THE Artful DODGER

May 2016

1.n.roystering young pickpocket from Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist. 2.n. printed handbill full of tidings from the WMI&AA with a closing date for contributions of 25th of each month to ***David Tynan on 9844 5727 or email davidtyn@gmail.com***

BONSOIR ET BON CHANCE!

This issue of The Dodger is the last one from Editor, Ken Virtue.

Until a replacement Editor is found The Dodger will be prepared by David Tynan (see details in the masthead above).

After 33 years on various WMI&AA committees Ken and the lovely Libby have moved from Warrandyte to Thornbury to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

They will remain enthusiastic members of the Association and will be seen smiling at all future WTC and WYT productions!

Warrandyte Mechanics Institute & Arts Association Inc 0009153X
www.warrandytehallarts.asn.au

WARRANDYTE MECHANICS INSTITUTE AND ARTS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Craft

Contact : Rosemary Climas 9844 2154

Second Term for the Tuesday Potters began as first term ended with a Silk Scarf day.
The girls had enjoyed the first occasion so much that they elected for a repeat. Thank you to Amanda for supplying the materials needed, and we all agreed it to be the best day ever.
During the holidays I decided to replace the very old and grotty vinyl bench covering under the window in the main studio. The sun had wrecked it. I was ably assisted by two knights in shining armour. One, Alan, who arrived in his shiny dark blue sports car, and the other, John, who is forever doing repair works for the Potters. Thank you, gentlemen, what would we do without you ?
We welcome three U3A students from the 8 week introduction course – Caralyne, Lac & Michael, it's great to have you. Please enjoy your time with us.

Contact: Marjorie Beecham 9844 3206

Any interested members should contact WMI&AA President David Tynan on 9844 5727.

Theatre News April

Another successful Follies in the bag. Congratulations to everyone involved. By almost all accounts it was very well received – the slick nature of changes especially but that is not to understate the benefit of clever technical work to create projections and a clever film. Several times during the run, some of the older lags would reflect on the some of the clunkier 2 minute scene changes with crew groping around in the dark as well as the silent movies.
We have taken the show onwards and upwards but we are still not satisfied! So we held a meeting on 29/4 to discuss the future of the show, its value to us as a Theatre Co and Arts Association and to the community, and how we sustain the creativity and maintain or achieve "freshness."

The summary of that meeting : Future Follies meeting – 29th April 2016

Present: Noelene Cooper, Liz Long, Alan Cornell, David Tynan, Simone Kiefer, Jeremey Loftus-Hills, Jelle Jager , Tony Clayton, Lisa MacGibbon, Lesley Mitchell, Daryll Mitchell, Richard Pengelley, John Milburn-Clark, Chris Milburn Clark, Joy Flanagan, Adrian Rice, Lou Phelan.

A fruitful and only occasionally strange meeting was held last Friday to discuss issues re Follies and make suggestions for future creators of the show to consider. Quickly … thanks to John for the pies and Liz for the muesli slice, Mr and Mrs Pumpkin for shared pizza and to those who brought along grog and, thanks to the attempted entrance by Alan the start of the meeting was only slightly delayed while we called a glazier.

The aim of the meeting was not to restrict nor dictate and hopefully all ideas were properly considered. Some that were raised were more or less rejected on the night, others left open for further discussion, but by the evening's end we were agreed on a number of suggestions and have the beginnings of a plan for the future.

We agreed that we would not change:

- The inclusive and community nature of the show, though we might consider "capping" the number of performers if it became "unwieldy."
- The time of year when Follies is staged. It was felt that its close links to the Festival need to be maintained as the revenue generated was too important to WMIAA to risk as well as underlining the community nature of the event.
- The cabaret, BYO format – though we felt we could make wine available to buy by the bottle
- The pace and continuity of the show

We agreed that there were areas that were clearly open to improvement:

- Enable broader written contributions by "recruiting" and briefing writers
    - Diary ad for contributors
    - Writing workshops including music and songs
    - Encouraging extra material as early as possible, including songs
- Rehearsal times and scheduling
- Consider fewer items to allow more rehearsal time
- Focus on the comedic element of "surprise" to ensure that more items are actually funny!
- Commence planning future shows with ideas for presentation/staging being the starting point rather than a theme
- Opportunities for audience participation and more direct engagement between actors and audience
- Balancing local content with expanded "Melbourne/Vic" content
- Special effects and "Wow" factors –esp in opening and closing numbers

We agreed that open for consideration were:

- Increasing the number of shows to 10, as follows:
    - Week1 – opening Thurs, (preview night) + Fri, Sat
    - Weeks 2 & 3 – Fri, Sat only
    - Week 4 – Thurs, Fri, Sat
- Ensuring continued use of multi-media
- A shorter show, closer to 90 minutes than 120
- A band with 4, adding a bassist to existing format
- The possibility of the band appearing on stage

We agreed that innovations would be desirable including (maybe)

- Puppetry
- Animals on stage (but only with stable crew) – I think that's what we said

Also to be considered:

- Meeting the needs of the audience. This is something that we should always have in mind but recognise that we are unlikely to satisfy all needs all the time. With around 900 people coming to the show it is inevitable that some will enjoy it more than others. In addition, with such a wide age range it is obvious that some items will have different degrees of appeal and while the comment one audience member made - "I didn't enjoy it this year – there was nothing political and no-one was offended, everyone should be, some of the time …" is interesting, meeting disparate needs is challenging and requires a balance in material.
- Avoid splitting the show over Easter.

In summary, we believe that based on audience feedback, the show generally exceeds expectations and we have an excellent reputation for a show that pleases the vast majority of the audience. The current slick, pacey format is well received but there are items of all types that don't always "work". The show is time-consuming to prepare and relies on goodwill from many people, all of whom are volunteers. The show is unique in terms of theatre in Melbourne and an identifiable part of the Warrandyte Community and Festival time. It most certainly must be retained and staged in March/April annually. We must aim to improve the way in which the show is prepared particularly written and compiled and rehearsed.

And next … once the directors of next year's show have been confirmed, another meeting to be arranged to commence the creative process with ideas, ideas and more ideas.

One Act Plays
Auditions were held recently and although it was rather disappointing turn out. We now have just enough cast. Thanks to David, Ruth and Daryll for directing and Lisa for producing. The plays are all comedies and for the first time we will trial table seating for the OAPs. We hope this will prove popular and encourage you to spread the word. We will of course allow and expect that people will BYO but we will also run a bar and sell choc tops.

Welcome back to WTC to Ruth Richter and David Rackham. They are both back into it with Ruth directing an OAP and David compiling ideas and score breakdown for "Brief Encounter." We may yet do it!

And lastly since I have the floor, I wonder if you would like to join me in congratulating Leicester City FC on winning the English Premier League and if I can propose changing the name of the WTC to "The Warrandyte and Mighty Foxes Theatre Company."? (Just putting it out there.)

Adrian Rice
WTC President
Email aderice@tpg.com.au

**** REMINDER – Warrandyte Theatre Company Annual General Meeting ****
May 9th 2016 at the Hall at 8 pm - All welcome!

NO LIGHTS NO LYCRA!

"Dance like no one is watching"

Every Wednesday 7-8 pm in the Hall – Entry $5

Hello Music Lovers,

So that you won't miss any Warrandyte Music concerts here are the remaining calendar events so please book early to secure your seat!

May 28th - Michael Johnson, harp & Matthew Arnold, violin with the Tudor Choristers. An evening of renaissance music and voice not to be missed.

June 18th - Free Reign CD Launch - Free Reign is the creation of Tony Leonard and is one of the most beautiful, mesmerising, joyful and fresh CD's I have ever heard. The music and lyrics speak of a new expression of Australian Landscape and bring the life of the Land into Sound and Soul.

I look forward to seeing you at one, or many, of our fantastic musical evenings and I deeply thank you for supporting us to grow into being.

Warm regards,
Lisa Pear

Why is there the letter "A" taped on the broken glass of our Hall front door?

Could it be that someone with a name beginning with "A' accidentally tried to walk through it recently?

Given that our much-loved WMI&AA member still has a headache from this encounter ***The Dodger*** will not reveal his or her true identity.

Maybe there will be a Follies song about it one day?

Get well soon, person "A"!

CIRCLE SINGING

Inspired by the work of Bobby McFerrin and Rhiannon...

CONNECT

CREATE

PLAY

EXPLORE

DISCOVER

Circle Singing is...

a playful and deep group improvisation practice for creative, musical, and personal development. Primarily vocal and musical, it also extends and weaves in explorations of movement, language and story

We welcome...

voices at any level to engage from where YOU are, while also challenging you to expand and meet your own edge.
***Beginners**: learn to open your voices and creativity in a safe and supportive space.*
***Advanced singers:** deepen your expressive and improvisational skills.*

WARRANDYTE MECHANICS HALL
MONTHLY SATURDAYS IN 2016:

JAN 23	MAR 5	MAY 14
FEB 20	APR 9	JUN 11

2:30-4:30PM..$15..ALL WELCOME!

Find out more: www.circlesingingmelb.com Contact: kirstymorphett@gmail.com

FOLLIES REVIEW MEETING A BIG SUCCESS

Warrandyte Theatre Company President, Adrian Rice, chaired a special Follies review session at the Hall recently which was attended by 18 enthusiastic members. Given the annual importance of The Follies to the ongoing success of WMI&AA, this was a great way to ensure that lessons were learned from the most recent production. Well done, all!

Message to the photographer, or *victory sign* for the future of Follies' productions?

WMIAA President's Report 2015

What – another year already – wow, this one went fast! I am now entering my 3rd year as 'pres', and hot on the heels of Ken's record.

This year has seen a further transitioning from 'groups' to a blend of active groups (Theatre and Pottery), and the consolidation of relationships between the association and some other artistic organisations. Chief among these were the Chocolate Lilies, and Lisa Pearson's Musical program (which now has a planned program of 8 concerts annually), and a number of other local community events.

In the Theatre group, *Penny for your Follies* showcased what a show the Follies has become, and what a great team Adrian and my sweetheart make (might need to keep an eye on that). What a canny move to start the WYT (Warrandyte Youth Theatre) in 2012 – the next generation of on and off-stage young people filtered nicely throughout the company's 2015 program. Without wanting to steal Adrian's thunder, our OAPs were again terrific with Arctic Fever in particular receiving a lot of festival love. We had so much talent and interest in WYT that we staged 5 short plays (including a WYT director Annie) in the Spring. We capped off a strong year with *God of Carnage*, directed by myself with Ken's help as I nicked off to Borneo for yet another school trip!

The kiln was delivered early in 2015, and is a great asset to the Pottery group – only 3 minor services thus far! I was able to visit the Pottery group a number of times during 2015, and was impressed at how much fun they seem to be having. The image of Marjorie in a school uniform will stay with me for a while.

Funds raised by our activities meant that were able to replace the hall curtains, and set aside money for the polishing of the hall floor, which due to competing demands for the hall, could not be done until after Christmas (Ok it was January 2016). We still have a number of capital improvements to make, such as the installation of a new structural beam, and lining of the ceiling above the stage for OHS reasons (including that actors sometimes step on possum poo!). More of this at future meetings.

We inducted 2 new life members, Jack Stringer and Noelle Burgess, and finally farewelled Pauline Cross, celebrating these events in style at Vanilla Orchid with a score of WMIAA 'elders'!

I'd like to saw a few short words about Ken Virtue – whom many of you will know. Ken is resigning from the committee after 33 years of service to the WMIAA. There can have been few that can claim to have given so completely to the goals of the Association. His 20 years as President steered us to the strong, creative and financially stable position we are now in, and that's not just because we got cheap paint from him. Like all great 'servant leaders', he was a master at building relationships, delegating where necessary, and commanding loyalty without even seeming to try. He also just … got the job done. We plan to find a social occasion later this year at which to embarrass him further.

Thank you to the many who have supported the WMIAA in 2015 – but especially to all members of the 2015 committee.
No-one is getting paid (except Graeme of course!), so it was just as well we had a lot of laughs!

My heartfelt thanks to following lovers of the WMIAA

- To my vice-President, Adrian, who stood in for me in my absences, creatively lead our thespians and gave sage advice in a strategic and calm manner
- To Pat, who reminds us all of what we sometimes forget, and thankfully has enjoyed a year of relatively few bureaucratic challenges
- To Marjorie, who continues to amaze with her energy, enthusiasm and forthright views – luckily her lovely

daughter Amanda was sometimes at meetings to manage her!

- To Robert, whose work on the website, and managing all things digital is very much appreciated.
- To Noelle, for her patient relationship with the now retired Dodger printer Rick, and for handling all correspondence
- To Graeme, for his Zen-like calm and thorough management of the hall and its various hirers, and for all of his work to keep our hall in good shape.
- To Ken, for his Dodger journalism – he is clearly quite upset that he has to pass this on to me, so I am prepared to offer him occasional guest Dodger editing if that would help
- To Noelene, who has begun the work of tackling our membership tasks and wrestling with the associated technology
- To Alan, for his clear thinking and generous contributions, and for being funnier than all of us combined
- To Jan, for her generous support, nods and smiles (although I notice she sometimes does this when she hasn't heard what I have said)
- And finally to the love of my life and money manager Simone, who is fast becoming the new 'heart and soul' of this wonderful association – without her work on the finances we would not have been able to pay for our trip to Europe in 2015 (that last bit is a joke)

Our challenges continue of course, but in 2015, as per usual, we kept this good ship afloat and sailing smoothly in a positive direction. I look forward to continuing to, with others, hold the wheel. That is the end of my nautical metaphors for the time being.

Cheers
David Tynan
President WMI&AA

WMI&AA Central Committee for 2016

President : David Tynan

Vice President : Adrian Rice

Secretary : Pat Anderson

Assistant Secretary : Noelle Burgess

Treasurer : Simone Kiefer

Committee :

Marjorie Beecham
Amanda Sgourakis
Alan Cornell
Jan Cornell
Robert Black
Noelene Cooper

AGM action : L-R : Pat, Graeme, Adrian, Noelene, Simone, Noelle, Marjorie, Amanda & David.
Not in shot are Ken, Robert, Jan & Alan.

The Presidential birthday cake forest fire….
David is trying to avoid heat stroke while Marjorie, Noelle and Amanda look on in anticipation !