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Dial M for Murder

by Frederick Knott



Please ensure that your phone
is set to silent during the
performance.

You may not want to answer
it

(D. Young)

MAY 2007

Murder he wrote

FREDERICK KNOTT only wrote three plays during his lifetime, yet his spine-tingling thrillers ran successfully in the West End and on Broadway in the 1950s and 1960s, and have been widely performed in theatres throughout the world in the years since.

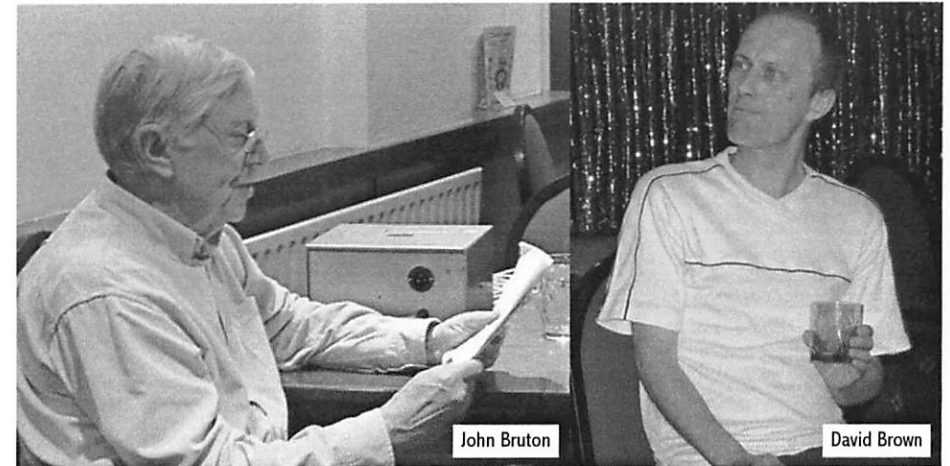
His most famous script, *Dial M for Murder*, was rejected several times before being made into a successful BBC television production in the early

1950s. It then hit the London stage to rave reviews, starring Alan MacNaughtan and Jane Baxter at the Westminster Theatre. In 1952 the play opened on Broadway, with the lead roles taken by Richard Derr and Gusti Huber. John Williams earned a Tony Award for his role as Inspector Hubbard.

In 1954 the script was adapted by Knott into a film directed by Alfred Hitchcock and filmed in 3D, starring Grace Kelly, Ray Milland and Robert



Robert Cummings, Grace Kelly and Ray Milland in the film version of *Dial M for Murder*



John Bruton

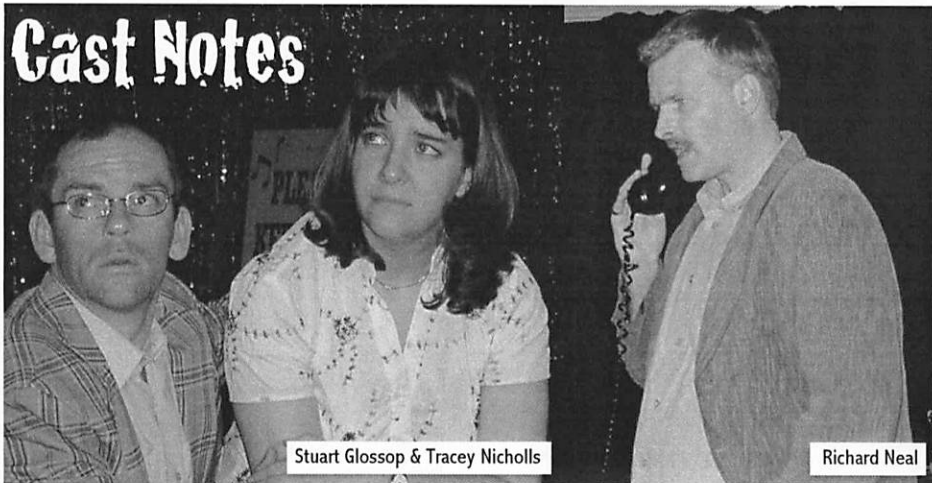
David Brown

Theatre's production of *Dial M for Murder* in 2002, but for our production he takes on the role of American writer Max Halliday. Stuart has had a busy few years since joining Wimborne Drama in 2003. Most recently he played with much wit and gusto the trickster Khlestakov in *The Government Inspector*. Before that he was Justin in *RolePlay*, Kevin in *Outside Edge* and a Temptor/Knight in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Stuart also directed our highly acclaimed productions of *Stepping Out* and *Charley's Aunt*. Back in his native Nottingham, Stuart played Lord Fancourt Babberley in *Charley's Aunt*, Drake in *Annie*, The Prince in *Romeo and Juliet*, Morris Townsend in *The Heiress*, Captain Bertorelli in *Allo, Allo* and Simple Simon in *Jack And The Beanstalk*. Tracey Nicholls is a late replacement for original cast member Penny Pearson who unfortunately had to pull out of the production because of ill health. Tracey last appeared on the Tivoli stage last year as Andy in the toe-tapping *Stepping Out*.

Tracey joined Wimborne Drama in 2001 and has played Agnes Wickfield in *David Copperfield*, Marie in *On the Razzle*, Edna in *An Inspector Calls*, Fanny Robin in *Far From the Madding Crowd* and was in the female chorus of *Murder in the Cathedral*. In 2005 Tracey played her "dream role" as Mrs De Winter in *Rebecca*. Tracey has also done plays with Wimborne Community Theatre and played Hermia in the Swan Theatre production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Richard Neal's last acting appearances were as Maxim de Winter in *Rebecca* and Truscott in *Loot*, for which he won Best Actor in a Comedy in the Daily Echo Curtain Call Awards in 2005, the last year the annual event recognising local amateur theatre was held. Richard's previous credits include: Malcolm in *Bedroom Farce*, Dennis in *One for the Road*, John Smith in *Run for Your Wife*, Tempest in *Forty Years On*, Dan in *An Evening with Gary Lineker*, Mompesson in *The Roses of Eyam*, Canon Throbbing in *Habeas Corpus*, the title role in

David Copperfield, Antipholus of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors* and Charley in *Charley's Aunt*. Richard has also twice won Daily Echo Curtain Call Awards for directing *The Madness of George III* and *On the Razzle*. He directed *The Government Inspector* in February this year. Having been involved in local theatre in Dorset for almost fifty years, David Pile finally gets his first taste of directing! David explains why he chose *Dial M for Murder* for his directorial debut: "The story had fascinated me ever since I saw the film many, many years ago. I found the complicated plot intriguing and always wondered whether I could put it on stage." David has lived in Ferndown since 1973 and has featured in countless dramas, comedies, musicals and pantos. Favourite roles include Widow Twanky in *Aladdin*, St Briche in *The Merry Widow*, Dr Willis in *The Madness of George III*, Barkis in *David Copperfield*, Ian Coggan in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and wily old geezer Osip in *The Government Inspector*.

Cast Notes

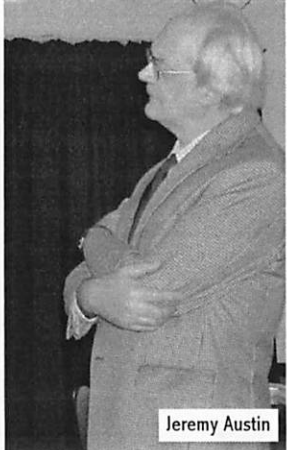


Stuart Glossop & Tracey Nicholls

Richard Neal



Andy Cragg



Jeremy Austin

No actor likes to be typecast, but **Jeremy Austin** clearly relishes the role of the police inspector, for having previously appeared in that guise in *An Inspector Calls*, *The Hollow* and *Run For Your Wife*. Jeremy now plays Inspector Hubbard in this production of *Dial M for Murder*. The tables were turned somewhat in February when Jeremy was himself 'inspected' as the Commissioner for Health in *The Government Inspector*. Jeremy won much praise for his portrayal of Thomas Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral* in the Minster in 2005. Other roles have included Headmaster in *Forty Years On*, Baines in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, Thomas Stanley in *The Roses of Eyam*, Charles in *Blithe Spirit*, Wicksteed in *Habeas Corpus*, Stephen Spettigue in *Charley's Aunt* and Derek Jobson in *RolePlay*. **David Brown** took two minor parts in *The Government Inspector* but here he gets his first major role for Wimborne Drama as Captain Lesgate. Originally trained in Drama and Theatre Arts, David returned to the stage with Broadstone Players in 2004 after

a 15-year break. He appeared in such plays as *Ghost Writer* and *The Anniversary* as well as appearing in various One Act plays and taking an active role in Writing, Directing, Lighting and Stage Management. This year he also appeared in the panto *Robinson Crusoe and the Pirates* at the Allendale Centre. **John Bruton** enjoyed his first acting experience since school so much when he played the German doctor in *The Government Inspector* in February that he is quickly back for more. Here he plays a police constable and a couple of voices "off". **Andy Cragg** was previously a member of the Zenith Theatre Company performing in *Cabaret*, *Hay Fever* and many musicals – "the non-singing, non-dancing roles - there are some!" says Andy. Andy's first on-stage performance for Wimborne Drama was as the Postmaster in *The Government Inspector*, although previous to that he was off stage shouting into a microphone as 'Voice of Man' in *Stepping Out*. **Stuart Glossop** played Captain Lesgate in a Nottingham Arts



Frederick Knott and Grace Kelly on the set of *Dial M for Murder*

Cummings. More recently it was reproduced as a contemporary film entitled *A Perfect Murder* starring Michael Douglas and Gwyneth Paltrow. His second most popular play, *Wait Until Dark*, ran for 374 performances on Broadway in 1966 and earned actress Lee Remick a Tony Award nomination for her portrayal of a blind woman terrorised by thugs. Later the same year, Honor Blackman played the lead in London's West End at the Strand Theatre. In 1967 the play was made into a popular film of the same name starring Alan Arkin and Audrey Hepburn. It was revived on Broadway in

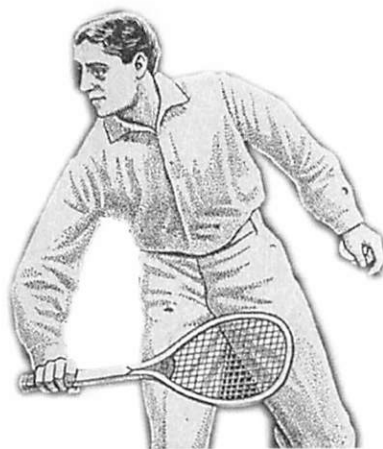
1998 in a play starring Marisa Tomei and Quentin Tarantino. His third play, *Write Me a Murder*, opened on Broadway in 1961 and ran for 25 weeks. Its cast included Denholm Elliott. Born on August 28, 1916 in China to an English missionary family, Knott read law at Cambridge University after attending Oundle School and served in the British Army from 1939-1946, achieving the rank of major. After the war he moved to the United States. Knott died in New York on December 17, 2002.

The 'shamateur' game

IN THE 1950s tennis was still almost exclusively an amateur game, a refined pastime for the well-to-do. From the time Major Walter Wingfield developed lawn tennis in Britain in 1874, the game was viewed as a social event for gentlemen and ladies.

Before the advent of open tennis in the late 1960s, with its 'anything goes' attitude, spectators generally were drawn from the highest levels of society. A genteel atmosphere prevailed at tournaments: men and women dressed formally, and splendid shots were rewarded with polite applause.

While we take the commercialism and professionalism of today's game for granted, the idea was anathema to most of the amateur officials who governed the sport in Britain, America, Australia and other major tennis-playing nations from the 1920s to the 1960s. To them, tennis was never intended to be a livelihood; players were expected to play for only a few months of the year and then return to their profession or business. Professional competitors had no place



in this world of amateur tennis, and the handful who gamely made a go of it, beginning after the First World War, were treated as pariahs by the tennis establishment.

Professionals could not play in the long-standing amateur tournaments, including the four Grand Slam events - Wimbledon and the US, French and Australian championships - and the Davis Cup.

Of course, the amateur players had to eat and sleep while they played the circuit at the various private clubs, and in the absence of any prize money, they subsisted on under-the-table payments dished out by tournament officials, a system that came to be known as 'shamateurism'. Any player who wanted to make a proper living from tennis had to sever his ties with the amateur establishment.

The expansion of air travel in the 1950s meant more and more players were flying around the world to compete at the various championships and the epidemic of 'shamateurism' become worse.

Radio in the 1950s

AT THE beginning of the fifties, radio in Britain consisted of just three BBC stations, the Light Programme, the Home Service and the Third Programme.

The Light Programme broadcast light entertainment and some popular (though rarely pop) music. The long-running series *Dick Barton - Special Agent* was broadcast on the Light Programme.

The Home Service was a mixture of news and entertainment - a favourite was *Saturday Night Theatre* which presented a 90-minute play each week.

The Third Programme was dedicated to "serious" drama and classical music - it was the least popular of the three. If you wanted to hear pop music, then

Radio Luxemburg was the place to tune the dial to in the fifties.



An edition of the Radio Times from January 1953

COMING SOON

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

A comedy of misunderstandings and mistaken identity
by Alan Ayckbourn

20-22 September

JOURNEY'S END

A powerful drama set in the First World War trenches
By R.C. Sheriff

1-3 November

Maida Vale

MAIDA VALE is in the London borough of Westminster. It acquired its name from the Hero of Maida, a public house which opened on the Edgware Road



soon after the Battle of Maida, a battle in the Napoleonic Wars fought on July 4, 1806 outside the town of San Pietro di Maida in Calabria, Italy.

As in the 1950s, when *Dial M for Murder* was written, the area today is extremely affluent, consisting of many large Edwardian red brick mansions with beautiful iron balconies. There are also many buildings with white stuccos and decorative trimmings. Maida Vale also encompasses Little Venice, a junction of three canals with many houseboats.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Maida Vale was a predominantly Jewish district, and contains the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, a Grade II listed building built in 1896.

Maida Vale is also home to a BBC Recording and Broadcast Studio, used

primarily by BBC Radio 1. The BBC Radiophonic Workshop was based here from 1958 until the Workshop was shut down in 1998.

Maida Vale tube station was opened on June 6, 1915, on the Bakerloo Line.

Famous former residents of Maida Vale include:

David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), the first prime minister of Israel

Robert Browning (1812-1889), poet

Sir John Ambrose Fleming (1849-1945), pictured right, who invented the thermionic valve which used to be a key component in radios, radar and computers



William Edward Friese-Greene (1855-1921), the inventor of cinematography

Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914), illustrator of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.



The need for reform was evident. In 1959 the Chairman of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) in Britain, Herman David, put forward a proposal that The Wimbledon

Championships be made open to all players, amateur and professional, but his plans were rejected.

In August 1967 an invitation tournament (sponsored by the BBC to mark the introduction of colour television) was held at Wimbledon with eight players taking part - all professionals. Most of these players had won honours at Wimbledon in their amateur days but had forfeited the right to play there on turning professional. The segregation of the two categories was soon to come to an end.

In December that year the LTA voted overwhelmingly to admit players of all categories to Wimbledon and other tournaments in Britain. Faced with a fait accompli the International Tennis Federation yielded and allowed each nation to determine its own legislation regarding amateur and professional players. In 1968, Rod Laver and Billie Jean King became the first Wimbledon Open Champions. The total prize money that year was £26,150.

Murder on the centre court

VERE THOMAS ST LEGER GOOLD from Waterford in County Cork, the Wimbledon runner-up of 1879, was convicted of murder in 1907 along with his wife after a railway employee in Marseilles noticed a stench coming from the Goolds' luggage and, on opening the suitcase, discovered the chopped-up remains of a woman.

The victim, a Danish woman named Emma Liven, was murdered when she asked for the return of money and jewellery she had loaned to the Goolds.

Goold was sent to Devil's Island, where he died the following year.

Goold was the younger son of an Irish baron who had for a while been the toast of lawn tennis. He became the first Irish Champion in 1879, causing a stir with his dashing style, coming through to the final without dropping a set and triumphing there with an 8-6, 8-6 score over C.D. Barry.

Goold set off to see whether he could repeat his success at Wimbledon, for despite the tournament's infancy - it was only the third year of The Championships - a player could still derive much from overall victory and from the seasonal society gatherings.

By all accounts, his flamboyant style was a hit with spectators who were more accustomed to watching baseliners swap shots. As a player looking to attack from the net, the Irishman was a wow with the crowds mingling round the Centre Court.

He progressed through to the final where he went down rather tamely to the Reverend John Hartley 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

WIMBORNE DRAMA

presents

Dial M for Murder

By Frederick Knott

CAST

Margot Wendice
Max Halliday
Tony Wendice
Captain Lesgate
Inspector Hubbard
Reporter/Williams
Thompson

TRACEY NICHOLLS
STUART GLOSSOP
RICHARD NEAL
DAVID BROWN
JEREMY AUSTIN
ANDY CRAGG
JOHN BRUTON

◆
TIVOLI Theatre
17-19 May 2007
◆

The action takes place in the living room of the
Wendices' apartment in Maida Vale, London

ACT I

Scene 1 - A Friday evening in September
Scene 2 - An hour later

ACT II

Scene 1 - Saturday evening
Scene 2 - Later that night
Scene 3 - Sunday morning

ACT III

A few months later. Early afternoon

◆

The Company & Director would like to thank:

THE BARRINGTON CENTRE FERNDOWN
for the loan of the coat stand

TONY FELTHAM for the loan of the desk

JEREMY PILE for the original painting

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (WIMBORNE)
for rehearsal space

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	DAVID PILE
Set & Sound Designer / Company Stage Manager	COLIN PILE
Assistant Stage Managers	BARRY BAYNTON CAROL BRUTON JAN STEVENSON
Company Electrician	JEREMY AUSTIN
Costume Designer	ANNE PONTING OF ECLECTIA COSTUMES
Wardrobe	CAROLYN HEWITT
Transport	MARK ELLEN
Publicity & Programme Editor	RICHARD NEAL
Theatre Production Manager	RUSSELL PARKER
Theatre Stage Manager	ASHLEY THORNE

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