

Murder Mystery night at Wrexham Library; Tuesday 7th May 2013

Introduction

On 7th May 2013, Wrexham Library became the centre of attention when a vicious murder was committed. With four suspects about to stand trial in front of a jury of many the scene was set and at 7.30pm the trial began...

To celebrate World Book Night, The Reading Agency (TRA) commissioned award winning thriller author Ann Cleeve to write a special murder mystery script which could be performed in a library setting. This was the first time Wrexham Library service had hosted and produced a night of this kind.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the event were simple:

- To promote and market Wrexham Library to members of the public
- To engage directly with new and existing readers and local communities
- To introduce a new event to the library calendar for marketing and promoting library services

Promotional materials and marketing

Publicity, marketing and promotion took place inside the library, in external venues, online and on the radio. All publicity materials were provided by the TRA free of charge but were adapted and translated into Welsh to suit local needs. A simple, clear effective design was created which was used on all materials creating a strong brand for the event.

Posters were distributed to all branch libraries in Wrexham County plus to neighbouring authorities Denbighshire and Flintshire libraries; together with council buildings such as leisure centres, Contact centre, Guildhall, Memorial Hall, tourist information centre; Waterstones, local colleges, the library website and the council weekly news bulletin.

A press release was written and distributed via the press office plus a regular article in the library's Wrexham Leader column.

Budget

The budget for the event was minimal as the TRA provided all of the materials. Small in house costs were occurred for photocopying, light refreshments and staffing on the evening.

Results

As the event would be interactive the number of guests was limited to allow staff to maintain order during the evening. The format of the evening dictated that guests would sit at tables rather than just chairs in a theatre layout for a traditional author event.

As a result of the marketing the library sold all tickets and had a small waiting list of people hoping to attend the event.

The most encouraging aspect of the evening was many new faces in the audience to the customers who would normally attend a traditional author event. The evening had a more social aspect to it and therefore groups of friends attended or in the instances where individuals attended, due to the table layout they mixed with other people and seemed quite happy to do so.

As the evening was designed to promote and celebrate World Book Night and reading in general, free copies of the book *Me before you* by Jojo Moyes were handed out to each guest. The aim of the book give away is to encourage people to pick up a book and read either for the first time or to try something more diverse, and this title was chosen deliberately to persuade crime readers to try something a little bit different. Most guests were thrilled at the book giveaway.

Whilst a team of staff deliberated who the winner of the Murder Mystery may be a book quiz was distributed to all guests, again this was received with much gusto and enthusiasm.

The library had ordered a number of books written by the award winning author Ann Cleeves to be sold to the guests on the evening. However, guests were more interested in traditional library services and failed to purchase a single copy.

Evaluation

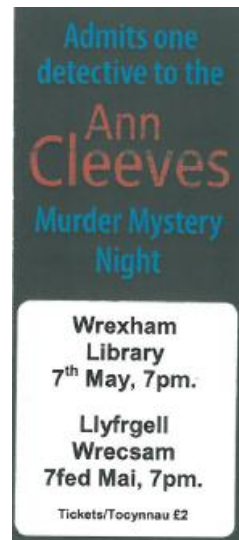
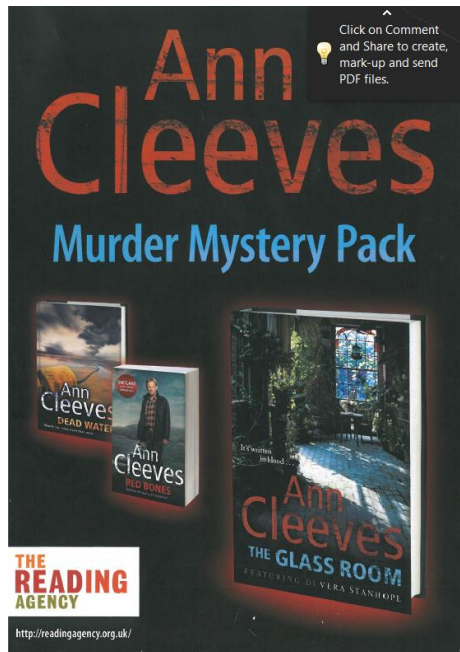
The evening was considered a great success (see customer comment) with many guests asking for a repeat event. The relaxed atmosphere added to the enjoyment of the night with several guests admitting their surprise at how nice the library was and what a range of resources we had available. The event was not aimed at creating new members but at raising the library's profile which it managed to achieve.

Where to next?

Once a script has been sourced the simplicity of this event could be easily replicated with very little cost to the library service. Whilst libraries are facing these austere cuts an event such as this can help raise the library profile to a new audience within the local community and can be socially inclusive. Wrexham Library has plans afoot to commit another murder on World Book Night 2014 – be afraid...

Debbie Salisbury
Wrexham Library, January 2014

The branding for the pack, which included all marketing and publicity materials and was adapted to be bilingual.



Customer comment:

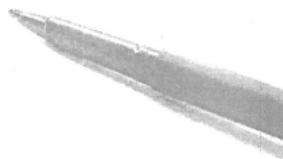
I attended the Murder Mystery evening last night along with five of my colleagues.

We all thoroughly enjoyed it! The suspects we were asked and very believable! The evening was very well organised and we all came away with a book to read.

! All this for £2.00!

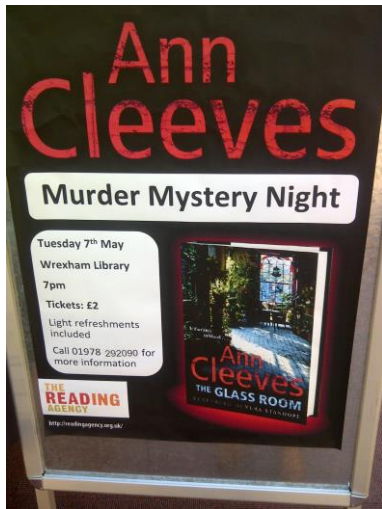
Thank you.

P.S. Will come again if it is repeated.



Photo's from the evening:

A:Frame noticeboard



The master of ceremonies and cast

