

The Amazing Mrs Christie



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By Alexander Baron



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Even if you have never read one of her books or a detective novel, you have probably heard of Agatha Christie; her name became synonymous with the murder mystery genre, and her characters Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple are recognised universally. She is also the most widely read novelist of all time, her books having sold a staggering one billion copies in English, and around the same in 44 other languages. Only the *Bible* and Mr Shakespeare have outsold her, and they have both been around considerably longer! Agatha Christie died 40 years ago today at the age of 85, and as you might suspect, her dedicated fans will be celebrating the anniversary.

Like Martin Turner of [Wishbone Ash](#), Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born at Torquay. The 125th anniversary of her birth was celebrated there last September with [a hundred events](#) over ten days. Her autobiography was published posthumously, but there have been other books about her, indeed she and her works have even been the subject of dissertations, including *Cognitive-linguistic manipulation and persuasion in Agatha Christie*, a 2006 [Masters Thesis](#).



Archibald Christie, 1915 (1889–1962)

She married twice, retaining the name of her first husband **Archibald Christie**, he divorced her in 1928 so he could marry his mistress. The run-up to the divorce saw her famous disappearance; she turned up at an hotel in a different part of the country nearly a fortnight later, something that has never been fully explained, and which has been the subject of much speculation. By this time she was already a fairly famous author; she retained custody of her daughter, and in 1930 married the archaeologist Max Mallowan, although she continued to use the name Agatha Christie professionally.



Max Mallowan with his wife, Agatha Christie Mallowan

In spite of the success of her novels, her play ***The Mousetrap*** is easily her most famous work, and holds the record for the longest running show in the world by far.

The Agatha Christie Society was founded in 1993, and in 1997 opened a US office.

If by any chance you missed any of the books listed below, these are certainly the top 10 Agatha Christie must-reads:

1. *And Then There Were None* (1939)
2. *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926)

3. *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930)
4. *Endless Night* (1967)
5. *Death Comes As The End* (1944)
6. *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934)
7. *Five Little Pigs* (1942)
8. *Peril at End House* (1932)
9. *The ABC Murders* (1935)
10. *Crooked House* (1949)

And what is your favourite Agatha Christie novel?

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