BALLAARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

NEWS LETTER

NOV 2026

Events Calendar lift out inside!



Something magical is coming this Chirstmas...

More info on page 4

LETTER FROM

THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Paula Nicholson



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Many of you would be aware that the Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute held its Annual General Meeting at the end of September. If members would like a copyof the President's Report or the Treasurer's report these can be obtained upon request at the library desk or via email. The meeting was well attended and included some special announcements. Three new Life Memberships were awarded at the meeting. The first being presented to Geraldine Roberts for her service across many areas including fundraising over the years and specifically for her dedication to the creation and ongoing success of the BMI vintage shop. Danny Stonehouse and Judy Peters were also recognized with Life Memberships. These ladies have been long serving BMI volunteers helping out in many facets of the business, including preservation of the collection, events assistance, building tours and other areas. Recipients delivered impromptu speeches during the presentation and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to volunteer and the personal rewards gained through volunteerism. A huge thank you to all three ladies for their long term hard work, loyalty and commitment to the Institute.

IN MEMORIUM

Along with this presentation the meeting was also informed of the very sad passing of Dona Pentland, another wonderful volunteer who worked alongside Geraldine in the vintage shop for many years with her passion for fashion and style shining through. Our thoughts are with Dona's family at this time.

We are also deeply saddened by the passing of Past President, past board member and Life Member Rex Bridges. A funeral for Rex was held in October with a large group from the BMI attending this farewell. We learned of a wonderful and very clever husband, father, grandfather and great grand father, a successful and hardworking business person, an inventor and as we all know, someone who continued to make a very significant contribution to his community right throughout his life. His work at the BMI continued right up to his passing and included building and maintaining our databases, extensive involvement in the renovations in the early 2000s and working in the Collections Committee as part of his dedication to the preservation of this important aspect of the BMI. Rex was also a leader in obtaining the heritage listings that now apply to our building and the Heritage Collection itself. Our thoughts are with his wife Wilma and Rex's wider family as they work through their loss.

THE MONTH THAT'S BEEN

Onto happier news, we have had an incredibly busy October as was noted in the newsletter last month. We welcomed some new staff members in recent weeks to assist with managing the varied and complex programming often having more than one hireable space activated at a time including our participation in the Melbourne Fringe Festival with many spaces hired to their Encore Ballarat program which was a terrific way of profiling our spaces to new audiences. We continued our very successful Author Talks and Twilight Talks series with large audiences enjoying world class authors and speakers including Monica McInernay and Micheal Robotham amongst others. These programs continue this month.

THE MONTH AHEAD

I hope some of you have got your tickets for the Open Garden weekend on November 14th and 15th. This important BMI fundraising event is generously supplied by Board Member Malcolm Roberts and Michael Stubbs at their home at Errard Hall, 5 Errard St North Ballarat, 10am to 4pm both days. Details for booking are available on Facebook, in this newsletter and flyers are in the library and around town. For $25 you can experience this beautiful garden and Malcolm's famous Devonshire Tea!!

We will be running our Christmas raffle again this year- details of the wonderful prizes will be available soon. This raffle is another fundraising opportunity for the BMI and we really appreciate the support of our members and others as you purchase tickets for yourselves and as gifts! Thank you also to the donors of our prizes, if you would like to participate this way, please drop off your donation to Rosemary at the library desk.

We are continuing to work to eradicate pigeons from the building with new netting and other measures being utilized. Watch this space!

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAMS

Disaster Preparedness Training was undertaken at the BMI recently, thanks to a Community Impact Grant from the City of Ballarat. The session included participants from many community based organizations and we thank AMAGA who supplied our trainer Sherryn, for the day. Lots of information was shared along with specific techniques for rescuing precious items should the need arise!

Our Collections Volunteers have now completed the long running Audit Project and have delivered a comprehensive improvement in the management and display of our Heritage Collection. We thank the team for all their hard work over many years.

STAFF CHANGES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of you may also be aware that Mark Potter has recently stepped away from his position as Marketing and Communications Coordinator. Mark has been integral in providing information to our members and the wider community and for our clients, through these newsletters, social media posts, poster development, digital advertising on our screens and other areas.

STAFF CHANGES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS CONTINUED...

Mark has worked tirelessly to produce high quality communications material and was also often found behind the Library Desk assisting if needed. His friendly smile and naturally helpful manner was often commented on by members and other visitors. Mark will be greatly missed throughout the organisation and we thank him for his service over many years and wish him all the best going forward.

Elise Heenan has joined us to continue on with this important work in the short term and will also work in the events area. She will be assisted by new volunteer Lee Martin with Communications - in fact this will be the first newsletter produced by the new team - please make both ladies feel welcome if you bump into them at the Institute.

In other news of change, our fabulous Curator and advocate Ellen Becker has announced her resignation from the BMI and from her position with the national Trust to take a full time role as Curator of the RAAF museum in Point Cook. Ellen has been with us for many years and apart from caring and advocating for our collection, looking after clients and taking many building tours, she has played a significant role in developing partnerships across the GLAM sector along with many media and radio interviews. Her knowledge of and interest in the history of the BMI, its collections and relevance into the future have played a major part in bringing in new audiences and promoting awareness across Victoria. Ellen will be sadly missed but has assured us that she wishes to continue her involvement with the BMI in many ways going forward for which we are very grateful.

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS EVENT

We are getting ready to release details of a world first Christmas activity in our beautiful Minerva Room, as seen on our front cover. Led by volunteer Zlatko Balazic with details of corporate support to come, audiences will be delighted by a spectacular use of this space open to ticket buyers from the beginning of December. More details to be released very soon and thanks to Zlatko for all the work so far!

You are all invited to our Christmas Party supported by the Little Brass Band and the Ballarat Singers. These groups have offered to volunteer their talents once again to entertain us in the Humffray Room on December 14th from 5pm, for which we are most grateful. Refreshments and drinks will be served.

IN CLOSING

I am delighted to have been voted on again for the last time as your BMI President and to have Jane Valpied continue as Vice President. Jane and I are both on our last year of possible tenure on the board so will be looking to fill these positions from our Board over the next 12 months. Chris Hutton remains Secretary and Edward Petrie as Treasurer. All other board positions are currently filled with members bringing important skill sets to the table in line with our Strategic Plan.



COMING THIS DECEMBER

A Victorian steampunk style sound and light experience inspired by Goldfields Ballarat will grace the Minerva Room in December.

Using AI animation and projection mapping technology, Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute volunteer Zlatko Balazic will transform the Minerva Room into a Christmas wonderland, inspired by Victorian age Ballarat, and mixed with a fun, light-hearted and quirky steampunk style.

This event is not to be missed! Ticket details and session times coming soon.



ROSEMARY RECOMMENDS

BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Art Lovers by Fiona McIntosh

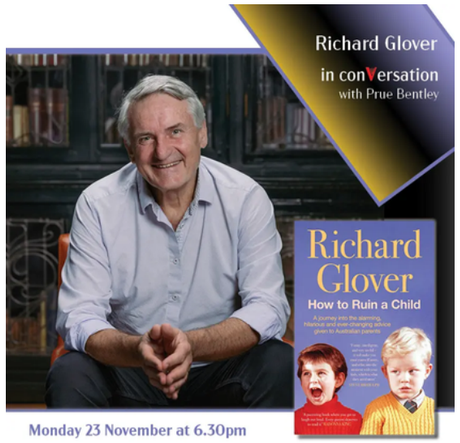


While war rages across the city of Valletta, local barkeeper's daughter Valentina Camilleri is on the cusp of womanhood when Flight Lieutenant Peter Fox falls out of the sky from his Spitfire and into her world. In that fateful moment, he captures not just her imagination and her dreams, but also her young heart. As he convalesces, Peter, an art historian, is captivated by Malta's spectacular cathedral and ts treasure, the framed artwork of Caravaggio.

A Dozen years on, Peter returns to the island as an art expert for newly crowned Queen Elizabeth's forthcoming visit. When he reconnects with Valentina, a woman now, he is horrified to see what has become of her.

AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Richard Glover



Richard is an Australian journalist and author. He is best known as presenter of the drive program on ABC Radio Sydney. He was born in Australia, but spent some of his early life in Papua New Guinea. He graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He has written 13 books including the humour book Desperate.

Richard Glover will be joining us in conversation with Prue Bentley at the BMI on November 23rd, Book your tickets to avoid disappointment!
www.ballaratmi.org.au/event/in-conversation-with-richard-glover/

RECOMMENDED READS

Watch the Quiet Snow by Mick Herron.



On spook street, snow is falling, hiding memories and secrets. A double agent on the loose. Confessions from the Cold War. Another operation bungled.
Whether it is John Bachelor – a spy handler a few rungs lower on the ladder than the slow horses-holding onto his job; spy chief Di Taverner using blackmail to get her way; or Jackson Lamb erasing his past life in the Cold War,

Sisters of the Storm by Lana Kortchik.



When US Army nurses and identical twins Andrea and Nicole find themselves stranded in a remove area of the war-torn Balkan Peninsula, their only route to safety is a perilous trek through the mountains with the Germans on their tail. On the long and risky journey, the treacherous conditions push both of them – and Andrea's marriage – to the limits. When a chance encounter brings Darren, Nicole's first love, back into their lives, a long -held secret threatens to tear the sisters apart. As the enemy moves ever closer and the danger continues to mount, will the chance to rebuild their relationship be lost forever.

I Can't Tell You But I Will by Magda Szubanski.



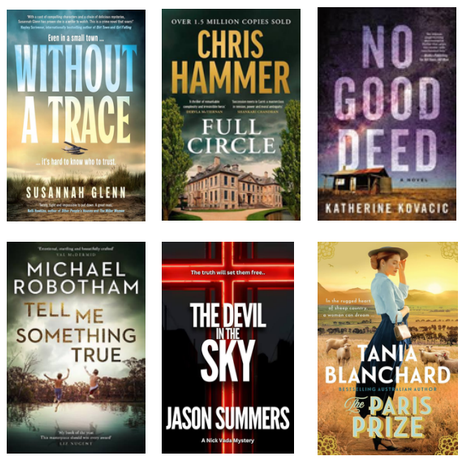
This unforgettable book describes the true cost of caring the courage it takes to keep going, and the impossible pull between public duty and private grief. And it pays a tribute to a powerful woman who is both complex and deeply loved.

NEW RELEASES

Mystery

Lie To Me D.S.Butler
The Dying Light Ann Cleeves
One Split Second Robert Dugoni
Double Tap Vince Flynn
Bad Deeds David J. Gatward
Stone Cold David J. Gatward
The French Illusion John Grisham
The Country Road Murders James Patterson/Mike Lupica
Private Tokyo James Patterson
The Heights Ian Rankin
Fury In Death J.D.Robb





Australian Mystery

Without A Trace Susannah Glenn
Full Circle Chris Hammer
No Good Deed Katherine Kovacic
Tell Me Something True Michael Robotham
The Devil in the Sky Jason Summers

Australian Historical

The Paris Prize Tania Blanchard

Australian Novel

The Featherwood Beekeeper Fiona McArthur
When Sullivan Met Lola Monica McInerney
Witchy Sister Kerri Rogan



Romance

Love Unlocked Cecilia Ahern
Summer At The French Bakery Jo Thomas



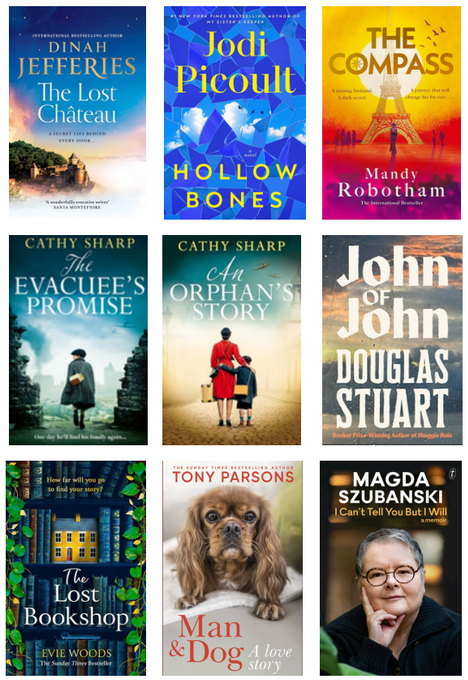
Novel

Our Noble Selves Kate Atkinson
Villa Coco Andrew Sean Greer

Scandanavian

No Song for the Dead Jussi Adler-Olsen
Dreams of Bronze Camilla Lackberg
Beneath The Mists Camilla Sten/ Vieca Sten





Historical Fiction

The Lost Chateau Dinah Jefferies
Hollow Bones Jodi Picoult
The Compass Mandy Robotham
The Evacuee's Promise Cathy Sharp
An Orphan's Story Cathy Sharp
John of John Douglas Stuart
The Lost Bookshop Evie Woods

Non Fiction

Man & Dog Tony Parsons
I Can't Tell You But I Will Magda Szubanski

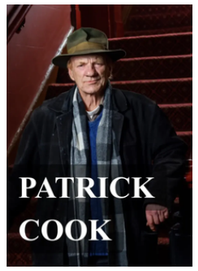
NOVEMBER TWILIGHT TALKS

PHIL ROBERTS AND GUESTS

WHEN: November 18th
TIME: 5:30pm-6:30pm (Doors open at 5pm)
WHERE: BMI's Humffray Room
COST: General $13, Members $9, Children FREE



Ballarat's own Phil Roberts is a former secondary teacher and principal and has previously written 25 books – the highlight was when his book Avenue of Memories won the 2019 Victorian Premiers History Award – the top prize of 120 entries. In 2017 Phil received an Order of Australia award for community services. He graduated from Federation University in 2019 with a PhD based on Ballarat's Avenue and Arch. At chess he is a novice, although he has learnt a great amount about this fascinating game during the writing of the book.



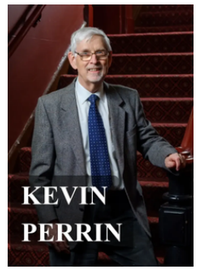
Patrick learned chess at age 11. He first joined the Ballarat Chess Club in 1976; served as Vice-President for 2 years, and followed by a further 28 years as President. As a player, he has won the Club Championship 8 times.



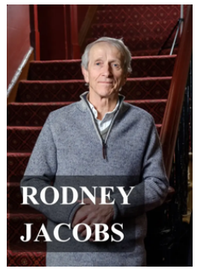
Peter began attending the Ballarat Chess Club in late 2021 and was immediately hooked on over-the -board chess. He's been a National Arbiter and Club President since 2024.



Anna starting playing 15 years ago. She enjoys the challenge of the game, and the endless opportunities to learn and improve her skills. She is a national level arbiter, and recently has become acting President of Chess Victoria.



A life member of the club, Kevin served as Secretary for 25 years from 1968, President for 2 years and Treasurer since 1999. He is an International Arbiter and was chief arbiter for the Begonia tournament for 34 years. He was club champion 7 times and country champion 5 times.



Rodney first came to the club as a 10 year old in the mid 60's with his father, Stewart, who had taught him to play at a young age. Since then, Rodney has had extended stints of enthusiasm for, and disillusionment with the game. He is still fascinated by the complexity and logic of chess theory.

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR BODY

WHEN: November 25th
TIME: 5:30pm-6:30pm (Doors open at 5pm)
WHERE: BMI's Humffray Room
COST: General $13, Members $9



This presentation explores how ancient wisdom and modern science can help us better understand the body's signals and the factors that influence health and wellbeing. Drawing on insights from neuroscience, microbiome research, nutrition, functional medicine and Eastern medicine, Meredith O'Loughlan examines the interconnected relationship between the gut, brain, immune system and whole body.
Participants will be introduced to the Neurobiome Wheel, an innovative framework that brings together common physical, emotional and cognitive symptoms into recognisable Biopatterns. Rather than viewing symptoms in isolation, the Neurobiome approach helps identify underlying patterns that may contribute to fatigue, stress, digestive issues, anxiety, inflammation, poor sleep and other chronic health concerns.
This engaging presentation offers practical insights into understanding the body's innate intelligence and provides a fresh perspective on creating greater health, resilience and wellbeing from the inside out.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: MEREDITH O'LOUGHLAN

For over 20 years, Meredith O'Loughlan has dedicated her life and work to exploring the meeting place between ancient wisdom, modern science and human wellbeing.
As a practitioner, researcher and educator, Meredith shares insights on how our bodies, as interconnected systems, communicate through symptoms, sensations, emotions and health patterns. Drawing on neuroscience, nutrition, microbiome science, functional medicine and the wisdom of Eastern medicine, she helps people better understand the language of their body.
Living well with Multiple sclerosis for over 25 years, drug-free, has profoundly shaped her understanding of wellbeing and the body's innate capacity for healing.
Drawing on both professional expertise and lived experience, Meredith translates complex health science into practical, engaging insights. Her work empowers people to recognise the connection between the gut, brain and microbiome, understand the body's signals, and make informed choices that support lasting health and vitality.
Passionate about bridging ancient wisdom with modern science, Meredith supports people in reconnecting with their body's innate intelligence and creating well-being from the inside out.

We acknowledge the assistance of our valued Supporters & Partners

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Saturday 9.30am – Noon
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