

3 July

## Fr HERMAN KAIBACH

16 February 1881 – 3 July 1969

Fr Cogger called him ‘a tough Alsatian’ and certainly the reputation of Fr Kaibach in his early years in Southern Rhodesia fitted that description. He had no car in those days and he walked everywhere.

Born in Strasbourg, Alsace, then part of the German empire, he entered the Society in Roehampton, England, in 1901. He was ordained in Valkenberg and visited his family in Strasbourg just as war was breaking out. He was stranded there and spent all the war years there caring for wounded soldiers.



It was only in 1920 that he was able to sail for Africa and he first spent time at Chishawasha beginning with Shona. In 1927 he moved to Makumbe and two years later to St Barbara's. In 1939, he was at Triashill and in 1946 at Mount Mellary. He returned to Chishawasha the following year and then moved to Mutoko in 1950. In 1958 he was again in Chishawasha and in 1959 at Monte Cassino. Finally he retired to Makumbe in 1964 where the present writer met him, still wearing his famous boots. He died five years later.

Such a rapid list hides the many varied tasks but it gives some idea of his vigour and energy. He once walked 130 miles in five days to found a mission in the Darwin area. He chose a site at Chakoma but was not allowed to proceed with it. He was sent instead to Mutoko while a younger man, Michael Hannan, started the mission - not at Chakoma but at Marymount. Hannan tells us he was loved by the people once they got past his berating them for their misdemeanours. His devotion to them took out the sting of his words.

Wherever he went he liked to plant orchards - and roses!