

# PRAHNAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

## VICTORIAN & LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY

NEWSLETTER NO 47 - OCTOBER 2006



140 High Street, Prahran (PO Box 1080 Windsor VIC 3181) Ph/Fax (03) 9510 3393 [library@pmi.net.au](mailto:library@pmi.net.au)  
[www.pmi.net.au](http://www.pmi.net.au) Open Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm, Sat 9.30am-1.00pm Membership \$12, \$10 conc., \$30 inst.  
Feedback / suggestions for this newsletter may be directed to writer / compiler Christine Worthington

*Prahran Mechanics' Institute and the Cinema & Theatre Historical Society present*

# HISTORIC PICTURE SHOW

Owing to the success of last year's Historic Picture Show, the PMI and CATHS combine once more to jointly present this event again in 2006.

*The theme of the Picture Show this year will be*

## TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATIONS

*Peter Wolfenden (Vice President, CATHS) will take us on another exciting journey through time as we explore mediums of transport and communication through*



*Australian Gazette silent films (1910s)*



*World War II period newsreels*



*Short films from 1940s through to 1970s*

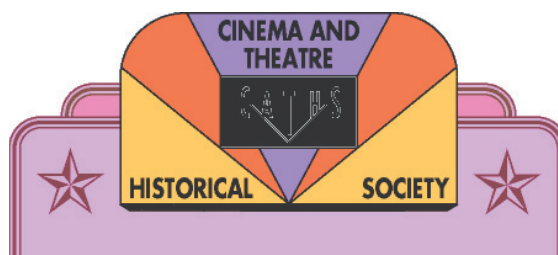
**6.45pm Wednesday 15 November 2006**  
*(meet at PMI Library, 140 High Street, Prahran)*

*Free Admission ★ PLEASE BOOK EARLY  
to reserve your seat!*

*Phone 9510 3393*

*or email [library@pmi.net.au](mailto:library@pmi.net.au)*

*The Picture Show will be followed by  
refreshments in the library.*



# INSIDE

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# AROUND THE LIBRARY



## MEMBERS NEWS

Welcome to the following new members who joined during August and September:

Thomas Allen	Hopie
Emma Chapman	Alison Day
Valerie Lee	Edna Thompson
Ray Cole	Sharon Merron
James Crosswell	Peter
William Draper	Angela
Stanley Edwards	John
Robyn Harriott	Paul

Thank you to the following members who made financial donations to the library during August and September:

Stella Barber	June Mayne
Nicholas Fothergill	Gwen Orford
Margaret Hicks	Eric Steele
Murray Houghton	Arriness Watson
Hinton Lambert	

## GENERAL NEWS

Members of the **Malvern Historical Society** visited the PMI on the evening of 10 August. Christine gave a talk about the mechanics' institutes, the library and the historical collection. Afterwards they were given a tour of the library by Cathy. If your club, society or organisation would like to visit the PMI please contact the library.

On 19 August PMI and **Prahran Historical & Arts Society** (PHAS) shared a stall at the **VAFHO** (Victorian Association of Family History Organisations) Family & Local History Fair. The fair was held at Dallas Brookes Hall in East Melbourne, and was bursting with stalls for a whole cross section of organisations concerned with history including historical societies libraries and archives, special interest groups and clubs and private companies. Jenni Casinader and Christine Worthington gave out many newsletters, bookmarks and brochures, and sold a few publications.

It was an enjoyable and successful day and the VAFHO committee are to be congratulated for giving so many groups the opportunity to expose themselves to such a wide audience.

On 5 September Christine gave a talk about the PMI at the **Kooyong U3A**. The Kooyong U3A is located at the Vision Australia complex and they run a weekly Speakers Corner along with a number of other interesting programs including French and Italian languages, music appreciation, economics and art. Thank you to Janet Foy and those who attended for your interest.

## NEW VOLUNTEER

Introducing our new volunteer in the library ... Since she began two months ago, Manjula Ratnayaka has been working two half days per week. She has been assisting with moving the collection around the new shelving project, as well as covering and processing new books and journals, filing, and helping out at the loans desk.

Manjula's time is taken up with looking after her young daughter, but she hopes to enrol in a Library Studies Diploma course part-time for next year. Manjula is very grateful for the opportunity to work as a volunteer in the library, because she says Tim, Christine and Cathy are good teachers.

Manjula has also spent some time filling in during staff leave and we would like to thank her for her time and conscientiousness in her work.



## PMI PRESS UPDATE

**Frontier French Island** is now available. The first print run sold out very quickly and another batch is on order so if you would like to order a copy, please print out an order form from our website and follow the instructions.

Work has begun on a history of **Wattle Park** which has been written by Ray Peace. As was the case for our recent publications about French Island and Elwood, nothing appears to

(cont. p.5)

# WRITING A LOCAL HISTORY

By Ruth Gooch



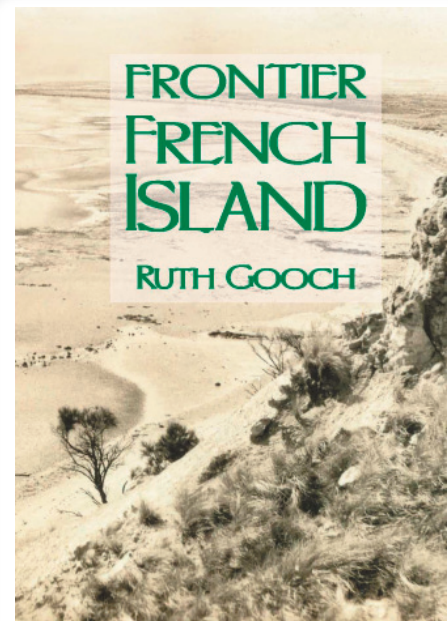
The ethical considerations involved in writing local history are considerable and when I wrote the history of French Island, I literally weighed up every line I wrote to try and stay within the proper bounds. One case in point was the bizarre story of Agnes Taylor's funeral which I initially rejected because I thought it would be poor taste to use it, but the story finally went in because it was an event which could only have happened on French Island and I felt it had to be included for that reason. But the historian's task is very different to that of the journalist – one of the first questions

I was asked by a journo interested in reviewing the book was, 'Were there any murders?' If I was not overly impressed by that approach, I admit to being tempted myself by the salacious. I have a marvellous story on file, for example, about the inappropriate emptying of a chamber pot, but that didn't go in the book in case it discomforted descendants, although it was such a cracker of a yarn, it was almost irresistible. My conscience won, but by a very narrow margin.

When it comes to publishing, then I could write the history of that experience in 10 volumes. Many of the major publishing houses won't even look at a manuscript of local history when it has a reputation for being either third-rate or of merely parochial interest. Having had my manuscript accepted by PMIP though, I sometimes felt overwhelmed by the complexities of the publication process, but every time I thought to myself, 'Why am I doing this?' there would be support from somewhere. My very erudite indexer, for example, was generous enough to express the view that he was both surprised and pleased by the fact that the history of a small community contained broader themes than the merely local – even if he was less impressed (but impeccably polite) about my French!

Publisher Christine Worthington was patient with my poor computer skills (about one notch up from zero) and also patient during a period when I was ill and uncertain if I could get to PMI to make the final amendments to the work. Somehow

**(cont. p. 5)**



ISBN: 0975600044

Extent: 335p, B5

Price: \$50

+ \$8 P&P within Vic

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Warrangine Word

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Hastings VIC 3915



## MEET THE COMMITTEE No 5 ... ALF LAZER

After serving in the RAAF in WWII as a leading Aircraftsman Flight Rigger, Alf attended the University of Melbourne and embarked on a career in business. He brings to the PMI over 40 years experience as a company director.

Following a sporting career as a schoolboy and Victorian champion hurdler and an international competitor, Alf has had a very long association with sports administration as an executive committee member of local and international university sports federations:

- Melbourne University Athletic Club (President) (Life Member)
- Melbourne University Sports Association (Hon Treasurer) (Life Member)
- Australian Universities Sports Association (Hon Secretary) (Life Member)
- International University Sports Federation (Technical Chairman for Squash) (Life Member)

In 2000 he was awarded an inaugural Australian Sports Medal for 45 years contribution at local, national and international levels advancing university sport. In 1985 he received a Member of the Order of Australia for service to athletics.

Alf Lazer first joined the PMI Committee in 1990 when former committee member the late Kurt Mangold 'tapped him on the shoulder' because he was looking for a business oriented and younger person to volunteer for the then aging PMI Committee. Alf has served as President since 1995.



## MEET THE COMMITTEE No 6 ... BEN QUIN

Ben Quin joined the PMI committee in 1999 and took on the role of Honorary Treasurer from previous treasurer Angela Syme.



After completing his Bachelor of Business (Accounting) at RMIT in 1995, Ben went on to complete a Certified Practising Accountants course and joined the Australian Society of CPAs. Ben has worked at the firm Quin & Bourke CPAs for over 15 years, and was made a partner in 1999. His experience and advice have been most helpful over the transition to GST, and as we plan for the development of the library.

Ben balances voluntary PMI time and his work with the commitments of a young family. In his spare time he enjoys football and horse racing.

**(from p. 3)** I did get there because I wanted the work to proceed, but it took every ounce of determination and stamina that I could muster.

Why did I undertake the project? French Island appealed to me because it was a pristine topic which had scarcely been touched, and I enjoy uncovering new material; finding an old island Minute book at the bottom of a tea chest in the possession of an elderly lady was to me, a bit like discovering the source of the Nile. I also enjoy the pursuit of excellence, and the thought of writing the history of a little-known island to scholarly standard was engaging even if a somewhat maverick concept. But to me, it was a real luxury to be able to pursue lines of inquiry of my own choosing when most local histories are umbrella projects obliged to be prescriptive.

Of the comments the book has attracted to date, the one that pleased me most has been Niel Gunson's 'fair-minded'. I would like to think so.

© Ruth Gooch 2006

I would like to add that PMI Press is very pleased to have been associated with this work - the most academic history we have published, and complimentary to the variety of material we have published so far. Ruth tells me that when she started researching the book, she anticipated a slim publication of around forty pages. Over ten years later we have 335 meticulously referenced B5 pages with over 200 illustrations sourced from far and wide. There is a copy of *Frontier French Island* available for loan in the PMI library, or if you would like to purchase a copy, please visit our website [http://www.pmi.net.au/press\\_news.htm](http://www.pmi.net.au/press_news.htm) and click on the order form link. Please act quickly, as the first print run sold out FAST. Christine Worthington Administrator, PMI Press.

### AROUND THE LIBRARY (cont.)

(from p.2)

have been written specifically about Wattle Park to date - so this will be another first.

Judy Buckrich, author of the history of the **Prahran Technical School**, reports that the manuscript is almost ready for editing, and finishing touches are being made to the bibliography. She has applied for some grant funding to assist with the cost of professional editing. We hope to publish this book early in 2007.

The **Malvern Special Needs Playgroup** are carrying out some further editing on the manuscript before work begins on that project.

### WBHA FAIR

The West Bourke Heritage Association is running its annual **Local and Family History Fair** on Sunday 15 October. The fair will be held at the Footscray YMCA,

Essex Street, Footscray.

This year the theme of the fair is 'Short print run publishing for local and family history'.

At 11am Christine will deliver the keynote address on the **PMI Press**. In the afternoon there will be a publishing forum panelled by the following people:

- ★ Bill Hannan - Hotham History Project, *The Pride of Hotham*
- ★ Catherine Reichert - Footscray Historical Society, *Footscray and Yarraville: a pictorial history*

- ★ Rob Olston - *Nanna and Pa*

and these authors will no doubt provide interesting detail about their publishing experiences.

Additionally, there will be exhibits and stalls by historical societies, genealogical groups and a variety of specialist groups.

*Around the Library cont. p. 6*

## LIBRARY SHELVING

As everyone knows, we need more space for our growing collections.

Fortunately, we have been able to recover some through the removal of the old defunct wooden shelving that lined our walls (only one more wall to go!).

Committee member Peter Wolfenden and his friends from the **Cinema and Theatre Historical Society** have been removing the old shelving, Stonnington Local History Officer David Tuck has carted the wood away and Swinburne University has built the new platforms upon which the metal shelving rests.

So it's been a community effort. We also propose to open up the display areas by removing the concrete blocks upon which the floor of the display areas rest. This will extend the library floor space and enable us to create a family history research area and a CATHS work station and a separate bay with seating for the general collection.

The **Mechanics' Institutes Community Partnership Program** Grant we received from the **Department for Victorian Communities** has contributed toward the cost of materials for this first stage of the project. After



*Rod Bendix and Peter Wolfenden (both of the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society Committee painting the library walls after they had removed some of the old wooden shelving.*

completion of the first stage, the grant will provide for new window signage and window tinting, as well as installation of the new workstations.

We have been making every effort to keep the library running smoothly despite the works, but we do appreciate the patience of library users during this time of important development.

## M.I.V. NEWS

The Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. is working towards obtaining funding from the Community Support Fund for restoring and maintaining mechanics' institute buildings.

The team at 'Working Edge' in Prahran (which recently redesigned the PMI website) is upgrading the MIV website and we hope it will be able to act as a portal for other mechanics' institute sites in the near future.

We hope to meet with the Minister for Local Government Candy Broad soon in order to discuss proposals outlined in our recently adopted MIV Strategic Plan as well as our need for ongoing support from her office and the Department for Victorian Communities.

In the meantime, one of our members has completed a thesis on mechanics' institutes for Monash University which he hopes to publish, and others are busy sourcing and scanning MI minute books, plans and other documents, as well as MI library stamps in various book collections around the state. All this material will eventually be indexed in the Big Mech Database as part of a proposed MI Community Resource Centre to be held at PMI.

The last MIV meeting was held on 16 September at the Footscray Mechanics' Institute (a great place to visit for people who love libraries, and it's stylish old billard room is a sight to behold).

The next will be the Annual General Meeting to be held 11 November at the Prahran Mechanics' Institute.



## GENERAL COLLECTION

The shadow of the wind / Carlos Ruiz Zafon  
 The apricot colonel / Marion Halligan  
 The cold moon / Jeffery Deaver  
 The other side of you / Sally Vickers  
 The bullet trick / Louise Welsh  
 Pound for pound / F.X. Toole  
 The rhythm section / Mark Burnell  
 Wild Mary: a life of Mary Wesley / Patrick Marnham  
 Judge and jury / James Patterson and Andrew Gross  
 12 books that changed the world / Melvyn Bragg  
 Rubicon: the triumph and tragedy of the Roman republic / Tom Holland  
 A royal affair: George the III and his troublesome siblings / Stella Tillyard  
 For the love of Philae / Christian Jacq [donated by Cecile Rees]  
 Watching out: a Fran Varady crime novel / Ann Granger [donated by Cecile Rees]  
 Medieval civilization 400-1500 / Jacques Le Goff  
 Blood storm / Colin Forbes [donated by Cecile Rees]  
 Architecture 3s: lost masterpieces [Crystal Palace, Palais des Machines, Pennsylvania Station New York] [donated by anonymous]

## HISTORICAL COLLECTION

Bannockburn The stepping stone: a history of the Shire of Bannockburn / Derek Beaurepaire [donated by Roslyn Ryan, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation]  
Beechworth Beechworth and the powder magazine / National Trust of Australia (Victoria) [donated by David Tuck]  
Bentleigh The golden harvest: a history of St Peter's Parish East Bentleigh 1984-2005  
Braybrook Braybrook: a history / Damian Veltri 2006  
Bunninyong Three times blest: a history of Buninyong and district 1837-1901 / Peter M. Griffiths  
Caulfield Holy Cross Parish Caulfield South / Carole McNally [donated by Jane Nigro]  
Carlsruhe Carlsruhe 1837-1987: celebrating 150 years of settlement [photocopy]  
Casterton Music on the hill: memories and voices: one hundred years of the Sisters of Mercy and Catholic education Casterton 2002 / edited by Mary Wickham  
Clyde A Clyde history: public hall and mechanics' institute / John Campbell [photocopy]  
Coghill's Creek A brief history of Coghill's Creek District and School / compiled by John S. Troup [photocopy]  
Dunkeld From Mount Sturgeon to Dunkeld 'celebrating 150 years' 22nd to 24th October, 2004: souvenir programme / Dunkeld 150th Committee [donated by David Tuck]  
Ellinbank A history of Ellinbank and district 1874-1974 / compiled by the Centenary of Ellinbank Committee [photocopy]  
Elwood Voices from Elwood: a guide to recording oral histories / Julie Shiels and Meyer Eidelson  
 Flood, fire and fever: a history of Elwood / Meyer Eidelson [donated by Meyer Eidelson]  
Heidelberg Scots Church Heidelberg: souvenir published in connection with the anniversary celebrations December, 1923: an eighty years' sketch 1843-1923 / William Lindsay [donated by Joan Esam]  
Eumemmering Call back yesterday: Eumemmering Parish / Jean Uhl [donated by Roslyn Ryan, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation]  
French Island Frontier French Island / Ruth Gooch [donated by Ruth Gooch]  
Hawthorn A deepening roar: Scotch College, Melbourne, 1851-2001 / James Mitchell 2001  
Invermay From dead horse to dancin': the history of Invermay and district 1847-1997 / Pamela Toom and Dianne Campbell [donated by Roslyn Ryan, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation]  
Glen Waverley 2 sites, 3 churches, 5 priests: a celebration of 50 years of Catholic worship in Glen Waverley / Peter Hammond [donated by St. Leonard's Presbytery, Glen Waverley]  
Macleod Trains, trials and triumphs: celebrating 50 years of the Parish of St Martin of Tours Macleod / Rosanna / Nell Musgrove  
Marysville The high way to heaven: a story of Marysville and district / Mary Kenealy

Melbourne Western horizons: short histories of Catholic primary schools in the Western Zone, Archdiocese of Melbourne 2002

Caring for our children: the history of nursing Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne / Margaret McInnes (2006)

Mt Noorat Playing footy and milking cows, the Mt Noorat Football League / Robert McLaren

Myrtleford Recollections: a collection of selected memories of people and events by senior members of the Myrtleford and district community 2006

North Melbourne Pride of Hotham: a tale of North Melbourne and a red-headed architect / Bill Hannan

Patho Patho 1871-1971: a centenary history [photocopy]

Queenscliff Saint Aloysius Primary School 1902-2002 'reflections of happy memories' / compiled by M.E. Salter

Shepparton Beginnings 1902-2002: 100 years of the Sisters of Mercy and Catholic secondary education in Shepparton / Kierin Murphy [donated by Notre Dame College, Shepparton]

100 year history of the Shepparton Butter Factory 1894-1994 / compiled by E.J. McDermott [donated by Joan Esam]

Smeaton Anderson's Mill - Smeaton / Department of Conservation and Environment (1990) [donated by David Tuck]

Snake Valley District diggings: newsletter of the Snake Valley and District Historical Society nos 1-51 [donated by Trish Poock]

Swan Hill Because there was a need: the history of Donnington Girls' Grammar School, Swan Hill 1929-1951 / Joan A. Pullen 2002

Wangaratta The first twenty years: North-Eastern Historical Society, Wangaratta, Victoria [donated by Roslyn Ryan, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation]

Wickliffe Wickliffe / compiled by Terri Gitsham Allen [photocopy]

Woody Yaloak Historic happenings: newsletter of the Woody Yaloak Historical Society nos 166-210 [donated by Trish Poock]

Yarra Glen My reminiscences of Yarra Glen since 1915 / Fred Sadlier [donated by Yarra Glen Historical Society]

Yarrawonga From Ballanda to 1968: the story of Yarrawonga / edited by A. Noel Loughnan [donated by Philip Knight]

The little red school: recollections and a rambling history of Yarrawonga Primary School 1877-2002 / Sharon G. O'Brien [2 copies donated by Yarrawonga Primary School]

#### Australian Art & Literature

Tales of the bushman / John and Samuel Sidney [donated by Margin Publishing]

#### Biography and autobiography

G.W.L. Marshall-Hall: portrait of a lost crusader: an introduction to the Marshall-Hall collection of the Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne / Therese Radic

An obedient servant: the life of schoolmaster James Mills Scott 1855-1934 / Tony Scott

The papers of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate : volume one: Chief Protector's office journal 1839-1850 / Ian D. Clark, editor [donated by David Tuck]

A new Melba?: the tragedy of Amy Castles / Jeff Brownrigg

William Moodie: a pioneer of Western Victoria / edited with notes by Joan Austin Palmer 1973

The diary of a Vice-Chancellor: University of Melbourne 1935-1938 / Raymond Priestley, edited by Ronald Ridley 2002 [donated by Judith Dwyer, Berwick Mechanics' Institute]

Mostly fun: my life by one who has led it / Jim Leslie 2000 [donated by Judith Dwyer, Berwick Mechanics' Institute]

From the Castlemaine diggings to Toorak: the life and times of Sir John Michael Higgins / Frank R. South

#### Rotary Club Histories

The Rotary Club of Prahran: fifty years serving the community 1955-2005 / Vicky Ryan [donated by Cecile Rees]

30 years on: a history of the Rotary Club of Glenferrie 1975-2005 / Llewellyn Jones, David Sutherland, John Wischer and Geoffrey Wood [donated by Rotary Club of Glenferrie]

A history of the Rotary Club of Hawthorn: the first 40 years: 1953-1993 / Bill Johnstone, Stuart Hickman, Bern Hames, Bruce Smith and Geoff Stevens [donated by the Rotary Club of Hawthorn]



## RECENT ACQUISITIONS *(August-September)*

The first thirteen years: a history of the Rotary Club of Central Melbourne-Sunrise Inc. (formerly the Rotary Club of Port Phillip-Melbourne Inc.) District 9800 Victoria Australia chartered 1987 / John Meehan [donated by Rotary Club of Central Melbourne-Sunrise Inc.]  
Celebrating the 50 year history of the Rotary Club of Cobram 1954-2004 / edited by P.P. Bob Cornish [donated by Aron Paul]

### Transport

Gold town railway section 2: construction pictorial and operation of the railway [Moe to Walhalla] / Stephen E. Watson (1986) [donated by David Tuck]  
The Calder Highway: Melbourne to Mildura: opening the Victorian inland / Howard A. Carr  
Visions of the Victorian railways: a photographic tribute from 1854 to 1980 / Gerald A. Dee  
Polly Woodside: Melbourne's tall ship / Ann Gibson 2006

### Business and industry

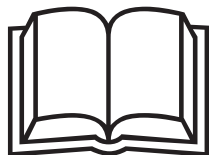
Pelaco: a visual history of Pelaco company and brand a century down the track  
River to the coast: a history of water supply to Apollo Bay and Skenes Creek / R.J. McCormick [donated by Barwon Water]  
Wool before the wind : a history of the Ronald family and the Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Company / Heather B. Ronald 1987 [donated by Mary-Louise Phillips]

### Miscellaneous

Naked democracy: governing Victoria 1856-2006 [exhibition booklet]  
Australia makes music / Isabelle Moresby (1948)  
Australian aboriginal words and place names and their meanings / compiled by Sydney J. Endacott [donated by David Tuck]  
Domestic service in Australia / B.W. Higman [donated by Jim Badger]  
For all creatures: a history of RSPCA Victoria / Barbara Pertzelt  
The still-burning bush / Stephen Pyne  
The traveller's guide to the goldfields: history and natural heritage trails through central and western Victoria / Best Shot Publications 2006  
Sense and nonsense in Australian history / John Hirst  
Biographical register of the Victorian Parliament 1985-2006 [donated by Adrian Gallagher, Victorian Parliamentary Library]  
'A very good business': one hundred years of James Hardie Industries Limited 1888-1988 / Brian Carroll [donated by Judith Dwyer, Berwick Mechanics' Institute]  
Challenge of the high country / Tor and Jane Holth 1985 [donated by Mary-Louise Phillips]  
When Hollywood came to Melbourne: the story of the making of Stanley Kramer's 'On the beach' / Philip R. Davey

2 books for sale [donated by Dierdre Farfor]  
1 book for sale [donated by Doug Gunn]  
6 books for sale [donated by Alf Lazer]

## COLLECTION NEWS



Recently we have been filling in some gaps in the collection by making facsimile copies of out-of-print materials. These include limited release and no longer available items such as small history booklets and small school and church histories.

Tim has also been focusing on increasing our stock of Victorian school histories by directly approaching schools that have published their histories in the last ten years. This is a slow but very worthwhile process.

If you have any school histories lying about the house that are no longer needed, why not donate them to the PMI? Every donated book is marked with book plate denoting the name of the donor and the year of the donation.



## BOOK COVERING

Would you like to protect your books from wear and tear by having them professionally covered?

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### ***Inside:***

## *Annual* HISTORIC PICTURE SHOW

PMI Press latest publication: FRONTIER FRENCH ISLAND

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