The Artful Dodger - August 2026

From the Chair

So many things are happening in our little part of the world, as illustrated by all the contributions in this edition of the Dodger. As Spring approaches, the major renovation and repair work finally begin on the Old Fire Station (which houses the Majorie Beecham Pottery Studio), and we are all very keen to see this work completed. So much work has gone into the redesign, and so many meetings, emails, drawings and inspections have zoomed around the digital highways to get this work started. A mighty thank you to all who helped us get this far, and to Grant and Jock in particular for their dogged patience, and solution-focused approach to bureaucratic processes! Finally, thank you to Briony for helping me piece together the August Dodger.

David Tynan

Theatre

Fasten your seatbelts for a hilarious night out in Warrandyte!

Warrandyte Theatre Company is preparing for take-off with Boeing Boeing, Marc Camoletti's fast-paced French farce, translated into English by Beverley Cross and Francis Evans. It is packed with witty one-liners, romantic turbulence and one carefully planned love life heading rapidly off course.

Set in 1960s Paris, the play follows Bernard, a confident bachelor secretly engaged to three international flight attendants: Gloria, Gabriella and Gretchen. Each works for a different airline, and Bernard arranges their visits around their flight schedules. His system is simple: one up, one down and one on standby.

With help from his increasingly unimpressed housekeeper, Berthe, everything appears to be flying smoothly. But when faster Boeing jets and changing timetables bring all three women to Paris at once, Bernard's perfect plan begins to nosedive.

His visiting friend Robert is quickly pulled into the chaos as they scramble to prevent the three fiancées from meeting. What follows is a whirlwind of frantic explanations, slamming doors, close calls and hilarious misunderstandings.

Although *Boeing Boeing* is a classic farce, its comedy goes well beyond people running through doors. The play combines sharp, witty one-liners with physical comedy, escalating confusion and a cast whose incredible comic timing keeps the laughs coming.

“What’s so fun about *Boeing Boeing* is its joyful escapism, we are taking the audience on a trip back in time to the 1960s,” says co-director Tegan. “With genuine period props and style, you are transported to another world and another time. Audiences can expect lots of laughs, plenty of chaos and a really fun night out while supporting local community theatre.”

The cast features Mason Frost as Bernard, Cormac Duff as Robert, Lisa Upson as Berthe, Frankie Photiadis as Gloria, Rosa Leonardi as Gabriella and Michelle Reeves as Gretchen.

Directed by Tegan DeClark and Taryn Johns, the production brings together a talented local cast and crew for an energetic evening of live theatre.

Boeing Boeing has even earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records. What earned this high-flying comedy a world record? Why has it remained such an audience favourite around the globe? You will have to come aboard and discover that for yourself.

Gather your friends, prepare for turbulence and enjoy a hilarious night out while supporting the performers and volunteers who keep community theatre flying! Performances will be held on:

- August 28 & 29, September 4, 5, 11, 12 at 8pm.
- August 30 and September 6 at 2.30pm.

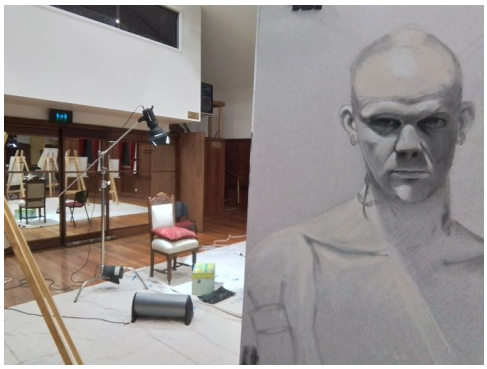
The tickets cost Adults $28, Concessions $22. To book now: https://www.trybooking.com/DNKAB

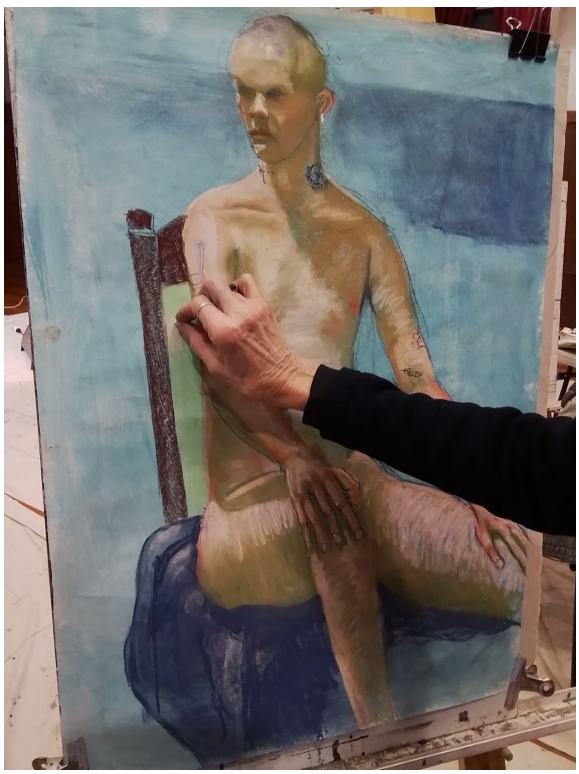
Louise Phelan

Life Drawing

Life Drawing has had an influx of interest with people coming to check us out to see if we suit what they're looking for. Because I don't run it as a term - it's pay on the day - therefore I never know who will be attending, so it's a great mix of regulars and new artists.

With these new enquiries I've needed to stipulate we are not a beginner’s group. It was set-up for artists to maintain and improve their ability, with a knowledge and understanding of life drawing.





I do think a life drawing group for those starting out could be popular. If anybody's interested in running one, please contact me for a chat.

Overall, we're carrying on as normal. I organise a model, long poses and people draw them with great outcomes. Cheers to all who keep turning up.

Marion Cooper

Chocolate Lilies Choir

A busy term!

The Chocolate Lilies recently participated in the annual, "Voices for Reconciliation" a nationwide community singing initiative led by Reconciliation Australia, during National Reconciliation Week. Over 41,000 singers across 700 plus choirs unite to perform iconic Australian anthems advocating for truth, land rights, and justice for First Nations peoples. This year the song was "Beds are Burning", the wonderful Midnight Oil song which we sang at the flag raising ceremony at the Nillumbik Shire offices.

This was followed by a joint community event with Nillumbik Reconciliation Group where we combined to offer the opportunity to the community to sing it in a free event joining with the Nillumbik Pub Choir at Edendale Community Farm, Eltham.

We are now learning new material for the upcoming Hurstbridge Wattle Festival and the 50-year anniversary of the Environmental Living Zone, at the Bend of Islands in Kangaroo Ground, later in October.

Nillumbik Pub Sing

This year I decided to add another string to the bow and started the Nillumbik Pub sing a monthly event where participants can have a drink, learn one song in a night – in three-part harmony – accompanied by a fantastic local band.

There is so much evidence regarding the significance of the music that was around us when we grew up. Memories are triggered, dopamine is created, and everyone leaves with a smile on their face! No singing experience is needed, and many haven't sung for years and, always a beautiful sound is created!

They are run in Eltham and the best way to find out more information is to check out our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1inE7xco2b/

Hope to see you there!

Nerida Kirov

Writers Group

We've been enjoying meeting on the first and third Wednesday's of every month. We're all working on our individual projects, sharing our work and getting feedback. We also discuss our processes and read excerpts from previous works, sparking discussion. It's a lovely social and supportive environment where we are all learning and calling upon our courage to show up to our inner callings to write.

If you'd like to join us we are meeting on the following dates for the rest of the year:

- September 2 & 16
- October 7 & 21
- November 4 & 11
- December 2 & 16

We meet from 7-9 p.m. at the hall, usually in the Green Room.

For more information or if you'd like to join us you can contact me at writewarrandyte@gmail.com.

There are no fees, simply a WMIAA membership is required.

Here are a couple of short pieces from two of our writers. I hope you enjoy them.

Michelle Reeves

Writing piece #1: Improvisation

I hear the music without listening to it.
I feel the patterns of the sound and I play notes.
My guitar sings and sighs and seduces the ears
Sometimes it soars and sometimes it swoops
I never know where it's going to next.
People value originality, it gives them pleasure,
They are continually asking me to make music.
When I do, I don't really know what I'm doing.
When I'm done, I don't know exactly what I've done.
I don't know how I do it, and I couldn't do it again.
I have no idea how I learnt to do it and, I can't teach anyone else how do it.
They call it improvisation
When you don't exactly know what to do, improvise, people like it.

Jock Macneish

Writing piece #2: The Priest

Soft leather shoes padded quickly down the stone lined corridor. Shadows retreated as light swung in a jerky periodic motion from the lantern. In the other hand, his wooden rosary was clasped as to prevent it from making more noise from clacking together. Wishing his shoes could be silenced even though they were probably the most silent shoes anyone had, he began to mentally check off the location of the items. He had done it a thousand times and checked them just as many, but tonight it came more as a way to calm himself within the urgency of the moment. There was no way that anyone would find them without the key anyway he thought as sweat began to suffocate him beneath his robes. Panting he stopped abruptly in front of the stone wall. He dropped his rosary and placed his palm upon the stone uttering an incantation. A doorway illuminated with signs and symbols glowing blue.

The stone began to fade away as if it never existed opening up to another long stone corridor. Doing one last check behind him he passed through the opening and placed his hand on the other side, muttering another incantation the stone reformed as solid as it had been before.

Now he was safe, but the urgency was no less. He continued padding his way down the hallway. The lantern swinging less frantically and his breathing began to ease. It had come early. He wondered at his calculations, the orb of influence calculated for minor error that occurred in any calculation, but this was different. Could it be? But no, how could it have been? He had spies in every quarter of the realm, for anyone to have found out about it … he shook his head to wash away his thoughts. That didn't matter now, what mattered was what came next. Its success was paramount to the survival of the universe, to life itself.

He slowed at another point in the wall and placed his hand on the cool stone, muttering a different incantation to the last. He watched as the signs and symbols glowed blue transmuting the stone into nothingness. He looked into the warmly lit room upon a woman whose hair glowed like the sun itself and a little child whose crystal blue eyes stared up at him, the smile coming from her eyes as she recognised him, lifting her arms up to engage in the play she was so familiar with. But he did not move across the room to embrace her and smile back. To give her that tummy tickle that always brought sparks of light from her laugh. Instead, he turned towards the woman with a sadness and worry that told her more than any words ever could. With resolve she said, "It is time."

Michelle Reeves

Celebrating Community Artistic Achievement

Last year WMIAA won the inaugural Manningham Community Award for Artistic Achievement. This year a team from the Association was invited back to the celebratory event, announcing the next round of winners of the Community Awards.

This year Heide Museum of Modern Art won the Artistic Achievement Award.

As last year, Warrandyte generally performed well with the Warrandyte Lions Op Shop winning the award for Community Excellence and our own Sandi Miller being a finalist for Excellence in Volunteering. Sandrajane Vincent-Corry, a member of Warrandyte Donvale Rotary, won the Volunteering Award for her amazing dedication and hard work setting up and running the Park Orchards Community Pantry responsible for coordinating large scale food rescue and its redistribution to local families in need.

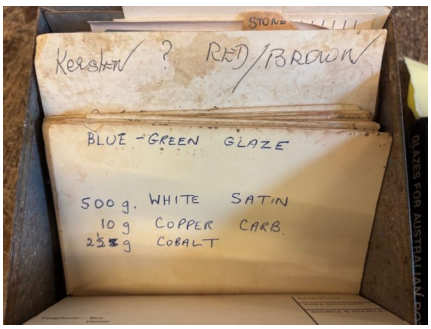
Grant Purdy

Pottery

Winter days in the pottery studio have been most productive and interesting. It has been like an active science lab with members expanding their experimentation with glazes. Potters are enthralled with their newfound and favourite pooling and crystal glazes.

Ceri, one of our most talented and long-term potters, has been collating glaze recipes by making and applying them to clay samples and documenting them for the benefit of all.

Many of the recipes are taken from the reliable source of Marjorie Beecham's glaze files and the handy book *Glaze for Australian Potters*, by J. Deboos. Ceri carefully weighs the glazes. (See pictures below of our gorgeous weights) kindly donated by Marjorie to our studio, many years ago.



Recent interest from new members has occurred in the past month, especially as people pass the studio and walk in to enquire. This has resulted in the studio running a third pottery group on a Thursday. In conjunction with this a welcome letter for new members has been created and endorsed by pottery members, outlining the history of the studio, safety and studio practices and maintaining the pottery community, set up so beautifully by Marjorie.

We are all very excited and delighted that renovations have begun!

Alison Beanland

Repair Café

May and June sessions were busy as usual, with the following statistics:

- July: 47 items dealt with of which 39 were completely fixed
- Aug: 63 items (a record!) of which 48 were completely fixed

At the July meeting we had the privilege of meeting John and Pat Anderson's son Jim, from the Alexandra Repair Café, who is an expert knife sharpener. He was very busy, having no rest for the entire two hours. Unfortunately, it was only a guest appearance!

In August, we were genuinely swamped, never have we worked on so many items in a session. The team, however, dug deep and rose to the challenge. We were even able to implement Bev's suggested innovation – no new items after 12:15 pm – so that we could all get away on time.

The repair café in action in July – and another happy bear and owner

Finally, we have two new fixers on board. Colin Cook - in electrics, mechanical (and everything else) and Bee Bee Mah in garment repairs. Welcome to the happy band of fixers!

David Tynan

Music at the Mechanics'

There's more music coming our way! Following up on the success of "Dreams" in April, we have approached a local band to perform for us. On Saturday, September 19 we will have one of Melbourne's premier blues bands playing at the hall. Rod Paine and, the Fulltime Lovers who take their name from a song by Jimmie Vaughan (The Thunderbirds), have been playing venues around town and interstate for more than 30 years. They also represented the Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society at the International Blues festival in Memphis in 2014. A fuller description of their talent and music is on https://www.rodpaineandthefulltimelovers.com.

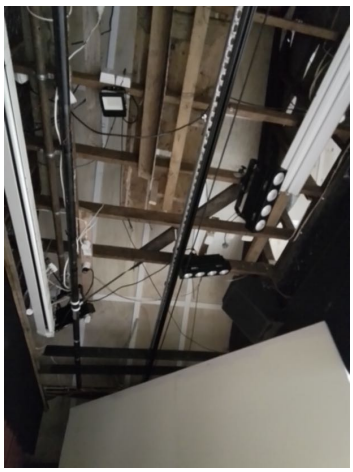
Tickets can be purchased for $35 per head at www.humantix.com (search for Rod Paine). The show runs from 7.30-10.30 pm with a bar which open during these hours, serving beers, wine and soft drinks. For further information, please contact Adrian on 0439 311 428.

Adrian Rice

Hall Housekeeping

Backstage ceiling

The second stage of the ceiling behind the curtain has been completed. Our handy carpenters, Tony and John, have completed a mind-boggling awkward job. Squeezing between rafters, getting caught on old nails and generally negotiating an old structure. It now looks fantastic and is a healthier environment to use (see some before and after pics below).



Thanks to all who helped clean up the area before, coping with some precarious removal of past junk stored in the rafters. It is a wonderful improvement to the hall finally completed. Yippee.

Marion Cooper

The Old Fire Station

Full steam ahead with the renovation!

It's well over a year since the incoming Government pledged money to help us repair and renovate the Old Fire Station housing the Warrandyte Community Pottery. The wooden parts of the building had been severely damaged by termites, to the extent they were unsafe and liable to collapse.

During 2025 Jock Macneish and many others worked hard to finalise the design of the building to accommodate a modernised pottery workshop including properly designed preparation room and a separate ventilated and fireproofed room for the kiln. The ground floor is to become a multi-purpose room that will provide a flexible layout allowing a range of community artistic activities and meetings, together with a display space for art.

We first heard from the Major Local and Community Infrastructure Projects (MLCIP) team, at the Federal Government, in September 2025, telling us that although the funding pledged was secure, nevertheless we still had to apply for the monies and, the inevitable complex application form arrived, requiring numerous appendices and attachments.

Then the MLCIP team moved the goal posts and told us the application and funding could only occur through Manningham, our local Council, who would have to 'sponsor' the project. Not only was this news to us - Manningham had no idea what this might entail.

Suffice to say it then took until February this year until we received a letter from the Minister telling us we were 'successful' and that the money already pledged to us would be ours. But then, of course, it got even more complicated and difficult.

It's taken months of discussions, meetings, correspondence, and endless delays down to Manningham and the MLCIP team, until all agreements were signed and the first instalment of money arrived in our bank account. Also, during the last four months we have been through the painful process of gaining planning and building permits for the work, with endless re-working of drawings, additional surveys and specialist reports.

The challenges of building in Warrandyte – from Jock Macneish

In July we received the first building permit to re-stump the floor of the upstairs workroom, completed just in time for the deadline set in the signed agreements. As of Monday August 10, we have the second permit that allows all the rest of the work to progress.

Chris Spring of Habitat Builders and his team are already at work, and the eastern end of the building is now fenced off as a work site.

One of our most important considerations has been to minimise the disruption to the pottery folks and we are currently planning that they will 'move' up into their newly renovated workrooms, around the beginning of October. Of course, as we have discovered throughout the last year, we will continue to encounter inevitable setbacks.

The restumped Pottery Workroom with a new floor

As an example, when the re-stumping work started, the ground under the floor was found to be badly contaminated by asbestos sheeting, presumably dumped there before that part of the building was erected in the early 1960's, or before. Its professional removal caused further delay and a considerable extra cost.

We now believe all the work will be finished and with an official opening taking place in late November or early December.

None of this could have been possible without the hard work of many people in the Association, especially those 'Potters' who have contributed to the design along with members of the WMIAA Committee, who have contributed so many hours to the process. Special mention must be made of Jock Macneish, who's careful design and patient drawing, and redrawing of plans and specifications, ensured we met and continued to meet all the ever-changing permit requirements.

Re-built eastern wall that was collapsing

Without the Federal Government funding this project would not have progressed and the wooden parts of the building would remain an empty shell. However, costs over and above the MLCIP grant have been considerable and we could not have afforded this work without financial support from Rotary Warrandyte Donvale and The Warrandyte Community (Bendigo Bank) Bank. We are also very grateful to all the Association members who have worked so hard raising funds through donations, pottery sales, the 'Fight the Mite' event and endless collections of cans and bottle for refunds under the CDS system.

Grant Purdy

Oral History Project

As advanced preparation for the Hall Centenary in 2028, work continues for the sub-committee, interviewing WMIAA members and anyone associated with the early life of our hall. Noelene Cooper has been added to the crack team of interviewers, and we now have nearly 20 interviews completed.

We are keen to locate and interview any community members with personal stories associated with the hall – particularly anyone with stories related to the Hall before the Warrandyte Arts Association was formed. Please contact Pat Anderson (anderson.pat50@yahoo.com.au) with any details of people we might be able to follow up.

Finally, here is a delightful anecdote from an interview with Amanda (Beecham) Sgourakis.

My first involvement with the Warrandyte Hall was through dance classes in the late 50s with Yvonne Mitchell, who is now Yvonne Reid. I attended these classes with my two sisters, and we were in her dance group for quite a few years. I was a bit chubby back then, so my family affectionately called me the "fairy elephant" when I performed in the concerts. At the time, we didn't live in Warrandyte. My parents, my sisters Karina, Sal and I, lived on a four-acre property on Thompsons Road in Templestowe. I'll always remember one Saturday when Mum and Dad gave us money to catch the bus home from dance. Karina would have been about five, I would have been seven, and Sal would have been nine, and we looked at each other after the dance class and said, "Let's buy an icy pole and some sweets." We did, and then we walked home from Warrandyte to Thompsons Road, Templestowe. We were just about to get to Thompsons Road and then along came Yvonne and her husband Irving and, two children hanging out of this big old car saying, "What are you doing walking down the street in ballet costume?" Going home! They drove up Thompsons Road and told Mum and Dad, who had come home by then. We'd walked all the way home from Warrandyte. So anyway, that's my first memory.

Pat Anderson

Membership

To renew your membership for 2026, click **https://www.trybooking.com/DIJZB** and follow the prompts. If you have any queries, please contact our membership coordinator Noelene by email (noelenecooper@bigpond.com) or by mobile 0400 861 133.

Noelene Cooper

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