



# Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

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## MINISTER HUTCHINS SIGNS OFF ON GRANTS

Members have been anticipating a response to a meeting with Local Government Ministerial staff in March. An answer came by one of the last actions of the former Minister for Local Government, the **Hon. Natalie Hutchins** (right) who signed off on a new round of library grants. In addition there was further funding for the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** records digitisation program and for the third **Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference** at Ballarat in November 2018.

The six 'core' Libraries: **Ballarat Mechanics' Institute; Berwick Mechanics' Institute; Footscray Mechanics' Institute; Maldon Athenaeum; Melbourne Athenaeum Library; and Prahran Mechanics' Institute** received an additional round of funding. These were joined by three 'new' libraries: **Bonnie Doon Library; Little River Mechanics' Institute; and Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room.**

Each Library was individually advised by the Minister's office of its success and MIV was advised of the Digitisation and Conference funding. This was a very fitting way to start MIV's celebratory countdown to our twenty momentous years.

The MIV Art Project **Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame** highlighted the achievements of twenty individual Institutes since MIV was formed 1998. All have greatly improved facilities and in the case of the libraries or museums, much strengthened collections. Successive Library Grants have been put towards lasting infrastructure and collection items to reinforce the individual significance of each library.



As for MIV's digitisation project, the extant records of some 110 Institutes are now held in the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** at Prahran Mechanics' Institute along with about 100 Institute monograph histories.

This all makes for a major resource for the study of Australian cultural history and individual community infrastructure at a grass roots level.

The Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 Conference at Ballarat 16-19 November has the theme 'Celebration and Survival'. The Saturday afternoon will be made over to speakers to help Halls survive and thrive. Our grant will enable a range of specialist speakers and greatly reduce rates for Institute delegates to attend.

WE EXTEND TO ALL A HEARTY  
COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON  
AND MAY THE NEW YEAR OF  
2018 BE A HEALTHY, MEMORABLE  
AND SAFE ONE.

# Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2018

*Year of Lifelong Learning*

## JANUARY

- 26-28 Campbells Creek Fryers Antiques and Collectibles Fair  
 27-28 Wingello Mechanics' Institute (NSW) - Building Centenary

## FEBRUARY

- 8 AMISA - Information session: New Crown Land Legislation as it relates to Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes - Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

## MARCH

*Australian Women's History Month*

- TBC Chiltern Athenaeum Museum delayed 150th Celebrations. Info on website [chilternathenaeum.com.au](http://chilternathenaeum.com.au)  
 24-25 Purnim Mechanics' Institute - Proclamation of Village

## APRIL

- 8 MIV Bus Tour - The Plenty and Macedon Ranges. Register your interest at [info@mivic.org.au](mailto:info@mivic.org.au)  
 18-30 Australian Heritage Festival

## MAY

- 1-20 Australian Heritage Festival  
 12 Little River Mechanics' Institute & Free Library - You Yangs Rural Districts Heritage Tour, with the theme 'On the time before 1850'.

## JUNE

- 1-3 UK Independent Libraries Association Conference - Crieff, Scotland

- 29-30 Melbourne Rare Book Week. Activities at Melbourne at Athenaeum and Prahran Mechanics' Institute

## JULY

- 1-8 Melbourne Rare Book Week - events at Melbourne Athenaeum and Prahran Mechanics' Institute

## SEPTEMBER

- 24 MIV Annual General Meeting  
 24 MIV's 4th Annual Wesson Lecture

## OCTOBER

- TBC Seniors Festival  
 TBC History Week  
 TBC Victorian Community History Awards  
 TBC American Membership Libraries Meeting - Charleston Library Society  
 TBC Murtoa Big Weekend

## THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTERS

Sean, Neal and the team from TDC3 Print Centre, 548 Bridge Rd, Richmond. [tdc3.com.au](http://tdc3.com.au)



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

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### MIV'S EVENTS CALENDAR IS ONLINE

[mivic.org.au/events.html](http://mivic.org.au/events.html)

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 [editor@mivic.org.au](mailto:editor@mivic.org.au) for inclusion in the online calendar. Let us help you promote your events!

## *Letter From The President*



Welcome to the Christmas 2017 Edition of *Useful Knowledge*. Not only does it contain our regular features and the latest news from the world of Mechanics' Institutes but it also details year-round gift ideas of prints and card sets.

MIV's recent "MECHANICS' INSTITUTES IN THE FRAME" art project has produced a 2018 Calendar and a range of Cards and Prints featuring high quality reproductions of Artist, David Callanan's paintings of twenty of our most iconic Institutes. These are available from our Member Institutes or can be ordered from MIV direct (see inside for details).

"MECHANICS' INSTITUTES IN THE FRAME" is just the latest of MIV's efforts to come up with fundraising ideas that help Member Institutes generate some of those much needed funds.

MIV's recent approach to the State Government on behalf of and in conjunction with nine of our Member Institutes has also borne fruit. These \$10,000 general grants to the Institute libraries at Ballarat, Berwick, Bonnie Doon, Footscray, Little River, Maldon, Melbourne, Prahran and Stanley will all be very welcome. Despite our occasional disagreements with the government, usually over continuing tenure on Crown Land reserves, they continue to recognise the good work and historical significance of our Institutes, their Historic Halls and Libraries and MIV appreciates and thanks all concerned for their support.

Grants were also received in support of the MIV Scanning Project (of Member Institute records) and the upcoming Australian Conference in Ballarat. Thank you Minister.

Of course while we are grateful for the State Government's support from time to time our oft repeated claim that Mechanics Institutes are independent, self-funded local initiatives would not be very credible if all we did was wait around for Government grants as our principal assets, our Institutes, Halls and Libraries just waste away.

To this end MIV has been exploring the possibility of a collaboration with a philanthropic organisation with objectives compatible with our own. Our hope and expectation is that in addition to some modest initial funding a pathway can be opened up to long term endowment style income that will allow some long cherished but hitherto impossible ambitions to be realised.

Our potential partners understand that Mechanics Institutes are values driven organisations and want to hear what it is about your organisation that qualifies it as a Mechanics Institute and how your project contributes to:

*"the dissemination of scientific and literary information, useful knowledge and rational recreation"*  
or helps conserve and maintain the facilities required to do so.

Not everything or everybody will qualify but if your committee has been harbouring ambitions that a monthly income of between \$200 - \$1,000 will help to realise, now is the time to put pen to paper and let me know about it.

Happy New Year.

*Robert Kingston*  
President.

# Editorial

As we stand on the cusp of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.** back in 1998, there is much to celebrate and reflect upon.

On the local and international scene there has been massive renewal in Institutes and their ilk. There has also been unprecedented opportunity created for sharing and advancing the Mechanics' story with meetings and Conferences in Australia, the UK and USA.

Perhaps because Victoria had the largest number of Institutes than any other State our researched story has become more advanced. Certainly the groundwork was laid by the elusive **James Egan**, followed by **Alf Wesson** and his coterie at the Council for Adult Education.

Then came **Jane Lennon** sanctioning the work of **Pam Baragwanath** and **Janette Hodgson**. **Philip Candy** and **John Laurent** called the National tune with *Pioneering Culture*.

The publication of Pam Baragwanath's *If The Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria* was a landmark event. It was launched at the first National Conference of Australian Mechanics' Institutes at the Melbourne Athenaeum in 2000.

Several **Mechanics' Worldwide** Conferences have been staged since then: Prahran (2004); Bath (2009); Melbourne (2012); and San Francisco (2016). Like groups, in the UK and USA, have been staging annual meetings for two decades. A small Australian contingent attended the UK Independent Libraries Association Conference earlier this year. Their next meeting is at Crieff, Scotland 1-3 June 2018. The American Membership Libraries Group meets at the Charleston Library Society in South Carolina in October 2018.

MIV is inviting Institutes from around Australia and across the world to celebrate their 20th anniversary at Ballarat on 16-19 November 2018 to celebrate and explore survival.

As part of that 'awareness' the MIV Committee sanctioned the creation of a calendar and a set of cards as an Institutes fundraiser. This was launched at Castlemaine on 10 September. These are available on our new on-line store.

Thank you for your support and encouragement for *Useful Knowledge* during my editorship and Season's Greetings to all.

Bron Lowden

## NEWS PLEASE

Let us have your news on the Hall, its history and more importantly its people. Email the **UK** editor at editor@mivic.org.au. Submission deadline for **UK46** is 1 March 2018.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Noelene Blair                      Tony Kamitsis  
Ellen Coates                        Robert Mense

## NEWSLETTER ROUND

*Tick after reading and pass it on*

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

## OUR WEBSITE IS MOVING



MIV's website is now moving to our new domain **mivic.org.au**. This new site will allow us to upload more of our Magazine and Newsletter Archive, as well as other MI related items. Please update your website bookmarks.

## UPDATE OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Contact details for some of our office-bearers have been changed to the addresses on the Contacts list on page 2. Please add **editor@mivic.org.au** to your mailing lists so we can keep up to date with your news and events. For all other enquiries, please send to **info@mivic.org.au** and they will be forwarded on to the relevant person.

## DIGITISING VICTORIA'S MECHANICS' INSTITUTE RECORDS

Victoria once had more than one thousand Mechanics' Institutes scattered across the State. In many cases Institute halls were the first public building in a town and today they are the last.

The comprehensive study of 'The Hall's' contribution to Victoria's community and culture has been difficult, because each hall was an individual entity, and records are/were held locally across Victoria.

However thanks to philanthropic and Government funding the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. has been digitising the records of Victoria's Institutes/Halls since 2003. To date it has digitised the extant records of more than one hundred Institutes and we are keen to digitise more to further enhance the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre**, at **Prahran Mechanics' Institute**, as a major central resource for the study of community and cultural history in Victoria.

We know there are many more Institute records out there, which are held in Local Government, Historical Society, Museum and private hands and we are keen to digitise these. They are done free of cost and the originals will be returned along with a digital CD and copyright continues to remain with the records' owner or provider.

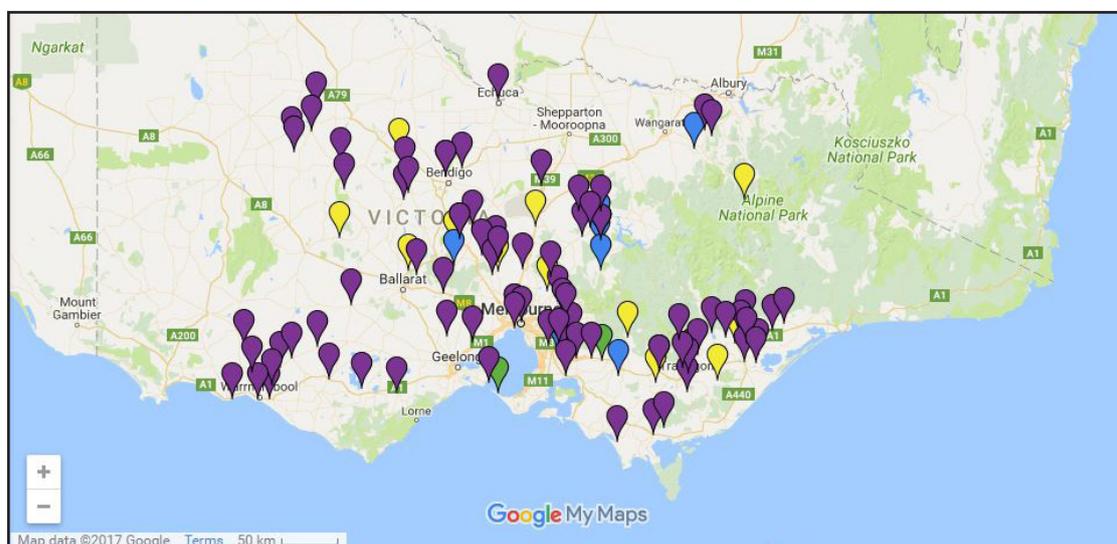
Some records may have already been digitised by the above entities and we would be pleased to have a copy of this material to facilitate further central research into the rich history of Victoria's Institutes or Halls

The extant records of the following Institutes/Halls have been digitised: Acheron;

Airly; Alexandra; Allansford; Anakie; Apsley; Arnold; Arthurs Creek; Bagshot; Ballan; Barfold; Beaconsfield; Beechworth; Berwick; Birregurra; Bolinda; Briagalong; Bunyip; Buxton; Camperdown; Charlton; Christmas Hills; Clydebank; Corack; Creswick; Dandenong; Darlington; Dean; Donald; Drummond; Eaglehawk; Echuca; Eddington; Edenhope; Eilerslie; Elmhurst; Emerald; Fawcett; Fernbank; Footscray; Foster; Glengarry; Glenmaggie; Harrierville; Kinglake West; Koornalla; Kurting; Laanecoorie; Laen; Lancefield; Langkoop; Lardner; Lilydale; Lindenow South; Little River; Llowalong; Maffra; Malmsbury; Mansfield; Melbourne; Merton; Mia Mia; Milawa; Minhamite; Moe; Molesworth; Mortlake; Mount Best; Mount Evelyn; Nagambie; Nalangil; Narracan; Narre Warren; Narre Warren North; Neerim or Neerim Junction; Newham; Newry; North Melbourne; Pakenham; Poolaijelo; Port Fairy; Purnim; Queenscliff; Rich Avon West; Riddells Creek; Romsey; Ruffy; Sale; Skipton; Sorrento; St Arnaud; Stanley; Stratford; Stuart Mill; Tallarook; Tarwin Lower; The Heart; Toongabbie; Tooradin; Traralgon; Trentham; Tyers; Tynong; Walhalla; Wallan; Warrnambool; Whorouly; Williamstown; Willung; Woolsthorpe; and Yarck

If you have records or know of records of Institutes not listed above, in the first instance contact should be made with Scanning Project Coordinator Judith Dwyer. Email: [mirc@mivc.org.au](mailto:mirc@mivc.org.au)

It normally takes 6-8 weeks to progress records through and in some cases these can even be picked up and delivered back.



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES IN THE FRAME

The historic Castlemaine Market building was the ideal venue for the launch of the exhibition, calendar and cards featuring the artwork of **Damian Callanan** on 9-10 September 2017.

The Heritage listed Market is owned by the National Trust of Victoria and leased to the Mount Alexander Shire as an exhibition space and Tourist Information Centre. To say the Market is an ideal exhibition space, is truly an understatement. Further our exhibition was greatly facilitated with the most valued cooperation and able assistance of Council staff **Natalie Parsons**, **Aileen Walsh** and **Amanda Every**.

The exhibition, designed and curated by **Bronwyn Lowden**, was 'bumped into' the venue at 9am and was fully hung for public viewing at the advertised time of 11am. The artist **Damian Callanan** also had a selection of his works and prints and those of his daughter **Lily** on show and for sale.



*L-R: Damian Callanan, Lily Callanan and Kirsty McIntyre at the exhibition*

A comprehensive exhibition catalogue, contained notes on the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, the artist, 'Art in Castlemaine' and some notes on the Market building, and featured black and white thumbnails of the twenty works with some notes on each of the featured Institutes.

Three large three metre long multi-coloured banners, which included a jigsaw of exhibited images, were hung on the street front and just



*Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame exhibition on display in the Castlemaine Market building*

inside each entrance. Our sales area featured calendars, cards in various pack formats, as well as publications for sale and previous Bus Tour Notes.

Near perfect weather saw some 600 visitors through the door on Saturday and 900 on Sunday. The latter number included

almost one hundred people, with a number of representatives of Institutes from across central Victoria, who attended Sunday's launch.

The launch was chaired by MIV President, **Robert Kingston** and was launched with a very apt and able address by aesthete **Nicholas Hudson**, a senior and much revered figure in Australian publishing, editing and book production. Nick is also the author of Hudson's *Modern Australian Usage*, universally recognised as the writers' and publishers' text.

Nick took us through the definition of a mechanic and the evolution of Institutes. He then moved on to the original purpose of art to strive to create an exact likeness. However the introduction of the camera meant this could be done with little effort and hence the development of the impressionist, abstract and cubist schools.

Artist **Damian Callanan** concluded the proceedings with his overview of the exhibition and his ambitions for future works and projects. MIV is grateful to **Damian** for allowing us to use the twenty images over the next five years to promote the Institute Movement and to provide



*Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame exhibition*

a fundraising vehicle for the twenty featured Institutes.

The challenge of presenting 'a comprehensive' exhibition of twenty paintings was achieved by allocating a single panel to each picture. Each Panel comprised a large print, explanatory text, calendar openings or prints and card sample. Hanging over each Panel was the framed watercolour image, which accentuated each panel. The panel layout attracted much favourable comment over the weekend and we saw many people assiduously reading the large print text.

Three people reading the texts had 'Eureka' moments. The first was **Dawn Colbourne** a granddaughter of **Henry Joseph Fudge** who built the Supper Room between the Athenaeum and Memorial Halls at Elmore. The other two were **Elaine Morris** (nee Nobelius), the granddaughter, and **Wendy Morris**, great-granddaughter, of **Carl Axel Nobelius**, the financier and builder of the Emerald Mechanics' Institute in 1905, but alas burned down in 1955. Other people commented on their experiences in connection with various halls.

We are most grateful to Bronwyn Lowden for donating her design and production skills in bringing this complex project to fruition with the assistance of **Ros Lowden**. We are also most grateful to the **Callanan** family – **Damian, Kirsty** and **Lily** for all their work and efforts in making the project and weekend such a success.

Further a big 'Thank you!' to all those Institutes who cooperated in this complex project and we are particularly grateful to those who have lodged orders for calendars, cards and prints to make it financially viable.

### **Nick Hudson's Launch Address**

How does a lexicographer open an art exhibition? Of course, I could just have said how much I liked Damian Callanan's paintings, which happened to be very true, and I said it. But this was not news to anyone. You could agree just by looking at them. What could I say which might be news to anyone?



*Maldon Athenaeum's Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame exhibition panel showing original framed watercolour, history, calendar page, card and card set*

The answer lay in the word 'mechanic', which must have one of the longest and most varied etymological histories there are.

We first encounter it in Ancient Greek, where 'méchané' meant a clever idea. Homer's hero, Odysseus, was called 'poly-méchanos', a person of many 'méchanés'. This is generally translated as 'the wily Odysseus', which is reasonable, because most méchanés were just ideas. And this led to the adjective 'méchanicos', meaning unexpected and artificial. But at least one was real. The hollow wooden horse which carried Greek soldiers into the walled enemy city of Troy, remembered as the Trojan Horse, was termed by Homer a 'méchané'.

Three hundred years later the word was attached to another physical object. On the Greek theatre stage, the convention was

that actors entering from the left were coming from the city, while those from the right were coming from the country. But what about gods, coming down from Mount Olympus. The solution was to have them come down on a sort of crane. The god who arrived this way either brought a surprising solution to an existing problem or a surprising new problem. The crane was called a 'mé-chané', and the phrase, 'theos apo mechanés' ('god from a mé-chané') became attached not only to an arriving god but to any unexpected event.

Five hundred years later, the phrase had been translated into Latin as 'deus ex machina', with the same meanings. And it survives as one of the rarer Latin tags in English.

We can note that the root word, 'méchané' had changed to 'machina', but the derivative, 'mechanicus' retained the Greek form. And their meaning continued to be very broad and essentially positive. Anything new and clever could be a 'machina'. from a new fabric to a new way of cooking eggs.

The form of the words scarcely changed when they entered English, but they became rare and with narrow and pejorative meanings. Neither 'machine' nor 'mechanic' occurs in the Bible, but both occur in Shakespeare. So, what did they mean?

In Hamlet. Polonius says of Hamlet, "whilst this Machine is to him",

## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES IN THE FRAME CONT...

which the experts tell me means “while his boring lifestyle continues”.

Exactly what it would have meant to his audience, is less clear, but there can be no doubt about the meaning of ‘mechanic’:

“Mechanicke Slaues With greazie Aprons”,  
 “A crew of patches, rude Mechanicals”,  
 “Base Dunghill Villaine, and Mechanicall”

It seems that ‘mechanic’ and ‘mechanical’ was the lowest level in their class system.

A hundred and fifty years later, in 1755, Sam Johnson (1705-84) published his dictionary. His practice was to give brief definitions followed by quotations showing the word in use in this way by great writers.

It has three definitions for “machine”:

1. Any complicated piece of workmanship.
2. An engine.
3. Supernatural agency in poems.

This sounds more like our language. However, the quotations accompanying meaning 1 are both about clocks, and the one about meaning 2, engine, is from Dryden describing the Trojan Horse. No evidence of the machines of the industrial revolution.

As for meaning 3, it is illustrated with a quote from Pope:

“The marvellous fable includes whatever is supernatural, and especially the machines of the gods.”

I remain unsure what “the machines of the gods” are.

So much for machines. But what of mechanics? Johnson has two entries, one for the noun and one for the adjective.

The noun definition is brief:

A manufacturer; a low workman.

This is illustrated by two quotations, both very pejorative.

The adjective is given three definitions:

1. Mean; servile; of mean occupation.
2. Constructed by the laws of mechanics.
3. Skilled in mechanics.

Here, definition 1 gets three quotations including one from Shakespeare, definition 2 gets a quotation from Newton’s *Optics*, and definition 3, the one which sounds almost like ours, gets no quotations at all.

This is not to say that the word has no pejorative senses today, if I said that a lady friend described my love-making as ‘mechanical’, it would not be a positive statement.



*Nick Hudson launching the Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame project*

However, Johnson’s entries make total, almost modern, sense provided you understand Johnson’s procedures. So here is my understanding of them.

Earlier dictionaries had contained what they called inkhorn words, words invented by their authors. Johnson proved that his words really existed by quoting them in use by great authors. But to be sure that there were no complaints from current authors that their work had not been quoted, he only quoted dead ones. As a result, recent usage could not be quoted,

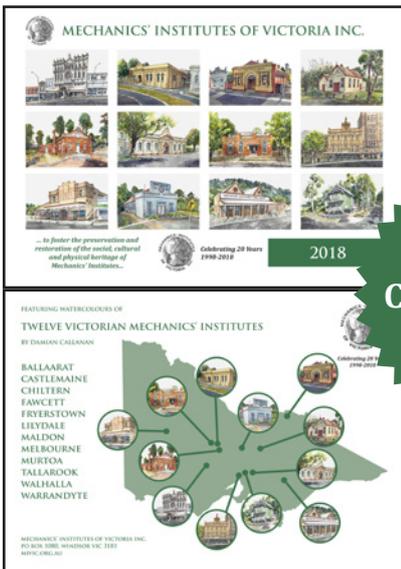
However, when a new word or usage was so common that omitting it would have been absurd, he simply quoted the meaning without citations. So the words which appear this way, briefly and without citations, so far from being questionable, are the ones which were so common that their meaning was unquestionable.

So, that is probably the answer. From being the lowest of the low, the name ‘mechanicals’ was applied to the people who built, maintained and operated the wonders of the industrial revolution.

So it was that when some charitable members of the upper class sought to improve the lot of the working class, they were able to identify a subgroup which showed itself willing and able to benefit from the provision of libraries, lectures and social interactions: the mechanicals. And the physical embodiments of that charitable intention were the Mechanics’ Institutes.

It is hard to imagine the reaction of the diggers when, within the chaos of tents and shacks which was a goldrush settlement, there arose, only a couple of years after the first gold was discovered, a building of solid brick or stone dedicated to their intellectual welfare. And in an astonishing number of cases the buildings are still there, still contributing to the welfare of their communities, all waiting to have their beautiful portraits painted.

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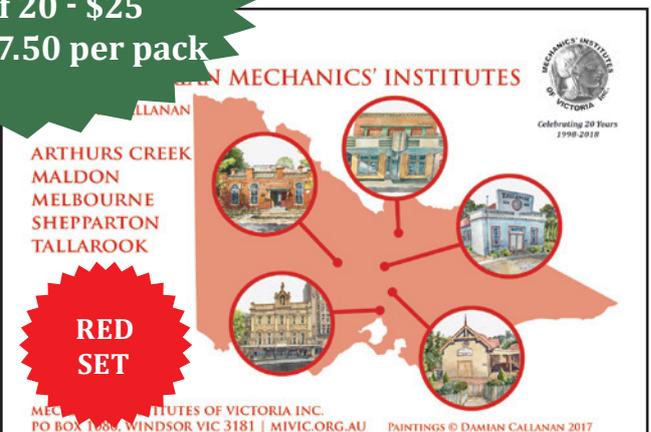
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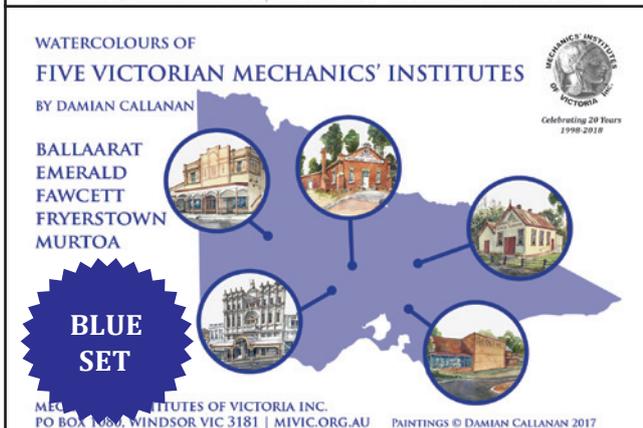
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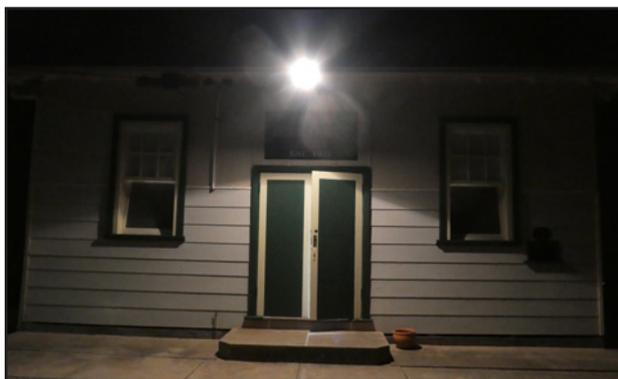


**YELLOW  
SET**

\*Packs of 5 cards are available in 4 kinds of mixed sets as shown above, or as 5 cards of the one Institute

## MOONAMBEL CELEBRATES HALL'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

As a lead up to Moonambel's celebratory weekend, **Ken James** addressed the Avoca & District Historical Society on Friday 17 November. Ken's subject was the Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria and specifically his research contribution to the award winning *These Walls Speak Volumes: A History of the Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria*, a book which he co-authored with **Pam Baragwanath**. (Copies of this book are still available through MIV's online shop.)



However the real event kicked off on the evening of Friday 24 November when the **Moonambel Community Theatre Company** world premiered **Steve Lane** and **Gwynn Van Den Bergen's** musical comedy **Raining at Lulubel's**. This had been scored and written especially for the Hall's anniversary and told the story of how the town's first hall had been washed down the flooded Mountain Creek in 1933.

On Saturday morning 25 November there was a Market at the Moonambel Primary School, No. 1683. This was reached by turning at the corner of Brooke Street and Grant Street, the site of the first Mechanics' Institute building, erected in 1901 and washed away in the flood. The School complex is centred on an 1873 red brick building. This housed a collection of historic photographs including those of Moonambel's World War I soldiers. One stall was selling **Damian Callanan's** Moonambel card from the **Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame** Art Project and the specially produced booklet *Moonambel's Mechanics' Institute Hall 1937-2017* by Hall Committee Secretary, **Jillian Hunter**.

The **Moonambel Arts and History Group** ran the

Sausage Sizzle producing very tasty sausage or hamburger sandwiches and also did traditional Devonshire teas, with scones lashed with jam and cream.

Other stalls were selling a range of plants to bric-a-brac. It was an ideal site for a market with tree shade and plenty of parking.

Mid-afternoon was the unveiling of the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria** Plaque No. 52 on the Institute wall. This was staged in the presence of the Moonambel Institute's Committee and a goodly gathering of locals and visitors.

MIV Vice-President **Bronwyn Lowden** congratulated the Hall Committee on reaching this landmark and on the way the Hall was maintained. She wished the community well into the future and then unveiled the plaque, with a rousing 'Three Cheers for the Hall!'

Hall Secretary **Jill Hunter** then invited the great-grandchildren of **Annie Summerfield** (nee Bannister) and her husband **Walter** to open the Hall door. So **Sharyn Wells** and **Mark Summerfield** (below) and son **Taiyo** replicated what their forebears had done eighty years before and walked through the door.



All were then invited inside, which was festooned with yellow, orange and red streamers, balloons and large paper blossoms. Pride of place was the large birthday cake, which featured an iced picture of the Hall. This was cut by **Iris Farnsworth** (left), the ninety year old wife of **Keith**, who had served on the Hall Committee for forty years, and **John Hunter** (far left) who succeeded his father **Alan** on the Hall Committee and who had also given long service. With the cake duly cut, all joined in singing a hearty 'Happy Birthday' to Moonambel's Hall.



John then gave his memories of the Hall. He was only a few months old when the original Hall was washed away, but he did remember looking in through the side door whilst carpenters **Charlie Aspery** and **Henry Streeter** were working on the new Hall's interior in 1937.

John paid tribute to the womenfolk of the community who had been tireless fundraisers. He remarked that the ladies made the money to purchase materials that were utilised by the men during working bees. We also learned the history of Ethel's [Bonsor] trestles that were used at the Hall for decades and other community events.

Then there was the routine of **Jack Moyle** lighting of the three gas lamps that had to be hung from the ceiling with the aid of a ladder at the beginning of each event, and taken down after. John recalled the long-time dance musicians **Kelly** (violin) and **Ruth** (piano) **Cutmore** who many a time played into the early hours. The supper comprised the contents of those who had brought a plate and a delicious brew of coffee and chicory and condensed milk that was warmed in kerosene tins over the outside fire.

He recalled the send off of soldiers to World War II and their thankful welcoming home after the War. Then there were the heady times when Moonambel were football premiers.

Besides bringing the toilets indoors, John noted other things have changed. The grass has to be mown now, as cattle are no longer permitted to roam the town.

John complimented the work of **Steve Lane** and **Gwynn Van Den Bergen** and the Moonambel Community Theatre Company in providing resources to upgrade the Hall by way of their bi-annual theatrical productions. This had also contributed to the Moonambel Arts and History Group's activities.

A surprise presentation was then made to the Hall Committee by **Patricia Murrell** (left) on behalf of the the **Murrell** family. They had purchased the original Damian Callanan painting of the Moonambel Hall, and noting that it must remain in the district, it was passed to the Hall for safekeeping in memory of **Erroll Murrell**.

It was then down to the serious business of afternoon tea and much catching up and reminiscing. One lady we spoke with was a graduate of the famed **Joyce Powers'** tap dance school that was run in the Hall for around twenty years. Joyce hailed



from Ballarat and travelled to Moonambel for the regular classes which comprised twenty local girls.

The Saturday evening Cabaret featured the **Seriously Sixties Band** led by **Geoff James**, lead guitar; **Meryl James**, keyboard; **Mal Kent**, drums; and **Peter Talbot**, bass guitar. Formed about five years ago, with three members from the old Bendigo-based **Impalas Dance Band**, they have been joined by Geoff's wife Meryl. Leading off solidly with the **Shadows'** theme tune **Apache**, they really had the white ants worried as the dancers jived, rock 'n rolled or simply glided around the Hall, whilst the watchers tapped their feet or clapped. Attendees were well cared for in the food area by members of the Local CFA. In addition to several lucky door prizes, there was a gold nugget in the prize draw deservedly won by local stalwart **Daryl Driscoll**.

It was a great night and the Serious Sixties Band can be booked with Geoff or Meryl on (03) 5460 5474.

Sunday morning featured the Ecumenical Church Service at the Moonambel Recreation Reserve. This was jointly conducted by the Uniting Church's **Rev. Joan Hall** and the Anglican Church's **Rev. Malcolm Thomas** and **Rev. Sandra Field**. It was a true service of celebration and thanksgiving. This was followed by a delicious picnic lunch.

In the evening it was back to the Hall for an encore presentation of **Raining at Lulubel's** and the drawing of further Moonambel-sourced gold nugget prizes which were won by **Ruby Walker**, **Brenda Leenarts** and **Caitlin Murrell**.

What a great celebration for the Moonambel community and its much loved Hall and they have foreshadowed centenary celebrations in 2037! Well done all.



## COSTERFIELD CELEBRATES CENTENARY

Flyers posted up and distributed around the region invited all and sundry to the centenary of the current Costerfield Hall. (The first, the Costerfield Mechanics' Institute was built in 1886 and is believed to have been destroyed by fire in 1916. In spite of it being wartime, the community moved fast and the new hall was opened on 10 March 1917 with a concert.)

Saturday, 21 October 2017 was indeed a red letter day for Costerfield of which the Hall and CFA shed are the last remnants of the village. The spacious hall reserve, which originally housed tennis courts and an oval, provided plenty of parking space.

The large Colorbond-clad Hall sits on a rise back from the Road and is fronted by a distinctive memorial, a large shard of antimony-bearing rock with a plaque, adjacent to the front door.

We were invited to arrive after 3pm for registration and a look around the hall and its historical exhibits on the wall. Following their closure, the Hall has been the recipient of plaques and Honour Rolls from the Methodist Church and State School. There was also a number of sporting pics when Costerfield fielded a very competitive football team.

The Hall is very well maintained with a new upgraded kitchen and we wondered about the two well-used bench seats. On questioning we were told that these were two of eight that had been salvaged from the old hall prior to being burnt to the ground.



In the absence of Hall President, **Marjorie Harris**, who was unexpectedly admitted to Hospital a few days before 'the big day', the Master of ceremonies was **Norm Harris**. Norm gave some background to the district and its mining history by **Allen** and **Peniston Coster**, **Edwin Field** and **William Youle**, with the district taking the name of the first two pioneers.

Mining for gold and antimony has always been part of the community and since 2006 has been very much so, with Canadian-based **Mandalay Resources** being the current operator. The mine works 24/7 with staff working 7 day shifts and then taking seven days off.

The Company regularly utilises, and pays for, the Hall for training sessions of its two hundred staff and community consultations and the Hall has benefited from its community grants.

Norm then introduced Mandalay's Community Adviser, **Tracey Bowen**, who spoke of the Hall as an essential community resource which had the full support of Mandalay. She congratulated the Hall Committee on the way they maintained the Hall for the community.

Nonagenarian **Les Bradley**, who makes periodic visits back to Costerfield, has recently had his family photograph all the Hall's memorabilia, plaques and Honour Rolls for the record and print outs were available for comment, additions and naming. Les did a 'Roll Call' of the old family names: Baker; Bock; Bradley; Burgess; Coverdale; Cunningham; Dare; Doyle; Felsted; Fiander; Fowler; Gill; Gardiner;



Harding; Harris; Harvey, Johnson; McDonald; McKenzie; McMurtrie; Mills; Newton; Osborne; Pemberthy; Parker; Phillips; Reed; Robinson; Ryan; Trott; Wade; Wallis; Ward; Wall; and Young.



Costerfield's oldest resident **Irene Mears** (above), was then invited to cut the centennial cake which featured an icing picture of the Hall. Irene had arrived in Costerfield, aged 4 in 1935

and her mother was Postmistress until her passing in 1987. Irene then continued until 1991, when she surrendered the licence.

A framed trio of photos – featuring Allen and Peniston Coster and William Youle was presented to the Hall by **Allan Wilkins** a descendant of the Coster family.

Afternoon tea followed with the 'bring a plate' tradition very well supported by the wider community.

The well-attended and over catered for barbecue concluded at 7pm. Then Kialla musician **John Zut** took to the stage with his keyboard and the dancing began – Evening Three Step; Foxtrot; Palma Waltz; Pride of Erin; and of course the Barn Dance which got everyone up. John also provided vocal for a few items. (Dance has always been a feature of Hall life, where the Gaytones and others have provided music in the past.)

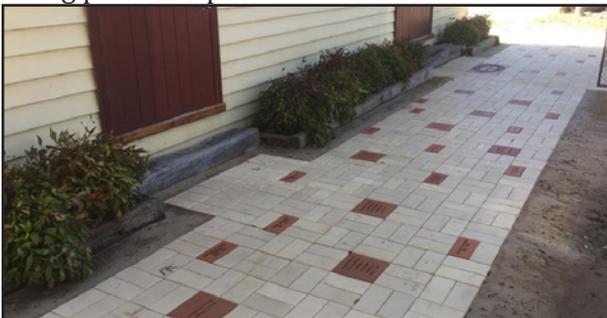
The Costerfield Hall folk did their centenary proud and the day was a fitting tribute to President **Marjorie Harris** for all her work for the Hall over the years.

## ADOPT A (ANYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF!)...

A new spin on fundraising which will leave a lasting touch on any Institute is a 'Adopt A...' Program. Anything that you need multiples of can be 'adopted' by an individual, family, organisation or business with their name engraved, plaqued or marked on the object which they have funded.

Over the last few years there have been various programs which have helped to furnish, rebuild, restore, refurbish or construct various Institutes.

Fawcett Hall held a 'Buy a Brick' or 'Buy a Paver' program which saw purchasers names inscribed on the brick or paver which are now being placed as paths around the Hall.



*Photo: Fawcett Hall Facebook*

Scottsdale Mechanics' Institute Hall (Tas) held an 'Adopt a Chair' program to update their seating. Each chair adopted was tax-deductible



and affixed with a plaque. All sponsors were invited to a "Chair Warming Concert" to try out their gifts to the community.

Alternatively, some Institutes have run 'Adopt a Chair' programs to restore their existing reading chairs in libraries to allow for their continued use, as well as for the comfort and safety of patrons.

Several overseas Institutes have 'Adopt a Book' schemes which allow restoration or conservation of older or damaged books in their collections. Books can be categories into different levels of 'Adoption' according to the amount of work required to repair, restore or conserve them. The book then has a bookplate affixed with the name of its sponsor.

## CREATE A FEATURE

In the **Armitt Museum and Library** at Ambleside, Cumbria (UK) is an ancient oak door attached to the wall, over which is a stone lintel bearing the date 1656. These items were removed from the Salutation Inn, when it was refurbished in around 1820 as the Salutation Hotel. The door went to the blacksmith's shop of the Benson family on Blue Hill, Ambleside, a business that had been established in 1781. The shop was lastly conducted by **Ian Benson** up until he retired about three years ago. The door was subsequently salvaged from a wrecker's yard and installed at the Armitt last year. The stone lintel fragment was found in a paddock. But there is more, for when the door is opened there is a catalogue of brands burnt into the much weathered surface, as tests after they had been forged on the anvil. Now there is a real piece of history.



was removed and reused at the blacksmith's forge on Blue Hill in Ambleside, worked by the Benson family since the 18th century and only closed in recent years. It was during these later years that the door was used for the testing of brands, its heat-bleached surface now scattered and pitted with a casual graffiti of repeated letters, often paired or single, branded or blind-punched into the wood. There are also a few discernible names including 'R. Askew', 'J. Jackson', 'R. Partridge', 'Elletson' and the place names 'Ambleside' and 'Wansfell'. The significance of the personal names remains uncertain, however research continues.

The Salutation Hotel occupies a central position in the life of Ambleside and not just geographically. The evidence of a door lintel dated 1656, now also preserved at the Armitt Museum, indicates a building at that date, but the name suggests even earlier origins. The name 'Salutation' was once common amongst English hostelryes. It referred to the appearance of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary and often indicates a pre-Reformation origin. Such inns typically bore the image of an angel on their signs. By the 18th century more common was a scene of the landlord welcoming his patrons, as indicated on a mid-18th century bill of fare for the Ambleside Salutation.

**William Green's** 1809 etching of the Salutation shows a somewhat ramshackled, rambling low building with tall ivy covered round chimneys and leaded sliding sash windows all clearly of a 17th century date which presumably evolved from an earlier farmhouse. Twelve years later in 1821 Green again produced an etching of a very different Salutation, heightened, extended and refenestrated. The 17th century building is still recognisable in the rear ranges, but the rest had disappeared under a façade of tidy gentrification. It is probable that it was during this phase that our door was discarded and found its way to the Blue Hill Forge

An important piece of Ambleside's social history is the 1720 Account Book of one of the Salutation's landlords, **Lancelot Dobson**, also held at the Armitt Museum. The book

### ***A door to the past at the Armitt***

Deborah Walsh, Manager, Armitt Library

Visitors to the Armitt Library maybe surprised to find a door hanging on the wall. Whether it is seen as a curiosity, a social document or a fortuitous work of art, it is a unique object, a door that leads nowhere except into Ambleside's past.

The most casual glance would tell anyone that this is a door with a history. It was discovered recently at an architectural salvage emporium, but is believed to have originated from the Salutation Hotel in Ambleside and dates from the 17th century. During the 19th century it



*Sketch of the Salutation Inn in 1821 by William Green. Source: Armitt Library and Museum*



*Close up photo of the Salutation Inn door.  
Source: Armit Library and Museum*

is interleaved with printed extracts from the 'Gentleman and Citizen's Almanack' of 1730, and a bill of fare provided by Elizabeth Dobson. Written in Lancelot's hand are prescriptions for various diseases including 'Cough and Asthma in Children', a recipe for Laudanum which includes Theban opium, saffron, ambergris, musk and oil of nutmeg. It is described by Lancelot as 'right good for pains'.

Lancelot Dobson's Account Book also gives us an insight into the economy of the Inn. It indicates that it was in possession of a number of hayfields both within and outside Ambleside, mainly providing fodder for the cattle kept to provide dairy products for guests to the Inn. The field names listed are still recognisable on today's map: 'Hows', 'Hows Head', 'Millands' (Millans), 'Burdass', 'Old Holmes' and 'Bridge Holme'.



*Left: Door and lintel with  
1656 date.*

*(Photo: The Armit : Museum,  
Gallery, Library Facebook)*

But well before the days of Lancelot Dobson, our door was constructed, originally of three boards with rails and muntins attached, to give the impression of panels. By the early 19th century we may presume that its somewhat antique appearance did not sit comfortably within the 'modernized' hotel and it was salvaged and reused. To fit its new arrangements at the forge, it was widened on the hinge side, lengthened to the base and strengthened with ledges to back. The original strap hinges were removed and iron pintals fitted to be set into holes within the floor and lintel above. Also during this time it was fitted with a rather curious keyhole escutcheon in the form of the blade of a circular saw.

Finally, in this, its latest incarnation, within the Armit Library, it has become something entirely different — a social document or one of those many 'restless objects' with complex histories, their survival often defined solely by chance. It provided us with the perfect example of how museum objects become 'worldless'; they survive though their worlds have gone and suggest connections through their history of human contact. It is almost as though, behind the door, those past lives and memories lie dormant.

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Note: Each item of memorabilia in the various Halls has a story. Photograph them and put them in to a Hall Scrapbook with their individual story.

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## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT ON MECHANICS' INSTITUTES (ICRPMI)

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We note **SouthHem Project's** recent successful Conference 'Cultural Geographies of the Colonial Southern Hemisphere' on 30 November-1 December in Dublin. Since then news has come from **Sarah Comyn** that the Project's website [ucd.ie/southhem/](http://ucd.ie/southhem/) 'Settler and Indigenous

Writing in the British-Controlled Southern-Hemisphere and Straits Settlements, 1780-1870' is now live and the database is searchable. Sarah advises 'We are still in the process of digitising catalogues, but most of the 500 catalogues are available for browsing.'

## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - BALLARAT - 16-19 NOVEMBER 2018... CONFERENCE COUNTDOWN

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In just under a year we will be gathering at Ballarat Mechanics' Institute for the third **Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference** with friends from across Australia and around the world.

We will be celebrating two key events. The first, is the twentieth anniversary of the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.** and the second is to remember **Armistice of World War I** on 11 November 1918.

Mechanics' Institute Halls across the world hold World War I Honour Rolls unveiled during or after hostilities. Halls have also aggregated Honour Boards from closed Halls, Schools or Churches.

It is right that we should remember the Armistice, but we must also remember the generation of youth that was decimated and did not return to their home towns. Some have no known graves, and lie in forgotten fields. Others that did return were emotionally and some physically scarred for life. They were all part of the Supreme Sacrifice of a generation.

**MIA 2018** will also provide an opportunity to review the progress of the Institute Movement over the last two decades, as well as their respective Associations. We will not be overlooking the progress of study of the history of Mechanics' Institutes around the world and combined efforts to address the dearth of published material on a Movement that had a profound effect on worldwide literacy and culture.

We will also be looking forward with a view to greater cooperation and networking with interstate and overseas Institutes and Groups. Largely for Victorian and Australian Institutes we will be making over the afternoon of Saturday, 17 November to Hall Management, Maintenance, Promotion and Survival. There will also be case studies of Institutes which have been engaged in niche pursuits, dance, markets, theatre, libraries and museums.

Our Conference theme of **Celebration and Survival** will provide plenty of scope for speakers and delegates to hear and learn of the Mechanics' Past, Present and Aspirations for the future.

The bus tours of Ballarat sites on Friday and Melbourne Institutes on Monday will give all an opportunity to see Institutes large and small.

Overseas and interstate delegates will have an opportunity to travel on to Sydney for Thursday and a day of activities there.

Paper abstracts will be called for in March 2018, with full Papers to be delivered by 30 September. The full Papers will be printed so that delegates will be able to read those that were delivered in parallel sessions.

Email your initial interest to [bronlowden@hotmail.com](mailto:bronlowden@hotmail.com) and we will keep you posted on Conference details.

We acknowledge the support and sponsorship of



Environment,  
Land, Water  
and Planning




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### MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2021 - EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

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Following on the success of **Reinvention** 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 how it 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](mailto:bronlowden@hotmail.com).

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Keep informed - join MIV  
[mivic.org.au/membership.html](http://mivic.org.au/membership.html)

## *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. We have not provided references for any of the articles (as their sources can be longer than the stories!), but we would be happy to send out notes we hold on Institutes if requested. Our newsletter is also indexed to enable histories of various Institutes to be aggregated over time.*

### **ARTHURS CREEK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1886)**



Arthurs Creek staged their **29th Annual Open Garden Walk** on Sunday, 13 November. The weather was just right for those who turned up to view the six district gardens that had been opened for the occasion. With registration at the Hall, it was a busy place with plant and other stalls selling their wares.

However the real features were the day-long barbecue and sandwich and cake stall. These proved a real boon for registrants and others who dropped by for lunch, or morning and afternoon tea or to meet up with friends over a cuppa. It was a real social day for the whole community, which ended with an evening dinner for the garden owners who had opened their properties earlier in the day and volunteers from the day.

Arthurs Creek is also planning a district history and a call for material will be made on their Facebook page.

For those who are interested in the conduct of events, catering, or Hall and site management, it recommended that you make the 30th Open

Gardens at Arthurs Creek 'a must see or go' event in 2018.

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

Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute is addressing communication full on with a regular comprehensive newsletter, website and a presence on the twitter and facebook platforms. In November they had another series of **Twilight Talks** which featured speakers: **Irene Wolfe** (Ballarat Writers' Festival); **Ross McMullin** (Will Dyson); and **Kate Torney** (Directing the State Library of Victoria). **The Michelle Nicolle [Jazz] Quartet** played the Humffray Room; there was a Rock 'n' Roll Dance in the Minerva Space; and the Ballarat Film Society screened '**Upstream Colour**'. The newsletter also has a Curator's Page' which draws on the history of the Institute and its people.

Looking to the future they have just launched the **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute Foundation** noting 'A capital pool must be built to fund future maintenance of buildings and amenities, to seize opportunities that will occur and to fund initiatives that will help our BMI realise its potential for the community of Ballarat.' Website: [ballaratmi.org.au](http://ballaratmi.org.au)

### **BEAUFORT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1867)**



We recently fielded a call from a local resident as to the fate of a now vacant Institute building. This was conceived as a joint project by the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations. The original 20ftx36ft building was erected by Messrs **Graves and Baker** at a contract price of £318. It was open to the use of all Protestants and it was stated 'It will also be used as a school room, lecture hall and Mechanics' Institute if required.' (The Catholics had already built their church.)

The Beaufort Assembly Hall was opened on Sunday, 21 April 1861 with Presbyterian **Rev. Alexander Adam** preaching in the morning and

Anglican **Rev. Philip Homan** preaching in the afternoon.

Lectures appear to have been held regularly, separate churches were built, and the site (and building) was passed to the Beaufort Mechanics' Institute and gazetted in 1871. The building was extended in 1887 and again in the 1920s. The site was ultimately passed to Council. It was used in recent times by the Beaufort Brass Band, Craft Group and Art Group. Following Council's transfer of the hillside site to the Beaufort and Skipton Health Services, it was found that water was pooling under the building and alternative accommodation was found for the long-term tenants.

With down-pipes disconnected and drains seemingly blocked the building is deteriorating in a 'sink' or 'basin' on the hillside. The locals convened a meeting on 13 December to discuss its future and we wish them well in preserving this Institute building that has a unique Church history.

#### **BONNIE DOON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1897)**

We note the original Bonnie Doon Mechanics' Institute building, moved from what is now the bed of Lake Eildon, is 'For Sale'. Designed by Melbourne architect **George Cliff** it was built and officially opened by **Cr Samuel Finkelstein** in 1899. In 1929 the building was sold to **Evan Evans** for use as a general store. In the 1950s it was moved to its present Phillip Street/ Bon Crescent corner site. In more recent times it has been known as the **Bonnie Bar and Kitchen** at 2 Phillip Street, Bonnie Doon and has had good customer ratings. The second Institute building was erected in 1931 and shifted to its present Arnot Street site in 2011 where it continues to house the community library.

#### **BRIAGOLONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)**



*Photo: Briagolong Mechanics' Institute Facebook*

The folk of Briagolong and beyond celebrated 'the completion of the Halls' new roof' with a hearty Afternoon Tea on 20 October. Given Briagolong's

large diverse building complex, a comprehensive 'topping' was no easy undertaking by way its execution and funding. That said, the heavy coat of red covered the rust in 1994, and that lasted very well, but as Briagolong's Facebook page tells it is now 'time to move on'.

The afternoon also provided attendees with an opportunity to inspect the newly renovated Ladies' Cloak Room. Plans for the Old Kitchen area were also on display, their next project. The Library, which contains a collection dating from 1835-1957, was also open for viewing. This well resourced Hall complex is an ideal meeting, conference and event venue.

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

The Institute was 'relaunched' on 8 September 2017 as a community arts venue utilising its 110 seat auditorium for film, lectures, theatrical performances and live music. The building will also be used for classes and workshops. The relaunch of the space by **Next Wave** is under the directorship of **Georgie Meagher**. Georgie said 'We're hoping to bring the creative community together and connect intergenerationally while making good use of this beautiful building'. Website: [brunswickmechanics.com](http://brunswickmechanics.com)

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

The recent launch of Damian Callanan's pictures as '**Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame**' at the Castlemaine Market also provided an opportunity to look at the Castlemaine Mechanics' Institute history and its role in establishing Castlemaine as an art education and cultural centre. This flourished at the Castlemaine School of Mines under **Thomas Fisher Levick** (1864-1945) with his art classes which commenced in 1887. He staged annual art exhibitions during his time in Castlemaine until 1892. This public exhibition of art laid the groundwork for the establishment for the Castlemaine Art Gallery in the old Land Office in the Post Office building in 1915. The now iconic purpose-built Castlemaine Art Gallery opened in 1931. The current on-going Gallery financial restructure should enable it to continue its role as one of Victoria's leading regional galleries.

**The Friends of Castlemaine Library** (FOCAL) was well represented at the launch of **Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame** at the Castlemaine Market Gallery and we thank them for their logistical support and advice.

FOCAL's recent October AGM featured guest speaker **Kavisha Mazzella** AM, an ARIA award

winner, sing/songwriter and choir leader for the **Brothers in Song** singing project at nearby Loddon Prison.

We were also pleased to meet representatives from new MIV member the Pioneer and Old Residents Association of Castlemaine Inc. which is housed in the former Telegraph Station building built in 1856.

### CHILTERN ATHENAEUM (Est. 1866)



Described by **Lonely Planet** as ‘this fantastic museum loaded with fascinating exhibits of yesteryear and local stories’ the Chiltern Athenaeum continues on the vision of the late **Rex Fuge**. Fresh from receiving a **Victoria Local History Project** grant of \$8000 to preserve and enhance their collection, they have put in train belated 150th celebrations for March 2018. Check out their website [chilternathenaeum.com.au](http://chilternathenaeum.com.au).

### CHRISTMAS HILLS MECHANICS’ INSTITUTE (Est. 1876)

We missed noting the inaugural **Christmas Hills Readers and Writers’ Festival** at the end of April this year. It was a very successful occasion and is likely to be repeated. This was followed in July with the **Annual Masquerade Ball** ‘a fabulous night of superb musicianship, great costumes - from silliness to the sublime, yummy food and wine, all with friends and neighbours, and strangers, good people all.’ The **Christmas Hills Orchestra Players** (CHOPS), which practice in the Hall, excelled themselves at this ‘their galah [sic] event of the year’. **Poetry@Chrissy Hills** is now a well established bi-monthly fixture where poets read and share their poems, during ‘a night of ideas, poetry and fun’.

Most recently they staged an **ARTYnoon TeaPARTY** which invited ‘All artists and creators of ART’ to attend. The invitation noted ‘This is not only a fun social event but also a great

opportunity to discover who’s creating what, when and how, and whether there is potential for further collaboration or resource sharing.’ It was a fully catered event and it was free. What a great idea to see and hear who is doing what in a district.

The Christmas Hills Institute is a quiet venue, has full catering facilities, plenty of parking and is ideal for meetings, conferences, weddings, exhibitions. Website: [christmashillshall.org.au](http://christmashillshall.org.au)

### DARLINGTON MECHANICS’ INSTITUTE (Est. 1870)



*L-R: Ken Blain, Darlington Mechanics’ Institute President; Florence Charles, author; Joanne Jackson, research assistant.  
(Photo courtesy: Trish Wynd)*

The Darlington Institute Hall was packed to standing room only on 8 October. The occasion was for the launch of **Florence Charles’** long-awaited book *Darlington*. Institute President, **Ken Blain** introduced the author and Florence recounted her three year journey researching the township, its organisations and its people. Local identity and ‘research assistant’ **Joanne Jackson** followed with a ‘potted history’ of the Clyde Inn which was located on the west side of Mount Emu Creek in the 1840s. The significance of this was soon realised, when **Alister Danks**, great great great grandson of the 1847 licensee of Clyde Inn, **John Miles**, was introduced. Alister then declared the book launched. In keeping with the tradition of Hall events, a sumptuous afternoon tea followed, sitting around the room in which **Hephzibah Nicholas** and her brother **Yehudi Menuhin** gave a concert in 1940. If only those walls could talk. (See Book Reviews)

**DINGEE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1912)**

It's been quite a time since the Institute provided a library service to the Dingee community. That has been recently been overcome with the \$500,000 conversion of the former Dingee Railway Station building. The building is under control of the Loddon Shire Council, which has sublet it to the Dingee and District Country Women's Association and the Goldfields Library Corporation. In addition to providing a library room, there will be adjacent reading and meeting spaces.

The project, part of the **Community Use of Vacant Railway Buildings Program**, was managed by heritage architects **Quadratum Architecture** and the conversion work was undertaken by Bendigo-based builders, **FNG Group**.

Minister for Transport, **Jacinta Allen**, officially opened the complex on 9 November in front of a most appreciative community. Minister Allen noted 'This new library will be a huge asset to the community – providing them with a place to meet and learn in the heart of town. Conveniently located at the station, the new library is easily accessible to everyone and avoids the need for people to make a trip to Bendigo to visit the library.'

In the meantime larger events continue in the Hall, now known as the Dingee Memorial Hall. Author, football tragic and veteran of 600 games, **Matt Zurbo**, gave a well-attended presentation at the Hall on 16 May. He took the audience through stories of 170 of football's greatest players, coaches, characters, cult heroes, clubmen and battlers.

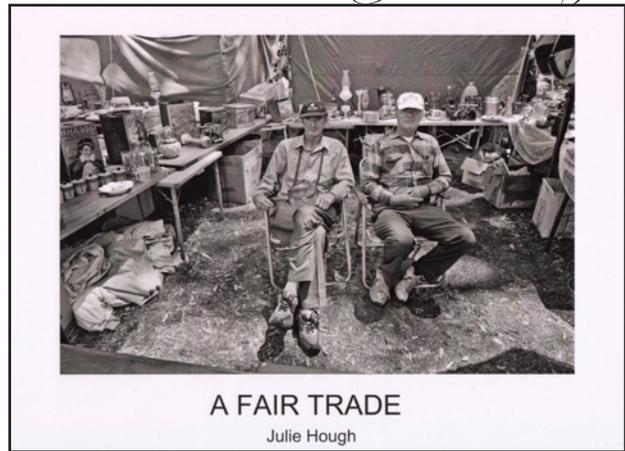
**EMERALD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1904)**

Following the recent staging of **Felix Meagher's** production of 'The Man They Call the Banjo' on 19 November, we now hear that the tenants of the MI building are preparing to vacate. The Radio Station is moving to an historic house connected with Upwey Primary School. The Men's Shed and U3A are not yet sure of their new premises.

We are advised that there are still some outstanding issues regarding accommodation and relocation back to the new hall which need to be resolved.

**FRYERSTOWN BURKE & WILLS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1863)**

Pre-empting the cancellation of one of Australia's largest Antique Fairs, running since 1976, was the launch of **Julie Hough's** self-published



photographic study of the Fryerstown Fair. For the last ten years Julie has been taking photographs of stall holders, their wares, and the Fair in general. *A Fair Trade* was appropriately launched at the Fryerstown Burke and Wills Mechanics' Institute on 5 August. The book is \$39.95 and available from Castlemaine booksellers or direct from Julie, email: [julz@juliehoughphotography.com.au](mailto:julz@juliehoughphotography.com.au).

We note the cancellation of the long-running Fryerstown Antique and Collectibles Fair because of fire modelling and insurance considerations. It looks like this has been replaced with the **Campbells Creek Fryers Antique & Collectibles Fair** which will staged at the Campbells Creek Football Oval, Fryers Road, Campbells Creek 25-28 January 2018. Contact details: Craig, Tel: 0412 508 170; email: [Redgum13@hotmail.com](mailto:Redgum13@hotmail.com). Kim: Tel: 0407 822 280; email: [kimrowlatt@hotmail.com](mailto:kimrowlatt@hotmail.com).

**JINDIVICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1886)*****A COMMUNITY SPACE TO BE SHARED BY ALL***

*Photo: Jindivick Mechanics' Institute*

On 27 October 2017, Baw Baw Shire **Councillor Tricia Jones** and **Councillor Jessica O'Donnell** along with past, present and prospective

players joined the Jindivick Mechanics' Institute Committee of Management (JMI CoM) to officially re-open the Billiard Room.

The evening was guided by **Mr Paul Ryan** who did a great job of giving past players a chance to share anecdotes.

It was enlightening hearing the many stories told by the past players. Thank you.

**Mr Jack Notman**, being in attendance the most senior of past players, told of the history of the room and the billiard table, throwing in a couple of bemusing recollections dating back to the 1950s.

The professional table, originally obtained from a 'Pool hall' of yesteryear, has been professionally refurbished. The light which hangs over table was purpose built by the then players and has been painted and given a new lease of 'light'. All surfaces have been scraped, washed, gap filled and painted. Windows attended to and cleaned. For safety and comfort sake the floor was refurbished. New carpet squares and an air conditioner were installed to finish it. A wish list of items such as stools and a further bench will be added over time when fundraising allows.

During the course of the evening, while a few 'breaks' on the billiard table were played, past members were heard to say they will return to enjoy the refurbished facility. The evening ended with light supper supplied by the community members in attendance and JMI CoM.

To all the community members who worked hard to make the Billiard Room a functioning area once more, 'Thank you!' The work planning, painting, carpet laying and restoration work have resulted in a space that will be well used for many years to come.

The Jindivick Mechanics' Institute Committee of Management would like to thank all who attended the opening.

The pool room is now ready for regular use by any members of the community to play a round of pool and meet the locals every Friday night from 7pm (and often Thursday nights). A small fee applies.

The Billiard Room is now able to be hired privately for a fee.

Please contact Booking officer through [www.jindivick.org.au/bookings](http://www.jindivick.org.au/bookings)

The Jindivick Mechanics' Institute Committee of Management would like to wish you all a Happy and Safe 2018.

Mary-Royce Hall  
Chairperson, Jindivick Mechanics' Institute

## JOHNSONVILLE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1886)



*Photo: Roslyn Lowden*

Johnsonville continues its long tradition of dance and advertises it with a large billboard in the front of the Hall 'Next Dance'. The **Old Time Dance Group** has been staging dances in the Hall for more than sixty years, regularly on the first Friday of each month, with a ball once a year. They also have made their way into legend with **Slim Dusty's The Johnsonville Dance** (1988). (Check out Slim singing it on Youtube.)

Last year the Hall received a Federal grant of \$5000 to build and equip an undercover barbecue area adjacent to the Hall's supper room and plans are well advanced with that.

The recent election of a new Committee has seen investigations into a number of potential projects including utilising the nearby tennis court area. In the meantime the Hall is used regularly for martial arts and dancing classes. The condition of the Hall both externally and internally is a credit to all concerned. Further being on a major holiday road, the Hall would lend itself to short term exhibitions, sales, etc.

Contact for Hall Hire: 0417 147 021 or 0407 040 743

## LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1910)

The Hall continues to have regular usage and the Library has been engaged in community outreach with promotion in 'What's on in Little River'. It also mounted a stall at the **Little River Community Fair** in March where excess and donated books were sold and these realised over \$100. Books not sold were donated to the **Mission to Seamen – Corio**.

The Library has become a local reference point for the City of Wyndham planning, heritage and community reports relevant to Little River. The Library is also becoming a centre for information on Little River and the Local History

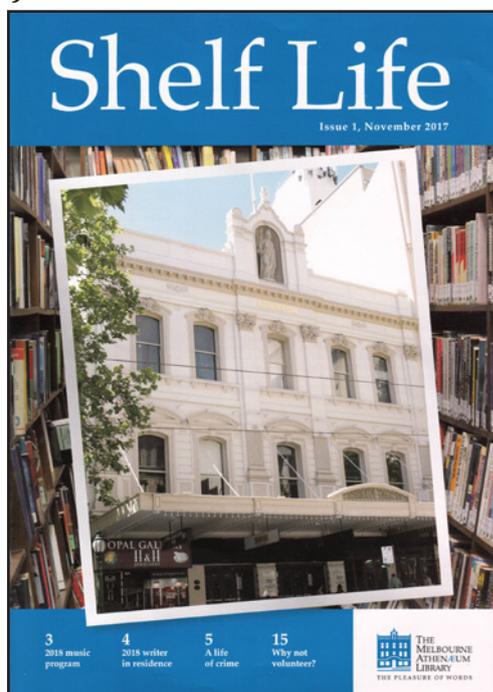
Collection has been expanded with Aboriginal and early settler material to support this use. Occasional book readings are held for playgroup and kindergarten children in the library. The Hall Committee also serves billy tea at the Little River River Australia Day celebration.

### **MANSFIELD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)**

Since the Mansfield Historical Society moved out of this Shire-managed building it has been vacant. It is understood a local community group are interested in tenanting the building but there are structural and maintenance issues that need to be resolved. MIV have been in touch with Council over the years on the condition of the building and its future. It is understood that Council has been in possession of a detailed Conservation Plan for the building since 2009. In the meantime a Planning Scheme Amendment proposes to include it in a Heritage Overlay.

It has recently become known to us that the original contractor for the Institute was Mansfield-born **William Paul Crockett** (1864-1932) who later rose to prominence in the Mildura Community as a fruitgrower, Mildura Councillor and Shire President and Member of Victorian Legislative Council from 1919-28.

### **MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM LIBRARY (Est. 1939)**



Issue 1, November 2017, of *Shelf Life*, a projected annual publication has just arrived. It takes us through the range of activities now conducted in and around the Athenaeum Library: archive; book groups; cinema; lectures and music. The

very recent **Marcus Clarke Lecture**, delivered by **Professor Graeme Davison** was a 'full house'. Outreach activities have included: **Rare Book Week; Sisters in Crime; History Week;** and **Open House Melbourne** which have all helped to bring people into the Library. Artist and Writer in Residence programs are adding a new dimension to the Library's activities. The brief closure to reconfigure shelving and integrate the Library collection has now shown to be well worth it. Volunteer programs for both the archive and library are proving beneficial for The Athenaeum and satisfying for those who are taking part. The Athenaeum's solid place in Melbourne's and indeed Victoria's history has not been forgotten with the 'Pictorial timeline of The Melbourne Athenaeum' and the 1840 Auction Map drawn up by surveyor, **Robert Russell** with document restorer **Guy Morel's** findings 'The cigar burn marks and what appears to be alcohol stains, suggest that lots of discussions may have happened whilst it was viewed.' Yet, in spite of all the apparent viewers/lookers, there was only one bidder, the **Rev. Thomas Hamilton Trail Osborne**, when 188 Collins Street was auctioned in 1840, and it was knocked down to him acting on behalf of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution! (The Rev. Osborne had previously made it known to one and all that this was for the Mechanics' and not to bid.) That's just one of the myriad stories that this iconic Collins Street landmark holds.

Website: [melbourneathenaeum.org.au](http://melbourneathenaeum.org.au)

### **MURTOA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1881)**

This year was the 21st Anniversary of the **Murtoa's Big Weekend**, staged over the weekend of 6-8 October. In addition to the Australia Heritage-listed **Stick Shed** being open, **The Water Tower Museum** and **Concordia College** were also open with special displays and tours for the Festival's duration. Event highlights were Friday's 133rd Annual **Murtoa Agricultural Show**, followed by a Family Fun and Film Night at Lake Marma. On Saturday there was the **Murtoa Cup**; the **Market in McDonald Street**; Choirs Singing in the Stick Shed; the Show 'n Shine; and the **Dunmunkle Sumpoilers'** Historic Engines display. On Sunday there was the **Rainbow Colour Run** in the morning on the Lake Marma Circuit, culminating with a 21st Birthday Party and evening fireworks over the Lake.

The Hall was the venue for the Sunday Ecumenical Church Service which was 'A time to

reflect on values and aspirations that help form our great community.'

With thousands attending over the duration, it will be hard for the town to get back to its normal routine. Well done all for again putting on this Big Weekend for Murtoa and Victoria. How about heading up there this year, for info: [murtoabigweekend.com.au](http://murtoabigweekend.com.au)

#### **OLINDA MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1907)**

The latest news on 'the removal' of the Olinda Hall from its well-established roadside 'Mechanics' Hall' Bus stop, is that it is on hold, pending further investigation and funding.

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

Prahran's Bi-Monthly Newsletter October 2017 launches the new cyber Blog '*Instituting the Past: the inner mechanics of the PMI Victorian History Library*'. We are told 'This is a space where we will be sharing book reviews and stories including a regular segment called Plotting History.' This 'tells how a PMI Library member uses the Library and gives a fascinating insight into their research'.

**History Week and Victoria's Seniors' Festival** provided a dizzying program of activities. There were lectures and 'show and tell' on: 'The Cato Street Archaeological Dig', by **Dr Michelle Negus Cleary**; 'Vintage Hotelware of Victoria', **Di Sandilands**; 'Drive-In Saturday', **David Kilderry**; 'You Collect What?! Talking Timetables', **Steven Haby**; and 'Neon Signs of Melbourne', **Jason Brack**. PMI President **Steve Stefanopoulos** led a 'Heritage Walk: Department Stores of Chapel Street's Past' and moderated a 'Show and Tell Pop Up' of memorabilia, antiques and family heirlooms. There were two slide nights of 1960s-70s 35mm slides: the first 'Australia's Transport Cavalcade', which included pics of the Ballarat and Bendigo trams; and the second comprised 'Remember When', drawn from the slide collections of Melbourne region Historical Societies. There were also four short courses of approximately one hour: 'Trawling Through Trove', with an accent on family history research; 'Gmail for Beginners', getting started; 'Excelling at Ebay', selling on-line from the start; and 'Success with Family History', getting your family history on to library shelves, with tips to make them accessible. The Friends of PMI also staged another 'Second-hand Book Sale'. Collections Librarian, **Ellen Coates** contributed the 'History Quiz: From Easy to Evil' and the 'History Crossword'. Secretary-Librarian Steven

Haby contributed to the 'Histrivia' column with 'And They're Off... Greyhound, Harness and Horse Racing Tracks in Greater Melbourne', with appropriate maps from: Morgans; Melways; and Universal directories. Two pages of book reviews completes the 12-page smorgasbord Newsletter No. 99, written and compiled by PMI's **Christine Moysey-Barker**, Marketing and Communications Officer. Website: [pmi.net.au](http://pmi.net.au)

#### **PURNIM MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1886)**

Most towns and villages in Victoria were gazetted. In spite of it having churches, a school and other community infrastructure, Purnim missed out. However the Purnim populace plan to remedy this oversight with a weekend of activities based on the Hall on 24-25 March 2018 which will celebrate official recognition.

#### **TYERS MECHANICS' HALL (est. 1888)**



**The Tyers Art Festival**, established in 1979, results in activities around the Hall and the nearby Tyers Primary School, No. 2182, established in 1879. Staged annually, over the second weekend in November, with twenty-two sections it caters for a whole range of media, and as well as providing opportunities for young artists, there is an 'Over 40 Emerging Artist Award'.

The 2017 event, from 10-12 November, saw the now well tried format again successful which attracted over 600 entries from more than 200 artists. The gala awards announcement night on the Friday evening, was challenging with the exhibition areas being filled to capacity as the assembled anxiously awaited the awards announcements.

Saturday saw the exhibition well attended, with the Community Bushfire Connection Group hosting its late afternoon Fire Awareness Program. On Sunday, from 10am-3pm, there was a fun day for all with music, stalls and rides.

**WANDONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1902)**

**History Week** (Saturday, 21 October) provided an opportunity for the Wandong History Group to mount a very professional exhibition in the Wandong Hall. The Group was formed in 2012 'to collate, catalogue and preserve the past

history of Wandong and Heathcote Junction for the benefit of future generations'. Indeed the display showcased that they are doing that very admirably! Wandong was a timber town, and the weatherboard Hall on donated land, was a pivotal part of it. The enlarged photographs, with clear explanatory text and artifacts, showed the enormity of the complex operations of sawmilling, brickyard and railway shipment, along with community infrastructure to support it, Hall, School and Churches. We compliment **Lynne Dore** and her team on such a well curated exhibition and hope that it will be repeated for wider advertisement in the future. This display shows exactly what can be done in a well-resourced country hall and Wandong is well placed near to the railway station.

## *The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes*

**AUSTRALIA****NEW SOUTH WALES****URANA SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1884)**

*Photo: Roslyn Lowden*

One of the iconic Halls of New South Wales stands in the Riverina township of Urana, population 300. The township is located between Lake Urana and Lake Uranagong and abuts the notable James Matthew Smith Flora and Fauna Reserve.

The Hall was built in two stages, the first as the Urana School of Arts and Mechanics' Institute in 1884, designed by **George Sheppard**. The second and unifying portion, as the Urana Literary Institute and Soldiers' Memorial Hall, is the work of **Sidney James Hunnings**. Sheep baron Otway Rothwell 'Ottie' Falkiner laid the foundation stone in October 1923 and it was opened in May 1925, with the final cost being £4000. High above the front door is the very distinctive multicoloured Australian coat of arms.



*Sabastian Pfeiffer repainting the exterior.  
(Photo: Roslyn Lowden)*

It has been well used and maintained by the community and the set of Honour Boards from the 1914-18 and 1939-45 Wars were restored in 2015.

The new regional Federation Shire Council very recently engaged painting contractors S&A Pfeiffer of Mulwala to paint the exterior of the building and work was well underway in September under the supervision of Sabastian Pfeiffer. Council and the community are to be commended on the way this truly stand out Hall is managed and maintained. The township is well worth a visit and look out for sculptor Andrew Whitehead's giant spider on the town's watertower, which is the mascot of the local spiders Australian Rules football team of which Urana-born Bill Brownless is a patron.

## QUEENSLAND

### CAIRNS SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1885)



*Photo: Jerrye & Roy Klotz MD via Wikipedia*

The Cairns School of Arts was established in 1885 and wasted no time in moving into its own building in 1886. This was replaced in 1907 with a new building designed by [Walter Howard] **Tunbridge** [1856-1943], [Oliver Allan] **Tunbridge** [1862-] & [Charles Dalton] **Lynch** [1871-1959] and built by **Hanson & Sons**.

Since then there have been extensions in 1932, 1939 and 1941. The **Cairns Historical Society** became a tenant of the building in 1980 and the building was added to Queensland Heritage Register on 21 October 1992.

In 2016-17 the building had a \$10 million makeover which included the addition of two floors and a mezzanine on the Shields Street frontage. It was reopened in 2017 as the **Cairns School of Arts Museum**, with distinctive signage, and the advertised motto: **Yesterday, today and tomorrow**. It is open to the public Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm.

Website: [cairnsmuseum.org.au](http://cairnsmuseum.org.au)

## THAILAND

### NEILSON HAYS LIBRARY – BANGKOK (Est. 1869)

Established as the **Bangkok Ladies [English] Library Association** in 1869, the Library was re-named for its esteemed President **Mrs Jennie Neilson Hays** who died in 1920. Her husband, **Dr Thomas Heyward Hays** commissioned noted Italian architect **Mario Tamagno** (1877-1941) to design 'a palace on a small scale' as a library and memorial to his late wife. This was built and opened in 1922 and passed to the Association.

After more than ninety years, in 2016, it was resolved to undertake: a major restoration; flood mitigation works; and an upgrade of the iconic building. Firstly this involved the clearance of the entire main building. It was a mammoth task for the staff **Khun Mae, Khun Chompoo** and **Khun Meow** and volunteers from the **Friends of Neilson Hays Library** in packing up and



*Moving back in day 2: ready for unboxing and restocking shelves*

*(Photo: Neilson Hays Library Facebook)*

relocating most of the library and its furniture to storage with the assistance of **Asian Tigers Mobility**.

In the meantime, since March 2017, a mini-library of about 4,000 books has been operating from the nearby Neilson Hays Café-Gallery. Other activities have been transferred to the adjoining British Club.

The 10 million baht (AUD\$400,000) project, which includes landscaping, is expected to be completed by early 2018. We wish Neilson Hays Library Association President, **Nalin Vanasin** and her Board success in the funding and completion of the work.

[www.neilsonhayslibrary.com](http://www.neilsonhayslibrary.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM

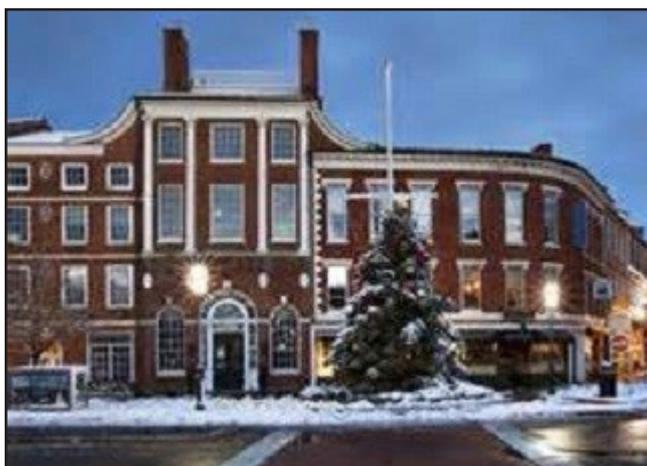
### ENGLAND

#### BIRKBECK COLLEGE, LONDON (Est. 1823)



The countdown is on to celebrate the establishment of the **London Mechanics' Institution** in 1823. Now known as Birkbeck College, a unit of the University of London. A history has been commissioned. Birkbeck's Master, **Professor David Latchman** is planning a year of celebrations.

## AMERICAN MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES MEETING



Directors from various Membership Libraries from across America met at Portsmouth in the State of New Hampshire for their 27th annual gathering on 20-22 October. It was also to help the **Portsmouth Athenaeum** celebrate its bicentenary since being set up in 1817. Amiable host for the occasion was the Athenaeum's Keeper, **Tom Hardiman**.

Delegates arrived during the Friday afternoon and Athenaeum Library Committee Members welcomed them and they were given a tour of the Library and building. The evening Reception provided an opportunity for delegates to meet with Athenaeum Board members.

Saturday's program included a Field Trip to Portland, and the **Maine Charitable Mechanics' Association Library** (MCMAL) and other sites. Following a continental breakfast at the Portsmouth Athenaeum the coach departed for Portland about an hour away.

The group was led by MCMA Library Director **Pat Larrabee**, first toured the MCMAL and then moved on to the Maine Historical Society. There an exhibition of the MCMAL 19th century parade banners was being held.

After a lunch in the MCMAL Reading Room the group moved on to the **University of Southern Maine** for a tour of the **Osher Map Library** and **Smith Center for Cartographic Education**. This has its genesis in 1986 when **Eleanor Houston Smith** donated her collection of maps, atlases and globes to the University in memory of her

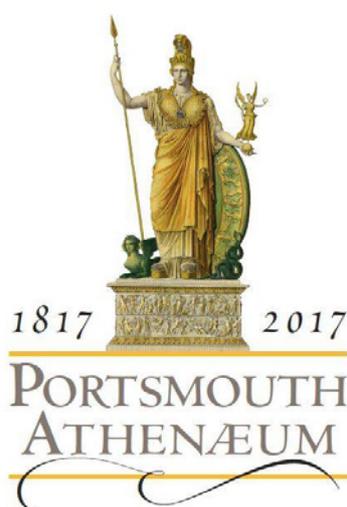
husband **Lawrence MC Smith**. In 1988 a major exhibition 'The Land of Norumbega: Maine in the Age of Exploration and Settlement' was held which featured the Smith holdings and items from private collections. **Dr Harold L** and **Peggy L Osher** then also donated their map collection to the University and provided resources to construct a building to specifically house maps. Since then other collections have either been acquired or donated to augment the library's holdings. The Library has also created a digital imaging centre to copy items from its and other holdings.

The group then returned to Portsmouth, to a Dinner where new faces were well-welcomed into the group.

Sunday started with an 8.30am breakfast and then followed Director's reports, a hearty lunch, and a resumption of the meeting, which discussed amongst other things, joint activities.

Also printed for the Portsmouth meeting was the updated Record of Meetings since the Membership Libraries Group was formed in 1991. This was organised by **Erika Torri**, one of the attendees back in 1991, and Director of the **La Jolla Music and Art Library**.

In October 2018 the AMLG will meet again, this time at the **Charleston Library Society** in South Carolina, where Director **Anne Cleveland** will be the host. The Charleston Library has undergone significant change in recent times and this will provide an opportunity to review progress.



# Where They Stood

## KERNOT HALL, YALLOURN (EST. 1956)

The township of Yallourn, in Gippsland's Latrobe Valley, was created by the State Electricity Commission for its employees from 1920. They worked in the Yallourn open cut coal mine and the accompanying power generating plants.



*Yallourn, in the 1920s. The General Store is to the right of the picture.*

*(Photo: State Library of Victoria collections)*

The township expanded through the years up until 1960s, when its population reached 5000.

In 1968 the decision was taken to expand the coalfield to feed the Yallourn W Power Station and demolish the town.

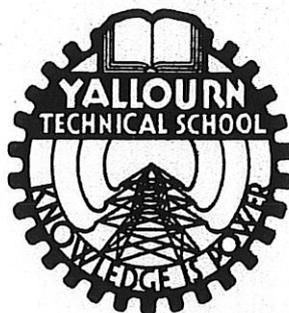
The clearance was complete in 1983 with many of the former homes being relocated to nearby towns such as Moe, Morwell, Newborough, Traralgon and Yallourn North.

St John's Church Hall provided the first meeting place in Yallourn, a monopoly it held for almost two decades. The Yallourn Theatre being built in 1939 and a public Hall was not built until 1959.

The first known library in Yallourn was based on the SEC-owned monopoly the **Yallourn General Store**. It had 420 subscribers in 1932, and it also sold a range of popular novels and the classics. The Store also published *Live Wire*, Yallourn's newspaper from 1926.

This had opposition for a time, from the Brown Coal Mine's *Electric Spark* which was published first in August 1925 and continued for seventeen months and ceased publication in March 1928.

The next library was established in the early 1930s by the **Yallourn and Brown Coal Mine Returned Soldiers' League**. In 1935 it was reported that **Dare John 'Jack' Alston** had donated a number of new books to the Library. When they moved into their new clubrooms in 1930 they had 600 books.



In 1939 the [**Mr and Mrs Robert Derwent**] **Dixon Reference Library** was established at the Yallourn Technical School. Dixon had been General Superintendent at Yallourn from 1934-39 and was retiring.

The **Yallourn Public Library** began in 1946 in the former Casualty Clearing Station, near the Health Centre, and was staffed by volunteers. Its bookstock was mostly from donations. The Library became the **SEC Library Service** from 1951.

**Kernot Hall** was built on the site of the former Casualty Clearing Station and temporary library in the Town Square. It was built and opened on 16 November 1956. It was named for **Charles Home Kernot**, Chief Construction Engineer of the State Electricity Commission.

Its uses were many and varied: cabaret balls, concerts, conventions, exhibitions, public meetings, Union meetings and wedding receptions. The Yallourn Old Girls' Association held reunions there and the **Yallourn High**



*Kernot Hall, Yallourn, 1961.*

*(Photo: Back to Yallourn 1961, Souvenir Booklet, via [www.victorianplaces.com.au](http://www.victorianplaces.com.au))*

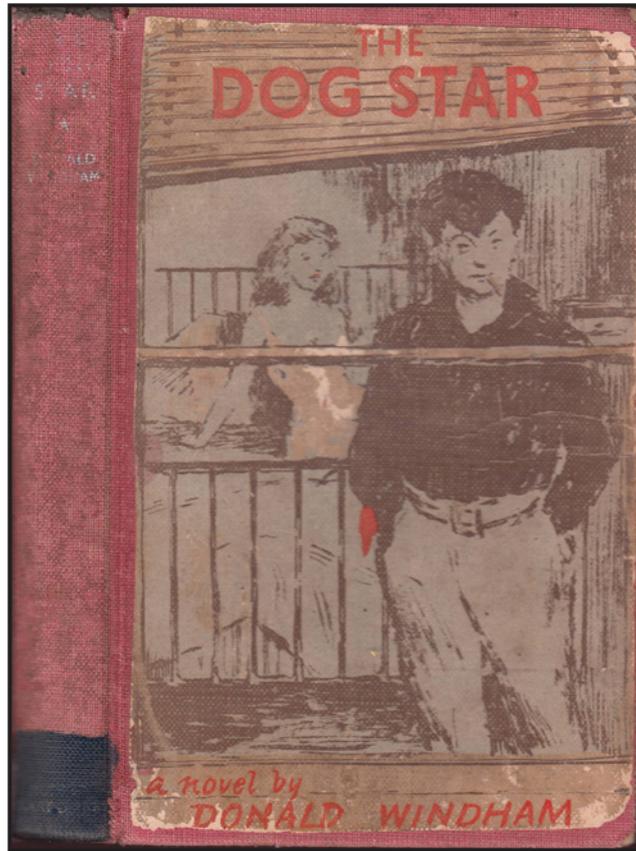
**School** had occasional assemblies there. It was also hired for television use and wrestling matches.

It was being used as an Apprentice Training Annexe and was one of the last of the buildings to be demolished in Yallourn township, early in 1987.

## 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 issue's item, from the **Wonthaggi Workmen's Club**, is *The Dog Star: A Novel* by Donald Windham and first published by Doubleday in the US in 1950. Our copy is the English edition of Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd. London of 1951. Printed in France by Régie de Livre Universel. It comprises 240 pages. The front free endpaper and the half-title pages are missing, making pages 1-4. The title page carries the distinctive RHD logo, a woodcut of a fox against a background of oak leaves. The book is in its original binding of carmine cloth. The spine is silverblocked across with title, author and publisher.



The author, **Donald Windham**, was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1920. He moved with his then partner **Fred Melton** to New York in 1939 and in 1942, with **Tennessee Williams**, collaborated to produce the play *You Touched Me*, based on a **DH Lawrence** short story. For a time he worked with **Lincoln Kirstein** on *Dance Index* and contributed articles. In 1943 he met Princeton University undergraduate **Sandy Campbell** and they had a relationship until Campbell's death in 1988.

*Dog Star* was Windham's first book and it received good

reviews. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1960. A number of Windham's works were published in Verona, Italy by Stamperia Valdona because of the overt themes of homosexuality.

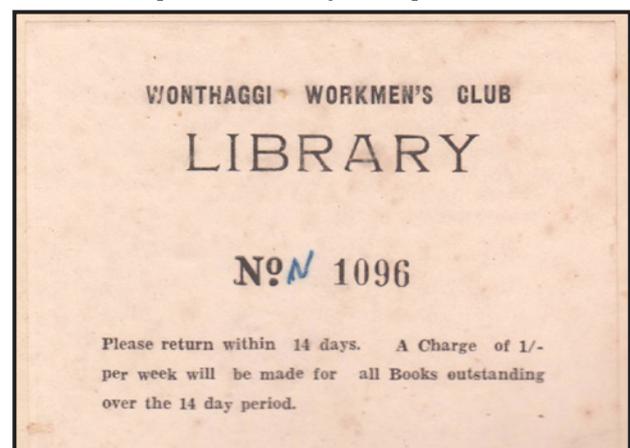
He had a longstanding friendship with **Truman Capote** and Tennessee Williams and this was detailed in his *Lost Friendships* (1987) and is regarded as his best book.

Windham died in 2010 and his estate, and that of his late partner Sandy Campbell, have since

The dustjacket has been cut up, with jacket front being overpasted on to the cloth cover. The clipped blurb has been pasted on to the front pastedown.

The back pastedown carries the bookplate of the 'Wonthaggi Workmen's Club/ Library/ No. N 1096, [The No. 1096 having been machine stamped, with the interpolated 'N' handwritten in blue ink.] / Please return within 14 days. A charge of 1/- / per week will be made for all Books outstanding / over the 14 day period.' The spine has a 3cm band of black ink across its base, perhaps obliterating a shelf mark.

The book details the life of the fictional fifteen year old Blackie Pride in America's deep south. It traces Blackie's time from his escape from reform school, his various encounters of street life as he roams Atlanta in the post- Depression 1930s, up until his sudden tragic end. This all happened under his star sign of Sirius, the dog star. Long in print, the book is regarded as one of the classics of Southern literature.

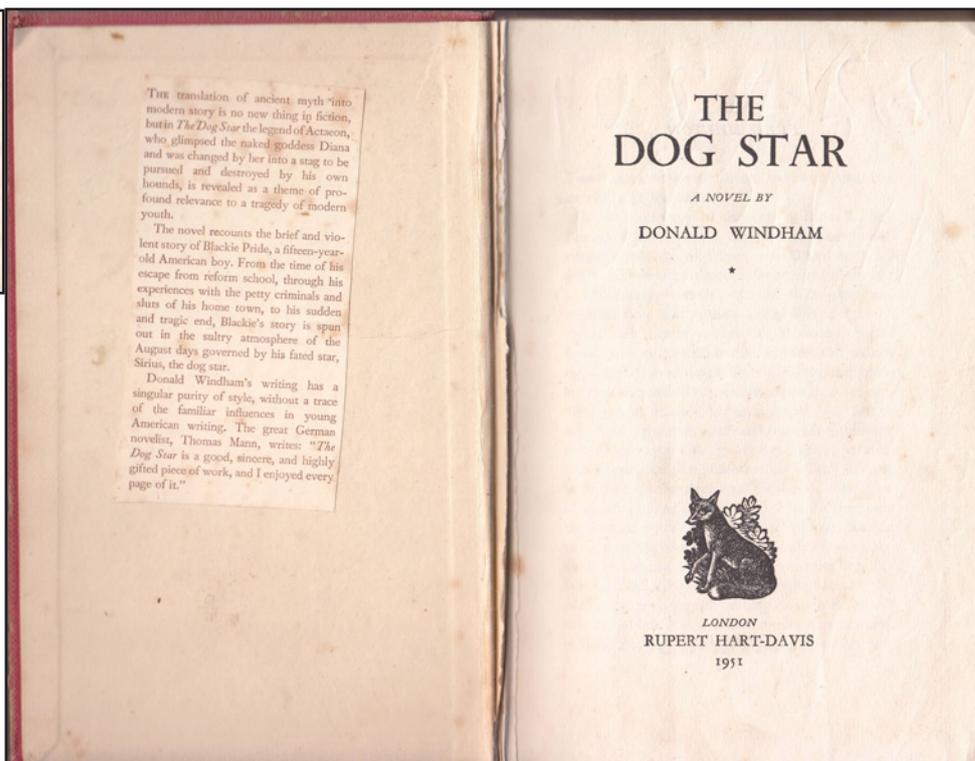




funded the Donald Windham-Sandy M Campbell Literature awards administered through Yale University since 2013. The awards to English language authors provide 'the opportunity to focus on their work independent of financial concerns'. Up to nine awards of \$165,000 each are distributed annually.

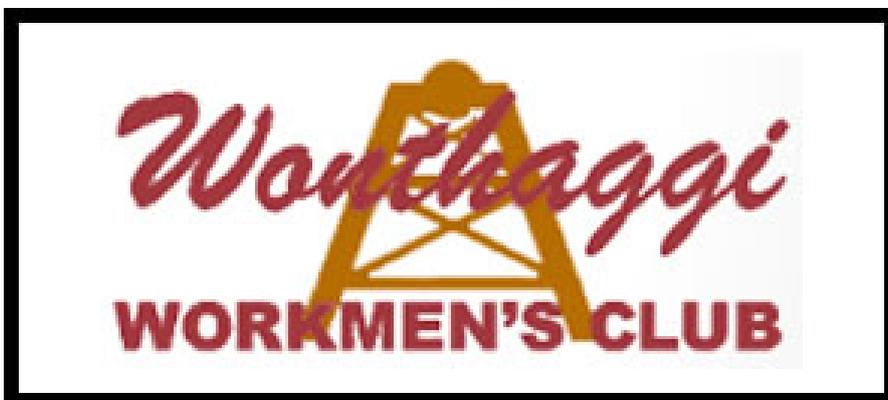
Australians **Noelle Janaczewska**, **Helen Garner** and **Ali Cobby Eckermann** have been recipients of past awards.

The publisher Sir Rupert Charles Hart-Davis is widely known as the king of editors. Born in 1907, the son of a stockbroker, although 'biologically speaking' most probably the son of Unionist MP and Yorkshire banker, Gervase Beckett. He was educated at Eton College and then Bailliol College, Oxford, albeit at the latter for less than a year. Initially he decided on acting as a career and he studied at the Old Vic, but in 1929 turned to publishing and joined William Heinemann Ltd. Then in 1931, after a year with the Book Society, he moved to Jonathan Cape as a Director. There he developed their list, until he volunteered for World War II military service and was commissioned into the Coldstream Guards. After the War he started Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd and published what he personally liked, but a liking not always shared by the public. RHD was taken over in 1956 by the Heinemann Group, and this was taken over Harcourt Brace in 1961, and then finally by Granada



in 1963. He then retired to the Yorkshire countryside and edited a string of titles from the letters of Oscar Wilde to those of his old Eton schoolmaster, George Lyttelton, which ran to six volumes. The imprint [and logo] is known for the Reynard Library of great English writers. He was President of the London Library from 1957-69, a critical period in its history. Four times married, his first wife was Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Rupert Hart-Davis was knighted in 1967 and died in 1999, aged 92.

And of the Wonthaggi Workmen's Club, it started life as Wonthaggi Workmen's Co-Operative Club in 1910. It still exists today in a redeveloped building at 65-75 Graham Street, Wonthaggi. Website: [wonthaggiworkmens.com.au](http://wonthaggiworkmens.com.au)

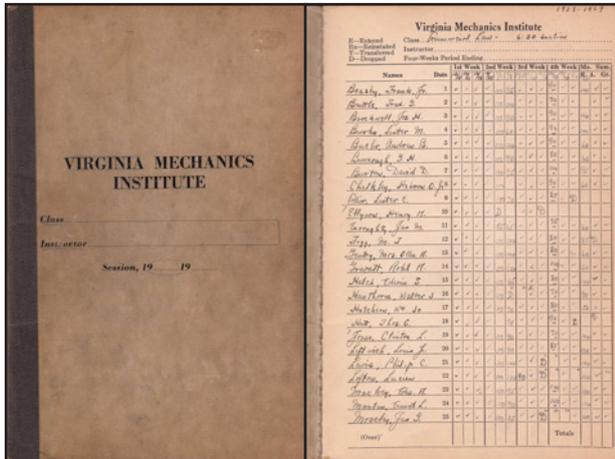


*To my mind, the most important thing about Donald Windham is that he believes in warmth. He knows that human beings are not statues but contain flesh and blood and a heart.*

EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER (1879-1970)

# The History Page

## INSTITUTE WORKBOOK REVEALS LAW BEGINNINGS



An item sighted recently concerns the former **Virginia Mechanics' Institute**, the imposing building which still stands in Richmond, in the US State Virginia and is now occupied by the **Virginia Commonwealth University**.

The Institute was 'heavy' into technical education, but also ran evening commercial courses.

This workbook was used in the 1928-29 period and contains the names of some two hundred students, including a few female, who attended the 'Commercial Law' lectures of Institute **Professor Collins Denny Jr** (1899-1964).

Denny was a graduate of Princeton University (1921) and University of Virginia Law School (1924), and worked briefly with the Richmond law firm of Wellford & Taylor.

In 1926 he partnered with **Charles Skinker Valentine** (1901-86) to form Denny & Valentine, a firm which vigorously supported racial segregation. Check out Collins Denney's wikipedia entry. We'll report more on the Virginia Mechanics' Institute in a later **UK**.



Virginia Mechanics Institute Building  
(Photo: vcu.edu)

## MARTIN LUTHER



Martin Luther painted by Cranach, 1529  
(Photo: Wikipedia)

Around the world the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation was being commemorated in 2017.

It all started with **Martin Luther** pinning an ultimatum to the door of All Saints Catholic Church in Wittenberg, Germany on 31 October 1517. This ultimatum contained 95 theses which protested the sale of indulgences which assured 'as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs [into heaven].'

Whilst this action ultimately led to the Dissolution of Monasteries in the United Kingdom by Henry VIII, it paved the way for the Industrial Revolution which took full flight in the late 1700s.

Interestingly enough Dissenters from mainstream religion; Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers and Unitarians, were amongst those who spearheaded the Mechanics' Institute Movement around the world.

### Quotations attributable to Martin Luther:

*If you want to change the world then pick up a pen. Everything that is done in this world is done by hope.*

*Beer is made by men, wine by God.*

*There never have been, nor are there now, too many good books.*

*You are responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say.*

*An unjust law is no law at all.*

*Peace if possible.*

*Truth at all costs.*

*One Book is enough, but a thousand books is not too many.*

# Curtain Call

## GLENGARRY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (EST. 1886)



The Hall holds a stage backdrop which features a rural scene and carries the signature '**Hoppner Drane**'. This was executed in the 1980s as part of a two-month Scope course conducted in the Hall by artist **Norma Kahill**. The two artists who formed the duo were the local resident **Helen Hoppner** and caricaturist **Ken Drane**. They had six sessions jointly working on the scene which is painted in acrylic paint. They later did a mural on the Glengarry Railway station.

Helen Hoppner recently turned up in the Australian Honours and we wondered if there was any family connections and indeed there was.

Ken Drane, however, was harder to track down, but ultimately we had success.

We'll let Ken tell his own story: 'Ken Drane honed his artistic talents as a member of the Glengarry Art Group in the Latrobe Valley during the early 1980s. Their best work was the result of drinking port in front of the open fire in their studio 'The Loco Shed', formerly the Glengarry Railway Station. This process was referred to as 'loosening up'.

During this time Ken, in collaboration with fellow artist Helen Hoppner did some larger joint works, one for exhibition at the request of the Sale Regional Art Gallery.'

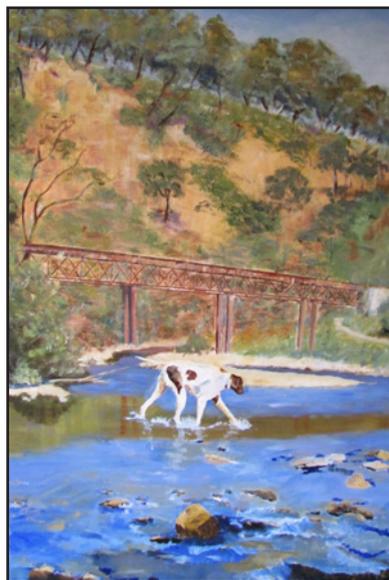
In 1998, after a career in industrial relations and business management, Ken purchased a property 'Hillside via Wymah' on the Upper Murray and returned to a family tradition of successfully breeding cattle. He retired from farming in 2012 and now lives at the Westernport coastal village of Warneet where 'He swapped his farm tractor for a water tractor, the tugboat *Bullfrog* and has been gazetted as a

*Clockwise from left: Glengarry Mechanics' Institute Hall; Stage backdrop painting by Helen Hoppner and Ken Drane; enlarged signature on stage painting (Photos: Roslyn Lowden); another Hoppner/Drane work.*

mediator with Victorian Department of Justice. Ken continues to produce and exhibit art work.'

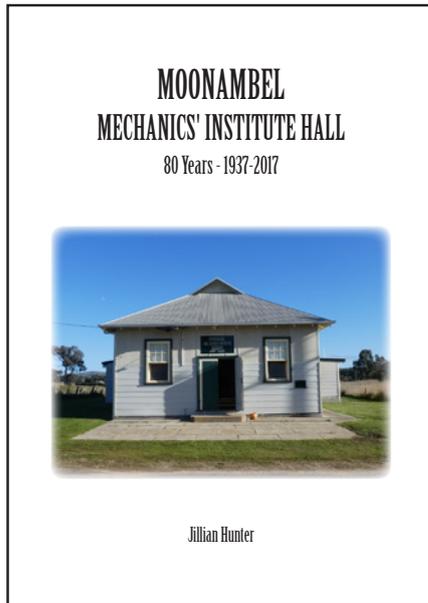
### BRUNTON'S BRIDGE

This cast iron bridge, provided an all-weather alternative to a nearby a ford over the Thomson River. It was crossed by carriers, who used bullock teams, to cart goods from the Toongabbie railhead to Walhalla. Erected around 1886 it is an early example of Victorian iron bridge building technology, with a span of 60 metres it is supported by six columns. The wooden decking and handrails which were destroyed in earlier bushfires have recently been restored. An English Pointer 'Zara' is in



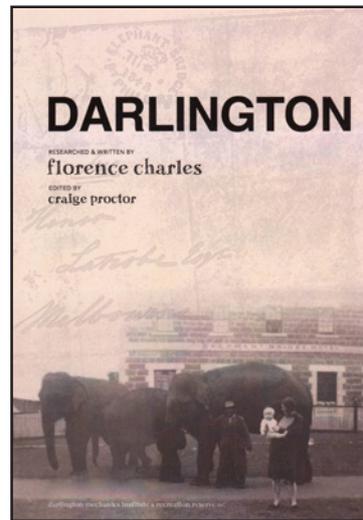
the foreground of this picture painted about 1983. It is a rare example of an Australian painting where two people combined and was commissioned for exhibition by the Sale Art Gallery (below). (Photo courtesy Ken Drane)

# Book Reviews



***Moonambel Mechanics' Institute Hall: 80 Years - 1937-2017*** - Jillian Hunter. Paperback, saddlestitched. 32 pages, illustrations, bibliography, appendices. 145x210mm. Moonambel: Moonambel Mechanics' Institute Hall Committee, 2017.

In 2016 the folk of Moonambel, both Moonambelles and Moonambulls, decided to celebrate the 80th anniversary of their much revered Hall with an afternoon tea. The project has grown somewhat since then and this book is a part of the expanded program. The first Hall and its contents went down the creek in the 1933 floods and because of the Depression it took some time to marshal resources to replace it in 1937. In recent times the Hall has been the home of the Moonambel Community Theatre Group which has channelled its profits back into Hall upgrades and amenities. This book is something of a model Hall history: Moonambel background; Hall history; Committee lists, for later amendment and addition; an expansion of the names on the original World War I Honour Roll, which went down the creek and was only recently located in a shed and is now back in the Hall; a fascinating press report of how Moonambel celebrated the end of World War I, over several days; a notional World War II Honour Roll; and a poem written for the fiftieth anniversary of the Hall back in 1987. What a great memento it was to take home from Moonambel's 80th celebrations. Available from: Moonambel Mechanics' Institute Inc., 9 Hunter Street, Moonambel, Victoria 3468, \$10 posted.



175x245mm. 9780646966649

This book tells the story of Darlington's two halls and the organisations and people that utilised them. It is a rich story which cannot be imagined as one drives along the Hamilton Highway past the Elephant Bridge Hotel.

The area was originally occupied by the Djargurd Wurrung Nation and was firstly known as Elephant Bridge from the 1840s.

The Darlington Temperance Hall and Free Library was built in 1871. In 1895 the site and Hall were transferred to Darlington Mechanics' Institute and Free Library.

The original hall was shifted back and turned around on the block and a new hall was teed into it in 1908. Looking through some of the uses: Football Club formed (1897); Hockey Club social (1899); the Ping Pong Club engaged in district tournaments (1902); Young People's Club concert (1906); Tennis Club formed and utilised Hall site (1909); Skating Carnival (1910); Darlington CWA formed (1948), and met until 2010; Darlington Social Club, first Annual Autumn Flower Show (1949), continued until 1952; Darlington Rural Fire Brigade formed (1949); Square Dancing (1953); movies (1960); and Indoor Bowls Club (1981).

Electricity was connected to the Hall in 1938 and the library continued into the 1950s.

**Hephzibah Nicholas**, nee **Menuhin** and her brother **Yehudi** gave a recital in the Hall in 1940. Accomplished pianist Hephzibah had married **Lindsay Nicholas**, of Terrinallum Estate, in 1938. Hephzibah contributed much to community life, including the formation of the Western District

**Darlington** - Researched and written by Florence Charles; Edited by Craige Proctor. Darlington Mechanics' Institute & Recreation Reserve Inc., 2017. Paperback, perfect bound. vi, 220 pages, illustrations, bibliography.

## Book Reviews cont...

Children's Library in 1948, which was funded by a ball held at Terrinallum.

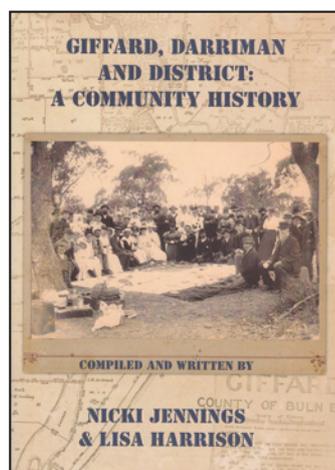
The books, packed in boxes, were carted by utility to the six schools in the region every fortnight. A branch library was later established to cater for another six schools. After the Nicholas's left the district the 5000 books were housed in the Mortlake Soldiers Memorial Hall from where the service continued.

The Nicholas's had a wide circle of friends and **Laurence Olivier** and **Vivien Leigh** were house-guests in 1949. The Australian and Victorian Symphony Orchestras also practiced at Terrinallum and gave concerts in the woolshed. In the meantime Hephzibah gave recitals around the world.

In 1952 the Darlington-Dundonnell Ladies Football Team played four matches around the district as fundraisers for the Mortlake District Hospital.

The Mortlake Car Club established the Mid-Western Speedway on the Hall Reserve in 1968 and that use still continues. The Hall became the home of the Dundonnell School of Ballet from 1990-2002, which graduated some six hundred students during that time.

This is the well written and illustrated story of a community that has managed and maintained their much-used hall down through the years. It was launched at the Hall in October 2017. Available from: Darlington Mechanics' Institute and Recreation Reserve Inc., 2471 Darlington Road, Darlington, V 3271, \$50, posted.

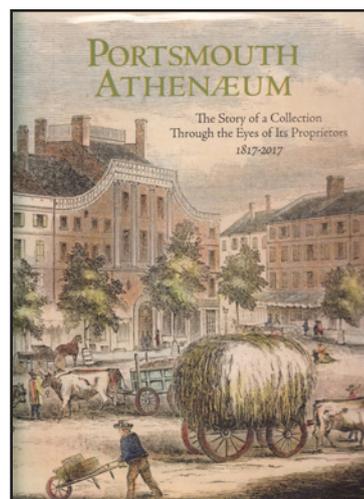


**Giffard, Darriman and District: A Community History** – Nicki Jennings and Lisa Harrison. Giffard West: Giffard West Hall Committee, 2016. Paperback, perfectbound. 260 pages, illustrations, bibliography, index. 210 x 295 mm. 9780646959979.

The publication of this book has been admirably supported by Public Record Office Victoria, Wellington Shire and the Giffard Branch of the Country Women's

Association and 'All profits from the sale of this book go to the Giffard West Hall Committee of Management for the maintenance and running of the hall.' Whilst the joint histories of the Giffard West Hall and Darriman Mechanics' Hall take but nine pages, it tells the story of the community that maintained and used the hall in many different ways. We are told of the organisations, the families and the pastoral history of the district, with a wide selection of photographs and documents. One photo shows 'The oral history day at the Giffard West Hall and the beginning of this book, 18th October, 2009'. The authors, community and the printers have come up with a very readable and visually appealing book, and such a project should be contemplated by every Hall Committee and its community.

Available from: Giffard West Hall Committee, 263 Giffard West Road, Giffard West, Victoria, 3851. Price: \$45.00, posted.



**Portsmouth Athenaeum: The Story of a Collection Through the Eyes of Its Proprietors 1817-2017, with Essays by Portsmouth Athenaeum Proprietors and Staff** - Sherry Wood, ed. Portsmouth: Portsmouth Athenaeum, 2017. Hardback with dustjacket. 113 pages, illustrated, mostly in colour. 240x1310mm. 9780998475400.

This chronicle was produced for the bicentennial of the Portsmouth Athenaeum, a long-lived institution that could be best described as part library, historical society and cultural organisation. This diversity, and that of its proprietors and later subscribers, has been its survival and its success.

## Book Reviews cont...

Several years in the planning, the book comprises 22 essays by 21 authors from vastly different backgrounds and the result is a work of skilled research. It begins with an alphabetical list of its proprietors and their share number, many of which have been held by families over several generations. Proprietorship was limited to 100 until 1949, and since then it has been increased gradually to 400.

This work looks at the people that started the Athenaeum in 1817 and acquired the New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company building back in 1823 and assembled in it the eclectic and varied collection that exists today.

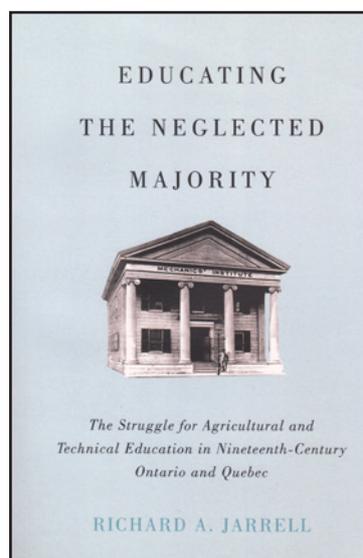
The constant of a sea port is an enduring theme, including the story of Proprietor No. 76, Captain HFD 'Hell Fire and Damnation' Davis, Industrial Manager of the Portsmouth Naval Yard, that controlled 20,000 employees producing submarines during World War II, including USS *Cisco* in fifty-six says. Ten submarine models were donated to the Athenaeum by his family.

Keeper, Tom Hardiman contributes papers on the Athenaeum's: founding President Nathaniel Adams; and, its all important book shelves. Others explore books, paintings, artifacts and building elements. Donald S Margeson brings the fascinating work to a close with 'The Fourth Fifty Years' with overviews of: Membership; Operating Budget; Physical Expansion; Special Collections; Technology Upgrades: Lectures; Exhibits; Performances; Social; Newsletter. (A body of subjects worthy of address by any organisation.)

The colophon depicts the Athenaeum's stuffed armadillo that has been a feature of its collection since the 1820s. The book, which largely comprises the crisp photographic images of David J Murray, was superbly designed by Susan Kress Hamilton, and printed by Penmor Lithographers of Lewiston, Maine.

A Limited Edition of 600, largely for subscribers and supporters, regrettably sees the book no longer available.

***Struggle for Educating the Neglected Majority: The Agricultural and Technical Education in Nineteenth -Century Ontario and Quebec*** – Richard A Jarrell. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016. Paperback. 432 pages,



illustration,  
bibliography,  
i n d e x .  
150 x 220 mm.  
9780773547384.

The decision to publish the late Richard Jarrell's near-complete work is to be complimented. He started looking at working-class education during his days

at Indiana University in Bloomington. Indiana was the State where the utopian New Harmony was established by Robert Owen in 1825 and pioneered early technical education for both men and women.

Jarrell gives us a pioneering study on the emergence and development technical and agricultural education in the most populous areas of Canada. Mechanics' Institutes, Women's Mechanics' Institutes and later Women's Institutes had a key role to play, as did **Edouard-Andre Barnard, Jean-Baptiste Meilleur** and the **Rev. Egerton Ryerson**. Institute members, libraries, museums, laboratories, exhibitions and evening classes played a key role in the formal and informal learning networks in the region. Institutes were the clearing houses of the latest in British and US technology and locally published and written texts diffused this knowledge further afield.

Industrialists and philanthropists also played a part by their support of the Institute movement which provided community library services until 1895.

This book is a worthy addition to work started with Lorne Bruce and his *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario 1850-1930* published in 1994.

Available from: McGill-Queen's University Press, CA\$47.95 plus postage, or through your local bookseller.

# Our People



We welcome the new Minister for Local Government **Marlene Kairouz** MP, who succeeds the **Hon. Natalie Hutchins**. Ms Kairouz also holds the portfolio of Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor

Regulation and has represented the outer western suburbs Electorate of Kororoit since 2008. A graduate in Medical Laboratory Science from RMIT University, Minister Kairouz lists her interests as: 'cooking, family, friends, biographies, music and tennis'. We look forward to working with Minister Kairouz into the future.



Truly one of the world's leading Mechanics' Universities, **Rochester Institute of Technology**, installed its tenth President, **David C Munson Jr** on 1 July. David comes from the University of Michigan where he was Dean of the College of Engineering

from 2006-16. RIT Board Chair **Christine Whitman** introduced David as 'This is a leader who has the vision for the future of RIT that will both unite and excite the entire RIT family from around the world.' He inherits the 2025 Strategic Plan 'Greatness through Difference' that aspires to career-focused education, research and innovation. We welcome David to the great Mechanics' Institute family. *(Photo: rit.edu)*



Fryerstown Burke and Wills Mechanics' Institute's **Pat Cubeta** was recently presented with a Certificate recognising over forty years of service to the Institute. The Certificate, endorsed by DELWP Land Manager **Adam**

**Melis**, was presented by Parliamentarian **Lisa Chesters**. The welfare of the Fryerstown Institute is a family tradition inherited from her

grandfather and father and Pat recalls having slept behind the Hall piano as a child while her parents danced. Later she too danced there. In 1976 Pat started the Antique Fair which has sustained and upgraded the Hall over the intervening years. The Antiques Fair has also put Fryerstown on the map. Thank you Pat for your much valued community work. *(Photo: www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au)*



**Moonambel Mechanics' Institute** is one of **Jill Hunter's** great loves and she has been on the Hall Committee since 1983, mostly as Secretary/Treasurer. Along the way, the load has been shared by her husband **Keith**, daughter **Kerry** and other members of

the Hunter family. Jill has recently written a history of the Moonambel Hall.



There has been change of the 'guard' at Nagambie Mechanics' Institute and President **Robert 'Bobbo' McMaster** has stepped down after more than ten years at the helm. Robert joined the Committee some forty-five years ago, was Secretary in 1976-78, and

since then, using his handyman skills, has devoted many hours to maintaining and improving the Hall both inside and out.

Also during this time the Hall has undergone a progressive and substantial upgrade with works including: repairs to the floor of the main hall; re-flooring the supper room; installation of split-shift air conditioners; kitchen upgrade; restoration of the front rooms; built-in bookshelves in the supper room; addition of concreted area and verandah at north side entrance; restoration and painting of window frames; installation of wrought iron gates; painting of façade; repairs to walls and ceiling; and very recently, a new roof and restumping and re-flooring of the main hall. Bobbo also fitted out the Op-Shop in the front of the Hall, where a well-organised team of ladies, have fundraised to make all the works

## *Our People cont...*

possible. We thank Robert and his wife **Lois** for for their very significant contribution to the Nagambie and Mechanics' community. (Photo courtesy Lois McMaster)



We salute the long contribution to the **Leonards Hill Mechanics' Institute Hall** Committee of **Mrs Elsie Howard**. Elsie was first elected to the Committee of Management on 23 March 1967 and has served since then and

is current Secretary. A local source notes 'She has been an amazing worker for successive committees over many years, being an inspiration to everyone.' Elsie also has another claim to fame for she has organised the regular Friday night Leonards Hill Country and Western Dance for around forty-five years in the Hall. It's been a winning formula of music from piano and drums, with occasional guest artists and 'beautiful suppers'.

In addition Elsie assists the judges at the Annual Baby Show and still helps with the running of the regular monthly markets.

Such community service deserves to be recognised and we know the community of Leonard's Hill and the Country and Western music and dance scene join us in thanking Elsie for her long and selfless service and we all wish her 'resounding good health'. (Photo courtesy: Ken Rae)



We note the retirement in September 2017 of **Inez Lynn**, Librarian and Chief Executive of the **London Library** since 2002. Twitter feeds 'She is [was] amazing - Always warm and unperturbed by the strangest research requests.' ... 'A

huge and heartfelt thank you to Inez Lynn, retiring today after 15 magnificent years as Librarian and Chief Executive.' Words we endorse 'Wishing her a very happy retirement!'

Inez was also awarded an MBE for 'Services to Literature and Libraries in London' in the 2017 New Year's Honours List. (Photo: londonlibrary.co.uk)



Inez was succeeded on 15 September by **Philip Marshall**, as the Library's Director, the eleventh since the **London Library** was established in 1841 by Thomas Carlyle and his friends. Philip, with a legal and management background, comes

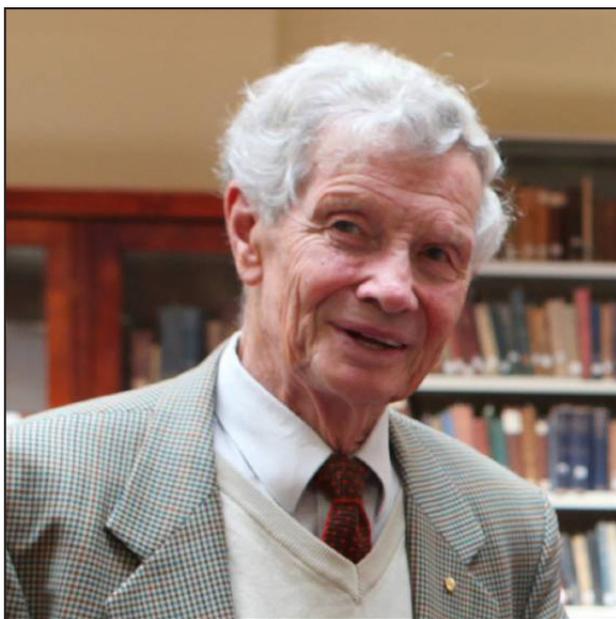
from previously holding senior commercial and development roles with leading cultural organisations which have included the **British Museum, Sadler's Wells** and the **Royal Albert Hall**. He has wide experience in revenue and membership development and this meshes with enhancing and supporting the Library's membership and its collection of one million books housed on thirteen miles of shelving. (Photo: londonlibrary.co.uk)



We note a person who grew up around and in the **Moonambel Mechanics' Hall** has recently been making news. **Captain Lisa Norman**, nee Hunter, emerged out of the fog and gently touched down in Sydney with Qantas's new Boeing

787-9 Dreamliner at 7.10am on 20 October. Lisa had flown VHZNA - Great Southern Land from the Boeing factory in Seattle, via Hawaii on its first long-haul flight. Lisa and the crew were welcomed by the pop group **Icehouse** singing their hit *Great Southern Land*. This is the first of eight Dreamliners that Qantas will put into service. Qantas will commence Dreamliner flights from Melbourne to Los Angeles in December and Melbourne-Perth direct to London will be possible in 20 hours in March 2018. The Dreamliner seats 236 passengers. (Photo: Qantas)

## Vale



It was with profound sadness that we learned of the passing of **Professor Weston Arthur Bate OAM FRHSV** (1924-2017) on 31 October, aged 93. Professor Bate delivered the inaugural Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria **Wesson Lecture** in 2015 and gave a passionate address at the launch of *These Walls Speak Volumes* at the Melbourne Athenaeum launch in November of that year. Earlier this year, in May, Weston delivered an address at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute on 'Ballarat. City of History' for the Ballarat Historical Society.

Born in Melbourne in 1924, and educated at Scotch College, Hawthorn, Weston enlisted in Royal Australian Air Force in 1943 and piloted Lancaster Bombers from Britain during World War II.

Discharged from active service in 1946, he then studied Australian history at the University of Melbourne under **Manning Clarke, Max Crawford, Kathleen Fitzpatrick** and **John O'Brien**.

Following several teaching appointments he in turn became Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and finally Reader in Australian History at the University of Melbourne during the period 1952-74. Weston then became Deakin University's foundation Professor of Australian Studies from 1978-89. In both Universities he had a profound and lasting impact on his students, with many going on to make significant contributions to the writing of local and regional histories.

Weston made a unique and enduring contribution to the study and writing of local history commencing with his *History of Brighton* (1962) and later with his Ballarat titles: *Lucky City* (1978) and *Life After Gold* (1993).

His long-standing membership of the **Royal Historical Society of Victoria**, and especially as President from 1991-97, saw him support and nurture a strong network of Societies. He travelled widely and lectured at many encouraging collection of memorabilia, particularly photos, and the recording of stories. The fact that the RHSV now: appears to have a permanent home; has a growing Foundation; and sponsorship, are the results of matters he solidly addressed.

Weston also championed the cause of professional historians advocating reasonable recompense by Councils and others when commissioning authors to write Shire or other histories.

His passions extended to poetry, gardening at his beloved 'weekender' at Merricks, and a good round of golf, only recently winning a Club championship.

Weston Bate is indeed one person that will be sorely missed by Victoria's history and cultural community. He was a mentor and warm friend to many.

Sovereign Hill, Ballarat has already recognised Professor Bate's unique contribution to Ballarat's history by way of their Annual **Weston Bate Lecture** inaugurated in 2010.

Our deepest condolences go to Janice, his family and his wide circle of friends.

A Celebration of His Life was held at Leonda by the Yarra, Hawthorn on 24 November 2017. The large attendance was piped in to a very moving and memorable occasion. A slide show provided celebrants of the large divergence of Weston's interests and his rich family life.

One of his sons pointed out enthusiastically that Weston would have loved the large crowd and would have worked it accordingly. That said Weston gave his all before audiences large and small in many communities across Victoria in the cause of promoting local history.

Former student **Dr Rick Tudor** spoke of 'Weston the Man' and **Professor Emeritus**

## *Vale cont...*

**Richard Broome** eulogised 'Weston the Historian.' Grandson **Archie Bate** played two of his own compositions on the cello. Soprano **Merlyn Quaife** sang Weston's poem 'Summit' set to music by pianist **Stefan Cassomenos**.

His children **James, Lyndon, Nicholas, Christopher, Tristan** and **Rosie** all shared memories of their father, with a conclusion provided by Janice, his wife and partner of sixty-two years. However Weston had the last say when a recording of his reading of 'Imara' his 1962 poem was played 'Once you have set your house upon this cliff... To greet the sun across re-awakening waters.'

Vale Weston Bate you touched many lives and left the world and its history a much enriched place. *(Photo: www.thecourier.com.au)*



Warrandyte has lost its 'resident' potter with the passing of **Marjorie Jean Beecham**, nee Pizzey on 15 November 2017, aged 90. Her funeral service was held at the Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute Hall on 24 November 2017.

Marjorie's interest in pottery started, when as an occupational therapy assistant, she was employed at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, working with ex-soldiers. The Pottery was one of 'the therapy' facilities. She joined the Warrandyte pottery school in 1955, and in 1959 she was asked to run it. Marjorie's skill and knowledge of technique, clays and glazes was encyclopaedic and will be greatly missed within the pottery community.

Marjorie moved to Warrandyte in 1972, with her husband Pi (Henry), who was a timber merchant and ran H Beecham & Co. Pi

transferred to the Rotary Club of Eltham in 1979 and since 1980 Marjorie had made the gifts which were presented to Eltham Rotary's speakers.

In addition to her work with the Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute Arts Association, Marjorie was the foundation President of the North Eltham Probus Club. Henry died in 2000, and they are survived by their three daughters, Sally, Amanda and Creina and their families. Our sympathy goes out to them all. *(Photo courtesy Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association)*



We note the passing of landscape artist **William Edward 'Bill' Parker**, a former student at the Keighley Mechanics' Institute Art School, at the Royal Bradford Infirmary on 24 July 2017, aged 95. Bill was born at Keighley and held a number of jobs over the years including that of the last lamplighter in his district. He served with the Gurkhas in the British and Indian Chindits Special Forces in Burma and North Africa during World War II working behind enemy lines. He remained in India after the War until the 1947 Partition and he then returned to Yorkshire and married Ada whom he had met at a Haworth cinema. His passion for art often saw him rise early to paint a subject on his way to work.

His daughter Ruth noted: 'He had a dry Yorkshire sense of humour and was kind and generous. His love of Yorkshire is evident in his beautiful landscape paintings.' Indeed a life well lived, with a lasting legacy or artwork.

Our sincere sympathy goes to his family. *(Photo www.keighleynews.co.uk)*

# Community Page

## RECIPE

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

## CARROT CAKE

### Ingredients

3 eggs  
300 grams grated carrot  
225 grams plain flour  
220 grams sugar  
185 mls vegetable oil  
1.5 teaspoons vanilla essence  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1.5 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 150°C.
2. Grease a 11x21cm loaf tin and line the base with baking paper.
3. Beat and combine eggs and sugar and slowly add oil. Combine sifted flour, cinnamon, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda and mix in with the eggs and sugar. Add carrot and vanilla and mix well.
4. Pour into tin and bake for one hour.
5. Ice when cold.

### Icing - Combine

185 grams icing sugar  
2 teaspoons softened butter  
Hot water

## SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 45

1. Where was MIV Commemorative Plaque No. 52 recently unveiled?
2. Which Institute conducts the annual Marcus Clarke Lecture?
3. Where did Dr Ross McMullin recently deliver a Twilight Lecture?
4. Who launched the MIV Art Project **Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame** at Castlemaine?
5. For which Institute did Slim Dusty compose a song?

6. Who wrote the landmark *History of Brighton*?
7. Re-roofing has recently taken place at which Institute?
8. Where is the next UK Independent Libraries Association Conference being held?
9. Who wrote the recent book concerning Canadian Mechanics' Institutes in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec?
10. Who was Local Government Minister that granted the most recent round of Library Grants?
11. In what railway station building has a community library recently been opened?
12. At what Institute was Ebay courses recently conducted?
13. Where did Hephzibah Lindsay and Yehudi Menuhin perform in 1940.

## SPOT THE 'BAKER'S SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 44 -ANSWERS

1. 20/20; 2. Badgers Creek Hall; 3. Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute; 4. James Hole; 5. Cowwarr Public Hall; 6. Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, Castlemaine Library, Chiltern Athenaeum, Fawcett Mechanics' Institute, Fryerstown Burke and Wills Mechanics' Institute, Maldon Athenaeum, Melbourne Athenaeum Library, Murtoa Mechanics' Institute, Tallarook Mechanics' Institute, Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Walhalla Mechanics' Institute; 7. Armit Library & Museum, Ambleside; 8. Winchester Cathedral; 9. Professor Philip Candy; 10. Stanley Athenaeum; 11. Tom Coleman; 12. Moonambel Mechanics' Institute; 13. Robert Arthur Buddicom.

## GETTING OUT THERE

In recent times MIV has been out there promoting and selling calendars, cards, prints, books and tour notes. We've been at the: **Arthurs Creek Open Gardens; Tallarook Farmers' Market** (twice); **Melbourne Athenaeum**; and **Prahran Mechanics' Institute**. We notched up some good sales and are grateful to the Institutes concerned for their whole-hearted cooperation. We are pleased to hear feedback from purchasers of their recollections and memories of Institutes far and wide - finally help them connect the dots between other Institutes as well.

## *Ideas & Opportunities*

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### **HARKAWAY HALL TEST CASE**

The **Public Land Consultancy's** Lex Loci from time to time raises issues concerning Halls on Public Land or freehold sites.

In August 2017 Lex recounts his mates were planning a 21st birthday bash in the Harkaway Hall along with 'A few, like, kegs of beer behind the bar, and a few, like, decibels of doof-doof.'

The Hall Committee demurred, that unless 'they could be satisfied on matters of supervision, security, transport and measures against gatecrashers', and they weren't, Lex's mates could celebrate elsewhere.

That's when the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) stepped in citing the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* (2006) and the *Equal Opportunity Act* (2010).

'The former *Act* imposes an obligation on public authorities (a term which ropes in the Harkaway Hall Committee) to act in a way which is compatible with human rights.

The latter *Act* makes it an offence to unreasonably discriminate on the basis of certain attributes, including age – unless with the authority of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).'

So the Hall Committee went there. 'VEOHRC told VCAT it was not convinced that the peaceful enjoyment of nearby homes and concerns about young people's safety could overrule the 'equality right' to party.

The Hall Committee told VCAT that Lex's mates were 'sometimes inebriated'.

They continued that on such past occasions damage had been done to the Hall and that people leaving the parties had engaged in anti-social behaviour and had caused damage to nearby homes and businesses.

VCAT agreed with the Committee and granted it exemption from the *Act*.

The Public Land Consultancy runs courses in connection with 'Public Land' check out their website: [publicland.com.au](http://publicland.com.au)

### **THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTES HALL OF FAME**

As we travel around we learn of people who have served on their Hall Committees for thirty, forty, fifty or even sixty years and it appears to be long overdue that these people get recognised in some permanent way.

Occasionally we hear of an occasional Life Membership, a Certificate of Appreciation, or luncheon, but these are very rare. Please think

about recognising those who have 'done their bit' in keeping the Hall doors open.

Initially each Hall should start compiling a list of office-bearers for their 'Memorabilia Book/s' which should also contain flyers, invitations, etc. of events which were staged in or around the Hall.

### **THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE - YOUR MEETING SPACE**

Harking back to **Jock McNeish's** thought-provoking cartoon on the cover of *Useful Knowledge* 40, make your Hall a hub for discovery, innovation and inspiration and a place to nurture connection, collaboration and creativity.

Let's make 2018 one of celebration for the Mechanics' Institute movement with: Sign up - by making sure that your Hall is signwritten with the name of your Hall and town and logo and a discreet 'For Hire' sign with contact details; devise a slogan for your Hall; and print a page detailing your Hall's story, with history, features, hire details, stage size, seating, tables, crockery, kitchen, all preferably with a measured plan. So make: signage; a slogan; and your story as goals for 2018.

### **TURN YOUR HALL INTO AN EXHIBITION SPACE**

For those who attended the **Mechanics' Institutes in the Frame** exhibition at the Castlemaine Market you will have seen an innovative way in which prepared panels can be used for exhibitions. Those with inquisitive minds will also have seen how these panels were hung.

It is an inexpensive system with fixed tracks and movable nylon lines are fitted into the tracks which have can have multiple ratchet units along each line to hang a number of pictures. The tracks can be fitted to existing walls or movable display panels.

For Halls in isolated areas this may well be a real incentive for people to stage exhibitions in your Hall, and provide extra revenue.

The firm is based in Sydney and their folk are very knowledgeable. In the first instance consult their website: [arthangingsystems.com.au](http://arthangingsystems.com.au).

### **2018 - THE YEAR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

Now is the time to plan an event to be part of the year long event. Plan a workshop, lecture, film or gathering and let us know the date so that we can publicise it. Check out the Adult Learning Australia website: [ala.asn.au](http://ala.asn.au)