

30 November

Fr MICHAEL HEWETT 3 October 1929 - 30 November 2001



East Leach is a village in Gloucestershire, England, where Billy Hewett SJ remembered growing up with his big brother Michael. He tells us they both had O'Connell as one of their names, so proud were they to be descendants of the Liberator of Ireland. Mick, as he was known, entered the Society straight from school in 1947. Bertie Banyard was a first year when Mick was a second-year 'angel guardian'. Bertie remembers how Mick helped new arrivals 'into the arcane complexities of the novitiate' and concluding that 'if he is

happy, it must be alright.' Mick helped us all by 'remaining human among the aridities of scholastic philosophy' and went to the then Rhodesia for regency at Monte Cassino. He enjoyed the teaching and wanted to return after ordination in 1962 but Billy reports on some disagreement with superiors which he, Billy, never understood.

Mick taught briefly in Leeds and then had a long spell at St Ignatius in London. He was a gifted schoolmaster and was particularly good with the 'unpromising and awkward' students. He would go to enormous lengths to help them and they would respond. He could be described as a 'cough drop', pursuing an 'unreasonable defence for an aberrant boy.' He extended his teaching to the pastoral care of the boys and also the teachers, opting to work from their staffroom. He even joined their union and was shocked to find he was on strike on one occasion!

As mentioned, Mick fell foul of superiors and the door to Rhodesia was closed to him and not even the balm of Paul Kennedy, the renowned tertian Instructor, was able to sooth his soul. Billy thinks it might have had something to do with Mick's championing of the underdog. He relished being chaplain to the poorest people in a night shelter and had a flat near Folly Bridge (Oxford) from which he operated.

His final years were happy and fruitful but his heart – and his eyes – were declining and he died suddenly in Oxford on 30 November 2001.