



Dick toasts his new novel



LOCAL GP PRESCRIBES A DOSE OF WINE AND CRIME

They say you can't judge a book by its cover and those popping to see their friendly local GP in Peterborough a few years ago may not have expected to see Dick Cartmel as a future author.

Yet here he is clutching his first published book *The Richebourg Affair* after taking a real change of direction.

Chatting with Dick at his book signing at the Royal Oak in Castor – one of his former patches as a GP – he's clearly delighted with the reaction.

"It's wonderful – but it was surreal when a pallet arrived on a lorry at my house with 15 boxes of my book in it!"

"I'm very excited. Having changed direction 2 years ago it was the right thing to do for me."

"It's always been there, I've written things all my life, but I had a calling to be a doctor which was the career until my retirement. The last ten years I was beginning to think about what happened when I retired. Two days after I did so I was en route to Nuits-Saint-Georges in France to try to create a story around the character of Chief Inspector Truchaud who'd come to me about 5 years previously, in a café in Nuits. That café features quite heavily."

He describes the story as a 'cosy crime thriller' similar to the likes of Martin Walker (who sets his books in the Dordogne) or Simon Brett who sets his in a small village on the Sussex coast.

"I specifically picked those writers as their books too have a major sense of place, and the local geography is an important character in the book in its own right."

"The character Truchaud was born in Burgundy but joined the police. Some 20+ years later his elder brother who still makes wine in Burgundy, dies suddenly, and Truchaud takes compassionate leave to support his family. When he's trying to find out about the last vat of wine his brother made, he comes across a body... and it gets more complicated from there. Do you want me to spoil it for you?"

Not at all as I'm only half way through it!

Dick is a real wine connoisseur so it's no surprise this is such a big theme in his book.

"I wanted to read a detective story set in Burgundy about the Vignerons," he explains, "and I couldn't find one so I wrote it. The inspiration comes from the people there I know, and the wine they make."

Dick's already written a sequel and has started on the third book of the trilogy.

However there is also a completely different, contemporary style book currently being edited about a



dysfunctional Peterborough which he describes as "fiction but based on gritty reality, with some very nasty bits!"

Although the success of the likes of JK Rowling is rare, many people think they've got a book up their sleeve so what's the best advice to any other potential local authors out there?

"Just write it!" says Dick. *"But you do need someone to hold your hand."*

Dick was helped immensely by Sarah Williams from The Book Consultancy which offers support, coaching, editing and publishing guidance. Sarah says – *"If you don't have somebody encouraging you and judging you then the result isn't going to sell. What you need is a team to support you. You can't do it on your own."*

"If you're writing because you want to and have something to tell other people then somebody, somewhere will want to read it."

The *Richebourg Affair* by R.M. Cartmel is available now from Crime Scene Books RRP £7.99.

Sharon McAllister



Dick's cousin reads a chapter at the launch