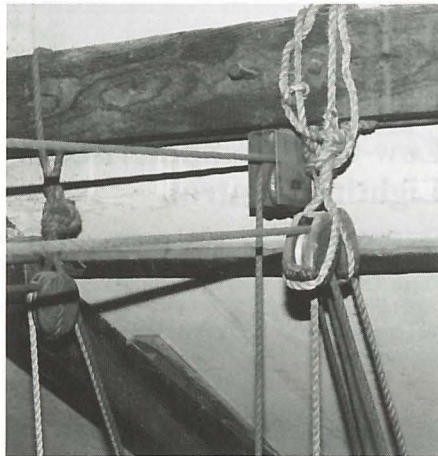


- ▲ Prompt side showing counterweight guides behind side masking and stage level guard panels. Fly gallery just visible at top of picture behind guides.
- ◀ Looking upstage OP after the fire, showing old timber roof trusses between which scenery was flown on hand lines



Lighting patch panel – Australian style.



Example of pre-fire snatch block hand lines.

to disturb the above mentioned 150 year old walls, the solution was to build a steel structure free standing outside and above the old building, and mount the fly galleries just over the level of the bluestone. It had been originally planned to put the counterweights on OP side, with a loading door upstage, but planning permission was not obtained due to the narrow side street, so the weights and guides had to be on prompt side. To improve stage volume, the fly gallery, hence the flying operation and rope locking are offstage of the guides. Although unusual, it was agreed that the method is better than the cumbersome alternative of double purchase counterweights.

Another regulatory outcome adding considerably to the cost, is the provision of 70° caged ladders or stairways for access to

galleries and grid. These take up a lot of space and in our view are very much a nuisance compared with simple vertical ladders.

Location of lighting FOH, and control gear for lighting and sound posed difficulties, as we were anxious not to disturb the auditorium any more than necessary. First step was to remove existing ugly 'temporary' box booms, circle front bracketry and cables, replacing them with more discreetly mounted bars and flush outlets. Then, it was thought, lighting control (Avab 204 to 80 JTM dimmers, mostly existing before the fire) in one circle box, and audio in the other. Later discussion with a newly re-constituted Theatre Royal Board indicated a wish to free both boxes for either audience or performers use on occasions. A small duct space at the rear of the circle was found and converted to lighting control (does this remind you of anywhere Fred Bentham?), audio being relocated in a cramped position under a stair landing downstage OP. There are however, tie lines from there to P corner and OP box for alternative control points.

A two ring SM intercom system to technical areas, dressing rooms and front of house, with programme relay and recall bell completes the re-equipment, not forgetting that there is a connection point for intercom and the AVAB in centre stalls for rehearsal purposes.

Perhaps it is best to allow the photographs to tell their own story, and let you share our pleasure in helping a grand old theatre into a continued happy existence. Our thanks are due to the Tasmanian Department of Construction, and to Forward Consultants for assistance for this short article. Anyone interested in more details on the theatre's history is referred to 'Theatre Buildings in Australia to 1905' by Ross Thorne, or 'A History of the Theatre Royal' by Dr. Michael Roe.