Anna Ciddor's review of

Not Just a Piece of Cake; Being an Author' ISBN 1922175803 (ISBN13: 9781922175809) Published by Brolga.

Breaking Down Stereotypes

Reading 'Not just a piece of cake being an author' is like sitting down in a comfy armchair and having a chat with a fascinating companion. Hazel Edwards' memoir contains a fount of interesting anecdotes and pearls of wisdom, all shared in a friendly, natural voice. This is a light, easy read but with lodes of underlying depth that make you want to keep on reading to mine all the gold.

The book is neither a strict 'how to' book on being an author, nor a chronological autobiography, but rather a useful and appealing combination of both.

For those interested in a writing career there are anecdotes that give a clear picture of life as author – informative for budding writers and a source of delighted moments of recognition for fellow writers. There are poignant and inspiring stories, such as thank-you notes from parents who have shared the Hippopotamus books with very sick children. And there are a multitude of generous tips on writing, including how to make non-fiction interesting, and '10 diet ingredients for a Memorable Story Recipe.'

The book also works as a highly enjoyable and enlightening life story to be read by non-writers. The typical image of an author as an introverted hermit living alone in an ivory tower certainly does not apply to Hazel Edwards. The list of her experiences reads like one of her own mystery stories: camel rides in the Australian outback, helicopter crashes, getting ice-bound in Antarctica, trekking in Nepal, coming near to death with a rare disease... to name but a few! And many of these adventures Hazel Edwards did not undertake till she was well into her fifties and beyond!

The book also reveals the important contribution a writer can make to the world and to individual lives. Hazel Edwards maintains a strong conscience with the topics she chooses to write about, using her books to break down stereotypes and bring hidden issues into the spotlight. She also spends a large part of her life visiting outback communities and helping children in remote areas connect with literature and learn about

the wider world. Her descriptions of this part of her life are touching as well as entertaining.

Any person who led such an extraordinary, action-packed and public-spirited life would be an object of admiration, but the fact that Hazel Edwards has managed all this as a married woman raising a family, while at the same time teaching, studying and writing is incredible! 'Not just a piece of cake being an author' is an inspirational book, and shows that anyone can achieve anything.