



Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

NO. 42 – SUMMER 2017

PO Box 1080, Windsor VIC 3181 Australia ISSN 1835-5242

Reg No. A0038156G ABN 60 337 355 989 Price: Six Dollars \$6



REINVENTION WAS A TRIUMPH



MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
LIBRARY & CHESS ROOM

The smorgasbord of presentations at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2016 - San Francisco** provided something for everyone ranging from starting out, establishing relevance, financing and very survival. The program was packed with information and experiences and of course the people who were really making things happen.

Australia was well represented, including: by **Robert Kingston**, MIV President and his partner **Violeta**; **Judith** and **Denis Dwyer**, Berwick Mechanics'; **Sue Westwood** and **Rose Blustein**, Melbourne Athenaeum; **Wendy Graham**, Ballarat Mechanics'; **Professor Roger Morris**, AMISA (NSW); and **Catherine Kerrigan** of the Adelaide Central School of Art.

The UK turned out with: the Independent Library Association's Chair **Emma Marigliano** of the Portico in Manchester, **Louisa Yates**, Gladstone's Library, Hawarden; and **Jane Sparrow-Niang** of Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. **Dr Martyn Walker** of the University of Huddersfield summarised his research in connection with his new book *The Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain and Beyond*.

Sian Williams, Librarian of the South Wales Miners' Library at Swansea gave an inspirational overview of the library's efforts in collecting remnant libraries, records, memorabilia and the reminiscences of miners and patrons of Welsh Miners' Institutes.

Canada was represented by **Lynn Verge**, Executive Director of Montreal's Atwater Library where computer literacy continues to be a focus of its educational outreach.

From the US Libraries came: **Elizabeth Barker**, Boston Athenaeum; **Matt Burriesci**, Providence Athenaeum; **John Flaherty**,



Mercantile Library, Cincinnati; **Tom Hardiman**, Providence Athenaeum; **Nick Kaufmann**, Maine Charitable Mechanic Association; **Benedict Leca**, Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport; **Michael Lieberman**, Folio Seattle; **Lisa Lyon**, Lanier Library; **Jean Marie Prociuous**, Salem Athenaeum; **Erika Torri**, Athenaeum Music and Art Library, La Jolla; and **Carolyn Waters**, New York Society Library.

It was pleasing to see three young researchers: **Amy Tsilemanis** of Ballarat's Federation University; **Eve Hartley** from the Heritage Consortium of the University of Huddersfield; and **Kirsten Loach** of the Manchester Metropolitan University, all presenting on their research work on existing Mechanics' Institutes.

San Francisco Mechanics' Institute was the ideal Conference venue and as was commented upon we did not have to explain what a Mechanics' Institute was to any of the delegates. We were also well provided for with a wide and tasty range of food from breakfast through to lunch and at the Friday reception.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JANUARY

27-29 Fryerstown Antique Fair – Info: Pat (03) 5473 4373; or Ross (03) 5472 5033, or Mobile 0402 626 362

FEBRUARY

7 State Library Victoria - Foxcroft Lecture - Professor Rosamond McKitterick 'Roman Authority in Early Medieval Europe: What is the importance of Roman texts in medieval culture and intellectual life' - Village Roadshow Theatre 6-7pm. Book with State Library.

MARCH

2-18 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Production 'Absent Friends'. More info: lilydaleatc.com

18 Romsey Mechanics' Institute Antique Fair, 9.30am-4.30pm. romseymechanicsinstitute.com/events

APRIL

18-31 National Trust Heritage Festival – Having a Voice

MAY

1-21 National Trust Heritage Festival – Having a Voice

7 Open Day at Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute

25-31 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Production 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'. More info: lilydaleatc.com

JUNE

1-10 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Production 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'. More info: lilydaleatc.com

2-4 Independent Libraries Association Conference 'Bricks, Shelves, Books and

People: Building for the Future as an Independent Library', Chawton House Library, Alton, Hampshire, UK

AUGUST

12-20 National Science Week

17-31 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Production 'High Society'. More info: lilydaleatc.com

SEPTEMBER

1-2 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Production 'High Society'. More info: lilydaleatc.com

23 MIV Annual General Meeting

23 MIV's 3rd Annual Wesson Lecture

OCTOBER

7 American Membership Libraries' Meeting – Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

15-22 History Week

THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTERS

Sean, Neal and the team from TDC3 Print Centre, 548 Bridge Rd, Richmond. tdc3.com.au



The MIV would like to acknowledge the support of our 'home' - the Prahran Mechanics' Institute.

MIV Contacts

President

Robert Kingston - rjk.kapl@bigpond.net.au

Vice-President

Bron Lowden - bronlowden@hotmail.com

Secretary

Luke Mitchell - footmech@bigpond.com

Treasurer

Gary Bester - g.bester@bigpond.com

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

Archives Scanning Project; Plaques; Travelling Exhibition

Judith Dwyer - jad134@hotmail.com

Research

Pam Baragwanath - pgarag@alphalink.com.au

Magazine/Website

Bron Lowden - bronlowden@hotmail.com

MIV'S EVENTS CALENDAR IS ONLINE

vicnet.net.au/~mivic/events

Subscribe for weekly email updates on events throughout the week.

Member Institutes: email through details of your events, or public events being held at your Institute, both big and small to bronlowden@hotmail.com for inclusion in the online calendar. Let us help you promote your events!

REINVENTION WAS A TRIUMPH CONT...



It was a nostalgic time at the Conference end on Sunday afternoon when **Erika Torri** of **La Jolla Athenaeum Music and Art Library** took to the microphone. Erika joined La Jolla in 1989 and was the moving force behind the creation of the **American Membership Libraries** and

their movable Annual meetings. At the conclusion of her talk Erika was presented with A Memorial from the **University of Re invention** with its only ever 'Honorary Doctorate for Outstanding Achievement'. Indeed, a single well deserved honour.

The presentation of sheaves of flowers and Certificates of Appreciation citing "Those assembled acknowledge, appreciate and applaud the sterling work of ... on organising a splendid



and successful celebration of the Mechanics' Institute movement' to **Deb Hunt, Taryn Edwards** and **Heather Terrell**, at the conclusion of the Conference, was a token of the heartfelt appreciation of all who attended **Re invention**.

Thank you all for supporting and contributing to **Re invention**, the effects of which *will be long lasting and universal*.

Finally we are most grateful to **Re invention's** generous sponsors and these included:

A n c e s t r y . c o m
Library Edition;
Boudin Sourdough Bakery;
Internet Archive;
Patrick & Co Stationers;
Prelinger Library;
San Francisco Writer's Grotto;
Schein & Schein Antique Maps and Prints;
Shaping San Francisco;
Te-We Tea;
TechSoup for Libraries;
 and **Western Neighbourhood Project.**

FUTURE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE CONFERENCES

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA – 2018

It is now over fifteen years since the call went out for potential participants in the first ever National Mechanics' Institutes Conference at the **Melbourne Athenaeum**. We are now repeating that call for another National gathering, this time at the **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute** in November 2018.

In 2000 all States, save Northern Territory were represented along, with the UK and New Zealand. We are confident that this can be repeated. We are keen to note the progress of the Institute movement since then, as well as celebrating the coming of age of MIV, which will then be in its twenty-first year. It will also celebrate the Institute people who have played pivotal roles in their various Institutes or in research. Think about a Paper, as these will be called for early next year.

Record your interest with: mivenquiry@live.com.au to be kept informed.

MW 2021 - EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

Following on the success of **Re invention** at **MW 2016 – San Francisco** it was foreshadowed that the **MW 2021** would in all probability be in Edinburgh Scotland at Heriot-Watt University, a 'Mechanics' University'. This will celebrate the bicentennial of the establishment of the Edinburgh School Arts.

However, MW 2021 - Edinburgh will not be a history lesson, but it will set out to show just what the Mechanics' Institute movement achieved and influenced around the world. It will also provide an opportunity for national researchers on the various continents to present their progressive reports as part of the **International Cooperative Research Project on Mechanics' Institutes**. In the first instance record your interest with: bronlowden@hotmail.com.

Keep informed - join MIV
vicnet.net.au/~mivic/membership

Editorial

San Francisco's **Reinvention Conference** is now a memory. MIV and its members played a significant role, not to mention that a Special Conference Edition of *Useful Knowledge* appeared in the satchels of all registrants. The extra 'Conference' content is included in this edition. We are now looking forward to **MW 2021 - Edinburgh** at Heriot-Watt University as part of their bicentennial celebrations.

Most back issues of *Useful Knowledge* are now available online, as well as the first five issues of MIV's newsletter from 1999-2001. We are currently working our way through digitising issues 6-19 of the newsletter, including adding back in coloured photographs. If you have original copies of images from these issues which are currently showing in black and white, it would be greatly appreciated if you could send them in for us to update. All newsletters and magazines in the magazine archive on the website can be searched through the site's purple search button in the top right corner, or at vicnet.net.au/~mivic/search

We passed fifty **Plaques** during the year and we need your help to particularly locate the sites of previous Halls so that these can be permanently marked. Similarly our **Digitising Project** is progressing and we hope to pass having the records of one hundred Institutes 'in the can' during 2017.

Our **AGM** was well attended with a number of country Institutes being represented. The **Wesson Lecture** delivered by **Gideon Haigh** 'In Search of the Mechanics' was well crafted and thought provoking and will be available in booklet form soon. The Launch of *Ubiquitous and Necessary* by **Helen Creagh** was very pertinent, given Helen's role in the Australian of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies' Mechanics' Institutes recording project.

Further the **History of the Hall in Australia** Project is gathering a group of people who are working on researching Institutes. Similarly the **International Cooperative Research Project on Mechanics' Institutes** concept is gaining interest in the wake of the publication of Martyn Walker's book (See Book Reviews section).

You will see the **Ex-Libris** section with a book from the now demolished Harrierville

Athenaeum. **Where They Stood** looks at another Institute which had a Library, Lake Marmal.

Our **Featured Institute** is Telangatuk East in the far Western District and **Case Study** details the value of an Open Day at Trentham in taking your Institute and its building to the public in an innovative way.

Put November 2018 in your diary for the Second National Conference of Mechanics' Institutes at Ballarat MI. In the meantime we urge everyone to get behind their local Institute, for with many hands, the tasks are easier and more effective.

We note the passing of: **Rex Fuge** of the Chiltern Athenaeum; **Bob Fleck** of Oak Knoll Books; and **John Laurent** of *Colonial Culture*.

A Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year to you all, including everyone at the Halls, Libraries, Museums or whatever.

Bron Lowden

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Barb Uke
Ying Zhou

NEWSLETTER ROUND

Tick after reading and pass it on

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

NEWS PLEASE

Let us have your news on the Hall, its history and more importantly its people. Email the **UK** editor at bronlowden@hotmail.com.

VOLUNTEERISM (DEFINITION) *The policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community.*

THESE WALLS SPEAK VOLUMES... IT'S A WINNER!

Announced on 17 October, during **History Week**, were the **Victorian Community History Awards** which are jointly sponsored by the **Royal Historical Society of Victoria** and **Public Record Office Victoria**.

The overall winner in the **Victorian Community History Award**, which 'recognises the most outstanding community history project submitted in any category' was *These Walls Speak Volumes: A History of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria* authored and published by **Pam Baragwanath** and **Ken James**.

The citation reads
'Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria have historically been meeting places for adult education, entertainment and the arts. The book ... provides an insight into the role of this local, independent self-funded and self-help voluntary system.'

It could be said that no book had addressed a State-wide study of a movement in Victoria since the late **Les Blake** and his team compiled *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria* in 1973, their massive three volume opus. *These Walls Speak Volumes* is a worthy successor.

We can but warmly congratulate the authors Pam and Ken on their outstanding achievement and the many people throughout Victoria who cooperated in this landmark research project.

However we must also commend the organisations that financially supported its publication: notably the **RE Ross Trust; Melbourne Athenaeum Library; Heritage Council Victoria; Public Record Office Victoria; and Victorian Scottish Heritage Cultural Foundation**. The **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria** also made a contribution.

Then there were: editor, **Julie Stafford**; designer, **Jenny Bullock**; and **Stuart Anderson** and the team at **BPA Print Group**, Burwood.

We heartily congratulate all of the above, who contributed to make this massive cooperative



L-R: Pam Baragwanath, Don Garden and Ken James.
Photo: Public Record Office Victoria Flickr

landmark research project a reality and its much deserved Award.

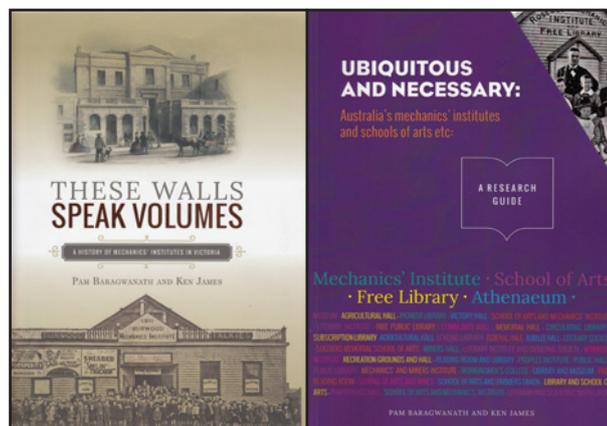
This book identifies many themes and groups that were a part of an individual Institute's history and it would be fitting to think that every Institute or a community in which they stood could expand on each entry.

Further it would be good to see more Statewide studies of Institutes and their users.

Ken James has already done this with his recently published *Victoria's Mutual Improvement Societies* (2016), a group that widely used Institute buildings, or progressed to the formation of Institutes.

During their huge research trawl Pam and Ken also assembled a massive trove of resources Australia-wide. These have been aggregated into another hefty tome *Ubiquitous and Necessary – Australia's Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts, Etc. A Research Guide* (2016)

Copies of: *These Walls Speak Volumes* are available at \$85, plus \$15 postage; *Ubiquitous and Necessary: A Research Guide* are available at \$55, plus \$15 postage. Send orders to: MIV, Box 1080, Windsor, V 3181



125 YEARS AT NARRE WARREN CELEBRATED IN STYLE

In this, the 125th year of operation, the Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute Hall continues to play an important role in the Community life of Narre Warren.

The Committee chose to celebrate the milestone event by dressing in period costumes of the 1891 era. In all approximately 75 people attended the event and importantly after many hours of research and assistance from the Narre Warren & District History Group we were also able to locate approximately 12 - 3rd generation descendants of **Sidney John Webb** and other original settlers of the Narre Warren District. Apologies were received from a niece of a granddaughter of **Sidney John Webb**, **Phyllis Isabel Webb**, who resides in Culcairn NSW. She explained that her Aunt was thrilled to receive an invitation to the event but had to decline stating that travelling down for the event and the preparation for her upcoming 100th Birthday on Anzac Day 2017, may be too much.

Judith Graley MP, State Member for Narre Warren South, was invited to attend and undertake an official opening of the day's events. Judith had already attended on another occasion in 2013 to celebrate the opening of the memorial garden to **Judith Allen** a tireless worker for the Hall committee and to unveil the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. Plaque No. 34 acknowledging the importance of the Narre Warren Mechanics' Hall in the community.

We were delighted when two new Councillors were able to attend and show their support; **Cr Rex Flannery** of Springfield Ward and **Cr Steve Bearden** and his wife. Other guests also included



Members of the NWMI Committee with local Councillors. Photo: NWMI



Descendants of Sidney John Webb cutting the birthday cake. Photo: NWMI

many local residents and members of other community groups from both The City of Casey and The Deputy Mayor of the Pakenham Shire.

A very extensive display included photographs [with the permission of **Max Thomson**] of the original settlers, **Sidney John Webb** and his family, who are

considered instrumental in the development and growth and of Narre Warren.

After the welcome by NWMI President **Russell**

Owen, Judith Graley thanked the present committee for their endeavours and tireless dedication in ensuring the Narre Warren Mechanics' Hall is kept as a reminder of the families of the past who contributed to bringing the community together in good times and bad. This is also one of

the major intentions, of the present day committee.

NWMI Treasurer **Judy Owen** gave an in-depth talk on the original inhabitants of the Narre Warren district and its surrounds, **Sidney John Webb** who donated the land for, firstly the **Narre Warren Railway Station School No. 2924** which opened next door to the Hall in 1889 and also Mr Webb donated land for the site of the Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute Hall, originally called "**The Narre Warren Railway Station Mechanics and Free Library**". **Sidney Webb** was also a leader when it came to bringing innovative farming methods into the district.

Judy also made a special mention of the **seven very large oak trees**, still remaining, in the grounds of the Mechanics hall which are now also **125 Years old**, these are linked to the remaining avenue of trees, on the North side of Princes Highway in Narre Warren which were planted by **Sidney John Webb**, the South side trees were removed for road widening.

A Fashion Parade of period costumes from the early 1900s followed with our models being members of our community and supported by one of our Hall hire groups.

An afternoon tea included the cutting of the celebration cake by the surviving relatives and allowed those present, time to catch up with old acquaintances, and time to make new friendships.

Judy Owen

MOLESWORTH - 114TH AND REFURBISHMENT



The people of Molesworth had a sunny day for the dual celebration of their hall's 114th birthday and the official completion of the hall's refurbishment.

Friends from surrounding hall committees at **Yarck**, **Fawcett**, **Acheron** and **Taggerty** gathered with current and former residents to make a substantial crowd.

Therese Morris, President; **Les Ridd**, Treasurer; **Cindy McLeish**; and **Brad Watts**, Molesworth Committee, spoke of the hall's history, the importance of town landmarks for community cohesion, and the cooperation between volunteers and contractors throughout the renovation process. MC Therese thanked everyone involved in the project from its inception to conclusion. Following the speeches, Brad Watts presented Therese Morris with a bouquet of flowers.

Member for Eildon **Cindy McLeish** and 97 year old **Jean Mahoney** unveiled the brass plaque. Photographs were taken to mark the occasion and position this October 2016 event in the hall's history. Jean, a former Member of the Molesworth Hall Committee, has been a champion and fundraiser for the past 40 years making cakes and preserves for the main funding raising events in Molesworth - The Molesworth Easter Bazaar and Clearing Sale. Until recently



L-R: Sharon Fox (Yarck); Bronwyn Dobson (Acheron); Brad Watts (Molesworth); Therese Morris (Molesworth); John and Liz Thorp (Acheron); Muriel Perry (Molesworth); Sam Hicks, Bernhard, Deane and Carl Sauerbeck (Fawcett); Corinne Brewis (MIV); Andy Russell (Molesworth); Les Ridd (Molesworth); Jill Russell (Molesworth); Ian Newman (Fawcett); Heather McClaren (Taggerty); Marg Ridd (Molesworth) (Photo: Rob Clements)

lived opposite the hall for most of her life. Only moving into accommodation in Yea early 2016.



Afternoon tea was shared, Happy Birthday was sung, champagne flowed and stories were told. A truly wonderful community celebration for the people of Molesworth and their friends.

Top: Attendees at the birthday and refurbishment opening celebrations; Left: Jean Mahoney (left) and Cindy McLeish unveiling the commemorative plaque. (Photos: Rob Clements)

Featured Institute

TELANGATUK EAST HALL (EST. 1885)

MY TELANGATUK EAST

Amity Dunstan, Hall Secretary, and resident of 13 years. Amity and her husband Tom run a large-scale mixed cropping enterprise in the district.

Telangatuk East is a rural locality, equidistant between Melbourne and Adelaide. The hall marks the district. There are no shops, no street lights or cluster housing to identify the location. On the pitch of the hall is a very tired and faded sign giving Telangatuk East its name to passers-by. The "local" population is approximately 56.

The landscape consists of fenced paddocks featuring scattered gums, patches of remnants and trees along creeks. Most residents' homes have a picturesque easterly view of The Black Range State Park. Primary production consists of prime lambs, beef, grains, hay and wool, with pest animals such as kangaroos and cockatoos from the nearby park. Telangatuk East has a chequered history of wildfires, droughts, and floods.

Like any Australian farming district which lies beyond the commuting distance of a significant regional city, population decline and dispersal is evident.

Last year the Telangatuk school bus to Balmoral Community College was replaced with a brand-new model, equipped with seatbelts, velour seats and a communal school bag holder. But it's owners, Terry and Shirl Robertson from Kanagulk, downsized the new bus, knowing that the population of Toolondo, Telangatuk, Rocklands and onto Balmoral, was not likely to ever sustain the same number of travelling students as it did in the late 1990s and previous decades.



Telangatuk East is a district which struggles to fill a weekly tennis team of four men and four women, especially when windrowing and harvest starts. The families that are represented on the hall committee are also on the tennis club committee and the CFA. Some community members also fill roles in Balmoral with the Pastoral and Agricultural Society, the SES, the Harrow Balmoral Football Club, the Cricket Club and the Lions Club. Volunteer fatigue is evident, however the culture of participation to maintain these clubs is ever present.

The Christmas Tree is the event of the year bringing together the community, and often their relations, past residents as well as people from nearby districts that all enjoy the gathering. On the 20th of December 2016 over 90 meals were served. Attendees bring salads or dessert, with the elect organiser managing the other catering logistics for such a crowd. Most importantly the fire truck delivers Santa. He dismounts from the truck with a sack full of presents; the children sit at his feet waiting for their name to be called to receive their gift and a small bag of lollies.

The residents' perceived benefit to manage the administration, communicate with Horsham Rural City Council, apply for grants, attend working bees, fundraise, and organise communal events determines the future of the hall. The toilet block is the greatest disappointment to the complex. The tennis courts, playground, kitchen, marquee, outdoor heater, BBQ and paved courtyard all support a social and likeable zone





for camaraderie and connectedness. New toilets would very much enhance the space.

Telangatuk East is a vibrant community, made up of resilient farmers and their families. The remoteness of the district forges friendships and generates sharing. Despite a very low population which is predicted to decline further, the hall will remain as the hub of the community. The community will ensure that the youngest generation continues to have a safe upbringing with positive childhood memories of playing at the Telangatuk East hall with traditional events and a culture of rural inclusivity.

HISTORY

The first hall (26ft x 14ft), was erected in the corner of Mr J Hunter's paddock and it was opened with a tea meeting and ball on 17 April 1885. Telangatuk East State School, No. 2917, was opened in the Hall in January 1889.

Julius Winkelman donated a site in 1891 and a new larger hall (36ft x16ft), was built there. Increasing attendance numbers saw the School move out of the old hall into the larger one in 1901. The Hall was lengthened to 46ft in 1904 and the School continued to operate from the Hall until it moved across the road on to its own site in 1928.

The community resolved to erect a new hall in 1926 and it was opened on 2 September 1925 with a concert and ball. The old hall was then sold by auction in 1928 to local farmer Richard Johnson.

Down through the years periodic upgrades have taken place: a supper

Clockwise from right: Telangatuk East Hall sign; side view of the Hall; the Hall from the road; rear view of Hall

(Photos: Karen Rees);

internal shot of the Hall showing Honour Board (Photo: Amity Dunstan)

room in 1933; a copper for boiling water in 1937; an electricity generating plant 1951-52; a new supper room in 1953; a septic tank and porch 1956; and connection to the State electricity grid in 1966. The Hall was passed to Council in 1987, and a Committee of Management was formed in 1988, and since then upgrades have continued with the assistance of Council.

Tennis has been a feature of Hall life since before 1910 and continues so today with three plexi-pave courts constructed in 2013. An emergency defibrillator was installed in the Hall for district use in 2014.

A feature of the Hall is its Honour Roll unveiled on 25 May 1918, prior to the end of World War I. It was carved by John Winkelman and fellow students at Gordon Technical College, Geelong.

SPONSOR OR SIGNWRITER WANTED

We'd love to see Telangatuk East Hall with its name boldly displayed on the building once more. If there is anyone out there who wants to make a difference, who can either donate or signwrite the sign '*giving Telangatuk East its name to passers-by*', contact Amity: amitydunstan@bigpond.com



MIV'S *Historical Plaques Program*

PLAQUE NO. 51 UNVEILED AT RHYLL



Rhyll Mechanics' Institute celebrated its 125th birthday on Sunday 20th November 2016. The afternoon was attended by both local residents and former residents - a great "Back to Rhyll" occasion. The Hall has been the meeting place for families and community groups throughout its life.

From 1891 to 1952 the building was the home of Rhyll State School No.3132. Former students and tutors shared memories of their school days. Others recalled the euchre parties, the dances, the Christmas tree in the corner, the bonfire on Guy Fawkes night, and the special family events that took place in the Hall.



The Committee of Management organised a comprehensive display of photos and memorabilia, and provided a magnificent afternoon tea and celebratory birthday cake.



(Photo: Rhyll Mechanics' Hall and Park - Phillip Island Facebook)

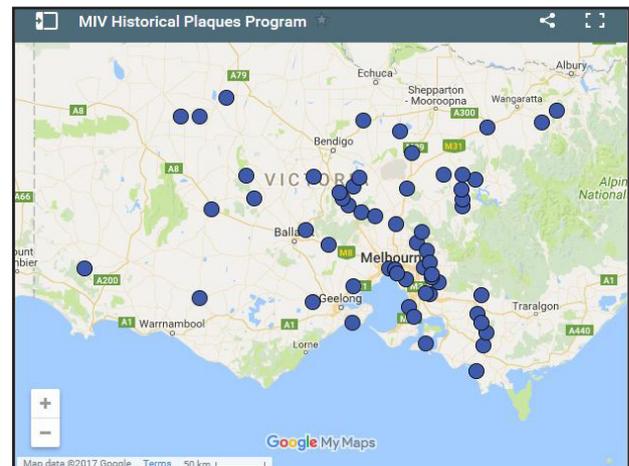
The afternoon culminated with the unveiling of MIV Historical Plaque No. 51. The plaque will be placed on the building to celebrate its 125th Anniversary and in recognition of its continuing role in the district.

Judith Dwyer

Recent Plaques

- No. 49 **Kyneton Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 50 **Somerville Mechanics' Institute** unveiled 12 February 2016.
- No. 51 **Rhyll Mechanics' Institute** - unveiled 20 November 2016
- No. 52 **Moonambel Mechanics' Institute** - to be unveiled in November 2017
- No. 53 **Merton Hall**
- No. 54 **Amphitheatre Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 55 **Inverleigh Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 56 **Ararat Mechanics' Institute** - unveiled 8 December 2016 (to be written up in UK43)
- No. 57 **Sea View Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 58 **Romsey Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 59 **Your Institute?**

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



MIV's Plaques issued to date. We still have a lot of the State to cover!

Check out the Plaques page on the MIV website for locations and individual citations - vicnet.net.au/~mivic/plaques

Wording and photographs can also be found on MIV's Open Plaques page. Please feel free to upload your own images via Flickr or Wikipedia and link them to our Open Plaques entries:

<http://openplaques.org/series/43>

We make an appeal to everyone to help us locate former Institutes sites, so that these can be plaqued and their history recorded.

THE ORIGINAL INVENTORS



*Top, L-R: Anderson, Birkbeck, Brougham, Horner, Holbrook, Ryerson;
Bottom, L-R: Carmichael; Fawkner, Lang, Parkes, Woodward.*

November 2016 saw delegates from the beneficiaries of the Mechanics' Institute movement's major countries: Australia; Canada; United Kingdom; and United States gather in San Francisco to discuss **Reinvention**. They shared their stories of their part of the vast inheritance of some 12,000 Institutes worldwide.

From the original **Invention of John Anderson** (1726-96) there have been major drivers, starting with **George Birkbeck** (1776-1841), and later his able lieutenant **Henry Brougham** (1778-1868) and **Leonard Horner** (1785-1864) in the UK. In the US we see **Josiah Holbrook** (1788-1854) driving the version known as the Lyceum movement. Across the border in Canada **Egerton Ryerson** (1803-82) promoted the movement, the name of which was largely extinguished by way of funding legislation in 1895.

In Australia, Scots: **James Ross** (1786-1838), established at Hobart the Van Diemen's Land Mechanics' Institution in 1827; and **Henry Carmichael** (1796-1862), Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts in 1833. In Melbourne, there was enigmatic English-born **John Pascoe Fawkner** (1792-1869), and the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution founded in 1839.

The **Rev. John Dunmore Lang** (1799-1878) and **Sir Henry Parkes** (1815-96) were 'ambassadors at large' for the MI movement in Australia.

Elsewhere around the world Institutes have been founded by emigres generally from the UK, like **Jonas Woodward** (1810-81) and **George Binns** (1815-47) in New Zealand.

INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION (UK)



The **Association of Independent Libraries** was founded in 1989 to further the conservation, restoration and

public awareness of a too little known, but significant section of our cultural heritage. It aims to develop links between its constituent members by means of co-operative agreements, newsletters, social gatherings, seminars, workshops and meetings.

The founding institutional members of the AIL all began life specifically as independently funded subscription libraries founded between 1768 and 1841 at a time when there were no public libraries and no university libraries outside Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh and Oxford. As more and more people were reading and books were very expensive to buy, groups of individuals combined together to form libraries which could be both of everyday use and of increasing value in the future. Many of the AIL members also provided other facilities for their members including museums, adult education and dining facilities. Several continue to do so.

The number of AIL members has grown since 1989 and now include libraries of varying historic foundations. Amongst these new members are libraries that have been preserved by means of funding from partner institutions and those that

never had subscribing members (such as the town libraries). Crucially, all members agree that the provision of a library is a key part of their activity and should subscribe to the aims and objectives of the Association.

Together, the Association's members possess over two million books and have many listed buildings in their care. Many also possess charitable status. They combine the preservation of their historic collections and beautiful buildings with a supply of the latest books and periodicals, a personal service to their members and research facilities for non members. The majority still retain their independence and all of them possess individual characteristics which are valued by regular users and new visitors alike.

In 2015 the Committee decided to change the format of the Association's annual meetings and agreed that it be in a conference format with an agreed theme. Papers were to be called from librarians, scholars, researchers and individuals in the independent sectors as well as from the public and academic sectors. It also agreed to a name change from Association of Independent Libraries (AIL) to the more positive sounding acronym of ILA (Independent Libraries Association). Along with that, came a new logo designed by staff at the Newcastle Lit and Phil. All the changes were approved at the most recent annual meeting held at Bromley House, Nottingham in conjunction with their bicentennial celebrations.

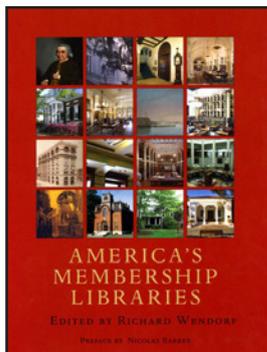
The current membership of the Independent Libraries Association include a wide cross-section of libraries:

- 1653 Chetham's Library, Manchester
- 1680 Library of Innerpefferay, Crieff
- 1704 Thomas Plume's Library, Maldon
- 1768 Leeds Library
- 1793 Westerkirk Parish Library, Bentpath
- 1797 Athenaeum, Liverpool
- 1799 Tavistock Subscription Library
- 1800 Langholm Library
- 1802 The Portico Library, Manchester
- 1810 Plymouth Proprietary Library
- 1813 Devon and Exeter Institution
- 1816 Bromley House Library, Nottingham
- 1818 The Morrab Library, Penzance
- 1819 Plymouth Athenaeum Library
- 1823 Whitby Museum Library and Archive
- 1824 Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution

- 1824 Ipswich Institute Reading Room and Library
- 1825 Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle
- 1832 Bradford Mechanics' Institute Library
- 1834 Saffron Waldron Town Library Society
- 1839 Highgate Library and Scientific Institution
- 1841 The London Library
- 1854 Birmingham and Midland Institute
- 1889 Thoresby Society, Leeds
- 1892 Guildford Institute
- 1894 Bishopsgate Institute Reference Library
- 1895 Gladstone's Library, Hawarden
- 1909 The Armit Museum Gallery Library, Ambleside
- 1912 Central Catholic Library, London
- 1928 Sybil Campbell Library, Winchester
- 1950s Working Class Movement Library, Salford

MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES GROUP (USA)

Membership Libraries in the United States and the Founding and 25 Years of Meetings of the Membership Libraries Group (MLG)



In 2004, I was asked to present a paper at the first Mechanics' Worldwide Conference in Prahran, Melbourne, Australia, about the history of the membership libraries in the United States. I started with the first library founded in 1731 in Philadelphia, based on

Benjamin Franklin's collection, and explained the founding of additional membership libraries and the transition of the membership libraries movement in the United States over the years.

Today, I will mostly focus on the Membership Libraries Group (MLG), which was founded in 1991 as a support group for all still existing membership libraries in the United States. At the conference right now, here in San Francisco, we will attend the 26th meeting of this group, which I am sure will be rewarding, educational and informative, as were the 25 meetings before.

Harold Augenbraum from the Mercantile Library in New York (now known as the Center for Fiction) was the one who had the idea to ask other membership libraries to join him for a brainstorming get-together in 1991, 260 years after the first library was founded. His library had some problems when he was hired as

director, and he was looking for guidance from other institutions. Eleven additional institutions joined him in April of that year. They reflected the different categories of membership libraries still in existence today: six were called *Athenaeum*, three were called *Mercantile Library*, two had *Society* in their name and one was a mechanics' institute library. We recognized the tremendous benefits we could gain from meetings of this sort and decided to meet annually in the fall, after meeting twice in 1991.

It has been a rewarding experience for all institutions. Today, I am the only founding member left from the initial group, and I remember every conference attended and everything I learned from each meeting. At the first meeting, in 1991, several important decisions were made:

The group would be called the Membership Libraries Group (MLG).

The group would meet annually in the fall, at different member institutions each year. Only directors would participate in the meetings; no substitute could be sent.

The 12 institutions participating and their respective directors were declared Founding Members of the Membership Libraries Group.

The 12 institutions included the Athenaeum of Philadelphia; the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library in La Jolla; the Boston Athenaeum, the General Society Library (Library of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen) in New York; the Mechanics' Institute Library, San Francisco, our host today; the Mercantile Library in Cincinnati; the Mercantile Library in New York (now the Center for Fiction); the New York Society Library; the Portsmouth Athenaeum in New Hampshire; the Providence Athenaeum in Rhode Island; the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, Rhode Island; and the Mercantile Library in St Louis.

Over the years, more libraries were found and included in the group. It was decided that, to be considered an active and voting member of the group, the institution had to be financially self-supporting for its library activities, could not be part of a larger organization, and had to provide a circulating library to its members. Some libraries do not fulfill one or more of these criteria anymore; however, they still have been accepted into the group as associated members, since they were founded as a membership library and still have some of the same concerns and problems and need the support concerning membership libraries today. The annual meeting attracts 10 to 12 participants each year who

exchange ideas and discuss issues especially pertinent to membership libraries.

Since the inception of the group, we have met 25 times and visited each other's institutions. The meetings are scheduled on a weekend in the fall and last two to three days, including tours of the host library and visits to other institutions which are of interest to the group. One day is dedicated to reporting on activities from the previous year and to discussing issues of importance to membership libraries in general. One member of the group takes on the chairmanship of the meeting, and quite often a previously agreed upon topic will be discussed in the afternoon.

In 2009, the La Jolla Athenaeum published a booklet of participants and hosts of the first twenty meetings of the group, from 1991 to 2009. An updated booklet is planned for 2016 to include all meetings from 1991 to 2015.

The meetings were held in:

New York (Mercantile: two times, Society: two times), Boston (two times), Philadelphia (three times), Cincinnati (two times), La Jolla (three times), Charleston (two times), St. Louis (one time), Newport (two times), San Francisco (one time), Portsmouth (one time), Tryon (one time), St. Johnsbury (one time), Salem (one time), and Providence (one time).

The regular voting members today (listed by their founding dates) are:

- 1747 Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, RI
- 1748 Charleston Library Society, Charleston, SC
- 1754 New York Society Library, New York, NY
- 1807 Boston Athenaeum, Boston, MA
- 1810 Salem Athenaeum, Salem, MA
- 1814 Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
- 1815 Maine Charitable Mechanic Association Library, Portland, NH
- 1817 Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, NH
- 1820 Mercantile Library/Center for Fiction, New York, NY
- 1826 Institute Library, New Haven, CT
- 1835 Mercantile Library, Cincinnati, OH
- 1836 Providence Library, Providence, RI
- 1855 Mechanics' Institute Library, San Francisco, CA
- 1890 Lanier Library, Tryon, NC
- 1897 Timrod Literary & Library Association, Summerville, SC
- 1899 Athenaeum Music & Arts Library, La Jolla, CA

Associate members are:

- 1820 General Society Library of the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, New York, NY
- 1846 St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, St. Louis, MO
- 2015 Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum, Seattle, WA

Libraries who are no longer participating:

- 1731 Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
- 1834 Nantucket Athenaeum, Nantucket, MA
- 1866 Minneapolis Athenaeum, Minneapolis, MN
- 1871 St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, St. Johnsbury, VT

All regular members have celebrated more than 100 years of existence, and some have been around for 250 years or more. In 2015, we added a new associate member with the founding of Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum.

With the newly found vigor and enthusiasm among the group, with the help from loyal members and supporters, with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the mission, I am certain all institutions will be around for years to come.

Erika Torri

Joan & Irwin Jacobs Executive Director
Athenaeum Music & Arts Library, La Jolla

ASSOCIATION OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND SCHOOLS OF ARTS (NSW)



The Association of Mechanics' Institutes and School of Arts [AMISA] Inc. is an association incorporated under the NSW *Associations Incorporation Act* [1984/2009]. AMISA 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 New South Wales. Membership is open to all individuals and groups which may have an interest in the Schools of Arts/ Mechanics' Institutes movement.

Since its formation AMISA has attempted to draw attention of the wider community to the significant role that the Schools and Institutes have played in Australia's history.

While they may not have achieved their original goal by 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 prototypical adult education provider for much of Australia and most Australians.

Schools and Institutes are often regarded as glorious failures but this position can only be supported if, 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.

Then the Australian Schools' and Institutes billiard tables, libraries of popular fiction, light entertainment, lowbrow lectures, useful classes, and regular social dances can be seen as blatant examples of this tragic failure.

However, one of the earliest 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 most successful – that they were able to adapt the often confused idealism of the Movement's founders to meet the very real practical needs of their local communities. In doing so they created some thousands of multipurpose adult education and recreational centres across Australia.

This is a much more accurate and positive assessment of the role of Schools and 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 cultural sense] of Australian adult education – landmarks much loved by their users and remembered with great affection by so many older Australians.

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 specialised facilities that can be no longer '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 for the regional library; a rural payments centre; the occasional cinematic of theatrical presentation; local MPs to meet their constituents; training programs offered for unemployed youth; local adult education classes; and meetings of the broad spectrum of local community groups, etc.

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

AMISA played a role in the Sydney Mechanics' funding of Hall surveys in the New England

Region by Barrie Brennan and Warren Newman in 2002-03 and more recently a State survey undertaken by the late Dr Elisabeth Richardson.

New proposed Crown Land Legislation saw AMISA convene a meeting in 2014 of representatives from Schools and Institutes to hear presentations by Government officers of legislation which had the potential to impact on all Schools or Institutes.

In 2015 AMISA launched its website and a Survey of War Memorial Schools of Arts and features and the result is now on line on their website. There is also information on grants, insurance and AMISA events. The compilation of a Directory of Schools and Institutes is also in progress.

www.amisa.org.au

Professor Roger Morris AM

Around Victoria's 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.

BENGWORDEN HALL (Est. 1883)

In the most recent round of PROV Local Grants, the former Bengworden Mechanics' Institute received a grant of \$2869 to enable the Hall's 'story and spirit to be captured'. The ultimate aim is to build on the book titled *Memories of Bengworden*, which was published in 2009, with one about the Hall.

BIRREGURRA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1865)

The EnLIGHTen Me Small Town Transformation Team has been busy planning their October 2018 Extravaganza. However they are keeping the community engaged along the way and such is their four week January 2017 program **The Yards Pop Up Village Green** commencing 13 January until 5 February. Events include: Twilight Grooves and Pizza Party in the Yards; Babes & Kids Pre-Loved Clothing and Toy Market; Otway Harvest Trail Food and Wine Twilight Fiesta; Family Picnic Day with Music

and Kids Arts Fun; Pedal Powered Twilight Cinema (BYO Deckchair); Mini-Expo Heritage and Future of Lamb and Wool in Birregurra. In addition to the above on: Saturdays, there will be Arts Fun for Adults and Kids, including print making, painting and patchwork; Sundays will feature Garden Walks and Talks, Garden Design Workshop Jardin Objet D'Art; and Mondays will include Outdoor Wellbeing Classes and Making Music for Fun. And if that program does not suit everyone you are even invited to stage additional events. Website: enlightenmebirre.com

BRUNSWICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)

The Moreland City Council is presently seeking a suitably qualified individual or organisation to manage the Institute. Applications closed on 16 January 2017. The Mechanics' Institute is Council's key performing arts venue which Council wants to see fulfill its potential as a vibrant, dynamic, arts hub that connects with the local community.

BULLUMWAAL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE HALL (Est.)

The Bullumwaal Muster, Saturday 5 November 2016

On a windy, blustery day approximately 100 People braved the road to attend The Bullumwaal Muster on Saturday 5 November 2016. There



Some of the Bullumwaal Muster participants in a group shot in front of the Bullumwaal Hall.

(Photo: Janice Haynes)

were people with family connections to the place (names such as Websdale, Palling, Husted (Minter), Hall & Holmes - Postmaster), people related to Ray Haynes, who wrote the book *The Bullumwaal Blues* (his daughter Janice, the organiser, and his sister, Pat Stephenson and his niece Kaye), people associated with the Timber Mill (Robinson), 8 former students of the Bullumwaal school (Stinten, Smith x 5 brothers and sisters!!, Price and Holmes), the Musicians Geoffrey D'Ombrian and Faye Backstrom, relatives and historians, local Bullumwaal residents and many others who just came for a sticky-beak, and to enjoy the BBQ and scones jam and cream at interval. The famous 1895 Bullumwaal Curtain was displayed, and donations for its restoration collected, and there were photographic displays, as well as presentations on the history of Bullumwaal and the School, and community singing segments with songs sung at the Concerts held in the hall in the 1950s.

The 1985 Bullumwaal Hall, one of the many surviving Mechanics' Institute Halls in Victoria, was packed to over-flowing, with numbers far exceeding those seen in the Hall for many a long year. There were many smiles as people greeted long-lost acquaintances, and nods and cries of recognition when the presentations were made. A highlight was when the former students who were present were called up to read their compositions from 1954.

Such fun was had by everyone that they all said they want to do it again soon - maybe in 2018? Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to making the day such a success. Now Janice Haynes is preparing for the Schools show 'Teach's Blues' she will present at 8 x East Gippsland schools in Education Week in May 2017. If you have any further information about Bullumwaal or the school to share please contact

Janice on 0407 348 478, email: jhaynes@ncable.net.au

FOREVER BULLUMWAAL!!

Janice Haynes

CASTLEMAINE LIBRARY (Est. 1855)

The **Friends of Castlemaine Library (FOCAL)** maintain an active support group for the Castlemaine branch library and a **Books for Babies** program, as well as providing **Books for the Palliative Care Unit** at the Castlemaine Hospital. To finance this work FOCAL have their now well-established periodic **Famous Book Sales** where one can buy pre-loved books, magazines, CDs, etc. They also took part in arranging an exhibition of **Ex-Libris Detritum: Things that Fall Out of Books**. One of their award-winning innovations was the '**Read-A-Long**' project where inmates of nearby Loddon and Tarrengower prisons, record stories for their children and the recording is sent with a message. Thanks to Crowd Funding the program is still ongoing. Filmmaker **John Flaus** was guest speaker at the recent AGM with 'A lifetime in the film industry'. There's always something happening at FOCAL, for membership contact focalcas@gmail.com.

CHARLTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1880)



Charlton's award-winning **Golden Grains Museum** featured in the latest round of Public Record Office Victoria funding and received \$7640 to purchase new display cases to mount two newly created exhibition units. You can become a Friend of the Museum for \$20 per year. Website: charltongoldengrainsmuseum.webs.com

KILMORE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

The Kilmore Institute conducted their usual pre-Christmas sausage sizzle, this time in the recently opened off-street Mill Street Mall. Long-time supporter **Barry Breakell** provided Christmas Carol music with his portable organ and Santa Claus arrived to dispense gifts from

the well-decorated tree. The **Kilmore Branch** of the **Bendigo Community Bank** provided funding for this, yet another community event.

LANCEFIELD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)

Lancefield has gone all out to showcase its unique pre-history by way of the **Extinct-Lancefield Megafauna Festival** which was staged from 25-26 November. The focus is on the giant wombat or Diprotodon which roamed the area about 40,000 years ago. More than a few got bogged in the clay swamp of the present day Lancefield Park and this is now one of the most significant megafauna fossil sites in Australia.

The most recent Megafauna Festival had author and environmentalist **Dr Tim Flannery** as their keynote speaker. His lecture, delivered in the Lancefield Mechanics' Institute, was very well received. There was a tour of the Mt William Aboriginal Axe Stone Quarry on the Sunday, one of a very few sites on the Australian National Heritage Register, which also attracted considerable interest.

MALDON ATHENAEUM (Est. 1863)



Author and journalist **Gideon Haigh** addressed the membership and friends of the Maldon Athenaeum on 19 October last, styled 'An Evening with Gideon Haigh'. Gideon concentrated on his latest crime title *Certain Admissions: A Beach, A Body and a Lifetime of Secrets*, which tells the story of radio announcer John Bryan Kerr who in 1949 was charged with the murder of 20-year-old typist Beth Williams. Kerr was tried three times, before packed courtrooms, with each jury delivering unanimous verdicts. His death sentence was commuted to twenty years, of which he served fourteen before release. He spent the rest of his life trying to escape his past, and when required his protesting his innocence. In all a riveting analytical investigation of the facts and the larger than life central figure, with Gideon concluding 'Two people could walk away from like encounters with John Bryan Kerr with completely opposite impressions of him.' Fielding a good number of questions at the conclusion

of his talk, naturally the subject of cricket was soon addressed. The evening, besides being an outstanding event, resulted in a boost to the Athenaeum's fund.

MOONAMBEL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1901)

Moonambel is gearing up for a **Back to Moonambel** Weekend on the 24-26 November 2017. This will also celebrate the 90th anniversary of the building of the current Hall. If you can help with memorabilia or memories of the Hall or would like to be placed on the mailing list contact: Jill Hunter (03) 5467 2211.

NARRE WARREN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

The 125th Celebrations were a mammoth task for Narre Warren's Committee of just 4, but they have decided that in 2017 they will join with another History Group in Narre Warren to again open the doors of the Hall to showcase the "Grand Lady" on 7 May 2017 for the Australian Heritage Festival 2017.

OLINDA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1907)

A grand old 'Hall of the Hills', Olinda, has recently had a repaint. The Green and Yellow colour scheme have been changed to Grey and White, and it looks a treat. The Hall hosts the popular **Market on the Mountain** which showcases local craft, fashion and food.

RHYLL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

It has been a varied but full year for the Rhyll folk. In January was the **Antiques and Collectibles Fair**, then came the **Really Rhyll Art Exhibition** in March which highlighted local artists. This was followed by a **Rabbit Control Workshop** in September and their 125th anniversary, **Back to Rhyll**, and plaque unveiling in November.

STANLEY ATHENAEUM AND PUBLIC ROOM (Est. 1863)

Exhibitions to see at the Stanley Athenaeum:

Botanical Treasures: Illustrations and Text from the collection at the Stanley Athenaeum, a selection of books in the collection that reflect an interest in botany and plants from all over the world, 'a global fascination with plants from the New World' and their fascination with the unusual. The aim of the exhibition is to look at the botanical interests of the Stanley community in the C19th and beyond, not only through their reading, but also in the Stanley landscape. It will provide an insight into the early fruit, vegetable



Stanley Athenaeum and Walkers' Shoe Store in snow pre 1900.

(Photo: Stanley Athenaeum collection)

and flower gardens of Stanley post European and Chinese settlement.

Ends 30 January 2017.

Minutiae to Grandeur: Nature, landscape, gardens, trees and plants

An exhibition of works by regional artists and artisans in a range of mediums. Artists are being asked to show their work on a botanical theme, priority will be given to artists from Stanley and Indigo Shire.

Exhibition Dates: 20 — 29 January 2017. Daily 10am - 4pm at Stanley Soldiers Memorial Hall, Stanley. The opening will be held on Friday 20 January 2017 at 6.00pm.

For more information and an entry form contact E: chris.dormer@westnet.com.au or contact Chris Dormer Ph 0458 606 922 or Janet Sutherland Ph 03 5728 6702

Stanley Calendar

Friends of the Athenaeum have selected black and white and colour images from the Athenaeum collection that feature Stanley's past and present events, places and groups, it also includes public holidays and key dates for local groups. The calendar will make a great gift and will be available for sale at the Post Office and Athenaeum.

Now Open Every Friday

Visit the Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room, Main Street, Stanley which is open every Friday & 4th Saturday each month from 10am to 12pm. *(other times by appointment)*

Contact - 0458 606 922 or 03 5728 6702 E: stanleyathenaeum@gmail.com

W: victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/stanley-athenaeum or home.vicnet.net.au/~mivc/stanley.html

Chris Dormer
November 2016

TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1890)

The Tallarook Farmers' Market, held on the first Sunday of each month, except January, goes from strength to strength. In fact it is a pleasant day out by train from Melbourne to Tallarook and the Hall is just a few minutes walk. V-Line provides a number of services up and back. You might like to add your name to their e-bulletins for event info email: libby@tallarook.org.au. Website: tallarook.org.au

THORPDALE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE RESERVE (Est. 1889)

In the most recent round of PROV Local Grants, the former Bengworden Mechanics' Institute received a grant of \$2383.75 to enable the documenting of the 'Thorpedale Pioneers Stories'.

UPPER PLENTY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1914)

The site has been cleared after the disastrous 2015 fire and has been planted with trees. The barbecue area has been fully reinstated adjacent to the nearby amenities block. It is a now a real and fitting place of memory. All that is needed now is the broadcast of an old time dance band in action to enhance those memories.

WINIAM MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1880s)

Located in Victoria's Wimmera, the Winiam community support their Hall, which still proudly displays its original name. In recent times the Hall has taken to a Facebook page and we learn that some 'low life' broke into the Hall in late April 2016 and stole the TV, DVD player, Play Station, Dyson vacuum cleaner, a steamer and some alcohol and soft drink from the fridge. 'They also damaged some of the Hall and left a mess.' The editor of the **Winiam Community Newsletter** notes 'If nothing else it did raise the profile of the Hall on Facebook and reached 3948 people.' Besides the Hall breakin, 2016 was a busy year with the **Casserole Tea** ('Please bring a main and dessert to share') in June, the **Thai Dinner** in October and the recent **Christmas Tree**. The Hall also received a grant from the Kiata Wind Farm to support the weekly **Football Practice for Farmers** program.

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives, it is the one that is most adaptable to change.

CHARLES DARWIN (1809-82)

The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

KANGAROO VALLEY SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1886)



Photo: shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

The township of Osborne was laid out in 1876, but the locally used Kangaroo Valley prevailed.

Mine host of the Pioneer Hotel, Charles Robinson erected the Cosmopolitan Hall, a building of 50ft x 25ft 'of gavanised iron on a wooden frame' in 1874. This was the first community hall.

In 1884, the School which had been built in 1871 and used for community events, was dismantled and erected opposite the Showground site and it became known as Union Hall or [E] Maguire's Hall. This was finally pulled down in 1931 and re-erected as a farmstead at Bendiela.

A third hall, the National Hall or Campbell's Hall, was built by James Campbell in 1889.

The Kangaroo Valley Mutual Improvement Society was formed in 1870. This group was re-formed as the Literary and Debating Society in the late 1880s and which met in the Union Hall.

A meeting to form the Kangaroo Valley School of Arts and Literary Society was held in 1886, but it was not until 1893 that a Committee was formed and meetings were held in the Church of England Sunday School Hall. It conducted a lending library which appears to have been based on the State School, where their library activities appear to have been funded by the Kangaroo Valley Amateur Minstrel and Dramatic Club from the early 1890s.

James Lambert Nugent donated a hall site, located adjacent to Kangaroo Valley Police Station and Osborne Park Recreation Ground, and a subscription list was raised. The School of

Arts, a 'humble structure of galvanized iron' was built by E Lumsden and C Sinclair and was opened on 30 April 1895 free of debt. This building was demolished in 1910.

In the meantime a site had been set aside on the other side of the road for a Mechanics' Institute in 1895, and grants were available Schools of Arts. There a large weatherboard structure, designed by JT Burrell, was erected at a cost of £400 and it was opened by Mark Morton MLA in May 1907. The 40ft x 22ft reading room, was accompanied by a library and committee room to its west and on its east was the office of the Cambewarra Shire, which had been proclaimed on 7 March 1906, at a rental of £20 per annum. The Shire continued to occupy the room until 1924.

Post-World War I, the building proved too small and additions were contemplated and Mr Sheaf, an architect, was commissioned to produce plans for a meeting hall, as the National Hall had been pulled down. The successful contractors at a price of £370, the Baker Brothers, used some of the stone from the demolished hall.

A supper room was added some time after 1937 and a lighting plant was installed in April 1946 until the Hall was connected to the grid in 1947.

During 1940 about 500 books were passed to Red Cross for distribution among the troops. In 1952 some new books were purchased and the library was placed in John Weaver's Café and were issued by him.

A feature of Hall life have been flower shows, debutante balls, doctor's room and movies. The latter required the Hall front to be remodelled in 1950 to accommodate a bio-box. Films have been screened successively by: J Julkeff of Berry from 1928; LC Snodgrass from 1946; and J Fox of Mittagong, from April 1950.

The Hall was passed to Shoalhaven Council in 1964 and since then has: replaced the floor throughout in new tallowood; removed walls between spaces; reconfigured catering arrangements to hall-wide rather than just supper room; done foundation repairs; demolished the fireplace and chimney on west wing; and refaced the biobox to improve appearance.

Today the Hall is an integral part of Osborne Park, the integrated Showgrounds and

Recreation Grounds, which was achieved in 1956 and is well used by the community.

SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1835)

In November 2016 the Rev. Henry Carmichael was inducted into the **International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame** which operates under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma. The extensive citation can be found on the website www.halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/2016/Carmichael (accessed 4 January 2017). The honour may be of interest to some readers. Henry Carmichael is the second Australian to be inducted into the Hall, Colin Badger being the first.

Reviewing the By-laws

As part of a continuing process of reviewing the governance arrangements within the School the Board at the end of 2016 successfully completed a substantial revision of the by-laws that have now been adopted by a general meeting of members. Whilst a number of amendments were of an administrative nature (It's interesting what happens to by-laws over time!) the key changes included:

- * Extending terms of appointment for Directors to three years;
- * Staggered appointments for Directors with one third to be elected each year; and
- * Extended voting opportunities for members in the election of Directors.

The changes are aimed at strengthening corporate continuity and increasing the opportunity for members to be actively involved in the governance of their organisation.

Living the Good Life with SMSA



Members and guests enthusiastically 'getting into the swing of things' with one of the presenters.

(Photo: SMSA)

In 2016, the School introduced **The Good Life** series of lifestyle events designed to give older Australians the tools and knowledge to get the

most out of life. Three highly successful talks were held, covering complementary medicine, meditation and mindfulness and ways to exercise and keep active every day, regardless of current fitness levels. The series will continue in 2017 as monthly talks complementing our regular program of events.

Taking a comprehensive and wide-ranging view of health, well-being and lifestyle, these talks will feature expert speakers covering everything from travel and healthy eating, to volunteering and avoiding internet scams. Our first talk for 2017 will cover a topic of particular interest to older adults, the recent changes to the pension and financial planning as you enter or continue your retirement.

Vice-President, Members Services, **Winsome Allen** says: "We are very excited to be adding the Good Life series to our permanent events line up. As their name suggests, we see these talks as a way to help older adults enrich their life experiences across mind, body and spirit."

Brian Johnston

Secretary, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

Website: smsa.org.au

QUEENSLAND

YANGAN SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1897)



Photo: environment.ehp.qld.gov.au

Located in the south of Queensland's Darling Downs, Yangan was a village established near Swan Creek. The Warwick-Killarney Railway was opened through the district on 2 June 1884. It was a noted dairying region and the town had two early butter factories.

The Yangan School of Arts was formed from a meeting held on 17 September 1897. Things moved quickly, for at the next meeting it was advised that Mr John Marriage had 'given a centrally situated site free of cost' and 'The next meeting will be held on Saturday, next, when final arrangements about the erection of a suitable building will be made'.

In January 1898 tenders were called and soon 'a very nattie little School of Arts and reading room' was formally opened on the evening of 14 May 1898 and 'it was a brilliant success in every respect'. The President Mr W Johnson noted the budget of £50 had been exceeded by two shillings, noting that the Treasurer, WP Adam had 'kept a tight grip... on the general fund'. A library was soon established with the titles added being advertised in the press.

In 1899 it was noted that 105 books had been purchased during the year at a cost of £18.8s.6d, which brought the total holding to 363 books. A number of journals had also been added including *Chambers' Journal* and *Windsor Magazine*. Borrowings for the year amounted to 1905.

In the same year it was decided to extend to building to twice its original size. This was eventually done in 1901 and included a library and smoke room. Further expansion was then planned to accommodate a billiard room.

In 1909 an approach was made to the Railways Department to provide a new site, with the view to shifting the existing building. Finally in September 1911 the Department conveyed current Lot 1, which comprised 18.5 perches (Resubdivision 1, of Subdivision 1, Allotment 2015) to the Institute trustees: Redmond Brewer, Alexander Kemp Jnr; and Thomas Kirkland. The adjoining current Lot 2 (Resubdivision 2) was purchased by the Institute in December 1914.

In the meantime the Yangan Masonic Lodge had purchased the original Institute and site for a Masonic Temple in 1912.

Architect W Kemp was commissioned to draw up plans for a building to accommodate a three-roomed (reading room, library and committee room) single skinned timber building, with a latticed verandah set flush with the footpath. Tenders were called and Sam Fagg was contracted to erect the building for his tender price of £264.

Hitching posts were erected outside the building and 'School of Arts' was signwritten across the front of the building. It was officially opened on 19 October 1912 by the Minister of Railways.

In April 1919 a World War I Honour Roll was unveiled in the Hall and this was to be supplemented by a World War II Honour Roll in 1949.

The Hall has continued in public management over the years, in spite of the railway closing on 1 May 1964 and the introduction of a mobile library. It was managed for more than forty years

by Alwyn Charles 'Gus' Mauch OAM, who died in 2011, aged 87.

The Hall is currently used for: a playgroup; Ladies Guild; Queensland Country Women's Association; Queensland Dairymen's Organisation; National Party; Returned Services League; Graingrowers; Bush Fire Brigade; and sporting groups.

The Hall hosts a weekly Farmers' Market, held on Sunday from 8am-12 noon.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AMERICAN RIVER INSTITUTE (Est. 1922)



Photo: www.theislanderonline.com.au

American River is located on Kangaroo Island, off South Australia, on Eastern Cove. Explorer and surveyor Matthew Flinders visited the Island in 1802. It is the recognised camp site of a group of American sealers that lived on the Island for several months in 1803 and built the 35 ton schooner *Independence* from local timber.

The Island was first settled in 1842, and Swedish-born Nils Ryberg settled at American River in 1884 and built Ryberg House as tourist accommodation. A wharf was built to serve the local settlers, the increasing tourist trade and a fish cannery. It was later upgraded to serve the mining of gypsum at Flour Cask Bay and Pelican Lagoon and has undergone further upgrades in 1964 and 2008 to serve the tourist and commercial fishing trade.

The Hall site was donated by Mr Fred Buick of Penneshaw, who laid the foundation stone of the building on 2 July 1928. Mr Buick was the first white child to be born at American River.

The 40ft x 30ft Hall was built on limestone footings, with oiled jarrah boards for the first three feet, then after that asbestos sheeting. The Hall was lined with stained and varnished Oregon panelling for about six feet up, then fibrous plaster. The Hall was lit by 'petrol lights'. The cost was £525. It was built by both salaried and volunteer labour and the official opening took place on 21 September 1928 when Mrs Nils Ryberg officiated in front of a crowd of 250 people, who participated in singing the **National**

Anthem and Song of Australia. Most of the money was raised by the American River Regatta Committee and there was a bank loan. The ladies had worked for the Piano Fund and raised the required £77.5s.

In 1948 it was being referred to as the American River Progress Hall.

On 19 January 2016, the Mayor of Kangaroo Island, **Cr Peter Clements**, chaired a Public Meeting in the Hall to discuss the Hall's future. The meeting voted overwhelmingly, sixty-one to three, to retain the American River Hall and upgrade it.

Mayor Clements in a Media Release following the meeting stated 'It is obvious to me that the community has spoken and has spoken clearly... Council recognises the community's excellent track record in pitching in with volunteer labour, and raising funds to achieve some excellent outcomes and this will always be supported.'

It was noted that land adjacent to the Hall had been previously sold for \$60,000, funds earmarked for the Hall's upgrade. Council had obtained expert advice as to the cost of a major upgrade and found this to be in excess of \$400,000, but locals believed that it could be upgraded to a usable standard for \$86,000. A member of the **Save the Hall Action Group** told the meeting that 'Out of all the money that Council's spent on the [Island] halls over the last four years, the American River Hall has only had 2.18% spent on it.'

We wish the American River community success in retaining and renovating their much revered Hall.

TASMANIA

LAUNCESTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1842)

The Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute now numbers some thirty-four and they all have not been idle. Their blogspot continues to throw up interesting facts. One is the continued existence of a set of Bell's *Poets of Great Britain Complete, from Chaucer* [1343-1400] to *Churchill* [1732-1764], comprising 109 volumes, purchased in 1844 and still in their original special ornamental case, which cost an extra two guineas. The set comprised the works of fifty British poets, and John Bell (1745-1831) started the set in 1776 and finished with fourteen volumes of Chaucer in 1786. They were largely printed in Edinburgh at the Apollo Press by Gilbert Martin (1784) and his sons. Launceston's

set comprises mostly first and second editions and a few of later date.

Website: launcestonmechanicsinstitute.blogspot.com.au

SCOTTSDALE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1881)



Photo: jsdas.org.au

The Ellesmere Post Office opened in 1865, and was renamed to Scottsdale in 1893. The Defence Nutrition Research Centre was established in 1958 and was redeveloped as the Defence Science and Technology Organisation in 2014.

A meeting to form a Farmers' Club and Library was held on 28 April 1880 at the Inverness Hotel, Ellesmere. The resolve was to form the Dorset Farmers' Club, with the power to form branches. Shortly after this it became known as the Scottsdale Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, with Rev. DJ Flockhart as President, and met in the Ellesmere Wesleyan Church.

Storekeeper and postmaster Thomas Tucker donated a site and the Association built an Assembly Hall, with a Reading Room and Library (below the stairs), at Tuckers Corner. It was opened on 20 July 1883 with a public tea meeting and concert. Mrs Simpson had lent her piano and Mrs Counsel 'with her usual good nature, contributed the use of her organ'.

The building which could accommodate 200 people cost £260.

The State School opened in the Hall in January 1885.

In 1886 the Association's name was changed to Scottsdale Mechanics' Institute. It was noted that a draughts tournament had been held and that a drama group had been formed.

A report on the Institute in 1890 showed there were 2000 books in the library and the reading room received a wide range of periodicals,

including several Christian papers. Library hours were 9am-10pm.

In 1917, the Institute approached Council to have them take over the Hall, and a meeting held on 30 August 1917 officially resolved to do this.

The Hall appears to have had biobox at the front. However film screenings may have been short-lived with construction of the Lyric Theatre at 28 King Street.

The James Scott Decorative Arts Society acquired the building in 2013 with a view to restoring it and returning to community use. Since that time this has been done and it was reopened in 2016.

A market is held on the third Saturday of each month in the Hall from 9am-1pm.

A Scattering of Stories: Music and stories that explore our community's indigenous and European identity was held in the Hall on 4 January 2017 and featured Patsy Cameron (Tasmania); the Stiff Gins (NSW); Professor Hamish Maxwell Stewart (Tasmania); and Liam O'Maonlai (Ireland).

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CALINGIRI AGRICULTURAL HALL (Est. 1918)



Photo: www.mingor.net

Calingiri is located north-east of Perth, near New Norcia. The area was recorded by a surveyor in 1903 as the Calingiri Waterhole and a township was gazetted in January 1917. It is a major grain growing region and has a Cooperative Bulk Handling site. It's population is around 100.

The Calingiri Agricultural Hall and Library was built by voluntary labour under the supervision of Mr LK Abbott. It was opened on 18 November 1918 by the Premier, Sir Henry Lefroy, and he announced a £100 grant towards the building costs.

Severely damaged by a violent hail storm, the Hall needed extensive repairs in 1923. Movies were screened in the Hall from 1924.

Another cyclone, this time in 1926, completely destroyed the Hall and it was rebuilt and opened on 14 October 1926 by Colonel JS Denton, MLA on the day of the first Calingiri Agricultural Show.

Annual Show night Balls became a feature of community life for decades.

Movie screenings continued on the Fitzgerald's circuit in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and then it became part of Lew Punch's circuit. Movies ceased about 1957.

By the 1970s the Hall was showing its age and the size meant large community events could not be held there. In 1979 the Calingiri Football Club submitted the successful tender to demolish the building.

It was replaced by the present Calingiri Recreational Hall, in Yulgering Road, which was opened on 29 March 1980.

The region is designated an important Bird area to support the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo. It was the site of the Calingiri Earthquake on 10 March 1970.

NEW ZEALAND

HORORATA LIBRARY HALL (Est. 1889)



Photo: Frey/Newman. On a Saturday Night (2012)

Located on the South Island, 50km west of Christchurch, on the edge of the Canterbury Plain, the Hororata Hall serves a pastoral and rural region.

The first meeting to establish a hall was held in the schoolroom on 21 August 1889. The meeting was informed that Sir John Hall had purchased an acre site opposite the racecourse and had had it fenced and planted and installed gates. He offered this as a hall site along with £50 to the building fund.

Christchurch architect Samuel Hurst Seager was commissioned to come up with a design, with options of brick or timber. After prevarication, work got under way and the Hall was officially opened with a ball on 11 April 1890. Their patron Sir John, was consulted widely from sourcing crockery to the waxing of the dance floor.

Since then the Hall has had almost every conceivable use and it still retains part of its

original library and its quaint biobox. It is well maintained by the local community, even though damage during the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, required restoration work.

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND

BRIDPORT LITERARY & SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE (Est. 1834)



Photos: Literary and Scientific Institute Bridport Facebook

The massive makeover of Bridport's long neglected building proceeds apace behind a fabric of scaffolding and plastic. Their very new website: www.lsbidport.co.uk takes one in almost real time to see work in progress and a range of events. And if you are in to Crowd Funding you might like to make a donation to their Building Fund and details can be found on their website.

LONGWOOD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1857)

Now that the CCTV is in place and the cameras can be monitored from a mobile phone, hopefully this will deter vandalism and any thought of break-in. The next fundraiser is to replace the Hall's fire alarm system. The **Annual Father Christmas in Winter Wonderland** again did not disappoint both young and old. Quiz is clearly big and growing at the Longwood Hall with a healthy prize of £50 for the winning team. Then besides the tea, coffee and licensed bar with cakes, there is always the pre-loved book and jigsaw sale table. Longwood are also actively planning their 160th celebrations in 2018 where a book will be launched.

www.longwoodmechanicshall.org.uk

OTLEY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1870)

In a follow-up on an earlier article, we now learn that Greg Mulholland MP has accessed a quotation for necessary works at the Institute for a £1.2million quote from respected building practitioner Basil Houldsworth & Sons. This

quote is much lower than the much touted one of around £4 million previously advanced by Council. He also notes that Council has sold some £8 million worth of assets that had been previously controlled by the former Otley Council. So the question begs what has Council spent this money on?

SCOTLAND

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY (Est. 1821)



Photo: www.alumni.hw.ac.uk

HW have just finished a year of the celebration of attaining the Royal Charter in 1966. It's been a busy time. As of old the HW continues to diffuse knowledge around the world, particularly to its Campuses in Dubai and Malaysia. But their diffusion stretches much further as it claims alumni in 190 countries.

WALES

SOUTH WALES MINERS' LIBRARY (Est. 1973)



Photo: minerssite.wordpress.com

The South Wales Miners' Library leads the world in the collection and preservation of the records, libraries, memorabilia and most importantly has and is collecting the memories of those who managed or frequented Institutes.

The South Wales Miners' Library's pioneering enterprise and the evolved skills of a dedicated team over the last forty years has created a unique international centre of immense worth. It is jewell, not only for its farsighted host the University of Swansea, but is a model for the rest of the world to emulate.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT ON MECHANICS' INSTITUTES (ICRPMI)

The Mechanics' Institute was a worldwide phenomenon which perhaps numbered 12,000 individual Institutes worldwide, with a plethora of management structures, but with a general common aim *'the diffusion of useful knowledge'*.

It is clear from what took place at San Francisco that there is a need to document and hopefully assist in coordinating various research activities on a national and international level. Presenters included: **Eve Hartley** based at the University of Huddersfield in Yorkshire, England with the subject **'The Regeneration Game: Recognising the Past in Order to Re-Brand the Future'**. Eve is working on the University's 175th anniversary project team curating an exhibition on the history of the University, producing web content and delivering workshops recreating the original Reading Rooms. Another presenter, **Kirsten Loach** is based on the Portico Library at Manchester. Kirsten is a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University investigating the sustainability of heritage in independent libraries. She chaired a Conference Roundtable **'Overcoming Challenges, Seizing Opportunities: Towards a Holistic Vision for Securing the Future of Our Heritage.'**

CALL FOR INFORMATION

"SouthHem" is a European Research Council-funded project investigating book circulation; the history of reading; literary appreciation and aesthetics; and the development of literary institutions and associations across the British-controlled Southern Hemisphere and Straits Settlements between 1783-1870.

The project is comparative, and focuses on the circulation of books, manuscripts, ideas, and peoples between and within three key zones: 1. Australia and New Zealand; 2. The Cape Colony and Natal; and 3. Java and the Straits Settlements.

The first phase of the project involves the tracing and recording of texts produced and circulating within the region described above. Sources are primarily library catalogues, bookseller catalogues, and auction catalogues. The team members of SouthHem are looking for any privately held catalogues (as well as any records of book purchases, standing orders, and the like), particularly those relating to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Singapore.

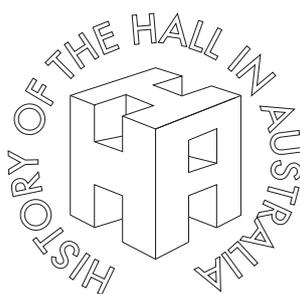
If you have any information, please contact Dr Sarah Comyn and Prof. Porscha Fermanis: sarah.comyn@ucd.ie; porscha.fermanis@ucd.ie

HISTORY OF THE HALL IN AUSTRALIA

The undeniable impact of Institutes on the regional, cultural and educational development has long been overlooked by historians and sociologists. Their ongoing influence, in a number of entities, on their various individual communities is still to be assessed even in the current context.

The publication of **Pam Baragwanath** and **Ken James' Ubiquitous and Necessary: Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts, etc: A Research Guide** and officially well launched by **Helen Creagh** after MIV's AGM paves the way for a major research push throughout Australia.

Of course we cannot forget about the massive and largely silent trawl for Institute records across Victoria. To date some eighty-five Institutes have had their records digitised and



these are available for inspection at the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** at **Prahran Mechanics' Institute**. There is also a growing collection of monographs on various Victorian and some Interstate Institutes.

The time has come for major effort on the part of academic institutions to utilise existing course frameworks to study the various aspects of Institutes, ranging from their architecture, activities, libraries and their very survival. We need a national website to bring all this together to probe the **History of the Hall in Australia**, for a paramount study in the history of Australian community life.

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

ANNE FRANK (1929-1945)

Case Study - OPEN DAY AT TRENTHAM

The case for the conduct of an Open Day was demonstrably shown at the Trentham Mechanics' Institute on 15 October 2016. The long-running saga of the Hepburn Shire Council's resolve to demolish the Institute building to make way for a community hub was recently overturned, with Council resolving in August to build the hub elsewhere.

Trentham's history is largely based on its original forests and when these were cleared it became a very productive potato growing and livestock producing region. Gold prospecting has long been a part of the local economy. Today, its close proximity to Melbourne has provided the opportunity for commuters, hobby farmers, and retirees to become located in the area and the town's population has increased to around 2000 in recent times.

Trentham has also become an area of small food industries with the thriving Trentham Food Hub monthly Farmers' Market. It also has an annual Spudfest and periodic Irish related dance and music activities.

The community clearly welcomed Council's decision, by showing just what activities could be staged in the Hall by way of an Open Day, albeit at short notice. The Hall is located on the south west corner of the High Street site. This leaves a vacant frontage to abut Bath Street in the east and a large open space to the rear bordered by mature cypress trees to the east and north of the site facing Albert Street.

The Hall was largely brickclad in 1981. Management was passed by the Department



to Council in 2014 and existing Committee of Management passed over the records and the proceeds of a bank account. Since then management has been by way of local contacts.

Since Council's momentous decision, the local community have shown their capacity and resolve to take back management of the Institute for their community and the recent Open Day demonstrated that capacity.

The theme of the day was existing and possible projects which would engage the whole of the community, from youth to seniors. MIV's two banners **Remember the Mechanics'** and **Mechanics' and Proud of It** advertised the event at the Street front.

Entering the front door the Trentham Historical Society, which had been formed in the Hall, provided historical pictures and extracts relating to the Hall. There was also a model of the Hall which had been constructed.

Central in the main Hall was a book sales table provided by Paradise Books and Daylesford's Book Barn. This featured alternative lifestyle and general titles.

On the left was the Hackerspace computer table which featured 3D printing and design and the latest Raspberry (Pi) Jam technology. The hope was that a local chapter of the group would become established in Trentham. Next came the TMI 'net' table which offered superceded computers which could be connected through an envisaged local Wi-Fi hub. Further along was the vocal music performance hub which proposed the turning of the former film projection space above the front of the building into a bespoke recording studio and training area. The stage featured the Poetry Slam which it was proposed to become part of a regional network of



Photo: twicopy.org/bhackerspace

activities. The Donate a Book to grow a library of local resources to support Hall activities and specialist local industries was next.

The Supper Room provided Devonshire Teas, with homemade scones and cakes, along with the clotted cream, and a variety of homemade jams, including a very rare apple jelly. The help yourself to tea and coffee was a way to overcome personal choice.

Around the walls were panels from MIV's travelling exhibitions, including the one for Trentham.

Then walking back into the Hall, was the table for the Mechanics' School of Art with a local skilled oils practitioner and examples present. Next, came the geology table with samples of local gemstones, maps and gold prospecting equipment. This attracted interest from everyone, in the hope a future elusive find.

Outside, to the east of the Hall was a boatbuilding and boat restoration site which had training and synergy potential with the nearby Tylden Reservoir.

Next came the Hobby Farm sheep yard. This promoted the idea of a single local Property Identification Code for owners with just a few sheep. These would be shorn and vetted annually at a Sheep Expo day.

The spit roast area, which featured a choice of four meats - beef, lamb, pork and poultry - with a thoughtful range of add-ons and choices. This attracted good patronage.

The event ran from 1pm-5pm and meshed in with the timing of the nearby Farmers' Market which was held from 8am-1pm.

The Open Day showed how a community can rally to the Hall cause and advance strategic and innovative future uses for the community's Hall.

Before and After...

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A COAT OF PAINT MAKES



Olinda Mechanics' Institute, 2014 and 2017



Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room 2012 and 2017

Where They Stood

LAKE MARMAL MEMORIAL HALL (EST. 1889)

Located in north-west Victoria, Lake Marmal is situated 20km west of Boort. The township was surveyed and proclaimed in 1878 near the intersection of the Old Marmal Road and with North Road on the northern shore of Lake Marmal, a 350 acre water and swamp feature. Today this Crown Land Reserve is managed by Parks Victoria.

A Post Office was opened on 17 August 1878 and closed on 28 February 1959. The Cemetery, gazetted on 7 March 1879, was of six acres and part of allotment 50, Parish of Terrapee, still has an occasional burial. Marmal appears to be an Aboriginal dialect word for 'hand'.

Historically the area has relied on cropping and sheep grazing, however in recent times the area has been the subject of the 200ha Central Melbourne Lake Marmal Vineyard Project and the 3500ha olive grove plantings of the Boundary Bend Company.

A two acre two roods site for 'Public Purposes' was gazetted on 16 June 1876 in the Parish of Terrapee at Marmal. Lake Marmal School, No. 1235 was built and opened under the supervision of Rebecca Murphy in 1877. The School burned down in 1886 during a bushfire when Mr McCrae was headmaster.

The School reopened in the newly built hall in 1889 under Miss O'Keefe and remained operating there until 1938. It was during the headmastership of Norman Theodore 'Norm' Deckert's that a move to build a new and separate school was successful.

Tenders were called in October 1937 for a 'New [School] Building', this time on a new site near the intersection of the Old Marmal Road and the Boort-Charlton Road. It was officially opened by Sir Noman Martin in 1938 and was finally closed in 1959.



A site for 'Public Recreation' comprising twenty-five acres three roods and twenty-six perches abutting allotment 60, in the Parish of Terrapee was gazetted on 8 September 1899.

A further site for 'Public Recreation' was gazetted on 18 January 1901 which comprised five acres as part of allotment 50, Parish of Terrapee.

LJ Blake, ed. in *Vision and Realisation* makes reference to a [Mechanics'] Hall being constructed at Lake Marmal in 1889. This is consistent with the fact that grants for a Lake Marmal Mechanics' Institute Library were made between 1889-1903 and the Library continued into the 1950s.

Fae Stevens in *Smoke on the Hill* states: 'In 1898 [sic] the Lake Marmal Mechanics' hall was opened, the chair being occupied by Mr T Langdon, MLA. Overtures were contributed by Miss Edwards, Miss R Coup, Mrs Proctor, Mr Campbell, Mrs Stubs and Miss Excell. Great credit to Mr [Charles] Berkeley, who trained the little ones. Miss Elliot gave two recitations. The evening finished with a dance.' It is suggested that the date should in fact read 1889, although no evidence by way of newspaper report has been found. There is however the fact that Thomas Langdon was MLA for Avoca from May 1880-March 1889. (He went on to be the Member for Korong from May 1892-May 1914.)

A two roods site for a 'Mechanics' Institute' at 'Terrapee', abutting allotment 60 Parish of Terrapee was gazetted on 8 September 1899. Messrs John McDonald Jnr, John O'Meara, William O'Meara, George Tremble and Hugh White were gazetted trustees on 24 November 1899.



A Catholic Ball was held at 'Lake Marmal' on 13 July 1900 with 176 people present, and there appears to have been annual Balls held there after that, even in to the late 1940s. The Hall was referred to in 1914 as 'Marmal Mechanics' Hall' in connection with a Grand Ball and Supper being conducted by the Marmal Tennis Club.

The Hall was adjoined by: tennis courts (1914); cricket ground (1914), with a concrete pitch installed in the 1930s; football ground (1902), Fogarbollas Football Club; and golf course (1914) of nine holes. Most of these activities continued until at least the 1960s.

The Hall's name was believed to have changed to Lake Marmal Memorial Hall sometime after World War I, although it was still being referred to as a Polling Booth: 'Lake Marmal, Mechanics' Institute' in 1952.

The Hall was upgraded in the 1980s by way of a Commonwealth Unemployment Scheme RED project. It was rewired, a 4500 litre tank was installed and the kitchen and external toilets received an upgrade. However the brick surrounded woodfired copper still remained. It is believed an east-west plantation of trees north of the Hall was established during this period.



From the mid-1980s-90s the Hall was the base for the annual two-day Lake Marmal Muster and proceeds from the well-attended events were paid to local charities. Power was subsequently disconnected and a generator was then used for occasional events.

In the 1990s a burglary resulted in the removal of most of the Hall furniture and equipment, along with the brass candlesticks off the piano, a glass case which contained a special book, and cricket photos and sporting memorabilia.

The last major event held at the Hall was the Byrne family reunion held in 1997 when some 200 people turned up for the weekend of activities.

A site inspection in 2007 revealed broken windows, some weatherboard cladding was dislodged, and a cupboard with a few library books still in place. Some crockery remained in the kitchen cupboards and the Honour Boards were still in place over the stage. (The World War I & II Honour Rolls have since been placed in the Boort Memorial Hall.)

The Hall was propped on the south side around 2010. It was finally blown down in a storm on 16 December 2014 and the site was cleared of the debris on 5 May 2015. The Reserve is now managed by Parks Victoria as part of the Lake Marmal Park Reserve.

The town was paper, but the memories were not.

JOHN GREEN (1977-) in *Paper Towns* (2008)

Ex-Libris - FROM THE SHELVES OF A MECHANICS' LIBRARY

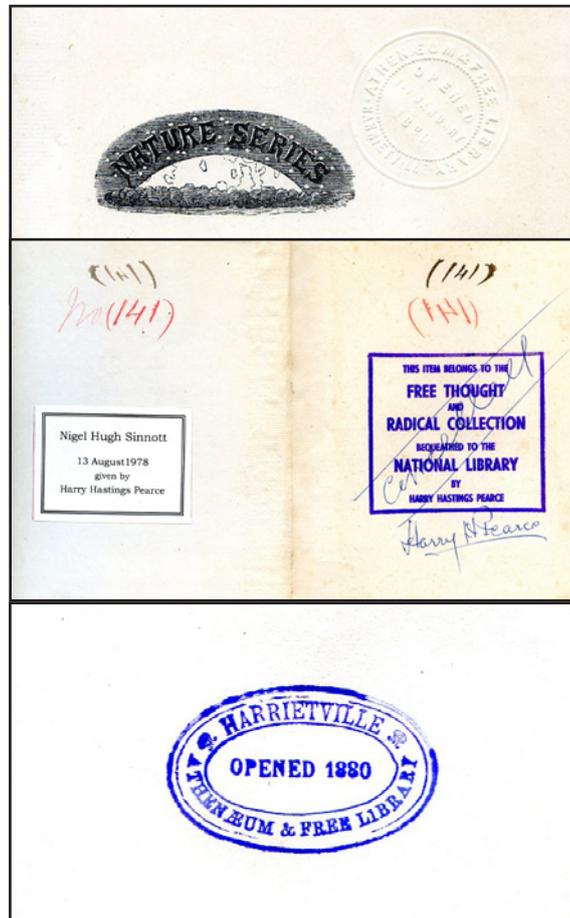
The Mechanics' Institutes are known universally for their libraries, which were in most cases the first in the many communities in which they were established. Whilst many books were taken to the local tip or sold, even the blandest title can tell us much about the Institute and the conduct of its library.

This item had its origin in the **Harrietteville Athenaeum and Free Library** in north-eastern Victoria. According to the Institute's circular seal, blind embossed on the half-title page, the Institute 'Opened 1st January 1880'. Books to the value of £17.19s.6d were soon purchased and the building was insured for £260 through the South British Insurance Company. In 1902, Mr D Williamson contracted to extend the hall 'to be the largest in the district'. The Loyal Alpine Lodge met in the Hall and for a time it operated as a School of Mines. The Hall was demolished in 1978 and Harrietteville Museum now operates from the site, now known as Athenaeum Park.

The book title is: *Charles Darwin: Memorial Notices*, reprinted from 'Nature' and it was published in London by Macmillan & Co. in 1882. Darwin (1809-82) is best known for his work *On the Origin of Species* (1859), but he also was a regular contributor on science-wide issues to *Nature Magazine* which was commenced in 1869. The title page carries the name of Sir Archibald Geikie (1835-1924), a geologist and Director of the Geological Survey of the UK.

The oval rubber stamp in blue appears on the title page, and pages xii, 3, 47 and the inside back cover. The book also carries various (shelf?) numbers: 'No. (141)', on the inside front cover; 'No. 330' and '404' on the title page; and 'No. 516' on an un-numbered pre-chapter page between pages xiii and 1.

The inside front cover also carries a rectangular stamp in blue 'This item belongs to the/ Free Thought/ and/ Radical Collection/ bequeathed to the/National Library/ by Harry Hastings Pearce'. The stamp has been diagonally



struck through with a handwritten 'Cancelled' between parallel lines. At the base of the stamp is the handwritten signature presumably of 'Harry H Pearce'.

Harry Hastings Pearce (1897-1984) was a noted bibliophile, labour historian and rationalist. He assembled a significant library during his life and was a regular attendee at the Book Collectors' Society of Australia and the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History meetings in Melbourne. He was also a longstanding member of the Henry Lawson Society, having joined in 1945, edited its journal the *Lawsonian* up to 1984, and held every executive

position in the intervening years. In February 1984 he gifted his papers and 15,000 books and pamphlets to the National Library of Australia.

On the opposite free endpaper is a printed label bordered by two parallel lines 'Nigel Hugh Sinnott/ 13 August 1978/ given by/ Harry Hastings Pearce'. Nigel Sinnott was a long-time friend of Harry Pearce and fellow rationalist and he contributed the biographical note on Harry Pearce to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 18.

We acknowledge the assistance of Nigel Sinnott in compiling this article.



Curtain Call

MINERS REST MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1865)

Continuing on from **UK40** where we covered the **Miners Rest** curtain. It was after a click around of the 'net that we were able to locate the artist **Robert 'Bob' Flavell** living with his wife **Loris** in retirement in Berwick. Unfortunately the full story came too late to include in



UK40, and we ran out of space in **UK41**, so we give it below.

Bob's father **Thomas Lexington 'Tom' Flavell** came from Trawalla State School to be Headmaster of the Miners Rest State School in April 1953 and he left to become Headmaster of Bungaree State School in January

1959. Bob's mother **Melanie**, but always referred to as 'Dolly', was a member of the CWA which met in the Hall. Bob recalls the Hall being well used by youth playing badminton and Miners Rest had badminton teams in the local competition. He also remembers the well-stocked Dadswell's General Store, which was close by the Hall.

Bob advises that it was while he was a second year student at Ballarat Teachers' College, that he was approached by Miners Rest Hall Committee member **Jim Davey**, who was in the local Fire



Photo: artsatlas.com.au

Brigade with Bob's father. Jim made a very persuasive pitch to paint a stage curtain and Bob agreed to paint the mural during the September School holidays in 1955.

Bob chose the subject 'The Erskine River near Lorne' at random from a photograph in a then current book of Victorian scenes. In noting that he just liked the scene, Bob explains

that holidays were not spent at the beach, but inland with either his grandparents at Balmoral or with his father's brother at Rocky Point near Ararat.

The Hall Committee arranged for a large piece of canvas to be stretched across the wall at the back of the stage and provided two step ladders and a plank to go between the two.

Bob then went to work on the canvas in situ, drafting the mural, and from time to time balancing on the sagging and wobbly plank carried by the two ladders. It was then down to the real work. Various sized tins of household oil paint and brushes were purchased from a store in Sturt Street, Ballarat, for which he was later reimbursed.

After about two weeks of ten hour days the project was complete. Unfortunately no picture appears to have been taken of the 'artist in residence'. Bob intimates that Miners Rest is his only mural.

At a dance and supper in the Hall shortly after, Bob was presented with 'a very good travelling case' which he still has 'in good condition'. Bob advises that at the time "I was quite unsure – was it an appreciation of my effort or a hint to 'get out of town son'."

Next year Bob went on to do an Extension Course with Melbourne Teachers' College in the teaching of art and craft to Primary School students. Then for four years he taught art and craft, before taking a position in a Boys' Home in 1961, and remained associated with Child Welfare organisations until his retirement in 1998.

We thank Bob for sharing the memories, the real stuff of history, and we wish him and his wife **Loris** good health and a long and happy retirement.



Book Reviews

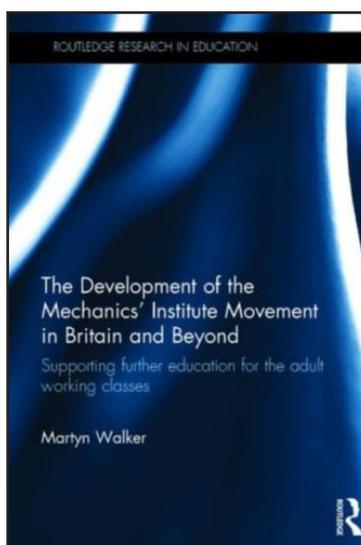
The Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain and Beyond: Supporting further education for the adult working classes - Martyn Walker. London: Routledge, 2017. Hardback. 194 pages, illustrated. 160x235. 9781138923553.

Books that explore an issue that has not produced a satisfactory answer are 'for me' a real attraction. Martyn Walker's book seeks to clarify the question concerning the degree to which Mechanics' Institutes – individually or in clusters – in the nineteenth century provided support and direction towards education in 'useful' and other relevant knowledge for Britain's working classes.

Walker has used the work of earlier writers with a particular view on the degree of help and assistance for the working classes plus the extensive records maintained by the British Institutes, particularly in the northern counties. His conclusion is that over the nineteenth century the Mechanics' Institutes were given sufficient support by industries, benefactors, the educated middle class and working class people (men and women) that they were able to provide 'useful knowledge' and 'technical education' through classes, lectures and books.

The background for this century in Britain is clearly defined including European wars, varying conditions for local industries and international trade. There were also important internal political changes and significant national education-related legislation. Walker documents the ways in which different regions, cities and towns responded to changing conditions and varying influences. A broad definition of 'working class' is used as the discussion examines the problems and responses to the situation in various locations for women and children. A key point of his argument is that the working classes, through the Mechanics' Institutes and other local activities, contributed to the causes of both employment and education.

At various times over the century, especially from the 1840s onwards, the special needs (or problems) of a district or city are noted by Walker, reflecting the widespread nature



of, and different circumstances facing, these communities. Nevertheless, the overall picture of the problems and responses of individuals, communities, agencies and government does provide a detailed picture of the scene.

There are problems however when the focus turns to overseas nations. The local conditions in Britain were not reproduced in the colonies or USA. One example is clear in the Australian story. There were significant actions taken by the British Government that related to the Mechanics' Institutes and

technical, adult and school education. However in the Australian colonies, the colonial (state) governments made decisions that anticipated problems and indicated they appreciated difficulties, eg. with Mechanics' Institutes and books (libraries) and technical education. There was in the Australian situation the fact that the colonial governments offered support and finance for their Mechanics' Institutes but there was a need for local 'back-up' and support. The community had to be involved.

Those who had travelled from somewhere in the British Isles to one of the locations noted by Walker perhaps perceived the Mechanics' Institute as a symbol of their homeland and of the good things, education-wise, that the Institutes may bring to their new place of living. The reasons why progress was made in these other places were perhaps influenced by what had happened and was happening in Britain. However, generally, the developments in these other locations regarding their Mechanics' Institutes depended mostly on the conditions, economic, social and educational, of their new village, town or city. Britain was a long way off and its development was at a different stage than their new country.

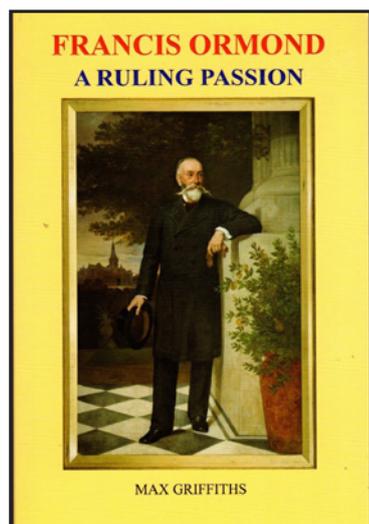
The work of those in Britain during the nineteenth century certainly contributed to significant changes in the amount and quality of further education that was available to those in the working classes. Why this was so for Britain has been clearly demonstrated by Walker. The situation in those countries other than Britain noted by Walker may or may not have achieved

Book Reviews cont...

that status for their further education. There is however ample evidence that the work and plans of those in Britain did make a real and effective contribution towards that goal of further education for the working classes, men and women. The question has been answered by Walker, as far as Britain is concerned.

Reviewed by Dr. Barrie Brennan

Available from: some bookshops or online about £95, plus postage.



Francis Ormond: A Ruling Passion – Max Griffiths. Sydney: Rosenberg Publishing, 2014. Hardback. 208 pages, illustrated. 150 x 225 mm. 9781925078534.

America had its railway and oil tycoon philanthropists, but Australia had its pastoral

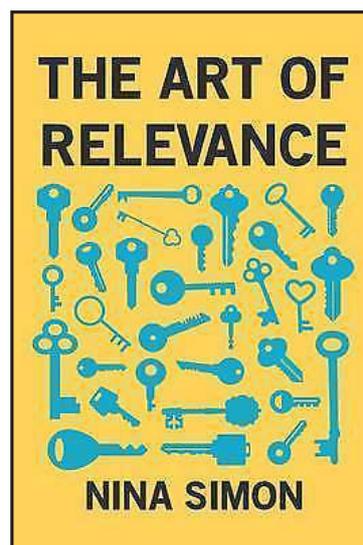
benefactors. Such was Francis Ormond (1827-89), the Scottish-born pastoralist and member of Parliament.

The author, who has significant involvement with causes which were common to Ormond, particularly explores the motive and outcomes of Ormond's enduring philanthropy on education. His Mechanics' connection comes by way of the need to educate the station hands on his father's Piggoreet Station and where he provided almost nightly tutoring. This experience later led to his foundation of the Melbourne Working Mens' College to which he donated £5000. It opened in 1887 with 320 students and fifty years later, in 1938, had 10,000 students. Later it was to become the Royal Melbourne Technical College, and is now known as the RMIT University. Ormond also contributed to the building of the Gordon Memorial Technical College in Geelong in 1888.

Besides technical education, he contributed some £40,000 to establish and build a Presbyterian College at the University of Melbourne in 1877. This materialised as Ormond College in 1881. He was less successful in founding a College of

Music, and had to be satisfied with founding the Ormond Chair of Music at the University. He also set up Ormond Hall for the Royal Victorian Institute of the Blind. Francis Ormond was also a generous benefactor of the Presbyterian Church of which he was an elder.

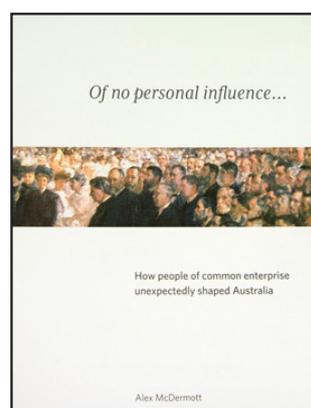
Available from: good booksellers, \$29.95, plus postage.



The Art of Relevance – Nina Simon. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2016. Paperback. 196 pages, illustrations. 155 x 225 mm. 9780692701492.

For those who have read Nina Simon's earlier book *The Participatory Museum*, this is a very logical progression by way of title and contents. This is hands-on with case studies covering a range of sites from museums, through libraries, to theatres, parks and after school programs. The montage of keys on its cover is not tokenism this book really enables you to unlock and develop meaningful programs which will mean more to more people in your community. This book makes you think outside the square to get you there. A truly inspirational read for you to shine.

Available from: Good booksellers, about \$37.50, plus postage.



Of No Personal Influence ...: How people of common enterprise unexpectedly shaped Australia – Alex McDermott. Melbourne: Australian Unity, 2015. 128 pages, illustrated, bibliography, index. 135 x 250 mm. 9780646930930.

Book Reviews cont...

In 1840, a group of men of no 'fortune... or importance' sought to create a society of mutual aid and self-improvement.' So started the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows in fledgling Melbourne and the movement spread throughout Australia. Similarly in 1871 the Australian Natives' Association was formed. Both these organisations, particularly the ANA shaped public opinion on Australia's Federation and Women's suffrage.

The ANA Women's Auxiliary was to become a major voice for women's rights and welfare.

This book demonstrates the close cooperation between the various Australian Unity branches

and individual Mechanics' Institutes and their ilk throughout Australia and how this has been ongoing.

Indeed 'Mutual companies established by and for their Members conducted on commercially minded principles, have remained enduring agents of economic activity'.

Author Alex McDermott has done much more than to document the history of an organisation, but has created an Australian social history worthy and deserving of a much wider readership.

This book is available for free download on the Australian Unity website.

Our People

The Mechanics' family is vast and we would appreciate notification of any items that would be of interest to our wider readership in Australia and across the world.



Melbourne Athenaeum's Manager **Sue Westwood** addressed the Ringwood and District Historical Society on 28 September with the story of 'The Ath's' Reinvention in recent times. This has involved greater

membership participation in book and film discussion groups and the addition of a musical programming. Sue and her Library colleague **Rose Blustein** jointly presented 'The Ath's' success story at San Francisco.



New Haven Young Men's Institute Library's new Executive Director **Valerie Garlick** commenced in August 2016. She replaces **Natalie Elicker** who has returned to practise law. The Institute is

Connecticut's oldest independent circulating library and its renaissance since **Will Baker's** term 2011-14 has been remarkable. The public programming has been true to its mission statement 'mutual assistance in the attainment of useful knowledge' and has resulted in a

healthy increase in membership. Valerie comes from an arts/curatorial background, skills which will be valuable for the Institute's continued and ongoing community outreach. (Photo: Matt Higbee)

Nagambie Mechanics' Institute's long-time Secretary **Yvonne 'Vonnie' Deering** has recently stepped down.



During her tenure the very active Committee was responsible for a substantial 'makeover' of the Institute building which has resulted in greater community use. We thank Yvonne for her cooperation

and support over the years and wish her and her family well. She is being succeeded by **Erica Allen** whose family have a long connection with the Nagambie area. (Photo: notjack.org)

Erika Torri, one of the most remarkable personalities in the reinvention of the worldwide Mechanics' Institute movement, was honoured with the conferral of an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Reinvention at the San Francisco Reinvention Conference in November. The award was supported by unanimous applause. Erika joined the very 'down at heel' La Jolla Athenaeum in 1989 and has guided its development in to a major arts and educational force in the region. She and her husband **Fred** have endowed the Athenaeum Arts and Music

Our People cont...

Library's Artists' Book Collection, which over the years has become one of the most notable library collections. As the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Executive Director of the Athenaeum, Erika has provided us with a fine example of how Reinvention can be achieved and then maintained. Our hearty congratulations are extended to Dr Torri on her well deserved award.



Member and supporter **Basil Walby** has recently travelled to England to celebrate his wife, Audrey's landmark ninetieth birthday, which was a most happy event. Basil did much to promote science in the community as longtime publisher

and editor of CSIRO publications. He continues to promote science and editorial excellence as a Life Member of the Society of Editors. (Photo: editorsvictoria.org)



People are known to have served the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute for long periods of time and **Rosemary McInerney** is one such person. Rosemary has been Librarian at the BMI for twenty-five years

and this landmark was celebrated with a special gathering recently. Rosemary was first introduced to the library when she visited as a child with her mother, who was a BMI member. Rosemary has seen great change at BMI and in addition to the myriad of library tasks organises and oversees the five book clubs that meet in the library. Congratulations Rosemary on your life and work at BMI. (Photo: [Ballarat Mechanics' Institute Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BallaratMechanicsInstitute))

Prahran Mechanics' Institute Secretary/Manager **Tim McKenna** who has been with Prahran Mechanics' Institute for sixteen years has announced his retirement which was effective 31 December. Tim succeeded **Cathy Milward-Bason** as Secretary/Librarian in 2008 and has overseen



the transition of Prahran's operations from High Street to St Edmonds Road. It has been a momentous time in PMI's history and reinvention. We thank Tim for his dedication in helping to build the PMI collection into one of national significance and the PMI into such an important community space. We also thank him for his unwavering cooperation and support of MIV and we wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement. (Photo: pmi.net.au)



Succeeding Tim McKenna at Prahran Mechanics' Institute is **Steven Haby** who started in December 2016. Steven

has an extensive background in public and special libraries, as well as technical and IT services. He

comes from his most recent position at Bass Coast Principal Libraries at the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation and has lectured in Library and Information Sciences at Monash University, Chisholm and Swinburne TAFEs. Steven adds 'I've been a member of the PMI Victorian History Library for many years and its collection of resources on Victorian Local History and latterly expanding into Australian local history is a core strength and the fact that this material can be borrowed is a key value proposition to our members and the community.... I am very keen to use my skills to support our team to expand outreach into the community and to provide more opportunities to access our incredible collection and services through many means. I am very keen to get the younger generation interested in local history. It is an honour to carry on the great work that Tim McKenna has done over the past decades.' (Photo: pmi.net.au)

We congratulate **Ellen Elzey** on her election to the role of **President** of the **Association of**

Our People cont...

Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts AMISA - NSW, who takes the place of **Professor Roger Morris AM** who has stepped down after years of sterling service.

Ellen has had a long association with the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts having been its Head Librarian for eleven years and then Chief Executive for ten years. She project managed the purchase of 280 Pitt Street and oversaw its restoration and refit. Ellen also coordinated the 2002 National Mechanics' Institutes' Conference in Sydney.

We note Ellen was recently guest speaker at SMSA and her topic was 'The History of 280 Pitt Street, SMSA's Building'.



Changes at the top of the National Library of Australia are to take place in March 2017 with the retirement of current Director-General **Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM**. Anne-Marie (right) has been Director-General since 2011 and has overseen the massive development of that now essential on-line reference tool Trove. Her successor **Dr Marie-Louise Ayres** (left) has been at the National Library for fourteen years and has been Head of the Manuscripts Department and leader of the Trove development team.

In spite of Government cutbacks we have seen the National Library's team adapt and achieve. The recent upgrade of the library's physical spaces is a tribute to that challenge of adaptability.

Marie Louise notes 'We have such impact when we can reach people in the tiniest, tiniest little towns and villages all around Australia, so that's certainly in my thinking - reaching communities that we haven't been best able to serve in the past.'

We wish Anne-Marie well in her well-deserved retirement and Marie-Louise a rewarding and enjoyable role in leading one of the truly great research oriented libraries of the world. (Photo: Jay Cronan)



We note the recent appointment of the **Earl of St Andrews** (George Philip Nicholas Windsor) as Chancellor of the University of Bolton. The Earl was educated at Eton and the Downing College, Cambridge, where he read history. He has

wide experience as a diplomat, an antiquarian bookseller, as patron of a number of humanitarian and arts organisations and as a champion of cultural diversity and understanding. Recently the Earl has been Chair of the internet-based world history project, the Golden Web from 2006-2012 and has been a trustee of the Global eHealth Foundation since 2013.

The University of Bolton has its genesis in one of England's oldest Mechanics' Institutes, established in 1824. It is also one of the newer Mechanics' Universities, having gained university status in 2004. Its motto, *Sapientia superat moras* - Wisdom overcomes difficulty, is most apt. We wish the Earl of St Andrews well and to quote Vice-Chancellor Professor George Holmes 'the Earl will add a tremendous amount to our community both as a scholar himself, but moreover because of his passion for higher education'. (Photo: © Rex)

Vale

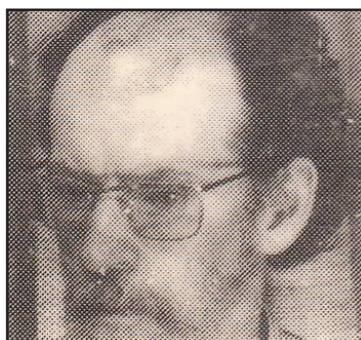


Our attention has been drawn to the sudden passing of **Chiltern Athenaeum's long-time manager and curator Rex Basil Fuge OAM** 'Mr Chiltern' on 6 September 2014. Rex was born in Chiltern on 21

January in 1935, and was educated at nearby Cornishtown. Over many years Rex laboured

Vale cont...

hard and long to develop the Chiltern Athenaeum into a significant regional museum. He also worked to preserve Lake View House, the last residence of author Henry Handel Richardson. In January 2015 a seat was unveiled there to Rex's memory which was suitably plaqued, a fitting tribute to the memory of a man who spent a long time on his feet advocating for the Chiltern community, including as being a Shire Councillor for more than thirty years. His 2005 Order of Australia Medal citation 'For service to the community of Chiltern through a range of heritage and tourist organizations, and to local government.' just highlights that wide contribution. 'Chiltern [and the Mechanics' community as a whole] has indeed lost someone special and unique, with the passing of our dear friend Rex [Fuge]. We all have fond memories of our visits to the Chiltern Athenaeum and his cheery welcome 'G'day, G'day'. May he rest in eternal peace. Our sincere sympathy go to his wife Mary, and their children Leonie and Warren and family.



Australian adult education and pioneer Mechanics' Institute historian, **Dr John Angus Laurent** passed away in Queensland at Toowoomba Hospital on 26 June 2016. John

was born at Caulfield in Victoria on 22 February 1947 and his family moved to Queensland in 1960. He was trained in the biological sciences and held arts and science degrees from the University of Queensland and Griffith University. He held a PhD from the latter. John started his career as a secondary school teacher and developed his interest in the history and cultural dimensions of science and technology. He later joined the Faculty of Science and Technology at Griffith University where he taught. John was unshakeable in his belief that Mechanics' Institutes played a significant role in the development of Australian Society and culture. He authored numerous journal articles and edited or collaborated on several books: *The Eye of Reason: Charles Darwin in Australasia* (1987),

with Margaret Campbell; *Tom Mann: Social and Economic Writings* (1988); *Pioneering Culture: Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia* (1994), with Philip Candy; *Darwinism and Evolutionary Economics* (2001), with John Nightingale; *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature* (2003); and *Science, Technology and Society: An Introduction* (2008), with Martin Bridgstock, David Burch, John Forge and Ian Lowe. John was unmarried and spent the last years of his life in Blue Care Toowoomba Aged Care Hostel. Our deepest sympathy goes to his brother Rob and family.



Bibliophile and publisher extraordinaire **Dr Robert Donald 'Bob' Fleck**, proprietor of Oak Knoll, passed away on 22 September 2016. Bob was born in Philadelphia on 4 February 1947 and graduated in Chemical Engineering from

the University of Delaware in 1969. He worked in the industry, but his passion for books prevailed as an employee with Getty Oil. He founded Oak Knoll Books in Newark, Delaware in 1976 and in 1978 he established Oak Knoll Press publishers. In his lifetime he published and distributed over 1000 titles about all aspects of the book from papermaking, through design, typography, printing, and binding. Bob published: *America's Membership Libraries* in 2008, which was edited by Richard Wendorf.

Books were Bob's life, and his life was books, a life well lived and toiled in the pursuit of the history and production of the book. Friday nights were however reserved for spending with his wife **Mildred 'Millie'** with a game of tennis, watching sunsets with a glass of wine at their beachouse in Fenwick, watching Phillies [baseball] games, or spending time with his family, especially his seven grandchildren. He leaves his wife Mildred and children, Wendy, Paul, Jenni and Robert. Our sincere thanks for a most remarkable life and sympathy to his family. His son and partner Rob will now head up Oak Knoll.

VERSAILLES: TREASURES FROM THE PALACE -

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA - 9 DECEMBER 2016 - 17 APRIL 2017

Few extravagances, that would eventually lead to a charge for democracy, could match that of the French monarchs reigning from the 17th to late 18th century. Britain's monarchs tried to emulate this by way of the Palace rebuilding and construction of the Brighton Pavilion. The Russian monarchy did the same, notably at St Petersburg.

However, Britain escaped such a bloody revolution, largely through the rise of the Philosophical Society and Mechanics' Institute Movement, where rational and ameliorating debate was allowed to and did take place. This ultimately gave rise to the 1832 *Reformation Act* which largely diffused the radical element.

The Palace and Park of Versailles was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979 and since then there has been a concerted international effort at substantial conservation and the reassembling of its original collections of Versailles by way of donation and purchase.

The opulence of Versailles and its 1070ha estate is showcased in this extraordinary



exhibition which has taken several years to mount. The visual extravaganza opens with a 'life size' montage of the Hall of Mirrors. Skilful groupings of items by various themes: the monarchy; acquaintances, mistresses and relations; palace and garden staff; buildings; arts and crafts; gardens; water; past-times; seasons; celebrations; and the 1789 Revolution, makes this exhibition one of exceptional showcasing.

At the opening weekend we met Gallery Director **Dr Gerard Vaughan** and the Gallery's Marketing Manager **Ashley Zmijewski**. Dr Vaughan noted 'We are very proud of how Canberra's Exhibition turned out.' Indeed and with due cause and we congratulate all concerned in making this visual masterpiece happen here in Australia. Do take in **Versailles: Treasures from the Palace** before 17 April and in case you can't, the lavishly illustrated gilt-edged catalogue *Versailles: Treasures from the Palace* is available for purchase online from the National Gallery of Australia Shop for \$49.95, plus \$10 postage.

MUSIC EVERYONE

Music has always been a traditional part of Institute life by way of dance, concert and even the music lessons, that were given by sometimes itinerant teachers utilising the Hall piano.

Some of the old dance bands even allowed budding artists, pianists, saxophonists, drummers, etc. to 'fill in' during a dance bracket and we would hope that may continue.

However what has been noticeable recently is the reinvention of music programs in Institute life. The Melbourne Ath has started a music program with University of Melbourne - Victoria College of Arts graduates providing a smorgasbord of performance. Similarly at the Ballarat Mechanics' music is now once again a feature of Institute life, in addition of the return of South Street to the building. We have seen the annual Evening at the Opera at Mia Mia, and occasional performances at Tallarook and Ruffy.

The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts recently granted \$10,000 to the Goulburn Regional Conservatorium in country New South Wales to

fund young musicians and when six members of the Goulburn Windies turned up with their wind instruments to play the for SMSA AGM, they were able to take home a further cheque for \$5000. (Read more on the therapeutic value of music: smsa.org.au)

Elsewhere in the world the La Jolla Athenaeum in California has led the Jazz revival over more than twenty years and the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Lit & Phil regularly programs music and voice performances.

Then we note the recent re-establishment of the Horwich Railway Mechanics' Institute [Brass] Band early in 2016. It was originally formed in 1912, won the championship of Great Britain and the Colonies in 1922, and alas ceased in 1931. The new HRMI Band gave their first public recital on the old Institute site in July 2016.

In conclusion we note the passing of singer **George Michael** on Christmas Day 2016 and his quote 'I still believe that music is one of the greatest gifts that God gave to man.'

Community Page

RECIPE

Australian farmers and manufacturers, many of which are Institute volunteers and supporter and are deserving of your support. Hopefully the purchase of Australia grown or made products will help reward them.

CITRUS CORDIAL

Ingredients

3 Lemons
2 Limes
3 Oranges
2 Teaspoons Citric Acid
1 Tablespoon Tartaric Acid
2 Tablespoons Epsom Salts
1.5 Kilograms Sugar
1.5 Litres Boiling Water

Method

1. Sterilise two glass bottles.
2. Grate rind from Lemons, Limes and Oranges.
3. Squeeze the juice from all the fruit and sieve out any pips.
4. Combine juice and rind.
5. Stir in Citric and Tartaric Acids, Epsom Salts and Sugar.
6. Pour in Boiling Water and stir until all the Sugar dissolves.
7. Bottle and seal for use as a cordial base.
8. Serve with chilled water to your taste, with Mint leaf.

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 42

1. Where is the UK **Independent Libraries Association Conference** being held in June 2017?
2. Who led the MIV delegation at **MW 2016 – San Francisco**?
3. Which Institute recently had MIV Plaque No. 51 unveiled?
4. With which Australian Institute was the Rev. Henry Carmichael associated?
5. What sports were once played on the Reserve abutting the Lake Marmal Mechanics' Institute?
6. Who are researching 'the circulation of books, manuscripts, and peoples between and within...Java and the Straits Settlements'?

7. Who endowed the Melbourne Working Mens' College?
8. Which Institute hosts a long-running Antiques Fair in January?
9. What is happening in Moonambel in November?
10. When was the Birmingham and Midland Institute established?
11. Which Institute promotes a 'Good Life' program?
12. What is the name of the Festival staged at Lancefield?
13. From which Institute did the title in Ex-Libris originate?

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 41 – ANSWERS

1. 'Harewood' Homestead; 2. McGill University, Montreal; 3. Gideon Haigh; 4. Henry Noyes' mother; 5. Plaques scheme; 6. Birregurra Mechanics' Institute; 7. Australia's Mechanics' Institutes, School of Arts, etc.; 8. Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Societies; 9. Alvin Toffler; 10. Broadford Mechanics' Institute; 11. Ken James; 12. Ken Caithness in 2015; 13. The perfume and scent library and archive in Paris.

DEFIBRILLATOR GRANTS



Round 2 of the Victorian Government initiative **Defibrillators for Sporting Clubs and Facilities Program, 2015-19** are now open. Details are available on the sports.vic.gov.au website and initially check the Guidelines and Assessment Criteria and Considerations. This program is particularly applicable to rural and remote centres. If you want further information contact the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356. Good Luck and we would be interested in hearing of your experience and success.

Ideas & Opportunities

SCIENCE WHERE?

We learned recently in the press that Science as a vocation is at a near all time low. Historically Mechanics' Institutes played a pioneering role in science education. Indeed George Birkbeck, the Mechanics' Institute pioneer, established the first chemistry laboratory at London University. We would like to think that tradition continued.

Some will recall in 2006, we travelled free Science lectures around the country on the subject of Victoria's then impending Synchrotron and visited Ballarat, Beechworth, Castlemaine, Stratford, Taggerty and Tatura and places in between and gave talks to schools and the general public. This, with funding, could happen again.

In the meantime why not encourage your local school to have students enter the **Science Talent Search** now conducted by **Science Victoria**. Information can be found on their website: www.sciencevictoria.com.au and entries close on 21 July 2017. Even if they do not win, a **Young Scientist Show and Tell** could be held in the Hall during **Science Week**.

WHY NOT A MURAL?

In recent travels we have seen murals featured on what were blank walls, and which may once have featured advertising. For the **Bridport Institute** redevelopment in the UK the Minerva Learning Trust put one hundred area school students to work on creating a mural. They were asked to cut and paint a stencil image of what they valued about Bridport. The project was led by **Cleo Heard** of Miss*C's Graffiti Academy and produced a unique and visually pleasing 7.5 metre long hoarding.

EMPOWERING YOUTH

We were recently impressed to learn how the rural Shire of Tatiara in South Australia, abutting Victoria's border, engages its youth. All four major centres in the Shire - Bordertown, Keith, Mundalla and Wolseley - stage cinema screenings, including the latest releases. In most cases youth form part of the screening and staging team.

You might have also seen how they learn to dance on the recent ABC TV **Heather Ewart's Back Roads** program on Mundalla. This featured the annual Debutant Ball, where eighteen young couples learned to dance 'Old Time'. The program also showed youth involvement in the

longrunning Annual Show, which started out as the Mundalla Horticultural, Floricultural and Industrial Society in 1889, the year the Mundalla Institute was built.

YOUNG FARMERS SCHOLARSHIPS

We are told agriculture in Victoria represents \$11 billion dollars annually to the economy. The Victorian Government under its Upskill and Invest program offers between ten and fifteen scholarships annually to young farmers aged 35 or younger. Up to \$10,000 is available per scholarship, \$5000 being for study, and a further \$5000 to invest in on-farm or professional development activities. Check out for the next round of grants on the website: www.agriculture.vic.gov.au.

BUS TOUR - GIPPSLAND

Periodic bus tours have been a feature of MIV activity down through the years. The upcoming tour is 'The Mechanics' Institutes of Gippsland' on Sunday 5 March 2017. Institutes that will be visited include: Glengarry (1886); Toongabbie (1883); Briagolong (1874); and Stratford (1866), and time permitting perhaps others. The **Bus leaves Berwick Mechanics' Institute at 9am sharp**. Tickets are \$60 and include a light lunch and afternoon tea. Bookings: Judith Dwyer (03) 9707 4254; Email: jad134@hotmail.com.

REMEMBERING THE BLUE LIGHT DISCOS

The year 2016 celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the **Blue Light Disco**. This now international concept, was first trialled by Victoria Police back in 1976 when a pilot program was conducted in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. Today some forty sites operate around Victoria, spread over eighteen of twenty-one of Victoria's Police Districts. Sites are staffed by volunteer Police and community members. It is an established fact that where Blue Light Discos are conducted over a period there is less juvenile crime. Blue Light Victoria also conduct a camp at Maldon which hosts youth 'at risk' during weekends and school holidays.

If you feel your town needs a Blue Light Disco to curb juvenile crime why not discuss the possibility of hosting regular discos in your Hall with the Officer-in-Charge of your local Police station. And we salute the Boys and Girls in Blue who give their time for this very worthwhile community initiative.