

13 February

**Fr ANTHONY DAVIS** 15 June 1914 – 13 February 2003

‘Jeep’, as he was known, was born in Waterlooville in Hampshire in the south of England. After school at St George’s, Weybridge, he entered the Society in 1933. He did seven years regency during the war years and, on reaching theology, spent much time providing transport for the college, ‘scouring the second-hand dealers for ex-army vehicles, often jeeps, which were cheap’ (Ted Rogers). He seems to have done his theology by preparing for exams with the bright guys.



He came to Africa in 1950 and was quickly appointed to St Paul’s, Musami, where he was to stay for 17 years. He transformed a ‘small mission station’ (Ted) in the capital of Mangwende! His many buildings might not satisfy close examination by an architect but they still stand and have served the mission all these years: a primary school, a secondary, a Teacher Training College, a hospital, a trade school ‘of sorts’, a craft school for the girls and the biggest church in the country. Also he built a swimming pool and a sports stadium and the mission had 20 outstations.

The St Paul’s football team became famous and won the national cup three times in the mid-sixties. Each year, there was a gathering of the outstations and competitions at the mission with parades and entertainment – a mini-Olympics. Jeep was organiser, director, coach and policeman. He would lead a posse prowling around at night with torch and stick to drive away the prostitutes. Not everyone was happy with the emphasis on sport and Henry Wardale, head of the secondary school, used forceful language to express his anger at the diversion of funds from the school to the team.

By 1967, it was time for a change and Jeep moved first to Chishawasha, then to the School of Social Work and later to St Peter’s Kubatana where he used all his experience at St Paul’s to develop the buildings and this time to throw his energy, not into football, but into music. He developed a marimba band (see picture) which played classical and popular pieces and he tune the notes (small wooden blocks) himself. Ted remembers the hours he spent getting them just right.

Jeep’s whole life was one of imaginative service and Ted, in his homily at Jeep’s funeral, said his life was an expression of Matthew 25, ‘I was hungry and you gave me to eat’.