August 2019

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

The future of the WMIAA: A Member Forum

This is advanced notice that we will be conducting a member's forum on the evening of Friday October 18. We hope to discover what members want from the WMIAA in the next few years, and to seek feedback about some current challenges and opportunities we have as an organisation. It is planned at a later date to also ask the wider Warrandyte community for their input. These forums will guide the WMIAA Committee's role as custodians of the hall, and possible changes to the future focus & priorities of our organisation. Stay tuned for further information.

Repair Cafe still on the mend

The August repair cafe was again successful (of course!) , with much advice, fixes & laughs. We look forward to seeing you at the Sept 1 session (which is also Father's Day).

The Lady From the Sea premieres – stunning!

What a superb production - great credit to all involved on and off-stage! Those of us who attended opening night agreed that the performances, set, costumes, lighting and gorgeous sound design all worked to create a highly polished and magical evening of theatre - well done Grant and the entire cast and crew.

Don't forget to book your tickets while you can!

Group reports

Pottery News

On Wednesday 24th of July eight of our potters ventured up to Monbulk to attended a Raku firing . It was a fabulous day hosted by The Ferntree gully potters. We were directed to the glazing tables with large tubs of glazes, white crackle, Egyptian blue , red and others. Once we'd glazed our already bisque fired pots we placed them on and around the heating kilns.When dry the pots were fired in the kilns, once they reached 1000 deg C with long tongs we removed the red hot pots and placed them into bins of sawdust and scrunched news paper , added more newspaper and let it flame. The lid with a thick layer of damp newspaper was placed on top and the pots were left to smoke for 20 mins. We achieved some fabulous pots . A long successful and fun day was had by all.

Amanda Sgourakis

Group reports

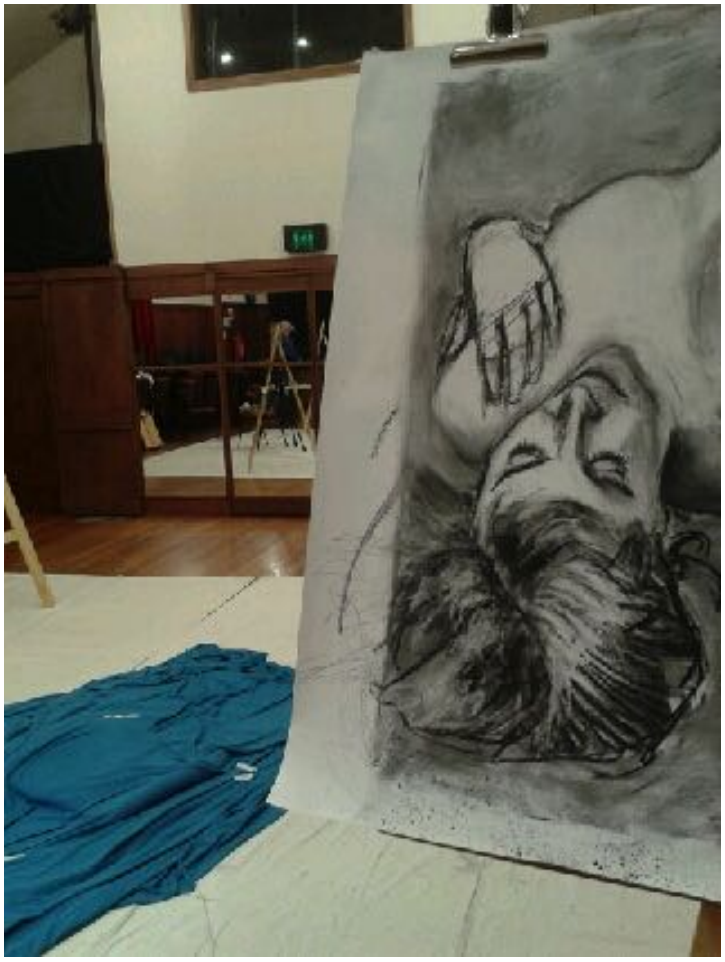
Pottery News (continued)

Group reports

Visual Arts News

Another great month of drawing & painting. We engaged a model for 3 sessions again. She was very skilled recreating the same pose each week. It was fabulous, as she reclined, twisted and formed a convex position. This provided great shapes and angles to capture. Certainly here, some of us have been successful. Cheers.

Marion Cooper



Group reports

Visual Arts News (continued)

Group reports

Theatre News

By the time you get this it will be past opening night of The Lady from the Sea. This is because I wrote this once and thought I'd sent it to the Dodger Master but in fact deleted it. Hence your Dodger is late because of me – sorry.

I have watched parts of several rehearsals and this will be a fabulous production with a "family" of new actors to our stage and a couple of well known faces too.

Here they are - mostly: Left to Right standing: Liz Long, Pam Ford, Andrew Scarborough, Reg Ellery, Steve Saul, Alan Ashby, Callum Robertson, Anita Sigmund, Grant Purdy. Sitting: Francesca Carl, Donna Cleverly, Renata Levin-Buckland.

Coming up Next – Two one act plays – "Crimes of the Heart"
We have cast the two plays. "Contractions" by Mike Bartlett and directed by David Tynan features Brie Snare as the Manager and Francesca Carl as Emma. "Elegy for a Lady" by Arthur Miller and directed by Adrian Rice stars Don Nicholson and Marnie Martinez. Thank you to all auditionees and welcome to Brie and Marnie who are new to the company.

And then … put this down in your calendar …
Auditions for "Calendar Girls" by Tim Firth directed by Susan Rundle.
Sun Oct 20 7 pm
Wed 23rd Oct 8 pm
This play is our season 1 for 2020. And then, if you've bought a 2020 diary …

[*Think its something about growing sunflowers in England - Eds*]

More about 2020.
Season 2 – June/July – Lovesick by John Cariani, directed by Adrian Rice and Lisa MacGibbon
Season 3 – August/September - Love Letters by AR Gurney, directed by David Tynan
Season 4 – November/December - Follies returns.

Adrian

Some shared memories

An interview with John Verrall, aged 97

After coming to live in Warrandyte in 1971, some of the first productions we (husband John and I) enjoyed at the hall were of the music hall variety and we have clear recollections of a fine performance by a Barbers' Shop Quartet, one member of which was John Verrall. When I heard recently that John Verrall had come back to the area to live, I was keen to meet him and hear some of his recollections.

A visit to John's daughter's house in Eltham was arranged and, after digging through our archives, it was clear that John had also acted in numerous plays, as well as being president of the "Drama Group" in 1961. So I went long armed with our incomplete archive of theatre programs and photographs.

What an incredible person. At 97, in spite of a number of health issues, John still has a good memory. I asked him what had brought him to Warrandyte and how he had come to join the Warrandyte Arts Association (WAA). Well, from England, he served in the Fleet Air Arm during the war and at the conclusion of hostilities, he requested to be discharged in Sydney. He married and later came to Melbourne and subsequently, while returning from a house hunting expedition to Yarra Glen, they spotted a house for sale in Kangaroo Ground Road, and so ended up in Warrandyte in the early 1950s. John joined the RSL and one Anzac Day he ended up in the pub where he was heard singing. Having an excellent voice, he was noticed by David Robertson who was a member of the newly-formed WAA, and who told him he must come along and join them. Hilda Barbour, an excellent musician, had started a choir and so John became involved. Then Hilda suggested that a small group should form a Barbers Shop Quartet. They rehearsed very thoroughly every Saturday morning. Hilda evidently had very high standards and expectations.

Music Group activities included the choir, musical evenings in private homes and many concerts in the hall. For one of these, Hilda invited a tenor from the Melbourne Opera Company to come out to Warrandyte to sing a duet with John. This was the well-known duet from The Pearl Fishers by Bizet, called "In the Depths of the Temple". John also sang many solos and duets with local, Joan Otto.

As well as singing, John became involved with the Drama Group, as it was then known and appeared in "Clerembard" in 1960, "The Man who came to Dinner" in 1961, "She Stoops to Conquer" in 1961, "Salad Days" in 1968, "A Penny for a Song" in 1969, "The Beggars' Opera" in 1970, "From the Hollow Shield" in 1973, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" in 1973 and "The Wind in the Sassafras Trees". No doubt there were more plays, but these are the only ones from the period, for which we have records that show John's name. John, for example, remembers performing in "Hello There", which was directed by Jenny White. He also remembers being involved in "Kelly Country", a play in which the narrative was sung by John from the corner of the stage. This show was also taken to South Melbourne Town Hall and attended by a relative of the main character depicted in the play.

John Verrall, Enid Bird, Gus McLaren in the 1961 production of "The Man who came to Dinner"

Some shared memories (continued)

An interview with John Verrall, aged 97 (continued)

John Anderson and I actually saw the production of "The Beggars Opera" in 1970 at Latrobe University (it was relocated there because of some problem with the Warrandyte Hall). It was a fine performance. While we didn't know anyone in the cast at the time, we decided there and then that we would join the WAA as soon as we moved to Warrandyte.

The Drama Group took part in many Drama Festivals, especially at Frankston, where every year there was great rivalry for honours between Warrandyte and a group from Swan Hill.

John's daughter, Gillian, has clear childhood memories of being at the hall during rehearsals and being amazed at how strongly her father's voice was projected. What with that and seeing him in various costumes, she found it almost scary. Gillian also remembers the cast parties after the shows. In those days, they were held in private houses and children were left in the cars with their sleeping bags. Someone might come out to check on them and bring the odd bag of chips, and they were told to toot the horn if there was a problem – this as late as the 1960s. Unthinkable now, but Warrandyte was a different place back then – a real village where everyone knew everyone else and everyone mucked in to get things done. John himself was on the committee to get the North Warrandyte Kindergarten started (early 70s) as well as fund raising for building the pool at Warrandyte Primary School.

We, John Anderson and I, ran many musical evenings ourselves during our time of active musical involvement with WAA, but never did we witness an incident that John Verrall described. Evidently at one gathering at Enid Bird's house (at the top of Bradleys Lane), John was singing and hit a high note, probably with some volume also, when – no, not a drinking glass shattered, but rather the glass in the door of Enid's oven. Amazing!

John and his wife left Warrandyte in 1986, mainly because of the difficulty for his wife with living on a steep block with her bad back and of the additional isolation of her not driving. They moved to Edithvale, which was much easier for her, but John missed the community spirit of Warrandyte intensely. However, he continued to sing with various groups after retirement. He even sang solos with the U3A Melbourne City Choir, coming up from Edithvale by public transport until about 5 years ago when a minor stroke made this impossible. He also sang at the Memorial on Anzac Day. Probably his last "public" performance was upstairs in the Warrandyte Grand Hotel, where Gillian had organised a special 95th birthday for him.

Thank you John. I had a lovely morning enjoying your enthusiastic memories of days of yore with WAA.

Pat Anderson: Aug 10th, 2019

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

How the Earl of Greystoke got his jungle name…

Lady From the Sea – rehearsal pics

Crimes of the Heart

Crimes of the Heart

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Contractions
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A wickedly funny satire about the rules and repercussions of office relations.

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