

18 March

Br HENRY PROEST

2 February 1848 – 18 March 1900

Born in Nijmegen, Holland, Henry Proest was ‘a burly, bustling Dutchman’ according to Andrew Hartmann. He was jovial and talkative (in broken English). Among the second group of missionaries to arrive, he spent time mainly as a cook at Pandamatenga, Gubulawayo and Old Tati from 1880 and was present with Br Nigg at the latter place when Fr de Wit had his fatal accident, being thrown off a horse.



In 1890 he was at Dunbrody in the bakery which, in summer, was a ‘perpetual Turkish bath’ (Hartmann). The boys used to frequent the bakery, which was out of bounds, in search of supplementary feeding and Henry welcomed them. But one boy came too often and Henry told him, ‘As I you again here see, shall I you make so that you shall be able for a week to sit not?’

In 1897, he requested to be sent back to Holland but when he reached Cape Town, he had second thoughts. He sent an urgent message asking to be recalled but seemingly it was too late. Maybe he had a sense that the cold and damp climate of Holland would kill him after his years in Africa. He was right. It did.

