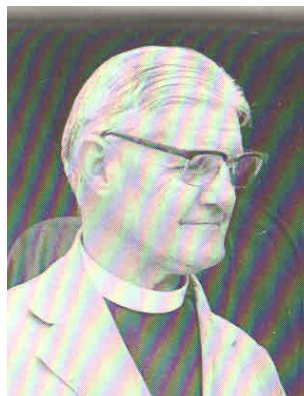


27 January

Fr DUNSTAN MYERSCOUGH

10 January 1912 - 27 January 1984



Dunstan Myerscough's unusual name goes back to Anglo-Saxon times. The family comes from Preston in NW England; he had a younger brother, Cedric, who was also a Jesuit and one of his three sisters was a Carmelite nun. He helped with milking the cows at the old Heythrop for he was a practical man, rather than an intellectual; from his earliest years he was 'making things' in his workshop. This included a fountain at the old Heythrop where a watering can rose was fixed to a fire hose nozzle concealed in a pile of rocks. Hidden coloured floodlights lit up a tree of fine spray on the night of King George V's jubilee (1935).

He spent years 'in the colleges' (St Aidan's and St George's) and he seemed to 'shuttle' between them 'almost as if superiors could not decide which place was to benefit from his work.' In 1947, he was at St George's as First Prefect but after four years he was at St Aidan's. In 1953 he was back at St George's and then back at St Aidan's two years later. He was there for the final closing of the college in 1973 and Dun was much involved in clearing up.

He was then sent to Musami in 1975 where he was a 'sort of minister' helping Gussie Donovan and later Mark Hackett. And of course he was there for the fateful night of 6 February, 1977, when he was the only survivor of the four Dominican nuns, three Jesuit priests and one brother lined up and shot on the road that runs through the mission. He later wrote an account of the night (*Letters and Notices*, November, 1977, p 155ff) in which he said the man who intruded into his room that night said, 'Come, we are not going to shoot you; we just want to show you something'. In view of what happened next – he was not shot - these words raise a question about who was responsible for the shooting that night. Dunstan clearly thought the guerrillas ('terrorists', he called them) were. But why would a guerrilla say that? It was an event that affected the rest of his life. When later, he was taking a break with his sister in South Africa, 'he simply sat in a chair all day and never said a word all day.' David Dryden tells the story that 'on that fateful night, Dunstan, who was very practical, as well as being a boxing coach, realised what was happening and fell to the ground a moment before the shooting started. Bodies fell on top of him. He thought he had been hit because he couldn't move. But later he was able to get out from under them.'

He returned to Rhodesia and asked to return to Musami but it was considered wiser he stayed in town and he lived at Prestage House while being visitor to the patients at St Anne's Hospital. He also acted as a sort of guest master at Prestage for the many who were coming and going during the first years of independence.

In 1983, he attended Cedric's Golden Jubilee in Preston with his three sisters, the first time they had all been together since 1928. But he soon suffered 'some sort of heart attack' and had to go to hospital on his return. He appeared to be making a recovery but was found dead in his room in the morning of 27 January, 1984, kneeling by his bedside.