

Forum's Farndale ladies set for Murder Mystery

Contributed by Barrie Penfold
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Forum Players spring show is The Farndale Avenue Townswomen's Guild Amateur Dramatic Society's Murder Mystery. If you've been to a Farndale show you will know that giggles and hysterical laughter are compulsory - and that's from the audience. The cast, of course, take it very seriously.

The Farndale Avenue Townswomen's Guild is made up of ladies who will rise to and take on a challenge. Although in this case their Amateur Dramatic Society may have bitten off more than they can chew with a plot and a script that would defy the wit of Sherlock Holmes to solve.

The show should be a good night out for anyone who enjoys slapstick, is happy to laugh out loud and who loves the escapism in watching other people's problems unfold before your eyes. If any in the audience see people from their local clubs and societies in the Guild that is, of course, entirely coincidental.

Here in rehearsal are three of the four Farndale ladies and their stage manager. From the left Dave Fisk is Inspector O'Reilly, Ros Bartlett is dressed for her role as the butler but also doubles as Colonel King. Sam Higgins is the haughty Daphne Bishop while Emily Plumridge goes from playing various members of the Bishop family to a French maid and even an elderly solicitor.

The four ladies in the Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society are a force to be reckoned with. The sheer scale of their ambition in mounting "Murder at Checkmate Manor", is only matched by their overwhelming confidence in their abilities to master all 14, yes 14, parts!

David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr have written ten Farndale plays starting in 1976 with the ladies' version of "Macbeth" for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This murder mystery is the third of the series. The Farndale ladies are known and loved worldwide. Forum's show is produced by Brenda Phelps who trod the boards in the two previous Farndale shows in 1991 and 1994.

Yes, this is the chair with the broken back as Emily Plumridge finds out to her cost. Removing the back is Ros Barlett in her butler role.

The play is set in the drawing room of Checkmate Manor. The family gathers for the reading of the will of the late Sir

Reginald Bishop. However, someone else has designs on the Checkmate millions, and will stop at nothing to get them. A string of grisly murders follow, where everyone has a motive and everyone is a suspect in a classic whodunit farce.

Show dates are Thursday 17 May to Saturday 19 May nightly in the Centre Theatre at 8pm. There will be the usual free performance for senior citizens on Wednesday 16 May at 8pm. Ticket prices are £9 adults and £7 concessions. Box office is in the library or ring 01628 52329, email leigh@forumplayers.com