

8 December

## Fr LEWIS CLIFFORD

9 April 1896 – 8 December 1970



Fr Sir Lewis Clifford Bart, as he became in later life, was born in Market Drayton in Shropshire and was educated in Beaumont where he developed his love of cricket. He entered the Society in 1914 and felt the ‘*malaise*’ in the novitiate where many felt they should be in uniform fighting in the newly declared war. After his years of formation and ordination in 1928, he returned to Beaumont where he was, except for his time as a military chaplain in the Second

World War, until 1956.

As chaplain, he was on one of two ships evacuating troops from France at the beginning of the war. One was sunk by torpedoes with the loss of life of all on board while Clifford’s ship got through. In the early years of the war he was based in the UK but he volunteered for foreign service and found himself in North Africa with General Montgomery in Tripoli.

He returned to teaching and cricket at Beaumont after the war and in the 1950s found himself the ‘improbable rector’. John Coventry, later provincial, was prefect of studies and realised Lewis could not follow all the details of switching to GCE but he also found him patient and supportive of his (Coventry’s) efforts. Clifford put the college on a sound financial basis and got on well with the former students and parents. It was clear to all that he loved the place despite a certain aloofness, even shyness, at times.

In 1956, at the age of 60, he volunteered for Rhodesia and was accepted. He had a fruitful number of years as PP of Mabelreign (see photo) and was much loved even though, like Chichester, he could not speak a word of Shona.

In 1970 cancer was diagnosed and he came back to Britain to die. He suffered much pain and one eye had to be removed.