

Debbie McGee to make her acting debut as a kooky psychic in Peter James' supernatural thriller 'The House on Cold Hill' at The Mill at Sonning from 23 April - 13 June 2020



Debbie McGee is to make her stage acting debut as a kooky psychic in the thriller 'The House on Cold Hill', by the No.1 best-selling author Peter James, at The Mill at Sonning.

Best known as the assistant and wife of the late magician Paul Daniels, Debbie wowed the country on the last series of 'Strictly Come Dancing'. She hosts a regular Sunday morning show on BBC Radio Berkshire and is a recurring member of ITV's 'Loose Women' panel. She said: "I am overflowing with excitement and nerves for my stage acting debut, I have always wanted to act and because I love The Mill so much I cannot think of a better venue to step into this new world. When Paul and I first started going to see productions at the Mill 20 years ago, we were amazed at the quality of the plays in such a small venue. But it is actually the intimacy that makes The Mill so special."

Director Keith Myers said: "'The House on Cold Hill' is the third Peter James thriller I will have the pleasure to direct for the wonderful Mill at Sonning, and now that pleasure is enhanced by the lovely Debbie McGee joining us to play the whacky psychic, Annie. I'm sure anyone who has seen her on stage or TV will agree with me that she is a natural comedienne."

A ghostly story of the Harcourt family, who move into the house of their dreams that has been empty for the last 40 years. However, their dream home quickly turns into the stuff of nightmares as they begin to wonder whether they may not be the only residents at Cold Hill...

'The House on Cold Hill' will run for 8 weeks from 23 April - 13 June at The Mill at Sonning.

Press are invited to review either

Wednesday 29 April at 8.15pm (two-course dinner in the restaurant before the show is included from 6.15pm to 8.00pm)

or Saturday 2 May at 2.15pm (two-course lunch in the restaurant before the show included from 12.15pm to 2.00pm)

Set majestically on the banks of the River Thames, the Mill at Sonning Theatre is celebrating more than 30 years of entertainment. Uniquely, as the only dinner theatre in the United Kingdom, it has gained unrivalled praise both nationally and internationally.



The Mill at Sonning prides itself on offering customers a unique Dinner-Theatre experience. Every ticket at The Mill includes a delicious home-cooked pre-show two-course meal.

The riverside restaurant, which overlooks the beautiful river Thames, has recently been refurbished and is now the perfect place to indulge before a show.

The first main course is served buffet style before our friendly team of waiters and waitresses help you to your table and take your dessert and drink orders.



THE MILL AT SONNING

There has been a mill at Sonning for many centuries. In the Domesday Book of 1086 three mills at 'Sonninges and Berrochescire' are mentioned. In the 1600s the rents for the mill went to the Royal Revenue.

During the Civil War when Cromwell had his headquarters in London and King Charles had his in Oxford, the troops met in the middle - Reading. It was Sonning which supplied the flour for the besieged garrison in the town. The site of the earliest Sonning mill could very well have been in a different place. Wooden buildings had a habit of burning down. The current one dates back to the 18th century but the main parts of the present theatre building are from around 1890. It was owned then by the Witherington family who added the top two storeys and the larger waterwheels for more power to drive the machinery. Around 1898 they put in a steam engine to supplement the water power.

The Phillimore family took over the mill in 1913 but they still traded under the name of C.H. Witherington and Sons Ltd. They remodelled the inside of the mill the following year. Up until 1950 the mill had its own fleet of barges which brought wheat from London right up to its door. In 1962, when the business was taken over by Associated British Foods Ltd., they remodelled yet again and introduced electric engines although the main source of power was still produced by the wheels.

When the mill closed in 1969, it was one of the last flour mills on the Thames driven by wheels. The new port mill at Tilbury had opened and Sonning, being much smaller could not compete economically. Also, one of Sonning's major customers, Huntley and Palmers, stopped making biscuits in Reading.

The mill remained empty until 1977. It was then that Tim and Eileen Richards, who had a great love of theatre, found the derelict building and decided to convert it into The Mill as it is today. Tim invited his brother Frank to join them and the transformation took four years to complete. THE MILL AT SONNING DINNER THEATRE opened on July 22nd 1982.

Sadly Frank Richards died in 1994, Tim Richards in 2002 and Eileen Richards in 2015. Her daughter Sally is now Managing Director of The Mill which continues to go from strength to strength thanks to its ever loyal staff and audience, having produced an abundance of plays and musicals.

In 1984 The Mill at Sonning was given a conservation award by The Times newspaper and The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for the design, restoration and conversion of the derelict mill into a dinner theatre.

It was named Most Welcoming Theatre by the Theatre Managers Association for the past three years running, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The House on Cold Hill

by Peter James

Adapted by Shaun McKenna

Directed by Keith Myers

The Mill at Sonning Theatre

Sonning Eye

Reading

RG4 6TY

Box Office: 0118 969 8000

www.millatsonning.com

23 April - 13 June, 2020

Evening shows: Tuesday - Saturday
at 8.15pm (dinner from 6.15pm)

Saturday matinees every week
Sunday matinees 3, 17, 31 May & 7 June
(lunch served from 12.15pm)

All tickets include a 2 course meal with
coffee, programme on your table and the
show

Tickets: from £54.00

Social

Facebook

@MillAtSonning

Twitter

@MillAtSonning

Instagram

@MillAtSonning

Getting to The Mill at Sonning

Rail:

The Mill is a 10 minute taxi ride from
Reading, Twyford, Earley and Wargrave
stations

Road:

From the M4 Junction 8/9:
Take the A404(M) to the A4, then follow the
B478

From the M4 Junction 10:
Take the A329(M) to the A4, then follow the
B478

From the A4155: Take the B478

There is ample car parking space available



T H E M I L L
S O N N I N G



**UK'S MOST
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THEATRE**
2016, 2017 & 2018