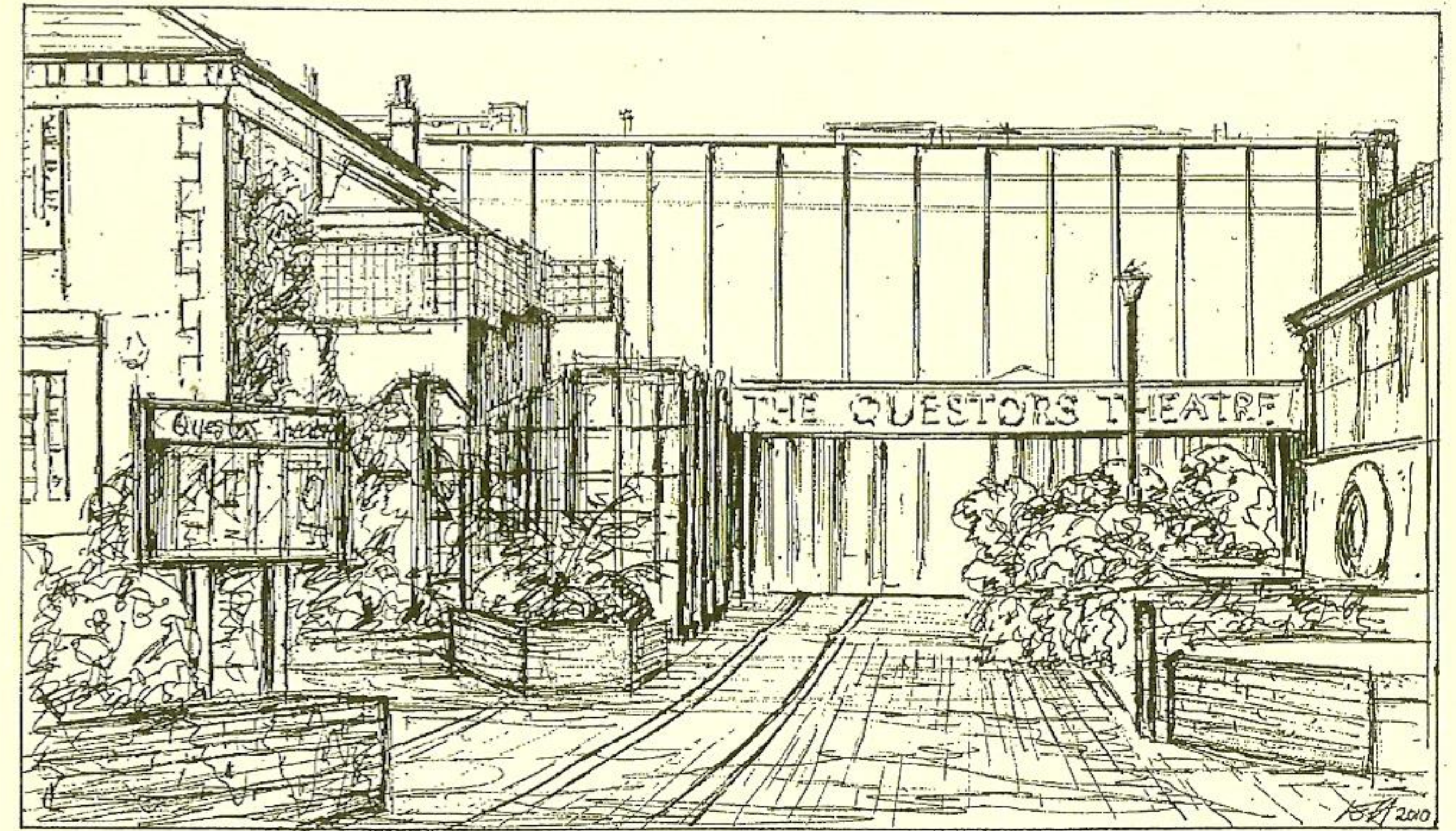




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



# NO FAIRY TALE

by Brian Abbott

The Studio

6 – 14 June 2014

# Qafé

Pop in for lunch or an afternoon snack – serving specialist teas and coffees, hot chocolate and soft drinks, with a selection of sandwiches cut to order.

Opening Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 11:30 am – 7:00 pm\*

Saturday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

*\*last orders for food at 6:30 pm*

For Playhouse productions:

Hot meal menu up to 6:30 pm followed by drinks, ice creams and snacks through the first interval.

# The Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members and Friends of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as audience members on show nights.

The club is open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers.

We are the proud holders of a Cask Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2014 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are **CAMRA West Middlesex Club of the Year**. A choice of at least three real ales is usually available, including Fuller's London Pride. We also provide a range of draught lagers and ciders, as well as wines and spirits – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours:

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

See [questors.org.uk/grapevine](http://questors.org.uk/grapevine) for more details

Neither the Qafé nor the Grapevine  
is able to accept credit or debit cards.



Image: Robert Vass

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# The Tailor and Ansty

Reading Eric Cross's *The Tailor and Ansty* today, it is astonishing that such a gentle, good humoured book could have caused the outrage that greeted it on publication in 1942. Yet the following year, when a Protestant landlord, Sir John Keane, tabled a motion in the Senate condemning the Censorship Board and calling for the removal of the ban, he was roundly defeated. There were only two votes in favour of the motion – that of Sir John himself, and his seconder.

The principal spokesman for the government was Professor William Magennis of the National University. Of the characters in the book he said: "The man is sex-obsessed. His wife, Anastasia (here called 'Ansty') is what in the language of American psychology is called a moron – a person of inferior mental development who may be thirty or forty years of age, but has reached only the mental age of five." Sounding increasingly like Goebbels, he declaimed: "There is a campaign going on in England to undermine Christianity. It is financed by American money. The society that is the main agent in the endeavour to put in paganism instead of the Christian creed and practice includes Professor Joad and George Bernard Shaw."

So concerned was the Irish government that this 'immoral' book should become widely quoted, the four-day debate was held in camera. What on earth was it about the book that led to it being banned for ten years? Readers looking for obscenity are likely to be hugely disappointed. The phrase 'scratch my bottom' does appear occasionally, but the coarsest joke in the book is hardly likely to give offence. For example:

"Oho!" chuckles the Tailor, "It was more like the case of the man who took his wife to the doctor in the old days. When the doctor took out his horn they had in those days for sounding a person, the man said, 'Sound her well with your horn, doctor. Sound her well with your horn'. 'The devil a need' said the doctor to him, 'by the looks of it you did that yourself long ago.'"

Shocking? Hardly. Maybe people were offended by Ansty's hilarity at the visitor who was unable to tell the difference between a cow and a bull. Or by the account of the Tailor's fear of contracting a disease from a soldier – like 'gunnery and erysipelas'. Or the description of a woman's breasts as 'the lumps of temptation'.

It seems unlikely. Perhaps the real offence the book gave was that the Irish peasantry were portrayed not as idealistic republicans, but as hard drinking layabouts and idlers. A priest giving a sermon describes the twelve apostles thus: "They were twelve ignorant men – as ignorant as any twelve men you would find in this parish, and, God knows, that wouldn't be difficult." Just as the plays of O'Casey and Synge had caused outrage just a few years earlier, so, one imagines, did *The Tailor and Ansty*. Eric Cross was not a writer in the class of his great contemporaries, but his book is one of great charm, and a love letter to a vanishing world. It can still be read today with great pleasure.

**Francis Lloyd, Director**

## Extracts from The Tailor and Ansty

There was a fellow long ago lived west, in Castletown. He wanted to make a journey to Bantry by the mail-car which used to run in those days.

The mail-car pulled up at the post-office to take on the mails, and begod, Jerry – Jerry McNally was his name – went into the post-office, too. He asked for a penny stamp, and when he got it he stuck it on his forehead and climbed onto the mail-car again and came away with it into Bantry.

When he came off the car in Bantry the driver said to him, "You pay me five shillings for carrying you from Castletown down here".

"What the hell do you mean?" said McNally, "by charging me five shillings?"

"Five shillings is the charge" said the mail-carman, "for the journey from Castletown to Bantry."

"The devil blast you, man" said Jerry to him then, "don't you see that I'm travelling by post? I'm stamped."

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The day ends with the last duty of all of the Tailor. At the end of the day, by the fireside, he and Ansty say the Rosary together in Irish. All the differences of the day are ended and forgotten, and the meaningless curses and the quarrels of habit and the rough, unvarnished words are solved, and banished with the prayers of the Rosary.

## Brian Abbott on No Fairy Tale

In 1988, I came across an article in *The Guardian*, about the burning of an author's book on the streets of Bradford and other towns; later death threats were issued – a fatwa. This was Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. I was deeply incensed that this could be happening on the streets of Britain. (Indeed, an early alternate title for *No Fairy Tale* was *Fatwas and Witchawatches*.)

The same article also referred to various authors whose books had been burned on their own doorsteps, banned or worse: Maeve Binchy, Edna O'Brien, Brendan Behan, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde – and *The Tailor* (but without naming the writer of the book). It mentioned a visit by three priests. I couldn't find the book anywhere.

Maggie, my wife, being Irish knew of *The Tailor and Ansty*, and ordered me a copy from Kenny's bookshop in Galway. It was completely innocuous.

Once I had researched more of what had happened to *The Tailor and Ansty*, I had no choice in the matter. I had to write the play. But I didn't so much write the play as get possessed by it.

My great thanks go to Francis Lloyd, who championed *No Fairy Tale* and, previously, *The Gospel According to Judas*.

# NO FAIRY TALE

by Brian Abbott

*World Premiere performance at The Questors Theatre: 6 June 2014*

## CAST

in order of appearance

Cross (Older)	<b>John Dobson</b>
The Tailor	<b>Anthony Curran</b>
Ansty	<b>Anne Neville</b>
Cross (Younger)	<b>Tom Cantwell</b>
The Cardinal/Guard Hoare/Seeker	<b>James Goodden</b>
Father Book	<b>Niall Bishop</b>
Father Bell	<b>James Farrar</b>
Father Candle	<b>Martin Halvey</b>
Waiter	<b>Richard Keeble</b>

The play is set in Southern Ireland and London, 1942.

The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes including a 15-minute interval.

## PRODUCTION

Director	<b>Francis Lloyd</b>
Set Designer	<b>Phillip Harrison</b>
Design Consultant	<b>Alex Marker</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Jennie Yates</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Nigel Lewis</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Joel Schrire</b>
Production Manager	<b>Jane Arnold-Forster</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Eric Lister</b>
Deputy Stage Manager	<b>Penny Seyfert</b>
Assistant Stage Managers	<b>Tom Clifford, Richard Keeble, Ashley Stapleton</b>
Properties	<b>Harriet Parsonage</b>
Fight Director	<b>Nicholas Jonne Wilson</b>
Lighting and Sound Operator	<b>Ieuan Jones</b>
Constructor	<b>Toby Burbidge</b>
Get-in Crew	<b>Henry Broom, Bianca Oelkuch, Paul Wilson</b>
Photographer	<b>Robert Vass</b>
Thanks to	<b>Alec Atchison, Denis Dracup, Anne Gilmour, Tina Harris, Nigel Lawrence, Jo Perse, Sylvia Wall</b>

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices.  
The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.  
Thank you.

## Biographies

### Brian Abbott – *Writer*

Brian has followed twin careers as playwright and actor for many years. As part of Parrabbola, he has specialised in commissioned writing for large-scale, site-specific community plays and musicals based on local, national and international history and events. His most recent, *Half a Cod a Day*, recently finished its tour at the Brighton Fringe Festival, where it was designated a 'must-see show'. Others have been staged in Gdansk and Ostrava (with Brian as dramaturg), and (as writer and lyricist) at The Philharmonic Hall Liverpool, Bromley, the Wirral, New Theatre Royal Portsmouth, Tilbury Fort, Rotherham, the Millennium Dome and South Holderness.

Prior to the Parrabbola projects, Brian's mainstream plays were produced at The Lyric Hammersmith, Haymarket Theatre Leicester, Bridge Lane Theatre London – and *The Gospel According to Judas* previously at The Questors. He was also chief writer and compiler on 200 programmes for the original *Fifteen to One* on Channel 4.

### Niall Bishop – *Father Book*

A native of the West of Ireland, this is Niall's first appearance with The Questors. Recent credits include *Largo Desolato* (Tower Theatre) and *Family Man* for Pat Pat Theatre (Dublin) which he co-wrote and directed. Niall trained at the Gaiety School of Acting as well as Dublin's renowned Focus Theatre. He is currently a student at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

### Tom Cantwell – *Cross (Younger)*

This is Tom's sixth play at The Questors having graduated from Student Group 61. Previous roles have included Antonio in *The Rover*, George in *Luca's Spoon*, Tom Stone in *The School of Night* and, most recently, Delio in *The Duchess of Malfi*.

### Anthony Curran – *The Tailor*

Anthony Curran has been an acting member since 1992 and is a graduate of Student Group 47. He has acted in parts as diverse as Mole in *The Wind in The Willows* and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*. His last production at The Questors was *ENRON*.

### John Dobson – *Cross (Older)*

John Dobson joined The Questors in 1981 and has played pretty well everything from an evil spider to a French maid and a Japanese biker in black leather. Highlights include *The Faith Healer*, *Breaking the Code*, *The Lesson* and *Dublin Carol*. In between acting, he looks after the Questors' archives.

### James Farrar – *Father Bell*

James trained with Student Group 56 graduating in 2002 and returns to The Questors with this production. Previously he appeared at The Questors in *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, *You Can't Take it With You* and *The Evolution of Esther*. He also appeared at Camden People's Theatre in *The Lesson*.

### James Goodden – *The Cardinal/Guard Hoare/Seeker*

James joined The Questors in 1987 and has now appeared in over 25 productions. Last autumn he was seen running between the Playhouse and the Studio in *House and Garden*. Previous to that his most recent appearances were in *Jeffrey Bernard is Unwell* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

### Martin Halvey – *Father Candle*

This is Martin's sixth production at The Questors, having joined in 2006 and enjoyed appearing in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Festen*, *The Alchemist*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *Three Sisters*.

### Anne Neville – *Ansty*

Anne has acted at The Questors since 1983. Parts include Matron in *Be My Baby*, Rhoda in *After October*, Grace Winslow in *The Winslow Boy*, Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*, Miss Shepherd in *The Lady in The Van*, Winnie in *Happy Days*, Maggie in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Ranyevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*, Mrs Alving in *Ghosts*, and Mother Courage.

### Phillip Harrison – *Set Designer*

Phillip recently joined The Questors and *No Fairy Tale* is his first set design here. Phillip has a Systems Engineering background and, for the past eight years that he has been living in London, has been consulting in the IT Telecommunication sector and recently started his own business.

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## Meet the Company – Wednesday 11 June

Come and meet the writer, director, cast and crew for an informal discussion in the Studio as soon as possible after the Wednesday performance.

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## Enjoyed the Show?

Let us know what you think, and connect with The Questors Theatre for updates on all upcoming productions and lots more.

Follow us [@questorstheatre](#)  and find us on [Facebook](#) 

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### **Nigel Lewis – Lighting Designer**

Nigel Lewis is Head of Lighting at The Questors, a professional lighting designer outside of The Questors and university lecturer in lighting design. He has lit many productions at The Questors including musicals, pantomime and drama. His most recent Questors production was *The Balcony*. He is thrilled to be lighting *No Fairy Tale*.

### **Francis Lloyd – Director**

Francis Lloyd directed Brian Abbott's play *The Gospel According to Judas* at The Questors, as well as *After the Dance*, *French Paste*, *Charley's Aunt*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Otherwise Engaged*, *Hobson's Choice* and *Engaged*. As an actor, he most recently appeared in *Shadowlands*. Other parts include Henry Carr in *Travesties*, Stephen in *Dealer's Choice* and Sir Robert Morton in *The Winslow Boy*.

### **Joel Schrire – Sound Designer**

Joel has been credited for sound and lighting designs on numerous productions at The Questors (most recently *House and Garden*) and some other fringe venues for over 15 years. He has also been known to apply his engineering and sailing skills to designing moving scenery and to building and operating sets.

### **Jennie Yates – Costume Designer**

Since joining The Questors in 2000, Jennie has worked on numerous productions, costuming from stock, making and designing. Her Questors productions are too numerous to mention, but recent costume design credits include *Antigone*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *It's a Wonderful Life!*, *Calendar Girls*, *Dracula – Fangs of Destiny* and *West 5 Story*.

## **Next Questors Production**

### **BLUE STOCKINGS**

**by Jessica Swale**

**12 – 19 July 2014**

**The Playhouse**

The final Questors production of the season features Questors Student Group 67 presenting a moving, comical and eye-opening story of four young women fighting for education and self-determination in 1896 Girton College, Cambridge.

## **Join Us**

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and benefit from membership:

- ✓ Half price personal tickets for Questors productions\*
- ✓ Discounted Guest tickets when you bring friends to Questors productions\*
- ✓ Children's FREE tickets<sup>†</sup>
- ✓ Opportunities to be actively involved in our productions
- ✓ Allowed to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Access to *iQ* – the members-only website [members.questors.org.uk](http://members.questors.org.uk)
- ✓ A full-colour members' magazine three times a year
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on *iQ* and email newsletter
- ✓ Monthly programme card
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

\*Reduced prices exclude certain events. <sup>†</sup>Under 18 only, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by an adult member.

**Introductory offer** – as a welcome for first-time members, get your first 12 months' membership for the price of six.

### **Getting the most from your membership**

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved front-of-house or backstage. Volunteer help is always needed for selling programmes or stewarding, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerised system. To meet members in a social setting, volunteer to help behind the Grapevine bar. Backstage staff including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, sound and light designers and operators, painters, wardrobe and costume and set designers are always welcomed; whatever your skills, we'll find a place for you. We also have courses for those wishing to direct.

The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

### **The Questors Youth Theatre – QYT**

Our Youth Theatre, QYT, runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 18. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages at weekday teatime. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! Details are online at [questors.org.uk/qyt](http://questors.org.uk/qyt).

Cover Image: Elaine Hagan

The Questors Theatre

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