

## **Press Note: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 – Day 2**

**Event:** Celebrating 125 years of Agatha Christie  
*Release of Kathryn Harkup's 'A is for Arsenic: The Poisons of Agatha Christie'*

**Kolkata, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2016:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 commemorated the 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Agatha Christie, the grande dame of crime fiction, with the launch of Kathryn Harkup's, '*A is for Arsenic: The Poisons of Agatha Christie*', a fascinating look at the poisons Christie used to kill her characters.

Presented in association with Bloody Scotland!- Scotland's International Crime Writing Festival, the launch was followed by an intriguing discussion on Agatha Christie with author of the book **Kathryn Harkup**, also a chemist and a science communicator; **Dom Hastings**, Director of Bloody Scotland; **Anuja Chauhan**, popular young adult writer and **Sujata Sen** Director, East India, British Council. During the riveting discussion, Kathryn offered unique insights into the work of perhaps the most popular author in the world who is still an influence and inspiration to crime writers around the world today.

Kathryn's background as an avid Agatha Christie reader and chemist with a doctorate on her chemicals makes her perfectly placed to investigate just how much science fact went into the fiction of Agatha Christie's novels. Her book '*A is for Arsenic: The Poisons of Agatha Christie*' is a fascinating read, investigating fourteen of the poisons Christie used in her books, looking at the scientific reality behind the poisons, the feasibility of getting hold of them, administering them, and detecting them historically as well as in modern times, and comparing actual cases with the murders written in Christie's books. The session was moderated by **Sumit Ray** at the vast green lawns of Tollygunge Club.

### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2016**

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata's pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grew out of the bookstore's year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the seven years since Kolkata saw her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a nearly 100 year old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favours depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects, from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events, and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January. In 2016 AKLF celebrates diverse themes encompassing books, theatre, the arts and cinema. AKLF's focus is on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. The 7th edition of

AKLF is poised to scale new heights, with an outstanding and meticulously curated programme, bringing the world and the nation to Kolkata. Continuing to celebrate the city's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites the festival rediscovers the quaint and hidden charms of the city through heritage walks. AKLF highlights several unique concepts with a fresh approach that reflects current concerns such as diversity, gender equality, continuities across borders and youth engagements, which are also broad themes running through the festival. AKLF signature heritage sites include Nandan, Town Hall steps, The Indian Museum, Presidency University, Tollygunge Club and Victoria Memorial. AKLF 2016 has participation from Australia, Israel, Scotland, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal as well as England, France, Germany, Pakistan, Bhutan and others. Some of the prominent personalities who will be part of the literary extravaganza are Ben Okri, Meera Syal, Christine Manfield, Ashis Nandy, Vir Sanghvi, Bharathi S Pradhan, Shatrughan Sinha, Shobhaa De and more. The four day long, multi-faceted event has several stimulating components designed to give visitors and the audience an enriching experience, with a great blend of literature, culture, art and heritage. And all of this is absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

### **Notes to Editors**

**Kathryn Harkup** is a chemist, science communicator and author of *A is for Arsenic: The Poisons of Agatha Christie* (2015). She is passionate about communicating how amazing science can be and has delivered talks and conducted workshops at various science festivals and schools across the South East as well as organisations such as The Hungarian Museum, The Training Partnership, RHS Wisley and The Royal Institution of Great Britain.

**Dom Hastings** is the Director of Bloody Scotland, Scotland's International Crime Writing Festival, an annual event to celebrate crime fiction from Scotland. Based in Glasgow, Scotland, Dom works to showcase Scottish literature internationally.

**Anuja Chauhan** is an Indian author and advertiser, often described as the best writer of the Indian commercial fiction genre. She worked in the advertising agency, JWT India, for over 17 years eventually becoming vice-president and executive creative director, before resigning in 2010 to pursue a full-time literary career. As a writer, she is best known for her best-selling, contemporary "rom-com" novels, *The Zoya Factor* (2008), *Battle For Bittora* (October 2010) and *Those Pricey Thakur Girls* (January 2013). Her new novel, a jump sequel to *Those Pricey Thakur Girls*, released in May 2015 is titled *The House That BJ Built*.

**Sujata Sen** is the Director (East India) of British Council. She is also the Director of British Council Management Services, NOIDA. Before joining the British Council she has been a journalist, columnist and a publishing editor. She holds honorary positions in various organizations and Trusts. She has produced books for the Nepal and Bhutan markets, and was also Head of Marketing for all of East India, including north-east, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Sen has authored two books viz, *Gender Studies* and *Women Rights and Empowerment*. She is the Chair for Future Hope ([www.futurehope.net](http://www.futurehope.net)); a Trustee for the Telegraph Education Foundation; Governing Committee Member at the Calcutta School of Music as well as a member of the West Bengal Heritage Commission.

### **AKLF 2016 Partners and Associations:**

The AKLF 2016 edition has forged several new, prestigious associations, following its impressive collaborations in first year in 2010. We are proud to welcome on board both our new and regular partners including the Victoria Memorial Hall, Indian Museum, Australian High Commission, Embassy of Italy in India, Bloody Scotland, British Council, Calcutta Debating Circle, Crime Writers

Festival, Embassy of Israel in India, Alliance Française, Portugal Embassy, Presidency University, Jaipur Literary Festival, Yes Foundation, FACES, Open Doors, FREED, The Creative Arts, Poetry Paradigm, MAKAIAS, Tollygunge Club, Max Muller Bhavan - Goethe Institute, The Park, Modern High School for Girls, Rakshak Foundation, Aishee, Streets of Calcutta, Calcutta Instagrammers, Wikipedia, Caravan, BEE books, Gibl.in, Bulk Email SMS India, Presto, She and Griffith Review. We also have 91.9 friends FM as radio partner, The Times of India as Print Media Partner, Anderson as Printing Partner, Selvel as Outdoor Partner, Typhoo as Refreshment Partner, Mera Tiffin as Food Partner, Indismart and Anon Production as special partners. A wide cross section of publishers, which include Niyogi Publishers, Future Publishers, OM Books and others will showcase their authors at AKLF 2016. AKLF is proud of these associations and hope they keep growing year on year.

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