

# Viridian Publishing Press Release

## **New murder mystery from the forensic science team**

'Death Cart' is the second novel in the Yorkshire Dales Mystery Series from author Susan Parry. A sequel to her successful debut novel 'Corpse Way', set in Swaledale, 'Death Cart' continues to follow Millie, now an archaeology undergraduate at the University of North Yorkshire. The university campus is a natural backcloth for Susan, whose career from student researcher to professor at Imperial College has provided a real insider's view of academic life.

Once again Susan has selected a title for her novel that has local significance. 'Death Cart' refers to the chariot burial that is found in Wensleydale and forms the focus for Millie's studies. While she was writing her book, Susan consulted many experts to establish whether it might be possible for such a burial to be discovered in Wensleydale. Although rare, chariot burials have been found in Yorkshire and the most famous is the Wetwang chariot burial. Susan was delighted when the British Museum gave her permission to use the photograph on the front cover of her book, depicting the skeleton of the woman found at Wetwang. 'I have always been in scientific research so it is natural that I enjoy investigating the background for my novels. I have had to read up on the archaeology and consult the experts about the particular details of chariot burials.'

Susan continues to draw on her knowledge gained through analytical work that she experiences every day in the company she runs in partnership with Professor Kym Jarvis. Their work brings them into contact with all kinds of forensic investigations, including examination of hair, bullets and vehicles. Their particular expertise is in the characterisation of soils, where the sophisticated instrumentation they apply can provide unique chemical fingerprints of soils found on shoes, tools and vehicles. This can be used to solve murders, as well as more routine crimes such as burglary and drug dealing.

The women's scientific work takes them around the world and Susan has recently returned from Japan where she was invited to speak about her nuclear chemistry research while Kym has visited Canada to present an invited lecture in geochemistry. The two professors recently attended an international conference on soil forensics held in Edinburgh to discuss their latest techniques in criminal investigations. In an interesting twist, a number of authors, including Ian Rankin, attended to learn more about the methods used and, as an author in the genre, Susan was invited to join the group of crime writers who provided additional interest for the guests at the conference dinner.

Despite the success of her first book, and requests from readers for another in the series, Susan did not start writing the sequel until earlier this year. 'I was taken ill just ten days after the launch of Corpse Way, two years ago,' she says. 'It was an autoimmune disease called Guillain Barre Syndrome, which attacks the nervous system. I was paralysed and only left hospital six months later after learning to walk again. It is so good to be able to come back up to the Dales and taking long hikes across the fells again. In fact this summer Mark and I mostly walked in Wensleydale; we love the small villages like Thoraby, Thornton Rust, West Burton and West Witton.' Readers will recognise many of the locations in Wensleydale, Bishopdale and Coverdale she describes in the book as well as parts popular with visitors like Semer Water and Aysgarth Falls.

When asked about the third book in the Yorkshire Dales Mystery series, Susan says that she is beginning to work on the plot already. We can be sure she will be weaving some interesting forensic material into the storyline.

Copies of Death cart are available through bookshops or direct from the publishers (Viridian Publishing [www.viridian-publishing.co.uk](http://www.viridian-publishing.co.uk))