

Tony Medawar, editor of the BODIES FROM THE LIBRARY anthologies, was kind enough to answer a few questions via chat and graciously gave permission for us to share the transcript:

Charis: I read in an interview you did with agathachristie.com that finding rare, unpublished work is a hobby of yours--how did that begin, and how did it lead to the BODIES FROM THE LIBRARY collections?

Tony Medawar: I read my first proper crime novel when I was about nine or ten. It was the Fontana paperback edition of Agatha Christie's *A Caribbean Mystery* with Tom Adams' wonderful cover illustration. Around this time Anthony Stevens' marvellous adaptations of Dorothy L Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey Stories began on BBC television. I was hooked. Over the next ten or so years I read everything published by Christie, Sayers and others including R Austin Freeman. It occurred to me that there must be some material that hasn't been published and I began to search for it. Since then I have found literally dozens of stories and plays, as well as novels under forgotten pseudonyms; and it has been my pleasure to make these available to a wider audience through the many books I have edited, including currently the Bodies from the Library series for HarperCollins. Two volumes have been published so far and a third is due out next year.

C: How wonderful! Is there any way you can give us a hint about what to look forward to in the third volume?

TM: As with the first two volumes, the third selection of Bodies from the Library will be an eclectic mix of stories, with lost and unknown stories from some of the biggest names in the genre. Some have never been published before - including one by Ngaio Marsh in which her much/loved detective Roderick Alleyn investigates murder and the world of fine art - while others have never been reprinted since their first, fleeting, appearance. While the majority of pieces in the book are short stories or novellas there is also the script of a radio play and - in a first for the series - the script of a television play. The volume will be launched at the annual Bodies from the Library conference in 4 July 2020 and will have around 15 stories by mostly American and British writers.

C: I'll be looking forward to that for sure. Going back to Sayers, can you tell me what the process of getting permission to publish the story was like, and the response you've seen from readers? (Confession—when our copy arrived at the library where I work, I might have done a little dance while cradling it in my arms like a baby)

TM: You will not be surprised to learn that the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Though its existence had been known for some years it was not known if any copies had survived. I was therefore amazed and delighted to come across it in the carefully indexed archive of Sayers' papers in the Marion E Wade Center in Wheaton, Illinois. The Center and of course Sayers' agent had to give their permission to reprint the story and we were very glad they did. While the story is not the best story Sayers ever wrote, it is very characteristic and does extend our knowledge of Lord Peter a little. It probably dates from relatively early in her career because, as many readers will have spotted, she still had a little to learn about the way that guns work. There are other fragments of Wimsey stories and I wrote a detailed study of these for the British magazine CADS (available from Geoff Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex, SS7 1PA, United Kingdom) but this is the only complete story. The Bodies from the Library series will continue beyond 2020, and I am hopeful that Dorothy L Sayers will also feature in a future volume ...