

Coffs Harbour Writers' Group



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Inc.

Affiliated with the Northern Rivers Writers Centre

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PO Box 1953, Coffs Harbour 2450 www.coffsharbourwriters.com

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Greetings

Winter has finally hit the Mid North Coast so a great excuse to sit inside and write and read. We have had so much inspiration for writing (and suggestions for reading) in the last month with the live streaming from the Sydney Writers' Festival and author talks at the Library. Bellingen Writers' and Readers' Festival is coming up on the long weekend. Have a look at the website and even if you can't afford the complete festival because of time or money choose just one or two sessions and car pool a visit to Bellingen. bellingenwritersfestival.com.au

And wait there's more...the Byron Bay Writers' Festival is 5 – 7 August and described as a place for intelligent discussion, passionate interaction and fun. Again you may not be able to get up the north coast but we are not missing out. Zachary Jane, a lovely author from Iluka (who presented at the Coffs Grassroots Weekend) organises a road trip each year of authors who are appearing. This gives us book worms in towns along the way the chance to hear these accomplished writers. This year's 555 (five towns five authors) Authors on their way to Byron Bay Writers' Festival will visit us on the 29 July. The authors are Kate Forsyth, Jesse Blackadder, Luke Carman, Gabrielle Stroud and Miles Merrill, the spoken work artist. See further in the Newsletter for some biographical details of these writers. Ros Ward from the Nambucca Valley Writers' Group attended a wonderful writers' retreat

several years ago in Oxford in England with Kate Forsyth so you must ask Ros about that amazing experience when you get a chance. You have the chance to meet Kate Forsyth and you don't have to go all the way to Oxford (what a shame!).

Similar to last year, there will be a social event at the restaurant Latitude 30 on Friday 29th July, 7 pm – 9 pm. This is a book your own table event.

We have so much happening in our area with a number of Creative Industries and Cultural Forums pulling people together. The Council's initiative to build a new Arts Hub with a new Art Gallery and Library in Coffs Harbour will provide a focus for the creative arts – where people of all ages can come together and learn (with all the latest technology as well as the old forms), create, be inspired and talk and plan with like-minded people. A collaborative place of quiet spaces, meeting places, reading nooks, visual arts exhibitions, music, workshops, training studios, café, art bar. Wow...let's make it happen. When you hear of focus groups and public meetings on this initiative, join in!

Regards Leonie

What's on in June/July?

Wednesday 1 June, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm Monthly Meeting Coffs Harbour Writers' Group
Cavanbah Centre, 191 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour followed by lunch in the Chill Out Café in the Community Village next door and then Character Development Workshop. Guest speaker: Ms Sian Nivison, Group Leader, Community and Cultural Services, Coffs Harbour City Council, on the Council's plans for a new Arts Hub with a new Library and Art Gallery and development of the new Cultural plan. *Email the Social Secretary with apologies for the meeting.*

Wednesday 1 June, Workshop with Margaret Penhall-Jones, Creating Compelling Characters
Workshop, 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm, Cavanbah Centre

Thursday 9 June 5.30 pm Author talk at the Library Graham Potts (*more details below*)

Friday 10 June – Monday 13 June Bellingen Writers' and Readers' Festival
bellingenwritersfestival.com.au

Thursday, 16 June, 10.00 pm – 12 noon Coffs Harbour Writers' Group Social Morning, at Ron and Danielle's home in Bellingen. *Directions from the Social Secretary.*

Friday, 29 July, 7.00 pm – 9 pm, Latitude 30, port area of Coffs Harbour near the Fish Co-Op. '555 Authors on their way to Byron Bay Writers' Festival'. The authors: Kate Forsyth, Jesse Blackadder, Luke Carman, Gabriel Stroud and Miles Merrill, the spoken work artist, will entertain and entrance you. This is a book your own table event and you can order a meal and drinks.

President's Report

Sydney Writers Festival Live Streaming Sessions at the Jetty Theatre 20 to 22 May

What a wonderful opportunity to be able to participate in this well-informed event, whilst sitting and observing the various array of wonderful authors being live streamed into the Jetty Theatre over three days.

Below are some of the takeaway messages from the authors like: William Boyd and Jonathan Franzen. Andrew Denton's topic of *Better Off Dead* was certainly interesting and it dispelled any concerns I had about the quality of his research over many years.

- Writing is as good as your imagination
- Be realistic in your writing
- Bring the past alive when describing your story
- Don't over research your book before writing it
- True readers are great writers
- Writing groups are helpful and encouraging
- Writing takes time to perfect
- Don't show off in your storytelling

Creative Industries Forum 24th May, in Kempsey

This amazing inaugural event drew attendees from as wide as Sydney to the North Coast. Over 180 participants were informed and entertained by a knowledgeable group of speakers relevant to the industry.

We heard from owners who shared their stories on how they started out as small business owners and the strategies they used to improve and succeed in their own field of expertise.

One such person was Monica Davidson, Creative Plus Business, who shared five simple tips to follow:

1. Take yourself seriously
2. Take each other seriously
3. Get yourself sorted out
4. Be easy to hire and pay
5. Prepare for success

30th Year Anthology Book Progress

I am pleased to report that we now have a print design layout template for our book and it is looking impressive and professional.

Cheers Lorraine

Creating Compelling Characters Workshop

Make Your Readers Care!

Presented by Margaret Penhall-Jones

When: 1st June, 2016

Time: 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Where: Cavanbah Centre, Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour

Cost: \$7.50 for members and \$15.00 for non-members

Characters drive your story. Creating real characters makes your reader turn the page. This interactive workshop, for the aspiring or emerging writer of fiction or memoir, looks at techniques for creating characters that will live on in your readers' minds after they close the book. Margaret will use some basic psychological insights to discover how you can create memorable characters that leap off the page and hook your readers from the beginning. She will draw on examples from modern fiction, memoir and film to see how the experts did it!

Facilitator: Margaret Penhall-Jones is a local writer and freelance editor, who is passionate about creating opportunities for people to develop their skills in writing craft, enabling creative ideas to come to life. She enjoys writing herself, especially romances and memoirs. Margaret is also an active member in the community with critique and memoir writing groups. She is also a member of our Coffs Harbour Writers' Group, Romance Writers of Australia and Romance Writers of America and a contest judge for Romance Writers of Australia.

Author event at the Library 9 June 5.30 pm

- **Graham Potts Thursday, 9 June 2016 - 5:30pm**

Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival Director, Irina Dunn, will “interrogate” Renaissance man Graham Potts, a classically trained, serving member of the Australian Air Force who writes thrillers. His action-packed style throws you into international conflicts closer to home than you think. Graham has a fondness for literature and appetite for intrigue. He tells stories that captivate, thrill and touch on the truth. Graham is author of *No Free Man*, a fast-paced and gripping spy thriller that will hold you riveted until the last page.

More about the authors on the upcoming 555 Authors Road Trip to Byron

Kate Forsyth, Jesse Blackadder, Luke Carman, Gabriel Stroud and Miles Merrill

Kate Forsyth is an Australian author. She is best known for her historical novel *Bitter Greens*, which interweaves a retelling of the *Rapunzel* fairy tale with the true life story of the woman who first told the tale, the 17th century French writer Charlotte-Rose de Caumont de La Force.

Forsyth is also the author of several children's books, including *The Gypsy Crown*, *The Puzzle Ring*, *The Starthorn Tree*, *The Wildkin's Curse*, *The Starkin Crown* and *Dragon Gold*. She has also published two heroic fantasy series, *The Witches of Eileanan* and *Rhiannon's Ride*, the poetry collection *Radianc*e, and the novel *Full Fathom Five* under her maiden name, Kate Humphrey. She is a five-time Aurealis Award winner.^[1]

She is married with three children, and lives in Sydney, New South Wales. She is also a direct descendant of Charlotte Barton, the author of Australia's earliest known children's book. Forsyth's older sister, Belinda Murrell, is also an author for children and young adults.

Jesse Blackadder

Passionate about words, Dr Jesse Blackadder is an international award-winning author of fiction for grown ups and children, an inspiring public speaker and a creative writing teacher.

The Australian Antarctic Division awarded Jesse the 2011-12 Antarctic Arts Fellowship and she travelled to Antarctica in 2011 to research the first woman to reach Antarctica. Jesse has also been a writer in residence in Sitka Alaska, in outback Australia, at Byron Bay and at Varuna, The Writers' House in the Blue Mountains.

Jesse is an experienced freelance writer and journalist. She studied creative writing (along with film and photography) in a BA (Communication) at the University of Technology Sydney. She has a Master of Applied Science (Social Ecology) and recently finished her Doctor of Creative Arts at the University of Western Sydney. She has won writing awards in Australia and overseas.

Luke Carman

University of Western Sydney student Luke Carman won a NSW Premier's Literary Award for his debut book *An Elegant Young Man*, a collection of short stories set in Western Sydney. Luke Carman is a Doctor of Creative Arts student at the UWS Writing and Society Research Centre.

"Luke Carman's witty collection of stories heralds a new, edgy and brilliant voice in Australian fiction," the judges wrote in their comments.

"Immediately the writer's erudition and craft are on display. Carman's epigrammatic stories, so perfectly suited to Giramondo's Shorts form, build in intensity and poignancy."

"After a rollicking, sometimes brazen and shocking romp through fraught geographical, cultural and racial terrain, we are left with the almost nostalgic suggestion that perhaps there can be no more true heroes – no great Ulysses – in our modern world."

"But, Carman suggests, you should not let that get you down."**G.J. Stroud**

Gabrielle Stroud

G.J. (Gabrielle) Stroud is a primary school teacher who loves reading and writing fiction. She has been awarded two residencies at Varuna Writers' House and contributes a regular column for her local paper. *Measuring Up* is her first YA novel. Gabbie lives by the sea with her baby, Olivia, her husband Matthew and her loyal dog, Shirley.

Miles Merrill

For seventeen years Miles Merrill has been the driving force behind spoken-word and performance poetry in Australia. He has toured with Saul Williams, jammed with Shane Koyczan, hosted an ABC TV Special - Australian Poetry Slam 08', wrote and co-directed a show in *Sydney Festival*, performed solo at the Sydney Opera House and created the spoken-word festivals – *Night Words and Word Travels Festival*. Merrill is founder of the national performing writers' program: Australian Poetry Slam.

Competitions and 'broadcast' opportunities *(from Margaret Penhall-Jones)*

ABC Open <https://open.abc.net.au/projects>

24 June: Monologue Writing Competition

The SOLO monologue writing competition is open to emerging and established playwrights in three categories: unpublished/unperformed, published/performed, and monologues written by high school students.

30 June: The NSW Writers' Centre turns 25!

In 2016, we're celebrating our 25th birthday and we want you to tell us your stories about the Centre. See our website for details.

11 July: Writers' Unleashed Picture Book Writing Competition

Picture Book competition is now open, in conjunction with the Writers' Unleashed Festival. Original work, 500 word limit, open theme, text only.

That's all for now. Don't forget, contributions please. Your own stories, book or film reviews, writing exercises...whatever takes your fancy. Leonie