

In the 40 years since it was formed by the residents of the City of Heidelberg, the Company has become one of the most respected, non-professional, theatre companies in Victoria. And its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary opens with the play that HTC patrons wanted to see again, **Charley's Aunt** by Brandon Thomas.

Over the years the Company has entered plays competitively in drama festivals including the Royal South Street Competitions, Ballarat, the Victorian Drama League's one-act festivals, the Mordialloc Arts Festival and the Moomba and Waverley Festivals of Community Theatre. It has won awards for all facets of theatre – production, direction, acting, set design, light, sound and costume.

The Heidelberg Theatre Company (then known as the Heidelberg Repertory Group) was formed in 1952. During its first seven years the 'Rep' performed in several halls in Ivanhoe then moved to the Independent Order of Rechabite Hall, 55 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe, after negotiating a long-term lease. Members of the Company built a proscenium-arch stage and a foyer. The intimate theatre seated 84, and six plays were presented each year for a ten night season each.

In 1974 the Company purchased the property at Turnham Avenue, Rosanna for the sum of \$45,000. The Heidelberg City Council gave \$7,000 towards the purchase price. In 1980 the Heidelberg Theatre Company gifted the property to the City of Heidelberg. The Heidelberg City Council provided funds to extend and convert the building into a working theatre and in 1982 the Company presented its first play, **The Knight of the Burning Pestle**, in its new theatre in Turnham Avenue.

The Heidelberg Theatre Company has contributed extensively to the development of the building since its purchase in 1974 including the rear extension, lighting equipment, ceiling fans, heating and sprinkler system. And now, in 1992, the front of the theatre is to be extended. This will result in the foyer being enlarged and include a more adequate kitchen, an office area, a mezzanine over the kitchen and additional storage. When extensions are completed the foyer will provide more adequate accommodations for audiences and members of the Heidelberg Theatre Company.