

The Company



Carole Hayman (Libretto) is a Writer, Producer & Presenter. A regular contributor to the BBC, Carole writes for radio, television and film and has made many documentaries and podcasts. She is well known as writer of the Radio 4 hit series "Ladies of Letters" which ran for many series on Radio 4 and ITV and toured earlier this year. **The Rotters Opera** based on scurrilous goings on in her home town of Deal during the late 19th century is her second opera. Her first, **The Hive**, loosely based on material gained from prior research into female serial killers is due to be performed by the Liverpool Philharmonic next year.



Simon Yadoo (Director & Actor) is an actor whose extensive theatre includes: a number of Shakespearean and classic roles at venues from Riverside Studios to Elsinore Castle in Denmark. Most recently he played Boyet / Don Adriano de Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Sir Peter Teazle in *The School for Scandal* for Changeling Theatre. Screen includes: *Muppets Most Wanted* (Disney), *The Constant Gardener* and *Vanity Fair* and Simon was nominated for a Van D'Or Comedy Award at Cannes for his lead performance in short film *Feet*.



Felix Cross MBE (Musical Director) is a composer, director and producer whose work has been performed nationally and internationally. From 1996 to 2015, he was the Artistic Director of Nitro/Black Theatre Co-op in England, developing and producing new musical-theatre from a black British perspective. During this time he also worked as a composer for a number of major theatre companies in England. In 2012, he was awarded an MBE for services to Musical Theatre.

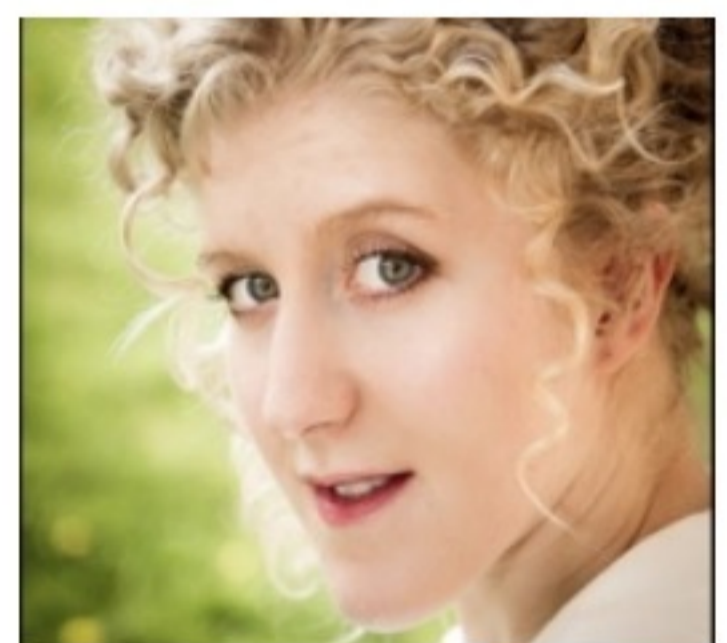
The Players



Jonathan Cobb (Sir Julian Goldsmit, Will Denny, Dogberry, Judge) is an actor whose theatre Credits Include: *War Horse* (The National Theatre), *Babe The Sheep-Pig* (Mercury Theatre Colchester), *The Grinning Man* (Trafalgar Studios), *The Wind in The Willows* for Boxtree Productions, *Lovecraft & Bordermen* (The King's Head Theatre), *The Taming of The Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure & King Lear* for Quite Right Theatre.



Kathryn Perkins (Sir Jasper Diehard, Pirate Pushy, Maria Baldwin, Landlady) Theatre Credits Include: *War Horse* (The National Theatre), *Babe The Sheep-Pig* (Mercury Theatre Colchester), *The Grinning Man* (Trafalgar Studios), *The Wind in The Willows* for Boxtree Productions, *Lovecraft & Bordermen* (The King's Head Theatre), *The Taming of The Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure & King Lear* for Quite Right Theatre.




Leigh Quinn (Cpn Keel, Verges, John Thomas, Magda) is a Scottish stage and television actress, singer and writer. Raised in Paisley, she attended PACE youth theatre and knew she wanted to tell stories for a living after being inspired by the 1940's film "The Bluebird". Since graduating with a BA in Acting from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, she has worked with many renowned theatres including the Royal Shakespeare Company.



Freya Stephenson (Lizzie Baldwin, Sir Jasper Diehard, Nattie Newbie) is an actor and musical theatre performer from Kent with experience on stage and screen. She has recently worked on: *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (University of Chichester), *Stranger Sings! A parody Musical* (The Vaults), *Loves Labours Lost* (Changeling Theatre) and *School for Scandal* (Changeling Theatre).

Deal Welfare Club presents



The Rotters Opera
written by Carole Hayman



“FUN, FRAUDULENCE & FLAGS!!”

Thu 5th Oct
7:30pm
Tickets £10 (£7.50 concs)

Deal Welfare Club, Deal
Tickets: 01304 374335



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This scratch performance has been made possible with grateful thanks to:



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Find out more

For more information, a synopsis and clips from performances, visit <https://therottersopera.uk>



A dastardly tale of dreadful deeds!

Background

From 1366 until 1832, the Parliamentary Constituency of Sandwich comprised just the three parishes of Sandwich, with a right to elect two MPs to the House of Commons.

Changes brought about by the Reform Act of 1832 however, meant the number of constituents was insufficient to retain two MPs and so the boundaries were extended to include the neighbouring towns of Deal and Walmer, which quadrupled the population.

In the five General Elections held from 1857 until 1880, both seats were won by Liberal candidates. So great was their popularity that the Conservatives decided it was pointless to contest the 1880 General Election and they were returned unopposed.

However, a vacancy arose shortly after when one of those elected accepted a peerage triggering a by-Election. Assured of success, the selected Conservative Candidate, Mr Crompton Roberts immediately made his way to Deal to begin canvassing on May 4th with his 'celebrated' electioneering agent and a big bag of gold!

A feature of elections of the time were the various inducements bestowed on electors for their vote which ranged from treating – offers of free food and drink – to downright bribery. However the extent and creativity to which the population of Deal and Walmer in particular entered into it was second to none.

The Conservatives won but so extensive was the bribery that the behaviour set off an appeal and a parliamentary commission was established to investigate.

Over the three weeks it took place, it was found that out of an electorate of 2115, 1850 voted, of whom half admitted they had been bribed and over 100 admitted to offering bribes. Nearly £9,000 (not far off £1m today) was expended between the two candidates with the Conservatives spending well over two thirds of that amount.

A noteworthy feature of the campaign were the sheer amount of flags and bunting in the party colours – then blue for the Liberals and yellow for the Conservatives. Deal in particular was festooned to such an extent that people came from miles around to see the sight.

The flags and poles on which they were fixed were a fertile way of getting money into the pockets of electors. Flags had to be made and required teams of men to erect them and then 'watched' lest the other side inflict damage. The rivalry was such that the flags grew bigger and bigger and the town's drapers, milliners and ironmongers made significant sums in generous remuneration for fabric, rope and so on.

For many in the towns it was Christmas, New Year and Easter all at once. Shopkeepers, publicans, boatmen – anyone who had a vote or might influence someone who did – had a wonderful time. And there is no sign that any of their "betters" – the clergy, councillors and magistrates of the town – raised any objections.

Crompton-Roberts won the election by 1145 votes to 705 and although he took his seat as an MP, the result was annulled after a few months, following the Commission's report.

As a result of the Commission Report, Sandwich was abolished as a constituency with effect from 25 June 1885.

The Principal Characters

Turnip Toff	a loveable rogue
Pirate Pushy	a nasty bully
Cpn Keel	a man of the people
Lizzie	a budding suffragette
Will	nice but dim
Dogberry & Verges	a right pair of clowns
Magda	a survivor
Sir Jasper Diehard	a 'luxury' Tory and sex pest
Sir Julian Goldsmit	the Liberal candidate
Shoella	a terrible Shag

How this came about

I came across this amazing and little known story about Deal's colourful past some years ago and approached my friend, the writer Carole Hayman for ideas about how it could be dramatised.

Perfect drama fodder, the Commissioner's Report on the events that took place is a lengthy document with verbatim, sometimes humorous accounts of all those on trial.

Carole's skill and unique perspective has developed the initial idea from being a mere depiction of the events to a wider ranging piece with contemporary parallels that resonate in our modern day lives.

This presentation is the second stage towards mounting a full production. We hope you will enjoy following us on our journey as it develops further.

Pat Wilson, Producer, Rotters Opera

You can read the full story (and may find that you recognise some of the names of those involved) at

A Forest of Flags - <https://afof.uk>