

The *Ambition & Destiny* Newsletter

October 2016



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Ambition & Destiny is a series of books inspired by research into Family History. It is a tale of love, loss and betrayal set in against a backdrop of Victorian England.

For a couple of months now I've been thinking about the real-life events that took place in the years following the *The Ambition & Destiny* Trilogy. Until recently I thought the turbulent years ended in 1890, but it now appears that events leading up to 1910 probably deserve a book of their own.

With that in mind, when someone suggested recently that I should avoid the use of the word 'Trilogy' in my subheading (in case I wanted to extend the story), I immediately knew they had a point. As a result, I will now be talking about *The Ambition & Destiny* Series. Not only will that allow me to add a Book 4 to the series (should it ever get written), it will also include the prequel to the whole story that is now becoming a reality (see below).

Editing Leads to the Birth of a Short Story ...

When I got the comments back from the editor in August I didn't expect them to have quite the impact they did. Some of the suggestions involved removing parts of the story that related to Mary before she was widowed (i.e. before the story started). While I was happy to do this, I didn't want to lose it completely. Coincidentally, at around the same time, I had been struggling to think of something to offer people to get them interested in the main series. Like having a lightbulb moment, I realised that if I took the Prologue from Book 1 and merged it with the sections I was taking out, I could make a short story. It took me a few weeks, and more writing than I expected, but I now have a short story. I have just sent it to an editor, and hope to have something to share very soon. Everyone who subscribes to this list will automatically get a copy, either in October or hopefully by November at the latest.

... The Short Story Leads to more Editing

The short story covers the six months of Mary's life when she met and fell in love with her husband, Charles. It is written from his point of view and includes one particular incident that was originally mentioned as a throw away line in Book 1. Needing more details, I did further research and realised that the event was not as innocuous as I'd first thought. I would probably go so far as to say that had it not happened the course of history would probably be very different. It's a strange feeling when you see your own mortality in terms of not having the chance to be born!

Anyway, as a result of the way the short story developed, I've had to change parts of Book 1. In addition to all the other edits this has slowed me down a little, but hopefully it will lead to a better book in the end.

Recent Posts

With a draft of my short story completed, I wrote the attached to share the idea with others who wanted inspiration:

[Building an Email List: The Value of a Short Story.](#)

In addition, based on my research into the predicament the widowed Mary found herself in, I wrote the attached describing how the poor were looked after before our present day welfare system:

[Victorian Era Poor Relief Outside the Workhouse.](#)

The more I learn about Victorian England, the more I realise how lucky we are today.

Cover Designs

I am disappointed to say that I haven't got any covers to share with you this month.

I'm on a steep learning curve and had thought that the designer would help with the creative side of things. Sadly this doesn't seem to be the case (not for the amount of money I have anyway!). I do have a few designs that I tested with a group but they still need work and so I'll hold off sharing them with you for now.

Hopefully next month!

Introducing the Characters - Mr Weatherby

Before I have any excerpts of the books to share, I thought I'd take the chance to introduce some of the characters. I promise there'll be no spoilers!

Along with Mary, **Mr Weatherby** is the other main person in Book 1. From my research I know the man who inspired the character was born in Gloucestershire in 1820, but without a penny to his name he made his way to Birmingham sometime in the 1840's. He

was typical of the time in that he started with nothing but due to the Industrial Revolution, and a lot of determination, he ended up doing very nicely for himself. His main business was making Hooks & Eyes (the small fastening you still get in the backs of bra's and on other items of clothing), although he did move into button making as well.

Being a successful businessman seemed to give him a lot of power and status and by Books 2 and 3, he was very prominent within the Birmingham Conservative Association. He also seems to have been a man who usually got his own way. As I was writing, a phrase I often reminded myself of was: "Whatever Mr Weatherby wants, Mr Weatherby gets." It didn't always work like that, of course (it wouldn't be a good story if it did), but it was a useful rule of thumb.

I've had some interesting responses to Mr Weatherby from the people who have read my early drafts, so much so that the storyline I've created for him is one of the reasons why these books will be accompanied by legal disclaimers to make sure readers know that this really is a work of fiction!

If you know of anyone else who would be interested in the books, please ask them to visit valmcbeath.com and sign up for the newsletter
