

Calendar Girls by Tim Firth
Directed by David Williams

Setting:

The play is set in Yorkshire, England in 1999.

Synopsis:

When cancer affects the small Yorkshire village of Knapely, the ladies of the local Women's Institute are determined to strike back. To raise funds, they publish their own nude calendar, breaking convention, shattering preconceptions and thrusting themselves into the media spotlight. Can friendships forged over many years survive instant success?

Set in 1999 and based on actual events, this play is an infectious celebration of life, driven by a finely balanced mix of cheeky humour and pathos.

Cast:

| | | | |
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| Chris | You want Chris at your party. She will talk to people she doesn't know, find things to say to fill silences and generate laughter. Part of this is because Chris is at home in crowds, holding court, being the centre of attention. Without Chris in her life, Annie would be better behaved, her life less fun. Together they are like naughty school girls. | 40s – 50s <i>Yorkshire accent</i> | <i>some singing required</i> |
| Annie | Annie will join in mischief but is at heart more conformist and less confrontational than Chris. After Chris has put a waiter's back-up in a restaurant, Annie will go in and pour calm. The mischievousness that Chris elicits saves Annie from being a saint. She has enough edge to be interesting, and enough salt not to be too sweet. | 40s – 50s <i>Yorkshire accent</i> | <i>singing required</i> |
| Cora | Cora's past is the most eclectic, her horizons broadened by having gone to college. This caused a tectonic shift with her parochial parents. She came back to them pregnant and 'tail between the legs', but Cora has too much native resilience to be downtrodden. She is the joker in the pack but never plays the fool. Her wit is deadpan. It raises laughter in others but rarely in herself. Her relationship with her daughter is more akin to that between Chris and Annie. | around 40 <i>English accent</i> | <i>singing and some piano playing required</i> |
| Jessie | Get on the right side of Jessie as a teacher and she'll be the teacher you remember for life. Get on the wrong side and you will regret every waking hour. A lover of life, Jessie doesn't bother with cosmetics — her elixir of life is bravery. Jessie goes on roller-coasters. Her husband has been with her a long time and is rarely surprised by her actions. Jessie bothers about grammar and will correct stall-holders regarding their abuse of the apostrophe "s". | 60s – 70s <i>British accent</i> | <i>singing required</i> |
| Celia | The fact that Celia is in the WI is the greatest justification of it's existence. A woman more at home in a department store than a church hall, she always feels like she's drifted in from another world. Which she has. She is particularly enamoured of Jessie, and despite the fact Jessie has very little time for the Celia's of this world, there is a rebelliousness in Celia to which Jessie responds. | 35 – 50s <i>British accent</i> | <i>singing required</i> |
| Ruth | Ruth's journey is from the false self-confidence of the emotionally abused to the genuine self-confidence of the woman happy in her own skin. Ruth is eager to please but not a rag doll, and despite being Marie's right-hand woman she is desperate to be the cartilage in the spine of the WI and keep everyone happy. She has a spine herself — if she was too wet, no-one would want her around. But they do, and they feel protective of her because they sense there is | 40s – 50s <i>British accent,</i> | <i>so me singing required</i> |

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| | something better in Ruth than her life is letting out | | |
| Marie | Marie the stern chairwoman of the WI, has gradually built the current 'Marie' around herself over the years as a defence mechanism. She went to her Oz, Cheshire, and found Oz didn't want her. She came back scorched. The WI is a trophy to her, which justifies her entire existence. There is a lingering part of Marie that would love to be on that calendar. | 40s – 50s <i>English accent</i> | <i>singing required</i> |
| John | Annie's husband John is a human sunflower. Not a saint. Not a hero. Just the kind of man you'd want in your car when crossing Australia. When he dies it feels like someone somewhere turned a light off. | 40s – 50s <i>Yorkshire accent</i> | |
| Rod | You have to be a certain kind of guy to stick with Chris and Rod loves it. He can give back what he gets, and has a deadpan humour which has always made Chris laugh. He drinks a lot but never so much as to have a problem. He would work every hour to make his shop a success. John was his mate, even though the relationship was originally channeled through their wives. | 40s – 50s <i>Yorkshire accent</i> | |
| Lawrence | Hesitant without being nerdy, Lawrence is a shy young man with enough wit to make a joke and enough spirit in him to turn up at the WI hall in the first place. When he arranges the shots, he is close to female nudity but sees only the photo. | 20s <i>Yorkshire accent</i> | |
| Lady Cravenshire | Lady Cravenshire doesn't mean to be so patronising but the WI women seem from another world. The world of her estate workers. | 30s – 70s <i>English accent</i> | |
| Elaine | Elaine, the beautician from the local spa, really doesn't mean to be so patronising. But Jessie seems to be from another world. The world of her Gran. | 20s | |
| Liam | Liam would like to be directing other things than photoshoots for washing powder. He's not so unprofessional as to let it show, but we can sense a slight weariness at having to deal with these women. There's a resigned patience to his actions and each smile he makes we feel is professional. | 20s – 50s | |
| Brenda | Brenda is a regular speaker on the WI circuit but somehow doesn't seem to click with the Knapeley crowd. | 20s – 70s | |

Auditions (by appointment only) – Tuesday, November 27th

Rehearsals will be:

Tuesdays 8pm-10.30pm

Thursdays 8.30pm-10.30pm

Commencing January 29th (TBC)

Dress Rehearsals:

Tuesday 30th April and Wednesday 1st May

Performances:

Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th, Thursday 9th, Friday 10th May at 8pm

Saturday 11th May at 2pm.