

# ≡ *Burning News* from the Incinerator Theatre

March 2026

## Ipswich Little Theatre Society Inc Newsletter



Ipswich Little Theatre  
SOCIETY ESTABLISHED 1946

### Editor:

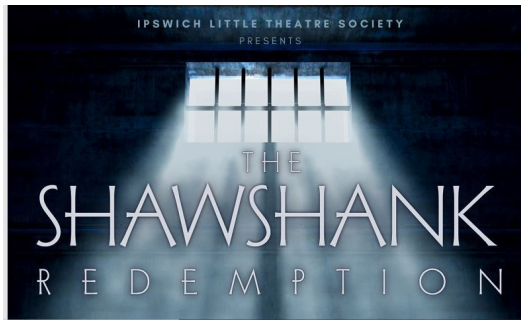
**Ian Pullar**

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info@ilt.org.au

### NEXT ILT COMMITTEE MEETING

7pm  
Tuesday  
14 April 2026

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The Shawshank Redemption has come to the end of a very successful season. Audiences were very happy and by the end of the season there was much jostling for seats at the group nights (see note on page 3).

One very unfortunate part of the season was that Jamie Spence who had been cast to play the Prison Warden was obliged to withdraw for health reasons. We wish him a swift recovery.

This meant a change of cast and Director Shane Mallory learnt the lines and went on after only two full rehearsals with an excellent performance. Congratulations to Shane for that and for his very imaginative direction. And of course to the cast for their amazing performances.



To be or not to be in a play that is supposed to be about Hamlet but ends up being all about Ophelia?

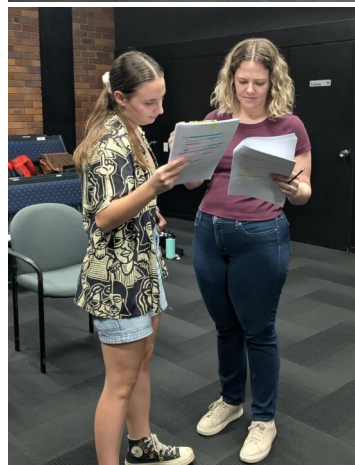
The cast of *Ophelia Chooses* is having fun in rehearsals playing with Shakespeare's poetry and prose, and exploring how well the Bard writes his heroines. We can't wait until May to show you how we make Shakespeare eat his words!



*Shawshank* bumped out on Sunday 15 March and *Ophelia* bumped in on the same day, so rehearsals can get really serious now.

The adjacent photos were taken in the Jean Pratt Building.

This is Shakespeare on its head. Where the Elizabethan stage did not allow women to perform (the female roles taken by men), in this production women have taken over the male roles! .



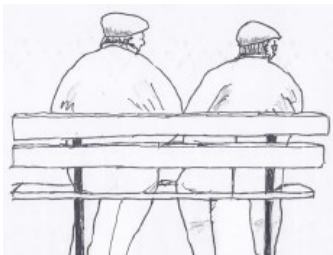
Above: Selina Kadell (Claudius), Helen Ekundayo (Gertrude), Corinne Biddulph (Ophelia), Joan Camugliamay (Laertes), Beck Haining (Fay)

Left: Corinne Biddulph, Beck Haining (Fay)

**Season 13 — 31 May 2026**

**Bookings at [ilt.org.au](http://ilt.org.au) or**

**VIC 3281 0555**



"In quizzes, my lack of knowledge of the Greek myths has always been my Achilles elbow."



## From the President

Congratulations to Shane, cast and crew of the *The Shawshank Redemption*.

Our audiences have thoroughly enjoyed the performances. For anyone who didn't see it, you missed a treat.

Rehearsals are under way for Season 2 *Ophelia Chooses* directed by Alison Lees. Tickets are on sale now and don't forget your ticket price includes a light supper.

Our three youth theatre groups are all underway and I know that the Firebrands have already started rehearsals for their showcase, while the other groups are well advanced with their plans which sound quite exciting.

*Ann*

### Vale Geoff Burns 23 March 1933 – 21 February 2026

On Monday 9 March, a funeral service was held for Geoffrey Lewis Burns, a long-term and much valued member of Ipswich Little Theatre.

As a member of the RAAF, Geoff was posted to Amberley airbase from where in 1961 he auditioned for a part in ILT's production of *The Admirable Crichton* and scored the title role. Also in the cast was Shirlee Wells who soon became his wife. They both remained active in ILT for many years. During his ILT career Geoff appeared in 23 productions including 11 full length plays, three Theatre Restaurants and three ten minute plays, despite quite long periods of deployment to more than 20 RAAF bases. Eventually he (and Shirlee) grew sick of his too frequent absences from his wife and daughters Vicki and Deanne. He resigned as a Warrant Officer and took on a number of jobs in Ipswich until his retirement.

In 1977 an unexpected vacancy occurred for the position of President. Geoff rose to the occasion and served in the position until the end of 1980.

One of the plays in which Geoff appeared was *Wait Until Dark* (1979). Sharing the stage with him was his (then) teenage daughter, Vicki. Now years later, we have been lucky enough to have Vicki, now Dwyer, acting in recent productions including *Popcorn* in 2025.

I had the great pleasure of directing Geoff in half a dozen plays and I wrote the ten minute plays with him in mind to play the parts. We also very much enjoyed his company. During the years in which we staged the Festival in the Girls' Grammar hall, Helen and I always finished the Monday morning bump-out exhausted and sought refuge with Geoff and Shirlee at their home in Tuggerah Street. We loved them.

Deanne is currently back in Australia for her Dad's funeral, so we have arranged for the installation of a memorial plaque in our garden of memories on Sunday 22 March at 10:30 a.m. If anyone would like to attend, please let Helen know for catering purposes.



Geoff and Lorna Hollaway (Longston) in the award-winning Festival play *The Apple Bit* in 1980.

## First Call for Directors for 2027

With the programme for 2026 now well and truly under way, Selection Committee will commence planning for 2027. Prospective directors are invited to submit offers to direct full length plays, or One Act plays as part of a season. The application should nominate a preferred play and an alternative and accompany the application with a script (hard copy or electronic text).

Applications will close on 30 June which will allow the Committee sufficient time to put together a balanced programme. Librarian Aaron Evans is happy to help members find a suitable script.

Applications to direct a One Act play for this year are also invited (but will need to be quite quick).

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

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

The Sparks Youth group continue to work on characterisation and stage craft. They had a Laughter Yoga workshop run by Beth Martin, which was quite fun for the students and helped them learn a few things about breath control. Soon they will start work on a play *The Sort of Accurate Adventures of Odysseus* written by Dior Austin.

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

The program is progressing steadily, with the focus remaining on ensemble building, developing performance skills, and creating a positive and supportive environment for young actors to grow. Later in the year, the main rehearsal focus will move to the Incinerator as their full-length production at the end of the year.

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

Firebrands have been busy this month. We've now cast both productions and have moved fully into rehearsals for *The Day the Internet Died* and our festival piece *Two, Four, Six, Eight, Who Do We Resuscitate?*. The group has settled well into the rehearsal process, and when students aren't actively rehearsing their scenes, we've been focusing on character development and accent work to support their performances.

## A Good Story of Redemption

as told by Michael Civitano

On the first Friday night, I was basking in the post-show glow. People were stopping us, saying how deeply the show moved them. One woman told James and me she was in tears. (I also clocked at least one grown man aggressively pretending he had something in his eye during curtain call.) She insisted we should take this show national. Brisbane? Too small. Australia? Ready.

Feeling like the praise probably wasn't going to get any better than that, I headed off in search of dinner. Still in full aged stage makeup, by the way. Nothing says "respectable member of society" like looking 30 years older than you are while ordering a late-night pizza.

Outside the shop, in the rain, stood a beautiful brown Retriever. Alone. Wandering the empty carpark. Her tag said her name was Valli. The staff told me she'd been there for hours. They'd fed her, given her water, tried calling the number — no answer. They were about to close. Naturally, I called the number too and left a message saying I'd wait a bit and, if no one arrived, I'd take her to the Wacol shelter.

Twenty minutes later — pizza cooling, makeup cracking — I told the staff I'd take her. I opened the back door. She jumped in immediately. Then shook. Every molecule of rainwater in South East Queensland redistributed itself across my back seat. As I closed the door, the clerk yelled, "Be careful you don't spook him or he could bite you!" SLAM.

Valli sighed deeply and lay down like she'd just escaped prison and was heading for Zihuatanejo.

Halfway to the shelter, my phone rang. "Hello, this is Mike."

"Oh hello! This is Helen — you called about my dog! Thank you so much! I'm looking after my friend's dog as well and Valli must've gotten spooked and escaped. I was just at the theatre in Ipswich seeing a show..."

I paused. "Was it *Shawshank*?"

"Yes! Have you seen it? Isn't it wonderful?"

"Well... sort of. I'm in it."

"What?! Who were you?"

"Entwhistle." Silence. "The guard who likes donuts?" And just like that, recognition. Stardom at last!

Plot twist: Helen lived HALF A MILE from the pizza shop. Half a mile, which, for those keeping score, is way more than 500 yards. Roughly nine football fields. Andy Dufresne would be livid.

Apparently Valli had "dug a hole" to make her escape. Pulled a full Dufresne. No word yet on which poster she used.

I dropped her home and spent the next 20 minutes getting a personal post-show review in her driveway. She'd seen *The Great Gatsby* at QPAC earlier in the week — "very good," she said, "but the music and curtains were too modern. Not very Roaring Twenties."

But *Shawshank*? "Better than expected. Better than QPAC."

So there you have it — Performed in *The Shawshank Redemption*, rescued a Retriever fugitive, drove nine football fields, out-reviewed Gatsby, all while wearing 70-year-old makeup and waiting for a cold pizza. Tell me that's not straight from a rejected Netflix pitch.

During the season there was an accident in the kitchen one night with broken glass. A splinter caused reasonably heavy bleeding from a helper's finger. Once it had been staunched, the PIC wrote an incident report stating (she thought) that "pressure and a bandaid were applied to the wound." But predictive text turned it to "pressure and a barmaid were applied"!

## 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**

Adjudicator **Arthur Frame**

**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

20 April	Auditions for <i>Daffodil</i>
13 May	Opening Night <i>Ophelia Chooses</i>
8 June	Auditions for <i>The Pink Hammer</i>

### Auditions *Daffodil*

*Daffodil* by E.M. Lark is a haunting stage adaptation inspired by *The Yellow Wallpaper*. This intimate psychological drama explores themes of isolation, control, and identity, set within a summer home in the late 1800s.

The production, directed by Kate Hoepner, is anticipated to perform at **five venues** as part of the **South East QLD Drama Festival Circuit** including an additional preview performance to be presented at ILT in July (date TBC). Performance session times will be confirmed closer to the festival. Festival dates are listed below:

Beenleigh (31, 1, 2 August): Ipswich (7, 8, 9 August), Toowoomba (22, 23 August), KSP (28, 29, 30 August), Nanango (5,6,7 Sept.).

**Audition Date: 20 April 7:30pm**

Characters:

- Cecilia – A young housewife experiencing “nervous depression.” Creative, intelligent, and increasingly obsessive.
- John – Cecilia’s husband and physician. Confident, clinical, and firmly convinced he knows what is best for her.
- Narrator – A mysterious storyteller figure who observes and interacts with the unfolding events.

### 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
<b>Youth Theatre – Sparks</b>	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