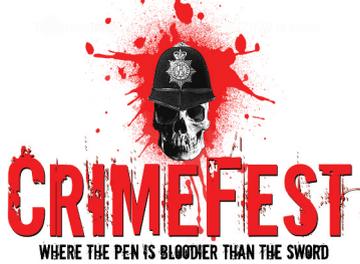


THE INTERNATIONAL CRIME FICTION CONVENTION

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CrimeFest, possibly Britain's biggest crime fiction convention, but unquestionably its friendliest, was held for the eighth year this past May. It was another huge success! Listed as one of fifty best festivals in the world by *The Guardian*, and one of the fifty best festivals in the UK by *The Independent*, the Bristol event is aimed at people who like to read an occasional crime novel as well as for die-hard fanatics. Appropriately, there was something for everyone.

The undisputed highlight of this year's CrimeFest saw international bestselling author Lee Child interview Maj Sjöwall, the Godmother of Scandinavian crime fiction. Together with her husband Per Wahlöö, Maj wrote a number of crime novels in the 1960s and 70s that influenced the genre's authors around the world, and which would ultimately start the current tsunami of Scandinavian detective writers.

For fans of the Golden Age, there was a celebration of 125 years of Agatha Christie which saw her grandson in conversation with Sophie Hannah, author of the recent



Lee Child interviews Maj Sjöwall

Poirot book. Overall the long weekend had over fifty panels featuring more than 130 authors from around the world. Topics ranged from Detective Duos to crime audiobooks, from historical crime fiction to modern-day thrillers, and everything in between.

As part of the weekend registration, delegates were also invited to the Crime Writers' Association Shortlist Announcement reception and the pre-Gala Awards Dinner reception. Those who had bought tickets to the dinner were treated to a wonderful speech by Toastmaster, James Runcie. The author, whose books were recently dramatised as *Grantchester*, drew hilarious comparisons between crime fiction and Man Booker-prize-

winning literature. Of course, there were also events for aspiring crime writers, including a crime writing day and Pitch an Agent – think speed-dating meets BBC's *Dragons' Den*.

Based on the success of recent years, CrimeFest 2016 is bound to be another sell-out event.

Next year's dates are 19-22 May, and throughout July CrimeFest is offering newbooks readers a discounted early bird rate of £135 on a full weekend pass when they register with discount code 'newbooksmag' at [www.crimefest.com](http://www.crimefest.com).