



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

The Chimes Newsletter



December 2019

New Norcia's Olive Oil – A Winning Formula



For centuries olive oil has been recognised for its nutritional qualities and it seems Australians are increasingly incorporating olive oil as part of a healthy and well-balanced diet.

New Norcia's founder, Dom Rosendo Salvado, planted the town's original grove in the 1850-1860's and by the early 1900s, olive production was an important part of the community's self-sufficiency.

Today, New Norcia is harnessing its many years of experience to produce high quality extra-virgin olive oil, which continues to win awards around the country.

Around 90% of New Norcia's olives are of the Mission variety, suited to the

town's climate and soil types. The grove is managed by the monks and staff, with the help of volunteers - including groups of old scholars from St Ildephonsus' College.

New Norcia's Property Manager, Ian Smith, oversees the grove and receives professional advice to help with ongoing care and maintenance.

"Professor Stan Kailis, from the School of Plant Sciences at the University of WA, has been a constant and welcomed source of information," said Mr Smith.

"And last year, recommendations from Associate Professor Robert Spooner-Hart, from Western Sydney University, were closely followed."

Pruning and sucker-bashing to remove new shoots is carried out every 12-18 months. Harvest takes place in May or June each year, however timing varies with each season.

The olives from the smaller and younger trees are hand-picked and sorted and mechanical harvesting rakes are used for the other trees. A combination of green and black olives is harvested and different proportions have an impact on flavour.

"This year we picked more black olives than in previous seasons and the flavour is

smoother," said Mr Smith.

Historically the olives were crushed in New Norcia however for some years they have been transported to the York Olive Oil Co. for processing. Here a two-phase process is used, meaning no water is added to the olives, which produces a superior quality oil with a higher content of antioxidants. A state-of-the-art press removes excess sediment and moisture, a key factor in ensuring a longer shelf life.

The oil is brought back to New Norcia where it is stored in stainless steel vats in the monastery cellar, ready to be bottled and labelled for sale.

On the back of a successful year in 2018, New Norcia's olive oil recently won 'Best in Show', 'Best WA Oil of Show' and a Gold Medal at the 2019 West Australian Olive Awards. It also won 'Silver' and 'Champion WA Oil' at the Australian International Awards 2019. Interestingly, New Norcia's olive



Pictured left: the trophy awarded to New Norcia at the West Australian Olive Awards 2019

Pictured right: Ian Smith and Shane Cummins, Head Judge of the AIOA

New Norcia's Olive Oil, continued...

oil has been winning awards as far back as 1908, where it won second prize in the Franco-British Exhibition in London.

New Norcia's 2019 vintage extra virgin olive oil is currently available for sale at the Museum & Art Gallery as well as the Roadhouse. It can also be found on the webshop at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



Pictured right: Rob Green from the Grounds Team labels the bottles of olive oil in the monastery cellar.

Vice Regal Visit

On Wednesday 6th November we were pleased to offer hospitality to The Honourable Kim Beazley AC, Governor of Western Australia.

The official party included Ben Halton (Government House) and personnel from the Wheatbelt Development Commission Mr Gavin Robins (CEO) and Ms Rebecca Kelly (Senior Regional Officer).

After visiting the European Space Agency (ESA) site, the party was greeted at the monastery gate by myself, Roy Gardner (Company Secretary and Accountant), Peter Hocking (Director, ACL) and Sue Johnson (Parish).

We proceeded to the oratory via the Spanish chapel for the celebration of Midday Prayer, the Governor later commenting on the peaceful effect the chanting of the psalms in choir with the monks had on him.

New Norcia catering manager Marlon Victoriano prepared a delicious classic Aussie lunch of roast lamb

and potatoes, which was enjoyed in the monastery refectory in silence with reading. Coincidentally, we were up to chapter ten of the history of Victoria Plains, which stimulated much discussion at coffee in the recreation room afterwards. We then popped into the monastery hall where Fr Robert gave a brilliant piano recital, including Salvado, Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell, the first President of WA's Legislative Council, and his own compositions.

The tour proceeded to the monastery library where Peter showed off the treasures of his 'roadshow' from the New Norcia archive. The visit concluded with a short tour of the Museum and Art Gallery where Melissa presented our visitors with gifts of New Norcia olive oil, nut cake and abbey ale....and a bottle of something special for the driver and attending police officers! The Governor departed with words of encouragement expressing his delight and gratitude for a very enjoyable visit.

Abbot John



On the Left: Abbot John and The Honourable Kim Beazley AC. On the Right: Roy Gardner, Sue Johnson, Peter Hocking, Abbot John, The Honourable Kim Beazley AC, Gavin Robins and Rebecca Kelly. Photography Credit: Jim Longbottom.

The Launch of New Norcia Studies 26

The 26th New Norcia Studies Journal was launched at the Palms Community Centre in Subiaco on Thursday November 7th. Now that Archives, Collections and Libraries are all part of the new department called ACL (Archives, Collections and Libraries – what else?), it was thought it would be a symbolic gesture to invite a luminary from this field to do the honours. Dr Kerry Smith, former colleague of mine from Curtin Library School who went on to become Associate Professor and Head of School, was approached and we were delighted when she enthusiastically accepted the invitation. We were just as delighted that attendance on the night, at 115 guests, was the best we have ever seen at a launch.

Fr John and Mayor of Subiaco, Penny Taylor, welcomed our guests and introduced Freeman of the City, and former Mayor, Heather Henderson who spoke about the link between New Norcia and Subiaco. Heather was followed by Kerry whose summation of the books being launched was so good that sales that night were probably the best we have ever had too. Kerry did also speak about archives and libraries.

Carmel Murray, Jody Burness and Joyce McKee did a brisk trade in selling our three books to eager guests. The books launched were, of course, the 26th edition of the Studies Journal, and Emeritus Professor Bob Reece's book, *The 1867 Photographs of W W Thwaites*. This is the first in what we hope will be an *Early New Norcia* series; it is also the published result of the work that Bob did as an Abbot Placid Scholar. The Archives Committee hopes that future titles in the series will include Andrew Walton's scholarship work on New Norcia's maps, and Liz Conor's work on the engravers and engravings in Salvado's *Memoirs*. Joan Oakland, who launched Journal No 25 last year, was the editor for both publications and is to be complimented on the fabulous job she has done in the layout for both.

The third book was one that has been in the making for over six years – that being Larrie Strautmanis' *New Norcia's Buildings and their Stories*. Larrie, who lives in Adelaide, has made several trips to verify facts for her book over the years and the result, beautifully put together by Natalie Nixon, is superb. Even in draft pre-publication manuscript form it has proved to be an invaluable tool for archival research.

Finally, but by no means least, Fr John announced the new Abbot Placid Spearritt Memorial Scholar for 2020. She is Marta Pérez Rey, a nationally accredited Spanish / English translator and lecturer in Spanish at the University of Western Australia. Marta is to transcribe and translate the diary of Br Francisco Marsa, a monk who arrived in 1849 but left in 1853 and whose diary is important as it covers the period when Salvado was in Europe. Marta was at the Launch so it was a great opportunity to meet



From top: Très Classique entertains guests; attendees listen with interest to the presentations; Dr Kerry Smith talks to the group about the books and archives and libraries. Photography Credit: Jim Longbottom.

her and see her obvious delight at being awarded the Scholarship.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the wonderful help given by Carmel, Jody and Joyce on the night; Diane Scott and Esther from City of Subiaco; Très Classique – the musicians; Jolimont Liquor and By-Word-Of-Mouth Catering. Thanks also to our special guests Mayor Penny Taylor, Freeman Heather Henderson and to our guest speaker, Dr Kerry Smith. The City of Subiaco has been wonderful yet again in hosting this event and providing the venue, catering and staff so, once again, a huge thank you to them.

Peter Hocking
Archivist

Further information about *The 1867 Photographs of WW Thwaites* can be found on page 8...

Abbot Placid Scholar for 2020 Announced!

At the *Studies Journal* launch held in Subiaco on Thursday 7th November, Fr John announced the new Abbot Placid Spearritt Scholar for 2020. As a result of an excellent proposal for the translation of a unique document, University of Western lecturer Marta Pérez Rey has been awarded the scholarship.

Marta comes from the green and mountainous region of Cantabria on the northern coast of Spain. She has lived in England, Spain and Ireland but for the last nineteen years has called Perth home.

Marta graduated with an MA in English Philology and a Master of Education from the University of Oviedo, Spain, and has been a certified NAATI translator (Spanish into English) since 2011. She is currently a tutor and lecturer in Spanish at the University of Western Australia as part of their Spanish major programme.

She has two young children and her dream is that one day they too will speak Spanish fluently. When she has time, her main interests include travelling, linguistics and foreign languages, reading, listening to music and teaching.

Her project will be the transcription and translation of Br Francisco Marsá's New Norcia diary which covers the period 1849 to 1853, the exact years that Bishop Salvado was in Europe looking for new recruits and funding. The diary was donated to the archives in 2005 by Californian Friend of New Norcia, Darryl Corti. He purchased it from an antiquarian book dealer who had chanced upon the diary in the catalogue of a Spanish antiquarian book dealer. The diary has never been translated but as Francisco Marsá was a printer and an educated man, it is expected to shed much new light on the mission's early years.

We all welcome Marta to her new role and wish her every success in this project.

Peter Hocking
Archivist



Above: Marta Pérez Rey

Outgoing Scholars Farewelled

We would all like to take this opportunity to give a heartfelt thanks to our outgoing scholars Eugenia Schettino, Judy McGuinness and Andrew Walton.

Eugenia and Judy, both Spanish language experts, have translated the letters of Bishop Salvado's brother, Santos, during the time before he came to New Norcia, and during his period here. It is an enormous corpus of correspondence, amounting to more than 400 letters, all of which have shed an amazing light on life in Spain and at New Norcia and especially on the relationship between Bishop Salvado and his brother. However, the body of correspondence for the pre-New Norcia years is so copious that not everything was able to be finished during the Scholarship. For this reason, we are all extremely grateful to Judy and Eugenia who have agreed to complete the task so that the letters can be published as part of the Archives' series of books, probably in two volumes, at a later date.

Andrew has compiled an extraordinary database of several hundred early maps of New Norcia with linking references to correspondence and diaries. The maps have been photographed as part of the process and these too have been linked in to the database. Like the letters mentioned above, this was, and still is, an enormous undertaking and, again, we are very grateful to Andrew who has offered to continue cataloguing the maps on a voluntary basis.

A thousand thanks to all three of you for the wonderful work you have so far done for New Norcia.

Peter Hocking, Archivist



Southern Bridge into Town

We wish to advise that the bridge located on the southern entry into New Norcia will be closed from late November - April 2020 while repair work is carried out. However please don't let this deter you from visiting New Norcia! To get to us during this period, simply use the northern entry off the bypass.

The Gillingarra Road will remain open to all traffic.

Parish News

On Sunday 3rd November the New Norcia Parish rejoiced with Aaron Manning who made his First Holy Communion. While several family members sat in the front pews, his mother Tracy sat with the choir and sang the responsorial psalm...solo...and like an angel!

Also present were thirty or so members of the New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation (NNAC) in New Norcia for their

annual weekend of reunion and healing. They were given a special blessing for healing after the homily and being the month of November, the month in which we remember the dead, the congregation gathered in the historic New Norcia cemetery for a blessing of the graves.

Abbot John, Parish Priest



Above: Abbot John with Aaron and Elidh Manning



Above: Fr David Barry, Dom Michael Tunney and Fr Anscar McPhee with members of the NNAC

Christmas at New Norcia Please Join Us

Christmas Eve

Tuesday 24th December
Vespers 6.30pm
Vigils 8.15pm
'Midnight Mass' 10.30pm

Christmas Day

Wednesday 25th December
7.45am Lauds
Conventual Mass 9.00am
Midday Prayer 12.00noon
Solemn Vespers 5.30pm
with Exposition & Benediction

27th Ecumenical Carol Service

Saturday 28th December
Featuring the Georgian Singers
Afternoon Tea in the Parlour 4.00pm
Service of Readings and Carols 5.00pm

Christmas Trading Hours

Christmas Eve

Hotel & Roadhouse: closes at 3pm
Museum & Art Gallery: 9.30am-3.30pm
(no afternoon tour)

Christmas Day & Boxing Day CLOSED

Friday 27th December

Hotel, Roadhouse, Museum & Art Gallery
USUAL TRADING HOURS

New Year's Eve & New Year's Day

Hotel, Roadhouse, Museum & Art Gallery
USUAL TRADING HOURS

Administration will be closed Christmas Day
until Thursday 2nd January.



The Grounds Team

The grounds team has been busy installing new signs around town designed by AXIOM Design Partners, including two informative signs. One has been placed at the Old Novitiate at the northern end of town, pictured below, and the other at the Museum and Art Gallery.

New brochure stands have also been placed in various venues and dead tree branches and grasses have been cleared to create fire breaks in the pine plantation.

During the heatwave in mid-November, Ian and Rob escaped to the cool of the monastery cellar to bottle and label olive oil, ready for sale in the Museum & Art Gallery and the Roadhouse.



From the Guesthouse

The Guesthouse is starting to wind down after a busy couple of months. There are still a couple of large retreats arriving before the end of the year but midweek bookings are noticeably quieter.

If you have someone on your Christmas list who has you stumped for a gift idea, perhaps a voucher for a stay at the Guesthouse would be the go! The recipient may call to book suitable dates for their stay, or you may wish to nominate a date which can be changed later if need be. The suggested donation for a night at the Guesthouse is \$100 per person. This includes a three-course lunch, two-course evening meal and a self-serve continental breakfast. Rooms with air-conditioning and ensuite bathrooms are available.

Looking ahead to 2020, the New Norcia Institute of Benedictine Studies programme is now available and bookings can be made through the webshop. If you missed out this year, have a look and book early! The first retreat is a Lenten Retreat run by Fr David Barry on the 28th February-1st March. Many of the groups coming to New Norcia for their annual retreats have already booked for 2020. At this stage all weekends in September have been taken. It promises to be a busy year.

Best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in 2020.

Bernadette and Guesthouse Staff

ESA Tracking Station

Back in July this year, I made contact with Suzie Jackson, the manager of the ESA (European Space Agency) tracking station just south of New Norcia. Suzie and her team work for CSIRO and they maintain the station, which is actually minute by minute controlled out of Germany.

I received permission from Suzie to visit late at night to shoot the stars over the 35m wide dish. I arrived and to my dismay it was literally surrounded by multiple sodium vapor lights and the light pollution was impenetrable... epic fail!

I emailed a couple of pathetic images to Suzie and included one from New Norcia, as an example of what could be achieved. Suzie then invited me back on the next new moon, weather permitting, and offered to turn off the lights for two hours.



I went back on a perfectly clear night a month later and this is one of the images I was able to capture. It is 18 individual photos covering 180 degrees, stitched together.

I sent the image to Suzie and heard nothing for a day. She then rang me to say that she had sent it through to her colleagues in Europe, who had asked if they would be allowed to feature it on their website. I agreed.

Jim Longbottom

The Benedictine Community of New Norcia

Invites you to the
27th Ecumenical Carol Service

Saturday 28th December

Featuring the Georgian Singers

Afternoon Tea in the Parlour 4.00pm

Service of Readings & Carols 5.00pm



NEW NORCIA
BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY

Christmas Gift Ideas from New Norcia

For a range of unique Christmas gift ideas visit www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au



Launch of Bob Reece's, *Early New Norcia: The 1867 Photographs of WW Thwaites, The Palms, Subiaco*, 7 November 2019

First of all, I want to thank the key person responsible for the night's hospitality, Freeman of the City and former Mayor of Subiaco, Heather Henderson, who carried on the annual tradition of launching New Norcia's publications at the Palms. It is a fine custom that we all appreciate.

For the coming into being of the book, I wish to thank Abbot John Herbert for the support that New Norcia provided to me in the form of the Abbot Placid Spearritt Scholarship, the invaluable assistance of the Archivist, Peter Hocking, and the highly-skilled work of Joan Oakland. Happily, she is back with us from California and I wish to acknowledge the magnificent job she did in designing the book and providing the technical and artistic skills that it called for. If, as Fr John has suggested, this is the first of a series of books on New Norcia's history and heritage, we can look forward to more gems being recovered from the past.

As for the photographer, Walter William Thwaites, who provided us with this unique visual legacy of New Norcia as it was 150 years ago, we are greatly in debt to his entrepreneurial energy, his skill and artistry as a photographer and his outstanding humanity. We have no photograph of him, unfortunately, and he did not leave enough material for a proper biography, but I can relate two anecdotes that suggest something of his character.

When a Geraldton reader complained to a Perth newspaper in February 1867 about the prices he was charging for his *carte de visite* prints, which normally cost about a guinea for ten in Perth, Thwaites outlined the problems encountered by a travelling photographer working in Western Australia's fierce summer heat:

The correspondent with His Argus eyes can no doubt find innumerable blemishes and defects in the cartes taken in his district, especially when

comparing them with those taken in a well-adjusted operating room, but I can assure him that taking a likeness in the open air, and an operating room, is quite a different affair. Those taken in the former are exposed to dust, a glaring sun where a person cannot open his or her eyes, and the ladies' dresses adjusted by means of stones to prevent them flying over their heads with the wind. Neither are these the only difficulties the Photographer has to contend against: when the thermometer is frequently ninety or one hundred degrees of heat in the shade, it is next to an impossibility to keep a nitrate bath in order, on which so much depends for a successful picture, which together with your collodium produces blemishes which the uninitiated public attribute to the want of skill in the operator.

And there were other issues:

The correspondent should also bear in mind, that when a Photographer visits out of the way districts it is generally attended with loss of time and expense, the population being scattered, and that he has much to contend against; spoilt children and country bumpkins, whose ideas never extended beyond [chewing] manna gum, and who have as much idea of position as a broomstick, are not the most desirable customers; on the other hand many an Australian lily, like the English rose, are to be found in the bush, 'Wasting its fragrance on the desert air', who so naturally fall into a graceful position that you would feel inclined to believe they were ushered into life by the graces.

Tragically, on 23 February 1888 when Thwaites was 73 he took his own life at his Parramatta (Sydney) home after finding out that the New South Wales government's promise of permanent support for him and his wife meant they would have to live out the rest of their lives in different poor houses. Picking up the story from the newspapers, the Sydney *Bulletin* related:

Poor Thwaites did not absolutely look for quail on toast on the strength of this invitation but the prospect seemed good enough for him to sell off his business and come down to Sydney. Then he found that the home in his case meant a cold berth at the Parramatta Asylum, while his wife was to be sent to the poor house at Newington.

The Bulletin told the Chief Secretary's Office that 'government officials should try for the future to be *less homicidal* in their grammar'.

I don't propose to say much about Thwaites' forty or so New Norcia photographs, which speak for themselves and don't need me to point out their compelling immediacy, their iconic power and poignant charm. But I feel pleased to have been able to identify Thwaites' work separately from that of Bishop Rosendo Salvado's elder brother, Santos Salvado, himself a gifted photographer, to whom it was attributed until now, and do proper credit to his (Thwaites') achievement. Taken together, Thwaites' August 1867 photographs re-create the reality of a world that might otherwise have been lost. What began as Prior Venancio Garrido's practical idea of projecting New Norcia's achievements and its promise of things to come has provided us with a rich legacy of meanings embracing history, anthropology, cultural interaction, genealogy, identity and of course our common humanity. New Norcia is a highly unusual place, a unique place you might say, in its particular blend of the past with the present. Thwaites' camera has served us not so much as a 'mechanical eye' as some have called it, but as a simple wooden box that he used to play magical tricks with time and memory for our enjoyment and our enlightenment.

Bob Reece
27 November 2019