

## **A Handbag by Anthony Horowitz – BCP’s 2026 Festival Play Entry**

**Auditions for [Banbury Cross Players](#)’ 2026 one-act festival play, *A Handbag* by Anthony Horowitz and directed by Chrissie Garrett will be taking place on 18th and 19th March 2026.**

Anthony Horowitz was commissioned to write a play as part of the National Theatre’s New Connections programme in 2009, and the result is *The Handbag* - a short play which is both funny and poignant for a cast of six - 4 men, 2 women.

### **The Play**

A group of people are rehearsing *The Importance of Being Earnest* but, as they attempt to perform a play which is alien to them to gain some form of escapism, it becomes apparent that their surroundings are not normal. Gradually, as tensions mount, squabbles ensue and each person’s story starts to emerge.

Prior to auditions, a **read through** of the play is being held on **12th March 2026** at St Hugh’s Church Hall in Banbury - if you attended the previous read through, it is not necessary to attend this second one.

### **Key Information**

- Auditions are being held at **St Hugh’s Church Hall in Banbury** on **18th and 19th March 2026** from 7.30pm.
- The audition will include script work only - there is no need to learn anything for the auditions.
- *You do not need to be a member of BCP to audition but will be required to join if cast.*
- **Rehearsals** will start 22nd March 2026 with an introductory workshop before they officially kick off on 13th April 2026, and will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays with the occasional Sunday.

Please note, in order to take part, you **MUST** be available to perform on the following dates:

- **27th May** - Performance at Adderbury Church House in aid of [FOCAL](#)
- **4th June** - Performance at Lighthorne Drama Festival
- **4-8th June** - Performance at Abingdon Drama Festival (exact performance date TBC)
- **8-13th June** - Performance at Wallingford Drama Festival (exact performance date TBC)

- **July 2026** - Potential additional performance to be agreed with cast (date TBC)
- **17th September** - Season Preview at The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury

A copy of the script is linked **here**. If you'd like more information, drop Director Chrissie Garrett an email at [chrissiegarrett111150@gmail.com](mailto:chrissiegarrett111150@gmail.com).

**Roles - 4 men, 2 women but can be any age/gender (including all men, or all women as needed)**

- **Rose** (also plays Lady Bracknell) - Emotional, dreamy (with moments of perception), and slightly fragile. She yearns for normality and must be played gently, and emotionally truthfully, not as a caricature. She plays Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and is obsessed with the 'handbag' as a symbol of freedom and escape.
- **George** (also plays Jack Worthing) - Protective and controlling and often acts as the leader of the group. He is prone to surges of anger and confusion but also craves structure and respect. He potentially has a romantic relationship with Rose, although this could be played as a paternal relationship depending on casting. The actor who plays him must be able to portray him as intense and powerful.
- **Allan** (also plays Algernon Moncrieff) - Allan is logical, practical and rule-obsessed.
- **Specs** (also plays Aleman, Gwendolyn, Jack and Cecily - in a single monologue!) - Nervous and twitchy, Specs is easily frightened. He is childlike in attitude with an underlying sadness, and has a stutter, which is crucial to his character.
- **Irene** (also plays Gwendolyn) - Glaswegian or Liverpudlian accent. Irene is impatient, controlling and passive aggressive in nature, believing she knows best. Must be played powerfully.
- **Kinsey** (also plays Lane) - Kinsey is to be played as lacking emotion; still and controlled with a quiet menace; clinical and bureaucratic.