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The Artful Dodger - October 2021

From The Chair...

Hi Everyone,

I started writing this in August and since then, with announcements and changes, I have had to edit this letter several times. There's that word we hear over and over... pivot, pivot, pivot!

Grant, Susan and I met to discuss current theatre productions and it won't come as a surprise to read we have postponed all theatre productions again.

We had been optimistically rescheduling *Visitors* and *Calendar Girls* for later this year – the former in October and the latter in Nov/Dec meaning Follies would have been bumped into 2022 and revert to March. We have no choice but to cancel *Calendar Girls* for 2021. *Visitors* is being maintained on a very low light with Zoom rehearsals and we now expect to stage the show to small audiences between 18 November and 10 December, and will confirm precise dates soon.

Should it not be feasible to bring you *Visitors* then we will move it to early 2022 – late Jan/early Feb.

The Theatre committee has now advertised a One Act Play writing competition in *The Diary*. The aim is to encourage local writers to submit plays which we will consider for performance. We do have some previously submitted which have yet to be fully assessed. The competition will be open to all though we feel it would also be appropriate for us to promote a youth category and we will approach schools. Performances could be online, live or both – see below.



Arts Expo

The Arts Expo sub-committee – Denise, Ian, David and Adrian discussed a nominal schedule and also the need for contingency. After speaking with representatives at Manningham City Council we have been given approval to vary the grant and again postpone the event. November is not possible and consequently we are now looking to March and April 2022. We will chat to Jane (Pottery Expo) and Glen (Festival Committee Chair) to ensure we collaborate and complement what they are doing.

The sub-committee will meet again soon to discuss options – which will include the possibility of a staggered approach over 2 or 3 weekends rather than a very full single weekend.

Importantly, we have come to realise that we are not only creating an exposition of what we already do in the hall but promoting the Hall and Arts Association as a vehicle for many activities, not all of which are currently catered for. In other words – it's not simply business as usual.

Play writing competition

We are seeking short plays for consideration for either live performance, online or both. Ideally the plays will not yet have been published. We are initially seeking plays from local writers in Manningham and Nillumbik but we reserve the right to extend the net and not rule out any worthy entries.

We will establish a small group of readers to assess the plays and recommend a short list to the Theatre Company committee.

- Plays should be between 15 and 30 minutes
- Be for two to six characters
- Require relatively simple sets

We are keen to receive plays from all sectors of our community and encourage everyone to enter.

Closing date: 5PM 17 December, 2021

Contact chair@warrandytearts.org.au for more information.

Bendigo Bank Community Investment Grant

We have had several chats with directors at the bank and have submitted an application for a grant towards the \$110,000 required to renovate the roof, extend the bio box and provide a much needed, improved lighting support system.

The full details of the project plan can be found via this link.

[Prop_Reurb and repair_Mech Inst Hall_Ver3_Aug 21.pdf\(Review\)- Adobe Document Cloud](#)

The bank has indicated that, although we have included this full amount in the submission on their advice, we would only be able to receive a portion. They have also noted that they will be able to work with us in sourcing other donors and grant options.

Rotary - Warrandyte and Donvale has indicated their support for the project. We are grateful for their support. Importantly the Association will need to contribute a minimum of \$15,000 and we hope we may raise more by appealing to members and casual supporters.

At the final analysis it is about ensuring the hall remains well maintained, available for our ongoing use and enjoyment and available to support a range of community activities. I thought I'd sign off by reflecting on what has been achieved this year – to balance the opening to this update which is all about what has to be postponed or cancelled.

We have successfully staged 2 live theatre shows and must be, in the context of a pretty ordinary year, be grateful that we managed to squeeze these shows in between lockdowns. We have two more plays that are virtually ready to stage and considering we have enabled close to 40 people – including directors, actors, producers, crew, designers, builders to be involved in something they love, we haven't done too badly. If we count audience too, then the figure rises to about 600! It seems unrealistic to imagine we will return to pre-2020 operations any time soon, so what we have learned from using Zoom, etc is invaluable as we plan for future years.

We find ourselves thinking about play readings, auditions, etc., all online, and we believe that configuring the hall in "cabaret" style has created a comfortable ambience for watching shows and I would suggest, this will probably be the best way forward for some years to come.

Till the next time,
Adrian

WAA Craft Group and Rosemary Climas by Pat Anderson

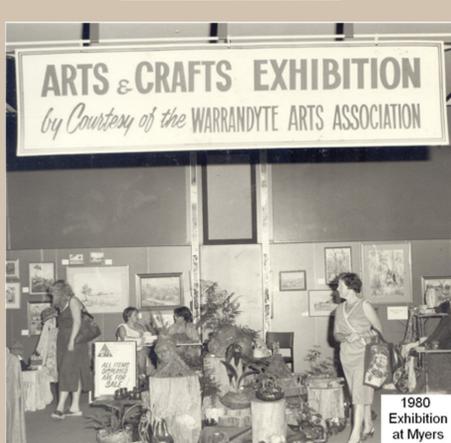
The Warrandyte Arts Association (WAA) had its origins in the mid nineteen fifties, commencing with theatre, followed rapidly with art, music and film. Next came children's dance and pottery. Then, in 1969, a group of people who met in a private home to practise spinning and weaving approached WAA to become part of the umbrella association as the Craft Group.

While starting out with wool crafts, monthly meetings grew to include macrame, screen printing, leathework, natural dyeing, bread making, candle making, embroidery etc. For each new craft introduced, leaders were sought from among the local population. As the group grew they migrated to the hall, meeting on a monthly basis until 2020, when Covid restrictions were the final straw in bringing the group to an end.

They had struggled for numbers for some years. The decline probably started with growth of the Neighbourhood House sector in the 1980s, where classes were held all over the place in many varied crafts. Unlike theatre and pottery that have very specific infrastructure requirements, like a stage and lighting or a studio with a kiln, craft can be undertaken almost anywhere and I suspect there are many private craft, especially patchwork, groups operating all over Warrandyte.

In its heyday the group went on numerous bus outings, the Sheep Show in Bendigo being a regular event on the calendar, returning with the bus packed to the rafters with fleeces and new materials. The group members contributed annually to the iconic combined exhibitions in the hall every November. A highlight in 1980 was the achievement of three teams from the group entering the "Fleece to Garment" competition at the Sheep Show.

I believe that group member Joan Golding also won an individual award at the Royal Melbourne Show for an evening dress crafted out of very finely spun wool. The combined WAA groups also took part in an exhibition at Myer, Ringwood as part of an Australia Week event.



To mark their first 20 years, the group created a banner of individual panels which will be displayed at the hall. Each panel has the name of its producer on the back, so group membership in 1989 was 28 minimum.

At some point in time, Rosemary Climas took over co-ordination of the group – I think in the mid to late 1990s. Rosemary then, as well as representing the group on the central committee (WMI&AA by this time) also served as Treasurer of the committee from 2003 to 2008. She also threw herself into helping organise the association's 50th birthday celebrations in 2006.

However since then, numbers have declined. New people came and went. Meeting only once per month probably isn't conducive to continuity. I know we found this with the music group in the form we had, and so it is not surprising that, after being unable to meet at the hall during 2020, the group finally decided to fold earlier this year. We thank Rosemary for her years of dedication to the association, along with fellow stalwart, Anne Drew.

Some long-standing association members gathered on April 14 at Pat Anderson's for a "Thank You" lunch for Rosemary and wished her well for an imminent hip replacement operation, from which she has happily now recovered.



Pottery News by Brenda Koochew

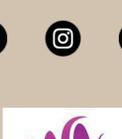
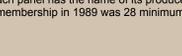
There were a few necessary repairs to the Marjorie Beecham Pottery Studio this year. All the potters wish to thank Peter, Colin and the members of the WAA committee who volunteered their time to help make the studio a safer place.



A highlight for the potters earlier this year was a mask making session with our master potter, Noelle. The potters have always admired Noelle's effortless creativity in her unique style of moulding expressive masks and we were very pleased when she agreed to pass on some of her experience. Sculpting 'faces' was a new and challenging experience for some of us, but certainly worthwhile. The degree of variety in resulting shapes and styles was quite unexpected.



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