October 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

WMIAA Members & Friends Forum– please come and contribute to the discussions!

As part of our efforts to ensure our ongoing custodianship of the hall, and to continue our charter of support and promotion of the arts in Warrandyte, we will be holding a members and friends forum on Friday November 8.

At this event, we will outline our achievements and current challenges, and then ask for input from our members and the Warrandyte community about the future direction of the WMIAA and in particular our role as custodians of the Mechanics Hall. The night will be facilitated by local Bruce Turner, who is a professional facilitator.

It is important that we hear from as wide a range of voices as possible, so please consider coming along and joining the discussions.

Vale dear Keryn

Most of you would know that our dear friend Keryn died recently after a long battle with cancer. She was a creative wonder woman - such a clever wordsmith and entertaining person around the theatre. On a personal note, I will miss her very much. Keryn introduced me to the WTC in 2003, when I was walking past the theatre and decided to drop in and watch an audition for a one act play she had written. In her inimitable way, she cajoled me to read for a part anyway, and cast me. If it hadn't been for her, I would never have become involved in the wonderful life of theatre and the arts in Warrandyte. More than this, I am grateful for all the moments I shared with her, and her wit and wisdom.

Art show triumph

What a triumph! 100 people on Saturday, 170 on Sunday, and many works appreciated and sold. Congratulations to Marion, Amanda and all members of the Visual Arts and Pottery groups for their efforts to make this happen. Find out more inside!

Group reports

Pottery News

The last weekend of September saw the grand final of much preparation and collaboration, resulting in a great exhibition of skills ... and it all happened in Warrandyte. Tuesday and Wednesday potters and visual artists were coordinated by Amanda and Marion to combine in the production of a beautiful exhibition of WMI&AA artworks.

Friends, family and the local community were impressed by the variety and beauty of the display.

Many congratulations to Amanda and Marion for all their efforts (too many to itemise!) in producing a great show. Many thanks to the WMI&AA committee on their support of the potters and painters.

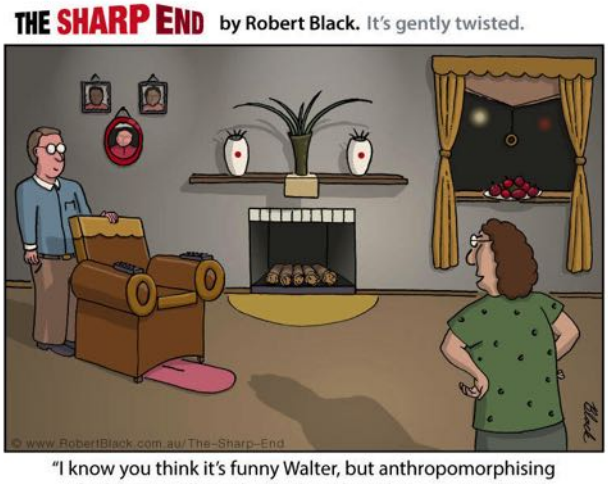
Brenda Koochew

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



"I know you think it's funny Walter, but anthropomorphising the house *really rattles mother* when she comes to stay."

Group reports

Visual Arts News

A BIG thank you to everyone that came & checked us out. We received wonderful positive feedback re-display & quality of art. It was great to show off the fine calibre of our group. The show contained local landscapes, figure studies, portraits, prints & still life pictures. And the attendance was encouraging, despite the holidays & grand final.

For those who purchased pottery or painting, congratulations on supporting handmade & local. Thank you.

Remember if you also like art, come join us.

If you missed this event, here is a snippet. Hope to see you next time.

Marion Cooper

Art Exhibition memories

Group reports

Theatre News

It seems not five minutes since I was writing about Animal Farm (March), yet it is now October and we've had 2 more superb productions to make this a very successful year and, which lays down the glove for me and Mr Tynan to come up with the goods for our last show of the year.

Crimes of the Heart

David is directing "Contractions' by Mike Bartlett. It is a biting satire on workplace relations. If you've worked for an organisation where the HR department has been rebadged as People and Culture, you may have been on the receiving end of a discussion with one of the junior HR staff who diligently plod through through the regs and policies assuming you, like them were born just the other day. Me bitter? Nah!

Francesca Carl plays Emma who may be in a romantic relationship with Darren depending on whose definition you use. Brie Snare, new to WTC … welcome Brie, plays The Manager of the department which discusses such things with its employees, reminding them of their responsibilities, to the Company.

Calling all calendar girls

WARRANDYTE THEATRE Company will be holding auditions on October 20 and 23 for their up-and-coming production of *Calendar Girls*.

Director Susan Rundle is looking to cast a range of characters.

There are eight female and four male roles.

Ages range from 45-70, except Photographer (30s) and Elaine and Liam (20s).

Cast would be required to affect a Northern England or Neutral English accent.

The production's season will run from March 20 to April 4, 2020.

For enquiries regarding script and auditions: theatre@psrundle.com

Adrian directs "Elegy for a Lady" by Arthur Miller, a play conjectured to have been inspired by his affair and marriage to Marilyn Monroe. An older man seeks the assistance of a younger woman, the owner of a boutique. He wants a gift for his mistress whom he believes to be dying and due an operation though she won't tell him in which hospital. The owner of the boutique becomes the man's muse as unaccountably he begins to pour out his story, his feelings, his grief. A short but beautiful play, Don Nicholson plays the man and Erin Brass the boutique owner.

We will be sitting at tables for this production and invite you all to bring some friends, some food and some drink. Some tickets are on sale at: Trybooking.com/BESLE.

Adrian

Lady from the Sea – VDL review

THE LADY FROM THE SEA

by Henrik Ibsen
Warrandyte Theatre Company
Directed by Grant Purdy
Reviewed by David Collins – August 23, 2019

The Lady from the Sea might be set in a small town along the rough Norwegian Sea, but it is the emotions at the heart of the story that are the most tempestuous. Ellida (Donna Cleverly) is married to Doctor Wangel (Reg Ellery) but, as much as she is committed to him and his daughters, she is drawn to the sea. Rather, it is the memory of an earlier love and the promises she made when they were briefly together that haunts her. It is a longing turned torturous when the sailor returns and asks Ellida to decide between him and her husband.

Played in the round on the floor of the hall, the audience were sat in an open rectangle around the action. Director Grant Purdy's set was a sparse faux-wooden surface with the occasional pieces of furniture and props brought on and off between scenes (some of these transitions took too long, though I'm sure, considering how large some of the emotions got, the actors appreciated a bit of a breather). While always gratifying to see some imagination applied to the staging of any play, I am unconvinced there was a great benefit to the storytelling here. Certainly, most of the actors had enough natural projection that they didn't have to spread their faces around the room, but some scenes were blocked a little hectic as the actors moved almost erratically in an attempt not to give one side of the room a view of the back of their head for too long.

Rowan Frances was suitably stoic as Ellida's former lover, just as Andrew Scarborough was suitably skittish as the dying artist, Lyngstran. Alan Ashby gave a nice performance as a family friend, Ballested. Francesca Carl did good work in the role of Bolette, one of the Wangel's daughters, as did Renata Levin-Buckland as her sister, Hilde. Renata had a naturally resonate voice that filled the space beautifully. Also strong of voice was Steve Saul as the retired teacher, Arnholm. His character—particularly with his infatuation—suffered the most from having 2019 audiences viewing a late-19th-Century text, but to Steve's credit he did as much as he could to portray a sympathetic character rather than an inappropriate one.

Reg Ellery was well cast as Dr. Wangel, playing a forthright character ignorant to the deeper struggles Ellida is battling at feeling trapped by convention and expectation, and ignorant also of his role in perpetuating her torment. As Donna moved fluidly around the stage floor, Reg took on a rigid physicality in excellent contrast. His character's lack of connection with his body highlighted the absence of empathy towards Ellida, making his eventual surrender to her all the more effective.

Donna Cleverley was wonderful in the role of Ellida. She was always present, actively listening, and you could see her character's emotions connecting with her body like electricity. Always engaging, nothing about Donna's performance felt forced as she was always careful to never let the histrionics overshadow the truth and heart of any scene or moment.

Grant Purdy and his cast and crew have done a lovely job in staging *The Lady from the Sea*. More, please.

Vale Keryn Wood

Most of you will know that our dear friend and great collaborator, Keryn passed away recently. We summarise her considerable contribution to Warrandyte Theatre Company.

The story starts with Keryn chatting to her neighbour – Jim Pasinis. The actual year this conversation took place is lost in clouded memories but, Keryn told Jim she was a bit "bored." Jim, who had been in a few shows told her to get on down to the hall and get involved with the Theatre Company. Lucky us!

Keryn performed in a at least one show that we can remember, playing Mrs Drudge in Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound" in 2002 and directed "The Other Woman" by David Ives in 2010. She also co-directed the Hey Nonny Nonny Follies with Lea but, it was her considerable contribution as a writer that she will be mostly remembered for.

She wrote a couple of one act plays – "Tidying Up" – in 2003, "Chux and Tux" – a short piece for our own theatre festival in 2005 and she wrote countless sketches for The Follies, many of them based on reality TV shows for which she had developed a passion for watching and parodying.

The Forensic Follies in 2007 was primarily down to Keryn as she wrote 9 sketches that wove a story through the entire show with a different suspect arrested at the end of each evening's melodrama. Keryn also wrote the three pantomimes that brought a great deal of pleasure and laughter to the stage. Ken Virtue takes this up …

"I was privileged to direct both "Princess Gorgeous in Neverland" and "Clutterbuck Farm". These were both lovely and well received pantos and were beautifully written. Working with such an engaging author throughout these productions is something that I will always treasure.

I always felt that Keryn had an "extra edge" as a playwright because she often tailored scripts to suit particular actors who had been cast in productions. This was a rare skill and ensured that the characters were completely at ease with their dialogue. She also worked seamlessly with the musical director so that the songs in these pantos were an integral part of the story lines. Libby has very fond memories of being both a chicken and a possum in Clutterbuck Farm, and who could forget David Tynan's stirring rendition of the pig singing its anthem "Cage" song."

Ken continues by summarising what many of also remember about Keryn.

…. "Those of us who were lucky enough to be present when Keryn showcased her extraordinary knowledge of old song lyrics will always smile at those special memories. Some of us could recall choruses of popular songs but Keryn constantly amazed us by belting out multiple verses while we all sat there saying "how could anyone possibly remember such obscure lyrics?" particularly after post-show beverage consumption). She would smile knowingly in advance, sure in her knowledge of the full extent of the verses about to be sung ! What an intellect, what a smile, what a woman!

As she said, she came off a high cerebral base.

Keryn's ultimate contribution was "Festivillain" in which she collaborated with Alan and Jack to produce a memorable panto at the end of 2018.

Ken again … "Keryn was an enthusiastic, albeit understated, member of the Theatre Company who worked easily with many Follies script writers and inserted her wonderful sense of humour into many productions. She will be sorely missed."

We will miss Keryn's enthusiasm for theatre and her generosity. Being a sensitive director I was always impressed that Keryn would always find the positives in anything that was performed on stage and we have been privileged to have her as a long time member and supporter.

Our thoughts are with her family, her son Alastair and her partner Graham especially. RIP Keryn.

Adrian Rice

Newest Life Member: Denise Farran

The following is the text of Denise's thank you speech at the official 'induction', held at Warren Glen Nursery Cafe on Sunday Sept. 22. It was a lovely afternoon, attended by many other life members, friends, her mum, and other assorted legends.

Thank you one and all for coming and being part of this joyous Life membership luncheon.

It all began at a committee meeting where I happened to be sitting next to David Tynan, when all of a sudden he stood up and started a speech. I was focused on doodling on the Agenda and was thinking to my self "why's David standing?"

I realised he was talking about me, announcing the news of being made a Life Member.

Embarrassed, lost for words, not good at being the centre of attention, think I said "thank you," blushed and turned red, but since that committee meeting in July I've walked around proudly with the thought of being made a Life Member and have had time to reflect upon a 37 year association with the theatre company.

Before coming to Warrandyte I was a member of the Swan Hill Theatre Company. I was sent to Swan Hill with 48 hours notice by the Education Department. Not having any family or friends in Swan Hill I asked at the teachers centre what was on offer re joining and getting involved in the community. Some one suggested the theatre company and the hockey team I joined both!

Recently in Pat Andersons interview with John Verrall, he talked about Swan Hill Theatre Company being a great rival to our company during the Moomba One Act Festival Plays.

On reflection they were very committed to what they produced eg In Camera by Jean Paul Sartre, Alison Mary Fagan and as quoted in the Swan Hill Guardian "For the first time an all woman lighting crew who did an excellent job."

Bit of a repeat history in that when I arrived in Warrandyte in 1982 I immediately asked staff members at Warrandyte Primary School if there was a local theatre company. "Yes there is and they're rehearsing a play presently called 'Out of the Question.'

I fronted at the hall and offered my services. It was the beginning of a long and meaningful relationship with a very talented theatre company.

From the outset three memorable and influential things happened.

Firstly the meeting of my life partner Gus McLaren. I met Gus on the set of "Out of the Question," the sparks flew.

I walked around like a Cheshire cat, one enormous grin, and a skip in my gait and a glowing wellness to the point of my mum asking, "Have you met some one at the theatre company." I replied, "Might have."

I had arranged for my parents to come to the final performance to collect a valuable prop, a cello, as I knew I was going to be away.

During the play mum was scanning the 3 male actors trying to figure out which one had captured her daughter's heart. When I next saw her she was quick to ask, "Is it the handsome, but more mature gentleman," very tactful my mum. I replied, "Could be." The age difference seemed only to enrich our relationship.

The other two memorable and influential things was the friendship of Gail Macrae and Rae Danks. Between these two formidable women I was set on a path of fun, commitment and doing all sorts of related theatrical activities, except acting on stage. Mind you I did make some brief appearances in Follies as a can can dancer, Our Place in the Sun, Thriller, The Miser and the piece résistance Travelling North that Jock Macneish critiqued "Denise Farran played an entertaining attendant at a Brett Whitely Exhibition" (1984)

To be honest I think my strings of dogs have appeared on stage more than I have. Scruffy, Lucy, Ben Bella, and Coco and attended rehearsals and even been written up in programs.

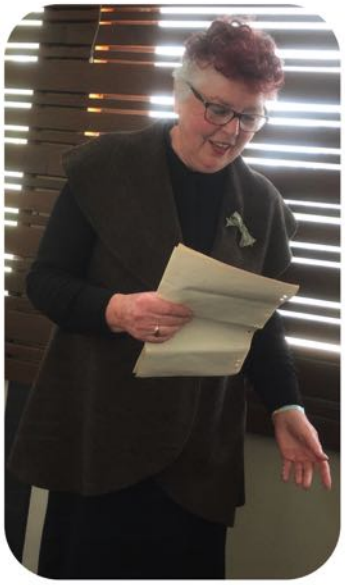
I made a list of what I have been involved in over my 37-year association …..

Costumes, props, gardening, sound, lighting, sets, stage manager, endless painting, front of house, assistant to the director, foyer decoration, set design, spot operator, back stage, model maker, producer, and something that was worthy of a special thanks in Habeas Corpus.

To finish with I'm truly honoured by the award and I'm thrilled by your friendship and attendance.

Denise Farran

Celebrating Denise Farran!



From the Archives – Hall Opening

From the archives – an article published in the 'Ringwood Mail" and "Warrandyte Gazette", April 11, 1928

NEW HALL OPENED AT WARRANDYTE - Mr. EVERARD PERFORMS CEREMONY - LADIES HOLD BAZAAR.

What is regarded as the biggest advancement that Warrandyte has made for 20 years, took place when the large new Mechanics' Institute Hall was officially opened by Mr. W.H. Everard, M.L.A.

This step is the result of more than 5 years' patient work, involving the holding of numerous dances and entertainments in the old building to raise the necessary funds, and congratulations are due to the Trustees - Messrs. R.P. Johnson {President}, F. Topping {Secretary}, Cr. C.R.H. Hemsworth {Treasurer}, J. Hogan and A.C. Scarborough - on their success. This building, which is now practically completed, will cost roughly £800., and there should now be no difficulty in speedily wiping off the remaining debt of £400.

The thanks of district residents are also due to the active Working Committees, consisting of Messrs. E.E. Houghton Sen., H. Kiley and H. Robinson, and Mesdames C. Hemsworth, T. Jones and F. Hornidge, who were always in the background when any efforts were being made to raise funds.

GRAND BAZAAR.

On the day of the Opening a Grand Bazaar was held in the Old Hall by the Ladies' Branch of the Hall Committee. It was a brilliant success for the ladies who had put their hearts into the work, and had been preparing weeks before. The Old Hall was greatly decorated with gold and heliotrope streamers, and the numerous stalls were daintily laid out. Residents had been most generous with gifts of groceries, fruit, vegetables, fancy goods, and cakes. Many commodities had also been donated by Melbourne firms.

The various stalls were conducted by Mrs. Hemsworth and Mrs. McCulloch {fancy goods}; Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Young {cakes}; Mrs Hutchinson and her daughter Carrie {sweets}; Mrs. Woods {soft drinks}; Mr. and Mrs. F. Hornidge {produce}; and Mrs. H. Robinson {afternoon tea stall}. A novelty - the idea of Cr. Angela E.J. Booth - was a "Bachelor's Stall", containing articles such as ask trays, shaving utensils, and braces. It was conducted by Mrs. Jones.

OPENING SPEECHES.

Mr. W. H. Everard, M.L.A., who had shortened his visit to Rushworth to be present, arrived at the New Hall at 3 o'clock. The building had previously been decorated by the Committee with streamers and gum leaves. Quite a large crowd of residents and visitors were present at the ceremony, including Mrs. Everard and family, Cr. and Mrs. J.A. Smith, Cr. C.R.H. Hemsworth and Professor W.A. Osborne.

The President of the Hall Committee {Mr. R.P. Johnson}, in introducing Mr. Everard, referred to the past work of the Trustees and Working Committees. "We have had a hard struggle for many years," he said, "and we now have a good Hall to suit the public. It is built on one of the finest sites in town, and if residents will continue to work together it will not be long before it is fully paid for."

ENVY RECIPROCATED.

Mr. Everard then addressed himself to the Chairman and gathering. "When I came from Rushworth this morning," he began, "it occurred to me that I was going from one mining town to another. I told the people of Rushworth yesterday that I was going to a place where the first gold was found in Victoria. They seemed to be jealous about it; but if you had seen Rushworth as I saw it yesterday and the night before, you would have been green with envy! Its people have been working for the "Back To Rushworth" movement for six months, and their magnificent work beggars description. They had miles of fairy lights, and had built beautiful green plots in the centre of the streets. I thought of old Warrandyte, and wondered what the people were doing there to beautify their town. My heart was in Warrandyte, and when I received your invitation to open your New Hall, I thought this was one of the finest marks of progress I had seen in Warrandyte for some considerable time.

"As for the Old Bridge here, it is a disgrace to Victoria. It is the only Bridge between Heidelberg and Yarra Glen, and is in a tottering condition. You have been offered £400. by the Government NOT to build a new bridge, but to renovate the old one. Surely if the Government can spend hundreds of thousands on the Spencer Street Bridge, it should not forget Warrandyte. You should approach the Minister again, and see if he is willing to spend a little more than £400., which is a parsimonious offer, considering the Bridge is so important. (*continued next page*)

From the Archives – Hall Opening

From the archives (continued) – an article published in the 'Ringwood Mail" and "Warrandyte Gazette", April 11, 1928

"It is an extreme pleasure to see such a large Hall, which reflects great credit on the Committee and those who worked so well to bring the plan to consummation. I doubt whether there is a more beautiful scenery in Victoria than in Warrandyte, and when you are improving the outlook of your town you are improving the price of your property. It breaks my heart to think that dear old Warrandyte is lacking in so many facilities which other places are giving to the public.

"Before we go across the Road to the Bazaar, which the ladies have organised, I have much pleasure in declaring this Hall open, and I hope that this forward step of the Warrandyte people will not be the last."

EARLY DIFFICULTIES.

Cr. J.A. Smith was then requested to speak. He thanked the Hall Committee for inviting him to be present. It was more than 15 years ago, he said, when they tried to move the Old Hall across the Road to the site next to the new building. They had met with abuse, and had been meeting with it ever since. Five sites had been suggested by people, and a ballot resulted in the present site being selected. He complimented the Committee on the structure erected, and said he was sure that this was the most opportune time. The Railways Standing Committee was coming to Warrandyte soon, and it must be impressed that something had been done. Referring to the beauties of Warrandyte, he said, unlike Rushworth, the place did not require a great deal of illumination before its beauties could be seen. What Warrandyte needed was Picnic Grounds between the Road and the River.

THE TURNING POINT.

Professor W.A. Osborne was the next called to speak. "I came today," he said, "as one of the humble audience, prepared to listen and learn, rather than speak and expound."

He congratulated the people on the Hall; and said he remembered the time when gold was still being discovered in Warrandyte. But things had changed since - the gold had petered out somewhat, and lethargy had fallen on the community. In his opinion there were two great assets which were going to be the making of Warrandyte. These were its natural beauty and its nearness to Melbourne. If the place were in the United states, it would be "one of the loveliest spots on God's earth." They would put capital and organisation into it. But these things would come to Warrandyte in time. This was the "Turning Point".

He praised the extraordinary cool climate in the Summer months, and said it was due to a river of cool air from the hills. Warrandyte had ceased to be bush, and would soon become a suburb.

The Opening of the Hall was just the kind of step which would convince the authorities the place was trying to improve itself. He regarded the erection of the Hall as the most auspicious event in Warrandyte's history for 20 years.

SPEAKERS THANKED.

The Secretary {Mr. F. Topping} then moved that a Vote of Thanks be accorded Mr. Everard and the other speakers. The audience responded by clapping heartily.

Mr. Everard: "I am very satisfied to be here today. I shall be more than satisfied when I see the Bazaar, ad doubly more than satisfied if you will all spend your money freely."

The speakers and audience then went across to the Old Hall. Here, Mr. Everard, after being introduced, remarked that the ladies must have been preparing for weeks. He congratulated the Ladies' Committee on the splendid work, and the appearance of the stalls. He said that Warrandyte, which was only 17 miles from Melbourne, should be made the most popular health resort in Victoria. He requested that the ladies carry on their good work. "You who have come to spend," he concluded, "keep on spending until there is not a 'bob' left in your pockets."

And forthwith he himself proceeded on a spending tour of the stalls.