

James Patterson Announced as Special Guest at Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival!

One of the best-known and biggest-selling authors of all time, James Patterson, has been announced as a headline act at the 2019 Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival.

Patterson has sold more than 375 million books worldwide and currently holds the Guinness World Record for the most #1 *New York Times* bestsellers. He has been the most-borrowed author of adult fiction in UK libraries, for the past 11 years in a row.

Mari Hannah, who has taken over the mantle of Programming Chair from Lee Child for the 2019 Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival, said: "What some people may not know about James Patterson is how much he cares about reading, how much he gives back, donating books and offering financial support to independent bookshops, ensuring that his reading legacy lives on. As the festival's Reader-in-Residence for the past three years, announcing James Patterson in my year as Programming Chair is a huge honour."

A renowned advocate of reading, philanthropist Patterson has donated millions to reading initiatives, schools, colleges, independent bookstores and libraries. He is also founding partner with the Duchess of Cornwall of the Children's Reading Fund (UK).

Mari added: "Crime fiction is a gateway into reading for many. As Reader-in-Residence, I toured libraries this summer with our annual Big Read. This year's title was James Patterson's *Along Came a Spider* and readers loved it. Harrogate has featured some colossal names when it comes to giants of the genre, from JK Rowling as Robert Galbraith to Lee Child and John Grisham. I'm thrilled that James Patterson will be joining us in 2019."

The son of an insurance salesman and a schoolteacher, Patterson grew up in New York and worked in advertising, before publishing his debut in 1976. His 1993 novel, *Along Came a Spider*, his first to feature Alex Cross, was also his first *New York Times* bestseller in fiction.

Mr Patterson's awards for adult and children's literature include the Edgar Award, the International Thriller of the Year Award, and the Children's Choice Award for Author of the Year.

James Patterson said: "I'm really looking forward to coming to Harrogate next year and meeting my UK fans. I was thrilled that *Along Came a Spider* was chosen as the Big Read at last year's festival and taken on the road by Mari Hannah to libraries across the North. I firmly believe that better readers become better thinkers, and libraries and book festivals play a key role in spreading the joy of reading."

Programming Chair, Mari Hannah, is best known for her Kate Daniels series which is in development for TV with Sprout Pictures. She also writes the Ryan & O'Neil thrillers and the Stone & Oliver series of police procedurals. In 2010, she won the Northern Writers' Award, followed by the Polari First Book Prize in 2013 for her debut, *The Murder Wall*. For her body of work, she won the CWA Dagger in the Library 2017. Mari lives in Northumberland with her partner, a former murder detective.

The 2019 Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival takes place at the Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate 18-21 July, harrogateinternationalfestivals.com