Dec 2018

The Artful DODGER

1.*n.* roystering young pickpocket from Charles Dicken's *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 David Tynan on 98445727 or davidtyn@gmail.com

What to make with a few bits of wood

Observant members would have noticed the piles of weatherboard panels and framing timber in the car park recently. The WMIAA, and in particular the Theatre group are hoping to improve storage of sets, props and costumes. After an earlier expensive quote for a container, we needed to explore cheaper options that might help us in the short term. So, we were were lucky to be able to purchase two 3 by 2 metre sheds for $2000! The story is that VET Construction and Building students from Aquinas College, Ringwood make these as part of an annual project, and then sell them at the end of the year to raise money for a school in Nairobi, Kenya (https://www.kiberakids.org/). The sheds arrive in panels, and with the help of a few, we were able to reconstruct them, and start to paint them to blend in as much as possible. They are the newest members of the property - please make them welcome.

A front cover for our front cover

Other hall works

Just in time for Christmas, we've had a couple of pieces of work completed at the hall. Lou, Brad and Nick the trusted builders have replaced the post that was mowed down by a wayward Mercedes driver (with a little help from termites) and they have also reinforced and made permanent the side extensions of the stage. We no longer need fret about the number of trained ducks that can dance in those corners. Here they are in action … sort of. I rather think Brad and Nick look as if they could not only be in the middle of their lunch but also a Follies sketch … anyone?

Actually it was five pieces of work. Lou has cut and hinged a gate that takes you to the side of the hall where the clean up sink is situated. They also put barge boards on the two sheds, and strengthened the post and rail between the sheds and the car park.

Group reports

Visual Arts News

It's been a great year for the life drawing sessions. We've had regular attendance by artists serious towards their craft. With increased numbers, we have had ti purchase 2 more easels to cope with the demand. The Mechanics Hall is a comfortable environment and now with Callum improving the lighting, a general "YEH!" Was the response - thank you Callum!

We will follow on next year starting February 1st, with the same program - single pose for the 3 hours. Perhaps through the year we'll have whole day sessions, pop-up gallery days - whoever the group directs.

The still life sessions Friday afternoons will continue (also restarting on February 1st).

The group is small so if life drawing is not your style, this may be! Any interest contact me on 0408 395 299. Thanks to all participants this year.

Marion Cooper

A special thank you to Rhonda Stewart who has led the Visual Arts group for the last couple of years, and has decided to retire from this position. We wish her well in her future endeavours, and we are already missing her input at the WMIAA Committee.

Group reports

Pottery News

On 30 October the Tuesday Potters had a quiet lunch for Marjorie to celebrate and reminisce . We have had a wonderful year in the studio, everyone has contributed to keeping the studio running smoothly. Well done to Liz for creating more than 120 beautiful serviette rings for her daughter Emily's wedding. On Tuesday 11th Dec. Robyn is kindly hosted our Studio Christmas party in her home. Merry Christmas to all the WMI & AA community and Happy and safe holidays.

Amanda Sgourakis and Liz Pryor

Group reports

Pottery News (continued)

Group reports

Theatre News

Well the pantomime had the town humming which is what happens when Jack and Alan contrive to set ear worms in place. Scientists believe it will likely be Easter before audience and cast stop singing "latte and a muffin" while queueing at the Warrandyte bakery. Congratulations again to the team behind the show – Keryn, Alan and Jack, David and Renata directing and the rest of the crew – particularly Anita and Emer – breaking their ducks at stage managing. Speaking of ducks … no – don't get me started but to put the record straight I have not trained in ballet … Is it too late?

And if you didn't see it, who would have thought they we could get through almost the entire second half of the show without Adam's lights?! Thank goodness for mobile phones and audience ignoring the request to turn them off!! As a result, following the black out which I believe might have been caused by short sighted ducks flying into power lines by the pub, ** we are were able to complete thanks to the umpteen phone torches. Spectacular!

Make sure you get a copy of this month's Warrandyte Diary with our monarchs on the front page. We have attached a copy later this Dodger. Or read it online at http://warrandytediary.com.au/december-2018/

Upcoming Auditions

On the horizon is the workshop for younger actors on January 19th and 20th 10-4 with our director Kia at the hall. This is to work with the script and characters of "Animal Farm" which will go into rehearsal immediately in the week commencing January 28th.

For details for the show and audition process, please contact Kia. (kiaheymoon@gmail.com or 0401047736)

Followed by auditions for The Lady from the Sea in February. Yes the show is in late August/September but in keeping with getting ahead. Auditions will be early to maximise the time actors spend with the script.

February Wednesday 19 February at 8pm and Sunday 23 February at 2pm

More details from the director: Grant Purdy grant_purdy@me.com 0412121631

You've missed it!

Auditions for our June play – "All My Sons" were held last week and casting is virtually complete. Given the large cast and the need for several couples, casting was quite tricky, but Alastair is very happy with the cast he has assembled. Rehearsals begin in April.

Grant success.

A different grant … this time a small community grant from Manningham for which we are very grateful. This grant of $1500 (which requires we co-contribute another $1500 will go towards buying additional stage curtains. The quote for the curtains is $3000. Neat huh?! Thanks to Tony Clayton for making the application for us.

You've missed it 2

The biannual WTC Finska competition.
Announcing this year's winner … Ian Craig with a confidently flawless performance in the Grand final. Defying the weather or at least the forecast a really decent crowd of 30+ assembled at Stiggants for as BBQ and Finska. The weather turned out more than ok and the fickets played true. See later this Dodger for some photos.

Finally, thank you to everyone with every show this year. It's been a successful year with excellent contributions from everyone. We've staged some excellent shows and been rewarded with mainly excellent audiences (quantity as well as quality!)

And a happy Christmas from WTC

** This may be fake news

Adrian

The Festivillain – Diary Review

review

By BRIONY BOTTARELLI

TOTAL NONSENSE, absolute stupidity, outrageous silliness and so ridiculously hilarious!

The best thing about comedy at the WTC, is that it brings back all the familiar names and faces.

It is always a joy to see Noelene and Simone being funny, in fact it is an expectation!

And again we got to hear Simone sing, along with the beautiful voices of Michelle Reeves (as Bronsky Awfley), Flora Terrens (as Alpha Sweetly) and Lisa Upson (as Sandra Crump).

I overheard that some audience members were surprised to discover after the performance that the Festivillain, Bronsky, had in fact, been played by a girl.

I guess that is convincing acting — or eyesight on its way out!

I have to admit, in contrast, that when the Twanky Sisters made their entrance, I was initially so focussed on Martha (Nolene Cooper) that when her sister Agnes (Grant Purdy) spoke, I got quite a jolt as I hadn't realised she was a he!

Although these sisters were delightful with their occasional little synchronised hop, they did remind me a bit of *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

The show was a fun send-up of the Warrandyte Festival with our ever controversial ducks making an appearance throughout the show, constantly wacky quacking, along with their side gig of rearranging the sets.

Although extremely organised, they were exceptional in giving the impression that they were as disorganised as the plastic ducks themselves.

Jock Macneish's set design was very effective in its simplicity, as always.

And what a treat having Jack Stringer and Alan Cornell collaborating once again with music and lyrics.

Bronky's *He's Behind It* came appropriately into play when the power went out just into the second half of the production on closing night, with Bronsky taking credit for that also.

However, this turned out to be a plus with the audience turning their mobile phone lights on so the show could go on.

A wonderful, special, unexpected addition.

I cannot imagine what any out-of-towners watching this production would make of it, but a local on our table, who had not been to a production for many years, was particularly taken by the colloquialism.

It was pleasing to see Adrian (a stunned duck) back in his own underpants.

It was also very interesting to note that he trained in classical ballet, or is that a joke?

If not, how about bringing that into a production?

What is light hearted and fun for an audience clearly required an enormous amount of work from all concerned.

And while it is hard enough to learn a song you are familiar with, there is an extra art to learning an original song.

Well written by Keryn Wood and directed by David Tynan and Renata Levin-Buckland.

However, David was greatly missed on stage.

I am not a very good critic of the WTC productions, I think everyone is wonderful.

The thought of getting up on stage, doing anything, terrifies me.

Well done all and here's to a wonderful 2019 at the old Mechanics' Hall.

A pleasing playhouse pantomime

Photos: STEPHEN REYNOLDS

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By DAVID HOGG

WAS IT BRILLIANT? "*Oh Yes it was!*"

A true pantomime from the brilliance of Kerryn Wood tells the story of a local villain who is intent on wreaking havoc with the Warrandyte Festival, in a plot which reminds us of *The Grinch* or *Scrooge*.

In fact so good was the plot that in the final performance the villain managed to turn off the power to Warrandyte in the second act (yes really), but in true theatre tradition the performance continued by mobile-phone-torchlight.

All the elements of a true pantomime were there; ladies dressed up as men, men as ladies, audience participation in the form of boos, hisses and "He's behind yous", silly songs we could sing along to, two hilarious ugly Twanky sisters, a king and queen, and finally, in place of the traditional pantomime horse, a line of wacky ducks wi' a braw bricht Scottish duck-herder.

And in a clever twist just as the villain has made good and is about to team up with our heroine, he finds out that she is a lesbian!

What fantastic acting.

I won't even start to name the stars or I'll go through the full cast, but suffice to say that the acting talent was breathtaking, a delight to see many of the old faces, and the newer faces can no longer be described as "up and coming"; they have well and truly arrived.

And the music, because this was truly a musical.

The geniuses of Jack Stringer and Alan Cornell, Warrandyte's answer to Rogers and Hammerstein, together produced a smorgasbord of scandalous songs.

Congratulations to Directors David Tynan and Renata Levin-Buckland for a wonderful evening of entertainment.

We are so lucky to have such a diversity of talent in our community.

Don't miss Warrandyte Theatre Company's upcoming productions:

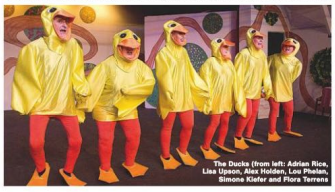
***Animal Farm* by George Orwell in March – a Warrandyte Youth Theatre Production**

***All My Sons* by Arthur Miller in June**

***The Lady from the Sea* by Henrik Ibsen in September.**

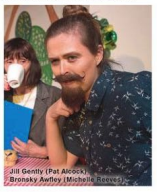
Willie the Duck herder (Eric Purdie)

Top photo from left: Martha (Noelene Cooper), Agnes (Grant Purdy), Jill Gently (Pat Alcock), Festival Queen Sandra Crump (Lisa Upson) and Festival King Keith Crump (Ian Craig)



The Ducks (from left: Adrian Rice, Lisa Upson, Alex Holden, Lou Phelan, Simone Kiefer and Flora Terrens

Alpha Sweetly (Flora Terrens)



Jill Gently (Pat Alcock), Bronsky Awfley (Michelle Reeves)

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Panto time! - The Festivillain

MIV Conference – Pat presents!

Over the weekend of 16th – 19th Nov, Mechanics' Institutes Victoria, as well as celebrating its 20th year of existence, hosted an Australia-wide conference in Ballarat, entitled "Mechanics' Institutes Australia: Celebration and Survival". Pat Anderson had been asked to talk about Survival of the WMI Hall through its arts programs, and the following is the background to the information she presented.

Warrandyte Mechanics Institute and Arts Association
Survival through arts programs

WMI hall today
WMI is a splendid building in the centre of Warrandyte. It is in good condition and well used, but it hasn't always been so. The building was officially opened in 1928 (the 3rd venue for WMI) and served the community well until the first 2 decades after the war. During this time, Warrandyte was still a village beyond the edge of Melbourne. But as Melbourne began to grow, more people acquired cars, drive-in cinemas became popular and the use of the hall as a community facility declined, and hence the income from hiring declined.

The hall in the mid 70s
By the mid 70s, the hall was in a sorry-looking state. During the previous decade, the annual financial balance grew increasingly negative and major maintenance jobs were needed, for which costs were growing dramatically. It was feared that the council would take it over, bulldoze it and build more shops in its place. The Warrandyte Arts Association (WAA) accounted for most of the hall's income in hiring. Members of WAA had likewise made donations and lent money to try to keep it afloat.

What was WAA?
The Warrandyte Arts Association grew from a public meeting called in 1955 by local drama enthusiasts who wished to expand their operation. As the drama group blossomed, so more groups came forward, within the year, to practise painting, pottery, music and photography. Theatre productions were staged, concerts were staged, exhibitions of visual arts and ceramics were held and an additional craft group developed in the 1960s. The hall played a key role in the productions and exhibitions, although its facilities were somewhat limited. There was a stage, but limited stage lighting, heaters that were so noisy that they had to be turned off during performances, and terrible chairs. Members were enthusiastic about improving the hall and saving it from decline or a take-over by council, and grandiose plans were drawn up for a major and costly redevelopment in the 1970s, but sadly no funding was forthcoming, and some residents thought it was a "gross over development of the site". Then the council bought the vacant site in the adjacent block to develop a community facility. It was hoped by WMI and WAA that the hall's development would be reconsidered as part of this, but it was not to be.

Amalgamation of WMI & WAA
The 'trustees' managing WMI and the central committee of WAA were effectively the same people, who were also making loans and donations to keep the hall afloat. As no outside help looked like coming, a new strategy was devised – to amalgamate the 2 bodies. After much legal consultation, it was decided that WAA could be merged into WMI, rather than trying to take it over. This would be a cheaper and easier solution, with no land transfer involved and the status of WMI would continue. The broad goals of the merged association would be to promote the arts in the community and to maintain the hall for community use. Who could possibly object to that? This merger proposal was put to a community public meeting in the mid 1980s and was ratified, and so WMI&AA was born and proceeded to incorporate to form WMI&AA Inc in 1986.

Hall restoration
With still no funding on the horizon, the committee of the newly-merged association, full of energy, enthusiasm and a degree of risk, decided on a major restoration program of the existing building and borrowed the huge sum of $36,000 in 1991 in order to re-stump the building, re-line it (inevitably the plaster fell off the walls and ceiling with restumping), install ducted gas heating, refurbish the committee room (kitchen/green room), paint the building inside and out and to buy a new piano. Amazingly the loan was paid off fairly quickly, so it can definitely be said that "The arts" had saved the hall, but clearly there were other factors involved:

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MIV Conference – Pat presents!

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- Tickets sales from theatre productions – yes, but these have to be popular shows to fill the hall – such as the annual Festival Follies, and discounted ticket sales in blocks through other community groups
- Skilful script writing of sketches for the Follies
- Creative publicity
- Fund raising music concerts
- Exhibitions of painting, pottery & craft, with a proportion of sales going to the association. Again, creative local talent with themes and clever layout, made these exhibitions legendary and a highpoint in the local calendar – BUT it was a time when people still bought paintings, and a time when earthy pottery & craft were still very much in vogue
- Development & sales of a local cookbook (such things were also still popular then)
- But an equally important factor was the enthusiastic involvement of the members at the time, (people who also had a personal interest in seeing the job done), with many exhausting working bees, week upon week, undertaking dirty work like stripping out the lining and external painting at dangerous heights. The work would have been impossible without the volunteer hours involved.

Since 2000, there have been numerous, on-going improvements to the hall. It never stops. Examples include:

- Re-roofing
- Memorial garden, graded access to front door
- External painting – twice
- Hall asbestos check and removal
- Purchase of chairs
- Sealing of car park
- Installation of AC
- Redevelopment of toilets (disabled access) & installation of water tank
- Rebuild of the stage to dance standard
- Purchase of lights & digital audio-visual equipment
- New kiln for the pottery after years of paying for repairs
- Termite prevention work
- Gutter repair and installation of leaf guard

Can we say that our arts programs have paid for all the on-going improvements?
Looking at a few examples, it is clear that several factors are again involved, although the arts programs have definitely generated funds, which has worked hand in hand with other factors:

1. *Access to various sources of funding/grants, mainly since 2000:*

- Manningham Council small grants (not for building works)
- State government grant towards the roof (note: this was one of the few grants for infrastructure)
- Manningham Council ward funds (have been significant)
- Manningham Council Heritage funds
- Even occasional $$ from Nillumbik Council across the river
- Bendigo Bank sponsorship
- Bendigo Bank – a major grant
- Other local business sponsorships

- Most grants require an equal contribution from the applicant. This means having $$$ in the first place, or the ability to raise money as necessary, which is where our arts programs have come into the equation
- Being aware of funding rounds and having projects "ready to go" – good in theory!
- Having skills in applying for various grants (helping the funding bodies tick their own boxes/goals)

2. *Cultivating relationships with granting bodies and sponsors through responding to requests* (eg involvement in Heritage Week activities, involvements in an artists' trail, invitations to attend productions and events

- Quality of theatre productions these go from strength to strength – but will always fluctuate according to personnel. Plus, there are inherent costs in staging a production. The performing rights of contemporary plays are especially high (up to $1000).
- Having digital-tech savvy people involved. No longer OK just to have fancy signage – must have a user-friendly website as well as an active Face Book site

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MIV Conference – Pat presents!

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3. *Being known in the community/ Artistic involvement in community projects* :

- the Federation Pathway in the park below the bakery – ceramic pieces,
- the Follies being part of the Festival Program for 30 years
- The outdoor painters being involved in a celebration of Women Painters of the Heidelberg School
- Actors involved in the gold discovery re-enactment in 2001 (150 years since discovery)
- Ceramic sculptures at the Pines Shopping Centre and Wombat Bend Play areas
- Making mosaic letter boxes for survivors of the 2009 bushfires in Strathaven
- Actors involved in the CFA "Fire Ready" web site

• Developing partnerships with other community groups (U3A at the pottery may have helped with funding for the kiln)
• Collecting relevant information to support applications (such as the current hall use census – people and hours per week)

It should also be said that over recent decades, Warrandyte has changed further. It has grown to become a suburb of Melbourne, albeit one with a special community feel. This means that there is a huge number of groups now competing for available grants. People are also much busier, spending far more time on the road commuting, which means competition for membership. There are many individual artists' studios offering tuition, Rotary runs an annual Arts Show for the Festival, the Neighbourhood House, and even the library, offers arts programs. There is an annual pottery expo on the riverbank and there are patchwork/craft groups in just about every street

The various arts groups of WMI&AA themselves can fluctuate in numbers and enthusiasm. Our outdoor painting group, that had been so active for years, gradually declined as members aged, until it faded away three years ago. But over the past 2 years, a new, enthusiastic group has grown, primarily with life drawing, still life and portraiture sessions, and there is talk once more of big art shows.

On the music front, the old format of soirees and occasional concerts also died. But in recent years, we have learnt to be flexible in forming 'associate memberships' with existing groups like the Chocolate Lilies Choir, as a new way to encourage artistic groups to become part of the WMIAA, thereby growing our membership and community impact. We have another experimental singing group using the hall, on very favourable terms, while they try to get established. These may also become "associate members". In addition, there is an individual who organises music performances in the hall on a monthly basis. While this is as an independent business (albeit barely making any money), we assist her with promotion and in other ways, thereby promoting the arts and seeing the hall used to its full capacity.

Examples of some major projects and funding sources

- Re-roofing in 2001 (Cost = $22,000)
    - $10,000 from State Government (Casino $$$)
    - $3,000 from local council ward funds
    - Balance from own funds, including:
    - Special fund-raising efforts (eg a "Raise the Roof" variety concert – 100 people @$20 = $2,000)
- Memorial garden, graded access to front door – a $3,000 contribution from Council ward funds
- External painting – twice – contribution from Council Heritage funds
- Hall asbestos check and removal – $3,000 contribution from Council ward funds
- Purchase of chairs - $3,000 contribution from Council ward funds
- Sealing of car park – paid for by Council (the problem was caused by their actions in the first place)
- Installation of AC
- Redevelopment of toilets & installation of water tank – $50,000major grant from the Bendigo Bank
- Rebuild of the stage – $12,000 donation from grateful persons
- Purchase of lights & digital audio-visual equipment
- New kiln for the pottery after years of paying for repairs -$4,000 Council grant, $2,000 Bendigo Bank sponsorship and fund raising
- Termite prevention work – Council Heritage fund
- Gutter repair and installation of leaf guard - Council Heritage fund

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MIV Conference – Pat presents!

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Detailed examples of some productions and costs involved. In general costs, over and above the considerable, general costs like utilities, insurance and technical equipment, include:

- Performing Rights (up to $1,000)
- Costumes - variable
- Sometimes specific new equipment
- Program printing (maybe $500)
- Publicity – advertisements & signage (maybe $500)
- Set building & painting
- Annual fee to APRA (for use of recorded music)
- Good ticket sales are not guaranteed, especially if a play is unknown

Summary

In the case of WMI Hall, it has unquestionably been saved by its arts programs, although there are other factors involved. More particularly, it was the merging of WAA into WMI that made the redevelopment possible, providing a cohort of committed people with a personal interest in seeing the works succeed.

On-going improvements continue to happen, for the same reasons. Our arty folk are to be congratulated for the fruits of their labours, in particular, our theatre company, whose productions provide the bulk of income raised, while the quality of their performances goes from strength to strength.

Pat Anderson

The Sharp End

One of our multi-talented members and WMIAA Web and all things digital guru Robert Black moonlights as a terrific cartoonist - you may have seen his work in other publications, including in the Warrandyte Diary. Robert generously permits us to publish one of his 'gently twist' cartoons each month - thanks Robert!

For more about the Sharp End, go to

http://www.robertblack.com.au/the-sharp-end

"Go into the light Sylvia … Go into the light …
Wait, what am I saying? She's a moth – of course she's going into the light!"

MIV Conference – Our Ken wins!

Also, at the conference dinner, various "Furphy" awards were presented. J Furphy and Sons had generously sponsored these one-off awards in conjunction with the celebrations. There were various categories of awards, mostly relating to the past 18 months, but also a category for the "Outstanding Contribution to an Institute by any Person". WMI&AA had nominated Ken Virtue for this category. In the event, the judges evidently had such difficulty in deciding a winner, so each nomination (6 in all) received a certificate.
Ken's nomination appears below:

Nomination by WMI&AA Inc. of Ken Virtue for a Furphy & Sons Award (Category "Past") as part of the MIVic 20th Anniversary

Background explanation

The existing Mechanics' Institute Hall in Warrandyte (WMI), built in 1928, was on the verge of extinction in the mid-1970s, (See Fig 7), but was saved by the Warrandyte Arts Association (WAA , which, with its various arts groups, was almost the single user at the time). It was saved through working bees, donations, loans and, above all, interest in the venue. When all else failed, the management committees of both organisations, who were effectively the same people, called a public meeting to seek approval for a merger. Following this, WAA was subsumed into WMI and WMI&AA was born in 1986, and quickly became incorporated. Thereafter, WMI&AAInc. borrowed a very large sum of money to expedite a rapid refurbishment in 1991, since which both major and minor improvements have continued apace.

Ken's leadership and technical contribution to the state of the hall facility

Ken Virtue was very actively involved with WAA from the 1970s until 4 years ago when he moved house, away from Warrandyte. Throughout this time he played a major role with the theatre group of the association, both on and off stage, but he also took a leadership role in the umbrella organisation, as president from 1995 to 2014, and prior to that, as vice president from 1989. In recognition of his contribution, he was made a life member of WMI&AA in 2006. Although he moved away from Warrandyte in 2014, he is still involved with the association.

His leadership role over a period of 25 years, from 1989 to 2014 and his contributions, both to the maintenance of and major improvements to the institute and to the artistic endeavours of WMI&AA, render him worthy of recognition. His contributions have greatly contributed to the cultural and community life of Warrandyte, and his building maintenance and engineering skills greatly contributed to the upkeep and improvement of the WMI Hall, a special community facility that is enjoyed on a daily basis by the community of Warrandyte.

Ken was Vice President when the association made the brave decision in 1991 to borrow $36,000, for the purpose of refurbishment of the hall - a considerable sum at the time. He was present at all the major and numerous working bees that supported the necessary work performed and to make it possible to pay professional contractors to undertake the re-stumping, re-plastering and re-wiring. (see Figs. 1 - 4). These working bees involved the unpleasant work of stripping out the internal lining of the hall, both heavy work and hazardous, installation of insulation in the walls and hours of internal and external painting. And, inevitably, there were numerous fund-raising efforts to pay back the loan, in which Ken was also involved (see Fig. 5).

In the period under Ken's leadership as president from 1995 onwards, many other major improvements were undertaken, often with the assistance of grants obtained from local and state government. These include the complete re-roofing of the hall (Fig 6) in 2001, the redevelopment of the front garden/entrance to allow disabled access, installation of improved ducted heating, air conditioning, external painting, replacement of chairs and tables, a new stage curtain, re-building of the stage itself, purchase of new lighting and digital equipment, and a project to check the hall for asbestos and obviate any ensuing problems. In addition, Ken successfully applied for a grant of $50,000 from the Bendigo Bank Community Foundation with which the toilet facilities were rebuilt. This rebuilding enabled an additional, separate toilet for disabled access and a toilet that can be accessed from the "Green Room" (the room that doubles up as a meeting room and as an unregistered kitchen) during productions. This grant also allowed the installation of a tank to collect roof water to be used for toilet flushing.

(*continued next page*)

MIV Conference – Our Ken wins!

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Underlying all these major achievements, however, was Ken's regular involvement in on-going maintenance issues for both the hall and pottery studio (also on the WMI title) – attending to leaks, drainage problems, cleaning out guttering, lighting issues, liaising with the hall curator, organising numerous working bees and helping at numerous production "bump outs" and clear ups. He had an extraordinary knack of getting things done. The 2010 production of "Pig Iron People", for example, required an old Valiant on stage. It was Ken who sourced and collected one, at least the rear half

of one, and somehow managed to get it on stage. (See below)
Being employed by Dulux meant that Ken was a good source of paint, and Ken even gave up part of his annual leave one Christmas to supervise/facilitate a painting work party from Box Hill Office of Corrections. Likewise, a grant was received in 2014 from the City of Manningham Heritage Fund towards work to replace termite damage and to undertake termite prevention work. As Ken had by this time retired, he worked alongside the contractor to ensure the work was completed on time and within budget.

It is not just WMI&AA that has benefited from this work. The whole community should be proud of the condition of our attractive, historic hall which is used on a daily basis by regular user groups and by a number of groups and individuals for occasional bookings.

Ken's artistic contribution to WMI&AA
Within the Theatre Group, Ken has played a consistent role. He has served as group president. He has directed several plays – "Visiting Hour", "My Son the Lawyer is Drowning", as well as 2 "Follies" and "Pantomimes". He has been involved on stage in many "Follies", and he has taken several more serious acting roles, including some memorable leading roles such as in "Life After George". But above all, he has enthusiastically encouraged new members to the theatre group and has provided considerable support to other groups in their own artistic endeavours within the association – such as the potters, painters and crafties with their exhibitions and sales and the music group with their occasional productions.

What made Ken so special was the way he could so calmly and efficiently deal with large numbers of people and crises simultaneously. Fellow association members said that it was a pleasure to serve on the central committee with him and equally enjoyable to be involved in a production under his guidance.

Summary
Ken's many voluntary hours, his leadership, ingenuity and enthusiastic involvement in hall maintenance and in the theatre, and his support for other groups within WMI&AA deserve recognition. His outstanding contribution, not only to WMI&AA but also to the cultural and community life of Warrandyte is, we believe, worthy of a J Furphy and Sons Award in this landmark year for MIVic.

Finska fun

Announcing this year's winner … Ian Craig with a confidently flawless performance in the Grand final. Defying the weather or at least the forecast a really decent crowd of 30+ assembled at Stiggants for BBQ and Finska. The weather turned out more than ok and the fickets played true. See visual record below.