



Mordred



Electronic Press Pack
(production edition)

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2016

*The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company,
Presents*

Mordred



Projected running time: 250 mins

Genre: Action / fantasy / drama

Rating: 15 (projected)

Year: 2016 (release expected early 2017)

Language: English

Country of origin: England

Virtual Press Office: www.southdevonplayers.com/mordredpressoffice.html

Official links: Website: www.southdevonplayers.com

Facebook www.facebook.com/MordredTheMovie/

IMDb : www.imdb.com/title/tt5159008/

Indiegogo crowdfund : <https://igg.me/at/mordred2016/>

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Synopsis

“ I am what you forced me to become!”

Mordred

King Arthur has ruled Dumnonia, the South-west peninsula of Britain, after being chosen as the Pendragon, after his defeat of the Saxon sea-wolves, at the Battle of Badon Hill, at the age of sixteen. His elder sister, once the Arch-druidess of Dumnonia, Morgan, consumed with jealousy, plots against the Throne, and is banished from Dumnonia after the deaths of Arthur's first wife Anna, and his baby son.

Many years later, a young nobleman is found, poisoned, on the moors. Brought to the fort town Isca, by Arthur's warriors, he is revealed to be Mordred, illegitimate son of King Arthur and also the victim of plots by Morgan.

Father and son slowly come to trust one another, and eventually, Mordred, who is well liked by most of Arthur's followers, is chosen as Regent of Dumnonia, as Arthur battles a second Saxon invasion.

A gritty, dark and ultimately tragic tale, Mordred is an Arthurian-era drama, heavily influenced by the earliest legends of Mordred, who is traditionally seen as King Arthur's arch-nemesis, and illegitimate son. In the earlier legends, Mordred is much more of an ambiguous character, and not pure evil, as in modern re-tellings, this production tells of the legends, from Mordred's point of view.

This drama is set in the 530s, against the backdrop of the Saxon invasions, heavily influenced by Celtic legends and Druidic traditions, and the earliest tales of Arthur, and his followers.



Production commences

On May 7th, 2016, principal filming begins, for this ambitious local production. It has been a long run of rehearsals, fund-raising, publicising and making costumes & props.

The cast, consisting of actors from across Devon and Cornwall have worked incredibly hard since being cast in this production at the end of February 2016. Travelling from all over the Southwest for rehearsals twice a week, the cast have not only needed to learn a challenging, emotional, action-packed script, but also many skills of the historical period; for example how to fight with a round shield, spear and shortsword, as instructed by Chris Barnicoat, Kev Start and Dave Trowt, who are Dark Ages combat specialists, based in North Cornwall.

Filming will run through May and June, around Devon and Cornwall, at a wide variety of locations, including a castle, and a reconstructed Iron Age site.

Contrary to the usual glamorous medieval settings for many Arthurian adaptations, with knights in gleaming plate armour, and ladies in stunning court dresses; this is a very different production. Set in the early 6th Century, this drama is set within a very different landscape.

Following the departure of the Romans from Britain, the Southwest again became the Celtic kingdom of Dumnonia. At this point in history, the Saxons were raiding along the coast, much as the Vikings did, centuries later. Set against this backdrop, Arthur and his warriors, fight to defend Dumnonia, against invasion.

The timeline for this film came originally from the entry for the year 537AD in the *Annales Cambriae*;

537 The battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut fell: and there was plague in Britain and Ireland. “Medraut” was the name that in later legend, became Mordred. We went with the later name “Mordred” simply so that it would be more recognisable to modern audiences.

The Southwest is linked to a wide number of legends connected with King Arthur, and as we researched, we found yet more old stories, both of Mordred, and and of other, Mordred-like characters who almost never appear in modern adaptations of the legend. Piecing these together, against this dramatic, ever-changing landscape of the Dark Ages, and using peripheral history of the times – for example; as the Saxons began to expand their kingdom of Wessex, Cynric, who was the first king of Wessex, is also an important character in our drama – we created our own version of the legend, with a lot of the backdrop which would have existed in the time it is set.

After months of research, rehearsing and training, the cast are really excited to begin filming at last!



Director's Statement



One of the things I get asked most often, is “what is Mordred?” I grew up loving the legends of King Arthur. As I began watching Arthurian films, I began to notice something about the characterisation of Mordred. Usually shown as a simplistic “bad guy” who appears late in the story, and destroys Arthur, he is undeveloped, usually appearing insane, or at the very least power-crazed. There is little development of his story. And yet, reading the books, and many versions of the legends, he is a character with a powerful story of his own. Old Welsh legends speak of him being likeable, and modest, not the young warrior who strides into Arthur’s hall demanding to be knighted, and with malice from his first appearance, in films and later stories. Whether a legend describes him as a son of King Lot of Orkney; Morgan's and Arthur’s illegitimate son born of incest, or

the son of Morgause, another sister of Arthur, Mordred has a powerful story of his own.

First mentioned in the *Annales Cambriae*, written in the 10th century, in an entry dating the Battle of Camlann to the early 6th Century, stating that warriors named Arthur and Mordred both fell in battle, though nothing of their relationship.

Piecing the legends together, I began to wonder how a likable, modest, well-spoken-of, young warrior, could have become the hate-filled rebel who turned on, and destroyed Camelot, a beacon of honour and humanity. And thus, the tale dramatised in “Mordred” was born, linked to southwest legends of Arthur, and as much as is known of Devon and Cornwall (then Dumnonia), in the 6th Century.

In 2005, I, and three others, founded the South Devon Players Theatre Company. Born of frustration with the local lack of opportunity for local actors, we created our own team on the £80 proceeds of a carboot sale, specialising in newly researched and written drama.

It took years to get it off the ground. Lack of funds, rejection for grants as a newer team, difficulty in finding rehearsal spaces, as well as a great deal of suspicion of these younger people using new theatre techniques and approaches beyond the locally established “amdram”, and rumours travelling around that we were a group for alternative needs, resulting in being sent, with no prior consultation, people who could not cope with regular rehearsals, social/ team environments, or performing for high-octane period dramas, then fuelling gossip that we were not a serious team, and causing friction within the team thus pulling productions down the drain.

Slowly we fought through it (and still have to do so), staying true to the original intention, slowly meeting and bringing on board a strong core team of other actors and creative, also wanting to create opportunities and showcases. We have acted as a pool of performers for productions by companies such as the BBC, Smithsonian, Disney, ITV, and others, and are now branching into film.

Mordred is our first feature film, and it is wonderful to have such a powerful cast – people from complete beginners, such as 13 year old Reece Whitehouse, who plays King Arthur’s 'legitimate' son Duran, through to Mike Mitchell, an international actor who has appeared in films such as *Braveheart*, and *Skyfall*, and in body-building has held 5 Mr World and 2 Mr Universe titles.

Keeping true to our roots of theatre, Mordred is also to be performed in a variety of theatre venues in Devon, and we hope, Cornwall, as well, during September 2016.

About the Team

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, is a team of dedicated, career-orientated performers, of all ages, who are working collaboratively on creating careers in theatre and film for local people. We always welcome new members, who share our ethos, and who, regardless of previous experience, want to join a lively, friendly, hardworking team of ambitious, career performers, hone old skills & develop new ones, and create high quality new stage and film productions.

We perform theatre shows in Brixham, around Torbay, and South Devon, based on historical events, classical stories and mythology. We also make period drama films and web-series productions, around Devon and Cornwall, which has become a large percentage of our annual projects.

The South Devon Players was founded in late 2005 by two Brixham-based performers who were seeking performance opportunities in the Southwest, and performed our first production in the summer of 2006. Since then we have gone from strength to strength, and are now growing rapidly, with awards won and a rapidly increasing member and audience base.

10 years ago, in 2005, SDP was in its fledgling state, it began as a handful of four frustrated actors chatting in a pub, wanting to create something to showcase both historical drama - and local talent, which we and others, feel is often overlooked in favour of imported talent. When we sobered up and got over our hangovers it still seemed a good idea.

Slowly we have found other serious people that share the aim of showcasing what they can do, and now with Mordred, it feels like this group is finally becoming what it was created to be; a powerfully ambitious, high-energy, positive, safe, often extrovert, creative environment.

We want it to be a professional organisation one day- not just in outlook, but a paid job and career, for everyone involved. Maybe that will take another 10 years, but with the new influx of amazing people, performers and crew alike, it feels closer than ever before.



Meet some of the cast



Rich Sandford- MORDRED

I did GCSE Drama at Secondary School, which is where my passion for performance started. I tried to get onto a Drama course at College but was refused. I then went on to the world of professional wrestling, starting out in the backyards before getting professional training. I then became a model, and one day I answered a casting call from Laura Jay for an extra in their stage version of Les Miserables. Since then I have accumulated about 3 years of stage experience, been in a few independent films, and been part of a Musketeers showteam. When I heard of Mordred, I jumped at the chance to be part of it and was very honoured to be cast in the lead role.

I get asked a lot "Who is Mordred?". I am Mordred, son of King Arthur and his late wife Anna, kidnapped and adopted by his sister Morgan Le Fey. Many people think I am evil, but there's two sides to every tale. This is MY story.



Mike Mitchell – DREST

Mike Mitchell, an international actor who has appeared in such iconic films as Skyfall, Braveheart, Gladiator, and who began his acting career, from his previous fame in bodybuilding, having held no less than 5 x Masters Mr World titles and 2 x Mr Universe titles with the World Fitness Federation. Mike now lives in Paignton, and appears as a cameo in the film, as Drest, a bandit who plots against King Arthur, and attempts a daring kidnap.



Guillaume Rivaud – KING ARTHUR

I started my acting career in April 2015 in order to follow my dream, utilize my talents and challenge myself like never before . Over the past few months I have worked on various productions such as Last Weekend horror feature film , Poldark TV series S2 , Forbidden History TV series S3 (King Arthur) , The Highway Man short drama film , Final Fantasy Seek Revenge short fantasy film , Viking Legacy feature film , Sapiens short drama film , Les Miserables Web Series , Somewhere Place short drama film , Case Files horror series and A pimp in the System short drama film .Having been involved with Laura and the SDP team for a year now , I now feel honoured and privileged to be working with them on the Mordred feature film as King Arthur .

The most commonly question I get from people is : " Do you feel the pressure as a Frenchman to be playing King Arthur " ? or " How can a Frenchman play King Arthur ? " Well , of course I feel the immense pressure to play this iconic character . This is the most challenging and demanding role I ever had to do and this has been playing on my mind for the past few weeks but if Kevin Costner can play Robin Hood , if Christian Bale can play Moses, if Colin Farrell can play Alexander The Great or Kiefer Sutherland can play a Roman General then I can play King Arthur . Also , if we research deeper the stories surrounding King Arthur , he actually spent a lot of his time in Brittany .

See the full cast & crew list on [IMDb: Link](#)

*See more cast biographies on the next page,
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Chris Barnicoat- CYNRIC

Despite taking drama at GCSE level almost 30 years ago I have had no acting experience since then until October of last year when I was recommended for a role in the short film "Trial By Fire" (Directed by Tim Seyfert) where I played the role of an American outlaw biker in a fan film set in the D.C comic book universe, This reawakened a love of acting and since I have appeared in several short Student films, such as "The Cloud Catcher (written and directed By Hannah French) and landed the title role in the short period film "The Highwayman" based on the poem by Alfred Noyes (Directed by Ollie Chater)

I have a lot of exciting things in the pipeline but I am especially excited about "Mordred" The reason for this initially is my absolute love of history and historical films....I just had to be involved, more recently my reasons for being a part of this have changed and It is primarily because of the incredible hard work that is going on behind the scenes to make this movie the epic it will become, the wonderful script and more importantly the incredible team both behind the scenes and among the cast who I am so very proud to know - we really are one big family who want to share this incredible epic journey with everyone.

The question I am most often asked is "Why cant I be a part of something like this?" and my answer is You Can - Mordred has had open auditions for its principle cast that anyone could have auditioned for, we are still holding open invitations for anyone to join the project as extras.

* Cynric, historically was one of the first Saxon kings of Wessex.

* Chris, is also head of our fight co-ordinators.



Poppy Goldburn - MELWYN

I have been compelled to study the theatre and its craft since a very young age. Having spent years of practice in youth theatres and drama groups since primary school, my lifelong dream of becoming a professional actress was granted to me at the age of sixteen. I was lucky enough to be selected for representation by a leading London agency after a performance with the Royal and Derngate Youth Theatre.

Since then I have performed at the National Theatre (Black Remote, 2007) and gone on to work in television. Some good examples include The Bill (2008), Place Of Execution (2009) and M.I High (2011). I have also been part of national advert campaigns for Sony and B&Q. Through this I was adamant to keep to my studies and gained a CHE in Theatre Practice from Northampton University in 2012.

Theatre in the community is my biggest passion and I continued to volunteer and work at my local theatre throughout my teens and twenties. After taking a short career break to have my two wonderful children I am ready to return to the acting world and am truly thrilled and inspired to be working on 'Mordred'.

The question I get asked the most is, like many others, 'how can I do that too?'. My answer is always the same. Seek out the opportunities, work hard towards them and never give up. Opportunities are often around, but if you can't find them, make your own! Start your own drama group! Write that play! Invite others in and share! Be kind and humble and grateful and follow your heart. Acting in all its forms is the most inclusive, creative and groundbreaking tool we have as a community to build balanced, healthy individuals. Let's embrace it. And spread it! Go Mordred!

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Ritchie Crane – LANCELOT

Always having a fondness and love for acting from secondary school and performing in local amateur dramatic productions, I decided to do a National Diploma course in Performing Arts at Plymouth college of further education. After completing this I then continued to study performing arts at the University of Winchester, specialising in devising and physical theatre. Here I gained a Bachelor of Arts degree and performed my solo performance 'Box-Bound'.

On completing University I moved back down to the southwest where I sadly got stuck into the daily 9 to 5 grind. After spending a few years doing maintenance work and spending some time with my young son, I have been actively trying to establish myself as a working actor. Completing work on short films, and showcasing a new piece of work, Network Tales, produced alongside Restless Theatre at last years Barnstable fringe festival. I'm truly excited about getting started on 'Mordred'.

It's an amazingly ambitious project that will show that there is an amazing pool of talent, hard working and enthusiastic artists within the southwest.

The question I've mainly been asked about this project is 'Why are you doing it?' My response is I believe in it! I believe that we as a company have a great deal we can teach each other, and there is a real drive to do the best that we can. Plus it's Arthurian Legend which is just plain awesome and I get to swing a sword (safely of course !!)



Margaret Somerville – GUINEVERE

This is my first major role and I'm grateful for the opportunity. I haven't performed since my teen years, when I participated in workshops at the Drum Theatre and TR2 building in Plymouth as well as being a member of The Heybrook Players, starring as Cheryl in The Cat's away (adult comedy) and The Prince in Cinderella (pantomime) which involved a little singing and dancing. Singing is another love of mine, which I do whenever the situation arises.

I'm grateful for Laura for adding me to The South Devon Players group, they're all lovely people and I'm grateful for the opportunities to challenge myself.

I'm grateful for any opportunity to star in a project that uses local talent and local scenery.

The time period interests me too and trying to find out concrete information such as was Arthur (meaning Bearman) a nickname for Ambrosius Aurelianus, a British War leader credited with defeating the invading Saxons at Badon Hill.

I'm very interested in History as well as Drama. I also most wanted to play Guinevere. She struck me as a woman who tries her best but ultimately fails but it makes her more human, torn between duty and love. Plus the fact that she's of Roman descent fascinates me as does the fact that this is going to be shown from the Pagan/pre-Christian era.

See the full cast & crew list on [IMDb: Link](#)

and many more of our cast and crew talking in their own words about the project on our website: [Link](#)

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Locations

For the time being, we are being a bit cagey about our locations, it is a common thing to have to do – for a simple reason. Often people are curious about a film shoot, and come along to watch what's going on. This can result in the accidental release of spoilers, or, as we have found in the past, members of the public trying to engage cast and crew in curious conversation, while we are actually trying to film. With the addition of celebrity cast, it also becomes a security issue for them.

So, all that we are saying for the moment, on the public front, is that we do have some amazing locations in Devon & Cornwall lined up. Ranging from a beautiful castle and grounds as Camelot, through to reconstructed historical sites as the town of Isca (now Exeter), and wild rugged countryside.

Funding

Funding a project like this is a huge issue. None of us are wealthy, I think most of our people count ourselves lucky if we are one of the fortunate ones who have a job.

Further more, ablebodied, mainly working-age adults? Doing an arts project? There is very little funding around for that sort of thing – we, and the type of project, and the intended outcomes of showcasing skills to help find employment, so not fall into many of the categories that funders like – and what grants there are, are incredibly oversubscribed. While grants have been applied for, we are not holding any expectations or very much hope.

Undaunted, we have launched a creative and often hilarious set of alternate fundraising. Some things work, and some don't – we are however trying everything we can think of! In addition to that, several members of the team are contributing what they can from wages, dole money, extra small jobs, etc.

A crowdfund on indiegogo has also been created, so that people are able to contribute. The link is at <https://igg.me/at/mordred2016/x/12578926>

The crowdfund is open for contributions until the end of May 2016/

So far we have held talks for museums, schools and social clubs, for a small fee. Some of our ladies – and one of our men – have put on a burlesque striptease show. Laura, the director, sells small odds and ends on Ebay. We have a merchandise range set up on the website Redbubble, and e-books for sale on lulu.com. The mother of one of the cast, is setting up a carboot sale event, the entry fees going to the film funds. A Torquay hotel provided us space for a film/ fantasy/ scifi convention, which took place in March. Laura and one of her unit directors, Simeon Costello, are doing a sponsored swim. And a cafe in Brixham, Mille&Me has hosted a photographic exhibition.

Slowly but surely, it is all adding up to a tiny but managable amount for the film.

Costs are kept down with recycling and remaking items from charity shops into costumes and props, looking for cheaper equipment on ebay where prices are most affordable.