

Newsletter

FEB / 2026



BALLARAT
MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE



Sunday 15 February

WHISPERS OF SHADOWS



Friday 28 February

Monday 2 March



Pub cinemas,
In the Shadow of the Gallows

Whispers of Shadows,
Danielle Whalebone,
Immersive experience

ballaratmi.org.au

Joseph Tawadros,
solo Oud,
World Music

From the Chair

To view the Message from the Chair go to the link below:

Ballaratmi.org.au/from-the-chair-feb-2026

Rosemary Recommends

Author of the Month

Paula McLean

Paula is an author, philanthropist and advocate for Australian literature. A patron and former Deputy Chair of the **Stella Prize**, she now serves as their NSW Ambassador. With a background in publishing and a legacy of supporting the voices of women, Paula brings a thoughtful perspective on purpose, creativity and the power of story telling.



Book of the Month

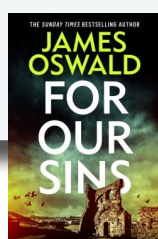
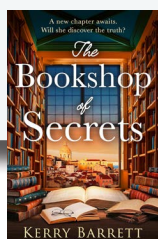
The One Remaining
by Paula McLean.

Hilary Mason is thirteen when her sister Elaine disappears. She fears someone close to the family is involved but represses her suspicions.

As an adult, Hilary becomes a successful novelist in her fifties, she comes upon a stack of old diaries, which document the trauma she's endured. She decides she is ready to face the hidden backstory of her life.

She embarks on writing a memoir, Hilary's Story, which will take her through her worst years and her best years, through courage and endurance, through friendship and great love.

The One Remaining is a captivating story of overcoming loss, finding the courage to trust those who believe in us, and the self-healing power of writing our stories.



Recommended Reads

The Bookshop of Secrets by
Kerry Barrett.

In a bookshop nestled in the sprawling streets of Lisbon, a shopkeeper leads a double life...

Looking for a new start after her father's death, Lara Hope arrives in Lisbon in search of a family she's never met.

As war storms across Europe, Lara finds solace and belonging in her landlady's tranquil bookshop in one of the most beautiful corners of the city.

But when she witnesses a customer secretly swapping a book, she realises the bookshop is not all it seems. Laura is plunged into a labyrinth in a world of mystery and façades, encountering new friends, an unexpected romance, and even royalty... Is she prepared to risk it all for this new life.

Unapologetically Ita by Ita Buttrose.

A compelling and enlightening book by our most celebrated journalist, Ita Buttrose, in her eighties she's as passionate as ever about the many causes important to her, the future of Australia, and living meaningfully to the very end of our lives.

Fresh from the toughest job in Australian media, Chair of the ABC, Ita frankly discusses her time at the place she calls an incredibly special Australian Institution'.

She also looks at the strength and challenges of Australian society, and has some inspiring words on how to succeed in the workplace. Closer to home, Ita opens up on motherhood, menopause, health curveballs, and what life is like for an older person.

New releases

For Our Sins by James Oswald.

The partial collapse of a disused Edinburgh church reveals a dead body in the rubble, his head badly smashed by falling masonry. Soon identified as an old ex-con-Kenny Morgan- his death is put down to a heart attack and deemed non-suspicious.

Tony McLean is approached by a notorious crime lord who suggests the police should be looking into Morgan's death more closely. Despite struggling with his recent retirement, he is reluctant to involve himself.

New Releases

Australian Mystery

<i>The Other Child</i>	Susi Fox
<i>Kill Your Boss</i>	Jack Heath
<i>On The Edge</i>	Katie Horan
<i>The First Law of The Bush</i>	Geoff Parkes

Mystery

<i>A Killing of Innocents</i>	Deborah Crombie
<i>Our Last Resort</i>	Clémence Michallon

Historical Fiction

<i>The Riviera Secret</i>	Sarah Steele
<i>Last Train To Freedom</i>	Deborah Swift
<i>The Bookshop of Secrets</i>	Kerry Barrett
<i>The Wartime Librarian's Secret</i>	Molly Green

Aust. Historical

<i>In The Paris Fashion</i>	Sophie Beaumont
<i>A Haunting at Venus Bay</i>	Julie Brooks
<i>The Butterfly Women</i>	Madeleine Cleary

The Adventuress of Albany

Darry Fraser

Romance

The Portrait

Danielle Steel

Psychological

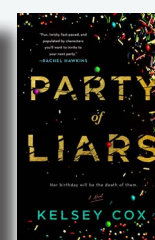
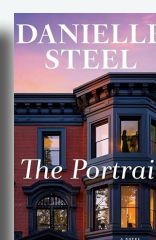
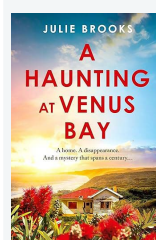
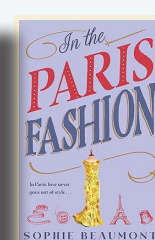
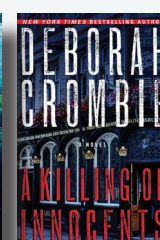
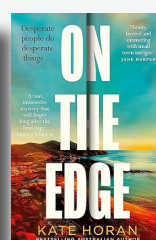
Party of Liars

Kelsey Cox

Non Fiction

Unapologetically Ita

Ita Buttrose



Twilight Talks - Phil Roberts, BMI Patron

The first season of the 2026 Twilight Talks will be in April and May.

We are organising a four weeks series based on *Ballarat Connections*

The talks will be in the Humffray Room on Wednesdays at 5.30 to 6.30pm on:

15, 22, 29 April and 6 May.

The first talk on 15 April will feature Hedley Thomson addressing:

Henry Lawson: *The impact of Ballarat on his writings.*

The previous talk in 2025 by Hedley was brilliant!

You will receive updates to the first series in subsequent newsletters and will be published on the website as information comes to hand.

FEEL the SPIRITS Tour - Phil Roberts

Last April, when introducing the three Twilight Talk speakers, I mentioned that Geraldine and I are members of the *Feel the Spirits* family, having toured in 2016 with Garry Snowden, his wife Marion and their Belgian friend Rene Degryse, a passionate battlefield guide.

These tours began in 2012, and the planned August 2026 tour will be their final one. There are still a few seats on the luxury coach, so if such a tour has ever interested you, now is the time to secure a spot, on either or both segments.

This is not a commercial venture, rather the sharing of extensive knowledge, with the opportunity for participants to visit places where forebears served in WWI- and perhaps sacrificed.

I, for one, would thoroughly recommend this experience.

**August 17 to August 27- Western Front & Paris
August 27 to September 4 – Gallipoli & Istanbul**

For details on this final *Feel the Spirits* tour, contact Garry.

M: 0409 302 617 - E: gsnowden@hotmail.com.au

You will also find this information on our website: ballaratmi.org.au/feel-the-spirits-tours/



Geraldine & Phil Roberts



BALLAARAT
MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE

What's On
February



Book Launch
Tori Baxter in conversation
Saturday 14 February, 12pm

VALENTINES DAY

BOOK LAUNCH
& LIVE CONVERSATION EVENT

Toria Baxter, Author

Abby Dinham, Host

MY SWEET MONSTER
A CAUTIONARY TALE OF DESIRE
TORI BAXTER

Saturday 14 Feb at 12 pm | \$10

In conversation
Paula McLean
Wednesday 25 February, 6.30pm

Paula McLean
in conversation

Wednesday 25 February | 6.30 pm

THE ONE REMAINING
Paula McLean

OPENING HOURS

Library: Mon, Wed & Fri, 10am-4pm
Tue & Thu, 10am-3pm
Sat 9.30am-12noon
Sun Closed

Vintage Shop: Thu, Fri, & First Sat of
of the month - 11am-3pm

Holidays/closures

Labour Day - Mon 9 Mar
Good Friday - 3 Apr
Easter Monday - 6 Apr
ANZAC Day - 28 Apr
King's Birthday - 8 June
AFL Grand Final - Sept
Melbourne Cup - 3 Nov

School holidays

3 Apr - 19 Apr 2026
27 Jun - 12 Jul 2026
19 Sep - 4 Oct 2026
19 Dec - 27 Jan 2027

Important Dates

Begonia Festival	7-9 Mar
Australian Heritage Fest	18 Apr -18 May
Ballarat Marathon	25 & 26 Apr
Ballarat Craft & Design Wk	1-10 May
Ballarat Heritage Fest	21 - 24 May
Ballarat Pride Month	1-30 June

ballaratmi.org.au/important-festivals-dates/

	Tue 3 Feb 10am-3pm Library	Wed 4 Feb 10am-4pm Library 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 5 Feb 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Fri 6 Feb 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 7 Feb 9.30am-12noon Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sun 8 Feb Closed Library
Mon 9 Feb 10am-4pm Library	Tue 10 Feb 10am-3pm Library	Wed 11 Feb 10am-4pm Library 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 12 Feb 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables 7.30pm Ballarat Film Society Flow, Animated Animal Ecofabale	Fri 13 Feb 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 14 Feb 9.30am-12noon Library 12pm-2pm In conversation with Tori Baxter - Book Launch	Sun 15 Feb Closed Library 5pm-6pm Joseph Tawadros - Solo Oud
Mon 16 Feb 10am-4pm Library	Tue 17 Feb 10am-3pm Library	Wed 18 Feb 10am-4pm Library 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 19 Feb 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Fri 20 Feb 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 21 Feb 9.30am-12noon Library	Sun 22 Feb Closed Library
Mon 23 Feb 10am-4pm Library	Tue 24 Feb 10am-3pm Library	Wed 25 Feb 10am-4pm Library 6.30pm-8pm In conversation with Paula McLean 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 26 Feb 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Fri 27 Feb 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 28 Feb 9.30am-12noon Library 8pm-11pm Whispers of Shadows	Sun 1 Mar Closed Library
Mon 2 Mar 10am-4pm Library	Tue 3 Mar 10am-3pm Library 7pm-9pm Pub Cinemas Presents: In The Shadow of the Gallows	Wed 4 Mar 10am-4pm Library 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 5 Mar 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Fri 6 Mar 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 7 Mar 9.30am-12noon Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sun 8 Mar Closed Library



Ballarat Film Society

Flow - Animated Animal Ecofable

Thursday 12 February 7.30pm showtime

Cat is a solitary animal, but as its home is devastated by a great flood, he finds refuge on a boat populated by various species, and will have to team up with them despite their differences.

Latvia, 2024, 85min. Directed, written and produced by Gints Zilbalodis.

Why not become a member of the Ballarat Film Society
ballaratfilmsociety.weebly.com/

In Conversation with Tori Baxter

Book Launch - My Sweet Monster

Saturday 14 February, 12pm - 2pm

Tori Baxter is a Melbourne-based writer whose debut memoir, *My Sweet Monster*, was brought to life after five years of catastrophic events. These experiences led Baxter down an unknown path of chronic health conditions, mental health crisis, pregnancy abandonment, sex work, poverty, and the pain that comes with loving a substance abuser.

Tori's writing brings a truth to the page that most people would spend their lives burying; her hope is to help others who experience domestic violence feel less alone.

Cost: \$10 | Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/in-conversation-with-tori-baxter

Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

Joseph Tawadros Solo Oud

Sunday 15 February, 5pm - 6pm

Joseph Tawadros AM is a leading Oud virtuoso, composer and 8 time ARIA-award winner. Born in Cairo, his chosen instrument, the Oud is an Arabic lute, the ancestor of the lute and modern guitar.

A virtuoso of diversity and sensitivity, Joseph performs in concert halls worldwide and is known for his brilliant technique, deep musicianship, storytelling and joyous style of performance. Joseph's drive to push musical boundaries has inspired collaborations with diverse performers and a solid repertoire of innovative, original music.

He performs live as a soloist, in duo with his brother James on Egyptian percussion, with his jazz quartet or with chamber orchestras and symphony orchestras all over the world.

Joseph has performed his own works with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, Western Australian

Symphony, Adelaide Symphony, Ukraine National Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg, the Morphing Chamber Orchestra. His ground-breaking Concerto for Oud & Orchestra was performed with the Sydney Symphony and recorded and released by ABC Classics in 2019.

Cost: \$5 - \$40 | Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/joseph-tawadros-ballarat
Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

In conversation with Paula McLean

The One Remaining

Wednesday 25 February, 6.30pm

The One Remaining is a captivating story of overcoming loss, finding the courage to trust those who believe in us, and the self-healing power of writing our stories.

Hilary Mason is thirteen when her sister Elaine disappears. She fears someone close to the family is involved but represses her suspicions.

As an adult, Hilary becomes a successful novelist. In her fifties, she comes upon a stack of her old diaries, which document the trauma she's endured. She decides she is ready to face the hidden backstory of her life.

She embarks on writing a memoir, Hilary's Story, which will take her through her worst years and her best years, through courage and endurance, through friendship and great love.

Cost: \$11.00 plus bkg. fee | Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/paula-mclean-bmi
Tickets also for purchase at the Library Box Office.

Whispers of Shadows

Saturday 28 February 8pm - 11pm

'A celebration of resilience, a hymn to the unwavering power of the human spirit, a poetic whisper that echoes into eternity'

Experience a mesmerising night of art rock, spoken word, and experimental sound as Danielle Whalebone presents Whispers of Shadows an immersive live performance that blends music, projections, and emotion into a powerful multi-sensory journey.

Cost: \$20.50 plus bkg. fee | Tickets:
trybooking.com/events/landing/1502601

Tickets not available at the Library Box Office.

Pub Cinemas Presents a double feature:

In the Shadow of the Gallows

Vendetta 19 - Only one man will remain standing

Monday 2 March & Monday 4 May, 7pm - 9pm

In the Shadow of the Gallows - In 1873 a frail figure was walked to the gallows at the Adelaide Gaol. She had been convicted of murdering her husband, and there would be no reprieve. The hanging of Elizabeth Woolcock has gone on in Australian true crime history as one of the most contested cases to result in capital punishment.

In The Shadow Of The Gallows is a psychological and biographical masterpiece that delves into not only the biographical and forensic details of the case, but also the psychological state of a 23 year old woman in the final hour of her life.

Vendetta 19 - Melbourne's inner suburbs erupt in gang violence during the 1919 Fitzroy Vendetta. After a year of bloodshed, Squizzy Taylor stands alone, solidifying his notoriety. Chronicles the early criminal exploits of these infamous gangsters.

Cost: \$21 plus bkg. fee | Tickets:
trybooking.com/events/landing/1520275

Tickets not available at the Library Box Office.

In conversation with Christian White & JP Pomare

The Long Night | Christian White The Gambler | JP Pomare

Tuesday 10 March, 6pm

Christian White, the author of *The Ledge*.
Josh Pomare, the author *17 Years Later*.

The Long Night

'Em has lived a quiet life with her complicated mother and is now looking for love and a potential escape from her small hometown. When a masked man kidnaps her in the dark of night, though, she is drawn into a terrifying world.

Twenty years ago, a terrible thing happened in Jodie Gibbs' life. She has been trying to forget that time ever since, pouring her trauma into her work and out of her mind. Until one night her daughter is kidnapped and Jodie is dragged back into the violence.

As Em and Jodie race into the darkness of the night, the agony of the past rushes up to meet them. It will take all their devotion and courage to escape this night alive.'

The Gambler

'PI Vince Reid is visiting an old friend when he's offered a case he can't Why did a respected local woman open fire at a political rally, killing a promising young university graduate? It's easy money, he's told. A sure thing.

But as Reid delves further into the case, the stakes are higher than he imagined. There are invisible players pulling the strings. Will he walk away a winner or pay for the ultimate gamble with his life?

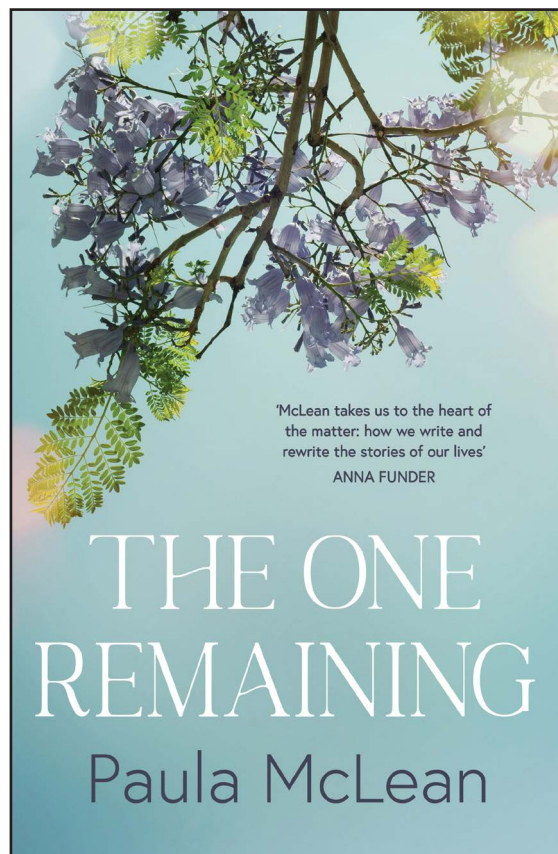
Cost: \$11.00 plus bkg. fee | Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/white-pomare-bmi

Tickets also for purchase at the Library Box Office.

in conversation

Don't miss Paula McLean coming to the BMI on Wednesday 25 February at 6.30pm.

ballaratmi.org.au/talks/



Library Operating hours

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10am - 4pm

Tuesday & Thursday: 10am - 3pm

Saturday: 9.30am - 12 noon

We acknowledge the support of our valued Supporters & Partners

Supporters & Partners

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Ballarat Connected Communities

Ballarat Cemeteries | Royal South Street Society | Ballarat National Theatre | BallaRat Pack

Find out how you can become involved | ballaratmi.org.au/about-us/supporters-partners