

began in a small way but when Mr Hotchin opened the exhibition in 1960, there were more than 150 paintings and 1,000 craft exhibits – china painting, pottery, shell craft, dolls, Chinese handicrafts from a wide area – displayed in both halls.

In those years, too, right across the region there was a growing tendency for people with shared interests to meet and function in specific social groups – as Apexians, Rotarians, repertory enthusiasts, horticulturalists, amateur historians and members of particular churches. The time had almost arrived for Narrogin's artists and craftspeople to form a group of like-minded people to pursue their love - art and craft.



*Narrogin Arts Group's first exhibition in the Narrogin Town Hall*

## **THE FIRST DECADE: 1966 – 1975**

Around Narrogin the names of at least 56 individuals or families have been assigned to streets, parks or buildings because the citizens at various times thought them worthy of being long remembered. In many cases so little was recorded at the time and the significance is hard to trace, but the contributions of others are still known and valued. Thus, the name Thornton Theatre in the converted Jehovah's Witness Hall in Fairway Street conjures up memories of dapper Little Jimmy Thornton, a Repertory Club Comedian; Sylvia Henry House, the nurses quarters at the hospital, keeps alive the indomitable spirit of the matron in the 1940's, 50's and 60's; R.W. (Bob) Farr added to the name of Narrogin Regional Library ensures that the genial and cultured mayor will not soon be forgotten.

Rather difficult to find until one knows where to look – on a short street leading off the road to Wandering – is the Joy Rich Art & Craft Centre at 4 Elliot Street. Joy is the lady who, when the time was ripe for the Narrogin Art Group to be

formed in 1966, ensured that the project would take off immediately and soon became its major inspiration, facilitator and encouraging presence.

Joy Rich's life had begun ordinarily enough. Born Lesley Joy Russell, she had grown up in a family of four at Wickepin. Having completed her school in that town, she began her teaching career as a monitor at Pingelly State School followed by two years at Claremont Teachers Training College. After teaching in Bunbury and Merredin, Joy retired in 1954 to marry Fred Rich, with whom she raised her own family of four in Ensign Street, Narrogin. She took up painting in 1964 and between 1972 and 1985 was employed by the Education Department as an art teacher at the Narrogin High School.

Joy's colleague and firm friend in the high school's art department, Heidi Astbury, recalled in 2016: "Joy was a leader among women and promoted all aspects of art and craft activities. She had the vision and the work ethic. "She was", asserted Heidi, "a person of commitment and passion." The commitment was always very clear to see, but the passion could often be cloaked under a quiet demeanour. This feature of Joy's nature was discerned by Mrs B. Linton, an oil painting tutor in the Technical Extension Service with which Joy had enrolled for an external course in 1969. She praised Joys' skill and rapid development, but on one occasion commented: "In some places you pile on paint with careless abandon, then suddenly you clam up and won't use any." In the Art Group Joy would usually be working enthusiastically by herself, while keeping a watchful eye on others, exercising restraint and tact and willingness to help. The passion was there, but muted. However, in March 1974, when too few Art Group members turned up for an AGM to form a quorum, she exploded. Her comments in that month's newsletter were quite ferocious. A very large number turned up for the rescheduled meeting in April.

When Joy took up painting in 1964 she was soon active with other artists who were members of the Narrogin Art Society and the Narrogin Art Gallery Committee. They ranged widely in age and experience, from John Barker's now elderly former pupil, Christina (Ina) Stokes to young new arrivals such as Les and Sue Riley. She was soon painting with those enthusiasts out of doors, in each other's homes, under tutors such as the Boissevains or Don Massotti at the high school or in other centres already begun, as at Beverley and Katanning. Several times, painters tried to establish an art group, but each

of those soon failed. Joy watched what happened and thought about what was necessary to make sure such a venture would thrive.

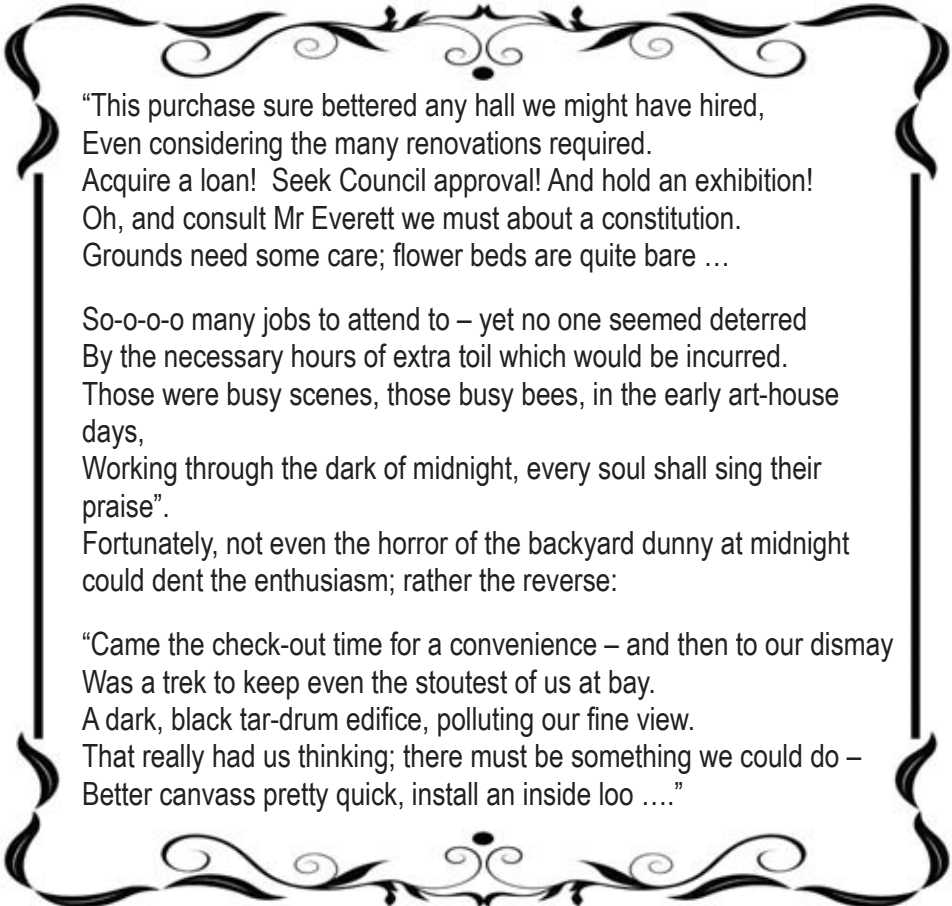
Eventually, on 3 February, 1966 Joy joined Les and Sue Riley at Ron and Rudi Tassell's home. These five decided to form 'an active painting group' with Ron as President, Joy as Secretary and Les as Treasurer. A week later, on February 10<sup>th</sup>, they met again, this time in the Riley's home, accompanied by other keen painters, including Ina Stokes, Elsie Webb, Lorne Parry and Linda Goater. Once they had confirmed their willingness to commence the group they did not lose the impetus by discussing what might or might not be possible. Instead, they had a very promising, practical offer to consider: an anonymous person who owned a half-built home at 4 Elliot Street would allow them to purchase that at the bargain price of 1025 pounds (\$2,050), interest free. The new Art Group members were very excited and their response was positive agreement to accept, although some wise head did suggest that, in case this fell through, they should book the scout hall for use. However, Council's inspector raised no problems and their studio/art room was theirs from 10<sup>th</sup> March.

In early 1966, that building at 4 Elliot Street bore little resemblance to the attractive art rooms depicted on page 4, in a drawing by Pat Negus, probably in mid-1980. Back then, only the rear half of the building had been constructed, divided into two rooms, with a bathroom – the present library - at the western end. Behind was the shed, a small laundry structure, a rotary clothes line and a backyard dunny. Entrance to the building was via an unsafe ramp.

As is now well known, the mystery person presenting the half-built house for the new Art Group to purchase, was Joy Rich. However, her reasons for acting as she did are not totally clear because, as the inaugural Secretary she seems to have made sure that nothing was recorded on that in print. One can but guess. Whatever Joys' motives were, the outcome was a great success. Claude Hotchin probably got close to the answer. Writing to Joy from his home "Chartwell" Mundaring, on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1966 he enthused: "What a great start to have a little place of your own. This is all good because it gives you all a common aim, a kind of shoulder-to-shoulder effort". How true that was!

Years later an unidentified friendly member had a go at penning verse to

express her memorial of those early days at No. 4 -



“This purchase sure bettered any hall we might have hired,  
Even considering the many renovations required.  
Acquire a loan! Seek Council approval! And hold an exhibition!  
Oh, and consult Mr Everett we must about a constitution.  
Grounds need some care; flower beds are quite bare ...

So-o-o-o many jobs to attend to – yet no one seemed deterred  
By the necessary hours of extra toil which would be incurred.  
Those were busy scenes, those busy bees, in the early art-house  
days,  
Working through the dark of midnight, every soul shall sing their  
praise”.

Fortunately, not even the horror of the backyard dunny at midnight  
could dent the enthusiasm; rather the reverse:

“Came the check-out time for a convenience – and then to our dismay  
Was a trek to keep even the stoutest of us at bay.  
A dark, black tar-drum edifice, polluting our fine view.  
That really had us thinking; there must be something we could do –  
Better canvass pretty quick, install an inside loo ....”

Apart from some members bringing spare items from home to make the rooms more habitable – chairs, tables, cup and saucers, utensils – they had little time for some years, to make firm moves towards costly structural improvements. Other priorities dominated.

One of the first was getting the group established legally by drawing up rules and regulations, a constitution, getting incorporated, attending to the various aspects of insurance . Elsie Webb contacted her friend Marie Miller and solicitor husband in Salters Point where their group had been through all that thirty years before. That led to those issues being placed in the hands of Narrogin

Solicitor, Bill Everett, who proved so efficient, supportive and generous that he was eventually asked to act as the Art Group's patron, a role he filled admirably between 1975 and 2009.

Then there was the need to get the studio/art rooms building paid for within a reasonable time. When the approach to Lotteries for a grant proved fruitless, many chances to run stalls and raffles were taken to become financial. The \$140 deposit was paid on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1966. By March 1969 almost half had been repaid. They tried to raise \$100 a year, but when that could not be done in March 1970, Margaret Winchcombe put on pressure to get \$363 paid and an extra \$300 in the following December. President Elsie Webb then urged for the final payment to be met in September 1971. To everyone's delight that was done and there was general relief all round. All accomplished in 5 years!

Before the first of those payments was made, that dark and mysterious splotch of paint entitled 'Homage to Narrogin' was applied to the kitchen wall of the art rooms by noted West Australian painter Guy Grey-Smith on 21 April 1966. There are many stories of what happened that day in circulation – some quite incredible. One of the more probable tells how Guy was in Narrogin as a judge at an exhibition run by the Narrogin Art Society. There he met members of the new Art Group who invited him to see their studio in Elliot Street. During the evening when the drink was flowing he was asked to paint a picture. He agreed, tubes of paint were produced and Guy squeezed several into his hand before going over to the corner and smearing the mixed paint onto the wall. He then spelt the title, added the date, and pointedly commented that this 'wonderful' piece was the work of his hand. The strong sense of derision in all this was caused by what had happened to Guy back in 1961. He had entered his painting 'Kangaroo Flats' in an Art Society exhibition and won the Acquisition Prize. However, the Mayor and President of the society had informed him very publicly that they were not impressed with his work. Guy Grey-Smith, fifty when he made this gesture, died in 1981 but that 'mural' still remains despite many people's wishes to have it removed. One wonders how Guy would feel if he could know how resolutely some members fought to have that mural retained.

The original members of the Narrogin Art Group were artists (painters) and Elsie Webb's china painters. And since Endowment Day, when the Group took

official possession of the building on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1966, it was important to get both groups earnestly to work because an open day display was planned for three days afterwards – on 26<sup>th</sup> of August, so that interested Narrogin citizens could see what the Group intended to achieve. The Group's visitor's book begun on that date, indicated how impressed many people were: 'progressive move!' wrote local member the Hon. Will Manning MLA, 'Congratulations!' came from Dr Alf Jacobs and 'Good Show' from Dr Mort Zilko. 'Surprised – didn't know this existed in Narrogin,' stated Geoff Beazley and 'Delightful afternoon' were Ina Stokes words. As for Ann Gillingham, she felt it worthy of receiving the catchword of praise of that time: '*supercalifragilisticexpialidotius!*' Sadly, after serving the Narrogin Art Club as secretary between 1966 and 1968, Ann Gillingham died in Taiwan in 1969.

During the Art Group's first decade the painters, having at least a basic introduction to water colours and drawing, were very active from the beginning, with classes of several hours one day a week at the Art Rooms and occasional weekend workshops in the Art Room at the High School. The first tutors, such as Henry Froudish and Win and Rhoda Boissevain, continued from the days before the Art Group was formed. They introduced oil painting and screen printing, so when Joy Rich took a one year course in oils with the Technical Extension Service and encouraged others to do the same under her direction, there was great interest. Don Mazzotti was visiting tutor in 1968 and 1969, and Gary Zeck's course in September 1975 was well received. Particularly valuable were the workshops run by Laurie Knott who provided insights into the technical details such as picture composition, tone, colour and texture. Following Joy's success as a member and also being a tutor, Elsie McGowan, who had recently won prizes at Wickiepin and Wagin, did the same in 1972-4, and even donated the student fees in 1974 to Art Group funds. Yet another novelty introduced by Joy in 1970 was holding a display of her own work in the Narrogin Art Groups rooms, with an introduction to art appreciation in the form of Ina Stokes delivering a paper on a famous artist.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, art groups, under various names, were developing across the region at Beverley, Darkan, Wickiepin, Pingelly, Wagin, Yealering, Harvey, Katanning, Quairading, Williams and the practice of these groups sharing in providing workshops and support began. Narrogin was mostly involved with Beverley, Pingelly, Wagin and Williams.

Meanwhile, the other artists, the china painters, were also active from February 1966. They were the group led by Elsie Webb following Joy Donaldson's departure. At first this initial group of eight progressed reasonably well with tutor Kitty Drok of Nedlands visiting several times a year from mid-1967. This was the beginning of Kitty's long association with the Narrogin Art Group which would eventually end in the late 1980's. In 1969 the Narrogin China Painters willingly lent their pieces to pre-school groups at Williams, Wickiepin and Kulin to help provide fundraising displays. Then in 1969 and 1971 members of the Guild of China Painters came to Narrogin to hold demonstrations in the Presbyterian and Methodist Halls. However this early success had been despite the lack of a china painting kiln in the art rooms. Elsie Webb had been doing this for her class in her own kiln at home. Eventually the load became too great, so she asked, in 1970, for the committee to release funds to purchase a kiln for the rooms. But, though willing, the committee could not; they were under pressure from Town Council to install septic sewerage. Various attempts to solve the problem were tried. Mavis Berson was asked to fire some, Joan Leaver helped for a while, then Elsie Webb and Joan Leaver amalgamated their private studios as 'The Blue Wren Studio' in Fathom Street, and painters could pay to have their own firing done.

A rather desperate fundraising effort was made by members painting a large pile of cups, saucers and plates for sale. Finally, providing a kiln became the Group's No. 1 priority and the art groups first china painting kiln arrived in August 1972. Great excitement! From being almost on the way out, china painting flourished. By May 1975 when a number of Narrogin and Katanning painters returned from an inspiring three-day seminar with visiting Guild guru Amy Lakides in Nedlands, china painters at 4 Elliot St. were working three days a week. That June, Kitty Drok stepped up the interest by introducing glass painting and such techniques as powder painting and palette-knife application.

In addition to the ladies who had left Joy Donaldson's Narrogin China Painters Association in 1960 to form a new group under Elsie Webb, the old association was still active. Noting the benefits of Art Group membership enjoyed by their previous class members, those ladies applied for affiliation with the Group in June 1968. The Art Group Committee would have welcomed the increased membership – the group had only 29 financial members at that stage – but they had to turn down the request. The Art Group premises were too small,

lighting conditions were inadequate; the group had no kiln – to say nothing of the toilet facilities. However, the Narrogin and District China Painters kept pressing gently for some years, and the Art Group members demonstrated their sympathy. In 1969 group painters lent the association painted china and provided refreshments to help them mount a display, and in 1972 the group seriously considered purchasing a house in Falcon Street to provide a building where the two groups could combine – but the Art Group was then financially embarrassed. In March 1975 the association requested permission to paint and use the kiln in the art rooms while still retaining their own identity. The Group's china painters adjusted their use of the rooms to accommodate the association painters. But then allowing them to have their own teacher in the rooms led to problems. When the association painters ceased to mount an annual display at the Narrogin Show, the group painters did that instead. Soon afterwards all mention of the Narrogin and District china painters association ceased in Narrogin Art Group records.

It was fortunate for Art Group developments that in March 1966 the Group would take in other arts and crafts in addition to 'active painters'. Consequently when Gertrude Petkovic (*whose pot is pictured below*), who had taught herself the basics of pottery in 1959 – 'out of a book' as she phrased it – and set herself up with a wheel and a kiln in her backyard shed, approached the Art Group committee in September 1968 and requested permission to form a pottery group, there were no constitutional problems. And since she proposed teaching classes in her own shed from February 1969 as long as the Group purchased her kiln and paid for the firing, the committee agreed – a

worthwhile increase in paying membership and no overcrowding at the Art Rooms. That all began quite harmoniously, and Elsie Webb ensured that potters passing the introductory course were welcomed at a social afternoon. During 1969 members, including Les Riley, built a wood-fired kiln at 4 Elliot Street, and another was purchased from a Mr Page in Katanning. That soon led to some potters being permitted to use the old bathroom/storage area (now







used as library/ photocopier/ records room) for working on their pieces – ‘clay finger marks and dust everywhere’ as one non-potter recalled. Not long afterwards

a gas fired kiln was installed in the shed and other equipment was purchased. However, by the time that future highly dynamic potter, Anne Lyneham, began in 1971, travelling down to Narrogin for classes with friends from Popanyinning – at Gertrude Petkovic’ studio - the future of pottery in the Art Group was somewhat in doubt. Basically, Gertrude’s knowledge was limited and there was little funding to bring in expert tutors. Joan Campbell and a few others were invited to visit and give workshops, but interest had declined and these workshops did not eventuate. Gertrude herself worked hard to promote the craft with displays, starting a class in Wagin, introducing classes in stoneware pottery and urging her students to take part in expert tutors’ workshops elsewhere. In 1973 the potters formed their own fundraising committee to provide \$1,000 towards purchasing equipment. But the decade ended with a question mark hanging over pottery.



Copper enamelling, the application of special powdered paint to copper objects, was already being done in Joy Rich’s Art Classes at the High School by 1973. However, in the Art Group, Mr Clamp gave a demonstration in April 1971, a workshop followed in September 1972 and Perth china painter Joy Jenner mounted a display at an exhibition in Narrogin, also in 1972. Margaret Winchcombe, Stella Keevil (*an example of her work Pg 17*) and Joan Leaver demonstrated copper enamelling in February and October

1973, and Margaret and others went to demonstrations at Kulin. In February 1974 the Art Group purchased a small copper enamelling kiln from Jacksons for \$171, then in July-August 1974 Margaret ran a 7 weeks course in the art rooms, at a charge of \$5.00 to members and \$7.00 to non-members, with all proceeds going to Art Group funds. The popularity was increasing to the point where purchase of a second kiln was being considered as long as the price was below \$130.

A comparatively small group of screen printers hardly scored a mention in Group records until in June 1970 Joy Rich went off to Muresk College to learn methods of fabric printing. Soon afterwards a group of Art Group screen printers, led by Margaret Winchcombe, prepared curtains

for the Repertory Club's production of 'The King and I', with all proceeds again going to Group funds. The value of screen printing as a much needed fundraiser became clear. In October 1973 a tablecloth was printed for the Rotary Clubs' 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and this first decade closed as the Art Groups' screen printers were commissioned to print T-shirts for the Narrogin Swimming Club and pennants for the Inland Sailing Club.



*Dryandra screen printed canvas bag by Julia Sutton*

Spinning, a craft that was to create great interest in the Group later, made only preliminary moves towards joining the Art Group in this first decade. On 13<sup>th</sup> November 1969, Mary Porter, her daughter Jill and Rita Walker demonstrated spinning to Group members. They then gathered interested people for training at the Porter's Highbury farm, but declined to demonstrate at the art exhibition

that year. In January 1975 they announced they had a group ready to start, and gave a demonstration at the high school that May. But the decade



closed without spinners being Group members. However the Art Group did stage a very successful weekend for spinners, dyers and printers under tutor Peggy Pickington from the Craft Association WA, which was

attended by spinners from Lake Bidy, Kulin, Wagin, Wickepin, Arthur River, Highbury and Narrogin. That was held on the Porter's property at Highbury.

Meanwhile Joy Rich was constantly, and quite zealously, encouraging members to suggest other crafts that might be introduced, and a significant number were put forward – from Japanese art to floral arrangements, from polishing Mallee roots to bark painting. Most died at birth, but the bark painting proposal hung on from mid-1969 to early 1972, as three C.W.A. ladies demonstrated, but without success. Knowing Joy Rich's keenness for fabric crafts, Margaret Winchcombe urged Joy to demonstrate batik in 1973; however, probably sensing that the time was not right, she declined.

Fundraising for the Art Group has always been vital to keep it alive and productive, but never more so than in the first decade before significant grants were made available. Thus, the minutes of the organisation are full of reports of money trickling in from fundraisers. Very numerous were the cake, produce and craft stalls (10% commission to the Art Group from each craft sale.) A great many were held on the Town Hall piazza and in the Group's own social functions in the art rooms. Raffles held on all of these occasions had prizes donated by generous painters and potters within the Art Group. Sometimes the Group would run afternoon tea at other organizations' functions, as when the Narrogin Art Gallery Committee's Central Great Southern Art Exhibition was

held late in 1967. Even the Groups' Christmas parties held at the Culleton's home in 1968 and 1971 had a large stall, and when Margaret Winchcombe hosted that event in 1973 she had a chocolate wheel installed! Sometimes the Group's fundraising was boosted by generous outsiders, as when Margaret Staines' Ballet Academy shared proceeds with the Art Group in 1969, and David Jones staged a mannequin parade for the Group in April that year.

Another significant fundraiser was the sequence of children's school-holiday programs held at the art rooms. Those began with a rather tentative move to run pottery classes on three days of the May 1969 holiday, with children's fees paid entirely into Group funds. Members were delighted with the youngsters' eager participation and they soon became a regular holiday feature. Prices were \$1.50 for the eldest child in a family, \$1 for the second, 50c for the third and any others entered free. Joy Rich was usually in control of classes on the three days, assisted by skilled practitioners in each art or craft and by other members to help maintain control. In 1973 the three days of the May holiday offered the children classes in pottery, painting, batik and copper enamelling.

When the Narrogin Art Group began in 1966, members had a very big – and totally unrealistic – hope of being able to stage a major exhibition each year. They had to wait four years before being able to host their first public exhibition; the minute books record a sad series of deferments during the first three of those years. That inaugural exhibition was held in the Narrogin Town Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November 1970. Joy was so delighted that Sir Thomas Wardle, Lord Mayor of Perth, agreed to open it that she made a social gaffe by writing to invite Sir Thomas to donate one of the prizes; for that she received a sharp rebuke from the Agricultural Society! Apart from that everything ran smoothly in a quiet way. The exhibition was 'closed' (had only relatively small prizes so that outside artists would not consider it worth their while to enter exhibits), Lady Wardle was presented with a hand-woven guest towel and china painted dishes and the raffle first prize was a six tile table painted by Elsie Webb. However, the event netted a sufficient sum for the Group to be able to pay off the final \$300 owing on the Art Group's building loan. That encouraged some members to call for an annual exhibition, but wiser heads ensured it became a biennial event. The 1972 exhibition could well have been staged on Mackie Park, but those wiser heads intervened again and this too was held in the Town Hall, with Mayoress Mrs Beall doing the honours and receiving a spray of

orchids. This time it was an 'open' exhibition with more substantial cash prizes to attract outside artists to enter. The inevitable happened, which didn't please the local artists. Hence on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November 1974, the Art Group returned to a 'closed' exhibition, opened by Mayoress Norah Farr, who received a spray of flowers. Only local artists work was on display but the healthy sum of \$500 boosted the Group's funds. By now the organisers had adopted a much more realistic expectation of what a comparatively new and modest sized Art Group in a country town could achieve.

Similarly, the comparatively modest level of skill of Narrogin Art Group's members was indicated by the very few winning prizes in larger centres' exhibitions. Only Joy Rich is recorded as having achieved that in this first decade with a seascape in oils at a Busselton Art Centre exhibition. Ron Tassell did win a prize in a Painters' Guild exhibition, but by then he and Rudi had left Narrogin. The only other wins recorded in those ten years were for a water colour and a drawing by Joy and a sculpture by Linda Goater at the Central Great Southern Art Competition in Narrogin in 1967 and four or five artists winning quite often in the Narrogin Agricultural Show.

On the other hand in this period, the Narrogin Art Group did commence a commendable outreach program: they provided support and encouragement to new groups in Pingelly and Williams which were starting up themselves; they lent completed pieces for display to other art groups and organisations in the region and supplied judges with relevant experience when requested by agricultural societies – very often at Pingelly and occasionally at Wickiepin, Kokerin, Bridgetown, Corrigin and Katanning. They also began supporting charities. One of their early acts under this heading was to commence an arts and crafts shop for charities in Narrogin in 1969. They also supported the Slow Learning Children's Group and Silver Chain, and got behind Judy Jeffrey's fundraising during the Spastic Children's Appeal in 1970.

The first decade ended much as it had begun, with a strong focus upon the Art Group's building in Elliot Street. By March 1969 members' working bees had painted inside and out, donations made it more comfortable, and \$447 had been paid out for having steps and a ramp constructed at the rear of the building with shelves in the former bathroom for storage. Rob Harrold had been engaged to install two fluorescent lights. Then, after a lull, Town Council

wrote in September 1971 stressing the need to install a septic sewerage system. Replacing the old dunny would certainly be welcome, but the cost was prohibitive. The Committee made no reply for a year until a second letter from Council in August 1972 made members discuss fundraising possibilities: a quiz night? Requesting a loan from Council (not possible because the building was not vested in Council) or from a bank? Or financial assistance from the Narrogin Art Gallery Committee? They even thought of charging members a substantial admission charge to their Christmas party at Mrs. Punch's home in 1973! Rather desperately the committee asked the Council whether it was planned to deep sewer Elliot Street. No, was the answer – lack of funds! By 1974 the Council was being asked for quotes, not only for the septic system but also for a 5 feet deep extension to the front of the art rooms. In September 1975 a little progress was made when Mr Grant's quotation for installing an inside toilet was accepted. Very hopefully, in late 1975, Joy Rich became the Art Group's representative on the W.A. Council of the Arts, to try to push for a grant for the necessary extension, but she did learn that grants could be available for purchasing equipment. Things must have looked rather bleak for the Group as they left for Christmas 1975.

## **THE SECOND DECADE: 1976 – 1985**

Despite the Art Group members' worries in December 1975, building development plans took off when the septic system was installed in January, 1976, with the \$1,685 being met entirely from Art Group funds. Attention then switched to plans for alterations to the existing art rooms building, which were confirmed in late March. The original plan for the new frontage was for a mere 5 feet extension, which would have been of little use. However, this was changed to a much more sensible 11 feet deep addition, with half the existing central wall retained to ensure the buildings' structural safety. A front porch was included at the eastern end of the frontage. Fortunately, a grant of \$3,500 was made available, leaving the Art Group to provide only a further \$405 to settle Annear and Grant's account. The work was finished by early July 1976, after which it was all hands on deck to have the new building ready for its official opening by patron Bill Everett at 5 pm on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1976. Many members took a part in painting the interior and Rotary's junior arm, Interact, was offered \$75 to paint the exterior. The Narrogin and District China Painters donated \$200 towards the cost of the lino floor covering, Elsie Webb donated the blinds,