

1 March

## **Br JOHN WERNER**

12 June 1912 – 1 March 1993



John Werner was born in Elbing, Germany and came to Africa in 1939 where we first find him in Gokomere for a year before moving to Mutoko and Musami. He ran the farm at Musami and Chishawasha where he was from 1945 to 1949. But he was unhappy, especially during the war. He found British Jesuits insensitive and felt taken advantage of since his country and theirs were on opposite sides of the war. This attitude came on top of his feeling, as a brother, of not being fully accepted.

He returned to Germany and was at the novitiate near Bingen until it, and he, moved to Berlin where he created a wonderful garden at Peter Faber College. In 1959, the German Jesuits were given their own mission but it took time before he was able to join them which he did in 1966. He went to St Rupert's where he developed a magnificent garden producing a great variety of fruit. But it was 'raised to the ground', presumably during the war.

He moved to St Albert's in 1967 where he ran a large garden for vegetables for the boarders and sisters and where he trained local people in gardening. He remained at St Albert's for twenty years and was there when the students were abducted in 1973 and the mission was attacked by the guerrillas, and later closed, in 1979. He then spent one year at the fledgling novitiate at Waterfalls that never got off the ground. He returned to St Albert's and again developed a magnificent garden. He was reasonably happy there though he once fell and broke a leg. In 1985 he went back to Makonde and then returned to Germany in 1987. He became quiet in his old age as his hearing declined. But he remained part of everything. He always had a friendly manner.