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## January 2026 News

 From Diane Wordsworth <diane@dianewordsworth.com>  
To Diane <diane@dianewordsworth.com>  
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## January 2026 News

Hello friends! How is everyone? Welcome to the January newsletter. And HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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### news...

I've been hinting at some news on the blog but I've not gone into detail on there yet as it's too public, I actually have 2 lots of news to share this time...

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### dogs...

In October we were asked if we'd take Hawley in for Son #2 as he and his partner of 18 years were splitting up and selling their house. He was moving into a rental, she was going travelling.

Of course we said yes, and we made all the arrangements for the working cocker spaniel to become our dog. Because of the upset and upheaval, though, we gave son's ex until February to make her mind up permanently as Hawley was really her dog.



Hawley

In the meantime, we decided to get a puppy. We don't like having just one pet as they can get a bit lonely when they're left at home alone. So we bought Alfie, a wire-haired dachshund.

After a month, son's ex-partner realised she was missing her dog too much and she cancelled her travel arrangements and bought a house with a garden so he could go back and live with her. We didn't mind, we'd given her the option after all.

So now we have Hawley until the end of February, but we're seriously in two minds about getting another puppy just yet. One, because it's hard work having one puppy let alone two, and it would be better to wait until Alfie is a bit older, but two, because of our other piece of news...

### **home...**

The house we're currently renting has been our longest home together for the past 14 years. We've moved about a bit, roughly every 2 years, so that the poet wasn't restricted on where he can work. We do like the house and the village where we live, but we were slowly putting down roots and starting to get attached to the area...

The poet retires in two years, maximum, and we don't want to be paying rent out of our pensions. So we put out feelers to see if the landlord of this house would be prepared to sell it to us.

In the time it took her to reply, we realised that this house isn't actually the best bet for our money. It needs a lot doing to it. Aside from the fact it needs a new roof, new gutters, new

soffits and fascias, new doors and windows, and a new heating system, it's also showing signs of movement. And we don't want to be worrying about a moving house.

So we're once again house-hunting, but this time we're looking for a small bungalow to buy that will see us out until at least the poet retires. We're doing this in case something happens to one of us so that the other will still be able to manage it alone if necessary. If it could also double up as a forever-home, all the better, as I for one am sick to death of moving house.

### **dogs again...**

It's daft getting another puppy when there's already such a big thing happening in our lives, plus, we want to maximise our spending power.

Alfie is great on his own, son's ex does come and take Hawley out and the weekend just gone he had a sleepover at where she's staying.

There's every chance she may change her mind again, which is also fine. We're looking on it as he's with us until he isn't. So, for now, we're sticking with what we already have.



Alfie

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### **patreon...**

The Patreon is pretty much up and running now, with free material for everyone to read and premium material for paid members to see. There are short stories on there and, at the time of writing, the first four bookazines.

I'm currently working on a series of premium articles about

writers' ideas, and I have a handful of general writing articles for backup. It also has a regular slot in my diary now, twice a week, to make sure I hit my own targets.

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### that's it for now...

That's all for now. Until next time...

*Diane*

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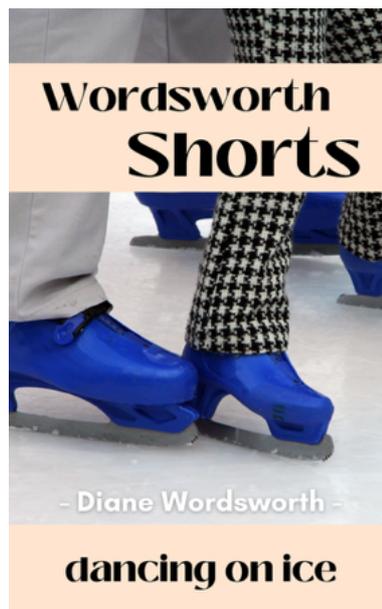
### links...

Don't forget, you can read my (week) daily blog [here](#), access the full newsletter archive to date [here](#), and *Words Worth Reading* magazine [here](#). Follow me on Patreon [here](#). And all of my books can be bought [here](#).

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### here's your next story...

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Dan's heart sank to the pit of his stomach. These were yet more of the times he missed his late wife, not having her there for the girls. He'd promised his oldest daughter a treat of her choice for getting another sticker at school, and Suze had chosen ice skating.

"Loads of my friends are going," she'd said. "And it looks so easy on television."

Easy?! Pah! Pull the other one. Dan remembered his own attempts at ice skating only too well. While most of his friends

were trialling for the ice hockey or speed skating teams, poor Dan was spending most of his time cold, wet, bruised and on his backside. Not to mention the ego-bashing and leg-pulling he'd also experienced.

Ice skating never was and never would be for him. But he had promised...

"Can I go too?" asked his younger daughter Matty.

Dan wasn't sure if there was a minimum age or not for ice skating at the local rink. He had a dim and distant recollection that there was a minimum age for sub-aqua diving, but he didn't remember anything about ice skating.

"Tallulah's little sister goes with her and she's six, the same age as Matty," said Suze, coming to the rescue – or was she banging yet another nail into his coffin? There went using Matty as an excuse not to go.

"Don't you need your own skates?" he asked, helplessly clutching at straws. Even he remembered the old floppy hire skates that provided no support for the ankles. They were creased and worn, they smelled to high heaven, and he was sure you could catch verrucas from them too.

"Oh, Daddy," admonished Suze. "Everyone knows you can hire skates, but Tallulah has a spare pair if I want to borrow them."

"We can't all borrow them, though, can we?" he said, resigned.

And he made the necessary arrangements for the three of them to go on one of the public sessions as well as making an appointment to see an instructor afterwards.

The box office and foyer had changed a lot since he'd last been there. It was more like the swish entrances to some of the larger leisure complexes or even shopping centres. In his day it had just been a scruffy hatch in the wall, a dodgy looking plain-clothes door, and a single window display advertising a handful of skate-wear. Now there were food court booths, several boutiques, and a small amusement arcade. It didn't feel as seedy as it had the last time he'd been. They'd also sold half of the building to one of the big chain supermarkets, and they'd extended upwards to create a private fitness club. And it was much more illuminated and heated.

The biggest surprise were the hire skates. Gone were the old red (for girls and ladies) and black (for boys and men), worn leather floppy, scruffy skates. Instead they were of a much more rigid material, plastic almost, and in some of the brightest fluorescent colours he'd ever seen. They could also choose

between figure skates with the brake at the front, or hockey skates without.

Already, when he tied the laces that surprisingly didn't break, nor were they knotted where previously they had broken, his ankles felt much more supported. Gingerly, he got to his feet and, other than a bit of a wobble, he was able to walk to the gap in the perimeter without falling over.

"Hey!" he announced, quite proud of himself. "I can stand up." Then he landed, with a bump, on the hard floor, on his bum, causing the girls to chortle with laughter.

Both Suze and Matty took walking in the skates in their stride. They watched from the seats for a few minutes before taking the leap. Dan tentatively stepped onto the ice first, immediately clinging to the side wall, and one-by-one helped his daughters do the same. A few desperate moves and they were standing up, if in a bendy kind of way, then the three of them took a few quick glidey moves.

Dan, as expected, was the first to land on the ice, but the girls thought it was hilariously funny and they all burst into more fits of laughter.

"Hey, Suze!" shouted a voice, and Suze's friend glided towards them looking very graceful. She had everything, all the gear, white figure skates, American tan thick denier tights, a fuchsia pink skating dress with a little jacket, and matching fluffy earmuffs and gloves. Her own little sister, dressed almost identically, but in acid orange, followed her.

"Hold our hands," Tallulah said.

"We'll take you around," said little Natasha.

"Can we, Dad?" asked Suze.

"Can we?" echoed her sister.

It sounded perfectly fine to him, and they'd never be far out of sight. Plus, it would give him chance to find his own ice legs without the embarrassment of his little girls watching him.

"Yay!" they cried, and off they went. Matty fell over almost immediately and Dan wanted to dash to her side. But she was soon up on her blades again, laughing, and off they went – again.

He clung to the side as he watched them complete a couple of circuits before bravely launching himself a few feet away, and he promptly lost his balance.

Dan's ankles were aching a bit with the unfamiliar strain. He'd not long recovered from a nasty fall on the snow in which he'd twisted one of his ankles. He flexed both feet a bit, bent down to tighten the laces, and tried again...

...and, actually, he managed a lot better than he thought he would. By the time he was able to carefully follow the four children, he was enjoying conquering the skates and wishing he'd pursued it when he was younger and more fearless than his sensible, adult self.

When it was time to take their skates back and meet the ice-skating instructor, the girls came back squealing with joy. Both Suze and Matty had taken to the ice like ducks to water – or penguins to ice – and their friends had even taught them a few easy dance steps.

Tallulah and Natasha swirled off in a flash of colour to join the others, spinning around the ice. Dan noticed that quite a lot of the children were wearing skating outfits, even some of the boys looking smart in their black trousers, white shirts and bow ties. Everyone else was either in tracksuits or regular jeans.

What looked like one of the coaches was headed in their direction.

"Do you want lessons or not?" he asked the girls, to another chorus of sing-song yeses. The attractive skating instructor smiled a beaming smile at them.

"Well?" she asked. "What did you think?"

"They really enjoyed themselves, thanks, and would love to have proper lessons."

"Really? That's great," she said, turning the smile on the girls.

"Er, do you teach adults too?" he spluttered out, surprising himself.

"Yes, we do," she said. And as she turned that stunning smile towards him he felt himself go slightly weak at the knees again, but this time it was nothing to do with the ice...

the end

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Rotherham  
United Kingdom

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