

Janet's Story

It was a windy March day and all the daffodils were flattened. As she drove along Janet was distracted, momentarily by a rainbow in the sky and she didn't see the figure of the man until it was too late. She slammed her foot on the brake but she couldn't avoid the collision. All she could see was the face.

She sat frozen with her hands gripping the wheel. Her eyes were fixed on the face of the figure which was jammed between the front nearside of her car and the fence. Every muscle in her body was taut, shoulders hunched, knuckles were white and then she started to breathe with some semblance of normality..

The tautness gradually relaxed and then she started to laugh hysterically. She laughed until the tears ran down her face and then she sobbed with heart rending gasps.

She released her hold on the wheel and groped for her mobile 'phone. Stabbing in the number, she waited for the comfort of her friend's voice. "Oh! Helen" she sobbed "please help me"
"Janet! Whatever is the matter? Please calm down and speak more slowly"
"Helen I need your help. I have had an accident. My car has damaged the fencing at the end of your drive"
"Was there another car involved"
"No, no!" she wailed "please come. I ran into Worzel Gummidge and he is staring at me"
"Oh! Can you move? Have you injured yourself?"
"I don't know!"
"You aren't making sense. Sit still I'll be there in five minutes. Poor Worzel!"

Helen left Ada, her cook, to carry on preparing the lunches for the guests while she put on her jacket then got into the 4x4 to drive down the 40 yard long drive to rescue Janet. When she got near the end of the drive, she parked the 4x4 and walked the rest of the way to Janet's car. She looked through the window and had to tap on the window to attract Janet's attention. Poor Janet had been staring fixedly at Worzel's face and nearly jumped out of her skin at the sudden noise.

"Come on Janet! Open the door so that I can check you over. The car is more or less O.K. a little bruised on the nearside. Poor Gummidge seems to have taken the worst of it".

Janet's face crumpled again and she spoke through her tears to say "sorry Helen, I know how much you treasured Worzel Gummidge. He was always lucky for you"

Helen helped her out of the car and did a check on Janet for injuries, then stood her against the notice board which needed straightening. It bore the legend ' Brookfield Farm and craft Centre.

Helen turned the 4x4 for the return journey back to the farm. Come on Janet. I'll get

Sid to come down to see to Worzel and bring your up to the house.

Helen and Bob's farm had almost crashed when foot and mouth hit their place. The heartbreak of losing their prize herd. The stench of the funeral pyres when the animals were slaughtered then burned in huge pits. The compensation was a bit slow in coming through so they did a plan B for their business.

The diversification consisted of turning the byres into separate units which now housed No.1. A wickerwork studio which manufactured baskets of all shapes and sizes. Garden ornaments and benches. No.2 retailed home dyed fabrics and gifts. No. 3 became a studio for a local artist and No.4 was the Farm Shop. One of the barns had been converted into a restaurant for the paying guests and the general public. It was proving to be a profitable business. The ground behind the byres was the site for four motel type bungalows which housed the paying guests.

Worzel Gummidge was a product of the Wicker work shop and he had been clothed by the fabric shop. H had proved to be a great asset, offering a friendly look as he stood by the notice board and the local children and their families couldn't think of a time when he wasn't around..

Helen gave Janet a gentle hug as she stepped on to the drive and said " Don't worry about old Gummidge the shop will fix him as good as new in no time at all. Now pop upstairs and have a wash and when you are settled on the settee I will bring you a warm drink.