

SALESIAN INSTITUTE

THE BEGINNINGS



Fr. James Kilcullen, sdb

Dedication

*To all those of the Salesian Family
who served God and the pupils
of the Institute.*

Printed at Salesian Press
Cape Town, South Africa

Don Bosco never set foot in Africa. However in the Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco there are dreams narrated which have some connection with Africa in the years 1875, 1876, 1885 and 1886. In these dreams he saw a wonderful future apostolate for the Salesians.



Fr. Strobino

Another interesting connection between Don Bosco and South Africa was the arrival of Fr. Peter Strobino in Port Elizabeth in 1879. This Italian priest was born in Piedmont in 1856. At an early age he was sent to Don Bosco's Oratory in Turin with a view to being accepted at the University of Genoa. During his four years as a boy at the Oratory he learnt to reverence and love Don Bosco. Following his course of Philosophy at the Diocesan Seminary at Biella, he entered the Brignole Salis College in Genoa for his theological studies in 1874. This was a special college which prepared future priests for the foreign missions. He was ordained priest on 15th June 1878, and was appointed by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda to the Eastern Vicariate, Cape Of Good Hope. The former Rector of the College wrote in glowing terms about the young priest to Bishop Ricards who was in charge of the Eastern Vicariate. Fr. Strobino's first mission was in the parishes of Alice and Seymour (1879-81). He then served in East London (1881-1887), and finally in St. Augustine's in Port Elizabeth. He showed remarkable administrative ability, and as one of the financial consultors of the Vicariate he helped to liquidate the heavy debts incurred in mission extension projects. He was ordained co-adjutor Bishop by Bishop Ricards on 1st November 1891. He was just 35 years of age. He had not forgotten his days at the Oratory and on several occasions expressed a wish that the Salesians would come to care for the poor children of East London. His untimely death on 18th October 1896 was a severe loss to the Church in South Africa. Six weeks after his death, the first pioneer Salesians set sail from Southampton for Cape Town, where after 22 days at sea they arrived on 20th December 1896.

The initiative to bring Don Bosco's Salesians to Cape Town had started some 13 years previously. Fortunately, we have a first-hand account of the first explicit mention of South Africa and the Salesians. In 1883, the late Mr. J.C. O'Riley of Cape Town visited Don Bosco in Turin with a specific request from Bishop Leonard that Don Bosco should send some of the Salesians to Cape Town. In September 1949, the late Fr. David de Burg received a full account of that interview from Bernard O'Riley (later Bishop O'Riley) who with Alban, his brother, accompanied their father on that occasion. (Bishop O'Riley's letter Appendix I.)

Bishop O'Riley told Fr. de Burgh that Don Bosco promised to refer the Bishop's request to Don Rua, his vicar. There were some negotiations afoot. (See Appendix II.) In 1896 there were two separate indications that the departure of some Salesians to South Africa was imminent.

From Don Bosco's time it had been customary for the Rector Major to write a circular letter to all Salesians and their co-operators at the beginning of each new year. This letter was intended to keep them informed of the activities of the previous year and to set out plans and goals for the year ahead. In the letter of January 1896, under the heading of "Proposals" we find these lines: "Apart from what concerns



Mr. A. Wilmot

Europe, a special invitation has come from the Mission of the Cape of Good Hope to which the Most Rev. Vicar Apostolic invites us with great urgency, so that we may help him in the conversion of those people and take care especially of the Youth..."

In April of that same year in the "South African Catholic Magazine" an article appeared entitled "Don Bosco and his work of Salesian Education". It was written by a prominent Catholic

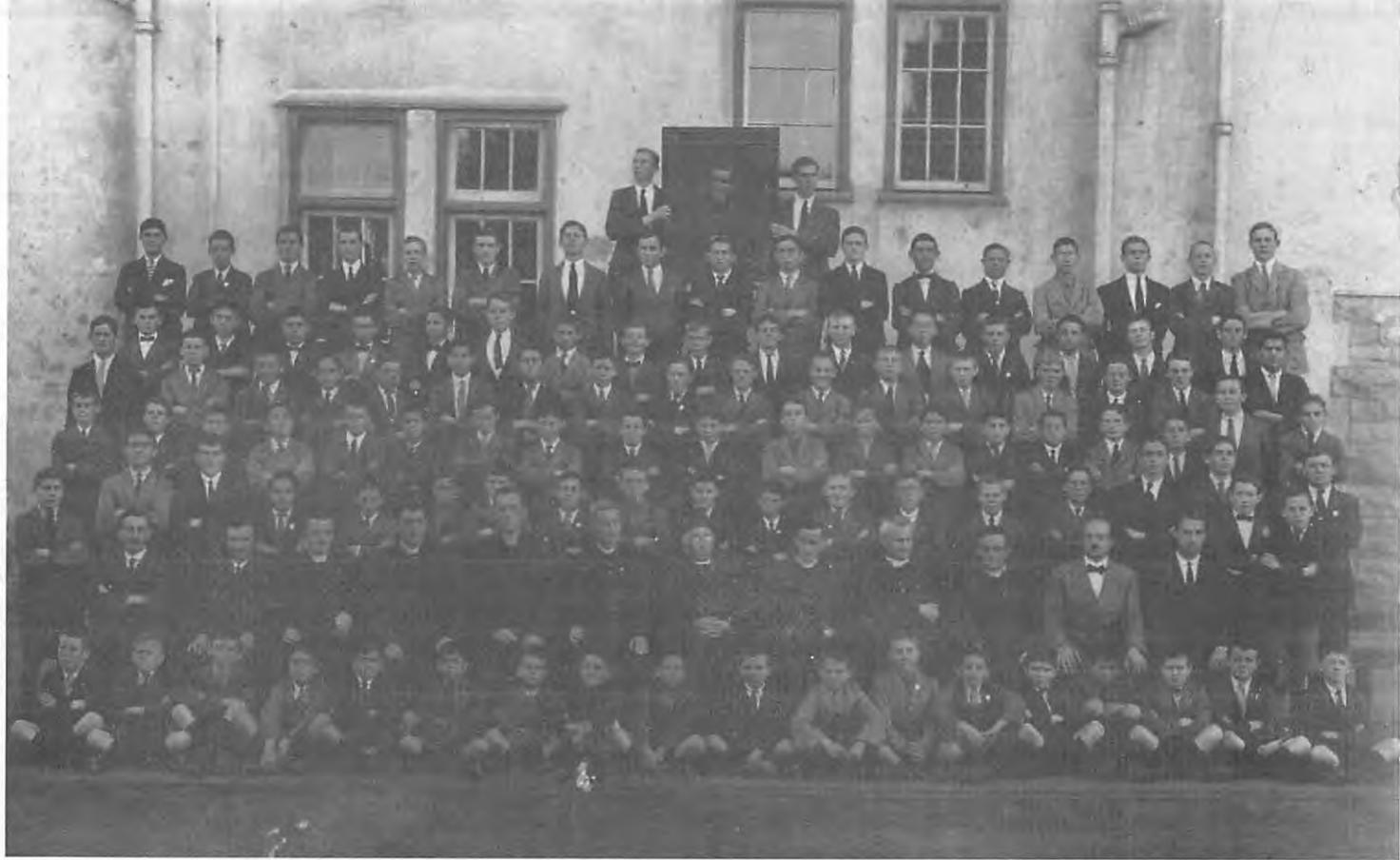


layman, Mr A. Wilmot. As well as giving an overview of the life of Don Bosco and his work, Mr Wilmot gives a very accurate account of Don Bosco's preventive system of education. He also refers to the visits he paid to two Salesian houses at Valdocco in Turin and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome. The concluding words of his article are of special interest: "This article is of special interest just now, as it is intended to introduce the Salesians into South Africa. It is hoped that they will come to Cape Town towards the close of this year".

Negotiations between Don Rua and Bishop Leonard there must have been. At any rate Mr Wilmot was correct.

The "Salesian Bulletin" of November 1896 describes the departure of 50 Salesians destined for various missions.

"On 31st October, eve of All Saints, there took place in the Church of Our Lady Help of Christians, at Turin the 31st solemn ceremony of the departure of 20 nuns of Mary "Help of Christians" and 50 priests and brothers bound for Patagonia, Uruguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Columbia, the United States of America, Palestine, North and South Africa. The Church, brilliantly illuminated as it usually is on the great feasts, was packed to capacity long before the ceremony was due to begin. When the choir had sung a motet Fr. Frederick Barni, who for a few years had served in the Salesian Mission of the Sacred Heart in London, gave his sermon. He spoke of the great needs of the missions and of the very great demands and sacrifices of a missionary vocation. The Archbishop of Turin gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and bade the



A group photo of the Salesian Institute boys and Staff, in 1922. Fr. Scaloni (Provincial) is flanked by Fr. Tozzi and Fr. Musgrave. Fr. McElliggott, Fr. Dunn and Fr. Cerutti are seated in the second row.

missionaries a fond farewell. Then His Grace, Archbishop Riccardi, with Don Rua, the successor of Don Bosco, and other Salesian superiors stood at the foot of the altar and exchanged the sign of peace with the young missionaries”.

FR. FREDERICK BARNI

It was a great honour for South Africa that the leader of the first little group of volunteers for Cape Town was asked to preach on that occasion. There can be no question that Frederick Barni was reared in authentic Salesian traditions.

He was born in the north of Italy in 1863, into a devout Catholic family. When barely 13 years old he came into contact with the first Salesians who opened the college at Borgo San Martino. When he was 16 years of age he asked Don Bosco to accept him as a Salesian novice. His parish priest, mindful that Don Bosco's religious group was not yet canonically established, tried to persuade the young aspirant to return home.

The lad was adamant: he would stay with Don Bosco. In October 1885 he made his profession into the hands of Don Bosco. Ever after he referred to that day as one of the happiest of his life. The death of Don Bosco on 31st January 1888 could have jolted his resolve. It did not. In 1891 Frederick Barni was ordained priest and was sent to the Sacred Heart Salesian Mission in London. For four years at Battersea he was Catechist and choir-master. He became proficient in English. Then came the call from Fr. Rua to lead the first group of Salesians to South Africa. He was 33 years old.

On 28 November 1896 the little band of five Salesians set out from Southampton on the S.S. "CAREY". (Some accounts say "S.S. GREEK") Fr Barni was joined by a cleric in training Bro. Thomas Giltinan, who in 1900 was to become the first Salesian to be ordained priest in South Africa. Three Italian lay-brothers completed the party viz. Charles Fea, Daniel Dellacasa, Ignatius Rametti: these were craftsmasters for

bookbinding, printing and joinery respectively. Teachers for these trades had been requested specifically by Bishop Leonard. We know that the single fare was £24 each for their passage. There is no account of their voyage, which took 22 days. The S.S. "GREEK" berthed in Table Bay on 20th December 1896. The Salesians had arrived.

EARLY TRIALS

Several reasons (poor postal service, language difficulties in correspondence and so on) have been suggested for what was, in fact, a very disappointing beginning. There was no one at the docks to meet the five Salesians. Eventually they squeezed themselves into a carriage drawn by an old white horse and were driven to the Bishop's house. Bishop Leonard was elderly and a sick man. The "Annali della Societa Salesiana" (Vol II P323) records the first impressions of the newcomers:

"Passing through the elegant and modern city with its beautiful streets and imposing mansions, they must have imagined they would set foot in a residence not vastly different from the rest of the inhabitants; instead they arrived at the two small houses given by the Bishop, hardly big enough for 15 boys in all, extremely poor and quite unfurnished, not a bed, nor a table nor a chair. How they managed to settle down, God alone knows. But worse was still to come. Mgr (Leonard) in two letters of 12th August 1895 and 28th July 1896 had laid down certain conditions beforehand which seemed acceptable but which in fact made it virtually impossible for the Salesians to carry out their work as Salesians. Fr. Barni was very tempted to return to Europe with his four confreres. Fr. Rua, being informed of this and of all that was happening, urged Fr. Barni to be patient and to put his trust in Divine Providence". It was a testing time.

The residence assigned to the Salesians (59 Buitenkant St) had been previously occupied by the Nazareth Sisters when they came in 1882. All the accounts seem to suggest that it was an inhospitable dwelling, to say the least. When Fr. Tozzi

wrote to Fr. de Burgh on 12th November 1956 in response to a request for any relevant details about the early days of the Cape Town foundation, he (Fr. Tozzi) sent a translation of Fr. Barni's first letter to Don Rua from Cape Town. It was written just 10 days after their arrival; so perhaps subsequent misunderstandings had not as yet arisen. Here is part of the letter:

59 Buitenkant St
Cape Town
30:XII:1896

Very Rev Fr. Rua,

We have had a very good passage and after the first week I was able to say Mass every day aboard. Last Monday we were able to visit the Rt. Rev Bishop Leonard. He is laid up and rather in pain as yet, out in the country, in the small village of Rondebosch about five miles from Cape Town. The Rt Rev co-adjutor, Bishop J Rooney, accompanied me with Bro Giltinan on this dear visit to our venerated benefactor. He wanted to know how soon we could undertake the printing of the "South African Catholic Magazine", the official monthly publication in the Cape Colony.

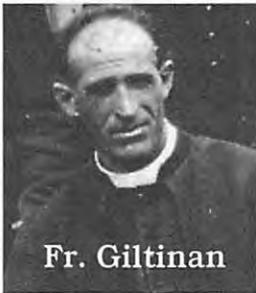
Bishop Leonard will enlarge our dormitory accommodation to receive fifty boys, at present we could begin with twelve. The Catholic people have received us kindly and are disposed to help us. Mr J S O'Riley, president of St. Vincent de Paul Conference, met you and dear Don Bosco in Turin when he brought two of his sons to the Propaganda College in Rome. He has obtained for us the goodwill of the Conference and the first donation of five Pounds.

Best New Year wishes to you and all members of the Superior Chapter. Give us, please, your large paternal blessings.

Your loving son in J.C.
The five pioneers in Cape Town.
Fr. Frederick Barni (Salesian)

There can be no doubt that there were misunderstandings between Bishop Leonard and the Salesians. It would seem that Bishop Leonard expected the Salesians to bring whatever was necessary to set up the work, including machinery and tools and so on. The Salesians were led to believe that the Bishop would have everything ready for them to begin the work immediately. No wonder that Fr. Rua pleaded with Fr. Barni to be patient : perhaps Turin felt that due to poor communications, they would have to take some of the blame for what had happened. Fr. Tozzi was a very knowledgeable and diplomatic old gentleman. When Fr. de Burgh wrote to him in 1949 asking for an authentic account of what had occurred in those early days, Fr. Tozzi's reply was cautiously positive:

“As to writing the history of the place (The Institute in Cape Town), I would be glad to know whether this comes from Turin or London or is it the desire of your Superior? Again, what would be the purpose of the story? Is it to complete our chronicles or for the Salesian Bulletin or for publication in your periodical or otherwise?”



Fr. Giltinan

One of the reasons is that the first five years of the foundation under Fr. Barni and Brother Thomas, afterwards Fr. Giltinan, have peculiar lights and shades and troubles, with the peril of bankruptcy to which you allude”. (Letter 11th June 1949).

In a subsequent letter to Fr. de Burgh (8th August 1956), Fr. Tozzi was more forthcoming:

“Dear Fr. de Burgh

As I have to collect material for the superiors in Turin for different purposes, later I may be able to supply some facts and dates for your chronicle. But I need dates to fix the happenings. At the same time I cannot leave aside the

happenings and conditions I found on my arrival, though not fixing the blame on anyone. It originated in the lack of comprehension between the old Bishop J Leonard, Vicar Ap and Fr. Barni, both good men of God

In spite of all these misunderstandings, the work slowly got under way. The trade school took shape. The South African Catholic Magazine wrote about the plan for an Industrial Training Institute for boys. The "Institute" designation has remained to this day.

The original concept of the work arose from the fact that the Sisters of Nazareth had a problem. The children, boys and girls, were nurtured splendidly up to adolescence, but while there was adequate provision for the girls, how to prepare the boys for adult living was very difficult. Thus the idea of a school in which the boys would be taught skills for their livelihood was the solution. The Salesians were the answer.

The first boy to be accepted was Robin Hardy, he was the first of many boys to come from Nazareth House; in fact, in March (1897) he was joined by seven others. A few weeks later, in April, the Catholics of Cape Town gathered at St. Mary's Convent to bid adieu to Bishop Leonard before his departure for Europe. The Bishop, inter alia, spoke about the recent arrival of the Salesians, and how they were to complement the noble work of the Sisters of Nazareth. He asked the people of Cape Town to support this new initiative.

In fact, the Capetonians had already begun to do so. On the very first morning after the Salesians' arrival, a certain Mr Callanan, an immigrant Irishman, came to the door of 49 Buitenkant St. with a basket of fruit. That same morning the Nazareth Sisters came to tell Fr. Barni that they would provide the midday meal for the first week. They continued to provide Sunday lunch for the next six months. Such practical charity has never been forgotten in the Institute. One good Marist Brother in the Hatfield St Community brought some pieces of furniture; every little helped. But it was hard going.

FIRST REPORTS

Apart from the account of the departure of the pioneers to Cape Town in November 1896, there was no further mention of them until the "Salesian Bulletin" of March 1897 published a photograph with this account taken from the "South African Catholic Magazine" of January 1897. The Magazine states that it had requested a progress report of the Salesian Industrial Institute for boys and had received this in reply:

"It may be of interest to many who seek news of the Salesians to hear that they are at last emerging from the chrysalis stage, which has hidden them for the past twelve months, and are now beginning to exhibit signs of moving. Thanks to the kind patronage of our respected Bishops and the untiring generosity of co-operators and friends, the Institute is beginning to assume ship-shape form. The not-too-spacious building is divided into four or five workshops for carpentry, book-binding, printing and later shoe-making and tailoring respectively.

The carpentry and book-binding are now working on a small scale and are prepared to execute small jobs where too much finish is not required; this, as the work is still struggling. These jobs would help towards the acquisition of finishing tools, which unfortunately, like many other things, cost money. Plain work of any description will be most acceptable.

The typographical Department has been furnished at great cost with massive modern machinery. The composing room is prepared to accommodate twenty five boys. It will be well to mention that the greater part of the furniture for this room has been made on the premises. This portion of the work must, however, have patience for some time pending the arrival of the sine-qua-non type. Whether, when and whence this will come is a question bearing a striking resemblance to Irish weather. Certain it is that, if hope can print books, type-founders would starve!! Specimens of books bound may be seen at any time on application to 59 Buitenkant St. Further developments in any of the departments will be duly notified

by kind permission of this Magazine". (South African Catholic Magazine, January 1898).

This contribution has all the signs of having been written by Fr. Barni. The tongue-in-cheek reference to Irish weather was probably directed at Bro Thos Giltinan who originated from Co Cork. The slow but sure development of the work is reflected in this report given two months later in the March 1889 issue of the "South African Catholic Magazine":

"The Salesian Institute (Buitenkant St, Cape Town) is gradually taking shape. They are open to receive orders for carpentry jobs and for book-binding, in both of which they are able to do excellent work. We hope their friends will be a little thoughtful in their regard when they are wanting such things done, for the Institute will have an uphill struggle before it becomes quite self-supporting, while the good it will do to our community by bringing up our boys to a useful trade is beyond our calculation. They have also taken over the Catholic Repository in Cape Town and are ready to supply prayer-books, Holy Week books, rosaries, fonts, pictures, crucifixes and so forth".

Reading between the lines, one can detect a growing anxiety about the viability of the project. However, the hard-working group of Salesians were beginning to make their mark. When Bishop Leonard returned to Cape Town on 4th June 1898 a "welcome home" reception was organised for him a few days later. A handsome album containing pictures of all the churches in the Cape Peninsula was presented to him. The album had been splendidly bound at the Salesian Institute. At the same function, Fr. Barni recited a poem composed for the occasion and presented to the Bishop a beautifully bound missal and a fine missal-stand, both products of the Salesian pupils.

Incidentally, Fr. Barni, who had certain poetic aspirations, was always ready to give his listeners a proof of his talent. At the wedding of a daughter of the Nannucci family, who were early benefactors of the Institute, Fr. Barni duly obliged with an original composition. He was extremely popular and with

his name Barni being frequently misinterpreted as BARNEY, he was often mistaken for an Irishman, especially as his hair was glowingly ginger!!

In August 1898 Fr. Barni set sail for Europe on the "Gaul". He was to attend the General Chapter of the Salesians in Turin. There, apart from giving an account of the work in Cape Town to Fr. Michael Rua and his council, he was able to meet many of the early stalwarts of the Salesians. We know that 132 delegates representing some 3000 Salesians attended that Chapter. Among these was John Cagliero, the leader of the first Salesian missionary group to South America. He became the First Salesian Cardinal. Paul Albera, who would succeed Michael Rua as the second successor of Don Bosco, was also there and many others who had been Don Bosco's early collaborators. We can be sure that Don Rua and his Council in Turin were well aware of the situation in the Cape Town project. In the light of subsequent events, this was just as well.

When Fr. Barni returned from Turin early in 1899, he brought some more Salesians with him. A new structure had been added to the older building so that 30 boys could be housed. Unfortunately, we have no record of the names of the Salesians who arrived to reinforce the early group. On 29th January, the feast of St. Francis de Sales, we find the Salesian community celebrating their patron's feast day. For the first time mention is made of the newly-formed Salesian band which gave its first performance that day.

The band was destined to become one of the best known in Cape Town and in future years (up to 1970) it was a feature of many celebrations in the city and its environs, including Robben Island.

In its issue of 23rd May 1899, the "South African News" published a lengthy article on the Salesian Institute. It is quite obvious that the whole thrust of the article was to arouse the sympathetic interest of Capetonians in the work of the Institute. The writer very strongly urged financial support for the work in his concluding paragraph:

"The utmost cleanliness and good order prevail throughout the Institution, which, relying as it does for its support almost wholly upon the generosity of charitable people, may well be commended to those able and well disposed to help such a good work as this - the shaping of poor boys into hard-working, bread-winning citizens". (South African News, 23rd May 1899).

That seems to suggest that wonderful progress had been made in less than 2 years in spite of daunting difficulties. The "South African Catholic Magazine", whose editor was the remarkable Mgr Kolbe, was unflinchingly helpful in publicizing the existence and work of the Institute. In its August 1899 issue, there was this interesting item:

"Mr Cecil Rhodes has been showing his sympathy with the Salesian Institute in Cape Town by a donation of £25. Previous to this, the Superior of the Institute had the honour and pleasure of a private interview with the great empire-maker, during which Mr Rhodes was made acquainted with the various works of the Salesian Institute.

It is a well known fact that he has expressed himself a strong believer in technical education. It is needless to add that the Salesians look upon Mr Rhodes' tangible appreciation of their work as an encouraging omen of greater progress and wider expansion, while it is bound to act as a stimulus on charitably disposed minds".

The outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899 affected the Institute in several ways. On October 17th, Bishop Leonard instructed that the prayer "Tempore Belli" (in time of war) be substituted for the prayer "Pro Pace" (for peace) at every Mass. The Litany of our Lady was to be recited after each Mass until further notice. The whole city must have been markedly affected. The frequent movement of troops to and from the many ships in Table Bay, the arrival of the wounded and prisoners-of-war from the battle zone must have caused disruption to the traditional easy-going life-style of the Cape. There must have been grave concern for the religious communities up-country. The Nazareth Sisters in

Johannesburg were finding it hard to find food for the helpless old people and the orphans under their care in the deserted city. The Dominican Sisters, scattered in small communities throughout the Transvaal, offered their services as skilled nurses for the wounded. The gallant little band of sisters, who could have fled from Mafeking, decided to remain in the beleaguered town to tend the sick and the wounded. Inevitably, the boys at the Institute must have become infected with the uncertainty that war-time brings. One of the Salesians at the Institute writing home in a letter of 10th January 1900 paints a fairly grim picture of war-time Cape Town. Not only were crowds of refugees pouring into the city, but hoards of loafers and criminal types were attracted by the possibility of quick pickings. The letter also told of the Christmas Mass at the Institute. Among the small congregation in the little chapel was Her Imperial Highness, Princess Radziwill of Prussia, who was on a visit to the Cape. She inspected the workshops and was so pleased that she promised the boys a treat.

Another distinguished visitor at the time was Lord Edmund Talbot, brother of the Duke of Norfolk. In April of that year (1900) the Duke of Norfolk himself visited the Institute and was entertained by the band. His Grace was no stranger to the Salesian work as he had visited the Oratory in Turin in 1884. In fact, he and his wife brought their young son, very ill with an incurable disease, to see Don Bosco. Writing to his great Salesian friend, Fr. Eugene Rabagliati at Battersea, the Duke said that though Don Bosco had not cured his son, he had told him things of such comfort as to render them more precious than the cure. Sadly, both his wife and young son died within a few years; but he did have a son from his second marriage.

Even though there was great goodwill towards the Salesians and the Institute, financially it was in dire straits. We know from the remarks of a very good friend of Fr. Barni that the Salesians had expended over £7 000 on the undertaking. Mr A Wilmot went on to say that the annual Government grant of £12 per boy was totally inadequate. Government grants invariably are. Quite obviously the work had outgrown its

original premises and in several articles in the public press, great stress was put on the necessity for a new site which would allow for expansion of the workshops.

Unfortunately, survival, not expansion, was soon to become the main pre-occupation of the Salesian Institute.

FINANCIAL CRISIS

There were many reasons for the fact that the Institute became crippled with debt. Firstly, due to the misunderstanding about the refurbishing of the house and workshops when the first group arrived; Fr. Barni had to purchase even the bare necessities - chairs, tables, beds and so on. Financially the pioneers got off to a bad start. The outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War with all its attendant upheaval and difficulties meant that likely benefactors themselves were financially embarrassed, and donations to such works as the Institute dried up. It must also be admitted that Fr. Barni was not blessed with business acumen. Years later a friendly and very knowledgeable attorney practising in Cape Town at the time wrote to Fr. David de Burgh as follows:

S A Association Building (3rd Floor)
6, Church Square,
Cape Town
21st Feb 1953

Dear Fr. de Burgh

I have your letter of the 16th inst. How can I help you? So far as I can remember the Rev. Father Barni was the first Superior of the Salesians, whose headquarters were in Buitenkant St. Fr. Barni was a very lovable man but a child in business matters.

Business was very bad in Cape Town when the Salesians made their start and, in company with many other concerns, they found themselves in difficulties. So grave were these financial difficulties that payment of 20/- in the £ was out of the question and creditors began to press for payment in full.



In the Supreme Court
of the Colony of the
Cape of Good Hope.

21/11/1901
B. J. J.

In the matter between
Matthew and Herbert Richard Beard trading
at Cape Town under the style or firm of
Trade & Co. Plaintiffs
and

The Salesian Institute
Defendant.

To Oreste Laehona Nannucci, William Joseph
Sumshaw O'Malley and Edward Patrick Reilly
all of Cape Town

You are hereby appointed Curator Bonis, and authorised as such to take
charge of and protect the Estate of the said

Salesian Institute

until the appointment of a Trustee or Trustees in the said Estate, or until
the Provisional Order of Sequestration, granted on the 8th day
of October 1901, by the Honourable Mr Justice
Mansoorp is discharged or withdrawn.

Given under my hand in the Master's Office, Cape Town, this 21st
day of November 1901

Master of the Supreme Court

The official decree of the Supreme Court
appointing Messrs. Nannucci, O'Malley and Reilly as
Custodians pro tem of the Salesian Institute (1901)

I was instructed by Fr. Barni to apply to the Supreme Court for leave to surrender the Estate of the Institute as Insolvent and a petition to the Court was in course of preparation when it was decided to approach the creditors with a view to their accepting 10/- in the £ in full and final settlement.

A letter was drafted by me and a copy sent to each creditor of whom a number were overseas. Meanwhile, a committee of three local gentlemen was formed consisting of:

- 1) Mr Nannucci, a Cape Town businessman
- 2) Mr E P Reilly, Secretary of the Cape Town Gas Company
- 3) Mr W J S O'Malley, an Estate Agent

(all of whom have passed away) and these gentlemen set about putting things in order. The creditors agreed to accept 10/- in the £ and payment was made accordingly.

The Rev. Fr. Tozzi arrived soon after and, with the help of the Committee of laymen, things began to improve. Fr. Tozzi, I was informed, was determined that the debts of the Institute (notwithstanding the compromise) must be paid in full and over a period of years paid the creditors the balance of their accounts. This all took place many years ago but I think I have fairly set out the facts.

If my memory is not at fault a Father McElligott was assistant to Fr. Barni in those days but neither of them were to blame. It was old man "depression" that did most of the damage. Things were very bad at the time.

With kind regards
Yours sincerely
G J O'Reilly



Fr. Tozzi

FR. TOZZI'S TIMELY ARRIVAL

It was Fr Giltinan, not Fr. McElligott, who assisted Fr. Barni. As Mr O'Reilly relates; Fr. Tozzi was sent post haste to Cape Town to take charge of affairs. At that time he was stationed at the Salesian Novitiate in Burwash, Sussex, England where he was novice-master and rector of the Community. He arrived on 12th February 1902 and assumed control of the Institute on 2nd March. Two days later the following notice appeared in the "Official Gazette":

"In the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope Office of the Master of the Supreme Court, Cape Town, 3rd March 1902

In the matter between Arderne & Co of Cape Town, Plaintiffs, and Petitioning Creditors and the Salesian Institute, of 51 Buitenkant Street, Cape Town, Defendant.

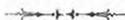
Notice is hereby given that the Provisional Order of Sequestration granted in this case on the 8th day of October 1901, by the Hon. Mr. Justice Maasdorp, has been suspended and the petition discharged by order of the Honourable the Supreme Court dated the 22nd day of February 1902.

Geo A Reynolds
Master of the Supreme Court"



PIA SOCIETA' DI S. FRANCESCO DI SALES

A tutti i Confratelli della Casa
di Capetosa
salute nel Signore



OGGETTO
—
Comunicazione
dell'elezione
o
confermazione
del Direttore

A norma delle nostre Costituzioni e Deliberazioni, in adunanza tenutasi dal Capitolo Superiore, il M. Rev.^{do} Signor Don Inea Tozzi è stato confermato Direttore di cotesta Casa. Mentre vi comunichiamo ufficialmente l'elezione avvenuta, vi ricordiamo il dovere di accoglierlo con tutto il dovuto rispetto e di prestargli ubbidienza a norma delle Costituzioni e Deliberazioni nostre.

Voglia il Signore concedere a voi ed a tutti i membri della nostra Pia Società il vero spirito di ubbidienza.

Il Signore vi ricolmi delle sue benedizioni.

Torino, li 18 Settembre 1909



IL RETTOR MAGGIORE

Sac. Michele Rua

Il Segretario

Sac. Lemoyne J. B.

NB. — La presente lettera verrà letta a tutti i confratelli insieme radunati dal Signor Ispettore o da chi sarà da lui delegato.

The official letter of Fr. Tozzi's appointment to the Institute signed by Fr. (now blessed) Michael Rua.

This must have come as a great relief to all at the Institute. No doubt realising that there was no more for him to do, Fr. Barni went to Fr. Duignam's house at Kalk Bay for a short retreat. On 18th March there was a farewell concert in honour of Fr. Barni. In view of the very clear account given in Mr G J O'Reilly's letter, it is very significant that Mr E Reilly, Mr W J O'Malley and Mr O Nannucci were the guests of honour. Next day (19th March) Fr. Barni left for Southampton on the RMS "Saxon". He deserves well of us for the five and a half years of foundation work that he had put into the apostolate of the Cape. He died in the USA in September 1939, aged 71.

The House Chronicle which is intended to record the daily life of each Salesian Community is the responsibility of the Rector. Unfortunately, this account of events in the life of the early Institute is not extant, if indeed such a chronicle ever existed.

So, for the early years (1896 - 1902) we have not the benefit of such an historical source. Fr. Tozzi took this responsibility very seriously, and from March 1902 until June 1923 he saw to it that the House Chronicle was kept up to date.

HOUSE CRONICLE (1902 - 03)

Most of the entries are of routine things that formed part of the horarium of the house. At times, unusual events, such as the visit of distinguished visitors, were recorded in greater detail and cuttings from newspapers often highlighted such occasions. For example, the "Cape Times" (1st May 1902) contained the following item:

"Lady Hely Hutchinson yesterday afternoon paid a visit to the Salesian Institute. She was met by Fr. Tozzi (Superior), Mrs T.J. O'Reilly, Mrs Gately, Mr T.J. O'Reilly C.M.G. and Mr O. Nannucci. The various workshops and buildings were inspected by her ladyship, who expressed herself well pleased with the good work she saw in progress. During the inspection the boys' band of the Institute played several popular airs. Mr

T.J. O'Reilly thanked her ladyship and expressed a hope that on her second visit, she would find the Institute in a larger and more commodious building".

So even at this early stage of his Rectorship, Fr. Tozzi was looking ahead. Meanwhile, he was setting up the structures. He needed more personnel and he got them: an entry in the Chronicle (20th Oct 1902) tells that Bro. Edmund Quinn and Bro. Ambrose Mulholland, both perpetually professed, arrived from England on the "Berwick Castle". Within a few days they had been assigned various duties. On November 17th, two more Brothers, both Italians, arrived; one of them Bro. Louis took charge of the tailoring department to teach the boys that trade. Reading through the House Chronicle one gets the impression that there was a good deal of tightening of discipline both in the Community and the School. There was greater emphasis on the spiritual needs of the boys; and the Salesian traditions of an annual retreat for all, regular daily practices of Piety and special emphasis on feast days were all observed with great fidelity.

Fr. Tozzi was an excellent organiser. He was careful to show his sincere appreciation for what had been achieved by Fr. Barni's helpers, but he also enlisted many others, especially from the numerous Italian community in the Cape. Fund-raising events of all kinds were organised to ensure the financial viability of the Institute.

The House Chronicle of 1903 lists the Salesian personnel as follows: Fr. Tozzi (Superior), Fr. T Giltinan (Bursar), the clerics were Bro. Edmund Quinn, Bro. Ambrose Mulholland, Bro. Gregory Kaintock; the lay-brothers were Bro. Daniel Dellacasa (Compositor), Bro. Lama (Tailor), Bro Marcovaldi (Shoemaker) and Bro. Rametti (Carpenter). That was the team as given on 1st January 1903.

During the holidays that summer, the boys went camping in Diep River. Whether Mr Ryan, the cook, had too much to do, we are not told, but we do know that he vanished without giving notice. Three days later (5th Jan) the Institute began

the new school year. A week later, six of the boys decided to prolong the holidays, without permission, at Diep River. After two days they begged a gentleman to take them back to the Institute.

In February there is an account of the inspection of the school by an H.M. Inspector. So there must have been some official recognition of the work by the education authorities. Another entry for this month (14th Feb) states that "our French washerman was invited to depart with all his belongings, and the newly-engaged cook kept him company!" On St. Patrick's Day, all the boys marched behind the Institute band to the Good Hope Gardens where a children's fete was being held. During 3pm - 6pm the band entertained the holiday-makers at several places in the Gardens. We are also told that there were 49 boys resident in the house. On Easter Monday (1903) Mr Nannucci entertained the Community and boys to lunch at his residence in Sea Point. The boys walked from Camps Bay, where the band had been entertaining people at the "Pagoda".



The Chapel

The Italian Consul was also a guest at the Nannucci home and presented some prizes to the boys. Shortly after this outing, two new pupils arrived from Mafeking, which raised the number of pupils to 51 - "the largest number we have ever had", according to the Chronicle.

Meanwhile, Fr. Tozzi was concerned about the spiritual welfare of the Italian immigrants. He organised a Mass for them at the Cathedral on 17th May; the Bishop not only gave permission but also a generous donation towards clearing off the debt of the Institute. About 200 Italians turned up for the Holy Mass. Afterwards, they were invited to the Institute for an open-air breakfast.

The entry for 23rd May is memorable in its own way: "Fr. Superior has in hand the amount to liquidate the old debts of the house". That ghost that had haunted the Institute for so long was finally laid to rest. Apart from the customary celebrations for every 24th May - the feast of Mary Help of Christians - to be debt free was a special reason for joy. The boys were treated to some music played on gramophone records after supper : the magic lantern show apparently was not a success!!!

Here is a verbatim report from the Cape Argus of Wednesday, July 8th, 1903; it refers to the payment in full of the debt:

The Salesian Institute

"Many no doubt know that the above institute became heavily encumbered with debt some two years ago, and had to compound with the creditors who graciously accepted a payment of ten shillings in the Pound, for which payment they gave a receipt for the whole amount due. Whilst accepting this arrangement, the Institute considered itself bound as a matter of conscience, when able, to pay the balance.

Through careful management and the generous help of friends, who have always come forward in time of need, the

Fathers in charge of the Institute are now able to announce that all the creditors, without exception, have been paid the remaining ten shillings in the Pound and have, therefore, been paid in full. It is but fair to add that on payment of the second dividend of ten shillings, the creditors allowed a generous discount. Special thanks are tendered to Mr O Nannucci who, with Messrs Reilly and W J O'Malley, worked earnestly in time of the Institute's greatest trial and who inaugurated the collection to clear off the debt".

It was a brave effort which must have enhanced the credibility of the Institute and the integrity of the Salesians.

On June 14th the boys were invited to the Good Hope Hall where the Hungarian Boys' Band gave a concert. Inevitably comparisons were made and some thought that Cape Town had as good a group of young musicians as the visitors! At times the Chronicler was honest enough to admit that the band had not performed well. The numerous entries giving details of church services and religious meetings are ample proof that in the Institute the boys were taught not only how to earn a living, but the reason for living. Many schools, much more prestigious than the Institute School, mistake academic instruction for full education. Fr. Tozzi did not. One amusing entry tells us that one Sunday (2nd August) after the Magic Lantern Show - with over 200 Italians present - some boy meddled with the bag containing the hydrogen and it exploded. No one was injured, but some boards on the ceiling were damaged.

On 27th September (1903) the Institute band and choir were invited to Robben Island by Fr. Leeson. There was a delay in getting the necessary permit (even in those days). Finally all were able to board the boat and the trip took 55 minutes. When the party arrived they found nothing had been prepared for them (shades of 1896). It was decided to return to the mainland by the ferry at 1pm. Meanwhile, Fr. Tozzi and Fr. Leeson went to see the Commissioner of the Island, who immediately arranged that all should stay for 3 days. At 5pm that evening the band played at the cricket

field. Next day, being Sunday, there was a church parade, and at 2.15pm the band entertained guests in the Commissioner's garden. On the following morning the whole party were transported by truck to the leper colony. On arrival the band formed ranks and marched into the compound to the strains of stirring music. They entertained the leper inmates for an hour and gave great enjoyment. The return journey to Cape Town that afternoon was quite rough as the wind whipped up the sea. The scribe notes: "The conduct of the boys was on the whole, good." That sounds like a tongue-in-cheek assessment: we can only speculate what some of the young musicians got up to. About this time there were visits from several prominent people. The Cape Times (17th July) reported that General and Mrs Louis Botha visited the Salesian Institute. The Austrian Consul came on 18th October; the Italian Consul came on November 1st to distribute the prizes given at the Italian Night School, begun by Fr. Tozzi; the Hon. Edmund Powell, editor of the "Cape Argus" presented the school prizes on 19th December, and praised the splendid work of the Institute.

Some of these events of 1903 have been given in some detail, not because that year was particularly eventful, but merely to give an idea of how the routine work of the Institute went on with typical school regularity and some periodic highlights. Meanwhile to accommodate some of the many boys who applied to enter the Institute, a house in Glynn St. was leased. Later we read "Fr. Superior has managed to secure a large house in Hope St., some 5 minutes walk from the Institute on moderate terms. He intends increasing the number of boys from 50 to 70. As there is accommodation in the workshops for that number." (25th July 1904). Even though this extra space enabled them to work and live more comfortably, it had been clear for some time that the whole project would have to be re-located. The problem was to find a suitable site.

THE NEED FOR LARGER PREMISES

As early as August 1900 the idea of the "New Institute" was mooted. In a lengthy article in the "Cape Times" it was reported that several very important people had been guests at the Salesian Institute. The visitors included Brigadier-General Brabant MLA, Major Tamplin MLA, Colonel Schermbrucker MLA, Mr A. Bailey MLA, Bishop Rooney, Prof. McOwen, Mr. T.J. O'Reilly, Mr E. Storm (Argentinean Consul), Signor Bateza (Italian Consul), the Hon. A. Wilmot MLC and others. After speeches by Gen. Brabant and Major Tamplin in praise of the splendid efforts being made on behalf of the boys, Mr Wilmot made several telling points. He was a sincere friend of the Institute. He noted that the Salesians had already expended over £7,000 on the undertaking, and how inadequate was the capitation grant of £12 per boy from the Government. Then he said that the Institute was becoming cramped for space and that they were negotiating for the lease of a piece of land elsewhere with the object of erecting more extensive premises. He expressed the hope that the Town Council, to whom the ground belonged, would grant it to them at a small rental.

OLD CEMENTERIES IN SOMERSET RD.

In an entry in the house chronicle for 24th April 1904, there is this brief hint of what was afoot: "The question about the "Old Cemeteries in Somerset Rd brought before Parliament and deferred to a future date. Great hopes are entertained of obtaining the Catholic portion of the cemeteries for the New Institute."

The whole process was to take years, but we can try to piece it together. There is an entry in the House Chronicle (5th May 1905) which states that the Cemeteries Bill passed the Committee stage and the 3rd reading (has been) fixed for Mon, 8th. But a clause has been put in "which does away with every possibility of building on the cemeteries." On the 8th May, Bishop Rooney called on Col. Crewe, the Colonial Secretary, so that the Bill is recommitted. The Institute rejoiced at this good news. Here is the actual press report from Cape Times (9th May 1905).

“On the order to go into committee on this Bill (Disused Cemeteries Appropriation Bill)

MR MICHAU Said that before this order was taken, he would move that the subject-matter of the Bill be re-committed.

THE SPEAKER: Does the hon. member move that the whole of the Bill be re-committed?

MR MICHAU: I only propose to move certain on the first and second clauses, but I will move that the whole Bill be re-committed.

Col. CREWE (Colonial Secretary) said there had been a deputation of the Churches in Cape Town. These churches desired to be allowed to put up buildings on these disused graveyards. Certain information had come to light in view of the information, he would offer no objection to the re-committal of the Bill.”

Meanwhile to gather support for the successful passing of the Bill in favour of the Salesians letters were sent to Messrs. Merriman, Cartwright, Garlick, Bailey, Gen. Brabant, Wood, Slater & Jagger. Mr. Cartwright and Mr. Merriman responded favourably. Mr. Wynne, Mr. T. Anderson and Mr. Andrew Wilmot had been very active on behalf of the Institute. Mr. Michau promised to do his best. A letter from Mr. M.G.J. Healy, Secretary of the Association of Salesian Co-operators which was published in the Cape Argus, set out very persuasively the case for the Institute. Another newspaper article about this time was even more forthright. Those opposing the re-allocation of the cemeteries advanced several arguments, as we shall see, but their chief objection centred on the possible desecration of the ground. The writer of the article on “Disused Cemeteries” trenchantly exposed the near-hypocrisy of their concern.

“Now that it has been practically decided that something must be done to amend the hideous condition of the disused cemeteries which are without funds for decent maintenance no suggestion is so devoid of all idea of desecration as the devotion of the sites to educational purposes. Conspicuous in this direction are the claims of the SALESIAN INSTITUTE, which sets itself to the development of distressed white boys

into well-trained and soundly educated citizens. At present the organisation which has this aim is hampered by lack of ground space and scarcity of means, and though its purpose is amongst the noblest of all benefits, which are not altruistic in their charity, it has not yet commanded its deserved public recognition.

So far as the sites are concerned, there is on the one hand the continuance of a hideous graveyard desecration amounting to a disgrace and a nuisance, and, on the other, the transformation into the scene of noble and valuable efforts to convert possible derelicts into well equipped craftsmen. There should be no further hesitation which restrains such important work."

In the course of his address to Salesian Co-operators on 6th June 1905, the Hon. A. Wilmot MLC gave a glimpse of the on-going battle to get the new site. Referring to the Disused Cemeteries Bill he said that he felt very keenly that it had not been passed. The Government had been pressed for time; even the Irrigation Bill had not been passed, among several others. He said he had very good reason to believe that it would go through in the next session as the Dutch Consistory was in favour of it. In his reply to the address Fr. Tozzi said that all the Institute shared Mr. Wilmot's disappointment at the postponement of the Cemetery Bill. However, he suggested that this could be a blessing in disguise because, according to the condition on which they would get the site, they would have to clean the ground and start something definite within a year. He reminded the co-operators that the work would be costly. The delay in the allocation of the site would give the Salesians and their friends more time to collect the money. Supreme optimist, opportunist and man of faith - that was Fr. Tozzi, seen here at his persuasive best. He worked far too hard at too many things and it is no surprise to find that he took ill in February 1906. The illness extended into March, and there must have been pressure from both the doctor and his friends because we find that he was sent off on a month's leave. Mr. Carroll and Mr. O'Callaghan contributed £15 towards his expenses for a holiday in Beaufort West. He paid £5 for

his meals for the month at a local hotel and lodged in the priest's house till April 7th. It is early July before we find any further progress in the matter of the Disused Cemeteries Bill. Obviously the lobbying of the Institute's friends had continued. This letter from the Colonial Secretary's office is significant. It is addressed to Mr. Anderson, a friend of Fr. Tozzi.

Colonial Secretary's Office
Cape Town
22nd May 1906

Dear Anderson

Yours of the 19th. The Disused Cemeteries Bill is quite ready, and if time permits I propose to re-introduce it this session.

C.P. Crewe

Slowly but surely things were moving. On the 5th July the house chronicler notes that: "Much is done with the help of the Hon. Wilmot and Mr. Anderson towards furthering in Parliament the Bill of Disused Cemeteries in which we have some interest".....an understatement surely! But we gather that there was considerable opposition remaining, mostly from bigotry because it was clearly an issue that would benefit a Catholic institution.

DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT

There was a lengthy debate in Parliament on 8th August 1906. Mr Malan proposed that the cemeteries should be turned into public parks. Mr Currey moved another amendment to the effect that the playing of games and sports on these grounds should not be allowed. Senator W. Thorne said that the cemeteries had been a public eye-sore for far too long and that the Cape Town Council had made every effort to secure possession of them. Should the grounds be given to the Town Council he could guarantee that they would be as well cared for as the Cape Town Gardens. This promise elicited cheers from the House. Dr. Hewat supported the view of the

member for George (Mr. Currey) that no sporting bodies should be allowed to organize games on the old cemetery site. The way little children played was quite different. The drift of the Debate was not too favourable for the Institute so far.

Then Mr. Cartwright said that a church should be allowed to put up a building for charitable purposes, such, for instance, as the SALESIAN INSTITUTE; the Church, of course, undertaking the removal and reverent burial of the remains in another cemetery. Mr Michau told the House that so far as his own church was concerned it was the unanimous wish of the Kirkeraad that the Bill go through as it had been introduced. The Church had done all it could to ascertain the wishes of those people to whom the plots belonged. He hoped the House would respect the wishes of the Church. He reminded the members that Westminster Abbey was built on similar ground. Mr Anderson reminded the House that the old burial grounds belonged to certain Churches which had their own governing bodies. The Bill provided the option to build churches or schools, and he could not see how a charge of desecration could be made in reference to the matter. There was sufficient open space for games because the Common was close by. Mr. Wynne praised the work done for orphans in the city by the Roman Catholic Church, which should be allowed to use part of the unused cemeteries for educational purposes. He was sure that respect for the dead would be a priority, and that the site would be used only for religious and educational purposes. Mr. Malan again voiced his opposition because in his view the Churches had no rights at all: the period of servitude had stopped. Should the Churches claim compensation for the walls surrounding the cemeteries that could be met, but it seemed to him that the Churches, by the sale of the plots, had recouped themselves over and over again for their initial outlay. The ground had been given in the first instance for certain purposes to the Churches: these purposes had now lapsed. And so the tide of Debate ebbed and flowed. Finally the amendment of Mr. Malan proposing that no religious, charitable or educational institutions be allowed on the site of the Disused Cemeteries was rejected by 52 votes to 40. However, the amendment by Mr. Currey that the playing

of games and sports on the site should not be allowed, was passed. It is difficult to see how members of Parliament could agree to the erection of an educational institution and balk at the playing of games on that same site. What forms would school recreational activities take?

The Upper House debated the Bill on 18th August with the views of the members much the same as in the Lower House.

Even then negotiations dragged on. The next relevant entry in the House Chronicle states that on 19th February 1907, Bishop Rooney accompanied Fr. Tozzi to a meeting with the Attorney General and the Colonial Secretary on the matter of the Military Burial Ground. They were advised that a special letter stating the case and application for it would have to be forwarded to the Colonial Secretary. The Military Burial ground is one quarter (1/4) of the ground enclosed by the walls of the Catholic Cemetery. It always went under such a name. In the consideration of Burial Grounds by the last Bill in the last session of Parliament it escaped consideration so that no one has been called to take care of it. It seems that the military authorities have no transfer for the ground so the best claim remains with the Catholics. The Attorney General gave Bishop Rooney and Fr. Tozzi good hopes about the outcome.

FR. MACEY'S VISIT

The Salesian Provincial Superior, Fr. Charles Macey, came out from Battersea, London, on an official visit on 11th June 1907. In the course of discussions about the work in the Cape the feasibility of a work for middle-class students was aired. Should future financial resources permit it, a section of Somerset Road could be set aside for them. Fr. Macey in due course (24th June) had a meeting with Bishop Ronney as a matter of courtesy. The idea of a boarding-school in Claremont was mooted as a possibility for the future. The Bishop advised against incurring large debts on the project in Somerset Road. He welcomed the idea of building temporary workshops: boarding students could be accommodated in Somerset Rd

until improving resources enable them to be transferred to Claremont. Fr. Macey's thinking must have been influenced by the success of the Salesian College in Battersea, London: the situation and the type of apostolate needed in the Cape were quite different. Fr. Tozzi listened, but bided his time: some years later he would begin a farm school at Lansdowne.

VISIT OF SIR ALBERT SPICER

On September 2nd of that year (1907) Sir Albert Spicer, an M.P. at Westminster paid a visit to the Institute and inspected the various departments. He had been commissioned to inspect British Army Barracks in particular and to report on the state of the country in general. Apparently he was greatly interested in English missions and missionaries.

While we cannot read too much into the visit, it is likely that some reference was made to the Disused Military Cemetery that the overcrowded Institute hoped would soon be the site for more commodious accommodation. After all the delay it is hardly coincidental that some weeks after Sir Albert Spicer's visit Fr. Tozzi and the Hon. A. Wilmot had an interview with the Colonial Secretary. On the following day (9th October 1907) the removal began of the corpses from the Somerset Catholic and Military Cemetery. Not only that but, due to the persistence of Mr. Wilmot, free labour from the Breakwater Prison was provided for the work. Subsequent to a meeting with Mr. Tricker of the Colonial office and Mr. Foster, Superintendent of the Breakwater Prison, it was agreed that operations in the cemetery would cease on 1st November.

PLANS FOR "NEW INSTITUTE"

On 2nd January 1908 we are informed that the transportation of stones from Mouille Point to the Somerset Road Cemetery had begun. Exactly one month later (3rd February) the work at the cemetery was completed. There must have been a lot of meetings in connection with the New Institute, as the new project was called. Nothing of note is recorded until the 11th August 1908 when the architect

brought the plans for the new Institute. This was a momentous week for all, because on the 13th August a block was made of the plans and several copies were made. Next day the plans were shown to the boys. That same week-end they were given to the Bishop. Already the old spectre of poverty was returning and at the end of August Fr. Tozzi warned the boys that dessert at supper might have to be discontinued because of money difficulties.

Needless to say, every possible means of fund-raising was being employed. The band, in particular, was in great demand for all sorts of functions and occasions. Obviously much hard work went into practising and full rehearsals; and people were perceptive enough to recognise an excellent boys' band. Apart from the donations that came from those who booked the band, the young musicians were excellent public relations officers for their school. Great good-will towards the Institute was the result, and the youthful band opened many doors. Matters must have been well in hand because Fr. Tozzi went to England on the White Star liner "Runic" on 27th March 1909. Significantly the entries in the House Chronicle, previously inserted by Fr. Tozzi, became rather less informative.

On July 20th a letter from Fr. Tozzi in London gave the good news that the plans for the New Institute had been approved. About this time there appeared a very sympathetic article by "W.R.B." extolling the work of the Institute, the dedication of the Salesians and "the miniature captains of industry". He was well-briefed and said Fr. Tozzi had gone overseas to get financial help: "£20,000 is not more than they need, and one day Somerset Road will be enabled, by a grand building, to house hundreds of boys." High hopes once more! Fr. Tozzi arrived back on September 28, 1909, and on the 12th December there was the annual prize-giving at the Institute. Invariably these end of the year events were given newspaper coverage that was almost disproportionate to the size and status of the Institute. One can only conclude that such exposure was an earnest of the esteem in which the Salesians and the boys were held. In this particular report on the 1909 prize-giving, Fr. Tozzi gave a detailed analysis of how

the boys' schooling was structured. There had been some rumblings from the trade unions about the training of the boys: later, credit for courses taken at the Institute was given by the controlling bodies of several trade-unions. Periodic exhibitions of the work done in the various workshops spoke volumes. Band recitals, workshop exhibits, conduct in public... it all helped to keep the Institute before the public eye.

Finally on 22nd February 1910, the architect notified Fr. Tozzi that an advertisement was being inserted in the newspapers inviting builders to tender for the building of the New Institute. The advertisement duly appeared at the end of February 1910. Mr. J. Rubbi won the contract.

In the Cape Argus of 3rd March 1910 there was a very comprehensive report on the Institute which ran to four full columns. "Citizens in the making" was the banner headline, and its sub-headings were "Raw Material", "Against Odds", "The Inception", "The Building", "The Inmates", "Music" and the "Workshop". On the following day "The South African News" began its editorial:

"There will be commenced very shortly on part of the site of the old graveyards in the Somerset Road a building which is not only going to be a marked addition to the Scholastic architecture of the Peninsula, but is going to be the seat of a grand expansion of most valuable educational work which has been done in the quietest and most unassuming manner for the past thirteen years by the Salesian Fathers" ... and Brothers of course! The writer goes on to give all associated with the Institute the highest praise adding the hope "that this magnificent work will, under Union, receive the support it so richly deserves".

Later that same month (28th March 1910) Fr. Tozzi announced at night prayers that on the following day the building of the New Institute would begin. One can hardly imagine what that meant to the staff and boys. They would still have to battle on in cramped quarters in Buitenkant St. But someone had let light into the tunnel: things could only get better.

A fairly detailed account of what can only be described as a long drawn out battle for the site of the New Institute has been attempted here, lesser men than these Salesian pioneers would have retreated in the face of such frustrating difficulties. In very similar circumstances Don Bosco was commended on one occasion for his unlimited patience: he said in reply that when he met an apparently insurmountable difficulty, if he could not get over it, he went round it. The men who persevered in order to get the new site in Somerset Road would know all about that.

WORK ON NEW BUILDING BEGINS



On the day that the Requiem Mass for Fr. Michael Rua was celebrated (10th May 1910) the first serious work on the new building began. That has significance for those who, like Don Rua, believed in God's providence. There must have been substantial progress in the work in spite of the fact that it was now mid-winter in the Cape. By the end of July the building was up to the first storey and the laying of the foundation stone was fixed for 31st July 1910. Bishop Rooney had accepted the honour

of performing the blessing ceremony. We cannot do better than to give the account as given in the Cape Argus.

LAYING OF CORNER STONE

"The ceremony of the laying of the corner stone of the new home of the Salesian Institute, Somerset West (sic) yesterday afternoon was well attended by a large number of ladies and gentlemen of all denominations, which went to show the keen interest taken in the noble work being done by the Salesian Fathers in the education and training of a large number of

youths in the city, who in all probability would, but for this institution, find themselves more or less entirely neglected. The Administration, Mr. A.F. de Waal, was unfortunately unable to be present. Amongst the prominent citizens who attended were Sir Frederick and Lady Smith, Senator Edward Powell, Rev. A.P. Bender, Dr. John Hewatt, Advocate Green, Mr. and Mrs G.S. Withinshaw, Mr. J.W. Herbert and Mr. T.J. Anderson... The building which is now up to the first storey was decorated with flag and bunting; and the band and the choir of the Institute discoursed sweet music at different stages of the ceremony. The stone was laid by the Most. Rev. Bishop Rooney. The singing of the Magnificat by the Choir closed the proceedings" (Cape Argus. 1 Aug. 1910)

The Salesians and their friends kept the momentum going. An illustration of the new building was printed in the Cape Times Weekly on 10 August. A week later a petition was made to the Cape Administrator on behalf of the New Institute; and next day a charity sermon in aid of the work was preached at Woodstock. Of course, there was reciprocity. On Sunday, 4th September, the choir and the band of the Salesians attended and performed at the Solemn blessing of the church of the Sacred Heart in Somerset Road. The band played in the garden of the Dominican Sisters from 4pm to 5pm, and the choir sang at the Solemn Benediction at 7pm. All told, a sizeable contribution.

Meanwhile, the fund-raising went on as the new building rose. The Argus of the 5th October tells us that: "In the Somerset Road there is rising a substantial looking pile of red brick with stone coursing; it is the new institute of the Salesians, built on the site of one of the old cemeteries whose ground, long sacred to the memory of forgotten dead, will now fulfil a better purpose in the service of the living, for in a few months time the Brothers will have installed under their roof their large family of otherwise homeless lads, who are now growing up well-trained, useful citizens well able to hold their own in the workshops of the world." Then follows an exhortation to the well-to-do to support the garden fete in aid of the Institute. The fete was at the Erin Lodge, the residence of the O'Reilly family in Buiktenkant St.

The date for the handing over of the New Institute was 16th January 1911, but things were not quite ready so the formal acceptance was postponed. However, we do know that a meeting of the Committee for the annual bazaar was held there on 29th January: no doubt the friends of the Salesians were duly motivated by the near-completion of the building. On 14th March, Bishop Rooney blessed the new house with Fr. Tozzi, Fr. Peze and Bro. Vincent present. Next day must have brought extraordinary excitement to both the staff and boys at Buitenkant St; the packing up began. Fr. Kilkenny and Joseph Selhas slept in the New Institute that night.

GRAND OPENING

On 25th March (Saturday) the official opening took place, the culmination of years of hopeful dreams, of heartache, setbacks, and of numerous intercessory prayers. In the unavoidable absence of the premier, General Louis Botha, the ceremony was performed by Mrs. Botha, his wife. The report says that promptly at 4.30pm Mrs. Botha unlocked the big double doors that give on to the street, and entered the new Salesian Institute followed by many visitors. The Salesian band heralded her arrival. She was welcomed in the stoep downstairs by Senator Powell who spoke of the cordiality of Gen. Botha and his wife: this had endeared them to the people of the Cape. All credit was due to the Salesians and other bodies which, in the absence of any public industrial schools, had provided the country with such institutions. "He concluded by referring to the liberality of Mrs. Botha's disposition as evidenced by her coming forward to open a Roman Catholic Institution".

That one sentence from the issue of the Cape Argus of 26th March 1911 tells us quite a lot. The fact that such sentiments could be voiced at a solemn public occasion and intended as a compliment to a very gracious lady reflects the difficulties that Catholics must have faced in their daily lives. And a gracious lady she must have been: in her reply she showed she had more than a passing interest in the work of the Institute. She said she had watched and admired the

work both by Fr. Tozzi and his predecessor. She expressed gratitude for the Brothers' interest, self-sacrifice and unselfishness. "May God bless this house, and crown every effort of those working within its walls with success" was her concluding good-wish. Perhaps it was too much to expect that such magnanimity would be found in future in the corridors of power. It wasn't, unfortunately.



Fr. Tozzi , F. Barni and other Salesians
at the front door, early 1920

When Fr. Tozzi made his speech of thanks to Mrs. Botha he also expressed his gratitude to the friends and benefactors of the Institute. The cost of the building was £13,000, and a heavy debt (about £4,000) was outstanding: he hoped that the benefactors would continue their generous help. The grand opening of the new school was a memorable experience for those who attended the ceremony. For the boys, Saturday had been business as usual: only the band had been at Somerset Road. Monday morning, 27th March 1911, was the great day for the boys: the exodus from Buitenkant St. began under the supervision of Fr. Kaintock. The carpenters went first. All the workshop equipment was taken in waggons to Somerset Road where Fr. Tozzi and Bro. Austin directed operations. In the afternoon the shoemakers made their move. On Tuesday the bookbinders moved their goods: the school and church furniture was transported, with the goods from the repository, in covered waggons. The boys who used the Glynn St. house as a dormitory brought their beds and bedding to the new house. After bathing in their new quarters the boys slept in the New Institute. However, all the boys still took their meals in the old place in Buitenkant St. On Wednesday the compositors and the tailors moved to Somerset



Salesian Garden, 1919

Road. Engineers from Dickenson's dismantled the machinery which was re-assembled on the following day in the new shops. On that same Day (Wed) the first Mass was celebrated in the temporary Chapel. On Friday, 31st March, Fr. Pezè transferred the Blessed Sacrament to the new house. The small boys now dine in the new refectory; and at night ALL the boys came to sleep in the New Institute. This is the definitive transfer. It had been a long, long journey.

When Fr. Tozzi presented his school report on 17th December 1911, he was reviewing a memorable year. Here is what he said:

"This has been an eventful year for our School. We have passed from the old premises in Buitenkant Street to this better fitted house which, with confidence in the Lord and in the generosity of the charitably disposed, we have built, and still hope we may in the course of time see free of the heavy debt of more than £8,000. In the midst of our financial difficulties, we have had considerable and tangible help in the warm co-operation and unstinted charity of friends who have willingly subscribed to the building fund. By the joint action of six of our foremost benefactors, we borrowed £3,000, and by this timely help we have been able to bring this portion of our building to completion".

Even then his reference to "this portion of our building" shows that he had even further plans for the Institute. Indeed he had. But it was not until 26 years later (in 1937) that the Institute building as we know it today was completed. That is another story.

APPENDIX I

PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF BISHOP O'RILEY'S VISIT TO DON BOSCO



Bishop O'Riley

The following is a verbatim transcription of the letter written by Bishop Bernard O'Riley to Fr. David de Burgh on 13th September 1949. It tells of his meeting with Don Bosco in the Oratory in Turin in 1883, about four and a half years before the death of Don Bosco in January 1888.

"It was in the year 1883 that my brother, Fr. Alban O'Riley and myself (Bernard) during our college days at St. Aidans, Grahamstown, had both felt called to the Priesthood, and were accepted by His Lordship, Bishop Leonard, of revered memory, as candidates for the Western Vicariate of the Cape.

His Lordship decided to send us to the University College of Propaganda, Rome, from which most of the early priests of the Vicariate had been drawn. To mention the names of a few only: Dr. J. Rooney (successor later to Bishop Leonard); Dr J. Dunne; Fr. John Duignan; Dr D. McAuliffe; Mgr. John O'Reilly; Dr. McCarthy; and a long string of others, too numerous to mention, who have gone to their well-merited reward, R.I.P. Their names, to those who remember them, are household words, and a perpetual stimulus to hold fast to that great treasure of the Faith for which they laboured so inspiringly to spread in this land of ours. My father, Mr. J.C. O'Riley, whose services were always unstintedly placed at the disposal of the Bishop, was asked by His Lordship to accompany us to Rome and see us settled in the Propaganda College. His Lordship had been in

communication with the Don Bosco, now St. John Bosco, with regard to introducing the Salesians into South Africa. And so my father was further called by His Lordship to take-in Turin on our way to Rome, to call on Don Bosco, and make the necessary arrangements for the departure of the pioneer band of Salesians to come to the Cape.

My brother and I bade farewell to St. Aidan's at the Summer Vacation of 1883. Knowing we were destined for Rome, we had for some time previously taken lessons in Italian from Fr. Rizzonelli S.J. of the College.

In the October of '83, together with my father we left Cape Town per Union S.S. ARAB for England. After a voyage of about 25 days we arrived at Southampton, proceeded to London where we stayed a few days, and then left for the continent and Rome, breaking our journey in Turin.

The first morning after arrival at Turin we went to Holy Mass and Communion at the beautiful church of Our Lady, Help of Christians to which is attached the Mother House of the Salesian Congregation.

It was 9.30am when we called at the Institute and asked for an interview with the Rev. Superior, Don Bosco. We were shown up stairways leading to a long narrow corridor lit up by a row of windows on the right whilst on the left was a series of rooms with closed doors. Don Bosco's room was the last at the end of the corridor.

Already at that early hour there was gathered in the corridor a long queue of persons of various descriptions waiting to have an interview with Don Bosco. This was fairly indicative of the esteem and sanctity in which he was held even in those days.

My father, having explained our mission, that he had come all the way from South Africa, and that he was commissioned by the Bishop of Cape Town to see Don Bosco on important business, we were allowed to take precedence of the queue.

As we entered Don Bosco's room he was seated at the small plain table, which served him for a desk, wearing his Biretta, just as he is represented to-day in his pictures. He rose to greet us with a smile, and we took his hand and kissed it, as is usual. He beckoned us to be seated. My father, speaking in French, explained the object of his mission. Don Bosco smiled pleasantly and said: Yes, he has duly considered the invitation of His Lordship, Bishop Leonard, and would be very pleased indeed to send his sons to South Africa to begin their missionary work there.

After a little further conversation and explanation between them as to the ways and means of travelling to the Cape, my father, indicating Alban and myself, said: "These are my two sons, born in South Africa, whom I am taking to Rome to study for the Priesthood at the College of the Propaganda". Don Bosco showed himself pleased and addressed us in Italian a few words of congratulation and encouragement.

Our interview having terminated we all knelt down and received Don Bosco's blessing. He then took from a little drawer in his table some small medals of Mary, Help of Christians, and gave us each one. We kissed his hand again



The First Salesian co-operators

and withdrew. My medal, I am pleased to say, which I much treasure especially since Don Bosco's canonization, I have kept and have with me ever since."

(Bishop O'Riley afterwards (31st Jan. 1954) gave this little medal to the Salesians. It is kept in the Institute with the Bishop's own hand-written authentication)

APPENDIX II

COMING OF SALESIANS TO CAPE TOWN CORRESPONDENCE by Fr. Alban O'Riley

The following is a letter written by Fr. Alban O'Riley on behalf of Bishop Leonard to Card. Svampa, Archbishop of Bologna. (14th August 1895. Cape Town)

Your Eminence,

Once again I am writing requesting that your Eminence interest yourself in a matter which is of great importance to this mission. His Lordship, the Bishop, has requested me to write to you. The Bishop is most anxious that the Salesians should establish themselves in this city of Cape Town. To this end I have asked Mr. A. Wilmot MCL to see if it is possible to discuss this matter with the Superior General of that Congregation. It seems a very favourable time for a foundation, because just recently our Government has decided to pay a certain sum for each poor white boy who will receive board, lodging and instruction in such institutions. The Bishop has requested me to ask Your Eminence to use your influence as the Cardinal Protector of the said congregation to ensure the furthering of this project. Together with the Bishop, we the other sons of Your Eminence in the Cape of Good Hope, would be grateful for this favour, as we have been for so many favours in the past. Asking your special blessing, Your Eminence,

I remain your humble son

Alban O'Riley

The Cardinal had been a professor in Propaganda before he was appointed as Archbishop of Bologna. The Cardinal's response was immediate. On a visiting card on which is printed "Card. Svampa: Archbishop of Bologna: 10: IX: 1895" the following letter was sent to Don Rua.

Very Rev. and Dear Father,

Even in the Cape of Good Hope it is known that the Salesians hold me in high regard, and here is proof of it in the enclosed letter of this former pupil of mine at Propaganda. Mr. Wilmot, of whom mention is made in the letter, will be in Europe soon, and he will most certainly request an interview with your Paternity. For my part, I recommend this proposed foundation which would extend the work of the Salesians and enhance your well-merited reputation. According to information from Don Rinaldi, I see we are assured of the foundation of a festive oratory in Bologna this coming year....it's not all we wanted, but it is something, but I am feeling much better at present. Please give my best wishes to all the sons of Don Bosco. I kiss your hand.

Card. Svampa

Don Rua's reaction was both prompt and positive.

Oratory of St. Francis de Sales
Turin
21st November 1895

To His Lordship, Bishop Leonard
Bishop of Cape Town

My Lord Bishop,

I beg leave to say that your Lordship's proposal of a Salesian Institute for Cape Town has been duly considered by the Superior Council of our Society, and as a result I am requested by Father General to state that he hopes to be able to comply with your request by October 1896. The condition which, for the present, presents the most serious difficulty is that of a

recognised professor of English. We have no English teacher with Government patent, but we have subjects with sufficient instruction to stand the examination of the National Schools Board which, perhaps, would be easier at the Cape than in England. May I beg your Lordship to give me some information regarding this latter point?

I have pleasure in presenting to Your Lordship the dutiful homage of my venerable Superior, Don Rua, with whom I unite in begging your pastoral blessing.
I have the honour to be, My Lord Bishop, Your Lordship's most humble and devoted servant.

(Signed) Don Durando
21-XI: 1895

Needless to say, Bishop Leonard was elated at this good news from Turin. In hindsight it is fairly easy to see how subsequent misunderstandings arose. When the Bishop sent this letter in reply to Fr. Durando's letter above, there were no specific details of any agreements before the Salesians came to Buitenkant St. The Bishop expressed the hope that the Salesian press would be able to print the "Catholic Magazine" in the following year (1897). Obviously he expected that the three workshops would be operative very soon after the arrival of the Salesian craftsmasters. Implicit in this (for him) is the presumption that the pioneer group would bring the necessary machinery. The Salesians could be forgiven for presuming that everything was in place and that all that was required was Salesian expertise. Here are the letters between Cape Town and Turin: read them in the context of the above assumptions. Remember that Bishop Leonard was a very sick man.

St. Mary's
Cape Town
8th January 1896

Very Rev. and Dear Fr. Rua,

Your letter of last November affords me very great happiness. I shall gladly welcome your noble Institute to the shores of South Africa. In reply to your letter, I can state that when your men arrive here, it will be an easy matter for us to procure Government Certificates for those required to teach.

As I told you, there will be two houses placed at your disposal. By an early mail, I will send you plans of these buildings so that you may advise me beforehand, what alternations or additional buildings you would wish so that you may begin work as soon as possible.

Next year I trust you will be able to print the Catholic Magazine; the next business of importance is the bookbinding and the carpentry trade. If you can see your way to it, perhaps a shoemaker would be useful: for the present I do not think a mason would be of much service. Wishing you you yourself and every member of your Institute God's choicest blessings and graces.

Yours faithfully in J.C.
+ John Leonard Vic. Apos.

An inkling of what transpired later is found in the following letter. Obviously, the plans which were to be sent to Turin by an early mail did not materialise and Don Durando must have been instructed to remind Bishop Leonard of this fact. Fr. Tovano, the chief archivist at the Salesian Archives in Turin, when transcribing these letters for the Cape Town Salesian Archives, adds this note: "The calligraphy of this letter is that of a sick man". All the letters in this Appendix II were kindly supplied by Fr. Tovano on 15th May 1957. Here is Bishop Leonard's apology for the delay in sending the promised documents.

St. Mary's
Cape Town
4th May 1896

To the Rev. Celestino Durando

Oratoria di S. Francisco
di Sales. Torino

Rev. and Dear Sir,

In reply to your kind and thoughtful letter of the 6 ult., I have only today ascertained that the Postal Authorities are NOT to blame for the non-arrival of the plans of the property destined for your Community here; But my inability to fulfil my promise - an attack of a rather protracted illness in past July and March of the present year - and my absence at the sea-side to recover my health - must be blamed for it. However, I shall endeavour to have the plans sent forward within the present month, or surely in June, please God. Indeed they are partly prepared, but not sufficiently complete to forward at present. Wishing you and your confreres every blessing in your good work. Believe me as ever.

Yours very faithfully in Christ
+ John Leonard. Vic. Apos.

The sickly Bishop was as good as his word and he duly forwarded the plans with a covering letter to Don Rua. To me, it is significant, that the previous letter of apology was addressed to Father Durando, not to Don Rua: in this way the good accord between the principals was preserved. Don Rua and the Bishop could continue their negotiations as if the delay of the plans had not taken placeold-world courtesy indeed.

St. Mary's
Cape Town
20th May 1896

Very Rev and Dear Fr. Rua

Enclosed you will find the plans of the buildings intended for your houses at Cape Town, here - from which you will be able to judge of the space that will be at your disposal, and from which you will be able to suggest any changes or additions

that may be necessary or advisable at once - and before the arrival of the Brothers. I shall be glad to do what I can to carry out your wishes in this matter, so as to have everything in order on their arrival. I presume you have taken notice of my suggestion in a former letter - Jan. 8th of current year - that the printing and bookbinding and carpentry branches of business are the most important to commence with, and particularly the printing and bookbinding - one brother should be capable of teaching English - if the Superior be not able to do so - in order to comply with the conditions of the Education Dept. for grants in aid of the good work.

I enclose a programme for entertainment in one of our convents to do as a sample of some of the work that may be of use to the Institute - I also forward by book post a copy of our S.A.C. Magazine as a sample of the work that will be expected as a matter of course. Believe me, as ever.

Yours faithfully in Christ
+ John Leonard. Vic. Apos.

When we consider all the circumstances surrounding this proposed new undertaking it is small wonder that misunderstandings arose between the Bishop and the Salesians. In 1895-96 there were no computers or faxes to facilitate accurate communications. The postal service depended on the mail-ships for overseas deliveries.

Letters written in English to Turin and replies written in Italian to Cape Town had to be translated and interpreted. So that when in the letter just quoted the Bishop wrote:

"I shall be glad to do what I can to carry out your wishes in this matter, so as to have everything in order on their arrival". It could be inferred that "everything" would be ready for the Salesians to start work - premises, machinery and so on. In fact they came to two run-down houses with nothing in them. It was most unfortunate, and Father Barni's first interview in depth with the Bishop was not any easy one. He refers to it in his first letter to Don Rua after their arrival. It

should be remembered that the meeting took place on 30th December, just 10 days after the 5 Salesians had landed in Cape Town. I wonder what sort of Christmas they had that year!!

Cape Town

30-XII: 1896

Very Rev and Dear Fr. Rua,

At last on Monday I had an interview with Mgr. Leonard. He is a sick man staying out in the country in a village called Rondebosch, about 5 miles from Cape Town. Bro. Giltinan and I accompanied Mgr. Rooney on this visit to this distinguished sick man. After exchanging the customary courtesies, Mgr. Leonard, who seemed to me to be in much pain, asked me why I had not brought with me the machines and the other necessary tools for setting up a press, a joinery shop, and a bookbinding department. I replied that I did not know whether the orphanage assigned to the Salesians had already provided the things necessary for the work.

His Excellency then replied: "It seemed to me that my letters were sufficiently clear; that is, that I would assume responsibility to pay the travelling expenses for 5 Salesians from London to Cape Town. Also that he would give, and in fact had already sent, £500 to be spent over a period of time for the expansion and improvement of the Institute.

His Excellency estimated that the delay with the machines would mean a delay of six months before we could begin work for the people who had for so long awaited the arrival of the Salesians. To tell the truth we have indeed met with good will from everyone. Here is an example.

Last Sunday I was invited by Rev. Doctor McCarthy to a meeting of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The president, a certain Mr. O'Reilly, who knows your reverence well and who also knew our beloved father, Don Bosco, proposed that £5 be donated to the new Salesian Institute. The proposal was carried unanimously with obvious enthusiasm. Bro. Daniel

Dellacasa, the printer, suggests that we purchase two machines; one would be a pedal type, a Liberty make, and the other capable of printing a 16" large size. The periodical we have to print is the "South African Catholic Magazine", copies of which were sent to Your Reverence by the Bishop, and now I am sending you the December issue. Bro. Charles Fea, the book-binder, recommends that the following items as listed in the Elenco and Catalogue be purchased. I'm enclosing the Elenco and Catalogue with this letter.

Bro. Ignatius Rametti, the woodwork master, recommends that we buy some tools which are marked in the Catalogue. The two small houses can only accomodate 15 boys: there is a prefect's office, a cellar, the chapel, a dormitory, parlour, two refectories, a kitchen, recreation room, school-room, two small rooms, one for me and one for the cleric.



The Institute Band & Choir

There are three yards: one is about 7 sq. metres, another 18 sq. metres and the third about 22 sq. metres. In this, the largest space, we intend building the three workshops in the form of a len to if the house prospers, as, please God it will, the Bishop intends to build a dormitory on the house which faces Buitenkant St. This one-storey house is well-constructed and would be very suitable for this purpose. This dormitory, in fieri, would be able to house 28 - 30 boys.

We all had a good voyage. After the first week I was able to say Mass daily and to say the Divine Office. We must attribute this to that miracle-worker, St. Anthony of Padua. Before his statue in London I promised 5/= (five shillings) if he granted my request. I need not tell you that I have already paid my debt. The present state of affairs is prompting me to promise 10/= to our dear saint, provided that by the end of 1897 we can have the workshops we need in our present predicament.

Bishop Rooney told me that in the whole of South Africa, apart from the small one of the Trappists in Natal, 850 miles from Cape Town, there is not a single Catholic Press and Book-binding establishment. So the Bishop is urging me to expedite our efforts, assuring me there will be an abundance of work straightway.

We put our trust in the Lord, in Mary Help of Christians and in Don Bosco's transparent goodness. We hope our prayers will be answered soon. Give our good wishes to Father Durando, our worthy Provincial, and to all the Superior Council.

Sincerely wishing them a good end (to old year) and a Happy New Year and we recommend ourselves to their fervent prayers. I kiss your hand. From 59, Buikenkant St. Cape Town (South Africa) on 30th December 1896.

I remain, Rev. Father, your devoted son in Jesus Christ

Fr. Frederick Barni.

It was a very difficult situation for the youthful Fr. Barni. He and the other four confreres were the innocent victims of the whole misunderstanding. It must have been most frustrating and humiliating to have come so far from home with great expectations only to find that a long delay seemed inevitable before their missionary enthusiasm could be channelled into the apostolate.

APPENDIX III

THE NEW INSTITUTE Cape Argus 26/3/1911

Over the years there have been alterations in the interior structure of the Institute. Should Messrs. McCleary and Grant, the architects, and builder, Mr. J. Rubbi, re-visit the building they designed and erected they would find the interior greatly altered. Circumstances and present needs have made this necessary. However, so that future generations may know what the Institute looked like on 25th March 1911, it may be sensible to record the detailed description of the new building as seen by the Argus reporter on that first day. Here it is:

“It has four floors: the basement, in which are refectories, kitchen, printing and book-binding rooms and stores. On the next floor are offices, class-rooms, compositors’ and tailors’ rooms, and the shoemakers. On the next floor are all dormitories, with a big room that will serve as a chapel at present, and as a dormitory later on when the completed scheme will include a chapel purposely built. Upstairs, under the roof, you have a large dormitory from which store-rooms, cunningly built in, take away the effect of a sloping roof, and the window recesses look like deep bays.

The entrance, therefore, is on the class-room floor, and you make it from the street up wide steps, which lead into a whole (sic) hall? whence a cool corridor divides the opposing sets of rooms. The handsome mosaic tiling of the hall, corridors and offices on this floor may perhaps suggest an idea of wealth - but if so, it is a false one, for the building has been planned with an eye to the strictest economy (and yet it has cost

£13,000.) But the tiling came as a gift from Nannucci, the dyer, and it gives a dignity to the entrance of a building which is plain, practical and solid; a building which is certainly a great architectural ornament to the neighbourhood.....

On this first floor, then, the visitor may go from the hall into several offices used by the staff, through a swing-door to the class-rooms, well-lighted on the left, and with restful green blackboards built into their walls. Here, too, is the composers' room, communicating by means of a lift with the printers' room in the basement.

Opposite is the tailor's room, and with the installation of electricity for lighting is also electric power for the ironing, as there is also in the carpenters' shop for driving the big saw.



Tailoring Department

At the end of the passage you come to the shoemakers' room, a large room lighted with windows both at the back and the left. In each work-room there is a sink and tap for hand-washing, and on every floor there are lavatories, especially well-fitted and tiled, for the new building, if plain, is practical. Going up the stone stairs with the iron balastrade one comes to the dormitory floor. One of these is at the end of the passage, and so has its lighting from two walls. It is served by bathrooms, lavatories, basins and showers and every necessity. From the passage one enters a huge room, to be for the moment, used as a chapel and sacristy. Then there is another dormitory with its own lavatory arrangements, and a little room which will at present serve as an infirmary. There are one or two private rooms on this floor, and the apartments are on both sides of the passage.

Upstairs, under the roof, are dormitories and the accommodation that goes with them. The basement opens on to a deep cool corridor, and it was in its shade that the opening ceremony took place this afternoon. Here too is the kitchen - tile-floored, and tiled dado, and opening into a tiled scullery through tiles arches. On one side is the Brothers' refectory, and on the other the big cool refectory where 120 boys will soon be eating three wholesome meals a day. Then there is the printers' room and general stores.

The Institute stands in grounds about 300ft. by 170ft., another is a piece of ground beyond a wall which might with advantage be added to their lot, so that they might have gardens to tend as well as a playground.

Across this ground, however, you walk to the carpenters' shop and band-room under one roof. This is a lofty hall with cross ventilation through windows as well as through roof ventilators. Here the boys will be able to work and move their heavy articles with comfort. Also the band can practise, undisturbing the rest of the house." (Cape Argus, 25th March 1911)

Whatever about the literary style of the reporter, one can only admire his attention to accurate detail in his account. The completeness of the report, too, points to more genteel times in media activity, when local people and local events were more newsworthy than the tawdry details of the goings-on of doubtful celebrities.

THE CURRICULUM

In his annual progress report for the memorable year of 1911, Fr. Tozzi was able to give a detailed overview of what the curriculum attempted to do for the pupils at the New Institute. Addressing the meeting on 18th December 1911, he outlined his plan.

"We are housing and teaching over one hundred boys. Allowing for a five years' training we will be able to send out every year twenty young men with a trade at their fingers' end, and a satisfactory amount of schooling. This year, our teachers' work has proved very successful: at the last inspector's examination all our boys passed their standard without a single exception. Our pupils are now bound over to us for five years, and by this prudent arrangement the completion of their schooling as well as that of their technical training is secured.

A marked advantage and a sure distinction for our school has been won through the kind consideration of Mr. J.W. Jagger. The Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the masters of the different trades, will control the trade teaching of our boys and award certificates to the successful pupils at the end of their training. This week our compositors, printers and book-binders have been examined by three masters of the printing trade who expressed their satisfaction at the work done.

We hope, by the end of next year, that the working of our six trade departments will be such as to carry out in its completion our trade syllabus, and then all our boys will have a chance of competing for the honour and the distinction offered by the Chamber of Commerce, a distinction which will be recognised by the trades when our pupils will seek for employment". (Cape Times, 18th Dec. 1911)