

# The Wonderful World of the Mechanics' and their ilk

**MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2004** show-cased just what a diversity and range of activities are conducted by the various Institutes around the world. There are the Universities, Colleges, Museums, Theatres, Libraries and of course the Community Hall

The Universities and Colleges have their special subject interests to suit their geographical location and local industrial profile.

We learned of Museums with large specimen collections comprising thousands of items.



Chatting at the Royal Society of Victoria Reception, from left: **Dr Richard Wendorf**, Stanford Calderwood Director, **Boston Athenaeum** (USA); **Rose King**, President, **Upper Plenty Mechanics' Institute** (V); and **Basil Walby**, **Royal Society of Victoria**. *(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

There were the Theatres where the performing arts talent was fostered from writing through to production, supported by substantial libraries and music collections.

Old Libraries, where one title of several volumes was so valuable it could substantially fund a US\$10 million restoration program or employ full time conservation staff to conserve rare books or documents.

And Community Halls that were reshaping Victorian and interstate country towns, through their energy and innovation.

The Lectures ranged from occasional up to

almost every night in some Institute buildings, when their associates are taken into account.

Publishing programs range from newsletters, CDs, books, and even a community newspaper.

There was the big, from the **Boston Athenaeum**, to the little at **Arthurs Creek** showcasing their history, happenings and buildings with equal pride and eloquence.

Fundraising ranged from the real 'wallet flattening' stuff, for a building makeover or special purchase, to the modest kitchen refit or rewiring, or cry for a new microwave.

Equally it showed what a huge range of diverse talent there is out there amongst the membership of this worldwide group which was getting together for the first time. It was certainly a powerhouse of expertise, energised with enthusiasm for the Mechanics' cause.

The names of **Birkbeck**, **Horner** and **Holbrook** were known to most, but the enormity of their legacy was of staggering dimensions.

History was certainly being made and everyone was there to help make it, and well.

## DIARY

**DATE**  
**MIV ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Saturday, 6 November 2004**  
**at 10am. To be followed by a Workshop in the afternoon.**  
**Prahran Mechanics' Institute, 140 High Street, Prahran**

## Inside this issue:

Housekeeping - Ideas...	2
President's Greeting	3
Minister's Address	4
Swinburne University	6
Mechanics' Worldwide 2004	8
State of the Mechanics'	15
Travelling Exhibitions	16
MISA Bookshelf	17
Around the Institutes	18
UK Independents' AGM	30
Buff Page Finder	31
News, Odd Spots...	32

# Housekeeping, Ideas and Opportunities

So we might not be able to organise meetings around the State as often as you would like, however there is nothing to stop an Institute inviting other Institutes in their region for a BBQ and a chance to network.

If we had all the Institute buildings on all the main streets in Victoria, now that would be a powerful advertising campaign.

So here's the challenge to all hall Committees to proudly reinstate their original Institute signagel.

## THE HALLS' WORKSHOP

For those who attended the Halls' Workshop in conjunction with the World Conference you would have learned much and for those that could not make it, the tapes are being transcribed and we will work through these in forthcoming issues of the Newsletter.

We must thank State Librarian **Anne-Marie Schwirtlich** and **Shane Carmody** for offering us the use of the State Library's **Village Roadshow Theatre** which was a perfect venue. Then there was **Emily Massina** our hostess for the afternoon and their 'technical' person **Heidi**.

A **Friends of State Library** member took the delegates on a most informative tour of the State Library prior to the Workshop and this was much appreciated by all. We heartily thank: **Fred Green** of the Department of Consumer Affairs; **David Heale** and **Dick Ford**, DSE Strategy and Partnerships, Crown Land Management; **Bill Hogg**, **Grantley Fearn**, **Andrew Taylor** of Jardine Lloyd Thompson; **Peter Pereyra** of the Building Commission; **Lorraine Huddle** of Lorraine Huddle & Associates; our historian **Pam Baragwanath**; Tallarook MI's dynamic **Libby Webster**.

We counted at least twenty-two Institutes present and that in itself made history for never had there ever been such a gathering of Institutes. This record however was broken later that day when we had representatives from over fifty Institutes at the evening reception.

## UNITED WE STAND

It is pleasing to note that we now have over eighty Institutes as members of MIV. Besides an interstate member we also have a few from overseas. Then we have some seventy personal members so our total membership is climbing. But the real significant part is we are now starting to step up to the 'microphone' and our sound is being heard.

The majority of our Institute members conduct community halls, and indeed we have recently joined up a couple of community halls as they see value in our present and future work.

However MIV does not have a large staff, indeed it has no paid staff and we all act in an honorary capacity.

So we might not be able to organise meetings around the State as often as you would like, however there is nothing to stop an Institute inviting other Institutes in their region for a BBQ and a chance to network. And if you are planning a regional get together, let us know and hopefully a Committee member or two may be able to attend.

The Institute movement is a great brotherhood/sisterhood and you have many friends out there you did not even know you had.

Just mention you are from an Institute when you visit and the ice is immediately broken.

**United we stand**, the option is just not on our agenda.

## THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AS A BRAND

It must be considered that our large 'M' has been around long before it was fashioned into an arch or it graced a notable beverage.

The Mechanics' Institute and its ilk have stood the test of time, a long time.

Recently I had cause to find why the Sir Colin Mackenzie Wildlife Sanctuary at Healesville changed its name. I was told it was all a matter of marketing, so now it trades as the Healesville Sanctuary, using its Sir Colin Mackenzie title for official purposes only.

It's something we all might have considered, and why not be styled as the Alberton Hall or whatever?

What that name change overlooks in the heritage of the name which has been around for two centuries. Wisely we see Institutes now proudly proclaiming their heritage, and it is an illustrious one. To think there were over one thousand

Institutes in Victoria. Now if we all got together that would really give us some clout.

In recent times Institute members have been out there selling the name and its paying off. There's been newspaper articles, a mention in Parliament, radio interviews and there's a few freshly painted new signs out there proudly acknowledging the rich Mechanics' Institute heritage.

It is not going to stop there, for the best is yet to come. Come the end of the decade we might be putting Australia Post stamps on our envelopes featuring images of Institute buildings.

The title of our new Travelling Exhibition **Mechanics'... and Proud of It!** tells the story.

We do have proud history and we must flaunt it, then grants, sponsorship and support from the most unlikely quarters will flow to individual Institutes.

All Institutes act independently, but by proudly branding ourselves as a Mechanics' Institute, School of Arts, Athenaeum or Lyceum we are declaring our common universal heritage.

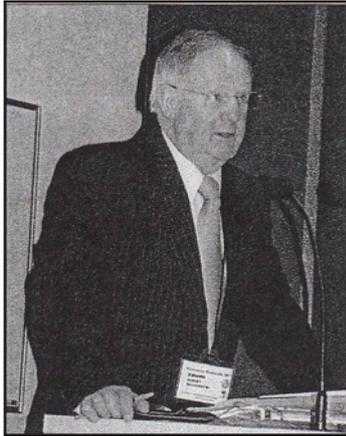
It's the old advertising adage, repetition makes one take notice. If we had all the Institute buildings signed on all the main streets in Victoria, now that would be a powerful advertising/awareness campaign.

So here's the challenge to all hall Committees to proudly reinstate their original Institute signage!

## YOUR OWN PROMO LEAFLET

The task is to produce a tri-fold promo leaflet for your Institute, giving history, Institute or hall features, hire charges and contact details, with a few pictures, historical or otherwise. Use a different colour paper other than white to stand your leaflet out from the crowd and scatter them around your area in shops, schools, etc.

What a splendid event the conference Mechanics' Worldwide 2004 was. Such a range and depth of papers and presentations, so much warmth and good-will, so much productive learning, networking and publicity...



MIV President and Conference Committee Chair, **Dr Frank Hurley**, provided the closing address at the recent First International Conference.

*(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

## *President's Greetings*

**WHAT A SPLENDID EVENT** the conference **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** was. Such a range and depth of papers and presentations, so much warmth and good-will, so much productive learning, networking and publicity for Mechanics' Institutes, Athenaeums and Schools of Arts

There are accounts of conference activities, speakers, excursions, workshops and celebrations elsewhere in this Newsletter. Here I want to thank our sponsors, who are also listed elsewhere, and the many MIV people who

worked so hard and so effectively to achieve a brilliant total conference outcome. First among these was undoubtedly our Secretary **Jim Lowden**, very actively supported by his wife **Ros** and children **James** and **Bronwyn**. I was very pleased to be able to present Jim with a plaque at the Conference Dinner honouring him for his wonderful work.

Also at the dinner, presentations were made to **Julann Meabank**, **Cathy Milward-Bason**, **Christine Worthington**, **Don Barker** and **Clive Brooks** in appreciation of their very significant contributions to various aspects of conference organisation. **Pam Baragwanath** was awarded Life Membership of MIV in recognition not only of her work for the conference but also her extraordinary contribution over many years to MIV and recording the story of Mechanics' Institutes everywhere. I want to make special mention, too, of the vital behind the scenes work of **Wallace Kirsop** in securing several of our outstanding international presenters, of **Graham Dudley** for his productive liaison with various Victorian Government agencies, and of **George Baragwanath**, **Judith Dwyer**, **Libby Webster**, **Peter Pereyra** and **Lorraine Huddle** for varied conference tasks done so well.

The conference has commanded much of the MIV Committee's attention over the last 18 months or so. It was not just an end in itself but also a platform on which to build further collective and individual institution endeavours. We look forward to the widespread participation of all people interested in our institutions (and those yet to become interested) in these activities.

My best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas and 2005 to all Newsletter readers.

*Frank Hurley*

PRESIDENT

## Minister's Conference Opening Address

I am tempted to describe it [The Conference] as action-packed. I certainly think there are times when delegates will be spoiled for choice and torn between several enticing options.



Minister for Local Government, **Candy Broad**, represented the Premier **Steve Bracks** at the opening of **MW 2004**.  
(Pam Baragwanath photo)

**GOOD MORNING EVERYONE**, especially to those visiting Melbourne from overseas.

Melbourne is one of the world's most liveable cities which attracts 1.25 million international visitors a year; but very few of them ever get to experience the delights of our Mechanics' Institute network, which I trust you enjoyed yesterday as part of the *Buildings, Books and Beyond* Conference.

I am very pleased to be here this morning representing the Premier of Victoria, Steve Bracks, to officially open, *Buildings, Books and Beyond*, the International Conference of Mechanics' Institutes.

At the outset I would like to congratulate the Mechanics' Institute of Victoria for their efforts in organising this conference, and for producing a very diverse, comprehensive and informative program. I am tempted to describe it as action-packed. I certainly think there are times when delegates will be spoiled for choice and torn between several enticing options.

I trust that those of you who took the Gold Fields bus tour yesterday would have seen some fascinating and historical buildings - particularly in Ballarat, Bendigo, Maldon and Castlemaine, which is undergoing a major refurbishment, thanks to a grant of \$1 million from the State Government. Visiting those mechanics' institutes gives you a good sense of the continuing and valuable role they play in their Victorian communities.

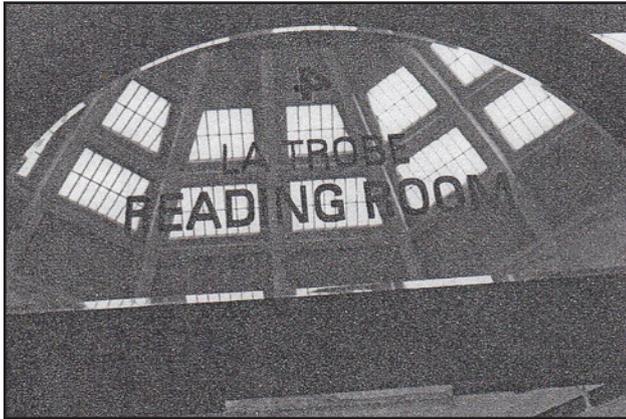
While those of you who stayed in Melbourne and visited our glorious State Library, could not fail to be impressed by the magnificent refurbishment of the building.

The restoration of the Main Reading Room is truly breath-taking. It is a beautiful building, particularly the patterning of the glazed ceiling in the Dome, the vaulting scale and the light - it does make you gasp. Overall, this project has been underway since 1990 and is being refurbished and modernised at a cost of \$190 million. And it is about to enter into its final phase, Stage 7.

Visiting those Mechanics' Institutes gives you a good sense of the continuing and valuable role they play in their Victorian communities.

## *Minister's Conference Opening Address... continued*

From the perspective of contributing to resilient, vibrant and sustainable communities, these Mechanics' Institutes and the 500 other Mechanics' Institute buildings around the State are invaluable.



The recently restored dome of the State Library of Victoria's **LaTrobe Reading Room**.  
(Kristina Holdaway photo)

Melbourne icons - one of them being the State Library, another is Flinders Street Station, a third is Melbourne University, plus *The Age* newspaper.

Prahran is one of four Mechanics' Institutes that still continue to serve as libraries in Melbourne - the other three being the Melbourne Athenaeum, the Berwick and Footscray Mechanics' Institutes.

All four recently received Mechanics'

Institute Community Partnership grants from the State Government. Prahran, for example, received a grant to set up a community publishing initiative, *Prahran Mechanics' Institute Press* to help publish books about places, people and organisations in Victoria. I understand that the *Prahran Mechanics' Institute Press* will also publish the proceedings of this conference.

From the perspective of contributing to resilient, vibrant and sustainable communities, these Mechanics' Institutes and the 500 other Mechanics' Institute buildings around the State are invaluable.

Most of the surviving Mechanics' Institutes are operating as community halls or homes to local organisations, others - like Berwick and the Maldon Athenaeum - continue to function as public libraries often holding locally significant cultural material.

The State Government continues to recognise the vital role these institutions play in our communities and we continue to support them in partnership with their local governments and committees of management.

The Government is also proud to be a sponsor of this first International Conference of Mechanics' Institutes, contributing \$12,000 towards to the cost of the event. Looking around me today, I feel I can say it is money well spent.

I need to do no more than declare the Buildings, Books and Beyond Conference officially open and to wish you a very satisfying and stimulating time at lectures and tours as part of the Conference, and especially to those visiting Melbourne and Victoria, enjoy your stay.

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*Riches do not consist of the possession of treasures, but of the use made of them.*

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (1769-1821)

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## SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY - PRAHRAN CAMPUS...

The Gallery exhibited the greatest range of photos of Mechanics' Institute buildings that had ever been shown in the one place before.



Swinburne University's Prahran Campus with some symbolic gumtrees, the venue of **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004**.



The **Welcome to MW 2004 and Celebrate** set the scene for a smorgasbord of Victoria's and other Institute buildings and much camaraderie. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

**IT MAY COME** as a surprise to all the Delegates to **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** that we were the first conference to be held at **Swinburne's Prahran Campus - National School of Design**.



Delegates from Warburton were **Bob Brooks** and **Ellena Biggs**, pictured in front of our new Travelling Exhibition banner, again from **Adam Wolff** and **Synergy Signs**. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

From the time we first walked up the stairs and entered the Design Building foyer on Friday morning, when the digital notice board flashed up 'Welcome to the Delegates to Mechanics' Worldwide 2004', we felt very much at home.

It just seemed ideal with its foyer and adjacent Gallery which was used as the Registration and Display Area.

The Gallery exhibited the greatest range of photos of Mechanics' Institute buildings that had ever been shown in the one place before. Added to this was the Travelling Exhibitions **Remember the Mechanics?** and a preview of the latest **Mechanics' ... and Proud of It!**

Then there was the **BHP** (Baragwanath, Huddle & Pereyra) **Big Mech Picture Show** which had 100 Victorian Institute pictures scrolling through on the screen. On the other side of the room was a computer which featured **Barrie Brennan's** database on the New South Wales' **New England Institutes**.



Registration Desk with sale items of books, cards, etc. Note the **OMICAS - University of Cincinnati 175th Anniversary** commemorative card packs on the left. Some Panel of the new Travelling Exhibition **Mechanics'... and Proud of It!** are on the right. All will remember **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004!** *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

...when the digital notice board flashed up 'Welcome to the Delegates of Mechanics' Worldwide 2004', we felt very much at home.

## ... AND OH JUST WHAT A VENUE IT WAS!

However without the generous support of the Council of Swinburne University and their various Department heads, and team leaders it would have been virtually impossible.

Then there was the Registration Table proper and the adjoining publication sales area with its books, and the OMICAS -University of Cincinnati's 175th anniversary distinctive playing cards.



More of the Gallery Display, the **Big Mech Picture Show** is centre, flanked by panels from **Mechanics'... and Proud of It!**, the Registration Desk and Visitor's Book, which also contained the names of the landmark Kilmore Conference attendees.

*(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

Bedecking the west end of the Gallery we had the flags of the Institute countries, plus that of Germany where delegate and lecturer **Dr Anke Heins** hailed from.



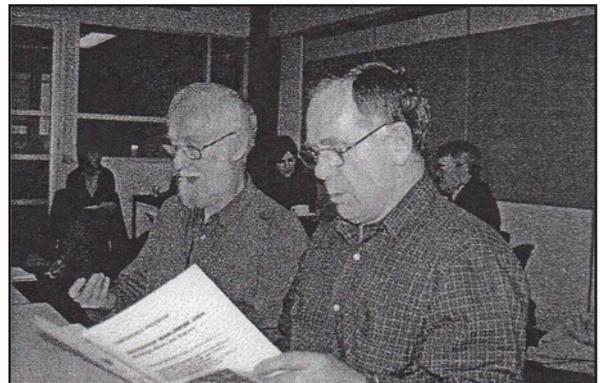
Centre left is the **Bromley House - Nottingham Subscription Library** teatowel and other material from the **Newcastle Lit and Phil** and the **Ipswich Institute**. The MI nation flags hang in the background. Further pictures from **Pam Baragwanath's** landmark **Mechanics' Institute** building collection are on the right.

*(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*



Action in the main Theatre, Room 3.10, with Ohio's **Professor Maria Curro Kreppel** at the lectern. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

But one does not survive without food and we were well fed throughout the Conference with the opportunity for 'takeaways'. This was all done with a minimum of fuss by **Margaret Shilton, Tye Nguyen** and chef **Gregory Reum** of the Swinburne Union.



Catching up on the forthcoming session over lunch, **Barrie Brennan**, Tamworth (right) with **Alan Creighton**, President, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

However without the generous support of the Council of Swinburne University and their various Department heads, and team leaders it would have been virtually impossible. And whilst it is unwise to single out names we especially thank **Dr Raj Sharma** our Swinburne University contact.

And who could ever forget Swinburne's two technical gurus, **Tomas Weisz**. and **Luc Allen**, who made it all run so smoothly.

Thank you from us all, to all concerned.

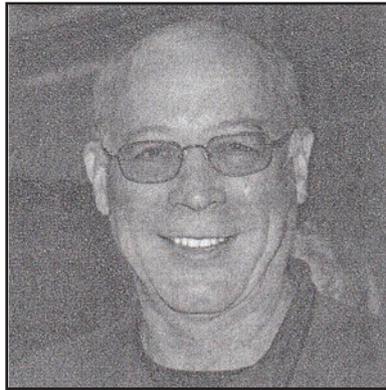
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# The Tours to the Grant and the Small...

Prahran Mechanics' Institute... was to be a homely base for out of Conference activities, a read of the papers, to make a phone call or to check the emails on the internet.

**THURSDAY MORNING** saw an early rise and all assembled at Prahran Mechanics' Institute. This was to be a homely base for out of Conference activities, a read of the papers, make a phone call or check the emails on the internet. After a hiccup with the transport, which gave all a chance for a coffee and to meet and greet, the intrepid party was Ballarat-bound.



Tour coordinator **Donald Barker**, planned the Pre- and Post-Conference tours and wrote the notes for the appreciative groups of delegates. In between he programmed the Conference speaker schedule and presented one of the Conference Papers. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*



Thursday's intrepid Pre-Conference Tour party outside the Maldon Athenaeum. *(Lucy Bantermalis photo)*

been restored and will be ready to host functions by the end of the year.

It was then by the express lane to the Vahland and Getzschmann-designed **Sandhurst (Bendigo) Mechanics' Institute** which is now the home of the Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE.

Here lunch, courtesy of **Glenn Thomas** and his team, was enjoyed in the Reading Room with its domed ceiling and surrounding gallery with remnants of the old library. Tour leader Donald Barker gave the building walk through commentary. Heading towards home the first stop was at the **Maldon Athenaeum** where a patient **Kaye McCann** and **Marni Mellor** were standing by to take the tour.

The **Maldon Athenaeum**, since the Bookmobile service was withdrawn, has again become the community library, which is run entirely by volunteers. It has recently opened a well-stocked Children's Section occupying its own room and now has regular story tellings.

At the rear is the timber Hall which is shared with the RSL and it has had a restump and paint in recent times and is looking very presentable.

Back on board it was a short ride to the grand **Castlemaine Mechanics' Institute**, where the paint had virtually just dried from the opening of the \$1.3 million refit and restoration. Unfortunately a large sum was spent on stabilising the foundations. At Castlemaine we were met by Librarian **Patrick Lakey** and The Friends of the Castlemaine Library's and **Jenny McIntyre**.

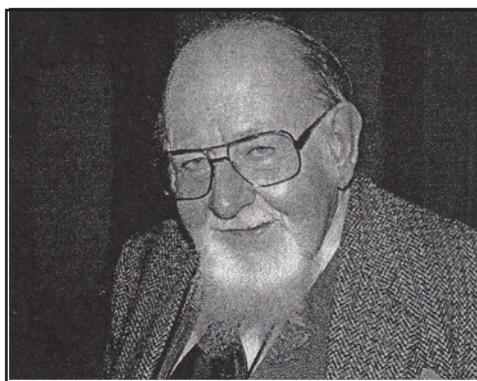
The Friends contributed financially and physically to the library upgrade and setup.

It was then express back to the Royal Society of Victoria for the evening Conference Reception

The Pre-Conference tour was to be a day of solid bricks and mortar Institutes from the goldfields era.

At the grand **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute** the party was met by **Dr Frank Hurley**, **Rex Bridges** and **Clive Brooks** for the fastlane tour of the 1860s building, over cup of coffee.

The magnificent upstairs reading room has just



Historian and architect **Peter Staughton** provided the commentary on the Thursday Goldfields Tour. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

...the grand **Castlemaine Mechanics' Institute**, where the paint had virtually just dried from the opening of the \$1.3 million refit and restoration.

## in the Goldfields and the Yarra Valley

Here the Institutes generally date from the late 1800s and the early 1900s with less opulent buildings...

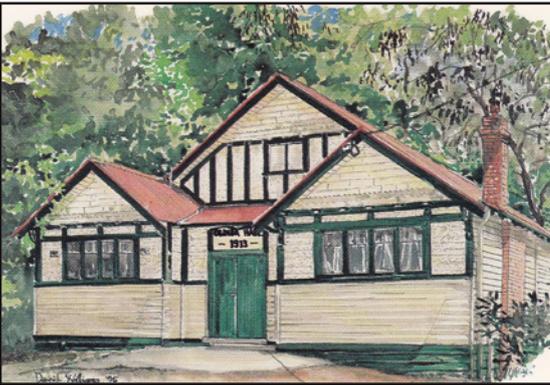
The Post-Conference Tour took in the Yarra Valley on the eastern fringe of Melbourne. Here the Institutes generally date from the late 1800s and the early 1900s with less opulent buildings, generally making use of the local timbers.

Heading east in to the fast rising sun the Dandenongs reared up from the landscape until we were at their feet. Then we edged up the Dandenong tourist road between the giant treeferns until we deviated to the **Kallista Mechanics' Institute**.

Here we were met by **Dianne Kueffer** and longtime Committee-man **Bob Coleman**.

We were told how **South Sassafras Mechanics' Hall** was built in 1914 and had its name changed to Kallista in 1929. It also had an association with the Heidelberg School of Australian painters including Tom Roberts.

The hall is much loved and featured indoor toilets and a nice catering facility. The floor was like glass indicative of its once common use for dancing.



**Olinda Mechanics' Institute**, built in 1913. It was extended in 1925 to include a stage and adjoining dressing rooms. In 1952 it became the site for the first Melbourne Film Festival.

*(Watercolour by David Williams)*

The next stop was the **Olinda Mechanics' Institute** where **Noel Boulter** and **Patricia Hogan** were our hosts. This building is indicative of problems with Council boundaries. It is located on the extremity of one Shire, although the major users live across the road in the adjoining Shire.

It is a time capsule of history with its biobox screening windows still in place and the rope that showed its early use as a gymnasium still hangs in silent testimony, as do the Honour Boards to the district's WWI and WWII soldiers.

**Lilydale Athenaeum** was our next Institute and historian **Tony McAleer** regaled us with stories, whilst stalwarts **Russell Johnson** and **Patricia Lyall** looked on. Inside is one of the most gracious

and sumptuous theatre interiors and it left us all breathless and filled with admiration.

Morning tea was had at the next door **Museum of**



Part of Monday's tour party outside the **Lilydale Athenaeum** whilst being briefed by historian **Tony McAleer**. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

**Lilydale** where Director **Elizabeth Downes** showed us around. We all appreciated the special exhibition about local Mechanics' Institutes that had been assembled. Local girl, Dame Nellie Melba's presence seemed very near with exhibits about her life both in the Athenaeum and in the Museum.

Back on the coach it was then express to Warburton where we were met by **Cr Monika Keane** of the **Yarra Ranges Shire**, and their Township's Development Manager, **Chris Dupé**.

Warburton Arts Centre's **Sue Millar** turned on a great



Yarra Ranges Shire's **Chris Dupé** (centre) and **Cr Monika Keane** (right) welcomed us to Warburton. *(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

luncheon spread for us which we all enjoyed whilst we chatted with a group of Warburton's citizens.

Our treat came with the opening of the **Warburton Mechanics' Institute** and the floodlights showed us the interior with ten years of pigeon droppings.

It was then back to **Healesville Institute** building for a quick lookover by courtesy of owner **Dr Debra McDonald**, with **Pam Baragwanath** as our guide.

Homeward bound, our coach turned into the **Oak Ridge Vineyard** where a tasting just happened to be taking place and after a brief graze it was express back to Prahran and the final farewells.

It is a time capsule of history with its biobox screening windows still in place and the rope that showed its early use as a gymnasium still hangs in silent testimony...

## CONFERENCE RECEPTION AT ROYAL SOCIETY

**IT SEEMED VERY RIGHT** that the Conference Reception was held at the **Royal Society of Victoria** building. The Royal Society was formed as the **Philosophical Institute of Victoria** in 1854 at a meeting held at the **Melbourne Mechanics' Institute**.



Arriving at the Royal Society, fresh from the Halls Workshop held at the State Library are from left, **Peter Pereyra** (Building Commission), **Lorraine Huddle** (Lorraine Huddle & Associates) and **Christine Worthington** (Prahran MI).

*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

Their historic building, on the triangle formed by LaTrobe, Victoria and Rathdowne streets has been a centre of science since its construction in 1859. The Society has been the instigator of many important initiatives including the financing of the Burke and Wills expedition, the establishment of the Museum Of Victoria, Victoria's National Parks, the formation of the Australian Antarctic Exploration Committee in 1885, and more recently the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Marine Science.



On a building tour **Camilla van Megan** (Royal Society), **Sharyn McMeikin** (Tallarook) and **Wilma Hammond** (Kilmore).

*(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

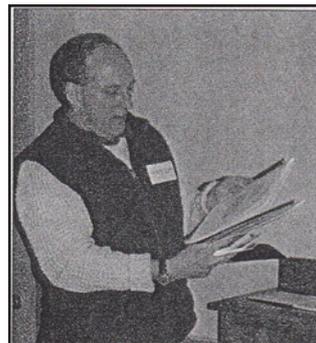
Our hosts for the evening were Royal Society Councillors, **Captain Bill McAulay** and **Basil Walby** and the Society's Executive Officer **Camilla van Megan**. All seemed to be engaged in taking tours of the various rooms of the Royal Society's Hall during the evening.



Checking out the antiques, from left **Libby Webster** and **Sharyn McMeikin** both of Tallarook.

*(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

Upstairs is the Lecture theatre which comfortably seats one hundred people. There is also a section of the Society's extensive library located in the room. The Society's building is used by a number of Melbourne's cultural organisations for lectures, meetings, seminars and displays.



Royal Society Councillor, **Captain Bill McAulay** in full military voice espoused the Society's publishing program, which featured a book on spiders, with a section on the Redback once sighted in many outdoor toilets connected with Mechanics' Institutes.

*(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

Today the Society runs a regular monthly lecture, issues quarterly Proceedings, confers several annual awards, undertakes field trips and has input into scientific matters, at a regional, State and national level.



**Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** Delegates in pre-Conference mode, with many people to meet and much to talk about.

*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

The Society has been the instigator of many important initiatives including the financing of the Burke and Wills expedition, the establishment of the Museum Of Victoria, Victoria's National Parks, the formation of the Australian Antarctic Exploration Committee in 1885, and more recently the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Marine Science.

## PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE'S COCKTAILS AT SIX

The Prahran Institute, since the early 1980s, has strategically created a niche with its Local History of Victoria Library. As well as servicing its growing membership it also supplies books on interlibrary loan through local library branches.

**CONFERENCE DELEGATES** were all invited for end of Day One drinks by the President, **Mr Alf Lazer**, and Committee of the Prahran Mechanics' Institute.

It was another great occasion to mingle and meet the various people whose names were familiar but whose faces you had not sighted before.



Prahran Mechanics' Institute President, **Alf Lazer** (left) exchanges thoughts with the Melbourne Athenaeum's President **Delina Schembri-Hardy** and fellow Prahran Committeeman, **George Swinburne**.  
*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

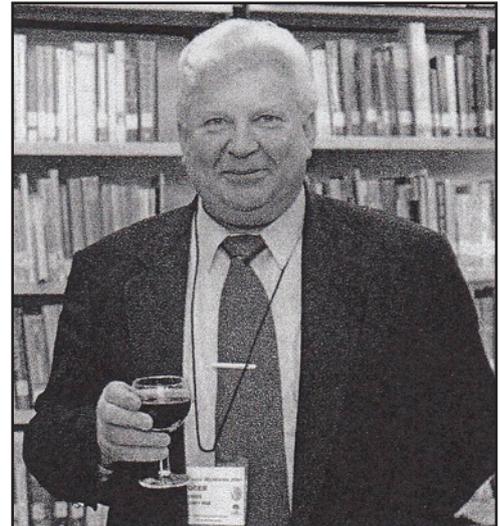
Given it was Prahran's 150th anniversary and its Sesqui-Centenary Gallery of photos of documents, places and faces were in place it was an opportunity to muse.

Exactly what Prahran's founder and Congregational minister the **Rev. William Moss** thought as he gazed down from his strategic wall space amongst the Photographic Gallery as we all gathered, we will never know.

However given that one his English relatives had made contact via the MIV just before the Conference, I think he would have been very proud of his legacy today.



From left, **Dr Julann Meabank** (MIV Conference Strategy Planner), **Dr Keith Manley** (Long University), **Graham Dudley** (Local Government Victoria) and Prahran's Librarian/Secretary **Catherine Milward-Bason**.  
*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*



President of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts of New South Wales and Committee Member of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, **Professor Roger Morris** was the coordinator of the Sydney Program.

*(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

The Prahran Institute, since the early 1980s, has strategically created a niche with its Local History of Victoria Library. As well as servicing its growing membership it also supplies books on interlibrary loan through local library branches. Besides conducting lectures, Prahran also runs the annual Allan Shinkfield Awards for local schools; a History Essay Competition; Genealogical Courses; and more recently Writers' Workshops.



From left, **Basil Walby** (Royal Society of Victoria), **Bruce Draper** (Arthurs Creek) and **Phil Roberts** (Melbourne).

*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

Early this year it commenced **Prahran Mechanics' Institute Press** to acquire: publishing hardware and software. Press Manager, **Christine Worthington** and Prahran's IT Manager **Tim McKenna** and several Prahran members combined to produce the Conference Proceedings CD-ROM, as their first publishing project.

## CONFERENCE DINNER AT THE MECHANIX RESTAURANT

It was quite a night, commencing with **Bruce Draper** (Arthurs Creek) reciting **Rabbie Burns' Celtic Grace**. The idea of the smorgasbord worked well and we all chatted away as we lined up to the groaning food tables. There was just no excuse to say there was not enough food!



**BEHIND THESE HISTORIC DOORS** the First International Conference Dinner took place. The distinctive etched glass doors once admitted to Prahran Mechanics' Institute's library but now house the Swinburne TAFE's catering school and the renowned **Mechanix Restaurant**.



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Background music was provided by the ear-pleasing **Stonnington Symphony Ensemble** and this added greatly to the enjoyment of the evening. Conference Chair and MIV President, **Dr Frank Hurley**, was Master of Ceremonies.

Four toasts: 'To all the Mechanics' Institutes and their ilk' proposed by **Dr Robert Anderson**, President, Association of Independent Libraries (UK), was responded to by **Joan Beddoe** (Brisbane); 'To our Visitors', proposer **Dr Roger Morris** (Sydney), respondent **Professor Maria Curro Kreppel** (OMICAS-Cincinnati); 'To the Institute Birthdays', proposer **Dr Richard Wendorf** (Boston), respondent **Graham Holdaway** (Kilmore); and 'To our Sponsors and Organisers' proposer, **Jim Lowden**, respondent **Alan Creighton** (Sydney).

Presentations were made to the Lowden Family: **James, Bronwyn, Ros** and **Jim** in recognition of their contribution to the organisation of the Conference.

In acknowledgement of her long and ongoing contribution to the Mechanics' Institute movement **Pam Baragwanath** was created a Life Member of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria and presented with a suitably framed certificate.



Two happy faces at the Conference Dinner, **Pam and George Baragwanath** after the Life Membership Presentation to Pam. Both have done and still do a huge amount to further the Mechanics' cause. Congratulations to you both! (Steward Bradley photo)

**Peter Pereyra** volunteered his moving rendition of Banjo Paterson's poem *The Man From Snowy River*, and we agreed to send the words to overseas visitors. (We've heard back from Dr Robert Anderson and he is working on it for recital in 2009.)



The giant **Paterson's Birthday Cake**, carrying the wording 'Felicitations' and remembering the birthdays of all Institutes, including the ones that could not be with us. (Kristina Holdaway photo)

Prahran Mechanics' Institute's **Alf Lazer** cut the giant decorated Birthday Cake donated by **Paterson's Cakes** and the **Schneider family**.

It came as quite a shock to hear later that we were the first Conference Dinner which Swincater, the staff and students of Swinburne TAFE - Prahran Campus, had catered. Not only was the Dinner singled out on the Conference Assessment Sheet for special praise, it was intimated by some as the best Conference Dinner that some had ever attended, anywhere in the world. Well done everyone!

## SUNDAY LUNCH AT THE MELBOURNE 'ATH'

As we bounded up or slowly climbed the stairs there was a great feel of history about The Ath and rightly so for the building on this Collins Street site dates back to 1841.

A GOODLY NUMBER faced the food platter at the Melbourne Athenaeum on Sunday at 12.30pm. Some had just heard **Dr Frank Hurley**, **Pam Baragwanath** and **Dr David McKitterick** on **Peter Clarke's Sunday Arts Program** on **ABC Radio 774**.



The Melbourne Athenaeum, from the verandah up showing the windows of the first floor library, our luncheon venue. Above is Ath 2, formerly a reading room, then Melbourne's most commonly used art gallery exhibition space and today as a theatre. Above is a statue of Athena-given to the Ath by a former lord Mayor of Melbourne, and above that is the lute a symbol of the Melbourne's German Leidertafel which had a room in the building for many years. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

As we bounded up or slowly climbed the stairs there was a great feel of history about The Ath and rightly so for the building on this Collins Street site dates back to 1843.

History has been well and truly made here and The Ath's membership list reads like a who's who in the history of Victoria. The Governor of Victoria was once the patron and **Captain William Lonsdale** was the first President.



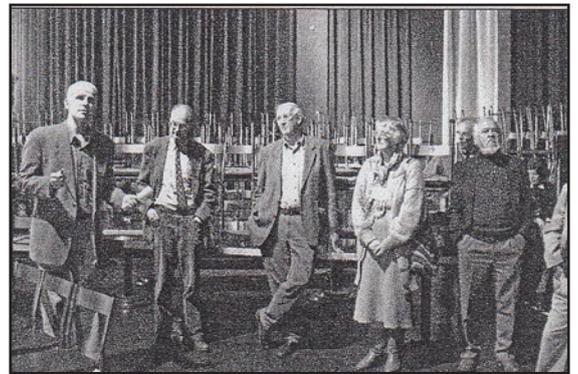
Listening to **Dr Frank Hurley's** Luncheon Introduction, from left, **Dr George Sukarieh** (Cincinnati), **Carole O'Brien** (Sydney), **Dr Richard Wendorf** (Boston), **Captain Bill McAulay** (Royal Society). *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

Indeed The Ath's role in the history of Victoria's culture - literature, theatre, film staging and making music and art is a story that is very rich but still yet to be told.

Most of Melbourne's early organisations were formed within its walls and the Separation movement from New South Wales gained momentum here.

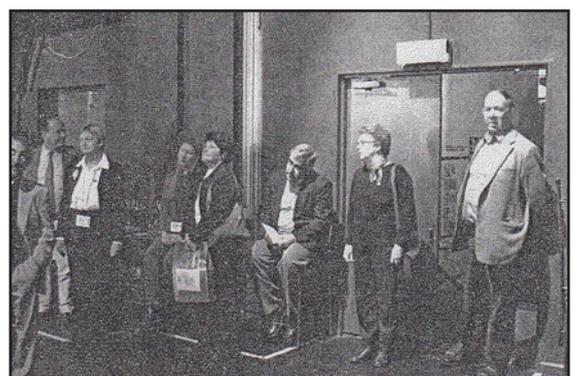
The Melbourne City Council was formed here, as were its leading cultural institutions.

The Ath conducts the oldest library in Victoria, still widely known for its recreational reading collection. It was also the site of the first meeting of the Victorian Public Service Association (Union) in 1885, and they rented an office here for a number of years. The Australian Communist Party also met there in the 1950s with one of its key players being **Frank Hardy** and that may well explain The Ath's several circulated copies of *Power Without Glory*.



The Ath's immediate Past-President, Peter Lovell, took the building tour. Here we are in Ath 2, amidst the tables and chairs which is now a comedy venue. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

The Ath was Victoria's first Mechanics' Institute established in 1839 and it was the venue for the first national Conference of Institutes in 2000.



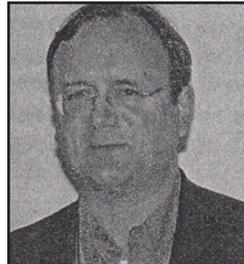
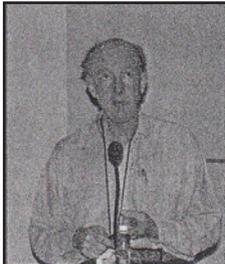
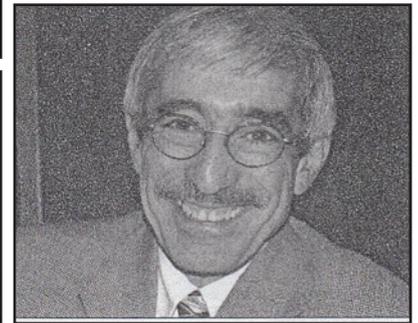
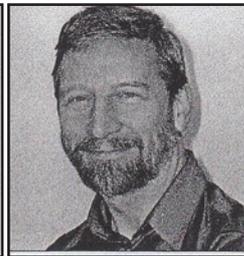
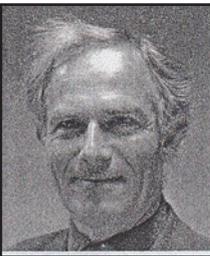
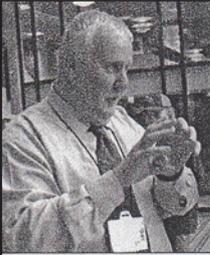
Inside the main Athenaeum Theatre constructed around seventy-five years ago as a picture theatre. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

After The Ath Luncheon delegates were invited by the State Library of Victoria's **Shane Carmody** to do a tour of the Library's special collections and many left to take up his generous offer.

# A CONFERENCE PICTORIAL ROUNDUP



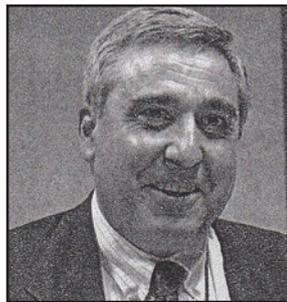
Left: **State Library Tour**; Below, left: **Dr Adrian Haas**; Below, right: **Pam Baragwanath**; Right, from left: **Lothar Kreppel**, **Professor Maria Curro Kreppel (Ohio)** and **Peter Wolfenden** at **The Ath Luncheon**..



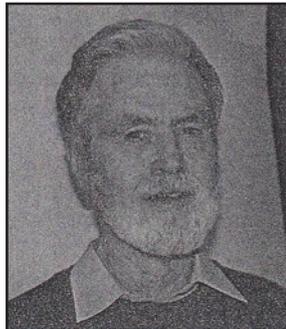
Above from right: **Professor Muthar Al-Ubaidi (Ohio)**; **Tom Lonsdale (Marsden)**; **Dr David McKitterick (Cambridge)**; and all seated for the Minister, **Candy Broad**.



Left: Prahra's **Alf Lazer** and **Catherine Milward-Bason**; right: **Professor George Sukarieh (Ohio)**; and far right: **Dr Anke Heins (Oersdorf)**.



Below, from left: **Lucy Bantermalis (Sydney)**; **Dr Bob Draper (Bath)**; **Clive Brooks (Ballarat)**; **Dr Helen Hewson (Sydney)**; and **Ivar Nelsen (Melbourne)**.



Pictures from various sources including: **Pam Baragwanath** and **Kristina Holdaway**.

Perhaps these familiar buildings have been taken for granted. Few communities or government agencies have nominated Institute buildings for listing on the various heritage registers. Although represented in most towns and reflecting an important element of our social history...

A total of 127 (23%) of the 561 are known to have received grants during that time [The past fifteen years].



## The state of Victoria's MIs - by Dr Celestina Sagazio Senior Historian, National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

**THERE IS INADEQUATE** funding for heritage places in Victoria, and it is so much lower than funding in New South Wales. Mechanics' Institutes, which include many significant buildings in urgent need of maintenance, require increased funding and protection. As part of a submission to the Victorian Heritage Strategy 2005-2010, the National Trust has asked the Victorian Government to consider increasing funding for state and local government heritage agencies, non-government agencies such as the National Trust, and heritage places in private ownership. The National Trust has recommended a range of funding options, including the introduction of a heritage lottery fund, modelled on the successful British program. This illustrated presentation will explore these funding options and ways of protecting our precious mechanics' institutes for future generations.

Since the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc., an umbrella organisation for Mechanics' Institutes, was founded in 1998 more people have become aware of the pressing problems facing these buildings and some funding has been forthcoming but nowhere near enough to cater for the demand. We need radical measures and strong commitment by all levels of government: local, state and federal as well as the assistance of other bodies to tackle these growing problems.

The diligent research work by Pam Baragwanath, Janette Hodgson and others has given us the basis for a good understanding of significance of Mechanics' Institutes and

the need to conserve them. There are over 500 remaining buildings, and the majority of buildings are still used for community purposes, such as a venue for meetings, social occasions, civic duties and recreation. Others are employed as museums, shops, theatres and storage.

Most institute buildings and halls are located on Crown land and managed by a committee of management. Many of the halls established originally on private land have since reverted to the Crown and local municipal councils. Baragwanath and Hodgson concluded in their 1998 study 'An Inventory of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria' that:

'Local committees remain responsible for raising the revenue to maintain the halls with little funding assistance available. The increasing age of many of these buildings poses serious problems for managers but the presence of a well maintained local hall is still a matter of pride for many communities...

Perhaps these familiar buildings have been taken for granted. Few communities or government agencies have nominated Institute buildings for listing on the various heritage registers. Although represented in most towns and reflecting an important element of our social history just over thirty Mechanics' Institute buildings are listed on either the Register of the National State or the Victorian Heritage Register. Many more deserve recognition of their heritage values.'

Since the publication of that study and of Pam Baragwanath's fine book *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria* (2000), the Historic Places Section of the Department of Sustainability and Environment has further developed its database on Mechanics' Institutes. The database has listed a total of 561 known extant Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria. There are 45 buildings on the Register of the National Estate and 24 on the Victorian Heritage

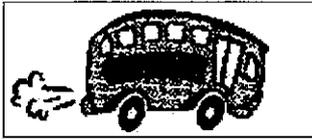
Register, many of which are on both registers. There are 97 listed on municipal heritage overlays. The National Trust has classified 63.

It has been estimated that 142 are managed by private owners or trustees (although some of them may hold Crown Grants, so the land is in fact Crown land - more research is required). A further 253 are conducted by committees of management on Crown reserves. The Department of Sustainability and Environment directly manages 13. There is a large number - 153 - in the undetermined category and much more research is needed to determine their status and condition.

The Historic Places Section has also surveyed the condition of the buildings from various sources: conservation studies, site visits, heritage assessments etc. Approximately 22 were described as in "poor" condition; 66 were "fair"; 242 "good"; 21 "excellent"; 8 "satisfactory"; 29 "very good"; 6 "reasonable". But 168 were undetermined.

The Historic Places Section analysed, too, the number of grants given to the managers of Mechanics' Institutes over the last 15 years or so. A total of 127 (23%) of the 561 are known to have received grants during that time. Although some halls may have received small grants from local councils and other bodies that the department was not aware of. Approximately 15 "heritage" grants were identified. In addition, the Historic Places Section conducted a committee of management survey during 2003-04 that surveyed 157 committees, of which 105 responded: "Urgent attention required": 4; "Poor": 18; "Good": 71; "Excellent": 9/ Total: 102.

(Extract from Paper delivered at Mechanics' Worldwide 2004)



## THE TRAVELLING EXHIBITION... MOVING ON

**FOLLOWING** hard on the heels of its massive showing at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** at Swinburne University—Prahran Campus, the **Remember the Mechanics?** Travelling Exhibition went to the **Stonnington Library - Toorak/South Yarra Branch**.

Its distinctive banner fronted the busy Toorak Road where thousands of people drive past daily.



The **Remember the Mechanics?** banner in place on the Toorak/South Yarra Library, facing busy Toorak Road.

*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

The **Stonnington Library Service** comprises four branches: Malvern, Phoenix Park, Prahran/Windsor and Toorak/South Yarra. Their extensive

website: [www.stonnington.vic.gov.au](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au) gives extensive details of their services which include public computers for internet access and word processing. Public phone, microfilm reading and copying facilities.

Their large range comprises: books, magazines, audio books, CDs, videos, music cassettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs and community language resources.

The community bus picks up and drops off potential borrowers and there is a free delivery service for the incapacitated.

There's regular story times for children and even regular late bedtime stories.



Part of the Travelling Exhibition, showing suburban Institutes, in place at Toorak/South Yarra Library.

*(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

## NEW TRAVELLING EXHIBITION READY FOR LAUNCH AT NARRE WARREN LIBRARY—1 DECEMBER

**MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2004** was also the venue for the preview of the new Travelling Exhibition **Mechanics'... and Proud of It!**

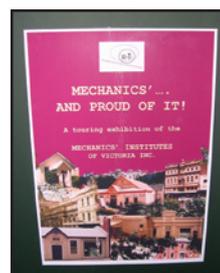
The exhibition was made possible by **Museums Australia (Victoria)** grant as part of their **Regional Exhibitions Touring Initiative**.

The new banner, again by **Adam Woolfe of Synergy Signs**, was proudly displayed at the Entrance of the **National School of Design Building** at Prahran, the venue for the Conference. (See picture page 6).

The Project Team comprised: **Pam Baragwanath, Manuela Daber, Judith Dwyer, Bronwyn Lowden, Jim Lowden** and **Dr Julann Meabank**. The striking design and production was by **Alaina Wilson**, with paste up by **Peter Pereyra, Ros Lowden** and **Judith Dwyer**.

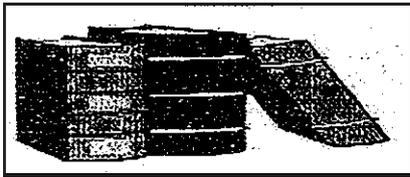
The eye-catching panels feature: **Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, Ballan Mechanics' Institute, Berwick Mechanics' Institute, Brunswick Mechanics' Institute, Buninyong Mechanics' Institute,**

**Chiltern Athenaeum, Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute, Footscray Mechanics' Institute, Lilydale Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute, Kilmore Mechanics' Institute, Maldon Athenaeum, Melbourne Athenaeum, Mortlake Mechanics' Institute, Murtoa Mechanics' Institute, Prahran Mechanics' Institute, Romsey Mechanics' Institute, Shepparton Mechanics' Institute, Stanley Athenaeum, Tallarook Mechanics' Institute, Trentham Mechanics' Institute, Walhalla Mechanics' Institute, Warburton Mechanics' Institute and Warrendyte Mechanics' Institute.**



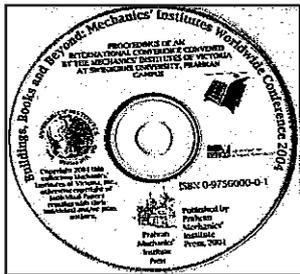
The striking title Panel of our new Travelling Exhibition **Mechanics'... and Proud of It!** This skilful montage of designer **Alaina Wilson** shows the range of Mechanics' Institute buildings, from the large to the small. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

**Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** was also the venue for the preview of the new Travelling Exhibition **Mechanics'... and Proud of It!** The exhibition was made possible by **Museums Australia (Victoria)** grant as part of their **Regional Exhibitions Touring Initiative**.



**BUILDINGS, BOOKS AND BEYOND: MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE 2004** - Robert Anderson et al. (2004) 340 pages. CD-ROM. \$66.00.

(0975600028); Paperbound \$85.00, Posted. (097560001X)



The forty Papers read at or submitted to the First International Conference .

**CONFERENCE TOUR NOTES: GOLDFIELDS AND YARRA VALLEY** - Donald Barker, compiler. (2004) 48 pages. Stapled \$10, Posted.

**CONFERENCE PROGRAM** - Conference Committee. (2004) 36 pages. Stapled \$12, posted.

**SOUVENIR CONFERENCE DINNER MENU**

(2004) 8 pages. \$8, posted.

**IF THE WALLS COULD SPEAK: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA** - Pam Baragwanath. (2000) 356 pages. Hardbound. \$62, posted 1876677325.

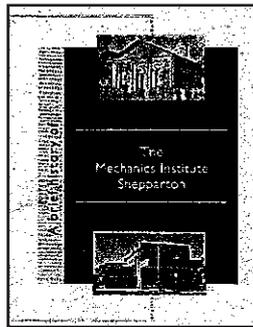
**BACK ISSUES OF MIV NEWSLETTER** - Nos 1-9,

\$6 each posted.

Available from *Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, Box 1080, Mitcham North, V 3132.*

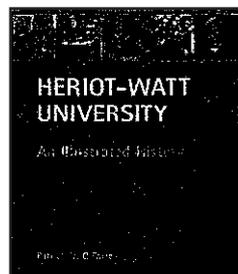
## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES/ SCHOOLS OF ARTS BOOKSHELF

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SHEPPARTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE** - Patrick Cruden. (2004) 23 pages. Paperbound. \$10.00, posted.



Available from *Shepparton Mechanics' Institute, 227 Wyndham Street, Shepparton, V 3630*

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY** - Patrick N O'Farrell. (2004) 511 pages. Hardbound. £33.00. 02736605X.



Available from *Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh, Scotland.*

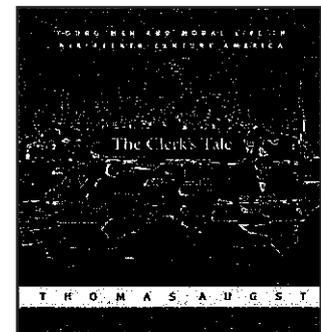


**MINYIP MECHANICS' INSTITUTE TO MEMORIAL HALL 1891-2004** - Minyip and District Historical Society. 2004.

60 pages. Paperbound. \$12.00, posted. 0958949557.

Available from *Minyip & District Historical Society, 49 Main Street, Minyip, V 3392.*

**THE CLERK'S TALE: YOUNG MEN AND MORAL LIFE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA** - Thomas Augst. (2004) 320 pages. Paperbound. US\$32.95. 0226032205.



Available from *University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.*

**SCIENCE, SUCCESS & SOIREES: THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE MOVEMENT IN NEWCASTLE AND THE LOWER HUNTER** - Barbara Heaton, Greg Preston, Mary Rabbitt. (2000) 126 pages. Paperbound. \$12, posted. 0909115575.



Available from: *Newcastle Region Library, Box 489, Newcastle, NSW 2300.*



## AROUND THE INSTITUTES

Contributions are gratefully accepted. If you wish to have your news included in the next issue of this newsletter please post your articles to MIV, Box 1080, Mitcham North, V 3132 or email to jim@theruralstore.com.au by 1 December 2004. **Can we have your newsletters please!**

### ARTHURS CREEK (est. 1886)

Local fruit growing interests were highlighted at **MW 2004** by **Bruce Draper** who presented a Paper written jointly by **Ken Murphy** and himself.

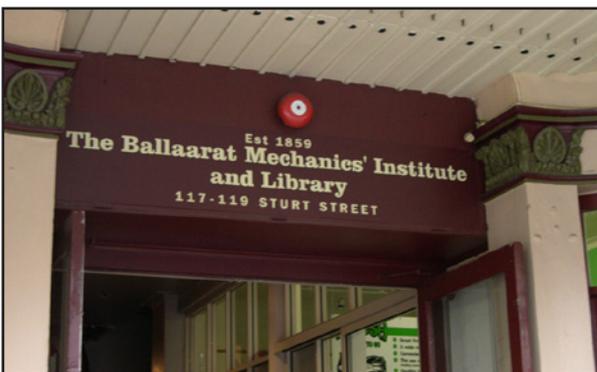


The immaculate interior of the **Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute** as it was seen last year on television. *(Ken Murphy photo)*

Unfortunately Ken was unable to attend the Conference because of ill-health and we all wish Ken well.

### BALLAARAT (est. 1855)

**Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute's** revamped website under [www.library.org.au](http://www.library.org.au) is now fully operational with news of the latest Spring twilight six-lecture series. They now have some 27,000 titles available on their online catalogue, divided into reference and fiction.



New livery signage above the main Sturt Street entrance to the **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute**. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

There's also a listing of the first 500 items of the 1419 specimens from the world class collection which was assembled by **Professor AT Abel**. This was located at the Ballaarat Institutes from 1869 until 1878 when it was dispersed, with the majority going to the **Ballaarat School of Mines**.

The website also advises another edition of the *Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute Journal* is due out shortly.

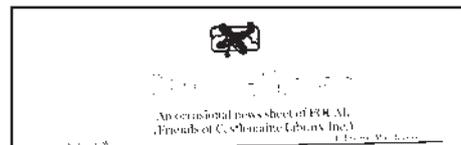
Restoration on the upstairs Reading Room is now complete and events are being planned to utilise this large strategic space. The Arts Precinct Project is also moving forward and it is hoped that restoration will start on the 400 seat theatre early next year.



Rear of the **Benalla Mechanics' Institute** building, showing modern additions which house new display and work areas. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

### BENALLA (est. 1869)

The Benalla Institute; located at 14 Mair Street, is occupied by the **Benalla and District Historical Society's** Costume and Pioneer Museum and the Ned Kelly Museum. This accredited museum houses displays of its famous sons, **Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop** (1909-93), **Captain Hector Waller** (1900-42) commander of the HMAS Perth sunk by the Japanese in 1942, and **Michael Joseph Savage** (1872-1940) first Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand. Then there is the Ned Kelly story and accompanying material. Exhibits occupy three large gallery display spaces as well as work and storage areas and the museum shop which also sells local arts and crafts. Two permanent displays: **'Fabulous Furs'** features sixteen elegant models dressed with a fur in place; and the other **'Masculine Mode'** depicts the attire of gentleman from 1788-1900. The museum is open seven days a week 9am-5pm.

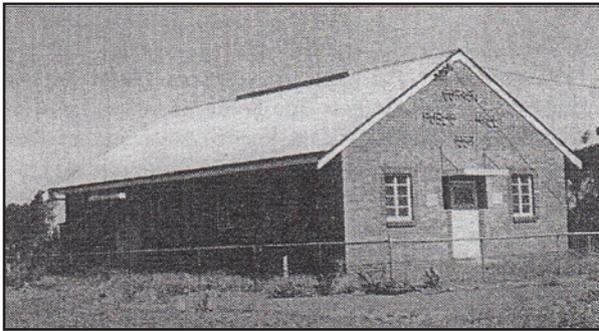


### CASTLEMAINE (est. 1855)

The **Friends of the Castlemaire Library** are still in celebration mode after the library moved back into the refurbished Institute building on 30 August. First customer was local **Ritchie Jones** aged 71, who had first

## Around the Institutes *continued*

joined the library aged 12. MW 2004 Pre-Conference Tour delegates had a chance to see over the library prior to the official opening on 16 October when the Library Quilt Project was unveiled. Author **Alex Miller** of *Journey to the Stone Country* fame drew a crowd of over one hundred to his August lecture and twenty-six new Friends were signed up on the day. Castlemaine Librarian, **Pat Leakey**, was guest speaker at the Friends recent AGM. One local, **Beth Sinclair**, celebrated the opening in her own way and made a significant cash donation to enable twenty-five art books to be placed in the library. Meanwhile in the foyer the **Adolphus Verey Photographic Exhibition** was open from 11 September-23 October highlighting images from the 4500 glass negative images held in the library collection. Meanwhile the Friends are out there busily fundraising for a number of 'essential' items for their 'new' library.



The **Corack Public Hall/Mechanics' Institute** in the early 1960s.  
(Alfred Wesson photo)

### CORACK (est early 1900s?)

We'd love to hear from someone about the Corack Institute which was demolished in 1967?

### DEAN (est 1891)

The Dean Hall was featured in the *Weekly Times* (1 September 2004) under the byline 'A town's heart is often its hall or mechanics' institute.' How very true.



In the photo of Dean's **Lyn Lea** and **Liz Kelly** and daughter, **Ruby** are seated at the entrance of their hall.  
(Photo courtesy of Greg Scullin-*Weekly Times*)

Issue four of the Dean Mechanics' Institute's *Dean and District News* carries news of the Dean Daffodil Open Gardens spread over four days, with a display in the hall. There's news of the granting of twenty-three Honorary Life Memberships to 'those who

have contributed significantly in a variety of ways at the hall'. These Honorary Members will be invited to plant a tree in the new hall landscaping. The Progressive Dinner and Reminiscing Night was a great success and much local information was gained. The piano has been repaired and re-tuned by a benevolent local tuner for materials cost only. Dean now has their own printer to produce the *News* thanks to a FACS grant. Their Farmers' Auction is planned for 26 February 2005 and entries are rolling in so that should be a good fundraiser. Indeed '**To survive, towns know it's hall or nothing**'.

Does anyone out there have a photo or photos of the **Donald Mechanics' Institute** for our **Big Mech Database**?

### DONALD (est. by 1878)

We are most grateful to **Lilian Kirk** archivist of the **History and Natural History Group of the MLA Society Inc.** of Donald for the following information.

"It [the Donald Mechanics' Institute] was in existence in 1878. As the rather fanciful extract from the *Donald Times* puts it (the one quoted in *If the Walls Could Speak*) a substitute building was used for some years. The 'out of town' was really about a block and a half from the main street, in a side street!

In 1884 the Committee advertised for offers of land on which the building could be erected, and in July 1884 tenders were invited for a brick building. In August 1884 the tender of JR Hornsby (£394) was accepted and in October 1884 the foundation stone was fixed. At this time it was stated that there were 150 subscribers. The building was completed in February 1885.

The Shire Council rented the two front rooms and held their meetings in the hall. Probably the Shire was there from 1885 to 1890.

In 1926 it was stated that the Mechanics' Institute was 'housing a good library, posses offices and meeting rooms'. The library continued into the 1930s.

In October 1953, the CWA [Country Women's Association] purchased the buildings for £200, and continued there until the building was sold in 1979 and demolished in 1980." Many thanks Lilian, this adds greatly to our knowledge of the Donald Institute's history.

### FOOTSCRAY (est. 1856)

The **Footscray Mechanics' Institute** is shortly to put their **Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnerships Program** grant to very good use. Librarian **Lin Scholz** reports the impending purchase of large print titles ranging from old classics to the latest blockbusters.

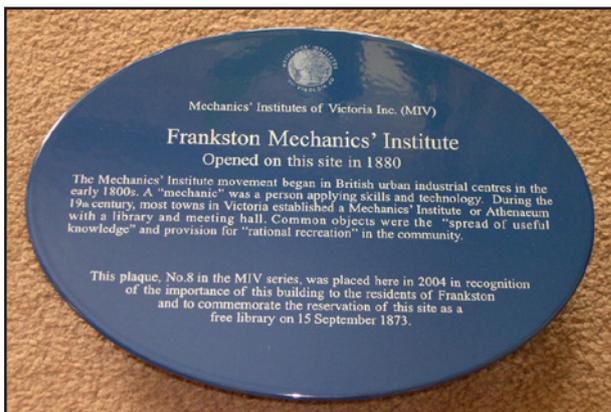
Then there is the assembling of the '**Baby Boomer Collection**' which will focus on Health, Financial Planning, Hobbies and Travel. Member comfort is also being addressed with the purchase of a new couch and comfy chairs. We welcome Lin back into our ranks after an extended stay in hospital and we wish her a speedy return to blooming good health, it being Springtime and all.

## Around the Institutes *continued*



### FRANKSTON (est. 1873).

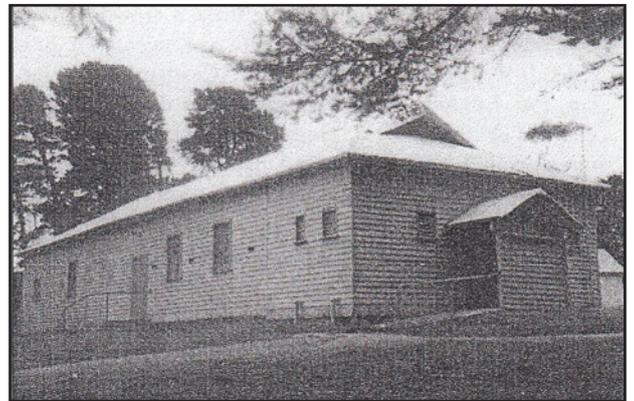
The **Mornington Peninsula Family History Society** newsletter, *Peninsula Past Times* is always packed with interesting information for those interested in family history and they maintain a very busy research library in the Frankston Institute. The August newsletter carries news of their 25th birthday dinner. President, **Lynne Emblin** received a Life Membership, and Distinguished Service Awards were made to **John Killian**, **Barbara Kolle** and **Dor Morrison**. The chair chronicled the Society's history 'On 10 June 1979 a group of ten person met at **Vicki Young**'s house in Frankston and formed the Peninsula branch of the GSV. Of these 10 persons, only one, **Sandra Beckett** is still with us. The Society's library was then carried to meetings. Now the library comprises 3000-4000 books and journals with thousands of microfiche and a computer system with about 60 gig of data and a membership of around 300.



Plaque No. 8 in the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria program is soon to go up on the **Frankston Mechanics' Institute**. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

The Society recently ordered an MIV plaque and this is to be fixed in place on the exterior of the Frankston Institute building in the near future. In conclusion the newsletter quotes from the Roots.Fermanagh website and the will of Gov. Blatchett of Plymouth proved in 1783.

'I desire my body to kept so long as it may not be offensive, and that one of my toes or fingers may be cut off to secure a certainty of being dead. I further request my dear wife that as she has been troubled with one fool, she will not think of marrying a second.'



### HALLSTON (est. 1886)

The ghosts of Hallston Mechanics' Institute have difficulty in finding their true home, for there have been four Institute buildings. One burned down and another is now a milking shed. The present hall is the Second on the site and was built in 1932. Like many others it was the place for church services, dances, table tennis, badminton, rifle shooting and football club activities. In the 1970s the supper room was used for school and the hall for group days, such as the Christmas concerts, euchre nights and dancing classes.

Hallston's **Colin Kelly** and **Robert Clark** were kept busy early this year organising a Clearing Sale of donated and commission sale goods. The sale which took place in June offered a large range of agricultural equipment, through to fencing materials, firewood and household items.

**Rodwells of Leongatha** provided the auctioneer gratis and there was spirited bidding for the large selection of lots.

### HEALESVILLE (est. 1884)

The **Healesville Mechanics' Institute** building is again on the market. **Dr Debra McDonald**, who spent a great deal of time and money restoring the building last year, has decided to sell and focus on her busy avian nutrition consultancy.

This building has a great history and whilst it has been in private ownership for the last fifty plus years it has continued to play a vital part in the cultural life of Healesville and district. Indeed in recent times it has been pivotal in the renaissance of the Mechanics' movement, for it was here that Pam Baragwanath developed her interest in the Mechanics' Institute movement. This resulted in her self-publishing of *Healesville Mechanics' Institute and Free Library 1892-1992* and her writing *If the Walls Could Speak*.

This fine weatherboard building would lend itself ideally as an exhibition or restaurant space with upstairs as accommodation, and it's just half a block from Healesville's busy main street.

**Around the Institutes *continued***

**KILMORE (est.1854)**

**Graham Holdaway** was re-elected President for the 150th anniversary year and the new Committee have plans for a **Back to Kilmore** on the weekend of 15-16 October 2005.

Events will include a Euchre and Dance Patty and their Annual Gardens of Kilmore Open Day.

In an earlier newsletter Kilmore appealed for



memorabilia and records connected with the Institute's history. They received a call from the Kilmore-Broadford Masonic Lodge advising that the silver trowel used for laying the Institute's foundation stone in 1863, once believed destroyed in a fire at the

The silver trowel used for laying the foundation stone of the Kilmore Mechanics' Hall in 1863 has now been presented back to the Institute.

Lodge in the early 1950s, still did exist and they offered it back to the Institute.

The Kilmore-Broadford Lodge has offered to re-stage the procession and stone laying ceremony at some time in the future at which the poem 'On Laying the foundation stone of the Kilmore Mechanics' Institute' will also be recited.



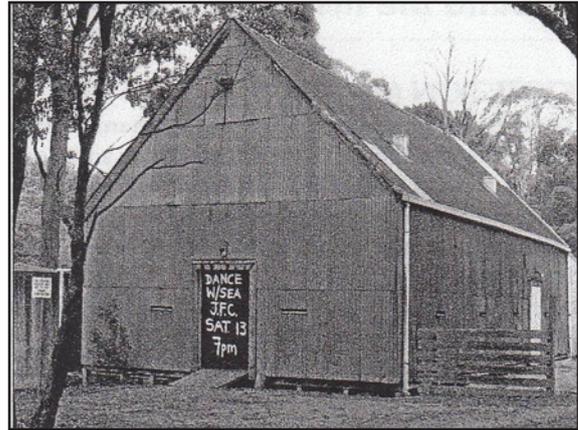
Kilmore's Annual meeting was addressed by Professor John Hart who spoke on Sir Colin Mackenzie, surgeon, zoologist and communicator. Sir Colin was born in Kilmore in 1877 and started the Healesville Sanctuary. He died in 1938.

**Professor John and Mrs Hart** at Kilmore's AGM. *(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

A perfectly fine day for the **Annual Gardens of Kilmore Open Day** saw them achieve a record crowd for this now well known event. The guest lecturer this year was **Pauline Ellis** who spoke on 'Lavender'.

All Kilmore's affiliate groups experienced a successful year, including the two dance groups—line and ballroom—and U3A having over one hundred participants in one or more of the sixteen courses offered.

**KINGLAKE WEST (est. 1908)**



**Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute**, another Institute very much in 'comeback' mode. They have been selling advertising on the front door for \$10 per week, and have come up with a redevelopment plan over the past three years which has now attracted funding.. *(Bev Johns photo)*

The Kinglake West is one of those feel good stories that we have seen evolving. They don't have the most elaborate hall in the State but the community does care for it and slowly over the last few years they have been determined to upgrade the facilities.

A couple of years ago they had a massive working bee to clear up and staged the **Remember the Mechanics?** Travelling Exhibition. It was a great success and it was with pleasure that we recently supplied a letter to support their application for Federal funding via their Regional Partnerships grants program.



It was an ecstatic **Bev Johns** that emailed to say that they had received a \$103,136 grant, supplied dollar for dollar.

**Bev Johns** and her daughter, tireless workers for the Kinglake West MI. *(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

The **Murrindindi Shire** had previously agreed to give \$60,000 from development contributions for public open space in the Kinglake West area. The balance is being made up by local contributions in cash and kind. Murrindindi Mayor **Mike Dalmau** said 'It's fantastic news!' and local MP **Fran Bailey** weighed in with 'This new funding will enable the local community, in partnership with the local council, to give the oldest public building still standing in the town a new lease of life. This project is also part of a larger, staged plan for the community that will include the development of surrounding sporting and recreation areas to create a focal point for the wider community.'

The money will be used to extend the hall to include a kitchen, the installation of new electrical wiring and heating, roof repairs and painting, the construction of a new toilet block and landscaping of the area.

It's a great news story and goes to show that it is important to work things through with staged plans, costing and show that you have been using the building and it does have community support. Congratulations to all concerned.

## Around the Institutes *continued*

### KYNETON (est. 1855)

The redevelopment of the **Kyneton Mechanics' Institute** site to incorporate a community library and a gaming venue to be established on the site by the Kyneton Bowling Club has stirred up some local interest. It appears that under Crown Land Reserves Act (1978) gaming would be a prohibited use on the site. This is based on the detailed legal advice of a Queen's Counsel. A concerned local resident Tom Gyorffy stated: 'The situation here is that this is a piece of Crown land and it has to be administered under the Crown Lands Reserves Act. So the question that has to be asked is—is the way they want to use it a way they're allowed to use it under the Act? And the answer in this case is, no, it's not because it's reserved as Public Reserve under the legislation.'

'They have to ask the question under the Crown Land Reserve Act 'is the bowling club a permitted use under this legislation?' The point is that the High Court has ruled specifically about Crown land use that a bowling club doesn't fit that category—and the reason why that was decided was that firstly, any club that gains a lease can exclude members of the public from use of the land, and secondly, the land can't be used to make private profit for an organization.'

'So the bowling Club is an unincorporated organization and is set up there—the profit it makes becomes private profit.'

Mr Gyorffy's closing remark is however, the real knob of the matter.

'You've got lay-people on the Council that don't understand the legal issues, they rely on advice from solicitors and from the Crown Land Management unit, but if you don't ask the right question, you don't get the right answer.'

It's a bit like the Oracle of Delphi—it tells you the truth but it talks in riddles! To my mind, people who are performing these public functions are being let down by the system.'

**'They should be getting proper advice from a proper system in place for dealing with these legal issues.'**

To that we can only say 'Yes we do need a body like the UK Charity Commissioners where Institutes and non-profits can go for specialist legal advice.'

### LOCH (est. 1890s?)

The Committee of the **Loch Mechanics' Institute** are smiling after a very successful start to their monthly Winter Markets. There was a great range of stalls selling a wide variety of goods, including some both made or grown locally. Proceeds from the markets go to refurbish the hall. Well done folks.

### MALDON (est. 1863)

The Maldon Athenaeum has propelled their library into the national spotlight by putting their hand up to conduct the regional finals for the **Nestlé Write**

**Around Australia Competition** for Grade 5 and 6 students.



Maldon's new Children's Library, in a dedicated room, was established with the assistance of a Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnerships grant. With a nice range of new books and some soft cushions it's attracting a wider audience with its regular story sessions.

*(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

Maldon appears to be the only non-government funded library to be engaged in the nationwide essay competition. It has really brought focus on the library by the whole community to judge the 1100 odd essays submitted by students from as far as Echuca in the north and Gisborne in the south and also including Bendigo and Ballarat Schools.

There's also been local writing workshops held at Maldon by respected children's author **Michael Pryor**. The regional finalists have also attended Maldon for their presentations and a Workshop.

It has been very heady stuff, but having recently visited Maldon it could not have happened to a more deserving library. And they will certainly put the \$500 fee to a very good use. Congratulations to Maldon!



### MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM (est. 1839)

The latest issue of *The Athenaeum Newsletter* is to hand with news of the appointment of their new librarian, **Jill Bartholomeusz**, and we welcome Jill to the Mechanics' community, noting her specialist engineering knowledge. Jill comes with extensive experience in specialist engineering and education libraries and her initial reaction was what an interesting library! Coming from libraries that are high tech, it is quite refreshing to work in such a unique library. Other librarians have referred to The Ath as being a 'hybrid' library—I think they mean that it is a rare and special place.'

After some rearrangement of Committee positions things are really starting to move with **Heritage Victoria** funded works due to start shortly.

## Around the Institutes *continued*

The works will include painting of the library, restoration of the verandah and canopy and some strategic plumbing.

Their **Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership** grant has been well spent on expanding **Athena**, their computerised catalogue of books.

In late July The Ath had a flying visit from **Ms Erika Torri**, dynamic director of the **Athenaeum Arts and Music Library of La Jolla**, California. La Jolla, as it is generally known, is another Institute very much on the ascendancy and due to build a new performing arts and exhibition complex to support its role as a major promoter of cultural programs in California's San Diego region.

The Ath's **Great Booksale** has been advertised for 13 November and the invitations are out for their **165th Birthday Afternoon Tea**.

**Council of Adult Education** staffer **Alf Wesson** is known for photographing many Institutes in the 1960s, but he also had a large collection of clippings and files of letters. One of the clippings dated 31 July 1969 and is by Herald act critic **Alan McCulloch** who writes under the byline 'Saving the Athenaeum' and reports 'on a one man fight'.

It is the story of Czech-born **Alois Svihla** who arrived in Australia in 1950. He started an art gallery in Carlton in 1966 which became a centre for poetry readings, music performances and the exhibition of previously unknown artists.

His vision is worth quoting: 'He [Alois Svihla] would have liked to revitalise the entire [Melbourne Athenaeum] complex: with picture theatre converted to live theatre for top, live performances, the library and all the other facilities cleaned up and redecorated.

He envisaged the Athenaeum as an intimate nerve centre bringing cultural character, entertainment and enlightenment to a special part of the city, which will become more special with the development of the city square.'

Alois found the entire project beyond his resources and chose to reprint the gallery, which had operated since 1910, and stage exhibitions there.

His words may yet prove to be very prophetic and we all wish Victoria's oldest Mechanics' well in their onward and upward march.

### **MINYIP** (est. 1886)

In the last issue we briefly mentioned the centenary of **Minyip Mechanics' Institute**, now known as the **Minyip Memorial Hall**.

Their grant celebratory ball was organised by Minyip Lions Club with wide community support.

The hall was well decorated with ferns and fairy lights, and with the addition of various ball gowns loaned by district families. The three people who prepared the all importance dance floor were named in the program.

Pictures from Minyip's past were projected on to the wall throughout the night, via computer technology. The evening's proceedings opened with music and song

reflecting their English, Irish and German roots, and concluded with 'I still call Minyip home'.



From left: MIV President, **Dr Frank Hurley**, **Owen King**, **Austin Morris**, **Joy King**, **Verda Loats**, **Peter Hamey** and **Phillis Morris**.

(Warracknabeal Herald photo)

MIV President **Dr Frank Hurley** was then called on to unveil the commemorative plaque in the Institute which had its beginnings in 1891.

Next came the launching of the hall's history *Minyip Mechanics' Institute Memorial Hall 1891-1904* [See details page 17].

In keeping with the opening celebrations in 1904, the district's magician **Wal Ferguson** was called on to perform some of the old tried and true tricks which were demonstrated during dance breaks. The old time music was provided by the local dance band, the Dixie Beats. Dress varied from old time, trimmed with fur, to modern, with the occasional 'Dad's old suit'.

The expected crowd of one hundred, turned into 150, but catering by the Kindergarten Ladies' which provided the usual sandwiches, as well as cream horns, sponges and jelly cakes, still found some left over. The Lions Club manned the bar.

The official part of the evening came to an end with the singing of *Auld lang syne*, but many lingered to catch up with folk who had returned to Minyip for the occasion. In a press article Minyip Hall Secretary **Joy King** is quoted as saying 'the Hall is the heart of Minyip. It's the town's meeting place. Many Minyip residents have a lot of fond memories of the hall including dances, weddings, and social gatherings'. How well said!

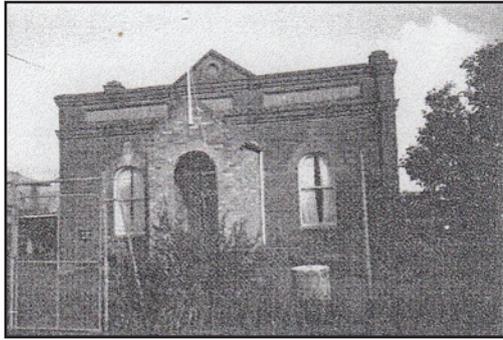


### **NATHALIA** (est. 1886).

Another good news story is told at Nathalia, where the Institute was sold into private hands after World War II. After a number of uses and little maintenance, the 1887.

## Around the Institutes *continued*

building had become derelict. The townsfolk became concerned and after a public meeting in 1969 an appeal was setup.



The photo on the previous page shows the before shot. Following its purchase by Council, the above photo shows the reinstated porch and a refurbished home for the **Nathalia and District Historical Society**.  
(Pam Baragwanath photo)

Council purchased the building and it was gradually restored as an historical museum. Some 400 people turned out for the reopening and the Nathalia and District Historical Society hope it will last another hundred years.

### NEWSTEAD (est. 1870s)

Following the pull out by Council of their bookmobile library service, a community group met recently to establish a community library in the former Newstead Mechanics' Institute building. The last word is that they have assembled some 5000 books and that their library is now open for business, all with volunteer staffing. It sounds very much like history repeating itself and perhaps we will have another member of our Library Group?

### PRAHRAN (est. 1854)

Things have been really buzzing at the Prahran Institute for months in conjunction with **Mechanics' Worldwide**.



Heritage Victoria's Director, **Ray Tonkin** (left) chatting with Prahran's Promotion and Publications Librarian, **Christine Worthington** at the Conference's Royal Society Reception.  
(Pam Baragwanath photo)

The Prahran Institute was the host for the Conference and tours left from there and it was a good spot to sit down quietly for a few moments to enjoy a cuppa.

Prahran's President **Alf Lazer**, their Committee and Secretary/Librarian **Cathy Milward-Bason** hosted the most enjoyable **Cocktails at Six** before the Conference Dinner in the **Mecanix Restaurant**.

Their **Prahran Mechanics' Institute Press** has installed the hi-tech equipment and software purchased with the aid of their **Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership** grant and they have issued their first publication, the Papers for the Conference which were done on a CD-ROM. This was no mean feat since the forty odd Papers came in various formats and had to be merged with abstracts and photos of the various authors. Several members volunteered their services to assist with the big project which was out in time for the Conference.

Their upgraded ten-page-newsletter previously issued quarterly has now been advised for publishing on a bi-monthly basis. The last issue also had a Members' Survey.

Their **Living Histories** program, lead by author **Julie Meadows**, has been a real success and this continues. The July Book Month Discussions were also another well-attended innovation.

The listing of Prahran's building by **Heritage Victoria** is also proceeding and this will herald in its 90th birthday and no doubt another party, and well deserved. The Lectures Program finishes the year with **Dr Mary Ellis** on *People and Plants: A History of Gardening in Victoria*.

The 20th Annual **Alan Shinkfield Awards for Excellence** will be held amongst area school grade six students. Prahran also conducts a State-wide annual **History Essay Competition** for year 8 and 9 students. Prahran is further strengthening its **Victorian and Local History Library** and in doing so will have to make extra space and this will be done by disposing of some of its general collection.

### RAINBOW (est. 1890s)

After Pam Baragwanath's interview on 'Australia all Over' a smart internet surfer emailed the following.

'I am now 63, live in Adelaide and was born and raised in Rainbow where the MI played a very important part in my yearly formative years.'

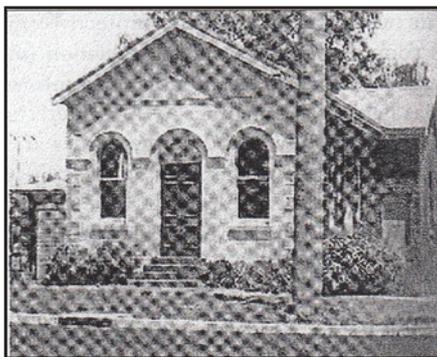


The former Rainbow Mechanics' Institute, believed to have been demolished in the 1960s.  
(Alf Wesson photo)

My family's first home was only two doors along the street from the Institute. I have often pondered the

## Around the Institutes *continued*

origin of 'The Mechanics' in Rainbow and those in virtually every neighbouring town. No-one explained the origin and until now I thought of it in the same mysterious and secret class as the local Masonic Lodge in which my father rose to some high position. I checked listings for Rainbow in your library and found reference to a couple of authors, **PL (Perc) Wood**, and **Ian Wood**, both contemporaries of my father, and both fellow Masons and both known to me. The 'Mechanics' Hall' was finally demolished well after I left Rainbow, possibly in the 1960s but I have clear memories of it and its onetime caretaker a kind but reclusive man named **Herb Walker** (who could fix wirelesses). I recall the library, the billiards room, the cards nights, the various public meetings, the activities around polling days, the many functions, in the main hall, the kitchen under the stage and I think there may have been a projection room. School Speech Nights, Debutante Balls (my mother trained the 'debs' over many years for their big night!) and regular dances were held there along with visiting stage acts 'Houdini the Magician' and his ilk and I would be most surprised if **Slim Dusty** had not appeared there on several occasions. It is Rainbow's centenary this coming October and many activities are being planned according to the *Rainbow Argus* - one of very few local papers still being published on a regular basis. I wonder if those coming from far and wide have more recollections of this very important part of what made Rainbow the town. I wonder if there were any records saved of the Institute while it was active. Thank you for your excellent site and I hope your Conference is going (went) well. And thank you for the change to bring back some of the memories. Best wishes, Neville Farrall.



### SEYMOUR (est. 1875)

We welcome the Seymour and District Historical Society as a new member and wish them well in their endeavours to find more of the history of their Institute building which they occupy.

There was a Seymour Farmer's Library in operation in 1863, but details are sketchy. It was however a much publicised 'high holiday' when the foundation stone of the present Seymour Free Library was laid on 19 November 1874. Rooms were added across the rear in 1889. In recent times it has served as a Water Trust Office, Commonwealth Employment Office and most recently as the Seymour and District Historical Society's rooms.

### SHEPPARTON (est. 1884)

Busy, busy, busy! was how one might have described the **Shepparton Mechanics' Institute** on a recent visit. Their meeting rooms were occupied and someone was in one of the kitchens preparing food amidst the latest of equipment and crockery.

This results from a redevelopment agreement where **Shepparton Access** use the Institute building for teaching during the day and the Institute and/ or its regular users use those facilities at night and on weekends.

Shepparton have also produced a chronicled history of the Institute since it was established in 1884 [see page 17].

This tenancy has not affected the long established woodworkers who have had a dedicated room in the building for decades.

### STRATFORD (est. 1866)

The *Gippsland Times* in 'Our View—Where there is no vision people perish' gives due praise to the folk of Stratford for having the 1950s toilet block removed from the front of the 1889 hall. The front will be restored to its original appearance. The article goes on to say 'It is often quoted that to look back is interesting but to look forward is essential'.

In commenting on the local raising of \$50,000 in double-quick time, the article went on 'In so giving toward the public appeal, the Stratford community recognised a degree of guardianship responsibility, demonstrating a pastoral common spirit and countrified togetherness not so easily encouraged in the culture of larger communities'.

### TALBOT (est 1870)

The headlines of *Talbot-Today and Tomorrow* cry: '**Town says 'no' to Library closure**'. The meeting was held in response to a Council decision to close the Static library in the old Court House/Mechanics' Institute since 1881 and replace it with a bookmobile service. Based on the facts and information presented at the meeting, it resolved unanimously to endeavour to have Council rescind the motion. The one councillor present, Cr Ian Robertson, subsequently moved a motion at the next Council meeting to that effect, but the motion lapsed for want of a seconder. As to the fate of the historic library building that too is in Council's hands for they are presently its Committee of Management.



### TALLAROOK (est. 1891)

Those **Tallarook Mechanics' Institute** ladies have another scoop on their hands with the launch of the **TARTS, Tallarook Arts Society** - Art from the Heart of the Goulburn. The founding members are the Kings of Tarts, **Peter Gillooly** and **David Blackley**, and the Queens of Tarts are **Sharyn McMeikin** and **Libby Webster**.

## Around the Institutes *continued*

They had a Gala Opening of their inaugural **Tallarook Art Show and Awards** earlier this month. [Full report next issue.] The prize pool of some \$6000 was largely sponsored by \$5000 from the **Goulburn Broken Catchment Authority**.

Their manifesto reads 'The guiding philosophy of our Society is to support local artists in capturing the essence of the Tallarook area in art; whether it be in landscapes, portraits of our people, or our flora, fauna, etc.

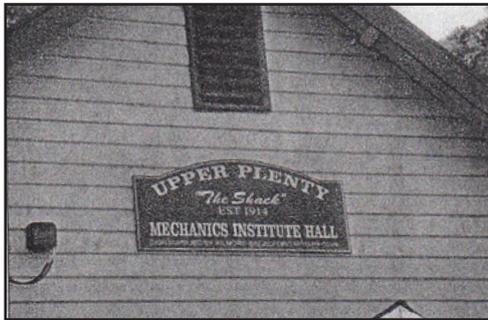
'All Money raised from the event will be put towards the 'Grand Plan' of restoration being undertaken by the Tallarook Institute Committee of Management. Specifically the funds will be put toward the much needed redevelopment of the toilet facilities at the hall including the installation of a disabled toilet.' I understand one local liked the project so much that their cheque for \$1000 came in the mail.

### UPPER PLENTY (est.1914)

Sixty people braved the coldest day of the year to attend the Upper Plenty Institute's **Community Bonfire and Barbecue** in June and it was so successful that it was decided to hold it again next year. It can now be seen why one of the fundraising priorities is upgrade the heating in the hall.

This will make it more appealing for the regular users which include the **Upper Plenty Garden Club**.

The new hall sign is in place thanks to a donation from **Kilmore-Broadford Rotary Club** and **Mitchell Shire** have donated a Notice Board which will act as a clearing house for community information, including personal messages.



**Upper Plenty Mechanics' Institute Hall 'The Shack'** with the new **Kilmore-Broadford Rotary Club** sponsored sign in place. *(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

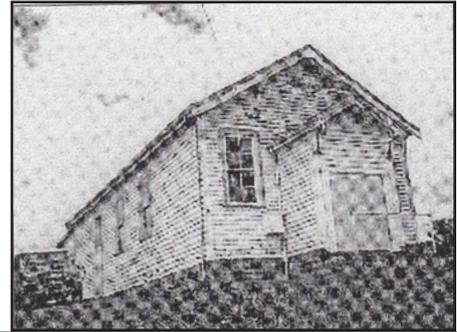
Upper Plenty also hosted the **Remember the Mechanics'?** Travelling Exhibition in August and was able to assemble quite a lot of local information and photos. It is proposed to have some of the pictures installed on the interior walls.

Their next big event will be the New Year's Eve Dance to usher in yet an even busier year for all.

### WANDONG (est. 1901)

Located on Rail Street, but believably named after a real

estate agent of that name, the Institute was built on land apparently donated by sawmilling entrepreneur **Robert Affleck Robertson**.



**Wandong Mechanics' Hall**, built on donated land, largely with donated materials. *(Pam Baragwanath photo)*

A quantity of the timber to build it was also donated by the **Australian Seasoned Timber Co.**, with the balance being supplied 'at best rates'.

The early records of the Institute were destroyed when fire gutted the Secretary **Stephen Price's** house, so the earliest record is from 1930.

The present Committee of Management, led by Christine Gordon, are advertising the Hall for rent and various items such as trestles, tables and chairs, crockery, urn, etc. are available for hire for parties, etc.

### WARBURTON (est. 1880s)

The advert was headed 'Attention all Tradespeople!' and it called for expressions of interest from those who might be interested in tendering for work on the restoration of the Warburton Mechanics' Institute. The work was to be done in two stages, comprising protective (to be carried out as soon as possible) and rehabilitation (to be carried out over the next twelve months). An information evening was held mid-September to brief interested parties.

It has been a long haul and all the parties are to be congratulated on getting things to this stage.

For those who were privileged to have a look inside and around the hall during the **MW 2004 Tour** and based on the remarks of those that did, it is well worth saving.

### WARRENDYTE (est. 1882)

The Warrendyte newsletters come regularly each month with the interesting news of the various groups which meet at the Warrendyte Mechanics' Institute.

Warrendyte Theatre Company's most recent production **Follywood** packed them in over nine nights and resulted in a profit of some \$10,000. This will be put to good use by upgrading the seating in the Mechanics' Institute Hall. We too applaud the WTC's determination to put bums on seats - and comfy seats at that.

### WILLIAMSTOWN (est. 1856)

The **Williamstown Historical Society Inc.** is one of our newest members and it has been an occupant of the **Williamstown Mechanics' Institute** building for more

## Around the Institutes *continued*

of the **Williamstown Mechanics' Institute** building for more than forty years. It now shares the building with the **Williamstown Theatre Co.**, which has had around \$1 million spent on building restoration and upgrading its staging facilities.

Council has also constructed an Archives Centre on the Mechanics' land for the use of the Historical Society.

In *Williamstown Illustrated* published in 1904 we are told: the Library is open from 3-5, and 7-9pm; the Reading Room is open 3-10pm; subscription was £1 per annum; and Mrs JT Morell was the Secretary.

'The Mechanics' Institute and Library is a substantial building, containing public hall (capable of seating 500 people), lodge-room, kitchen and appurtenances, library, reading rooms (members and free), and recreation rooms. The Library contains 5000 volumes, amongst which, besides fiction, are many valuable works on Science, Art, History, Biography, etc. The Reading Room is well supplied with daily and weekly papers, various periodicals, and scientific and other publications. The Billiard Rooms are well equipped, and supplied with two of Alcock's best tables.

The Institute is a favorite resort for the townspeople, and captains of ships are heartily welcome, and are made honorary members during their stay in port. Classes in connection with the Workingmen's College are held regularly, and are fairly attended.

### WONGA PARK (est. 1908)

The **Wonga Park Mechanics' Institute**, which was built by working bees and the proceeds from local events, opened its hall in 1908. In the late 1970s a toilet block was added and building was clad in brick.

Today, as part of suburbia, it is a busy place indeed. Under the management of Council it has had a spectacular upgrade. It is a good example of how a hall can be used by various community groups and private instructors who hold courses there. It is presently partly used as a day care centre and has good meeting facilities including a well-equipped kitchen.

The **Wonga Park Community Cottage** uses it to stage some of their sixteen odd courses.

### AND ELSEWHERE... NEW SOUTH WALES

#### FREEMANS REACH (est. 1900)

**Kay Ridge** reports in on the gradual changing of the guard at Freemans Reach and a fundraising push for the upgrade of hall facilities. The new Committee have kept membership low at just twenty cents, and as Kay hastily points out those that pay have to do all the work anyway.

The Hall has been kept alive by generations of Freemans Reach families, some of whom attend the monthly fourth Saturday night dance which has been running for eighty years. A regular playgroup meets in the Hall and it is a venue for the annual Hawkesbury High School examinations.

The hall was built by working bee and opened in 1901. It had its much publicised moments of fame when it featured as the 'Wandin Valley Hall' in the television series **Country Practice**.

#### SYDNEY (est. 1833)

It was good to catch up with the **Sydney Mechnaics' School of Arts and Association of Mechanics' Institutes /Schools of Arts—NSW team at MW 2004**. SMSA hosted Conference delegates with a post-Conference seminar and tour and it was excellent to know that our keynote speakers were not just speaking in Melbourne.



Photographed during the Post-Conference Tour of Sydney, during which local and international delegates participated. *(Lucy Bantermalis photo)*

SMSA's latest newsletter was available at the Conference. The cover story was 'What else do we do?'. Sydney in addition to proving the library, runs a program of talks, it also provides scholarships to children of members and an adult scholarship for further study.

It sponsors prizes at the three campuses of the University of Western Sydney and supports **2RPH** (Radio for the Print Handicapped) with donations and readers.

In memory of its longest serving SMSA President, it endows the **Arthur Maxwell Literature Prize** at the University of Sydney.

Occasional special purchases for the State Library of New South Wales have been partially sponsored. It has also been involved in exhibition development with the Sydney Morning Herald and its latest **Miles Franklin: A Brilliant Career?** will tour Australia.

Recently it supported the publication of the two volume work *The Web of Science: The Scientific Correspondence of the Reverend WB Clarke*, Australia's pioneer geologist.

Then the latest is the sponsoring of a pilot study of the New England Institutes, which hopefully will extend to the rest of New South Wales.

Sydney is currently running a weekly writing class on 'Life Writing' conducted by biographer **Chris Williams**.

The newsletter advertises **MW 2004**, with 'This is a story of visionaries, benefactors, radicals, and reformers as well as pragmatic and hardworking committee members...'

The other interesting item was **Eva Cox's** analysis of the recent Member Survey. [See next newsletter.]

## Around the Institutes *continued*

### QUEENSLAND ROCKHAMPTON

**Sue Palmer-Gard** reports in with news of the impending start of the \$3.4 million new library and community centre which will utilise the facade of the 1894 **Rockhampton School of Arts**. The building has stood vacant for more than twenty years, and has withstood a few demolition moves, until the outside was painted in 2002.



The Rockhampton School of Arts building, closed for twenty odd years, now to have a \$3.5 million redevelopment as a library and community centre. The adjoining motel at right is the former Institute's Hibernian Hotel site.

*(Sue Palmer-Gard photo)*

The Rockhampton School of Arts 'opened its doors to the public in 1865, and just over a year later opened a hotel next door 'The Hibernian' which was leased out to publicans to raise money for the School's upkeep. This was recently demolished to make way for a motel.

We look forward to hearing further reports of progress in returning this site to its original use.

### CANADA MONTREAL (est. 1828)

It was good to have **Marshall Wansbrough's** Paper on the **Atwater Library and Computer Centre - Montreal Mechanics' Institute** in time for the Conference Proceedings. The Sub-Committees report showed how a Strategic Plan can be structured, based on a critical review of the Institute's position, and move forward.

We wish Montreal well in their continued challenge to strengthen their position in their community.

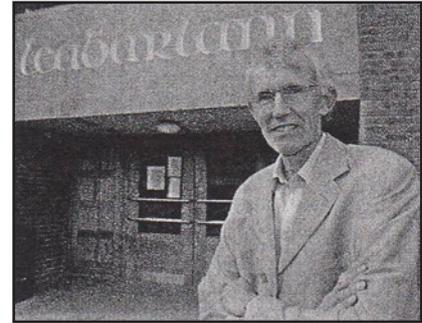
An in case you are wondering, Marshall's daughter and her new baby boy are just fine.

### IRELAND CORK (est. 1860s?)

Long-time **Cork Institute of Technology** Directory **Dr Patrick Kelleher** retired on 31 August and he has been succeeded by **Dr Brendan Murphy**, who relishes the challenges.

A native of Tralee in Co. Kerry, Dr Murphy is a Mathematics and Statistics graduate and has lectured in

Mathematical and Computer Sciences at CIT since 1974. A Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and of the Irish Computer Society, he is also a Chartered Engineer of the Institute of Engineers of Ireland. Multi-lingual and widely published, he has been Head of the Department of Maths and Computing at CIT since 1988. During that time he has established partnerships throughout Europe and served on numerous Advisory Boards. He has chaired the Government Skills Initiative Body for the development of accelerated computer courses since 1997, is Chair of IT net and a director of HEAnet.



**Dr Brendan Murphy**, new head of the **Cork Institute of Technology**.

*(Cork Institute photo)*

Dr Murphy looks forward to working with the dedicated staff of Cork Institute of Technology and its constituent colleges, Cork School of Music, Crawford College of Art & Design and the National Maritime College of Ireland. He aims to continue to improve access opportunities to third level education and to growing its role in allowing industry to innovate.

### UNITED KINGDOM BIRNAM (est. early 1880s)



Victoria University librarian  
**Sue Reynolds**.

*(Kristina Holdaway photo)*

Victoria University's **Sue Reynolds** brought news of a recent International **Beatrix Potter** Conference being held at the restored **Birnam Mechanics' Institute** near Dunkeld in Scotland. The Birnam Institute Trust was set up in the early 1880s to provide a community facility and it has been managed down through the years by a Committee of Management representative of user groups. With a small annual grant of £250 from Council it was pretty much a hand to mouth existence until someone had a dream to reinvigorate the building, ambitious plans were developed and an appeal was launched. The **Millennium Commission** and the **Scottish Arts Council** (Lottery funded) liked what they saw and provided the majority of the funding.

Today after a £1.7 million refit and extension Birnam is a first rate performing arts, cultural and conference complex, with such groups as the **Birnam Film Society** and the **Birnam Institute Players Society** located there.

## Around the Institutes *continued*

In case you are wondering, Beatrix Potter had a family connection with the Birnam area and it was her friendship with Perthshire naturalist **Charles Mackintosh** who encouraged her interest in fungi and lichens.

It was due largely due to the wide interest in Birnam's ongoing Beatrix Potter exhibition, started in the late 1990s, and the success of its accompanying retail shop that they were encouraged to embark on the building restoration and redevelopment.

### MENHENIOT - JAGO (est. 1911)

Earlier in the year we had a letter from **David Clue**, chair of the Jago Institute giving us some history. Menheniot is a Cornish village of some 1500 people located inland from Plymouth. It has long agricultural and mining associations.

The men only Institute was gifted to the Menheniot community in 1911 by **Miss Lucretia Bedford Jago** in memory of her brother Edward.

Sited in the centre of the village, it was built of Portland stone and the front features a cathedral window, with the coats of arms of the **Trelawney** and **Jago** families in stained glass.

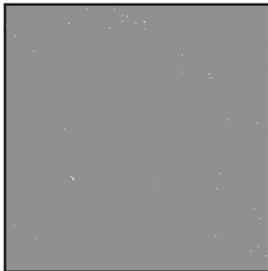
It had two billiard tables, a Reading Room and a Library. Today it fields three successful snooker and billiards teams who play in the local competition.

The Institute is run by a Committee of ten, with a nominee from, the Plymouth Council.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA LAJOLLA (est. 1893)

The **Athenaeum Music and Arts Library**, is located in the suburbs of San Diego, is a thriving centre of culture. In addition to the traditional books, the library has a strong film and music component. They also run active programs in music, drama and the visual arts.

Their monthly newsletters carry news of their innovative projects. In addition to their Monday Noon Mini-Concert series featuring San Diego musicians, there is also the Concert series featuring international performers. Recent flyers have covered Jazz recitals, **Broadway's Best** featuring the music and lyrics of Cole Porter, Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart and George and Ira Gershwin, and the latest details the thirteenth series of Dialogues in Art and Architecture with the theme of 'Beyond the Property Line' which will explore architecture and urban planning.



La Jolla's director, **Erika Torri**  
(*Athenaeum Music & Arts Library*)

The Athenaeum's director, Erika Torri, has set a blistering pace in her administration since 1991. Membership now runs at near 2500, and with an annual turnover nearing \$1.5 million, the Athenaeum is on the brink of major expansion. The hope is to develop its own major performing arts and exhibition space.

### NEW YORK - GENERAL SOCIETY

A whole floor of the **General Society's** building has been leased to the **Contemporary Crafts Centre** and they have recently featured a marble carving Master Course conducted by British sculptor.

This will complement and strengthen the **Small Press Publishing Center** and the **Building Trades School** that already exist in the building.

### NEW YORK - MERCANTILE LIBRARY

Director for some ten years, **Harold Augenbraum**, has resigned to take up a position with the Book Awards program. Harold guided the refocus of The Merc to become an influential contemporary literature centre.

### PHILADELPHIA - ATHENAEUM

The **Athenaeum of Philadelphia** have just set up their **Regional Digital Imaging Center**. This is based largely on their recently acquired **Cruse Scanner - Model CS220 ST** capable of scanning images of 48" x 72" to publishing quality in just over one minute.

This acquisition will greatly enhance the Athenaeum's ability to expand plan printing on demand from their already large collection of architectural drawings. Their positioning to become one of the largest architectural repositories in the US, coupled with their ability to deliver print quality images from their collection also has long-term strategic and economic benefits.

### PEOPLE

**Leverhulme Trust** Emeritus Fellow **Dr Robert Anderson** was on 'the research' whilst in Australia and after leaving the Conference went to Sydney and then on to Canberra looking for information on Institute museums. Robert is returning in November for follow-up.

Emeritus Professor and Rochester Institute of Technology's historian **Dane Gordon** is presently on a three month sabbatical in St Petersburg, Russia.

Trinity College, Cambridge Librarian **Dr David McKitterick** drew one of the largest crowds to an evening at Melbourne University's Leigh Scott Room for his lecture. Some forty extra chairs had to be brought in and there were still some people standing. David's subject was books published in and about Cambridge. It was good to see that such talent in town did not go unnoticed. David was keynote speaker at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004**.

London University's **Dr Keith Manley** caused many a belly laugh at **MW 2004** with his well-chosen turns of phrase. Keith was last seen soaking up the sun in Hawaii.

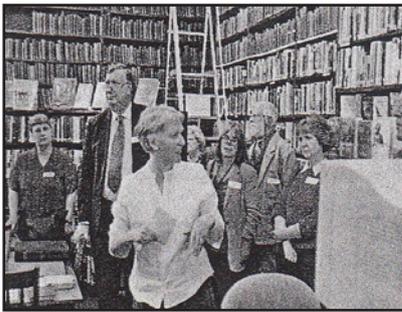
Another **MW 2004** keynote speaker was Boston Athenaeum's Stanford Calderwood Director **Dr Richard Wendorf**. Besides giving a talk to the Melbourne Johnson Society at Monash University, Richard also took in our National Gallery's paintings of Sir Joshua Reynolds to see which of Reynolds' assistants had worked on various parts of Victoria's paintings.

## UK ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ANNUAL MEETING

**Geoffrey Forster, Association Chairman and Director of Leeds Library**

The AIL held its annual meeting at the **Guildford Institute of the University of Surrey** on Saturday, 19 June 2004. This was the Association's first visit to Guildford. The Guildford Institute was founded in 1834 as the Guildford Mechanics' Institute and has enjoyed a partnership with the town's university since 1982.

As usual, the event was a convivial one with an emphasis on giving people a chance to network. The occasion also offered the opportunity to explore the host institution and other places of local interest. There was a welcome reception in the Institute's Assembly Room on the evening of Friday, 18 June 2004, hosted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford, **Cr Keith Taylor** and **Mrs Lucy Taylor**. The Mayor welcomed delegates from as far away as Newcastle upon Tyne and Penzance to their fifteenth annual gathering. **Miss Sue Telfer**, Chairman of the Institute's Library Committee, drew attention to a fascinating exhibition on writers inspired by Surrey, presented by Surrey County Council with additional



Guildford Institute Librarian **Mrs Clare Miles**, centre, in white top, giving the Grand Tour of the Library. *(Krystyna Smithers photo)*

paragraphs and books from the Institute's collections. The annual meeting itself commenced at the Guildford Institute on the Saturday morning with a welcome and introduction by **Professor John Harding**, Chairman of the Management Committee. Two talks followed by Guildford Institute members. **Russell Chamberlin** spoke on the history and character of the Guildford Institute describing the Institute's significant past role in the life of Guildford, its gradual decline along with other institutions of its type and the successful efforts to save it and to re-endow it with energy and purpose. **Matthew Alexander's** talk, entitled 'Libraries, museums and myths', drew attention to famous local traditions of surprisingly recent origin, such as the Pilgrim's Way and the early history of Guildford's 'Sword of State', which were perpetuated in writings on Guildford and Surrey but which had no foundation in fact.

**Clare Miles**, Librarian of the Guildford Institute, then took delegates on a tour of the library. The projected building alterations would, she hoped, include a refurbishment of what were unworkable shelving arrangements and the provision of additional storage space in the basement.

After lunch (a key feature of any AIL annual meeting and a particularly splendid example in Guildford), delegates visited two important local landmarks in the town of

Guildford. **Dr Richard Christophers**, formerly of the British Library, led a tour around the Royal Grammar School (founded between 1557 and 1566) which boasts an ancient chained library given by Bishop Parkhurst and now housed in the headmaster's office.



Listening to **Dr Richard Christophers** at the Royal Grammar School established in the sixteenth century. *(Krystyna Smithers photo)*

Delegates then visited the Hospital of the Blessed Trinity, a complex of almshouses founded by **Archbishop George Abbot** in 1691 that still provides accommodation to the elderly members of the local community today. They were given a tour of the Hospital by the former Master, **Mr John Moss**.

On returning to the Guildford Institute, the formal business of the gathering took place - the annual general meeting - with **Mr Geoffrey Forster** in the chair. The annual report and accounts reported a year of increased activity, not the least of which was the work undertaken on the AIL's website by **Mr Fergus Wilde** at the Portico Library, Manchester, and the design and production of a bookmark advertising the website guided by **Mrs Krystyna Smithers**, the Association's Secretary.

An important part of the AGM is the president's address which was given by **Dr Robert Anderson**, the recently retired Director of the British Museum. Dr Anderson looked ahead to an expanding association in terms of both the number of members and the goals pursued. He is to present the AIL's greetings and it to refer to its activities and future aims at the first international gathering of mechanics' institutes and athenaeums in Melbourne, Australia, in September 2004.

The meeting concluded with a lively discussion centering on possible future projects and opportunities for co-operation between Association Members and other like-minded bodies such as the **Cathedral Libraries** and **Archives Association** and the **Historic Libraries Forum**.

Following the AGM, delegates enjoyed tea before making their respective journeys home. The Association's thanks are given to everyone at the Guildford Institute for providing such a memorable and enjoyable event. The Association's Members now look forward to a busy year. The 2005 annual meeting will be held at the **Saffron Walden Town Library Society**.

# THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTES'... BUFF PAGE FINDER

The following is compiled in good faith for your information and if you find any details that should be changed or can be added please advise the Secretariat.

## COMPLIANCE

**Building Commission**, Level 27, Casselden Place, 2 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, V 3000. Tel: (03) 9285 6400. On matters of Health, contact should be made with the Health Surveyor at your local Council.

## CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS AUSTRALIA

Commenced in 1982 at Ballarat, the **Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers** has grown to have over twenty offices Australia-wide and has changed its name to as above. They also do work on halls and can be contacted on 1800 032 501.

## CROCKERY, ETC.

**Hotel Agencies**, 298 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, V Tel: (03) 9419 7777; and keep your eye open for auctions of former restaurants, hotels, etc.

## GRANTS

If you have paid your MIV subscription you should have received a copy of the *Grant Opportunities* booklet. If you haven't please call the Secretariat and one will be sent out. Most Councils have a round of Community Grants and you should apply and copy your application to your local councillor. There are also grants available from time to time for exhibitions the **Public Record Office Victoria** and **Museums Australia (Victoria)**. Another possible source is The Poor Box, by applying to your local Clerk of Courts.

## HERITAGE

Most Councils have a Heritage Adviser and they should be contacted in the first instance. **Heritage Victoria** is located at Nauru House, 80 Collins Street, Melbourne, V 3000. Tel: (03) 9655 6519. Heritage Victoria also periodically advertise grants.

## INCORPORATION

All lodgement documents, including Model Rules, can be downloaded from the website at: [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) and click on 'Associations'. If you don't have web access ring

1300 361 673 and they will send them out or you can call at Floor 2, 452 Flinders Street, Melbourne and pick up a set. The Department of Consumer and Business Affairs also handle lodgement of returns, Rules, Public Officer, etc.

## INSURANCE

Information is on [www.communityinsurance.com.au](http://www.communityinsurance.com.au) with a downloadable application form. If you are still having trouble contact **Grantley Fearn** at **Jardine Lloyd Thompson** on (03) 9860 3400. For building insurance contact your local insurance broker, or as a last resort, **Bill Hogg** at **Jardine Lloyd Thompson** on (03) 9613 1415.

## LEGAL

If you are on a **Department of Sustainability and Environment Reserve** you should contact the Crown Land Section at a regional office. If you are on freehold land contact Local Government Victoria at GPO Box 2392X, or Level 14, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne. Tel: (03) 9208 3590.

## MANAGEMENT MANUAL

*The Committee of Management Responsibilities and Good Practice Guidelines: Crown Land Management* Manual is an excellent guide for Hall Committees. They are free to those who have Halls on DSE Reserves, but would be available to inspect at DES Regional Offices.

## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

**Secretariat:** Jim Lowden, Box 1080, Mitcham North, V 3132. Tel: (03) 9873 7202; **Membership, Australia \$15; International \$25;** Clive Brooks, 3/106 Warrenheip Street, Buninyong, V 3357. **Travelling Exhibition:** Libby Webster, Tel: (03) 5793 8390; **Plaques:** Dr Frank Hurley, Tel: (03) 5330 3052; **Big Mech Database:** Peter Pereyra, Tel: (03) 9285 6458.

## WEBSITE

The Institute has a website at [www.vicnet.net.au/~mivc](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~mivc) and any amendments or additions should be emailed to [jim@theruralstore.com.au](mailto:jim@theruralstore.com.au)

*Only in popular education can man erect the structure of an enduring civilization.*

ANDREW CARNEGIE (1835-1919)

# MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE MISCELLANEA

## News, Odd spots and Research Projects

### CARNEGIE'S OTHER AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY

In the last newsletter we queried the location of where the fourth Carnegie Library built in Australia. The others being at Midland Junction (WA) Hobart (T), Mildura (V) and there is now Northcote. We thank the observant Sue Reynolds, Librarian at Victoria University of Technology for bringing this to our attention. [See story next issue.]

### SCIENCE LECTURES AT YOUR MECHANICS?

For those who stayed for the lunchtime showing of **Dr Bob Draper's** film on the **Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution's** work in promoting science in schools in Bath it was very interesting. They had a massive expo, **Bath Taps into Science**, in which visitors were expected to participate in the various projects.

As a result the Bath team won a special award from the **British Association for the Advancement of Science** in 2002 for its promotional work which has now been 'franchised' nationwide.

And hard on the heels of this was a call from **Mike Murray** of the **Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS)**. We've met with Mike and discussed the development of a pilot series of events in 2005 in which country Institutes would invite to participate in a round of lectures and/or science shows. If your Institute is prepared to host a local event, please email or phone the Secretariat.

### NOW HEAR THIS!

MIV rolled out the Big Guns for the ABC Radio's **Sunday Arts Program** with **Peter Clarke** on Sunday 5 September. President, **Dr Frank Hurley**, Historian, **Pam Baragwanath** and MW2004 keynote speaker

**Dr David McKitterick** ably represented the Mechanics' voice in the twenty minute segment as an admiring band watched the live to air interviews. **Pam Baragwanath** also had a spot on ABC Radio's **Australia all Over** with **Ian 'Macca' McNamara** just prior to **MW 2004** and it attracted interest Australia wide.

'Macca' gave a commitment to do a broadcast from a Victorian MI in the future so that will be a big event for the MI movement nationwide.

### BOOKS FOR THE TAKING - 13 NOVEMBER

The **Melbourne Athenaeum** at 188 Collins Street, Melbourne is staging its first major Book Sale for many years and at the end of the day the remainder will be available for donation to Institute libraries.

Why not drop by and see what is on offer which may be of interest to your Institute.

### SPONSORS WHO SUPPORTED MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2004

*We are most grateful to these sponsors who made Mechanics' Worldwide 2004 possible.*

**Department for Victorian Communities, Ian Potter Foundation, Leverhulme Trust, Swinburne University of Technology, Paterson's Cakes, Prahran Mechanics' Institute, Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, Shire of Yarra Ranges, City of Stonnington, State Library of Victoria, Royal Society of Victoria, Melbourne Athenaeum, DeBortoli Wines, Cadbury-Schweppes and Synergy Signs.**

### QUOTE OF THE TIME...

*I am proud to be part of a movement that has had enough birthdays to **both** go out of fashion and then, as inevitably will happen, come back into vogue as the underlying good sense of what we're about is recognized anew.*

**Graham Holdaway**, President, **Kilmore Mechanics' Institute**, responding to the Toast to 'Birthdays' at **MW 2004** Dinner.

### CONFERENCE PAPERS

Those people who have ordered the new CD-ROM or hardcopy of the MW 2004 Conference Proceedings, we thank you for your order. It is taking a little more time to type the extra Papers and have them checked with their authors, but we hope to have the updated Proceedings in our hands by late November or early December. Thank you for your patience.

We wish our readers around the world a Joyous Christmastide and may much Health, Happiness and Prosperity come your way in the New Year of 2005.

**Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.**, Box 1080, Mitcham North, V 3132, Australia. Tel: (03) 9873 7202; Fax: (03) 9873 0542; Email: jim@theruralstore.com.au; Website: www.vicnet.net.au/~miv