



THEAKSTON'S OLD PECULIER HARROGATE CRIME WRITING FESTIVAL

22 - 25 July 2004, The Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

www.harrogate-festival.org.uk/crime

A true classic and something of a mystery in itself, Theakston's Old Peculier is delighted to announce its sponsorship of the Harrogate Crime Writing Festival.

It can be no matter of chance that many of our most notable crime fiction characters enjoy a pint to assist in solving their most complex cases! Ever since Chaucer, ale has proved to be an invaluable inspiration to the creative process.

Now in its second year, the Harrogate Crime Writing Festival is Europe's largest crime writing festival, attracting writers and enthusiasts from all over the world for four days of best-selling authors in conversation, panel sessions, late night cabaret, industry seminars, true-crime specialists and forensic events.

Highlights of the weekend programme include award winning Minette Walters, former MI5 boss Stella Rimington, Martin Sixsmith, Christopher Brookmyre, Val McDermid and Colin Dexter - creator of Inspector Morse who was of course well known for solving murderous crimes over a pint of ale.

Old Peculier's story goes back to William the Conqueror and Nigel de Albini, one of his captains. After rampaging across the local area, the King gave him the lands and estates of Mashamshire as a reward. These passed to his son, the knight Roger de Mowbray who, during the Crusades was captured by Saladin and held ransom for seven years before being redeemed by the Holy Order of the Knights Templar.

Coming home, he was overcome with gratitude and gave the living of the church at Masham to St Peters in York. But the Archbishop of York wasn't too pleased, as this made him responsible for administering lawless far-away Masham, which was over-run with thieves and vagabonds. The cunning cleric freed Masham of "all the customs and claims of his Archdeacons and officials" - and established the independent Peculier Court of Masham to deal with law.

The chairman of the original court had a great seal made to mark his decisions. The seal used today, and the modern symbol of all Theakston beers, is based on this.

Simon Theakston, Executive Director, T&R Theakston said: “The exquisite thrill the reader finds in a well-crafted crime novel is hard to equal – but at Theakston we believe we can match it in the world-famous ale - Old Peculier.

“This classic ale perfectly captures that mysterious connection between author and reader and brewer and drinker, which is why we are delighted to be sponsors of Harrogate Crime Writing Festival.”

William Culver-Dodds, Harrogate International Festival Director added: “I am delighted to welcome Old Peculier as our Title Sponsor, a perfect match for our world class celebration of crime fiction in Yorkshire. And if you enjoy a beer with your book, a glass of Old Peculier promises to be the best partner in crime!”