



# USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

Newsletter No 30 – Summer 2013

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## NEWS HEADLINES

### BUILDINGS, BOOKS & BLACKBOARDS - KEYNOTE

*'...there is much evidence to support the claim that the [Mechanics'] Movement [evidenced by Yorkshire] actually went from strength to strength throughout the nineteenth century'.*

These are the words of **Dr Martyn Walker**, who was a breath of fresh air, to positively address the profound influence that the Mechanics' Institute movement had on Society in the nineteenth century.

Dr Walker's keynote paper **'The banquet was prepared for guests who did not come': A study of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes and its contribution to 19th century adult working class education, 1838-1900'** challenged the generally accepted view that Mechanics' Institutes in Britain made little contribution to adult working-class education, lasting for only a short period of time.

The Mechanics' Institute doom sayers that have been vocal in quite recent times appear to largely rely on JW Hudson's *The History of Adult Education* published in 1851.

Based largely on the *Annual Reports of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes*, which were published from its Leeds headquarters from 1838, Dr Walker looked at the statistical returns, which listed the number of male and female members, membership costs, and the number of books in the various libraries. In addition Dr Walker has plotted the location of Institutes into urban and rural groupings and further researched key individual Institutes.

By contrast Dr Walker's paper provides ample evidence that puts beyond doubt that **the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain was successful**, with regard to its original aim, in providing education to the working classes in support of industrialisation.

In Australia we have a much more difficult problem assembling evidence, as there was only one long-running Institute' Association and that was for the State of South Australia-based Institutes. This highlights the importance of the **Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre** to copy the individual records of Institutes in Victoria.



Given that Australian Institute libraries did not generally cease or pass over their libraries to Councils until after World War II, that alone demonstrates their ongoing educational role by way of self-help.

The existence of so many Institute halls today makes their very existence a venue for all types of 'education-related' purposes.

We are most grateful that the **University of Huddersfield**, a proud descendant from the Mechanics' Institute movement, sponsored Dr Walker's visit to Australia to share his eminent research first hand. We trust that Dr Walker's experience and contact with the local Australian Mechanics' movement by way of his visits to city and country Institutes and to the Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre at Prahran has given an added perspective and emphasis to his Mechanics' Institute studies. We trust continuing contact with Huddersfield will take place.

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#### NEXT MIV MEETING

Saturday, 9 February 2013, at 11am. Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, 117 Sturt Street, Ballarat.

## MIV AT WORK

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The following officerbearers were elected at the MIV AGM held on 10 November 2012.

President: Peter Pereyra; Vice-President: Dr Jill Blee; Secretary: Mrs Judith Dwyer; Treasurer Pro-Tem: Graham Hughes; Committee: Dr Donald Barker; Mrs Corinne Brewis; Bruce Draper; Robert Kingston, Professor Wallace Kirsop; Ms Bronwyn Lowden; Jim Lowden; Dr Peter Mansfield; Jack Stock, Bruce Stubbs; and Ms Sue Westwood.

### MIV OCCASIONAL E-News

Given MIV's launch of the Occasional E-News advance notice of events can be sent to:

**mivenquiry@live.com.au**

### MIV SCANNING PROJECT

The digitisation of the original archive records – minutes, financial reports, correspondence – of Mechanics' Institutes continues. Records from **Stanley Athenaeum, Foster, Glenmaggie, Beechworth's Burke Museum, Stuart Mill and Traralgon** are the most recent additions.

If you have or know of records that could be scanned contact **Judith Dwyer** on **(03) 9707 4254** or by email at: **jad134@hotmail.com**. There is no charge for this service but it is necessary to book your records in so that arrangements can be made for drop off and/or collection in a timely manner.

## COMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### JANUARY

- 26 January  
Maldon Athenaeum 150th Anniversary.
- 28 January  
Friends of the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute  
Community Concert.

### FEBRUARY

- 3 February  
Tallarook Farmers' Market.
- 8 February  
Opera at Mia Mia MI. Tickets - Ph: 5433 3121.
- 9 February  
Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. Meeting,  
11am, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute.
- 13 & 23 February  
Stanley Athenaeum's Tutti Fruitti Exhibition

### MARCH

- 3 March  
Tallarook Farmers' Market.
- 6-23 March  
Lilydale Athenaeum - Play: *Steel Magnolias*.  
Tickets - Ph: 9735 1777.
- 13 March  
Ballarat Mechanics' Institute Concert - She  
(Seven Harps). Tickets - Ph: 5331 3042.

- 13 & 23 March  
Stanley Athenaeum's Tutti Fruitti Exhibition
- 15-17 March  
American Membership Libraries Meeting  
(resheduled because of hurricanes),  
Providence Athenaeum.
- 22 March  
Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts 180th  
Birthday Celebrations.
- 31 March  
Bungaree Mechanics' Institute Tea Dance.  
3pm-8.30pm.

### APRIL

- 1 April  
*Useful Knowledge* article submission deadline.
- 7 April  
Tallarook Farmers' Market.
- 18 April-19 May  
National Trust Australian Heritage Festival.

### MAY

- 4-5 May  
Clunes Booktown.
- 11 May  
Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. Meeting.  
Location TBD.

## MIV CONTACTS

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Plaques and Travelling Exhibition: Secretary

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



This year, 2013, marks the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria at Kilmore. I believe that substantial work has been achieved in that time in restoring some measure of awareness of the value and historical significance of the Institutes in the public perception.

The Annual General Meeting in November 2012 established the Committee for the coming year and elected four new members, **Robert Kingston, Jim Lowden, Dr Peter Mansfield** and **Sue Westwood** and their contribution to the continuing work will be most welcome. I am very grateful for the contributions of all of the committee members but most importantly the support of the Honorary Secretary **Judith Dwyer**, not only for her committee duties but her coordination and active involvement in the digitisation program. Regrettably the former Vice-President **Jill Bartholomeusz** stood down from the committee but her support to the MIV is acknowledged and recognised.

In 2012 we were privileged to conduct three of our meetings at **Little River, Footscray** and **Elmore** and our thanks are extended to the committees of those Institutes for hosting our meetings. The MIV participated in a Ministerial meeting at **Maldon** and conducted two bus tours. The Mechanics' movement participated in the combined conference '**Buildings, Books and Blackboards**' in conjunction with the **Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society** and the **Library History Forum**. **Dr Martyn Walker's** keynote address on the Yorkshire Institutes added a refreshing dimension to an early period in the movement's history.

Our scanning project has been provided new vigour and a stable future with the assistance of a funding grant and the digitisation of the extant records of many Institutes has been achieved. We acknowledge the assistance provided by **Tim McKenna, Christine Worthington** and **Ursula Zamecnik** at the Prahran Mechanic's Institute, which houses the Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre and our scanning equipment, and we look forward to a continued association when the Prahran Institute moves to its new building in 2014.

There are challenges to be addressed in the coming year including our work with the Mechanics' Institutes throughout the State in seeking charity status, and preparing a response to the recent *Review of Victoria Public Libraries Report*.

Finally, we note the passing of a most valued Committee member, **Brian Foley**, and our condolences are extended to his family.

*Peter Pereyra*

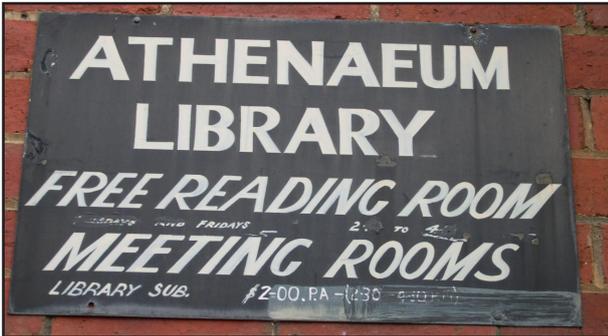
President.

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*Great Institutions do not forcibly indicate the universal eagerness for knowledge as those upon a minor scale, and established in small districts.*

HENRY PETER LORD BROUGHAM & VAUX (1778-1868)

## MALDON MINISTER'S MEETING



Maldon Athenaeum Library  
Photo: Bronwyn Lowden

A key meeting with Local Government Victoria personnel took place at the Maldon Athenaeum on 17 October. This was generously hosted by Maldon's **Joy Leneaux-Gale** and **Winsome Strickland**. Aably organised by MIV Honorary Secretary **Judith Dwyer**, the meeting was Chaired by MIV President **Peter Pereyra**.

Minister **Jeanette Powell** was unable to attend because of the late **Hon. Peter Ross-Edwards'** State Funeral at Shepparton. (The late Mr Ross-Edwards, was a former partner in the Shepparton law firm of PV Feltham & Co., which provided two key trustees for the Shepparton Mechanics' Institute, the late **Percy Victor Feltham** (1902-86) and the long-serving **Lance Woodhouse**.)



David Morris, MP.  
Parliamentary Secretary for  
Local Government.  
Photo: Victorian Government

The Government delegation was led by **David Morris** MP (Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government) and included **Colin Morrison** (Director, Funding Programs, Local Government Victoria) and **Dan Harper** (Manager, Funding Programs, Local Government Victoria). The Institutes present with their representatives included: Ballarat,

**Dr Jill Blee** and **Mark Bevelander**; Berwick, **Susan Griffiths**; Footscray, **Luke Mitchell**; Maldon Athenaeum, **Joy Leneaux-Gale** and **Winsome Strickland**; Melbourne Athenaeum, **Sue Westwood**; Prahran, **Tim McKenna** and **Peter Wolfenden**; Bonnie Doon, **Corinne Brewis**; Little River, **Peter Jones**; and the Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre and Stanley Athenaeum, **Jim Lowden**; also present were MIV Committee members: **Peter Pereyra**, **Judith Dwyer** and **Professor Wallace Kirsop**.

Each person presented a summary of their library's activity, and how each Institute supplemented existing library services at a regional and even State level. All gave weight to the necessity for certainty of ongoing funding and demonstrably showed how previous Government grants had had a profound effect on their library's activities. Copies of the presentations were placed in a folder to be given to the Minister.

One interesting feature was how some Institutes had embraced the new technology of electronic readers, eg. Kindles, iPads, Tablets, etc. and their acceptance by the seniors with ongoing 'training'.

A kit was given to each member of the Government delegation, which included: a coloured version of the current edition of *Useful Knowledge*; and MIV's *Historical Plaque Program* leaflet which gives an idea of the distribution of Institutions and plaques throughout Victoria. A draft version of Jim Lowden's *The Libraries, Book Collections, Museums, Theatres & Community & Farmers' Markets of Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes* was also put into the package for the Minister.

Maldon Athenaeum's ample home-made luncheon hospitality was dispensed by a cheery group of volunteers which included **Jan McKeown**, **Lesley Rolland-Jones**, **Marion McLelland**, **Julia Fitton** and **Barbara French**.

The Hon. David Morris advised the meeting that the Government was in the process of a review of Victoria's public library services which was due out in late November 2012. After its release submissions would be called for early in 2013 and MIV should make a submission at this time.

The *Review of Victorian Public Libraries Stage 1 Report* appeared early in December 2012 and its key considerations were divided into two parts - **Statewide** and **Local** - with appropriate recommendations.

### **STATEWIDE initiatives and responsibilities, summary.**

*Increase accessibility to a quality **statewide collection** developed and owned by local government.*

*Establish a **statewide languages other than English (LOTE) collection**.*

*Improve access to the **statewide interlibrary loan service**.*

*Expand the **statewide courier system** to more efficiently deliver interlibrary loan requests.*

*Develop a common **platform for digital material** consisting of two parts: access to downloadable ebooks and eresources and digitised local history and heritage material.*

*Establish a **single library management system**.*

*Investigate the best value **collection procurement options**.*

## cont...MALDON MINISTER'S MEETING

*Establish common processing and cataloguing practices.*

*Deliver **shelf-ready material direct to branches.** Install **RFID readers at all public library services** and tag all items in the statewide collection.*

*Develop **one library card** with local branding.*

*Develop **a single discovery layer and integrated content management system.***

*Develop a **Victoria Library app.***

*Establish a Victorian Library **social media presence.***

*Investigate central **procurement options for hardware** (computers, tablets, resources) and other services.*

*Develop a **statewide marketing strategy.***

### **LOCAL initiatives and responsibilities**

*Make **staffing decisions** based on local community and service needs.*

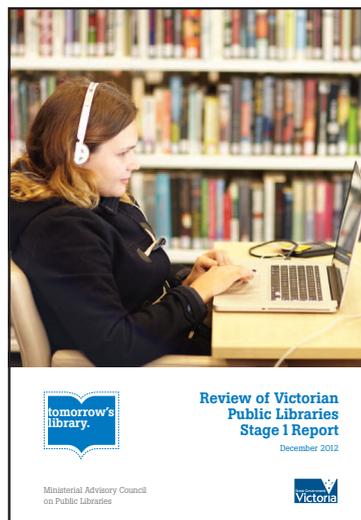
*Develop a **staff training framework** that is specific to the need of individual services and investigate possible collaboration opportunities.*

*Where appropriate, **recruit and utilise volunteers** to support the delivery of local public library services based on local community needs.*

*Share knowledge and continue to assist the community in **sourcing and evaluating information.***

***Plan and design public library services** including size and location, based on community needs.*

*Consider **environmentally sustainable design** and other principles alongside other local capital works needs.*



*Review of Victorian Public Libraries Stage 1 Report.*

*Photo: Department of Planning and Community Development*

*Evaluate **co-location partnership opportunities** and community hub models in line with local community needs and sustainable management.*

*Continue to develop **programs and outreach services** that respond to the needs of the local community and increase lifelong learning opportunities.*

*Develop a **digital literacy framework** and programs specific to the need of the local community.*

*Develop strategies to maximise the benefits of **high-speed Internet access.***

## CHARITIES COMMISSION MEETING

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, MIV had written to the newly established **Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC)** seeking a meeting to seek charitable status for Mechanics' Institutes and their ilk Australia-wide and the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. and the NSW-based Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts Inc.

The meeting took place on 24 October at ACNC's Docklands office. The Commission staff we met were **David Locke** (Assistant Commissioner Charity Services), who hails from UK's Staffordshire and **Sallyann Stonier** (Director of Registrations), who's a native of the UK's Midlands. MIV President **Peter Pereyra** and **Jim Lowden** represented MIV.

This was a valuable exploratory meeting with key ACNC personnel. There was to be a two-pronged way forward. Firstly MIV was to lodge a separate application on its own behalf. (It has since been noticed that the Australian Men's Shed Association

has been registered as a charity with full tax deductible gift recipient status.)

Secondly MIV was to survey Institutes, not just its members, to see how many use the *Incorporated Associations Act* Model Rules, or if not, what Rules and Objectives are used.



*David Locke (left) and Sallyann Stonier.  
Photos: ACNC*

## BUILDINGS, BOOKS & BLACKBOARDS: INTERSECTING NARRATIVES CONFERENCE

Around one hundred delegates attended the **BBB - MW2012** conference which was held in Melbourne from 27 November to 1 December. It was staged in partnership with the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society and the **Library History Forum**, and attracted participants from Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, UK and USA.

Centred on **RMIT University's** new Building 80 (Swanston Academic Building) at level 7, it was the first Conference to be held in the recently commissioned building.



*RMIT Building 80, Swanston Street, Melbourne  
Photo: RMIT University*

About twenty Mechanics' Institute delegates attended and included: **Professor Martyn Walker** (University of Huddersfield); **Dr Karen Attar** (Senate Library, University of London); **Dr Keith Manley** (National Trust, UK); **Professor Sue Middleton** (University of Waikato); **Dr Geoffrey Burkhardt** (Australian National Museum of Education); **Professor Roger Morris** (AMISA – NSW); **Winsome Allen, Peter Clancy, John Robinson** and **Alistair Wong** (Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts); **Bruce Draper** (Arthurs Creek); **Chris Dormer** (Stanley Athenaeum); **Wilma Hammond** (Kilmore); **Catherine Milward-Bason** (Kingston Libraries); and MIV's **Peter Pereyra** (President), **Judith Dwyer** (Secretary), **Dr Donald Barker** (Committee), **Bronwyn Lowden** (Committee) and **Jim Lowden** (Committee).

MIV organised the Pre-Conference **Heading for the Hills Mechanics' Institute Coach Tour** on 27 November. (See following pages.)

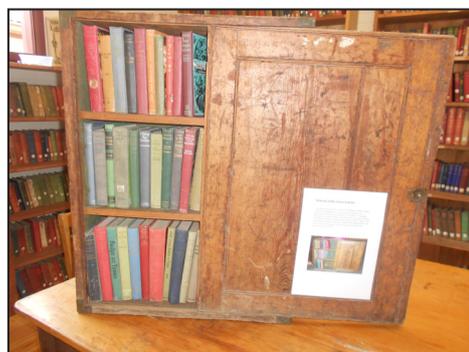
Further we hosted the **Launch Cocktail Party** at the Melbourne Celtic Club on the evening 28 November with MIV President Peter Pereyra introducing guest **Michael van Leeuwen**, Executive Director of the State Library of Victoria Foundation, who spoke on his life-long interest in books.

The **Prahran Site Visit** on the evening of 29 November was also an MIV initiative. This visit gave **Prahran Mechanics' Institute** Librarian and **PMI Press** Director, **Christine Worthington**, an opportunity to explain Prahran's present operations and the benefits to accrue from its move to its new building in 2014. Christine detailed how PMI provided space for the records of the **Cinema**

and **Theatre Historical Society**, the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria** and the **Australian Railways' Historical Society (Victorian Branch)**, which were complementary to one another.

MIV President Peter Pereyra then gave delegates an overview of the **Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre** and its holdings and conduct. He chose two clusters of Institutes one in Central Victoria and the other in Gippsland to show growth with details of their building and their fate.

He selected **Narracan East MI** as his case study looking at the State Library's Book Box 43 and the installation of lighting in the hall. He also showed slides of numerous halls and their aspects. The possibilities of research on any or all of these pieces of documentation was endless.



*The State Library of Victoria Book Box in the  
Narracan East Mechanics' Institute Building in  
Old Gippsland  
Photo: Pam Baragwanath*

The Conference which was spread over five days, with up to four concurrent sessions, including use of the main theatre, required careful planning. The Keynote Speakers: **Dr Martyn Walker** (see page 1); **Professor Alistair Black** in '*Cathedral of culture, citadel of science: the public library building in Britain since 1850 as monument and machine*'; and **Professor Adam Nelson** on '*Tariffs on Textbooks: The United States and the Global Knowledge Economy, 1816-26*', all gave us much to think about in terms of the role of the Mechanics' Institute Movement.

The interesting segment *A Picture and a Thousand Words* attracted two Institute related submissions on **Port Nicholson** (Wellington, NZ) and **Kilmore**.

We thank the management of RMIT University for allowing free use of this magnificent facility and trust our 'travelling' of the new building proved a useful 'exercise' for its longterm future use.

We also thank Prahran Mechanics' Institute staff **Tim McKenna**, **Christine Worthington** and **Ursula Zamecnik** for opening the PMI library on the Thursday evening for the Prahran site visit.

Then there are the many people that were connected with the staging and researching of the **Heading for the Hills Mechanics' Institutes Coach Tour**—Thank you all.

## HEADING FOR THE HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

Some twelve delegates joined MIV members and friends to brave the elements of a dull rainy morning on 27 November for the **Heading for the Hills Mechanics' Institutes Coach Tour**. The tour of the north-east suburban and central Victorian Institutes was proposed by **Bronwyn Lowden** as a Pre-Conference event and coordinated notes based on Pam Baragwanath's research for *If the Walls Could Speak* with further work in collaboration with the various Institutes to produce the set of tour notes.

In keeping with the MI history theme, the tour left from the **Melbourne Athenaeum** (est. 1839), Victoria's oldest Mechanics' Institute, and **Coach Captain Rex** welcomed us on board. We headed up Collins Street past the Paris end where a number of Mechanics' trained artists had their studios.

In Hoddle Street, Collingwood we noted **George Raymond Johnson's** magnificent 1887 **Collingwood Town Hall** in which the **Collingwood Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1857) had rooms on its first floor. The library moved to the ground floor after World War II and in 1949 it became part of the Free Library Service Board.

Roughly charting along the Yarra River we reached **Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1878) the home of the **Warrandyte Arts Association** which has transformed the once dilapidated building into a thriving arts centre for craft, pottery, painting, music and theatre. It is the latter, through its well established quality productions, which has provided most of the funds to initially restump and reroof the building. Since then an amenities block, kitchen upgrade, lighting and sound have greatly improved the hall's usefulness. We were greeted by longtime Secretary **Pat Anderson** who told us something of the former site's history. Caretaker **Graeme Breadmore** was also on hand to make us feel welcome.

We then headed over the river and out through **Kangaroo Ground** (est. 1885, and was demolished as **Stevenson's Hall** in 1969) where **Jack Stock** gave an historic overview of the area. Finally we reached the down-at-heel **Doreen** (est. 1907), locked up behind a fence, waiting for the decision to swing the wrecker's hammer. So much for the trustees who resolved to pass the site to the Crown in the hope of retaining it for the community!

**Mernda Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1880) was our next stop and Trustees' Chair **Kevin Doyle** was waiting with a display of historical books to give us something of its history. The outstanding feature of Mernda was its craftsmanship in stonemasonry, there not being a crack in the interior or exterior masonry. A recently resurfaced floor provided an ideal venue for the callisthenics group who are regular users. Kevin told us of the boxing bouts organised by **Lionel Rose** when his father-in-law had the adjacent Bridge Inn Hotel.

The rain eased off as we skirted the southern end of the Yan Yean Reservoir, constructed from 1853-57 to supply Melbourne with water. At **Arthurs Creek** (est. 1886) very generous morning tea hospitality was dispensed by **Ruth White, Lois Stublely, Robyn Harris, Gayle** and **Pat Corr** and **Helen** and **Laurie Parker**. MIV Committeeman and Arthurs Creek historian **Bruce Draper** gave some of the history of the Institute from his new booklet *Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute*.



*Dr Martyn Walker at the Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute for the tour's morning tea stop.*

*Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

Well fed up, we then moved on past large orchards and an occasional vineyard to the new **Strathewen Hall** (est. 1909) and were greeted by brilliant sunshine. Hall President **Karl Apted** took us through the rebuilding project and tourees were able to see the spectacular outcome for the Strathewen community. All were taken by the stained glass window featuring the old hall and the museum space behind glass doors. (For anyone engaged in the rebuilding or restoration of a hall, Strathewen, with its many sustainable technologies, is well worth a visit.)



*Tour members in the new Strathewen Hall hearing the history of the rebuilding project from Hall President, Karl Apted. Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

Retracing our tracks we then took the spur road, with panoramic views stretching to the distant hills, on to **St Andrews MI** (est. 1882) where all was quiet. On Saturdays some 10,000 people visit for the weekly Market where some 300 stalls set up. A new shuttle bus also ferries people in from and to Hurstbridge

## cont...HEADING FOR THE HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

Railway Station. This takes some pressure off the parking which is dense for over a kilometre, stretching outside town in every direction on market days.

Moving by the new **Panton Hill** (est. 1901) we cruised on towards **Christmas Hills** (est. 1873) where gleaming galvanised cladding was in place over the new timber frame. President **Veronica Holland** greeted us and explained the hall's chequered history and the phoenix-like creation before our eyes. The builders' lunchbreak provided us with the opportunity to have a brief look inside and we could see the array of solar panels already contributing to the electricity grid. With a New Year's Eve planned opening we left the builders to it and we were then back on the road. The clear morning gave us an impressive vista as we gazed from the ridge down over Yarra Glen and to the distant Yarra Valley.

Gliding up the Melba Highway we passed Gulf Station and a plethora of vineyards until we took the Kinglake Road. At Kinglake we saw the last of the temporary village left over from housing the refugees from the Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009. We saw rebuilding all along the way until we arrived at **Kinglake West** (est. 1908). Here we were greeted by **Bev Johns** and her indomitable mother **Mavis**. Ushered into the hall, tea and coffee was soon up and lunch was distributed by **Ros** and **Bronwyn Lowden**. Bev gave an overview of the hall's history and its extensive use during and after Black Saturday. We could see evidence of film and stage use with a lighting and sound system. Indeed just what a recreational oasis is the hall and its accompanying reserve.

It was then on to **Whittlesea** (est. 1883) which is now managed for the community by the Australian Christian Church, and still used by various community groups. **Upper Plenty's 'The Shack'** (est. 1914) is the next oasis of activity. Car park, public toilets, barbecues and a refurbished hall for the community and the adjacent Upper Plenty Primary School which has 120 students makes for well used facilities. **Rose King** had arranged for us to have a look over the site.

At **Wandong** (est. 1900) we were greeted by **David Moran** who proudly showed us over their hall which



*Afternoon tea at the Strath Creek Hall.  
Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

has only recently been reopened after a three year makeover. The stage scenic painting by 'HR Smith' from 1957 was the feature and caused comment. A concrete apron skirts the hall with new plantings. The whole site has also been landscaped with occasional bench seats to provide for contemplation.

Heading up the Hume Freeway we took the Flowerdale exit at Broadford and the Murchison Hill provided a vision splendid over 'The Valley of a Thousand Hills'. The steep descent took us to **Strath Creek** (est. 1904) a splendid community complex. The hall has recently had a massive makeover with sustainable technologies installed. Public barbecues and a pizza oven make for added use. The Strath Creek ladies, which included **Denise McKenzie, Ali Foster, Rosemary Simon-Ralph** and **Noreen Foster** laid on a Devonshire afternoon tea of freshly baked scones, homemade jams and whipped cream. (Strath Creek was once a significant dairying area with its own creamery.) The hall has set out to collect district memorabilia with the Strath Creek Primary School's sign affixed to the interior end of the hall. Panels highlighting the district's ex-servicemen and women occupy one end wall.

Heading up to the Yea-Seymour Road we skirted the Tallarook-Mansfield Rail Trail which provides for welcome respite at the Trawool Hotel. We went on to pass Seymour's Light Horse Park which was established at the recommendation of General Lord Horatio Kitchener in 1910. This was used for World War I training and established the Seymour Railway Station as a major transit centre.

Our next stop was the **Victorian Railways Institute Seymour Branch** (est. 1917) where President **Des Ring** showed us around. We were very impressed with the newly restored World War I Honour Board which was surrounded by painted coloured coats of arms of the Australian States. The once huge railway establishment has now diminished to around twenty, but former and retired employees still make the hall and its bowling rinks well used.

Our next drive-by was the quaint **Seymour Pioneer Library** (est. 1874) which hosts the **Seymour and District Historical Society** today and its record centre. It also has a memorial on the wall to the Aborigines who were buried nearby.

From Seymour we rolled back down the Hume Freeway into Melbourne to alight at the Athenaeum. Indeed a full but a great overview of regional MIs and their general very good health. Congratulations and thank you to all concerned particularly to **Bronwyn Lowden** who plotted, timed and photographed the tour. The tour notes also include other regional Institutes for those who would like to drive the course at their own pace. (see review on page 34)

## PERPUSTAKAAN PERINGATAN ZA'BA UNIVERSITI MALAYA (UM)

Two **Buildings, Books and Blackboards** Conference delegates and presenters **Lisdar Abdul Wahid** and **Adida Mohamad Amin** based their paper on the **Za'ba Memorial Library**, or better known to UM staff and students as **PPZ**.



*Za'ba Memorial Library staff members Lisdar Abdul Wahid and Adida Mohamad Amin presenting at BBB Melbourne. Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

Formal education started in the Malaya region when **The Raffles Institution** was established by **Sir Stamford Raffles** (1781-1826) in 1823. This school was funded by the British East India Company and still operates as a secondary college today.

The **King Edward VII College of Medicine** was set up in 1905 to enable specialist local medical related education. To commemorate the centenary of the founding of Singapore, the **Raffles College** was established in 1928 for tertiary arts and sciences education.

These two colleges merged in 1949 to become the **Universiti Malaya (UM)** based in Singapore with another campus Universiti Malaya - Kuala Lumpur established in 1959. The two campuses became autonomous in 1962 under the Universiti Malaya banner, with **Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj** as first Chancellor.



*Perpustakaan Peringatan Za'ba (Za'ba Memorial Library), Universiti Malaya. Photo: Universiti Malaya*

The University's motto '*Ilmu Punca Kemajuan*' translates as '*Knowledge is the Key to Success*'.

The main campus is situated on a 750 acre (309ha) site at Kuala Lumpur. This accommodates 22,500 national and 2500 international students, an academic staff of 2500 and 4000 support staff. Interestingly most lectures are delivered in English, with the others being in the Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese or Indian tongues.



The combined library holdings total 2,100,000 monographs housed in the main library, which was set up in 1959, or in one of thirteen faculty or specialty libraries. In all the combined libraries employ a staff of 300 people.

One of the UM's significant branch libraries is the **Za'ba Memorial Library**. This collection is based on the library of Malay-born polymath **Zainal Abidin Din Ahmad** (1895-1973), universally known as Za'ba.

Za'ba completed the Standard One Cambridge examination in 1915 and became engaged in language studies eventually developing school curriculum in the Malay language. His first book *Umbi Kemajuan (Roots of Success)* was published in 1932. Post-war he commenced lecturing at the University of London in 1947 and graduated Master of Arts from there in 1954, by which time he had returned to Malaya. He was honoured



*Above: Zainal Abidin Din Ahmad 'Za'ba' (1895-1973).*

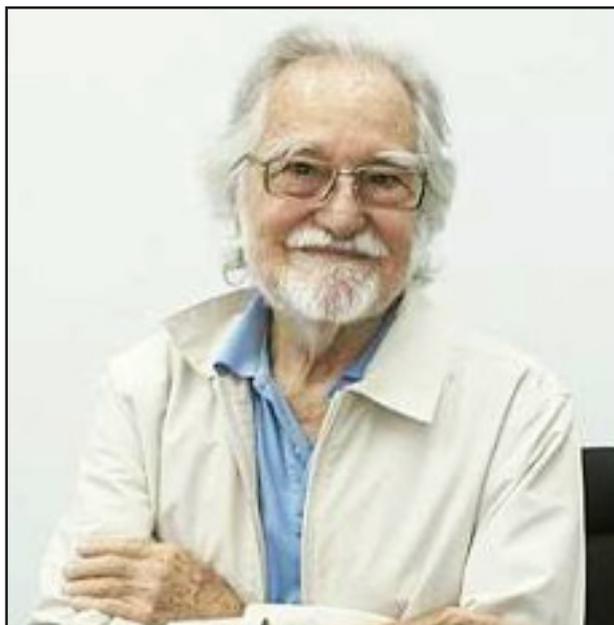
*Photo: Universiti Malaya*

## cont...PERPUSTAKAAN PERINGATAN ZA'BA UNIVERSITI MALAYA (UM)

with the title Tan Sri in 1962, and received an Honorary Doctorate of Literature from the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 1973.

Za'ba gifted his library collection to the UM on 16 October 1965 and it was transferred to the University Library in 1974. His collection comprised some 3175 items, either printed or in manuscript form. The Jawi Script manuscript collection comprises 300 items, some of which date back to the 14th century, pertaining to the Malay language and culture. Za'ba's collection also included Arabic texts relating to language and Islamic studies which spans from the 17th century to the present.

Subsequent to the Za'ba's foundation collection, further specialist collections have been added. London-born **Royal Professor and Vice-Chancellor Ungku Abdul Aziz** (1922- ), who started at the Universiti Malaya in 1951 as an economics lecturer, became Vic-Chancellor in 1968 and retired in 1988, gifted his Pintado Portuguese collection.



*Royal Professor and Vice-Chancellor Ungku Abdul Aziz (1922- ). Photo: The Star online Picture Up Close and Personal with Royal Professor Ungku Aziz*

Likewise the collection of anthropologist and sociologist **Professor Michael Godfrey Swift** (1929-84) has been donated. Professor Swift is of interest to us as the foundation Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Monash University from 1967-84. Professor Swift was born in London, England on 29 December 1929 and graduated BSc (Econ.) in 1951, and received his PhD also from the London School of Economics in 1961. He held a lecturing post at UM from 1958-61 in the School of Malay Studies. This was followed by a period at the University of Sydney



*Professor Michael Godfrey Swift (1929-84).  
Photo: Monash University Archives*

as Senior Lecturer in Anthropology 1961-67, after which he joined Monash. He was published widely on Malay sociology and anthropology with key works being *Malay Peasant Society in Jelebu* (1965) and with Maurice Freedman, *Rural Sociology in Malaya* (1959). Professor Swift died in Kuala Lumpur on 5 May 1984.

A number of titles in the Za'ba are unique and others are very rare, generally being from small print runs. UM also holds a Dutch collection of microfilms covering the period 1641-1824.

All of these and more makes the Za'ba the pre-eminent centre for the study of Malaysiana and the ancient regional cultures.

Lisda and Adida both attended the **Prahran Site Visit** on 29 November to see the specialist **Local History Collection** and hear of its operation along with that of the **Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre**, both significant collections of national interest.



*Universiti Malaya Library. Photo: Universiti Malaya*

## AGGREGATION REALLY WORKS

At **Buildings, Books and Blackboards** Dr Martyn Walker showed how the **Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes** was successful. Similarly Bronwyn Lowden showed how periodic aggregations of Institutes in Australia, particularly in South Australia, had been of widespread benefit to the member Institutes.

A recent aggregation of Mechanics' Institutes and community halls in South Gippsland has been successful in receiving funding. The Ministerial Press Release dated 30 May 2012 is worth quoting verbatim.

*Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development **Peter Ryan** made a special visit to his electorate of Gippsland South last Friday to announce a massive injection of state government funding - \$420,000 plus - to upgrade four local halls.*



*The Mt Best Hall.*

*Photo: south-gippsland.com*

*To an excited crowd of 50 or so assembled in the **Mt Best Hall**, Mr Ryan announced that the government would contribute \$282,750 towards the **Corner Inlet Halls Network Redevelopment Project** to redevelop and upgrade the community halls at Mt Best, **Toora** and **Hedley** and a further \$139,650 towards restoration of the **Meeniyon Mechanics' Institute Hall**.*

*The Corner Inlet Halls Network Redevelopment Project is funded through the government's \$1 billion **Regional Growth Fund Putting Locals First Program**.*

*South Gippsland Shire Council will contribute \$34,250 towards the \$377,000 restoration project, with*



*Peter Ryan MLA at the Mt Best Hall.*

*Photo: Courtesy Peter Ryan MLA*

*local hall committees funding the remainder. The Toora Hall Committee is contributing \$40,000, the Mt Best Hall Committee \$15,000 and the Hedley Hall Committee \$5,000.*

*The funding will allow the Mt Best Hall to receive a major extension to the eastern side of the present structure, including a meeting room, toilets, storage area and upgrade to kitchen facilities. Despite the ancient kitchen, the hall committee managed to provide a delicious spread of afternoon tea for Friday's guests.*

*At Toora the existing asbestos roof of the hall will be replaced with a functional and safe roof, after safely removing the asbestos, while Hedley Hall will get new toilet facilities.*

*'If places like this could talk, what stories they would tell!' remarked Mr Ryan. Reminding the assembled throng that he had had a country upbringing in Lockington- he said he knew the importance of local halls to the communities they served. He praised the hall committees who have worked hard to secure money for their local facilities, saying they were the heart and soul of their communities.*

***Mary Biemans**, the president of Toora Hall Committee, spoke on behalf of the Halls Network. She thanked Mr Ryan for the state government funding and thanked South Gippsland Shire Council for its contribution. She said it had been a long road - four years - and along the way there had been fears that the Toora Hall would have to close if funding was not secured for a new roof.*

*She thanked the people from within and even outside the Toora district who had responded to the membership drive, so that the hall funds increased and she paid tribute to the Halls Network.*

*When she was working as South Gippsland Shire's community facilitator in the eastern region of the shire, **Marzia Maurilli** encouraged the communities of Toora, Mt Best, Hedley, Welshpool, Port Welshpool and Port Franklin to form the Corner Inlet Halls Network in order to be better placed to secure funding for priority projects. The network decided to concentrate efforts on the halls in most need of an upgrade - at Toora, Mt Best and Hedley.*

*Council Chief Executive Officer **Tim Tamlin** thanked Marzia Maurilli along with the shire's Community Strengthening Manager, **Ned Dennis** and Grants Officer **Penni Ellicott**, for their work in securing the funding.*

*'We've been on tenterhooks not knowing if we would get the money, so to get it is very exciting. It's a feather in our cap and shows what small communities in this district can achieve,' said Ms Biemans.*

***Brian Hoskins** voiced the thanks of the people of Meeniyon for the funding for that hall. He said the hall, which was built in 1938 and designed to be very good acoustically - 'some say it's the best in Victoria,' - was a very well used community asset and an international*

## cont...AGGREGATION REALLY WORKS

and national venue for music through **Lyrebird Arts Council**. 'But the old girl's getting tired.'

Meeniyian needs the rotting timbers of its windows and doors replaced, asbestos cladding removed, two unused doors filled in and a new door created. The building also requires rewiring, insulation and a repaint.

The Meeniyian Mechanics' Hall Committee is providing \$26,550 towards the project, and \$20,000 is coming from the South Gippsland Shire Council.

It is hoped that work can be carried out on all four halls over the next six months, but much will depend on the weather. Guests battled wind and rain to get to Mt Best Hall for the funding announcement last Friday. **Mayor Warren Raabe** went so far as to say that he now recognised there was a need for improved drainage on the road up the mountain. 'Rest assured it's on top of my mind!'



Meeniyian Mechanics' Institute.  
Photo: Bronwyn Lowden

**And did Mt Best get their road fixed?** They certainly did and that just shows why it is important to invite local Councillors to activities held in Institutes.

## WHO'S FOR A TOUR OF THE INNER CITY & SUBURBAN MECHANICS'?

It has been proposed that we do a tour of the inner city and close suburban Institutes and as a preliminary 'fishing expedition' to compile substantial notes on each we advance the following list which may or may not be exhaustive.

Even if we do not get enough numbers for such a tour any information, gained will be a valuable addition to an Institute's file at the MIRC.

- **Brunswick Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1868), 270 Sydney Road
- **Carlton Hall** (est. 1877), 150 Princes Street
- **Collingwood Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1859), Hoddle Street (in Town Hall)
- **Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1854), 170-172 Cecil Street (in Town Hall)
- **Essendon and Flemington Mechanics Institute** (est. 1879), Cnr Mt Alexander Road and Pascoe Vale Road, Moonee Ponds (the Clocktower Centre)
- **Fitzroy Free Library** (est. 1877), 201 Napier Street (no longer has library in it)
- **Royal Albert Mechanics' Institute and Free Public Library** (est. <1867), Smith Street, Fitzroy/ East Collingwood
- **Footscray Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1856), 209 Nicholson Street
- **Kensington Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** (est.1897), Bellair Street (in Town Hall)
- **Melbourne Mechanics' Institution (Athenaeum) Library** (est 1839), 188 Collins Street
- **Melbourne Trades Hall and Literary Institute** (est. 1859), Lygon Street
- **North Melbourne (Hotham) Free Library and Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1882), Errol Street
- **Northcote Free Library** (est. 1893), 185-187 High Street
- **Prahran Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1854), 140 High Street
- **Richmond South Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1859), Church Street (now demolished?)
- **Sandridge (Port Melbourne) Mechanics' Institute and Free Reading Room** (est. 1853), Bay Street, Port Melbourne (in Town Hall)
- **St Kilda Mechanics' Institute** (now demolished)
- **Victorian Railways Institute** (est. 1909), Flinders Street
- **West Melbourne Literary Institution** (est. 1864), NW Cnr Spencer and Rosslyn St / Lonsdale Street (now demolished)
- **Williamstown Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1856), Electra Street

If you are interested in being part of such a tour, or any tour for that matter, please contact MIV at [mivenquiry@live.com.au](mailto:mivenquiry@live.com.au)

*Copies of Past MIV Bus Tour Notes are available for purchase. Please contact the Secretary for price and availability.*

## HALL BACKDROPS

Painted stage walls or decorated curtains were a feature of Institutes over the years. Some were painted by local artists or scene painters who moved from town to town with travelling theatrical productions.

Curtains are known to exist or have existed at the following halls and we would appreciate advice or photos of any others that may still exist or once existed. We would particularly like photographs and any other details on artists and when they were painted or crafted or installed.

Email: [pgbarag@alphalink.com.au](mailto:pgbarag@alphalink.com.au)



*Smythesdale Mechanics' Institute.*  
Photo: Pam Baragwanath

**Bacchus Marsh** (built 1858), drop down canvas scenes of 'lake and mountain' and a 'drawing room'; painted by Barry Jagers 1904.

**Ballan** (built 1887).

**Bullumwaal** (built 1894), features information on local businesses.

**Dean** (built 1890), painted by Barry Jagers, 1925.

**Kooreh** (built 1923), features cottage garden scene.

**Little River** (built 1910), scene of hall and You Yangs in background; painted by Peter Jones, July 2011.

**Molesworth** (built 1902) features historic buildings of Molesworth through the years.

**Mt Best** (built 1938), wool applique; designed by Marilynne Zanella in 1983.

**Nagambie** (built 1873), the stage curtain featured 'an island surrounded by ocean with ships approaching, seagulls wheeling on a bright blue sky; stage scene was 'a magnificent garden containing green trees and blooming flowers growing around a neat little brick cottage;



*Mt Best Hall.* Photo: Meryl Agars



*Molesworth Hall.* Photo: Bronwyn Lowden painted by Mr Longley; Barry Jagers painted some new scenes in 1904.

**Newlyn** (built 1886), painted by Barry Jagers.

**Nullumbik** (built 1882), also known as Diamond Creek; featured a picture of Lake Killarney. Now demolished.

**Poowong** (built 1884). Now demolished.

**Port Franklin** (built 1895), features Port Franklin township.

**Powelltown** (built 1917), features English rural estate mansion and gardens.

**Riddells Creek** (built 1875), backdrop may no longer exist, but once described as 'astounding'.

**Sale** (built 1891), had a Swiss scene. Now demolished.



*Powelltown Public Hall.* Photo: Russ Haines

**Skipton** (built 1905), features painting of Institute.

**Smythesdale** (built 1861), features European hillside town scene; in storage with Historical Society. Now demolished.

**Somerville** (built 1891)

**Springvale** (built 1914), showed a 'massive stone bridge, with a rippling stream and small hamlet in the distance'.

**Toora** (built 1909), applique designed by Marilynne Zanella about 1983.

**Tooradin** (built 1882)

**Tynong** (built 1928)

**Ullina** (built 1902), featured two oval rural scenes.

**Wandong** (built 1902), features rural scene; painted by HR Smith, 29 June 1957

**Wunghnu** (built 1887), featured 'a picture of a house taken from the *London Illustrated News*. The Hall is now in private ownership.

## MIV HISTORICAL PLAQUES PROGRAM

The **Historical Plaques Program** started from an idea advanced by then MIV Committee Member **Alan Tonkin** in 1999. Implemented by **Paul Permezel**, there has been a relatively slow uptake, but recently there's been an eager push to add MIV commemorative plaques to Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes. The most recent being **Leongatha** (No. 30), **Bonnie Doon** (No. 31) and **Fawcett** (No. 32).



*Mia Mia Mechanics' Institute plaque No. 21, unveiled by Mrs Beryl Ross, 27 October 2007—a photo recently dug out of the archives. Photo: Pam Baragwanath*

**In several cases we do not know the date of unveiling or whom it was that unveiled the plaque. Pending the future issue of a booklet 'Plaques of the Mechanics' Institutes' it would be good to have those details in hand. This is history in the making.**

To order a plaque (They cost \$185 each and require your installation.) email Judith Dwyer on jad134@hotmail.com or write to Box 482, Berwick, 3806.

- ~1 Maldon Athenaeum. Unveiled by Dr Frank Hurley, Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria President, 21 April 2003.
- ~2 Ballan Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 6 December 2003.
- ~3 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Sir Rupert 'Dick' Hamer, former Premier of Victoria and Jim Lowden, Secretary of MIV, 6 April 2003.
- ~4 Taradale Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2003.
- ~5 Lilydale Athenaeum. Unveiled by Richard Longmore, Chairman of Directors of the Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company 22 February 2004.
- ~6 Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library. Unveiled March 2004.
- ~7 Minyip Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Dr Frank Hurley, President, Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, June 2004.
- ~8 Frankston Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled December 2004.
- ~9 Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Cr David Lewis, Mayor, South Gippsland Shire Council, 12 June 2005.
- ~10 Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Pam Baragwanath, Sunday 11 September 2005.
- ~11 Prahran Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Ms Chris Gallagher, Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria, 8 October 2005.
- ~12 Digby Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2005.
- ~13 Melbourne Athenaeum. Unveiled by Governor of Victoria, John Landy, 24 October 2005.
- ~14 Benalla Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled October 2005.
- ~15 Jindivick Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2005.
- ~16 Emerald Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2005.
- ~17 Dean Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 3 September 2006.
- ~18 Oakleigh Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 29 September 2006.
- ~19 Newham Mechanics' Institute.
- ~20 Nagambie Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2007.
- ~21 Mia Mia Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Mrs Beryl Ross, 27 October 2007.
- ~22 Mortlake Mechanics' Institute.
- ~23 Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute.
- ~24 Little River Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2010.
- ~25 Croydon Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Pam Baragwanath 23 February 2010.
- ~26 Elmore Athenaeum Hall. Unveiled 14 June 2012.
- ~27 Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Cr Rob Guthrie on 26 April 2012.
- ~28 Laen Mechanics' Institute site. Unveiled by Ivan Landwehr at the site 18 November 2012.
- ~29 Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room. Unveiled by Jim Lowden on 25 August 2012.
- ~30 Leongatha Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Cr Jim Fawcett on 14 November 2012.
- ~31 Bonnie Doon Free Library. Unveiled by Bill Maxwell and Steve Arbuthnot on 24 November 2012.
- ~32 Spring Creek Mechanics' Institute and Free Library (Fawcett Hall). Unveiled by Mayor John Walsh 24 November 2012.

If you have any corrections/additions to this list, or photos of an MIV plaque being unveiled (like the one shown above), please send them to Bronwyn Lowden at bronlowden@hotmail.com

We would like to have a complete record of MIV's Historical Plaques Program for our records. Please let us know who unveiled your plaque, if it was marking a special occasion, the events for the day and who was in attendance.

## BENDIGO AND ADELAIDE BANK

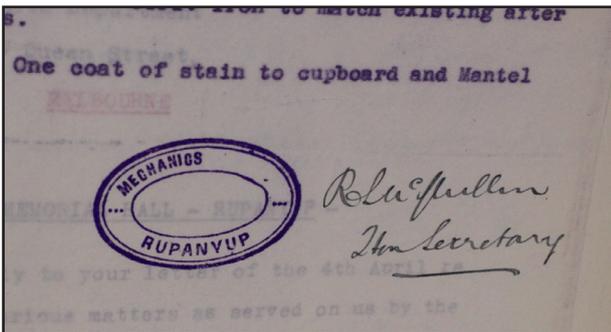


Following the widespread closure of country bank branches in the 1980s-1990s (some 2050 alone closed in the 1990s), **Bendigo Bank**, a small regional bank which had started in 1858, came up with a way of expanding its business and assisting rural communities. The plan was to in effect franchise its operations to locally owned and operated branches, managed by a local unpaid Board of Directors.



*The Minyip Memorial Hall, successor of the Mechanics' Institute. Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

The first branch to be trialled was the **Minyip-Rupanyup** townships in 1998. A branch was to open in each town provided a certain level of custom could be guaranteed. Since then the success of this branch alone has channelled some \$700,000 in profits back to the two towns.



*Rupanyup Mechanics' Institute Library Stamp from the PROV. (The original Mechanics' Institute was demolished in 1965 and was replaced by the Memorial Hall.) Photo: Courtesy of Ken James*

If anyone knows the story of why the Rupanyup Mechanics' Institute Library stamp seems to be missing part of its name, please send the details to Pam Baragwanath: [pgbarag@alphalink.com.au](mailto:pgbarag@alphalink.com.au)

Other branches followed and today the Bendigo coordinates some 295 branches which employ some 1450 staff, generally local people. Combined annual revenues amount to annual \$250 billion.



*The new playground at Upper Plenty's "The Shack" was supported by the Wallan & District Community Bank Branch of the Bendigo Bank. Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

In addition to providing local employment, **Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Community Banks** (The Bendigo Bank merged with the Bank of Adelaide in 2007.) keep capital in the community and provide local investment options.

They also distribute their dividends and profits in the community and we are hearing more and more of local branch largesse, which in one town was distributed between sixty community organisations in a single year.

Some Institutes that have benefited from grants include: **Arthurs Creek**, for chairs and tables; **Lancefield**, for renovation of floors; **Meenyan** with the rewiring of the hall; **Mt Best** with AV equipment; **Prahran** for its newsletter; **Romsey**, for chairs and tables; **Toora** with floor refurbishment; **Upper Plenty**, playground equipment; and **Warburton**, for chairs.

Indeed their slogan '**Good for U and Your Community**' seems to have substance.



*The Lancefield Mechanics' Institute recently received a grant for a flooring upgrade. Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

## STATE LIBRARY USER ORGANISATIONS' COUNCIL OUT IN THE FIELD



*State Library of Victoria  
Reading Room at the  
University of Ballarat  
Photo: Flickr*

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the major outstanding work at the **State Library of Victoria** is the refurbishment of **Queen's Hall**. It is now estimated that these works will cost around \$18 million.

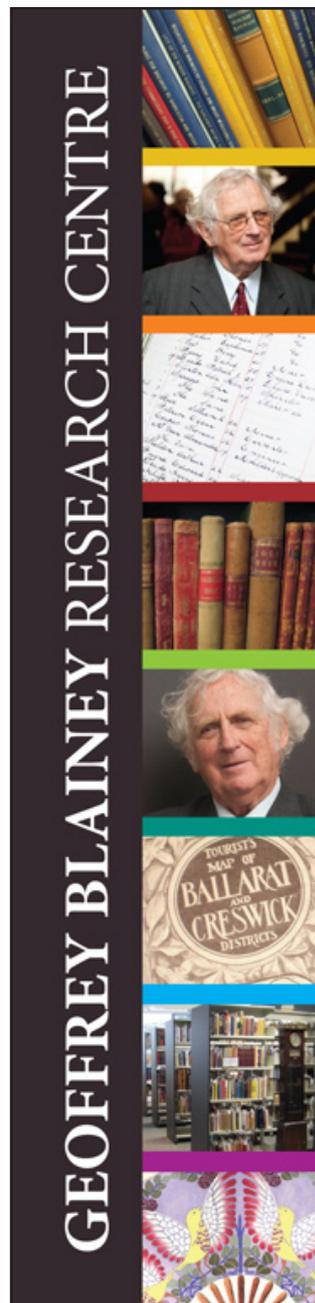
**SLUOC**, on which MIV is represented by our President **Peter Pereyra** and Committee Member **Professor Wallace Kirsop**, recently met with the new State Librarian **Sue Roberts** and Director of Development **Shane Carmody** about the future direction of the State Library.

To further acquaint themselves with future library needs SLUOC recently undertook a tour of the **State Library's Ballarat Repository** which is housed in the **University of Ballarat** precinct.

The Ballarat Repository was built and opened in 2005 at a cost of \$11.5 million. The whole building is climatic controlled and has a special 'cold storage area' for photographs, negatives and films. There are some 48km kilometres of shelving in three bays, which houses the overflow from Melbourne, which has some 45km of shelving. The Ballarat Repository has already taken up 43km of the existing space and whilst it was envisaged that the remainder would be filled by 2015, some reconfiguration will enable more space to be found which could extend the capacity of the present building to 2017.



*Patsy Adam-Smith  
Photo: Fryer Library Pictorial Collection,  
University of Queensland*



*Geoffrey Blainey Research  
Centre  
Photos: University of Ballarat*

A planned adjunct storage facility will cost around \$20 million.

It was noted at Ballarat that the late author **Patsy Adam-Smith** (1924-2001) Archive occupied some twelve metres of shelf space. In addition to authoring a series of bestselling books including: *Hear the Train Blow* (1964); *The Anzacs* (1978); *The Shearers* (1982); and her autobiographical *Goodbye Girlie* (1994), Patsy was Field Officer at the State Library of Victoria from 1970-82. She was also a **Museum of Victoria**, Committee Member from 1983-2001.

Items from the State Library's Ballarat Repository can now be accessed through the University of Ballarat's **Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre** on the top floor of the **EJ Barker Library (Mt Helen Campus)**. This is a supervised reading area which houses the **Geoffrey Blainey Mining Collection** and the **University of Ballarat Historical Collection**. The latter includes the records of the **Ballarat School of Mines**.

Professor Blainey was the foundation Chancellor of the University of Ballarat from 1994-98 and he donated part of his collection to the University in 2002, with a further donation in 2005 and a third donation is presently being negotiated.

After touring the Ballarat Repository the party moved on to the **Ballarat Mechanics' Institute** where they were shown around by former MIV longtime Treasurer **Clive Brooks**.

## LEONGATHA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

The unveiling of MIV plaque No. 30 by **Cr Jim Fawcett** on 14 November 2012 on the front of the building was the last event to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the present Leongatha Mechanics' Institute building on 26 March 1912 by Hon. JE Mackey.



*Unveiling of MIV plaque No. 30 by Cr Jim Fawcett.  
Photo: Lyn Skillern*

The first Institute, opened in 1891, was located on the site of the present **Leongatha Memorial Hall**. It was a timber structure of 80'x40' and became an auxiliary to the new 1912 brick structure. The original old hall burned down in 1924.

The billiard room closed in 1979 and the library moved out in 1981 to alternate premises. In 1983 the building was leased by the then **Shire of Woorayl** to the **Leongatha and District Historical Society** which still maintains it for the community, as well as sharing it with the **South Gippsland Genealogical Society**.

One of the Society's centennial events was a reenactment of a Magic Lantern slide screening which took place in the original Institute in 1895, showcasing pictures from the Sudan War (1883-85). The evening was stage-managed in the nearby hall by magic lantern enthusiast and Historical Society President **John Hyett**.

With the coming of piped gas to Leongatha, it has now become an economic proposition to install gas heating in two of the museum fireplaces and this makes it more enticing to recruit volunteers.

The other pressing matter dealt with during the year was the purchase of a shipping container to

house the museum overflow. The container has now been packed and is housed in a shed. On the top of the container was stored a rare pea rake which was used to rake the green peas, prior to drying and shelling for seed or food use.

The container was accessed to briefly retrieve the old Court House witness box which was used as part of the Court House's centenary celebrations. It was featured in a production of ***Trial by Jury*** to authentic effect.



*MIV plaque No. 30. Photo: Lyn Skillern*

A volunteer recruiting drive has been successful and it will again be possible to open the Museum every day during January. It is found that this time of year is a busy one with lots of people moving around and a good revenue earner for the museum.

Next year the regular exhibitions will feature aspects of the **Pioneer Settlers**. No doubt dairying will feature (The Victorian Jersey Society was formed in Leongatha in 1912.), as will the onion industry, which will give new life to the Society's popular *Onion Cook Book*. The Soldier Settlers' may also get a run to revive their *ANZAC Cook Book*.

In June-July 2013, the Society's displays will be supplemented with a regional showing of the **VicRoads Centennial Travelling Exhibition**.

The Society's McCartin Street Museum is open every Thursday and Friday between Noon and 4pm. Website: [leongathahistory.org.au](http://leongathahistory.org.au)



*Morning tea at in the Institute. Photo: Lyn Skillern*

## GOBUR MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY

Gold was discovered at Godfrey's Creek in 1868 by John Ambrose and party. Immediately a rush started to the area which was variously to be known as O'Briens, Penningtons or Godfreys Creek. It was an alluvial field with gold being found generally from the surface to forty feet deep.

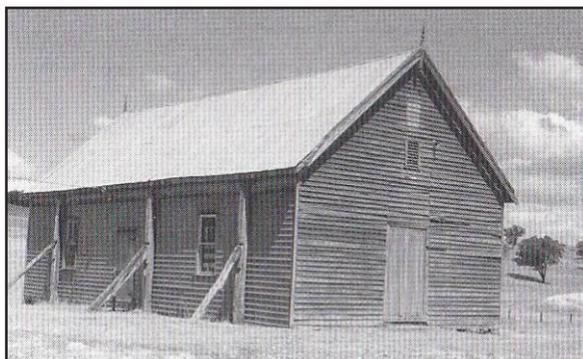
In 1869 a further discovery by the Working Miners Co., 5km further north and near the present site of Gobur, started a township of 'rough stringybark buildings' a number of which were hotels or wine shanties around which it was stated 'there were twenty fights before noon on Saturday'.

By the end of 1869, the township was officially named Gobur, and it had a Post Office, State School No. 1047 and Wesleyan Methodist Church. The gold rush finished in the early 1870s, but gold was still mined into the 1880s. Several town buildings were burned in a fire in the 1880s, which left only a hotel and town store.

The store, which burned down in 1911, was not replaced and the Post Office was transferred to the Commercial Hotel, which although delicensed in 1914-15, continued as the Post Office from 1916 until 1974. From 1941, the postmistress was Mrs Margaret McKenzie who came to Gobur as a school teacher became a farmer's wife. She was occasionally assisted in later years by her daughter Enid. Enid's husband Leslie Shaw farmed and also had the mail run for thirty-nine years which was shared with Enid and later their son Mervyn.

The Gobur Racecourse and Recreation Reserve has been in use since the mid 1870s, and served as the home of the Gobur Racing Club from 1884 up until 1928. The Gobur Cricket Club was established in 1871 and had a constructed cricket pitch. The Gobur Rifle Club commenced in 1880 and the Gobur Football Club came into existence in the mid-1880s. The Gobur Tennis Club shifted to the Reserve from their clay courts near the hall in 1935 and a nine hole golf course was laid out at the Reserve at the same time. The Reserve is still used for tennis and other community events.

The State School closed in 1947. The population of the Gobur district is presently numbered at about



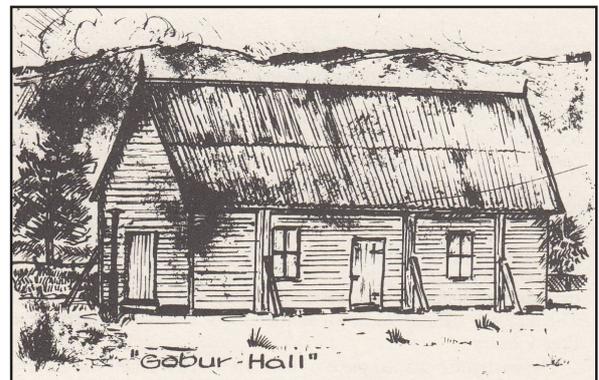
*Gobur Mechanics' Institute and Free Library, about 1965. Photo: Alfred Wesson*

100 and are involved in farming pursuits, which in the past also included dairying and tobacco.

The Gobur Mechanics' Institute was probably established in 1887, as the Gobur Rifle Club held a Grand Ball in the Gobur School House on 26 Dec 1887, with proceeds going towards the Gobur Mechanics' Institute and Free Library. A Government building grant of £26 was announced in February 1888 and a Crown grant of land on the corner of Weldon Street was obtained.

However this was not exactly where the hall was erected. It was built on Michael Brennan's land and he later made it over to the Hall trustees but they failed to register the transfer. John Coghill subsequently became the owner and he demanded £25 for title and he fenced it in, until the 'ransom' was subsequently paid on legal advice.

The weatherboard 25'x 40' hall, which was built shortly after, almost onto the Weldon Street fenceline, was lined with thin tongue and groove pine boards and had a fourteen feet ceiling. The flooring was one inch tongue and groove Kauri pine. It was opened to the public on 19 October 1888, a bright moonlight night, with a Ball and Supper. A library was assembled shortly after and by 1893 there were 350 books with 'numerous papers and magazines'.



*Gobur Mechanics' Institute about 1980. From a sketch by Patricia Hulley in John Waghorn's Gobur and the Golden Gate (1982).*

The hall developed a lean in the 1940s and in the 1950s was propped from the south with three wooden upright sleeper-like pillars. Later three more stays were added to the north side. It was clad with aluminium sheeting in the 1960s. A separate supper room was constructed in the early 1900s and this still remains.

Dances were organised early in the life of the Institute, with a fortnightly Quadrille Assembly being held in the Hall in 1891. For many years it was part of the Yarck, Merton, Molesworth, Ruffy, Homewood, Friday and Saturday night dance circuit. A feature was the Boxing Night dance which followed the all day tennis tournament. The hall had its own piano. Early attendance was required prior to dances to light and

**cont...GOBUR MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY**



*Gobur Mechanics' Institute and Free Library Supper Room, 2012. Photo: Bronwyn Lowden*

pump up the Tilley lamps and light the copper at the rear for the hot water for supper.

The Presbyterian and Methodist churches held regular services in the hall from early times. Since at least the late 1940s the Presbyterians had the first Sunday of each month and the Methodists the third Sunday. The same people would attend both services irrespective of denomination. The Presbyterian minister and respective hymn books would be issued on one occasion and the Methodist hymn books would be issued at the next service by their minister. Anglicans and Catholics just 'rocked up' anyway. One of Mervyn Shaw's grandmothers played the organ for the Presbyterian services and his other grandmother played for the Methodist services. Ecumenism was alive and well in Gobur from early times.

Badminton became a feature of hall use from the late 1960s and later the stage was removed to give the approximate length required. However the hall was still four feet short of the regulation court size of forty-four feet and a line was placed four feet above the floor, across the former stage end.

Darts were also popular. Several places around the hall wall had elaborate drawings of dart boards. The pine timber was soft so the darts stuck in nicely, but it did make for unsightly parts of the hall lining.

The centenary of the 1869 district land sales was celebrated in 1969 around the hall and at the same time grid electricity was switched on to the hall and the community.



Around this time Weldon Street was realigned closer to the hall front and sealed, thus becoming a dangerous blind corner.

*Interior showing Gobur Mechanics' Institute and Free Library book collection, 2012. Photo: MIRC Collection*

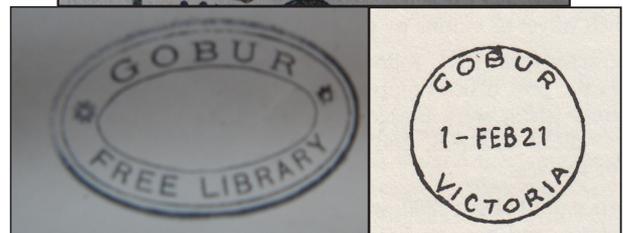
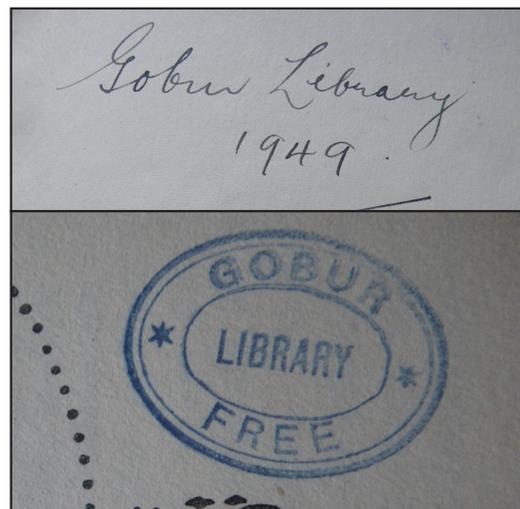
The hall, like most country halls, was used for a tremendous variety of things over the years: Harvest Festivals and social events connected with the church; Christmas parties; wedding receptions; dances; picture nights; sporting events; many weekly card nights, meetings, etc. The hall was closed to community in the mid-1980s and it was sold for \$100 and demolished around 1987-88 in the hope of rebuilding it at the Gobur Racecourse and Recreation Reserve, but the use of secondhand materials on Crown Land Reserves ran into trouble, and the project was abandoned.

The hall's supper room is still used as a store shed in which are kept the hall form seating and other hall furnishings.

A remnant Gobur Institute library collection of some 400-500 books was still extant, double stacked on six shelves, in 2012. During the months of November and December Corinne Brewis and Judith and Denis Dwyer recorded details of the books and packed them ready for removal to nearby Fawcett Mechanics' Institute, which has recently been renovated, where they will be housed in the near future.

It is noted that there were at least four separate marks used to identify the various books, including the Gobur Post Office Stamp.

The Institute's records appear to be missing, but there are some photographs and a library borrowers' book in possession of a local family.



*Examples of Library imprints used by the Gobur Mechanics' Institute. Photos: Bronwyn Lowden; Postmark from Waghorn's book*

## STANLEY ATHENAEUM GOES APPLES (AND PEARS)

Following on the closure of their **Boz and Phiz** (Charles Dickens and Hablot Knight Browne) **Exhibition**, Stanley opened their current **Tutti Fruitti Exhibition** on 24 November. The exhibition was based on a crate of documents and memorabilia which was passed to the Stanley Hall in the early 2000s. It contained the records of the **North-Eastern Fruit Growers' Association** 1942-2002 and a run of *The Fruit Grower* magazine.

The exhibition, which also relied on the work of late historian **Geoff Craig's** booklet *The Apple Days of Stanley*, was curated by **Chris Dormer, Helen McIntyre** and **Janet Sutherland**.

Chris Dormer noted apples and pears were the economy of the Stanley region from the early 1900s-90s, and recounted how it was almost constant orchard from Beechworth to Stanley. Now only a few significant orchards remain, including those of the **Chambeyron, Collins, Hilton** and **Sinclair** families. In between can be seen the occasional heaps of bulldozed trees, and a few odd trees.

On arrival at the Stanley Athenaeum we were greeted by a row of wooden fruit packing cases and a canvas picking bag. At the door was a prominent donations jar which had already received some prior most welcome attention. But it was not all take, for we were soon given the opportunity to sample a selection of dried apples and pears and homestyle cooking.



*The open-air display of fruit picking bags, packing cases, and price cards outside the Athenaeum.*

*Photos: Bronwyn Lowden*

Once inside we were greeted to an array of industry related documents and a table of art work. The **Stanley Primary School** had been given a preview of the exhibition on the previous day and they had drawn their view of the apple and pear industry. The vibrant red and green colours depicted the various fruit varieties grown in the area. Well done students!

Scattered around the room were sections depicting the fruit industry. In a closed wall display were exhibits illuminated by very effective hi-tech

LED light strips. We were informed that this had been hastily installed by handyman **Ray Brabant** and that it was connected to a 12 volt battery 'out the back'. It may have been improvised but it was highly effective.



*Helen McAlpin, Miss Apple and Pear Festival Queen Runner-Up, 1963*

One section showcased **Miss Apple and Pear Festival Queen Runner-Up** in 1963. Appropriately the exhibition was then opened by Stanley's Miss Apple and Pear Festival Queen of 1963, **Ms Helen McAlpin**. (An article in the *Fruit Grower* had alerted the Committee to a Stanley participant and they tracked it through and found that the person still lived locally.) Helen told how she arrived with her parents in 1953, to take up an orchard at Stanley. After attending local schools she went on to the University of Melbourne where she studied music. She recounted how the local fruitgrowers prevailed on her to represent them in the state-wide contest and they duly purchased her dresses, hat, gloves and shoes. After interviews she was invited to participate in a grand Apple and Pear Ball in Melbourne. The prize, a gold Omega watch, which she proudly displayed.

Helen remained in the fruit industry and conducts, with her partner **Pierre Masclef, L'Oliveraie Olive Grove** near Beechworth.

But there's more coming up in connection with **Tutti Fruitti**. There will orchard and packing shed tours, a cider tasting, and a bake off (with apple inspired recipes of course) in the future. The exhibition is open to the public on the following days or by appointment and closes in 31 March 2013. Inquiries Chris Dormer (03) 5728 6594.

Future Open Days:

February: Wednesday 13th and Saturday 23rd.

March: Wednesday 13th and Saturday 23rd.

## BONNIE DOON PLAQUE UNVEILING AND BOOK LAUNCH

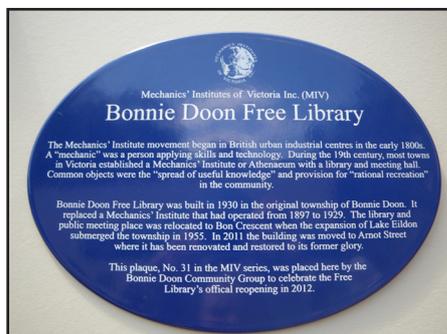
A goodly crowd assembled under the large gum tree adjacent to the **Bonnie Doon Free Library** on 24 November to hear of the history and 'moving' experiences of the hall. Built in 1930 the hall was first moved to its Bon Crescent address in 1954-55 to allow Lake Eildon to be flooded.

The local community well remember the hall moving through the village on the back of **Jeff Cowton's** house-removalist truck in March 2011 and 'backing' the building into position across the old school oval to its Arnot Street frontage. (The year 2010 was very wet and any attempt to relocate the building then was deemed to be fraught with problems.)



*Bonnie Doon Free Library (left) with its lending library, is again located at the centre of the community. Photos: Bronwyn Lowden*

Bonnie Doon Community Group President **Nola Evans** chaired the re-opening proceedings and introduced local MP, **Bill Sykes** who launched **Corinne Brewis's** *Tale of Two Libraries, Bonnie Doon 1897-2012*. Corinne then spoke on her hunt for the Hall's history stating that local records of the hall were sparse. Information came from the newspapers and the **Public Record Office**. One person present promised 'some things', an offer which was to be pursued later.



Proceedings then moved on to unveiling of the MIV plaque No. 31 which was undertaken by senior residents **Steve Arbuthnot** and **Bill Maxwell** in the presence of Bill Sykes. The cutting of the ribbon at the entrance of the hall was undertaken by Bill Sykes and Steve Arbuthnot. The interior of the library room reflected very much the original decoration. Library



*Steve Arbuthnot and Bill Maxwell unveiling Bonnie Doon Free Library's MIV Plaque No. 31.*

shelves housed a good collection of books near the entrance door. Electric lamps provided old style lighting around the walls to be used when the intense fluorescent lamps were not in use. Memorabilia including: photos; a copy of the Bonnie Doon Public Library Rules and Regulations; and a newspaper clip 'Tribute to God's Speedy Edie', a glowing obituary to Bonnie Doon's longrunning librarian Miss **Edith 'Edie' Hearle BEM** who died in 1998. Edie paid the hall's electricity bills and did the cleaning, when funds did not permit otherwise. Edie also played the organ at the three local churches, was sewing mistress at the Bonnie Doon State School (1928-46) and was an active participant in many local organisations that met in the hall. Edie would have loved the 're-opening' day which was more than adequately catered for by the local ladies.

Copies of Corinne Brewis's book (\$20, post paid) can be had by contacting Bonnie Doon Community Centre at Box 150, Bonnie Doon, V 3720. Tel: (03) 5778 7722

Any person who has photos, memorabilia or information relating to the Bonnie Doon Free Library please contact the Bonnie Doon Community Group, Arnot Street, Bonnie Doon, V 3720 or telephone: Nola Evans on (03) 5778 7238



*The Official Party, from left: Bill Sykes MP, Steve Arbuthnot, Nola Evans, Bill Maxwell, Cr Paul Sladdin (Shire of Mansfield)*

## FAWCETT HALL & PUBLIC LIBRARY CELEBRATES 130TH



The sign on the Spring Creek Road corner of Midland Highway between Yarck and Alexandra said it all 'Fawcett Hall Open Today'. Heading north into the hills with Spring Creek to our left we travelled the bitumen road to arrive at the hall just before the road crossed the Spring Creek bridge.

The gravel apron outside the hall was part of the largesse from the local Council. The hall 'compound' was newly fenced and mown. Gazebo tents were in readiness to provide protection from the impending rain which arrived by a very occasional drop. A well utilised table tennis table provided a diversion for young and old. (Table tennis was once big in a number of halls.)

Inside the hall, the unlined walls give the hall a unique character highlighting the interior side of external weatherboards and looking skywards is the wooden roof structure supporting the near-white galvanised iron roof. Pride of place in the kitchen was a new double door fridge purchased with the proceeds of a recent Trash and Treasure market.



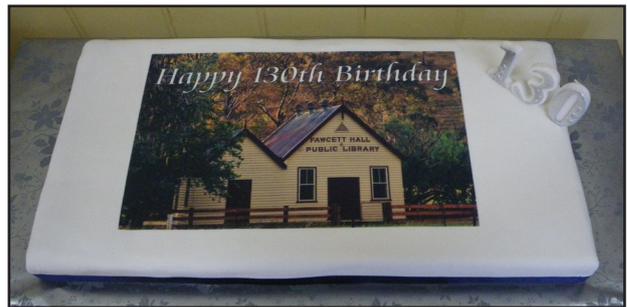
*"A Night at the Movies" trailer parked at the Fawcett Hall*

The weekend of events was to celebrate the 130th Anniversary since the building of the original Spring Creek Mechanics' Hall. Friday night kicked off with a private viewing of 1947 Australian Classic **Bush Christmas** which starred Chips Rafferty and the Australian comedy, featuring Michael Caton, **The Castle** (1997). The children snuggled up to see more recent movies. This was all made possible by the **Movies on The Move Cinema Trailer** from the **Rotary Club of Belvoir Wodonga** and sponsored by **National Australia Bank** and others. (The six year old trailer is provided free for community groups and comes completely self-contained with projector, sound equipment, screen, chairs, barbecue, seats, etc.)



*The CFA BBQ in full swing in the grounds of the Fawcett Hall.*

Saturday events started with a barbecue hosted by **Koriella Fire Brigade** with meat donated by National Australia Bank Alexandra and cooked to excellence by **Chris Lees** with a deft hand on the tongs. The barbecue attracted a crowd of around one hundred people. Many stayed on for the bush dance at which instructors provided the lead for the various styles. Supper included of the 130th Anniversary Birthday Cake depicting a photograph of the hall made by **Lyn Mulhall**.



*Happy 130th Birthday!*

Then there was the unveiling of MIV Plaque No. 32 by Murrindindi Shire **Mayor John Walsh**. Dancing followed a sumptuous supper. The evening concluded with the auctioning of the remaining meat by the inimitable **Jimmy Young** in good voice and banter. This brought a close to a memorable weekend of festivities.

The 'Library' part of the freshly painted sign on the front of the hall will soon have real meaning when the remnant Fawcett Library will be integrated with that of the Gobur Free Library, in the building.

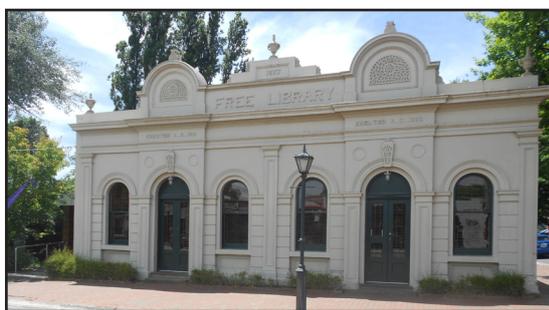
Fawcett have aspirations to complete the hall to full working use and replace the 'hire' toilets and the makeshift kitchen. The proposed new wing at the rear of the hall will comprise a kitchen and toilet block and has an estimated value of \$90,000.

We can only but admire the Fawcett team led by President **Samantha (Sam to all) Hicks** and Secretary **Ian Newman** and their partners and Committee. MIV is pleased and proud to have played some little part in their success which we are sure will go on.

## ALEXANDRA FREE LIBRARY

**Alexandra Free Library or Alexandra Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** or it could have been called AMI and Public Library. These were bodies eligible for funding from 1863, for buildings and purchase of books, most of them adopted the name Mechanics' Institute. Now of course it is the headquarters of the **Murrindindi Library Service**.

This building is important for several reasons: the elegant heritage building with its gracious interior is a historic asset and a credit to Alexandra, the surrounding area as well as Victoria. It is important because of its architecture, as it says in the heritage study – a notable building of individual significance, impressive with aesthetic values and a high degree of integrity.



*The Alexandra Free Library Building.  
Photos: Pam Baragwanath*

It is important because it has faithfully delivered excellent library service continually to the community and district since 1883, for just on 130 years! Imagine the changing times well over a century, several wars and two World Wars, times of boom and times of recession and depression. But this library endured through all these changing times from—its first Government Grant in 1877 (which was: £19/8/7 for the purchase of books and the amount of £30 in aid of the building fund,) right up until the present day.



*Inside the Alexandra Library.*

It is important, because the founders and first committee members were obviously very capable and aspirational in their untiring efforts to provide library resources and an intellectual culture for their community! They had to choose a suitable site, design and plan a building, arrange all the finances for the ambitious project, furnish and decorate it, choose and purchase suitable reading materials, hire a Librarian



*The Children's Area of the Alexandra Library*

and continue to maintain the Library in this large building. Given the times, none of this would have been easy, but they obviously persevered and were successful in their ambitious outcomes.

It is important and amazing that this institution is still here, well maintained in Alexandra and still in use exactly as the first Committee had in mind.

It is a tangible reminder of one of the most influential and radical social movements in the world, the Mechanics' Institute movement that swept across all the commonwealth countries at the beginning of the 1800s with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Why was it radical? They broke into new ground. They were the first adult education schools and public libraries in Australia. Because of the new inventions, steam, electricity, pumps etc. there was a demand for trained workers.

It was a time of great social change. Apart from piecemeal apprenticeships and Guilds, Adult Education for the masses was relatively impossible, access to a library and facilities for training for employment was almost unheard of – until the Mechanics' Institutes came on the scene. Between six and seven hundred were quickly established in the UK alone, and later in all commonwealth countries. But it was in Australia, and specially in Victoria that the movement flourished like nowhere else.

Compare the 700 in the UK, with 2,500 in Australia and 1100 of those were in Victoria; half of them remain, the majority of which are still true to the original aims, that of Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

Alexandra joins an elite group of 39 Mechanics' Institutes which very proudly are still libraries. Of the 39, 19 are like Alexandra where the library services have continued in the original building and the resources are provided as part of Victoria's Public Library Services. What a magnificent legacy has been inherited here in Alexandra from successive committees over 135 years.

Foresight and endeavour are essential for any worthwhile project and the tangible legacy endures here in Alexandra.

Pam Baragwanath

## CORK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, IRELAND

Cork, is located at the head of the Lee Estuary, on the southern coast of Ireland. The town was established as a monastic site in the late sixth century by St Finbarr (550?-623), marked by today's St Fin Barre's Cathedral. The town's walls were built by the Danes between 915-22. In 1690 it was held by James II and was besieged by the Duke of Marlborough with a force of 10,000 foot soldiers and 1200 cavalry.

Cork or Corcagh, Gaelic for 'swamp', is described in *Lonely Planet's Guide* 'at the top of its game: sophisticated, vibrant, diverse'. With a population of some 150,000, the region's main produce today comprises grain, livestock, linen and timber.

The following groups are listed for further interest: Cork Library Society (est. 1792-1941); Royal Cork Institution (est. 1803-85) promoting agriculture; Cork Literary and Scientific Society (est. 1820- ); Cuvierian Society of Cork (est. 1835); Cork Temperance Institute for Literature and Science (est. by 1845); and Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (est. 1891- ).

The Cork Mechanics' Institute was established in 1825. **Richard Dowden** (1794-1861), Unitarian and Reformer was Secretary for a time. Artist **Samuel Forde** (1805-28) was briefly a master in the Institute's school. In 1851 Hudson in *The History of Adult Education* shows the Institute to have ninety members who paid 2s6d quarterly. There were 800 volumes in the library with 1000 borrowings annually.

They had a newsroom and monthly lectures. **W. Keleher** was the librarian.

The Institute was still operational in 1879.

A Carnegie Library was built during 1904-1905, with **Andrew Carnegie** laying the foundation stone, but this was destroyed in 1920 by retreating British occupation soldiers.

E d u c a t i o n a l establishments in Cork have included: Cork School of Art (est. 1790?), Cork Society of Arts (est. 1815), College of Art and Design (est. 1850), Crawford Municipal School of Art (est. 1884), Crawford Municipal Technical Institute (est. 1912), Crawford College of Art and Design (est. 1979), merged into Cork Institute of Technology; Cork Institute of Technology (1973); Cork Academy of Music (est. 1974); National Maritime College of Ireland; Queen's College, Cork (est. 1845), University College, Cork (est. 1908), and since 1997 part of the National University of Ireland.



*Cork Mechanics' Institute building, 2012.*

*Photo: George Swinburne*

## FORRES MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, SCOTLAND

Forres is believed to have been built on the site of the Roman fort of Varris on a tributary of the River Findhorn in Morayshire. Nearby is the Pict-Scottish Sueno's stone, a 6.5m high red sandstone stèle dating from the 9-10 century AD, which features a Celtic cross and a battle scene against Norse invaders.

Forres had an early charter granted by King David I in the 12th century and it was the centre of an early textile industry and market town. Today it has some 9000 people.

The Forres Mechanics' Institute and Library was established in 1847, by **Dr James Brands Allan** (1808-90) and merchant and shipowner **Duncan Dunbar** (1804-62). Allan was its first President. (There was a Forres Literary Institute in 1851, located in High Street, Forres, which then had twenty members and had held ten lectures in previous year.)



The Institute was 'shut during the entire day' of patron Duncan Dunbar's funeral in 1862. Forres Mechanics Football Team was launched in 1884, which broke away from the St Lawrence Club.

The 1827-29 building, to the design of **Archibald Simpson** (1790-1847), was built for the Lodge of St Lawrence, No. 144, which had been established in 1776. Financially embarrassed in 1855, the Lodge sold it to the Trustees of the Forres Mechanics' Library and Institute for £850 on 9 May of that year. (The Lodge continued to meet in the building until 1984.) It was refronted in 1899-1901 to a design by **John Forrest** and was used during World War I as an Auxiliary Hospital. In the 1930s Council took over the building and it was refurbished by architect **Alister Gladstone MacDonald** (1898-1993) in 1938 and was used as the Town Hall. It was again used for military purposes during World War II. The Nairn and Moray Council are now in occupation of the building. **The Beatles** played there in 1960. The Institute was gifted a collection of the paintings of **Constance Frederica 'Eka' Gordon-Cumming** (1837-1924).

*Forres Mechanics' Institute building, High Street, 2012.*

*Photo: George Swinburne*

## HUDDERSFIELD - ONE OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE UNIVERSITIES

Huddersfield, in West Yorkshire, is located adjacent to an Iron Age hill fort site near the confluence of the rivers Colne and Holme. Its siting as a market town in the Pennines made it an early centre for textile production, which became a part of the Industrial Revolution and early Luddite machine smashing.



*Aerial view of Iron Age hill fort, Castle Hill which overshadows Huddersfield. Gatherings have been held on the hill for centuries, including those of the Chartists from 1843-48. The Victoria Tower commemorating Queen Victoria dates from 1899.*

*Photo: webbaviation.co.uk*

Today the town is still reliant on textile and woollen manufacture, but has diversification into chemical production and engineering. Almost 20% of its 150,000 population is Asian or British Asian, originating from the Indian sub-continent.

Huddersfield has a long history of theatre, music and choral singing and is noted for its football prowess. Its annual Festival of Light and Fireworks has achieved world notoriety.

The **Huddersfield Scientific and Mechanics' Institute** was established in 1825, but appears to have been shortlived. **Huddersfield College** was established in 1838 by **William Willans** (1800-79), a Non-Conformist. In 1841 Huddersfield had twenty-one Sunday Schools with 5205 scholars.



*The Huddersfield Broad Canal, which opened in 1776, was the life blood of industrial Huddersfield. It now bisects the present University Campus, seen in the background.*

*Photo: Pennine Waterways.*

The **Huddersfield Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society** was established by employees of **Frederic Schwann** (1799-1882), manufacturer, Unitarian and temperance reformer. Schwann promoted the formation of the **Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution** in 1843. It built its first premises in 1849 and it moved into a new building opened on Saturday 7 July 1853 by the Duke of Somerset, in Northumberland Street at cost of £4000. By 1859 the Institute had 780 scholars and 51 teachers and by the 1870s had 1500 members.



*The Penny Savings Bank.*

*Photo: University of Huddersfield*

In 1850 **The Penny Savings Bank** was started in the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, by banker and merchant **Sir Charles William Sikes** (1818-89). This was to be the forerunner of the Post Office Savings Bank legislated in 1860.

The Institute continued until 1884, when it merged with the **Huddersfield Female Educational Institute**, which had been formed in 1846. The merged entity was known as the **Huddersfield Technical School and Mechanics' Institute**.

The Ramsden building, designed by **Edward Hughes**, was constructed in 1888 and promoted by



*Ramsden Building, University of Huddersfield.*

*Photo: University of Huddersfield*

## cont...HUDDERSFIELD - ONE OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE UNIVERSITIES

textile manufacturer **Sir John Ramsden** (1831-1914) and a successful Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition followed shortly after it opened to help pay off its construction debt. The name was changed in 1896 to **Huddersfield Technical College** and in 1958 became known as the **Huddersfield College of Technology** when it merged with the **Huddersfield Technical (Teachers) College** (est. 1947).

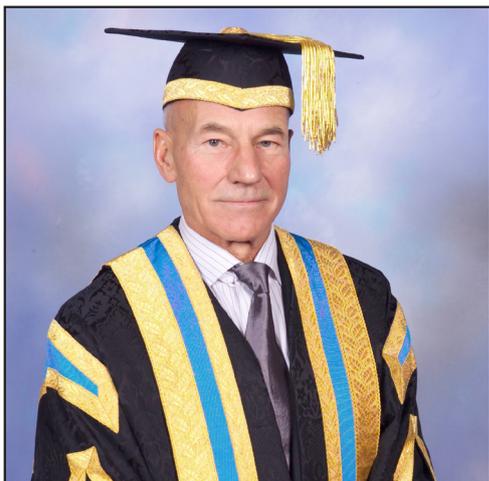


*University of Huddersfield Logo.*

In 1970 the College amalgamated with **Oastler College of Education** (est. 1963) to form the **Huddersfield Polytechnic**, which became the **University of Huddersfield** in 1992.

Today the University operates from its main Queensgate Campus. Some 2000 academic and support staff serve a student population of 24,000. At last count over 130 nationalities comprise the Campus student mix.

The University conducts the following academic faculties: Applied Sciences; Art, Design and Architecture; Computing and Engineering; Educational and Professional Development; Business; Human and Health Sciences; Music, and Humanities and Media.



*University of Huddersfield Chancellor since 2003,  
Professor Sir Patrick Stewart.*

*Photo: British Council for Education*

Huddersfield has its unique characteristics, with it's Chancellor **Sir Patrick Stewart**, better known as *Star Trek's* Captain Jean-Luc Picard, who still



*University of Huddersfield Library  
Photo: University of Huddersfield*

occasionally lectures to drama classes, inspite of his busy official schedule.

Professor Bob Cryan, Huddersfield Vice-Chancellor since 2007, is a graduate of the University. He holds five degrees with specialisations in engineering and strategic leadership with a wide external focus.

Huddersfield has research strengths in: History; Music; Social Work; Engineering; and Chemistry.

Ratings of Universities in the United Kingdom, places Huddersfield sixth overall in the employability of its graduates. It ranked top of the Yorkshire universities group. It's slogan 'Inspiring tomorrow's professionals' is clearly no idle boast.

Further given its industry related linkages it is demonstrated that Huddersfield delivers and supports them. Chancellor Sir Patrick Stewart's remarks at the opening of the new £17 million Business School in 2011 'Here is evidence that we mean business at the University of Huddersfield', and they do.

Huddersfield was named **Entrepreneurial University of the Year in 2012**.



*University of Huddersfield Central Services Building  
Photo: University of Huddersfield*

## AROUND THE INSTITUTES

Institutes are asked to send details of their events, reports and photographs for publication in the newsletter. Email: bronlowden@hotmail.com

### **ACHERON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1914)**

At the AGM held on 16 September 2012 those elected included: **John Thorp** (President); **Barbara Gamble** (Vice-President); **Lorraine Redshaw** (Secretary); **Louise Edward** (Treasurer); **Barb and David Gamble** (Hall Hire); **David Gamble** (Hall Maintenance); and **Beth Thorp** (Newsletter/Website). The Committee comprised: **Bronwyn Dobson; Jan Fallon; Joan Fordham; Anita Rennie; Peter Sutherland; and Andrea Turner**. At the AGM it was resolved to conduct a working bee in November as part of its cyclical maintenance program and this was well attended and finished with a barbecue. Acheron will celebrate its centenary in June 2014. The annual Christmas Event saw Santa Claus arrive on the Fire Truck with presents for the children. To record and publish the history some \$5000 has been obtained from the **Public Record Office of Victoria – Local History Grants Program** and **Murrindindi Shire** have contributed another \$2500. If you would like to donate further or contribute information and/or photos address correspondence to Acheron Hall, Box 186, Alexandra, V 3714. Email: acheronhistoryproject@virtual.net.au. For those interested in website construction take a look at Acheron's site at: acheronhall.com. Email: acheronhall@gmail.com

### **ALEXANDRA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1877)**

MIV Historian **Pam Baragwanath** and Committee member **Corinne Brewis** shared the lecture dais at the Alexandra Library recently. They both lauded the conduct of the long 130 year unbroken history of the provision of library services in the Alexandra MI building (see article on page 23). Corinne spoke about John Hardy, the influential first President of the Alexandra Free Library. However with the recent release of the *Review of Public Libraries Report*, the future provision of library services in country Victoria is very much up for discussion. Hard on the heels of the release of the report it was announced by Murrindindi Council that three staff would be retrenched from the Alexandra Library. This follows on the redundancy of the only qualified librarian from the Alexandra Library earlier in the year.

### **APOLLO BAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1885)**

The Committee staged their very first Bay and Beyond Market on 4 November with a good roll-up. Built in 1890 the hall served as the local Post Office for a time. It was also an early movie site. Today the Institute provides permanent gallery space for Apollo Bay Arts Inc.

### **AXEDALE PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1945)**

The first Community Market was staged by the Hall Committee on 17 November. It is hoped this ongoing event will enable local groups to fundraise by way of a regular local market. The hall was built in 1945 on land donated by a local resident. A kitchen and supper room were added in 1990. Recently it has been modified for use by a Pre-School Group. Future inquiries: Anne (03) 5439 1210

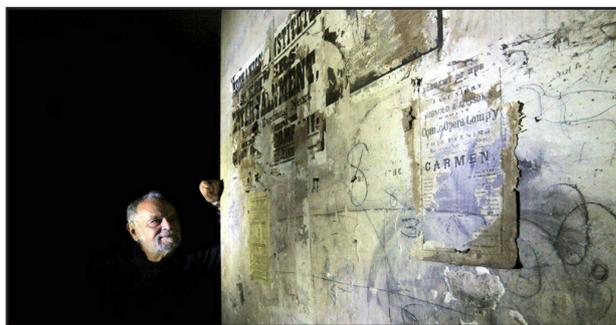
### **BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1859)**

An agreement has been reached with the University of Ballarat whereby ten post-graduate students are admitted to use the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's rich historical and archival collection.

As the countdown continues to the re-opening of the main theatre in March, with the Canberra-based **Seven Harp Ensemble**, there has been an interesting find.

Whilst shifting shelving and panelling in the Institute's basement, an old wall was exposed which carried a poster for the 1885 performance of Mary Braddon's Gothic thriller *Lady Audley's Secret* which starred Helen Vivian.

The reinstatement of the theatre's dark green walls and the polishing of the jarrah flooring will all be an ambient part of future events which will be promoted by the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute.



*Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute has found 1800s concert posters stuck to a wall while they were removing a bookcase. BMI marketing director John Hosking is pictured here with the posters and bills.*

*Photo: Jeremy Bannister.*

### **BALMORAL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1884)**

The free Jaffas rolled when the flicks came to Balmoral on 24 November. Featured was a short film produced by the primary school students at **Balmoral Community College**. The feature was **Joyful Noise** which starred Dolly Parton and Queen Latifa.

The Hall Committee staged the event in conjunction with the **Chameleon Arts Collective**. The original Glendinning Street site for the construction of an Institute was granted in 1860 but the building was not constructed until 1888 by a **Mr Barton** of Coleraine to a design by engineer **AG Hill**

also of Coleraine. A library existed from the early days and film became a regular usage in the 1900s. Extensive renovations took place in 1940 when the hall was refloored and a supper room was housed in a skillion extension. This was converted to brick in 1956.

The Bowling Club has occupied part of the reserve since 1964, and they constructed Club Rooms on to the side of the hall in 1977.

Interestingly enough there was also a **Balmoral Mechanics' Institute** in NSW, which opened debt-free in January 1902 and appears to have operated up until 1964. It consisted of 'a hall, reading and chess rooms, dressing-room and store-room'.

#### **BRANXHOLME MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1878)**

The Mutual Improvement Association purchased land in McNicol Street, Branhholme in 1878. Builder **George Foster** commenced in 1883 and the building was opened in January 1884. The building, with stone foundations, cost £218. A supper room and kitchen were added by builders **Ewan Coutts** and **E Gibbons** in 1888. In 1936 Hamilton architect **HI McGuigan** was commissioned to restore and reconfigure the original building with **J Coult** being the successful contractor. The hall has been the assembly point for a number of honour rolls and memorial plaques. The site was transferred to the Crown in 1956.

#### **BRIAGOLONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1872)**

The Hall Committee staged a free film night on 16 November with the main feature being Martin Scorsese's **Hugo**. A good crowd attended the film and the light supper afterwards.

#### **BYADUK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1890)**

Located on the Hamilton to Port Fairy Road the Institute was built in 1904. The hall is 25m x 10m with a plaster ceiling. It had a library from the outset and was an early site for the screening of film and still has the biobox attached, but the external stairs have been removed. It has a World War II Honour Roll and an extensive collection of local photographs hangs on the supper room wall. The Byaduk Institute received an interesting bequest of £100 from the will of **Mrs Annette Melville** in 1920.

#### **CHRISTMAS HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1873)**

Following on the receipt of some \$300,000 Victorian Bushfire Relief and Recovery Authority funding the rebuild of the hall has been the main focus of the Christmas Hills Committee. Needless to say longtime stalwart **Harold Muir** is cock-a-hoop and President **Veronica Holland** watches the progress of works almost daily. The new 'green' building will have provision for a library and a museum space. Plans are also in hand for an upgrade of the tennis courts

and the installation of Petanque and croquet rinks. In the meantime groups are in the wings in readiness to organise a film festival, art exhibitions, and yoga and pilates classes.

#### **FOOTSCRAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1856)**

The billiard tables at Footscray have been fairly quiet for several years, but that is soon about to change for fifty people have put their names down to be part of a snooker team in the Victorian Billiards and Snooker Association League. (The Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute based Billiards Club still flourishes.)

#### **GLENBURN HALL**

Glenburn's new hall, funded largely by \$250,000 from Melbourne Water's Sugarloaf Pipeline Alliance and the Bushfire Recovery Funds has been completed. A large bitumenised parking area has been landscaped with plants which are watered by water harvested from the roof and treated greywater. The hall provides a Book Nook, and meeting facilities for the Crafts Club and Garden Group as well as playground equipment for children. The district, with a population of 200, still largely relies on farming for its income. A Post Office which opened in 1902 still operates.



*The newly constructed Glenburn Hall which has been rebuilt after the Black Saturday Bushfires.*

*Photo: Bronwyn Lowden.*

#### **JEETHO HALL (Est. 1892)**

Jeetho boomed with arrival of the rail in the 1880s and the Shire of Poowong and Jeetho was created in 1891. It commissioned Melbourne architect **John Waugh** to design a Town Hall and the contract was let to **WJ Hosking** for £500 and it was built and opened on 7 July 1892. The Shire was amalgamated in 1908 and its headquarters were transferred to Poowong. The hall and land was eventually sold to the trustees of Jeetho Hall in 1919 for £75. The railway line closed in the 1950s.

The Hall became dilapidated and there was a community meeting in 2003 with forty people present. The Committee then embarked on a \$250,000 facelift, starting first with the roof and exterior walls, with the project being supervised by Committee member **David Wanless**. Interior fittings included brass chandeliers and gilt framed mirrors. The toilets were tiled in crimson and bone colours, with quality plumbing fittings. Recently a State



*Formerly the Jeetho Town Hall, and now the Community Hall, it has recently been restored.*

*Photo: onmydoorstep.com.au*

grant of \$20,250 has finally enabled the completion of works which include: heating; external lighting; floor refurbishment; electrical work and window dressings. In the meantime annual membership of the Hall remains at \$15. Well done all.

#### **KILMORE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)**

Just arrived is the Kilmore Institute Newsletter No. 53. It contains an article on an Institute foundation and ex-officio Committee Member Fr Timothy O'Rourke who started his life as a missionary priest in New Zealand in 1849 working with the Maoris. For health reasons he crossed to Victoria in 1853 and moved to Kilmore in January 1854. In addition to delivering a number of lectures to the Kilmore Institute he also donated runs of the periodicals *London Illustrated News* and *Household Words*. A tireless worker and church and school builder he died in 1861, aged 36. After being buried first in the Kilmore Cemetery his remains were exhumed in 1871 and buried in St Patrick's Church, Kilmore, the church which he had built. The newsletter also details the two annual Kilmore Institute events 'Christmas Carols in Hudson Park in 2011' and 'Scaretactics 2012'.

The Kilmore Institute took over the Carols from the Lions Club several years ago. It involves the whole community from church choirs, Scouts, SES and local businesses. Santa arrives on the SES truck and he distributes bags of lollies courtesy of Nestles Allen's Sweets. Last year beneficiaries were Anglicare which received a large quantity of presents from the 'Giving Tree' and the SES which received a cheque for \$450. Kilmore's 'Scaretactics', as an October prelude to Halloween, grows each year. This year a motivational pre-event workshop paid off handsomely with an increased number of scarecrows appearing around the town and district which involved schools, Dianella Hostel and local businesses. The newsletter's montage of fourteen photographs shows some of the various installations around the town. The scarecrow group at Dianella Hostel which featured the Mad Hatter's Tea Party was outstanding.

The Institute's real good news was the gaining of a Federal Community Grant to purchase a sound

system which was put to good use during the very recent 2012 'Carols'. It will also be available for other community events.

#### **KYNETON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1855)**

**The Friends of the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute** proved their enduring worth by staging a community concert on Sunday 21 October in the refurbished Kyneton Mechanics' Institute. It was a full program showcasing local diverse talent, the bulk of which came from the **Kyneton Secondary College** under the extraordinary leadership of music head **Henry Vyhnaal**. The two one act plays by High School student **Rauri Barker** indicate the depth of talent in the youth of Kyneton. Clearly this will not be the last such event. Congratulations are due to **Michael Kennedy** and **Robert Martin** for managing the day and their enthusiastic supporters on a splendid concert in celebration of the Institute's return to community use.



*Kyneton's Opening Concert. Robbie Melville (Guitar), Sam Thorpe (Double Bass), and Henry Vyhnaal (Fiddle).*

*Photo: Roslyn Lowden*

#### **LAEN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1886)**

On Sunday 18 November 2012 about seventy people gathered at the site of the Laen Mechanics' Institute for the unveiling of a plaque to ensure that future generations will know the history of the Laen community and its Mechanics' Institute.

Laen was once a district of small farms of about 160 acres and was a thriving community with a school and Mechanics' Institute. Former resident **Ivan Landwehr** decided that the Laen Mechanics' Institute should have a permanent site marker. A plaque already marked the former school site.

An early challenge was researching the history of the Laen Mechanics' Institute. With assistance from the Donald and Minyip History Centres and **Mrs Joyce Clark** who spent hours searching the old newspapers on microfilm, Ivan was able to compile a comprehensive history of the Laen Mechanics' Institute and the vital role it played in the community.

The Laen Mechanics' Institute was built in 1886. It was a large (50ft x 20ft) galvanised iron hall, later lined with timber. The opening was celebrated with a concert and ball attended by 250 people. It was the lifeblood of a thriving rural community. There were



*Standing beside the Laen Mechanics' Institute commemorative plaque—creatively solving the problem in the absence of a building to attach the plaque to.. L-R: Dale Funcke, Harold Flett, Ivan Landwehr and Robert Loats.*

*Photo: Courtesy of Ivan Landwehr*

dances, balls, school concerts, luncheons on picnic days, church services, and a library. It continued as a centre for community activities until the late 1940s. One of the last recorded events was a concert in 1951.

In 1955 the building was sold and was dismantled and shifted to a site on the Stawell-Halls Gap Road where it was reassembled as a woolshed and remains so at the present time.

#### **MALDON ATHENAEUM (Est. 1863)**

The Maldon Athenaeum Library celebrates 150 years of continuous service to its community on 26 January. It certainly has been quite a story of highs and lows. In spite of the building burning down in 1933, a library service continued from a shop window until the new building was erected in 1934.

Longtime President **Joy Leneaux-Gale** remembers when she came to Maldon in 1994 the Athenaeum was very much down at heel. The library occupied a single room with a mismatch of book cases housing about 3000 books. It had thirty members and was staffed by four volunteers who were responsible for opening it for two hours on Friday afternoons.

The building was generally in poor condition with cracks in the walls. Its roof space was occupied by possums and the various pictures showed evidence of a silverfish invasion.

Since then the assistance of the Government MI library grants and targeted fundraising, with the assistance of Australian Taxation Office deductible gift recipient status, has changed all that. The **Bendigo Maldon Community Bank, Commonwealth Government, Mt Alexander Shire** and the **Rusden Trust** are all deserving of mention.

The gradual upgrade of the rear hall has also proved a valuable adjunct to enable the holding of lectures, events and displays.

Since the bookmobile ceased coming to town in 2008 the library has really blossomed with the

regular addition of new titles, including large print and talking books.

Today, behind the quaint stained glass window, there is a real ambience about the Maldon Athenaeum library. Its distinctive matching solid wooden shelving houses its 18,000 book collection over three rooms and the walls display various pictures and memorabilia. With around six hundred members and a volunteer group of some forty members as well as their partners it is a busy place, where people now come to meet and chat. It is a great credit to all concerned. Happy Birthday Maldon Athenaeum.

#### **MARDAN HALL (Est. 1912)**

On 27 October 2012 the Mardan Mechanics' Institute Hall celebrated its 100th birthday. The hall was opened on 28 August 1912 by Mrs Mackey, wife of Mr JE Mackey MP, who was held back in Melbourne, and sent his wife on to open the new hall in his stead. A plaque was unveiled for the centenary celebrations by Mr Russell Broadbent MP.



*The image of Mardan Hall used for their Centenary Celebrations.*

*Drawing by Andrea Curtis*

#### **MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM (Est. 1839)**

The Ath goes from strength to strength with its outreach and innovation. Recently they have joined with **Kay Craddock** Antiquarian Bookseller, and **Mary Dalmay's** Reader's Feast to establish a Reader's Walk in Collins Street, Melbourne. The initiative has been supported by a brochure 'Something Old... Something New... Something Borrowed'. Beginning in November 2012 authors will be invited to put their *Hands in Print*. A physical impression will be taken of the author's hands and an artist will create a permanent display which will be placed within the Reader's Walk literary precinct. The first inductee is legendary Scottish crime writer **Ian Rankin**.

**History Week** was also celebrated at The Ath with a series of lectures on Melbourne's history.

#### **MT BEST COMMUNITY HALL**

The Mt Best district in Gippsland's Strzelecki Ranges, and ten kilometres from the coastline, was first settled in the 1890s. In 1892, eighty acre allotments were advertised for selection. The land

had to be first cleared before it could be grazed or crops planted. Tracks had to be cut through the timber and homesteads were built.

In 1898 Sir Robert Best, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey 1894-99, agreed to have the district named for him. Shortly after a public meeting was held which resolved to change the district name from Mt A to Mt Best.

The Mt Best Hall was built in 1902 and this was also used for school. The Methodist Church was built in 1905. Both were burned down on Black Thursday, 23 January 1906 and several homes and lives were lost, including six children of Francis 'Frank' Lonsdale's family on the way home from school.

The hall was rebuilt in a different location in 1909 and again the school was held in the hall. Community use continued until its use by the South Gippsland Eisteddfod, when after a performance of 'All a Mistake', the hall burned down in 1933.

Replaced in 1938 its use has continued until today. Gas lights were installed in 1958, when cypress trees were planted around its perimeter. (These trees were cleared in 2007). In 1961 tennis courts were built next door to the hall and in 1966 electricity was connected to the hall and district.

The stage wall hanging was designed by **Marilynne Zanella** in 1983. (Marilynne also designed the stage curtain in Toora.) It was made by ten local ladies using old woollen pullovers which were cut up. It comprised three latitudinal strips which were then sewn up to form the full backdrop.

A major event held throughout the early 2000s was the **Easter Mt Best Art, Craft and Photography Exhibition** which attracted entries from a wide radius. This has provided revenue to upgrade the hall.

The **Lonsdale** family had a reunion at the hall in 2006 when three hundred and fifty people were present. They also unveiled a plaque at the Mt Best Lookout, 436 metres above sea level, commemorating their six killed family members. A district get-together was held early in 2012 which attracted eighty people from all over Victoria.

The hall's record is near complete. Pioneer **John R Gunn** was an avid amateur photographer and a collection of his glass slides, including some of the hall, was found on a local tip. These have since been converted to a CD disc.

#### **SKIPTON MECHANICS INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)**

This was the base for the **Skipton Rose and Iris Festival** on 10-11 November. Blooms were displayed in the hall and local gardens were opened on Saturday and Sunday. The National Library's Trove throws up the opening of the present building on 14 November 1905. Designed by Ballarat architects **Clegg and Miller**, it was built by **William Robertson**



*Skipton Mechanics' Institute during the Rose and Iris Festival. Photo: Home is where the Hall is website*

of Ballarat. The main hall had the dimensions of 50'x30', with the stage being an extra 20'x18', which could also be utilised as a supper room. There were also two dressing rooms of 14'x12'. 'The front portion of the building provides for a large club reading room and billiard room, and a small newspaper room. The building is of wood framed in a stone foundation, and the roof is of iron. The cost of the building, with furniture, acetylene gas, and stage fittings will amount to about £1000.'

As a further aside, UK's **Skipton Mechanics' Institute** distributes funds each year for science education purposes. There could be opportunity for the two Institutes to establish a linkage.

#### **TENNYSON MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION HALL (Est. 1910)**

This hall was opened on 11 August 1910 by Mr Albert Palmer MHR. Does anyone have any further record of this building which was located in north-central Victoria?

#### **WARRANTYTE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND ARTS ASSOCIATION (Est. 1882)**

Warrandyte looked a treat as we arrived for our BBB Tour visit on 27 November to a pristine Institute thanks to the garden tidy up by **Noelle Burgess** and **Marjorie Beecham** and general clean up of **Graeme Bredmore**.

The December issue of the *Artful Dodger* states: *While our local Insitute is not a library, it is certainly a valuable community facility and a centre for promoting the arts and our specific set up is a good model for the on-going viability of such a good hall...*

How very true and thank you for being such a great example of the Mechanics' Movement! For what's happening at Warrandyte, and to read more articles from this month's *Artful Dodger*, check out: [warrandytehallarts.asn.au](http://warrandytehallarts.asn.au).

*Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers, and the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.*

LAURA BUSH (1946- )

## VALE

MIV Committeeman **Brian Foley** died on 9 July 2012 from cancer. Brian was the long time secretary of the Ballan Mechanics' Institute and he was a great source of wisdom on the Crown Land-based Institutes and their appropriate management. Brian was also a much esteemed member of Ballan Lions Club. He was buried from Ballan on 12 July 2012.

Our sympathy goes out to his wife **Marilyn**, his family and his colleagues at the Ballan Mechanics' Institute.



We note the passing of **Pam Darling OAM**, born Pamela Helen Beauchamp to Leonard and Ella on 8 October 1921. She grew up in and was educated at Brighton and at the University of Melbourne with the intention of becoming a librarian. However Navy Service during World War II interrupted this. Her duties included night shifts plotting the movements of shipping in Australian waters. Although engaged in 1944, she had to wait for RAAF-wartime fiancé Leading Aircraftman **Richard Noel Darling** to return from World War II service. They were married at the Littlejohn Chapel, Scotch College, Hawthorn on 1 March 1946. The Darlings moved to Berwick in 1958 and Pam became librarian at Berwick Mechanics' Institute in 1962, a position she held until 2009. During which time she worked with the late **Dr Noel Stephenson**, who was Institute President from 1961-88, to revive the Institute. She motivated a group of volunteers to staff the library and fundraise. She also introduced the children's library which was to become a feature of the library. The Institute was rebuilt in 1981-82 and was to house the unique Casey Collection. Her work was honoured with a Centenary Medal in 2001 'For services to the Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library' and in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2011 Medal of the Order of Australia 'For service to the community through the Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library'. Pam died at Berwick on 2 September 2012. There was a private cremation. Her husband Richard 'Dick' pre-deceased her in 1984. Indeed she was 'A truly

inspirational lady'. We extend our sincere sympathy to her family and her Berwick Mechanics' Institute friends and alumni.



We recently learned of the death of **James Norman 'Jim' or 'Sparky' Spark** on 29 November 2012. There was a private cremation at his request. Born at Maffra, Jim grew up part time between Maffra and Melbourne. Jim's father worked at Maffra in the sugar beet factory for six months and for the rest of the year worked in the Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Ltd's woolstores. Jim served as No. A 32217 with the RAAF at the end of World War II. After the War he spent the rest of his life in the aviation industry and retired to Kyneton. He had long involvement with the **Friends of the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute** and attended the reopening concert in October. His humour, honesty and generosity of self will be missed. Our condolences go out to his wife **Maureen** and family.

**Elma Jean Barker** died St Catherine's Hostel, Wangaratta, on 31 August 2012, aged 91. Her husband Ralph pre-deceased her. Our most sincere sympathy to our Committeeman Donald and his family.

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Tasmania's 4 January 2013 bushfires largely burned the town of Dunalley, including **Dunalley's Hall**. The Hall was built by volunteers and opened 16 May 1898. It soon established a library and was used regularly for church services. Since enlarged, it was much used by the community including for theatre workshops, small theatrical stage productions and the well established flower shows. Along with the Hall, its contents including Honour Rolls, historic photographs and lighting equipment were all lost. A number of fundraisers have been launched to reinstate the Hall, including a concert organised by Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) on 21 January.

Our thoughts go out to the folk of Dunalley and this yet again highlights the need to have a photographic record of the building and its contents and its records digitised.

## PEOPLE



*Susan Walter holding her award winning book,  
pictured with Pam Barawanath  
Photo: Nea Gyorffy*

Successful in the **Victorian Community History Awards**: Local History – Small Publication Award. Commended was **Susan Walter** for her *The Elongated Dog Kennel: The History of the Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute*. Congratulations Susan.

A rejuvenated **Professor Roger Morris** was up and about again at **BBB**. He certainly has not lost any of his enthusiasm for the MI movement and AMISA (NSW). Roger's paper 'The Mechanics' Institute: Australia's Landmark in Adult Education' attributed a very positive role to MIs in the history of adult education in Australia.

The indefatigable **Dr Geoffrey Burkhardt** was also at **BBB**, where in his latest role as Assistant Curator at the Australian National Museum of Education (ANME), he presented a Paper 'The Research Collection of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century School Textbooks in the Australian National Museum of Education'.

It was good to catch up with **Dr Keith Manley** at **BBB**. Keith has moved from London to the country where he has become bibliographic consultant to the **National Trust** at **Castle Drogo**. Claimed to be the 'last castle to be built in England', with dramatic views over Dartmoor, Castle Drogo was designed by **Edwin Lutyens** and built between 1911 and 1930 for businessman **Julius Drewe** (1856-1931) as his family seat. It has a Norman themed library. The castle and its surrounding 650 acre estate was gifted to the National Trust in 1974.

Keith's **BBB MW 2012** paper on '**Victorian voluntary libraries of Great Britain**' provided original research and not too few pieces of humour.

Former MIV President and Life Member **Cathy Milward-Bason** was also at **BBB MW 2012**. Cathy gave **A Picture and a Thousand Words 'Presentation'** on '**Margery C Ramsay: A career in**

**libraries.'** (Margery Ramsay was the State Library's Deputy Librarian 1969-74 and Principal Librarian 1974-81). A thought provoking subject much worthy of a detailed biography. Cathy is currently employed with the City of Kingston libraries, which comprises eight branches.

The recent RMIT University graduation ceremony saw the conferral of a Doctorate of Information Management (Honoris Causa) upon **Frances Helen 'Fran' Awcock, AM**. For those who remember back to MIV's start it was Fran Awcock, who was then Chief Executive Officer of the State Library of Victoria, who launched the Kilmore Conference in April 1998.



*Dr Fran Awcock, AM.  
Photo: RMIT University*

Dr Awcock is an alumnus of RMIT University, where she gained her Graduate Diploma of Librarianship. She later went on to become the State Library of South Australia, Director from 1991-97 and then moved to Victoria, where she was Chief Executive Officer of the State Library of Victoria from 1997-2002. At each State Library she directed significant building and redevelopment projects which changed the manner in which state residents access information and she raised the profile and standing of both libraries. At both sites new technology and information systems were installed and these were ably promoted to the community. Upon retirement she was a Councillor of the RMIT University from 2004-09. In 2005 she consulted on the redevelopment of the National Library of Papua New Guinea and was part of the implementation of those recommendations.

Dr Awcock was made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to librarianship and the community in 2004. She has served on several industry related groups including: the Council of Australian State Libraries; Victorian Association of Library Automation; National Book Council; and the Friends of Libraries Australia. Indeed few have done more for the printed word in its many formats. Congratulations Fran from the MIV movement.

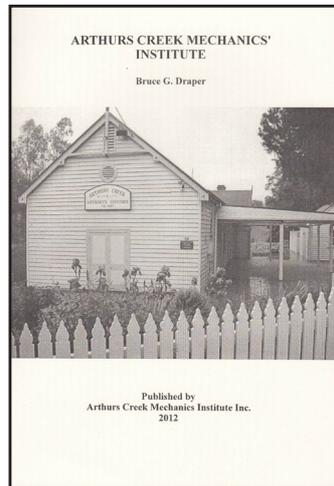
Congratulations to Warrnambool Mechanics' Institute historian **Elizabeth O'Callaghan** for being named in the 2012 **National Volunteer Awards** announced in December for 'Long Term Commitment to Community Service'.

## ON THE BOOKSHELF

**Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute** by Bruce G Draper. Paperback, saddlestitched. 34 pages, illustrated, bibliography. Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute Inc. 2012. Issued in conjunction with celebrations to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the settlement of Arthurs Creek, this book puts the Arthurs Creek Institute at centre stage.

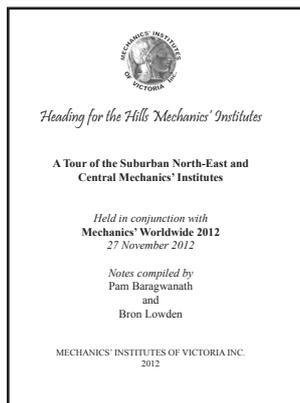
The district was named for Henry Arthur (1801-48) one of the members of the Port Phillip Association. Well illustrated, with contemporary photos it weaves the district's history in with that of the Hall.

The Brass Band, Fruit Growers' Association, Church and sporting groups, celebrations of the homecoming of district soldiers from distant fields of battle and community milestones all rate a mention. The various stages of the development of the Hall, and its periodic lean times are discussed. Its rejuvenation since the 1990s has seen it reach its zenith in community life and it becoming the custodian of the district's historic record. The seasonal curse, the bushfire looms large with the hall being pivotal to community after the Black Saturday Bushfires on 7 February 2009, and its recovery. Available from: Bruce Draper, 62 Hillside Road, Rosanna, V 3084. \$11.20 posted.



**Heading for the Hills Mechanics' Institutes Tour Notes** compiled by Pam Baragwanath and Bronwyn Lowden. Prahran: Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, 2012. Paperback, saddlestitched. 38 pages, illustrated, bibliographies. This follows on previous sets of *Tour Notes*. The aim of the *Tour Notes* is to research the various regional Institutes and update known details. (Corrections and/or updates would be most welcome.) If nothing else the notes provide a

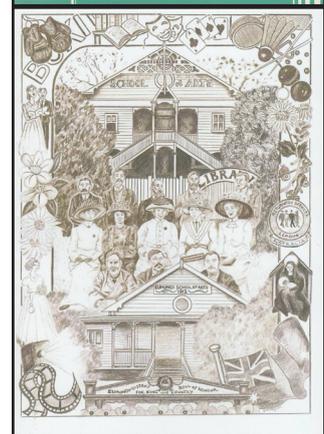
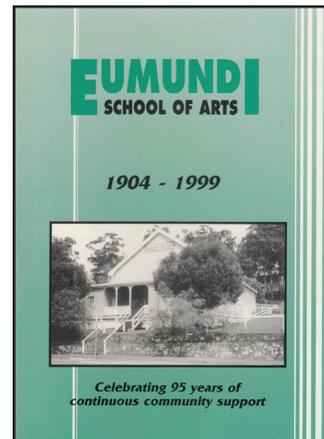
guide for a pleasant Sunday drive through the region. Included in this set are details of: Arthurs Creek; Brunswick; Christmas Hills; Doreen; Heathcote; Kilmore; Kinglake West; Mernda; Nagambie; Panton Hill; St Andrews; Seymour; Strath Creek; Strathewen; Tallarook; Tooborac; Upper Plenty; Wallan; Warrandyte;



Whittlesea; Wonga Park; and Yarrambat. Available from: MIV, Box 1080, Windsor, V 3181. \$10.00 post paid

**Eumundi School of Arts 1904-1999: Celebrating 95 years of continuous community support** by Daph Greer and Nancy Weir. Eumundi Historical Museum, 1999. Paperback, saddlestitched. 56p, illustrated, bibliography. ISBN 064637513X. Located adjacent to Queensland's Gold Coast, The Eumundi School of Arts, celebrated the centenary of its present hall in 2012. This splendid book is crammed with information from the time of the Government land grant in 1905 to the construction of the first hall in 1908 and the present building in 1912. The chronology of: talking pictures commence, 1922; petrol generated electric light installed, 1932; RSL moves into hall, 1950; indoor bowls commences, 1959; Ladies Auxiliary established, 1966; hall lowered and Eerwah Vale Hall annexed, 1968; Eumundi & District Historical Association appointed trustees, 1989; stage extensions completed, 1999, tells but part of the story. The splendid logo and souvenir card, created for the 2012 celebrations by Ian and Audrey Gunn, further sums up the hall's history of dance, boxing, theatre and community events. Excellent

pictures, plans of the hall, and clips from the hall's comprehensive and continuous archive makes this book a worthy addition to any library dealing with the history of community and Mechanics' Institutes. Available from: Eumundi Heritage Foundation, Box 427, Eumundi, Q 4562. \$10.00 posted, and also ask for the centennial souvenir card.



**If you know of an Institute which has had its history written and has not been reviewed in Useful Knowledge, please contact the MIV Secretary with the details on price, availability and supplier.**

## IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### A DRIVER'S MANUAL

To assist in the management of your hall for the present and future Committees it is recommended that you start a **Hall Manual** with sections for: Building, Electrical, Equipment, Plumbing, etc. List service providers with contact details, nature of works or installation and dates which they were carried out. This will help future Committees in their management of your Institute.

### A STITCH IN TIME

In recent travels it was interesting to learn that some Institutes set aside in their annual budgets a maintenance allowance. One Institute had been doing this for years and had gradually got the hall in shipshape condition, with a little and often approach. Another started quite recently by prioritising tasks and working through the list, whilst lodging grant applications, some of which were successful. In a comparatively short time a lot has been achieved, in fact beyond their wildest dreams. But they had the vision to plan it through.

The importance of programmed maintenance, like: keeping the water out by cleaning out the spoutings; fixing broken windows; keeping the vermin out; and paint touch up is paramount. All can save heaps of money, if they are attended to promptly.

An annual working bee of district residents can work wonders even if it is only for community networking. It is amazing the talent and connections that are out there that can advance your cause.

### SIGN UP

Starting at the 'front door' it is essential that a good first impression be given to visitors. The name of the hall should be appropriately signwritten across the front of the hall, with preferably a date of establishment which gives a sense of history.

In a visible place should be a small notice-type board with a 'For Hire' and a contact phone number or email contact. If there is a window in front of the hall it can be displayed there.

A noticeboard with an opportunity to promote future events would also be reasonable and an added bonus to hirers.

### DON'T BLAME IT ON THE CHILDREN

Just what is your hall doing for youth? We learned recently of a Hall Committee which sponsored a youth group and made available a table tennis table. To that could be added a dart board. A CD player could be used for karaoke or a dance. A couple of the members could supervise by keeping up the soft drinks and heating the pizza for supper or afternoon tea. An occasional matinee film could be shown. Then there is the Christmas Party. Make the hall a family place. Many Institutes have land attached, even tennis courts, so outdoor sports may be possible.

We must all make a determined attempt to foster youth involvement for who else will look after the halls in the future.

### SEEING READ

Purchase or seek the donation of book case to house donated books. Reserve one shelf specifically for children's books. It would also be good if two shelves could be provided with locked glass doors: one to provide a not-for-loan local reference collection on a district's history, Aboriginal pre-history, geology, flora and fauna, as well as family histories or books by local authors; and the other could house museum related items like documents, photos or copies.

Short on wall space? Store your book collection in stackable plastic tubs which can easily be brought out of the storage cupboard on 'library lending days'.

### MAKE THE MEMORIALS MEANINGFUL

Most Institutes have Honour Boards, single plaques or lists of Hall office-bearers. Bring those names to life with supplementary information.

With the centenary of the Gallipoli landing coming up in 2015 here is the challenge. Even basic searches of Boer, World War I and World War II records on the Australian War Memorial website [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au) or in the case of World War I [www.aif.adfa.edu.au](http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au) or [www.mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au](http://www.mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au). For deceased soldiers the Commonwealth War Graves Commission site [www.cwg.org](http://www.cwg.org), will all be useful.

For general searches type the full name into your search engine or into [trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper](http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper) you could be surprised. Interest the local school history teacher and publicise your quest in the local newspaper and stand by for information.

### PLAN AHEAD

A few halls are nearing their centenary by Institute establishment or hall replacement. Announce your intention of a celebration way ahead, perhaps with a preliminary Sunday afternoon meeting. There you will be able to secure addresses, solicit ideas and generate interest. Given time people will travel interstate or across the world for such events but they need time to plan.

Don't forget the **Australian Heritage Festival** is in April-May, **History Week** is in October and **Home is Where the Hall Is!** in November.

Plan your events now, and let MIV know what is happening and when and we will do our best to let our members know too!

### GO TELL IT FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Communication is very important and you have to compete with a wide range of promoters and events.

That said, if you don't promote your Institute and its community purpose, people will not rally to the cause.

## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES LIBRARY DIRECTORY

### LIBRARIES

*The following is a list of Institute Libraries and their specialties. It is suggested that you phone ahead for opening hours which may vary according to the season*

#### MECHANICS' INSTITUTE RESOURCE CENTRE (MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.)

140 High Street, Prahran, V 3181  
Telephone: 9510 3393. Website: [www.vicnet.net.au/~mivic](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~mivic)  
Email: [mivenquiry@live.com.au](mailto:mivenquiry@live.com.au)  
Collections: Mechanics' Institute related material, particularly Victorian.  
Open: Same hours as Prahran MI Library

#### BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

117-119 Sturt Street, Ballarat, V 3350  
Telephone: 5331 3042; Website: [ballaratmi.com.au](http://ballaratmi.com.au)  
Collections: 19th century newspapers and periodicals; contemporary fiction and non-fiction; videos; jigsaw puzzles, CDs.  
Open: Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm, Saturday 9.30am-12noon.

#### BERWICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY

15 High Street, Berwick, V 3806  
Telephone: 9707 3519; Website: [berwickmilibrary.org.au](http://berwickmilibrary.org.au)  
Collections: Contemporary Library; Children's; Local History; Casey Collection.  
Open: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9.30am-5.30pm, Friday 9.30am-5.30pm, 7pm-8.30pm, Saturday 9.30am-12.30pm.

#### FOOTSCRAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

209 Nicholson Street, Footscray, V 3011  
Telephone: 9687 1935. Email: [footmech@bigpond.com](mailto:footmech@bigpond.com)  
Collections: Modern Fiction; Serials; Daily newspapers; Local History; Women's Studies  
Open: Monday-Wednesday, Friday 10.30am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-4.30pm, Thursday 10.30am-12noon, 2pm-4.30pm.

#### MALDON ATHENAEUM LIBRARY

97 High Street, Maldon, V 3463  
Telephone: 5475 1326. Website: [www.maldonlibrary.org.au](http://www.maldonlibrary.org.au)  
Collections: Modern Fiction; Maldon & Goldfields History; Children's; Large Print  
Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2-4pm, Saturday 9.30am-12noon.

#### MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM

188 Collins Street, Melbourne, V 3000  
Telephone: 9650 3100. Website: [melbourneneathenaem.org.au](http://melbourneneathenaem.org.au)  
Collections: Recreational Library; Daily newspapers; Serials  
Open: Monday-Thursday 9am-6pm, Friday 9am-5pm, Saturday 9.30am-12noon.

#### PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

140 High Street, Prahran, V 3181  
Telephone: 9510 3393. Website: [pmi.net.au](http://pmi.net.au)  
Collections: Victorian and Local History Collection; Contemporary Library; Serials  
Open: Weekdays, 9.30am-4.30pm; Saturdays 9.30am-1pm

### OTHER LIBRARIES

#### ARARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

171-173 Barkly Street, Ararat, V 3377.

Telephone: 5352 1447  
Collections: Mills & Boon; Detective; Western  
Open: Weekdays, 3pm-4.30pm

#### BONNIE DOON FREE LIBRARY

Arnot Street, Bonnie Doon, V 3720  
Telephone: 5778 7722.  
Collection: Contemporary fiction  
Open: Monday-Wednesday, 1pm-4.30pm

#### DEAN HALL & MECHANICS' HALL

1371 Ballarat-Daylesford Road, Dean, V 3352  
Telephone: 5334 5238.  
Collection: Contemporary fiction; Children's toys  
Open: Monday-Wednesday, 1pm-4.30pm

#### DIGBY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & LIBRARY

Clare and Buckingham Streets, Digby, V 3309  
Telephone: 5579 3253. Website: [mccallum-collection.org](http://mccallum-collection.org)  
Collection: Contemporary fiction; Craft  
Open: Tuesdays, 4pm-5pm

#### LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

6 Rothwell Road, Little River, V 3211  
Telephone: 5283 1939. Website  
Collection: Modern fiction; Local History  
Open: every second Saturday, 10-12 Noon

#### MT EGERTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Main Road, Mt Egerton, V 3352  
Telephone: 5368 9367  
Collection: Contemporary fiction  
Open: Fridays, Noon-2pm

#### STANLEY ATHENAEUM & PUBLIC ROOM

Main Street, Stanley, V 3747  
Telephone: 5728 6594. Website: [www.stanleyvictoria.com.au](http://www.stanleyvictoria.com.au)  
Collection: Heritage Collection; Regional History Collection; Geoff Craig Archive  
Open: By appointment

#### TALBOT FREE LIBRARY

Camp Street, Talbot, V 3371  
Telephone: (03) 5463 2008  
Collections: General  
Open: Saturdays 10-12 Noon

### MUSEUMS / LIBRARIES

#### BURKE MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Loch Street, Beechworth, V 3747  
Telephone: 5728 8067. Website: [www.burkemuseum.com.au](http://www.burkemuseum.com.au)  
Collections: Main Street, Family History, Medical, Industry, Chinese.  
Open Daily, except Christmas Day

#### BENALLA COSTUME & PIONEER MUSEUM

14 Mair Street, Benalla, V 3760  
Telephone/Fax: 5762 1749. Website: [www.home.vicnet.net.au/~benmus/](http://www.home.vicnet.net.au/~benmus/)  
Collections: Ned Kelly, Period Costume, Benalla's Famous Sons, Creator's Gallery.  
Open Daily 9am-5pm.

#### CHARLTON GOLDEN GRAINS MUSEUM

1 High Street, Charlton, V 3525  
Telephone: 5491 1574. Website: [www.charlton.vic.au/museum](http://www.charlton.vic.au/museum)  
Collections: Local history, Cropping  
Open weekends and by Appointment

#### CHILTERN ATHENAEUM MUSEUM

57 Conness Street, Chiltern, V 3683

Telephone: 5726 1280. Website: [www.chilternathenaem.com.au](http://www.chilternathenaem.com.au)  
Collections: Eustace, McEwen, Military, Mining, Industrial, Newspaper & Genealogical Records  
Open seven days, 10am-4pm, or by appointment.

#### HAMILTON HISTORY CENTRE

43 Gray Street, Hamilton, V 3300  
Telephone: 5572 4933. Website: [www.home.vicnet.net.au/~hamhist](http://www.home.vicnet.net.au/~hamhist)  
Collection: Regional history, archive  
Open: Daily, except Saturday, 2pm-5pm

#### LEONGATHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

McCartin Street, Leongatha, V 3953  
Telephone: 5662 2492. Website: [leongathahistory.org.au](http://leongathahistory.org.au)  
Collection: Regional history  
Open: Thursday and Friday, 12 noon-4pm

#### MALMSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mollison Street, Malmsbury, V 3446  
Tel: 5423 9383. Website: [home.vicnet.net.au/~malmhst/](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~malmhst/)  
Collections: Regional history  
Open: Fridays, 9am-2.30pm

#### NATHALIA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

47 Pearce Street, Nathalia, V 3638  
Telephone: (03) 5866 2955  
Collections: Regional history  
Open: Second Sunday of each month, 1.30-4pm

#### NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sorrento Mechanics' Institute  
827 Melbourne Road, Sorrento, V 3943  
Telephone: 5984 0255. Website: [www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au](http://www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au)  
Collections: Early Settlement of Victoria, Maritime, Local History, Military  
Open weekends 1.30pm-4.30pm, or by appointment

#### PORT FAIRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

63-65 Sackville Street, Port Fairy, V 3264  
Telephone: 5568 2263. Website: [historicalsociety.port-fairy.com](http://historicalsociety.port-fairy.com)  
Collection: Regional history  
Open: Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday, Public Holidays 2pm-5pm.

#### RUSHWORTH MUSEUM

Cnr High & Parker Streets, Rushworth, 3612  
Telephone: 5856 1951. Website: [rushworthmuseum.wordpress.com](http://rushworthmuseum.wordpress.com)  
Collection: Regional history  
Open: Saturday 10am-3pm; Sunday 11am-3pm

#### SEYMOUR FREE LIBRARY & READING ROOM

Tallarook and Edward Street, Seymour, V 3660  
Telephone: 5792 2311. Website  
Collection: Regional History.  
Open: By Appointment

#### WILLIAMSTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5 Electra Street, Williamstown, V 3016  
Telephone: 9397 1534  
Collections: Local History, Maritime  
Open: Sunday afternoons 2-4pm