

Subject: Hazel Edwards' (Non-Boring) Summer Newsletter

Date: Wednesday, 14 December 2011 5:09:27 PM AET

From: Hazel Edwards

To: Kim Edwards

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Hazel Edwards

an Australian Author

Newsletter

Wednesday, 14 December 2011

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Holmesglen Hazelnuts

After 23 years, Hazel has now resigned from Holmesglen's Diploma of Professional Writing but will mentor selected Hazelnuts. To celebrate the last graduating year, students recently shared thematic food based on titles of their completed book manuscripts at the Launch Lunch.

Hippo on an American roof!

After a packed St Kilda Film Festival premiere, the short film adaptation of 'There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake' from Pocket Bonfire Productions has screened in Austin, Texas, the Edinburgh Film Festival and in Washington DC. More information (and a non-boring trailer!) [available here](#). It has been a very interesting creative process being involved in the making of the film, and Hazel has now been speaking to groups about the *Book to Film* Process.

For more information, [contact Hazel](#).

FEATURE

Give an historic (and non-boring!) gift of the imagination

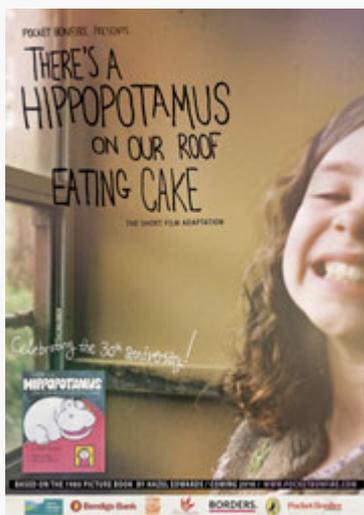
Why not craft a story from your childhood as a gift for a younger family member for this holiday season or new year project?



All families have interesting stories to share. Some are genuinely historic. Others are embarrassing moments. Some may revolve around mementos like rings, medals or photos. Record, email or just tell it and create a unique and memorable present for Christmas, birthday or a special occasion. It's a kind of historic gift of the imagination. You can add visuals by scanning old photos and perhaps even create a custom book to bring your story to life.

The keys to creating an engaging and 'non-boring' family history are:

1. Audience



The book that scared librarians

Hazel's book [f2m, the boy within](#), tackles a controversial topic – transitioning gender. A recent blog post discussed the reactions. [Read more here.](#)

Non-boring Gift for Blokes

Need an easy-reading gift for a young male? '[Cycling Solo; Ireland to Istanbul](#)', is a great read from the quirky mind which inspired the hippo series. Suitable for backpackers, cyclists, literacy or lounge chair adventurers! The book can be posted overnight, just in time for last minute Christmas gifts.



2012 Astrid Lindgren Award

Along with fellow Australian author Jackie French, Hazel is incredibly honoured to have been [nominated for the 2012 ALMA](#), the most prestigious international award for children's book creators.

Consider your audience. Select the central story to suit their interest and craft the words for that age group. They may be adolescents, toddlers or inbetween, so write in a format that is applicable. For example, if you are writing for a toddler, create a picture book with a couple of well structured sentences for each page.

Think about what your specific-aged audience would MOST want to know about? If you are unsure, ask them.

Answers may include:

- *Getting in trouble when you were their age.*
- *What school was like then.*
- *How did you talk to friends without texting?*
- *What did you wear?*
- *Any pets or working animals?*
- *Did you ever break anything?*
- *Any funny things happen?*

Consider their areas of interest and craft your story to suit.

2. Visuals and Aids

Write to visuals or 'props'. Sometimes it can be easier to write a story around the photos you already possess (even holiday snaps) or special momentos such as jewellery, family heirlooms or other interesting items from an earlier time. (eg. an old pair of spectacles, vintage radio or even an LP record).

You can also draw on images from the past that show something unusual, eg. an 'ice chest' or a 'crystal set'. Use the item to set the time, place and mood to tell your story. Alternatively, you may want to 'gift' the item and add the story, so they are forever entwined for generations to come.

3. Family members

Try and feature as many of your current family as possible in the story so that they can also enjoy the experience and have the opportunity to add in their own recollections when it is shared. It is also an opportunity to include other members of the family that may no longer be alive but have links to the audience – perhaps they all share the same name. (Recently I wrote about three generational members in our family, who share the name 'Garnet' – [‘Searching for a Lost Garnet’ on ABC Life Matters](#) – and many families responded they wished to write around inherited names or military settings.)

Master Chef Recipe for Getting Published

Quality, fresh ingredients from REAL life.

- Mix story worth telling.
- Take out ego and insert craft.
- Add a sense of humour
- Mixed fruit of adjectives (use moderately)
- Spice with candid observation.
- Balance savoury and sweet.
- Scatter Facts.
- Sprinkle anecdotes.
- Taste- test with sample readers.
- Trial various formats.
- Add title.

Slow food cooker or Microwave.
Don't have a kitchen tantrum, insist on others bowing to your misunderstood genius nor write a celebrity cook book.

Mould for Intended reader.
Decorate with PR puff.

Result: Satisfied reader or indigestion due to over much hot air.

Free Literacy Performance Scripts

Are you a 'doing' kind of person? Be a VERB in the funny 'Parts of Speech TV Show' performance script. For 2012 Year of Literacy, Hazel is offering free performance scripts for adult and child literacy groups. [Email Hazel for more details.](#)



4. Word tricks of the trade.

To create a 'non-boring' family history, be sure to

- keep the sentences short
- test your words aloud
- add questions
- use repetition
- think of ways to involve your audience
- commit 'anecdultery'. ('Anecdultery' is the skill of telling anecdotes or mini stories in varied formats, even digitally.



'ISN'T HISTORY JUST ABOUT OLD, DEAD PEOPLE?' 10 YEAR OLD.

No. Using anecdotes which are mini stories can change kids' attitude towards history. Even those from your own family's history.

Extraordinary, so-called 'ordinary' people deserve to have their stories told in the context of their times. And that may include your relatives such as great, great grandparents.

History is his and her story. It's about how people solved problems or invented new ways of doing things better. It's also about things going wrong, whether war, prejudice, loss or climactic disasters. History is high gossip about people, not just dead dates and boring facts.

History doesn't date but interpretations change.

Sharing these stories can give the members of your family a sense of connection, place and understanding. Often they will inspire discussion, introduce new questions and perhaps even trigger a bigger search for more. And of course, they will provide them with insights that can be passed on through the generations keeping the unique experiences, names and characters of your family alive.



Hazel's' Articles, Books and Audio With Historical Links

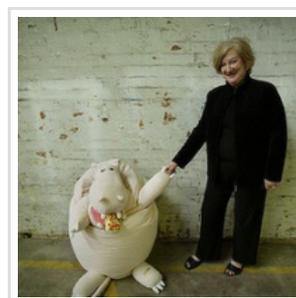
- [Inside History](#) 'She has My Face'
- [Writing a Non Boring Family History'](#) EBook
- ['Searching for a Lost Garnet' on ABC Life Matters](#) :Hazel shares her experiences tracking down a long departed soldier, and discusses researching genealogy and military history researching. Also in 'The Genealogist' Magazine, Dec 2010
- **Antarctica Closeup** ISBN 9781876944544 Interactive website www.nma.gov.au/play/making_tracks.
- **Enact: History** ISBN 9781921454714 ([Teaching Solutions](#)) Student-actors check facts and evaluate, as well as have fun playing around with historic role models.
- New Frontier Publishing; www.newfrontier.com.au 'Dr Fred Hollows & Sir Edward Weary Dunlop in Aussie Heroes series for 7-10 year olds. Also e-books

OTHER ARTICLES

A (non-boring) creative workshop

Recently interviewed in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) and [The Age](#) about online opportunities for authors, Hazel's workshop on this topic and more

'authorpreneurial' activities will be running in 2012. An e-book to accompany the sessions will be also available. Stay tuned for more details....



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