

# The Chimes



Newsletter of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia

Vol. 25 No. 6 – Sep 2025

Ian Smith – last day at the desk:

## The end of an era (or two).

*On the 31st July 2025, Ian Smith said his last goodbyes as Property Manager of New Norcia and commenced a well deserved retirement. The caravan is ready to go, first stop Exmouth!*

Ian first came to New Norcia in 1990 working for Guy Wegulin, a builder doing restoration work in and under the monastery.

In 1991, he became the maintenance man for the monastery until 1993 when he returned to Perth and worked in facilities management for schools and a yacht club.

He returned to New Norcia in 2014 as the Property Manager and has since then been engaged in all aspects of maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.

Just some of those infrastructure upgrades have been: upgrade of the sewerage system; installation of a lift in the MAG; the New Norcia bypass and resulting major asphalt works through the town; St Gertrude's flat renovations; restoration and renovation of the Old Trading Post; restoration and renovation of Kelly's Cottage; renovation of St Ild's cottage; major air-conditioning works right across

the site; renovation of St Ild's dining rooms; major upgrades to the roadhouse ceilings and electricals; painting of staff housing, and most recently, stage 1 of the repainting of the monastery buildings.

Ian says that he has had the privilege of working with a great team, and a great team of regular contractors.

He extends his thanks to Abbot John and the New Norcia monks for affording him the opportunity to work here and he greatly appreciates their help and assistance.

He says he will miss the many daily challenges of the role, but will not miss phone calls from the Water Corp alerting him to water leaks somewhere/anywhere on site.

We all wish Ian a happy and healthy retirement and many safe travels with Karen.





# Repainting the monastery buildings: update

*Updating the article two editions of the Chimes ago, we have continued to progress with the ENORMOUS task of re-painting the monastery buildings.*

That report showed the first stage of the task in removing the old flaking paint and getting ready to commence the painting. All the outside walls of the monastery are now sealed and have a first coat, most have already received their final coat.

The workers from Eric Hood Painting are doing a fantastic job and are now progressing with the inside of the monastery cloister. As they proceed, there are also carpentry works to be completed where windows have rotted beyond redemption (even in a Benedictine monastery). The very last of this phase of the works will be the rear four storey monastery building, where access requires a larger cherry picker and the monastery gates, where amongst other things the UIOGD at the top of the gate will again be gilded.

There is still much to be done.... Stay tuned!



*We are very pleased to welcome our dear monastic friend Sr Hilda Scott, who is spending time with us during her sabbatical.*

Sr Hilda recently retired as Abbess of Jamberoo Abbey, a Benedictine monastery of nuns in the Illawarra Valley within the Diocese of Wollongong, NSW.

Not prone to idleness, Sr Hilda has been busy pruning the central cloister roses, polishing mountains of brass, and dusting endless shelves of library books.

Known for her deep spiritual wisdom and insight, we seized the opportunity to invite Sr Hilda to lead the Community retreat 24-31 August.

How blessed we are to have Sr Hilda in our midst!



*A note from Dawn Franker on her recent furniture donation...*

*"Just some history about the dining room suite. It belonged to my parents, Edward & Beatrice Martin. They would be delighted to know that it is going to such a worthy recipient.*

*It was manufactured in the 1940's or 50's. It is made of Imbuia solid wood, with carved legs. There are six chairs. The buffet has two cupboards and three drawers.*

*I am 81 years old and am moving from a three-bedroom apartment in the city to my son's property where he is building me a one-bedroom granny flat. Unfortunately and sadly I do not have enough space for the dining room suite.*

*I hope it will stand in pride at your monastery."*





## Olive Grove maintenance

*Yes, even olive trees need maintenance, and Dimitri, who is a part of our grounds and maintenance team, is just the man for the job.*

We have some 700 trees on site. Our oldest groves are on the east side of the river and push right out to the bypass. They are Mission variety and were planted in the 1860's specifically for production of olive oil.

The two newest groves are to the north of the workshop buildings, on the west side of the river.

Our olive oil is multiple gold medal, and premium gold medal award winning. From both a heritage and product sales perspective, maintenance and care of the groves is important work, that in recent years has been crowded out by many other maintenance and renovation priorities.

Dimitri joined the maintenance crew earlier this year and lives on site with his wife and two adult sons. Dimitri is Greek and just loves the olive groves. He has been hard at pruning the trees and opening the centres so that our gorgeous sunshine can perform its magic on our olive harvests.

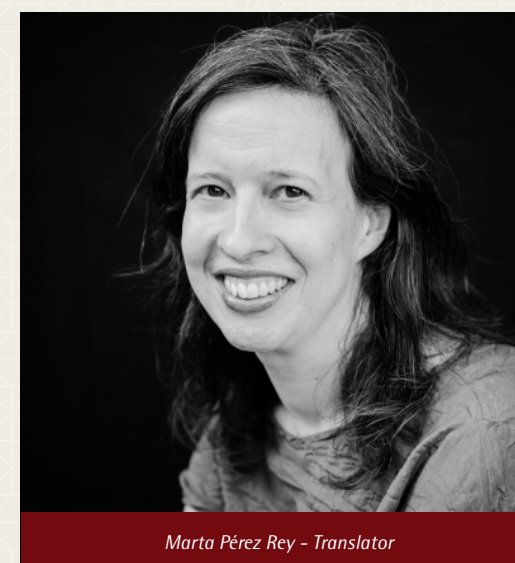
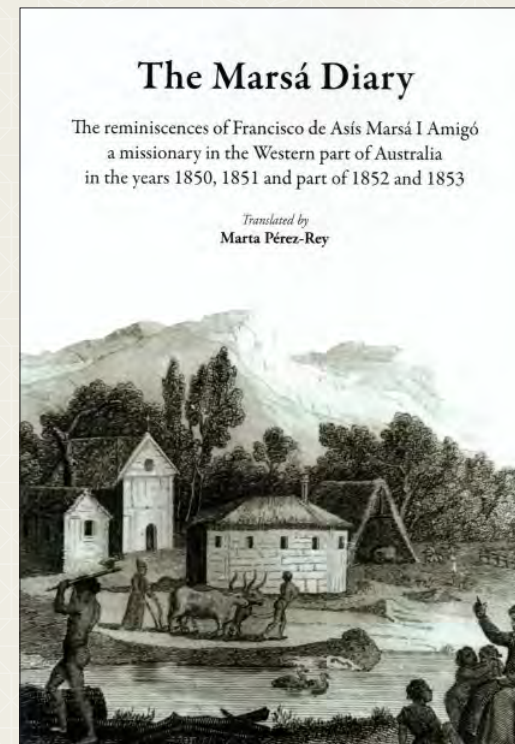
It is slow work, with Dimitri up a ladder, pruning, sawing and generally working his part of the magic. So far, he has pruned around 50 trees...A mere 650 to go!!

But Dimitri just loves tending the olive groves.

In October, he will travel to South Australia to represent New Norcia at the International (Australia) Olive Oil Awards and hopefully bring home yet another gold medal.



## Another new book from the Archives! Marsá Diary: the reminiscences of Francisco de Asís Marsá I Amigó



Marta Pérez-Rey - Translator

*We are delighted to announce the publication of the Marsá Diary: the reminiscences of Francisco de Asís Marsá I Amigó, who was a Spanish missionary in Western Australia in the years 1850 – 1853.*

Marsá was one of thirty-nine Benedictine priests and brothers who were recruited by Bishops Rosendo Salvado and José Maria Serra to come to Western Australia in 1849 aboard the Spanish warship Ferrolana to build the monastery at New Norcia. Marsá experienced first-hand the physical hardships involved in colonising the Victoria Plains and he was a witness to the complicated ecclesiastical turmoil which rocked the early colony. In his Diary, Marsá covers in detail the outward trip, the arrival in Fremantle, the difficult journey to the New Norcia site and the work and the hardships involved in building the monastery. Tom Stephens' very comprehensive foreword brilliantly sets the scene and provides the background context to that tumultuous period in Western Australian history.

University lecturer Marta Pérez Rey was awarded the Abbot Placid Spearritt Memorial Scholarship in 2020 to translate the Diary. Her translation is a very sensitive work in which she has captured the "tone" of Marsá's writings including his often very dry sense of humour.

Marta, a native of Cantabria, graduated with an MA in English Philology and a Master of Education from the University of Oviedo in Spain, and has been a certified NAATI translator (Spanish into English) since 2011.

The book will be officially launched at New Norcia's Library Day on Friday October 17th but it is available now in the Museum and Art Gallery shop, priced at \$29.99.



# Library Lecture Day

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Unearthing our stories:  
role of libraries in preserving  
local history & heritage

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Location: St Gertrude's

Day & date: Wednesday 17th October 2025

Start: Registration and morning tea 9am

Tickets: \$100 for adults and \$85 for  
concession holders (seniors and students).

Morning/afternoon teas and lunch included.

For more information, or to book, please visit  
our webshop via the below link or scan the QR code

<https://www.newnorcia.com.au/events/library-lecture-day>



## Happy Birthday Jane!

*On Monday 25th of August Jane Graham celebrated her 60th Birthday with family and friends at the New Norcia Hostel.*

Jane is a local and with her friends organises several functions at New Norcia each year.

Celebrations started with drinks from the bar and share platters, followed by à la carte mains and sticky date pudding for dessert.

After dinner guests enjoyed more drinks with New Norcia nut cake, pan choc and biscotti.

Everyone had an enjoyable night.



## Coming Together for Safeguarding

*Dedicated safeguarding officer Tracy Sievewright joined the annual Perth breakfast.*

Tracy is pictured with newly appointed Archdiocese Chancellor Daniel Lynch.

## We value your feedback

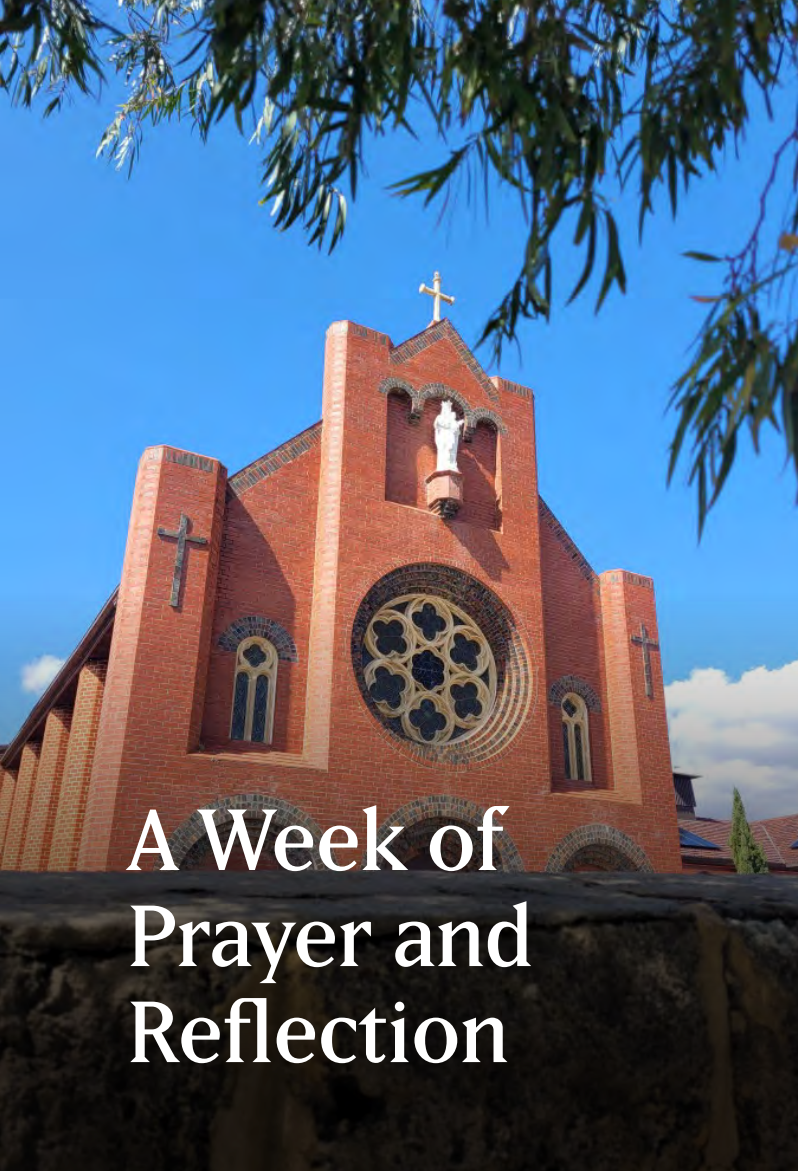
At New Norcia, your feedback helps shape a better experience for every visitor. We actively listen through a variety of channels:

- Our in-house visitor survey
- Reviews on TripAdvisor and WikiCamps
- Conversations and comments on Facebook and Instagram

Whether it's a suggestion, a story, or a snapshot—every bit of feedback helps us grow and improve.







# A Week of Prayer and Reflection

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***From 1st - 6th September Abbot John spent the week with the Carmelite nuns in Nedlands, facilitating their annual retreat***

An enclosed contemplative community, the theme of the retreat focused on aspects of monastic life, including prayer, solitude, spiritual reading, community and stability. Along with two retreat conferences each day, Abbot John met with individual sisters for a spiritual chat or reconciliation, and celebrated Mass. He made the most of the beautiful sunny weather, walking down to the river, and spending some time catching up on his own reading.

## Coming Events

From July 2025

**13<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

One Day Retreat: The Apocryphal Gospel-  
Meeting the Jesus of Myth and Imagination

**3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Weekend Retreat: Benedictine Secrets for  
Balance and Serenity

**17<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Library Lecture Day

**25<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

One Day Retreat: Praying the Rosary -  
An Introduction (or Reintroduction)

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

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## Liturgical Calendar

September - October 2025

**Saturday 13 September**

St John Chrysostom  
(Memorial)

**Sunday 14 September**

Exaltation of The Holy  
Cross (Feast)

**Monday 15 September**

Our Lady of Sorrows  
(Memorial)

**Tuesday 16 September**

Sts Cornelius & Cyprian  
(Memorial)

**Wednesday 17 September**

St Hildegard of Bingen  
(Optional Memorial)

**Saturday 20 September**

Ss Andrew Taegon, Paul  
Hasang & companions  
(Memorial)

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**Sunday 21 September**

Twenty-Fifth in Ordinary Time

**Saturday 27 September**

St Vincent de Paul (Memorial)

**Sunday 28 September**

Twenty-Sixth in Ordinary Time

**Monday 29 September**

Ss Michael & All Holy Angels  
(Feast)

**Tuesday 30 September**

St Jerome (Memorial)

**Wednesday 1 October**

St Teresa of the Child Jesus  
(Memorial)

**Friday 3 October**

Bl Coumba Marmion  
(Optional Memorial)

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**NEW NORCIA**  
BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY

The Chimes is a monthly publication of the Benedictine  
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