



Useful Knowledge

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.
NEWSLETTER NO. 32 – WINTER-SPRING 2013

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REGIONAL
ARTS
VICTORIA



HOME IS WHERE THE HALL IS! *Be In It!*

November is the month when, thanks to **Regional Arts Victoria's Home Is Where The Hall Is** initiative, Victoria celebrates our regional Halls in all shapes and sizes, from Mechanics' Halls to Memorial and Community Halls. What a great way to shine a light on these important community hubs. We urge you to get on board and support this worthy project now in its third year. Thanks to its past success it is growing in momentum and highlights the central and pivotal role of the local Hall in their various communities.

This month-long-festival also showcases the diversity of activities conducted in community Halls across Victoria. It also highlights the large group of thousands of volunteers who manage local Halls for their various communities.

Put your thinking caps on for an event for the **Home Is Where The Hall Is!** month of November. As a fall back, an Open Day would be a last resort, but add a twist. Why not turn out the arrival of a local personality from history some time during the day? His/her arrival could be over the back fence, off the road or in a Falcon Ute. Let your imagination run wild.

Make your activity one which will highlight the hub of your community – your Hall. Invite the Mayor, local Councillors and your local MPs. They may not be able to make it but at least they will get a notice of your Hall. This may be the first time they have heard of you, but it will not be the last as you may be looking for a grant for Hall maintenance in the near future. Prior to your big day have a working bee so everything will be ship shape inside and out of your Hall. Get someone who is computer savvy to run up a poster for your Hall putting a picture of your Hall prominently 'centre stage'. They could also run up a trifold leaflet with some history, hire conditions, a membership incentive could offer cut

price hiring, and your aspirations for your Hall. Put some memorabilia around the Hall on tables in photocopy form, or canvas the district for photos, etc.

See if you can put on scones (See recipe for lemonade scones in **UK** No. 31) with some jam and cream during the day as a fundraiser. A jar with 102 jelly beans, as a guessing competition, might also be another earner.

This year the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.** are putting up their hand in strong support of **Regional Arts Victoria's Home Is Where The Hall Is!** November campaign. We are organising the

Pieces of Eight Bus Tour around Central Victorian Institutes and Halls on Sunday, 27 October.

The last call on tour will be the Barfold Hall which had its start as a school. At this event, the **Home Is Where The Hall Is!** month will be officially launched. We will also be taking the opportunity to see the launch of **Ken James** and **Noel Davis's** book ***Eight Central Victorian Mechanics' Institutes.***



Barfold Hall

But there's more, there will also be an exhibition of art featuring Institutes in the region. MIV will have its travelling exhibition **Remember the Mechanics'?** in the Hall and will also be playing visual and sound image material.

Registration for **Home Is Where The Hall Is!** is open NOW! Please come on board register your event by keying in **homeiswherethehallis.com**. It's free to register and so is the publicity on their website. This year we look forward to seeing a record registration from Mechanics' Institutes and their ilk and hopefully this support will ensure ongoing funding for support of your local Hall and its activities.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE FOR
2013/2014 (SEE PAGE 4)**

Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 5 September
Tarwin Lower Mechanics' Institute - Unveiling of MIV plaque No. 35, 11.30am. Tel: (03) 5663 7505.
- 8-12 September
Adult Learners Week.
- 13-21 September
Warrandyte Mechanics' Theatre - The Real Inspector Hound. Tel: 0423 088 217.
- September-December
Stanley Athenaeum - 150th Anniversary Exhibition - Stanley Athenaeum: A Community Strengthened through the local Athenaeum.

OCTOBER

- 3-7 October
American Membership Libraries Meeting, La Jolla Athenaeum, San Diego.
- 19 October
Fawcett Hall Garage Sale, 655 Spring Creek Road, Fawcett. All proceeds go to Hall funds. Any Enquires contact Jan on 5772 2963 or Sandy on 5772 3223
- 20 October
Olinda Mechanics' Institute, 2pm - Unveiling of MIV plaque No. 33.
- 20 October
Tooborac Mechanics' Institute - Tooborac Rabbit Ramble. Tel: (03) 5433 5332
- 21 October
Useful Knowledge article submission deadline for Summer Edition.
- 27 October
Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria – Pieces of Eight Bus Tour – Central Victorian Institutes. Bookings: (03) 9873 7202
- 27 October
Book Launch: *History of Eight Central Victorian Mechanics' Institutes* by Ken James and Noel Davis, Barfold Hall, 2.30 pm.

NOVEMBER

- 1-30 November
Regional Arts Victoria - **Home Is Where the Hall Is!** Month. Events in Halls across Victoria. homeiswherethehallis.com
- 6-23 November
Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre - Are you Being Served. Tel: (03) 9735 1777
- 9 November
Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Annual General Meeting. Time and Place: TBD.
- 9 November
Friends of Kyneton Mechanics' Institute - Community Concert

- 24 November
Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute - Unveiling of MIV plaque No. 34, 1pm 59 Webb St, Narre Warren. Tel: (03) 8790 5988
- 29 November
Footscray Mechanics' Institutes - Unveiling of MIV Plaque to celebrate Centenary of building. Time and Place: TBD.
- TBD November
Lardner Mechanics' Institute - Unveiling of MIV plaque. Tel: (03) 5626 1278.

DECEMBER

- 27 December - 1 January
Cudgewa Mechanics' Institute - Bush Dances.
- 27 December - 1 January
Nariel Creek Bush Music Festival
- TBD December
Minhamite Soldiers' Memorial Hall - Pantomime.

2014 - FEBRUARY

- 8 February
MIV Meeting - Time and Place TBD.

MARCH

- 22 March
MIV Regional Meeting - 10am, Kilmore Library, 12 Sydney Road, Kilmore. All welcome. RSVP: (03) 9873 7202.

APRIL

- 25 April
Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute Hall - ANZAC Day Community Afternoon Tea, 2pm.
- 25 April
Sheep Hills Mechanics' Institute - ANZAC Day Dawn Service and Breakfast, 6am.

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

MIV Contacts

President: Peter Pereyra
ppereyra@buildingcommission.com.au

Vice-President: Position Vacant

Secretary: Judith Dwyer jad134@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Judy Owen jpowen@iprimus.com.au

MIRC/E-News mivenquiry@live.com.au

Archives Scanning Project; Plaques, Travelling Exhibition: Judith Dwyer jad134@hotmail.com

Research: Pam Baragwanath
pgbarag@alphalink.com.au

Newsletter/Website: Bron Lowden
bronlowden@hotmail.com

Letter From The President



In April 1998 about a dozen Mechanics' Institutes assembled at Kilmore where it was resolved to establish the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.** (MIV). This was a momentous occasion, for never before in Victoria's history had such a gathering of Institutes taken place. Since then Institutes have met in various places – Ballarat, Elmore, Leongatha, Little River, Maldon, Malmsbury, Melbourne, Moe, Tallarook, and of course Prahran.

MIV has also been proactive in the national arena with the hosting of the first National Conference of Mechanics' Institutes in 2000 and the first World Conference – **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004 – Melbourne**. It also assisted with the formation of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts Association in New South Wales (AMISA). MIV is also in contact with the Membership Libraries Group in the USA and the Association of Independent Libraries in the UK.

The huge task of recording the Mechanics' Institute story in Victoria has been ongoing in earnest since the 1950s, with the landmark field and research work of **Pam Baragwanath** since the 1980s and more recently we have seen the prodigious work of **Ken James**.

You recently received our Survey and we were grateful that more than half of our membership responded. (It's not too late to have your response!) The purpose of the Survey was to enable us to gain a broad picture of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Victoria. (See page 9 of this newsletter for the preliminary survey report.) In response, at the most recent MIV meeting, we resolved to seek meetings with our Minister and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Whilst we may not be able to secure up front grants of \$60,000 like those to Men's Sheds or Community Houses we will be pleading the case for Institutes, who were there first, and how are they being funded from a State or Local level. If you have not returned your Survey please do, and by so doing you will be helping us to help you.

We also plan to have a Regional Meeting at Kilmore on 22 March 2014. This day will be made over fully to Institutes. We plan a couple of speakers but the emphasis will be on what Institutes are doing, how you are doing it and what are your concerns.

Our Annual General Meeting is being held on Saturday, 9 November 2012. Visit MIV's website for further details when they are available.

Peter Pereyra

President.

Editorial

Firstly thank you for the very positive feedback on my appointment as Editor of your newsletter. I had close involvement with issues No.'s 29 and 30 so I have had some 'apprenticeship'. The success or otherwise of my tenure of the Editorial chair will however largely rest with you as Members and readers. I can but mediate articles submitted and choose editorial direction.

However my aim will be to showcase as many Institutes as possible and highlight the great diversity of activities that exist within each Institute. Your feedback will also tell us where areas need to be addressed. Hence the request for your correspondence on any issue.

It is also good to see some new Members coming on board and some former members re-joining so MIV must be doing something right and I hope *Useful Knowledge* has been a contributing factor to that.

Just a reminder that membership fees are due now if you have not already paid for the 2013/2014 season. MIV Membership is from 1 July to 30 June annually. If you did not receive a renewal notice, or would like to check if you or your Institute have paid up for this year's membership season, contact the MIV Treasurer (details on page 2) or fill out the enclosed form (also available for download from the MIV website: www.vicnet.net.au/~mivic/membership).

This issue features **Dance** which has been an integral part of Institute since each was opened in the various communities, with a concert, and the Hall was then cleared for a dance. Many attendees arrived home in time to milk the cows in the morning. Such events took the advantage of a full or near full moon so that patrons would have light to ride or drive home.

Needless to say Hall lighting systems and music 'the piano' and bands will be subjects of future articles.

We have held **Theatre and the Performing Arts** over to No. 33, **Film** to No. 34 and **Festivals** to No. 35. If you have a contribution on all or any we would welcome these.

In the meantime keep your cards and letters coming!

Bron Lowden

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members:

- Barwon Heads Community Hall
- Friends of Launceston Mechanics' Institute
- Mr Doug Gunn
- Ms Kathryn Launer
- Minhamite Soldiers' Memorial Hall
- Mt Best Hall
- Mt Eccles Hall
- Wesley Hill Hall

E-NEWSLETTERS

This, our first e-Newsletter, will be sent out to those who have opted to receive their newsletter by email

and mail or email only. If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter by email, please email me at bronlowden@hotmail.com and I will add you to our email list. This is a simple way to pass our newsletter on to your whole Committee, simply forward it on, while keeping a copy for yourself too!

MIV WEBSITE

MIV's website has recently gone through an overhaul with new features still being rolled out in the coming months. We have uploaded a couple of new pages to the site, including a new **Plaques** page, complete with info on where to find MIV's Plaque at each Institute, and links to photos, text and maps. We will shortly be adding new pages for MIV's **Travelling Exhibitions, MIRC, Useful Links, Directories** and **Calendar**. Our new Online Calendar will be available for all Institute Members to advertise the dates of their events. Please email the date, time, place, contact details and any relevant website links to bronlowden@hotmail.com and I will endeavour to add your event to our calendar as soon as possible.

COMMUNITY DINNERS

On some recent travels through Gippsland and Central Victoria, I noticed a couple of sign boards out the front of the local Institute or Hall stating "All Welcome! Community Casserole Tea". The idea is simple, and not difficult to organise: bring enough for yourself and family and some to share, get the community together and have a casual evening catch up. Organise a carpool to collect the elderly residents of the area and make sure they get a good feeding up in the company of friends they may not see very often. Bring a casserole, vegetable dish, soup or dessert to share, or in summer, meat to BBQ and a salad or dessert. It may only occur a couple of times a year, but it is a good way to showcase your hall to the community, as well as get everyone together.

NEWSLETTER ROUND

Tick after reading and pass it on

President.....

Vice-President.....

Treasurer.....

Secretary.....

Committee (*Insert your name*)

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UK ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES MEETS IN BELFAST - 7-9 JUNE 2013



*Attendees for the AIL Annual Meeting at the
Linen Hall Library, Belfast.*

Photo: Linen Hall Library facebook

The AIL was delighted that its annual meeting should be held in the Linen Hall Library during its 225th Anniversary year.

After the Friday evening 'ice-breaking' reception a group of us retired for a memorable evening at one of Belfast's popular eateries. Our appetites for food, drink, music and excitement were assuaged under the one roof ...

The Saturday morning commenced with a few words from the Director of the Linen Hall followed by AIL President, **Dr Robert Anderson's** address which bemoaned the constant dumbing down of libraries, remarking that the libraries of the AIL were seen increasingly as role models of what libraries should be, although public libraries, he felt, nurture the quest for knowledge and learning in children.

Robert then noted that the Mechanics' Institutes in Australia, often very important centres for remote communities, have held the Worldwide Conferences, as have the UK and we shall look out for news of the next possibly taking



Hugh Pierce, Ipswich Institute; Louisa Yates, Gladstone's Library; Lynne Allan, Portico Library; John Killen, Linen Hall Library (behind); Christiane Kroebel, Whitby Lit & Phil Society; Emma Marigliano, Portico Library; Geoffrey Forster, Leeds Library.

Photo: Linen Hall Library

place in North America. Thanks were also expressed to Jim Lowden of the MIWC, and his daughter Bronwyn, for producing the excellent MI Newsletter and for his continuing support.

Gerry Devaney, a retired teacher and a volunteer researcher in the Library gave

a fascinating illustrated outline history of the Linen Hall and held our attention for the next 30 minutes or so and we learned of its beginnings and the unique world-class collections held there.

Siobhán Fitzpatrick, Librarian of the Royal Irish Academy, followed with an account of her institution, picking up on some of Gerry's remarks about rebel librarians, saying that Librarians could certainly be seen as control freaks and subversive through their natural curiosity and desire to improve knowledge through democracy and perhaps what they do, she continued, is often in conflict with their paymasters' desires. Siobhán then went on to regale us with details of the wonderful treasures held at the RIA such as, amongst other items, a fragment from the acts of St Columba that pre-dates the Book of Kells by 200 years!

The AGM then took place at which it was decided that more workshops and seminars would be scheduled which would address topical issues that affect the shifting and changing trends within special and historic collection libraries, such as social media, marketing, outreach – all terms that many of us are bombarded with but don't know how to use to our advantage. On a positive note we celebrated the intake of young members into our institutions and on to our committees. They inject new and fresh ideas and provide a much needed balance of traditional and forward-thinking outlooks and skills.

The day ended on an account of the Linen Hall's impressive collection followed by a thoroughly enjoyable short film, shot for the 200th anniversary by BBC Ireland and presented by **Sean Rafferty**, a BBC Radio 4 presenter.

The whole weekend was rounded off on the Sunday morning with a trip to the fascinating **Ulster Museum**. Wonderful!

Emma Marigliano
Portico Library, Manchester



MIV *Bus Tour* - LARDNER TO LEONGATHA: ACROSS THE STRZELECKI RANGES - 19 MAY 2013

It was raining as we gathered at the Berwick Mechanics' Institute Library, greeting friends from previous tours and meeting those on their first tour. The bus arrives and it is all aboard for the start of the Lardner to Leongatha MIV Tour.

Heading east various historical landmarks are identified. Leaving the freeway, we travel down the old Princes Highway, passing the **Longwarry North Hall** now home to the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club. At Drouin, opposite the Drouin Library (and former MI), we are joined by **Graeme Hardie** and **Heidie Kestle** from the **Lardner MI**. Graeme provides informative commentary as we drive along Lardner's Track. We gain some idea of the challenges faced by the early settlers.



Lardner Mechanics' Institute. Photo: Denis Dwyer

Following a welcome morning tea at Lardner, it was back on board, and with the rain easing, we continue the drive south. We pass the **Strzelecki MI** where a community morning tea is in progress, and arrive at Coal Creek, Korumburra.



Photo: Denis Dwyer

Coal Creek Community Park and Museum recreates a coal-mining village that is typical of the towns of South Gippsland. The historic buildings on display includes a Mechanics' Institute. The **Kardella South Public Hall** was moved to the site and is now once again a venue for local events. On the day we visit it was decorated in preparation for a Baby Shower that afternoon. The Hall features a stage,

movie projector, piano, and honour board. Lunch at the Pig & Whistle Cafe. This building was the former **Kardella Mechanics' Institute**. The Kardella MI was used by the community and the school, and is now a popular cafe. It still retains the architectural features of a MI, plus a selection of Honour Boards that have been relocated here for preservation.



Photo: Denis Dwyer

The **Leongatha Mechanics' Institute** is home to the Leongatha & District Historical Society. The Historical Society has done a wonderful job restoring the MI, with its leadlight windows and pressed steel ceiling, and now housing an impressive display that evokes and explains the history of the district. We were made very welcome by the Society members, renewed acquaintance with **John Murphy** a founding member of the MIV, and while partaking of a sumptuous afternoon tea, were given a talk about the history of the **Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute** by Pat Spinks.



Afternoon tea at the Leongatha Mechanics' Institute.

Photo: Corinne Brewis

We return in sunshine along the South Gippsland Highway, detouring through KooWeeRup en route to Berwick.

Judith Dwyer

FUNDRAISING: DANDENONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE STYLE

The Dandenong Mechanics' Institute was built in 1863 and The Roads Board and later the Shire of Dandenong set up offices in the Institute building, which was enlarged with a brick extension in 1882. The Shire appears to have paid no rent to the Institute.

The Institute's town centre site was much coveted by the Shire and eventually the Institute was coerced to make over the site to Council in return for settlement of the Institute's outstanding debt on the Hall extensions and for the perpetual occupancy, use and income from second floor of the proposed new Town Hall, which was constructed in 1890. Our founders were very careful to enshrine these arrangements in a Perpetual Agreement

The Institute continued with its traditional role in providing a community library and meeting space. After a time Council muscled in on the Institute space, resumed part of it and sub-let it to the newly formed Gas Company. Council took the rent but did not pass the proceeds on to the Institute. Since that time it has had to fight in one way or another for funds, position, control or ownership of what had been lawfully negotiated at the beginning.

When we rebooted the Dandenong Institute after the new Millenium, little did we realise how entrenched anti-Institute sentiment was since the Institute's forced recess in 1974, when its library was removed from the building.

A Council staffer in a private sit down in 2007 gave us our first clue as to what direction we should take in re-establishing ourselves by telling us that 'we [Council] have more money and resources than you will ever have and the only way we would entertain the likes of an Institute as was previously in Dandenong, is if you guys were making millions of dollars... then we might just talk about what you need or want'. What a good idea!!!

As for us being invited to sign a document extinguishing the Perpetual Agreement, in return for talking, highlights the arrogance of the bureaucracy. It caused the Institute to look at the role we must now play, to assemble a war chest.

But how? The answer is deceptively simple... you use a ready resource that no bureaucratic assemblage will ever have, control or even understand: loyalty driven by right and freedom of thought. You will only have this when the open minds of clear thinkers are brought together under a volunteer banner. Institutes seem to attract such individuals.

With a direction and an objective, we set about finding our means and so one of our educational programs was allocated as fundraiser for our war chest and so the **Jetbike** and **B1** came into being. Our original proof of concept Jetbike 'Frank' featured on the cover of our in-house periodical *The Phoenix* and B1 was born.

So even if no funds are found in the Jetbike program, its high profile on the world stage will no doubt bring questioning eyes to look upon the whys and wherefores that have seen our Institute come under fire for so long. It also accentuates why Council have made such strenuous efforts over a prolonged period of time to hide its legal obligations to Dandenong's Mechanics' Institute.

The **Jetbike Program** is the first heavy calibre and very noisy round to be fired on our side in this recent skirmish of a war that began in the 1890s and has been reiterated by the Institute's protagonists over the decades. Most recently as 2007, when Council with the assistance of certain Government bodies, saw fit to try and sink the Institute in the Federal Court and make its demise permanent... they lost that battle and they will continue to do so from this point onwards. We are hoping for an amicable truce... but until then, we are just enjoying the fun our members are having with this fundraising exercise and many more that will come.

Ironically this comes at a time when the area celebrates the centenary of Moorabbin-born Harry Hawker's serious entry into aviation, by being the first to circumnavigate Britain in the air. In the meantime we have access to a large archive of aviation and engineering documents and memorabilia that needs housing. This would mesh in with any collection of material relating to the more recent manufacturing operations of International Harvester and Volkswagen.



B1 is the first purpose built production ready gas turbine powered motorcycle for use on public roads in proof of concept form, for the DMI's first major fundraising effort. Its preproduction successor 'B2' will herald the beginning of our other related and/or peripheral programs. Photo: Andrew Russell

Check out: Youtube: Dandenong Mechanics' Institute First Ride.

Andrew Russell
President, Dandenong Mechanics' Institute

A GRANGE BY ANOTHER NAME

South Australia no longer has any type of Institutes association but there is one suburban Adelaide Institute which is still in operation as a longstanding Institute library and which has sought companionship with the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc

Located in South Australia within the Adelaide western suburb of Grange and only metres from the foreshore, stands the **Grange Institute Hall**. The Hall was originally built for local residents to use and has been open to the public for over one hundred years. The name '**Grange**' originates



The Grange Institute Open Day and Booksale in full progress. Photo: History SA Flickr

from name of explorer **Captain Charles Sturt's** cottage, 'The Grange' which still stands within the suburb.

The Hall was built for **Charles and Louisa Marett** who were recent immigrants from the Island of Jersey. In the late 1800s Grange was seen as a seaside retreat with few houses amongst the sand-dunes and not far away the locals farmed animals around the swamp and reedbeds. In fact the area was once called the **Reedbeds** district. Charles and Louisa Marett, themselves local dairy farmers and storekeepers, built the **Grange Hall** at their own expense to serve the requirements of this newly emerging community. It opened on 16 December 1898 by **Thomas Henry Brooker, MP**.

The Hall is a simple structure of four walls built of stone that has been clay coated in the early 1900s and later painted. Clay brick quoins, Gothic style windows, and at the front a façade inscribed with the build date, provides historic identity to this modest and tidy building. The ceiling is made from unpainted wooden boards with lapped edges and stained with a warm shade. The floating jarrah floor is in surprisingly good condition given the various uses of the Hall over the one hundred and fourteen years.



Grange Institute Volunteers Margaret Mitchell, Roger Andre and Wynn Grigg. Photo: History SA Flickr

The **Grange Evenings Recreation Society** was formed in the Grange Hall in January 1901 under the chairmanship of **Mr G[raham] D[avid] Muirhead**, Headmaster of the Grange School, in on 25 March 1901 the Committee unanimously agreed to change the name to the Grange Institute and to become affiliated with the public Library. In August 1902, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council approved the rules of the Grange Institute. The Hall has been used as a library since 1901.

The Maretts were approached by the Institute committee in July 1902 and the Hall was purchased for £350. By 1908 the Grange Hall was reported to be much too small. By July 1909 the Grange Institute had an annexe of two rooms added to the western side of the main hall, costing £100 raised by a bazaar for the purpose. Lighting was provided by a 'new spirit invention' donated by **Mr TR Scarfe**, a local business identity.

Ever since the Hall was built and opened in 1898, it has been used for community purposes. The Hall has been used for celebrations, farewells and meetings to create other community clubs such as the seaside Tennis Club and the Grange Bowling Club. Many fundraising events were held within its walls and included regular Red Cross Circle meetings. In August 1918 funds were raised for the World War I, 3rd Australian Light Horse Trench Brigade when a children's fancy dress party was held in the Hall to pay for Christmas boxes for the soldiers. Some fundraising events were called 'bazaars' and included the sale of home-made sweets, musical performances and storytelling. This old Hall was once lovely and very well used by the local community in the early 1900s, and possibly only had the local pub and church buildings competing for public attention.

Original meeting minutes and some other historical documents have been saved and maintained by members of the Grange Institute Incorporated. A copy of the 1898 opening night program adorns the one wall while on another wall hang two large framed photographs, one of **Miss Dora Cunningham** and her private school pupils, c.1913, the other of a World War I fancy dress ball.

From 1978, Institute libraries began progressively closing in favour of council funded public libraries. In 1982 the Government ordered all Institute libraries to close before 30 June 1988, claiming that public libraries were more viable to fund. With the support and determination of the Henley and Grange Residents' Association, and funding from subscribers and the Henley and Grange Council, the Government handed over the running of the Grange Institute to the Grange Institute Trust Incorporated.

Residents were very happy and relieved, since it was a welcome service for residents who were unable to get to the closest Public Library in Henley Beach.

The Institutes Association of South Australia was disbanded in 1990 and the Grange Institute is possibly the only one maintaining a traditional library subscription library. Others are used for craft sales, weekend markets and community functions, and more than a few have been sadly abandoned or demolished.

A highlight of the Grange Institute's more recent history was the visit of the then governor

of South Australia, **Sir Eric Neal**, on 16 December 1998 to unveil a plaque commemorating the centenary of the building.

The Grange Institute Hall survives as a respectful monument and is financially supported with income in the form of rent from the attached annexe building which is being used as an art studio, while book sales have also helped to support the Institute. Financial grants and contributions from the local council, the City of Charles Sturt, have supplemented building maintenance funds.

The Grange Institute is open to the public at times limited to the availability of volunteer librarians who ensure that the latest in fiction is always to hand; their services are sincerely appreciated by a small number of older but devoted local people living within a short distance of the Hall.

Longtime MIV member, the Grange Institute held a recent Open Day to showcase their building and library activity. Built in 1898 the rendered brick building has a rich history and has been a hub in the Grange community.

Volunteers operate the library and an art studio and gallery occupies the Institute annexe.

The secondhand book sale conducted during the day brought in valuable income to help restock the library shelves with new titles.

Mark Doherty

MIV News - MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to those who took the time and effort to complete and return the MIV Membership Survey. Your thoughts and recommendations around the value of the MIV network are vital to the Committee. There has been a great response rate which gives the MIV a valuable sample on which to consider and base the future direction for the organisation, and it appreciates that many have also indicated interest in completing a more comprehensive survey in the future.

MIV will continue to represent and promote the movement, lobby government and support each organisation and assist to identify and catalogue records of the Institute.

The majority of Institutes offered a Hall for hire, with kitchen and staging facilities. The range of uses demonstrates how important the Hall is to

your community. Some interesting ones included – social events (weddings, anniversaries); dog training; performances, indoor bowls; doctor and solicitor visits; book clubs; occasional child care; CFA meetings, squash; craft groups; book swap; art exhibitions; bible study; historical groups; and a wealth of classes including yoga, aikido, sewing and dance. The typical Hall was more than 100 years old and was in excellent to fair condition, and they are maintained on very small budgets.

The MIV will review the survey over the next couple of months, and looks forward to reporting in greater detail at the November Annual General Meeting.

Sue Westwood
MIV Survey Co-Ordinator

LAUNCESTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE'S NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT REMNANT BOOK COLLECTION



The first major project undertaken after the formation of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. in 1998 was to commission an assessment of remnant Institute libraries in Victoria. It identified the major historic collections, with that of the Ballarat Institute being the most significant. Progressively since then small remnant collections have been identified across Victoria.

It is in this context that the significance and integrity of the historic **Launceston Mechanics' Institute Collection** held within the Launceston Public Library system has come under review. Recent research undertaken by **Pam Baragwanath** has identified the Launceston Mechanics' Institute collection as the second largest remnant Institute collection in Australia. The largest being the 48,000 volume **Adelaide Circulating Library [Institute] Collection** housed separately in a dedicated area within the **State Library of South Australia**.

The Launceston Collection has its origins with the establishment of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute in 1842. Its early leaders were the movers and shakers of northern Tasmania: newspaper proprietor **James Aitkenhead**; **WS Button**; Police Magistrate **WH Breton**; **William Henty**; newspaper editor; **Rev. Charles**

Price; and Congregational Minister the **Rev. John West**. In addition to running lectures and cultural program the Institute acquired a significant library both through purchase and donation. The collection of the **Launceston Book Society** was added in 1843, to be later augmented by books of the **Launceston Library Society** in 1888.

Land was acquired on the corner of St John and Cameron Streets in the centre of the growing town and a small building erected. More substantial premises were constructed on the site in 1860. It was on the basis of its collections that the holdings of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (1887) and the Launceston Mechanics' Institute & Public Library (1890) were established. The building and its contents became the Launceston Public Library in 1929 when the Mechanics' Institute formally came to an end in name, though still administered by a board under the existing arrangements for the Institute.

The Institute and its collection passed to the **Launceston City Corporation** in 1945. In 1954 Council by way of public subscription and ratepayer funds acquired a significant portion of antiquarian **Archibald Lawrence Meston's** (1890-1951) collection from his estate. This largely comprised Tasmanian local history and

natural history. Whilst most of the Launceston Collection has been held in separate storage, some notable Mechanics' Institute items have been added to the State Library's collections and to the Meston Collection.

Control of the building and its contents passed to the State Library Board in 1971, with the exception of the Mechanics' Institute and Meston collections.

After the Library Board of Tasmania took over management of the collection, items from the LMI were progressively de-accessioned and placed in storage in Moonah, Hobart.

Over several years beginning in 1993 the boxes holding the

THE READING ROOM

Is supplied with the following Periodicals; the back numbers are circulated with the books of the Library:—

The Westminster Review.
The Edinburgh Review.
The Builder.
Mechanics' Review.
Blackwood's Magazine.
Dublin University Magazine.
Athensum.
Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal.
Chambers' Edinburgh Magazine.
Art Journal.
Punch.
Family Herald.
London Journal.
Cornhill Magazine.
All the Year Round.
Once a Week.
Melbourne Punch.
United Service Gazette.
Gardeners' Chronicle.

NEWSPAPERS:—

English.—London Times, The Illustrated London News, and The Home News.
Irish.—Saunders's News Letter.
Scottish.—The Scotsman.
Sunday.—The Sydney Morning Herald.
Victoria.—The Argus.
Tasmania.—Launceston Examiner, The Cornwall Chronicle, Hobart Town Advertiser, Gazette, and Mercury.

THE FOLLOWING WORKS FOR REFERENCE.

Johnson's and Webster's Dictionaries.
McCulloch's Commercial ditto.
Field Exercises and Evolutions of Infantry.
Manual of Artillery Exercises.
Musketty Instruction of the Army
Who's Who in 1861.
The British Workman.

☞ The Reading Room is open daily from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

de-accessioned part of the collection, some 20,000 volumes, were moved back to Launceston. Popular fiction titles were set aside and those published up to 1914, 6347 volumes, were catalogued and shelved as the Victorian and Edwardian Collection. Only these volumes and those integrated within LINC Tasmania's collections are publicly known and accessible through TALIS, the Tasmanian Automated Library Information System.

It was through a grant from the **Sir John Morris Fund** that this work of review and cataloguing was made possible, as well as research for a history of the LMI published in 1998: *Going to the Mechanics': A History of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute 1842-1914* by **Dr Stefan Petrow**.

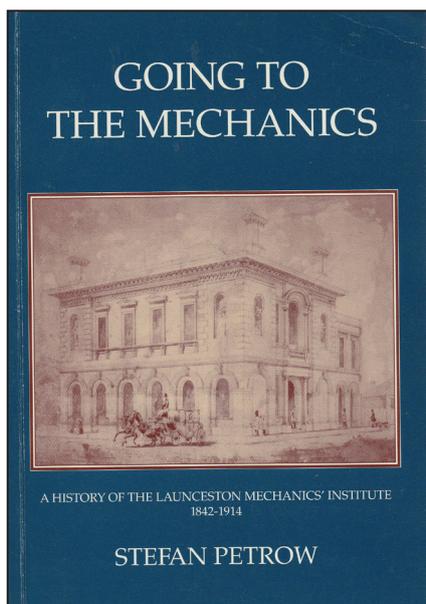
A key factor in the granting of funds was the interest of the late **Dr Stephen Murray-Smith** who, on a visit from Melbourne in the early 1960s, first flagged the significance and urged the preservation of the LMI collection. His particular focus was the popular fiction, although it was the nonfiction and reference part of the collection that was singled out for commendation by the **Munn-Pitt Report** of 1935.

The recent inclusion of the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office into LINC Tasmania, has triggered the need to examine the status of the unused and inaccessible parts of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute Collection. A resulting consultant's report has initially recommended the disposal of the non-fiction collection. It is important to note that the non-fiction titles referred to are uncatalogued and still in boxes; and the review was conducted on approximately 10% of them.

The availability of such remnant Mechanics' Institute libraries for serious research and bibliographic history is an opportunity not to be missed.

Further, in the absence of a detailed listing of non-fiction titles pertaining to such a significant period in Tasmania's development one would expect to find unique titles reflecting industry and agriculture in the colony.

Among the extended holdings of records of the LMI now preserved in



the Launceston Local Studies Collection there are catalogues from the 1840s to 1910 of the Institute's books and periodicals. These, together with the remnants of the LMI collection in the stacks and the volumes currently integrated with LINC Tasmania's working collection, indicate the character of the original Launceston Mechanics' Institute holdings at various stages of its life.

Research founded on these materials and records could lead to the rebuilding of the collection of the kind undertaken at the **Redwood Library** on Rhode Island or the **Neilson Hays Library** in Bangkok.

Redevelopment of the Launceston LINC might well be an opportunity to set aside a dedicated area in Launceston to assemble and make available this truly nationally significant collection and apply for private foundation as well as State and Federal funds to achieve this end.

The part of the collection slated for disposal is far more than boxes of discarded items. The LMI books, periodicals and records in totality tell the story of past owners, users and borrowers, and as such they are a unique and enduring legacy. Future scholars of the book and Tasmanian history will be forever grateful for their preservation.

Clearly the 1840s component makes it a unique Mechanics' Institute library remnant and as such is of immense importance.

Photos courtesy of Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute.



Featured Institute

TARWIN LOWER MEMORIAL HALL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE



This region in south-west Gippsland was first settled in the 1870s as a farming area with the Post Office opening in 1881. Today the district is largely engaged in dairy farming. The township, situated mostly along River Drive, abuts the Tarwin River which rises to the north and flows into the ocean at Venus Bay 5km to the west. Fed by an average annual rainfall of 939mm the Tarwin River provides good year-round fishing along its length.

Whilst the town's static population is around 150, this rises to over 2000 in the holiday season, mostly centred on the caravan park to the south. Its shopping strip and hotel caters to the larger region of Middle Tarwin, Venus Bay and Waratah Bay. A cycling/ walking track joins Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay.

The Tarwin and Districts Primary School has eighty students and the school operates a clubs program which in addition provides universal water safety and bike education. The town has a single shared church which is used by the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Church denominations.

The move to establish a 'Public Hall' was made before the township was surveyed in 1888. A fundraising concert was held in 'Mr Bergin's spacious room, Andersons Inlet' in March 1888. The present **Tarwin Memorial Hall Mechanics' Institute** is located on River Street in the town centre on a one acre freehold site which was

purchased for £6.12 shillings and 6 pence, with the initial trustees being Alfred Brown, Thomas Lees (1830-1905) and Robert Fisher (1835-1906). The Hall was built by local contractor Richard Patterson in 1889-90 at a cost of £275 and was opened on 7 March 1890 by Francis Conway Mason MLA. The two stained glass windows are believed to have been installed at this time.

It was also initially used as a school and church for the region. In 1914 the hall was



'thoroughly lined', including the anteroom and a folding platform was installed.

The Hall was enlarged and configured to its present T-shaped design during the period 1923-33, with the financial assistance of George Black and other donors, and was officially re-opened on 1 September 1933. The extensions included rooms exclusively for RSL use, with World War I Honour Board, external flagpole and commemorative entrance way.

Over the years the Hall has been home to the local Country Women's Association branch, Red



Cross, Cubs and Brownies. For a time it was used as a medical centre. The Venus Bay Lifesaving Club was formed in the Hall in 1961. The centenary of the purchase of the Hall land was celebrated on Australia Day 1988 with a major carnival and arts festival.

In 1998 three people turned up at the Annual General Meeting and a trumpet call went out



'The hall is part of our history, it should be retained. There's more in it than just a building, **it's the heart of the town.**' Indeed! The call reverberated around the community and today the Hall is in excellent condition and well-used by the community.

Current activities centred around the Hall include: a weekly craft group (with specialties in painting, knitting and mosaics), garden



club meetings, Red Cross, periodic Gardiner Foundation meetings, film nights (There's a large pull down screen.) and travelling entertainers.

The long-running series of markets which are held on public holiday weekends occupy the Hall and the large open space to the south of the Hall. The recent advent of two January twilight markets has proved popular for holidaying visitors. An increasing range of craft, fresh produce, treasures, and clothing feature among the sixty odd stalls.

There is an on-call group of local people who rally to the cause when needed. On market days a special purpose barbecue area is manned by Hall stalwarts.

These market and related activities, have provided valuable revenue to upgrade the kitchen to become a major catering facility for the region. Split air conditioning has been installed, solar hot water, new hall tables, and a toilet makeover are among the latest upgrade projects.

We salute Lower Tarwinians, both past and present, on their initiatives in maintaining the Tarwin Lower Memorial Hall Mechanics' Institute for future generations and wish them well in their forthcoming 125th anniversary celebrations.

Photos: Roslyn Lowden

 Tarwin Lower will be unveiling MIV Plaque No. 35 on 5 September 2013 at 11.30am.

TAKE YOUR PARTNERS AND LET'S DANCE!



Many Mechanics' Institutes across Victoria are used in connection with dance. Indeed most were officially opened with a concert and dance. Since time immemorial dance has been an integral part of any community. What's more it is a great way to maintain agility and physical fitness.

In early days the full moon heralded the staging of a local dance. However the automobile, with good headlights, changed that and halls could stage dances each week. Most Halls had their regular Friday or Saturday night 'hops'. **Picola** claims one hundred and ten years of regular dance. The **Jeeralang** monthly Friday night dates from 1955. **Great Western** has weekly dances. **Leopold** have two long-running dance fixtures. The fortnightly one conducted by the Hall Committee features the four piece New Ritz Band which has been playing the venue for about ten years. The band comprises piano, saxophone, trumpet, and a versatile vocal, drums or trombone. Leopold is also the venue for the weekly Wednesday night dances conducted by the Geelong Old Time Dance Club. Other venues have occasional dances such as at Mardan, but with a fixed New Year's Eve event.

Many couples first met at the local 'hop', so their engagement parties were held in the Hall, followed by an occasional wedding ceremony, with the wedding breakfast at least taking place in the Hall.

Today Hall use involves great variants from traditional old time, bush, Latin, Rock 'n Roll, Line, Discos, ballet, modern or even ethnic dances, such as Scottish Country or even Mediterranean bellydance. In most cases new or casual members are welcome and lessons will be given.

Some people follow circuits where old time or line dances are staged sequentially in a region on either Friday or Saturday night. Some Halls have weekly dances featuring different styles.

Other Halls are places where specialist lessons are given and perhaps annual concerts staged. Some teenagers pursue dance as they would netball, football or tennis. It is a pity that some Hall managers regard such instructors as 'commercial operators' for these people provide a valuable cultural 'add-on' to any community.

Major competitions include West Gippsland Dance Festival established in 1991 and longrunning Eisteddfods at Ararat, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. Royal South Street at Ballarat have also staged long-running dance competitions.



In cases where **Blue Light Discos** have been running long term in a town there appears to be increased attendance numbers along with a decrease in the number of local youth offenders. The line was they grew to know and respect the law. There was an element of trust.

Blue Light Discos have been happening since 1976 when the first one was staged at Mooroolbark. The idea was for police to engage youth in a congenial manner and provide safe alcohol and drug-free venues for youth to meet or dance. Since then it is estimated that six million patrons who have attended Blue Light Discos since they were started. Blue Light Discos currently operate at more than fifty venues, of which twenty are Mechanics' Institutes, in metropolitan and country areas. They are generally staged on Friday or Saturday nights catering to an age range of 8-16.

Their success has become an integral part of Victoria Police's 'Pro-Active' strategy which now includes: Derby Hill Youth Tennis Coaching Camp; Youth Forums; Light Horse Brigade; Pool Party Discos; and Educational Visits both to schools and at Victoria Police facilities. In addition there are clinics in abseiling, basketball, canoeing, cricket and skateboarding. They also sponsor the Indigenous Youth Ambassador Movement which empowers indigenous youth to address health and wellbeing issues in their various communities, through mentoring leadership and resources. All these are reminiscent of the Police Youth Clubs which operated in Mechanics' Institutes in the past.

Victoria is hosting the International Blue Light Youth Leadership Camp for future community leaders from 22-27 November 2013

This is a great and proactive initiative of Victoria Police who staff venues on a volunteer basis with local volunteers who are generally parents. For activities in your area check out the website: bluelight.org.au.

CARLTON DANCEHOUSE - CARLTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1877)



In 1877 politician **James Munro** had **John Pigdon** build the two storey Carlton Mechanics' Hall for him in three weeks at a cost of £2000. This was in the hope of garnering political support and he later donated the Carlton Mechanics' Institute to his

constituents. It served the community well over the years as their Hall, a library and as a Masonic centre. Last century it had been tenanted by the RSL and then the Carlton Community Centre which moved out in the late 1980s.

In 1992 **Hellen Sky**, **Sylvia Staehli** and **John McCormick** met with Melbourne City Council

DANCE CONT...



personnel and suggested that they occupy the building as a centre for dance on a three months trial basis. It was a bold and innovative step, but would it work? Initially the building worked on 'sweat equity' you clean the toilets, etc and you get time in the studio. After three months an extension was granted.

Eventually triennial funding from the **Australia Council** in 1996 secured Dancehouse's future. In 2001 **Helen Herbertson** was appointed as the first Creative Director and she was succeeded by **David Tyndall** in 2005.



Angela Conquet.

Photo: danceinforma.com.au

In 2011 Angela Conquet from the Mains d'Oeuvres, Saint Ouen, Paris, France was appointed to succeed David. Interestingly Angela comes from a similar socio-economic neighbourhood – chic apartments on one side of the road and worker or Government housing on the other.

She describes dance as 'Life in all its shades and sometimes that can be confronting... It may not always be pleasant, but it

will make you think... The body can tell you so much... Dance enables people to grow and think.'

Twenty years on Dancehouse has established for itself and its teachers and students a deserved international reputation and part of a national and worldwide network of like organisations. That said Dancehouse still remains as Australia's only centre for independent dance.

The broad original aims of Dancehouse remain the same 'facilitation of new audiences, alliances and mobility schemes'. Besides resident teachers and students, it has visiting teachers and students. Around performance has also developed successive teams of lighting, sound, setbuilding, photographers, musicians, costumers, visual artists and publicists.

Today Dancehouse is very much a business with a diverse Board of Directors, ongoing funding streams, a growing membership and a committed team of over twenty volunteers who assist when and where they are needed. A busy office administers the centre, which currently has an annual turnover of around half a million dollars. It runs a box office for dance related events held in the Hall.

Largely the building is made over to two large performance theatres and smaller spaces made over to tuition and practice. Over one hundred and twenty teachers operate out of the building offering 25 dance styles over some 600 classes which have engaged some 3500 students. Last year there were forty-one separate productions, along with thirty-eight workshops or master classes. (Internationally

recognised French choreographer **Myriam Gourfink** recently visited and gave performances and conducted a workshop.) In all these events attracted some 4000 attendees.

Dancehouse offers two residential scholarships as 'Housemates' for up to fourteen weeks, with one being for 'Performance' and the other being for 'Research'. A recent student concluded 'This is truly a rare and unique opportunity'. Dancehouse is also a partner in the **Rotary Arts Project** where sociological disadvantaged youth are placed in creative roles and which have had very positive outcomes for participants.

A foyer, reception and office space was created in 2004, with a feature being a blackboard wall.

A strong outreach program has been pursued in recent times. Their quarterly journal *Dancehouse Diary* was first issued in 2012 and this has a widening distribution. Then there was the first **Shake the House** which invited neighbours from up and down Princes Street and Rathdowne Street to 'let them know what we do'. Most recently there has been the launch of the **Connect! program** where patrons, donors, members, teachers and friends get together to celebrate the rich and enriching artistic life of Dancehouse. Checkout: Dancehouse 20 years on youtube; website: dancehouse.com.au.

ARARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1859)



Dynamic Dance Studio Ararat operates from the imposing two-storey Ararat Mechanics' Institute in busy Barkly Street. The Studio's history stretches back to 1950 when a young **Stella Rosengreen** (1930-97) started

to give lessons at the Ararat Victorian Railways' Institute in Highland Dancing.

Other steps followed – tap, jazz and ballet and soon the **Rosengreen School of Dancing** had a class of over thirty. Concerts, examinations and competitions followed. Proceeds went to local charities and in 1974 Stella was made a Life Governor of the Ararat & District Hospital for her significant fundraising efforts.

The competition evolved into the annual longrunning **Ararat Eisteddfod** started in 1955, which is now held over eight days, with ten regional dance schools taking part.

The School moved to the Mechanics' Institute in the 1970s, the upstairs Hall of which had been deserted as a meeting space for other more accessible venues.

DANCE CONT...



Stella and her daughters **Christine** and **Jeanette** and sons, **Ivan** and **David** continued to teach generations of young dancers there. One student **Amy Harris** went on to dance with the Australian Ballet.

The death of Stella, in 1997, was keenly felt by the Ararat community because of her caring and generous spirit. Stella was 'second mother' to many. The School was continued under the ownership of her daughter Christine.

In 2004 **Donna McKenzie** opened **Donna's Dance Studio** and in 2009 the Studio changed hands to the current owner **Laura Waters**, who renamed it **Dynamic Dance Ararat**.

More than two hundred students attend the Institute weekly, generally for after school and occasional weekend classes. The student range starts at age four and goes upwards. Styles range from jazz, ballet, tap, hip-hop and contemporary with a local staff of five, including Stella's daughter Christine and granddaughter Donna. Guest tutors come from further afield: **Jamie Blomeley** teaches break dancing; and **Christine Fiscalini** teaches belly dancing.

Besides providing valuable revenue for the regular maintenance of the aging Mechanics' Institute building, the studio by way of long-term tenancy have also done much to rehabilitate a detached building located at the back of the Institute into a specialist studio. More recently they have fitted out and carpeted an upstairs room into a cosy meeting space with attached toilet. In the main upstairs hall a new floor has been laid, to overcome the occasional splinter. They have also purchased seating for small concerts.

This studio provides for widespread cultural diversity and in the case of Ararat that is only too evident, with the eight day Ararat Eisteddfod which is known nationally. What's more the variety of dance classes offered actively engages a large number of young people in healthy and vigorous exercise, with lifelong benefit.

The annual Christmas concert is their 'big event' and is held in the Ararat Performing Arts Centre, with several performances. Last year's theme was 'Nursery Rhyme' and 200 students took part, costumed by **Jeanette Byron**, with lighting by **Jake Kosiancic** and sound by **David Rosengreen**. It was a triumph. Contact: Laura Waters. Tel: 0409 162 500

MT EGERTON MECHANICS' HALL (Est. c.1879)

Diva's Edge Bellydance Studio principal Julianne Murphy grew up in Ballarat and moved to Townsville in Queensland. In 2002 she returned to live at Mt Egerton near Ballarat. Working in Ballarat she became involved with a local bellydance group and she loved it. 'It became addictive. You just feel terrific after a vigorous workout.' Julianne said.



It was suggested that she start teaching at Mt Egerton and so the Diva's Edge Bellydance Studio came into being in 2005. Since then it has established a national reputation conducting regular classes for the locals which cater for: children, teenage and two adult groups. In addition schools and workshops for regional Victoria, involving national and overseas teachers are held at Mt Egerton Mechanics'.

Belly dancing has ancient origins and the Greeks and Romans reported on it taking place in Asia Minor and Turkey describing 'shimmering' movements, both in female and male dancers. It has folk dance origins and has only become a performance act in quite recent times. In Australia it only came to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s, where it is associated with bright but brief costumes.

Belly dance is a non-impact weight bearing exercise and is thus suitable for all ages. During fingering and throwing the veil it builds strength in the fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders and the upper body, the 'shimmering' of the midriff and hips, burns excess fat in these areas. Fast movement and flexing provides for better circulation in the legs. The health benefits of bellydancing have been seriously canvassed and supported by papers in medical publications.

Julianne also caters for suitable costuming from the alluring to the discreet. She stocks a range of: Egyptian costumes, tribal costumes and accessories, coins, paillettes, zills, beads, Egyptian and Turkish hip scarves, kid's costumes, rectangle veils, gothic chokers and costuming, hair accessories, jewellery, bindis and class wear. They cater for children to ladies in XXL, and guarantees you will find a treasure to delight. These are sold at markets and festivals, as well as by mail order.

Julianne's Diva's Edge Bellydance Troupe comprises several ex-students and friends who perform at community events and fundraisers. The big annual efforts have been in support of charities including: Breast Cancer Research; Prostate Cancer Research 'Supporting the men that support us'; and most recently the purchase of neo-natal childcare equipment for the Ballarat Hospital. These fundraisers are now in their seventh year and are held at the University of Ballarat's Mt Helen Campus.

Contact: julieannemurphy@bigpond.com or on Facebook: Diva's Edge Bellydance.

STAGE CURTAINS

The Stage Curtain hunt is still turning up Halls where Curtains exist. In the case of the **Newlyn Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** (est. 1886) the curtain was sold with the Hall when it was removed to another site.

Thanks to the cooperation of **John and Fay Hungerford** of **Newlyn Antiques and Cottage Garden Nursery** we have been able to get some valuable details. The subject is Mitre Peak, Milford Sound and is by **Barry Jagers** who was born in New Zealand. It is titled, signed and carries the date of 1925.



Newlyn Mechanics' Institute stage curtain, painted by Barry Jagers, 1925. Photos: John Hungerford

The curtain is for sale on the understanding that the purchaser wishes to acquire the entire building and contents for an obscenely gross sum which will allow the current owners to retire in a luxurious manner beyond their wildest expectations. (And that will be a bargain price for obtaining a national treasure!) Contact: John or Fay at goodday@newlynantiques.com.au.

In the case of **Eddington Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1893) the scenic backdrop depicting a rural scene is the only thing left from the original Mechanics' which was demolished when the new Memorial Hall



Bullumwaal Mechanics' Institute stage curtain. Photo: Pam Baragwanath

was built in 1984.

The **Landsborough Mechanics' Hall** (est. 1922) curtain by report depicted 'a lake and mountains', however as 'it was falling to pieces' and was thrown out in the 1990s.



Somerville Mechanics' Institute stage backdrop, painted by the late Norma Fear.

Malmsbury's indefatigable

Photo: Bronwyn Lowden

historian **Sue Walter** has turned up a set of outwards correspondence from the Borough of Malmsbury's Town Clerk Letter Book which throws valuable light on to Barry Jagers' *modus operandi*.

Shortly after arriving in Victoria in 1903 Jagers did a 'scenic scene painting tour' in Gippsland. On 2 April 1904 Jagers wrote, from 93 Grattan Street, Carlton, to Malmsbury Council 'offering to paint drop scenes curtains, wings &c &c at a cost not to exceed £3', and gave **Longwarry Mechanics' Institute** as a reference as to the quality of the work performed by him.

Malmsbury Town Clerk, **William Lambert** wrote to Longwarry seeking confirmation of details on 2 May 1904. On 4 June Lambert replied to Jagers accepting the offer and asked him to 'forward plans and designs' and advise a starting date. On 22 June Lambert returned the 'plans &c' by rail to **Melton** as requested and in an accompanying letter noted the scenes 'Killarney, the Bridge across the Straights and the scene from Derwent River'. Lambert, on 24 August, advised that October was suitable to start the work. Lambert's next was dated 15 November which sought a start date for 'scenery at the Town Hall' which had recently been renovated. He noted that 'your coming has been looked forward to very anxiously since the first of the present month, after you had finished **Woodend**.' The next is dated 5 December 'Received your note this morning and the time you mention will suit.' Then silence until 11 June 1906 noting that in 1904 your proposed visit to Malmsbury 'did not receive sufficient encouragement to induce you to proceed'. The letter sought an estimate for new drop curtains, & two sets of scenery for center & back, with wings and sky borders to match'. Jagers' reply was swiftly received and on 13 June was advised 'My Council has not at present sufficient funds to carry out the whole of the work' and suggesting a revised quote for limited works. The rest is silence. **Thankyou Sue!**

Blue Plaques

COMMEMORATING PEOPLE-POWERED HISTORY SINCE 1866

It was a sad day for London's **Blue Plaques** lovers when early this year it was announced that no new blue plaques will be considered for installation by English Heritage until further notice due to a 34% cut in funding.

The London blue plaques scheme was founded by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) in 1866. The first plaque to be installed was to commemorate the birth place of **Lord Byron** at 24 Holles Street, Cavendish Square. Unfortunately, this plaque, and more than half of the 35 plaques installed by the RSA are no longer in existence.

From 1901 to 1986 the scheme was run by the London City Council (LCC) (later the Greater London Council (GLC)). Style, design and colour varied somewhat in early years of their administration, until the blue colour and design we see today were decided upon.

English Heritage took over the scheme in 1986. To date, nearly 900 plaques have been installed throughout London over the years, (around 100 of which are no longer on display due to removal or destruction for demolition). All plaques which had already been approved will be installed throughout the year, but as it stands, there will be no further plaques installed. This is only the third time in the almost 150 years of the scheme that it has had to be put on hold (the others being during WWI and WW2). Here is hoping that we see the London Blue Plaques back in action in 2014!

Plaques are a valuable asset for communities. They tell a little bit of history about the town, and the buildings or people that were or are still there. The Australian Bicentennial Project 1788-1988 installed many plaques throughout the country, many of which are not known about or have been forgotten. Websites like **Open Plaques** (openplaques.org) allow people to add plaques from their communities (what they say, who they were installed by, when and where) for the world to see. MIV's Plaques have allowed its plaqued Institutes to be pinned on the map beside the great London Blue Plaques scheme. We are proud of our Mechanics' Institutes here in Victoria, and we would love to display more of you, not only to our other Members who read this Newsletter, but to the rest of Australia, and beyond to the world through our plaques scheme.

To order a plaque (They cost \$195 each, including postage, and require your installation.) or to find out more information, email Judith Dwyer on jad134@hotmail.com or write to Box 482, Berwick, 3806.

MIV has recently added a page to their website solely dedicated to its **Historical Plaques Program**. It includes a map of where the plaques are located around the State, a numbered list of all plaques



which have been installed, where you can find the plaque at the Institute (inside/outside), and also links to our page at Open Plaques (http://openplaques.org/organisations/mechanics_institutes_of_victoria).

Below is the list of plaques currently in place. We would like to welcome Olinda, Narre Warren and Tarwin Lower to our ever-growing list.

REMEMBER: Home Is Where The Hall Is! is coming up in November. It is an ideal time to honour your Institute with a plaque. Get your orders in **NOW** in time for November!

MIV's Historical Plaques Project:

- ~1 Maldon Athenaeum.
- ~2 Ballan Mechanics' Institute.
- ~3 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute.
- ~4 Taradale Mechanics' Institute.
- ~5 Lilydale Athenaeum.
- ~6 Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library.
- ~7 Minyip Mechanics' Institute.
- ~8 Frankston Mechanics' Institute.
- ~9 Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute.
- ~10 Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute.
- ~11 Prahlan 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.
- ~30 Leongatha Mechanics' Institute.
- ~31 Bonnie Doon Free Library.
- ~32 Spring Creek Mechanics' Institute and Free Library (Fawcett Hall).
- ~33 **Olinda Mechanics' Institute.** To be unveiled 20 October 2013 (see calendar for details).
- ~34 **Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute.** To be unveiled 24 November 2013 (see calendar for details).
- ~35 **Tarwin Lower Mechanics' Institute.** To be unveiled 5 September 2013 (see calendar for details).
- ~36 *Your Institute???*

Around the Institutes

This column is comprised of 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.

ACHERON MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1890)



The district of Acheron is in count down mode for their Back to Celebrations and Book Launch which will take place in June 2014. In the meantime the continual upgrade of the Hall's facilities is taking place. Recently replica School House Lights with

white translucent bowls and antique bronze fittings and chains were installed in the Hall. The eight lights, which comprise two rows of four, hang to about three metres from the floor and are fitted with dimmers to suit the occasion. The two closest to the stage are on a separate circuit. Thanks to local electrician **John Turner** they were in place in time for the **Annual August Winter Dinner**. The comment that they were 'Fantastic' and that 'they look like they have always been there.' Shows that the project was well worth the effort. And the Dinner had the theme 'We're a Little Bit of Country', with the overider 'dress up or dress down in your best country gear'. It featured the usual auction and raffle and a good night was had by all. Book subscriptions and or/reservations can be made by email in the first instance acheronhistoryproject@virtual.net.au or with **John Thorp** on (03) 5772 1442. Website: acheronhall.com

BULN BULN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1906)

The **Warragul and District Historical Society** were recently gifted a very rare item which was thought to have been long since lost.

'[In April,] Geoff Hewson and Joyce Pierrehumbert presented the Society with a large framed photograph of the first committee of the **Buln Buln Mechanics' Institute**, which was photographed on 23rd August 1907. The photograph hung in the hall for many years, but was removed for safekeeping by Joyce's late husband, Charlie when the hall was sold and moved to Drouin West, where it is currently used as an art gallery.

The photograph shows the thirteen members of the Committee posed in front of the recently completed Buln Buln Mechanics' Institute.'

Excerpt from Warragul and District Historical Society, *Monthly Bulletin*, No. 455, May 2013 (written by editor **Colin Silcock**).

This wonderful piece of history is now back on display at the Warragul and District Historical Society rooms. To read more about the history of the Buln Buln Mechanics' Institute, Colin has uncovered some more information, also available in the same issue of the *Monthly Bulletin*.

BUXTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1889)

Buxton Hall Re-Opening



Photo: Willie Cureton

On Saturday, 16th March the community of Buxton came together to witness the Buxton Hall re-opening after an extensive re-fit and renovation.

This was achieved by a dedicated team of volunteers after extensive organisation and community consultation.

Funding for the refurbishment was generously provided through Regional Development Victoria (RDV) from monies raised by bushfire recovery donations.

The Buxton Hall was built during the 1950s to replace the original Mechanics Institute Hall which had fallen into disrepair. It was built by an enthusiastic band of volunteers from and around Buxton contributing labour and goods and expertise to the build.

Time was catching up with the "Old Girl" and it was well overdue for some T.L.C. to bring it back to a suitable condition for public use. Asbestos was removed, possums evicted, re-roofed, reclad and new amenities put in the hall is something we are all very proud of.

The Hall is a true community hall, being totally funded by the Buxton Community through fundraising, hall hire fees, and memberships to the Buxton Progress Association.

The refurbishment has enhanced the hall, which has still retained its 1950s characteristics and the wonderful mural at the back of the stage depicting the local Cathedral Range Landscape.

Past President **Clive Clayton** officially reopened the hall. He welcomed all attending and thanked those responsible in making it all possible. Guests were then treated to a 1950s style afternoon tea served by hostesses dressed depicting fashions of that era. All

agreed it was a most enjoyable afternoon and we can feel very proud of our achievements.

Willie Cureton
Secretary, Buxton Progress Association

CASTLEMAINE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1855)



Mt Alexander Shire CEO, Phil Rowland, Goldfields Library Corporation CEO, Carolyn Macvean, Mount Alexander Shire Mayor, Michael Redden, Minister for Local Government, Jeanette Powell, Friends of Castlemaine Library President, Denise Jepson, Castlemaine Library Manager, Robyn Annear

Photo: Jenny McIntrye

The **Friends of Castlemaine Library** were pleased to announce that the Castlemaine Library and Mount Alexander Shire Council successfully obtained funding for the redevelopment of the Library foyer as an activity centre. The Victorian Government, together with the Mount Alexander Shire council will be investing about \$150,000 in the space for screens, air conditioning and benches to make the space more usable in the day-to-day operation of the library, whilst still retaining flexibility for use by the theatre.

CHARLTON GOLDEN GRAINS MUSEUM (Est. 1879)



Photo: Carolyn Olive

The **Golden Grains Museum** was established in 1973 and was located in the distinctive Charlton Mechanics' Institute building which was erected in 1881. Here was assembled a massive regional collection covering district themes – agriculture, industry, sport, war and community health and medicine.

However since 2007 it's been a harrowing few years for the dedicated team of volunteers. First there were the white ants which were eradicated, funding was obtained and the damaged woodwork was replaced. Then all walls were cleared in readiness

for painting, with pictures being stacked on the floor. Then came the 2011 floods that flooded to a metre throughout the building. Some items could be resurrected, others could not. In some cases copies were sourced from the original or other sources.

Two years on the Museum with the efforts of many volunteers, business and philanthropic help the community gathered to celebrate the re-opening. This time the sun shone brightly as the crowd assembled in the adjacent **Elliot Gardens**, whilst the **Wedderburn Old Timers Band** played in the band rotunda. After the Museum was officially reopened the public were invited to look over their refurbished museum. The makeover has been amazing with new interactive display panels, fittings and display which makes it all the more reason to make it up to Charlton one day. Make it for a weekend and on Saturday you can take in a movie at the refurbished **Rex Theatre** and be ready for the 11am Sunday opening of the Museum.

CHRISTMAS HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1873)

The Christmas Hills Committee have recently accessed funding for the appointment of a Project Coordinator (Community Development) for the **Christmas Hills Renewal Project**. It is a twelve month contract with approximately twenty hours per week which started in August. In the meantime we still await the impending opening of the rebuilt Institute.

CHEWTON TOWN HALL (Est. 1858)

After a period located in a shop almost directly opposite the Town Hall, the **Chewton Mechanics' Institute** moved into the rear of the former Town Hall building. Today the building is managed by the **Chewton Domain Society**. It is presently undergoing significant restoration as a part of \$250,000 upgrade of the building and surrounds which also contain an amenities block. The work is being undertaken by **Greg Owen** of **Period Restoration Services** of Beechworth and Castlemaine.

CLYDE MECHANICS INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1925)

Community meetings in the Clyde region were originally held in the Clyde Methodist Church opened in 1909. A move to build a community hall was first started in the mid-1920s.

The hall site, located near the railway station, was donated by **Albert Wenn** (1879-1941). The building contract was let to **Edward H Thompson** of Cranbourne and the total cost was just over £700 and it was opened in April 1928 by **Arthur Walter** (1873-1951) MLA.

The community took its library function seriously and by 1935 it had assembled some 1200 books. The library was opened for many years on Saturdays by **Philip Stanley Dawson** (1888-1975), hall caretaker and maintenance man. He is also credited with having painted the scene on the Hall stage wall.

The Hall was a site of silent film screenings and euchre and dance. For a time the Hall hosted the Baby Health Centre, the Country Women's Association, Klyde Klub, Clyde Progress Association and craft markets.

Over the years upgrades have been made to the building amenities and consequently its community use has continued. The library closed in 1965, but the service was resumed in 1975 by the **Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service** and today Hall facilities are used by a mobile library service.

CUDGEWA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1887)

The present Institute Hall dates from 1919, with extensions at the front built in 1963. During the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme the Cudgewa Mechanics' was the scene of regular Saturday night dances.

The dance theme still continues for since 1997 three dances have been held in the Hall during the annual Nariel Creek Bush Festival. The Cudgewa Hall Committee receives the proceeds from two of these. The Hall Committee conducts three Community Markets each year – Autumn, Spring and Christmas. Hall use includes: Land Care and Government agency meetings. Recent works include a new ceiling above the stage and an upgrade of the stage, lighting, etc. The next major project to be tackled is a costly upgrade of the sewerage system.

ESKDALE HALL (Est. 1913)

On Saturday 14 June a large crowd of district and former residents gathered to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the first Public Hall in Eskdale on 20 June 1913. Previous to this there had been a private hall, but the local community needed its own. So they built a new hall on donated land. It was used to 'send off' soldiers to World War I and it also welcomed them home. A second Hall was built alongside in 1958. The football team were longtime users. The long-running annual debutante ball saw the Hall decorated with ferns and plants. The deb balls were recently revived as biennial functions. The Hall also recently served as the **Eskdale Primary School** when their school buildings were being refurbished.

The weekend started with a get-together in the Hall to inspect a large range of historical photos assembled by the Mitta Valley Heritage Society's **Janet Duncan**. To a black and white theme **Larsen's Band** provided music for the evening old time dance. Sunday comprised an inter-denomination church service followed by a sausage sizzle. After which the small community returned to normal speed and a welcome rest for organisers Hall President **Phillip Lord** and Committee **Kelly Lord, Sarah Lord** and **Nyka Ellis**.

FAWCETT HALL AND FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1882)

The folk at Fawcett are delighted at the announcement by local MP **Dr Bill Sykes** that they have received a grant of \$60,000 'to turn the fawcetts on'. This grant will enable the construction of a commercial



Caption: Bill Sykes MP at the opening of the Fawcett Hall in May 2011 following completion of stage one of the hall's refurbishment. Photo: Fawcett Hall facebook

kitchen, outdoor deck and toilet block. The idyllic and isolated setting of the Fawcett Hall has the potential to attract special events and there have already been some inquiries for the use of the Hall and grounds for weddings and meetings. Fawcett have also received funding from the Fire Ready Communities Grants Program offered by Regional Development Victoria for \$10,620 to conduct a localised series of bushfire planning workshops and new infrastructure and equipment to better enable the community to use the Hall for these programs and in emergency situations. Also, mark in your diary for 19 October from 8am, Fawcett Hall's Garage Sale - all monies raised will go to the Hall. Indeed 'Anything is possible.' Bookings: sam@rossparkwoolshed.com.au

FOOTSCRAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

Redevelopment in the proximity of the **Footscray Mechanics' Institute** has seen the naming of an adjacent street '**Mechanics' Place**'. This is the second street name to carry the 'Mechanics' appellation this year. Footscray's current building is 100 years old this year and a MIV Plaque is planned for unveiling before the year is out.

KILMORE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

Never one to shy away from issues that confront Kilmore people, the **Kilmore Mechanics' Institute** has recently thrown its weight behind the **Kilmore Monument Support Group** who are lobbying to prevent the siting of the Kilmore-Wallan Bypass Freeway through Kilmore's Public Park and Garden, the Crown Land Reserve that abuts the Kilmore Township. This is not the first time that it has stepped into the fray. The first was the public access and use of the Reserve with a major seminar of users and Government agencies. The second was to reinstate the Look Out Tower to public use. In that case restoration was done in conjunction with **Kilmore-Broadford Rotary**.

KYNETON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1858)

The **Friends of the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute** recently submitted the **Kyneton Mechanics'**

Institute for listing on the **Australian Heritage Register** and the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria provided a letter of support.

Their case was based on: the formation of a country militia, the Kyneton Mounted Rifles in 1860, which was to be called out to control rioting strikers on the Melbourne to Bendigo railway line; the continuous presence of a library on the site since 1859; then the momentous Australian Natives' Association Conference held there in 1893 which 'cranked up' the stalled Federation cause; early technical education; and the Hall's long association with theatre and band music. The latter is being revised by a Community Concerts Series which is being promoted by the Friends.

After more than a decade of skirmishing the Friends of Kyneton Mechanics' Institute and Macedon Ranges Council are now thankfully colluding to ensure the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute is well used by the community.

In May Council issued figures of that use for the past twelve months which showed 8087 people attended a function, event or meeting in the Institute. There were: 24 public and private events or activities and some ninety-five public and community meetings took advantage of Council's offer of free use by non-profits for six meetings a year. (We can only but heartily applaud Council for such an action.) A private operator conducted thirty-seven youth drama classes in the Hall. In addition to the above the Victorian Electoral Commission hired part of the building for three months.

The Friends have so far conducted a series of **Community Concerts** showcasing largely local talent, but the most recent featured world class talent by way of **Peter Hooper** (banjo) and **James Clark** (double bass and tuba).



Kyneton's Autumn Concert was compered by the indefatigable Friends' President **Michael Kennedy** (pictured left. Photo: Nea Gyorffy). Longtime Kyneton resident and retired midwife **Max Barton** had suggested a bracket of sing-a-long numbers for the seniors and

that was ably led by **Juliana Cleal** and the audience participation was robust.

The interval provided an opportunity to inspect the Schools' Art Show which had been coordinated by the Friends' **Jane Turner**. It comprised work from **Kyneton Primary School** and **Our Lady of the Rosary Parish School** and was a great surprise. In all some hundred examples were on display featuring the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute building. There were three dimensional models of the Institute, including one very large version, and a range of drawings, including etchings of the building. **Kyneton Art Group** offered six Encouragement Awards and Group Secretary **Ann Paterson** said that the judging

was 'very tight' and we can only but agree. The Friends and the participating Schools can only be congratulated in encouraging this great initiative for youth. I am sure those notable women artists, **Clara Southern**, **Josephine Muntz** and **Polly Hurry** who once exhibited in the Institute would have been much moved had they been present.



After interval **Elsie Lowry**, an accomplished young pianist from **Sacred Heart College**, Kyneton gave two items on the Hall's Schiedmayer & Soehne upright piano. Both soloist and the piano did Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's and the stirring Aram Khachaturian's works justice.

Then it was down to a series of songs from the **C3 Trio** led by **Dennis Cartwright** with musical interludes from the repertoire of Hoagy Carmichael and Oscar Pettiford featuring the guitar, banjo, double bass and tuba. Juliana Cleal's rendition of *Fever* was particularly moving.

Indeed it was a smorgasbord of music served up during the afternoon, all to keep the feet tapping. With events such as this, **Kyneton's Community Concerts Series** must gain a following. The **Summer Community Concert** is scheduled for 9 November. In fact why not become a subscriber to the Friends and this gets you admission to a Season's Concerts.

The Friends are hopeful of returning the Hall to full community use as a performing and visual arts space and hub and that includes the presently closed balcony. This will mean a second significant round of funding. To advance this proposal Kyneton Friends Michael Kennedy and their honorary architect **Robert Martin** met with the Shire's new Heritage Adviser **Ivar Nelsen** and had a 'walk through' of the building. Ivar is now considering a way forward, perhaps with successive individual grant applications, for the balcony and staging facilities. Applications for membership of the Friends should be directed to Barry Murphy, Pipers Creek, 156 Pipers Creek-Pastoria Road, Pipers Creek, V 3444.

LAKE BOLAC HALL (Est. 1896)

Lake Bolac Gets Static Library

In December last year Lake Bolac residents had their mobile library replaced with a permanent local facility. Some \$180,000 was made available by the State Government from its \$17.2 million Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to fund the \$240,000 project which was coordinated by the Lake Bolac Development Association and Ararat Rural City Council. The new library provides a meeting room

and children's area, internet access and more than 1500 books. It will be open seven days a week and will be staffed by volunteers trained by Ararat Rural City Council Library staff.

The Government also provided a further \$45,000 from its \$36.8 million Libraries Funding Program for a library outreach vehicle which will serve the Streatham, Willaura and Elmhurst districts.

In the 2011-12 year 1.1 million Victorians accessed library services and recorded some 51 million loans.

MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM (Est. 1839)

Program Director **Sue Westwood** has been kept busy this year as the Book Clubs, Film Group and Speaker's Sessions continue to attract interest. The recent session with State Librarian **Sue Roberts** was a 'sell out'. Another engaging talk was given by book artist **Bruno Leti**. We take books for granted, but they are built and are a real work of art, design, paper, cover, etc. However put an experienced artist in the driver's seat and you can have a book of great visual beauty, with real feeling, both emotional and tactile.

The Ath has also thrown financial support for the **Scarlet Stiletto Awards**, now in their twentieth year. The Ath is offering a prize of \$1000, with a runnerup of \$500 conditional upon the words 'body in the library' being used.

MIA MIA MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1907)



Project members Anthony Ryan, Wendy Hulls, Jim Coombe and Kate Hicks at the old post office.

Photo: Bendigo Advertiser

The **Mia Mia Mechanics' Institute** has received a Federal grant to publish the history of the Mia Mia district. On 7 July they staged a **History Project Progress Day** in the Institute where Parish maps showing land settlement and photographs and some draft articles were on display. Lunch was served between 12.30pm and 2pm to enable people to sit and chat.

The Mia Mia area has had its droughts, fires, famines and rabbit and grasshopper plagues. There is Aboriginal occupation, the early pastoralists and gold diggers.

Locals experienced the visit of **Burke and Wills** and later saw the **Duigan** brothers construct and fly the first Australian-made aeroplane. Then there were the largely hapless group of soldier settlers and the making of the Eppalock Reservoir. The book is scheduled for completion in 2014. If you can

contribute contact: Anthony Ryan via miamiasocial@gmail.com.

MINHAMITE SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1923)

The Minhamite Soldiers' Memorial Hall is situated between the now closed Minhamite School and the abandoned Minhamite Railway Siding with its ghost-like goods shed. The Hall is the last building for the community. Indeed 'The Last Train to Minhamite' was the theme for a community play written and produced by new settler **Joy Hildebrand** and her husband **Hildebrand**, a ukulele master. It was a triumph and annual concerts have been held since. District life has redeveloped around the Hall with community barbecues, swap meets, ukulele tutorials and of course commemoration ceremonies. Their current aspiration is to have the Hall restumped and return of the Hall to full community and wider use. The Hall is located on a freehold acre site and would be ideal for a regional meeting, family reunion, or a visit.

MOLLONGHIP MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1910)



Artist in Residence Anne E Stewart 'Out of the Mist' which celebrated the Mollonghip Hall, its history and its people. anne@anneestewart.com.au

MOUNT BEST HALL (Est. 1902)

Word has filtered down from the mountain that the Mt Bestians are still talking about their 'All Things Irish Night' when the March Hare or Easter Bunny or whoever it was hopped by with lots of chocolate. The Hall was packed to capacity for the dinner and the stage, sometimes floor, show, with some rollicking good acts and creative hairstyling. All compered by the inimitable **Max O'Adam**, oh begorra, with variations on a theme of green and orange.

Mt Best has a 'web' page on Facebook and you can read their newsletters there. There's the 'Happenings' page; Mini Profile of a community or Committee member, to which they contribute a personal par and then answer set questions, Hobbies, Fave Food, Football team, Can't live without, etc.; Celebrations; Congratulations; Mt Best Youth Group; Mt Best Women's Group; and Men's Bocce. This site is well worth a look and perhaps even copying, for your Hall, although I cannot recall writing that.

The Annual General Meeting of the Mount Best Hall Association was held on Saturday, 20 July. It was preceded with 'hearty hot soup' and the meeting was followed by 'seriously sweet sweets'. What a great idea! The good news of the evening was the Report from Building Project Officer **Ray Brown**

was that their Hall reno-additions were finally to get underway 'very soon'.

MOUNT ECCLES MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. c.1905)



Each year local and former Mt Eccles residents gather around the local cenotaph for the Anzac Day Ceremony. It is the defacto annual 'Back to Mt Eccles'. The Hall provides the hub for this activity which attracts several hundred people to this otherwise quiet part of Gippsland. The annual afternoon tea takes place at the Hall at 2pm on Anzac Day.

NAGAMBIE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1871)

The Nagambie folk have been busy in a number of different directions. Further major works are taking place in and around the Hall. Listing of the extant library is also at an end thanks to **Yvonne Deering**. (There will be better and further particulars in the next newsletter.)

NARRE WARREN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

The unveiling of MIV Plaque No. 34 will take place on Sunday 24th November 2013 at the Narre Warren Mechanics Institute, 59 Webb Street, Narre Warren at 1pm, this will be held in conjunction with the dedication of a memorial garden for a tireless worker for our committee, **Judith Allen** who passed away last year.

Judy Owen

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)



Prahran Mechanics' Institute's new building.

The PMI is preparing for a move in to its new home in late 2014. This will be its third site in nearly 160

years. The transition will be one which will bring the Prahran Institute well into the 21st century with state of the art fittings and facilities.

The new venue is just one hundred metres north of the present location along St Edmonds Road on the west at No. 39. The two storey brick building was erected in 1964 and has served variously over the years as a clothing factory and importer's warehouse.

It was purchased by a developer in the early 2000s who renovated the space for offices, and upgraded toilet and kitchen facilities on the two levels. A feature of the new location is the off-street parking for eight spaces within the building and in front where there will three short term spaces and a disabled space.

The building will be serviced with a lift, otherwise there are stairs. The top floor will be largely open plan and this will house the PMI's 30,000+ volume local history collection, the library offices, areas set aside for the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria** and **Australian Railways Historical Society**, and a reading area lit by natural lighting from large windows facing east. The **Cinema and Theatre Historical Society** will have a separate lockable space. Also on the first floor will be a volunteer workroom, a fully resourced theatre and lecture space seating approximately ninety people, meeting spaces and a catering area.

On the ground floor will be a smaller meeting/function space. There will also be provision for closed library stacks on the ground floor.

This will be a boon for the PMI and the three groups which have their collections in the building. It is expected that the theatre and function space will have very regular usage.

It is not anticipated that there will be need for any extra staff and **Tim McKenna**, **Christine Worthington** and **Ursula Zamecnik** will move into the building around 2014. No doubt they will also welcome some help so you may wish to put your name down in the library.

Prahran recently hosted the **University of Melbourne's Friends of the Baillieu Library** for a site visit and Promotions & Publications Librarian Christine Worthington gave a powerpoint presentation on the history of the Mechanics' Institute Movement and the PMI and its foray into education and more recently into local history. Christine explained that local history material is filed under place names rather than under individual subject headings such as education, religion, sport, etc. MIV's growing collection of Mechanics' Institute related books is also filed with the Prahran collection.

As was pointed out Prahran has titles not in the state or national libraries. Many self-published authors and small groups are unaware of international standard book numbers and legal deposit. The PMI is able to track down material in its special subject area very well. Those brave Prahran Committee members who determined on the local history course in the early 1980s certainly set up the PMI for survival well into the 21st century with an unassailable niche.

(But then who would think of going to the USA to find the largest collection of Shakespeare related material in the world at the **Folger Library** in Washington. So the real message is find your niche and go for it. Prahran did.)

Meanwhile, if it is some consolation to the memory of Prahran's forebears, the sale of the campus to Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE will result in the continuance of education on the campus, including hospitality and the creative arts. NMIT claims to be the largest provider of primary industry training in Victoria and one of the largest in Australia, with seven metropolitan campuses and country campuses at Ararat, Eden Park, Kyneton and Yan Yean.

SOMERVILLE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)



Operating from two front rooms in the well-cared for art-deco Hall is the busy **Somerville-Tyabb and District Heritage Society** with some fifty members. One room is utilised as a gallery where members mount occasional exhibitions, centred around district themes which include fruit growing. Local historian **Evelyn Sage** advises that the Hall was passed over to Council about 1970 and is today managed by the Mornington Peninsula Council. The building once housed a busy library which included a section on fruit growing and this was manned by volunteers of which Evelyn was one. That too was passed to Council in the 1970s which now operate the community library almost opposite the Hall. The only memento remaining from the Library is the book stamp.

The Hall has seen the life of a vibrant rural community: War time farewells and welcome homes; rounds of fundraising; football and cricketers' balls, theatrical productions; flower and horticultural shows; as well as weddings and wakes. The Hall is still busy with dancing classes held five nights a week and Church services on the weekends. The Hall was subject to a massive refurbishment around 2005 and still retains its distinctive painted stage backwall scene painted by the late **Norma Fear**.

SORRENTO MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. c.1874)

The **Nepean Historical Society** at their Sorrento Museum have housed a mysterious bird-like figurehead from a ship since 1973. Previous to that it had spent one hundred and twenty years in the backyard of a Rosebud cottage.

Efforts have been made over the years to establish its source by Museum collection coordinator **Joy Kitch**. Recently Joy wrote it up in their newsletter and it resulted in a call from a Geelong resident **Bob McKenzie**.

Bob was researching the *Sea*, a vessel of 841 tons under the command of Captain James McKay, which brought his great-great-grandparents to Melbourne in 1853. After unloading its passengers the *Sea* left Hobsons Bay on 24 May bound for Callao, Peru, but sheltered in Swan Bay during a prevailing storm.

On the evening 31 May she weighed anchor and set sail. 'It was blowing half a gale from the south-west and a tremendous sea was running.' On the way towards the Heads the ship struck Point Nepean Reef, and whilst some of the crew reached shore, others remained on board and the ship was smashed on the reef overnight, drowning the remaining crew. Bob found that the ship's figurehead was in the form of a bird, so further investigations are being made.

ST LEONARDS MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1926)

This was built by Returned Soldiers in 1926. It was refurbished with a \$63,000 grant, but to cost \$98,000 in November 2012. The Hall is also the site for Food Swap meets.

STANLEY ATHENAEUM & PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1863)

Things have been busy at Stanley with further restoration works including electrical wiring, plumbing and the building of storage cupboards. Then there has been the building of three archive storage cupboards for Land care, Cemetery Trust and Hall and Athenaeum records. On 1 July they opened their most recent exhibition '**150th anniversary of Stanley Athenaeum: A Community Strengthened through the Local Athenaeum**'. The exhibition is open monthly on the 2nd Wednesday and 4th Saturday of each month between 10am-12pm until the end of December, or by appointment. Tel: Chris on (03) 5728 6594.

We were also very happy to hear that from 12 September 2013, the Stanley Athenaeum will again be running an active lending library service out of their building. The mobile library to Stanley ceased in March last year, and since that time, residents have had to travel out of town to have access to a lending collection. A representative from the Indigo Shire Libraries will be dropping into the Athenaeum fortnightly on Thursdays from 3.30pm-4.30pm to drop off and collect books, as well as have a computer available for residents to reserve books, magazines and DVDs for their next visit, and a book display of new additions to the lending collection. This is an excellent idea for smaller communities which have lost their mobile libraries. Try contacting your local library service and see if they have this program set up, and if so, find out how your Institute can be a part of it!

STUART MILL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1876)

That inveterate Mechanics' hunter **George Swinburne** has this time been tracking down memorabilia and the history of the **Stuart Mill Mechanics' Institute** which had a library. It appears to have been built in the early 1880s and local storekeeper **George Coles** was Secretary for a time. The Institute was demolished in 1981 to make way for the new Memorial Hall.

TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

Tallarook still continues in its community and cultural role. Their entry on **Regional Arts Victoria's Cyberpaddock** is a proactive example. *We are a small country hall that aims to bring art 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 a supper room with kitchen. We have disabled access, three phase power, honky-tonk piano.*

In the meantime Tallarook's Farmers' Market held on the first Sunday of each month (except January) gathers apace, heralded by the Market Cryer. Website: tallarook.org.au

TATURA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & VICTORY HALL (Est. 1879)

The **Victory Hall** has received a great boost to user comfort with the installation of airconditioning and heating. The installation was entirely funded from the proceeds of the **Blue Light Discos** held regularly in the Hall since 2002. So in addition to paying rent for the Hall the young patrons have also contributed significantly to the Hall's amenity. Well done to all concerned.

TELANGATUK EAST MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1884)

New tennis courts along side the Telangatuk East Mechanics' Hall. Photo: Robyn Blake.

Telangatuk East had its start in 1884 with an 'in-aid' fundraising picnic. In 1885 the first Hall was erected in the 'corner of John Hunter's paddock'. It was

replaced in 1891, with an addition in 1896. It in turn was replaced in 1927, again with additions of a store room in 1933 and supper room in 1953. Electricity was connected in 1966. The Hall was transferred to the Shire of Kowree in 1987. In 2008 the Hall was painted and a new kitchen added. Tennis has always been 'big' at Telangatuk East and very recently three new tennis courts have been constructed adjacent to the Hall. These state of the art courts, replaced those laid down in 1936, and have the potential to bring people to the Hall for tennis clinics and social games.

TRENTHAM MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1879)

The Trentham CWA (est. 1932) meets in the Mechanics' Hall on the 1st Monday of each month. Trentham Easter Art and Craft Show is now an annual fixture at the Institute, so chalk that in to your calendars.

TOOBORAC MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1889)

Tooborac have found a truly unique niche with their annual **Rabbit Ramble** which is coming up on 20 October. It celebrates the bunny from paddock (must be free range) to plate and attracts cooks from across the State to plate up the pesky varmint. It's a fun day but a serious fundraiser for the Institute and the community. If you are a home cook or professional there's a category for you. Website: tooboracrabbitramble.com.au.

YARRAGON PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1879)

This Hall started out life as the **Waterloo Mechanics' Institute** in 1879. It was replaced in 1906 on a new site, the present Campbell Street site in 1906, which was in turn replaced in 1933. A library was one of its strengths. Since then it has served the community well. Art is well served with workshops, classes and an annual exhibition. Recently it conducted a booksale which resulted in some \$15,000 being distributed between the Yarragon, Darnum and Ellinbank Fire Brigades.

The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes

NEW SOUTH WALES

EAST KURRAJONG SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1903)



Located on the fringe of the Blue Mountains, **East Kurrajong School of Arts** has reflected the dedication and vibrancy of its community since it was first mooted. In 1903 a freehold site 'was dedicated on the 4th July 1903, for the purpose of which the building was being erected'. Funds were then progressively raised 'in small amounts' until 1922 when £140 was in hand and it was decided to build. The foundation stone was laid on 3 November 1923 by **Mrs Richard William (Jane Sophia) Buttsworth** (1857-1936).

The Hall was opened on Anniversary Day (Australia Day) 1924 with another Sports Meeting and a take of £93, which meant the Hall was debt-free. Things then moved fast, a stage was added and a piano was purchased in 1925 and a supper room added in 1926.

Annual sports meetings, periodic concerts and regular dances continued to be feature of community life. In more recent times the Hall has become the home of the East Kurrajong Playtime Group.

The adjacent Stanley Park which was the long-time cricket ground has been pressed into use for extra activities which include a stopover for an annual bike ride.



Their Annual Christmas Barbecue brings the community together as do the periodic **Trash and Treasure Days**. Classes in jewellery making and mosaics started in 2012 and obviously led to the recent highly successful **Hobby Show** which has resulted in the scheduling of the next for 7-8 June

2014. This entrepreneurial activity has led to the planning of an **Annual Gum Boot Scootin Honky Tonk Country Hoedown and Mini Ute Muster** on 31 August.

Recent works have included the reflooring of the supper room with cypress and sealing it with polyurethane, and finishing a concrete path around the Hall and some interior painting.

When we visited, the Hall had a leaflet holder in the entrance alcove with an informative trifold promotional leaflet. The 'For Hire' sign was conspicuously displayed on a pole outside the hall and the library was promoted on a poster on the front door Notice Board which also promoted Open Days on the first Tuesday of each month. Then there are the 'Exercises with Linda' every Tuesday night. The library is now receiving regular support with a dozen or so turning up to exchange books. A 'Hawkesbury History,' section has recently been added and some out of print books have been donated.

Long-time Hall stalwarts **Robyn Daines** and **Lindsay Brown** have in recent times been joined by new residents **Ann Garrick** and her husband. (Ann was introduced to the area by her father who was stationed with the RAAF at Richmond in the 1990s.) The organisational work load is now shared by a Committee of seventeen and the recent admission of social members has brought another thirty on board. Website: eastkurrajonghall.com.

MARSHALL MOUNT HALL (Est. 1953)



60 years of dance at Marshall Mount Hall.

Photo: Illawarra Mercury

South of Wollongong, old time dancing has been a feature of life at **Marshall Mount Hall** for the past sixty years. Every fortnight the locals and some 'out of towners' gather together for the Saturday night dance.

The original band the **Marshall Mount Merry Makers**, formed in 1953, played albeit with musician replacements including Kevin, the son of the band's founder **Arthur Bowley** who died in 2006, shortly after retiring. The Merry Makers' final lineup was: **Robert Brown** (accordion), **Kevin Bowley** (banjo)

and **Bev Brownlee** (drums), until their 'retirement' in 2009.

The fortnightly dance took over from socials that were held in the other main building in the district, Marshall Mount House since 1934, where **George** and **Elizabeth McDonald** were the hosts.

Today's Saturday night dances start at 8pm and finish at midnight, interrupted by a supper. Pre-empting supper the more energetic macarina, the nutbush, drops of brandy, and chicken dance come into play. Supper still has the same home cooking.

The current band is **Step n' Out** and their line-up includes **David Huntsman** (keyboard), **Keith Murphy** (vocal), **Gordon Robinson** (drums), **Paul Drewry** (bass guitar).

The admission charges are: adults, \$10; children 5-16, \$2.00; and, under 5 free. Two very strict rules have prevailed since George McDonald, a staunch Methodist, held sway – no alcohol, although there have been a few known to leave the hall 'to top up the radiator' and no smoking. Fortunately recordings of Arthur Bowley's style and compositions were taken for the Australian Film and Sound Archive and are now available for sale on CD.

Arthur Bowley's role was captured in the chorus of a song 'Saturday Night at Marshall Mount' by Neil McCann.

'Saturday night at Marshall Mount, The Merry Makers play

*Whipping up a storm with Old Time dancing
Arthur Bowley calls the tune, some couples lead the way*

Dancing through the evening to the tune of Wendy Anne.'

The Hall was built on a half acre site gifted by Hughie Stevenson (Marshall Mount Progress Association, President), the Chitticks donated a cow ... and soon the required £627 was in hand to finance the construction.

The Hall opened with a social evening, with dancing, on 8 May 1953. The Marshall Mount Country Women's Association was formed in the Hall in 1963 and still meet there monthly. The Marshall Mount Young Farmers' Club also met there during the 1950s-70s.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Hall, a booklet was issued, and the author noted 'The pattern of life is apt to change, but it is sincerely hoped that the melodies of the old time dance will not fade away into the night, but linger on through years to come.'

That was written forty years ago and just recently they celebrated sixty years of dance at Marshall Mount Hall and ABC Television did a feature. So the melody lingers on and we hope it continues to do so for another forty years!

Remaining dance dates for the year are: 14, 28 September; 12, 26 October; 9, 23 November; and 7, 21, 31 (New Year's Eve) December.

For the record those dances for which dance signs are held include: Barn Dance; Boston 2-Step, Canadian

3-Step, Drops of Brandy, Eva 3-Step, Evening 3 Step, Festival Glide, Festival Jive, Gay Gordons, Gypsy Tap, Jazz Waltz, La Bomba, Maxina, Merrilyn, Oxford Waltz, Pride of Erin, Quick Step, St Bernard's Waltz, Swing Waltz and Valetta Waltz

The Hall is managed by the Marshall Mount Progress Association. Further info: Kevin Blissett (02) 4256 2026.

SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1833)



Debating is soon to be on the agenda at the SMSA. But before that will be eagerly awaited launch of the first book-length history of the SMSA authored by social historian **Garry Wotherspoon**. Garry was commissioned by the Board of SMSA in 2012 to undertake the project. It has been a real epic with most of the research was done by Garry, but it also draws on earlier research done by amongst others **Dr Roger Morris AM**, **Mark Dunn** and **Catherine Freyne**. The book will be launched at NSW Government House in late September, with SMSA Patron, the Governor of New South Wales, **Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO** and her husband **Sir Nicholas Shehadie AC OBE** present. This will be a red letter day in the 180 year history of SMSA and we wish them well for their big event.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TEROWIE INSTITUTE (Est. 1879)

An Aboriginal term which means hidden waterhole, Terowie now boasts a population of around 150. The town has the distinction of being the registered address of itinerant **Bob the Railway Dog** (1878-95) who travelled the railways but always managed to return to Terowie and his guardian **William Ferry**.

Bob carried a collar with a brass plate 'Stop me not, but let me jog, For I am Bob, the drivers dog.'

Any connection with Bob and **General Douglas MacArthur's** World War II speech on the Terowie railway station platform saying that 'He would return' is purely coincidental! Terowie has its 'Bob the Railway Dog Trail' and the Institute was a regular leg stretching point for Bob!

UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL VILLAGE HALLS FORUM (Est. 1983)



This group was formed in 1983 and addresses issues of management including legal and operation of some 9000 community halls throughout England. Their membership includes Village Hall Associations and County Councils. We will be doing a detailed item on their activities in a future edition. In the meantime check out their website: nvhf.org.uk.

ENGLAND

BATH ROYAL LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION (Est. 1824)

Bath Celebrates Twenty Years of Renaissance

It's been twenty years since the keys of the Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution (BRLSI) building were passed to then newly formed management group. Since then, it has been quite a ride to return the badly run down Queen's Square building to its present glory. The celebration on 10 May paid tribute to those who played key roles in the initial move and those who have continued to carry the baton.

Gathered in the Jenyns Room, named for the **Rev. Leonard Jenyns** (1800-93), Anglican vicar, naturalist, historian and supporter and benefactor of the BRLSI, were Members and invited guests who included the 785th Mayor of Bath **Cr Andy Furse** and Chair of the Bath and North East Somerset Council, **Cr Rob Appleyard**.

The Reception was followed by an address from an original 1993 and current Bath RLSI Trustee **Michael**

Below: Celebrations underway at the BRLSI. Photo: BRLSI; right: BRLSI building in Queen's Square, Bath. Photo: Wikimedia commons



L-R: Dr Steve Wharton (BRLSI Chair of Directors), Michael King, Cr Rob Appleyard (Chair, B&NES Council), Betty Suchar (BRLSI Chair of Management). Photo: BRLSI

King titled 'The Fight for BRLSI'. He recalled the struggle to reclaim the BRLSI buildings and collections from the Avon City Council and the refurbishment of the very down-at-heel building. He singled out names for special mention **John Coates, Karl Jaeger, David Dunlop, Chris Patten** (now Chair of the BBC Trust), **Victor Suchar, Clive Abbott, Bob Whittaker** and **Bob Draper**. (Bob attended **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004 - Melbourne**, was awarded an MBE for services to the Institution, conferred with a rare PhD from Samuel Smiles' University of Self Help, and is still BRLSI's House Manager.)



The **BRLSI at 20 Exhibition** showcased the people and happenings over the past twenty years, not to forget **Mechanics' Worldwide 2009** of which



Bath was the memorable host. Those that attended **MW 2009 – Self Help** could not have been more impressed with what they saw and experienced.

Bath like many other Institutes worldwide from: Brechin and Westerkirk in Scotland; Cwmamman, Llanhilleth and Newbridge in Wales; Whitby, St Agnes, Bishopsgate and Armit in England; Boston, LaJolla, St Johnsbury and more recently Newhaven in the US; Bangkok's Neilson Hays, Thailand; and the Akoroa Coronation Library in New Zealand, have risen again phoenix-like in their various communities in the past two decades.

Bath's twentieth anniversary gathering brought together the key players that had made it happen and they provided valuable reminiscences of their personal experience. There was some deserved back-patting on where they had come from. However there has also been much thought over the past twenty years as to 'Where are we going'. Clearly they have aggregated the scientific and academic community around the BRLSI, in all over twenty individual groups. From personal experience it's a most welcoming place and we trust that this will continue to make the BRLSI a haven for science, debate and investigation well into the future. Indeed England's first scientist **Adelard of Bath** (c1080-c1160), the subject of a forthcoming BRLSI book, would be justly proud of their achievements.

Happy Birthday BRLSI. And to quote their poet laureate **Simon Tyler** 'We've celebrated Institutes/ For working men and poor/Long may they last for years to come/And make us yearn for more.' Website: brlsi.org.

SCOTLAND

BRECHIN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1837)



Located in Angus, Scotland, the **Brechin Mechanics' Institute** has undergone a renaissance in recent years with a significant restoration program largely funded by the Heritage Lottery

Fund. Works outside the building are now complete and have now started inside and will continue through 2013.

Brechin has embarked on an aggressive arts program with a regional arts focus. Recent events have featured the **Budapest Orchestra**, **Tayside Opera**, **Christmas Fayre** and a **Victoria and Albert Museum** promotion.

On 3 May they launched their now annual Art@The Mechanics' with a range of pictures in various mediums

and a collection of work from local textile artists. There was also a representation from students from the Brechin High School. That said the building still has its regular users namely kickboxing, pilates, the Bridge Club and seniors. Website: brechinmechanicsinstitute.org. (Photo: Brechin Mechanics' Institute website)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EAST PRINCETON MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1843)



Photo: Friends of the East Princeton Mechanics Hall website

Located in the State of Massachusetts, the **East Princeton Mechanics' Hall** started out as a schoolhouse and was built in 1852. It replaced an earlier schoolhouse that had been built in 1843, hence the 1843 which appears on the front of the present building. The current two-storey building cost \$600 and had classrooms on the ground floor and an auditorium on the first floor. A school operated from the building until 1945. It was also used for community meetings such as those of the **Princeton Farmers' Club**, which by 1882 had become the **Princeton Farmers and Mechanics Association** and conducted meetings and lectures there.

The ladies of the district formed the **East Princeton Village Improvement Society** in the 1890s and held suppers and dances to raise funds for local amenities. These included street lights and a band stand. The Improvement Society continued until the 1980s, holding its regular children's parties.

When the school closed in 1945, it continued as a public venue, housing the library and providing a home for the **American Legion Post 334**. It is still the venue for the **Friends of the Princeton Public Library** book sales.

The building is now managed and championed by the **Friends of Mechanics Hall** who hold regular fundraising events and conduct working bees in and around the building.

In 2004 The Mechanics' was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the East Princeton Historical District. Website: mechanicshall.net.

KIRKBY MALZEARD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (EST. 1848)

A chance sighting of an Institute building on the British television program **Escape to the Country** lead to a rewind and freeze on the building's signage. Subsequent contact with the Institute's Hon. Treasurer **Mrs Joan Fraser** has revealed an interesting story.

Kirkby Malzeard is located in the 'Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' in the lower Yorkshire Dales. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Chirchebi 'church village', with the Norman word Malzeard 'bad clearing' being a 12th century add on. In 1307, Edward I granted a Charter to John de Mowbray, to hold two fairs annually and a weekly market and these ran through into the early 1900s.

The town has a population of around 800 and serves the surrounding farming communities of Laverton and Dallowgill. In recent times it has become the home for a branch of **Wensleydale Creamery** which produces cheese and employs fifty local staff.

The Institute was first mooted in the early 1840s and was finally established on 17 February 1848. The two-storey stone building was erected largely by volunteer labour and working bees to cart the required stone from the local quarry. It opened in 1852, with a hall, reading room and library. (Mrs Fraser advises 'We do still have some old books in the front Reading Room, but nothing of great value, and the days of there being a library are long gone.') A billiard room was added to the rear in 1896.

In 1936 a large hall with a stage was built to the rear and the front section of the building was reduced to a single storey. The Institute was particularly busy during World War II with various fundraising activities for the War effort and for packing soldiers' parcels.

Commencing in January 2005 the Hall underwent a complete 'makeover' to upgrade the 1930s facilities. The first phase comprised a complete refit of the Ladies Toilet area and the second phase was to upgrade and enlarge the kitchen.

The third phase was the building of a new annexe to house Men's Toilets and a new meeting room fitted



out for computer based courses and training. The Institute remained open for the duration of the works which were completed in 2006.

The Hall's staging facilities have been upgraded with new lighting, sound and a retractable screen, along with a hearing loop facility. This makes the Hall eminently suitable for the staging of single artists or small travelling companies or film.

The Hall provides a room for visiting health professionals and hosts the Mobile Post Office Outreach Service for an hour or so during week days.

It is also interesting to see how the Kirkby Malzeard Institute's corporate structure has changed: achieved Charity Status in 1997; update of Constitution in 2000; property assets were transferred to the Official Custodian of Charities in 2001; and in 2002 the Institute became VAT registered in anticipation of future projected works.

Today the Institute has over one hundred members, although all-comers are welcomed. The Hall is well-used for community groups, including the local Women's Institute, which has met there on the first Wednesday of each month since it was formed in 1929.

Interestingly the **Kirkby Malzeard Women's Institute**, which was formed from a meeting on 13 November 1929, established a link with the **Tumby Bay (SA) Country Women's Association** Branch in 1934 (The Tumby Bay CWA started in August 1933). That association continued until 2000.

Mrs Fraser noted that during World War II and for a period thereafter the Tumby Bay CWA ladies sent food, which comprised mostly dried fruit, and comforts parcels to the citizens of Kirkby Malzeard. These were packed in the old Tumby Bay Institute, established in 1905, and Mrs Fraser added 'they were very much appreciated'. May was the annual 'Link Month' and the Australian 'Song of Peace' would be sung.

Website (and photos): kirkbymalzeard.org.uk

On friendship: Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.

OPRAH WINFREY (1954-)

IN SEARCH OF ALF WESSON



Photo courtesy of Wesson Family

You will have previously read of our search for MIV teacher and historian **John Stuart Egan** who was researching Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes in the 1950s and 1960s. It is now clear that John Egan was in touch with a contemporary teacher and successor Mechanics' Institute historian **Alfred Wesson** who was to assemble the **Wesson Collection** of some three hundred photos of Institutes.

But who was Alf Wesson? My search started with a fruitless ring-around of the Melbourne phone book. The hunt then moved onto **Trove** that invaluable tool of our iconic **National Library of Australia**. An *Argus* 1949 engagement notice flagged Alf's future wife's maiden name and her native town in country Victoria. A check on white pages and bingo 'Yes, Gwenn was my aunt!' and so the story unfolded.

Alfred Wesson was born in 1925 into a Methodist family at Watford, Hertfordshire, England, the son of a dairyman. Alf took advantage of an old educational trust to gain an eleven plus scholarship to Watford Grammar School, where he excelled in Greek and the violin. War interrupted a career in insurance and he enlisted in the Royal Navy and became a ship's radio operator travelling the world. At the end of the War he contracted dysentery and was put ashore at Colombo. There he facilitated the repatriation of British servicemen.

Discharged at Ceylon from the service in 1947, he went to Perth where he became a Methodist lay preacher and was posted to Denmark in country Western Australia. After a year he went to **Queen's College, University of Melbourne** where he took firstly a BA and DipEd then an MA and BEd and finally an MEd. After a stint of teaching, he went to work with **Frank Eyre** at **Oxford University Press** from 1954-62 developing a children's list. From there he then joined the **Council of Adult Education** as Head of Creative Arts, with the added role of Manager of Touring Companies. From then until 1971 he

travelled extensively promoting CAE Book, Music and Art Clubs, and activities. CAE Director, **Colin Badger**, regarded Alf as his very able 'wingman'.

Alf married **Gwenneth Simms** in 1950 and they had five children, two sons and three daughters, all of whom initially attended Preshil School, Kew. Growing up his children recall walking across paddocks and driving up back roads looking for a pile of rocks or a remnant chimney where an Institute once stood. Occasionally they found a derelict building.

On Colin Badger's death in 1971, Alf was overlooked as his successor and he left CAE and joined the **Preston Institute of Technology** from where he retired in 1975. He then visited Europe with Gwenn and spent some time touring ancient sites in Greece.

He divorced Gwenn about 1982 and married South African-born **Rosina LaGrange** and they went to live in Cape Town, South Africa. In 1995 Alf decided to pack up and return to Australia and it was while he was arranging his visa at the Australian Embassy in Capetown that he had a heart attack and died. His ashes were returned to Australia and Rosina returned also, and died in Melbourne in 1999.

Some people remember Alf as a very quiet and unassuming man. However to his real friends his sparkling wit, erudite knowledge, outstanding organisational skills, combined with his sartorial elegance in skivvies and khaftans, found him great and inspiring company. Alf's MEd thesis '**Formal Adult Education in Victoria 1890-1950**' is in the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne. His article '**Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria**' was in the *Victorian Historical Magazine*, v42, n3, Aug 1971.



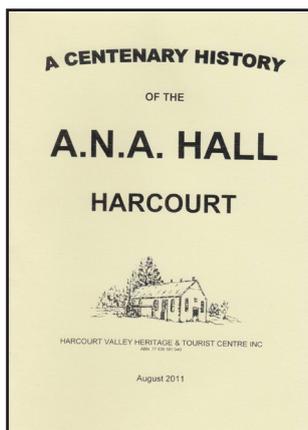
One of the many unidentified photographs of Mechanics' Institutes. Photo: Alf Wesson.

MIV still has a number of Wesson's photos which have not been identified. Search Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria on flickr and see if you can recognise any of the photos uploaded.

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.

A Centenary History of the ANA Hall Harcourt.



George Milford. Harcourt Valley Heritage & Tourist Centre Inc., 2011. Paperback, saddlestitched. 12p, illus. 150mmx210mm.

This slim volume tells the story of one of several ANA (Australian Natives Association) Halls that were established around Victoria in the 1890s and early 1900s. The ANA was started in Melbourne in 1871 as a Benefit

Society and fraternal for Australian born men. The ANA became an active advocate for Federation and campaigned vigorously through its branch network. After the Kyneton State ANA -Meeting in 1893 Central Victoria became a stronghold for the Federation Movement. Harcourt Branch No. 240 was formed in 1908, fundraising took place, land was purchased from Mrs Ellen Roberts, and Mr Sutherland of Barkers Creek, a concrete bridge builder, constructed the walls of concrete. New additions and floor replacements have taken place over the years.

It was purchased by the Shire of Metcalfe in 1969. It had prolonged use by the Country Women's Association and Young Farmers' Club and was a venue for the Shell Oil Company film screenings. Today Harcourt's ANA Hall is the district's Tourist Information Centre, meeting place and Museum which features Harcourt's assets - its orchards and granite quarries. This is a well written account of the Hall's centenary of community service and a unique and integral part of the State's built history. Available from: Harcourt Valley Heritage & Tourist Centre Inc., 7 High Street, Harcourt, V 3453. \$7.00 Posted.

History of the Katandra and District Memorial Hall 1924-94. Katandra and District History Group Inc. Katandra: Author, 2012. Paperback, sidestitched. 22p, coloured and b&w illus, plans. 215mmx300mm.

This history is a compilation of Minutes, newspaperclips and Government-sourced documents, interspersed with pictures and memories of district residents. It compiles the story of how a post-World War I community committed to commemorate its

servicemen and women. In 1923 the choice of location was determined by a geographically central location plotted on a map and the site was then apparently donated by the site owner, Michael Dwyer. It served the community well until opposition from the newer Hall at Katandra West and onerous maintenance requirements saw the Hall demolished in 1994. The final paragraph leaves all of us with something to ponder.

Travelling stranger shed a tear.

For the hopes of many men lie here.

A land for heroes they sought to build.

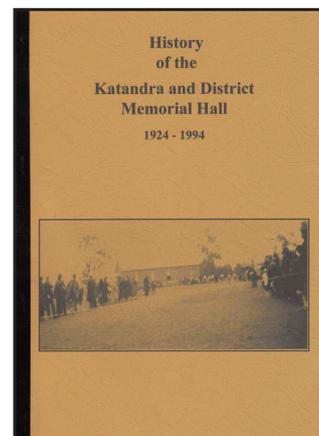
Have we their legacy fulfilled.

Whilst a slim volume this book is a good model of what to compile and how to compile it. Available from: Katandra and District History Group Inc., Post Office, Katandra West, V 3634. \$7.20 posted.

Wallan Public Hall: A Stroll Down Memory Lane, 7 April 2013. Wallan Public Hall Committee of Management, 2013. DVD.

This is a fascinating record of a redletter day for Wallan. Wallan achieved much and more with their 'Stroll' assembling the community together and the history of their Institute and their building. The day had a good balance – friendship, 'field notes (signage, hall timeline, mementos, exhibits, and reminiscences), and food. Every Institute should schedule such an event to garner its history and get new people through the door and this is a good model for such an occasion. Your Memory Day doesn't have to celebrate a particular milestone but planned well ahead it will be a major event in the history of your Hall. The Wallan Hall is a central feature of the town being at the centre of an historic World War I Avenue of Honour with the district War Memorial cenotaph being at the front. Well done to all concerned at Wallan, *Memory Lane* and your Hall are a credit to you and your community.

Available from Wallan Hall Committee of Management, 29 Raglan Street, Wallan, V 3756, or phone (Julie) on (03) 5783 1417. \$6.20 Posted



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.

WHAT'S IN A BOOK



Found recently in a bric-a-brac shop in Meeniyan was a book which carried the **Whittlesea Free Library** stamp.

The book was Sir Walter Scott's **Kenilworth** in *The Illustrated Waverley Novels* series of Marcus Ward & Co. of Belfast. Ward was a very large stationery and coloured greeting card manufacturer with offices in London and New York. The firm was started by Andrew's father John

The 426 page book carries no publishing date, but is around 1878. It is bound in olive green cloth, and is gold blocked with blind embossing. It is stamped throughout with the library stamp. On the inside cover is No. 112 struck through and replaced with 462.

This could be explained by **Bill Payne** in *The Plenty* with 'The cupboard of books constituting the old library [in Christ Church, Whittlesea?] was moved to its new location.' The Whittlesea Mechanics' Institute opened in 1884 and 'soon had 470 volumes in the library'. So we can say it dates from the 1880s. The Whittlesea Mechanics' Library continued into the 1970s and this is an interesting remnant.

BASS (VALLEY) MECHANICS' INSTITUTE STAMP



The publication of a copy of the **Bass Mechanics' Institute Circulating Library and Queen Victoria Hall Museum, FB[?]. Ex.** stamp in UK31

drew the following response from **Bass Valley Community Group Inc.**'s Centre Manager **Julie Coleman**.

I was really excited to receive your letter and copy of your magazine with the 'stamp' of the Queen Victoria Hall.

I can confirm the Bass Memorial Hall is in fact the Hall of our Community Centre.

The Hall was originally located near the Anglican Church in Hade Avenue, Bass. Not sure of the year but it was relocated to the Bass Road, opposite the Catholic Church, where sat for many years. The Hall was in regular use up until the late 1970s.

The Woolamai State School No. 847, located on the other side of the Bass River, was established in 1866 and was renamed Bass State School in 1915. A new School

was built at Corinella in 1978 and the Bass State School closed. The buildings remained on-site but were not being used.

In 1980 the founder of the Bass Craft Group Mrs Clare Le Sevre approached the Education Department to use the buildings for the Craft Group. The Education Department gifted the buildings to the Group and in 1981 the Bass Valley Community Group was established. Mrs Clare Le Sevre was on the Committee of Management until 2012, and is now the Mayor of Bass Coast Shire.

Clare and the local publican [the late Campbell Logan] decided over a few drinks one night, that it would be a good idea to move the Hall from its location opposite the Catholic Church to the Bass Community Centre, as the hall was not being used and was falling into disrepair. With the support of the local Council and a lot of volunteers, the Hall was lifted from its stumps, loaded onto a truck and moved to its current location, which is here at the Community Centre.

Unfortunately none of the [Flinders and Bass] exhibition you mentioned remains, neither do any of the books that may have been kept on the premises. However we still do have the original picture of Queen Elizabeth that was hanging in the Hall at the time.

The Hall is currently used for a number of activities and is maintained by the Bass Valley Community Group Inc. Currently all the buildings including the Hall have Heritage overlays, and have been kept in their original condition.

Many many thanks Julie. We are sure those old pioneers would have endorsed your erstwhile Mayor's action 'over a few drinks' inaugurating the move to shift the Hall. It is good to know that it is still carrying on largely in its original purpose. This is the stuff of history and Good Luck to all at the Bass Valley Community Centre, you have a great inheritance!

PROGRESS REPORT OF REVISED EDITION

If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria

In 2000 Pam Baragwanath published *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria*. It provided a short building and social history of about 400 Mechanics' Institutes. The first edition has been out of print since 2003 but the book is still in demand as a reference. Pam Baragwanath and Ken James as co-authors are revising and expanding the book. Pam is revising/updating the entries that appeared in the first edition while Ken has been writing up accounts of close to another 400 Mechanics' Institutes which were not included in the first edition. New information is always welcome.

Pam Baragwanath and Ken James

Community Page

RECIPE

The story of a ute, with a giant pot on the back labelled 'UK Casserole', being backed into a Hall may have some credibility if people followed our last recipe with 450kg of carrots. Equally if a town's population has grown very large rabbit-like ears. We hope you picked up the typo and enjoyed last issue's recipe. In keeping with using Australian grown produce: we give you...

BAKED PEARS

You will need

6 firm Pears
60g brown sugar
100g butter, melted
Generous pinch of cinnamon
200mls cream/ or 6 scoops of icecream

Method

Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a shallow ovenproof dish with non-stock baking paper
Peel, quarter and core the pears. Combine the brown sugar, butter and cinnamon in a large mixing bowl. Add the pears and coat well with mixture.
Place the coated pears on a lined dish and ladle over any of the remaining liquid. Roast in preheated oven for 25 minutes and golden brown, baste occasionally
In the meantime, whisk the cream until fluffy
Divide the hot pears into individual servings, top with any remaining syrup, and add a generous dollop of cream, or icecream will do.
Enjoy!

SPUDS AND STUNNERS

Once there was a Young Farmers' Club in almost every town, but alas no more. The recently formed **Dean Newlyn Young Farmers** are 'bucking' that trend. **Dean Hall and Mechanics' Institute** hosted the third annual **Spuds N' Stunners Bucking Bull Night** where they challenged allcomers to take on the mechanical bull on 6 April. The event ran from 6.30pm-11.59pm and featured a barbecue, DJ, lucky door prize and free camping. Put the event in your diary for next year.

BLUELIGHT DISCO TATURA

Tatura is one of twenty Institute sites that operate a Friday night disco for the 9-16 year olds. This has now been running since 2002 and attracts about 150 patrons each dance. The long term positive benefit and involvement of such 'community' policing can now be seen in the wider community.

KYNETON CONCERT & ART SHOW

The most recent Friends of Kyneton Mechanics' Institute Community Concert featured a young **Elsie**

Lowry solo on piano. It also featured artwork of students of Kyneton Primary School and Our Lady of Rosary School. In all, excellent youth involvement.

SUMMER HOLIDAY FUN

As summer holidays have just passed by in USA and the UK, over the past few months, Institutes across the northern hemisphere have been coming up with creative ideas to keep kids occupied over the holidays. Activities range from sleepovers in the libraries, story times, craft days, book making workshops, kitemaking and flying, treasure hunting and tours, film screenings and science experiments. Do any of these ideas interest your Institute for this summer's school holidays? Some Institutes have been booking a day with a circus school or outdoor activity group and have offered day-long activities at discounted rates to the children of members.

SPOT THE 'BAKER'S DOZEN' REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE No. 32

1. What is the name now applied to the former Carlton Mechanics' Institute?
2. Where is the Kardella South Hall presently located?
3. Near which Institute was Mechanics' Place recently created?
4. What dance specialisation is taught at Mt Egerton?
5. Where is **Home is Where the Hall Is!** month being launched in 2013?
6. When did Blue Light Discos start in Victoria?
7. What was the nickname given to Dr James Beaney?
8. Who started La Mama Theatre Restaurant in Carlton in 1967?
9. Where did the Association of Independent Libraries hold their 2013 AGM?
10. Which Institute's name is synonymous with a famous wine?
11. What is the Featured Institute in this issue?
12. What does the Norman word 'Malzeard' mean?
13. Where is the Barry Jagers' stage curtain for sale with a Hall and a Antiques business?

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

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

1. Maldon Athenaeum; 2. 1833; 3. Several; 4. Bessie Belle; 5. Gordon, Hawkesdale, Lancefield and Powelltown; 6. Mumbai, India; 7. St Agnes Miners' Mechanics' Institute, Cornwall, UK; 8. Akaroa and Kaiapoi (Kaiapoi was demolished in 1995.); 9. South Australia; 10. Associations Incorporation Reform Act; 11. Murphys Creek Hall, Queensland; 12. Dr Julann Meabank; 13. In the USA in Washington DC.

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'.

We note the retirement of our Hon. Treasurer **Graham Hughes** after being six years in the role. Graham has shepherded our meagre funds to gain the best possible interest and has fulfilled the Treasurer's role with distinction. We can only say many many thanks Graham and we do greatly appreciate your sterling work over the years. Graham continues on the Committee of Berwick Mechanics' Institute where he has held various positions since 1981.



We welcome **Judy Owen** as our new Hon. Treasurer. Judy and her husband **Russell** are long-time Committee members of the Narre Warren Mechanics' Hall. Judy is also a City of Casey-Cardinia Councillor and a Justice of the Peace. (Photo: City of Casey website)



Warrandyte Mechanics' long-serving 'Mr Fix-it' or 'Paint-it' **Ken Virtue** is stepping down from the Presidency of the Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association after twenty-one years. Ken took over from **Doug Macrae** in 1992 and has overseen the

transformation of a very much 'down-at-heel' building to a well resourced performing and creative arts complex. And well-painted with **Dulux Heritage Weathershield Gloss** colours. It hasn't been easy with a hand to mouth existence largely funded through drama performances. However the recent stage replacement, and foyer and toilet makeover brings the major works to a conclusion. Ken has purchased a place at Airey's Inlet to spend some of his spare time, but will remain on the Committee and no doubt will be available for dramatic parts other than as President. Ken is succeeded by long-time Vice-President **Jack Stringer**. Well done to all the Wmiaans you are an inspiration to us all. (Photo: The Artful Dodger)

Sharing the speaker platform at the recent Eastern Suburbs Historical Societies Conference Group was Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Fellow **Pam Baragwanath**. The Conference was attended

by some eighty-five delegates from twenty-five Historical Societies. It was held on Saturday, 29 June at the **Karralyka Centre** at Ringwood which allowed Societies to have their 'trading' tables. The day was organised by MIV Member **Russ Haines** who took a novel lunchtime walk to several Ringwood historic sites at which he exhibited a series of 'Then' photos.

We note the election of first woman President in the **Bradford Mechanics' Institute's** 181 year history, succeeding long-time President **Alan Verity**. In June 2013 **Tricia Restorick** noted 'I am following on from some famous names as far as Bradford is concerned, people who have streets named after them these days. So that is pretty overwhelming'. Tricia, who is a retired teacher from Guiseley High School, noted that Bradford Mechanics' Institute, established in 1832, still remained true to its original ideals. 'Today's members may not be aspiring young apprentices or up-and-coming clerks from a Victorian wool merchants' office, but they are equally enthusiastic to pursue their interests and their hobbies through borrowing books, organising and supporting the many interest groups and enjoying the bi-annual social occasions'. She added 'My role will be to draw on both these things – the experiences of some people and the energy of the new ones. I am excited.' In addition to the use of an extensive library, members can join any of the special interest groups, participate in the regular social events or share the regular newsletter. They also have use of the fully refurbished floor of its building made into meeting, display and exhibitions spaces and a fully-equipped kitchen. Tricia in affirmation noted 'It may be a surprise to some older Bradfordians to know the Mechanics' is still in existence – **but it is!** It is interesting to note that one of the first Women's Mechanics' Institutes in Britain was started by **Fanny Hertz** (1830-1908) in Bradford about 1858.



Mentioned in the Queen's Birthday Honours was the Wahgunyah School of Arts' **Mervyn Wesley 'Wes' Comini**. Wes and his wife Edie moved to Wahgunyah around 1990 and since then they have played major supportive roles in various community organisations including the Wahgunyah School of Arts. Wes 'shared' the Order of Australia Medal with his wife, **Edie**.

(Photo: Corowa Free Press)

Alan Barber a volunteer at the **Beaney House of Art and Knowledge** handed over the MIV Certificate to 'Diamond Jim' Beaney's alter ego at the opening of

the revamped Beany Institute on 5 September 2012. Alan's long awaited biography of the flamboyant Melbourne medico and some time politician who endowed the Beany Institute and Free Library to the people of Canterbury is due to be published later this year.



In May, **Narelle Stone** was announced as Victoria's Favourite Librarian. Narelle is Technical Services Librarian at **Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT)**. Her nominators described her as 'always being helpful, kind and friendly'

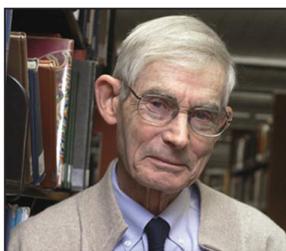
and 'someone who will always go the extra mile to help students and staff find whatever it is they are looking for'. Narelle noted that she was glad that 'her library is often described as the 'heart', and the learning and social 'hub' of the Bendigo TAFE'.

(Photo: Bendigo Advertiser)



Visiting Professor, **Travis McDade**, Law Librarian of University of Illinois, gave a talk about book theft from libraries at Melbourne's Rare Book Week. He also mentioned the community's attitude to punishments for same, a noting great variation. We append the visual view of the Innerpeffray Mortification Trust's coat of arms.

I wonder if those waddy carrying enforcers had the required effect? Come to think of it, they must have, for the Innerpeffray Library at Crieff in Scotland still have a large collection of historic books.



Rochester Institute's **Professor Emeritus Dane Gordon** has not retired, he is still as busy and has just completed his mammoth study of Saul the first King Israel. He has also recently co-edited a set of Papers on Epictetus (c.55-135) the

first century Greek stoic philosopher who espoused 'As part of the universal city that is the universe, it is our duty to care for our fellow man'. All that said he still sets aside time for his passion of gardening.
(Photo: RIT website)

Early this year the Meeniyan Mechanics' Institute nominated **Ethel Hanks** to the South Gippsland Shire for an award. Ethel has served on the Mechanics' Hall Committee for thirty-four years 'raising funds through catering and the weekly dance group, and

taking responsibility for keeping the hall clean and tidy. She's always there when a working bee is held, making sandwiches, carting concrete, painting, and when it comes to the break, she's right there too, making the cuppa, and offering treats she has baked'.

Ethel constructed the bluestone walls around the Hall and in nearby Tandarra Park. Being on a plethora of local Committees and 'for the Meeniyan community, having Ethel in their midst is like Christmas every day!' Well done, Ethel!

Vale

Long-time promoter and Trustee-Secretary of the Mernda Mechanics' Institute, **Kevin Doyle**, died on 20 March 2013 after a long battle with cancer. He was aged fifty-six and his wide range of friends gathered at the Yan Yean Cemetery for his interment. Kevin was present at the historic 1998 Conference and those who went on the 2012 Heading for the Hills Bus Tour will remember Kevin as our host at the Mernda stopover. Our sincere sympathy goes out to his loving daughters Niamh and Caoilin, and to mother Maureen.

Marie Hormann, one of the **Wonderful Women of Warburton**, died on 16 June 2013 near Horsham. A death notice in the *Wimmera Times* describes her as being 'a courageous, inspirational lady and friend'. Marie was one of a courageous group of women who chose to bare their all to bring attention to the plight of the Warburton Mechanics' Institute. And it worked! Our sympathies go out to her children Margaret, Hans, Yvette and friend Paul.



Australian theatre lost one of its mothers on 17 June 2013, when **Betty Burstall** passed on aged eighty-seven. Betty founded **La Mama** in Carlton in 1967 as a coffee house theatre. The bold philosophy was 'We are open to all comers and

we read all scripts. There's no rent and they [the writers, producers and performers] get the box office.' It is still the same philosophy which has spawned generations of actors. Betty's Memorial on 27 July was regaled with the good and 'bad' times of the theatre. On one particular occasion the whole cast and crew were arrested for obscenity and taken to Carlton Police Station with the theatre patrons in pursuit uttering the 'f' word until the last of the cast and crew were released on bail. Interestingly enough the show running at the time of Betty's Memorial was **James Clayden's** play '**Substitute for the Mechanics' Institute.**'

(Photo: australiacouncil.gov.au)

Ideas & Opportunities

A PATHWAY TO YOUR HALL

A common feature seen in recent travels is a metre wide concrete path right around the hall building, with a larger apron at the front. Slightly sloped away from the building it protects the foundations. It also provides a fire barrier and it stops dirt being tramped into the hall. Similarly a lesser barrier would also work around outbuildings such as store sheds and toilets. The path also provides a firm base on which to rest a ladder for maintenance. This could be done by working bee or even by way of the locally based readymix concrete truck which occasionally has overs.

VISITATIONS

It would be good to think that the historic activity of one Institute visiting another could be restarted. Indeed the rail excursions to distant Institutes in England inspired **Thomas Cook** of Cook's Tours fame. Such a tour could take the form of an Open House when any Institute members would be invited to see Institute X or when just one Institute approached another. It could establish an ongoing relationship with reciprocal visits and activities.

TWINNING

Searching the web can reveal Institutes of the same names in different countries, even in different States. It would be good if Institutes of like name could twin up. Who knows what could happen in the future. There could be shared visits, ideas, and even 'staff' swapping for a period.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

For a number of years now **Harold Muir** has issued a Christmas Card from the **Christmas Hills Mechanics' Institute** with the wording from Father and Mary Christmas. Indeed what a great idea. With various promotional printing opportunities it could be done quite economically and you can sell them as fundraisers.

OPEN DAYS – BE IN IT

With the present three potential annual Open opportunities – **Heritage Week, History Week** and **Home Is Where the Hall Is!** month, there is ample opportunity to get aboard and swing the Hall doors open for an all-comers visitation.

Run up a membership form, a flyer for future events, and photocopy up some Hall documents, to be laid on tables.

You could put on a few gigs during the day, a recitation, song, musical item, juggling, magic or whatever is available from the local community. You could also put on morning or afternoon tea. Fly a balloon or two outside and make visitors welcome. Greet visitors with a big grin and welcome them to the wonderful world of the Mechanics' Institutes. Have a donation box at the door, who knows what may fall in it?

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS ARTS ATLAS

Institutes in the Central Highlands region of Victoria which have their building available for hire, can sign up to the Central Highlands Arts Atlas and make their venue available for arts groups in the region to use their facilities for exhibitions and classes. Website: artsatlas.com.au

FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HALLS

A State Government agency Regional Development Victoria have significant funds available for Hall upgrades. These are made through their Putting Locals First Program of the Regional Growth Fund. They generally have some local funding requirement which in some cases appears to have been quite low. Check out the website rdv.vic.gov.au where information can be had along with downloadable forms. It is suggested that you enlist the support of your local State MP and Council in the interim. Invite them down for a look. Council may even agree to stage a meeting in your Hall.

One of the recent recipients has been the **Seaspray Hall** which received \$58,000 which will be used for a kitchen and toilet 'modernisation'. The Hall was used on 200 days last year for Senior Citizen's, Tennis Club, Primary School and CFA and other uses.

CLOSED NOTICE BOARD

Put a locked glass-fronted display case in the foyer or porch of your Hall. Users can have a key to put their own flyers in but you have control of what goes on the Notice Board. A few extra drawing pins in the corner will facilitate orderly use. This will ensure future events get publicity and items on the board will not blow away.

YOUR OWN LIBRARY

It should be the aim for all Halls to build up a local history library for reference at least. This would be a great source for the **Trivia Night**. Bookshelves with a couple of lockable shelves can be had from major office supply stores or in large homeware warehouses. The other shelves can be an honour library or book exchange - bring a book and take a book.

GALLIPOLI ANNIVERSARY 2015

There's going to a lot happening in 2015 to commemorate World War I and most Halls have Honour Boards, Rolls or Portrait Galleries. In all likelihood there will be some funding available, you may even like to see if the local RSL would like to be a partner in the project. Plan a major activity during the year with a Reunion centred around your Honour Board supplemented by research by your High School or even Primary School students. Start a scrapbook in your library shelf, with a sheet for each soldier for additions against a soldier's name.

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them*
Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES DANCE DIRECTORY



This Directory is a guide only and it is suggested that you ring or email ahead for confirmation of dates and times. If contacts or dates have changed please let us know. Equally let us know if we have missed out on regular Mechanics' dance venue.

**BLUE LIGHT DISCO
BALMORAL MECHANICS'
HALL**
Glendinning St, Balmoral, V 3407
Contact: Geoff Barcham
Info: geoff.barcham@police.vic.gov.au

BANNOCKBURN HALL
27 High St, Bannockburn, V 3331
Age, below Grade 6, and above 'if they behave'.
Contacts: 1. Senior Constable Mick Rooney; 2. Senior Constable Tony Den Hartog
Tel: 1. (03) 5286 1222; 2. (03) 5265 1211

CAVENDISH PUBLIC HALL
Barker St, Cavendish, V 3314
Contact: Geoff Barcham
Info: geoff.barcham@police.vic.gov.au

CRANBOURNE PUBLIC HALL
Cnr South Gippsland Hwy & Clarendon St, Cranbourne, V 3977
10-15 years
Contact: Andrew Poulter
Tel: (03) 0425 868 710

EPPING MEMORIAL HALL
827 High St, Epping, V 3076
Contact: Senior Constable Tim Forster/Senior Constable Wendy Shields
Tel: (03) 9409 8100

INVERLEIGH PUBLIC HALL & MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
71 High St, Inverleigh, V 3321
Age, below Grade 6, and above 'if they behave'.
Contacts: 1. Senior Constable Mick Rooney; 2. Senior Constable Tony Den Hartog
Tel: 1. (03) 5286 1222; 2. (03) 5265 1211

**KYNETON MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE**
Cnr Mollison & High Sts, Kyneton, V 3444
6pm.8.30pm. Primary School Age
Contact: Senior Constable Joe Grbac
Tel: (03) 5421 2900; Email: joseph.grbac@police.vic.gov.au

LAVERS HILL HALL
43-47 Great Ocean Rd, Lavers Hill, V 3238
Contacts: 1. Leading Senior Constable Laurie Allen; 2. Constable Mandy Cauchi
Tel: 1. (03) 5237 3200; 2. (03) 5235 93143

LETHBRIDGE HALL
25 Russell St, Lethbridge, V 3332
Age, below Grade 6, and above 'if they behave'.
Contacts: 1. Senior Constable Mick Rooney; 2. Senior Constable Tony Den Hartog
Tel: 1. (03) 5286 1222; 2. (03) 5265 1211

MEREDITH COMMUNITY HALL
4 Russell St, Meredith, V 3333
Age, below Grade 6, and above 'if they behave'.
Contacts: 1. Senior Constable Mick Rooney; 2. Senior Constable Tony Den Hartog
Tel: 1. (03) 5286 1222; 2. (03) 5265 1211

MONBULK COMMUNITY CENTRE
Cnr Moores Rd & Main St, Monbulk, V 3793
7pm-11pm, 12-15 year old
Contact: Leading Senior Constable Ken Tromp
Email: ken.tromp@police.vic.gov.au

NARRE WARREN NORTH COMMUNITY HALL
Old A'Beckett Rd, Narre Warren North, V 3804
6pm-9pm, Grades 3-6
Contact: Leading Senior Constable Mark Townsend
Tel: (03) 9705 3111; Email: mark.townsend@police.vic.gov.au

PAKENHAM & DISTRICT PUBLIC HALL
Cnr Henry & John Sts, Pakenham, V 3810
6.30pm-9pm, Years 5-8
Contact: Constable Sharon Paterson
Tel: (03) 5945 2500

ROSEBUD MEMORIAL HALL
994 Point Nepean Rd, Rosebud, V 3939
Contact: Senior Constable Mike Shuldt
Tel: (03) 5984 2000

SUNBURY MEMORIAL HALL
Stawell St, Sunbury, V 3429
6pm-8pm, Primary School Age
Contacts: Senior Constable Rebecca Ladek/Senior Constable Kimberley Hunting

Tel: (03) 9744 8111

TATURA VICTORY HALL
Hogan St, Tatura, V 3616
6.30pm-9.30pm, Age 5-13
Contact: Sergeant Darryl Phillips
Tel: (03) 5824 3099

TAWONGA HALL
44 Kiewa Valley Hwy, Tawonga, V 3697
6.30pm-9pm
Contact: Rob Taylor
Info: alpine@bluelight.org.au

TEESDALE MECHANICS' HALL
1109 Bannockburn-Shelford Rd, Teesdale, V 328
Age, below Grade 6, and above 'if they behave'.
Contacts: 1. Senior Constable Mick Rooney; 2. Senior Constable Tony Den Hartog
Tel: 1. (03) 5286 1222; 2. (03) 5265 1211

OLD TIME BANGHOLME SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HALL
Worsley Rd, Bangholme, V 3175
Fourth Saturday of each Month
Contact: Sam Capes
Tel: (03) 9796 6574

BROWN HILL FREE LIBRARY HALL
375 Humffray St North, Ballarat V 3350
Tuesdays
Contact: 1. Kerry; 2. Andrew
Tel: 1. 0418 176 376; 2. 0411 243 543

CLYDE PUBLIC HALL & MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
30 Railway Rd, Clyde, V 3978
First Saturday of each Month
Contact:
Tel: 0424 308 022

CONGUPNA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL
Congupna, V 3633
Second Saturday
Contact: Leonie
Tel: (03) 5831 8163; 0427 566 764

CRANBOURNE HALL
High & Clarendon Sts, Cranbourne, V 3
OLD TIME DANCE CLUB
Every Tuesday; Third Friday
Contact: Henry
Tel: (03) 5997 7298

DALYSTON MECHANICS' HALL
Bass Hwy, Dalyston, V 3992
Fourth Saturday
Contact: Dot
Tel: (03) 5678 7334

DARNUM MEMORIAL HALL (MECHANICS' INSTITUTE)
Cropley St, Darnum, V 3822
First, Third and Fifth Thursday
Contact: 1. May; 2. Eileen Hall
Tel: 1. (03) 5623 1719; 2. (03) 5623 6349

DUMBALK HALL
29-31 Farmers Rd, Dumbalk, V 3956
Wednesdays; First Saturday
Contact: Lindsay Richards
Tel: (03) 5664 1239

EPPING HALL (MECHANICS' INSTITUTE)
Cnr Hall & High Sts, Epping, V 3076
Fourth and Fiftyh Sunday Afternoons
Contact: Don or Kay
Tel: (03) 9654 1916; 0432 145 460

GLENROWAN SPRING CREEK PUBLIC HALL
Daniel St/Old Hume Hwy, Glenrowan, V 3675
Tuesdays
Contact: 1. John or Judy; 2. Myra Baxter
Tel: 1. (03) 5764 1303; 2. 5721 3253

GRANTVILLE HALL
Grantville, V 3984
First Friday
Contact: Peter or Lorna
Tel: (03) 5657 4272

GREAT WESTERN MECHANICS' HALL
Western Highway, Great Western, V 3377
Tuesdays
Contact: 1. Bill Carlyon; 2. Mrs Lou Hemley
Tel: 1. (03) 5356 4378; 2. (03) 5359 8447?
GREAT WESTERN CLUB
Mondays
Contact: Vesper Hewetson
Tel: (03) 5358 3624

JEERALANG NORTH PUBLIC HALL
1005 Jeeralang North Rd, Jeeralang North, V 3840
Fourth Friday
Contact: Judy
Tel: (03) 5166 1682

JOHNSONVILLE PUBLIC HALL
Princes Hwy, Johnsonville, V 3902
First Friday
Contact: Beryl
Tel: (03) 6166 6721

KIALLA CENTRAL HALL
Kialla Central Rd, Kialla, V 3631
Wednesdays

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES DANCE DIRECTORY



Contact: 1. Moira; 2. Myra
Baxter
Tel: 1. (03) 5822 1665; 2. (03)
5721 3253

KOONWARRA HALL
Koala Drive, Koonwarra, V
3954
Mondays, Third and Fifth
Saturdays
Contact: 1. Noel; 2. Vera
Tel: 1. (03) 5662 2672; 2. (03)
5664 3252

KOOREH HALL
Bendigo Rd, Kooreh, V 3478
Second and Fourth Tuesday
Contact: Brian Wright
Tel: (03) 5495 1180

LANDSBOROUGH HALL
29 Burke St, Landsborough, V
3384
Fifth Friday
Contact: Jean and Keith
McCready
Tel: (03) 5352 1322

LEOPOLD HALL
Bellarine Hwy, Leopold, V 3224
HALL COMMITTEE
Every Second Saturday
Contact: Gordon
Tel: (03) 5282 1782
GEELONG OLD TIME DANCE
CLUB
Every Wednesday
Contact: David Ogle
Tel: 0425 731 298

LONGWARRY HALL
Longwarry-Modella Rd,
Longwarry, V 3816
Mondays, Fourth Saturday
Contact: Freda
Tel: (03) 5629 9454

MAILORS FLAT HALL
837 Caramut Rd, Mailors Flat,
V 3275
Third Saturday of each month
February-November, 60/40
Dancing
Contact: 1. Max Greene; 2.
Debbie Sicely
Tel: 1. (03) 5562 0548; 2. (03)
5565 4482

MARDAN MECHANICS' HALL
10 Coulters Rd, Mardan, V 3953
Occasional, quarterly,
including New Year's Eve
Contact: 1. T Marshman; 2. John
McColl
Tel: 1. (03) 5664 1209; 2. (03)
5664 1271

MOYSTON HALL
Moyston-Willaura Rd, Moyston,
V 3377
MOYSTON OLD TIME DANCE
CLUB
Third Friday
Contact: Owen Decker
Tel: (03) 5354 2565

NAR NAR GOON NORTH
PUBLIC HALL
Cnr Bessie Creek Rd & Dore Rd,
Nar Nar Goon North, V 3812
Second Saturday
Contact: Garry Andrews
Tel: (03) 5942 8502

NEWBOROUGH PUBLIC HALL
Balfour St, Newborough, V
3825
MOE OLD TIME DANCE CLUB
Mondays
Contact: 1. Lois; 2. Diane Turpin
Tel: 1. 0400 750 482; 2. (03)
5174 2862; 0419 742 862

NILMA LILICO HALL
Bloomfield Rd, Nilma North, V
3821
Third Friday
Contact: Noel
Tel: (03) 5623 2085

PICOLA MEMORIAL
(FEDERAL) HALL
Picola North Rd, Picola, V 3639
Second Saturday of each month
Contact: Jeanette
Tel: (03) 5869 1274

PICNIC POINT HALL
Drevermann St, Bairnsdale, V
3875
BAIRNSDALE DANCE CLUB
Tuesdays
Contact: 1. Lindsay and Carolyn
Hanrahan; 2. Jim Carey
Tel: 1. (03) 5152 3069; 2. (03)
5156 8480

SPRING GULLY HALL
Spring Gully Rd, Spring Gully,
V 3550
BENDIGO NU VOGUE &
ENGLISH SEQUENCE DANCE
CLUB
Wednesdays
Contact: Chris Muller
Tel: (03) 5447 0567

TALLYGAROPNA SOLDIERS'
MEMORIAL HALL
Victoria St, Tallygaropna, V
3634
Fourth Saturday
Contact: Ralph and Lillian
Willgoose
Tel: (03) 5865 5416

TANJIL SOUTH HALL
Willowgrove Rd, Tanjil South,
V 3825
First Saturday
Contact: 1. Eric Grant; 2. Ken
Williams
Tel: 1. (03) 5127 1635, 0412
687 570; 2. 5160 1400

YACKANDANDAH HALL
High St, Yackandandah, V 3749
YACKANDANDAH DANCE
GROUP

Tuesdays, Second Saturday
Contact: 1. Stan Sutherland; 2.
Mick or Shirley Steff:
Tel: 1. (03) 6027 1266; 2. (02)
6024 3215

SCOTTISH
BUXTON MECHANICS' HALL
Public Hall Rd, Buxton, V 3711
Triangle Dancers
Thursday
Contact: Di
Tel: 5963 3299

NEWHAM MECHANICS' HALL
1292-1294 Rochford Rd,
Newham, V 3442
Woodend Scottish Country
Dancers
Every Thursday
Contact: Margaret
Tel: (03) 5427 1100

ROSEBUD MECHANICS' HALL
Pt Nepean Rd, Rosebud, V 3939
Flinders Shire Scots
Contact: Howard
Tel: (03) 5986 6772

CLASSES
ARARAT MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE
171 Barkly St, Ararat, V 3377
Operator: Dynamic Dance
Studio
Contact: Laura Waters
Tel: 0409 162 500
Student Range: From aged 4
upwards
Styles: Jazz, Ballet, Tap, Hip-
Hop and Contemporary
Activities: Concerts

CARLTON DANCEHOUSE
150 Princes St, Carlton North,
V 3054
Website: dancehouse.com.au

RIDDELLS CREEK
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
63 Main St, Riddells Creek, V
3431
Contact: Val Sparshott.
Tel: (03) 5428 6223

LINE DANCING
ATHLONE MECHANICS' HALL
895 Drouin-Korumburra Rd,
Athlone, V 3818
Contact: Roslyn Uren
Tel: (03) 5659 2222; (03) 5657
7238

CALIFORNIA GULLY
MECHANICS' HALL
8 School St, California Gully, V
3556
BLACK HORSE LINE DANCERS
Tuesday
Contact: Joanie Lobb
Tel: (03) 5447 3459; 0427 185
345
Website:
blackhorselinedancers.com.au

ELLIMINYT PUBLIC HALL
168 Main St, Elliminyt, V 3250
KICK BACK COUNTRY
Monday
Contact: Majella Brown
Tel: (03) 5335 8441; 0429 358
441

LUCKNOW HALL
105 Great Alpine Rd, Lucknow,
V 3875
BAIRNSDALE BOOTSCOOTERS
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
Contact: Marlene Landsbury
Tel: 5152 6000; 0418 516
069

MOOROODUC HALL
Bentons/Derrill Rds,
Moorooduc, V 3933
MONTANA LINE DANCERS
Monday, Thursday
Contacts: June Hulcombe; 2.
Barbara Willshire
Tel: (03) 5975 0118

NEWBOROUGH PUBLIC HALL
Rutherglen Rd, Newborough, V
3825
Wednesday and Thursday
Mornings
Contact: Linda
Tel: 0438 275 327

PENSHURST MEMORIAL
(MECHANICS') HALL
Main St, Peshurst, V 3289
Thursday
Contacts: Ray and Trish
Graham
Tel: 0448 645 240; 0417 879
860

SAILOR'S GULLY HALL
Sailors Gully Rd, Sailors Gully,
V 3556
OUTLAW BOOT SCOOTERS
Monday, Wednesday,
Thursdays
Contact: 1. Dot; 2. Bob
Tel: 1. (03) 5446 3882; 2. (03)
5448 4886

ST LEONARDS MEMORIAL
HALL
1342 Murradoc Rd, St
Leonards, V 3223
PORT BOOTSCOOTERS
Tuesday
Contact: Len and Dawn Olsen
Tel: (03) 5257 1529; 0430 291
249

WAURN PONDS HALL
225 Waurn Ponds Drive, Waurn
Ponds, V 3216
BARWON VALLEY
BOOTSCOOTERS
Tuesday, Thursday
Contact: Marilyn Van der Pol
Tel: 0419 502 970; (03) 5243
2497