

Southport Dramatic Club

Murdered to Death

**A Gripping Spoof 'Whodunnit'
by Peter Gordon**

Directed by Adrian Roberts

**24th January -
1st February 2014**

7.45pm



LITTLE THEATRE
Home of the
Southport Dramatic Club

Box Office Tel: (01704) 530521/530460

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Director's notes

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, Happy New Year and welcome to SDC's first play of 2014.

When asked to direct *Murdered to Death*, I jumped at the chance. I had seen the play a few years ago and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it and loved the idea that my directorial debut for SDC would be a play that pushed most of my comedy buttons.

The play, written by Peter Gordon, is somewhat of an Agatha Christie comedy tribute with by no means a small homage to one or two of her greatest detectives. If it is murder mystery fun you're after then you've come to the right place.

It has been fantastic fun rehearsing this play. The cast have immersed themselves



Adrian Roberts
Director

into their respective roles with such verve and vigour. I'm sure, once you have seen the play, you will agree.

There are many people I need to thank for their help and support during our rehearsal period including the set designer and builders, the wardrobe department, props and many others. I would like to personally

thank the cast who have been a joy to work with, Lynne Hawkesworth for keeping us on the straight and narrow, Tracey Batchelor for stepping in to the play at such late notice and our tea boy (you know who you are).

So come now and join us as at Mildred's manor house where intrigue and mystery are served and where everyone has a skeleton in the closet.

Can the bungling Inspector Pratt solve the crime before anyone else is murdered or will the miscreant get away with it and murder more. In fact will anyone get out alive at all...

It leads me now just to say sit back, relax and enjoy *Murdered to Death*.

Adrian Roberts, Director



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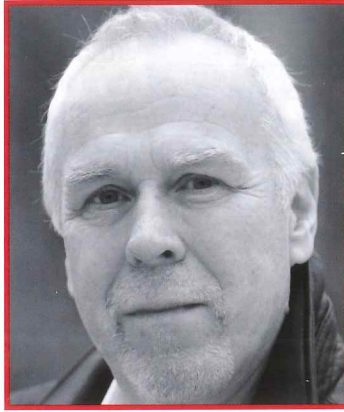
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Peter Gordon

The playwright Peter Gordon was born in 1950 in York. Peter is now a full-time writer, but he had started his working life as a Chartered Civil Engineer and worked in the Middle East. He then became Head of Civil Engineering at a UK University.

Peter, who is now one of the country's most popular playwrights, had his first play published in 1990. He has written comedies, a psychological thriller and a one act comedy. They have been performed by both professional and amateurs in over a thousand productions.

The playwright is perhaps best known for his *Inspector Pratt* trilogy of plays. The following has been written of



Peter Gordon
Author

his modern comedies: "Peter Gordon writes about life. Sometimes it is bizarre and funny, sometimes it is sad, but it is always entertaining." Some of his comedies are: *The Reunion*, *Out of Focus* and *Third Week in August*. *Third Week In August* was performed at the Minack

Theatre in Cornwall, which is world-famous.

Par for the Course is the latest play from Peter Gordon. The television adaptation *Generations Apart* was also written by him.

The playwright played a part in the formation of the Piggybank Theatre Company in 2010. The scheme stages new work for good causes.

Peter has a love of music and he plays the drums and guitar. He also plays the ukulele, although he does not want to tell his friends about this!

He is married to Janice and has returned to his roots, like a "true Yorkshireman," and now lives near York.





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Murdered to Death

Peter Gordon's *Murdered to Death* is a spoof of the work of Agatha Christie. A revised edition of the play premiered at York's Grand Opera House on September 2nd 2002.

Peter Frosdick and Martin Dodd were behind the show and it was produced by UK Productions Ltd. The cast included: Mary Duddy, Shona Lindsay and Nicholas Smith. It was directed by Julian Woolford. It went on a national tour and today has been presented by over seven hundred professional and amateur companies all over the world. The Nottingham Evening Post described it as

"...hilarious and very clever", while British Theatre Guild said it is a "...deliciously wicked spoof."

Murdered to Death is the first part of the Inspector Pratt trilogy written by Gordon.

Its sequels are *Secondary Cause of Death* and *Death By Fatal Murder*. Together these plays have been put on in countries as far afield as South Africa and Australia by both professionals and amateurs.

In *Murdered to Death*, Inspector Pratt has a difficult task to try and find the

murderer of the house's owner. The play is set in the 1930s in the lounge of a country manor house. Other characters include: Bunting the Butler; the local sleuth Miss Maple (who seems to follow murder about); the incompetent local detective and his constable; a dodgy French art dealer; and a debutante. Inspector Pratt goes about his work, but the murderer isn't finished.

Will the Inspector be able to find the culprit before he or she has killed all the cast?



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Synopsis of Scenes

The action of the play takes place in the lounge of a country manor house in the 1930s.

Act One

Scene 1: Late afternoon, autumn

Scene 2: The following morning

Act Two

Scene 1: Two hours later

Scene 2: One hour later



The Little Theatre - Home of the Southport Dramatic Club.

The SDC wishes to ensure that all our patrons enjoy a comfortable, enjoyable and safe visit to our theatre. We should be grateful for your co-operation in helping us to achieve this. Please note the following:

- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
- At the end of the performance, exits will be open at both the front and back of the auditorium.
- First Aid assistance is regularly provided by volunteers from the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Should you require help, please advise our stewards on duty in the Foyer.
- Patrons with hearing impairments should note that the auditorium has an Induction Loop System for your assistance.
- Please ensure that all mobile phones and electronic devices are switched off during the performance.
- Photography and video recording are not allowed during the performance.

Designated Premises Supervisor, Alan Newport





Mildred
Tracey Batchelor



Dorothy
Ceri Watkins



Bunting
Simon Hawkins

MULTI
to J



Colonel Charles Craddock
Stephen Pritchard



Margaret Craddock
Helen Pritchard



Elizabeth Hartley-Trumington
Catherine Leight



Pierre Marceau
Nick Lloyd

Horrid Death



Joan Maple
Trudi Hirsch

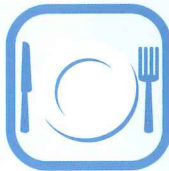


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Nathan Colman



Inspector Pratt
Paul Wilkinson

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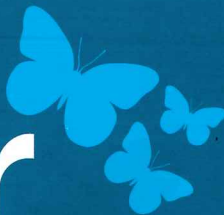
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Staging

Stage Manager	Roy Carr
Assistant Stage Manager (Prompt)	Lynn Hawkesworth
Properties	Sandy Town & Cast
Wardrobe	James Hughes-Alty and the SDC Wardrobe Team
Lighting	Alan Gosling
Sound	The SDC Sound Department
Scenic Artist	Bob Jessamine
Set Design	Syd Coley
Set Construction	SDC Construction Team
Armourer	Syd Coley
Photographs	Fletcherhill Photography
Programme Editor	Jacquie Bolshaw
Programme Sub Editor	Barry King
Programme Content & Research	Henry James
Programme Layout and Design	Mitchell & Wright (Printers) Ltd

During this production there are several gunshots

Acknowledgements

The Director would like to thank: Judith Ryan for the loan of “the elephant”



How the SDC functions continued...

Lighting Department

The lighting team at the Little Theatre are responsible for designing the lighting requirements, plotting where the light should go and operating them for each of our shows and most of our subtlets.

Each show has a different lighting rig which involves clambering ladders, crawling along narrow passageways in the roof, (banging your head!) in order to focus and colour up each lamp accordingly. We have two front of house lighting bars and four on stage on which each lamp is hung. We have a stock of around one hundred and twenty lamps

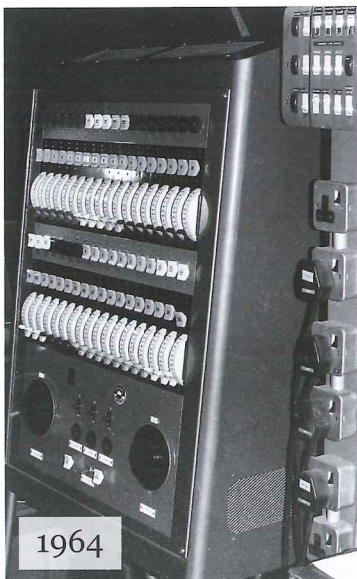
from which to make our selection according to the type of lighting effect we wish to create.

As well as the core lighting we have to consider the special effects, including strobes, smoke and haze. We also have to think about lights for the fire effect in a fireplace, for lamp standards and wall lighting. We need to consider “blazing sun”, “moonlight”, “shadows”, and creating such effects as “ghostly” appearances!

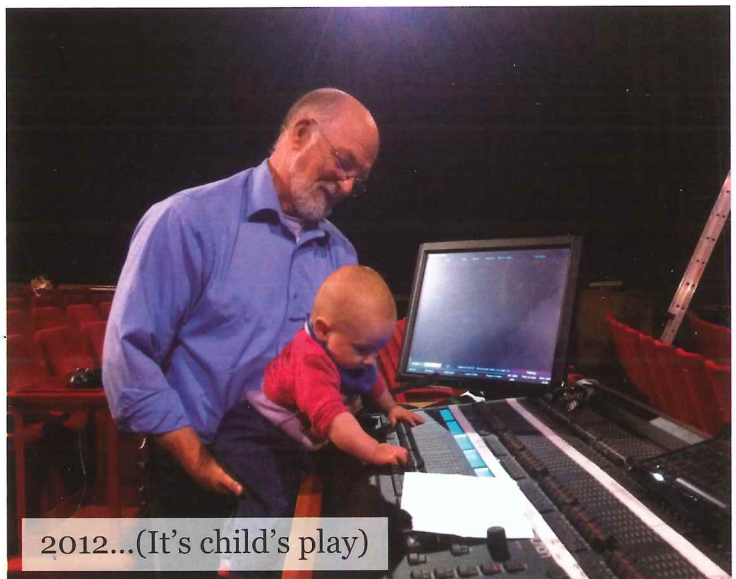
Of our most recent productions “The 39 Steps”, “Titfield Thunderbolt” and the battlefield scenes in “My Boy Jack” were the most

challenging (and the most rewarding) for the team, as much of the story was enhanced by the lighting or was essential of the understanding of the plot.

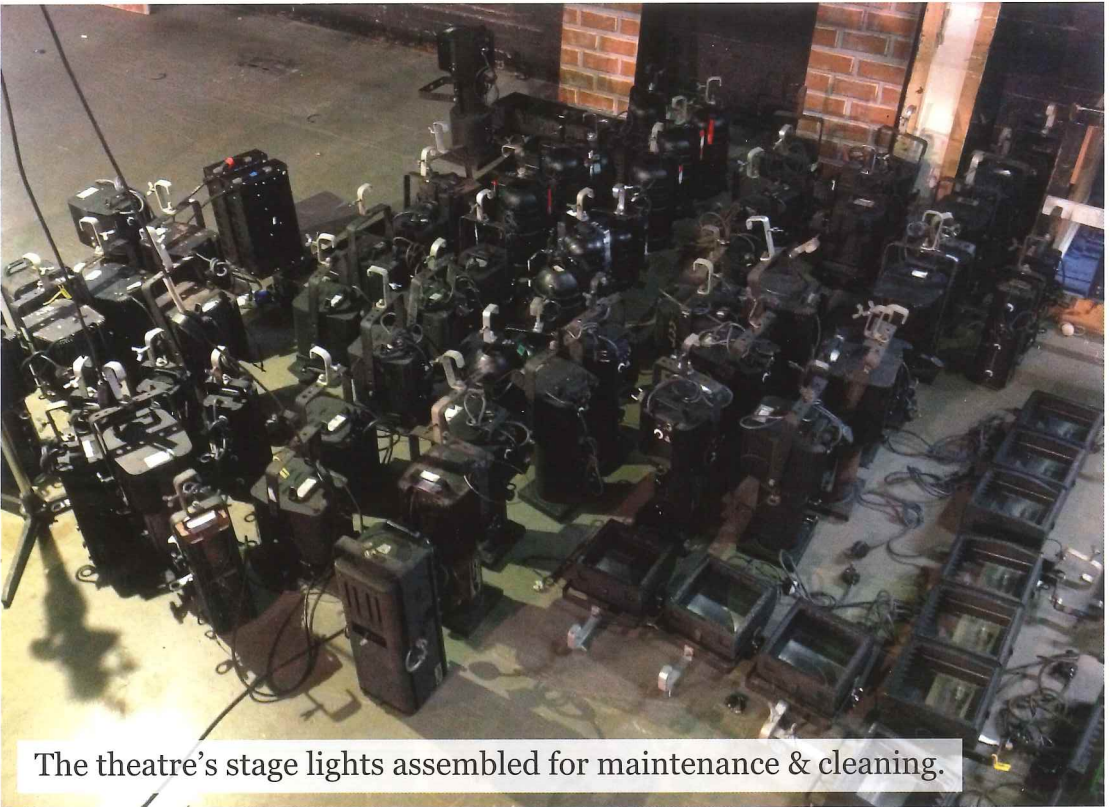
Lighting boards and lights have changed dramatically over the past fifty years as the two pictures illustrate..... 1964 and 2012; from tungsten lamps to the introduction of the modern LEDs; from manual operation to digital programming who knows where to next!



1964



2012...(It's child's play)

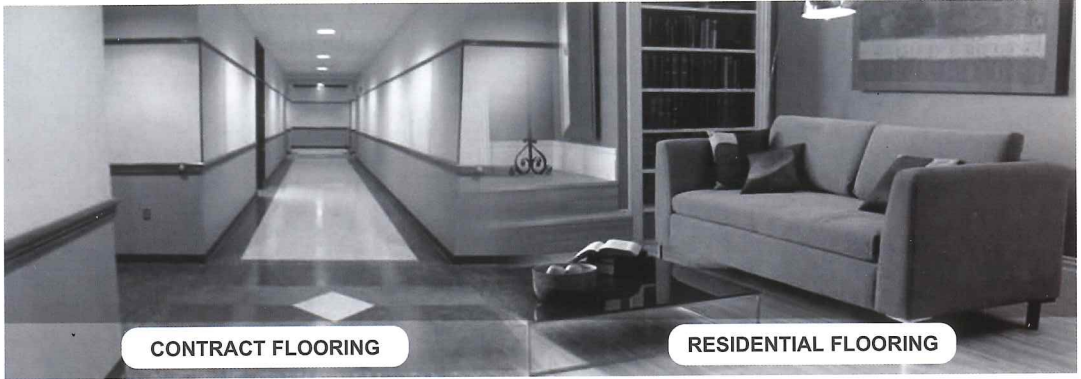


The theatre's stage lights assembled for maintenance & cleaning.

Can you solve the following?

1. Who created the character of Miss Marple?
2. What was Miss Marple's Christian name?
3. Where did Miss Marple live?
4. What was the occupation of Miss Marple?
5. How many of Agatha Christie's crime novels feature Miss Marple?
6. What was the name of the fictional Belgian detective?
7. Can you name two famous actors who played the role of the Belgian detective?
8. What is the name of the longest 'whodunnit' play on a London theatre?

Answers can be found on page 18.



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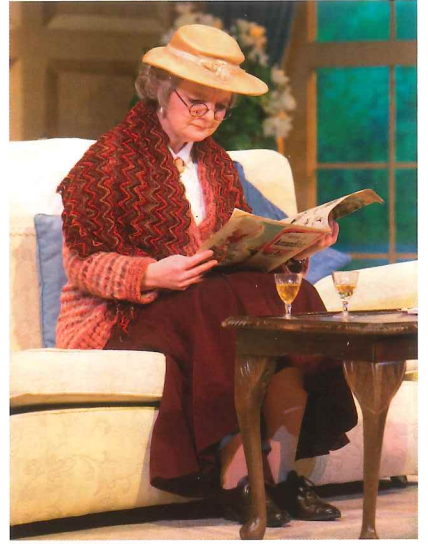
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Michèle Martin

Director

NOW IN REHEARSAL

Lettice and Lovage

by Peter Shaffer

If you've ever been frustrated by 'Jobsworths', baffled by gadgets or upset at concrete eyesores replacing beautiful buildings, this play will strike a chord.

Written for Dame Maggie Smith by Peter Schaffer and described as "...exhilarating new comedy....one of the sharpest, wittiest most passionate and elegant plays of the year.." it won the 1988 Evening Standard's best comedy award.

Laetitia (Lettice) Douffet as she is known, is mad keen on history. She lands a job as a guide for The Preservation Trust. Unfortunately Fustian House is the most boring stately home in Britain. Using her knowledge of history Lettice embellishes her tales, much to the delight of most visitors. Unfortunately Lotte Schön from the Preservation Trust discovers Lettice is not following the company line and sacks her.

Faced with economic oblivion does she crumble? Not Lettice, she leaves the scene of her dismissal in a blaze of glory and as a result kindles an unexpected friendship. Despite a close brush with the law they embark on a crusade to make the world a better place.

Fancy a night out to beat the winter gloom and lift your spirits? Then book your seats now while you can.

Michèle Martin, Director

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However, if you present your 'car parking' ticket at the Little Theatre Box Office, Bar or Foyer Servery you will be given a 'follow-on' ticket. When you return to the N.C.P. car park to pay before driving away you then insert firstly the 'car parking' ticket followed by your 'follow-on' ticket and the charge will be reduced to **£1.00**.

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The Answers to **Can you solve the following?** from page 15: 1: Agatha Christie, 2: Jane, 3: St. Mary Mead, 4: Amateur Detective, 5: 12, 6: Hercule Poirot, 7: David Suchet and Peter Ustinov, 8: The Mousetrap.

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SDC
Production



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SDC
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Southport Dramatic Club

A Tony Award-Winning Comedy
by Peter Shaffer

Lettice and Lovage

Directed by
Michèle Martin

21st February -
1st March 2014

7.45pm

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