



Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

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Celebration
& SURVIVAL

YOU'RE INVITED TO MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA 2018 - BALLARAT

Few opportunities exist for the National and even International Mechanics' Institute community to gather and discuss our rich and enduring heritage and more importantly our survival. The forthcoming third national **Mechanics' Institutes Australia** Conference at Ballarat Mechanics' Institute will be one such rare opportunity.

There are immense challenges for the Mechanics' Institute Movement, whether that be in the administration and management of halls, libraries, museums, theatres, or as community centres or hubs.

The buildings range from grand to the demure. Some are presently even derelict in a paddock off the well-beaten track. For the latter there may be little hope, but we must get the record and any documentation along with photographs of the building and its features and the stories of those who remember better days, before nothing remains from 'where they stood'.

Presently there is no body in Australia, beyond the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, assiduously collecting or at best digitising records. MIV has limited storage and certainly none to receive artifacts such as samples of crockery, architectural furniture or fittings.

Remnant libraries of Institutes are in back rooms or even under the stage. A detailed study of the remnant library of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute library is revealing there is much to be learned by seeing what is actually being read and in what format in a region.

Our Conference theme is **Celebration and Survival** and there will be something in **MIA 2018** for everyone, particularly our **Hall Survival Workshop** on the Saturday afternoon,



with a special Saturday day rate of \$30 per person, for up to two Institute delegates. Non-MIV Institute members are welcome to attend the Conference on Saturday at the same rate.

Website: mivic.org.au/mia2018.html



**TALLAROOK ICON LOST TO FIRE
MORE ON PAGE 5.**

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
ENCLOSED FOR 2018-2019.**

Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JUNE

- 1-3 UK Independent Libraries Association Conference – Crieff, Scotland
- 8-10 Briagolong Film Festival at Briagolong Mechanics' Institute. briagolongfilmfestival.com
- 8-16 Theatre: 'Doubt', Warrendyte Mechanics' Institute
- 29-30 Melbourne Rare Book Week. Activities at Melbourne Athenaeum and Prahran Mechanics' Institute
- 30 Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 - Call for Papers Abstracts close

JULY

- 1-8 Melbourne Rare Book Week. Events at Melbourne Athenaeum and Prahran Mechanics' Institute
- 8-15 NAIDOC Week - Theme: Because of Her, We Can!
- 28 Rock 'n' Roll Dance, Nagambie Mechanics' Institute

AUGUST

- 16-1 Sep Theatre: 'Moonlight & Magnolias', Lilydale Athenaeum

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 - Early Bird Registrations Close
- 22 MIV Annual General Meeting
- 22 MIV's 4th Annual Wesson Lecture

OCTOBER

- 1-30 Seniors Festival
- 7-14 History Week
- 27 Kilmore Mechanics' Institute - Scaretactics: Scarecrows from Outer Space. Contact: Leanne 0408 166 088

MIV'S EVENTS CALENDAR IS ONLINE

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 for inclusion in the online calendar. Let us help you promote your events!

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

NOVEMBER

- 1-30 Home is Where the Hall Is!
- 9-10 Tyers Arts Festival
- 11 Arthurs Creek Open Gardens
- 16-18 Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference – Ballarat
- 17 Mechanics' Institute Survival Workshop - Ballarat
- 19 MIV Bus Tour - Melbourne Institutes
- 19 Conference Keynote Speakers Public Lecture, Prahran Mechanics' Institute
- 22 Mechanics' Institutes Australia - Sydney Day

THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTERS

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Letter From The President



Welcome to the 2018 Autumn/Winter Edition of *Useful Knowledge*. As always I hope you enjoy reading about the exciting world of Mechanics Institutes both here and abroad.

As the fortunes of our Institutes continue to wax and wane we are reminded yet again just how their continuing existence can be both inspiring and depressingly precarious at the same time.

On the one hand we at the Mechanics Institutes of Victoria, along with many of our friends from New South Wales and the Harbour City, have been celebrating the 185th anniversary and continuing success of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, the oldest operating Institution of its kind in Australia.

On the other hand we are mourning the loss of the Emerald Mechanics Institute, abandoned by its community and consigned to the dustbin of history by a complicit local council.

How can it be that here in Victoria the Government is simultaneously providing grants to and allowing the destruction of institutions that not only share the same values but are all equally profound expressions of our common history?

Clearly there is work for us to do if we are to move on from a situation where our Institutes can be receiving plaudits from Ministers one minute and be being reduced to rubble the next.

However not only do they say that a problem shared is a problem halved but it is also held that the longest journey starts with a single step, so if you too are grappling with how to secure the future of your Institute why not make a point of coming to Ballarat in November.

The 3rd Australian Mechanics' Institutes Conference – Celebration and Survival from 16-18th November is an attempt to address these challenges head on.

Do our Institutes have a future beyond those in the Cultural Icon Class? Is there a shared set of values to which our Institutes do or could subscribe? Are these values relevant to the 21st century? What is the price of independence and where will the money come from? What activities should we be encouraging and raising money for? How much money do we need? Do we have a vision big enough to attract it?

Don't just come along, join in the discussion. Why not present a paper or lead a workshop? It's time for big ideas and visionary initiatives.

If you share my belief that these historic, independent, voluntary, local institutions, dedicated to pushing back against ignorance and providing equality of opportunity are a genuine expression of the Australian story and have a meaningful role to play in the 21st century I look forward to meeting you in Ballarat in November.

Robert Kingston
President.

Editorial

We called Australia's Mechanics' Institute people together in Melbourne in 2000 and now, eighteen years on, we are doing it again. In the intervening time a lot has changed, with Mechanics' Institutes becoming more and more recognised in their many forms from the remote rural hall to some of the leading educational Institutions in the world.

In Victoria, Gippsland's **Bullumwaal Institute** has just hosted their biennial Bullumwaal Gold Expo on 11 March, the best ever, and on the other side of the world at Edinburgh in Scotland the **Heriot-Watt University** has been named *The Times* 2018 **International University of the Year**.

Bridport Literary and Scientific Institution in Dorset, England has just emerged from a massive restoration program and the **Williamstown Mechanics' Institute** in Victoria has recently been closed for a two year makeover.

Institutes across Australia and the world are re-inventing themselves to show that the two hundred year old Mechanics' Institute Movement and its purposes are still relevant today.

The 'Mechanics' people', the **Humboldt** brothers – **Alexander** and **Wilhelm** - in Germany and **Charles Dupin** in France have had their stories told. That of American Institute pioneer **Josiah Holbrook** is still yet to be fully told.

Dr Martyn Walker of the **University of Huddersfield** and keynote speaker at **MW 2012 – Melbourne** in 2012, and presenter at **MW 2017 – San Francisco**, has started with a world overview *The Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain and Beyond* (2017).

The **University College Dublin SouthHem** team are probing the Southern Hemisphere and others have or are working the regions such as **Dr Barrie Brennan** and **Helen Trustum** in New South Wales. The **ADFAS Working Party** have also assembled working dossiers on nearly fifty Institutes in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Two years ago **Pam Baragwanath** and **Ken James** published their *Ubiquitous and Necessary: Australia's Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts, Etc.: A Research Guide* (2016) for the Australian national scene.

Perhaps **MIA 2018 – Ballarat** is an opportunity to truly form the Mechanics' Institutes of Australia Inc. to fully assemble the truly nation building

story of the remarkable Mechanics' Institute Movement. Do come and make history with us in Ballarat to celebrate our past and plan our future survival.

With this issue we welcome members of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts and those of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts (NSW) who will receive *Useful Knowledge* by email. We welcome any feedback or tales from our wider readership.

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@mivc.org.au. Submission deadline for **UK47** is 1 August 2018.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Peter Anderson Christine Meagher
Colin Driscoll Paul Watt
Wolf Heidecker

NEWSLETTER ROUND

Tick after reading and pass it on

- President.....
- Vice-President.....
- Treasurer.....
- Secretary.....
- Committee (*Insert your name*).....
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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@mivc.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@mivc.org.au** and they will be forwarded on to the relevant person.

Time, don't let it slip away, raise your drinking glass 'Here's to yesterday!'

ANONYMOUS

TALLAROOK'S ICONIC MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LOST TO FIRE

We woke to the sad news on Sunday, 6 May to hear that the 127 year-old Tallarook Mechanics' Institute had been consumed by flames, which started at around 10.30pm on Saturday evening, in the rear of the building. Within half an hour the timber structure was well alight and beyond saving.

The next day, in true Mechanics' tradition of the show must go on, Sunday's Farmers' Market was hastily reorganised for the Tallarook Railway Station precinct.

The Mitchell Shire Council-owned building was insured, but the contents of which, valued at about \$50,000 was not, and community meetings are already underway to plan the Institute's future.

An independent structural engineer deemed the building unsalvageable and within a week of the fire demolition began on the unsafe remaining structure.

On 15 May 2018 at the second community meeting since the fire, State MP for Northern Victoria, **Jaelyn Symes** announced an up to \$200,000 pledge from the Victorian Government's

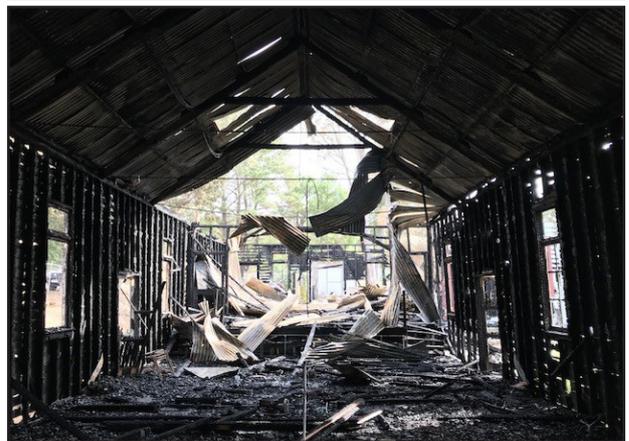


Community Support Fund to go towards the rebuild and refit of Tallarook's new Hall.

The move is now on to rebuild the Hall and we wish them all well in having the phoenix that is Tallarook Mechanics' Institute soon rise from the ashes.

For all the latest on the rebuild, check Tallarook's Community updates page at www.tallarook.org.au/communityupdate

Above: Jaelyn Symes MP; From top right: The Mechanics' Institute ablaze; Hall interior (Photos: Mitchell Shire Council); demolition in progress of the front and rear of the Institute.



We understand that the Tallarook Institute's records were stored in the Hall, but they had been digitised by MIV so there is a copy in the MIRC. (Institutes can have their records scanned free of charge, thanks to external private and Government funding.)



CONFERENCE COUNTDOWN... MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - BALLARAT - 16-18 NOVEMBER 2018

In just under six months 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 the **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 - Ballarat 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 such 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 on Thursday, 22 November for a day of activities there.

Call for Papers abstracts are due by 30 June 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.

Registrations are now open for Conference delegates with the Early Bird rate available until 1 September 2018. Discounted rates apply to Members of either MIV, SMSA or AMISA. New membership applications must be received by 1 September for the Member Registration rates to apply.

For more information, including: the Call for Papers; Conference program; and online registration, please see the Conference website: mivc.org.au/mia2018.html

STOP PRESS

Heriot-Watt University's Principal and Vice-Chancellor **Professor Richard A Williams OBE** will open **MIA 2018 - Ballarat** on 16 November 2018. Further details *UK47*.

We acknowledge the support and sponsorship of



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning





KEYNOTE SPEAKERS - PROGRAM

As in the past we have tried to assemble speakers that will contribute to our knowledge and methodology of understanding the wider Mechanics' Institute Movement.

As **Pam Baragwanath**, and more recently **Ken James** have shown there is a huge story out there in Victoria, with much more to be discovered. Potentially there are dozens of Halls in Victoria which may not exist by the end of the next decade, similarly records of these and other Institutes.

Our two keynotes represent: **Siân Williams**, on the collecting and use of those records, whether they be written records, artifacts, photographs or remnant libraries in Wales, UK; and **Michele Frey**, to reflect on what is happening in and around a large sampling of community halls in New Zealand.

There will an opportunity to hear both keynote speakers: in Melbourne at the Prahran Mechanics' Institute at 7.30pm on Monday, 19 November; or in Sydney at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts on Thursday, 22 November.

We are most grateful to Michele and Siân for their generosity and cooperation in agreeing to deliver extra lectures in Melbourne and Sydney.

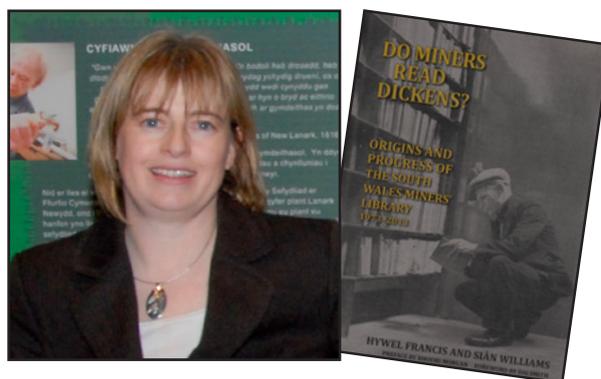
MICHELE FREY



Michele Frey is an experienced community development consulting professional based in New Zealand. She is also the co-author of *On a Saturday Night - Community Halls of Small Town New Zealand*, published by Canterbury University Press, her third publication made possible through her passion and commitment to really understand and capture the essence of these places. Through her work she could see

that these places in some contexts are alive and kicking and incredible parts of society. In others they are on the cusp of being replaced with something far 'flashier', or simply demolished. So what makes them go one way or the other? Based on this research, Michele will share her view on the key mechanisms for their long term prosperity.

SIÂN WILLIAMS



Siân Williams is Head of Research Collections at Swansea University*, and manages the **South Wales Miners' Library and the Richard Burton Archives**. She has led or contributed to numerous successful externally funded bids, including digitisation projects and community based exhibitions, collaborating with community organisations and museum, library and archive professionals. In 2013 she co-authored, with Hywel Francis, *Do Miners Read Dickens? Origins and Progress of the South Wales Miners' Library 1973-2013*, which was published by Parthian.

Siân is co-chair of the Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum Archives & Special Collections Group; a Trustee of the Paul Robeson Wales Trust; and Secretary of Llafur: the Welsh People's History Society.

Both books can be ordered for delivery at the Conference. Email mia2018@mivic.org.au in the first instance.

*Swansea University was established as the fourth campus of the University of Wales in 1920. It took its current title in 2007 and has a student population of 20,000. Its moto is Gweddw crefft heb el dawn - Technical skill is bereft without culture.



J FURPHY & SONS AWARDS

Since 1998, the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. has looked to promote the five hundred remaining Institutes and buildings of Victoria's once one thousand strong Mechanics' Institute Movement.

Across Victoria there has been a notable renaissance in Institutes, with widely diversified activities, which have significantly funded restoration work and new additions. A number have become Neighbourhood Safer Places and have been resourced accordingly. All however are ready for use in time of bushfire or flood and most are managed by volunteer Committees of Management.

Halls as meeting places continue in the old Furphy watercart meeting-place tradition for the exchanging of information. That ranges from the battlefields of Europe to the bushfire ravaged parts of Victoria. The water they carried slaked many a thirst and brought reassurance to those who gathered to 'regroup'.

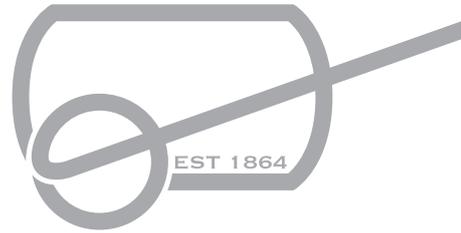
The most notable of the various inscriptions that appeared on the cast iron Furphy tank end was in 1898 'Good, better, best - never let it rest - till your good is better - and your better best.' A saying with various attributions but most commonly to St Jerome (347-420).

In 1920 another inscription was used, this time in Isaac Pitman's shorthand which in translation reads 'Water is the gift of God, but beer is the concoction of the devil, don't drink beer.' This was amended in 1942 to the more proscriptive 'Water is the gift of God, but beer and whisky are the concoctions of the devil, come and have a drink of water.'

A further popular inscription, also in shorthand, read 'Produce and populate or perish.' This saying was attributed in a part to a speech of 'The Little Digger' WM 'Billy' Hughes in 1935.

The **J Furphy and Sons Awards** will recognise the contribution of the Mechanics' Institutes and their people to Victoria's cultural and community life and that of the ongoing engineering ingenuity of the Furphy family. J Furphy & Sons have agreed to sponsor these one-off awards as part of the MIV's 20th anniversary in 2018.

The J Furphy & Sons Awards will be made from nominations received from Member Institutes of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria



GOOD, BETTER, BEST...™

FURPHY

Inc. covering the period 1 January 2017-30 June 2018. Please do support them.

Applications close on 30 August 2018 and there is no charge for entry.

All submissions received, including any attachments, will become the property of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. and use may be made of material received in announcing award winners.

The Award Categories are as follows:

PAST

- * Best event (or exhibition) staged in conjunction with an Institute.
- * Best history of an Institute, related event or person.
- * Outstanding contribution to an Institute by any person.

PRESENT

- * Best new signwrite or roadside signage of an Institute building.
- * Best new logo or slogan of an existing Institute.
- * Best use either by a private or commercial entity of a Mechanics' Institute building.

FUTURE

- * Best restoration project - building/ artefact.
- * Best youth program.

Address your application to: Awards 2018, MIV, Box 1080, Windsor, Vic 3181.

Recipients will be announced at the MIA 2018 Ballarat Conference Dinner on 17 November 2018.

JOHN DESMOND BERNAL - SOCIALIST AND SAGE

BY BASIL WALBY

As we grapple with the requirement for increased science and technical education, there is a pressing need to sell science both to the end users: Government and industry; and the participants, the students of today. The grassroots Mechanics' Institute movement played a major part in this in the past, and today that role has been taken up by the Mechanics' Universities and others around the world.



One outstanding example is the University of London's Birkbeck College which is approaching its bicentenary in 2023. Here night courses are still an integral part of the curriculum and science education and communication have been a vital and ongoing part. Perhaps the doyenne of its scientist communicators was polymath John Desmond Bernal, who after an earlier brilliant career at Cambridge University joined Birkbeck College in 1937.

JOHN DESMOND BERNAL

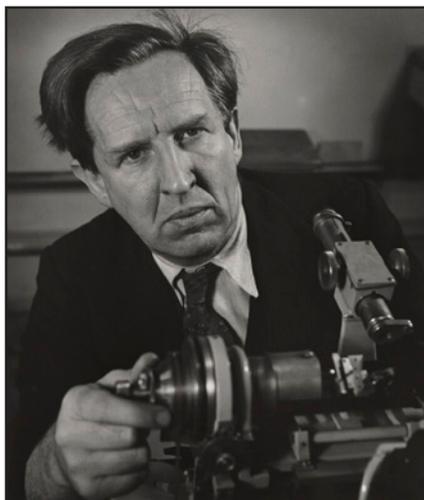
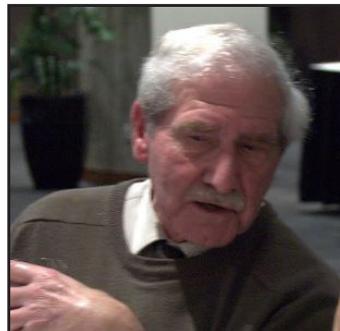


Photo: © Wolfgang Suschitzky / National Portrait Gallery, London

In 1946 Bernal set up Birkbeck's Biomolecular Research Laboratory, the alumni of which were to have huge impact on future scientific research. Bernal saw that scientific research and its communication should be tailored for human need, with a long term goal. An example of this had been

the challenging multi-author book Science in War hastily produced by Penguin in 1940.

BASIL WALBY



British-born Basil Walby, the author of the following article, read chemistry and mathematics at King's College London and moved into science communication with Macmillan

Publishing. He came to Australia in 1971 to head up the publishing and communication arm of the CSIRO. During his sixteen years, pioneering and utilising latest digital and electronic technologies, Basil turned their publishing unit into Australia's leading and one of the world's leading science communicators. CSIRO's distinctive publications can be found in bookshops today, and around the world by way of publishing partners.

Whilst the following Paper was written in 1995, its message and example of John Desmond Bernal is very profound – we need science and it must be promoted as a positive career path to our youth.

John Desmond Bernal, Irish Catholic, communist, mathematician and crystallographer, played a central part in interpreting science to the community as well as defining its social relationships in the years 1930-70. He never wavered in his belief in the innate worth and honesty of science and its honorable practitioners, something that his American contemporary, **Robert Merton** had espoused in 1942 when describing the normative structure of science in terms of communism, universalism, disinterestedness and organised skepticism. Bernal's broad vision for science is laid out for us in his prophetic book *The Social Function of Science* finished just before the outbreak of the Second World War (WWII) in 1939. In this book he gives us glimpses of where science is leading to in the twentieth century. It is interesting in this final decade of this century to see how his predictions and warnings have been justified.

It is impossible in a short essay to review the full spectrum of topics that Bernal dealt with in a book of over 400 pages and 10 appendices. Consequently I shall concentrate here on some of his more general theses on the teaching

of science, the organisation of research and scientific communication.

But to place Bernal in the milieu of European science in the middle half of the 20th century, it will be necessary to look first at his background and education as a mathematician in post-WWI Britain. He grew up in comfortable circumstances on a family farm in Nenagh, a small country town in County Tipperary in the centre of Ireland. Although a Catholic, he attended a local protestant school between the ages of eight and ten, where he showed an early interest in practical chemistry¹. Following local practice his parents then sent him to a boarding school in England (Stonyhurst College) until 1914 when its lack of a science curriculum caused them to send him to another private boarding school. He spent the war years at Bedford School contemplating, the stupid slaughter taking place in Europe and pondering his anomalous position as an Irish citizen in a foreign land. He left school having 'mastered the classical nineteenth-century ideas of physics, chemistry and biology ... and had become a tolerable amateur astronomer'². His education had been broad enabling him to appreciate the writings of George Bernard Shaw and H.G.Wells. And more importantly a teacher at Bedford had introduced him to Einstein's first papers on general relativity. He won a mathematics scholarship to Emmanuel College, Cambridge and took up residence there in 1919.

SAGE AND SCIENTIST

Bernal obtained his nickname 'Sage' at Cambridge, where he embraced enthusiastically new ideas from a wide range of subjects and read widely outside his area of natural science. Postwar Cambridge was a serious place because many of the undergraduates were war veterans who had been exposed to some of the worst aspects of the outside world and had experienced man's inhumanity to man. He was introduced to socialist politics and finally broke his ties completely with religion. He subsequently became a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1923 and gave his views on these matters in his first book in 1929³. On graduating in June 1922, he joined the elder **Bragg (Sir William)** at the Royal Institution near Piccadilly, London on the basis of an algebraic paper he had written dealing with

the symmetries of crystals. It was notable for containing neither illustrations nor references to any previous writers.

He said it needed none. Bernal was fortunate to be able to study X-ray crystallography within ten years of its discovery in 1912 by **Max von Laue** in Germany. This period was called 'the heroic age of physics' at the 1923 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. It was at the Royal Institution that the young scientist established his credentials by working with those who would become household names in the international family of crystallographers - people such as the two **Braggs, Bill Astbury** and **Kathleen Yardley** (later **Lonsdale**). It soon became evident that Bernal was not a gifted manipulator of equipment - his imagination and ability to synthesise ideas were his strengths. His arrival in Cambridge as a lecturer in structural crystallography in 1927 after competing with Astbury and **W.A. Wooster**, two more experienced crystallographers, was as explosive as his arrival at the Davy-Faraday laboratory had been in 1922. A 45-minute impromptu address to the selection committee was 'eloquent, passionate, masterly, and prophetic' according to the chairman, Professor **Arthur Hutchinson**⁴. His biographer, **Maurice Goldsmith** says that over the next few years Bernal 'began to define his responsibilities as a scientist to society and to science itself'⁵.

Historians of science were required to re-examine their thinking after the visit of a delegation of Soviet scientists to the Second International Congress of the History of Science and Technology held in the Science Museum in London from 29 June-3 July 1931. The eight representatives from the USSR made a formidable team led by **Nikolai Bukharin**, head of the Academy of Sciences Commission for the History of Knowledge. It included internationally famed scientists such as the physicist **A.F. Ioffe** and the plant geneticist **N.I. Vavilov**. Their contributions were rapidly translated and published within a month as *Science at the Cross Roads*.⁶ An influential group of British scientists listened to the Soviet scientists. It included **Hyman Levy, Lancelot Hogben** and **Joseph Needham** all of whom were to play an important part in humanising science and mathematics for the population at large.

1 Maurice Goldsmith (1980). *Sage: A Life of J.D. Bernal*. London: Hutchinson, pp22-23.

2 Goldsmith (1980), p25.

3 J.D. Bernal (1929). *The World, the Flesh & the Devil: An Enquiry into the Future of the Three Enemies of the Rational Soul*. London: Jonathan Cape.

4 C.P. Snow in Maurice Goldsmith and Alan Mackay, eds., (1964). *The Science of Science*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, p24.

5 Goldsmith (1980), pp54-55.

6 Goldsmith (1980), p77.

It was arguably the presentation by Professor **Boris Hessen** at the Congress on the social and economic roots of **Isaac Newton's Principia** that made the most profound impression upon the local scientists present in the Science Museum. His proposal that science was directed by the social, political and technical forces of the day came as an illuminating flash to people who had previously considered scientific developments taking place in an environment uninfluenced by outside forces. The science writer **J.G. Crowther** was able to discover more about contemporary Russian views as he took various members of the Soviet delegation on visits to laboratories. Shortly after this meeting Crowther took a group of twenty scientists to represent Britain as a scientific panel of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR.

This gave Bernal his first chance to see life in the Soviet Union.

Amongst his travelling companions were several people who would work with him during WWII and subsequently, including **J.B.S. Haldane, Julian Huxley** and **John Cockcroft**.

Bernal became increasingly disenchanted with the position of science and scientists in the 1930s. The economic depression and the rise of fascism in Europe convinced him that communism and planned economies would lead to their better deployment for the benefit of mankind. Doubts about Soviet treatment of dissident scientists and the possible wrong use of science were not apparent to him or many other scientists at the time. He worked hard for the rights of scientific workers at all levels in Britain and supported the socialist groups that became so influential amongst university teachers and researchers in the mid-thirties.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF SCIENCE

Bernal's optimistic and provocative ideas on using science for the good of mankind appeared in print early in 1939. His book, *The Social Function of Science*, which might have been expected to have been unnoticed as a result of the outbreak of WWII in September of that year, was seized upon as a brilliant analysis of where science was in the 1930s and a prophetic account of where it might be going. The book was reprinted five times between 1940 and 1946⁷. It is constructed in two sections: Part 1 deals with science as it was and Part 2 with what science could do. I shall look in some detail at some of the suggestions made in the second part with the benefit of nearly sixty years of hindsight.

⁷ Goldsmith (1980), p77.

Although translated into many languages, the book had not been published in the USSR forty years on⁸.

THE TEACHING OF SCIENCE

Bernal had much to say about the shortcomings of science teaching in Britain. What he said in the 1930s has been repeated many times since in English speaking communities and much of it bears repeating even today. He was critical of teachers, examination boards and the techniques used. He pointed to the dangers inherent in all too-early specialisation which forced students to select a limited range of subjects at ages as low as fourteen or fifteen. He believed that all children should be exposed to a broad education including mathematics and science as well as traditional subjects such as history and languages. In advocating a cross-disciplinary approach to education, he saw advantages in teaching the history of subjects alongside the more technical aspects. Such an enlightened view is not very common today when more and more special topics have been crammed into high-school curricula. Bernal wanted to encourage young people to think. Time could be spent better in letting them test hypotheses rather than in learning more 'facts'. He was not the first to suggest that an heuristic approach to science would be of value to school children. **Henry Armstrong** had been advocating that in the 1880s - even amongst children in the primary schools⁹. His views on the teaching of biology were radical at a period when structure and anatomy dominated the learning of botany and zoology in practical classes. Influenced by his own experience and his friendship with Levy and Hogben, he recommended a greater use of statistical methods in experimental biology. Examinations he thought were cramping a broad education in most subjects. What would he make today of the 'mystical enthusiasms and anti-rational tendencies ... at the command of all reactionary forces'¹⁰ that we hear from the creationists at large in some of our schools even now?

The universities did not escape his criticisms. He was opposed to so much time being spent in lecture theatres, particularly by large groups of students. Are not these anachronistic things still going on in first-year science classes today? To better stimulate student interest he suggested that the boringly stereotyped practical classes needed

⁸ Goldsmith (1980), p77.

⁹ Roy M. MacLeod and Peter D.B. Collins (1981). *The Parliament of Science: The British Association for the Advancement of Science 1831-1981*. London: Science Reviews Ltd, p199.

¹⁰ J.D. Bernal (1939). *The Social Function of Science*. London: George Routledge & Sons, p248.

to be re-modelled by making them genuinely exploratory. Because students needed to learn how science was really done he advocated small groups of students being attached to research personnel in working laboratories. Students also needed practice in writing science in addition to reading widely on developments in science and technology. Courses, he said, needed to have more variety so that they could be tailored to the end-needs of the students according to whether they were to become research scientists, industrial scientists, teachers or managers. As a corollary, he suggested that there needed to be an improved balance between the research and teaching staff in the universities.

If the situation was unacceptable in the 1930s how much worse are things today now that such a high proportion of school leavers proceed to tertiary studies? Appendix 1 of *The Social Function of Science* shows how few students were at British universities before WWII. Funds were inadequate then to do all that Bernal suggested. The gap between needs and resources is even wider today. It is taking a long time to harness our modern tools of educational technology to address many of Bernal's concerns.

RESEARCH AND ITS ORGANISATION

As in Australia in the 1930s, research groups in Britain were small and poorly resourced. Excluding money for defence purposes, most research money came from central government - always an unpredictable source of funds. The bulk went to a few well-defined areas. In 1937 two groups, DSIR (the equivalent of CSIR in Australia) and ARC (the Agricultural Research Council) spent over sixty per cent of the £1.84 million allocated to non-military research, whereas industry contributed a total of £0.4 million, two-thirds through the Research Associations set up to support the larger industries and one-third from individual companies. Bernal quoted figures supplied by the Association of Scientific Workers to show that the £120,000 outlaid by the companies supported just 159 research scientists. These figures may well be unreliable as some well-known companies are not listed. Nevertheless, it is clear that very little was being spent by industry on R&D. The same may be said to apply in Australia in the 1990s.

Bernal was critical of the 'bushfire' approach taken by government departments to the solution of problems, the stultifying effect of interdepartmental rivalries and the difficulties encountered in transferring new processes from the laboratory to full-scale production in industry. He suggested that because the

academies, institutions such as the Royal Society and the Chemical Society, were no longer providing scientific leadership, there should be much stronger links between the universities, government departments and industry. To achieve this he wanted to see much more mobility amongst researchers employed in these sectors. He accused the academies of concentrating too much on their publishing activities at the expense of practical science. The question of mobility has been a recurring one up to the present. All sides have given reasons for not encouraging mobility ranging from those associated with staff succession to portability of pension rights. Such difficulties are not insurmountable as shown by the introduction of CRCs in Australia in the 1980s. At last we seem to have been able to set up workable mechanisms to encourage the use of the joint resources of universities and statutory authorities in the solution of industrial problems.

The interdisciplinary approach to problem solving which surfaced during WWII under the name of operations research was not foreseen specifically by Bernal in his book. But such an approach was not foreign to him and his fertile imagination was sought by those who were advising the War Cabinet in Whitehall once the war started. Chapter 7 of Bernal's book is entitled 'Science and War' and shows that many of those who were associated with the Cambridge Anti-war Group had been seriously concerned with the applications of science in defence. Contacts made at that time, particularly with the Oxford anatomist **Solly Zuckerman**, who had strong connection with government were helpful to Bernal in being asked to tackle wartime problems. When WWII ended many scientists who had worked either as civilians or servicemen in operations research returned to business or industry to set up interdisciplinary research groups. The newly emerging nationalised industries with their desire to harness technology and their belief in planning became major employers of university graduates from a wide range of disciplines. This initiative thrived for over twenty years, but has been much less in evidence more recently. There is, however, an increasing demand for many-faceted approaches to the solution of complex logistical/operational problems - no less than there was in the 1960s.

This paper is to be continued in **UK47**

PURNIM - CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY TOGETHER

Purnim came alive on Sunday March 25 when an estimated 400 people celebrated the 150ish years of township settlement, including music, food and sharing stories.

Renowned musician and Framlingham-connected **Archie Roach** (below right) led an array of local talented artists, performing alongside **Cooper Lower, Nancie Schipper, Gabby Steel, Brett Clarke, Blake Rudland, Bruce Campbell Collective** and **Flynn Gurry**.

Moyne Shire Youth Council produced a booklet and DVD to capture and promote the history of Purnim and nearby Framlingham Settlement. People from across the state and beyond attended, with many purchasing the history booklet/DVD.

Looking back, moving forward was the theme for the event, with many people sharing their stories in the history marquee.

More than \$800 was raised in raffles and through a donation effort for the CFA who assisted in the St Patrick Day fires a week prior to our event.

The event was supported by Moyne Shire, the Victorian Government and the communities of Purnim and Framlingham Aboriginal Settlement.

Geoff Rollinson
Chair, Purnim Community Group.

The nearby Aboriginal Settlement of Framlingham has always been an integral and ongoing part of the district and it was fitting to start the proceedings with a Welcome to Country by Aboriginal Elder **Bob Lowe**. Then followed the launch of **Geraldine Edar-Ralph's** book and DVD titled *Purnim's 150-ish Year Celebration: Looking Back, Moving Forward*.*

An excellent music program followed, which was led by the inimitable singer-songwriter **Archie Roach**, a former resident of the nearby Framlingham Aboriginal community.



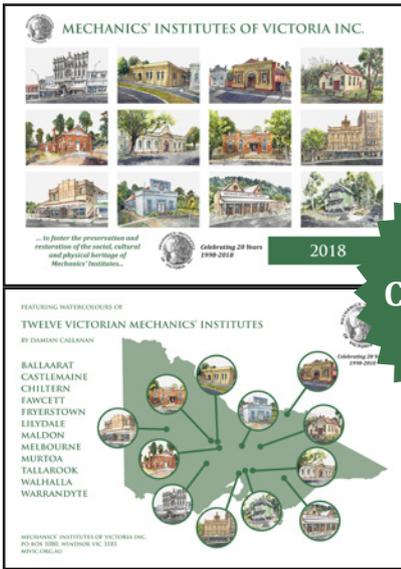
In spite of having a Post Office established in 1868, the township never received the official recognition of gazettal. Historically Purnim punches well beyond its weight. War hero Captain **Reg Saunders** MBE (1920-90) who served in World

War II and later in the Korean War was born at Framlingham. The first Aboriginal to be commissioned in the Australian Army, Reg was so respected locally that the Purnim Community Group purchased his medals in 2017 and these are now held by the Warrnambool RSL. Another locally born celebre was the much decorated World War I flying ace Squadron Leader **Paul McGinness** DFC, DCM (1896-1952). He was later to team up with Sir **Hudson Fysh** (1895-1974), his former gunner and observer, and Sir **Fergus McMaster** (1879-1950) to form Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services (QANTAS). The local Bryan O'Lynn stud farm produced 1870 Melbourne Cup winner **Nimblefoot**, and his progeny are still winning. All these and many more were showcased in a display of photos and memorabilia mounted in the Hall on the day. Little remains of the once thriving Purnim township besides St Anne's Catholic Church and St Marcellus' Catholic Primary School, a district which now comprises a number of large dairy farms, and of course the Purnim Mechanics' Institute Hall. A reprint of Ron Best's *Purnim Mechanics' Institute Hall 1901* was also available for sale on the day.

*Available from the author, Geraldine Edar-Ralph at Moyne Shire Council, Box 51, Port Fairy, VIC 3284, \$15.00 posted.

Photos: Geoff Rollinson

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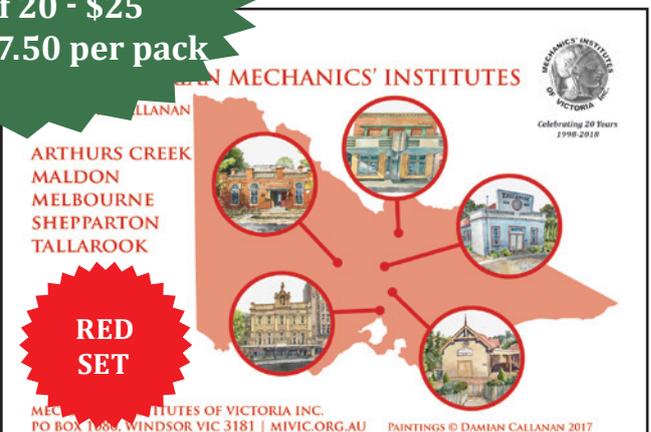
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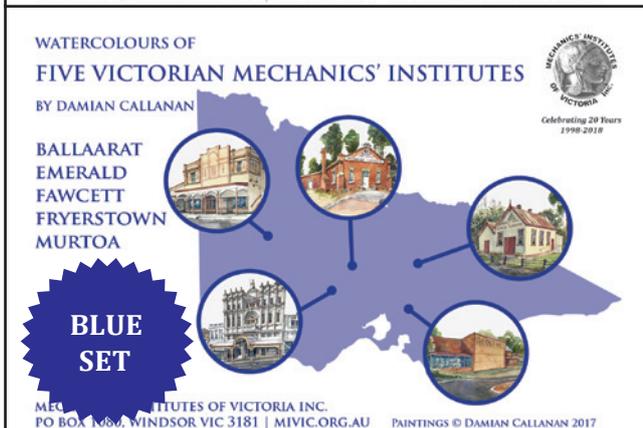
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Around Victoria's Institutes

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.

BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1859)

The other phoenix of Ballarat*, the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute has entered another phase in its re-invention with the appointment in April of a part-time Executive Manager **Tony Godfrey**. The appointment has been made possible with a grant from the Ballarat City Council. The aim is strengthen and enhance BMI's role in Ballarat's cultural and arts hub. The Ballarat Film Society stages monthly screenings to growing audiences. The Friday night Twilight Talks Series 2 kicked off on 20 April with **Dr Ross McMullin** with 'Never Forget Australia – Transformation at Villers-Bretonneux' foreshadowed the opening of the **Sir John Monash Centre** at Villers-Bretonneux, France on 24 April. Other Twilight speakers have included: **Dr Glenice Wood Lake; Jenny Debney; Julian Laffey; Dr Anne Doggett** and **Viktor Sheludko**; with **Peter Griffiths** still to follow. The successful Twilight format starts at 5pm 'for drinks, cheese and conversation, followed by a 30 to 40 minute talk'. The Nathaniel Spielvogel Oration for 2018 was delivered by Professor **Janet McCalman** on 8 May. Details of events, membership, Friends activities, and of course the new Ballarat Mechanics' Institute Foundation, which celebrates past generous benefactors and welcomes new ones.

*The original was the remarkable Phoenix Foundry, a world class locomotive, steam engine and implement builder that had its origins in the 1850s and closed in 1905.

Website: ballaratmi.org.au

BAIRNSDALE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)

The movement for an Institute started in 1868, but did not get traction until 1874. The Library was established in the Shire Hall and by 1875 it



had 650 books and by 1881 it had 900 books. The library had grown to 2350 books by 1894.

An architectural competition was held to decide on the design of the building and four entries were received, with the winner being **Thomas Swan** (1852-1930). However the actual design used was that of Melbourne architect **Harry Browse Gibbs** (1858-1918), later to be senior partner in the firm of HB Gibbs & **[Alexander Kennedy Smith] Finlay** (1872-1921).

It was built in two stages, with the first being in 1888-89 in a red brick blood and bandage style. It was erected by Bairnsdale builder **William J Yates** at a contract price of £1125.19s

The second stage was done in 1913, with the sympathetic addition of bays 8-12 to the west. These extensions included a proscenium stage, dressing rooms and a first floor library. The works were designed by **John Henry 'Harry' French** (1870-1953) and done from January-June 1913 by **John McKnockiter** (1863-1943). The building re-opened with a grand Ball on 19 June and a 'Brilliant Juvenile Ball' on 20 June 1913.

Electricity was connected in 1916.

The building stood vacant for a time until it was taken over by Council in 1949 and then the library was brought under the Free Library Service Board. The building was renovated in 1950 and included a children's library.

In 1975 the building was again modified under the supervision of architect **Graham Sedenary**. The stage was removed and a new south-eastern section was added.

Author **Harold Edward 'Hal' Porter** (1911-84) was the second full-time librarian 1953-58 and he was a Mechanics' Institute purist. His study has since been named the **Hal Porter Room** and contains copies of all his books.

The site was redeveloped in 2013 and the 1975 extension was removed. The false ceiling in the main hall was removed and replicas of the original ceiling roses were reinstated.

It is currently utilised by the East Gippsland Shire Library.

The Hall holds a memorial plaque to those who rescued the Chinese caught in the Mitchell River flood in 1893. Another is to the officers and crew of SS *Albert* also from 1893.

BEAUFORT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1871)

A recent edition of the *Pyrenees Advocate* (20 April 2018) featured an article headed 'Historic building now appears safe'. The article went on the 'Beaufort and Skipton Health Service (BASHS) is intending to spend \$1.5 million to restore the Mechanics' Institute.' A spokesman announced on behalf of BASHS 'The Mechanics' Institute is an important community landmark and of great significance to the people of Beaufort. It was inherited from the Shire in very poor condition but the hospital board is committed to restoring the building to enable it to be used once again by community groups. We have already spent \$100,000 on essential works to reduce the damp in the building and are seeking a further \$1.5 million to restore the building to one of which the Beaufort community can be rightly proud.'

BEECHWORTH ATHENAEUM (Est. 1856)



The Robert O'Hara Burke (1821-61) Memorial Museum, established on the Athenaeum in 1863 has long been regarded as a 'museum of museums'. Thankfully the astute management of the long-time curator **Robert Hurlock Jenkyns** (1828-85), the community and of late the Indigo Shire Council, the collection has been kept intact. The late **Roy Collington Harvey's** (1904-71) vision of a 'Street of Shops', opened in 1979, added to that unique place. The collection comprises some 30,000 items which make up static exhibitions of the Kelly Gang, goldmining, the Chinese community and Beechworth's war heroes and resource special exhibitions.

It has just been announced that part of the Aboriginal Collection of some ninety-six items, assembled by **Reynell Eveleigh Johns** (1834-1910) and purchased by the Athenaeum in 1868,

for £25, are being returned to the indigenous community.

These items are being featured in a special **Return Exhibition** at the Burke Museum until 7 June 2018.

Over the past decade, curator **Linda Peacock**, has been trying to assign items to particular Aboriginal tribes. Some twenty objects have been identified as belonging to the Dja Dja Wurrung, and these have been returned to them.

These items will then be housed at the Bendigo Art Gallery 'waiting for a special indigenous space to happen'. www.burkemuseum.com.au

BIRREGURRA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1865)

Birregurra's **EnLIGHTen Me** Project came to a dramatic climax with the sellout (Free) Birregurra Hall Ballyhoo with the entreaty to **Dive Down the Rabbit Hole... You're invited to the Ball**. Held on Saturday 28 April it was a huge success and rated as one of the most memorable nights in Birregurra's history.

The Ballyhoo was preceded with well-attended creative lantern making workshops at the Primary School on 17 April and Butter Factory on 22 April and these lanterns were put to good effect during the night.

Proceedings kicked off on the Saturday at 5.30pm with an assembly at the Birregurra Recreation Reserve of a varied assortment of conveyances in readiness for the Grand Parade. People dressed in a vast array of outfits ranging from the conservative to the outrageous.

Come 6pm the various participants were ordered into single file and they set off to proceed down Strachan Street and then into Main Street, which was lined with people, and finally arrived at the Hall.

There guests were engaged in a smorgasbord of music, film, dance and performance centred around twenty installations. The whole activity was coordinated by digital 'White Night' artist **Craig Walsh** and designed and choreographed by **Gorkem Acaroglu**. Interwoven throughout the three hour visual and dance extravaganza were various aspects of the community's history and the varied experiences at the Birregurra Mechanics' Hall.

This event was the culmination of eighteen months work with the community working with professional artists as part of the **Small Towns Transformation** – an initiative funded by the Victorian Government. And what an event it was.

Website: enlightenmebirre.com

BRIAGOLONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)

The Briagolong Mechanics' Institute is once again playing host the the **Briagolong Film Festival** over the long weekend, 8-10 June 2018. This event has just been awarded winner for 2018 in the 'Best Family Activity Category' by the Central Gippsland People's Choice Awards. Seven films are on the weekend's program, including the premiere of short film documentary 'Comrades and a Cabin'. Tickets are available at the door for all screenings. More information can be found at briagolongfilmfestival.com or by contacting Annette Short on 0402 537 283.

BUDGEREE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1910)



Photo: Budgerie Hall Facebook

There is an interesting Hall, School and School residence precinct in the small village of Budgerie in Gippsland. The fact that they still exist side by side, in spite of nearby buildings being destroyed by bushfire, is miraculous, but they would be a very rare example of an extant set of community Hall/School buildings.

The School residence is now in private ownership, but when the School closed in 1992, the local community successfully lobbied the Shire to buy it. Since then it has been managed by the Hall Committee. Last year Council found the School was one of its assets and after an inspection had the building padlocked and demolition was considered. Fortunately a local group has again rallied. Hall Committee Secretary, **Leanne Potter** addressed the 5 March 2018 Council meeting and Council resolved to start negotiations to have the site revert back to Crown Land in keeping with the status of the Hall. The Hall Committee is now seeking \$220,000 to restore the School building and have asked Council to make a contribution.

CHEWTON TOWN HALL (Est. 1858)

On Saturday, 5 May visitors were able to see at first hand the culmination of years of struggling,

planning and finally achieving the restoration of this regional landmark. It is not easy to confidently assemble full documentation which has an end price of around \$300,000, without the necessity of staging it in parts with multiple funding.

To understand the process it is necessary to go back to 1995 when the then Shire of Metcalfe consolidated eleven allotments which comprised the Post Office, Town Hall and Ellery Park into one title. In the same year the assets of Metcalfe Shire were merged into those of Mt Alexander Shire.

The Chewton Post Office was subsequently put on Shire's 'Assets for Sale Register' in April 1996. The community rallied and secured Council agreement to pass over the aggregated site to community management.

A public meeting held in the Town Hall on 24 November 1996 adopted the precinct name of 'Chewton Township Domain' and that the management Committee would be '**Chewton Domain Society**'.

So started the long-running process of fundraising and enhancing the various assets. It is an inspirational story of success. Today the Domain Society conducts and manages a community website and Facebook page, publishes the regular *Chewton Chat* a community newspaper, and runs the annual **Monster Meeting** community festival.

www.chewton.net/chewton-domain-society

CHILTERN ATHENAEUM (Est. 1850s)

Under the banner 'A Night at the Museum' and as a part of the **Heritage Festival** Chiltern hosted six Lectures in their **My Culture, My Story** series based on local people. The **Chiltern Museum** hosts a significant extant library from the old Athenaeum days. Included are the works of **Henry Handel Richardson, Mary Gaunt** and **Wilfred Busse**. The first name is well known, but the others less so.

Mary Gaunt, who was born in Chiltern in 1861, was educated at Grenville College, Ballarat and the University of Melbourne. She started contributing literary items to magazines and had her first book *Dave's Sweetheart* published in 1894 and in the same year married **Dr Hubert Miller**. Miller died in 1900 and she then went to London, where she was moderately successful, and eventually travelled to the West Indies, Africa and the East. From the 1920s she mostly lived at Bordighera in Italy, but fled from there in 1940 to Cannes, France where she died in 1942.

Two of her brothers **Guy** and **Ernest** both rose to become Admirals in the Royal Navy. In all Mary authored some thirty-one books, six of which were non-fiction.

Wilfred Clarence Busse was born in Chiltern in 1898. Educated at Chiltern State School, Wesley College, Melbourne and the University of Melbourne, from where he graduated in law and was called to the Bar. He worked most of his life in Chiltern as a Barrister and Solicitor and gained the unofficial title of historian of Chiltern, leaving behind several manuscript histories and a scrap book. He had two books published *The Golden Plague: A Romance or the Roaring Fifties* and *The Blue Beyond: A Romance of the Early Days in South-Eastern Australia*, both by Hutchinson in 1930. He died at Chiltern in 1960 and is buried in the Barnawartha Cemetery.

Website: chilternathenaem.com.au

EMERALD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1904)

The Emerald Mechanics' Institute was featured on one of **MIV's Art Project** cards. Pending demolition, its tenants moved out of the Hall in February and since then it has been surrounded with construction fencing. There has been one hitch in that the electricity cable which was connected to the Library a decade ago ran through the building. So a generator has been hired and this has been thudding along 24/7. We wish the community well in their new home.

LEONGATHA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)



Photo: ABC Gippsland: Rachael Lucas

We missed the fruition of one of the great stories showcased in the Institute Museum by the **Leongatha Historical Society**. It was the unveiling of a statue of nine year old **Lennie Gwyther** astride his pony **Ginger Mick** on 14 October 2017 in Centennial Park, Leongatha. It is a truly amazing story which starts with

Lennie sowing 25 acres of crop while his father was incapacitated. 'And what reward would you like?' to which Lennie replied 'I would like to ride **Ginger Mick** up to see the opening of Sydney Harbour Bridge! We could do twenty miles a day via Orbost, Cooma, Canberra, Bowral and on to Sydney. Look I've got the route mapped out!' Lennie had clearly done his homework and his wish was granted and on 3 February 1932 he set out from the family farm 'Flers' at Leongatha. He was armed with a letter from the Shire President of Woorayl Council to the Mayor of Sydney. The story caught the attention of the press and soon the whole nation was reading of Lennie's progress. (Lennie's epic ride even made *The Times* in London.) People turned out along the route to greet and feed him and **Ginger Mick**. Passing through Canberra he met Prime Minister **Joseph Lyons**, who shook his hand and wished him 'God Speed'.

Arriving in Sydney he went to the Town Hall to deliver the Woorayl Shire President's letter to the Mayor of Sydney, **Sir Samuel Walder**. He was then invited to take part in official opening parade on 19 March 1932. He witnessed Captain **Francis deGroot** galloping up to cut the ribbon pre-empting the Premier of New South Wales, 'The Big Fella', **Jack Lang**. Lennie was then shown around Sydney's various highlights including the zoo. His official round of events over, Lennie set out on **Ginger Mick** from the Sydney Town Hall at 10.30am on 11 April 1932. Later he overnighted at Gunning where he was feted by the local school and he gave a talk about his journey. The local Council even presented him with a one pound note as it was his tenth birthday. Lennie rode back into Leongatha on 11 June 1932 where a crowd of 800 people gave him a hero's welcome and he was greeted by the Shire President, **Robert McIndoe** and given a civic reception. Later in the year he rode down to the Melbourne Show, leaving at 2am and arriving at the Showgrounds at 2pm where 'he rode round the arena, to the accompaniment of prolonged applause.'

Lennie Gwyther's story is the subject of a book by Stephanie Owen Reeder, *Lennie the Legend: Solo to Sydney by Pony* (National Library). It is also the subject of a graphic display at one of the Victoria's several Mechanics' Institute-based museums, Leongatha.

Website: leongathahistory.org.au

LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1911)

The Little River folk have been systematically, working their way through their recent \$10,000 Library grant, with some much needed insulation. The library is located on the north wall of the Hall and it used to get pretty hot in there with the afternoon sun shining directly on to the wall. There are also plans for some new lighting, some upgraded glass-fronted shelving and book purchases to reinforce the local history collection, including several titles which have mention of the local Wadawurrung Nation. The Little River Institute was the starting point for a self-drive or bus tour during Heritage Week which took in district landmarks that existed 'before 1850'. The tour commenced with a traditional 'Welcome to Country'.

mivic.org.au/little-river.html

MANSFIELD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)

Photo: Baragwanath/James
These Walls Speak Volumes

The most recent news on this building is that it is to be taken over/ handed over to the Mansfield Kindergarten Committee. One room will be used as their office, with the other being available for community use. The Kindergarten Committee is now in full fundraising mode and we wish them well.

MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM LIBRARY (Est. 1839)

The Athenaeum Library is exploiting its unique niche as a 'serious' library for discerning recreational readers. Its sponsorship, since 2012, of the 'Body in the Library' category of the **Scarlet Stiletto Awards** promoted by the Sisters in Crime is a case in point. The Athenaeum's most recent Scarlet Stiletto readings night on 27 April featured authors **Jane Clifton**, **Susanna Lobez**, **Leigh Redhead** and **Angela Savage** who regaled the audience with stories of past winners.

Film is also proving so popular at the Athenaeum that a second Screen Club is being

launched on 25 May at 6.30pm. Inquiries (03) 9650 3100.

Regular author talks continue, with the most recent being on **Elizabeth Macarthur**, a daughter of the vicarage, and later 'matriarch' of the Australian Merino sheep industry. Author **Michelle Scott Tucker** did the subject the credit that is long overdue. Saturday Board Games continue, as do regular music recitals, and there is even more. Indeed the Melbourne Athenaeum Library is a busy place, but for its members it still remains that quiet oasis in the middle of the bustling city. Membership is just the cost of three hardback books.

Website: melbourneathenaeum.org.au

NARRE WARREN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

The Narre Warren Mechanics' Institute team has again participated in Heritage Week, this time with an art exhibition '**Our Past Captured on Canvas**'. This featured part of City of Casey's *Through Art* series. Artworks explored Narre Warren and its surrounds from the 1800s up until the present time. The exhibition was held on Sunday, 29 April and during the opening period 10am-3pm it drew a steady number of viewers and favourable comment.

Website: narrewarrenmechanicshall.org

PORT ALBERT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1876)

Photo: Rob Dunlop

The Port Albert Institute is a busy place. They have just concluded their restoration project - both inside and out, with the last task being a replacement sign write. The Institute hosts the Port Albert Progress Association which has just reached a considerable milestone, the publication of issue No. 100 – February 2018 of their free local community newsletter *The Tattler*. 'Proudly supported by Wellington Shire Council' it is compiled and printed at the Institute. The

Institute also hosts the monthly Port Albert Market, held generally on the fourth Sunday.

PORT FRANKLIN (BOWEN) MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1895)



Photo: Rob Dunlop

The mention of 'Port Franklin Mechanics' Hall' five times in 1916 sparked interest in pursuing yet another elusive Mechanics' Institute.

After contacting local historian **Neil Everitt** the story was revealed as follows.

Port Franklin, near Corner Inlet, is located on the South Gippsland coast, at the mouth of the Franklin River. The area was first settled in the 1840s but later by Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Irish families, mostly engaged in fishing.

The first Bowen Hall was erected in 1896 on a Government Reserve, thirty feet from the edge of the Franklin River. The 30ft x 15ft hardwood timber structure, had a pine floor, iron roof and a tin chimney, lined with bricks. It was opened with a dance on 15 May 1896.

The Hall Committee ran foul of the Board of Health for not having toilets, and Hall Secretary **FC Cripps** advised that two 'closets' had been erected in 1897. Perhaps these were 'long drop', for Hall Secretary **JH Cripps** further advised that 'pans' had been placed in the 'w.closets' in March 1898.

In 1908 a Piano Fund Dance was held in the 'Bowen Hall'. **Harry Miles** and **W O'Brien** officiated alternately as MC. Dancing continued until 3am and 'Mr O'Brien, his wife, and friends [who] had walked out from Foster, had to return again the same way, but appeared to have enjoyed their [sic] selves thoroughly'. At the conclusion of the evening 'a nice little sum was left in aid of the piano fund'.

The Hall was also known by the Port Franklin Fishermen's Association as their 'clubrooms'. It was mentioned in 1911 as a Polling Venue.

In 1906 **Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Cripps** donated a more central site for a new 'Mechanics' Institute and Public Hall'. The trustees were: **Olaf**

Anderson; William Cripps; William Thomas Cripps; Frank Roberts; and Frederick Selberg.

Post-World War I the movement started to build a new Hall on the Cripps' site in Tramway Street. Tenders were called 'for the building of a Public Hall at Port Franklin. Labour and materials, or labour only.' Tenders closed with Hall Secretary **Edward F Avery** on 3 October 1923. **Gilbert Frederick Agg** was the successful bidder for the 25ft x 43ft structure, which had a stage and kitchen facilities.

In March 1924 it was reported that the new Hall was completed but 'Before handing the new building over the committee the contractor gave a 'christening' dance which was largely attended and a happy time was spent.'

Port Franklin State School No. 4280 was opened in the Hall as an 'adjunct' infant school teaching up to Grade 4, in 1927 under Miss **Angelina Canale** and **Mrs Gilsean** with thirty-one students in the first year.

In 1928 the Board of Health reported that the Hall kitchen area was unsuitable to accommodate fourteen double desks. The School eventually moved into a building brought from Wonyip in 1930.

A 1937 Gippsland Province polling booth listing gives it as 'Port Franklin, Mechanics' Institute'. Electricity was connected to the Hall in 1938 after it had been wired by **FP Joel** of Leongatha.

In 1958 a 'severe windstorm' moved the Hall on its foundations. A Government grant and local fundraising enabled the Hall to be ready for the New Year's Eve Ball in 1960.

Badminton was played in the Hall from the 1960s and it was used by the Tennis Club located across the road.

The Hall has a stage backdrop of a fishing village scene. It also holds an Honor Roll and a Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II over proscenium.

Adjoining the Hall is the **Elizabeth Cripps Memorial Reserve** with a barbecue shelter, playground and lawn.

The roof was replaced in April 2010 at a cost of \$25,000 funded by Government and Council grants.

Neil Everitt's history *They Fished in Wooden Boats: A History of Port Franklin District and the Fishing Families* was launched in March 2011.

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

Prahran Mechanics' was certainly 'out there' during the National Trust's Heritage Week with

several activities. These kicked off on Saturday 21 April with **Dr James Donaldson** 'Sheds, Shears and Strikes: The Golden Age of Wool 1860-1890', which charted the transition of blade shearing to the use of the new technology of machines and the handpiece and comb and cutter mechanisms, and Union resistance. On Sunday 22 April, City of Stonnington Mayor and PMI President **Steve Stefanopoulos** then took an appreciative 'following' on his now well-honed wander down Chapel Street, looking at past and present Department Stores. Royal Botanic Gardens of Victoria Director, Professor **Tim Entwisle** followed 28 April with 'Shared Dreams and Destinies: The Botanic Gardens of Melbourne and Sydney', and told how Australia holds two notable gardens of world ranking with a history and legacy which was shared with and influenced many notable regional community gardens. The extraordinary and indeed unique Prahran Mechanics' Institute told its own story as the second oldest continuous library in Victoria having been established in 1854 on Wednesday 2 May with 'The Hardy Survivor: Stories of the PMI' at a late morning lecture show and tell. A 'Slide Night: Old Melbourne', on the evening of 7 May showcased slides from a number of a sources. Dr **Judith Buckrich** concluded the series with 'Acland Street: The Grand Old Lady of St Kilda' on 12 May.

Website: pmi.net.au

RUSHWORTH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1861)

Rushworth really comes to life each year with the annual **Easter Festival**, which this year was on 31 March. It is also a busy time for the Institute-based **Rushworth Museum** for that is when they stoke up 'The Wizard', their 1912 John Fowler Leeds-built Steam Traction Engine, in readiness for its 'sprint' up and down High Street, which in top gear is around 4mph. The Rushworth Museum also turns out their circa 1928 Massey Harris Tractor for the big day. Conducted by the Rushworth & District Historical Society the Rushworth Museum is well worth a visit. The Museum is open: Saturdays 10-Noon; and Sundays 11am-3pm or by appointment.

Website: rushworthmuseum.wordpress.com

SORRENTO MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1877)



The Nepean Historical Society conducts one of Victoria's best regional accredited museums in the historic Mechanics' Institute building. **The Friends of the Sorrento Museum**, with the slogan 'History is our story' actively supports fundraising and staffing of the Museum. It's Mornington Peninsula base provides much history from Victoria's first brief settlement in 1803 through to the evolving Point Nepean landscape. It's latest exhibition 'Nepean – Point of All Nations' shares the stories of the multi-cultural influences on the southern Mornington Peninsula down through the years. This runs until 20 May. The Museum opens on the weekends from 1.30pm or for groups by appointment. Website: nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au

STANLEY ATHENAEUM & PUBLIC ROOM (Est. 1863)

Women of the 19th Century: Hearts of Gold & Minds of Mettle - Mary Rawes to Mariette Craig'. February 2018 - February 2019



The Malsem Family visiting the exhibition that features their ancestor Christina Von Malsem.

Photo: Stanley Athenaeum

The Stanley Athenaeum's new exhibition '**Hearts of Gold & Minds of Mettle - Mary Rawes to Mariette Craig**' has recently opened. It presents the little known stories of Stanley's C19th women, their diverse skills and occupations - in horticulture, gold mining and retail. These

resilient women include a group who signed the 1891 Monster Petition for women's suffrage.

The exhibition is the culmination of a year of research by the Friends group. **Helen McIntyre** and **Valerie Privett**, the main researchers, have been supported by the professional skills of guest curator **Ali Rowe** in bringing this exhibition to fruition.

Beechworth based historian **Jacqui Durrant** spoke about 'Finding the Spaces In Between in History' when she launched the exhibition on Saturday 10 March at the Stanley Memorial Hall, 110 people from near and far attended. The Stanley Hall looked 'absolutely fabulous' in suffragette colours and the afternoon tea brought by everyone was delicious.

A ground breaking expose of the lives of C19th women on the Ovens Goldfield, the production and presentation of this project has been partly funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. There have been many visitors since the opening. The exhibition runs until February 2019.

The Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria - Funding Allocations 2017-18

Some key projects have been undertaken at the Stanley Athenaeum as a result of Local Library Funding from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Most welcome, the funding has enabled phone and internet connection, a 'state of the art' security system, new environmental monitoring equipment and funds to reproduce Geoff Craig's *History of Stanley*.

"Stanley Times and Mining Journal" - Geoff Craig - New Edition

Originally published in 1983 this is the most comprehensive history of Stanley available and has been a long time out of print. It chronicles Stanley's beginnings as a goldmining town, set in a beautiful high altitude environment with a unique history that was changed forever by mining, logging and later intensive agriculture. This new edition will be launched in July. It has a larger format, all the original photographs are digitally reproduced and is indexed for easier access.

Copies will be available from July. For further details contact E: stanleyathenaeum@gmail.com

Visit the Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room, Main Street, Stanley.

Open every Friday & 4th Saturday of each month 10am to 12.30pm (*other times by appointment*).

Like us on Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/Stanley-Athenaeum-1192094190800862/?fref=ts>

mivic.org.au/stanley.html

<http://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/stanley-athenaeum>

WANDONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1902)



Wandong's new storage shed to the left of the Hall

MIV Plaque No. 60 has been supplied to the Institute in conjunction with the town's Anzac Day celebrations and the **Wandong History Group's Walk Through the Wars** exhibition held at the Hall. Approximately 500 people went through the exhibition throughout the weekend, and many locals were 'rediscovering' their town's Mechanics' Institute.

At long last the go ahead for the construction of a store shed has finally seen it erected.

WILLIAMSTOWN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1856)

We have heard that the Williamstown Historical Society have packed up their collection and have moved out of the Williamstown Mechanics' Institute. Their last 'hurrah' was an Antiques and Collection Sale on 28 April. This is all in readiness for the underpinning and makeover of the iconic Institute building, a project which is expected to take up to two years. The Society has been a tenant of the Institute since the mid-1950s and had assembled a very significant museum collection there with largely a maritime theme. In the meantime the Society is operating an office from the old West Newport Kindergarten in Laurie Street.

Website: williamstownhistsoc.org.au

The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

QUEANBEYAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1858)



Photo: www.theq.net.au

After two false starts, firstly in 1858 and then again in 1866, and even after a land grant in 1886, when a Committee was elected, things moved slowly. In 1891, a brick building was secured for Institute purposes and 'the inaugural meeting of the Queanbeyan School of Arts was held on Monday [13 July 1891] in the premises which had been secured [at a rent of five shillings a week] for the purposes of the institute in Manaro-street [sic], his Worship the Mayor (Alderman Lazarus) presiding.' Rules were discussed and the Mayor offered the gratis use of the Temperance Hall for lectures and meetings. Trustees were appointed and a Committee was elected with NM Lazarus as President. It was noted that 'upwards of forty members had joined'. They also took possession of the bank account from a previous Institute containing between £8 and £9.

Debating and theatrical activities became associated with the Institute and in 1894 the Institute purchased the brick Evans' building, also in Monaro Street, and it moved there. By 1926 the Institute had sufficient funds to commission architects **Mitchell** and [**James Wallace 'Wal' Sproule** (1890-1970) to design a new building which was erected in Crawford Street by **SJ Taylor**.

Council acquired the building in 1947 and it was used as the community library until 1975 and since then has been used by the Queanbeyan City Council.

The cultural successor to Queanbeyan's Mechanics' Institute/School of Arts is the

Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre, universally known as **The Q**. They are celebrating their tenth anniversary this year and have produced a superb Season 2018 program folder, which has it all. The Q also has an exhibition space for travelling exhibitions. Not surprisingly one of the early shows for the year was a 'Thank Q for the Memories' and 'So let the foyer bells ring as we roll into our tenth anniversary year – Let's Celebrate'. Indeed 'The Q is a quality venue with an intimate atmosphere unique to our region. A fantastic place to entertain and be entertained.' Website: theq.net.au

SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1833)

Celebrating our 185th Anniversary



Photo: Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

This week, the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts celebrated the 185th Anniversary of its founding in 1833 with two special events.

On Wednesday, 21 March, members braved extreme weather warnings to participate in a bus trip to Seaham in the Hunter Region honouring the **Reverend Dr. Henry Carmichael**, one of our leading founders and a man of many skills, talents and vision. A Scottish Presbyterian minister, Henry Carmichael was at the forefront of adult education in the colony, a pioneering landholder in Seaham, a national and internationally acclaimed wine-maker and an early advocate of the industry in the colony.

Two plaques were unveiled, one at Seaham Cemetery to mark the restoration of the Carmichael-Ralston family grave site, and one at the **Seaham School of Arts** to commemorate Henry's role in the SMSA's founding and his

contribution to the local region. Henry has no surviving direct descendants, however we were delighted to be joined for the occasion by Mr **Toby Ralston** and his family who are descended from Henry's wife, **Nancy Ralston**.

On Thursday, 22 March, the actual anniversary of our founding, members and distinguished guests returned temporarily to the SMSA's original building, now the **Arthouse Hotel**, for a celebration dinner in what was once our Reading Room, with its magnificent dome. **Winsome Allen**, President of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, and **Robert Kingston**, President of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, spoke about the School's history and significance.

QUEENSLAND

DALBY SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1864)



Photo: environment.ehp.qld.gov.au

Dalby, in the Darling Downs, is about 280km, north-west of Brisbane. The district was first settled in the 1840s by Henry Dennis and was originally known as The Crossing [over the Myall Creek].

The town was surveyed in 1853 and was proclaimed a municipality in 1863. It was connected by the Western Railway to Ipswich in 1868. The Dalby region has a diverse economy of cropping, grazing, manufacturing and coal mining.

The **Rev. Edmund George Moberly** (1834-1921), Anglican, chaired a meeting in Union Hall on 12 April 1864. Other speakers included: **Rev. Joseph Coles Kirby** (1837-1924), Congregational and **Rev. Fr William Bowe** (1835?-64), Catholic. The meeting passed a resolution 'That such an institution as a School of Arts was required by the people of Dalby'. A subsequent meeting was held in May 1864 to elect officebearers.

Two buildings were offered: **Charles Douglas Eastaughffe**'s (1804-85) 'Union Hall with all its forms' and Alderman **Alfred Peter Gayler**'s (1823-69) 'bare hall which he just erected'. The

latter was accepted for an annual rental of £115. The Institute was officially opened on 1 July 1864 and the Hall was decorated with flags, banners, flowers and evergreens. The platform was occupied by: President, **Joshua Peter Bell**, MLA (1826-81); Vice-President **Frederick William Roche**, JP; and Treasurer, Alderman **Richard Sexton**. In his opening address the President 'hoped the committee would avoid making it [the Institute] an arena for political matters'.

A report was read by one of the Honorary Secretaries. 'At the suggestion of one or two gentlemen, the clergy of the town called a public meeting to consider the advisability of establishing a School of Arts.' A Committee was formed on 12 April and ninety-four people gave their names and guaranteed an annual income of £142.10s. A Government grant was later promised. Messrs **John Sidney**, **William Kent jnr**, **Rev. Mr Moberly** and **Alfred Trundle** donated some books and **John Sidney** purchased some books whilst in Sydney. Regional newspapers gave their papers gratis, and subscriptions were taken out to other periodicals.

Then followed entertainment by the Dalby choir and others. The Revs Moberly and Kirby spoke. 'After a vote of thanks to the choir and the decorators the greatest and most interesting meeting ever held in Dalby came to a close by the whole assembly singing the National Anthem.'

In December 1864 **JP Bell** MLA of Jimbour donated 'one hundred and fifty volumes of books of a valuable description' to the library.

At the Annual Meeting in July 1865 it was advised that the Government 'were about to grant a piece of land for the building site.' The Council was a tenant in the Hall as was the Church of England. Mention was made of 'that great acquisition - a large and well-equipped library' and £48.18s.6d had been spent on books, with £28 being sent to Messrs Mudie in London.

Local MP **Charles Coxen** secured a £300 grant for the Institute on the understanding that it would be matched by a like local contribution in August 1865.

The 'Annual Commemoration' was held on 24 July 1867 in the 'large hall of the new building' and 'the room was crowded with all classes of our townspeople'. This new building appears to have been on the corner of Cunningham and Stuart Streets, Dalby. In 1869 **WM Groom** MLA delivered a lecture 'Richard Cobden and his Influence on the British nation.'

Their building burned down on 8 May 1899 between 2am and 3am and it was insured for

£350, £250 with the Manchester Company and £100 with the National. The piano and library were not insured. The Municipal Council decided to erect their own Hall, independently.

In July 1899 **JT Bell** MLA advised that £500 had been put on estimates towards a new building. Architect **William Hodgen** (1866-1943) was engaged to design the new 'Dalby School of Arts and Technical College'.

Tenders were called and **WS Smith** was the successful tenderer in May 1900. Smith refused to sign the contract stating he had made an error in his calculations and the price should have been £1147 instead of £1047 and the contract then went to **G Garner** the second lowest tender at £1186.

The two-storey wooden building was constructed on the corner of Cunningham and Stuart Streets, Dalby. It was opened on 8 November 1900 with a Plain and Fancy Dress Ball at which 200 were present. The library and technical college rooms were located on the first floor. Mr Bell MLA could not be present and Mrs Bell subsequently opened the building on the following day in connection with a fundraising bazaar.

The Institute building was passed to Council as trustees around the 1920s.

Fire again destroyed the School of Arts in the early hours of 22 August 1930. The building was insured for £1500 with the State Government Insurance Office and contents for £830. **Kenneth Fisher** was Secretary and Caretaker at the time and in November 1930 reported that membership stood at 109 and donated bookstock from various Institute libraries was 1160.

It was agreed to contribute the insurance received and pass full control of the Institute site to Council and then build on the Institute's site.

The new building, designed by **TR [Thomas Ramsay] Hall** (1879-1950) and **Phillips** of Brisbane, was built by **Hill & Brown** of Brisbane at a cost of £5180 and was opened on 13 February 1932 by Premier **AE Moore**. Later that month Secretary **Fisher** was able to report 1540 books, with the purchase of 260 new books.

Extensions were made to the Institute in 1935 and opened on 16 November 1935 by Premier **Ned Hanlon**.

The Library was transferred to the Drayton Street site prior to 1941. **JS Patterson** joined the Library in 1940 as Librarian and in 1954, he reported 131 library members and 252 recreation members, who used the billiard tables.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TAPLAN INSTITUTE (Est. 1915)



Photo: Panoramio/User: ilmar v

Located in the Murray Mallee district, the Adelaide railway line was constructed through the area in 1913 and the town was laid out by **Henry George** in 1914. The Taplan Post Office opened on 1 July 1914.

In June 1915 a meeting was held in **Mr Kause's** (sic) store to discuss the building of a hall. 'In fact, members were so keen that they viewed the site by lantern light in order to communicate with the owners by Saturday's mail'. It was hoped it would also serve as a School and Church.

In July 1915 a meeting was advised that **Mr Clarke's** offer of an acre of ground for a Hall site was accepted and a schedule of work to be done gratuitously by members was to be drawn up and approved. Another site was offered by **Kelly**.

The Clarkeites and Kellyites had trouble determining on either of two sites and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, **Clarence Goode**, came to Taplan in February 1916 to decide on a Hall site between the Kelly and Clarke offers. He recommended the Kelly offer and a 30ft x 17ft structure was subsequently built. It was listed as a Polling Booth in 1917.

In 1922 a larger Hall was planned, designed by **Philip Rupert Claridge** (1884-1968), it was to be a 60ft x 35ft, which was to have the 'old building attached'. The foundation stone for new hall was laid by **FM McMillan** MP on 28 July 1923 on a site that had been 'presented to the Taplan township by **HG Kelly** in 1915'. Mr McMillan recalled how early Committee meetings were held in the shade of a mallee tree or at night when the campfire provided light for the secretary to record the minutes. The sum of £52 was laid on the foundation stone. Afternoon tea was served in the old Taplan Hall.

Erected by a local contractor **SJ Kennett**, using local labour, the stone Institute cost £1180. Gloria lighting had been installed and the stage

was fitted with a drop curtain. The Ladies Committee was given great credit. The new Hall was formally opened on 5 February 1924 by **M McIntosh** MP, with a sports meeting in the afternoon, High Tea was served in the Hall at 5pm and a concert was held in the evening.

It had a long-running Library and it was noted that **PB Barton** was Librarian in 1935. A Victory Ball was held at the Institute on 28 August 1945, with a 'Good floor, music and supper.' The Hall was the site of a long-running annual Strawberry Festival.

The Institute was sold into private ownership about 2000 and is still standing in 2018.

TASMANIA

WOODBIDGE HALL (Est. 1890)



Photo: aussietowns.com.au

Located 40km south Hobart on the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, the district was first settled in the early 1800s by sealers, whalers and timber cutters. As Oyster Cove it was the last Tasmanian Aboriginal Settlement established in 1847. The area was known as Peppermint Bay after the establishment of the Post Office in 1854. It was renamed Woodbridge in 1881 after a notable property owned by **George Miles** who was a native of Woodbridge, England.

The Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre which is a major educational facility is a notable area attraction.

A 'Grand fancy fair' was held on 5 March 1890 'in aid of the Institute' under the patronage of His Excellency the Governor **Sir Robert** and **Lady Caroline Hamilton** and the Mayor of Hobart.

The 'institute' was built early in 1890 with 'plenty of room on the stage, and the rear of the structure is to be used for library and dressing rooms'. It was built at a cost of £450. 'Mrs **RD Poulett-Harris** has been the prime mover, and she has been ably supported by Mesdames **Oldham** and **Musk**, to whom all credit is due.'

On 12 September 1891 'a public library with a free reading room was opened at the Woodbridge Hall'.

Annual Fruit and Flower Shows were the major fundraisers staged for the Hall, supplemented by an occasional bazaar. It was announced at the Bazaar in May 1899 that the Hall was now debt free and **Mr Lea**, the Government Entomologist gave a lecture on 'Fruit Pests' and later fielded questions. [**Arthur Mills Lea** (1868-1932) was Government Entomologist 1899-1912.]

In January 1901, the Duke of York's birthday was celebrated with a market in the day and a concert and dance in the evening.

The Annual Meeting of the Woodbridge Hall and Library Committee was held in January 1929 at which **JT Warring** was elected as President for the fifteenth consecutive year.

In 1938 'owing to poor support' it was resolved 'to close the library and offer the books for sale'. The exterior of the Hall was painted in 1942.

Hall uses have included: Agricultural Bureau; Draughts Club; Football Club; Regatta Association; Rowing Club, etc.

The Hall hosts a regular market staged on the second Saturday of each month.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

TAMMIN AGRICULTURAL HALL (Est. 1911)



Photo: Wikipedia/ User: Bahnfreund

Located 180km east of Perth, the area was first settled in 1893 by **John Packham** and **William Donnan**. The Southern Cross Railway was constructed through the area in 1894-95 and the town was gazetted in 1899. The Coolgardie water pipeline of 1902 secured the viable future of the township.

Two grain elevators were erected at the Railway Siding in 1932 and the first concrete silos in Western Australia were constructed there in 1960. The local community has purchased the hotel and garage in recent times.

The move to build a community hall commenced in 1903 and in 1908 the Tammin Progress Association started collecting funds.

The 50ft x 40ft and 22ft high brick and stone hall was built in 1911 at a cost of around £850. The interior ceiling was of varnished jarrah. It was designed by **Charles Henry Whiteford** (1865-1933) of Northam and built by Messrs **Edmondson** Bros of Northam.

A memorial plaque was laid and the Hall was opened by the Minister for Lands, **James Mitchell** on 16 June 1911. It was suggested that the Committee take 'advantage of the travelling library system in connection the Victoria Public Library in Perth.'

It was proposed to erect two rooms and a large entrance hall at the front, and a supper room and dressing room at the back. Additions were made to the Hall in 1921. The Hall had long-term Church use until the 1930s when the Church of England was built

A biobox was installed in 1930 and the Hall became an active cinema. Further extensions, front rooms for a library, meeting room and cloak rooms and supper room, were designed by **George Herbert Parry** (1882-1951) of Parry and **Rosenthal** and built by **Braidwoods** in 1940. Ballroom dancing then became a feature use.

In 1953 the Hall was damaged in a severe storm and in 1955 it was renovated extensively. A further room was added to the front of the Hall in 1968 and the Hall is still in use.

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND

LONGWOOD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1858)

This town-based Hall, near Huddersfield in Yorkshire, England, has phoenix-like again become the community focus, thanks to **Derek Fairbank** and his team. Regular events are now held there and a prioritised program of works continues as funding becomes available.



*Creative marketing:
Longwood Mechanics'
Institute coaster*

This year celebrates the 160th year of the building of the Institute and the Longwood Community Group have recently issued a colorful coaster as a lead up to the publication of the Institute's landmark history.

The Longwood folk are also in the process of restoring their World War I Honour Board in time for an Armistice unveiling in November.

They have enlisted the help of the memorable picture of Kitchener 'We need you!' to achieve their £1000 restoration fund target.

SCOTLAND

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY (Est. 1821)



The flagship of the Mechanics' Institute Movement, formerly the Edinburgh School of Arts, has been named *The Times* International University of the Year for 2018. Selected for 'its truly global presence and impact: the University has five global campuses in the UK, Dubai and Malaysia, partners in 150 countries and over 30,000 students worldwide.'

Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Williams OBE responded to the announcement. 'It is an honour and a great accolade to our staff and students that we have been named as *Times* and *Sunday Times* inaugural **International University of the Year**. Heriot-Watt University is like no other stretching back to our origins in 1821 we have always been pioneers in education. This award recognises our heritage and rich culture as being the most successful University, global University in the world with students from over 123 countries and staff from over 85 countries, we are truly global. The University has been recognised because of its amazing international presence, its quality and its impact.

Just a few years ago we were a University with branch campuses and the pioneering Edinburgh University Business School, but today we are operating as an integrated University, an integrated global University with 30,000 students connecting into five main locations in Scotland, Dubai and in Malaysia.

We have established a unique international genre for a research led integrated university. We offer our staff and students opportunities for extreme mobility in which they can teach research across our international locations sharing culture and developing connections across our locations with communities and businesses all over the world. We are truly like no other, truly global.

Congratulations to all at Heriot-Watt.

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

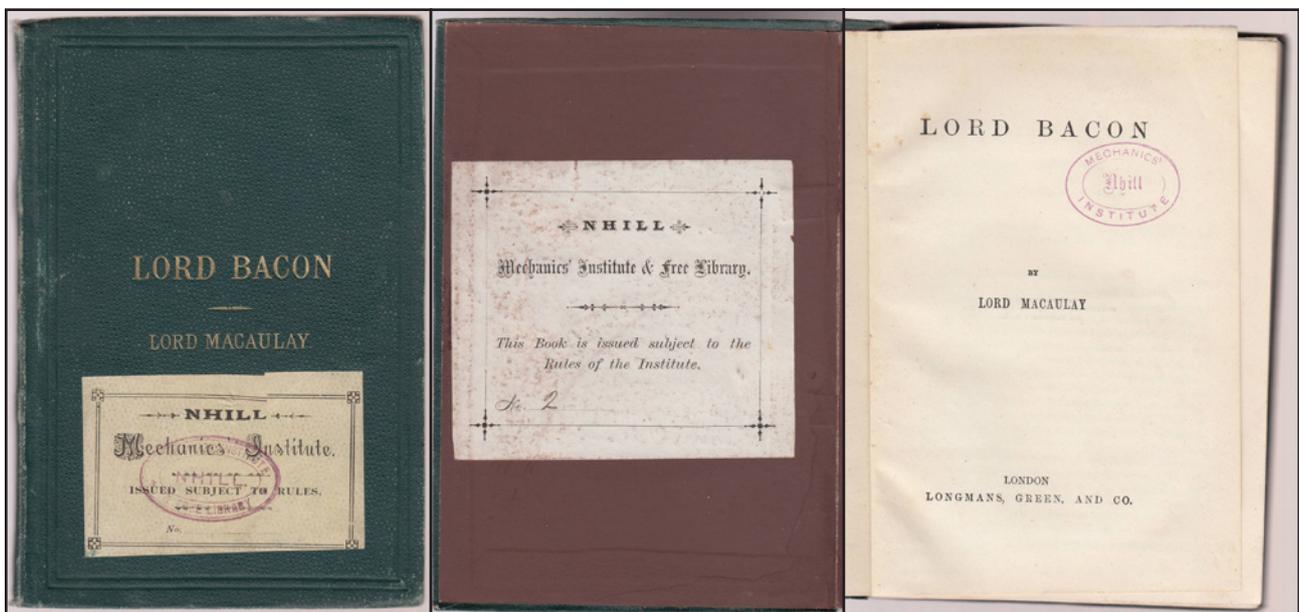
The Mechanics' Institutes are known universally for their libraries, which were in most cases the first in the many communities in which they were established. Whilst many books were taken to the local tip or sold, even the blandest title can tell us much about the Institute and the conduct of its library.

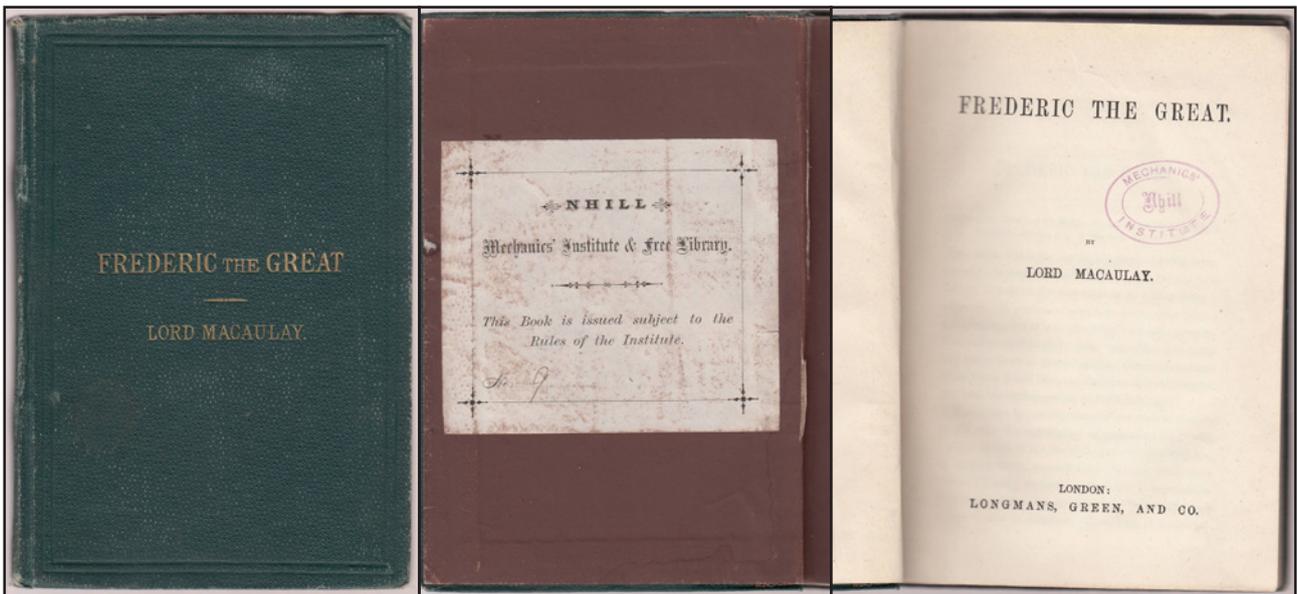
We recently sighted three books with identical bindings that were ex-libris **Nhill Mechanics' Institute & Free Library**, which was spawned from a meeting of the Nhill Progress Association in 1880. The Government granted a site and the Hall was built and opened on 1882. It purchased 625 books in its first year of opening and by 1893 its holdings numbered 1361 books. The building was 'severely damaged' by fire in February 1908 and reopened in August 1908 as the Lowan Hall. It was sold to the Methodist Church in 1920 and renamed the Wesleyan Hall. Today the building is used for a Men's Shed. When the library ceased or was dispersed is at present unknown. The titles below most certainly survived the fire of 1908.

Now back to the books. They are all published in London by 'Longmans, Green & Co.', and whilst they carry no publishing date it is probable they were issued after 1873, for that is from about when the publishing imprint was first used. They were all printed by Spottiswoode & Co., New Street Square and Parliament Street, London, on tightly printed pages in a 9 point Roman typeface. All books have the dimensions of 120x180mm in size, are bound in olive green cloth, and have a blank spine. However the cover has a blind stamped border, with gold stamped title in capitals above the author's name 'Lord Macaulay'. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59) was the son of Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838),

anti-slavery crusader, founder of the Society for the Suppression of Vice and co-founder of London University. Thomas Babington was an historian and Whig politician, both fields in which he excelled. He was also an essayist and reviewer and the three books are in fact reviews of much larger works. In order of numbered accession they are:

No. 2. Lord Bacon [1561-1626]. It reviews *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England: A new Edition* by 'Basil Montagu Esq [1770-1841].' It was published in sixteen volumes in London between 1825-1834. The review comprises 140 pages. On the front is pasted a white 850x550mm, black printed bordered label which carries the wording 'Nhill/ Mechanics' Institute. / Issued subject to rules./ No....' Overstamped in purple is a 400mm oval seal stamp which carries the wording 'Mechanics' Institute' around the top and '& Free Library' at the bottom. 'Nhill' appears in the centre in large block Roman capital letters. On the front pastedown is 900x1000mm white label, printed in black with a border enclosing the wording 'Nhill/ Mechanics' Institute & Free Library./ This book is issued subject to the/ Rules of the Institute/ No.' with '2' handwritten in black ink. There is a different 350mm oval stamp, than that used on the cover, which carries the wording 'Mechanics' at the head and 'Institute' at the foot with 'Nhill' in an Old English typeface in capital





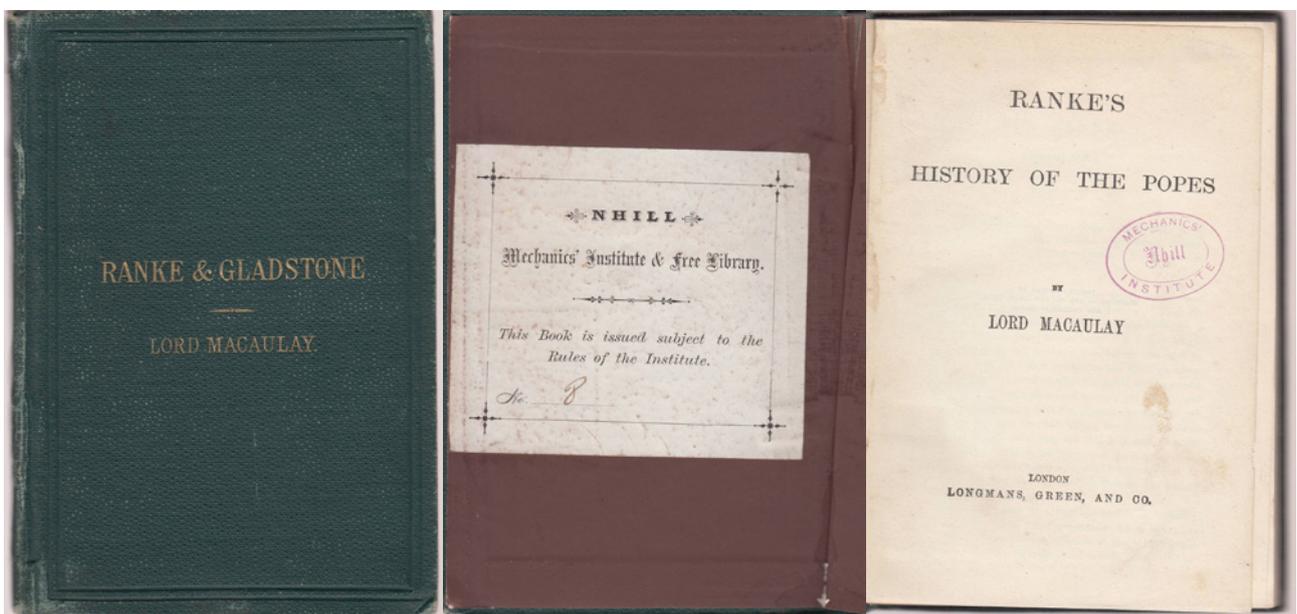
and lowercase, which is stamped occasionally through the book. This stamp is also used in the other volumes.

No. 8. Ranke & Gladstone, is in fact two works. The first, reviews *The Ecclesiastical and Political History of the Popes of Rome, during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* by 'Leopold Ranke [1795-1886], Professor of the University of Berlin, and translated by Sarah Austin [1793-1867]'. It was three volumes, and was published in London in 1840. The review comprises 47 pages. The second, is *The State in its Relations with the Church* by 'WE Gladstone Esq [1809-98], Student of Christ Church [Oxford University], and MP for Newark'. It was in its second edition, and was published in London in 1839. The review comprises 70 pages. It has the Library bookplate on the front pastedown and occasional library stampings throughout.

No. 9. Frederic The Great [1712-86]. This reviews *Frederic the Great and His Times* by 'Thomas Campbell Esq [1777-1844]'. It was in two volumes and was published in London in 1842. The review comprises 129 pages. It has the bookplate on the front pastedown and occasional library stampings throughout.



Photo: anothergirlmeetsbike.blogspot.com

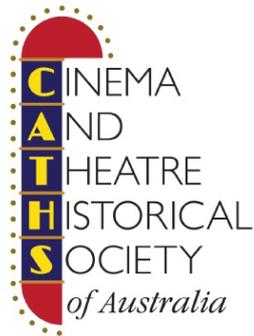


The History Page

CATHS ARCHIVE NOW ONLINE

Those with a keen interest in Cinema and Theatre now have online access to the **Cinema and Theatre Historical Society's** Theatre database for Australia and New Zealand. CATHS also has available for inspection by appointment a large range of files on individual sites.

caths.org.au



STIMULATING THE RESEARCH OF INSTITUTES

Whilst a part of the Mechanics' Institute story has been told there is still much more to be done with limited resources. There is a need to enlist the help of the wider community in our research.

Past work that is worthy of ongoing emulation is the **Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's Matthew Flinders Measured Drawing Competition** which had architecture students produce plans for existing historic structures. This was conducted from the late 1970s through into the early 1990s. This project captured diverse subjects across Victoria from bridges, bandstands, houses, factories, churches, lighthouses, public buildings, cemeteries, etc. State Library Victoria has digitised 264 of these on their website and the **Healesville Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** is one drawn by **Michael Williams** and **David Mulhall**.

Plans such as these are good to have for grant applications, restorations, or in the event of a possible building replacement. In some cases these may have even been included with an application to the Board of Health or Health Department in connection with building of an Institute. They also could be in Council records.

Another good opportunity is to engage local schools to write a history of your Institute either as an individual student project or as a class. One remarkable example we have seen was *The Community Comes Together: A History of the Grantville Public Hall*, published by Newhaven College in 1993. This was undertaken as part of history coursework by **Minori Tani**, a **Youth for Understanding** exchange student from Mito First High School, Japan during her year at Newhaven College on Phillip Island in Year 11.

It contains plans, photos, newspaper extracts, the results of interviews, etc. (The Grantville Institute was built in 1888 and replaced with a new hall on a different location in 1991.)

SOUTH-HEM - AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA AND THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

Based on University College Dublin the **SouthHem Project** commenced in late 2016, this project is already achieving very impressive results which are regularly updated on their dedicated website. Their first two day Conference staged in late 2017 'Cultural Geographies of the Colonial Southern Hemisphere' drew an impressive range of papers on Southern Hemisphere cultural development and influences.

The outcome of the two-day 'Digital Cultures, Big Data and Society' conference held at the University over 15-16 February 2108 drew on the results of a working party on 'Industrial Memories' and their methodology in digitising, the use of word embedding and frequency analysis techniques in the 'mapping' and indexing of the 2009 Ryan Report. This emanated from the 2000 Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse.

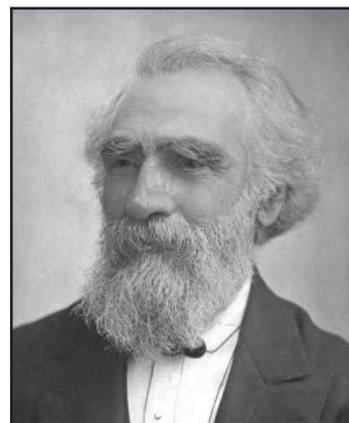
This template can be applied to other fields and subjects and the Paper abstracts look at case studies and opportunities.

SouthHem have already copied some five hundred surviving Australian auction, bookseller and library catalogues and is presently compiling glosses of these.

Website: Southhem.org

CORNWALL - UK

Two recent Papers delivered to the Cornish Association of Victoria in February 2018 provide valuable groundwork to further research in that



very fertile region. The first was 'John Passmore Edwards and His Institutes', with details of the libraries built by philanthropist **John Passmore Edwards** (left) for various Cornish communities. The second was 'Some

Early Libraries and Mechanics' Institutes of Cornwall',

Copies of the two Papers, with associated research notes, and a pioneering 'List of Libraries, Endowments, Etc. [of Cornwall]' have recently been lodged with the MIRC. The material has also been sent to the Royal Institute of Cornwall's Courtney Library in Truro and the Cornwall Record Office. Access to the latter site will be available at the new **Kresen Kernow Record Centre** when it opens in Redruth in 2019.

ENGLAND'S INSTITUTES



We welcome the latest volume of **Historic England's** Introduction to Heritage Assets series *Mechanics' Institutes*, published in December 2017. Historic England has seventy-six Institute

buildings on its register. It now only lists the Swindon Institute as being endangered, having recently removed the Bridport Literary and Scientific Institution from that list, when fully refurbished it again opened to the public in February this year.

VICTORIAN BALLARAT GOLDFIELDS' LIBRARY

The **Art Gallery of Ballarat** recently staged an exhibition of **Eugene von Guerard** (1811-1901) paintings and items from his sketchbooks. One gem is 'Golden Point Ballarat, and Flat, with part of Black Hill', although painted in 1874, it is based on a drawing of July 1853. The numbered key at the foot of the drawing gives tent 'number 4' as a 'lending library'. Evidence of this library is in the *Argus* of 6 April 1853 under the heading 'Aspects of the Diggings' which in part states: 'A large circulating library has been established at Golden Point for the use of the diggers, consisting of about seven hundred volumes, the works of our best authors.'

In Memoriam

HENRY, LORD BROUGHAM & VAUX

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

At 5pm on 7 May 2018 Mayor **David Lisnard**, and the leading citizens of Cannes, France assembled at the gravesite of Henry, Lord Brougham & Vaux in Cannes's Cimetière du Grand Jas. There they laid a wreath to the memory of 'La Pere de Cannes', Henry Brougham. Mairie Lisnard's monthly *Cannes Soleil*, for April 2018, carries a montage of portraits of Henry Brougham and 'L'hommage de Cannes'. The front cover story continues to the inside with a program of events that will take place in 2018 to honour their founder, Henry Brougham.

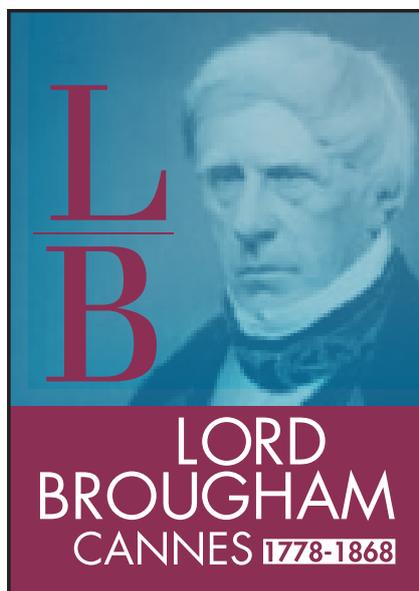
Brougham, by virtue of his publication *Practical Education upon the Education of the People* (1825) drove the Mechanics' Institute message around the world, with translations also in French and German. He also lectured widely in Institutes promoting their cause. In addition he also did much to found London University and

from its opening in 1828 until his death in 1868 was its chair. Brougham also drove the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge from its establishment in 1826 to its winding up in 1848. SDUK publications, including their authoritative map series, went into many libraries around the world. Stories exist of SDUK's *Penny Cyclopaedia* being syndicated in workplaces by more than twenty members who diligently waited for their turn to read the journals.

However Brougham's legacy goes much wider to the promotion of the causes of: universal education; anti-slavery; parliamentary and law reform; women's rights; and as a key player in the passing of the 1832 *Reform Act*.

A larger than life statue was erected in the centre of Cannes at the centenary of his birth in 1878 when a program of events was then staged. The statue was replaced in 1953 after being damaged in World War II.

The Cannes Council have even come up with a poster to celebrate the forthcoming year of activities.



Where They Stood

FUMINA (DUGGAN) MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (EST. 1912)

The Fumina district is located 20km east of Noogee and 45km north-west of Moe in Gippsland. There appears to have been two Fumina Halls, referred to variously as Fumina (Fumina North) and Fumina South. The Fumina Institute site is located in Duggan Road North, Fumina.

The Fumina Mechanics' Hall was built in 1913 and in February 1914 the Committee sought Council's permission to use the hall until 'it is examined and [a] permit granted'. The grant of a permit dragged on beyond June 1914 with 'matters still requiring attention'.

A tennis court was built on the Hall site in 1921 and the Hall was extended by 16ft in 1921-22.

Duggan East (Fumina) State School No. 3793 had opened in a private house in 1913, moved to another private house in 1914 where it remained until 1921 when it closed. The School reopened in the Hall in 1924 and remained there until the Hall burnt down on 16 February 1926 during the bushfires. The teacher had lived in the rear 'ante-rooms'.

The School then operated for a short time from Mrs Rosa Turner's house until June 1926 when the State Bush Fires Relief Committee had a provided a 24ft x 12ft marquee with flooring to serve as a school and hall, until the new Hall was built. There is a graphic description of enduring heavy rains and snow falls whilst the marquee was in use.

Contractor **Henry Sykes** of East Malvern had the task of building the new Hall at a cost of around £450 and it was not 'finished' until February 1927. The new Hall, by March 1927, still 'required alterations.' The School then moved back into the Hall where it was closed from 1941-43, reopened again and closed for the final time in 1960.



Photo: Rob Dunlop



The Polling Booth at 'Duggan (New Public Hall) was advertised in October 1928.

The Hall was again destroyed by bushfire on 13 January 1939 and was rebuilt later that year.

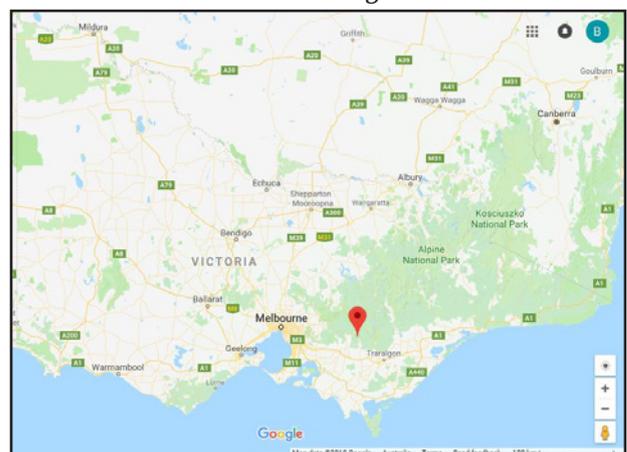
A Porch was added in 1945, and a shelter shed and basketball and tennis courts followed later.

The Hall was deregistered in 1963 and it was derelict in early 1990s with creepers growing through the building.

However by February 2018 the building had been cleared from the site, but the chimney remained as did the entrance gates. A picnic table and seat had been installed and a shelter appeared to be in the process of building.

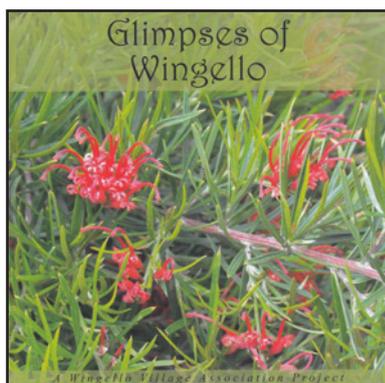


Photo: Pam Baragwanath



Source: Google Maps

Book Reviews



Glimpses of Wingello – Carole Olde, Colin Reed et al. Paperback, perfectbound. 184 pages, illustrated with b&w and colour plates, plans. 210 x 210 mm. 9780646982717.

Two years ago the Wingello community decided to celebrate the centenary of the opening of their Mechanics' Institute on 26 January 1918. As part of the Back to Wingello project the Village Association decided to produce a community history and this is the surprising result. Encompassing the district's geology, flora and fauna, it looks at the habitation of the Gundungurra and D'harawal Nations, for Wingello is on the border of their lands.

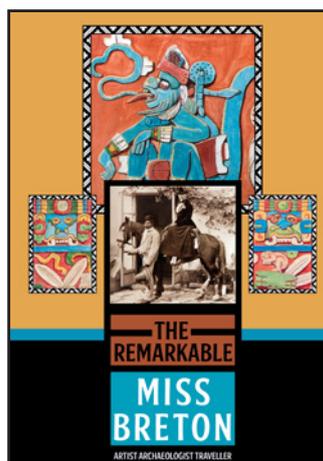
Exploration in 1818 and settlement in the 1830s resulted in the creation of a regional town. The railway arrived in 1868 and this saw the development of local industries, sheep and cattle grazing, quarrying, sawmilling, orcharding, beekeeping and eucalyptus manufacture.

The School was used as the meeting place until the Coronation Hall opened in 1902, but this was burned down in 1915, and it was replaced in 1917. Local families form the 'et al' of authorship.

The Appendices flesh out: the basic names on the World War I Honour Board; World War II enlistments from the areas; the native plants; and bird species of the area.

Glimpses of Wingello is an admirable production, made more interesting and useful by the careful and wide selection of illustrations: plans; documents; historical photos; and contemporary pictures. In the Institute's case there are: documents, architectural renderings; pics of the 'Ag Show', 'Deb Ball', 'between dances', 'Rita Davy at the piano', 'Tom Davy on the Accordion', 'Bush Dance 2016', and two exterior shots of the Hall. Well done to all concerned and Happy Birthday to Wingello Mechanics' Hall.

Available from: Wingello Village Association Inc., Box 5103, Wingello, NSW 2579, \$45.00 posted.



The Remarkable Miss Breton: Artist, Archaeologist, Traveller - Jane Sparrow-Niang. Paperback. 84 pages, illustrations, bibliography. 150x210mm. Bath: Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution, 2017. ISBN - 9780993567407.

E-Book: 9780993567414.

Indeed a remarkable story with an unlikely Australian connection, the early days of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute and later long-term connection with the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. The story starts with the father of 'Miss Breton', **William Henry Breton**. He was born in Clapham, Surrey in 1799, joined the Royal Navy and served with the British anti-slavery fleet off the West African coast and in the West Indies.

He retired from the Navy in 1830 and 'indulged his inclination to travel'. He first visited Sydney, then Tasmania, Western Australia and sailed on to Mauritius and arrived back home in 1833. He then travelled to Scandinavia and Russia. By late 1835 he was back in Tasmania as a Police Magistrate for Richmond 1835-41, then similarly at Launceston in 1842-47. There he became a foundation member of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute in 1842 and its President from 1842-49.

In the meantime he married **Elizabeth D'Arch** at Hobart in 1844. They had a son who died shortly after birth in 1846. The Bretons returned to England in 1849 and initially set up home in Kensington where their daughter **Adela Catherine**, our 'Miss Breton', was born on 31 December 1849.

The family moved to Bath in 1850. There Adela appears to have taken drawing lessons and travelled on the continent with her parents, but Bath was their base. Father, Henry becoming engaged with local groups, including the BRLSI and 'Miss Breton' was winning prizes for her watercolours by the 1880s.

Book Reviews cont...

Her mother died in 1874 and her father died in 1887. Adela was now free to travel at will, firstly to the USA and Canada. After that she generally spent several months abroad every year, visiting Mexico, Egypt, India, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Japan, Hawaii and the Latin American countries. She travelled solo, elegantly and stayed at the best of hotels. In spite of hardships, Mexico was a favourite and she visited there thirteen times between 1894-1908. There she travelled long distances on a mule – sidesaddle, generally with her Mexican guide **Pablo Solorio**, and ‘Disguised... in dark glasses + a veil’, she travelled under the assumed name of ‘Hernandez’. At archaeological ‘digs’ she camped on site with her faithful guide Pablo, who visited Bath with her about 1895.

One person Adela met in Mexico was the noted archeologist and anthropologist **Alfred Tozzer** from the Peabody Museum at Harvard University and she had a long-term correspondence with ‘Don Alfredo’, which still exists as a remarkable field record of archaeological survey. In addition Adela made full-size copies of the murals of temples and buildings and she and her Pablo, collected artifacts. After peer recognition in 1901, she styled herself ‘archaeologist’.

The death of Pablo in 1903, but not finally confirmed until 1905, left her missing and deeply grieving for her Robinson Crusoe Friday-like assistant, who made himself available when she visited Mexico.

She regularly attended International Conferences and organised the first meeting of the International Congress of Americanists in England in 1912. After attending her last International Conference at Rio de Janeiro in late 1922, Adela sailed for Barbados in the West Indies, where she died at the Hotel Pomeroy on 13 June 1923, aged 73. Her long-term amicable relationship with Bristol Museum resulted in it getting the largest portion of her work, but other examples exist in a number of Institutions, including the BRSLI, which has named a room for her. A commemorative plaque was erected on her house at 15 Camden Crescent, Bath in 2016. Indeed ‘She [‘Miss Breton’] was a very remarkable woman’ and we thank Jane Sparrow-Niang for telling and illustrating it so well.

Available for order or download on Bath’s website: brlsi.org



Mechanics’ Institutes: Introduction to Heritage Assets – Ian West, edited by Deborah Mays. 20pages, illustrated. 210 x 300 mm. London: Historic England, 2017. This booklet is a welcome addition to Historic England’s valuable series ‘Introduction to Heritage Assets’.

The ‘introduction sets out the origins and evolution of the Mechanics’ Institute, a nineteenth century phenomenon.’ Institutes were most certainly a result of the Industrial Revolution which provided education for the working man ‘through lending libraries, lecture theatres, class rooms and laboratories’. The curriculum was varied from technical to recreational. ‘The concept was a successful one and by mid-[nineteenth] century there were several hundred Mechanics’ Institutes gracing England’s major urban centres.’

Around seventy-five of the Institutes are listed by Historic England, with at least a third of these in compatible re-use and ‘continue to illustrate, in their dignified variety, the commendable efforts made towards adult education in Queen Victoria’s reign’.

The author notes the ‘vital but often overlooked part [Mechanics’ Institutes] played in the development of adult education’. This is ‘complicated’ by the plethora of names, some with changes along the way, and with varying but similar objectives. ‘It is estimated that, by the second half of the 19th century, there were around 1,200 such institutions in Great Britain...’ Whilst many had their own buildings, funded by subscription or ‘wealthy benefactors’, others operated from an array of volunteered or rented premises.

With the onset of universal child and adult education and libraries, many redundant Institutes were either demolished or converted to business or residential purposes. However some survived to become technical colleges, community libraries, or repurposed community buildings, some as Working Men’s Clubs. The

Book Reviews cont...

'Introduction' concludes with 'very little research has been carried out into Mechanics' Institutes as a distinct building type'.

Of the over 700 institutions with 'mechanic' or similar term in the title and established by 1851, showed besides them being in industrial centres, many were in market towns and rural areas. They generally had the backing of 'local industrialists, clergy or other members of the professional class' with appropriate management committees to ensure Institutes 'did not become centres for promoting radical political ideas'. Their standard educational fare comprised: English (language and literature); mathematics, with geometry; and languages, generally French, with an occasional Latin site. In addition, there were also technical subjects, varying to cater for local industrial and commercial needs. Some catered specifically for female members. These were supplemented with concerts, dances and exhibitions. Institutes aggregated together to facilitate the sharing of lecturers, books and expertise.

The *Technical Education Act* of 1889 enabled Institutes to transform into technical colleges which were to become the higher education institutions of today.

The author then treats us to the individual study of the architectural features of Institutes, which for quick reference are listed in alphabetical order: Accrington; Bacup; Witham, Barnard Castle (1846); Batley; Bradford (1832); Burnley (1834); Whitworth, Darley Dale (1890); Andersonian, Glasgow (1799); Brassey, Hastings (1880); Huddersfield (1823); Leeds (1824); Liverpool (1825); Florence, Liverpool (1889); London (1823); St Bride's, London (1884); Manchester (1824); Marsden (1841); Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1824); Londonderry, Seaham (1846); Shrewsbury (1825); and Swindon (1854). Classroom and library furniture, theatre seating and lighting, with some historical photographs, are sampled along the way.

We commend Historic England on this important ground breaking study, which will no doubt lead to a much wider future research. The final paragraph on the 'Further Reading' page shows that we have not laboured in vain *'The Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. in Australia has promoted four international conferences devoted to the study of these institutions, with the fifth due to be held in Scotland in 2021. Further*

details of these and proceedings of some past conferences can be found via their website.'

E-copy available for download on website at: HistoricEngland.org.uk



MECHANICS' INSTITUTES RESOURCE CENTRE

Our Library has now been assembled at Prahran Mechanics' Institute and this will be progressively up-loaded as a sub-set to that of that Prahran Mechanics' Institute on the **Libraries Australia database**.

In the meantime we have a preliminary printed catalogue of most items and this is available at the MIRC desk. We are also in the process of assembling a reference collection of 'world related' material and will notice that in future editions of *UK*.

Our website also maps Institutes that have had their records scanned and if you click on an Institute a list of those records comes up. These are all available for viewing at Prahran Mechanics' Institute Library.

The MIRC Collection is currently 'Not for Loan', and is only available for use at Prahran.

MIRC LIBRARY DONATIONS

A financial donation by **Wallace Kirsop** has enabled the purchase of the following publications: Martyn Walker, *Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain and Beyond* (2017); Gerringong and District Historical Society, *Gerringong School of Arts* (2016); Bill Spicer, *Muswellbrook School of Arts and Beyond... An Illustrated History* (2013); and Tony Dawson, *For the Moral and Intellectual Good: Port Macquarie School of Arts 1840-1951* (2016).

Pam Baragwanath has also donated a significant number of Mechanics' Institute and Hall histories.

Jill Hunter has also donated a copy of her *Moonambel Mechanics' Institute Hall*.

We thank these people for their very generous gifts.

Our People



We note the long past service of **Ailsie Wilks** to the Benayeo Hall and community. Ailsie played the Hall piano for every imaginable event and for every dance for more than fifty years. She now lives in well-earned retirement in the

Edenhope and District Hospital Nursing Home and Lakes Hostel where she still occasionally 'tickles the ivories'. We heartily thank Ailsie for her past dedication to enlivening the Benayeo community with her musical talents.

The story of the Hall piano is told in *Benayeo on the Border: A Local History* (2000). It was a 'Ricca' and it was purchased from Cawthorne's, Rundle Street, Adelaide at a cost, including freight, of £151.15s. It was railed to Binnum on 27 August 1946. There it was collected by RJ Wilks, L Chaston and K Biddulph and installed in the Benayeo Hall. The 'Ricca' is still in the Hall and played occasionally.



We missed the appointment of **Michele Morgan** as Centre Manager of **Briport Literary and Scientific Institute** in June 2017. It was Michele's job to get the scaffolding and hoardings down, and get the tenants

and the community into the refurbished building. It's been quite a ride from start up to open up. We all wish Michele well in her challenging role in making a building which has been closed to the public for more than twenty years again play a cultural and meaningful role in the Bridport community.

Christine Worthington, longtime librarian at **Prahran Mechanics' Institute** and more recently as Development Officer at the **Royal Historical Society of Victoria**, Christine is moving to England, where her partner **Dave**



is taking up a new appointment in London's Canary Wharf precinct. Of course they will be joined by their daughter **Julia**, who is fast growing, in readiness to become 'a Sloane Ranger'. They depart mid-June and we wish them all well.



We note the 'retirement' and stepping down from the Prahran Mechanics' Institute Committee of **Peter Wolfenden**. Peter utilised his engineering skills to help and advise the PMI in the establishment and

fitting out of their new home in St Edmonds Road. He has also entertained many groups with his vast knowledge of film. We sincerely thank Peter for sharing his invaluable skills and wish him a long and happy 'retirement', with an occasional film screening.

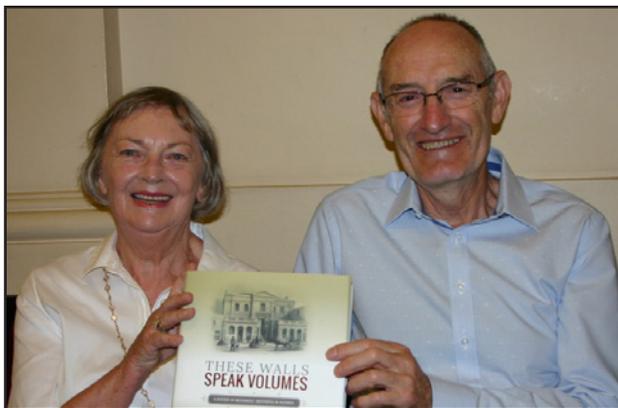


One of the notable **Mechanics' Universities, Queensland University of Technology** has recently announced the appointment of **Professor Margaret Sheil AO** as Vice-Chancellor. Margaret was previously

Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer at the **University of Melbourne**. She has academic qualifications in Pure and Applied Chemistry and Physical Chemistry. The Royal Australian Chemical Institute has inaugurated the **Margaret Sheil Leadership Award** in recognition of services to

Our People cont...

science. Her Order of Australia in 2017 also recognised her work for science and education. We heartily welcome Margaret into the wonderful world of the Mechanics'. *Photo: Wikipedia User: Pinirou*



Award winning authors **Pam Baragwanath** and **Ken James** took the Mechanics' Institute story to the Whittlesea Shire during the National Trust's Heritage Week. They gave their joint 'missionary' talk on 'These Walls Speak Volumes' at the Mill Park Library on 23 April 2018 to an appreciative audience and fielded a diverse range of questions after. *Photo: Kristina Holdaway*



Gideon Haigh, the presenter of our 2016 **Wesson Lecture**, recently launched his latest book *A Scandal in Bohemia: The Life and Death of Mollie Dean*. The launch was held at the Victorian Public Record Office,

Victorian Archives Centre on the evening of 11 April 2018. Gideon, much like his discovery of the Mechanics' Institutes story, started out with but a single photo of Mollie Dean. From there he pieced together Mollie's life as a respected teacher at Melbourne University High School; but alternatively, she was a minor Bohemian arts celebre, a poet, writer of a novel in progress, immodest model and an occasional warmer of beds... until the violent attack on her in a St Kilda Street, and her subsequent death in hospital on 21 November 1930. Fellow traveller **Betty**

Roland said Mollie left 'a path of havoc in her wake' and so it was in death. Published by Penguin it's a gripping read of the life and yet unsolved murder of Mollie Dean.



We note the recent appointment of **Tony Godfrey** as Executive Manager of Ballarat Mechanics' Institute. Tony who holds a Bachelor Business Accounting; Graduate Diploma in Business Management; and a

Masters of Business Management, brings a wealth of experience from various administrative posts. 'The position is to manage Ballarat's historic and cultural institution and focus on its long-term sustainability.' It is envisaged that partnerships with the City of Ballarat and other community organisations will be further strengthened and enhanced to make the Institute an integral part of the Ballarat arts, cultural and educational community and economy.

In taking up his position Tony stated 'the history, heritage and community connection of the Institute is extremely impressive and the work to date by the Board, staff and volunteers is an absolute credit to all. The future is really exciting.' Indeed it is and welcome Tony to the 'Wonderful World of the Mechanics' Institute Movement'. For Ballarat Mechanics' Institute it is onwards and upwards.



Professor Carl Bridge, continues as Professor of Australian History at King's College, London and has recently contributed a chapter to *An Historian for All Seasons: Essays for Geoffrey Bolton* (2017).

Carl was the author of *A Trunk Full of Books: History of the State Library of Australia* (1986). A copy of this book has recently been added to the MIRC.

Vale



We note the passing of **Mervyn Graham 'Merv' Shaw** on 10 January 2018, the result of an accident. Merv, who was a trustee of the Gobur Mechanics' Institute, was aged sixty-nine. He had conducted a large grazing property at Gobur.

Readers will recall several years ago the story of a remnant north-central Victorian Institute library in the remaining 'kitchen' of the Institute standing out in the middle of a paddock. Inside were several hundred books in a glass fronted bookcase. With Merv's permission, **Corrine Brewis** and **Judith Dwyer** firstly listed and removed the books to the Fawcett Hall & Public Library. Merv then had the bookcase restored at the Alexandra Men's Shed and the bookcase now holds the original collection at Fawcett.

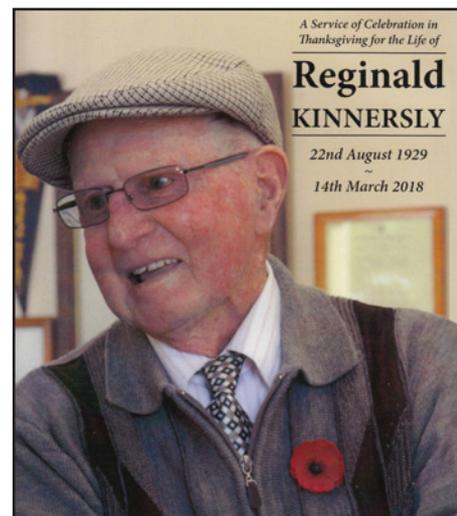
Fortunately we were also able to get some of Merv's reminiscences of the Gobur Institute.

His well-attended funeral was held at St David's Uniting Church, Terip-Ruffy, and was followed by a private cremation. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Jenni and family. *Photo: Corinne Brewis*

Surrounded by his family **Roger Myles Burrows** passed away at Ballarat on 25 March 2018, aged 76. He will be sadly and sorely missed as a long-time member and volunteer of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute. Roger had an immense knowledge of books and libraries and he ran the BMI Building Tours with flair, backed by his encyclopedic knowledge. A keen photographer, with a camera always at the ready, he was also a long-standing member of the Australian Photographic Collectors Society. Roger was farewelled with a Memorial Service in the Humffray Room at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute on Friday 6 April. His wife Margaret



pre-deceased him, but he is survived by his long-term partner and companion, **Nita** and his three sons **Alistair**, **Jamieson** and **Hamish** and their extended family. There will now also be a vacant seat at the regular Thursday morning coffee fixture. Our sincerest condolences to all. *Photo: Ballarat Courier*



Clunes Free Lending Library's Committee of Management long-time Chair **Reginald 'Reg' Kinnersly** died peacefully at his home 'Boovando', Tourello on 14 March 2018. He was 88. Reg had a long record of community service including: Ballarat Shire, Councillor 1970-93, Shire President 1988-89; Ballarat Water Board, Commissioner 1982-93; Creative Clunes, Board Member; Clunes RSL; All Nations Lodge, No. 28, Clunes. Following a service held at the Old Wesley Bluestone Church, Clunes, the burial took place at Coghills Creek Cemetery. He is survived by Paula and Steve and their families. His wife Margaret predeceased him. Our sympathy to all.

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.

RECIPE - BACON & EGG PIE

Ingredients

2 sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed
 11 eggs, one beaten for glazing
 125ml milk
 5 slices of bacon, without rind, chopped
 ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
 ¼ cup chopped parsley
 ¼ cup finely chopped spring onions
 ½ cup finely chopped mushrooms
 Salt and Pepper to taste

Method

1. Preheat oven to 190C.
2. Grease 22cm pie dish and line with sheet of thawed puff pastry.
3. Over a medium heat, fry bacon for 2 minutes, and cool.
4. Combine six eggs together with nutmeg, mushrooms, spring onions, parsley and milk. Add salt and pepper to taste.
5. Scatter half the bacon in the prepared pie dish, then pour in the beaten egg mixture. Crack each of the remaining four eggs, one by one, into a bowl and gently add to mixture in the pie dish. Spread remaining bacon over the top.
6. Glaze pastry rim with beaten egg. Cover pie dish with other sheet of puff pastry, trim to size and crimp edges with a fork. Brush top with beaten egg.
7. Cook for fifteen minutes at 190C, then reduce heat to 170C and cook for another 30 minutes.
8. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the pie dish for thirty minutes. Enjoy!

LOTTERY FUND UPDATE

Senator, the Hon. Minister **Bridget McKenzie**, in her role as Minister for Sport, has advised that this now falls under the 'Australian Government Sport Plan' and is 'currently being explored'. This will be in conjunction with 'previously announced, support for the initiatives with the arts and heritage portfolios'.

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 46

1. Where was the recent 'Ballyhoo – Dive Down the Rabbit Hole... You're invited to the Ball.'
2. Which iconic Institute recently burned down?
3. How many people can an Institute send to the **MIA 2018** Survival Workshop at a reduced rate of \$30 for the **Survival** day?
4. A recent bus stop was established near which Institute?
5. What was the name of the science communicator who taught at Birkbeck College, who had the initials JDB?
6. What is the most notable product of engineer John Furphy of Shepparton?
7. Which Institute recently hosted the Biennial Gold Expo?
8. What does the acronym MIRC stand for?
9. Who are the two keynote speakers at the **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018** Conference in November?
10. Which museum turns out its Fowler traction engine for Street Parades?
11. On what date do the J Furphy & Sons Awards close?
12. At which Hall did Archie Roach recently perform?
13. Where is the Gobur Mechanics' Institute library collection now located?

SPOT THE BAKERS DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 45 – ANSWERS

1. Moonambel; 2. Melbourne Athenaeum; 3. Ballarat Mechanics' Institute; 4. Nick Hudson; 5. Johnsonville; 6. Weston Bate; 7. Briagolong Mechanics' Institute; 8. Crieff, Scotland; 9. Richard A Jarrell; 10. Hon. Natalie Hutchins; 11. Dingee; 12. Prahran Mechanics' Institute; 13. Darlington Mechanics' Institute.

COMMENTS/CORRECTIONS, RECOLLECTIONS ETC.

We welcome your letters and comments on any items published. Perhaps you can correct a date, a name spelling, or add a precise street number location of an Institute.

We would also like to hear if you have fond memories to tell of your time at an Institute. Please feel free to write in.

Ideas & Opportunities

HAWKING YOUR HALL

The local Hall is often taken for granted by its community and even regional Councils, so it is a matter of drawing attention to it from time to time. Invite Council to have a meeting in your Hall or as fall back have the mayor, Shire, CEO and local Councillors down for a walk through to share your aspirations for a grant or three.

Little Halls that don't have a web presence can put up a profile on the MIV website.

SIGN UP

As we drive around we still see Halls without signage and/or contact details. It is very likely a picture of your Hall will appear on some photographic platform on the internet and what an opportunity has been lost to promote your Hall, your district, or any other feature.

This is not just a Hall matter it should be of district and regional concern and given the circumstances may even be eligible for Shire funding. Signage should include the district name: 'Heavenly'; name 'Mechanics' Institute'; and establishment date '1884'. It could also feature a logo. Perhaps you could let local students loose on the idea and have an exhibition in the Hall of the results. You could even canvass a motto 'Heavenly today, divine the next'. A smaller sign could include 'For Hire' and a phone and email contact, preferably in large letters, so they can either be seen from the road, or from an enlarged, web-based pic.

MONTHLY FUNCTION

Ideally every Hall should have a monthly function. It does not have to be over the top. It can be a barbecue, on the first or last Friday of the month, BYO. Someone needs to open the Hall and make sure there is gas for the barbecue. And anyone available can drop by. You may even wish to screen a movie or dance to some sixties or later records. Perhaps a couple of phone calls could be necessary to flush out some reluctant starters. Simple signage could promote the event.

WHAT'S YOUR SPECIALTY

Every district has something or somethings that are special. This may require thinking outside the square and it could be workshopped over a Sunday afternoon tea at the Hall. It could be a landform, a fossil trilobite colony, a rare plant or insect. Perhaps even a notable event when General McArthur or Slim Dusty dropped in

or the Beatles stayed for a weekend. It could be: Reliable Raelene the district's midwife for fifty years, who played honky tonk on the Hall piano and the church organ as required; or a pink elephant, bunyip, tiger, phantom swaggie or district wag who could have happened by. When you have identified your 'thing' seek out all there is to know about it, then you may even like to add a few pics, reminiscences or a few books on the subject to the Hall Library cupboard.

BUS NOW STOPS AT ACHERON



Photo: John Thorp

Following lobbying by the Acheron community and local MP **Cindy McLeish**, Public Transport Victoria have established a Stop at the corner of Connellys Creek Road, and Maroondah Highway.

A function to celebrate the inauguration of the stop ACHERON (Stop ID 48551) was held at the site on 26 February 2018 at 4.30pm when Cindy McLeish and **Brad Saunders**, CEO of McKenzie's Tourist Services and a goodly number of locals welcomed the 4.45 from Melbourne.

A tip for those advertising events, it is advisable to list public transport availability. It is noted that there are bustops outside Halls at: Buxton; Darraweit Guim; Emerald; Great Western; Lancefield; and Olinda Halls. There are probably others. Train also provides easy access for a day out at the Tallarook Farmers' Market, St Andrew's Market or a wander around in Little River or Narre Warren.

NEW NATIONAL TRUST ADVOCACY WEBSITE

Heritage Week was used as the opportunity for the National Trust to launch their new **Advocacy Toolkit**. It was launched at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria on 16 May. This free on-line resource will provide communities across Victoria with the tools they need to protect their district's natural and cultural heritage.