

Write, Yeah Right!

This was a superb, intensely motivating session, spent listening to two enthusiastic New Zealand writers, Gretchen Brassington and Alison Robertson, talk about their love of writing, the motivators for their writing, and their newest publications.

Gretchen Brassington, more commonly known as Brassy, describes herself as a shy child from a large family, who largely went 'unnoticed'. She writes for children about children doing children's things, and has an overriding aim to help children overcome their fears.

Brassy keeps an exercise book with her wherever she goes so she can record things that inspire her for future reference. She also keeps all correspondence, such as emails, relating to a work. The things that happen in her books have all really happened – she just dramatises them and changes the names. Her new book, 'Paperchase', about two girls travelling around Australia is based on enjoyable times she spent walking around New Zealand as a child with her older sister. Keep on writing Brassy, your books are delightful!

The second writer at this session was Alison Robertson. Alison's interest in reading developed when she obtained a school holiday job in a bookshop where she read all the children's books. She has had a varied career working in broadcasting, with Radio New Zealand then as a sports reporter and for a community newspaper. After having her family she took a Polytechnic course on short story writing, and it was one of the short stories she wrote on this course that became the first chapter of "Knocked for Six" that won her the Ester Glenn award.

Alison kept her audience captivated with the story of her latest novel, 'Finding Isabella'. Based on the true story of her great grandmother, this tells the story of young lass, pregnant to a married man with four children, she is sent out to New Zealand in disgrace.

Currently Alison works at the Waikato Management School as a home tutor for new Immigrants, but writing remains an important part of her life.

How fortunate New Zealand is to have these wonderful writers of children's fiction, and how privileged the attendees of this workshop were, to be able to hear a little of the backgrounds of their life and works.

Joy Hamilton