

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION LAUNCH

The Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria (MIV) has produced a travelling exhibition entitled "Remember the Mechanics?" with the aid of a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria. The exhibition was launched by the Hon. Bob Cameron MP, Minister for Local Government and Member for Bendigo West, at Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute on 17 August. The launch was a great success, attended by about 60 guests including representatives from Heritage Victoria, the Public Records Office of Victoria, and the Departments of Infrastructure and Natural Resources & the Environment, as well as local dignitaries, community representatives, and MIV members. Bob Cameron spoke about the Department of Infrastructure's **Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership Scheme** which gave \$85,000 in grants to 11 mechanics' institute libraries last year and announced a further grant for \$10,000 to refurbish the Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute's interior.

The purpose of the exhibition is to promote a greater awareness by the general public, Councils and heritage bodies of the historical significance and current activities of mechanics' institutes throughout Victoria.

A great deal of work went into preparing the travelling exhibition which consists of a large banner, 21 large panels describing the development of the mechanics' institute movement in Victoria and 100 photographs of existing institute buildings. The imaginative project was put together by designer **Gita Lestari** who used her computer and art skills to combine text and photographs in a pleasing format.

We are most grateful George and Pam Baragwanath for their installation and staffing of the exhibition for its duration and taking it on to Tatura. Dr Jujann Meabank also acted as an able meet and greet and book seller for the exhibition launch.

The Eaglehawk Heritage Society, led by Elaine Harrington, really did the Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute proud, firstly with their massive clean-a-thon, assistance with the installation, and the most enjoyable and sumptuous morning tea. A special thanks to Bev Hanson, Joy Mildren, Ruth Claridge, Noelene Wild, Aylene Kirkwood, Ian Wild, John Casey, June McMillin, Bruce and Helen Mainka for all your help.

Institutes, clubs, societies and libraries from Alexandra, Bairnsdale, Benalla, Bonnie Doon, Castlemaine, Kilmore, Lakes Entrance, Leongatha, Mt Waverley, Numurkah, Port Fairy, St Arnaud, Sor-



Hon. Bob Cameron and with Dr Frank Hurley (right) and Eaglehawk Mechanics' Trustee Owen Davies (left)

rento, Stanley, Tatura, Walhalla, and Warracknabeal have asked to host the exhibition.

The exhibition opened in the Tatura on 13 September. Don Kilgour, Member for Shepparton, spoke to forty guests about the importance the Tatura Mechanics' Institute and Victory Hall played in educating the community over the years through the provision of lectures and a library. A fund raising night will be held on 13 October. Guest speaker Dr Frank Hurley will speak on the difference between Community and Contract. Tickets cost \$18 (includes a split roast dinner, a band and drinks at bar prices). Proceeds go towards restoring the hall complex. Contact David Bourke, Secretary Tatura Civic Halls Committee, on Tel. 5824 2351, Fax 5824 2352, Email david_f_bourke@optusnet.com.au. The exhibition will be displayed at the Tatura Museum until 20 October.

Stanley Athenaeum will host the exhibition over the Melbourne Cup Long weekend **November 3-5**. Castlemaine Historical Society hosts it **1-18 February**. See our Calendar for future venues & dates.

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*Wishing
you a safe
and joyous
Christmas
and a
peaceful
2002.*

Remember the Mechanics? Launch of the Travelling Exhibition

Extract of a speech by Pam Baragwanath

Mechanics' Institutes are one of the most important and successful, visible and continuing institutions in Australia and particularly in Victoria where they flourished, perhaps more than in any other State.

There were over 1,000 and half of them remain. Still serving the community.

They were the first adult education schools, the first and longest-running libraries, holding the fort for over 100 years.

They created a cultural climate with associated art galleries, museums, picture theatres and live theatres.

They created an intellectual climate with lectures, classes, debates, reference and fiction libraries as well as the daily news.

They were often the first public building in a settlement providing a meeting place for valuable civic infrastructure, such as council meetings BEFORE there were town halls.

They provided an absolutely necessary focus and venue for social and community activities.

They were the original do-it-yourself community self-help project. Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute is an outstanding example of community enterprise, self-help. It is a gem. It deserves to be preserved and maintained as a unique, largely intact and irreplaceable historic and

Left to Right: Dr Frank Hurley, Hon. Bob Cameron, Elaine Harrington, Pam Baragwanath, Mayor Bruce Ackerman, and Own Davies outside the Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute



community asset, not just for this goldfields area but as an excellent example of a Victorian Mechanics' Institute. That it remains here is due largely to the efforts and dedication of Mansell Davies, a true Mechanics' Institute Trustee who ensured that the building was preserved for future generations.

I would like to thank the Minister not only for generously opening this Exhibition of Victorian Mechanics' Institutes at Eaglehawk today, for the much needed grant for restoration work on the building - and for the valuable on-going initiatives of his Department of Local Government, the Community Partnerships Program with the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria. Excellent work has begun.

Long may it continue. Thank you

SYDNEY CONFERENCE 6-8th September 2002

“Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes: From and For the Community.”

by Roger Morris (Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts)

At a meeting held recently, a number of key decisions were taken that will determine the nature of the 2002 Mechanics' Institutes/ Schools of Arts Conference which is to be held in Sydney. Please note the following and consider coming to Sydney next year and participating in the conference.

TIMING - 11.00am Friday, 6 September to 12 noon Sunday, 8 September, 2002. The late start will enable interstate visitors to fly in on the day and the midday finish will allow such visitors to get home on Sunday afternoon. Staying over Saturday night will also qualify air travellers for the cheapest possible fares.

THEME - “Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes: From and For the Community.” The call for papers and workshop sessions etc. will go out in about a month or so. As well as keynote speakers, paper sessions, and workshops, it is planned that there will be a bus tour of local schools of arts and a conference dinner.

LOCATION - Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt St. right in the heart of midtown Sydney. There is a very good range of accommodation available with in easy walking distance including the new and very reasonably priced Sydney Central YHA Hostel.

“Schools of Art and
Mechanics' Institutes:
From and For the
Community”
2002 Conference Theme

Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute: Strategy and Projects for the Future

Dr Frank Hurley, President



Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute aims to be the nationally recognised, functioning, accessible exemplar of the 1000s of Mechanics' Institutes, Athenaeums and Schools of Arts that were spread throughout the colonies of 19th century Australia. The elements that will enable the BMI to achieve this goal are: a heritage, four-level building in the heart of one of the country's most historically notable cities; a nationally significant collection of newspapers, journals and books; an active management committee; supportive local Council, community and Parliamentary representatives; funding from targeted public programs.

The BMI was formed in 1858. The first part of its Sturt Street building was constructed in 1859-60. It contained an auditorium able to hold over 1000 people in the then standard conditions for audiences, a large reading room and several meeting rooms. The handsome front section was built in 1869 with several spacious rooms, auditorium foyer and staircases, secretary-manager's living quarters and shopfronts for retail lease. Uses of spaces in the building have changed with shifts in times and tastes over the past 140 years but the building is substantially as it was in 1870. The collection contains full runs from their 19th century origins of the main local newspapers, of the *Argus*, of many 18th and 19th century British journals, of books, some of them rare, on mining, minerals, geology, contemporary technologies and travel. The library has been a constant in the BMI's 140 year history. In 1935 the Institute bought the 1870s Mining Exchange building which adjoins the BMI at its south-west side. An access corridor was constructed and the library was moved into the old Exchange building where the lending section has operated ever since.

These buildings and the collection are the legacy, the heritage, the challenge and the opportunity that the BMI committee of management came to consider at a strategic planning workshop in October 1997. The context was the ever more frequent need for costly patch-up maintenance on the old buildings, extreme shabbiness of and risk of falling masonry from the facade, destructive moisture penetration at many points, rising costs of utilities and insurance, declining returns from leases in a difficult rental market, declining numbers of members, deterioration and inaccessibility of much of the valuable print collection. Participants in the workshop included representatives from the City of Ballarat, the University of Ballarat, Her Majesty's Theatre and the Royal South Street Society. An outcome of the workshop was adoption by the BMI of this vision for its future:

- The activities of the Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute will reflect a sense of its history while evolving over time to achieve the organisation's original objectives in contemporary ways. The Institute will responsibly maintain its heritage buildings and collection of print materials and use its facilities and resources, in consultation and concert with other organisations, to enhance the cultural, intellectual, social and recreational life of its members and the community.

The three key guides to action in this statement are: *original objectives in contemporary ways --- responsibly maintain buildings and collection --- consultation and concert with others*. What is being done to give substance to this rhetoric?

Original objects --- Contemporary Ways

Article 2 of the BMI's original Articles of Association states: "The objects for which the Institution is established are the diffusion of Literary, Scientific, and other Useful Knowledge, and the supply of Rational In-door Recreation to the Members." Now as a century ago, the lending library and the research collection contribute to the achievement of this object. Lectures were another traditional means of diffusing knowledge. Over the last three months, the BMI has made its redeveloped 19th century Reading Room available to the University of Ballarat for a very successful series of ten weekly presentations by different specialists on gold-related subjects as part of the Victorian Gold Discovery 150 years celebrations. (The Reading Room, incidentally, we have named the Batten Room in honour of the father and son who between them held our Secretary/ Librarian position from 1859 to 1951.).

The three key guides:

- * original objectives in contemporary ways
- * responsibly maintain buildings and collection
- * consultation and concert with others.

Facilitation of regular presentations on other topics is planned. The BMI is identifying organisations with what our founders called “rational in-door recreation” objectives: genealogists, chess players, writers, photographers, debaters, public affairs groups and the like. When the building is conserved with heritage fidelity and contemporary amenity, we believe it can be the ideal meeting place for such groups - symbolically, conveniently, synergistically, efficiently

Responsibly maintain collection

The BMI's resources were and are not adequate to this task. We are trustees for the community in caring for and making accessible this collection. Public funds were and are necessary. Our second application to the National Library of Australia (NLA) Community Support Program brought a grant in 1998 of \$2000 for a collection conservation study. Recommendations from this study led to the development of a collection policy. Volunteers moved the bulk of the heritage collection from the basement where it had been stored for decades to a sorting and conservation working space. A successful application for \$20,000 from the Centenary of Federation Program for conservation work on the collection has enabled us to clean 1000s of items, to acquire conservation boxes for many of the newspapers, to have some storage-display cupboards built and to have some of the most valuable monographs re-bound. In conjunction with this conservation work, we have systematically entered details on over 5000 items on a data-base of the historic reference book collection. A grant in 2000 of \$5000 from the Victorian Government's Partnerships with Mechanics' Institutes program helped the BMI to acquire a computer and software for this database and a link to the Central Highlands Regional Library.

The database can be accessed through the BMI's internet site (see below). Volunteers from among the members and friends of the BMI have done the conservation work and data entry supervised by Edwina Shooter. Rex Bridges, a member of the BMI committee designed and implemented the database. We have had enquiries about holdings from the USA and were able to mail a photocopy of one text in response to an e-mail request from the USA. The lending library service to our 500 members is maintained with purchases from a modest acquisition budget and many donated books.

Responsibly maintaining the building.

As with many Mechanics' Institutes, this is our biggest challenge. Independent management by an elected committee is an integral part of the heritage of the BMI and we want to preserve that. We believe that local and State governments also want this: they already have enough languishing heritage “assets” to manage. The BMI's assets, facilities and services are for the public and it is and a proper recipient of public funds.

Heritage Victoria has given the BMI tangible support over the last three years with several grants totalling around \$20,000 for emergency repairs on two occasions, for investigation of the condition of roof beams (following collapse of a section of roof last Easter) and for preparation of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). This 250 page - appendices CMP was prepared in 2000 by Wendy Jacobs, a heritage architect, and Dr David Rowe of Authentic Heritage Services. Estimates of costs for selected stages of conservation work were also provided.

Full conservation of the buildings and services within it will require about \$2 million. The BMI committee's strategy is to match stages of conservation with public funding programs and to form alliances where appropriate in the quest for funding. Here is how things stand at present.

(1) Conserving the Significant Exteriors: CHPP Application

The most pressing need is to secure the envelope of the building. The CMP and related cost estimates have informed what we believe is a very strong submission for a substantial grant from the Federal Government's Cultural Heritage Projects Program (CHPP). The grant sought is for the conservation of the significant exteriors of the BMI. This will involve restoration of the façade (including returning the statue of Minerva atop the BMI to her original wholeness and splendour), replacement of much of the roofs and moisture-proofing brickwork in places. We tried unsuccessfully for a CHPP grant 2000 but learned much in the process. An authoritative CMP, written commitment from two local building industry firms to contribute significantly to the project and written statements of strong support from City Council, local parliamentarians, newspaper management and several service organisations underpin the current submission. Announcement of 2001 CHPP grants is imminent.

(2) Conserving the Significant (Front) Interiors: PHP Application

A project to conserve the significant interiors in the front section of the building is complementary to the exteriors project. The façade of the building is the interface and there would be economies in scaffolding, architect's fees, perhaps a single contractor and so on if exteriors and front interiors were conserved concurrently. The BMI has applied to the State Government's Public Heritage Program (PHP) for a grant to conserve the major rooms and staircases of the 1869 section of the building. We understand that a decision on these grants will be made late in the year.

The total sought from CHPP and PHP sources is around \$500,000. Competition for the grants is intense. We believe we have made a strong case in each program.

(3) BMI/Her Majesty's Theatre: Linking and Leasing Proposals

There are three elements to the strategy for the conservation and the future uses of much of the rear portions of the BMI property: Her Majesty's Theatre, the BMI auditorium and the BMI owned former Mining Exchange housing our lending library at present.

The rear of the BMI abuts Her Majesty's Theatre, 900 seat theatre built in the 1870s and beautifully restored ten years ago. Her Majesty's is now owned by the Ballarat City Council and managed by a Board appointed by Council. It is home to the Royal South Street Society competitions each year. The idea of building a link between Her Majesty's and the BMI has been floated in the past but never pursued. The BMI auditorium has been leased to cinema operators for many years but has not been much used for cinema purposes in recent years. Her Majesty's management would like the flexibility of having a smaller theatre and additional rehearsal and storage space which a link to the BMI could provide. The former Mining Exchange comes into play as it is located beside Her Majesty's and is owned freehold by the BMI. It is not part of the original BMI which is built on Crown grant land. It is a heritage building in its own right and has served the BMI well but costs of maintaining, heating and lighting this old building further strain the budget. The BMI and Her Majesty's Theatre Board (in consultation and concert) have developed a brief for a feasibility study covering: building a link between the BMI and Her Majesty's; the sale to or a long term lease by Her Majesty's of the Mining Exchange; a long term lease of the BMI auditorium by Her Majesty's; re-location of the BMI lending library to refurbished space adjacent to the Batten room. A long-term lease of the auditorium, we believe, would enable Her Majesty's to apply for funding from the Regional Arts Program to do the construction work and conservation work on Mining Exchange and auditorium. For the BMI, an important aspect in the study will be the estimates of revenue from sale and or rental agreements over the next 10 - 20 years.

Our strategic intent is to reduce costs by conservation of buildings and reduction in the building space we manage and to increase income for use in maintaining the building and the collection and to help us achieve those original objects of the BMI in contemporary ways.

If you think that there is a lot of work involved in these projects you are right. In this year of the volunteer, the BMI is fortunate that it can draw on the generosity and skills of its committee members and many others in the community.



Around the Institutes

Contributions gratefully accepted. If you wish your news to be included in the next issue of this newsletter please post article/report to PO Box 1080 Windsor 3181 or email pmiinc@vicnet.net.au by **1 February 2002**.

Authentic Heritage Services - David Rowe and Wendy Jacobs completed a Conservation Management Plan for the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute building in January this year. The report included an historical overview of the Institute and building, as well as a thorough physical analysis and comparative analysis with other Institutes (and Mining exchanges) around Australia. A Statement of Significance for this nationally significant building was prepared together with recommendations and cost estimates.

David Rowe and Lorraine Huddle completed a conservation plan for Kyneton Mechanics' Institute in August 2000 commissioned by the Macedon ranges Council. Their report did not support the controversial design proposal for the major development that was being publicised at the time. In fact they recommended that the building be nominated to the Victorian Heritage Register as being of State significance. The Heritage Council of Victoria have since included Kyneton Institute building and surrounds on the Register. Their Conservation Management Plan has subsequently been unanimously supported by Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the Kyneton community are currently working with architects McGlashan Everest P/L to ensure a good outcome for the building that meets the needs of the organisations that use the place.

David Rowe and Wendy Jacobs were engaged in June to prepare a Conservation Management Plan of the Ballan

Mechanics' Institute and Free Library building. This report will be completed in October. A development proposal is currently being considered by the Moorabool Shire and Ballan community.

Ballan Mechanics' Institute (est. 1860) - Ballan Hall Committee is in the first stages of talks with the State Department for Regional Development with a view to obtaining funding for a full refurbishment of their hall. The committee hopes to house a Community Enterprise Centre (an Information Technology centre) along with the refurbishment. Ballan Chamber of Commerce have secured funding for the IT centre and are looking for somewhere to house it. Committee members Derek and Marion Edwards believe that the MIV should strive to keep abreast of funding options and access and initiate "training for committees in new ways of managing institutes to keep them vibrant community assets".

Ballarat Mechanics' Institute (est. 1855) - The Institute and Her Majesty's Theatre recently met to discuss a possible physical link between their two buildings. A feasibility study will be undertaken on the development of the proposed complex. Most of the institute's Federation Grant has been spent on cataloguing the collection. 5000 items have been entered on computer. BMI have staged a series of 10 Friday evening lectures on the gold theme - mine disasters, gold fields, theatres.

Berwick Mechanics' Institute (est. 1862) - The Institute now has volunteer librarian to catalogue the Casey Collection on their new computer catalogue. This historically significant collection of books, pamphlets etc. reflect the lives and interests of Lord and Lady Casey. The computer terminal and software was purchased through a grant from the Department of Infrastructure's "Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership Program". Some 85 items have been added so far, with 800 to go! The Institute's homepage is under construction. The library is sending books withdrawn from the collection to hospitals and schools in New Guinea via the Inner Wheel association.

A recent Regional Library strategic report from Casey Council shows that Berwick's rapid population growth is expected to double in the next ten years. The population is fast outgrowing the present library. Berwick MI has a 40,000 book stock, and utilises the services of about 40 volunteers, who presently serve the busy community. However it seems that the local Council is breathing down its neck. With space at a premium and residents go to Narre Warren for computer use, it is predicted that a new and much larger library will be built elsewhere.

Briagolong (est. 1874) - Linda Barraclough reports that part of their grant from the Department of Infrastructure's "Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership Program" has been used to fit glass doors in the library which are in keeping with the look of the library. She says now the books are better protected, it will be possible to open the library more often. The same grant has allowed the Wellington Library Service to transfer data from the Institute's card catalogue onto its online catalogue. In the future it will be possible to search for the Institute's library books on the Internet.

Bright Free Library (est. 1886) - Rosemary Withers, President of the Friends of Bright Free Library, a group who lobbied hard to retain the library, reports that extensions to their building began two weeks ago. They hope to be finished by Christmas. The \$400,000 extensions and ancillary works are being funded by a Department of Infrastructure's **Living Libraries Program** and the Alpine Shire Council. In the meantime, the library remains open for business.

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Bulumwaal Mechanics' Institute (est. 1894) - Pam Baragwanath recently visited and photographed the Bulumwaal Institute. The Committee is seeking funding to restore its building and its historically significant stage curtain.

Castlemaine Free Library (est. as the Mechanics' Institute 1855) - The new million dollar development design appears to be a satisfactory compromise between retaining the integrity of the historic building and meeting the current needs of the town. The entrance will be relocated to the side of the

building in Mechanics' Lane. The new project, designed by architect Greg Burgess, is being funded by the Victorian Department of Infrastructure's Living Libraries Program.

Chiltern Athenaeum (est. 1850's) - Originally a goldfields library, town hall and council chambers, the Athenaeum has a large collection of 19th century books. Open weekends and public holidays 10am - 4pm or by appointment. For a guided tour telephone Rex Fuge 5726 1467.

Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute (est. 1868) - The Eaglehawk Heritage Society organised a big clean up of the Institute for the launch of the MIV's travelling exhibition last month (see page 1.). The Institute has a reading/meeting room, a small lending library, and an attractive well used billiard room. It is home to the Bendigo Historical Society and soon to be home to a branch of the North Central Regional Goldfields Library which will replace the book mobile which currently parks out the front of the building every Friday.

Elmore Athenaeum (1869) - The Athenaeum held its re-opening on the 1st July. 100 people attended, the Mayor unveiled a plaque and Bruce Chirgwin President spoke about the early history of the hall, the efforts of the committee, and assistance received through the Rural Support Scheme and the City of Greater Bendigo. Bruce also extends his sincere thanks to Chris Smith, the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment Historic Places Architect, for his inspirational support towards renovating the hall. The hall was hired out for its first function three weeks ago. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough power and the committee now have to raise over \$5000 to install a new connection to the mains which they plan to do through the Elmore Fields Days agricultural show in October and a street stall in November.

Footscray Mechanics' Institute (est. 1856)- Secretary Lin Sholz reports that their growing collection is now fully catalogued on line, their membership increases and the institute's homepage is currently under construction.

Frankston Mechanics' Institute (est. 1880) - Council has decided to "de-commission" the hall i.e. demolish it. The hall is under-utilized compared to the six other halls within the City and a report has been prepared stating that the building is not historically significant because its many additions. Council will cease taking bookings for hire of the hall in December this year. The Mornington Peninsula Family History Society, Sea Scouts, and theatre groups who use the hall will be relocated by 2003.

Information Mechanics' Institute (est. 2000) - William Hollyer who spoke at the 2000 National Conference has an IT background. He is presently involved in designing a CD which will go to libraries, etc. to assist people in finding information they need to access. Much like the traditional Mechanics' Institute role. William is designing a web page which will include images from *If the Walls Could Speak*.

He is also presently chasing grant money for the production of ten-minute film based on the historical aspects of mechanics' institutes and has sought the assistance of Dr Philip Candy and Pam Baragwanath. The film will be made by IT staff from RMIT, a latter day descendant from the Melbourne

Working Men's College, which was formed at the Melbourne Athenaeum. It is proposed to launch the film at the Sydney 2002 National Conference. Inquiries to William Hollyer, 67 Haldane Street, Beaumaris, V 3193. Tel: 9515 0048

Kilmore Mechanics' Institute (est. 1854) - The Institute is holding their seventh Gardens of Kilmore Open Day on Sunday, 18 November. Contact Elaine Lavender on 5781 1022 or 5781 1711 for further information. The Talking *Free Press* has completed over 250 editions and as well as assisting the community provides a great oral history for the town. A new cabinet has been purchased to house the Records Collection at the Kilmore Hospital where the Institute has its new Medical Library on permanent loan. The Kilmore Celtic Festival was very successful and planning for the next one to be held 28-30 June, 2002 has commenced.

Lakes Entrance Mechanics' Institute (est. 1907) - The Institute is building a new wing to house their library. They would like to host the MIV travelling exhibition during the official opening of the wing in 12-18 months time.

Leongatha Mechanics' Institute (est. 1891) - Secretary John Murphy reports that the Institute recently received a grant of \$20,000 from Heritage Victoria through the South Gippsland Shire for renovations to their library, billiard room and kitchen/work room. The museum is closed during renovations. Their "Then and Now" photographic exhibition created to celebrate the Centenary of Federation concluded in August after the very successful Daffodil Festival. Leongatha will be staging their biennial lecture on 25 November with a day-long seminar on heritage roses conducted by noted Rosarian Nieuwestweeg. Previous seminars have been conducted by the Embroiderers' Guild and another featured a Motor Show.

Lilydale Athenaeum (est. 1882) - Run by the Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company Inc., the Athenaeum is open 10am - 2pm most days. For a guided tour Tel. 9735 1777. The Company stages four plays per year plus pantomimes. Their recent production "Death Trap" ends soon. The Cinema and Theatre Historical Society will be visiting the Athenaeum in October (with other institutes in the area which used to show films or hold theatre productions).

Little River Mechanics' Institute (est. 1910) - The Institute holds weekly dancing classes and the odd wedding. Werribee Shire began hosting regular senior citizen luncheons in the hall last month. Ivan Fairchild has been Secretary for 22 years and Vlr's Phyllis Dougall their long serving Librarian opens their small library on Saturdays. In recent years the hall was used for filming the series *Blue Heelers*.

Maldon Athenaeum (est. 1863) - New book cases purchased through the Department of Infrastructure's "Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership Program" arrive this week. The cases were built to appear in keeping with the historical reading room which is furnished with pieces on permanent loan from the Old Mint in Melbourne. The grant is also being used to build the Maldon Collection focusing on Maldon's hey days. Pictures owned by the Athenaeum are being restored by the Castlemaine Art Gallery. The RSL hall located behind the Athenaeum and sometimes used by them has been restumped and painted with landscaping completed by the local Lions Club.

Maryborough Free Library (est. as the Mechanics' Institute

1859) - the library collection has been moved to a new building and the old building bought by one of the town's councillors is up for resale.

The Melbourne Athenaeum (est. 1839) - The old card catalogue is gradually being converted to go online. Memberships are up on last year. Secretary Leila Winchcombe's memoirs are being recorded for a film called Picture Palaces. The foyer has been filled with footy fans purchasing tickets all week. A new Cafe d'Orsay has opened at the Athenaeum downstairs from the library.

Mildura Carnegie Library (est. 1907) - The library collection has been moved to the new Deakin Centre which also houses an information centre and a swimming pool! The Carnegie building is now home to the Mildura Historical and Genealogical Societies.

Narrawong Mechanics' Institute (est.?) - Guitarist Bruce Mathiske gave an excellent concert at the Institute last week (the hall has very good acoustics). The comminee organises these concerts through Arts Victoria from time to time. A Shire community forum will be held at the Institute next week. The hall is also used regularly by the local play group, a craft/patchwork group, and for senior citizens' luncheons. Secretary June Lazell held a 'Christmas-in-July' luncheon to give locals a taste of the festive season as experienced in the Northern Hemisphere where she lived for many years. The committee's application for funding from the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment to roof and upgrade their old toilet block was unsuccessful. The committee has tried and will try again.

Port Fairy Mechanics' Institute (est. 1860) - The Port Fairy Historical Society will host the MIV's travelling exhibition around October/November 2002 or Jan/Feb 2003. The exhibition will be supported with books and works by Australian artists Will Dyson and Percy Leason from the Institute's collection as well as swords commemorating the Separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales. The Institute's collection has been incorporated into the Corangamite Regional Library collection but is housed separately behind glass doors.

Prahran Mechanics' Institute (est. 1854) - the Prahran Mechanics' celebrated the 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold in Victoria with a lecture by the award winning writer Robyn Annear on the outbreak of the gold rushes based on her book *Nothing But Gold*. The Victorian Colonists Group visits us later this month for a tour of our Victorian history library (group bookings 9510 3393). Our next guest speaker is Frank Van Straten, OAM who will lecture on the historic theatres of Melbourne on 17 October at 7pm. An exhibition of rarely seen material from the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society will coincide with the lecture. Visit our website www.vicnet.net.au/~pmi Inc for a list of our latest library acquisitions.

Sorrento Mechanics' Institute (est. 1884) - The Institute is home to the Nepean Historical Society. The Society organises exhibitions and talks at the Institute. MIV historian Pam Baragwanath is giving a lecture on mechanics' institute on 3 November. A display on the man who named Portsea has just ended. The next exhibition is on the Portsea Camp-Lord Mayors Camp 18 December -30 January (contact 5984 2333 for further information). The Society also runs the museum at the Portsea Quarantine Station which recently received \$4 million from the Federal Government to upgrade the complex.

Stanley Athenaeum (est. 1863) - The Athenaeum will host the MIV's travelling exhibition during the Cup Weekend 3-5 November. The Athenaeum's library collection has been catalogued by the Upper Murray Regional Library and secured behind glass doors.

Tatura Mechanics' Institute and Victory Hall (est. 1880) - The Civic Halls Committee opened the MIV's travelling exhibition at the Tatura Museum on 13 September. Local MLA Don Kilgour did the honours, in the presence of Mayor Chris Hazelman of the City of Shepparton and Tatura Civic Halls President Ted McCracken. The exhibition closes on 20 October. A special fund raising night will be held 13 October (see page 1 for details). The Committee raised \$1900 at an auction in June to help raise funds to restore the hall complex.

Since the opening of the exhibition in conjunction with a display of Prisoner of War and Internment Camp Memorabilia there has been considerable interest which has included two bus loads of visitors, one being from South Australia.

Warburton Mechanics' Institute (est. 1880s) - The Cinema and Theatre Historical Society will be touring old and new theatre venues east of Melbourne in October including the Olinda Hall, the Lilydale Athenaeum and "highlight of the Weekend" tour the Warburton Mechanics' Hall. CATHS has begun a database of institutes which were once used as cinemas or theatres.

Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute (est. 1882) - The Institute's hall is maintained by the Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association. The Institute and Arts Association amalgamated in 1986 in order to foster all forms of artistic expression in the community and to maintain the historic hall for use by the community. Secretary Pat Anderson reports that 2001 has been a great year for the Institute. In February the hall was re-roofed with assistance from the State Government Community Support Fund, the local Lions Club and the Manningham City Council. More recently a mosaic path has been created in a new garden providing wheelchair and pram access to the hall. The mosaic depicts activities held in the hall - painting, pottery, theatre, music and craft. Hundreds of volunteer hours have been spent on the project which will be completed when extra funds permit and dedicated to an outstanding local volunteer Henry Beecham.

PERSONAL PARS

Last month Pam and George Baragwanath visited over 20 institutes in South Australia (see under SA heading) and the Broken Hill Mechanics' Institute in NSW. The large, well used institute still operates as a technical college but its future, along with other organisations within the town, is unknown as the mines are closing down.

Pam Baragwanath has also been promoting her book and giving talks at local historical organisations in Victoria. She recently spoke at the Manningham History Smiths and the Country Women's Association, Croydon. Her next talk will be at the **Nepcan Historical Society's museum (former Sorrento Mechanics' Institute) on the 2nd November at 8pm.**

Cathy Milward-Bason is taking maternity leave come December and we all wish her and Daniel well for the impending birth. In the role as secretary Cathy has been the lynch-pin of

the MIV and we are all going to have rally round to assist with the busy secretarial work.

Kilmore MIV delegates Ray and Marguerite Fagg have recently returned from the UK and are busy organising the next round of U3A Courses. (The Kilmore U3A was sponsored by the Kilmore Mechanics' Institute.)

NEW SOUTH WALES

MIV member **Barrie Brennan** reports that he and Warren Newman plan to undertake an architectural survey of the mechanics' institutes in their region around New England.

Albury Mechanics' Institute (1859-1965) - Thanks to the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society (Victoria) who sent us the following item from page 38 of the *Border Mail* (4/6/94): "A Mechanics' Institute for Albury was mentioned in April 1857, at a public meeting at McCalls Hume Inn ... Many enthusiasts paid their subscription on the spot, but the idea felt through at a second meeting when it was discovered that records of the previous meeting, and the subscriptions collected, had disappeared." The Institute was finally formed two years later and the first building opened in 1862. The original front was later demolished to make way for an impressive two-storey frontage. This building was opened by Dame Nellie Melba in 1908. "It is interesting to note that this elaborate building was well beyond the needs, or expectations, of Albury's population of 6000. But it would appear that the town's leaders ... had set their sights on Albury being selected for the Federal Capital, and such elaborate buildings were part of the sales pitch." The building was demolished in 1965. A local wrote in a subsequent edition of the newspaper "It's rather tragic when one considers that virtually nothing has replaced the building since it was pulled down - some flag poles and a strip of lawn!"

Tenterfield School of Arts (est. 1865) - The School of Arts, where Federation leader Henry Parkes gave his famous "Tenterfield Address" on 24 October 1899, has been restored and a museum dedicated to Parkes created in the old hall. This project was funded by a Centenary of Federation grant for \$3 million. The School of Arts was opened and rededicated by the **Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson** in July. The event attracted a lot of interest from State and Federal departments. The Friends of the School of Arts are holding their annual Henry Parkes Commemoration dinner in October - key note speaker is **Governor General Dr Peter Hollingworth**. The School of Arts is owned by the National Trust (the first property purchased by them in 1957) who lease it to the Tenterfield Council for a peppercorn rent. It houses the local library and a theatre hall. It remains the centre of community life and the community are happy to share it with the rest of Australia.

Does any one have any information on fate of the **Wagga Wagga School of Arts**?

QUEENSLAND

Our QLD members have been busy writing institute histories - **Joan Beddoe** has published a history of mechanics' institutes and schools of arts in Australia and **Lisanne Gibson** from Griffith University writes about mechanics' institutes, gold and art in her book (see Bookshelf). **Robert Longhurst** is preparing a history of the **Woombye School of Arts**.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Among the SA institutes that Pam Baragwanath visited and photographed last month were **Arno Bay, Cleve, Cowell, Cummins, Hallett, Hawker, Karkoo, Monash, Mt Bryan, North Shields, Orrooroo, Peterborough, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Port Neill, Quorn, Renmark, Rudall, Terrowie, Tooligie, Whyalla, Whyte-Yarcowie, Willowie, and Wilmington.**

The grand two storey Cowell Institute recently held a Centenary of Federation Ball (prizes for the best Federation costume) during a weekend of Federation festivities. The beautiful Quorn Institute held a Centenary of Federation concert in mid September. Whyalla Institute was recently sold to Harvey Norman P/L who built a huge complex behind the relatively tiny façade. The Eyre Peninsula is involved in a scheme for renovating the halls through a partnership program between the Department of Education and Training (DEET) and local councils.

This month, **Cathy Milward-Bason** will be visiting the former **South Australia Institute**, now the State Library of SA, to meet with the MIV's SA contact **Dr Michael Talbot**. She also plans to visit the **Port Adelaide** and **Gawler Institutes** and the three surviving suburban Institutes at **Brighton, Glen Ormond** and the **Grange**.

TASMANIA

Tasmania has many wonderful old mechanics' institute buildings. Former Chairman of the National Trust in Tasmania **Lionell Morrell** has put forward an idea of engaging the Tasmanian historical societies to help gather data for an architectural survey of these historically significant institutions similar to the one completed by the Department of Natural Resources in Victoria and the one proposed for NSW.

NEW MEMBERS

Joan Beddoe is from Queensland. She is author of *Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia* (see Bookshelf).

Rohana Bourne, a former Librarian from Kilmore, joined at the Eaglehawk launch of our travelling exhibition.

Ken Cooper is from Castlemaine and is interested in local history. He is a life member of the Castlemaine Art Gallery and a committee member of the local historical society.

Lisanne Gibson is from the Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, Griffith University QLD. Lisanne wrote of *The Uses of Arts Constructing Australian Identities* (see Bookshelf). Lisanne is interested in the 'history of art programs, public art, and heritage'.

John Graham is from Eaglehawk. He is currently undertaking a Librarianship course and his interest in mechanics' institutes stems from his interest in library history.

Carole O'Brien is President of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. Carole is interested in adult education, community development, local history and heritage conservation.

BOOKSHELF

If the Walls Could Speak : a Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria by Pam Baragwanath \$55 + \$7.00 P&H

John Anderson's Legacy: The University of Strathclyde and Its Antecedents 1796-1996 by John Butt. This is a fascinating account of how Professor John Anderson's will and endowment shaped a whole educational institution and spurred the establishment of the Mechanics' Institute movement under Dr George Birkbeck. Published by Tuckwell Press, The Mill House, Phantassie, East Linton EH40 JOG, Scotland, 246p.

Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia by Joan Beddoe. Published by the author 2001. A good 20 page overview of the subject with interesting photographs not published elsewhere. Copies available \$15 from Joan Beddoe, 318 Flinders Parade, Sandgate 4017 QLD

The Uses of Art: Constructing Australian Identities by Dr Lisanne Gibson. Published by QUP with the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, Griffith University, Nathan, Queensland, 2001. Available for sale \$35 from Queensland University Press. The mechanics' institute movement is discussed in chapter three entitled 'Mechanics, Gold and the Uses of Art'. The author argues that "the origins of modern Australian cultural policy can be traced in the establishment of Australia's first cultural institutions the mechanics' institutes."

Library Student **Jennifer Laux** kindly donated a copy of her essay on the **Sale Mechanics' Institute and Free Library**.

Frankston Library kindly donated two papers on Frankston Mechanics' Institute by former Chief Librarian Jennifer Borrell and Ruth Katjee.

Member **Margaret Stevens** has donated a numerous articles with references to goldfields institutes. Thanks Margaret.

The **Prahran Mechanics' Institute** (Victorian and Local History Library) holds upwards of a hundred books and articles on the movement. Most of the books are available for loan and copies of the articles can be faxed at a small fee.

To exchange info on mechanics' institutes subscribe to new list serve AUS-VIC-MECH-L-request@rootsweb.com

CALENDAR

2001

24 November - **Committee Meeting and Christmas Party** - Prahran Mechanics' Institute, 140 High Street, Prahran 10am and later at the Flying Duck Hotel, 67 Bendigo Street, Prahran at 12 mid day. (See Flyer)

2002

27 January - **Copy Deadline for Next Newsletter**

February - **Committee Meeting** - To be Fixed.

6-8 September - **2nd National Mechanics' Institutes/Schools of Arts Conference**, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts.

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION TIMETABLE

2001

13 September- 20 October Tatura Mechanics' Institute and Victory Hall

Venue: Tatura Museum, 77-83 Hogan Street
Contact: David Bourke, Secretary, Tatura Civic Halls Committee, 275 Mulcahy Road, Tatura 3616

3-5 November Stanley Athenaeum

Venue: Stanley Hall next door to the Athenaeum, Main Street,
Contact: Rosslyn Williams, Indigo Shire Council, Ford St, Beechworth. Tel. 5728 1000.

11 November - 27 January, 2002 Nurmurkah & District Historical Society

Venue: Heritage Centre, crn Melville and Knox Streets.
Contact: John Sigley, Secretary, Nurmurkah & District Historical Society, PO Box 314, Nurmurkah 3636. Tel. 5862 2230.

2002

1 - 18 February Castlemaine Historical Society

Venue: Castlemaine Information Centre. Shipping address - c/- Mary O'Toole, Graffiti Publications, 69 Forest St, Castlemaine. Contact: Mary O'Toole, Castlemaine Historical Society, PO Box 655, Castlemaine. Tel. 5472 3653.

25 February- 11 March Warracknabeal Branch Library

Venue: Warracknabeal Branch Library, Lyle St.
Contact: Doreen Huebner, Warracknabeal Branch, Wimmera Regional Library, Lyle Street, Warracknabeal 3393. Tel./fax 5398 1270

5 July - 1 August The Highway Gallery

Venue: The Highway Gallery, 14 The Highway, Mt Waverley
Contact: Ms Marjorie Walker, The Highway Gallery, 31 Josephine Avenue, Mt Waverley 3149. Tel. 9803 9071

October - November Port Fairy Historical Society

Venue: Court House, 30 Gipps St, Port Fairy
Contact: Lynda Tieman, Curator, Port Fair Historical Society, PO Box 152, Port Fairy 3284. Tel. 5568 1432

Awaiting confirmation: Walhalla Board of Management (Walhalla Mechanics' Institute), for **April**; Kilmore MI for **June**; Nepean Historical Society (Sorrento Mechanics' Institute) **no date**; Friends of Bright Library **late 2002-early 2003**; and Lakes Entrance MI **no date**.

**If you would like to host the exhibition please complete the enclosed form and return it to the Secretary, PO Box 1080, Windsor 3181.*

NEWS ROUNDUP

Centenary of Federation Closing Celebration - 30 November-2 December

The wind-up event for the Centenary of Federation in Victoria is being staged at Ballarat over a three day period 30 November to 2 December. Scattered over a number of venues will be display of projects which have been funded by Centenary of Federation grants and that is where *If the Walls Could Speak* comes in. The stall will be staffed by **Pam and George Baragwanath & Dr Julann Meabank** over the weekend. If you can put in an hour or three over the weekend please ring Pam on 9876 5164.

Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnerships Grants

At the latest meeting inquiry was made about the availability of a further round of grams and it was resolved that we write to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Bob Cameron, to seek his support. It is noted that Eaglehawk received a special one-off grant for recent works there.

2004 International Conference

We're excited about the possibility of staging the 2004 International Conference in Melbourne and we've lodged a Letter of Inquiry with the Carnegie Foundation seeking funding. It is remembered that a couple of Institutes received funding to redevelop their libraries in the early 1900s, the Carnegie Library in Mildura was one such project.

Now for the Movie

Dr Paul Permezel gave a briefing to the last meeting on how a film could be made about MIs. There was two possible approaches. One was to the ABC for an Australian Story and the other was to government body such as Film Victoria to provide funding for production.

Living Libraries Program

The second round of grant application for this innovative library program has now closed. In all some \$12 million has been allocated for projects over the next three years. At least two MIs have submitted redevelopment projects for this latest round which will be announced early in 2002.

Public Records Office of Victoria Local History Grant

Discussion dealt with the establishment of a special of **Mechanics' Institute Reference Collection** (MIRC) of resources for students and researchers. It was also hoped that this would be a repository of MI memorabilia that was being generated as a result of the '**Remember the Mechanics?**' Travelling Exhibition. A funding application was being developed to provide for the purchase of a core reference collection or rare and new publications, photocopying of Institute related booklets of library catalogues, rules and brief or manuscript histories and the scanning for digital storage of Institute photographs. Included would be provision for the storage of the collection. The MIRC collection would be based at Prahran Mechanics' Institute as it would mesh in well with the **Local History Collection**.

Thanks to the Librarian at Benalla Library. who after a request for any old books bearing the original institute library stamp, donated to the MIV a complete set of Jonathon Swifts. Publication dates range from 1700 to the early 1800's. Unfortunately, the books are only suitable for exhibition to illustrate the damage that can occur due to poor storage of valuable material, but the library stamps are clearly legible.

A TOUCH OF MIDAS: The Impact of the Gold Rushes on the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Victoria

By Cathy Milward-Bason (Prahran Mechanics' Institute)

On the 7 July, 1851, just six days after the creation of the colony of Victoria, James Esmond's discovery of gold at Clunes was officially announced to an excited public. Within two months of Separation Victoria was producing more gold than anywhere else in the world.

The social dislocation brought about by the flood of gold immigrants in the beginning of the gold rushes, lent greater force to arguments supporting the creation of institutions which would promote social integration and reformation of morals. The more optimistic of the contemporary commentators believed the levelling of class distinctions would be beneficial, but only if material enterprise was leavened with the cultivation of learning. (Askew: 107)

Prior to the discovery of gold in Victoria, only three institutes had been established: the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute & School of Arts; the Geelong Mechanics' Institute; and Portland Mechanics' Institute. In the first years of the gold rush, society was turned upside-down. The Geelong Mechanics' Institute was forced close and the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute reported that "Many of our members have been attracted to the goldfields and have temporarily ceased to regard the Institution with that concern which they formerly manifested in its welfare." (Wilmot: 31)

Many diggers found little or no fortune on the gold fields. Those that decided to stay in the colony formed the backbone of rural communities forming throughout Victoria together with the newly arrived migrants who sought their fortune by supplying goods and services to the diggings rather than digging for gold themselves. John Rowley was such a man. He worked on the goldfields for three years before moving to Warmambool to become a successful businessman, "a manufacturer of soda", who helped to form the Warmambool Mechanics' Institute in 1853. As Paul Jones observes in his thesis on the institute movement in Victoria, "These were the people who were to become the backbone of the movement, not overly wealthy but simply members of town society." (Jones : 32)

In 1854 and 1855, as society settled into a state of relatively stability, demand grew for a revived institute in Geelong and seven more institutes were formed in Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Kilmore, Kyneton, Prahran and South Melbourne. During the years 1856-1867 there was no government assistance for building of Mechanics' Institutes and very little financial aid for the purchase of books. Yet there was a tremendous increase in the number of institutes formed during and after the gold rushes. (Eastwood : 73). From 1856 to 1859 thirty two institutes were established in Victoria and 129 between 1860 and 1870. (DNRE)

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The general pattern was first a gold strike and then, in the next few years an institute. (Wesson: 7)

Gold was never discovered in Prahran but the formation of the Prahran Mechanics' Institute in 1854 was partly inspired by the need to provide instruction to the diggers. Prahran at this time stood at the edge of a swamp, its main street was a dirt track, and the site of the town hall was a long lagoon. On March 13 1854, a meeting was held in the schoolroom of The Independent Chapel for the purpose of forming a mechanics' institute "for recreation and instruction after the toils of the day." The Institute was to provide a library and specimen cabinet for diggers returning from the gold fields as Mr Orlebar explained in a lecture he presented at the Institute, published in *The Argus* (30 May 1854):

Some gold-diggers have their wives and families in Prahran. Their number will probably increase. When here, they may be glad to learn of some stone they have thought worthwhile to bring down with them: the institution should have a special cabinet where he may compare his specimen: and mineralogical works, which he may consult. He may have observed some remarkable phenomena, for which he desired an explanation, and there should be standard works in the library for him. Then he would probably gather some fresh ideas, and with them return to his work, apply them, and thus classify himself in his turn to contribute to science.

No one knows whether this specimen cabinet was ever created. There are no records of the 350 books collected and classified by the library at this time and it seems the institute's committee lost interest after the "wonderful Midas-like times had passed." (Cooper: 57).

Nevertheless, in November 1868, a Mr Nicholls (probably local mining agent Charles Frederick Nicholls) approached the Prahran Mechanics' Institute with a proposal to present a lecture on "The Probabilities of a Gold Field in the immediate neighbourhood of Melbourne and Prahran." His proposal was put forward a month after reports of a nugget said to be worth £70 to £80 found in Prahran turned out to be a hoax. Some months later rumours of a strike at Orrong Paddock in Toorak also proved false. Perhaps this is why the lecture never went ahead and the committee concentrated its efforts on its "Prahran Popular Readings" instead.

YOUR HISTORY

Unfortunately, the Prahran Mechanics' Institutes does not have its minutes to 1860, and a search of the correspondence and minute books from 1861 reveal few references to gold. The story of your institute during the gold rush is probably very different.

The MIV collects material on the mechanics' institutes of Victoria, Australia and overseas. If you have any stories about the impact of gold on your institute we would love to hear from you. If you have a short story that we can we can reprint in the next MIV Newsletter please forward it to the Secretary.

The best contribution will receive a free copy of *If the Walls Could Speak*.

References (the following are available for loan or by fax from the Prahran Mechanics' Institute, Victorian and Local History Library, 140 High Street, Prahran Tel. 03 9510 3393)

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List of Members

Dr Frank Hurley, President (Ballarat Mechanics' Institute)
Mr John Murphy, Vice President (Leongatha Mechanics' Institute Inc)
Ms Catherine Milward-Bason, Secretary and Treasurer (Prahran Mechanics' Institute)
Leila Winchcombe, Public Officer (Melbourne Athenaeum Inc)
Mrs Pam Baragwanath Committee Member (Historian)
Mr Paul Permezel, Committee Member
Mr Don Taggart OAM, Committee Member
Mr Alan Tonkin, Committee Member
Mr Alex Tyrell, Committee Member
Ex Officio Mr Graham Dudley, Co-ordinator Public Library Services
Office of Local Government, Dept. of Infrastructure

Mrs Pat Anderson, Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute
Mr Bill Ashworth, Walhalla Mechanics' Institute
Ballaraat Mechanics' Institute
Cr Linda Barraclough
Mrs Joan Beddoe
Ms Joan Bilston
Mrs Rohana Bourne
Maria Boyce, AIGS Warrnambool
Mr Barrie Brennan
Mrs Jane Carpenter, Warrnambool Museum & Archive
Mr Ken Cooper
Ms Marie Cooper
Mr Geoff Craig
Marion Edwards, Ballan Mechanics' Institute
Ms Ellen Elzey, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts
Ms Jennifer Evans
Mr Ivan Fairchild, Little River Mechanics' Institute
Mr Rex Fuge, Chairman Chiltern Athenaeum Trust
Dr Lisanne Gibson
Mr John Graham
Mrs Joyce Hayes, Berwick Mechanics' Institute
Denise Jepson, Friends of Castlemaine Library
Prof. Wallace Kirsop
Dr John Laurent, School of Science Griffith University
Ms June Iazell, Narrawong Mechanics' Institute
Mrs Dianne Le Quiniat, Secretary Kilmore Mechanics' Institute
Miss Joy Leneaux-Gale, Secretary Maldon Athenaeum
Mr Jim Lowden, Life Member
Dr Julann Meabank
Mr Warren Miller
Mr Richard Myers
Mrs Carole O'Brien, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts
Mr Len Peeler
Mrs Susan Reynolds, Library Studies Department, Victoria University
David Rowe and Lorraine Huddle, Authentic Heritage Services
Ms Roslyn Ryan, Wimmera Regional Library Corp
Mrs Pat Sanders
Mr Ray Spencer, Emerald Mechanics' Institute
Mrs Margaret Stevens
Ms Lin Scholz, Secretary Footscray Mechanics'
Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts
West Gippsland Regional Library Corp
Mr Ian Woodroffe

AMISA - New South Wales

By Roger Morris

A well attended meeting was held Friday, 29 June 2001, at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts (SMSA) with the aim of forming the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts - New South Wales (AMISA-NSW).

In addition to those in attendance, expressions of interest and support were received from interested persons, schools of arts, and other bodies who could not be present at the meeting. Altogether the following schools and institutes were represented; Boorowa; Carlton; Leichhardt; Peakhurst; Sydney; Tenterfield; Tuon Technology Museum (Sofala); Wyong Creek; and Yarramalong. Additionally, the Henry Parkes Foundation and the Jerilderie and the Milton/ Ulladulla Historical Societies were represented. Finally, there were a number of individuals, with an interest in schools and institutes, present. After a lengthy, wide ranging, and very interesting meeting, it was resolved to form the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts - NSW and to seek the incorporation of this new association. An interim committee was formed. The SMSA agreed to provide secretarial assistance to the new association and to meet the financial costs involved in the incorporation process. A constitution has been drafted and work on the practical matters to do with the incorporation process has begun.

