

'Fair is our inheritance'

The play *'Fair ... is our Inheritance'* is a three-act religious drama encapsulating high and low points in the history of the parish of St. Finbar's. The title is biblically based, Ps. 15, v. 6b and suggests that the inheritance is not land so much as the rich tapestry of the lives of early parishioners.

Two narrators link the story line between the twelve scenes and a chorus of nine speaking voices occasionally provide reflective moments.

A cast of seventeen is supplemented by ten or eleven Grade IV students who will alternate in joining the cast to enact a scene in 1851 when Inspector Childers came to inspect the children and in 1925 when Mother Clare came from Star of the Sea Convent to re-commence the school which had been closed since 1881.

The playwright, Rosemary Gleeson, taught in Tasmanian Catholic schools before moving to Melbourne.

She wrote and directed religious dramas and poetry/movement sequences in St.

Father Lou Heriot

*invites you to join
in our historic
150 year celebrations*

For further details, contact:-

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**A play has been
commissioned to
celebrate 150 years of
the parish**

Mary's Cathedral, Hobart; scripted a Youth Renewal Service for the Divine Service series on the ABC and a similar service for Radio Australia.

Since moving to Melbourne she has worked for nine years for Radio 3 RPH where she has scripted Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas programmes.

DIARY OF EVENTS

'Fair is our Inheritance'

17th, 18th, 23rd, 24th and 25th April.

The 150 Year Con-celebrated Mass

30th April @ 7.30pm

Parish Display (1940-1998)

Starts 30th April

Trivia Night

11th July

Youth Dance Party

1st August

Flame of Faith Mass & Dedication

16th August

Posterity Display (1998-Tomorrow)

Opens 16th August

Anniversary Ball

9th October

Open Air Ecumenical Service (picnic & period costume day)

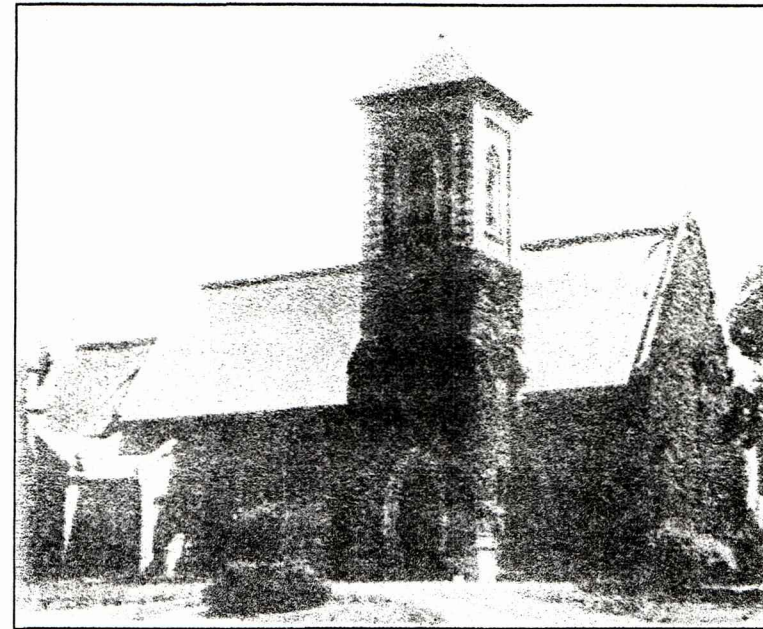
29th November

Midnight Mass (Finale)

25th December

St Finbar's Parish Church

East Brighton



Celebrating 150 Years

1848-1998

The first Roman Catholic parish south of the Yarra

When in 1847, JB Were offered land in Brighton to church members who wished to erect a place of worship, the Roman Catholics were pleased to take advantage of the offer. Mr Were was acting as Power-of-Attorney for his brother Nicolas, who was living in England.

Whether the original Roman Catholics chose the land or whether JB allocated it is not known, but the area bounded by Centre Road and Western Port or Arthur's Seat Road (as the Nepean Highway was then termed) became and has since remained the venue for Catholic worship, education and gatherings.

In those early days the little chapel was named in honour of Saint Patrick and the congregation - mostly Irish immigrants - were landowners, market gardeners, fishermen, carters and charcoal burners.

Dean Coffey, O.F.M. would come from St. Francis Church in Melbourne Town to offer Mass once per month - the average attendance then was about 80.

In 1853, the chapel received its first resident Pastor - a young Irishman, Father P.W. Niall. The area he had to administer was enormous: from the 'Canvas City' down into the Mornington Peninsula, to Wonthaggi and up into the Strzelecki Ranges.

In the 16 years that Father Niall ministered, new parishes sprang from the original, but this parish had, and always will have, the distinction of being the first Roman Catholic parish south of the Yarra.

Another distinction awaited it in 1871. At the laying of the foundation stone of the stone church, the little church on the hill was re-named in honour of St. Finbar; the first church in Australasia to be named after the great monastic founder in sixth century Cork.

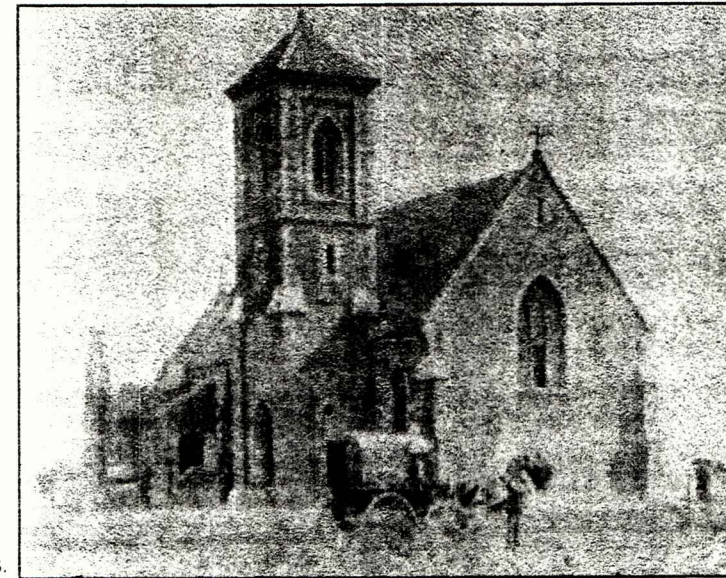
Oral history has it that the first Bishop of Melbourne, Dr. A. Goold, O.S.A. desired the Cathedral to be named in honour of St. Patrick and that no other church was to carry the same title. Oral history also has it that parishioners of St. Patrick's, Little Brighton (as it was then known) were exceedingly loath to forego the title of 'Patrick' and only succumbed in 1871. Certainly the school, closed in 1865, and the Hibernian Society of Little Brighton, operated always under the patronage of St. Patrick.

Because of the proliferation of new parishes St. Finbar's fell into decline in the 1880's and lost its status as a parish until 1940. In that year new life was breathed into St. Finbar's when it was re-constituted the parish of East Brighton with a resident Priest, the first in just under 60 years.

Fr. John Ashe held the distinction of being the Parish Priest of St. Finbar's for 41 years - until his death in 1981.

With the present Parish Priest, Fr. Lou Heriot, St. Finbar's continues to be a vibrant, pulsating parish providing spiritual and temporal help to those many who wish for it.

Long may it continue to do so.



Early days:
A horse and cart draws up to St. Finbar's.

"New parishes sprang from the original, but this parish had, and always will have, the distinction of being the first Roman Catholic parish south of the Yarra..."