




<p>NAME:</p>	<p>Chris McDermott</p> 
<p>Profile: <i>(Tell us about yourself; how long have you been writing? What inspires you to write? how long have you been a member of Watford Writers? What are your favourite reads?)</i></p>	<p>I have been writing for a good deal of my life, but only started in earnest when I sold my first murder mystery play in October 1996. I joined Watford Writers in the spring of 2019 and was instrumental in the setting up the sub-group of people who write for children (The KidsLit group) in August 2020. I enjoy reading the Watford Writers' entries to the various competitions – I am always impressed by the very high standard.</p> <p>In May 2023 I graduated as a Master of Studies at the University of Cambridge in 'Writing for Performance'. Reference to this is made on the Wolfson College, University of Cambridge website. My dissertation included my play, 'Duplicity' and an analysis of that play. The structure which I used for 'Duplicity' enables the audience to vote for which of three routes the protagonist should take in the second part of the play. This structure reflects my interest, as both a writer and educationalist, in using drama to provoke discussion and debate.</p> <p>I have also written academically, resulting in the future publication of two papers, each of approximately 6,000 words, in 'The International Journal of Excellence in Smart Education'. The first is on the subject of 'An Analysis of the Importance of Emotional Intelligence in the Working Life of the Headteacher', which is based on my MBA dissertation for the University of Hull. The second has the title, 'Leadership and Change. Personal Reflections of Principals in Dubai'.</p>
<p>Main writing interests <i>(Novelist, Poet, Playwright, Biographer, Historian, Academic, Researcher, other etc?)</i></p>	<p>My main interest is as a playwright, although I have written and performed poems and short stories for events such as The Bushey Performing Arts Festival, where I have been responsible for organising a number of stages. At the Bushey Performing Arts Festival of 2025, I wrote, and performed, the poem which opened the festival.</p>

	<p>The plays I have written fall into two main categories: murder mystery plays and short, ten-minute plays. I have written over 40 plays which have been seen by paying audiences; this includes nearly 1,250 performances of my murder mystery plays. I wrote the play, a murder mystery, which opened the Emirates Festival of Literature in Dubai in 2014.</p> <p>I have won a number of prizes outside Watford Writers, including Best Script from over 100 scripts at the 'Short and Sweet' play festival in Dubai in 2022; this is the largest short play festival in the world. Later that year I won Best Performer in the 'Short and Sweet' play festival in Essex from over forty actors. I also won an award as Best Director in the 48 Hour play festival in Dubai in 2016, when we, as the participants, had to write, rehearse and perform a play within two days. I have co-written a play which was performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1980.</p> <p>Professionally, I wrote the murder mystery play to celebrate the three-hundred-year anniversary of Watford Grammar School for Boys in 2004. In a professional capacity, I have also written murder mystery plays for Fred Olsen cruise lines. Moving forward, I would like to give more time to my Murder Mystery Players business. N.B. At the moment I do professional acting work for 'Murder 57', which involves improvising dialogue around a structure.</p> <p>I have done professional 'voice over' work in the past, and, although this has related to an academic book for adults, I would be interested in committing my writing for children to audio.</p> <p>I have had two plays I wrote for adults, performed by children, for the Aspire charity at the Albery Theatre (now the Noel Coward Theatre) in London's West End in the 1980s. In terms of writing for children, I have written two plays for the Emirates Festival of Literature about Expi Elephant, a character invented by my friend, Nishita Bhayani. More recently, I have worked with my very good friend, and fellow Watford Writer, Mike Lansdown, on 'The Beans' project, which is a collection of stories for young children that we have written for the TV personality, Mr Motivator.</p> <p>I have also written a book of short stories for adolescents, designed to provoke discussion. I should like to work on this going forward.</p> <p>One writing project which I haven't started, but which I would like to work on in the future, relates to school leadership. The book would present the reader, possibly a practising school leader, or a school governor, with issues which they would need to resolve, possibly following discussion with others. This focus again signals my interest in engaging the recipient of my work, this time the reader, and other times, the audience.</p>
Do you have a special place in which to write?	My special place to write is my study at home. I may create elsewhere, but I only ever do any word-processing when I am back at home.
Do you have a preferred time	My preferred time of the day for writing is the morning. This is

of day for writing?	when I am at my freshest and when my subconscious has had time to reflect and create when I have been asleep.
Have you been published or have self-published? <i>(Please list your publications)</i>	I have been self-published, or at least I have had my murder plays printed, before I have sold them.
Do you have any special techniques for writing? Specialist equipment or writing aids?	I do not have any special techniques, or specialist equipment, for writing. Having said this, my murder mystery plays need to be much more structured, in advance, than my other types of writing.
Have you been involved with any other writing activities? <i>(e.g. workshops, organising writing events, attending external workshops, retreats?)</i>	I have run workshops for Watford Writers, for the Emirates Festival of Literature in Dubai, and for my friends, as well as having presented at Wolfson College, the University of Cambridge. Most of my workshops have been about writing plays, i.e. short plays or murder mystery plays. The two presentations at Wolfson College have been about my play, 'Duplicity' and the Hindu religious story, 'The Ramayana', which I have written an M.A. thesis on. I believe that, in having a series of presentations to celebrate Diwali, Wolfson College was the first Cambridge college to do this. My original dissertation had been written for the Institute of Education, the University of London (IOE), which is now part of UCL.
What writing project are you currently working on (or intend to start)?	Currently, I am working on my 'Storyworth' project, which is about my life and which was bought for me by our children. I am nearing completion with this. I shall then return to my story which is written for middle years children, 'The Time of Our Lives', which is set in Dubai.
Do you have other interests? and/or member of other groups/societies?	I have a number of interests and passions, including: family (of course!), sport, the theatre, music, studying and travel. These interests can be passive, when I am a member of the audience, or they can be active, when, for example, I play sport, such as squash, or perform on stage.
Do you have a website; Facebook, Twitter; Instagram? or write a blog?	My website is: murdermysteryplayers.co.uk .
What message would you like to give to other writers / would-be writers?	<p>It is a cliché, but 'Just get it written'. Once you have done that, you can always return to your draft to re-work it. 'Writer's block' is a commonly used term, so allow yourself time to reflect and create, then write things down. You can worry about issues such as style, punctuation and grammar at a later date, but how can you correct something if you have nothing to correct?</p> <p>My second piece of advice would be to have writing friends who you work with to critique each other's work. Never forget that your best friends will always be happy to tell you where you can improve your writing for your benefit.</p>
Do you have favourite author or book?	'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Bronte.