

Thank you for joining us to celebrate Riding Mill Drama Club's 75th anniversary.

If you've enjoyed watching and thought, "I'd like to try this", then give it a go. We welcome anyone with or without any experience. You might fancy treading the boards or doing an equally important back stage role - there are loads - wardrobe, publicity, props, tech, stage manager, front of house etc. Speak to a member tonight or get in touch through our website, Ridingmilledramaclub.com where you can also find details of up-coming events, future and past productions as well as entertaining videos and archive photographs.

Our next production is
26th, 27th, 28th March 2026

Thank you to

Riding Mill Village Hall Trust, Riding Mill Methodist Chapel
and all the clubs who have altered their schedules

Ian Wylie for Studio photographs
Matthew Lewis for poster design
Members and friends for the loan of furniture, props and costumes
Vintage at the Tower, Corbridge
Core Furniture Hexham



27th—29th November 2025

Riding Mill Parish Hall

This amateur production of "Murder in the Studio"
is presented by arrangement with
Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.
www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

Welcome to Riding Mill in 1950. The world is recovering from the terror and upheaval of wartime. Petrol is no longer rationed but you still need ration books for sweets, butter, cheese and meat. The village is quieter now that temporary wartime offices like Vickers Armstrong have moved back to Newcastle. Evacuees have left and people have returned to their normal occupations. The Drama Club formed by the local WI has just put on its first production.

So our play begins. Great excitement has been building in anticipation of the out-side broadcast by the "BBC Radio Players". Two Agatha Christie radio plays, Yellow Iris & Personal Call, will be transmitted with a live audience. You will meet the acting troupe as they arrive. Their rivalries and secrets will be revealed as you eavesdrop on their conversations - and another mystery will unfold during the evening.

Our local villagers from the time will show you to your seats and sell you raffle tickets, drinks and ice creams. Enjoy this immersive experience!!

From 1950 Riding Mill

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| RMDC President, Mrs Mitcalfe | Anne Lawrence |
| RMDC Vice-President, Mrs Evelyn Gaskell | Hazel Osmond |
| Mrs Edith Bell | Hayley Reece |
| Mrs Lizzie Forrest | Angela Routledge |
| Mr Jack Forrest | Sandy Gardner |
| Mrs Gladys Forster | Sarah Amies |
| Mrs Nancy Hibbert | Helen Sanderson |
| Mrs Florence Meek | Cecilia Bridges |
| WPC Mavis Barker | Carole Smith |
| Foley Artists | |
| Miss Prudence Fothergill | Helen Mason |
| George the handyman | Bill Mulligan |

From 1950 "BBC"

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| Announcer, Mr Alvar Lidell | Kris Andersen |
| Patrick Blake | Shaun Fenwick |
| Grace Deveraux | Frances Hewitt |
| Pippa Green | Susan Joyce |
| Millicent Millais | Liesl Allcock |
| Fintan Peebles | Mike Smith |
| Jenny Simpson | Carrie Craig-Gilby |
| Greg Williams | Mike Routledge |
| Freddie Winterbourne | Nic Tortice |
| Lilian Thomas | Carolyn Hagger |

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| The BBC Radio Songsters | Lee Falkingham, Carolyn Hagger, Mike Routledge and Sharon Thompson |
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Jenny Simpson (Carrie Craig-Gilby)



I am privileged to be gracing the airwaves as part of the BBC Radio Players in Murder in the Studio, I am told that I am a force of nature wrapped in a sensible cardigan and armed with a teacup full of sass. Hailing from somewhere between a stage door and a scandal, I have acted from the age of five. In Tyneside I was cast in Babes in Woods and following this debut I became a member of three Dramatic societies where I was "spotted" in Blithe Spirit when I under-studied following sickness amongst the cast. Now I am a veteran of the wireless with a voice like warm treacle and a tongue sharp enough to slice through any diva's ego!! I have performed everywhere from the Sunderland Empire to the back corridors of Broadcasting House on programmes ranging from long-running soaps to children's entertainment. I am a member of the BBC's repertory company, a resource of 50 actors maintained for the broadcaster's dramas after the war. I am currently married to Colin a set designer for the RSC

Lilian Thomas (Carolyn Hagger)



Born in the Angel, Islington, as Lilian Mary White, the songstress later adopted the stage name Lilian Thomas in loving memory of her late father. From her earliest days, he fostered in young Lilian a deep affection for music. It was under his encouragement that she first lent her voice to local public houses and working men's clubs, delighting audiences even as a child.

In the years since, Miss Thomas has earned distinction as a solo vocalist of fine repute, whilst also sharing the stage with many celebrated names both at home and abroad, notably Vera Lynn, Gracie Fields, Ronnie Scott, and Perry Como. She appeared on Perry Como's radio programme—the first ever to be transmitted from an aeroplane in flight, back in 1946. Alongside Jo Stafford, the Lloyd Shaffer Orchestra, and the programme's crew, the performance took place some 20,000 feet above the earth, where, owing to the impracticality of stands, hand-held microphones were employed throughout.

As her career continues to flourish, Miss Thomas stands poised to become one of the foremost vocalists of the coming decade—a true chanteuse of distinction and charm.

Millicent Millais (Liesl Allcock)



Milly trained with the Conibear Dance School from the age of 5, before graduating from the Italia Conti Academy in 1948. Her performance as Elvira in Noel Coward's delightful play *Blithe Spirit* won her critical acclaim as most promising newcomer to the London stage last year. She is thrilled to be performing with Mr Patrick Blake in her first appearance with the BBC Radio Players.

Greg Williams (Mike Routledge)



Hailing from Yorkshire, Mr Williams is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His theatre and television work is extensive. During the war he continued to appear in West End theatre when enemy bombing allowed. His most recent roles have been in *Uncle Vanya*, *Arms and the Man* and *The Seagull*. He appreciates this opportunity to join the BBC Radio Players bringing quality live productions to the masses.

Fintan Peebles (Mike Smith)



Originally from Ecclefechan in Scotland. Toured with ENSA during the War and then joined the BBC Repertory Company on demob. He has played a number of parts in broadcast radio and onstage throughout the country. He has been a member of this company for two years. He is especially in demand for parts on radio, courtesy of his facility with a range of accents, some of which you will hear this evening.

2025 Behind the scenes team

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| Directed and additional script by | Jean Buckley |
| Producer | Christine Evans |
| Set Designer, construction and Stage Manager | Matthew Osmond |
| Sound | Simon Probyn |
| Lighting | Molly Agar, David Irwin |
| Props | Pat Harvey |
| Wardrobe | Judy Wilthew, Bettina. Ayre, Pat Harvey |
| Set construction | John Hagger, Colin Craig-Gilby |
| Publicity | Julian Menes, and cast members |
| Bar | Colin Craig-Gilby |
| | Colin Craig-Gilby, Sharon Thompson, |
| | Judith and Julian Menes, |
| | Marie Douglas |
| Box office | Christine Andersen |

Act One

Yellow Iris by Agatha Christie.

Music by Alexander Bermange

Set in the restaurant of the Hotel Jardin Des Cygnes

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| Pauline Weatherby | Millicent Millais |
| Senora Lola Valdez | Grace Deveraux |
| Hercule Poirot | Patrick Blake |
| Anthony Chappell | Freddie Winterbourne |
| Barton Russell | Fintan Peebles |
| Stephen Carter | Greg Williams |
| Waiter | Alvar Lidell |
| Attendant | Jenny Simpson |
| Compere | Pippa Green |
| Singer | Lilian Thomas |

Interval 20mins during which drinks and ices will be on sale and the raffle drawn.

Act Two

Alvar Lidell introduces the cast for-

Personal Call. An Agatha Christie mystery which opens at a cocktail party given by James and Pam Brent in their Kensington home.

Please switch off your mobile phones (whatever they are!)
No recording or photos during the performance.

Alvar Lidell (Kris Andersen)



It is my privilege to be part of the show this evening bringing some gravitas and real-life historical accuracy to the proceedings.

I joined BBC Birmingham as chief announcer in 1932, moving to London the next year.

I had the responsibility of announcing the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 and reading the ultimatum to Germany on 3rd September 1939. During the war I was part of a team of newsreaders employed by the War Office and served for one year in the RAF as an intelligence officer.

After the war I was appointed chief announcer for the Third Programme in 1946.

Patrick Blake. (Shaun Fenwick)



Always the star of the show, Mr Blake is a familiar face to audiences in British films and on television. In Richmond he honed his craft in weekly rep acting in (and sometimes directing) an impressive range of classical and modern titles. His Shylock, Jack Manningham (Gaslight), Othello and more recently Konstantin (The Seagull) are some of his most memorable roles. With his beloved wife Grace by his side, he is delighted to be leading this evening's outside broadcast. A little diversion before Hollywood beckons!

Pippa Green (Susan Joyce)



Born in Canterbury, my father and I regularly visited our local theatre and it was here that I was inspired to take to the stage. Miss Grace Deveraux saw my Portia at the Canterbury Repertory Theatre and generously offered to become my mentor. I now have the utmost privilege to be personal assistant to Miss Deveraux and her husband, Mr Patrick Blake.

Grace Deveraux (Frances Hewitt)



Originally from Wakefield, Miss Deveraux came to the attention of John Gielgud when appearing at the Leeds Grand Theatre. He persuaded her to join the Old Vic where she starred alongside Ralph Richardson and Vivien Leigh in the 1938 production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* playing Hermia and meeting Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, who famously got entangled with Titania and Oberon's crowns! During the war she toured with ENSA alongside Patrick Blake who later became her husband in a highly publicised wedding. They have since starred together in numerous plays in London's West End, most recently *The Seagull*. Sadly, a short illness prevented her from taking the role of Laura in the film *Brief Encounter*, although she was admirably understudied by Celia Johnson. Miss Deveraux is extremely popular with our BBC Radio Players audience and kindly agreed to perform tonight beside her husband in Agatha Christie's *Yellow Iris* and *Personal Call* before travelling to Hollywood, where she is due to star with Olivia de Havilland in *The Queen of Sheba*.

Freddie Winterbourne (Nic Tortice)



Freddie Winterbourne is delighted to return to the north east tonight playing Anthony Chappell in *Yellow Iris* and Evan Curtis in *Personal Call*. Originally from Northumberland, he was encouraged to join the family's law firm and train as a barrister. However, he joined a local rep theatre as an outlet for his artistic nature and soon realised that this was his calling.

He graduated from RADA in the early 1930s, under Sir Kenneth Barnes before returning north to perform at the Newcastle Playhouse and the Sunderland Empire.

During the war, he toured with the Old Vic, bringing Shakespeare to audiences across Britain, and later starred in productions at the Liverpool Playhouse and Theatre Royal, Bath. Now as a seasoned member of the BBC Radio Players, he is known for his sharp wit and keen observations. Freddie is a confirmed bachelor with a taste for dahlias (his "Flaming Fireball" won Best in Show three years running), greyhound racing (his beloved "Mrs Tiddles" wears a custom silk collar), and a collection of antique fountain pens so extensive it once caused a minor scandal at Sotheby's.