



MINISTER ANNOUNCES SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANTS FOR MIs

SIX OF VICTORIA'S most active Mechanics' Institutes are to share a grant of \$60,000 to help them develop their public lending programs, the Minister for Local Government [and Mechanics' Institutes] **Ms Candy Broad** announced today.



Minister Candy Broad,
Mechanics' Institutes and Local
Government Minister.

Ms Broad said the grant was a major component of a grant allocation totalling \$95,000 from the Minister's Special Projects and Contingencies Fund to support library projects with a strong community focus.

'Mechanics' Institutes still play an important role in communities across Victoria with over five hundred of them continuing to operate as halls or homes for local organisations,' Ms Broad said.

'The six Mechanics' Institutes which will share in this grant have historically significant book collections and are an integral part of the public library lending network.'

The Mechanics' Institutes to receive the grants are located at **Ballarat**,

Berwick, Footscray and Prahran, plus the **Melbourne** and **Maldon Athenaeums**.

Ms Broad said each Institute would be eligible for a maximum grant of \$10,000 based on projects which demonstrated practical community benefit.

The Special Grants and Contingencies Fund allows for an annual allocation of over \$400,000 from the Library Grants Program to support strategic projects that have sector wide significance and meet the objectives of community strengthening.

*Let us be grateful to those people who make us happy;
they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.*
MARCEL PROUST (1871-1922)

DIARY DATE
-CONFERENCE-
MECHANICS'
WORLDWIDE
Buildings,
Books and
Beyond
PRAHRAN
2-4 September
2004.
There'll be something in it for you!

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HOUSEKEEPING - Opportunities and Ideas

The need
to focus on
projects to
bring them
to reality
must be a real
consideration.

If we are
doing good as
well as being
seen we will
flourish.

CONCENTRATION, COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

Yet another version of the old 3Cs, but well worth pondering. The need to focus on projects to bring them reality must be a real consideration. Have a brainstorming session, get the bones of your project written down and cost it through to be a bit on the heavy side. It's better to have some money left over for a helpers' barbecue than to be in there looking for a second call.

We need to communicate our aspirations, our master plan as it were, well in advance. Put a coloured flyer sheet in the newsletter or create a special Occasional Newsletter for the purpose. List the jobs available and the skills required. Sprinkle the newsletter with positive motivational quotations, photocopy them and scatter them around your community.

If the cash is needed up front and extra donations are required, put up a barometer bulb sign in the front of the hall. Organise a ten cent chain up the main street, a 1960s trivia night, or a queen or king competition among hall user groups.

It is then that people can evaluate the worth of the project and how they can make a contribution, either physically or in kind.

It may be necessary to get another newsletter out just before the Big Working Bee giving credit to all past helpers and name them. If you can get a picture or two in, all the better. On the big Working Bee day be organised, with jobs allocated and materials to hand. Don't forget the tea, coffee, sugar and cordial as well as biscuits for the 'cuppas'. You'll also need the camera for the before and after shots and make a list of all those who helped and turned up.

And Good Luck with your big day. It could be the start of something really big, and the first step back to rehabilitating your local Mechanics' Hall or its surrounds.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE

A stitch in time ... and it's no idle quip. Blocked spouting and downpipes, loose iron or broken tiles can mean big dollars if not attended to promptly.

Some Institutes have a quarterly clean out of spouting and downpipes, to stop overflow and pooled water can cause rust or sagging in spouting. It pays to put a wire gauze mesh over downpipe inlets to keep out leaves and twigs.

In the UK, heritage buildings appear to have a six-yearly thorough health check over and under, inside and out. An ordered works schedule is then given to the building owner to work through.

Electricals and emergency exit doors and lighting also need to be given a regular look over.

THAT WISH LIST

So we've had the inspection and we need to prioritise works in order of compliance, maintenance or replacement. There may be a shortfall in resources available or if there are still some funds left, it would be good if we had ...

Occasionally there are some grants going or perhaps a low interest loan from Council for the community hall that your voluntary committee maintains.

Recently Heritage Victoria advertised a funding round with a matter of days to closing and those that had a wish list project ready could well have been successful.

THE BUILDING FUND

There's nothing wrong with costing and prioritising your wish list and putting the fund barometer up on the hall wall.

One just never knows where money could come from or who may give it.

You may even wish to publish a quarterly donors' list in the local newspaper or your newsletter to keep the pot boiling.

IF YOU DON'T USE IT ...

You'll lose it. How true. We must make our halls the hub of the community by the mode of inclusion rather than exclusion.

If we are doing good as well as being seen we will flourish. If we practice exclusion we will wither. We must get our halls used regularly, even if we have to throw the occasional sausage sizzle for the leaders of various groups to come and discuss their future in their community hall.

You could even organise a community expo inviting all groups to come and set up a table in order to recruit new members. Indeed each local user group should have a rep on the Committee to get some new young blood on board in readiness for the succession plan.

OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTERS

Above we talked about newsletters and they can be regular or occasional. Print is all powerful. Advertise the hall hire rates, mention activities recently held in the hall, suggest perhaps a joint art and/ or crafts exhibition, list your aspirations, heaters and new seating for the meeting room, an electric urn and microwave for the kitchen. Perhaps someone would like to donate one in memory of a relative or colleague?

Mention the milestones of the hall and its committee. List coming events. Put an occasional photo in using a scanner or digital camera. You can mail some newsletters out, but left at local schools, store, post office, etc. they can reach their wider intended audience.

And don't forget to let the MIV have a copy of your newsletters, we are building up an archive of all things Mechanics' and these are a vital component.

Our President...

On Plaques...

**We hope that
these six will
have at least
doubled by the
end of 2004**

**On MW
2004...
The Conference
will be enriched by
and enriching for
a wide range of
participants...**

**On 2004...
May we all find
satisfaction in
doing something
worthwhile
during this year to
assist ... our
MI ...**



From the MIV President

Greetings to all members and friends of MIV everywhere. Beside me on my desk as I write are three more MIV plaques destined for placement soon at the **Taradale MI, Berwick MI and Free Library** and the **Lilydale Athenaeum** respectively. They are three of a batch of four plaques I collected from the manufacturer Glassmetal Industries in Geelong in November. One of the four was presented to **Ballan Mechanics' Institute** at a celebration there on 4 December to mark the splendid restoration of their building. I was delighted to be able to accept the invitation of **Lou Callow** and the Committee at Ballan to attend this celebration and present the plaque. Some of the stalwarts of past Committees at Ballan entertained and educated the large number present with accounts of local community efforts to sustain the building over the years. Efforts including growing crops in paddocks 'donated' for a year by local landholders and, on one occasion, a very early morning drive to claim a stall at Victoria Market to sell the peas harvested from one such venture. All present were justly proud of the past, present and future role of the Mechanics' Institute in the Ballan and district community. At Berwick the plaque will be unveiled on 17 March 2004 at the Annual General Meeting to commemorate 126 years on the site. The Taradale MI was established on its present site in 1858 and a plaque will be unveiled there in the first half of 2004. The Lilydale Athenaeum plaque is to be unveiled on 22 February to mark the restoration of the building and is dedicated to the 'memory of **Geoffrey Arch Page**, Founding Director of the Athenaeum Theatre Company'.

These four plaques will join the two already in place at **Maldon** and **Tallarook**. We hope these six will have at least doubled by the end of 2004. MIV is preparing a brochure with information on the plaques for distribution to Local Government and MI Committees of Management around Victoria. This will be one of our projects in the coming year.

Another very big project is, of course, the **First International Conference of MIs, Athenaeums** and kindred organisations to be held at Swinburne University/Prahran MI in September. The Conference themes of '**Buildings, Books and Beyond**' will look reflectively, affectionately, critically and purposefully at the MI movement's overseas origins, influences and heritage, the extraordinary development and social/ cultural contribution of the MI movement in our part of the world and the conservation of this heritage and a role now and in the future. The Conference will be enriched by and enriching for a wide range of participants - from the community of scholars, from representatives of MIs in communities large and small, from supporters and students of MIs around our nation and around the world. We already have a number of Conference Benefactors. We are hopeful that the Victorian Government, which has already been generous to MIs through its **Community Partnership Grants Program** will respond positively to MIV's submission for a Conference Grant that will enable us to keep costs of attendance very low and make attendance possible for many MI activists from around Victoria whose local organisations are not able to assist with Conference costs.

A happy 2004 to you all. May we all find satisfaction in doing something worthwhile during this year to assist the conservation and role in our community of our MI, Athenaeum or related organisation.

Frank Hurley

PRESIDENT

MECHANICS' ... AND PROUD OF IT!

Showcasing the Mechanics' Movement

There are some people out there who think MIs are a thing of the past. And of course they are right, they are a very enduring thing from the past, but they can and will continue to benefit communities into the future.

A BIG THANKYOU to those Institutes who responded to our short notice call for material for their Institute Panel.

We've so far received Exhibition Panel submissions from Ballarat, Berwick, Buninyong, Chiltern, Kilmore, Maldon, Mortlake, Murtoa, Numurkah, Prahran, Romsey, Shepparton, Tallarook, Trentham, Walhalla, Warburton and Warrandyte. Others have been promised from Arthurs Creek and Kinglake West and it is not too late to get your Institute up on the wall.

This prompt response was very much appreciated and it has given us the opportunity to review available material and start planning for this exciting new exhibition.

The preparation of this exhibition is being largely funded by a recent grant from the **Regional Exhibitions Touring Initiative** through **Museums Australia (Victoria)** and funded by **Arts Victoria**.



MIV Honorary Secretary **Jim Lowden** receiving Museum's Australia's cheque from Parliamentary Secretary **Bruce Mildenhall**.

Interestingly enough **Mr Bruce Mildenhall** in handing over the cheque to MIV remarked that there must be hundreds of Institutes, for there appeared to

be one in every country town. He was right!

Mechanics' ... and Proud of It! will showcase the Institute movement, in its various forms, in action in the community.

We still have a big public relations job to make our achievements and most importantly our aspirations more widely known and to show we are a very relevant, indeed vital part of our various communities. There are still people out there who think MIs are a thing of the past. And of course they are right, Institutes are certainly a very enduring thing from the past, but they can and will continue to benefit communities into the future.

These trusts, whether it be buildings or land or both, established by our forefathers or predecessors seem to be irrelevant to some who just don't understand the rich inheritance in and of these historic sites.

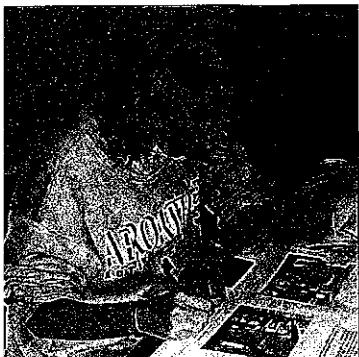
It is our task to do the PR job. Who designed and built the hall and who paid; who's performed or lectured in the hall; its various uses; and the major community events that it has hosted including the send off and return of soldiers to several wars.

Overseas Institutes are going through a period of renaissance, perhaps lead to a certain extent by the **Women's Institute's Calendar Girls**.

We hope **Mechanics' ... and Proud of It!**, which will be launched at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** International Conference, will be to a large extent our flagship to promote the movement's rich history and its very positive future to all.

The facilities that an Institute can provide can range from conducting a library service, to running the community hall, staging community events or coordinating vital

groups that can meet within the hall to make our communities more inclusive.



Manuela Daber, a Deakin University Museum Studies graduate has been doing mockups of the various Institute panels in readiness for scanning them into the computer for the final print out.

(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

The range of activities received from Institutes so far is very much as above, but we still want a submission from every Institute so that it can also show the number of Institutes out there who are really doing exciting and innovative things in their various communities.

If your Institute does not make it to the final display, the material will be used to supplement our new database and it will also enable us to build up a wider profile when we are representing the Institute case to Government.

Mechanics' ... and Proud of It! will be launched at Mechanics' Worldwide in September 2004, and it will showcase and demonstrate just how relevant Victoria's movement is to its interstate and overseas visitors and various dignitaries who will visit the Conference venue.

Encourage one another and build each other up.

1THESSALONIANS 5:11

MEETING WITH OUR MINISTER

The hour long meeting [with the Minister and her advisers] was affable and canvassed a range of issues relevant to MIs.



Minister Candy Broad

OUR PRESIDENT, Dr Frank Hurley, Vice-President Catherine Milward-Bason and Historian Pam Baragwanath met with our new Minister Candy Broad on 23 October. Ms Broad, who besides being the Minister for Mechanics' Institutes is also the Minister for Local Government and she was accompanied by her Ministerial Advisers and the Departmental Library Manager Graham Dudley, responsible for Mechanics' Institutes and libraries, who is an ex-officio MIV Committee member.

The hour long meeting was affable and canvassed a range of issues relevant to MIs. It was felt that Institutes were now better positioned to be able to present a detailed case for assistance and support in providing for the maintenance and upgrading of community halls and in appropriate cases, library services.

We still have our seven point plan, originally put to **Minister Bob Cameron**, boiling along nicely.

1. Further round of funding by way of Community Partnership Grants for special projects, collection reinforcement and conservation. *Latest round of grants just announced.* **2. Assistance in the development of a Master Strategic Development and Business Management Plan for the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.** *Assistance will be in the form of a facilitator and venue, and a date will be set for the meeting shortly.* **3. Reinstatement of Municipal Rate and State Land Tax Exemption for Mechanics' Institutes as previously existed under the Municipal Corporations Act (1867).** *This item is still under review in conjunction with amendments to the Local Government Act. In the meantime if your Institute is paying rates why not approach the Council, cap in hand, claiming widespread community benefit for either a rate remission or refund.* **4. One-off pilot grant to fund a round of Institute strategic building maintenance inspections.** *This item is boiling along quite well with a pilot-program of some twenty Institutes already costed and awaiting the Minister's consideration.* **5. Assistance with the conduct of Training Seminars on Institute and event management and promotion for Institute staff and officers.** *These will be part of Regional Meetings to be staged in cooperation with the five regional offices of the Department.* **6. Review of existing legislation with a view to making the operation of Institutes more effective and efficient.** *This is in the meltingpot and hopefully we will be able to peruse the relevant draft legislation and comment on same.* **7. Assistance with the conduct of five Regional Meetings of Institutes and Institute Managers during 2002-2004.** *Assistance would come by way of five DSE regional offices in Melbourne and country Victoria.*

We also sought financial assistance for helping to stage **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** as this will bring overseas speakers to Victoria who we hope will not only speak at the Conference, but elsewhere to further enrich our community.

We also plan to stage a **Pre-Conference Workshop** on the afternoon Thursday 2 September for delegates from country Institutes on matters such as insurance, hall maintenance, health and compliance and promotional issues.

If you are having difficulty with a Government Department or Council let us know and maybe we can get some of the red tape cut. If you've got a good news story in dealing with a Government Department and/ or its staff also let us know because these people should also be recognised for the help and understanding. It may even be possible to make awards each year recognising those who have assisted the Institute movement.

We also plan...
a workshop...
for delegates
from country
Institutes on
matters such as
insurance, hall
maintenance,
health and
compliance and
promotional
issues.

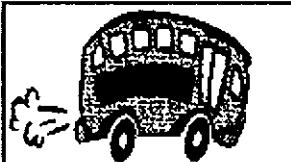
PLAQUES TO GO UP ON FURTHER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE BUILDINGS

Hopefully we will be able to establish a plaques trail in the future and have a suitable leaflet detailing the trail.



Maldon Athenaeum President, Joy Leneaux-Gale receiving Plaque No. 1 from MIV President, Dr Frank Hurley.
(Clive McCann photo)

The further plaques have been ordered by **Lilydale, Berwick, Taradale and Frankston** and installation is planned over the next few months at suitable unveiling ceremonies.



Remember the Mechanics? can provide an important rallying point for the revival of your Institute or community hall.

OUR TRAVELLING EXHIBITION, *Remember the Mechanics?* still continues its missionary journey around Victoria. It's now been shown in over twenty venues and is currently on display at **Walhalla**.

It then goes to **Tallarook, Dandenong Museum and Historic Gardens, Prahran** for the International Conference and then **Warrandyte** and there are some dates available in between. Comprising twenty-four panels of text and photos it gives an overview of the Mechanics' movement in Victoria, with a typical country Mechanics' Institute, Wallacedale in the Western District. There are also five regional sets of enlarged Mechanics' related photos comprising some

Hopefully we will be able to establish a plaques trail in the future and have a suitable leaflet detailing the trail.



The distinctive metal plaque installed at the restored **Ballan Mechanics' Institute** in December.
(Kristina Holdaway photo)

Plaques coordinator **Paul Permezel** has produced an explanatory leaflet to assist with the installation. If you would like a blue plaque with text reversing through in white it's certainly not too late, for we like to put them through in batches and this helps to keep the cost down.

The cost is \$175 posted and a tax invoice will be mailed out to you to cover that amount.

For information and/or the ordering please contact Paul Permezel on fax (03) 9499 4267.

Stand firm let nothing move you!

REMEMBER THE MECHANICS? TRAVELLING EXHIBITION MOVES ON

three hundred in all. The exhibition also comes with a distinctive banner for hanging outside your venue.

Remember the Mechanics? was funded by a grant from the **Public Records Office Victoria** and was designed by RMIT University graphics design student **Gita Lestari**.

Remember the Mechanics? can provide an important rallying point for the revival of your Institute or community hall. It can involve your local politician who may be able to secure a Government grant, perhaps even a matching grant from Council. Further it can involve the whole community who can contribute their own memories.

Exhibition bookings can be made with **Pam Baragwanath on 9876 5164**.

AMISA NSW - Up and Running

THE FIRST ISSUE OF AMISA NEWS,
Vol. 1 No. 1, October 2003 has hit the desk.

It brings news of the inaugural meeting of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts of NSW and the formation of their Association.



AMISA inaugural member **Clifton School of Arts** is a real 'good news' story. Seven years ago their 1910 building was derelict and threatened with demolition. Today, after much fund-raising and community sacrifice, it was opened on 30 March 2003 and it is once again available for community use.

(AMISA Newsletter photo)

Membership of AMISA is open to organisations currently or formerly recognised as a School of Arts or Mechanics' Institute or linked to such an organisation and to individuals connected with and/ or interested in Mechanics' Institutes of Schools of Arts.

The meeting was held at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts on 26 September, and **Clifton, East Kurrajong, Guildford** and several Sydney Schools, and the **Henry Parkes Foundation** attended.

Apologies and/ or expressions of support were received from **Casino, Combargo, Jerilderie, Nimbin, Peakhurst**, as well as a number of **Southern Highland Schools of Arts**, historical Societies and interested individuals.

An examination of the Association's new constitution took place and a volunteer Committee of Management comprising **Professor Roger Morris, Kathleen Bearsby and Lucy Bantermalis** will oversee the Association's business until the first Annual General Meeting and elections are held after June 2004.

In the meantime **Carole O'Brien** was to act as pro tem Public Officer and **Ellen Elzey** was

to act as Secretary and newsletter editor.

One of the first activities was to be a workshop on, you guessed it, insurance and other issues of interest to Schools of Arts.

This is planned for late November. A number of ideas for functions for those interested in the history and architecture of Institutions was discussed, including a tour of the old Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts building, which was restored two years ago.



Singleton Mechanics' Institute as it looked before major restoration earlier this year. It was opened in 1867 and has been in the ownership of the Singleton Council since 1941 and managed by a Committee of Management.

(AMISA Newsletter photo)

The Association will publish a quarterly newsletter. Contributions, including photos, are eagerly sought and can be emailed to sydneymsa@nextcentury.cotu.au or by post to the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, Level 3, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Membership of AMISA is open to organisations currently or formerly recognised as a School of Arts or Mechanics' Institute or linked to such an organisation and to individuals connected with and/ or interested in Mechanics' Institutes or Schools of Arts. Membership fees are \$20 per year for organisations or \$10 for individuals. For more information please phone Gail on (02) 9262 7300 or email sydneymsa@nextcentury.com.au.

The Wonderful Women of Warburton - The Anatomy of a Promotion

It could have been a smart commercial ploy but reading on, here was a group of ladies who were prepared to fundraise in a very tangible way for their local Mechanics'...

THE INVITATION FLYER arrived in the mail. A tasteful single-sided leaflet, well worded with a Victorian style vignette picture of some tantalisingly partly-clad ladies.

It could have been a smart commercial ploy but, reading on, here was a group of ladies who were prepared to fundraise in a very tangible way for their local Mechanics' which had been boarded up behind a wire fence since 1992.



Warburton Mechanics' Institute, 2003. The back portion, on the right was built in 1897 and moved on skids to its present position in 1913, when the front portion was built. The high wire fence was erected around the building in 1992 following safety concerns and in hindsight this has saved it from unwanted visitors and vandalism.

(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

Further the **Warburton Mechanics'** is one of only two two-storey weatherboard MI buildings left in Victoria, the other being the **Toongabbie Institute** in Gippsland. It was also listed on the Register of the National Estate.

It all started at a **Shire of Yarra Ranges** Community Consultation Meeting or Talkfest. The item on top of the agenda was '**Warburton Mechanics' Institute**'.

This was built on a Government Reserve in 1886, the building being financed by the community.

It was burned down in 1896 and rebuilt in 1897 again by the community. In 1913 it was deemed too small and the front section was shifted to the back of the block, again by the community, who built the new section at the front.

The State Government has previously had this building on their 'assets' register for sale since the mid-1990s and Council at that stage had no objection to the impending sale.

Meanwhile back at the Community Consultation pow-wow, Council outlines the Government's conditions for taking on the project as a Committee of Management and how it has to find \$100,000 to take it on.

However in the meantime the pigeons are stripping weatherboards from the wall and there is no money and nobody is able to nail them back on.

Ronnie Howard, the local benefactor for want of a better term, slaps two hundred dollar notes down and says 'That is for emergency maintenance'. It was all positive from there and a fundraising campaign was up and running.

Some of the local ladies, led by the indomitable **Ellena Biggs**, in jest thought they could emulate that coup of the ladies of the other great British Institute movement which now utilises many Mechanics' Halls throughout Britain, the **Women's Institute**. The British ladies had posed in various womanly activities with appropriate props. 'We could do that for Warburton!'

Many a good word is said in jest, but their word was their bond and they set about recruiting talent, to the point of harassing likely candidates in public places, challenging their commitment to community.

It worked and local businesses came on board to help finance the project and the local printer agreed to make it happen.

The day dawned bright as we drove up to Warburton for the launch in the **Arts Centre**. It's a quaint town built on the side of a hill which slopes to the gurgling headwaters of the Yarra River. It's now very tourist oriented with eateries and craft shops.

The new Museum/Tourist Information Centre, with its huge eye-catching waterwheel

The Wonderful Women of Warburton *continued*

Now Lawrence [Money] knows a good cause when he sees one... And so the cards were well launched.

turning relentlessly, welcomes you into a display of Warburton's yesteryear and your water supply.

Warburton is again finding its way after the banks pulled out, but now there's a **Bendigo Bank** in town and things are starting to look up again.

We arrived prior to the appointed time and there were posters outside advertising screenings of **Calendar Girls**. How appropriate!

Inside, there was an air of frenzy. The Power Point presentation has crashed and **Mike Randall** was in recovery mode. A scale model of the Warburton Mechanics' was prominently placed with a gaping but inviting hole in the roof ready to accept any donations, money box style.

We moved into Arts Centre Hall. It could seat 100 people, but with only a small body of chairs, it left plenty of standing room. Trestle tables along the wall groaned with 'plates' filled up with 'goodies' for afternoon tea country style.

After some meeting and chatting the proceedings were called to order. The MC was **Marie Hormann**, the alluring 1950s catwalk girl, and she outlined the genesis of the project. Then promo girl **Erica Randall** called on the Melbourne **Age** Spyman **Lawrence Money** to launch the postcards.

Now Lawrence knows a good cause when he sees one, it is in his genes, for his mother was a one time **Miranda** of the **Weekly Times**, and she had a great affinity with country communities. And so the cards were well launched.



Two notable personalities who have appeared in Warburton, **Madame Melba** and **Madame Biggs**.
(Mike Randall creation)

Then came the Power Point presentation, hinting at important persons who may have visited Warburton in a present, former or after life.

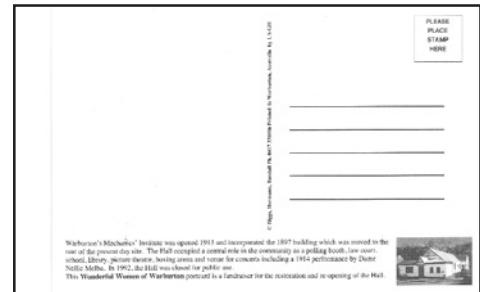
It will probably win a Ronnie at the next Ericas in Warburton (Don't laugh! Ask anyone where the Melbourne Film Festival began, was it not the Olinda Mechanics' Institute?)

Then we had the toetappers, followed by flower girls spreading potpourri and neatly packaged strawberries and cream lollies amongst the assembled.



The postcard girls then congregated and gyrated around as the audience clapped.

And then it was the hardsell, as the auctioneer announced the sale of unique framed autographed prints. There was some reluctance to bid up until the fifth and last item, when the pose of the local councillor was knocked down for \$1000. And so the auction totalled \$1650.



Reverse of **Wonderful Women of Warburton** postcards

Ladies with trays, like the old lolly sellers in the theatres, then appeared selling the cards.

Then it was afternoon tea and the sampling of the jelly cakes, the lamingtons, the cream cakes. Most of the sandwiches had gone by the time we got there!

The cards are tastefully done in old style, two in colour and two in sepia toning. **Now if ever there was a cause worth supporting, this is one that deserves it!** Put your five dollars or a cheque in an envelope and post it to: E Biggs/ M Hormann, **Wonderful Women of Warburton**, Main Street, Warburton, V 3799.

MECHANICS' MEN & WOMEN - Dupin, Hertz, Holbrook, Howe, Pringle & Ryerson

It is ironic that few of the giants of the Institute movement, in various countries, have had substantial biographies published about them.



Baron Pierre Charles François DUPIN (1784-1873). Mathematician, Educator, Parliamentarian and Author.

Dupin modelled the French Institutes on his observations at first hand of the Glasgow and London Institutes and used his position in the government to further the development of technical and general education.

Fanny HERTZ (1810?-80?). And just who was this 'Fanny Hertz of Bradford who was involved in the setting up the Mechanics' Institutes for Women in the Yorkshire Manufacturing districts?' She was certainly a delegate at the **National Association for the Promotion of Social Science** Conference held at Bradford in 1859.

Ref: Sally Phillips 'The Queen's Institute, Dublin' in *Prometheus's Fire: A History of Scientific and Technological Education in Ireland*

This and the following articles on UK and US Institutes were compiled by Jim Lowden as part of his recent tour of overseas Institutes.

IT IS IRONIC that few of the giants of the Institute movement in the various countries have had substantial biographies published about them, the most notable deficiency being **Josiah Holbrook**. It is hoped that the proceedings of **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** will include Papers on the various key players including some of the lesser known ones such as **Fanny Hertz**.

Josiah HOLBROOK (1788-1854). Author, Lecturer and Businessman. Born into a farming family Holbrook was educated at Yale and returned home to run the farm. Seeing the need for education he sowed the seed in his lectures and in print. He set up Millbury Lyceum in 1826 and the movement took off to number over 3000. So did his educational supply house. In 1854, a fall from a cliff whilst collecting rock specimens, resulted in his drowning in the river.



Is this **Josiah Holbrook** in full lecture mode with wall charts, globe and apparatus all supplied by his Lyceum supply business?

(Museum of New York)

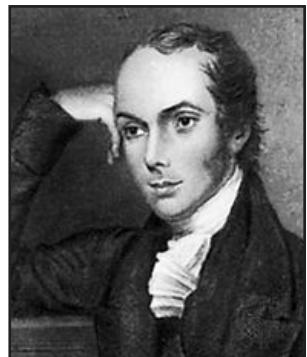
Joseph HOWE (1804-1873). Journalist and Politician.

Promoted the :MI movement in Nova Scotia, some records of which can be seen in the University of Strathclyde, Scotland.



Statue of **Joseph Howe** in the grounds of Province House, Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Mike Campbell photo)

Thomas PRINGLE (1789-1834). Journalist and Poet. Scottish-born Pringle immigrated to South Africa in 1819 and in a few years left an :MI legacy there. He returned to London in 1826 to become Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society.



Egerton RYERSON (1803-82). Preacher, Educationist and Author.

Ryerson started out in the Methodist Church against the wishes of his father. He rose to become editor of the *Christian Guardian* and Methodist delegate to London where he espoused the British line. He was appointed Superintendent for Education for Upper Canada in 1844 and held that position until 1876.



Egerton Ryerson as head of Ontario's public educational system.

(Ontario Archives Collection)

Three Scottish Miner's Libraries

In any case all carry the hallmarks of generous benefactors, including that recent great one that appears to be making its name felt widely throughout the Mechanics' movement in the UK, the Heritage Lottery Fund.

STRETCHING IN A SMALL BAND across the Parishes of Dumfries and Galloway is a group of still extant Miner's Institute libraries: **Leadhills**, **Wanlockhead** and **Westerkirk**. Nearby is another very old library at **Langholm** which may well have had its origins as a Farmer's Library.

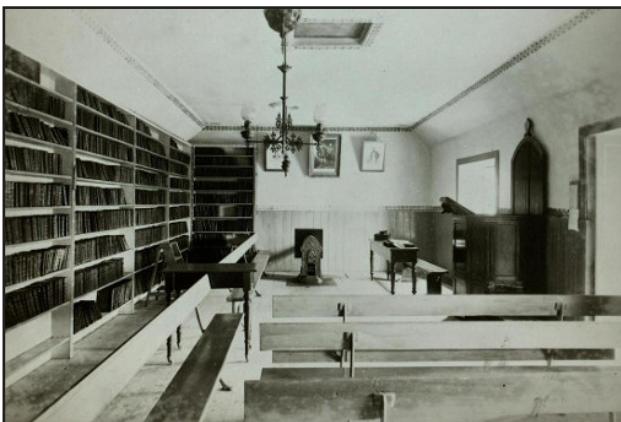
In any case all carry the hallmarks of generous benefactors, including that recent great one that appears to be making its name felt widely throughout the Mechanics' movement in the UK, the **Heritage Lottery Fund**.

This area of Scotland is noted for its mining, particularly lead, but also of gold, and mining carried on for many centuries up until quite recent times. Today all that is left of the leadmining industry is **Scotland's Museum of Lead Mining** at Wanlockhead which includes the old Wanlockhead Miner's Library building and its book stock.

Gold is still fossicked in the hills and a band of Wanlockhead gold was placed on the mace of the new Scottish Parliament.

LEADHILLS READING SOCIETY

Established in 1741 with twenty-three members, who were all miners except for the Minister and Schoolmaster. Prospective members had to lodge a written application and pay a three shilling admission fee and thereafter two shillings annually. Its motto was 'And leave the rest to Heaven'. Today it holds some 4000 books with publisher imprints dating from 1739 to 1854 and claims to be the oldest continuous subscription library in Britain. It is staffed by volunteers who open it on three days a week during the summer season.



Interior of **Leadhills Reading Society** Library as it exists today.
([Leadhills Reading Society website](#))

WANLOCKHEAD MINER'S LIBRARY

Thirty-two miners met in 1756 and determined to set up a library 'for our mutual improvement'. The miners contribution was supplemented by that of the management. The library has had a revival in recent times as a part of

Scotland's Museum of Lead Mining with it featuring computer interactive displays, lectures and exhibitions.



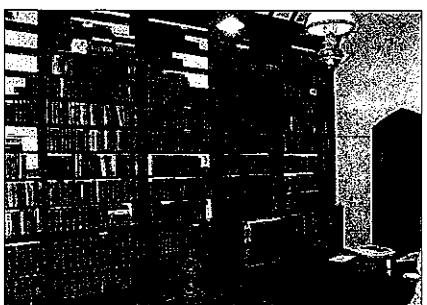
Wanlockhead Miner's Library, 1756
(*Scotland's Museum of Lead Mining*)

WESTERKIRK LIBRARY

Antimony mining resulted in the setting up of a mining community at Jamestown in the early 1790s. In 1793 the company and others donated twenty-three books to the miners for a library and resolved that 'We the miners in this



place, finding the Books sent to us ... will tend greatly to our Improvement, have thought proper to Advance Five Shillings per each man for purchasing more Books'. Eventually the library moved into a purposebuilt facility in Bentpath. The Library is now open between 7-8pm on the last Monday of the month when local residents can select from its 8000 books.



Westerkirk Library (top) and interior with books bound in leather made possible by the **Thomas Telford** endowment.
(*Arthur Bell photos*)

SCOTLAND'S OLDEST PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Endowed for the public by clergymen

Existing
Endowment
Libraries
bequeathed
to posterity
by clergy are
located at
Crieff (c.1680),
Dunblane (1684)
and Kirkwall
(1683).

Exactly what motivated Manchester merchant **Humphrey Chetham** (1580-1653) to will the establishment of a library after his death is uncertain. His emphatic stipulation of free public access is interesting and its mission still continues on in its 17th century monastic like premises. However there are three existing Scottish libraries established on a similar premise. Two of these were established by clergymen, and in the case of the third a clergyman built the library.

INNERPEFFRAY MORTIFICATION TRUST, CRIEFF

David Drummond, 3rd Lord Madertie (1620?-84) directed that a library be established on the endowed chapel and school at Innerpeffray, near Crieff. This was done around 1680, and further endowed by his nephew **William Drummond**. It originally was housed in the chapel loft, but **David Hay Drummond**, Archbishop of York, had it relocated to a nearby purpose-built library in 1762. The two-storey structure had a residence on the ground floor for the librarian.



Located on the treed banks of the River Earn the **Innerpeffray Library** (left) is an idyllic country setting. On the right is the Collegiate Chapel of St Mary built in 1507-08 on the site of an earlier church. The Library was housed in its loft for over seventy years.
(Innerpeffray Mortification Trust photo)

Innerpeffray's Borrowing Records exist from 1747 until borrowing ceased in 1968.

The Library has been recently restored and air-conditioning has been installed. Display cases have been added to the library to enable some of the notable 3000 volume library to be on view. There are many different Bibles and some geography and science works. Innerpeffray claims to be the oldest free library in Britain.

LEIGHTON LIBRARY, DUNBLANE

Bishop Robert Leighton (1611-84) bequeathed his collection of 1500 books and 70 manuscripts to establish a library in connection with the Cathedral at Dunblane. The two-storey library was constructed in 1687 for the books upstairs and the librarian downstairs.

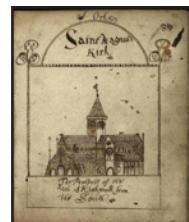


Some 3500 more books have been added to the collection since its establishment. The Library closed in 1840 and reopened again in 1992.

An on-line catalogue is available through the **University of Stirling** to which you must apply to view the books. **Messrs Barty Solicitors** can be contacted to view the building.

KIRKWALL BIBLIOTHECK, ORKNEYS

This is claimed to be the oldest surviving public library in Scotland and founded in 1683. Shortly before his death the **Rev. William Baikie** willed his books and manuscripts to the minister of Kirkwall and his successors 'for a Publick Liberarie to be kepted within the town'. The collection was supplemented by the **Rev. James Wallace** and was incorporated into the Orkney Subscription Library in 1815. With the introduction of the Free Library in 1890 the rare books were purchased by **Archdeacon James Craven** who produced a catalogue of the items and donated them to University of Aberdeen in 1914.



Today the **Orkney Library and Archive** at Kirkwall houses an ms copy of the Rev. James Wallace's 'Description of the Isles of Orkney'.

Endowment Institutes as MIs... Is there really much difference, except a name?

Let us talk of
Benefactors
of Buildings,
Books and
Beyond...
And
remember
the farmer
and others
who donated
sites for the
building of
Institutes
and all those
that donated
to their
construction.

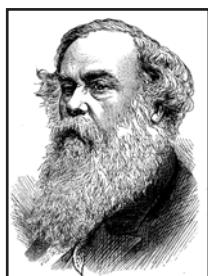
WHEN ONE LOOKS at the Neilson Hays Library in Bangkok, it has all the elements of an MI, except that it is run by an all-women Committee. Established in 1869 as the Bangkok Ladies Library Association it was endowed by Dr Heyward Hays (1854-1924) in memory of his wife and upon his death a sizeable portion of his estate became a Library endowment, with interest only to be used.

There also seems to be little difference between the endowments of Sir Titus Salt (1803-76) and the Victoria Hall at Saltaire, Peter Cooper (1791-1883) and his Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York and William Wagner (1796-1885) with his Wagner Free Institute of Science in Philadelphia. In Victoria we had Robert Allan (1811?-78) donating the Mechanics' Institute building to the Buninyong community, as did Lord Panmure (1771-1852) in Brechin, Scotland.

Similar motivations no doubt prompted the endowments of Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), George Peabody (1795-1869) and the assistance of the DuPont family to the Wilmington Institute Library.

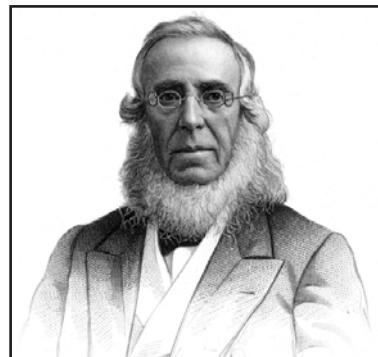
Let us look at the Institutes of Salt, Cooper and Wagner.

Titus Salt learnt the elements of wool processing trade in the Bradford area and became involved in wool buying. A chance purchase of a lot of alpaca wool, with its long staple, saw it make very durable fabric. Salt adapted his machinery and established a new factory, his seventh, on the Leeds to Liverpool Canal in 1853.



He then set about establishing the model village Saltaire, combining his own name and the that of the river which flowed nearby. He planned the village to contain 850 homes on

twenty streets, with forty shops, a Club, Post Office, Fire Station, School, Church and the Victoria Hall. It comprised reading rooms, a library and lecture theatre. The School of Arts and a billiard room were located on the upper floor, whilst in the basement was a fully equipped gymnasium, with three billiard tables and class rooms. Today the Victoria Hall has reverted to Council, as trustee of last resort, and it has been redecorated and is hired out for all types of events.



Cooper Union Archive

Peter Cooper's is a rags to riches story. After varying jobs he purchased a glue factory and his wife was credited with inventing Jell-o. He built the first American rail locomotive, the Tom Thumb and went on to invest widely in good ideas. He was determined that no one would have to grow up the way he did, with less than a year of formal schooling. In the early 1850s he promoted an idea for a free college for the 'the boys and girls of this city, who had no better opportunity than I'. He wanted education to 'be as free as water and air'. So with a set-up cost of \$500,000 the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art opened its doors in 1859 on Cooper Square. All a student had to prove was that they were willing to learn and the Cooper Institute would take them on.

Today its faculties of art, architecture and engineering are of world repute.

The Cooper Union also provided a public reading room and library and artists and inventors were encouraged to meet there. The 900 seat Great Hall was much used by distinguished lecturers and the community and still is.

It is said that 'Cooper's spirit still permeates the Cooper Union, as once the old man's presence used to haunt it.'

PHILADELPHIA'S WAGNER FREE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE - A PHOENIX ON THE RISE

Little has changed in the Museum since then [1891] and it is much as [Joseph] Leidy left it...

LOCATED FAR from the centre of Philadelphia is one man's dream to 'gratuitously' instruct in the Natural Sciences.

In West Montgomery Street in the heart of a black area is the imposing structure in which the museum, library and lecture theatre are housed.



William Wagner, founder of the **Wagner Free Institute of Science**.
(Wagner Free Institute of Science)

William Wagner (1796-1885) was a successful merchant and an astute collector of natural history specimens. He retired at aged forty-four and started giving lectures at his own home 'Elm Farm' until they became so popular that he moved them to a local hall in 1855. In 1860 work started on the Institute which was completed in 1865. He headed up the Incorporated group until his death in 1885 and under the terms of his will it continues today, as a trust chaired by his descendant **Philip Wagner** and a range of faculty talent that reflects the Wagner's real worth and value to the scientific community.

No wonder world renowned biologist **Dr Joseph Leidy** (1823-91) accepted the offer of the position of faculty head.

Leidy took it forward to recruit the best lecturers to run the public programs and to undertake significant field trips.

Most importantly Leidy organised the vast collection of 100,000 museum specimens into a systematic display where one worked from simpler to more complex organisms in order of geological time. That huge task was completed just before his death in 1891.

Little has changed in the Museum since then and it is much as Leidy left it, except the Museum shop.



Interior of the **Wagner** showing portion of main second storey exhibition hall.
(Wagner Free Institute of Science)

With a dwindling endowment nothing could be spent in upgrading the museum to flashy dioramas and 'modern' display techniques. So the museum and the lecture hall just remained the same.

Finally, in the late 1980s, a review put the whole Institute's operations under the microscope. The Institute was to position itself in the scientific community as it always existed and would move forward accordingly. In 1990 it

was designated a National Historic Landmark, to become a museum of museums. Director **Susan Glassman** then came on board and today leads an enthusiastic team of young people who just beam with pride in the revived interest in their charge.

The Wagner staff now work in with area schools and the local St Joseph's University, from which undergraduates conduct its school and youth programs.

In late 2003, building works were nearing completion, with the replacement of windows and skylights, leaking gutters and roofing.

The Library was being returned to the exact room where the first Public Library service operated in Philadelphia from 1892. This elegant area has been completely refurbished and will house the Institute's book collection and the large runs of many scientific journals. It will also hold the Institute's many prints, photos and original drawings.

The huge collection of natural history has universal coverage, with the kangaroo, koala and wombat also being featured. The fossil specimens gathered from the various sponsored field trips are very significant.

An interesting facet of the collection was the 3500 glass slides which were used in the free educational programs, now replaced by videos.

Some sixty free public evening lectures will be held at various venues around the city this year, along with four open days and the ongoing school programs at the Institute.

TWO US EDUCATION GIANTS - Ohio and Rochester - GROWN FROM INSTITUTES

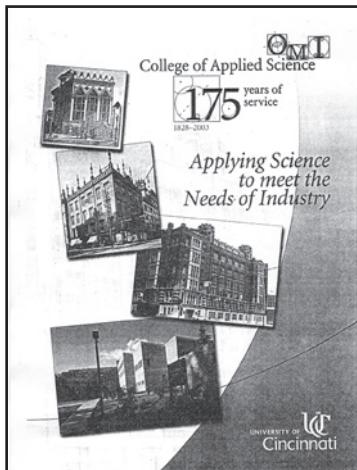
At Ohio Mechanics' Institute of Applied Science...
 'We plan to celebrate, for close to 175 days, the achievements of these 175 years.'

At Rochester Institute, for their 175th and beyond, they will long remember the quiet woman Grace Watson, who was unknown to them, but was to leave them \$3.27 million in 1961. It was used to purchase the present 1300 acre campus.

In the last issue we reported on the 175th anniversary of the **Ohio Mechanics' Institute College of Applied Science**, but it has been pointed out that there is also the impending 175th anniversary of the **Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute**, now known as the **Rochester Institute of Technology** in 2004.

OMICAS's celebration was high profile in the community with the issue of a special newspaper supplement. The Dean, **Professor Richard Newrock** said 'We plan to celebrate, for close to 175 days, the achievements of these 175 years.' and he issued an invitation to be with them at '**The Mechanics' and Citizens Ball**' on November 15, 2003.'

Emeritus Professor Robert Dorsey summed it well 'The rich history of the Ohio Mechanics' Institute includes educating thousands of people who literally built and operated Cincinnati in skills ranging from construction trades to management to fine arts'.



We also made a contribution to their Celebrations, with Sydney's **Professor Roger Morris** giving a lecture to the faculty. In reporting OMICAS's **Professor Maria Kreppel** advises Roger Morris's reception was amazing with all the University hierarchy present to hear what a Mechanics' Institute actually was and where the movement really came from. And now they know all about their rich heritage.

Congratulations OMICAS and party on!



Rochester's early history was told and illustrated in the book *Blazing New Trails* published by the Institute in 1937.

The **Rochester Athenaeum** was established in 1829 with **Nathaniel Rochester** (1752-1831) as its first President. The **Rochester Mechanics' Institute** was formed in 1885 by manufacturers **Henry Lomb** (1828-1908), **Max Lowenthal** (1843-1914) and **Frank Ritter** (1845?-1915) to provide training in technology and industrial arts. The two merged in 1891 to form the **Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute** under the Presidency of **Ezra Andrews**. By 1912 it was undertaking cooperative programs with industry. In 1944 the name was changed to the **Rochester Institute of Technology** to reflect the educational focus of the Institute.

RIT comprises eight Colleges: Applied Science and Technology; Business; B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences; Kate Gleason College of Engineering; Imaging Arts and Sciences; Liberal Arts; the National Institute for the Deaf; and Science.

Its 15,000 students and 2800 staff from some ninety countries and almost every US state are housed on its 1300 acre campus, which includes residential colleges. The dining room for these colleges is called 'Gracie's' and therein lies a story which is a lesson to us all. **Grace Watson** was a quiet woman, unknown to the Institute, living on Hayward Avenue in Rochester. When she died on January 7, 1961, at the age of 90, she left the Institute a surprising gift of '\$3.27 million...' This enabled the purchase of the present large campus site. Rochester does not forget Grace Watson, or the many generous benefactors who have contributed to their \$400 million endowment.

And now bring on the Birthday Cake, Rochester.



MIV DATABASE - The life and times of the Mechanics' Institute buildings will now be at your fingertips

The creation of the 'Big Mech' database will be an opportunity to collect all known information together into a single database for access and updating as required.

ACCORDING TO BARRIE BRENNAN, 'The heritage of most Mechanics' Institutes is the building'.

A detailed database is being developed for the MIV which will complement the significant resource book *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria* by Pam Baragwanath.

The database will provide user friendly access to information about the history and architecture of Victoria's MIs.

Reports of one to ten pages on each place, can be printed in colour or black and white from the database and made available to individual MIs.



The recently restored **Tallarook Mechanics' Institute** had a very successful Open Day, with community events and an historical display. It is events such as these that are valuable for the collection of history on local MIs.

(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

These reports will have photographs of the exterior and interior, and when available historical photographs and architectural drawings of the original architecture and decorative schemes as well as historic events held at the hall.

They will be ideal as attractive and educative posters/booklets for disseminating information about the history and architecture of individual MIs to their members and visitors.

It is hoped that the presentation of this information will, inspire the careful restoration

and adaptation of the buildings into places with upgraded amenities and greater use.

This is undoubtedly the correct procedure, but the importance of their MI has been underestimated by some local communities.



Newham Mechanics' Institute has just celebrated its centenary and it has several honour boards, including that from Cobaw State School.

(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

Architectural historian and heritage advisor and MIV Committee member, **Lorraine Huddle**, will analyse the architecture of the buildings and coordinate the project. Other honorary assistance to the project, at this stage are, fellow MIV Committee member **Peter Pereya** who has offered to help with the huge task of scanning historic photographs and plans. **Ivar Nelsen** and **Janette Hodgson** from the **Historic Places Branch of the Department of Sustainability and Environment** have agreed to make some material from their database available for inclusion, and **Pam Baragawnath** has agreed to make all her material available for inclusion in the database.

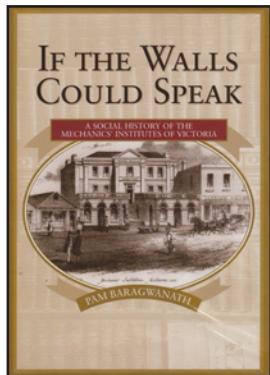
It is anticipated that funding will be sought for the database to be published in hard copy and in PDF format on a CD as a means of fundraising. This follows the highly successful book by Pam Baragwanath which has been a great source of funds for the MIV.

Special thanks go to **Ian Perry** of **Big Picture Software Pty Ltd** and **Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd** for free use of the software designed and developed by them.

The creation of the 'Big Mech' database will be an opportunity to collect all known information together into a single database for access and updating as required.



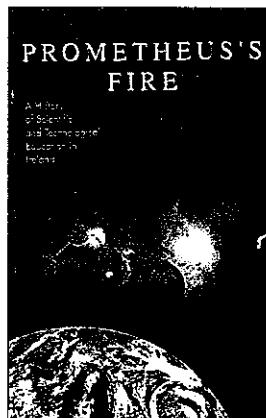
IF THE WALLS COULD SPEAK: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA - Pam Baragwanath. 2000. 356 pages. Hardbound. 1876677325. \$55.00, plus \$7.00 postage.



Available from Pam Baragwanath, 4 O'Neill Way, Warranwood, V 3134. Tel: (03) 9876 5164.

The creation of the 'Big Mech' database will be an opportunity to collect all known information together into a single database for access and updating as required.

PROMETHEUS'S FIRE: A HISTORY OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND - Norman McMillan, ed. 2000. 610 pages. Paperbound. 0952597403. Approx. €30, plus €10 postage.



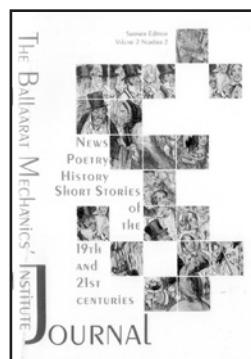
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES/ SCHOOLS OF ARTS BOOKSHELF

Comprising the specialised research of thirteen contributors, this hefty tome will be of more general interest than for the three chapters, two on Mechanics' Institutes and the other on the Queen's Institute for Women.

The Royal Dublin Society and the Dublin Philosophical Society also appear to have much in common with an MI.

Available from Tyndall Publications, 'White Butts', Killeskin Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow, Ireland

THE BALLARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE JOURNAL - Ron Southern, editor. 2003. Vol. 2, No. 2. 60 pages. 1447 1418. \$20 for two issues posted.

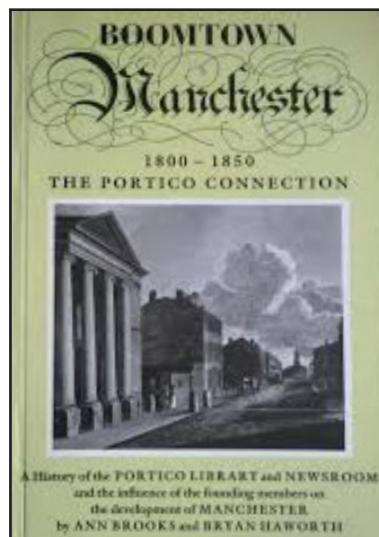


Articles cover: smugglers; the island at the mouth of the Murray; gargoyles; Kheri Lakhimpur; tiger hunting; a Pharaoh; a Bronze Age community in Cyprus; steam power; round the London underground on an engine; and Lethal Catch, a short story.

Available from Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, 117-119 Sturt Street, Ballarat, V 3350.

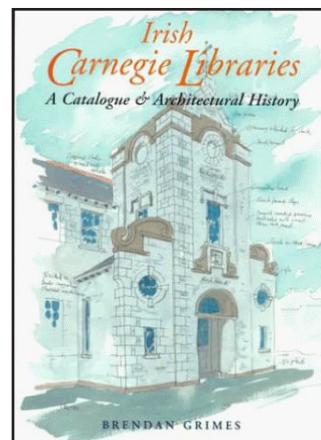
BOOMTOWN MANCHESTER 1800-1850: THE PORTICO CONNECTION

Ann Brooks/Bryan Haworth. 1993. 136 pages. Paperbound. 0951916807. Approx. £10, plus £7 postage. Available from Portico Library, 57 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3HY, UK



A History of the PORTICO LIBRARY and NEWSROOM and the influence of the founding members on the development of MANCHESTER, by ANN BROOKS and BRYAN HAWORTH

IRISH CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: A CATALOGUE OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY - Brendan Grimes. 1998. 278 pages. Hardbound. Approx €50. Available from Irish Academic Press, 44 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4, Ireland





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 March.

ARTHURS CREEK (est 1886)

Ken Murphy reports that the hall has recently been painted inside and painting the outside is the next major project. The use of the Arthurs Creek hall down through the years reflects community interests and two of these have been band music and fruit growing. Arthurs Creek was also a trailblazer in that the first woman, **Mrs Clancy**, was elected to the Committee in 1939 and she later became President in 1947.



Commemorative plaque outside the **Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute**. (*Pam Baragwanath photo*)

To record the hall's centenary of community service a plaque was unveiled in 1987 marking '100 years of community involvement'.

BALLAARAT (est. 1855)

Issue No. 4 of the *Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute Journal* has just hit the mailbox, again with items old and new, quaint and mainstream.

The business plan for the Theatre Precinct and work in the upstairs rooms is proceeding and hopefully come the International Conference we will be able to see those works completed.



Decorated glass panel at the entrance to the **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute**, not the 'aa' in Ballaarat.
(Pam Baragwanath photo)

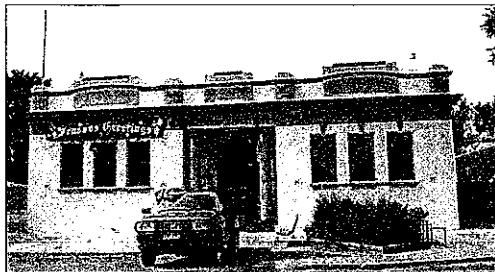
A further bracket of successful twilight lectures has been completed and they have recently launched their *Occasion Papers Series* with Professor Thomas Mitchell's *Democracy* being No. 1. It sounds very

topical when one considers the 150th anniversary of Eureka coming up next year.

With the launch of the regularly used website interest continues to flow and membership is increasing. A two-volume subscription to the *Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute Journal* is \$20 and copies of the *Occasional Paper Series* are \$10. Payment should be sent to Treasurer, **Clive Brooks**, Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute, 117-119 Sturt Street, Ballarat, V 3350.

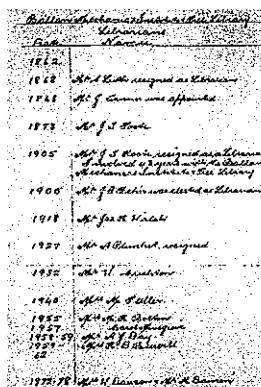
BALLAN (est. 1860)

Ballan had their big day on 4 December when the \$800,000 renovations were opened to the public. The inclusion of the **Community House** and **Enterprise Centre** within the redevelopment will ensure that the MI will be a very busy place in the future.



Getting all in readiness for the big re-opening day at the **Ballan Mechanics' Institute** on 4 December.

A function was held that afternoon ‘in recognition of the efforts and commitment given by past and present Committee of Management members, together with those involved in the Ladies Auxiliary’.



The Information on the Honour Board has been placed temporarily whilst information continues to be collated by our local historians, Jessie Dehnert and June Huggins. We thank them for their efforts.

Around the Institutes continued

The smile on **Derek and Margaret Edwards** could not be contained as MIV Commemorative Plaque No. 2 was unveiled proudly recording the building's MI links.

It's been a win win situation for Ballan residents. They have a new community facility and they still have one of the few historic buildings left in the area.

The temporary Honour Board idea is great and it is something that should be done in every Institute. Get the names down! You can put them in order with dates later. A bird in the hand ...

Congratulations again to heritage architects **Wendy Jacobs** and **David Rowe** and beavers **Howard** and **Josie Weedon, Lou Callow et al** on a job well done.

BEECHWORTH — BURKE MEMORIAL MUSEUM (est. 1856)

The building started out as the hall for the **Young Men's Association** in 1857. Its name was changed to **Beechworth Athenaeum** in 1858 and to **Public Library**, when the Council offered assistance on the assurance that it would be open to the public.

The **O'Hara Burke Museum** was added on in 1863 to commemorate the ill-fated explorer who had lived and worked in the area. At the time it was rated as the best equipped museum outside a capital city in Australia. It included cultural, geological natural history and literary exhibits. In the interim history passed Beechworth by and the museum had degenerated into a rundown collection in a leaking building which was closed to the public.



Burke Museum, Beechworth ... well worth a visit
(Pam Baragwanath photo)

In the 1960s local **Roy Harvey** took up the cause and rehabilitated the building and some of the collection and joined the **National Trust**'s call to arms by recreating a montage of Beechworth's main street in the Museum. Elsewhere the **Powder Magazine** was restored and so was **Tanswell's Hotel**. Then the **Carriage and Harness Museum** opened and Council came to see the value of history and money was put into restoration and building works. Finally it even hired a curator to manage the Burke Museum and the collections that have been assembled. Given that Beechworth has not had an Historical Society, 'The Burke' has been regarded as the local repository.

Today **Anna Robins** is the person charged with the

management of the Burke Museum and she has just sourced a **Museums Australia** grant to install environmental management equipment to enable them to stage major travelling exhibitions.

BERWICK (est. 1862)

Things are never quiet at Berwick for as the City gets bigger, the Library gets busier and more volunteers are needed to cope. But **Pam Darling** continues with her team of thirty-five volunteers much as she has done for decades.



Volunteer storyteller **Joyce Hayles** heads up the spiral staircase to the reference collection.

(Berwick and District Journal - Warren Reed photo)

But the Berwick Institute is not like an ordinary library, membership comes with add-ons. There's a regular story-time every Thursday where Mums have formed quite a bond during the after-session coffee. Then there are the regular charities to support by selling Christmas cards, etc. Last year the Red Cross benefited by some \$1000. At the front door is the Save Our Spectacles bin which the Kiwanis Club clears for Third World countries.



Library volunteer **Thelma Ricardo**.
(Berwick and District Journal - Warren Reed photo)

With over 40,000 books, tapes and magazines on the shelves, it lends out about 800 items a week.

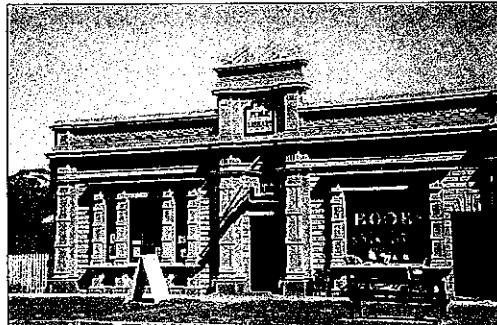
Recently the Berwick Institute had a double page spread and a front page promo in the *Berwick and District Journal* and it is what we all dream about, but we can but ask?

Around the Institutes continued

In the meantime cataloguing the Casey Collection of many thousand titles is still in progress.

BUNINYONG (est. 1859)

Liz Lumsdon reports in on behalf of the **Buninyong Joint Library Trust Inc.** and gives a rosy picture of things Buninyong. The **Tourist Information Centre** has been busy as has the internet access and family history centre. All are great drawcards. The Centre is staffed by volunteers five days a week. In the meantime the library is assembling a nice set of goldfields related reference material and it is always on the lookout for things Buninyong, in print, photograph or artifact. The meeting room is also well used by local community groups.



The Buninyong Free Library building gifted to the community by benefactor Robert Allan in 1861. (Frank Thomas photo)

Their valued tenant **Buninyong Books** is also getting a larger share of the action on the main Warrenheip Street, since it has been opening seven days a week.

CASTLEMAINE (est. 1855)

The Flyer has just floated in from the **Friends of Castlemaine Library Inc. (FOCAL)** with some good news that the \$1.3 million re-development is nearing completion, but the budget has been very tight. So tight in fact that the \$15,000 airconditioning component had to be put on hold, which would mean added expense in the future. To overcome this FOCAL asked Council for an interest free loan to finance the work, with repayment over five years, and Council agreed. So it's a win win situation for Castlemaine. This contribution from FOCAL will be in addition to the reading tables which FOCAL is having made for the library.

FOCAL has recently been given a small grant by **Mt Alexander Council** to mount an exhibition of the photographic work of Castlemaine photographer **Adolphus Verey** (1862-1933). Verey opened his studio in Castlemaine in 1883 and died at the lens as it were, in 1933. He was a Committee member of the Castlemaine Mechanics' Institute and was Vice-President of the School of Mines and served on other local Committees. The exhibition will open in the foyer of the renovated library and theatre early next year.

On the fundraising front things have been busy, with the Quilt Project still in progress. That has raised \$1700

to date. There was also the book sale held in conjunction with St Luke's Church Pete that realised \$450 and cleared out a lot of bookstock.

The Annual meeting saw **Denise Jepson** returned to the chair and **Jo Mauch** joining the Committee as Publicity Officer.

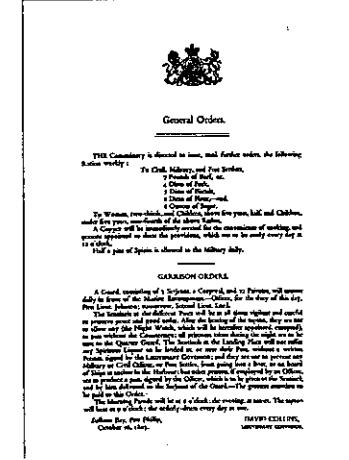
CENTRE FOR THE BOOK -

MONASH UNIVERSITY, CLAYTON

We welcome the **Centre for the Book** as a member of MIV. We have to hand the HOBA (History of the Book in Australia) Newsletter, No. 9, October 2003. It notes that volume 2 of the *History* has been published and volumes 1 (1788-1890) and 3 (1946-2000) of this massive project are progressing favourably.

It also reports on a number of other meetings and conferences, including the Australian Newspaper Press Bicentenary Symposium. There are also some musings on Melbourne's predecessor to Borders, **EW Cole** who opened his Book Arcade in 1883.

There is also a nice piece on the 200 year history of printing in Victoria. There was a re-enactment of the printing, on a hand press from handset type, of the first *General Orders* at Sorrento, which lists Weekly Rations and Garrison Orders. Limited to twelve numbered copies and available to those present on the day it is a nice collector's item.



Copy of *General Orders* printed at Sorrento 16 October 2003 on the Monash University's table top Har-Ma hand printing press. (The original was printed by **Matthew Power** of Sullivan Bay, 16 October 1803.) It came in a covering folder with an historical note by **John Currey**, David Collin's biographer.

Inquiries about the Centre for the Book or the HOBA Project should be addressed to **Professor Wallace Kirsop**, Centre for the Book, School of Literary, Visual and Performance Studies, Building 11, Monash University, V 3800. Email: centre.forthe.book@arts.monash.edu.au.

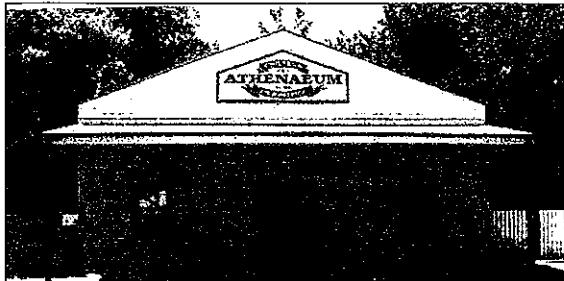
CHILTERN (est 1864)

Chiltern plays on its history and rightly so for the **Chiltern Athenaeum** was the hub of the town and the Shire offices until 1937. It continued as the library and is now part of the town's museum complex.

The Athenaeum was formed from the amalgamation of

Around the Institutes continued

two community organisations, the **Chiltern Literary Institute** and **Chiltern Young Men's Improvement Society** in 1864.



The Athenaeum's **John McEwen Annexe**, where archives are stored and exhibitions are held.
(Chiltern Athenaeum Collection)

Since the library was moved to the Memorial Hall in 1970, the Athenaeum has become the region's museum and it collects accordingly. An extension called 'The John McEwen Annexe' houses the archival material and exhibition space where regular exhibitions are held. **Rex Fuge** chairs the very active Chiltern Athenaeum Trust and it staffs the Museum and holds periodic lectures and conducts cemetery tours.

DANDENONG (est. 1863)

There's some very late and exciting news afoot from Andrew Russell on the revival of this Institute. We wish them well and we will bring an update with the next newsletter.

ELDORADO (est. 1935)

This is not a Mechanics' Institute but a community hall built as the **Soldier's Memorial Hall** in 1935-36. Previous to that residents had used the Eldorado Court House for community functions, but when that burned down in 1923, they were forced to use the smaller school. Finally with community and mining company support it was decided to build a new hall on the offer of a donated block of land.



The Hall was taken over by the **Rural City of Wangaratta** in the 1980s and it is now under a local Committee of Management chaired by identity **Jim Buchan**. In our last newsletter we mentioned the pivotal role played by Institutes and community halls during bushfires and other regional emergencies.

A couple of weeks later we heard **Treasurer John**

Brumby expressing exactly the same sentiments and he committed \$46,500 to the upgrade of the kitchen at the Eldorado Hall which was worked to capacity during the bushfires. The works will see a building extension and a complete refit of the kitchen with new appliances. Well done Eldorado and enjoy your new kitchen!

FOOTSCRAY (est. 1856)

Word is spreading that the **Footscray Mechanics' Institute** library has a great range of reading material, with a specialty in Women's Studies. In addition you can read the daily papers and the latest magazines in the quiet haven that is the Footscray Mechanics'.

Then upstairs there's the opportunity to unwind over a leisurely game of billiards. It's all very calming, like your own private club. However that cannot be said about the rest of building for it's a bustling place with tenants going hither and thither.

Why not drop in to 209 Nicholson Street, Footscray for a walk around to see the range of leisure reading on offer?



FRANKSTON (est. 1880)

To hand is the latest fact filled newsletter of the **Mornington Peninsula Family History Society** detailing their activities and opportunities in the world of genealogy and the reports of their various portfolio holders.

They note in their newsletter that their landlord at the Frankston Mechanics' the **Frankston City Council** has called them in to discuss the possibility of relocation from the Institute building where they have been for more than a decade.

It looks like it will now need a miracle to save the **Frankston Mechanics' Institute** and one of Frankston's oldest buildings from demolition at the hands of the trustee, the Council.

FRYERSTOWN 29TH ANNUAL ANTIQUE FAIR

All proceeds are used for the upkeep of Fryerstown's historic Hall

Follow the signs from CHEWTON near CASTLEMAINE
2003 VicRoads County Highway Map 59 F4
MAGNIFICENT COUNTRY FAIR AROUND HALL

JANUARY 2004

Saturday 24th
7.00am to 5.00pm

Sunday 25th
9.00am to 5.00pm

Monday 26th
9.00am to 3.00pm



ADMISSION \$2.00
CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE

- Light Refreshments Available - Stall Holders Welcome - Enquiries Phone: (03) 5473 4373 a/b

Around the Institutes *continued*

FRYERSTOWN (est. 1863)

Fryerstown's **Pat Gibbs** reports in that they have just been given control of more land adjacent to their Hall Reserve. This will ensure the continued success of their **Annual Antique Fair**, now in its 29th year. Last year the Fair attracted 30,000 people.



Past proceeds from the Annual Fair have been used to refurbish the hall and kitchen and build a new toilet block at the rear. If you are looking for a good day out or want to book a stall in the future contact **Pat Cubeta** on (03) 5473 4373.

HEALESVILLE (est. 1884)

For those who treasure the architecture of the Mechanics' you would have to give a big pat on the back to **Debra McDonald** of the **Church Street Artisans Gallery** which will specialise in wildlife art.



It is located in the former Mechanics' Institute, although you wouldn't know it wasn't the real thing with all its original livery 'Mechanics' Institute' signwriting reinstated. The inside restoration is just as good, with the original floor boards exposed and polished.



Ben Hardman, State Member for Seymour, speaking at the **Church Street Artisans Gallery** opening.
(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

The Gallery opening was performed by **Ben Hardman** and **Pam Baragwanath**, former owner and MIV historian before a large crowd. Two of the former Institute members **Frank Foxcroft** and **Harry Blenheim** were present and they regaled us with stories from the past, including one concerning the once elusive billiard tables. Debra plans to run courses on bird and animal nutrition and courses for children during the holidays.

It's very heartening to see a Mechanics' building recycled to its almost original purpose, a gathering place for exhibitions and learning.

In November it was the gathering point for relatives of Joy Fox Webster to celebrate her life. The Healesville Mechanics' was to become the home of her artistic parents Elton and Ivy Fox who had returned from living in San Francisco in 1935.



Former Healesville Institute owner **Pam Baragwanath** speaking at the opening of the **Church Street Artisans Gallery** in July.
(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

The Fox family sold it to **Pam Firth (Baragwanath)** in 1986 and Pam's first **Mechanics' Gallery** exhibition was of paintings, sketches and photographs from the Fox home, together with some of Joy's paintings and some of her husband Hugh's artworks.

Joy died at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane on 10 May 2003.

Footnote: Joy and her mother Ivy had a most successful joint exhibition at the **Melbourne Athenaeum Gallery** in 1952.



KILMORE (est. 1854)

The Kilmore Institute is planning for its 150th anniversary next year. For its Annual General Meeting, Kilmore invited Chief Justice of Victoria **His Honour John Harber Phillips** to speak on 'The Trial of Ned Kelly' as its after meeting lecture.

The Court House venue was packed to the top of the gallery as His Honour acted out the various parts of the saga prior to Ned's arrest and during the subsequent trial. It all seemed appropriate for Ned appeared, at aged eight,

Around the Institutes continued

in Kilmore as a defence witness at an uncle's trial for cattle stealing. Exactly where that appearance was is not sure for the original Court House had burned down, and the present building had not been finished. Interestingly Ned's defence counsel at his trial was **Henry Bindon** and his father **Samuel** sat as Judge on the Kilmore Bench for a time.



His Honour John Harber Phillips, Chief Justice of Victoria, speaking from the Bench of the Kilmore Court at the Kilmore MI AGM on 'The Trial of Ned Kelly'. *(Bronwyn Lowden photo)*

Inspite of the wet weather, Kilmore's annual **Gardens of Kilmore Open Day** had a near record attendance with author and landscape gardener **Allan Windust** speaking to his new book *Waterwise*. Open Day coordinator **Elaine Lavender** reports that it was fortunate some rain had fallen prior to the event to help revive the parched gardens.



LAKES ENTRANCE (est. 1907)

Formerly known as the **Cunningham Mechanics' Institute**, the **Lakes Entrance Institute** was built on land donated by the Carpenter family in 1907. The old building has had major additions/alterations in 1924, when the RSL rooms were added, and in 1999 when the commercial kitchen was installed.

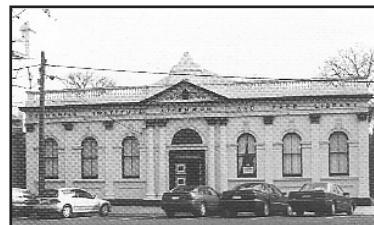
Mechanics Street, Lakes Entrance has been a very busy Street for the past few months as contractors have been building the \$1 million library annexe to the Lakes Entrance Mechanics' Institute.

The Library was moved into the complex just prior to its official opening by **Craig Ingram, MP**, the Member for Gippsland East on Friday, 21 November. The opening was followed by a light luncheon and it was generally agreed that the new **Lakes Entrance Library and Business Centre** will be a great asset to the community.

Prior to the library being relocated to the out of town new Civic Complex in the late 1980s it had been in the Mechanics' Hall.

In the meantime the hall had also been redeveloped by a very active Committee of Management led by **Colin Stone** and its commercial kitchen enables it to cater for major functions including seminars and meetings.

Obviously the locals are very impressed with the return of the library back to the Mechanics', for according to Library Manager **Jenny Murphy**, borrowings have almost doubled since moving back in November.



LILYDALE (est. 1884)

The **Lilydale Athenaeum Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** continues its close connection with theatre and music and is the present home of the **Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company** who have undertaken restoration of the building.

The Company mounts regular productions and occasional visiting performers present shows. There is generally a panto and picture program conducted during the school holidays.

Dame Nellie Melba appeared on the Lilydale stage four times between 1920 and 1930 and it is not surprising that the Melba Museum started in the two front rooms of The Athenaeum. This has now grown into the two-storey building next door and into a new Visitor's Centre and Theatrette. Now there is an ongoing \$1.5 million redevelopment which hopefully will be ready for the International Conference tour next year. From little acorns ...

MALDON ATHENAEUM (est. 1863)

In keeping with its newfound role as the community library **Joy Leneaux-Gale** and her very active Management team of volunteers are making the Athenaeum really work for the community.



(Clive McCann photo)

Around the Institutes *continued*

Maldon had a big weekend to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the local discovery of gold. Maldon assembled a very solid collection of goldfields related books and memorabilia for the occasion and there were many people who came through the Institute for a look and they were impressed with what they saw.

Their increased shelving now carries a range of large print books and a much perused 'New Titles' section. The exterior of the Maldon Athenaeum belies the interior charm that has been enhanced and nurtured under the present management. They are also working on reinforcement of their very valuable community archive and regional studies collection.



MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM (est. 1839)

To hand are the lastest two very innovative newsletters from The Ath. The Spring Edition is packed with interesting ideas. It launches with their new logo of a seated Athena reading a scroll book and gives her brief biog. It also launches their on-line catalogue; **Athena**. Opening hours are on the front page, and the range of book review journals which the library subscribes to and/or receives. There's also the announcement of a review clipping service from the three big dailies. Long time Committee member **Wilma Stubbs** was a well-deserved recipient of the Centenary Medal. There's discount jewellery at one its tenants, **The Opal Gallery**. And theatre tickets, if you sign up a new member, for you and the new member. Credit card facilities are now available. Two comments segments 'Why do you love The Ath?' and 'Why did you join The Ath?' have a diversity of replies. There are staff book selections and staff news. **Margaret Lyons** is pictured being farewelled on a Harley Davidson motorcycle. An author's biography and lists of the winners of the latest literary prizes, The Booker, etc. There are even Parking tips, **City Square Car Park**, in Little Collins Street \$1.65 for the first half hour or **Wilson's** in Flinders Lane, \$3 for first hour. The last word is 'Expand your horizons at The Ath'.

The December issue is less extensive and carries a front page montage of scenes from the well-attended Christmas Party depicting members and some staff. Christmas Gift Subscription ideas, newsletter deadlines, staff book selections. Then there are two brain teasers-Police Mysteries and Crime Quiz. The prize is an Ath dozen of reservations and a book from the sale table.

The sad news of Library Manager **Lisa Sukkel**'s resignation is one of regret. It was Lisa who was charged with

the huge responsibility to bring The Ath into the 21st century and history will show she did just that. In the sixteen months at The Ath she achieved computerisation and an on-line catalogue, Membership automation and credit card facilities. In addition she achieved a major reorganisation and revamp of the library. It was a daunting task to embark on and little wonder when Lisa was asked what she was going to do next she replied 'Have a good rest.' And we say 'You deserve it and enjoy it!'



Lisa sat in as the The Ath rep on the MIV Committee and contributed positively and imaginatively to our meetings. We all wish Lisa well and hope that she will continue to contribute to the Mechanics' movement. Lisa will be replaced in a temporary capacity by **Delina Schembri-Hardy** who has extensive library and membership organisation experience.

MURTOA (est. 1887)

There's a very determined streak at Murtoa that sets out to do things and does them well. It purchased its own block of land in 1885 and built its own hall. It was one of the pioneers in the country for screening movies.

Against all advice it took *The Ten Commandments* for a ten day season in 1925. Accompanied by the Murtoa Orchestra it was a real hit with the house full each night.



Inside Murtoa Mechanics' showing the balcony and the hall set for a wedding reception. To the extreme left can be seen part of one of the wreath motif panels, a distinctive feature repeated around the hall wall.

(Jo Warrick photo)

In 1928 the hall was partly destroyed by fire so they moved the pictures outdoors whilst debentures could be sold to raise funds to rebuild the hall. In 1933 sound was installed for screening films and the debenture holders were repaid. A Cinemascope screen was acquired in 1955

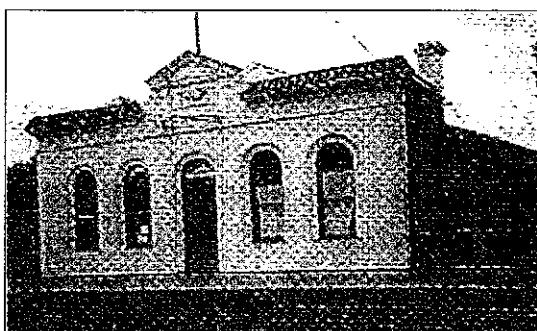
Around the Institutes continued

and pictures ceased in 1970. Murtoa's early involvement with cinema certainly deserves a story.

However as the film fundraising came to an end another stream of income was planned with the installation of a kitchen in 1964 and that has been the mainstay of the hall fundraising since. It has financed restoration of the hall and the purchase of suites of crockery, glassware and cutlery as well as chairs and tables to enable large functions to be held in the hall.

NAGAMBIE (est. 1873)

Chris Anders and the Nagambie Hall Committee are out there with a renewal program underway. They want to paint the hall inside and out to put it in a usable and inviting state. This main street landmark is one of Nagambie's oldest buildings having been built in 1874.



It was used for several years as the **Goulburn Shire Offices** and for a while as a school and as a church for most denominations. And of course there always was the library with a growing range of books, including a lot of contemporary fiction. Their interesting history is closely connected with music and the performing arts through the **Nagambie Amateur Dramatic Club**. They attracted leading talent like **Amy Nagel** and **Amy Castles**, the **Lynch Family of Bellringers**, and **Edison's Talking Machine** was demonstrated on the stage in 1891.

Almost every local organisation used it for their meetings and if there was a worthy cause the Dramatic Club would stage a fundraiser, just like they did for the hall on a number of occasions.

Whilst the two coppers behind the hall boiled the water for supper and for the tea and coffee, there were the times when it had to be done in the wet and by 1930 it was decided to built an extension at the rear and this was done. This also facilitated the use of the hall as a picture theatre.

The **Buffalo Lodge**, **Manchester Unity Lodge**, **Hospital Committee** and the **Country Women's Association** all became regular users and continue on their use today. Now Nagambie, like a lot of other small country towns, is on the move residents are looking to the Mechanics' to again make it happen.

NUMURKAH & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Society members have fond memories of their Mechanics', which still stands as a furniture store in town. The

Numurkah Society are good at putting exhibitions together and Numurkah tries to travel theirs around the district. They just have received another **Museums Australia** grant to mount another exhibition. Congratulations to **John Sigley** and the Numurkah membership. They are up there with the overseas Institutes which are doing exhibitions in this way.



PRAHRAN (est. 1854)

Preparations are well in hand for the launch of Prahran's 150th anniversary celebrations.

Membership continues to increase as is the use of their library. Their lectures and programs are generally booked out shortly after being advertised. It is patently obvious that more space is required.

It is noted that the Institute agreed to extend the lease on some space to the Minister for Education for a further ninety-nine years in 1947. The area leased was the first floors of its High Street and its John Street buildings for one shilling (ten cents) per year. In the interim the lessee appears to have also moved into the ground floor of the High Street property. There was also the apparent sale of portion of its John Street property to the Minister for \$20 in 1979.



Prahran's pre-eminent position, specialisation and promotion making it grow...but presently it is at no space to go.

(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

At Prahran's Annual General Meeting it was resolved to set up a Lease Task Force to review the Lease and their report has been delivered to the Membership for further consideration.

In the meantime Acting Librarian **Christine Worthington** represented the Institute at the Annual Meeting **Membership Libraries' Group** in New York in October. Christine has written an article on the meeting for the library journal *Incite* which will appear in March. Meanwhile Prahran's innovative programs proceed. There were lectures; five **Writers Workshops** in February and March under the tutelage of **Julie Meadows**;

Around the Institutes *continued*

Book Month in July; the 2003 **History Essay Competition**; and the annual **Alan Shinkfield Awards** for Stonnington schools, presented to Grade 6 students who have 'filled their school's criteria for general excellence'. They are also offering to cover members' books in plastic, \$1.50 paperback, \$2.50 hardback. The subscription for Prahran is \$9 per year.

RAGLAN (est. 1892)

'Young mother inspires small town to think big: An historic hall at Raglan will come alive this Christmas thanks to the work of one determined woman'. So reads the headline and byline of an article in the *Weekly Times* of 23 November 2003 by **June Alexander**.

When **Marianne** moved from Minyip to marry grazier **David Troup** of Raglan she missed the community life of her old hometown. After becoming mother to two children she still would drive daily past the **Raglan Hall and Mechanics' Institute** in Codrington Street and she watched the paint peeling off the weatherboards ... 'it was looking worse and worse' and so she swung into action.



Marianne Troup and the folk of Raglan getting ready for their big Christmas Market and Open Garden Day in December. *(Weekly Times photo)*

Marianne joined the Committee of Management early this year and formed an events committee. A Community Grant provided \$1500 for new doors and the enthusiasm spread and so did the fundraisers all bringing the community together.

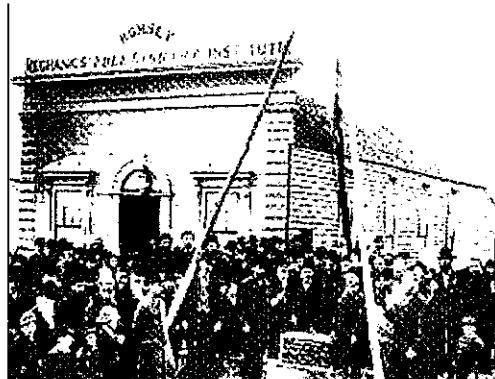
There's much to do but they've got a wish list and ways to make it happen and their first big event was **Raglan Christmas Fair**, with 25 stalls in the hall, and an **Open Garden Day** on 7 December.

Marianne sees the hall becoming a venue for trivia nights, ballet classes, a family day care centre and an occasional cafe for weekend visitors to the Pyrenees wine region. Marianne's final words ring all too true 'It is vital as a community that we keep increasing the usage of our hall for the future of our district.'

ROMSEY (est. 1875)

Noel Shaw reports in that the Romsey Institute is a busy place with it being used by the Country Women's Association, a Church, Lions, RSL and Senior Citizens as well as for calisthenics, jazz ballet and line dancing. Then there are

the irregular uses for birthday parties, concerts, presentation nights, weddings and of course a host of meetings.



Laying of the foundation stone for the new brick front for the Romsey Institute in 1884. *(Romsey Mechanics' Institute collection)*

Back in 1868 local storekeeper **Sidney Seymour** started to collect money for a local library, but returned the money through lack of support. However local school teacher **AN Thomas** was more successful in 1875 and a weatherboard hall and library was built. A decade later it was felt to be too small and a two-storey brick portion was added.

In 1904 fire destroyed the wooden section and a building program eventually was complete in 1958. In the 1970s the library was discontinued with the advent of the Bookmobile service.

Romsey-born **Professor Vincent Buckley** held a Personal Chair in English at Melbourne University. He always maintained that his love of books was fostered as a young lad by his mother at the Romsey Mechanics' Institute and **Mrs Hemphill** at the Lancefield Institute.

SHEPPARTON (est. 1884)

There's great news from Shepparton that the Government are funding an \$800,000 redevelopment of the present building in return for a long lease by a Government agency.

In 1957 the billiards use ceased and the Institute became the town library. In recent times the library has gone to larger premises and the Institute has reverted to community use. Today the Shepparton Institute is well-used by a number of local groups.



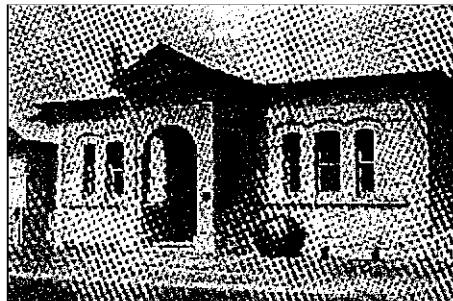
Shepparton's trustees **Mal Erskine, Lance Woodhouse** and **John McPherson** have kept a very steady ship in recent times and this latest move will take the Institute and its users well into the 21st century.

Around the Institutes continued

SORRENTO (est 1876)

We recently received a nice leaflet history of the Sorrento Institute by **John Alexander**. The establishment date is given as 1876 and it received title to its land grant in July 1876. A hall was built on it and it was opened with a concert on 3 Feb 1877. Performers at the opening ceremony included **George Coppin** and his daughter **Blanche** and **Sir Charles Gavan Duffy** moved a vote of thanks with 'an excellent speech'.

A library was established and open on weekdays to the public.



Sorrento Mechanics' Institute building.
(Nepean Historical Society)

In 1885 **Mrs Armstrong**, later **Dame Nellie Melba**, sang two songs and a duet to an appreciative audience. The Hall was extended in 1895 to accommodate a Committee Room and a Supper Room.

It has been used as a Lodge, a Court, Drill Hall, Theatre and a Red Cross packing centre. In addition every conceivable celebration has been held there.

After a number of lean years Council took it over and passed it to the **Nepean Historical Society** in 1965 and they opened their Museum there in October 1967. The building was extended with the Heritage Gallery in 1997 and this allows for more display space and an area to conduct community programs. The leaflet concludes with 'The Society continues in the spirit of the original Mechanics' Institute.'



TALLAROOK (est. 1891)

Libby Webster reports on a busy time with fundraising

and successes with their screening of *The Man From Snowy River* and the **Rural Quilter's Exhibition** which was coordinated by **Joan Hall** and which attracted over one hundred quilts.



Local architect and builder **Andrew McKay** built the **Tallarook Mechanics' Hall** in 1891. His advertising slogan was 'A house in a day... A street in a week'.

(Tallarook Mechanics' Hall collection)

Since then the floor of the stage has been replaced and the timber will be used to make frames to display memorabilia in for hanging around the Hall. The floor and stage have been sanded and repolished and hopefully grant money will come through to paint the interior.

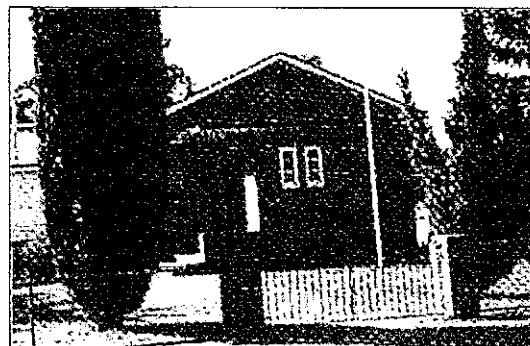
In the meantime it's on to the next big event in March with the local showing of the **Remember the Mechanics?** Travelling Exhibition in conjunction with a display of period clothing.

Then there is the idea of painting a back drop for the Hall to be unveiled in conjunction with an art exhibition later in the year. Inquiries Libby Webster on 5793 8390.

THOONA (est. 1890s?)

The village of **Mokoan**, north west of Glenrowan, had its name changed to Thoona in 1889. As this Aboriginal name implies, it is 'a village surrounded by hills'.

The **Thoona Memorial Hall** was built in 1956 on the land reserve of the Thoona Mechanics' Institute and Library so it appears there was probably no Institute building on the site.



The well-cared for Thoona Memorial Hall was built in 1956.

(Pam Baragwanath photo)

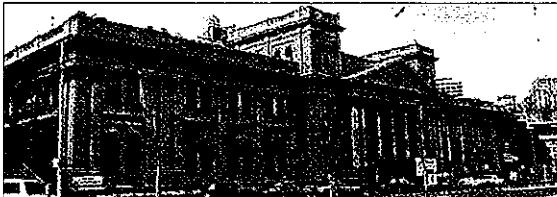
Cathryn Irvine of the present Committee of Management advise that they are planning on an upgrade of the kitchen

Around the Institutes *continued*

to bring it into line with present health regulations' and so the funding hunt is on. Thoona just is like the typical country Institute, the centre of community life, and a vital part of the rural Victorian network and fabric. Local Halls must be a protected species! We look forward to updates on their work and in the meantime we wish them well.

TRADES HALL (est. 1859)

Calling by recently we were saddened to find that long-time Librarian **Sarah Brown** had left. Sarah was in charge of the Trades Hall and Literary Institute library for more than nineteen years and we wish her well in retirement.



Until a replacement was found the library has been closed intermittently. Sarah's replacement is **Lisa Callaway**, who was previously Librarian with **Workcover Victoria**, and we welcome Lisa to the Institute ranks.

TRENTHAM (est 1879)

In 1879 the Institute made an application for a land grant which was made in 1880 and they started building a weatherboard hall 55ft x 25ft which was opened in March 1881 by the Institute President **Don McPherson**. Several additions were made over the years.



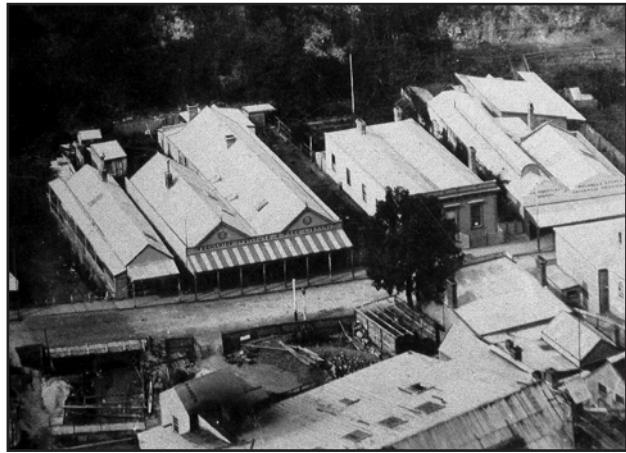
Trentham Mechanics' Hall showing the brick front and toilet block added in 1956.
(Pam Baragwanath photo)

In 1956 a new brick front and toilet block was added to unify the view from the street.

It has hosted almost every conceivable event and last year staged an exhibition of the history of the local **Trewella Foundry** was very well attended.

WALHALLA (est. 1865)

A couple of issues ago we published a picture of Walhalla found at a trash and treasure market. We now have another picture sent in by **Ann Ringer** of the **Mornington Peninsula Family History Society**. From a family album, it is believed to have been taken in the 1880s.



Walhalla Mechanics' Institute and Free Library and Main Street, Walhalla in 1880s.
(Mornington Peninsula Family History Society)

Terry Hennessy reports that things are now on the move in Walhalla since the installation of power. Further the **Long Tunnel Goldmine** and the newly opened **Tourist Railway** are once more putting people on the once very quiet streets.

WARBURTON (est. 1880s)

The good news has just come through that the Victorian Government is to pass the Warburton Mechanics' Institute building to the Yarra Ranges Council for the benefit of the community along with a \$210,000 grant to restore the building.



Warburton Mechanics' Institute from the street front. The high wire fence is soon to be a thing of the past, thanks to Government consideration and largesse.
(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

We can only say 'Congratulations' to all concerned who have kept this issue boiling along, from the politicians, to Council, and of course those community stalwarts.

Now there will be an event to attend, the re-opening of the Warburton Mechanics' Institute. We will keep you posted. It's something **Dame Nellie Melba** could come back for!

WARRANDYTE (est. 1881)

The Warrandyte newsletters roll in regularly telling us all their activities: Choral, Craft, Drama, Music, Painting and Pottery. There seems to be something happening at the

Around the Institutes *continued*

Warrandyte Institute every day and almost every night and as the facilities are constantly being upgraded so the use increases.



If you live in the Warrandyte area and would like to become involved in any of their activities, in the first instance email kenneth.virtue@orica.com and he will put you in touch with the individual group coordinator.

WARRENBAYNE (est. 1880s)

Helen Bromley reports that things are on the move at Warrenbyane with a number of fundraising social events held including a Market, Frog and Grog Night and the New Year's Eve Dance. All resulted in nice profits which will go towards internal maintenance.



Like many country halls, Warrenbayne grew like topsy from central hall core to a number of additions

(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

Tuey have a weekly dance which is well attended and this is involving the whole community. In 2004 they hope that Christmas in July will be their best ever. Recently \$3000 was spent on reproofing the Hall under the supervision of **Neil Bromley**, so the water is now kept out and is channeled into tanks.

The central hall was built after fire burned the original hall down in 1892. A skillion was added in the 1970s and the supper room, indoor toilets and porch in the early 1990s.

Warrenbayne's got a wish list and besides painting there is the need for an external toilet block which can be used by the nearby Tennis Club and others who use the barbecue facilities.

It is the Evacuation point for the area and it serves as the meeting place for Landcare, CFA, Tennis and Cricket clubs, the Primary School. Visiting fox shooter groups and motorcycle clubs are also among the odd hirers and recently it was used for a social gathering for a Melbourne family with brought in catering.

YARCK (est. 1892)

Things appear to be happening at the Yarck Institute, with odd weatherboards being replaced and board joins and nail holes being puttied. The front has been undercoated and the verandah has also been painted. Inside it looks as though that has also had a makeover.



The **Yarck Hall** has an interesting front with a verandah that comes out to the kerbside.
(Bronwyn Lowden photo)

The present building appears to date from 1892, and is not unlike a rural church of that period. It has had later additions in the 1920s and the brick toilet block from the 1980s.

AND IN NEW SOUTH WALES ...

RICHMOND (est. 1858)

After forty-five years in various positions on the **Richmond School of Arts** Committee, **Ron Rozzoli**, steps down. It's been a great innings of service to the community and to the Institute generally. It no doubt gave Ron great pleasure earlier this year to host the bus tour of the Hawkesbury Schools of Arts and the luncheon at Richmond. He leaves the Institute in great shape and moving vigorously forward. We wish him well in his well-earned retirement, but we do hope that he will join us in Melbourne at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** so that we can all shake his hand. His wise counsel will always be sought.

SYDNEY (est. 1833)

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts has passed the magical membership figure of 1000, and not achieved for some fifty years. It was a great way to end their very successful 170th Birthday Celebrations. Sydney is also in restructure mode with the CEO position being linked with that of Events Manager and **Ellen Elzey** left in November after nineteen years and Events Manager **Gail Quirk** takes over Ellen's duties. We wish Ellen well in her retirement and no doubt she will continue to contribute to the Mechanics' movement and we look forward to continuing to work with Gail.

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess.

HEBREWS 10:23

US MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES NEW YORK MEETING

- Jim Lowden

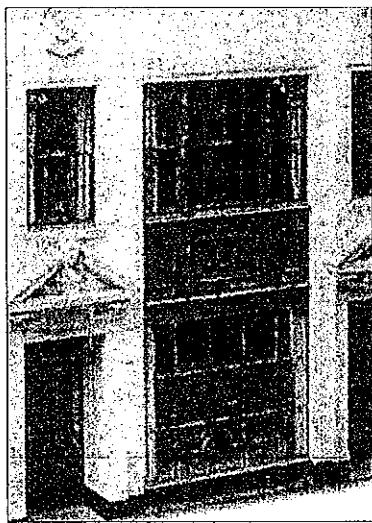
THE MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES GROUP have been holding annual get togethers since 1991. They don't have a formal corporate structure, with next year's venue being decided at the close the meeting. It is then up to the nominated host Institute to promote and organise the next meeting.

The Delegates flew into New York from across the US to attend the Friday night dinner in Chinatown which attracted a near full house with a number of partners being present. For them it was a visit to the 'Big Apple' and to take in a spot of shopping.

The duration of the twelve-course dinner gave one a chance to chat with our host the **Mercantile Library of New York's** director **Harold Augenbraum** and folk that I had not met before, but had talked with on the phone over the last couple of years.

The **John Smith Hotel**, where most people stayed, was within easy walking distance of '**The Mere**' where we were to meet on Saturday morning, so I took that course.

Heading away from the Hotel on foot I rounded the corner and there he was, a young ebony black lad, proclaiming 'Welcome to New York, the City of dreams'. And how right he was, the welcome was indeed warm and I was to be privy to the many dreams of the various Institute directors.



The Mercantile Library's building, complete with window display, on East 47th Street, 'a membership library and literary centre made for the public'.
(Mercantile Library Collection)

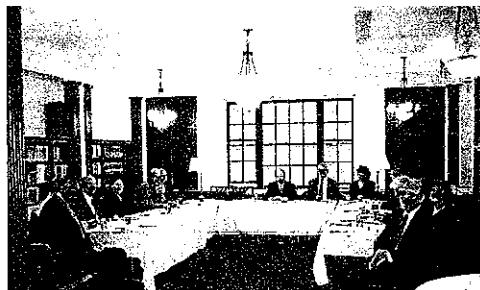
The light breakfast gave us a few moments to catch up with delegates and to meet the President of '**The Mere**' **Sharon Benenson**. It was then down to the

debriefing, chaired by **Harold Augenbraum**, of the fourteen Institutes present.

Each Institute presented their 'annual report', accentuating general membership increase, with annual fundraising slightly down, and draw downs on their endowments of between 3% and 8%.

Renovations and restorations were completed at some and underway at others. We heard of the grand innovative projects in some and in another the debilitating case of a few members taking legal action against the Committee to prevent it selling its Audubon Birds, to fund urgent building stabilisation.

It was a rare privilege to see what professional Institute Directors do and how they have carved a niche market for their own Institute, as a membership paying library, against the free public system.



The afternoon session dealt with promotion within Institutes and we learned of the various angles to deliver a good event or fundraising campaign which is an annual feature in all Institutes. In addition they actively solicit bequests and pursue funding avenues. A lively debate took place on the role of the Institute visionary or driver, the one with the vision and the one who has to sell it to a Board. The Institute sinks or swims on the effectiveness of the driver.

Generally the Delegates had been with their Institute for several years, with two exceptions.

Next morning we met at the **General Society of Mechanics' and Tradesmen** for a look over their building. It appears to be like a lion that will very soon roar. It has got the Small Press Center, Trade Classes with 350 students, and collections in development and an amazing lock collection... and drivers. A light late morning tea, farewells and it was all over and I was on the Amtrak speeding, through New England in the fall, towards Providence, Rhode Island to call on the **Providence Athenaeum**.

Thankyou Membership Librarians for your generous hospitality and friendship and I hope to see you all in Oz at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** in September.

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 Control 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 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 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.ourcommunity.com.au with a downloadable application form. If you are still having trouble contact **Grantley Fearn** at **Jardine Lloyd Thompson** on (03) 9860 3400.

LEGAL

If you are on a Department of Sustainability Reserve you should contact your regional office. If you are on freehold land contact the Office of Local Government in Melbourne. 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, \$15:** Clive Brooks, 3/106 Warrenheip Street, Buninyong, V 3357. **Travelling Exhibition:** Pam Baragwanath, Tel: (03) 9876 5164; **Plaques:** Paul Permezel Fax (03) 9499 4267; **Database:** Lorraine Huddle, Tel: (03) 5241 6446.

TOILET BLOCKS

Two MIV Committee members are working on template plans for a Toilet Block which will comply with Council regulations. This might save your Institute some dollars. Inquiries: MIV Secretariat.

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

ANDREW CARNEGIE (1835-1919)

Buildings, Books and Beyond is theme for MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2004



AROUND THE WORLD the news is spreading of **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004**. We've also had our 'missionaries' out there spreading the word from **Bangkok** (Thailand), **Innerpeffray** (Scotland), **Harwarden** (Wales), **The City - London** (England), **Belfast** (Northern Ireland), **Dublin** (Ireland), **New York** (USA) and many places in between.

The US was well visited with Prahran's **Alf Lazer** being in New York, and Prahran's Librarian **Christine Worthington** visiting Institutes on the east and west coast.

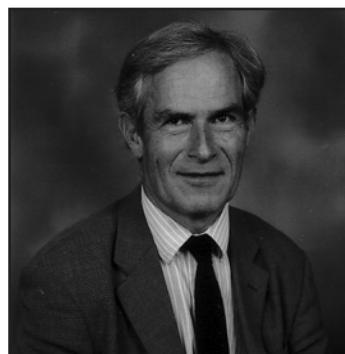
The Institute movement is in very good shape, but the benefit from increased cooperation and communication between Institutes has huge potential.

It is hoped that **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** in Melbourne in September 2004 will bridge the gap between like-Institutes worldwide. No matter the name, we all have so much in common. Our Conference logo was designed by a team from **Swinburne's National Institute of Design** led by **Trevor Streader** and Communications (Honours) students **Mei Chin 'Stephanie' Wong** and **Myrtle Jeffs**.

It probes our themes of **Buildings, Books and Beyond** and we hope with parallel sessions

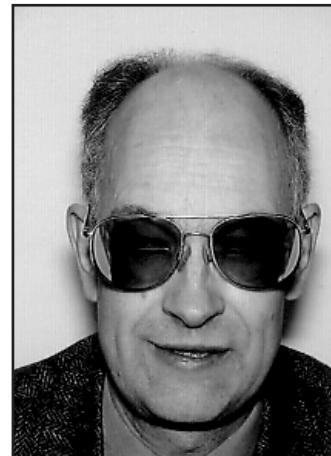
this will enable a range of speakers on a variety of topics to highlight the visionaries and administrators, the buildings, their libraries and museums, educational and recreation facilities and the future.

We want **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** be to be a worldwide celebration of our rich heritage, so we need a Paper or Poster from your Institute. Further if any of your members are travelling to Australia in 2004, make sure they make it in September to represent your Institute at MW 2004. We have recently been greatly buoyed up by promised support from the **Ian Potter Foundation** established by the great Australian benefactor the late **Sir Ian Potter**. The following keynote speakers have come on board to help us get to the heart of the movement.



Dr David McKitterick, bibliographer, prolific author and Librarian at **Trinity College, Cambridge** will speak on Institute buildings.

Dr Robert Anderson, author, bibliophile and director of the **National Museums of Scotland** (1985-92) and **British Museum** 1992-2002 and now Fellow of **Churchill College, Cambridge** will speak on Institute museums.



Dr Keith Manley, bibliographer, author and editor of **Library History** is presently Assistant Librarian at the **Institute of Historical Research, University of London** and he will talk on Institute libraries.



Dr Richard Wendorf, art historian, English Professor and Director of the **Boston Athenaeum** will talk on the US\$30 million redevelopment of the Boston Athenaeum.

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