COMING UP

Volunteer and Member Christmas Afternoon Tea

This year’s Christmas Afternoon Tea for Volunteers and Members will be held on Saturday 1 December 2018 at 2:00PM.

Please join us for sandwiches and refreshments in the William Moss Room.

If you wish to attend, please RSVP by 4:30PM on Friday 16 November 2018 at www.trybooking.com/TTYQ or by phone 9510 3393.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

We will be closed for the Melbourne Cup public holiday on Tuesday 6 November. The returns chute will be open should you wish to return any items. The library will be open as usual on Monday 5 November and will resume normal operating hours on Wednesday 7 November.

FROM THE SECRETARY LIBRARIAN

Welcome to another newsletter.

The 2018 Seniors Festival is in full swing once again and PMI has hosted some wonderful events including a fascinating talk on the rock and roll music scene in Prahran from the 1950s to the 1980s. Ian McFarlane (a noted music journalist and historian) painted a picture of Prahran, and in particular Greville Street, as a Melbourne version of Haight and Ashbury in San Francisco. Did you know that AC/DC used to play at the Station Hotel and that Chrissie Amphlett, who lived in Greville Street for a while, would regularly gig there to, in her late teens and early twenties?

The Station Hotel is now being remodelled to include apartments and Leggett’s Ballroom is all but a memory. Such is progress.

If you are visiting the PMI soon, you will notice some subtle changes around the library. In order to better promote our collection we are installing new display shelving within our existing shelving units. We have also added section dividers throughout the print collection which will help navigation when looking for a specific item or browsing.

Steven Haby, Secretary Librarian

GENERAL NEWS

VICTORIAN SENIORS FESTIVAL

We are halfway through this year’s Victorian Seniors Festival. We have had some old and new faces come through the library during the festival so far, which is has been wonderful.
We still have spaces available for our upcoming Seniors Festival events - more details can be found under Upcoming Events on page 4.

As mentioned by Steven in his welcome, we hosted Ian McFarlane’s presentation *Prahran the Rock’n’Roll Town* on Saturday 5 October. This was an incredibly popular presentation with the event selling out by Saturday morning.

![Image of Ian McFarlane with CATHS member Tony Tibballs](image)

There were lots of smiles, laughter and nodding throughout Ian’s talk and some were able to add anecdotes to Ian’s stories.

The new permanent book sale area in the James Mason area worked well. The Friends took advantage of the wonderful weather and moved part of the booksale out to the front of the library, which attracted passers by to stop and browse.

We have been running our weekly *Excelling at Ebay, Trawling Through Trove and Success at Family History* workshops/talks. We have once again had some very engaged participants who are eager to learn. We are continuing to run these events until the end of October. Visit page 4 for upcoming dates.

On Saturday 13 October, the *Cinema and Theatre Historical Society* presented *Geelong’s Hidden Gem: The History of the Geelong Theatre*. This event was also held in conjunction with *History Week* celebrations.

CATHS President Richard Twentyman spoke about the history of the Geelong Theatre which opened in 1913. It was one of the largest theatres in Australia at the time with a capacity of 1,400.

![Image of Richard Twentyman](image)

Over time it underwent a number of rebuilds including being converted into the Village Twin in 1970 and is now know as the Village 11.

Richard presented a fascinating selection of images that illustrated the changing interior and façade over time (which thankfully has been restored to its former glory).
We had a fantastic response to the PMI Library survey. The staff and committee would like to thank all of the members who took the time to complete the survey.

Ellen and Chris will begin evaluating the data over the next couple of months, but a brief look at the information provided suggests there is some fantastic data to work with. We will report on the findings of the survey in the 2018 Annual Report.

We have already implemented a couple of changes in response to some of the information provided, including regular ‘What’s On’ emails to members and a link to the PMI Blog on our website.

Congratulations to Jennifer McCoy who was the recipient of the $50 book voucher.

Once again, a big thank you to all of you who took the time to respond to the survey.

**INSIDE THE LIBRARY**

**APRA Music Licence**

The library now holds an APRA Licence which allows us to play music within the library. If you have visited the library recently, you may have noticed that we are now playing welcome music on the ground floor.

We also played a selection of Australian music at the *Prahran the Rock’n’Roll Town* event, which was personally selected by Ian McFarlane to compliment his talk. Music played included *Saturday Night* / Skyhooks, *Boy on the Run* / The Dingoes, *Roll That Reefer* / Captain Matchbox Whoppee Band and *Boogie Man* / Daddy Cool. This set a great atmosphere to the room before the event officially began.

If you are a Spotify user, you can find our public playlist *Prahran the Rock’n’Roll Town with Ian McFarlane* here: [spoti.fi/2yhAXjW](http://spoti.fi/2yhAXjW).

**Signage and Shelving**

We are continually working to make our collection as accessible as possible. As touched upon briefly by Steven in his welcome message, you will begin to see some updates to the print collection shelving.

We have already completed Stage 1 of our Wayfinding Project which includes section/subject dividers throughout the shelving, to assist users with navigating the collection. In particular, this signage will help anyone who is browsing to quickly see where different subject areas are located.

For example the section dividers currently include Art, Architecture, Music and Sport among others and a breakdown of the Victorian Local Histories by State.
Stage 2 of the project will involve further subject breakdowns including identifying the Victorian Local Histories by region.

We have replaced the brochure display shelving - previously located on the wall at the top of the stairs - with a new larger freestanding slatwall unit (see image below). The unit is located in the foyer, adjacent to the lift, clear of high traffic areas.

You can find information from community and historical organisations as well as PMI brochures/flyers.

Front facing shelving will be installed throughout the main library, allowing us to highlight more titles and better promote the collection. We will also have a full bay of display shelves which will be visible upon entering the library. This will provide a permanent book display area which we can use to showcase different parts of the collection. We have begun moving books to make room for the shelving with the help of Kimberley, one of our volunteers.

## CENTENARY OF MELBOURNE’S ELECTRIC SUBURBAN TRAINS

By Steven Haby

In the first week of October 1918 the first electric trains in Melbourne commenced running on the Flemington Racecourse line on driver training exercises. Proper electric train services commenced running between Sandringham and Essendon on 28 May 1919.

Work had actually started in 1912 to electrify Melbourne’s suburban rail network, with the network ready for operation by 1915. However, World War I delayed work as electrical equipment from the United Kingdom could not reach Australia.

The idea for electrification was kickstarted by the Victorian Railways’ Chief Commissioner Thomas James Tait in 1908 who engaged English electrical engineer Charles Merz to deliver a report to the government. A number of subsequent reports were delivered to refine the original recommendations.

By 1920 electrification had extended to Fawkner, Darling, Altona and Williamstown.

It was an immediate success with patronage booming as travel times were slashed, travel was more comfortable and frequencies increased. The electrification of the network competed on equal terms with the M&MTB electric trams.

The first electric trains were a mixture of brand new ‘Tait’ multiple units (named in honour of Commissioner Tait) and converted ‘Swingdoor’ carriages - some examples of these can be found below.

Above, is an image of a four car ‘Tait’ set comprising a motor car, trailer, driving trailer (non-powered motor) and motor car at the former Springvale Cemetery branch line in 1938.

To the right, is an image of a ‘Swingdoor’ motor AKA ‘doggies’ or ‘dogboxes’ on the former outer circle line at Alphington whilst on a tour in 1989. This line ran into the now closed and demolished APM paper mill. These trains were narrower and slightly shorter than the ‘Tait’ cars which are behind 107M. Sadly 107M was destroyed by fire by vandals a few years ago.

On the left is an E class tank engine no. 353 shunts carriages, taken at Spencer Street in 1953. These locomotives and others were quickly displaced from suburban work as electrification encroached into their territory.

You can read more about electric suburban trains in my Throwback Thursday post for 18 October on our Facebook page.
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**PMI Victorian Seniors Festival**

We are continuing to run events throughout October as part of the 2018 Victorian Seniors Festival. All events, apart from the Heritage Walks are free, but bookings are essential.

You can book online via our website, or by phone on 9510 3393.

**Excelling at Ebay**

Tuesdays, 11:00am-12:30pm

Learn about how eBay works and how easily you can set up an account and start selling or buying.

**BOOK ONLINE:** [www.trybooking.com/WCCZ](http://www.trybooking.com/WCCZ)

**Trawling Through Trove**

Wednesdays, 10:30am-11:30am

Let us help you put the pieces of your family history puzzle together with this introduction to exploring and interacting with Trove’s resources including newspapers, photographs, books, websites and other ephemera.

**BOOK ONLINE:** [www.trybooking.com/WCCH](http://www.trybooking.com/WCCH)

**Success with Family History**

Wednesday 24 and 31 October, 11:30am-12:00pm

Find out how you can help ensure that your family history not only makes it into libraries, but is also as accessible as possible for researchers and fellow family historians.

**BOOK ONLINE:** [www.trybooking.com/WCCO](http://www.trybooking.com/WCCO)

**Heritage Walk: Malvern Civic Precinct**

Wednesday 24 October, 10:00am-11:30am

Come on a guided heritage walk of the Malvern Civic Precinct with the Mayor of Stonnington, Cr Steve Stefanopoulos

Library Members, Seniors/Concession Card Holders $15.00 | Non-Members $20.00

**BOOK ONLINE:** [www.trybooking.com/WCEG](http://www.trybooking.com/WCEG)

**Slide Night: Days of Melbourne and Victoria’s Past**

Thursday 25 October, 7:00pm-9:00pm

Come along and relive the past with a night of slides remembering Melbourne and wider Victoria of yesteryear.

Supper will be provided in keeping with the era. You can look forward to such delights as Fairy Bread, Devils on Horseback and Pigs in Blankets catered by the great folks at St Edmonds Cafe next door.

Staff will also be dressing for the occasion so feel free to join in. You may wish to bring along your sunglasses as Secretary Librarian, Steven Haby is threatening to wear one of his beloved Hawaii shirts. Consider yourself warned.

**BOOK ONLINE:** [www.trybooking.com/WDDB](http://www.trybooking.com/WDDB)

**NEW: Family History Social Group**

Do you enjoy friendly conversation and family history?

The Friends of the PMI Library are running a social group on the first Monday of each month from 1:00pm-3:30pm.

Come along and share your knowledge and skills with other group members in a friendly and supportive environment while making use of the many resources available at the PMI Victorian History Library.

Whether you are just starting out with your family history research or have many years experience you are welcome to come along.

Starting Monday 5 November 2018.

No bookings required.

**HNSA Melbourne Chapter**

**Join a Community of Writers talking about their Craft**

History Novel Society Australasia (HNSA) hosts an annual event program focussed on the craft of writing, bringing together established, emerging and aspiring writers to talk about their writing, the craft of writing, getting published and much more.

*Sip & Savour Historical Flavour Event*

Join Glenice Whiting, Lynne McDermott and Alli Sinclair in conversation with Robert Gott accompanied by pairings of beverages from around the world.

Thursday 8 November, 6:30pm, Mail Exchange Hotel, 688 Bourke Street, Melbourne. (Tickets: $25)

**Book Online:** [www.trybooking.com/VRJZ](http://www.trybooking.com/VRJZ)

Join the following HNSA Facebook Groups for more information about events, including profiles about appearing authors:

**Melbourne Chapter:**

HNSA: [www.facebook.com/groups/HNSAustralasia/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/HNSAustralasia/)
Melbourne has long been thought of as the racing capital of Australia. But how did it come to be?

The Spring Carnival as we know it started in March in 1838 west of Spencer street. It was immediately successful. In 1840 a group of enterprising men applied and received a grant of land which would become Flemington Racecourse.

Racing fever hit its stride with many formal racing clubs being established. The first was Port Phillip Turf club, founded in 1842, however it did not last a very long time. The Victoria Turf Club was established in 1852. In 1856 the Victoria Jockey Club came to be and later on merged to become the Victoria Racing Club (VRC).

It is little surprise that a town that had a gold rush in its midst, also had many willing punters that crowded the racetrack. The amount of willing punters, was so numerous in fact, that Melbourne was becoming real competition for the Sydney and Tasmania racing meets. As a result good fields and adequate trainers were in high demand in Victoria.

In 1857 a challenge race was held in Melbourne between Sydney horse Veno and Melbourne filly Alice Hawthorn. The prize was 1,000 sovereigns, which caused a flurry of excitement across the two states. Veno was victorious on the day and in fact also won another race against a Geelong horse, Van Tromp, on the same day (what a champion!).

The appetite for large cash prizes was growing and in 1859 the Australian Champion Sweepstakes was announced with a prize of 500 pounds. The Melbourne Cup followed in 1861, which further prodded interstate rivalry in the racing community.

Sydney based horse Archer, won the first two Melbourne Cups. During this time many private racetracks popped up including Elsternwick in 1882, Moonee Valley in 1883 and many, many others.
Throughout the ensuing years there were issues with unregulated betting, which culminated in the Victoria Racing Club Act of 1871. This law meant that the only legal form of betting was on the racecourse on the day of racing meets. Realistically it is likely that illegal betting continued in some form. Off course betting was eventually allowed in 1960 with the TAB becoming legalised.

The radio gave racing a new lease of life in the 1920’s and even more with the arrival of television. More people could take part in racing, rather than just the crowds at the race track. During this time Phar Lap was racing and due to increased media attention, he rose to almost mythical status.

In the 1980’s a revitalisation of the racecourses led to world class facilities. From 1993, the Victoria Racing Club decided to start attracting international racehorses. In 2018 over 84 million dollars will be given in prize money over 132 meets the during Spring Carnival.

The Melbourne Cup is still the race that stops the nation 157 years after its inception. May you all pick a winner this year!

References

- First Tuesday in November : the story of the Melbourne Cup / D.L. Bernstein.
- Cup day : the story of the Melbourne Cup 1861-1960/ Maurice Cavanough, Meurig Davies.
- A century galloped by : the first hundred years of the Victoria Racing Club / John Pacini.
New Books

**Tomato: Know Sow Grow Feast / Penny Woodward, Janice Sutton and Karen Sutherland**

Heirloom, organic, Australian. Karen leads you through organic heirloom tomato growing, from seed sowing to feeding, pruning and training. She outlines a variety of ways to grow, tells stories of some passionate growers and helps you to keep problems at bay with an extensive illustrated pest and disease section. Penny chronicles the history of heirloom tomato varieties in Australia and explains how to breed your own heirloom tomatoes. She also details why tomatoes are so good for you, and why a red tomato is red! Finally Penny lists, and describes in details, more than 220 different heirloom tomatoes that can be sourced in Australia today. Janice explores the enticing and diverse range of heirloom tomato flavours, describes in detail how to select, prepare and cook heirloom tomatoes, and explains how to create the perfect tomato passatta and paste. Finally, she shares more than 60 delectable tomato recipes from renowned chefs from all over Australia.

**Picardy: An Australian garden inspired by a passion for all things French / Marian Somes**

This rich and evocative memoir is not only an uplifting story of creating a French idyll in an Australian landscape, but a beautifully written account of how a garden changed their lives.

When Bryce and Marian Somes took a whistle-stop tour of France in 1986, they couldn’t have imagined the lasting effect it would have on their future.

Having tried to coax various gardens to flourish along on the harsh Western Australian coastline and later moving on from suburban gardening in Melbourne, the Someses found 26 acres of bare but beckoning land in Victoria’s Gippsland in 1992 and set about creating what Bryce lovingly referred to as a French folly.

The ever-expanding garden, which now includes an olive grove and vineyard in addition to the orchard and extensive perennial and picking gardens inspired by Monet’s Giverny, surround a rustic rammed earth farmhouse and barn that are also continually evolving.

**Mirka & Georges / Lesley Harding and Kendrah Morgan**

The impact of Mirka and Georges Mora on Australian art and food has been remarkable.

Arriving in Melbourne in 1951 from Paris, they energised local society and transformed the culinary and artistic landscapes. Their apartment became a hub for the bohemian set, and their cafes and restaurants brimmed with sophisticated food, sexual intrigue and creative endeavours. Mirka’s distinctive art, now collected by major galleries, was a vital part of this heady mix.

Their eateries were magnets to the rich and famous, a who’s who of the art world and those looking for a seriously good time. Mick Jagger was a customer. As were Bob Dylan, Barry Humphries, Jean Shrimpton, Ava Gardner, Gregory Peck, Marlene Dietrich, Fred Astaire, Maurice Chevalier and Graham Kennedy.

Launched in the year of Mirka’s 90th birthday, Mirka & Georges gloriously illustrates the Moras’ extraordinary story, with the couple’s classic French recipes, photographs from family albums and…

**The Maddest Place on Earth / Jill Giese**

(Winner of the Victorian Premier’s History Award)

Gold-fuelled Melbourne was booming, but dwelling in the fault lines of the proud young colony was an alarming fact – Victoria had the highest rate of insanity in the world. Was it the antipodean sun, gold mania, excessive masturbation, the heady pace of modern life?

The true story of colonial Victoria’s quest to cure insanity unfolds through the lives of three English newcomers – a gifted artist, exiled from his homeland for his madness; an ambitious doctor, bringing enlightened treatment ideals to his post in charge of the overflowing asylum; and a mysterious undercover journalist, who sensationally exposed the lunatics’ plight in Melbourne’s press.

Amid the clamour of fraught endeavours and maddened minds, the story reveals unexpected hope, creativity and ennobling humanity – and surprising contemporary relevance as we continue to grapple with this ancient human malady.
**Coming Soon**

**Slow Catastrophes: Living with drought in Australia / Rebecca Jones**

Living with drought is one of the biggest issues of our times. Climate change scenarios suggest that in the next fifty years global warming will increase both the frequency and severity of these phenomena. Stories of drought are familiar to us, accompanied by images of dead sheep, dry dams, cracked earth, farmers leaving their lands, and rural economic stagnation. Drought is indeed a catastrophe, played out slowly. But as Rebecca Jones reveals in this sensitive account of families living on the Australian land, the story of drought in this driest continent is as much about resilience, adaptation, strength of community, ingenious planning for, and creative responses to, persistent absences of rainfall. The histories of eight farming families, stretching from the 1870s to the 1950s, are related, with a focus on private lives and inner thoughts, revealed by personal diaries. The story is brought up to the present with the author's discussions with contemporary farmers and pastoralists. In greatly enriching our understanding of the human dimensions of drought, Slow Catastrophes provides us with vital resources to face our ecological future

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**A Sand Archive / Gregory Day**

Long before I ever met him I knew his name from the leaky desiccated type of a grey-brown slim volume, cheaply printed but essential to my research...

Seeking stories of Australia’s Great Ocean Road, a young writer stumbles across a manual from a minor player in the road’s history, FB Herschell. It is a volume unremarkable in every way, save for the surprising portrait of its author that can be read between its lines: a vision of a man who writes with uncanny poetry about sand.

And as he continues to mine the archive of FB Herschell - engineer, historian, philosopher - it is not the subject, but the man who begins to fascinate. A man whose private revolution among the streets of Paris in May 1968 begins to change the way he views life, love, and the coastal landscape into which he was born...

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**Granville Stapylton: Australian Felix 1836: Second in Command to Major Mitchell / Gregory C. Eccleston**

Granville Stapylton was a late but important addition to Major Mitchell’s so-called ‘Australia Felix’ survey of 1836. Following his death in the Moreton Bay area in 1840, Stapylton’s field notebooks had been returned to his family in England; for more than 140 years they were unavailable to scholars. In the mid-1980s when Gregory Eccleston was researching the proposed Major Mitchell Trail, he traced the notebooks to Chichester in Sussex and had them microfilmed. They now form the primary text of this magnificent publication. On its own, the information within these notebooks is of great significance to the early European history of Victoria, but its value has been greatly enriched and supplemented here through the precise and meticulous research carried out by Eccleston. The smallest details of explanation and context relating to entries in the notebooks are provided through marginalia, annotations and end notes to each chapter. The book is also lavishly illustrated in colour throughout. It is both a mine of information and a work of art.

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**Silent Lives: Women of Warrnambool and District, 1840-1910 / Elizabeth O’Callaghan**

Elizabeth O’Callaghan is a former secondary college principal who for many years has contributed to the Warrnambool Historical Society. In this book she has made extensive use of diaries, letters, early newspapers and other documentary resources to reveal the lives of women of Warrnambool who have, until now, been silent in the record of social history. The result is a display of both her dedication to right an historical imbalance, and her masterful use of the available resources. The first chapter, where the fate of Indigenous women is discussed with compassion, sets the pattern for the whole book. The narrative is interspersed with perceptive and compact biographies of representative women, related to the various topics. Thematic discussions include women in paid employment, particularly as school teachers, their recreational interests, political activities and charitable work, examined and analysed within the social context.
Governance

The PMI is incorporated under the Prahran Mechanics’ Institute Act No 1617 (1899) and operates under the Rules of the Prahran Mechanics’ Institute and Circulating Library, gazetted in the Victorian Parliament on 24 July 2007. Members are provided with copies of the PMI legislation and Library Policy on request, and can join our mailing list to receive committee meeting minutes.

Committee

The PMI is administered by a committee of seven people. Six Committee members are elected by the members of the PMI at the annual general meeting for a four year term of office and one person appointed by the City of Stonnington. The current PMI Committee Members are:

- Dr Judith Buckrich (President)
- Cr Steve Stefanopoulos (Vice President & City of Stonnington representative)
- Mr Ben Quin, CPA (Treasurer)
- Cr John Chandler OAM
- Dr Michelle Negus Cleary
- Mr Chris Michalopoulos
- Mr Tim McKenna

The PMI Library Staff

- Steven Haby, (BASocSci Librarianship) (Secretary Librarian)
- Ellen Coates (BA (Hons); MA (Info. Stud.)) (Collections Librarian)
- Christine Moysey-Barker (AssocDegInfoStud) (Marketing and Communications Officer)
- Ursula Zamecnik (DipLib&InfSt) (Library Technician)

The Prahran Mechanics’ Institute is an institutional member of the Australian Library & Information Association and is a member society of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Find Us Online

Did you know the PMI Library has a Facebook and Twitter page? We also have a Blog!

Check us out at:

[Facebook link](#) /[PMILibrary](#) /[institutingthepast.wordpress.com](#)

Visit Us

- **Parking**: Parking is available at the institute on a first-come-first-serve basis. There are 3 spaces at the front of the building and a further 7 spaces in the garage (accessed from the front of the building on St Edmonds Rd) – please park in the numbered spaces to avoid blocking cars in. If all spaces are taken, there is 1 hour parking in St Edmonds Road and Greville Street. Please note the Cato Street carpark in Izett Street is now closed for redevelopment, visit [www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Development/Council-Projects/Cato-Square](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Development/Council-Projects/Cato-Square) for more details in relation to parking in the area.

- **Trains**: The Institute is one block from Prahran Station (Sandringham Line), turn right into Greville Street and then right again into St Edmonds Rd.

- **Trams**: There is the #6 tram running along High Street, the #72 tram along Commercial Road and the #78 tram along Chapel Street.

- **Buses**: Buses #216, #219 and #220 run along Commercial Road. You can alight at the Prahran Market stop.