



Plays written by Linda Messham **(a member of the Congleton group) with details of** **how to hire.**

1. Ladies only eat one biscuit, 10 parts

The scene is the living room in an ordinary suburban house. The occasion is a meeting of a local women's group. A speaker has been booked for the evening and ten members are looking forward to hearing her talk.

Upstairs, a small boy has been watching as the ladies arrive. He has counted them carefully. He wants to know how many chocolate biscuits will be left for him. He can work it out because he knows that "Ladies only eat one biscuit."

Downstairs the meeting is definitely not going to plan.....

2. Our own Miss Bertram, 12 parts

The play takes place late on a Sunday afternoon in the lounge of a small hotel. The guests are all old girls of St Hilda's, a prestigious local school. They have spent the weekend at a school reunion.

The reunion finished with a talk by Felicity Bertram, a famous singer and former music teacher at the school. The talk was inspirational and finished with everyone joining in a rousing song. Everyone left the school "on a high" with the music still ringing in their ears.

Most of the people went home but a few are staying an extra night at the hotel intending to travel home in the morning. They are in the lounge looking forward to a cup of tea and a relaxing evening.....

3. False Alarm, 10 parts.

It is Saturday morning in a small hotel. The hotel guests are on an organised tour visiting art galleries and museums in and around London. They are accompanied by their tour guide.

The play starts around 5.00am. A fire alarm bell is ringing. The hotel manager is escorting the guests back into the hotel lounge after they have evacuated the building. They have been told to wait there while the fire fighters complete their search of the building. It is just routine, soon they will be able to return to their rooms. Or will they?

4. The Semitones, 10 parts

The action takes place in a coffee bar of a motorway service station. There are settees and chairs round a low table. Chloe, the leader of a close harmony singing group, is sitting reading. Her group, The Semitones, are on their way home after taking part in a Sweet Adeline competition. (Sweet Adeline competitions are the female equivalent of Barber Shop contests). The group were disappointed to have come second.

They have stopped for a short break at the service station and agreed to meet up in the coffee bar before continuing their journey. Will they get away on time or will they be held up by unforeseen events?

5. Treasure Trail, 10 parts.

The scene is the meeting room of a village hall. A treasure trail has been taking place on a route starting at the village school and ending at the village hall for refreshments.

Heidi, one of the organisers, is sitting at a table marking some of the entry forms. The event is drawing to a close so, one or two at a time, the rest of the organising committee finish their jobs and join her. Everyone is pleased that their first event has been such a resounding success.

In a few minutes, when the last two finish putting away the tables and chairs, everyone will be able to go home, tired but happy.

That is unless something unexpected happens.....

6. The show must go on, 10 parts

The action takes place in the Green Room of a small repertory theatre. It is towards the end of Act 1 of the latest play being staged by the Soames-Abbott Theatre Company, a small professional theatre group.

When the curtains close for the interval, the actors come off stage and gather in the Green Room for a well-earned rest. They complain that the heating system is not working. But before the end of the interval, they have far more serious things to worry about....

7. Cherry Trees, 11 parts.

The action takes place in one of the residents' lounges of Cherry Trees, a privately owned residential and nursing home. This lounge is for the use of the "bed and board" residents who enjoy being looked after but do not require any medical care.

For them, Cherry Trees is just like a four-star hotel with the advantage that, should they develop any medical needs, they will be cared for.

The play opens on a Tuesday morning with two of the residents sitting in the lounge.

Cherry Trees is usually a quiet, restful place but soon the peace is disturbed by a series of strange events. When there is a murder on the premises, the sharp-witted residents decide it is down to them to solve the crime.

8. A most Bizarre Case, 11 parts

Mr Mitchell, the head teacher of Ashfield Primary School, is in his office with his "Do not disturb" sign lit up. The teaching staff are sitting waiting for him to start a staff meeting. Their patience is wearing thin, they all have better things to do with their time. What can he be doing?

They don't find out until the next day when they become involved in a most bizarre case.

9. The Mad Professor, 11 parts.

The action takes place at Preston railway station. The train to Glasgow has been terminated at the station because an incident further north has blocked the line. All the passengers on the train have been told to disembark, but passengers from carriage K have additional instructions to assemble in the staff rest room on platform 3.

Why have the passengers from carriage K been singled out? What has an incident further north to do with them? They are soon to find out!

10. The Walking group, 11 parts

The play is set at Fellside, a country hotel in the Lake District. Among the guests are members of a guided walking group and Dot, their leader. The itinerary for the group includes several days walking on the local fells interspersed with free days to visit local tourist attractions. On the first evening some of the guests encounter an

attraction of a different kind - a tall, charming Irish man who seems to be central to the mystery which gradually unfolds.

11. Ad Hoc, 11 parts

The play is set in a small-town community centre. It is evening and people are arriving for a pop concert being put on in aid of a local hospice. Entertainment for the evening is provided by the band Ad Hoc. The band members have finished setting up and are assembling in a backstage room waiting until it is time for the concert to begin. They are excited as this is their first gig - but will it turn out to be their last?

12. Just a check up, 10 parts (new play available for hire from 17 March)

The play begins in the waiting room of The Crescent Dental Practice. Rose, one of the dentists, is standing by the receptionist's desk. She has just put the phone down.

The day has begun badly. There is an outbreak of flu in the town and one after another, the other members of staff have rung in to say they are too ill to work. Unfortunately, Rose has managed to find just one locum hygienist and a temporary receptionist, but no dental nurses are available. As long as it's just a check up, she can manage to see to some of her own patients. All the other appointments will have to be cancelled.

It will be a day like no other.

Linda donates the money raised to charities supporting third world countries. In 2024 Linda raised £1140, which was donated to [Médecins Sans Frontier – Doctors Without Borders](#) who will use it to help people affected by conflict and natural disasters, having access to surgery and medical care.

Last year's donation brings the total directly raised from hiring the plays to just over £13,140. Most years Linda has managed to get matched funding which means the total received by the third world charities she supports is now over £22,000. NWR groups continuing to hire the plays makes this possible. She says "There are some wonderful groups who have supported me since the start and have done all eleven plays – number 12 is now available. Thank you again for your part in making the donations to charity possible".

HOW TO HIRE A PLAY

Step one – make a provisional booking

Email me lmessham@googlemail.com with the date you want the play and, if it is available, I will make a provisional booking.

Please send an alternative date in case the first is booked up.

When I receive your payment, your booking will become definite. I can hold provisional bookings for ten days, but no longer as other groups may want the same date.

Step two – send a BACS payment to confirm the booking

The hire charge for the plays is £15 for NWR groups, other groups £20

Here are the details for bank transfer: -

Account name: Mrs Linda Messham.

Sort code: 40-18-09

Account number: 71009214

Please add your name and group name so I can identify the payment.

Also, please email me to let me know you have made the payment and include your address for posting.

Step three – I send you an email containing the organiser's information

Well in advance of your play evening, I will email the organiser's information so you can familiarise yourself with the instructions and sort out the parts.

The email will contain instructions for the organiser, a character list with brief description of each part, costume suggestions and details of any props that are needed.

Step four – I email to say the play pack has been posted

This email will contain a contents list. When the parcel arrives, please check that everything is there.

It will also have the "posting on" address.

Step five – you receive the play pack

The play pack will arrive a few days in advance of your meeting – please let me know when it has arrived. *If you want to take part in the play, do not read the scripts in advance of the meeting.*

Step six – you do the play and post it to the next group (or back to me) as directed in step four

Please post the parcel the day after the play evening.