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# USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

### Newsletter No 31 - Autumn 2013

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AUSTRALIA'S LONGEST RUNNING MECHANICS' INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 180 YEARS. See page 8

### WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

You may have received this newsletter as a member, under the door of your Hall, or in a targeted mailing. Maybe for some, the immediate reaction is that 'We are not a Mechanics' Institute!' But that is mere semantics in the scheme of things.

Most Mechanics' Institutes are Community Halls and we are all faced with the same problems of insurance and lack of regular grants to maintain aged infrastructure. The lengthening list of Mechanics'

Institutes and Halls that are now designated Neighbourhood Safer **Places** (NSP) brings the added burden of compliance management. Whilst it makes sense to make Halls places of last resort, the extra resourcing of those

From the big building at Bendigo to the typical at Taggerty. We all face the same issues and we are all in this together.

and other Halls that are called on from time to time, whether it be tornado, flood or bushfire, is needed.

The availability of a Hall to be activated with volunteers, generally around the clock, is something that just doesn't happen. It is dependent on the goodwill and probably the generosity of volunteers who have already put their hand in their pockets for Hall and grounds maintenance.

As has been noted in the past Councils collect rates to provide community infrastructure, and paramount in that is the Community Hall. However across the State few Councils give regular annual grants to their Halls in their Local Government areas and the question must be asked 'Why not?'

When one Hall Committee approached a rural Council staffer as to the possibility of a grant to supplement Hall fundraising for works, the staffer in a moment of total frankness stated 'Perhaps you should increase it a bit, after all you save Council a lot

of money maintaining and managing these facilities.' How perceptive.

Similarly Council has concessional rates of insurance, utility charges and purchasing. Why are these not passed on to benefit the Community Hall? Then some of the Community Halls have been taken over by Councils. There, the bean counters have determined that the Community Hall must be a cost recovery operation, putting hire charges on small

community groups, that make use of the Hall prohibitive.

Indeed we are all in this together and we need your support to take our case jointly to Government and agencies to gain equity for your Hall. To do this we need to assemble incontrovertible proof and we will be

circulating a survey shortly enlisting your help in this.

We are also a sharing organisation. You may have your specialties in fundraising and that can be libraries, markets, film, theatre, visiting performers or even an annual event. Share your success stories with us as to the strangest event that has been held in your hall, by the seeing of 'Hall for Hire' in your window or on the front of your Hall.

One of the other issues we must address is to get youth involved in our Halls so that we can pass the baton on to ensure the Hall's future management.

Let us have your thoughts on any issue and tell us what works for you. It may also work for others in some remote part of Victoria. Whether you are a Mechanics' or not come on board and let's make Halls places of family nourishment and enjoyment.

### **NEXT MIV MEETING**

Saturday, 10 August 2013. Place and time TBD

### **COMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

### MAY

1-31 May

Beechworth Burke Museum, Loch Street. The Museum has an exhibition titled simply **Ned Kelly** and it is open daily 10am-5pm. They are also organising Walking Tours of Beechworth at 10.15am and 1.15pm daily. Cost: Adult \$10; Concession and Students \$7.50; Family \$25.00.

3-18 May

Williamstown Musical Theatre Company, Electra Street. **Sweet Charity**. Info and Bookings: www. wmtc.org.au

15 May

Harcourt Heritage Centre, Harcourt ANA Hall, 7 High Street. District History Display. 9am-4pm. Gold Coin Donation.

18-19 May

Tallarook Art Society - "heARTfelt" Art Exhibition and Sale

19 May

Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association, Corner Yarra Street and Mitchell Avenue – Open Day -10am-4pm. Free Admission.

19 May

MIV Bus Tour - 'Lardner to Leongatha'. Contact: MIV Secretary, Judith Dwyer

26 May

Eskdale Hall Centenary. Contact: Phillip Lord (03) 6072 0383

29 - 31 May

Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company, Castella Street. **Laughter on the 23**<sup>rd</sup> **Floor**. Info: www. lilydaletc.com or Inquiries (03) 9735 1777

### **JUNE**

1-15 June

Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company, Castella Street. **Laughter on the 23**<sup>rd</sup> **Floor**. Info: www. lilydaletc.com or Inquiries (03) 9735 1777

6-30 June

Leongatha & District Historical Society, McCartin Street - VicRoads Centennial Travelling Exhibition

9 Iune

Bonnie Doon Country Market, in the grounds of the Community Centre.

21 June

Tallarook Mechanics' Institute - Ali McGregor - Alchemy. Contact: bookings.com.au

### **JULY**

1 July

*Useful Knowledge* article submission deadline for Winter-Spring Edition.

1-27 July

Leongatha & District Historical Society, McCartin Street - VicRoads Centennial Travelling Exhibition

### **AUGUST**

TBD

Leongatha Historical Society Exhibition: Pioneers and Local Roads and Bridges. www. leongathahistory.org.au

10 August

Mechanics' Institute of Victoria Inc. Meeting. Location TBD

31 August

Meredith Harvest Farmers and Craft Market

### **SEPTEMBER**

29 September

Bonnie Doon Country Market, in the grounds of the Community Centre.

### **OCTOBER**

1 October

*Useful Knowledge* article submission deadline for Summer Edition.

27 October

Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria – Bus Tour –Central Victorian Institutes. (03) 9873 7202

### **NOVEMBER**

1-30 November

Regional Arts Victoria - **Home Is Where the Hall Is!** Month. Events in Halls across Victoria. homeiswherethehallis.com

3 November

Bonnie Doon Country Market, in the grounds of the Community Centre.

30 November

Meredith Harvest Farmers and Craft Market

WANTED: Notice of your forthcoming events. Email: bronlowden@hotmail.com

### **MIV CONTACTS**

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



This issue sees a change at our newsletter helm. We thank **Dr Donald Barker** for his most valued work over the past five years in sustaining the newsletter. This is our vital message to the world.

Our newly elected editor is **Bronwyn Lowden** who has grown up with the Mechanics' Movement. In fact she can claim to be one of the few standing to attend at the historic 1998 Kilmore Conference from which the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria was formed.

Bronwyn's longstanding interest and action in the movement varies from giving talks to community groups, updating her landmark *Checklist of Australian Mechanics' Institutes* (launched at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts in 2006 and now on the way to its fourth edition), and adding to her photographic file of Institute pictures and books to her world Mechanics' Institute related collection.

With her brother **James**, they coordinated the speaker 'technology' at **Mechanics Worldwide 2004** in Melbourne.

Bronwyn presented at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2009** in Bath and most recently at **Buildings, Books and Blackboards** in Melbourne. She was elected to the MIV Committee in 2008 and we wish her well in her new and challenging role.

Our newsletter is our window to the world and we have recently updated our mailing list to include key Government personnel, community partners and our fraternal Associations in the UK and USA. It was recently resolved to do a promotional mailing to involve and engage more Institutes.

We are considering a 'Domesday Book like' survey of Institutes which will collect information on known Institutes for taking a case to Government on insurance, rates, recurrent funding and access to Government contracts. This will also be a valuable archive document for your Institute so it will be supplied in duplicate.

Floods and fires have again taken their toll on Institute records and this again highlights the need to have them copied and we can help with that.

It was good to see some new faces at the Ballaarat Mechanics' Regional Meeting and we welcome several new members. Future regional meetings will be notified well in advance and will be devoted largely to the business of Institute visitors and we trust you will support them to make them worthwhile.

As part of our fifteenth anniversary we will conducting a bus tour to Central Victorian Mechanics' Institutes.

Finally we seek interest in forming group alliances. We already have a libraries group and believe there are opportunities to form museum, theatre, market, dance, film or craft groups. There may even be the possibility for inter-Institute billiards, table tennis, chess, draughts, cards or darts tournaments.



President.

### **EDITORIAL**

This is my first newsletter as official editor. The newsletter now has its own history dating back to the last century (1999). I pay tribute to all previous editors from the first **Dr Julann Meabank** to the most recent **Dr Donald Barker**.

Dr Barker edited *Useful Knowldege* for six years, no mean feat in itself and we thank Donald for keeping the flag flying vigourously for the Mechanics' Institute Movement.

Like all editors, I have flagged a new style and regular features will be added in the coming issues including a featured Institute, a legal and housekeeping column, a youth column, researcher page, a buy-swap-sell-donate column, as well as photos that require identification.

I have also included a casserole recipe for the regular community lunch or tea that I hope you will plan to have in your Hall, if you are not already doing so. We are after all our brother or sister's keeper and the Hall is our second home, and our community's refuge. *Use it or you will lose it.* The sight of vehicles, travelling from all directions along dusty gravel roads, converging on the Hall, similarly car lights at night, are truly the most heart warming experiences you can imagine or ever wish to see.

The previous issue of *Useful Knowledge* will be uploaded on to the MIV website as the most recent newsletter is issued, so there is the possibility of greater exposure and hopefully more feedback for our research queries. Therefore tell us if we were wrong. You may even wish to tell us what you liked, or what you would like us to write about.

Welcome aboard the good coach *Useful Knowledge*, the vehicle of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Victoria and beyond. It's going to be quite a trip and I hope you will continue to share it with me as we welcome others aboard on our journey through the wonderful world of Mechanics' Institutes.

Bron Lowden

### **WANTED: NEWS - DEAD OR ALIVE**

We are interested in both your history and your happenings, with pictures, cartoons, etc. for publication in *UK*. Your history and news is vital to us. Send you news by email or post:

bronlowden@hotmail.com Bron Lowden 29 Lisbeth Avenue Donvale, V 3111.

### SAVE A TREE - IT'S EMAIL FOR ME

You can elect to have your newsletter sent by email in the future. This will ensure a crisp image with often coloured photos, easy distribution to your Committee Members and to anyone who may be interested in joining MIV, that you would not risk giving your hard copy away to. Please email the Newsletter Editor if you would like to recieve (a) an email and hard copy, or (b) an email copy only.

#### SHARE IT AROUND

MIV newsletters are created as a community resource. They are not intended just for filing in the Secretary's records. They must be passed around to the Executive and Committee and after that they can be left in the Hall for all to read. You never know what people are interested in or where they are travelling to, there may be something in here of interest to them. Put this copy out for people to peruse. (To stop the copy from walking out the door, punch a hole in the top left hand corner and tie it to a sturdy structure in the Hall; when the next newsletter comes out, only then should this be untied and filed away.)

Our newsletter is not called *Useful Knowledge* for nothing and that knowledge is to be shared. It is important that people know our history and why we still don't carry spanners in our back pockets (although that would be a nice touch). Today's Mechanics' are certainly not a monastic-like order, we are militant and out there, in and for our communities. Our mission is to inspire all for our Hall.

### NEWSLETTER ROUND

Tick after reading and pass it on	
President	
Vice-President	
Treasurer	
Secretary	
Committee (Insert your name)	

### WERE WE WRONG?

Given the history of Victoria's 1200 odd Institutes is still largely to be written, from time to time we float articles that may not be factually correct. We believe the important thing is to make a start and get something down, and if it is wrong, it can then be corrected.

Not making a start is the do nothing option, and that by definition does not achieve anything. The pioneers of our 12,000 Institutes around the world clearly did not choose the do nothing option and neither will we.

If a fact, name spelling, date or place name is incorrect let us know. As that great scholar from antiquity, Anonymous, stated: 'To be human is to be fallible.'

### BALLARAT REGIONAL MEETING

Hosted by Ballaarat President, **Dr Jill Blee**, the Regional Meeting was held in the refurbbished Humffray Room at the Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute on Saturday, 9 February.

Five rural Institutes were represented: **Balmoral** by **Dot O'Callaghan** and **Helen Brown** who drove 216kms to attend the meeting; **Elaine** by **Jayne Solly**; **Malmsbury** by **Sue Walter**; and **Skipton** by **Stan Foote**.

There was a good attendance by the Committee and several of the Ballaarat Committee attended including Mark Bevelander, Clive Brooks and Phil Roberts. There was a full agenda which had to be ultimately abandoned in order to hear reports from our visiting Institutes.

Debate on one interesting item was led by Ballaarat's archivist Mark Bevelander who suggested the creation of a Union Catalogue for Mechanics' Institute libraries and remnant collections based on a single database system. The possibility of whether this could be accessible on the MIV website or in individual Institute libraries was also canvassed.

The reports given on behalf of the various Institutes included:

# BALMORAL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1886)

The Balmoral Institute building dates from 1888 and it has been progressively added to down through the years, with several additions. It was built on donated land which was transferred to the Crown in the 1950s. The site is shared with the Balmoral Bowls Club. The Hall is well used by the community including for theatrical productions.

### **ELAINE HALL (Est. 1878)**

Located on the Geelong Road, 31km south of Ballarat, the present Elaine building dates from the 1910/11, although the Elaine Mechanics' was formed in 1878. It is well managed by a local committee and underwent restumping and restoration in the 1990s. Up until last year it hosted a visiting bookmobile. This was subsequently replaced with a library staff member who in the evenings sat in the Hall to take on-line orders for books, issue ordered books and accepted returns. Alas this limited service has recently been stopped. The nearest library is about 20km away at Buninyong. The Hall hosts periodic dances and is the local polling venue.



Unfortunately the Hall records have not been passed on by previous officeholders so the Hall history is not accessible, nor can they presently be copied or digitised to ensure survival into the future.

# MALMSBURY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1862)

After long-term tenant the **Malmsbury Historical Society** had cleaned out the 'elongated dog kennel' and established its ownership, Macedon Ranges Shire Council became the nominal owner. It then appointed a Committee of Management to manage the building for the community. The Society were required to pay a \$500 annual 'rental' fee and this was increased to more than \$1000 a short time ago. Needless to say the Historical Society, as the custodian of the area's historical record which is stored in the building, has refused to pay. They have cogently pointed out there is other meeting space available at the old Town Hall. So it's a matter of 'Watch this space!'

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

The date of the present building is 1905 with various additions and renovations. Built adjacent to the Skipton Creek it was recently flooded and all the Institute's original records were destroyed in the underfloor storage area. Fortunately some had been digitised by the Skipton Historical Society some time ago, so digital images of some still remain. The Committee of Management planned to install a shed on higher ground near the front of the building but heritage considerations initially dictated an underfloor concrete bunker. However an estimate for the proposed works came in at around \$300,000, so a solution was found, install a shed at less than \$10,000. With the town's hotel not likely to open again, more use is being made of the Hall. The Hall is well maintained thanks to recurrent Council funding to enable a comprehensive maintenance schedule and systematic restoration work.

# BALLARAT BUILDING TOUR AFTER THE MEETING

At the close of the Meeting, attendees were given a

tour of the near finished Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute. During the tour Malmsbury's Susan Walternoticed some other canvas-bound books with advertising.

Photos - Left: Elaine stamp from the PROV; Right: One of the canvas wrapped books at the Malmsbury MI featured in Sue Walter's book The Elongated Dog Kennel



### LEGAL: NEW ASSOCIATIONS' LEGISLATION

For those Incorporated Associations which issue copies of their Rules to new members they should be aware that *The Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* came into force on 26 November 2012. It is best that this practice not continue until your Association in General Meeting either adopts the Model Rules or changes its rules if it does not presently use the Model Rules.

The new *Act* affects every Incorporated Association and office-bearers and members should be made aware of those changes. There is a twelve month transition period for associations using the Model Rules under the old *Act* to either adopt the new Model Rules or opt out for their own set of Rules. In the meantime the new Model Rules are operational for those who in the past operated under Model Rules.

For those who have their own set of Rules, those Associations which have not changed their Rules in accordance with the new list of scheduled items, until those rules are changed, will have Model Rules substituted where appropriate.

The Scheduled Items include:

- 1. Your rules must include the name of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 2. Your rules must include the purposes of your incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 3. If your association has qualifications limiting who can be a member, these must be outlined in the rules (Model Rule compliant);
- 4. If your association requires members to pay a membership or a joining fee or if other fees apply to members (such as subscription fee), your rules must set out these fees and the circumstances in which they must be paid (Model Rule compliant);
- 5. Your rules must outline the rights, obligations and liabilities of members (New Model Rules covers this item);
- 6. Your rules must make provisions for the resignation of a member or cessation of membership (Model Rule compliant);
- 7. The procedure (if any) for the disciplining of members and the mechanism (if any) for appearances by members in respect of disciplinary action taken against them (New Model Rules covers this item);
- 8. The grievance procedures for settling disputes under the rules between the incorporated association and any of its members or between a member and any other member (New Model Rules covers this item);
- 9. Your rules must include the name, membership and powers of the committee or (other body, for example a 'board') that manages the incorporated association. This includes providing details of (a) the procedure for the election or appointment of members of the committee; (b) the terms of office of members of the committee; (c) the grounds on which, or reasons for which, the office of a member of the committee becomes vacant; (d) the filling of

- casual vacancies occurring within the committee, and; (e) the quorum and procedure at meetings of the committee; (Model Rule compliant);
- 10. The procedure for the appointment and removal of the secretary (formerly public officer) of the incorporated association (New Model Rules covers this item);
- 11. The custody of records, securities and other relevant documents of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 12. Provision for the custody and use of the common seal (if any) of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 13. Provision of members to have access to, and be able to obtain copies of, the records, securities and other relevant documents of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 14. The preparation and retention of accurate minutes of: (a) general meetings of the incorporated association, and; (b) meetings of the committee or other body having the management of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 15. Provision for members to have access to, and be able to obtain copies of, minutes of general meetings of the incorporated association, including financial statements submitted at a general meeting (New Model Rules covers this item);
- 16. Right of access (if any) by members to minutes of meetings of the committee, including any terms and conditions subject to which access may be granted (New Model Rules covers this item);
- 17. The intervals between general meetings of members of the incorporated association and the manner of calling such meetings (Model Rule compliant);
- 18. The quorum and procedure of general meetings and whether members are entitled to vote by proxy at general meetings (Model Rule compliant);
- 19. The time within which, and the manner in which, notices of general meetings and notices of motion must be given, published or circulated (Model Rule compliant);
- 20. The sources from which the funds of the incorporated association are to be or may be derived (Model Rule compliant);
- 21. The manner in which the funds of the incorporated must be managed and, in particular, the mode of drawing and signing cheques on behalf of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant);
- 22. The manner of altering and rescinding the rules of the incorporated association and of making additional rules (Model Rule compliant);
- 23. The disposition of any surplus assets on the winding up or dissolution of the incorporated association (Model Rule compliant).

It is suggested that you peruse the new *Act* and its associated Regulations at **www.legislation.vic.gov**.

### LEGAL: NEW ASSOCIATIONS' LEGISLATION cont...

au. Discussion and changes are outlined on the Public Interest Law Clearing House website www.pilch. org.au. There is also interesting discussion about the various changes on the Hunt & Hunt Lawyers website www.hunthunt.com.au.

That said copies of the Model Rules (26 pages) should be made for all committee members in the first instance. All members should also be advised of the new legislation and that a copy of the Act, Model Rules and Regulations is available for inspection and/or they can be referred to the Government legislation website.

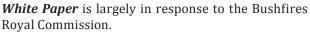
When considering the new *Act* it might also be an appropriate time to review the Statement of Purposes.

After you have adopted the Model Rules or changed your Rules it is suggested that a copy be supplied to all new members on joining, perhaps in an A5 booklet format.

The fee for adopting model rules has been waived and the fee for an association changing its own rules has been reduced to \$75.20 until 26 November 2013. After this date, higher fees apply.

# VICTORIAN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REFORM WHITE PAPER

In December 2012 the Victorian Government issued the Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper. Just as MIV is addressing the Review of Victorian Public Libraries on behalf of its membership so must MIV address the Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper. (It is noted that MIV did not have a chance to input on either process.) That said the Victorian Emergency Management Reform



Our readers will recall that three Halls were burnt during the 2009 Black Saturday Fires: Calignee, Narbethong and Strathewen, and these have since been rebuilt. Some seventy other Halls were used during and after the fires with notable examples being Kinglake West and Arthurs Creek. Other Institutes have been rebuilt in the case of Christmas Hills and Glenburn, and others such as Strath Creek and Wandong have been substantially upgraded.

The White Paper is notionally concerned with Preparedness, Response and Recovery, with the engagement of volunteerism. Again in response to the Royal Commission findings we see Halls being designated as Neighbourhood Safer Places or NSP on directional signage, with examples being-Gordon, Hawkesdale, Lancefield and Powelltown. There is much responsibility in the conduct of such centres and they need to be adequately resourced to meet the 'Place of Last Resort' description.

### THE ROLE OF THE HALL

The Community Hall is necessarily the focus for any community education and action, whether it be prior to, during or after a major event. Necessarily the Hall must be fully resourced to enable strategic delivery of the above.



### RESOURCING FOR EMERGENCIES

To faciltate the upgrade of Community Halls it is suggested that free audits be made to enable progress towards making all Halls as safe as possible in the event of an emergency. That investigation be made of a firefighting 'fogging' system on and around the Hall, with a view to installation in fireprone areas. There must also be a significant water storage for use in connection with or during a community catastrophe which can

provide water for event use and for a firefighting 'fogging' system. The provision of a petrol driven pump and generator in fireprone areas must also be considered as well as external power point connections on all Halls for an external generator should the power go down. Further landline telephone connection be installed in places where mobile telecommunications is problematic. The provision of telecommunications and AV packages to enable DVD training or information aids for communities from one central source. The provision of basic toilet units at all Halls, self composting may even be a consideration. The access to Government and Council contracts for goods and services would also be highly beneficial.



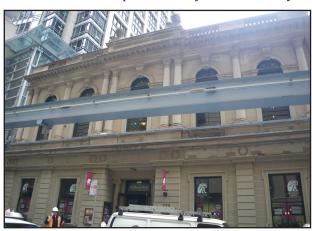
Photos: Top - Neigbourhood Safer Places sign being placed at Halls statewide; Above - Benjeroop Public Hall which was impacted by the 2011 floods. The community tried their hardest to protect the building with sandbags (Photo: ABC Central Victoria website).

### SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS CELEBRATES 180TH



About 200 people turned out on the cold blustery night of 22 March 2013 to celebrate the initial gathering on the same date in similar conditions in 1833. This time it was to celebrate very much the vision of **Rev. Henry Carmichael** (1796-1862) and the Committee which was chaired by **Major Thomas Mitchell** (1792-1855). President **Paul Reid** and Vice-Presidents **Winsome Allen, Alan Creighton** and **Carole O'Brien** welcomed the guests that gathered to honour the milestone and to hear the report on the current solid position of the **Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts**.

SMSA Secretary **Grahame Marks** introduced President Paul who recounted the sale of the original 275 Pitt Street building to Alan Bond's Bondcorp in the heady times of 1987 which turned the old SMSA building into the **Arthouse Hotel**. This first caused the Institute's relocation to **Australia Square** and then to the **Piccadilly Centre**. Finally in March 1996 the SMSA purchased **Lincoln House** at 280 Pitt Street, the former home of the Speedwell bicycle and motorcycle





manufacturers
Bennett & Wood.
The building also
housed tenants
Lincoln Record
Corporation and
Universal Pictures
for a time.

Built in 1925-26 to the design of architects Spain & Cosh, the quaint L-shaped ten storey brick building took some time to convert and fit out and it was not until March 2000 that

the premises were ready for occupation. Since then the Institute has been in 'catch up' mode following a decade of virtual shut-down, but can now boast around 1200 members.

Today the SMSA building is a busy place, with streetlevel shops leased to a coffee shop and a chemist. The first floor comprises meeting rooms and the **Mitchell [lecture] Theatre** which are much utilised spaces, not only used by tenants, but other city based organisations. Floor two comprises the extensive 35,000 volume library with study and newspaper and periodical reading areas. (The recent addition of e-books makes the e-library accessible 24/7.)

Floor three comprises the Institute offices, boardroom, a 'hire out' room, and the **Tom Keneally Centre**. Pride of place in the Centre is Tom's 'office'



where **Paul Ryan**'s 2009 striking larger than life Archibald Prize entry '**Mountain of Tom'** hangs for all to see.

The remaining seven floors and the basement are fully tenanted with a mix of not-for-profits and commercial occupants. Over eighty per cent of the tenants are not-for-profit or educational entities.

Much use is made of the SMSA's walls which carry: murals; pictures, including artworks from the Julian Ashton prize which is sponsored by the Institute each year; and memorabilia, which includes photos and letters relating to the Tom Keneally Centre.

President Paul noted that commemorative explanatory panels had recently been fixed to the walls of the various rooms named in honour of SMSA identities. The Institute had taken steps from early times to admit women as members and it seemed apt the main function space, where the celebratory decorated cake was displayed and finally cut, was named for **Louisa Lawson** (1848-1920) the first woman councillor of the Institute. With her later famous son **Henry** (1867-1922), she purchased the *Republican* in 1887 and in 1888 started *Dawn*, which became a successful women's paper, on which she employed female staff including typesetters and printers.

Indeed all the panels are an interesting read, including that of **Sir Henry Parkes** (1815-96) who ran his *Empire* newspaper largely from the Institute. Then there was the debating at the Institute which attracted **Edmund Barton** (1849-1920), Australia's first Prime Minister. It was President Paul's expressed hope that debating would again feature in SMSA life.

With the singing of 'Happy Birthday', 'Three Cheers' and a toast 'To the health of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts' official proceedings concluded.

Chatting around we met **Tom Thorburn** and his wife **Norma**. Glasgow-born Tom grew up in England and arrived in Sydney aged nineteen. He had been a member of the Institute for fifty-two years and has seen the SMSA in all its 'homes'. Then there was historian **Garry Wotherspoon** who has been commissioned to write the history of the Institute 1833-2013 which is to be published later in the year. Garry's challenge is what to leave in, with a

tight length brief. He said he had just discovered the Stenhouse Circle which largely operated from within the Institute's membership and that alone was the subject of a book some time ago.

It was also good to catch up with Carole O'Brien who was in Melbourne for the First National Mechanics' Institutes Conference in 2000. We also renewed acquaintances with **Peter Clancy**, **John Robinson** and **Alister Wong** who had been in Melbourne for **BBB – MW 2012**.

The SMSA celebration was a truly memorable event, and full credit must go to **John Robinson** and his team for the careful planning.



Only five Sydney organisations could be listed that were established prior to 1833 and still exist, those being The Benevolent Society (1813), Bank of New South Wales, now Westpac (1817), Allens - Lawyers (1822), Sydney Agricultural Show (1823) and the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1831).

Like Tom Thorburn and others we can't wait for the bi-centennial bash. *Happy Birthday Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, and long may your candles burn brightly.* 

Photos, clockwise from below: Attendees at the celebration were treated to music by a local string trio; SMSA's original home, now the Arthouse Hotel; 180 years celebration photos; the present Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts building; Tom Keneally's 'office' overlooking his own collection of publications. (Even in Tom's absence, his portrait watches over the room); Winsome Allen cutting the birthday cake.



# FEATURED INSTITUTE WALLAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY



The township of Wallan Wallan is located on the northern fringe of Melbourne at the southern foot of Pretty Sally's Hill. Once it served the highway, farming community and the nearby railway village of Wallan East. Today it is a dormitory suburb of some 7,000 people, from where workers commute daily to Melbourne either by car or train.

Wallan had its 'suburban' start with the arrival of **Robert Holmes a'Court** in the late 1970s when he purchased the 1000 acre farming property of 'Mittagong'. Here he established Heytesbury Stud with South African architecturally styled buildings and from which he launched **Black Knight** successfully on the 1984 Melbourne Cup. The death of Robert Holmes a' Court in 1990 saw the property sold in 1997 to an Asian syndicate to be developed as **Hidden Valley** residential estate and country club.

The Wallan district was first settled by Scottish, English and Irish settlers in the 1840s. A Post Office was opened in 1858 and the railway line to the east in 1873. The Wallan Wallan Mechanics' Mechanics' Institute was first mooted in 1864 and a Committee was elected in April 1865, with William Hartley 'King' Budd as President. The Committee were eventually



granted a site on the Wallan Wallan Common where it built the still existing brick Free Library Hall early in 1877. This was added to with weatherboard 'renovations', the main hall in 1913 and 1933. External brick toilets were added near the front of the building in the late 1950s-60s and these were demolished in favour of a toilet block built on to the east of the Hall in 2001.

A cenotaph was erected in front of the Hall in 1922 and unveiled in December by **Brigadier-General HE** 'Pompey' Elliott. It thus became a focal point for the previously planted Avenue of Honour of elm trees which is now recognised as a State Heritage feature.



The centenary of the first renovations in 1913 and \$70,000 of external removations over the last 2 years was celebrated on Sunday 7 March 2013 with 'An Afternoon Tea and a stroll down Memory Lane'. We were met at the door by current President Julie Palmer and her husband David who had just stepped down after being Hall Treasurer for twenty-six years. Attendees were duly name-tagged at the door. Then stepping into the main hall which was lined with tongue and groove pine boards in 1928. One felt 'the witness' of those boards which still remained in their natural state, albeit mellowed with smoke from lanterns and cigarettes over the years. Those boards had seen it all.

Around the Hall were time-line panels which featured the history of the Institute which had been prepared by **Mike** and **Gayle Phillips**. A novel touch was a series of plaque like posters blue-tacked at static points around the walls such as 'Lining Boards installed in 1928', 'Toilets added 2001' prepared by **Claudia James**. A white board with a marker attached stated 'This Hall has been used for ...' with many uses besides dances being mentioned, including by the CFA as a Staging Post during the 2009 Bushfires.

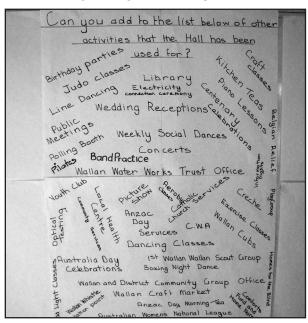
To the east of the Hall is an alcove like area which can be used as a stage or reconfigured to become extra floor area. Here was featured mannequin dummies



with period clothes, and Institute records including Minute books, and printed books opened at references to the Wallan Mechanics'. The principal one being Bill Payne's *Pretty Sally's Hill* which was launched in the Wallan Institute in 1981 with a dance and with 'a plate' as admission. It was noted that official records existed from around 1932 when some perplexing questions about the Hall's history were being posed by officialdom. There was a hint in the Minutes of the time that perhaps it was best that the early records 'no longer exist' course of action be taken. Another take is that the records were destroyed in a fire at a former Secretary's residence.

From the stage at the northern end of the Hall the two people who took us down 'Memory Lane' reminiscing were Wallan-born octogenarian Beryl Stewart and Kerry Page. (Kerry's late father Jeremiah 'Jerry' and mother Alice 'Allie' Vallence were nearlife-long members of the Hall.) The speakers trialled out the newly purchased sound system for the Hall.

Following the official business, afternoon tea was served on to groaning tables set up in the middle of



the Hall. The revamped kitchen, now located in the original brick building, was put to good use by a band of indispensable helpers including **Lyn Ferris**, former Secretary for over 20 years, and **Helen Falkiner**, a relatively new member to the Hall Committee. Those generally invisible helpers are as equally as important to any event.



The everpopular monthly Wallan Market was started in the Hall and adjoining Hadfield Park in 1983 and still continues with upwards of 200 stalls with a number still in the Hall, where the Wallan and District Community Group Committee conduct a fundraising stall. The Hall also makes available its toilets which can be accessed through an external door.

The Wallan Gap is an important route for aviation and perhaps it with this in mind that a recent graffiti artist signwrote the roof of the Wallan Hall with his 'tag'. However his thought of longterm exposure was shortlived as it was removed immediately upon discovery.

Well done Wallanites, you did your Hall and the Mechanics' Institute community proud. It was a single honour and pleasure to be in your midst.

Photos, clockwise from left: A poster was pinned up for attendees to add to the uses of the building; Signs placed on parts of the Hall gave details of when parts of the building were added and altered (or not); Welcome signs out the front of the Hall invited visitors to 'Stroll Down Memory Lane'; Some flowers with a note left by the Laffan and Cornfoot families for the Wallan Public Hall Committee. "May this day go down in history. Well done!"; the northern stage (which can be folded up against the wall for a larger building capacity) with vintage dress displays; memorabilia table including Minute Books, photographs, letters, awards and recollections.

### PIECES OF EIGHT ... AND A FEW EXTRA HALLS 27 OCTOBER 2013

MIV has been running bus tours since 2000 and they have taken in various parts of Victoria. Two ran over weekends, one to Gippsland and one to the North-East. These are looked upon as not just good times, but they are also of great value to those who go on tour for various reasons. There is so much to see and learn at and about each Institute from their intriguing collections to how they do things. Then there is the architecture of the building and how it has been added onto and maintained.

The Mechanics' folk never cease to amaze at how they approach different problems to achieve the same outcome – the survival of their Institutes.

Each tour is a new challenge. Find a route. Make contact with the various Hall managers. Prepare a running sheet of the tour. Drive the route and get some photographs. Based on times, identify morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea stops. Then prepare a potted history of each for tour notes. In some cases this will be the first attempt to get a history together on some Institutes. It may not even be possible to verify hearsay at the time of going to print, but at least it is an honest attempt to get something down, so that it later can then be corrected or verified.

Filling the bus is of paramount importance, not only to make the tour a cost recovery exercise, but also to ensure that as many people who have an interest and/or a stake in an Institute can participate. This enables them to meet people with like interests and to see how others manage. This latter point cannot be over emphasised for the benefit Institute managers could derive from a tour. In fact it would be good to see Institute's sponsoring a bus ticket for a Committee member to go on 'a fact finding' tour, with the potential to follow up on ideas.

So next time an MIV Bus Tour comes around it is not just a good day out, but it is also a good *educational* day out. After all Mechanics' Institutes invented group tours, and it took **Thomas Cook** to exploit the idea. But in recent times UK Institutes have revived the group tour idea with special interest tours around the UK or Europe. One tour from the **Ipswich Institute Reading Room and Library** even came to Australia.

Come aboard for the next tour. It could add a whole new perspective to your life. You could return to their community market, annual auction, museum collection, theatrical production, film night or dancing class. We can guarantee you one thing, that you will admire the resilence and dedication of the volunteerism of the people who manage the Institutes and/or Halls for their various communities, thus saving the public purse millions of dollars each year.



MIV's Pieces of Eight Bus Tour is to be held on Sunday 27 October 2013. This will be held as a prelude to Regional Arts Victoria's Home Is Where the Hall Is month of November. Central Victorian historians **Ken James** and **Noel Davis** will be our guides for the day leading MIV's official Home is where the Hall is activity.

A growing number of Institute Halls are participating in this now annual event and we compliment the Victorian Government and Regional Arts Victoria for funding and organising the event.

The **Pieces of Eight** tour moves from the very solid **Gisborne** and **Kyneton** Institutes both recently refurbished, to the smaller but not less used Institutes/ Halls of **Malmsury**, **Taradale**, **Elphinstone**, **Chewton**, **Fryerstown**, **Sutton Grange**, **Redesdale**, **Mia Mia** and **Barfold**. All appear to be in glorious renaissance with innovative programs of community activity. We will be updating the research on the various Institutes and will be writing to the various Institutes to coordinate this.

The tour will officially finish at Barfold where the **Travelling Exhibition** will be launched, along with the launch of Ken James and Noel Davis's latest book on eight Central Victorian Mechanics' Institutes.

Again morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided along the way and the usual notes will be a part of the package.

Reserve your seat now by emailing Jim: theruralstore@bigpond.com.au or Bron: bronlowden@hotmail.com or phone (03) 9873 7202.

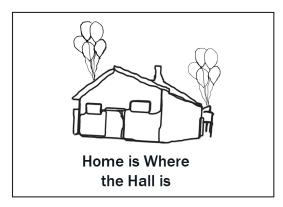


### **OPINION**

### THE HUB IS WHERE THE HALL IS

by Jim Lowden

Over a lifetime I have attended events in countless Institute and Community Halls, many as a privileged guest, others to which I have been honoured to have been present.



We have recently seen the second running of the Home is Where the Hall Is! in November, a State Government funded initiative of Regional Arts Victoria. The slogan is a clever adaptation of 'Home is where the heart is.' I see the two as synonymous. Just like home, Halls are places of great life experiences, and they have treasured memories for all people. It therefore is understandable, why people are so passionate about their Halls and the need for their retention, but there are immense pressures to obliterate our Hall 'memory'.

The recent **Buildings**, **Books** and **Blackboards Conference** caused me to reflect on the reasons for the rise of 'the Hall', whether as Mechanics' Institutes or the great Town Hall edifices that rose in the nineteenth century. They were symbols of pride, they were the community's 'castle'. They provided: a plethora of opportunities; self-help and motivational lectures; libraries, where all could read no matter what age; a meeting place for like-minded groups; and a recreational venue whether that be dancing, gymnastics, darts, billiards or chess.

First and foremost Halls were family venues, no one was excluded. I and countless others, when babies, probably spent hours under Hall seats tucked up in our bassinets, whilst our parents danced or took part in a community meeting. We grew up with other children, who also attended at the Community Hall.

In comparatively recent times, there has been an assault on our Community Halls, either from distant Government agencies or Councils and their staff, who seem to have no apparent affinity, either through their administrative actions or funding for community amenities and the relentless pursuit of cost recovery. Indeed one officer in a report to a Council in the 1990s stated 'Mechanics' Institutes are no longer relevant.' How wrong he has subsequently shown to have been!



Recent rationalisation of libraries, previously maintained by Institutes in towns and districts, across the nation until the late 1940s, has seen the return of the library shelf to a number of Halls, and this may well be the future trend. Similarly the return of many other activities to the Hall, can return it to its full and previous hub status.



However the challenge to every Institute Hall is that you must aggressively sell it. Place a prominent sign in the window or outside the Hall 'For Hire' with a phone number. Install a noticeboard in the window or foyer to advertise future Hall-based events.

Plan a Hall-based community working bee to get the district together, conclude it with a barbecue. Organise at least one annual event to involve all the family, it can be a Christmas Party. Trial a couple of events, a lecture, an exhibition, a film night. Start a wall of memory.

We must start our succession planning and get our youth out of the pubs, off the roads, and back into the Halls. That may involve the restarting of Blue Light Discos, YMCA/YWCA, Young Farmers, Apex, etc. Just as the pioneers of the Mechanics' Institute Movement provided opportunity for youth self-help. We need to nurture future community leaders and to again make the Hall a hub, a family place. There is no need to re-invent and resource them in different guises, our Halls, or should that read hubs, are already there.

I too salute the memory of Mechanics, Pam Darling, Brian Foley, Jim Spark and Dr Bill Hardy. RIP.

Alere Flammam - Feeding the Flame

### STAGE CURTAINS

One of the most prolific artists of stage curtains in Victoria was scenic stage painter **Barry Henry George Jaggers**.

Barry Jaggers was born in New Zealand in 1869 the son of George and Elizabeth (Proctor/Hartley).

Prior to coming to Australia he painted new stage scenery for 'over eighty public concert halls' in New Zealand, including the **Alhambra Theatre**, at Otago in 1898.

Crossing to Sydney he was engaged by the NSW Government to paint public buildings in connection with the Commonwealth celebrations.

After completing work there he moved down to Victoria where he formed a collaboration with a **Mr Woods**, who was coadjutor and 'one of Melbourne's leading comedians' in 1903.



Jumbunna Hall stage backdrop Photo: Pam Barawanath

He painted a number of scenic backdrops for Mechanics' Institutes at **Drouin**, **Longwarry**, **Jindivik** and **Yarragon**.

In Warragul in 1903, 'Four scenes were supplied one represents a garden scene in which the colours are nicely blended the whole producing a very pretty effect. The other is a representation of Lake Como with the snow clad mountains in the distance. At the foot lies the placid water of the lake, and in the foreground is a garden with green borders and a playing fountain at the centre. The perspective of the picture is very effectively brought out. At the sides of the stage the floral or spring scenes form an appropriate finish to the whole. The other scenes which were presented to the audience on Wednesday evening are the property of the ANA comprising a drawing room and a kitchen scene'. The concert featured the Warragul orchestra. There were also ten young girls dressed in Japanese costume 'that went through some very pretty evolutions which indicated that they had received careful training by Mr Jaggers'.

He also painted curtains at **Trafalgar** and **Neerim**. In **Sunbury** in 1904, the Committee were to buy the materials not exceeding £4, and he was have the use of the hall for an entertainment 'to recoup him for the labour'. He went on to paint stage scenes for Institutes



Dean Hall's stage curtain, painted by Barry Jaggers.

Photo: Dean Hall facebook page

at Bacchus Marsh (1904), Nagambie (1904), Dean (1921), and Newlyn Halls.

Before coming to Australia Barry had diversified with his painted model Japanese Village which he later travelled around country Victoria, Tasmania and elsewhere.

His memberships included: various Masonic Lodges, including the Thespian Royal Arch Chapter No. 76. He married New Zealand-born **Grace Eglinton Sandiland**, the daughter of **John** and **Elizabeth (Currie)**. They appear to have had two children: **Richard** who was born in Carlton in 1905; and **Olive** who was born in Carlton in 1907.

Barry Jaggers died in Melbourne in July 1940, aged 71 and was his body was cremated at Fawkner. He was survived by his wife and two children.

References: Otago Daily Times, 2 Jul 1898; West Gippsland Gazette, 29 Sep 1903; Sunbury News, 15 Oct 1904.



This mural in the Molesworth Hall was painted by Muriel Perry and the late Joan Williamson in 1994. It is deteriorating rapidly as it was painted on butchers' paper, joined with sticky tape. The Molesworth Hall is looking into the possibility of a digital reproduction of this artwork as part of their planned building renovations and restoration. Please contact them if you could be of any assistance or can offer a referral.

Photo courtesy Andy Russell

### HOME IS THE HALL



The Howes Creek Hall. Photo: Mansfield Real Estate

The recent advertised sale of the former **Howes Creek Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** raises the question of how many other Institute buildings have become residences.

In the case of the Howes Creek Institute 'the building is a very handsome one and [at a] cost about £250' was built in 1908 and opened on 19 June by **Thomas Hunt** MP. 'After the formal opening there was a concert, followed by a well-staged farce, and the customary dances wound up a big night's entertainment.' In January 1927 a bushfire raged through the district and 'Much difficulty was experienced in saving Howe's Creek Hall owing to the dense suffocating smoke which rose from the pine needles from the trees surrounding the building'.

The Hall was a regular dance venue and was the local polling booth. It was sold by Mansfield Shire Council in 1991 and was converted into a dwelling in 1992 and a mezzanine floor was added in 1995. It was further renovated and extended in 1998. It also features a mural from the Mansfield Musical and Dramatic Society (MUDDS) production of *Camelot*. Indeed 'If only the walls could talk ... with whispers of the past and memories of community dances and romances started'. The sales pitch goes further 'a unique home in delightful rural setting'; beautiful views from every window; cathedral ceilings and a fabulous mural; your own stage – performance of dinner party?' The asking price was \$375,000.

### **WOODEND MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1861)**

This was first built in 1862 and opened on 22 May 1862 with a Ball in the Woodend Assembly Rooms. The following morning Mr Waldock's hounds were scheduled for 'a run after the kangaroo'. This building was burned down and was rebuilt and the 'new' hall was opened with a Fancy Dress Ball on 5 August 1873. It was used for a strategic community railway meeting in September 1873.

In 1893 architect **Louis Boldini** (1828-1908) was commissioned to design a new façade and

front section in front of the existing Hall. This fine symmetrical classical Italianate cement rendered two-storey structure is architecturally significant. This was completed in 1893 at a cost of £800. In 1899 the Committee resolved to purchase *The Times* reprint of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

The RSL met there for a period during 1922-30s. In the 1970s the building was used for production of television programs, with two units working on occasions, with resident setbuilders and production staff.

The Hall was sold into private ownership by the Woodend Shire Council in November 1983 and for a time was an art gallery and antiques centre. Portion of the building has been turned into residential accommodation to mesh with a new addition at the rear. It is being offered again for sale in 2013 with a price tag of \$1.35 million. If you are interested contact Keatings Real Estate, Woodend.



Woodend Mechanics' Institute

Some other buildings that have been turned into dwellings include the: Buangor Mechanics' Institute; Curdies River Memorial Hall, Mechanics' Institute and Library; Evansford Mechanics' Institute; Healesville Mechanics' Institute; and Mirboo Mechanics' Institute.

The former **Ross Bridge Mechanics' Institute** is now a shearing shed and **Laen Mechanics' Institute** has been removed and used as a farm shed.

Yet others languish and yearn for a loving owner or tenant at **Clunes, Glenloth** and **Kurting.** 



Healesville Mechanics' Institute

### TO MARKET, TO MARKET

Markets have been a feature of community life for centuries. Initially they were for marketing local produce both primary and manufactured. Today, in the absence of auction houses running periodic fortnightly or monthly fairs, communities are taking the initiative to re-introduce their own markets or fairs.

Many of these are centred on or around local Mechanic's Institutes. They range from the Institute being the initiator, a partner or just being the venue. Their staging varies from annually, holidays, fifth Saturday or Sundays, to quarterly, monthly, fortnightly or weekly.



They range from the huge such as **St Andrews** which has been staged almost every Saturday since 1973. (It does not operate on days of Total Fire Ban.) It attracts over three hundred stalls of a great variation. St Andrews provide a shuttle bus from Hurstbridge railway station to accommodate those without cars. Performing artists of all types are retained to perform during the opening time. The Hall has benefited greatly from the Market and has had upgrades of various types including electrical wiring to provide a bank of power points for those stalls requiring electricity. Admission is free.

The **Wallan Old Time Market**, held monthly since 1983, is largely staged in the Hadfield Reserve



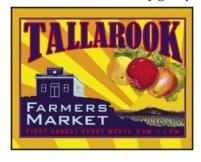
adjacent to the Institute where sells stalls in the Hall, those outside are sold by the Scouts

The Scouts and Guides conduct a monthly **Bush Market** in **Yarram Mechanics' Institute** which is also used as their headquarters. The proceeds have been largely used to upgrade the Hall in recent times.

Lancefield conducts two simultaneous monthly markets – the Lancefield and District Farmers'
Market adjacent to the Institute and the Lancefield
Little Treasures Market which is held in the
Institute

By far the largest annual fair is held in and around the **Burke and Wills Institute** at **Fryerstown**. Commenced in 1975, the **Fryerstown Annual Antique Fair** is held over the Australia Day long weekend and attracts over three hundred stallholders from around Australia. In recent times they have coordinated a shuttlebus from Castlemaine railway station.

The **Redesdale Bush Market** is held annually on the second Sunday of March conducts a market. Another annual market is the **Molesworth Easter Bazaar Craft Sale and Auction**. Staged on Easter Saturday, it is now in its thirty-fifth year and has raised over \$250,000 for Hall maintenance, local charities and community groups.



The monthly markets at **Skipton** and **Tallarook** concentrate on regional produce. Tallarook conducts a fundraising stall of its own and features donated items or produce

from stallholders and a respective recipe each month which is emailed out as a reminder prior to the market.

Markets at **Barwon Heads** and **Tarwin Lower** cater to the tourist market and hold their markets during the holiday period with some twilight dates.

See the **Market Directory** on the back page. If we have missed anyone or the information is not up to date, please let us know.

Photos: Top left - St Andrews Market sign; bottom

left - Fryerstown
Antique Fair
(lucykingbowerbird.
blogspot.com);
Tallarook (above)
and Meredith
(right) Farmers
Market logos.



### CONSERVATION CORNER FLOODING AND WATER DAMAGE TO BUILDINGS

There are many great resources available online to provide guidance on the salvage and conservation of water damaged records, property and objects. English Heritage have produced a publication entitled Flooding and Historic Buildings available for free download from www.english-heritage. org.uk/publications/flooding-and-historic-buildings. This booklet has been compiled to address preventative measures and the inspection, conservation and repair of historic buildings after flooding. Despite some of the architecture and age of the buildings in the UK being very different to those in Australia, the principles are the same.

### **Being Prepared**

There are three stages of flooding that need to be factored in when preparing for floods: preparation (before); reaction (during); and recovery (after). If your area is prone to flooding, or fringes on a flood plain, and there is a lack of permanent flood protection measures for your building there are two ways to go about defending and preparing your property.

Flood resistance or flood proofing works to reduce the amount of water getting in or flood resilient works to reduce the damage caused when the water gets in.

Good general maintenance and recording of repairs or areas of concern which need to be monitored are always highly beneficial to preparing your building for flooding. By constantly ensuring your building is watertight from the windows to the roof will leave you with a dry ceiling overhead even if the water does come in from under the door or floor. In addition, preparing the rest of your property for flooding or heavy rains is very important too.

Temporary barriers can be fitted around buildings, in doorways or on ventilation points and can help reduce flooding into buildings. The advantage of temporary barriers is that they can be stored away when not required. Purpose made window or door barriers can have fixtures in place permanently, with the barrier being slotted in to place when needed; covers for air ventilation bricks can easily be snapped on and removed; and sandbags coupled with large tarps up the side of walls or across doorways can make an effective temporary water barrier.

However, if your site is prone to repeated flooding, then more permanent barriers may be more cost effective. Things to be considered should be: moving services and electrical equipment to higher points of the building; installing backflow valves on water and sewerage plumbing; landscaping the land around the building to allow for efficient water run-off; and when rebuilding or renovating, consider materials which would survive better when immersed in water or are easy to clean off.

As soon as flood warnings are issued, prepare to turn off and make safe all gas/electric/water supplies and assemble temporary barriers ready for

installation. Move valuables to another location, or to the highest stable and secure point of the property.

And most of all, photograph everything that you have in or around the building, and the building itself, to aid any insurance claims which may be needed.

### **During a flood**

If waters are at a low level, check that all services are disconnected (see that power has been disconnected before entering any water) and assess the integrity of all temporary or permanent barriers. Identify any weaknesses in your flood barriers and try to stabilise or support any measures which are starting to fail.

#### **Response and Recovery**

As soon as flood waters start to recede, remove any barriers to allow floodwaters out and aid ventilation. Wire mesh or perforated plywood sheets may be temporarily fixed over windows to allow free air flow but discourage unwanted visitors to the building at night. When the building is safely accessible, enter and document damage before any clean up: mark water levels on exterior and interior walls and photograph any parts which will need to be replaced or require cleaning and restoration.

Any standing water should be removed from in or around the building as soon as possible. Creating drainage holes, run-off channels and pumping water out were possible.

Salvage any items which have been damaged or have become detached and put aside for drying out. Even though they may seem too far gone for restoration, they could be used as a template for replacement items.

It is important to remember that you should dry out the building and objects slowly. Natural ventilation of buildings and cross-ventilation aided by the use of fans can help to draw the moisture out of walls and floors without the potential of mould growth which can come when warmer drying methods are used. Clear mud and silt away from the bases of external walls; remove covers and flood detritus from airbricks and ventilation shafts; open all doors (including cupboards, floor trapdoors) and windows; move furniture and pictures away from walls; remove water logged insulation; identify any closed spaces where the air cannot circulate and see if there is a way they can be ventilated.

To read more about flood preparation and response download *Flooding and Historic Buildings* from the link above.

Public Record
Office Victoria's
Community Archives
team helping out
volunteers at the
Charlton Golden
Grains Museum, after
the January 2011
flood. Photo: PROV
flickr



## 10 YEARS OF PLAQUES -CAN YOU HELP US MAKE IT TO NO. 50?

It has been 10 years since the first Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. Plaque was unveiled at Tallarook on 6 April 2003 by Sir Rupert 'Dick' **Hamer**, former Premier of Victoria and **Jim Lowden**, then Secretary of MIV. In celebration of this, and with it also being MIV's 15th year, we hope to mark the occasions by issuing plaque number 50.

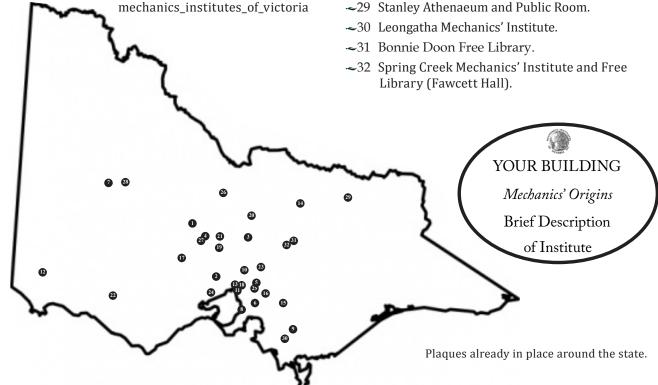
The purpose of the MIV Historical Plagues **Program** is to inform the public of the history of the Mechanics' Institute Movement and also give a snippet of history about the individual Institute. These plaques have been used to commemorate a significant date in the history of an Institute or town; be it an anniversary, or a significant renovation or restoration project, or maybe you would like to acknowledge the work of your members and volunteers, both past and present.

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

Below is the list of plaques currently in place. The map shows where the plaques have been installed to date. If your corner of the State has yet to be represented, why not discuss with your Committee about getting an MIV plaque so that anyone travelling through your area can stop at your Institute and understand a glimpse of Mechanics' Institute history, and the history of your town or building. Or, for those who already have a plaque installed, speak to your neighbouring towns about getting a plaque for their own Institute. Better still, invite them over for a barbeque and to have a look at yours!

MIV's plaques are now avilable for viewing online at http://openplaques.org/organisations/

- **~**1 Maldon Athenaeum.
- **~**2 Ballan Mechanics' Institute.
- **~**3 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute.
- Taradale Mechanics' Institute.
- Lilydale Athenaeum.
- Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library.
- Minyip Mechanics' Institute.
- Frankston Mechanics' Institute.
- Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute.
- ≈10 Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute.
- ∼11 Prahran Mechanics' Institute.
- ~12 Digby Mechanics' Institute.
- ∼13 Melbourne Athenaeum.
- ∼14 Benalla Mechanics' Institute.
- ~15 Jindivick Mechanics' Institute.
- ∼16 Emerald Mechanics' Institute.
- ∼17 Dean Mechanics' Institute.
- ~18 Oakleigh Mechanics' Institute.
- ~19 Newham Mechanics' Institute.
- ~20 Nagambie Mechanics' Institute.
- ~21 Mia Mia Mechanics' Institute.
- ~22 Mortlake Mechanics' Institute.
- ~23 Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute.
- ~24 Little River Mechanics' Institute.
- ~25 Croydon Mechanics' Institute.
- ~26 Elmore Athenaeum Hall.
- ~27 Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute.
- ~28 Laen Mechanics' Institute site.
- ~29 Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room.



### AROUND THE INSTITUTES

This column is comprised of largely contributed articles and those written 'in house'. Whilst care has been taken to ensure dates and facts, the scant history of Institutes makes it an impossible task to verify these. If you find a date, spelling or fact incorrect let us know and we will publish amendments in our next issue. Our newsletter is indexed to enable histories of various Institutes to be aggregated over time.

### **BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1858)**

The recent opening of the magnificently refurbished Minerva Space with a concert by SHE, a group of seven female harpists, was a resounding success. It also trialled the grand piano gifted to the Institute by long-time member **Eileen Anderson**. The thirteenth season of Twilight Talks in April-May feature speakers with subjects ranging from walking in Spain, the Songs of War, Museum of the Aleutians, Ballaratborn Arthur Lynch, 4th Light Horse Regiment, and an ice-free Arctic. Ballaarat has recently started a French Group which meets fortnightly. The group's stated interests are language, food travel, culture and history in that order, but with an over-rider 'Come along whatever your language capability.' Volunteerism is very much to the fore at Ballaarat with a recent working bee in the basement, a call for volunteers with computer competency, and as tour guides. A recent e-book workshop discussed ways of managing readers, borrowing readers and downloading content. Duncan and Tine Rolley also recently conducted workshops on the Heritage & Conservation of books with hands on advice. Other workshops were planned on the use of the social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Wifi is now available in the library. The Ballarat Film Society and Ballarat Writers Inc. are now also staging regular events at the Institute.

Twilight talks are held at The Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute on Friday evenings. 5.00pm for complimentary wine & cheese – 5.30 the talk. \$6 members \$10 Non-members

Check out the Ballaarat MI website for the most recent round of Twilight Talks and events by the Ballarat Film Society and Ballarat Writers Inc.: ballaratmi.com.au

### **BEECHWORTH BURKE MUSEUM (Est. 1857)**

The mention of Ned Kelly attracts widespread community interest as the legend lives on. The Burke Museum's current exhibition open from 1-31 May is **Ned Kelly** and highlights the Kelly gang's connection with Beechworth. Whilst there you can see one of the most significant historical museums of rural Australia. They are also conducting walking tours of Beechworth during the National Trust Heritage Festival. Contact: burkemuseum.com.au.

# BERWICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1862)

The 150th Annual General Meeting was held on 13th March 2013 when about 40 people attended. They included library volunteers, members, local councillors and senior staff from the Casey Cardinia Library Corporation (CCLC). The President's report included our highlight of the year, the 150th anniversary of Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library's opening. Events included a civic reception, Open Day when about 400 people visited the library and a lunch for volunteers.

After the end of the AGM, **Heather Arnold**, Local History Librarian, CCLC gave an interesting and wide-ranging talk on the development of local history resources in the Casey Cardinia region, mentioning collections held at the Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library.

Plans for the future include digital cataloguing of the library. A decision has been made to use the Bookmark system and work has started on the project.

Berwick MI was also named as one of the 'Hot 5 Libraries' by the *Herald Sun* to escape the March Heatwave along with the State Library of Victoria, Carlton Library, Prahran Library and Port Melbourne Library.

### **BESSIEBELLE [MECHANICS'] HALL (Est. 1907)**



The Bessibelle Mechanics' Hall. Photo: JayKay Photography

Typical of many communities the local Bessiebelle Hall is the last public building 'standing'. The Post Office closed in 1972, the Presbyterian Church closed in 1972 and the Primary School closed in 1995. The once bustling community store now stands abandoned next to the hall. While the fifteen acre reserve purchased in 1924, is part of the hall curtilage, it no longer sees football, cricket or netball activity, but the Hall is still well used. A recent drive by showed a quilting day in progress with a full production line set up on tables around the hall. Museum cases were on the wall with football, netball and tennis memorabilia. Bert Newton's autographed

photo wishing the Netball team well in the 1983 finals and saw them triumph, is part of the collection. Alongside are the various district Honour Rolls. Behind the stage was the recently upgraded kitchen ready to cater for any major district event. There was also a room that was described as 'The Library Room' and alas some books are still there which carry the Bessie Belle [sic] Mechanics' Institute library stamp. I can now understand why people regard the Hall as such an important place of 'memory'. The loss of a Community Hall takes away that 'memory' of good times, but some sad, and even a once thriving village. The Bessiebelle Hall is a credit to all concerned, well maintained and freshly painted, set in well-mown surrounds to curtail any bushfire should it get close. Contact: Raymond Sharrock on (03) 5577 5214; 0417 574 532.

### **BUNDALONG HALL (Est. 1950s)**

Located near the convergence of the Ovens and Murray Rivers, Bundalong is the Aboriginal word for 'joined'. The township was once agricultural based but today is largely focused to tourism and recreation. The town has a permanent population of around 300 but this swells to around 800 during the holiday season. The town still has its store and of course the Bundalong Hall which is located on the Tom Cronin Recreation Ground where tennis and other sports are played and a children's playground is located. The Hall was well used after the 2012 floods. On the night of 21 March 2013 a freak tornado ripped through the area and since then the Hall has been used as a Relief and Recovery Centre. On 27 March a major strategy meeting was held to plan the handling of the Easter holiday period for the usual influx of visitors.

### **CASTLEMAINE LIBRARY (Est. 1855)**

The Friends of the Castlemaine Library (FOCAL) have recently received two grants. The first was from the Mount Alexander Shire which has enabled them to revamp the 'Books for Babies' program. This program was established in 2008 and has been mostly funded by FOCAL book sales and other fundraising activities. It is jointly administered by the Friends of the Castlemaine Library volunteers and the Mount Alexander Shire Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service. 'Books for Babies' aims at providing books for new infants which visit the MCH Service at four months of age with book bags, board books and library information to mothers of young children and enouraging reading to infants and participation in other programs offered by the Castlemaine Library.

The second grant received was from the State Government Community Volunteers Grant scheme was for durable and lightweight stackable chairs for FOCAL functions.

# CHRISTMAS HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1873)

The Christmas Hills Mechanics' Institute renovations are nearly complete. Those who came

on the 'Heading for the Hills' bus tour in November last year will have seen the renovations in progress and will be happy to know that the works are nearly complete. This photo, taken by MIV friend **Christine Joy**, is taken from the bottom of the block looking up at the double storied back of the building. We look forward to their Grand Re-Opening in the coming months.



Christmas Hills Mechanics' Institute April 2013. Photo by Christine Joy.

### **CLUNES FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1862)**

After seeing very bad times, interior refurbishment of the Clunes Free Library had seen it in fairly regular use, particularly during the Clunes Booktown Weekends of the first weekend in May. However just when the Clunes Community Group was prepared to take up the long-term tenancy of the Hall and undertake major restoration works they struck a hitch. A structural study, followed by another, has found the foundations of the building so unsteady that any occupancy would be considered unsafe. It is estimated that the costs of remedial works would be in the vicinity of \$300,000, consequently the building will remain unoccupied and no doubt will continue so for the foreseeable future. No doubt a broken window will permit the pigeons to again occupy the building to take it back to when we first saw it in 2003. Inquiries: Public Land Services, DSE Bendigo Office (03) 5430 4444.

### DEAN MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1890)



A recent drive by the well-maintained Dean Institute saw a row of cars parked. On inquiry it was found it was being used by a Church Prayer Group and it was their lunch break. The comment was that the site was ideal: no noise; no parking problems; and plenty of space to walk around. Further it had a great kitchen with food storage facilities. The stage still has the near century-old stage curtain which was painted by Barry Jaggers (pictured in 'Stage Curtains' article). Contact: Liz Kelly (03) 5334 5238

### DEREEL SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1920)

Dereel's Hall, located adjacent to the CFA Station, was a busy place during and after the the 27 March bushfire. During the fierce firestorm four people were injured, including three firefighters, sixteen houses and eighteen sheds were lost and 1300 hectares of grassland was burnt.

Last year **Golden Plains Council** held a consultation meeting at Dereel with a view to declaring Dereel's Hall Community Centre a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) and to prepare the community for just such an event. So the Hall became an immediate focus for the community and has remained so since then providing Government agency advice and the basic necessities for those who have lost everything by way of clothing and personal possessions.

The Victorian Premier **Dr Denis Napthine** conducted a community meeting in the Dereel Hall on 28 March. The issue of poor mobile telecommunications coverage during the conduct of the fire was also highlighted.

It was noted a telecommunications tower had been promoted in 2008 but residents had objected, however a tower was now contemplated for Rokewood next financial year.

Like many other places, since the closure of the Dereel Post Office in 1971, the Hall has become the place known as Dereel, a district with a population of about 700, with some absentee householders. A community nurse visits the Hall every Tuesday and Thursday and a dietician holds clinics monthly. The Walking Group meets at the Hall every Tuesday and Thursday and after a walk or exercises stays on for a cuppa and a chat. Then there is the community breakfast held on the first Tuesday of each month. In addition there are the monthly art and craft workshops. The nearby **Dereel Lagoon** is a Nature Conservation Reserve and its fauna and flora attracts visitors year round. Past art and craft exhibitions held in the Hall have highlighted the significance of the Dereel Lagoon.

# EAGLEHAWK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)

The Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute is again achieving its full potential. Following the launch of MIV's **Remember the Mechanics?** Exhibition in 2000, the Bendigo Goldfields Regional Library established a presence in the building in the original Museum Room. In late 2012 Eaglehawk was upgraded to a full branch library and this was relocated into what was the original the Billiard Room area, but has latterly been used for museum storage. This now frees up the Museum Room for development in accord with its original use. The original Library Room, still houses the historic library which was closed after Mrs James's departure. It is claimed that 'This is the only working Mechanics' Institute Library with its original collection of books in the State.' The original

library is being catalogued for assessment. The Eaglehawk Mechanics' under the control of the **City of Greater Bendigo**, is now under the management of the **Eaglehawk Heritage Society** which is chaired by **Elaine Harrington**.

### **FAWCETT HALL & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1882)**

We would like to wish the people of Fawcett all the best with their grant application for the upgrade of kitchen and addition of bathroom facilities for the Hall.

Fresh-off-the-farm chestnuts are available for purchase, all proceeds to the Fawcett Hall. Call Sam on 03 5772 3227

### **GISBORNE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. c.1856)**



The 1859 Gisborne Mechanics' Institute has recently seen a \$295,000 refurbishment, thanks to funding from the State Government. The works schedule included asbestos removal, replastering, painting and external landscaping. It was reopened on 27 February 2013 to a well attended event. Present were the Parliamentary Member for Northern Victoria **Donna Petrovich** and Member for Macedon **Joanne Duncan**. Macedon Ranges Council CEO **Peter Johnston** stated that it was 'a very special occasion for many community members'.

Among the longstanding residents present were **Eddie Gardiner** and his wife **Lyn**, who were married in the Hall in 1964. Their bridesmaid **Joan Anderson** was also present at the reopening. Eddie wrote and read a poem for the occasion which noted that the 'the steadfast hall is as constant as a part of life itself'.

Besides its most recent use as an Anzac Day ceremony venue, it also hosts ballet concerts and gym classes. It has also received a new tenant the **Windarring Disability Support Service**, who came with a \$500,000 funding package from the Federal Government and \$200,00 from their own resources to relocate to the Institute building. They have joined **Macedon Ranges Further Education Centre**, **Gisborne Senior Citizens**, **Gisborne Fitness Centre** and other organisations in this very busy place.

Another tenant the **Gisborne and Mount Macedon Districts Historical Society** was also represented at the reopening by **Phyllis Boyd** who commented that it was 'wonderful to have this beautiful building back in the community.' With that we can agree wholeheartedly and say 'Well done Gisborne!'

# HAWKESDALE MEMORIAL & MECHANICS' HALLS (Est. 1896)

Located in Western Victoria, north of Warrnambool, the Hawkesdale area is largely sheep and cattle grazing country. The Hall is very much the centre of closely knit and sharing community. They promote the community and its products. In 2011 they ran a very successful art, photography and family history day as part of Home is Where Your Hall Is. The Moyne Shire's official Australia Day Ceremony was held in the Hall earlier this year with a capacity crowd. Local Hawkesdale Scout leader Russell Bell was awarded Citizen of the Year. Not to shy away from serious fundraising the Hawkesdale Hall crew catered, from their fitted out commercial kitchen, for the **Southern Campdrafting Association**'s Hawkesdale Campdraft Weekend in February which attracted five hundred visitors over the weekend. And more recently on the traditional first Saturday in March The Great Annual Wool Show was held. Fleeces are donated, judged and then sold with the proceeds going to the Hall. The CWA participated with a craft display and Hawkesdale's P-12 School contributed an exhibit. To highlight Hawkesdale's uniqueness Chinese Mandarin is taught at their P-12 School which has around three hundred students and a Sister City relationship exists with a Beijing school. They exchange visits each alternate year. Contact: Rosalie Cozens on (03) 5560 8505

### KAARIMBA HALL (Est. 1900)



'Kaarimba Hall is 112 years old, and sits on a quiet crossroad in a small farming district.' The galvanised iron clad hall is well maintained outside and inside. The hall comes to life in November each year for the **Great Kaarimba Bake Off, Fire Brigade Sunday and Photo Display**. Last year the Bake Off attracted some eighty entries with the competition being fierce particularly among the local men 'chefs'. Check out YouTube for the 'Kaarimba Hall Bake Off' video. Contact: (03) 5826 9488.

### LEONGATHA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1912)

Last year the Leongatha Mechanics' Institute celebrated its centenary. This beautiful building was opened in 1912 as a second Mechanics' Institute for the town. Designed to be a library, meeting room and billiard room the building was unique with stained glass windows, pressed metal ceilings and interior walls of plaster and reeds. The earlier Mechanics'

Institute continued in its role as a hall for all types of public events. This Hall was later destroyed by fire in 1919 and the magnificent Memorial Hall built in its place. The Memorial Hall was built to honour of the men from Woorayl Shire who served in World War 1 and opened in 1926.

During 2012 the Mechanics' hosted an exhibition for the centenary of state secondary education in Leongatha. Leongatha High ran from 1912 to 1989, Leongatha Technical School from 1967 to 1989 and Leongatha Secondary College from 1989. The exhibition contained photographs, documents, and memorabilia of all sorts, uniforms dating from the 1930s and sports uniforms including a football jumper from the 1920s.

Pioneer settlers are the focus for 2013. During the year the Society will be displaying items about early pioneer families. The first families highlighted are the **Hamanns**, the **Shinglers** and the **Watts**. Other families will be showcased throughout the year.

The other subject for the year is road making. 2013 is the centenary of **Vic Roads**. Leongatha Mechanics' Institute will be the venue for the Vic Roads centenary exhibition. This display will be running during June and July. To add to the Vic Roads display the Society will add photographs from its own collection of early roads and road making in the region. We have asked the other Societies in South Gippsland to contribute two photographs each to the display as well.

The Leongatha Mechanics' Institute is well worth a visit just contact the Leongatha Historical Society and make arrangements to do so.

www.leongathahistory.org.au

Address: Mechanics' Institute, McCartin Street, Leongatha (next to Memorial Hall).

Phone: 5662 2492.

Email: secretary@leongathahistory.org.au

# LILYDALE ATHENAEUM, MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1882)

The Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company notched up another successful year with three productions: *Glorious; Woman in Black;* and *Calendar Girls*. They received ten awards in the Lyrebirds for 2012, including **Best Production - Drama** for *Woman in Black*. They have also recently forged an association with **Rochford Wines** who provide wine for after show suppers.

The passing of one of the Company's founders, **Dr William 'Bill' Hardy** at aged 88 is also noted. With the late **Russell Johnson** and **Geoff Page**, he along with **Pat Lyall**, founded the Company in 1975.

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

The 150th Celebrations of the **Maldon Athenaeum** were twofold, they celebrated the Institute's history and they also celebrated 150 years of literature 1863-2013. It all culminated on the Easter Parade through town. Mounted on the back of **Maurie** and **Heather Bartel**'s forty feet tray truck, characters ranging

from Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* to JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* came to life. Others strutting their stuff came from *Poems of Robert Burns, Wind in the Willows, The Magic Pudding, Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Shiralee.* The Maldon Athenaeum's efforts resulted in the judges awarding 'Best Vehicle', 'Best Character Set Entry', and 'Best Community Entry'. Congratulations to Joy, Winsome and all the characters and others concerned. We're sure Waller Realty's cash prize for 'Best Community Entry' will be put to good use in their library.

# MALMSBURY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1862)

The Institute's key tenant the Malmsbury Historical **Society** has as its motto 'We Serve to Preserve' and actions in recent times have achieved much to preserve the Institute building. In March Sue Walter gave a talk 'Death by Disease or Misadventure in Malmsbury'. Sue covered the epidemics of typhoid, diphtheria and scarlet fever which took a heavy toll. Then there were the others who met their deaths by drowning, accidental shooting or in the workplace. It is planned to follow this up later in the year with a tour of the victim's graves at the Malmbsury Cemetery. The talk strangely coincided with the offer a \$100,000 reward by the Victorian Government for information leading to the solving of the mysterious disappearance of a 55 year-old woman from Malmsbury in 2012. The Malmsbury Society recently hosted a meeting of the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council. Website: home. vicnet.net.au/~malmhist

### **MOUNT BEST HALL (Est. 1901)**

Located on its third site, close by to what has to be one of the best views in the State of Victoria, the Hall is central to the community. The protected Hall foyer carries posters of forthcoming events in the Hall and district and contacts for potential hirings. The nearby tennis courts are no longer used for serious tennis, but for petangue. Regular film screenings take place as do dances. They have also recently established a library which has a children's section. Their former Frog and **Grog Night**, now known as the **Frog and Food Night** has to be a unique event. It is a serious business with the hall floor appropriately paint marked. A string fixed to the wall and the driver stands in the middle of the Hall. A cardboard cutout frog is coaxed along the string from the wall to the centre of the Hall. For Mt Best's latest newsletter click on the icon at www. toora.org. Mt Best plans an annexe extension on the eastern side to accommodate larger events.

# MT EGERTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. c.1876)

There's been a lot happening at Mt Egerton since the **Shire of Moorabool** provided a grant to purchase materials for maintenance and upgrade at the Hall. **Peter Martin** and his energetic 'work for the dole' team have achieved miracles since they moved in on

and around the hall. It is reported these folk have 'yet again done wonders'. One of the new tasks was to build cupboards to hold the large mirrors for the dancing groups and the Hall tables. New fencing is to follow, then the new trusses. It is heartening to see reported 'The Hall is getting lots of usage which is great to see.' The Moorabool Shire is to be commended for their Shire-wide grants to their Community Halls managed by community groups. Such grants make sense and ultimately saves ratepayer funds for such uses.

### PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

The Prahan Mechanics' Institute, situated on High Street in Prahran, is now to have a laneway just around the corner from it, named "Mechanics Lane". The laneway, is one of a few "Mechanics Lane" already found throughout the state.



Source: Google Maps

# ROKEWOOD MEMORIAL HALL (MECHANICS' INSTITUTE) (Est. 1868)

The Dereel bushfire of 27 March 2013 saw the **Rokewood Memorial Hall** immediately become a Relief Centre providing shelter and advice for those affacted.

The original Rokewood Mechanics' Institute was built in 1868 by **Charles Fletchers** to the design of well-known Western District architect **Alexander Davidson** (1839-1908). It was demolished in 1959 to make way for the present Memorial Hall.

### **SORRENTO MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1884)**

The **Nepean Historical Society** presented an exhibition **Fishing and Limeburning – The founding of a Community** for the National Trust Heritage Festival. During the exhibition they had a working model of a lime kin on display. Their Museum located at 827 Melbourne Road, Sorrento is open on weekends from 1.30-4.30pm. Check out their website: www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.aus

# STANLEY ATHENAEUM AND PUBLIC ROOM (Est. 1863)

A celebration of Stanley's 150th birthday of the Athenaeum took place on Saturday March 16th. This was hosted by the **Friends of the Stanley Athenaeum** and attended by an enthusiastic group from Stanley and throughout Indigo Shire including Mayor **Barbara Murdoch**. The manager of Burke Museum, **Patrick Watt**, reflected on the early days of the Athenaeum being a 'domain of gentlemen', and the social changes that this reading and research room has seen since. Stanley musicians, **Mel Tomkins** and **Geoffrey Fryer** accompanied 'Happy Birthday' with a mandolin and acoustic guitar.

A curious 'exchange of queens' then took place. **Chris Dormer** recounted how the Stanley Athenaeum was gifted a portrait of **Queen Victoria** in the 1950s by William and Alfred Crawford, whose uncle was brother to John Brown and both worked as servants to Queen Victoria at the time. Along the way, the Burke Museum stored Stanley's portrait, but it became confused with the Burke Museum's rather different portrait. In 2011 the wrong portrait was returned to Stanley and was photographed by Janet Sutherland and framed, this mistake was not discovered until recently. Lillian Hollands, as President explained that once the mix-up was discovered, the Friends of Burke Museum set about the preservation of the correct Stanley portrait so it could be returned to the Stanley Athenaeum. The 150th birthday was a fitting opportunity to 'exchange the queens' as those who established the Athenaeum lived in Victorian times.

A high tea was enjoyed by the guests who reflected on the history of that era which resulted in mixed fortunes for those under Queen Victoria's rule. Scottish and Irish refugees thus came to Australia. The 150th birthday concluded with some storytelling by those who had brought along an artefact from Victorian times. Maggie Tyrie showed a cup made from an armament shell by a great grandfather in India and Doff Bunting had a beautiful pair of miniature carved ladies' boots made by a forester in the Otway Ranges from blackwood. This was fascinating and, as Mayor Murdoch commented 'Story-telling as promoted by the Friends of Stanley Athenaeum, is vital in the digital era'.



Stanley Athenaeum 150th Anniversary Victorian Afternoon tea. The Queen's portraits can be seen at the back of the room ready for the exchange. Photo by Janet Sutherland

### TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

Tallarook's Cyber paddock listing 'We are a small country hall that aims to bring arts and culture to the district. We strive to make the venue as versatile as possible. There is a main hall that seats 100 with a stage and supper room with kitchen. We have disabled access, three phase power, [and] honky-tonk piano.' Tallarook has become an active participant in Regional Arts performances and hosts a monthly Farmers' Market on the first Sunday of each month. April's featured vegetable was the Mushroom with a mouthwatering recipe for mushroom pate.

### WAIREWA HALL (Est. 1959)



Wairewa Landcare Christmas party in the Hall. Photo: Wairewa and District Landcare Group

This Hall has recently had a major renovation and was largely rebuilt. Interestingly enough there is the Wairewa Marae Hall in New Zealand which was opened in 1855 and was later rebuilt.

The Wairewa and District Landcare Group was formed from a meeting held in the Hall in 2005.

### WALLAN MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1865)

The present building has its origins in 1877 with additions in 1913 and 1931. In 2010 Mitchell Council received a Victorian heritage grant to upgrade the Hall. Works included repairs to weatherboards, roof, guttering, downpipes and drainage as well improved natural lighting. On Sunday 7 April the Hall was 'reopened' with 'An Afternoon Tea and Stroll down memory lane'. The Wallan Scouts contributed some \$4000 to the upgrade. It is also regularly used by DB Dance Dynamics and Cheerleading who teach dance, ballet and theatrical skills.

# WARRANDYTE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1882)

It would be fair to say there is something at the WMI and Arts Association for you. If you wanted to be on the stage, into craft, painting, pottery or music you've found your niche. Then they always looking for fundraisers, publicists, front of house volunteers, setbuilders or sound gurus. Their most recent production was **Fantasy Follies** which was rollicking good throughout their nine session season in March-April. WMI&AA's most recent targeted fundraiser shows their 'barometer' has nudged past \$20,000 to the \$25,000 target. New make-up lights in the Green Room are an early part of the upgrade. Check out the latest issue of *The Artful Dodger* on their website: www.warrandytehallarts.asn.au

### THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

# CURLWAA MEMORIAL HALL/MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1907)

This Hall lies within the Shire of Wentworth. Curlwaa was named for the Aboriginal dialect term for native peach or quondong. The district was formed as part of the Wentworth irrigation scheme for the production of dried fruit. The Hall was built in 1907 on land originally owned by G Cumming.

Fundraising took place after World War II and it was finally restored in 1958 when it was renamed Memorial Hall. It is built from timber with a corrugated iron roof and is comprised of two different sections. The main Hall and the rear provides for an elevated stage. The gable hip roof has simple timber fretwork. The wooden doorway features gates which form the war memorial. Its access road Memorial Road takes its name from the former War Memorial which has since been demolished 'as a traffic hazard'.

### **WONGAWILLI COMMUNITY HALL (Est 1952)**



Wongawilli Community Hall. Photo: Wongawilli Colonial Dance

Wongawilli, located in the Illawarra region of New South Wales, from 1919 became the centre of Wongawilli Coke Works which closed in 1938 in favour of up-dated facilities at Port Kembla. The Hall was constructed in 1952 on land donated by Broken Hill Proprietary, with funding for materials from the Joint Coal Board. The actual building was done by local residents. Since 1990 it has been managed for the Wollongong Council by the Wongawilli Colonial Dance Club that have been holding bush dances every Wednesday night in the Hall since 1987. An evening usually comprises ten dances, which are called and at first walked through. Proceeds are given to local charities. It is also home of the Wongawilli Band and Wongawilli Colonial Dancers and the Wongawilli Hall Ceildih Band. Check out their website: www.wongawillicolonialdance.org.au.

### PEAKHURST SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est 1909)

The foundation stone for the brick building was laid 20 March 1909. The building was to be 68'x30'

with the Hall 39'x30', with two rooms of 12'x15' for the committee and library, with an adjacent reading room of 17'x30'. It was officially opened on Empire Day, 29 May 1909. The Hall is still well used by the community. Like an increasing number of groups, a brief history was published in 1999. Peakhurst has their own Facebook page and they regularly post pictures of other Schools of Arts is New South Wales with a snippet of the Institute's history, as well as what the building is being used for now. Their collection to date numbers over 60 and is a wonderful resource to trace the present state of Schools of Arts in New South Wales. Keep up the good work!



Peakhurst School of Arts. Photo: Bron Lowden

### GLEN MORRISON SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1887)

The Glen Morrison School of Arts was built in 1887 adjacent to the Glen Morrison Goldfields. It appears to have been used up until the 1960s. Papers for the Institute exist in the NSW Public Record Office from 1923-63. Around the 1970s it was shifted to the **Pioneer Cottage and Museum Complex** in Derby Street, Walcha. There it has assumed the new role as Wool Industry Hall showcasing the sheep and wool industry with various artifacts such as handpieces, combs and cutters, grinding wheels, wool packs, bale fasteners, etc. For Information of the Pioneer Cottage and Museum Complex phone **Bob Walsh** on (02) 6777 2318. The Walcha School of Arts built in 1876 by E Styles burned down.

### **QUEENSLAND**

### **MONDURE PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1928)**

Mondure is located in the South Burnett Shire region of Queensland between Wondai and Kingaroy and was on the Murgon to Proston railway line which was closed in 1993. Built in 1928, the Hall too was subject to recent flooding and has now bounced back. A recent upgrade saw the installation of a disabled ramp and verandah. The Hall has been used for recovery meetings. It has also been used for Centacare's free

Pamper Days where district ladies are invited to the Hall for a morning tea guest lecturers and a hearty lunch. All are aimed at keeping well, staying active and combating depression. There's even the opportunity for a facial or a makeover. What a great idea.

### **MURPHYS CREEK HALL (Est. 1930)**



The Murphys Creek Hall nearing completion. Photo: Rotary District 9830 website

Located in the Lockyer Valley at the foot of the Great Dividing Range on the railway line between Brisbane and Toowoomba, Murphy's Creek is predominately an agricultural area. Their Hall, which had been built in 1930 was subjected to a substantial makeover in 2009-10. Then came the massive flood which ripped through the valley in 2011.

Help came from a most unlikely source **Rotary District 9830 Tasmania**. Rotary took the Hall's replacement on as a project and raised some \$911,000 which was a tad short of the target. In true entrepreneurial style Tasmanian Rotary's **Ted Richey** flew to Queensland and met with the Premier to kick the fund off and resulted with a contribution of \$167,000. The Tasmanian Government through **Premier Lara Giddings** even came to the party with a contribution on behalf of the people of Tasmania.

The Hall has been built on Council land which has been raised to be above the 2011 flood levels. Located adjacent to existing sporting facilities it will have a multifunctional use. The project contractor was **Ivan Johnston Constructions** of Toowoomba.

The Murphys Creek Community Centre was reopened with great fanfare on 9 February 2013, with a strong presence from their benefactors, Tasmanian Rotary. They certainly lived up to their motto 'Service above Self'. The Murphy's Creek Progress Association will manage the Hall for the community.

### **ZILLMERE SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1890)**

The now defunct Zillman's Waterholes School of Arts, established in 1890, later became the Zillmere School of Arts. Their corrugated iron building was added to with the former weatherboard Zillmere State School in 1924. This was a popular dance and film venue. It was also the scene of 'many a donnybrook' between Zillmere youth and out of town visitors. Today the Zillmere Road and Jennings Street corner site hosts

Zillmere's community library, where children's storytelling takes place every Thursday during school term.

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

### **BLINMAN MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1896)**

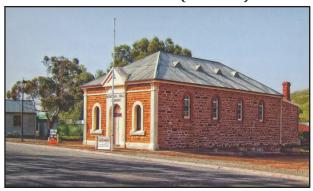


Photo by Bruce Standfield

This 'artified' photo turned up at a Trash and Treasure sale at the Fish Creek Hall in January. We were told the donor lived locally and was probably in the café. On presentation at the café, **Brent Balchin** was duly summoned. No he was not the photographer, but he knew who had taken the photo and he rang him on his mobile. The picture was taken in South Australia about 2008, but photographer **Bruce Standfield** did not know where, but we now know it to be Blinman.

Copper was discovered in the region by shepherd **Robert 'Peg Leg' Blinman** in 1859. He developed a mine with the help of a syndicate and they sold it in 1862. The main shaft achieved a depth of 146 metres and it had drives radiating from it. One ran for 160 metres until it opened onto a spectacular chasm which was called 'The Chapel'. At its peak some 300 workers were employed, mostly of Cornish origin. Mining continued until 1918 when the ore ran out.

The Blinman Institute initially used the Foresters Hall before building its own Hall in 1896. It is still in use for the community and exhibitions. Today Blinman has a population of around 50 and stages two annual festivals: the **Land Rover Jamboree** over Easter and **Cook Out Back** in October. Both attract thousands of visitors.

### MYPONGA HALL (Est. 1891)



The coastal area around Myponga was taken up by the South Australian Company in 1841. The Hall site

was purchased by CW Eats for a Hall in 1891 and it was soon after built and declared open on 18 May 1892 by **HE Downer, MP**. 'A large number sat down to dinner and tea.' A program of sport was held in the afternoon and a concert was held in the evening. The Hall was 'refurnished throughout' in 1938, when a Memorial Porch was added. Local tradesmen SJ Herring did the stonework and C Pearce did the woodwork. The 'New Hall' was officially opened on 19 September 1938 by Mr Connor, MP, supported by Messrs Halleday and Bagot, MLCs. Visitors inspected the 'up-to-date cloak-rooms, dressing rooms, a spacious stage, attached supper room, modern kitchen, and a biobox. 'The kitchen contains stove, copper, flyproof cupboards, drainboard and sink.' Football and basketball matches were played between Yanakilla and Myponga in the afternoon. In the evening a ball was staged in the charge of **Mr Ross** Eats and music was supplied by Miss D McArthur and Frank Shute's dance band from Adelaide. 'The takings for the day were £70.' The Hall still serves the community.

Photos of Strathalbyn and Myponga by Christine Joy, MIV friend and Education Coordinator at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Melbourne. She spent her recent holidays in South Australia and photographed these two Institutes for us. Thanks, Christine!

### STRATHALBYN INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)



Land was purchased from **T Stevens** early in 1874 and architect **T English** was commissioned. Then builder **RC Trenouth** went to work. It was opened on 13 November 1874 with a Masonic procession, followed by a Grand Luncheon, a 'muff cricket match in the afternoon and a Ball in the evening. The building cost £1390, with a further £200 to furnish it. The Institute had been previously established around 1861 and has used rented premises. The building was used until quite recently as the region's library

The town was originally centre to a pastoral base until silver was discovered. Today it has a population of about 4000 people. Annual events include a Collectables Fair in August and **Rotary's Great Strathalbyn Duck Race** in November, the town being located adjacent to the River Angas.

An interesting aside was that Strathalbyn was used for Woodend in the filming of *Picnic at Hanging Rock in* 1975.

#### UNITED KINGDOM

### **ENGLAND**

# ALTON MECHANICS' AND APPRENTICES LIBRARY, HAMPSHIRE (Est. 1837)



Curtis Museum with Assembly Rooms behind. Photo: weyvalley.co.uk

Now known as the **Curtis Museum**, the **Alton Mechanics'** and **Apprentices Library** was established in September 1837 at the impetus of **Dr William Curtis**. At the time he had assembled some forty like-minded friends interested in discussing literary and scientific subjects and collected one hundred books. They met in the former hop store of Crowley's brewery for the first two years. Lectures were mostly given by William's brother **Dr John Wright Curtis** who had a special interest in botany and ornithology, complementing. William's interested in geology.

The Institute moved to Baverstock's ballroom in 1839 and in 1844 it moved again to premises provided by Crowley's for a girls' British School. They were soon joined by a boys' British School and its headmaster **Charles Stewart** became actively involved in organising and promoting a lecture program for the Institute.

By this time the library boasted six hundred books and carpenter **John Gale** was the Institute's Librarian. In 1850 Gale advocated 'the educational value of a varied and well arranged museum.' To demonstrate his point he hosted a private 'open house' of his own collection at which ninety-eight people attended. In the following March the members combined their items for an exhibition in the Town Hall for Institute funds.

In June 1854 the Institute embarked on an Exhibition of Works of Art and Industry and of Natural Objects. 'Beautiful, valuable or just interesting items' were lent by residents of Alton and further a field. The exhibition which ran for three weeks was a great success. The proceeds enabled a house to be bought in Market Street, which was converted by members into a Reading Room and Library and the following year (1855) a Museum was fitted out on the first floor. Geology was featured, but there were also 'skulls of birds and animals and examples of taxidermy'.

The Museum attracted great public interest and eventually enabled the Institute to move into the present purpose-built building in October 1880 which was opened by the the Earl of Selborne who was then Lord Chancellor. The building was part of 'suite' of like buildings which included the Inwood Cottage Hospital and the Assembly Room and were all designed by **CE Barry** and built by **JH & E Dwyer**.

William Curtis died the year after the opening and the Museum was named for him. The **Alton Urban District Council** became responsible for the Museum after 1920 and following the *Education Act* of 1944 it passed to Hampshire County Council in 1946. Now it is part of the Hampshire County Museums Service.

(It is noted there was the **Alton Mechanics' Institute and Library** in **Caledon, Ontario, Canada**, the circa 1882 building of which still exists — see the **History Page** for more details.)

### **DENHOLME MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1860)**

Located in Main Road, Denholme, a suburb of Bradford, this Institute was established in 1860 and the current two-storey stone hall was built in 1880. It still houses the community library and its Hall and meeting rooms are available for hire.



Denholme Mechanics' Institute. Photo: denholme.org

### **HUDDERSFIELD UNIVERSITY (Est. 1825)**

The University holds internationally significant archives and special collections, particularly for contemporary British music and for sport but also for politics, women's history, the arts and its former Mechanics' Institute. In the case of the latter, this includes the annual reports, photographs of classrooms, laboratories, library and machine hall. The latter was part of the 1888 exhibition to raise money for the then new institute and technical school. There several examination papers relating to the Society of Arts and City (the Institute was the first one outside London to hold their exams in 1857) and City and Guilds of London Institute.

We have high aspirations to make archives and special collections much more widely available and to more securely safeguard them for the future, creating a better legacy of collections information and

knowledge. We want both our own staff and students as well as our audiences locally and internationally to experience the excitement of accessing the past, to learn about it and find it valuable because they have an experience which will make a difference to their lives in the future.

The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund has supported a development project (running from September 2012 to May 2013) to develop and refine our plans to transform the service, in particular its accommodation and facilities for users and collections, its informational infrastructure, and its programming. During the project we're working with a wide range of interested parties as well as architects, designers and other specialists. We will make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in summer 2013 for stage 2 of the project.

Find out more about our progress at www.library. hud.ac.uk/heritage

Martyn Walker

# ST AGNES MINERS' & MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1841)

This Cornwall Institute announces the recent opening of Café Front Room with retro vintage dining, and a fare of homemade cakes, soups and sandwiches. As an added bonus they have installed a record player and you are invited to take your vintage vinyls along for a spin. Now there's an idea. We wish hosts **Jo** and **Miranda** success and pleasant times. **John Passmore Edwards**, who gifted the building to the community in 1893, would be truly pleased.

### **SWINDON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est 1850)**

The word out from the Swindon Friends is that 2013 will be a year to watch. For those Australians who have subscribed to the Swindon cause over the years there appears to be some hope that the Institute will be finally restored in community/Council ownership.

### **NORTHERN IRELAND**

### LINEN HALL LIBRARY, BELFAST (Est. 1788)



This year the Linen Hall celebrates its 225th anniversary. Founded in 1788 as the **Belfast Reading Society**, the Linen Hall has the distinction of being Belfast's oldest library and the last subscription library in Ireland. The Linen Hall has an unparalleled Irish and Local Studies Collection. It also holds the **Northern Ireland Political Collection** totalling some

350,000 items. They also hold one of the best Robert Burns collections outside Scotland, Plans are in hand to digitise some of the Linen Hall's treasures and put them on line. If you are planning to be in Belfast this year call by their Donegall Square building, where the open hand above the entrance welcomes you. Go in for a cuppa and a sandwich in their Coffee Shop and a look over their Souvenir Shop for gifts and publications. Nobel Laureate Seaumus Heaney writes 'That everybody is welcome in the building is one of the glories of the place and its tradition. In our cultural and our historical understanding the very words The Linen Hall Library represent not just books, but better hopes for the way we live. For a just, civilised and inclusive society'. Indeed does that not apply to all Institutes? Happy Birthday Linen Hall Library we'll be thinking of you during 2013. Website: www.linenhall.com

### **WALES**

### LLANHILLETH MINER'S INSTITUTE (Est. 1906)



Photo: Lanhilleth Institute LTD Facebook

Located in the Ebbw Fach Valley in the Gwent region this Grade II Heritage listed Institute has recently been fully restored. The imposing three-storey structure was built in stone and brick in 1906 as a community centre by and for the coal mine workers and their families. Today with a mission statement 'The vibrant heart of the community, seeking to meet the changing needs of the people it serves, and reflect the vision of the miners who built it.' Not only does it still continue to provide a library service and meeting rooms, its Red Ash Café provides internet facilities. It hosts St Illtyds Communities First office, Head for the Arts, and a health centre with a resident doctor. With a performing arts program and visiting entertainers it caters for a much wider community. All this carries on the educational traditions of St Illtyd, a sixth century saint and described as 'the most learned of the Britons in both Testament and all kinds of knowledge.' St Illtyd established a monastery just near this site in the sixth century which survived until the Norman Conquest. Today's St Illtyd's Church, just above the Institute site, roughly marks the spot which provides commanding views of the area.

### **SCOTLAND**

### **UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE (Est. 1796)**



Photo: University of Strathclyde Facebook

The University of Strathclyde has been named as the Times Higher Education UK University of the Year 2012-13 as a 'bold, imaginative and innovative institution'. Their new Technology and Innovation Centre is due for final completion in 2014. This comes on the heels of the: Fraunhofer Centre for Applied Photonics, with laser technology; Advanced Forming Research Centre for engineering applications; Enterprise Research Centre for small to medium enterprises; and the Confucius Institute, for the promotion and study of Chinese language and culture. The University has 26,000 students and a staff of 3200, spread over three campuses.



Strathclyde has its genesis in the Andersonian Institution which established by the will of John HD **Anderson** (1726-96)1796 as Glasgow's second University to provide 'the place for useful learning', its motto. (Anderson was a former

lecturer at the **University of Glasgow** where he was nicknamed 'Jolly Jack Phosphorus' by his students, on account of his spectacular practical demonstrations.) **Dr George Birbeck** (1776-1841) joined the Institution as a lecturer in 1799 and he started evening classes for mechanics. After a number of name changes and amalgamations it became the **University of Strathclyde** in 1964, merging with the **Scottish College of Commerce** at the same time. Today the University's main campus is called the **John Anderson Campus** and the main library is the **John Anderson Library**. Congratulations all, John Anderson would have been justly pleased and so would have been his executors, who largely financed the Institution.

### **INDIAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTES**



The Bombay Mechanics Institute circa 1850-1870. Source: Victoria and Albert Museum Collection online.

The Bombay Mechanics' Institute opened in 1847, with **Dr Bhau Daji** (1824?-74) being a promoter. Lectures under its auspices were given in the workplace: printing and lithography at the Government printing office; plastic arts at potteries and casting shops; and metallurgy at the dockyard. In 1863 Baghdad-born financier and merchant **David Sassoon** (1792-1864) gave 60,000 rupees to build a new Institute building. Architect Colonel John A Fuller, Royal Engineers, came up with a Venetian Gothic style building which was completed in 1870. From 1873 the building was known as the Sassoon Mechanics' Institute. It still exists today as the David Sassoon Library and Reading Room and is located at 152 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Kala Ghoda, Mumbai. Membership is open to all, but requires a prior interview by the Committee. Ref: Peter Stansky, Sassoon: The World of Philip and Sybil (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

Calcutta Mechanics' Institution and School of Arts was established by Dr Frederick Corbyn (1791-1853), Garrison Surgeon at Fort William and editor of the India Medical Journal and the India Review, following a public meeting held on 26 February 1839. From the outset it had 'sixty members, a large library and ten thousand rupees in its exchequer'. Lectures were held on physical science, manufactures, commerce, agriculture and the arts. By 1843 interest had waned and it was relaunched as the Calcutta Lyceum to encourage arts and sciences with lectures, exhibitions and an art school but it too 'came to an end shortly afterwards'. Ref: Partha Mitter, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Madras Railway Company built workshops at Pothanore and set aside a building as a library and reading room. In 1898 they had a purposebuilt **Madras Mechanics' Institute** constructed. We have not determined its fate at this stage

Madras has an important education connection. In 1789 the **Rev. Dr Andrew Bell** (1753-1832), was appointed to supervise an orphanage for illegitimate and orphaned sons of officers in Madras. There he saw children teaching others by drawing in the sand and

thus evolved his monitorial system. Upon returning to England in 1796 he published *An Experiment on Education, made at the Male Asylum at Madras.* (London: Cadell & Dames, 1798). This was also adopted by educational pioneer **John Lancaster** in England. Ref: Rev. Frank Penny, *The Church in Madras.* (London: John Murray, 1922)

### Jamalpur Mechanics' Institute



Jamalpur Mechanics' Institute circa 1897 Source: British Library Online Gallery.

This was established at the East Indian Railway workshops which were located at the foot of the Rajmahal Range in 1862. Three hundred miles northwest of Calcutta. The location had the tomb of **Baba Jamal Saheb** hence the name Jamalpur. The Institute established in 1857 comprised a library, reading and billiard rooms, an entertainment hall and a swimming pool. Today it forms a part of the **Indian Railways Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (IEIMEE)** which started in 1888 as a technical school.

Roorkee College (now Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee) had its origins from classes commenced in 1845 for local youth who were working on the Upper Ganges Canal. The College was established in 1847 by **Sir James Thomason** (1804-53), Lieutenant-Governor of North-Western Provinces (1843-53) as a civil engineering college. He issued a pamphlet in 1852 advocating raising Roorkee College into a great school for every branch of engineering labour'. Teachers compiled lecture notes, developed models, made drawings and compiled texts and manuals which were periodically updated and these were used widely throughout India.

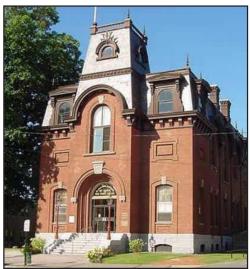
(Thomason also established a system of elementary schools in centrally located villages throughout the region and at the time of his death the schools numbered 897.)

Today Roorkee is a major centre of academic research and education. Literacy is 82% compared to the national average of 64%. Interestingly enough a whole industry manufacturing compasses, surveying and nautical equipment and related publications has been developed at Roorkee which sells to the world. Ref: Professor KV Mital, *History of Thomason College of Engineering and History of Roorkee University* (Roorkee: Roorkee University, 1996).

### ST JOHNSBURY ATHENAEUM - VERMONT - USA

St Johnsbury, with a population of 7500, is located in the State of Vermont. The **Athenaeum Library and Art Gallery**, strategically located in the Main Street, dates from 1871-3. It was built at the behest of **Horace Fairbanks** (1820-88), the son of a successful partner in **Erastus** (1792-1864) and **Thaddeus** (1796-1886) Fairbanks scale manufacturers.

(Prior to the building of the Athenaeum, there was the **St Johnsbury Academy** established by the Fairbanks brothers in 1842 and they paid the school's costs for the first forty years. Interestingly the Fairbanks family played a lead role in the establishment of the **St Johnsbury Trade School** in 1918.)



The St Johnsbury Athenaeum. Photo: St Johnsbury Athenaeum

Horace, continued in his father's benevolence, and to head up the library he recruited William F Poole (1821-94) in 1866. Poole, who had previously been at the **Boston Athenaeum**, advised on the titles and Fairbanks sourced the finest editions in the best available bindings. Architect John Davis Hatch III (1827-75) was commissioned to design a library building in the French Second Empire Baroque style. In 1868 Lambert Packard, chief builder at the Fairbanks Scale Works, went to work with a team of twenty craftsmen, and the first phase of the building - the library and lecture hall opened on 27 November 1871, with the library comprising nine thousand volumes. On the day after the library opened to the public, special lectures were conducted for the children and they were entertained by a six-piece band. Fairbanks stated 'children were the town's future'. (A special Children's Room, was added in 1924, and this was to be later decorated with suitable murals. The reading programs still continue through The Acorn Club - 'we're nuts about reading'.)

Not to be outdone by the opening of the **New York Metropolitan Museum of Art** and **Boston Museum** 

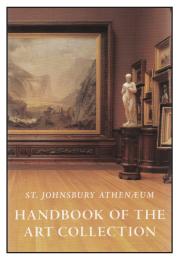


The St Johnsbury Athenaeum Library. Photo: St Johnsbury Athenaeum

**of Fine Arts,** both established in 1870, Fairbanks commissioned Hatch to design an art gallery and this duly opened in 1873.

He appears to have selected suitable pictures for the gallery himself and these represent the majority of the gallery's holding today.

The building languished into the 20th century until it was designated a **National Historic Landmark** in 1996. Since then there has been a planned and systematic restoration of the building and its collection.



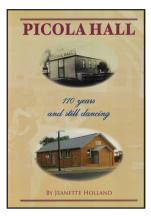
In keeping with the theme for excellence the trustees quite recently resolved to issue an innovative collection handbook under the authorship of Mark D Mitchell, with multidisciplinary team. and photographic new reproductions of collection items Robert Ienks. of America's One finest printers, the Stinehour **Press** 

was commissioned to do the design and production. The result is: *St Johnsbury Athenaeum: Handbook of the Collection* (St Johnsbury: Trustees of The St Johnsbury Athenaeum, 2005). Paperback. 150 pages, illust, plans, bibliog., index. 9781584655657. This comprehensive handbook could well be used as a production model for others with similar gallery, museum or book collections. Available from St Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St Johnsbury, Vermont 05819, USA. Cost: USD\$20.00, plus USD\$10.00 airmail postage.

www.stjathenaeum.org

### **BOOK REVIEWS**

New reprint technologies are making available standard works on the Mechanics' Institute Movement and old histories of individual Institutes. If you see or learn of any Institute histories do let us know and we can review them. We like to cite reviews with posted price and an availability address so people can get their own copies.

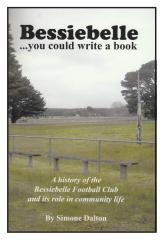


Picola Hall: 110 and Still Dancing by Jeanette Holland. Paperback 110 pages. 9780646540733. Brave venture capitalists subscribed to shares to build a Hall at Picola with Edmund Lawrence Lizard taking up forty shares with twenty being in lieu of the cost of the land. Mr Lizard was also given naming rights and he chose Federal Hall. Tenders were

called and building began in late 1899. The opening celebrated on 17 January 1900, with a concert followed by a ball at which sixty-five couples were present. The weatherboard building burned down during the early hours of 18 August 1936, with little saved except 'a picture showman's plant' and a few seats. It was replaced with a larger brick building, the Picola Memorial Hall, the following year. Two years later, during the screening of a film, a fire broke out and the hall was completely gutted. Rebuilt it was reopened in September 1939, with a new Gloria Lighting System, which was in use until electricity was connected in the mid-1940s. Coffee was boiled in kerosene tins out the back of the hall and after a boot was found in an emptied tin, careful guard was maintained in the future. It is a great read for the nostalgia buffs with an excellent selection of pictures, including those of bands that played in the hall over the years and chonological lists of officebears. And they are still dancing at the Picola Hall. Available from: Picola Hall Committee, C/- Mrs Jeanette Holland, 993 Hardings Road, Picola, V 3639. Cost \$24, post paid.

Bessiebelle... you could write a book: a history of the Bessiebelle Football Club and its role in community life by Simone Dalton. Paperback, saddlestitched. 71 pages, illustrated, with an index. This is a fascinating account of how a community grew out of Thomas Alexander 'Tom' Browne's [Rolf Boldrewood] Squattlesea Mere run. Bessie Belle Cameron is believed to have been the inspiration for the naming of the district. This book is not just a history of the Bessiebelle Swamp Hawks [Tigers was later taken as a more apt ferocious name.] but of the community that supported them. Marngrook or football was played by the local Aboriginals before the settlers came. A local football team was formed in 1895 years

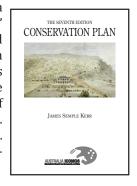
before the Bessiebelle Mechanics' Hall was built on gifted land in 1908. The initial site could not accommodate sport so the Hall Committee purchased an adjoining fifteen acres in 1924 for a Recreation Reserve. Football was played there until the Football Club was wound up in 1999. It's memory lived on to 2008 when someone suggested that 'you could write



a book' and Simone Dalton did just that! From the team's secret weapon of 'speed ball' rissoles, starting with a recipe of 'take one minced kangaroo' to the recipe of Packs a Punch, with the first ingredient being twenty-two bottles of spumate, to which is added a bottle of tequila, etc. Then there was the 'Bessiebelle Pub' which opened in the football rooms each Thursday night, to raise funds to support the team. Bessiebelle's poet laureate Robin McInness captured the night back in 1984, when a surprise police raid hit 'The Pub', with his epic poem 'The raid on the Bessiebelle Pub'. Other fundraisers included: the Moonshiner's Shindigs; the Wythe family honey booth; Isobel and Audrey Sharrock's lolly shed; and Joyce Wythe's persuasive raffles. The players - the men and women - took to the field in gladiator style and more than one sorry opponent got in the way as did an occasional umpire. After the women had fallen foul of the football code, they took to netball with great success. In all an engaging read. Available from: Bessiebelle Recreation Reserve Committee, C/- Mrs Carmel Jasper, 38 Manlys Road, Bessiebelle, V 3304. Cost: \$20, post paid.

**The Conservation Plan** by James Semple Kerr. 7th edition. First published in 1982 and now in its seventh edition, this book is now available free of charge online. It has evolved over the years and is widely used by heritage practitioners and property owners. 'It outlines the logical processes of the *Burra Charter*, and how to prepare a Conservation Plan to

guide and manage change to a heritage item appropriately.' The project has been assisted by the Royal Australian Historical Society with funds made available by the Heritage Branch of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Available at www.australia. icomos.org/publications/theconservation-plan/



### **COMMUNITY PAGE**

# COOKING UP A CASSEROLE You will need:

1.1kg stewing steak, cut into chunks

1 large onion, skinned and finely sliced

1 clove of garlic, skinned and finely sliced

700g potatoes, peeled and diced

450kg carrots, peeled and diced

225g frozen peas

25g plain flour

700ml beef stock

75ml vegetable oil

2.5ml Worcestershire sauce

Salt and Pepper

#### Method:

Spread flour on some baking paper and coat the pieces of meat in the flour. Save the left over flour.

Add the coated pieces of meat into a heated casserole dish and brown on all sides and remove onto separate dish. Turn down the heat and add the chopped onions and garlic to the casserole and cook until tender. Stir in the remaining flour.

Gradually add the stock and Worcestershire sauce and stir in the pepper and salt and stir until thick.

Return the cooked meat to the dish and bring to the boil, then simmer for 2 hours in the oven on  $150^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Add the potatoes and carrots and bring to boil and reduce heat for 20 minutes.

Stir in the frozen peas, and simmer again for 5-10 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

#### Eniov!

### TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

MIV has two travelling exhibitions which you can use to support a special promotional event at your Hall. Both exhibitions come with a set of panels fitted with eyelets for easy hanging and a large advertising banner to go on the outside of your Hall.

The first exhibition **Remember the Mechanics?** comes with a laminated set of Mechanics' pictures for wall or table display. The second exhibition **Mechanics'...And Proud of It!** dates from 2004 and shows various Mechanics' Institutes in renaissance. The use of the exhibitions is free, but your Institute will be responsible for freight to and from Melbourne. In the first instance contact The Hon. Secretary, Judith Dwyer on (03) 9707 4254 or Email jad134@ hotmail.com

### LEMONADE SCONES (Makes a dozen)

Pre-heat oven to 220°C

### You will need:

1 cup of lemonade (straight from bottle)

1 cup of cream

3 cups of self-raising flour

2 tablespoons of sultanas (optional)

#### Method:

Mix flour, sultanas, cream and lemonade

Turn on to lightly floured board

Flatten mixture to 1.5cm thickness

Cut out scones with round cookie cutter

Place cut scones on baking paper on baking tray

Brush scones with milk or beaten egg (optional)

Bake for around ten minutes, or until tops are golden brown

Remove from oven and dust with flour

Enjoy hot with butter or margarine or cold with jam and cream!

# SPOT THE 'BAKER'S DOZEN' REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 31

- 1. Which Victorian Institute just celebrated its 150th anniversary?
- 2. When was the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts established?
- 3. How many Institutes have 'annual' markets or auctions in Victoria?
- 4. Which Victorian Institute-based Football Club trained on kangaroo rissoles or 'speed balls'?
- 5. Name two Institutes which are Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP).
- 6. Where is the David Sassoon Library and Reading Room?
- 7. To what Institute can you take your old LP Records to have played while you are having coffee?
- 8. Where are two Coronation Halls in New Zealand?
- 9. In what State is the Blinman Institute?
- 10. What is the name of the new Association Incorporation legislation in Victoria?
- 11. Which Hall did Tasmanian Rotary restore/ rebuild?
- 12. Who was the first editor of this newsletter?
- 13. Where is the Folger Shakespeare Library?

(How did you go? Answers in the next newsletter, if we can find them!)

### **LETTERS PLEASE**

Tell us what you like or what you dislike or what you would like to see in the newsletter. We would particularly like ideas which would engage youth in our Halls. They are our future if they remain in the district or just come back when they are famous.

### THE HISTORY PAGE

These pages are a clearing house of ideas and trivia that people come across. Let us have your snippets or queries and who knows? Send your items in to the Editor.

### BASS (VALLEY) MECHANICS' INSTITUTE STAMP

The recent discovery of the Queen Victoria Museum/ Bass Mechanics' Institute Circulating Library stamp by Ken James provides a quandary. The Queen Victoria Museum is followed by what appears to be 'FR. Ex'. The Bass [Valley] Mechanics' Institute was started in 1895 and the Hall was built in 1896. It is assumed that the stamp was created around 1900. There were two items relatively fresh in people's memory. Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887 and her long reign. The other was the centenary of explorer George Bass's visit to the area in 1798 in an unnamed whaleboat. Matthew Flinders followed in the Investigator in 1801. It is known that a Matthew Flinders Tom Thumb [his whale boat] exhibition existed at Bass in the early 1900s, so the hypothesis is advanced that the 'R' is in fact a mutilated 'B' and the 'FR Ex' could mean Flinders [and] Bass Exhibition.



Bass Mechanics' Institute stamp discovered at the Public Record Office of Victoria.

### JENNIFER JILL LUNDIE/EASTWOOD (1934-94)

The question was thrown up recently that Jill Eastwood in her article on the Melbourne Athenaeum in Philip Candy and John Laurent's Pioneering Culture paraphrased Jill Lundie's 1955 BA (Hons) thesis almost word for word. Is that not plagiarism? Some detective work eventually found that Jill Lundie became Mrs Jill Eastwood. Exactly why she chose the Melbourne Athenaeum as a thesis subject is for conjecture, but what is not is that she was born at the Jessie McPherson Hospital, which was built on the site of the old West Melbourne Literary Institute, in 1934. Any thoughts or better particulars?

### **BRITISH PHONE BOX LIBRARIES**

The everpresent red phone box scattered throughout Britain have become the home of an increasing number of 'community' libraries. Some one adds a



Book Exchange Telephone Box in England. Photo: Hostelling International facebook page.

few shelves. Borrowers take a book in and take out another one. Or simply leave your surplus books there. This has all come about as part of BT's "Adopt a Kiosk" campaign which enables British communities to keep their much loved phoneboxes in town, and convert them to another community use. So far BT have received several case studies on libraries, emergency defibrillator points, as well as what could possibly be the world's smallest art gallery - all of which are now operating out of their old telephone boxes.

If you know of any communities in the UK which would love to keep their red telephone box, visit bt.com and search "adopt a kiosk" to find out more details. Chris Gilmore has also written an interesting blog post listing and mapping phone box libraries around the UK. Visit http://xrisglmv14.blogspot.com. au/p/list-of-phone-box-libraries.html

On the Isle of Mull enclosed bus shelters with telephones, all powered by the sun, provide refuges for backpackers or roaming sheep seeking shelter from the Scottish weather.

### WEST MELBOURNE LITERARY INSTITUTE

Established in 1864 this Institute had a stellar membership of politicians and City of Melbourne Lord Mayors. The building on the south-west corner of William and Little Lonsdale Streets, Melbourne was demolished in 1934 for hospital extensions which later became the **Peter MacCallum Clinic** which in turn was demolished for the County Court building. Historian **Ken James** would like to know of any people or documents connected with this Institute. Email: knjames47@gmail.com

### THE ATH RESOURCES DOCKLANDS LIBRARY

On the subject of community libraries. The Docklands residents had a recent windfall when the **Melbourne Athenaeum Library** lent one thousand books to establish a community library. Since then a considerable number of books have been donated. The Ath books are lent out with details being recorded. The others are loaned on an honour system.

### **JUNIOR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS - 'THE TECHS'**

Dr Lesley Preston writes:

The techs were an innovative secondary school option that were organised around a curriculum that focused on practical and theoretical ideas to support students to become active and useful social participants and citizens.

The techs had executive Councils, strong links with the community, and a varied theory and practice curriculum (they were not dominated by university entrance examinations). The techs operated very successfully for over ninety years, yet were dismantled in a decade (1979-89).

- I'm interested to know what people remember and how they feel about their former techs?
- Why were schools required to become 'secondary colleges'?
- I'm interested to know more about the tech' history, for example, did they have links to the Mechanics' Institutes?

Lesley's thesis was based on the Shepparton South Technical School (1960-1990), where she worked between 1974-1985. If you wish to contribute to her research contact: lpreston@alumni.unimelb.edu.au

### AKAROA CORONATION LIBRARY



Akaroa Cornation Library. Photo: Wikipedia

The area was first settled in the 1840s after Captain Owen Stanley went ashore from the HMS *Britomart* in 1839. Located at 103 Rue Jolie, in an historic suburb of Christchurch, the Akaroa Coronation Library has its origins in the Literary and Scientific Institute started in 1863. The land for the Institute was donated by Dr David Watkins and architect Samuel Farr was commissioned to design the building which opened as the Akaroa Mechanics' Institute on 22

May 1875. It soon had a well-stocked library. By 1911 the weatherboard building was in need of renovation and this was done with a Coronation grant given to commemorate the coronation of King George V. The front was given the Arts and Crafts/English Romantic Revival treatment and the building reopened as the **Akaroa Coronation Library**. It remained the community library until 1989, when it became an archives and special collection centre. However since the Christchurch earthquake in February 2011, the building had been closed pending a structural assessment. This has now been done along with recommended structural works and the Coronation Library again opened to the public on 21 February 2013.

### KAIAPOI CORONATION LIBRARY

Interestingly enough there was another name change and there are probably others. In 1911 the **Kaiapoi Mechanics' Institute** handed over their library and some property to enable a library to be erected to commemorate the Coronation of King George V in 1910. Subsequently architect **FJ Garnett** drew the plans and the contract was let to builder **Alfred Pearce** for a brick building. At the laying of the foundation stone on 27 December cheers were given for 'the Mechanics' Institute' and for 'the new library'. The building opened on 5 September 1912. It was demolished in 1995 to make way for the new library.

### ANOTHER MI STILL EXISTS IN CANADA!



Alton Mechanics' Institute. Photo: Historic Places Canada

For a long time it was believed that Montreal was the last remaining Institute to exist in Canada, that is now not so. The **Alton Mechanics' Institute and Library** still exists in Caledon in Ontario Province. Built about on land donated by **JL Meek**, the single storey brick building was financed by **William Algie** of the Beaver Woollen Mills about 1882 for the use of his workers. We are awaiting further and better particulars.

Have you heard of another Mechanics' Institute which we may not have heard of? Send in any information you have so we can share it with our members, or give us a name and we will see what we can find!

### **OUR PEOPLE**

If you hear of any Mechanics' Institute people 'in the news' please let us know. They could have travelled, written a book, received an award or whatever. We like to recognise the news and the community contribution of 'our family'.

**Dr Robert Anderson**, President of the UK Association of Independent Libraries has recently been in India and noted the presence of a short-lived Institute in Madras. (See the 'Indian Page' in **The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes.**)



We note the departure of Allison Belcher from the Melbourne Athenaeum Library in March. Allison was responsible for the new library layout and for successfully promoting outreach programs by way of groups to recruit new members. Allison always

championed and supported the Mechanics' Institute movement and we wish her well in the future and trust her interest in MIs continues.

Melbourne Athenaeum archives volunteer **Margaret Bowman** who completed a State Library of Victoria fellowship in 2011/2012 received an invitation from CJ La Trobe Society to give a presentation about Secretary/Librarian (1844 – 1850) and artist George Alexander Gilbert. Margaret's presentation will be held at the Royal Historical Society in July.

It was good to see our other former Treasurer **Clive Brooks** at the Ballaarat Regional Meeting. Clive has been the Ballaarat MI's long term archivist and has played a major part in getting the Institute's historical records in order and making them accessible for researchers.



The resignation of Shane Carmody Director as of Development at the Library State Victoria is noted. Shane has very much been the public 'face' of the State Library recent years in and driven a bold, vigorous and diverse outreach program of exhibitions and

lectures. These have added a whole new dimension to life around the State Library and to the use and interpretation of its world class collections. His erudition and scholarship will be missed. We all thank him for his energy and his innovation and wish him well in the future. However we trust his interest in the book and all its aspects will remain in his 'new' life and that we will continue to hear his astute comment from to time on the book and its many elements.

MIV friend and longtime informant and photographer Kristina Holdaway was recently in England and happened upon the Curtis Museum in Alton. (See England in The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes section.)



Carmel (holding certificate of congratulations from the Member for Western Victoria, David Koch, MP) and Murray Jasper (holding their wedding portrait). Photo: JayKay Photography

A Mechanics' Institute spotter recently happened by the Bessiebelle Hall when Murray and Carmel Jasper were celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary with their three daughters and friends. Having contributed to so many events in the hall over the years it is good to think that they could also benefit from its use. Congratulations Murray and Carmel and may you both continue to live long and happy lives together.

The Linen Hall Library, Belfast Librarian John Killen recently delivered the Folger Lecture at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, USA on the 'Breifne O'Reillys: An Ulster Clan in Medieval Ireland'. The Breifne O'Reillys, one of the most important families in Ireland, ruled the network of lakes around Lough Erne through the 17th century. This fits in with the Folger's current exhibition 'Nobility and Newcomers in Renaissance Ireland'. Also programmed in connection with the exhibition were poetry readings and music recitals. John joined the

### **OUR PEOPLE cont...**



Linen Hall Library staff in 1977, became Deputy Librarian in 1978 and Chief Librarian in 2010. Foran extended interview with John search www. eamonnmallie.com

Another Melbourne Athenaeum volunteer, Anne Marsden, is completinga State Library of Victoria fellowship in 2012/2013. She has been researching biographical

information about the men of the first committee of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution. She has been asked to submit a paper for the *La Trobe Journal* to be published later this year.

We note the imminent retirement of Sharon Miller a librarian at the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute since 2005 and from 2009 its Library Director. Sharon, the sixteenth Librarian to serve the Institute since succeeded 1855. Inez Cohen after her retirement in 2009. We wish Sharon well in the future. See an online interview with Sharon at inalj.com/?p=14902



Sharon Miller...Mechanics's Institute Library Director | INALJ

Well-known heritage consultant and architect **Ivar Nelsen** has recently taken up the appointment of Heritage Advisor to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council. We wish Ivar well with his work in this area of national heritage significance.

**Dancehouse**, occupier of the **Carlton Mechanics' Institute** building, notes the death of **Jo Spray** in Queensland. Jo was Operations Manager of Dancehouse from 1998-2008, pivotal years. She did much to make Dancehouse really work, rather than just being a fantastic idea. I am sure Jo was pleased to see Dancehouse celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year.

MIV member and Institute spotter **George Swinburne** was recently on an extended sea cruise with his wife **Jan** and they went ashore in New Zealand and spotted the **Akaroa Coronation Library** at Akaoroa. (See **New Zealand** in the **Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes.**)



Dr Robin Wagner Director of the Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania has been researching in Australia for a time. She also visited the Melbourne Athenaeum Library where she was entertained by

Allison Belcher (Librarian) and Marjorie Dalvean (Archivist). Dr Wagner presented at the Buildings Books and Blackboard Conference in November on 'What Munn Missed: Queensland Schools of Art' -. In the Foreword to the Munn Pitt Report Australian Libraries: A Survey of Conditions and Suggestions for Improvement (ACER, 1935) it states that they did not go further north than Brisbane. Ralph Munn dismissed the rural libraries in the State as poor and 'not sufficiently strong to serve their communities properly'. More recently Robin has been working at the State Library in Melbourne looking through the responses to questionnaires that were sent out to Victorian Institutes in 1935. There were a number of major Institutes that did not figure in the 120 odd responses received from Institutes.

Congratulations to Malmbury's **Sue Walter** who has just had her study proposal on Malmsbury's bluestone approved by the University of Ballarat for post-graduate studies. The working title of Sue's thesis is '**Culverts to Cathedrals - The Importance of Malmsbury Bluestone**'. Her supervisors are: Drs Anne Beggs-Sunter, Stafford McKnight and Jill Blee. This appears to be groundbreaking work in an area noted for its bluestone buildings.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Welcome to our new members:

- Mark Bevelander
- Graham Gooding
- David Gordon
- Dr Lesley Preston
- Phil Roberts

# CREATIVE CORNER A CARTOONIST'S VIEW OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE





As a young person I devoted myself to devising ways to get out of doing things.

Later, I discovered to the joy of being included in community affairs. By then, I had managed to avoid learning any significantly useful skills. However, years of scribbling in the margins of my schoolbooks allowed me to earn a living as a cartoonist.

Most community organisations have very little use for cartoonists.

Then I discovered the **Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute**. There are a lot of arty people in Warrandyte, and the local Arts Association uses the Mechanics' Institute Hall as their home. The Hall is a splendid timber structure, seasoned by eighty years of music and laughter, and a much loved anchor point for village activities.

Every ten years or so the Hall gets a major 'going over' of one sort or another.

A new roof, a new floor, new toilets, new interior lining, restumping, repainting, or rewiring. It now bears faint resemblance to the building put up in 1926

But like the bushman's axe, it's still the best Hall we've ever had.

The regular renewal work has created the opportunity for lots of creative fundraising. We have sold wine, put on Plays and Concerts, run Hypotheticals, and done all the things you'd expect, plus a few that you wouldn't.

Although largely incompetent with hand tools, power tools and anything resembling a paintbrush, the Mechanics' Institute has still found ways of using my skills to help the Hall. Here are just a few of the images that allowed me to be a part of a wonderful institution over the past forty years.



### **IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

#### WINTER IS ON THE WAY!

Autumn is the perfect time to clean out the spouting and see that all the gutters and downpipes are ready for any winter rains. Don't forget to clean off leaf catchers on tanks and replace any damaged gutter-guards to make sure your Hall captures as much rainwater as it can for the next summer. Have someone also give a quick look over your roof to see if any tiles are broken or iron is coming loose and make an attempt to repair any damage before any bigger problems arise (like flooding or water damage). A quick look over windows and window frames for cracked glass or rotting timber will also help to identify areas which may develop into a bigger problem, so if you do find anything, write it in the building maintenance book and put it on the monthly 'Maintenance Checklist' to ensure it is looked at often. Where possible touch up any exposed woodwork with a dop of paint to prevent or lessen the prospect of wood rot. A general clean up around the outside of your Hall would also be a good idea too; clearing away any fallen branches or plants which did not make it through the summer will leave your winter visitors only jumping puddles to reach the door.

### **GETTING OFF THE GRASS**

Recent rains have made for lush grass areas around the Halls and outbuildings. It would not be unrealistic to get up a monthly mowing roster to share the load. With an explanatory sheet of 'no go' or 'take care' zones this would mean your Hall area always looks clean and cared for. A quarterly working bee could whipper-snip areas that are less accessible.

### **BOOKMARK THIS IN YOUR INTERNET BROWSER!**

Keep an eye out for grant opportunities from the Department of Planning and Community Development by frequently checking the 'Grants Index'. Many annual and ongoing grants offered by the DPCD are listed on this site incuding links to program information, eligible criteria and submission dates. Find the Grants Index at: http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/home/grants/grants-index

#### SIGNING UP

As we drive around we still notice Institutes with no contact numbers on windows or notice boards. Who knows who may be prepared to lease your Hall but they need to be able to make contact to do this. A simple paper sign for placing inside a window with contact details will only take a few minutes, but it could earn your Hall some real money. We've heard of country Institutes being used periodically for filming projects and that brings in real money. Travelling shows may also be interested. Then there are country weddings and the inevitable funerals. Go to it and good luck. You may even get a call from us wanting to have a look around and take a few pictures!

#### **MAILING LIST**

Communication is the key to any successful organisation and to keep in touch you need an up to date mailing list with preferably email addresses. The latter helps reduce costs and the honorous workload placed on the Secretary. People will travel for distances for advertised events with some advance notice and events which are perhaps marginal then become profitable.

#### IT'S ALL IN YOUR HALL

We recently saw an A4 flyer for a country Hall. It showed: a photo of the Hall; a floor plan; stage size; pull down film screen; stage curtain; public address; Hall capacity for a dinner, seated or standing event; tables and chair available; kitchen equipment; crockery and cutlery; parking space on site; as well as adjoining tennis courts, oval and barbecue. It also showed contact details both by phone and by email. It was professional and impressive.

### ACCENTUATE THE UNIQUE

The best way to promote your Hall is to associate it with something unique. For a start your town's name is probably unique. Research it fully and prepare a poster for laminating and placement in your Hall. Further there may be people who distinguished themselves in some fields of endeavour. It could be one single event. It may be a plant or animal species that takes its name from your area. It may be your library which has a single collection on a subject. Two Halls from memory had a very large collection of books on fruit and vegetable growing another had a multihundred book collection on beekeeping. If you could build a collection of books relating to a local farming interest like canola or olives or Galloway cattle you will stimulate interest. Exercise for the your agenda: A brainstorming session on how you can accentuate your Hall's uniqueness. It may be even an annual Frog and Grog Night.

### **SPICE UP YOUR MEETINGS**

People generally travel distances to attend meetings. Some are held on freezing cold nights. Think outside the square with some wrapped sweets or dried fruits or nuts. Even a hot cup of soup could be a winner on a freezing cold night. Just as a cold lemonade on a hot night would be welcome. Meetings must be pleasurable or people will just simply go away. Prepare a detailed agenda so that people will have an opportunity to consider matters. Put a thoughtful quote from a famous person or even a local at the bottom of each agenda. [We've seen jokes, but some were not 'political'.] With all details in hand the meeting will be concluded in a timely manner with less debate. Good people do not want to waste time.

### MECHANICS' INSTITUTES MARKETS DIRECTORY

Many Institutes across Victoria host community markets of various sorts and the following is a round up of some. On the other hand if your market is not listed let us know the details for the follow up listing next issue. It is suggested you make contact with the listed contact or a website before attending.

#### APSLEY HALL

Main Street, Apsley, V 3319 Contact: Gillian McCabe Tel: (03) 5586 1277

Last Sunday of each month, 9am-1pm

Features: Food, Art and Crafts, Plants, Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

#### BARWON HEADS HALL

79 Hitchcock Ave, Barwon Heads, V 3227

Box 1140, Barwon Heads, V 3227 Contact: 0402642357

Last Saturday of each month, except December and January when it is every Saturday, excepting public holidays 9am-1pm

Features: Craft; Cooking; Plants; Garden Produce

# BONNIE DOON COMMUNITY CENTRE

Arnot St, Bonnie Doon, V 3720 Tel: (03) 5778 7722

Website: http://www.bonniedoon.net/home/country\_markets.html

5 times a year - Australia Day weekend; Easter weekend; Queens Birthday weekend; End of September; Melbourne Cup weekend, 1pm-4.30pm.

Features: Car-boot, food, bricka-brack

#### **BRUTHEN MECHANICS' HALL**

Main Street, Bruthen, V 3885 Contact: 5157 5110 or 5156 4148 Box 169, Bruthen, V 3885

Email: bruthenvillagemarket@yahoo.cvom.au

Fourth Saturday of each month, 9am-2pm

Features: Bruthen Village Market. Food, Produce, Craft and Secondhand stalls. Music and Buskers

## FOSTER WAR MEMORIAL ARTS CENTRE

79 Main Street, Foster, V 3960 Tel: (03) 5664 0096

Third Saturday of each month, 8am-12pm

Features: Foster Promontory Farmer's Market. Vegies, Fruit, Fish, Farm Goodies, Craft

# FRYERSTOWN BURKE & WILLS HALL

Castlemaine St, Fryerstown, V 3451 Tel: (03) 5473 4373 Australia Day Weekend Features: Established in 1975, this Fair attracts sellers from around Australia

#### **GRANTVILLE HALL**

Bass Hwy, Grantville, V 3991 Contacts: 5678 8465 or (03) 5678 8438

Fourth Sunday of each month, except December, 8.30am-2.30pm

Features: Grantville Variety Market. Over 100 stalls 'with something for everyone'.

### INVERLOCH COMMUNITY HALL

A'Beckett Street, Inverloch, 3996 Contact: Ken Fisher.

Tel: (03) 5663 5256

November, January, March, phone for dates

Features: Inverloch Rotary Market, Art, Craft, Fresh Produce

#### JOHNSONVILLE HALL

Princes Hwy, Johnsonville V 3902

Contacts: Perry Tel: (03) 5156 4162 First Sunday of each month, 8am-12 Noon

Features: Bush Market

#### JUMBUNNA HALL

Cruickshanks Rd, Jumbunna, V 3951

Contacts: 1. Mrs Smith; 2. Mrs Wylie

Tel: 1. (03) 5657 3241; 2. (03) 5657 3253

First Sunday of each month, 9am-1pm

Features: Jumbunna Bush Market. Craft, Food, Treasures and Fresh Produce

### KOONWARRA HALL

Memorial Park, Koala Drive, Koonwarra, V 3954 Contact: Rod. Tel: 0408 619 182 First Saturday of each month, 8am-12pm

Features: Farm Produce, Home Produce

# LANCEFIELD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

High Street, Lancefield, V 3435 Contact:

Tel: 0407860320; Email: meggshp@gmail.com
Fourth Saturday of each month, 9am-1pm

Features: Food and Craft

#### LOCH PUBLIC HALL

Smith Street, Loch, V 3945 Contact: 1. Jennie Kennedy; 2. Bernie Dilger

Tel: 1. (03) 5659 4305; 2. 5659 4244

Second Sunday of each month May-September, 9am-1pm, otherwise closed

Features: Craft, Produce, Plants

### MEREDITH MEMORIAL HALL

61 Staughton St, Meredith, V 3333

Contact:

meredithharvestmarket@hotmail.com

Last Saturday in March, August & November, 9am-2pm.

Features: 50 stalls, local produce, craft, live music, children's activities.

### MOLESWORTH [MECHANICS'] HALL

Goulburn Valley Hwy, Molesworth, V 3718
Contact: Muriel Perry. Tel: (03) 5797 6215; 0427 310 213
Email: lesridd@mcmedia.com.au Website: www.molesworth.info Easter Saturday 9am-4pm..
Features: Local crafts, homemade food, fresh produce and plants.

#### POMONAL PUBLIC HALL

12 Wildflower Dr, Pomonal, V 3381

Tel: (03) 5356 6312 Last Sunday of each Month, 10am-3pm.

Features: Village Market - Food and Craft

### PORT ALBERT MECHANICS' HALL

2 Victoria St, Port Albert, V 3971 Contact: 1. Linda; 2. Gloria Tel: 1. (03) 5182 5679; 2. (03) 5182 6303 Website:

Fifth Sunday of each month, 8am-1pm

Features: Food and Craft

#### REDESDALE HALL

Agnes Mudford Reserve, 2631 Kyneton-Redesdale Road, Redesdale, V 3444 Contact: Carolyn Boyd, Lot 8 Oldfield Road, Redesdale, V 3444 Tel: (03) 5425 3194 Second Sunday in March Features: Annual Bush Market

### ROKEBY HALL & RESERVE

2 Brandy Creek Rd, Rokeby, V 3821

Contact: Rhiannon Tel: (03) 5626 8523 Second Saturday of each month, 8.30am-12.30pm, except June July, August Features: Food and Craft

### SKIPTON MECHANICS' HALL

Anderson Street, Skipton, V 3361 Contact: Jan Tel: (03) 5340 2204 Second Saturday of each month Features: Food and Craft

# ST ANDREWS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Kangaroo Ground/St Andrews Road, St Andrews, V 3761 Contact: The Secretary, St Andrews Community Market Box 199, St Andrews V 3761 Tel: 0467 535 341; Email: standrewsmarket@yahoo.com. au Every Saturday, but not on Total Fire Ban Days

Features: 300 stalls

Website: standrewsmarket.com.

### TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Main Road, Tallarook, V 3659 Contact: Clive Hines

Tel: 0417 8903 327; Email: clivehines@hotmail.com

Website: www. tallarookfarmersmarket.com.au First Sunday of every month, except January.

Features: Tallarook Farmers' Market. Food and Craft; Libby's Monthly Recipe

# TARWIN LOWER MEMORIAL HALL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Riverside Drive, Tarwin Lower, V 3956

Contact: John Classon Tel: (03) 5663 7505

Monday Public Holidays, 9am-2pm, except January when twilight 4pm-8pm

Features: Craft, Treasures and Various Goods

### WALLAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Northern Hwy, Wallan, V 3756 Contact: 0438 000 439 Second Saturday of each month, 8am-2pm Features: Wallan Scouts Old Time Market. 150 stalls.

#### **WESLEY HILL HALL**

Cnr Pyrenees Hwy/ 149 Duke St, Wesley Hill, V 3450 Contact: (03) 5473 4465 / 0418 117 953.

Every Saturday, 7.30am-1pm. Features: Food & wine, oils, craft, demonstrations.

## WOOLSTHORPE MECHANICS' HALL

Manifold St, Woolsthorpe, V 3276 Contact: Kazz Tel: 0438 628 158; Email: kazzbody moves@gmail.com Second Sunday of each month

Features: Food, Craft and Bric-a-

### YARCK HALL

Maroondah Hwy, Yarck V 3719
Tel: (03) 5773 4304;
Email: johnandrobyn@
aussiebroadband.com.au
3rd Saturday of every month,
9am-1.30pm.
Features: Local produce, jams,
craft, plants and wines.

## YARRAM MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Church Road/South Gippsland Hwy, Yarram, V 3971 Contact: 51825679; 0407852129 First Sunday of Each Month, 8am-1pm

Features: Scout's Bush Market