



USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

Newsletter No 29 - Winter & Spring 2012

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

NEWS HEADLINES

WE WELCOME DELEGATES TO THE JOINT
MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2012 CONFERENCE
BUILDINGS, BOOKS AND BLACKBOARDS
27 November-1 December 2012

MEETING OUR MINISTER

On 17 October a meeting is planned at the Maldon Athenaeum with the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Jeanette Powell MLA. It has been six years since we last met our Minister in the same place.

In 2004 Minister Powell opened the vastly remodelled Shepparton Mechanics' Institute and last June unveiled their \$700,000 extensions.

Born in Prescott, Lancashire, UK, which also had an interesting early Mechanics' Institute, Minister Powell arrived in Victoria with her parents in 1958. The family then settled in Shepparton and was educated at the Shepparton Girls' Secondary College.

Gaining Local Government experience with the Shepparton Shire as a Councillor and President, she was then appointed a Campaspe Shire Commissioner in the Local Government restructure. Entering Parliament became her next career move and she was elected as Member for the North Eastern Province in the Legislative Council in 1996 and moved to a Lower House seat for the 2002 elections.

Minister Powell has had extensive Committee experience including the Parliamentary Library Committee from 1996-2006. That interest has continued and in August 2012 the Minister announced a funding package of \$5.53 million for twenty-two library projects, as a part of the Living Libraries Infrastructure 2012-2013 Program.

The impact of the first round of grants in 2000 of \$10,000 each to the six core Institute libraries has borne fruit ten-fold. Similarly, the renaissance of the Mechanics' Institute movement has blossomed.

However the ongoing issues for every local Mechanics' Institute still remaining are the hoary chestnuts of: funding; Institute maintenance; insurance; Council rates and utility charges.

MIV ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, 10 November 2012, at 10am. Melbourne Athenaeum, 188 Collins Street, Melbourne.



The Official Opening of the newly renovated Shepparton Mechanics' Institute, Member for Shepparton, Jeanette Powell (left) with Trustee of the Shepparton Mechanics' Institute, Lance Woodhouse and Shepparton Access CEO, Wendy Shanks. Photo: Alicia Zeqir, The Adviser.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from the President	3
News	4
Around the Insitutes	21
The Wonderful World of MIs	26
The History Page	35
People	37
Book Reviews	33
Coming Events	38
Ideas and Opportunities	39
Libraries Directory	40

EDITORIAL

This is a double issue of *Useful Knowledge* and is only now produced. Due to the intrusion of external factors, your editor has been unable to devote the time necessary for the timely publication of this journal.

In keeping with the **Buildings, Books and Blackboards Conference** theme, readers will find mechanics' institutes, both local and overseas, are fully represented in this issue.

All the usual sections are included – News, Around the Institutes, The History Page and reports of the various activities of Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria. Donald Barker

MIV AT WORK

MIV SCANNING PROJECT

All MIV members should be aware of the opportunities presented by the MIV Scanning Project especially in light of the loss of records that occurred during the 2008 bushfires.

The grant for the MIV Scanning Project is enabling the MIV to assist Mechanics' Institutes across Victoria to have their records digitised to ensure that they are preserved for the future. We can also assist Historical Societies by scanning any records that they have in their possession relating to Mechanics' Institutes.

The MIV Scanning Project is not limited to MIV members, but we do want to make sure that none of our members miss out on this opportunity.

Records relating to the following Mechanics' Institutes have recently been scanned: **Acheron, Molesworth, Tooradin, Merton, Lancefield, Yarck, Alexandra, Little River, Footscray, Sale, Riddells Creek, and Newham.**

If you would like further information, or someone to explain the project to your committee, please contact Judith Dwyer by phone: 9707 4254 or email.

MIV LIBRARY SURVEY

Thank you to all those members who have completed and returned the Library Survey with their membership renewals.

Committee members and library group members met recently to consider the results to date. The libraries and library collections of Mechanics' Institutes fall into several distinct groups.

There are those that have collections that have survived as testimony to the historic role of Mechanics' Institutes as providers of library services. Some of these are very extensive, like the 6,000 volume historical collection of the Chiltern Athenaeum. Others have small remnant collections that are on display as indicators of what our

forebears were reading. Examples can be inspected at Malmsbury and Lancefield.

The MIV Scanning Project has located and scanned a number of these early library records, and keen family researchers can now search out the individual titles that were borrowed by their ancestors.

There are Mechanics' Institutes that continue to offer a lending service, as well as retaining collections of historic materials. These include the six larger Institutes at **Ballarat, Berwick, Footscray, Maldon Melbourne** and **Prahran**. These Mechanics' Institute libraries continue to develop and enhance their roles in a changing environment.

Of particular interest have been the lending services in small regional communities. **Little River** has provided a lending library service since it was founded over 100 years ago. And **Bonnie Doon** has revived its library service following the relocation and restoration of the former Free Library building.

Several Historical Societies, located in Mechanics' Institute buildings, are not only preserving the remnant collections of the former Mechanics' Institute libraries, but are building collections of local history books and materials to assist researchers.

MIV OCCASIONAL E-News

The MIV is now producing an "Occasional E-News" distributed by email to members. The purpose is to provide current information that becomes available between the printed *Useful Knowledge* Newsletter. For example, information about grants, and notice of events to which all members are invited.

If you would like to be on the mailing list, please send your email details to: mivenquiry@live.com.au

Also send the details to this email address if you are organising an event that you would like publicised to MIV members.

MIV CONTACTS

President: Peter Pereyra
 ppereyra@buildingcommission.com.au
 Vice-President: Jill Barthomeusz
 jillbarth@gmail.com
 Secretary: Judith Dwyer
 jad134@hotmail.com
 Treasurer: Graham Hughes
 grayhues@gmail.com

Newsletter: Donald Barker
 donhel14@bigpond.net.au
 Archives: Pam Baragwanath
 pgarag@alphalink.com.au
 MIRC/E-News
 mivenquiry@live.com.au
 Plaques and Travelling Exhibition: Judith Dwyer

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



I take this opportunity to welcome all delegates to **Mechanics' Worldwide 2012 – Buildings, Books and Blackboards** joint conference. Mechanics' Institutes have been very much a part of all those components.

We trust delegates will have an enjoyable time in Melbourne and be able to visit Victoria's oldest continuing Mechanics' Institute, which was renamed as the Melbourne Athenaeum in 1873. The three storey building facing Collins Street is topped with a statue of Athena or Minerva and above that is a lyre, the symbol of the German Leidertafel which operated from the building until 1914.

On Tuesday 27 November we will be on the **Heading for the Hills Bus Tour** heading out of town to take in a range of Institute buildings, a number recently refurbished and one hanging in the balance. It promises to be a good day.

A tour of the Prahran Mechanics' Institute, arguably the second most important local history collection, outside the State Library of Victoria, is planned for Thursday 29 November. Established in 1854 Prahran, it has been a hardy survivor and since adopting local history as its niche in 1981, it has become a key resource for Victorian history, conducting both a mailing service for members and interlibrary loans.

At Prahran is the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** where a huge archive of Victorian Institute related material has been assembled, along with a good representation of interstate and international Institute material. The Centre has been purchasing Mechanics' Institute related books and memorabilia since 2008.

On the horizon we also have our **Annual General Meeting at the Melbourne Athenaeum on Saturday, 10 November at 10am**. Please make an effort to come along to represent your various Institutes. The year 2013 marks MIV's Fifteenth Anniversary in supporting and promoting the Mechanics' Institute movement and we are contemplating ways the Mechanics' Institute community can celebrate this landmark event in proper style.

Peter Pereyra

President.

A SALUTE TO THE STATE LIBRARY AND ITS LEADERS

For those who use the State Library of Victoria, we are well served by our representative on the State Library User Organisations' Council, our President **Peter Pereyra** and **Professor Wallace Kirsop**.

In the past two decades our State Library has been transformed from the 19th century to the 21st century to ensure its place as one of the great libraries of the world and a leader in digitisation with an on-line presence. Such a transformation has not been easy, particularly finding the required money to do those works and it is a credit to all concerned.

Continuous Library Boards have kept the focus during the Presidencies of **James Strong**, **Leigh Masel**, **Ian Renard**, **Sam Lipski** and **John Cain** who stepped down earlier this year, after six years as President.

It has been quite story which started with Premier John Cain in the late 1980s, when the possibility of expanding the library and museum onto the old Queen Victoria Hospital site was canvassed. However focus came when **Jeff Kennett**, who as a former Shadow Minister for the Arts, and was Premier from 1992-99. Jeff regarded the library upgrade as a priority consideration and his Governments made funding available.



Former Premier John Cain and President of the Library Board 2006-2012 Photo: Multicultural Arts Victoria

Consequently a project of some \$240 million was embarked upon to 'modernise' the interior and waterproof the exterior. The redevelopment and recladding of the reading room and its dome being the largest single project.

The decision to build an offsite state of the art storage facility at Ballarat was also taken at this time and this aggregated and centralised a number of stores that had previously existed. Currently investigations are being made to extend that facility.

The only remaining major work in the library to be addressed is Queen's Hall, which will perhaps take as much as \$40 million to refurbish.

We pay tribute to John Cain on his departure from the Library Board and welcome **John Wylie**, as the Library's twenty-third President. John comes from a financial background to this challenging role in Melbourne, as a **UNESCO City of Literature**.

Also stepping up to the plate is **Sue Roberts** as State Librarian and Chief Executive Officer. Sue comes from Victoria University in New Zealand and has a strong background in repositioning libraries for information delivery into the 21st century.



*John Wylie, Library Board of Victoria, President
Photo: State Library of Victoria*

Born near Manchester at Leigh, an early Mechanics' Institute centre, Sue has had a life-long love affair with the book starting at the local library at an early age. We welcome Sue to Melbourne, Australia and we trust that interface with our participation through the State Library User Organisations' Council will be harmonious and fruitful.

In the meantime we look forward to celebrating the centenary of the Domed LaTrobe Reading Room in 2013.

The State Library is currently staging an exhibition '**Enchanted dome: the Library and Imagination**' in the **Cowen Gallery** and it runs until 14 July 2013.



*Sue Roberts, Victoria's State Librarian
Photo: State Library of Victoria*

A library implies an act of faith, which generations still in darkness hid. Sign in their night in witness of the dawn.

VICTOR HUGO (1802-1885)

IF THE WALLS COULD SPEAK (VERSION 2)

It is now twelve years since **Pam Baragwanath's** landmark *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria* was published. Launched at the first ever **Australian National Conference of Mechanics' Institutes** at the Melbourne Athenaeum in 2000, it still remains the single most important record of Mechanics' Institutes in the world.

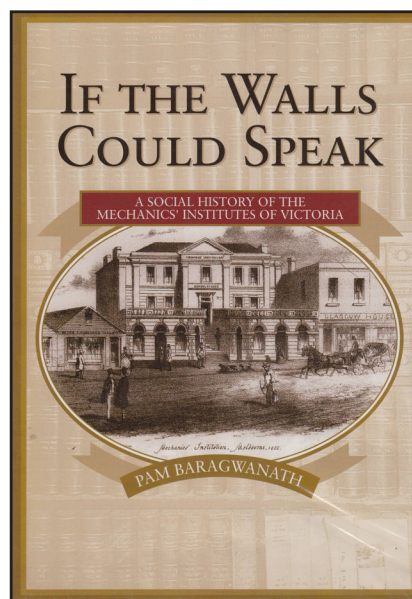
It took JW Hudson's *The History of Adult Education* (1851) a step further, putting flesh and bones on Institutes. Whilst Robin Alston has tried to list all Institutes in the UK, those who use that list find occasional omissions. Bronwyn Lowden bravely started on her *Mechanics' Institutes...: An Australian Checklist* in 2004 and with the help of an increasing network of helpers it has gone through several updated editions. Barrie Brennan has done valuable work with his survey on NSW New England Institutes as has Helen Trustrum in *Old Time Country Halls* [Richmond-Tweed River area of NSW] (1998). David Verran has done extensive work in New Zealand, but the USA and Canada Institutes have yet to receive attention beyond Richard Wendorf's compilation *America's Membership Libraries* (2007). Brendan Grimes' *Irish Carnegie Libraries: A Catalogue and Architectural History* (1998) is an interesting comparative work.

Pam Baragwanath's written and extensive networking and field work has served the Mechanics' Institute movement superbly for three reasons.

Firstly Pam waived her royalty fee and this has proved a generous ongoing endowment for MIV which does not receive any government funding to cover its administration costs.

Secondly it highlighted the huge Mechanics' Institute legacy in Victoria which then and still does exist across Victoria. Pam's book was not just 'Hello we are out there!' but it showed other Institutes that they were not alone. It has consequently spurred them to new heights of endeavour.

And thirdly it provided a basis, in some cases only an all important Institute photo, on which to build further research.



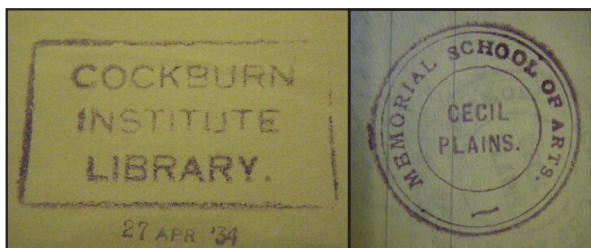
Lorraine Huddle's establishment of Institute files on a database has been pivotal to the ongoing collection and grouping of material. This resulted in the establishment of the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** at Prahran Mechanics' Institute which meshes nicely with the **Cinema and Theatre Historical Society** archive (Film and Theatre were vital parts of Mechanics' life.) and more recently with the **Australian Railways Historical Society (Victorian Branch)** archive (Rail carried the State Library and private library book boxes to Institutes across Victoria and Railway Institutes were established in major rail centres.).

If the Walls Could Speak is in constant use and one can see well-thumbed copies in libraries, consultants and Government offices. It is a vital reference tool for administrators and historians.

Pam's hope is to republish a second edition and since it was launched in 2000 she has been assembling: additional information on the featured Institutes; detailed entries on the 'photograph only' Institutes; and entries on newly 'found' Institutes.

Pam's quest is to locate and or assemble new material on all of Victoria's Institutes for future publication. The starting point would be to see what already exists in *If the Walls Could Speak*. Pam has also been collecting library stamp imprints or old books with the stamps in situ.

In the first instance you can email Pam at: pgharag@alphalink.com.au with details of information you hold on Institutes. Old Minute books, library stamps, registers and books would be a boon!



History is the piling of fact on fact, building a road, which may one day lead somewhere.

ANONYMOUS

VALE – NEIL ALDEN ARMSTRONG (1930-2012)

We note the passing of **Neil Armstrong** on 25 August 2012 at Indian Hill, Cincinnati, Ohio. He stepped from 'The Eagle' into history on the Moon's surface on 21 July 1969 leaving the oft quoted phrase 'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.'

(That phrase could have been equally used at the time George Birkbeck set up his Mechanics' class at Glasgow's Andersonian Institution in 1800 or when Leonard Horner opened the Edinburgh School of Arts in 1821.)

After leaving NASA in 1971, Neil Armstrong joined the University of Cincinnati staff as Professor of Aerospace Engineering until 1979. (We learned of Cincinnati's illustrious start as the Ohio Mechanics' Institute College of Applied Science in 1828 at **MW 2004**.)

At Cincinnati Armstrong created courses in aircraft design and flight navigation operations and established the second oldest university aeronautical engineering program in the USA. The feature that is remembered from those pioneering days was his humility and quiet dedication in setting up the courses. He gave one public interview in 2006.

Ohio-born he was a pilot at age fifteen. Educated at Purdue University in aeronautical engineering on a Navy scholarship in 1947, he finally graduated in 1952, after having served in the Korean War where



Neil Armstrong

Photo: NASA

he flew seventy-eight combat missions. From Purdue he became a test pilot and a participant in the Gemini and Apollo missions.

Cincinnati's **Professor Awatef Hamed** described Neil Armstrong as an 'icon for humanity'. Upon his death an announcement from his family stated he 'serves as an example to young people around the world to work hard to make their dreams come true, to be willing to explore and push the limits, and to selflessly serve a cause greater than themselves'. They further charged 'next time you walk outside on a clear night and see the moon smiling down at you, think of Neil Armstrong and give him a wink.' Vale Neil Armstrong and we too extend our deepest sympathy to his family and to the OMICAS – Cincinnati community.

His cremated remains were buried at sea in the Atlantic Ocean from the *USS Philippine Sea* on 14 September, accompanied by three volleys from a US Navy firing party.

Two Australian towns had a unique connection with the Apollo Moon Program, **Parkes'** Radio Telescope 'The Dish' (NSW) for receiving the pictures and **Kilmore's** High Frequency Radio Receiving Station (Vic.) for receiving the sound. Both towns had Institutes – **Parkes People's Institute** (est. 1891) and **Kilmore Mechanics' Institute** (est. 1854).



Map of lunar landscape from Giovanni Battista Riccioli's Almagestum Novum (1651) in 'The Marvels of Science' exhibition, Marsh's Library, Dublin.

Photo: Marsh's Library

*How the restless sea is toiling, and the stars are beating loud,
And across the waste of heaven flies a lone, unquiet cloud.
Manomin by MYRON COLONEY (1832-1900?)*

A REBADGED BEANEY REOPENS

The Canterbury (UK) Beaney Institute Public Library and Museum has been closed for five years to permit a £14 million major redevelopment/extension. (The Heritage Lottery Fund provided £7 million.)

Rebadged as the **Beaney House of Art and Knowledge** it reopened to great fanfare on the weekend of 8-9 September. Present for the occasion was a re-incarnated **Dr 'Diamond Jim' Beaney** (1828-1891) who received a certificate from the

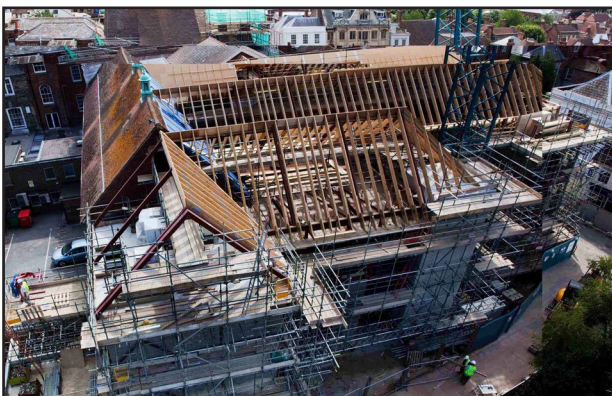


Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria recognising the landmark event. The certificate, signed by our President, **Peter Pereyra**, was handed over on our behalf by **Alan Barber**. Alan first made contact with **Pam Baragwanath** a number of years ago and so unfolded the story of a Melburnian who had been born and educated in Canterbury.

Beaney first arrived in Melbourne in 1852 and eventually qualified in medicine at Edinburgh. His flashiness, jewelled hands, fondness for champagne and 'brave' surgery found him off-side with his fellow medicos and charged on several occasions with murder after his patients had died. Exonerated on all counts he continued and was part of the staff of University of Melbourne's Medical School where he taught in paediatrics and sexual and women's health, and endowed prizes there.

He lectured on a number of occasions at the **Melbourne Athenaeum** which was a short walk from his Collins Street rooms and residence. He also wrote and published a number of books on medical related topics.

Melbourne was too small for Dr Beaney and on one occasion he sold up (The three volume sale catalogue is in the State Library of Victoria.) and went back to England seemingly never to return, but he did and died here in 1891. He was buried beneath a large stone column in the Melbourne General Cemetery.



Dr Beaney's yearn for eternity resulted in a conditional gift to Canterbury Cathedral where there is a plaque to his memory on its wall. He also sought to establish in Canterbury 'an Institute for Working Men'. He would have been familiar with Francis Ormond's Working Men's College of Melbourne, established in 1887 and this may have been his inspiration.

The Canterbury Corporation and Mayor were to oversee the project. With an eye for opportunity the Corporation saw this as the way to redevelop and house the Canterbury Museum, established in 1825 by the Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution which in turn had been established in 1769 as the Canterbury Historical Society for the Cultivation of Useful Knowledge. The Canterbury Corporation purchased the museum from the Lit and Phil in 1846 and a Reading Room was set aside there for working men at one penny per week. The Public Libraries Act of 1892 saw Canterbury quick to establish a Free Library in the same year.

The Charity Commissioners agreed to vary Beaney's will and the Corporation purchased the George and Dragon Inn in High Street and demolished it in 1897. The Royal Museum, with Queen Victoria's patronage, and Free Library opened on 11 September 1899. It was extended in 1934. The key memorable museum exhibits appear to have been a stuffed lion and an embalmed severed hand. Overcrowding resulted in the establishment of Heritage and Roman Museums elsewhere.

The new redevelopment has brought it all back together with state-of-the-art galleries, exhibition space, and an enlarged library footprint with educational facilities.



James George Beaney (1828-1891).

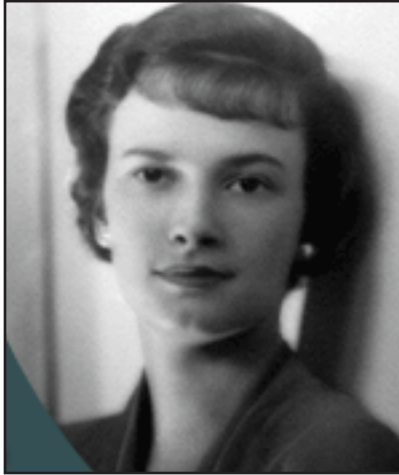
Described as a 'short, podgy man with pale blue, rather shifty eyes, with his hair curiously upswept to either side of his head like a pair of horns'.

Photo: Wikipedia

Left: Reconstruction of 'The Beaney' in progress.

Photo: The Beaney Institute

PORTRAIT OF A PHILANTHROPIST



Gladys Kriebel Delmas (1913-1991)
Photo: Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation

One of the generous contributors to MIV projects is the **Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation** of New York. Their US\$5000 grant was to digitise Mechanics' Institute records from fire-prone areas and it came via Monash University's Centre for the Book.

But just who was this 'unknown' person who established a Foundation that would support such a worthwhile project on the other side of the world? I probed the Foundation's website with little success. The internet lists countless projects that have been past benefactors of the largesse of an endowment of some \$45 million. This corpus generates interest to support academics and other projects, a goodly number involving the city of Venice, either by study or visitation.

Gladys Kriebel was born in Worcester, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on 3 July 1913, the daughter of Vernon K, a research academic who invented a one part polyester resin now universally known as 'Loctite' and Laura Cassell Kriebel.

Graduating from Vassar College, Poughkeepsie (NY), she went on to the Sorbonne University in Paris and later to Cambridge University, where she studied Shakespeare.

In 1937 she married Jean Paul Delmas, a graduate of French Schools, including the Paris Conservatory, and a successful publisher, poet and businessman. Jean Paul spoke five European languages and Japanese. The newlywed couple spent the war years in occupied Paris where Gladys worked as a radio journalist for French National Radio. Later she was to work for Radio Canada in Europe and Latin America for twenty-five years. Both she and her husband shared a great love for New York and Venice, in Italy.

During her life the principal beneficiaries of her giving were: the New York City Ballet; the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University; and New York Public Library, as a Trustee. For more than twenty years she contributed to the annual salaries budget for the New York Public Library to enable it to remain open for longer hours.

The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation promotes the advancement and perpetuation of humanistic inquiry and artistic creativity by encouraging excellence in scholarship and in the performing arts, and by supporting research libraries and other institutions which transmit our cultural heritage.

Gladys established the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation in 1976 to encourage 'excellence in scholarship and the arts, they were particularly interested in wide access to research library collections, the quality of dance performance, and the study and performance of early music'.

The Foundation gives special consideration to Venice based projects particularly relating to current economic and environmental problems, in addition to its history, architecture, art and music. The recipients of such funded projects must spend their time in Venice.

The Delmas's collected rare books and modern art and were patrons of museums, galleries, ballet and concerts of early and modern music. Their work in Venice involved restoration projects and academic research into Venetian history and civilization. Gladys Kriebel died at Beth Israel Medical Center, New York, on 20 November 1991, aged 78, from heart failure. Her husband predeceased her in 1988.



The Newham Mechanics' Institute, has recently had its records scanned thanks to the grant from the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.

Venice is like eating an entire box of chocolate liqueurs in one go.
TRUMAN STRECKFUS PERSONS 'TRUMAN CAPOTE' (1924-1984)

OPINION

NEARLY 15 - LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

by Jim Lowden

Next year we celebrate and review fifteen years since the establishment of the **Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria**. It has been quite a trajectory from startup to today.

Clearly our initiative to promote the Institute movement has been largely successful to the public, but full acceptance by Government is yet to be achieved hence our failure to gain an invitation to the major regional infrastructure workshop last year.

The Mechanics' Institute movement is in renaissance in Victoria and elsewhere and the challenge is to take those Institutes forward into the new age of information technology and energy.

Exhibitions do not need to contain valuable items. Print and computer technology could take art and historical related travelling exhibitions to country Institutes, based on regions or circuits. This would overcome the need for insurance and security as would otherwise be required.

Similarly speakers could also be engaged to speak in various regions or circuits. Arts groups could be similarly engaged. There is also the need for exploration of artist, author, poet, or musician in residence opportunities just as is done at some rural Institutes in NSW.

Institutes are a vital part of infrastructure providing venues for recreational activities such as dance, bowls, table tennis, badminton, billiards, yoga or even basketball. Unfortunately some Institutes and Councils managing Institutes treat the promoters of such activities as commercial entities and they are charged accordingly, when in fact they are providing recreational activities, just as the tennis, cricket or football clubs do. Similarly travelling theatrical troupes, singers and musicians are charged commercial rates when in fact they bring an added dimension of cultural depth to the community.

One of the major challenges to face MIV heading for year fifteen must be to finally compile a comprehensive directory of the assets and interests firstly of our 150 Institute members, then the other 400 Institutes that still exist out there. This is massive project requiring expert input which would result in clear community, wider public, emergency service and Government benefit, and must be deserving of serious funding.

Such a project would enable MIV to better serve its constituency with hardcopy and on-line directories of segment members – whether they be library, museum, theatre, dance, billiards, table tennis, community markets, or as meeting, exhibition and hall spaces. Many Institutes have tennis courts and ovals attached and these could be used as emergency helipads or exploited for a whole range of purposes to generate additional income.

The full exploitation of our website, which needs to be revamped, to allow online input from our

members into correction of their contact details, hall dimensions, kitchen capabilities, even services, as well as forthcoming events. Blogs and Flickr provide on-line opportunities for film clips on individual Institutes or appeals for particular information.

Clearly the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** is growing to be a major reference resource for scholars and Government agencies and this requires issues of physical accessibility, records management and use, and storage and exhibition space into the future to be reviewed and addressed.

Growing membership has taken MIV to some 150 Institute members and 75 personal members and has reached the point where it must consider the employment of a secretariat, even part-time to handle general inquiries, assemble information for the newsletter, promote regional meetings and assemble and distribute information on current issues for address. Outreach must also be made to the other 400 non-member Institutes.

Funding is a major consideration and whilst proscription as a tax deductible entity will attract some funding, there needs to be a plan to achieve future funding. This may even apply to a regular appeal to members to consider MIV in their wills.

MIV must be in a position, in the future, to be able to draw on emergency funding to assist Institutes in dire straits. Pro bono or volunteer services must also be sought in areas of accountancy, law and architecture to address specialist issues.

However the real challenges of: equitable funding; insurance charges; Council rates; utility charges; OH&S compliance; and accessing Government contracts for hardware items must be taken up forcibly and continuously with Government and relevant agencies to ensure an outcome.

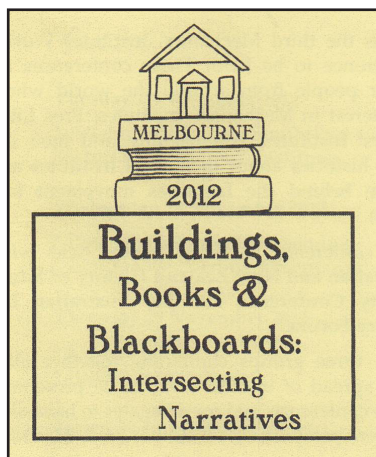
We must also ensure regular meetings take place with Department of Local Government staff, and other agencies such as the Municipal Association of Victoria to advance issues to serious address.

All the above are issues and to ensure they are taken forward I propose a major weekend State Conference of Institutes – **At 15 – Looking Forward, Looking Back** at a regional centre with a full agenda of past and future issues to enable Government and other agencies such as Emergency Services (SES, CFA and Ambulance Victoria) to address issues relating to Institutes. We would also have case studies, either delivered in person or by video, similarly motivational speakers addressing Institute segment interests.

We have been part of the Mechanics' Institute renaissance and now we must keep the flame burning into the future and **Nearing 15** is the time for a full review.

Alere Flammam — Feeding the flame!

MECHANICS' WORLDWIDE 2012
BUILDINGS, BOOKS AND BLACKBOARDS
27 NOVEMBER-1 DECEMBER 2012



Whilst you have missed the Earlybird Registration you're not too late to come on board for what is looking to be to be an illuminating time probing the three threads of the 'Intersecting Narratives'.

We have an interest in **Professor Martyn Walker** who hails from Yorkshire's **University of Huddersfield** where he has been Head of Department for Post Compulsory Education and Training since 2001.



Professor Martyn Walker.
Photo: University of Huddersfield

In 2010 Professor Walker completed his PhD on "Solid and practical education within reach of the humblest means: the growth and development of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institute 1838-1891." Earlier this year he published his Paper 'The Origins and Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement 1824-1890 and the Beginnings of Further Education' in the journal of *Teaching and Lifelong Learning*.

He has spent a lifetime in teaching and in recent times he has been involved in the establishment of a partnership with the University of Huddersfield and

China's **Quandong Provincial Vocational Training Centre for College Principals**.

Other keynote speakers include: **Professor Alistair Black**, Graduate School of Information and Library Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has been widely published on library history; and **Professor Adam R Nelson**, Educational Policy Studies and History, University of Wisconsin at Madison, who has researched and published in education history.

Events that will involve MIV members are the **Pre-Conference Heading for the Hills Bus Tour** on 27 November and the visit to the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre at Prahran Mechanics' Institute** on the evening of 29 November.

The **Heading for the Hills Bus Tour** departs from the Melbourne Athenaeum at 8.30am and will arrive back there at about 5.30pm. It will take in suburban north-east and north central Mechanics' Institutes. Hopefully by then we will see a near-finished rebuilt Christmas Hills Mechanics' Institute. We will also



Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute. Now restored, the library used to open on nights of the full moon.

Photo: Bronwyn Lowden

see the newly refurbished Upper Plenty, Wandong and Strath Creek Mechanics' Institutes.

The visit to the MIRC on 29 November will allow Conference delegates to experience some highlights from arguably the largest single collection of Mechanics' Institute related material in the world at what is the largest Local History lending library in Australia, the Prahran Mechanics' Institute. It will be an opportunity to see Prahran's long-time home before PMI is relocated to its new premises.

Conference information:
buildingsbooksandblackboards.blogspot.com

Libraries: the medicine chest of the soul.
 Inscription above the door of a library at Thebes

SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1833)

Sydney MSA have recently commissioned **Catherine Freyne** to research and author an article on the School of Arts Movement and its related people for the *Dictionary of Sydney* which is extensively referenced and is available online at dictionaryofsydney.org. It indicates that there were some 140 such Institutes in Sydney and suburbs with a further 600 in regional New South Wales.



It has been quite a ride for the SMSA since the largesse of Bondcorp purchased their original three storey site at 275 Pitt Street, Sydney in 1987 and they purchased the eleven storey building further down the street at No. 280 in 1996. Refurbished by the SMSA, it utilises the first three floors and leases out the other floors, generally to non-profits.

Income funds a range of activities, including prizes at various Sydney universities and a \$3000 scholarship at the Julian Ashton Art School.

A recent August activity has been the first anniversary of the establishment of the **Tom Keneally Centre**, which is a dedicated suite housing Tom's research library, copies of his books, and related memorabilia. The dedicated centre was constructed and fitted out through the generosity of the **Westfield Group** and **Frank Lowy**.



Tom Keneally at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts
Photo: Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

'The Tom Keneally Centre's look and feel reflects, as much as possible, the character of Tom's original library.' The Centre is open for use on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10.30-2.30pm, or by appointment. As a part of the anniversary Tom gave a lecture to a packed house in their Mitchell Theatre.

In September activities included: the screening, with a contextual introduction by cinema enthusiast **Peter Rainey**, of Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* starring Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray and Edward G Robinson; **David Deasey** on 'The Boer War', a war in which 16,000 Australians served and around 1000 died, as well as one Australian nurse; and noted musicologist and raconteur **Warren Fahey** AM with his concertina in full voice.



The Tom Keneally Centre has been tastefully decorated for the use of members who wish to have a quiet read
Photo: Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

Sydney's well fitted out library provides a range of newspapers and periodicals along with the latest in literature. Loans can be for an eight week period. In a newspaper survey the SMSA's library was recently noted as one of the 'quietest places' in Sydney.

The library also hosts a number of book clubs and discussion groups. Indeed the SMSA is a busy place.

Sydney SMSA has excellent conference facilities as the Friends of Libraries Australia found with their recent conference there. The 170 seat theatre is fully serviced with sound and screening capability. Catering is also available. They also have fully serviced meeting rooms available.

ADFAS – THE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS SOCIETIES

ADFAS was formed in Australia in 1985 and today represents thirty-four individual groups comprising some six thousand members Australia-wide.

It was interesting to see **Melbourne ADFAS** with a table at the opening of the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute staffed by district members as a part of the ADFAS interest in Mechanics' Institutes.



Melbourne is part of the Flinders Lecture Circuit of nine groups where contracted local and overseas speakers deliver a talk at each centre. Each group has between six and nine lectures annually.

ADFAS in the Community

GUNDAROO NSW

Name: Working Man's Library; Literary Institute

Address : Cork Street Gundaroo

The Town:
Gundaroo is a small historic village in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, about 35 kilometres north of Canberra and 15 kilometres west of Lake George. The explorers Charles Throsby and Joseph Wild travelled through the Yass River valley in 1820. In 1825, Governor Lachlan Macquarie granted 30 acres to the first white settler, Peter Cooney. And by the 1840s there were approximately 400 residents in the area.

The Harrow Inn was the first non-residential building, built in 1834. The Post Office was built in 1848, the first school opened in 1850 and the Police Station in 1852. The district's prosperity grew when gold was discovered in 1852 and by 1859 the mining population was over 500.

Gundaroo is now considered a dormitory village for Canberra, with residents attracted by its charm and the preservation of the character of its streetscapes. The population is 331 (2006 census). It is regarded as an important example of a typical 19th century Australian village and is a significant tourist attraction for the area. Most of the old buildings, constructed between 1860 and 1890, remain in generally good condition.

1

They not only have lectures, field trips and overseas study tours but engage in serious themed surveys to ensure 'the preservation of our national artistic heritage'.

Recently they have adopted Schools of Arts/ Mechanics' Institutes as an area of study. They have their first nine Schools of Arts up on their website www.adfas.org.au. Those Institutes are **Bombala, Boorowa, Braidwood, Bungendore, Goulburn, Gundaroo, Gunning, Queanbeyan and Young**.

ADFAS in the Community

BOMBALA NSW

Bombala School of Arts.

Name: School of Arts (also variously, Mechanics' Institute, Literary Institute and Institute).

Address: 15 Caveat Street Bombala

The Town:
Bombala is located in the Monaro district, the south eastern region of New South Wales between the coast and the snowfields of the Snowy Mountains. It is just under 500 kilometres south of Sydney and 80 kilometres south of Cooma. Situated on the Bombala River, its name is from the Ngarigu people of the region and thought to mean 'meeting of the waters'. Today, the town is small with a population of about 1206 (2006 census). With an elevation of 760 metres above sea level, it experiences cold, often snowy winters. The region of the town is fringed by National Parks, nature reserves, and State Forests. The major industries are grazing, for the production of fine wool and beef cattle, and timber-getting; with some more recent 'specialist' industries such as the production of lavender. Tourism is becoming more important and the picturesque local area is promoted as 'Platypus Country' with the largest population in NSW of this iconic native creature.

The area was first settled in the 1830s when Captain Ronald Campbell established a grazing property. By 1848, he owned 6500 hectares which he called 'Bombalo'. By 1856, Bombala

1

Each Institute comprises several pages of history, historic pictures, architectural and unique features of the building, fittings and furnishings. A file also generally contains a selection of documents depicting book catalogues, library stamps, event posters, billheads, penmanship etc.

What a splendid project to be engaged upon. We certainly can do with all the assistance we can get to document the great Australian Mechanics' Institute/ Schools of Art legacy.

If you wish to volunteer to research an MI or School of Arts in your region and want to participate or join ADFAS, contact soa@adfas.org.au

*Clockwise from Left: Gundaroo Literary Institute
history by ADFAS; Institute records; Bombala School
of Arts history by ADFAS
Images: ADFAS*

WESTWARD HO! BY BUS WE WENT

On Saturday 27 May an eager group took the **Westward Ho! Bus Tour of Institutes**. The day-long tour was organised by our indefatigable Hon. Secretary **Judith Dwyer**.

Starting from Williamstown, our first visit was Footscray (est. 1856), which hosts a community library at the south end of town, and is landlord to a number of community organisations. The present building was designed by Gerald William Vanheems (1872-1939) who also did work on churches. Footscray's Librarian **Luke Mitchell** led the walk through of the building.



The tour then moved on to the recently restored Little River (est. 1909) the work of Geelong architects Thomas Frederick Seeley (1848-1931) and George Raymond King (1872-1950). The Institute hosts the Little River Historical Society and the community library which has increasing use. The new commercial kitchen also makes the hall an ideal place for community events, including weddings. (MIV Plaque No. 24 was unveiled there in 2010 to celebrate its centenary.) **Peter Jones**, the painter of the scenic stage backdrop, was our host at Little River.



A leisurely lunch was then had at the Little River Hotel Motel, before the tour moved on to the Anakie-Staughton Vale Hall (est. 1907). This building appears to have been designed and built by the Smith brothers of Meredith in 1907-08. It was opened by Premier of Victoria, the larger than life Sir Thomas Bent. Electricity was connected in 1956. By the 1960s, with all of the original trustees assumed dead, management was taken over by the City of Corio. There has been additions in recent times. Today it is managed by **Peter Legge** and friends of the Anakie Hall Association and **Ray Tucker** welcomed us on their behalf. The hall hosts the **Annual Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show** and community uses.

Ballan Mechanics' Institute (est. 1860) is well sited on the main road. The present building was constructed and opened in 1887 to a design by Alexander Davidson. It was renovated in 1922 with a new façade to the design of Morrow and George Clegg (1870-1958). Its operations were largely funded from crops planted by farmers. However onerous costs and legislative requirements caused the site to be passed to Council in the 1980s. In the 1990s a local group was formed to revive the Institute and an \$900,000 restoration took place in 2003. (MIV Plaque No. 2 was unveiled there on 6 December 2003).



Ballan scandalised the community in 2004 by hosting the 'Bras in Ballan' exhibition. The tour of the building was led by MIV Committee member **Brian Foley** who explained that the building hosts a number of community groups, including the town library and a Men's Shed, and meetings of Government agencies. Ballan also supplied us with a sumptuous afternoon tea, thank you.

After another day of seeing various Mechanics' Institutes in action and good health, it was then back to Williamstown for a tour of the Williamstown Historical Society's museum, led by **Ada Ackerly**.

Another great tour and thank you Judith for your organisation of the day.

The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page.

ST AUGUSTINE (354-430)

ELMORE REGIONAL MEETING

The decision to take meetings and tours to the country is a great way for people and Institutes to network. Then there is also the opportunity to see other Institute buildings going to and from the meeting.



Travelling up the Northern Highway from Melbourne we saw **Wallan, Tooborac and Heathcote**. Coming home there was the chance to see **Hunter, Stanhope, Rushworth and Nagambie**.

Our hosts at **Elmore** for the day were **Brian and Betty Chirgwin, Bill Comer, Norma Holmberg and Flo Seddon** and indeed what an experience it was to see such a large complex in such well-kept order and it is a credit to the Committee. In fact the complex comprises two halls back to back, one (Elmore Athenaeum, pictured above) facing Michie Street and the other (Memorial Hall, pictured below) facing Hervey Street. The formation of the Athenaeum dates back to 1869 when they took over the old school building. This proved too small so they built the new Athenaeum Hall behind it in 1885-86. Designed by William Charles Vahland (1828-1915), it was built by Arblaster and Galbraith. A supper room was added at the rear in 1893-94. After World War I it was decided to build a larger hall at the rear and ex-servicemen



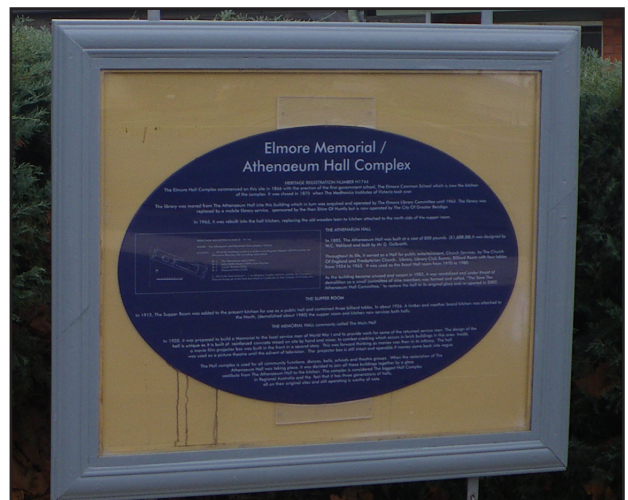
were employed on the project. In the early 1990s the Athenaeum Hall was in danger of demolition and a 'Save the Athenaeum Hall Committee' was formed. Their efforts with a lot of fundraising have been successful beyond belief.

Brian explained the various parleys he had with different inspectors relating to OH&S and fire safety requirements and demonstrated the 'nifty' door locks/ handles placed at a low level to enable children to 'escape' from the building. We were also taken by the quaint 'logs' which adorned the World War I Honour Board in the Memorial Hall.



We also saw plaque MIV Plaque No. 26 in place and we were treated to the innovative blow-up plaque which gave a more detailed history of the Institute (pictured below).

The morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea were memorable and we thank all the Elmoreys for their overwhelming hospitality.



The supersized plaque is situated outside the Memorial Hall side of the complex (as seen at left). These plaques are ideal for a more detailed history and blueprint of the building.

Images: Bronwyn Lowden

STANLEY'S ATHENAEUM & PUBLIC ROOM IN RENAISSANCE



The former goldmining town of Stanley in north-east Victoria with a current district population of 300 has been left an interesting legacy of a **Public Room**, rebuilt in 1874, with an accompanying library of science and literature related books.

Local community stalwart the late **Geoff Craig** (1935-2003) did the community a great service when he hung out to save the Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room and its historic library collection from the early 1800s to the 1950s in situ. Geoff further ensured its survival by donating his regional history collection of some four hundred titles, and the copyright to the fifty odd publications he had authored, to Stanley's Athenaeum Library.

Geoff's cries for help enlisted the support of heritage architect **Ivar Nelsen** and other locals, **The Friends of the Stanley Athenaeum**. As a result the building and its library with key science texts, and runs of authors such as **Charles Dickens**, **Ada Cambridge**, **Ethel Turner** and **Alan Marshal** have been saved.

MIV members were privileged to see the Stanley Athenaeum and its library pre-restoration in 2008, on the **Alps and Athenaeums North East Tour** organised by Dr Donald Barker. Since that time the interior of the building has been restored with the oak floor boards sanded and sealed and a carpet square placed mostly over them. New heating has been installed. All bookcases have been fitted with locked sliding glass doors. The original library tables have been sanded down and a new suite of chairs has been installed.

The decision to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 2009, based on Stanley's third edition copy and his illustrated *The Expression of the Emotions of Man and Animals* (1872) was pivotal in putting Stanley on the cultural map.

The recent installation of MIV Plaque No. 29 and the opening of the '**Boz** [nom de plume of author Charles Dickens] and **Phiz** [nom de plume of noted

engraver and illustrator Hablot Knight Browne] **Exhibition**' furthers that claim. Celebrating the bicentennial of Charles Dickens' birth, the exhibition features the books and illustrations from ten of the fifteen Dickens titles. Curated most professionally by **Chris Dormer** and **Helen McIntyre**, with **Janet Sutherland** providing the photography and imaging, **Boz and Phiz** showcases some of the gems from the Stanley Athenaeum's historic library collection and blowups of Phiz's illustrations.



Group at the unveiling of MIV Plaque No. 29

As part of the celebration of Dickens life, a sell-out trivia night, and an excellent dinner prepared under the watchful eye of chef **Michel Renoux** was held in the adjacent Stanley Memorial Hall on Saturday, 8 September. The presence of some of Dickens' memorable characters, readings from his works and other entertainment made it a memorable night.

The **Boz and Phiz Exhibition** (pictured below) is open to the public on the second Wednesday and fourth Saturday of each month or by appointment until 30 November. A small donation would be appreciated.

Stanley's Summer Exhibition will be **Tutti Frutti** which will showcase the local fruit growing industry.



KYNETON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE REOPENS

The Hon. **Damian Drum** officially opened the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute after its \$2 million makeover on Friday 27 April. The Government contributed \$980,000 and the Macedon Ranges Shire Council contributed a further \$1 million to make up the balance. There was a lot of backslapping and congratulation.



The Hon. Damien Drum speaking at the opening of the refurbished Institute.

This was an occasion that many thought would not happen, but a few made sure it did and they were the **Friends of the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute**. It would be fair to name key players, but in alphabetical order: **David Francis, Tom and Nea Gyorffy, David and Genevieve Hansford, Michael Kennedy and Barry Murphy**.



One cannot overlook architect **Robert Martin** who did repeated architectural renderings to ensure the building and landscape fitted its original purpose as a community hall, with a performing arts capability, in a garden setting.

These people attended countless meetings and when the occasion needed, put their hands into their own pockets. Later, cartoonist **Jock McNeish** even lent his deft hand to the cause.

Ray Tonkin, formerly Director of Heritage Victoria, should also be singled out for his excellent pivotal work on the 'feasibility study'. At the impressive workshopping of his report, Ray stated that he 'was not going home until all the questions had been answered'. A brave man indeed! Ray could be seen in the throng at the official opening.



The opening coincided with the two day **Kyneton Showcase**, an expo of community organisations that had tables throughout the building. In all some forty-nine organisations took advantage of the occasion. This very successful event was organised by **Eric Dearicott** who heads up the community newspaper **Kyneton Connect**. When we left the schools were coming through and the Institute was again abuzz, after having been vacant for nearly a decade.

Present in a bookcase were some books, a remnant of the former Kyneton Mechanics' Institute library. Another interesting feature of the works was an exposed portion of the former frieze which was covered with perspex. The restoration of the frieze and the balcony are still awaiting funding.

It's now over to the community and Council to make it work, but any thought of cost recovery may be an impediment. But we must add 'Well done all!'

Photos: Nea Gyorffy



MALMSBURY CELEBRATES 150

The 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute was celebrated with a weekend of activities on 28-29 April. Initially it occupied the former Caroline Chisholm shelter shed built on the road to the Mt Alexander goldfields, before building the present structure.

The Saturday saw two momentous events the first was the launching of **Sue Walter's** book *The Elongated Dog Kennel: The History of the Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute* by MIV Fellow **Pam Baragwanath** (pictured below). And why the title? In 1872 a writer described the building as an 'elongated dog kennel'.



The second event was the unveiling of the MIV memorial plaque No. 28 which was undertaken by **Cr Rob Guthrie** (pictured below).

The Federal Hall was added at the rear in 1895. This was years before Federation but a pivotal Federation meeting took place in nearby Kyneton in 1893 with the Australian Natives' Association as the driving force. This may have been an influencing factor.



Today the Institute's remnant library of some three hundred books and the district's record are housed in the Institute building which is managed by the Malmsbury Historical Society.

Malmsbury has an interesting connection with another piece of the Mechanics' Institute jigsaw. Devonshire-born **Dr Edward Davy** (1806-85), Mayor of Malmsbury on three occasions, was inaugural President of the Adelaide Mechanics' Institute in 1851.



He was also a pioneer of the electric telegraph, experimenting in 1835-36, and his work was recognised by Honorary Membership of the Society of Telegraph Engineers just before his death at Malmsbury in 1885.

Clockwise from left: Cr Rob Guthrie, Shire of Macedon Ranges unveiling plaque; Sue Walter with her book and launcher, MIV Fellow, Pam Baragwanath; group waiting for the official events; Malmsbury Historical Society representatives with Cr. Rob Guthrie.

Photos: Nea Gyorffy

You can do anything if you have enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes rise to the stars. Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes, the swing in your gait, the grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of will and energy to execute your ideas. Enthusiasts are fighters. They have fortitude. They have staying qualities. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress. With it, there is accomplishment. Without it, there are only alibis.

HENRY FORD (1863-1947)

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS FOR AUSTRALIA

The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) opened their doors in Melbourne officially on 1 October 2012. This culminates in two years of an Implementation Taskforce which sought input from **David Locke**, Executive Director of Charity Services with the Charity Commission of England and Wales and **Donna Walsh**, former Director of the Review and Analysis Division of the Directorate of the Canadian Revenue Agency. (Mr Locke has since joined the Commission.)

This is a very welcome move as those who were at the **MW 2004** in Melbourne would have learnt how the CC went into 'bat' for Institutes at Bath and in the Yorkshire Pennines at Marsden.

Those who attended **MW 2009** at Bath would have seen the result of the recreation of a dynamic Institute which now hosts more than 150 meetings a year in its building. Not to mention the numerous visitors who attend their exhibitions, lectures and Saturday morning coffee Open House.

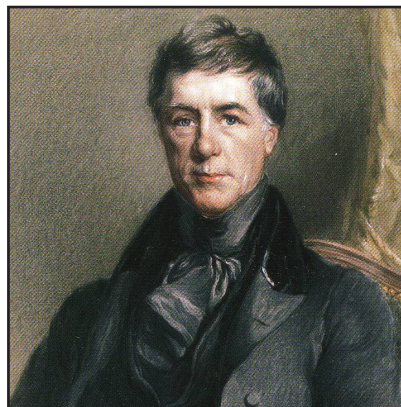
Those who went on to **Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society** could also see how the hand of the CC had enabled their staggering redevelopment as Pannett Art Gallery and Whitby Museum and continued occupation of Pannett Park.

Not only does it enable not-for-profits and people to gain skilled advocacy but it also registers organisations as tax deductible gift recipients which opens up a whole range of trusts and donors who give to special interests. Further it enables the Commissioners to determine on tied trusts dedicated to for example 'freeing of the slaves on the Barbary Coast' or the 'shepherds of the pigs on the Spitalfields Common'. The rationalisation of such charities resulted in the now vibrant **Bishopsgate Institute** created in 1895. It is noted the CC also arbitrated on the will of Melbourne medico Dr James George Beane in creating the **Beane Institute** in Canterbury.

Interestingly enough the concept of Charity Commissioners has its origins with one of the fathers of the Mechanics' Institute movement, **Henry Peter, Lord Brougham and Vaux**.

It started in 1816 with his chairing a Commission into education in London, which found that educational charities seemed unaccountable for abuses. The airing of a nationwide inquiry in 1818 showed these abuses to be widespread and the report in Parliament achieved little. However his *A letter of Samuel Romilly, MP... upon the abuse of charities* (1818), dry as it was, gained public interest and the pamphlet went through many editions in its first year of publication. This rallied public interest and some

very red faces amongst charity managers. Further action finally resulted in the establishment of the present permanent body in 1853.



ACNC considered public submissions and held hearings around Australia to come up with the model which will be legislated into existence in stages over the next few years. ACNC is headed up by **Susan Pascoe, AM** who has considerable experience in education and the public service and was most recently one of the three Commissioners for the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

We welcome Ms Pascoe and her team and wish them success in achieving equity for the not-for-profits. MIV does not presently have tax deductible gift status (TDGS) and to access grants in the past submissions have had to be made through a deductible entity.

We have in the first instance written to the Commission to seek the proscription of Mechanics' Institutes as non-profits and tax deductible gift recipient entities. We have also sought TDGR for MIV.



Surplus wealth is a sacred trust which its possessor is bound to administer in his lifetime for the benefit of the community.

ANDREW CARNEGIE (1835-1919)

TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

When we set out to create the Travelling Exhibitions we were mindful of the need to promote an understanding of the Mechanics' Institute movement. Few of us at the time knew where it really came from and how the Mechanics' movement evolved.



An unrestored Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute when 'Remember the Mechanics' was launched in 2002.

Photo: Pam Baragwanath

It was a sharp learning curve. But all creators rose to the occasion absorbing information assembled by **Philip Candy** and **John Laurent** in their *Pioneering Culture: Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia* (1994) and **Pam Baragwanath** in her mammoth study *If the Walls Could Speak: A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria* (2000). When we had all the ideas together, it was up to designer **Gita Lestari** to put it into poster form.

The exhibition had to be self-contained so it came with its own large advertising banner, boards which could stand some rough treatment and laminated panels which could be simply wiped clean. The boards were fitted with eyelets for ease of hanging.

Then to choose a launch venue. We originally thought of the domed room at the former Sandhurst Mechanics' Institute and now the Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE.

But that seemed all too easy and President **Cathy Milward-Bason** contacted **Mansell Davies** at **Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute** who clearly needed some help. Mansell agreed to let us use the Eaglehawk MI for the launch. But then who would clean up the room for the launch. MIV agreed to tackle the task in league with the Eaglehawk Historical Society. On the day prior **George** and **Pam Baragwanath** could be seen through a cloud of dust, ably assisted by Eaglehawk's **Elaine Harrington** with her dust pan.

The day ended with an exhibition proudly and well hung.

Next morning invited guests were welcomed by the distinctive red white and blue banner. Our Minister **Bob Cameron** launched '**Remember the Mechanics?**' and the Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute to survival.

The exhibition travelled widely and there seemed to be real enthusiasm for reviving the movement in Victoria. Further we had launched our play for the **First World Conference Mechanics' Worldwide 2004** – Melbourne.

So we moved into production mode again with the promotion of the achievements of various Mechanics' Institutes with '**Mechanics'... and Proud of It!**', designed by **Alaina Wilson**. This was launched by **Dr Helen Light**, President of Museums Australia (Victoria), at the Fountain Gate Shopping Centre Library.

This distinctive banner was used to welcome delegates to the Swinburne Campus daily for **MW 2004** sessions.

If you would like to book either of the travelling exhibitions contact Judith Dwyer on email jad134@hotmail.com



'Mechanics' ... and Proud of it!' exhibition in place at Narre Warren North Library.

Photo: Bronwyn Lowden



Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.
SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS 'MARK TWAIN' (1835-1910)

PLAQUING THE INSTITUTES

The **Historical Plaques Program** started from an idea advanced by then MIV Committee Member **Alan Tonkin** in 1999. Implemented by **Paul Permezel**, there has been a relatively slow uptake but recently there's been a recent push to add MIV commemorative plaques to Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes. The most recent being **Elmore** (No. 26), **Malmsbury** (No. 27), **Laen** (No. 28), **Stanley** (No. 29), **Leongatha** (No. 30) and pending for unveiling in November **Bonnie Doon** (No. 31).



Interestingly Elmore couldn't put all the wording on the plaque that they thought was necessary and they had a super-size plaque made and installed.

For those who follow such matters, yes there was a plaque issued to Kyneton but this inadvertently duplicated an existing number so it will be reissued after restoration of the façade of the building has been completed.

In many cases we do not know the date of unveiling or whom it was that unveiled the plaque. Pending the future issue of a booklet 'Plaques of the Mechanics' Institutes' it would be good to have those details in hand. This is history in the making.

Below is the complete list of plaques with known details and if you can update the list email Bronwyn Lowden at bronlowden@hotmail.com To order a plaque (They cost \$185 each and require your installation.) email Judith Dwyer on jad134@hotmail.com or write to Box 482, Berwick, 3806.

- ~1 Maldon Athenaeum. Unveiled 21 April 2003.
- ~2 Ballan Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 6 December 2003.
- ~3 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Sir Rupert 'Dick' Hamer, former Premier of Victoria and Jim Lowden, Secretary of MIV, 6 April 2003.
- ~4 Taradale Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2003.
- ~5 Lilydale Athenaeum. Unveiled by Richard Longmore, Chairman of Directors of the

- Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company 22 February 2004.
- ~6 Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library. Unveiled March 2004.
- ~7 Minyip Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Dr Frank Hurley, President, Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, June 2004.
- ~8 Frankston Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled December 2004.
- ~9 Mt Eccles Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Cr David Lewis, Mayor, South Gippsland Shire Council, 12 June 2005.
- ~10 Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Pam Baragwanath, Sunday 11 September 2005.
- ~11 Prahran Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Ms Chris Gallagher, Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria, 8 October 2005.
- ~12 Digby Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2005.
- ~13 Melbourne Athenaeum. Unveiled by Governor of Victoria, John Landy, Melbourne Athenaeum, 24 October 2005.
- ~14 Benalla Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled October 2005.
- ~15 Jindivick Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2005.
- ~16 Emerald Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 2005.
- ~17 Dean Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 3 September 2006
- ~18 Oakleigh Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled 29 September 2006.
- ~19 Newham Mechanics' Institute.
- ~20 Nagambie Mechanics' Institute.
- ~21 Mia Mia Mechanics' Institute.
- ~22 Mortlake Mechanics' Institute.
- ~23 Kinglake West Mechanics' Institute.
- ~24 Little River Mechanics' Institute.
- ~25 Croydon Mechanics' Institute.
- ~26 Elmore Athenaeum Hall.
- ~27 Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute. Unveiled by Cr Rob Guthrie on 26 April 2012.
- ~28 Laen Mechanics' Institute site.
- ~29 Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room. Unveiled by Jim Lowden on 25 August 2012.
- ~30 Leongatha Mechanics' Institute.
- ~31 Bonnie Doon Free Library.

The world's first blue plaques were erected in London in the 1860s to mark the homes or workplaces of famous people or an event. The program is now used worldwide.

AROUND THE INSTITUTES

ASCOT MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION HALL (Est. mid-1890s)

This elusive Institute recently turned up on the web. Ascot is between Clunes and Ballarat, and west of Creswick. It has as its progenitor the Australian Natives' Association who sponsored the Ascot Mutual Improvement Society in the mid-1890s who ran debating, public speaking and lecturing events. The hall was built in 1901, and Kauri pine was used for the lining and floor. The rear kitchen, meeting room and enlarged stage area were added in 1952. The side toilet block was added in 1967 and the hall was reclad in 1968. Maintenance and insurance costs caused it to be passed to the Shire of Ballarat in the 1980s. In 2010 it was rewired and repainted. The bell in front of the hall is from the Ascot Primary School which closed in 1988. Its freshly painted sign 'Ascot Mechanics' Institute' raised some ire in 2010. heritage. Population 200, Ascot was and still is a pastoral area and it celebrates as a community with two key events 'Casseroles in July' and the 'Christmas Barbecue' where Santa Claus arrives and the event concludes with Christmas Carols. Dances, their major fundraiser, have been held on the first Saturday of each month since 1985.

One of Ascot's sons, Thomas Tunnecliffe (1869-1948), who lived variously at Newlyn, Dean, Clunes and Ballarat, was to become a bootmaker, union official, author and politician rising to Acting Premier of Victoria in 1932.

BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1859)

Restoration of the Ballaarat Institute moves to finality with major works in the Minerva Space and Theatre coming to an end. Their new website and slogan 'Enlivening our present by illuminating our past' promotes the Institute's activities and resources. The Institute will be exhibiting the work of the finalists of the **Take-a-Bow** performing arts photographic competition on October 20-28 with photographic 'technique' demonstrations over the final weekend by Lawrence Winder. Website: ballaaratmi.com.au

ROBERT O'HARA BURKE MEMORIAL MUSEUM, BEECHWORTH (Est. 1856)

Widely regarded as 'a museum of museums', The Burke has recently announced a sponsorship scheme whereby local businesses, families, etc. can adopt a museum item, a shop in the historic street, an entire collection or an exhibition. Sponsorships start at \$50.00 and run for five years. The Friends of Burke Museum meet regularly and conduct lectures and events in the notable recreated streetscape in the Museum's precinct.

The five-year 'Spring Clean' of the museum collection was undertaken in July. Given that some



'interesting' taxidermy chemicals, including arsenic, were used in the 19th century this required spacesuit and breathing equipment.

BERWICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1862)

Berwick Mechanics Institute and Free library has expended all the funds from the Mechanics' Institutes Libraries Program Grant. The main items purchased were computer and software, and the replacement of all the mercury vapour dome lights with low energy lights, a reduction to our carbon use which will lead to a lower electric bill.

The City of Casey has increased the annual grant to operate the library from \$31,500 to \$35,000 a year plus GST. A donation of \$4,500 was also received from a councillor's wards funds in recognition of the 150th Anniversary of the Berwick M.I. The City has also approved an Events Grant of \$3,000 to assist with our Open Day on 24 October 2012 to be held to commemorate the 150th Anniversary. The open day has been titled "A Celebration of 150 Years of Literary Improvement." The Berwick M.I. at 15 High Street will be open from 10am to 4pm. All members of the public, including members of other Mechanics' Institutes, will be most welcome to attend the Open Day and enjoy a tour of the Institute and partake of some light refreshments.

To further celebrate the 150 years in Berwick there will be for sale Calendars with pictures of a local historical nature, and fine quality china mugs. The highly regarded book *A History of Berwick Mechanics Institute* by Richard Myers will be on sale at the special price of \$15.00.

A Civic Reception, invitation only, and unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the 150 years is to be held

at the City of Casey Council offices on the Wednesday before the Open Day. A luncheon for the Volunteers will take place on 31st October.

BOLINDA MECHANICS INSTITUTE (Est. 1912)

The Annual Daffodil Show and Spring Fair was held at the hall reserve in September. Stalls and car boots provided a good range of goods. Included for the children, for a \$12 wristband, were: an animal farm; an archaeological dig; train ride; hay ride; jumping castle; picnic race; a Western Water Show Bag; and a luck dip. Now there's a carnival in the country.

BONNIE DOON FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1897)



Now in place beside the Community Centre, the old Free Library has been restored, wired and plumbed and will officially open in its new library role on Saturday, 24 November by **Bill Sykes**, MP. An MIV plaque will be unveiled on that day and **Corinne Brewis's** new book *A Tale of Two Libraries: Bonnie Doon 1897-2012* will also be launched. This will be the end of a long haul for the determined Bonnie Doon community and we welcome them back into their library role for the community.

CHARLTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1879)

Charlton's Golden Grains Museum has recovered from the January floods and is now again open for business. In the recent **Museums Australia (Victoria) Awards** their **Carolyn Olive** received a 'Highly Commended' in the category 'Award for Excellence (Volunteer)'. Congratulations Carolyn and thank you for your many years of service to the Golden Grains Museum.

CLUNES MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1862)

Those who were on the 2006 **Goldfields Mechanics' Institutes Bus Tour** will recall a very down at heel Clunes Free Library building, shared with a flight of pigeons. It was built in 1872-74, largely through the generosity of mining entrepreneur **Revett Henry Bland**, who was to lead the Institute for eighteen years. In 1907 Clunes protested that the

library subsidy to Victoria's Institutes was £2,500, which equated to £6 per Library Institute.

On the day of the of the tour we were to meet **Tim Hayes** who later led a Committee to restore the building to its former glory and for it to play a pivotal role in **Clunes International Booktown** and the Annual Book Town Festival. Earlier this year Clunes was granted membership of the International Organisation of Booktowns and declared Australia's first International Booktown. Last month **Tim Hayes**, **Graeme Johnston** and **Dr Tess Brady** represented Clunes at the World Booktown Symposium at Paju Bookcity, South Korea. Their paper can be viewed online at www.booktown.clunes.org. It is worth a read as a blueprint for town renewal. Clunes now hosts some ten resident and on-line bookshops and several other shops which stock books. The next Clunes Booktown weekend is planned for 4-5 May 2013.

EAGLEHAWK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)

"The Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute library was one of the longest surviving mechanics' institute libraries, closing only in 1992 with the death of the librarian, Mrs May Jones. Since then the Goldfields Library Corporation has maintained a minimal library service in the mechanics' institute building. The branch library is located in a room of the mechanics' institute and is open on Wednesdays from 9am to 12 noon and as a trial, on Saturdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The library has limited disabled access and no heating or cooling. Unsurprisingly, the library is not well patronised. According to local councillor Peter Cox, "People aren't using the services because there are so few of them to warrant a visit" A response to this situation has been the formation of an action group called "Grow Our Age-old Library" (GOAL). The aim of GOAL is for Eaglehawk to have a proper library service similar to the one in the suburb of Kangaroo Flat. The CEO of the Goldfields Library Corporation, Carolyn Macvean hopes that the restored vacant rooms in the institute building can be used as a library but there are issues relating to the heritage listing of the building and Council funding priorities to be resolved first." (*The Bendigo Miner* 10 May 2012.)

FAWCETT HALL & PUBLIC LIBRARY (Est. 1882)

A garage sale is being staged at the hall at 655 Spring Creek Road, Fawcett on 6 October 2012 between 8am-1pm. The purpose is a fundraiser to purchase a fridge for the hall.

Then as a part of Children's Week 20-28 October 2012, there will be a **Baby and Toddler 2ndhand Clothes and Toy Expo** on Sunday 28 October between 10am-3pm.

The Hall's 130th Birthday Celebrations will take place over the weekend of 23-24 November. These will kick off with a movie night, with lights out at 7.30pm. There will be a separate movie for the children 'in the

front room'. Besides local catering, there will also be 'home made popcorn'.

On Saturday night, celebrations will continue with a bush dance and birthday supper. Music and dancing starts at 7.30pm with 'two professional instructors'. Supper will be at 9pm. The evening will conclude with a whip cracking demonstration at 10pm.

FISH CREEK MECHANICS' HALL (Est. 1899)

Film is alive and well at Fish Creek where the Promontory Coast Film Society screen movies on the first Friday of each month. The Institute was built around 1899 and has served the community well.

HUNTER PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1927)



The subdivision of the Elmore Estate (1921) and Burnewang Park Estate (1923) brought an influx of soldier settlers into the area. First the school was established in 1923. Following the establishment of the Hunter Progress Association in 1926 the site for a hall and tennis courts was donated by Henry Smith, but when he died in 1929, it was found that title still remained with the Closer and Soldier Settlement Board, so they had to pay the Board £11 for the land, a survey fee of £6.6s and a Crown Grant fee of £1.6s. Fortunately the Board did not value the 60'x30' hall and tennis courts that had been constructed on the site by that time. The hall opened on 26 October 1927 with a newly installed piano. The tennis courts having been opened a week previous.

The hall underwent a massive makeover for the 75th Anniversary Celebrations in 2002, but has languished since.

JAMIESON FREE LIBRARY MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1883)

The Jamieson Free Library Memorial Hall appears to have been built in 1883 as the Howqua Shire Hall and Offices. The Howqua Shire amalgamated with the Shire of Mansfield in 1919 and the hall was turned over to the community. It was then renovated and became the Jamieson Memorial Hall. It has recently had major renovations and a repaint in brown and cream livery in time for the 150th anniversary

celebrations. Adjacent to the hall is the well used community noticeboard.

KILMORE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

Kilmore 'The Mechanics' Institute without walls' continues its community roles with its various projects. One notable is 'Scaretactics' with the aim being for the local community to develop and exhibit their own scarecrows. Past showings include scarecrows sitting on the balcony at the local Hospital, sitting on second floor balcony rails, or just prostrate in the front garden of a house. Then there is the Annual Christmas Carols, with a sausage sizzle in the community Park and the arrival of Santa.

KINGLAKE WEST MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1906)

Built in 1908, the hall was completely refurbished by 2006. It played a critical role during the 2009 bushfires when it was open 24-hours a day provisioning firefighters and providing refuge for bewildered locals. Its accompanying reserve hosted a range of temporary establishments after the fires and the hall itself served as the local supermarket. Settling back to some normality the community now enjoys various entertainments that come by, the visits of which are made easier by a first rate public address system.

LANCEFIELD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)

Lancefield recently received \$4000 from the Macedon Ranges Council to fund the commission of a development masterplan. They've also recently catalogued their remnant library of some 200 books. Lancefield is home of the Lancefield Craft Market held on the fourth Saturday of each month commencing at 9am. Lancefield Mechanics' is also a designated Fire Refuge.

LILYDALE ATHENAEUM (Est. 1882)

Fresh from the receipt of thirteen Lyrebird Awards for its productions, The Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company have scheduled *The Calendar Girls* for the 7-24 November 2012 Season. Based on a Yorkshire Women's Institute, the film was a box office hit starring **Dame Helen Mirren**, which later travelled as the most successful play ever to tour the UK. Credit Card Bookings, Tel: 9735 9569, Monday, Tuesday, Friday 10am-2pm.

Lilydale's four productions achieved an eighty per cent house in 2011 and they don't disappoint. Recent airconditioning in the foyer and hall, the construction of joint toilet facilities with the Melba Museum and staging space has greatly enhanced the Lilydale theatre experience.

We note the passing of **Kath Hill**, who with her late husband **John**, contributed to the important musical and set building of past Athenaeum Theatre productions. Both names have been added to the Athenaeum's alumni wall. A worthy tribute. Check out The Athenaeum's website at: www.lilydaleatc.com.

MALDON ATHENAEUM LIBRARY (Est. 1863)

Our library continues to prosper with the addition of more bespoke shelving to accommodate our ever-growing book collection (nearly but not quite 18,000 but it won't be long before we hit that number). Also, lighting has been upgraded in several areas. During an exceptionally cold, wet winter, our Reading Room is a warm and cosy haven and we welcome all visitors.

The young mother of two of our junior members offered her services at the beginning of the year to organise a Story Time session on a Saturday once a month. Christine's enthusiasm was infectious and we happily agreed to a test. And what a fantastic event this has become with its popularity increasing each month to a point where the Children's Library is now bursting at the seams with small children, their parents or grandparents and happy noise! Truly wonderful. Each session has a theme and the children are encouraged to participate in associated handicrafts and songs. The session's popularity now extends well beyond Maldon's boundaries.

Maldon has a small population (between 1200 and 1500, some residents only "weekenders") but this has not stopped regular new applications for membership as we continue to add more names to our database. Approximately 500 members not a bad response in a small town but of course, the Maldon Athenaeum is unique and very beautiful. It is anticipated that in this digital age we shall continue to go from strength to strength.

Also, we have a flexible approach to special requests for titles and are happy to purchase any editions that will be of general interest.

Should anyone visiting our website wish to contact us, maldonlibrary@iprimus.com.au will initiate a fast response. We look forward to hearing from you, wherever you may be.

NEERIM JUNCTION MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1873/74)

Our Hall had a busy year 2011 with Squash weekly, Yoga 3 nights a week, a craft class weekly and a revue type show put on for two nights with about 180 people attending each night. We are hoping that 2012 is just as busy. Faye Bransgrove, Treasurer, Neerim Junction Hall Committee

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

Prahran is busy planning its exodus from its High Street, Prahran site in 2014. There have been meetings with architects to plan the layout of the new building for maximum use, as well as the physical packing and transport of the library and its archive collections to the new site. The works will include the installation of a lift to the second floor.

Prahran's membership has grown apace in recent years, in fact 55% in the last three years. This in itself makes it essential that more members can access lectures, workshops presently held in cramped quarters. Then there is the matter of exponential growth of the library which now exceeds 25,000

volumes. The prevalence of short-run publishing has enabled the production of more works in history. Their recent addition of the Ancestry Library Edition to their genealogical resources has been a further incentive for family history researchers to use the Prahran library. Website: pmi.net.au.

ROMSEY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1868)

Romsey was the recent recipient of a 2012 Bendigo Bank Community Grant of \$2000 to enable the purchase of chairs and tables. It seems it is 'payback' time, for the Institute hosted the Bendigo Community Bank during its establishment years.

SHEPPARTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1877)

Shepparton continues its long history of community service, fostering learning, recreation and social advocacy with the extensive rebuilding and modifications that have been made to the Wyndham Street complex. The new extensions and modifications were officially opened by the **Hon. Jeanette Powell** on Thursday, 14 June, 2012.

The Shepparton Mechanics' Institute was founded in 1877, constructed its first building, a weatherboard structure in 1880, and in 1888 a brick building was erected. It is this brick building that has been modified over the years. There was a major refurbishment in 2003, followed by this major extension in 2012.

The extensions include four new air conditioned meeting rooms. These will not only be available to local community organisations seeking a comfortable meeting place, but also add to the learning environment for Shepparton Access participants.

The long and distinctive history of the Shepparton Mechanics' Institute is reflected in the names given

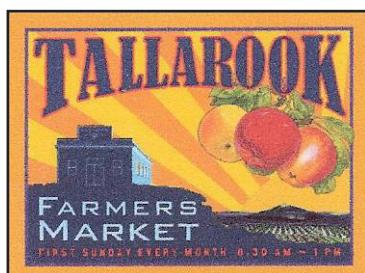
to the rooms at the complex. There is the **Joseph Furphy Reading Room**, and meeting rooms named after Shepparton identities: **Sir Andrew Fairley**, **Ralph Longstaff** and **Mal Erskine Jr.**

The Trustees of the Shepparton Mechanics' Institute and the Committee of Management of Shepparton Access are to be congratulated for their vision in working to create an institution that continues to serve as a social, learning and recreational centre for the local community.

SUNBURY MEMORIAL HALL (Est. 1883)

This started out as the Sunbury Mechanics' Institute in 1883. In 1885 the foundation stone was laid by **Lady Janet Clarke** and **Sir William Clarke** opened the building later that year. A room was added at the rear in 1895, possibly as a library. In accord with funding the building became known as Sunbury Memorial Hall after being remodelled and enlarged in 1922, for use as a picture theatre. It became the home of the Shire of Bulla offices in 1923. A fire gutted the building in 1938 and it was largely rebuilt to the design of Stuart Calder and opened in 1939. In 2009 the hall underwent a \$500,000 upgrade including the installation of a commercial kitchen. Today it is the home of the RSL, with the hall and meeting rooms being used for community purposes. Since the closing of the adjacent Stawell Street to through traffic it has become part of the Village Green Precinct which includes the War Memorial Cenotaph, the showcased historic Rupertswood Battery gun and the Starkie Fountain. Bordering the Village Green are also the St Mary's Anglican (1867) and St Andrew's Presbyterian, now Uniting (1870) churches.

TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1890)



The Tallarook Mechanics' Institute continues to surprise with their eclectic range of entertainments. In April they held a country rock music night and that was followed in May by comedian **Josh Earl**. The ever popular Sunday markets continue on the first Sunday of each month.

THE BASIN PROGRESS HALL (Built 1931)

Built in 1931, The Basin Progress Hall was built by The Basin Progress Association. Located adjacent to the busy Mountain Highway this hall continues to serve the community. In 1954 it was the first home of the now highly successful **Basin Theatre Group**. It was purchased in 2004 by Knox City Council and

has recent amenity upgrades, including a commercial kitchen. It is now managed by **The Basin Community House** which runs a range of classes in the building ranging from meditation, Taichi, dog grooming and belly dancing. Since 2005 it has been used by **The Basin Music Festival**, for its events, community markets and as a youth stage - The Big Break. As a fundraiser on the weekends volunteers serve tea and coffee with cakes or sandwiches in the hall when not otherwise in use. The hall is available for hire.

WAHGUNYAH SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1912)

Pioneer **John Foord** donated land for the original hall built in 1861, which was replaced by a building moved to the site in 1911 and was burnt in 1912. The present brick hall dates from 1912, with its building financed from the sale of debentures. Later two rooms were added to serve as a library and a meeting room. An adjoining block of land was purchased and a supper room was erected upon this. The hall has served the community well over the century, and to celebrate this landmark event, a weekend of festivities is planned for 26-27 October. It is hoped that people will bring along memorabilia, photos and artifacts to establish an historical collection in Wahgunyah. Further information: Brenda Watson on: (02) 6032 8060; or email btcms@bigpond.com.

WANDONG MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1902)

New life has again been breathed into the Institute with it being reopened to the public on Sunday 22 April 2012 after major renovation and refurbishment. It started with an 'Open Day' for community organisations and all were invited to set up a table promoting their Club. They also hire out trestles and chairs.

WARRANTYTE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1882)

The Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association have a number of active sub-groups namely, Craft, Painting, Pottery, Music and Theatre. The activities and achievements of these various sub-groups are described in exquisite detail in the Institute's monthly newsletter *The Artful Dodger*. This most interesting publication is available online at www.warrandytehallarts.asn.au/

In August the major event was a series of four one act plays — Ferris Wheel, Father's Day, A Talk in the Park and Android Upgrade. Directed by Simone Kiefer and Adrian Rice and produced by Dick Pengeley, each play brings a unique perspective on life and relationships. Ferris Wheel by Mary Miller is an unlikely love story set in an amusement park. A Talk in the Park by Alan Ayckbourn invokes a semblance of solitude until Arthur arrives. Fathers Day by Allan Williams explores the solitary world of an older man and Android Upgrade by Vee Malnar is funny and futuristic. Another performance of one act plays will be given on 12 and 13 of October.

Contributed by Allan Cornell via edodger.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

CANADA

MONTREAL MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & ATWATER LIBRARY



The Atwater is the last of Canada's Mechanics' Institutes. With the threat of funding withdrawal, unless the name was changed, they were left little option for survival.

Montreal Mechanics' Institute, established in 1828, however resolved to continue to promote their proud heritage. Since it moved into its present building in 1970, it has been a pioneer in adult education, starting computer education courses in the early 1980s. The 50,000 volume library still attracts specialist readers. A feature of The Atwater is its extensive volunteer base of some 170 people. Their assigned tasks range from hosting functions, collection and building maintenance to the gardening and plantings of the external manicured grounds. Long-time stalwart **Marshal Wansborough** is again back at the Atwater's helm.

IRELAND

CLONMEL CENTRAL COLLEGE

The Clonmel Mechanics' Institute was formed in 1842. Coaching and 'trucking' pioneer and entrepreneur **Charles Biaconi** (1786-1875), a sponsor of the Institute, laid the foundation stone of the building in 1845. The Institute commissioned John Joseph Lyons to design extensions in 1852. The second stage of the building was completed in 1858. In 1873 the building was passed over the Clonmel Literary Institute and in turn to the Clonmel Corporation after the Libraries Act, 1899 was adopted. This became known as Mulcahy House and in the 1960s was passed into the possession of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Clonmel Central College presently operates three campuses in Clonmel. Clonmel Mechanics' Institute has been subject for a recent University thesis by **Molly Doyle**.

MARSH'S LIBRARY - DUBLIN



Established as the first public library in Ireland in 1701 by **Archbishop Narcissus Marsh** (1638-1713), it was legislated as a 'publick library for ever'. The current Queen Ann building in St Patrick's Close, Dublin houses some 25,000 volumes in the original oak bookcases, as well as remnants of the original chained library.

Today Marsh's operates in almost every respect as an Institute. It hold lectures, mounts exhibitions, has a strong youth and educational outreaches, promotes the book arts and is a major community resource as a reference library and community repository.

Included in Marsh's recent '**Marvels of Science**' exhibition is the Library's copy of Giovanni Battista Riccioli's *Almagestum Novum* (1651) which shows Riccioli and Grimaldi's plans of the lunar landscape in great detail.

The Benjamin Guinness, Lord Iveagh (1937-1992) Library, after the death of his former wife in 2010, was recently donated to Marsh's Library by the Guinness family. It comprises some 5000 volumes with some rare manuscripts. The fine Irish bookbindings were also a feature of the collection. The collection will remain at 'Farmleigh' the mansion and 75 acre Guinness estate, which was acquired by the Irish Government in 1999 for use as a guest house for distinguished visitors. Access to the Guinness Collection can be arranged through Marsh's Library.

Marsh's operates the **Delmas Conservation Bindery**, which not only conserves its own books and manuscripts, but also does contract work for other institutions and private clients.

LIMERICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

This is the longest running Institute still in existence in Ireland. It appears to have been first mooted in 1832 and was established in 1836, with a building erected shortly thereafter. Since then there

have been a number of additions. In spite of the stated initial 'no political or religious' at the outset it soon became a lecture point for the use of all. Today it serves largely as a meeting space and hosts Trade Union tenants.

NEW ZEALAND

DUNEDIN ATHENAEUM & MECHANICS INSTITUTE

Established in 1851 by evangelist the Rev. Thomas Burns (1796?-1871). After being in temporary accommodation a site was acquired in the Octagon and a small hall was erected. In 1869-70 Watt & Co. built a brick and stone structure to a design of David Ross (1827-1908) which included a library, reading room, ladies' room and three classrooms. The Fortune Theatre was added later. This library still continues to open its reading room and lending collection to subscribers. In 2007 with mounting maintenance costs it was forced to sell its building to the Dunedin Corporation, who are working through a redevelopment plan for the Institute building, with one proposal being the development of an eight hundred seat 'boutique' theatre. In the meantime the Institute has life tenancy of the building. A recent reviewer noted its quiet ambience and 'everything is totally manual (and not a PC in the Place). Wow!'

The Dunedin Athenaeum has had a fair share of publicity with University of Otago's Centre for the Book making a push for UNESCO to recognise Dunedin as a Centre for Culture. It will also be the subject for exposure during the **Dunedin Third Rare Book School** in 2013.

THAILAND

NEILSON HAYS LIBRARY & GALLERIES, BANGKOK

Located adjacent to the British Club, in Surawong Road, the historic **Neilson Hays Library** is everything a Mechanics' Institute could be. The recently opened



Garden Gallery and Café is well catered for by the chefs from the nearby **British Club**. Lectures, exhibitions, workshops, music recitals, drama and children's programs, including storytelling, all go to complement 'Bangkok's Premier Collection of English Language Books'. It also plays a major part in the promotion of all forms of art, rotating exhibitions through its much sought after gallery spaces.

The building was erected in 1921-22 in memory of **Jennie Neilson Hays** (1850?-1920) for the Bangkok Ladies' Library Association which had been founded in 1869.

The library has been through various catastrophes including being sacked of its historic collection during World War II. Fortunately the catalogue remained and the historic 'Siamese Collection' has now been largely reassembled. The Library is under the patronage of the Thai King and Queen who make an annual official visit.

The striking building, designed by Italian architect, **Mario Tamagno** (1877-1941), has recently undergone roof restoration and a repaint.

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND

BATH ROYAL LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION

Established in 1824, Bath admirably hosted the memorable **Mechanics' Worldwide 2009 Conference**. Who could forget the atmospheric steam rising from the Roman Baths, walking the Royal Crescent, Geoffrey Forster's astute spontaneous observations of Stonehenge, the reading of the Conference Ode... and the Bath hospitality? Indeed we were amongst like-minded friends.

Bath's story of revival continues to inspire and demonstrate that the impossible is achievable. A diverse range of groups 'inhabit' the building and it's open house for coffee every Saturday morning for them to get together. Checkout Bath's extensive and challenging website www.brsls.org, where you can see Bath's intro video. Indeed 'There is something for everybody'. That is surely the challenge for every Institute.

LEEDS LIBRARY

Established above a bookshop in 1768, The Leeds Library is claimed to be the oldest private lending library in Britain. The current library building was constructed in Commercial Street in 1808. Today it houses around 140,000 books and has Special Collections of Civil War Pamphlets and Reformation Tracts. Some 800 members pay £75 each to join and can borrow up to thirty books at a time. Leeds was recently the subject of visit by **BBC Up North** crew and to view a clip of **Geoffrey Forster** talking up the Leeds Library, click on www.theleedslibrary.org.uk.

MANCHESTER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Newly styled as **The Mechanics' Conference Centre**, the former Institute has long been part of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) and from 2004 part of the newly formed University of Manchester. It was not a part of the building sell-off, as covenants restrict it to educational use.

Established in 1824 the Manchester Mechanics' Institute moved into the present Grade II listed building in Princess Street in 1855. The three-storey building was designed by JE Gregson in the Italian palazzo style and includes a basement and an attic. It has been the site of momentous events including: the founding of the Trade Union Congress in 1868; foundation of the Cooperative Insurance Society in 1867; and the formation of UMIST in 1883.

Until recently the building served as a museum for Trade Union memorabilia and archives and administration centre. Today the building offers meeting rooms from six to 180 people with ancillary services from staging to catering. *Now if those walls could speak!*

NEW MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, SWINDON

The longrunning saga and fate of the Swindon Mechanics' Institute has played out another chapter. BBC News Wiltshire carried the story on 5 September 2012 that the building owner, Forefront Estates Ltd. was 'struck off' by Companies House for failing to file its accounts on time.

This follows Swindon Borough Council entering the property to do urgent repairs to the Grade II listed building in 2010 which amounted to some £400,000. Council billed Forefront Estates for the works and later had the matter dealt with in Court. Subsequent essential works has lifted Council's repair bill to around £1.2 million.

The New Mechanics' Institute, Swindon was built in 1854 for workers on the Great Western Railway and the derelict building was offered to Council in 1986 for £1, an offer which was declined. It subsequently sold for private development for £50,000, then £250,000 in 1988, then to the present owner for £500,000 in 2003.

The Mechanics' Institute Trust has played a proactive role in the preservation of the Institute building commenting on various development plans and finally formulating a proposed development plan for commercial and community use to ensure ongoing viability of the site. These plans include a: Forum with seating for 200; Boutique Cinema with seating for 140; Conference Suite with Meeting Rooms; Youth Venue; Theatre/Auditorium with 300 seats; range of specialist shops; and a restaurant. It is expected that the finished cost could be around £12 million. Substantial funding of course would be dependent upon Council or Public ownership.

The full story of the ongoing saga can be seen at www.mechanics-trust.org.uk. Their website also contains a link to **Buildings, Books and Blackboards**

MW 2012 – Melbourne. Many thanks to those concerned.

PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY LIBRARY



The Plymouth Publick Library was established in 1810 and initial subscribers were required to contribute thirty guineas each and soon had its own architect designed building in central Plymouth. Its name was changed to the Plymouth Proprietary Library in 1876. During World War II, it was bombed in 1941 and most of its 45,000 book collection was destroyed. (Fortunately some rare items were in storage with Lloyds Bank.) It reopened at its present North Hill two-storey premises in 1942 and has assembled a 17,500 collection with an emphasis on recreational reading, travel, biography and regional history. With a rear courtyard, members can retreat there with their lunch and utilise the tea and coffee making facilities which are on site. The library has copying and computer facilities. It hosts a Writers' Group and runs open days. The Proprietary even has sole rights to two street front car parks which members can use to pick and drop off books. Info: www.plymouthproprietarylibrary.org.uk.

NORTHERN IRELAND

LINEN HALL LIBRARY, BELFAST

It is ironic that sectarian strife which brought the Linen Hall Library within a hair's breadth of its extinction, should now be holding an unrivalled collection of some 250,000 items recording that strife. In the face of closure from the constant violent actions in front of the building, a brave group resolved to hang on. Today, after redevelopment, the Linen Hall is a vibrant exhibition, performing arts, meeting and conference space, in addition to its unparalleled Irish and Local Studies Collection, which has been assembled since the Linen Hall Library was established in 1788. It also runs a publishing program based on its rich collection of prints and books. Nobel Laureate **Seamus Heaney** pays a fine tribute by saying 'No institution in Northern Ireland has done more to

promote enlightenment and represent a better future for all citizens' than the Linen Hall Library. Check out the website: www.linenhall.com.

LURGAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Established at 67 Market Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh in 1857, the Lurgan Mechanics' Institute, Library and News Room building survived a fire in 1868. The Town Hall was built next door in 1868 at 69 Market Street on the corner of Union Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh to a design by William Raffles Brown (1822-1866). The Institute's library role was taken over by Council and conducted from the Town Hall basement in 1891. The library was transferred to the new Lurgan Carnegie Library built in 1902. The Town Hall was converted to a temporary Police Station and Barracks in 1972, and passed over to the use of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. After they vacated the building it was purchased by the Mechanics' Institute and is now also part of a much used four-floor



venue for community functions and conferences. It assembles strong darts, draughts and soccer teams that participate in local competitions. One of the building's regular users is the **Man[chester] City Supporters Club** and this may explain the light and dark blue painted livery of the building.

SCOTLAND

WESTERKIRK LIBRARY, BENTPATH

Located in the Dumfries and Galloway countryside one would not expect to come across the oldest existing lending library in Scotland, established in 1793. Housed in its Grade II 1840s recently restored building the 8000 book collection contains remnants of the original collection. The library was originally located at Jamestown for the use of the miners and when the Westerhall Mining Co.'s antimony mine closed in 1799-1800 it was moved to the school. Engineer **Thomas Telford** (1757-1834) is believed to have used the library as a young man and that is why he left an endowment in his will, amounting to some £2700. Interest on this sum has allowed for annual purchases of books about Telford or related subjects. Such books carry the embossed stamp 'Telford



Legacy'. A memorial to Telford was erected in grey Creetown granite in front of the library in 1928.

The **Westerkirk Parish Library Trust** raised some £300,000 to restore the building between 1992-97. Today the library is open on the first Monday of the month and borrowing from the collection is limited to district residents only.

THE DUNBLANE INSTITUTE



Located in High Street, the Dunblane Institute and Church Hall was erected in 1907 on the Balhaldie House vegetable garden site by the Dunblane Reading and Amusement Association (est. 1889) from their own resources. It is stated that they 'rejected a generous offer from Andrew Carnegie'. Today the complex houses various community services including the busy reference and lending library. It has a meeting room and an exhibition space for hire. (The billiard tables are still remembered as being a hive of activity until quite recent times.) The library is administered from Stirling.

Quite nearby the Institute is the historic **Leighton Library** located in the Dunblane Cathedral grounds, which was established by the will of **Archbishop Robert Leighton** (1611-84). He left money to construct the quaint two-storey building to house his library for the use of the clergy of the Dunblane Diocese of which he was Bishop (1661-70). Borrowing ceased around 1840. In addition to Leighton's original collection of 1400 books, a further 3100 were subsequently added. Some eighty-nine languages are



represented in the collection, with an early **Book of Psalms** from 1504. The building was restored in the 1980s and the library is now open for use or viewing by appointment where people can still see the original 'Twelve chairs of turkie red leather'.

WALES

ST DEINIOL'S, NOW GLADSTONE'S LIBRARY, Harwarden, Flintshire

'Thinking... we've been doing it for over one hundred years. It's just our name that's changed'. As a part of the renaissance to survival, this explains the recent name change to '**Gladstone's Library at St Deiniol's**'. This was once the home of former British Prime Minister **William Ewart Gladstone** (1809-98) and still holds his 32,000 volume library and private archive.

Today Gladstone's Library is the largest most important historical research library in Wales after the National Library in Aberystwyth, and comprises a collection of 250,000 volumes, including a substantial Irish section, which attracts attention from scholars around the world.

The large religious collection has very recently been augmented by the significant **Don Cupitt Archive**. The Rev. Professor Cupitt (1934-) is a former Anglican clergyman, and noted philosopher, broadcaster and religious commentator over six decades. He is currently based at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.



The library attracts writers-in-residence, conducts lectures and workshops, and offers accommodation to scholars or the public. It has excellent fare at its new **Food for Thought Coffee Shop**, where people can drop by for lunch.

People use the centre for 'retreats' where they can enjoy the peace and quiet of the surrounding grounds or village. A modern new conference centre has done much to ensure the ongoing viability of Gladstone's Library as a unique resource for clergy and laity alike.

At the 9 July Founder's Day Luncheon, Gladstone's Warden, the **Rev. Peter Francis** announced the launch of the two-year '**Re:Defining Liberalism Project**'. 'This project has to have many strands as liberalism means such a variety of things to so many different people. The responses we have had so far already show how differently it is interpreted across different cultures and in a variety of countries across the world. It is a truly fascinating project...'. (The same sentiments could be equally applied to how Mechanics' Institutes operate and are defined today.)

Founder's Day also provided the opportunity to announce the three annual Fellowships which are awarded to people who have made significant academic contribution to: Gladstone studies; divine learning; or the liberal arts and those who have shown exceptional support to Gladstone's library.

Gladstone's Library was a participant in Wales' Open Door Program in August and volunteer **Friends of the Gladstone Library** lead regular tours of the building and grounds.

NEWBRIDGE INSTITUTE & MEMORIAL HALL - Monmouthshire

The large £5.2 million restoration of the Grade II listed **Celyn Collieries Institute** (opened in 1908) and **Newbridge Memorial Hall** (opened in 1924) is now well underway. A 'Topping Out Ceremony' was conducted on the Memo's rooftop on 29 August to celebrate the completion of the restoration and reslating of the large roof structure, which had begun by Seddon Constructions in January. So with the water kept out, the interior refurbishment will now proceed. This has been a major task for The Stute & Memo Trustees' Chair **Howard Stone** and his small band of helpers over the past decade. At the ceremony Howard stated 'This is fantastic news... Huge thanks must be given to all those who have kept the belief that was once a dream will now become a reality'. (We know the feeling!)

It has certainly been a long haul since the cinema projectors (still in place) went silent in 1972, ironically after packed audiences viewed '*The King and I*'. Then the mines closed in 1980. The Stute and Memo were the subject for a **BBC Restoration** program in 2004 and this focussed national attention on their plight and the assistance of a development grant from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**. The HLF have finally

contributed £2.9 million, along with £2.2 million from the **Welsh Assembly Government**, to the project

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

US MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES TO MEET

Following on the success of last year's **New York Society Library** (est. 1754) meeting organised by **Mark Bartlett**, the 23rd 'Annual' Membership Libraries meeting will be held at the **Providence Athenaeum**, Providence, Rhode Island.

The Providence's Executive Director **Alison Maxell** will host the occasion on the weekend of 2-4 November. Providence Athenaeum was the result of the 1836 merger of the Providence Library Company (est. 1753) and the Athenaeum Library (est. 1831).

Located in its William Strickland (1788-1854) designed 1838 building, Providence hosts an exceptional heritage library, including early juvenile fiction. The **Sayles Gorham Children's Library** has occupied its own space in the building since 1977 and is well stocked with books, DVDs, and stuffed toys and animals. The 'Sayles' is a vital part of an aggressive outreach and annual Friends [fundraising] Campaign. Nearby Brown University regularly provides speakers for its innovative lecture program.

LA JOLLA ATHENAEUM MUSIC & ARTS LIBRARY



La Jolla started out its life as an 'all women's group' in 1893. Languishing in the early 1990s a group of citizens decided to give it redirection and in the interim its membership has grown to 2500 members.

La Jolla's programs attract a far greater participation through its community related lectures, music, particularly jazz, recitals, art exhibitions and workshops and the development of specialist library collections. Not all events are held at 'headquarters' allowing the attendance of larger audiences and extra profit towards other Institute projects. Two of their collections in particular rank in national significance – The **Bach Collection** of sheet music, recorded music and books and the **Fred and Erika Torri Art Books Collection**, highlighting the various book arts of design, papermaking, printing and binding.

Sponsorship and planned giving have been the major means to enable building redevelopment and extension. The promotion of new arts-related talent is also bearing fruit, with 'alumni' returning for 'advanced' thank you sessions.

Indeed watch the video interview with the **Joan and Irwin Jacobs Executive Director Erika Torri** at www.ljathenaeum.org. Erika has been the constant of the American Membership Libraries Group since it was formed in the early 1990s. *The San Diego Times* rightly states 'There are few libraries in America as unusual as the Athenaeum Music and Arts Library'.

WORKING MEN'S INSTITUTE, NEW HARMONY – Indiana

This was established in 1814 as the Harmonie Society by German religious and separatist leader **Father Johann Georg Rapp** (1757-1847). The 20,000 acre site was acquired by Welsh industrialist **Robert Owen** (1771-1858) in 1825 who renamed it New Harmony. Its citizens established a free library, a public school system open to all, and a 'civic drama group'. Owen's sons also became residents: Congressman **Robert Dale Owen** (1801-77) sponsored the legislation to create the Smithsonian Institution; geologists **David Dale Owen** (1807-60) and **Richard Owen** (1804-92) did much to establish New Harmony as a centre for the US Geological Survey, which assembled a community of scientists and educators; and **William Owen** (1802-42) became the community's financial and business administrator, as well as being a founding member of the New Harmony Thespian Society and the Posey County Agricultural Society.

Among the intellectuals attracted to New Harmony was **Cornelius Tiebout** (1773-1832) a skilled artist, engraver and printer. He taught printing and published the bi-monthly newspaper *Disseminator of Useful Knowledge* from 1826 until his death in 1832. He also started a publishing program of influential scientific works which continued past his death.



In 1979 New Harmony's **Atheneum** or the Athenaeum Visitor's Centre was opened as an entrance to the historic village. The striking three-storey structure was designed by **Richard Meier** and it went on to win numerous design and architecture

awards. It comprises a 200-seat auditorium where visitors see a seventeen minute movie on the history of New Harmony. The gift shop comprises 1/32 scale model of the Harmonist Brick Church. One gallery features the various individuals in New Harmony's history. Another gallery contains a 1/120 scale model of New Harmony in 1824. Tours of New Harmony start from the Atheneum which provides a commanding view over the Indiana State designated Historic Site and surrounding landscape.

New Harmony's enduring history was recognised in 1937 with the establishment of the New Harmony Memorial Commission. In 1937 it identified the site as the New Harmony State Memorial, but it later became the New Harmony State Historic Site. In 1965 New Harmony was assessed by the **National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings** and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. In 1973 a second New Harmony Memorial Commission was established along with the private non-profit Historic New Harmony Inc. with funding from the Lilly Endowment. The boundaries of the Designated Historic site were expanded in 2000 to include more



buildings.

Included in the site is the Working Men's Institute established in 1838 by geologist **William Maclure** (1763-1840). The Institute's buildings include the present three-storey brick library and museum constructed in 1894 and the three-storey **Murphy Auditorium** which was built in 1913, both of which were endowed by longtime New Harmony resident and philanthropist **Dr Edward Murphy** (1813-1900). The library remains as the oldest continuous library in Indiana. (Indiana went on to have 144 Working Men's Institutes.) Today, **The Friends of the Working Men's Institute** also play a prominent role in the conduct of events around the Institute.

The establishment of New Harmony has been described as being like an exploding rocket, and the resulting sparks continued to burn as an after glow for almost a century. An apt description for the establishment and continuance of an Institute.

The associated **Paul Tillich** (1886-1965) **Park**, dedicated in 1963, commemorates the twentieth century theologian. Located on elevated ground, the park features a stand of evergreen Norwegian Spruce and a walking track along which is placed a series of

large stones with quotations from Tillich's writings. His ashes lie beneath one which carries the quotation 'And he shall be like a tree planted by the river of water that bringeth forth his fruit for his season. His leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper'.

New Harmony celebrates its bicentennial in 2014 and this might be a time to visit this unique and fascinating site. The New Harmony Working Men's Institute is a member of MIV.

CINCINNATI OMICAS' EMERY BUILDING AT 100

Built in 1911 as the home of the **Ohio Mechanics' Institute's College of Applied Science** trades school, The **Thomas J Emery** (1830-1906) **Building** also included the Emery Auditorium for 'civic use'. The project was largely endowed by **Mrs Mary Muhlenburg 'Lady Bountiful' Emery** (1844-1927) in memory of her late husband and the architect for the project was Cincinnati's Samuel Hannaford & Sons.

The theatre complex comprised seating for 2,200 patrons and included acoustics which were based on principles utilised by British engineer **John Scott Russell** (1808-82).

Initially it was the home of Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra until 1936, after which it became the home of the American Theatre Organ Society from 1969-99.

In the meantime OMICAS had amalgamated with the University of Cincinnati in 1969 and the University vacated the building in 1988.

Between 1999-2001, the University undertook a \$10 million redevelopment of the student portion to create the Emery Center Apartments, which comprised 59 apartments, parking, office and retail



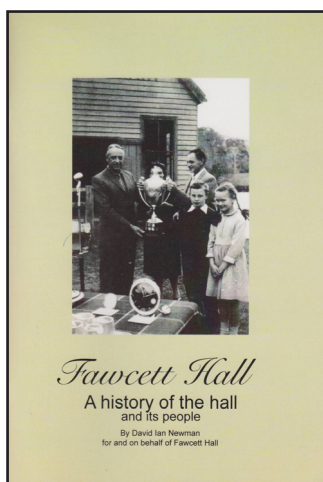
space.

The Auditorium with its world class acoustic properties was left for limited public use under the management of Emery Centre Corporation. In 2008 this was taken over by the **Requiem Project** which has driven the restoration and redevelopment of the Auditorium since then, with a major event: '**11.11.11, a Review of The Emery**', to celebrate the centenary of the building. The sell-out event has fast-tracked the future use of the building, including by the Cincinnati Film Festival.

BOOK REVIEWS

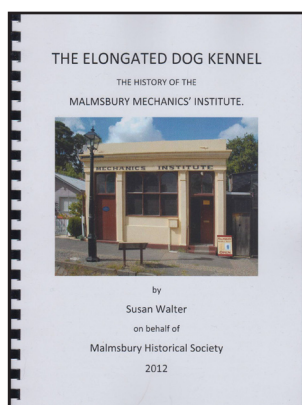
Tale of Two Libraries: Bonnie Doon 1897-2012 by Corinne Brewis. Paperback. A4, 40p. Details the history of two buildings, the first of which, the Doon Mechanics' Hall, was sold into private ownership and used as a shop, and moved to the new Bonnie Doon township in 1955, and the second building, the Bonnie Doon Free Library, which was recently moved to a central point in town to again serve as the community library. This booklet is in press and will be launched on 24 November at Bonnie Doon. It will be available from: Bonnie Community Centre, Box 150, Bonnie Doon, V 3729. \$20, posted.

Fawcett Hall: A History of the Hall and its People by David

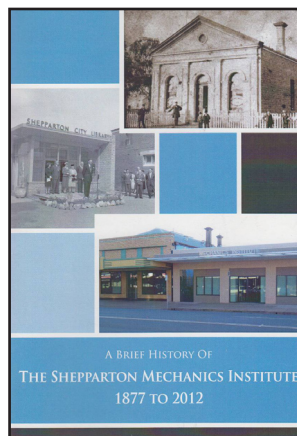


Ian Newman. Paperback, saddlestitched. 72 pages, illustrated with photos, maps and documents. 2012. Here's the story of a small community hall that 'phoenix like' flies again to protect its remnant library and the community's heart. Available from: Fawcett Mechanics' Institute (David Newman), 643 Spring Creek Road, Fawcett, V 3714. \$25, posted.

The Elongated Dog Kennel: The History of the Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute by Susan Walter. Paperback, comb-bound, A4. x, 146p, illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. 2012. This book traces the development and use of the site from: a Caroline Chisholm goldfields shelter shed (built 1856); Council Offices (1862); Malmsbury Mechanics' Institute (established 1862); Federal Hall (built 1895); and today's home for the Malmsbury region's historical record and an Institute remnant library. This is very much a blueprint for a Mechanics' history: reproduction of newspaper references; black and white and coloured photos; referenced text; recent building uses; a known membership list; bibliography; and an excellent index. Available from: Malmsbury Historical Society, Box 113, Malmsbury, V 3446. \$30.00, posted.



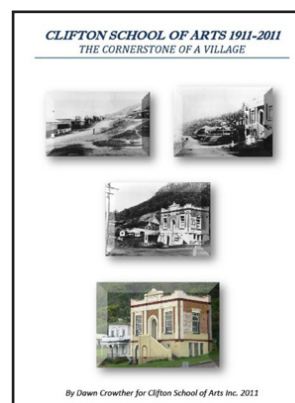
A Brief History of the Shepparton Mechanics' Institute



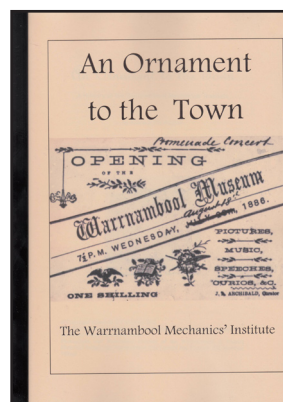
1877-2012 by Patrick Crudden. Paperback, saddlestitched. 26 pages, illustrated with photos. 2012. The Shepparton Free Library and Workingman's Club was formed in 1877 and they obtained a land grant for 'Mechanics' Institute' purposes. Several groups were formed on the Mechanics' including the Chess and Cricket Clubs. Since the early days and

down through the years a successive group of shrewd trustees have cannily repositioned the Institute into advantageous situations, thus benefiting the wider community. It is a slim volume but there are good ideas to be learned from it. Available from: Shepparton Mechanics' Institute, 227 Wyndham Street, Shepparton, V 3630. Free

Clifton School of Arts 1911-2011: The Cornerstone of a Village by Dawn Crowther.



Paperback. 136 pages, 100 photos and illustrations. 2011. This culminates a good luck story and the refurbishment of an iconic Institute located south of Sydney 'perched on a cliff high above the Pacific Ocean' with enviable ocean views. A community building since 1911, but in a totally derelict state by 1996, it has been recently restored. It is now an exceptional community meeting, performing and exhibition space, with workshops running throughout the winter period. Available from: Clifton School of Arts, 338 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Clifton, NSW 2515. \$30.00, posted.

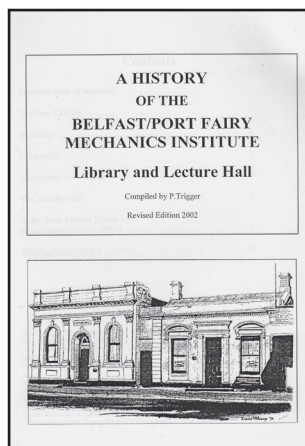


An Ornament to the Town: The Warrnambool Mechanics' Institute by Elizabeth O'Callaghan. Paperback. 68p, illustrated, bibliography, index. 2011. Established in 1854 the Warrnambool Mechanics' Institute provided a library service; played a role in the

development of technical education in the district from 1873; conducted early exhibitions of arts and manufactures; and established a museum and art gallery in 1886. Council purchased the Institute in 1911 for £250 and the museum was located there from the old Court House, which was then taken over by the newly established Warrnambool Technical School. A valuable plan of the Institute in the 1930s-40s shows the various collections then held. There is some interesting detective work done of the fates of the art gallery, museum, book and newspaper collections. The art works are largely in the new Warrnambool Art Gallery. The museum collection was dissipated, whilst portion of the important remnant library is housed in the Warrnambool Municipal Library, with the remainder, with the newspaper collection, available at Flagstaff Mechanics' Institute at Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village. The book contains three valuable appendices: the 'Rules of the Warrnambool Mechanics' Institution (1859)'; 'Selected extracts from the *Warrnambool Examiner* Editorial of March 28th 1871 – probable writer – Henry Laurie'; and biographies of 'Some Notable Persons in the History of the Warrnambool Mechanics' Institute'. This is a fascinating read of an Institute building that ceased to exist in 1975, but its history continues. Available from: Warrnambool Historical Society, Warrnambool, 2 Gilles Street, V 3280. \$15.00, posted.

History of the Belfast/Port Fairy Mechanics Institute Library and Lecture Hall

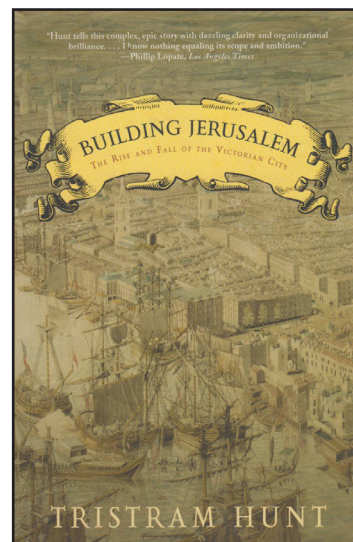
by Pearl Trigger. Revised Edition 2002. Paperback. 42p, illustrated, bibliography, index. 2011. This is a revised edition of Pearl Trigger's 1970 history. Whilst gestation appears to have started in 1856, the Belfast Mechanics' Institute was not officially established until 1860. The extant 1866 set of rules 'The Belfast Mechanics'



Institute has for its objects, the diffusion of Literary, Scientific and other useful knowledge among its members, to the exclusion of all controversial subjects, whether religious or political.' Lectures filled the early life of the Institute as did the establishment of a library and the adjoining hall. Excellent plans of the phases of the two buildings, newspaper extracts, list of officebearers and librarians and a range of historical pictures are included. In addition, the library holds several original cartoons including ones by Dyson, Leason, Reynolds, Gregory and Chidley, as well as framed prints. Available from: Port Fairy Historical Society, Box 152, Port Fairy, V 3284. \$20.00, posted.

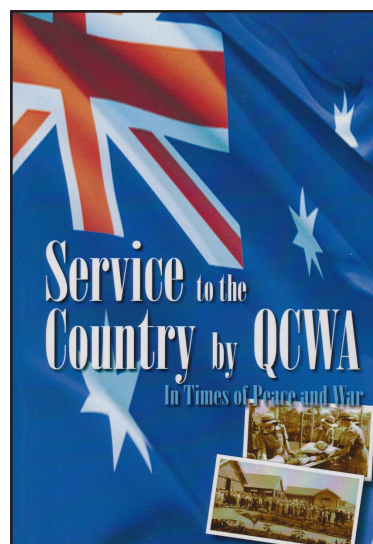
Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City by Tristram Hunt. Paperback. 576 pages. New

York: Owl Books, Henry Holt, 2005. This thought provoking work takes lines from William Blake's poem 'And was Jerusalem builded here/ Among those dark Satanic mills?' alluded to with steaming smokestacks in the recent Opening Ceremony of the 2012 Olympics. Hunt's hypothesis is that communities evolve best from within and best



without external governmental influence. The role of the Mechanics' had a lasting influence and may well have been the reason England did not have 'its own' French Revolution. People could meet in Institutes and debate and discuss issues which affected them, with little Government interference. And whilst politics and religion were 'no go' zones, science and education certainly were. Indexed, with an extensive bibliography, it is a long but memorable thought provoking read. Available from: Book Grocers, Melbourne, etc., was \$10.00.

Service to the Country by QCWA: In Times of Peace



and War by Norma Lovelace. Paperback. 80 pages, illustrated. 2012. A fascinating look at what goes on in and around Queensland Country Women's Association meeting places, many of their own and others being Schools of Art. Some trivia includes the 36,757,000 pounds in weight of food sent to Britain

between 1945 and 1948. There were 7,110,000 parcels sent to Britain between 1940 and 1948. All this was appreciated and drew many letters, even one from Yorkshire's Goathland (**Heartbeat** Country). Between 2011 and early 2012 Queensland CWA distributed \$281,000 to flood and cyclone victims. It is an interesting read and there has to be a PhD there for unravelling the diverse role of the Mechanics' Hall in times of war and peace. Available from: Queensland Country Women's Association, 89-95 Gregory Terrace, Brisbane, Q 4000. \$11.20, posted.

THE HISTORY PAGE

NORTH ADELAIDE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE:

The First Thirty Years

King William Street, one of Adelaide's majestic roads bisects the Central Business District and leads past the Festival Centre, across the River Torrens, past the Adelaide Oval and St Peter's Cathedral to the leafy suburb of North Adelaide.

Here King William St. becomes O'Connell St. and about half way along, Tynte St. intersects O'Connell St. A grand two storey building stands about midblock in Tynte St. west, which houses what was the North Adelaide Institute and the local Post and Telegraph Office. The foundation stone was laid in September 1883 and the building opened in 1884.

Documents on display during South Australia's *About Time*, their History Festival in May 2012, indicated that the North Adelaide Mechanics' Institute was established at a meeting in August 1851. A subsequent search of early newspapers revealed that the *original* Mechanics' Institute was built in Ward St. That would appear "normal" – an Institute starts at one location and ends up at another some years later. But on the surface, a few of the displayed dates did not seem to make much sense. My journey to attempt to clarify the history of the N.A. Mechanics' Institute had commenced!

The Register reported that the first AGM of the institute was held in October 1851. In 1901, *The Advertiser* reported the sixteenth AGM being held on 19 July 1901. Only 15 Annual General Meetings in 50 years? A brass plaque within the present building, unveiled by the Lord Mayor on 15 October 1984, is inscribed: "to commemorate the occasion of 110 years of community use of the North Adelaide Institute". Yes, 110 years of this particular building maybe, but surely 123 years from those initial meetings in 1851!

So are we reviewing the one North Adelaide Institute or a number of perhaps disjointed organisations, all bearing the same name? Attempting to clarify the growth and development of the Institute was revealing and rewarding on a number of fronts. Much of this article is based on newspaper reports found on Trove, the N.L.A.'s on-line newspaper data base together with observations made at the present building.

The Beginning

There is little doubt that a meeting was held to consider the establishment of a Mechanics' Institute on the 12 August 1851, followed by a Public Meeting two weeks later. The First General Meeting of the Institute was held on 7 October 1851.

The ensuing years saw the embryonic Institute enduring lack of interest followed by enthusiastic involvement only to slide back into dormancy. Some of this "sluggishness" was undoubtedly due to the

effect of the Victorian Gold Rush. Almost overnight some 16000 people left the Colony of South Australia and contributed to Victoria's population explosion. Between 1851 and 1854 Victoria's population grew from 29,000 to 123,000.

About a year after the First General Meeting, *The Register* reflected: "We are happy to announce that this institution is not only recovering from its late prostration, but that arrangements are being made for a series of lectures on Chemistry, by Mr. H. Watson, each lecture to be followed by a musical entertainment".

There must have been a hiatus in lectures because a later newspaper report in June 1853 stated that Mr Watson's lectures had resumed, one dealing with the importance of carbon: "How wonderful that substance which we have seen brilliant and transparent in the diamond, opaque in charcoal, ponderous in limestone, incombustible in carbonic acid, highly combustible in carbureted hydrogen, sweet in sugar, tasteless in starch, acid in vinegar — that we should find this substance entering into the composition of every vegetable, of every animal, of man himself."

During those early years, meetings took place at various venues including the Christchurch schoolroom, the Lodge-room behind the Queens Head Hotel (est. 1839) in Kermode Street and others in O'Connell St.

In August 1853 the Institute sought exemption from council rates, as presumably land had been registered in its name. This was followed a month later by a request to council for permission to remove stone from parks "for the purpose of constructing a building".

The First Institute building

Jubilation! On 18 November 1853 a foundation-stone was laid for a library and reading room in Ward St. N.A. *The Register* reported the ceremony and quoted the president, Mr. Peter Cumming, as saying:

"...This Association shall be denominated the 'North Adelaide Institute,' for the encouragement of science, art, and industry, by means of a library, reading room, museum, model-room, lectures, and classes for study; also, by periodical exhibitions, for the purpose of making known scientific discoveries and inventions. It has been deemed advisable to prohibit religious and political discussions...." The building project moved swiftly because in January 1854 the Institute commenced occupancy of its rooms in Ward St. *The Register* reported: "The plan comprises a reading-room 13 feet by 14 feet, which is already finished, a committee-room of the same dimensions, and a lecture room 50 feet by 30 feet,

with communications for the contemplated model-room and museum.”

It is interesting to note that the President clearly used the name the “North Adelaide Institute”. Most documentation including official records however, included “Mechanics” in the name. “Polytechnic Institute” was used in a speech on 25 August 1851, but was corrected immediately by Mr. Cumming in reply. There was further progress in February 1854 when a lantern slide projector was obtained and a lecture entitled, “An Hour with the Poets”, was delivered.

Reference to the council’s rate book for 1855, the earliest available at the Adelaide City Archives, shows that annual rates of 15/- (\$1.50) were payable by trustees of the North Adelaide Mechanics’ Institute, for their property on part of Town Acreage 772 located in Ward Street. This is near the present corner of Walter Street. Mr. P. Cumming was also shown as part owner of Acreage 772. He donated money and the land to establish the institute building but problems soon arose in legalities associated with the Institute’s trust deed. Unfortunately today, there are no signs of the original building. Michael Talbot’s book, *A Chance to Read – A History of the Institutes Movement in South Australia*, indicates that office-bearers of the Institute resigned over problems concerning the trust deed for the land donated by Peter Cumming.

In August 1854, *The Register* reported that: “the North Adelaide Institute is in anything but such a flourishing condition as its originators anticipated it would by this time have reached”! More research needs to be done about this period, but it is apparent that the original institute stumbled and fell!

The Second Reincarnation?

By December 1858 some form of reformation seems to have taken place and “another institute” had been established. The Institute’s library was now located in the supper room of the new N.A. Masonic Lodge. A newspaper report of the opening of the Lodge Hall included the following reference to the institute: “The supper-room is at present used for the library of the new North Adelaide Institute - a Society which bids fair to be a very nourishing one. It has already bought all the books belonging to the old Institute, and we understand that after paying for them there will be about £80 in hand for fresh purchases”.

In 1861 the population of North Adelaide reached 3418, living in 824 dwellings and generally the hardships of the earlier years were behind most. But then unfortunately, further years of economic difficulty beset South Australia and little information about activities at the Institute could be located. In fact, South Australia was in severe economic depression from 1867. A run of bad seasons had ruined harvests. Copper and wool prices were low, unemployment was high and many people were migrating to Victoria and New South Wales.

By June 1871 the colony’s economy had improved and the population in North Adelaide grew to about 5164. The 1870-71 wheat harvest was a record and

high prices for wool and copper stimulated trade. The turn-around in economic circumstances resulted in a continually growing population, demand for houses and goods and prosperity.

North Adelaide Institute - ver.3 born

December 1881 saw a meeting to discuss the establishment of a “public institute” in North Adelaide. About 100 people attended and speakers went out of their way to make clear that it was a public institute under consideration – not a private or sectarian reading room “as had been the case some eight years ago when the Temperance Hall was used”.

So after much turmoil, the good people of North Adelaide once again became re-focused. They were on a mission and a major turning point had been reached in the life of the North Adelaide Institute!

What was really at the root of the failure of the original institutes? Was it personalities, disagreements over potential use by religious organisations, or plain lack of support due to unfortunate timing and the economic climate?

Peter Wolfenden

SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

SDUK was created by Mechanics’ Institute pioneer Lord Henry Brougham and former teacher and later barrister Matthew Davenport Hill and their colleagues to produce informative texts for schools and libraries. Such a program was vital to their objective to influence the whole spectrum of education from primary education through the Infantile School Society (est. 1824), the London Mechanics’ Institution (est. 1823) and other Institutes, and the University of London, later University College, London (est. 1826).

The publishing program was superintended by the dynamic Charles Knight, a man of great aptitude and editorial skills. SDUK’s aim was twofold to ‘give the people books which might convey knowledge to uneducated person, or person imperfectly educated’ and to ‘reduce the price of scientific and other useful works to the community generally’.

SDUK was launched in 1827 with texts on a whole range of subjects written by experts and closely printed on thirty-two pages, to sell for sixpence.

Further projects ensued: maps (1830); *Quarterly Journal of Education* (1831); *Penny Magazine* (1832); and *Penny Cyclopaedia* (1833).

The project from the outset was successful. By 1845 intense competition and commit to large projects caused publishing to cease.

However many of SDUK’s titles continued to be published late into the 1800s, with a number being translated in German, French, and Spanish.

Jim Lowden

OUR PEOPLE

Graham Hughes

Our long-time Treasurer Graham and his wife have taken a trip to the UK to visit family. They have also taken in some time in France.

Philip Candy

Professor Philip Candy has returned to Australia from his appointment in England and is now ensconced at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba Campus. There he is Professor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Learning). Philip's early work with John Laurent, on Mechanics' Institutes Australia-wide *Pioneering Culture* (1994) is a much used text on MI history.

Ivar Nelsen

Heritage architect and supporter of the Mechanics' Institute movement, Ivar Nelsen has not been idle. Following on the restoration of **Frankston Mechanics' Institute** he has been working on the restoration of **Fawcett Mechanics' Institute**. Ivar is also Heritage Advisor to the Surf Coast, Mansfield and Alpine Shire Councils. Ivar recently conducted a seminar at Bright titled 'Living with the past, not in the past' where he stated 'Heritage can be celebrated as an active part of an exciting future and not just a static remnant of the past'.

Richard Wendorf

Former Boston Athenaeum Director, Dr Richard Wendorf took up the Directorship of the **American Museum in Britain** in 2010. As the only museum of Americana outside the USA, it opened in the Claverton Manor in 1961 just outside Bath. In its rural setting it showcases an Arboretum of American trees. Richard has not been idle with the opening last year of the Folk Art Gallery, Stables and Coach House. The museum hosts lectures, workshops, re-enactments and exhibitions and always is a busy place.

Roger Morris

We are glad to hear that Professor Roger Morris is 'much better now' and has regained mobility. We are looking forward to catching up with him at **MW 2012** in November.

Sydney MW 2012 Delegation

Four Directors of Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts will be attending MW 2012 in Melbourne in November. They are **Peter Clancy, Winsome Allen, John Robinson** and **Alister Wong**.

A NOTE FROM

JILL BARTHOLOMEUSZ

Sometimes it is hard to believe that I was Head Librarian at the Melbourne Athenaeum for seven years! Since leaving the library in June 2010, after a few months to recover and think things through, I am now employed in two part time positions.

I work three days as an administrator with an Engineering Company called Calibre Global, in Collins Street, Melbourne. Calibre Global is an engineering services and project delivery company. We design and deliver mine, rail and port materials handling projects for the resources and infrastructure sectors, in Australia and select international markets.

The other two days I am employed as the Librarian at the Photography Studies College, Southbank. The Photography Studies College is a leading contemporary tertiary photography college, located in Melbourne's vibrant arts and cultural scene. PSC is now a dual sector provider offering both Degree and Advanced Diploma courses. The College is forty years young.

I have decided to leave the MIV Committee after nearly six years, as you can see from my present positions that my interests are changing. There's the old saying that Committees new blood, and well the couple I want to join, they need that...

I have really enjoyed being on the MIV Committee. It has been a learning experience and I would like to thank everyone for their kindness and support over the years. I plan to stay in touch with the group, and will remain a member checking on events in the future that would be of interest to me. For now, I look forward to the BBB conference which is less than 2 months away.

A special thank you to the MIV Committee and all the people I met during this time.

Kind regards,

Jill Bartholomeusz

We would like to sincerely thank Jill for her positive and innovative contributions to MIV and wish her all the best for the future.

Charles Knight was too much a social reformer to be a safe and prosperous man of business. In his eagerness to make people wiser, he let slip opportunities of making himself rich. His blood was too warm, his heart too generous, for trade. The Athenaeum, 15 July 1873, obituary of Charles Knight (1781-1873), publisher to the Society for Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

COMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OCTOBER

17 October
MIV Libraries Group Meeting with the Minister,
Maldon Athenaeum Library.

21-28 October
History Week

21 October
Community Concert, Kyneton Mechanics'
Institute, Friends of KMI

26-28 October
Centenary, Wahgunyah School of Arts.

NOVEMBER

1-30 November
Home is where the Hall is!. See:
homeiswherethehallis.com for latest details.

2-4 November
American Membership Libraries 23rd Annual
Meeting, Providence Athenaeum, RI, USA

7-24 November

Calendar Girls, Lilydale Athenaeum, Lilydale
Athenaeum Theatre Company

10 November

MIV Annual General Meeting, Melbourne
Athenaeum, 10am.

23-24 November

130th Anniversary Celebrations Fawcett Hall
and Public Library

24 November

Bonnie Doon Free Library Plaque Unveiling

27 November

**Heading for the Hills Mechanics' Institutes
Bus Tour**, from Melbourne

27 November - 1 December

**Buildings, Books and Blackboards:
Intersecting Narratives Conference**,
Melbourne

IN SEARCH OF JS EGAN

MIV Historian Pam Baragwanath is on the trail of one JS Egan who sent out a questionnaire with a covering letter, quoted below, from his address Box 39, Hightett, S21 in August 1965. It would be great to get a questionnaire!

I am engaged in collecting material for a Master of Education thesis on 'The Mechanics' Institute Movement in Victoria.'

As you are no doubt aware, this movement played a big part in the cultural and social life of the nineteenth century. Practically nothing has been written of the movement, as a whole, in Victoria, although local historians have made passing reference to the organization in individual towns.

Material from which a comprehensive survey could be constructed is rapidly disappearing. Even the old Mechanics' Institute halls have, in many cases, been demolished. Unless something is done soon to make a permanent record of the movement, the task will become impossible.

With this in mind I am taking the liberty of sending to you the accompanying questionnaire, together with a reply-paid envelope, in the hope that you will be able to provide information, and I should appreciate greatly your full cooperation in answering the questions on the sheet.

Even if you cannot help, would you be good enough to return the questionnaire with 'No' as the answer to Question 2? In this way, I shall be able to keep my records in order.

In closing, I might add that the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne supports me in collecting

this material, as part of its program of educational research.

Thank you for any assistance you can provide.

Yours faithfully, JS Egan

This is what can be cobbled together on **John Stuart Egan** (1916-96) up to this time.

He was born at Moonee Ponds on 5 June 1916, the only son of Mr and Mrs HT Egan. John was educated at Melbourne Teachers' College and joined the Education Department as teacher No. 31724. He appears to have had several country postings. During World War II, he enlisted for service from at Bright on 15 December 1943 and served with 2nd Australian Cavalry Division Training Pool. The date of his discharge is unknown.

He was author of: *A Consolidated School at Bright* (Melbourne: Melbourne Teacher's College, 1944) and undertaking his Master of Education degree through the University of Melbourne in 1965.

John married Daisy Gregson Gibbs, who was born about 1920?, the eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs WD Gibbs of Bairnsdale, at Surrey Hills Presbyterian Church, on 12 January 1944. Daisy was also an Education Department teacher, No. 32269 and she died on 21 June 1991, aged 70 and was cremated at Springvale 24 June 1991.

John died on 28 September 1996, aged 80 and was cremated at Springvale on 3 October 1996.

John Egan's work on MIs predates that of Alfred Weston and Colin Badger in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Pam believes they were known to one another. The challenge is can someone throw more light on John Egan and his family.

IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Home Is Where The Hall Is! - November

This Government supported initiative through **Regional Arts Victoria** is well worth your support and if it keeps working, hopefully funding will continue. Plan an event and register it with a couple of pics of your hall – one exterior and one interior. Visit homeiswherethehallis.com

History Week - 21-28 October

Again this is an initiative funded by the Foundation of the late Vera Moore. It could be that this is an opportunity for schools to participate in writing a history of your Institute or a biography of one of the people connected with it. The art class could produce the best drawing or ground plan with the help of a measuring tape. An exhibition of the art and readings from the written histories could make for an interesting Sunday afternoon, after a get-together barbecue. Start planning for next year!

Who's for Lunch?

A couple of rural Institutes are running regular monthly lunches, with husbands and wives, partners and anyone is invited to just drop in. It's a good way of developing community networking and just keeping in touch. Lunches happen on the same day of each month, with bring a casserole or sweet. A speaker from the local law or accounting firm, medical practice, Ambulance Victoria, travel agent, funeral director, stock and station agent, Centrelink, or the most recent attendee at the Camel Cup, etc. can address a range of topics. Schedule the event for say 12.30pm-2pm. It's an open invitation to all for say the third Wednesday of each month, with the speaker starting at 1pm sharp. Put details in the local paper and on the hall and local noticeboard. Advertise your next speaker, with catchy subject line, at the current function. A donation box and/or raffle could be used to buy some new crockery or cutlery for the hall or send the next district Olympian to Rio. Some speakers can be generous. Also have some membership forms ready with provision for an email address, so you can broadcast details by email just prior to each event.

Mechanics' Essay Competition

One of the greatest ways to get people involved is to get them to research and understand the rich heritage of Mechanics' Institutes and their purpose. Indeed have you ever wondered why they were one of the first groups to be established in the community and today they could well be one of the last? The Mechanics' purpose is just as it was 200 years ago, it is one largely of self-help.

A Day in the Life of Your Institute

Floating an idea. It would be good to compile submissions of your idea of '**A day in the life of an Institute**'. It could be written, prose or poem, video or still photography or it could be just sound with a still background. Get the grey matter cracking. Anyone for sponsorship?

A Library for the Taking

Melbourne Central management have recently set up **The Little Library** with shelves in a shop front in their shopping centre. A welcoming blackboard states that people can contribute books and borrow others on an honour system – no check in or out and no fines. The idea is in use throughout the US. There's also **Book Forest** in Berlin, where the books are housed in hollows recessed into the upright logs with protective clear doors. It's like the **Station Mechanics' Libraries** operating in the early 1900s in NSW and Queensland and detailed at **MW 2004**. Indeed some Institutes currently operate similar libraries. All you need is a bookshelf.

Selling Memberships

It is acknowledged that people who work for the hall, should not pay. Perhaps a honorary life membership would overcome that to some extent. However a lot of district residents wouldn't mind kicking in a few dollars each year, for a discount on hall hire for a future family reunion, celebration, art or craft exhibition, etc. Businesses could even be enticed to join for similar reasons, such as stock and station agents, funeral directors, and visiting professionals. They may even consider a membership as their annual contribution to the maintenance of the community hall. Think about it. It generates revenue and more importantly commitment and involvement.

Make a Cosy Room

We've recently come through some cold nights and there can be nothing worse than freezing during an evening meeting at the local hall. No matter how large or otherwise uninviting your Institute maybe, make a cosy meeting room in your Institute. Paint it, carpet it, light it, heat it, tastefully furnish it... and advertise it with an appropriate sign in the hall window or in the front wall notice board, maybe even a leaflet. The availability of an urn and crockery, tea and coffee bags, sugar sticks and a UHT milk in the fridge will show your users you want them back. People need inviting meeting spaces and you can no doubt do with the money. That should attract other potential users, maybe regular visiting professionals.

What is valuable is not new, what is new is not valuable.
HENRY PETER, LORD BROUGHAM & VAUX (1778-1868)

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES LIBRARY DIRECTORY

LIBRARIES

The following is a list of Institute Libraries and their specialties. It is suggested that you phone ahead for opening hours which may vary according to the season

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES RESOURCE CENTRE (MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.)

140 High Street, Prahran, V 3181
Telephone: 9510 3393. Website: www.vicnet.net.au/~mivic

Collections: Mechanics' Institute related material, particularly Victorian.

Open, weekdays 9.30am-4.30pm, Saturday 9.30am-1pm

BALLARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

117-119 Sturt Street, Ballarat, V 3350
Telephone: 5331 3042; Website: www.bmi@ncable.net.au

Collections: 19th century newspapers and periodicals; contemporary fiction and non-fiction; videos; jigsaw puzzles, CDs.

Open: Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm, Saturday 9.30am-12noon.

BERWICK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY

15 High Street, Berwick, V 3806
Telephone: 9707 3519; Website: www.berwicklibrary.org.au

Collections: Contemporary Library; Children's; Berwick Local History; Casey.

Open: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9.30am-5.30pm, Friday 9.30am-5.30pm, 7pm-8.30pm, Saturday 9.30am-12.30pm.

FOOTSCRAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

209 Nicholson Street, Footscray, V 3011
Telephone: 9687 1935. Email: footmech@bigpond.com

Collections: Contemporary Library; Daily newspapers; Serials; Local History; Women's Studies

Open: Monday-Wednesday, Friday 10.30am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-4.30pm, Thursday 10.30am-12noon, 2pm-4.30pm.

MALDON ATHENAEUM LIBRARY

97 High Street, Maldon, V 3463
Telephone: 5475 1326. Website: www.maldonlibrary.org.au

Collections: Contemporary Library; Maldon and Goldfields History; Children's; Large Print

Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2-4pm, Saturday 9.30am-12noon.

MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM

188 Collins Street, Melbourne, V 3000
Telephone: 9650 3100. Website: melbourneathenaeum.org.au

Collections: Recreational Library; Daily newspapers; Serials

Open: Monday-Thursday 9am-6pm, Friday 9am-5pm, Saturday 9.30am-12noon.

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

140 High Street, Prahran, V 3181
Telephone/Fax: 9510 3393. Website: www.pmi.net.au

Collections: Victorian and Local History Collection; Contemporary Library; Serials

Open: Weekdays, 9.30am-4.30pm; Saturdays 9.30am-1pm

OTHER LIBRARIES

ARARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

171-173 Barkly Street, Ararat, V 3377.

Telephone: 5352 1447

Collections: Mills and Boon; Detective; Western

Open: Weekdays, 3pm-4.30pm

BONNIE DOON FREE LIBRARY

Arnot Street, Bonnie Doon, V 3720

Telephone: 5778 7722.

Collection: Contemporary fiction

Open: Monday-Wednesday, 1pm-4.30pm

DEAN HALL & MECHANICS' HALL

1371 Ballarat-Daylesford Road, Dean, V 3352

Telephone: 5334 5238.

Collection: Contemporary fiction; Children's toys

Open: Monday-Wednesday, 1pm-4.30pm

DIGBY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & LIBRARY

Clare and Buckingham Streets, Digby, V 3309

Telephone: 5579 3253. Website: www.mccallum-collection.org

Collection: Contemporary fiction; Craft

Open: Tuesdays, 4pm-5pm

LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

6 Rothwell Road, Little River, V 3211

Telephone: 5283 1939. Website

Collection: Contemporary fiction; Local History

Open: Monday-Wednesday, 1pm-4.30pm

MT EGERTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Main Road, Mt Egerton, V 3352

Telephone: 5368 9367

Collection: Contemporary fiction

Open: Fridays, Noon-2pm

STANLEY ATHENAEUM & PUBLIC ROOM

Main Street, Stanley, V 3747

Telephone: 5728 6594. Website: www.stanleyvictoria.com.au

Collection: Heritage Collection; Regional History Collection; Geoff Craig Archive

Open: By appointment

MUSEUMS / LIBRARIES

BURKE MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Loch Street, Beechworth, V 3747

Telephone: 5728 8067. Website: www.burkemuseum.com.au

Collections: Main Street, Family History, Medical, Industry, Chinese.

Open Daily, except Christmas Day

BENALLA COSTUME & PIONEER MUSEUM

14 Mair Street, Benalla, V 3760

Telephone/Fax: 5762 1749. Website: www.home.vicnet.net.au/~benmus/

Collections: Ned Kelly, Period Costume,

Benalla's Famous Sons, Creator's Gallery.

Open Daily 9am-5pm.

CHARLTON GOLDEN GRAINS MUSEUM

1 High Street, Charlton, V 3525

Telephone: 5491 1574. Website: www.charlton.vic.au/museum

Collections: Local history, Cropping

Open weekends and by Appointment

CHILTERN ATHENAEUM MUSEUM

57 Conness Street, Chiltern, V 3683

Telephone: 5726 1280. Website: www.chilternathenaeum.com.au

Collections: Eustace, McEwen, Military, Mining, Industrial, Newspaper and Genealogical Records

Open seven days, 10am-4pm, or by appointment.

HAMILTON HISTORY CENTRE

43 Gray Street, Hamilton, V 3300

Telephone: 5572 4933. Website: www.home.vicnet.net.au/~hamhist

Collection: Regional history, archive

Open: Daily, except Saturday, 2pm-5pm

LEONGATHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

McCartin Street, Leongatha, V 3953

Telephone: 5662 2492. Website: www.leongathahistory.org.au

Collection: Regional history

Open: Thursday and Friday, 12 noon-4pm

MALMSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mollison Street, Malmsbury, V 3446

Tel: 5423 9383. Website: home.vicnet.net.au/~malmhist/

Collections: Regional history

Open: Fridays, 9am-2.30pm

NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sorrento Mechanics' Institute

827 Melbourne Road, Sorrento, V 3943

Telephone: 5984 0255. Website: www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au

Collections: Early Settlement of Victoria, Maritime, Local History, Military

Open weekends 1.30pm-4.30pm, or by appointment

PORT FAIRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

63-65 Sackville Street, Port Fairy, V 3264

Telephone: 5568 2263. Website: historicalsociety.port-fairy.com

Collection: Regional history

Open: Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday, Public Holidays 2pm-5pm.

RUSHWORTH MUSEUM

Corner High and Parker Streets, Rushworth, 3612

Telephone: 5856 1951. Website: rushworthmuseum.wordpress.com

Collection: Regional history

Open: Saturday 10am-3pm; Sunday 11am-3pm

SEYMOUR FREE LIBRARY & READING ROOM

Tallarook and Edward Street, Seymour, V 3660

Telephone: 5792 2311. Website

Collection: Regional History.

Open: By Appointment

WILLIAMSTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5 Electra Street, Williamstown, V 3016

Telephone: 9397 1534

Collections: Local History, Maritime

Open: Sunday afternoons 2-4pm