

## Join Us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and benefit from membership:

- ✓ Half price personal tickets for Questors productions\*
- ✓ Discounted Guest tickets when you bring friends to Questors productions\*
- ✓ Children's FREE tickets†
- ✓ Opportunities to be actively involved in our productions
- ✓ Opportunity to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Access to iQ – the members-only website: [members.questors.org.uk](http://members.questors.org.uk)
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on iQ and email newsletter
- ✓ Receive the regular programme leaflet
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Special invitations, events and offers not available to the public
- ✓ Ticket reservation facility (conditions apply)
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

*\*Reduced prices exclude certain events. †Under 18, excludes certain events, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by the member.*

### Getting the most from your membership

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved front-of-house or backstage. Volunteer help is always needed for selling programmes or stewarding, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerised system. To meet members in a social setting, volunteer to help behind the Grapevine bar. Backstage staff including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, sound and lighting designers and operators, painters, wardrobe and costume and set designers are always welcomed; whatever your skills, we'll find a place for you. We also have courses for those wishing to direct.

The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

### The Questors Youth Theatre – QYT

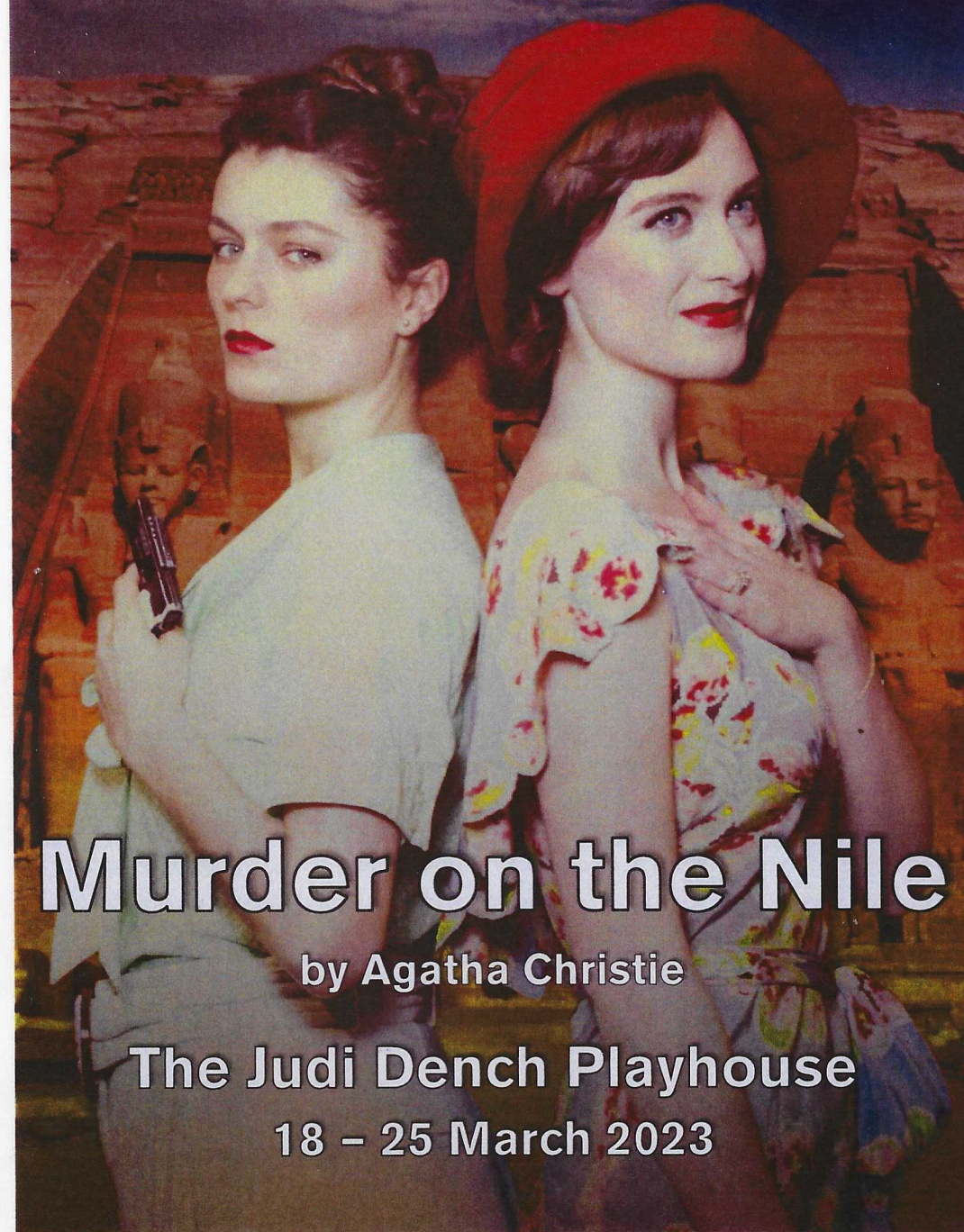
Our Youth Theatre, QYT, runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 18. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages at weekday teatime. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! Details are online at [questors.org.uk/qyt](http://questors.org.uk/qyt).

The Questors Theatre  
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ  
Registered Charity No. 207516

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The Questors  
THEATRE



# Murder on the Nile

by Agatha Christie

The Judi Dench Playhouse

18 – 25 March 2023



## Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, snacks and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre café stop or interval ice-cream.



Place your interval order before the show to beat the crowds.

Open before and during the interval of all Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances.

Find **Fields** on **Facebook**.

## The Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members and Friends of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as audience members on show nights.

The club is open six nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes, and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers.

We are the proud holders of a Cask Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2023 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are **CAMRA West Middlesex Club of the Year**. A choice of at least three real ales is usually available, including Fuller's London Pride. We also provide a range of draught lagers and ciders, as well as wines, spirits and soft drinks – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours (subject to change):

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (Monday – Saturday)

Sunday lunchtime: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

See [questors.org.uk/grapevine](https://questors.org.uk/grapevine) for more details.

**Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.**



image: Evelina Plonyte

# Murder on the Nile

by Agatha Christie

**The Judi Dench Playhouse**

**18 – 25 March 2023**



# MURDER ON THE NILE

## Agatha Christie, Mystery and The Questors...

This is the first time that The Questors has ever staged an Agatha Christie, which in 90+ years is a bit of a mystery in itself. It may be that the choice of plays open to us is so huge that Christie was often on the list and just never made the season cut. But suffice it to say, I feel honoured to be the director to create the world of Agatha for the first time in our Playhouse.

71 years ago, in 1952, *The Mousetrap* opened in London's West End, and is still running. Christie's formula of creating an unlikely 'villain' with complex motives has intrigued for over a century, and *The Mousetrap* is a perfect example – and no I'm not telling!

Christie had written a number of plays and books before this, of course, and *Murder on the Nile* opened at The Wimbledon Theatre in 1945, before playing at The Ambassadors from March 1946.

In her foreword to the book, *Death on the Nile*, from which the play is taken, Christie says, "My friend, Francis L. Sullivan, liked the book so much that he kept urging me to adapt it for the stage, which in the end I did."

The original book is quite different. Many characters are differently named, there are more of them, a more complex plot, and more murder! But the chief difference is the absence of Hercule Poirot from the play. Rumour has it that she had tired of the character of Poirot and wanted to exclude him from the stage version. She managed to persuade her friend Sullivan about this and promised that she'd write the role of a church canon for him. But it seems he only played the role in Dundee Repertory where it premiered, and he didn't transfer to the London cast.

## Life of an author

Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born on 15 September 1890 into a wealthy upper middle class family in Torquay, Devon, and was largely home-schooled. In 1905, her mother sent her to Paris, where she was educated in a series of *pensionnats* (boarding schools). After completing her education, Christie returned to England to find her mother ailing. They decided to spend the winter of 1907-1908 in the warm climate of Egypt, which was then a regular tourist destination for wealthy Britons. They were there for three months with Christie attending many social functions. After returning, Christie developed her social whirl and was introduced to Archibald 'Archie' Christie at a society dance. Archie proposed marriage three months later and they were married on Christmas Eve 1914, when he was home on leave from France. Christie involved herself in the war effort, first as a voluntary nurse, then from 1917 in the chemist dispensary after qualifying as an apothecary's assistant, giving her a working knowledge of medicines and poisons that featured in many of her novels, short stories, and plays. She had one daughter, Rosalind, and continued her writing, becoming increasingly successful.



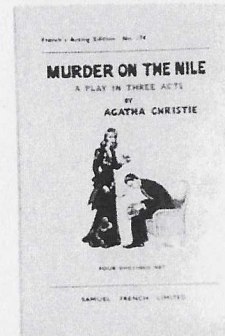
## Gone...

Her infamous 'disappearance' in December 1926 caused a national furore and made international headlines. Rewards were offered, thousands of volunteers and police joined the search, and airplanes searched the rural landscape. She was eventually located, eleven days later, at the Swan Hotel in Harrogate, Yorkshire, and opinion is divided over the reasons behind her disappearance. But Archie's affair and request for divorce and the death of her beloved mother were surely factors. She makes no mention of this period in her autobiography, merely saying, "So, after illness, came sorrow, despair and heartbreak. There is no need to dwell on it."

On another trip to the Middle East in 1930, she met archaeologist Max Mallowan, who was to become her second husband. She accompanied Mallowan on his archaeological expeditions, and her travels with him contributed background to several of her novels. He was knighted for his archaeological work in 1968, she was named a Dame in 1971, and they remained married until her death. Dame Agatha Christie, Lady Mallowan, died in January 1976 aged 85.

## Christie stats

Agatha Christie was a prolific writer, said to average a novel a year, writing 66 detective novels, 15 short-story collections and 20 plays (including radio and TV plays). She also wrote six romantic novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott as well as two autobiographies. Named the 'Queen of Crime' her novels and short stories sold over two billion copies, and the Guinness World Records lists Christie as the best-selling fiction writer of all time; numbers surpassed only by the works of William Shakespeare and the Bible. She is also the most translated individual author in the world, her books having been translated into more than 100 languages.



Christie's stage play *The Mousetrap* holds the world record for the longest initial run: by September 2018 there had been more than 27,500 performances.

Her novel *And Then There Were None* is one of the top-selling books of all time, with approximately 100 million copies sold. In September 2015, it was named the 'World's Favourite Christie' in a vote sponsored by the author's estate. More than 30 feature films are based on her work and many of Christie's books and short stories have been adapted for television, radio, graphic novels and even video games.

It has been a pleasure to revisit a classic of my youth, having appeared in Rep in Scotland in this play in the 80s. I remember nothing of my original encounter save a pink beret I was required to wear – happily, that costume decision has not been repeated!

Thanks must be given to my lovely creative crew and designers who have painstakingly brought Egypt, Abu Simbel and the Lotus to life. Thanks also to my lovely cast who were happy to delve into Christie's details, and help us all navigate the plot entanglements and the direction of travel.

We hope you enjoy your trip.

**Lucy Aley-Parker, Director**



# MURDER ON THE NILE

by Agatha Christie

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 18 March 2023

## CAST

in order of appearance

|                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Steward                     | <b>Nigel Lawrence</b>        |
| 1st Beadseller              | <b>Nicola Littlewood</b>     |
| 2nd Beadseller              | <b>Vanda Ladeira</b>         |
| Miss Helen Ffoliot-ffoulkes | <b>Alison Griffin</b>        |
| Christina Grant             | <b>Holly Braine</b>          |
| William Smith               | <b>Guy Jack</b>              |
| Louise                      | <b>Nicola Ditter</b>         |
| Dr Bessner                  | <b>David Hovatter</b>        |
| Kay Mostyn                  | <b>Alexandra Upton</b>       |
| Simon Mostyn                | <b>River Apparicio</b>       |
| Canon Ambrose Pennefather   | <b>Mark Redrup</b>           |
| Jacqueline de Severac       | <b>Alexandra Rose Wilson</b> |
| McNaught                    | <b>Julian Casey</b>          |

**Setting:** The observation deck of the paddle steamer Lotus on the Nile between Shellal and Wadi Halfa

**ACT I:** at Shellal – late afternoon

**ACT II Sc 1:** by the temple of Abu Simbel, three days later – evening after dinner

### Interval

**ACT II Sc 2:** the same – five minutes later

**ACT III:** the same – next morning

The play lasts approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes including a 20-minute interval

## PRODUCTION

|                            |                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Director                   | <b>Lucy Aley-Parker</b>                                                                                                                           |
| Set Designer               | <b>Alex Marker</b>                                                                                                                                |
| Costume Designer           | <b>Jenny Richardson</b>                                                                                                                           |
| Lighting Designer          | <b>Andrew Whadcoat</b>                                                                                                                            |
| Sound Designer             | <b>Martin Choules</b>                                                                                                                             |
| Stage Manager              | <b>Jane Casey</b>                                                                                                                                 |
| Deputy Stage Manager       | <b>Emma Hunt</b>                                                                                                                                  |
| Assistant Stage Managers   | <b>Kennet Kärema, Prashant Tailor</b>                                                                                                             |
| Properties                 | <b>Joanna Mludzinska</b>                                                                                                                          |
| Set Dresser                | <b>Ian Black</b>                                                                                                                                  |
| Miss ff's Costumes by      | <b>Karen Latimer</b>                                                                                                                              |
| Hair and Make-Up           | <b>Pauline Hudson, Peter Wang,</b><br>students of West Thames College                                                                             |
| Lighting & Sound Operators | <b>Colette Green, Derek Stoddart</b>                                                                                                              |
| Lighting Rigger            | <b>Terry Mummery</b>                                                                                                                              |
| Set Constructors/Painters  | <b>Ian Black, Mike Chislett,</b><br><b>Parm Choudhry, Cecily Johnson,</b><br><b>Katarzyna Kryńsk, Derek Stoddart,</b><br><b>Sabrina Stoecklin</b> |
| Photographer               | <b>Evelina Plonytė</b>                                                                                                                            |
| Videographer               | <b>Robert Vass</b>                                                                                                                                |
| Thanks to                  | <b>London Removals</b> for delivery of furniture                                                                                                  |

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices. The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.  
Thank you.



# Biographies

## **River Apparicio – Simon Mostyn**

River joined The Questors in 2019 and graduated with Student Group 74, with which he appeared in *Loveplay*. Prior to that he appeared in various plays for the Beaufort Players in Ealing and Argosy Players in Ruislip. He studied Creative Writing and Film at De Monfort University in Leicester and his hobbies include writing and badminton.

## **Holly Braine – Christina Grant**

This is Holly's debut appearance at The Questors. Having spent much of her time at the University of Cambridge acting in all manner of productions, she took a break from performance to establish a career in the fine art world. Today she is an auctioneer and Director of Impressionist and Modern Art at Sotheby's auction house. It is her huge pleasure and privilege to be returning to the stage now under Lucy's directorship to play the equitable Christina.

## **Julian Casey – McNaught**

Julian became a Questors Acting member in 2006 and has played a wide variety of parts since then, including: *India Gate* (Mountbatten/Lutyens), *Whipping It Up* (Alistair), *Days of Significance* (Lenny), *Rutherford and Son* (Martin), *The Bear* (Smirnov), *Season's Greetings* (Neville), *Measure for Measure* (Pompey), *She Stoops to Conquer* (Mr Hardcastle), *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Giant Blunderbore), *50 Years of the Playhouse* (CSM Rivers), *West 5 Story* (George) and *Dracula – Fangs of Destiny* (Dracula/Van Helsing).

## **Nicola Ditter – Louise**

Nicola is a German actress, who came to London 10 years ago to pursue acting. She graduated from the University of Central Lancashire in 2018 and has been working as an actress, voice-over and dubbing-artist ever since, in addition to her work as a German freelance dubbing-scriptwriter. *Murder on The Nile* is her second play at The Questors, after playing Erica in *The Water's Edge* in 2021.

## **Alison Griffin – Miss Helen Ffoliot-ffoulkes**

Alison has performed in a number of Questors productions since 2015, including *All My Sons*, *Season's Greetings*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Lying Kind*, *Improbable Fiction*, *Rhinoceros*, *What the Dickens?*, *Contractions*, two Questivals and 10 Overnight Plays. She directed her first Questors production, *On Me* in July 2022 as part of the Questors New Writing Festival. Alison hopes to be part of the Overnight Plays this year, performing at The Questors on Easter Monday.

## **David Hovatter – Dr Bessner**

Having just directed a Playhouse show (*Little Dorrit*), David now finds himself acting there (the last time was in a workshop version of *India Gate*). Recently he was in *Dear Brutus* in the Studio and before that he devised and directed *The Dog & the Scarf*, also in the Studio. During the pandemic, David devised the outdoor shows, *Bard in the Yard* and *What the Dickens?*

## **Guy Jack – William Smith**

Guy is excited to be rediscovering the intricacies of a comedic role after some time away from characters with a lighter shade. *Murder on the Nile* is Guy's second full production with The Questors, following *Haunting Julia*, and, thanks to the warmth and focus of its members, he can say he is looking forward to joining a third production in the near future.

## **Vanda Ladeira – 2nd Beadseller**

As a student at Questors Acting for All, Vanda is an aspiring actor who had the privilege of joining the cast of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in 2006. She feels working with a talented ensemble is an incredible opportunity, and is excited to join the cast of *Murder on the Nile*, and to continue exploring roles on stage, having played a few parts in short films.

## **Nigel Lawrence – Steward**

An acting member for 35 years, Nigel has played a wide variety of roles ranging from D'Avalos in John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* (1988) to John Durbeyfield in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (2018). An award-winning poet, he recently performed his own 'literary parodies' in January's Comedy Variety Show and one of his own short stories in February's Questanory 2, one of the theatre's QExtra events.

## **Nicola Littlewood – 1st Beadseller**

Nicola became an acting member and was an acting ASM in *Twelfth Night* in 2016. She has since played Ramia in *Galatea* in 2017, Lady Caroline in *Dear Brutus* in 2021/22, and performed in *Four Stars* in the Questors Power Plays, in *False Widow* as part of Welcome to Stepford, in the Overnight Plays, and played Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 2022.

## **Mark Redrup – Canon Ambrose Pennefather**

Mark has been acting for The Questors since 1990, appearing in around 70 shows, recently seen as King Arthur in *King Arthur and the Twelfth Knight*. Previous priest parts include Rev. Samuel Gardner in *Mrs Warren's Profession* (2013) and Rev. Samuel Parris in *The Crucible* (2015).

## **Alexandra Upton – Kay Mostyn**

Alexandra is thrilled to be taking part in her first Questors production. Previous credits include Pamela/Annabella in *The 39 Steps*, Julia in *1984*, Helena and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Mary Warren in *The Crucible*. She has also sung The Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* and Mabel in *The Pirates of Penance* at the Edinburgh Fringe.

## **Alexandra Rose Wilson – Jacqueline de Severac**

Since studying Acting at UCLan, Alexandra has worked on numerous film productions, and will be appearing in the upcoming documentary series *Billionaire Blooms*. This is Alexandra's second production at The Questors, previously appearing in *Pride and Prejudice* as Jane Bennet.



### Alex Marker – Set Designer

Alex joined The Questors in 1988, and is currently the artistic director of The Questors Theatre and director of Questors Youth Theatre. Trained as a stage designer at Wimbledon School of Art, he has designed over 150 productions from the fringe to the West End. Recent Questors design credits include: *The Light Burns Blue*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and the pantomime *King Arthur and the Twelfth Knight* in which he also appeared as Merlin the Magician.

[www.alexmarker.com](http://www.alexmarker.com)

### Lucy Aley-Parker – Director

Lucy graduated from Webber Douglas many years ago. An acting member since 2008, she's played many enjoyable roles since her Questors debut as Smeraldina in *A Servant to Two Masters* – which also toured to Venice. Her most recent Questors appearance was as a NYC/Brooklyn 'cleaner' in the New Writing Festival last year. She has directed a variety of plays at The Questors, including *Days of Significance* by Roy Williams, *Animal Farm* with QYT and *The Water's Edge* by Theresa Rebeck in 2021.

As an actor she is represented by [www.ccmactors.com](http://www.ccmactors.com).

### Martin Choules – Sound Designer

Martin has recently designed the sound for *Haunting Julia*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Loveplay*, *Dear Brutus*, *Strange Orchestra*, *Fault Lines*, *Future Conditional*, *Absent Friends*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Animal Farm*, *Improbable Fiction*, *The Exonerated*, *Rhinoceros*, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* and *NSFW*.

### Jenny Richardson – Costume Designer

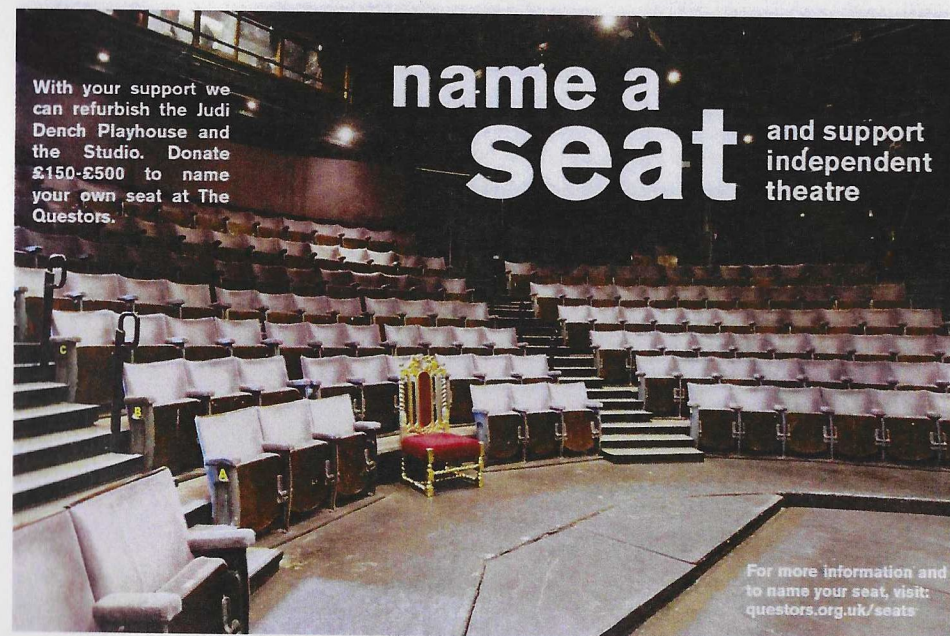
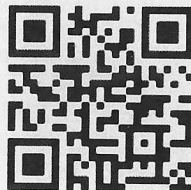
After many years working in stage management, props and set design, Jenny enjoyed a change of direction to costume design, recently for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Little Dorrit*, *Peregrine Proteus*, *Hangmen*, *Apologia*, *The Children*, *First Love is the Revolution* and *Fault Lines*. Jenny is frequently in demand as an upholsterer.

### Andrew Whadcoat – Lighting Designer

Recent lighting designs include *Not About Heroes*, *The Dog & the Scarf*, *The Ghost Train*, *Haunting Julia*, *Peregrine Proteus*, *Little Dorrit* and the Caryl Churchill double bill. He has also designed for AppEaling Theatre, Idle Discourse, Orange Moon and PlayGCTheatre at The Questors and other venues.

## Show Feedback Form

Your thoughts and opinions are important to us. Please scan the QR code with your camera phone to fill out our anonymous show feedback form. This is so we can continually improve our audience experience and our productions. Thank you so much for coming to visit The Questors Theatre. We hope that you enjoyed the show.



## Next at The Questors

### THE GUT GIRLS

by Sarah Daniels

24 March – 1 April 2023

The Studio

Set in late Victorian England, this captivating play explores the lives of five women working in an uncouth 'gutting' shed. But when their livelihoods are put under the knife, can a lady from the gentry turn things around?

A keenly observed, darkly comic drama, revealing the harsh realities of working-class women in the depths of Deptford. This atmospheric production of Sarah Daniels' critically acclaimed, gritty play will be staged by The Questors Student Group.

### MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by William Shakespeare

28 April – 6 May 2023

The Judi Dench Playhouse

Sicily, 1920: the war is over, and the soldiers return home to let their hair down and fall in love. Young Claudio is smitten with virginal and beautiful Hero, while clever Benedick and Beatrice ignite an old flame, with a little help from meddling friends. Add a villain of the piece and a group of home guard worthies who lack every qualification for the job, and the fun is complete. Shakespeare's greatest romantic comedy is the perfect post-pandemic treat. Don't miss the party!