

Field Research in Pre-Lockdown Egypt

Sue Kingham



Remember when self-isolation meant little more than getting on with your WIP? This year has dramatically changed all that. I count my blessings that I went on my research trip to Egypt before Covid-19 wreaked havoc with international travel.

My husband and I were born in England but have just celebrated our 20th anniversary of moving to New Zealand. In December 2019, we decided to show our two teenage children a 'proper' Christmas. Barbeques and swimming at the beach are all well and good, but the festive season should be spent indoors by a fire, rain lashing the windows, watching the Sound of Music for the millionth time with family squabbling. Proof that you can take the girl out of England, but you can't take England out of the girl.

On our way 'home,' we made a stopover for eight days in Egypt—I know it isn't exactly 'on the way', but when you are spending a ridiculous number of hours on a plane you barely notice a handful more. The reason for this visit was that for the past year I have been slogging away at my

first novel, which is set in Ancient Egypt. Who was it who said, write what you know? Hmm, they may have been onto something. Not only am I attempting to write my first longer piece of fiction (my previous word counts averaged around 2,000), I've had to do a tonne of research. In fact, at times, I'd rather build a pyramid than write a novel. Piling up a heap of stones into a pointy shape is nothing compared to developing at least two engaging character arcs (it's a romance novel) and assembling a cast of secondary characters to populate a credible world set four thousand years ago.

This article isn't a travelogue, so I'll restrict myself to one tip for Cairo: hire a local guide and a driver. You won't stand a chance unless you do, and it is cheaper than going on an expensive tour. How best to describe Cairo traffic? Imagine riding the largest rollercoaster in the world, one that regularly corkscrews, without a security bar or seat belt. Our fantastic guide, Ibrahim, told me he had lived in the city for ten years, but even he wouldn't risk driving Cairo's streets. Crossing a road is equally harrowing. Traffic lights and pedestrian crossings are non-existent. With four or five lanes (not that there are any marked lanes), full of cars, motorbikes, buses, trucks, donkeys, and bicycles, all you can do is pray as you step out. Fortunately, we never needed to cross a road, as our driver deposited at the door of every destination. Not great for climate change but hey, we survived.

Is field research really necessary when writing a novel? I'd read a tonne of books about ancient Egypt, scrolled through countless webpages, watched YouTube videos and films, what more did I need? What I was hoping for was sensory details, and I got them in spades. Standing on the banks of the Nile at dawn and dusk was priceless. I went at the time of the year in which I've set my story, and I discovered Egypt is remarkably cold in December. I knew there was only a strip of green along the banks of the Nile, the rest being desert. Still, I hadn't truly comprehended it never rains in the south, and only occasionally in the north of the country, which means everywhere is incredibly dusty.

Spending eight days surrounded by Egyptians was terrific. Their skin tones vary enormously as do their eye colours. I asked Ibrahim what he thought ancient Egyptians would have looked like, and he pointed to himself and said, "Just like me." I laughed, but I suspect he was correct.

Visiting the pyramids and The Valley of the Kings was invaluable. I had my hero carrying a torch along a long dark corridor when he entered a tomb. However, I discovered the tombs were decorated up to the entrance. They were lit by a complicated arrangement of mirrors





which reflected natural light inside. I went to the workers' village in The Valley of the Kings and found it was much more compact than I had envisaged. It was a warren of small houses, and the workers lived there with their families, not away from them as I had expected.

These, and dozens of other discoveries, will inform my next draft. I'm probably going to change the year in which I've set the story, and my hero will undergo a radical makeover. Finding out all these facts was essential, and yet the rewrite makes me more convinced than ever I might be better off constructing a pyramid than a historical novel. However, as my writing ability trumps my stonemasonry skills, do keep an eye out for my book. The working title is, 'The Artist's Embrace'. But please don't hold your breath, remember Egypt wasn't built in a day.



Sue is an award-winning writer of flash fiction, non-fiction and short stories. She is currently working on a historical trilogy set in Ancient Egypt. In 2018-19 her entry My Guiding Light was awarded second place by the agent judge in the RWNZ Great Beginning competition. In 2019 her short story The Art of Falling in Love was included in Liaison magazine.

Sue also writes magazine articles and tutors at the School for Young Writers in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Recommendation: Writing Podcasts

Mel Climo



We are moving into an increasingly audio world, and I am slowly catching on. I don't use voice search (though my kids do) nor listen to audio books (though my kids do), but I am an avid writing podcast listener.

I was indifferent to podcasts initially.

I am a late adopter of new technologies, never buying the latest model when upgrading my phone or TV. For someone who likes change, I am slow to change my technology preferences, working on the 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it' approach. I was slow to get a mobile phone (back in the nineties!), am still lacking in Twitter acumen, and don't have a smart home assistant. One day I'll work out how to download movies before they make it to Netflix.

The Scientist tried to convince me of podcast awesomeness about six years ago, making us listen to podcasts on how things worked, science and history. They were okaaaay, but he couldn't understand why I wasn't enthralled.

Then in 2016 I found writing podcasts.

I discovered it wasn't the medium I disliked, I just hadn't found my 'thing' yet. Like books, podcast choices are based on individual tastes and interests. Even within writing-specific podcasts I have my favourites, while others like different presenters, styles and topics.





WHY ARE PODCASTS SO POPULAR?

From the advent of the internet and email, to Netflix and YouTube changing our video consumption, then more recently the rise of audio in podcasts and voice assistants, digital platforms have transformed the way we work, learn, play and live.

Here are some reasons I think of for 'why podcasts?'

1. Choice

- General and niche topics cover a vast diversity of content
- Podcasts offering inspiration, education, personal growth, escapism, entertainment and more
- Different length formats - episodes can be under ten minutes or over 2 hours

2. Accessibility

- Free (usually) and widely accessible through numerous platforms
- On-demand - listen when and where it suits the reader
- Allows the listener to productively multi-task and optimise their time

3. Relationship

- Conversational style is more natural and less structured than news or a story
- Helps build trust in the podcaster - the listener hears their genuine 'voice'
- Podcasts can be an entry point into a like-minded community, through comments and affiliated social media groups

WHEN DO I FIND THE TIME TO LISTEN?

Not when I should be writing. I listen when I'm moving - walking, driving, doing housework - and sometimes when crocheting or knitting, if the project requires to me to look at it all the time (i.e. when I can't watch TV and do craft simultaneously).

It can be a trap though, to always be listening.

Walking and driving used to be my quiet thinking times, solving a problem (in life or writing) or just letting my thoughts meander. I am careful to not fill every quiet moment with noise and stimulation.

*I listen when I'm moving -
walking, driving, doing housework
- and sometimes when crocheting
or knitting...*

HOW MANY CAN PODCASTS YOU LISTEN TO, REALLY?

Not as many as I'd like! I've moved up to 1.5x listening speed on most of them, and have been known to skip ahead through introductions and sponsors blurbs to get to the interview, or vice versa - skipping the interview and only listening to the host(s) discussion.

Sometimes I get a long way behind and only pick the episodes that appeal the most, and then I batch them i.e. go for a very long walk!

One handy thing is authors being interviewed about a new book tend to do the circuit, so I only need to catch them once, usually on which ever podcaster is my favourite at the time.

HOW DO I CHOOSE?

I tried a lot of podcasts. I am not monogamous and my preferences differ. I love the irreverence of the Story Studio guys, the optimism and acumen of Joanna Penn, and the honesty and authenticity of J, Rachael and Zach.

Sometimes I am a faithful listener and other times I drift away and come back later.

I can't always explain why I like something (or not) - it just is personal preference. I like some interview styles and not others. I search for content that matches my interests and learning stage, and a podcaster(s) with the 'right' balance of knowledgeable, but not pretentiousness, that suits me.

WHAT'S IN MY PODCAST LIBRARY?

REGULAR - these are the podcasts I currently listen to weekly, or every few weeks I batch half a dozen episodes to catch up:

- [The Creative Penn](#) - usually interview style, plus an intro covering publishing news and Joanna's personal updates
- [The Writer's Well](#) - J and Rachael ask each other a blind question (alternating weekly) on writing topics from craft to wellness
- [How do you Write?](#) - mostly interview format where Rachael explores authors' writing processes
- [The Story Studio](#) - Johnny, Sean and Dave. They make me laugh every week (there is swearing and opinions), and I learn useful stuff.
- [Writers Ink](#) - usually interview style with big name authors, from J and J.D





OCCASIONAL - these podcasts I dip in and out, when the topic appeals. If I had unlimited listening time, these would all be on my regular list:

- [ALLI: Self Publishing Advice Podcast](#) - I usually catch the monthly Advanced Self-Publishing Salon with Joanna Penn and Orna Ross, and then occasionally listen to other episodes that appeal. They offer a range of formats, soooo many episodes, and cover a broad range of topics from poetry to marketing, and interview tons of inspirational indie authors.
- [Books & Travel](#) - Joanna Penn's other podcast, total escapism for me - dreaming of future travel destinations (but there are great book recommendations too).
- [Sci Fi & Fantasy Marketing Podcast](#) - interview style or host discussions on a vast range of topics, relevant across genres.
- [The Self Publishing Show](#) - usually interview style, covering a wide range of topics on craft, publishing and the business of writing.
- [The Career Author](#) - J and Zach discuss a breath of topics on the business side of writing and publishing.
- [Self Publishing Authors \(SPA\) Podcast](#) - interviews and host discussions by awesome New Zealand indie authors.

MAYBE ONE DAY- these podcasts have been recommended, and I have added them to my feedbut haven't jumped in to them yet:

- [Go Publish Yourself](#) (Ingram Spark's Self Publishing Podcast)
- [How to Write Fiction](#): Alone in a Room with Invisible People
- [Kobo Writing Life Podcast](#)
- [Qwerty Writing Life Podcast](#)
- [Misfits Guide to Writing Indie Romance](#)

I know there are more out there.

There was a thread in the RWNZ Members Only Facebook group where people also recommended The Worried Writer, So you want to be a Writer, Writing Excuses, Helping Writers become Authors....and more.

What do you listen to? How many of these have you tried?

The world of podcasting is waiting for you!



Mel Climo (writing romance as [Molly Matheson](#)) is an emerging writer and a self-confessed newbie to the fiction writing playground. Her first indie publication was an anthology short story in 2019 and she is hooked. She is blogging about life and writing at [maketimetowrite.com](#).

Dialogue



Lola Goulton

Dialogue is one of the most important aspects of a novel. Great dialogue enhances characterisation, and moves the plot forward. But stilted or unrealistic dialogue makes a novel difficult to read, and can encourage the reader to abandon the novel (#TrueStory).

Dialogue needs to read like words real people will say, but it also needs to read smoothly and have meaning. This means eliminating some of the ums and ahs and repetition we have in real-life dialogue. But it doesn't mean replacing them with long, grammatically perfect sentences that no one would ever say in real life.

Here are some tips for writing great dialogue:

DIALOGUE SHOULD SOUND NATURAL.

It's not natural—because it doesn't have all those ums and ahs and interjections and interruptions and subject changes that are features of a real conversation. But it needs to sound natural.

That means:

- Short sentences.
- Simple sentences.
- Sentence fragments.
- Avoid adjectives (because we don't usually use adjectives in our everyday conversation).





• Use adverbs (use them sparingly, but you can use them. After all, most people do use adverbs when they talk, which is probably why so many slip into our writing).

When we talk in real life, we're more likely to use a succession of short sentences than a longer, complex sentence. Which of these sounds more like how real people talk?

I love dogs, because they're always so affectionate.

I love dogs. They're so affectionate.

Both paragraphs are grammatically correct, but the second sounds more like real-life dialogue.

In contrast, interior monologue can be full of complex sentences, because that's more like how we think:

I love dogs, the way they're so affectionate. Not like cats. Cats can be cuddly and all, but it's all on their terms. They can be affectionate, but they can also be really standoffish.

Writing overly formal dialogue can lead to writing sentences that no one would say in real life, or that are impossible to read aloud (punctuation is your friend, people). Some authors find that dictating their manuscript helps ensure their dialogue reads and sounds like a real conversation.

USE REALISTIC VOCABULARY

The vocabulary in dialogue should fit the specific character:

- Age
- Education level
- Culture
- Where they live

An adult is going to use more complex vocabulary than a child (unless the child is particularly precocious). A university professor is going to use more complex vocabulary than a manual worker (unless that manual worker is working to support their PhD studies).

USE CONTRACTIONS

Most of us use contractions when we speak, so it feels unnatural to read dialogue that does not use contractions. But there are exceptions:

If the novel is historical fiction (i.e. before Tudor times).

If the character speaks English as a second language.

If the character is speaking another language.

If the scene calls for formal language e.g. a police officer giving evidence in court.

AVOID DIALECT SPELLINGS

Some authors use nonstandard spelling to indicate the character's accent. I find this distracting. Sometimes it's distracting because I can't work out the word, so I have to stop and sound it out to understand the passage.

For example, I once read a novel which made a point of

saying the character pronounced vase as varse. I found that distracting—instead of reading on for the plot, I found myself wondering how the author says vase. Even more annoying was the novel where the white characters referred to the police but the African-American character called them the po-lice.

Here's an example, from *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh:

Ah tried tae keep ma attention oan the Jean-Claude Van Damme video. As happens in such moveis, they started oaf wi an obligatory dramatic opening. Then the next phrase ay the picture involved building up the tension through introducing the dastardly villain and sticking the weak plot together. Any minute now though, auld Jean-Claude's ready to git doon tae some serious swedgin.

I am obviously not the target reader for *Trainspotting*, because I find this virtually unreadable (and inconsistent: Walsh has only used dialect for common words:

- ah for I
- tae for to
- ma for my
- oaf for off
- wi for with
- ay for of

The less common words are spelled correctly—introducing the darstady villain. Surely someone who says ma for my and wi for with would say intraducin, not introducing? As such, the spelling feels inconsistent.

I therefore recommend the following:

- If the word is English, use the dictionary spelling.
- If the word isn't English, use the relevant dictionary spelling.
- Use slang where appropriate.
- Use regional vocabulary where
- Use word order to indicate accent or nonstandard usage

This will give your dialogue regional flavour without forcing your readers to sound out all the words.

ENSURE DIALOGUE DOESN'T TELL

One of the major "rules" of modern fiction is to show, not tell. Dialogue should be showing, but sometimes dialogue slips into telling e.g., when the characters are telling each other things they already know, or when dialogue is used to share backstory.

So those are my five tips for writing realistic dialogue in fiction. I'll be back next month to discuss one area where telling often slips in—in dialogue tags.



[Iola Goulton](#) is a New Zealand book reviewer, freelance editor, and writer. She holds a degree in marketing, has a background in human resource consulting, and works as a freelance editor specialising in Christian fiction. When she's not working, Iola is usually reading or writing her next book review.



From the Editor: Uncertainty. Ugh.

Gillian St. Kevern

Uncertainty is the worst. If we know something is going to happen, even if it's bad, we can prepare for it. Not knowing what is coming is somehow a lot harder. Even though New Zealand is in such a privileged position of safety right now, not knowing how world events are going to pan out is hugely stressful. Having been reminded just how quickly something happening across the globe can have an impact on us, it's no wonder that so many of us (myself included!) are feeling anxious and unmotivated to write right now.

Case in point: Heart to Heart. By now I was really hoping to have firm news on our newsletter's future. As I write this, we're still looking for replacement editor(s) and a formatter. Writing an editorial is a lot harder when you're not sure whether it's your last, or if you're going to be penning the next one too. I'm going to assume that this is not going to be the final issue of Heart to Heart, but please, if you can help us out, get in touch!

At the last Christchurch chapter meeting, we revisited the goals we'd set in February and evaluated our progress. Surprisingly, about half of us were on track. I say surprisingly not as a reflection on the Christchurch chapter, but as I would have assumed that Covid-19 and lockdown would have had a greater disruptive impact on us.

Funnily enough, I was one of those who were 'on track.' My goal in February was to work on my work/life balance. While I'm still working on that, I've made enough progress that I'm writing regularly again. I'm spending more time with family, and doing all of the associated writer things that got dropped while I was not balancing very well. I'm even on track writing wise.



I was not the only one surprised. In the hectic everyday battle of sorting out priorities and deciding what to do with the limited amount of time at hand, it's easy to lose sight of your goals. Taking the time to pause and reflect on where we were, what we'd set out to do, gave us the space to realise that how we feel we're doing isn't always an accurate representation of how we're doing.

Others discovered that their goals at the start of the year have changed completely as priorities change and goal lines shift. What really impressed me is how readily the writers in this boat changed course. It occurs to me that as writers, we've got an advantage when it comes to uncertainty as we already deal with it in our working life.

We cannot control sales, publishers, editors and, on some days, we cannot even control our characters. Yet, we still manage to write. The publishing world is constantly changing as new hot trends and sub-genres emerge, new tools and platforms become available and others crash and burn in major ways. Throughout all this chaos, writers continue to write and publish and—perhaps most importantly—readers continue to read.

It's kind of unreal to think that writers, who are probably the most anxious and uncertain group of people you'll ever meet, are, in this time of massive global uncertainty, providing hundreds of thousands of readers with escape, reassurance, affirmation, care and the stories they need to get themselves through another day. Our stories have never mattered more.

So be kind on yourself. If you're struggling to make your pre-Covid plot or writing schedule work, revisit it. Make changes. Grow. Adapt. Try something new. Write something stupid and just for fun. Try a scene from a different character's perspective or take your computer into your back garden or a notebook to the beach. Or give yourself permission to stay in bed and binge-read a favourite author. After all, you need stories too.

Call for Remits for the 2020 Annual General Meeting

It is hereby given that the twentieth Annual General Meeting of the Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc (RWNZ) will be held on Saturday 22nd August 2020, at 10:30am, via Zoom.

It's that time of year again! Time for the Notice of the twentieth RWNZ AGM, and a call for executive nominations, remits and special resolutions. Don't be shy – put your best foot forward, throw your hat into the ring or whatever other cliché you can think off, because member engagement is critical to the continued growth and success of the Romance Writers of New Zealand.

The RWNZ Executive is made up of six positions: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Publicity Officer, and Secretary (See full job descriptions on our [website](#)).

This year, our Treasurer, Tania Roberts, must stand down as per the constitutional requirement of members standing a maximum of four years. She is (thank you!) happy to assist with auditing end-of-year finances, but a new Treasurer is essential! Also, we will be looking for a new Membership Secretary for the 2020-21 year. The rest of the Executive will be re-standing.

We invite you to apply for any position you're keen to serve on. Elections are good for the health of the organisation, both for the eventual make-up of the board, and for members in general, who can feel fully engaged in the direction of where our organisation is going.

I filled the vacant Secretary role in April after meeting Susan (president) at a local RWNZ retreat. With such lovely Executive Committee members, how could I not want to help lighten their load? I'm still learning the ropes, but excited to be a part of this wonderful organisation of creative folk. There is always room for changes and improvements and we welcome your input or suggestions and time to help it be the best it can be.

The organisation is financially sound and we have a steady membership of around 400.

The position descriptions for each of the Executive positions are [loaded on the website](#).

If you have questions about any of these positions, feel free to get in touch with the current Exec to ask about the roles and how we found our year, and yes, that includes those who are re-standing. You can [find our emails](#) on the website. We're a friendly bunch and would welcome the chance to chat.

If you don't see yourself as having time to be on the Executive this coming year, there are other ways to make a difference. One way may be to volunteer in a smaller capacity, and another may be to put forward an item to be proposed as a remit or special resolution.

We currently need:

- A Treasurer
- A Membership Secretary
- An Editor (or editorial team) for Heart to Heart
- A Formatter for Heart to Heart
- A few Contest Managers
- A team of members to cover Facebook/Social Media

And of course heart to heart articles are always needed.

I hope to see many of you at the AGM and conference.

Cheers,

Debbie
Secretary



News from the President

Susan Sims

I hope everyone is doing well as life seems almost normal here in New Zealand in spite of the global pandemic raging outside our borders. I hope you and your loved ones are all safe. I've got my fingers firmly crossed for our Australian members and families too – it's virtually close to home for me with my son living in Sydney.

We all still need to keep track of where we're going, and follow the guidelines from the [New Zealand Government](#) (both for health-related and business support information) for Kiwis, or the [Australian Government](#) for our Australian members, it is really important. Fingers crossed for our double nation bubble to come to fruition so we can cross the ditch and see each other again!

I know not everyone is doing ok and want to reiterate that it is normal to feel stressed or anxious in these situations. For Kiwis to get support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, call or text the free 'Need to talk?' service on 1737. This is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for you to talk things through with a trained counsellor.

Anne and the contest managers have been doing an amazing job this year, and I've been so impressed and grateful for all their work.

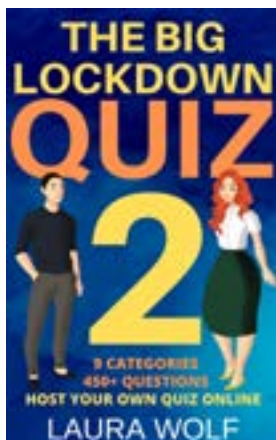
In other news, the Dunedin Library Friends of the Library have confirmed funding for an Essie Summers plaque in the Octagon in Dunedin where she will join other famous kiwi writers. It is looking likely that the unveiling will be done as part of the Dunedin Writers and Readers Festival early next year. I've been talking to the Friends and the festival Manager and we're hoping that a related RWNZ talk/panel/event in the festival is a possibility to sit alongside this. Early days, but I'm optimistic.

As you'll have seen in the latest RWNZ email, the AGM will be held by Zoom on the morning of August 22nd. The Zoom link will be sent out soon, so keep an eye on your emails.

Keep safe, keep well, and keep writing!

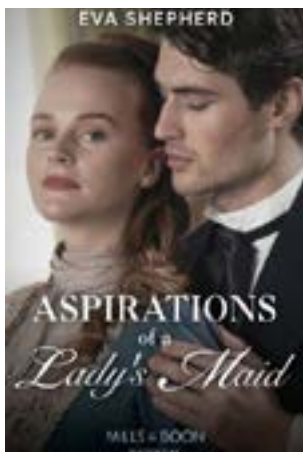
Love, *Susan*

Woos and Hoos



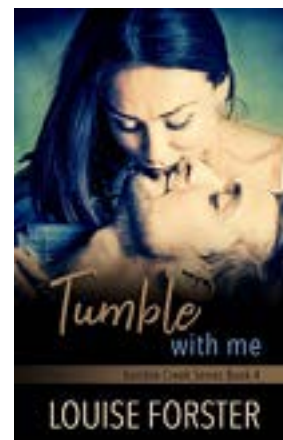
Congratulations to Laura Wolf, who, due to popular demand, has brought out a second edition of The Big Lockdown Quiz. This new version has 450+ questions in 9 categories. Something for everyone to keep you connected with friends and family online!.

Buy The Big Lockdown Quiz 2 [here](#)



Eva Shepherd's latest Victorian romance, Aspirations of a Lady's Maid, comes out in July with Harlequin Mills & Boon. Eva Shepherd is the pen name of Vera Larsen, a member of the Canterbury Chapter of RWNZ.

Read Aspirations of a Lady's Maid [here](#)



Nice work Louise Forster on releasing book for in her bestselling Tumble Creek series, Tumble With Me. Despite an infuriating face-off with a sub-contractor, Ava Bennet is determined to rise to the challenge of building her own home—if she can conquer her fears. Ex-soldier, Lawson, who has a few secrets of his own, and his chosen work can be hazardous.

Buy Tumble With Me [here](#)



Well done Ashlee Robinson, whose Little Sky Romance box set, published as Alexa Rivers, went live at the end of May! This five book collection completes the Little Sky Romance series and promises lovers of small town romance 'all the feels.'

Buy the Little Sky box set [here](#)

A reminder: you can submit WooHoos by emailing the editor or via the form on the RWNZ website.

WooHoos should be 2-3 sentences in the third person, and, if featuring a book release, the accompanying image should be of the cover.

No other images will be accepted. This is to ensure that everyone's news gets equal prominence.

Thanks! ♥

Woos and Hoos



Launching mid-July - 'Romancing the Summer' - ten gorgeous summer-themed romances from award-winning authors in New Zealand, Australia, and the US. They're warm and witty novellas, all aimed at the US market in summertime - from many of the team who wrote 'Romancing the Holidays' for Christmas 2019. Only 99 cents US, or free on Kindle Unlimited.

Buy Romancing the Summer [here](#)



Allison Butler is celebrating the print release of Book 1 of her Borderland Brides series. The Healer will be available in paperback form from August 5th 2020.

Buy The Healer [here](#)



Leeana Morgan's small-town, feel-good Christmas romance, Silver Bells, is now available. The third in the Santa's Secret Helpers series, Silver Bells pits a family therapist against an Afghanistan vet.

Buy Silver Bells [here](#)

A reminder: you can submit WooHoos by emailing the editor or via the form on the RWNZ website.

WooHoos should be 2-3 sentences in the third person, and, if featuring a book release, the accompanying image should be of the cover.

No other images will be accepted. This is to ensure that everyone's news gets equal prominence.

Thanks! ♥

Contacts

Susan Sims: president@romancewriters.co.nz

Mollie Smith: vicepresident@romancewriters.co.nz

Tania Roberts: treasurer@romancewriters.co.nz

Deb Howell: secretary@romancewriters.co.nz

Josie Berliner: publicity@romancewriters.co.nz

Gillian St Kevern: membership@romancewriters.co.nz

The next issue of Heart to Heart will be the combined August/September issue. The deadline for this issue is August 31st. Please have all articles, news, reports, and advertising to the editor at:

heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz

on or before the deadline.

Heart To Heart (H2H) is the official publication of Romance Writers of New Zealand (RWNZ) and is published eleven times a year. No part may be reproduced or used for profit by RWNZ or others without prior written permission from the editor.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of RWNZ, its executive, or its editors. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility will be taken by RWNZ or the editors for inaccurate information.

Heart to Heart Contact: Gillian St. Kevern (Editor)
heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz

To submit a woo hoo, e-mail Gillian or use [this form](#) on the website.

To join the RWNZ Members-Only Facebook page, click [here](#).

The Welcome Mat

Another red carpet roll-out this month for new members:



Carol Hudson - Central North
Katherine Leamy - Central North
Erin Inwood - Christchurch
Paddy Austin - Wellington
Abbie Spiers - Wellington
Dot Duthie - Otago/Southland



Great to have you all with us!

Don't forget to read the information for new members page on our website [here](#)

Of course, you'll need to login before you can access the members' area, but you'll find information there about how to join the [RWNZ Members-Only Facebook page](#).

Heart to Heart Needs You!

Are you an InDesign whiz? Ace at editing? Have always wanted to make your mark on RWNZ? If so, Heart to Heart wants you.

Our amazing formatter Emma and myself are stepping down with the June/July issue, and we're looking for volunteers to replace us from August. Whether you have your eye on a particular role or would like to form a team to share the job, it's up to you—as is the decision on whether to put out an issue every two months or return to the monthly format. There is a lot of flexibility in these roles and what you decide you want to do with them.

To find out more about what is involved, contact us at heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz

Regional Round-Up Reports

AUCKLAND

Convenor: [Ruth Clough](#)

HAWKES BAY

Convenor: [Bronwen Evans](#)

Hawkes Bay had another lovely Zoom meeting in June, where Wellington member Leeanna Morgan talked us through her yearly calendar, pre-orders process, launch campaign and general marketing etc. It was so lovely of her to share her knowledge and the girls up here really appreciated it. So, thank you, Leeanna.

WELLINGTON/KAPITI COAST

Convenor: [Gudrun Frerichs](#)

COAST TO COAST

Temporary Convenor: [Jill Batty](#)

During Covid we held out meetings via Team Meeting with the help of a technologically savvy member. Our June meeting was run by Lyndsay Campbell and she shared her own writing experience and challenges with structure and POV. This provoked some interesting helps and hints and enlightenment.

Our July meeting was the first one held in person. We met in a café in Tirau and did cold reads. 500 words of the start of a story so we could look at whether the start has the necessary “hook”.

We lost a member, Jeanne Drake, last year and have decided to hold a C2C competition in her honour.

We are currently in the process of replacing our convenor, Bel, who has done a wonderful job but being involved in the medical profession, is finding Covid a continuing stress.

Our next meeting is on Saturday August 8th.

Regional Round-Up Reports

NELSON

Convenor: [LaVerne Clark](#)

June: Yay! At last we're allowed to meet again. The Nelson Chapter's first post Covid meeting was held on Saturday 13 June at 2pm, Nick Smith's HQ.

Unfortunately, we were only five able to attend: Jaclyn, Sally, Annika and our two newest members Chrissie and Leanne. Special thanks to Jaclyn for the divine brownies and Chrissie for the caramel cookies as dessert after Annika's sandwiches with chicken pate and smoked salmon.

We started with getting to know Chrissie & Leanne and to introduce us to them. Also spent time catching up of what we've been doing – particularly writing – during our isolation months.

Then we brainstormed some ideas for what to do at the nearest upcoming meetings with the following result:

4 July Sally gives us a mini workshop on 'Show & Tell'. We have had two great workshops by Lorna on this subject in the past, but it can't be said often enough.

1 August Bob Ervine will talk to us about how to write film manuscripts. Bob has up to recently been a columnist for The Nelson Mail but writes film manuscripts as well.

12 September Jaclyn will talk to us about advertising and marketing from her own experience in that field.

Since our meeting we have been approached by a local writer, Chris Stuart, who would love to talk to us about sales opportunities. So, it's full on here.

If you are interested in romance writing, you are welcome to come to a meeting and see if we are a group for you. We normally meet on the second Saturday every month at 2pm, Nick Smith's HQ at the corner of Waimea Rd and Quarantine Rd.

July:

We met a week early this month, in order to accommodate our guest speaker. Six members gathered to hear a very interesting talk by Chris Stuart, who shared with us her writing journey. As she has lived all around the world, her experiences have enriched her writing.

We discussed future meetings and the formula required to ensure smooth running. Our meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of the month, and all members are welcome. Contact Anneka at (03) 548 5561

CHRISTCHURCH

Convenor: [Emma Lowe](#)

The Christchurch is loving being able to meet in person again. Both our June and July meetings were well attended with lots of chat to be had. In June we had a frank discussion about the issues we've faced during and after lockdown and where our writing is going. In July, Mel led a planning session that started with us reexamining the goals we set ourselves in February. While many of these goals have fallen by the wayside in our covid-world, a surprising amount of us are on track or doing better than expected. It was a welcome chance to re-evaluate our goals and renew our enthusiasm, determination and celebrate the progress we've made so far.

OTAGO

Convenor: [Samantha Burton](#)

The Southland/Otago chapter met up in Saturday 6 June and Saturday 4 July. We had a good turnout for both meetings, despite the chilly weather. The June meeting focused on 'your cast of characters and making the most of them', while the July meeting was about the craft book, 'Story Genius', and some key takeaways from it. The next meeting, which is a brain-storming session (for those of the group who'd like some help with various planning, writing, editing or marketing issues), will take place on Saturday 1 August 2020 at 2pm.

BLenheim AREA

Contact: [Iona Jones](#)