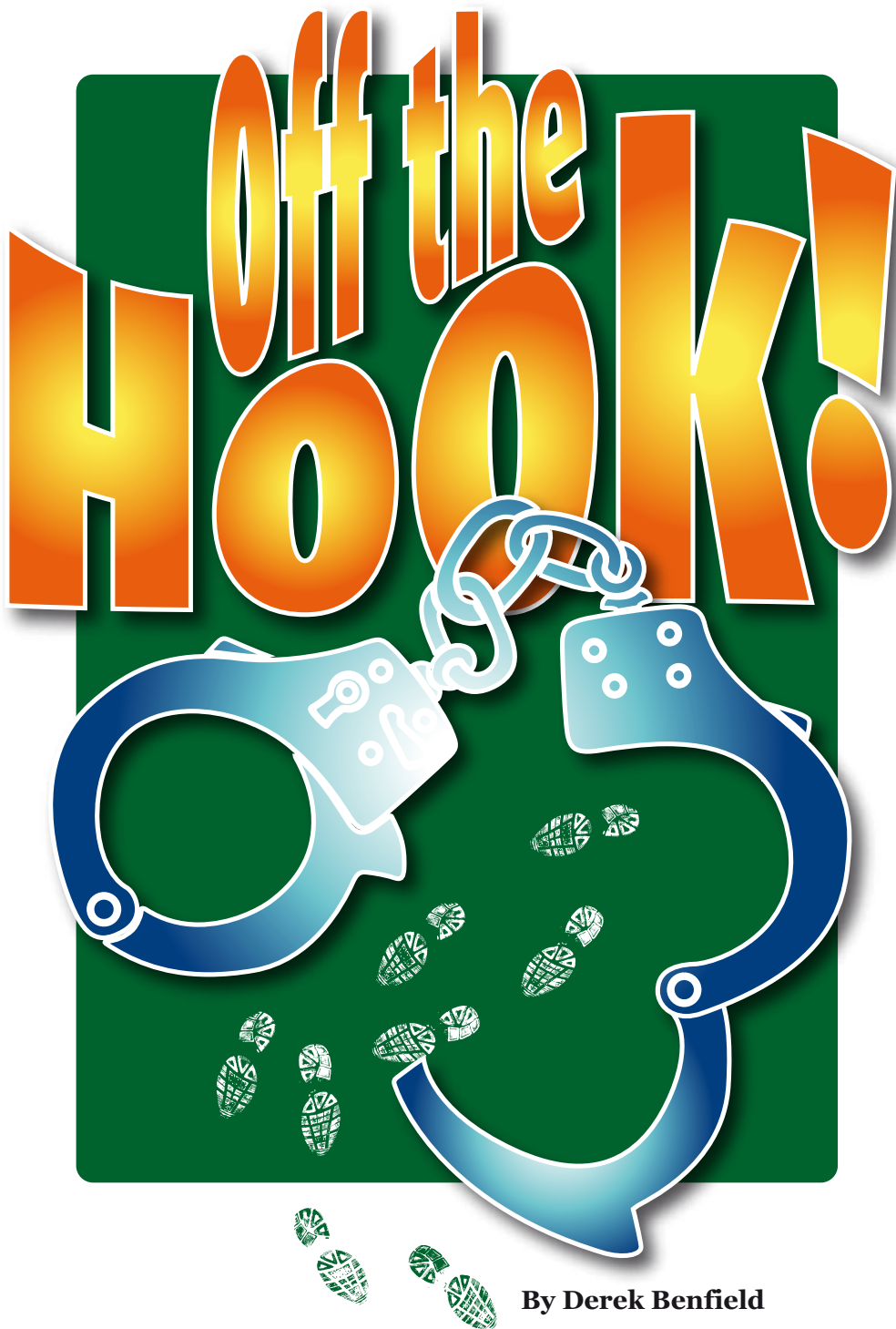


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Royal Shakespeare Society's Open Stages Project.

Am-Dram groups around the UK are invited to do 'something new' related to Shakespeare. The production will be assisted in a small way by the RSC and by its regional partners, in our case Belfast's Lyric Theatre.

In 2012 the RSC are holding a World Festival of Shakespeare and they intend to invite one company from each of the participating regions to perform their work in Stratford-on-Avon in July 2012.



Bart Players have teamed up with ***The Dublin Shakespeare Society*** to devise a new production as part of the Open Stages project. The Barts team is headed by James Burns, Lorna Hastings and Barney Gadd with additional input from some of the usual suspects. ***The Shakes*** regularly put on a full Shakespeare work in the Teachers Centre in Parnell Square in Dublin along with an interesting mix of other works and rehearsed readings.

The Shakes have visited Belfast several times and are very impressed with what we in Barts have and the potential to create a really exciting Shakespeare experience of interest and enjoyment to our regular audience, schools and beyond.



Whilst nothing is as yet cast in stone we are hoping that the Belfast production will take place at the end of January/ start of February 2012, squeezed in between the panto and the festival play followed by a Dublin performance a week later. If the show is as successful as we anticipate we may pencil in some further dates, e.g. May or June but it is early days yet. Without giving too much away, we are looking at performing several scenes from different plays in a selection of 'spaces' inviting the audience to follow the action and experience Shakespeare in an intimate and exciting

way – watch this space Want to be involved? contact Barney, **07801 389 859** or **barneygadd@yahoo.com**



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A Note from The Rector

Welcome to St. Bartholomew's Church Hall this evening! I do hope you enjoy this production of 'Off The Hook'.

At St. Bart's we gladly embrace the arts, reckoning they are all part of the incredibly rich tapestry of human life and experience that come to us as gifts from God. Alongside drama comes music, and one of my joys is singing with the choir on Sunday mornings as our Musical Director John McDonald teaches us new music, including wonderful offerings from the pens of composers as widely separated in time and style as John Rutter, William Harris, Anton Bruckner, Johannes Eccart and Giuseppe Pitoni.

And if what I have said above prompts you to want to know more about St. Bartholomew's and what makes us tick, then there's more information at: **<http://www.stbartholomew.connor.anglican.org>** or come along and join us one Sunday!

One of the major challenges facing us at present is raising the funds for a new roof on the church. We have worked hard on a submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund, but so far they have not found it possible to give us money for this worthy cause. So we are especially grateful for all the support that people are able to give to various fund-raising events that we put on from time to time.

Enjoy yourselves this evening!

Yours (with a slight grin)

Ron Elsdon (Rector)



Off The Hook!

By Derek Benfield

CAST:

in order of appearance...

Nora Catchpole	Gail Murphy
Edna (her sister)	Pat Rennix
Fred Baxter	Andrew Devonshire
Major Catchpole	Stewart Greer
Charlie Mullins	Michael Fee
Harold Spook	Norman Turkington
Mrs Fletcher-Brewer	Alice Kyle
Carol (her daughter)	Lorna-Jayne Fletcher
Polly	Justine Henderson
Mrs Parkinson	Anne Maitland

PRODUCER & DIRECTOR:
Brendan Fegan



Michael Fee has been with Bart's for a few years, with various parts in panto and festival plays as well as producing superb graphics for our posters and winter tickets as well as collaborating with his better half Emma to get our website up and running. See www.bartplayers.co.uk Last summer he played the rather precious civil servant Benjamin Tapeworth in 'Strike Happy' but is equally at home as the hapless criminal Charlie Mullins

Lorna-Jayne Fletcher is another regular at Bart's Players having played Percy French's young wife in 'Percy', a saucy Russian spy in our 2009 summer theatre, a saucy music hall artiste in 'Strike Happy' and several parts including a WWII mum in 'Heil Belfast' and here is the romantic interest of Charlie Mullins.



Andrew Devonshire has acted and directed with the Hillsborough Players and has appeared in several of our summer shows and festival plays including the scheming George Seagar in last summer's 'Strike Happy'. However his nadir must surely have been as one of the persuasively Ugly Sisters in our recent production of 'Cinderella.'

Justine Henderson - has worked with the Crescent Arts Centre acting classes and made her debut with Barts in last year's Cinderella. She is really enjoying developing a cockney accent for the role of Polly Parkinson and hopes to tread the boards in many more Bart Players productions.



Norman Turkington – as a former professional actor Norman appeared in theatre and television throughout the United Kingdom before returning to civvy street and Belfast to raise his family. He joined Bart Players some eight years ago and has been involved with most of their shows since then and particularly enjoys the summer season.. Norman's recent roles have included Henry Hornett in the "Sailor" plays, Toad in "Wind in the Willows", Humphrey Podmore in "Running Riot" and his disturbingly realistic portrayal of an Ugly Sister in 'Cinderella'





Gail Murphy –Gail joined Barts in March of this year. With over 15 years experience in Comedy with Dunmurry Players performing in the group Theatre Belfast and Portrush Summer Theatre .

Stewart Greer –Stewart joined us a few years ago acting in ‘The Big House’, ‘The Wind in The Willows’ and ‘Busybody’. and as a slow-witted Palace Flunkey in Cinderella. Now Stewart plays Major Catchpole, the hotel manager, somewhere between Basil Fawlty and Mr Magoo



Anne Maitland – Ann has been a stalwart of many Bart productions and excelled as Mrs Hornett in ‘Sailor Beware’ in 2006 and ‘Watch it Sailor’ in 2007’ but is slightly concerned that playing a ‘grumpy old woman’ like Mrs Parkinson just might see her typecast. mmm.....

Pat Rennix a member of Bart Players since 2008 and involved in productions of Busybody by Jack Popplewell as Marion Selby, Running Riot by Derek Benfield as Agnes Podmore, Heil Belfast by David Sloan, Clara Hellewell in ‘Strike Happy’ and Cinderella the Pantomime. Also a member of Hillsborough Drama Group.



Alice Kyle – Alice is making her debut with Barts after previously spending 30 years with Dunmurry Players. She played numerous leading character roles in most of their productions over that period including Summer Theatre and Group Theatre. She also appeared in “The Auction in Killybuck” at the Grand Opera House.

Brendan Fegan has played several roles from Carnoustie in ‘Sailor Beware’ to the German officer in ‘Heil Belfast’. His first toe dip into directing was with 2009’s offering ‘Running Riot’ (also by Derek Benfield) followed by last year’s hit, ‘Strike Happy’ and he hopes for a hat-trick of successes with this show.



Derek Benfield, (1927 – 2009)

Derek Benfield successfully combined the career of a character actor with that of a prolific boulevard playwright.

Most familiar from

appearances on television

in *The Brothers* (1972-76)

and *Hetty Wainthropp*

Investigates (1996-98), the

diminutive, balding and often

moustachioed Benfield frequently played fathers and members of what used to be called “the lower orders”.



Benfield was born in Bradford, where his father was a journalist. Many of his later roles brought out his northern background, as did his plays, such as *Down to Brass Tacks* (1962). After studying at Bingley grammar school, he did some early performing on forces radio during wartime service in the army, before acting training at Rada.

Starting with *The Young in Heart* (1953), Benfield wrote more than 30 stage plays. Most were light comedies, often trading on marital misunderstandings, with occasional diversions such as *Murder for the Asking* (1966). Such titles as *Post Horn Gallop* (1964), *A Bird in the Hand* (1973) and *Touch and Go* (1982) clearly showed the influence of Brian Rix, in whose company Benfield had made his acting debut, in Yorkshire in 1948. They were popular in regional venues and with amateur dramatic companies, and were often performed abroad.

Beyond a Joke (1979), starring Arthur Lowe, had its premiere at the Shanklin Theatre on the Isle of Wight. *Bedside Manners*, starring John Inman, had a tour in 1988, and Benfield was still having productions staged in the new millennium.

Bart Players enjoyed great success with his comedy ‘Running Riot’ in 2008 and also 2009 for the summer theatre.

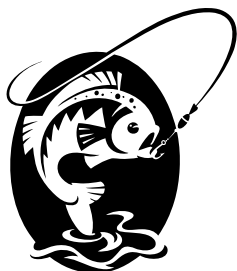
Refurbishment of Changing Rooms

Our audiences can hardly be aware that we have had an ongoing problem with a leaking roof to our dressing rooms in the Canon Lindsay Hall and together with poor insulation to the windows and walls this has resulted in somewhat miserable conditions for our cast pulling on their costumes – especially in the middle of winter!



However the Select Vestry are undertaking a review of the whole hall with a view to improving both the fabric of the building and the experience of the users. To this end they have secured a roughly 2/3rd grant from Big Lottery – (Energy Efficient Venues) to allow us the start the first phase by replacing the roof over the single storey changing rooms and this work will start right away.

You can help by coming to our shows and bringing your friends! - and then we can get on with Phase II



The Bart Players

THANKS

We wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks, the kind help and assistance we have received from so many sources in connection with all aspects of this production.

In particular we mention:

Our Advertisers,
J J Tohill

81st Scouts & Beavers

Ivan Martin – U105

Gerry Anderson, BBC

Arts Council of N. Ireland

. . . . and others too numerous to mention, including many friends in other
Am-Dram Societies

oOo

Bart Players Pantomime

Following the tremendous success of ‘Cinderella’ last year Barts are again fortunate to have persuaded Simon Pyper to direct ‘**Aladdin**’. The play will be performed at Barts on 30th November to 3rd December 2011

Readings for this panto:

Tues 20th and Thurs 22nd Sept. at 8.00 pm

Those interested in reading for a part or to simply enjoy the craic at a reading are warmly invited to come along on either or both of these dates.

Anyone interested in being involved in one of Belfast’s livliest Drama Groups contact: **barneygadd@yahoo.com** or mob: **07801 389 859**

Finally: ***“Every joke is a tiny revolution,” thought George Orwell.
“Whatever destroys dignity, and brings down the mighty from
their seats, preferably with a bump, is funny.”***

www.bartplayers.co.uk