

Present: 12
Apologies: Belinda, Martin, Knox sisters
New: Robert Brown

AGENDA:

We wish all who were unable to be with us today well, and hope that we will see them in our next meeting. We also wish Martin in particular a speedy recovery. Martin has been testing out the Brisbane medical facilities recently, and when he is once more allowed to drive, and has sufficiently recovered from his heart procedure, he will be back with us. Martin has been working hard recently with his conversion of some of his written material to movie format, and has a wealth of experience to regale us with on his return.

■ Chair Peter, along with some of the members present raised the topic of being safe on the internet, and discussed briefly how to be circumspect on emails which masquerade as from bona fide sources, and in particular those emails that present as familiar businesses, and raise concerns about accounts, or bills, or refunds.

The recommended procedure is to not open anything, don't follow links within emails, don't believe what you read, and contact the sender directly from verified links to confirm the information you are being presented with.

Keep yourselves as safe as you can. Particularly vulnerable are folk with language difficulties, or those who believe everything they read.

Janet also wanted folk to be mindful when on social media as well, as anyone can say they are whoever they like, there are no real checks, and balances for this. Photos can be taken from other sites, as well as

information. Doubt everything... and really if seems too good, it probably is.

The motto for today is when in doubt, check it out.

■ Chair Peter, because he can, took us all for a wander down historical paths today with a reminder about the Ides of March, very pertinent to the month that we're in, and conversation ensued with Caesar, being stabbed in the back, a chap called Mark Antony, and 44 BC along with the 15th of March as a memorable day.

■ Peter, also who has been exploring matters of writing on the internet, came across a statement that said, 'writing is a technology that reconstructs thoughts' along with a need to teach students writing, the importance of writing, and the importance of the meditative process of writing. This of course then became a discussion of structure, which is teachable and then passion, essence and empathy which are more acquired than reproduced. Some very heady thoughts were discussed on what writing in fact was and is, and how unique it also can be, as well as individual to both writer and reader.

■ Russell introduced membership to the new software that he's trialling that assists with the final polishing of writing. The product is called 'Pro writing Aid' and comes with a variety of contact points, from the Free version which will assess 500 word amounts, to the Premium package which at this stage is costing about \$180 Australian for 12 months subscription. So far Russell is very impressed by the product, and even though it is American in origin, accommodates Australian English well. It corrects, looks at grammar, continuity, style, critiques with options, and makes suggestions for improvement to your 'finished product'. It appears as heaps cheaper than a paid for editing of your work and very useful for those who are confident with self-publishing.

Discussion also covered fonts of the moment, with a change from Times New Roman, to Garamond (which is what I've used for this newsletter) and a recommendation that Georgia also as good.

For those folk who are not as confident with self-publishing without hand holding Russell also recommended Brisbane Self-publishing as being very helpful, yes you pay, but they factor in what you also have managed to do for yourself, and prices can reflect this.

■Lexia presented a page of Dialogue tips for all present today. Her paper covered what dialogue could achieve in prose; how to use dialogue tags; the accepted punctuation for dialogue; the don'ts of dialogue and helpful hints.

If anyone wishes to follow up any of these pearls, you can refer to her references: ■jerryjenkins.com

■Jeff Elkin- the Dialogue Doctor

HOMWORK:

February's homework was enjoyed, with the topic of Second-hand Clothes being the favourite choice, followed by Swept under the Carpet. Most enjoyable was John's ' You don't have to be crazy but it helps' which tended to best suit the flavour of today's meeting and the viewpoints presented.

Next meetings topics are: **text using dialogue**

■I was talking to my mate Bert/Beatrice.....

OR

■a discussion between you and a friend

OR

■ As Milly waited in line to enter the store, she heard 2 men discussing the window display

OR

■ write a piece of poetry or prose that pleases you

Well, we've reached the end of today's meeting. As always everyone had lots to say, it was lovely to meet with new member Robert who is just starting his writing journey with an interest in biography, and good to see young Sam at another meeting, informing us all that she has Tuesday's off now – may that last.

Sue continues to impress with her self-disciplined approach to writing, Denis keeps us on our toes with thoughtful questions, Deb shows a flair for saying it like it is, while Richard managed to relish finding us in our new library quarters. We think Bakhti and Peter may be dabbling in science fiction as a genre and Russell, Peter, Lexia and I avoid homework, and try to keep the ship afloat.

Keep writing, thinking, experimenting with words, and staying in touch with your sense of humour. Till next month, Janet