

Memories of Fr. George Drew C.Ss.R

by Fr. Beverley Ahearn C.Ss.R

Fr. George Drew died in Bishop Eton in 1972.

During the First World War he was in the army as a young man and he spent the latter part of his military service in Palestine.

Later especially the time he was at Bishop Eton, towards the end of his life, Fr. Keaton, Bernard Keaton would visit from Hawkstone and being professed at the same time, in the same novitiate, they sat next to one another in order of profession in the refectory. And it was always interesting when they did meet, one could hear them talking about the days, reminiscing about time in the army

Sometimes to the extent that one confrere remarked it sounds as if while George Drew was winning the war for the British in Palestine, Buster Keaton was winning the same world war for Britain on the Western front in France.

But George Drew joined the congregation after the war, and the major contribution that he made to the Province was in the early 30s when he was appointed director of the juvenate, the name given to our junior or minor seminary, which then and until 1950 was at Bishop Eton Liverpool. He became director there about 1932 and he raised the standard of education by introducing public exams.

During his three years it became established that juvenates had to pass the junior Oxford and then the senior Oxford, and it was only if they got a pass in the senior Oxford that they were accepted for the novitiate, and this continued through to 1950 when the juvenate was closed in Bishop Eton and in a different way continued in Birmingham when it was reopened there in Birmingham. It wasn't the Oxford exam that they took but it was the state examinations of O'level and A'level.

But this raising of the standard for the novitiate was due to Fr. George Drew.

Part 2

Fr. George Drew – he was also noted for a recreation he had – the Times cryptic crossword. He was certainly good at solving the crossword, but he preferred always to do it with two or three around him making suggestions, because in this way it not only helped with answering or filling in all the answers to the clues, but it sometimes gave rise to a discussion, and in doing it this way during recreation there were very often minor discussions brought as a result of a clue, or an answer or the relation between the two.