

18 July 2005



Sidmouth stars in murder mystery

The idyllic balmy summer days of pre and post-war England were recreated last week (12-15 July) as an episode of ITV's Miss Marple was filmed in Regency Sidmouth. And East Devon District Council played its part in making the location filming go smoothly for the crew and the town.

Visitors flocked to the seafront as Sidmouth, re-costumed as *Dillmouth*, became the backdrop for Granada television's filming of *Sleeping Murder*, starring Geraldine McEwan as the spinster sleuth.

Also in the town were other stars, including Russ Abbott, Dawn French, Martin Kemp, Sophia Myles and Sarah Parish.

With period costumes from the 1930s and 1950s, veteran vehicles parked on the Esplanade and even an authentic seafront shelter imported by the scenery team, the drama evoked memories of quieter, happier times when Sidmouth earned its reputation as a traditional bucket and spade resort.

East Devon District Council employees played a full part in helping Sidmouth look the part and EDDC's Economic Development Unit is also hoping the show will give the local economy a welcome shot in the arm.

Signs were cleaned, car park spaces were roped off and water was supplied to the crew's mobile canteen. Filming had been due to start on the Monday, but was delayed to enable Britain in Bloom judging to take place unimpaired.

The Council's road-sweeping machine was even called in after filming had finished to scrub off the paint used to obscure yellow lines on the road surface. Normally, the mixture of emulsion paint and washing-up liquid washes off easily, but several days of hot sun meant it had baked on hard and had to be scrubbed off mechanically!

The production should give a double boost to the town's tourism industry. Not only did crowds flock to Sidmouth as word of the filming spread, but many more holidaymakers are expected to visit next year after the episode is screened.

ENDS

See over for picture caption



Picture caption:

- **Can the camera lie? Sidmouth 2005 looks for all the world like the clock has been turned back 50 years, as vintage vehicles are parked on its Regency seafront. Picture: Paul Duriez.**

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