



# USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

**Newsletter No 24 – Winter 2010**

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## MIV HAPPENINGS

### DIARY DATES FOR 2010

#### MIV AGM:

13 November at 10am. The venue is the Melbourne Athenaeum Library, 1st Floor, 188 Collins Street, Melbourne. A notice of meeting and nomination form is on the inside of the back cover. The AGM will be followed by the MIV Committee Meeting.

#### HISTORY WEEK – 23-31 OCTOBER:

Institutes planning an event or activity should forward details to Samantha Smith [info@historyweek.org.au](mailto:info@historyweek.org.au) at RHSV who will incorporate the details on their website and forward some promotional material.

### MIV CONTACTS

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*The Bright Free Library celebrated its centenary on 24 September.*

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## NEWS HEADLINES

### GRANTS

*MIV committee member Brian Foley keeps a sharp lookout for any alternative income sources for mechanics' institutes. He has supplied the following information.*

**Local History Grants Program** is a long-running grants program funded by the Community Support Fund, and is administered by PROV on a year-by-year basis.

**Heritage Victoria** administers a range of heritage grants on behalf of the Victorian Government on a yearly basis.

**The Department of Community Planning and Community Development** offers a grant finder for locating the most appropriate grant for your needs.

**The Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program**, administered by the National Library of Australia, aims to preserve and provide access to nationally significant, Australian cultural heritage material held by community groups across the country.

**The National Historic Sites (NHS) program** is an Australian Government grants program that provides assistance to protect and conserve Australia's most significant historic heritage.

The Indigenous Heritage Program (IHP) is an Australian Government initiative that supports the identification, conservation, and promotion (where appropriate) of Indigenous heritage.

*The State Government has also made available grants for which mechanics' institutes and halls can apply for.*

***Ready for Tomorrow: A Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria*** is the Victorian Government's long-term plan for regional development to support regions to manage growth, respond to changing environments and enhance their prosperity, liveability and sustainability.

In rural and regional Victoria 95 per cent of towns have a population under 10,000

people. These small towns play a vital role in maintaining the regional economic and social fabric, acting as important centres of economic and business activity, community and intra- and inter- regional connections. Small towns also play a critical role in providing services to surrounding agricultural regions and meeting the needs of residents, and those living in the surrounding rural hinterlands.

The Sustainable Small Towns Development Fund is a new program managed by Regional Development Victoria. Its objective is to assist communities in small towns by creating new opportunities for:

- a) economic growth and enhancing the appeal and liveability of rural townships and surrounding areas by developing economic and social infrastructure; and
- b) small town communities to reduce greenhouse gases through development of local renewable energy supply and local energy efficiency developments.

The program will support projects that focus on: - pathway, adaptive capacity, heritage, industrial estate, civic renewal, community facilities or tourism infrastructure; and - development of Sustainable Energy Business Cases to enable small towns to operate on an increased sustainability platform.

The program will support projects in communities with populations of up to 10,000 people, but up to 15,000 where there are exceptional circumstances or opportunities.

#### **Who Can Apply**

Applications for infrastructure projects in small towns will be accepted from the 48 regional and rural local governments.

Applications for sustainable energy business case projects will also be accepted from community organisations.

#### **Funding Support**

Applications will be received throughout the year on an ongoing basis. Grants for

infrastructure projects will generally be provided up to \$300,000: – on a \$3 to \$1 basis for the 38 rural local governments; and – on a \$2 to \$1 for the 10 larger local governments.

In the case of industrial estate infrastructure, funding will be on a \$1 for \$1 basis excluding land and in-kind (up to a maximum of 50% of the local contribution). In the case of Sustainable Energy Business Cases, grants of up to \$50,000 will be available on a \$3 to \$1 basis for community organisations.

In calculating the level of grant assistance, in-kind will be considered subject to the following requirements: • no more than 50% of applicant (and partners) contribution being in-kind;

- skilled labour costing of \$35 per hour;
- unskilled labour costing of \$15 per hour;
- equipment costed at standard commercial hire rate; and
- councils are generally ineligible from providing in-kind as part of their funding contribution

For more information on any of the above guidelines visit [www.rdv.vic.gov.au](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au) or call 13 22 15 to get a copy of *Ready*

## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES TOUR

A successful tour of mechanics' institutes in the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire was held on Sunday May 23. Institutes visited included Berwick, Beaconsfield, Officer, Pakenham, Nar Nar Goon, Tynong, Garfield, Bunyip, Gembrook, Cockatoo, Emerald and Narre Warren. A comprehensive set of tour notes was prepared by Heather Arnold,

*for Tomorrow – A Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria.*

## 175 History Grants

In some further good news, the list of recipients of the Victoria 175 History Grants has been published on the PROV website. Melbourne Athenaeum and Prahran MI have both been successful.

The Melbourne Athenaeum Incorporated received \$7,660. The Prahran Mechanics' Institute Victorian History Library (PMI) received \$3,806 to publish the manuscript, *Beginnings: A chronological account of the first Europeans to visit or explore the state of Victoria and an account of the first European pastoral settlement of the various districts of the state* by Frank Hutchinson.

Amendments to the Building Act 1993 just passed by Parliament greatly increase the penalties for breaches of the act applicable to the safety of places of public entrainment. The Act can be purchased from Information Victoria or downloaded at [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au). Committees of Management should consult the building owner and the building commission.

Local history librarian for the Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation. At many of the institutes visited the group was met by local identities who gave presentations which were most enlightening. A further tour to mechanics' institutes in the South West of the state is planned for 2010.

## CAN YOU HELP?

*Useful Knowledge* has received a request from Marina Larsson, the Senior Policy Officer, Veterans Heritage, Veterans Unit, Department of Planning and Community Development. She has just started working in the area of Veterans Heritage and understands that Mechanics Institutes are one of the organisations that care for Honour Boards. She has been contacting all kinds of community organisations to ascertain

the kinds of heritage in their care and how they go about looking after it. Marina would like to know how many and what kinds of honour boards are in Mechanics Institutes? There is a grants scheme that some Mechanics' Institutes may be eligible for.

Marina may be contacted at [marina.larsson@dpcd.vic.gov.au](mailto:marina.larsson@dpcd.vic.gov.au) or telephone 9208 3060.

## MIRC REPORT

A meeting was held on 8th of April with Shane Carmody from the State Library of Victoria. Shane outlined the SLV interest in the MIRC collection and noted duplication with the ephemera collection. Shane raised the issue of what is a remnant collection? How many need to be kept to be representational of the period? Archival records of mechanics' institutes (minutes, correspondence and accounts) would definitely be of value to the SLV.

This led to the discussion of the digitising

### MIV SCANNING PROJECT

For several years the MIV, through the volunteer work of committee member Peter Pereyra, has been scanning the records of mechanics' institutes. The importance of the project became glaringly obvious during the 2009 bushfires. The MIV had already scanned the Arthur's Creek MI records, but the records of the former Marysville MI, held by the local Historical Society, were lost in the inferno. This brought home the urgency and importance of the project. The archives of mechanics' institutes – the minute books, cash books, library catalogues and rules, correspondence – have faced fire, flood, and occasionally neglect – but have survived to provide a written record of the great work done by the predominantly volunteer members over the years.

Through the endeavours of MIV President Wallace Kirsop, a grant was obtained from the Delmas Foundation in New York for the minutes, correspondence and financial records to be scanned as part of disaster

project and MISER. Shane was shown the quality of data base and scanned records. What physical records should be saved and where? No answers. There is a possibility of linking it to SLV web site and Shane provided some suggestions for future funding. There was to be an inspection of material at Pam Baragwanath's home by an SLV officer as she intends to give her material to the State Library.

*Linda Aspinall*  
*MIRCC Co ordinator.*

management.

Ann Palamountain has been appointed and is busy scanning the records as they come in. Preserving the archival records of Victorian mechanics' institutes, and making them accessible to future researchers, is at the core of the MIV Scanning Project.

Records of mechanics' institutes from Berwick to Malmsbury, Fawcett to Sorrento, Bunyip to Alexandra, have been scanned over the past six months. Collecting the records for scanning has been very rewarding. The records of mechanics' institutes no longer in existence have been located, and several members are currently using their archives to compile histories of their local institution. We look forward to reading the finished works.

The MIV intends to continue the project – hoping to ultimately “scan every MI record in Victoria” – and will be seeking further grants and donations to achieve this goal.



## AROUND THE INSTITUTES

The editor would be pleased to receive reports from members relating to happenings and activities at their mechanics' institute or hall.

Items of interest could include historical snippets, meeting reports, news of functions or events held or grants received and improvements made. Contact Donald Barker at donhel14@bigpond.net.au or telephone 03-9762-4149

### **BALLAN**

Ballan is celebrating 150 years since the original meeting was held to canvas support to establish a Mechanics' Institute at Ballan. The meeting was held in the Church of England School Room on 21st July 1860. The meeting to formally establish the Ballan Mechanics' Institute was held on 7th October, 1860.

The committee was successful in May obtaining a community arts grant of \$1500 from the Moorabool Shire Council to design and produce a limestone and metal sculpture to celebrate 150 years since the establishment of the Ballan Mechanics' Institute in October 1860. A number of volunteers are assisting with the sculpture under the guidance of important local artist. Julie Jones. The sculpture aims to reflect those who served the institute, those who used it, and the reason the institute was used at the time. It planned to unveil the finished sculpture as part of the 150th celebration which will commence in October. Moorabool Shire has increased its annual operational support for all halls in the shire by 3%. Ballan MI will receive \$23,330 (incl. GST).

A two kilowatt photovoltaic system was installed at the end of October 2009 and since then has generated 1800 kilowatts of power (to mid June). The committee received a rebate of \$9250 from the Commonwealth Government towards the cost of the installation of the panels from their Community Photovoltaic Scheme being approximately 50% of the installation cost. On a daily basis up to 20% of the power is being provided by the solar panels during the period of daylight. It needs to be noted that at Ballan the total power consumption

for the complex including that used by the tenants is in excess of 120 Kilowatt hours per day.

An appeal is being put out by the committee of management at Ballan for information to assist in preparation of the history of Ballan Mechanics' Institute and the Institutes of the Ballan Shire which included; Blackwood, Barry's Reef, Gordon(s), Mount Egerton and Blakeville. Any pictures, correspondence, information on government grants, programmes, dance cards etc would be very much appreciated. Please contact the secretary on 0353681602 or forward to PO Box 469 Ballan 3342

*Contributed by Brian Foley*

### **BALLAARAT**

The finale of Ballaarat's 150th anniversary celebrations was a grand dinner at Craig's

Hotel held on the evening of the 14th August 2010.

The Stage 2 works are nearing completion. The library operation has moved back to the refurbished Batten Room. The whole ground floor refurbishment has been very pleasing. Work on the auditorium is proceeding to plan. An "official opening" should occur some time in October or November.

The official launch of the history of the institution *Under Minerva's Gaze* will take place on 1 October.

*Contributed by Frank Hurley*

### **BERWICK**

Christine Pritchard is the new President replacing Joyce Hayes who served for ten years. New committee members are Corinne Brewis and Susan Griffiths. New bookends for shelving have been purchased and installed. These bookends have slots which

*Contributed by Graham Hughes*

now enable us to display to our readers the latest books in stock. On May 23 we hosted a morning tea for the participants of the MIV Bus Tour of the Cardinia Shire and the City of Casey. A grant has been submitted to the Public Records Office, Victoria for the purpose of having transferred from audio cassette tapes to disc and printed form seventeen one to two hour conversations conducted some fifteen years or so ago by former Librarian Mrs. Pam Darling with several noteworthy senior residents. These conversations graphically describe the life and times of the district going back to over 120 years in the past. It is hoped this project will be completed in time for the Berwick M.I. 150 anniversary celebrations in 2012.

Berwick MI volunteers prepared information and a display for a Local History Expo held at the Beaconsfield Community Centre on Saturday 28 August

## BRUNSWICK

The Brunswick Mechanics' Institute is located on the corner of Sydney Road and Glenlyon Road in Brunswick. This delightful venue is in the heart of Brunswick and is suitable for theatre, music concerts some dance performance and other community events.

The performance space features sound and lighting equipment, retractable tiered seating for a maximum of 100 people, floor seating, five collapsible flexi-stage units and production and booking facilities. The photograph below was forwarded by Pammie from the Brunswick Mechanics' Institute who informs us that the trees have been removed by the council due to disease.

## FRANKSTON

TELL ME WHY



**Mechanics of music**

THE Brunswick Mechanics' Institute has nothing to do with cars or mechanics. In the 1800s, the definition of mechanic was someone who worked with tools, for example, stone masons or skilled labourers. Mechanics' institutes began as places of adult education for those in the community who could not afford it, funded by donations and subscriptions. The Brunswick Mechanics' Institute began as a concert hall, housed a library for 108 years, and is now an arts complex, the Mechanics' Institute Performing Arts Centre, provides community services, and has national and state heritage recognition.

■ Do you have an interesting story to share with your community? We invite readers to report in their words on local affairs. We can help get your article and photo ready for publication. Visit [www.morelandleader.com.au](http://www.morelandleader.com.au) and follow the Reader Reports link. Details: 9495 9558.



Frankston City Council has started work on the refurbishment of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute. Typically this institute has filled a variety of functions since its establishment in 1880, as the public library, dances, meetings, court of law and as a children's inoculation centre. The refurbishment has been funded by a partnership between three levels of government, \$435,000 from the Frankston Council, \$465,000 from the federal government and \$300,000 from the state government community support fund. The allocation of these funds represents the culmination of efforts by local ALP MP Alistair Harkness and Lynn Emblin from the Mornington Peninsula Family Historical Society.

### **MALMSBURY**

An exhibition was held at the Mechanics' Institute on the weekend of 22-23 May. It featured early Chinese settlement in the district, initially centred on mining and then largely on market gardening, with some trading. The exhibition included some material previously displayed at our "Chinese on the Goldfields" exhibition in November 2008, along with more recent material, particularly from the post-goldfields era.

The exhibition will saw the launch of a new book compiled by Sue Walter, our research director. The book, appropriately entitled "Gold 'n Greens", runs to about 230 pages and is extensively illustrated. It will be the first definitive book on early Chinese settlement in the "greater Malmsbury" district, extending from Kyneton to Elphinstone, from Green Hill to Spring Hill, and taking in both gold mining and other occupations, such as market gardening. It was officially launched at 11am on Saturday 22nd May.

We have not been able to maintain our regular open Tuesdays at the Mechanics' Institute during the past few weeks, while Sue Walter has been "flat out" finishing off her new book, but everything should get back to normal after the exhibition and book launch (see above). Our room at the front of the Mechanics' Institute is generally open between 9am and 2pm on

Tuesdays (except during school holidays), but to make sure (especially if you have to travel any great distance), please check with Sue (phone 5423 9383) beforehand, as work commitments of some of our team have made it a bit harder to ensure that we can open every week.

### **MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM**

The TV interview by Jennifer Byrne with author Ayaan Hirsi Ali was filmed in the Library on 30th July. It was shown on ABC1 at 10.05pm on 24th August.

The Athenaeum participated on both days during Melbourne Open House. There were an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 visitors.

Sophie Arnold, Executive Officer, has provided an up-to-date report on the Melbourne Athenaeum renovations. These renovations include: an effective new orchestra pit and scenic flying system, new theatre seats and carpeting, remodelled toilets on the mezzanine level and improved drainage and safe access to the roof. The days of worrying about flooding from old drains and leaks in the roof are now past us. The Athenaeum received \$9,500 to develop a pictorial exhibition. Archivist Marjorie Dalvean and Librarian Jill Bartholomeusz are developing the exhibition which will be on display in the library and possibly the foyer downstairs.

Sophie Arnold is resigning and her successor is Sue Westwood who assumed her new role on 6 September.

The launch of the new renovated theatre took place on Sunday 15th August.

*Jill Bartholomeusz*

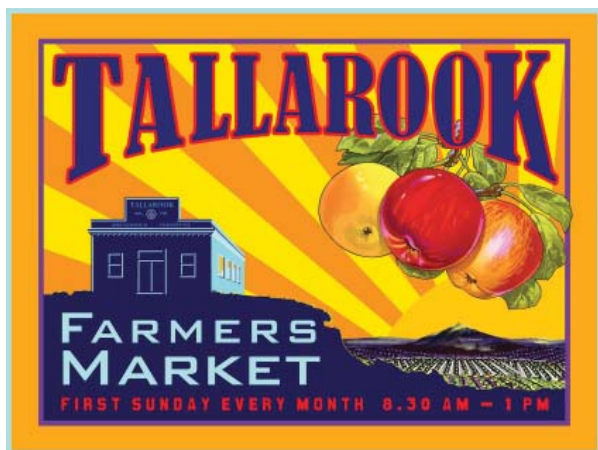
### **PRAHRAN**

The sale of the 140 High Street building has been finalised and the committee are now considering the PMI's options for the future.

The PMI has received a Victoria 175 grant to publish a manuscript from the collection concerning the early exploration and pastoral settlement of Victoria.

See [www.pmi.net.au](http://www.pmi.net.au) for activities taking place at the PMI for History Week including a display, lecture, picture show and the announcement of our 2010 Short History Prize.

*Christine Worthington*



## TALLAROOK

The Tallarook farmers market is held at the Tallarook Mechanics Institute Hall, Main Road, Tallarook on the 1st Sunday of the month. The hours of trading are from 9am-1pm.

For the benefit of other mechanics' institutes that may be contemplating a similar venture the rules and regulations adopted by Tallarook are listed below.

### What you can sell

- Seasonal food, plants, seedlings and cut flowers - the produce must be grown by the stallholder

- All products must be produced, caught or grown in the area – proof of authenticity of the products may be requested by the Market Manager, and if appropriate a visit to the producer's property will be undertaken

- Value added products - the ingredients must come from Victoria and the item processed by the stallholder. This includes food that is for immediate consumption.

### What you can't sell

- Any product that has been resold or bought from a wholesaler or another primary producer

- Produce that is not fresh
- Produce that is not of a high standard
- Products that have been purchased, re-packaged or selling on of finished products

Stallholders must have the following information available for customers:

- Name of the business
- ABN
- Contact details
- Ingredients and production method
- Prices per kilo of item must be clearly advertised
- Weight

## Criteria for Selling at the Farmers Market

Stallholders must have a comprehensive knowledge of what they are selling, including the production method, where it is grown and cooking instructions etc. The producer, family and employees that are directly involved with production are permitted to sell the products. Stallholders who do not produce their own products are not permitted to participate in this market. The relevant accrediting body (i.e. NASAA, BDF) must certify all organic products. Evidence must be given to the Market Manager before it can be sold or offered as organic. Victorian food handling regulations must be adhered to and all other relevant local health laws (i.e. baked and cooked items must be prepared in an "approved" kitchen). A visit to the kitchen where food is being prepared may be required.



## HISTORY PAGE

*This issue features two articles from the archives of the Melbourne Athenaeum which discuss some previously unknown aspects of that institutions management and. In addition there is a most interesting article on the history of the Carisbrook*

*Mechanics' Institute by Alex Stoneham. Bronwyn Lowden who is now a student at the University of Tasmania contributes a short piece on the demise of the Swansea Library.*

### FIRST LADY

From its founding in 1839 until 1919 when Miss Cooper was appointed 'lady assistant', the Melbourne Mechanics Institution appears to have been an entirely masculine organisation: its patrons, committee members, trustees and staff were all men. Men continued to predominate in the organisation's management until 1976, when Mrs. E. McInnes and Mrs E Handfield were elected to the Committee to Management.

However, among subscribers, women had a much longer history, gradually increasing in number until, in the latest surviving list (for 1946) they formed the majority. The first of these many women deserves recognition as a pioneer. She was recorded among the list of subscribers for 1848 in the patriarchal manner of the day as Mrs Col. Anderson. There is no special mention in any of the Institution's surviving records of her becoming a member: the organisation seems to have been as properly blind to gender as to religious affiliation. In any case, her status as the colonel's wife together with her long experience of colonial service life would ensure that she would fit comfortably into the organisation.

All we know of her life (and it is the bare bones) comes from the press, and most of it referring to her husband or children: news; shipping intelligence; the colonel's obituary; family notices and advertisements. Indeed, it is only from her death notice (Argus 19.8.1870) that we learn for the first time that her name was Mary. Until then she appears in the records only as the colonel's wife. Being also the daughter as well as the mother of colonels, she would have taken that for granted:

her father was Col. Campbell and her son W.A.D. Anderson went on to become Lt Colonel of the Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment.

We don't know how old Mary was when she joined the Mechanics' Institution, but she would have been middle aged with her family growing up. One of her four daughters had already married in Sydney while her only son and the other three daughters all married in Melbourne during the 1850s. The double wedding on 31 December 1856 at St Paul's Church of her second and third daughters to 'gentlemen of old standing in the colony' must have been a social occasion of some note. The youngest daughter, Juliet Vivian also married a man from the country, Charles Hugh Lyon.

Although appearing in the records only as the colonel's wife, Mary was an independent woman. In February 1851, while her husband briefly entered public life as an appointed member of the Legislative Council, she went to Sydney, perhaps to see her married daughter there, even to say goodbye if her husband had received another posting. She and her three unmarried daughters were back in Port Phillip in July.

As a young man Anderson had served, inter alia in the Peninsular campaign one degree of separation between Napoleon and Melbourne in the 1840s! We don't know when he and Mary married, but she must have shared many years of her husband's extensive colonial service, including the time when he was in charge of the convicts on Norfolk Island. The family returned to Australia from India in 1845, Col. Anderson having obtained leave of absence for two

years on a medical certificate. They appear to have settled for a time in Parramatta, as it was there, the following year, that their eldest daughter was married in the Anglican Church to Alfred Rush of the 58th regiment on July 11th. Not long afterwards, in August, Col. Anderson left Sydney for Calcutta presumably to settle his affairs there while Mary, evidently a woman with cultural interests, imported a piano from London. It looks as if they had decided that Australia was to be their future home.

But it wasn't to be Sydney. In November 1846 there was a sale of some surplus furniture, a couple of horses and milch cows from their home at Newlands, Parramatta, preparatory to making a move to the greener pastures of Port Phillip. It's not clear when they arrived there to settle, but there is a report of their return to Sydney in February 1846 on the Shamrock from Port Phillip, probably a trip to set things up for their move. According to the colonel's obituary, he 'engaged in squatting pursuits on the Goulburn River', but by this time, Mary may well have had enough of pioneering. Whatever the reason, it was not long before the Andersons moved to South Yarra where they built Fairlie House beside the Botanic Gardens, (now the site of Anderson Street and Fairlie Court) and it was there that they spent the rest of their lives.

## THE LP RECORD LIBRARY AT THE MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM LIBRARY

During the booming Australian post-war economy, many households aspired to own a record player and a record collection to reflect their family's musical tastes. Records became treasured possessions and record playing became an enjoyable family interlude. Until record making became an industry in Australia, all records were imported; fine music and classical works were particularly expensive as most were imported from Europe. Music lovers wanting to listen to classical music could rarely hope to own a set of Wagner's operas, for example, as each work required multiple discs and imports were limited.

Musical shows were also popular pastimes in Melbourne, however live

Settled in her new permanent home, with her children growing up, Mary would have had more time for her own interests. In 1848 she joined the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution which at that time had a collection of some 3228 volumes as well as copies of the latest local and English newspapers and magazines. She was again a member in 1850, 1851, and 1852 – and then there are no more subscriber lists in the annual reports to search through until 1866. Was she something of a Victorian bluestocking, enjoying uplifting books, or did she share a delight in fiction with her daughters? During the 1850s, did she call in to change her books on her way to 'doing the block' to see and be seen or did she prefer a quiet read at home?

Although we know so little of her personal tastes, her appearance, her values, her friends, her family or her daily life, it is clear that she must have had strength and courage to have lived the life of an army wife of the time.

We do know, however, that like the many women subscribers who succeeded her, she had a love of books.

*Note. Volunteers in the archives of the Melbourne Athenaeum are researching the changing roles of women in the organisation since its inception. Mrs Col. Anderson is one of our discoveries. Where were the other women members of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria?*

theatre productions were not something the average family could regularly afford to enjoy. Classical recitals and operas were rare and accessible to even fewer of the populace. Following an overseas trend, recorded music societies and music libraries started to emerge throughout Australia. They became popular and developed in the same way as subscription book libraries, thus enabling them to lodge bulk orders for classical works. Recitals of works from their collections were regularly held for members. In some cases, their lending collections included sheet music.

In late 1958, to accede to numerous members' requests, the Athenaeum Management Committee agreed to

consider the establishment of a music LP Record Library. The matter was deferred until the next year to enable the incoming Management Committee to assess the matter in full. Accordingly, in January 1959, after the Finance Committee advised that funds were available for a start-up allowance of 250 pounds, the Management Committee resolved to approve an LP record library “strictly as an experiment to be reviewed in 12 months”. Two months later, a further 50 pounds was allocated and almost every month thereafter, similar sums were allocated. By June 1959, there were 140 members. Many of these were new members for the Athenaeum as the Committee had agreed to LP Library memberships being a separate subscription facility; existing library members, however, could expand their membership to include a special low priced LP component. Lunchtime recitals of items from the collection were regularly held in the Art Gallery space above the reading room; whilst intended mainly for members, these events were also advertised in the press for promotional purposes.

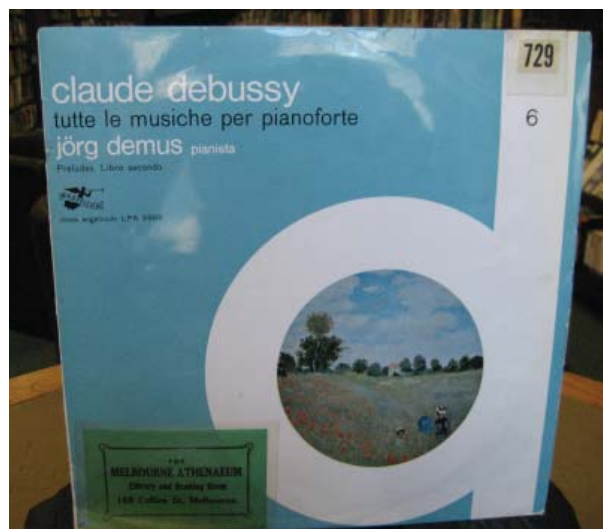
In 1969, the Committee started a Suggestion Book for Members. This was to provide members with an avenue to make requests for books and records and to make general comments and complaints. Each month, this book was perused by the Committee and their decisions or comments were recorded beside each member’s suggestion. Today, this book is an interesting insight into what was being read at the time and what music was popular. In the 1960s, the music requests ranged from Wagner’s operas to modern orchestral pieces by exponents such as Herb Alpert & His Tijuana Brass. In the 1970s, members were requesting operatic albums by Dietrich Fischer-Diskau and Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, the soundtrack of “A Clockwork Orange” and Mahler’s symphonies. In the 1980s, Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata” and Liszt’s “Rhapsody No.5” were requested as well as “The Moods of Ginger Mick” by C.J. Dennis.

By 1969, memberships at the Athenaeum were declining as free municipal libraries were in full swing and quickly becoming

popular community resource centres. In 1971, in an effort to raise membership numbers, the Athenaeum opened a branch library at Forest Hill Shopping Centre. The LP collection in the city Athenaeum was overhauled and a selection of records was transferred to the new branch, supplemented by brand new records including popular music albums. The branch LP library got off to a good start and after one month of operation, it had gained 70 members, probably because of the low \$1 joining fee. Despite initial hopes, by the end of 1977, the branch’s income was not covering expenses, so when the shop’s lease expired at the end of 1977, it was not renewed. The stock and fittings were subsequently sold or redeployed to the city Athenaeum.

The LP library continued to operate in the city. Members’ requests had been received for music cassettes and in 1978 selected purchases were made, however spoken word cassettes and videos were

*Continued next page*



*The photo is of the only LP held in the ATH’s archives. The cover has a green Athenaeum Library label and the number 729 which denotes its catalogue number and identifies its acquisition date as mid 1961. The LP is Volume 6 of All the Music for Pianoforte – The Second Book of Preludes by Claude Debussy, performed by Jörg Demus. The cover illustration is a cameo of Claude Monet’s painting “Les Coquelicots”. The ATH would be interested to learn if other Mechanics Institutes that conducted libraries also had a recorded music collection. Please contact Carol Andrews, Athenaeum Volunteer, at [library@melbourneathenaeum.org.au](mailto:library@melbourneathenaeum.org.au)*



not considered feasible. By October 1987, despite these improvements, the recorded music section had outlived its usefulness. The Board ruled that the music section was to be discontinued, the stock sold and the space reallocated to library storage. Three main factors contributed to its demise, (a) the time spent by staff in maintaining and managing the collection, (b) the space the stock and its display occupied in the library and (c) the level of policing required in checking returned LPs for scratches, often resulting in altercations with members

to extract replacement costs for damaged items.

The mass production of recorded music on new and cheaper media, such as Cassette, Video, CD, and DVD and the ready availability of cheap music players, has seen the demise of record societies and record libraries. Today, the Athenaeum is a thriving book library with a collection of various recorded media, on cassette, video, CD and DVD, which does include a small music selection.

## CARISBROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Carisbrook Mechanics' Institute opened in 1858, and was located in the Town Hall and Corn Exchange building from 1859. One of its first activities was the creation of a library. A century later with the introduction of a regional public library, with local services, the Mechanics' Institute Library ceased to function, was closed, and the book-stock and records were dispersed or destroyed.

Our Historical Society has as one of its aims the preservation of our heritage, and for some years we have been on the lookout for any records or books from the Mechanic Institute's library. In 2005 the first volume turned up in a jumble sale. It was *A Handbook of South Australia* published by the S.A. Government Statist in 1876. It had no number on it, but did have a circular library stamp.

Over the next three years another four titles turned up. In the meantime the neighbouring Newstead Historical Society had published *Newstead Mechanics' Institute: Its Role in the Life of a Central Victorian Community*, written by Adrian Haas in 2006. This fine publication provided vital information on the history of a Mechanics' Institute, similar to Carisbrook's. One of the titles cited in Adrian's book was *The Libraries of the Mechanics' Institutes' of Victoria*, a report written by Frances Clancy in 2000. This provided further details on libraries such as existed at Carisbrook. Both books represented a big challenge to our Society - how best to preserve the heritage, but with few of the objects.

Then a big breakthrough! Our Society inherited the Clanalder Archive - the book collection of a former society member, John J .Alderson. The Archive included about 20,000 books. Among them we have identified about 300 titles with library stamps or script numbers from the former Mechanics' Institute. These are predominantly quality fiction, biographies, travel, colonial authors, and reference books. They are the types of books that were of interest to John Alderson. Presumably the general fiction, detective stories, and romance held little interest to him. These have been catalogued and restored to the original library shelving at the Carisbrook Town Hall. The story of what befell the original collection was then researched by members. Apparently the book-stock was offered for sale or made available free to any local who wanted some of them. The residue, plus the records, was put on a bonfire, which 'burnt for a couple of days' according to several locals who were there at the time in the late 1950s. Frances Clancy indicated that this was a common fate of many such collections. She also pointed out that some of the books were transferred to municipal libraries. This was especially true of volumes worth archiving. More commonly, boxes of these books and bound journals and newspapers frequently were transferred to municipal offices, local museums, or libraries, where the boxes were generally just stored away. Many ended up in the local tip.

So our Society now has a significant

remnant of books, a couple of bound journals, and an exercise book from 1940-41, which includes the names of borrowers, the books they borrowed, and lists of titles the Library purchased in those years. From these we can discern some of the library's history. Carisbrook Mechanics' Institute Library began in 1858, and existed for almost 100 years. It was subscription based, but for many years was able to apply for Victorian government grants for book purchases. The level of such government support fluctuated markedly.

In the collection the titles from 1850 to 1870s include fiction by then contemporary English, Scottish and American authors such as Ballantyne, Fenimore Cooper, Thackeray, Washington Irving, Lord Lytton, and Kingsley. Non-fiction titles include Brougham's *Works* [1856-60], Rollin's *Ancient History* in six volumes, poetry of Terence, *Life in America* [1848], and *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review* [1855]. It is clear that some of these books were local donations. A few of these titles are archive material and worth preserving. Some of the books have script accession numbers but for most of the titles the only identification is the library stamp. Occasionally this is in red.

Between 1880 and WWI fiction titles include mainly British and American writers such as Conan Doyle, Barrie, Hardy, Haggard, Kipling, Crockett, Twain, and Winston Churchill. A set of *Tales of the Borders* by Wilson is there and a small range of travel books, such as *South Africa: Its people...* by Furvis & Beggs, and *Stanley's Emir Fasha Expedition* by A. J. Walters. There are several biographies, including *The Life of R. L. Stevenson* by G. Balfour. Australian books (in colonial editions) include *Tales of Crime* [1894], *On the Modification of Organ* by David Syme, and *Mystery of a Hansom Cab* by Hume.

There are some treasures among the non-fiction titles. These include *The Story of Denmark* by Sidgwick, *Works of Washington Irving* in nine volumes, and *Travels and Cosmos*, both in three volumes by Humbolt. There are far fewer surviving titles for the period 1920 to 1940. Fiction authors include Arnold Bennett, John Buchan, John

Galsworthy and Compton Mackenzie and H.G. Wells. Several Australian authors are included - *The Pioneers* by K.S. Pritchard, *So Disdained* by Neville Shute and *Ride On Stranger* by Kylie Tennant. There are several biographies too. Not many titles remain from the post-WW2 period. A donated *House of Were* [1954] and a small range of light fiction- romance and crime novels - are all that exist.

Where did the Institute Library obtain its books? At the beginning many were donations, and these continued during the Institute's life. Books were purchased from dealers such as W.D. Blair at Newstead. Another source of books was purchase or donation by other organisations, such nearby Amherst Sanatorium. In the early 1940s the Carisbrook Mechanics Institute bought books at the sales organised by the Melbourne Athenaeum Library. Such purchases were usually of lighter fiction,

romance, travel and crime. Titles include *Message From A Corpse* by Merwin [1947], and, *One Half So Precious* by Francis [1944]. The original Athenaeum sticker was left on the cover. As further confirmation each title had a two line Athenaeum stamp The Melbourne Athenaeum and a three line stamp Sold by the Melbourne Athenaeum. At times the Institute Library exchanged books with another Mechanics' Institute. An example is the *The Blanket of the Dark*, by John Buchan [1932]. (Accession No. 1L549) from the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute. Such exchanges were a cost-efficient way of providing the widest range of titles for subscribers and to keep them subscribing. It also meant that accession numbers had to be changed.

Financing the Library operations was a continuing problem. Initially the bookstock was donated and the Institute relied on subscriptions. The Victorian government made annual grants after 1860; the amount [always small for Carisbrook] was based on the local subscriptions raised and local donations. From 1876 only 'free libraries' were eligible for government grants. 'Free' meant that the library was open free to the public for reading purposes" Only subscribers could actually borrow books" When economic times were tough

the government grants for libraries were slashed or removed" This was true in the 1890s and 1930s.

Naturally book stocks declined as did the number of subscribers. In 1941 the Victorian government set up the Victorian Library Services Board, which conducted an enquiry into the provision and operation of libraries in the state. The outcome

was that after 1949 public library services would be provided by municipalities only, and government grants would be to those municipalities which agreed to provide library services. Such services must be staffed with qualified librarians. These measures spelled the death knell of Carisbrook Mechanics' Institute Library, which was eventually replaced with a regionally based service - the Central Highlands regional library.

Frances Clancy set out the options for the future of, Mechanics' Institute Libraries

## SWANSEA LIBRARY

It was only the other day that we had to chronicle the closing of the Jerusalem Library and Reading Room, and to-day we have the unsatisfactory duty of recording a similar fate as having overtaken the Swansea Library. The closing of an institution that has been, and is capable of being so useful, must be sincere cause for regret, not only in the districts more immediately interested, but to all who take pleasure in whatever tends to promote the social and intellectual improvement of a people. The effort that has been made to keep open such humanizing institutions in localities so sparsely peopled is highly creditable to those who have borne the brunt of an uphill game, but the result need surprise no one. But surely the closing of such institutions

in her 2000 Report. She argued that the existing large and functioning libraries continue with government contributions and in cooperation with regional libraries, but that small libraries adopt measures to transfer stock and operations to local municipal libraries. Archive holdings should be preserved.

What ought our Society to do with the existing collection from the Institute? Most of it is too frail to lend, some of the titles are worth archiving and, while the Institute Library shelving exists, it offers little protection for the books. Our Society will probably preserve the remaining titles in a glass-fronted book case. We will continue to collect any titles that turn up, and keep the catalogue up-to-date. A list of titles will be given to the local Maryborough branch of the Central Highlands Library.

should not be accepted as final. We know the economising tendency of Parliament and of Government ; but public money is much worse spent than if Public Libraries and Reading Rooms were subsidised by the State. The Act, handing over to the Colonial Government encheated property, was passed under the distinct understanding that the proceeds, instead of being thrown into the public Treasury, would be applied to such purposes as subsidising public libraries. But come from what source the money may, Parliament shirks its duty in not aiding such institutions.

*The Mercury* (Hobart),  
Wednesday 12 September, 1877



**MECHANICS’ INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.**

ABN 60 337 355 989 Incorporated in Victoria A0038156G

PO Box 1080, Windsor VIC 3181, Australia

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the Mechanics’ Institutes of Victoria Inc. will be held at 10.00am, SATURDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2010 at The Melbourne Athenaeum Library, 188 Collins Street, Melbourne.

The Annual General Meeting will include the election of office-bearers for the Association and nominations for all positions are called for: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Committee members. Members are invited to attend, and must be financial in order to vote. Nominations for office-bearers must be signed by two (2) members and be on the form below.

MIV Office-Bearers (current): President: Prof. Wallace Kirsop ; Vice-President: Dr Donald Barker ; Treasurer: Graham Hughes ; Secretary: Judith Dwyer ; Committee Members: Linda Aspinall, Jill Bartholomeusz, Bruce Draper, Graham Dudley, Brian Foley, Lorraine Huddle, Dr Frank Hurley, Bronwyn Lowden, Dr Peter Mansfield, Peter Pereyra.

- AGENDA:**
1. Apologies.
  2. Confirmation of Minutes of 2009 Annual General Meeting.
  3. President’s Report.
  4. Treasurer’s Report.
  5. Election of Office-Bearers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Committee Members.
  6. Setting of Membership fees 2010-2011.
  7. Rules of Association MIV:

**Motion:** That the committee recommends to the AGM that the rules be amended as per the notice circulated in Useful Knowledge #23.

8. Other Business.

**Apologies and RSVP (for catering) to:**

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MIV Sec. Judith Dwyer , P.O. Box 482, Berwick.3806  
 (03) 9707 4254 Email: [jad134@hotmail.com](mailto:jad134@hotmail.com)

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**Nomination Form**

We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 being financial members of the Mechanics’ Institutes of Victoria Inc.,

nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the position of \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to the nomination

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_