

May 28

Fr KENELM DIGBY BEST 27 January 1876 – 28 May 1915



Fiesole, near Florence, was the birthplace of Kenelm Digby Beste and as a twelve-year-old he made his way to school at Stonyhurst. When asked if he travelled all that way on his own, he said, 'No, I had a young boy to look after.'

He entered the Jesuits in 1894 and taught at Beaumont from 1901 to '07. 'In philosophy he seemed to be perpetually organising something.' He was ordained at St Beuno's in 1913 and two years later found his name on the 'Status' as Prefect of Studies at St George's in Bulawayo before a letter

from the provincial to that effect reached him.

He spoke Italian, German and French as well as being handy with a camera, a spade or a saw. The spade was useful during theology as he did some archaeological work around St Beuno's discovering a buried 13th century dwelling, Siamber Wen, in a village north of St Beuno's.

There was much praise of his work in St George's but few details. On one occasion he took a break in Mutare: 'This is a lovely spot', he wrote, 'as different from Bulawayo as Switzerland is from the Sahara. It is a one-horse mission ... very hard with no external, spiritual or material consolations, and the gloomiest of outlooks. All work in Rhodesia is very uphill, but this is the most discouraging of all.'

He was only eighteen months at St George's before dying of typhoid and kidney complications.