

Agatha Christie™

It would be a crime to miss Agatha Christie Week

14-20 September 2008

Monday, 1 September 2008 – The annual week-long celebration of the world's best-selling novelist gets underway on Sunday, 14 September.

Agatha Christie Week coincides with the anniversary of the author's 118th birthday and will involve a range of activities in London and Christie's home county of Devon and coincides with the premiere of a new Poirot television adaptation on ITV1.

The aim of the week is to both provoke a critical reassessment of the literary legacy of the Queen of Crime and celebrate her position as a British cultural icon. Four million Christie books are sold each year and she is revered by contemporary novelists and cultural critics including Umberto Eco, Michel Houellebecq and Kate Mosse.

Among the week's events are:

- 14-21 September: The annual **English Riviera Agatha Christie Festival**, featuring guided tours of the author's home town of Torquay; screenings of Christie films; a murder mystery dinner; and a talk by her grandson, Mathew Prichard.
- 16 September: A unique performance of Christie's classic play **The Mousetrap** at London's St Martin's Theatre for 200 children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in and around London, presented by Agatha Christie Ltd, HarperCollins and the theatre charity, Mousetrap Theatre Projects.
- 14 September: **Mrs McGinty's Dead**, the television premiere on ITV1 of the first of three new lavish Poirot adaptations starring David Suchet to be screened throughout the month, with **Cat Among the Pigeons** (21/9) and **Third Girl** (28/9) to follow. Both **Mrs McGinty's Dead** and **Third Girl** feature Zoë Wannamaker in the role of Christie's most autobiographical creation – that of Ariadne Oliver, the author of a series of best-selling novels about a fastidious foreign detective!
- 14 September: The release of stylish range of porcelain mugs, deckchairs and canvas bookbags based on classic Christie covers by **Art Meets Matter**, the cutting edge English design company behind the famous Penguin Classic collection.
- 13-20 September: **Agatha Christie Week on BBC7** with dramatisations of the Poirot adventures *After the Funeral* and *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe* and the Marple mystery *Sleeping Murder*. Also included is a reading of *8.55 To Baghdad*, in which writer Andrew Eames follows in the footsteps of Agatha Christie's true life exploits in the Middle East.
- 15 September: The official publication date of the definitive three-volume edition of **Agatha Christie's Short Stories** by HarperCollins, the first such collection ever attempted.

Many of the 176 stories were originally written for popular weekly and monthly magazines; some were later reworked into full-length novels or plays such as *Witness for the Prosecution*.

- 16-20 September: **And Then There Were None**, Christie's own stage adaptation of the world's best-selling mystery with more than 100 million copies sold. Performed by Bill Kenwright's Agatha Christie Theatre Company at the Princess Theatre, Torquay.

According to Tamsen Harward, Manager of the Agatha Christie literary estate:

"Christie fans tend to be passionate about anything to do with their favourite author but an equally important element of Agatha Christie Week is to reach out to new audiences. That's one of the reasons behind the special performance of *The Mousetrap* for inner city schoolchildren. I'm excited that this year's Agatha Christie Week festivities serve new and existing fans alike. That's why it would be a crime to miss it."

Mathew Prichard, the author's grandson and Chairman of Agatha Christie Limited, said:

"One hundred and eighteen years after she was born no one would be more surprised than my grandmother that her writing would remain so popular and that there would still be so much interest in her life and times. Perhaps her secret is that while the world she wrote about may not exist any more, the passion, motives and emotional undercurrents contained in her work are universal themes. The popularity each year of Agatha Christie Week is testament to just how timeless – and popular – her writing is."

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About Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) is the world's best-known mystery writer. The Guinness Book of Records lists her as the best-selling fiction author of all time with an estimated two billion copies of her works sold: a billion copies in the English language and another billion in more than 45 foreign languages. It is often said that she is outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare.

Agatha Miller was born in Torquay on September 15, 1890. In 1914 she married Colonel Archibald Christie, an aviator in the Royal Flying Corps. The couple had one daughter, Rosalind, before their divorce in 1928. Two years later on a dig in Iraq she met archaeologist Max Mallowan; they married later that same year. In 1971, Christie achieved her country's highest honour when she received the Order of Dame Commander of the British Empire. Agatha Christie died peacefully at home on January 12, 1976 after a short cold.

The Agatha Christie portfolio was acquired by the media company Chorion Ltd in 1998. Its mission is to nurture Christie's literary legacy and introduce the author's work to new audiences. Chorion takes an active role in managing the global Christie publishing programme, film and TV adaptations of her stories and theatrical productions. It has also presided over the introduction of fresh formats including partworks, graphic novels, manga, games, audiobooks and consumer products.

www.agathachristie.com