



Hazel Reeves MRSS SWA FRSA  
Sculptor

The  
Agatha Christie  
Statue  
*Torquay Harbourside*  
Hazel Reeves

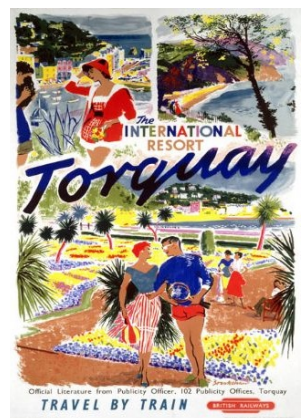


**Why do I want to sculpt Agatha Christie?**

Because of my enduring love of Agatha Christie's writing, passed down from my grandad. As the family bookworm, I would spend days absorbed in reading her paperbacks on family holidays in Devon, and while working in my mum's secondhand paperback shop as a teenager. This love has stayed with me, with Christie's characters - Poirot, Miss Marple, Tommy and Tuppence, Mr Quinn - keeping me company as I work on commissions late into the night in my studio. Listening to Agatha Christie's autobiography has further enhanced my fascination. I also have a real motivation, and track record, to redress the lack of representation of women in statuary, one bronze at a time.

**How will I capture Christie's spirit?**

I tell stories in bronze. This statue will be dynamic, with both plot and character. It will have intrigue, with clues to her work and life to engage passers-by, yet will be a faithful likeness to Agatha Christie, conveying her humour, intelligence, love of travel, and of course, her affection for Torquay. I see her in the Torquay of my imagination – always sunny, always exotic - as depicted in vintage railway posters.



It is rare that a particular photo captures the story I want to tell. But this time, there is. While this image is not of Agatha Christie in Torquay, it is a tableau that could be transported to many different locations.



Source: 'Agatha Christie visits the Acropolis, 1958', Daily Herald Archive at the National Media Museum, [wiki-commons](#)

### The statue scene

It's the 1950s, Agatha Christie is in the best of moods. Why? She loves the sun, she loves the sea, she loves Torquay. We find her striding out in the sunshine, along the harbourside, with blue skies above and The Strand behind. She's wearing a summery dress, sun hat (but no sunglasses) and her signature pearls. In one hand she holds a sun parasol and in the other, her woven bag. Agatha is en route to Beacon Cove for a much-loved sea swim.

Below is a rough maquette made in clay so that you can get an idea of the movement of the statue I am proposing. I also work on a portrait, to start my thinking about how to portray her. See my film for the process of sculpting these.



But this is only one interpretation...the best public statues inspire the imagination of passers-by to create their own stories. Perhaps Agatha is instead striding down to the boathouse at her beloved Greenway, the setting of my favourite book, *Dead Man's Folly*. Or, as the photograph suggests, she is happily travelling with Max, visiting archaeological sites like the Acropolis.

With any statue you need passers-by to come up close and ask questions. Who is this woman striding out? What is her connection to Torquay? Is it Agatha Christie? Or is it Miss Marple? Where is she going? Is the parasol a clue to her book *Evil under the Sun*? What's in her bag? Does it contain clues to her life and books? Perhaps a vial of medicine, from her dispensary days, or is it in fact a bottle of poison?

### **How I would like to engage with the public if I were chosen**

It was such a pleasure to visit Torquay, the harbourside, and Greenway (see my film to get a sense of my travels). And I also took the opportunity to chat to local people about Agatha Christie and Torquay. If selected I would like to chat more to people and get their ideas for clues to Agatha's work and life that I could secrete around her clothing or have peeping out from her bag, or even embroidered into her clothing (she was a keen embroiderer) and loved flowers. I like the idea of us perhaps finding a mousetrap clamped to the hem of her dress at the back!

### **What scale and material am I proposing?**

I propose casting in bronze, given its beauty and robustness over time, including in a marine environment. I suggest a scale of life-size plus 20%, installed directly into the paving, no plinth. This remains a friendly human-scale, so people won't be able to resist engaging with the smiling Agatha Christie.



Thank you,

**Hazel Reeves MRSS SWA FRSA**