



I left RHS in 2001, and was very keen on languages, which you might not find surprising. I studied Latin with the wonderful Mr Hartley, who will be sorely missed. Languages were greatly encouraged at RHS and it's delightful to see the way they're supported today.

I never went to university as I had no clear direction of what I wanted to study. I ended up working full time and after a moment of madness, I experienced a spell of driving forklift trucks for a living! Whilst that might sound odd at first, having experienced a job mainly based outside, it's given me a permanent appreciation for desk jobs (especially in winter!)

My time at RHS ignited a passion for writing and computing, and whilst my early careers could be politely described as serpentine in path, they did eventually head to where I am today.

From the forklift driving I was noticed by the directors in head office and asked to work for the sales team. It was there I finally got my start tinkering with IT. From there I went to work for a top 50 law firm as their Service Desk Supervisor. I now find myself as a Senior Team Lead at an IT consultancy on the south coast. All of my jobs have been in male-dominated sectors, and I would strongly encourage all women to head towards, and not shy away from, such workplaces. If you have the drive and the passion, you can do any job. Your gender is not a debilitating factor.

In between all of this I wrote in my spare time. I had written two novels when my first horror title was picked up by niche horror publisher Permuted Press in 2012. They picked up a further two trilogies from me, and the first of those, the Empath series, was written and released in the space of a year. I now have six novels and a novella out, with a further four novels to be released by the end of the year.

I never saw myself as a horror writer – another seemingly male-dominated area – but the number of female horror authors is growing, and it is a hearteningly supportive genre to write in.

Dawn Peers