

February 2026

Ipswich Little Theatre Society Inc Newsletter



Ipswich Little Theatre
— SOCIETY ESTABLISHED 1946 —

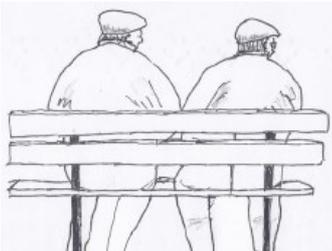
Editor:

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**NEXT ILT
COMMITTEE
MEETING
7pm
Tuesday
10 March 2026**

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“My daughter recommended a TV program on Netflix she thought I’d enjoy. Five minutes later I’d forgotten the title, so she reminded me it was ‘Unforgotten’.”

The Shawshank Redemption

opens on 25 February.

Directed by Shane Mallory, assisted by Amanda Harrison, this play written by Owen O’Neal and Dave Johns, is a stage adaptation of the classic movie of 1994 which in turn was an adaptation of Stephen King’s 1982 novella, *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption*.

The play is obviously very popular with our audiences. Not only has the season been extended with an additional matinee on 14 March, Thursday 12 March has also been made available for public performance.

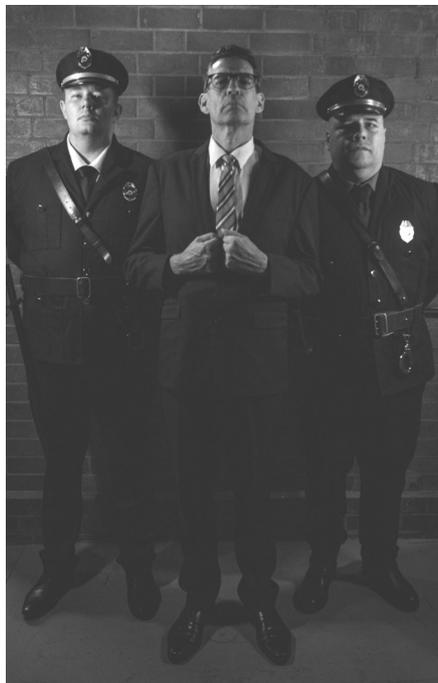
Season 25 February—14 March 2026

Bookings at ilt.org.au or VIC 3281 0555

Photos by Amanda Harrison



The cons: Sean Gibson (Tommy), Aaron Evans (Dawkins), James Sheehan (Rico), Jason Lawson (Brooksie), Chemark Rehder (Red), Jon Darbro (Andy)



The guards and the warden: Shannon Griffiths (Hadley), Jamie Spence (Norton), Michael Civitano (Entwistle)



The sisters: Mark Scott (Pinky), Daniel Stanton (Bogs), Gaike Harrison (Rooster)

To volunteer for front of house work during *The Shawshank Redemption*, click <https://www.admin.ilt.org.au/foh-roster/>



From the President

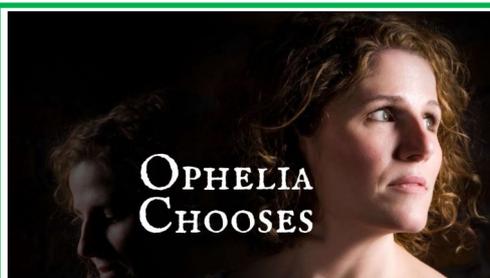
I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Jim for the last seven years and the guidance he provided to the committee and ILT through what at times were very challenging situations. I know that I have very big shoes to fill and I give an undertaking that I will fulfil this position with fairness, compassion and kindness. I am sure that many times over the next few months I will be saying to myself WWJD, (What Would Jim Do?). I am thankful to know that he willingly gives of his time and advice.

2026 again promises to be a very busy year for ILT, with four main house productions, the Festival and performances from our four sub-groups in the JP building. I look forward to seeing each and every performance.

For anyone who would like to become involved with ILT but doesn't want to be on the stage, you can still help with front of house, or at working bees. Everyone is welcome to come along.

I look forward to seeing many of you during 2026.

Ann



On 2 February, auditions were held for our second major production of 2026 – *Ophelia Chooses* by Buddy White – to be directed by Alison Lees with Robyn Flashman as Assistant Director. There was a superfluity of excellent female actors (actresses?), so much so that the roles could have been cast several times over. On the other hand, males were more noticeable for their absence. What to do?

In a flash of brilliance, Alison solved the dilemma – cast females in the male roles!

Shakespeare's own writing often included situations and characters which challenge the notion of gender and roles played by men and women in society. In Shakespeare's time, males played all of the female roles, due to the law, but a clever writer could use this tradition to their own advantage by subverting the romance genre and having the sexes engage in foolish, "gendered" behaviour to create humour. Added complexity – the very presence of females playing male roles lends itself to a greater complexity and depth to all of the play's language and context. Layers of nuance are added to the text when a female is playing a male who is chastising a female for behaving in an "unwomanly" manner! Remaining contemporary and relevant to younger audiences – in this time of thoughtful exploration of the notion of "gender" and the understanding that gender can be a contextual notion, dependent on culture, history and precedent rather than truth, and to demonstrate that Ipswich Little Theatre is not afraid to respectfully explore the notions of male/female and non-binary experiences through its representation of characters on stage, is a clear indication of our willingness to embrace diversity and expressive freedom. Ipswich Little Theatre is open, welcome and relevant to everyone.

Accordingly, the following cast has been chosen:

Ophelia	Brie Burley
Gertrude	Helen Ekundayo
Fay	Beck Haining
Hamlet	Mack Groves
Laertes	Joan Camuglia-May
Polonius	Kim Frohloff
Claudius	Selina Kadell
Shakespeare	Lewis Chatten

Said Hamlet to Ophelia.
 "I'll do a sketch of thee.
 What kind of pencil will I use -
 2B or not 2B?"

- Spike Milligan



This production will also be different from our usual fare in another way: a Supper Theatre. At no extra cost, at the conclusion of each performance the audience will be served a supper in the courtyard. Drinks will be available from the bar at very reasonable prices.

Season 13 — 31 May 2026

Bookings at ilt.org.au or VIC 3281 0555

Group bookings at our major productions are a popular means of fund raising. The Group Nights for both *Ophelia Chooses* and *The Pink Hammer* are fully booked (with waiting lists). But there are opportunities for our end of year show, *Ben Hur*. Anyone interested should contact Martie Blanchett on 0405 186 767.

Youth Theatre

From this year, our Youth Theatre has been reorganised into three groups, each with a narrower age range. All groups have commenced classes:

Sparks (School years 4,5,6). Director Chris Austin-Greenhill

The Sparks Youth group started on 31 January and we have breached our cap of 15 students and have 17 undertaking their two-week trial prior to signing up. Students are learning about basic stage craft and will be working towards their production which will be based on Greek Epic poetry.

Flames (School years 7,8, 9). Director Mack Groves

Flames group is still in its early stages, and the focus so far has been on helping the group settle in, get to know one another, and feel comfortable in the space. Over the coming weeks, the group will continue to develop their improvisation skills, with the aim of sharing a small, informal improv showcase for families later in the year. This will be a chance for students to demonstrate what they've been exploring in class, rather than a polished performance. After this, the program will begin transitioning into rehearsals for a scripted play, where students will start working with text, character, and staging. The year will eventually lead to a full performance, giving participants the opportunity to experience the process of putting together a show from start to finish.

Firebrands (School years 10, 11, 12). Director Kate Hoepner

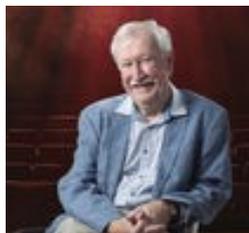
Firebrands have had a really solid start to the year, with the group currently capped at 23 students. Across the initial sessions we've focused on settling the ensemble and beginning foundational work in script analysis and interpretation, which will underpin our work for the year. As with all Youth Theatre groups this year, we've introduced a two-week trial period to support group fit and student wellbeing. From a performance perspective, we will very soon be proceeding with our proposed June production of *The Day the Internet Died* (directed by Kate and Sam Hoepner), as well as our festival entry of *Two, Four, Six, Eight, Who Do We Resuscitate?* (directed by Jess Pitman, assisted by Ollie Gavranovic).

Festival 2026

This year, ILT will be hosting its 70th Drama Festival. First staged in 1955, the event has been hosted every year since, except for the two Covid years. This makes it the longest running Festival of its type in the Southern Hemisphere.

Festival Director Aaron Evans, who has taken over the role from Di Johnston, Festival Secretary Jo Robbins and their team are planning special celebrations to mark this important milestone.

An initial step has been the engagement of Arthur Frame as the adjudicator. Readers of these Newsletters will have read of Arthur launching his book *The Arts Juggler* on our stage in November. Arthur previously adjudicated our 30th and 60th Festivals, so it is fitting that he should make an encore performance this year.



Look forward to more news in future editions of our Newsletter.

Festival Entries

Apart from the Youth Festival entry of *Two, Four, Six, Eight, Who Do We Resuscitate?*, Selection Committee has also approved *Daffodil* by E. M. Lark as an ILT open section entry in a number of Festivals. The play will be directed by Kate Hoepner with Brittany Evans as her assistant director. Auditions will be called in due course for the three available roles.

Selection Committee would also welcome applications from other directors for Festival plays. Contact Martie Blanchett on 0405 186 767.

A Big Year for ILT

Not only will we be celebrating our 70th Drama Festival, in August we will be marking 80 years since the foundation of Ipswich Little Theatre Society.

And in November it will be 150 years since the birth in America of Walter Burley Griffin, the architect of our beloved Incinerator. The Burley Griffin Society has been contacting towns with WBG buildings inviting them to celebrate. We will be doing our bit, hopefully in conjunction with Ipswich City Council.

We will bring news of events as plans unfold.

2026 Season in Brief

Season 1: 25 February — 14 March

The Shawshank Redemption by

Owen O'Neal and Dave Johns

Director: Shane Mallory

Assistant Director: Amanda Harrison

Rated MA15+ Strong Adult Themes, Violence and Coarse Language

Season 2: 13 — 31 May

Ophelia Chooses by Buddy White.

A Theatre Supper Season

Director: Alison Lees

Assistant Director: Robyn Flashman

Rated: PG Adult themes

Annual Drama Festival

Director: Aaron Evans

7, 8, 9 August

Season 3: 16 September — 3 October

The Pink Hammer by Michael Amos

Director: Jim Orr

Assistant Director: Chris Austin-Greenhill

Rated M Adult themes, Coarse Language & Sexual References

Season 4: 18 November — 5 December

Ben Hur by Patrick Barlow

Director: Sam Hoepner

Assistant Director: Melinda Park

Rated PG Adult Themes and Religious References

DIARY DATES

25 February	Opening Night <i>The Shawshank Redemption</i>
13 May	Opening Night <i>Ophelia Chooses</i>
8 June	Auditions for <i>The Pink Hammer</i>

Tools of the Trade

During the recent “break”, Building Committee and the PPM team carried out a number of important maintenance projects in the Jean Pratt Building. The main wardrobe (which the wardrobe ladies had kindly emptied) had water damage repaired and the room sealed and painted, the “lighting box” was stripped of its accumulated “tat”, repainted and the areas repurposed. The tools are now re-housed on a shadow board in the storage room. All that is required is for the users to put them back where they belong!



P.S. The wardrobe ladies have now culled and reinstalled costumes.

2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

President	Ann Collyer	0400 997 365
Vice President	Julie-Anne Wright	0419 758 724
Past President	Jim Orr	0402 377 258
Secretary	Helen Pullar	0400 801 443
Treasurer	Chris Greenhill	0427 977 007

CONTACT DETAILS FOR OTHER IMPORTANT POSITIONS

Membership Secretary	Julie-Anne Wright	0419 758 724
Group Liaison	Martie Blanchett	0405 186 767
Marketing	Kim Frohloff	0428 725 379
Building Bookings	Desley Cronon	3288 8754 / 0435 309 352
Youth Theatre – Sparks	Chris Greenhill	0427 977 007
– Flames	Mack Groves	0439 202 955
– Firebrands	Kate Hoepner	0479 048 979
Daytime Theatre Troupe	Kay McAllan	0439 305 658
Theatre number		3812 2389