

27 March

## Br WILLIAM NASH

26 June 1923 – 27 March 2011



Bill Nash was born in the naval city of Portsmouth and, after the family returned from an aborted migration to Canada because of the depression, he entered the Navy in 1937, aged fourteen. Discipline was rough and tough in those days and, later in Rhodesia, Bill sometimes spoke of his hard early days. His father also was a stern character.

Bill had a terrible war on the ships escorting convoys to the arctic port of

Archangel and to Malta: constantly bombarded, always cold and never getting enough sleep. Ray Armstrong heard from him that he was once ‘ordered to stand in the open part of the bridge and report any sighting of in-coming aircraft’, and Ray comments, ‘I cannot imagine a more dangerous position to be in on any ship in the time of war.’ Another time, in the Mediterranean, he was watching a merchant ship nearby and suddenly there ‘was a great flash and a big noise and when he looked again, the ship had disappeared. In all the tension and strain, Bill developed a stammer.

He ‘drifted’ for four years after the war but kept in touch with St Ignatius, Stamford Hill, in London until such time as he was able to make his way to the novitiate at Harlaxton in 1950. His novice master, George Walkerley, an ex-service man himself, was just the man to nurse Bill back to peace and stability.

In 1958, Bill came to Rhodesia and worked in farming. Ray remembers him at Chishawasha where he was ‘calm and confident’ addressing the boarders, ‘with an authority that showed up the Royal Navy at its best.’ At one point he was at Archbishop’s House and drove Bishop Chichester and Mark Hackett to Makumbi. The bishop began by saying to his companion, ‘we have a rotten

driver. Let's say three Hail Marys.' Sure enough, dodging a cow on the road, Bill swerved and turned the car over. It landed back on its four wheels.

Vincent Wood, Bill's nephew, recalled at his funeral that Bill was warm and friendly with a sense of humour. He returned to Britain in 1976 and was at Farm St. He had a good reading voice but irritated members of the community, when he answered the phone, by giving the caller spiritual direction before passing on the call. Joe Munitz, who knew Bill, said he had problems with the Society and Joe enigmatically added, Bill had 'a fire that burned at different strengths at different times.' Wood added. 'He was a man who was prepared to make sacrifices and endure hardship. He was a shining example.'