



*Pax, a Latin word meaning peace, is the motto of the Benedictine monks of New Norcia*

# The Chimes Newsletter



June 2019

## “People, Place, the Joy of Music and Community Values...”

Baptism is a rite of adoption into Christianity that most people have no recollection of. It generally occurs at a very young age when parents choose which religious path they would like their child to follow. I myself was never baptised. My mother and my grandfather were both baptised as Catholic; however my parents are not religious people. I remember going to Midnight Mass at Christmas and attending Easter services, but it was not something that ran staunchly through our family. And for that reason, rather than baptising my sister and me 'because it is what the family would have done', they decided to leave us to make the decision we felt was right further down the track. My mother had far more foresight than I ever gave her credit for.

My path started almost a year ago. And I have a strong sense of the “stages” I followed in my adoption of the Catholic faith and the Benedictine Rule. Ever since I met Kyle, my partner, I knew his

family were true locals. Both he and his sisters were baptised at New Norcia and Kyle was a choir boy as a child. About three years ago we took on the lease of some of the monastery’s farm, and the children and I have spent hours walking the land. I think it gives you a direct link and sense of belonging, hearing the stories of the first settler monks and the shepherds, seeing the wells that are dotted across the landscape – the feeling of hard work and sweat that went into the land resonates strongly with Kyle and me.

In June 2018 the second stage made itself present. I began working at the Museum and Art Gallery under the leadership of Carmel Murray. Carmel is home grown, born and brought up in the Victoria Plains Shire - what her family don't know about New Norcia isn't worth knowing! And suddenly I saw a whole different side to the beautiful buildings and the men that live behind the gates. It was an understanding of why they choose

this life. They choose New Norcia. The labour of love that Salvado put into the land and people, and the Aboriginal families. I heard stories from locals, from visitors and from ex-students, and I became hungry to hear more and be able to tell the story – the whole story – to the people that come to visit. By spending time in the community, Kyle and I also made the decision to have our children baptised, aged 4 and 6. In a similar way to my mother, I had chosen not to do it early as the church was not something that was part of our life, and I felt it was very hypocritical to have them baptised but then turn my back on the church with a wave and a thank you.

Perhaps if I had gone to a church in Perth, my feelings for being baptised may have been different. I firmly believe there is something, which I cannot yet put my finger on, that makes the Benedictine Rule resonate more with me than other spiritual traditions. Their ethos is hard work, hospitality,

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moderation, humility and stewardship. They live by the labour of their hands (Rule of St Benedict 48.8). Being a farmer's daughter and in a farming family, nothing is truer. They provide warmth and acceptance; they live simply and find balance where they can. They expect every person to acknowledge their own faults and weaknesses, but also to strive and recognise their own gifts. I think this is such a beautiful thing to look for in myself and to encourage in my children. But one of the biggies for me is stewardship, being aware of the bigger ecology we are part of and understand the interaction of people and their environment and how closely one affects the other. The Benedictines were incredibly forward thinking, being established in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century!

Stage three, one of the biggest, was meeting Melissa Victoriano. For those of you who don't know her, she is a modern-day angel in disguise. For those of you who do, thank you for sharing her with me. Melissa has worked as a tour guide at New Norcia for about six years and ended up as my "tour buddy". For the first five months I worked closely with Melissa. She kept

me on track, gave me advice, helped me prepare the children for baptism, and in doing this meant I would attend Mass on Sunday and meekly sit behind her in case I wasn't sure what to do next! After a few weeks she came to me and said "you have a lovely voice Tracy, you should join the choir". And so, the next stage in my journey began. I would wait excitedly for Father Robert's liturgy emails to see what was coming, what we would be singing – it was like being reborn and I found a complete joy in standing there and learning the hymns.

The idea had been planted and the final decision made. After the children were baptised, Abbot John said to me, "it'll be you next, why don't you do it at the Easter Vigil?" So the Abbot and I would meet up, talk about any questions I had, discuss things I didn't feel comfortable with or didn't agree with, talk through the church's view versus my view – and questions I thought were taboo or not to be spoken of were put out on the table. I was then asked what my confirmation name would be!? Well, my name is Tracy?? The Abbot explained that when a child is baptised you put forward their chosen name, however as an adult I could choose a Christian

name to be recognised by. Many people select a biblical name or the name of a saint. After a bit of research and a short list of Ann (patron saint of mothers), Marie (patron saint of farmers), the final decision went with Cecilia – patron saint of music. After a long and fulfilling preparation period, with Melissa by my side as my sponsor, I felt that Easter Sunday morning at 4.30am (thanks Abbot John....) surrounded by the Community that had taken in this Scottish lass, and made her part of their parish, that I had become an official member of the New Norcia congregation. It was just beautiful.

For me, I truly believe I was never "called" to the faith. I believe I surrounded myself in people and place. People who made me feel welcome, allowed me to follow the joy of music that I had missed, and a Community whose values I believed more than any other.

Tracy Sievewright

*Pictured page 1, from left: Tracy Sievewright's baptism at Easter; Easter lunch with the parish.*

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## Annual Institute Day 2019

The New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies is delighted to invite you to the 'Annual Institute Day' for 2019 on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Our theme for this year is *Benedictine Spirituality and the Search for God*.

We are very happy to introduce two keynote speakers this year. One is Fr. Araliya Jayasundara, osb, a Benedictine monk of the Sylvestrine Congregation from Sri Lanka. A notable scholar, formator and spiritual leader in the Benedictine world, he is currently Director of the Sylvestrine Benedictine Minor Seminary as well as Vice-Rector of St. Anthony's College, Kandy, both in Sri Lanka.

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Anna M. Silvas, a world-class researcher in Greek, Latin and Syriac patristic. She is a leading authority on the Rule of St. Basil, which strongly influenced and informed the Rule of St. Benedict, and will share ways in which the ancient Church offers us useful insights into the spiritual issues of our own times.

In the afternoon, there will be an opportunity for discussion on themes and issues raised in the lectures. This will be followed by a talk and musical recital on the remarkable life and work of Padre Antonio Soler; a Spanish Benedictine monk of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century who was an outstanding harpsichord virtuoso in his time, and a highly innovative and original composer.

A splendid lunch and morning and afternoon tea is included within the programme of the day, as well as a visit to our Museum and Art Gallery.

The day commences with registration and morning tea at 10:00am at St Gertrude's College, and will conclude at 3:15pm. To book visit [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au), go to the webshop and look under Events.



*Pictured above: Caring in a Competitive World (detail) by Annette Allman, 2010, oil on canvas (NNC2011.1). Winner 2010 Mandorla Art Award.*

# Concert at the WA Law Museum

Shortly after his arrival and the founding of the mission at New Norcia, Dom Rosendo Salvado found the mission was in a dire financial state. Conditions were immensely harsh; food was scarce and sickness was a constant problem. After repeated requests for financial support were denied, Salvado realised he would have to create his own solution! Having been at New Norcia for only three months, he decided to walk to Perth to plead his case with Bishop Brady. But assistance was not forthcoming so, after unsuccessful attempts at begging outside church on Sundays, he began to consider other ways he could raise the much needed funds. He decided he would stage a piano recital to be held in the Court House. News of the concert was met with real enthusiasm; I imagine that Perth was a bit of a cultural backwater in 1846! The community gathered together in support of Salvado, a piano was borrowed from the Sisters of Mercy, posters and programmes were printed by the Jewish community and candlesticks were lent by the Protestant church. The concert was held on 21<sup>st</sup> May, and lasted for three hours. Salvado played his own compositions, and improvised on themes from popular operas. It was reported that Salvado played entirely from memory and that the concert was a great success with the town buzzing about it for over a week. It was also a financial success and Salvado was able to purchase many essential items and carry on building the mission.

Back to the present day - in 2019 the Old Law Court Museum



*The group listening to Fr Robert Nixon play the piano at the Old Law Court Museum*

relived history and hosted a Benedictine monk giving a piano recital once more! To celebrate Heritage Week and the opening of a temporary exhibition about Salvado, the Law Society invited Fr Robert Nixon OSB to give a piano recital. Channelling the original Salvado recital, Fr Robert played some of his own compositions as well as some of Rosendo Salvado's. The beautiful heritage building was brimming with people and humming with excitement; after some delicious canapés and refreshments, Chief Justice Peter Quinlan and the Law Society's president, Greg McIntyre SC, welcomed everyone to the concert, after which Fr Robert delighted the crowd with his polished performance. The exhibition runs until October and showcases many rare and interesting objects related to Salvado and his life that are on loan from the New Norcia Collections department.

Fr Robert is a Catholic priest, pianist, composer and monk of the Order of St Benedict. He joined the Benedictine Community of New Norcia in 2013, where he serves as organist, liturgy co-ordinator and Director of the Institute for Benedictine Studies. He was awarded his Fellowship of Trinity College, London, for harpsichord performance, and Fellowship of the London College of Music for research on the musical writings of the Venerable Bede.

Lucy Nicholson, Communications Manager



## ACL Volunteers

Very often volunteers' contributions go unnoticed and unappreciated, so I thought it would be fitting to acknowledge three volunteers whose work has materially changed the archives and library collections for the better. Christine Choo has been volunteering at New Norcia for ten years working on a genealogy database using archives reference materials, especially the baptism, marriage and burial registers. Christine uses Family Tree Builder to create her database which now covers the period from 1847 to 1900 with over 2,000 names included. At the press of a button we can print out a person's antecedents or their descendants and all their information.

Vida Whale is sorting out the extensive photograph collection by comparing the actual photographs with the computer entry. In doing so she has introduced a new stage to the checking procedure so that we are confident that our records

are as accurate as can be. Additionally, Vida is well over a third of the way scanning the vast collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century correspondence. Both these activities ensure the preservation of the items through reduced handling whilst at the same time making these documents more readily accessible for research etc.

Jim Longbottom, our newest volunteer, is doing a fantastic job setting up a spreadsheet to catalogue the basic details of an extensive collection of books so that Librarian Dom Paul can compare them with the main catalogue and arrive at a decision as to what to do with them; so far Jim has catalogued over 1500 books. Thanks so much to all three – your work really is most valuable and very much appreciated.

Peter Hocking, Archivist

# Abbey Pale Ale - New Product Release

To partner with New Norcia's Abbey Ale, "Abby Pale Ale" has just been released and is now available from the New Norcia Hotel and Museum Gift Shop.

Pale ale is made with predominantly pale malt. The highest proportion of pale malts results in a lighter colour. *Abbey Pale Ale* is a traditional session style pale ale. Light hop flavours at the front, balanced with some sweeter malt to finish.

It is a celebration of cultures, tastes, aromas and tradition in a collaborative relationship between the monks of New Norcia and Mash Brewing in the Swan Valley.

# MASH BREWING



## News from the Guesthouse

The first six months of 2019 have flown by. The Guesthouse area has seen many improvements including new carpet in the entrance and lounge room, hard flooring in the dining room, fly screen doors to the paved area and the replacement of the old screen doors with strong mesh on the twin share room.

Just before Easter the Guesthouse team had a busy bee in the courtyard garden. This sometimes neglected area is now looking very inviting. A garden bed of succulents has been added to a bare area, fresh mulch has been laid under the trees, and a number of hanging baskets with a variety of Zygote cactus have been hung from branches throughout the garden. Some parrot ravaged geraniums have been replaced with kangaroo paws and a desert rose. Hopefully these plants are not as tasty to our feathered friends. A seating area has been developed in the centre of the garden which will allow guests to fully enjoy the garden. If you haven't visited for a while, come and see our improved garden soon!

There are three places left for the Christian Meditation Retreat on the weekend of the 21<sup>st</sup> June. If you wish to book please call the Guesthouse on (08) 9654 8002 or go to the webshop at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au) and register online.

**Bernadette Taylor, Guesthouse Manager**



*St Ildephonsus' Cottage*



*Mary and Bernadette enjoy a quiet moment in the Guesthouse gardens*

### St Ildephonsus' Cottage

The ceilings in St Ildephonsus' Cottage have been replaced and are currently being painted.

This single storey red brick building was built in 1957 as accommodation for the staff of St Ildephonsus' College. It contains bedrooms, shared bathrooms, kitchen, and living room and can be booked by groups or families to enjoy the peace and quiet of this beautiful town.

#### Accommodation rates

Family rate \$150/night Bed & Breakfast for a family of 2 adults + 2 children (under 16yrs)  
Extra adults \$25/night | Extra child \$15/night

#### If eating at the Guesthouse

Lunch is \$25/person and dinner \$20/person  
Half price for children

For more information or to make a booking please contact Bernadette Taylor on (08) 9654 8002 or [guesthouse@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:guesthouse@newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

# Bunny Orchids Found in Town

Mel George, who formerly worked at the Roadhouse and is now at the Hotel, is an avid wildflower observer.

She was excited to come across these Bunny Orchids recently, pictured to the right, which she found near the Hotel and in Piggery Lane in town.

Ten species of bunny orchids occur in Western Australia where they are found in a range of areas that are swampy in winter to dry inland woodlands. They occur from north of Kalbarri to Israelite Bay on the South Coast.

Mel is now closely watching the development of Greenhood and Snail Orchids in town, which she expects to see flower in the next few weeks.



Photos of Bunny Orchids taken by Mel George

## 2019 Friends Magazine – Issue 39 – Out Now!

Twenty three pages of up-to-the-minute news from New Norcia is now available. To order your copy visit our website at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au). The magazine is free, however postage costs do apply.



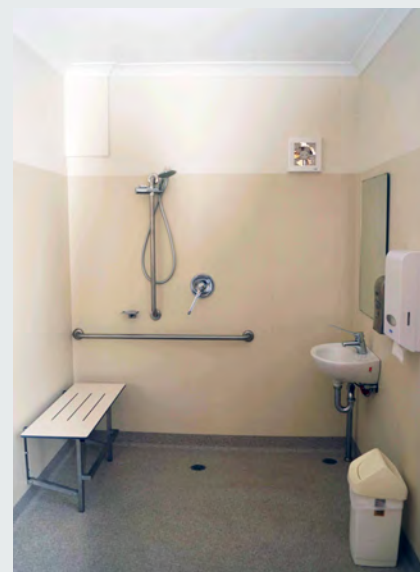
## Hotel Mini-Facelift

The Hotel has undergone many small upgrades recently; the bedrooms have new bed linen and valances, furniture and paintings have been moved and swapped, the dining room has had curtains installed and the grand stairs now have fresh pot plants to frame them....with more changes in the upcoming months.



## St Gertrude's Flat Improvements

St Gertrude's flat has been undergoing upgrades, including repainting the first floor, a new disabled bathroom and better access. The photo below shows the newly fitted bathroom.



## Home-Made Goodies from the Roadhouse

Marilyn and the Roadhouse team have added some delicious food to their menu:

- Home-made quiche
- Bacon and egg pies
- Pizza
- Savoury and sweet scrolls and muffins made by the New Norcia Bakery.



## New Norcia Olives – 2019 Season

We had a couple of kind volunteer groups who came to New Norcia to help sucker bashing, namely using a little tomahawk machete to cut off all the new growth around the olive trees. The groups had fun but admitted that it was hard, physical work! A lunch in the olive shed gave them renewed energy to carry on with the afternoon shift. We thank all volunteers for their help.

The 2019 olive season has been rather short, due to the lack of rain. The olives were small and yielded little this year, or rather much less than in previous years, 4.5 tonnes of olives only produced 700 litres of oil.

Because the olives were much riper when picked the resulting oil is much yellower in colour, with a smoother almost banana-like flavour. We will be interested to see how it goes at the Royal Show after last years' success. The oil has been put into the monastery cellars where it will stay for a good few weeks to settle before it is decanted into bottles.



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## The Latest Addition to Services for Town Tours

The Museum and Art Gallery has a wheely exciting new addition to its services. A newly acquired golf buggy is now used to provide groups of up to five with a much easier way to see the town - especially those with tired legs or small children. It means these groups can get closer to some of the buildings, which can only usually be seen from the distance, and spend more time inside them.

The buggy will be useful in summer, so full tours can be carried out in the heat. And it will soon be tested out in the rain!



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## Mandorla 2020 Theme Announced and Entries Open

Entries are now open for the 2020 Mandorla Art Award, Australia's most significant thematic Christian art prize. The theme has been announced:

A REFLECTION ON MICAH Chapter 6, verse 8.

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does THE LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

Shortlisted artworks will be exhibited as part of the finalists'

exhibition at STALA Contemporary in Perth in May 2020. The winning artwork will become part of the Mandorla collection and receive \$25,000 prize money (acquisitive), sponsored by St John of God Health Care. There will be a further two highly commended awards of \$5,000 each; the Patricia Toohey Painting award of \$5,000 and the People's Choice Award of \$2,000 sponsored by the Benedictine Community of New Norcia, for a total prize pool of \$42,000.

For further information there is a collection of material on the website: <https://mandorlaart.com/>.

# The Tale of the Car Keys – A Story of Karma

I'm always surprised by the variety of people that come through the doors here at the museum. One Friday afternoon a group came up to the counter and was greeted with the usual "Good afternoon, welcome to New Norcia!! How can I help you today?" But the response was not the norm! It was "can we leave some clothes here and collect them next week?"

And so the conversation began...

They were a group of five walkers about to start their pilgrimage on the Camino Salvado Trail. This is the route Salvado walked from Subiaco to New Norcia. Nowadays it meanders through the Swan Valley, the hills, the National Parks, along worn farm firebreaks, and ends up at the door of the Abbey Church up here in New Norcia. This equates to approximately 180km and is normally undertaken over eight days. We have had a number of Camino groups arrive here, usually as part of an organised expedition who are collected and dropped off every day, and fed at night. However these hardy souls were doing the whole thing independently - carrying their food, tents and all their own gear, for the whole eight days. They were hoping they could store some clean clothes at New Norcia to change into after they arrived. Being an avid walker myself and having the trail on my own bucket list I was delighted to help. "Absolutely!" I exclaimed! On the condition that I could follow their progress on the pilgrims' Facebook page and come and meet them when they arrived.

And so the days passed. I saw pictures of them leaving the city, walking through Waralunga National Park and Julimar Forest - it looked absolutely stunning and very peaceful. Unfortunately one of the group was injured and had to stop, but the other four carried on.

On the Sunday night, they were planning to camp on Old Plains Road before the last push into New Norcia on Monday morning. My family has a property on Old Plains Road, so the children and I planned to take some liquid refreshment and some nibbles down to them. We drove up and down, up and down - nothing. I was a little worried with no phone signal something had happened to them.

Monday came. I got a message saying they were an hour away (just in time for Fr Robert's organ practice in the church, an added bonus) and one of the ladies had something for me. How curious! I was imagining some lovely memento of their walk, possibly a lovely flower or stone. It was at this stage the strangest thing happened. To cut a LONG story short, almost five months ago I lost my car keys somewhere between Bolgart and our front drive on Old Plains Road. I had assumed they were lost forever. They had my "in case of emergency" details on them, so I always thought if someone found them they would call. Unfortunately that call never came.

Back to my Camino walkers... They walked into New Norcia, my kids ran to meet them. I helped them with their bags to the door of the church, and one of them said "you're Tracy Sievwright, aren't you?" "Yes," I replied. There aren't many of us in the Wheatbelt! "I think these belong to you....." and out came my very dirty, very bedraggled, but still working - car keys! I was gobsmacked!!!! They had packed up their camp and hadn't gone more than 500m when one of the ladies looked down and saw them on the gravel. There were just no words! As they were checking themselves into the Guesthouse as a bit of a treat (they were going to camp) I popped up to the Museum to collect their small bundle and take it to them. I just couldn't believe it! I am a firm believer in helping others, and in this case - I'm a firm believer that Karma was definitely on my side!

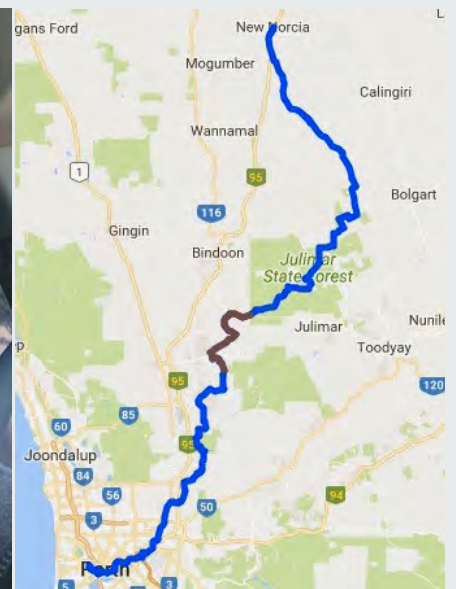
## Tracy Sievwright, Museum & Art Gallery



The Camino walkers arriving



Tracy Sievwright with her keys



A Map of the Camino Salvado Trail

# New Norcia Writers' Festival – August 24<sup>th</sup>

We are happy to announce the programme for the annual New Norcia Writers' Festival. Like its predecessors, the emphasis is still on literature as performance, with readings from the authors accompanying each session. Join Amanda Curtin as she talks about her latest book on a revered WA artist, *Kathleen O'Connor of Paris*; Dr Michael Levitt on health and happiness with *The Happy Bowel*; Steve Hawke on his powerful novel *Out of Time*; Jon Doust on the timely reissue of his compelling memoir *Boy on a Wire*; poet Annamaria Weldon on her sparkling new collection *Stone Mother Tongue*; and Bindy Pritchard on her debut short story collection *Fabulous Lives*.

Our two performances this year feature The West Australian's Travel Editor Stephen Scourfield and percussionist Steve Richter presenting a new work for spoken word and music, *Elsewhere*; and operatic baritone Robert Hoffman with pianist Tommaso Pollio performing a German art song in the original language and in translation.

Food options include a Middle Eastern hot buffet lunch from the Hotel (\$40.00) or picnic lunches from St Gertrude's College (\$19.95). Ticketholders will be able to "curate" their

own programme again this year by choosing four out of eight possible sessions on the day. Event tickets and meals can be purchased from our webshop at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

The day finishes around 3pm with a wine tasting and a light afternoon tea featuring New Norcia bakery products.

"As most of the venues have limited capacities, allowing concurrent sessions effectively double our potential audience," festival director William Yeoman said. "This means greater choice and a real festival buzz."

Morning and a light afternoon tea will be provided.

The Hotel has accommodation available, please contact them directly on [hotel@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:hotel@newnorcia.wa.edu.au) or 96 548 018.



## New Norcia Artefacts at the Newcastle Gaol Museum, Toodyay

On 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019, a new exhibition opened at the Newcastle Gaol Museum titled *Taking up the Trail – Botanical Journeys from Toodyay to Mt Leseuer*.

The heart of the exhibition is the botanical connection between Toodyay and New Norcia. It is exploring the stories of botanical journeys between the two places over time. Themes interpreted include Deep Time (the Noongar perspective), European Discovery and 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Beyond. Significant artefacts from the library, archival and museum collections from the Benedictine Community of New

Norcia have been borrowed for the exhibition which has now been extended to the end of the year.

On show (reproduced for the first time on a large screen) are coloured slides from the personal collection of noted West Australian botanist, Charles Austin Gardner. These slides were included in the bequest made to the Benedictine Community after Gardner's death in 1970. They have largely been hidden since then. Many wildflower images are from the 1950s and 1960s and their clarity is extraordinary.



## EVENTS COMING UP IN NEW NORCIA

- Fri 21 – Sun 23 June Benedictine Institute Retreat: Christian Meditation
- Fri 12 – Sun 14 July Benedictine Study Weekend: The Desert Fathers – The Earliest Christian Monks
- Sat 3 August Annual Institute Day
- Sat 24 August New Norcia Writers' Festival

See New Norcia's website at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au) for more information