



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

The Chimes Newsletter



September 2017

First Francis Xavier Conaci Scholar Welcomed

At the invitation of the Australian Embassy to the Holy See in conjunction with the Australian Catholic University, I travelled to Rome to give a short address at a reception (6th July) to welcome the Inaugural Francis Xavier Conaci Scholar, Nathan Pitt.

“A second-year Bachelor of Psychological Science student at ACU’s Brisbane Campus, Nathan is an Aboriginal student from Brisbane, with cultural connections to Yiemman Country. Nathan plans to pursue a career providing health support to remote communities. A particular interest is examining criminal or forensic psychology in order to work with incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.”

“This opportunity means that I can gain greater understanding of the thoughts and views that supersede culture, and as such I can learn and grow as a person in ways that I couldn’t possibly do otherwise,” Nathan said. (ACU Media Release, 6th July 2017).

Activities prior to the reception included a visit to St Paul Outside the Walls where Conaci is believed to have been buried (1854), and the Curia of the Sylvestrine Benedictines where Australian Abbot Michael Kelly hosted a celebratory lunch.

The reception at the residence of the Ambassador Melissa Hitchman drew a significant crowd of dignitaries, ACU students, Australians in Rome, and the media. Nathan gave an inspiring

address and I was pleased to have the opportunity in my own address to offer the support of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia and the New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation, and to make the connection between this impressive young scholar and his Aboriginal brother, Conaci, to whom this scholarship gives honour:

“Nathan, like your brother Conaci, you will have to work hard to achieve your goal, and I hope you will be able to fulfil his unfulfilled dream of returning to your beloved family and friends to share what you have learnt. No doubt there will be times when you’ll be animated and stimulated by your studies, and there will be times too when you’ll feel less so.

It is at those times that you will be able to access a source of spiritual support – in God, of course – but also in the spiritual communion you share with your brother Conaci, made even stronger by the tangible presence of his body buried here in Rome. Many pilgrims have felt the spirit of Conaci when visiting his place of rest; some say his spirit is at peace, others suggest an aloneness of spirit, being so far away from his land and his people. Your presence here, Nathan – and that of those who will follow you – assures us that the spirit of this Aboriginal boy will never be alone, never be forgotten, and that through you and your work, his spirit will live on in new and meaningful ways.”

By Abbot John Herbert



Above: His Eminence Cardinal James Harvey, Ambassador Melissa Hitchman, Director of First Peoples and Equity Pathways Jane Ceolin, Nathan Pitt, Abbot John and Abbot’s representative from St Paul’s Outside the Walls at the place of Conaci’s burial near the entrance from the basilica.



Above: Abbot John, Nathan Pitt & Abbot Michael Kelly at the Sylvestrine Curia

Taking the next step – Dom Robert Nixon ordained to the Diaconate

Benedictine monk Dom Robert Nixon was ordained to the Diaconate on 29 July at New Norcia by Auxiliary Bishop Donald Sproston.

In a recent interview with The eRecord, Dom Robert opened up about his journey which led him to join religious life and later, monastic life with New Norcia's Benedictine Community.

Born in Mount Isa, North West Queensland, Dom Robert spent his childhood years growing up in Townsville.

He said his family's way of life, strongly rooted in the Catholic faith, established him firmly in the practice and culture of Catholicism.

An altar server and church organist, Dom Robert studied music and education; later working as a professional musician and music teacher for a number of years.

He said he had always felt an inner calling to religious life and drawn to discover more about his spirituality.

"Although I felt called towards religious life since I was young, I only worked up the resolve to follow this vocation when I was in my 30's," Dom Robert said.

"Looking back, I see that the hand of God was at work in my life all along. Initially, I went to the Seminary in preparation for diocesan priesthood, but I came to discern that it was actually monastic life to which I was called."

Deeply inspired by the stories of ancient desert monks and by the writings of the monastic saints throughout the ages, Dom Robert had never experienced or witnessed real monastic life first hand until visiting New Norcia.

After seeing the dedication to prayer and the mutual support in the spiritual life, he said he was filled with a great wish to become a monk.

"I was very drawn also to the liturgy at New Norcia, with much more of a reflective pace and contemplative tone than that which I had encountered elsewhere.

"One of the things which constantly strikes me is the dedication and enthusiasm of my monastic brothers for our way of life, even those who have been monks for many decades.

"As monks, I think we truly live life to the full; each day is busy and brings its own varied gifts.

Dom Robert said the initial challenges he faced were the early morning starts to the day, having to wake up at 4.30am to prepare for Morning Prayer just past 5am. However, he

added that little by little, he got accustomed to it.

From his interactions with the many guests that visit the monastery, Dom Robert also said he can see that the monastic life, though 'enclosed', actually fulfils an important role in the Church's mission of evangelisation, and says it is a great honour to serve the Lord in this form of ministry.

"My Ordination to the Diaconate is a particular call and commission from God and the Church to the sacramental ministry, the service of the Word and assisting at the altar. "I am greatly humbled by this event, but am assured of the assistance of God's grace," he said.

For anyone discerning religious life or the priesthood, Dom Robert says not to be afraid of taking the next step.

"'Duc in altum'; step out into the deep. Christ walks with us at every stage in our life and is present to us in Scripture, the Sacraments and prayer, calling us to embrace our vocation courageously, with commitment, and without equivocation; whether it be marriage, single life, or religious life and/or priesthood," he said.

"Our life becomes blessed to the extent to which we can live in conformity with the will of God.

"For those discerning a vocation to the religious life, I would say - the very fact that you are thinking about religious life is a call from God to go ahead and explore it, both by prayer and by practical steps," Dom Robert concluded.

By Josh Low

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Pictured above: Dom Robert Nixon with Auxiliary Bishop Donald Sproston, surrounded by his fellow monks.

Hello from the Guesthouse!

The bypass is finished, the rain has made the paddocks green and the Monastery Guesthouse is waiting for you to come and stay!

The winter rain has brought a new sparkle to the courtyard garden and lifted the spirits of the locals. The heater in each room will ensure you are snug if the weather is wintry.

The Benedictine Experience weekends this year run by Dom Chris and Sr Margaret are proving popular. The smaller groups ensure a more personal experience and all on the retreat experience meals in the refectory with the monks. Some comments from retreat guests include:

"I found the weekend very helpful in enhancing my spiritual life. The whole weekend was led very professionally and well conducted. I will recommend it to my friends."

"Good atmosphere; idea of monasticism explained clearly-applicable to any way of life; interacted with the monks; it was impressive."



"The hospitality was very much appreciated-comfortable rooms and delicious meals! It was a great group of people to meet. I am going home much more relaxed"

The next Benedictine Experience Weekend is on the 29th September - 1st October. There are still a few places available.

A number of parishes and other groups have also enjoyed retreat days at the Guesthouse, including the North Beach Acolytes, St Christopher's Parish Roleystone and a women writers' group.

If you haven't visited for a while you will be impressed with the new sealed footpaths and car parks throughout the town.

By Bernadette Taylor, Guesthouse Manager

Save the date! New Norcia Library Lecture Friday, 6th October

People who attend this annual event range from interested and informed members of the public, to librarians representing a multitude of professional interests and/or dilemmas.

If you are interested in how old photographs make their way through history, and the problems of safeguarding such personal and cultural treasures, or you wonder what volunteers may be doing with local history, this year's seven guest speakers will provide you with some intriguing questions and answers that reach far beyond libraryland.

For more information visit our website at: <https://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au/education-research/library/library-lectures>, where you can also download the programme.

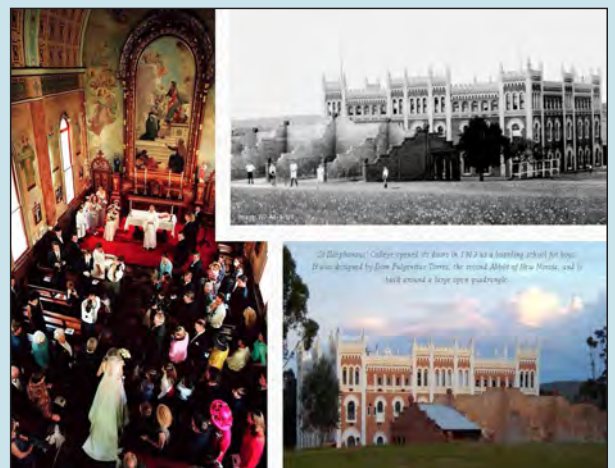
New Norcia 2018 Calendar

With stunning 'then and now' photos of the historic buildings which make up New Norcia, our 2018 calendar is now available.

It includes liturgical dates, school term dates, public holidays and dates of importance - this practical calendar makes the perfect addition to your home, or gift for someone special.

The calendar costs \$9.95.

It is available from the Roadhouse, Hotel, Museum and Museum & Art Gallery Gift Shop and Guesthouse - or you can purchase it online at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



River Walk Project Commences

In January we received the good news that New Norcia had been successful in securing a \$50,000 grant from the Wheatbelt Development Commission's *2017 Community Chest Fund* for the implementation of an Indigenous Archaeological display in the heritage Apiary building behind the Monastery and to upgrade the existing walk.

The grant funds were released on the 1st July and the project is well underway. The graphic designers have started work on the interpretative signage for the exhibition and the cultural and historical totems that will be placed along the route. The tables and benches have been ordered and the New Norcia Buildings and Grounds team have been working hard to get the areas ready for the 1,000 native species to be planted, as well as installing new gates for ease of access. Once finished, the Exhibition and River Walk, which will be extended into the olive grove, will be a great addition to New Norcia's education programme for visiting schools as well as other visitors to the town.

By Lucy Nicholson, Communications Manager



The Importance of Preservation

"As everyday Australians, we often do have the capacity to contribute to the preservation of our diverse and multi-cultural Australian heritage - its past experiences and the present that may meet future needs. Bernise Reid's story about the history of a book is a timely reminder," Carolyn Talbot, New Norcia Librarian.

Dear Friends

Carolyn Talbot, the New Norcia Librarian, has kindly asked me to write about the importance of preserving old books.

I have to say we have had a beautiful experience recently handing over our precious old book into the safe keeping of the Benedictine monks of New Norcia. Let me tell you the story!

My husband, John and I have been all our married life in the one house (55 years); lots of history hidden in cupboards and bookcases. As I systematically worked through every cupboard and shelf in each room over a period of several years in preparation for our eventual downsize, I put much thought into 'what will I do with this' as I went about my project.

We had a very old (1895) book with a metal and leather cover and lovely clasps titled *Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. It had come to us almost by default.

Our newspaper delivery man back in the 1980s was also a client of John's and a descendent of the bride-to-be to whom the book was

given as a wedding present. He suggested we go to the clearing sale of the old family home and we did. The book was in the sale and John and I bought it.

Fast forward 30 years and I need to find a safe home for this lovely old book. Our children were not at all interested in it and it would almost certainly have ended its days in a skip bin!

I set about gathering provenance for the book: information on the old family home in East Fremantle and the link to the book -- our paper-man's connection to this family -- our connection to him -- photos of the book including one of its inscription -- a letter to the Librarian at New Norcia with our request that the Benedictines might accept the book as a gift.

And they did. We met in New Norcia on 5th June this year with four other family members to sign over the book and to hand it to Carolyn on behalf of the Benedictine monks of New Norcia.

In his thank you letter, Abbot John Herbert wrote of the book being a superb example of a master printer's work. Of equal importance, the fact that the book has remained in excellent condition attested to both the bookbinder's pride in contributing to a beautiful artefact and the book's owners holding the book in great regard.

Abbot John also noted that, according to the National Library of Australia, only two other libraries indicate that they hold a copy of this book. The Abbot went on to say that he used the word "hold" because it is his belief that the books in New Norcia Library are held for the purposes of providing sources of information, as well as safe guarding these oft-times irreplaceable artefacts.

By Bernise Reid



Above: Bernise Reid, Dom Chris Power, Carolyn Talbot and John Reid

Around Town...



You may notice that the town clock is missing something – It makes it rather hard to tell the time! No, the hands have not just fallen off. Thanks to two generous donors, they have been carefully removed and sent to the skilful hands of Garth Caesar who is fully restoring the clock. It should be back in place in a couple of months.



Local ambulance volunteers conducted a training course on 20th July at St Ildephonsus' College. The training included two ambulances and allowed volunteers to practise their triage techniques, prioritising patients and communicating with St Johns' Head Office.



The Buildings and Grounds team has been busy! St Ildephonsus' Cottage has received an exterior makeover; brick paving has been put down, a native garden planted, a new safety handrail installed and a rock wall built.

Lucy Nicholson set up a tasting and product display at the Moora Show on 16th September so visitors could sample New Norcia's olive oil, breads, Nut Cake, Pan Choccolatti and Biscotti.



Rare Plants at New Norcia

I'm a taxonomist at the Western Australian Herbarium and my job is to discover, name and describe new species of plants. We are hoping to come to New Norcia and find the rare new species *Thomasia* sp. Green Hill (S. Paust 1322) last collected back in 2008 from the southern edge of New Norcia farm's 'rubbish dump paddock' so we can name and describe it. As this is a rare plant, special permission is required to collect it (over and above the usual collecting licence), which I have obtained. We aren't planning to undertake field work until mid-October. We will let you know if we have exciting news.

Carol Wilkins and I described another new species from the related genus *Lasiopetalum* (both plants belong to the family Malvaceae) - *Lasiopetalum cenobium* (from the Latin *cenobium* meaning "monastery") in 2015. It has only ever been collected twice from the area, so sadly we think it may be extinct. It would be amazing if it was rediscovered on your grounds!

Dr Kelly A. Shepherd
Senior Research Scientist
Western Australian Herbarium

Pictured right: Holotype of Lasiopetalum Cenobium (A.Cayser s.n PERTH 01298348). The plant is only known from two collections from New Norcia in 1918.



Tangled Trails: Colonial Art at New Norcia

The New Norcia Art Collection has a small group of important paintings from the colonial period of the settlement of WA. These continue to attract speculation and research from writers, historians and academics who regularly make contact and visit New Norcia to view the artworks in person.

Recently one such writer, amateur art historian Robert Stevens, has been the catalyst for new research that has answered some of our questions regarding how these paintings came to be in the community's possession. Robert's article, focusing on the convict artist James Walsh, draws on New Norcia Collections' and Archival material and has recently been published in the August edition of *Australiana* magazine (*James Walsh, convict artist in Western Australia. Australiana, August 2017 pp14-24*).

Before photography was widely available, landscape painting functioned to record the broad scope of activities, range of locations and developments embodied in property. In England landed gentry could afford to commission highly-trained oil painters to proudly depict their estates. In Australia a number of convicts freed under ticket-of-leave redirected their forging skills to sketching and watercolour painting for a new class of land holder. The views of Perth and of New Norcia in the New Norcia collection fall into this second category.

Two watercolour views of New Norcia, from the East and from the West, are well-known, and provide a wealth of historic data concerning the establishment of the mission when commissioned from the amateur colonial artist Walter Benson in 1861. With the assistance of archivist Peter Hocking, a review of the New Norcia Expenditure books of the period has provided proof that a series of payments was made to Walter Benson, James Walsh

and another unnamed artist, possibly Guglielmo Ewing, the Rome-based lithographer who produced a well-known print of the mission in 1864. The date, payee's name and money paid are clearly entered in the ledger titled 'Expenses of the Benedictine Mission of New Norcia from the Year of Our Lord 1857, beginning from the month of February of the same year' [New Norcia Archives 02953-2].

Although conjecture remains concerning two artists known as W. Benson working in the Swan colony in the period, it is clear that Salvado had need of artists' skills. Abbot Salvado depended initially on donations and tangible support from Spain and Europe. To illustrate the progress of the mission, these paintings were essential. 'View of Perth from Mt Eliza' by James Walsh, 1864, is also a highly-prized early work, with another version by the same artist held by the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Although not of New Norcia, the watercolour arguably displays the growing town as the gateway to New Norcia and as the centre of an established colony, worth investing in. A picture tells a thousand words, so the saying goes.

Questions remain, particularly concerning a third artist paid but unnamed in the ledger in 1864. However the past is revealed through careful investigation, with the retention of records and historic material, and through the inquisitive drive of researchers and writers. Their input is warmly welcomed in both Collections and Archives, linking these areas in revealing the origins of the New Norcia Art collection.

By Marina Baker, Museum Collections Manager



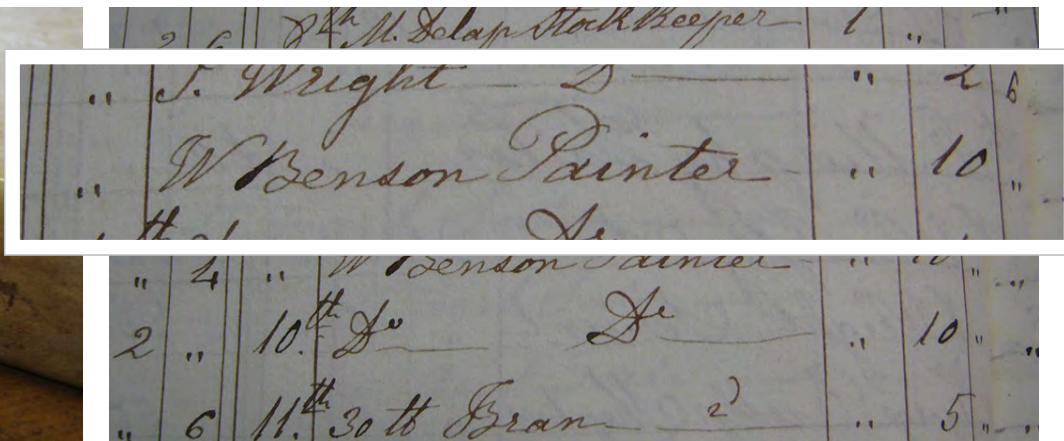
Above: 'View of New Norcia from the East' by Walter Benson [73594P/1975.818b]



Above: Engraving produced in Barcelona, 1862 [AWoP 474]



Above: Close up of ledger



Above: W Benson entry 8th March 1861 (NNA 02953-2)

2017 Writers' Festival

The 2017 *New Norcia Writers' Festival* was a sell out - the day brought over a hundred people together to enjoy the diverse and engaging sessions set in the town's stunning heritage interiors.

Nicole Sinclair kicked off the day discussing her debut novel *Bloodlines*. In conversation with festival director, Will Yeoman, the session was rich with humour and warmth while discussing the novel's themes and Nicole's writing techniques plus juggling pregnancies, babies and day to day life! Inspirational.

Zen student, former performance poet and creative writing teacher Brigid Lowry discussed her quirky new book *Still Life with a Teapot* with Charlotte Guest. Brigid, a wise, witty and thoroughly engaging conversationalist offered advice, observations, hope, reality checks and insight into what it's like to be an ageing woman in the 21st century.

Lunchtime offered the chance to peruse the Indigenous cultural exhibition and the restored Abbey Press whilst picking up a souvenir bookmark hot off the press, created by Geoff Moore, printer extraordinaire.

After a stirring piano recital by Dom Robert Nixon, UWA Senior lecturer Tony d'Aeth Hughes led an interesting discussion examining some of Australia's

most well-known and significant writers - Albert Facey, Peter Cowan, Dorothy Hewett, Jack Davis, Elizabeth Jolley, and John Kinsella -and how their literature shapes the human experience of the geographical changing landscape.

The day ended in the rarely visited, highly decorated, Spanish Chapel where Stephen Scourfield and Will Yeoman created magic and beauty; Stephens's poetic prose transported us from the wheat belt to rural England, accompanied by the soulful strains of classical guitar.

The Spanish Chapel was restored in 2012 with generous donations from Friends of New Norcia.

By Lucy Nicholson, Communications Manager



Above: William Yeoman and Stephen Scourfield in the Spanish Chapel



Letterpress Workshop: 10th October 2017

An intensive one day basic course introducing students to letterpress printing.

Participants will learn hand typesetting using a variety of different typefaces, and at least two different presses. They will lock type up in a forme, learn how to roll out ink and ink up a press and print a joint poster and a small card.

This workshop offers the unusual opportunity to learn letterpress printing at the recently restored Abbey Press at New Norcia. Tutor Claire Bolton has been a letterpress printer for 40 years and has taught workshops for over 20 years at her Alembic Press in the UK, in the US and Australia, and at London Rare Book School. Claire has offered her time and expertise to restore the Abbey Press to working order.

Cost: \$120.00.

Places are limited to six people, so book early! Please book via the webshop or email communications@newnorcia.wa.edu.au.

A Celebration for Keith Hunt

Long standing member of the New Norcia community and previous manager of New Norcia's farm, Keith Hunt, celebrated his 80th birthday on the old Hunt family farm in New Norcia last month. They were joined by all his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, friends and the monks of New Norcia to help him enjoy his day.

Conversation flowed, speeches were given, and the day was accompanied with fresh farm lamb on a spit with gravy rolls and homemade pumpkin soup. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day.



Above: Dom Robert, Fr Bernard, Fr Anscar, Keith Hunt, Fr Anthony, Dom Paul & Fr David.



NEW NORCIA HOTEL

NEW NORCIA HOTEL ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

The New Norcia Hotel has been a hive of activity. We have a new pool table and jukebox, refreshed rooms and a new menu on the way.

Come and join us for these activities:

- Wednesday – Steak Night \$18.90
- Friday – Chase the Ace
- Saturday – Live Music 4pm-7pm, \$12 cocktails and \$7 pints
- Sunday – Rib Night (BBQ, sweet chilli or mango)
- Monday to Friday – Happy Hour 5pm-6pm

Exhibition by local artist, Nyree Taylor

ARCADIA NYREE TAYLOR

September 28th - October 4th, 2017
Opening Night: Saturday 30th September, 6.00pm

KIDOGO ART HOUSE
Bathers Beach (off Mews Road), Fremantle
0417 096 365 or nyree@furthermore.com.au



Wildflower walks with Sarah Mason



Carrah Farms host wildflower walks where you'll see some very special flora and bird life in managed and covenanted bushland. Bookings are essential and seasonal. Please contact Sarah on 0459 212780 or enquiry@carrah.com.au.

AFL Grand Final

at the New Norcia Hotel
30th September
11.30am – 3pm
GIANT screen (3x2m)
Outside on the deck
Live & Free

2017 New Norcia Olive Oil wins Silver at the Perth Royal Show!

For Class 2: Commercial volume, using oil
sourced from a single grove.
Congratulations to all those involved.

2017 Perth Royal Olive Awards

— Silver —
CONGRATULATIONS

Class 2: Commercial volume, using oil sourced from a single grove:
production of oil for this entry is 200 to 4,999 litres.

For Entry: New Norcia Olive Oil

ID#: MONO

Score: 82



President