Part 3: Summer Programme, Week 2 (14 – 20 July 2024)

Sunday 14 July: at last, a bright morning with sunshine!
Visit of Cambridge University Botanic Gardens: https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/. From Selwyn College, I went down Sidgwick Avenue, then turned right on Newnham Road until The Fen Causeway, which crosses Sheep's Green and Coe Fen, quite a pastoral landscape in the city:

At the end of The Fen, I turned on my right-hand side, on Trumpington Street, where I found 200 m further the entrance of the Botanic Gardens (at the corner of Bateman Street):

1: Stream Garden
2: Woodland Garden
3: Bog Garden
4: Schools' Garden
5: Rock Garden
6: Main Walk
7: Systematic Beds
8: The Rising Path
9: New Pinetum
10: Mediterranean Beds
11: The Glasshouse Range
12: Bee Borders
13: Terrace Garden (New Zealand Flora)
14: Gilbert Carter Woodland
15: Old Pinetum
16: British Wild Plants
17: Cory Lawn
18: Dry Garden
19: Fen Display
20: Rose Garden
21: Grass Maze
22: Understanding Plants
23: Dry Meadow
24: Garden Research Plots
25: Autumn Garden
26: Winter Garden
27: Chronological Bed
28: Scented Garden
29: The Dell
30: Herbaceous Beds

Cambridge University
Botanic Garden

“The original Botanic Garden of Cambridge University was founded in 1762 in the centre of the City, now known as the New Museums Site. It grew plants used for teaching medical students at the University. John Stevens Henslow, Professor of Botany at Cambridge from 1825 to 1861, was responsible for moving the Garden to its current site. Here he designed the new Garden to host a wonderful tree collection, but his ideas about variation and the nature of species are what caught the attention of his famous protege, Charles Darwin”. The evolution of the gardens from that time to the 21st century is explained on the following webpage: History of the Garden - Cambridge University Botanic Garden

I started my visit on Murray Walk, and its area of Systematic Beds (Nr 7 on the map):

Then turning on Henslow Walk, I passed by the Rock Garden (Nr 5 on the map):

Turning on my right-hand side, I passed by the Glasshouse Range and the Bee Borders (Nr 11 & 12 on the map):

Turning around Main Lawn on Middle Walk, I found the fountain, set in a peaceful environment:

Continuing a little on Middle Walk, I then turned into Bateson Walk and stopped at its Fen Display (Nr 19 on the map):

I went on Bateson Walk up to the Scented Garden (Nr 28 on the map)

Scented Garden (panorama)

Then I spent some time walking around the Herbaceous Beds (Nr 30 on the map):

Continuing on South Walk, I admired the Rose Garden (Nr 20 on the map):

Coming back to Middle Walk, I saw people relaxing and kids playing around the fountain (seen from the opposite perspective than previously):

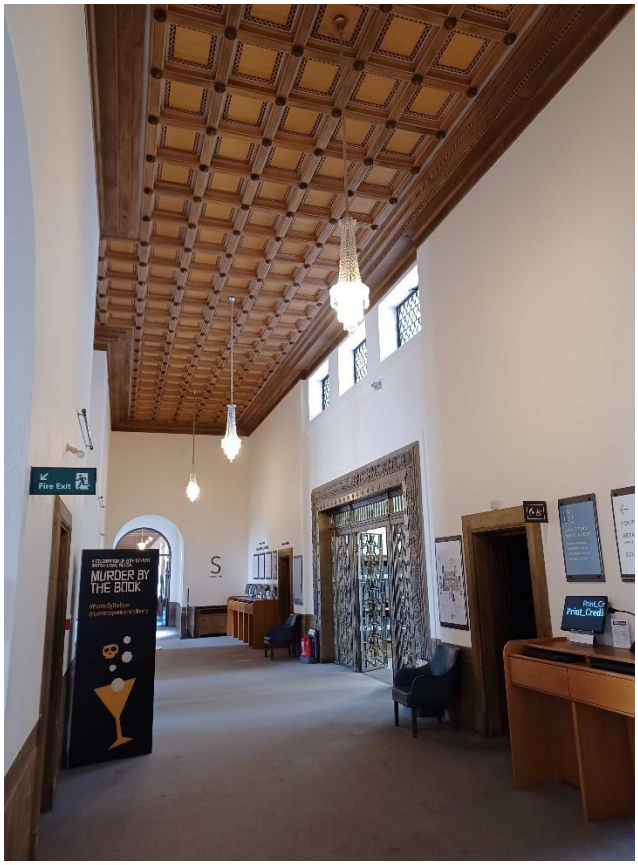
I then went back to the exit through Henslow Walk (again) and, turning on my left-hand side, on Lynch Walk. I could not help taking a photo of the giant aquatic plants and the magnificent willow bordering the Bog Garden (Nr 3 on the map):

Before leaving the garden, I visited the shop and bought several postcards featuring artistic photos of the various places I admired here…

Visit of Cambridge University Library and *Murder by the Book* exhibition (Tuesday 16 July)

This Library is an impressive building composed of a tall tower and two wings, which opened in 1934, and of later built extensions. “A number of major acquisitions in all departments came to the library during the course of the twentieth century, prompting the need to build an additional closed-stack extension which was taken into use in 1972”. The stage II extension of the Library was opened in 1994. https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/about-library/history-cambridge-university-library

I could access the first floor of the Library in order to visit the exhibition, which took place in the South and North galleries. The landing is quite elegant, with a beautiful ironwork on the glass doors.



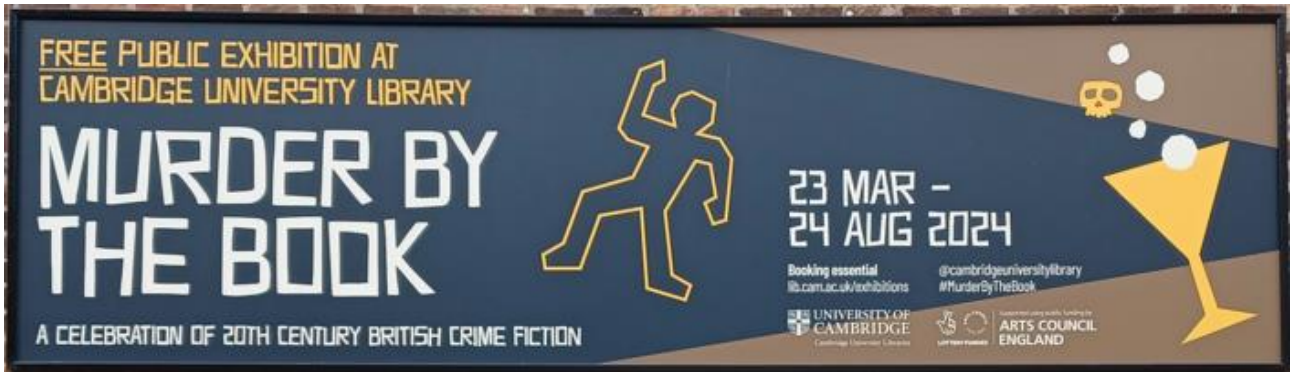
Landing on the first floor

North Gallery

The windows in the first-floor galleries have a view on interior terraces:

And at the end of the North Gallery, you can relax in the Tea Room:

Exhibition *Murder by the book*



Official presentation of the exhibition by Stuart Roberts [1]:

"Murder by the Book: a celebration of 20thcentury British crime fiction puts on display nearly 100 of the most famous, influential and best-selling crime novels in UK history, as well as other consequential works that are now long out of print. The vast majority of novels on display are drawn from the Library's unique, world-class Tower collection of first editions in their original dust jackets (…)

Aside from Christie's 1937 Remington typewriter, one of the star exhibits of *Murder by the Book* is the typescript of her final Poirot novel *Curtain* – locked away for nearly 30 years and originally supposed to be published posthumously. It was the last novel published before her death in 1976 and finally revealed a closely guarded secret about Christie's beloved detective Hercule Poirot – a revelation so culturally significant, that it featured on the front page of the New York Times.

The Christie objects, loaned by the Christie Archive Trust, also include her draft notebooks from the writing of *Curtain* and *Witness for the Prosecution*.

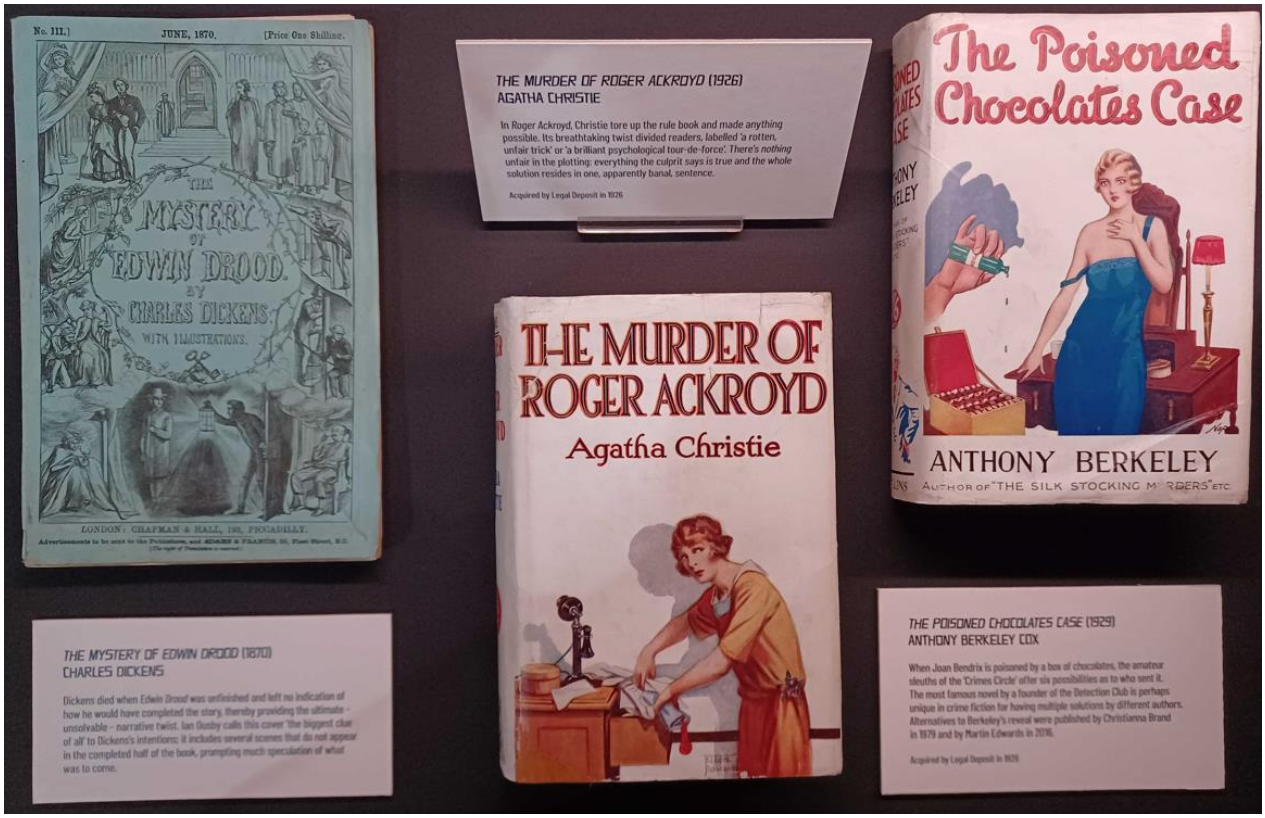
Elsewhere, the exhibition also features Wilkie Collins' writing desk, as well as the Library's first edition copy of his seminal work *The Moonstone*."

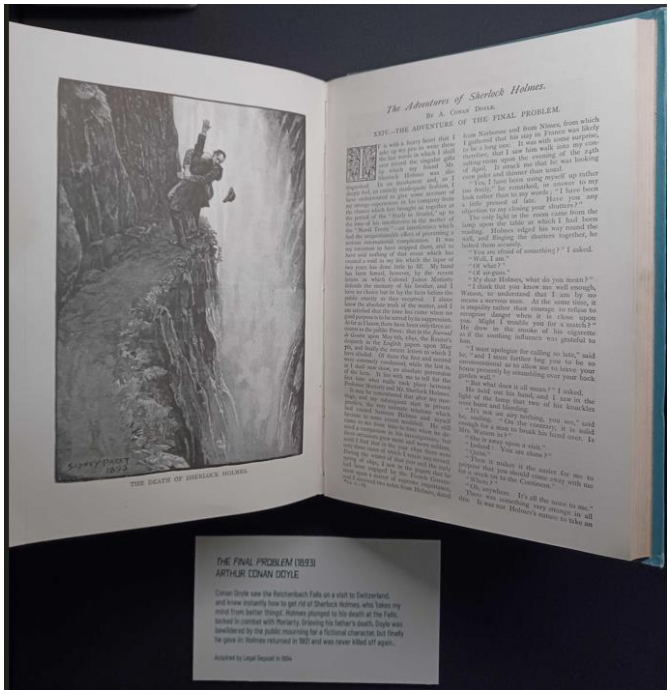
Agatha Christie's Dictaphone, typewriter, typescript copy of her final Poirot novel *Curtain*, and her exercise book containing draft notes on the plot of the novel[2].

[1] Source: Murder by the Book: a celebration of 20th century British crime fiction (cam.ac.uk)

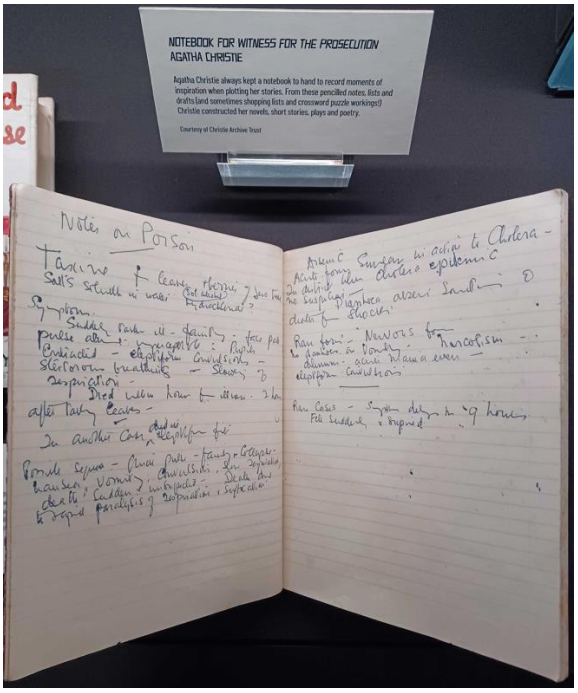
[2] Ibid

The first part of the exhibition was organised around the main features of detective novels (see Appendix here after) and the presentation of rare manuscripts or first editions—in addition to Agatha Christie's personal items showed in the photo here above—in glass cabinets:

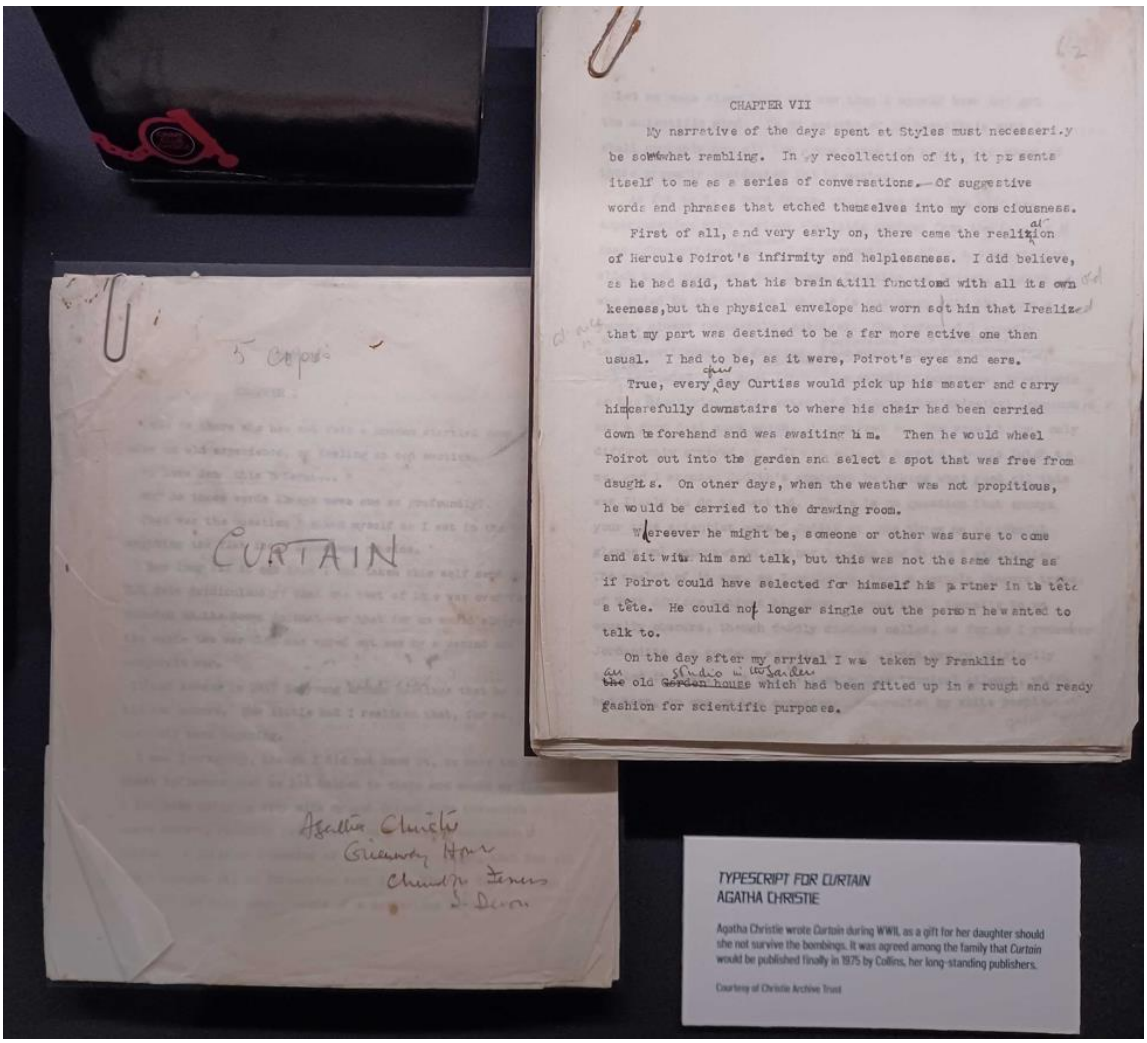


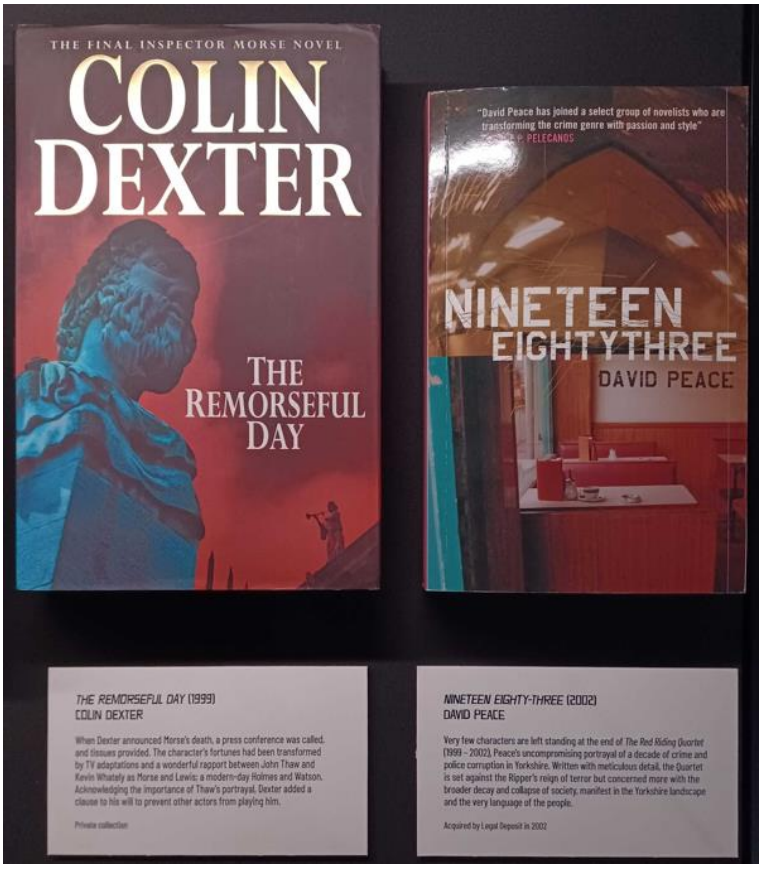


The Final Problem (1893) by Arthur Conan Dyle

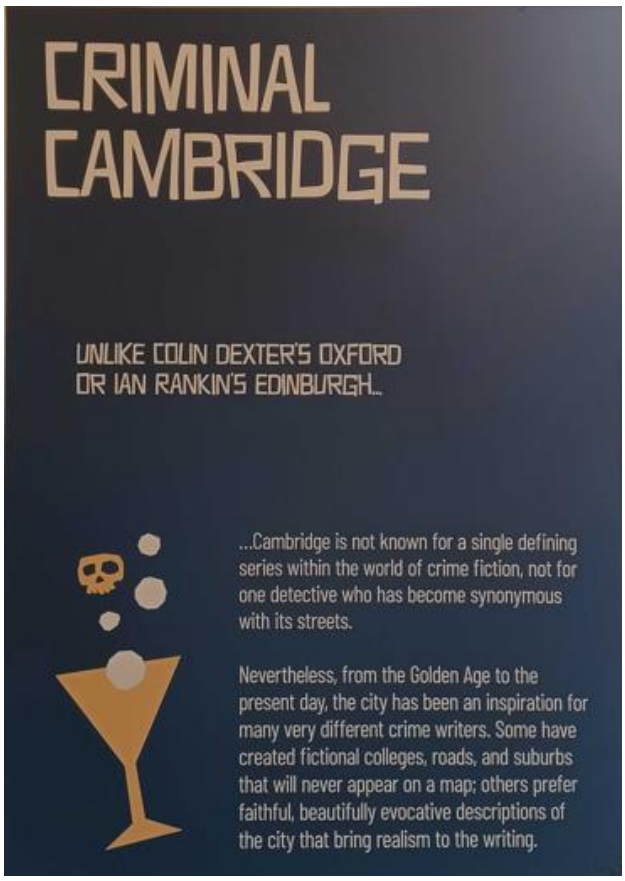


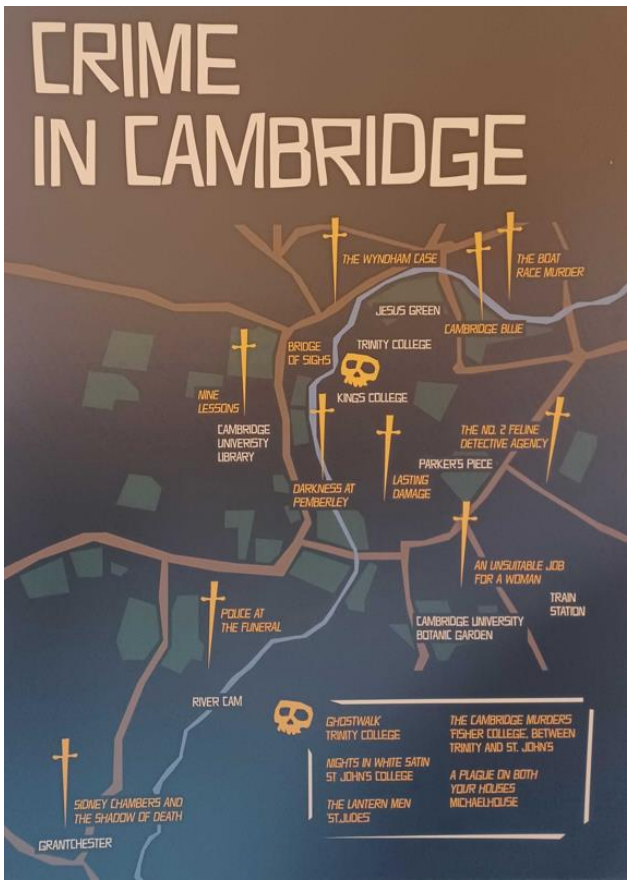
Notebook for *Curtain*, Poirot's last case (1975)


CHAPTER VII
My narrative of the days spent at Styles must necessarily be somewhat rambling. In my recollection of it, it presents itself to me as a series of conversations. Of suggestive words and phrases that etched themselves into my consciousness.
First of all, and very early on, there came the realization of Hercule Poirot's infirmity and helplessness. I did believe, as he had said, that his brain still functioned with all its own keeness, but the physical envelope had worn out him that I realized that my part was destined to be a far more active one than usual. I had to be, as it were, Poirot's eyes and ears.
True, every day Curtiss would pick up his master and carry him carefully downstairs to where his chair had been carried down beforehand and was awaiting him. Then he would wheel Poirot out into the garden and select a spot that was free from draughts. On other days, when the weather was not propitious, he would be carried to the drawing room.
Wherever he might be, someone or other was sure to come and sit with him and talk, but this was not the same thing as if Poirot could have selected for himself his partner in the tête a tête. He could no longer single out the person he wanted to talk to.
On the day after my arrival I was taken by Franklin to the old Garden house which had been fitted up in a rough and ready fashion for scientific purposes.
5 Copies
CURTAIN
Agatha Christie
Greenway House
Churchstow Devon
TYPESCRIPT FOR CURTAIN
AGATHA CHRISTIE
Agatha Christie wrote Curtain during WWII, as a gift for her daughter should she not survive the bombings. It was agreed among the family that Curtain would be published finally in 1975 by Collins, her long-standing publishers.
Courtesy of Christie Archive Trust

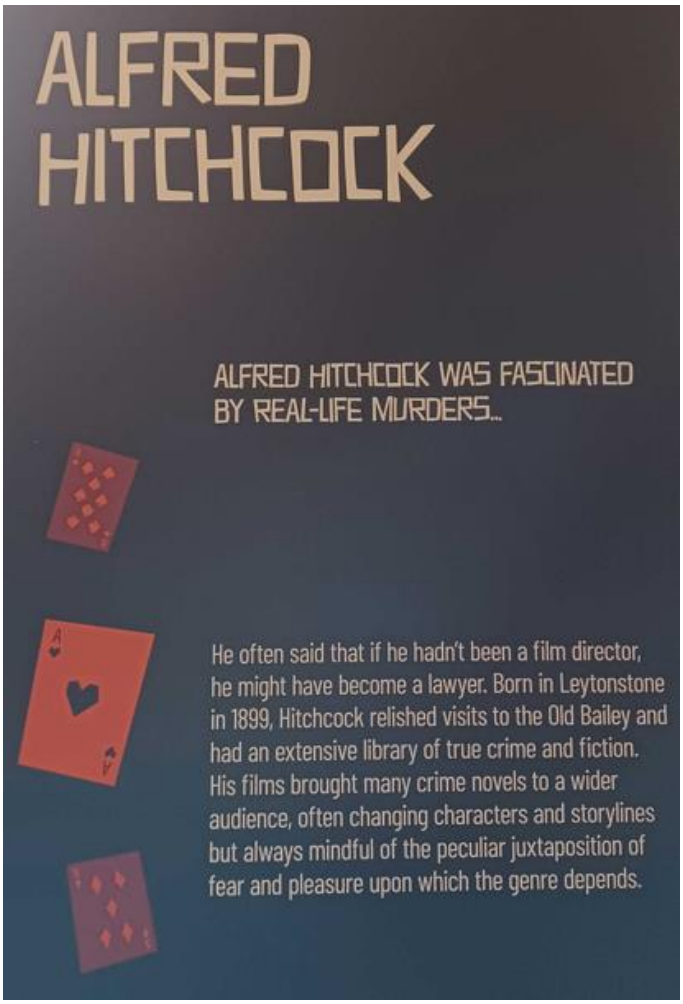

THE FINAL INSPECTOR MORSE NOVEL
COLIN DEXTER
THE REMORSEFUL DAY
"David Peace has joined a select group of novelists who are transforming the crime genre with passion and style"
PELECANOS
NINETEEN EIGHTYTHREE
DAVID PEACE
THE REMORSEFUL DAY (1999)
COLIN DEXTER
When Dexter announced Morse's death, a press conference was called, and tissues provided. The character's fortunes had been transformed by TV adaptations and a wonderful rapport between John Thaw and Kevin Whately as Morse and Lewis: a modern-day Holmes and Watson. Acknowledging the importance of Thaw's portrayal, Dexter added a clause to his will to prevent other actors from playing him.
Private collection
NINETEEN EIGHTY-THREE (2002)
DAVID PEACE
Very few characters are left standing at the end of The Red Riding Quartet (1999 – 2002). Peace's uncompromising portrayal of a decade of crime and police corruption in Yorkshire. Written with meticulous detail, the Quartet is set against the Ripper's reign of terror but concerned more with the broader decay and collapse of society, manifest in the Yorkshire landscape and the very language of the people.
Acquired by Legal Deposit in 2002

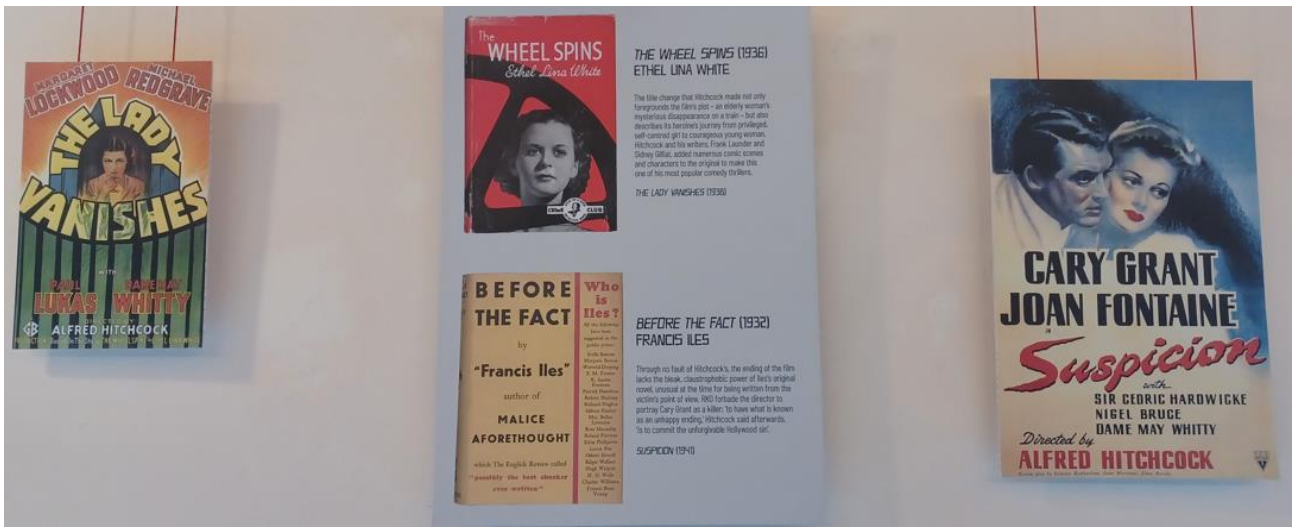
The second part of the exhibition was split into crime fiction located in Cambridge (South Gallery) and adaptations of crime fiction for the cinema (North Gallery).





North Gallery:




MARGARET LOCKWOOD
MICHAEL REDGRAVE
THE LADY VANISHES
ALFRED HITCHCOCK
The WHEEL SPINS
Ethel Lina White
THE WHEEL SPINS (1936)
ETHEL LINA WHITE
The title change that Hitchcock made not only foregrounds the film's plot – an elderly woman's mysterious disappearance on a train – but also describes its heroine's journey from privileged, self-centred girl to courageous young woman. Hitchcock and his writers, Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, added numerous comic scenes and characters to the original to make this one of his most popular comedy thrillers.
THE LADY VANISHES (1938)
BEFORE THE FACT
by
"Francis Iles"
author of
MALICE AFORETHOUGHT
Who is Iles?
BEFORE THE FACT (1932)
FRANCIS ILES
Through no fault of Hitchcock's, the ending of the film lacks the bleak, claustrophobic power of Iles's original novel, unusual at the time for being written from the victim's point of view. RKO forbade the director to portray Cary Grant as a killer: 'to have what is known as an unhappy ending,' Hitchcock said afterwards. 'Is to commit the unforgivable Hollywood sin'.
SUSPICION (1941)
CARY GRANT
JOAN FONTAINE
Suspicion
with
SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE
NIGEL BRUCE
DAME MAY WHITTY
Directed by
ALFRED HITCHCOCK


THE HOUSE OF DR. EDWARDES
FRANCIS BEEDING
THE HOUSE OF DOCTOR EDWARDES (1927)
FRANCIS BEEDING
Francis Beeding was the pseudonym of a writing duo, John Leslie Palmer and Hilary Aidan St George Saunders. Their Gothic psychological thriller is set in a Swiss asylum, and Hitchcock visited American hospitals and psychiatric wards before working on the film. To give life to the dreams which are crucial to the plot, he included a sequence designed by Salvador Dalí.
SPELLBOUND (1945)
STRANGERS ON A TRAIN
PATRICIA HIGHSMITH
STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1950)
PATRICIA HIGHSMITH
Hitchcock immediately recognised the cinematic potential of Highsmith's novel, securing the rights for $7500. Raymond Chandler worked on the screenplay. Hitchcock added the ingenuity of another fine crime novelist to Highsmith's brilliant premise, getting permission from Edmund Crispin (whose work he had already referenced in Stage Fright) to use the carousel scene from The Moving Toyshop.
STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1951)
DAVID O. SELZNICK presents
INGRID BERGMAN
GREGORY PECK
in
ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S
SPELLBOUND
A SELZNICK INTERNATIONAL PICTURE
ALFRED HITCHCOCK
BRINGS YOU 101 MINUTES OF MATCHLESS SUSPENSE!
STRANGERS ON A TRAIN
FARLEY GRANGER RUTH ROMAN ROBERT WALKER

Wednesday 17 to Saturday 20 July

Near the end of my stay in Cambridge we finally enjoyed a fine, sunny weather. The Colleges' flower gardens looked gorgeous in the bright sunlight, and the beautiful trees and green lawns seemed refreshing after a walk in the busy city centre. I also visited Downing College and several science museums, but the narrative of these visits will be embedded in a future post about the Enlightenment, sciences and their representations in British arts in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Thanks to the classes and some of the lectures I attended to during these two weeks, not only my understanding of both Shakespeare's plays and their historical and cultural context has increased, but they also gave me food for thoughts and inspiration for several future articles, to be posted on the section "English literature and arts" of this blog!

The Cambridge University Press bookshop (Trinity Street) was temporarily closed, so I could not browse into it. But there is a huge bookshop, Heffers, also in Trinity Street, with offers a large choice of books, including a small section of second-hand books. I went to two second-hand book shops, hunting for a pocket book edition of Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, and found it (as well as other books) at David Bookseller: G. David Bookseller: Antiquarian and second hand bookseller and buyer | England (gdavidbookseller.com). Nearby, you have also The Haunted Bookshop: Sarah Key Books - The Haunted Bookshop.

On Thursday night, I went—with three other fellow students—see *Hamlet*: within the framework of the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival 2024, they performed this play in the Fellows' garden at King's College: Hamlet | The Cambridge Shakespeare Festival

This last experience thus rounded up nicely this whole summer programme devoted to Shakespeare!

Eva Anglessy, 23 July 2024

APPENDIX

I recorded here below the texts of the posters and explanations which were displayed at the exhibition *Murder by the Book*, Part 1.

1) Introduction by Nicola Upson

"There's nothing like a potent amalgam of mystery and mayhem to make whole the world kin." P. D. James, 1982.

Diverse, surprising and written unashamedly to entertain, crime fiction outsells any other genre. *Murder by the Book* looks at the art of crime writing through a creative lens, exploring the different elements that a novelist weaves into one compelling story: brilliant ideas, atmospheric settings, vivid characters, challenging themes, and the perfect unguessable ending. Within each section, Golden Age classics sit alongside books by contemporary authors, revealing what those stories have in common and how much the genre has evolved.

Cambridge University Library's rich crime collection includes novels that are long out of print or republished in very different editions, highlighting the stylish artwork that tempted early readers. Acquired through the legal deposit scheme, many of these books were housed in the Library's tower because it was thought they would rarely be read. Now they have an exhibition in their honour, showing how far crime writers have come in laying to rest divisions of literature and genre fiction.

It's a world of extraordinary humanity and variety, building on its past but always moving forward—and continuing bringing pleasure to millions.

2) Where to start

"The first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels in a genre invented by Collins and not by Poe." T. S. Eliot

Crime writing as a genre began in the mid-19th century, but T. S. Eliot was wrong. *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins was not the first detective novel. *The Notting Hill Mystery* by Charles Felix appeared in book form three years earlier in 1865.

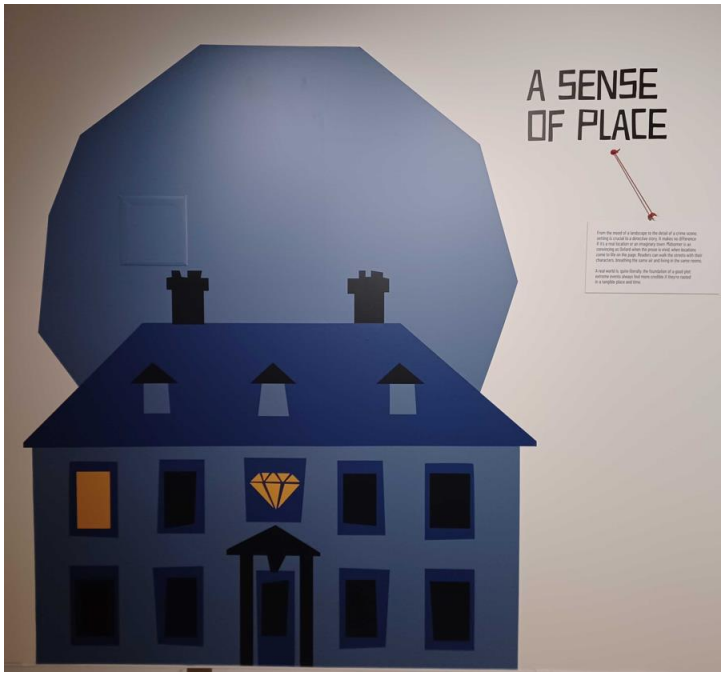
The Moonstone foreshadowed many classic tropes of the 20th-century detective novel: clues and red-herrings; suspects and twists; investigations and reconstructions; and even an English country house. Moreover, it established the *ethos* of the genre: ingenuity; a fair, skilfully devised puzzle; and a deft shifting of suspicion.

"[*The Moonstone*] introduced into fiction those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors." Henry James

> The crime novel has diversified over the years into different sub-genres, each with distinguishing traits: brilliant detectives; forensic experts; Golden Age style narratives with humour and a likeable amateur; transport murders; and surprise bestsellers that spawned a host of imitations. Most of these approaches, though, have their origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

‘Write what you know’ isn’t always possible for crime novelists: most are strangers to the violence they describe. However, authors use aspects of their lives as a starting point for their books, be it professional knowledge, emotional experience, or even friends and family.

3) A sense of place



From the mood of a landscape to the detail of a crime scene, setting is crucial to a detective story. It makes no difference if it’s a real location or an imaginary town: Midsommer is as convincing as Oxford when the prose is vivid, when locations come to life on the page. Readers can walk the streets with their characters, breathing the same air and living in the same rooms.
A real world is quite literally the foundation of a good plot: extreme events always feel more accurate if they’re rooted in a tangible place and time.

4) Heroes and villains

“The novelist who employs murder needs only the writer’s imagination and an understanding of the darker side of human soul.” Ruth Rendell

A crime novel is about getting to the truth, but not simply as a matter of whodunnit or why. Truth shouldn’t be a reveal, reserved for the final chapter, but should run through the novel and sit on every page—a quest for the truth of human nature.
As an author, it is essential to get into the mindset of your characters, to write for them, not about them; otherwise, some important part of them will remain forever elusive and artificial. Credible characters and plausible motives are the key to everything. Without them, a crime novel fails.

The victim:
Reminding us that ‘the body in the library’ once lived and breathed is one of the most important things a crime novel can do. Detective novels are often referred to as ‘whodunnits’ and are usually

built on the identity of the killer, but the victim is the catalyst for the whole story and just as important. They must have a powerful presence in the narrative as a real person, not just the mechanic for a puzzle.

The criminal:
The battle between good and evil, victim and perpetrator, has long been the driving force of the genre. No one is all good or all bad, however. It's not an author job to judge or condone characters; it's an author job to get under their skin and show readers why they do what they do.

The detective:
It sometimes feels as if our favourite detectives have been in our lives forever. The most fully formed characters come from an ever-deepening relationship with their authors. That relationship develops particularly well over the course of a series and is rewarded with tremendous loyalty from readers—and often by a screen adaptation.

5) The dark places

"He had the mind of a thriller writer, obsessive, guilt-ridden, preoccupied with trivia. He had lived too long with thoughts of death." P. D. James, *Innocent Blood*.

By its very nature, crime fiction asks its readers—and writers—to venture into dark and difficult territory. The genre's foundations are cruelty and violence, loss, and grief. It explores crimes that me might shy away from in real life and takes us uncomfortably close to the people who commit them and the people who suffer.
Some readers turn to the genre because it makes them feel safe—safe because justice is (usually) served or because fiction is a secure place from which to explore the darker side of human nature. But crime fiction is at its bravest and best when it asks unsettling questions—about motive and emotion, about violence, about how we punish the guilty and the innocent. And as some of these books have proved, the genre doesn't just reflect society; it can change it, too.

6) The end

The perfect ending is an elusive, contradictory thing. We race through the pages, longing to know what happens, and then—if the book is a good one—we wish we hadn't got there. We want to be fooled and enjoy the twist that we didn't see coming, and yet we want to be right and win the battle of wits between author and reader.
The one certainty of closing a good book is that we must part company with a world we've come to love—a worlds that has perhaps become more real to us than the one we live in.

There are two levels of reality in most crime novels: what the reader is told page by page and what the author knows and is keeping secret. A twist can take many forms: the least likely suspect; new information that changes everything you thought you knew; the undercutting of assumptions, conscious or subconscious; an apparently insignificant moment that holds the key to the story. Without any spoilers, here are some of the best.