



STAGE TWO  
DOWNHAM

A photograph of three women in period costumes, likely from the play 'Three Sisters'. They are standing in a dark setting, possibly a stage. The woman on the left is wearing a dark blue dress with a white collar. The woman in the middle is wearing a green dress with a white collar. The woman on the right is wearing a dark blue dress with a white collar. They are all looking towards the camera.

# WE ARE THREE SISTERS

BY BLAKE MORRISON

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At Downham Village Hall

27th to 30th November 2024

*Programme by donation*

**NODA**  
For every stage

## Notes from our Director



It is difficult to imagine the pretty Yorkshire village of Haworth as an overcrowded, industrial area with dreadful unsanitary conditions and a life expectancy of only 25years!

This is where our Three Sisters lived and wrote most of their novels. Their story is amazing! Not expecting women's novels to be published they even wrote under male pseudonyms.

I chose this play because it is a portrait of determination and imagination. Charlotte, the oldest, is the mother figure to her two sisters and author of Jane Eyre. Emily, the shy sister, wrote Wuthering Heights and Anne the youngest sister, who died at the age of 29years wrote *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* – all three sisters wrote while sat round a table in the parsonage after Parson Patrick, had gone to bed! Mother had died after Anne was born and dear Tabitha, the housekeeper, cared for them all. Brother Branwell was also a talented artist and poet but sadly became an aggressive addict. Visitors to the parsonage came and went but all valued this special family.

We have a cast of new, returning and 'old' members of Stage Two and as the director it has been a privilege to work with them. My thanks to everyone who has helped in any way with this production and to you all for coming to see, what I hope, will be an enjoyable experience.

**Fran Osborne**  
*Director*



I directed my first play for Stage Two Downham in 1999 with *The Village Fete*, and I am so proud to still be a member of this friendly, talented, supportive, entertaining - I could go on - group of people!

Over the years we have chosen a range of plays from comedies to mysteries to dramas and this time we hope you will enjoy a historical drama about the Brontë Sisters. A peep into a very talented family, but not without their problems.

*All action takes place in The Parsonage at Haworth*

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## **Act 1**

January 17th - Anne's birthday

## **Act 2**

Later that evening

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## **Interval**

*20 minutes, during which refreshments will be available*

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## **Act 3**

After a storm

## **Act 4**

Upon their return

## **Act 5**

Farewell

## Andrea Cawley

*Charlotte Brontë*

Andrea is back on stage after a break of nearly 10 years, and recently appeared in *A Bunch of Amateurs* with Burnley Garrick.

Previous productions with Stage Two include *Flare Path*, *The Ghost Train* and *Strictly Murder*.

Andrea is over the moon to be back in the Stage Two Downham fold with old friends and new, and she hopes you enjoy the production.



## Martha Bowers

*Emily Brontë*

Martha is playing the role of the mysterious Emily Brontë.

Martha was in her first Stage Two production at the ripe age of 10 in *The Admirable Crichton*, and is now taking on a much larger role at the age of 16. Martha also performs as a solo singer and attends Ella Shaw's Academy of Arts, an award winning performing arts school in Lancashire. She is also studying drama in college and intends to make a career out of her passion for the creative arts.



## Jennifer Whiteside

*Anne Brontë*

Jen first performed with us back in 2013 in *The Ghost Train*. Since then, Jen has been involved in several Stage Two productions including *The Admirable Crichton*, *A Bunch of Amateurs* and last year took on two lead roles in *Pygmalion* and *Educating Rita*. She has also performed with other local societies including Blackburn Drama Club and CPCAODS.

Jen has played principal roles in Musical Theatre Productions including *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Calamity Jane* and *Sunshine on Leith*, all with Blackburn Musical Theatre Company.

Jen is thrilled to be playing the role of Anne and is delighted to be directed by Fran Osborne again.



## Steve Cooke

*Patrick Brontë*

This will be my 18th production with Stage Two Downham, starting with 2007's *Noises Off*, and including *The Ghost Train*, both of which were directed by the excellent Fran Osborne, our director for *We Are Three Sisters*.

I act for a number of societies in the area, which allows me to play a broad variety of characters and genres. I recently played the title role in *Grow Up Grandad* for Burnley Garrick.

I have always found Stage Two a friendly happy group. We have had some good times together.



## Alfie Bentley

*Branwell Brontë*

I'm Alfie and while I have faith it's not too obvious, this is my first adult play, and I'm honoured to have been taken under the wing of Stage Two Downham.

I helped with sound and lighting for *The Dresser*. From there it seems I'd done such a bad job I've been demoted to an actor in this play as the character Branwell.

I've loved my time here with the people that surround this community and look forward to hopefully being invited back for future plays.



## Richard Hubbard

*Doctor*

Richard's first show with Stage Two was 2014's *Confusions*, and he has appeared in several since then, including most recently *Educating Rita*. He has also co-directed plays, including *God Of Carnage*.

As well as Stage Two, Richard has appeared on stage for Blackburn Musical Theatre Company, and Blackburn Drama Club, where he has had the privilege of bringing to life some iconic roles, such as Teyve in *Fiddler On The Roof*, and Perks in *The Railway Children*.

With the Doctor in *We Are Three Sisters*, Richard is back to his comfort zone of 'grumpy middle aged bloke'!



## Chris Bowers

*Curate*

Chris is celebrating his 11th year with Stage Two having tread his first board with the society in 2013's *The Ghost Train*, alongside Jennifer, Steve, and Andrea, and also directed by Fran. Chris is excited to be performing in a modern play with a classical pedigree highlighting the broadness of Stage Two's range.

When not acting in Stage Two Chris enjoys singing bass in the Ribble Valley's premier barbershop group Wrong Direction, and has been known to join the chorus of the odd musical here and there.



## Julie Laing

*Lydia Robinson*

Julie only recently came back to am dram in May this year after a 30 year break. This is her first performance with Stage Two Downham, and she is thrilled and honoured to be playing Lydia Robinson in *We Are Three Sisters*.

Recently Julie played Jean in *Sunshine on Leith* with Blackburn Musical Theatre Company along side Richard Hubbard and Jen Whiteside. She is so happy to be back on stage with both of them again.

She would like to thank Fran Osborne and her team for giving her the opportunity to play Lydia and to bring her back to life.



## Alan Herron

*Teacher*

This is Alan's fourth appearance for Stage Two, and despite suffering from terminal stage fright this is delicately balanced with a massive ego and so he is back for another go. He's probably been bitten by some sort of bug.

He looks forward to performing on stage with a really talented bunch and some exceptional new talent. He is delighted to be reunited with Fran, the director, who plucked him out of obscurity to give him his first part in *A Bunch of Amateurs* and has probably forgotten how mediocre he was.



## Jacqui Shepherd

*Tabby*

Jacqui joined Stage Two Downham in 2018 and has been involved with all of their productions ever since. From props and set development to Production Manager, she is always happy to provide backstage support in some way or other.

Jacqui enjoys directing and had her directing debut in 2021, with *The Winslow Boy*. Most recently Jacqui was delighted to direct *The Dresser* earlier this year.

Jacqui has appeared in a number of Stage Two plays such as *The Admirable Crichton*, *A Bunch of Amateurs* and *Pygmalion*. She is looking forward to being part of the company, playing Tabby the housekeeper, in *We Are Three Sisters*.



## The all important backstage crew

<i>Directed by</i>	Fran Osborne
<i>Production Manager</i>	Kim Croydon
<i>Set building</i>	Brian Howarth & Mick Gidlow
<i>Set decoration</i>	Roger Astin
<i>Props</i>	Kate Herron & team
<i>Stage Management</i>	Mel Crook & Darren Moss
<i>Lighting &amp; Sound</i>	Paddy Keane & John Bradshaw
<i>Continuity</i>	Wendy Watson
<i>Front Of House</i>	Kim Croydon & team
<i>Poster Design</i>	Alan Herron

Our thanks also go to the following;

Rossendale Players for furniture, Pendle Hippodrome for costume and props, Frances & Peter Eldrige for props

## Stage Two Downham

Stage Two Downham is based right here in the beautiful village of Downham in the Ribble Valley. We stage an autumn and a spring production and are looking to stage a further event in early summer.

We try to be innovative in our choice of plays, ranging across the classics, modern plays, comedies, dramas and thrillers. Just a browse through our website will give you an idea of our versatility and originality. Our reputation locally is excellent, we have a loyal, regular audience, and with each new production new audience members are attracted.

Stage Two Downham was formed in 1989, and since then we have collaborated with other societies, participated in several community projects, and of course successfully produced many plays. We are members of Noda, a national society for amateur theatre groups, from whom we are very proud to have received six regional awards to date.

Backstage and onstage, we are always welcoming to new members who are encouraged to become involved in whatever way they wish. So, please look through our website for an idea of what we do and, if you are interested, get in touch with us! We will be really pleased to meet you!

Since that first production in 1989, of *Round And Round The Garden*, we have presented at least one show every year, in fact *We Are Three Sisters* is our 61st. Well almost every year. Like everyone else COVID forced us off the stage during 2020 and 2021, but we kept ourselves busy by recording Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, which you can watch for free on our website.

If you have enjoyed tonight's show, please let us know. We'd love to hear from you. We also keep our audience up to date with future productions and important Stage Two Downham news by email. So if you aren't already subscribed, please ask to be added to the list.

[www.stagetwodownham.co.uk](http://www.stagetwodownham.co.uk)





STAGE TWO  
DOWNHAM

Our next production...

**Chris  
Bowers**

directed by  
**Kim Croydon**

**Richard  
Hubbard**



The classic comedy about two men struggling with daily life

**April 2nd-5th 2025, Downham Village Hall**

Keep an eye on [www.stagetwodownham.co.uk](http://www.stagetwodownham.co.uk) for details