

Tall tales and true from the treehouse

A noisy audience was sprayed with gunfire at Christ Church Grammar School’s chapel last Friday.

People were happy – it was the launch of Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton’s new book, The 117-Storey Treehouse.

“You can break any school rule you want,” Mr Griffiths told the 1000-plus children present, to huge cheers.

Students gasped when Mr Griffiths told them the treehouse now also had a shark tank, an underpants museum, a circus, and a penguin-powered tour bus.

One boy was sceptical. “Since when do penguins fly?” he asked.

Mr Griffiths insisted everything in his book was correct.

“Penguins fly since two days ago, when this book came out,” he said.

“Some writers make stuff up, but I have a very bad imagination.

“I just write down what happens.

“My books should be in the non-fiction section.

“Go and re-arrange my books in your library.

“If a librarian asks you what you are doing, just tell them Terry told you to do it.”

The shark tank was partly the reason Mr Denton couldn’t be at the launch.

“There was an accident while Terry was feeding the sharks,” Mr Griffiths said.

“I kicked him – but who could not resist kicking Terry Denton



Fighting robots in a treehouse! ... Author Andy Griffiths and students create one of the scenes from new book.

into the shark tank?

“He’s in little bits at the moment.”

The gunfire occurred when Mr Griffiths invited three children on stage to battle each other in a giant fighting-robot arena, also a feature of the new treehouse.

A girl with sonic blasters and a boy with lasers were blown away by a girl with a pump-action water-gun.

The audience also roared when Mr Griffiths showed them a picture of a tree that looked like a human bottom.

“No one would ever put their treehouse in a butt tree,” he said.

He revealed there might only

be four or five more Treehouse books.

“Because we started with 13 (storeys in the first book), it’d be really cool if there were 13 books,” he said.

Students at Kalannie Primary School in the Wheatbelt got up at 4am to be at Christ Church on time after a three-hour bus trip.

Children from schools in Mandurah, Byford and the Swan Valley were also there.

The launch was arranged by Scribblers Festival, arts group FORM’s annual children’s literature celebration.

The Treehouse books have sold more than 10million copies in Australia.

Stage reprieve for Floreat Playlovers

Playlovers has been given a \$10,000 lifeline, but the curtain could still fall on one of WA’s oldest community theatre groups.

The group will soon be able to rehearse at Hackett Hall, in Floreat, after being locked out since 2016 but members still want to be able to perform and rehearse in the same venue.

“Having to find a performance space is completely unviable for a community theatre group that needs the same venue to rehearse and perform,” Playlovers member Janelle Hammond said.

“It’s no good just having a rehearsal space.”

Ms Hammond said the group did not want to pay to use different stage sets in different venues.

Hackett Hall, which has been used by the group since the 1960s, needs urgent repairs and last week Nedlands council agreed to stump up \$10,000 to allow the theatre group to use the venue “only for the purpose of their rehearsals”.

Nedlands council is worried about health and safety issues in the hall, which is in Lawler Park.

Playlovers will be required to oversee minor works such as removing curtains, electrical testing, paving repairs, repair or replacement of asbestos eaves and testing and tagging fire suppression equipment.

“This gets them back into the hall and a space they’ve used for years,” councillor Cilla de Lacy told the council.

“They promise they will not rehearse Tarzan of the Jungle.

“They won’t be swinging from the rafters.”

Ms de Lacy said the group had lost 110 members in the past three years and needed help to find a suitable performance venue, potentially the new Shenton College Performing Arts Arena.

“We should support Playlovers to use Shenton arena and help them with an exit strategy,” she said.

Mayor Max Hipkins said Kerry Hill Architects had advised it would be cheaper to build a fit-for purpose venue rather than completely restore Hackett Hall.

He said the council should be overseeing the repair works in its own hall.

Councillor Gordon Hay said Playlovers had been offered many options over the years.

The council approved a motion to fund works up to \$10,000 and allow Playlovers to rehearse at Hackett Hall until March 14, 2024, when the hall will return to Nedlands council for “control and management”.

Charged over trespass

A trespasser allegedly exposed himself while outside Methodist Ladies’ College’s boarding house early on Sunday morning.

Police were called to the Claremont school at 3am after receiving a report about a man shouting obscenities and damaging property.

A man was charged with criminal damage, committing an indecent act, trespass, and assaulting a police officer.

An MLC spokeswoman said students were unaffected by the incident.

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