



MONSIGNOR HAWES HERITAGE

March 2025

NEWSLETTER

A Note From the Chair

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2025!

The other day, I was waiting to collect a pizza at Dominos and three young ladies couldn't decide what to order so looking across at me they said to the waitress, "Serve the old man first". Jolted, I exclaimed with a smile, "Old man!"

Age creeps up on us all as it is on Hawes' buildings. Some of these buildings are now over 100 years old, and like ourselves require a lot of maintenance!

In many cases, the faith communities that built these places are in terminal decline and unable to conserve these exceptional Hawes buildings on their own, and this is where Monsignor Hawes Heritage Incorporated (MHHI) is so important as it works to conserve and celebrate these places for the whole community.

Last year, Monsignor Hawes Heritage Incorporated applied for a State Heritage Council grant to conserve the external fabric of the Utakarra Cemetery "San Spirito" Chapel. While we were successful, we were placed on a "reserve list", meaning, we will only get a grant if another successful applicant determines they cannot proceed with their project. These stage 1

external works will cost around \$181,000, 50% of which will have to be funded by us. We anticipate the second stage of the internal works on the chapel will cost even more.

Last September, 300 people attended a great celebration of the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone for Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church, Mullewa.

Many who attended observed the need for repairs to the church and presbytery. Since then, initial steps have been taken to develop a comprehensive and prioritized conservation works plan with the assistance of an architect. This works plan will be a topic for discussion at the forthcoming MHHI Board meeting on 10 April.

The inside pages of this newsletter give fuller details and photos of these two major conservation projects, while the back page provides an opportunity for all of us to get involved by making a donation via the tax deductible **John Hawes Foundation**. Can I thank you all in anticipation of your generous donations. Together we can do it!

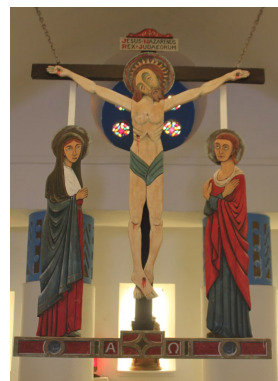
God bless, Fr Robert (Chair of MHHI)



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John Hawes "the artist" painted many **Roods** in his life including this one in the Church of Sts Peter & Paul, Clarence Town, Long Island, Bahamas. It was inspired by Gauguin's "Christ Crucified in the Buttercup Meadow".



**DON'T MISS OUT
BOOK TODAY !!!**

Hawes Heritage Events Presents

Encountering Beauty

Featuring Internationally Renowned French Performers

Johann Vexo (Organist)
&
Damien Riviere (Tenor)

at St Francis Xavier Cathedral Geraldton

Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 7pm

To book your tickets please scan this QR  Code or go to www.trybooking.com/CZKOM

Tickets also available by phoning 99213221 during Office Hours 9am to 4pm

Event Sponsors:  

Coming Events

- ⇒ Encountering Beauty Concert (SFX Cathedral) April 1
- ⇒ Orchestral Mass (SFX Cathedral)... June 21
- ⇒ Camino 2025 July 25 - 27
- ⇒ Fremantle Chamber Orchestra August 22
- ⇒ Blessing of the Fleet October 19
- ⇒ Hawes Year of Hope Pilgrimage TBA

EVENTS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you have spare time and organizational skills **HAWES HERITAGE EVENTS** is looking for volunteers. Contact Fr Robert Cross at heritage@geraldtoncatholic.org.au

2025 CONSERVATION PROJECTS

San Spirito Chapel Utakarra

In 1936 Monsignor Hawes turned 60 and in those times the average life expectancy for males was 63.5 years. Perhaps this is why he turned his mind to where his mortal remains might rest!

On a 999 year crown grant lease located in the Utakarra Cemetery, in April 1936, Hawes set about designing the stunning San Spirito (Holy Spirit) mortuary chapel which he fully funded himself.

The “Modernist” external style of San Spirito illustrates how Hawes kept abreast of changes in architecture. Its geometric Modernist exterior however gives way to a classical 10th century Romanesque style interior with barrel vaulted and quadripartite brick ceilings. The Chapel is a great example of Hawes trademark ability to harmoniously blend different architectural styles into one amazing structure.

A characteristic of modernist architecture is “Form follows Function”. Externally, the geometric form of the chapel is somewhat akin to a white washed tomb, topped off with a modernist styled bell fleche.

The function of the chapel is to provide space for the funeral obsequies of the Catholic Church. Stepping inside, the white washed nave interior section of the chapel is barrel vaulted and sectioned by ribs of mauve and white stripes, mauve being the colour of mourning. The eye is drawn to an amazing masonry and wrought iron rood screen topped with a stunning Hawes painted signature Rood of Christ crucified, flanked by the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Apostle John. Beneath the cross is an inscription Hawes was fond of using, *JESU, JESU, MIHI JESUS* (*Jesus, Jesus, be unto me Jesus*).

The wrought iron work in the chapel was crafted by the famed wrought-iron craftsman and engineer Wilfred Priestner (1871 - 1961).

On the ceiling in front of the rood screen is a “post Hawes” addition to the chapel in the form of a ceiling mural of God the Father in glory surrounded by clouds and angels. The mural was commissioned by Bishop Gummer in 1954 and painted by the Italian born and Ravenna Academy of Fine Arts trained artist Dan Mazotti (1925 - 2008) soon after he arrived in Australia. Dan later became an Italian teacher and the art master at Aquinas College and produced many fine pieces of art in his lifetime.

An imposing tomb is centred in the nave that contains the mortal remains of Archdeacon Adolphe Joseph Lecaille (1826 - 1908) whom Hawes had exhumed and reinterred in his Chapel.

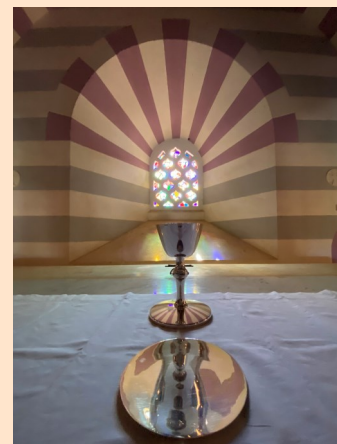
The reason Hawes most likely did this is that he recognised the labours and talents of Lecaille who was one of what SFX Cathedral Precinct Project architect Dr John Taylor calls a “love of God architect”, who together with Italian mason Joseph Ascione (1819 - 1888) and Irish carpenter Joseph Nunan (1842 - 1885) designed and built simple fit for purpose Catholic churches



in Western Australia in the 19th century, including the original St Francis Xavier Church in Geraldton.

Adjacent to the Lecaille tomb is the location of the tomb of John Cyril Hawes, but as we know, Hawes body is not there but interred in a cave beneath his Hermitage on Mt Alvernia on Cat Island. The Utakarra Chapel “burial site” of Hawes is marked by a large brass plaque effigy of himself vested as a priest with the Latin inscription, “Orate pro anima R. Adm. D. Joannis Hawes Decani olim Mullewa Rectoris Ecclesia Cathedralis Geraldtenensis Architecti et hujus Fundatoris. Jesu, Jesu, Esto mihi Jesus”, which translates to, “Pray for the soul of the Rev. Adm. John Hawes, formerly Dean of Mullewa, Rector of the Cathedral Church of Geraldton, Architect and Founder of this Church. Jesus, Jesus, be unto me Jesus.”

Upon entering the sanctuary portion of the Chapel, a freestanding altar is the main furnishing which has above it a Hawes designed ciborium or small circular baldacchino with a painting of the Holy Spirit surrounded by stars hovering over the altar. The sanctuary has a quadripartite brick ceiling with four ribs intersecting in the centre and on the north and south walls large round windows receding into very small external window openings. Throughout the chapel are the signature Hawes louvered unglazed windows and shutters that speak of



the Arts and Crafts principle of building for the environment of the place. In the east wall is a cement traceried window set in front of a window of recycled stained glass. When celebrating Mass in the chapel sun light streaming through the multi-coloured glass of this window mystically plays onto the altar and sacred vessels.

Tours of the building can be arranged by contacting Fr Robert Cross 0400216088 or emailing heritage@geraldtoncatholic.org.au

2025 CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church (OLMC) Precinct Project

At the Mullewa Centenary of the Laying of the Foundation Stone of Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church, the **OLMC CHURCH PRECINCT PROJECT** was officially launched by MHHI Chairman, Fr Robert Cross.

Everyone who attended the celebration saw for themselves the desperate need to repair the flaking walls of the Church caused by rising damp.



A more keen eye may have spotted a host of other urgent works, such as the need to replace the central stone column at the front doors and to securely attach one or more bas-relief sculptures of the seven sacraments that are detaching from the Church façade.



Wood rot is evident in some window frames and other wooden elements of the Church.



Meanwhile, efflorescent salts from rising damp can be seen throughout the interior including the floors, the baptistry, statue plinths and altars. And there are lot more conservation repairs needed.



While we are only just commencing the Project, some works were completed in 2024 that could not be delayed any longer, specifically, the waterproofing and repainting of all three domes

(yes, there is a little dome on top of the campanile) as well as the capping atop the facades of the church. This work was contracted to Renaissance Decorators with the assistance of the Critch family who loaned an additional cherry picker. The total cost of these works was \$37,000, \$30,000 of which came from the Cyclone Seroja Vietnamese Fund with Monsignor Hawes Heritage Incorporated contributing \$7000.

In 2025 we plan to commence work on addressing the severe



rising damp issue that is seriously eroding most of the external walls up to a height of around 1.2 meters. Part of these works will require drainage works to channel water away from both the Church and the Priesthouse walls. While the following photo taken by Fr Robert O'Bryan is very beautiful it also illustrates how torrential rainfall events are flooding the grounds and contributing to the rising damp problems.



It is estimated the costs of the conservation works associated with the **OLMC Precinct Project** will be in the vicinity of \$1 million. But already we have a generous donation from an individual of \$30,000 that is earmarked to replace the boundary fencing in due course. As local farmers await the opening rains of the 2025 season, perhaps they might consider doing what many of their parents and grandparents once did to help build and support these extraordinary Churches, that is, put in a few acres of wheat for the Church, or come up with fund raising ideas, and more importantly, volunteer to conduct them.

Donations to the OLMC Precinct Project can be made through the John Hawes Foundation (see page 4).

LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE GERALDTON ESCAPE ?

Then go no further than

THE HERMITAGE



Retreat into the Arts & Crafts of John Cyril Hawes

Book through STAYZ Using this QR Code



Another initiative of MHHI

Activating the Monsignor Hawes Heritage Trail and Supporting Regional Tourism and Regional Communities through the provision unique heritage accommodation!

THE GHOSTS OF CYCLONE SEROJA LINGER!

In 2021, Cyclone Seroja struck the Mid West causing physical devastation and psychological trauma. The Parish Priest of Northampton, Fr Larry Rodillas, had a close brush with death as his presbytery collapsed around him with jagged roof timbers chimney bricks collapsing around him. Similar experiences abound among many other Mid West residents caught up in cyclonic maelstrom.

Nine Monsignor Hawes heritage buildings in the Diocese of Geraldton were damaged by the cyclone, some severely, and the length of time it is taking to repair them has in itself become a source of trauma for the many already long suffering.

Four years on almost to the day that this newsletter article is being composed, we are still waiting for works to be completed on the Sacred Heart Convent in Northampton and for works to commence on Our Lady of Fatima Church in Nanson. It is estimated that when all works are completed, the total Diocesan repair costs will exceed \$5 million.



Above: Convent in Northampton still to be repaired fully



John Hawes Foundation Donation Form for Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church Precinct Project

Enhancing Regional Revitalisation and Strengthening Community Social Wellbeing

Making your donation to Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church Precinct Project

Thank you for considering supporting our fundraising efforts to help restore and conserve Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church Precinct. Please complete the form below and send it to the provided address.

If you would like to make a bequest in your Will please contact us on how to go about this.

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church Precinct Project



Donation details

FIRST NAME	<input type="text"/>	SURNAME	<input type="text"/>
COMPANY NAME <i>(If applicable)</i>	<input type="text"/>	DATE	<input type="text"/>
POSTAL ADDRESS:	<input type="text"/>		
PHONE NUMBER	<input type="text"/>	EMAIL ADDRESS	<input type="text"/>

I wish to donate \$ _____ to Our Lady of Mt Carmel Precinct Project

Payment details

Direct Bank Transfer Details for the John Hawes Foundation:

Acc Name: Mons Hawes Heritage Incorp **BSB:** 086 006 **Acc No:** 26 493 5344 **Ref:** Surname + Initial + Mullewa. Cheques can be made payable to **Mons Hawes Heritage Incorp Fund** and posted to the **John Hawes Foundation** at the address below.

Contact details for Fr Robert Cross

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