

June 30

## Fr WILLIAM BRAND

11 February 1875 – 30 June 1940



Willie Brand is mentioned, in passing, in *Men for Others*, the book celebrating the first 100 years of St George's College but in fact he was the prime pusher for the school to move to the more suitable site in Salisbury at Hartmann Hill. He doesn't even appear in the index nor is there a photo of him. After two years as rector, he decided they had to move and explored sites all round Bulawayo, 'north, south, east and west', without success. He then settled on Hartmann Hill but, of course, there would be many objections and, foreseeing them, he drew up details plans BEFORE putting the idea to the consultors. When the plan stalled, he appealed to the provincial to come out from London, and settle the matter. Willie had his way and all at St George's have never regretted the move.

He was born in Glasgow and went to school at the Mount and Stonyhurst, and entered the Society in 1893. He did six years regency at Beaumont and was ordained in 1908. Later he returned to Beaumont for another eight years, was called up to serve as a chaplain in the army during the war and soon after (1920) was appointed rector of St George's.

'Seemingly imperturbable', he was seen as 'stern and aloof' by some and 'approachable and considerate' by others. To be 'sent to the rector' was a fearsome prospect for a boy but he was always considered fair. His brother, David, also a Jesuit and also at St George's said 'Willie was quiet and retiring and even I, his brother, did not know him well.' The end of his term as rector coincided with the move to Salisbury and Willie went to Clermont, a parish we then had in Cape Town. After a few years that was given up and he returned to England and became minister at Wimbledon before going to Lauriston, Edinburgh, in 1933. He was much appreciated as a PP and set out to build a youth centre - an idea ahead of its time - which was uncompleted when war broke out. He was also renowned for his visiting the poor