

The Agatha Christie Literary Trail

THROUGH THE ENGLISH RIVIERA & SOUTH DEVON



HarperCollins

THE ENGLISH RIVIERA
Agatha Christie™

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THE *Agatha Christie*TM

LITERARY TRAIL THROUGH THE ENGLISH RIVIERA & SOUTH DEVON

Enter into the world of Agatha Christie on the English Riviera and in South Devon! Reveal the inspirations behind her popular novels and find out about the woman herself, with the Agatha Christie Literary Trail.



The Queen of Crime was born in Torquay on 15th September 1890, and went on to write over 80 novels and plays, selling more than 2 billion copies worldwide. The English Riviera is full of the places that she loved, and where she spent some of the most important chapters of her life. Perhaps most beloved of all is her holiday home at Greenway, on the banks of the River Dart, which she purchased with her second husband Max Mallowan in 1938.

Her writing was strongly influenced by the beautiful county of Devon, from the relaxed charm of the coastal towns to the windswept ruggedness of the moors. More than 20 books were inspired by South Devon landmarks and each site features in the Agatha Christie Literary Trail here. See if you can identify some of the familiar places you've read about!

◀ UNFOLD HERE FOR SOUTH DEVON MAP

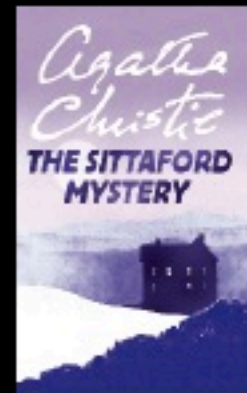


THE *Agatha Christie*™ MILE

Drift back into the style and opulence of the Jazz Age as you retrace the steps of the world's best-selling author along Torquay's seafront.

- 1 THE GRAND HOTEL** Site of Agatha's honeymoon to Archie Christie on Christmas Eve 1914.
- 2 TORQUAY RAILWAY STATION** Remembered as the site where Joan Hickson's Miss Marple and David Suchet's Poirot met for the first time as part of the Centenary Celebrations.
- 3 TORRE ABBEY** Home of the Agatha Christie's Potent Plants Garden.
- 4 PRINCESS PIER** A favourite spot of Agatha's for roller-skating, and built in the same year she was born.
- 5 PRINCESS GARDENS** Featured in *The ABC Murders*, and site of Princess Theatre, where the official Agatha Christie Theatre Company tours each year.
- 6 THE PAVILION** It was after attending a Wagner concert here that Archie Christie proposed to the young Agatha Miller.
- 7 AGATHA CHRISTIE BUST** A bronze bust created to commemorate the Agatha Christie centenary year in 1990 by Dutch sculptor Carol Van Den Boom-Cairns.
- 8 THE STRAND** Recognisable in certain novels.
- 9 TORQUAY MUSEUM** Home to the Agatha Christie Gallery.
- 10 ROYAL TORBAY YACHT CLUB** Agatha's father Frederick Miller was a prominent member here.
- 11 BEACON COVE** Agatha once got into difficulty whilst swimming here and almost drowned. Living Coasts overlooks the cove from its terrace.
- 12 IMPERIAL HOTEL** Features in three novels.

1 THE SITTAFORD MYSTERY 1931



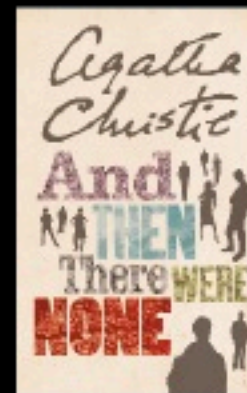
This novel is set in the fictional village of Sittaford, near Sittaford Tor, on Dartmoor. Okehampton features as Exhampton, and Exeter appears by name.

PLOT: Six guests huddle together for a séance, during which they receive a chilling message about one of their neighbours, six miles away across the snowy moor.

DID YOU KNOW? Dartmoor and Moretonhampstead also feature in the novel *The Big Four*, a Poirot mystery.



2 AND THEN THERE WERE NONE 1939

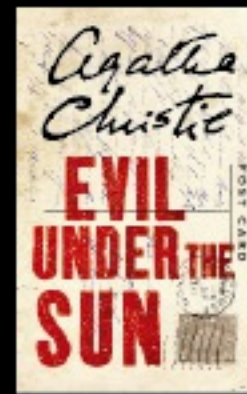


Burgh Island is the inspiration for Soldier Island, where the guests are cut off from everything except the inescapable shadows of their own past lives.

PLOT: Ten people are invited to a lonely mansion on Soldier Island by a host who fails to appear. One by one, the guests share the darkest secrets of their wicked pasts. And one by one, they start to die...

DID YOU KNOW? This is the best-selling mystery novel of all time, and is the most adapted of all her works.

3 EVIL UNDER THE SUN 1941 POIROT



Smugglers' Island in Leathercombe Bay is clearly Burgh Island, in Bigbury Bay. The hotel in the novel is named The Jolly Roger.

PLOT: Hercule Poirot is enjoying a well-deserved holiday at Smugglers' Island resort when the strangled body of actress Arlena Stuart is found.

DID YOU KNOW? Burgh Island is connected to the mainland by a tidal causeway, accessible on foot when the tide is out. When the tide is in, a sea tractor transports visitors over the waves.



4 THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT STYLES 1920 POIROT



Christie's first novel introduced Hercule Poirot, inspired by Belgian refugees in Torquay during WWI. It was completed at Moorlands Hotel at Haytor on Dartmoor where she retreated to find peace and quiet to write.

PLOT: Captain Hastings is convalescing at Styles Court. When someone is poisoned, he is fortunate to bump into his old friend, famous detective Hercule Poirot.

DID YOU KNOW? Christie's knowledge of poisons was acquired during WWI while working at the dispensary in Torquay's Town Hall.

5 THE REGATTA MYSTERY 1939

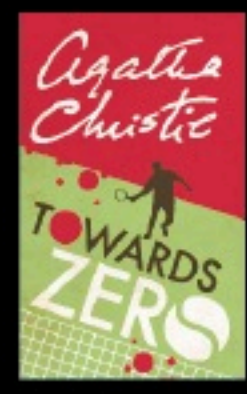


This short story features in *The Problem at Pollensa Bay*, and describes the regatta and fair in Dartmouth.

PLOT: Diamond merchant Isaac Pointz and his guests come ashore at Dartmouth after the yacht races. When Pointz's famous diamond disappears Parker Pyne investigates.

DID YOU KNOW? It is likely that the Royal Castle Hotel at Dartmouth is represented by the Royal George Hotel.

6 TOWARDS ZERO 1944



A Devon clifftop is the setting for this intriguing mystery where Kingsbridge has become Saltington, and Salcombe is represented as Saltcreek.

PLOT: A house party gathers at Gull's Point, where earlier events in the individuals' lives come to a dramatic head. It's all part of a carefully laid plan – for murder!

DID YOU KNOW? The 2007 television adaptation was filmed around Salcombe in South Devon.

7 PERIL AT END HOUSE 1932 POIROT



Torquay's Imperial Hotel becomes the Majestic Hotel here, located in the fictional town of St Loo (clearly Torquay). End House was based on a building that once existed at Rock End in Torquay.

PLOT: Hercule Poirot's relaxing holiday takes an unexpected turn when he meets young Nick Buckley, whose life he believes to be under threat.

DID YOU KNOW? The 1990 television adaptation was filmed around Salcombe, Devon.

8 POSTERN OF FATE 1973



Torquay is shown here as Hollowquay, Corbyn Head is Baldy's Head, and The Laurels represents Ashfield, her childhood home. A blue plaque marks Ashfield's former location. (A)

PLOT: Tommy and Tuppence retire to their new home The Laurels, but adventure finds them when they discover that the old house holds many forgotten secrets.

DID YOU KNOW? This was the last book Christie wrote, although it was not the last to be published.

9 THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY 1942 MISS MARPLE

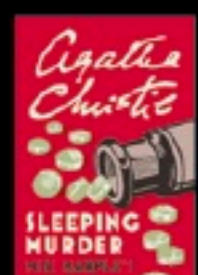


The Imperial Hotel becomes the Majestic Hotel again, this time located in the town of Danemouth in the county of Glenshire.

PLOT: A young woman is found dead in the Bantrys' library, while another's remains are later discovered in a quarry. Miss Marple is invited to solve the mystery.

DID YOU KNOW? The chest found in the hallway of Greenway House also features in The Body in the Library.

10 SLEEPING MURDER 1976 MISS MARPLE



The Imperial Hotel is once again featured, this time as itself. The 1987 Joan Hickson adaptation was filmed in Lymington, Devon, and the 2006 Geraldine McEwan version was filmed at Sidmouth.

PLOT: Miss Marple is called upon to solve a 'perfect' crime committed many years before.

DID YOU KNOW? This was published as Miss Marple's final case, although Christie had actually written it during WWII, along with Poirot's last case, Curtain.

11 THE MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT 1924



Agatha's father Frederick Miller belonged to Torquay Natural History Society and supported Pengelly's excavations of Kents Cavern - inspiration for Hampsley Cavern here.

PLOT: Anne Beddingfield sets about unravelling a mystery linking a diamond robbery, a tube station, and a murder in a country mansion.

DID YOU KNOW? Frederick Miller was president of Torquay Cricket Club (B) and a regular at the Royal Torbay Yacht Club, which overlooked the ladies-only beach at Beacon Cove.

12 DEAD MAN'S FOLLY 1956 POIROT



Greenway and its surroundings feature heavily in several novels. Here it formed the inspiration for Nasse House, and its boat house provided the setting for murder.

PLOT: Sir George and Lady Stubbs host a village fête with a mock murder mystery, but a shocking turn of events requires Poirot's detective skills.

DID YOU KNOW? The nearby village of Galmpton features as Nassecombe, and Hoodown Youth Hostel is based on Maypool Youth Hostel. Brixham features as Brixwell.

13 GREENSHAW'S FOLLY 1960 MISS MARPLE



Greenshaw's Folly features in The Adventures of the Christmas Pudding. Christie donated the proceeds from this work for the commissioning of the stained glass window in Churston Church.

PLOT: The lady of the house at Greenshaw's Folly is murdered just days after drawing up a new will. Can Miss Marple solve the case?

DID YOU KNOW? Agatha was acquainted with Lord and Lady Churston and regularly dined with them at Churston Court.

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14 FIVE LITTLE PIGS 1943 POIROT



Greenway features here as the house of the murdered philanderer Amyas Crale.

PLOT: A daughter tries to clear her mother of murdering her father and presents Hercule Poirot with a brilliant challenge: to find the fatal flaw in the perfect crime.

DID YOU KNOW? The inspiration for using the name Amyas came from a romantic picnic the young Agatha once had with one Amyas Boston at Ansteys Cove (C) in Torquay.

15 THE MURDER AT THE VICARAGE 1930 MISS MARPLE



The Murder at the Vicarage is said to have been inspired by Torquay, and was the first appearance of Miss Marple in a full length novel.

PLOT: The tranquility of St Mary Mead is shattered when Lucius Protheroe is found dead. Inspector Slack is at a loss. Perhaps Miss Jane Marple, the local village busybody, can help.

DID YOU KNOW? Did you know that Agatha Miller was christened at All Saints Church (D) in Torquay.

16 MRS MCGINTY'S DEAD 1952 POIROT



This novel is set in the vague South Devon location of Broadhenny. Reference is made to a place called Cullenquay, which seems to represent Torquay.

PLOT: When Mrs McGinty dies, suspicion falls on her lodger - but he doesn't look like a murderer. Poirot believes he can save the man from the gallows.

DID YOU KNOW? First published in 1952, the novel was adapted by MGM in 1964, and released as 'Murder Most Foul'.

17 WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS? 1934



Agatha dedicated this book to Christopher Mallock, of Cockington Court, Torquay. The golf course and cliffs are reminiscent of Torquay Golf Course and Petitor.

PLOT: Bobby Jones loses his golf ball over a cliff edge. On the rocks below, he finds the body of a dying man, who, with his final breath, opens his eyes and says, 'Why didn't they ask Evans?'

DID YOU KNOW? The young Agatha Miller would take part in amateur theatricals with the Mallocks at Cockington Court.

18 ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE 1958



Greenway is represented here as Sunny Point House, while the Greenway Quay bell (still there today) is used to summon the ferry to Drymouth (Dartmouth).

PLOT: While serving time for killing his mother, Jacko Argyle dies in prison. Two years later, a possible alibi suddenly appears. It seems that Jacko was innocent... and that the murderer is part of the surviving family.

DID YOU KNOW? The 1985 film starring Donald Sutherland was filmed at Dartmouth.

19 MURDER ON THE LINKS 1923 POIROT



Christie was a keen, if nervous, golfer, playing regularly at Churston and Torquay courses. Her knowledge of golf inspired this 1923 mystery.

PLOT: When millionaire P.T. Renaud is found stabbed to death, Poirot looks no further than the family. Where there's inheritance to be gained, there's motive.

DID YOU KNOW? It was on Torquay Golf Course that Agatha Miller received a marriage proposal from suitor Reggie Lucy, who resided in Hesketh Crescent, (E) Torquay.

20 THE ABC MURDERS 1936 POIROT



The village of Churston features in this novel. The third murder takes place at Elberry Cove, and Poirot and Hastings journey from Paddington to Churston Station to investigate. Princess Gardens in Torquay also appear.

PLOT: Ascher in Andover, Barnard in Bexhill, Clarke in Churston: all dead, with an ABC Railway Guide found beside their bodies. A serial killer is playing games with Hercule Poirot.

DID YOU KNOW? Agatha regularly enjoyed bathing at Elberry Cove.

Agatha Christie's RIVIERA

Immerse yourself in Agatha Christie's Riviera and relive the pre and post-war era so fondly described in her novels. Step back in time with a trip on a steam train, take a ride on an authentic vintage bus to Greenway, or board a ferry for a sea and river voyage to "the loveliest place in the world". At Greenway – now owned by the National Trust – the journey into a bygone era continues, with all the rooms decorated in the 1950s style.

You'll also love the dedicated gallery at Torquay Museum, and strolling along the Agatha Christie Mile (see map inside), taking in the Potent Plants Garden at Torre Abbey.



MORE INFORMATION

The English Riviera Visitor Information Staff are on hand to answer all of your Agatha Christie-related queries.

Simply telephone our Visitor Information Line on **0844 474 22 33** (low cost call) or pop into the year-round Visitor Information Centre on Torquay harbourside, where you'll also find a selection of books. You can also log on to www.englishriviera.co.uk/agathachristie for facts, ideas and inspirations for your Agatha Christie break.

Scan here to view the Agatha Christie's Riviera video. ▼



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The Agatha Christie FESTIVAL

Each September, the English Riviera transforms itself into the murder mystery capital of the country for the annual Agatha Christie Festival in honour of the Queen of Crime. Visit around her birthday, and you'll find murder, mystery and mayhem with a packed programme of events, from garden parties to die for to lunches at Burgh Island, plus exclusive tours of Greenway and special guest appearances. Visit www.agathachristiefestival.co.uk for more information.