

# Viridian Publishing Press Release

## **'Partners in crime' publish Yorkshire Dales mystery**

When 'partners in crime' decided to publish scientific books two years ago, they didn't expect to be launching a murder mystery as part of their list.

Corpse Way is the first work of fiction to be published by Viridian Publishing, an independent company that until recently has built its reputation on scientific books. Professor Susan Parry and Dr Kym Jarvis own the company.

Susan Parry is one of only a dozen female chemistry professors in the country. She uses highly sophisticated techniques to detect trace amounts of toxic metals in everyday items like children's toys and food. Kym uses a laser for forensic investigation of samples so small, that they are not visible to the naked eye.

The two women, who are scientific experts, formed a partnership three years ago to solve a wide range of scientific problems and their investigations sometimes gets them involved in prominent murder cases. They have carried out forensic investigations to compare soil samples taken from crime scenes with those on peoples shoes or in vehicles. They have identified chemical fingerprints in bullets and measured arsenic in the hair of poison victims.

Although Susan is a longstanding member of the Society of Authors, she has never ventured into fiction before. 'I have always wanted to write a novel but when the twins were young and I was building my career there never seemed to be the time.' She has now finally managed to combine her familiarity of the Dales and its mining past with her scientific knowledge in a detective story, Corpse Way. Inevitably her scientific background can be detected in the story with elements of archaeology, the environment and forensic science.

Corpse Way is a reference to the ancient track used to carry bodies from Keld for burial at Grinton Church until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although the village where the main action takes place is fictional, readers will recognise the region as the story unfolds. The plot is based on three weeks that Millie spends with her grandmother in the summer. The holiday is dominated by the death of two of the village residents, an isolated shooting lodge and the mysterious Dutchman who rents it. The action takes the characters to familiar locations in Swaledale, such as the village of Reeth as well as further afield to Wensleydale and Wharfedale.

'Being a scientist I'm particularly interested in the legacy of lead mining in Swaledale and it plays an important role in the book,' Susan says. 'The nature of the dale, its scenery and village communities are all fashioned by the industrial history of the area. It's fascinating to think that Reeth, with a population of only 500 now, had thirty thriving shops in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 300 children enrolled in the village school.'

'Mark and I fell in love with the Yorkshire Dales before we were married, when we spent our first holiday together in Wharfedale,' she added. 'I seem to remember it was Easter and we were snowed in for several days!' They have spent their summers in the Dales ever since and five years ago they bought a farmhouse in Swaledale, possibly the most unspoilt part of England. Their daughters, Elspeth and Alice, who walked with them on the fells as tiny children, are now both at university. These days, Susan and her husband are seen out on the moors accompanied by their Airedale terrier, Elvis.

Susan said that it took her 18 months to write the novel, fitting it into any spare moment left from her research. She is already working on the next book in the series, which has a strong forensic storyline.

Corpse Way will be launched at the beginning of September to coincide with the Sedbergh book festival.

Copies of Corpse Way are available through bookshops or direct from the publishers (Viridian Publishing £6-99: [www.viridian-publishing.co.uk](http://www.viridian-publishing.co.uk))