

MUSINGS

From Beverley Asmus

Where do we get our inspiration to write? Is inspiration something that occurs spontaneously, regardless of time and place, and is so fleeting it must be captured in a trice, before it dissipates forever? And why don't those 'philistines' – who obviously don't share our passion – try to be more understanding when we stop suddenly in a shopping aisle, or even walking down Queen Street, and take out our special little book and reliable pencil to jot down that brilliant thought?

Why walk over the top of us!

From Karen Reyment

Life is Sweeter Wearing Rose-Coloured Glasses...

The door closed. The buttery remnants from the morning's baking greet me and the outside world is left behind. Inside is so separate to the outside world. It is a haven of comfort. The sounds are muted.

I often shop at Jocelyn's Provisions. Today I drive over the Story Bridge. My car sweeps into the last free space, just outside the door. A smiling face holds the door open for me, I smile back.

Inside, Rosie is pouring scoops of golden granola into clear bags ready to be sold. She offers me a taste. It is sticky and tastes of cinnamon. From where I stand, I can see the floury benches of the kitchen. The busy chefs are turning out a vast collection of treats for food lovers like me.

The shop is dotted with reminders of days-gone-by. Rusted Persinware scales sit high on a shelf. They are permanently stuck on eleven pounds, a reminder of their working life. An old, metal icing tool lies dormant. It has a cone shaped nozzle. It was the old, three-tiered, metal cake tin in the window that Rosie saw as a sign to work here. Her Grandmother owned one exactly the same.

A basket made of twisted wire, holds clear bags of cracked, ivory meringues. Shelves are filled with rows of take-home mouthfuls. The parmesan rounds are encased with a crust of sesame and poppy seed. Lemon polenta biscuits are cut in triangles with gently rounded corners. Chocolate shortbreads have crinkled edges while other shortbreads are fat and heart-shaped. Long jewel bars are studded with glacé fruit, acting as coloured mirrors to their souls. On a child-height shelf, are batons of soft pastel-coloured marshmallow, in yellow, pink and green.

My favourite sweet treat to enjoy secretly inside my car, is the tiny nut pastry. These are topped with a generous dollop, of either lemon or passionfruit curd. Today, there is also caramel. Rosie slides my caramel nut pastry into the tiny, white bag. I can feel myself begin to tense. I have to speak out. "Please be careful not to let the caramel touch the sides of the bag, I don't want to lose any." Rosie smiles and leans in to say, "But that is the best part. Then you can enjoy licking the caramel off the bag." I pay and leave the shop, smiling.

I had never looked at it that way before. Previously, I have left the shop frowning as I realise that half of my treasured topping has been lost to the paper bag. Not anymore. Thanks to Rosie, I wait until I stop at the next red light. I tear my bag wide open. I lick it clean of every last bit of sweetness, and drive home wearing rose-coloured glasses.

From Hilary in England

Dear Everyone at Carindale Writers' Group,

Hello from Sunny England - just joking - it's raining, of course, but we do have lush green grass in plentiful supply. I hope you're all having an enjoyable year. We are having a busy one as usual. We're still happily in the morris dance group and have been away for quite a few weekends to various festivals around the country. We've been down to Upton on Severn, a village right next to the River Severn, between Gloucester and Worcester where there are many lovely sixteenth century Tudor buildings and cottages with thatched roofs. It's like being in a postcard or a BBC costume drama. I am the dance foreman, which means I run the practices every week and organise the dance program for when we dance out. It's almost like having a part time job, unfortunately I do it all for love, not money.

Another festival was at Evesham, which is not very not very far away from Upton. There was a battle there in 1265 between the future Edward I and some barons led by Simon De Montfort. They were sick of Henry III and his cronies who were squandering all the countries money on themselves (not much changes, does it?). However by dastardly trickery they were defeated - "Such was the murder at Evesham, for battle it was none." Edward pretended to be reinforcements for Simon but at the last minute, he hoisted his own banners and wiped them all out. Anyway, the festival was enjoyable. We had a bus tour around some little villages where we got out and danced with other morris sides and then we went back to Evesham by boat and through a lock from the Upper Severn to the Lower Severn. We had some good music and singing sessions in the rowing club and in a local pub and ...the weather was fantastic! We're off to Durham in July and Saltburn by the Sea in August for more festivals and frolicking.

At the beginning of June, we went for a week's cycling holiday from Balloch, near Glasgow, on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, to Inverness. There were five of us and we cycled, on average, thirty-five miles a day. One day we did fifty miles, which is my third longest ride ever. We stayed in bed and breakfast places over night and everyone of them was really good. The Scottish hospitality was excellent. One of our hostesses pointed out to us a house which belongs to J.K.Rowling. She has bought the farm on the hillside above her so that no-one can look down and take sneaky pictures of her, I suppose. We cycled past it the next day. It's near a place called Aberfeldy. We were so lucky with the weather as we kept missing all the rain. When the front came in from the east, we were over towards the west and vice versa, and one day we scooted up the middle between two fronts. We saw magnificent scenery and the mountain tops still had patches of snow on them! We cycled on back roads and old rail tracks which have been converted so we could enjoy our surroundings without worrying about traffic. One evening, after dinner, we heard a pipe band playing. They were practising in front of a village hall so we had a free concert. We're hoping to do another cycling trip, this time to Brittany, at the end of August.

It was lovely to see Judi and Hamish here earlier in the year, if only for a brief time. They got to see our little huouse and have a cup of tea with us. (By the way, Judi, we've still got some of the guinness left! Imagine that!) Thanks for the postcard from France.

I hope Jeff enjoyed his battlefields trip earlier in the year and got back safe and sound. Has Charles found himself a good woman yet? That's what I want to know.

You are probably all busy writing and producing best sellers. How is the Aussie project going?

Well, I'll wish you all the very best for the rest of the year and I'll see you again in March.

Bye for now,

Hilary