



# USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

Newsletter No 26 – Winter 2011

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## MIV NEWS

### MIV TOUR

MIV have organised a day tour along the Bass Coast and Phillip Island for 24 July. As an interesting aside, the tour will also visit the National Vietnam Veterans Museum at Newhaven and the Phillip

Island and District Historical Society Museum at Cowes. The cost is \$50 and lunch is included. A booking form for the tour is enclosed in this newsletter.

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Jill Bartholomeusz, Bronwyn Lowden.

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## DIARY DATES

2011

13 Aug 2011 – MIV General Meeting:  
Melbourne Athenaeum  
13-21 Aug 2011 – National Science Week  
Oct 2011 – Applications for Holsworth  
Local Heritage Trust Grants close  
12 Nov 2011 – MIV Annual General  
Meeting: Melbourne Athenaeum

2012

Oct 2012 – Applications for Holsworth  
Local Heritage Trust Grants close  
Dec 2012 – Mechanics' Institute Conference  
with ANZHES 2012: Melbourne

## PLAQUING YOUR INSTITUTE...

MIV's Historical Plaques Program was brought to life in 2003. The aim is to plaque every Mechanics' Institute and their ilk in Victoria. The plaque gives a brief history of the mechanics' institute movement, and also significant establishment dates of the institute on which the plaque is named. A new Historical Plaques Program is available by contacting MIV Secretary, Judith Dwyer (see contact details p.1).

So far, MIV has plaqued 24 Institutes across Victoria:

No 1 Maldon Athenaeum  
No 2 Ballan Mechanics' Institute  
No 3 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute  
No 4 Taradale Mechanics' Institute  
No 5 Lilydale Athenaeum  
No 6 Berwick Mechanics'  
Institute and Free Library  
No 7 Minyip Mechanics' Institute  
No 8 Frankston Mechanics' Institute  
No 9 Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute  
No 10 Arthurs Creek Mechanics'  
Institute and Free Library  
No 11 Prahran Mechanics' Institute  
No 12 Digby Mechanics' Institute  
No 13 The Melbourne Athenaeum  
No 14 Benalla Mechanics'  
Institute and Free Library  
No 15 Jindivick Mechanics'  
Institute and Free Library

No 16 Emerald Mechanics' Institute  
No 17 Dean Hall & Mechanics Institute  
No 18 Oakleigh Mechanics' Institute  
No 19 Newham Mechanics' Institute  
No 20 Nagambie Mechanics' Institute  
No 21 Mia Mia Mechanics' Institute  
No 22 Mortlake Mechanics' Institute  
No 23 Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute  
No 24 Kyneton Mechanics' Institute  
So the question is: Who is going  
to be number 25 . . . ?

Who plaqued you? For those Institutes who have already had their plaques unveiled, MIV would be interested to know who unveiled your plaque, on which date and for what occasion for our own records. If you could kindly email any details you would like to share with us to: [bronlowden@hotmail.com](mailto:bronlowden@hotmail.com)  
We would be interested to receive feedback about having your institute plaqued.

Let us know what facilities you have. We may be able to recommend your institute for a wedding one day! MIV often get enquiries about which mechanics' buildings would be available for weddings, or other functions. In fact one query was for a Tai Chi class! If you let us know, and would be happy to host events from outside the community, we will be sure pass on your details to those who enquire.

## NEWS HEADLINES

### HOME IS WHERE THE HALL IS

November is Community Hall month. This initiative of Regional Arts Victoria, with the ABC as a partner in the project, will be a big celebration of community halls and the volunteers who run them.

The MIV hopes that all our members take part. Community halls often began life as Mechanics' Institutes. It really is simple – just register your interest on the Regional Arts Victoria website: [www.rav.net.au](http://www.rav.net.au) Registrations close Thursday 1 September, so there is some time to plan.

It is an opportunity to promote your hall and its facilities and to highlight the Mechanics' Institute contribution to the social and cultural life of the community. It is a chance to involve younger members, or new residents to your district; to share the history and stories of your local hall.

If organizing a special event seems too difficult, why not make a feature of a regular event. For example, the monthly dance could feature a display of photos of yesteryear, or the costumes that were worn. A group that meets regularly in your hall might have a special open day to attract new members, or to show off their activity.

There are also some free exhibitions available for booking in November. Available from MIV are Mechanics' ... and Proud of it! This exhibition provides a glimpse of the variety of cultural, educational, and social activities in mechanics' institutes throughout Victoria. Local mechanics' institutes provided information and images for the posters. There are 22 institutions represented: Arthur's Creek, Ballarat, Ballan, Berwick, Brunswick, Buninyong, Chiltern, Eaglehawk, Kilmore, Leongatha, Maldon, Melbourne, Mortlake, Murtoa, Prahran, Romsey, Stanley, Tallarook, Trentham, Walhalla, Warburton, Warrandyte. The exhibition consists of laminated poster (420 cm x 590 cm) on mount board with the

place name at the top. Each mount board is 840cm x 600cm. There are 24 panels, and a display banner for hanging outside the hall (or on a wall).

Also available from MIV is Remember the Mechanics'? This exhibition outlines the history of the Mechanics' Institutes movement from its origins in the UK, to its rapid expansion in Victoria following the gold rushes. At its peak there were over 1,000 institutions in Victoria. And many continue as the community halls of today. The story of the Mechanics' Institutes movement is brought to life in the individual stories of the institutions at Ballarat, Walhalla, Berwick, Wallacedale, Maldon, Stanley, Prahran, Melbourne, Briagolong, Eaglehawk, Footscray, Leongatha and Kilmore. It consists of 20 panels (mount board) each 840cm x 600cm, and a display banner for hanging outside the hall (or on a wall).

From the National Science Week Victorian Coordinating Committee and the CWA of Victoria comes Raveling the World. This exhibition is a science-craft project to celebrate the International Year of Forests and will be on display in Federation Square during Science Week in August.

The CWA have taken scientific drawings and images of eucalyptus trees, their fruits, nuts and leaves and recreated them in hand-worked wall hangings. They have also created 3D models of molecules associated with these eucalyptus trees. There are approximately 8 wall hangings of 2mx2.5m in size and several smaller pieces of work that could be hung as mobiles.

The MIV has booked this display for November. You may like to involve your local CWA in putting on this exhibition. There is help available to set up the exhibition and to take it down.

Contact MIV Secretary, Judith Dwyer (contact details p.1), if interested in any of these exhibitions.

## AUSTRALIAN GENERATIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

This project is currently seeking participants across Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. In a new national project, historians at Monash (Professor Al Thomson, Associate Professor Christina Twomey and Dr Seamus O’Hanlon) and La Trobe Universities, in partnership with ABC Radio National and the National Library of Australia, are collecting life story interviews with generations of Australians

born from the 1920s to the 1980s. The Project is interested in the life stories of all Australians - rural and urban, male and female, the recently arrived and people whose families have lived in Australia for generations. People can register their interest in participating by going to [www.arts.monash.edu.au/australian-generations](http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/australian-generations) and clicking on the orange headphones. Or call Kate on 03 9905 2206.

## FROM THE ASHES . . .

### REBUILDING VICTORIA’S FIRE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

It has been two years since the Black Saturday bushfires of 7 February 2009. Here is some news from Mechanics’ Institutes which have been impacted by the fires. We would like to express our thanks to all local businesses, companies and organisations that have helped Victorian communities get back on their feet and help rebuild and repair their Community Halls.

Callignee Hall is rebuilt!

After losing their Hall in the February 2009 bushfires, the town of Callignee has received a new Community Centre to replace the lost Hall, Fire Station and School. The opening took place on Australia Day with around 500 people in attendance.

The new facility cost around \$3 million and includes a large new kitchen, room for the local playgroup, Community Hall space with stage, Fire Station, cricket change-rooms, outdoor patio area. The new



*The new Callignee Community Centre (Photo from Victorian Community Development website)*

eco-friendly building was funded by the Victorian Government, Latrobe City Council and corporate donors including Alstom International Pty Ltd, of Morwell. Alstom has provided funding for solar panels, solar hot water systems, grey water systems and other environmentally friendly conscious technologies.

DSE has appointed Latrobe City Council as the Committee of Management, who will form a local Committee of Management to oversee the day to day use of the Hall.

#### Devon North Hall Improvements

Over 200 people gathered at the Devon North Hall to celebrate the improvements and share the new facilities. The Devon North Hall was fitted with a new kitchen, verandas on the North and West of the building, disabled access facilities, a shower and had the Hall floor renewed.

All of these projects were made possible with funding help from the VBAF and FRRR.

#### Jeeralang North Hall Upgrades Underway

The Jeeralang North Hall was damaged in the 2009 fires. The pouring of a new concrete slab has been completed and plumbing is awaiting connection.

#### Narbethong

The old Narbethong Hall, situated on the Maroondah Highway was completely destroyed by the bushfires. Now, works have begun to create a new \$1.8 million Community Hall which will again provide



*Above: The old Narbethong Mechanics' Institute Hall (Photo by Bronwyn Lowden)  
Below: Design of the new Narbethong Hall (BNV and Arup design)*



## MEN'S SHED ON-LINE

The Australian Men's Shed Association, together with Beyond Blue and the Movember Foundation has launched a new website – The Shed Online – [www.theshedonline.org.au](http://www.theshedonline.org.au). The Shed is an online social community where men can make new mates and share skills.

Like the 400-plus community-based Men's Sheds across Australia, The Shed Online aims to provide a space where men can discuss a range of topics, catch up on news

and events, play online games, exchange ideas and take part in activities. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Ros Lording at Beyond Blue: [ros.lording@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:ros.lording@beyondblue.org.au) or call the Beyond Blue information line on 1300 224 636. Several Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria have developed Men's Sheds in their buildings. How would your community like to get involved as well?

a public meeting space in the town. The design is inspired by the pastoral and forest environments of the area, its rural character and timber industry heritage. Funding has been made available from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund, McDonald's Australia Ltd and insurance payments. There has been pro bono support from BVN and Arup for the design and engineering through Emergency Architects Australia. The rebuild will be supported by local contractors Edwards and Moore of Kinglake and Hedger Constructions of Alexandra. Visit [http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/images/stories/Narbethong\\_Hall\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/images/stories/Narbethong_Hall_Brochure.pdf) to see the plans for the new Narbethong Community Hall.

## Strath Creek Community Hall and Pioneer Reserve

The upgrades and extension of the Strath Creek Community Hall and Pioneer Reserve have begun. The \$900,000 works will enable the construction of a new toilet block and BBQ shelter, extension and upgrade of the kitchen and meeting room facilities, as well as upgrading the old tennis courts to make them multi-sport courts and construction of an adjacent pavilion. The three stage works are expected to be completed in June.

## IS YOUR INSTITUTE WRITING A LOCAL HISTORY?

The Holsworth Local Heritage Trust, a charitable fund within the Victorian Community Foundation, supports the publication of local histories and offers grants to community groups in order to make these publications come to life. If you are part of a small, not-for-profit Victorian organisation, and your group has

an interest in heritage preservation, grants of up to \$1,500 are available to help with the publication of any specific or general local history in Regional Victoria. Check this webpage for more details: <http://www.anz.com/Documents/AU/Aboutanz/HolsworthLocalHeritageGuidelines.pdf> or visit an ANZ bank to find out more.

## UNESCO ASIA-PACIFIC HERITAGE AWARDS FOR CULTURE HERITAGE CONSERVATION

The Ballarat Mechanics' Institute received an honourable mention in these awards (see the Ballarat entry in Around the Institutes below). The following articles provide some background information on these awards.

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation have been established to recognize the achievement of individuals and organizations within the private sector, and the public-private initiatives, in successfully restoring structures of heritage value in the region.

This project advances UNESCO's global strategic objective of "promoting the drafting and implementation of standard setting instruments in the field of culture". Within this global framework, it builds on the regional pillar of "localization and empowerment of the culture profession to develop and implement standards".

UNESCO's mandate is to promote the stewardship of the world's cultural resources, including the built heritage which constitutes our collective cultural memory, and the foundation upon which communities can construct their future. In Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO supports conservation activists at all levels, and particularly seeks to encourage the role of the private sector in preserving the region's cultural heritage.

Since 2000, UNESCO has received 359 entries from 23 territories, spanning a wide range of conservation projects from private residences to palace complexes. Many of the entries have set technical and social benchmarks for conservation in the region, while acting as catalysts for local preservation activity. Over the years, the projects illustrate the increasing momentum and level of conservation in Asia and the

Pacific.

In 2005, UNESCO launched the Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation. The Jury Commendation recognizes newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well integrated into historic contexts.

A total of 33 entries have been received for the 2010 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation, the eleventh cycle of the Awards programme. The jury will meet on 9-11 August 2010 to select this year's winners at UNESCO Bangkok in Thailand.

An Award of Excellence will be given to the project selected as representing the most excellent achievement in the restoration of an historic structure, followed by Awards of Distinction, Awards of Merit and Honourable Mentions. Winning projects will be announced in September 2010.

Out of 33 projects, 30 have been submitted for the Heritage Conservation Awards programme. Three projects have been submitted for the Jury Commendation for Innovation category, which recognizes new structures built in historic contexts. The submissions are from 14 countries: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The 11-member 2010 UNESCO Heritage Awards jury comprises Mr Arash Boostani, Dr Tim Curtis, Dr William Chapman, Dr Richard Engelhardt, Dr Nobuko Inaba, Dr Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, Dr Spencer Leineweber, Mr Laurence Loh, Dr Que Weimin, Ms Gurmeet Rai, and Dr Johannes Widodo.

## MIRC REPORT

### MIV SCANNING PROJECT

The Scanning Project continues with more records from Trentham, Narre Warren, Whorouly and Eaglehawk being added to the database.

The primary purpose of making copies of original mechanics' institute records in digital form is to conserve and preserve them. Researchers can use the digital records and not constantly handle the originals. The digital records can also be used to illustrate your institute's history and achievements. The Fawcett Hall history by Ian Newman is an excellent example of using the material in this way. And the Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute records have been used in the latest Casey-Cardinia

history blog "Links to our past".

The MIV has a record of the location of many mechanics' institute records. For this we must thank those who responded to Project Mis-ing initiated by Pam Baragwanath in 2005. But there are still individual mechanics' institutes that have lost track of their records. The Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV) can be a source of original material. All mechanics' institutes that received a library grant had to complete an annual return. There were also records and information required by the Health Department. All government records can be researched at the Public Record Office.

## AROUND THE INSTITUTES

### BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Friends of Minerva organised an Afternoon Tea at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute on Sunday 10 April. This event allowed friends of the institute to visit the new, upgraded facilities of this magnificent Ballarat venue. Included in this event was a tour of the Institute and information of upcoming events and activities.

As noted above the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute was the recipient of an honourable mention in the 2010 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation. The judging panel made the following comments when making the award.

The refurbishment of the former Ballarat Mechanics' Institute has restored the iconic landmark of the 19th century gold mining town and showcases a significant chapter of Australia's heritage. The highlight of the project is the restoration of the street façade which demonstrates strong technical prowess and reinforces the coherence of the

historic urban landscape. The interior works including new services such as the lift were undertaken with an eye to authenticity and reversibility by minimizing the impact of new interventions and retaining the original elements to the extent possible. The project demonstrates exceptional private-public commitment to ensuring the ongoing accessibility and continuity of the institute's historical, architectural and social significance for townspeople and visitors alike.

### BERWICK MECHANICS INSTITUTE AND FREE LIBRARY

The Annual General Meeting of BMIFL was held on Wednesday at 9th March at the Berwick RSL Hall. Almost fifty people attended. The guest speaker at the AGM was an entertaining John Wells, a local historian and author. There was one change to the committee, unfortunately Professor John Miller, our former Vice-President decided to resign so he could care for his wife. Susan Griffiths has taken John's place.

Chris Pritchard continues as President, Dr. Eddie Vaughan as Secretary, Corinne Brewis continues as a committee member. Corinne continues her involvement with Bonnie Doon hall.

At the Annual General meeting Treasurer, Graham Hughes, was presented with a thirty years of service badge. As a result of this presentation we received some very favourable front page publicity, on one of Berwick's prominent local newspapers. The article also mentioned the downward turn to BMIFL finances over the past two years. A hold has now been put on the purchase of many new books for the library. We are waiting on a positive response from the City of Casey for an increase to our Annual Grant. The City of Casey has been a strong supporter of Berwick MI's activities for many years. The city has recently funded some minor repairs to our building.

In November 2010 a grant application to PROV was made to assist fund the digitisation of some interviews recorded originally to audio cassette by our past noteworthy Librarian, Mrs. Pam Darling. We await the result of this application, which is due to be announced shortly by the Minister for Arts, Mr. Ted Baillieu.

BMIFL celebrated World Heritage Day on Monday, April 18th 2011 with other members of the Casey Cardinia Local History Reference Group at the National Trust Casey Cardinia Branch Rooms, Pioneers Park, Berwick. The theme this year was "Water" and each group gave a short presentation on a water-related theme, photograph or object from their collections. There was great variety in the presentations – public water troughs, floods and rivers, sea and lake swimming pools, water tanks and historical anecdotes – just to name a few. BMI displayed books from the Casey Collection on irrigation in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Australia.

The BMIFL is also investigating ways to celebrate its 150th anniversary which falls in October 2012.

Mrs Pam Darling was the deserving recipient of an Order of Australia in recognition of her 47 years of dedicated

service to the Berwick Mechanics' Institute & Free Library. In her typical style she noted that the award only came her way because of all the community support for the Berwick Mechanics' Institute. "My library years were very fulfilling" she said, noting that highlights were the starting of a children's library and the tremendous support of the team of more than thirty volunteers. Pam celebrated the occasion with more than seventy guests at an Open House. Details of Pam's long service to the Berwick Mechanics' Institute are outlined in the MIV Newsletter#23.

#### CHARLTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Charlton Golden Grains Museum which is housed in the Charlton Mechanics Institute was severely flooded in the January floods. Having already been flooded in September with only minimal damage, in January we had over 2 feet of water throughout the building which resulted in significant damage to the building, furniture, equipment, display cabinets and sadly our historical collection. With all but three of our members affected by the flood and the town without power for many days, measures to minimize damage were difficult to implement. However with the help of volunteers from PROV, the Donald Historical Society and the Ballarat Gold Museum, the remainder of our collection was cleaned and packed into storage. Other items were put into a large freezer on loan and have since been professionally dried. The building now awaits repairs and with financial assistance through grants and donations, we soon look forward to setting up our museum again with a fresh new outlook and most importantly a brand new photocopier. We are truly indebted for the assistance and support we have already received from the museum & historical sector, both regionally and state wide. It's comforting to know help isn't far away for our small regional museums when in need.

#### EDENHOPE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The future of the Edenhope mechanics' Institute appears to be in some doubt. Brian Foley has provided the following update.

An agenda item for the West Wimmera



*Charlton MI. Top: After the flood peak  
Above: High water mark on the organ  
Below: The research room*



Shire Council meeting that was held on 26th May 2011 was a proposal to transfer ownership of the Edenhope Mechanics Institute and Free Library Trust from last Trustee (Gerald Joseph Cranage) to the Shire. At present the building is leased to the Institute committee. Council Officers have recommended that \$20,000 be set aside in the 2011-12 budget for legal costs and that the building inspector prepare a

report regarding current and future repairs and maintenance requirements.

The following motion was then carried at the 26th May meeting of the West Wimmera Shire Council "That council seek a meeting with Edenhope Mechanics' Institute Hall Committee and the surviving Trustee Mr Cranage to discuss the intentions of Council and the Committee before proceeding with any transfer of ownership process regarding the Edenhope Mechanics' Institute property from the last surviving trustee to the West Wimmera Shire Council". Hopefully an appropriate arrangement can be made that will see the continuation of this fine institute.

#### FAWCETT MECHANICS INSTITUTE

The Fawcett Mechanics Institute Reserve committee invited local and past residents to be part of the Fawcett Halls' Official re-opening ceremony on Saturday 28 May at 2pm.

Attendees on the day came along and saw the hall, memorabilia, a slide show of works to date, some even found a bargain at the white elephant sale, and many took home a home made jam, relish and or a sauce. Some residents had not seen each other for some 66 years.

On the day local resident and committee member Jimmy Young recited a poem especially written for the halls re-opening, Ian Newman launched with Helen Armstrong's assistance 'Fawcett Hall a history of the hall and its people' and Alexandra RSL Sub Branch President Henry Andrews presented a letter sent to children at the Fawcett State School (No 3393) by Lt Colonel Leslie Cecil Maygar VC to the committee.

President of the committee Sam Hicks made small presentations along with Dian Williams from Department of Sustainability – Seymour and Ros Coleman from Heritage Victoria to the major sponsors of the Hall and committee members to recognise their outstanding contributions to the hall during the restoration.

Then to mark the occasion of the re-opening Cr John Walsh planted a Manchurian Pear

tree to symbolise the valleys past connection with Gold and the Chinese that mined in Spring Creek.

Member for Benalla Bill Sykes representing the Minister for Planning Mathew Guy assisted in cutting the re-opening ribbon with representatives of past and current members of the families in Fawcett that was stretched along the front fence.

A raffle was held, drawn and won by local Stephen Mortensen on Sunday at 4pm and was kindly donated by Jenny Barca from Arndale Pharmore Pharmacy.

If wish to support the hall you can purchase the 74 page commemorative booklet-Fawcett Hall a history of the hall and its people by contacting Ian on 03 5772 2997. The booklet is \$20 per book plus \$5 postage and handling. All profits from the book go to the ongoing restoration of the hall.

#### MALMSBURY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Malmsbury Historical Society meets in the mechanics' institute on the third Wednesday of each month. The institute is open for visitors and researchers each Friday between 9am and 2pm. Contact can be made at malmsburyhistorical@gmail.com An open weekend was held at the institute on 15-17 April which was well attended and which realised \$120 from research fees and from the sale of publications.

#### MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM

The Athenaeum recently held a free exhibition - The Melbourne Athenaeum in Pictures. An exhibition about a building in Collins Street is unusual, especially when it's held within that building. Originally called the Mechanics' Institution (the name Melbourne came later to the settlement) the Melbourne Athenaeum's building was first completed in 1842. By 1886 the building had evolved into the three-storey building you see today, on the same site, next to the Town Hall.

Stand in front of the Regent theatre, on the other side of Collins Street, look across the road and imagine the "New Building" as it was called in 1886. The elegant Victoria Coffee Palace was next door and there was no veranda (an addition in the 1920s). But

imagine further back, to 1842. On the same site stood a plain, two-storey, Georgian structure behind a grassy slope and a picket fence; no footpath to speak of; Collins Street a muddy mess with tree stumps dotted along its length.

The exhibition of twenty images on display barely skims the history of this unique place. As a community centre with a hall, lending library, reading room and museum, the institution flourished, through wars, depressions, economic booms and busts, mirroring the trends and developments of the city. After 171 years, the excellent library is still operating and still offers respite from the busy city. The hall was eventually enlarged and, with a major make-over in the 1920s, was transformed into the gracious theatre seen today.

The exhibition was curated by Jenny Davies, well-known for her excellent book about Flinders Street Station, Beyond the façade. The exhibition is free, open to the public and on display in the theatre foyer. A souvenir brochure is available either in the foyer or in the library - on the first floor.

In further news from the Athenaeum, Librarian Jill Bartholomeusz has resigned as Librarian of the Melbourne Athenaeum Library. Sue Westwood reports that her last day was Friday 10 June. Jill's energy, warmth and commitment to the Library has seen significant growth in the membership and development of Library programs during her seven years with us. Many of our members have been saddened to hear of her departure. Her commitment in representing the Ath at the MIV has been





acknowledged by the committee. We hope that relationship continues, and would like reassure committee members that the MIV is most welcome to continue their meetings here at the Library. Allison Belcher will act as Library Manager until mid-September by which time a we hope a suitable replacement can be arranged.

#### NEWHAM MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Newham Mechanics Institute following its re-opening 18 months ago continues to complete minor projects left over from its major works project. Landscaping, flagpoles, gabion retaining walls, plantings, community orchard opening and painting the old hall are all part of what makes up our community hall a work in progress.

The best post-build result has been the dramatic increase in the hall's usage by community groups and individual's occasions. This has meant a good increase in revenue and if it continues perhaps we won't have to fundraise as much to pay the annual bills [we hope!!]

We are embarking on a marketing plan with professional help to do flyers etc to keep building our usage and our professional kitchen has also made a big difference - it is impressive.

This has been a huge project for a small community of 250 odd households.

There has been terrific support for the Committee but let me tell you - democracy is a messy business!!

If you want to get your hall up to scratch I would encourage everyone to go for it, it's hard but there are lots of good people

to help you both in government and in your town. You learn a lot of new things and find a different world than that which you might be used to living it but it is well worth it - we have great pride in what we have accomplished. All you need to do is keep your eye on the prize!!!

Sally Stabback  
Committee of Management

#### PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Prahran Mechanics' Institute, which was recently forced to sell its heritage building in High Street, Prahran, has found a new home.

The PMI committee has been negotiating the purchase of a renovated building at 39 St Edmonds Road, Prahran, for some months and a contract of sale was signed today, Friday 16 June.

The building is a short walk, indeed within sight of, the High Street building.

Before the PMI occupies the new building, some works will need to be carried out, including the installation of a lift. Under the sale agreement, the PMI still has about three years remaining at the High Street building - plenty of time to carry out necessary works and plan the big move.

The new building will offer the PMI more than double the floor space (from 230m<sup>2</sup> to over 550m<sup>2</sup>) for its Victorian History Library, a dedicated function room and homes for partner historical organisations (including the Cinema & Theatre Historical Society, Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria and the Australian Railways Historical Society Vic Branch).

Additionally, some on-site car parking spaces will make life easier for visitors to the library.

The PMI retains its property in Chapel Street, Prahran, which for 110 years has provided the PMI with its main source of income. The committee will consider the feasibility of developing the Chapel Street site in future.

PMI President, John Chandler, says: "This is a bold new beginning for our Institute known as 'The Hardy Survivor' - from our

original educational beginnings we have evolved into an important local history library specialising in Victorian History among other activities. The new home will allow us to expand the range and level of services we provide to our membership and the public."

#### TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Tallarook Mechanics' Institute must surely be the pace setter when it comes to community activism and the range of activities it provides and co-ordinates. Listed below are the activities that the institute has been involved in since the last issue of Useful Knowledge.

On Saturday, March 26th at 2.00pm the Pinnacle Puppet Theatre presented "The three little pigs with a twist!", a family show for both adults and kids. All proceeds went to the Seymour District Community Fund Raising and all money raised went directly, via Seymour's service clubs, to Charlton, Victoria, a town that has been devastated twice by floods.

The monthly farmers markets (held on the first Sunday of the month) has continued to attract new stalls. Amongst the latest additions are Pasta Adele (home made pasta and crostoli), LLWagyu (free range dry aged premium beef), Carly's Cupcakes (Cakes for all occasions), Jack Jakovljevic (fresh fruit), and also Dimits Orchard (Fresh Fruit) and A Cake Of Soap (Handmade Soaps). The market is managed by Clive Hines who can be contacted at Home: 03 5799 2228 Mobile:0417 803327 or email:clivehines@hotmail.com

Also featured at the march Sunday Market was Guitarist & Singer Andy Allen (pictured above and the featured stall for the March Market was Yellow Box Organics also pictured above.

Another initiative of the Tallarook Mechanics' Institute is the Tallarook Stacks, an exciting new art program. The April Farmers Market featured Indian potters Manohar Lal (Manori) and Dharmveer who are exponents of the hereditary Rajasthani traditional pottery, and who are giving the visitors to the market the opportunity to get



their hands dirty and learn how to throw a pot – Indian style. The potters are visiting Tallarook from India and while they are here are also undertaking an ambitious project to create the 'Tallarook Stacks' with the local community and school groups. The object of the project is to bring together professional artists and the local community in a collaborative adventure, Tallarook Stacks, a ceramic installation at Tallarook Mechanics Institute. Sandra Bowkett local potter and facilitator of the project said "This project will express our local natural environment in a sculpture. This is an opportunity for artists and non-artists to work together on a creative process which is reflective of the community that has a significant outcome."

On a lighter note, the Tallarook Mechanics Institute presented a season of comedy in 2011. On Friday 29th April Barry Morgan delighted the audience with a memorable musical experience with an organ demonstration on the 1981 Hammond Aurora Classic. On Saturday 21st May songwriter, singer, comedian and prominent radio personality Greg

Champion captured what it is to be Australian through his unique combination of comedy, sports parodies and country and folk music. On Saturday 25th June Dave O'Neill, one of Australia's most versatile and loved comedians presented "Happy to be out of the House". Finally on Thursday 7 July a 'Circus Clown Show' with Tony Bones the clown was held for the benefit of grown-ups and children alike.

Libby Webster

#### WARRANTYTE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The Warrantyte Mechanics' Institute is the home for the Warrantyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association (WMIAA). The association is the umbrella organisation for a number of specific groups: Theatre, Pottery, Painting and Arts. The theatre group has had a busy year presenting a major performance 'The Follies Goes to Town' for a season in April. A series of three one act plays: Soap Opera, Decline and Fall and Good Grief were held on 24-25 June and 1-2 July.

On a more prosaic note the institute building required some plumbing repairs

as Alan Cornell reports.

The rain fell and the Hall toilets flooded. The plumbers connected our wee drain with next door's big drain. The Hall toilets flooded again. The plumbers dug more drains across the back of the hall. Next rains anxiously awaited. No such problems with the new pottery toilet (which will henceforth be known as The Potty) which opened for business - good news for the 18 potters who started classes this term.

Alan Cornell, Edodger editor

#### INSTITUTES IN BRIEF

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council 2011-2012 budget proposed to allocate \$35,000 for works at the Gisborne Mechanics' Institute and \$25,000 for furniture at Kyneton Mechanics Institute.

From the Moorabool Shire Council we learn that as part of the summer round of community grants, Bungaree Mechanics Institute would receive \$5000 towards kitchen upgrade and Ballan Mechanics Institute and Free Library \$4000 towards repairs and replacement of the Green Room floor.

## HISTORY PAGE

*The history page(s) of this issue of Useful Knowledge features two articles by MIV committee member Brian Foley, firstly a history of the Ballan mechanics' Institute, of which he is the current secretary and secondly a sample*

*of the research he is currently undertaking into land legislation as it relates to mechanics' institutes. Also included is an article by Geoffrey Burkhardt on his preliminary research into published histories of mechanics' institutes.*

### **BALLAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY A BRIEF HISTORY**

*This speech was made by Brian Foley at the Ballan 150th Sculpture unveiling.*

This area was settled in 1838 when Cowie, Stead and Von Stieglitz moved up the Moorabool Valley to find suitable land. Robert Von Stieglitz named his selection of 4836 acres "Ballan" and his brother selected "Ballanee" 16,000 acres on the opposite side of the Werribee River.

By the mid 1840's a small settlement had developed on the Werribee River as a stopping point for carriers moving supplies to the Western District. In 1847 a Post Office was established at Ballan on the mail route between Melbourne and Portland before moving to Bacchus Marsh for a period. In September 1850 a Post Office was established in both locations. In December 1850 the Village of Ballan

was proclaimed and officially published in the "Port Phillip Gazette of 1st January 1851. The village extended from near the Police Station to what is now Duncan St and from the River to Steiglitz St. A copy of the 1858 Map is on display. In 1859 "The Handbook to Australasia" published by Fairfax Melbourne described "Ballan" thus situated on an eminence on the banks of the Werribee River on the main road from Melbourne to Ballarat. The climate is salubrious but in winter season on account of its elevated position very cold. There is a steam driven flour mill, Post Office and four stores.

On 21st July 1860 a meeting was held at the Church of England school room to canvas the idea of establishing a Mechanics Institute. On the 7th October 1860 due to the support gained, a meeting was again held in the school room where the formal motion to establish the "Ballan Mechanics Institute" was carried by those present. Interesting the Ballan Mechanics Institute was about the fortieth established in Victoria and many significantly larger towns did not establish an Institute until much later. Was it the wife of Charles Hugh Lyon, Juliet Vivian who arrived in Ballan in early 1860 to become mistress of Ballanee at 21 years of age? It is known that her mother Mrs Anderson had been a subscriber of the Melbourne Athenaeum from about 1848.

Juliet and Charles were strong supporters of the Institute often loaning furniture from their home for Plays and other events.

A letter dated 12th October 1860 under the signature of A T Musgrave was sent to the Governor of Victoria Sir Henry Barkly asking the land on the North West Corner of Simpson and Cowie Streets be reserved as a site for a "Mechanics Institute". A second letter was sent to the local Member of Parliament asking the cause of the delay on the 23RD October 1860. The site was temporary reserved on 12th November 1860 subject to a Mechanics Institute Building being completed in 12 Months at which time the Reserve could become permanent.

After a delay due to floods a twenty by forty feet brick building was opened in

December 1861.

The Government Gazette of 22nd January 1862 lists the following Trustees Charles Hugh Lyon, Dugald McPherson and Peter Inglis.

On the 11th November 1862 the formation meeting of the Ballan Roads Board was held at the Institute. The Board later became the Ballan Shire. I hope the Shire may consider identifying these sites as part of the 150th Anniversary of Local Government in 2012 - 2014.

By the mid 1870's the business centre of Ballan was moving to Inglis Street and the Committee sought permission from the Government to sell the existing site and looked at sites along Inglis St. By this time the building had added a fifteen by fifteen foot reading room.

On the 30th May 1885 the Committee paid £27/10/- for the present site. Today the site is worth in the order of \$700,000 - \$800,000. In the Gazette of 24th July 1885 Edward Blake and Michael Walsh replaced Peter Inglis and Charles Lyon as trustees. In the Gazette of 7th February 1887 Michael Walsh, Edward Blake JP and Marcus Mogg were named trustees of the new Inglis St site. The new building was officially opened on the 31st August 1887 at a cost of around £1000; opening as the Ballan Mechanics' Institute and Free Library. The opening of the Institute commenced with a concert followed by a dance which ended at dawn. Based on purchasing power the tickets to the event were about \$90 in today's values.

An interesting fact has come to light via the Argus Newspaper. The Central Board of Health did not give formal approval for the institute to open until mid October 1887.

You may wonder why the name changed with the addition of Free Library it is all to do with government grants which were given to Free Libraries until the depression of the 1890's. The total grant reached its peak in 1890 at £20,000 about \$ 17.5 million today adjusted for population. Distribution of funds was based on a complex formula and distance from the Melbourne CBD. Our Mayor would be very pleased if the State Government gave similar operational

support to Crown Land Reserves today. The old Institute was rented to the Salvation Army for £1 per month in advance and was sold in 1895.

In 1906 an acetylene gas lighting plant was installed to provide lighting and the Committee carry out other improvements to the building. Also in September J N Tait introduced the Biograph to Ballan. In 1907 the committee installed a large water tank to operate the gas plant due to problems with the urban water supply quality. In 1912 Skating was introduced but by the financial reports interest quickly waned ending during 1914. At the end of the First World War a movement developed to enlarge the hall and replace the Library and front meeting room. This work was completed in September 1923 being done at a cost of £1910.

In 1923 disaster nearly occurred when film caught on fire in the Bio Box. Thanks to the quick thinking of the operator and rapid response of the Ballan Fire Brigade only slight damage occurred. In 1930 the building was closed for 4 days when the Health Department decided that Bio Box fire shutters were not installed to the Department's requirements. It would appear D. R. Fraser was completing the work when the Inspector arrived but decided to place a close order on the building immediately. In 1934 an agreement was reached with Mr Cook of Mortlake to show movies fortnightly at Ballan for a hire fee of £1/5/- during the late 1950's the fee increased by 5/-. The showing of movies ended in the early 1960's.

In 1963 an amendment was made to the Lands Act 1958 to allow Trustees to surrender freehold Land to the Crown. Local Government could also do it if the trustees had died or could not be located. In 1964 the Trustees of the Ballan Mechanics Institute and Free Library on direction from the Committee approached the Crown Lands Department to surrender the land on which we now stand. The final trustees of the Institute were Ernest Robertson, James Wheelahan; Secretary of the Institute from the 1930's and Percy Bailey. Transfer was completed in 7th December 1966 when the

transfer was published in the Government Gazette. The land was permanently Reserved under the Lands Act for the purpose of a "Mechanics' Institute".

There was a delay until October 1968 before the first Crown Land Committee of Management was elected from the Ballan Community. The reason for the delay was need to amend the Act to enable the committee to be appointed directly by the Crown and not via local government as what we now know as a Section 86 Committee. The minutes of this meeting seem to indicate that some of those attending were surprised that both land and Building now belonged to the Crown. Initially the Committee hoped to rebuild the hall but could not get the Shire's support to finance this. By 1975 funds had been raised via potatoes and pea crops and catering by the ladies auxiliary to build a new kitchen and supper room and install new toilets attached to the building. The total cost of the project was \$73842. The Shire was able to source Government funds for the project.

Disaster again nearly occurred when fire occur in the front of the building during construction.

Additional expenditure occurred the following year to improve the electrical supply in the building. In the mid 1970's the Shire decided to join what is now known as the Central Highlands Regional Library Corporation. So the Committee decided to close the Institute Library in 1978 with the final sale of books occurring in late 1979. This ended a service which had lasted 129 years.

In 1992 a grant of \$9000 was provided by the Shire to replace the stage and hall floor. In 2001 the Committee was successful in obtain a Crown Land Improvement Program Grant (CLIP) of \$16000 this allowed the Committee to fund a 10 year Management Plan and a Conservation Study was completed. During 2001 – 2002 the Committee worked with the Shire to source funding for the ten year plan. It was decided to apply for any grants available. In 2002 the Shire was successful in obtaining \$640,000 from the Community Support

Fund, \$110,000 from Adult Education and a contribution of \$170,000 from Shire resources. These funds enable tenders to be called and what we see today completed in late 2003.

Since then the Committee has carried out a number of improvements with support of the Commonwealth, DSE and the Shire including Solar Photovoltaic System, PA system, Heating and Cooling, Security Cameras to name a few. The Institute

reflects the social history of the community I ask that we pause and remember all who used the facility or served as committee members and other roles especially those served their country in time of war since 1861.

Prepared by Brian Foley  
Secretary, Ballan Mechanics' Institute &  
Free Library Committee Inc.  
March 2011

## ACTS OF PARLIAMENT WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO A MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND OR FREE LIBRARIES

Amongst Brian Foley's many interests is a special interest in the regulatory environment applicable to mechanics' institutes. The following article examines this issue with reference to specific legislation applying to individual mechanics' institutes.

When land is permanently reserved for specific use under the Lands Act it requires a new act of Parliament to change its use or to sell it. The following is a list of Acts which allow this change to occur. People with an interest in a particular Institute can access [www.austlii.edu.au/au/vic](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/vic) and then go to the historical acts database. Local newspapers which in some cases may be digitally loaded on to TROVE, the National Library of Australia on-line newspaper site may also provide insights into why a different site was selected for the Institute

### 1. Ararat Mechanics Institute Land Act, Act 1407 24th December 1895

The original site at County of Ripon Municipal District of Ararat being one rood, allotment 20 of Section 6, was set apart by an Order in Council on 18th April 1859 for a mechanics institute.

The Order in Council dated 18th April 1859 is hereby revoked and the grant dated 7th February 1886 made void, revoked and annulled and the land returned to the Crown. The government may sell the land and the proceeds given to the trustees of the Ararat Mechanics' Institute.

### 2. Hamilton Mechanics' Institute Land Act 1900, Act 1634 8th February 1900

The original site set apart by Order in

Council on 12th November 1866 and gazetted on 18 December 1866 (p.2778) is revoked and the grant dated 18th January 1867 is made void and the land returned to the Crown. The Government may sell the land and the proceeds given to the trustees of the Hamilton Mechanics Institute.

### 3. Geelong Mechanics Institute Act 1899 - Act 1614 8th September 1899

The original site was set apart by an Order in Council on 8th April 1859. The society wants to be incorporated and the land sold. The Act defines how the incorporated body will be set up and its powers. The grant of 8th April 1859 is revoked and Government is able to sell the land and the proceeds given to the trustees of the Geelong Mechanics Institute

The land described as two Roods and 12 perches, County of Grant, Parish of Corio being part of block 55 Town of Geelong formally known as block 56 Town of North Geelong. The north boundary is Little Malop St, and the South boundary Rylie St.

### 4. Queenscliff Free Library Act - Act 1237 13th December 1886

This Act allowed the Trustees of the Queenscliff Free Library to sell the site granted on 12th November 1872 and allow the new Mechanics' Institute and Free Library to be erected on a site selected as result of a deed poll dated 31st October 1884 using the net proceeds of the sale of land toward the building of the new institute. The original Site was 37 perches, Allotment 18 Section 2 Township of Queenscliff.

#### 5. Act for regulating the Sale of Crown Land – Act 907 18th September 1860

All Land Acts for Victoria can be traced back to this act. It enabled Crown Land to be either temporarily reserved or permanently reserved for a public purpose. I have all ways felt when looking at this act that when determining the public purposes land could be put to that when drafting the bill the ‘recreation convenience or amusement of the people’ was used to cover any other use of public land.

The Act also established the principal that once land was permanently reserved, its status could only be changed by an act of Parliament whereas a temporary reservation could be revoked by an Order in Council.

To prevent land being sat on to prevent others using it temporary reservation was for 12 months only and had to be re-applied for and a notice placed in the Government Gazette. Permanent reservation could only be granted when a suitable building was erected on the land. The government gazettes show that organisations often took ten or more years before permanent reservation was granted to them.

Since the 1970’s Parliament has passed at least one Land Act to revoke or change the permanent reservation of land which is no longer required for the purpose it was originally reserved.

#### 6. Yarram Yarram Mechanics Institute Act 1924 – Act 3355 1st October 1924

This act enabled the institute to move forward due to the decease of those who signed the indenture of 20th August 1860 and the land trustees of the land dated the 10th November 1866. It enabled new trustees to be appointed pursuant to the Libraries Act. It enabled the new trustees to sell the existing site and use the proceeds to purchase land and erect a new Mechanics Institute and Free Library for the people of Yarram. The sale funds could only be used

for the new building. The Act required that the public must be able to read books, periodicals and newspapers but could not remove them unless they were a member of the Institute. The act also allowed the establishment of free lending library in connection with the Yarram Mechanics’ Institute and Free Library.

#### 7. South Melbourne Mechanics Institute Act 1908 – Act 2146 18th August 1908

This act follows from the Emerald Hill Town Hall Act. It vested the premises referred to in section 10 of the Emerald Hill Town Hall Act and in the lease dated the 18th January 1881 in the councillors for the time being of the City of South Melbourne as trustees who shall remain trustees while on council.

#### 8. Oakleigh Land (Mechanics Institute) Act 1930 – Act 3878 28th October 1930

This act allows the trustees of the Oakleigh Mechanics Institute which was permanently reserved on the 20th March 1893 to be transferred to City of Oakleigh and that the City will maintain the buildings erected or will be erected and to provide a free library for citizens of the city. The land described as reserved for a Mechanics’ Institute and Free Library will now be reserved for Municipal Purposes. The City will become responsible and liable as the Trustees. See also Oakleigh Mechanics Institute Act 1905

#### 9. Yarrowonga Land Act 1930 – Act 3885 18th November 1930

This act enabled the Yarrowonga Mechanics Institute to be incorporated into the new Municipal building. As part of the arrangement the Institute Committee would be given space in the new building for a library and reading room and an annual grant of £140 be provided every subsequent year to the committee of the Mechanics’ Institute. Today that annual grant would be worth approximately \$11,500. Also refer to Yarrowonga Land Act 1910.

## PUBLISHED HISTORIES OF AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS OF ARTS AND MECHANICS' INSTITUTES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

*Below is a short work in progress report of a survey Geoffrey Burkhardt is undertaking of published histories of mechanics' institutes and schools of arts around Australia.*

### Introduction

During the last few decades' considerable research has been undertaken on many aspects of schools of arts, mechanics' institutes, athenaeums and literary institutes around Australia. Published studies and surveys have focussed on their halls, their libraries, their borrowers and their contribution to Australian local and social history. However, of the 2000 or more such institutions in Australia in 1900, comprehensive histories of individual mechanics' institutes and schools of arts have been published on comparatively few of these types of institutes.

Catherine Milward-Bason's annotated bibliography of Australian mechanics' institutes and schools of arts is perhaps the first such comprehensive bibliography of secondary sources relating to these institutes. She identified 116 books, journal articles and theses about these institutes of which only 47 dealt comprehensively with most aspects of the history of individual institutes. Compared with the number of published histories of individual primary and secondary schools (over 2000 publications) and churches or parishes (over 2500 publications) there appears to be a considerable dearth of publications dealing specifically with the history of schools of arts and mechanics' institutes in Australia. Pam Baragwanath's excellent reference, *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria*, is a most valuable initiative in respect of the state of Victoria, comprising historical details contributed by many of the institutes listed in her book. It provides a useful but summary account of the historical development and progress of individual institutes but limited to those institutes in Victoria.

This paper reports a work-in-progress survey of 34 books containing a specific history of institutes around Australia. A content analysis of these 34 published contributions (listed in endnotes) was undertaken and the following results are summarized below. The sample does not include unpublished theses or journal articles relating to aspects of institutes.

All 34 publications of the schools of arts and mechanics' institutes in the survey canvassed the history of their respective institute to a greater or lesser degree. What differed among them was the format and organization of information. Some, such as the publications of the Seaham School of Arts, the Lake Charm Mechanics' Institute, the Alstonville School of Arts and the Yandina School of Arts approached their historical exposition in a purely chronological or diary format, based on quoted entries or précis of their institute's committee minute books. Those institute histories published for the occasion of their centenary or jubilee, such as St. Arnaud's Mechanics' Institute, Eumundi School of Arts and Carr's Creek School of Arts emphasised aspects of their foundation including a focus on those local citizens and early committee members involved with the establishment of the institute. The Ballarat Mechanics' Institute maintained an online electronic presentation, which has now been archived in Pandora at the National Library of Australia, 2002-2010.

Of the total 34 publications sampled, 31 provided details about the building of their institute's hall together with information about how their respective institute halls have been used by the institute itself, but more particularly how their halls were used by various groups in their respective local communities as an important social and civic resource. The Briagalong Mechanics' Institute's historical publication is a good example of an historical account emphasising its community contribution aspect although only 23 of the 34

publications sampled gave due emphasis to this important side of the social/community contribution of their institutes. Twelve of the institute histories analysed in the sample contained a reproduction of the floor plan of their buildings.

#### Significance of Library Collections

One of the most important features of the institute movement, as recognised by researchers and library historians during the last few decades, is the significant social and educational roles performed by the libraries of the institutes. Most usually the first libraries to be established in most town and country districts during the nineteenth century were the forerunners of the public libraries movement that developed during the first half of the twentieth century. It is surprising to note that only 23 of the 34 published histories in the sample afforded comment or recognition of the role their respective libraries played in the provision of social, recreational and educational resources during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some histories with particularly significant library collections such as those of Berwick Mechanics' Institute, Lambton Mechanics' Institute, Healesville Mechanics' Institute

Launceston Mechanics' Institute and the Newstead Mechanics' Institute collection devote the equivalent of a chapter or more to the growth and usage of their respective libraries. Eleven of the publications sampled reproduced lists of their subscribers. However, evidence of the survival of borrowers cards, a rich source for local historians, appeared to be confined to only a handful of institutes. A recent conference paper by Andrew Sergeant addresses this aspect of library history through the analysis of the few remaining sets of borrowers records of the Braidwood Literary Institute. The publication of the Berwick Mechanics' Institute history, a cloth bound book of 198 pages, devotes three chapters to its library, charting its growth with details of its book-stock across the decades, in addition to lists of its borrowers, librarians and visitors. Nineteen of the publications in the survey included details of founders and pioneer committee members. Healesville

Institute includes a complete list of all of its committee members from 1884 to 1975, in addition to a subscribers' list for the year 1919.

#### Historical Records

Nineteen of the 34 institutes surveyed contained reproductions of pages from their historic records or archives. These included committee minute books, concert programs, reproduction of pages from visitors' books and lists of members and subscribers. Eleven of the publications which included bibliographies in their endpapers revealed that the minute books of those institutes had been preserved. Reproduction of newspaper clippings noting significant events of an institute were also reproduced in some of the publications. These items included reports from annual general meetings, forthcoming fairs, dramas, concerts, etc. Two publications were selected in the sample as examples of the historical and research utility of reports of conservation surveys of their respective institute buildings: Bundaberg School of Arts and Rockhampton School of Arts. Although these reports do include in the preliminary pages an outline or summary of the history of the institute, their main focus appears to be architectural. Conservation strategies are recommended. Nevertheless, these studies are valuable sources for information which might not otherwise have been recorded if the conservation study had not been undertaken.

A number of the histories of institutes describe the range of courses, technical and vocational, in addition to recreational, which were offered by an institute. For example, in the Gympie School of Arts publication the following courses were on offer in 1902: bookkeeping, oil painting, dressmaking, music, singing, shorthand, typewriting, perspective drawing, practical chemistry, mineralogy, metallurgy, geology, mechanics, mathematics and surveying.

The geographic distribution of histories in the sample largely reflected the population distribution in each of the Australian colonies at the end of the nineteenth century,

including ten items from NSW, twelve from Victoria, eight from Queensland, two from South Australia and one institute publication from each of Western Australia and Tasmania. Seven publications in the survey were in the nature of a centenary or jubilee publication.

A number of histories in the sample were particularly distinctive in respect of their local context. For example, the publication of the Hahndorf Institute was written in the context of nineteenth century German immigrant settlement in the district. One of the largest histories in the sample, that of Launceston Mechanics' Institute, devoted a chapter to the role of music and the arts at the Institute, also the development of the Institute's museum which displayed specimens of natural history, geology, ethnography and "curios".

1 Milward-Bason, Catherine, *Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Sources*. Prahan Mechanics' Institute, 1995.

2 Baragwanath, Pam, *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria*. Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc., 2000.

3. List of publications included in the survey sample:  
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Duncan, Mary, *Seaham School of Arts*, 1902-2002.

Shaw, Brian, *Peakhurst School of Arts*.

Hunter, Cynthia, *Dungog School of Arts Centenary 1898-1998*.

Blyth, Adrienne, *Yandina School of Arts*.

Mackenzie, Marion, *Corinda School of Arts to Municipal Library*, 1895-1997.

Webb, Raeburn, *Gympie School of Arts and Library: 90 Years of Service*, 1905-1995.

Richards, Scott, *Bundaberg School of Arts Conservation Study*.

Hunter, Percy, *Brisbane School of Arts Centenary 1849-1949*.

Somerville, Jennifer, *The Heart of the Valley: Goolmanger School of Arts 1906-2006*.

*Reflections of Fordsdale: Fordsdale School of Arts 1932-2007*.

*Conservation Plan: School of Arts Rockhampton*.

Longworth, Pat, *A History of Laurieton School of Arts*.

Myers, Richard, *Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library: A History*.

*Mechanics' Institute Elder Street Lambton: A Short History and List of Borrowers' Cards*.

*Ballarat Mechanics' Institute (Online Electronic Resource)*

*Minyip Mechanics' Institute to Memorial Hall, 1891-2004*.

Murphy, John, *Leongatha Mechanics' Institute and Free Library 1891-1991*.

Barraclough, Linda, and Watt, Dorothy, *Briargolong Mechanics' Institute. More Than a Place of Amusement*.

Nest, Denise M. *Bunyip Mechanics' Institute Hall 1906 to 2006. A Place of Learning and Entertainment*.

Wittwer, E.A. *For Education and Entertainment: A History of the Hahndorf Institute*.

Haas, Adrian R. *Newstead Mechanics' Institute: Its Role in the Life of a Central Victorian Community*.

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*Lake Charm Mechanics' Institute: The First One Hundred Years, 1891-1991*.

Ashworth, D. W. *The Walhalla Mechanics' Institute and Free Library 1865-1988: From the Ashes Third Time Lucky*.

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Petrow, Stefan, *Going to the Mechanics': A History of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute 1842-1914*.

Dean, Margaret, *North Melbourne Free Library and Mechanics' Institute, 1880-1956*.

Fuller, Marguerite, *School of Arts Alstonville's Hall. Carr's Creek School of Arts Inc., Centenary Celebrations*.

Emery, Linda, *Exeter School of Arts Hall 1902-2002*.

*Perth Mechanics' Institute Inc., Special Centenary Issue 100 Years Service and Catalogue*.

Maslen, Colin John, *History of the Mount Gambier Institute 1862-1980*.

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5. Webb, Raeburn, *Gympie School of Arts and Library: 90 Years of Service 1905-1995*. Aebis Publications, Brisbane, [c 1995] .

6. Wittwer, E.A. *For Education and Entertainment: A History of the Hahndorf Institute*. Pub. by author, Hahndorf, S.A. 1982.