JULY:2011

THE Artful DODGER

1.*n.* roystering young pickpocket from Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. 2.*n.* printed handbill full of tidings from the W.M.I.&A.A. with a closing date for contributions of 25th of each month to Alan Cornell on 98444111 or alan@commercialventure.com.au

That the One Act Play season has firmly established itself as a highlight of the WTC calender was endorsed by large and enthusiastic audiences for each of its five performances. Though the nights were as cold as the beer, the energy was as hot as the soup and audiences went home feeling warm and a little bit fuzzy.

Playwright Roger Gimblett must have had the Warrandyte Mechanics Institute Hall in mind when he penned *Decline and Hall*. The opening offering for this theatrical triptych gave us a Building Committee struggling to keep up with the upkeep of an ageing, ailing hall. Sound familiar? Newcomer Sue Pickett joined old hands John Milburn-Clark, Noelene Cooper, David Creedon and Ken Virtue as they slipped seamlessly into their respective stereotypes and milked them for all they were worth. How bizarre to see President Ken, who will probably bequeath his body as a stump for our own old Hall, barracking for the bulldozer! We trust he was only acting.

With no dramatic depths to plumb, the cast played strictly for laughs and delivered them on cue and en masse. Bill Connolly ably directed the traffic and hall in hall it was a great opening.

(Continued page 2)

(From page 1)

Be afreud, be very afreud, if you ever strike a therapist like Lisa Upson's Evelyn Barge. *Good Grief*, written by Queenslander Frank Wilkie, let loose the Christian therapist from hell on a client whose loss issues were many, varied and mostly of his own making. Though relatively new to our stage, Terry Clayton understood his role of supporting rather than competing with Lisa's histrionic character and did it beautifully. In fact this was a very demanding piece that in less accomplished hands could have ended in tears, but director Phyl Swindley must share the applause for delivering the hit of the night. Quite simply, Lisa's performance was astonishing, and if she doesn't collect a swag of awards as they go on tour I'll need counselling.

And then, for something completely different, a man fell in love with a washing machine. The lonely Maytag repairman was an iconic TV campaign that began in the sixties. Here our favourite One Act Playwright David Ives takes this idea to its logically illogical conclusion in *Soap Opera*. Robert Black was perfectly cast as the obsessive repairman whose love for his work was as pure as a packet of Cold Power. So dazzling was Lou Phelan's Maypole queen he couldn't see that Mabel, played achingly well by Simone Kiefer, was the girl he was meant for. In fact the supporting actors were uniformly excellent. David Creedon was more at home here as both the suavely saucy Maitre D' and as the mad repairman whose life has spun out of control in the laundry of love. David Tynan lost his voice but not his timing as a snag-wielding SNAG. And Lou's appliance-fatale was just so - white! My only quibble was why Robert eschewed the American accent adopted by his colleagues? Again, this play was so over the top it could easily have sunk into sudsy silliness; that it didn't is a credit to David Tynan's deft direction and evenly excellent performances.

So well done all concerned on a great night's entertainment. And good luck on tour at the various OAP Festivals. I have no doubt your efforts will be well awarded.

Group reports.

Theatre

1. One Act Plays

Well the OAP's have had a wonderful opening weekend. Opening night saw a large crowd of sponsors as well as regular punters enjoying the 3 plays. Lots of laughs were heard and good warming soup consumed. Congratulations to all involved. After next weekend in Warrandyte, the plays hit the road for a couple of OAP Festivals in Macedon, the Dandenongs and possibly Foster. Hope to see you all at the Mechanics next weekend and don't forget there is also a matinee at 2pm.

Follies 2012

The good news is we already have a Director for next year's Follies - John Millburn - Clarke. Many of you would remember his legendary skits in previous Follies and we are thrilled to have his talent and skill turned to directing. The first writer's meeting is Aug 5th so get those creative juices flowing. The theme is 'The Extra-Terrestrial Follies'.

September Production

We have chosen a beautifully written play called "Almost Maine" by John Cariani for our main play for the year. Auditions for this play are on Thursday August 11th and Sunday August 14th. More about this in next month's Dodger.

Lisa Upson 9844 1436

Painting

We have had a good month, the weather has been very pleasant considering it is winter. The wattle along the river is beginning to blossom and we are looking forward to a sunny day tomorrow.

We are taking the term break for the following 2 weeks, returning on the 20th July, shall be in touch with our arrangements for that day.

Pauline Cross 9439 1775 Gill Beddington 9842 2151

Pottery

Just back from an amazing journey along the Birdsville Track to Lake Eyre. A fulfilment of a life long dream amazing! Full of early Australian history.

End of term looms near. Third term dates are: July Tues 19th, Wed 20th to Tues September 20th, Wed 21st. Fees are due on the first day of term.

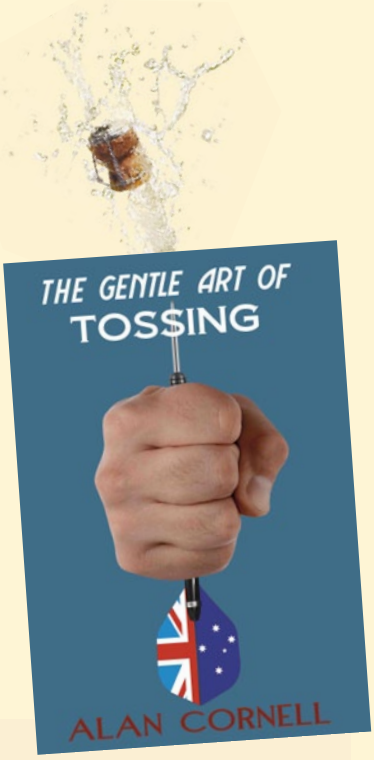
Marjorie Beecham 9844 3206

Craft

Rosemary Climas 9844 2154

LOOK WHAT THE CRAFT GROUP MADE!

Not the babies, the quilts. Anne Drew recently produced two beautiful quilts for two beautiful Cornell twins and aren't they a picture! The quilts, not the babies. Well, yes, the babies too. That's Frankie, mother Jaki and Baxter. Nanny (Jan) took the pictures.



OFFICIAL LAUNCH

@ the Hall
@ 7:30pm
Thursday, 21st July

To be launched by
Graham 'Smokey' Dawson
All welcome

POP IN FOR LAUNCH

WMI&AA members may be aware that our erstwhile Editor of the Artful Dodger, Alan Cornell, has recently published his first novel.

Alan is already well known to us for his wonderful comedy sketches and songs written for many past Follies, and his regular *Living with the Trotts* column in the Warrandyte Diary.

Now he has launched himself into the dizzy and complicated world of publishing with his very entertaining book entitled *The Gentle Art of Tossing*.

This is a work of comedy, and Alan's classic wry humour shines through this "Daisy & Goliath" look at a hopeful young darts champion, her Aussie manager/promoter and the English "dartocracy".

Published by Black Pepper, it is also available via www.alancornell.com

So support your community author and come along to see Alan at the local launch of his book to be held at the Hall on the 21st July.

No doubt Alan will autograph a copy for you!

Ken Virtue

David,
Finally had time to watch the DVD this evening. I appreciate that filming a performance makes for a most unflattering register of any production and having said that would ask you to pass on my congratulations to the cast, crew, designer and director of the production. I believed your Jack, David and I believed Lisa, Noelene and Bill. The second act soliloquies were superb. David and Angeline had the most difficult jobs and were the glue of the production as they needed to be. I found it a sensitively directed, heartfelt production and as such, I could ask no more. I was moved by it and I didn't expect to be. Congratulations.
Thank you so much for supplying me with the DVD and forgive me for not responding sooner, it has just not been possible.
Carry on !
John.

Concertofest: Surrey Hills Orchestra

(*Includes WMI&AA member Sue Boyle*)
Sunday, August 7, 2011, 2.30pm, MLC Barkers Road, Kew.
Mozart; Concertante for violin & viola; Beethoven piano Concerto No 5; Bruch: Kol Nidrei for cello & orchestra
Tickets: $12 ($5 Under 12). Phone 9877 5286 or go to www.surreyhillsorchestra.org.au

Diamond Valley Community Bank Vocal Eisteddfod

Organised by a sub-committee of the Diamond Valley Singers and held every year on Melbourne Cup Day. It seems a long way off now but if anyone is interested in singing please contact Graham Ford on 9439 3267 or visit www:dvsingers.org/eisteddfod.

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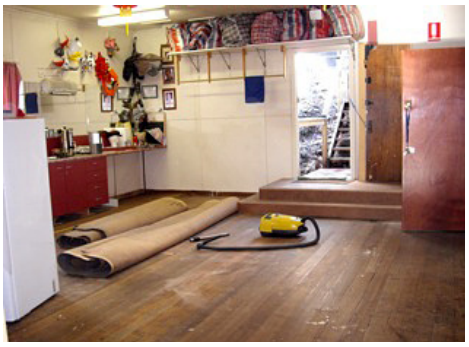
Boring

In the recent One Act Plays, Hugh (looking remarkably like Ken Virtue) pointed out that the maintenance of a historic hall is never done. Last month, along with Phil Dyer and Bill Connolly, he trod the boards in the kitchen and found that termites had already made a meal of them. And were busy eating into more. The guys spent four days replacing much of the kitchen floor and several boards in the main Hall besides. The pest man is coming this week to spray the sawdust out of them, which may have to be a regular exercise over the years ahead.

Ken was also spotted in the Pottery Studio modifying a hand rail and holding back the waters when a tap washer collapsed.

A bit of maintenance on the website is also underway courtesy of Robert Black. See his work at www.warrandytehallarts.asn.au.



Pottery

Congratulations to Alan upon the launch of his book "The Gentle Art of Tossing". A great read, finished it already.

Our mighty sculptures are nearing completion. Thanks to Mand and Robyn for collecting the limestone for us. Thankyou too to Ken and Karen (our budding plumber) who arrived with shifting spanner last week.

Marjorie Beecham 9844 3206

Painting

Our bargain sale is coming up - Sunday 28th August, 2011 10am - 4pm. Painting members to have their works in the Hall between 9am-9.45am, paintings framed, unframed. Oils, watercolours, drawings and pastels. paperworks to have mounts.

Pauline Cross 9439 1775

Theatre

One act plays

Well we have finally come to the end of the OAP season for this year. On Sunday, July 24th we all headed up to Gembrook for the Gemco OAP Festival and enjoyed their wonderful facilities and hospitality. All 3 plays were on the last session on Sunday afternoon so most of us stayed for the adjudication. We received many nominations and awards which seemed a fitting end to the season *(see list on page 2)*. Many thanks to all those who gave their time and talents including Kerryn Wood on sound, Denise Farran on lights and a special mention to Jo French and Naomi Oosting for their outstanding efforts stage managing and producing.

Almost Maine

Our main play for the year, Almost Maine, now has a Director! We are pleased to announce that Phyl Swindley is the Director and Adrian Rice has put his hand up to produce. I am looking forward to the finished product knowing it is in excellent hands. Auditions are on Thursday, August 18th at 8pm and Sunday, August 21st at 2pm.

Follies 2012

The Director of next year's Follies, John Milburn-Clark is already hard at work and has called a brainstorming night to be held at the hall on Friday, August 5th at 8pm. The theme is all about aliens and space, so bring a plate to share and a bottle of fine wine along with all your good ideas.

Lisa Upson 9844 1436

Craft

Rosemary Climas 9439 3206

The WMI&AA doesn't have a "Writers' Group" (yet), despite our Association's role to 'promote all forms of the Arts within the Warrandyte community'. However, you would have thought that most of the town had turned up at on a winter's night the Hall recently to celebrate the book launch for Alan Cornell's *The Gentle Art of Tossing*. The old Hall was an appropriate venue for our latest Life Member, and it welcomed Alan's family, friends and writing colleagues to witness a special moment in Alan's life.

His publishers, Black Pepper Publishing, were there of course, and their principal, Kevin Pearson, was first to acknowledge Alan's blend of skills as he noted how much Alan had impressed them with his storytelling ability. He introduced well-known sportscaster, "Smokey" Dawson, as Master of Ceremonies for the evening who duly entertained the crowd with his memories of Alan being "a very good bowler" at Carey Grammar, and the fact that he had thoroughly enjoyed every moment of the book. He shared a number of amusing local and international sports moments from his special inside perspective as a commentator. After Smokey officially launched the book Alan took the stage to the calls of "speech, speech" (and didn't he look comfortable on such well-travelled territory!).

It soon became clear that the process of writing and publishing a book is not for the impatient or the faint-hearted, as Alan described the challenges he finally overcame to arrive at his special moment. He thanked Jan for "believing in him" and never wavering in her encouragement for him to finish his first book. He also acknowledged those who had helped him along the way, before reading a page or so in the traditional manner of an author at the launch of his book. It was no accident that such a page chosen at random moved the assembled crowd to outright laughter and applause, such was their enjoyment at hearing Alan's comic magic in real time.

Afterwards, those who weren't queueing at the table to buy autographed copies were lining up at the bar or quaffing a slice of local pizza. Others lined up for the dart board to 'toss' a few gentle feathered projectiles. It was truly a great night for Alan, and for the Arts!

Ken Virtue

OAP GONGS

MACEDON OAP FESTIVAL

Winners:
Best Male Support Actor: Ken Virtue
Best Female Support: Naomi Oosting
Adjudicator's Special Award: Louise Phelan, David Creedon
Nominations:
Best Female Lead: Simone Kiefer
Best Male Lead: Robert Black
Best Female Support: Noelene Cooper
Best Production: *Decline and Hall*
Best Director: Bill Connolly
for *Decline and Hall*

DANDENONG RANGES OAP FESTIVAL

Winners:
Best Female Actor:
Lisa Upson
Best Male Support Actor:
John Milburn-Clark
Adjudicator's Award:
Naomi Oosting
Best Production Runner Up: *Good Grief* directed by Phyl Swindley
Nominations:
Best Male Support Actor: Ken Virtue
Best Female Support Actor: Simone Kiefer, Noelene Cooper
Best Male Actor : Robert Black, Tony Clayton
Best Ensemble Production: *Decline and Hall* , *Soap Opera*
Best Director: Phyl Swindley for *Good Grief*
Bill Connolly for *Decline and Hall*

TEN MINUTES! TEN PLAYS! $1,800 in Prizes!

Eltham Little Theatre's "Quickies" is now in it's third year.
$1,000 Best Script $500 People's Choice Award $300 Youth Award
Submission deadline Sunday 13th November 2011
Performances 24th - 26th May 2012
Enquiries: 10minquickie@gmail.com or Paula 0422 954 837
Visit www.elthamlittletheatre.org.au for submission form.

MILL BOYS at Collingwood Underground Theatre

A group of sawmill workers in WA struggle for individuality and intellectual expression. Adapted from James Ricks' Vogel-nominated novel '11 months in Bunbury'.
27 August to 10 September. Tickets : greentix.com.au or at the door.