

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†
- ✓ Opportunities to be actively involved in our productions
- ✓ Opportunity to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Access to **iQ** – the members-only website: members.questors.org.uk
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on **iQ** and email newsletter
- ✓ Receive the regular programme leaflet
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Special invitations, events and offers not available to the public
- ✓ Ticket reservation facility (conditions apply)
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

**Reduced prices exclude certain events. †Under 18, excludes certain events, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by the member.*

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 lighting 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

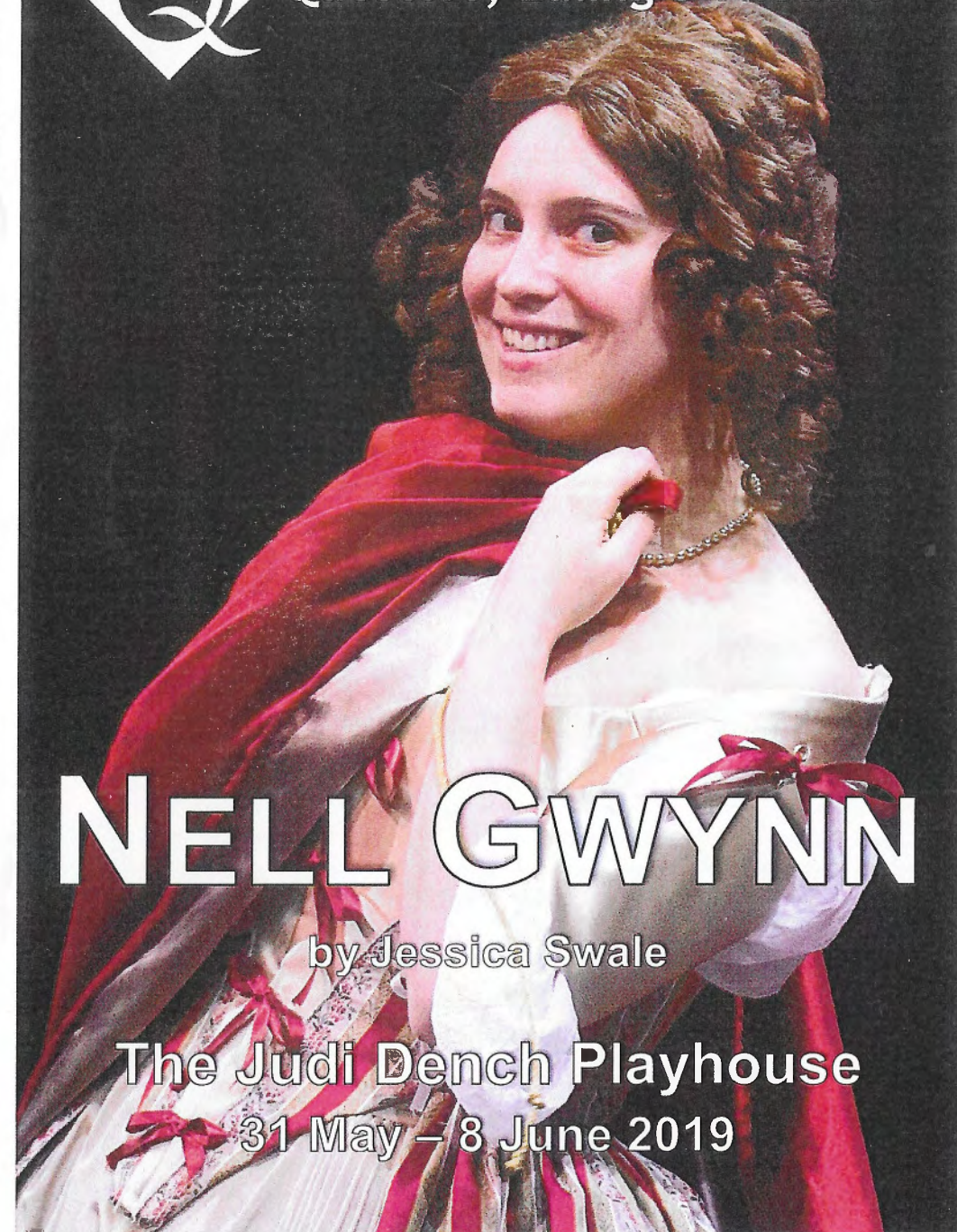
Our Youth Theatre, QYT, runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 18. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages at weekday teatime. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! Details are online at questors.org.uk/qyt.

The Questors Theatre
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ
Registered Charity No. 207516

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Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011
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Questors, Ealing's Theatre



NELL GWYNN

by Jessica Swale

The Judi Dench Playhouse

31 May – 8 June 2019

Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, hearty meals and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre meal or intermission ice-cream.

Order interval drinks before the show to beat the crowds.

Regular opening hours:
Monday to Saturday,
9:00 am to 7:30 pm

Also open before and during the interval of all Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances.

Find **Fields** on **Facebook**.



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 2019 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 – 10:30 pm (Sunday – Wednesday)

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (Thursday – Saturday)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details.

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.



image: Carla Evans

NELL GWYNN

by Jessica Swale

The Judi Dench Playhouse

31 May – 8 June 2019

NELL GWYNN – FACT AND FICTION

Almost everyone has heard of Nell Gwynn, the orange seller at Drury Lane who became an actress and eventually the mistress of King Charles II. We may have heard Charles's famous last words, "Let not poor Nelly starve". But those few facts are generally as much as anyone can say about her. I certainly couldn't have added any more until I first encountered this play.

But Jessica Swale's comic masterpiece can teach us a lot, as almost all of the main events are historical fact, even if presented in an imaginative format and an inaccurate chronology. And indeed nearly all the characters are real; the only exceptions are Ned Spiggett and Nancy, who are nevertheless entirely believable inventions.

What do we know for certain, and what is fiction? Nell was probably born in 1650, but we aren't too sure where. Both Hereford and Oxford lay claim to her, though she was certainly brought up in London, in Coal Yard Alley in Covent Garden, where her mother was a brothel-keeper. Her father died in a debtors' prison. Was Nell a prostitute? In the play she unashamedly admits she was; but given that she was selling oranges at the theatre when she was 13 and started her acting career at 14, this may be exaggeration. But she certainly knew about life in a brothel and the men who visited it.

It is true that she became an actress, and indeed a very celebrated and popular one. We must assume, as the play does, that she was supremely talented. She did have an affair with Charles Hart, but it was another three years before she met the King. In the meantime she scored a huge success as Florimel in Dryden's *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen* (1667), as well as many other plays.

By 1668 she was the royal mistress, became pregnant with her first son in 1669, and left the stage. She made a brief return to acting in 1670 but finally retired in 1671, giving birth to her second son. Thereafter she remained one of Charles's many mistresses, probably his favourite, until his death in 1685. She died two years later at the age of 37; there is no evidence that she ever returned to the stage. Her triumphant return in the play is pure imagination – in any event Dryden's *Tyrranick Love* was first performed way back in 1669.

But Nell did indeed play Valeria in *Tyrranick Love*, and the epilogue that finishes our play is the almost complete epilogue from it. There is also very good reason to believe that Nell wrote it herself, in spite of her illiteracy. That she was allowed to do that must surely be a mark of her popularity and status in the theatre.

Where Jessica Swale has really exercised her imagination is in bringing to life the relationship between Nell and the King. But even what we see has a great ring of truth about it. For an illiterate teenager to have risen as she did from her childhood in a brothel, she must have been more than a pretty face and a willing bed-fellow. Rather she must have been bursting with wit, personality, charm, talent and down-to-earth intelligence.

And that she and Charles were genuinely in love with each other must surely also be true. No other mistress lasted so long; no other was content simply to be herself rather than demand a title. And the King's famous last words are an unmistakable giveaway.

Much else in the play is also historical fact. Nell's line "I am the *Protestant whore*" is recorded as her response to a delighted crowd when they mistook her for the hugely unpopular Louise de Kérouaille. Old Ma Gwynn did indeed die drunk in a ditch, though not until many years after that event in the play. It is perhaps a measure of Nell's alienation from her family that this could happen while Nell was a wealthy mistress to the king and mother to the Earl of Burford.

The King really did make his mistress Barbara Castlemaine (described by John Evelyn as "a vulgar mannered arrogant slut") Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen, the unfortunate wife who was never able to bear Charles a legitimate heir. Even the story of the laxatives delivered to Nell's great rival Moll Davies (another of the king's mistresses) comes from historical hearsay if not truth.

Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston were members of Thomas Killigrew's company. Hart was the romantic lead, playing frequently opposite Nell Gwynn; Kynaston played mostly female roles and was described by Samuel Pepys as "The loveliest lady I ever saw in my life". Lord Arlington was an adviser in the King's Court, though probably not as high ranking as he appears in the play.

All the extracts from plays of the period that we see are genuine (though massively edited!). The scene at the opening of Act 1 is from Dryden's *The Rival Ladies* (1664); Dryden did indeed write a version of *The Tempest* called *The Enchanted Island* (1667), lifting a lot of Shakespeare's text, and giving Miranda a sister Dorinda. The play that Nancy struggles to act in is Etherege's *She Would if She Could*. But there is no record that Dryden ever wrote a play about Lady Godiva, or that Nell acted in it.

And the descendants of the characters in Nell Gwynn are still with us today – Charles had so many mistresses and illegitimate children that they create almost a roll call of the hereditary peerage. But Charles always regretted that he had no legitimate heir to become monarch after him. Interestingly that will soon come true – Prince William, Duke of Cambridge is in fact a descendant of King Charles II, through the Spencer family.

David Emmet, Director

This production has been generously sponsored by

Roger Kelly

in honour of 50 years as a Member of The Questors Theatre
and 20 years as an Honorary Life Member.

NELL GWYNN

by Jessica Swale, music by Nigel Hess

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 31 May 2019

CAST

From Cheapside

Nell Gwynn
Rose, *her sister*
Old Ma Gwynn, *their mother*

The King's Company

Thomas Killigrew, *manager*
John Dryden, *playwright*
Charles Hart, *leading actor*
Edward Kynaston, *actor of female roles*
Ned Spiggett, *trainee actor*
Nancy, *wardrobe mistress*

The Royal Court

King Charles II
Lady Barbara Castlemaine, *his mistress*
Queen Catherine of Braganza, *his Portuguese wife*
Louise de K rouaille, *his French mistress*
Lord Arlington, *foreign minister and chief adviser*
William, *attendant*
Attendant

All other parts played by members of the company

Musicians

Keyboard
Percussion

Scene

Act 1: London in the 1660s, the theatre and the Royal palace

Act 2: A good few years later

The performance will last approximately 2 hrs and 45 mins, including a 15-minute interval.

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

Nell Rose
Emily Sanctuary
Dorothy Lawson

Gareth Bevan
Tim Pemberton
David Hovatter
Julian Smith
Emre Kose
Wendy Megeney

Mike Hadjipateras
Maya Markelle
Nina Flitman
Maya Markelle
Phillip Sheahan
Kevin Sebastianpillai
Brian Marks

Graham Reid
Laurence Reid

PRODUCTION

Director David Emmet
Musical Director Graham Reid
Costume Designer Carla Evans
Lighting Designer Andrew Dixon
Sound Designer Azaldeen Mohamed
Set Design Advisor Alex Marker
Choreographer Gaia Cicolani
Stage Manager Jenny Richardson
Deputy Stage Managers Jennifer Kerr, Doug Willis
Assistant Stage Managers Dumitru Cotelea, Arabella Jacobson, Letizia Maculan, Leia Vogelle
Properties Ian Black, Bron Blake
Props Makers Toby Burbidge, Shaan Latif-Shaikh, Geoff Moore
Prompter Sue Kendrick
Rehearsal Choreographer Sara Page
Costume Makers Jane Arnold-Forster, Adina El Masry, Anne Gilmour, Anna Hadjipateras, Sue Peckitt, Nell Rose, Alison Simmons, Shobi Springer
Wardrobe Assistants Sarah Andrews, Jan Auvache, Raymond Childe, Sadie Crowder, Jean Derby, Helen Karasiewicz, Jenny Richardson, Moonika Leisson, Mary Smith, Sylvia Wall
Wigs and Make-Up Francesca Dwyer, Anna Harvey, Alex Luckhurst, Aimee Sampson, Rebecca Mattssons, Eliza Wingfield
Lighting Operators Evelina Plonyte, Andrew Quick
Lighting Riggers Roisin Tierney, Robert Walker
Sound Operators Chris de Gromoboy, Azaldeen Mohamed
Set Realisation Doug King, Rob Willin
Scenic Painters Dennis Dracup, Matthew House, Alex Marker
Get In Assistance Bernard Brady, Toby Burbidge, Bernd Gauweiler, Simon Higginson, Steve Souchon, Nigel Lawrence, Jo Perse
Photographer Carla Evans
Videographer Peter Gould, Gavin Jones
Thanks to Monique Snell, Nigel Worsley, Fengfan Zhou, Kall Kwik (Chiswick)

Biographies

Gareth Bevan – Killigrew

Gareth has been an acting member since 1998, appearing in shows such as *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and most recently *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure*. He is also a musician – singer, guitarist and bassist – and has played in the band for Questors pantos.

Nina Flitman – Queen Catherine

Nina has appeared in many productions at The Questors, with roles including Vivie in *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Sylvia in *The Pride* and Lady Macbeth in the RSC Open Stages production of *Macbeth*. She sits on the Board of Trustees, and also runs her own international theatre company Idle Discourse.

Mike Hadjipateras – King Charles

Mike joined The Questors in 2003 and has appeared in many productions, including *Doctor Faustus*, *Present Laughter*, *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, *The Seagull*, *Mary Stuart*, *All My Sons*, *The Crucible*, *Burnt by the Sun*, *Peer Gynt* and most recently *That Face*. Mike is also a history teacher at a Rudolf Steiner school.

David Hovatter – Hart

A member for over 30 years, David appeared most recently in *Rabbit Hole* and *Absent Friends*. Also a director, writer and deviser, he has created shows such *Grex*, *Max & Moritz*, *Moby Dick* and *Houdini: Upside Down and Backwards*. He will create a new show *The Dog and the Scarf* for the Studio in October.

Emre Kose – Ned

Emre was in Questors Youth Theatre, acting in *Too Fast*. At university he appeared in several productions including Neil Simon's *Rumours* and Ella Hickson's *Boys*. Back at The Questor recently he has been in Student Group 72 and worked as a teaching assistant. This is his debut as an acting member.

Dorothy Lawson – Old Ma Gwynn

After wide experience in musical theatre around the country, Dotti became an acting member in 2013, appearing in *The Ladykillers*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, *Dick Whittington*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*. Dotti also works on FoH, backstage and in the Grapevine, and is a member of the Reminiscence Roadshow team.

Maya Markelle – Lady Castlemaine / Louise de Kérouaille

Maya joined The Questors as a member of Student Group 71, playing a maid in *Trelawny of the Wells*, Susan in *Blood Sports* and Miss Mint in *Albert Make Us Laugh*. Since graduating she has played Natalie in *Multitudes* and Elle in *Doe*, and taken part in table readings for New Writing events.

Brian Marks – Attendant

Brian joined The Questors only two months ago, after changing career to become an actor. He trained at Brian Timoney's Actors Studio and made his acting debut in October 2018 on the *Corner Boys* UK Tour.

Wendy Megeney – Nancy

Wendy has acted with The Questors since the 1980s, touring to the Minack (*Tom Jones*) and Japan (*Black Comedy*). Recent performances include Mari (*The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*), Mammy (*The Cripple of Inishmaan*), Sunny (*The Exonerated*), Judy (*The Last of the Haussmans*), Molly O'Neill (*A Priest in the Family*) and Martha (*That Face*).

Tim Pemberton – Dryden

This is Tim's tenth show at The Questors. Most recently he's played Luka in *The Bear* (also at the NEATA festival in Lithuania), Sparkish in *The Country Wife* (also at the Minack in Cornwall) and Vsevolod in Peter Flannery's adaptation of *Burnt by the Sun*. In between acting, he helps with lighting.

Nell Rose – Nell Gwynn

Nell joined The Questors a year ago, playing in *The Heiress* as Marian Almond, and in a rehearsed reading of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She has previously performed in Highgate with Theatre in the Square, and with Putney Arts Theatre Company in *The Thrill of Love*, still one of her favourite roles to date.

Emily Sanctuary – Rose

Emily joined The Questors a year ago, and appeared in *Revenge is Tweet* for QExtra. This is her debut in a Questors main production. Previously she has acted in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Jumble Theatre, and in *Taking Care of Baby* and *The Lady's Not for Burning* at Leicester University.

Kevin Sebastianpillai – William

Kevin has been an active member of The Questors working backstage since 2009, and has ventured on stage for *Pygmalion*, *Twelfth Night* and the last three Christmas pantomimes, plus AppEaling's production of *Rafta Rafta* at The Questors in 2018. Previously he was part of Youth Action Theatre in Hampton Hill.

Phillip Sheahan – Lord Arlington

Phillip has been a member of The Questors since 1974, contributing to over 80 productions as an actor, director or playwright. His most recent appearance was as Mr Scoblowksi in *Daisy Pulls It Off*. Phillip has also been a contributor to PlayBack and was involved in creating and writing the highly successful *Soapsud Island*.

Julian Smith – Kynaston

Julian was an acting member in the 1990s, appearing in four productions. He rejoined a few years ago, since when he has appeared as Feste in *Twelfth Night*, The Duke in *Measure for Measure* and Clov in *Endgame*. Julian also runs the touring theatre company Teatro Unfortunato.

Gaia Cicolani – Choreographer

Gaia has trained both as a dancer (at Trinity Laban) and actor (in Questors Student Group 71). She appeared in *The Maids* and *Albert Make Us Laugh*. She was the choreographer for *Love's Labour's Lost*. She is using both skills professionally with an immersive theatre company and as a movement director.

Andrew Dixon – Lighting Designer

In 2019, Andrew will have been lighting for 60 years from amateur dramas to BBC epics. He finds them all equally exciting. His recent designs at The Questors have included *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mother Goose*, *Larkin With Women* and *The Last of the Haussmans*.

David Emmet – Director

David trained as an actor in Student Group 28, but is now known more as a director. *Nell Gwynn* is his 58th main production. Other recent productions include *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *The Pride* and *Mary Stuart*. David is also Director of Studies for the Student Group and teaches acting in the Foundation Year.

Carla Evans – Costume Designer

Carla joined The Questors in 2013 with an interest in all kinds of backstage craft. She instantly fell in love with the workshop and wardrobe, and has since worked on over 40 productions as a costume-maker, set designer, photographer and poster illustrator. Her most recent designs include the set for *Taking Sides* and costumes for *Sleeping Beauty*.

Alex Marker – Set Design Advisor

Alex joined The Questors in 1988 and currently serves as Artistic Director and the Director of Questors Youth Theatre. He has designed over 150 productions for many venues ranging from West End, regional, touring, site specific, fringe and, of course, The Questors, where he has designed most of the QYT productions over the last 22 years. www.alexmarker.com.

Azaldean Mohamed – Sound Designer

Azaldean joined The Questors in 2018 as a member of Young Studio, and acted recently in *Find Me*. As well as training in acting, he is involved in the sound department. He operated on *Absent Friends* and *The 39 Steps*; this is his first production as a sound designer.

Graham Reid – Musical Director / Musician

Graham is a graduate in music from Edinburgh University, and joined The Questors in 2015, since when he has been a musical director, composer, arranger and pianist on several productions, including *Red Peppers*, *The Country Wife*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Lady Susan*, *Animal Farm* and *Daisy Pulls It Off*.

Laurence Reid – Musician

Laurence is a percussionist who first worked with The Questors in 2015. He has played in *Red Peppers*, *The Country Wife* and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The Questors – The Future

Help to make The Questors an even better place! Donations and bequests are continuing to contribute to the life of this unique theatre. For instance, a generous donation made possible a recent training programme for young ESOL students (English for Speakers of Other Languages), and ambitious work on the fabric of the site is ongoing. This is your theatre and the theatre of future generations of playgoers and participants. Donate now or in your will, anonymously if you prefer. Andrea Bath, our Executive Director (020 8567 0011), will answer any enquiries in confidence. Or go to questors.org.uk/giving to see ways in which you can support The Questors.

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Next at The Questors

DI AND VIV AND ROSE by Amelia Bullmore

14 – 22 June 2019

The Studio

One is promiscuous. One focuses on her studies. One is sporty and jovial. They couldn't be more different, but when Di, Viv and Rose meet at university, they join forces to discover that life together can be fun and intense. In this heartfelt story laced with humour and spanning a course of 27 years, the three women experience love, loss and change as they learn what true friendship means.

CHARLEY'S AUNT by Brandon Thomas

13 – 20 July 2019

The Judi Dench Playhouse

The second-year Questors Student Group presents this classic comedy of young love, mistaken identity and one dear old lady. In late Victorian England, Oxford students Jack and Charley press their amateur acting chum, Babbs, into impersonating Charley's wealthy aunt and to act as chaperone whilst they entertain their lady friends, Kitty and Amy. But when the real aunt turns up, confusion and chaos ensues.