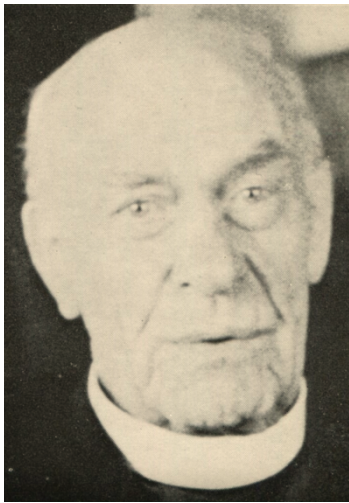


28 September

## Fr SAMUEL KENNAN

28 June 1899 - 28 September 1974



Samuel Kennan is a late comer to this collection of little lives probably because he spent only a year in the sub-continent and didn't seem to leave a mark. His obituary barely mentions his time as minister at St Aidan's, 1946/7, before passing on to his activities on his return to the UK. But someone (unnamed) made a comment after his death: 'There was one particularly sad memory which he carried; his year in South Africa in which he was convinced he had been prevented from giving what he could have offered in the situation there.' These are enigmatic words standing on their own but they at least hint that he wanted to stir up the

complacency (if that is the right word) of the community whose total focus seems to have been on the school itself to the exclusion of the surrounding ambience of a South Africa heading for an ever more hard model of 'apartness'.

Sam Kennan was born in Liverpool and joined the Royal Air Force when he was just nineteen. The war was about to end but he still had time to be wounded flying over Passchendaele. His contemporaries say he never really recovered his nerves and he permanently damaged one leg. But he entered the Society in 1919 as soon as he was released from the RAF. He spent four years regency at Mount St Mary's Jesuit school near Sheffield. He later said his superiors did not understand him but he kept going anyhow. After ordination in 1937, he served at St Ignatius Stamford Hill, first as a teacher and then as a minister, and it was then that the famous Br Lynch, who was going deaf at the time, remembered the trouble Sam took to right out the 'points' given in a community retreat for him.

In 1946, as mentioned, there was the South African interlude. He returned in 1947 to be a pastor in Preston where he visited, walking on his bad leg, all over his district. Aware the youth were drifting away from the church, he started a Boys' Club. Gradually the boys discovered his concern and love for them and it left a lasting impression. In 1956, he moved to the retreat centre at Corby Hall where, as was the custom at the time, he gave about three conferences a day. But 'he would never talk from a set formula of notes. He felt he could be more fluent and free without them'. As his health deteriorated, he moved to St Beuno's and a wheel chair.

*LL&NN Vol 80, Mar 1975, p 111*