

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – July 2023

This month's guest speaker: Ken Vernon

Ken is a published author and highly experienced journalist with over 30 years experience, covering the whole continent of Africa and its various wars, as well as the Cold War (see our **June 2022 newsletter**). He can also tell you all about climbing Mt Everest. And political cartoons. He wrote a book about both!

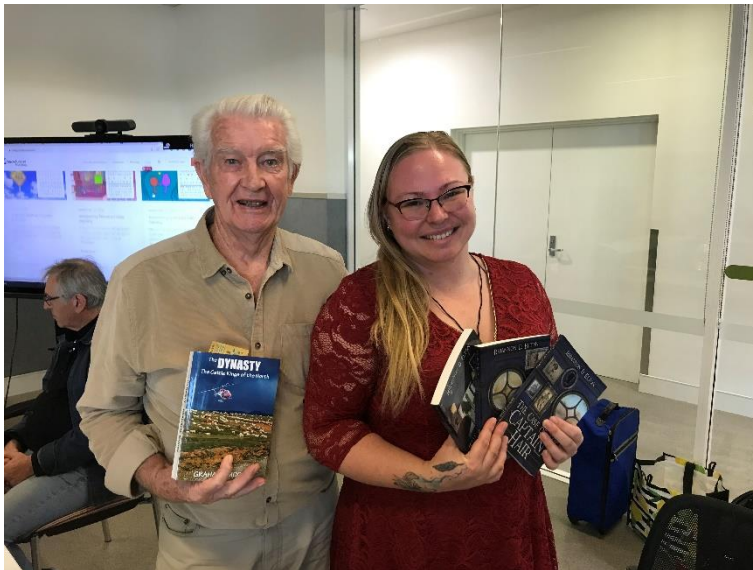
This time, he will speak about three different subjects,

- a) Niche Publishing
- b) His trip to base camp on Mt. Everest.
- c) The loss of life and the costs involved, in Mountain Climbing.

Now here is something to look forward to!



Last month's guest speaker: Rhiannon Elton



In marketing, a major factor is “your point of difference”. So, Rhiannon Elton doesn't describe herself just as an author of children's stories. On [Her website](#) she describes herself as a “**Fantasy Detective Author**”. Yes, Rhiannon certainly would know: Her set of ‘Wolflock Cases – Volume 1’ alone has 10 books in it!

So, how does one become a successful author? “I grew up as a child who loved writing,” she said. “Every single day I would write into my book. I loved

dinosaurs.“ Then write, rewrite... All my high school years, writing was my refuge from bullying. Then I got to Years 11/12...” And still today: “You must write every day.” She calls it her ‘Morning Pages’. “It's like turning on a tap. Do NOT analyse it!”

Where many authors speak almost exclusively about their books (yes, of course!), Rhiannon extended this to immensely educational marketing tuition. She names her technique her ‘Wizard Tower’. “You have your own version of magic” she enthused. “Your wizard tower does not have to be a standard tower. It can be a gothic cathedral or a penthouse. Grahame Moore's, writing rural stories, would be a big homestead with a wide verandah.”

Rhiannon also extensively elaborated on the secrets of a good website and social media presence. “Each one of these is a brick in your tower: she elaborated. “**Chose 5 colours that look good and match what your colours are as an author.** E.g. in my case, black letter (it's

actually dark green) background, dark words and silver. Suit, shirt and jacket will always match. The colour will talk about you as an author...”

Sorry people, I need to stop right here; you should have been there yourself! We ended up going over time, and I assure you: nobody complained.

PS: I should also mention that Rhiannon is the organiser of the annual **Logan Writers Festival**, which last month was attended by several of our members. Visit her website <https://rhiannoneltonauthor.com>

Worth mentioning:

You may have heard that our member **Jack Kregas** managed to break his hip, but we understand he’s well on the mend and quite likely will attend this month’s meeting (possibly on crutches or in a wheelchair...)

Stacey King mentioned the following websites you may want to visit:

BookFunnel <https://bookfunnel.com/> - This site caters particularly for Independent Authors. Good stuff! Just go and check it out...

Discord: <https://discord.com/> - In essence: a permanent Zoom. You can hang out with your friends or fellow authors permanently.

This month’s challenge: Can you improve on that?

He was a stock broker. He gave her an impression of such integrity that you were almost more sorry for him than for yourself, when the good thing he had put you on to as a special favour turned out to be a dud. (Somerset Maughan – Short Stories)

Found any special sentence or paragraph you have re-read three or four times just for the joy of it? **Send your entry as a photo, text, email or doc to helensvalewriters@gmail.com** (or simply reply to the email in which I sent you this newsletter).

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- d) Alright, all of you **erotic fiction** writers (including those who have only thought about **erotic fiction**, but have not written anything about it for the public to read – high school love letters to your girl/boyfriend don’t count...): Stringybark is running a **‘Stringybark Erotic Fiction Award 2023’**. A word of advice, provided by Stringybark: Erotic Fiction is NOT pornography. (You knew that anyway, didn’t you? 😊), Competition closes 13th August 2023
- e) **Ernestine Hill Memorial Short Story Award** Short Story – max 4000 words – Rural setting. \$1,000 first prize. Closes 21st October 2023.
- f) There are another 583 (last time I looked) competitions on reedsy.com – There must be one or two which suit you!

May 100 Word competition:

Q: What is the difference between ignorance and apathy?

A: I don’t know, and I don’t care.

If the above Q&A touches you in a negative way, please forgive me. But participation in the May competition, despite being extended to the end of June, was somewhat disappointing, with only 6 entries. *(There is, of course, a positive aspect to this: A rank amateur like me has a 16.667% chance of winning the bottle of red! ☺)* Anyway, our convenor Grahame will get somebody neutral to decide the winner at the upcoming meeting.

Why so few entries? Is it because those members who didn't enter, don't care? It's certainly not because they don't know how – after all we are all writers, or want to learn how to be a writer. And it's meant to be fun, not anything serious. Just your small contribution to the group.

Give us your opinions!

Our group is there for the principal purpose to help each other to write better stories and how to get them published. Hopefully, even to make an income from it. Some members have put in great effort. Just take as an example **Stacey King**, who maintains the website and its **Resources** section. It's there for you to use.

Yet, some of our members we have not seen for ages! We'd like to know why not.

So, please tell us, what are you looking for.

I have set up an **online survey, which is anonymous**. You can only vote once, and I can assure you that I can't work out who voted, or made what comment. So feel free to pour your heart out and criticise! But don't forget to also make some constructive suggestions. [Click on this link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MDTXL6L) to access the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MDTXL6L>

This month's meeting

This month's meeting will be on 20th July 2023. Usual place and time: ground floor meeting room at the Helensvale Library, 10:00 am. Put it in your diary now.

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People who can't differentiate between etymology and entomology bug me in ways I cannot put into words.

