



Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

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ALAN DUFFY TO DELIVER WESSON LECTURE 'THE CASE FOR SPACE'

Since time immemorial various civilisations have been interested in the heavens. The distinct features provided a means of finding the way and that could be to a trading corroboree in Western Victoria or to an annual pilgrimage to Stonehenge in England. Visual observation of the planets and stars also provided a means of calculating the correct date of such events in order to be there for the gathering. Such calculations also indicated times in which to sow crops or when certain plants would be suitable for harvest.

Australia has long been at the cutting edge of space exploration. **Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane** established, equipped and staffed the Sydney Observatory in 1822. In Victoria **Georg von Neumayer** set up the Flagstaff Observatory for Geophysics, Magnetism and Nautical Science in Melbourne's Flagstaff Gardens in 1857.

Lawrence Hargrave experimented with powered flight and box kites in the 1880s-90s and his work and aviation is promoted on the Australian twenty dollar note. The **Duigan** brothers at Mia Mia built the first Australian plane in 1910. Moorabbin-born **Harry Hawker** post-World War I started a company in England, which after his death in 1921, later designed and manufactured fast military aircraft, like the Hawker Hurricane.

Australia entered aircraft manufacturing via the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation in 1936 and this operated until 1985

Fastforward to 1947 when Woomera was established in South Australia as a joint test facility with Britain.

Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation through its Division of Astronomy and Space Science has,



*Associate Professor Alan Duffy,
Swinburne University of Technology*

since the building of the Parkes telescope in 1961, been engaged in developing a network of varied and complementary watching facilities in NSW, WA and the ACT.

Subsequent development of space exploration has had a profound effect on communications, mapping, weather forecasting, land use and defence. The decision to have Australia re-enter physical space exploration was taken by the Federal Government last year, with the creation of the Australian Space Agency.

So against this background this year's Wesson Lecture will be delivered by **Associate Professor Alan Duffy**, a science communicator and participant in space exploration. The title of his challenging lecture will be '*The Case for Space*' on 21 September at the Prahran Mechanics' Institute.

Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

JULY

5-14 Rare Book Week

7 Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, Jazz in the Humffray, 7.30pm. Luke Howard and the Eugene Ball-Louis Armstrong Project.

7-14 NAIDOC Week - Theme: Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together.

27 Newham Mechanics' Institute presents an Award-Winning Australian Artist Live @ The Hall. See newhamhall.com for more info

27-28 Open House - Melbourne

AUGUST

10 Acheron Hall Winter Dinner. South American Theme: Rio, Carnival. More info: acheronhall.com

15-31 Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre, 'Picnic at Hanging Rock'. lilydaleatc.com

16-31 Warrandyte Youth Theatre, 'The Lady from the Sea'. warrandytehallarts.asn.au

30-31 Melbourne Writers Festival

SEPTEMBER

1-8 Melbourne Writers Festival

21 **MIV AGM**

21 **Annual Wesson Lecture, Alan Duffy 'The Case for Space'**

OCTOBER

4-6 Murtoa Big Weekend: Making Big Things Happen. Art Exhibition and Sale, Murtoa Mechanics' Institute

13-20 History Week

TBC American Membership Libraries Meeting, New York Society Library, USA

NOVEMBER

3-9 International Games Week

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

THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTERS

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MIV'S EVENTS CALENDAR IS ONLINE

mivic.org.au/events.html

Subscribe for weekly email updates on events throughout the week.

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

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Letter From The President

As 2019 is flying by, it is time to start planning ahead for the next year to come.

We have just been through an election and the pork barrel rolled along and we wonder how many Institutes took advantage of applying to their local MP with a manageable wish list to select an item for a photo opportunity at the local Hall.

We often hear the phrase that an Institute is on 'the hunt for money', but when asked how much, a wish list is reeled off, but is the list individually costed? **Every Institute should have a costed wish list, in case opportunity knocks.** This could include: a defibrillator; replace windows; new roof; re-wiring; suite of crockery; underpin the hall; stage curtain; exhibition tracking; sound system; overhead projector, etc.

Tax time is also rolling around and an advertised wish list could be circulated to local solicitors and accountants who may have opportunities available for tax deductibility if you have already arranged this through the Charity Commission. Further when you are sending out membership renewals members may wish to make a contribution of, or towards, one or a number of the listed items.

The bicentenary of the Mechanics' Institute Movement is coming up in 2021 and we need to take full advantage of the occasion. Please prepare to be part of this landmark event and start to compile a history of your Institute. You can easily start with the basic 7x7 method, with seven categories of seven items: 1. basic district history, geology, flora and fauna, settlement; 2. founders and sustainers of your Institute; 3. the Institute's building/s, pictures, plans, etc.; 4. its activities and associations; 5. significant events; 6. key documents; and 7. pictures of people, posters, etc. You may even wish to expand or vary the categories or number of items.

Start a page for each category and list down the items, ready for workshopping firstly at Committee level then with a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon at the Hall.

Start with assembling a scrap book of plastic inserts for each item, but so you can later chronologically order the material as needed. Involve your area schools to undertake areas of study.

Short print run technology makes production in the reach of every Institute, and you can start a list of pre-orders to underwrite the project. Your book will be a valuable tool when you are seeking funding or support for your Institute and its activities. En masse such a collection of histories could be used for an approach to Government for funding to undertake national research on the real contribution that the Mechanics' Institute Movement has made to Australian culture and community, and continues to do so.

One of the privileges of being part of the worldwide Mechanics' Institute family is hearing of the great variety of activity that takes place within Institutes. Join us at the Wesson Lecture on 21 September 2019 and renew your membership with MIV for another year to be part of the worldwide Mechanics' Institute Movement.

Bron Lowden
President.

Housekeeping

Last year the MIV spent considerable time workshopping its future operation and objectives. **We would like to hear from members both individual and those representing Institutes exactly what their wishes for and expectations of MIV may be. Please run it by your next Committee meeting and do let us have your suggestions.**

You will all be aware that Committee members volunteer their time to attend the several meetings we hold each year. Executive Members and particularly the MIRC Coordinator **Judith Dwyer** give much more time. Updating the website and compiling *Useful Knowledge* is presently done on a voluntary basis. It would be good to think all Institutes would consider nominating a representative to serve on the Committee to ease the load or at least attend the AGM.

We need Institutes to send in their news and concerns. MIV has produced the **Damian Callanan Art Project** calendars, prints and cards. We launched the **MIV Libraries Directory** and **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** last year. *Your generous donations have enabled the purchase of a basic reference collection to cover the Mechanics' Institute Movement story both in Australia and around the world. This purchasing continues.*

Thanks to Judith Dwyer and Government support the Mechanics' Institute records digitisation program continues as a free service to all Institutes. If your Institute is still to have its records copied please contact us so that we can book it in as a scanning project and the collection of the records can be arranged.

Our **Plaques Program** edges towards the magical one hundred and identified Institutes can be Googled for a plaque pic and in some cases a building pic.

MIV also staged the successful and memorable **Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference** at Ballarat in November last year and this left the massive and valuable set of **Celebration and Survival** Papers behind which is available for purchase.

We will be launching the **MIV Museums Directory** later this year, which will detail the work of our Museum members. Ideally this would be followed by the like of Directories for Markets, Dance, Performance, Music, etc. to showcase the diverse activities that take place in Institutes and their buildings. Finally a full Directory of

Institute Members would be a massive case study of community volunteerism deserving of much greater funding.

We urge all to come along to the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 21 September 2019 at 10am at Prahran Mechanics' Institute. This will be followed by the **Annual Wesson Lecture** which this year will be delivered by **Associate Professor Alan Duffy** with the challenging **The Case for Space**. Alan is a notable face for Science and a skilled communicator. We ask you to make it a family day and support this exciting occasion to see Space as a career opportunity.

This *Useful Knowledge* comes with a Membership Renewal Invoice. Payments can be conveniently made online through Shopify. See you all at the AGM on 21 September.

NEWS PLEASE

Let us have your news on the Hall, its history and more importantly its people. Email the **UK** editor at editor@mivc.org.au. Submission deadline for *UK50* is 1 October 2019.

NEWSLETTER ROUND

Tick after reading and pass it on

- President
- Vice-President.....
- Treasurer.....
- Secretary.....
- Committee (*Insert your name*)
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UPDATE OUR CONTACT DETAILS

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

LAUNCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE FRANKSTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

A goodly number gathered in the Frankston Mechanics' Institute on Saturday, 16 March 2018 for the launch of **Esther Anne Ringer's** *Hall on the Hill: A History of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute & Free Library 1873 to 2013*. Among those gathered were: **Chris Crewther**, Federal Member for Dunkley; **Cr Quinn McCormack**, representing the Frankston Council; and others from various community groups, some that had used the Hall down through the years.

The publisher, the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society had assembled a number of well designed panels featuring documents and information from sections in the book and these provided considerable interest and comment from those who arrived early for the launch.

The event was chaired by the President of the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society, **Lynne Emblin** who explained that the Society had occupied the Hall for a decade between 1996-2006 and that it had been pleased to publish Anne's book as Frankston's *Hall on the Hill* was very much a community landmark.

Lynne introduced the Federal Member for Dunkley Chris Crewther who detailed his life-long association with area and said that he was pleased to announce a \$2500 grant to the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society to support their valuable work in documenting the history of the area and its families. This book added to the number of publications that had already been produced by the Society.

Next to be introduced was the author **Anne Ringer**, who has had long involvement with the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society and she explained her involvement.

The Launch of the Book "THE HALL ON THE HILL" A History of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute and Free Library 1873 to 2013 by E. A. Ringer

Thank you for coming today to help launch my book after 18 years of research - I was not working on it for all that time-and I did publish a C.D. on the rates book of the local area which I had been studying to discover who the residents of the Shire were and what were their occupations. In my years of teaching I have moved from Casterton to Corryong and many places between and in every town, large and small there has been a Mechanics' Institute and many, such as Alexandra still house the town's library.

I did not really know what a Mechanics' Institute stood for until the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society took up residence in one of the front meeting rooms and closed in verandah of the Institute. On possession, the room was dirty and dusty and the floor had to be scrubbed and existing curtains washed and new side curtains and curtains for the reading room made. Dust and dirt was cascading through the gap between wall and ceiling. One of our members, **Pat Draper** had completed a partial index of the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, and by using the index I went to our microfiche copy of the *Journal* and found out about the beginning of the Institute in 1880. Marj. Knight, another of our members, did volunteer work at the Public Records Office, and she discovered the Department of Health records for the building. This led to many months of travelling to the PROV to read through the files and get many of them copied.



Then and now: the changing facade of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute in the last 15 years

LAUNCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE FRANKSTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE CONT...

I first met Jim Lowden who visited our library because rumours had been circulating that the Council was going to decommission the building and possibly sell the site which had, at one stage, been advertised for sale. We had a long discussion about the Library and its possible closure. A short time later a request was made for my attendance at the meeting of "Friends of Frankston" at one of the local church halls. It was a most entertaining meeting with Jim Lowden, the Secretary of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, pointing, with almost biblical fervour, at the four local Councillors of the City of Frankston, and saying loudly and clearly, "You think you own this building, but you don't, it belongs to the people of Frankston." After this meeting and further lobbying by Jim and the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria the building was saved. Jim had informed me that the Department of Land and Sustainability held the land records for the building and I travelled to their office in Box Hill where I read and had copies made of the documents. The building was in quite a dilapidated state with a considerable amount of asbestos. The gutters were all but gone, the plumbing archaic - flush the toilet and you could hear a gurgling sound in the hand basin. The roof was unlined making it very hot in summer and cold in winter but the Hall had one redeeming feature - a beautiful dance floor. Another important part of the research into the history of the building was the reading of old editions of the *Standard* newspaper by **Lynne Emblin, Marj. Knight** and **Val Latimer**. Personal experiences of the local residents had been collected by **Dot Morrison** at her U3A classes and these were passed onto me.

The Council decided that the Hall had to be refurbished and grants were obtained from the Commonwealth and State Governments as well as the Council contributing to the funds - over one and a half million dollars. A Committee was formed and I was honoured to become a member. Meetings took place over two years with decisions made on every aspect of construction - type of material, plans of the building and its future use. While the Society was still in occupation we could not get in via our usual entrance of the kitchen and when found our way in via another door we found that an Aboriginal group had use of the Hall and had constructed



a mia-mia in front of the kitchen door. Another amusing incident happened when the Committee went to inspect the Hall and we found some squatters had made a very comfortable home for themselves, armchairs included. The police moved them on but all their junk was left behind.

The day the work commenced, the first major job was to remove the asbestos roof which left the Hall open to the weather through one of the wettest summers on record. Fortunately the floor had been covered and only one small piece had to be replaced. After two years of meetings and consultations the plans were finally passed and work began. When the interior lining was removed many original features were revealed such as the shape of the original structure at the Bay Street end of the building and some decorative plaster work part of the 1905 renovation. These features, plus one of the cooling vents, were left as part of the history of the building. The Sea Scouts had been allowed the use of the building and a ramp had been completed to get the boats on the stage and a cyclone wire fence erected on the front of the stage. These were removed.

The Hall was opened on Wednesday 19 October 2011 by the **Honourable Alex Chernov, AO, QC**, and the **Mayor Cr. Kristopher Bolam JP** in the presence of **Ms Laura Smyth MP**, Federal Member for Latrobe and **Ms Inga Peulich MP** Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region. The front reading rooms were completed by the Council in December of the same year.

I would like to give special thanks some of many people and organisations who helped in the publication of the book - the Public Record Office of Victoria who contributed \$3000 plus GST for the printing, the City of Frankston for \$500 for the launch, Marj, Lynne, and Val for the newspaper reading (Val also completed the initial index), **Jim**

Lowden for his advice and help, **Claudia Spiers** for her image enhancement and restoration and **Rowan Brown**, the printer at Deakin University, responsible for the printing of the book. But my greatest thanks go to my daughter **Allison** who was responsible for the layout and spent many hours correcting my mistakes. And finally to my late husband, **Raymond** for his patience.

I stand here on this stage proud that I have contributed to the restoration and refurbishment of the Hall which stands proudly on the hill, a legacy for all the local community.

E. Anne Ringer

The book was then officially launched by Jim Lowden who reflected on the importance of retaining and maintaining places of memory in a community. On behalf of all those present he thanked the Frankston City Councillors who, in their wisdom, had allowed the Hall to survive and had overseen its restoration. Buildings such as this provided unique places of identity for pilgrimage, pride and reference.

He complimented Anne Ringer on how much she had actually found out about the Institute given that the Institute records were lost, but such an event as publishing the Institute's history might even 'flush' them out. He trusted that the book would continue to show what a gem their 'Hall on the Hill' really was, albeit it being the oldest extant building in Frankston and in the public realm.



In closing he congratulated all concerned on the production of the book, the Government for providing finance to publish it, wished the Mornington Peninsula Family Historical Society well and declared the book 'well and truly launched' and recommended its purchase.

The author Anne Ringer then cut the celebratory launch cake which featured an image of the cover of *Hall on the Hill*. A sumptuous afternoon tea of sandwiches, cakes, slices and pastries then followed as the author signed copies. After which we walked out from 'The Hall on the Hill' into the glorious sunshine shimmering on Port Phillip Bay.

Clockwise from below: The celebratory cake featuring the cover of Anne Ringer's new book; Anne Ringer cutting the cake; launch attendees enjoying afternoon tea in the Hall; L-R: Lynne Emblin, Jim Lowden, Chris Crewther and Anne Ringer.



BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 160



And indeed they have a lot to celebrate, not only the Institute's rich history but also their survival and more recent phoenix-like renewal. They chose to launch their celebratory weekend in conjunction with the new series of

Twilight Talks, a lecture format which has proved very successful for them on 26 April.

The event was appropriately held in the glorious Minerva Space which was packed out for the occasion. Board member **Mike Stephens** was on the welcoming table and attendees were invited to share in the drinks and nibbles.

At the front of the Hall was the warm up group **The Winter Berries**, a local quartet that has been together for four years. The lineup comprises: **Georgie Williams**, vocal and guitar; **Sarah McMaster**, vocal and violin; **Geoffrey Williams**, percussion; and **Tom McGowan**, lead guitar. Their repertoire includes Rhythm and Blues, Folk and Pop. The sound and the individual spotlighting of the performers was engineered by the BMI's new Venue and Facilities Manager **Sam McColl**.

While The Winter Berries were singing images from the Max Harris Collection were rolling by on the Big Screen, with dramatic effect using panning or movement.

The evening was chaired by the BMI Executive Manager **Tony Godfrey** who introduced **Twilight Series** speaker **Amy Tsilemanis**. Amy has been Curator-in-Residence at the BMI for the past three years and her main task was to 'bed in' the most incredible Ballarat 3000 item photo



The Winter Berries



*BMI Executive Manager, Tony Godfrey.
(Photo: BMI)*

collection of collector and photographer **Max Harris**, which he assembled over forty years. The acquisition of this collection for the Institute and posterity, along with Amy's curatorial position, were funded by local philanthropists **David** and **Jenny Haymes**.

The depth and breadth of the **Max Harris Photography Collection** can be seen on the **Victorian Collections** website where some 1500 low-res images have been uploaded. The site can be searched by keyword and there is provision for audio clips and the addition of comments.

BMI has put the collection to good use in creating a whole suite of picture formats for sale from individual images to DVD collections. BMI have even installed two wall murals in local



*L-R Jenny Haymes, Amy Tsilemanis
and Max Harris. (Photo: BMI)*

businesses with a blowup from the Max Harris Collection.

However as Amy explained the very existence of the Collection has enabled a whole new outreach which has engaged the community by way of the press, on-line media, film and exhibition. As the oft-repeated statement 'A picture tells a thousand words' so there has been the opportunity to garner those thousand words by way of workshop and on-line feedback. The themes of Communication, Coordination and Collection were ever present. It also highlights the role of innovative, creative and interpretative partnerships.

This work in showcasing photography has been very timely as the **Ballarat International Foto Biennale** gains momentum with their very recent acquisition of a permanent home and exhibition space nearby. There has also been the recent creation of the online-based **Ballarat Collections Network** which has been led and facilitated by the **City of Ballarat**. The Max Harris Collection has been used in creating historic lineal streetscapes.

Creative and sustainable change by way of exhibition of galleries, archives and museums is happening in Institutes around the world.

Erin McCuskey's latest art film on the BMI was screened to highlight space and collection use. It was noted that this was being archived in the growing Audiovisual Collection that is being assembled in the BMI.

But then there has been a whole series of themes in – **Talking Shop: the Henry Sutton 1890s photos; cinema history; the motor industry; streetscapes; window displays, etc.**



Some of the Talking Shop displays. (Photo: BMI)



*Happy 160th Birthday,
Ballarat Mechanics' Institute! (Photo: BMI)*

Open Day, The Christmas Shop, White Night and even the very recent **Easter Egg Hunt** have been very positive for the BMI.

In closing Amy noted a comment 'You have got the car on track, now for the joyrides.' Collection aggregator Max Harris enthused: 'This is where the collection belongs. Pictures can be copied and the detail can be used to recreate the original shop facades.'

Jenny Haymes added the need 'To clone your [Amy's] brain.' as much had been done to 'showcase the place' the BMI and Ballarat. She added that the curatorial role had been 'a breath of fresh air, showcasing and bringing the Library to life, for all to see its relevance and importance'.

Amy noted her time at the BMI had been an immense challenge and a real privilege and she thanked the Haymes family and wished the BMI well into the future. Questions followed and Jenny Haymes then presented Amy with a floral 'Thank you.' We all wish Amy well in writing up her PhD and look forward to reading it in due course.

Sighted on the night were Institute President **Professor Terry Lloyd**, Past Presidents: **Wilma Bridges**, and **Rex; Frank Hurley** and **Phil Roberts; Ross and Marilyn Furness; Andrew Miller**; and **David Dahlenberg** who so ably 'teched' the historic **Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference** at BMI last year.

A weekend of events in and around the Institute followed. 'Happy Birthday BMI.'

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT ON MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

The challenge for cooperative research is to bring people and/or organisations together to work on the overall task of documenting the Mechanics' Institute Movement around the world. It is only then that we will see the enormity of the contribution that it has made to culture and literacy and indeed still is making.

Let us know about your projects or areas of interest and we will list them.

For example:

CANADA

I have a basic list of 400 Canadian Mechanics' Institutes which I would like to grow and/or share with someone working in that area. The listings are mostly from the Province of Ontario which had some 300 Institutes by 1900, but there are several dozen from Quebec, another dozen from Prince Edward Island, similarly Nova Scotia, and a sprinkling from across Canada. Canada appears to have had about 600 Institutes, and half as many again Women's Institutes and Farmers' Institutes. Many WIs had their own Hall, and library. (Canada started the [Country] Women's Institute Movement.) Contact: Jim Lowden Email: theruralstore@bigpond.com

USA

With an estimated 5200 Institutes across the USA documenting these is a massive task, but we would be interested in learning of any listings.

IRELAND

We are interested in hearing from anyone who is reaseaching Institutes in Ireland. These were generally timber buildings and were replaced by Carnegie Libraries in the early 1900s.

Odd Spot

One of the oldest Universities in the world is that of the University of Louvain in Belgium. Established in 1425 by the Catholic Church, it has the motto: 'Seat of Wisdom, Seat of Knowledge'.

It presently has a student population of 31,000 and a staff of almost 6,000.

UCL
Université
catholique
de Louvain



MECHANICS' INSTITUTES *Annual*

CALL FOR PAPERS OR ARTICLES

To further the worldwide collaboration and aggregation of international research on Mechanics' Institutes it has been resolved to issue a *Mechanics' Institutes Annual* comprised of articles and Papers in the region of 5-30 pages. Articles can be on: Mechanics' Institutes in general; a group of Institutes; a particular Institute; a person connected with an Institute or Institutes; an Institute related event or activity; or Institute artefact, Honour Roll, statue, book, etc.

Contributors will receive a copy of the compiled issue and your work will be guaranteed permanence. Send your article through to the Editor (editor@mivc.org.au) citing "Mechanics' Institutes Annual".

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, and is still very influential. 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.

FESTIVAL OF SMALL HALLS

We missed advance notice of the **Festival of Small Halls** which has been travelling throughout southern Australia in the last couple of months, including across Victoria. It is an idea which started in Canada on Prince Edward Island in 2008, spread to Ontario in 2014 and is promoted in Australia by **Woodfordia Inc.** in conjunction with the **Port Fairy Folk Festival** and **National Folk Festival**. The touring party usually includes one overseas group and an Australian artist and they play folk and contemporary music. In this case it was **The Once**, two lads (**Phil Churchill** and **Andrew Dale**) and one lady (**Geraldine Hollett**) from Newfoundland, Canada who have been touring as a group since 2009 and **John Flanagan** 'Timber and Steel' from Australia.

The recent tour included the following Victorian Halls: **Barnawatha; Boolarra; Gargarre (Sound Shell); Glenlyon; Goroke; Hallston; Murtoa; Pomonal; Red Cliffs; Sedgwick; Tallangatta; Tarwin Lower; and Wycheproof.**

In South Australia they played: **Allendale East; Beltana; Lameroo; and Orroroo.** And in NSW: **Caldwell; Dalgety; Ganmain; Grenfell; Lacmalac; and Woodstock.**

You can check out feedback of their perambulation around Victoria and elsewhere on the website: festivalofsmallhalls.com.

*Clockwise from top: Festival of Small Halls;
Boolarra Hall; Murtoa Mechanics' Institute;
Tarwin Lower Mechanics' Institute;
Barnawatha Hall; Hallston Hall.*



Featured Institute

SEAVIEW MECHANICS' INSTITUTE



History of the formation of the Sea View Mechanics' Institute

By Robert Cusworth-Warner, President

The Strzelecki's were not immune to settlement in the 1880s and 1890s despite the extreme challenges of extremely large trees, much scrub and poor roads or tracks to traverse. Roads were not the only services required for a burgeoning population, as schools, churches, various clubs and all manner of social activities would all be most important.

In Sea View, the State School, No. 2636 commenced in 1885 and became the hub for most of the above functions but by early 1900 with more people heading into our hills a larger facility would be required. With the increasing demand on the school building, several prominent local residents were pushing the cause forward and it is evident that there was in fact a Committee formed titled the 'Sea View Mechanics' Institute' of which Mr G Brown was the Secretary.

Progress towards the establishment of our Institute stepped up a notch in the latter part of 1904. A grant from the Lands Department was applied for but after the tedious negotiations for seven months, half an acre of land fronting McDonalds Track was donated by Mr Bernard Kennedy and Secretary of the Institute, Mr Brown, in September asked Council what was being done to set aside some roadside space for

parking and the plans as submitted to Council were adopted in October 1904. The Institute Committee wasted no time, holding a meeting in the school to push forward their project while the weather and roads were good. A hall plan of 50ft x 25ft with ante rooms and porch attached would be drawn up by Mr Lacey, architect of Sale who kindly offered to do so free of charge.

By March 1905 the residents of the surrounding area and some from Warragul had subscribed to a fund for the building and tenders were called. On 21 March a well attended meeting of subscribers appointed trustees for the building. Six were nominated and after a ballot Messrs W Cully, FB Arnold and M Johnson were elected. (And to this date in 2018 these trustees still remain on the title.) The tender of Mr Games of Yannathan for the erection of the building was accepted.



Interior of the hall. (Photo: Flickr/phunnyfotos)



Seaview Honor Roll. (Photo: Flickr/phunnyfotos)

At the beginning of May it was reported that Mr Games had made significant progress with recent fine weather. In fact the building progress was so swift that a meeting on 20 May appointed Office-bearers and a Committee for the ensuing twelve months. President, Mr SW Frazer; Vice-President, M H Misson; Secretary, Mr G Brown; Treasurer, Mr JJ McGrath; and a Committee comprising FB Arnold, J Brown, Bernard Kennedy, W McCully and A Wallace. Messrs H Tanner and Morgan were appointed Auditors. Following this election, arrangements took place to open the new building on Wednesday, 14 June with a Grand Concert and Ball, something above the normal scale. The Committee decided to invite the local Member of Parliament, the Hon. JE Mackey, MLA to open the Institute and preside at the concert. Tickets to the concert would be two shillings, the ball eight shillings, or a combined ticket of five shillings.

The Government gave £60 towards the adoption of a free library which was opened on Saturday, 1 July 1905 with the donation of two hundred volumes, the majority of which were generously presented to the Institute by members of the old Sea View Lending Library that was for some time past closed. The total cost of the building was £300 of which £98 was required to be borrowed. The building is of softwood weatherboard, lined inside and varnished. Two ante rooms are 12ft x 12ft with fireplaces. A commodious porch is located at the main entrance. The stage is of proportionate size and the floor is 2½ inch kauri silent nailed 'a credit and ornament to the district'.

The opening day of 14 June 1905 arrived and as expected in this area, was met with wet,

misty weather and sloppy rough roads, however it failed to deter between 200 and 300 people from being present. From this time several new clubs were formed to avail themselves of the new facility. The Committee was extremely busy in organising functions over the coming months in order that the debt would be reduced.

On the 4 July 1907 the School was destroyed by fire and students then used the Institute until their new building was completed in November. All manner of meetings, weddings, and other functions have since been held in our hall including the more recent badminton and yoga.

The Mechanics' Institute building has changed very little since those early days and recent Committees have been determined that the Institute must be preserved for future generations. The previous two ante rooms are now the kitchen/meeting room with one fireplace and concrete floor and the stage is no longer in existence.

In 2003 over \$20,000 was spent in reblocking the main hall and replacing the original floor with ash. The vestibule entry was reblocked, and the verandah and paths were concreted in 2013.

Three years later, in 2016 the windows were repaired and the exterior of the building was painted. Bollards were erected in front of the building and a new fridge was installed in the kitchen.

In 2017 the vestibule was lined with pine. Shortly after, during the closure and revamp of the Warragul Arts Centre, the Hall hosted a production of the 'Kings of Croon' to a sellout house.

To enable a major kitchen upgrade in 2018, the Hall electrical wiring was replaced and this enabled the installation of a donated Miele oven and microwave oven. New storage cupboards were also made.



THE PARLOUR LIBRARY

Most Mechanics' Institute libraries had copies of books which carried the tantalising byline **Parlour Library** and we went in search of its origins.

The Parlour Library was founded in 1846 by the Belfast firm of **Simms and McIntyre**. It was the first successful series of fiction imprints in paper boards, which was advertised as books 'for all', and generally sold as shilling volumes. They had distinctive green covers featuring a line drawing by **Albert Henry 'H' Warren** (1830-1911). This series stimulated an unprecedented demand for cheap, attractively packaged new and popular novels.

In the absence of detail on the Belfast publisher the matter was referred to the **Linen Hall Library** in Belfast and this inquiry drew the following information from **Mary Delargy**, the Linen Hall's Irish and Reference Librarian.

The original firm was **David Simms** and **John Doherty**, who were working on the radical [United Irishmen] newspaper *The Northern Star* until their presses were destroyed by the Monaghan Militia on 19 May 1797. The paper was conducted by David's brothers, William and Robert Simms (1761-1843). Simms and Doherty took over from where the *Star* left off and continued their partnership until 1803. In 1807 Simms formed a partnership with James McIntyre and throughout the 1820s they were involved in the printing of both literature and school books. By the 1840s their enterprise had expanded to include an office in Paternoster Row, London. The year 1846 saw their beginning of the then revolutionary 'Parlour Library' which allowed for the cheap printing of novels in a specific format of printing and binding, and titles were added monthly. Their first title was *Tales of the O'Hara Family* by John Banim. After having

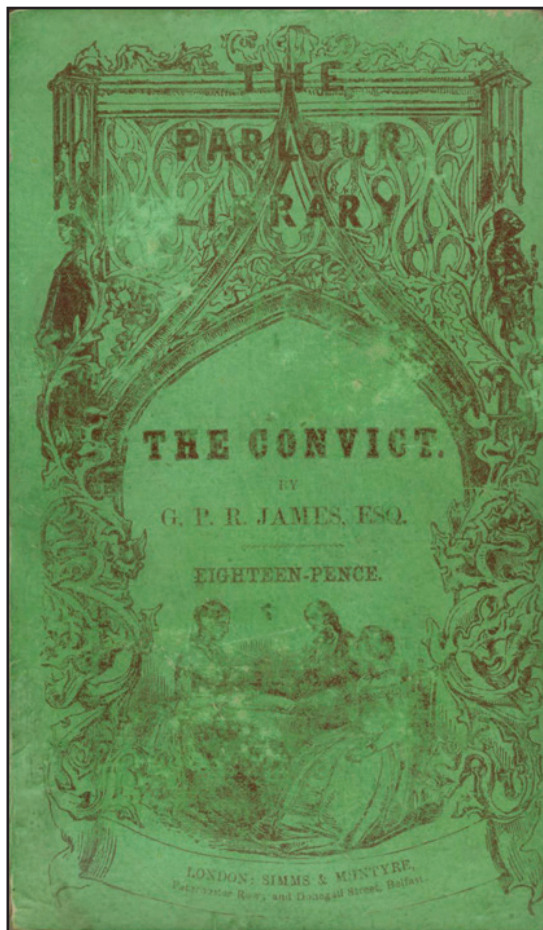
produced one hundred and one volumes, they sold their Paternoster Row dealings to their London agent **Thomas Hodgson** in October 1853. However Simms and McIntyre continued to produce school texts and the partnership appears to have ended by 1860, when Longman & Co. was added to the Simms prefix. The last book in the series appears to have been published in 1870 by R Simms alone, presumably the grandson of the original founder.

Mary cites *The Printed Word and The Common Man: Popular Culture In Ulster 1700-1900* (1988) a book authored by former Linen Hall Librarian **James Ralph Ronald 'Ronnie' Adams** (1946-93).

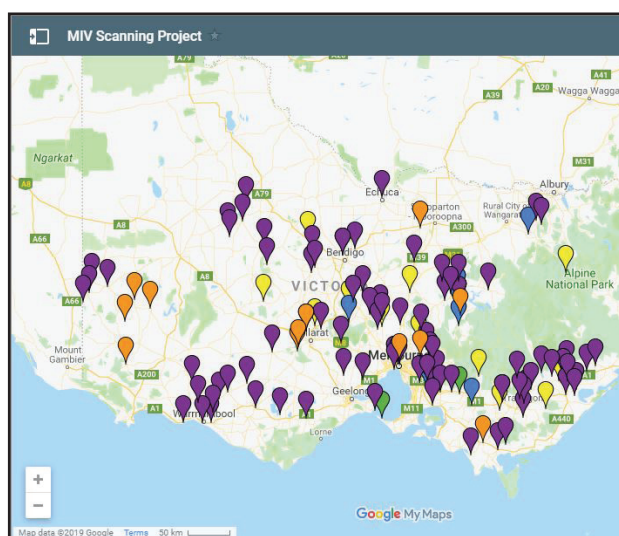
This series was continued by Thomas Hodgson of London and a succession of London publishers into the 1860s: **Darton & Co.**; **CH Clarke**; [John] **Darton &** [Frederick] **Hodge** 1862-66; and finally **Weldon & Co.**

Of Australian interest is *The Convict* by **GPR James** (George Payne Rainsford James [1799-1860], who was a prolific author of novels and historical works, published in London and Belfast by Simms and McIntyre in 1853. It carries the Popular Library Series No LXVI (66). It is a hardback with pictorial decorated green boards and is of 416 pages, with publisher advertisements on the endpapers. It carries the cover price of 'Eighteen Pence'.

It was first published in 1847, and from there JA Ferguson gives its publishing history in his *Bibliography of Australia*. Firstly as item 5075 when it was first published as *The Convict. A Tale* in 1849 by Smith, Elder & Co. of 65 Cornhill, London in three volumes. Item 10871 has it published as *The Convict. A Tale*, published by Simms and McIntyre of Paternoster Row, London and Donegall Street, Belfast, in a single volume of 416 pages.



MIV'S *Mechanics' Institutes* *Resource Centre*



DIGITISING

Recent scanning tasks have included the records of the: **Miners Rest Mechanics' Institute**; **Lakes Entrance Mechanics' Institute**; and **Ararat Mechanics' Institute**. The Minute Books of the **Bairnsdale Mechanics' Institute** are also scheduled for scanning.

RECENT ADDITIONS

Thanks to the generosity of donors we have been able to purchase most of the core books for researching the history of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Australia and beyond and these include: **Martyn Walker's** *The Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain and Beyond*; *Pioneering Culture: Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia* – **Philip Candy &**

John Laurent, editors; *Australian Libraries [The Munn Pitt Report]* – **Ralph Munn** and **Ernest Pitt**.

We hold copies of the Proceedings from past Conferences at Kilmore, the Melbourne Athenaeum, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, Prahran, Bath and Ballarat; and the recently lodged Queensland research notes by **Steve Kellermeier**, which supplement his thesis on the Queensland School of Arts which he had previously lodged. We also hold **Helen Trustum's** *Old Time Country Halls* [of New South Wales].

For the United Kingdom we have a reprint of **JW Hudson's** *History of Adult Education* (1851) and **Mabel Tylecote's** *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851* (1957).

There is also a growing number of Institute monograph histories, mostly from Victoria but some from interstate. The most recent addition is **Anne Ringer's** *Hall on the Hill: The Story of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute*. There are also notes from our Halls Survival Workshops for inspection which cover a whole range of subject areas. Regrettably these items are not for loan and can only be used on the premises.

A big thank you for all those who made donations with their memberships last year as this is now becoming a valuable research adjunct to the digitised records we already hold and we will keep adding to the collection as material becomes available.

ASSOCIATION OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AND SCHOOLS OF ARTS - NSW (AMISA-NSW)

Our sister organisation the **Association of Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts NSW Inc.** held their AGM on 28 March 2019 at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. President **Phil Reed** chaired the meeting which opened with Vice-President noting the passing of three past members: **Margaret Ewin** (Milton-Ulladulla School of Arts); **Graham Deverell** (Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts); and **Ron Rizzoli** (Richmond School of Arts).

Activities included: Lands Department Update, February 2018; Insurance Workshop,

June 2018; hosting **MIA 2018** keynote speakers, November 2018.

The elections resulted in the following being appointed as office-bearers: **Phil Reed**, President; **Winsome Allen**, Vice-President; **Ellen Elzey**, with assistance from **Cecile Cornford**, Treasurer; **Maria Townsend**, Secretary; **Public Officer**, **Roger Morris AM**; **Committee**: **Cecile Cornford**; **Margaret Thorne**; **Anne Deverell**; **Denise Mitford**; and **Kathleen Bearsby** (Life Member).

During the year the Committee also continued the review of the Richardson archive.

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.

ACHERON HALL (Est. 1914)



The Acheron Hall Committee has locked in dates for two of their key community events for the year. The Annual Winter Dinner is being held on 10 August 2019 with a South American theme: Rio, Carnival. Also their Christmas Party has been locked in for 14 December. The Hall has seen regular use for weddings, engagements and other celebrations, as well as meetings of the local Book Club, Fly Fishing School, Acheron Tennis Club and Acheron CFA.

Recent fundraising efforts also saw Committee-Members manning a Potato Stall at the Alexandra Easter Fair selling "Dobson's Gourmet Potatoes" with monies raised going towards operating expenses for the Hall.

Another fundraising program is Acheron Hall wines, which are made by Murrindindi's

Sedona Estate, and are available in both a Shiraz and Sauvignon Blanc. Contact the Acheron Hall Committee if you are interested in topping up your cellar.

acheronhall.com | acheronhall@gmail.com

ARTHURS CREEK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1886)

Legendary composer and singer **Eric Bogle** and **Ami Williamson** gave a benefit performance in the Hall on 29 March to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires. Following the fires, Eric visited the area and composed his now well-known and poignant song 'Ashes' which was included in his 2013 album 'A Toss of the Coin'.

On 10 April noted forester **Rowan Reid** gave a talk in the Hall for the Landcare community 'Growing Trees on Farms for Conservation and Profit'.

The **Arthurs Creek Primary School** conducted an Anzac Memorial Service in the Garden of Remembrance at the Hall on 24 April.

BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1859)

Exhibitions have become a way to draw a wider community in Institutes and Ballarat have capitalised on this with their most recent **Talking Shop Exhibition**. This was curated by **Amy Tsilemanis** and BMI volunteers. It was in place for the two Community Day events.

Ballaarat have also recruited a bank of volunteers to assist with events and these have been coordinated by **Marilyn Furness**. Foremost among recent events have been the increasingly popular Twilight Talks which included one on Stone Walls by Board Member **Andrew Miller**. Film is popular at the BMI, but so is theatre with a performance of 'Don't Knock Noah: the Musical' on 9 March, and similarly music as was shown with the sell-out 'Motown and Soul' Concert given in the Minerva Space by **Motor City Sounds** on 29 March. www.ballaratmi.org.au

BENALLA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1869)***BENALLA COSTUME AND KELLY MUSEUM***

Dress styles from 1750 and 1950.

(Photo: Benalla Costume and Kelly Museum)

A major new exhibition is now on display at the Benalla Costume and Kelly Museum – home of the Benalla Historical Society Inc. Titled “**Fashion Through Time from 1750**”, the various exhibits contrast fashions one hundred years apart.

There are about twenty five costumes exhibited commencing with the museum’s oldest garment, a beautiful green brocade gown, circa 1750, which is compared with a magnificent cream crinoline, circa 1850, and an elegant evening gown of the 1950s.

Contrasts continue up to the present day where a tubular ankle-length garment from 1918 differs strikingly from a glittering short dress of 2018.

Society members were treated to a very pleasant evening when the exhibition was opened on 24 March by **Loel Thomson**, the well-known Melbourne costume collector and exhibitor.

Alan Monger

www.home.vicnet.net.au/~benmus

CASTLEMAINE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1855)

The indomitable Friends of the Castlemaine Library celebrated International Women’s Day on 8 March with a fundraising party in the Botanical Gardens organised by **Kavisha Mazzella AO**. The proceeds of \$649 went towards their sustained Literacy Program in the Tarrengower Women’s Prison. The Friends have tax-deductible status with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and would welcome donations to support this work. The Friends had their blockbuster Annual Book Sale in the Library on Saturday, 4 May which ran from 9am-4pm, an exhausting day for volunteers, but a very profitable one for the Friends. Contact for donations or activity notification: focalcas@gmail.com

CHILTERN ATHENAEUM (Est. 1864)

Chiltern has just mounted and opened their exhibition ‘**Chiltern – The Town that Sparked the Kelly Outbreak**’. As a part of Heritage Week, the exhibition was launched with a weekend of events by way of lectures, films, music and food and it is open until the end of May. The exhibition contains artifacts and replicas of memorabilia from the time and challenges the viewer to consider what the options may have been for those involved. The weekend and exhibition and Conference were both organised by **Alan Crichton**. Well done to all concerned.

chilternathenaeum.com.au

CLUNES FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1862)

Staged over the weekend of 4-5 May 2019 the Clunes Annual Booktown Festival attracted some 18,000 people for the weekend event. Besides the largest range of booksellers, attendees were treated to a range of author talks, panel discussions and literary luncheons. In addition there was live music, a range of street performers, and a wide variety of local food and wine available.

Clunes is a splendid example of how an idea can transform a regional community. It has now expanded its activities to other events which

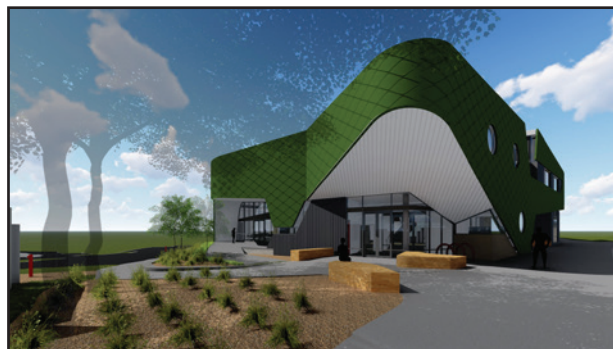
include occasional literary events but also the **Clunes Ceramic Award** in September. www.clunesbooktown.com.au

EAGLEHAWK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1868)



Eaglehawk was featured in the most recent Royal Historical Society of Victoria's *History News* feature 'Hall of Fame' in an article by **Pam Baragwanath**. The Institute opened in May 1869 with fifty-five books and with donations of books, including from botanist Ferdinand von Mueller, the collection soon grew to 1000. The Library continued until long-time librarian **Mrs Victoria May James** retired in 1992. However the Billiard Room at rear of the building continued to function. The Eaglehawk Heritage Society moved in to part of the building in 1994 and under the leadership of **Elaine Harrington** this has continued to operate. MIV's decision to launch its first travelling exhibition **Remember the Mechanics?** in the Institute in 2000 was to have profound effect, but not before **Pam** and **George Baragwanath** cleaned away several years of pigeon droppings and the occasional carcase from the floor. Minister **Bob Cameron** launched the exhibition and met with trustee **Mansell Davies** and others. An emergency grant was obtained to keep the pigeons out and shortly after that the Community Library opened in the building. The last trustee **Owen Davies** handed the building over to City of Greater Bendigo in 2007. Since then a Committee of Management has seen the library utilise a second room and has returned the Institute to full community use, and these include the annual Dahlia Festival and Arts Festivals And periodic exhibitions. Recently a notable painting, two Honour Boards, one which lists Eaglehawk Mechanics' Institute Presidents and one for World War I servicemen have been returned to the Hall. The Library is now open six days a week.

EMERALD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1904)



*Rendering of the new Emerald Community Hub.
(Source: cardinia.vic.gov.au)*

The Hall now demolished, the Emerald Mechanics' Institute Hall former Committee of Management recognised one of the longstanding roles of a Mechanics' Institute, that of a community library. Longstanding Institute Committee members **Ray Spencer** and **Ron Harmer** passed over a cheque for \$24,500 to the Emerald Library, which was accepted on their behalf by **Jessica Nichols** and **Chris Buckingham**. Indeed Libraries Change Lives!

FOOTSCRAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1857)

The collaborative renovation works, which have involved most Committee members, are nearing completion and the expanded reading area will be opened for member use shortly. The Footscray Mechanics' Institute is one of one of those best kept secrets with its eclectic collection, in addition to its huge Mills & Boon collection, perhaps Australia's largest, astutely assembled by current Librarian **Luke Mitchell**. Then there is also a significant Women's Studies collection marshalled together by a former Librarian the late **Lin Scholz**.

LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1910)



Electrical wiring, a critical concern of Hall managers, has recently required attention. There has been a decision taken to renew a major portion of the wiring and so Institute President **Les Sanderson** is on the hunt for funding. The Institute, and its library, share the building with the Little River Historical Society. The Society recently staged a successful activity weekend during Heritage Week which involved the Hall.

The Library has just been gifted a most welcome facsimile set of the three volume *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (1888-89) which was edited by Andrew Garran (1825-1901) and copiously illustrated under the supervision of the hustling Frederic Boley Schell (1838-1902). The books were donated by **Lisa Clarke** of the **Little River General Store**. The *Atlas* gives a description of the Little River township and the stone-pocked plateau around Little River.

The Little River Mechanics' Institute Library is Now Open 10:00 – 12:00 Every Saturday (Christmas & Easter excepted)

We welcome Little River resident **Lynne Morse** as our third honorary librarian. This makes it possible to open the Library every Saturday ... so interested visitors, potential new members and new volunteers are always welcome to call in ... whether for browsing, serious reading or a cup of tea.

Our plans for 2019 include ...

- * To encourage readers and borrowers ... Little River residents and visitors of all ages
- * To celebrate our heritage library and local history collection
- * To provide information about the Little River District & community activities
- * To promote the outstanding cultural & natural heritage of the Little River and You Yangs District.

Lynne Morse, Peter & Sue Jones

Hon. Librarians

Little River Mechanics Institute & Library

MANSFIELD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1874)



After being vacant for some considerable time a local Mansfield group has taken a 21 year lease of the former Mechanics' Institute Hall, with an undertaking to redevelop it. This will ensure the building's survival.

MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM (Est. 1839)

The 30 January downpour caused firstly a flood and then a ceiling collapse in the Library. Manager **Sue Westwood** skillfully piloted the return to full library service, around issues regarding WorkSafe, a heritage building and a range of tradesmen. The official reopening is to take place on 17 April with the AGM. www.melbourneatheneum.org.au

MERTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1910)



Built in 1923 as the Mechanics' Institute, the Hall was renamed the Merton Memorial Hall in 1945. It was one of the **Festival of Small Halls** sites for 2019 and on 27 March Canadian trio **The Once** and **John Flanagan** rolled into town. And what a memorable night it was with some visitors taking up the offer of free camping at the Merton Racecourse.

NEWHAM MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1902)

Newham recently celebrated their **Comedy Spectacular** with the Melbourne International Comedy Festival by staging 'Hall Lot of Laughs' featuring **Dann Connell, Kirsty Webeck** and **Simon Palomares** on 27 April with a gala night in the Hall. They also staged their second successful film screening with the Oscar-winning 'Bohemian Rhapsody' on 10 May. Coming up on their events page is the: Winter Lecture, Annual Members Night, An Award Winning Australian Artist, Theatre Night, AFL Grand Final, Melbourne Cup Day and Community Christmas Party. Scheduled for next year are the Autumn Social and Unagami. www.newhamhall.com

NEWSTEAD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1866)

One of the regular events staged in the Newstead Hall complex is the regular community lunches, where half the plate is of vegetables. Reporter **Maritsa Gronda** in the *Newstead Echo* observed: 'Of course health is so much more than what you put in your mouth, it's the environment, the people, the talking, joking, laughing. You would

know, the Mediterranean tradition of sharing meals. I think its here in this room.'

The recent heat has also seen the 'Cooling our Streets' group retreat to the 'coolest place in town' the Institute. This group is involved in street tree plantings 'Creating a Cool and Connected Newstead (3CN)'. Newstead is already noted for its avenues of trees that were planted post-World War I. www.newsteadcommunitycentre.com

PORT ALBERT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1876).

Photo: Pam Baragwanath

The site comprises two halls, one the original Institute Hall and the other a former Church which has been moved to be alongside the Hall. Both are well used by the community for fundraisers, community meetings, Church services, wakes and weddings, exercise classes, and even Government and Local Government meetings, and occasional **Beers By the Bay** Concerts. It is also the town's Emergency Assembly Point. The regular monthly Markets were established in 2015 and have grown steadily with peak times being Easter and Australia Day when the street is closed off and up to fifty stalls sell their wares. Easter is also the time when a group of local artists have a show and sale in the side Hall and utilise the Hall's exhibition screens.

There is a plan afoot to add a porch to the front of the Hall and take out the false ceiling in the 1950s foyer, which was placed in front of the original 1878 Hall. This will make it uniform with the high ceiling in the main Hall. The Committee are on the hunt for \$60,000 to undertake the works. The Hall is presently being marketed as a Wedding venue with a motel and B&Bs providing local accommodation.

PRAHRAN MECHANIC'S INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

Prahran Mechanics' Institute showcased their niche uniqueness during the recent Australian

Heritage Festival. Included were walking tours and author talks with: **Phonse Tobin** on the Tobin family of funeral directors; and **Nicole Jenkins** on 'Bridal Fashions of the 20th Century'. Prahran had good cause to celebrate its 165th birthday on 1 May for it's been a long haul since the first meeting held on that date in 1854. Prahran is also embarking on new ground to transform from the historic Act of Parliament under which it presently operates to an Incorporated Association. www.pmi.net.au

STANLEY ATHENAEUM (Est. 1863)



Stanley Athenaeum's Fire on the Plateau exhibition (Photo: Janet Sutherland/Stanley Athenaeum Facebook)



Opening of the Stanley Athenaeum's new exhibition. L-R: Chris Dormer, Cr. Barb Murdoch, Dr Jacqui Durrant and Ali Rowe. (Photo: Janet Sutherland/Stanley Athenaeum Facebook)

The exhibition award winning team at the Stanley Athenaeum have added another element to the Water, Fire, Air trilogy, this time with 'FIRE'. Their latest offering **Fire on the Plateau**

opened on 11 May followed by a typical country afternoon tea in the adjacent Hall. The exhibition comes ten years after the 2009 bushfires which raged through the area as well as other parts of the State. It documents how bushfires affect communities. Especially the aftermath, and how Government and local regions manage and plan for subsequent fire events. Funded by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Commemoration and Community Grants Scheme and Into Our Hands Community Foundation this is the largest budget exhibition mounted by the very dedicated Friends of the Stanley Athenaeum. For bookings and times of opening contact: **Chris Dormer** on 0458 606 922 or (03) 5728 1540. [www: mivic.org.au/stanley.html](http://www.mivic.org.au/stanley.html).

TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1890)

Following the disastrous fire of 5 May 2018, planning is proceeding with the design for the rebuild. Recently the Committee of Management was advised that it been accepted as part of a Regional Arts Victoria Mentoring Program. This means a mentor will be provided to liaise with the architect to support the design of the hall's internal fit out for the staging of events. The monthly markets still continue and are well supported. www.tallarook.org.au

WAHGUNYAH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1861)



This very well maintained Hall, has a valuable adjunct buildings which is well used for meetings and is fitted with a commercial kitchen. This makes the Hall, the interior of which is surrounded by historic pictures of Hall events and district history, ideal for large gathering such as regional meetings and weddings.

The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

GOULBURN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1853)



Photo: www.goulburnpost.com.au

The iconic two-storey building on the corner of Auburn and Montague Streets, Goulburn recently sold at auction for \$4.7 million. The building was designed by EC Manfred and opened in 1881. It had been previously sold by Council in 1993 for \$657,000, but has since been refurbished. Occupied by a number of tenants it was claimed to generate an annual income of \$277,390.

SINGLETON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1866)



The Institute building survives as the home of the Singleton Family History Society, Singleton Potters and the annual Singleton Arts Festival. Its history was recently marked by a High Tea and History occasion and then opening of an exhibition to celebrate the architecture, civic and social history of the George Street landmark.

QUEENSLAND

DULULU HALL (Est. 1923)



Dululu School of Arts, 1993 (Photo: Gaye Vardy)

Dululu is a small community situated approximately 70km south of Rockhampton, Queensland. The School of Arts has survived 95 years and is still controlled by The Dululu Progress and School of Arts Association which is an Incorporated body. It can be found at 14 Bryant Street, Dululu. The Progress Association also administers the Free Camping ground nearby.

The following article appeared in *The Central Telegraph* on Wednesday September 21st, 1983. *The Central Telegraph* is the local newspaper published in Biloela, central Queensland.

DULULU HALL IS 60 YEARS.

How many times have you passed a little hall or "School of Arts" in the Queensland countryside and wondered what it was all about and was it ever used. Most of these halls are used every so often and are rich in the history of the district.

The Dululu School of Arts is one of these and will be 60 years old on 24th September. The original records seem to have vanished into smoke. However, the date seems certain because it was opened, according to a long time resident and former publican, Bert Peacock, on the day the red poll bull died down on the flats. Now how could you be more certain than that?

Many of the country halls were erected and paid for by local residents, put into the hands of trustees and run by a hall committee. As time went by and changing

circumstance, the shire had to take them over. In the Banana Shire only two still remain in the hands of trustees and hall committee and Dululu Hall is one of these; a matter of pride in the district.

The hall was built by Hans Larsen and Jimmy Arneil. At a much later date a verandah was added by the CWA and later purchased by the trustees. It took the Dululu community over 20 years to pay for the hall but they did just that and in recent years they have worked towards its improvement.

The first President of the Hall Committee was George Barnes and George Kent Snr the first secretary. For a period of nearly 30 years Ted Dodge was secretary-caretaker of the hall. He still farms in the district and can tell of the very popular dances held there with up to 3 bus loads from Mount Morgan coming to the dances.

During its 60 years the hall has been washed off its stumps by the 1928 floods. It has had an entirely new floor put in under supervision of Wilf Osborne and with the help of many others in the district. In fact, over the years most of the district have contributed in one way and another to keep this hall useable and used.

To celebrate its 60 years Diamond Jubilee, the current hall committee under its president Ray Llewellyn have decided to mark the event with a dance not to be forgotten. It will be 1923 style with a genuine bush dinner of corned beef, damper and spuds in their jacket. The corned beef is genuine grass-fed beef too! There will be a period costume prize. It is timed to begin at 6.30pm and it is hoped that past and present residents will turn up in droves to pay their respects to this genuine bush ball.

A more recent article prepared by committee member Gaye Vardy for the Dululu Progress and School of Arts Association Incorporated appeared in *The Central Telegraph* in 1993. The article was researched by Gaye and is more expansive than the earlier publication.

Gaye has the hall as being “officially opened on 23 September, 1923.” Burt Peacock is again the reference for the opening date. Gaye goes on to say

The event was duly celebrated by a Sports day and dance. A special train operated to bring visitors from Mt Morgan to Dululu.

Bert Peacock has good reason to remember the day, it was two days before his 11th birthday and he especially remembers the excitement at the dance.



Unknown event (possibly a ball) being held under benzine lamps in Hall. (Photo: Gaye Vardy)

Gaye’s research uncovered further information regarding election of committees and fundraisers, though there seems to be a difference of opinion regarding the office bearers. Gaye comments:

Of course the first valuable item the new committee acquired was a piano. Dances were most popular and the original “crows ash floor” was much admired as the “fastest floor” around. They danced to music supplied by local musicians and/or Orchestras, under the glow of “Gloria lamps” fuelled by benzine.”

Citing one story regarding hall activities Gaye related the following:

On 8th October, 1927, they held a “Basket Ball”. Admission was Gents, one shilling, ladies with baskets, free. This was a novel idea. The ladies brought baskets filled with home made “goodies” to share at supertime. These were auctioned during the night to the highest bidder. A prize was given to the lady who’s basket gained the highest bid, and the gentleman who won each bid got to have supper with that lady. A clever way to raise funds as young men would be keen to have supper with their sweetheart. This was an example of the many functions held to raise funds to pay for the hall, and the records show they did very well.

Gaye provides more background regarding the disastrous flood of 1928.

In 1928 the hall suffered flood damage. It was a distressing time for the whole district. At Struck Oil, in the upper reaches of the Dee River, they recorded 42 inches of rain. The volume of water was so great it broke the wall of the dam in Mt Morgan.

On Sunday 22nd April 1928, the Dee Valley was struck by a torrent of floodwater, claiming lives and bloodstock, and causing much devastation. Residents of Dululu retreated to the highest ground, near the site of the railway station. There are many heart-rending stories that stem from this tragedy.

The water rose approximately six feet above the hall floor. On the 6th May, 1928, Mr Arneil's tender of £27 was accepted for replacing hall on its blocks, and in September of that year D. Shepherd was granted 3 years free lease in consideration of his repairing the flood damaged fences. Conditions in the lease included keeping it "free of pear", which some will know became another story of devastation in our history".



Wedding party outside the Hall in 1935 after the extension had been completed.

(Photo: Gaye Vardy)

Far from having "vanished into smoke" the committee still holds many of the original minutes and Gaye noted

An interesting notation appears often in the minutes regarding meetings to be held the first Saturday (for instance) nearest the full moon. With our limited knowledge of these times we guess this was for ease of travelling at night - by the light of the approaching full moon.

As mentioned in the 1983 article a side verandah was added. This was about 1939 for the Country Women's Association for which the trustees eventually reimbursed that Association. A dance was held for the "switching on" of electricity on 17th November 1962. Gaye goes on:

More recent events have been the dedication of the "Traveller's Rest" area to "our Pioneers" with the laying of a plaque on 5th April, 1980, a Spring Fair on 12th

September, 1981, and a Diamond Jubilee Ball on 24th September, 1983.

A committee still controls the Hall and Sports reserve, and although they have very few members the committee is hoping to put on a celebration in 2023, its 100th year.

Many thanks to Gaye for her research and the photographs provided.

Steve Kellermeier

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

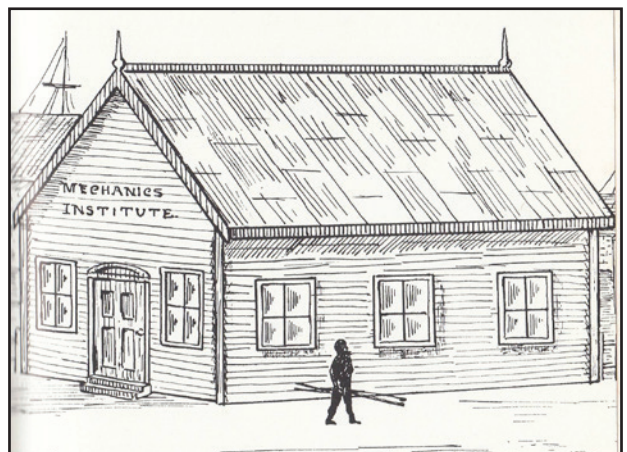
GRANGE INSTITUTE LIBRARY (Est. 1898)



Photo: Steve Hudson via weekendnotes.com

Another Institute that took advantage to promote itself during the Australian Heritage Festival was the Grange Institute, perhaps the only Institute in South Australia to still conduct a public library. An Open Day is planned for later in the year in which a display of 'plumb' items from the collection will be held.

PORT ADELAIDE INSTITUTE (Est. 1836)



The Port Adelaide Institute in 1854, in a wooden house on Walter Smith's timber yard. This was destroyed in the 'Great Fire of Port Adelaide' in 1857. (Source: Michael Page Port Adelaide and its Institute 1851-1979)

The Port Adelaide Institute was one of the first institutes in South Australia and one of the few

called a Mechanics' Institute. It was formed 15 years after the province of South Australia was proclaimed in 1836.

As the main entry point for the new city of Adelaide, Port Adelaide soon became a bustling centre and in 1851 the cream of the local community took the initiative to establish its own institute. According to the commemorative book published fifty years later, "within five minutes of the opening of the door, and the lighting of the candles, the little Court House was thronged, two or three juveniles taking up a commanding position on the window sill". A few months later, an impressive Mechanics' Institute Committee was appointed, free use of the local Masonic Hall gained, land for a building offered, books donated and a lecture delivered.

The enthusiastic beginning was interrupted by the gold rush and the foundling Institute closed its doors after only nine months. Early in 1854 enough diggers had returned to attempt a revival, with the purchase of some periodicals, a small collection of books and rental of premises. Too few subscribers led to the liquidation of the Institute's assets, and in 1857 the rented wooden Mechanics' Institute building was burnt down.

In 1859, undaunted, some determined locals enlisted 100 subscribers, the cooperation of an existing Magazine Club and a local book club, free use of a room at the White Horse Cellars, and the support of the government-enacted South Australian Institute to re-establish the 'Port Adelaide Institute'.

Membership fluctuated and the library moved three more times before a permanent building could be canvassed. Construction began with a private donation of £500, a very active bazaar committee, a State Government grant of £2,500 and a donated piece of land. In October of 1874 a procession to the laying of the foundation stone and a week-long bazaar was headed by the Mayor, Town Councillors and Institute officials, followed by members of the Friendly Society, the Good Templars, the Working Men's Association, a Brass Band and a Drum and Fife Band. A grand affair!

Two years later the Governor opened the imposing two-storey building (plus basement). Built on the prominent corner of Commercial Road and Nile Street it included a library, reading rooms, a lecture hall, class-rooms, a museum, committee and curator's rooms, 'retiring room for the ladies' and the librarian's residence.



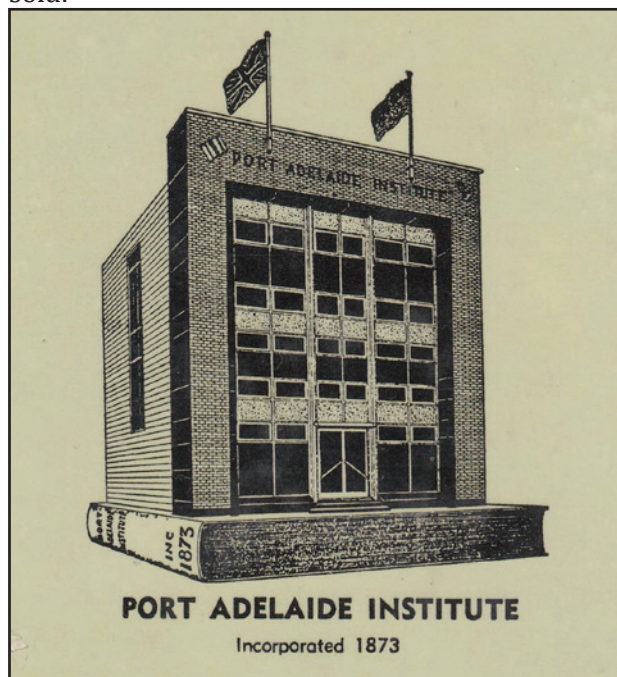
*The 1876 building as it currently stands.
(Photo: Joelle Hancock)*

By 1883 its classes included German, French, drawing, classics, singing, moral philosophy and logic, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, chemistry, architectural and mechanical drawing, mechanics and shorthand. The Institute had become more of an adult education centre than a gentlemen's club, with fees reduced to attract workers and the Education Department contributing towards tuition costs.

The Institute flourished into the 20th century under two entrepreneurial librarians, **Arthur Rose** and then **Frederick Edward Meleng**. It created branches at Henley Beach and on Kangaroo Island; amalgamated with the Semaphore Institute; gained donations for 224 scholarship-subscriptions for local school-children; began a public Juvenile Library; and adjusted its offerings to attract its seafaring clientele. It doubled its number of books in the twelve years to 1913 by which time it was receiving 854 magazines every month. An Easel Club, Musical Society, Chess Club and Caledonian Society, were among the groups using its premises. In 1920 it began a story hour for children and added day classes in commercial and art subjects to the very popular night classes. These continued after WWII until 1954.

The year 1913 was a high point for the Institute with a membership of 1,150 while its costs - for reading material, maintenance and salaries - kept increasing. The State Government's subsidy to Institutes faltered and the local Council provided only a small annual grant. Not enough to save the Institute from selling its grand building to the Customs Department in 1959 and moving to a smaller, purpose-built building, at 115 Vincent Street. Its museum was consolidated into a Nautical Museum and most of its extensive

art collection and any first-edition books were sold.



Bookplate used by the Port Adelaide Institute from 1959 to January 1979. (Source: Michael Page Port Adelaide and its Institute 1851-1979)

The Institute was finally dissolved in 1979, transferring ownership to the Port Adelaide Council, and becoming the Port Adelaide Public Library. A separate State-owned Maritime Museum now houses the Institute's nautical museum collection in one of the Port's early buildings.

Joelie Hancock

TASMANIA

FRIENDS OF LAUNCESTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LIBRARY

The FOLMI team are still beavering away with the cataloguing and entering items on the Australian National Bibliographic Database. To date some 13,500 titles have been added, some with multiple volumes, and there was a reported 300 post-1914 fiction titles still to go.

Conservation of the non-fiction collection are at Room D007 UTAS and have been arranged in Dewey order spread 'loosely' on fourteen rows of shelves. This allows for easy removal and replacement of titles as they are processed. The cleaning, treatment for mould and red rot, then the covering and/or boxing is a time consuming job and so far rows 13 and 14 have been completed.

In the meantime the extant Institute records held in the Ross Smith Local History Section at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, the

correspondence and accounts have been sorted and indexed and a typed guide is being prepared. These will then be boxed by year and labelled accordingly.

FOLMI is also assembling a bibliographic and working reference library to support their activities and have archived their various submissions and resulting reports. FOLMI's **Mike McCausland** attended MIA 2018 and took away a copy of **Sian Williams'** *Do Miners Read Dickens?* and copies of the Conference Proceedings and documentation.

During the year FOLMI created three displays. The first featured books and periodicals relating to Charles Darwin and the second featured the Library's holding of the miniature volumes of Bell's British Poets. Both are still showing in Newnham Library at UTAS. The third exhibition was in the Launceston Public Library and featured items relating to the end of World War I.

The search for a permanent home is still ongoing, with perhaps a collaborative centre for like-minded historical groups being explored.

UK

GLOUCESTER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1840)



Now morphed, with several other foundations, into the University of Gloucestershire, it has a Campus in Gloucester and two in Cheltenham. It has just been granted the right to establish a further Campus at Swindon, with £21 million to establish the Institute of Technology. Gloucestershire has eight schools: Art and Design; Business and Technology; Education; Health and Social Care; Liberal and Performing Arts; Media; Natural and Social Science; and Sport and Exercise. It has collaborative arrangements with five overseas countries including Zimbabwe and Malaysia. **Professor Stephen Marston** has been Vice-Chancellor since 2011. It has the motto 'In animo et veritate' or 'In spirit and truth'.

OTLEY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1839)

After being vacant since 2010 the Otley Mechanics' Institute (Civic Centre) building, in spite of community unease, has finally been sold by Leeds Council for residential flat development. Leeds has now agreed to spend

20% of the proceeds in Otley. This is in spite of the 1957 Institute resolution that it was ‘a gift for the benefit of the town [Otley]’ when it was conveyed to Council at the time. The large 1871 two-storey building is Heritage listed and has four distinctive busts, seemingly of Institute benefactors, set into the front of the building above the second floor windows.

USA

MAINE CHARITABLE MECHANIC ASSOCIATION (Est. 1815)



Photo: Maine Charitable Mechanic Association Facebook



Photo: mainecharitablemechanicassociation.com

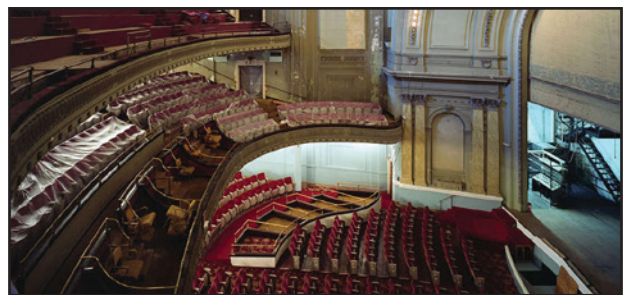
After two hundred years the Board recently voted to use ‘Mechanics’ Hall’ as the public front for the Association. In addition to undertaking major building renovations which started in 2014-15, which opened up the ballroom again after having been closed since 1943, they have also installed their first Executive Director **Anne Leahy**. Their current ground floor street

front tenants are **The Art Mart** and the **Maine Crafts Association**. These stores mesh in well with the lecture and exhibition series **Makers at the Hall**, some lectures of which can be viewed on Youtube. Their next big project is a refit of the kitchen adjacent to the Ballroom. www.mainecharitablemechanicassociation.com

OHIO MECHANICS' INSTITUTE COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCE (Est. 1827)



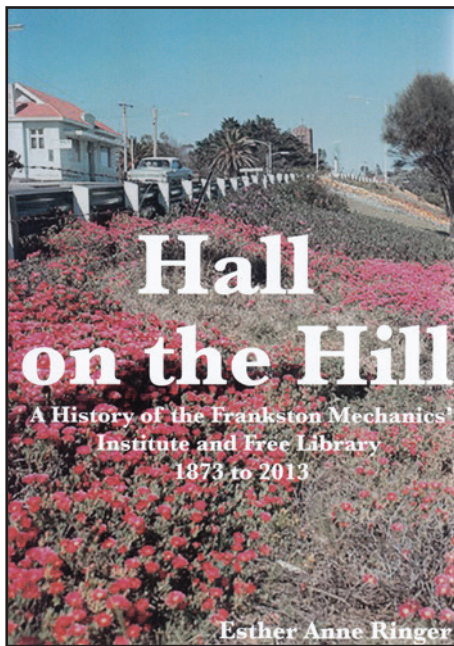
*Emery Theatre building.
(Photo: www.citybeat.com)*



*Inside the Emery Theatre.
(Photo: maps.roadtrippers.com)*

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* of 24 April 2019 noted 'Emery Theatre to be put up for sale'. This iconic architectural gem was part of the OMICAS assets when it merged with the University of Cincinnati in 1968. This notice prompted an 'Opinion' column in the same newspaper on 7 May 2019 by former judge and lawyer Mark P Painter which in part reads 'For 50 years, UC has abdicated its stewardship of 'Cincinnati's Carnegie Hall', allowing it to become "beyond repair". Now UC wants out. Not so fast'. The Hall was financed by philanthropist Mary Emery and was one of four Halls across the US designed for symphonic music, the others being: Carnegie Hall, New York; Orchestra Hall, Chicago; and Orchestra Hall, Detroit. Attorney Painter concludes his article 'Perhaps Attorney General Dave Jost, who is charged with enforcing charitable trusts, should investigate'.

Book Reviews



Hall on the Hill: A History of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute and Free Library 1873-2013 – Esther Anne Ringer. Paperback. 322 pages. Illustrations, plans, bibliography, list of Office-Bearers, index. 210mmx300mm. 978097523496. (Frankston: Mornington Peninsula Family History Society, 2019.)

This book comprehensively tells the story of Frankton's oldest extant public building, the Frankston Mechanics' Institute. In the absence of the records of its creator, the Frankston Mechanics' Institute, the author has drawn on the rich vein of records that is at the Public Record Office Victoria. This holds those of the Lands Department for its land tenure record, firstly by temporary reservation in 1873, then upgraded to that of a permanent reservation in 1880. Then there are the records of the Health Department, for the Institute's operational life, with occasional plans.

On 2 May 1880, the building was officially opened by the Institute's President, **Mark Young**, and this was followed by a Concert and Ball. The Library commenced in the building on 4 October 1880 and remained there until it was shifted to the new Shire Library in Bay Street.

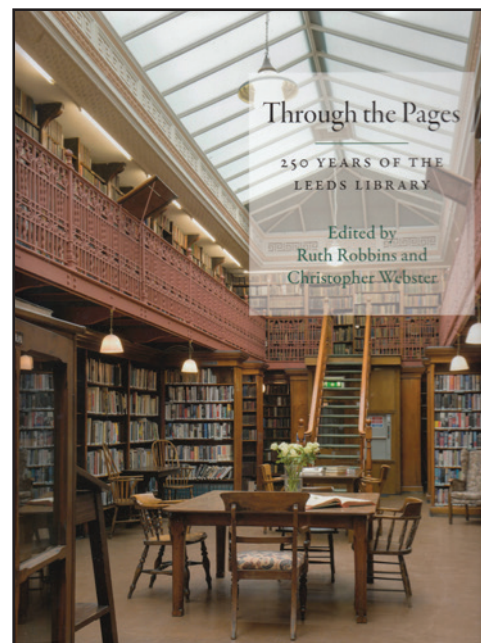
Since its formation, the Institute's history can be tracked in the local newspapers, some of which are on line via the National Library of Australia and others are held at State Library Victoria. Regrettably there was very little held

locally, save a few firsthand stories from event patrons.

Certainly there is a quite a bit of material from the time that the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society moved into the building in 1996 and remained there until 2006. Then followed uncertain times until the building was restored and opened again for public use in 2011.

Anne Ringer has skillfully woven the known record into a very readable narrative of how an Institute has survived through various uses and in uncertain times. Along the way in the last two decades, she has played a significant role in ensuring 'The Hall' has remained on 'The Hill'. The book is well designed, incorporating historic and contemporary documents, has an Office-Bearer list, and a substantial index. This is yet another handsome publication from the Mornington Peninsula Family History Society.

Available from: Mornington Peninsula Family History Society, Box 4235, Frankston, V 3199. Price: \$35, plus post and packing \$15.



Through the Pages: 250 Years of The Leeds Library – Ruth Robbins and Christopher Webster, eds. Hardback. 215 pages, illustrations. 9780952383611. (Leeds: The Leeds Library, 2018.)

Located on the River Aire, Leeds was well placed to receive raw supplies and ship manufactured goods. Leeds grew rapidly from a

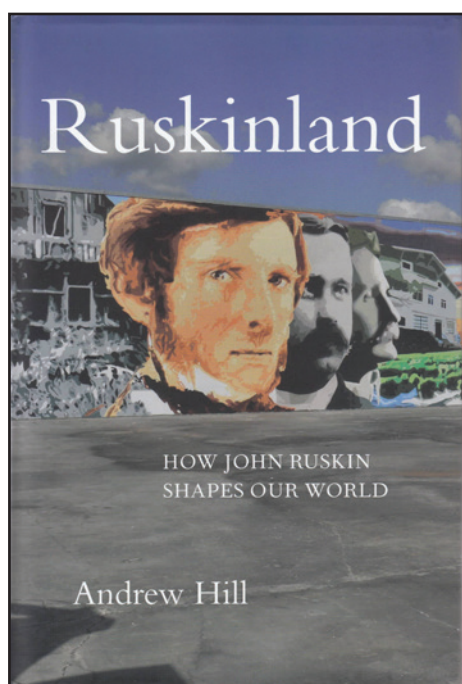
market town in the 18th century to a diversified industrial centre.

The Leeds Library, the oldest surviving library of its kind in the UK, was very much a part of that transition. It was formed in 1768 by selling shares and the members were in fact the proprietors. The first Secretary was **Joseph Priestley** (1733-1804), who was to become a notable science educator and scientist. The Leeds Library has survived because the ground floor of the two storey building was planned as shops with the library and meeting rooms above and this has provided a steady income stream from its central site.

Whilst most of the original collection still exists, some rare items were sold to enable survival in leaner times.

This book of Ruth Robbins and Christopher Webster is an important record of how the Leeds Library and its proprietors developed a book collection and social institution that supported and sustained an industrialised community. Its special collections, including a substantial one in French, are worthy of greater study, as is the use of its record.

Available from: The Leeds Library, 18 Commercial Street, Leeds LS1 6AL, UK. www.theleedslibrary.org.au. Price about \$110 posted.



Ruskinland: How John Ruskin Shapes Our World - Andrew Hill. Hardback. 304pages. 145mmx223mm 9781843681755. (London: Pallas Athene Publishers, 2019.)

John Ruskin certainly left his mark on the world. The award-winning architectural statement of the **Ruskin Library and Research Centre and/or The Ruskin Museum of the Near Future** at the **Lancaster University** is just the start. This timely book has been published to commemorate the bicentenary of John Ruskin's birth on 8 February 1819 in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, London of a Scottish-born father and English mother.

From being home-educated he went on to King's College, London and then Oxford. He travelled widely with his parents and he was exposed to a wide variety of literature and particularly art and architecture and became associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Movement.

He had involvement with **Sir Henry Acland** and the establishment of the Oxford University's Museum of Natural History in 1850 and on **JMW Turner's** death in 1851 he was named as one of his executors. Ruskin taught drawing at the London Workingmen's College in the early 1850s and this led him into delivering public lectures around the country on art and its 'index of a nation's being' and later extrapolated as 'The art of any country is the exponent of its social and political values' in 1870. His book *Unto this Last*, published in 1862, was and still is one of his most influential works. His father died in 1864 and left him a significant legacy which he applied to schemes of social change and amelioration of the poor.

As a commentator, Ruskin wrote as he saw it and even had the temerity of suggesting that **James McNeill Whistler**, by asking two hundred guineas for works in an exhibition, was 'flinging a pot of paint in the public's face'. Whistler sued and recovered a farthing in damages, and had to pay his own costs.

Ruskin first visited the Lakes District in 1829 and this led to his long interest there and he finally purchased the home 'Brantwood', on the shore of Coniston Water in 1871. He took a particular interest in the Coniston Mechanics' Institute which he endowed and established an arts and crafts community around it.

He died at 'Brantwood', Coniston in 1900 and **Sir Edward Tyas Cook** and **Alexander Wedderburn** collected his works in to 39 volumes which were published between 1903-12 by George Allen.

Ruskin wrote 'For all books are divisible into two classes: the books of the hour, and the books of all time.' Andrew Hill in *Ruskinland* takes us into the complex and influential mind of one who

Book Reviews

was arguably the most controversial intellectual of the Victorian Age. *Ruskinland* is a thought provoking read about the life and thoughts of a timeless commentator, who continues to influence readers of his books, which have been translated into many languages.

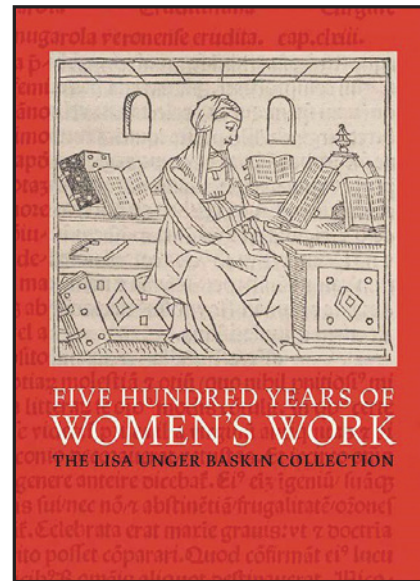
Available from: Internet booksellers at around \$60.00, plus postage.

Five Hundred Years of Women's Work: The Lisa Unger Baskin Collection – Naomi L Nelson, Lauren Reno, and Lisa Unger Baskin, eds., with essays by Lisa Unger Baskin, Elizabeth Denlinger and Laura Micham. Paperback. 160 pages, illustrations. 280mmx233mm. 9781605830810. (New York and Durham, NC: The Grolier Club and Duke University, 2019.)

Since 2015 the **Lisa Unger Baskin Collection** has been housed in the **Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture at Duke University**, in Durham, North Carolina. The collection had been assiduously assembled over an almost fifty year period to reflect the wide canvas of women at work.

'The unifying thread is that women have always been productive and working people and this history has essentially been hidden.'

This is a unique record which takes the role of women from the traditionally allocated tasks



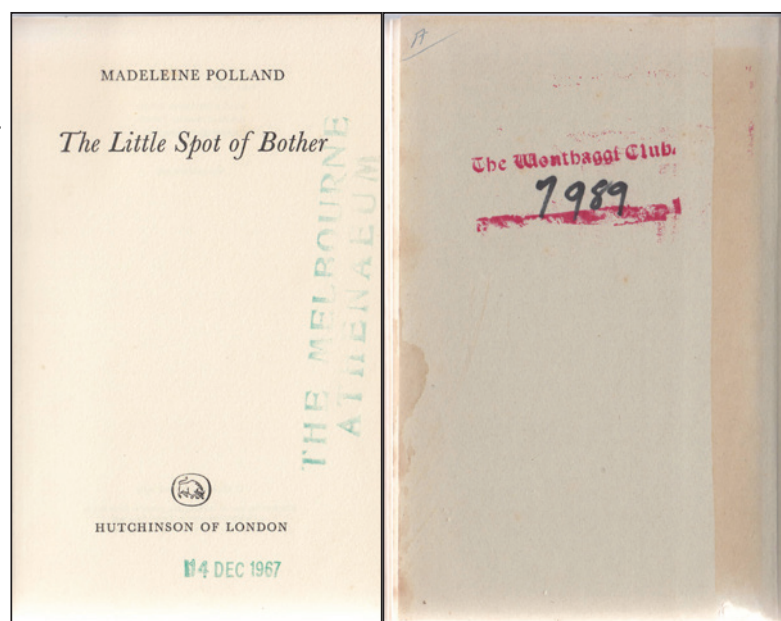
of housekeeping, cooking, teaching, sewing and nursing into a much more diversified but largely undocumented realm. Women featured in business, literature, art, administration and this book admirably provides examples.

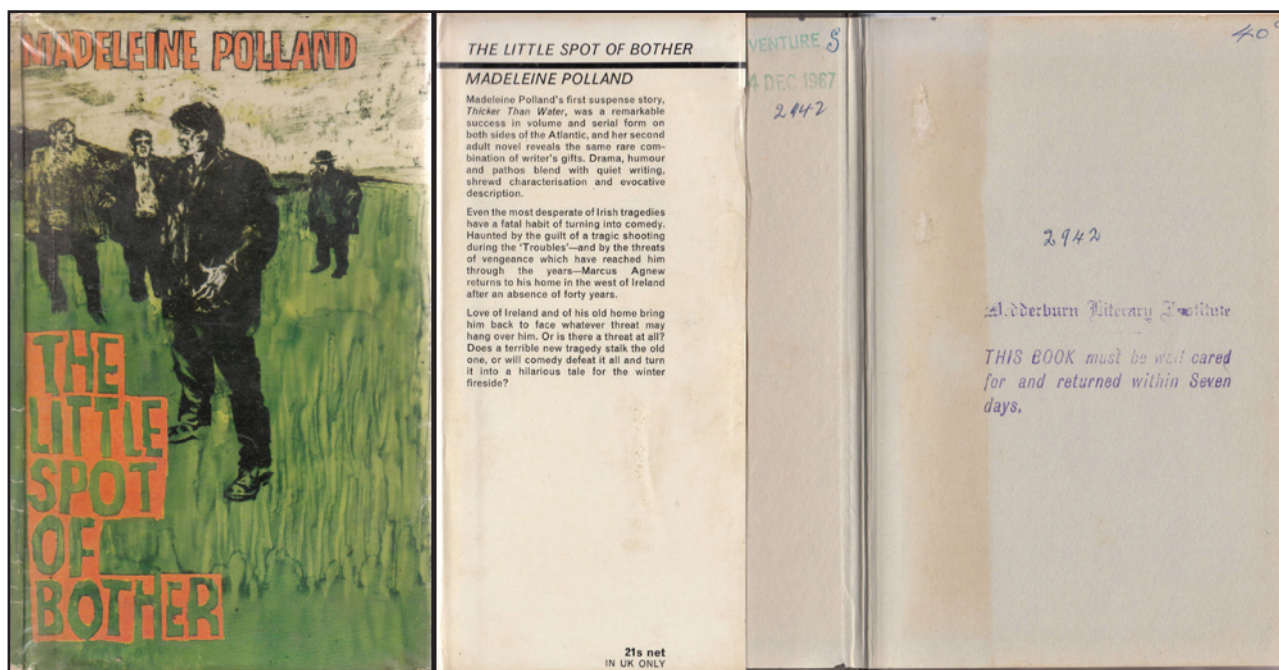
This catalogue, designed by **Miko McGinty Inc.** is printed in full colour, reflects credit on all concerned in mounting this unique exhibition. It is an exhibition that could be widely travelled in a modified form.

Available from: Oak Knoll Books, 310 Delaware Street, New Castle, Delaware, 19720. USA, www.oakknoll.com. Price US\$60, plus postage.

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

The title chosen for this edition is much travelled. It is a first edition from the Cork-born author **Madeleine Polland** and titled *The Little Spot of Bother*. Published by Hutchinson & Co. of London in 1967, it was printed by Anchor Press and hardbound in black cloth by William Brendon, both of Tiptree, Essex. The text of 191 pages and jacket was designed by **Oliver Elmes**. The book is 130mm x 205mm in size and was published in the US under the title *Minutes of a Murder*. It was later published as a paperback by Arrow Books in 1969, with a new cover design and the added wording 'After forty years, Marcus Agnew returns to





Ireland to face whatever threat may hang over him.'

The author was born **Madeleine Angela Cahill** at Kinsale, Ireland in 1918 and her family moved to England when she was young. After leaving school she worked as a library assistant from 1939-42, then with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force at a radar station during World War II from 1942-45. She then returned to librarianship and later married. The first of her some thirty titles, *Children of the Red King*, was published in 1960, and *The Little Spot of Bother* was her tenth. Her last title, *The Pomegranate House*, was published in 1992. She also used the pen name of **Frances Adrian** and died in England in 2005.

The designer **Thomas Oliver Elmes** was born in 1934. His father **Thomas Patrick 'Rick' Elmes** was born in Melbourne and worked as an artist before enlisting in World War I. He remained in England after the War and married. Oliver Elmes undertook varied graphic commissions including book jacket illustrations for Ian Fleming titles: *Live and Let Die*; *The Man with the Golden Gun*; and *Goldfinger*. He also did book illustrations as well as logo design and is noted for his title designs for BBC features *The Goodies*, *Elizabeth R*, *The Good Life* and a *Doctor Who* logo which was never used after the series was cancelled. He died in 2011.

The cited copy was most probably purchased from the Melbourne branch of Hutchinson in 1967, the year of publication. The front pastedown carried the green stamp 'Adventure'

and handwritten 'S' with the date stamp 14 Dec 1967. Underneath is the handwritten number '2942'. The title page is stamped with the green 'The Melbourne Athenaeum' perpendicular along the fore-edge side. It is also date stamped 14 Dec 1967. The extant plastic covering of the dustjacket was most probably done at the Athenaeum.

The book then appears to have passed to the **Wedderburn Literary Institute**, the purple rubber stamp appears on the front free endpaper. The top right-hand corner carries a handwritten 40c. The handwritten number '2942' appears on the middle of the page.

Underneath the Wedderburn stamp is 'This Book must be well cared for and returned within Seven days.'

The Wedderburn Mechanics' and Literary Institute was established as the Mount Korong Miners' Literary Institute in 1859 and still operates from its 1912 building. In the mid-1990s the Institute passed its 3000 book collection to the Korong (Wedderburn) Historical Society which then sorted through the collection and historical titles separated and saved and since then the surplus titles have been gradually sold off or given away.

The final owner of the book appears to be 'The **Wonthaggi Club**' the red rubber stamp of which appears on the back free endpaper. Underneath is the handwritten number 7989. The Wonthaggi Club was formed in 1911 and is today a major area hospitality centre.

SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS MEDAL AWARDED TO JIM LOWDEN



Jim Lowden has had a long association with Mechanics' Institutes, both in his home State of Victoria, and at a national and international level. In Jim's early years, he managed the Kilmore Mechanics' Institute library and its collection, and following its demolition, helped transform it into 'The Institute without Walls'. This has grown into a life-long commitment.

Jim's vision, passion and dedication to research has uncovered fascinating tales, histories, connections and people involved in or with Mechanics' Institutes from all around the world. He has inspired, encouraged and supported Institutes globally through his tireless letter and email writing. Jim has made numerous contributions as an author, publisher and presenter to conferences both locally and around the world. Jim remains a selfless researcher more than happy to share his work with others and encourage their research projects.

In 1973, Jim was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship to study issues concerning scholarly publishing houses across several countries.

Following the State Conference of 1998, Jim was instrumental in the founding of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, of which he is now a Life Member.

Jim was recognised locally as Citizen of the Year for the Shire of Kilmore in 1994 and for the Shire of Mitchell in 2001.

The Board is delighted to present Jim with the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts Medal in recognition of the extent, quality and nature of his tireless contribution to the broader community through education and participation locally, nationally and internationally.

The Board voted unanimously to make this award on Monday 11 February 2019. Jim is a most worthy recipient of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts Medal, and a valued friend and colleague of the School. The medal is the highest award given by the School to an individual.

Winsome Allen
President
12 March 2019



as an occasional award on the vote of the Board. The medallion carries a version of the Institute's seal which was created in 1874. Featured on the front are three ladies, which from left to right, hold: a lyre, a small harp-like instrument; a scientific instrument, perhaps an astrolabe; and a stonemason's mallet. At the base of the image is inscribed 'Knowledge is Power'. The obverse is surrounded by a wreath with space for the awardee's name.

The medal was made by Millers Badges of Sydney, in collaboration with Pontifex Jewellers of Sylvania, a Sydney suburb. The 3mm thick copper medallion is 50.8mm in diameter, and is burnished with an antique copper stain.

The medal was presented at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, on 12 March 2019, which was addressed by Jim. He was joined on the occasion by his wife Ros and daughter Bron.



The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts has created a medal, their highest honour, for services to the Mechanics' Institute community,

Curtain Call

WANDILIGONG PUBLIC HALL (Est. 1874)

Located in north-east Victoria is Wandiligong and gold was being mined in the area in the 1850s. The district was originally known as Growlers Creek until the name was changed in 1872 and the township was surveyed in 1888. Today Wandiligong has a population of around 300 people.

The township has been recognised by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) for its historic streetscape. Its temperate climate also makes it ideal for horticulture, notably apples. The town relies on tourism particularly during the snow season.

A Wandiligong branch of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows was formed in the early 1870s and they originally met at the Prince of Wales Hotel.

In 1874 the present Hall was built on a freestone foundation with triple red brick walls, with a shingle roof, which was later replaced with corrugated galvanised iron. It was lined inside with Baltic pine and had a one inch thick Kauri floor.

It was opened to the public in 1874 and in 1875 was in temporary use by the Wandiligong State School, No. 275.

William Lawrence Zincke (1819-96) spoke at the Hall on 3 July 1880. Zincke was the Kelly Gang's solicitor, but at this time he was on the election hustings. He was to be elected as MLA for Ovens which he held until February 1883.

The following year, in late November 1881, the Wesleyans staged a bazaar in the Hall which ran over two days and on the Saturday night the Wandiligong Brass Band gave a recital.

The Hall had other Lodge use by the Independent Order of Rechabites, the Band of Hope and Blue Ribbon Army. It also had wider community use by the: Brass Band; Choral Society; Glee Club; and Horticultural Society.

There were also community events such as: balls; concerts; dances; minstrel shows; parties; and even roller skating.

In addition to the Send Offs and Welcome Homes of soldiers during the Boer, World War



I and World War II. One such event was when Troopers **Arthur Clarke**, No. 1162 and **Charles Deacon**, No. 1075, both members of the Fifth Victorian Mounted Rifles, were welcomed home in May 1902. They were joined on the platform by Lance-Corporal **Edward Arthur Duncan** and Trooper **Alexander Henderson Wallace**, No. 221, who had previously been welcomed home. 'Miss Redfern played an overture on the pianoforte while the hall was filling'.

The Hall was sold to the RSL in 1947 and was the central focus of the district electricity switch on in 1955.

It was sold into private ownership in 1971 and with threatened demolition and after a public outcry it was purchased by the Wandiligong Preservation Society in 1972. The Hall had been fully paid for by 1974 when a Centenary Fair was held to celebrate the building of the Hall.

Restoration and Hall upgrades enabled the annual Primary School Concert to be again held in the Hall. Since then there has been a very substantial makeover of the whole building including the relocation of the supper room.

The Hall is now advertised as a wedding, function and meeting venue with a well-thought through website.

The Hall Committee stages annual Produce Markets in Autumn and Spring.

A distinctive painted rural scene forms the stage backdrop which was painted perhaps in the 1970s by the late **Pat McGough** who died on 19 October 2016 and 'some other ladies'. They purportedly did it under the supervision of an artist.

The Hall still has the original lettering 'MU. Hall./ 1874' as signage on its front.



Where They Stood

TRAYNORS LAGOON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE & FREE LIBRARY (EST. 1896)

Site Address: 669 Traynors Lagoon Road (Cope Cope-Marnoo East Road), Traynors Lagoon, V 3477

History

Located in the South Grampians Shire, in the Wimmera, near St Arnaud, the Traynors Lagoon district lands are now utilised for broadacre cropping of grain with sheep grazing.

The Traynors Lagoon State School, No. 1832 was established on a two acre site in a portable wooden building, which had two rooms attached for the teacher, **James Hudson** (1860-98). It opened with an enrolment of twenty pupils on 1 July 1877. The School closed in 1894, but reopened in 1909. The building was replaced in 1937 when the Swanwater West School, No. 1262 was relocated to the site. The School closed in 1966.

The only building that still carries the Traynors Lagoon name is the CFA Fire Station, which is on the Hall site.

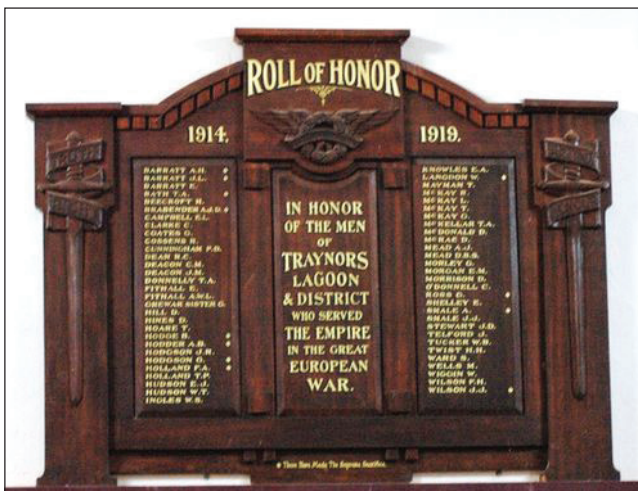
A Mutual Improvement Society was established in June 1896, and it met in the Traynors Lagoon State School, No. 1832. The Society debated on Sunday afternoons at which upwards of forty people would be present.



Photo: <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/113784>

In June 1904 **William Keast** MLA (1866-1927) attended for the eighth anniversary of the Traynors Lagoon Mutual Improvement Society and delivered an address. He offered a guinea prize for the best debater for the next six months. An early Society Secretary was school teacher **Henry Helesby Twist** (1863-1920).

Following the decision to reopen the State School it was resolved to erect a community Hall. Local wheat haulage teams carted the material to the site free of charge. The timber Hall of 65ft x 26ft, with two 12ft x 12ft ante-rooms had a



Honor Rolls of Traynors Lagoon are now found in Liberty Hall, St Arnaud.
(Photo: Arthur Garland via Monuments Australia)

corrugated galvanised iron roof and it opened on 7 April 1909 at a cost of £600.

The Traynors Lagoon Rifle Club was operating from the Hall in 1909 in and 1910 it had forty-four members.

In 1915 'the debating society in connection with the above institute commenced its nineteenth year on Friday evening, July 2nd.' The topic for the debate was 'Is the pen mightier than the sword?' It was noted a future debate topic was to be 'Should Conscription be Enforced in the Commonwealth?'

Eighteen local members of the Institute enlisted in the War, many from the Debating Club. The Hall was made available to the Red Cross for free use during World War I.

Typical of a number of World War I related sendoffs was one on 27 August 1915 to **Private Percy Holland** of Avon Plains. He had played a significant role in bringing a daily mail service to the district and the recently completed telephone line. In handing over a purse of sovereigns, **Cr Thomas Barratt** noted 'This is given by your friends in the district as a slight token of the esteem in which you are held as a citizen, as a friend, and as a public spirited man. We wish you God-speed in the noble cause we are so proud that you are espousing, and we hope we have the pleasure in welcoming you back among us when the war is over.' Private Holland responded 'Should I fall, please do not mourn. I have counted the cost, and that which I do, I do gladly'. **Private Thomas Percy Holland**, No. 1941, was a member of the 37th Infantry Battalion, served in France where he contracted an ear infection which affected his hearing and he was Boarded

out as unfit and was returned to Australia on 8 April 1917. He died at Swan Hill in 1956 aged 73.

In October 1915 a debate was held in the Hall under the auspices of the Traynors Lagoon Branch of the Red Cross Society. The subject was 'Is the White Australia policy a suitable one for Australia?' The subject being well canvassed by 'for' and 'against', supper was then served and 'the hall was cleared for the inevitable dance, which rounded off a most pleasant night'.

In May 1918 **Francis Clarence 'Clarry' Clarke** (1899-1970) of Waterloo Plains was given a send off in the Hall to wish him 'God speed, and a safe return from Armageddon' and he was presented with a wallet. He did not go overseas, before the War had ended.

In May 1918 an article stated 'the Institute has debts of £170, and £600 in insurance. Consequently it cannot run on fresh air neither can its doors be kept wide open, its lamps trimmed and burning without having a war chest replenished occasionally.' It was noted that Institute President **Joseph Barker** and Secretary **Arthur Holland** had done a 'motor run' of the area and had collected £40.

The Institute had a library.

The idea of a War Memorial was floated in June 1918. It eventually took the form of a cenotaph in the grounds of the Hall, with an honour board and photos of soldiers in the Hall, was unveiled in June 1919 by **Chaplain Captain Charles Neville** (1873-1943) of Geelong. It contained the names of fifteen World War I soldiers, who had paid the Supreme Sacrifice.

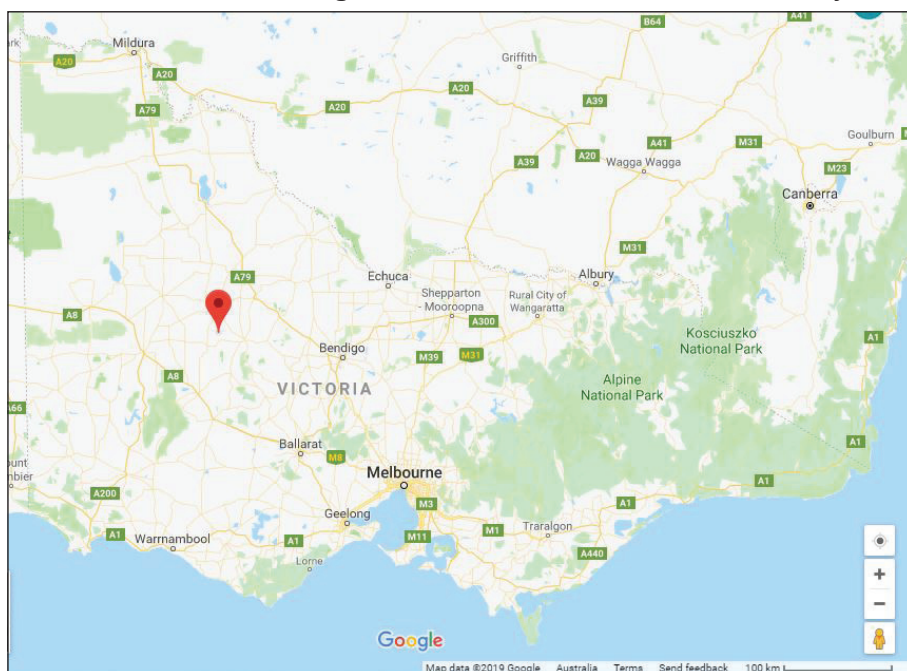
A later World War II Honour Board was added and similarly a Panel to the War Memorial. The

World War II Honour Board is now located in Liberty Hall, St Arnaud.

A supper room was added in 1930s and a brick toilet block dated from 1960s

Over the years its uses included: birthday parties; concerts; dances; debates; dinners; farewells and welcome homes; flag bridge evenings; flower shows; roller skating; table tennis; and wedding breakfasts. There were also public meetings and lectures for farmers

The Hall was demolished in 2013.



Our People



Fresh from **Mechanics' Institutes Australia 2018**, the South Wales Miners' Library's **Sian Williams** recently attended A Global Study of Mountains at Appalacian: An International Mountain Studies Symposium. Staged at

the Appalacian State University in Boone, North Carolina, on 11-12 March. Sian's topic was 'The Miners' Next Step: The South Wales Miners' Library and Communities After Coal.' Swansea University has previously hosted visiting Appalacian scholars.

The Symposium reviewed comparative mountain studies in the Appalacian Mountains and other mountain regions around the world.



Ballaraat Mechanics' Institute's **Amy Tsilemanis**, who has been curator of the Max Harris Photographic Collection for the past three years, gave a Twilight Talk on 26 April about her work and the outcomes. Amy has also been

nominated for the forthcoming 2019 Ballarat Heritage and Design Excellence Awards: Communicating, promoting and celebrating heritage - Talking Shop, as curator for the Ballaraat Mechanics' Institute. Amy also received the Mayoral Award for emerging heritage and design practitioners as Curator of the Ballaraat Mechanics' Institute.

The current Executive Director of the Philadelphia Athenaeum, **Peter Conn**, is to step down shortly after being in the position since January 2016. This followed Peter's retirement as Vartan Gregorian Professor of English and Education from the University of Pennsylvania a position he had held from 1993. Emeritus Professor Peter is the author



of a number of books on 19th and 20th century American literature and an award winning biography of Chinese missionary and author **Pearl Sydenstriker Buck** (1892-1973). Buck won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Good Earth* in 1932 and was the first American

woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. We wish Peter and his family well in his 'second' retirement. (Photo: Margo Reed via philly.com)

One busy lady at the Port Albert Mechanics' Institute is **Ulla Killury**. Ulla is responsible for Hall up keep, Events, Hire and Markets. The Hall hosts a **Make it, Bake it, Grow it and Collectibles Market**, usually on the 4th Sunday of every month. But there is more, she also plays a vital part in the production of the Port Albert community newspaper (Newsletter) *The Tattler*. For her daytime job, Ulla, and husband Rob conduct the Port Albert General Store, which sells the proverbial needle to an anchor and 'a lot' of fishing licences.



Ballaraat Mechanics' Institute's artist in residence, **Pauline O'Shannessy-Dowling** was on hand during the recent 160th Anniversary Celebratory weekend to showcase the range and variety of her work.

Pauline has played a significant role in the staging of *White Night* in Ballarat. The promotion of art and artists within Institutes is becoming more widespread which is pleasing. The adaptation of Halls with the

Our People cont...

installation of relatively in-expensive tracking could be a real consideration to support artists by way of exhibition in your region.

We note **Dr Keith Manley** will be an attendee at the forthcoming UK Independent Libraries Association Conference at the Devon and Exeter Institution. Keith was a keynote presenter at the **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004 – Prahran**. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London and has of late been assessing and reporting on historic house libraries for the National Trust. Keith also serves on the Committee of CILIP, the Library and Information Association.



MIV has recently had communication from **Tom Lonsdale** of Marsden Mechanics' Institute, located in Pennines in Yorkshire. Tom was another presenter at **Mechanics' Worldwide 2004 –**

Prahran. He later inspected a plaque at the Melbourne Athenaeum where his namesake **Captain William Lonsdale** was the first President. The Marsden Mechanics' has been recently returned to community ownership and Tom is Chair of the Marsden Community Trust.



We were sorry to learn that Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's inaugural Executive Officer **Tony Godfrey** has indicated his intention to stand down in July. It was a great pleasure to work with Tony before and during **Mechanics'**

Institutes Australia 2018 Conference at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute. It was a gruelling three days and Tony was there all of the way from open up early in the morning to lock up at night. We wish him well in the future and thank him for making MIA so memorable.



Lynne Morse is the latest Honorary Co-Librarian, with Peter and Sue Jones at the Little River Mechanics' Institute Free Library. Lynne has had a lifelong involvement in the region. She was raised in nearby Lara where she was the

second Girl Guide to be awarded Queen's Guide and went on to qualify and practice as a midwife. She has lived in a range of cities across Australia and overseas. She and her husband Joseph settled in Little River in 2018.

'The short four-minute walk from home to library is an added delight as part of a team which now opens every Saturday, instead of every second one,' she said. 'To welcome our most enthusiastic borrower each Saturday, four-year-old Chase, is an added bonus. His passion is for story books on trains. When he finishes poring over these, he inquires of any new additions to the library with which he can demonstrate his growing expertise in adding the mark of our historic rubber stamp inside the front cover.'

Lynne has set up and manages our Facebook page, see [Fb:littleriverlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/littleriverlibrary)



Whilst former Ballarat Mechanics' facilities manager **David Dahlenberg** may have retired he still has very active involvement in organising **Jazz in the Humffray** in July at the Institute.

Our People cont...

After some five years of scanning Mechanics' Institute records **Meredith Sherlock** has regrettably decided 'It is time to move on.' We are most grateful to Meredith for the many thousands of pages she has added to our immense Mechanics' Institute record. Her professionalism and diligence has been most appreciated and we thank her most sincerely on behalf of all those Institutes that have had their records copied for posterity.

The newly rebadged Maine Charitable Mechanic Association, to Mechanics' Hall, has appointed its inaugural Executive Director



Anne Leahy who started on 22 April. Anne comes from a background in profit and not-for-profit organisations with wide communication and arts experience. She moved to Portland in 2009 as Programming Director with PopTech and currently serves as Board Chair at SPACE Gallery and is on the Advisory Board for the Portland Bach Experience.

Vale



Michael Powell (1955-2019), Librarian, Chetham's Library, Manchester passed away on 11 March 2019, aged 64. Michael had been at Chetham's for some thirty years. Two Twitter quotes sum up our feelings. 'We are immeasurably sad to announce the devastating news that our brilliant and beloved friend and colleague Michael Powell died peacefully in his sleep early this morning (Monday).' Manchester tour guide **Suzanne Hindle** noted Michael Powell was a funny, knowledgeable and very much the beating heart of Chets. I am very sad to hear of his death. **Rachel Mann** added 'One of my favourite human beings. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.' Indeed fond memories of visits to Chetham's and memorable chats. We trust Michael's vision for Chetham's to have a major exhibition space will reach fruition.

Michael graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a PhD thesis on Ecclesiastical History in 1984. His funeral was held at Manchester Cathedral on 22 March at 2pm.



One of the volunteers who turned up to help at the **Mechanics' Institutes Australia Conference** at Ballarat last November was **Viktor Sheludko**. Vik had been a long-time resident of the Ballarat area and had involvement with pioneering computer technology, firstly at St John of God Hospital, then with his own business. He delivered a Twilight Talk to the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute early last year on the restoration of his former residence 'Brim Brim' a landmark property at Buninyong. Vik passed away at Monash Medical Centre on 14 March 2019 following a heart operation. A unique and most memorable celebration of Vik's life was held at one of his favourite haunts, Café Sidra in Learmonth. Deepest sympathy to Rosemary, David and Kate, his sister Irene, and their extended family.

Of Ukraine parentage, Vik was born in Berlin during World War II. He came to Australia with his parents and sister and lived in several migrant hostels.

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.

CARAMALISED ONION TART

Ingredients:

4 large brown onions
1 bunch of thyme
20g butter
200g Feta cheese
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon brown vinegar
2 sheets frozen Puff pastry

Method

1. Thinly slice the four large brown onions.
2. In a deep frying pan, over a low heat, melt 20g of butter and add one tablespoon of olive oil.
3. Add sliced onions to the pan and cook for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden brown.
4. Then add one tablespoon of brown sugar, one tablespoon of brown vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Combine and cook for a further minute.
5. Preheat oven to 200 degrees C. Join the two sheets of frozen puff pastry together to make a 20x32cm rectangle. Score a 2cm wide border around the edge of the rectangle. Prick the centre of the sheets with a fork. Heat for fifteen minutes.
6. Spread pastry base with caramelised onion and sprinkle with crumbled Feta and thyme sprigs. Bake for a further fifteen minutes until golden brown.

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE No. 49

1. Who is the author of the recently released book *Hall on the Hill*?
2. Which Institute in the USA is hosting the 2019 Membership Libraries Meeting?

3. Which Institute hosted a recent Eric Bogle Concert?
4. Who will deliver the 2019 Alfred Wesson Lecture?
5. Who recently completed three years as Curator at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute?
6. Which Hall starting with the initial 'M' recently hosted a Festival of Small Halls event?
7. In what part of the State is the Seaview Mechanics' Institute?
8. Who is the recently elected President of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes School of Arts (NSW)?
9. When is Melbourne Open House?
10. Which Institute Committee recently handed over a significant cheque to a Library?
11. Where is the Café Sidra?
12. Who is the author of the article on the Port Adelaide Institute?
13. Who wrote the book *Ruskinland*?

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 48 – ANSWERS

1. Professor Rory Duncan; 2. Celebration and Survival; 3. Little River Mechanics' Institute; 4. Australia, Germany, New Zealand, England, Scotland and Wales; 5. Alistair Urquhart; 6. Dr Lauren Weiss; 7. Neerim Junction Mechanics' Institute; 8. Bengworden Hall; 9. A suitcase; 10. Jonathan Woodhead; 11. Devon and Exeter Institution, Exeter; 12. Steve Kellermeier; 13. Claire O'Brien.

DAVID CLARK DESCENDANTS REUNION

Descendants of passengers who arrived on the *David Clark* (the first ship to bring assisted immigrants direct to Port Phillip) in October 1839 are invited to attend a reunion to mark the 180th anniversary. This will be held on Sunday 27 October 2019 at Gulf Station, Yarra Glen, Victoria (an historic farm, once owned by William Bell, one of the passengers). To receive information as plans are settled, email now to davidclark1839@gmail.com.

Ideas & Opportunities

WAR HONOUR ROLLS

One of the entrants in the last year's Furphy Awards was Badger Creek Hall and they were in the process of adding extra details to the name only listing on the World War I Honour Roll. Arthurs Creek had previously undertaken a similar project. It is suggested that each Hall should have a similar record. One Hall has a folder with a single sheet in a sleeve for each named soldier in alphabetical order and extra information is added as it becomes available. And don't forget the Boer War for many volunteers were recruited in Australia's country areas. There may well be Federal grants available to support such work in the future.

HALL OF MEMORY

The launch of Anne Ringer's *Hall on the Hill* the story of the Frankston Mechanics' Institute provided an opportunity to reflect on just what had taken place in the Hall over the years. The Ballarat Institute has been recording the memories of events and activities held in the Institute from people who were attendees or participants. However each Hall should have a scrapbook in which flyers, posters, tickets, press reports of events should be placed and dated. Assemble some panels or pictures to place throughout your Hall.

MAKE YOUR MEETINGS MEATY

In discussion with a Hall Committee representative, who happened to be on five other local Committees, she drove home the point that her time is very precious and meetings must be meaningful with a clear pre-circulated agenda with reports, and be pleasant, or she is out of it. (Sam Hicks made the latter point very clear in her Halls Survival Workshop talk at MIA 2018.) One meeting that she attends is during lunch hour and sandwiches and coffee are shared during the meeting and it *must be over* in forty-five minutes. She also made the point that many issues can be decided by a quick ring around of the Executive, thus obviating the need for a meeting.

DOCUMENT YOUR DONORS, ETC.

A recently attended event made great acknowledgement of the generous donors to the

Institute and these were recognised by name in their building. Does each Hall, where land has been donated for the Hall site, know who their donor really was? Is a biography of him/her available on the record, along with that of the builders and architect, as these all can be valuable for leverage later on. I recently had cause to query a major Institute about the genesis of a named collection and the email response was that 'We do not know!'

'AS SEEN ON TV'

In recent promotional material relating to the **Festival of Small Halls** there was mention of *The Castle* featuring a brief glimpse of the Merton servo as the Kerrigans were driving up to Bonnie Doon. The featured solicitor Dennis Denuto certainly made use of his new found fame! How are you recording your Hall's big moments? Have you thought of how your Committee might handle a request to use your Hall for the filming of a movie or advert?

VALUABLE CONNECTIONS

Halls over more than a century of events and activities will generally have some notable connections. Have you documented these and perhaps tried to leverage them. I am reminded of the restoration of the St James Hall which had early connection with the Coles family. The current store chain owner was more than generous in support of the appeal. There may even be some lingering trusts which favour specific areas or activities and you may probe these with trust managers. Some may even have lain 'dormant' for years.

MAKE MINE MUSIC

Institutes are making their venues increasingly places of music. Some of those with regular music programming include: **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute; Brunswick Mechanics' Institute; Bundalaguah Mechanics' Institute; Meeniyah Mechanics' Institute;** and the **Melbourne Athenaeum**. Ballaarat Mechanics' are now advertising their Annual Winter Jazz Program. Both LaJolla in the US and Marsden in the UK have an emphasis on Jazz. If you want prior notification put your name down on the email list.