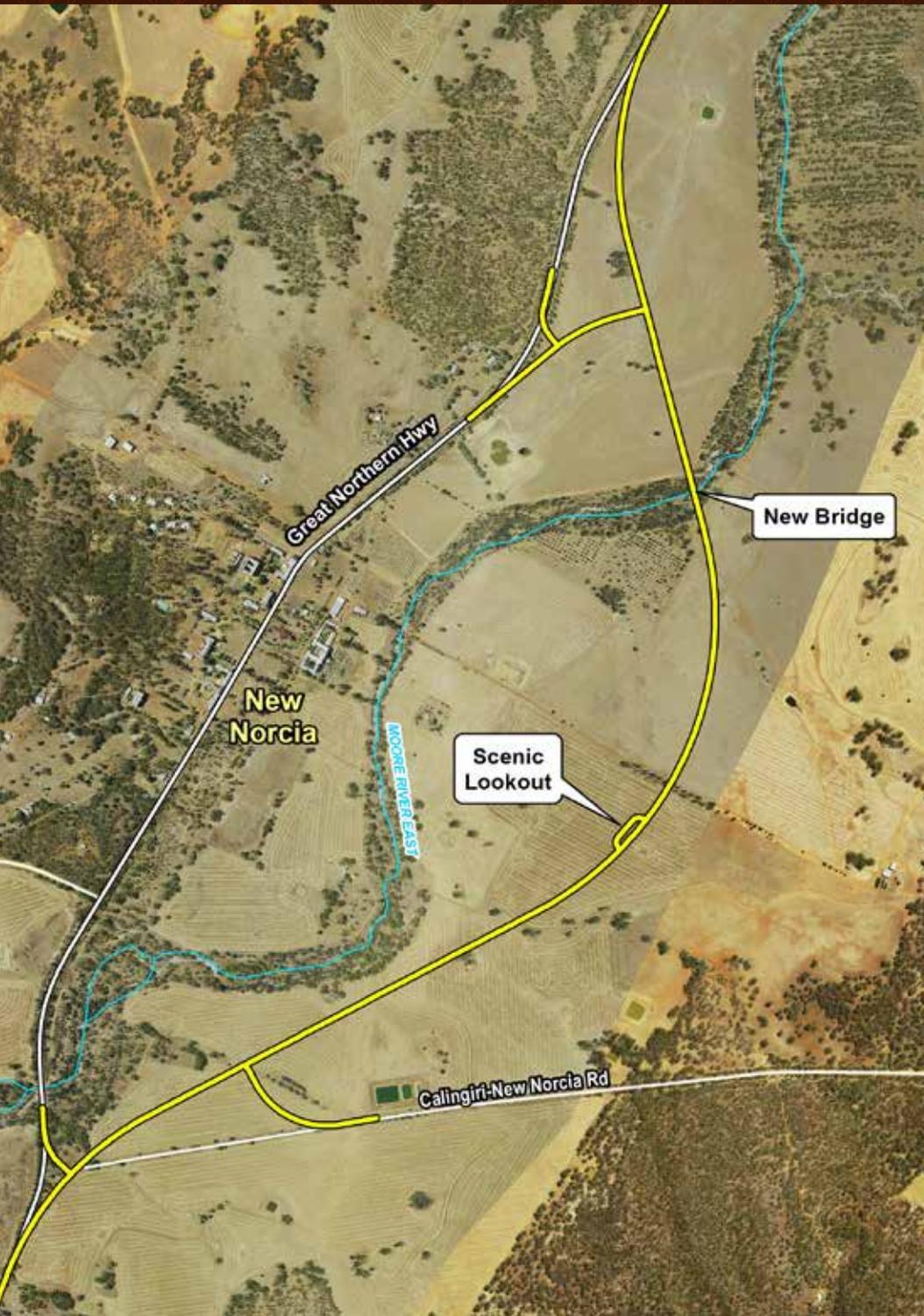


# Friends

A Communication to the Friends of New Norcia

ISSUE 38



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# When in Rome...

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The Monastic Institute within the Pontifical University of Sant' Anselmo, which stands at the highest point of the Aventine, one of the mythical seven hills of Rome, hosted the Fourth International Symposium *Monasticism and the Economy* (7-10 June).

Aided by the extensive research and writing by New Norcia archivist Peter Hocking, I gave a paper entitled *With eyes fixed on heaven...and the bottom line: the spiritual and economic sustainability of New Norcia, a town like no other*. The paper traces the slow but steady evolution of the New Norcia community which includes heroic pioneering endeavours and long years of conflict, difficulty and hardship. It explores the complex web of relationships and the vast possibilities and significant challenges involved in attempting to create an environment in which the monastic goal of seeking God and the corporate realities of running a monastic town can coexist – the complex and delicate task of holding oratory and boardroom in balance. New Norcia was well represented at the symposium with Oblates Katharine Massam and John Smith offering papers entitled *Work, Idleness and Leisure: towards a monastic ethic of time and productivity* and *Living by Godly Wisdom: Monasteries and Management in an age of Corporatization* respectively. All three papers were well received and will be published by Sant' Anselmo in 2017.

The few months back in New Norcia, before my return to Rome in September, included the happy occasion of clothing a new novice Dom Paul Forster, a week in Victoria for the Canonical Visitation at the Anglican Benedictine Community of St Mark's Abbey Camperdown, and the usual typical mixture of New Norcia chaos and calm. I returned to Sant' Anselmo for the Congress of Abbots (3-16 September), this time staying at Sant' Ambrogio, the Curia of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation to which New Norcia belongs. Just twenty minutes walk from Sant' Anselmo along the picturesque Tiber River, it is nestled in a charming little alleyway near the Synagogue and is close to some of my favourite places such as Piazza Campo De Fiori and Trastevere. Along with the many business sessions, the Congress agenda included lectures and workshops during which many meaningful exchanges took place with monks both already known and newly met. We enjoyed pilgrimages to Subiaco and Sacro Speco (the cave of St



View from Sant' Anselmo on the Aventine

Benedict), Monte Cassino (the monastery founded by St Benedict), and the Pontifical Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls in the care of the Benedictines – the hospitality shown to us was extraordinary. Several Cardinals celebrated Mass for us throughout the Congress and we were honoured with a private audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican, who graciously took the time to meet each of us individually.

In a spirit of great joy, the Congress elected Abbot Gregory Polan of Conception Abbey (USA) to the Office of Abbot Primate. He is a very fine man; intelligent, capable, a problem solver; he is humble and struck me as very warm and approachable. The ringing of the bells, the singing of the *Te Deum*, the primate's proclamation of the *Credo* at the conclusion of the election, and the festive meal we shared in the refectory gave witness to the joy we shared with Benedictines throughout the world, both past and present.

After the Congress I moved to San Lorenzo da Brindisi, an impressive 1960s university size Capuchin house with fine facilities and a stunning chapel, for the General Chapter of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation (17-23 September). The friars were very hospitable. The Chapter elected another fine man Fr Guillermo Aborleda Tamayo OSB, abbot of Medellin and abbot administrator of Guatapé (Columbia) as Abbot President of our Congregation.

After the Chapter I returned to central Rome for the weekend staying at *Domus Australia* to assist at the launch of the Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship for Indigenous Studies (24 September 2016), an initiative of the Australian Catholic University (ACU), which now has a campus on another of the seven hills, the Janiculum. Francis Conaci, an Aboriginal boy from New Norcia and his companion John Dirimera went to Rome with Salvado in 1849 to begin their journey into monastic life, studying at the monastery of Cava in Naples. Sadly, Conaci became ill, returned to Rome and died there in 1853. He is buried in the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls. The launch, hosted by ACU and the Australian Embassy, took place at the Vatican Ethnological Museum (after hours!) right by the Australian exhibition including material about New Norcia. After a welcome from Professor Barbara Jatta, Deputy Director of the Vatican Museums, and an opening prayer led by Ms Jane Ceolin, Director of First Peoples and Equity Pathways, ACU (MC), we heard from distinguished

guests, Mr Julien O'Connell AM, Pro Chancellor ACU and HE Ms Melissa Hitchman, the new Australian Ambassador to the Holy See. Representing the Benedictine Community of New Norcia and the New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation, I gave a short address (see page 8), and Abbot Emeritus of St Paul's Outside the Walls, Rt Reverend Dr Edmund Power OSB, read a first-hand account of Conaci from the abbey chronicle. For me, it was one of those 'goose-bump' occasions – that this young Aboriginal boy from New Norcia should be so honoured and revered was very moving. This delightful event concluded with *aperitivo* in the Vatican Gardens and, on so many levels, it was an experience I shall never forget.

Abbot John



Abbot John meets Pope Francis



The day of the Election - spot the Aussie!

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Editor - Lucy Nicholson

### CONTACT DETAILS:

**Friends of New Norcia**  
The Benedictine Community of New Norcia  
Great Northern Highway  
New Norcia WA 6509

Telephone: (08) 9654 8018  
Facsimile: (08) 9654 8097  
Email: friends@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

**Monastery Office**  
Telephone: (08) 9654 8018  
Facsimile: (08) 9654 8097

**Monastery Guesthouse**  
Telephone: (08) 9654 8002  
Email: guesthouse@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

**Museum and Art Gallery**  
Telephone: (08) 9654 8056  
Email: info@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

**New Norcia Hotel**  
Telephone: (08) 9654 8034  
Email: hotel@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

**Group Accommodation and Education Centre**  
Telephone: (08) 9654 8018  
Email: groups@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

Please visit the New Norcia website for up-to-date news and events at:

[www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au)

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# New Norcia Bypass



Livestock underpass being built

In March 2016, Minister Dean Nalder visited the community to formally advise them that the New Norcia bypass project would go ahead. Jointly funded by the Australian and West Australian Governments, this 29.8 million dollar project is being delivered by Jacobs and Arup and constructed by Decmil.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> April, a “Ground Breaking Ceremony” saw stakeholders, dignitaries, and locals gathered together spade in hand to officially open the project by turning the first sod.

Abbot John has reflected that although the bypass may reduce passing trade in the future, it is important and necessary for three main reasons;

New Norcia is a place of spiritual pilgrimage, a place where people come to seek God and peace - tranquillity facilitates this search whereas roaring heavy traffic rumbling through the town is detrimental to this quest!

As a town of historical and cultural significance, a place of living heritage and monastic tradition, the fragile 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings which house such extraordinary exhibitions and artworks were being damaged, and the whole fabric of the town was in danger.

Thousands of visitors to New Norcia were being placed in potential danger. With 1,300 vehicles passing through the townsite on a daily basis, forty percent of these being heavy vehicles, the heavy road traffic poses extreme risk to our guests, many of whom are school groups, foreign visitors and the elderly.

Before work started, environmental, heritage and Indigenous surveys of the land were carried out and the main sewer pipe, effluent pipe, water main and Telstra optic fibres all had to be relocated. Overhead power lines had to be modified and new fencing and project signs installed.

Construction started in May 2016 and was greeted with heartfelt excitement and

happiness. It was of course one of the wettest winters on record which impinged on progress, but now the project is moving quickly and the finish date should be approximately July 2017.

The project consists of the construction of 6 km of road to the east of New Norcia and includes the installation of overtaking lanes, culverts, a stock underpass, safety barriers, a bridge, re-vegetation and planting, a scenic lookout, a farm access track, reconstruction of existing drive ways, intersection flag lighting, for north and south entrance statements and of course the full pavement construction of the road.

The monastic community has been very grateful to be able to support the project and has been liaising with the two lead contractors Jacobs and Decmil, who are undertaking the works on behalf of Main Roads. As well as providing the land on which the bypass is being placed, the Community has provided accommodation and catering services to the contractors for



the duration of construction as well as some additional resources such as sand and water. The town of New Norcia is also benefiting from having a range of heavy construction equipment to improve and upgrade some of the ageing roads, drainage culverts and pathways around the town site. A variety of concrete pathways and carports has already been constructed around the town. This has been achieved

by using the excess or surplus concrete from the bridge and footings. Normally this excess concrete would be wasted or discarded; however in keeping with The Rule of St Benedict, the aim at New Norcia is to be frugal with what we have or have been given.

The Abbot and the monastic community would like to express their heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in helping the project

reach realisation; many people have been working on this in the background for many years.

Lucy Nicholson  
Communications Manager

## The Photos Explained

Livestock underpass: pictured top left

The stock underpass is required to allow access for the owner and stock to cross the road in safety. At this stage the concrete base is complete and pre-cast concrete box units (2.7m wide x 2.4m high) have been placed on the base. In the foreground one can see the steel for the wingwall construction. Wingwalls are shaped to intersect the bank of earth on which the road is built. All concrete is reinforced with steel, because while concrete is strong in compression, its tensile strength is only 10 percent of the compressive strength. Without the steel the concrete would break.



Bridge construction: pictured above and bottom left

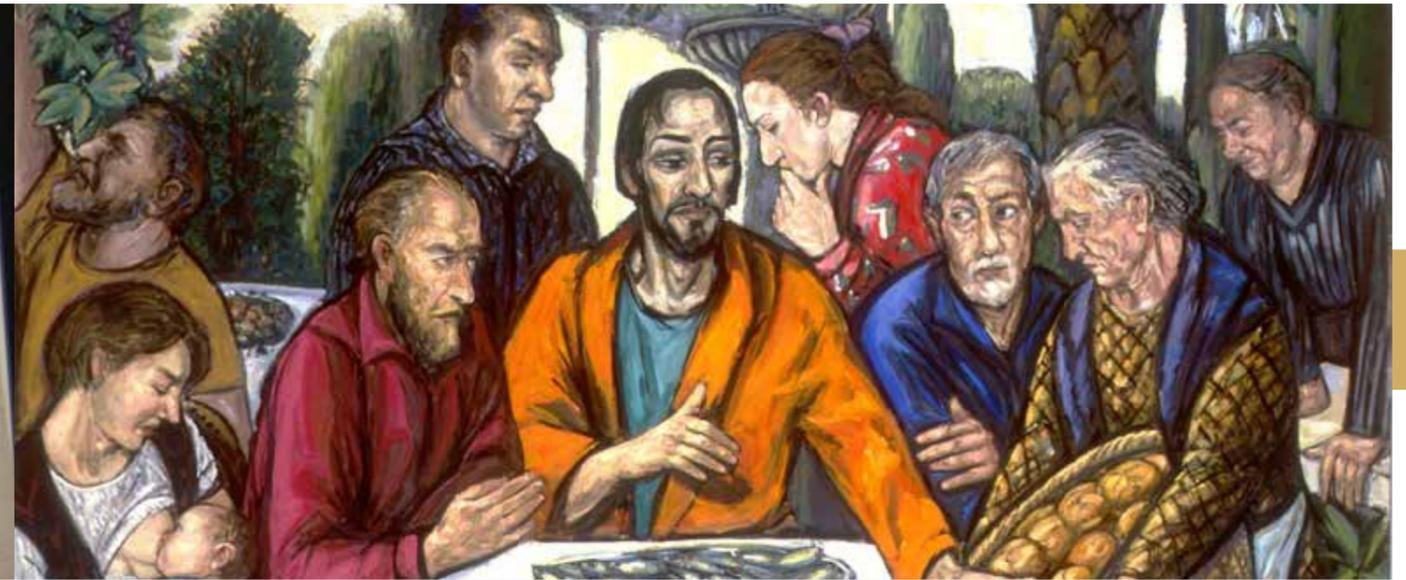
Standing on the north of the river looking south; the steel cages for the four piles that make up pier two are right up next to the river. At this stage of the construction the piles are complete and the construction of the structures which hold the bridge deck are about to commence. The people in the background are placing a blinding layer of concrete around the piles (15m deep) of Pier 1. This concrete is placed there to support the scaffolding which in turn supports the form work into which the liquid concrete is placed. The formwork is effectively a mould and once the concrete hardens this formwork is removed.

In the foreground are the top of the piles (12m deep) just behind the temporary rock structure which had to be built to move the river over by 3m to allow the construction of the piles. In the background are the tops of the piles (19m deep) for Pier 3. The piles are set 1m into the rock at the base of each pile. This required the piling rig to drill a hole into the bedrock to a depth of 1m to allow the pile to be constructed so that it transmits all the loads that are placed on it into the solid rock.

It was interesting to see the rock level was higher in the area where Pier 2 was constructed. The area has Dolerite intrusions into the Granite, which is the predominant rock. The Granite is the light coloured rock while the Dolerite is the black rock that forms the round boulders.

# A Prized Collection

Entry view of the exhibition with *Noli me tangere* by Roy de Maistre (1949), *Australiana Madonna* by Martin Sharpe (2011), *The Glory Of God And The Dignity Of Man* by Allan Baker (1987), and on the far wall *Search Engine* by Kate Lindsay and Ken Wadrop (2002).



Psalm (71) 72 by Salvatore Zofrea, 1996

**The collection of contemporary Australian religious art housed at the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery is a large, surprisingly good body of artwork that has been steadily building since 1985.**

It is the only known collection dedicated to Judaeo-Christian art in the country. In time, and with the assistance of the art community and the general public, it has the potential to grow into a collection of national significance.

For a small rural town, New Norcia has an extraordinarily rich artistic heritage. It can be encountered almost everywhere – in the buildings, the collections, even in the cruciform layout of the town itself, with the sun symbolically rising over the monastery and setting behind the cemetery. In fact, given New Norcia's strong sense of place, it could be argued that nowhere else in Australia does religious art sit so comfortably and have the chance to be so readily appreciated.

Today the collection numbers approximately 160 artworks. The majority are paintings but there are some photographs, several sculptures and one video work. Most date from the 1980s onwards and are by Western Australian artists. Major local artists represented include Howard Taylor, Robert Juniper, Brian McKay and Miriam Stannage.

There are around thirty artworks by artists of national significance dating from the

1930s to the present. These include major paintings by Roy de Maistre, Weaver Hawkins, Ray Crooke, John Coburn, Alan Oldfield, George Gittoes, Joe Furlonger, Salvatore Zofrea, Graham Fransella, Brent Harris and Janet Lawrence/Julie Rrap. There are also minor pieces by Frank Hinder, Fred Williams and Charles Blackman.

Unlike most collections, New Norcia's collection of contemporary Australian religious art began out of necessity. In 1986, twenty-seven Old Master paintings were stolen from the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery. All except one were recovered but they were in a seriously damaged condition and it took the community the next twenty years to have them restored.

A bigger crisis with more threatening consequences occurred in 1991. New Norcia Catholic College, the town's secondary boarding school, abruptly closed for financial reasons. In the search for a new central business, the monastic community turned to cultural tourism, a longstanding second-order activity that had not been fully explored but which appeared to have potential. In this context, the development of a contemporary Australian religious art collection emerged as an enlightened component in the town's survival package.

In retrospect, it is a collection that wanted to grow. From the outset, the majority of the artworks have been donated, sometimes by benefactors but mostly by the artists themselves. This giving has recently been

made more attractive by the Commonwealth Government awarding the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery tax deductible status for monetary donations to the collection under its Deductible Gifts Recipient scheme (DGR) and for donations of artworks under its Cultural Gifts Program (CGP).

Building a contemporary Australian religious art collection has been a learning curve for New Norcia. Historically most acquisitions have been associated with the Mandorla Award, a national award for Christian religious art based in Perth. It is a themed award and has been held on sixteen occasions since its inception in 1985. As a result, until recently the New Norcia collection was probably more correctly described as an accumulation rather than a genuine collection.

However, with time and the acquisition of artworks from other quarters, especially a number of important earlier works, a clearer collecting philosophy has emerged. The focus has sharpened and the collection now aims to tell a story of Judaeo-Christian art in Australia from the 1930s to the present using cornerstone works. The gaps are many and obvious, especially from the 1930s to the 1980s; however, there are enough key pieces to suggest the skeleton of the project.

In March 2015, thanks to the generosity of Melbourne benefactors, Allan and Maria Myers, the collection was especially fortunate to acquire Roy de Maistre's 1949 painting of the Risen Christ encountering

Mary Magdalene, entitled *Noli Me Tangere*. Last year a grant from the Melbourne-based, Copland Foundation made possible the purchase of Robert Juniper's important early work, *Last Supper - Lord, is it I?* (1958). Not only are these paintings significant artworks in their own right but they make important connections with two other early works in the collection *Golgotha Scene* (1958) by Harold Weaver Hawkins and *The Deposition* (1961) by Ray Crooke. These four not only make a thematic set – a paschal mystery series – but they also date from the same 1950s-60s period and show the influence of the international modernist movement on emerging contemporary Australian painting. This group from the post war period now forms the foundation of the present collection.

A large work entitled *Prepare the Way* – by the late John Coburn and inspired by the scripture text concerning John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus Christ – is a highlight from the collection's middle period. Although Coburn is one of Australia's leading abstract artists this work is symbolic rather than abstract, having at its centre the Eucharistic cup and, above it, the triangle representing the Trinity. The strong simple colours of gold, red and black emphasise the majesty of Christ's redemptive work. This painting was an entry in the 1982 Mandorla Award and, while Coburn didn't win the prize that year, he generously agreed to exchange it for one of his smaller works which was already in the New Norcia collection.

Two more recent cornerstone pieces focus on the Stations of the Cross and are both by women artists. The first, by the late Western Australian artist Miriam Stannage, is a series of fourteen black and white photographic images featuring found objects on sand. Each is a strong, accessible image and together they form a powerful journey to Calvary – but the effect is undercut by the materials and their setting which speak of randomness and impermanence and perhaps the fragility of Christ's great act of self-giving in our consciousness today.

The second, *Ciphers* (2013), is a large collaborative work by two leading feminist artists, Janet Lawrence and Julie Rrap from Sydney – their work is a series of fourteen small black and white drawings of a single hand in different positions, perhaps suggestive of the conflicted crowd that accompanied Jesus. Across the front of these drawings is a sheet of clear perspex smeared with translucent red and white paint, disturbingly evocative of blood and body fluids and Christ's suffering. The different media juxtapose the perspectives of the Passion story itself, but they also serve to highlight the danger inherent in mass emotion at any time. Both the Stannage series and the Lawrence/Rrap work were generously donated by the artists.

The contemporary collection is housed in a large, well appointed exhibition space at the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery, the town's main attraction for visitors. The contemporary gallery has a regular

programme of changing exhibitions based on its own collection supplemented by loans from other institutions. Biennially, it hosts the finalists' exhibition of the Mandorla Prize, retaining the winning artwork for display purposes on behalf of the Mandorla Art Committee.

The collection is supported by excellent storage and management systems and is staffed by a part-time collections manager and consultant exhibitions manager/curator. Perhaps a testimony to the maturing nature of the collection is the fact that in more recent years New Norcia has been invited to mount special displays at a number of Perth hospitals and, in 2012/13, to tour an exhibition of twenty five works around the main regional galleries of Western Australia.

Each Benedictine community relates to the outside world in its own way, and at New Norcia a small town has developed which has had a surprising range and scale of activities. Over its history it has been an Aboriginal mission, the centre of an extensive pastoral enterprise, a place of secondary education and a service and social centre for the local rural hinterland. However because the monastic community remained overwhelmingly Spanish until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the site speaks with a European rather than the more usual Anglo-Saxon voice.

Today with so much built, movable, documentary and intangible heritage still intact, the town is widely regarded as one of the country's most significant heritage

...continued on page 9

# Indigenous Scholarship

## Abbot John's Address: ACU (Rome) Launch of Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship for Indigenous Students, Vatican Museums September 2016

To the Officials of the Australian Catholic University and the Australian Embassy to the Holy See, thank you for inviting me to this launch of the *Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship for Indigenous Students*.

I have been in Rome for the past three weeks attending the Congress of Abbots at Sant' Anselmo, followed by the General Chapter of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation held at San Lorenzo, so I was very pleased to be able to accept your kind invitation, a delightful way to conclude my time in Rome.

I offer these few words this evening on behalf of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia and the New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation...and of course, in honour of Francis Xavier Conaci, who died here on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1853.

In these past weeks I have participated in two monastic liturgical celebrations at St Paul's Outside the Walls, the burial place of Conaci, and on both occasions I have felt his spiritual presence, both in the magnificent entrance to the church where he is buried and in the peace and stillness of the monastic cloister.

Some of you may have attended the ACU Melbourne COV&R Conference in July, or at least read the transcript of Fr Frank Brennan's paper, in which he describes the moving liturgy at the burial site of Conaci in front of the Basilica of St Paul's at the time of the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop. Tears were shed, the didgeridoo was played, a traditional dance was performed, an old favourite hymn was sung and prayers were offered, including the Lord's Prayer in the language of the Noongar people.

Fr Brennan explains the significance of this event and the reason it was so moving:

*They had reclaimed [Conaci's] story. His story was a vehicle for communicating their own ongoing struggle with straddling the divide of belonging and meaning. Their liturgy provided the means for communicating meaning, dignity and hope despite all that has occurred. (Brennan, 16 July 2016)*

While this scholarship will be of great benefit to Indigenous students studying here in Rome, its very existence will do more for the Aboriginal people back in Australia than we will ever know. I'm sure of one thing though – it is another step towards healing, another step towards the unity to which we all aspire.

Although most of what we know of Conaci and his companion



77930P  
A scan of a drawing of John Dirimera, left, and Francis Conaci from the Archives of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. Photo: Miriam Rudolph

Dirimera comes from the *Memoirs* of New Norcia's founder Rosendo Salvado, a quick search of the New Norcia archive uncovers a story not just of history, but an ongoing dynamic story of interpretation; a story of mission, encounter and collaboration; a story of possibility and hope.

There is no time to go into detail here, only to say that this scholarship picks up two central monastic values – the love of learning and the desire for God – values upheld by Conaci in the opportunity given him. When invited by Salvado to return to Australia from the monastery of Cava he says:

*We've not done our studies. When we go back to Australia, our parents and friends will ask us if we understand the 'talking papers' (books and letters) and if we can make them ourselves (know how to write), if we can make horses and tress (know how to draw) and many other things...so it is much better for you to leave now; in the meantime we study a lot. (Victims of Charity by Desmond O'Grady, The Age, 22 November 1986)*

This enthusiasm and commitment paid off. In Conaci's delightful hand-written letter to Salvado from Cava 18<sup>th</sup> July 1951 he says:

*To give you proof of my behaviour in study, I send you a certificate that I got in the public examinations of September, with the mark "Very Good," together with the silver medal, which the Father Master of Novices is keeping for me. We thank you for the picture cards of saints that you have sent us, and we ask you to bring us a little book of prayers containing the Preparation for Holy Communion. (Trans. Stormon, The Salvado Memoirs)*

In his *New Norcia Studies* article, Abbot Bernard Rooney reflects on this relationship between Salvado and these Aboriginal Benedictine students:

*Salvado not only loved the boys, but held such high opinion of their moral and intellectual capacity that he saw them as potential mentors and spiritual leaders of their Indigenous community. (Rooney, New Norcia Studies 15, 2007)*

As we launch this scholarship here in Rome, may all those who benefit from it follow Conaci's example; may they be encouraged by his desire to succeed and to share that success with their beloved family and friends, which, as we know, was a part of Conaci's dream that was never fulfilled.

The Benedictine Community and the New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation congratulate everyone concerned with this scholarship and I'm so thrilled to be here with you this evening to offer our encouragement and support.

In the spirit of the ACU motto, may all the exciting potential that this scholarship promises, give witness to 'truth in love'.

# IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS

## Significant Religious Artworks from New Norcia's Contemporary Collection

This exhibition features contemporary Australian artworks inspired by the Christian narrative. The works date from the 1930s to the present day.

For most of the artists – believers or not – traditional Western religious art seems to have imprinted on them a powerful iconography for dealing with the central issues of human life.

Australian Gallery (1<sup>st</sup> floor to the right)  
Museum and Art Gallery of New Norcia  
From 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 until 2018



Weaver Hawkins Golgotha Scene 1958

## A Prized Collection

...from page 7

sites – Australia's only monastic town – and cultural tourism, together with residential school camps, courses in monastic subjects and more traditional forms of hospitality like retreats have flourished. Approximately 60,000 people visit the site annually.

In a monastic town where much of the culture is traditional and predictable, and rightly so, New Norcia's contemporary Australian religious art collection is a surprise and refreshingly unpredictable.

And while the collection may have had its origin as a promising strategy to help give the town its best chance of survival – a function it continues to fulfil – it has matured into an imaginative, attractive catalyst for promoting important conversations between artists and viewers in a post modern society.

In collaboration with artists, benefactors and supporters, New Norcia looks forward to building this unique contemporary religious art collection into a collection of

national significance for the benefit of all Australians.

To help with the development of New Norcia's Contemporary Australian Religious Art Collection or for more information, please contact –

Joy Legge, Exhibitions Manager/Curator  
– joylegge@iinet.net.au

Marina Baker, Collection Manager –  
museumcollections@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

# “... of fine twisted linen, and blue, purple, and crimson yarns.” (Exodus 26:1)

## *The steady progress of the New Norcia Ecclesiastical Textile Collection Storage Facility*

The New Norcia Ecclesiastical Textile collection, begun by Rosendo Salvado in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continues to evolve and strengthen into the future. The earliest and most significant part of the collection of almost 1,200 pieces – the so-called *Spanish Collection* of thirty items – is about to be moved into its new home in a dedicated room in the old St Joseph’s Convent at New Norcia. As this long project comes to fruition, it is with appreciation to the commitment of the Benedictine community, through the support of the National Library of Australia’s *Community Heritage Grants* section and due to the generous donations from many of the Friends of New Norcia that progress is being realised.

A ‘Special Project’ fundraising focus was established by New Norcia in 2014; its aim was to renovate the first floor of the former Benedictine Sisters’ convent as an ecclesiastical textile storage area. Almost \$29,000 has been raised to date through the Friends.

Following on from the recommendations of the *Preservation Needs Assessment* Report of 2012, during 2014 Monochorum proceeded with the establishment of the new, enlarged and environmentally appropriate storage facility in the area identified by the PNA as the most suitable. With the main hallway and rooms branching from the original St Joseph’s chapel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the New Norcia Museum, both security and accessibility will be possible for future museum visitors and researchers.

Upgrading works undertaken and completed in 2015 saw the renovation of three sizeable rooms, two passageways and

a large open space with toilet facilities attached. It included upgrading the electricity, plumbing, painting, floor sanding and finishing, with new lighting and blinds. Work was carried out under the direction of the site architect by external contractors and New Norcia’s in-house maintenance team. While the total cost of capital works, excluding the value of in-house labour, was \$35,275, the shortfall has been met by New Norcia’s own resources.

As a further contribution to the establishment of the new storage facility, New Norcia allocated \$5,000 in 2016 for the purchase of new storage racking for the other two rooms of the renovated suite, which will house the bulk of the collection. These items are of lesser significance than the Spanish Collection and much of it can be accommodated on a hanging system and shelves. A fourth room has also been cleaned and painted in the same area as an interim workroom with sewing, ironing and storage equipment, acid free materials and padding for the movement and re-hanging of the garments.

In the most recent and exciting advance, New Norcia Collections department has just acquitted a grant of \$12,727, received last year in the National Library of Australia’s Community Heritage Grant round. With this grant and in consultation with textile conservator Rinske Car and metallurgist Dr Ian MacLeod, a group of custom-designed storage furniture was designed and commissioned from WA exhibition touring company

*Art-on-the-Move.* The four furniture pieces – mobile drawers and shelving that double as a work bench space – are constructed of hoop pine on castors and will house the most significant and rare examples of the collection – the group of embroidered ecclesiastical garments and altar linen used by the Spanish court, some dating from 1640.

Concurrent with these works, the conservators Rinske Car and Dr Ian MacLeod have utilised grants from Healthway and the Copland Foundation, generated in 2013 to celebrate Rosendo Salvado’s Bicentenary in 2014, to conserve four textiles of the highest priority. They are a cope, a chasuble, a mitre and a chalice cloth (pictured top right). The ground breaking techniques developed by Rinske and Ian in stabilising threadbare silk, conserving organic dyes, and treating tarnished gold and silver embroidery, have resulted in these textiles re-emerging as the most sumptuous and exquisite examples of their type. We can now rotate the display of at least one of these conserved items at all times in the Museum and Art Gallery of New Norcia.



*Detail of flower & bird of conserved Chalice Veil*

The research generated during the conservation process has resulted in a number of published papers, delivered at national and international forums by Rinske and Ian. Examples from the New Norcia collection have served both as guides to best-practice and as a stimulus to study. John Viska undertook an *Analysis of Plants* identified on the conserved chalice veil, clarifying the common and botanical names with descriptions and origins. In 2016 we were approached by a PhD student from the University of Canberra whose thesis undertakes a survey study of the Ecclesiastical Textiles of Australia. We hope the new storage area will allow further opportunities to access, investigate and celebrate the unique aspects of the New Norcia Textile collection.

Dr Ian MacLeod has recently introduced us to a breakthrough in nanotechnology – a copper fibre impregnated plastic material being made into storage (Intercept) bags. With many of the major galleries, companies and museums adopting them, we are trialling their use in the transfer of textile collection items with significant metal components, such as silver and gold thread, buttons and lace, especially as a way to maintain the high level of conservation funded. The copper attracts impurities and effectively cleans while it stores, a win-win also for the durability of funding outcomes and the enjoyment of future viewers.

The next phase sees the planning and progressive transfer of the textiles to their new areas, from the present confines of the old Vestments Room. Skilled volunteers are already gathering to assist in this major focus of 2017. There are also other rare and fragile pieces still to conserve, the next priorities on a large list beginning perhaps with the Processional Banner depicting the Madonna, and carried by Salvado and his fellow monks from Barcelona as they set sail for the new world in 1849. More treasures await, more stories to be revived with the fate of the textiles collection, so close to the heart of New Norcia’s cultural life, in the past, present and future. Thank you to everyone who has supported this important and ongoing venture.

**Marina Baker**  
Museum Collections Manager

*Above: Detail of peacock on conserved Chalice Veil*

*Right: Detail of couchant lamb on radiant sun, Chalice Cloth – photo by Margie Eberle*



*Right: Conserved Mitre and Cope – photo by Eva Fernandez*



# Imparting the Tradition

The New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies continues to present a range of experiences to a wide variety of people interested in deepening their spiritual life and pastoral endeavours. 2016 seems to have slipped by so quickly, probably because it has been a dynamic year, filled with our usual array of retreats, reading weekends, study programmes and special events.

We got off to an early start with an Undergraduate/Graduate unit *Ancient Monastic Wisdom* (also offered as a reading weekend for those interested in immersing themselves in the writings from the wise early Church Mothers and Fathers). Twelve intrepid souls braved the extreme heat of February in New Norcia for this intensive week of prayer, reading and study. A highlight of the week was the Monastic Q&A (ABC style). Sr Carmel hosted the evening, with our panel guests being, Abbot John, Sr Jill, Fr David, and Dom Paul (the newest recruit to the monastery) – intense questions from the students and illuminating answers from the panel generated a thought provoking night.

It was with great sadness in our hearts that we have learned of the sudden death of one of our students from this lively week, Alistair McKay. Alistair was a regular to Institute events during 2015 and made many lasting connections during the February intensive. His spirited wit and infectious enthusiasm, along with his attractive panache delighted us all. He will be sorely missed. Rest in Peace Alistair.

During September 2015, Sr Jill O'Brien sgs was invited by the Liturgical Commission of the Diocese of Auckland in New Zealand, to offer workshops on worship spaces that encourage "full and active participation" in the liturgy. She addressed a variety of audiences, including seminarians, priests and architects of the diocese, school religious educators as well as parish groups. These workshops focused on encouraging people to think about what constitutes a space that is not only beautiful but addresses the needs of the liturgical and devotional life of a community.

Jill also travelled to Christchurch where she conducted two conversations with people from four parishes who were preparing to build new churches after the destruction caused by the earthquake in 2011. The topic of these conversations was "Preparing to Build Anew ... Faithful to our Tradition". Although from a distance, her work for this project has continued into this year.

Professor Constant Mews from Monash University was our visiting scholar for Annual Institute Day held on October 1<sup>st</sup>, a very stormy day as it turned out, yet this inclement weather did not deter 48 participants from travelling up the Great Northern Highway to drink in the wisdom from both St Bernard of Clairvaux and St Hildegard of Bingen. Constant's presentation included not only their spiritual teaching but also chants from the ancient Cistercians

and Hildegard along with her captivating illuminations. New Norcia Abbey Wines lifted our spirits at lunch with their generous donation of Chardonnay, Rosé and Shiraz. Many thanks to the wine-maker, Nick Humphry.

The Carmelite nuns of Nedlands invited Sr Jill to help them in the renewal of their understanding of the Eucharist. She spent four days at their monastery working on the topic with the sisters using Gill Ostdiek's little book, *The Mystagogy of the Eucharist*. For a Benedictine, wondering (or wandering?) within the Carmel cloister was new experience. The sisters welcomed Jill with warmth and joy and participated in her sessions with enthusiasm.

Sr Carmel was asked to be one of the speakers for an event run by the Centre for Faith Enrichment of the Archdiocese of Perth held at the Newman Siena Centre in Doubleview. The afternoon was entitled: "Mysticism Three Ways: Looking at the Mystical Tradition of Judaism, Christianity and Islam", and involved presentations by three speakers, Rabbi Moshe Bernstein, Carmel and Sheik Muhammad Agherdien, followed by question time. It was a fabulous opportunity to share our faiths with one another, to recognise our commonality and differences in an atmosphere of great respect and a desire for deeper knowledge of each other's ways to God. The afternoon was well patronised, with 126 people attending the presentation.

We thank Dr Michelle Jones, the director of the Centre for this wonderful initiative.

Carmel Posa sgs



Sr Carmel Posa sgs with Sheik Muhammad

# Simple Profession

On Friday 3 June 2016, on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I made my Simple Profession during the Community Mass. Standing before the altar, I professed the monastic vows of Stability, Obedience and Conversion of Life before Abbot John, the monks of the Community, family members, parishioners, and many members of our broader New Norcia family.

It was a truly blessed and spirit filled day, the culmination of a long journey of life, prayer and discernment that had taken different shapes and forms over the years, but which had ultimately led me to this most magnificent day at Holy Trinity Abbey, New Norcia.

Upon reflection, my journey to the Benedictine Way as expressed by the Benedictine Community of New Norcia really began for me as a boy in Gladstone, South Australia, with the best witness in my life of a simple, yet deep faith, combined with a love of prayer and love of others, my mum. Other remarkable people who have helped to form and guide me on my journey to God over the years were the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Monsignor William

Nesdale, Fr Adrian Head, the Salesians of Don Bosco, Fr Jude Pirotta mssp and the St James the Apostle Parish Community, Hoppers Crossing, Victoria.

The Mass of Simple Profession contained two particularly beautiful liturgical moments that touched me so deeply that they will remain with me forever. The first of these being when I signed my profession document on the altar, and then standing before the altar I prayed "Suscipe me, Domine, secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et non confundas me ab expectatione mea" (Psalm 118:116 - *Receive me, Lord, as you have promised, and I shall live; do not disappoint me in my hope*). This was my prayer of total surrender to, and trust in, the Lord.

The second was when I was clothed with the Scapular and hood. As St. Benedict tells us, it is the scapular that is the yoke of the Rule and the Divine Office, it is the hood of justice and charity (love). In short, this garment forms part of my search for Christ.

As I continue my monastic journey, my search for Christ takes on various forms including my time in the oratory each and



Dom Daniel (centre) with eldest sister Theresa Caulfield & Frank Zubrinich

every day, praying over the psalms of the Divine Office, and in daily Conventual Mass with my brothers as we ponder Christ in the Word and Eucharist.

My search for Christ will also journey through the challenges and struggles, the joys and surprises of the common life that I share with my brothers.

It is within this context that my brothers and I live our vocation as monks.

*Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus- That in all things God may be glorified.*

Dom Daniel Meers OSB

# Salvado Catholic College

Salvado Catholic College, Byford, was officially opened on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016, with a celebration attended by Bishop Sproxtton, Abbot Fr John Herbert and Catholic Education Western Australia Executive Director, Dr Tim McDonald.

The school, the latest addition to the Catholic Education Western Australia system, has a strong focus on the development of the whole child; supporting students intellectually, spiritually and physically with contemporary and dynamic teaching methods, learning spaces and technology. Presently the college caters for kindergarten to year two students but will eventually accept students up to year twelve.

The College takes its name and inspiration from New Norcia's founding figure, Bishop Rosendo Salvado. Its motto "Peace, Justice, Compassion", was chosen for its reflection on the life-work of Bishop Salvado, including his commitment to education provision through New Norcia, religious devotion, and a level of respect for Aboriginal culture which was uncommon for a European person of his time. Foundation College Principal, Santino Giancono, stated; "Salvado was a real pioneer of his time and so it is fitting that the Catholic Education's newest college should bear his name."

Staff, students, and families celebrated Salvado Day on 1<sup>st</sup> March at the College, it is planned to become a yearly commemoration. The date marks Bishop Salvado's birthday, his first Mass, the Feast Day of his patron Saint Rudesindus, and also the laying of the first foundations at the New Norcia Monastery.

The relationship between Salvado Catholic College and New Norcia is not just historical. In August the staff was welcomed by the New Norcia community to take a two day retreat, building their connection with the Benedictine faith tradition and to reflect on the works and life of Bishop Salvado.

As a gift to the College to celebrate their foundation, the New Norcia Benedictine Community commissioned a painting from portrait artist Leonie Dobrowolski. The painting depicts Bishop Salvado surrounded by vignettes of his life at New Norcia. The work compliments steel artwork commissioned by the College from a local artist located at the two entrances.

New Norcia's monastic community is delighted to be able to work with the college in the coming years and support their new venture.

# From the Archives

When I started to write this, I titled it "A quieter year in the archives" but as I looked through my reports to the quarterly Archives Research and Publications Committee, I see that neither 2015 nor 2016 were anywhere near as quiet as I had thought – it was just that the emphasis had shifted.

The number of visitors to the archives remained high and in addition to the numbers of those seeking, typically, family information, our VIP guests included: the State Governor, the Spanish Consul, Margaret Medcalf and Lennie McCall (former State and Battye Librarians) and Cathrin Cassarchis (WA State Archivist). From the world of archives, we welcomed the Religious Archivists' Group who had lunch here as our guest, 18 archivists from the Sisters of Mercy, five archivists from the Sisters of St John of God in Broome and 15 students from the Melbourne College of Divinity. From overseas, we welcomed Francesco De Toni (UWA PhD student) with his parents visiting from Rome, former UN ambassador Dr Tommaso Gliozzi and his guests also from Rome, Dr and Mrs Hood from the USA, and Peter Boam with his nephew Willem visiting from Holland. Closer to home we had three separate parties from New Zealand, and Dom Clement and Fr Aelred travelled from San Beda in Manila.

Our volunteers have continued to do wonderful work and I would like to put on record my huge appreciation to (in alphabetical order) Carol Aldrich (from the USA), Christine Choo, Diana Davies, Rev Caro Field, Rob Hart, Daniela Lugo, Larrie Strautmanis (from Adelaide) and Andrew Walton. Carol, Diana and Caro have been very valuable helpers in general areas, whilst Rob and Larrie have done some wonderful work on typing up Fr Roman Rios' 1924 History of New Norcia whilst Larrie has also been working on appendices for, and general editing of, the forthcoming book of Bérengier and Salvado's correspondence translated by Judith McGuinness and Peter Gilet; Christine is continuing her sterling work on the Aboriginal Genealogy programme whilst Andrew has become well and truly involved in our latest project – the cataloguing and photographing of the Archives' extensive map collection. In addition, Fr Anthony Lovis has continued typing up the Community Chronicles, scanning the seemingly endless collection of photographs and laying the ground work for the archives' new media collection. Despite some serious surgery, Geraldine Byrne has continued to provide her expertise in annotating the photograph collection which is being scanned by Fr Anthony.

Researchers conducting academic work in the archives either for



Cathrin Cassarchis

their own research projects, higher degrees or on behalf of the archives during 2015–2016 included Associate Professor Katharine Massam (Melbourne College of Divinity), Associate Professor John Kinder (UWA), Associate Professor Alex Main (Murdoch), Dr Liz Conor (Monash), Francesco De Toni (PhD UWA), Geoffrey Coad (PhD UWA), Odhran O'Brien (PhD Notre Dame), Federica Verdina (PhD UWA) and Alex Bell (Mercy Heritage). In connection with this, we were delighted to welcome Eugenia Schettino and Bob Reece as the 2016 Abbot Placid Memorial Scholars into our fold of researchers. Eugenia was the critical reader for Judith McGuinness who was the former Scholarship holder, transcribing and translating the letters of Bishop Salvado to Théophile Bérengier. Now the roles are reversed and Judy will be acting as the critical reader for Eugenia who is transcribing and translating the large body of letters written to and by Santos Salvado while he was resident at New Norcia (1869–1879). By a happy chance, Emeritus Professor Bob Reece is researching Santos Salvado's photographs and his role in the arrival of the camera at New Norcia.

The archivist has been busy in outside events too, representing New Norcia on the Catholic Archives Advisory Committee every second or third month, and on the Religious Archivists' Group which meets irregularly at a different religious archive in the metropolitan area. In May this year, the ABC's Compass screened its *Letters of Salvado* programme, for which Fr David, Judith McGuinness and the archivist were interviewed; Eugenia's husband, César, spoke Salvado's part and Dom Robert was the apparently shadowy figure who seems to be (a rather slimmer) Bishop Salvado.

Donations made to archives during 2015 have been well documented (i.e. the Police Incident Book); also donated but not yet acknowledged was a Rollei 35mm slide projector from Fr Bernard Rooney. Following Professor Bolton's sad passing late last year, his widow Carol very generously donated an enormous part of Professor Bolton's journals and books on Western Australian Aboriginal history to the monastery. These eventually

## The Pilgrim Trail – Subiaco to New Norcia

The 202 km Pilgrim Trail was launched by the Governor of Western Australia, Kerry Sanderson, on 1 March 2016. It winds its way from St Joseph's Church in Subiaco through places of historic interest, leaving the metropolitan area via the Swan River foreshore before heading to Bells Rapids, of Avon Valley Descent fame, through Walyunga National Park and Julimar forest to the outback town of Bolgart, home to a second iconic West Australian bell tower! The final leg follows Old Plains Road to New Norcia where booked groups are welcomed by the ringing of bells, a ceremonial washing of feet and the gift of a commemorative postcard to mark their achievement.

The trail follows the footsteps of Dom Rosendo Salvado and is based on the Compostela de Santiago Camino Salvado trail in Spain. It offers a contemporary pilgrimage for those searching for reflection, connection and renewal.

For more details visit; [http://pilgrimtrail.com.au/the\\_trail/](http://pilgrimtrail.com.au/the_trail/) or <http://www.caminosalvado.com/>



found their way to the library, rather than the archives but I mention it here as it was the archivist who collected them!

The 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of the New Studies Journal titled *Ways of Telling*, being the proceedings from the previous year's Salvado Symposium, was launched jointly by Dr David Balloni (Italian Consul) and Dr Joshua Brown, former Abbot Placid scholar, at the Palms in Subiaco in November 2015. In addition to the journal's launch, Stefano Girola's much anticipated translation of Salvado's *1883 Report to Rome* was published too. There was no Studies Day in 2015, but things got back to normal with the 2016 event being held at the usual venue (St Joseph's Hall and St Gertrude's College) on May 28<sup>th</sup>. The title *Voices from the Archives* comprised papers from Odhran O'Brien (Griver and Salvado), Dr Stefano Girola (the 1900 Report to Propaganda Fide), Ross Bertinshaw (the well sinkers of the Victoria Plains) and Dr Peter Price's paper on Salvado and Serra in Rome at Vatican 1; sadly, Peter was not well enough to come to New Norcia (from

Melbourne) so his paper was most ably delivered by Dom Robert Nixon.

The launch of our biggest Journal yet – *No 23* at 130 pages – also took place in Subiaco at the Palms on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November along with the release of Stefano Girola's 1900 Report. We were thrilled that Cathrin Cassarchis, the State Archivist was able to launch the Journal and the 1900 Report for us, for which we are most grateful. Both these journals and all previous issues are available from the museum shop and online at the New Norcia website.

Peter Hocking  
Archivist



Abbot Rooney and Fr David in their costumes

### THE MONKS PERFORM!

Last August New Norcia hosted a very special event – sisters, staff and friends of New Norcia performed selected Cantos from Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, under the direction of Walter Cerquetti Lippi.

Eighty people attended this unique event and were treated to four different sessions concentrating on Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, the words interspersed by monastic chants, psalms and hymns sung by soprano Mary Creed. Musical interludes from Dom Robert Nixon were a delightful addition. The day received very positive feedback, and Walter hopes to return in the future to direct a performance of the *Life of Benedict*. We will keep you posted!

*"Congratulations on a fantastic event yesterday. It exceeded all expectations."*  
Peter Quinlan SC



# Interpretive Signage

In 2012, the New Norcia Benedictine Community selected Axiom Design Partners to build upon and execute the findings and recommendations of the Interpretation Plan created by Heritage Consultants Godden Mackay Logan, to develop and implement signage to enhance visitors' understanding, engagement and appreciation of New Norcia.

Axiom initially developed a design strategy and style guide followed by the development and design of specific signage projects – both wayfinding and interpretive. Wayfinding signage assists visitors to navigate a place and find their way more effectively, whilst interpretive signage helps visitors to understand the significance of place.

The first project stage saw the installation of interpretive signs to the Monastic Precinct.

This stage was gratefully partially funded by grants from the State Government Royalty for Regions and the Wheatbelt Development Commission. These signs combine the rawness of routed Cor-ten steel, which is then 'wrapped' with finely etched stainless steel interpretive panels. This represents both the strength / persistence as well as the craftsmanship for which the New Norcia monks are renowned. The signage appears to be

'extruded' from the earth and bows in reverence to the place it interprets. The steel of the plinth rusts and takes on the personality of its environment, further reinforcing the sign's connection with the site.

The second stage of the project saw the first rollout of wayfinding signage to key areas within the townsite. The design of the wayfinding signage is purposely simple. Designed to be obvious yet respectful so it does not dominate or visually distract from the aesthetic of the town.

More interpretive and wayfinding signage is currently being progressively rolled out throughout the townsite and will continue to do so for many years as each precinct within the townsite is upgraded.

As part of the adaptive reuse of key building assets in the town, Axiom has also repurposed the building known previously as the Marion Shrine into the Mission Cottages Interpretation Centre. This building now serves as both a memorial to, and as an aid for, the interpretation of the old New Norcia Mission Cottages, where for more than 100 years many Indigenous families had made their homes. The footprints of the old cottages can be seen directly adjacent to the building.

Other signage projects undertaken have

included upgrading the visitor map and all signage at the Visitor Centre and New Norcia Hotel to further improve visitor experience and also upgrading the signage at the roadhouse, now known as the Salvado Café.

Future projects currently in planning are an upgrade of the River Walk Interpretive Trail which will greatly improve visitors' experience and understanding of this unique and important part of New Norcia's history. The Apiary is also in the initial stages of planning interpretive signage and exhibition cabinets to house Fr Bernard's Indigenous artefacts he has collected on the site over the decades.

It has been and, indeed, continues to be, a pleasure to be involved in such a historically important project, each year our own understanding and appreciation for both the people and the town continues to grow. As with any project of this type and scale, the job is never really finished – there are so many opportunities for signage to be used to assist visitors to better understand, engage and appreciate the wonderful place that is New Norcia.

**Benjamin Hames**  
Design Director  
Axiom Design Partners



## Museum & Art Gallery- An Introduction...

Welcome, I am the new Museum and Art Gallery manager, Carmel Murray. I came to New Norcia when I was about five days old. It was the 1970's and my dad, Keith Hunt, had just got the position of Stock Manager on the farm. Dad continued in this role for about three months before taking over as the Farm Manager, where he remained for the next 30 years. My mum, Bobbie Hunt, worked in the town laundry doing the boys' washing during this time.

The Hunts have had a long standing relationship with the Benedictine monks and New Norcia itself. William Hunt, my great-great-great grandfather came over from England in Salvado's time and dug some of the historic wells in the area, many of which still remain today. He married Catherine Murphy and started work at Glentromie, about 7km north of New Norcia. In 1880 he took up fifty acres of lease land, calling it Norfolk Farm after his home in the "old country" and made his life there. The original block is still in the family and is where my parents have retired to; they are still farming it to the present day.

So we made our life here in this very close knit community; my primary schooling was at Yerecoin, a small village about 60km away and, for my secondary education, I attended Salvado College at New Norcia. I was a "day bug" so enjoyed the best of both worlds; I could go home every day to my mum's wonderful home cooking, but could also have sleepovers with 160 girls doing hair and makeup.

The staff at the Museum and Art Galley are very excited to have been given a grant to install a lift so people unable to use the stairs now have full access to the first floor and can appreciate the artwork and exhibitions on show. The interior of the gift shop is to be upgraded, including painting and installing new shop fittings to highlight our products. Hopefully these works will be finished by the end of February 2017. Lucy, our Communications Manager, and I have been working closely together to promote New Norcia to Tourist Centres in our region which I am delighted to say is going extremely well. As part of this process, we hosted a "famil" for local Tourist Information Centres and took them on a private town tour and, from all reports, the day was a great success.

On a final note I would encourage you all to call in to meet our friendly staff, say hello, take a tour or peruse our gift shop.

**Carmel Murray**  
Manager, Museum and Art Gallery



Carmel Murray

## Education Centre Update

The Education Centre provides a wide range of activities for groups that visit New Norcia. The Aboriginal Studies programmes on offer are increasingly popular, the main presenters for these being Fr Bernard Rooney OSB and Lester Jacobs. The pair teach spear and boomerang throwing, traditional face painting, maya maya building, traditional tool making demonstrations, Aboriginal art, Aboriginal music and dance and a bush tucker walk. Due to high demand for the activities, the two presenters found themselves overwhelmed by interest from groups. With the addition of new monks to the community, Fr Bernard was able to approach Dom Robert Nixon to support him in presenting many

of the activities.

In 2015, Dom Daniel Meers entered the Novitiate. After guidance and instruction from Fr Bernard and Lester, Dom Daniel is now also assisting in the delivery of many units in the Aboriginal Studies programme.

Thanks to the additional help and support from the new presenters, the Education Centre is able to facilitate a more indepth itinerary for all students, whether on a day visit or a longer camp at New Norcia.

# Buildings and Grounds



Replacing gutters at the Monastery

The past twelve months have been very busy for the Building and Grounds Department, especially since the announcement of the New Norcia bypass, which started months of preparation work planning what services could be provided to the contractors.

A list of requests for the bypass was prepared by Main Roads and head contractor, Decmil, for office space, housing and areas for transportable accommodation; all of which required water, power and sewerage connections. The increasingly long list of projects for the Building and Grounds team was met with enthusiasm and hard work.

In 2015, the Department of Housing Western Australia handed five houses, located on the northern side of town, over to the Monastery. Three houses were vacant at the time and one was used as staff housing. The other two were identified as accommodation for Main Roads staff during bypass construction. The three vacant houses required renovation work, such as the painting and installation of new floor coverings, blinds and air conditioners.

The Old Trading Post has become an office space for Main Roads. It required renovation work inside and out, including painting, carpeting, removing the old asbestos enclosed verandas and installing balustrading and handrails (which is an



Old Trading Post - before renovation

ongoing project). In addition, air conditioners, new fencing and gates were installed.

Below is a list of other work carried out by our team.

### Museum and Art Gallery

The Museum and Art Gallery is currently undergoing an upgrade, including new guttering installed by Top Gun Roofing along the south-western side.

The town was fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Wheatbelt Development Commission to help cover the costs of the installation of a lift to the first floor of the building. The work is being completed by New Norcia Building and Grounds staff and Western Projects. The expected completion is February 2017. A condition of the grant is that New Norcia Services must co-contribute by completing some of the preparation and minor building works.

Early in 2017 the Gift Shop walls are due to be re-painted, the timber floor boards in the office area polished, and new display cabinets installed.

### Monastery Projects

Guttering on the first floor Northern Cloister was replaced by Top Gun Roofing along with roof repairs over the first floor veranda Central Cloister.

Concrete pads have been installed in the carports for monastery vehicles and under



During renovations

clotheslines at the rear of the Monastery Guesthouse.

Concrete paths have been laid at the Benedictine Institute. This has reduced potential trip hazards by removing the old concrete slabs that lead to the Education Centre toilets.

### New Norcia Roadhouse

The Roadhouse has undergone a facelift from the old Gull signage to the new Puma insignia, with some fresh new paint and fuel bowsers. New signage on the glass windows and a new canopy has also been installed. The interior has been painted by the Building and Grounds staff.

New concrete paths laid at the top rear toilets have also been completed. This will improve access for patrons and help reduce the dirt and mud, especially in winter.

### Swimming Pool

Sadly, after forty years, the swimming pool has been decommissioned. This is due to a number of factors, ongoing maintenance issues, water restrictions and risk management and safety concerns.

### Olive Oil

New Norcia was awarded a Bronze medal for our olive oil at the 2016 Perth Royal Show. Last year's production was low in oil, along with many other olive oil producers around Western Australia. We are hoping for a good crop and higher production in 2017.

Ian Smith  
Property Manager

## Hotel Update

New Norcia's Abbey Ale, made from an ancient monastic recipe, has been a popular thirst quencher for those visiting New Norcia since 2006, when Master Brewer Chuck Hahn developed the brew. A decade later the brewing reins have been passed on to Mash Brewery. Mash Brewery boasts a world class, locally built craft brewery in the Swan Valley. It produces a range of naturally brewed beers, now including our very own Abbey Ale! New Norcia is looking forward to working closely with this fantastic local brewery and continuing our great Abbey Ale brew. The newly packaged ale will be available this year.



The new look New Norcia Abbey Ale

The wonderful musician Harry Hookey, his brother Jack and his alternate ego band *Small Town Alien* visited the hotel to delight patrons in August. Harry is an ARIA-nominated blues and roots singer-songwriter, who has toured both nationally and internationally with the likes of Kasey Chambers. The atmosphere created a fantastic night for all.

During the winter months the hotel bar received a facelift. Our wonderful Buildings and Grounds team repainted the entire area and installed beautiful light bulbs above the bar. New bar stools completed the renovation. A retro arcade games console has been installed, with popular games from the golden era of gaming; Pac Man, Donkey Kong and Space Invaders. Come in and have a heritage gaming experience!

Norah Mc Gee  
Hotel Assistant Manager



The brand new New Norcia Abbey Ale is now available!!!

## Guesthouse, a place of retreat

From January to November in 2015 the Guesthouse played host to over 4,000 guests. They hailed from all Australian states and from overseas to enjoy the peace and serenity found here. We welcomed many parish groups who chose to have their annual retreats in New Norcia. The variety of groups spending time at the Guesthouse can be seen from a small sample of those who joined us in 2015, which included Justices of the Peace, Printer's workshop, Philosophy and Scripture, Anglican Clergy, Women's Retreat, Leukaemia Foundation and Uniting Church Ministers.

In 2016, we trialled a new format for the Spirituality Programme. The Benedictine Institute of New Norcia is offering a selection of themed weekend retreats, reading weekends and reading weeks.

Benedictine Experience weekends have also been offered. These were originally limited to twelve participants but have proved so popular the number for each retreat has been increased. Retreats begin with vespers on the Friday evening at 6.30pm and conclude after lunch on Sunday. The weekends explore the Rule of St Benedict. Using the ancient craft of Lectio Divina, there is an opportunity to delve deeply into the scriptures. The focus for the retreats is listening for the voice of God in our lives through the monastic experience. Over the course of the weekend, the participants are to experience a meal in the refectory with the monks. The meals are taken in silence whilst one of the community reads from the book of the day, scripture and the Rule of St Benedict.

All retreat dates for 2017 can be found on our website in the Benedictine Spirituality brochure [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

## New Norcia Library

The New Norcia Library's book and serial collections continue to reflect the religious, spiritual and wide ranging interests of the Benedictine monks and Sisters of the Good Samaritans of New Norcia. Every year, new books are approved for purchase by the Library Committee. A quantity of donated bookstock also makes its way to New Norcia for possible inclusion in the collection.

Statistically, the total number of New Norcia's books listed with the National Library of Australia is 5,962. In many instances New Norcia Library is one of the few, if only library in Australia indicating that it holds a book that matches the Libraries Australia catalogue record.

Three frequently returning visitors again worked with Early Imprints resources that will assist in the improved identification of some of the older books held in New Norcia Library. Another visitor matched some of these older books to the Early Imprints records so that the librarian was able to upgrade catalogue records. Such projects take a long time to accomplish but the volunteers are the people who "make it happen." I, as librarian, remain grateful for the diligence and ongoing contribution of the New Norcia Library's volunteers, book donors, my colleagues and the monastic community.

Carolyn Talbot  
Librarian



# A New Era



The New Norcia Benedictine Community has been successfully farming the land surrounding the mission since Rosendo Salvado founded the Community in 1847. Without any assistance from either the Church or government, Rosendo realised early on he would have to acquire land and farm it to enable the establishment and development of the mission, and of course to provide the very basics of life, food, for the townspeople and community.

He also realised agriculture was a means to be able to provide employment and training in a range of trades to the local Indigenous peoples.

The profile of the farming enterprise in 1886 shows the monastery had 700 acres of cleared land, produced 2,000 acres of wheat, 72 acres of barley, 40 acres of hay, 15 acres of vines producing 2,000 gallons of wine, a 10 acre orchard, 150 cattle, 250 horses, olive trees, bees, silkworms and coffee. In fact in an average year in the 1880s the farm produced enough to feed a town community of 250 people and was known as a place of "plenty of tucker". However, like many other entrepreneurs of his day, Salvado turned to sheep and wool

to provide funds for the development of the town. The first Merino sheep flock of 710 head was bought from Northam in 1847. The flock grew and over the coming years the wool cheques enabled him to buy freehold land and increase the pastoral leases to 900,000 acres and a flock of approximately 17,000 sheep. At this point Salvado was the State's second largest landholder.

The size of the farm has fluctuated greatly over the last 100 years, depending on the various leases or freehold titles owned by the Community.

In 2017, the income raised from farming activity is still used, in conjunction with the other businesses, to fund the expenses of the town upkeep of New Norcia. Today the monastery farm consists of 8,379 hectares (ha), of which 3,810 ha is arable and the rest is native bushland. The cropping programme uses 80 percent of the arable area, the rest being used to run the Merino flock of 6,000 sheep.

Under the advisory capacity of the late David Bedbrook the farm changed its focus over the last thirty years in response to rapidly changing markets. In an effort to keep professional and proficient the



emphasis was placed on cropping and sheep in an effort to streamline the business.

Until recently, the New Norcia farm was considered a medium to large farming operation; however with the amalgamation of smaller farms into larger corporate farmed properties over the past ten years or so, the size of the New Norcia farming operations compared to other operations has begun to change.

Modern Australian farming practices have driven the need to increase the size of farming activities to benefit from the economies of scale needed to maintain the high-tech and sophisticated farming techniques now required to make a successful farm enterprise. To continue the stewardship of the New Norcia district, and preserve the remaining native bushland for future generations, the Community has therefore rejected the option to expand the farming operations.

The cost of high-tech farm machinery and compliance requirements has impacted heavily on the ability of smaller farming operations to reliably produce sufficient annual surpluses. The New Norcia farm is no different from the cost and regulatory pressures being experienced by all farmers in Australia. The cash expenditure required to fund the New Norcia farm has grown significantly over the last ten years, and it is anticipated the expenditure required to put in a crop will continue to increase at a similar rate over the next ten years.

In addition, the drying climate being experienced over the West Australian grain growing areas is making it increasingly



difficult to manage and budget for consistent farm surpluses.

To manage and reduce the risks associated with the New Norcia farm operations an extensive financial review was undertaken by the New Norcia farm consultant, the Company Board of Directors and finance advisors. Following this review, the Monastic Community of New Norcia unanimously agreed to lease the farm from 2017.

Understandably, the decision was a difficult one for the Community, however based on the best advice available, the decision to lease the farm will provide the Community with a stable and relatively risk free income from renting the farm that will continue to fund and support the Benedictine Monastery at New Norcia.

The successful tenders for the farm are two well known local farming families, who have both had long associations with

the Benedictine Community.

The Community is looking forward to working with the two new lessees to continue the successful farming tradition started by Rosendo Salvado in 1847.

**Roy Gardner**  
Accountant



# David Bedbrook R.I.P

*In the death of David Bedbrook New Norcia has lost one of its dearest friends*



In the 1980's New Norcia went through some structural changes, one of which was the recommendation to engage a farm advisor. So David Bedbrook joined the fold as our consultant. In many ways it was a rare opportunity for a young consultant to oversee a large property of 8,500 hectares, half cleared, half bushland that had its origins in 1847 but had never realised its full potential. Perhaps some of you remember the young David, with fire in his belly – dangerous!

At the early meetings of our Farm Committee, made up of the farm manager, the accountant, David and myself, he asked us a question – what kind of farm did we want to be? Was this a trick question, we wondered?

David gave us the answer – quick and straight, if we wanted to be a financially successful farm we couldn't continue to run sheep, cattle, pigs and crop as well. We simply didn't have the skills or the gear. We needed to focus on our strengths and let the other things go.

It was a watershed; we became a sheep and wheat farm, with the emphasis on stock. Over the next thirty five years, under David's leadership, productivity steadily improved and the farm modernised, mostly out of its own profits.

In terms of those dreaded comparative tables which came annually from Planfarm, New Norcia gradually moved from the bottom third of clients to the middle third and progressively even through those ranks. However it was no constant upward trajectory. Like many farmers, we had to negotiate a major restructure in the 1990s when the bottom fell out of wool and we were running 16,000 sheep. We progressively and expensively moved into cropping most of the farm.

As you can imagine, all this did not happen without a lot of hard work and pain. Our farm meetings were always stretching sessions but fortunately no one broke. We all knew that David was David because he cared so much.

He gave 150 percent and had New Norcia's best interests at heart. His commitment to us was perhaps never more evident than over the last year when he knew he had terminal cancer. Because of his business-like approach from time to time he would put forward

the position, that if the Benedictine Community could not make a 3-4 percent return on its farm investment, it should be thinking of better alternatives. More recently as the profitability of our farm plateaued, he became convinced that leasing was now the financially responsible option. Although this was initially an unattractive course of action, with his intimate knowledge, thorough research and clear, logical recommendations, he first convinced the finance advisers and then the monastic community. In his remaining months he worked tirelessly to complete the transition. In conjunction with Abbot John, he finalised the lease documents, selected two eminently suitable lessees, and organised for the sale of our stock and plant. He achieved it all, to our great satisfaction and relief. As our farm consultant, David Bedbrook was the right man at the right time for New Norcia. However, he grew to become much more than that, he became our trusted friend, he joined our Friends organisation, came to our events and donated to our annual restoration projects.

A few years ago when he saw a large early town plan of New Norcia in our parlour that had been conserved by a benefactor, he said he would like to do something like that, if the opportunity arose again.

In 2014 he funded the restoration and framing of some of our earliest farm maps for a special exhibition to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Rosendo Salvado.

He wanted to belong to us and us to him.

As Carol, David's wife, said when we met to plan this ceremony, David may not have been religious but he was certainly a spiritual person. I suspect he found a touch of God, the God he believed in, at New Norcia. On his last visit a couple of weeks ago we asked him how the family were. He said he was concerned but he knew Carol and the kids were strong. We asked him how he was in himself and he said OK. I've thought a lot about that answer since and I really believe, he was very much OK.

*Editor's version of the Eulogy delivered by Dom Christopher Power at David Bedbrook's funeral in November 2016.*

# 2017 Friends Special Project

*Museum Lift Installation*



The first floor of the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery houses Australia's largest collection of moveable religious art works; both old masters and contemporary pieces plus valuable historical artefacts and the important cartoon from the workshop of the Renaissance artist, Raphael.

In the past, the steep stairwell has hindered access to this area. Of the 15,000 visitors to the Museum and Art gallery in 2015, over one third were seniors and many more visiting groups with mobility issues were unable to see the exhibitions.

We are delighted to announce that the 2017 Special Project is the installation of a lift from the Visitor Information Centre to the first floor of the Museum and Art Gallery.

Recent advances in elevator technology have enabled a unit to be installed within the framework of Heritage Building Guidelines. An internal lift unit can be installed without disturbing the fabric of the building.

The project will cost approximately \$100,000.

Partial funding for this project was supplied by a successful grant application of \$49,950 from the 2016 Wheatbelt Community Chest Grant, which has allowed us to order the lift itself. As you can see, there is much work to do prior to installation.

#### Scope of works

Purchase of lift	\$56,870
Carpentry	\$9,500
Construct steel work	\$7,500
Repaint	\$1,500
Brickwork	\$3,000
Electrical works	\$5,000
Contractors' costs	\$9,500
Architect and Engineer fees	\$6,000



*The lift shaft during construction*



As with most grants, successful applicants are required to make an in-kind contribution and to seek additional funding. The Benedictine Community has made a substantial contribution to the project through commissioning its heritage architects and engineers for the preliminary work, and by employing external contractors and using its own maintenance team to undertake all the associated works.

We now turn to you, our Friends, to ask for your assistance in raising the \$40,000 needed to complete this very important addition to the New Norcia. We hope this appeal will be of interest to many of our Friends. The Museum and Art Gallery is an integral part of our visible history and we are excited this will soon become accessible to everyone.

Work has commenced on this project and it is hoped it should be finished in the next couple of months.

Donations to this project are tax deductible and can be sent via a cheque to "Monochorum Ltd", or through the website on the DONATE tab on the homepage: [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

# New Norcia

## *2017 Calendar of Events*

Fri 24 - Sun 26 February	Benedictine Experience Retreat	Sat 19 August	New Norcia Writers' Festival
Fri 10 - Sun 12 March	Benedictine Experience Retreat	Fri 8 - Sun 10 September	Benedictine Institute Retreat
Thu 13 - Mon 17 April	Easter	Fri 29 Sept - Sun 1 Oct	Benedictine Experience Retreat
Fri 12 - Sun 14 May	Benedictine Institute Retreat	Fri 6 October	New Norcia Library Lecture
Fri 19 - Sun 21 May	Benedictine Experience Retreat	Fri 13 - Sun 15 October	Benedictine Experience Retreat
Sat 27 May	New Norcia Studies Day	Fri 27 - Sun 29 October	Benedictine Institute Reading Weekend
Fri 2 - Sun 4 June	Benedictine Institute Reading Weekend	Thur 9 November	New Norcia Studies Journal Launch
Fri 30 June - Sun 2 July	Benedictine Institute Retreat	Fri 17 - Sun 19 November	Benedictine Institute Retreat
Fri 28 - Sun 30 July	Benedictine Experience Retreat	Fri 24 - Sun 26 November	Benedictine Experience Retreat
Fri 4 - Sun 6 August	Benedictine Institute Reading Weekend	Mon 25 December	Christmas



### YOUR WILL

When making your will and thinking about worthwhile causes, have you thought of including New Norcia? New Norcia is one of the great heritage sites in Australia. Your bequest would help us immensely in our work of preserving and sharing its heritage.

If you would like to contribute to the Monastery through this avenue, our legal title is: Monochorum Ltd. For more information, contact the Abbot on (08) 9654 8018 or [john.herbert@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:john.herbert@newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

