

## The Murder Mystery evening of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009: “Who killed the School Caretaker ?”

Another year and another SLT /PTA Murder Mystery evening! Teddington school hall in January is like the village of Midsomer- a dangerous place to be, but also a popular one. Our narrator for the evening, Dr Hui, led us through the fatal events and the competition’s many pieces of paper.

For the third Murder Mystery the setting was back to a school one, Toddington on Sea School ( “Good School with outstanding features” OFSTED 2009) on an Inset day, where the caretaker Steve Hartley ( played with a convincing Yorkshire accent and flatcap by Mr Ainley), a whiskey loving but work-shy caretaker, was dead by the first act.

Fortunately the second act saw the arrival of Inspector Parrot ( played with a determined Belgium accent and even more determined moustache by Mr Watling) to interview all the suspects and review the events leading to the murder. First to be interviewed had to be the Headteacher Miss Smythe ( played by Mr McGrath in a gown and bosom both designed and made by Ms de Brett ), who seemed short of school funds and very upset by the caretaker’s treatment of his assistant.



The assistant caretaker, Dickie (played by Mr Weeks and a Churchill the dog accent) had every reason to dislike Mr Hartley and had a bewildering array of caretaking tools and implements that could have been used to kill him. The school librarian, Shirley Clarkson ( played by Ms Corston with a variety of northern accents), who preferred to dress in the uniform of her previous job as a nurse, had access to a lot of medicines which she could have used to kill Steve, even though she was having an affair with him.

Then there was the local builder, Henry Morgan (played by Mr Law with the hairstyle/wig and moustache of a 70s Lothario) who had agreed to pay Steve a bribe to ensure he got the school’s building contract but found the building was not to go ahead. Other suspects included the art teacher, Rosemary Fielding (played by Ms Shaw as an art-loving fitness fiend), being blackmailed by Steve for completing her students’ art coursework, and also the

Head of Drama, Gerald Clarkson ( played in a suitably dramatic costume by Mr Jacobs), a thespian of the old school, angry because the lazy caretaker had not built his school play's set.



By the end of Act 2 the audience had to make up their minds and name the murderer and his/her accomplice; they could then enjoy and wonder at Act 3's convoluted and unbelievable denouement. Who could believe Inspector Parrot ( pronounced Par-row, not Parotte) as he revealed that Mr Weeks was Mr McGrath's son, that Mr Law loved Ms Shaw but she loved Mr Jacobs- and nobody seemed to love Ms Corston except dead Mr Ainley ? Surely it wasn't too difficult to work out that the murderer was out for revenge, not a valuable painting, and that he and his accomplice had escaped the caretaker's office, by climbing up a rope and through the stage floor trapdoor?

The very enjoyable evening with a very forgiving audience was another great success and excellent fundraiser, with the PTA organising an excellent supper, bar and prizes. Ms Watts provided back stage support, Ms de Brett applied the make-up and Ms Hannan, assisted by Isaac Whittingham of 9AS, set up the lighting.

