

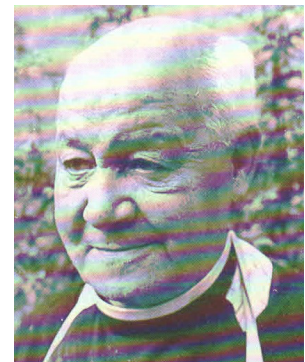
21 March

Br JOHN BRUCE

22 March 1903 – 21 March 1987



Information is not to hand for Mozambique but, for the other countries of the Southern Africa Province, John Bruce was the first born in the province to join the Society. It was 1940 and war time. His father was white and his mother was coloured. He was born in Port Elizabeth and went to school at Dunbrody where he worked as a tailor and a cook. He later moved to Chishawasha where he taught, farmed and cooked. He always considered South Africa as his home but he never lived in Africa as a Jesuit!



Soon after entering the novitiate in Manresa, London, he moved to St Beuno's in North Wales to escape the bombs. He never left it and died there 47 years later. What struck Br Richard Wheatley was 'his calm and placid nature. He seemed to take everything in his stride.' He was cook, looked after the hens and did tailoring. He also looked after the retreatants' rooms. To the workers at St Beuno's he was always the same 'never angry or ruffled with anyone. He didn't mind if you did the job his way or yours but always kept his calm.' He found it hard to accept women retreatants at first but they quickly took to him; 'he was small and cuddly.'

He loved the bees and gave them more sugar than they gave him honey. He always appreciated what was done for him and his thank you was, 'I'll say the rosary for you.' He enjoyed dodging Br Wheatley and helping himself to sugar in the kitchen. Not good for a diabetic but 'it does me good', he'd say.

He was ready for death when he moved to the sisters of Mercy in Colwyn Bay. The pictures are of him at Dunbrody, before he joined the Society, and later at Beuno's.



Br John Bruce and his school children, Dunbrody, 1930