



Antony Davies leads off with how it all started

Nick Fry asked me to meet with him early last year to talk about what the bank could do to mark its fifteenth anniversary. Nick is a joyful and happy, community-spirited character and he thought of a clock because there wasn't one in Braidwood.

He thought a freestanding one in the park might be quite nice. The park is lovely, but the centre of activity in the main street is more down towards the National Theatre. So we thought, possibly on top of the National Theatre could be quite nice, but of course, that brought up the issue that there hadn't previously been one on that building.

The general consensus amongst conservationists is that it would be feasible to instal a clock if there had previously been a clock, but less appropriate if there hadn't been. So then we came to the idea of using the bank's façade.

ANTONY DAVIES AND JANE KENDALL.



# Baby Ben



Because it is a bank there are security issues — you can't just go drilling holes in walls because it affects the security of the building. So it needed to be away from the functional part of the bank.

The original façade on the Bendigo Bank building wasn't especially exciting and it also gave us the opportunity to move the Bendigo Bank signs from the top of the awning down to the bottom. I think it's significantly improved the style of the building from the outside. Of course, there's a direct cue taken from the Bernardoff building, a few doors up, which has a similar arched awning on the front.

When we came to the suggestion of some artwork around the façade of the clock to add some interest, Nick said, "Could it move?". I sort of bullishly said, "Oh, yes, it could, but ...".

From those germs of ideas there emerged a small group of local people who came on board to assist. Jane Kendall designed the silhouette figures. This wasn't ever going to be a pastiche, or a copy of any other sort of clock.

In terms of the artwork, the figures are there to delight small children in passing, and it's working really well in that respect. Lots of children gather there, before and after school, and on weekends to wait for the figures to move on the hour — it's quite charming to watch.

The artwork, we decided, should be

vaguely industrial and simplified so that it was durable, but still attractive, understandable and have local relevance. It's not intended to describe the entire history of Braidwood. It is simply a group of amusing figures that you could interpret to have a local relationship if you wished to.

There's the gold escort carriage and the two bush ranger figures, and the horse has rather a nice movement. It jumps up in fright when the bush rangers are in front of it.

There are also Aboriginal figures, representations of the community who lived here for such a long time. The Aboriginal community on the South Coast, who were responsible for this area, were consulted closely to see how they should be depicted in a

CLOCK MAN MATTHEW LITTLE.



silhouette figure. There were quite a few adjustments that Jane had to make to accurately portray the figures.

There is a rabbit because we do have an awful lot of rabbits, and I think he hops in a realistic way using springs. There's a kangaroo, of course, a sheep and a cow.

The mechanism itself became very complicated, because it actually is a tricky thing to design. It had to be weatherproof, because it's totally exposed and it needed to have almost no maintenance required, but if something was broken or damaged it needed to be easy to fix.

So, we called on the expertise of Matthew Little, the clockmaker, who is a very talented fellow. We sat down at Matthew's kitchen table for many hours, thinking of ways that we could make the silhouettes move that wasn't too much of a mechanical nightmare.

Matthew is meticulous and a perfectionist. Had it been me I may well have used bolts as pivots, but he said, "We'll make them out of stainless steel". Then he brazed everything on beautifully and made neoprene and bronze bushes.

The next issue was to find a clock — town clocks are surprisingly hard to find, but eventually we found a very obliging company in Genoa, Italy. They supplied the clock and custom built a computer to operate it.

When everything arrived it came with

a very simple wiring diagram in Italian. My Italian's not, I'm afraid, as good as it might be, so we had to spend about three weeks, most nights, doing Skype sessions with the clockmaker in Italy in order to wire it. The clock has quite a complex series of a few hundred wires, between the various panels that control the movement and the time.

Its chimes can set on numerous different styles, or you can make up your own. Currently, it has a Westminster chime, which is a popular international standard, and it goes on the quarter hour.

The first time I turned it on I was up in the turret hut, and when it chimed I nearly fell off my ladder because it was really very loud! It's been turned down to a significantly lower level now.

Baby Ben is really well made, it's simple, and a bit childlike in the construction. I think it's worked out very well.

Jane Kendall explains how the designs came about

Antony brought me on board because I have a background in art and design, and we've done various projects together. He said to me one day, "I've got a challenge for you."

Antony is a little a lot more than just project manager — he's actually the

brains, I think, behind how the whole thing works. The brief was to do some silhouette figures, in some way representative of things about Braidwood, but really just to make a fun, interesting tourist attraction as a gift to the town.

I was a graphic designer when I left school but I've not really done metal work before. I drew on a lot of historical silhouette design where they really tell a story.

I also needed to work within the visual possibilities and the capabilities of laser cutting metal. The artwork had to

JANE'S PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS.

