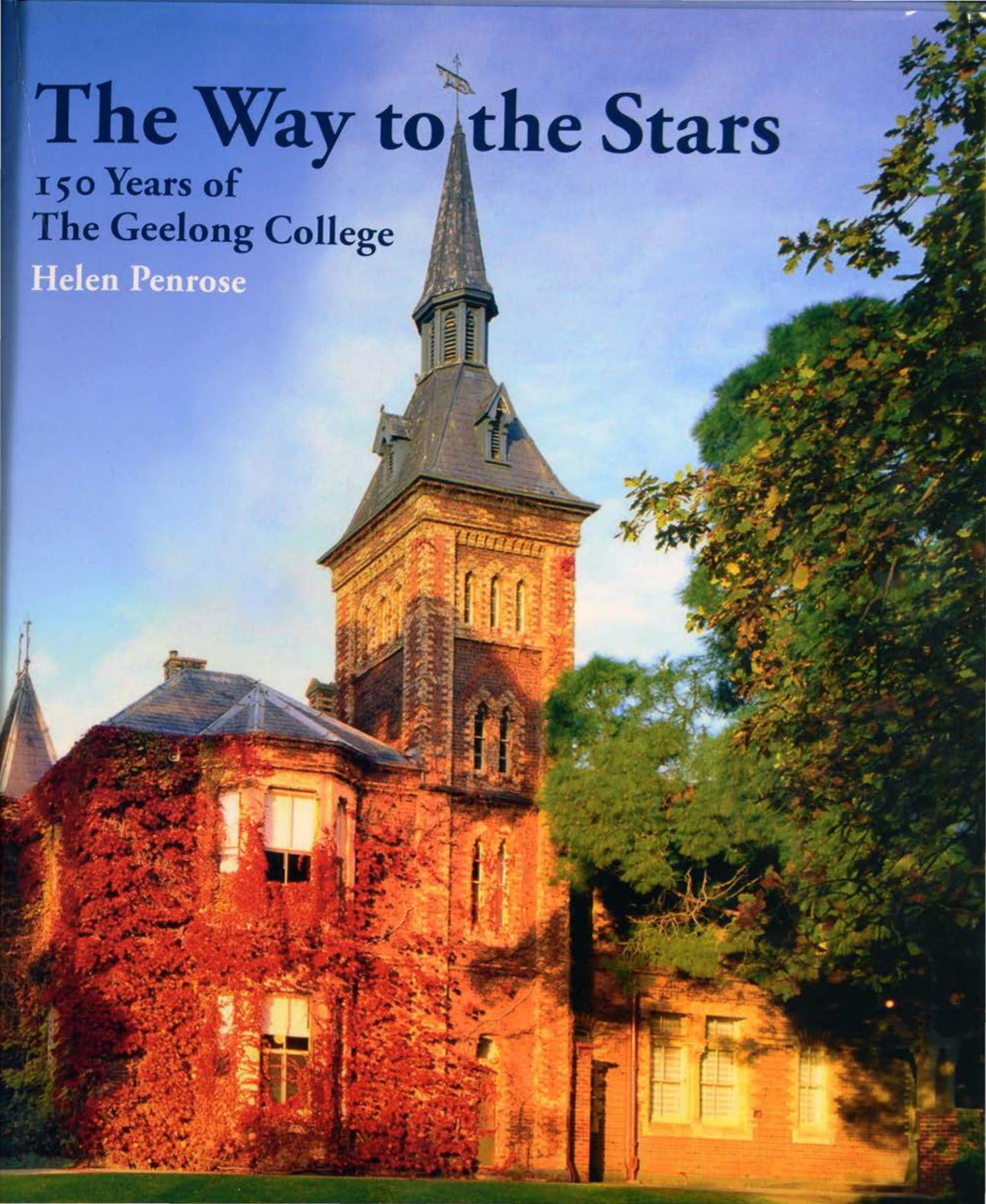


# The Way to the Stars

150 Years of  
The Geelong College

Helen Penrose





The pavilion on its formal opening day in 1904



Classroom A, 1955



Boys' and girls' victorious Head of the River crews, 2003



# The Way to the Stars



SCIENTIA FIDES  
SCIENTIA FIDES



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**150 Years of The Geelong College**

**Helen Penrose**

Australian Scholarly Publishing

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The crest of the Pegasus and the school motto was designed by Mr George F. Hutton, one of the first two masters employed by Dr Morrison in 1861. The motto was from Virgil 'Macte nova virtute puer, sic itur ad astra' which can be translated as 'Blessings on your young courage, boy; that's the way to the stars'.

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# Foreword

In 1861 the town of Geelong was only 25 years old, and as in many of the outposts of the British Empire, the new settlers were creating a society in the image of their home country. At the same time, they were battling a new environment and adapting to strange conditions that indigenous Australians had lived with for 30,000 years. Scottish settlers were building their new life around the broad pastoral expansion into the Western District, or the excitement of the gold rush in Central Victoria, but they relied on their institutions of church and school as a focus for their familiar culture.

The Reverend Alexander Campbell was a minister and Geelong community leader who led the impetus for a school for boys in the fledgling settlement of Geelong and district. The Scots had a reputation for excellence in education and securing the headmastership of George Morrison created the basis for a school that fulfilled their desire for a first class liberal education.

Helen Penrose has written a wonderful record of the 150 years of The Geelong College, with support from her colleagues at HistorySmiths and the school's archivist Con Lannan. This history tells of the struggle and the successes that mirror Victorian and Australian history: survival and progression through the difficult times of wars and depression contrasting with the thriving years of gold rush and wool booms – the school has experienced it all.

The story often centres on the strength and vision of our Principals, from our founding Principal, Mr George Morrison in 1861, to Dr Pauline Turner in 2011. But it also succeeds in capturing the essence of this now co-educational school centred in a provincial city that combines academic excellence with tolerance, athletic endeavours with sportsmanship, and engagement in the arts with an inclusive culture.

Reverend Alexander Campbell would be very satisfied to see what his vision 150 years ago has become in the 21st Century.

*Dr Hugh Seward  
The Geelong College Council Chair*



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### Abbreviations

AFL	Australian Football League
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
APS	Associated Public Schools
BA	Bachelor of Arts
ENTER	Equivalent national tertiary entrance rank
ESL	English as a second language
ERI	Education Resources Index
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IARTV	Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria
IT	Information technology
ICT	Information and communication technology
LOTE	Languages other than English
MA	Master of Arts
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MLC	Methodist Ladies' College
NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Art
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OGCA	Old Geelong Collegians' Association
PE	Physical Education
PFA	Presbyterian Fellowship Association
PLC	Presbyterian Ladies' College
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
SES	Socio-economic status
SOSE	Studies of Society and Environment
SRC	Student Representative Council
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational education and training
VFL	Victorian Football League

### Author's Notes

Dates in brackets after staff members' names in the text indicate years of service at the College, if known.

A single year in brackets after a student's name indicates their year of leaving the College, if known.

All images, unless otherwise acknowledged, have been sourced from The Geelong College.

# Acknowledgements

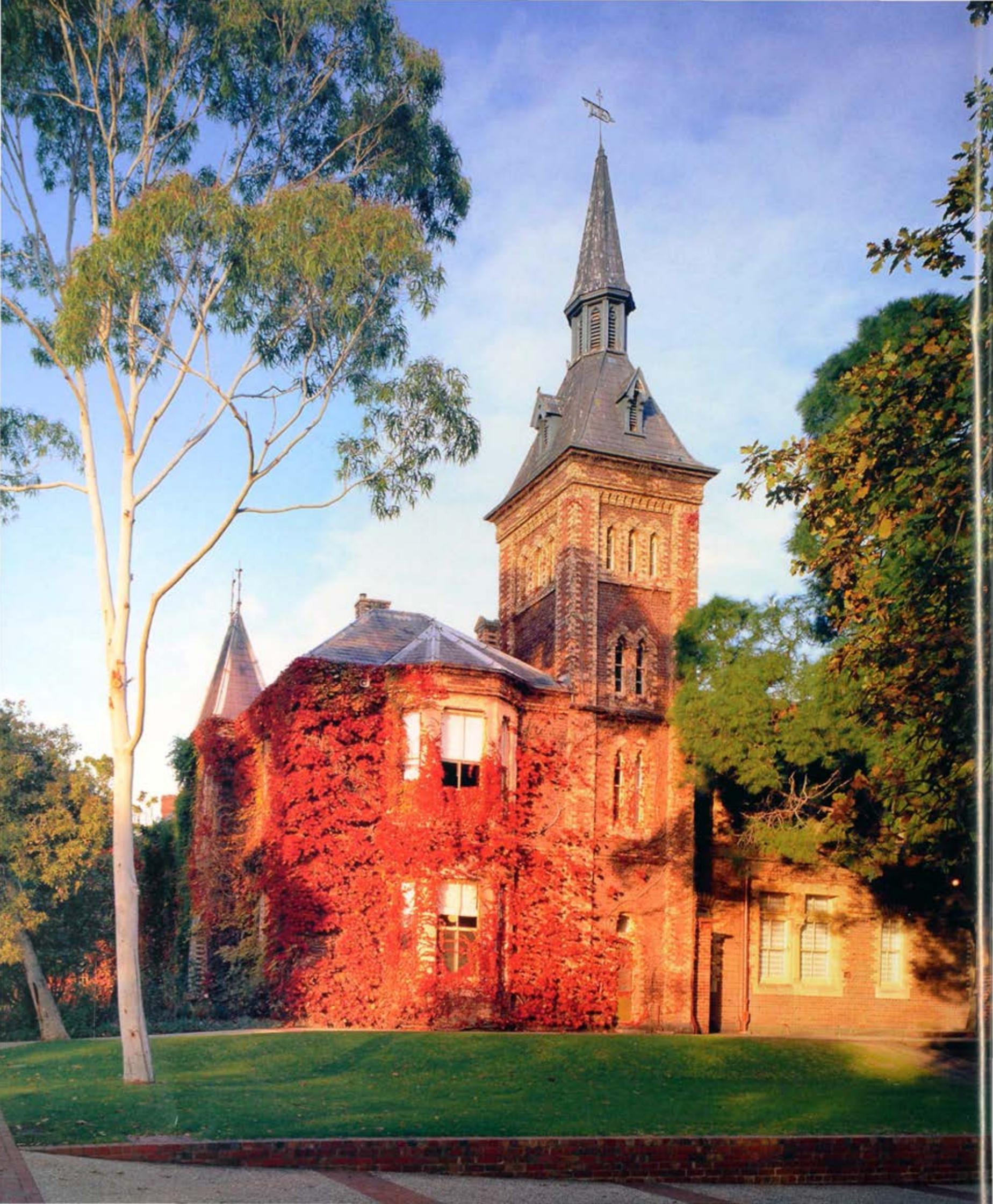
The Geelong College History Committee, chaired by Dr Hugh Seward, with Bill Huffam, Con Lannan and Dr Pauline Turner, has provided me with tremendous support and thoughtful advice about the project. These people were joined by Fred Elliott, Warren Harris, Leslie Hatton and Pat Wood to form an Editorial Committee to provide feedback on manuscript drafts. I am most grateful for all their hard work. Staff members at the College have provided practical assistance, especially the Archivist, Con Lannan, the Director of Community Relations and Development, Mike Howell, and the Principal's Personal Assistant, Jenny Ryan.

This history is significantly enhanced by the insights and stories given so willingly in the course of formal oral history interviews, listed in the references at the back of the book, as are the names of others who assisted with photographs, or in several other ways to provide diverse research sources.

Access to Paul Mishura's database of enrolments (Mishura Collegians' Database) was a tremendous aid to my research. My thanks are also due to staff at archives and institutions in Melbourne and Geelong: Melissa Campbell at Geelong Grammar School, and staff at Geelong Heritage Centre, State Library of Victoria, Public Record Office Victoria and University of Melbourne Archives.

My colleagues at HistorySmiths deserve special thanks as well: Claire Levi, Barbara Pertz and Fiona Walters for research, transcribing of interviews, editing and proofreading. Thank you also to my mother, Patricia Penrose, who read the manuscript for me, and to the team at Australian Scholarly Publishing.

*Helen Penrose,  
Historian, HistorySmiths P/L  
Member, Professional Historians' Association (Vic)*



# Introduction

'School histories tend to be shaped according to the priorities of the time in which they are written', said The Geelong College's eighth Principal in 1979. 'They disguise or conceal the tensions which were often there; they are inclined to be hymns of praise and often the doubts, distractions and despairs are carefully avoided or glossed over; they are often written by people whose prejudices about what is successful may do some injustices to other areas and to other personalities.'<sup>1</sup> Indeed, this has often been the case. However, this history of the College is not a hymn of praise, although it does celebrate 150 years of education at the College in 2011. It reveals rather than conceals, and has tried to do justice to its brief: to understand the College's foundation and development within its context of Church, society and education in Victoria. The broad brush approach has been deliberately conceived to complement the extensive biographical and statistical details of College life and its people, to be found in the online *Geelong College Illustrated Heritage Guide* compiled by College Archivist, Con Lannan.

In creating this history of the College, I have used a wide range of sources. New oral history research enlivens the narrative since the 1940s. The College Archives is remarkable for its depth of both official and personal records. Among its treasures are a substantial collection of written reminiscences by Old Collegians and staff, which is collectively most revealing of life at the College and the people within; a significant body of correspondence written by a Boarding Housemaster; and an extensive pictorial collection. Research for this project also uncovered some important new sources in repositories elsewhere. A small collection of letters at the State Library of Victoria, for example, survives from the early 1870s, written by teacher Arthur Backhouse to his parents. Sydney's Mitchell Library holds the vast collection of G.E. Morrison's papers (Old Collegian and son of founding Headmaster, Dr George Morrison), including important correspondence and other documents relating to the sale of the College to the Presbyterian Church in 1908. Extensive newspaper research has thrown light on the era before this, when the College was privately owned (1864–1908) and had no College Council and consequently produced no Council Minutes to guide the historian.

All this material, and a great deal more, was interrogated to trace and understand the College's establishment, development and ties to the Western District, Geelong and the Presbyterian (later Uniting) Church. The College was established by the Presbyterian Church

## College Principals

Dr George Morrison	1861–1898
Norman Morrison	1898–1909
William Bayly	1910–1914
Walter Price	1915–1919
Reverend Francis Rolland	1920–1945
Dr Martyn Buntine	1946–1960
Peter Thwaites	1960–1975
Peter Gebhardt	1976–1985
Paul Sheahan	1986–1995
Dr Pauline Turner	1996–present

of Victoria in 1861 to provide education for local Geelong boys, just after the temporary closure of Geelong Grammar School. Under the direction of the indomitable Scottish scholar, Dr George Morrison, the school grew quickly and moved in 1871 to an expansive hilltop location in Newtown. During Dr Morrison's long period as Principal (1861–98), the College earned an outstanding reputation for high academic standards. The strong Presbyterian ideals of a rigorous education continued during most of the period during which the College was operated and, later, owned by the Morrison family (after the Presbyterian Church was unable to provide appropriate financial backing).

When the College was sold back to the Presbyterian Church in 1908, it became a member of the elite Associated Public Schools (APS) and was governed by a Council largely composed of Old Collegians and Church representatives. The considerable influence of Old Collegians began during this period, with prominent Council Chairmen and long-serving Council members and teachers. Their commitment and loyalty became essential to the College's survival, for considerable instability was experienced after the sudden death of its second Principal, Norman Morrison (1898–1909). Internal challenges encountered by subsequent Principals, William Bayly (1910–14) and Walter Price (1915–19), added to the difficulties of drought and World War I.

Students deeply admired the example set them by the College's next Principal, the Reverend Francis Rolland (1920–45), under whose guidance began the innovative House of Guilds. The Presbyterian Church and Council had been determined to appoint a minister. The Christian values of service and good citizenship have been hallmarks of the College's identity since Mr Rolland's period, during which the formal relationship of Church and College became strong. As the College grew, so too did boarding and its association with Victoria's Western District. At boarding's peak, during Dr Martyn Arnold Buntine's period as Principal (1946–60), boarders were spread across four buildings and created an impenetrable hierarchy of students (with day boys at the bottom of the heap). Until the end of this period, the Junior School was part of the main campus. In 1960, the new Preparatory School opened on Aberdeen Street.

The next Principal, Peter Thwaites (1960–75), and his successor, Peter Gebhardt (1976–85), gradually put into place more new facilities, well-qualified teachers, higher academic standards, co-education and a more balanced curriculum. Since then, the College has been greatly affected by drought, recessions and intense competition from other schools. Paul Sheahan (1986–95) consolidated much of the best of the work done by his predecessors as the College responded to many challenges with modern technologies, environmental and outdoor education, and a renewed emphasis on responsible citizenship and Christian values. Dr Pauline Turner has continued this work since 1996, but the historian, of course, works with the past, so a more general narrative necessarily replaces any historical analysis of the most recent years while their threads and outcomes are not yet concluded. Nevertheless, the College's Scottish founders would no doubt be pleased to find some historical symmetry, in the now modern co-educational College, with a return to notions of rigorous scholarship that were expected of Dr Morrison's students 150 years ago.



ELEMENTS  
OF SCIENCE.

COLLEGE  
1861  
1861

The  
Pegasus

