

How many times do we as Expat Brits rush back home bypassing one of life's most unique and very British Traditions - visiting the theatre in London. During this last summer we were able to indulge and enjoy the wonderful ambience and history. We would like to take a few minutes of your time to share a few memories.

Our first theatre date was:

The Mousetrap
St Martin's Theatre

Agatha Christie didn't invent the English country house mystery, in which the murderer is someone in This Room, but she perfected it in her early novels by masterfully playing with the conventions of the genre so that the murderer was always the last person you'd guess.

And so it is with The Mousetrap. A modest little whodunit of the sort that appeared every season, The Mousetrap opened in November 1952 and ran and ran. And somewhere around the tenth year it began to be a hit because it was a hit, as the attraction became "that long-running play" as much as its own merits. Now it's over 50 years old, and as obligatory a stop for the London tourist as the Changing of the Guard. So it hardly matters what I say about it, does it?

A motley group of people are snowbound in a country hotel when murder strikes. Whodunit — the mysterious foreign gentleman, the strange young man the retired major our too-normal-looking host and hostess? At the end of every performance there's a curtain speech begging

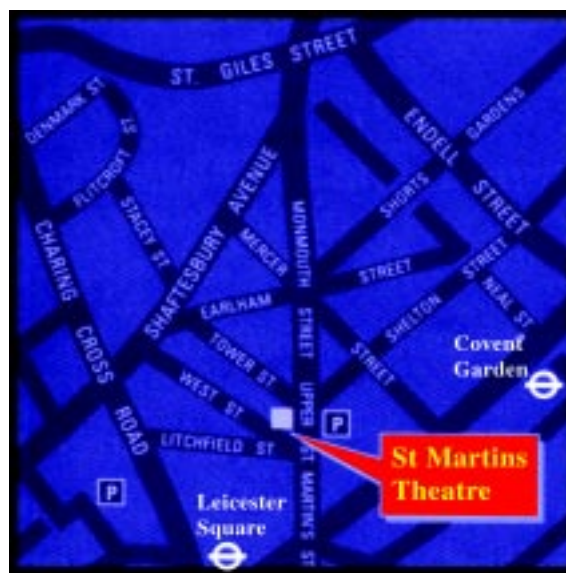


you not to tell your friends, so I won't cheat. I'll just assure you that, when you and your friends try to guess during the interval, you will all be wrong. And so it is almost certain that you'll enjoy The Mousetrap, because it will fool you. I should warn you that you take a chance on the acting and actors. Though the original cast, back in 1952, featured Richard Attenborough (more recently director of Gandhi and star of Jurassic Park) by now each new cast is made up of journeyman actors happy for a year's work, and the producers won't allow too much individuality to rock the boat.

Chances are that, once the delight of not having guessed wears off, The Mousetrap will fade in your memory. When you plan your next trip home or to the UK make sure you include this one in your travels.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II graciously attended the 50th Anniversary Royal Gala Performance on 25th November 2002, pictured here with Lord Attenborough, one of the show's original stars.



St Martins Theatre is on West Street which runs off Shaftesbury Avenue. The theatre is only a 3 minute walk from either the Covent Garden or the Leicester Square tube stations.