

# *Spirit* of Sandhurst



Special Edition: Issue 5  
April 2012  
Catholic Education Sandhurst

## Reflections from the Director

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Editor: Jenni Kennedy  
 jkennedy@ceosand.catholic.edu.au

Layout: Catherine Barianos

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This special edition of the *Spirit of Sandhurst* magazine celebrates our history as we welcome Bishop Tomlinson as our seventh Bishop of Sandhurst. We trace our story since the declaration of the Diocese of Sandhurst in 1874.

As I write this reflection, I am reminded of the document of Pope John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*,<sup>1</sup> which encourages us to 'recall the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and to look to the future with confidence' (n. 1). The spirit of this special edition is to recall our history with a focus on the leadership of the Diocese of Sandhurst from its origin under the

episcopates of two Augustinians – Bishops Crane and Reville through until today.

As a diocese we have much for which to be grateful – the leadership of our bishops, the vision of Rev Dr Henry Backhaus, the selflessness of many clergy and the courage and generosity of countless men and women who have worked together over the years to ensure that the Good News of Jesus Christ is known to all.

The story is captured in the contributions of the Bishops, the buildings especially Sacred Heart Cathedral which is an icon in Australia and in the story of Catholic education – a story of generous service by religious orders of men and women and of countless lay women and men who continue the story today.

We live the present with enthusiasm encouraged by the surge in enrolments and the growth and development of the schools and challenged by the call to renew ourselves as a core part of the mission of the Church in the 21st century. We can look to the future with confidence as we contribute our gifts in response to our Baptismal call and in union with our Bishop.

At our Catholic Education Sandhurst Diocesan Conference in May we will be exploring 're-imagining the mission' so that the legacy of the Gospel and our forebears will continue to contribute to the common good of all, responding to the 'signs of the times' as a community of faith.

We give thanks for the pioneers of the Diocese of Sandhurst, for the generosity of those who have responded with love and generosity to the call of God to serve the People of God and to those committed to continuing the mission today.

Blessings

**Ms Phil Billington**  
 Director  
 Catholic Education Sandhurst

# Bishop Leslie Tomlinson

We are delighted to welcome Bishop Les Tomlinson to the Diocese of Sandhurst. As with all of us, our story is an important part of who we are and in this edition of Spirit of Sandhurst we examine the history of Sandhurst and especially of the seventh Bishop of Sandhurst.

Bishop Les Tomlinson was born on 27th August, 1943 at Mildura Victoria, the third child of Edward Tomlinson and Alice Rogers. He received the Sacraments of Initiation and grew up in Sacred Heart Parish, Mildura.

He was educated at Sacred Heart Primary School and St Joseph's College, Mildura.

Prior to entering the seminary Bishop Tomlinson undertook clerical work in Irymple and at Melbourne. At the beginning of 1968 he commenced studies for the Priesthood at Corpus College Werribee. At the invitation of the then Archbishop James Knox, he became one of the initial class of St Paul's National Seminary Kensington NSW.

Bishop Ronald Mulkearns ordained him to the Priesthood for the Archdiocese of Melbourne at St Joseph's Church, Red Cliffs on 18th August 1972. Following ordination he was Assistant Priest at Mitcham for three years before being loaned to the Archdiocese of Hobart for three years. Returning to Melbourne he served as Assistant Priest in North Dandenong and Sunshine before being appointed successively as Parish Priest of Carlton, Rowville and Ormond.

Bishop Tomlinson was Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral for four months prior to being appointed Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, in April of 2003, an appointment he has held to the present. Pope John Paul II named him as a Prelate of Honour on 27 May 2003. Bishop Tomlinson was also Secretary of the College of Diocesan Consultors, Chairman of the Personnel Advisory Board, Deputy Chairman of the Diocesan Planning and Development Fund, Deputy Chairman of the Diocesan Finance Council and Chairman of the Catholic Capital Grants Company and the Chairman of the Diocesan Planning, Building and Finance Committee. He was also Secretary of the Roman Catholic Trusts' Corporation for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Earlier, he had been an active member of the St Patrick's Cathedral Works Committee (1994–1997), involved as committee member and then Secretary of the Priests' Remuneration Fund (August 1992 – January 2003). He spent some years as State Chaplain to the Knights of the Southern Cross and as the Spiritual Advisor of the State Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria.

He was ordained bishop as Titular Bishop of Sinitis on 17 June 2009 and served as an Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Melbourne when he adopted the arms from which his present arms are derived.

On the 3rd February, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Tomlinson as Bishop of Sandhurst – a ministry in which he will lead our Diocese as Chief Pastor and spiritual guide to all. He has already begun with blessing new school buildings, celebrating the centenary of St Joseph's Primary School in Kerang and presiding over the Easter ceremonies at the Sacred Heart Cathedral amidst the many administrative and pastoral roles which he also fulfills. We give thanks for his generous response to become our Bishop.







The Installation of Bishop Leslie Rogers Tomlinson as the seventh Bishop of Sandhurst marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Sandhurst Diocese. Over 1,500 people gathered at the solemn ceremony which took place at Sacred Heart Cathedral on March 1st 2012.

A trumpet fanfare heralded the entrance of the newly appointed Bishop of Sandhurst, who was preceded by over 100 clergy into Sacred Heart Cathedral. Bishop Tomlinson was greeted at the entrance of the sanctuary by Cathedral Administrator, Monsignor Frank Marriott who has been Diocesan Administrator since the death of Bishop Joe Grech in December 2010.

The crucifix of the second Bishop of Sandhurst, Bishop Stephen Reville was passed to Bishop Tomlinson to kiss along with holy water, with which to bless himself and the congregation.

Respected Jaara elder, Uncle Brien Nelson welcomed all to country before the Red Ochre Dancers performed the cleansing dance. Monsignor Marriott then led Bishop Leslie to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel where he prayed before receiving his vestments.

The joyous sound of the Sacred Heart Choir filled the Cathedral as Bishop Tomlinson received the Mitre of Bishop Grech, and the Crozier of Bishop McCarthy before taking his seat as Bishop of Sandhurst for the first time, escorted ceremoniously by Archbishop Hart and Monsignor Marriott.

The Apostolic Letter was read by Monsignor John White, previous Vicar General of the Diocese of Sandhurst and was presented to the Diocesan Consultors to be signed. The congregation applauded as Bishop Tomlinson was officially received as the seventh Bishop of Sandhurst.

Representatives of local community groups, organisations and Christian Churches and parishes of the Deaneries of Sandhurst were presented to Bishop Tomlinson along with local dignitaries. Bishop Tomlinson smiled broadly as he greeted the procession of well-wishers.

Bishop Tomlinson's first homily as Bishop of Sandhurst offered a strong message of hope while paying respect to those who have gone before him.

"Already the Diocese of Sandhurst has been blessed with many endeavours, undertaken over the years by my six predecessors, in collaboration with the priests and faithful of the time, to address the needs of the people and Church."

"We have a legacy to build upon, to bring Christ to our world and our world to Christ. I ask that you unite with me in prayer that God may continue to empower you and me to each use our talents and gifts to fulfill our respective responsibilities in His Church in the Diocese of Sandhurst," said Bishop Tomlinson.

Born in Mildura in 1943 Bishop Tomlinson says his appointment as Bishop of Sandhurst is a homecoming of sorts. "Having been born and brought up in Mildura, just north of the Sandhurst Diocese, I am no stranger to country life," he said.

"In reflecting on over almost forty years of my Priesthood, I believe that the richest and most fulfilling aspect of my ministry has been my work as a pastor. I look forward to being Bishop and pastor of the clergy and people of the Diocese of Sandhurst."

Bishop Leslie Rogers Tomlinson was appointed Bishop of Sandhurst by his holiness, Pope Benedict XVI on February 3rd, 2012. Prior to his installation he held the positions of Vicar General and Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne.

The people of Sandhurst have welcomed the news of Bishop Tomlinson's appointment and look forward to the strong leadership and spiritual guidance that he will provide in his new role as the seventh Bishop of Sandhurst.





# Installation

1st March 2012



Most Reverend Leslie Rogers Tomlinson DD  
Seventh Bishop of Sandhurst  
COAT OF ARMS

## Bishop Tomlinson's arms display:

- the Sacred Heart, originally adopted from the arms of Archbishop Knox - recalling the Sacred Heart Parish at Mildura where he received his earliest formal education, Archbishop Knox's early encouragement and support of his priestly vocation, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who taught him at St Paul's National Seminary at Kensington and the Parish of the Sacred Heart at Carlton which was his first appointment as Parish Priest. Perhaps prophetically, it also represents the Cathedral of the Diocese of Sandhurst
- roses emblematic of the Mother of God and here representative of Our Lady of Good Counsel, the Patroness of the Diocese of Sandhurst, thus, traditional in the arms of bishops of the diocese, and
- the emblem of St Patrick's Cathedral - recalling his period of service as a priest and bishop in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The motto "In Christ's name" recalls the invocation preceding the priest's entry onto the sanctuary at the beginning of the Mass and encapsulates the dedication of all efforts for the sake of the Gospel.

In the language of heraldry, the arms are blazoned as: Gules in fess two roses between in chief a bezant Or charged with a Sacred Heart proper and in base a bezant Or charged with three chevronells conjoined the centre one throughout terminating in a Latin Cross Or.

*The arms were designed by Richard d'Apice and Fr Guy Selvester and illustrated by Sandy Turnbull.*





# 1874 - 1901

## Bishop Martin Crane OSA (1818-1901)



Born in Ireland in 1818, Martin Crane was ordained an Augustinian Priest in 1841 and was announced as the first Bishop of the newly created Diocese of Sandhurst in 1874.

Installed as Bishop of Sandhurst in May, 1875, Bishop Crane set about visiting the various parts of the diocese. He found forty churches, many in poor repair, and few parish centres and only seven resident Priests. He succeeded in bringing out more priests from Ireland, and within seven years he had built twenty-eight new churches.

On a visit to Europe in 1882, Bishop Crane consulted a London specialist about his failing eyesight and underwent surgery which unfortunately resulted in total blindness. Further illness followed while he was away, and so he arranged for the appointment of Reverend Stephen Reville as Coadjutor-Bishop.

Before leaving for Europe, Bishop Crane had spoken of building a Cathedral in Bendigo. He was away for four years and when he returned to the diocese despite his loss of sight, work began in 1896. Bishop Crane attended the formal opening of the first section of the Sacred Heart Cathedral in September 1901, but had to leave the ceremony due to illness. He died suddenly on 21 October, having been a priest for sixty years, and a Bishop for over a quarter of a century.

# 1901 - 1916

## Bishop Stephen Reville OSA (1844-1916)



Fr. Stephen Reville accompanied Bishop Crane to Australia in 1875 and at the age of 40 he was appointed both Coadjutor Bishop of Sandhurst and the Titular Bishop of Ceramus, later that same year he was ordained a Bishop.

As Coadjutor Bishop to Dr. Crane who was suffering from poor health, Bishop Reville would bear a great deal of the responsibility of the diocese for the next sixteen years. Finally, on the 21st of October, 1901, Bishop Reville succeeded Bishop Crane as the second Bishop of Sandhurst.

In 1904 Bishop Reville established St Aidan's Orphanage with the help of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Bishop Reville stipulated that both boys and girls be admitted to the orphanage to avoid splitting up families and St Aidan's Orphanage became the only Good Shepherd convent in Australia to care for boys as well as girls.

On the 19th September, 1916, at the age of 72, Bishop Reville died from pneumonia, while still in office. He was the last Augustinian Bishop of Victoria and at the time of his death had served the people of Sandhurst for over 30 years. Bishop Stephen Reville was held in the highest esteem by all sections of the community.

# Bishops of

# 1950 - 1979

## Bishop Bernard Stewart (1900-1988)



Bernard Denis Stewart was born in Essendon, Victoria in 1900. An excellent student he won a state scholarship to study at St. Joseph's Christian Brothers' College, North Melbourne where he was Dux for 2 years in succession.

Bishop Stewart was a great sportsman and scholar; he excelled at football and played for Prahran in the VFL. He graduated at Melbourne University in Arts (1920) and Law (1922). In 1923 he became a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria which he practised until 1926.

Bernard Stewart completed his ecclesiastical studies in Rome and was ordained in December, 1929. After twenty years' service in parishes, Fr Bernard Stewart was appointed Co-adjutor Bishop of Sandhurst and succeeded as Bishop of Sandhurst three years later.

In 1977 Bishop Stewart saw the completion of the Sacred Heart Cathedral; he worked tirelessly to establish Bethlehem Home (where he died) and Mount Alvernia Hospital (now St John of God). Many schools were also established during this time.

Bishop Stewart retired as the Fourth Bishop of Sandhurst in 1979 and was succeeded by Bishop Daly. At 88 years of age Bishop Stewart died leaving a legacy of strong spiritual leadership which endured for nearly half a century.

# 1979 - 2000

## Bishop Noel Daly (1929-2004)



Noel Desmond Daly was born in Sale, Victoria on February 10, 1929. Ordained in 1952 his first appointment was to Yallourn in January, 1953 before moving to St Michael's, Traralgon during September that same year where he remained until December, 1959.

He was appointed Bishop of Sandhurst on April 27th, 1979 at the age of 50. Bishop Noel served the Diocese as its leader for 21 years, during that time he introduced many pastoral initiatives and offices including Centacare Family Services, Faith Education Sandhurst, the Renew

and Many Parishes One Purpose Program, Ministry to Priests Program and Continuing Education of Priests, Vocations Ministry, Youth Ministry, Sacramental policies including the Steps in Faith Parish Approach to Sacramental Preparation. These initiatives benefitted the whole community and are his legacy to the people of Sandhurst.

Ill health forced him to retire in July 2000 and on January 14th, 2004, Bishop Daly died suddenly just a few weeks prior to his 75th Birthday. Bishop Noel Daly was a man of great faith who cared deeply for people, at the time of his death he was the spiritual leader of more than 86,000 Catholics throughout central and northern Victoria.

# 1917 - 1950

## Bishop John McCarthy (1858-1950)



Bishop John McCarthy was one of the most renowned figures in the Roman Catholic Church in Australia. Born in Ireland, in 1858, he was ordained a priest in 1882 and began a service to the Roman Catholic Church which was to take him across the world and last for 67 years.

Bishop McCarthy arrived in Melbourne in 1890 and served in the Woodend and St Kilda parishes before becoming private secretary to Archbishop Carr.

On Thursday, June 7th, 1917, in succession to the late Dr. S. Reville, Dr McCarthy was consecrated Bishop of Sandhurst at Sacred Heart

Cathedral, Bendigo.

In the mid 1940's plans were begun to establish a Catholic boarding school in Bendigo and Bishop McCarthy was a driving force behind the initiative. The Bishop's objective was to ensure that country boys were able to receive a solid Catholic education in a rural setting. On February 5th 1955, five years after Bishop McCarthy's death, St Vincent's College was officially opened with an enrolment of 43 boys.

Bishop McCarthy would go on to become one of the longest serving Bishop of Sandhurst with a period of service spanning 33 years. On the 18th August 1950, Dr. John McCarthy died at the grand age of 91.



# Sandhurst

## 2001 - 2010

### Bishop Joseph Grech (1948-2010)



Joseph Angelo Grech was born in Malta in 1948. After completing the first four years of studies for the priesthood in Malta, he arrived in Australia to complete his studies and was ordained a priest in 1974.

Fr Grech spent his early years as an Assistant Priest in four inner city parishes in Melbourne with a high migrant population from 1975 to 1988. In 1992 he travelled to Rome and on his return was appointed full time Chaplain to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Melbourne. He was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne in 1999 and appointed as Bishop of Sandhurst in March, 2001.

Installed as the sixth Bishop of Sandhurst in April 2001, Bishop Joseph Grech quickly became affectionately known as 'Bishop Joe'. During his ten years as Bishop of Sandhurst he was an active member of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life with special oversight on Migrants and Refugees issues, he was also responsible for Youth Ministry on behalf of the Bishops of Australia and was a much sought after international speaker. He made an extraordinary contribution to Youth Ministry in Australia and overseas. During his 10 years as Bishop he visited schools tirelessly and was a profound inspiration to students, teachers and families.

On the 28th December, 2010 Bishop Joseph Grech died suddenly after a short illness; the outpouring of grief at his passing was immense. Bishop Joe will be remembered as a man of the people and a champion for young people.

## 2012 -

### Bishop Leslie Tomlinson (1943-)



Leslie Rogers Tomlinson was born in Mildura Victoria in 1943 and was ordained a priest in 1972. Fr Tomlinson spent his early years as Assistant Priest at Mitcham before being loaned to the Archdiocese of Hobart for the following three years. Returning to Melbourne he served the parishes of North Dandenong and Sunshine before being appointed successively as Parish Priest of Carlton, Rowville and Ormond.

In 2003 Fr. Leslie Tomlinson was appointed Vicar General and was ordained as Titular Bishop of Sinito and Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne in 2009.

Bishop Tomlinson has had extensive responsibilities as Secretary of the College of Diocesan Consultors, Chairman of the Personnel Advisory Board, Deputy Chairman of the Diocesan Planning and Development Fund, Deputy Chairman of the Diocesan Finance Council, Chairman of the Catholic Capital Grants Company and the Diocesan Planning, Building and Finance Committee.

Bishop Tomlinson was installed as the seventh Bishop of Sandhurst on March 1, 2012.



# *History of Cath* “from

The tale of Catholic Education in Australia is as much about the religious and lay pioneers who brought education to the children of Australia, as it is about the Catholic education system itself. These pioneers established schools through sheer hard work in inadequate and often difficult circumstances. We owe the establishment and success of our schools to those both past and present, who have dedicated their lives to providing Catholic education throughout our region.

The history of Catholic Schools in the Sandhurst area is an epic story spanning over 150 years, beginning before the Sandhurst Diocese was established in 1874. The earliest schools in the Diocese appeared around the Goldfields with the first begun for approximately thirty pupils by Reverend Dr Backhaus in 1853 at Bendigo. Within six years, another seven schools were founded around Bendigo and similar schools were established at Beechworth and Wangaratta.

As the population and parish numbers increased, so did the numbers and enrolments of schools. During these early years, lay teachers were the backbone of Catholic schools, often working under very difficult conditions. Between 1872 and 1893, every State in Australia passed an Education Act removing state aid to Church schools. This was a turning point for Catholic schools and indeed, for the Catholic community in Australia. Bishops and parishes decided to persevere with the Catholic system, but with no money to pay teachers, the bishops had to appeal to religious orders in Ireland and other European countries, and soon religious sisters and brothers were responding to the crisis.

By 1911, the diocese had Augustinian Fathers, Marist Brothers, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Brigid, Sisters of St. Joseph, Presentation Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus and Good Shepherd Sisters. Over the years these Religious Congregations have contributed generously to the fabric of Catholic Education.

By the middle of the twentieth century, Sandhurst had twenty-nine primary schools and sixteen secondary schools, educating around 6,000 students. All of these schools were built, maintained, renovated, and extended without

government funding, and supported by each Religious Congregation and a Diocesan School Inspector. It was only after government funding was re-introduced in the 1960s, and increased in the 1970s, that a Diocesan Education Office was established.

The Catholic Education Office of Sandhurst was established in 1974 together with Offices in Sale and Ballarat Dioceses and with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. Prior to 1974 there was a Catholic Education Office in Melbourne.

Under the directorship of Monsignor Peter de Campo, Mr Adrian Sexton was appointed in Bendigo and Jim McKenna in Wangaratta; they were the pioneering Educational Consultants who served the diocesan schools with only some part time secretarial assistance. Adrian Sexton would become the first lay Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst in 1979 and by 1982 the staff had increased to five.

The original office in Bendigo was located in the upstairs room of St Kilian's Hall and the Wangaratta Office was set up in a shop front in Carrier Street. As the number of personnel grew the need for bigger premises became evident and larger premises were obtained - Bendigo in 1983 and then again in 2009, and Benalla in 1984 and again in November 2002 with a move to the St Brigid's Centre in Wangaratta. A third office was established in Shepparton in 2007 to support the schools of the Goulburn Valley Deanery.

The Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) was established in 1997 as the principal consultative body to the Bishop of Sandhurst regarding Catholic school education in the Diocese. It was established by Bishop Daly and was the creative work of the Director of Catholic Education, Mr Denis Higgins.

The Sandhurst Diocese extends nearly 400 kms from west to east, and up to 130 kms from north to south. Two rivers form three of its boundaries, the Loddon in the west and the Murray to the north and east. While in 1874, Sandhurst was made up of only five parishes – Bendigo, Beechworth, Wangaratta, Heathcote and Echuca - parish numbers



# *Catholic Education* humble beginnings''

continued to grow until the 1970s, with the present number being forty one. Sandhurst is home for approximately 86,000 Catholics.

Today, Catholic Education Sandhurst has grown to comprise 42 Primary Schools, 10 Secondary Schools and 3 specialist settings. Currently twelve hundred teachers are employed across the Sandhurst Diocese educating approximately 8,982 primary and 8,339 secondary students. The schools continue to be served by the Sandhurst School Education Board and the Catholic Education Office with sites in Bendigo, Shepparton and Wangaratta.

Catholic Education Sandhurst has come a long way from its humble beginnings; early primitive school buildings have been replaced by current structures that range from modern new schools facilities to established schools that have incorporated innovative designs to fuse the old with the new! Language learning centres, science hubs and first class technology have transformed educational provision across the region and throughout Australia.

There is no doubt that Catholic Education owes much to its past and to the people who worked hard to make the Catholic system what it is today. It is from these pioneering beginnings that we build upon the opportunities to flourish and grow, to provide quality education across the diocese and to continue the epic journey of Catholic education well into the future.





# Henry Backhaus

## a legacy

When gold was discovered at Bendigo Creek in 1851, people hastened to the region in the hope of finding instant fortune. The rich goldfields of the Bendigo region, formerly known as Sandhurst, attracted people from far and wide and from many walks of life.

As the population grew so did the need for supplies, services, spiritual guidance and education of the young. In 1853, Henry Backhaus, a young priest from Paderborn, Germany arrived on the Bendigo Goldfields; the rest as they say is history.

This year marks 200 years since the birth Dr Henry Backhaus. It is on this significant anniversary that we pause to remember the remarkable man who shaped the history of the Sandhurst Diocese like no other.

### Henry Backhaus:

The son of a Prussian boot merchant, George Henry Backhaus (1811-1882) was born on February 15, 1811 in Paderborn, Germany. A gifted scholar, he completed his studies in Paderborn before travelling to Rome in 1832, where he studied at the College of the Propagation of the Faith, and was ordained in 1836.

As a young priest, Henry Backhaus had a passion for missionary work which lead him to India. Here he stayed for the next ten years until a liver complaint and poor health caused him to leave India in search of a cooler climate. He travelled to Singapore and Batavia, before landing in Australia in 1846.

Dr Backhaus spent eleven months in Sydney here he indulged his love of music with the Sydney Metropolitan Choir, but on learning that the Bishop of Adelaide required a priest to service the German Catholics of his region he travelled to South Australia to take up the position.

Departing Sydney, he arrived in Adelaide in 1847, here he worked in challenging conditions for more than four years, during this time he decided to make the Australian mission

his life work, and took the oath of allegiance in June 1849.

When gold was discovered in Victoria in 1851, Dr Henry Backhaus set sail for Melbourne, arriving in February, 1852. He was quickly appointed the first priest to take charge of the Catholic population on the Victorian goldfields and wasted no time travelling to the Bendigo area. Dr Backhaus said his first mass in the Gold Commissioner's camp at Forest Creek diggings on May 2nd.

In the early months Henry Backhaus travelled constantly round the various diggings on the goldfields, basing himself at Mount Alexander. Later that year, another priest was stationed at Kyneton, leaving Backhaus free to concentrate on the area along the Bendigo Creek.

The original gathering place for mass was in the Golden Square area, but before the end of 1852 Henry Backhaus had pitched his tent at the site where St Kilian's Church now stands. The first Catholic church of the Goldfields was a simple tent complete with a slab-walled chapel and canvas roof. As well as being a place of worship, Henry Backhaus used the chapel as a Catholic school for the children of the area; this was the first of many schools that Henry Backhaus would establish over the next few years.

In 1855 Bishop Goold requested that a proper church be built to replace the canvas chapel. Construction began almost immediately on a stone church and despite difficulties with foundations and materials it was in use early in 1858, although not completed for another five years. Backhaus dedicated the church to St Kilian, an early Irish missionary to Germany, and one of the patron saints of Paderborn.

Henry Backhaus worked tirelessly in his role as priest on the Goldfields and was also heavily involved in community and civic matters. His considerable medical knowledge was also in constant demand and he provided homœopathic treatment for the sick in addition to his duties as priest. Dr Backhaus was also extremely skilled in financial matters and between his arrival in 1852 and his death thirty years later;

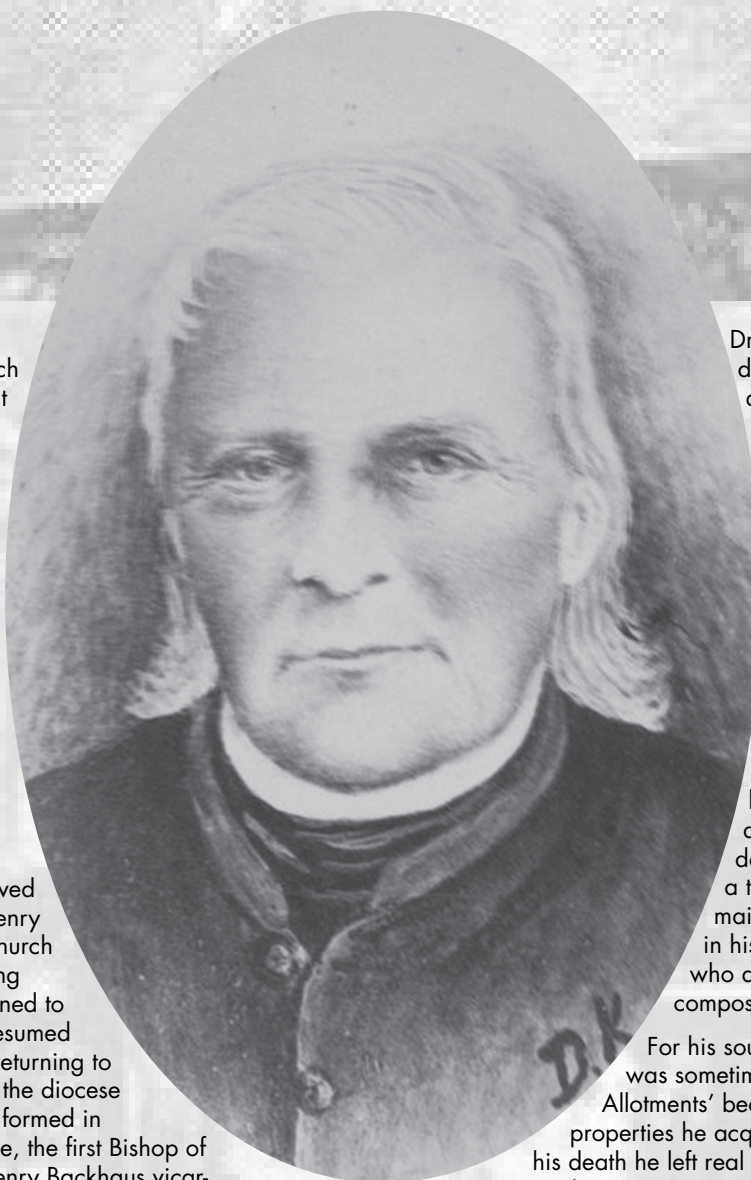


Dr Backhaus accumulated considerable property which would be left for the benefit of the church, enabling the Cathedral, among other things, to be built.

In 1863, at the age of 52, Dr Henry Backhaus announced his retirement and intention to return to Europe, citing personal reasons. A grand banquet was arranged to farewell the highly respected priest who had left an indelible mark on the Bendigo people.

Two years later a set of valuable church plates arrived at St Kilian's, sent by Dr Henry Backhaus as a gift to the church that he began. The following year Henry Backhaus returned to his adopted country and resumed work in Adelaide prior to returning to Sandhurst in 1867. When the diocese of Sandhurst was officially formed in 1874, Bishop Martin Crane, the first Bishop of Sandhurst appointed Dr Henry Backhaus vicar-general.

In 1881 Dr Henry Backhaus announced his permanent retirement and following another large scale public farewell, Dr Henry Backhaus moved to Brighton in Melbourne. When he became seriously ill in August, 1882 he insisted on returning to Bendigo; he died there on September 7 and was buried in the churchyard at St Kilian's with a funeral which seems to have been without parallel in the town's history!



Dr Henry Backhaus was described as being tall and ascetic looking; he was the complete example of the educated man who chose to share the hardships of the early gold diggers so that he could best minister to their wants. Frugal in his own requirements, he constantly carried out surreptitious acts of charity. He had the rare distinction of being esteemed by the poor as well as the rich, by his own parishioners and by members of other denominations. He was a talented musician who maintained a high standard in his own church choir, and who also produced some notable compositions of his own.

For his sound business acumen he was sometimes called 'Rev. Corner Allotments' because of the valuable properties he acquired in the early days. On his death he left real estate, valued for probate at more than £75,000, to accumulate for twenty years and to assist in carrying on the development he had begun.

It is impossible to imagine what Sandhurst would look like today had Dr Henry Backhaus decided not to journey to the Bendigo goldfields. The people of Sandhurst will always be indebted to the remarkable Dr Henry Backhaus who shaped the history of the region and whose legacy continues to provide for those who follow.





Re-imagining  
the  
MISSION

# 2012

A Pilgrimage of Faith



This Spirit of Sandhurst magazine captures the spirit of Catholic Education in the Sandhurst Diocese - its uniqueness, vibrancy, innovation and commitment to enhancing the lives of its students, families and teachers.