

Viridian Publishing Press Release

The Ribblesdale Viaduct a setting for the latest crime novel, *Grave Hand*, by Susan Parry

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the saving of the Settle to Carlisle railway from closure and there have been a number of activities held to celebrate the event, including the opportunity to walk across the famous Ribblesdale viaduct. Coincidentally the cover of Susan Parry's latest novel depicts the iconic viaduct because, like the others in the series, her book is set in the Yorkshire Dales, and this time much of the action takes place in Ribblesdale and Ingleton. "The building of the Ribblesdale viaduct and Blea Moor tunnel was a fascinating period in the history of the Dales. There was a large settlement of navvies working on the railway and the families lived alongside their menfolk. I was able to find some interesting descriptions of life at the time, including a newspaper article by a journalist who visited the camp in the 1870s. It was a harsh and violent environment and the large number of bodies in the churchyard at Chapel-le-Dale is proof of the toll in human life that it took to complete the railway."

Susan has always had a strong historical theme to her novels: 'Corpse Way', the first book in the series was set in the lead-mining area of Swaledale and 'Death Cart' centres on Bainbridge, site of the roman fort in Wensleydale. The stories cover some of the most beautiful parts of the Dales and include some of Susan's favourite walks. "I have enjoyed all the walks described in the books. I have completed them many times accompanied my husband, our daughters and Elvis, the Airedale terrier."

Susan began writing when her twin daughters were small, finding the odd moments between her full time job as a university professor and looking after the family. The girls are now grown up and interestingly both have careers in crime –but on the right side of the law, their mother is quick to point out! Consequently Susan is free to concentrate on her writing. Susan's husband retired last year so they are now able to spend more time together in the family home in Swaledale, where the views from her farmhouse are a real inspiration. When asked how she gets the ideas for her books she says that the plots develop as she writes and often she is surprised herself by the outcomes.

Readers who have enjoyed following young archaeologist, Millie Sanderson, will have watched her grow from an unsure teenager into an assured university graduate despite becoming involved with a number of unpleasant murders on the way. When asked if she is continuing to write about Millie, Susan becomes quite animated. "Oh yes, she's only just become qualified as a forensic archaeologist so she's just getting down to the serious stuff!"

Susan knows quite a bit about the 'serious stuff'. Her work in the consultancy she runs with business partner, Professor Kym Jarvis, involves a range of exciting projects, including forensic studies and archaeological investigations which provide further inspiration for the books. Susan takes particular pains to ensure that the forensic techniques in her books are scientifically correct. She admits that she sometimes goes 'a bit over the top' to investigate the background to her stories. "I don't like to think that I could be making a silly mistake, so I check details such as where there is a mobile phone signal, bus timetables and shop opening times. I was nearly caught out in the latest book over when a police station would be open to the public!" she explained. "I really enjoyed researching the building of the Settle-Carlisle railway at Ribblesdale; it was fascinating to read about the day-to-day life of the navvies and their families at the camp on Blea Moor."

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Susan's novels are now a familiar sight in bookshops and a range of outlets across the Dales. They are stocked by the National Park Centres as well as the Wensleydale Creamery. In the summer she can be found at craft fairs in Hawes and at the main agricultural events, including Wensleydale, Muker and Reeth Shows. "I really enjoy meeting people who have read my books," she says. "It's the only opportunity I get to meet my readers and it is always a pleasure to speak to them about the places they know so well."

'Grave Hand' is available in local bookshops £7.99 or by post from Viridian Publishing, PO Box 746, Woking Surrey, GU24 0AZ £9.20 inc p&p.

www.viridian-publishing.co.uk e-mail: viridian.tc@virgin.net

Susan will be signing books at the following events this summer

23rd & 24th July - **Hawes Craft Fair** <http://www.wensleyfairs.co.uk/>

14th & 15th August - **Hawes Craft Fair** <http://www.wensleyfairs.co.uk/>

26th August - **Reeth Show** <http://www.reethshow.co.uk/>

29th August - **Wensleydale Show** <http://www.wensleydaleshow.org.uk/>

30th August - **Borders in York – 12 to 4pm** <http://york.borders.co.uk/store/york/33>

2nd September - **Muker Show**

We hope to see you there!!