

Access



ARTS Access

Newsletter of Arts Access Society Inc.

September 1987

Football, meatpies, "Fire Plume" and...



"Fire Plume"—Paula entices students from a Special Development School on to the stage.

What could have livened up Election Day more than taking a bus load of Americans to a Melbourne Football Game! On Saturday July 11 an Arts Access contingent met an Arts Dialogue contingent at the Rialto and proceeded to the Melbourne Cricket Ground to see the 'Roys take on the Roos'.

I've never seen such a collection of Australian hats, Dryza-bone coats etc—R. M. Williams will be on easy street for the next 12 months!

Many meat pies, soggy chips, tomato sauce, and glasses of beer later we were delighted to find we were about to be hosts to a group of exciting, searching people who were here to see the work being done in Melbourne covering all areas of education and arts and to discuss possibilities and new trends and tell of their experience "back home."

Arts Access was responsible for a visit to "The Crimson Parrot" at The Church Theatre where Ian Cumings' puppets were the centre of admiration; a visit to Art Project with Myra Hilgendorf as hostess,

and an all-day seminar at the Footscray Community Arts Centre.

On the morning of the Seminar there were two performances of "Fire Plume" a wonderful storytelling concept, backed by musical dialogue. Both performances were attended by children from local Special Developmental Schools and it was an amazing spectacle to see children sitting in rapt silence one minute and enthusiastically playing the musical instruments the next.

While the performance was in progress a group of Arts Access artists and our Americans guests were viewing video and films of work relating to Arts and disability.

After lunch, attended by various members of the Arts Access board, we all settled down to a real exchange of ideas. The artists spoke of their work and why they choose to work in this field and our guests then followed with a job description of what they did and what the future held.

Charlie Welch and Mary Ann Hagan spoke of the work of Very Special Arts and

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Dinny leaves —back soon

Yes, the rumours are true. Executive Officer, Dinny Downie has left Arts Access for good...well, for a good three months anyway.

Dinny has trekked off to Sydney to take a three-month secondment to the Community Cultural Development Unit of the Australia Council.

Dinny's position will be as a Project Officer with duties relating to the 1987 funding run, with specific regard to the Arts Councils, Networks and other organisations.

"The chance to work at the Australia Council is an exciting concept and as long as I don't get lost in Sydney, I'll be back for the last two months of the year.

"I imagine I'll be back before anyone notices I've gone," she said.

Kate Brennan will be in charge of the office and Carey Brickel is returning for three days a week.

Welcome

Meanwhile, Chris Milton has joined Arts Access as Ticketing Co-ordinator.

Chris, who was previously the administrator with the Tasmanian University Research Company, studied Sociology at the University of New South Wales.

Chris and spouse Sally Brown have three children, Alexander, 2, and John and Greg (twins), 8 months.

Apart from theatres, films, music and playing the flute, Chris likes reading and changing nappies. So much for acquired tastes!

Just before leaving for Sydney, Dinny said that Chris "was the best thing to happen to Arts Access since the new ramp, automatic door, the new kettle, the paint job, Kate Brennan, Suzie Dickson and the griller."

Read this!

If you would like details of projects in which you are involved mentioned in the Arts Access newsletter, please send details to Arts Access. Our next edition will be out mid-December.

Programming Update

Since our last newsletter programmes have begun in the following areas:
Kingsbury/Preston

The second phase of the Kingsbury programme with students at Preston SDS and Preston East Technical College involves artists Helen Martinneau and Helen Kennedy in drama and movement.

Plenty Hospital

Artist Noel Maloney and Leigh Morgan have run a programme of video and drama for longer term patients at Plenty Psychiatric Hospital. It is hoped that we can continue this programme on, in conjunction with the Mont Park programme.

Brunswick

A drama and physical skills programme with artists Paul Upchurch and Gill Shaw involving children from multicultural backgrounds.

Turana

Artists Gill Shaw and Therese Cashew are involved in a programme of circus and drama with boys from Quamby and Intake.



The Australian Bicentenary 1788-1988®

Also, a Bicentennial Project, in the field of silk-screen printing will lead to an exhibition.

Multiple Sclerosis Society

Artist Bella Grosberg is running a movement programme at St Albans for MS patients.

Bairnsdale

As part of our regional development work another programme focusing on intellectually disabled young people has commenced. It will also involve staff training.

Arts Access Society Inc is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to those who are disabled and disadvantaged.

Please contact us if you would like to become a member of the Society or know more about our activities.

Executive Officer: **Dinny Downie**
Programme Director: **Kate Brennan**
Office Administrator: **Michelle Stone**
Ticketing Project Officer: **Chris Milton**

Office Assistant: **Susie Dickson**
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Volunteer Office Assistant: **Suzanne O'Dwyer**

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Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Richard, Libby and Larundel- a magic combination



Reprinted from The Age

Most of our members will be aware of the very positive direction of this programme. Richard Bengé and Libby O'Neil have worked their own special magic for twelve months now and have won the support of hospital residents and staff. They have brought to fruition the work done over many years by Arts Access. In fact Larundel was one of the first contacts made by Dinny Downie when she began work here eight years ago.

It is very satisfying to come to a point

where the hospital management has so valued its artists that it will now take over the cost of their salaries on a permanent basis. Arts Access now looks to support the programme by providing additional input and advice and in particular to involve some trainees in 1988.

The very substantial contribution made by artists and the hospital to community arts is documented now in the Larundel Artists-in-Residence report prepared by Arts Access and available at a small cost from the office.

—Special performance—



Heidelberg SDS and Heidelberg Tech—an integrated circus! This performance came at the end of our program with Kingsbury students at Heidelberg with artists Suzie Dee and Gill Shaw.

Thanks again to Graham Berry and Typographical Services

Photography by Susie Dickson

Arts Access for Sale...and Bairnsdale



Bairnsdale—an "uplifting" experience for staff and their elderly clients. Photo: R. Macindoe.

A pilot programme aimed at increasing staff awareness and skills in arts and recreation with older people in the Gippsland area proved a success.

The five-day programme which was funded by the Department of Sport and Recreation will now serve as a model for future training programmes in other areas of the state.

Staff came from various hostels, day and community health centres and nursing homes in Sale and Bairnsdale. But the programme was not restricted to staff and artists Liz Sadler and David Lander along with two trainee artists from the local area took staff, volunteers and older people on a journey through their personalities and creativity.

The programme was split up into two two-day sessions in each of Sale and Bairnsdale with an evaluation and planning day to end the week. On Day One at each centre participants explored the possibilities for work with older people with storytelling and improvisation. On Day Two older people at the centres joined in with the activities.

Community Resource people were also involved and at least four specific programmes emerged and others were floated as a follow on to the experiences of the week.

Throughout the programme enthusiasm was high and the response to the programme showed that the aims of providing stimulating training and the encouragement of new ideas for working in the arts with older people were achieved.

AAS Inc for CRU's and SAH's

For some time now Arts Access has been eager to work in two less accessible areas of disability—Community Residential Units (CRU) and Special Accommodation Houses (SAH).

However funds from the Health Department and the Schools Commission have enabled us to initiate programmes in this much needed field.

We are working with 5 CRUs from the north and north eastern region. Each unit is home to 5 intellectually disabled young people with a staff of 5-7 workers. Most of the units are supported by the Office of Intellectual Disabilities. However it is often difficult or impossible to provide many

extra activities outside the unit. After lengthy discussion between Arts Access and representative from CRUs a movement and music programme was decided upon.

Starting in July and run by artists Lyndon Nicholls and Al Wunder the programme is running at a Community Hall (donated by the Salvation Army) in Preston. It will enable the children to make friends with their peers from other units and share in a new exciting experience in self-expression. Arts Access is also keen to develop staff skills in the arts area to assist the potential for on-going activities.

The Special Accommodation programme is developed in response to an

approach from Jenny Macaffer and Louise Glanville to link in with the SAH Interest Group in the west and north western metropolitan region. The group aims to encourage properties/managers of SAH's to tap into local community resources to get SAH residents to participate in the community run courses.

Arts Access will be working with 3 SAH's, Grosvenor Lodge, Greenhaven and Wattle Lodge in Essendon, Footscray and Brunswick in developing specific art projects within The Boomerang Club, Dalkara and the Brunswick/Coburg Learning Exchange.

We will keep you in touch with the progress of this far reaching pilot programme.

Drama

How do drama and occupational therapy go together? Very well, as far as the patients and staff are concerned at Dandenong Psychiatric Centre.

Senior Occupational Therapist, Di Logan, said the Arts Access drama

programme received a good response from patients and from all staff at the centre.

The programme was conducted by artists Helen Lenga and Jacque Robinson on Wednesday mornings and involved out patient and inpatient groups.

Football, meatpies, "Fire Plume"

its links back to Australia through Arts Access. Charlie Welch had brought a bundle of books and tapes for our Resource Centre and indicates that he is interested in attending any major event organised in Australia again, involving art and disability – as he comes from Hawaii maybe we can organise a reciprocal arrangement! Needless to say the sharing of ideas and contacts was of benefit to all concerned.

On Thursday night the Americans invited the whole Victorian organising group to dinner at the Arts Centre, where we were treated to some wonderful performances and a slide presentation of their trip.

Arts Access was presented with a Kennedy Centre medallion as a token of their appreciation.

I would like to thank Helen Cameron, Barbara Dover, and Debra Anderson for organising a very busy and informative week. It was obvious that the visitors enjoyed Melbourne and dare I say, thought it was the highlight of their tour!



Our Arts Dialogue visitors - Margaret and a keen harpist

Drama at St. Vincent's...



St. Vincent's School in South Melbourne has just been the scene of an Arts Access "takeover."

For one week in June, artist Neil Cameron with Suzie Dee, Danny O'Riordan, Vanessa Beck and David Joseph worked on the production of a Drama Event as the school turned most of its time-table over to Arts Access.

Using the boys' ideas and interests the artists built a circus theme and into it wove the boys' version of "The Elephant Man." This theme was a reflection of the wish "to be like everyone else."

The gala performance night began with a drum banging, light flashing, stilt-walking, mask waving procession. It then

evolved into a demonstration of the boys' new found acrobatic, juggling, musical and performance skills.

Their condensed version of the John Merrick story – the misshapen man treated like an animal and searching for understanding, then followed. All the boys performed with great energy and commitment and the involvement of the staff at St. Vincent's was a highlight.

The sense of satisfaction was evident at the supper which followed although the artists who kept it all together looked decidedly exhausted.

The boys are now going on to perform a selection of their work at the Catholic School Drama Festival. We wish them well.

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