

NaNoWriMo – The Final Leg

“What’s your word count, then?”



That’s the main question people ask about [NaNoWriMo](#). Then they carry on to talk about other, more interesting things.

Tonight, my total stands at 47,882 which isn’t bad. In fact, it means I only have to write 530 words a day from now until Tuesday to reach the 50k goal, which seems confusingly manageable.

However! Yesterday someone threw in a sneaky follow up question. “But,” the asker asked, (askingly), “are you *happy* with what you’ve written?”

Hmm. The answer to that is, yes and no.

The writing that this challenge encourages is completely at odds with my usual approach. I’ve been blogging and contributing to local papers and newsletters for nearly ten years, so my general practice involves keeping things succinct. I don’t want people getting bored in the middle of an article and wandering off for a jammy dodger. What if they never come back?

This is not a sensible attitude to take towards NaNoWriMo. When you’ve promised the internet you’re going to write 50 thousand words in thirty days, any words will do. Repetition, needless exposition, random streams of consciousness... everything goes in, and stays in. As a result, some of my novel is embarrassingly bad. (Ed – in your view Ali!)

There again, if it wasn’t against the rules to edit, I would definitely be struggling to reach the word count. I suspect I would have deleted a good two thirds of my book, and Microsoft Word would have breathed a sigh of relief.*

Fortunately (or not, as the case may be) I’m not allowed to

delete anything, and the fact that most of what I've written is nonsense is OK because there are some good bits in there too. Well hidden, in some cases, but there.

Obviously if this was something I had any intention of publishing, it would need a bit of work. By which I mean it would need to be entirely rewritten, although I don't know where I'd begin because I've rather lost track of who the audience was going to be.

But at least I have something to work *from*, which is of course the whole point. NaNoWriMo is one of those rare cases where one's writing is not about quality, but quantity. By midnight on Tuesday, I'm going to have close to sixty thousand words of quantity to edit, delete or keep as I see fit. Whether I'm happy about re-reading it or not, it's got to be better than a blank page.

***Word hates me at the moment. 'CONSIDER REVISING,' it silently screams, underlining every other sentence in green. My response is to carry on uploading those grammatically inconsistent fragments to my blog.**