

Present: 20

Apologies: Jeff, Roselie, Richard, Marion, Allan

AGENDA:

Anthology update – The final 'final' date for anthology submissions has been determined as the end of this month, 29th February, 2020. *(Just so folk don't believe that I have fallen in love with the word 'final', it is because we have had a number final dates advertised as we've gone along throughout last year, and this is now 'it', as they say.)*

Currently there are 38 submissions received into Russell's tender care, with a few more to be added from Chair Peter's storage. This on estimation should suggest a book of approximately 120 pages in the offing. So well done folks.

Russell's next chore will be forwarding on to the editing members their job lots for a final check read, before going to publication.

Meetings for CWL 2020 - Chair Peter resumed our discussion from end of last year about what works, and what doesn't with regards to meeting procedure for our monthly get-togethers. This led to an involved **discussion** amongst members, about **the difference between editing and beta-reading**, along with forming an understanding around clarity of expectations from the writer's perspective, and the reader's perspective.

There will be further information to be made available to members at future meetings; however it was decided that there is a difference between editing and beta-reading, with a very definitive answer that beta-readers are NOT editors. The beta-reader checks the readability of the story, once the writer is happy that they have reached the publication stage.

Member Cynthia will provide CWL with more information at our next meetings. She believes that it is crucial that everyone, from the reader to the writer, have a clear idea of expectations of the feedback/assessment process.

Member Judy suggested also that writers should choose their readers carefully. It is important that writers have a variety of responses to their works to attempt to address the subjective nature of giving feedback. Our published writers in the group were all supportive of the above statements.

When tracking **what is currently working well** from the attending membership's points of view, it was decided that discussions rated positively with the group. The freedom to identify an issue of interest at the meetings and to talk it through was most favoured. **What else worked?** Continuing with the homework topics each meeting, as well as adhering to a timely 2 hour meeting, was also well received.

Suggestions for improving the quality of meetings focussed on room organisation for the gathered 'crowd', as well as speaking to the library/council about the possibility of extending parking times for members on meeting days.

An inclusion of 'Ask a question' as well as, 'A bit about me' might also prove to be fruitful to the meeting's agenda.

General Information:

■ Member Lorraine, who is also 'The Writers' Grapevine' is planning **two road trips** for this year. The purpose of these trips is to visit selected drought/fire affected regions and bring visitors AND some writing talks/workshops etc. to these struggling areas. The first is in April and will take in the Central Queensland Coast area around Bundaberg, and the second will be in September, and visit the Bathurst area down south.

If you would like to join Lorraine and participate in this worthy venture, please contact her to register your interest. It is assumed that each person will carry their own costs, and make their own travel arrangements etc.

Contact Lorraine on writersgrapevine@yahoo.com

■ Member Judy has kindly sent in notification of a **free seminar** for writers and those with an interest in writing in the **Moreton Bay Region**. At North Lakes Library, on Sat 15 Feb, between 10.30am -2pm, Dr Shelley Davidow from USC will present how to turn your **life experiences into a gripping story** that your audience will want to read. Contact North Lakes Ph. 3480 9900, on 10 The Corso, North Lakes, Q, 4509.

HOMEWORK:

Much opportunity was taken by today's membership to 'bag' the topic selection from our November meeting. Chair Peter took it bravely on the chin, while Janet observed, along with a number of other members, that matters were not helped by some truly 'sad' jokes made by some of the members. It appears there is a comedian in some of us.

Reminder, homework needs to be kept to a respectful limit so that all members can have the opportunity to speak if they so desire.

March Homework: Long Past Dawn OR The Abandoned Suitcase

Include the word '**egregious**' in your offering.

We finish up with a contribution from member Jeff who is experiencing a bout of ill health at the moment, so many thanks for staying in touch with CWL and thinking of us as you travel your bumpy health road at the moment Jeff.

Why do the British like using excess letters (for example, 'colour' instead of 'color', 'cheque' instead of 'check', 'analogue' instead of 'analog', etc.)?

It's a big secret. People outside the UK aren't generally informed of this, but in the interests of education, truth and beauty, here we go.

The English language is not, technically, a language. It is difficult to define what it is, but the best description is that it is the absolute pinnacle of psychological warfare. I know that sounds crazy, but bear with me.

You see, England kept being invaded and the English couldn't do a damned thing about it. First the Romans, then the Angles and the Saxons and the Jutes, then the Vikings. Terrible business! The last straw was the Normans; although they were Vikings they lived in France. That was just too close for comfort, I mean, being invaded by the French... Unthinkable!

But how could the British people fight back? That's when they had a wonderful idea. They decided to make a language so confusing, so utterly, incomprehensibly, unimaginably, painfully stupid that it would melt the brain of literally everyone in the world who was a native speaker of a sensible language. And so, they got cracking.

That is why knight is spelt with a K. Do pronounce the K? No - don't be silly! Why is gnome spelt with a G? Precisely because it shouldn't be spelt with a G. That's the beauty of it, don't you see?

But try not to be too much of a wreck; not just yet anyway. Silent letters were just the start of it and I'm not even counting the magic E we stuck on half the words, just to confuse things. We haven't got the time to get into that - sorry, haven't got the time.

Why do we spell "doughnut" the way we do, only to not actually pronounce 3/8ths. of the letters? Well, just to see foreigners go cross-eyed, basically.

The plural of tooth is teeth, and the plural of foot is feet, and the plural of goose is geese. So why is "sheep" singular? Why not "one shoop, two sheep"? And what's the plural of moose? Also moose. Are you weeping yet? Well, we're not done.

Why are “wind” and “wind” spelt the same, when they sound different? And why does “wind” rhyme with “binned”? Why do the letters “ough” sound the same in “enough” and “tough”, but different in “though”, and “thought”, and “bough”?

We even carried this over to our place names. Why is “London” spelt that way when we actually say “Lun-dun”? Makes it harder for invaders to find, you see.

Here’s an experiment. Try to pronounce the following - don’t worry, I put the pronunciations in the next paragraph to help you. But try them out yourself first.

Here we go:

Worcestershire, Leicester, Middlesborough, Hunstanton, Magdalen College, Leominster, Godmanchester, and Loughborough.

Now here’s how you should say them:

Woos-tuh-shur, Lest-uh, Mid-ulls-bru, Hun-ston, Mord-lin College, Lem-ster, Gum-ster, and Luff-bru.

So, how did you do? Most non-British people I’ve met - unless they’re Anglophiles - do quite badly. I mean, try going up to someone on a railway platform and asking to go to “Lowg-buh-ruh”. People will look at you like you had broken into their house on Christmas morning and defecated on the parlour rug. But don’t be ashamed - that’s sort of the point.

In World War Two, when we thought the Germans might invade, we took down all the road signs. The Germans found out, knew they’d have to rely on asking people for directions and abandoned their plans to invade that same day. Having to actually talk to English people...
Nein danke!

Even the ‘helpful rules’ we came up with to explain English don’t actually work. “I before E, except after C”, they say. Is that actually correct? Not really, see “receipt”, or “neighbour”, or “sleigh”. Actually, more words ignore that rule than follow it. So, why have the rule? To screw with people’s minds, of course.

The thing is, the whole experiment worked. Within a few centuries, the French either gave up and went home, or they succumbed to such levels of unrelenting insanity that they were incapable of being anything other than Civil Servants. No-one has dared invade the country since for fear we’d try to speak to them.

And all of that is before I get on to mentioning the fact that we have several hundred local dialects and accents in the country too. Britons can identify each other's point of ethnic origin within two doors from their place of birth by their accent. Social stereotyping based

on how one speaks English is the norm. It's probably overkill, but as the basis for endemic discrimination and racial bias it seemed like a good idea originally.

And don't get me started on the Welsh language. That is the nuclear deterrent of incomprehensible spelling, I'm telling you. The Scots are not much better with "Kircudbright" and "Ecclefechan".

The point is, not only did we get people to stop invading Britain but the British were able to build an entire vast Empire on the back of this pig's breakfast of a language.

Most of the time, they would just send a long, rambling letter to the political elites of any particular country delivered in warships, gunboats and columns of heavily armed troops. A few days later, they would stagger out of their offices/ palaces/ long houses or mud huts, dazed and confused holding their complimentary copy of the Christian Bible, only half understanding that the letter was a courtesy, politely informing them that Britain would be running the country from now on – taxation and tariffs to follow. By the time their ears stopped ringing, the British had already built a dozen railways and it would be pretty damned rude to kick a chap out of a country once he had built you a railway, don't you think?

Whole thing worked for centuries. They would ask us to leave, we would agree to be out by February and by the time the locals had worked out how to spell it, another fifty years had gone by – the revenue taxi-meter ticking all the while.

America rather screwed the pooch by trying to get the language to make sense, you see. They started simplifying the language, and as such, they have had dreadful trouble keeping people in line. People can actually deal with American simplified spellings and such, and so they aren't trying to drag themselves out of a fog of confusion during every diplomatic meeting. And even then, they're only dealing with the random extra letters. Imagine if you were a non-English speaker entering the Anglophone world cold and had to learn the entire salmagundi of English spelling from scratch?

Like I said in the beginning, it's not simply a language, it is Psychological Warfare. I'm surprised that Britain hasn't been indicted in the International Court of Justice in The Hague yet.

Hopefully you have had a bit of a laugh, or at the very least a wry smile from reading the above. See you all at the next Meeting , Tuesday 3rd March, 9.30 in Caboolture Library.

Cheers Janet

