

DANDENONG

Name: Dandenong Mechanics' Institute
Address: No longer exists
Institute established: 1863
Date of present building: Not applicable
Building succession number:
Current use: Community - Drum Theatre
Municipality: City of Greater Dandenong

History

The Mechanics' Institute took over from the Bridge Hotel as the public meeting and entertainment place at Dandenong in 1863. The Court of petty sessions, Roads Board and Shire Council meetings all took place at the Mechanics' institute from 1863 till 1890. At first it was a modest timber building, and in 1882 it received a brick-faced extension at the front. As well as being used for meetings, the Institute boasted a library and a billiard table. When a Town Hall was proposed for the site, long and forthright negotiations with the Shire Council led to an agreement whereby the Institute was offered the top floor of the new 2-storey building.

In 1882 the library held 952 books and the opening hours were 8pm-10pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and there were approximately 2,240 visits over the year. By 1894, in the new Town Hall, there were 1,850 books, the hours were 9am-10pm, and the number of visits had risen to approximately 5,303. The library continued as a Mechanics' Institute library until about 1970, when its books formed the foundation of the Dandenong branch of the Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service in Stuart Street.

The Mechanics' Institute bowed out without a fanfare or fuss in the 1970's, a victim of the progress that has transformed Dandenong from the little wattle and daub hamlet at the birth date of the Institute, in to the bustling city of today. After the relocation and re-organisation of the library, its' Town Hall site was used by the Dandenong Historical Society till 2000. In 2000, the Town Hall was extensively remodelled and further extended to become the current Drum Theatre.

References: Government Printer (1883). *Statistical Register of Victoria for 1882*;
Government Printer. (1895). *Statistical Register of Victoria for 1894*; Brennan, Niall. (1978).
Chronicles of Dandenong. City Manager, City of Dandenong. (1988). Dandenong and District
Historical Society *Gippsland Gate Vol 3 no 4 page 56*; Gasparetto Nadia *Stage 2, City of Greater
Dandenong Heritage Study, 2000* (unpublished),

Chris Keys [chris.keys@dingley.net]
Tuesday, 26 August 2014 1:06 PM
'DDHS'

Subject: FW: Dandenong MI revised entry in If The Walls Could Speak: a social history of Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, by Pam Baragwanath and Kan James.
Attachments: Dandenong MI.pdf; _Certification_.htm

Chris Keys

0418340754
Chris.keys@dingley.net
11 Dryandra Cres
Keysborough 3173

From: pam baragwanath [mailto:pgbarag@alphalink.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 22 August 2014 9:44 AM
To: chris.keys@dingley.net
Subject: Dandenong MI revised entry in If The Walls Could Speak: a social history of Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria, by Pam Baragwanath and Kan James.

Dear Chris,

This is the revised entry that we had - so far - I'd like to use the two photos as before of the MI as well as the Town Hall if that is alright?
I'll also send you the - original entry.
I'd be quite happy for you to completely rewrite the entry if you'd like to because no doubt you have other information.
And yes that early controversy is worth noting.
Many thanks,
Pam.

g District Historical Society

Chris Keys [chris.keys@dingley.net]

Tuesday, 26 August 2014 1:07 PM

'DDHS'

FW:

Subject:

Attachments:

Dandenong MI original entry.pdf; _Certification_.htm

Chris Keys

0418340754

Chris.keys@dingley.net

11 Dryandra Cres

Keysborough 3173

From: pam baragwanath [mailto:pgbarag@alphalink.com.au]

Sent: Friday, 22 August 2014 9:44 AM

To: chris.keys@dingley.net

Subject:

DANDENONG

Name: Dandenong Mechanics' Institute

Address: Lonsdale Street, Dandenong, V 3175

Institute established: 1863

Date of present building: 1890, 1940², 2000

Building succession number: 2: 1863, 1890

Current Use: Community – Town Hall *Drum Theatre*

Municipality: Greater Dandenong

History

Starting in 1863, the Mechanics' Institute was the first public meeting place in Dandenong. At first it was a modest timber building but was later enlarged and improved with a new brick front. As well as being used for meetings, including those of the District Roads Board and the Shire Council, the Institute boasted a library and a billiard room. When the present Town Hall was mooted, the prize site was occupied by the Mechanics' Institute in the centre of town. After long term negotiations, a satisfactory formula was reached for the demolition of the Institute. Its activities were to be transferred to the upstairs portion of the Town Hall ~~under a special arrangement that still exists~~. Thus the way was cleared to allow for the erection of the Dandenong Town Hall in 1890. For a time the library was transferred to the ground floor at the Town Hall but then was transferred to the Regional Library in Stuart Street. The Mechanics' Institute, Dandenong's oldest institution, bowed out without any fanfare or fuss, a victim of the progress that has transformed Dandenong from the little wattle and daub hamlet of the Institutes' birth year, into the bustling city of today. The building is a prominent landmark, one of the few remaining buildings in the area from the nineteenth century and the influential involvement of the Mechanics' Institute spans well over one hundred years. In 1882 the library held 952 books and the opening hours were 8pm-10pm, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. There were approximately 2,240 visits over the year. In 1894 there were 1,850 books and the opening hours were 9am-10pm. Over the year there were approximately 5,303 visits.

References: Government Printer. (1883). *Statistical Register of Victoria for 1882*; Government Printer. (1895). *Statistical Register of Victoria for 1894*; Brennan, Niall. (1978). *Chronicles of Dandenong*. City Manager, City of Dandenong. (1988). Correspondence; Dandenong and District Historical Society. (1974). *Goodbye to the Mechanics' Institute*; George Fenton Roulston. (1984). *Reminiscences of Early Dandenong*.

AA around 1970, the library was closed, and its books formed the basis of the new Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service which served the Dandenong, Springvale, Sturt Cities, Berwick and Pakenham areas.

DANDENONG

Name: Dandenong Mechanics' Institute
 Address: Lonsdale Street, Dandenong
 Institute established: 1863
 Date of present building: 1890
 Building succession number: 2: 1863 and 1890
 Current use: Community – Town Hall

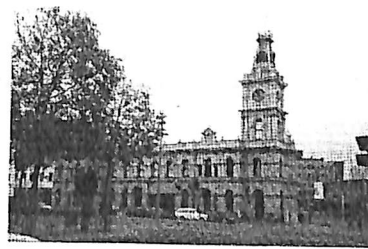
Social history

Starting in 1863, the Mechanics' Institute was the first public meeting place in Dandenong. At first it was a modest timber building but was later enlarged and improved with a new brick front. As well as being used for meetings including those of the District Roads Board and the Shire Council, the Institute boasted a library and a billiard room. When the present town hall was mooted, the prize site was occupied by the Mechanics' Institute in the centre of town. After long term negotiations a satisfactory formula was reached for the demolition of the Institute. Its activities were to be transferred to the upstairs portion of the town hall under a special arrangement that still exists. Thus the way was cleared to allow for the erection of the Dandenong Town Hall in 1890. For a time the library collection was transferred to the ground floor at the town hall but later was transferred to the Regional Library in Stuart Street. The Mechanics' Institute, Dandenong's oldest institution, bowed out without any fanfare or fuss, a victim of the progress that has transformed Dandenong from the little wattle and daub hamlet of the Institute's birth year into the bustling city of today. The town hall building is a prominent landmark, one of the few remaining buildings in the area from the nineteenth century, and the influential involvement of the Mechanics' Institute with the town spans well over 100 years.

References: Brennan, Niall. (1978). *Chronicles of Dandenong*. Hawthorn Press: Melbourne. P. 94-96. City Manager, City of Dandenong. (1988). Correspondence. 29 September. G. F. R. (1984). *Reminiscences of early Dandenong*. Dandenong and District Historical Society. P. 86-89. *Goodbye to the Mechanics' Institute*. (1974). Dandenong Historical Society. June. P. 56.



Circa 1885



DARLINGTON

Name: Darlington Hall
 (formerly Darlington Mechanics' Institute)
 Address: Cnr Ware and Lang Streets, Darlington
 Institute established: 1894
 Date of present building: 1896
 Building succession number: 2: 1896 and 1908:
 Additions in 1973
 Current use: Community



Social history

The original hall is now the kitchen and supper room. It was moved to an east – west position when the main hall was added in 1908. A marble plaque on the eastern wall records the important role played by T. T. Shaw of Wooriwywrite and there is a long list of people who gave donations. The hall was opened with a grand concert and ball. The hall was used by the football club,

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Chris Keys [chris.keys@dingley.net]
Tuesday, 26 August 2014 3:34 PM
'DDHS'
FW: Dandenong Mechanics' Institute

Chris Keys

0418340754

Chris.keys@dingley.net

11 Dryandra Cres

Keysborough 3173

From: Jenny Dalrymple [mailto:j.dalrymple@bigpond.com]
Sent: Thursday, 21 August 2014 7:15 PM
To: chris.keys@dingley.net
Subject: Dandenong Mechanics' Institute

South Bourke and Mornington Journal (Richmond, Vic. : 1872 - 1920) Wednesday 25 May 1910 p 3 Article

Good luck

Jenny

ps have a good time at Paynesville

Sent from Windows Mail

No virus found in this message.

Checked by AVG - www.avg.com

Version: 2014.0.4744 / Virus Database: 4007/8066 - Release Date: 08/19/14

Internal Virus Database is out of date.