



LECTURE

Free Lecture for Melbourne Rare Book Week

Prof Wallace Kirsop

on

**People from Prahran and District
Important to the Melbourne Book Scene**

6.30pm, Thursday 21 July 2016.

All welcome. Refreshments provided.
Bookings essential 9510 3393 or library@pmi.net.au

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ABOUT THE PMI

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OPEN:

Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri
9.30am - 4.30pm

Thu
9.30am- 7.00pm

excluding public holidays
and the Christmas/New Year
period.

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The PMI invites you to participate in the
2016 Short History Prize

Prize: \$1,000 – \$500 for the author(s) and
\$500 for the associated historical group.

Topic: A historical essay, article or work of a place or an aspect of a place
in Victoria, Australia, or a person associated with a place in Victoria,
written by a member or members of a Victorian historical society or
similar organisation.

Closing Date: Friday 26 August 2016

A panel from the Professional Historians
Association judges the prize.

To download a copy of the guidelines and
entry form, visit:
<http://www.pmi.net.au/events/#shp>



**Short
History
Prize
2016**



AROUND THE LIBRARY

DONATIONS

Book Donors

Thank you to the following people and groups who donated books to the library in April-May 2016:

Tony Tibballs	Peter Synan
Pat Ryan	Ivan Binns
Jim Hevey	Yarra Plenty Regional Library
John Peck	Bayside Library Service
Margaret Dunne	Haileybury College
Ursula Zamecnik	Shirley Xanthos
John Nunan	Elena Taylor
Irene Fullarton	Cinema and Theatre
William Garner	Historical Society
The estate of Adrian Brogan	Deirdre Farfor
Judith Buckrich	

GENERAL NEWS

Staff changes

We were all very sorry to lose Christine from the staff of the PMI. We hear she is enjoying the challenge of her new position at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Following on from her departure, the committee have decided to make some changes to staff duties. They have created a new staff position called Marketing Officer and hopefully we will have employed someone for this position by the time of the next newsletter!

We would also like to welcome Ellen Coates who has been employed to help in the library with cataloguing and various other library projects, she has been a great help in this time of staff transition. ■

Vale: Gerry Kennedy



It is with great sadness I inform you that Gerry Kennedy, President of our associated group, the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society, died on 28 May due to pancreatic cancer.

Gerry was a driving force behind the creation of the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society and the development of its archive here at the PMI. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. ■

PMI Press

I am pleased to announce that after a hiatus due to the move, the PMI Press has now chosen another book for publication. 'Where did all the blacksmiths go?' a history of blacksmithing in Australia with biographies of blacksmiths (principally Victorian). The author is Shirley Xanthos. This will be a valuable addition to Australian history as there are very few, if any, books on the social aspects of blacksmithing. ■

Book Sale

Wendy and the Friends of the PMI have been working diligently to sort and price a large amount of spare second-hand books that the PMI has accumulated. We will be able to offer these for sale to our members soon. Stay tuned for further updates by email. ■

GENERAL NEWS

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held on 28 May with a good attendance of about 40. The meeting was followed by a talk by Pam Baragwanath. See the next page for the President's report to the AGM. If anyone requires a copy of the full annual report, let us know and we will be able to send you an electronic version via email. ■

Thanks to Pam Baragwanath



Following the AGM, Pam gave us a very interesting talk on mechanics' institutes in Victoria. As you may be aware, Pam has recently launched the revised version of her book about Victorian mechanics' institutes. The new edition is titled 'These walls speak volumes'.

Pam collaborated with Ken James to produce the book and it is a thoroughly comprehensive survey of nearly one thousand mechanics' institutes in Victoria. Also, during the research for their book, Pam and Ken came across a lot of resources and information regarding mechanics' institutes and the like in Australia that could not be included in 'These walls speak volumes'. They are now compiling this information into a digital resource and are in discussions with the State Library of Victoria to make this information available in digital book format online. ■

AROUND THE LIBRARY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM (edited version)

2015 was another significant year in the history of the Prahran Mechanics' Institute being the first year we have been in occupation of our new building - when I gave my report at last year's AGM it was only one day after the building's official opening. It's been a hectic and exciting time since then, as we have been adjusting to our new surroundings, enjoying our new enlarged facilities and the expansion of services we are now able to offer.

In the 12 months since the major work on the building was completed we have been resolving a number of additional fit-out issues. One recent improvement of note has been installing a drop-down ceiling ladder connecting to the roof area, greatly enhancing safe access. Here in the Moss Room, to better cater for exhibitions, we are planning to install a security camera to provide additional lighting.

A special thank you, in particular, must go to Peter Wolfenden, one of our committee members, who has used his extraordinary handyman skills, spending many hours during the last twelve months undertaking various improvements to the building and its equipment.

So, once again, it's been a busy year for our staff with the front of House activities but also another busy year for our Committee.

At the committee meeting following last year's AGM I was re-appointed as President, Steve Stefanopoulos was appointed as Vice President and Ben Quin was re-appointed as our Treasurer. Also, Cr Claude Ullin has been reappointed by Stonnington Council as their delegate to our committee.

The committee has also appointed four sub-committees to focus more fully on particular aspects of our operations, namely:

Finance sub-committee: Ben Quin, Tim McKenna and myself.

Advocacy sub-committee (to investigate sources of funding): Claude Ullin, Chris Michalopoulos and Steve Stefanopoulos.

PMI Press sub-committee: Judith Buckrich, Chris Michalopoulos, Steve Stefanopoulos and Sylvie Blair who is an ex officio Bookpod representative.

and Property sub-committee (upkeep and improvement of 39 St Edmonds Rd): Peter Wolfenden and myself.

Additionally, the committee, as well as having its normal meeting cycle has been holding ten-year-plan meetings in order to develop a long term plan for the future of the Institute and it is intended that such a plan be resolved upon in the coming year.

I must in this report acknowledge some significant grants and donations. As I reported last year, your committee was successful in obtaining a significant grant of \$120,000 from Stonnington City Council, the grant is being paid over three years. We received \$40,000 in July last year and we will be receiving the next 40,000 this July. We had to dip into our investment account at Perpetual to pay for the renovations, but with the help of the Stonnington Grant, we anticipate that we will not have to do so again, allowing our investment fund to grow.

Stonnington Council has also given us grants for the funding of our newsletter and communications, including our new colour brochure, our volunteer gifts and function, and money to purchase new periodical boxes which greatly enhances the look of the periodicals area.

You will, no doubt, have noticed our new lectern. We have the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society to thank for the donation of \$2,100.00 to cover the cost of purchasing this equipment. We have attached a plaque to acknowledge their kind donation.

On the staff front, our Promotions and Publications Librarian, Christine Worthington, after more than 15 years of excellent service, has resigned to take up a position at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria as Collections Manager & Volunteer Coordinator, we will miss her greatly. We are currently conducting interviews for a new position which will involve doing the promotional part of Christine's work such as newsletter, website, advertising, events etc. We will also be hiring a collections librarian to take care of the ordering, accessioning and cataloguing of items for the collection, work that until now has been shared between Tim, Christine and Ursula.

2015 was the 8th year of the volunteer program. Up to December 2015, 27 volunteers contributed 670 hours' work in the library and 6 book indexes were completed by indexers. We thank all our volunteers for their hard work. The PMI has also now started a Friends Group. Wendy Eldridge has kindly agreed to be the co-ordinator of the Friends and she has been busily working with the new group to organise our surplus books for sale. They have already spent considerable hours on this task and this will no doubt increase income to the PMI from the sales.

There are a few people I have to thank on behalf of the PMI, for their support. Firstly, I must say a special thank you to our Committee, Vice President Steven Stefanopoulos, Treasurer Ben Quin, Judith Buckrich, Peter Wolfenden, Chris Michalopoulos and my Council colleague Cr Claude Ullin for all their efforts throughout the year.

And a very special thank you to our dedicated staff, Tim McKenna, Christine Worthington and Ursula Zamecnik - and also to all of our very generous volunteers. And thank you to all of our generous donation givers and book donors. And to you, our members, thank you for your continuing support.

Your Committee is looking forward to another exciting and busy year ahead in our new home, as we continue on with this new era for the PMI that will, as I said at our AGM last year, increase our relevance to the community, redefine the service we offer and redefine who we are. The future of the PMI is well assured and we can plan for the years ahead with confidence.

John Chandler

NON-FICTION

The fair dinkums / Glenn McFarlane

'Fair Dinkum' (def.): honesty, guts, directness, fortitude, courage, truth.

You had to be fair dinkum to enlist after the hell of Gallipoli hit home. A new breed of warrior and patriot stepped up as Anzac's second wave.

Among them were 152 men of the 7th Battalion - fruit pickers and farmers, bootmakers and blacksmiths, miners and mailmen. They fought under the colours of 'mud and blood' in the searing sands of Egypt, on Gallipoli's fatal shore, across killing fields in France and beyond. Born in the right place at the wrong time, the bravery and ingenuity of these young Australian men forged a legendary band of brothers: 'The Fair Dinkums'.

High seas and high teas : voyaging to Australia / Roslyn Russell

'The rats I frighten away by throwing books or anything hard at the spot at which they commence their gnawing.' Emigrant Janet Ronald wrote this in the journal she kept on board one of the ships transporting free settlers from Britain and Ireland to Australia in the nineteenth century. On journeys lasting more than 100 days, non-stop, our forebears endured raging seas, the dazzling heat of the tropics and freezing temperatures as ships journeyed far into the southerly latitudes. They also formed social communities, putting on plays, developing sometimes lasting relationships and taking part in wild nautical rituals.

Using diary entries and shipboard newspapers, author Roslyn Russell gives a vivid sense of what it was like to leave one life for another and sail across the world into the unknown. In the foreword, Kerry O'Brien writes about his Irish ancestors' perilous voyages to Australia in the nineteenth century-as both free settlers and guests of Her Majesty.

Private lives, public history / Anna Clark

The past is consumed on a grand scale: popularised by television programs, enjoyed by reading groups, walking groups, historical societies and heritage tours, and supported by unprecedented digital access to archival records. Yet our history has also become the subject of heated political debate.

In *Private Lives, Public History*, historian Anna Clark explores how our personal pasts intersect with broader historical questions. Drawing on interviews with Australians from five communities around the country, she uncovers how we think about the past in the context of our local and intimate stories, and the role that history plays in our lives.

Certain admissions : a beach, a body and a lifetime of secrets / Gideon Haigh

Who killed Beth Williams? On a warm evening in December 1949, two young people met by chance under the clocks at Melbourne's Flinders Street railway station and decided upon a spontaneous night on the town. The next morning, one of them, twenty-year-old typist Beth Williams, was found dead on Middle Park beach. When police arrested the other, Australians were transfixed: twenty-four year-old John Bryan Kerr was a son of the establishment -- a suave and handsome commercial radio star educated at Scotch College.

There were three 'sensational' trials after which Kerr was sentenced to hang, based on an unsigned confession. Amidst a frenzy of public outcry his sentence was subsequently commuted to twenty years imprisonment. Kerr always maintained his innocence and became a Pentridge celebrity and poster boy for rehabilitation. More than fifty years after the event another man confessed on his deathbed to the crime, and two other unsolved

murders, outing himself as an untried serial killer. But could he be believed?

Compelling and brilliantly evoked, *Certain Admissions* is stranger than any crime fiction. It's a real-life story of murder, corruption, blood ties and social history that will leave you guessing long after the final page.

Van Diemen's women : a history of transportation to Tasmania / Joan Kavanagh & Dianne Snowden

On 2 September 1845, the convict ship 'Tasmania' left Kingston Harbour for Van Diemen's Land with 138 female convicts and their 35 children. On 3 December the ship arrived in Hobart Town.

While this book looks at the lives of all the women aboard, it focuses on two women in particular: Eliza Davis, who was transported from Wicklow Gaol for life for infanticide, having had her sentence commuted from death, and Margaret Butler, sentenced to seven years' transportation for stealing potatoes in Carlow.

Using original records, this study reveals the reality of transportation, together with the legacy left by these women in Tasmania and beyond, and shows that perhaps, for some, this Draconian punishment was, in fact, a life-saving measure.

■
See our 'Recent Additions' for more!