September 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

WMIAA Art Exhibition – you are all invited!

The Visual Arts and Pottery Groups have been working hard to prepare for the upcoming exhibition of their works, some of which are for sale. To be held on the AFL Grand Final weekend, so the dates of September 28/29 should be easy to remember. Please drop in and support your local artists!

Not a quick brown fox

On the afternoon of August 8, we had a visitor. It seemed very quiet and slow moving, but hung around the hall for many hours, including out front, near the sheds, and at the back of the pottery studio. The next day it was gone – was it a sign? What was the message. These questions remain unanswered.

Using our bins - a gentle reminder

This is just a gentle reminder for all members and hall users to help us by using the correct bins for rubbish, recycling and garden waste. If you are not sure about which bin is appropriate for a particular item, please check out Manningham Council's web page which provides the clearest guide.

https://www.manningham.vic.gov.au/bins

Group reports

Pottery News

The Potters are happily busy making, drying, glazing and firing pots for the coming September Art Exhibition. Also we are saddened to hear that Rene (our 'Centenarian' potter), and may not be able to attend potters group in the future.

Amanda Sgourakis

WARRANDYTE MECHANICS INSTITUTE
&
ARTS ASSOCIATION

ART EXHIBITION
GARDEN CERAMICS & VISUAL ART

OPEN Sat 28th & Sun 29th
September 2019
10AM - 4:30PM

INVITATION TO DRINKS
Sat 3pm - 4:30pm

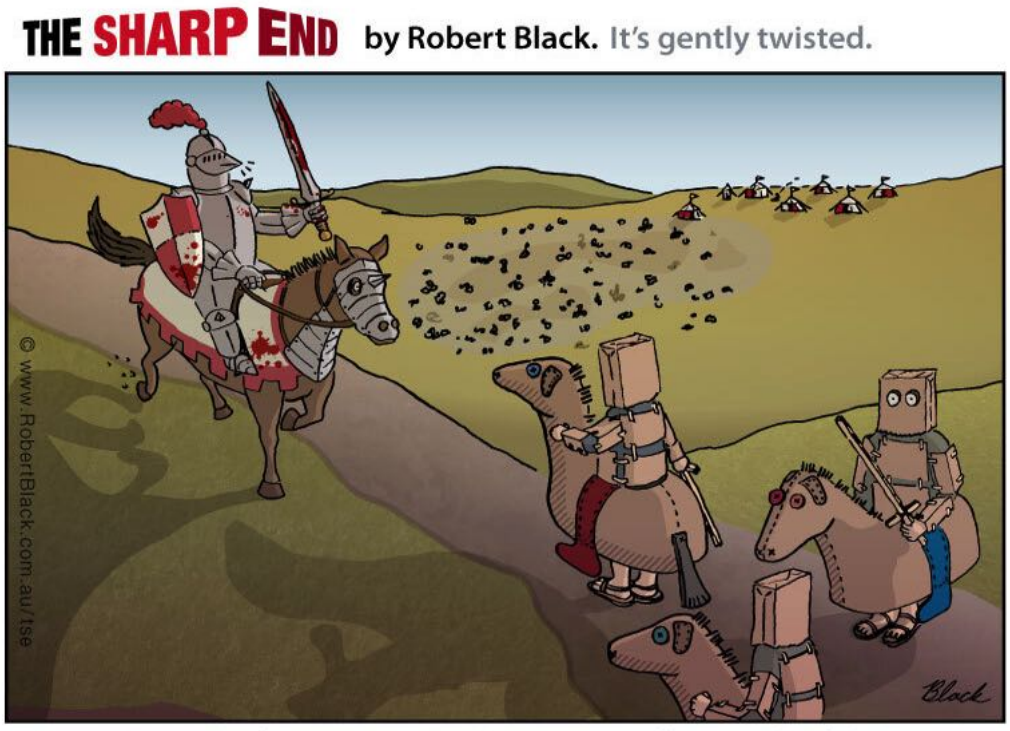
At: The Mechanics Institute Hall
180-186 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. VIC

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



"Decoys. The enemy is proving very violent and ruthless, so our king commands you to join us in battle!"

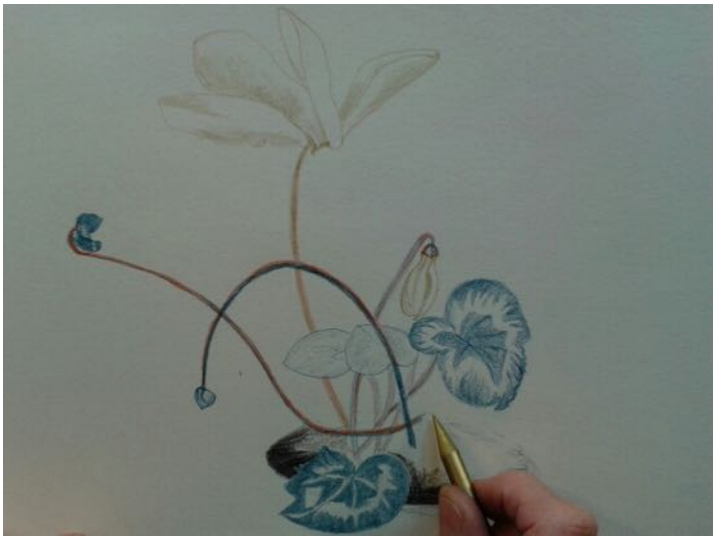
Group reports

Visual Arts News

Happy Spring! We are busy organising the art show & crossing our fingers for all to go well.
We are aiming to bring back the Annual Mechanics Institute Art Show, by reinventing the hall into a gallery space.

With a bit of paper, some paint & colour, or just the humble pencil, as artists we hope to create something of interest to ourselves & maybe others. I hope you will venture in & see what we've been up to. Our overall plan, is to encourage other local artists to join us, in ceramics, still life & life drawing.

Marion Cooper



Lady from the Sea – audience review

We often publish reviews of our shows from the VDL or Warrandyte Diary reviewers. However, we received a lovely and unsolicited review from a local legend Barry McKimm, and we were so moved by his astute reflections, we asked if we could include it here - thanks Barry!

Barry writes …

I felt very connected with content of Ibsen's play. Ibsen had amazing insight into the way women were treated in the 19th century. This is still very relevant for us in the 21st century. WTC production is inspiring in every way. I thank you for the work WTC do. I felt I should respond with a review, or perhaps more like a commentary. Being a performer, and composer, I know how good it is to get detailed audience response. Too often artists are left in the dark.

The Lady from the Sea – Henrik Ibsen (WTC August 2019)

Brilliant production, brilliant performance. WTC gives us the highest level of theatre.

Ibsen brings to light the complexity of relationships that are still part and parcel of our modern day culture. The Lady From The Sea was written in 1888 and, 150 years later, women are still bound by men who believe women are chattels, whose main role is to bare the children and attend to the needs and comforts of men. The male of the species are free to do what they like.

Each of the male characters expected, in their own way, this sort of attention. Little did they realise they were simply, pathetically, giving expression to their own vulnerability. To see this enacted must have been quite a shock to males of the 19th century.

Fortunately for Dr. Wangel, he finally, at the end, came to understand that all he had to do was love Ellida and not interfere with her profound need to make her own choices.

The pressure of social conformity drove Ellida to take refuge in a fantasy of remembrance. Her old lover turned up, and she did not even know who he was. Wangel was outraged that a charismatic stranger who looked like he could become threatening, might take Ellida, Wangel's own wife, whom he considered to be his property, away from him.

Luckily for Wangel he either gave up on the idea that women are possessions and chattels, or he actually realised that every individual, whether they are male or female, must take responsibility for their own deeds, their own speech, their own thoughts. It is hard to know which way he went, but one hopes for the best. Of course Ellida was so wrapped up in her own needs she did not conform to normal house-wifery or (step-) motherhood expectations. Her eldest stepdaughter had to do all the housework.

Social conditioning is very powerful. These days, more so than ever before. Traditional culture was terrible for women in the 19th. century, and these days the pressure is still on. In many cultures, within our historical period, women are dominated by male authority. This is a reality of traditional cultural values, more than it is of the social conditioning we get with advertising and so on. Patriarchy is a traditional culture which goes back for centuries.

All the actors were brilliant. Particularly Donna Cleverley. Donna revealed the frustration of being bound, not just in one way, but in many ways, by the irrational authority of patriarchy. Donna made Ibsen's work reveal the state of play in our own historical period, as he certainly did in his own time. This is a constant state of play even though Ibsen had the perception, and the courage, to bring these matters into the general public of the nineteenth century through his plays. in fact through his art. We often overlook the importance of art in all its form. Art provides a clarion cry, that reveals truths about life.

Subjugation of women in the 19th century is still very much with us. Ibsen's plays lay bare the psychology of this sort of behaviour.. Donna and all the players of WTC give us the reality, that every individual lays bare the life they choose to lead, by their actions, their thoughts, their choices. And the key to all this is a loving choice, rather than a choice of controlling the people in our life.

Barry McKimm 25 August 2019

Group reports

Theatre News

Adrian is away, so we have included this reflection from Grant Purdy on the triumph of The Lady From the Sea. [Eds]

The theatre company took some risks in staging this captivating and enigmatic drama in August:

* Would audiences turn up for a work from an author who has a reputation for somewhat 'difficult' plays?
* Could we actually stage it 'in the round', with an audience on four sides?
* Would audience members accept that sometimes they wouldn't see actors' faces when they spoke?
* Could we find the right cast members for some very emotionally demanding roles?
* Could the theatre company trust me to direct, after a long sabbatical from the stage?

However, I'm glad to say the risk-taking more than paid off and the show was a great success, from so many perspectives.

The Lady From the Sea is one of Ibsen's more approachable plays - where the audience is taken on a roller coaster of emotions, with moments of laughter interspersed with high drama with moments of high drama. Just like the sea, beneath all is a sense of restlessness that infects all characters as the play builds slowly to a tense and highly dramatic conclusion.

During the performances, we witnessed how audiences members seemed transfixed by the drama. They held their breath and then gasped during some of the most emotional scenes and chortled at the many moments of humour. Feedback at the end of the show was universally positive with many saying it was one of their best theatre experiences. Some of the written feedback we've received includes:

"Congratulations on such a solid production. I woke up this morning feeling fulfilled, and that I'd enjoyed a solid piece of theatre the night before. This interpretation really showed how theatre can be done if there is enough creativity and daring."

"It was atmospheric, excellent sound, well lit within the environment and well set in the round. Great choices from an excellent eye. It could easily have stacked up in a professional playhouse."

"Brilliant production, brilliant performance. WTC gives us the highest level of theatre."

The cast members all gave superb performances and it would not be right to single out anyone for special praise - they all rose completely to the challenge Ibsen laid out for them. It was fascinating to see how, from the most accomplished to the relatively inexperienced, their characters grew and developed through rehearsals, until by the show they became real people with a complete set of emotions and mannerisms. They also worked as a great team, both on and off the set and many friendships have been made.

Of course, audience don't see all the hard work that takes place off the set and for many months beforehand. The cast and I appreciated greatly the wonderful crew who supported us: sourcing and maintaining the marvellous costumes and props, rigging and operating the tricky lighting, finding just the right music to set the scene and convey the right emotions and, of course making sure cast members are ready for their 'cues' and the set is correct.

No show at Warrandyte is complete without a glass of wine, a cup of tea or a 'choc-top' during the interval and we were blessed with an army of front of house volunteers who looked after the audiences so well.

So, as it turned out, taking those risks was very worthwhile indeed. As one of the cast member wrote: "I have no hesitation in saying this is the best bit of theatre I have ever been a part of" – and I certainly feel that way too!

Grant Purdy, Director

Water under the Warrandyte Bridge

Some recollections from Lexie Blake on the early WAA post-war years

"WATER UNDER THE WARRANDYTE BRIDGE"

by

Lexie Blake

It was quite a big leap in time for me from the Gold Rush town of Bendigo to the original gold-discovery place, Warrandyte. I was born in Bendigo and, after many of life's little adventures, including short sojourns in Sydney and Melbourne's Albert Park, found myself in Warrandyte in 1948.

My childhood home was located opposite the picturesque Lake Weeroona in Bendigo. In Warrandyte the Yarra River was a stone's throw from my door - and I have always loved being near water. I fell in love also with the big old home with its majestic oak tree that we found in Warrandyte - a rare find for sale just after WW2 - and my husband, JohnEmery, my little son, Christopher, and later in 1951 our "miracle" daughter, Rohanne, (born in our home with only me in attendance) and I settled down to family life at "Warranoak".

It was, in the beginning, quite a pioneer existence. No water, sewerage, electricity or gas in our area - with corrugated iron rain-water tanks, candles, kerosene lamps, fuel stove and the ubiquitous bush toilet under the gum trees. Later, of course, all the amenities came to make life more comfortable - although it was a little lonely for me in the daytime with only "Nan" Crawshaw living nearby. She became a second mother to me and Nanna to the children.

Indeed, it was "Nan" who encouraged me to visit the C.W.A. after the then-President, Joan Golding, called one afternoon when we were enjoying a "cuppa" on the back verandah. Joan was seeking new C.W.A. members and suggested that I join, offering to drive me to the Meetings. I was most reluctant to leave Rohanne even for a few hours once a month, but Nan insisted that she would baby-sit and that I was to get to know other people in the district.

Surprisingly, I found many friends among the members, particularly those who were interested in drama and music in which I had been trained before my marriage. Soon we had the nucleus of a Drama Group and put on many plays and concerts in the old Hall, much to the delight of our audiences. This was, of course, before The Box mesmerised the populace, and in those days we made our own entertainment.

Our C.W.A. Drama Group became quite professional over the next few years and in 1955 we scored much success when we won three awards, including mine for Best Actress, with our entry in the Upper Yarra Valley Group C.W.A. Drama Festival. This really inspired us to seek wider opportunities, and on the 22nd November, 1955, a Public Meeting was held in the Mechanics' Institute, attended by C.A.E. President, Colin Badger - and the Warrandyte Arts Association was born, its President being Vern Davidson; Secretary, Joan Golding and Publicity Officers, John and Lexie Emery.

Eventually we had a very active Drama Group, Art Group under the direction of talented artist and author, Harry Hudson; Music Group, which included the Warrandyte Singers and many talented musicians giving regular recitals in the Hall and Music Nights in

Water under the Warrandyte Bridge

Some recollections from Lexie Blake on the early WAA post-war years (continued)

members' homes. There was also a Pottery Group with Reg. Preston. Phyll Dunne and Gus McLaren; Films and Photography with Alan Aldous and Ted Domeyer and the Children's Creative Dancing and Junior Art and Drama Groups with Yvonne Mitchell and Sonja Stewart.

.....So much water under the Warrandyte Bridge...
so many talented and wonderful people no longer with us!

I, myself, am a widow for the second time. My first husband, John Emery, died suddenly in 1960 and I will always be grateful to the many Members and friends who supported me in those dark days. I am not altogether sure, though, that they all approved of my re-marriage in 1962 to the then rather brash young Ian Blake, who made me laugh at play rehearsals and who spent the rest of his life devoted to me and the children (our son, Gordon, was born in 1963), finally succumbing to cancer in the year 2000.

Now, to my utter astonishment, I am an Old Timer and, having made my final leap to the City twenty years ago, I can see the silhouettes of the high-rise C.B.D. buildings from my front garden - and the nearest water is the historic Merri Creek with the wider waters of Port Philip Bay a short car-trip or tramride away.

Sometimes, while walking our little dog, Lucy, in nearby Batman Park among the tall old trees and well-kept lawns and gardens, I think of those busy years in Warrandyte when we were all madly being "actively creative" with our many plays, Art Shows and Musicales and our Christmas Festivals on the banks of Anderson's Creek. We always tried to foster the interest of the younger generation in the Arts - indeed, it was with the young people in mind that the Association was formed 50 years ago. Our Village was so far, it seemed, from the metropolis with only a most inadequate bus service. There were no mobile 'phones, computers, television antennae or modern mansions crowding the hills with their tennis courts and swimming pools - so the W.A.A. brought us much to look forward to.

It also meant many hours of hard work and devotion by some very talented people who are no longer here and it is to them that this memoir is dedicated.

Today there is a fresh current of water flowing steadily towards the Warrandyte Bridge, mingling in its shade with the old memories - and maybe leaving behind some new ones as it continues on its merry way to the wider world.

In Memory of:

John Emery, Ian Blake, Harold Baigent, Enid and Malcolm Bird, Joan and Lionel Cowden, Regina ("Nan") Crawshaw , Tony Doogood, Ron Golding, Harry Hudson, Veranne Irving, Alan Tisdall and Jeannie White.....

and the many others who made it all possible.

Crafties at Work

Pat Anderson is happy to report having met up with a lively band of crafties - six of them, including two younger ones. Callum joined in too and photos were taken as proof of life!

Crimes of the Heart

Crimes of the Heart

TWO BRILLIANT ONE ACT PLAYS

Contractions
by Mike Bartlett

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

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