

BR JOSEPH SEUFZGER (1895-1973)

Joseph Seufzger was born on 14th February, 1895, at Paulustropen, Bavaria (Germany) and lost his father in the Franco-German War in 1898. He found he had to grow up very quickly as his widowed mother needed his help. The struggle was too much for her and she passed away in 1904, so Joseph, at the age of nine was left an orphan and at the mercy of relatives who made good use of his sturdy arms. At the age of ten, he used to relate, he was working alongside the men mowing the crops, the only concession being that his scythe was somewhat smaller!

When the First World War broke out he was called up to serve in the German Army and spent most of the war years at the Western Front. He had no illusions about the glory of the war and worked out all sorts of tricks to be sent back home on leave, even 'accidentally' wounding one of his legs!

The war over Joseph returned to working as a farm labourer. His experiences in the Army and afterwards set him thinking of the emptiness of so many people's lives - they seemed to have no other aim than living for the present day. Eventually, in 1925, he decided to make some enquiries about the Salesians who, so he had heard, were accepting returned soldiers either as students for the priesthood or as Brothers. He was accepted at the House of Ensdorf which had been opened five years previously. He commenced his novitiate later that year and was professed on August 15th, 1927.

At this time the Superiors in Turin were putting together a team in answer to repeated and urgent requests from Fr. Manassero in Australia. A large property had been bought at Sunbury and Brothers were needed both to run the farm and teach the practical aspects of agriculture to the students of a school about to be opened.

The German Provincial was asked if he could spare any of his men and his response was immediate and generous although his was a young Province and badly in need of men itself. In 1927 six Salesians set sail for Australia. They included Bro. Joseph Seufzger, Bro. Ludwig Aman and Bro. Francis Beyer.

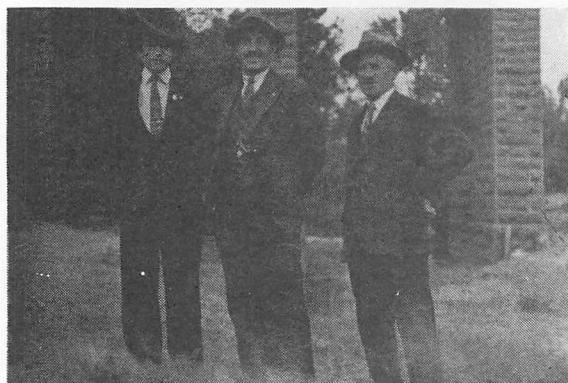
Those who know anything about the early history of "Rupertswood" have some idea of how tough those times were. A community made up of men from many nations who had no common language, living under almost impossible conditions



with long hours of work that no-one seemed to appreciate. No wonder so many Salesians came and went in those first years - those who remained were real heroes!

Br. Joseph spent the first eight years working in the diary; the next two on the farm and then finally to the vegetable garden and orchard. Those who made their novitiate in the 40's and 50's also believed that Br. Joseph had an unofficial office - that of assistant novice-master! Whether it was digging in the garden or getting flowers for the altar a 'few' words of advice from Br. Joe were part and parcel of the assignment. He was a strict supervisor as well and woe betide the novice who did not turn in all the weeds or who did not put his spade back in the shed spotlessly clean and shiny. They were lessons that many have never forgotten and for which they have always been grateful - Br. Joseph had the ability of using everything to remind people of their obligations as christians and religious. We can never forget, for example, the remarks he made as we dug deep to get every trace of a convolvulus roots? Just remember that if vices get a deep root in our lives they will not be eradicated very easily!

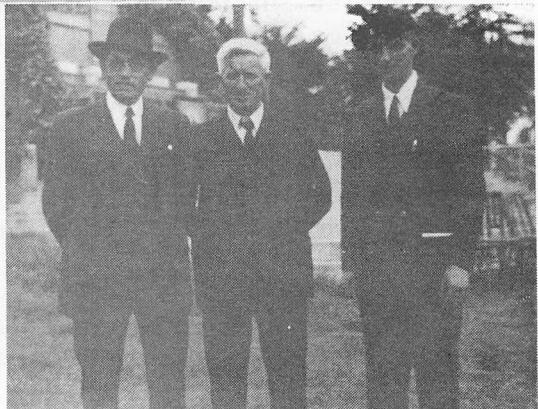
In 1952 Br. Joseph went back to his native Germany and there remained until his death in 1973 at Konstanz



LEFT: J. Ledda, C. Acerni,
J. Seufzger.



LEFT: J. Seufzger.



RIGHT: J. Ledda, J. Seufzger,
S. Quaranta.