



LEFT: St. Bede's Daniel McCormack and St. Patrick's College Wellington's Paul Bickle holding the restored Shield

BELOW: 1921 Winners St. Patrick's College Wellington and the Rev. Dean Holley, who donated the Shield.

THE HOLLEY SHIELD – 94 YEARS OF NEW ZEALAND RUGBY HISTORY

BY GORDON NOBLE-CAMPBELL (S)

The Holley Shield holds a treasured place in the rugby history of SPC Wellington, St. Bede's and SPC Silverstream. The Shield was named after the former Provincial of the Marist Order, Father Dean Holley SM and was first competed for in 1921 between the 1XVs of SPC Wellington and St Bede's College.

In 1931, the annual competition between the two Colleges became a Triangular Tournament, with the addition of SPC Silverstream. In 1943, "the contest for the Holley Shield was with regret abandoned under the stress of circumstances" and SPC Silverstream (the Holders as at that date, retained the Shield. The Triangular Tournament was never reinstated after this date.

The Shield then rather mysteriously disappeared. 50 years later in the early 1990's, Fr. came across the Shield at St. Bede's College in a dilapidated state, and suggested that it should be restored, however there was little interest at that time to do so.

In 2013, talk emerged of reinstating the annual rugby contest between the three schools and St Bede's Deputy Rector, Gerry Davidson initiated the project to restore the Shield to its former glory. Made of mahogany and embossed in sterling

silver, the wood of the Shield was badly damaged, with many of the silver shields missing, as well as one of the three silver clover-leaves.

Chris England, a member of the St. Bede's Rugby Committee took charge of the restoration work and spent many hours restoring the damaged mahogany to its former glory. St Bede's also engaged a silver-smith to replace the missing silver-work. As shown above the Shield has now been restored to its former glory for the benefit of future generations of Marist young men who represent their schools in rugby, at the 1XV level. Going forward, the Shield will be won and lost on a challenge basis, whenever the Holder plays either of the other two schools. The Holley Shield is a true taonga of Marist education and sport in New Zealand. The restoration work has also been financially supported by the St. Patrick's College Old Boys' Association.

Between 1921 and 1943, the Holley Shield was played for a total of 21 times. On two occasions, 1922 and 1940, matches were not played (meaning the prior year holder retained the Shield). From 1921 to



1930, it was only played for between SPC Wellington and St. Bede's. In that era, SPC Wellington won the Shield 7 times and St. Bede's 3 times. From 1931 to 1943, it was played for between SPC Wellington, St. Bede's and SPC Silverstream as a Triangular Tournament. In that era, SPC Silverstream won the Shield 10 times, and SPC Wellington 3 times. SPC Silverstream was the holder of the Shield in 1943, when the annual Triangular Tournament ended. Between 1949 and 1973, SPC Wellington and St. Bede's reinstated an annual fixture. Similarly, between 1991 and the present, an annual fixture was reinstated between St. Bede's and SPC Silverstream only. In 2014, the first match between St. Bede's and SPC Wellington for 41 years was played, resulting in a draw.