Loreto Portland 125 Years

Loreto Portland was founded in December 1884

After an illness in 1883 Mother Gonzaga Barry was persuaded to go to Portland to convalesce in the brisk sea air. She thought all the sisters would benefit from a seaside house and in December 1884 Mother Gonzaga travelled with a community of five to found Loreto Convent Portland and to begin Loreto's long association with Portland. A school was opened in the last week of January 1885.

A six room cottage in Bentinck Street was leased and Bayview Cottage eventually purchased. Bayview Cottage had been built by Stephen Henty and later rented by Mary MacKillop and her family.

Mother Boniface Volcker was appointed the first Superior and Mother Raphael Gallavan, Mistress of Schools.

Later Seaview Cottage next door was purchased which was to become the boys' college, St. Aloysius in 1906. In 1900 the front of the Convent was built and in 1903 the wing with the spire was added.

In 1885 Loreto also took responsibility for All Saints School, the Parish Primary School.

Bayview Cottage, or Loreto's School of the Holy Child as it was first known, with early sisters and students.
M. Raphael Galavan is the sister on the left and M. Boniface Volcker on the right.

Portland children with their dolls, c.1910

Portland's Dolls' House, an eight room two storey house with furnished rooms, laundry and kitchen. Each child was given a room to look after. The doll's house was housed in one of the front rooms named "The Doll's House".

Mother Angela Finn was born in Portland in 1902. Her mother was a friend of Mary MacKillop's mother and she received her first communion from Father Tenison Woods, co-founder with Mary Mackillop of the Sisters of Joseph.

Nun’s Beach c.1910, pupils in their navy blue sailor suit uniforms.
The day started with a swim in the summer, then classes for a couple of hours and again in the afternoon followed by recreation on the beach sometimes with a picnic afternoon tea.

Boys of St. Aloysius College, c.1940

Mother Philomena Doherty and Mother Gonzaga Barry gathering ferns at ‘Govie’, or Government Paddock, c.1910

Mother Raphael Galavan. Before bed there would be a hug and a tuck-in from “Mummy” Raphael.

M. Columbanus Croughan, Mother “Col”, who looked after the little boys in St. Aloysius and taught in All Saints Parish School for over 40 years.

Mother Boniface Volcker, first Portland Superior and one of the Australian pioneers

Portland Convent, 1900, with the new wing built next to Bayview Cottage comprising dormitory and school room.
All Saints School on the left and All Saints Church on the far left.

Srs. Pauline Allen, Christine, Consuelo, Miriam,
Christopher, Emilian, Bernadette, Francesca,
Thomas, Dolorosa, Aquin, Lucy, Clair, Mary, Elizabeth.
PORTLAND, 1974

Portland Convent with new wing with parlour, enlargement of the Chapel and accommodation for the nuns below a spire added in 1903.

Seaview Cottage next door to Bayview Cottage, to become St. Aloysius College for boys in 1908.

Portland Community 1924 or 1925

Government Paddock or “Govie” as it was known, where, weather permitting a picnic lunch of billy tea and toasted jam sandwiches was taken every Saturday afternoon. Maiden hair fern and wild flowers would be collected to press and place in a letter home.

Students enjoying the Portland Beach, 1950s

Portland Students in the brown uniforms introduced in 1946 and worn into the 1970s.

Lack of available religious staff, the high proportion of non-Catholic enrolments and lack of opportunity for boys' education in Portland prompted the restructuring of Loreto Portland.
In 1977 Loreto Portland became a co-educational, ecumenical Christian school, the Christian Community College, which became Bayview College in 1996.

Sr. Genevieve Davey with Minister for Education, Lindsay Thompson, at the opening of the Christian Community College

Celebration of Loreto's 125 years in Portland at Bayview College 2009
Sr. Denise Desmarchelier on the left.

Sister Clair Dowden who was at Portland 1967-1984

1996 Portland Community

The Loreto community moved from the school site to two adjoining houses in Gawler Street in 1980.

Sr. Denise Desmarchelier, Sr. Bernadette Ziesing, Sr. Frances Browne, Portland Community from 2005