

GWR stages train-naming ceremony for best-selling author Agatha Christie

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Great Western Railway (GWR) has named a train after best-selling author and Great Westerner Agatha Christie.

Christie's iconic murder mystery play *The Mousetrap* might have kept people guessing for 70 years, but GWR can exclusively reveal it has named Intercity Express Train (IET) 802110 in her honour.

The cast of *The Mousetrap*, which continues its national 70th Anniversary tour at Torquay's Princess Theatre from today until Saturday 16 September, joined guests for a special ceremony at Paignton station.

Christie was nominated for the train naming by the public and GWR colleagues as part of GWR's Great Westerners campaign, recognising past and present heroes from across the network.

The IET was named by Agatha Christie's grandson, Mathew Prichard, before departing on the 1410 service to London Paddington.

Also in attendance was GWR Train Manager Rob Smith and his 103-year-old grandmother, Joan Nott, a world-renowned expert on all things Agatha Christie.

As a tourist guide with the West Country Tourist Board, Joan researched and specialised in the Agatha Christie Story, tours that attracted journalists from all over the world.

She was awarded the prestigious Blue Badge in 1976 and worked with Dame Agatha's daughter, Rosalind Hick, and later with Mathew as part of her research for the tours.

Chair of the Agatha Christie Festival, Heather Norman-Soderlind, said:

"Agatha Christie is indelibly linked to her birthplace and home on the English Riviera; her stories with great train journeys and travel. How fitting that GWR's Intercity Express Train, the Dame Agatha Christie will be transporting festival goers and visitors to the Bay in future."

Along with The Mousetrap anniversary tour, the timing of today's naming also coincides with this year's annual Agatha Christie Festival, which runs until Sunday 17 September.

A registered charity, the aim of the festival is to use the extraordinary power and reach of Agatha Christie's global reputation to help the growth of Torbay's local economy, increase tourism in the region, and promote the area's literary and geological heritage.

Created for both locals and Christie's legion of fans across Britain and around the world, the festival includes high-profile speakers and performances of her plays and poetry, as well as other related arts and literary activities.

MP for Torbay, Kevin Foster, who spoke at the event said:

"Agatha Christie's legacy can be seen all over Torbay, with her stories still captivating audiences and readers worldwide. Given the role our railways played in her books and the special place Paignton was for her, it is apt Paignton Station should be the location for this naming ceremony. Everywhere this train goes it will promote both her legacy and the English Riviera as a whole."

GWR Train Service and Performance Director, Daryn McCombe said:

"We've been thrilled to celebrate Dame Agatha Christie today with so many people connected both to her work and to her personally.

"Her name has become synonymous with both Devon and the railway. Born in Torquay and famously featuring rail travel in some of her most popular works, her legacy continues to draw people to some of the most beautiful parts of our network.

"Whether it's to visit the annual Agatha Christie Festival to walk in her footsteps or visit some of the breath-taking Devon beaches and landscapes that inspired her writing, we are proud that our services are able to connect fans of all ages to the area."

Photo credit: Great Western Railway