

Barzillai Quaife was Australia's first philosopher and a Professor of Divinity. He was associated with The Hughenden and lived in Queen Street, preaching at the end of his life, in the Congregational Church on Ocean Street, Woollahra.

Barzillai Quaife's son, Dr Frederick Harrison Quaife, built the gracious Hughenden in the 1870s. The Victorian Italianate Hughenden with its black marble fireplaces, servants bells, unique staircase, and Dr Quaife's initials, still etched in Lombardic script in the glass above the entrance.

Dr Quaife was an important social and political figure in the colony as a founding father of the British Medical Association and later its President, who brought the first x-ray machine to the colony. He was also a founding father of the British Astronomical Society in Australia.

After the Quaifes, The Hughenden commenced a chequered history – Masonic Hall, guest house, nurses' home, a dance hall, and the Riviere Ladies College.

Men may be foreigners but they are men. They may be uncivilised but they are yet men... One nation may not oppress another. The natural rights of man are universally the same.

Barzillai Quaife – 1872

The Riviere College's motto was Des Fleisses Lohn – Rewards of Work and Diligence – inspiring a generation of Australian women to pursue their brilliant careers. These women include Dame Constance D'Arcy, a pioneer obstetrician and gynecologist who fought relentlessly for maternal care and women's rights; Lillian de Lissa, pioneer of early childhood education; Estelle Barnes, pioneer female dentist; and Matilda Meares, pioneer graduate of Sydney University.

By 1990 The Hughenden had fallen into dispute, half hidden behind a concrete fence. It was discovered by writer Susanne Gervay OAM. With the legacy left by her parents, who escaped communism in Hungary to find a safe haven in Australia, the Gervay family began the lengthy restoration of The Hughenden. Melding European arts and culture with Victorian heritage, it would become a uniquely Australian arts and literary hotel.

The art of The Hughenden is eclectic including artworks from the 1800s to today. Dr Quaife's portrait and the silver plate awarded to him for his services to the Ambulance in 1886 hang in the bar, a permanent exhibition of the works of Australian children's illustrators is located in The Reading Room.

The Hughenden is a patron of the arts and literary life and is home to the Australian chapter of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). The Hughenden also supports a number of charities including Room to Read, which brings literacy to the children of the developing world, Books in Homes reaching indigenous and disadvantaged children, Monkey Baa Theatre and many other community organisations.

The Hughenden is located at the gateway to Centennial Parklands, established 1888, which is the birthplace of Australia's federation. Set among one of the largest expanses of colonial Victorian architecture in Australia, it is at the crossroads of heritage Woollahra Village, the arts of Paddington markets, designer fashion boutiques, the Sydney Cricket Stadium and Football Stadium, the Entertainment Quarter and Fox Studios.

The Hughenden today welcomes guests to explore its history, enjoy a drink in the Victorian lounge, stay in a unique room and discover our warm hospitality, while becoming a part of the ongoing Hughenden story.

