

CFXE C.4.208 - - Xavier (Joseph Whelan) - Died 1968

“Louis” – Latin Teacher

OBITUARY Br. XAVIER, C.F.X.

Brother Xavier (Joseph Whelan) was born in Burnley in Lancashire in 1903 on 2nd July, the feast of the Visitation. All his life he retained the deep faith of his Irish forbears, the down to earth practicality of his Lancastrian birthplace and a great love for Our Lady on one of whose feasts he had first seen the light of day.

Rottingdean, in 1918, Deeping and Mayfield were the steps that led him to the Parnassus of London University where he took a degree in French. Then came appointment to the staff of Clapham and the years that followed were undoubtedly the happiest of his life. Not yet afflicted with the arthritis that eventually crippled him, he was, strange as it will seem to later generations, a very keen sportsman. On the football field he had a devastating kick that deceived many an unsuspecting goalkeeper and in cricket he could produce a weird bowl (a googly ?) that rose from the small of his back, lurched into the air in a slow arc, broke twice (not necessarily near the wicket) and baffled many batsmen who could handle more orthodox deliveries. He had strong views on such things as the gaining of Colours, and a player who fell foul of him waited a long time for recognition.

He was also for a period, and this again will surprise those who only knew him when the fires had gone out, Prefect of Discipline; wielding the rod with vigour and precision

The war took him on a Cook's tour of the country; Southport, Ironbridge, Aberdovey, Blackpool, East Grinstead and Taunton, moving from school to school as his superiors and the doodle-bug dictated.

After the war he was sent to Manchester and it was during his Manchester period that a serious decline in his health manifested itself. Believing that the more buxom and genial air of the south would better his condition he transferred to Clapham only to discover that his search for health was illusory. He struggled on in school under an increasing burden of ailments until he was in 1963 retired, not unwillingly, from the classroom altogether. Five more years spent in almost total retirement at his beloved Clapham saw only a steady worsening of his condition. In July of this year he was transferred to Wadhurst and there he died on Tuesday, 8th October, after a short illness, quickly and quietly, as he would have wished, supported by the consolations of the religion and the religious life he had all his life followed with meticulous devotion.

He had his faults. His virtues far outweighed them. May he rest in peace.