



Useful Knowledge

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF VICTORIA INC.

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MECHANICS' INSTITUTES WORLDWIDE 2021 - EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND -

Covid has changed the world. The bicentennial celebration of Heriot-Watt University's establishment as the Edinburgh School of Arts is one of many events that have been affected. However with the vaccine roll-out and new technology, the scene has changed.

It has very recently been confirmed by Heriot-Watt's Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Richard A. Williams**, that **Mechanics' Institutes Worldwide 2021 – Edinburgh** will go ahead on the date of **15 October 2021**, with both in person (for those able to travel), but for most via remote participation online. There will be a Call for Papers shortly.

Heriot-Watt has appointed **Emeritus Professor Patrick Corbett** (P.W.M.Corbett@hw.ac.uk) to Chair the Conference Committee and Paper Collection. Patrick will also be working with **Emeritus Professor Susan Roaf** and both have a longstanding interest in Heriot-Watt's history and progress.

Further information will be available soon and you can register your interest at G.Rennie@hw.ac.uk about the Conference, registration, Call for Papers, etc.

The Edinburgh School of Arts was established by educator **Leonard Horner** and businessman **Robert Bryson**, as part of the afterglow of the Scottish Enlightenment. The first lecture was given on 16 October 1821 in what had been St Cecilia's Musick Room, which was had been purchased by the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1809.



L-R: *Professor Richard A. Williams, Vice-Chancellor of Heriot-Watt University; Emeritus Professor Patrick Corbett, Conference Committee Chair.*

(Photos: Heriot-Watt University)

It is hoped that this lecture will be recreated and made available online in the very same room which still exists as a part of the University of Edinburgh's Musical Instrument Museum. It is envisaged that there will also be a lecture about the history of the Mechanics' Institute movement, Heriot-Watt and other universities.

It is recognised that others around the world may wish to celebrate on the weekend of 15 and 16 October 2021 at a number of sites around the world. There will be a special dinner in Edinburgh on 15 October and further events at St Cecilia's Hall on 16 October.

Coming Events - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL

- 1-30 Yarra Ranges Museum (Lilydale) – Trailblazers
 1-30 Stanley Athenaeum – Around the World in Eighty Maps Exhibition
 5 Tarwin Lower Craft Market
 10 Rokeby Market
 18-30 Australian Heritage Festival. Theme: 'Our Heritage for the Future'
 18-30 Williamstown - Preserving the Past

MAY

- 1-2 Williamstown - Preserving the Past
 1-19 Australian Heritage Festival. Theme: 'Our Heritage for the Future'
 1-31 Stanley Athenaeum – Around the World in Eighty Maps Exhibition
 1-31 Yarra Ranges Museum (Lilydale) – Trailblazers
 2 Opening of new Tallarook Mechanics' Institute
 8 Rokeby Market
 12-18 Museum Week – At a Museum near you
 15 Leonards Hill Hall Country Market
 17-23 Library Week. Theme 'Adventures in Space and Time'.

JUNE

- TBA Briagolong Film Festival
 1-30 Stanley Athenaeum – Around the World in Eighty Maps Exhibition
 1-30 Yarra Ranges Museum (Lilydale) – Trailblazers
 6 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute – Farmers' Market
 19 Leonards Hill Hall Country Market

JULY

- 1-2 Yarra Ranges Museum (Lilydale) – Trailblazers
 1-31 Stanley Athenaeum – Around the World in Eighty Maps Exhibition
 4 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute – Farmers' Market
 17 Leonards Hill Hall Country Market

AUGUST

- 1 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute – Farmers' Market
 21 Leonards Hill Hall Country Market

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute – Farmers' Market
 18 Leonards Hill Hall Country Market

- 24-26 UK Independent Libraries Association Meeting - Leeds Library 'Libraries as the "Great Good Place".' – Onsite and/or Online

OCTOBER

- 1-31 Royal Historical Society of Victoria – History Month
 3 Tallarook Mechanics' Institute – Farmers' Market
 15-16 MIW2021 - Edinburgh - Onsite and/or Online
 16 Leonards Hill Hall Country Market
 24 Lyonville Hall Bake Off
 TBA Fawcett Public Hall – Open Gardens, Market, Stalls, Cafe
 TBA American Membership Libraries Group AGM

THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTERS

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Editorial

'Tomorrow will be a Better Day!' This was the favourite saying of the late Captain Sir Thomas 'Tom' Moore, an ordinary man who walked himself into history and with the help of the media won the hearts and respect of the British nation, and the world.

Sir Tom did something simple and with determination achieved fame. There's a message there for all Hall managers and everyone. What can we do to save our impoverished Halls and reposition them into a post-Covid environment by doing something?

The use of the media, whether that be print or electronic has changed the world. We can dial into lectures and meetings around the world and we can share our thoughts and inspirations with like groups. The world is our oyster and we need to be more inclusive rather than exclusive.

Our Halls may require significant events to fund survival and that will need support which may come from neighbouring Hall groups or from publicity through and by them. Indeed when did you ever sit down with other Hall managers in your area for a barbecue, or lunch to discuss matters of mutual interest: an equitable share of Council rates; insurance; youth programs; joint event funding, management and promotion, etc.?

MIV stages occasional Workshops such as at **MIA 2018 Ballarat** which was thankfully subsidised by Government and supported by an illustrious panel of speakers for which we were most grateful. Perhaps future Workshops can be via an electronic platform that will enable participants and presenters to join in from around the State.

MIV has long nurtured a Library Group and produced a *Directory* in 2018 of its ten Library members. In 2019 it also produced a *Directory* of its sixteen Museum members and now has started to compile a *Directory* of its twenty Market members. Such cooperation can be valuable when approaching Government for support.

Useful Knowledge goes to key politicians from the Premier down to keep them informed of what we are doing. We have recently seen the Solar Panels on Halls roll out and are yet to learn of the result of Government's Local Government Rate Review and Creative Industries Strategy. MIV is also attempting to leverage other opportunities but we need your ongoing support and input from time to time.

We welcome the following new members to the Committee of MIV: **Pat Anderson** (Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute and Arts Association); **Sam Hicks** (Fawcett Public Hall and Free Library); and **Robert Shackleton** (Christmas Hills Mechanics' Institute). We congratulate them on their election and thank them for volunteering their valuable time. We know that their wide experience in their 'home' Institutes will prove valuable for MIV and its members.

Opportunities don't happen, you create them.
ANONYMOUS

Housekeeping

HISTORY PRIZES

There were once around one thousand Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria and we are keen to get as much history on each Victorian Institute as possible. Mechanics' Institutes were in many cases the first public building in many Victorian country towns and today they are the last.

1. HISTORY

This requires the history of: an Institute or group of Institutes; a person or persons connected with an Institute; an event or particular activity connected with an Institute; or, an artifact or book connected with an Institute. Projects can be submitted in either manuscript or book form. The Prize is \$1500, with five prizes of \$100 each.

CONDITIONS

1. Collaborative projects will be accepted.
2. All work must be the original research of the submitter or submitters.
3. No electronic submissions will be considered and all physical material submitted will become the property of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc., but copyright will remain with the author/s.
4. The Judges decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
5. Applications close on 1 October 2021. Announcements will be made at the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. Annual General Meeting in November 2021.
6. Entries must reach: Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc, Box 1080, Windsor, Vic 3181 by the specified date.

YOUTH AT YOUR HALL

The 'knotty' question of youth involvement in Hall activities was raised at a recent Committee meeting. It was noted that no Hall represented on the Committee allowed 18th or 21st birthdays in their Halls. This is reflective of the times when some people no longer respect community property - which we all own, including those who seek to trash it. Youth must have real ownership in their Community Hall for they will be the successors in the future. Clearly universal respect for community property is something that will not happen overnight, but we must make a start, as is being done in Northern Ireland where children from both Catholic and Protestant families are attending events together in the hope of better times. We must

seek to integrate current Hall management with youth, your future Hall's management.

In the next year it would be good if every Hall made an effort to have Schools in their catchment visit their Hall for a walk through and a history lesson. Maybe it could result in an art exhibition of pictures created from the day, a collaborative model of your Hall or its History or the 'personalisation' of the Hall Honor Rolls.

Each School could be invited to plant a tree or shrub as a memento of their visit and that could be entered in the Hall's Minutes. Each School could also be asked to design a poster for your next event and a series of these could be used as promotion and entered in loose leaf sleeves of the Hall of Fame record book.

HALL AWARDS

DELWP recognises Hall managers who give exceptional service. However when did your Hall recognise those people have given long service to your Hall either on the Hall Committee or by sustained support of your Hall? And please share your champions with us with a picture.

NEW MEMBER

We welcome the following new Member
John Graham

NEWS WANTED

Please let us have stories of your Institute, its history and/or its people with a couple of pictures. Copy for the next issue of *Useful Knowledge* 55 closes on **20 June 2021**. Email: theruralstore@bigpond.com.

MAGAZINE ROUND

Tick after reading and pass it on

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

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE MUSEUMS *Alive*

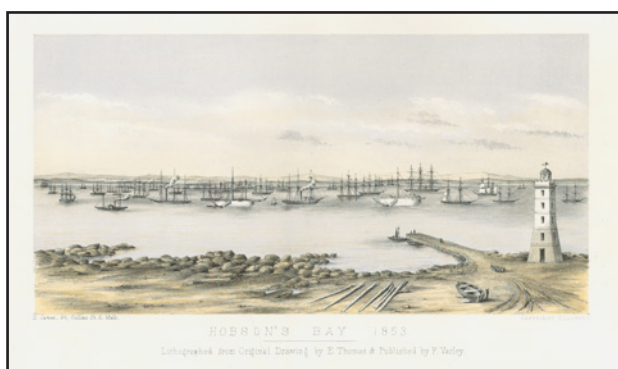
Museums are the archive of our lives, and those of our forebears. They tell our story at a regional and collectively at a national level.

MIV has sixteen Museum Members, and these are largely staffed and curated by volunteers. Those volunteers give their time selflessly, and keep the doors of the Museums open. Their specialist collections and buildings attract visitors to the various towns.

From time to time they mount specialist exhibitions and we are seeking Government support for our Museums to enable them to curate and mount special exhibitions and publicise them.

WILLIAMSTOWN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Upcoming exhibition: Preserving the Past for our Future: Our Heritage Buildings



Hobson's Bay 1853 by Edmund Thomas

(Collection: State Library of Victoria, Melbourne)

In 1835 a small township developed to accommodate the influx of new settlers and their stock which was based around the port area of Williamstown. It was concentrated around Nelson Place, fanning out from there as the population grew. Organised by the **Williamstown Historical Society** to coincide with the Hobsons Bay Heritage Festival, this exhibition will include information on many of the historic buildings still in existence along with other more contemporary buildings of social interest, accompanied by photographs showing how they looked in the past.

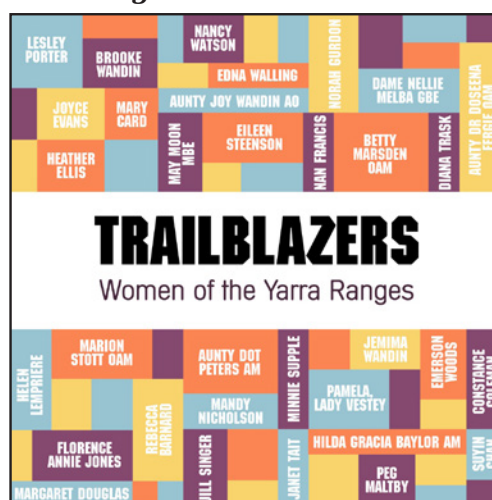
Location: Mezzanine Gallery, Williamstown Library, Ferguson Street, Williamstown

Dates: 18 April – 2 May, 2021

Times: 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday & 10:00 am to 1:00pm Saturday

YARRA RANGES REGIONAL MUSEUM, LILYDALE

Upcoming exhibition - Trailblazers: Women of the Yarra Ranges



This year marks the 110th anniversary of International Women's Day. Celebrate this incredible milestone at the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum's new exhibition, *Trailblazers: Women of the Yarra Ranges*.

Women have contributed significantly to the Yarra Ranges community, as artists, activists, educators and more. The exhibition showcases thirty of these trailblazing champions, from activist and Wurundjeri Elder **Aunty Joy Wandin AO**, to opera singer **Dame Nellie Melba** and musician **Rebecca Barnard**.

Local artist **Cat MacInnes** has illustrated a series of colourful portraits, depicting these powerful agents of change, while writer **Lindy Schneider** has written biographies for each woman, exploring just some of the many things that make them trailblazers.

Visit the Museum to celebrate these strong women and their legacies.

Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, 35-37 Castella Street, Lilydale 3140, Saturday 6 March – Sunday 25 July. Free entry. More info at: <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Yarra-Ranges-Regional-Museum>

STANLEY TELLS 'HERSTORY'

Saturday, 6 March 2021 will long go down in the annals of Stanley, a small town in north-eastern Victoria, as the day Stanley's 'herstory' *Hearts of Gold Minds of Mettle: Nineteenth Century Women of Stanley* was launched. The day dawned at around 6.30am with a radio interview of lead author **Helen McIntyre** by ABC Rural's **Sandra Moon**. And in keeping, 'Lady Luck' provided a beautifully fine day to follow.

Stanley is normally quiet on a Saturday afternoon, but people started to arrive at the Soldiers' Memorial Hall from 2pm and by 2.30pm the Hall was soon filled to COVID capacity. However in anticipation of a larger crowd some seating was available outside on the freshly mown grass, but more seats were soon required until there was standing room only.

For those who arrived early, books were available for purchase at the welcome table, which also carried the innovative Donation Box, which had already attracted quite a bit of the folding stuff. Nearby one could inspect the 'scrapbook' of sources from which the biographies of the one hundred local ladies was compiled. On the interior north wall of the Hall were the various assembled World War Honour Rolls, which were accompanied by recently compiled explanatory panels to commemorate the Stanley and District soldiers who had paid the Supreme Sacrifice.



Stanley Athenaeum's Coordinator Chris Dormer welcoming attendees to Stanley

Proceedings got under way at 3pm and the Stanley Athenaeum's Coordinator **Chris Dormer** welcomed all to Stanley and read the apologies including one from the **Quacinella** family in Queensland. In addition to providing a photograph of Mary Agnes Yule which is on the cover of the book, they had also contributed a number of others. It was noted that the project had grown from a request for information by **Dr Haley Singer** on Stanley 'eco-feminists' for a forthcoming seminar at Beechworth in 2017.

Acknowledgement was particularly made to the Holsworth Heritage Fund's Victorian Community Fund, which had provided a grant to enable the book's publication.

Indigo Shire Mayor, **Cr Jenny O'Connor** gave an acknowledgement of the traditional owners the local lands, the Waywurru and Dhudhuroa speaking people.



L-R: Indigo Shire Mayor, Cr Jenny O'Connor; Independent Senator for Indi, Dr Helen Haines

It was then over to the launch and the Independent Senator for Indi, **Dr Helen Haines** was introduced. Commenting on her drive across the Stanley plateau, she noted that the pinoaks were changing colour on arriving at Stanley. She acknowledged that the surrounding hills and rivers of the Goulburn-Murray region were the traditional lands of the Dhudhuroa and Waywurru People, who had walked the land for generations. Dr Haines said 'I honour their spirit – and the memory, culture, art and science of the world's oldest living culture through 60,000 years'.

Dr Haines recounted Dr Singer's request for information on 'eco-women' was met, in the absence of readily available information on indigenous women, with details on ten women of European descent.

Dr Singer's premise was that 'the exclusion of the lives of women from historical accounts has fundamentally limited our understanding of human history and experience'.

Several Friends of the Stanley Athenaeum took up the challenge and found that in spite of the contribution and legacy that women had made they were largely invisible to history standing behind the eponymous title of Mrs or Miss, or their husband's or father's name. In some cases this even extended to obituaries.

In addition to the resident European women there were also those of the indigenous Peoples who visited the plateau periodically.

Dr Haines observed 'As the title *Hearts of Gold* signals, these 19th century women were representative of the diversity of goldfields life. Mary Rawes was born in England in 1794, Maud Ah Quon was a young Chinese European in the 1860s, and Mariette Craig in the 1890s was of French descent'.

As one who had grown up on a Western District property, Dr Haines instanced an example of her grandmother, whose husband had died young and had left her with a young family and the farm to run. She milked the cows, raised geese, attended the stock sales, and did a myriad of farm management chores and when she died her occupation was given as 'housewife'.

Dr Haines then cited the example of Stanley's Amelia Elizabeth 'Millie' Mason who lived nearby on eight acres of land in an 1870s weatherboard cottage. She cooked on the open fire and used a candle for lighting. She walked everywhere and had a friend Violet Spencer who lived nearby. For many years Millie cared for her aged parents until their death, and in the meantime played tennis and was a devoted churchgoer. She died in 1987, aged of 93.

Don Watson in his book *The Bush*, described the families of places like Stanley as having 'inserted themselves into a crack in the nation's development... schools, churches, halls, hospitals, agricultural shows, libraries, mechanics' institutes (and Athenaeums). A persistent effort in small things, says Watson, that laid down the lasting pattern in Australian rural life'.

Ten themed chapters present the various local women, the last of which treats the thirty-four women from the Stanley plateau who signed the 1891 Monster Petition seeking a vote, equal to that of men. They were among the 30,000 women from around Victoria who signed the petition in six weeks.

As an aside, Dr Haines noted that of the 1202 people elected to the House of Representatives, since 1901, only 132 had been women.

Like those signatories, if women wanted things changed they had to put up their hands and that is why she had nominated for Parliament. Her nursing career, as a midwife, had stood her in good stead 'don't run, walk fast', and stay calm under pressure.

As an Independent Member of Parliament she accepted the challenge of representing the diverse electorate of Indi and took her role seriously, particularly issues concerning women. 'A seat in

Parliament is a privilege that would never have come to me without the quiet work and sacrifices of the many women who have paved the way. As a woman in public life, we have an obligation to celebrate others and to lift up the next generation of women leaders as we ourselves have been lifted up'.

Dr Haines added 'It's also why the work of groups like the Friends of the Stanley Athenaeum is so important, women collaborating to bring the lives and stories of other women to our attention, advancing their legacies in our communities, maintaining, testing, mending and extending the very fabric of our society'.

In closing Dr Haines said 'I'd like to thank the dedicated Friends and recognise the work of writers and editors **Robyn Harcourt**, **Helen McIntyre** and **Val Privett**, Friends coordinator **Chris Dormer**, and so many people and families in the community who shared stories of the 100 women'

'These are strong and vital threads in *Hearts of Gold and Minds of Mettle*'.



L-R: Helen McIntyre, Val Privett and Robyn Harcourt

Floral presentations were then made to the authors and Senator Haines by Cr O'Connor, with proofreader **Andrew Box** receiving a bottle of wine.

It was noted that 'Could the women, mentioned in the book, ever realise that one day they would be acknowledged in a book such as this'.

Some housekeeping followed. **Jeffrey Fryer** had provided the public address system which enabled a sound feed to those who were seated on the lawn outside. The Stanley Hotel had supplied the refreshments, and the Celebratory Cake was made and decorated by local pastry chef **Genevieve Love** in the commercial kitchen at Stanley Memorial Hall.

Dr Haines then proceeded to cut the cake, accompanied by the authors and Cr O'Connor and afternoon tea was then served.

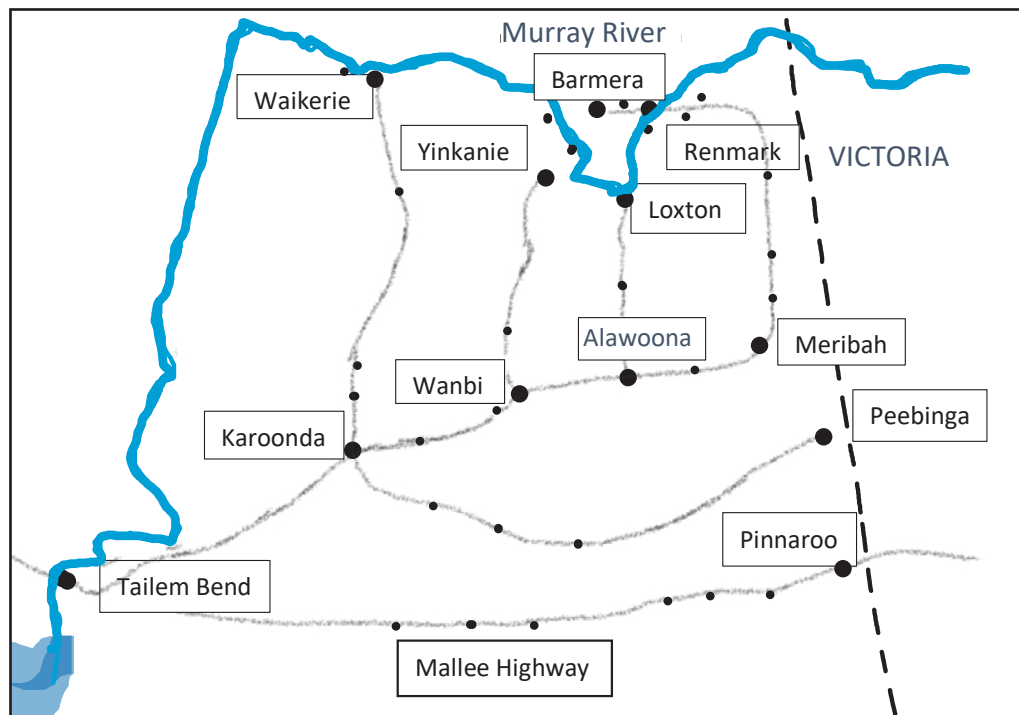
Photos: Roslyn Lowden

MURRAY MALLEE INSTITUTES BY JOELIE HANCOCK

The Murray Mallee is a grain-growing and sheep-farming area in South Australia bounded by the River Murray to the north and west, the Victorian border to the east, and extending some 50km south of the Mallee Highway. By 1900 the land was sparsely populated. Graziers abandoned their leases largely due to rabbits invading their pastures. The Murray River boat system, which had been used for transporting wool system, failed in droughts, and investment in the Mallee railways was not approved until 1903.

In 1890, Renmark was the only community along that part of the Murray that had an affiliated Institute. But this changed in 1906 when the first railway to penetrate the Mallee was opened from Tailem Bend to Pinnaroo, running close to the Highway. The first Institutes in the newly opened Mallee were built along this railway. Gradually between 1906 and 1925 fingers of railway tracks reached out from Tailem Bend to the east and the north. Sidings were constructed about every 10 miles along each track, enabling farmers to deliver their produce and pick up supplies.

It didn't take long before settlers addressed their need for services such as mail, sheep yards, roads, schools, churches and places to meet and socialise. The first public building for most of the settlements was a hall, called either a Hall or an Institute. These buildings were intended to serve as schools, places to worship and to gather. Some people knew enough of other established settlements to explore with the Institutes Association the procedure for gaining affiliation, which included a library. The map above shows the 37 towns or areas that had an affiliated Institute by 1930. (Neither Yinkanie nor Peebinga had an Institute but are included as



The Mallee railways and towns with Institutes

the terminals.) Between these were many halls that never affiliated as Institutes.

Along the railway, the settlements of Geranium, Wilkawatt, Lameroo, Parilla, Parrakie and Pinnaroo all erected their halls to be used as Institutes in 1909 or 1910, affiliating with the Institutes Association at the same time. Jabuk's hall was built in 1910 and affiliated in 1923, Peake built an Institute hall in 1913, and Moorland in 1923. It was not long before some of the first Institute halls were found to be inadequate and erected a larger, grander building as at Parilla.



*Opening of Parilla Institute, 1912
(Photo: The Chronicle 7.2.1912)*

A flurry of railway developments led to four more fingers opening up the land to a fresh wave of prospective farmers. In 1914 four separate

tracks were opened to Waikerie, Loxton, Peebinga, through Meribah to Paringa, and then later on to Barmera. Wanbi to Yinkanie was added in 1925. All of these lines went through Karoonda, whose Institute affiliated in 1914. As with the Pinnaroo line, the settlers soon took steps to gain the services they needed, which included seeking a grant of land on which to build a meeting place, either a Hall or an Institute. If an area had a suitable building (such as these) for a school, fewer school-aged children needed to be enrolled to entitle them to a teacher.

The erection of the buildings depended on voluntary labour, particularly where farms were widely scattered. Sites had to be cleared, stone carted and laid, followed by maintenance. While women were rarely members of the Institute committees and trustees, their organising and baking skills were regularly required and appreciated. In droughts and tough times donations and subscriptions were paid in bags of wheat.

The activities that took place in the Halls and Institutes changed over time. It was usual for schools and churches to use the hall until they had their own premises. A few of the Institutes had a Literary and Debating Society that organised debates, public speaking and oral presentations. The CWA, Agricultural Bureau and RSL branches generally had their base in the Institute building. The Institute was the centre for sports days, strawberry fairs, euchre evenings, bazaars, dances, balls, celebrations, and concerts; for welcoming home soldiers, farewelling friends, performing plays and organising political meetings.

After WW2, small towns began to decline. Just as the railways had opened up the Murray Mallee, now better roads and vehicles enabled more efficient transport of produce and access to area schools and larger centres. As most of the railways through the Mallee ceased to operate, the majority of the settlements dwindled. Not surprisingly, most of those that do remain are along the Mallee Highway and the River.

Many of these River and Mallee Highway Institute buildings still hold a central place in their communities. Along the river those at Purnong, Waikerie, Kingston-on-Murray, Moorook, Barmera, Loxton, Glossop, Monash, Renmark, Berri, Lyrup and Paringa are still well used, as are those along the Highway at Parilla, PARRAKIE, Peake and Pinnaroo. Like most of them, Loxton's former Institute has had several additions since its first building in 1909.



Former Loxton Institute in 2017

(Photo: Joeline Hancock)

Of the 37 Mallee Institutes that had affiliated with the Institutes Association, more than half of their buildings have been abandoned, demolished or sold. Those at Bugle, Maggea, Meribah, Perponda, Taldra, Taplan and Veitch remain - proud and alone - for the curious traveller to wonder about their origins and the lives of those who built them.



Former Bugle Institute in 2020

(Photo: Joeline Hancock)

REMEMBERING IT WELL AT LITTLE RIVER BY PETER JONES

"I wore a mask."

"Your face was plain."

"The stars were out."

"It began to rain."

"Ahh yes, I remember it well."

"We danced apart."

"You held me tight."

"That heavy cake."

"No. It was light."

"Ahh yes, I remember it well."

"That dazzling moon."

"There was none that night."

"In November, not June."

"That's right, that's right."

Ahh yes, I remember it well."

"Curfew was for eight."

"There was none that night."

"We danced till late."

That's right, that's right."

Ahh yes, I remember it well."

"Sanitizer spread,"

"We had no need,"

"From toe to head

We'd stem that weed.

Ahh yes, I remember it well."

"I slept alone."

"You slept with me

when we came home.

Oh, don't you see?"

"Ahh yes, I remember it well."

Apologies to Lerner & Lowe, I remember it well.

'Gigi'. Sung by Hermione Gingold & Maurice Chevalier.

There could not be a better time to relearn how to laugh. There have been lots 'a bits a' fun' at the Little River Mechanics' Institute and Free Library throughout its 110 years of continuous service. My introduction to Little River, the town of mirth, was upon driving through in November 2007. The sun had set on the old timber building but there was an inviting glow and raucous din from something inside. It was a starry night and, as though I had been carried back in time to the Ben Bowyang comic strip, the Saturday night dance shook the old hall, around which radiated parked vehicles as though litters to a mother pig. I pulled up and peeped through the window. A

huge spongy dice, green with black spots, was being thrown and rethrown (by **Les Sanderson**, President of the local Historical Society) to progress a field of tiny wooden horses along numbered lanes. It was 3rd November, the night of the renowned Little River Cup Eve Ball.



Les Sanderson throws the cup race dice.

(Photo: D. Clarke 172, 2014)

Daytime events around the Hall have also engendered fun, merry amusement and provision of entertainment. Visits from groups such as Tourist Information Volunteers have always been welcome. A youthful rendition of *I still call Australia home* became an annual favorite. A few paces to the West, President of the Lions Club **Nicole Green** would sizzle a string of sausages with an egg slice and produce many a smile for the free breakfast.

But, had you driven past the Little River Mechanics' Hall in the early evening of the last Saturday before the first Tuesday in November, you may have seen signs of hilarity in its infancy. You may have seen an early bird or two arriving before the sun had hardly set. **Terry Hedt** Fire Chief and **Lynette Richmond** were there sporting Viking outfits, resplendent with bi-horn helmets and ready to raise the temperature. It was a mediaeval theme that year. By then tickets would have sold out.

For over a dozen years the hands-on creative director for the Cup balls was **Peter Britchford**, master slater. Just as one ball was over he would plan the next theme – a horse, a movie, a period in history? He would greet each participant on their arrival with a big disarming grin. Whether

his own costume was themed as “Jockey’s colours”, “Book title” or “Cowboy”, Peter wanted to out do himself from the year before. Some voted his diaphanous “Heigh Ho Silver” as his best. From Britchford’s contagious laugh would spread other laughs of different styles – “droll”, “absurd”, “bizarre” and “frozen”. A droll be-kilted Scottie struck an absurd pose in 1957, hands clenched above him. In a bizarre metamorphosis the members of one table arose as one. But there was a problem. “As one,” became, “as five.” Five Statues of Liberty now multiplied before your eyes.



Bizarre metamorphosis. Statues of Liberty multiply (Photo: D. Clarke 0010 29 Oct 2011)

Walt Disney produced “laffs” with animation in the cinema. **Jenny Martinez** produced “laffs” with animation, live in the Mechanics’ Hall. They could not take their gaze off her eyes.

The most unpredictable part of the evening was the “Interview” stage. Peter, as the ultra-inquisitive MC, sometimes with a leer, sometimes with a “My dear?” would precariously balance on the tightrope of controversy over a sea of suspense. A female interviewee might raise an eyebrow to Peter’s cheek. before they would invariably survive and a willi-willi of the laughter of relief would circuit the hall. The MC’s aim was to assist the judges for the Fashions of the Field by narrowing down their choice. The aim of the audience was to smile, laugh and lend support jocularly. Some would notice the You Yangs at dusk on the stage backdrop. This had been designed and painted by locals, **Jenny Martinez** and **Peter Jones**. Another artist, General Store manager **Lisa Clarke**, painted too – her whitened face. Her elaborate costume and maintenance of character for Queen Elizabeth I ensured her place as winner for 2011. Sometimes it was as though we were looking at a mannerist portrait of the sixteenth century and not the Little River welcomer of the 21st century. On another occasion we witnessed two New York brotherhood mafia, **Lisa** and **Peter Clarke**, with weapons, inflated in black like two Michelin men. They may have been two puffed up gangsters

but Peter Jones turned up in armour of deflated Cachet gourmet selection cat food tins.

At meal time all hopped into an old-fashioned country buffet selection in the Supper Room. Then, with batteries recharged, jocularly crescendoed and the electronic rock band turned up the herbs. Dances in groups and sub-groups were 100% pure fun. Memories of a bygone era were refuelled with the Charleston.



*Garry in hilarious dance – 100% PURE FUN.
(Photo: D. Clarke 050, 1 Nov 2014)*

As if the heavens weren’t close enough. Leaps, outstretched hands and flailing arms said it all with wild mass dancing. But it was the small groups that knew what it was all about. They smiled with their all. Grins could not have been broader. Fun we know, must not be taken for granted. In 2017, when key contributors Lynne and Peter Britchford announced their intention to leave the region Les Sanderson proposed a vote of sincere thanks from the Little River Historical Society for over a decade of pure fun. Why will we keep our eyes peeled for new opportunities to laugh in Little River? Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) said it all in a Dedicatory Ode –

From quiet homes and first beginning,
Out of the undiscovered ends,
There’s nothing worth the wear of winning,
But laughter and the love of friends.



*Les Sanderson, President of the Little River Historical Society, laughs the morning after.
(Photo: Peter Jones L100-0026, 2 Jan 2015)*

Featured Institute

LYONVILLE MECHANICS' HALL



The Lyonville Mechanics Hall has long been the central focus of life at the hamlet of Lyonville. Once a thriving timber town nestled in the Wombat Forest of the Central Highlands of Victoria, Lyonville has waxed and waned over the years. However in the last twenty years, there has been a steady increase in population as city folk discover the joys of living in the countryside, yet only 1.5 hours from Melbourne.

The influx of tree changers has helped revitalise the hall, with new members joining the committee and new faces supporting our fund raising events. Our hall was fully renovated some 10 years ago, using Council, State Government and Hall Committee funds. The works included a new kitchen, lighting, painting and restumping.

For those of you on similar hall committees, I thought I'd share some of our activities and ways of working in case it is useful to others. The Hall Committee is a Community Asset Committee under the auspices of Hepburn Shire Council. We currently receive a \$500 maintenance grant from Council and can apply for additional support via their budget process if needed.

We have a small Committee of 7 members, some very long standing (50 years!) and some who joined much more recently. Our Committee meets monthly for about an hour or less and is harmonious in its decision making. We try to

*The Lyonville Mechanics' Hall today.
(Photo: Simon Eggleston)*

rotate the office bearer roles every few years to encourage others to have their opportunity to lead.

We offer the hall for hire to locals and others who want to use it for private functions such as weddings. We have also hosted regular art and yoga classes in past years. In non-COVID times we run three main fundraising events each year: a wood chop organised in conjunction with the Victorian Axemen's Association, a



*The 2018 cake bake off entries.
(Photo: Simon Eggleston)*



Locals at the opening of the pizza oven in February this year.

bake-off, where local cake makers vie over their creative confections, and a harvest festival and picnic. Our other major fund raising activity is a volunteer-run café each Sunday from 10am to 1pm. We serve espresso coffee and homemade cakes, sell local berries in season and local homemade jams. The café commenced in 2019 and is a very popular community forum where locals meet, swap ideas and new residents can meet their neighbours. The hall and café also provide an informal setting for meeting local councillors or other community consultations. After an initial outlay of around \$3,000 for a second hand commercial coffee machine, the café operating expenses are minimal and all proceeds go towards projects at the hall.

Our latest project has been the construction of a pizza oven in the hall grounds. We applied for and received a community development investment grant from the local Trentham branch of the Bendigo Bank to help pay for the oven, which was built by volunteers. The pizza oven was officially opened in February this year, marked by a community outdoor pizza lunch attended by around 50 people. Whilst hoping that the oven will be hired for private functions, we also plan to host occasional pizza lunches as fundraisers for the hall, and to use the oven at our major events.

In addition to planning for repairs and maintenance, the Hall Committee has authorised some planting and beautification of the hall grounds. We will try to use local volunteers to build and plant a herb garden and paint the outdoor toilet block. We also used cafe proceeds to help plant an Avenue of Honour along the main road at the entrance to the village.

On a personal note, I joined the Hall Committee about 6 years ago and enjoy my involvement very much. In a recent community planning exercise, it was heartening to hear the positive comments about the hall and its activities voiced by many of our residents. It makes it all so worthwhile.

Contributed by Vicki Jackson

*Below: Crowds at the 2018 woodchop.
(Photo: Simon Eggleston)*



"CEASE NOT TO LEARNE UNTIL THOU CEASE TO LIVE"

The words immediately struck a chord. **Dr Philip Candy** first saw this inscription in a stained glass window in the beautiful, historic house, 'Boooloominbah', on campus at the University of New England in Armidale NSW, in 1987. It is apt that this call to lifelong learning resonated so much; decades later, it seems a near-perfect summation of his path in life.



Dr Philip Candy (Photo: Candy Family collection); stained glass window at 'Boooloominbah' at University of New England, Armidale.

Philip had always been fascinated by history. As a teenager in the late 1960s, he began investigating his own family history. The thrill of uncovering his ancestors' stories led him to a broader curiosity about the world in which they had lived.

His academic experience started at the University of Melbourne with an undergraduate degree in Commerce, and at first he seemed destined to become an accountant.

Instead, he found himself drawn to working more closely with people, and helping expand their horizons. A remarkable career in adult education followed, focused on lifelong learning beyond school settings; spanning more than four decades, multiple Australian states, and several countries.

Among his signal achievements, Philip's 1987 doctoral thesis (University of British Columbia, Canada) became the basis for his book *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning*, published in 1991, which was soon recognised as "the definitive text" in the field.

As Director of the Academic Staff Development Unit at Queensland University of Technology for seven years, in the late 1980s to mid-90s, his task was to improve the educational and learning experience for both students and staff, through implementing programs in teaching and learning across the university.

It was during this time in Brisbane that Philip met **Dr John Laurent** (now sadly deceased), from Griffith University, with whom he shared a love of history and a deep interest in the early education of adults throughout Australia. Together, they investigated the development and cultural significance of Mechanics' Institutes

(Schools of Arts), and to their surprise, found that few books had recognised the significance of this category of institution in the social history of Australia. This was the genesis of *Pioneering Culture*, a book that explored and paid tribute to the enormous cultural contribution made by Mechanics' Institutes to the nation's heritage.

Since the publication of this text in 1994, popular interest in the role of Mechanics' Institutes in society has greatly increased, and people now see the value of preserving those that remain.

For the two authors, and this also seems to be the case for many of their readers, these historic buildings, ubiquitous in Australian towns and cities, represented a tangible nexus between their interest in the personal and family aspects of history, on one hand, and its institutional and collective aspects, on the other.

Over the years, in true lifelong learning fashion, Philip's passionate interest in how we learn remained constant, even as the ways in which people were doing it rapidly evolved. He collaborated extensively in research on the role of information literacy in universities and libraries, and by 2001 had been awarded a year's leave to study self-directed online learning, resulting in a book-length research report for the federal government, *Linking Thinking: Self-directed Learning in the Digital Age*.

This highly regarded report led Philip to an opportunity in the UK, as the National Director of Education, Training and Development for the National Health Service. The role involved setting up training and development for all health service staff throughout the NHS, the largest employer in Europe.

"CEASE NOT TO LEARNE..." CONT...

In 2011, as a result of a hospital procedure Philip suffered a severe stroke which brought his illustrious career to a sudden halt. He was left with multiple disabilities, including an inability to speak or write, although his considerable intellect remains.

Philip, his wife Mary-Anne, and three children regard these circumstances as his greatest lifelong learning challenge. The focus of the learning has, naturally, changed dramatically. It includes multiple weekly appointments to

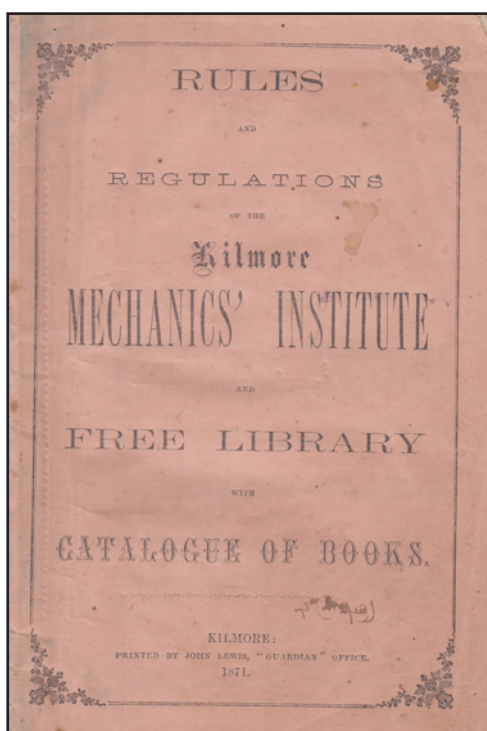
continue with rehabilitation so he can retain his mobility and improve communication.

Over the past decade, he has met this sudden change in life trajectory with a characteristic dedication and perseverance. His passion for family history research continues as he uses his computer every day and, with assistance, maintains communication with some fellow researchers. And it all reinforces the profound value, for Philip, of the words he read in that stained glass window many years ago: "Cease not to learne until thou cease to live."

REMNANT LIBRARIES

In late 2019 we launched our Remnant Library search and now have identified collections ranging from a few volumes to several thousand volumes from some sixty Institutes scattered around the State. Aggregated in total, their holdings represent some 42,000 volumes. One Institute, the former **Scarsdale Mechanics' Institute**, at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat holds the remnant collections of several Institutes. Another **the Fawcett Public Hall and Free Library** holds its own, along with that of **Gobur Mechanics' Institute**, in its original bookcase.

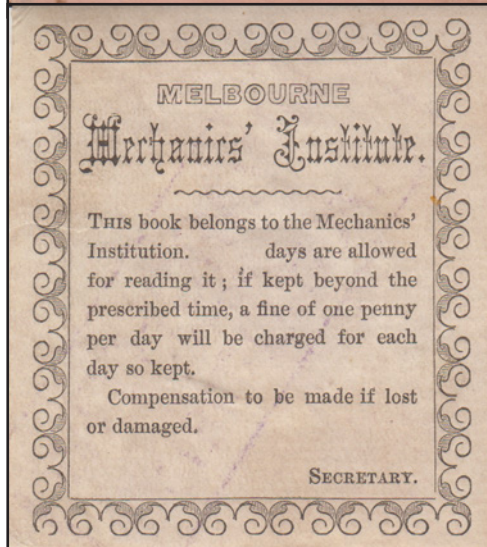
It is intriguing just what those libraries contain and what listings can tell us. A handwritten listing of the library of the **Glenaroua Mechanics' Institute**, then deroofted, was taken back in the 1960s and a copy exists in the MIRC. Few Library catalogues exist, although



we recently sighted a very rare and possibly a unique catalogue of the **Kilmore Mechanics' Institute and Free Library** from 1871. Not only does it contain the Rules and Regulations and a listing of the 1000 volume collection, but it also listed Officebearers and four Life Members. Hopefully we can get this scanned for the MIRC in the near future.

Another item that was part of the **Philip Candy Archive** which was recently presented to MIV is a bookplate of the **Melbourne Mechanics' Institution**, which was before 1873 when it became known as the **Melbourne Athenaeum**.

We also recently received a listing of the Remnant Library of the **Amphitheatre Mechanics' Institute** which comprised nearly 200 volumes which are still housed in the Hall.



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.

AMPHITHEATRE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1901).



(Photo: Bron Lowden)

'Memory' has not been forgotten at the Amphitheatre Mechanics' Institute, which was built in 1901. They first erected a distinctive brass plaque in the Hall to the seven World War I soldiers, from the district who paid the Supreme Sacrifice in May 1924. This was followed by granite arch 'to the memory of fallen comrades' in October 1936 and installed to brass plaques on the pillars on 28 October 2002 commemorating those who enlisted for World War I and World War II. An MIV commemorative plaque, No. 54, was unveiled in 2016. Recently **Susan Campbell-Wright** completed a listing and condition assessment of Amphitheatre's remnant Library and a copy has been deposited in the MIRC file at Prahran.

BENALLA COSTUME & KELLY MUSEUM (Est. 1967)

This Museum occupies the original Benalla Mechanics' Institute building erected in 1870 and since extended. The Institute collaborated with the RSL in 1921 to build a larger Memorial Hall and after the Library was taken over by Council, the Institute faded away. We were excited to learn and see in 2019 that a significant

remnant of the Benalla Mechanics' Institute Library still existed hidden away in an original glass-fronted bookcase. Recently we heard some more interesting news, the Benalla RSL were having a cleanout of an old storeroom and found the 1879 and 1885 Minute Books and Cashbook ledger. The Historical Society have also been compiling information on the Institute for fifty years and have assembled a large scrapbook. All these have recently been collected for scanning as part of MIV's free record digitisation program. www.home.vic.net~benmus

CHRISTMAS HILLS MECHANICS' HALL & FREE LIBRARY (Est. 1876)

Still reeling from the shock of receiving a \$14,000 Stamp Duty Bill after transitioning their land title from Trustees to the new Incorporated Association and ongoing Land Tax Bills, Christmas Hills has miraculously regrouped.

It is now around sixty years since the Library ceased to operate from the site, although there are occasional books still to be found on local bookshelves. However like a number of Mechanics' Halls they have set up some shelves and people are donating books to re-establish a library. This reinforces their claim to being 'The Cultural Centre of the Universe'. www.christmashillshall.org.au

FAWCETT HALL & PUBLIC LIBRARY (Est. 1882)

To establish their uniqueness Fawcett have installed a striking mosaic of their 'Spring Creek Free Library' stamp on their front entrance walkway. The Fawcett and Koriella residents and landowners staged a very successful Outdoor Community Barbecue Dinner on 6 March to bring the Hall back to life. This was their first big night since **Cinamon Cunningham's** Bushfire Relief fundraiser in February 2020 which featured **Jenny Biddle** and **Steve Paix**. Fawcett have also recently produced 'a walk through' video of their much loved Hall which has been posted online. www.fawcettHall.org.au

FOOTSCRAY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1856)

The doors are open again at Footscray, with current hours being Wednesday-Friday 10am-4pm. Lockdown and closure has enabled new Librarian **Cameron Borg** to reorganise and catalogue the collection which will be placed

online. New shelf signage and a welcoming street front sign, leaflet promotion and a new Library Card have already increased membership, which is \$10 per year. They have just launched their Book Club with the first subject being crime writer Ruth Rendell (1930-2015) who introduced Detective Inspector Richard Wexford to the world. She also authored a series of crime novels under pseudonym Barbara Vine. www.footscraymechanicsinstitute.org.au

KILMORE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

The Kilmore Mechanics' Institute have recently launched a Community Garden Group which will operate from an 'acre site' at Christ Church, Kilmore. Formal arrangement has been established with the Anglican Church hierarchy and plans are now in hand to initially plough portion of the site and then establish a couple of beds. They recently had a visit from members of the Seymour Community Garden which was opened in November 2019 under the aegis of the Salvation Army.

LITTLE RIVER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1910)

The Little River Committee has spent lockdown working through and planning a number of projects including provision for film screening, reflooring of the Hall, hopefully a new roof and rebinding some of their Library's treasures. They are now on the hunt for funding and we wish them all the very best of good luck. Their Library now includes a Local and Regional History Collection of more than 200 volumes. Membership is \$5.00 per year for an individual or family. In addition there is a Bookplate Membership category of \$30, which enables the librarians to purchase a needed book, in which the member's name is inscribed. www.littlerivermechanicshall.weebly.com

MALMSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (MALMSBURY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE)



(Photo: Bron Lowden)

As the long Victorian lockdown drew to a close, the Society was notified by the owners of the

building (Macedon Ranges Shire Council), that the parapet at the front of the building was in a hazardous condition. After an initial inspection, and with the footpath closed to the public, works were undertaken just prior to Christmas to repair the structure. Unfortunately, while the initial problem was resolved and the footpath reopened in January, an inspection of the whole building revealed other problems that need to be addressed before the facility can be reopened. At present Council are awaiting the formal site report and will need to develop a schedule of works and budget before any decisions on funding and works can commence. While we await further developments the building remains closed, however the Society is able to undertake some research services using digital information, and portions of our image collection have been added to the Victorian Collections website.

Sue Walter

MURTOA MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1881)

Last year Murtoa received a \$100,000 grant under the Government's 'Home is Where the Hall is' grant program. Whilst most work will be 'invisible', with repairs and replacements, it will support the previous investment in new stage curtains and a piano.

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1854)

After a series of closures and tentative openings, access from 8 March has been stabilised to a five day week, opening on Monday-Friday from 9.30am-4.30pm daily. PMI plans major Book Sales in April and later in the year.

During Children's Week, in February, PMI launched their Creative Writing Competition for Children aged 4 to 12 which requires typing 'up a story told by a grandparent, parent, carer, aunty, uncle or elder, about their friends when they were your age. What kind of adventures did they get up to? How were things different then? What made their friendships special?' It might be a bit late for this year but start getting entries ready for 2022.

We all love indexes as they have the potential to throw up that elusive name. Prahran has many which can be digitally searched. Two that caught our eye were 'Australia's Army War Dead 1885-1972' and the 'Genealogical Database of Australia's Travelling Showpeople' compiled by Mark de Leon. www.pmi.net.au

ROMSEY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (1868)

Romsey have spent lockdown in creating a very stylish website which has a thoughtful

page listing 'User Groups', along with relevant contact emails. A History page, is followed by a very informative facilities page, with room sizes, equipment, etc. for the information of potential hirers. www.romseymechanicsinstitute.com

SEYMOUR PIONEER (FREE) LIBRARY (Est. 1874)

The most recent edition of the *Seymour Historical Newsletter* contains a short history of the library by Don Wilson. It has its genesis in the Seymour Farmers' Library which was operational as early as 1863. The current site was granted and gazetted in 1874 and the Hall was built and opened in 1875 and the building was extended in 1889. The nearby School used the building as 'overflow' on occasion and the building was requisitioned for Military use during both World Wars, and for recruitment during the Vietnam War. Electricity was connected around 1935 and the Library, which had almost ceased to function by 1941, saw the books sold in 1942.

The building was then used by: the Waterworks Trust to the 1960s; the Commonwealth Employment Service in the 1960s; and the Transport Regulation Board from 1970-79.

The Seymour Historical Society took over the back portion of the building in 1974 and in 1979 took over the whole building and has occupied the building ever since. Following the completion of recent building restoration works a new exhibition has been mounted in the main Hall. The building is open on the First Sunday, and Third Tuesday of each month. www.historyvictoria.org.au ~ Seymour & District Historical Society.

STANLEY ATHENAEUM

'Around the World in Eighty Maps: The Philips' Imperial Atlas of the World' 1890 Exhibition



John Treweek (1829-1919), born in Cornwall, England. John was a member of Library Committee 1873 and then Secretary from 1889 to 1896 and from 1900 until 1919. Following his death in 1919, the Committee of the Athenaeum presented

*this portrait to the Athenaeum in his memory.
(Photo: Stanley Athenaeum)*

The arrival in Stanley in June 1890 of this impressive 'Philips' Imperial Atlas of the World' from England would have been as exciting and equivalent to the arrival of 'Google maps'. It created a 'window on the world' and has been frequently visited, well used and loved by the Stanley community during its life of 130 years in the library.

The 'Around the World in Eighty Maps' exhibition tells the story of how the atlas arrived at the library, how Robert Craig is instrumental in the purchase of this significant volume, reflecting the aspirations of the newly elected library committee, their vision and optimism for the library and Athenaeum for the future, buoyed by the prosperity of Victoria and the reign of 'Marvellous Melbourne'.

The 'series of eighty maps illustrating every aspect of geographical science', with its lofty ambitions was based on engravings from 'original drawings compiled from the latest works of eminent travellers and explorers'. The folio size 'Philips' Imperial Atlas of the World' at the Stanley Athenaeum is a rarity, being one of only two known copies in public collections in Australia and one of eight copies in worldwide collections.

Researchers **Chris Dormer** and **Ali Rowe** have unearthed the background to the atlas, the people who made it happen and the story of its journey into the 21st century. 'Around the World in Eighty Maps' features the text, books and photographs to bring the story alive, and is curated by Ali Rowe MA who designed the interpretive panels and exhibition layout.

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

'Prepare and Protect' Project

Late in 2020 the Friends of Stanley Athenaeum were successful in receiving a substantial grant of Community Groups Futures Grant from the Foundation of Rural and Regional Renewal, the \$19,500 grant auspiced by Indigo Shire Council will enable the Friends to engage professional support for the development of a Disaster Preparedness Plan, a Significance Assessment and training and assistance with cataloguing the Historic Book Collection. The 'Prepare and Protect' Project will be the main focus for the Friends group in 2021.

Saluting our Service

Earlier in 2020 a grant was obtained from Veterans' Affairs for the relocation of the Stanley and Hurdle Flat State School Honour Boards to

the Stanley Memorial Hall. This work has now been completed and interpretive panels have been installed. These panels are based on the extensive and exhaustive research of Ali Rowe in collaboration with Chris Dormer.

Chris Dormer

Coordinator: Chris Dormer 0458 606 922

Stanley Athenaeum & Public Room, 2 Mt Stanley Road. Stanley.

The Stanley Athenaeum is now open for visitors, bookings are encouraged.

Normal Opening times - Every Friday & 4th Saturday each month, 10am - 12.30pm (or by appointment)

For more information contact: 0458 606 922 or 03 5728 6702

E: stanleyathenaeum@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Stanley-Athenaeum-1192094190800862/>

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

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mivic/stanley.html>

TALLAROOK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1891)

Three years after the disastrous fire the Tallarook Mechanics' Institute will be officially opened during its Farmer's Market, on Sunday 2 May. It would be a fitting show of support to make this a gathering day for representatives of regional Mechanics' Institutes. Looking forward to seeing you all there. www.tallarook.org.au

WARRANTYTE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE (Est. 1882)

Using the words of the editor of Warrandyte's *Artful Dodger*, Jo French 'The Arts are bubbling back to life in Warrandyte and the doors of the Hall have been swung open and the dust swept from its corners'. Manningham Council agreed to fund **Warrandyte Arts Expo 2021** which was scheduled for 19-21 March but was postponed and is now planned for October-November to be sure. It has not however been all doom and doom for three online plays raised \$5000, from a national and worldwide on-line audience and the 'Friends of the Hall' assembled another \$11,000 in a call-out for support, so that paid the bills during the Covid lockdown. Upcoming plays include: *Lovesick*, June; *Calendar Girls*, September; and *Follies*, November-December. www.warrandytehallarts.asn.au

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

PHILIP CANDY ARCHIVE

In November 2020 the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. came into the possession of the **Professor Philip Carne Candy Archive** relating to Mechanics' Institutes. Comprising several boxes it contains material ranging from: bound theses; books; pamphlets; manuscript and photocopied articles; single paper-based items; and photos and slides depicting persons, buildings and places.

This represents material assembled during Professor Candy's various postings in: Australia; Canada; New Zealand; South Africa; United Kingdom; and the United States of America.

MIV is seeking funding to firstly sort the collection. The bound theses, books and pamphlets will be catalogued, identified with a bookplate and integrated into **Mechanics' Institutes Resource Centre** Collection. Other material will be placed in archive boxes for later detailed cataloguing, for which we are also seeking funding.

We thank Philip, Mary-Anne and other members of the Candy family for this generous donation which will supplement and enhance our existing collection, and which will benefit future researchers.

This is MIV's second major acquisition of Mechanics' Institute related items, the first being the **Pam Baragwanath Collection** of pictures and memorabilia around 2006.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES RESOURCE CENTRE

Digitisation has again commenced with records of the Institutes of: Benalla; Deans Marsh; Kilmore; and Newbridge in the pipeline. If your Institute is still to have records copied let us know. This is a free service, and your records will be returned with a CD of same.

A copy of the Records is archived in the MIRC and will be available for future researchers. This is a huge resource for students of history and the evolution of various technologies. Please let us know if we can scan your records,

The Wonderful World of Mechanics' Institutes

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

WELLINGTON SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1897)



(Photo: Google Street View)

Located at the junction of the Bell and Macquarie Rivers, at an elevation of 305 metres, Wellington is an inland town, 260km west-north-west of Sydney.

In 1840 a village named Montefiores was set up on the north side of the Macquarie River Crossing. The town of Wellington was gazetted in 1846 and proclaimed on 20 March 1885.

Efforts to establish a Mechanics' Institute in Wellington date back to May 1874, when 'a club having for its object the purchase of books' was formed with school teacher JC Dillon as Secretary. 'A fair number of books were purchased and a room was rented in a cottage in Percy Street'.

In 1877 an application was made to Government for a grant of a building site and this was granted on the corner of Warne Street and Nanima Crescent in December 1877 and in January 1878 a public meeting nominated five trustees.

The Committee of the Wellington School of Arts invited competitive designs in February 1878 for a building with a cost not exceeding £1500. Fundraising then proceeded and in May 1878 the Government placed £1000 on the estimates for the 'Wellington School of Arts, in aid of erection of building, on the usual conditions'. The Wellington Cricket Club and Wellington Band gave entertainments in aid of the Wellington School of Arts building fund.

Then following the vacation of the old Public School building in 1885, Council applied for and

was granted its use as a Free Public Library. It was under the *Municipalities Act*, that the Government granted £200 for the purchase of books. Council then subscribed to a 'good many periodicals' and continued to pay for these for several years. When these subscriptions ceased interest in the Library and Reading Room waned. However the book collection still remained.

In July 1897 a meeting of the newly formed Wellington Mechanics' Institute was held and the Secretary was instructed to communicate with the Minister of Education, relative to what subsidy the Government would grant the society for building purposes, and also for the maintenance of the institute; and also obtain from Angus and Robertson information regarding the supply of books, etc.

In July 1899 the Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Mechanics' Institute was held at Plummer's Studio. The Secretary reported that the library had increased from 500 books to seven hundred with an expense of £20. Shelving space was being increased and it was planned to spend another £20 on books to 'give a library of really first class works of about 900 books'. It was regretted that 'the Debating Club, in connection with the Institute, has apparently died out'.

In July 1900 'The Wellington Mechanics' Institute now has 1000 books and 50 members. However in September 1901 it was noted that the Mechanics' Institute and Public Library were 'in a most unsatisfactory condition' and should be merged to reorganise. Change happened for in May 1902 'The Mechanics' Institute's new site, next to the *Times* office, is generally voted by members to be convenient and central. The rooms are very cosy and convenient, and the popularity of the Institute is bound to increase as the result of the change'.

This most certainly happened, for in July 1902 it was noted that there is at present three times the number of members as at 30 June 1901 and that one hundred new books had been added since then. The game of cards was introduced into the Institute early in 1903.

Early in July 1903 the proposed erection of a School of Arts at Wellington received a boost, with the Government promising £140 towards a building, which would comprise a library, reading room, and a billiard room.

Later in July 1903 the annual meeting of the Mechanics' Institute resolved to change the name to the 'Wellington School of Arts'. It was also resolved to purchase a 66ft frontage to Swift Street from the Bank of New South Wales for £3.12s per foot and this would be financed by the issue of debentures to the value of £155 bearing 6% interest per annum.

The Government was then asked to sell the old Library site and to hand over the proceeds to the School of Arts Building Fund, on the understanding that the School of Arts would provide a free reading room.

In January 1904 it was noted that 'The work of removing from the old Mechanics' Institute to the new School of Arts is now being carried out'.

In July 1904 the annual meeting of the members of the Wellington School of Arts was held in the institution's rooms. It was noted 'that only two or three years ago the institution was at a very low ebb'. Membership was now 120 and 516 books had been issued for the month of June and the billiard tables were returning 'at least £2.10s a week'.

In July 1906, it was reported that 'During the past year, the building debt of the Wellington School of Arts was reduced by £75 and the final payment of £85 was made on the billiard tables. The improved position was 'mainly due to a grant of £140, representing compensation for the land originally dedicated to their use in Lee-street and subsequently resumed by the Crown. The committee propose to assist in a scheme for technical classes'.

In addition to the Wellington School of Arts Rugby Club, there was also the 'Wellington Mechanics' Literary and Debating Society, which engaged with neighbouring like groups.

In July 1909 the total debt on the building was £426 and the institution had 191 members. The Minister of Education visited in April 1911, and he was advised that the institution had recognised the value of University Extension work and an effort had been made to establish technical classes, and the names of the requisite number of students for a class in wool sorting had been sent to the technical department. At that time the Institute had £230 of debt, with revenue of about £120 from subscriptions and another £140 from billiards.

In August 1917 the Treasurer reported that the overdraft had been reduced to £359. A motion was carried that the *Wellington Times* be subscribed for and laid on the table, and that the *Gazette* be paid for to commence from the same time.

In June 1920 the Railways offered to take over the Wellington School of Arts and merge it into the Railway Institute, admitting the citizens to membership and all privileges. At the time there was a debt of £300 on the School of Arts, but the assets were worth at least £1000. However the offer was not taken up. In December 1920 a chess club was formed in conjunction with the Wellington School of Arts.

The Annual General Meeting in July 1927 was informed that: the institution had 225 financial members; 'a special effort' resulted in a profit of £64; the Annual Ball was a success; library borrowings for the year amounted to 11,032; of the twelve scholarships allowed to pupils of local schools, only eight had been taken up; electric light had been installed at cost of £22; and 'a letter was read from the president and secretary of the Soldiers' and Citizens' Club, suggesting they hand over the effects to the School of Arts, thereby bringing about an amalgamation, without the Club losing its identity, and on various other conditions'. The matter was to be explored further and placed before a meeting of subscribers.

Later in 1927 builder JF Walker drew up plans, for a 40ft deep building, behind the present structure and with the existing width, but foundations were to be planned to accommodate a second storey at some future date. 'The northern end of the present building is also to be taken out and another ten or more feet added to the length of the building to permit the billiard table the property of the Soldiers' Club, being installed therein'. Tenders were called in September 1927 'for alterations and additions to the School of Arts'. The Sutton Bros were contracted to build the new Hall at a cost about £800.

The amalgamation was approved in December 1927 and the Wellington School of Arts and Soldiers' Club's new assembly hall at the rear of the School of Arts, was opened by Sir Neville Howse in August 1928 and over £100 was collected on the night.

In 1935 a regular column appeared in the press 'The following are a few more of the novels of the School of Arts is offering readers at present'. (Similar lists were periodically advertised over the next two years.) A billiards and snooker tournament was arranged between Mudgee and 'Wellington Mechanics' Institute' in October 1935.

The Annual General Meeting of the School of Arts and Soldiers' Club for was held in July 1937. The institution had 176 members, down by 24 on the previous year. It was noted 'the library

was kept up to date every week by modern books received from the Katinka Library, of Sydney', several new journals had been added and during the year there had been 12,125 borrowings. Snooker and Hall hire revenue was up substantially, but the profit was only just over £6.

By February 1940, a poorly attended public meeting (12 committee members and 3 from the public) was informed that the situation was dire. The President, the Rev. KD Norman referred to outstanding local debts amounting to £195, which was made up of various accounts owed to the business houses of the town. He said 'it was a disgrace to owe so much money to local business people'. The School's total liabilities were £1134, comprising: Bank, £850; Municipal Council, £89; and sundry creditors £195. The assets were £2600. The Rev. Norman observed 'It is quite obvious that the public of Wellington do not want the School of Arts. If they did they would have been here in hundreds tonight'. The meeting was advised that the Hall was let on the average of nineteen times a month.

The Annual General Meeting conducted in August 1941 was attended by the executive and two members. It was chaired by Dr VW Savage and it was noted that DN Macbeth, former secretary and committeeman, had died. Dr Savage stepped down on account of ill-health. Membership had increased from 156 to 202. Borrowings had been 9964, which was an increase of 1161 on the previous year. Rentals accounted for £80 and Billiards returned £164. There was a credit of about £29 on the year's operations.

In May 1946 'A meeting of the members of the Wellington School of Arts will be held on Monday, 3rd June, at 8pm, for the purpose of confirming a resolution duly carried at a duly convened meeting, held on 3rd May, that the trustees be empowered to sell the lands and assets of the institution to the Wellington 2nd AIF Comforts Fund for the establishment of a returned soldiers' club'.

In April 1947 it was reported that 'The ownership of the Wellington School of Arts building has passed to the local branch of the RSSAILA for use as a club for its members. This follows action by the local Comforts Fund, which for a period of more than a year have been negotiating to purchase the building from the School of Arts committee with the sanction of the Chief Secretary's Dept.... The arrangement relieves the School of Arts of the responsibility for a debt of over £1000, under which it has laboured for many years'. The report went on

that 'the Soldiers' Club will continue to provide the public library for citizens' and 'hope to be able to conduct the library on improved lines and to restore the building and furnish it adequately'.

In 1947 'Further representations to the Minister for Education by the League and Mr Clarrie Robertson resulted in the return of this [Library] money to the sub-branch for the purchase of library books. All the old library books were dumped'.

In the 1950s a makeover of the building was carried out by Jack Merrel and other volunteers and architect Owen Kennard acted in an honorary capacity for the requisite structural repairs.

A Liquor Licence was obtained in 1955 and in February 1958 the Arthur Street property and that of the late Dr VW Savage in Swift Street were purchased.

The Soldiers' Club moved to its present new premises in Arthur Street in 1961 and the School of Arts building was for a time used as a National Fitness Hall. It was later refurbished to become the Senior Citizens' Centre, a use which still continues.

QUEENSLAND

THANGOOL SCHOOL OF ARTS (Est. 1926)



Thangool School of Arts as it existed up to 2004.

Thangool is a small township of around 400 people approximately 12 kilometers south of Biloela on the Burnett Highway in central Queensland. The area was first explored and settled by the Archer brothers in the 1850s who were the first Europeans to reach the Fitzroy River.

The town was surveyed in 1925 and the railway extended to Thangool in the same year. The area was originally home to the Gangulu Aboriginal people (also written Kangulu, Kanolu and Kaangooloo) and the word Thangool is reportedly an Aboriginal word meaning possum.

By 1927 there was sufficient population in the area to open a state school which has survived to this day. Agitation was already stirring for the construction of a School of Arts. Local newspapers from early 1926 reported on various activities in aid of the effort to raise funds. Progress was

evidently made in fundraising as it was reported in the *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin* on Saturday 19 March 1927 that “It is rumored that the School of Arts building committee have been negotiating for the purchase of a large building, previously used by the railway construction works, as a provision store, and if the parties come to an agreement, it will be shifted to the township and erected as a hall”.

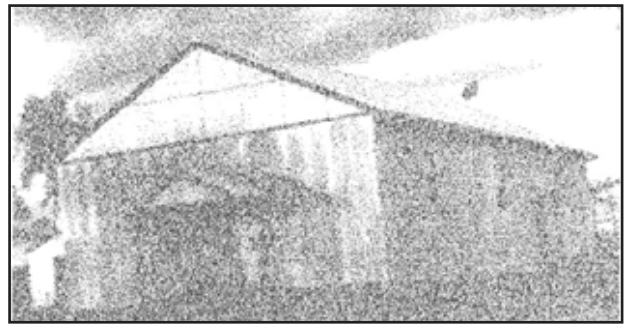
That enterprise seems to have fallen through as there is no further mention of it in the news. A typical report of fund raising comes from the *Morning Bulletin*, Saturday 11 February 1928 “A dance in aid of the School of Arts was held in the goods shed on Saturday night. The takings at the door were £7 14s. 6d. and between 30 and 40 couples attending, including visitors from Biloela and as far away as Goovigen.”

Similar reports were prevalent in the ensuing years including sports days, Boxing tournaments, Euchre evenings and aforesaid dances. Funds evidently accrued over time and an advertisement appeared in *The Capricornian*, Thursday 26 December 1929. “TENDERS are hereby invited up to 8 pm. on SATURDAY, 4th JANUARY, 1930. for the BUILDING OF A SCHOOL OF ARTS. 64ft by 32ft. on the reserved allotments of Thangool in accordance with plans and specifications to be seen at Mr. S. Clarke's. Thangool. Each tender, which must be sealed and marked 'Tender,' must be accompanied by a deposit of £5. The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted. F. V. M. NOTHDURFT. Hon. Secretary’.

Once the bugbear of all developments was sorted (money) things happened quickly back then. Over the Christmas period tender documents were perused, sums done, and tenders lodged. On Wednesday 8th January it was reported that “at a meeting of the committee held yesterday it was decided to accept the tender of Mr. G.H.Miers of £449 for the erection of a School of Arts. Building operations will commence almost immediately”.

Good progress was made and apart from some weather and supply issues the builder carried out a successful contract. Evidently the community was growing with the following comments in the *Morning Bulletin* Thursday 13 March 1930. “Now that the framework of the new School of Arts has been completed, it can easily be seen that, when finished, the building will be an imposing one, and marks the progress the district has made during the last couple of years. The official opening was fixed for April 26th at 11 a.m.”

The 26th April was a big day in Thangool. Sports were held on the racecourse followed



The original School of Arts.



With a new façade.



Recycled Ball ticket, Ladies, 1963



Recycled Ball ticket, Gents, 1963

by the opening of the hall, which was reported thus: “At night the new School of Arts building was declared open by Mr. S. A. Barret [sic, Stuart Barrett], who was recently elected to the Banana Shire Council. The speaker thanked the committee for the honour it had done him, of asking him to open the institution and congratulated the people of the district on the fine structure. He said all must sympathise with the object of entertainment and

sports, and all must appreciate the efforts of the indefatigable workers, the results of whose labours could be seen in this building. A dance followed. The music was supplied by Mr. F. Cole, and Mr. G. M. Simmons was M.C. At a result of the sports and dance a profit of about £80 is expected."

In the ensuing years, the hall was used for the typical and varied uses that many halls were used for such as Dances, Fancy Dress Balls, Deb Balls, Church services, Weddings and 21st parties. In 1944 the hall provided housing for Land Army girls when they arrived to help harvest the cotton crop. It was the meeting place for the Thangool Advancement Association from its inception in 1953. The members met in the hall every month for over 30 years.

In 1960, improvements were made to the building costing approximately 3,500 pounds. A later photograph shows a small anteroom near the front and it is assumed that is the "improvements" referred to. This was the room used for the lending library in its later years.

By the late 1980s the local council, Banana Shire Council had taken over responsibility for the hall.

The Department of Child Health operated from there for several years until vacating at the end of 1990. By this time, the Hall was presenting as a maintenance issue and the Council received letters outlining those issues well into the 1990s. The council operated its library from the front room until 1992 when it closed.

From then until 2000 the only tenant was the local play group when they too moved out. A public meeting was held to determine the future of the Hall and in July 2004 it was sold for \$200 for removal, so by the end of 2004 the site was again vacant.

One of Thangool's legends, **Geoffrey Allan Webb**, passed away in 2000. After many discussions with the Council approval was given in October 2004 for the creation of a Passive Park. The Geoff Webb Memorial Park was born to honour Geoff's life and community service and it was dedicated in 2006.

Geoff was three when his family moved to Thangool from Emerald and bought the general store in 1932 from Denton Scholes. Apart from three years at high school in Rockhampton Geoff lived the rest of his life in Thangool and his whole working life was spent in the shop. He was a faithful member of the Anglican church, the Biloela Masonic Lodge, the Thangool Fire Brigade, the Thangool and District Advancement Association – being the Secretary from its inception in 1953 until 1988 – 35 years and then



The Geoff Webb Memorial Garden.

continued serving in the position of Treasurer for a few more. In 1990 Geoff was awarded an OAM for service to the community.

The Memorial Garden, much like the School of Arts, has been host to weddings, birthday parties, Christmas and New Year gatherings and family functions.

Thanks to Chrissy Muller (nee Webb) for much of the history and photographs used.

Steve Kellermeier

TASMANIA

WOODBIDGE INSTITUTE (Est. 1890)



Woodbridge Hall

(Photo: www.aussietowns.com.au)

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

In March 1889 'The fancy fair on behalf of the Woodbridge Institute took place [at Peppermint Bay], as advertised on Saturday. The object proposed is the erection of a building containing a large room, suitable for lectures and public meetings, with a smaller one to serve as a library and reading room. At present the courthouse contains the only room at all suitable for public gatherings, and this is not available for other than magisterial purposes, except by express permission of the Attorney-General. That

permission was kindly granted on the present occasion, but the crowded and heated state of the room forcibly illustrated the desirableness of the object for which the bazaar was held'. The principal stalls were those of Mrs Musk, Mrs Potter and Mrs Poulett-Harris. The passenger ferry *Huon* had left Huon wharf at 1.45pm bound for Peppermint Bay where passengers attended the fair and started on her homeward journey at 8pm, in the bright moonlight.

In September 1889 tenders were invited 'for the Erection of the Woodbridge Institute, Peppermint Bay' and in November 'A valuable plot of land in a central position has been secured... for the Woodbridge Institute and reading-room'. This was gifted by George Miles, and the tender of Mr Benson Edwards for the construction of the building had been accepted.

In March 1890 another 'Bazaar' was held and it was reported that 'the building was well advanced and will be completed in a short period... there is plenty of room on the stage, and the rear of the structure is to be used for a library and dressing rooms'. It was built at a cost of £450. 'Mrs RD Poulett-Harris has been the prime mover, and she has been ably supported by Mesdames Oldham and Musk, to whom all credit is due.' The 'Grand fancy fair' was under the patronage of 'His Excellency the Governor, Lady Hamilton, Admiral Scott, and a party from Government House [who] had been conveyed to the Bay in the SS *Victory*, and the party came away laden with the articles purchased'.

Woodbridge indeed had friends in high places for in the House of Assembly 'Dr Crowther moved 'That an address to the Governor, praying the sum of £50, be placed on the Estimates in aid of the Woodbridge Institute'. The people of Peppermint Bay had expended a large amount of money in improving the place. They had raised £260 on behalf of the building, which would serve several purposes. They desired the small sum he had named as a contribution towards the £400, the total cost of the building, which would be the nucleus of a library and a room for meetings.

Saturday, 12 September 1891 'was a red letter day to Woodbridge. On that day a public library, with a free reading room was opened at the Woodbridge Hall. In the evening a successful concert was given at the Hall by our energetic schoolmistress, Miss McPhee'.

In February 1896 'A harvest thanksgiving service was held in Woodbridge-institute on Sunday... The Wesleyans have taken the Hall for the summer, the church being too small for the increasing congregation. A profitable and

enjoyable sermon was preached by Mr Ebery. There was a large attendance. The hall was prettily decorated with grain, fruit, flowers, and vegetables by the ladies, assisted by Mr Ebery'.

The annual Bazaar was the major fundraiser staged for the Hall. It was announced in May 1899 that the Hall was now debt free, the day had netted £23, against an outstanding debt of £16. So over the intervening nine years profit from the bazaars had cleared the £450, but funds had also enabled the purchase 'of a handsome piano and furniture'. Later Mr Lea, the Government Entomologist, gave a lecture on 'Fruit Pests' and after the lecture fielded questions.

In June 1901, the Duke of York's birthday was celebrated with a market in the day and again the *Huon* 'brought down a large number of visitors from Hobart' and the fair was then opened. 'Two chopping matches proved a great attraction during the afternoon, and quite a large crowd assembled to witness them'. A concert was held in the evening, followed by dancing, which concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

The theme of 'Prohibition' reached town in July 1917 when 'A public meeting, convened by the Woodbridge branch of the Tasmanian Temperance Alliance was held in the Woodbridge-hall last week. It was a rough, wet night, but there was a good audience. The Rev. FH Gibbs presided. A choir of some 20 voices rendered songs and choruses, the theme of which was prohibition'.

In May 1919 'Every section of the district was represented at the Woodbridge Public-hall on Saturday afternoon, when the Chief Justice (Sir Herbert Nicholls) unveiled an honour roll to the memory of 49 young men from the district who enlisted for active service during the war... The honour roll, which is hung in the public hall, is a very fine piece of work in blackwood, skillfully carved, and bearing a marble tablet with the names of the following soldiers, inset in gold... Sir Herbert Nicholls said the last time he had spoken in the Woodbridge Public-hall was 21 years before, when Captain Evans and himself were advocating the federation of the Australian States'. Sir Herbert also noted that of the 49 young men who had volunteered '21 of these fine young men had given their lives'.

The Hall was used for military drill practice during World War I. The area's close proximity to the Bruny Island Quarantine Station, and the Spanish Influenza threat had caused public alarm by August 1919. It was reported the 'Kingston State School had been converted into a hospital, and the old police quarters were being

used as a kitchen and cookhouse. The Margate Hall had also been equipped as a hospital, and the Woodbridge Hall was also being prepared'.

In February 1922 'Pictures are being shown at Woodbridge and Margate weekly and form a great attraction not only in those places, but also to surrounding districts. The managers (Messrs Bellis and Reeves) are doing their best to put high class pictures on the screen and they are to be congratulated on their effort'. These utilised a 'cinema lantern' as electricity was not installed in the Hall until 1925.

In October 1925 'At a meeting of the Woodbridge Hall and Library Committee, held in the library... applications for the position of librarian were received (vice Miss C Edwards, resigned) and Miss P Hardinge was appointed. It was decided to send a letter of appreciation to Miss Edwards for the able manner in which she carried out her duties'.

Uses around that time included: Agricultural Bureau; Draughts Club; Football Club; Channel Regatta Association; Rowing Club; Young Men's Club; Men's Euchre Club; Mothers' Union, etc.

A ticket box was built into the front of the Hall in 1926, and a projection room in 1927, which housed the 'kinema machine'. At the same time a 'Ladies' Powder Room' was built on to the northern side of the Hall.

From 1926 weekly film screenings took place in the Hall. These were initially conducted by Dick and Dinah Perry as one of their venues on the southern Tasmania circuit. Screenings continued in the Hall until 1976.

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

In 1938 'owing to poor support' it was resolved 'to close the library and offer the books for sale'.

At the 1942 AGM, with a reported credit balance of £43, it was decided to call for tenders to paint the exterior the Hall.

As part of a number of several Channel venues, the Hall hosted regular dances up until the 1960s. The Hall also hosted a Badminton Club which played in local competitions.

The building had passed to Council by 1960 and it has been managed by successive Councils since then. The Hall hosts a regular market staged on the second Saturday of each month.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BROOKHAMPTON FREE AGRICULTURAL HALL (Est. 1898)



(Photo: <http://www.mingor.net/>)

Located in the South West Region, Brookhampton is located 208km from Perth. It is on the traditional lands of the Noongar People, which were once densely covered with trees.

The area was settled by James Guy Thomson who established the Brookhampton cattle station in 1858-59. On his death in 1890, the property, which then comprised 700 acres freehold and 80,000 acres leasehold, was offered for sale and did not sell and was inherited by his three sons, James Guy, Mervyn 'Bon', and John.

The leasehold was resumed by the Crown in 1895-96 and the Thomson brothers, Mervyn and John, were given an opportunity to acquire a portion. Mervyn took 'Brookhampton' homestead and John established 'Woodperry'.

Brookhampton was established as a station on the Donnybrook to Bridgetown Railway line, opened in November 1898.

In 1898 the local settlers met 'to find ways and means of building a much needed hall' and a Building Committee was appointed.

Pioneer settler Henry Cain donated the triangular block of land, from his Wellington Location 582 in 1898 which comprised one acre and two perches in area. Three trustees: Thomas Clifford; Henry Cain; and Frank Mucklejon Miller were elected to hold the site.

The unlined 35ft x 15ft hall was built of oiled weatherboard and erected by 'the settlers themselves'. The 'chief carpenters' were Messrs Thomas 'Tom' Miller, Frank Miller and JC Sears. John Thomson of Brookhampton had provided the materials and Henry Cain donated sixteen sheets of iron for the Hall roof.

The Hall was officially opened on 15 September 1899 by Thomas Miller who was to be long-time Chairman for 21 years. It was later completely timber lined inside.

A provisional school opened in the Hall on 6 December 1899, under Mrs Clarkson, and

remained there until 1903. The Hall was also used for Methodist Church services.

It has been the long-time home of the Brookhampton Bell Ringers formed in 1904 by Frank Young who had bought the bells from the disbanded St Andrew's Bell Ringers at Coolgardie. He taught some members of the Thomson's Brook Musical Club and the group still practice in the Hall.

A sports ground was established in close proximity to the Hall and the nearby district War Memorial was erected by Peters and Gillies of Subiaco in 1919. The memorial, which comprises a granite obelisk on a sandstone base, contains the names of thirty-three service personnel of which nine paid the Supreme Sacrifice.

A mature oak survives adjacent to the Hall from an early planting.

The Hall was altered in 1922 to include a stage, dressing rooms and an enclosed verandah which contained a kitchen and a chimney was built on in 1923. These works appear to have been done by J Griffith, who at the price of £115 was unable to complete the contract in the specified period and Tom Clay took over and had completed the project by September 1922 at a further cost of £58, with the timber being supplied at an extra cost of £33. The work was done under the direction of Horace E 'Horrie' Lloyd.

In March 1924 the Hall Committee called for tenders to extend the Hall by 16ft and Horrie Lloyd did this work at a cost of £34. Later in the year he replaced the floor, which had been damaged by roller skating, for a further £4. The Hall was reopened on 24 October 1924 by George Barnard, MLA.

During World War II, the Hall accommodated refugees from Singapore and Malaya, who were brought down from Perth to help with harvesting the potato crop. It was later resumed by the Army to house prisoners of war.

A commemorative stone and plaque was unveiled during the centenary celebrations in 1999 during which a history of the Hall, authored by June Scott, was launched.

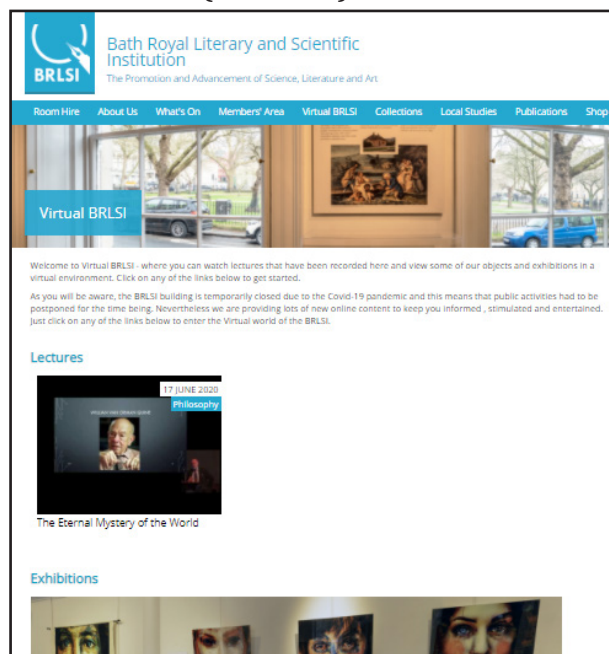
Hall uses over the years have included: CWA; Church; Lodge; Scouts; Guides; Bush Fire Brigade; and Tennis and Football Clubs.

The Hall is still in use by the community and is well maintained.

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND

BATH ROYAL LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION (Est. 1824)



Virtual exhibitons and lectures availble on the BRLSI website. (Photo: brlsi.org/virtual-brlsi)

Bath has embraced digital technology full-on and have notched up more than one hundred on-line lectures in recent times and these are archived on their extensive website. In celebrating International Women's Day the BRLSI launched the *Women's Street Map of Bath*, initially in draft form. **Jane Sparrow-Niang** identified in her book, *Bath's Extraordinary Women; A Guide to Women who Have Lived or Visited the City of Bath Through 1000 Years of Its History*, a large number of women worthy of commemorating in Bath. (A copy is available for reference at the MIRC.) Since the plaquing of notables' sites began in Bath in 1898 some eighty plaques are in place, but only eleven relate to women, with two of those being added recently. **Betty Suchar** has set the ball rolling by mapping nineteen sites, with suggested plaque wording. www.brlsi.org

WALES

GLADSTONE'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN (Est. 1906)

The doors may well be closed at Gladstone's Library until September 2021, but things are still happening within the building. Four new ensuite bedrooms have been created, which means all guest rooms now have their own bathroom. Extra toilets have been installed on the ground floor. The Reception area has been enlarged and



Gladstone's Library. (Photo: Bron Lowden)

the Dining Room has been refurbished and 'the food will have a new slant'. The heating 'boilers' have been replaced and the 'erratic' fire alarm system has been upgraded. Finally the three main seminar rooms have been fitted with enhanced equipment to enable people to join meetings and events remotely.

Should you ever be in the area you will receive a warm welcome, the food is good, the beds are comfortable and the large library is unique. www.gladstoneslibrary.org

USA

LAJOLLA ATHENAEUM AND ARTS LIBRARY (Est. 1884)



(Photo: www.ljathenaeum.org/visit)

In 2018 we learned of the takeover of a former bakery building in Logan Heights and this has now been developed into The Athenaeum Art Center (AAC). It has four exhibition spaces, an event space, fully equipped print studio, a pottery kiln, and an art studio. It offers a unique set of bilingual programming that includes the exhibition of national and international arts, music concerts 'with the distinct sounds of our bilingual region', participation in community festivities, free after school art programs, art classes, and a variety of unique experiences in collaboration with local organisations.

The AAC is also a participating venue in the twice monthly Barrio Art Crawl, providing a walk through of the Centre, access to exhibitions,

print shop demonstrations and meeting artists. www.ljathenaeum.org

NEW YORK CENTER FOR FICTION (Est. 1820)

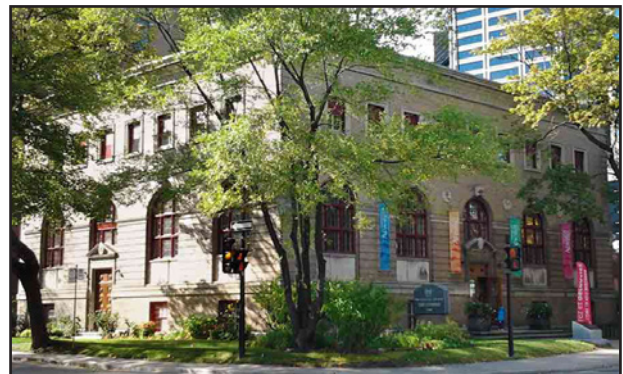


(Photo: centerforfiction.org)

Formerly the Mercantile Library of New York, the New York Center for Fiction will be celebrating the bicentenary of its life in 2021. Coming from a high of around 120 programmed events in 2019, with an average attendance of over sixty people, the Center has transitioned to on-line courses in 2020 and hopefully will return to full activity later in 2021. In the meantime members have use of the second floor Members' Lounge and enjoy 10% discount at the bookshop. www.centerforfiction.org

CANADA

ATWATER LIBRARY, MONTREAL (Est. 1828)



Atwater Library. (www.westmountmag.ca)

The Library runs a number of courses and workshops. It utilises expertise in running Free Device/Computer Workshops for Seniors caters for specialisations such as Android, Windows 10 and Apple.

Another workshop recently conducted under its Financial Literacy Program was 'Income Tax Preparation,' led by Certified Financial Planner Lynn Bennett, it was a sell out, and two further sessions were planned to accommodate the overflow.

In the meantime the Atwater enters the final phase of its 'Building Communities' [Capital Raising] Campaign. www.atwaterlibrary.ca

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

The title for this issue comes from the Bungendore School of Arts. It is *Songs of a Sourdough* by Robert W Service and published by 'T Fisher Unwin Ltd. London: Adelphi Terrace' as part of the Forty-First printing in 1921. It sold for four shillings and sixpence.

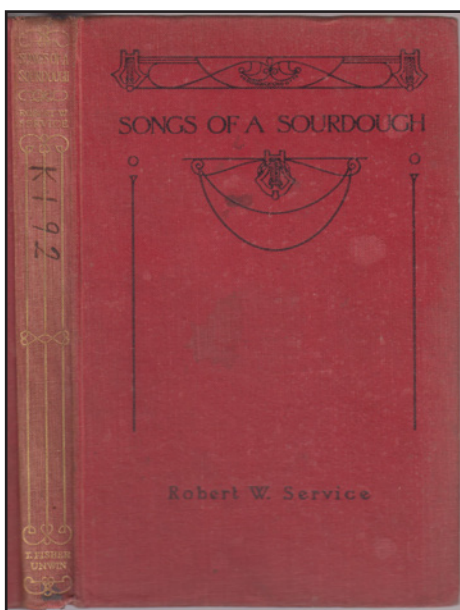
The book is hardbound in red coloured cloth and is blocked in black on the front cover and gold on the spine, with the handwritten 'K192' in black ink running from the head to the tail of the spine. It is of 127 pages, 190mm x 125mm in size and it was 'Printed by R & R Clark, Limited, Edinburgh' on laid paper.

Songs of a Sourdough was first published in 1907 in Toronto, Canada by William Briggs (1836-1922) Press, a publisher which operated from 1879-1918, as part of the Methodist Book and Publishing House. It had fifteen printings during its first year and Barse and Hopkin of New York did an edition under the title *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses* in the same year. Dodd, Mead & Company, also did editions in 1907 and 1916.

T Fisher Unwin started their publication with the Sixteenth impression/printing (first English Edition) in 1907 and it was generally reprinted twice annually from then on.

The front pastedown carries, near the top, centred, but on an angle: an elliptical purple rubber stamp 'Bungendore School of Arts' grouped around the edge and handwritten in the centre in black ink is 'K192'. At the base of the paste down, against the spine is a white 13x25mm white label with the wording printed within a black rectangular border 'ANGUS & ROBERTSON LTD./ New and Secondhand Booksellers/Publishers to University/80 Castlereagh St. Sydney. The same rubber stamp and handwritten 'K192' appears in the same position on the flyleaf.

The half-title page, under the title carries a pasted in 8x5cm newspaper clip from the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* of 19 January 1924. This defines the word 'sourdough' as 'a man who has seen the ice on the Yukon freeze and break up. In short one who has spent an entire winter in the country. Originally it meant an Alaskan who kept a lump



of sourdough in his kit, saving it from one batch of bread so that it would serve to raise the next'.

The book is dedicated 'To C.M.' which has long been a mystery, but recent research shows that to be 'Constance MacLean' a girl who the author had met at a dance in Duncan, British Columbia, in 1902. At the time he was working variously as a farm labourer and store clerk and was not considered suitor material. He even took courses at McGill University's Victoria College to impress her, but failed on both counts.

However in 1908, when he was a bank clerk and a bestselling author, he looked up Constance again and they became engaged. It is not known what happened to their relationship but she married Leroy Grant a surveyor in 1912. Service moved to Paris, France in 1913 and married well, to Germaine Bourgoin (1887-1989), the daughter of distillery owner, in June 1913. However future editions of *Songs of a Sourdough* still continued with the 'CM' dedication.

But what of Robert William Service, 'The Bard of the Yukon'? He was born at Preston, Lancashire in 1874 of Scottish parents and spent his boyhood years at Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Scotland with his three maiden aunts and his paternal grandfather. He joined his parents in Glasgow in 1883 and attended Hillhead High School. From there he joined the Commercial Bank of Scotland as a clerk, but resigned at age twenty-one to become a cowboy and travelled to North America 'wandering from California to British Columbia'. In the latter he became a store clerk at Cowichan Bay and started to contribute poetry to the local press. In 1903 he joined the Canadian Bank of Commerce and in 1904 was sent to their Whitehorse branch in the Yukon and arrived by the newly constructed railroad. Based on local events and personalities he continued to write poetry for the local press.

In 1906 he sent a collection of his poems to his father, who was then based in Toronto, with a cheque to have some copies printed. Publisher Briggs was impressed and sent his cheque back and offered him a ten percent royalty. Published

in 1907 *Songs of a Sourdough* was an immediate success. In the meantime he was posted to Dawson City in 1908 and as one who had had newly arrived in the mining districts of Alaska, he wrote *Ballads of a Cheechako* which was also a success. He then resigned from the bank and continued to live in Dawson City and produced his first novel *The Trail of '98* again a success. He left Dawson City in 1912 and in 1913 settled in Paris where he remained for the next fifteen years and served with American Red Cross during World War I. His brother Lieutenant Albert Service, was killed in action in France during the War and is commemorated in *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man* (1916).

By War's end he 'settled down to being a rich man in Paris', promenading in the best suits, sporting a monocle by day and in old clothes at night, in company with his doorman, 'to visit the lowest dives of the city'. These experiences were captured in verse and adapted in his later books. During the winter his family moved to Nice where he came into contact with other writers who also 'wintered there'.

Two of his early books *The Poisoned Paradise: A Romance of Monte Carlo* (1922) and *The Roughneck: A Tale of Tahiti* (1923) were made into silent movies. The book *The Trail of '98*, starring Dolores del Rio, Ralph Forbes and Karl Dane was made by MGM into an early talkies movie in 1929.

He first visited Russia in 1930 and again in 1939, from which he hastily retreated first back to Nice and then to Canada. He spent the War years in California and then in Monaco from 1947-58. He died at Lancieux, France on 11 September 1958 and was buried in the local cemetery.

Memorials exist to Service in: his birthplace, Preston (a plaque); his boyhood town, Kilwinning (a cairn); Dawson City, Yukon (his cabin); Whitehorse, Yukon (a bust).

Thomas Fisher Unwin (1848-1935), the son of printer, started his publishing firm in 1882, with the slogan *Vita sine literis mors est* or 'Life without Learning is Death'. Unwin's publishing success revolved around quality books

published with a number of targeted series, the first being *The Story of Nations*, which comprised sixty-five volumes. His firm merged with Ernest Benn Ltd in 1926 and he retired to Midhurst, Sussex where he died.

The firm of R & R Clark was established by Robert Clark (1825-94) in Edinburgh in 1846. Clarks built up an international reputation as book printers of quality and reliability, with some authors demanding of their publisher that Clarks print their book. Clarks hired the first female compositor, Fanny MacPherson, and she remained with the business for sixty years. In the 1930s Clarks produced the sixpenny *Waverly Series* of Sir Walter Scott's novels which sold hundreds of thousands of a title. The firm was gifted to the University of Edinburgh in 1946 and they sold it to the Thyne Group in 1962, and it was the subject of an ill-fated management buyout and merger as Clark-Constable and the firm's closure in 1979.

Bungendore is situated in south-eastern New South Wales, on the southern shore of Lake George, 27km east of Canberra. The School of Arts was established in June 1888 and a reading room and library were opened in rented premises in July of that year.

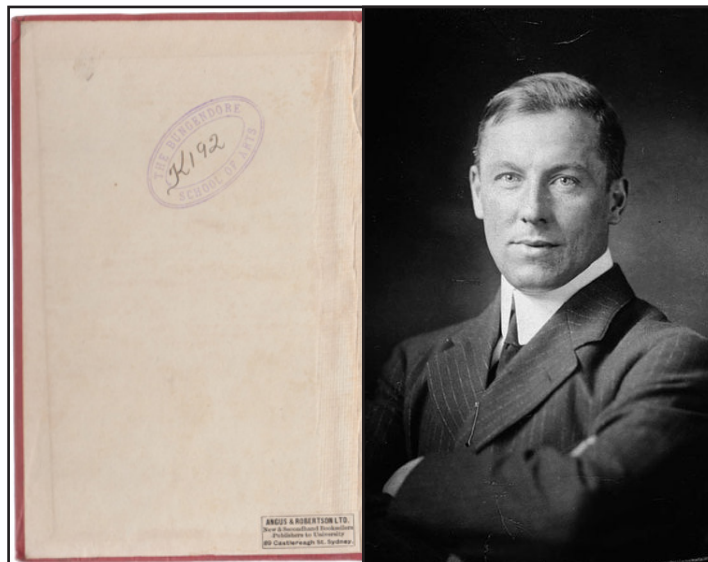
A Government land grant was sought and obtained in 1889 and 'a Stud and Weatherboard Reading Room' was built and opened in 1890. The building was extended in 1906 and a billiard room was added in 1913.

By 1915 the Library had 85 members and by 1917 it had 1353 books 'and a fairly full supply of daily newspapers and periodicals'.

The building was further extended in 1925 and a Baby Health Centre Room was added on to the building in 1930. The Trustees passed the building to the Yarrowlunla Shire Council in 1960.

The Bungendore School of Arts building still stands and is in regular use as an arts and education venue.

For a good read we suggest Enid Mallorys biography *Robert Service: Under the Spell of the Yukon* (Surrey, BC; Heritage House, 2006).





SYDNEY MECHANICS' SCHOOL OF ARTS

At the 9 March 2021 AGM **Winsome Allen** was re-elected as President and the following people filled the five vacant positions on the Board: **Shirley Hunt; John Michael Robinson; Lesley Scanlon; Eugene Stawski and Geoff Webb.** Congratulations to all and for your future contribution to SMSA's 188th year of operation. Indeed 2020 was a difficult year for members and tenants and hopefully the easing of restrictions will see a return to normal in 2021, where electronic events will once more become face to face and access to the building will be eased. Future flagged events include an ANZAC film screening and a re-enactment of a nineteenth century SMSA debate.

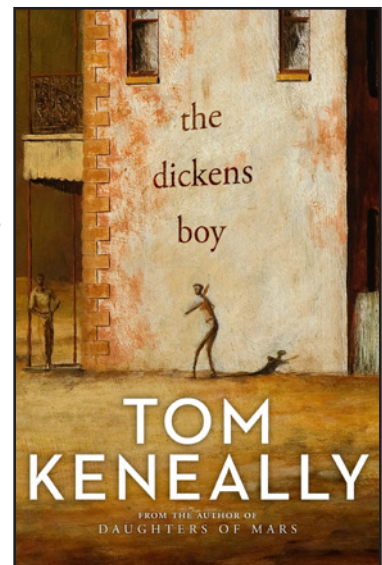
Lockdown has seen the complete renovation and transformation of the theatre into a state of the art facility with increased opportunity for hiring. This work was overseen by Secretary **Max Bosotti.** An official opening is planned for April and in recognition of the historic and invaluable contribution of pioneer educator Henry Carmichael to SMSA, the theatre has been renamed the **Henry Carmichael Theatre.**

The Library has reopened, as has the Tom Keneally Centre, with limited access to computers, and to the 'Cuthbert's Café' area. However increased use of electronic resources will no doubt continue by way of member access to e-books, electronic magazine subscriptions, Beamafilm. For the present time the Murder on Monday Reading Group will continue to meet 'virtually'. SMSA member **Peter Rainey** recently introduced a screening of the Japanese classic film *Sanshoo the Bailiff* (1954) and **Jo Henwood's** lecture on 'Sydney's Invisible Women' was a 'sell out'. This revealed the ladies who had made

significant contributions to Sydney culture, professions, business and life and was a fitting contribution to Women's History Month. Check out the website: www.shesaw.com.

SMSA Members have also been recently extended the opportunity to borrow books from the **Tom Keneally Centre Collection.** Tom's latest book *The Dickens Boy*, tells the story of one of the two sons of Charles Dickens' that came to Australia and became engaged in rural pursuits. **Edward Bulwer Lytton 'Plorn' Dickens** (1852-1901) arrived in Melbourne in 1868, aged sixteen, worked on a sheep station, later served in the NSW Parliament 1889-94, and died at Moree (NSW) in poverty.

www.smsa.org.au





After its scheduled meeting in February 2020, the State Library User Organisations' Council Inc (SLUOC) has not had the opportunity to reconvene to continue with its work. The purposes for which the Council is established are to promote and encourage:

- the development and conservation of the State Library collection as a national resource for public reference and scholarly research;
- the use of the State Library by the community as a major cultural venue;
- the provision of high-quality facilities for Library users in general and for special-interest groups;
- the management of the Library on a basis that will facilitate collegiality, specialisation and professional development among the staff, and provide for the most productive interaction with the public;
- the provision of adequate public funding to the State Library so that it may properly fulfil these roles.

It is usual for the Council to meet twice yearly with the State Library's CEO, Kate Torney, and her staff to discuss the continuing programs of the Library and to contribute suggestions and recommendations that are considered reflective of the individual memberships of SLUOC's member organisations. Some issues discussed in our last meeting included the lack of reference material in the Heritage Reading Room, the closure of the reference collection in the Australiana Library, and a similar lack in the front-of-house areas of the library including, but not limited to, library catalogues, encyclopedias and bibliographical dictionaries. It is hoped that these matters can be continued in our next meetings.

Although the current health crisis forced the closure of many public spaces, including the State Library, it seems that the staff met the challenge

by providing on-line seminars at frequent intervals. It has, of course, also maintained access to its ever-growing collection of on-line resources.

The State Library's first off-site storage facility was built in 2005. This building, the Ballarat Off-Site Store ("BOSS1") on the campus of Federation University at Mount Helen in Ballarat, was equipped to hold more than half of the Library's physical collection with fifty linear kilometres of space. BOSS2, built next to BOSS1 will provide an additional twenty-five linear kilometres of storage and it is anticipated that this will be sufficient until 2027. At our last meeting, in 2019, with the staff of the SLV, the final stages of work were being completed.

On 5 December 2019, the restored Queen's hall, reopened as the Ian Potter Queen's Hall. From 1913, Queen's Hall was used by the Museum of Victoria and after some refurbishments in the mid-1970s it was re-purposed as the Art, Music and Performing Arts Library. From 2003, Queen's Hall was closed to the public but, with generous allocations of over \$55 million from the State Government and a further \$28 million in philanthropic donations, the space has been restored to resemble its original grandeur. Queen's Hall is open to the public each day from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. The State Library has provided an excellent link on its website so that the progress of the renovations can be seen: <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/visit/our-magnificent-spaces/ian-potter-queens-hall>

Most disappointing for SLUOC was that it had to cancel its annual seminar for 2020. Preliminary planning for our 2020 seminar addressing the needs of historians using the SLV collections, provisionally to be titled "History in the Library". It is hoped that, if the health crisis abates, the seminar will be rescheduled for 2021.

US MEMBERSHIP LIBRARIES MEET

The 2020 US Membership Libraries Group held their Annual Meeting from 28-29 October and on 5 November 2020. It was hosted by **Jean Marie Prociou**s, of the Salem Athenaeum, Massachusetts, online via Zoom.

There was a good attendance: **Matt Burriesci**, Providence Athenaeum; **Anne Cleveland**, Charleston Library Society; **Caroline Cumming**, Seattle Folio; **Allison Escoto**, Center for Fiction (Brooklyn); **Eva Geertz**, Institute Library (Hartford, CT); **Thomas Hardiman**, Portsmouth (NH) Athenaeum; **Beth Hessel**, Philadelphia Athenaeum; **John Hoover**, Cincinnati Mercantile; **Deb Hunt**, Mechanics' Institute, San Francisco; **Annie Leahy**, Mechanics' Hall (Portland, ME); **Benedict Leca**, Redwood Library and Athenaeum (Newport, RI); **Jean Marie Prociou**s, Salem (ME) Athenaeum; **Jenny Putrill**, Lanier Library (Tryon, NC); **Leah Rosovsky**, Boston Athenaeum; **Mary Warnement**, Boston Athenaeum; and **Carolyn Waters**, NY Society Library.



*Salem Athenaeum at night.
(Photo: Scott Booth via salem.org)*

It was a strange year of adaptation to library visitation, borrowing, along with 'virtual' event programming and delivery. All within a COVID-safe traceable environments. Many libraries took the in-house 'customerless' times to do long overdue housekeeping and most pursued grants or fundraising, with some success. Others looked at their buildings both inside and out for upgrade or revamp. A couple reviewed or reworked their websites.

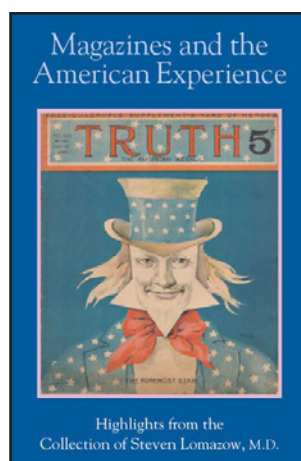
In Cincinnati, the Mercantile Library building has been sold and it looks like they will have to relocate to a different floor at a considerable financial outlay.

Members generally responded to appeals, although a number reported that membership was down. On-line lectures, clubs and exhibitions were very well attended and borrowings generally increased, particularly e-books. Major online fundraising events produced good financial results. One included a 'virtual' dinner where meals were collected from a selection of local chef-owned restaurants. Others postponed planned celebrations to 2021.

Staffing across the board took a hit, and many Libraries will emerge from the pandemic experience leaner and more reliant on providing virtual 'less costly' programming for their memberships.

(Photo: www.philaathenaeum.org)

Book Reviews



Magazines and the American Experience: Highlights from the Collection of Steven Lomazow, MD – Steven Lomazow. Hardcover, with dustjacket. 325 pages, illustrated in black and white and colour. 250x200mm. ISBN 978160583019. (New York: Grolier Club, 2021).

This immense catalogue comes by way of a current exhibition at the New York-based Grolier Club, established in 1884. It is a tribute to the Club and the exhibition's curators, one of which was the Collection's owner Dr Steven Lomazow. Whilst we see many exhibitions, few are so well documented and supported by additional material from various specialists and historians.

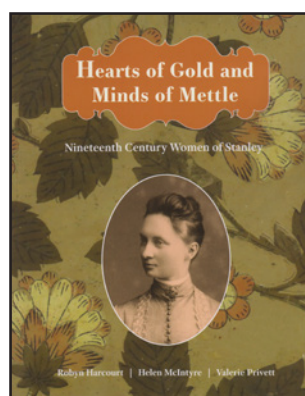
Almost three hundred years of magazine publishing showcases the nation's history as it was published in periodicals since 1733.

The exhibition [and catalogue] is broken up into ten sections or genres: We the People: 1733-1792; Building a Nation: 1793-1850; Cornerstones of Emancipation; Civil War and the Dawn of the Industrial Age: 1851-1892; The Progressive Era and Two World Wars: 1893-1950s; The information Age: 1950-2000; Separate and Unequal: African American Magazines; Images of Nation: Art and Magazines; The Show Must Go On: Movie Radio and Television Magazines; and Magazines for the People: Humour and Pulp Magazines.

An introduction to each section is authored by a specialist and is accompanied by a bibliography. This catalogue along with the on-line material provides the greatest single illustrated survey of American periodical literature. Sumptuously illustrated with 425 colour plates this is a fine production deserving of its illustrious publisher. However in spite of its weight and hefty postage, it deserves a place on the bookshelf of any student of the press.

A large array of magazines were either subscribed to by various Mechanics' Institutes, or were gifted, and as they were largely not bound, few have survived.

Available from: The Grolier Club, New York US\$75.00, plus postage.



Hearts of Gold and Minds of Mettle: Nineteenth Century Women of Stanley – From Mary Rawes to Maud Ah Quon to Mariette Craig – Robyn Harcourt, Helen McIntyre, Valerie Privett. Paperback. 213

pages, illustrated in black and white, bibliography, index. 215x270mm. ISBN 9780648395522. (Stanley: Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room, 2021).

This book breaks new ground in Victorian publications in that it tells 'herstory' rather than the traditional 'history'. It stems from a research inquiry in 2016 asking for details of local Stanley 'eco-women'. This pioneering research shifted the focus of women from 'devout helpmates' to centre stage and resulted in the award-winning exhibition 'Hearts of Gold Minds of Mettle' which opened in 2018. It is from this exhibition that further material was assembled to build up an inventory of one hundred names. The book starts with a very welcome map of localities and landmarks. Biographies are spread over nine sections: Women of the Goldfields; Liquid Gold; Entrepreneurs; Orchards and Gardens; Teachers; Nurses and Carers; The Fabric of Society; Chinese Women and Children; and Literature Lovers. Each biography is segmented into: Early Years; Occupation/Skills; Community Life; and Later Years.

The book concludes with the 'Monster Petition of 1891', to which thirty-four local ladies added their signatures to claim that Government should be 'by all People, not [by] one half [men]' and 'That in short Women should vote on Equal Terms with Men'. Valuable biographical details of these district ladies is a supplement. (It took several Parliamentary Bills to finally achieve the vote for women in 1908, but the 1891 Petition was its genesis.)

The book's final parts: A Chronological Table of the Women's Stories, comprising Dates (Birth, Marriage and Death); Name; Story; and Cemetery (Burial place). A 'List of Illustrations'; 'Selected Bibliography' of which the Geoff Craig Collection

forms a significant part; and 'Index', of names, places and occupations.

The authors Robyn Harcourt, Helen McIntyre and Valerie Privett have meticulously and successfully produced a worthy pioneering model for each district to tell 'herstory', of Ada Cambridge's 'mortal woman – neither more nor less'.

This handsome book, printed and produced by BookPOD, is a worthy addition to the Stanley

Wale



After fighting cancer through most of 2020 **Meredith Joy Sherlock** died on 3 November 2020. She represented Monash University's Ancora Press in MIV's membership for many years. People will have encountered her in her regular work as part of a team digitising original records for the Mechanics' Institute Resource Centre at Prahran Mechanics' Institute.

In 2010 she did the design and typesetting for *Collections, Characters and Communities: The Shaping of Libraries in Australia and New Zealand*, edited by BJ McMullin (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), the papers from the Ninth Australian Library History Conference, held at the Prahran Campus of Swinburne University on 26-27 June 2009 and co-sponsored by MIV.

Meredith's contribution to MIV Activities was a small portion of a highly productive career that was all the more remarkable since she had to cope with serious ill health over four decades. From 1984 onwards her principal employment – usually in the precarious circumstances of part-time and short-term engagements – was in research assistance, editing and typesetting for publication. Her employees included LaTrobe University, the Australian Defence Force Academy, Public Record Office Victoria and, above all, Monash University, where she performed complicated and demanding tasks from 1989 until her death. In addition she was editor,

Athenaeum's growing list of publications. We acknowledge the generous support of philanthropist Carol Holsworth for the publication of Victoria's history in volumes such as *Hearts of Gold Minds of Mettle*.

Available from: Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room, 2 Mount Stanley Road, Stanley, V 3747. Price: \$35, plus \$12.50 pack and post.

proofreader and editor in her own business Here's Proof from 2002. Her services were in demand in academic publishing because of her exceptional dedication, her meticulous attention to detail and her grasp of the intellectual issues at hand. Several internationally significant books owed much to her input.

Although Meredith's dozen years as Secretary of the State Library User Organisations' Council was related to her role at Ancora Press, when she was titular editor, they were not untypical of her involvement in wider cultural and community affairs. She was a Life Member of the Early Music Society of Victoria and, in her last years, Secretary of the Kew Philharmonic Chamber Choir. Her interest in conservation and environment was channelled into such causes as saving the Mullum Mullum Creek Park and promoting Friends of the French Island National Park. To the latter in particular she gave decades of hard labour.

It is hardly astonishing that Meredith's friends and colleagues are busy preparing a commemoration of her life to be published as a volume by the Chaskett Press.

Wallace Kirsop



Jose Hess, a former graduate of the Trade School of General Society of Mechanics' and Tradesmen of the City of New York, died on 10 February 2021. Born as Josef in Germany in 1935, to a

Vale

Jewish family that left for Colombia in 1938, he started in the jewellery business at aged 14. He moved to the US in 1950, where he continued in the jewellery trade, graduated high school and obtained a degree with the General Society. After a four year tour of military service in Germany, he left to work for American jewellery designer David Webb and in 1958 he set up his own design business, Flaircraft. His creations made red carpets and designer magazines and earned him several awards. He was World Jewellery Confederation President from 1997-2000 and was on the Board of the Manufacturing Jewelers and Silversmiths of America, and was a President of the Plumb Club and 24 Karat Club of New York. He taught at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology and was instrumental in establishing a jewellery course.

He died at St Augusta, Florida, and is survived by his wife, Magdalena 'Maggie', a renowned jewellery designer and four children. During life when asked how he was, his repeated answer was 'Strong like a bull!' Maggie Hess commented "This was his definition. He would say 'As you venture through your life, lift your head high, stand in your beautiful power, and walk with courage, confidence and positivity, and be strong like a bull.'"

World Jewellery Confederation President, Gaetano Cavalieri said 'Jose is one of handful of people that can truly be described as having changed our industry, and he left it a better place... Jose was compassionate and generous with a keen sense of humanity and community'.



The passing of **George Marshall Wansbrough** of Montreal's Atwater Library has been recorded.

Known to friends and family as Marshall, he was born in Windsor, Ontario in 1938 and grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Following time at the Gordon Bell High School (Winnipeg) and University of Western Ontario (London), he graduated from the University of Toronto with an MBA. Marshall then entered the Canadian Foreign Service with postings in Tokyo, Madrid and London, after which he settled into a career in human resources in Montreal.

Marshall joined the Board of the Atwater Library around 1998, served two terms as President in 2000-2003 and 2011-2013. Following his retirement from the Board in 2016, he served as an Honorary Board Adviser until his death. During his many years of volunteer service, the Atwater Library diversified programming, broadened its reach, and upgraded the heritage building. Had he lived another few months, he would have seen the his long-championed transformation of the basement stacks, with elevator or lift access.

Marshall had indicated his intent to attend **Mechanics' Institutes Worldwide - Melbourne** in 2004, but the impending birth of a grandchild caused him to cancel.

He had longstanding passionate interests in sailing, model trains and classic cars (MGs). An avid traveller, he crisscrossed the globe, and only very recently had visited Alaska with his companion Sue Elliott.

He passed away at Montreal on 3 March 2020, after a short illness, aged 81 and his remains were interred in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto. He leaves a daughter Gillian, her husband Ivan, and grandchildren Jordan and Abby. His wife of forty-three years, Jane, who had predeceased him in 2009, was also prominent in the Atwater's vibrant social life. Our condolences go out to his family and wide circle of friends. They will miss 'a charming, funny, and generous soul, who was immensely curious about people and things'.

In the meantime, The Atwater is considering a way to tangibly recognise Marshall's significant contribution to its life and sustainability.

Our People



Husband and wife duo, **Anthony** and **Kathy Lakey**, occupy the roles of President and Secretary of the Romsey Mechanics' Institute respectively. They

first bought land in Romsey in 1986 and moved there in August 1988. Since then they have used Romsey as their base whilst teaching in the region. Since retiring in 2010 Anthony and Kathy have become heavily involved in the conduct of the Romsey Mechanics' Institute and have had the oversight of a gradual upgrade of the building. The most recent project is the building of two unisex toilets and two storage rooms in the existing building. That work was funded by a \$35,000 Government grant facilitated by Macedon Ranges MP, **Mary-Anne Thomas**.

Fittingly the Anthony and Kathy duo were recently recognised by DELWP for their volunteerism in the management and maintenance of the Romsey Mechanics' Institute building. Congratulations to team Lakey - Anthony and Kathy. (Photo: <https://sunburymacedonranges.starweekly.com.au/>)



Library personality **Tom Coleman** left the Melbourne Athenaeum staff in November, where he had been for five years. Tom attended the UK Independent Libraries Association Conference at Chawton House in 2018 and later visited some other

libraries. We wish him well in the future.



Administrator **Leah Rosovsky** became the seventeenth leader of the 213 year old Boston Athenaeum in May 2020. Leah is a graduate from Harvard College and holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and has worked in Moscow (Russia),

Lahore (Pakistan), Tufts University (2006-13) and most recently at Harvard University, where she led several innovative programs, including: establishing the Harvard Global Institute; prevention of sexual assault; increasing visibility

of the arts; and integrating faith traditions into student educational development. In taking up her role as the current Stanwood Calderwood Director, Leah said 'I'm thrilled because the Athenaeum is just a terrific Boston institution. It's really a privilege to be associated with it'.



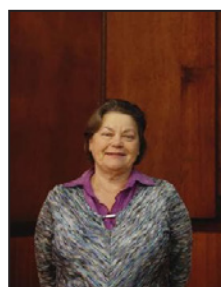
Career librarian **Jenny Purtill** joined the Lanier Library, Tryon, North Carolina as Executive Director 'during the first week of March 2020'. Jenny graduated BA from Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina and holds a Master's in Library and

Information Science from the University of South Carolina. She moved with her family to Tryon in 2019, when her husband Alan became Pastor of the Tryon Presbyterian Church. Under Jenny's watch the Lanier Library's dog friendly policy will most certainly continue, as the Purtill family have two dogs. The Lanier Library celebrated its 130th anniversary last year.



We note that the Melbourne Athenaeum Library's former playwright-in-residence **Angus Cerini** has been announced as a winner of the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. Angus won the prize for Drama for his *Wonnangatta*, which was a

true story and brought to life by Hugo Weaving and Wayne Blair for the Sydney Theatre Company. As the Athenaeum Library's playwright-in-residence in 2019, Angus spent many hours immersed in his writing at the Athenaeum.



Badger Creek Hall's **Kathleen Cameron** is still beavering away on her biographical listing of the sixty-nine names on Badger Creek World War I ornately carved Roll of Honor which hangs in the Hall. It has been a long search which has thrown up details of some

nine Aboriginal soldiers from Coranderrk Aboriginal Station and some itinerant workers. Fifteen of the Badger Creek total were either killed in action or died whilst serving in the

forces. In all Kathy has forty-nine of the names detailed. Kathy was also recently named by DELWP for services as Secretary of the Badger Creek Hall for the past ten years. However her volunteerism stretches back before that with the CJ Dennis Toolangi Community Hall and Toolangi Living and Learning Centre. Well done Kathleen.



Dr Donald Barker, longtime MIV member and former editor of this journal, was the recent recipient of the Victorian Celtic Club's Dr Michael O'Sullivan Award for 2020. Donald has been Librarian at the Celtic Club for a decade in its former Queen

Street/Latrobe Street location and latterly in William Street. There he revived and organised their Library and conducted a Seniors Broadband Kiosk for a number of years.

Donald is currently also doing similar work at Monbulk RSL which houses the **Mrs Aeneas Gunn Memorial Library** and was assembled from 1946. A Commonwealth Heritage Grant has been recently received to conduct a significance assessment of the collection. (Mrs Aeneas 'Jeannie' Gunn [1870-1961], of *We of the Never Never* [1908] fame, was long active in the welfare of soldiers and their families, particularly in the Monbulk area. She was largely responsible for establishing the Library which comprises around 1000 books.)



Executive Director of the New York Center for Fiction, **Noreen Tomassi**, stepped down in June 2020, after sixteen years in that role. During that time Noreen drove change, from targetted programming, writing workshops, outreach,

membership drives and value adding to memberships. Along the way this included a name change from Mercantile Library to The Center for Fiction. Then there was the brave sale of the original East 47th Street site and the purchase of the LaFayette Avenue site in Brooklyn. Noreen delayed retirement until the Center had moved to Brooklyn and had been established. This provided new opportunities for programming across a range of projects: writing workshops; Crime Fiction Academy; Emerging Writer Fellowships; and On Screen Awards. The

new site also provided a café and bookshop which has contributed to revenue and interaction. We wish Noreen well into the future. In the meantime **Michael Roberts**, formerly of the PEN American Center, has been Interim Executive Director. (Photo: Beowulf Sheehan)



Stanley pastry chef **Genevieve Love** turned the loss of her employment during the Covid pandemic into a positive for her local community. Utilising the recently installed commercial kitchen at the Stanley Memorial Hall, during the March and April

'lockdown' last year, Genevieve baked some 800 morning teas for isolated residents who live in the Stanley community. Not surprisingly she was nominated for the Indigo Shire's Young Citizen of the Year and she was announced winner in January this year. Needless to say her old school Beechworth High and the Stanley community are very proud and appreciative of her most generous and selfless gesture. And yes Genevieve has a new job with Jimjam Foods. (Photo: Mark Jesser)



Researcher extraordinaire **Ken James**, who regularly flicks items on to us is presently researching the history of Joyces Creek, and its elusive *moving* Hall. But that's not all 'I am currently working on histories of Sedgwick, outside Bendigo (with a co-author) which just needs the surname index to be completed. Also the Castlemaine to Bendigo railway line (with co-authors, almost finished). Also working on histories of a number of localities around Castlemaine – Strangways (with co-author – almost finished), Muckleford (almost finished and by myself) as well as histories of Walmer and Woodbrook – all by myself with still lots of work to be done'. But that's not all, Ken and Sue are the proud new grandparents of **Oliver Edward** (born 29 January) (above left) and **Alexander Henry** (born 18 November) (above right).

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.

ROASTED PUMPKIN, BACON AND FETTA FRITTATA

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon of olive oil
 6 green onions cut into 5cm pieces
 600g pumpkin, coarsely cut
 4 bacon rashers, with rind removed and chopped coarsely
 1 clove of garlic, crushed
 ½ cup or 40g of finely grated Parmesan cheese
 ½ red or green pepper
 6 eggs
 2 teaspoons of cornflour
 ½ cup or 125ml cream
 100g fetta cheese, crumbled

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200C
2. In a large baking dish combine pumpkin and oil and bake uncovered in the hot oven for 15 minutes. Then add onion, bacon and garlic and bake uncovered for a further 15 minutes until pumpkin and bacon are browned lightly.
3. In the meantime, grease a deep 19cm square cake pan and sprinkle base and sides with half of the Parmesan cheese.
4. Reduce oven temperature to moderate. Spoon pumpkin mixture into the prepared pan. Whisk eggs in a medium bowl with the remaining Parmesan cheese, cornflour and cream. Pour egg mixture over the pumpkin mixture and sprinkle with the remaining Fetta cheese.
5. Bake, uncovered in a moderate oven for about 45 minutes or until the frittata sets. Then allow to stand for 10 minutes and then turn it out onto a plate. Cut into quarters and serve with a fresh garden salad, and garnish with parsley.

Note:

Serves 4. A frittata can be served hot or at room temperature.

Cover with a mixture of cornflour and icing sugar and store in a dry airtight container (not in the fridge).

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 54

1. Which Hall is due to reopen on 2 May?
2. When is the closing date for the MIV History Prize entries?
3. Where is the crime author Ruth Rendell being discussed?
4. Who completed his jewellery course with the General Society of Mechanics' and Tradesmen of the City of New York?
5. Which Institute got a \$100,000 'Home is Where the Hall Is' Government grant?
6. What did Dr Steven Lomazow recently curate?
7. Which Institute recently submitted their Remnant Library listing?
8. Who recently launched the book *Hearts of Gold and Minds of Mettle*?
9. Where is the Mrs Aeneas Gunn Memorial Library?
10. Where was a copy of Edward Dyson's *Fact'ry 'And's* recently deposited?
11. Which Hall recently fired up its new pizza oven?
12. Where is the play *Calendar Girls* hitting the stage in September?
13. Name the three new MIV Committee Members?

SPOT THE BAKER'S DOZEN REFERENCES IN USEFUL KNOWLEDGE NO. 53 – ANSWERS

1. Page 4; 2. Swanpool & District Memorial Hall; 3. Richard Ovenden; 4. Mooroopna; 5. 1688; 6. Kathleen Bearsby; 7. 23 April; 8. Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh; 9. Tasmania; 10. Dr Sue Reynolds; 11. Dr Cheryl Threadgold; 12. Kerang; 13. Terang Mechanics' Institute.

Ideas & Opportunities

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Grant opportunities appear from time to time with two currently running. The **Holsworth Heritage Fund** through the Royal Historical Society with applications open from 1 March until 31 July for an amount of up to \$2000 to publish works of historical value. The other is **Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program** through the Federal Department of Veterans' Affairs which runs for 2021 with applications closing up to 31 December 2021.

DONATION BOX

Halls that run free events or host other occasions have the potential to attract donations. An open view clear plastic donation box with a wide donation slot will show how generous people have been. However make sure it is supervised or securely screwed down. Happy counting.

PROUDLY PROCLAIM YOUR PLACE NAME

We still see Halls without their place name proudly signwritten on the front or even side. If this is not possible put it on a piece of paper in a window so those who photograph Halls can identify yours. Better still have an explanation board in front of your Hall detailing its illustrious history. Another way is to affix an MIV Commemorative Plaque, if your Hall does not already carry one. Visit mivc.org.au/plaques.html

NOTICEBOARDS

Few Halls have noticeboards where contact numbers can be displayed and people who hire the Hall can advertise their forthcoming or regular events. It could be all a part of the service. You could even leverage the cost of the Notice Board with a guarantee of a permanent advertisement.

CONTACTS

The recent transition of MIV contacts to an electronic form revealed that we, in some cases, had contacts that were considerably out of date or phone numbers that had been disconnected. As we will be utilising electronic more into the

future can you all ensure that after each AGM that you will let us know your current responsible officebearer's phone and email contact. Also let your Council know of same for some Councils did not even have a contact name for some Halls.

REGROUP IN '22 WITH A BACK TO

It is a fair bet that by the time we get to 2022 that we will all be vaccinated and keen to get out there. This could be a time to regroup and help replenish the coffers of a very battered bank account. Start planning now with a meeting of all community groups to get things moving and share the load. You might also like to see what works are needed around your Hall and get them costed with a view to have them achieved in time for the Back To or asking for donations to have them achieved after the Back To. Required windows could carry a small plaque, with other major items similarly acknowledged.

Odd Spot

A recently fielded a question from a friend, about where a fine first edition copy of Edward Dyson's *Fact'ry 'And's* (1904), illustrated by his brother Will Dyson, would find a good home, clearly needed some thought.

Research showed that Edward George 'Ted' Dyson (1865-1931) was born at Morrison's Diggings, near Ballarat, the son of a mining engineer. He was largely educated in the Ballarat area, and later had various employment: with a hawker; at mines; as a drover; as a factory hand; and as a freelance journalist. He was first published in the *Ballarat Courier* in 1884, and later contributed to *The Bulletin*, where his brother Will's cartoons were also published.

Dyson authored a number of other books among them *Beno and Some of the Push* (1911) and *Spats' Fact'ry* (1914).

Given the Ballarat connection, the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's Heritage Library, was a possible place and their catalogue was checked, with no extant copy, so it was suggested that the potential donor take a drive to Ballarat and check out the potential repository. He did and was 'blown away' with what he saw, and *Fact'ry 'And's* has found a new home.