

## [Title]



[image caption and credit]

### **This month's news**

Hey {{ contact.FIRSTNAME | default : "there" }}. How are you?

First of all I'd like to tell you that I've had an acceptance!

#### **Acceptance news**

I wrote *Paper Roses* for an assignment for *12 Stories in 12 Months*. I already had the idea percolating away, but when I saw the prompt on the website was 'paper', I thought I had the ideal story idea.

And so I added the story to my power board and plugged the story into my writing machine.

Did you see my power board? It's a whiteboard that has all of my writing projects on and the production process each of them will go through. I wrote not one but two blog posts about it, and now 'the power board this week' is a regular update on the blog.

You can [see the introduction here](#) and the first [power board this week here](#).

I have yet to create a final cover for this story, for when it's been published and I can start publishing it myself.

The assignment wanted 1,500 words, which was an odd length for any of

my markets, but I wrote it and thought I could edit it up or down to fit. In the event it stayed at 1,500 words and I sent it off on 2 June. Three weeks later it was accepted, and I believe that is quite the record for this particular market.

First of all it will appear in one of the publications from *The People's Friend*. I think it's going in the weekly magazine, but it might also have been pegged for either a special or an annual.

As soon as I know where and when it will be published, I'll send out a newsflash, so do watch out for that.

### **Stories behind the stories**

I'm currently toying with the idea of writing a book on the stories behind some of the stories I've written, along with the story itself. I haven't given it a lot of thought, but it's something that's there, percolating.

Several of my existing stories do have interesting stories behind them.

The first short story I ever had accepted was called *Carnation Confusion* – hands up everyone who can guess the theme to that one. I don't know if it was ever published.

The second short story I ever had accepted was called *A Stranger At Eight*. I don't think that was ever published either by the magazine that bought it.

The third short story I ever had accepted was called *Fireworks Jamboree*, but that was the first short story of mine I ever saw in print.

All three of these stories have interesting stories behind them. I might have a tinker and see what I come up with.

***What do you think? Would YOU be interested in a book of stories with the stories behind them? Email me at [diane@dianewordsworth.com](mailto:diane@dianewordsworth.com).***

### **Newsletter archive**

Something I've been promising for ages is a regular newsletter archive where new subscribers can find older newsletters, or where existing subscribers can see them all in one place.

It's in a hidden location on the website, so please don't share this with anyone unless you know they're a subscriber too.

[Here's the link](#) to the newsletter archive, where you can also download (I think) the pdfs.

### **Symonds Yat**

Another thing I promised readers last time was an update on our holiday to Symonds Yat at the end of May. So here it is.

Symonds Yat is a village of two halves (Symonds Yat East and Symonds Yat West) that straddles the River Wye where England meets Wales. Monmouth is one way, Ross on Wye is the other way.

We arrived at our cottage at around teatime on the Saturday and settled the pets in. The next day, on the Sunday, we did our usual orientation

drive and we did some shopping in Monmouth.

The rest of the week was spent touring and sightseeing. We couldn't go out for very long, because we didn't want to leave the cat on her own for longer than we had to. But there was plenty to see within a 30- or 40-minute drive and we always went back to the cottage in the middle of the day before going out again in the afternoon.

Here are some of the poet's pictures.



panoramic view from Yat Rock



Yat Rock from our cottage



the River Wye



our cottage



Rufus loving his wheels



Goodrich Castle



flora



Hay on Wye, the world's first book town



the River Wye



the view from our cottage



chaffinch



nuthatch



woodpecker



on Yat Rock - we could have spent days up there

### **Holly**

Our lovely cat Holly went out on Wednesday 14 June and we haven't seen her since. She's elderly, deaf, going blind, and showing signs of dementia. She got out of the garden once before, in February, and she couldn't remember how to get back in. That time, we got her back after a week.

On the day in question, we were in the midst of a heatwave. All of the door and windows were open, but we were pretty sure that she couldn't get out of the garden any more.

The last time I saw her was around midday when she came to scrounge some of my dinner. We haven't seen her since, although one of our neighbours did let us know that they saw her trying to work out how to get back into the garden later that same day. Sadly, there have been no positive sightings since.

We have walked the streets, I've delivered leaflets through doors, I've spoken to the postman, we've been in touch with the lovely couple whose garden she turned up in last time, we've spoken to our friends in the village, and I've shared stories all over Facebook that friends and associates have also shared far and wide.

I've also stood and listened for her, because she has been very vocal of late. We think it's either the suspected dementia or her trying to feel the sound vibrations. But I've not even heard her.

One day last week I had a vivid dream where I was sure she had come home and she was cuddling us and fussing around us. But it was only a dream.

At the time of writing she's been gone for more than two weeks. We're hoping that someone has taken her in and is keeping her in, but we can't help thinking either that she may have gone somewhere to die and perhaps my dream was her coming to say goodbye and that she was all right.

Holly has been with me for seventeen years. The only other constant I've had for that length of time outside of my immediate family was my lovely dog, Roly.

I am trying to be positive, I keep having a word with the Cosmos to bring her home safely. But as each day passes, it gets more difficult. And now we're starting to think that any news would be better than nothing.

I had another cat vanish more than ten years ago, but I'm certain someone I know ran over her with his car - I hope by accident. For them to disappear and us not know what has happened is the worst thing. It's distressing and upsetting.

We just want her to come home.



### **Other news**

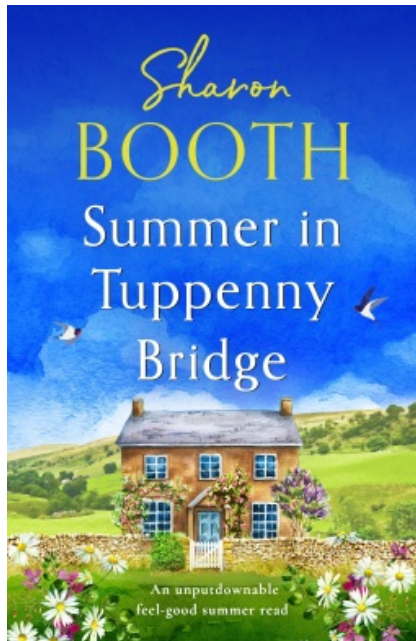
In other news, I finally finished



revising *Diary of a Pussycat*. This is the sequel to the hugely popular and successful *Diary of a Scaredy Cat*. Once again, it's another year in the life of a writer – this writer – that was previously published on the blog.

These posts have now been removed from the public blog, but the book has the added attraction of weekly exercises to help readers build up to a regular working freelance schedule.

It's due out in the next few weeks. I'll send a newsflash when it's ready.



### **What I'm reading this week**

I'm reading a few books at the moment, but the one I'm currently reading for Net Galley is *Summer in Tuppenny Bridge* by Sharon Booth.

This is another in Booth's Skimmerdale series, the Yorkshire Dale world she invented herself, based on some of her favourite places.

### ***What are you currently reading?***

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**Here's you free short story**



# Wordsworth Shorts

- Diane Wordsworth -

## it wasn't me

### **It Wasn't Me**

Ziggy ran his fingers through his hair in frustration. He hadn't planned this first weekend very well at all.

He had the official opening of the new retail premises and all the paraphernalia that went with that, he had his very first commercial commission, and it was his turn to have his six-year-old son Abe as well. As if he didn't have enough to worry about looking after the pathologically clumsy but adorable boy, everything was going wrong and Abe wanted to spend his whole time in the new shop - but what child wouldn't want to be surrounded by chocolate? He kept on eating the display and every time his dad caught him, complete with tell-tale chocolate smudges all around his face, the little boy would declare, in all sincerity: "It wasn't me."

It was Saturday morning. The grand opening ceremony for the shop was 1pm. Ziggy had to get a chocolate fountain and two massive black forest gateaux to the engagement party venue by noon, and set the fountain up so that the happy couple could switch it on when they were ready. He'd also individually wrapped, in red and gold cellophane, sixty hand-made chocolates, pralines, truffles, toffees and so on.

But someone was stealing the favours.

"It wasn't me," assured Abe.

"How about a chocolate hunt?" suggested Ziggy at last, not knowing what else to do.

"Do I get to eat them?"

"Only if you find all of them."

Abraham put on what he thought was a grown-up puzzled face while he weighed the idea up.

"I can count to ten..." he said at last.

"You can count to a hundred, you little tinker. But I'll hide just fifteen of them," he said, wrapping some 'rejects' in blue cellophane. "When you find them all," he reached up to get an empty plastic dish off a shelf, "I want you to put them in here." He put the dish where Abe could reach it. "When you have all fifteen you can eat one—"

"One?" yelled the boy. He was learning some things far too quickly.

"Okay two – but only if you're good and concentrate on the game. And you have to count to a hundred out loud while I hide them. With your eyes shut."

Abraham closed his eyes tight and counted clearly, slowly and loudly while Ziggy hid some chocolates in relatively easy places and some in slightly more difficult ones. He made sure, though, that he could see his son all the time he was working. It took him slightly longer than he hoped, but the two-tier chocolate cake centrepiece for the window display was finally finished, and so were all the things he needed to take to the party.

"You can have a chocolate now," Ziggy said, surprised but quite proud that his son had found all fifteen reasonably quickly. "So long as you didn't peek." Abe shook his head and crossed his heart. "Okay then, you can have another after we've swept up that cocoa powder you spilled."

"It wasn't me," said Abraham.

The six-year-old helped his dad to pack everything for the party very carefully in open-topped cardboard boxes. Ziggy had also obtained some chocolate cosmos flowers to add a finishing flourish – he'd pinched some for his window display too. They locked the shop up and drove the new van the short distance to the assembly rooms. A bar had already been set up so Abraham was placed on a chair a safe distance from anything he could damage, with some chocolates and his Nintendo.

Jacqueline, the fiancée, was there to oversee and supervise everything. The party wasn't due to start until much later in the evening so there was a relaxed atmosphere. Abe sat good as gold, sucking his chocolate in his mouth so that it lasted longer. But he wasn't playing with his games console. He was too busy watching his dad demonstrate the chocolate fountain. Abe was fascinated and kept wandering over so he could stick his finger into the flowing chocolate.

"Abe," said Ziggy, "if you promise not to touch, I'll dip some marshmallows in so you can taste it, but you must let me finish setting up first."

"Okay," said the boy, returning to his seat. And that's how he was the first to see the funny man at the door who wobbled a bit as he came in and kept bumping into chairs, tables, imaginary objects. Ziggy gave the man a wide berth as he went out to get the last of the boxes from the van. The gateaux he was collecting would need to be kept cool until the party later.

Abraham sat quietly on his chair. The party lady smiled at him and ruffled his hair, but she stiffened when she saw the drunk.

"Mark! What are you doing here?"

The funny man was already close enough by now for Abe to smell him, and he carried on to where the chocolate fountain and engagement cake were on display.

"I don't believe you're engaged," he slurred. "It didn't take you very long. Were you seeing him when you were still seeing me?"

"No!" said Jacqueline, horrified. "Oh Mark, please don't spoil things."

"Why not?" He produced a small bottle from his coat pocket and drank noisily from it, although Abe noticed that he dribbled most of it. "I loved you, Jack," said Mark, lunging towards her. But she jumped out of his way and he stumbled.

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Outside Ziggy was locking the van when he heard the thud, a crash, and then the sound of glass breaking.

"Oh no!" he cried, almost dropping the box as he dashed back inside. What had Abraham done now?

Jacqueline was frozen, a look of shock on her face. The chocolate fountain was in pieces on the floor with liquid chocolate still spurting from the spout and splashing everywhere. A table was on its side, the tablecloth in a crumpled heap on the floor stained with chocolate and with clumps of cake stuck to it. And Abe sat, good as gold on his chair, exactly where Ziggy had left him, eyes wide with surprise, licking the finger he'd used to mop up splashes of chocolate from his clothes.

"I don't need the marshmallows now, Dad—"

Ziggy, a thunderous look on his face, bawled: "ABRAHAM!"

To which the child most truthfully replied: "It wasn't me..."

Ziggy was about to argue when he heard a kerfuffle from behind the upturned table. The drunk was carefully getting back to his feet but he managed to pull what was left of the cake onto the floor and on top of himself.

Jacqueline didn't bother to call the drunk a rude name or to yell at him, but he knew he'd gone too far. He made another attempt to get to his feet, successfully this time, and staggered out of the assembly room with about as much dignity as he could muster.

"Are you all right?" Ziggy asked Jacqueline, himself calmer now. At the same time he checked his son was fine.

"M-m-my c-c-cake," she stammered.

He felt very sorry for her as she started to clean up the mess in a daze. The beautiful two-tier cake was ruined, as was his chocolate fountain, but he could replace that a lot easier than she could the cake.

"Is the lady's party spoiled?" asked Abe sadly.

"It is without the cake," Jacqueline muttered.

Abe tugged at his dad's sleeve and whispered in his ear.

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It wasn't quite what Ziggy had in mind when he planned the grand opening event, but the news story certainly made more of a splash than anyone could have imagined.

Abe and Ziggy had gone back to the shop to replace the fountain with a fondue - he'd have plenty of time to order a new one. The two-tier chocolate cake that took pride of place in the window display was very quickly tarted up with chocolate butter cream, chocolate shavings and a large punnet of fresh raspberries. And the story of how Ziggy had donated his own prized cake to the engaged couple made front page news.

Ziggy couldn't have wished for better publicity, Abe managed not to be sick after eating all of that chocolate, and the happy couple lived happily ever after.

the end

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**Diane Wordsworth**

Rotherham, England

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