



# Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

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## "LEST WE FORGET"

There would hardly be a Hall in Victoria or its adjoining Reserve, or a nearby cenotaph that the words 'Lest we Forget' are not recorded. The phrase is from Rudyard Kipling's **The Recessional** penned for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. 'Lest we forget – Lest we forget' is repeated after the first four verses as an entreaty that we will not forget the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Those three iconic words 'Lest we forget' are often added at the conclusion of Laurence Binyon's **For the Fallen**. 'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old/ Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn./ At the going down of the sun and in the morning,/ We will remember them.'

Those young men and a few women that were universally farewelled from our Halls, Binyon tells us 'They went with songs to the battle, they were young.' They went to the far off battlefields of Gallipoli, the Middle East or the Western Front. Many did not return. They were the new hopes of the generation that had largely established the Mechanics' Halls in regional Victoria in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s.

Alas 'They mingle not with their laughing comrades again; /They sit no more at familiar tables of home.' Then those communities were robbed of some of their best. Little wonder the individual communities raised Honour Boards, Cenotaphs, Memorial Gates and even Halls.

Some of those who returned formed Soldier Settlements, or laboured at community projects, like the Great Ocean Road.

A hundred years on this is an opportunity for your Hall, your community to... 'remember them'.



*Menin Gate at midnight by Will Longstaff*  
Photo from: Collection Database of the Australian War Memorial under the ID Number: ART09807

This Anzac Day why not also remember 'the going down of the sun' on far off battlefields with a lowering of the flag. It could then kick on to a 'welcome home' dance to all local service personnel. A reflection at midnight of Will Longstaff's famous painting 'Menin Gate at Midnight' when those ghostly legions rise again from fields

of white crosses or any resting place, with the sounding of The Reveille and a Roll Call of district soldiers who did not return. (Invitations please!)

Our Halls were then and still are central to community life and it was no accident that the School given to the village French of Villers-Bretonneux, largely funded by Victoria's schoolchildren, contained an attached community Hall, not unlike a typical Mechanics' Institute.

This is an opportunity to remember all your district's service personnel whether they be the early settlers who fought at Waterloo, the Crimean War, New Zealand Maori Wars, the Boer War, etc. ...

**"At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them."**

# *Coming Events* - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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## **JULY-JANUARY 2015**

26 July-31st January 2015 - Stanley Athenaeum  
- Stanley New Year's Day Sports -  
Photographic exhibition.

## **OCTOBER**

12 Leongatha Historical Society 50th  
Anniversary Luncheon, Leongatha  
Mechanics' Institute.

19-26 History Week

26 CJ Dennis Poetry Festival, CJ Dennis Hall,  
Toolangi, with a Special Reading by Ted  
Egan, Patron of the CJ Dennis Society.  
Contact: Jan Williams (03) 5962 9282

26 MIV Bus Tour - Williamstown to Bellarine  
Peninsula. Tel: Judith Dwyer, (03) 9707  
4254

## **NOVEMBER**

1-30 Home is Where the Hall is month - Make  
something happen in your Hall this  
month and start planning now

1-2 Moonambel Mechanics' Hall - Community  
Theatre production - "Cinderella"

8 MIV AGM - Melbourne Athenaeum, 188  
Collins St, Melbourne, 2.30pm

9 Romsey Mechanics' Institute - Antiques  
and Collectables Day

9 Sandford Mechanics' Hall - Village Market  
and Gathering Under the Jubilee Oak

18-19 11th Australian Library History Forum:  
Libraries for the People - State Library of  
New South Wales

19 Yarra Ranges Heritage Open Day, Mont  
de Lancey Historic Homestead and  
Museum. Tel: (03) 5964 2088

22 Kooreh Memorial Hall - Old Time/New  
Vogue Dance

29 Balmoral Mechanics' Hall - Chameleon  
Arts Community Artworks Show

## **2015**

## **JANUARY**

24-26 Fryerstown Burke & Wills Mechanics'  
Hall - Fryerstown Antique Fair

## **FEBRUARY**

TBC MIV Committee Meeting

## **APRIL**

25 Sheep Hills Mechanics' Institute - Anzac  
Dawn Service

25 Mt Eccles Hall - Anzac Dawn Service

TBC Kilmore Mechanics' Institute - Fungi  
Walk Monument Hill

## **MAY**

TBC MIV Committee Meeting

## **JUNE**

TBC Association of Independent Libraries -  
UK - Annual meeting - Morabb Library,  
Penzance, Cornwall

## **JULY**

15 Little River Mechanics' Institute -  
Unveiling of Nurses Memorial.

## **2016**

## **OCTOBER**

8-9 American Membership Libraries - Annual  
Meeting - San Francisco Mechanics'  
Institute, USA

**WANTED: Notice of your forthcoming events. Email: [bronlowden@hotmail.com](mailto:bronlowden@hotmail.com)**

## *MIV Contacts*

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## *Letter From The President*



Throughout the 175 year history of Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes their objectives have remained the same. Namely:

- the diffusion of scientific and literary information
- useful knowledge
- rational recreation

In the 1800s these objectives were well served by providing public lectures and subscription libraries. This was where the thirst for knowledge lay. The halls and other buildings built to serve these objectives brought a rapidly changing outside world into otherwise isolated communities.

As we commemorate 100 years since the start of WWI and the ANZAC story it is worth recalling that those terrible events along with Federation, universal suffrage, wars and depression all found their way into the national consciousness via the reading rooms and lectures provided by Mechanics' Institutes.

Often the first public building in fast growing townships Victoria's Mechanics Institutes quickly assumed a wider role as meeting place and community centre. A useful but nonetheless ancillary role many still perform to this day.

Sadly the curious old buildings and scattered collections of many surviving Institutes are commonly held to be mere relics from a bygone era to be taken advantage of until some property developer or council grabs their land and puts them out of their misery. Little thought is given to the Institution, its accomplishments and the reason for creating it. Nor is the emotional and financial investment made down the generations acknowledged or even understood. This is where the MIV has a role to play.

### **Building on the Past, Open to the Future**

The objectives of The Mechanics Institutes of Victoria (MIV) are threefold: Namely to:

- conserve the social, cultural and physical heritage of active Institutes
- recognise and conserve former Institute buildings
- revive inactive Institutes

Despite the fascination that Mechanics' Institutes, their physical heritage and social history hold for the historically minded of our members all three of MIV's objectives are undeniably forward looking.

Our members conserve the social, cultural and physical heritage of active Institutes on a daily basis by filling them with activities relevant to their community. The activities conducted within easily extend to the physical maintenance and conservation of our historic and heritage buildings and collections.

Every Committee of Management has its extraordinarily generous circle of local tradesmen and women willing to lend a hand when necessary. Not only a fine example of useful knowledge but suggestive of a range of activities that could be built upon. After all how many of us travel the world to be inspired by other people's efforts to conserve their history. Mechanics' Institutes are ours. If their walls could speak it would be of our history writ both large and small.

The MIV Committee is always looking for inspiration regarding potential activities that might interest one of our Member Institutes or be suitable for reviving an inactive Institute. So don't be shy, write in with your suggestions. Even better become an Individual Member of the MIV and enclose your suggestions along with your membership application/renewal.

Not all of Victoria's surviving 562 Mechanics' Institutes will be with us in 100 years time. However those that are will be diffusing scientific and literary information, spreading useful knowledge and rationally recreating in unique ways that have yet to be imagined.

Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes have an illustrious past and challenging present but most of all they have a fascinating future. It really does come down to what we as individuals want to make of them.

*Robert Kingston*  
President.

# Editorial



Firstly thank you to those people who have returned their **Website Profiles** and **Anzac Surveys** and have provided material for this edition. There's so much happening out there and it is great to share this with our other members, whether they be local, interstate or overseas.

Kitchener was the man for the job when he was recruiting for World War I. The army that he helped to assemble melded into one army to achieve a final victory, albeit at great cost. Australian soldiers did it very much their way and still do, making them widely respected wherever they serve.

At this point in time we need you to come on board to give the Mechanics' Movement weight and purpose to gain equity for all the Mechanics' Halls across Victoria, whether it be Crown Land, Council Land or freehold. They all have the same broad objectives and all serve the community.

Carnegie Foundation President Anthony S Bryk recently stated 'We can accomplish more together, than even the best of us can do alone.'

We have the MIV elections coming up please do consider nominating for a position. There is such a depth of talent in our membership and we need to access this to ease the load for us all.

Finally keep the news rolling in and keep up the recruiting. This magazine should be in every library and various interest group libraries. If you let us know some likely names we can send them a complimentary inspection newsletter.

Finally thank you for your support in my first year as official *Useful Knowledge* Editor it has been an interesting and challenging adventure.

*Bron Lowden*

## READ UP ON *USEFUL KNOWLEDGE* ANYWHERE YOU CAN GET TO YOUR EMAIL

If you would like to receive *Useful Knowledge* by email in addition (or as an alternative) to your regular hard copy, please send me an email at bronlowden@hotmail.com and I will add you to our mailing list. Receiving your *Useful Knowledge* via email enables you to see all the photos in full colour, and you can forward the magazine onto your Institute's Committee or members.

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members:

- Roger Beattie
- Derrinallum Community Hall
- Deborah Hunt (USA)
- Laanecoorie Mechanics' Institute
- Lyonville Hall
- Ian MacBean
- Rainbow Archive & Historical Society
- Phil Reed (NSW)
- Urana Hall (NSW)

## NEWSLETTER ROUND

*Tick after reading and pass it on*

- President .....
- Vice-President.....
- Treasurer.....
- Secretary.....
- Committee (*Insert your name*)
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

NOTICE OF AGM  
MIV'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE  
HELD AT  
THE MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM LIBRARY  
188 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE,  
8 NOVEMBER 2014, 2.30PM

## RUSHWORTH BUILDING CENTENARY CELEBRATED WITH A PLAQUE



A dedicated group of local people gathered in the light drizzling rain at 11am on 10 May 2014 to celebrate the centenary of Rushworth's iconic Mechanics' Institute building. The occasion was marked with the unveiling of Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Commemorative Plaque No. 41. George Gemmill, a long time member of the Rushworth Historical Society Museum Committee, was MC for the occasion and detailed some of the building's history to the assembled. He then introduced Cr Adrian Weston, who spoke on the vital importance of preserving local history. Cr Weston complimented the Society on the condition in which the High Street building was maintained and also thanked the Museum volunteers for voluntarily giving of their time to keep the Museum open for the wider public. The chair then introduced the Museum's longest serving member and Life Member Jeff 'Chief' Perry who had been selected to unveil the plaque. As 'Chief' removed the curtain spontaneous applause broke out from those assembled.

By way of background the Rushworth Mechanics' Institute was formed in 1861 and it met in the local school room. In 1869 it opened an 'excellent' library 'in a small room in the corner of the shire hall'. Finally in 1897 it erected its own, which alas was found to be in the path of the later proposed Rushworth-Colbina-bbin railway line. After compensation from the railways it was resolved to let a tender to pull down the 'old' hall and build another close by. This was to be

done by contractor Daniel Crothers (1866-1949) under the supervision of architect Adolphus James Inches (1857-1940).

Institute President, William Gunn Jnr laid the foundation stone on 18 July 1913 and the building was opened in November 1913. The substantial 'blood and bandage' style building housed a substantial billiard room. Shortly after it opened: Frank Clarke MLC donated 'a handsome binding' of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* valued at £27.10s; electricity was connected; and mortgagee Miss Elizabeth Gunn reduced the interest rate from 5% to 4%, for which she was accorded Life Membership. The Institute continued until 1978 when its community library closed.

In the meantime the Rushworth and District Historical and Preservation Society was formed



in 1969 with Mr Ron Ristrom as President and William Jacobson as Vice-President. The Society made an appeal for documents and artifacts and this was the start of the major collection which the Museum houses today. The Museum is open every Saturday from 11am-1pm and on Sundays from 11am-3pm (or by appointment for groups), with a gold coin donation as admission.

Rushworth Museum

PO Box 158, Rushworth V 3612

Tel: (03) 5857 2352 / (03) 5856 1583.



*Photos: Top left and above: Rushworth Mechanics' Institute front and side view; left: Jeff 'Chief' Perry (left) and George Gemmill with the newly unveiled MIV Plaque No. 41 for Rushworth Mechanics' Institute.*

## DUNROBIN CELEBRATES



*The Dunrobin Centenary Committee spent many hours preparing for the weekend celebrations. L-R: Gavin Lowe, Julie Robins, Lois Lowe, Judi Rees, Jeff Hortle, Kelvin Bateman, Gina Reid and John Reid.*

*Photo: spec.com.au*

In 1912 the Closer Settlement Board purchased the Dunrobin Estate and 'carved it' up for settlement. One of the first things the new settlers did was to establish a Hall. Local settler Alfred Thomas Gravestocks (1869-1946) donated two acres for a hall site. Casterton contractor William John Peden (1870-1944) and his son William Sutherland Peden (1898-1959) built the hall under the supervision of retired builder William Thomas Killeen (1846-1925). It was officially opened on 14 August 1914 by Glenelg Shire President Cr John Ross.

A century later, on the weekend of 16-17 August 2014 a crowd of between two and three hundred people which included descendants of those settlers and locals came together to celebrate the centenary of their much beloved Hall. Activities started at 1pm on Saturday with a reopening of the well-cleaned Hall. Inside was a display of memorabilia and a hearty country Devonshire tea.

Proceedings moved outside at 3pm to unveil the new roadside sign by the grandson of the original hall builder WJ Peden. In unveiling the

sign Mr Peden advised that the one hundred year guarantee that his grandfather had placed on his workmanship, had as of now expired.

Next followed the presentation of service certificates to around fifty Dunrobin CFA volunteers. This was followed by the evening Bush Dance which featured the Deep Creek Country Band, with dancing going on into the early hours.

Following a sleep in on Sunday morning a large marquee welcomed visitors to the nearby site of the former Uniting Church to an ecumenical service. This was followed by a sausage sizzle lunch.

The afternoon's proceedings back at the Hall started with the planting of a time capsule by two-year old Jack Robins. Then ninety-one year old Marj Rees planted a the centennial Jacaranda tree.

Amidst all that a commemorative book was launched of which details will be given in the next newsletter. Indeed there has not been so much excitement in Dunrobin since the their XVIII nudged the premiership in the 1950s.

## BALLAARAT'S BREECHES BIBLE

The much publicised find of a 'Breeches Bible', dated 1585, by Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute volunteer Marion Blythman highlights the significance of collections within Mechanics' Institutes, not only in Victoria but across the world. The find came when Marion was unpacking boxes of books after the massive library shift and assessment.



Another library volunteer, bibliophile Roger Burrows then started to research the history of 'The Newe Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ: conferred [compared] diligently with the Greeke, and best approved translations in divers [sic] languages...Imprinted at London by Christopher Barker, Printer to the Queenes Maiestie. 1585. Cum gratia & privilegio [With grace and privilege].'

It became known widely as 'The Breeches Bible', for the translation of Genesis 7:3 'and Eve seeing that they were naked sowed [sewed] figge-tree leaves together and made themselves breeches'. Translated largely by William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby and Thomas Sampson, British exiles living in Geneva, it was among the first Bibles to be published in English. Earlier 'literal' translated versions are known as the: 'Bug Bible' (1535); 'Wife-Beater's Bible' (1549); and 'Treacle Bible' (1549). The 'Breeches Bible', the first to use verse style and commentary, was first produced in Geneva in 1560.



The Breeches Bible, was to be adopted by theologians Myles Coverdale, John Calvin and John Knox and it went to America with the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower* in 1620.

The English-produced 1585 version came in three sizes: the Personal [Ballaarat's], or octavo (190x126mm); Pulpit, or quarto (218x139mm); and Bishop, or folio

(343x216mm) versions.

Printer Christopher Barker (c1529-99) was of wealthy parentage and first entered the publishing trade in 1569. He started as a Bible printer in 1576 having obtained 'a privilege' to print Geneva Bible. In 1577 he obtained the Royal patent from Queen Elizabeth I to print all Parliamentary documents as well as 'Bibles and New Testaments, in the English tongue and any other translation, and all service books to be used in churches'. His son Robert was to print the King James Bible in 1611 under Royal patent. Robert's 1631 'reprint' became known as the 'Wicked Bible' with Exodus 20:14 reading 'Thou shalt commit adultery.' Needless to say King Charles I, not to mention the Archbishop of Canterbury, was outraged and Robert's licence to print was cancelled.

Other gems in Ballaarat's collection include a first edition 1586 copy of William Camden's *Britannia* in Latin and a handwritten copy of the Koran dating from around 1800. Then there are first editions of Ballarat icons, Rafaello Carboni's *The Eureka Stockade* (1855) and William Bramwell Withers' *The History of Ballarat* (1870).

The 'Breeches' find received considerable publicity with an article by the *Ballarat Courier*, of which the online version includes a six slide inside 'peek'. *The Age* also picked up the story as did Red Symons on ABC Radio 774 who did an on-air interview with Roger Burrows.

Photos: Adam Trafford via [thecourier.com.au](http://thecourier.com.au)

## ACHERON CELEBRATES CENTENARY

The overcast sky and chilly winds did not reflect the mood of the standing room only crowd that jammed the Acheron Mechanics' Hall on Sunday 15 June.

Inside the Hall walls were 'speaking' with an array of pinned up posters which featured photos and other memorabilia recounting the march to its centenary.

Hall Committee

President John Thorp chaired the proceedings in a fine booming voice. He recollected the five year countdown to culminate in their big day. It started with the assembling of a research group of about fifteen people who were assigned various projects based on their interests and knowledge. This group met on a regular basis to flesh out a book contents.

An Event Committee was later formed to plan the Centenary Celebrations and Book Launch which had resulted in earlier bus tours of the district, the Saturday evening dinner in the Hall and finally to this day.

But for the time being it was back to the beginning of the establishment of the Institute and the building of the Hall by Mr Fox on land donated by Thomas Connelly, a story recounted ably by Geoff Dobson, a descendant of the Institute's first President Anderson Dobson.

John noted that the Hall was declared open to the singing of 'God Save the King' in good voice and directed the audience to re-enact this event which all did in an upstanding manner in 'booming voice', a fact which was drawn to the attention of the press representative present.

The Centennial Cake was then cut by Stella Webster, assisted by her daughter Bernice, and this was shared during afternoon tea.



Then followed the launch of the book *Acheron: A History of the District* by Cindy McLeish MP. Ms McLeish noted her relationship to district pioneer Robert Rennie and the importance of preserving a district's story and its identity and the Acheron Hall was pivotal to this.

She then launched the lavishly illustrated, mostly

in colour, book which we were told was available in both soft and hardback editions. Presentations were then made to the main authors Elaine Furniss and Andrea Turner who had coordinated the project along the way. The book's designer Elizabeth 'Beth' Thorp was also recognised, noting her great patience and understanding, when late photographs or copy came to hand. Contributor and 'able hand' Bernice Webster was also recognised.

Next followed the drawing of the raffle of painting **View of the Acheron Valley** by local artist Wykeham Perry who was present for the occasion. Local identity and former champion shearer George Cumming was summonsed for the occasion. He was ably assisted by two barrel girls who churned the hexagonal barrel which carried local sponsorship details.

Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Committee Member Corinne Brewis then gave a history of the Mechanics' Institute Movement and presented a commemorative plaque which would be later mounted on the front wall.

The proceedings then moved outdoors with the Murrindindi Shire Mayor Margaret Rae and representatives of the Rennie families being involved in the Centenary tree planting. A twenty-five year time capsule was also 'planted' in the ground, local residents had previously been invited to submit items.

A sumptuous afternoon tea then followed to finish off the most memorable day and the Centenary Celebrations for the Acheron Hall.

In addition to the book being available for sale, souvenir monogrammed glasses in two styles and postcards were also created for the occasion.



## LAUNCH OF KEN JAMES' BOOK WEST MELBOURNE LITERARY INSTITUTE: A HISTORY

A good crowd assembled on 1 September at the Melbourne Athenaeum Library in Collins Street, Melbourne for the launch of Ken James' *West Melbourne Literary Institute: A History*. On hand to launch the book was the President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Dr Don Garden.

'Ken James' book tells of the foundation in 1864 of what was called a literary institute. In effect it was the same as a mechanics' institute. The two titles and some others such as athenaeum appear to have been used largely interchangeably in the nineteenth century, although the names might also suggest a slightly nuanced differences in the aspirations or emphases of the founders of the organisations.

Putting together the story of the West Melbourne Literary Institute has been a great challenge for Ken James. There are few sources and no extant records of the WMLI itself. As recently as ten years ago this book could not have been written as the few mentions of the Institute were mainly hidden away in old newspapers, almost impossible to find. However, the establishment of Trove, and the National Library's online access to digitised newspapers, has revolutionised historical research.

In 1864 a number of prominent Melbourne citizens formed a committee to establish a Literary Institute in West Melbourne. They were granted a site corner of William and Little Lonsdale streets, but initially could only raise funds to build a large room which was opened in 1867. The building was later extended, and there the WMLI operated reading rooms and a circulating library.

Over years various other activities and functions were held in its premises. Not much detail is known, but Ken has put together a good outline and you will need to read the book to find out about them.

Early in the twentieth century the building was leased to the neighbouring Queen Victoria Hospital, and in 1909 it was acquired by the hospital. The WMLI trustees exchanged the premises for a new site, but they were never



*L-R: Ken James, Dr Don Garden and John Wagstaff. Photo: Jim Kiel*

able to afford to build on it. Somehow, the WMLI organisation was able to continue until the 1930s, but was then dissolved.

The WMLI building was demolished long ago and the site is now under a corner of the County Court.

The struggles and decline of the WMLI are indicative of the broader challenges for mechanics' institutes, many of which

struggled to survive as the nineteenth century wore on. Times and community needs changed. However, I but suspect that the challenge for the WMLI was partly due to the changing demographics in the city of Melbourne.

From the 1870s and 1880s fewer people resided in the Melbourne's central business district which was increasingly dominated by commercial and industrial activities. Certainly this was the case in West Melbourne where the population moved further west and north, and adjacent North Melbourne was consolidated as the main residential area at this end of the city.

Fewer residents and a decline in patrimony eroded the WMLI, although the building continued to be used for various purposes.

I find it interesting that the demographic situation has now reversed and population is now flowing in the opposite direction, which has implications for the Royal Historical Society of Victoria which is situated two blocks along William Street opposite the Flagstaff Gardens and is a slightly similar cultural organisation. There has been a mushrooming of high-rise apartment buildings in the area which has transformed the landscape and demography around the Flagstaff Gardens.

There are still many questions to be answered about the WMLI, and I hope that in the future Ken or someone may be able to do so, if and when more sources emerge. But this is an excellent start and it gives me much pleasure to launch this book.' Don Garden

Afternoon tea followed yet another successful book launch at The Ath, which is again taking a very firm place in Melbourne's literary community.

## ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES 25TH AGM AT GLADSTONE'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN

The weekend of 20-22 June was one of varied activity and networking for members of the Association. Gladstone's Library, located in the rural Welsh landscape of Hawarden, was set up by former British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone in 1889.

Gladstone envisioned sharing his extensive library with the British public and had built two large rooms for a library and several study rooms around it. He was closely involved with the transfer of the 32,000 books from his nearby home Hawarden Castle.

On his death in 1898 he willed a further £40,000 to develop his dream and with community fundraising it included a more permanent structure and residential accommodation.

Today Gladstone's Library is Britain's finest residential library with a particular strength in Irish history and governance, but with the overall collection of Gladstone the polymath. Today the library houses some 200,000 volumes with an ongoing acquisition program to supplement collection strengths.

Gladstone's Director of Collections and Research Louisa Yates, hosted a wine reception in the main library on Friday evening, followed by a tour of the library stacks and reading rooms. A substantial Dinner followed in the Library's Dining Room at 7pm where suitable toasts were made. Most people took up the later adjournment to the nearby 1812 Glynne Arms hostelry where a yesteryear charm prevailed and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

Several people took walks in the Library's extensive grounds before the 8.30 breakfast schedule. Following official registration Louisa Yates welcomed all to the Gladstone's Library. This was followed by Dr Robert Anderson's Presidential Address. Gladstone's Gary Butler then gave an overview of the 'The Collections of Gladstone's Library' and Louisa Yates followed with the 'The Challenge of Digitisation'. An Open Forum then followed 'Keeping an Independent Library Open - and Independent'. Many members had found that non-library related activities - cafes, coffee shops, conferences and courses - were the ones that brought in the cash.



*Dr Robert Anderson, AIL President, handing a lovely print of a London library reading room to Geoffrey Forster, our outgoing Chairman. Photo: AIL Facebook*

Then there was discussion on raising a library's profile by social events, social media or a web presence. All had a part to play. But one question remained 'Once in the door how do we get them from the café to our collections?'

Lunch followed and then came the Annual General Meeting. Next came a visit to Hawarden Castle and WE Gladstone's study, to which he referred to as his 'Temple of Peace'. Afternoon tea was held in the Hawarden Farm Shop. Dinner was held in the Library.

Sunday morning started with an address from the Warden of Gladstone's Library, the Rev. Peter Francis who titled his talk 'Gladstone's Living Heritage and the Future of an Independent Library.' Lunch Followed.

Then followed a visit to the new 'Chester Cathedral at Height' a behind the scenes guided tour of the 12th century Cathedral and a climb up through the building to the roof and spire with breathtaking views of the city and countryside.

The two thousand year old site once housed a Druid temple, then a Roman temple dedicated to Apollo. A Church existed here in 660, and from 875 it safely housed the relics St Werburgh. It was replaced by King Alfred's daughter, Queen Ethelfelda in 907 to house her remains. It was under Abbott St Anselm that the present Cathedral was started in 1092 and construction continued through until the Dissolution of Monasteries in 1539. Fortunately Henry XVIII handed the building to the newly created Diocese of Chester and it was saved.

Restoration started in earnest in the 1830s and has been ongoing since then, with the 'Cathedral at Height' being enabled by the most recent works.

A tour of Chester's impressive Roman Walls followed. Chester started out as the Roman fort Deva Victrix in AD79. The four main roads Eastgate, Northgate, Watergate and Bridge radiated out from the city centre from this time.

A weary group of delegates then headed for their various home libraries with a lot to think about. St Deniol's rebirth as Gladstone's Library is an inspirational example to all, and a great place 'to recharge the batteries'.

# MIV'S *Historical Plaques Program*

## UNVEILINGS - BOTH NEW AND OLD UPDATES!

### **NO. 41 - RUSHWORTH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE - Unveiled 10 May 2014**

This Plaque was unveiled by Jeff "Chief" Perry during the Institute building's centenary celebrations. This Plaque is located on the front of the building.

### **NO. 42 - ACHERON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE - Erected 16 June 2014**

This Plaque was presented to the Acheron Mechanics' Institute during its centenary celebrations in June. This Plaque is now located on the front of the building.

### ***Upcoming Plaques***

### **NO. 43 - BARFOLD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

### **NO. 44 - CHRISTMAS HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

### **NO. 45- WALLAN FREE LIBRARY**

### **No. 46 - BARWON HEADS COMMUNITY HALL *CAN YOU HELP?***

Some details of the unveiling and installation of MIV's Plaques have passed us by. If you have any information which is not included on our website, please email Bron Lowden (bronlowden@hotmail.com) and a Missing Information form will be sent to you highlighting the areas we are missing. We would like to have all the details for each Plaque for our own records and for any MIV Plaque hunters out there.

### ***We are missing information about:***

- No. 2 - Ballan Mechanics' Institute
- No. 8 - Frankston Mechanics' Institute
- No. 9 - Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute
- No. 14 - Benalla Mechanics' Institute
- No. 15 - Jindivick Mechanics' Institute
- No. 16 - Emerald Mechanics' Institute
- No. 17 - Dean Mechanics' Institute
- No. 22 - Mortlake Mechanics' Institute
- No. 23 - Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute
- No. 39 - Alexandra Mechanics' Institute

### ***Filling in the blanks...***

*Some of the details for MIV's Plaques have passed us by, and a second call for information missing*

*from our archive has brought to light some further details about some MIV's Plaques which were never published for our members to read about.*

### **NO. 4 - TARADALE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE - Unveiled 2003**



This Plaque was unveiled in 2003 by Graham Christie, then-President of the Taradale Historical Group. This Plaque can be found on the front door of the Institute.

### **NO. 7 - MINYIP MECHANICS' INSTITUTE - Unveiled 12 June 2004**



This Plaque was unveiled by Dr Frank Hurley, then-President of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, to commemorate the centenary of the main hall. This Plaque can be found inside the Institute, on the north wall of Meeting Room 1.

To see where all MIV's plaques can be found visit: [vicnet.net.au/~mivc/plaques](http://vicnet.net.au/~mivc/plaques) for the full list, where to find them at each site, who unveiled them, map, and links to more details and photos.

To order a plaque (They will cost \$195 each, including delivery, and require your installation.) or for more information, contact: Judith Dwyer, Box 482, Berwick, V 3806 or jad134@hotmail.com.

*Life is one big road with lots of signs.*

BOB MARLEY (1945-1981)

## MIV *News* - RECORD SCANNING FOR YOU

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As one of the largest concentrations of Mechanics' Institutes in the world, Victoria is naturally one of the greatest sources of Institute history. Little wonder since our Past President and Life Member Peter Pereyra started to scan records around 2003, the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** has grown to become the largest single archive of Institute records in the world.

It is no idle boast. Further when you think that each Institute was its own separate entity, there being no guiding hand as with other established groups, it is a huge undertaking tracking them all down. This has been the task of Pam Baragwanath and more recently Ken James who have combed the State for Institutes and their records.

It is a fascinating record that has emerged of what was generally the first major public group in any town which went on to build the community hall, which lasted perhaps a century and some in various re-incarnations have lasted through until today.

The record is amazing giving details of a whole range of community matters, Government support or otherwise, as well as reading and borrowing habits. Then there are the various building technologies and building utilities such as lighting, heating, water and power.

Many other Institute elements are reflected, the events staged, printed material relating to these events, photos, plans, etc.

Each Institute is individual and that is why we are keen to be able to copy your records, which is a free service, enabled by the support of the Victorian Government. We keep a copy of your records and supply you with a disk and return your records. If you have audio or film of events that have been staged in your Hall we would also be interested in these items. Likewise photos relating to monogrammed items such as crockery, glassware, tea towels, etc. that have been used or issued by your Hall would be most welcome.

For further information contact: Judith Dwyer,  
Email: jad134@hotmail.com

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## LAND, BUREAUCRACY AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

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We witness the current fiasco of the 'drip feed' of the ongoing tenure by the **Royal Historical Society of Victoria** and others of the **Drill Hall** in A'Beckett Street, Melbourne. It is noted a number of affiliate Historical Societies occupy Institutes or use Crown Land building space.

Is the Victorian Government and/or its bureaucracy really that pushed not to enable worthy community organisations such as the **Royal Historical Society of Victoria** and the **Victorian Concert Orchestra** not to occupy this public space?

Both these iconic organisations have served the State of Victoria very well over many years and still do. Furthermore their location near Flagstaff Station makes them eminently accessible for all. ***Surely is it not unreasonable that Government at least provide them a secure and permanent home.***

Similarly in other Crown Land properties across Victoria where long-term tenancy is questioned, eg. Kilmore 's town-based Public Park and Gardens Reserve and Kilmore Recreation Ground and Racecourse, to be considered as a potential

VicRoads highway bypass route. Both of these Crown Land Reserves have been in community occupancy for more than 160 years!

Cannot the Premier The Honourable Dr Denis Napthine show real leadership now and step in and demonstrate Victoria's appreciation of the worth of these community organisations and assets to stop the uncertainty and haemorrhaging that such uncertainty brings. **Clearly the bureaucrats don't understand, nor do they seem to care about our heritage.**

Write to the Premier now and cite the above along with other local threatened public lands or properties of which you have knowledge. There seems to be some prevailing misunderstanding that these are lands are in fact held for the public and not as mere pawns on a chessboard to be played with by bureaucrats or developers!

**Sharpen up the quill now for the time is ticking. The Premier's address is Level 1, Treasury Place, Melbourne, V 3002; his Email is premier@dpc.vic.gov.au. Let us know of the response for these are vital public issues for which we must stand up, and now!**



# Opinion

## THE SIX 'C's' CHALLENGE BY JIM LOWDEN

As I have moved around Institutes, some in other States, or across the world I never cease to be amazed at the inventiveness of communities. To detail their various initiatives would take literally pages, but I have distilled them down roughly to the six 'C's': Camaraderie; Children; Christmas, Craft, Culture and Collection.

There can be no doubt about the camaraderie extended by Institutes as I have moved around the world. There is always a welcome hand extended and the offer of a cuppa if required. Indeed I wonder why there are not more visits between Institutes, not only on a regional, but State or even on an International basis. The optimum would be perhaps for the larger Institutes to arrange staff swaps for perhaps say a month to foster goodwill.

Children must be encouraged right from the very start. I was recently made aware of the German Forest Kindergartens where children are given a range of outdoor day-long experiences. The Mechanics' is also a place where they could be given a range of indoor educational experiences. They could measure the various components of the building, record its features, explore its workings and do a set of drawings. These could then be exhibited in the Hall at a future event. Similarly a play could be staged around the various Hall activities they have discovered that have taken place in the Hall.

Christmas is a special time of goodwill and it is an ideal opportunity to engage all at the Hall. Santa can arrive on the local fire truck to reinforce the fire danger message. There can



games like the old sack race or three-legged races. Perhaps some time during the event some one can stand up with the talk on aspirations for the Hall or what it means to you. Then there could be an annual report of the community's activities noting the highs and lows, with even an award or two for tasks well done.

It is amazing the craft being created in country Halls. Some Halls have a range of groups and even a craft library to inspire. There is opportunity for combined displays and sales. Such regular gatherings do much to relieve the 'at home' boredom of country folk. The Country Women's Association did much in the past and perhaps there is enough interest to revive a CWA group. Make a drop-in lunch a regular part of your activity for those who have not got the craft bug yet.

There is also the opportunity in many communities to share various cultural aspects and there is the potential to have theme days sharing food and customs. May be there is an opportunity to establish a sister-city relationship with a similar size community overseas.

Halls can be much more than four walls, which unfortunately cannot speak. However there is an opportunity to record what takes place in the Hall or check what has taken place there in the past. You could be surprised. It should be the aim of every Hall to collect its history, or even a collection of local history books, even those relative to Landcare with fauna and flora reference works. Lockable bookcases can be had from large stationery outlets. Some come with a few open shelves to allow 'an honour' borrowing system of some fiction titles, music or DVDs.

Finally could you please see your way clear to offer the room rent-free to a local youth or Young Farmers group and ask for a representative to sit on the Hall Committee. Those young folk must be respected for their input, for the Hall is going to be theirs one day and there has to be a succession plan. Perhaps that could stand for another 'C', Continuity!

*Top: Childrens' paintings of the Hall at Barfold;  
left: Quilting club at the Bessiebelle Hall.*



## SO MUCH MORE THAN A HUMBLE HALL BY ROGER MORRIS

*Excerpts from a submission to the Crown Lands Management Review by the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts [NSW] Inc.*

AMISA Inc. was founded in 2003. Its principal goal is to provide a forum/meeting place for those interested in the preservation of the social, cultural and physical heritage of Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes in NSW. Since its formation AMISA has attempted to draw the attention of the wider community to the significant role that the Schools and Institutes have played in Australia's history.

There were some 800 plus Schools of Arts in NSW. In this submission the general term "Schools and Institutes" will be used.

### **The First Wave**

All these early Schools and Institutes [the so-called "first wave"] placed a heavy emphasis on intellectual and technological goals. They saw themselves as providing for the scientific/technological education of mechanics and the moral uplift of the working classes.

However, almost everywhere, most of these "first wave" Schools and Institutes failed to thrive. Except for that handful that evolved into well-known universities, colleges and libraries. A NSW example here is the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts [1833] which through its Working Men's College is the parent of the NSW TAFE system and the grandparent of two universities: UNSW and UTS.

As a result of this "failure to thrive", many observers of adult education have cast the Schools and Institutes movement, as a whole, in the role of glorious failure. This has been done largely on the basis of the claim that they had failed to achieve their stated purposes, in that:

- They had not succeeded in promoting the mental and moral improvement of the working classes.
- They had not educated the mechanic in the scientific principles underlying his trade

### **The Second Wave**

However, an examination of the stories of the "later" Australian Schools and Institutes, which were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, supports the long held view that there was indeed a distinct and quite different "second wave" of Schools and Institutes in Australia.



*Sans Souci Literary Institute*

These Schools or Institutes, despite their name, had little to do with the scientific/technological education of the artisan class:

*"The mental and moral improvement and the rational recreation of the members through the establishment of a library and reading room, and by the provision of lectures, the formation of classes, the maintenance of recreational facilities, and by such other means that seem desirable to the Committee."* [New Lambton Mechanics' and Miners' Institute 1902]

### **The spread of the second wave**

As the nineteenth century ended and the twentieth century began, there was a shift of population from the rows of rented inner city terrace houses to the new owner occupied detached cottages of the suburbs spreading along the newly developed rail and tram lines. At the same time, as a result of the government's closer settlement policies in many rural areas and as new mining areas were opened up, a number of new towns and villages were established. In almost all of these new suburbs and towns, there was soon built a School or Institute.

The records of many of these Schools and Institutes are far from complete. However, the one event, in their lives, that is very well documented, in almost all cases, is the ceremony at which the School was officially opened. From the detailed newspaper reports of these ceremonies it can be seen just how significant these events were in the lives of their communities. Senior, as well as local, politicians were in attendance, often the Premier, sometimes, the Governor as well or instead of the Premier, usually the Minister for Education, local clergy, and the local Mayor and Aldermen.

### **The Decline of the Schools**

The local School or Institute had developed as a comprehensive provider of educational, social, cultural, civic and recreational services to its community. But by the middle of the twentieth century, that community, and the wider Australian society,



*Matong Mechanics' Institute*

## SO MUCH MORE THAN A HUMBLE HALL CONT...



*Brucedale Hall*

was changing. Many of these changes proved to be detrimental to the continued good health of the local School of Arts.

- The Great Depression had ended the annual state government grant that had assisted with funding the School's activities, particularly the Library.
- WWII and its aftermath had forced Australian society to revisit its priorities and there was a great and very welcome expansion of educational opportunities for all Australians, including adults.
- New entertainment media, at first, the movies, then, radio, and finally, television captured the leisure time interests of many people.
- As local populations grew, a varied range of more specialised community services and facilities were established.
- The motorcar led to the development of a much more mobile, less tied to the local community, population.
- The NSW Public Libraries Act finally began to be implemented. Now Municipal Councils were expected to establish and operate public libraries. Once established these new modern public libraries, with their up to date collections and trained staff soon made the much more limited and elderly collections of the Schools' subscription libraries largely redundant.
- As licensed clubs spread across the community, their growth fuelled by their poker machine income, the Schools' main source of income fell dramatically. The use of and the income from their billiard tables declined dramatically. In the new licensed clubs you could not only play billiards at no cost, you could get a cheap meal and have a beer at the same time.

### ***The End of Schools and Institutes?***

By the late 1950s, the day of these uniquely Australian Schools and Institutes seemed to have been done.

- The premises of more than half the Schools and Institutes in NSW [some 400 plus] were



*Cessnock School of Arts*

transferred to their local Municipal Council and continued to serve a public purpose, as a branch library or a community-hall or were put to some other public purpose, under that auspice.

- Some passed somehow into private hands and the buildings surviving as cinemas, super markets, shops and/or offices [e.g. The Balmain Working Men's Institute Arcade], and even private residences,
- Some tragically ceased to exist, their buildings demolished and a Municipal Car Park or a block of flats erected in their place [and in the case of Miranda – a Rural Bank Branch].

But some 150 Schools and Institutes managed to survive and to continue to operate as independent Schools of Arts right up to the present day.

### ***Glorious failure? or An Australian success story?***

While they may not have achieved their original goal of providing a comprehensive scientific/ technological education for the artisan class, Schools and Institutes had in many rural towns and city suburbs provided important educational, social, civic, and recreational services to their local communities. They were the proto-typical adult education provider for much of Australia and most Australians.

Schools and Institutes can only be regarded as glorious failures if, one agrees with the view of those who focus on formal statements of goals and purposes and on the absolute imperative of reforming the moral depravity of the working classes.

One of the earliest and greatest supporters of the Schools and Institutes movement was Sir Henry Parkes, [serial Premier of NSW and father of the Australian Federation] who liked to say that: Australians are "*a practical people and have little affection for the ideal or the imaginative; and we are rather proud of this deficit in our national character*".

From this point of view the Schools and Institutes can be seen as being most successful - in that they were able to adapt the often confused idealism of the Movement's founders to meet the

## SO MUCH MORE THAN A HUMBLE HALL CONT...

very real practical needs of their local communities. In so doing, they created some thousands of multipurpose adult education and recreational centres across the nation.

This is a much more accurate and positive assessment of the role of the Schools & Institutes in Australia's cultural and social life providing as they did for both education and recreation: for **both "books and billiards"**. As such, they were **the real landmarks** [in both a physical and a cultural sense] of Australian adult education – **landmarks** much loved by their users and remembered with great affection by so many older Australians.

### ***What needs to be done now?***

This submission takes no partisan position on the proposed changes to the administration and management of Crown Lands in New South Wales. However, it does make some general points about how all NSW Schools and Institutes, both past and current, should be treated by both the state and local government.

In the past, the state and, particularly, local government have poorly served the Schools and Institutes movement. Remember, since the Second World War some 400 odd Schools and Institutes have been "transferred" to their local Municipal Council in terms of the provisions of the Trustees of Schools of Arts Enabling Act [1902] **OR** section 357A of the Local Government Act as amended which said that **"the trustees of Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts may transfer their libraries, land and premises to councils who shall then hold them upon trust for library purposes"**.

Now while some Councils maintained the premises of the School or Institute, so acquired, as a Branch Library or, in a few cases, as the Central Municipal Library, most did not. Even those that did initially honour the intent of section 357A, eventually came to a view that the former School



*Singleton Mechanics' Institute*

or Institute building or site should be given another public use [demolished to provide a Municipal car park say] **or** given to a section of the community [as a Moslem prayer room say] **or** sold to partly fund a new municipal asset on a different site.

Most Councils, which received School or Institutes in this period, operated them as "public halls", usually called **Community Halls**. Some of these halls have been widely used and very well

maintained and in a few cases extended and even rebuilt. But, except in a very small number of cases, the building's original name and purpose has been lost. There are very few people under 70 years of age, who know what a School or Institute was and what it did.

To take but one example, AMISA is currently conducting a survey of Schools and Institutes, which have WWI Memorials. From an initial partial pilot study there appears to be at least some 100 plus such Schools or Institutes. This is not surprising given that the School or Institute was most likely the only local public building [besides the local public school, the other common site for a WWI Memorial] at that time. However, when contacted, the relevant Council Officer[s] will deny having the existence of any such local School or Institute located memorial, even though there was [and is] a **Mechanics Institute** built in the late 1890s, which became after WWI a **Soldiers' Memorial School of Arts** [1920] and when transferred to the Council in the 1970s was renamed the **Memorial Hall**. This is one more example of the tendency of many people to believe that "history" only begins with their own involvement with the issue under discussion.

### ***Our Recommendations***

No matter what the final outcomes of the total review may be, **we submit that:**

- Schools and Institutes in NSW should be accorded the respect, by both levels of government, that their history and their contribution to their local community's and the state's social and cultural development warrants
- Such respect should extend to an acknowledgement of their unique contribution to the development of our "vernacular architecture". There are/were, for example, some amazingly beautiful "weatherboard gothic" Schools and Institutes



*Mururrundi Literary Institute*

## SO MUCH MORE THAN A HUMBLE HALL CONT...

- This acknowledgement should involve a commitment to the maintenance of the physical fabric of the Schools and Institutes no matter under whose auspices they now operate
- Moreover, those schools and Institutes that are still performing a public role in serving their community's social and cultural needs should have access to infrastructure grants to: fix the roof; upgrade the toilets; and meet the requirements of contemporary public safety regulations etc.
- Finally, no obstacles should be placed in the way of those Schools and Institutes who wish to continue as self managed institutions, however, this will require assistance with such matters as insurance cover [both public liability and building] and local council rates and levies.



*Finley School of Arts*

### ***A Concluding Comment***

In more recent times there has been a renewed interest in the Schools, both in terms of their history and their current potential to achieve many significant local community and state government goals. This is especially the case in smaller rural towns and those suburbs where their "Main Streets" are in steep decline as they lose out to the ever-expanding regional shopping, entertainment, medical, and administrative centres. Remember, that the local School or Institute originally developed as a comprehensive provider of educational, social, cultural, civic and recreational services to its community. Perhaps

there is, once again, a need for a single multi-purpose facility to replace the more specialized facilities that can no longer be "supported" in these "declining" communities. Such a facility as well as providing the more usual community/public hall services to its local community, could be the venue on a part-time basis for: the local depot of the regional library; a rural payments centre; the occasional cinematic or theatrical presentation; the local MP to meet his constituents; the training programs offered to unemployed youth; local adult education classes; the meetings of the broad spectrum of local community groups; etc.

***Perhaps, the day of the Schools and the Institutes will dawn once more.***

Dr. Roger K Morris AM  
President AMISA Inc.

## MIV *News*

### GOVERNMENT AGENCY TO INVESTIGATE HISTORIC PLACES

Earlier in the year the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council announced it was conducting an Investigation into Historic Places and MIV was invited to nominate a representative to be a member of the Community Reference Group. MIV has nominated our Honorary Secretary Judith Dwyer for the position which will involve meetings over the two year period of the Investigation

The purpose of the Historic Places Investigation is to:

- review current information and information sources on historic places on public land, including the representation of historical themes;
- examine and provide an assessment of current information, management arrangements for historic places in Victoria and any issues and

opportunities related to their future protection, use and sustainability; and

- make recommendations for opportunities to improve management arrangements to conserve, protect and enhance the historic, community and educational values of these places, including potential for sustainable use and adaptive re-use of historic assets.

Over the years many of you have contacted MIV with issues of particular concern regarding the management of your buildings and facilities. It is our hope that this will be an opportunity to ensure that these are addressed in the Final Report.

MIV has made a submission to VEAC covering many of these issues but if you have any particular issues that you would like to see raised email Judith Dwyer at jad134@hotmail.com.

## THE ANZACS

Mechanics' Halls, particularly those in Victoria, had been well prepared for World War I. They had witnessed Lord Thomas Brassey, who travelled widely as Victoria's Governor (1895-1900), speak on a number of occasions about being prepared for War. Many country towns had Rifle Clubs and Easter Military Camps were being staged first at Queenscliff and Langwarrin, and then at Clarkefield from the 1880s, so when the Boer War broke out there were many young men eager for the stoush. This was even more so when the decision was made to make them cavalrymen rather than infantrymen, as they were generally experienced horsemen.

The Boers ran a 'hit and run' campaign with few scruples and the Australians paid dearly with the massacre at Wilmanrust. Bushveldt Carbineers Harry 'Breaker' Morant and Peter Handcock tried them at 'their game' and paid the price, and were executed by firing squad. An exonerated but broken George Witton returned to Lancefield to write his damning *Scapegoats of the Empire*.

But Kilmore-district born Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie 'LC' or 'Elsie' Maygar won the VC and Yeaborn Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan McLeish served with distinction and became folk heroes in their communities. A large framed portrait of Maygar was on the now demolished Longwood Mechanics' Institute wall.

Massive military camps were held at: Seymour in 1910, at which Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener attended; followed by successive Easter camps at Kilmore in 1911 and 1912, which attracted up to 5000 men from around Victoria, many with their horses. Citizen soldier Major James Burston returned to his birthplace, to command the two camps at Kilmore.

These were massive logistical operations involving: engineering, housing, watering and lighting; transport; provisioning and catering both at base and in the field; medical treatment; and heavy gun deployment. Trains arrived around the clock with men, tents and supplies. The YMCA provided a large recreational tent. In short very much an intense preparation for War.

On the outbreak of World War I on 28 July 1914, Maygar rallied his former Boer War colleagues and

others, the story of which is told in *Maygar's Boys: A Biographical History of the 8th Light Horse Regiment AIF 1914-19*. Patsy Adam Smith's masterful overview *The Anzacs* tells of the general recruiting from August 1914.

The recruits trained at Broadmeadows, Seymour or Langwarrin and were readied for sailing to Albany in WA where the convoy was to assemble. The first convoy sailed from there to Middle East on 1 November 1914.

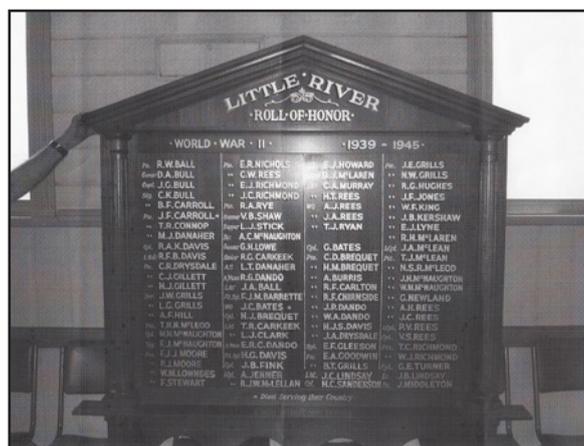
Nurses were also recruited, and some of these had experienced service during the Boer War and *Guns and Brooches: Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War* tells their poignant story. Kilmore-born Matron Mary McKenzie Finlay was one of the first batch of six nurses and sailed on the *Shropshire* to Albany on 20 October 1914.

The War took its toll on her health and after briefly returning to her position at Melbourne Grammar School, died in 1923.

Before they sailed, farewells were staged in the Halls across the State, generally in the form of dances. Many were given presentations of watches, 'Gospels', or pipes. Then came the final farewell at the local railway station with the town band playing. These farewells continued throughout the War.

However, before anyone departed for overseas, the Australian Red Cross was formed nine days after the start of War. In September 1914 Dame Nellie Melba entered the fundraising drive and later became President of the Lilydale Branch. The Red Cross Movement spread like a wildfire and soon there were hundreds of groups located across Victoria and their humanitarian work continued throughout the War in the various community Halls. However the Red Cross' activities were not just limited to fundraising they coordinated and assembled food and comforts packages in local Halls throughout the country. Halls became depots where jumpers, balaclavas and socks, knitted by the thousand pair were simply dropped off.

A youthful Linda Tuttle at Shepparton, in between school lessons, spent the War years knitting dozens of pairs of socks. She recalled each pair had to have a note inserted giving the name and address of the knitter and a 'Good



Honour Rolls in the Little River Mechanics' Institute.  
Photo: Peter Jones

Luck' message. They were then dropped off at the Shepparton Mechanics'. Several years after the War, she recalled a visit from a former soldier who had received and worn her socks and he thanked her for keeping his feet warm on freezing nights on the Western front.

The urgent appeal from France for warm vests resulted in Halls being turned over to 'factories' to make sheep skin vests with local women working in a production line. Many thousands of these were made and sent by rail to Melbourne.

Also in Shepparton and other fruitgrowing areas people went to the Institutes to pick up fruit and jars to make jam. The filled jars were then returned, packed in boxes and railed to Melbourne.

The Red Cross was not the only one in the fundraising field, there was also the YMCA and the Commonwealth and State governments with War Bonds and Peace Loans.

Meanwhile the ANZAC troops were landed on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and the bitter and bloody impasse continued until the arrival of Lord Kitchener for his inspection on 13 November 1915. Things moved swiftly from there to the final evacuation of the 41,000 men by 20 December 1915. It is reported that Lieutenant-Colonel Maygar was the last to step off from the shore with the brilliantly executed Gallipoli evacuation.

Back home the impact of Gallipoli became all too apparent as clergy, police and in some cases the local mailmen delivered the sad news to family members. Then as Eric Bogle recounts in his *The Band Played Waltz Matilda* the legless, the armless, the blinded, and the insane were carried down the homeport gangway.

Some of these soldiers travelled on recruiting and war bond campaigns or were employed in administrative posts. Others spent many years in various forms of recuperative surgery. Others wore balaclavas to cover the massive facial scarring. Matron Finlay's brother George spent years working in myofacial surgery, firstly at Sidcup in Kent, then back in Melbourne. Noted medico Dr



*Elmore Memorial Hall*



*Lake Charm Hall Memorial Gates*

Colin 'Bricky' Mackenzie was advocating his 'up and at em' strategy for wounded soldiers to get their muscles moving again and quickly. Western Front veteran Joe Ford recalled that after one of his legs was amputated he was on crutches in days with his wooden leg. Later back in Victoria he was to plough many an acre following his horse team on foot.

After Gallipoli the Australians were then separated into two sections – Middle East and Western Front. Maygar took the Middle East and the Charge of Beersheba after which he was killed. Mansfield High School teacher Lieutenant George Langley was sent off to raise and train the 1st Australian Company of the Imperial Camel Corps, comprised mostly of soldier misfits. Langley 'clicked' with his Company members, who went into operations with Colonel TE Lawrence of Arabia fame. At War's end he returned to become a leader in Legacy for the welfare of soldier families.

Others like Boer War veteran Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Edward 'Pompey' Elliott finished up on the Western Front at the disastrous Battle of Fromelles but saw a triumphant reversal at the Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux. Pompey Elliott returned home after the War and spoke at Anzac Day ceremonies, officiated at Memorial Hall openings, and was a leader in ex-soldier welfare, until his suicide.

One interesting section of the Red Cross was the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau which opened in Cairo on 21 October 1915. It was led by Vera Deakin, a daughter of politician Alfred. Later she moved to London where she coordinated the search for missing soldiers. She continued this work into 1919. It required persistent effort and in some cases it took two or three years to establish a soldier's fate which was generally death, but sometimes alive as a prisoner of war.

Meanwhile at home, the Conscription debate continued in the Halls throughout Victoria. Archbishop Daniel Mannix made his views very



## *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.*

### **BALMORAL MECHANICS' HALL (Est. c1884)**

***Chameleon Arts presents Community Artworks from The Big Draw and Woolly West Fest. Saturday 29 November 2014, 9am-5pm***

Chameleon Arts welcomes everyone to an exhibition of community artwork. We'll be filling our Hall with ... Our Woolly creations that were included in Hamilton and surrounding towns' inaugural and highly successful Woolly West Fest which was held in August 2014 in conjunction with the annual Sheepvention Expo. If you haven't met Balmoral's Eweina, the handcrafted purple sheep and her four shopfront lambs, they are a must-see. Eweina's diary is filling fast so this might be a rare appearance! Artworks from our first ever 'Big Draw', held on 11 October 2014. Our community drawing event was themed "It's Our World – A Celebration of Our Environment". Balmoral locals unleashed their inner artists against the backdrop of our vibrant and inspiring Martinich-Carran mural. Come and see the results! We are proud to showcase our local works.

### **DEAN HALL & MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. c1890)**

A yearly calendar of activities has kept the Dean folk busy. The year started with a very successful Trivia night. The Big Spud Dinner held in the evening of 31 May included the weigh in of the biggest spud with the honour being to hold the **Dean Hall Heavy Spud Perpetual Trophy** for the ensuing year. The Annual Big Spud Fest held in June 2014 was yet another triumph for the humble spud. An afternoon program of events included the inevitable potato bag race.

Dean is a great venue for a corporate dinner, wedding, regional meeting or family reunion, with excellent kitchen facilities and plenty of parking. Contact details Liz 0412 674 827 or email [lizkelly@gmail.com](mailto:lizkelly@gmail.com).

### **DUNROBIN MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1914)**



*Photo: Dunrobin Community Facebook*

The Dunrobin Hall float themed 'Dunrobin 100 Years' was placed second in Kelpie Country Street Parade on 7 June. The Parade which takes place in Casterton attracts floats from around the region and is an integral part of the Annual Australian Kelpie Muster program.

### **FAWCETT HALL (Est. 1882)**



*Photo: Fawcett Hall Facebook*

With their nearly finished outdoor wood-fired pizza oven in place, the renovations really are starting to finish off at Fawcett Hall. On Saturday October 4, at 2pm, the Fawcett Hall Reserve Committee of Management will celebrate together with community members, sponsors, business sponsors, stakeholders and Regional Development Victoria the finalisation of the Final Upgrade Project for Fawcett Hall.

This opening will signify that the hall is ready for community usage and the completion of the Conservation Management Plan.

With a new kitchen, rainwater hook up, 3 toilets, outside decking, solar panel installation and outside lighting, the hall is equipped now to host functions, events, meetings and more.

A dedicated team of local people have worked tirelessly for the halls' restoration since February 2004, securing grants, fundraising with hall events, sourcing local and regional sponsorship and coming together as volunteers to ensure the hall is preserved for the future usage by the community. It really has been a great team effort for the Fawcett community to see the building grow and evolve through their own handiwork. Facebook updates have constantly kept all those interested informed and up-to-date with the latest developments, and the hall bookings are starting to roll in for the coming months. Congratulations, Fawcett!

#### **FISH CREEK MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1899)**

The theme for this year's Annual Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival was 'music'. Held over a ten day period from 16-25 May it featured a number 'add-ons': musician Anne Norman returned for a Musical Hall Night titled 'String Fever Concert'; a Mini-Film Festival featuring musical movies with a tea theme; two Elders Days; a Family Fun Day and Fair; Musical Workshops held throughout the Festival; and of course the High Tea.

Each of the sections was well supported and these included: Traditional; Butch; Exuberant Whimsy; Aquatic; Popular Choice, the winner of which was Sonata in Tea Flat; and Packer's Prize. The judges also selected a number for Honourable Mentions.

It was a fun time with many 'a cuppa' Devonshire shared in the Hall on 18 and 25 May from 2-5pm, with other activities being spread to other venues. This is yet another example of finding a niche and running with it.

The Fish Creek Huge Garage Sale is staged in the Hall during January and donations are already being received. This is the Hall's major fundraiser each year.

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

In keeping with its longterm interest in the local Hume and Hovell Monument and surrounding Crown Land Reserve, the Kilmore Institute has recently been very proactive. It has produced a trifold leaflet *Kilmore's Crown Jewels* detailing the various components of Kilmore's town-based 157ha Crown Land Reserve, which is the remnant of the original 1853 Commonage Reserve grant of 518ha.

The Institute, along with other community groups and individuals, recently made a submission to VicRoads Environmental Effects Statement Committee of Inquiry about the Bypass Option which will in effect bisect the Monument Hill Reserve. It also plans to appear before a scheduled Heritage Council of Victoria Hearing which will consider an application to have the whole Kilmore Crown Land Reserve listed on its Register of Historic Places. The Reserve has seen many and varied uses since it was created in 1853.

#### **KOOREH MEMORIAL HALL (Est. c1884)**



A dance with old time new vogue. We will be dancing the night away to Carmel's Music. A delicious supper will be provided. The dance has been going for over 20 years.

The Kooreh Hall celebrated its 90th birthday last year! The main use of the hall is for ballroom dance classes, which occur every two weeks from March to November. Our Christmas break-up is held every year in December for the whole district. Lots of littlies have now started coming along now that santa comes to visit. The Hall was out of action for more than 12 months due the floods that went through our region in 2011. The flood damaged mainly the floor and the kitchen with water rising up to the level of the bottom of the seats. However, we have been fortunate to have made repairs to the Hall now and have had upgraded facilities. The Kooreh Hall Dance had a couple of years off during the repairs however we are back on track following renovations – the dance will be good for your body and the mind.

Date: Saturday 22 November  
Venue: Kooreh Memorial Hall  
Address: Wimmera Highway  
Time: 8.00pm – 12midnight  
Entry: \$8

#### **LYONVILLE HALL (Est. 1881)**

Located on the Woodend-Daylesford Road, the quaint hamlet of Lyonville is not backward in coming forward. It has its own space on the



Photo: spadetoblade.com

Central Highlands Arts Atlas. 'Lyonville Hall is a quaint, classic wooden country hall. It has had very little renovation and it certainly adds to its charm.' It hosts the Annual Fireman's Ball, Christmas Carols and an annual Bake Off and Woodchop. There is also the occasional travelling theatrical event and an increasing number of weddings. There's ample parking and the large mowed lawn space adjoining the Hall, makes it ideal for a marquee.

The Hall seats 100. 'It is perfect for live music as the acoustics are excellent... Two effective split system air conditioners ensure the Hall is comfortable during the cold Lyonville winter or a hot summer day.'

The ability to turn out a good cuppa was enhanced recently with a \$135,000 makeover of the Hall's kitchen and upgrade in equipment. (If you are looking for something a little more bracing there is the nearby Radio Springs Hotel.) Well done all. Bookings to: Kareena Hodgson. Tel: (03) 5348 5631; Email: kareenahodgson@gmail.com

### MACORNA HALL (Est. 1892)



Mrs and Mrs George Welsh opened their Macorna Hall on 18 July 1892. It was officially opened by Shire President, J Cullen Jnr. The Hall was 60ft x 20ft, with a supper room of 13ft x 40ft, and 'a caterer's room' of 13ft x 12ft.

Later in community ownership it was well-used by the community. The Hall was reclad with crimped steel in the 1990s. A new external paved walkway leads to a new entrance, complete with

internal toilets which were constructed in the 1990s. Its use continued until 2011 when the new Community Centre was built at the Recreation Ground.

Now with broken windows, a leaky roof and open doors it needs a new use. Is there anyone out there interested? Contact the Shire of Gannawarra.

### MALMSBURY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1860)

Some very good news has recently been received by Malmsbury Historical Society that the lease of the Institute to the Malmsbury Advance Association has been terminated. The Society, which has been a long term tenant of the building, has recently been offered a lease by Council, which the Society has accepted.

In the meantime the MAA have cleared the building of its heaters, tables, fridge and digital television. Council have recently resolved to install reverse cycling heating units and to develop a five year forward management plan. This will involve the removal of the 1970s asbestos from the kitchen and toilets and an upgrade to current standards. The wish list includes the replacement of the items that have been removed by the MAA and solar panels for the roof.

Business for the Society will be 'as usual' but the Society is keen to continue use of the building by the community for meetings, displays and combined activities. Well done all in securing this win for the community.

### MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM (Est. 1939)

The Ath is taking a solid place in Melbourne's literature society with a range of Book Clubs, related lectures and the occasional book launch. (The Ath recently hosted the launch of Ken James' *West Melbourne Literary Institute: A History*, by Dr Don Garden.)

Their most recent conversazione, in which they partnered with Sisters in Crime, **Val (McDermid) Down Under: Tartan Noir Queen spills all to Angela Savage**, and she did live to tell the tale, was yet another successful foray into the literary community.

Librarian Rose Blustein, in keeping with crime fiction theme, recommends the following crime authors: Orhan Pamuk; JB Priestley; Bill Pronzini; Patrick Quinlan; and Ben Rehder. All these authors and more are well represented in The Ath's amazing reading range. Indeed 'The Pleasure of Words!'

Talking of range, if you want to stock up your holiday house with books or even provide an imaginative gift of a dozen or two books, The Ath's sale table provides an extravaganza of books mostly at \$1 each. Membership is \$99 (\$89 Seniors) with a right to borrow thirty items at a time for up to four weeks.

Check out their website [www.melbourneathenaeum.org.au](http://www.melbourneathenaeum.org.au)

### **MOONAMBEL PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1901)**

#### ***Pantomime- 'CINDERELLA', Saturday 1 November & Sunday 2 November 2014***

The Moonambel Community Theatre Company put on at least two shows every year and are a very talented bunch of performers, ably led by two 'ostensibly retired' opera singers. They have played to packed houses/halls for the past ten years! These are their 'retirement' years not 'working years that I'm referring to. Both spent many years working over in London & thus have brought their considerable expertise here to Moonambel. This show promises not to disappoint once again! The proceeds of their raffle will go towards our hall. Visitors come from near and far to see these wonderful performances. They are all very much 'tongue in cheek'- very clever indeed. Their latest offering 'Cinderella' will run over two sessions: Saturday 1 November at 8pm and Sunday 2nd November matinee at 4.30pm. Entry: \$10.00 or \$2.00 for children 12 yrs old & under

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

As Prahran prepares for its third move in its 160 year history some good news has come its way. The City of Stonnington have voted to contribute \$40,000 each year over the next three years to facilitate the shift and re-start at their new address in St Edmonds Road. Council also contributed \$2000 towards the implementation of the PMI's new catalogue. Merging existing catalogues and a new website to come on line later in the year will provide for a more streamlined administration.

But there's more the Sir William Brooke Charitable Foundation have also again agreed to contribute a further \$5000 towards the fitout and furnishing of the new building.

The PMI Short History Awards again drew a large number of entries and the winner will be announced on the PMI website on 20 October.

PMI's Manager Tim McKenna and Librarian Christine Worthington recently had cameo roles in Channel 9's reality TV program 'The Block'.

Foreman Keith had an underground tank problem and he went to the Prahran Mechanics' Institute to research the previous use of the Block's site at 121 High Street. Tim and Christine's detective work showed it to be the site of a former Ampol service station.

The August 2014 newsletter announced twenty-eight new members had been admitted since June. The eighteen volunteers had completed 682 volunteer hours in the similar period. Projects include indexing local histories. Extra material has also been added to the Ancestry Library Edition available at PMI. If you're into Tech, they are also available on Facebook.

Indeed the PMI is a busy place and you can be part of it by way of an: Individual Member, \$12; Student or Pensioner \$10; Institutional, \$30. Website: [www.pmi.net.au](http://www.pmi.net.au)

### **ROMSEY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1870)**



On Sunday November 9th the Romsey Mechanics' Institute and the Romsey Neighbourhood House will be holding an Antique Collectables Display at the Romsey Mechanics' Institute, 122 Main St Romsey.

There will be displays of a variety of items ranging from antique bottles, trains, pottery and ceramic ware, Shearing handpieces and tools, hunting whips plus many more. A display of children's collections will also be featured. An appraiser will be on site as well as demonstrations in Chalk Painting and Jewellery making.

The cost is a gold coin, appraisals \$5 a piece or 3 for \$12. Morning and afternoon tea on sale, provided by Romsey Red Cross.

If you are interested in having a display or are interested in booking an appraisal please contact Gail on 0416 028 219

### **SANDFORD MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1871)**

The Mechanics Institute is located at 14 Burke Street, in the centre of the 'village' of Sandford

opposite the site of the former State School. It sits adjacent to the Forester's Hall, at 16 Burke Street. Both buildings share the original Mechanics Institute Reserve, but a simple post and wire fence surrounds each building and its land, defining one from the other. The Mechanics Institute was built in 1886. Both buildings were the result of local people coming together for mutual benefit. John Stewart Anderson, a local saddler, was an important early member of the Mechanics Institute at Sandford, and was also a member of the Board of Advice for the South Riding to the Shire of Glenelg, the Sandford Common Committee, the Rifle Club, the Sandford Cemetery Trust, and a foundation member of the Ancient Order of Foresters. He established 'penny readings' and the money raised formed the nucleus of the library later housed in the reading room at the rear of the Mechanics' Hall. The Mechanics' Institute is a simple red brick building with a corrugated iron roof. The interiors are simple, and appear to have been little altered since about 1920. The floors are local hardwood timber and the internal walls are rendered. As secretary of the Institute he called for tenders and James McCormack was the successful tenderer. The Sandford Hall is currently used for monthly Village Markets, for Line dancing and card playing and some CFA and Community Meetings.

This is a quaint little country hall in a small rural farming town. Come and join us for a sausage sizzle, coffee, tea, cold drink and a sweet treat and sit under our heritage listed Jubilee Oak Tree and listen to some live music by local musicians. There will be many stalls with something for everyone ranging from bric-a-brac, vegies, craft, sweets, books, art and much more!

On Sunday 9 November they are staging their Village Market and Gathering under the Jubilee Oak Tree. You can set up your own stall for \$10. Entry is free.

For more information and to make a booking call Trish on 0481067441

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

Tallarook was recently named as Regional Arts Victoria's third winner of their 'Most Kick-Ass Presenter Award'. RAV's Performing Arts Manager Kane Forbes said 'You can rest assured Tallarook is a celebrated national location. Everyone absolutely loves performing at Tallarook hosted by Libby [Webster] and

her team. It's one of the best nights on tour. It's famous.' Well done, Tallarook!

Check out Tallarook happenings including its monthly market by Googling 'Tallarook Mechanics' Institute'.

### **TATURA CIVIC HALLS (Est. 1888s)**

Fundraising is proceeding apace at Tatura with Mechanics' and Victory Halls President Tom Perry and Secretary Ian Grant hosting the Member for Shepparton Jeanette Powell on a recent visit and inspection. On her visit Ms Powell presented the Halls Committee with a new Victorian flag. An interesting snippet of history arises therefrom. 'Victoria's flag dates back to 1865, when Australian colonies were empowered to use vessels of war, and thus each colony needed its own distinctive flag. Victoria was the first Australian colony to have its own flag and it was first flown on 10 February 1870, aboard Victoria's colonial warship HMVS *Nelson*'.

Victoria Hall celebrates its ninetieth anniversary in September 2015 and here's hoping we will be able to celebrate with a suite of restoration works done in time for the event.

### **WANDONG HALL (Est. 1901)**



The Wandong Hall has been a busy place since it has been refurbished. A Craft Group meets every Monday; The Lightwood Flats Book Club meets monthly; the Wandong Country Knitters meet monthly; Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group meets monthly; the In2 Quilting Group have a monthly quilting day; the U3A Kilmore and District Book Club and the Wandong History Group also meet there. During school term the LA Dance Academy conducts classes there every Thursday. It's a good spot for regional meetings with good catering facilities and parking. Check out their website at: [wandong.vic.au](http://wandong.vic.au), Wandong Public Hall. Tel: Christine (03) 5787 1870

# *The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes*

## AUSTRALIA

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### WOODENBONG PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1911)



Situated 8km south of the Queensland border its land surface is the result of volcanic activity of twenty-four million years ago. Nearby is the forested Macpherson Ranges with a number of significant peaks of which Mount Lindesay is the highest at 1195m.

The township was gazetted in 1908 and the timber industry was then the main employer. With the land cleared, dairying and cropping became the established industries.

The town hosts a K-12 School with about 350 students, which has a significant regional catchment and teacher employment.

The annual Woodenbong Rodeo ran for many years. However today the district hosts the twice yearly Yamaha Australian Dirt Bike Adventures which bring about 700 riders to each event and many visitors to the area.

The district also attracts Yowie spotters, with reported sightings back into the 1890s, and the most recent being in 2003.

In 2014 the town's population was about 330, with a district population of 650. The mainstay of the area is hospitality, tourism, with cattle grazing.

The movement to build a hall in Woodenbong commenced with a meeting held in 1911. A land grant was obtained and a bank loan of £200 was arranged with residents acting as guarantors. In 1913 the contract was let to John Watson to construct the hall. It was 40ft x 30ft with 12ft walls, of weatherboard construction, and had a rosewood and mahogany floor, and a galvanised iron roof.

The *Warwick Examiner* reported in August 1913 that the Hall 'is expected to be completed in about two weeks'. It was opened on 8 October

1913 by the Hon CA Lee, who was presented with 'a handsomely mounted umbrella' on the occasion. A Sports Meeting was held in the afternoon and a Ball was staged in the evening.

The Hall, which was rebuilt in 1957, was the longtime venue for films which ran through until 2013, screened for some fifty years by Eric Taylor. The Hall still remains the centre of community life, with an annual Anzac Day service and the Cancer Council's Biggest Cup of Tea. A Hall Sub-Committee conducts the monthly Yowie Country Market and Music, that has been running since 2008 on the last Saturday of the month, between 8am and 3pm.

The day-long annual Australia Day proceedings are also centred on the Hall and brings the whole community together for a day of celebration. After the flagraising the Woodenbong Australia Day ambassador presents the wards, generally in the presence of the local MP. Awards are made to Senior and Junior Citizens and all are given the opportunity to give their own stories and what is their view of being an Australian. Similarly the Woodenbong boy and girl school captains address the assembly.

The free community spit roast lunch then follows. Then everybody sits down to watch the annual City versus Country cricket match which normally attracts a couple of big names from A Grade cricket.

After that the adjournment is to the long-running Woodenbong Hotel where games are played and food is again served.

The Hall is managed by the Woodenbong Public Hall Reserve Trust under the Presidency of Reg Spencer. The Trust is presently working through a Hall makeover, starting with the toilets, and then the replacement of the fifty year old roof.

Records of the Woodenbong Public Hall are held by the NSW State Record Centre which cover the period 1957-78. *Photo: www.helenthura.com*

## QUEENSLAND

### MOUNT MORGAN SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1887)

Located in Central Queensland on the River Dee, Mount Morgan or as it was then known as South Calliungal, started as mining town in 1882. The three Morgan brothers had pegged claims on



Photo: [www.mountmorganexperience.com](http://www.mountmorganexperience.com)

most of the mountain top at that time and later sold their interest to mining magnate William Knox Darcy who used his new found wealth to finance oil exploration in Iran which led to the formation of Anglo-Persian Oil Company (BP). The mine which produced gold, copper and silver closed in 1990. The town stages the annual Golden Mount Festival.

The first School of Arts was established in 1889 and the first lecture was given by William McIwraith, President of the Central Queensland Caledonian Society, who gave a lecture titled 'The Songs of Burns'. The Hall opened on 11 September 1891 and burnt down about 1894. It was rebuilt on a newly proclaimed School of Arts Reserve in 1895. Dame Nellie Melba performed here in 1911. The second building was burned down on 25 April 1923. A Special Meeting was called the following day which was held in the Commonwealth Bank to discuss a new building.

In the meantime the Library reopened in the leased St Mary's Institute with books imported from London by Mount Morgan Mine Manager, AA Boyd.

The adjacent library and reading room reopened on 24 April 1924. The present building was erected by W Butcher and R Ames and opened with a grand ball on 24 August 1924 with State Government loan of £3000.

It was a film venue. The Hall was used to accommodate US troops during World War II. Refurbished in 2011, the Hall was reopened in November of that year.

The visiting US 7th Fleet Band last year gave a free performance in the Hall as a part of the military exercise Talisman Saber in 2013.

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

### **HALLETT INSTITUTE (Est. 1879)**

The area was first settled by the Hallett brothers - Alfred and John, in the 1840s and they grazed sheep on their Willogoleeche Run. [George] Goyder's Line which roughly delineates cropping from pastoral enterprises passes through the area. Today the township of Hallett, population 120, is the advertised 'Hub of 3 Great Trails'.

The first Institute Hall was built at 29 Julia Street and the architect was Frederick William Holder and the builders were George & William Sara and John Dunstan at the contracted price of £778. The foundation stone was laid on 6 August 1879 by Rowland Rees MP. The building was 30ft x 45ft, 18ft high, with two rooms at the front 12ft x 16ft each. The stone was sourced from Gilbert's Quarry, Hallett. There were 150 books in the library and a Lipp & Son piano had been purchased. Mr Rees returned for the opening on 10 November 1879. The major fundraiser was to be the long running annual Institute Sports Meeting. Consequently the Hall had been cleared of debt after two years.

By 1886 Secretary Francis Stringer Smith advised there were 441 books in the library, there was an average daily attendance of six, with a total attendance of 1860 for the year. Periodicals to which it subscribed included: *South Australian Advertiser*, *South Australian Times*, *Burra Record*, *Jamestown Review*, *South Australian Government Gazette*, *Australasian Sketcher* and *London Graphic*.

The Hallett District Council became a building tenant and in March 1894 tender for 'Repairs and Improvements to Hallett Institute' were advertised, which enlarged the building that was to be later taken over the by Council. It was subsequently used the by the Church of England from 1929 until 1956. It was then used by the RSL and still later a local playgroup. One of the two front rooms was being used as a library and the other by the Historical Society for a Museum. In the 1980s it was sold into private ownership.

A new Hallett Institute was designed by [Edward] Davies, [Charles William] Wooldridge and [Francis Hedley 'Frank'] Counsell built in Alfred Street/Jessie Streets in 1928-29. The foundation stone was laid by Miss Lily Margaret Melrose on 28 November 1928. The building was to be erected by day labour under the supervision of TE Richards, WS Murray and ES Statton. Peter Findlay was 'the mason in charge' assisted by H Dunemann. The two-storey building of local sandstone, also contained a basement supper room. The plans of which still exist. The building cost £6,225 which included fittings and furniture. It was officially opened by the remarkable 'blind squatter' and philanthropist Sir John Melrose of Ulooloo on 20 November 1929. Following the opening a sports program, fete, afternoon tea, high tea, then a concert followed, for which a jazz band had been engaged. All these events resulted in some £500 being raised on the day. (Findlay also built the Town Hall and Masonic Temple.)



*Outback Odyssey riders gathered for dinner and breakfast in the Hallett Institute's Hall.  
Photo: [www.hallettmidnorth.com](http://www.hallettmidnorth.com)*

A projection room and billiard room were upstairs. Council later used the billiard room as a meeting room. On the ground floor was the stage and concert hall which could accommodate 370 people. One of the two front rooms was used as a library for which residents paid a subscription to use. The other was used as a meeting room, as well as by a visiting doctor and banking staff from Burra.

Eventually Council moved downstairs and the library was relocated to the old Institute building in Julia Street. Upon Shire amalgamation in 1997 the library returned to one front room and the Historical Society was located in the other room. Meanwhile the upstairs area was turned over to the use of Country Fire Service and the SES.

In 1960, at which the basement supper room yet again became overcome with smoke, Sir John Melrose's daughter Mrs Lily Owen-Smyth subscribed the funds to add an above ground supper room at the rear to her father's memory.

Past Hall users the CWA and Red Cross have consistently fundraised for Hall down through the years organising at least one major fundraiser each year to add to the Hall's amenity.

The Historical Society has been assembling the records of local organisations that have become defunct, like the tennis, netball and football clubs.

The region is noted for its fine Merino wool production and the cement casts of a Merino ram and ewe are fixed to two Statton gates (ES [Edward Stanley] Statton was a longtime Hall Committeeman.) with a strategically placed sheepdog. These were located in front of the Institute in the 1997 with tree panels of town signage and history.

## **TASMANIA**

### **BUSHY PARK HALL [UPPER DERWENT UNITED HALL] (Est. 1872)**

The Bushy Park area was largely owned by the Shoobridge family which settled there in

1822. They are credited with having grown the first hops in Tasmania and were pioneering orchardists.

The Bushy Park Workingmen's Club was formed about 1872 and it occupied rented premises.

The current Hall is located in Glenora-Gordon River Road. It was built on land donated by Vincent Shoobridge (1872-1948). William Ebenezer Shoobridge (1846-1940) was President at the time of its building and his son Henry William Shoobridge (1874-1963) was to be Secretary for almost forty years. Designed by Messrs [Robert Flack] Ricards (1866-1938) and [Frank J o s i a s ] H e y w a r d ( 1 8 7 6 - 1942) and cost around £1,100. It comprised a central block of two storey with wings of one storey and was constructed from timber



donated by WE and HW Shoobridge; the piano was given by HW Shoobridge; and WE Shoobridge donated the cinematographic apparatus, two billiard tables, and a bagatelle table. With the books removed from the Club's old library there was now 1400 volumes in the new one.

The building was from the outset lit by electricity from WE Shoobridge's 'hydro-electric' plant. 'The main hall is 72ft x 30ft and is airy. The floor is in excellent condition for dancing, and the arrangements for the bioscope pictures are everything that could be desired in fact, in a trial run the other night the verdict was excellent; could not be beaten in Hobart, let alone Melbourne or Sydney. Then the Oddfellows' Lodge [Glenora Branch] is very satisfactory, being comfortable and convenient. The Bushy Park [Workingmen's] Club that has weathered so many years has taken on a new lease of life with its new quarters. The billiard room with its two three-quarter tables, is all that could be desired, while the games room and the library are excellent.'

It was officially opened by the Governor of Tasmania Sir Harry Barron on Wednesday 30 August 1911. Afternoon tea followed. A biography

presentation in the evening was followed by a dance.

The Upper Derwent Roll of Honour was unveiled on 17 December 1916 by WE Shoobridge MHA. The roll contained 159 names, with a further eleven who had died on active service by that time. The board was made of polished blackwood and painted in gold, all the work of Abraham Needham (1860-1922) of Hobart.

Major restoration works took place in 2010 which comprised roof replacement, painting and with Market hire proceeds of \$12,000, electrical rewiring. There has also been a more recent kitchen upgrade.

The Hall, which has been 'a constant landmark in the Derwent Valley', celebrated its centenary on 27 August 2011 with an afternoon tea and historical display of photographs and memorabilia. The advertising flyer touted 'Come reminisce with us! Take a trip down memory lane.'

The Hall Committee's, now well established, Bushy Park Community Market is held in and around the Hall every Saturday 8am-1pm and it attracts around one hundred stalls. The Hall is currently regularly used by the Upper Derwent Anglers Club and Oddfellows Lodge. Bookings: Tel: (03) 6286 1160 *Photo: gallopini.blogspot.com.au*

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### DARDANUP AGRICULTURAL HALL (Est. 1893)

The area was first settled by Thomas Little in 1852, who named his property Dardanup Park. Today it has a population of around 300 people.

Located 'between the Picton-Boyanup Road and the railway line just north of the tourist information bay', the Hall was constructed from November 1893-94 by J&H Gibbs. The 40ft x 20ft Hall was built of local jarrah and weatherboard, and was lined inside with 'varnished matchwood' and was 'well ventilated'. It was opened on 14 March 1894 by Hon. Henry Whittall Venn followed by a tea and concert.

After 'God Save the Queen' was sung by the audience 'the seats were removed by willing hands and dancing [was] kept up with great spirit until the train left for Bunbury'.



*Photo: magictravelblog.com*

Trustees comprising: F Fee; F Johnston; J Maguire; HA Lowrie; and E Gardiner were appointed in March 1894 and rules and regulations were drawn up and a manager was appointed.

The Dardanup Road Board was gazetted in 1894 and it met in and utilised the Hall as an office.

In October 1894 a special train was provided for the Wellington Ploughing Match and a ball was held in the Dardanup Hall in the evening which 'far eclipsed all previous entertainments of the kind held in Dardanup.'

The Government acquired land in the area in the 1920s and the township was gazetted in 1923.

The Dardanup Farmers' Union launched a Junior Farmers' Club in 1949 and this was to meet in the Hall.

In 1955 the Road Board secured a £12,000 loan to build a new Hall adjacent to the Road Board offices. They commissioned Perth architect JW Johnson to design the new hall which was built at 15 Ferguson Road. It was opened by Iven Manning MLA on 18 October 1956.

Located in front of the Hall is the Sir James Mitchell (1866-1951) Memorial. Mitchell was a former Premier of Western Australia 1919-24, and was noted for his agricultural policies in opening up the wheat belt to closer farming settlement.

In 2002 the Dardanup Bull and Barrel Festival commenced. Each year in October since then a large makeshift bull has been built and this is burned on the final night of the festival.

Just outside Dardanup is a place called Gnomeville, in a bushland setting, at the intersection of the Ferguson and Wellington-Lowden Road. The collection started around 1995 when objectors to the proposed roundabout left a few gnomes as witness. The collection has now grown to several hundred with contributions coming from around the world. Refugee gnomes are welcome and can be resettled straight into the Gnomeville community. Gnomeville has its own website.

**UK - ENGLAND****LONGWOOD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est 1858)**

*Photo: [www.yorkshirepost.co.uk](http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk)*

Longwood is located in West Yorkshire about 4km from Huddersfield. The Longwood Young Men's Improvement Society was formed in the 1830s and met in the Huddersfield Temperance Coffee House. This group was renamed as the Longwood Mechanics' Institute in 1844 and continued with meetings and educational activities in the Longwood Baptist Schoolroom.

Following a meeting held in the Baptist Meeting House on 13 June 1857 chaired by the Rev. Charles Packer, the gathering, which comprised both members of the Institute and the Longwood News Room, was informed that upwards of fifty scholars were being accommodated of an evening, but there were 65 males and 15 females on the list. It was then resolved that both the Institute and News Room jointly build a Mechanics' Hall.

The sum of £160.10s was subscribed on the night and collectors were dispatched through the district to raise more. A further meeting on 26 June resolved to construct a building on land leased from Sir Joseph Radcliffe.

A subscription list was drawn up and the three storey building of 'coursed, squared rubble with ashlar dressings and a stone slate roof' was to be constructed and the foundation stone was laid on 30 September 1857. The Institute 'of plain and substantial character' likened to a 'non-conformist chapel' was officially opened by benefactor Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Akroyd MP on 6 October 1858 at a cost of around £750.

As well as classrooms, a school room, a concert hall and reading room, the building incorporated two cottages for the use of the caretaker and schoolmaster respectively.

Each year industrial chemist David Dawson (1808-84), 'the Milnsbridge Poet', delivered 'a rhyming description of the past and present history of [nearby] Milnbridge' at the annual soiree of the Longwood Mechanics' Institute.

In 1876 the school was transferred to the Longwood School Board, which in 1883-84 built the Goitfield Board School to serve as a boy's school and Institute school use ceased in 1884 when students were transferred to that campus.

However educational and community use continued, supplemented by a lending library and a small saving bank.

The Hall was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence during World War II and because of the Prisoner of War Camp at nearby Salendine Nook, the name was removed from the front of the building to prevent the area's identification.

In the 1990s the community nearly lost their Hall but with a determined plan restoration has been ongoing. In 2008 a disabled ramp and porch were added to the front of the building as a 150th anniversary project. A highlight of the year was the opening of the foundation stone to reveal the contents of the time capsule placed there in 1858.

Longwood's Home Page at [longwoodmechanics.org.uk](http://longwoodmechanics.org.uk) tells us much and is an exemplar of what a home page could be.

'A true community building set in the Colne Valley of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD3 4UU United Kingdom. The Victorian Building is held in trust by the Longwood Village Group for the residents of Longwood.

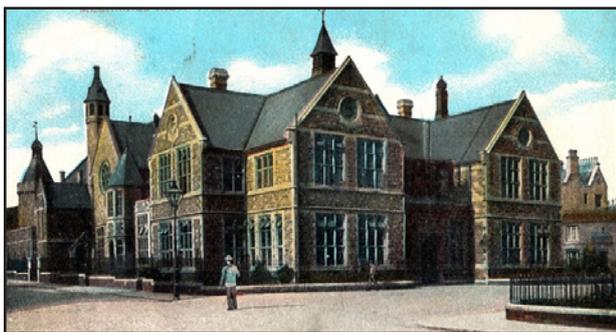
The Main Hall has a large stage with capacity of 80 for dancing and 100 for Shows. Library and information centre. Meeting rooms: Old School Room/dance studio for meetings of up to 30 people; Art Room for meetings of up to 12 people; Philip Taylor Room capacity 8.' Indeed it is now a busy place with table tennis, art clubs, Zumba, ballet, martial arts and creative kids as well as hosting the Longwood Art and Craft and Village Shows.

The Institute conducts the Longwood Village Coffee Shop from 10am to 2.30pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Fairtrade coffee and tea is available, along with homemade cakes and sandwiches. A hot 1, 2 or 3 course dinner is served at 12 noon. Booking is advisable.

Longwood is also home of the annual Longwood Sing established in 1873 and conducted even during the Wars. Known as the 'Mother of all Sings', the Longwood Sing attracts choirs from the region to the specially constructed amphitheatre.

**SWINDON RAILWAY INSTITUTE (Est. 1844)**

Pressure continues to be put on Swindon Borough Council to restore the Railway Institute which is one of the few surviving buildings remaining from the railway works. Former apprentices and workers from Swindon are putting pressure



on the Council before it's too late. A council spokesman said that 'the future of the iconic 159 year-old building was unclear due, to among other problems, a lack of funds and no plans on what it could be used for'. The building dates back to 1855 and was built by the Great Western Railway for its employees and families, providing a reading room, library, health service, coffee room, lecture hall (which could also be used for concerts) and local market! After a fire in 1930, the first floor was converted into the Playhouse Theatre. The Institute closed in 1986 along with the railway works. The building was sold and finally in 2002 it was purchased by Forefront Estates for £500,000. However, Swindon Council were given rights in 2010 to carry out urgent repairs. The roof had to be made safe and the building weather proofed at a cost of £800,000. English Heritage gave £250,000 towards the cost. The basement is flooded and there is a high level of asbestos and leaded paint contamination. The Tudor-Gothic building, which is now Grade II listed, 'would cost tens of millions' to restore, money the Council does not have. Photographs can be accessed via [www.steampicturelibrary.com](http://www.steampicturelibrary.com). Article written by Geoff Courtney in *Heritage Railway*, Issue 192, July 31 – August 27, 2014, pp.26 – 27.

Martyn Walker

## USA

### ATHENAEUM OF PHILADELPHIA (Est. 1814)

The Athenaeum was established by a group of prominent Philadelphians which included Chief Justice William Tilghman, Jacob and Benjamin Gratz, George and Robert Vaux, Nicholas Biddle, Horace Binney, George Cadwalader and Mathew Carey.

'Their first and immediate object was the collection, in some central place, of American and foreign periodicals, publications of politics, literature and science and maps, dictionaries, and other books of reference to which access might be had at all hours of the day.' In addition they hoped to sponsor 'popular lectures upon, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, and History' and



*Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

a museum 'to contain specimens of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, scientifically arranged, natural and artificial curiosities, coins, medals, gems, intaglios, &c.'

After being a longterm tenant of the American Philosophical Society, the Athenaeum acquired the present site on Washington Square. In 1845 newly arrived Scottish-born architect John Notman was commissioned to design the present Italianate Palazzo Revival style building, America's first in that style. The library opened to the public in 1847.

The Athenaeum may well have been housed in National Historic Landmark building, near the Hall of Independence, but it was also subject to the whims of Society and fashion, and in the early 1950s it was near to collapse both financial and to a lesser extent physical.

The hiring of the young Francis James Dallett as librarian from 1955-62 resulted in the repositioning of the Athenaeum by fundraising and exploiting Philadelphia's French connection, Joseph Bonaparte. An aged intransigent Board saw Dallett leave for greener fields and to be succeeded by two other librarians in short succession.

This was a pivotal time in the Athenaeum's history when a young inexperienced but very enthusiastic Roger Moss was hired as Director in 1968. Moss and a succession of Committee people turned the fate of the Athenaeum around to reposition it into Philadelphia's cultural icon that it is today.

This year the Athenaeum is celebrating its bicentenary with a program with Symposia, Lectures, Exhibitions and more! **The Treasures of Athenaeum: 200 Years of Collecting** exhibition opened on 12 September and it shows how Institutions can nurture and collect.

It is pleasing to see the **Roger W Moss Symposium – Philadelphia Architecture: The future** will be launched in conjunction with an exhibition and awards presentation for **Looking Forward: Re-Imagining the Athenaeum of Philadelphia** architectural competition.

## Where They Stood

### RINGWOOD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1908)



*Photo: Courtesy Ringwood Historical Group*

The Ringwood Progress Association started the move for a Mechanics' Institute in 1908 and secured a Lillydale Shire Council loan to build a Hall. Working bees levelled the building footprint, on the north-west corner of Whitehorse Road and Melbourne Road, on the seven acre Institute site, or what is now 149 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood.

The building was designed by Alexander Stanley Eggleston (1883-1955) and tenders were called in March 1909. Thomas Henry Gwillam (1854-1930) supervised the construction of the Hall gratuitously.

As a result a substantial hall was built and it was officially opened on 22 September 1909 by the Victorian Premier John Murray who 'expressed himself simply amazed with the equipment of the hall, and particularly its architectural work, and thought that it expressed more architectural pretensions than any other of its kind he has seen in the state.'

In the hope of recouping a substantial part of the construction costs a four day carnival and fair was arranged.

Prominent citizens, mostly ladies, were charged with organising the Fair stalls, which were centred around themes: Teguminous; bric-a-brac; The Old Curiosity Shop; refreshment; fruit; candy; flower; tea house; drapery; literature and stationery; grocery; and dairy produce and poultry. There was also a shooting gallery and a Punch and Judy Show.

The highlight was a bush drama and pageant titled **The Advent of the Ringwood Pioneer**. Included was a group of 'Aborigines', local residents in make-up with girdles of bark and fern leaves, armed with a collection of shields, throwing sticks, spears and boomerangs.

The event was covered by the *Weekly Times* which carried an account and pictures of the occasion in its 2 October 1909 edition.

For a time in the 1920s the Institute hosted a campus of the Ringwood State School No. 1451. The newly formed Ringwood Council met in the Hall from 1924-26, when it built the Town Hall.

The Mechanics' was demolished in 1967.

### DONCASTER ATHENAEUM (Est. 1871)



*Doncaster Athenaeum prior to 1914.*

*Photo: Picture Victoria website*

Located at 790-806 Doncaster Road, Doncaster, part of the site was purchased from the Crown and a further acre was donated by Alfred Octavian Hummel. The Institute opened on 29 November 1871 with Pastor Max von Schramm (1840?-1903) as MC when 'A concert was given by a number of ladies and gentlemen from Melbourne.' The design is attributed to Thomas Edward Serpell (1835-1912) and it was constructed of grey rendered brick, the windows had rounded heads, and it was roofed in corrugated iron.

It had an early well-used reference library and was used as community centre. The Hall was renovated and enlarged in 1914 to include a stage, ante-rooms, lodge and supper rooms. The Hall could then seat 250. In 1915 the Committee of Management voted to make the Hall available as a 'hospital for wounded soldiers'. The outcome is not known.

The granite pillars were added to the Hall front in 1921 to commemorate the area's World War I soldiers. It was a film venue from the late 1920s until at least 1964, when it was transferred to Council.

The Box Hill Doncaster Regional Library Service was formed in 1961 and the library purpose was taken away. The front of the building was taken off for road widening about 1971 and the memorial panels were relocated.

It was a youth dance site in the 1970s which featured the band Arctic Myth and it was used by the Elderly Chinese Citizens Club from the 1980s-2001. The granite pillars and Honour Roll were then transferred to the Doncaster RSL Hall.

Council sold the site into private ownership and the Hall was demolished in July 2001. The site was subsequently used for a car dealership. The site was again bulldozed in 2014.

## The History Page

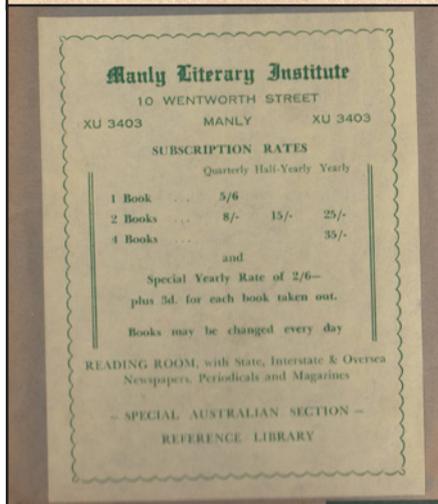
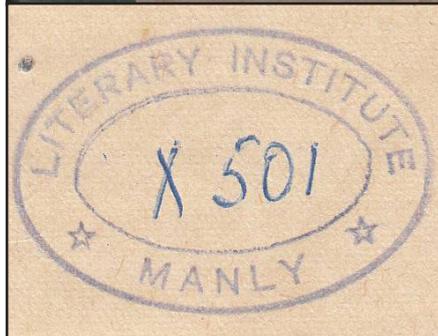
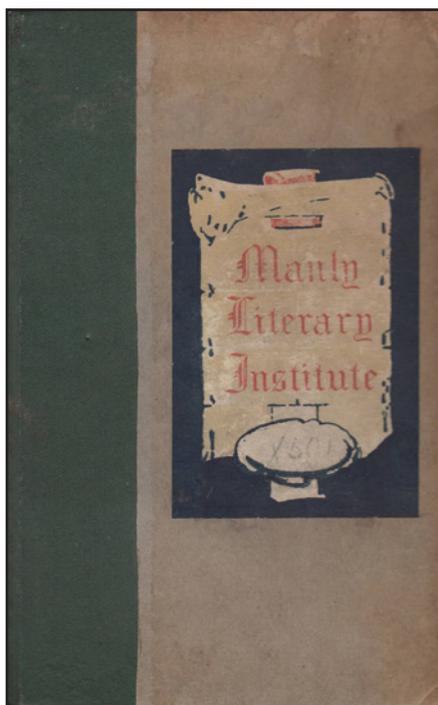
*This page is a clearing house of ideas and trivia that people come across. Let us have your snippets or queries and who knows? Send your items in to the Editor.*

Following on from the Sheep Hills story we now have another book this time from the Manly Literary Institute in New South Wales.

Book: Axel Heyst. *After Hitler*. (London: Minerva Publishing Co. Ltd, Great Russell Street, 1940.) First Edition. Hardback. 228p. 220x150mm. Contents: Explanations and Apologies/Germany Again/The Man/The System/After Hitler/Little Europe, What About You?/The Postscript. Printer: Riverside Press, Edinburgh.

Binding: Quarter bound in heavy board, with green cloth and grey paper, endpapers bottle green, 1cm green woven bookmarker bound in at head. (This is most probably a later library binding.)

Marginalia: White paper title label handwritten in ink pasted on spine 'AFTER/HITLER/AXEL/ HEYST. White Book Plate, 75x105mm pasted centre cover, comprising linocut surround, printed in black, with oval at base in which is handwritten in crayon 'X501', with Old English 60pt 'Manly Literary Institute' and 'hanger' at top printed in red. Tinted green Library Plate 105x135mm on front pastedown, with bordered text printed in emerald green using 24pt Old English and 10pt Times. 'Manly Literary Institute/10 WENTWORTH STREET/ XU 3403 MANLY XU 3403/ SUBSCRIPTION RATES/Quarterly Half-Yearly Yearly/ 1 Book 5/6 / 2 Books 8/- 15/- 25/- / 4 Books 35/- /and/ Special Yearly Rate of 2/6- / Plus 3d. for each book taken out. / Books may be changed each day/ READING ROOM, with



State, Interstate and Oversea/ Newspapers, Periodicals and Magazines/ SPECIAL AUSTRALIAN SECTION/ REFERENCE LIBRARY. Library stamp in purple ink, Oval parallel lines with 'LITERARY INSTITUTE' at head and 'MANLY' at base, on mid-title page with 'X 501' written in centre in biro. A stamp, of similar design, but larger is printed in black at the foot of the last page.

There is extensive marginalia throughout the text in pencil, mostly vertical lines, occasionally parallel, in the margin. Some underscoring in one case heavily 'The German Army can be trusted only if completely and ultimately disarmed.' The rear cover has some water damage which may have been the result of the fire at the Institute in 1940.

Axel Heyst appears to be the pseudonym of author Zbigniew Anthony Grabowski who was born in Krakow, Poland in 1903 and died in London, England in 1972.

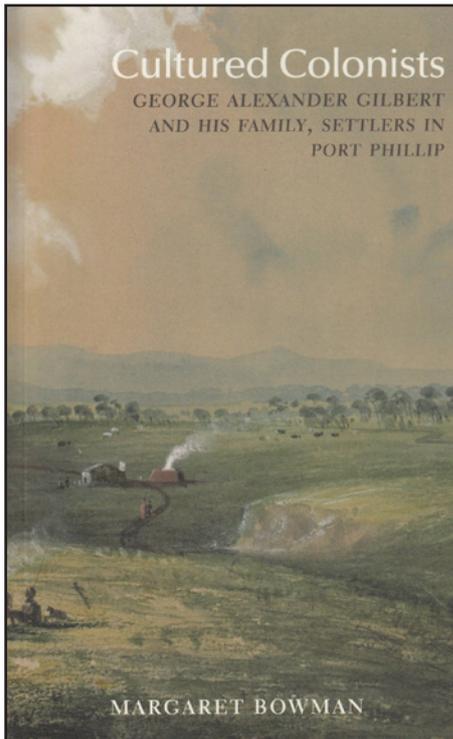
The Manly Literary Institute was formed in 1901 and occupied the Victoria Hall in The Corso. Later The Institute moved to its own two-storey redbrick building in Wentworth Street which was designed by Frederick Trenchard Smith and the Governor Lord Chelmsford. laid the foundation stone on 19 June. It was built by Martin Clarence Heraty at a cost of £3000 and opened late in 1909. A fire gutted the building on 21

August 1940. 'Fortunately, the books suffered only slight damage from water, as a result of a large tarpaulin being used to cover them.' The building was eventually sold to the Department of Education. In 2009 the building was leased to Manly Council as a community centre.

## Book Reviews

### ***Cultured Colonists: George Alexander Gilbert and his family, settlers in Port Phillip***

Margaret Bowman. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing; Melbourne Athenaeum Library; State Library of Victoria, 2014. Paperback, x, 125p, 32p plates, bibliog., index. 140x245mm. 978925003642.



George Alexander Gilbert (1816-77) was like a number of other well educated men and women who arrived in Melbourne in the 1830s and 1840s. In Gilbert's case he arrived on 3 November 1841 with his wife Anne, and the two children of her first marriage to the late Sir John Byerley. He almost immediately joined the embryonic Melbourne Debating Club and started an art school. Soon he was to join the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution where he was to conduct his art class. An inspired Gilbert managed this cultural entity as Secretary/Librarian from 1844-50 where lectures and ideas for the growing colony were discussed, the major item of which was Separation from New South Wales. After a spell as Acting Goldfields Commissioner and as a colourist of photographs for early Melbourne photographers he appears to have finally left Australia in 1861. He next turns up in Toronto, Canada where he remained for a decade. He then moved to New York and finally to Hartford

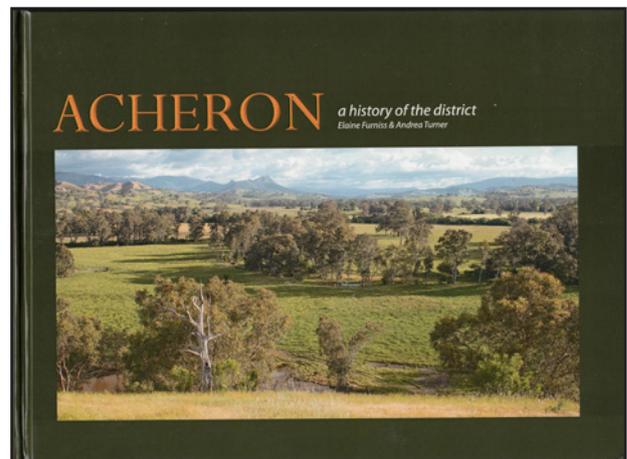
(Connecticut, USA) where he died in the Insane Asylum on 23 December 1877.

Dr Margaret Bowman's well-researched book is a fascinating read about yet another little known but very influential character in Melbourne's bustling 1840s. We are fortunate that a number of Gilbert's Victorian artworks survive and these are reproduced in colour in the book which is well-designed and produced.

Available from: Melbourne Athenaeum Library, 188 Collins Street, Melbourne, V 3000. \$47.00, posted.

### ***Acheron: A History of the District***

by Elaine Furniss and Andrea Turner. Acheron: Acheron Mechanics' Institute Inc., 2014. Paperback and Hardback, 238p, facsimis, illus, plans, ports, bibliog, index. 215x290mm. 9781876870737.



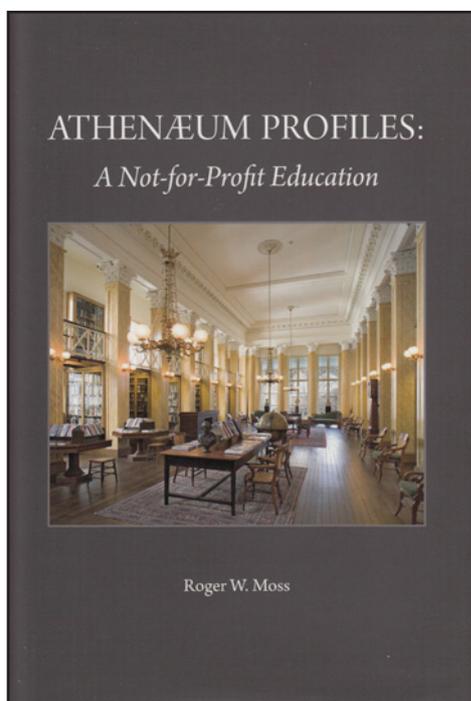
This is perhaps the model district history, but firmly centred around the Acheron Mechanics' that was built and opened in 1913. Like many Institutes it has found new direction in recent times and its entrepreneurial flair through community involvement and marketing has enabled its restoration. The book project began several years ago with a working party that developed a framework with several research arms. The collected pictures and illustrations have greatly supplemented the text. It is a good read and an inspiration for others to 'make it happen'.

Available from: Acheron Mechanics' Institute Inc., Mrs Lorraine Redshaw, Box 186, Alexandra, V 3714. Paperback \$65.00, posted; Hardback, \$85.00 posted.

## *Book Reviews cont...*

### ***Athenaeum Profiles: A Not-for Profit Education***

Roger W Moss. Oak Knoll Press, 2014. Hardback, 165p, ports, extensive footnotes. 160x235mm. 9781584563280.

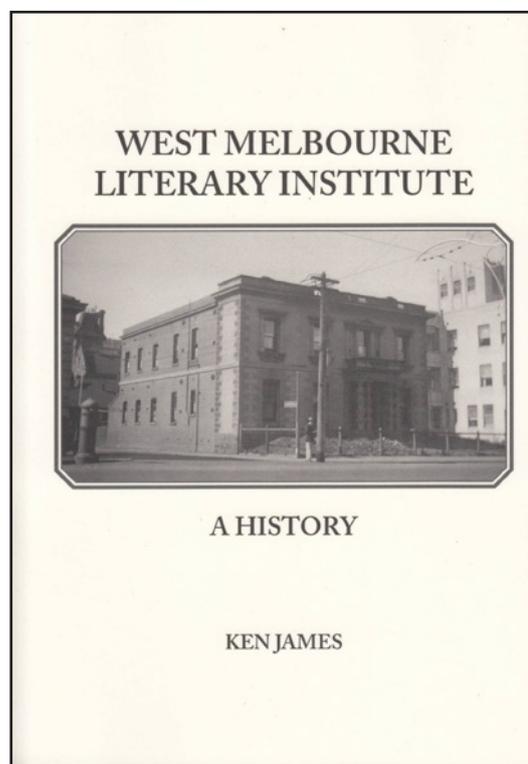


This book was produced for the bicentennial of the Philadelphia Athenaeum which opened its doors in 1814. The author Dr Roger Moss was the Athenaeum's director from 1968-2008. During his term, when under the inspired leadership of key board members, the institution took a pivotal course to not only again take its place as a key cultural institution in Philadelphia but also become a major national repository and source of materials relative to building, architecture and interior design. Modern technology has enabled the Athenaeum to become a much used global resource. In many ways Dr Moss shows the way of how a moribund near bankrupt institution can phoenix-like rise again with inspired ideas, an assembled leadership, a collection policy and the growing of a healthy endowment. A practical, motivational and inspirational read for any young 'Roger Moss' thinking of taking on the revival of an Institute.

Available from: Oak Knoll Press, 310 Delaware Street, New Castle, DE 19720, USA. About \$80.00, posted airmail.

### ***West Melbourne Literary Institute: A History***

Ken James. Camberwell: Self published, 2014. Paperback, 103p, plates, biographies, name index. 145x210mm. 9780992308711.



The West Melbourne Literary Institute came into being to service an articulate community on the western fringe of the city. Its membership were the movers and shakers, a number of which gained prominence in the Melbourne City Council, several of which became Mayor. Others gained parliamentary seats. However just as the WMLI rose under the guidance of Sir Redmond Barry and others, so it disappeared, seemingly to merge in spirit at least into the West Melbourne Bowling Club, with its assets distributed to worthy causes. The records must be out there somewhere, but where?

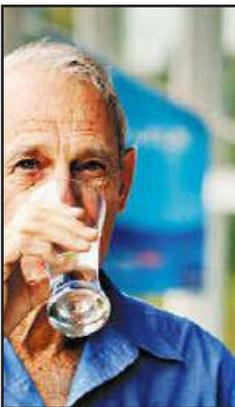
Available from: Ken James, 18 Lofty Street, Camberwell, V 3134. \$24, posted.

If your Institute has written a history which is available for sale and has not been reviewed, please let us know.

## Our People



Mechanics' people generally play a wider role in the community and such is keen Latrobe Golf Club member **Sue Westwood** (fifth from the right), who with fellow Club members, recently braved the ice bucket challenge to benefit Howard Florey Institute research into Motor Neurone Research.

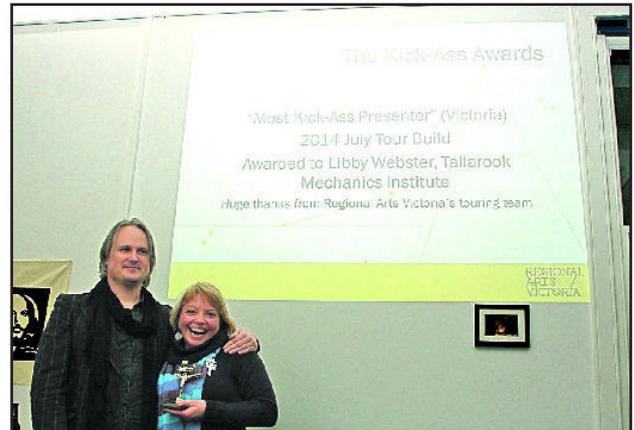


Mentioned in the Queen's Birthday Honours was local businessman and Justice of the Peace, **Eric Reginald Taylor** OAM for services to the Woodenbong (NSW) community. Eric has been Woodenbong Hall Secretary since 1952 and was its long time cinema projectionist up until 2013. *Photo: northernstar.com.au*



The indefatigable **Ken James**, fresh from the launch of his *West Melbourne Literary Institute: A History*, is still beavering away with Mechanics' Institute historian **Pam Baragwanath** to finish off their massive revise and update of *If The Walls Could Speak*. If you still have outstanding revise work on an individual MI or have found a

photo or any other vital information relevant to a Victorian MI please email Ken on [knjames47@gmail.com](mailto:knjames47@gmail.com) or Pam on [pgbarag@alphalink.com.au](mailto:pgbarag@alphalink.com.au). *Photo: Kristina Holdaway.*



Also on the awards front was the indomitable Tallarook Mechanics' **Libby Webster**, who was awarded 'Most Kick-Ass Presenter (Victoria)' by Regional Arts Victoria on their 2014 July Tour Build. RAV's Kane Forbes noted 'There are people who are exceptional at their job but don't fall under the criteria for current awards and it is important to recognise them. Libby absolutely meets that, no questions.' Congratulations Libby and all at Tallarook. *Photo: mmg.com.au*



We welcome **Andrew Morrison**, the new Executive Director of Leeds Library into our midst. He took up his new position in January 2014, having previously been with English Heritage from 1992-2004 and York Museums Trust from 2004-14. Andrew held curatorial positions with both these groups and is eminently qualified to promote the Leeds' gems to a wider public. *Photo: bbc.co.uk*

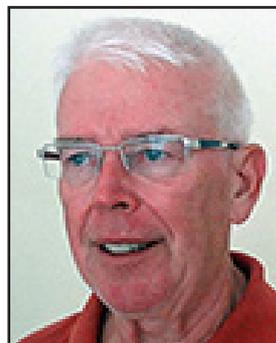
## Our People

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We also overlooked the appointment of **Deborah Hunt** as the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute's new Library Director. Deborah, who took up her appointment in late 2013, comes from a varied library and information sciences consulting background. She also has a mentoring role with BayNet the region's information technology

'people' hub. In addition, she has also recently joined MIV. Welcome to the wonderful world of the MI Deb! *Photo: milibrary.org*



One of the key organisers of the very successful Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts Crown Lands (NSW) Seminar at Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts was **Phil Reed**. Phil, who sits on the SMSA Board, has recently taken on the role of AMISA Secretary and we look forward to working with him into the future. He also recently joined MIV. We wish him well in his various roles in promoting the Mechanics' Movement. *Photo: smsa.org.au*

## Vale

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Canberra-based **Victor Crittenden** was an early member of MIV. Victor was a librarian at the Canberra College of Advanced Education (University of Canberra) 1968-86 and was a director of Mulini Press which published

indexes, bibliographies, guides to reference sources and facsimile editions of Australian history and literature of the colonial period. The Auslit website attributes 146 works to his name. The Bibliographic Society of Australia and New Zealand recognised his extensive contribution to the field with the Lu Rees award in 2007. He was awarded an OAM in 2010 for biographical and literary study of the Australian colonial period. A generous man in thought and deed, Victor died on 2 June 2014, aged 89.

We note the passing of **James Richard 'Jim' Johnson** at the Casterton Memorial Hospital on 19 November 2013, aged 90. Jim was born at Telangatuk East on 8 March 1923. After World War II service, he served on the Committee of the Dunrobin Hall for many years. Jim also wrote the history of Dunrobin which he directed to be published after his death. He is survived by his wife Thais, and his children Kay, Wendy and Greg. Our sympathy goes out to his family and many friends.



# Community Page

## RECIPE

*Australian farmers and manufacturers, many of which are Institute volunteers and supporters deserve our support. Hopefully the purchase of Australian grown or made products will help reward them.*

### LEMON, ORANGE & LIME CORDIAL

#### *You will need for a good batch*

6 lemons	2 tablespoons tartaric acid
6 oranges	4 teaspoons of citric acid
1 lime	4 teaspoons of Epsom salts
3 kg sugar	3 litres boiling water

#### Method

1. Grate rind off lemons, oranges and lime.
2. Squeeze juice out of fruit and mix with grated rinds.
3. Stir in sugar, tartaric and citrus acid acids and Epsom salts.
4. Pour over boiling water and stir well until all sugar dissolves. It is suggested that you do this over heat to get best results.
5. Decant into sterilised bottle and seal for storage in a cool place.

*Combine 4-5 parts, according to taste, on ice, with chilled water for a refreshing summer drink.*

### SPOT THE 'BAKER'S DOZEN' REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 35

1. Where will the American Memberships Library Annual Meeting 2016 be held?
2. What pseudonym did author Zbigniew Anthony Grabowski use?
3. In what connection is 'Breeches' used?
4. What Institute is associated with the humble 'spud'?
5. What was the name of the Institute in West Melbourne?
6. Which UK Institute has a similar name to one demolished in central Victoria?
7. At which Institute was Bobby photographed in UK No. 34?
8. Which Institute recently signed a lease with Council?
9. Who was Acheron's champion shearer?

10. For what does the acronym VEAC stand?
11. Which Institute has close connection with the Shoobridge family?
12. Which iconic Institute will be moving later this year?
13. Which US Institute celebrates its bicentennial this year?

### SPOT THE 'BAKER'S DOZEN' REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 34 - ANSWERS

1. Wallan and District Community Bank Branch - Bendigo Bank; 2. October; 3. Armchair Travelling in the C19th and Now; 4. Acheron; 5. Narre Warren; 6. Fawcett; 7. Peter Lee; 8. Koondrook; 9. Program from Opening; 10. Sheep Hills; 11. Boort and Birchip; 12. Luke; 13. Outlaw Bootscooters

### WHERE'S BOBBY?



Can you identify which Mechanics' Institute in Victoria MIV's President is standing in front of? The winning Member or Institute will be announced in the next issue (if it is guessed correctly)! Send through your guesses to the President by 1 December 2014 for your entry to count. There will be a surprise for the winner! *HINT: This Institute was established in 1907 unlike Osana who insists she was established in December 2006. Thank you to her father for taking the photo.*

## *Ideas & Opportunities*

### COMMUNICATIONS, ANYONE?

From the point of view of a magazine editor it is ideal to have articles arriving in the mail highlighting activities from various Institutes or recent discoveries of film site, hall curtains, odd library books or other trivia.

Every Hall Committee should have a Communications Officer to promote their Hall and the activities therein. This is where it may be possible to 'draft' a communications student from the local High School or College to cover your activities for the newspaper or the local community newsletter.

### GET BRANDED!

There have been many unforgettable and timeless logos developed over the years. Take that of Ford or The Flying Kangaroo. It is probably a project that we should look at exploring in depth starting with the design of the various library book stamps that were used by the Institutes down through the years.

However there are some very innovative logos in use today and it would be good to have your logo and its background, year of implementation, designer, and any interesting facts surrounding its development.

The local art group or school could develop a logo if you don't already have one. But when you do make sure its history and designer is recorded. For this is a momentous event. Badging your Institute can have far reaching effect. It can lead to stickers, tee shirts, tea towels, glassware, etc. All can be steady earners when sold at community events.

### FIND YOUR NICHE

As we wander around we see longrunning events in some communities, besides the Annual Show or Race Meetings, although these can be notable in their own right. However as Institutes we must have the future in mind and how our halls will continue into the future, not only surviving to maintain an aging fabric, but also to maintain a sense of community as Big Brother hovers from afar.

This is the stuff for think tanks or probably in a lot of cases around the barbecue after a working bee, or perhaps during the annual meeting which must become far more than the election of office bearers. These events must be 'spiced up' with a guest speaker, some food and a real presentation of the balance sheet not only in terms of dollars but also of the Hall community.

But you must all find your niche and make it work. Get your thinking caps on.

### INSPIRATION

We were really taken with the interview with Rural Woman of the Year Pip Job recently on ABC TV **Landline**. Her project was **Positive Farming Footprints** and the family social audit. Pip is also Executive Officer of the Little River Landcare Group

based in the Yeoval and Cumnock Regions of NSW. The Positive Footprints idea could well be applied to the Community Hall as a **Care for all at the Hall**. The tough times in farming with unpredictable weather patterns caused her local group to resolve 'That there would not be a suicide in the district during the prevailing tough spell.' That resolve was achieved by a caring community.

Take a look at their website: [littleriverlandcare.com.au](http://littleriverlandcare.com.au). Indeed to quote Sarah Wynn a regular BYO casserole gathering at the Hall could be 'An opportunity to have a good laugh, study other women's wrinkles and enjoy some very good food at someone else's expense.' Get that regular drop in event happening. Start a book/DVD/CD exchange shelf in your Hall. Get that caring rural network happening. Liver River even has a Kids Club with regular events at either of the two Halls - Yeoval or Cumnock as well as an annual camp.

### WHERE WAS WALLY (SORRY BOBBY)?

#### *Emerald Hill Mechanics' Institute*

170-172 Cecil Street, Cnr Dorcas Street  
South Melbourne

The Institute started in 1854. The Hall was built in 1857 and was opened on 4 December 1857 in the presence of the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly.

The Hall served as a library, meeting place, Baptist Church, dramatic club, and Emerald Hill Council offices. It also housed the Emerald Hill School of Art. The Institute secured a lease of part of the new Emerald Hill Town Hall in 1876 and moved there in 1879. The Institute Hall was sold into private ownership in 1881 and a new façade added in 1884. Renamed Mayville Hall it was let for public use until 1905, including the South Melbourne Literary and Debating Society from 1893.

As the only correct answer came from an MIV Committee Member the sur(prize) will jackpot this issue. Two sur(prizes) to the first correct entry.



# MECHANICS' INSTITUTES WAR MEMORIAL DIRECTORY

*This Directory is a guide only and it is far from complete. If you are able to update or correct any of the entries we would be most appreciate. Alternately there may be ones that we have not included about which you can supply information*

## **ANAKIE HALL**

55 Staughton Vale Road, Staughton Vale, V 3340

Memorials: World War I & II Honour Rolls; Korean and Vietnam Plaques.

Additional: Memorial Gates, Anakie Reserve 'erected as a tribute to those who served in both World Wars'.

## **BARWON HEADS COMMUNITY HALL**

79 Hitchcock Ave, Barwon Heads, V 3227  
Memorials: World War I & II Honour Boards; Plaque to VC winner; Photos; Cenotaph on Hall Reserve

2015 Celebrations/Activities: Anzac Day Service, 25 April to be conducted by local students overseen by RSL; district research project on World War I soldiers' names; School Research Project and Exhibition of War memorabilia including packs, helmet and clothing.

## **CHILTERN ATHENAEUM**

57 Conness Street, Chiltern, V 3683

Memorials: World War I Honour Roll; Large compilation and display of World War I & II district soldiers and memorabilia.

## **ELMORE ATHENAEUM**

62 Michie Street, Elmore, V 3558

Memorials: Hall; Honour Roll

## **LARDNER MECHANICS' HALL**

Lardners Track, Lardner, V 3821

Memorials: Honour Rolls for World Wars I and II.

## **LEONARDS HILL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY**

School Road, Leonards Hill, V 3461

Memorial: Lenoards Hill State School No. 931, World War I Honour Roll

## **LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY**

8 Rothwell Road, Little River, V 3211

Memorials: World War I Honour Board showing thirty-nine names of soldiers enlisted, of which eleven are shown as being killed, but a further casualty has been recently identified to make that twelve; a photo montage of the twelve World War I soldiers killed: Privates John Bates, Edward Connop, J Connop, Owen Curle, Reg Farrar, E Gabrielsen, Alfred Green, G Lodge, J Lodge, TS Lodge, B Moreton and Stan Parker. World II Honour Board, showing ninety-one enlisted and two of these killed on active service. Little River Uniting Church World War I Honour Boards, 'inherited' when the Church was sold in 2013.

2015 Celebration: Erecting Memorial to World War I nurses – Sisters Kit

McNaughton and Sadie McIntosh – to be unveiled 17 July.

## **MALDON ATHEANEUM**

97 High Street, Maldon, V 3463

Memorials: Honour Roll. Methodist enlistment for World War I; Photos.

Additional: World War I Machine Gun placed on Anzac Hill; Cenotaph in Shire Gardens.

## **MINYIP MEMORIAL HALL**

52 Main Street, Minyip, V 3392

Memorials: World War I Honour Rolls for: Minyip & District; Minyip Presbyterian Church; Minyip Methodist Church; Nullan Railway Station State School; and Laen State School. Plaques for Robert Learmonth and Colin Leach. Hand embroidery, including photos of F Burton, P O'Callaghan and W Rutherford. Photos of: Boer War soldier, JC Ruwoldt; World War I soldiers, FR Burton, FW Cox, WC Jenkins, CH Turner and four soldiers on horseback; and World War II soldiers, CH Leach, RG Learmonth, and L Pietsch.

Additional: Flagpole in Town Square to all Service People; Memorial Gates at Oval. Photos: Fundraising Queen Competition, 1922; Opening Minyip RSL Clubrooms at the Hall, 1922.

2015 Celebrations: Minyip Historical Society is researching district soldiers by way of Newsletter canvas.

## **MOONABEL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

Woods Street, Moonable, V 3478

Memorials: Distinctive World War I Honour Board. Other memorabilia was lost when the first Hall was washed away in December 1933 floods.

Additional: Moonabel Primary School and Avoca and District Historical Society have some pictures. War Memorial is situated at the eastern end of town.

2015 Celebrations: Moonabel Community Theatre Co. plan an evening of World War I songs on Anzac Day; Moonabel Arts and History Group are planning to upgrade Moonabel's Anzac Avenue. Moonabel Primary School plan an exhibition of photos of World War I soldiers who enlisted from the district. Avoca & District Historical Society plan a special display

## **NAGAMBIE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

286 High Street, Nagambie, V 3608

Additional: Cenotaph on median strip opposite the Hall

2015 Celebration: RSL Anzac Day Service

## **ROMSEY MECHANICS' HALL**

122 Main Street, Romsey, V 3434

Memorials: Two Honour Roll Boards from World War I.

Additional: Romsey-Lancefield RSL have rooms in the Institute and have a large collection of War related memorabilia.

## **SEYMOUR RAILWAYS INSTITUTE**

Railway Parade, Seymour, V 3660

Memorials: Distinctive World War I Honour Roll, featuring State flags

## **SHEEP HILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

Sheep Hills, V 3392

Memorials: Cenotaph opposite Hall

2015 Celebration: Anzac Day Dawn Service, 25 April

## **SOMERVILLE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

66 Station Street, Somerville, V 3912

Memorials: Somerville MUIOOF World War I & II Honour Board; Memorabilia including gas mask, swagger stick, horseshoe carrier, medals, war buttons and ammunition bandolier; World War II photo montages of servicemen and women taken from the *Frankston Standard*, 1949.

Additional: Cenotaph in adjoining Fruitgrowers' Reserve

2015 Celebrations: A breakfast followed by a book launch detailing local World War I servicemen and women. A display during the month of April featuring memorabilia and photo from the Historical Society collection. Somerville Primary School No. 2656 pupils will be researching district World War I service personnel.

## **SORRENTO MUSEUM**

827 Melbourne Road, Sorrento, V 3943

Additional: Cenotaph on front beach at Sorrento

2015 Celebration: Launch of World War I Panel in Museum, with exhibition.

## **TARADALE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

High Street, Taradale, V 3447

Memorials: World War I Honour Rolls: Taradale Anglican Church; Taradale State School, No. 614.

Additional: War Memorial, Calder Highway, Taradale commemorating service personnel from all Wars, with lists.

2015 Celebrations: Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services.

## **WHOROULY LIBRARY HALL**

12 Church Street, Whorouly, V 3735

Plaque erected on interior back stage wall in 1921, lists 'Whorouly & District War Heroes: 1914, 12 names, of which two died on active service; 1918, 12 names of which three died on active service.

2015 Celebration: Anzac Day, 25 April. Guest Speaker; Whorouly Primary School Booklet Launch celebrating the lives of five local soldiers killed during World War I; Hall March Past; Tree Planting in Memorial Park Drive; Unveil Restored Memorial Gates at Whorouly Memorial Park; and Community Luncheon.

**NEXT FEATURE: SHOWS** which can range from: Antiques, Art, Baby, Doll, Flower, Grain, Pigeon, Poultry, Rabbit, Wool or whatever. Please let us have your pictures and stories by  
10 January 2015.