

Attendance: 12

Apologies: Denis, Jennifer, Belinda, Debbie

Welcome to May's meeting and the Jacaranda Café at our new site of Bolton Clark retirement community. Today we started with coffee and nibbles as required, and some furniture reorganisation under the map of Richard (many thanks) and the careful and informed advice of the supervisor of the café who was just wonderful in her helpfulness. Now we sit all facing one another, as well as a little closer. We now feel more like a group of friends than a work party. Well done folk.

AGENDA:

Chair Peter started us off with a review of the next to be published anthology from CWL. This took the form of checking names of contributors as well as titles of their written offerings. Peter commented on any edits he had been forced to make to works tended, mostly along the lines of punctuation enthusiasms, and clarification of dialogue issues.

It would appear that the word count will be approximately 40,000 words which is in line with our initial goals. Our next stage of the process will be converting the product into useable Amazon data, a naming of the anthology and then submission for electronic publishing. Once published purchases can be made on line through Amazon, or via members who will purchase at a members' price. More info to date when this stage is reached.

Today's discussion arose from Peter's editing comments re punctuation and its importance. Mostly it was along the lines of the need to use writing conventions which are there to assist readers to understand the intent of the author, and not just to allow for the assumption that the reader will surely get that. Such things as commas, full stops, line placement, and tracking who's in fact speaking were considered. It would appear that dialogue transactions cannot be left to the story flow, but must indeed be carefully thought out. A lot of our members have on occasion been utterly frustrated with trying to work who said what to whom in their reading. A most off-putting state of affairs.

Member Russell took us on an adventure with his most recent learnings of using AI on a piece of his writing. This time it was using the apps of Eleven reader (free but with a quota of characters for use in a time frame) and Eleven labs (costed). These two apps show the advance in audio technology and its application to the written word. Audio books are but a click away when these apps are used. Today we listened to Lawrence Olivier, and a chap called Charlie, record a short piece of Russell's prose. This was then followed by a created podcast of the previous writing where Russell's work was then discussed by a male and female avatar.

We are so blessed for Russell's continuing education of us all with the technology becoming available. To say membership were utterly gobsmacked by the readings and even more so by the podcast would be a complete understatement. It cannot be underestimated the impact of hearing the dulcet tones of Olivier, or a younger more 'hip' Charlie reading part of the same prose. Russell's words simply shone in gravitas, realism and authorship that might have ordinarily gone unattended if left to just a reader's imagination. Hearing the following podcast which Russell assured us had absolutely no input from him apart from the piece of prose was beyond amazing. Two commentator avatars spoke at length on what his prose suggested, what we might think about, what needed to be questioned etc etc. How anyone can tell the real discussion from the app version is absolutely beyond me.

As folk would imagine discussion was very lively post this experience. We discussed the ethics of use, what is made easy, what does it mean for ownership of skills and craft, the recognition of use of AI, the use of a deceased person's voice etc etc

How anyone can assess credibility of discussion enters an entirely new realm. The possibility of selling as fact a completely fictitious exercise has overtones of Orwell's 1984. I may indeed never believe anything again on seeing or hearing value, along with the need to be very circumspect in taking anything at face value has very real media connotations. At the very least we certainly need to keep educating our population to bring energy to their assessment of sources of information, or their belief systems based on the data that has informed them.

HOMEWORK from today!!!

Janet, Richard, Bakhti, Maurice, Sue, John and Peter tantalized us with their words and thoughts, of not only what was important in the passing of time or remembrances, but the beauty to be found in the allotted time of those meaningful moments when we find ourselves near out of time. Much praise goes to Sue who decided to experiment with a form of Japanese writing called *Tanka* which structures its poetry according to a set number of syllables in line length and poem total. It was just beautifully done, and adhered well to theme of reflections in water from start to finish. We closed with a lively rendition from Peter, who had used the form for his poem from 'a pocketful of sixpence' to guide him. So much joy as always with the gentle, clever, witty use of words across our membership.

HOMEWORK for next time !!!!

From Peter:

The following three subjects are random selections AI generated by Claud AI. The opening sentence I have “humanised” somewhat. They are of a spooky nature, admittedly, so if they do not appeal to you feel free to choose a subject of your own.

☐ **"Whispers in the Wallpaper"**: Marina had lived in the Victorian house for a couple of weeks before she realized the floral patterns in the bedroom wallpaper kept rearranging themselves.

☐ **"The Impossible Blue Hour"**: It was during that strange stretch of time between midnight and dawn—when the world holds its breath and anything seems possible—that Sasha first noticed she could walk through walls.

☐ **"Salt and Sparrows"**: The old lady had been leaving trails of salt across her doorway every night for forty years, not to keep spirits out, but to guide one particular spirit home.

Well that's your lot for this newsletter, and apologies for the current print colour, but my usual technological skill is evident in that I cannot undo what I have previously selected, and I want to finish on ' a note of acceptance of the avatar of writing according to word which does not want to listen to me and what I want '. It feels a bit like dog training when my lovely Gus was 2 and indeed experiencing the terrible 2's and went through the 'no mahm' stage in our interactions and yes I didn't attend to his no's with too much bother either, and currently as a 9 year old he's just perfection. Hope it does not take mastery of word quite that long however. Cheers Janet