

# The Chimes



Newsletter of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia

November 2023

## St Ildephonsus' College 'Old Boys' Reunion

*On the weekend of October 28th – 29th, a group of former students from St Ildephonsus' College came to New Norcia for a reunion, organised by former students Ambrose and Keith.*

The mostly 80 and 90 year old "Old Boys", stayed overnight in their former college dorms, reminiscing about their schooling life in New Norcia. They enjoyed a roast beef dinner along with a few Abbey Ales and other drinks, served in their former refectory. Many commented on the wonderful changes to the refectory since their last visit.

On Sunday morning they had a cooked breakfast followed by Mass in St Ildephonsus' Chapel, with their dear friend Fr. David as the celebrant. After Mass the "Old Boys" enjoyed a light lunch before farewelling each other and returning home.



*St Ildephonsus' College "Old Boys" enjoying dinner in their former refectory.*

## Safeguarding Audit 2023

*New Norcia has completed its Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) 2023 audit.*



The 2023 audit assessed New Norcia for both Children and Adults at Risk in line with the second edition of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). We are pleased to announce that the auditors have assessed us as having "fully implemented and embedded a culture of safeguarding throughout the community."

This pleasing result is a product not only of the dedicated work of the New Norcia Safeguarding Committee but of the awareness of, and commitment to, safeguarding as being everybody's responsibility.

Although assessed as 100 percent compliant, when it comes to safeguarding, there are always opportunities for further improvement. The auditors have encouraged us to continue the development of our safeguarding profile by making a few recommendations that will further enhance what is already in place. With safeguarding being a major priority, we have commenced work on the implementation of these suggestions.

The ACSL Audit Report can be accessed here: [NewNorciaAudit.pdf](#)



# Things Both Old and New



**H**aving been closed for several years due to safety concerns, the old shed in the museum and art gallery precinct was demolished in the first weeks of October.

After specialist contractors removed the asbestos roof, it was discovered the steel frame was completely rusted and the concrete floor deemed unstable. It was also more than obvious that the iron sheeting walls and louvre windows had seen better days. Although the building was not heritage listed, Jim Longbottom prepared a comprehensive photographic report using heritage guidelines and our heritage consultants (Urbis) submitted the request to Heritage Council (WA), who subsequently approved the demolition. Originally used as an extension to the laundry in the 1950's, in recent years the shed housed a display of old farm machinery and domestic equipment such as a meat safe, butter churn and wine press.

These important fragile historical pieces have been carefully transferred to three heritage buildings at the northern end of town – the olive and carpentry shed, the blacksmith's shop, and the old flour mill, forming three new self-guided exhibitions. We are working on printed and audio-visual interpretation installations with our design partners Axiom, and hope to open these exciting new exhibitions not too far into 2024. The original early 20th C laundry, now in full view, will eventually be restored, providing a sheltered space with seating and vending machines for visitors waiting for the tour, or to enjoy an indoor picnic on a rainy day.



# The 5th International Benedictine Oblates Congress

*On Saturday September 9<sup>th</sup>, Pastor John Usher, and Rev Leonie Gaffel, both Oblates of New Norcia from Queensland, joined 150 fellow Oblates from 25 countries across the globe for the 5<sup>th</sup> International Benedictine Oblates Congress.*

Held every four years (although it has been six years since the previous one), this Congress met at Sant'Anselmo Monastery in central Rome, for a week of balanced work and play, interspersing days of workshops and guest speakers with trips to special places, all covered by Morning and Evening Prayer, and daily Mass. There was also a short concert featuring the modern premiere of O Beate Benedicte, a 16th century composition by Alessandro Grandi which honours St Benedict, and has only recently been re-discovered.

Guest speakers included Sr Marie Madeleine Caseau, Prioress of Saint Bathilde of Vanves, France; Abbot Donato Ogliari, Abbot of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, and Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, who spoke on Benedictine hospitality as a path to reconciliation; while the workshops looked at Oblate formation, living out our calling in the 21st century, and explored Islands of Silence and contemplative practice.

Day trips included a visit to Monte Cassino, with guided tours led by the Abbot's secretary, Mass in the Abbey, and lunch in the Refectory with the monks. Next was a trip Sacro Speco in Subiaco, site of the cave where a young Benedict spent three years of his life, the tour of which was followed by an amazing five-course Italian lunch at the restaurant that forms part of the Subiaco Monastery.

The final day of the Congress saw the group at Vatican Palace, where they were given a private audience with Pope Francis who spoke to the Oblates on three aspects of Benedictine life – 'a continual search for God', 'enthusiasm for the Gospel', and 'hospitality'. Following his message, all members of the group had the opportunity to greet the Pontiff, with photos taken of the occasion by Vatican Media.







## Father Robert at St Patrick's Basilica Fremantle.

On Friday October 27th, more than 100 people were at St Patrick's Basilica in Fremantle for Father Robert's wonderful concert performing original compositions from his new album "Celestial Void" as well as beloved works from Rosendo Salvado, Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninov.

St Patrick's is a beautiful venue, and Father Robert filled the Basilica with beautiful music for 1 1/2 hours. There were many familiar faces in attendance who regularly visit New Norcia, and those from St Patrick's made everyone very welcome.

## The Mystery of the Puzzling Document solved.

In response to the article in the October Chimes, Margaret Ker of Fremantle has sent the following:

"I think I can shed some light on the mystery document but, unfortunately, it is not the light for which you were hoping. In a nutshell, I don't believe that it has any possible connection with the Benedictines in general and New Norcia in particular.

I believe that the recipient was Hugh Brown Birch (b. 1876, d. 1901). He was the third son of Henry Birch, a very well-known Perth identity who was a butcher/baker and also a leading Congregationalist and Freemason. Those last two facts of course militate strongly against any substantial link with New Norcia.

Hugh married in 1899 (Sarah Jane Halliday) and my best guess at present is that the document could relate to this event. The key word, understandably read as "Benedictine", might then refer tongue in cheek to his new status as in numbered among the 'blessed' (i.e., benedictos).

The witnesses are an interesting bunch (possibly all married) but the most easily identifiable among them is not

Gerald De Courcy Lefroy but De Courcy Gerald Lefroy (gosh I really wish families would not do this!). He lived until 1948.

The others, apart from his employers, seem to have been young men around Hugh's own age. Apart from the one I too cannot read, they can be traced. I have some rather disorganised sightings that I am happy to share with you and/or Richard [Williams]. Trove, register entries (BMD) and the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board together often combine well.

How or why the document survived (let alone ended up in Doubleview) is just as mysterious as anything else. Hugh's widow Sarah Jane never remarried (she died in Victoria Park in 1960) and there were no children."

Thanks Margaret, and thanks to Richard who sent us the certificate; whilst it has apparently nothing to do with New Norcia, the document has at least been saved from the chook shed!



PRESS RELEASE for release 6 September 2023

# 2024 MANDORLA ART AWARD ENTRIES NOW OPEN

With a prize pool of over \$50,000, Mandorla is Australia's most significant thematic Christian art prize. The Mandorla Art Award actively fosters a relationship between contemporary fine artists and the writings of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Open to all artists across Australia, working in any medium, Mandorla invites artists to think laterally and with sensitivity by interpreting a new theme for each iteration of the award.

The 2024 [theme](#): *Refocus 'Let all that you do be done in love' (1 Cor. 16:14)*

### PRIZES

2024 promises to be Mandorla's most exciting award yet, with the inclusion of a major new prize category, the [New Norcia Artist Residency Prize](#). This is a unique opportunity for an artist to live and create artwork in Australia's only monastic town. In partnership with the New Norcia Benedictine Monastery, this one-month residency provides a studio, accommodation, meals and a \$10,000 artist fee.

In 2024, Mandorla will award five prize categories:

- **Mandorla Art Award Prize** – Acquisitive: **\$30,000**
- **Highly Commended Catholic Archdiocese Prize**: **\$5,000**
- **Highly Commended Anglican Diocese Prize**: **\$5,000**
- **People's Choice Prize** – provided by Benedictine Community: **\$2,000**
- **New Norcia Artist Residency Prize**: 1-month residency and **\$10,000**

### JUDGES

Finalist works are selected by an eminent panel of judges and shown in an exhibition in May 2024 at Holmes à Court Gallery in Gooyaman West Perth. The artwork awarded the Mandorla Art Prize is acquired into the Mandorla Collection, held at the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery. The selection panel and judges for the 2024 Mandorla Art Award are:

- [Hannah Mathews](#) - Director of Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, WA
- [Richard Lewer](#) - Artist, Vic
- [Dr Raewynne Whiteley](#) - Theologian, WA

### ENTRIES

Entries are open from now until **Friday 13 March 2024**. Artists can enter via the [online entry form](#). The artwork can be in any medium and must have been produced in the last year and not previously exhibited.

### CONTACT

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Above: Claire Beasein, 2022 Winner, *Chalice*, silkworm cocoons on cotton rag paper.

Below: Mikaela Castledine, 2018 Winner, *God is in the House*, Crochet cotton, glass and ceramic found objects



# Who was Peter Lewis?

Since at least 1995 there have been regular, recurring requests to the archives for information on “Peter Lewis”. He has been described as a monk, an *alter ego* for Fr Francisco Salvadó, as a relative of Bishop Salvado’s and as a workman at New Norcia. Adding to the confusion is that Peter apparently anglicised his name from Pedro Luigi Salvado or something similar. My predecessor, Wendy McKinley, tried valiantly to find out who he was and, in an email to one researcher in early 2007, she wrote “If you find the real story I would love to know it”. The response to that from her correspondent was “I somehow doubt we will ever know the truth about Peter Lewis”.

Sixteen years later the situation has not changed. So what records do New Norcia’s archives hold that might relate to him. The first place to look is the *Libro de expediciones para la misión de Nueva Nursia*; this is the register of monks which is added to chronologically as monks enter New Norcia and it goes right back to the very beginning with Bishops Salvado and Serra. Information included in this register comprises details of where the monk came from, who his parents were, dates of profession, entry to New Norcia and date of death. Unfortunately, Peter Lewis or Pedro Luigi Salvado (or anything similar) does not appear which would suggest quite conclusively that he was not a monk.

There are thirty-eight references to “Lewis” on the archives database but nothing for a Peter Lewis. Another source of information, then, is in the correspondence. There are approximately 20,000 items of correspondence in the archives, all of which (during the Salvado years, 1846-1901) have been summarised in English by eminent scholars and linguists over many years, so we now have a searchable collection of thousands of letters. However, a search for “peter” and “lewis” brought up nothing in the correspondence up to 1859, whilst the same search for “pedro” brought up several instances of letters from Salvado’s brother, Pedro Pablo Salvado, but not Luigi.

From the archives’ point of view, there are, then, no references to a monk called Peter Lewis. But what of the other claims, for example that he was, in actual fact, Fr Francisco Salvadó (note the accent on the final “o” – something that is absent from Bishop Salvado’s name and which is important as, for Spanish speakers, this represents two entirely different names). The *Libro de expediciones* states that Fr Francisco’s parents were Pablo [Salvadó] and Teresa Clos, that he was born in Castellón de Seano in the Diocese of Solsona (Spain) on 30 July 1823, he arrived on the *John Panter* in 1853 and was a student when he entered New Norcia the same year; he was ordained on 7th October 1855 and left the mission in 1857 to be the parish priest in Toodyay and York. In 1864 he went to Ceylon where he spent between three and four years working with the mainly Italian Sylvestrine Benedictines. In a letter written on 12 March 1884, Salvadó wrote that, after returning to Spain from Ceylon, he spent some years in parish work in Barcelona before joining the Claretians in 1874 at which time they were in exile in France.

The BDWA also lists Peter Lewis, but as having been born fourteen years later than Francisco in Portugal in 1837, that he too arrived on the *John Panter* (although he doesn’t appear as such in the passenger list), he married Ellen Batt in 1863 and went on to have twelve children, the last of whom was born in 1884.

Nombres.	Nacimiento Dia. Mes. Año.	Padres.	País de su Nacimiento.	Dirigido.	Oficio.	Observaciones.
Franc. Salvadó.	30. Julio. 1823.	Pablo y Teresa Clos.	Castellón de Seano.	Solsona.	Estudiante.	Ordenado de Sac. en N.º. 7 Oct. 1855. Dejó la M.ª en 1864 (no fue relig.).

Extract for Francisco Salvadó in the *Libro de expediciones para la misión de Nueva Nursia*.

SALVADO, Francis (Rev. Pedro Luigi), b. 30.7.1823 (Spain), relative of Rosendo, arr. 14.8.1853 per John Panter as a student. Listed in York 1859 Census. RC Clergyman. Lit. Naturalized 29.2.1860 & anglicized his name to Peter LEWIS.

Extract from the BDWA for Francisco Salvadó (note the missing accent).

LEWIS, Peter, b. 1837 (Portugal), d. 14.1.1902, arr. 14.8.1853 per John Panter, m. 2.1863 (Pinjarra) Ellen Mary BATT b. 1.9.1844 d. 31.1.1909, dtr. of Joseph & Ruth (nee Downton). Chd. Joseph C. b. 1865, Peter b. 1866, Mary b. 1867, Ellen Ruth b. 1869, Isabel Elizabeth b. 1870 d. 1960, Anthony b. c.1873 d. 1902, Clara b. 1874, Justina Agnes b. 1875, Mary, Louisa b. 1879, John Silva b. 1880, Laurence b. 1882, Cecilia Mary b. 1884, 1/2 sons d. infancy, (All Frem/Perth RC). Gardener at Pinjarra & Serpentine. Employed 4 T/L men 1864, 1872, 1875 & 1881 (one a charcoal burner). Anglicised his name from Petro Luigi, (see Rev. Francis Salvado).

Extract from the *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*.

Most recently, a new angle has surfaced, namely that Peter Lewis was the illegitimate son of Bishop Salvado. George Russo in his book *Lord Abbot of the Wilderness* (Melbourne: Polding Press, 1980) does allude to a possible dalliance when Salvado was still a young man. Russo writes quoting from Rodriguez’ work *Un Gallego, Civilizador de Australia* (Madrid, 1946, page 6):

*“At this period Rosendo apparently suffered from a divided soul. It seems that he fell in love and determined to solve the conflict by applying rather hastily for orders. The bishop refused to ordain him because of an alleged relationship with a woman. No more than this can be said.”*

Certainly, there is nothing in the archives that can substantiate or even refute the statement. As far as can be determined though, this is the only reference to the possibility that Peter Lewis might have been an off-spring, but it is a very vague statement about an alleged relationship about which, as Rodriguez writes, nothing more can be said and, I would add, inferred.

That brings us to the last possibility – that Peter Lewis was an employee of the mission. According to the BDWA, Peter Lewis was a gardener in Pinjarra and Serpentine. Whilst there was no Peter employed at New Norcia, there was however a John Lewis who, in September 1856, signed on as a shepherd. Could he have been the inspiration for the Peter Lewis of later years?

In conclusion, I think I have demonstrated that Peter Lewis is a very shadowy figure where New Norcia is concerned and I think I have shown that there are no monastery records relating to him. My feeling is that Peter was the Peter as described in the BDWA but that the regrettable, and now proven to be incorrect, link to Francisco Salvadó was the genesis of the excitement that Peter Lewis was somehow connected with the monastery. But, despite that and as that researcher said in 2007, I “somehow doubt we will ever know the truth about Peter Lewis”.

Peter Hocking  
Archivist

## Thinking Outside the Box – the 2023 New Norcia Library Lecture.

*Sixty-five librarians and library workers came along to New Norcia on Friday, October 20th, to attend the first library lecture since the two-day Archives and Library convention, exactly two years earlier. And, just like that event, the proceedings were held in the beautiful chapel at St Gertrude’s College. Former head of Curtin University’s Library School, Dr Kerry Smith, compered the proceedings with wit, charm and grace after her introduction by Abbot John.*

Like Library Days in the past, the format was for talks in the morning followed by a sumptuous lunch in the newly renovated St Ildephonsus’ College dining room, after which attendees could choose from a variety of walks and visits.

in the old Abbey Press, kindly demonstrated by Geoff Moor who has volunteered in the Abbey Press for many years and who very kindly agreed to come up from Roleystone especially for the demonstration.

The proceedings began with Nicole Wreford, librarian at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, who gave a talk entitled *Post-Covid hybrid library thinking: thinking outside the box in 2023*. Nicole was followed by a double presentation from Shane Dowling and Laura Blake from City of Swan. Shane started off by giving us some personal reflections on his life as a librarian which included some fascinating connections to New Norcia; no less interesting was Laura who spoke to us about *Library values in the digital age – the evolving role of the public librarian*. Finally, we had a most informative and in-depth presentation from Danielle DeGiorgio who is the Digital and Information Literacy Advisor for the Library Services Centre at Edith Cowan University. Danielle’s talk was *Beyond the reference desk: transforming learning technology support with library peer assistants*.

After lunch our guests were treated to a rare visit to the monastery library, hosted by the monastery’s Liturgist, Fr Robert Nixon; a look at some of the monastery’s rare books in the main library presented by monastery librarian, Dom Paul Forster ably assisted by volunteer Jim Longbottom; a visit to the archives; and a working display of printing



L-R: Shane Dowling, Danielle DeGiorgio, Laura Blake, Kerry Smith, Nicole Wreford and Abbot John.

# Calendars now available

Hot off the press - the 2024 New Norcia calendar features the works on paper of Fr. Lesmes Lopez OSB. An exhibition in St Ildephonsus' large and small dining rooms.



This calendar shows the liturgical calendar as celebrated by the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. Purchase the calendar online at: [shop.newnorcia.com.au/products/calendar-2024](http://shop.newnorcia.com.au/products/calendar-2024)

# Coming Events

From November 2023

18 November 2023

Abbot's Table: Spring 2023

24 - 26 November 2023

New Norcia Guesthouse - Benedictine Experience Weekend V

15 December 2023

Piano Concert - Treasuries of Ragtime Piano

Visit our website for a complete list of Coming Events - [newnorcia.com.au/whats-on/events-calendar/current-events](http://newnorcia.com.au/whats-on/events-calendar/current-events)

# Liturgical Calendar

November 2023

Wednesday 1 November

All Saints (Solemnity)

Thursday 2 November

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed

Saturday 4 November

St Charles Borromeo (Memorial)

Sunday 5 November

Thirty-first in Ordinary Time  
Mass at 7:30am in Oratory

Tuesday 7 November

St Willibrord (Optional Memorial)

Thursday 9 November

Dedication of Lateran Basilica (Feast)

Friday 10 November

St Leo the Great (Memorial)

Saturday 11 November

St Martin of Tours (Memorial)

Sunday 12 November

Thirty-second in Ordinary Time

Monday 13 November

All Holy Monks and Nuns

Tuesday 14 November

Commemoration of the Deceased of the Monastery

Thursday 16 November

St Gertrude (Memorial)

Sunday 19 November

Thirty-third in Ordinary Time

Tuesday 21 November

Presentation of BVM (Memorial)

Wednesday 22 November

St Cecilia (Memorial)

Friday 24 November

St Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions (Memorial)

Sunday 26 November

Christ The King (Solemnity)  
(Ordinary Time, Week 34)

Thursday 30 November

St Andrew (Feast)



**NEW NORCIA**  
BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY

The Chimes is a monthly publication of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. To subscribe to the digital version, email [publications@newnorcia.com.au](mailto:publications@newnorcia.com.au).

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