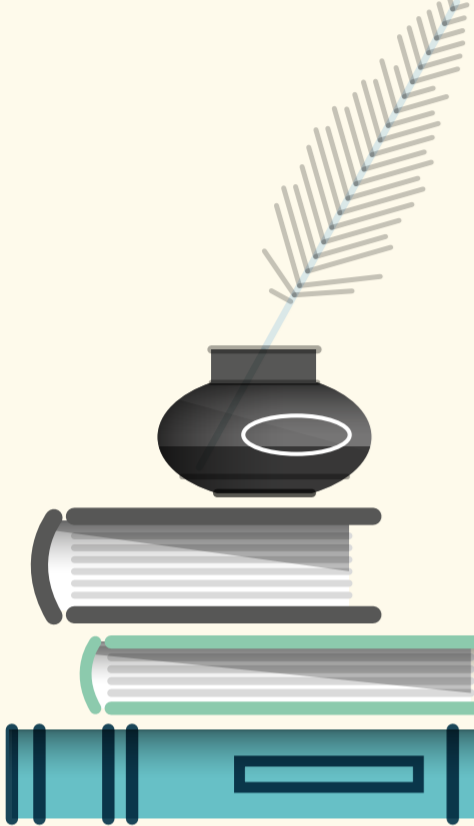


Writers on the Riviera

Take a literary tour around the English Riviera and uncover the places and stories of the greatest writers of all time, who, for the past 200 years, have flocked to the English Riviera. Sent on doctor's orders, to relax in our warm climate, to promenade with the well-heeled, debate with the greatest minds and to be inspired by the stunning coastline. They came and they left their mark.

Now you can follow in their illustrious footsteps and find the indelible traces they've left.



'How do I love thee, let me count the ways?', the occult, Bovril, a Prime Minister, the scandal that brought LGBTQ+ to the media, the UK's answer to Stephen King, and a roller-skating nurse who would become the best-selling novelist of all time.

Use this map to uncover the places our literary heroes frequented and walk the streets, beaches and cliff top locations that most inspired their work. You can head out on foot to many of the places shown on the map. The accessible central route which is mostly on the flat (markers 1 to 4 and C and D on the map) shouldn't take you more than an hour.

Take the day to do the whole thing with plenty of stop offs along the way. Make use of local transport or drive to places further afield. See stunning architecture, unforgettable views and award-winning heritage attractions along the way.

Listen to audio and delve further into Writers on the Riviera online at www.englishriviera.co.uk. Find out more about our literary residents and visitors as well as other famous - and infamous - wordsmiths Arthur Conan Doyle, Peter Cook, T.S Eliot, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling and Aleister Crowley.

Naturally inspiring

The English Riviera was the place to live the highlife in Victorian times, but did you know that this area is built on the very foundation of civilisation. A mind-bending 400 million years of our extraordinary world evolved right here beneath your feet. Here tropical seas frothed, scorched desert winds blew, and the very earliest man scraped out an existence. Now recognised with UNESCO Global Geopark status, we celebrate, debate and share stories and findings from the English Riviera that continue to define us today.

Did you know
The Devonian is a geologic period and system of the Paleozoic, spanning 60 million years from the end of the Silurian, 419.2 million years ago, to the beginning of the Carboniferous, 358.9 million years ago. It is named after Devon, where rocks from this period were first studied.

"For years to aid inspiration, I've been walking local stretches of the South West Coast Path, swimming and kayaking the coves and beaches near my home in Torbay and exploring the closest estuaries and rivers. What never fails to surprise me is how the landscape, and its flora and fauna, changes so dramatically here (as does its geology). Within a few miles I can walk from the sub-tropical to the volcanic and forbidding. I've taken hundreds of pictures and studied the light and atmospherics, the coast, valleys, woods and open expanses, the skies, cliffs, caves and farms, before trying to define and recreate it all in my thrillers and horror novels. By 2019, three of my novels have been set here - 'Lost Girl', 'Under a Watchful Eye' and 'The Reddening'. As far as inspiration goes, as I often say: the Bay provides."

- Adam Nevill, local resident and award-winning author.

Top tips

Look up or you'll miss the stunning architecture

Stop and enjoy the views, they've been inspiring people for thousands of years

Enjoy a Cream Tea (the Devon way with the cream before the jam!)

Whilst you're exploring England's Seafood Coast, tuck into locally sourced fish and chips

Enjoyed this trail? Find out more at www.englishriviera.co.uk and www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk



Dame Agatha Christie

15 Sept 1890 - 12 Jan 1976

While many writers travelled to the English Riviera for inspiration, the best-selling novelist of all time is a home-grown talent. Agatha Christie was born into a comfortably wealthy family in Torquay and spent much of her youth in the resort, where she also served in the Town Hall hospital as a nurse during the First World War. The town and its colourful characters certainly influenced her writing, with Hercule Poirot inspired by the Belgian refugees she met in Torquay and Miss Marple based on her grandmother's friends, who were far more fussy than her own relative.

Her love of South Devon saw her buy a holiday home at Greenway in later life, which also served as inspiration for some of her most famous stories. The prolific writer wrote 66 detective novels, 14 short story collections and the world's longest running play - 'The Mousetrap'. Famously, she has only been outsold by the Bible and Shakespeare, having sold more than two billion copies across the globe. Amateur sleuths are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of the Bay's most famous literary daughter and discover several of the places that were influential in her life and works.



Thanks to The Christie Archive Trust



A The Grand Hotel

This beautiful hotel with award-winning views was built to resemble a French chateau and wouldn't look out of place on the Côte d'Azur. Agatha spent her honeymoon night here with her first husband, Archie Christie, on Christmas Eve 1914. Archie, a qualified aviator with the Royal Flying Corps, came home on leave from France.

Today the hotel boasts an Agatha Christie Suite furnished in a 1930's style, with a vintage typewriter under a portrait of the author. The terrace makes an ideal spot for enjoying a cream tea while reading your favourite Christie mystery.

C Princess Pier

A favourite spot of Agatha's for roller-skating with her friends during her youth, and built in the same year she was born. Take a waterfront stroll along Torquay's palm-lined promenade to the end of the pier to watch the world pass by with fishing boats, sightseeing cruises and paddleboards.

Roller-skating was very fashionable during the author's youth and would cost twopence if you bought your own skates. £1.7 million was spent on the pier in 2018 to repair storm damage and make the structure fully accessible.



Thanks to The Christie Archive Trust

B Torre Abbey

While Agatha was growing up, the Cary family still resided in Torre Abbey and she was known to have attended parties there. Today it is open to the public and is the home of the International Agatha Christie Festival.

The stunning interior gardens also hide a dark secret. Here you will uncover the Potent Plants Garden, an Agatha Christie-inspired display with a variety of fascinating plants that may kill or cure! Literary fans will love trying to solve the mystery of the missing story titles using the clues in the four garden beds. The house is also worth exploring, as the four floors reveal over 800 years of history and art.

D Princess Gardens & The Pavilion

Without doubt one of the most popular spots for an evening stroll in the Bay, the gardens featured in the crime novel, 'The ABC Murders'. These stunning pleasure gardens, built on reclaimed land, were named in honour of Princess Louise, the daughter of Queen Victoria. With beautiful flowerbeds, exotic Torbay palm trees and lawns; the attractive fountain (donated by the nearby Torbay Hotel) is a particular highlight.

The nearby Royal Terrace Gardens, known locally as Rock Walk, with sub-tropical Mediterranean plants and an illuminated staircase, offers an elevated and unrivalled vantage point to enjoy the entire bay.

The Pavilion was once a thriving art nouveau style Edwardian concert hall and theatre which attracted the most celebrated artists of the day such as Sir Edward Elgar, Rachmaninoff and Anna Pavlova. Agatha was a regular visitor and it was following a Wagner concert at The Pavilion, that Archie Christie proposed to the young Agatha Miller.

E Torquay Museum

Home to the UK's only dedicated Agatha Christie Gallery, you can step inside Poirot's study and lounge, featuring furniture, books, pictures and even the fireplace used in the ITV adaptations starring David Suchet.

Other highlights include a Miss Marple outfit as worn by Joan Hickson, David Suchet's Poirot's famous walking cane and some of the author's personal effects and first edition novels. Agatha's father was a member of Torquay Natural History Society, which later became Torquay Museum.

F Royal Torbay Yacht Club

The English Riviera boasts some of the finest sailing waters around the UK and includes in its rich maritime history the first modern day tall ships race and the 1948 Olympic watersports. In her autobiography Agatha talks about the club, of which her father Frederick was a prominent member. Her father divulged that some of the men would use opera glasses to try and spy on the women swimming from the ladies' only beach at Beacon Cove below.

In her autobiography, Agatha also reveals how she almost drowned whilst swimming here in her youth, which could have dramatically changed the face of crime fiction as we know it. Whilst the club is members only, you can get similar views from the lookout point.

G Meadfoot Beach

Although Torre Abbey Sands and Corbyn Head Beach were the first to end gender segregation, Agatha preferred to swim at the more fashionable Meadfoot Beach, once mixed bathing was allowed here. It remains a beautiful spot to visit, with the crescent of the Osborne Hotel overlooking the curve of the coastline, with Shag Rock straight ahead and Thatcher's Rock off to the left. As a child, Agatha spent nearly every day of the summer at this beach with her sister Madge and nephew Jack.

H Cockington

No visit to the English Riviera should be complete without spending a few hours in Cockington, a 450-acre country park. The delightful chocolate box village with its thatched cottages, cream tea spots, pub (designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens), artisan craft studios, manor house and charming church would make an ideal setting for one of Christie's murder mysteries. As a child she loved horse riding through the country lanes, while she would also take part in many amateur theatricals organised by the Mallock family, who were friends of the Millers and whose ancestors had owned the stately home for some 300 years.

I Greenway House

This extraordinary estate was the beloved holiday home of Agatha Christie and her family. Now owned by the National Trust, the house has been carefully preserved and contains beautiful collections of books, botanical china and archaeology, all accumulated by the family over the years. The house also boasts stunning features, including romantic gardens spilling down to the River Dart. The house features in three of her books, dubbed the Greenway Collection - 'Five Little Pigs', 'Ordeal By Innocence' and 'Dead Man's Folly'. The latter was the very last Poirot episode to be made starring David Suchet and was filmed on location at the house.

"One day we saw that a house was up for sale that I had known when I was young. Greenway House, on the Dart, a house that my mother had always said, and I had thought also, was the most perfect of the various properties on the Dart...So we went over to Greenway, and very beautiful the house and grounds were. A white Georgian house of about 1780 or 90, with woods sweeping down to the Dart below, and a lot of fine shrubs and trees - the ideal house, a dream house."

