



# Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

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## MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS



Celebration  
& SURVIVAL



L-R: Dinner at Miners Rest Hall; Professor Rory Duncan opening the conference. Photos: James Baker

The curtain came down on the end of the **Mechanics' Institutes of Australia 2018 – Ballarat** with **Alastair Urquhart's** skirl of the pipes, as we assembled for one last time under the flags of the participating Nations or States in Ballarat's Minerva Space.

All delegates and presenters are now reportedly safely back home at the far flung corners. And what a memory was left behind in a massive aggregation of: the Papers from **Celebration and Survival**; Halls Survival Workshop Notes; Bus Tour Notes; Program; J Furphy & Sons Awards booklet; and the Souvenir Dinner Program. Not to mention the photographic record and friendships advanced.

A 'Very Big Thank You' to our keynotes **Rory Duncan, Michele Frey, Siân Williams** and also to **Jonathan Woodhead** from Birkbeck London and **Lauren Weiss** from the University of Strathclyde for being with us to present Papers. All went well beyond their call of duty to support **MIA 2018** and we thank them sincerely.

I think it would be fair to say there was something for everyone at **MIA 2018**, from the daily Ballarat Mechanics' Institute building tours by **Phil Roberts** to the erudition of **Peter Wolfenden** and his world of cinema. Then there were the Federation University Campus tours by **Sam Henson, Bob O'Shea** and **Sue Owen**. Entertainment: by **Bob Flavell**, with his

perambulating suitcase; to pictures of Miner's Rest in earlier days by **Bill Loader**; the **Seriously Sixties Dance Band** and the truly memorable 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' from the bugle of **Claire O'Brien**; and our Master of Ceremonies, **Peter Nankervis**.

For the foodies there was the spectacular barbecue spread at Miner's Rest and Peter Ford's Celebratory Dinner in the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's Minerva Space. Then we had Subway, Homeground Bakery, Zambrero Mexican and Encore Pizza, with add ons from Ferguson-Plarre, Coles Deli, Cleo's Deli and Dancehouse. Indeed variety is the spice of life.

We cannot forget our transportation which was in the capable hands of **Little's Bus Lines** of Ballarat and their most able coach captains **Scott** and **Jo**, who went well beyond their normal remit to cater for our special needs.

Last of all there was the magnificent venue of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute which we were able to showcase to the world, thanks to the generous support of the Ballarat Board. We were ably supported by **Ross** and **Marilyn Furness, Tony Godfrey, David Dahlenburg** and the host of volunteers from the **Friends of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute**. We must also thank our two German visitors **Cara** and **Michelle** who ably and cheerfully filled in where necessary during the weekend.

# Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## MARCH

- 7-23 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre, 'Quartet'.  
lilydaleatc.com
- 16 Launch of Frankston Mechanics' Institute  
history, Frankston Mechanics' Institute,  
12.30pm. More info/RSVP: raringer@  
netspace.net.au
- 16 Live Music: Mr PC & The Devious  
3, Newham Mechanics' Institute.  
newhamhall.com
- 17 Mt Best Community Hall Guitar Concert,  
part of the Prom Coast Festival.  
promcoastfestival.org
- 17 Romsey Mechanics' Institute Community  
Market
- 23-31 Warrandyte Youth Theatre, 'Animal  
Farm'. warrandytehallarts.asn.au

## APRIL

- 1-6 Warrandyte Youth Theatre, 'Animal  
Farm'. warrandytehallarts.asn.au

## MAY

- 23-31 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre, 'The  
Wisdom of Eve'. lilydaleatc.com

## JUNE

- 1-8 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre, 'The  
Wisdom of Eve'. lilydaleatc.com
- 7-9 Briagolong Film Festival,  
Briagolong Mechanics' Institute.  
briagolongfilmfestival.com
- 7-9 UK Independent Libraries Association  
Conference, Devon and Exeter Institution,  
UK
- 7-22 Warrandyte Youth Theatre, 'All My Sons'.  
warrandytehallarts.asn.au

## AUGUST

- 15-31 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre, 'Picnic at  
Hanging Rock'. lilydaleatc.com
- 16-31 Warrandyte Youth Theatre, 'The Lady  
from the Sea'. warrandytehallarts.asn.au

## SEPTEMBER

- 21 MIV AGM
- 21 Annual Wesson Lecture, Alan Duffy 'Case  
of Space'

## OCTOBER

- 4-6 Murtoa Big Weekend: Making Big Things  
Happen. Art Exhibition and Sale, Murtoa  
Mechanics' Institute
- TBC American Membership Libraries  
Meeting, New York, USA

## NOVEMBER

- 7-23 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre, 'Ladies in  
Black'. lilydaleatc.com

## THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTERS

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548 Bridge Rd, Richmond. tdc3.com.au



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### MIV'S EVENTS CALENDAR IS ONLINE

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

Subscribe for weekly email updates on events  
throughout the week.

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

## *Letter From The President*

This is my first letter as President and I take this opportunity of wishing you all the very best for this New Year of 2019. I would like to thank past-President Robert Kingston for his efforts on behalf of MIV.

My mission as President is that I will be acting to further the interest of all Institutes and all of our individual members. This may be within the framework of existing groups Library, Museum or by way of Government and Local Government interface. That said we need your tangible and active support in all our activities as we have no paid staff.

In addition for individual members there will be activities such as lectures, workshops, bus tours or site visits. Clearly communication is vital to this end and we seek your prompt response to our requests so as we can plan in advance.

Last year **Minister Marlene Kairouz** launched our ***Libraries Directory*** and officially opened the **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre**. In the latter we not only have an expanding collection of monographs about Mechanics' Institutes but there is also a collection of resources across a range of subjects that may be of interest to you and your Institute or Hall. We also hope to put some of our Institute data online.

I would also like to sincerely thank all who participated in the **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 – Ballarat** Conference whether as a presenter or delegate. It was a busy and I trust rewarding time for you all and we are pleased to report that all made it safely back home around Australia and across the world. We hope you found it an energising experience for it is not every day that Mechanics' Institutes can get together, particularly at a national and international level. I would particularly like to thank Jim Lowden for his enormous effort in organising such a memorable and beneficial event for us all to learn from.

It was good to see the spread of nominations for the **J Furphy & Sons Awards** and thank you to all those who supported and participated in the concept. It was particularly pleasing to see some nominated Institutes being present at the Saturday Night Celebration Dinner.

A most pleasing feature was to see representatives or alumni from six Mechanics' Universities present at **MIA 2018 – Ballarat** and it is to be hoped in the future that there can be greater cooperation between the grass roots Mechanics' Institutes and those that have progressed to tertiary level. Perhaps Institutes can provide venues for extension, regional or performance activities. It would be good to think that a cradle to grave approach could see youth 'graduate' from the local Hall to a Mechanics' University and perhaps come home to work and/or retire.

Please mark down in your diaries MIV's AGM which will take place 21 September 2019 and stay for the Wesson Lecture, presented by Professor Alan Duffy, with a talk titled 'A Case for Space'.

We would welcome feedback as to what you or your Institute would like to see us doing so we can consider those ideas as potential strategic goals.

*Bron Lowden*  
President.

# Housekeeping

With **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 - Ballarat** now behind us we look forward to furthering our mission to make the World of the Mechanics' Institute a bigger and better space and place.

I was touched by a quote in a recent Hall history 'The only certainty is that there will be more uncertainty; in parishes where the school has closed, even modernised halls have struggled to survive. If Dunbog Hall can be both reliable and flexible, adapting to real needs – not imaginary or sentimental ones – and if the ceiling doesn't fall down and if the present heating system lasts a bit better than previous versions, then it will bewith us for a good while yet.'

\*Jonathan Falla, *Hall in the Heart: A Fife Parish Hall [Dunbog] and its Community 1914-2014* (Cupar: Stupor Mundi Books, 2014). The district of Dunbog is about 45 miles north of Edinburgh and about 17 miles west of St Andrews.

The **Halls Survival Workshop** presentation of **Bodye Darvill** from Gippsland's Wellington Shire gave us a valuable insight into how a Shire can and does tangibly support its many small communities. This must be a blueprint for the way forward and if you want a copy of Bodye's notes email us.

Communication is paramount and we seek the cooperation of all our members in promoting the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria activities to all their members. This can include Workshops, Bus Tours, lectures and even Special Interest Groups – Library, Museum, Dance, Theatre, Market, Insurance or Equity.

Further we are only largely able to print your story, your activities and recognise your people by what is sent to us. Similarly we can only promote your Institute effectively if we have all the details on a dedicated membership page on our website.

Please circulate *Useful Knowledge* around your respective Boards or Committees so they can see what we and others are doing and most importantly what we propose to do in the future. MIV is membership driven and is wholly run by volunteers. Even leave a copy of *Useful Knowledge* in the Hall for others to see.

Please keep the news of your Hall, your events and your people rolling in, along with a pic or two.

## NEWS PLEASE

Let us have your news on the Hall, its history and more importantly its people. Email the **UK** editor at [editor@mivc.org.au](mailto:editor@mivc.org.au). Submission deadline for **UK49** is 1 May 2019.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Joelie Hancock	Catherine Kerrigan
Louis Hesterman	Anne Marsden
Lorraine Huddle	Helen Monro
Lindsay Jackson	Lauren Weiss

## NEWSLETTER ROUND

*Tick after reading and pass it on*

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

## MW 2021 - EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

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

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



## CHRISTINE MACKENZIE DELIVERED 4TH ANNUAL WESSON LECTURE

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The fourth annual Wesson Lecture was engagingly delivered by career librarian **Christine Mackenzie** who shared her life's journey from library patron, librarian, library administrator and now ardent international library strategist and promoter. Indeed we all shared a great treat to hear from clearly one of the world's notable motivational and innovative librarians. Christine's lecture also provided the opportunity to muse on the march of technology in the delivery of much expanded information resources.

In opening with the statement 'I hope that Libraries will not go the way that Mechanics' Institutes went [and throw their books out]' Christine hastily continued to say that 'the wheel appeared to have taken a full turn with today's libraries becoming more like Mechanics' Institutes.'

Christine's formative years were spent on the family dairy farm at Valencia Creek in south-east Gippsland. There district community activities were held in Valencia Creek Soldiers' Memorial Hall built in 1926 and where photos of district pioneers **Jacobus A Du Moulin** and **Thomas Lamb** hung on the Hall wall.

Her youthful reading included the twenty-seven volume series of the job-hopping *Cherry Ames, Nurse* by social worker turned author, **Helen Wells** (1910-86). 'Oh how I wanted to be a nurse!' Christine mused.

Then there were the thirty-seven titles of Gippsland-born **Mary Grant Bruce** (1878-1958) about the life of the Linton family on Billabong Station and elsewhere. These were accessed via an aunt.

Valencia Creek State School had closed in 1955, along with five other smaller schools, to become a part what was to be known as the Boisdale Consolidated School and she caught the bus in to there each day. Boisdale Consolidated then had a library and librarian and an expanded range of books which she read voraciously.

Her desired career path then changed from nurse to librarian, but fate thwarted her from joining the Maffra Library staff to eventually take up a Commonwealth Scholarship at Monash University from where she graduated BA in 1973. Christine then completed a Graduate Diploma of Librarianship and Graduate Diploma of Management at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Her first job was as a reference librarian at the State Library of Victoria where she accessed books from the multi-storeyed stacks radiating from and around the main reading room. She also worked on the desk in the catalogue room where lines of wooden cabinets held layers of catalogue drawers filled with cards which were held by way of a central rod which passed through the bottom of each card and prevented cards from being pulled out or removed. It was during this time microfiche readers were progressively being used to read filmed library cards and microfilm readers were being used to read microfilmed documents notably newspapers.

From the State Library of Victoria Christine was in Perth for a year and then came back and worked at Frankston Library for five years. She then took three years off, during which time her two children were born.

Christine then joined the pioneer visionary **Colin Watson** at the Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service, which covered the municipalities of Springvale, Dandenong, Pakenham, Casey and Cardinia. It was then believed to be second largest library group in Australia. There she was Reference Librarian and set up the initial reference collection at the new Endeavour Hills Library.

It was during that time that she took a six month exchange to the Baltimore County Public Library, Maryland, which was then headed up by the dynamic **Charles W Robinson**. The exchange involved the whole family, during which time the exchangees swapped houses and 'lives'.

The Baltimore County Public Library was a very progressive and innovative library service, with an emphasis of giving people what they wanted, which was quite a radical idea back in those days. Very large quantities of best sellers would be purchased to ensure that people could borrow them when they came to the library, and it was quite a revelation to see 1500 copies of the latest **Wilbur Smith** purchased for the collection. There was an excellent information service provided and a very large and impressive Summer Reading Club for children to encourage them to keep reading over the long summer holidays.

The Baltimore Library Service was very much customer driven and this emanated from a 1989 mission statement *Toward the Year 2000: A Strategic Plan for the Maryland State Library Network*. This was followed in 1990 with The

State Library Network Coordinating Council's *The Maryland State Library Network: Who we are, What we do, How we do it, And for Whom* which articulated a myriad of resources that would be made available to Maryland residents. To prepare a delivery plan, the Coordinating Council appointed the Seymour Working Group in 1991 to create an implementation document.

The Seymour Plan was completed by September 1992 and this described how a telecommunications backbone would connect libraries to the internet and how this would then connect Maryland libraries and residents to information resources. The Seymour Plan also visualised delivering communications and documents by electronic means, and providing search tools for locating and delivering books and documents. In June 1994 Maryland was the first US State to offer a Statewide internet service to all its customers.

In Australia computers began finding their way into offices and homes from the mid-1980s and the internet grew in Australia from AARNet (Australia's Academic and Research Network) university-based services in 1989 and this had spread to general usage in capital city and suburban areas from the early 1990s.

In the early 1990s Christine was recruited by the Mornington Peninsula Regional Library and following Local Government amalgamations, she became Manager Information and Access at Mornington Peninsula Shire Council which had been created from the aggregated network of the Flinders, Hastings and Mornington Shires.

Christine participated in the establishment of Nepean Net which was a pioneering library and community website. In 1994 the Kennett Government set up the visionary Vicnet service, which was a community web publishing service as well as an Internet Service Provider to public libraries and community organisations around the State. Vicnet was based on the State Library of Victoria and was progressively rolled out across Victoria until it was closed in 2014.

In 1998 Christine and her family headed north to Queensland to become Manager of the Brisbane City Council Library Service. There she addressed client services and professional staff development and restructured management services utilising the well-tested Sirsi library system and implemented profiled collection purchasing and shelf-ready services. The number of public access computers was greatly increased and the service enjoyed great support from the Lord Mayor of the time, **Jim Soorley**.

Management also benefitted from the dedicated efforts of **Ruth Cameron** who had previously been the Camberwell Waverley Regional Librarian and

who was responsible for the first wave of library refurbishments and buildings.

In the meantime the US-based Google search engine went live in 1998 and the public-resourced Wikipedia was launched in 2001. Other web-based resources were also being expanded into full previously published books by way of the: Project Gutenberg (established 1971); Internet Archive (1996); and later Open Library (2006), which now numbers more than six million titles.

In 2004 Christine returned to Victoria and joined the widespread Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service as Manager. This entity covers the Councils of Banyule and Nillumbik and the growth area of Whittlesea, stretching from suburbia to rural. At Yarra Plenty she witnessed the introduction of ebooks and Web 2.0 technologies, including blogs, You Tube, Flickr and Library Thing in 2006.

She also planned and implemented the Digital Hub at Mill Park Library with National Broadband Network funding and later introduced maker spaces to Mill Park, Thomastown and Watsonia branches. The Eltham, Watsonia, Lalor, Rosanna and Thomastown branches were all refurbished during her time.

Christine resigned from Yarra Plenty in January 2016 to pursue other interests. The position of Executive Officer with the Public Libraries of Victoria Network became available in September 2017 and she worked there for fourteen months. As an association of public library services, PLVN's activities include: advocacy; information sharing; training; consortia purchasing; and joint projects.

Christine closed her lecture by concluding that the library of today was re-inventing itself to become more like the model of the old Mechanics' Institute – a place not only for books, but also for lectures, other events and more.

Perhaps it is time for the existing Mechanics' Institutes to reintroduce libraries to complete the mix?

Christine was inducted as a Fellow of the Australian Library and Information Association in 2008 and in 2012 was the recipient of the Victorian Association for Library Automation Robert D Williamson Award for one 'who demonstrates leadership, curiosity, excellence and innovation and, in the view of their peers, are outstanding contributors to the development of information technology usage in Australian libraries and information service.'

What a privilege and inspiration to hear Christine's story and we wish her well in her Presidential term at the International Federation of Library Associations and the progress of her stated mission of 'Let's work together!'



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - BALLARAT - 16-18 NOVEMBER 2018

**Celebration and Survival** was the third National Australian Conference of Mechanics' Institutes and Their ilk. It was held over the period from 16-18 November 2018 and by feedback was voted an overwhelming success. It greeted delegates from across Victoria and every Australian State, except Northern Territory. It also drew two presenters from the ACT, as well as delegates from the UK, as well as our keynotes from Wales and Scotland and New Zealand.

We are most grateful to all those who submitted and/or presented Papers which made the Conference a 'smorgasbord' of ideas and research and these have been given permanence in the *Proceedings* which was 'rushed through' on a very tight schedule by **Shaun Hammersley** and the team at **Doran Printing** of Braeside, Victoria. We were particularly pleased to include the Papers of **Martyn Walker** of the University of Huddersfield and **John Dent** from Tasmania, and of course **Pam Baragwanath**, who were all unable to attend.

A most pleasing and very proud aspect was that six Mechanics' Universities were either represented or had alumni present and Martyn Walker's pioneering Paper on the 'Mechanics' Universities' was very apt.

Most delegates arrived in Ballarat on the Thursday night, some quite late, but a few caught up for dinner which was 'hosted' by some MIV Committee Members.

Friday morning saw early risings and gravitation, generally downhill, towards the iconic town-centre Ballarat Mechanics' Institute building. Registration was in the Hooper Room, named for **Stan Hooper**, a long-serving Institute Secretary 1962-91. There we had the Art Project featuring the artworks of **Damian Callanan** and Libraries Exhibition which showcased MIV's ten member libraries and various books for sale. There **Judith Dwyer**, **Kristina Holdaway**, **Ros Lowden**, our two German guests **Cara** and **Michelle**, and **Marilyn Furness** and the **Friends of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute** helped out for the Conference duration.

Equipped with their pre-assembled delegate bag, name lanyard and bottle of water, delegates were then escorted upstairs to the splendidly



*Presentations in the Minerva Space  
(Photo: James Baker)*

restored Humffray Room for a cuppa and introduction all around or a speed read of the Program or Proceedings. The Humffray Room was named for Ballarat Reform League and first Ballarat Mechanics' Institute President **John Basson Humffray**. The Humffray Room was to be our eatery for the next three days, as well as a break out area for parallel sessions.

The Conference was called to order by **Jim Lowden** promptly at 9am in the Minerva Space appropriately named for the Roman goddess of wisdom, strategic warfare and the sponsor of the arts, trade and strategy, a larger than life size statue of which sits atop the front of the building.

Hanging overhead were the flags of: Australia; England; Scotland; Wales; New Zealand; and Germany for our two WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) guests.

**Bronwyn Lowden**, President Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, and a Member of the Conference Organising Committee welcomed everyone to **MIA 2018 – Ballarat**, the Third National Conference of Mechanics' Institutes and Their ilk. Appropriately Ballarat historian and immediate Past-President of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, **Phil Roberts**, then outlined the Institute's history and that of its grand three-storey home. This was a good introduction for those who were to take Phil's early morning building tours either on Saturday or Sunday.

Keynote **Siân Williams** of the South Wales Miners' Library followed with how visionaries



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - BALLARAT - 16-18 NOVEMBER 2018 CONT...



*Siân Williams displaying some of the items within the South Wales Miners' Library collection.  
(Photo: James Baker)*

saved the remnant of the South Wales Miners' Institutes when the Coal Board closed the mines in 1984. What was staggering was the memory that was saved from dozens of remnant libraries, scores of Institute records and the memorabilia that went with them – banners, artworks and the records of a contingent of Welsh miners, along with contingents from fifty-four countries that went to defend the Spanish Government against General Franco's Fascist forces in 1936. Paul Robeson happened along in 1934 whilst studying at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. He recorded the song *Land of Our Fathers* and starred in *The Proud Valley* (1940). Social commentator Charles Dickens' books found a good readership in the Welsh Valleys as did publisher Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club titles. (It was interesting to see a full set of the Left Book Club shelved together in the Library in 2016, including George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but alas not *Animal Farm*, Gollancz considered that too hot, politically, to handle.) Then there is the oral record of several hundred interviews with miners and Union leaders. Siân closed with the South Wales Miners' Library taking the miners' memory to a wider audience at Welsh Festivals and around the world, including to **MW 2016** and **MIA 2018**.

**Siân's message is a challenge to Australia to start collecting the Mechanics' Institute record seriously around Australia and for substantial funding to be applied to collecting**

**the oral record as has been done in South Wales.** Many of our Committee folk have served for sixty years and more and do they have a story to tell about volunteerism and more.

Morning tea was followed by the Official Opening by **Professor Rory Duncan**, fresh off the plane that morning from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Professor Duncan agreed at the very last moment to fill in when **Professor Richard Williams** was unable to attend and we did greatly appreciate Rory's presence for the rest of the Conference.

The thought provoking presentation of **Catherine Kerrigan** 'Gap, Story, Place: The Role the Independent Library in the 21st Century' drew on her research on 461 independent libraries around the world and their modes of survival.

'Much More Than a Humble Hall: World War One Memorials in NSW Schools of Arts and Mechanics' Institutes' the joint paper of **Roger Morris** and **Robert Parkinson** took a sampling of NSW Institutes in which War Memorials were located in or attached to.

**John Dent's** 'Mechanics' Institutes in Tasmania' was valuable pioneering research which paves the way for further work.

Lunch from the ever-trusted **Subway** provided the usual good range of fresh tastes. It was then into a solid range of presentations of various topics.

Researcher **Ken James** took us through his astute methodology with 'Researching the Mechanics': Some Case Studies'. Of particular interest was the temporary Viaduct Mechanics' Institute established in connection with a major construction project near Geelong and the prevalence of roller-skating in Institutes.

'Future-Proofed Romance?' was the Paper delivered by **Peter Jones**, Joint Librarian of the Little River Mechanics' Institute. Down through the years Little River assembled a significant collection of the romance novels of Australian writer Lucy Walker and Peter's Paper detailed that significant collection, its content, and the cover art.

Queensland's **Steve Kellermeier** presented 'My Thesis: A Tale of Survival of the School of Arts and the Written Word'. This pioneering

research study in 1980, long before Google, is one of determination, innovation and dedication. This material has now found a potentially wider audience with Steve depositing his research notes with the MIRC which already holds a copy of his thesis.

'Innovative Institutes: The Unique Opportunities for Staff and Patrons in Mechanics' Institutes' was a presentation by **Ellen Coates** (Pahran Mechanics' Institute) and **James Baker** (Melbourne Athenaeum Library). This looked at how new staff can both contribute to and benefit from Institute survival and innovation.



*Lauren Weiss displaying some of the publications uncovered in her search for Mutual Improvement Societies. (Photo: James Baker)*

**Lauren Weiss** of the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow's paper titled 'Uncelebrated Societies and Their Archival Survival: A Call for the Rediscovery of Mutual Improvement Groups and Revitalisation of their Study' rounded out the sessions for Friday. Lauren detailed the large amount of material that was available for study of Mutual Improvement Societies and their ilk. Victoria had over 400 Mutual Improvement Societies, and in Australia and New Zealand at least ninety had established their own periodicals. Again this is an example of pioneering research that was showcased at **MIA 2018**.

Following the afternoon tea break we walked down the Street to the waiting **Little's** coach for our afternoon bus tour. (For further details see articles: **On the Buses** and **Miners Rest: A Hall Visit that will be Long Remembered.**)

There was an early start on Saturday morning for the **Halls Survival Workshop** and it commenced with Phil Roberts' **Building Tour** or Peter Wolfenden's **Movies Down Through the Years** session. Hasty copying of some late notes still enabled us to start on time for what

was a very full day packed with information both delivered and in the Halls Survival Workshop satchels.

There were single sessions all day which were staged in the Minerva Space with delegates seated at tables. The last session was held in the Humffray Room to allow set up for dinner in the Minerva Space that evening.

The Workshop was kicked off by **Grant Hull**, DELWP Manager, Ballarat Region, who spoke to 'Crown Land Use and Management'. As the majority of existing Mechanics' Institutes are on Crown Land, either managed by a local Committee or through a Local Council, this was a very valuable session and the resulting notes are a very useful guide.

Fawcett Hall's **Sam Hicks**, a true inspiration, followed with the challenging 'Grantwriting: Nothing is Impossible'. Sam's presentation left us in awe of what has been achieved at Fawcett, but it also showed innovative ways to source funds and support, and make things happen.

The next presenter was **Joy Leneaux-Gale** with 'Maldon Athenaeum Library - A Phoenix Rising'. Joy moved to Maldon to see a badly down at heel building and a moribund library. With drive, charm and time, Joy and her team of very able supporters have transformed the building and grown a library that now caters to the whole Maldon regional community, including a special youth library. It even delivers to Aged Care facilities and the school. Clearly they also have fun times along the way.

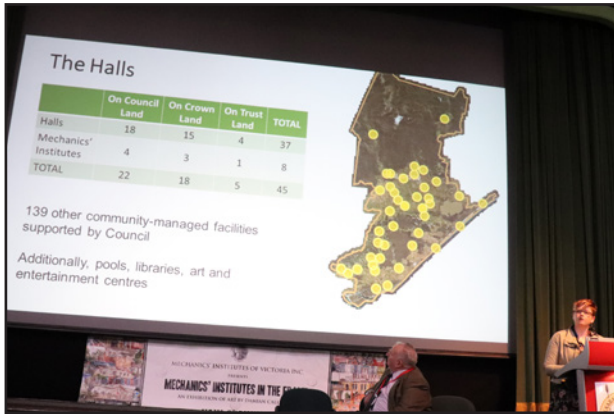


*Michele Frey discussing the location spread of Community Halls found in her book. (Photo: James Baker)*

Keynote **Michele Frey**, from Xyst New Zealand, took us on a journey of discovery in the compilation of her book *On a Saturday Night*. Michele's findings are compelling and you can



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - BALLARAT - 16-18 NOVEMBER 2018 CONT...



*Bodye Darvill discussing Wellington Shire Council's support of Halls and Institutes in their municipality. (Photo: James Baker)*

learn a lot by seeing what others are doing and how they do it. The concept of 'The Hall' being central to the survival of small successful communities was pivotal. There is also a need to get this information down into an accessible form so that the 'memory' will not be lost forever. Michele commented that a few of the Halls mentioned in her book were no longer operational and/or standing. Indeed there is a need for every Hall to start collecting its history.

The very much enlightened **Wellington Shire** generously sponsored their Coordinator of Community Halls, **Bodye Darvill** to attend and speak on 'Wellington Shire - Supporting our Halls'. Wellington Shire takes its Local Government community support role very seriously and clearly this is done through all the Halls - more than forty of them throughout the Shire. Their Halls Support Group has a rep from each Hall and it meets several times a year canvassing areas of concern and mutual interest. Having an effective Local Committee of Management saves money in the long-term and Wellington gives annual untied grants to all its Halls on a sliding scale of usage. Such support over more than a decade has enabled a little and often maintenance program and has reduced large grants for capital works. In very recent times Council assumed the responsibility for the insurance of each Hall and it also undertakes inspections of electrical and plumbing infrastructure and O&S matters. Halls can still apply for capital grants for upgrades, renewals

or extensions. Indeed this is the model that all Councils should aspire to not only in Victoria but Australia wide. Well done Wellington Shire and to Bodye for telling the compelling story so well.

Inverleigh Mechanics' Hall is located in the Geelong region and over the years from its original bluestone Hall has grown a bit like topsy to embrace a whole range of activities of which lawn bowls is a major part. Local historian and Hall Secretary **Christine Windle** took us through the evolutionary story with 'Handing on the Baton: Inverleigh Mechanics' Institute - Then and Now.' This documentation was based on an 'I Remember' Recollections of Inverleigh Hall' project.

Lunch was provided by the **Homeground Café and Bakery** team which is just a couple of doors up from the Institute. This allowed us to not only have a variety of sandwiches but also some piping hot pastry goods, followed by a range of slices and cakes. Brendan and his staff certainly did us proud and no one was left hungry.



*Greg Owen discussing restoration and preservation of older buildings. (Photo: James Baker)*

Commonsense Hall maintenance, little and often was covered by the skilled practitioner **Greg Owen** of Period Building Conservation of Stanley in country Victoria. 'Hall Maintenance and Management' is very much part of the charge and brief of every Hall manager. The preservation of wood, iron, brick and rendered surfaces is pivotal to a community's key asset - its Hall. However the most cost-effective form of Hall management is preventative maintenance.



*Duncan and Christine Rolley discussed recovery from flood and fire for paper-based materials.  
(Photo: James Baker)*

**Duncan and Christine Rolley**, Principals of Artifact Book and Art Conservation of Kyneton in their presentation 'Paper-based Materials and Recovery from Flood and Fire' gave us a sampling of case studies of items that had been flood or fire ravaged. They also provided general information on the preservation and maintenance of paper-based items of which every Institute holds examples. Indeed the work and advice of very skilled conservators.

The next presentation was given by **Cameron Auty**, Manager, Museum and Cultural heritage at the Shire of Indigo. Beechworth's Burke Museum is one of a few significant Mechanics' Institute historic museum collections in the world. Cameron took us through his topic 'Building a Museum Collection'. Halls aggregate collections over time, from artifacts of locks, lightfittings, sporting memorabilia, plaques, Honor Rolls and of course runs of Institute records. Their recording, appropriate hanging, housing and storing are all matters for consideration. Or is there some specialisation which can be built upon?

Sydney-based **James Campbell** of Art Hanging Systems gave us an overview of how our Halls can be turned into exhibition spaces by way of the installation of hanging rails or modular display panels with his presentation 'Temporary Exhibition Systems'. This could prove a lifeline for regional Halls which could hang exhibitions for a period, stage regional exhibitions or even travelling exhibitions. These could also be the means of attracting workshops which involve the display of a large amount of visual material.

A very able and informative **Ian Davidson** of the Federation of Victorian Film Societies laid out the method and means of setting up a Film Society based on an Institute with his lively

'Enliven Your Mechanics' Institute with a Film Society'. Membership of the Federation provides access not only to advice but also a range of films at economic prices. The resulting installation would also help Halls with the provision of audiovisual equipment for events such as funeral wakes, workshops and seminars.

The Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room's duo of **Chris Dormer** and **Helen McIntyre** took us through the process of researching, mounting and publicising an exhibition with their presentation 'Exhibitions on a Shoestring: C19th Stanley Women: Hearts of Gold and Minds of Mettle'. Having mounted close to ten exhibitions since 2005 Stanley has shown by way of innovation and economy how effective exhibitions can be assembled and mounted at very little cost.

In the final segment of the day **Pat Anderson**, from Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute Arts Association, told of the Institute's 'Survival Through Arts Programs'. This took us from a near-derelict building to one which is now well-resourced and well-used by music, visual arts, craft, pottery and theatrical groups. Their innovative fundraising barometer counting up the tally towards various fundraising goals and the use of a resident artist's cartoons along the way.

We do appreciate the great effort the various speakers put into their presentations and we are left with a permanent record from the day which can be accessed at the MIRC for those who were unable to attend the **MIA 2018 Halls Survival Workshop**. Each speaker was presented with a bottle of Domaine Chandon Brut. This was awarded 'Best Australian Sparkling Wine' at the 2018 Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships in London in July 2018.

Sunday started very early for one of our keynotes, **Michele Frey** and her partner **Nick** as they took part in the 10km **Ballarat Foundation's Run for a Cause** around Lake Wendouree which started at 7.30am.

Meanwhile back at the BMI, Sunday started with another of **Phil Roberts'** Building Tours and then a full parallel program. Speakers from Victoria and around Australia presented on their Institutes or ongoing Institute research or promotion – a real smorgasbord.

The day started with a Panel presentation of: **Luke Mitchell** (Footscray Mechanics' Institute), **Sue Westood** (Melbourne Athenaeum Library) and **Steven Haby** (Prahran Mechanics' Institute) 'Analogue or Digital? What Matters



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - BALLARAT - 16-18 NOVEMBER 2018 CONT...

is Connection and Authenticity: Surviving in the Digital Age'. All presented their individual stories of establishment, adaptation and survival.

**Joelie Hancock** looked at the 'Institutes of South Australia: Towards a Complete Record' and her methodology in searching for and recording Institutes in that State.

The role of women, behind the men, was canvassed by **Anne Marsden** in her 'Pioneering Women: The Families of the Founders of the 1839 Melbourne Mechanics' Institution'.

Martyn Walker's Paper on the UK Mechanics' Universities charted the evolution of some twenty UK Institutes to University status and the wide-ranging choice of subjects these offer to the student of today.

'A Twist in the Tale: How Launceston Mechanics' Institute kept its collection and lost its building' was addressed by **Mike McCausland** a Friend of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute. The tale of the survival of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute Library, clearly one of the most significant archival library collections in Australia, is intriguing, but it's future has not always been secure.

'Collaboration, Chequebooks and Coffee: Reflections on my first 18 months as Secretary-Librarian, Prahran Mechanics' Institute Victorian History Library' was **Steven Haby's** presentation. Running a very significant Australian library and managing its assets and programs with a small staff is a daunting challenge. Based on his experience, Steven provided strategies for a way forward.



*Professor Rory Duncan presenting Professor Richard Williams' paper. (Photo: James Baker)*

Sunday's keynote **Professor Rory Duncan** was introduced by former MIV President and Life Member **Dr Frank Hurley**. Professor Duncan read Professor Richard Williams' Paper 'The Purest of Institutes?' Reflections celebrating the formation of the first Institute of Mechanics in 1821 that became Heriot-Watt University'. This took us from the foundation of the Edinburgh School of Arts in 1821 and its progress to become Heriot-Watt University. Today it is one of the world's great Mechanics' Universities, with cutting edge technology in engineering and medical science and campuses in Dubai and Malaysia. At the conclusion of the reading we were treated to Professor Duncan, on his home ground of cell biology, and some amazing shots of 'strange' things that are in our bodies, many many times their actual size. This was in direct contrast to the small souvenir kangaroo toy Professor Duncan displayed from his 'Welcome pack'.

Then followed the inspirational **Libby Webster** with 'Tallarook Mechanics' Institute: A Hallish Story' taking us through the high of the renaissance of Tallarook over nearly two decades. Then the calamitous late night fire that saw all of that effort reduced to a burnt out shell, which ultimately had to be demolished. Since then there has been the optimistic and challenging planning for a rebuild.



*Libby Webster talking of the heartbreaking loss of Tallarook's Mechanics' Institute building. (Photo: James Baker)*

Sunday lunch was a surprise, a pop-up Mexican Taco bar from **Zambrero's** served in the Minerva Space and that certainly did not disappoint with people going back for another taco.

**Helen Creagh** presented 'Learning from the Past' the Association of Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (ADFAS) project that has been comprehensively documenting Institutes in several Australian States for almost a decade.

The inimitable and thorough **Peter Wolfenden** presented 'The Visitors: Enter the Travelling Picture Showman' involving 'The Lanternist; Mr Edison's Talking Machine; and Recollection of the Travelling Picture-Showman'.

**Helen Monro** probed 'Culture and Identity in Victoria's country Institutes' and the amazing **Wendy Birman** detailed the history of the 'Perth Literary Institute: A Cultural Oasis'.



*Mayor Samantha McIntosh.  
(Photo: James Baker)*

We were joined during the afternoon tea break by the Mayor of the City of Ballarat **Samantha McIntosh** and she graciously cut the second tier of the MIV 20th Anniversary birthday cake. Cr McIntosh welcomed all to Ballarat and hoped that we had enjoyed our stay. Ballarat Mechanics' Institute and the City of Ballarat have recently agreed a funding package which has enabled the employment of a part time executive officer. This is with the aim of developing a greater use of the BMI spaces and make the BMI building a more dynamic part of the Ballarat Arts Precinct.

'Digital Self-Guided Tours to Mechanics' Institutes Around the World', the presentation of **Greg Curcio** and **Lorraine Huddle** of the new

ROAMNI App showed how Institutes can get on-line in an international network.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts President **Winsome Allen** took us on a tour of Sydney's long and illustrious history by way of 'The Hunting of the Snark or 'What it is we should be doing now?'

The last session was a combined one, with the first segment being given by **Jonathan Woodhead**, Policy Adviser, Birkbeck London, University of London 'Surviving and Striving into the Future: How Birkbeck Emerged from the London Mechanics' Institute to Become London's Evening University'. Established in 1823 this was to be the flagship of the Mechanics' Institute Movement worldwide by way propagandist **Henry, Lord Brougham**. It was also closely allied with the foundation of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and the formation of London University of which it was ultimately to become a part.

The second session was a rather rushed **Closing Panel** which had as Discussion items: Formation of Mechanics' Institutes Australia; Fourth Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference – Date and Venue; Mechanics' Worldwide 2021 – Heriot-Watt University – September 2021; Birkbeck College – University of London Bicentenary 2023; *Useful Knowledge*; Exchange Programs; and World wide Communication.

All these items are very much on the table for future discussion and fulfillment.



*Alistair Urquhart. (Photo: James Baker)*

**MIA 2018** was closed by bagpiper **Alastair Urquhart** playing a bracket of Scottish tunes which included appropriately 'Auld Lang Syne'. Alastair edits and produces the long-running monthly current affairs **Letter from Melbourne** and **Letter from Canberra**.



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - ON THE BUS... BALLARAT REGION TOUR

A feature of the **MIA 2018** program were the two bus tours that were conducted on the Friday afternoon and on Monday for which coaches were supplied by the **TJ Little (Little's Bus Lines)** and coordinated by **Rod**. Our driver for Friday was **Scott** and he met us in Albert Street, near the BMI. Federation University's **Sue Owen**, Director of Library and Learning Spaces, joined our group there and we were conveyed to the Ballarat Campus of Federation University in Lydiard Street South.



*Sue Owen (left), Director of Library and Learning Spaces, Federation University, addressing Conference attendees on Ballarat Campus Tour. (Photo: James Baker)*

Originally this was the home of the Ballarat School of Mines and Industries established in 1881, and at the time it was the third tertiary institution to be established in Australia after the University of Sydney (1850) and University of Melbourne (1856).

There, we met Head of Campus, **Associate Professor Sam Henson** and **Professor Bob O'Shea** Former Executive Dean of the Federation Business School and our group was divided into three and we all went separate ways, swapping for each section.

My group first visited the Old Court House (1868) which has been converted to a boutique theatre space and then went on to a former gaol space which had been converted into a state-of-the-art pottery studio. Via the Library we walked up to the impressive gaol entrance by way of a former burial ground where the victims of capital punishment were originally buried.



*Professor Bob O'Shea, former Executive Dean of the Federation Business School, addressing Conference attendees. (Photo: James Baker)*

We then proceeded on to the distinctive administrative building which dates from 1901. It was here that Federation University had its main administration located until quite recently. It was backed on to by a distinctive terraced Botanical Garden which was used for the material medica pharmacy course. Next door, to the north, was the former Wesleyan Chapel, which was acquired in 1884 and this was the School's Museum until 1954 when the extensive natural history collections were dispersed.

Finally we visited the site of the former home of the Ballarat Brewing Company, which was established in 1872 as the Royal Standard Brewery, and with other local breweries merged to form Ballarat Brewery. This had the public face of 'Ballarat Bertie' emblazoned on its product from 1926-94. The site was purchased in 1994 and the buildings were 'selectively' demolished in 1995, but some historical features and elements of the site were retained.



*Head of Campus, Professor Sam Henson, addressing Conference attendees on Ballarat Campus tour. (Photo: James Baker)*



*L-R: Jim Lowden, Judith Dwyer, Luke Mitchell and Professor Rory Duncan on the tour through Federation University. (Photo: James Baker)*

Now fully redeveloped this holds the Federation University's Tech Park Central and Enterprise Suites, which provides support and low cost accommodation to industry startups.

A nearby site was part of the MB Johns Brass Foundry which was started in 1896, and some of the buildings were purchased about 1957 for SMI trade use.



*(Photo courtesy State Library of Victoria)*

Back aboard the coach we headed for the State Library Victoria's Store, on the edge of Federation University's Mt Helen Campus. Unfortunately works were taking place in BOSS 1 (Ballarat Off-Site Store) and BOSS 2 was still unfinished but it gave us an idea of the massive scale of the State Library's holdings and required storage.

Next stop was the quaint Buninyong Library Trust timber building, which abuts the footpath. There we were met by Trust members **Liz Lumsdon**, **Dawn Whykes** and **Ken Nicholls**. The timber façade looks like rendered brick or stone, but it is not and this is what makes it near unique. It was built in 1860 for the Buninyong community by local businessman **Robert Allan**, a Scot.



*Buninyong Library Trust members (front row, L-R) Ken Nicholls, Liz Lumsdon and Dawn Whykes talking about the history of the Institute. (Photo James Baker)*

The southern portion was the library and reading room, and the northern portion, separated by a calico screen, was the living space for the library and family. This caused some concern in 1874 when the librarian **Mrs Amelia Duly** contracted typhoid fever and she was living on the premises and died there in July of that year.

The interior was partially lined in tongue and groove pine lining boards and they still exist. The Institute building houses the Tourism Information Centre, and sells local publications. A subgroup of the Trust operates the Buninyong community website from the building and collaborates in the production of the community newspaper. Check them out on: [buninyong.vic.au](http://buninyong.vic.au).

Indeed the Buninyong Institute is one of those great news stories of survival and a tribute to the late **Derick Leather** and his supporters that continue on his vision.

We approached the Miners Rest building in the daylight to see the new gleaming new 'Miners Rest Mechanics' Institute Community Hall' signage and the newly curated garden beds and paved paths. Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt **Professor Rory Duncan** unveiled the new signage and he pulled back the curtains to reveal the recently-added but long-used 'Mechanics' Institute' title.

We then moved inside for the Friday night Barbecue. (See separate article.) At 9pm sharp Scott was back to collect us

Scott then conveyed us safely back to our various scattered Ballarat town centre abodes. Indeed a day to remember and full credit to our carrier Little's Bus Lines and their staff member Scott.



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - MINER'S REST - A HALL VISIT THAT WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED

Several years ago we saw a pic of the inside of the Miners Rest Hall which showed a stage scene. Inquiries found that it was painted in the 1950s by **Bob Flavell**. A search on the internet found a teacher Bob Flavell, but 'No, I think you are looking for my uncle.' Then we found Bob and got the story for our occasional UK feature 'Curtain Call'.

Fast forward we were planning **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 - Ballarat** in 2016 and thought we would do a tour of a couple of Ballarat rural Institutes and we wondered about the evening meal and after consultation with Miners Rest we agreed on an evening barbecue there.

Clearly this proposed visit was taken very seriously by the Miners Rest Committee and they set various Hall restoration and ground works in place. Council provided some money via **Cr Grant Tillet** and things moved on. The stage backdrop was also scheduled for some cleaning. We invited **Bob Flavell** and his wife **Loris** to join us on the Friday and attend the Barbecue at night and say a few words about how he painted the stage scene.

Things moved along and a gas barbecue was purchased and we did a Hall drive by the week before **MIA 2018** and were 'shocked' to find the Hall sign had been reworked to 'Miners Rest Mechanics' Institute Community Hall' across the front of the building and a smaller version with contact details near the front fence.

The MIA 2018 Bus Tour arrived at Miners Rest on the Friday evening, just ahead of our ETA of 1900 hours, and we alighted in the broad daylight. The Miner's Rest Hall looks a bit like an early version of a 'Nissan' hut, but was a feature of the designs of local architect **William Brazenor**. It was opened in 1888.

**Professor Rory Duncan** of Heriot-Watt University had agreed to unveil the new signage and he did so in the presence of Cr Grant Tillet from the City of Ballarat. We then moved inside to



*Professor Rory Duncan unveiling the new signage at Miners Rest. (Photo: James Baker)*

see the hall laid out with chairs and tables and in front of the stage was the smorgasbord to end all smorgasbords. Meat and vegetarian options and twelve salads or sides. Hall stalwart **Bill Loader**, whose uncle was a member of the original Hall Committee, said grace. His son, **Peter** is current Hall President.

Background music played as we filed past the smorgasbord with our ever growing plate loads. It was all so tempting that you had to try a bit of each. We then seated ourselves at the tables and helped ourselves to a range of softdrinks, juices or water and grazed through the various plated elements. Some people were even tempted back for seconds.

Sweets were next with the largest bowl of profiteroles that I have ever confronted. Again we were tempted by the many 'sides' and to try something of everything.

A call to order introduced the sprightly Bob Flavell who told us of the Stage Scene's genesis. Accompanied by the suitcase that had been presented to him in the Hall seventy years before Bob then perambulated around the Hall regaling us of the Miners Rest story as he went, which went like this.

### **TIME MACHINE SUITCASE**

In reality, this suitcase is a time machine - let's see where an inexperienced driver may transport us to.....

#### **1812**

That's a good year for an Overture!

If you peer towards the setting sun you can see, near the lagoon, a clan of the Waitherong tribe, the local First Nation people. If you come across any of them, please offer your respects to their elders - past, present or emerging.

#### **1852**

G'day Tom, G'day Dick, G'day Harry.

They are miners on the way from Buninyong to the new goldfields at Clunes. It's a long way to push ye wheelbarrow or carry ye swag and

shovel - so, like many others, they have a rest - at Miners Rest.

### 1854

Good evening Mr Clarke.

No wonder they call him "Big Clarke" - he's a BIG man. He took up a pastoral licence of 30,000 acres next to Miners Rest and called it Dowling Forest after his first wife, Elizabeth Dowling. Clarke soon developed a fine race course on his lease.

### 1954

Oops! Sorry! We jumped a hundred years. Never mind.

Good evening, Your Majesty.

On the evening of March 6th 1954, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip slept in the Royal Train at the Dowling Forest Racecourse Railway Siding before visiting the good citizens of Ballarat the next day as part of their 1954 Royal Tour of Australia.

### 1865

Good evening, Gentlemen.

I believe it is a public meeting to discuss the formation of the Miners Rest and Dowling Forest Mechanics' Institute and Free Library and to seek a Government grant for the purpose.

### 1888

Hello Mr Brazenor.

I think Mr Brazenor is here for the opening of the Institute. He was the architect of this fine building and also the first grandstand at the Dowling Forest Racecourse - each building has a distinctive curved roof. Mr Brazenor designed and built his own Cattle Yards Inn, where in 1867 he entertained Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, delaying him on a civic engagement. The poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon, was a one time friend and fellow huntsman. Mr Brazenor would be impressed that the Institute was open from 9.00 am until sunset and had a library of 270 books.

### 1946

Let there be light; and there was light.

Electric light was connected to the Institute this year.

### 1955

G'day Bob.

Good d.....Oh, that's me!

My dad became the Headmaster of the Miners Rest State School in 1953. A couple of years later, while I was attending Ballarat Teachers' College, I was invited to paint a new stage backdrop for the Hall. The Committee arranged for the large



*Bob Flavell storytelling. (Photo: James Baker)*

canvas to be stretched across the stage back wall. I purchased household oil paints for the task, then selected a colourful scene from a book on scenic Victoria - 'The Erskine River at Lorne'. My difficult tasks were enlarging an A4 size picture to the stage size, and negotiating the height of the mural from step ladders and a plank. I had the two weeks of the September school holidays to complete the task.

At a social night a few weeks later, I was presented with a very good travelling case.

I still wonder - was the presentation in appreciation of the mural OR a hint, 'get out of town, son!!!'

---

Bob was then followed by Bill Loader, the regional historian, who took us on a pictorial story of the Miners Rest district looking at its buildings, people and events, a rare treat. This showed the evolving and changing landscape... even to the reinstatement of the Mechanics' Institute name.

Professor Rory Duncan then presented a framed Certificate of Appreciation to the Miners Rest Hall's President, Peter Loader. Rory said that he would return one day to Miners Rest with his son to show him the signed certificate and place where he unveiled the sign.

The Miners Rest hosts for the evening were then all lined up: **Peter Loader**, President; **Margaret Adams**; **Karen Grose**; **Dianne Jennings**; **Simone Judge**; **Bill Loader**; and **Lynette Rock**. They were then serenaded with 'For they are Jolly Good Fellows' and 'Three Cheers'. Next was a group pic on the stage and Bob Flavell's signing of the mural.

We then heard our coach arrive and we bade our fond farewells. No one can complain that they weren't properly fed up at Miners Rest. Coach Captain Scott weaved through the back streets of Ballarat's accommodation places until everyone was safely delivered back to their 'digs'.



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION DINNER

This was held on the evening of Saturday, 17 November in the restored Minerva Space of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute.

While the **Seriously Sixties Dance Band**, fresh from a gig at the Moonambel Mechanics' Institute the previous week, were warming up the seated Dinner attendees took their seats. They provided background and dance music throughout the evening.



*The Seriously Sixties Band. (Photo: James Baker)*

Master of Ceremonies for the evening was **Peter Nankervis**, President of the Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute and Committee Member of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria.

The assemblage sang the first verse of our National Anthem 'Advance Australia Fair'.

**Peter Ford** reputed to be one of the best caterers in regional Victoria had charge of the evening dinner arrangements and provided the sit down meal and attentive wait staff.

MIV Commemorative Plaque No. 64 was then unveiled by **Dr Frank Hurley OAM**. Frank was



*Delegates from the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, L-R: Cecile Cornford, Paul Reid and Winsome Allen. (Photo: James Baker)*



*Dr Frank Hurley OAM with unveiled MIV plaque No. 64 for Ballarat Mechanics' Institute. (Photo: James Baker)*

President of MIV when Committee Member **Alan Tonkin** suggested a plaques program and now these have been erected in and on more than sixty buildings or former Mechanics' Institute sites across Victoria.

The MIV 20th Anniversary Celebratory Cake, a two-tiered affair carrying the MIV logo. (Certainly much has happened since we first gathered at Kilmore on 18-19 April 1998.) The cake cutting was overseen and/or undertaken by our overseas visitors Rory Duncan, Michele Frey, Jane Sparrow-Niang, Siân Williams and Jonathan Woodhead.



*L-R: Jonathan Woodhead, Michele Frey, Jane Sparrow-Niang, Rory Duncan and Siân Williams. (Photo: James Baker)*

Next followed the **J Furphy and Sons Awards** (See separate article.).

The staff of Peter Ford catering were then called into the room to thank them for their valued contribution to the evening with 'For They are Jolly Good Fellows' and 'Three Cheers'.



*The Staff from Peter Ford Catering.  
(Photo: James Baker)*

Both the Furphy Water Tank and the Mechanics' Institute Halls were gathering points during World War I, but generally in different hemispheres. In the Northern Hemisphere the Furphy Water Tanks were on the fields of battle. In the Southern Hemisphere or home, there were the: recruiting rallies, send offs, fundraising, packing Comforts Fund parcels, welcome homes, Armistice celebrations, benefits for the families of the fallen, Honour Roll unveilings and the lingering memory of those who did not return and the ongoing fallout from shattered lives. Indeed every Institute is a vast storehouse of 'Memory' and we may well heed Rudyard Kipling's charge 'Lest we forget – Lest we forget'.

A reading of part of Laurence Binyon's 'For the Fallen' was read by **Graham Holdaway**, a former President of the Kilmore Mechanics' Institute.



*Bugler Claire O'Brien.  
(Photo: James Baker)*

Bugler **Claire O'Brien** played 'The Last Post' and the room fell silent in reflection of the casualties of war. Claire then returned the gathering to normality with her moving rendition of 'The Reveille'. It was a rare treat to hear the traditional military bugle playing these very real military procedures.

Master of Ceremonies Peter Nankervis then took us through 'Reflections' on War and its fallout and impact on communities. **Dr Roger Morris** then proposed a Toast 'To the memory of those who served in the farflung fields of battle, and of those on the homefront who supported them, and later shared the burdens of the returned soldiers'.

A stirring dance bracket from the Serious Sixties Dance Band then brought the evening to a conclusion and the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne.' We then moved back to our various places of accommodation for a good sleep and an early start the next morning.



*(Photos: James Baker)*

We are most grateful for the effort spent in set up for the Dinner by the BMI staff and Friends. Tables were arranged to seat six facing the stage, with another two seats with their back to the stage. This worked really well and it meant that people could move around and be seated for a time whilst 'visiting'.



## J FURPHY & SONS AWARDS



A feature of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria's 20th Anniversary Celebrations was the **J Furphy & Sons Awards**. Both are synonymous with gathering points during World War I and both promoted self-improvement.

*'Good Better Best – Never Let is Rest –*

*Till your Good is Better – And Your Better – Best.'*

The Awards were advertised earlier in the year which covered eight categories and the nominations and winners were announced at the **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018 Conference Dinner** on the evening of 17 November.

Thankyou to all those who nominated Institutes and projects, the list and Awards booklet showcased the wide diversity of Institute activity and hopefully will inspire others to take up some of the ideas.

### 1. BEST EVENT (OR EXHIBITION) STAGED IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN INSTITUTE OR HALL



*Jill and Keith Hunter of Moonambel Mechanics' Institute. (Photo: James Baker)*

Nominations: **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute** - *Twilight Talks Program*; **Benalla Mechanics' Institute** - *Dressed to Impress: Our Own Fashionista*; **Kilmore Mechanics' Institute** - *Scaretactics*; **Little River Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** - *'Before 1850' You Yangs Region Rural Districts Heritage Tour*; **Maldon Athenaeum Library** - *Great Scone Bake and Pop-Up Devonshire Tea Café*; **Moonambel Mechanics' Institute** - *Celebrating 80 Years of the Current Moonambel Mechanics' Hall*; **Newham Mechanics Institute** - *Newham Mechanics' Institute Membership Drive 2018 – A Huge Hit*; **Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room** - *Hearts of Gold and Minds of Mettle – Mary Rawes and Mariette Craig – Stanley's Women of the Nineteenth Century*;

and **Tallarook Mechanics' Institute** - *Phoenix Market*.

Winner: **Moonambel Mechanics' Institute** for the Institute building's 80th Celebratory Weekend, which included: the publication and launch of its history; a theatrical presentation; a market; MIV plaque unveiling; Ball; Ecumenical Church Service; Barbecue Luncheon; and a theatrical repeat.

### 2. BEST HISTORY OF AN INSTITUTE, RELATED EVENT OR PERSON

Nominations: **Badger Creek (VC Mullett) Hall** - *Badger Creek District Great War Honour Board 1914-1919: Explanatory Booklet prepared in 2017-18 in Honour of the Centenary of World War I* – Kathleen Cameron; **Charlton Mechanics' Institute** - *Charlton Golden Grains Museum 2018 Calendar*; **Little River Mechanics' Institute** - *'Before 1850' You Yangs Rural Districts Heritage Tour* – Carole Bartholomew, Heather Threadgold and Peter and Sue Jones; **Moonambel Mechanics' Institute** - *Moonambel Mechanics' Institute Hall: 80 Years 1937-2017* – Jillian Hunter; **Melbourne Athenaeum Library** - *And the Women Came Too: The Families of the Founders of the 1839 Melbourne Mechanics' Institution* – Anne Marsden; and **Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room** - *Stanley Times and Mining Journal* – Geoff Craig.

Winner: **Anne Marsden** for her book *And the Women Came Too: The Families of the Founders of the 1839 Melbourne Mechanics' Institution*.

### 3. OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO AN INSTITUTE BY ANY PERSON

Nominations: **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute** - *Dr Frank Hurley OAM*; **Community Nomination** - *Pam Baragwanath*; **Leonards Hill Mechanics' Institute** - *Elsie Howard*; **Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room** - *Chris Dormer*; and **Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute** - *Ken Virtue*. In view of the significant contribution all the nominated people had made to Institutes it was decided not to make a specific award.

### 4. BEST NEW SIGNWRITE OR ROADSIDE SIGNAGE OF AN INSTITUTE BUILDING OR HALL

Nominations: **Badger Creek (VC Mullett) Hall**; **Prahran Mechanics' Institute**; and **Telangatuk East Hall**.

Winner: **Telangatuk East [Mechanics'] Hall** for the reinstatement of their sign.

#### 5. BEST NEW LOGO OR SLOGAN OF AN EXISTING INSTITUTE



*Chris Dormer and Helen McIntyre of Stanley Athenaeum with Professor Rory Duncan.  
(Photo: James Baker)*

Nominations: **Lakes Entrance Mechanics' Institute** and **Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room**.

Winner: **Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room** which incorporated the original old Hall ornate signwriting and its library purpose, an owl, the symbol of wisdom and learning.

#### 6. BEST USE EITHER BY A PRIVATE OR COMMERCIAL ENTITY OF A MECHANICS' INSTITUTE BUILDING

Nominations: **Ararat Mechanics' Institute** - *Dynamic Dance*; **Healesville Mechanics' Institute** - *Old Mechanics' Bed and Breakfast*; **Nagambie Mechanics' Institute** - *Nagambie Opportunity Shop*; **Newlyn Mechanics' Institute** - *Newlyn Antiques and Cottage Garden Nursery*; **Shepparton Mechanics' Institute** - *Shepparton Access and Human Services Victoria*; and **Wunghnu Mechanics' Institute** - *Wunghnu Tavern*.

Winner: **Nagambie Mechanics' Institute** which has conducted a volunteer run Opportunity Shop from its front rooms since 1985. The significant proceeds from this enterprise have been used to upgrade the building over the years.

#### 7. BEST RESTORATION PROJECT - BUILDING/ARTEFACT

Nominations: **Berwick Mechanics' Institute** - *Securing the Record*; **Fawcett Hall and Public Library** - *Paving the Way*; **Little River Mechanics' Institute** - *Repositioning the Library*; **Nagambie Mechanics' Institute** - *Assembling, Cataloguing and Housing the Remnant Library*; **Romsey Mechanics' Institute** - *World War*



*Peter Jones of Little River Mechanics' Institute & Free Library. (Photo: James Baker)*  
*I Honour Rolls; and Toongabbie Mechanics' Institute - Restoring and Rehousing the World War I Memory of Toongabbie*

Winner: **Little River Mechanics' Institute** with their *Repositioning the Library*. This included improving the environment of the existing books and for potential readers by the installation of insulation, LED lighting and improved shelving and book housing. It also augmented the existing Local Studies Collection and a Special Interest Collection with book purchases. The installation of street front heritage light was representative of one which had existed in earlier times.

#### 8. BEST YOUTH PROGRAM



*Winsome Strickland and Joy Leneaux-Gale of Maldon Athenaeum. (Photo: James Baker)*

Nominations: **Badger Creek Hall** - *Little Pop-Up Library*; **Maldon Athenaeum** - *Youth Library*; and **Newham Mechanics' Institute** - *Children's Cooking Classes*.

Winner: The **Maldon Athenaeum** which maintains a separately housed and well-resourced Youth Library, conducts readings for children, occasional author visits and other youth related activities.

We acknowledge the valuable financial support of J Furphy & Sons of Shepparton, the family run engineering company that made the iconic water cart. The Furphy family have been long-time supporters and officebearers of the Shepparton Mechanics' Institute.



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - ON THE BUS... MELBOURNE REGION TOUR

At 7.30am on Monday morning we picked up the special diet packs from Homeground Cafe and Bakery, and at 8pm **Little's** coach was back in Albert Street with **Jo** as our coach captain. She stowed the various pieces of luggage under the bus and we were away. In spite of heavy traffic we arrived at the Melbourne Athenaeum our first stop and pick up point at 10am and proceeded up to the first floor library, with some taking the now near unique wood panelled 1930 lift. There Librarian **Tom Coleman** gave us a history of the library from its start-up in 1839 until today and its various add-on activities: Book and Film Clubs; Music Recitals; Lectures; Artists in Residence; Games; and White Nights. Members can borrow twenty books at a time for the \$90 per year membership. It was pleasing to hear that membership numbers were increasing with a younger demographic.



Athenaeum Manager **Sue Westwood** then took over explaining the artists in residence program and their art books and support of writers. We were taken into the foyer where a pictorial history of the building hangs on the walls. From there we progressed into the 1920s art-deco 800 seat theatre where the stage was being arranged for a show that night. We saw the orchestra pit, which is now very much part of the Melbourne Opera Company's repertoire.

We emerged from the Athenaeum and **Jo** was waiting patiently for us in Collins Street to again get aboard. Our next stop was the Footscray



Mechanics' Institute with an early 1900s central verandah-brick façade by architect **Gerard Vanheems**. The building stretches along Nicholson Street and it is tenanted by mostly non-profits. There we were met by Trust President **Neville Balfour** and Librarian **Luke Mitchell**. We were told Footscray's story from its inception in 1854 and its strong billiards past to the assembling of its present specialty collection of some 12,000 Mills and Boon titles.

The recent opening up of the new reading room space in the building was an exercise which involved volunteers from the Committee and membership. Removal of layers of paint from 'marbled glass' was solved with the application of a product called **Peel Away** produced by **Dumond Chemicals**. The removal of a large tree that was surrounded by buildings also added more light to the building.

Upstairs we were taken into the billiard room where the tables are now mostly silent, with only one group using them for snooker one night a week.

In the Board Room we then shared a range of pizzas sourced from the neighbouring **Encore Pizza** store and reminisced on the past three days of **MIA 2018**.

Emerging from Footscray **Jo** was waiting patiently for us. It was then a drive by the Newmarket and Flemington Institute Library site and on to the Brunswick Mechanics' Institute which stands on a prominent Sydney Road corner site. We approached from the rear over what had been the old Institute's swimming pool long-since filled in. The Library was removed



from the building decades ago and since then it has varied arts use.

The building is now under the management of **Next Wave** and site manager **Susannah Day** showed us around the spaces, mostly painted in black. Seated on part of the 100-retractable seat unit we learned of Next Wave's plans for the utilisation of the spaces for performing, practicing, rehearsal and teaching.

In addition to the exterior Booking Office/Ticket Office, we were touched with the interior mobile bar being faced with some Wunderlich panel which matches the ceiling lining in the building.



Outside we took in the street corner monument, adorned with its bolster and chisel, carrying on the theme of 'by hammer and hand all arts do stand', but in this case a gathering place where radicals spoke in full public view, in the hope of no violent authoritarian reprisal.

Aboard again we headed for the Carlton Hall, at which Dancehouse has been located since 1992. We were met in the foyer by Program Producer, **Ashley Dyer**, who took us on a tour of the building with an explanation of the various spaces and their uses by some four thousand students and teachers each year. The most recent innovation has been the opening of SkyLab which has been fitted with barres and mirrors in a large room that relies on natural light. It is named for



the late **Hellen Sky** one of the co-founders of Dancehouse. I loved the signwriting 'Dancehouse is the home of independent movers... It is the homeland for independent, the bold, the brave, the rare, the fragile.' Surely also applicable to every Mechanics' Institute.

Back on the ground floor we moved to what is the Green Room with tilting up rear wall and it was here that an afternoon tea of Dance House's culinary signature of scones, jam and cream was served. There we were welcomed by Dancehouse's Artistic Director **Angela Conquet**, who came from Paris in 2011 and stayed. It was good to see people seated and chatting, overshadowed by murals of dance, but albeit for a short time.

Jo was again waiting for us in what was then a busy Princes Street and we boarded for Prahran Mechanics' Institute, via the Museum/Exhibition building complex, Fitzroy Gardens, MCG and Prahran.

There we were met by **Steven Haby**, Secretary Librarian who introduced us to the building and its various collections: Local History; Cinema; Railways; Public Transport Timetables; and of course the Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre Collection. There we saw coordinated signage and much comment was made about the black and white pictorial murals that depict the Institute's earlier locations, Chapel Street, then High Street and finally St Edmonds Road in 2014.

It was then a nostalgic farewell to those who were taking the bus back to Ballarat, via the Athenaeum, and too of course Jo our skilled, animated and very patient coach captain.

Then, following a sandwich tea at from **Cleo's Deli**, our two keynote speakers **Michele Frey** and **Siân Williams** and **Jonathan Woodhead** from Birkbeck London delivered public lectures in Prahran's well-appointed Moss Room. And so ended the final Victorian segment of **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018**.



## MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AUSTRALIA - SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS - 22 NOVEMBER



I was delighted to be a part of SMSA's delegation of directors to the recent Mechanics' Institutes of Australia/Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria conference in Ballarat along with **Cecile Cornford** and **Paul Reid**.

What truly impressed us all is the passion that people have regarding Mechanics' Institutes and related organisations.

Each of the presenters spoke from the heart when relating the challenges that they faced whether it be recruiting members, financing their operations through grants or surviving disasters.

In the stories of survival and triumph, traits such as perseverance, strength of character and determination were evident.

We truly enjoyed meeting like-minded people amongst the attendees and it was enlightening to visit some of the local Mechanics' Institutes, from the little library with a very small membership, to larger organisations like the Melbourne Athenaeum.

Moreover, we gained a lot of ideas on how to reach new people and market our organisations as we move into the future.

On the Thursday following the conference, SMSA welcomed keynote speakers **Siân Williams** and **Michele Frey** along with **Bronwyn Lowden** from MIV. Despite the dust storm that blew into Sydney that day, Siân and Michele spoke to an enthusiastic audience of SMSA and AMISA members about the Miners' Institutes in Wales and the history and uses of community halls in New Zealand.

Putting a conference of this kind is an immense and thankless job, and so I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to Jim Lowden, Bronwyn Lowden and their support team who did such a fabulous job in making it all run smoothly.

Winsome Allen

President, Sydney Mechanic's School of Arts  
Vice-President, AMISA NSW



*Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts and AMISA welcome Siân, Michele and Bronwyn to the SMSA.  
Back Row L-R: Brian Johnston, Roger Morris, Ellen Elzey, Carole O'Brien, Phil Reed, Nick Stillwell;  
Front Row L-R: Bronwyn Lowden, Siân Williams, Winsome Allen, Cecile Cornford, Lesley Scanlon,  
Michele Frey, Melanie Ryan. (Photo: M. Haywood)*

## MIV'S *Historical Plaques Program*



*Unveiling the commemorative plaque for the 40th anniversary from the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria from left: Member for McMillian, Russell Broadbent; Neerim Junction Hall Vice-President Gerry Eversteyn; Neerim Junction Hall President, Julie Eversteyn; Baw Baw Shire Mayor, Mikaela Power; Margaret Lockett; Neerim Junction Hall Secretary, Sue Bransgrove; and Member for Narracan, Gary Blackwood.*

*(Photo courtesy Sue Bransgrove)*

### **Recent Plaques**

- No. 58 **Romsey Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 59 **Taggerty Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 60 **Wandong Public Hall**
- No. 61 **Yarck Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 62 **Tatura Mechanics' Institute**
- No. 63 **Neerim Junction Hall** - unveiled 11 November 2018
- No. 64 **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute** - unveiled by Dr Frank Hurley, 17 November 2018.
- No. 65 **Your Institute?**

The plaques are oval in shape (~30cm x ~20cm), with a blue baked enamel surface and white lettering. In consultation with Heritage Victoria, they recommended that they be the same blue colour as their plaques so as to be noticed from afar as marking an historic building. The plaque will carry the MIV logo, some standard text and a personalised space

for details of the Institute (approx. 120 words), and also the plaque number. Pins on the plaque's reverse will enable fixing to stone, concrete or wooden buildings. They can be mounted on board if required. The plaques have an expected life-span of about fifty years.

To order a plaque (They will cost \$195 each for MIV Members, \$250 for non-Members, including delivery, and will require your installation.) or for more information, contact: Judith Dwyer, Box 482, Berwick, V 3806 or jad134@hotmail.com. Check out the Plaques page on the MIV website for locations and individual citations - [mivic.org.au/plaques.html](http://mivic.org.au/plaques.html)

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

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

## Around Victoria's Institutes

This column is comprised of contributed articles and those written 'in house'. Whilst care has been taken to ensure dates and facts, the scant history of Institutes makes it an impossible task to verify these. If you find a date, spelling or fact incorrect let us know and we will publish amendments in our next issue. We have not provided references for any of the articles (as their sources can be longer than the stories!), but we would be happy to send out notes we hold on Institutes if requested. Our newsletter is also indexed to enable histories of various Institutes to be aggregated over time.

### BENGWORDEN HALL (Est. 1883)

Located in south-east Gippsland, the Bengworden Hall has been closed for a time to allow the removal of asbestos and the replacement of new lining. Built in 1883 and in 1885 had 300 books in the library and this had increased to over 1000 by 1900. It has been well maintained by the community over the years and had a major upgrade in 2014. The works then installed an attached toilet block and a new kitchen and adjoining meeting room which is well used for regional events. The Hall holds a distinctive photographic World War I Honour Roll which contains the portraits of eighteen local soldiers which has recently undergone restoration. In preparation for the reopening, the Hall Committee is planning a series of history panels to hang around the Hall interior. Hopefully there will be a re-opening in May or June.

### FAWCETT HALL & PUBLIC LIBRARY (Est. 1882)



Photo: Fawcett Hall Facebook

With the regular Pop Up Pizza nights still well supported, **Sam Hicks** and her team still forge on with improved community amenities. Among the more recent is the installation of a Defibrillator which has been made possible with a grant from Murrindindi Shire Council and donations from the Alexandra Rotary and Lions Clubs. Training sessions have been held for locals so that as many people as possible will be able to use and access this very valuable community resource.

### LILYDALE ATHENAEUM (Est. 1888)

The 2019 Program of shows for the Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company has now been released. Coming to the stage this year are:

#### **Quartet**

Season 1 2019: 7th – 23rd March, Matinees: Sundays 10 & 17 & Sat 23 March. A comedy by Ronald Harwood, Directed by Kellie Tweedale. By special arrangement with Origin Theatrical Pty Ltd.

#### **The Wisdom of Eve**

Season 2 2019: 23rd May – 8th June, Matinees: Sundays 26 May & 2 June, and Saturday 8 June. A drama by Mary Orr, Directed by: Katie-Jane Amey. By special arrangement with Hal Leonard Australia.

#### **Picnic at Hanging Rock**

Season 3 2019: 15th – 31st August, Matinees: Sundays 18 & 25 & Sat 31 August. A mystery drama adapted by Tom Wright, Based on the book by Joan Lindsay, Directed by Helen Ellis. By special arrangement with Dominie Pty Ltd.

#### **Ladies in Black**

Season 4 2019: 7th – 23rd November, Matinees: Sundays 10 & 17 & Sat 23 November. A musical - Book by Carolyn Burns, Music and Lyrics by Tim Finn, Based on Madeleine St John's novel, *The Women in Black*, Directed by Alan Burrows. By special arrangement with David Spicer Productions.

Bookings can be made online at [lilydaleatc.com](http://lilydaleatc.com). Single show: Adult \$26.00; Concession \$24.00. A 2019 Season ticket is available for \$85.00, allowing admittance to 4 plays per calendar year.

### LINDENOW PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1882)

The imposing solid red brick Lindenow Hall is located on a bluff overlooking the Mitchell River flood plain notable for its extensive vegetable

production. The original Hall was built on a site donated by John Whitbourne in 1882. Found to be too small, the present much larger Hall was erected next door in 1914, again on another site donated by Whitbourne family. Although the Hall once had an extensive library the last of the books were disposed of in 1964.

The original Hall had longterm kindergarten use, but in 1984 it was found to be riddled with white ants and it was demolished and a new kindergarten was built on the same site and opened in 1986. The 'new' Hall has had a number of upgrades and additions by way of a toilet block, entrance foyer and kitchen upgrade. A feature of the Hall is the large sealed car park on the east side of the Hall which can hold many dozens of cars.

The Wall of Remembrance and Cenotaph are located at the north end of the carpark, overlooked by an ancient gum which appears to be floodlit at night.

#### **MEERLIEU PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1910)**

The Meerlieu Mechanics' Institute is located on a substantial Reserve and was opened in 1912. It served as the district State School from 1912-45 when the present separate School was built nearby. (Previous to this the School had been conducted in the Anglican Church for about thirty years.)

The Reserve has long been the home of the Meerlieu Cricket Club 'The Tussocks' established in 1937. The Club has established practice facilities and a well resourced main oval with changerooms. A large collection of cricket memorabilia and photos is housed in the Hall.

The Hall was transferred to the Shire in 1954 but is still well maintained by a local community Committee of Management. Since then an extensive kitchen block was added in 1962, and a toilet block in 1981. The Hall was connected to the electricity grid in 1960 and solar panels were installed in 2010.

The north facing wall of the Hall has been fitted with large doors which open onto an undercover paved area which stretches along most of the length of the Hall. There is also good signage. The Hall holds district World War I and II Honour Boards.

#### **MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM LIBRARY (Est. 1839)**

During one of the storms which have lashed Melbourne, the Athenaeum suffered severe storm damage in the library and part of their ceiling collapsed. The library has had to close to

all patrons until the necessary works have been carried out to repair the damage to the building. Check their website before visiting for opening hours: [melbourneathenaeum.org.au](http://melbourneathenaeum.org.au)

#### **MINERS REST MECHANICS' INSTITUTE COMMUNITY HALL (Est. 1865)**

Freshly signwritten, freshened up with a coat paint, with newly landscaped surrounds and a large hard surface parking area at the front, the Miners Rest folk deserve the heartiest of praise. Furthermore the spectacular **MIA 2018 Conference Barbecue Dinner** will be a lasting memory for all who attended that truly amazing evening. You certainly did the Mechanics' Institute Movement proud. Thank you all.

#### **MURTOA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1881).**

Murtoa's Big Weekend in October 2018 featured a very successful Art Exhibition and Sale in the Institute and it is to be repeated this year. Just prior to the weekend it was announced that the Hall had been successful in the Government's Pick my Project submission and would receive \$35,673 to replace their sixty year old stage curtains. Congratulations to all concerned.

#### **NARRE WARREN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)**



*One of the paintings in the exhibition, titled 'Villers Bretonneux'.*

The Narre Warren Mechanics Institute Hall hosted the Provenance Artists "ARMISTICE" 100 Year - Holt Art Exhibition in November and we are thrilled with the result.

We were thrilled to have received a Government Grant from the Federal Grant, \$28,000.00 as a result of the efforts of **Anthony Byrne MP** member for Holt.

There were about ninety invitees at the opening of the event on Friday evening and some

of the dignitaries were: Former Ambassador of France; Former Ambassador of Belgium; **Mr John Wells** - President Dandenong/Cranbourne RSL; Anthony Byrne was an apology, due to illness but sent his best wishes via his Personal assistant.

Members of the Provenance Artist and Committee members of Mechanics' Institute Hall assisted with the set up of the 31 Paintings and accompanying information boards, the Flags of 10 Nations dressed up the interior of the Hall.

The evening commenced with the National Anthems of Australia and France, the bugler played the 'Last Post' and John Wells recited the Ode followed by 'Reveille'.

The response from the Art work was amazing, even more pleasing was the supper which had a French theme together with French wine.

The display was staged at Casey Central Shopping Centre 5-11th November 2018.

Russell Owen

### **NEWHAM MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1902)**



*A dish prepared by the grade 6 students in the hall: vegetable fritters, corn cob, tossed salad and salad dressing. (Photo courtesy Carol Tillyer)*

### **COOKING THE INEDIBLE - Children's Cooking Classes**

Around 2014 a teacher at the Newham Primary School started giving basic cooking and food preparation classes to students. These proved popular but space and facilities were limited, so the School teamed up with the Newham Mechanics' Hall which has an up-to-date kitchen, food preparation area, extra space and an existing vegetable garden.

The Hall can also accommodate two separate food preparation areas to enable those children with special dietary needs to also participate.

The year generally starts out with finding what vegetables children *don't like* and these are then planted in the special beds at the School. Classes are held in the Hall each fortnight during the school year. Tables are also set up in the main Hall and this enables the usual five groups of five to go to work. Innovative ways are then demonstrated on how to prepare and eat *the inedible*.

The year ends with a barbecue of Fritattas and/or hamburgers and salads which are cooked and prepared by class members.

There has been a progressive move from purchased to home grown ingredients. To enable the project to continue and diversify, an orchard has recently been planted at the school, mainly comprising cherry, pear and apple varieties. Fencing, raised beds and work areas have been built by the Woodend Men's Shed which obtained a grant through Bunnings in Sunbury to provide building materials and Landcare has provided some money.

The Newham Mechanics' Hall is also used for other School group activities.

### **STANLEY ATHENAEUM & PUBLIC ROOM (Est. 1863)**

The folk at Stanley certainly saw their prolonged hardwork come to fruition last year. Utilising part of their Government Library Grant, they researched and mounted their current exhibition **Hearts of Gold: Minds of Mettle**, which told the story of sixty local women. This received the 2018 Museums' Victoria **Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums**. Then they received exposure at the Victorian Local History Awards with a Commendation in the **Historical Interpretation Section**. Finally they won J Furphy & Sons Award for their Logo which was presented to Chris Dormer and Helen McIntyre at the **MIA 2018 Celebration and Commemoration Dinner**. They also now have the **Stanley Athenaeum** page (pages) on the MIV website. Chris and Helen also ably told their inspirational story at the **Halls Survival Workshop** with their 'Exhibitions on a Shoe String'. Well done all and thank you for supporting MIV in its activities.

### **STAWELL LITERARY & SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE (Est. 1866).**

This distinctive two-storey brick Institute was sold into private ownership in 1876 and since then it has either been used as a residence or for commercial purposes. The most recent use is

that it is being developed into Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

### **SWAN REACH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1881).**

After long-term Pre-School use this building was sold into private ownership in the early 1990s and since then it has had a number of commercial uses. Now in changed ownership the new owners are planning on setting it up as a space for wider community use.

### **TOONGABBIE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1883)**

It seemed fitting that World War I and II Honour Boards that were once an integral part of the Hall and its Memory have recently been returned to the Hall. When the Toongabbie State School building was demolished in 1968 the School World War I Honour Plaque was passed to the Hall. However, when the Mechanics' Hall became so unstable and in danger of collapse in the late 1980s, all the Hall Honour Boards and School Plaque were passed to the new Recreation Reserve Pavilion, located on the abutting Reserve.

Now well restored, the Hall takes its place in the architectural icons of Mechanics' Institutes and is the only two-storey weatherboard Hall still standing in Victoria.

The Toongabbie Recreation Reserve Committee of Management were successful in obtaining a Federal grant to restore the World War I and II Honour Boards and this work was done by **Long Signs** of Morwell. The Committee recently took the opportunity to have the Honour Rolls re-installed on the walls of the Mechanics' Hall. The unveiling was celebrated with a community event and reunion of families named on the World War I Honour Board and Plaque on Sunday, 21 October. It was in fact a double event celebrating the return of the Boards and Plaque to the Hall and the Centenary of the Armistice.

The Traralgon City Band were on hand to present suitable music and the address was given by **Mitchell Evans**, now a student of Gippsland Grammar School, but formerly a student of Toongabbie Primary School. Toongabbie Centenary of Armistice Committee member **Graham Berrett** noted 'We were very happy Mitchell agreed to speak, to establish the connection to the school and his age, which is the

same age as these men would have been when they went to War.'

The reinstallation of the Honour Boards and School Plaque with Australian and UK flags has effectively formed a 'Wall of Honour' in the Hall, 'Lest we Forget'.

### **WALHALLA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1865)**

#### ***Centenary Event at Walhalla Institute***

On 1 October 2018 the Baw Baw Shire held a Council meeting in the Walhalla Mechanics Institute to mark one hundred years since the Walhalla Shire amalgamated with the Narracan Shire on 1 October 1918.

It was also one hundred years since a Shire meeting had been held in Walhalla. From the time of the Walhalla amalgamation in 1918 to 2018, there has not been a Shire Council meeting held in Walhalla.

The Mayor of the Baw Baw Shire, **Joe Gauci**, welcomed all the Councillors and guests and then introduced Councillor **Michael Leaney** who gave a short presentation on the changing fortunes of the town. How the town had been a bustling and rich settlement which went into decline after the gold mines closed and was now developing as a major tourist attraction.

Michael then introduced **Greg Hansford**, author of *In Days of Gold: The Pioneers of old Walhalla*, who gave a history of the Walhalla Borough (1872) and the Walhalla Shire (1886) through to its demise (1918). As the mines became less profitable and eventually closed, the miners left in search of work and the Shire could no longer sustain itself on the available rate revenue leading to the amalgamation. It was an excellent presentation with many interesting historical details. One snippet was the use of the Mechanics Institute Hall for the meeting to call for the Borough to be established.

**Brian Brewer** of the Walhalla Heritage and Development League then took a walking tour of the township in sunny spring weather.

A display of memorabilia was held in the meeting room of the building.

As with many Mechanics Institutes, the building played a major part in the history of the town and did so again with this centenary event.

Graham Goulding  
Walhalla Board of Management



## UK INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES THIRTY YEARS

Fresh from MIV's 20th Anniversary, the UK **Independent Library Association** is due to celebrate its 30th Anniversary this year. It has its genesis from an informal meeting convened by Librarian **Janet Allan** at the **Portico Library** in Manchester in the mid-1980s. In addition to the Portico, present were representatives of the **Birmingham and Midland Institute, Leeds Library** and **Liverpool Athenaeum**. A more general meeting was called in 1989, also at the Portico, and eighteen libraries were either present or subsequently joined and the Association of Independent Libraries was formed.

Membership gradually spread throughout the British Isles. Since then Annual Meetings have itinerated around member libraries and a solid network has been forged. It is also from within the Association that the **Historic Libraries Forum** was formed representing the Cathedra and other specialist historic libraries, that were not totally independent.

In recent years the Association has undergone 'renewal' with a name and logo change and a Conference format surrounding its Annual General Meeting. This year's Conference is to be held over the period 7-9 June at the **Devon and Exeter Institution** in the Close of Exeter Cathedral.

The theme is **Adaption, Change, Reinvention: Continuity and Change in Independent Libraries**. We are told that the definition of 'adaptation' is 'the action or process of altering, amending, or modifying something (especially something that has been created for a particular purpose) so that it is suitable for a new use.' Any library is an adaptable space; they've embraced technology, changing reader demographics, the loss of original buildings, the addition of new buildings, ever-shifting collections, and much more. What, is so intriguing about libraries is that continuity is as important as adaptation. All libraries treasure their original buildings and oldest books; their longevity is USP. How do libraries change while remaining the same? How do libraries emphasise the new while retaining the old.

In recent times ILA Conferences have brought together not only those who are working in and around the Independent Library sector, but also a wider network of those who work around libraries, archives, special collections and information technology. That can include library founders, readers, members, subscribers, librarians, archivists, interns, volunteers, trustees,

benefactors, partner institutions, architects, computer programmers and the general public.

Papers must be 20 minutes long and the following are suggested as possible topics, but other ideas are welcome.

Projects that successfully changed any aspect of the library and its community;

Recruiting adaptation: impact of staff, trustees and board members;

New ways of retaining a library's ethos;

Blending the old and the new;

The impact of digital technology;

Buildings and spaces; new builds and renovations;

Library communities then and now;

Exhibiting collection treasures in new ways; and

Opening up library spaces with clever security.

The Call for Papers is out and abstracts of 250 words are due by Friday, 22 February 2019 with either **Anne Howard** or **Louisa Yates** at [independentlibraries@gmail.com](mailto:independentlibraries@gmail.com)

It is emphasised that Papers need not be scholarly thus providing an opportunity for all to participate.

And the venue for **ILA 2019, the Devon and Exeter Institution** (D&EI), which clicked over its bicentenary in 2013, was established as a subscription library 'To promote the general diffusion of Science, Literature and the Arts, and for illustrating the Natural and Civil History of the County of Devon, and the History of the City of Exeter.' And it still retains those 1813 objectives. It holds 35,000 books and many thousands of maps, prints, pamphlets, press cuttings and leaflets. The Library catalogue can be accessed online through the University of Exeter.

Its very significant original collection of natural history, ethnography and antiques was passed to the Royal Albert Museum and Post Office in Exeter when that was opened in 1868. This is now known as the RAMM (Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery).

The D&EI has just emerged from a highly successful 2015-2018 Development Project, during which it achieved charitable status and gained funding from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** and **Historic England**.

## SOUTHHEM PUBLIC LECTURE

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We took advantage of a hurried visit to Melbourne by SouthHem researcher **Dr Sarah Comyn** to deliver a public lecture on 10 December 2018 at Prahran Mechanics' Institute.

The SouthHem Project, based on University College Dublin, is funded by the European Research Council and runs from 2016-2023. Its focus is on books and reading between 1780-1870 and is being conducted in three zones: 1. Australian and New Zealand; 2. Southern Africa – Cape Colony and Natal; and 3. South-East Asia.

Sarah has had a number of visits to Australia and has assembled a digital collection of book catalogues from Public Libraries, Mechanics' Institutes, Subscription Libraries, Booksellers and Auction Sales. These are now available for viewing on the University College Dublin - SouthHem website. We are assured that as part of the funding agreement that they will remain permanently listed on the UCD website after the South-Hem Project is completed, which will therefore remain as a permanent resource. They can be searched by author, title, bookseller or place.

Sarah's lecture title was '**A New Reading Public: The Mechanics' Institute in Victoria**'.

Her research has so far revealed 430 catalogues in Australia and New Zealand and 70 in Southern Africa, with 48% being of library origin, 34% from book auctions and 18% from booksellers. The catalogues were in English with an occasional individual European language title. Nothing in indigenous languages was cited.

Thirty-nine of the catalogues had been issued before 1830 and the balance to 1870. About half had their origin in Victoria. The most notable catalogue producer was Melbourne bookseller and publisher **Henry Tolman Dwight** (1823-71) who issued his first catalogue in 1859, with others in 1862 and 1865. Following his death, the 1871 auction catalogue of 35,000 titles of Dwight's 'stock-in-trade' went under the hammer, with the sale lasting fourteen days.

However most of the notable catalogued book auctions were located in Sydney and number 63. Although the newspaper advertised sales of book collections occur in far more instances than that there appears to be no extant catalogues.

Victorian catalogues cited were those of the Geelong Mechanics' Institute (1850 and 1858), Prahran Mechanics' Institute (1859),



Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute (1859), Sandhurst Mechanics' Institute (1869) and those produced by **Augustus Tulk** at the Melbourne Public Library in 1861 and 1865.

It is clear that Libraries to a certain extent relied on William HJ Traice's (1813-85) *Handbook of Mechanics' Institutions, with Priced Catalogue of Books Suitable for Libraries*, which was first published in London in 1856 and revised through numerous editions into the 1860s.

Most of the catalogues have so far been described by glosses which give comment on practices by booksellers, librarians, administrators, bookcollectors and auctioneers as well as the existence of varied marginalia. Reference was made to the work of Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (1999).

Sarah finished with some of her current research on the **Early Closing [of Shops] Movement** and the use of advertising, posters and touring speakers who spoke in Institutes around Victoria. She named some of the key players: Glasgow-born **Henry Langlands** (1794-1863) who was an iron founder, a Baptist, and campaigned on the 'Knowledge is Power' theme; **George Smales Searle** (1823-1912?), Beechworth newspaper proprietor; and **John Scarlett** in the Ovens region.

These and others advocated on the 'Please shop before 6. Support the Early Closing Movement.' Certainly a topic for another day.

We sincerely thank Sarah for giving of her time and talents to update us on the SouthHem Project and congratulate her on past research and wish her further success in her ongoing research into the cultural literacy of early Australia.

## AMERICAN MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES GROUP 2018 MEETING

Twelve members of the Membership Libraries Group convened for their annual meeting in beautiful Charleston, South Carolina at the **Charleston Library Society** ([charlestonlibrarysociety.org](http://charlestonlibrarysociety.org)), 4-6 October 2018.

Those of us who arrived a day early were treated to an excellent panel on literary fiction at the Charleston Library Society where we got to see Executive Director **Anne Cleveland** and her staff welcoming guests and speakers and making sure the program went well. We also toured this beautiful city on land and sea and enjoyed the Charleston hospitality of all we met, especially our host library.

We enjoyed an evening at the Board President's home for cocktails and beautiful views of Charleston Bay. We had another lovely evening at Anne and Will Cleveland's home with delicious appetizers and conversation on the screened in piazza (porch). We ended the evening inside the home with rousing piano playing by one of the guests of many music genres to which we all sang along.

In attendance were:

**Anne Cleveland**, Executive Director, (Charleston Library Society)

**Elizabeth Barker**, Boston Athenaeum (Boston, Massachusetts)

**Erika Torri**, La Jolla Athenaeum Music and Arts Library (La Jolla, California)

**Pat Larrabee**, Maine Charitable Mechanic Association (Portland, Maine)

**Carolyn Waters**, New York Society Library (New York, New York)

**Deborah Hunt**, Mechanics' Institute (San Francisco, California)

**Tom Hardiman**, Portsmouth Athenaeum (Portsmouth, New Hampshire)

**Caroline Cumming**, Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum Library (Seattle, Washington)

**Jean Marie Procius**, Executive Director, Salem Athenaeum (Salem, Massachusetts)

**John Flaherty**, Mercantile Library of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, Ohio)

**Valerie Garlick**, New Haven Institute Library (New Haven, Connecticut)

**Amber Keeran**, Lanier Library (Tryon, North Carolina)



*MLG Meeting 2018 attendees.  
(Photo supplied by Deb Hunt)*

Membership Libraries Group (MLG) members range from small to large with the smallest being the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association with one part-time librarian and 300 members; and the largest is Boston Athenaeum with 6000 members and dozens of staff. New York Society Library and Mechanics' Institute are next and about equal in terms of members/staffing. Some of these libraries are losing members; others are thriving and growing membership.

### TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

#### *Boards of Trustees*

- \* Setting expectations in terms of service and donating funding. Donations ranged from no minimum to a minimum of \$15,000/trustee.
- \* Budgets: annual endowment spend ranged from 3-18% though most use a 3-year rolling average at a 3-5% draw.

#### *Development*

- \* Gang of 5: former board presidents who were big donors (they are off the Board now). Annual lunch with all of them for executive director to throw out ideas: E.g., \$5000 special membership and one of them says, "I'll do that."
- \* naming spaces, etc. as much as possible for large donations.
- \* goal to have each development person earn his/her own keep and double donations in next three years and triple in six years.

### **Events/Programming**

- \* oversell popular events by 10% because of no shows.
- \* charge \$15 for all events -- members and non-members.
- \* provide more intimate programs than other organizations. It is a salon. (Good selling point.)
- \* some libraries do galas and others do not. It can be very expensive unless you have a large sponsor, and even then, the income may not be worth the work and trouble.

### **Membership/Engagement**

- \* membership form asks about their interests.
- \* university student team worked with them to develop metrics around engagement.
- \* implementing a monthly auto pay via credit card. Many pensioners want monthly payments.
- \* Homepage banner: "A gathering place for readers, writers, and thinkers since 1835. You belong here."
- \* Harry Potter themed Yule Ball this year to draw younger members.
- \* Focusing on diversity both in membership and on board.
- \* Wednesday Happy Hour from 5:30-6:30. It is announced in the Library and they go to their meeting room for wine and peanuts. Usually get about 25-40 members.
- \* Every two years celebrate Life Members (40 years or longer). They have an oral historian come and record on film their memories about the library. At last celebration, they had remarks from 52-year member.
- \* Rather than trips for members, do donor events (at other libraries) and coffees. They will reciprocate.

### **Volunteers**

- \* Volunteers are used in many different ways from inventorying library print materials to staffing programs. One has to be clear on what is expected of volunteers, ensure a good fit (job description and training are essential) and be careful that they do not do regular staff work.

### **Collections**

- \* Most reported fewer print items being checked out, but MI San Francisco had an

increase of 13% in fiscal year 2018 over fiscal year 2017.

- \* Ebooks continue to be popular, but so does print. Various vendors include:
  - Cloud Library
  - Overdrive
  - Axis 360
  - Boston Athenaeum uses Massachusetts State Library for all eBooks rather than spend money on them

Contributed by Deborah Hunt  
Librarian, San Francisco Mechanics' Institute

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The Charleston Library Society was established in 1748 by 'a group of nineteen young gentlemen of various trades and professions'. The first officers were elected on 1 April 1749 and by 1750 the Society had 129 members and 2000 books. It was from within its membership the College of Charleston was formed in 1770 and the Charleston Museum, America's first, was formed in 1773.

Over the years the Society has had three homes: the Charleston County Courthouse, 82 Broad Street, 1792-1835; 50 Broad Street, 1835-1914; and 164 King Street, since 1914, with annexe purchases also since then.

The current Executive Director **Anne Cleveland** joined the Library in 2009 and rearranged shelving to provide a revamped space that could seat 250 guests for an event. This space is now well utilised. Memberships depend on member generosity and starts from \$150 as a Member of the **Beatrice Witte Ravenel Circle** to \$10,000 as a 1748 Fellow.

Today the Charleston Library Society is much more than a library, that holds around 120,000 books, as well as manuscripts, maps, artworks and other ephemera, and it is very much a societal entity. In addition there is a children's library of 7,500 titles. It programmed some 180 activities in 2017 and these vary from lectures, author presentations, music and voice recitals and debates and forums of historic and contemporary interest, with an occasional exhibition. The latter largely fall under the direction of Anne Cleveland and are organised by **Dutch Reutter**, a graduate of the College of Charleston, who joined the Library in 2015.

## Case Study - FESTIVAL OF SMALL HALLS

### GOOVIGEN SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNITY HALL

The recent 'Mechanics Institutes Schools of Arts and their ilk' conference was about **Celebration and Survival** of the various associated halls and community halls that many have become. On the same night as the first day of the Conference one such community hall in Central Queensland was the scene of a fund-raising event.

On 16 November 2018, the **Festival of Small Halls** performed in the Goovigen Community Hall. The old School of Arts is not used for functions anymore. It is part of the Historical village/display.

Some background history for the halls follows:

Goovigen is a Small Country Town with Two Halls.

The School of Arts was built in 1929 with lots of volunteer labour from the early pioneers of the district. Constructed of corrugated iron and local timber, it was to become the social venue for the district.

The first function was a dance held on 21 August 1929. It served many organisations at that time – such as a church, used for teaching Sunday school, a wedding venue, dance hall, meeting room, concert venue, a place where the soldiers were farewelled on their way to fight for our country and a place to welcome those lucky enough to return home. It was well loved and well used until 1955 when popular large gala balls were in vogue and the School of Arts just wasn't large enough or modern enough to hold such an event. Who wanted to visit the outdoor loo in their beautiful ball gowns? So plans were put in place to build a larger more modern hall. This took some time to achieve and in the interim the local picture theatre was the focal point for these large functions.

By 1965 the Community Hall was built, again with the assistance of generous donations and lots of volunteer labour to help the builder – it had indoor toilets! The grand opening ball was held on 6 November 1965 to a crowd of almost standing room only. The only money borrowed for construction was \$3000 from the bank of New South Wales, now known as Westpac.

The School of Arts was sold to a grain merchant who used it for grain storage for several years. The Goovigen Historical Society and Museum was formed with the aim of purchasing and



reinstating the hall to its former glory, headed by **Mr Percy Schluter**, his wife **Elaine** and a team of willing helpers who worked tirelessly to make this happen.

The Historical Hall, as it is now known, stands grand, proud and holds the history of our town and district, attracting lots of interested visitors. It is still the same as it was in 1929 – the local crows ash timber flooring is still as good as the day it was built.

The Community Hall is now the focal point of our small town. Over the years the Progress Association has fundraised and secured grants to upgrade facilities and we now have a large modern well laid out community hall. Even though it is now 53 years old, it shows no signs of ageing, holds pride of place in our small rural town and serves our community well. *(Written by Cath Jordison and supplied by Melinda Petty of Banana Shire Council).*

Melinda Petty is the Community Development Advisor for Banana Shire Council and reports the event was a great success and a major fundraiser for the Goovigen P&C. The P&C advise that feedback has been wonderful and positive, a great event for both the P&C and the community itself.

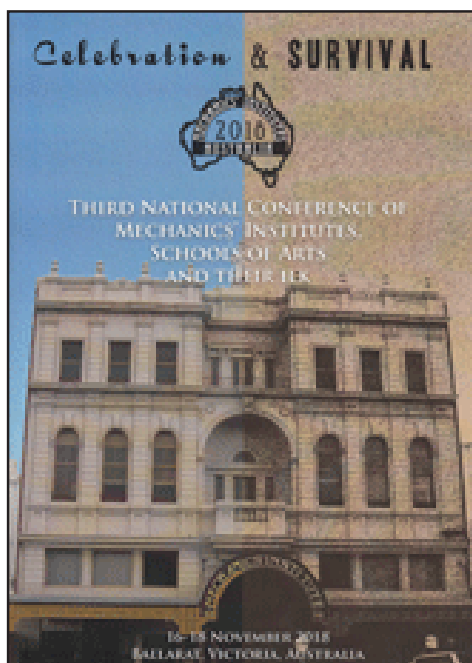
Information on the Festival of Small Halls can be found at <https://festivalofsmallhalls.com/>.

Steve Kellermeier

*Photos courtesy Melinda Petty*



# Book Reviews



***Proceedings of the Third National Conference of Mechanics' Institutes, Schools of Arts and their ilk convened by the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. at Ballarat Mechanics' Institute 16-18 November 2018*** - various authors. Paperback, perfect bound, 338 pages. 210x297. 9780646995823. Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc., 2018)

## **Foreword**

The Mechanics' Institute (MI) Movement is more than 200 years old, the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, venue for this Conference, is nearing its 160th anniversary and Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. (MIV) was formed 20 years ago in 1998. Time has modified all three but, as the infinite variety of papers collected in this volume of Proceedings shows, it has not withered them nor countless other Institutes, Schools of Arts and their ilk around Australia and in other parts of the world.

Some early Institutes evolved into institutions of higher education. Two such are Birkbeck in London and Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, both now internationally renowned. Their stories are recounted in these Proceedings. Another paper tells how the community origins and local identity of less prestigious institutions in the United Kingdom (UK) can still be advantages in a competitive higher education market.

Within these Proceedings, readers will find papers that are scholarly and analytic in their accounts of the contribution of MIs and Schools

of Arts to colonial culture in Australia and to adult education here and in the UK. They will find warm, personal accounts of small communities' relationships with their local Institutes' buildings and books. The influence of *These Walls Speak Volumes*, Pam Baragwanath and Ken James' monumental 2015 history of MIs in Victoria, is apparent in papers tracing and recording locations and stories of Institutes in several other colonies/States of Australia.

Community and identity have always been elemental in Mechanics' Institutes. The traditional and continuing roles of Institutes as independent libraries, as halls and social hubs in times of communal celebration or crisis are feelingly described in many papers. An exemplar is the account of how much was lost in the 2018 destruction by fire of so vibrant a community venue as the Tallarook (Vic) MI.

Befitting a Conference theme of 'Celebration and Survival', papers presented encompass past, present and future. As one paper conceptualises the historic shift in context and roles, the 'analogue construct' 19th and 20th Century Mechanics' Institute must adapt to the new digital age while retaining its essential role as one of the ever-diminishing number of pillars of what we call *community*. Another paper describes the imaginative use of digital applications and platforms to give people everywhere a 'self-guided walking tour' of an MI, wherever it might be located.

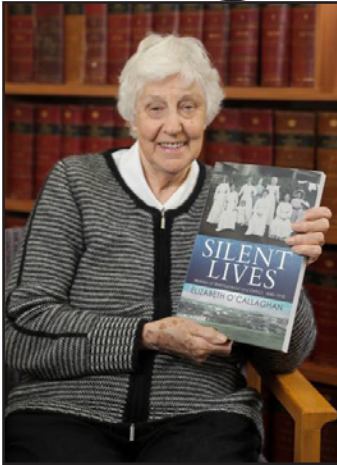
The Conference and these Proceedings are an excellent celebration of the past and present of myriad Institutes around the world. The experiences and the ideas they share will be invaluable contributions to the survival, indeed to the continuing resurgence of Institutes in many places. Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. is to be commended for organising this Third National Conference. The authors of papers published in these Proceedings are to be thanked for their wide-ranging research and stimulating presentations.

Dr Frank Hurley OAM

Foundation Chair of MIV Inc. and  
Patron of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute

Available from: Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc., PO BOX 1080, Windsor VIC 3181. \$80.00 + \$13.00 postage. Also available through MIV's online store. Follow the links from [mivc.org.au](http://mivc.org.au)

## Our People



**Elizabeth O'Callaghan** was recently named as a section winner in the 2018 Victorian Community History Awards. Elizabeth's book *Silent Lives: Women of Warrnambool and District 1840-1910* was winner of the Local History Project Award and

the book was published by the Warrnambool and District Historical Society. In her acceptance speech Elizabeth said that on moving to Warrnambool she joined the Historical Society and then married its President in that order. Congratulations Elizabeth. (Picture: Rob Gunstone)



MIV Committeeman and Little River Co-Librarian **Peter Jones** was one of the delegates to **MIA 2018** and who really put the **Little River Mechanics' Institute** well out there. Peter submitted a Paper on Lucy Walker (1907-

87) an Australian romance author of which Little River has around twenty of her titles and as a result of presenting his Paper scored another ten of her books at the Conference and some speaking engagements. Peter submitted nominations on behalf of Little River in the J Furphy and Sons Awards and Little River won one section. Peter arrived at **MIA 2018** with the Little River Mechanics' Institute banner, Institute flyer and copies of the **Little River Walking or Driving Tour** for sale. And during and around the Conference Peter was part of the welcome team to visiting delegates on bus tours or at evening dinners etc. And Little River have a presence on the MIV website and is a member of MIV Libraries Group which feature in its recently launched *Libraries Directory*. Thank you Peter for your

very tangible support of MIV and representation of Little River Mechanics' Institute, and for serving on the MIV Committee. (Photo: James Baker)



We welcome Newham Mechanics' Institute's first woman President **Kerri Ritchie** to our midst. Kerri recently succeeded **Stephen Mitchell** in that role. Kerri grew up on a sheep property at Tooleybuc in NSW and has a great

affinity for the country and small communities. She has only recently in 2017 moved to Newham with her family and came to the Institute via the pilates class. In her daytime job she is supervising producer of the much-watched ABC television series **Back Roads** which during past series' has featured several Institutes around Australia.



**Next Wave**, the current tenant of the Brunswick Mechanics' Institute, has recently appointed a new CEO **Roslyn Helper**. Roslyn is an artist, writer and director with national and international experience both as an artist and

administrator. She holds a BA (Media and Communications/Government and International Relations) and an MA (Arts Politics) from the Tisch School of Arts, New York University.

Taking up her new role Roslyn commented 'Next Wave has long been a cultural bastion, a place for artists and audiences across the country to come together, to share ideas and experiences through art. Now more than ever, Next Wave plays a vital role in supporting new voices and presenting bold artistic investigations that critique, inspire and engage with our broader cultural and political dialogues. It is a huge honour to step up and lead Next Wave, and I can't

## Our People cont...

wait to get started.' We wish Roslyn and the Brunswick Campus every success.



The Melbourne Athenaeum's indefatigable volunteer researcher and author **Anne Marsden** was one of the presenters at **MIA 2018** where she ably told the story of her latest book *And the Women Came Too: The Families of the*

*Founders of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution.* Anne was also a recipient of one of the J Furphy & Sons Awards announced at the Conference **Celebration and Commemoration Dinner.** (Photo: James Baker)



We missed the retirement of Ballarat's Sovereign Hill Chief Executive **Jeremy Johnson** in June. Jeremy joined the staff of Sovereign Hill in 1995 and became Chief Executive in 2002. Under his watch Sovereign Hill has

consistently won State and National Tourism Awards. In an interview Jeremy noted 'Our Winter Wonderlights Christmas in July is also memorable. It has seen Ballarat overcome the cold. Ballarat is old, cold and gold. It's such an advantage to have that.' Advertising for this event has featured the former Scarsdale Mechanics' Institute building which was relocated to Sovereign Hill in 1971. Jeremy's community service was been recognised by Federation University with an Honorary Doctorate in 2011 and a Victorian State Tourism Award for his individual outstanding contribution in 2012. Jeremy leaves Sovereign Hill when annual visitation numbers and profits are at record levels. We wish Jeremy and his wife Anne a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.



We note the resignation of **Ralph Lewin** as Chief Executive Officer of the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute Library and Chess Room effective as of 14 January 2019. Ralph has been with the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute

since 2014 and during the intervening time the Institute's profile, programming and membership has been lifted to new levels. Ralph leaves to become Executive Director of the Peter E Haas Jnr Family Fund which manages some \$227 million in assets and distributes some \$2.7 million annually to community causes. The Haas family control the Levi Strauss Company. Ralph noted 'It's been a great run. I will miss the mixture of people and this historic place. I feel that the Mechanics' Institute is one of those places that makes San Francisco, well, San Francisco.'



We note the resignation of **Daniel Rose** as Director of the **Swindon Mechanics' Institution Trust** (UK). Daniel joined the Trust at aged seventeen, and sixteen years on in that position he has forcefully and vocally

advocated the renaissance of the iconic Swindon Mechanics' Institute which has been shut up all that time. He has seen the transition of the building to private ownership back to public ownership and development of a plan forward, albeit slow. Daniel is moving to Greece, with his wife Jen and young son. But he states 'I will remain supportive of the Mechanics' Institution Trust and look forward to watching the organisation continue to grow and develop.' We wish Daniel and his family a safe and pleasant spell in Greece and hope that one day he may return to the Mechanics' fold. (Photo: Dave Cox)

# Vale



We note the passing of the Elmore Athenaeum's long-time stalwart **Brian John Chirgwin** on 16 August 2018. His beloved wife, Betty predeceased him by several weeks. Brian became involved in the Elmore Athenaeum at a critical time when it was near derelict and the bricks were being removed for building local barbecues. Eventually it was restored and a new kitchen again joined it to the abutting Soldiers' Memorial Hall. MIV had a Regional Meeting at Elmore many years ago and we were privileged to hear its illustrious story from Brian. Brian was farewelled with a Thanksgiving Service in Elmore's Sacred Heart Catholic Church on 24 August which was followed by a private cremation. Indeed Elmore has lost a great community worker and long may he Rest in Peace. Our sincere condolences go out to his family. *(Photo: Brendan McCarthy)*



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of **Dr Joan Elizabeth Hunt** on 6 September 2018 at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the result of a stroke. Joan was a great friend of Local History in Victoria and indeed Australia. She was a Past-President of the Woody Yaloak and Ballarat Historical Societies and co-founder of the Central Highlands Historical Association. She served on the Royal Historical Society of Victoria as a Councillor: 1988-94, 2002-11 and 2012-14. As RHSV Vice-President, Joan and was Convenor of the History Victoria Support Group which

organised workshops across Victoria, including one at the Kyneton Mechanics' Institute. Joan was also a former Councillor of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies. She also undertook an extensive Churchill Fellowship to the UK to study local history groups and how they shared and made known their resources. Joan had only just completed judging the Victorian Community History Awards. Our sympathy goes out to her husband Gary and her children Veronica, Stephen and Felicity and their extended families. Following a private funeral, a Memorial Service was held at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute on 20 September. Historian Suzie Zada remembered her as 'vibrant, generous, knowledgeable and constantly teaching all who heard her speak.'



The Richmond (NSW) community was saddened learn of the passing of **Ronald Francis 'Ron' Rozzoli** on 16 October 2018. Born in Sydney in 1936, his family moved to Richmond in 1946 where his father conducted the business of Rozzoli Jewellers, watchmakers and jewellers. Ron worked in the business and he took it over after his father's death in 1975 and he then ran it until his retirement in 1995.

Ron had been a long-time and active member of the Richmond School of Arts and was Honorary Secretary from 1960-2003. It was under Ron's 'watch' that it was largely restored and became a community hub for theatre and craft.

It was therefore fitting that the largely attended Memorial Service to Ron was held in the Richmond School of Arts on 1 November 2018. The family directed that in lieu of flowers that donations be directed to Richmond Literary Institute (established in 1861), School of Arts. Our sincere condolences go out to his much admired wife Margaret, children, extended family, and brother Kevin. Indeed a life well lived, leaving many fond memories.

## Community Page

### RECIPE

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

### MELTING MOMENTS

#### Ingredients

60 grams (2 oz) Self Raising Flour  
 60 grams (2 oz) Corn Flour  
 60 grams (2 oz) Butter  
 60 grams (2 oz) Sugar  
 ¼ teaspoon of Vanilla Essence  
 1 egg

#### Method

1. Cream Butter and Sugar, then add Egg and beat.
2. Sift Flours, add to creamed mixture, and add Vanilla.
3. Mix all ingredients well.
4. Prepare a greased baking tray or use baking paper.
5. Using a teaspoon, place spoonfuls of mixture on the baking tray, allowing space to spread. Press half of the 'blobs' with the back of a fork. These will be the tops.
6. Bake in a preheated 180°C for about ten minutes.
7. Let cool on tray, then sandwich together with a layer of icing sugar or jam.

### SPOT THE BAKERS DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 48

1. Who represented Heriot-Watt University at MIA 2018?
2. What was the theme of the MIA 2018?
3. Which Institute has a significant collection of the books of Australian romance writer Lucy Walker?
4. What flags were flying in Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's Minerva Space during MIA 2018?
5. Who played the bagpipes at the conclusion of MIA 2018 on Sunday afternoon?
6. Who represented Glasgow's University of Strathclyde at MIA 2018.

7. Where was MIV Plaque No. 64 recently unveiled?
8. Which Gippsland Institute is being cleared of asbestos?
9. What was Bob Flavell carrying at the Miners Rest Mechanics' Institute Community Hall?
10. Jonathan ..... represented Birkbeck College London at MIA 2018.
11. Where is the next Independent Libraries Association AGM/Conference to be held?
12. Who recently presented his Queensland Schools of Arts research notes to the MIRC?
13. Who played the bugle at the MIA 2018 Celebration and Commemoration Dinner?

### SPOTS THE BAKERS DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 47 -ANSWERS

1. Professor Richard Williams, but actually Professor Rory Duncan; 2. 'Beautiful Monsters'; 3. Rev. Ralph Mansfield; 4. at sea, aboard the ship *Light of the Age*; 5. Dancehouse, Carlton; 6. A military tank fitted with a library; 7. Toongabbie Mechanics' Institute; 8. *And The Women Came Too: The Families of the Founders of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution*; 9. Swansea, Wales; 11. An author and poet; 12. Ballarat Mechanics' Institute; 13. Rev. Henry Carmichael.

## Odd Spot



*The beautiful stained-glass windows at Camperdown Mechanics' Institute*

## *Ideas & Opportunities*

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### **IS YOUR HALL HIRE READY?**

Halls run on the proverbial smell of an oily rag and a few extra hirings a year could be real bonus. You would be surprised at who may be wanting to hire a hall. It could be for a weekend retreat, a Christmas party, a family reunion, a film company, an exhibition or sale space, occasional regional meeting, a funeral service, a one or two person travelling theatrical performance or even regular dance, judo or yoga classes. Your Shire may even wish to hire it for local planning meetings or even a Council meeting.

To make sure you are Hall ready and prepared, a walk through listing all deficiencies by way of tables and chairs, cutlery and crockery, with cups for at least sixty. You may also consider when the electrical wiring and equipment (urn, warmers, etc) were checked out last for safety. Get some quotes and get the work done or items replaced. If you are cash strapped apply to your shire for a capital works grant, or maybe the local Community Bank or service club, even your local State and/or Federal MP.

### **PLAN A CELEBRATION AND GOAL**

There is nothing like having an end goal or deadline to actually achieve something. Why not set a major works program to be achieved for say a District Reunion three years hence and involve all community groups to plan a weekend or week of events. Get your project costed, erect your fundraising barometer, promote your event: Back to Barfold; Gifford Gathering; Fawcett Fly In; Head for Hallston; Leaving for Little River; Return to Rochester, Stanley Search; Wander by Wandong; etc. Plan a couple of major events – smorgasbord lunch; the Araratians in Concert; a Lecture - 'Frank lived here' or 'Our Orchids'; a tour of the District by bus with Ima Lost as speaker. Invite luminaries who were either born or lived in the area well in advance.

### **FINDING YOUR HALL CONTACT DETAILS**

This is sometimes problematic with a cursory search of the internet. Certainly your Hall will come up if you have your own website. Your Hall may even come up on your town's website. It may also even come up as a mention in a Shire listing of Halls and contacts. It may even come up as one with a MIV plaque and if you have a special site on the MIV website. It is imperative that you keep your Shire (and MIV) posted with your

latest contact details as this is the most obvious place for people to start looking if your Institute has no web presence.

### **SIGN UP**

Every Hall should carry a sign so that people can identify it. People and businesses are placing pictures of buildings on the internet almost daily and this will get you exposure. Better still put another sign on the building with a phone number large enough to read in any picture that might appear on the internet. For small communities this is just not a Hall matter but one of pride for the whole community. In quite a number of cases besides a CFA Fire Shed, the Hall would be the only place left in the district to carry the name.

### **LEAFLET**

There are many examples of templates on the web for you or your tech savvy son or daughter to create a Hall flyer. Ideally it could be a trifold and a holder could be fitted in a sheltered spot near the hall entrance or even in a container fitted with a lid to keep the leaflets dry. This means you have advertising 24/7.

### **WEB PRESENCE**

Some Councils have a page presence for each of their Halls. Some towns have their own websites with a space the Hall. You may even like to establish one for your own Hall. But failing that Institute members of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria can have a web presence of five pages as part of their membership.

### **LINK UP**

No man (or woman) is an island. Talk to neighbouring Hall Committees or you may even wish to formalise a group through the local Shire. You could meet at least once a year to canvas current issues – funding, maintenance, utility charges, insurance, policies, hire agreements, etc. and share knowledge.

### **SHARE SIGNAGE**

Occasionally we see Hall signs with attachments which show when various groups meet in the Hall. This not only advertises your Hall as a dynamic community place but it also promotes groups who use it and contribute to its upkeep. An occasional sign also mentions the sponsors and contributors, which may include a Government funding program. Show your appreciation of any support and hopefully it will generate more.