**CALENDAR GIRLS**

***Audition Notes***

When Annie’s husband dies of leukaemia, she and best friend Chris resolve to raise money for a new settee in the local hospital waiting room. They manage to persuade four fellow Women’s Institute members, Cora, Celia, Ruth and Jessie to pose nude for an “alternative calendar” with a little help from hospital porter and amateur photographer Lawrence. The news spreads like wild-fire and hordes of press descend on their small village in the Yorkshire Dales. The calendar is a huge success, but the new found fame puts a severe strain on the friendship of Chris and Annie.

This is an extremely funny and very moving play, that will make the audiences laugh till they cry and make then just make them cry.

A play about a wonderful group of women, that will give you ladies of the Settlement some of the best lines you will ever get. Some wonderful scenes of ensemble acting that will stretch you and develop your skills. There are many parts available all with wonderful lines and scenes.

I appreciate that some of you will have anxieties about parts of the play, but don’t let that put you off, although the play is set in Yorkshire, accents are not a must. The women in reality were from all over the country, much like the members of the Settlement Players.

Joking apart, the art of the plays choreography of the “nude” scenes lies like a fan dance in what is withheld. Should anyone see anything they shouldn’t, the whole scene will be destroyed and for each character involved in the photos, we are talking about 6 seconds of a 2 hour show. I will not be in the closed stage area when the scene is rehearsed and I am hoping to have an all female backstage crew, not to mention some industrial heating.

**The Ladies:**

**Chris**

You want her at you party, she will talk to anyone, talk to fill a silence. Chris loves a crowd, being the centre of attention. Without Chris, Annie would be better behaved but life would be less fun.

**Annie**

She will join in mischief, but at heart is more conformist and less confrontational than Chris. Annie will clam the chaos caused by Chris, but is not a saint. Enough edge to be interesting and enough salt to be not too sweet.

**Cora**

Is the lady with a past, the joker in the pack. A rebel, who went to college on a motorcycle and came back pregnant. Defeated but not downtrodden, a dry wit that makes others laugh but not herself. A single mother. NB. Cora needs to be able to sing and ideally a rudimentary piano player.

**Jessie**

A retired teacher with a zest for life. Get on the right side of her, she’ll be a teacher you remember all your life, the wrong side and you will regret it. She doesn’t bother with cosmetics but she does bother with grammar, especially the incorrect use of the apostrophe.

**Celia**

That she is a member of the WI is a credit to the WI, for Celia is more at home shopping and doing lunch, than listening to lectures in a church hall. A great friend of Jessie, you wouldn’t normally have the time of day for a Celia, but she responds to Celia’s rebellious streak.

**Ruth**

She makes a journey from the downtrodden and emotionally abused to the self confidence of a woman happy in her own skin. She is eager to please, and right hand woman to Marie, but not too wet or no one would want her around. But they do, as she has a warmth to her, there is more there than she is willing to show.

**Marie**

She has gradually built the current “Marie” around herself as defence mechanism. She has been to Oz and Cheshire and come back scorched. The WI is her trophy and justifies her existence. A part of Marie would love to have been in the calendar.

**Lady Cravenshire (age not important, only 1 scene)**

She doesn’t mean to patronise, but these WI women are from another world, of world of estate workers.

**Elaine (younger part, only 1 scene)**

She doesn’t mean to patronise, but Jessie seems to be from another world, a world of her gran.

**Brenda (older part, 1 short scene)**

A visiting lecturer at the WI meeting, talking on the fascinating subject of Broccolli

**The Guys**

**John (Annie’s husband, ideally actor will need to shave head)**

A human sunflower but not a saint. Not a hero but a guy you would want to drive across America with.

**Rod (Chris’s husband)**

You need a thick skin to be married to Chris and he loves it and her. He gives as good as he gets and will always make Chris laugh. He drinks a lot but not so its a problem. Would work every hour to make his flower shop a success.

**Lawrence (The photographer)**

Young, hesitant but not nerdy. Shy but enough wit to make a joke and enough spirit to turn up and the WI in the first place. He will be there for the photos but sees only the photo.

**Liam (TV director – 1 scene)**

He would much rather be directing anything other than a commercial for washing powders. He’s a professional so doesn’t show it but we get a sense of the weariness.

I have intentionally not mentioned ages, because they are not as important as getting a balance and fitting each of you to the right character. I have no preconceived ideas for any role it is all down to the audition. This is mostly an ensemble piece, so most of the ladies will be needed at all rehearsals.

Cliff

**DATES OF PERFORMANCE : November 14th to 16th**