

No. 58 Autumn 2023

The magazine of the
Mechanics' Institutes
of Victoria



Useful Knowledge



Launceston Mechanics' Institute, 1867

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2023 MIV Committee

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 Les Sanderson
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A note from the Editor: Heather Arnold

Welcome to my third *Useful Knowledge*. Thank you for your feedback.

I'd love to receive your contributions—tell us how your community uses their MI; have you received any grants? Undertaken renovations? Written a history? Formed a partnership with other organizations? Had any great events? Send me a story or some photographs.

Remember, as I have said before, my main focus in life is local history, so if I don't receive anything, then I will fill this newsletter with stories on the history of Mechanics' Institutes!

Contact me on mivnewslettereditor@gmail.com

Cover: Launceston Mechanics' Institute, 1867. Photographer: William Cawston. Image: Libraries Tasmania



**PMI Victorian
History Library**

Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, P.O Box 1080, Windsor, 3181.
 ISSN 1835-5242

Reg. No A0038156G ABN 60 337 355 989 Price \$6.00.

The MIV would like to acknowledge the support of our 'home' the Prahran Mechanics' Institute.

MIV Facebook page

We have discussed at the Committee level whether we should have a Facebook Page for the MIV.

I actually like Facebook pages as they are a quick and easy way to get information across, and even though apparently 'young people' find Facebook passe, they aren't really the demographic of our organisation.

I am happy to start a page, but we need to decide whether to set it up as a Group or a Page. If it is a Group then anyone can post to it, and I just feel that's a nightmare, as people sometimes post rubbish and irrelevant stuff and it can take up a lot of time on the part of the Admins to oversee. The Gippsland History page is an example of a really well run Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1755971574632862>
 Lost Melbourne is an example of a Page <https://www.facebook.com/LostMelbourne>

I would prefer to set it up as a Page and have on small number of Admins who could post to it.

What would be on it? Events, sharing posts from other MI Facebook pages, grant opportunities, news about MIs, old photographs, book reviews, excerpts from Trove, maybe even a 'On this Day' etc.

If you have any thoughts on this matter, then let me know,
 Heather mivnewslettereditor@gmail.com

News from the MIV Committee

Skills Directory

Mechanic Institutes' Victoria are planning to make a listing of member organisations and individuals who have skills and knowledge to share with other Institutes and Athenaeums.

If you or your organisation have had particular challenges and successes and are prepared to share these with others, then you could be included in the new MIV Skills Directory. Or if you are looking for someone to assist you with a particular enquiry then there may find another MIV member who can assist you with informed advice. Some examples of useful skills to share might include:

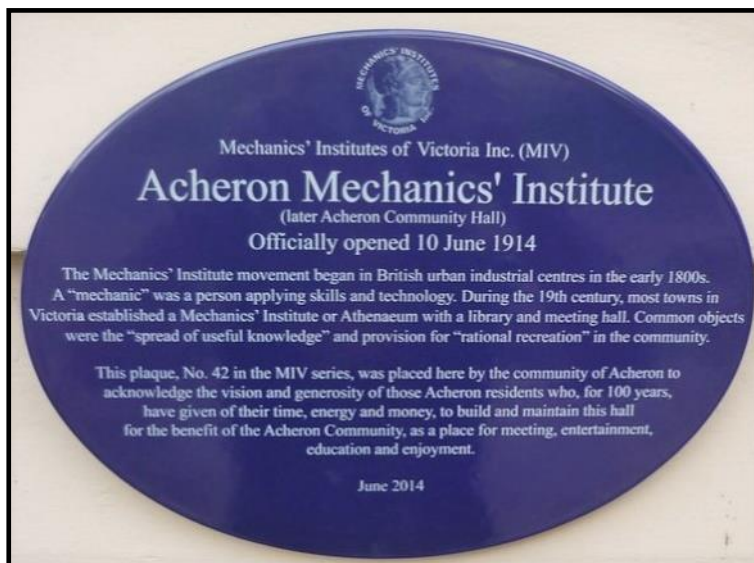
- Administration e.g. planning, managing committees, working with Local Government, budgeting and reporting, insurance.
- Assets Maintenance e.g. heritage buildings, lighting, heating, climate control.
- Collections and management e.g. cataloguing, systems, conservation, bookbinding and repairs.
- Public Programs e.g. events, exhibitions, lectures, education, tours, programs
- Fundraising e.g. media, social media, events, publishing and promotion

If you know you or other members of your group or institute have valuable skills that you are willing to share in an advisory capacity with other MIV members then please contact:

Chris Dormer on stanleyathenaeum@gmail.com or Heather Arnold mivnewslettereditor@gmail.com

MIV Heritage Plaques

The purpose of the MIV Historical Plaques Program is to inform the public of the history of Mechanics' Institutes



in Victoria and also give a snippet of history about the individual Institute. The idea of putting a plaque on Mechanics' Institute Halls was advanced by Committee member Alan Tonkin in 1999. Committee member Paul Permezal brought it to reality in 2003 and since then plaques have been installed to mark special occasions within Institutes all across the State. These plaques have been used to commemorate a significant date in the history of an Institute or town; be it an anniversary, or a significant renovation or restoration project.

Acheron MI Plaque. Image: Bron Lowden.

We have installed 67 plaques to date and there is a near complete list on our website <http://www.mivic.org.au/plaques.html>

Does your Institution wish to be Plaque No. 68? Surely, that's a lucky number for someone, or maybe your street address contains the number 68 or your postcode? Send us an email mivnewslettereditor@gmail.com and we'll start the process.

[Small print: your organization pays for the plaque \$195, but we organise it]

MIV website

We have a website <http://www.mivic.org.au/> which has lots of useful information and also includes back issues of Useful Knowledge <http://www.mivic.org.au/magazine.html>

We are, however, having 'issues' with access to the website, due to various reasons, so you may find the website is not completely up-to-date in some areas. We are working on this matter.

Distant Participation: World War 1 seen from a regional Mechanics' institute

Story and images by Mike McCausland
President, Friends of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute

As in every aspect of life in Australia, WW1 had its deep impact on Mechanics' Institutes and libraries. The most common legacies are Memorial Halls and Honour Boards preserving the names of those who fought and fell. The Launceston Mechanics' Institute & Public Library has a different tale to tell: its substantial remaining collection of books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and ephemera relating to the conflict.

Of these, newspapers are the most immediate: within days, censorship allowing, cables could bring reports of actions, though CEW Bean's official report from Alexandria of the Gallipoli landing took three weeks. Citizens of Launceston had a choice not only of the local Tasmanian papers, but those of Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth, as well as, after a greater time lapse, from New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries. A curious remnant from this period are a few papers from Ceylon, Gibraltar and Malta, and surprisingly, a government publication printed for the British Army in Macedonia, the *Balkan News*.

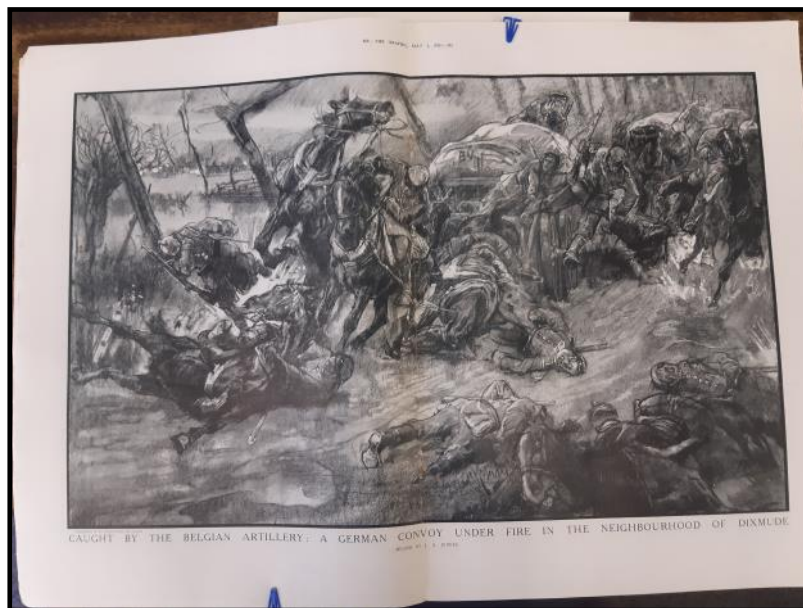


The Balkan News, November 15, 1917

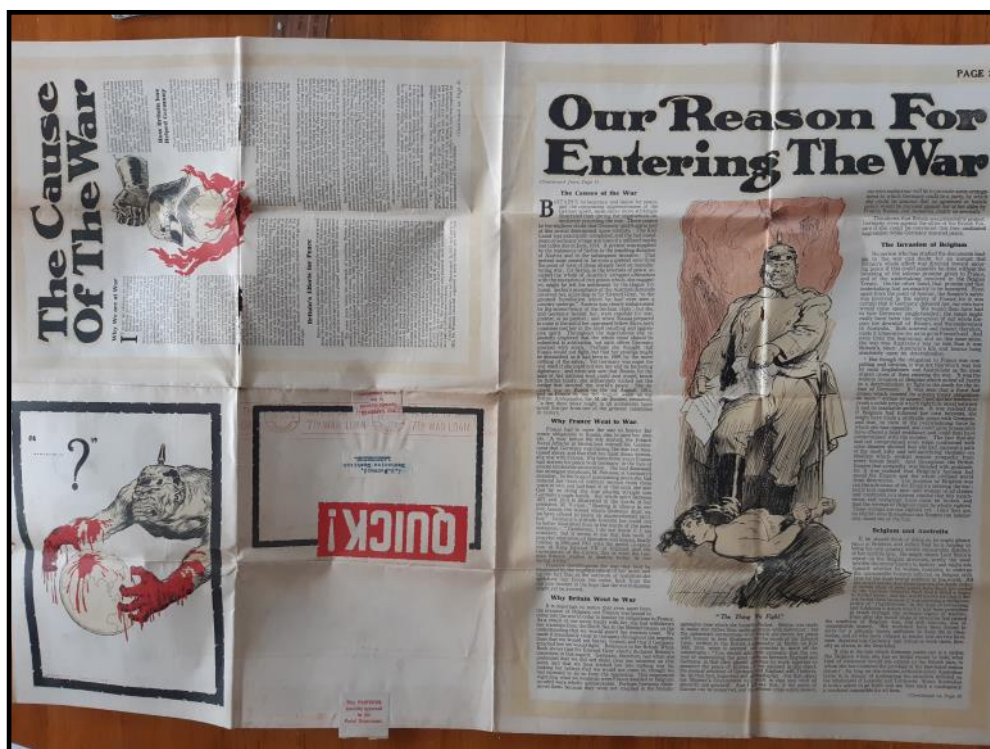
The most dramatic portrayal of the Great War comes from *The Graphic* published in London and eagerly read in the colonies. Its centerfold certainly was graphic in its artistic representations of suffering, when it came to the peasants of Belgium, of heroism by the lovable British Tommy and his gallant French ally, and of the cowardice, brutality and incompetence of their German foe. Although Canadian troops are often celebrated, Australians generally are not, and perhaps Launcestonians tempered its propaganda with a recognition that it was primarily meant for a different readership.

Distant Participation: World War 1 seen from a regional Mechanics' institute

Dozens of wartime pamphlets have survived too. They usually represent the official government points of view, composed by academic commentators, historians, military strategists, and navy and army officers. These range from a single-fold sheet proclaiming America's importance to the Allied Front (ironically titled *More "Contemptibles"*) to a 200-page book that warns of *The Hun's Peace Bludgeon* published for a local readership by The Industrial Australian and Mining Standard in 1919. The most striking is a broadsheet folded to make a pamphlet transmissible by post: *Quick!* With its famous, and gruesome, political cartoons by Norman Lindsay.



Centrefold of *The Graphic* from May 1, 1915



Quick!

Article continues overleaf

Distant Participation: World War 1 seen from a regional Mechanics' institute, Continued

By Mike McCausland

So many books relating to the War were acquired by purchase and donation to the LMI&PL that a separate reference and nonfiction section was set up by the librarian. And books kept appearing after the armistice, with increasing emphasis on memoirs by returned soldiers, and on fiction that interwove stories of combatants and those on the Home Front.

One of the themes in the Annual Reports of the LMI Board from 1914 on was the difficulty of obtaining books from Britain during the blockade of Allied shipping, and the sudden increase in their cost. The quality and availability of paper fell too, despite the cost; much of the correspondence archived in the War years and after shows how the Institute economized by copying outgoing letters on the back of earlier correspondence or on scraps of paper.

For regional Launceston, the Institute's Public Reading Room was a vital means by which citizens linked with the wider world and learned of triumphant and catastrophic events in Europe. Like letters from servicemen and women, though, they were censored, and even more directed to supporting the government's position of maintaining the Empire. Considering the overwhelming enthusiasm for Australia playing its part on behalf of the Allies, and the government's urging of conscription it's remarkable that it did not eventuate until WW2. Our distant participation kept a perspective that even the written word could not conquer.



Launceston Mechanics' Institute, 1911. Photographer: H.J. King
Image: Libraries Tasmania

Is the original Lyonville Mechanics' Institute the shortest lived MI?

By Heather Arnold

The Lyonville Mechanics' Institute was opened on Wednesday April 23, 1880. *The Argus* of 1/5/1880 had this report—

Mr. Cooper, M. L. A., opened the Lyonville Mechanics Institute on Wednesday evening, and although it rained incessantly, still there was a large attendance to hear his lecture of "The Land We Live In." He gave a brief history of the early discoveries by the Dutch and other navigators, and then he described the settlement of Victoria by the Hentys, Batman, and Fawkner. Referring to the gold rush, he expressed regret that there was not at that time a liberal land law in force, so that the successful digger might have expended his earnings in land instead of going to other colonies. Mr. Cooper concluded by stating that no colony in the world had a better climate or finer class of people, and reminded the young and rising generation that it depended on the self-reliance they exhibited if it were desired to make this a glorious country.

Sadly, it was burnt to the ground over the night of Saturday, November 20/Sunday November 21, 1880. The *Kyneton Guardian* 24/11/1880 had this report—

I am sorry to report that the new Mechanics' Institute at Lyonville was burned to the ground on the night of Saturday or early on Sunday morning. There was no fireplace in the building, and how the fire originated is mystery. If it is the work of an incendiary, no punishment would be too hard for him. The building was something to be proud of, and the loss to the residents of the district will be severely felt. Mr. Lyon has acted nobly in getting this building erected, and it is to be hoped that the residents of the district will do their utmost, as they did before, to erect a new one.

The *Ballarat Star* of 24/11/1880 also reported on the event—

*Great surprise and indignation was expressed by the people of Lyonville on Sunday morning, when they found that in the middle of the night their Mechanics' Institute had been burned down by an unprincipled scoundrel. The building is burnt clean to the ground, and sundry books, lamps, papers, &c, were all destroyed. According to the *Daylesford Advocate*, the miscreant who did the crime has not been discovered.*

The Mechanics' Institute survived seven months. Is there a candidate for a shorter lived building? Let us know.

A new Mechanics' Institute was built in Lyonville around 1886/1887, according to *These walls speak volumes: a history of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria*. The book notes that a nearby sawmiller donated the land and the timber for the building. There is another account of the hall in Lynn Sunderland's book on Lyonville *Charlie's Book: the life and times of a country town*. She writes that *In 1880 local sawmiller Horatio Weatherhead organised the construction of the Hall on a Crown land block adjoining his own land in the heart of the township*. It is possible that Horatio donated the land and then the timber for both halls, even though the *Kyneton Guardian* article, above, implies that it was James Lyon who was responsible for the erection of the first Hall as he *has acted nobly in getting this building erected*. Interestingly, there is no reference in *Charlie's Book* of the hall burning down.

Horatio Weatherhead was my great grandfather; he was in partnership with James Lyon, who was the namesake of the town of Lyonville. Horatio was later granted a license by the Department of Lands and Survey to mill 2,000 acres of forest in North Tynong, so around 1909 he shifted his operations from Lyonville to North Tynong. Hence my interest in the history of Tynong, and you can read about Tynong Halls, starting on page 22.

References

These walls speak volumes: a history of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria by Pam Baragwanath and Ken James (published by the authors in 2015)

Charlie's Book: the Life and Times of a Country Town by Lynn Sunderland (Melbourne University Press, 1999). The book is based on the memories of Charlie Miller, whose family had operated a store at Lyonville from the 1880s.

Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute Renovates its 'Bio Box'

By Pat Anderson

Since the Warrandyte Arts Association (WAA) amalgamated officially with WMI in the mid 1980s becoming WMI-AA, our charter has been to foster the arts in our community, and to maintain the venue for the community. To this end, our association has already undertaken some major renovations, including re-stumping, re-lining, re-roofing, re-painting, stage enlargement, roof water collection, and general beautification etc.

The current building of the Warrandyte Mechanics' Institute dates from 1928, with additions of toilets and a bio-box in the mid 1950s, and the basic structure of the wooden building is now showing its age even more to the extent that its future is in jeopardy. Moreover, modern day safety requirements mean that some expensive refurbishment has now becoming urgent, if this vital asset is to continue to be available to the Warrandyte and Manningham and Nillumbik communities.



Warrandyte Arts, our new, catchier, public name to replace the verbose 'Warrandyte Mechanics Institute and Arts Association', has therefore commenced an ambitious program of projects to extend the life of this valuable cultural asset. The first one of these, to renovate the bio-box or control cabin has just been completed. Apart from the cramped conditions being no longer adequate to house modern lighting and sound computerised systems, a professional assessment concluded that the bio box was a fire waiting to happen. The photo on left shows the state of the bio-box before renovation.

A local builder (and member of WMIAA) dismantled the existing, ancient room and rebuilt a much larger and safer one, designed by

Life Member Jock MacNeish, cantilevered out so as not to encroach on the existing floor space below.

Warrandyte Arts also re-built the sound and lighting systems, using up to date equipment and cabling to further reduce fire risk and improve functionality.

The new room (shown in photo on right) and its equipment was given a test drive for the latest theatre company play – Under the Table – and performed flawlessly. It was a delight for the tech team to have room to move and a pleasant, safe working environment.



Today the arts community associated with the hall is flourishing. Most years there are over 120 members of the association, engaged in a range of artistic activities and groups, as well as a Repair Café, which aligns to an extent with the original purpose of MIs. The hall is almost in constant use by these groups as well as by other hirers who hold meetings, exercise sessions, events, shows and social occasions in the hall. Indeed, we can certainly claim that the "arts" have saved the hall through money raised by the efforts of its association members, through theatre in particular, but also with art shows and through fund raising and grant seeking by the committee. Our current secretary, Grant Purdy, has been tireless in this regard.

Warrandyte Arts is incredibly grateful for a substantial grant of \$20,000 from the Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) Warrandyte, and for kind donations from Rotary, the Riverside Market and the Lions Club together with many smaller contributions from lots of people as well as its own funds. (When making online bookings for shows through Trybooking, people are also invited to make donations)

Warrandyte Arts' next challenge, to bring the hall into the 21st Century and ensure it lasts for another 100 years, is the installation of cranked beams to support the timber roof trusses and replace the existing tie bars. These tie bars are no longer effective in preventing the truss system failing and pushing out the walls of the hall. In addition, they are currently used for hanging the theatre lights in spite of being badly placed for this use. So, we also intend to install a new lighting bar system, with audio and data capability - hung from the new support beams. These projects will hopefully take place over the next two years and we will be actively seeking grants and further sponsorship locally to achieve our goals.

Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute: A Celebration of Volunteering

By Peter Nankervis



Arthurs Creek Mechanics Institute is totally dependent on volunteers to contribute to the many facets of the management of our Hall.

At our recent meeting, we celebrated the wonderful contribution of one of our members. The minutes of the meeting dated 28th July 1959 record the committee welcoming Brian Murphy on to the Hall Committee. Brian has continued to contribute and serve the committee at a number of levels and in many different ways. We thank Brian for not only his massive contribution but also for his dedication, input and loyalty to the wellbeing of the Hall over these decades.

We shared many recollections and stories that emerged over this period of time, something for the collection of stories about our Hall.

We presented Brian with a framed photograph of the Hall with the following citation. 'Recognising and celebrating the many and diverse contributions Brian Murphy has brought to the management of Arthurs Creek Mechanics Institute Inc. Committee member from July 28th 1959 – November 2022. 63 years of loyal service.'

Congratulations and thank you Brian.

Photo: Brian Murphy (on right) with Arthurs Creek MI President, Peter Nankervis.

Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute was opened in 1887. The *Evelyn Observer* of 16/9/1887 reported that *A grand concert and ball to celebrate the opening of the above institution was held on Friday evening, September 2nd, and proved in every way a thorough success. As this was the first entertainment of the sort ever held at Arthur's Creek, much speculation was indulged in as to how it would come off; and it is pleasing to record that the result achieved, notwithstanding the recent heavy rains which rendered the roads in a very sloppy condition, far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of those concerned in its promotion.*



A statement was also made as to the expenditure in erecting the building which cost, as it stands, including furniture and fittings, solicitor and architect's fees, a trifle over £200. It was designed by Mr E.J. Henderson, architect, Queen street, is constructed of weatherboard and iron, and is very neat and handsome in appearance, and consists of a hall 40 x 20; library, 17 x 12 ; and dressing-room, 11 x 12.

Left: The Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute Hall set up for the wedding of Lena Murphy and Allan Verso in 1925. Image: Arthurs Creek Mechanics' Institute Hall Facebook page.

News from the Stanley Athenaeum

By Chris Dormer

When the World was Pink

An exploration of the words and colours of 'colonialism', when the British Empire was at its zenith and were coloured pink on the maps of the 'Philips' Imperial Atlas of the World', a magnificent volume that travelled across the world to arrive at the Stanley Athenaeum in June 1890, the 'Philips' Imperial Atlas of the World' will be on display with a talk, facsimile maps and panels related to the Atlas and its journey.

At Stanley Athenaeum on Friday 23 June 2023 at 10.30 am, check the Winter Words program; Winterwords Beechworth W: <https://winterwords.com.au/schedule/>

George Peach: Photographs focusing on 60 years of Stanley Life.

When George Peach was given a camera by his mother, this started a lifetime of recording the world around him. George left Stanley in 1928 to work in Melbourne, returning regularly to visit his family and took to chronicling life in Stanley; the Peach family, everyday life, local places, events and activities. This exhibition features a selection of George's photographs with a focus on children, fashion, transport, work, leisure and life in Stanley across 60 years of the twentieth century, they will be displayed with George's original captions.

Visit this exhibition at the Stanley Post & Community Hub (old Stanley School), Main Street, Stanley.

Open from 1 July 2023 - June 2024.

Open Monday - Friday 8.30- 10.30 am & 3.30 - 5.30pm, Saturday 9.00 - 11.00 am. Closed Sunday, Public Holidays and Red Code days or by appointment, contact: 0458 606 922

6th Geoff Craig Memorial Lecture

The Friends of Stanley Athenaeum will be presenting the 6th Geoff Craig Memorial Lecture with speaker Tony Rinaudo AM presenting 'The Forest Underground.' Tony will talk about some of the influences that took him to Africa, the discovery of 'the underground forest' and the technique which has become known as 'Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration' – what it is, it's history, impact and spread. And will about the challenges ahead in terms of tackling climate change, land degradation, deforestation.

Tony Rinaudo served as an agriculturalist and missionary with 'Serving in Mission' in Niger Republic from 1981 to 1999. He is widely recognized for his influential contribution to heightened international awareness on the impact and efficacy, and uptake of, simple, low cost, scalable methods of reforestation known as FMNR (Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration). Among major awards Tony and FMNR have recently received are the

2018 Right Livelihood Award "for demonstrating on a large scale how drylands can be greened at minimal cost, improving the livelihoods of millions of people", and the World Future Council Agroecology Award. In 2019, Tony was appointed as a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia (General Division).

The lecture will be held at Stanley Memorial Hall, Stanley on Sunday 17th September 2023 at 2pm.



Speaker Tony Rinaudo AM

Publications Available from Stanley Athenaeum;

- 'A Hearty Vote of Thanks: Christina Muter' - First Woman President of the Stanley Athenaeum' \$8
- 'Hearts of Gold and Minds of Mettle' (2021). Robyn Harcourt, Helen McIntyre and Valerie Privett. \$35
- 'Fire on the Plateau: A History of Fire and its Management in Stanley' (2019). Dr Jacqui Durrant, \$30
- Stanley Times and Mining Journal'(2018). By Geoff Craig. Now in its 4th Edition. \$30
- also local cards and bookmarks - various prices.

Research Enquiries Welcome

The Friends of Stanley Athenaeum undertake requests for research from both individuals and community groups, the research fee of \$30 per hour for the first hour and \$20 per hour thereafter.

Stanley Athenaeum and Public Room

2 Mount Stanley Road, Stanley.

Open every Friday & 4th Saturday each month from 10am to 12.30 pm or by appointment,

Enquiries: Chris 0458 606 922

E: stanleyathenaeum@gmail.com

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

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

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

Chiltern Athenaeum Museum - a work in progress

By Viv and Maureen, Co-chairpersons, who also supplied the images

In August 2021 the Chiltern Athenaeum Museum closed its doors temporarily for renovations. Almost two years later we are still closed as renovations are continuing under the direction of Indigo Shire.



The Athenaeum building is over 150 years old and was last renovated during the 1970s. It is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and featured in the Mechanics Institute calendar some years ago. The building has had extensive work to manage rising damp, mould, and salt ingress through the brickwork. Windows were removed, repaired and replaced. Under floor ventilation has been installed.

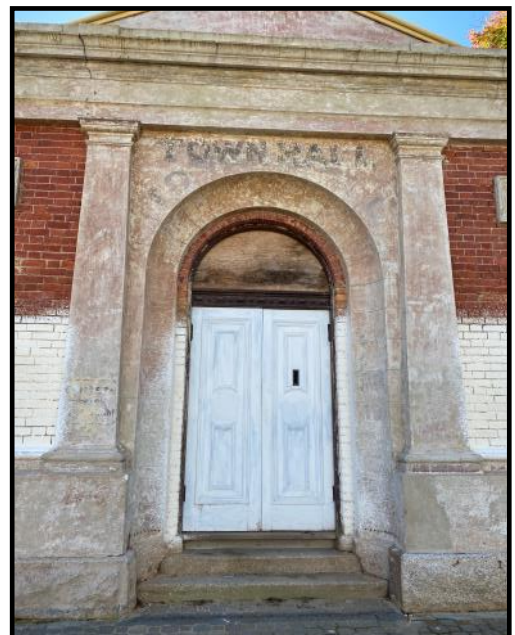


An extensive study of the paint on the exterior of the building was undertaken resulting in a 20 page booklet discovering the timeline of paint layers to determine the final colour scheme to be used. In this process we found that the words TOWN HALL were written twice over the main door and there was an ATHENAEUM name plate on the brickwork at the front of the building.

We are waiting on the next phase to commence, which includes climate control, painting both the interior and exterior, and roof and floor repairs. A new security system and electrical upgrade is also planned.

For the volunteers at the Chiltern Athenaeum this has been a testing time as we had to move all of our collection to the John McEwen Annex (alongside the Athenaeum) and our furniture was relocated to Beechworth. This has meant that visitors to our town have not been able to see our wonderful collection.

Despite the disruption and the ongoing stop/start renovation, we have managed to keep a small number of volunteers engaged in the work of the Museum. We have collaborated with the Chiltern Cemetery Trust to conduct a Cemetery Walk and have held a Literary afternoon, both in 2022. We have continued to catalogue our collection and conduct regular meetings. We are looking forward to the day when we can re-establish our collection and welcome visitors to the Chiltern Athenaeum Museum again.



Postcards of Mechanics' Institutes

Compiled by Heather Arnold

The book, *Edwardian Melbourne in Picture Postcards* by Alexandra Bertram and Angus Trumble (Miegunyah Press, 1995) notes that the man credited with the invention of the postcard was Heinrich von Stephan (1831-1897), Post Master General of the Northern German Confederation. He was also involved in the International Postal Union, which became an important regulator of international trade. During the Franco-Prussian War (July 1870-May 1871) he organised the Feld Post which in 8 months handled 89 million letters, 2.5 million postcards and £10 million in money. They delivered to and collected from soldiers on the battle field. Clearly, a man with a remarkable attention to detail and procedure. In 1865, at a Pan-German Postal Convention, Heinrich presented his idea of a post card and as a result the first postcard was published by the Austrian Post Office on October 1 1869. The British Post Office published their first postcard in October 1870.

The Smithsonian Institute, however, says that from late 1848 in the United States 'mailed cards' could be sent through the post, i.e. a card with the correct postage attached and used by businesses. Then on February 27, 1861, the U.S. Congress passed an act that allowed privately printed cards, weighing one ounce or under, to be sent in the mail. That same year John P. Charlton (also written as Carlton) copyrighted the first postcard in America. (<https://siarchives.si.edu/history/featured-topics/postcard/postcard-history#>)

Whether it was Heinrich von Stephan who invented the postcard in 1869 or whether they just naturally evolved from 'mailed cards' of 1848 it doesn't really matter because from the early 1900s postcards were produced in the millions, including these ones of Mechanics' Institutes.



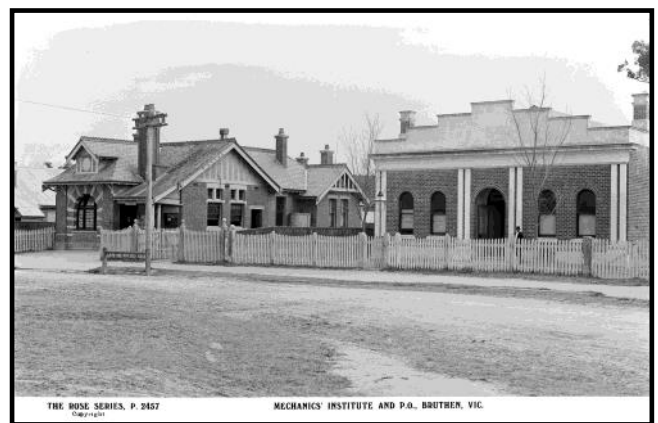
Left: Werribee.

Below left:
Murchison.

Below right:
Mornington.

Images from State
Library of Victoria





Top:
Camperdown.

Above left : Sale

Above right:
Bruthen.

Images from State
Library of Victoria.

Left: Albury.
Postcard from
Editor's collection.

Smoking in Mechanics' Institutes

Here are a few interesting articles about smoking in Mechanics' Institutes—clearly a vexed question. My favourite argument for allowing smoking was put by Mr Anderson at a meeting at the Sandhurst Mechanics' Institute who believed *real mechanics might be induced to join the institute if smoking was allowed*.

Ballarat 1878

Non-Smoking-Room at the Mechanics' Institute

Sir, —I do not think that the decision arrived at by the committee of the Mechanics' Institute will give any satisfaction to those who signed the requisition for a room for the use of non-smoking members to play chess and draughts in. The room now to be set apart for that purpose is situated in the most objectionable part of the whole building, as all persons using it must go through the smoking-room to get at it, and each time the door is opened the objectionable smoke of the other room will be carried into it until the atmosphere will assimilate to that of the smoking-room itself. This looks like giving a stone when bread is asked. But perhaps the most remarkable thing in connection with the whole affair is the reason assigned for not giving the room asked for, viz., "that it would not suit to have two conversation-rooms so far apart. I should certainly consider this one of the strongest reasons that could be advanced in its favor, as non-smokers do not wish in the least to be near a smoking-room. I suppose after this it will be considered a satisfactory reason for one refusing to take a coat from his tailor because it "fits so well." I am sure that the use of the room asked for would have been a very great boon to a large number of members - who will never think of using the room given —and as the room wanted is used chiefly as a lumber-room, it seems a great pity that the members should pass and repass it daily, year after year, and not be allowed the use of it when it is not otherwise profitably engaged. I should also mention that the room to be given does not contain any fireplace, so that during the long winter afternoons it will be useless.- Yours, &c., MEMBER 13th August, 1878 Source: *Ballarat Star*, August 15, 1878.

Merino 1883

At the next meeting of the Mechanics' Institute Committee a very interesting question is likely to be settled, that is, whether smoking in the reading-room is to continue allowable as heretofore. The point is a somewhat knotty one, both sides having good arguments in their favour. It is well known that in towns of any pretensions, smoking is not permitted in Mechanics' Institute private rooms, but these in deference to their self-denying and abstemious members, can afford to act up to the letter of the law. Whilst in our case, take away the names of our smoking members, and the subscribers list would look puny indeed. The half-dozen non-smokers who by the way are nearly all very casual visitors to the Institute, might have the place comfortably to themselves, but what about the corresponding loss of revenue? The Institute was never so popular or largely patronised as at present, and chiefly too by a class that such places are calculated to benefit, viz., the young men, who in too many cases prefer the excitement and attractiveness of card and billiard rooms. Is it not as well to encourage this class of members even though a little extra license is allowed in the shape of enjoying a pull at the fragrant weed, which by the way is well known in sanitary circles to be one of the best of disinfectants. Could not the parties who never participate in the pleasure of a long drawn whiff, use a little self-denial in deference to the advancement of a good object? However, next Thursday week will settle the question one way or other and in the meantime; no doubt both sides will be promptly marshalling their respective forces.

Source: *Hamilton Spectator*, July 12, 1883.

Sandhurst (Bendigo) 1887

A question affecting the interests of the Sandhurst Mechanics' Institute is likely to give rise to lively discussion at the annual meeting of members. It is whether smoking is to be allowed in the chess room or not. Up to very recently members gave been content with the pure, sweet atmosphere of heaven, the natural breath of life pervading the building, but since the opening of the fine new chess room smokers have suddenly desired to raise a cloudy atmosphere in which they alone can revel. The air of Sandhurst must be pestilent indeed when they thus propose to nullify its evils by mixing with it fragrant exhalations of their own creating. It has ever been thus - God's gifts are good, but man's inventions many and an improved atmosphere is the latest human inspiration. The proposal is considered by many to be a deliberate attempt to establish a privileged class in a public institution, but it has yet to be seen whether the objecting male and female members will consent to be smoked out. Source: *Bendigo Advertiser*, July 23, 1887.

Smoking in Mechanics' Institutes

Another report of the smoking issue at Sandhurst (Bendigo) 1887

Mr Wood moved that smoking be permitted in the chess room, and Mr. Sewell seconded the motion. Mr. Casey pointed out that smoking was allowed at Geelong. Mr. Robshaw thought an arrangement could be made to suit all parties. Mr. Stamp supported the motion, if smoking was in moderation. Mr. Beebe, senr., asked what moderation was. Mr. Allsop thought there should be a smoking room somewhere. Mr. Robin had not heard any arguments in favor of smoking beyond personal gratification. Mr. Coope thought the experiment might be tried. Mr. Anderson believed real mechanics might be induced to join the institute if smoking was allowed, Mr. Beebe, junr., thought the committee were not bound by the motion. Mr. Cohen expressed a strong opinion against smoking in the chess room, as it opened into the main entrance to the library largely frequented by ladies. Another place might be obtained. Mr. Woods replied. The motion was put and carried by 26 votes to 8.

Source: *Bendigo Advertiser*, July 29, 1887.

Melbourne Athenaeum 1891

It is astonishing how comparatively few people are aware of the advantages which the Athenaeum Library and reading rooms offers to its subscribers. Thousands of people daily pass and repass the building in Collins street, adjacent to the Town Hall, and think it is only a concert or lecture hall. Yet the Athenaeum is the oldest literary institution in Melbourne.A smoking room was tried a few months ago, but its gloom and discomfort was great enough to discourage the most persistent indulger in tobacco, and so it has been abandoned. Still, with better accommodation it certain that a large number of now subscribers would be induced to join the institution if they were allowed to smoke as well as read. Source: *Table Talk*, November 21, 1891.

Violet Town 1895

Our attention has been called to the fact that some persons make it a practice smoking in the Mechanics' Institute to the annoyance of others who visit the hall. A gentleman informed us on Wednesday that he was reading the papers there but had to leave because a stranger sickened him by smoking, who when asked to desist refused to do so. On behalf of the public we direct the attention of the committee to this matter in the hope that a stop may be put to the annoyance. Source: *Violet Town Sentinel* April 19, 1895.

Mudgee 1907

An innovation of a very desirable character has been made by the committee of the Mechanics' Institute. A smoking room has been furnished, and set apart exclusively for the use of the male members. Many men, no

matter how fascinating may be matters they are reading, find it difficult to practice sufficient self-denial to forego the luxury of a pipe. They will now have an opportunity of enjoying both pleasures, as well as the diversion of an occasional game of cards, should their inclinations point that way.

Source: *Mudgee Guardian* July 29, 1907.

Left: Mudgee Mechanics' Institute.

Image: Flickr



Coronation functions at Mechanics' Institutes

Here are four accounts of functions to celebrate the Coronation of the Queen in 1953.

Coronation Debutante Ball: A Brilliant Function *Narracan Shire Advocate, October 30, 1953*

Organised by the Moe Church of England Ladies' Guild, the Coronation Debutante Ball held at the Mechanics' Hall, on Tuesday evening, proved a brilliant and memorable function. The traditional pageantry associated with these social events was supplemented by a colourful setting and crown motif main entrance, accurately designed, artistically draped and tastefully illuminated with red, white and blue electric lamps. From the body of the normally drab-coloured hall, this departure was a pleasant surprise, all the more so, because of a liberal display of streamers radiating from a central point in the ceiling and the distributed brackets of flowers along the walls. Ample bunting as a background to the stage and flowers in front fully indicated the labour and time employed in these self-imposed duties, obviously a labour of love. The crown referred to rose to a height of over eight feet by a width of some 10 feet, framing the front door entrance through which the 12 debutantes and their partners emerged to be presented.



Moe Mechanics' Institute. The building was demolished in 1959.
Image: Centre for Gippsland Studies.

The Magic Moment

Following some two hours of dancing, to the pleasing music of Dick Winter's orchestra, Mrs J. Botterill, officially acting as compere, announced Mr T. G. Littleton, Chancellor of the Diocese of Gippsland, with Mrs K. Nancarrow; Reverend K. Nancarrow, with Mrs T. G. Littleton and Mr and Mrs George Jackson, who took their places at the top of the hall to receive the debutantes and their partners. First to emerge from the colourful drapings of the crown-framed entrance were two tiny flower girls (in red), then two slightly taller little girls (in white) and following, two taller flower girls (in blue).

After the presentations of bouquets, shoulder sprays and button holes of flowers, Mrs Botterill announced each of the debutantes and partner as they emerged at the lower end of the hall, to slowly traverse the hall for presentation. Approximately 300 present, comprising relatives, friends and dancers, applauded each couple, the debutantes, happy and beautiful in white and their partners correctly attired in black; all obviously well trained. Retiring after presentation, the couples moved alternatively down each side of the hall, and as six couples faced inward and danced to the entrancing strains of the Coronation Waltz, the large audience warmly expressed appreciation.

Later, the retirement of the flower girls and the official party was as graceful as the earlier entrances. Then as the barrier were removed, the many dancers continued the light fantastic into the wee small hours.

[The article concludes with a full list of the debutantes and their partners]

Coronation functions at Mechanics' Institutes

Coronation Celebrations
Kilmore Free Press, June 4, 1953.

The Coronation Dance in the Mechanics Hall, arranged by the Kilmore Musical Society, was largely attended and those present enjoyed a memorable night. Considerable time was spent by the organisers of the function in decorations for the occasion and the ball presented a colorful scene with streamers of red, white and blue and photos of Her Majesty on the walls.

The ceiling was covered with balloons and a large "E" covered one wall. The stage was a mass of red, white and blue flags and streamers, mingled with foliage, poppies and berries. From the wall, with the Union Jack for a background, hung a large framed photo of Queen Elizabeth. At the actual time of the crowning of Her Majesty (9.30 p.m.) the large crowd joined in the singing of the National Anthem, followed by "Land of Hope and Glory" and "There Will Always Be An England." Simultaneously with the Coronation the balloons were released from the ceiling with the waving of flags and blowing of trumpets and wearing of caps the night continued in a happy atmosphere throughout.

A buffet supper including sausage rolls and cocktail sausages, was one of the best ever served at a dance locally and the ladies of the Musical Society are to be complimented on their effort.....During the evening a prize was allotted to the lady present with the name of "Elizabeth." It was found, however, that there were none present bearing the name and the prize was then awarded to the lady whose birthday was nearest to that of Her Majesty (April 21) and Miss Baar (April 18) was the recipient.

Melton Coronation Day Sports
Bacchus Marsh Express, June 6 1953



Contrary to official forecasts, the outdoor programme at Melton on Coronation Day was favored with pleasant weather. School-children of the Shire assembled in the morning at the Mechanics' Hall, where the Shire President (Cr. W. A. Lewis) gave an address on the significance of the Coronation and the responsibilities of the Queen and her subjects. He expressed the hope that the young Queen Elizabeth would never have added to burdens of office the stresses and strains of another war.

Melton MI, 1977. Photographer: John T. Collins.
State Library of Victoria Image.

Led by Piper Geo. Masterson, the children marched to the sports ground, and it was quite a procession, with decorated cars and bicycles

giving it color. Free ice cream, fruit and lollies were distributed to all youngsters at the park. District school teachers gave able assistance in the day's arrangements and a vote of thanks is due to them for making Tuesday a "working" holiday. All schools, competing for a cup donated by Miss M. Smith—won by Melton State School (Melton "A" team). For schools with net enrolment of less than 20 pupils for trophy (Coronation Book) donated by the Shire President, (Cr. A. Lewis)—won by Exford State School.

[The article concludes with a full list of the results. The Schools/ teams which took part were: Diggers Rest, Exford, Melton A, Melton Z, Melton South, Rockbank, Sydenham and Toolern Vale.]

Trees To Commemorate Coronation
Gippsland Times, August 17, 1953

At the conclusion of the August meeting of Briagolong Country Women's Association meeting, six trees were planted in the grounds of the Mechanics' Hall, the branch's coronation year gesture. These were planted by Mrs. H. Freeman, Mrs. Irvine, Mrs. M.Higgins (president, secretary, and treasurer), Mrs. D. Bennett (daughter of one of the original trustees of the hall), Mrs. M. A. Higgins and Mrs.Ivill. These trees while helping to beautify the grounds of the hall, will always be a living memorial to commemorate the crowning of Queen Elizabeth.

South Australian Institutes on the River Murray

By Joelle Hancock <https://institutessa.com/>

For thousands of years aboriginal clans lived along the length of the river we now call the Murray. The river was named in 1829 by Charles Sturt and not long after, European settlers began to take up land along its banks. In 1854 the first paddle steamers took over from bullocks to transport goods to and from the commercial port of Goolwa at the river's southern outlet. So it was that the first South Australian institute on the Murray was at Goolwa.



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Until it had a building of its own the Goolwa Institute held its meetings in the local flour mill, in the town hotels or a storeroom of one of the shops. In 1861 it affiliated with the South Australia Institute, just a few years after that organisation was formed by the State's government to support the institutes that were popping up around the state. By 1887 Goolwa had its own institute building, which was extended and renovated until it had the building that in 2023 houses the Alexandrina Council, and the Council's library.

Goolwa Institute, 1901.

Image: State Library of South Australia

The next SA institute on the Murray began in 1872 at Milang. Just north of Goolwa, Milang was at the time one of South Australia's busiest ports. Its building was opened in 1884 and today, with a number of substantial additions, it still serves its community as a meeting place.

Right: Milang Institute, 2006.

Image: Peter Wolfenden.

Below left: Main Street, Milang, 1896.

Image: State Library of South Australia.

Below right: Milang Jetty, 1912.

Image: State Library of South Australia.



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South Australian Institutes on the River Murray

Mannum was the next town on the river to have an institute. Its first building that was opened in 1882 was replaced by a much larger two-storey building thirty years later, in 1911. That building was undergoing extensive renovations this year until the Murray flood put a halt to the work.



Mannum, 1907.

Image: State Library of South Australia



Mannum Institute in 2016

Image: Joelle Hancock

River trade flourished, with over 200 paddle steamers using this water highway by 1865. Over the next decades new railways and improved roads offered alternative forms of transport. The introduction of irrigation gave the next boost to towns on the Murray and a new flurry of community activity followed.

Renmark (close to the Victorian border) established its institute in 1890 and its own building in 1909. By 1923 the building had acquired the grand dimensions that it has today. It is still serving the Renmark community.



Renmark Institute, 1925.

Image: State Library of South Australia

Article continues overleaf

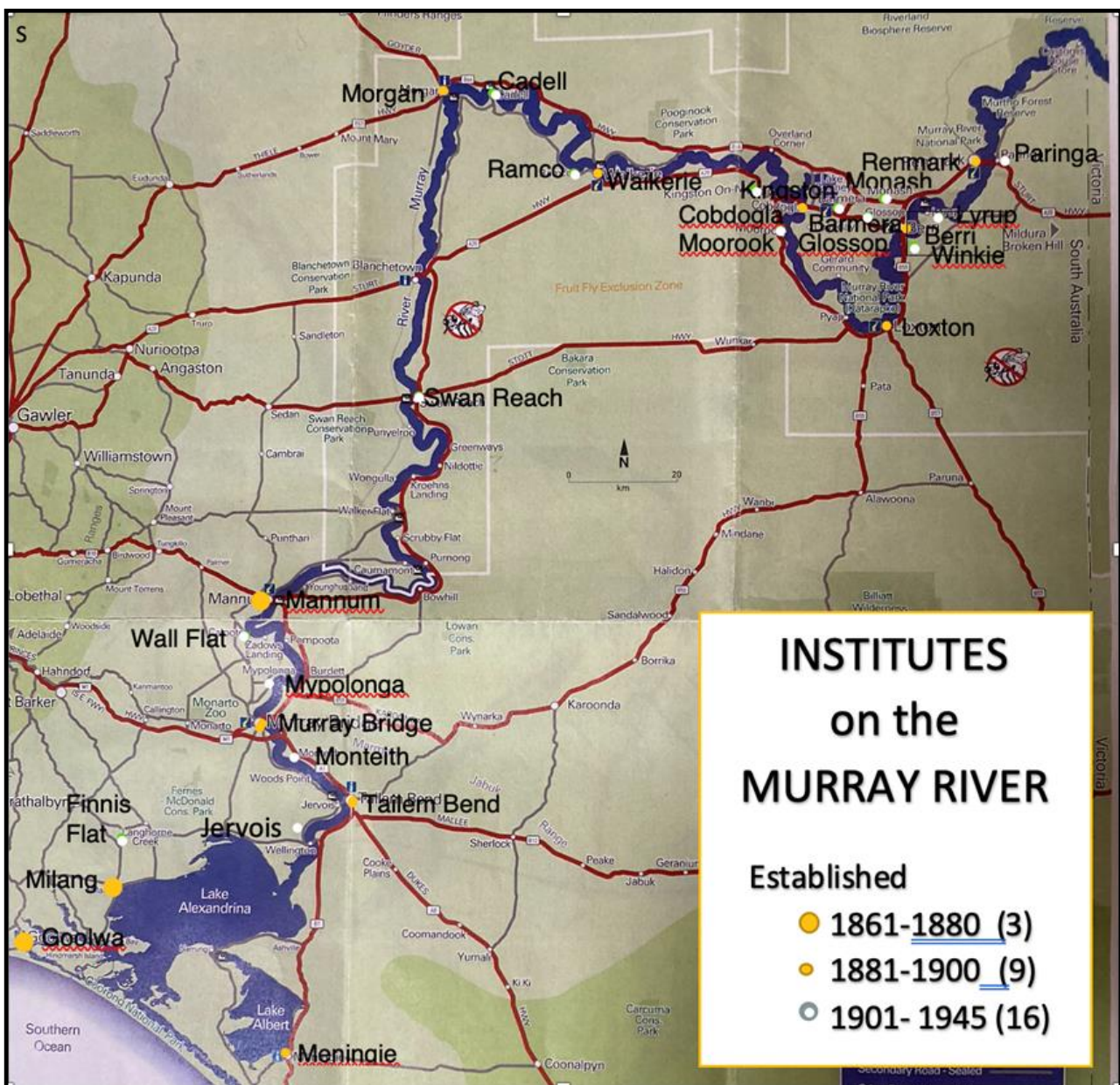
South Australian Institutes on the River Murray, continued

By Joelle Hancock <https://institutessa.com/>

The four other Murray River institutes established before 1900 began in rented premises but soon erected their own buildings which in 2023 remain significant meeting places in their communities – at Meningie (opened in 1889), Waikerie (its fourth building opened in 1921), Murray Bridge (opened in 1911 and now the Murray Bridge Town Hall) and Morgan (opened in 1909).

Where people settled, institutes provided their communities with a meeting place and a library. From 1910 sixteen more Institutes were formed along the Murray – at Finnis Flat (in the south), Jervois, Monteith, Mypolonga, Wall Flat, Swan Reach, Cadell, Ramco, Kingston, Moorook, Barmera, Glossop, Monash, Winkie, Lyrup and Paringa (at the Victorian end). Paringa was the only one that did not erect its own building.

All 38 buildings are still cared for by their communities and continue to serve them in 2023.



Map supplied by Joelle Hancock.

Vale: Margaret Bowman (1920-2023) - Academic, Melbourne Athenaeum volunteer and Author.

By Anna Bowman, published in *The Age* May 23, 2023.



The distinguished Melbourne academic and writer Dr Margaret Bowman - who died February 25, 2023 aged 103 - was born in Leeds but embraced Australia and the opportunities it offered when she and her large family arrived in Melbourne in 1959. Her husband John Bowman's appointment as the inaugural professor of Middle Eastern studies at Melbourne University, prompted the move.

"Melbourne was good to us," she often said. She was well aware she would not have had such an interesting life and career anywhere else. In 1961, Margaret became an Australian citizen, writing in a family memoir she "hoped that as citizens we have earned our keep". Her OAM was for services for local government and community.

In 1960, with her youngest child still a toddler, she was one of the first people to benefit from the opportunity to study for a degree part-time, choosing politics because it provided insights into the way society was structured and because the lectures fitted in with her complex childcare commitments.

With a first-class degree, Margaret was offered a lectureship at Monash University. While teaching there, she completed a PhD in local government, exploring the community of Box Hill, the municipality she lived in, published as *Box Hill: the suburban political process* (1978). During the Whitlam government (1972-75) Margaret was a consultant to the Department of Urban and Regional Government and in 1979

published *Australian Approaches to Environmental Management, the response of State planning, comparing approaches in different States* (sixth publication of the Environmental Law Reform Group).

In her academic work, Margaret frequently explored issues that were at hand, relevant to her life and where she lived and had been overlooked as subjects for serious academic study. Her focus on local government was pioneering. Shining a lens on the local, led to comparisons not only within Australian states, but also, international arrangements. In 1983, she co-edited *Local Democracies, a study in comparative local government* (1983) with William Hampton which looked at local government in countries including Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Fiji and Japan.

She developed an interest in rural areas, when she and John moved to Creswick, near Ballarat in the late 1970s and she became senior lecturer at Ballarat College of Advanced Education (now Federation University). In 1985, she published *The Welfare Officer for the Aged: a study of the implementation of a Commonwealth programme*. In *Getting the Numbers: women in local government* (1987) co-edited with Amanda Sinclair and Lynne Strahan she explored how to encourage more women to become involved in local government.

She is probably best known for writing about social reformers, the subject of *Reformers, shaping Australian society from the 60s to the 80s* (1989) co-written with journalist Michelle Grattan. After returning to North Melbourne where she and John lived for 50 years (with a break in Creswick), Margaret was a volunteer teacher of English to refugees for many years. She also developed new research interests, completing a second PhD at ANU on painting and politics in the ancien regime, a study of the development and influence of royal academies in 17th-century France.

Her research in the Melbourne Athenaeum archives enabled her to explore the creation of new cultural organisations in the colonial era and beyond, publishing articles in the *Victorian Historical Journal* and others. In 2011, she was awarded a State Library of Victoria fellowship to research the life and legacy of George Alexander Gilbert, the Athenaeum's first secretary. She expressed surprise when a journalist commented on her age - 91 at the time. Her book *Cultured Colonists, George Alexander Gilbert and his family, settlers in Port Philip*, (2014) won a community history prize.

Margaret continued to be active until the last year of her life - writing two family memoirs, studying French with U3A and walking her dogs Danny and his successor Wally. Thanks to the help of all her children and a team of carers, she was able to remain in her own home until two days before she died, avoiding what she regarded as being "in captivity" in residential care. Her beloved husband John died in 2006. She leaves six surviving children Anna, Sara, Helen, Katy, Dina and David. Mary died in infancy and her son Andrew in 2017. She is also survived by 15 of 17 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, based in Australia, the UK, France and Kenya.

Tynong: a town of many Halls

By Heather Arnold

The original version of the article, with references, can be read here
<https://kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com/2023/02/tynong-mechanics-institute.html>

The earliest public building in Tynong was the Mechanics' Institute and this post looks at the history of this Hall and the other one (or was it two or even three?) Halls that may have at one time been at Tynong. Tynong is a town on the edge of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp in West Gippsland. The area was opened up in the 1870s for farming and timber, which was used for sleepers for the construction of the Gippsland Railway line. The Tynong Quarry supplied the granite for the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, which was officially opened on November 11, 1934.

The first reference I can find to the Tynong Mechanics' Institute was in *The Argus* in February 1886, when the building was used to hold a political meeting, so that would indicate a likely build date of late 1885, early 1886. The first school in Tynong which operated from August 1887 until 1892 was in the Mechanics' Institute .

In the early days Mechanics' Institutes had to send in a return to the Government and these returns were published in the annual *Statistical Register for the Colony of Victoria compiled from official records in the office of the Government Statist*. Tynong appears in the 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891 and 1892 editions of the Statistical Registers.

The 1887 issue tells us that the building cost £145 to erect of which £21 came from the Government and £29 from other sources, £50 in total, which meant that £95 pounds was still owing. They had a collection of 236 books and they were open every evening. The next year, 1888, the book stock was 200, the opening hours were 1.00pm to 3.00pm and 7.00pm to 9.00pm and they had 550 visits throughout the year and received a Government grant of £20. 1889 - book stock -196; hours 9.00am -11.00am and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, annual visits were 350 and received a Government grant of £6 18 shillings. 1890 - same opening hours as 1889, book stock 207 and annual visits were 600. 1891 - book stock was 300; hours were 7.00pm to 10.00pm Thursday and Saturday and annual visits were 260. 1892 - book stock was 200, opening hours 7.00pm to 10.00pm on Wednesday and visits had declined to 100.

The next Tynong school (No. 2854) opened on May 1, 1905 in the Tynong Hall and it was used for this purpose until 1908, when the old Cardinia school was shifted to a newly acquired site on the west side of Tynong Road .



Tynong Hall in 2023.

In December 1917, the Dandenong Advertiser reported on -

The occasion of the opening of the local public hall (the need of which has long been felt), on Friday evening last, was honored by the holding of a concert, a coronation ceremony and a ball..... The purpose of the queen carnival was to provide funds, not only to put the building in such a condition, that the requirements of the Board of Public Health would be met, but also that some degree of comfort might be secured, and to this end a large committee room, and a ladies' room were' added to the structure. About £100 were spent on these improvements. This was not the current hall which opened in 1927, more of which later.

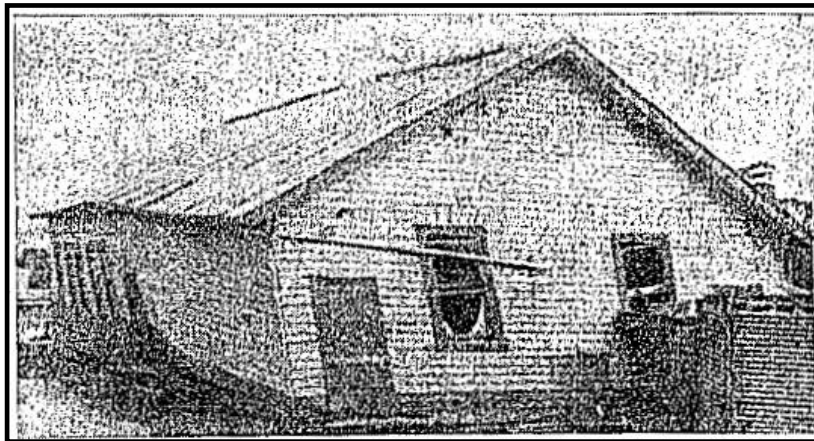
I feel these additions of the Ladies' Rooms and the Committee Room were to the original Mechanics' Institute. However, the book *From Bullock Tracks to Bitumen* notes that the first public hall was originally the school, put on land bought by the Progress Association in 1913 from Mrs Gault. It was opened in 1917. So, was the 1917 building a new hall and not an extension to the old Mechanics' Institute?

A report in the *Pakenham Gazette* of November 10, 1961 says the history of the *Tynong Hall* goes back to 1909, in which year the Progress Association purchased the present site from Mr Gault. A year or so later they purchased from the Education department an old Schoolroom and that served as Tynong's Hall for many years.

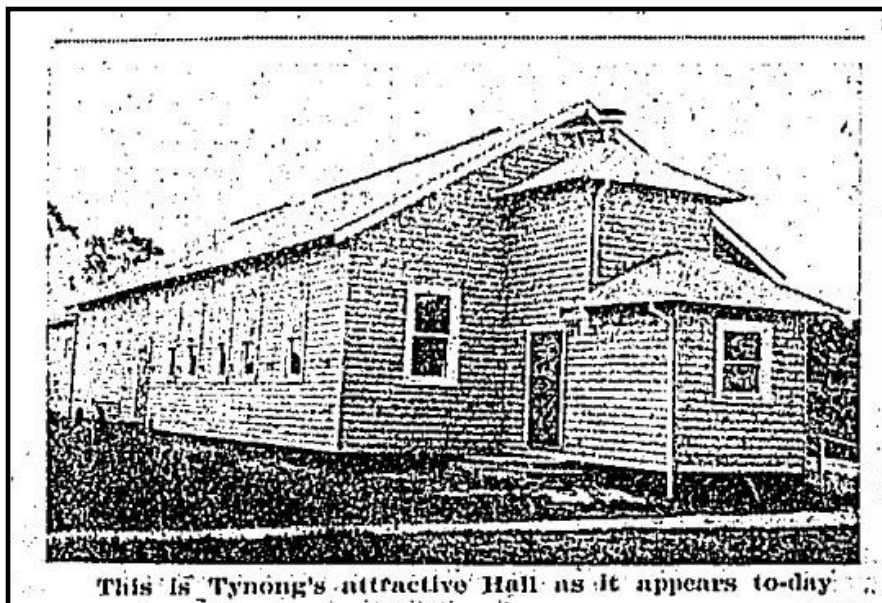
Tynong: a town of many Halls

There is yet another account of a Tynong Hall from the *Pakenham Gazette* of June 15, 1962 which are the reminiscences of an early resident, Mrs Ryan. Mrs Ryan says -
Where Wilson's home is at present in 1918 a partly built house, three rooms and frame work for more. The Centre rooms were at one time a Tynong Hall. It was in the paddock opposite the lane that runs between Jack Hamill's and Keith Nilsson's. Mr Jas Smith later sold to Mrs Gault and Miss O'Connor. In the early 1920s Mr Jas Marsden bought it and had a nice 6-roomed home made of it. (Mrs Marsden for years had a catering business.) Mr Cecil Brand bought the property and turned it into a nice home and complete with fowl pens etc. There have been a few more tenants since then, and at present Wilsons occupy it .

The current Hall was officially opened on January 14, 1927 by Councillor J. Dowd, the Shire President. The Hall cost £900.00. Disaster befell this Hall thirty years later as the *Pakenham Gazette* of November 10, 1961 reported August 5, 1959, was a black day in the history of Tynong. On it a gale, sweeping through a narrow belt of country, blew over their Public Hall. So great was the damage that opinion was almost equally divided as to whether the building could or could not be restored to its original condition. If August '59 was a black day, November 6th, '61, was a 'red letter night', for it marked the re-opening of a much better Hall than Tynong ever possessed before, with the addition of a new supper room and other rooms. Needless to say, the building was packed to the doors for the happy occasion. About 250 attended. The supper room had a well-equipped kitchen and there was also a Ladies' room.



The Hall after the wind storm of Wednesday, August 5, 1959.
Pakenham Gazette August 14, 1959, p. 1



The Tynong Hall at its re-opening in November 1961.
Pakenham Gazette November 10, 1961, p. 1

Tynong: a town of many Halls, continued

PICTURE THEATRE, TYNONG.
TENDERS are invited for Purchase as going concern of Picture Theatre, Tynong. Modern plant of one pair G.B. projectors with rear scanned heads; lamphouse with 30-30 globes, 5-inch lenses, one Montor speaker and flaire, 1 slide machine complete with lenses, 1 automatic record changer, &c., &c. Inspection by arrangement. Tenders close with Sec. Tynong Picture Theatre, on Tuesday, May 8, 1952, at 4 p.m. Any tender not necessarily accepted.
A. McLENEHAN,
Secretary.

Tynong Hall also has a Projection Room, which is currently inaccessible. I have no confirmed information about this Projection Room. Was it built in 1927 when the Hall was built – the 1920s was time when many Picture Theatres were being erected, so that would be logical.

However *These Walls Speak Volumes: a history of Mechanics' Institutes in Victoria* notes that in the 1950's the Hall Committee purchased a film projector and used the Hall as a Picture Theatre and that there is a memorial tablet in the bio-box. But then I found this advertisement from April 1952 about the Tynong Theatre plant being sold as a going concern. Were they selling recently acquired equipment? If the Theatre wasn't in the Hall, where was it? I have no answers.

The Argus, April 12, 1952
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article23173771>

The current hall was built in front of the Mechanics' Institute Hall, and in the 1950s and early 1960s the original hall was being used as Infant Welfare Centre and a Supper room. I presume that the article, below, is referring to the 1885 building, however it really only adds to the confusion as to whether there was actually a hall built in 1917.

Move to sell Tynong's First Public Hall

What was originally a State School and about 1917 became Tynong's first public hall, will probably be sold for removal by the Hall Committee.

The subject came up at last Tuesday's Hall Committee meeting.

The main hall, which has recently been re-built and added to, is now in use and some parts of the old building had either to be pulled down or re-built. This old building has been used by the Infant Welfare Centre Committee, but they will, it is expected, soon move into the main Hall.

The decision to dispose of the old building was not arrived at without a good deal of consideration. Finally it was decided to invite tenders for its purchase and removal.

One suggestion advanced during the discussion was that if a satisfactory tender was not forthcoming, the building, which is quite sound, should be re-erected as a pavilion on the Recreation ground.

Move to sell Tynong's first public hall (or was it?)
Pakenham Gazette, February 9, 1962, p. 10

My local sources tell me that the building was sold and moved to the Bayliss farm on the Highway. From there it was relocated to Old Gippsdown at Moe in 1973 (or 1978), where it remains today; and Old Gippsdown claim it to be the original Mechanics' Institute.

So, were there in fact three or even four Tynong Halls? The 1885 Mechanics' Institute, the 1927 current Hall and a Hall that was opened in c.1910 or 1917 or was there yet another Hall that became part of Mr Wilson's house? Tynong is said to be Aboriginal for 'plenty of fish' but I believe it must really mean 'plenty of halls'.