



**Southeast England and Capital Crime:  
London, Kent, and Sussex  
22 September-7 October 2020  
*BOOKS SET IN THE AREAS THAT WE WILL VISIT***

## LONDON

**CHARLES DICKENS**, perhaps more than any other, is the writer most associated with London. Famously, he went to work at age 12 in a blacking factory, near the present-day Charing Cross Station; he became a court reporter at age 17; and at age 24, with the publication in 19 installments (1836-37) of *Pickwick Papers*, he became a household name. Most of Dickens' novels are set in London and use many places in and around London.

***Bleak House*** (first published in serial form, 20 parts, 1852-1853) Some critics believe the novel is England's first real contribution to the modern detective story with the character of Inspector Bucket, though the main focus is not on the detection aspect of the plot. Bucket, like so many of the detectives who followed him, is an amazing reader of people and a tool for navigating society, following the thread that connects the secrets of Lord and Lady Dedlock to the fetid slum of Tom-All-Along's. The novel is a scathing satire of the slow, complicated, seemingly senseless process of litigation in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England, as the case of Jarndyce v. Jarndyce moves at a snail's pace through the Inns of Court to its inevitable devastating conclusion against the backdrop of fog-clogged London and a large cast of quirky characters. At the novel's center are three orphans, the mysterious secret of Lady Dedlock, and a murder. Tragedy abounds, hopes are dashed, and someone dies by spontaneous combustion.

**SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE** (1859-1930) Scottish writer and physician, creator of Sherlock Holmes, surely the most well-known of all detectives ever created and the detective regarded by critics as the most influential, after Poe's Dupin, in the development of the detective figure in fiction. Doyle divided his time between London and his home "Windlesham" in Crowborough, East Sussex. He is buried in the grounds at Windlesham.

"**The Red-Headed League**" (1891) encapsulates the web of small businesses, secret groupings, and mysterious schemes in the convoluted city of London. When a pawnbroker appears at Holmes and Watson's Baker Street headquarters, it takes Holmes to see how the color of the man's hair might connect to an artificial knee company—and to the bank vault sitting temptingly beside his pawnshop. In a list of the top twelve best of his stories, Conan Doyle placed this one second (after "The Speckled Band") because of the originality of the plot.

**JOHN le CARRÉ** (David John Moore Cornwell) is a British writer of espionage novels. He worked in MI5 and MI6 (the Secret Intelligence Service and the Security Service) during the 1950s and 1960s, a background that informs his novels. His 3<sup>rd</sup> novel, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963), was an international best seller and led to his leaving MI6 to become a full-time writer. Many of his George Smiley novels have locations in and around London <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2017/smileys-london.html>

*Call for the Dead* (1961) introduces the unassuming spy-hunter George Smiley along with le Carré's fictional version of MI6, "the Circus." With a plot centered on Smiley's investigations into an apparent suicide by a man he's recently interrogated, it also provides an interesting bridge between the mystery novel and the spy sub-genre le Carré would perfect in the coming years.

**John Mortimer** (1923-2009) was a barrister, dramatist, screen writer, and author. He was a trial attorney for more than 30 years, meanwhile producing film scripts, short stories, and novels. His most famous creation is Rumpole of the Bailey, which became a long-running BBC series. Mortimer wrote collections of short stories based on the TV series. The stories are social commentary but also very funny, witty, and delightful.

*Rumpole of the Bailey* (1978), first in the Rumpole series. Comprised of six short stories, they chronicle Rumpole defending a number of low-life criminals, who may or may not be guilty of the crimes with which they are charged.

**Andrew Taylor** (<http://www.andrew-taylor.co.uk>) has written full time since 1981 and has published 45 novels. He has won the Crime Writers Association Ellis Peters Historical Dagger award an unprecedented three times, and in 2009 he was awarded the prestigious Cartier Diamond Dagger Award for sustained excellence in crime writing. For his clever plots, dark overtones, and sense of place in London, he has been compared to Dickens.

*The Ashes of London* (2016), first in a series of historical novels set in London at the time of the Great Fire, 1666. As the fire consumes everything in its path, the body of a man is found in the ruins of St Paul's Cathedral, stabbed in the neck, thumbs tied behind his back. The son of a traitor, James Marwood is forced to hunt the killer through the city's devastated streets. When a second murder victim is discovered in the Fleet Ditch, Marwood is drawn into the political and religious intrigue of Westminster and across the path of a killer with nothing to lose.

*Bleeding Heart Square* (2008) It's 1934, and the decaying London cul-de-sac of Bleeding Heart Square is an unlikely place of refuge for aristocratic Lydia Langstone, fleeing an abusive marriage and hiding in Number 7. However, unknown to Lydia, a dark mystery haunts the decrepit building. What happened to Miss Penhow, the middle-aged spinster who owns the house and who vanished four years earlier? Why is a seedy plain-clothes

policeman obsessively watching the square? And why are parcels of rotting hearts being sent to Joseph Serridge, the last person to see Miss Penhow alive?

**Barbara Vine** (Ruth Rendell, 1930-2015) is the name that Rendell wrote under when producing her dark psychological thrillers, most of them set in London. Under her own name, she wrote a series of police procedurals featuring Chief Inspector Wexford of the Kingsmarkham Police and one-off psychological novels exploring the backgrounds of killers and victims alike. As Barbara Vine, her novels not only continued exploring the psychological makeup of killers and the people they killed but created darkly bizarre and often disturbing plots.

***King Solomon's Carpet*** (1991) An eccentric man lives in a crumbling schoolhouse overlooking the Tube line, compiling his obsessive history of the Underground. A group of misfits is also drawn toward his house, including the enigmatic Axel, whose deadly secret casts a shadow over all their lives. These damaged outcasts are brought violently together by London's mysterious Underground system. Fascinating in part for its very thorough historical examination of the development and growth of the Underground.

## KENT

**Christianna Brand** (Mary Christianna Lewis, 1907-1988). Author of the Inspector Cockrill of the Kent County police series, Brand is noted for her clever plotting, her ability to surprise the reader, and her sense of humor. Cockrill is a crusty character with incredible powers of deduction and a great judge of human nature. Brand also wrote children's books, among which is the Nanny McPhee series.

***Heads You Lose*** (1941) introduces Inspector Cockrill when he is called to Pigeonsford Estate, where a group of close friends have gathered. Grace Morland is found dead in a ditch, a murder made even more unusual by the fact that Grace was wearing her friend's hat, the same hat that the day before she'd claimed she wouldn't be caught dead wearing.

***Green for Danger*** (1944), the second Cockrill novel, is considered her most outstanding work and is a classic of mystery fiction. In this book, a patient in a hospital for bombing victims dies on the operating table. Foul play is detected, and Inspector Cockrill is called to investigate.

**HELEN J. CHRISTMAS** (<https://www.samefacedifferentplace.com/>) author of short stories and crime novels, lives in Chichester, Sussex. Her series *Same Place, Different Faces*, is set across 4 decades, each novel taking place in England and shaped around the social and political climate of its time. The series follows the lives of three abused teenagers, all desperate to pursue their dreams, find love, and re-establish family ties.

***Beginnings*** (2012) First in the series, published by Amazon Kindle. The story is a thriller set in the 1970s in East London, against a background of organized crime, but hidden within this story is a political conspiracy as well as a love story.

***Visions*** (2015) Book two in the series takes place in 1985 in Kent. It's been 12 years since Eleanor fled the horrors of London, hiding in a remote country village. This tense, psychological thriller branches into the lives of 3 different characters but at the center is the restoration of an English country house, which attracts the interest of an evil property developer from London, determined to get his hands on the home at any cost.

**CHARLES DICKENS** (1812-1870), perhaps the greatest writer of the Victorian era, certainly the most popular writer of his age. Dickens grew up near the Chatham Dockyards in Kent. As an adult, he lived in London, while Gads Hill Place in Higham, Kent, served as his country home. He died at Gads Hill. Both Chatham and Higham are close to Rochester, which celebrates Dickens as no other town does.

***Great Expectations*** (first published in serial form, 1860-61) Dickens' 13<sup>th</sup> novel follows the young Pip from childhood to maturity. The novel has a central mystery, a murderer, a swindler, and a number of evil villains. Dickens creates unforgettable characters such as Pip's faithful friend and brother-in-law Joe, the escaped convict Magwitch, the sad, crazed Miss Havisham, and the beautiful, hard-hearted Estella. The novel uses some actual places in Rochester, including Restoration House, upon which Miss Havisham's Satis House is based.

***The Mystery of Edwin Drood*** (1870), Dickens' attempt at writing a full-length mystery novel, was left unfinished by his death. He had written about half of the planned novel and had made a sketchy outline of what he planned for the entire book. Set in Cloisterham (fictionalized version of Rochester), the novel focuses on the uncle of Edwin Drood, John Jasper, choirmaster and music teacher who falls in love with his pupil, Rosa, Edwin's fiancé. When Edwin goes missing, Jasper spreads the rumor that his friend has killed him.

**PAUL C. DOHERTY, OBE** (<http://www.paulcdoherty.com/>) has written over 100 books and has published a series of historical mysteries set in the Middle Ages (including a group based on the *Canterbury Tales*), Classical Greece, Ancient Egypt, and elsewhere. His books have been translated into more than twenty languages. He is Headmaster of Trinity Catholic High School in London.

***An Ancient Evil: The Knight's Tale of Mystery and Murder*** (1995). In the first of a group of mysteries based on the *Canterbury Tales*, the Knight relates a chilling story about a sinister old Oxfordshire cult that appears to be linked to a terrifying series of more recent murders.

**T. S. ELIOT** (1888-1965) was one of the major poets of the twentieth century but also a playwright, a literary critic, and an editor. He changed the nature of poetry with his experimentation with verse, diction, and style and became a leader of the modernist poetry movement. Born in St. Louis, he became a British citizen in 1927.

***Murder in the Cathedral*** (1935), first performed in Canterbury Cathedral, is a verse drama depicting the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Beckett in Canterbury Cathedral during the reign of Henry II. The action occurs between 2 and 29 December 1170 and chronicles the days leading up to the Archbishop's martyrdom. Becket's internal struggle represents the larger issue of an individual's opposition to authority.

**BRIAN KAVENAGH** (<https://filmmaker2.webs.com/>) After a filmmaking career in Australia, Kavenagh has become a writer of cozy mysteries with a series featuring amateur detective Belinda Lawrence and her antiques dealer friend Hazel. Lawrence is an Australian but has inherited an aunt's cottage in Bath, where she now lives. Kavanagh lives in Australia.

***A Canterbury Crime***, 4<sup>th</sup> in the Belinda Lawrence series. The ancient walled city of Canterbury has held many secrets over the centuries. But none are more mysterious than the death of Professor de Gray. When Belinda Lawrence is called in to evaluate the contents of the Professor's Tudor Manor House, she suspects foul play. But why would anyone murder a harmless academic?

**KATE MORTON** (<https://www.katemorton.com/>) was born in South Australia and lives in London and Australia. Her first five novels have all been *New York Times* bestsellers, *Sunday Times* bestsellers, and international number 1 bestsellers; they are published in 34 languages across 42 countries.

***The Secret Keeper*** (2012) During a party at the family farm in the English countryside, 16-year-old Laurel spies a stranger coming up the long road to the farm and watches as her mother speaks to him. Before the day is over, Laurel will witness a shocking crime. Now, fifty years later, the family is gathering at the farm for her mother's ninetieth birthday. Realizing that this may be her last chance, Laurel searches for answers to the questions that still haunt her from that long-ago day.

**VITA SACKVILLE-WEST** (1892-1962), poet, novelist, and garden designer. Most famously known for creating Sissinghurst, one of the most beautiful gardens in England, and for her novels *All Passion Spent* and *The Edwardians*. She was the model for Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*.

***All Passion Spent*** (1931) The novel addresses people's, especially women's, control of their own lives. The title is taken from the final three words of John Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. The story focuses on the widow of a former prime minister and viceroy of India, Lady Slane, who discovers at the age of 88 who she is—and it's not the proper, decorative, and dutiful wife of a statesman that she has been playing all her life.

***Sissinghurst: Vita Sackville-West and the Creation of a Garden*** (co-author Sara Raven)

From 1946 to 1957, Vita Sackville-West, poet, bestselling author, and creator of Sissinghurst, wrote a weekly column in the *Observer* describing her life at Sissinghurst, showing her to be one of the most visionary horticulturalists of the twentieth-century. The book draws on those columns to describe the process of creating a place of such beauty and elegance that it has become one of the most visited gardens in the world. The book is illustrated with drawings and original photographs throughout.

**WILLIAM SHAW** ([www.williamshaw.com](http://www.williamshaw.com)) lives in Brighton and works as a journalist and author in both the US and the UK. He has written regularly for the UK's *Observer* and *Independent*, as well as the *New York Times*. His recent works include police mystery novels based in London in the late 1960s, featuring Detective Sergeant Cathal Breen and Police Constable Helen Tozer, and more recently, a new series set in Dungeness, Kent, which features Detective Sergeant Alexandra Cupidi.

***She's Leaving Home*** (US title: *A Song from Dead Lips*) (2015) 1<sup>st</sup> Breen and Tozer.

London, 1968: The body of a teenage girl is found just steps away from the Beatles' Abbey Road recording studio. DS Breen investigates in what may be his last chance to prove he's up to the job in a world changing beyond recognition. Nothing illustrates the shift more than Helen Tozer, a brazen and rambunctious young policewoman assisting him with the case. Together they navigate a world on edge, where conservative tradition gives way to frightening new freedoms--and troubling new crimes.

***Salt Lane*** (2018) First in the series, Cupidi is a recent transfer from the London metro police to the rugged Kentish countryside. She's done little to ingratiate herself with her new colleagues, who find her too brash, urban, and—to make matters worse—she investigated her first partner, a veteran detective, and had him arrested on murder charges. Now assigned the brash young Constable Jill Ferriter to look after, she's facing another bizarre case: a woman found floating in local marsh land, dead of no apparent cause.

**DOROTHY SIMPSON** ([www.dorothysimpson.co.uk](http://www.dorothysimpson.co.uk)) is author of the Luke Thanet series, set in Kent. When she married, she moved to Maidstone and trained for and became a marriage counselor, which she did for 13 years before writing her first crime novel. She says that marriage counseling is “the best possible preparation for writing crime novels.” Simpson stopped writing in 2000 because of severe repetitive stress injury.

***The Night She Died*** (1980), first in the Thanet series. Julie is stabbed in the front hall of her own home, cut to the heart right through her tweed overcoat just minutes before her husband returns from evening class to find her dead. Inspector Thanet is pointed towards a foggy November evening twenty years ago when the three-year-old Julie may have witnessed a dreadful crime. Did her haunted past return to give her more than the occasional nightmare?



**CHARLES TODD** ([www.charlestodd.com](http://www.charlestodd.com)) Caroline and Charles Todd, American mother and son creators of the highly praised Ian Rutledge and Bess Crawford series, both set in England during and after WWI. Shell-shocked Scotland Yard Inspector Rutledge carries in his head the voice of Hamish, whom Rutledge executed during the war; Bess Crawford is a battlefield nurse working just behind the front lines and an amateur sleuth.

*A Duty to the Dead* (2009) (Bess Crawford #1) England, 1916. Bess Crawford receives a desperate request from a dying lieutenant while serving as a nurse aboard a hospital ship. "Tell my brother Jonathan that I lied," the young man says. "I did it for Mother's sake. But it has to be set right." Back home in England, Bess goes to Kent to deliver her message and receives an unexpected response from the dead soldier's family, for no one admits to understanding what the message means. But the Grahams are harboring a grim secret, and Bess must, somehow, get to the bottom of it.

## **EAST SUSSEX**

**JOHN BUDE** (Ernest Carpenter Elmore) (1901-1957) lived in Kent and Sussex, eventually settling near Rye, East Sussex. He wrote some 30 crime fiction novels, many featuring his two main series characters Superintendent Meredith and Inspector Sherwood.

*The Sussex Downs Murder* (1930) Second in the Superintendent Meredith series, this is a classic English detective story with vivid descriptions of the beautiful Sussex countryside. At their Sussex farm Chalklands, brothers John and William and William's bride share the family home. When elder brother John goes missing, Superintendent Meredith is called in to investigate

**GRAHAM GREENE** (1904-1991) was an English novelist, playwright, short story writer, and journalist regarded by some as one of the great writers of the 20th century. He was shortlisted in 1967 for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

*Brighton Rock* (1938) Some critics believe that *Brighton Rock* is not only the best book ever written about Brighton, but that it ranks as one of the top crime novels of all time. The key character is not the detective but the villain himself. Charles Hale is on a newspaper assignment in Brighton when he meets Pinkie, a teenage gang leader, and realizes that he is doomed. A hard core of hatred and violence runs through this novel, in which the seedy underworld becomes visible.

**ELLY GRIFFITHS** (<https://ellygriffiths.co.uk/>) is the pen name of Domenica de Rosa. She was born in London but the family moved to Brighton when she was five. One of her series features forensic archaeologist Dr. Ruth Galloway and is set in Norfolk; the other features Stephens and Mephisto, evocatively chronicling the shabby gentility and shadowy theatrical world in Brighton of post-war seaside Britain.

*The Zig Zag Girl* (2015), first Stephens and Mephisto novel. Brighton, 1950. The body of a girl is found cut into three pieces and Detective Inspector Edgar Stephens is convinced the killer is mimicking a famous magic trick, the Zig Zag Girl. The trick was invented by Max Mephisto, with whom Edgar served in the war as part of a shadowy unit called the Magic Men, using stage tricks to confound the enemy. Max advises Edgar to identify the victim quickly, advice that comes back to haunt him when he discovers she was a young woman he knew well. He's soon at Edgar's side, hunting for her killer.

**PETER GUTTRIDGE** (<http://www.peterguttridge.com/>) is a novelist, critic, writing teacher and a chairperson/interviewer at a wide range of literature festivals and events. He is a former Director of the Brighton Literature Festival. For eleven years he was the *Observer* newspaper's crime fiction critic. He is the author of eleven novels, two works of nonfiction and numerous short stories. His Brighton trilogy (2010-2012) explores Brighton's criminal past and present through serious, engaging fiction.

*City of Dreadful Night* (2010), first Brighton mystery. July 1934. A woman's torso is found in a trunk at Brighton railway station's left luggage office. Her legs and feet are found in a suitcase at Kings Cross. Her head is never found, her identity never established, her killer never caught. July 2010. A massacre in Milldean, Brighton's notorious no-go area. An armed police operation gone badly wrong. And then, one by one, the police involved in the killings start to disappear. Meanwhile, young ambitious radio journalist Kate Simpson hopes to solve that Brighton Trunk Murder of 1934. She enlists the help of disgraced ex-Chief Constable Robert Watts. It's only a matter of time before past and present collide.

**PATRICK HAMILTON** (1904 –1962 ) was an English playwright and novelist born just outside Brighton. Study of his novels has been revived recently because of their distinctive style, deploying a Dickensian narrative voice to convey aspects of inter-war London street culture. He is notable for capturing the atmosphere and Cockney dialect traditionally associated with the East End of London. Well known for his plays *Gaslight* (1939) and *Rope* (1929), many think his finest work was in his last novels, *The West Pier*, *Mr Stimpson and Mr. Gorse*, and *Unknown Assailant*, all featuring the memorable psychopath Ernest Ralph Gorse.

*The West Pier* (1951), first novel in the Gorse trilogy. Graham Greene hailed the novel as “the best book written about Brighton,” with JB Priestley describing his fictional landscape as “a kind of No Man’s Land of shabby hotels, dingy boarding-houses and all those saloon bars where the homeless can meet.”

**PETER JAMES** (<https://www.peterjames.com/>) was born in Brighton. He has written 35 novels, including the International best-selling crime thriller series featuring Brighton-based Detective Superintendent Roy Grace, which have sold 20 million copies worldwide and have given him fourteen consecutive UK *Sunday Times* number ones, as well as number ones in several other countries. James's books have been translated into 37 languages.

*Dead Simple* (2005), first Roy Grace novel. Michael Harrison had it all: good looks, charm, natural leadership, a wicked sense of humor, and now, Ashley, his fiancée. While out



celebrating with a group of friends a few nights before the wedding, Michael suddenly and unexpectedly finds himself enclosed in a coffin equipped only with a flashlight, a dirty magazine, a walkie-talkie, and a tiny breathing tube. It's all in good fun, that is, until the four are killed in a drunk driving accident just moments after leaving Michael completely alone and buried alive.

## WEST SUSSEX

**PETER LOVESY** (<https://peterlovesey.com/>) is a British writer of historical and contemporary crime novels and short stories. His best-known series characters are Sergeant Cribb, a Victorian-era police detective based in London; and Peter Diamond, a modern-day police detective in Bath. He now has a third series featuring Inspector Henrietta (“Hen”) Mallin, set in Chichester. In 2000, he received the Crime Writers Association Cartier Diamond Dagger Award for lifetime achievement in crime writing. He lives near Chichester.

*The House Sitter* (2003), 8<sup>th</sup> Peter Diamond novel. The corpse of a woman is found strangled to death on a popular Sussex beach. It turns out that she was a top profiler for the National Crime Faculty, who was working on the case of a serial killer. And though she was a Bath resident, the authorities don't want Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond to investigate the murder. What could they be trying to hide?

*The Circle* (2005), first Inspector Mallin. When Bob Naylor is prodded into joining the Chichester Writers' Circle, he scarcely expects to find that he will be rubbing elbows with one—or more—potential victims of murder by arson. In order to free himself from suspicion and save himself from going up in flames, he will have to cooperate with formidable CID Chief Inspector Henrietta Mallin.

**Isabella Muir** (<https://isabellamuir.com/>) is the author of the Sussex Crime Mysteries set in in the nineteen-sixties and -seventies and featuring a young librarian and amateur sleuth, Janie Juke, who has a passion for Agatha Christie. All that Janie has learned from her hero, Hercule Poirot, she is able to put into action as she sets off to solve a series of crimes and mysteries.

*The Tapestry Bag* (2017), first in the Sussex Crime mystery series. A young woman, Zara, goes missing, one year to the day that her boyfriend, Joel, was killed in a hit and run. In the quiet seaside town of Tamarisk Bay, her friend Janie decides to make it her mission to track Zara down. It's the 'swinging sixties' and Janie fears that Zara may be mixed up with drugs, alcohol, or worse. As Janie explores the strange circumstances of Zara's disappearance, she starts to question the truth about Joel's death.