

## PRESS RELEASE

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*Swinton Park*  
*Masham*  
*Ripon*  
*North Yorkshire HG4 4JH*  
*01765 680900 www.swintonpark.com*

### **An evening with Marcus Scriven, the author of *Splendour & Squalour***

Swinton Park, the luxury castle hotel in the Yorkshire Dales, is hosting a book talk and signing by Marcus Scriven, the author of *Splendour & Squalour*, on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Hailed as "witty, gossipy and profoundly researched" (Sunday Times), the book spills the beans on both Yorkshire aristocratic families and others, as he "guides us through each catalogue of errors with relish and wit" (Daily Telegraph).

From stunning stately homes to the prisons of wartime Britain; from the House of Lords to Edwardian asylums; from the Ritz and the Dorchester to East End pubs, "*Splendour and Squalor*" tells the stories of four of Britain's most illustrious aristocratic dynasties and of the black sheep who brought them down. They kept monkeys in West End hotels, and rent-boys in Deauville and Kensington. They spiced up life in pre-war Britain by patronizing illegal gaming clubs and staging elaborate five-in-a-bed sex in stately homes. They used firearms with convincing disregard for their own and others' safety and drove their Rollsies and Bentleys with apparently suicidal intent. They acquired yachts and helicopters as they shipped the family silver to California and disposed of Old Masters at auction. They married frequently and unsatisfactorily, humiliating their wives and always withholding from them dynastic secrets of schizophrenia and insanity. Lacking the energy and appetite to do so, they rarely developed their talents. Carpeting their lives with deceit, they sought consolation in ferocious expenditure, funding narcotic and alcohol-fuelled blow-outs. They ignored the advice of sane relations, shrugged off trustees, and experimented with burglary, shop-lifting, vagrancy and fraud. Their primary, possibly sole, accomplishment was to drag down their families with them. They were the black sheep of aristocracy and this is their story.

Marcus Scriven read history at Oxford, was briefly a soldier, and then became a journalist, working initially for the Sunday Telegraph, then the Evening Standard, before embarking on research for *Splendour & Squalor*, his first book. He was a leading contributor to Channel 4's documentary on Victor Hervey, 6th Marquess of Bristol.

Proceeds raised on the evening are being donated to Help for Heroes. Entry £10 per person (including a glass of wine).

[ENDS]

Press : Felicity C Lister : DDI 01765 680944 : felicity@swintonpark.com