

≡ *Burning News* from the Incinerator Theatre

April 2024

Ipswich Little Theatre Society Inc Newsletter



Ipswich Little Theatre
— SOCIETY ESTABLISHED 1946 —

Editor:

Ian Pullar

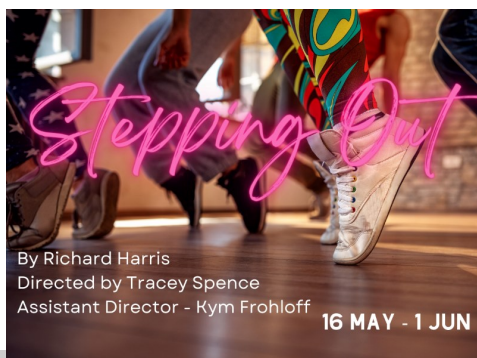
07 3281 4437 or e-mail:
info@ilt.org.au

**NEXT ILT
COMMITTEE
MEETING**
7pm
Tuesday

From the President	2
Junior Theatre	2
Young Theatricals	2
Daytime Theatre Troupe	2
Festival 2024	
Theatre Shirts	2
Raffles	2
Vale Shirlee Burns	3
Plays for 2025	3
Tourific Troupers	3
A Trip Down Memory Lane	4. 5
Diary Dates	6
Auditions <i>Clue on Stage</i>	6
Contacts	6



He who laughs last doesn't get the joke.



Bookings are now open for our next major production *Stepping Out*, directed by Tracey Spence with Assistant Director Kim Frohloff

ilt.org.au or VIC 3281 0555

Wine and Cheese Night on
Friday 17 May

The girls (and boy) are really getting into the swing of things in rehearsals Director Tracey Spence reports that “they have been coping well with the small bits of dance that have been woven into the scenes so far, so I am hopeful I can make tappers out of them.”



The cast starting to Step Out at rehearsal: (left to right) Chris Smith, Cara McArthur, Linsey Sullivan, Lily McLean, Josie Yarham, Corinne Biddulph, Courtney Murrin

Our directors go to great lengths to present quality productions. Tracey and Kim have both gone to tap dancing classes to ensure it will be a case of “do what I show you, not do what I tell you.”

In the spirit of the play, the audience on the Friday nights are invited to dress up in '80s gear. There will be a prize for the best costume.

ILT has presented this play twice before (Director Tracey Spence was a young member of the cast previously) and both times it proved very popular – which why we are doing it again. The matinees are already sold out, but there are still tickets available for the evening performances.

Don't miss this heart-warming spectacular!

Front of House

One of the great features of our productions, the audiences tell us, is the wonderful reception they receive from our welcoming front of house staff. We are so lucky that we have so many willing volunteers prepared to carry out this essential function for us. Without them, what would the audiences do?

You too can be part of the welcoming team .

To offer assistance, please sign up at <https://www.admin.ilt.org.au/foh-roster/>
For advice or guidance contact FOH Manager Robyn Flashman 0477 771 016



From the President

Thank you to Connie and Ann who have put so much effort into setting the kitchen and bar up, not only for the last season but now preparing for *Stepping Out*. They have worked to ensure that some glitches from last season have been ironed out.

Vale Shirlee Burns. Shirlee has just moved to that great theatre above and I know will be enjoying herself performing and helping others enjoy themselves. Shirlee was always fun and kind to me personally and I know that Vicki and her family will miss her deeply.

Jim

Junior Theatre

The Juniors are reconvening after the Easter school holidays break and resuming work on their production of *Wishes*.

Daytime Theatre Troupe

After their short break, the DTTs have also recommenced and are working up their production of *Picnic in the Woods*.

Young Theatricals

According to Director Aaron Evans, "Rehearsals (for *Antigone 3021*) have been organised chaos – which have been masterfully run and organised by Mack to ensure that all 31 of our students are doing something each rehearsal – from blocking to helping create props, each week our young people have thrived in pulling this show together.

The students are having a ball and so will you when you come to see it.

Festival 2024

In our 68th year of One Act Play Festivals, we are excited to have Talisa Pariss-Proby, an Australian voice, speech and drama teacher who lives in Brisbane, as our Adjudicator for 2024.

Talisa has been in education for over 15 years and is passionate about the ARTS and its potential to develop confident and articulate voices in our society. She currently prepares students for Eisteddfod and examination work at various schools around Brisbane, in addition to running her own private studio. Talisa is also a member of several committees with her peers in the drama industry where she is able to advise, lecture, keep on top of current trends and be a role model in several community groups.

Her qualifications speak for themselves:

- Bachelor of Journalism/Bachelor of Arts (International Relations)
- Advanced Diploma of Drama and Performance Teaching (AMEB 2011)
- Advanced Diploma of Performance (Trinity College of London 2008)

Over the past couple of years Talisa has adjudicated at Festivals and Eisteddfods from the Gold Coast to as far north as Cairns.

We look forward to her valued comments, suggestions and feedback during our wonderful weekend of 9-11 August 2024.



Theatre Shirts

Connie has orders for 8 shirts so far. Ipswich Embroidery are happy to accept individual orders at no extra cost anytime as they will keep our logo on file. They will supply the shirt or you can take your own garment (it doesn't have to be a shirt – e.g. it could be a fleece for the coming winter).

IEW

IPSWICH EMBROIDERY and WORKWEAR

Email: shop@ipswichembroidery.com.au
Web: ipswichembroidery.com.au

81 Cemetery Road
RACEVIEW
(Opposite Eastern Suburbs Hardware)

Ph: 3281 7551
Mob: 0475 230 451

Raffles

Connie would welcome donations of prizes for our ever-popular raffles. There is a constant demand for prizes and the raffles are a valuable source of revenue. Donations can be left at the bar and Connie will deal with them from there.

Vale Shirlee Burns 1941 – 2024

ILT members have been greatly saddened by the death of one of its long-time members Shirlee Burns. We extend our sympathy to her husband, Geoff and daughters Vicki and Deanne and their families.

From the moment she was born and named Shirlee not Shirley, it was determined that this beautiful person would be a once-off. Shirlee's parents, Les and Dulcie Wells owned an Ipswich institution – Domestic Linen in East Street Ipswich. From this store, countless numbers of young girls bought linen for what was called their Glory Box, often by lay-by, paying items off each pay day. The linen was of excellent quality, the service impeccable. From a very early age, Shirlee and her sister Jill could be found after school hours and in holidays working behind the counter of this lovely shop, so lots of people knew Shirlee Wells.

Shirlee attended Ipswich Girls' Grammar School. In those days, there was a desperate shortage of teachers and many girls were offered places at Teachers' College immediately after Junior or their Sub-Senior Year (Years 10 & 11 in today's system). Shirlee was one such – and so began her long career as a primary teacher. She taught in several Ipswich schools, finally ending her teaching days well past normal retirement age at Ipswich Grammar School when they established a Junior School. Her young pupils adored her.

Shirlee had a charismatic personality. Her life was a glorious performance on a daily basis and no doubt that was the reason for an immediate attraction, when in 1961, a young fellow named Geoff Burns found himself in the same cast in Ipswich Little Theatre Society's production of "The Admirable Crichton".

I would be one of the few people who still have a connection with ILT who would remember this production. I had recently studied and performed in the play as part of Sub-Senior English. It was great to see it performed on the Town Hall stage by adults. Geoff played Crichton, and Shirlee was Lady Mary. What those two characters thought of each other was in the hands of playwright JM Barrie, but what Geoff and Shirlee thought of each other was very obvious.

Geoff and Shirlee were among the group of Town Hill performers who moved with the company to the Incinerator, on the stage of which they both performed. They remained faithful members and generous benefactors of ILT. In 1979, I was in the cast of "Wait Until Dark" with Geoff and a very young Vicki Burns – now Vicki Dwyer who has carried on a great family tradition. In the early 1980s Shirlee became involved in Young Theatricals, undertaking productions for them.

In 2007, Ian and I brought Shirlee and Geoff together on stage again in one of Ian's plays "Anzac Day". It was a delight to work with both of them and one that we remember fondly. Shirlee played the part of a poor, isolated country farmer's wife. Night after night, Shirlee would come to rehearsals dressed in a "possible costume". I would suggest gently that she needed to dress down a bit. Minor adjustments continued to be made, but in the end I conceded. Shirlee just didn't "Dress down". Her role, again with Geoff in "How Could We Ever Forget?" displayed her natural instinct for glamour. How could we ever forget the wonderful adornments in her trademark hairstyle and the colourful elegant garments, the ready smile and the beautiful personality that was Shirlee Burns.

Helen Pullar



Plays for 2025

Applications are open until the end of June for budding directors to submit offers of productions they would like to undertake in 2025. These can be made to Selection Committee Convener Ann Collyer.

Selection Committee would also be happy to consider offers of potential Festival entries.

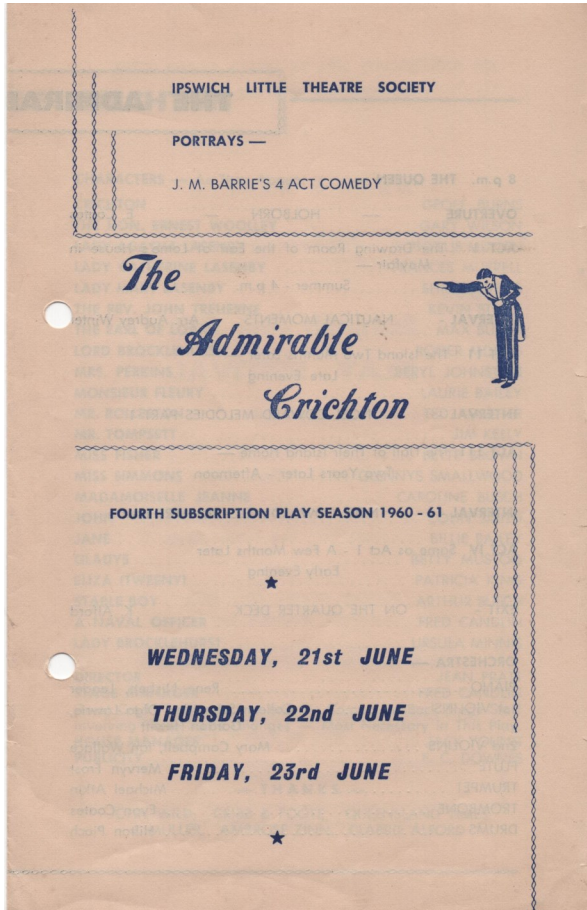
Librarian Aaron Evans would be happy to help directors looking for suitable plays to search our extensive library.

Tourific Troupers

Our Tourific Troupers will be hosting a tour group on 16 April and are willing to accept further bookings. These highly popular tours have now been available for the last 20 years or so. Visitors are entertained with delicious two course lunches, an illustrated talk on the history of the Incinerator and its occupants and a short play (to remind them that we are a theatre and not a restaurant) all for the incredibly low price of \$27.50 per head.

For bookings contact Helen Pullar 3281 4437/0400 801 443

A Trip Down Memory Lane — Helen Pullar



Shirlee Burns' death led me to the ILT Archives and a subsequent realisation that there are a lot of memories in my head (still!) which most other members wouldn't have. This is not going to be a literary piece of work, but just facts maybe worth recording.

This comedy by JM Barrie of "Peter Pan" fame was first performed in 1902. It was a stock-in-trade theatre piece and most years ILT would perform at least one classic—sometimes Shakespeare, or a Noel Coward, a JB Priestly, an Emlyn Williams, an Oscar Wilde and in 1961 this JM Barrie.

At the time, Ipswich Little Theatre performed in the Ipswich Town Hall and had no permanent home. The Sunday before the season members 'bumped in' flats, furniture, décor items and a set (often quite complex) was erected. A couple of rehearsals took place— followed by a brief three night season. All over and a bump out on the following Sunday. What a lot of work for such a short season.

When Crichton was originally performed it was noted that play's biggest challenge was the complexity of the scene changes, which caused the original production to run past midnight so, for this and many other plays, ILT sets were quite complex and the run time—four acts— quite long. The ILT production had three scene changes.

The back page of the programme advises that:

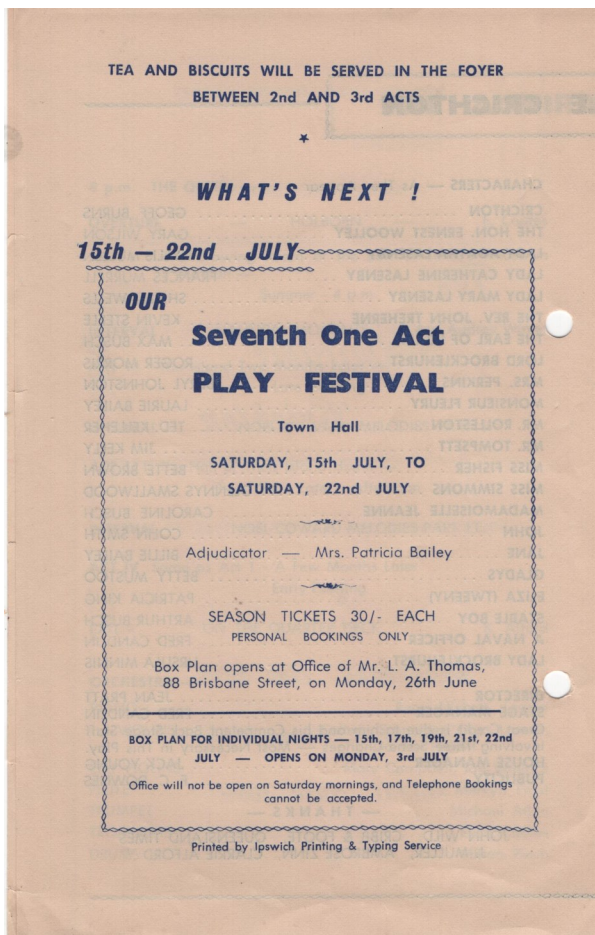
TEA AND BISCUITS WILL BE SERVED IN THE FOYER BETWEEN 2nd AND 3rd ACTS

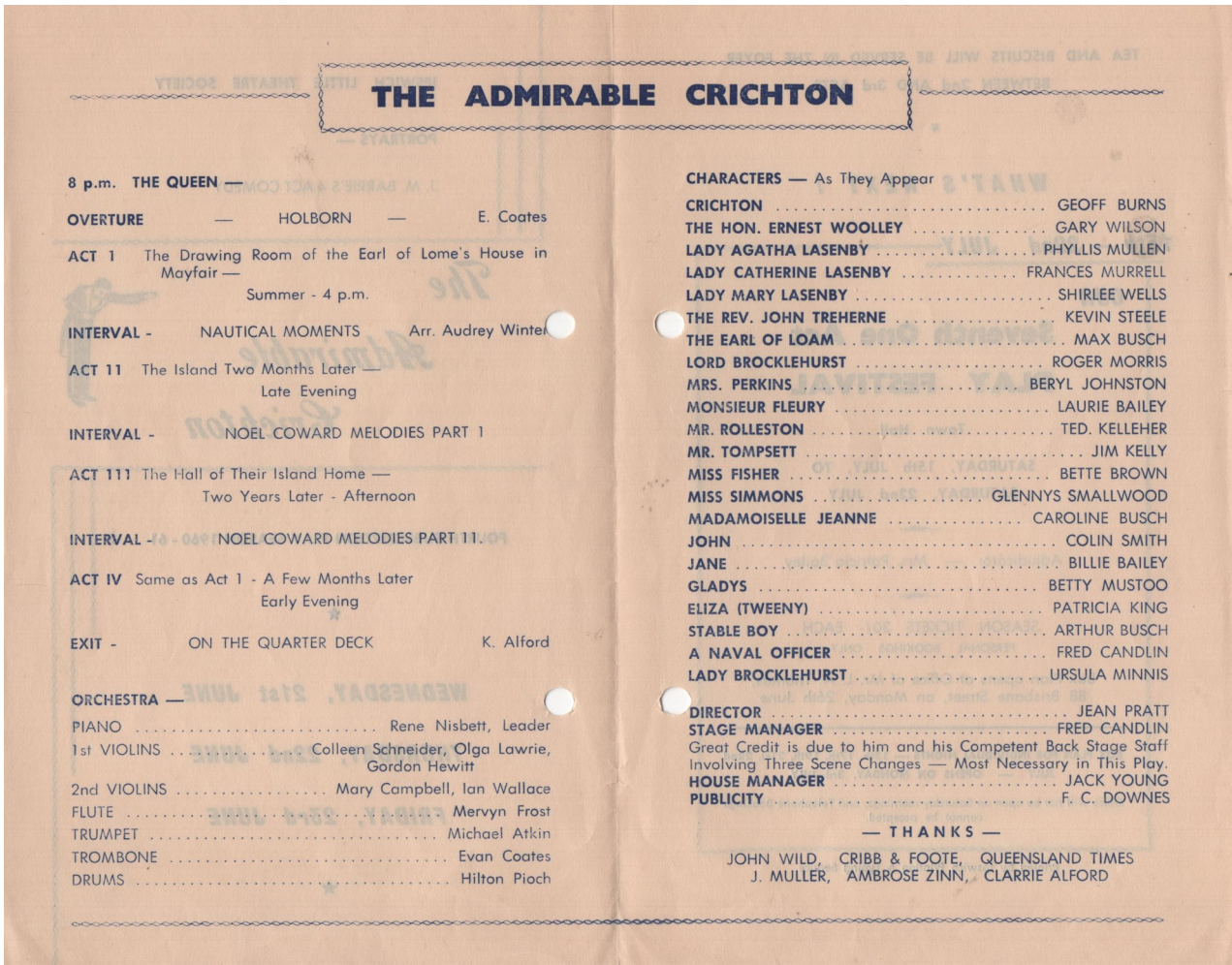
This was actually how I first became aware of ILT because my mother, a very reluctant public speaker and certainly one with no aspirations to act, was today's equivalent of a FOH volunteer. [These ladies worked out of a little room in the foyer where they—in another setting — signed their children up for injections so I considered it a space to avoid.] As is still the case today non-performing volunteers were crucial—the Social Committee they were called.

Of course, our Festival already played an enormous role on Ipswich's social scene —maybe that's a trip down memory lane for another edition.

Copies of the programme were printed, as you can read, by Ipswich Printing and Typing Service from their business at the Ipswich Railway line end of Ellenborough Street.

Publicity was in the hands of a legendary figure by the name of FC Downes — an eccentric, upright grey-haired man who lived in Eastern Heights and who was frequently seen walking to town, brief case in hand— the latter no doubt sometimes containing the draft of an ILT programme.





Audiences were well dressed and were greeted at the door by the Patron Mr Les Thomas, dressed in tails. Usherettes — young girls from memory, probably members, daughters, sisters, girl friends—showed people to their seats.

At that time we boasted an Orchestra. At 8.00pm sharp the audience would stand for the National Anthem—in those days “God Save the Queen”. This would be followed by an orchestral overture and, as the programme shows, the orchestra also performed in the intervals between acts and at the end of the evening. [Colleen Schneider—one of the violinists— still supports us as a 2024 Subscriber.]

But now for the Cast or Characters as they are called—22 in all. No doubling up. First you need to realise that with no purpose-built space, rehearsals were frequently held in private homes and I have spoken before of visiting the home of Jean Pratt (mother of Eleanor Beale, my contemporary) and being transfixed by the fact that the sitting room was different every time. Did I see a setting for Crichton—it’s quite likely. Can you imagine rehearsing a play with a cast of 22 in your home?

The cast is a list of recognisable names for me, and many would of you will be familiar not only Geoff Burns and Shirlee Wells, but also Kevin Steele and Beryl Johnston. One name which might not immediately mean anything is that of the actress who played the significant role of Tweeny (the maid) — none other than Patricia King, better known as Patti Pratt.

Today’s Directors at Ipswich Little Theatre can rehearse for weeks in our Jean Pratt building followed by five to six weeks in the Incinerator, mostly with a reasonably finished set. Our last season had a cast of 17 but that was in six different plays and we had the satisfaction of performing twice on 26 occasions.

The amount of effort that putting together a show such as “The Admirable Crichton” in difficult rehearsal spaces, minimal time on the performance space and then performing only three nights is almost incomprehensible.

Shirlee and Geoff did well to manage getting to know each other under these conditions.

Time to reflect and count our blessings.?

2024 Season in Brief

Season 1: 28 February — 17 March

Ageing Disgracefully

Producer Helen Pullar
Six short plays staged in the Incinerator Theatre and the Jean Pratt Auditorium

Rated: PG Some adult themes.

Season 2: 15 May — 1 June

Stepping Out by Richard Harris

Director: Tracey Spence
Assistant Director: Kim Frohloff

Rated: PG.

Annual Drama Festival

Director:: Di Johnston
9, 10, 11 August

Season 3: 18 September — 5 October

Clue: On Stage adapted from the Paramount Pictures film written by Jonathan Lynn and the board game from Hansbro, Inc written by Sandy Rustin, based upon the works by Jonathan Lynn, Hunter Foster, Eric Price

Director: Tony Erhardt:
Assistant Directors: Jo Robbins and Dave Dunkerley.

Rated PG: Adult Themes.

Season 4: 20 November — 7 December

Bondi Legal by Tony Laumberg

Director: Chris Austin-Greenhill
Assistant Director: Liz Ball

DIARY DATES

27 May 7:30 pm	Auditions <i>Clue: on Stage</i>
30, 31 May 6 pm 1 June 10 am & 2 pm	Junior Theatre <i>Wishes!</i>
10 June to 21 June (booked sessions) 15 June 10 am Matinee performance	Daytime Theatre Troupe <i>Picnic in the Woods</i>
19, 20, 26, 27 July	Young Theatricals <i>Antigone 3021</i>
9, 10, 11 August	Drama Festival

*Was it Colonel Mustard with the Wrench
in the Study?*

*Was it Mrs. White with the Knife in the
Kitchen?*

*Or maybe it was You with the Rope in the
Library!*

Auditions for CLUE ON STAGE

May 27th at 7:30pm

Cast List

Wadsworth - M 40 - 60yrs.

Mrs. Peacock - F30 - 60yrs.

Professor Plum - M 30 - 50yrs.

Mrs. White - F 40 - 60yrs.

Mr. Green - M 30- 50yrs.

Colonel Mustard - M 40 - 60yrs.

Miss Scarlet - F 30 - 50yrs.

Yvette - F 20 - 40yrs.

Man - M 30 - 60yrs.

Woman - F 30 - 60yrs.

For more information please email or txt Tony on

tony.erhardt@gmail.com or 0408 058 706.



2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

President	Jim Orr	0402 377 258
Vice President & Selection Committee Convener	Ann Collyer	0400 997 365
Past President	David Austin	0413 636 249
Secretary	Helen Pullar	3281 4437/0400 801 443
Treasurer	Chris Greenhill	0427 977 007

CONTACT DETAILS FOR OTHER IMPORTANT POSITIONS

Subscription Secretary	Julie-Anne Wright	0419 758 724
Group Liaison	Robyn Flashman	0477 771 016/
Marketing	Robyn Harm	0413 742 116
Building Bookings	Desley Cronon	3288 8754 / 0435 309 352
Junior Theatre	David Austin	0422 620 851
Young Theatricals	Kate Hoepner Aaron Evans	0479 048 979 0431 041 068
Daytime Theatre Troupe	Jane Sheppard	5464 5363 / 0419020675
Tourific Troupers	Helen Pullar or Jane Sheppard	H 3281 4437 .J 5464 5363
Theatre number	NB: Only during rehearsals or meetings	3812 2389