

Interest Groups NEWSLETTER

October 2023

Greetings from the board

Spring is in the air, as reflected in the abundance of blooms across our fair city. Our monthly newsletter gives a clear indication that the interest groups are flourishing.



We receive a steady stream of enquiries from individuals keen to join groups. These are referred to the relevant convenors for action. There is no general waiting list, and membership numbers are determined by each group. This is usually limited due to the activities of the group and availability of suitable venues.

The IG newsletter represents the activities and discussions of individual groups, and the monthly reports reflect this. Groups are autonomous, and free to express their views. However, they should not do so 'on behalf of U3A'.

If the views of a group, from the perspective of an individual member of that group, are not being fairly reported, they can debate it 'in house'. If need be, a different author can be appointed for the next report. The board does not censor what is published, but we are prepared to distance ourselves from a group that does anything to discredit U3A

Dunedin.

Our organisation offers educational opportunities and healthy debate on a wide range of subjects. There will be differences of opinion, which is normal in a democratic society. In this context, the views expressed by individual groups do not necessarily reflect those of the board.

Andre Smith

Pics supplied by Andre after his recent trip: An African sunset. A flat white, Africa style.

Art Collections Group

Convenor: Anne-Marie Hutton Monthly: First Tuesday 10 am annemariehutton@gmail.com



Mahiong Group

Convenor: Jean Tilleyshort 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 10 am s-jtilleyshort@xtra.co.nz



Book Share Group

Convenor: Trish Irvine First Friday, 1:30

trishjockloch@gmail.com



Monday Current Affairs Group

full

Convenor: Joy Hayward Third Monday, 1.30

iovhayward@hotmail.co.nz



Dining Group

Convenor: Karen Wards

Third Friday, 7 pm

karendwards@gmail.com



Photography Group full

Convenor: Ann Wood First Thursday, 1:30; Third Thursday, TBA

ann.wood14blaw@gmail.com



Expanding Musical Horizons

full

Convenor: Paul Wheeler Second Monday, 10 am wheeler@outlook.co.nz



Poetry Group

Convenor: Carole Bezett Fourth Wednesday, 11 am carolebezett@gmail.com



Gallery Group full

Convenor: Tash Hurst Second Wednesday, 10:30 tash.hurst@xtra.co.nz



Singing Group

Convenor: Claire Stevens Weekly: Monday, 1 pm cstevensnz@gmail.com



Gardens & Botanical Group

Convenor: Robyne Selbie **full** Second Wednesday, 1:30 robyneselbie1945@gmail.com



Tuesday Current Issues

Group full

Convenor: Gretchen Kivell Third Tuesday, 10 am gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz



Genealogy Group full

Convenor: Jean Tilleyshort 1st and 3rd Fridays ,10 -12

s -jtilleyshort@xtra.co.nz



Waikouaiti Global Conversations

Convenor: Kath Ryan 2nd Wednesday 2-4pm kathryan09@gmail.com



Home Gardens Group

Convenor: Carole Bezett Third Thursday, 1:30 <u>carolebezett@gmail.com</u>



Walking Group full

Every Thursday,10:30
Joint Convenors:
Averil McLean
averilmclean2@gmail.com
Janet Hewson
ie.hewson@xtra.co.nz



Lunch Group

Convenor: Anne Stratford Second Friday 12:30 annepstratford@gmail.com







Book Share Group

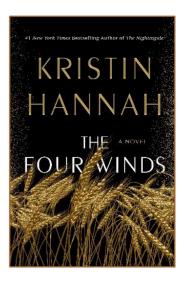
October

The selection of books at our October meeting was diverse and created much discussion on the books' characters and the times in which they lived.

Elaine had been reading The Four Winds: a novel by Kristin Hannah. This is an American novel set in the time of the Great Depression. In 1934 the world had changed after the Great War was over; millions are out of work, and drought has devastated the Great Plains. Dust storms roll relentlessly across the plains and everything on the Martinelli farm is dying including Elsa's marriage. Each day is a desperate battle against nature and a fight to keep her children alive. In this uncertain time Elsa, like many of her neighbours, must make the agonising

THE WEST COAST WHITEBAIT CHILDREN

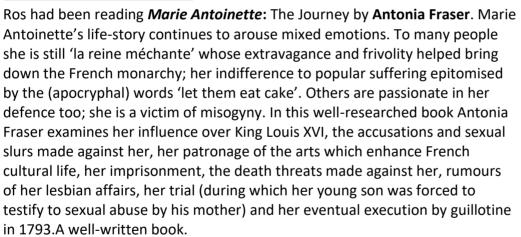
choice to fight for the land she loves or leave it behind and go west to California. Elaine says this is a fascinating read of family experiences.

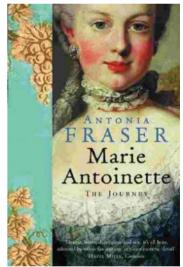


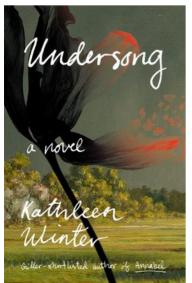
A New Zealand book by a local author was Elaine's next book – The West Coast Whitebait Children by Duncan Dolby. This a book of stories based on the intimate and vivid depiction of the lives and legends of characters, places, and events from around the South Island over the past sixty years, particularly the West Coast. These stories include humour and insights into the spirit of the coast, about its beauty, ancient Māori and recent history, village life and people, and the effects of the demise of coal mining. The

children's love of whitebaiting is the glue that

holds it all together.



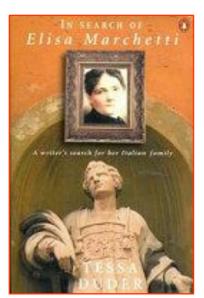




DUNCAN DOLBY

Ros's other read was an historical novel – *Undersong* by Kathleen Winter. When a young James Dixon, a local jack-of-all-trades recently returned from the Battle of Waterloo, meets Dorothy Wordsworth he quickly realises he's never met another woman like her. Aged in her early thirties, Dorothy has already lived a wildly unconventional life. And as her famous brother William Wordsworth's confidante and creative collaborator — considered by some in their circle to be the secret to his success as a poet — she has carved a seemingly idyllic existence for herself alongside William and his wife in the Lake District. One day Dixon is approached by William to do some handiwork around the Wordsworth estate, and he quickly realises his real responsibility is to keep an eye on Dorothy. Through fictional James Dixon we can step inside the emotional and artistic struggles of the Wordsworth family.

Nola shared her West Coast adventures with us, and we enjoyed hearing of her recent travels



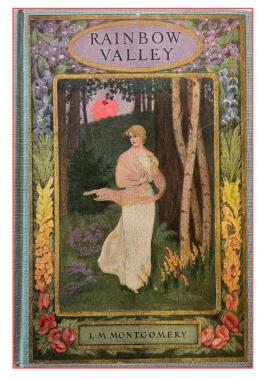
Carolyn had been reading *In Search of Elisa Marchetti* by Tessa Duder. This book is a mixture of travel and detective story and is an account of Tessa Duder's search for her Italian roots. Her great-grandparents immigrated to New Zealand from Italy

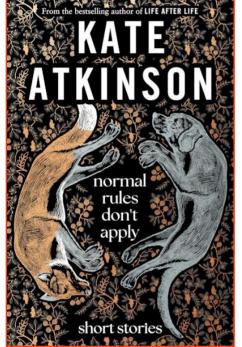
in 1876, and their youngest daughter Elisa was Tessa's maternal grandmother. Elisa passed on to Tessa a great love of Italian opera, art, and language. As she travels to Italy to research her ancestors, she uncovers a story of deception and disappointment. Another good story from a well-known New Zealand writer.

Carolyn's other book is an old favourite in the Anne of Green gables series,

number seven in the series: *Rainbow Valley* by L.M. Montgomery. Anne Shirley is all grown up, has married her beloved Gilbert, and is the mother of six mischievous children. These boys and girls discover a special place all their own, but they never dream of what will happen when a strange family moves into an old mansion nearby. The children have many adventures in this sun-dappled valley, even keeping a pet rooster out of

the pot. Carolyn describes revisiting this old classic as 'a comfort read'.



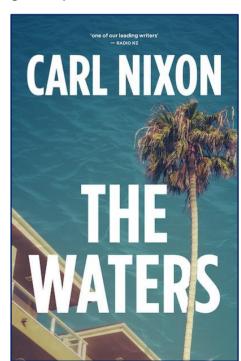


Trish had been reading **Normal Rules Don't Apply** by **Kate Atkinson** a collection of eleven short stories. Some are long and some are short, but all are brimming with ideas that are strange, disrupt time, and have sci-fi

elements that stretch your mind. Every story had a dog but other than that nothing that seemed to connect them as a collection. Worth a look if this is your genre.

Trish's second read is the recent 2023 novel *The Waters* by Carl Nixon which is a constructed in 21 short story format chapters. Taking place over forty years the Waters

family are as much a fixture of their small Canterbury town as 'the pub', the two-classroom school, or the old jetty. In 1979 dad Pat loses the family money by selling the family farm and investing in a failed property development, but in the chapters written from his perspective he shows no remorse or understanding of the role he plays in the family. All the Waters siblings deal with tragedies, addictions and illnesses, loss and accidents. Although the chapters have designated timeframes and character



perspectives, it can be difficult to follow at times, but the references to the Canterbury landscapes give a sense of location.

Our next meeting is on Friday November the 3rd, and in December we are having a shared Christmas lunch.

Gardens and Botanical Group October

A lovely day was on order for our trip to visit two Dunedin gardens, it duly arrived after some very windy days leading up to our planned trip on Wednesday, so we made the most of it.



Our group started at Kay
Belsey's garden. Kay is one
of our members and she
very kindly offered to host
us for our October
meeting. On our arrival
Kay gave us a synopsis of
the history of the garden
and her innovations since
shifting here six years ago.

Initially the garden was landscaped by Alan Birchell, incorporating native plantings in a very well-designed garden setting. The architectural bones of the garden delighted Kay, but she needed some flowers to brighten her day, so she has over the years introduced touches of colour into the plantings. An example was the planting of osteospermum under the hedging along the driveway which created an attractive

entrance to the upper garden.



The garden has strong architectural lines which has enabled Kay to place two prunus trees, under planted with a colourful array of perennials and bedding plants. A white wisteria frames the outdoor living room. Not quite out but an impressive feature for later in the month. The garden flows down the hillside allowing for a feature wall cascading down to the lower garden.

The vegetable garden is another addition Kay introduced and we were amazed at the range of vegetables she was already harvesting - with more to come. The fernery is another interesting feature as you continue around the grounds. Tree ferns and ground hugging plants make this a special place. The whole area seemed like a large botanic garden.



this house. Some of these plants may be unnamed treasures. The size and health of the trees suggested they had ideal growing conditions.

Mulching and attention to the soil were important to the new owners who are continuing to develop the garden as it was and are adding their own plantings to extend the interesting array of species.

So many treasures to appreciate in this garden, mature maple trees, climbing roses, a variety of irises and many examples of ground cover of which we were invited to take cuttings. Judy had grown a beautiful white camellia from a cutting she took some years ago, so some were also keen to try their hand at growing one.



We enjoyed a tasty lunch at Copper in Maori Hill before travelling to Shelley Duncan and Judy Blackman's garden in Opoho.

This is a special garden featuring a number of rhododendrons grown by Ralph Markby, a noted propagator of these, and the previous owner of



The garden had beautiful views over Dunedin city, very sheltered from strong winds and blessed with plenty of sunshine. Like many gardens in this city, one arrives off the street, down a long drive to a little personal paradise, a gardener's delight.

Pathways lead you around the garden to different views, including

a garden sculpture of a departed maple tree and a very active beehive. I think the photographs tell a better story than I can! October is Rhododendron Month, so it was a great finish to our day out. Robyne

Expanding Musical Horizons October

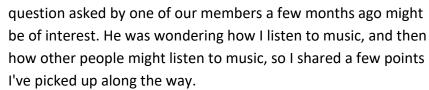
Our theme for September was 'Our Own Choice' in which members were asked to share music that was

special to them in some way. Everyone chose two pieces that meant something special at a particular time of their life, influenced them in some way, helped them recover from traumatic times in their lives, was a favourite from their young days, or made an impact on them in some other way. Designed to fit into one session, it spilled over and filled our October session because of the impressive research each person had done, or because of the personal story that they told, and the follow-up discussion that it triggered. Because I reported more



"And now, Bach's Brandenburg Concerto Number One, first movement."

fully on this in the September newsletter, a response I made to a



THE FOUR MUSICIANS OF THE APOCALYPSE

There is no 'correct' way to listen to music. For you, it might depend on the piece of music, the situation you are in, your personality, your childhood and other background experiences you've had in your life. Being a right-brain or left-brain person might make a difference. You are likely to listen to the same piece of music at different times and on each occasion have a different listening experience.

Let's take an example. If a crowd of people is listening to a classical concert, at any given moment there will be people in the audience who:

- imagine and dream of a scene that the music evokes
- react physically with imperceptible movements in their fingers or feet
- feel a sense of power when listening to 'big sounds' like trumpets or pipe organs or loud percussion
- remember an important event in their life associated with this piece of music
- feel good about recognising some of the musical elements in the piece
- analyse the form, orchestration, harmony or melody in some depth as it is played
- think about how the performers on stage might have reached that level of ability
- think about the composer's contribution to the particular period in which the music was written
- feel a bit overwhelmed because they are learning to play an instrument or are a budding composer and are wondering how they are ever going to reach that level
- wonder what they are going to write because they have to critique the concert for the media
- daydream about anything else and might be miles away in their mind.

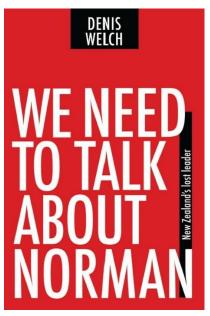
Waikouaiti Global Conversations October

There are no prizes for guessing what we talked about this week! We couldn't sidestep it any longer. So, after trying to make sense of the Palestine-Israel situation — a task that pretty much eluded us — we focussed on the weekend's forthcoming (at that time) election, including the various televised debates, the polls and early voting.

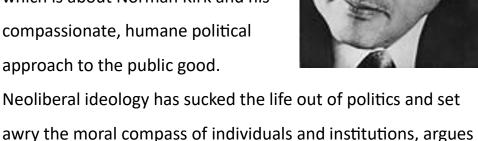


The unexpected rise of New Zealand First led to a discussion about advertising to influence voting,

mostly on social media, by third party 'promoters' (individuals and groups who are registered with the Electoral Commission, but do not have to disclose where their funding has come from – on 11 October RNZ reported 31 of them with a combined permissible spend of \$12m!) and entry-ism (the infiltration of bona fide political parties by third parties wishing to wield influence from within, a quasi-takeover), and an article written by Charlie Mitchell entitled 'An awakening': How the freedom movement found its man in Winston Peters, published in the Waikato Times on October 7.



We concluded this part of our discussion with talk about Dennis Welch's book 'We need to talk about Norman: New Zealand's lost leader' which is about Norman Kirk and his compassionate, humane political approach to the public good.



Welch. It doesn't have to be this way.

On a slightly lighter note, members recommended the following documentaries: Beckham (Netflix), The Loudest Voice about Roger Ailes of Fox News (Netflix), and Four Horseman (You Tube) that raises questions about our economic, political, and religious structures and offers more just alternatives. For escape try Utopia (Netflix) and Parks and Recreation (TVNZ+).

Art Collections Group October

The October visit of our Art Group was a treat for those who were able to come. We visited the studio of Rod Eales in Upper Junction.

Rod, not her official name, but a nickname bestowed by her family in childhood and used ever since, was born in Whakatane. She moved

to Dunedin to study at the School of Art and, except for a brief stay in Wellington, has lived here ever since.

She graduated with a Diploma in Fine Arts from the







Polytechnic and a Diploma in Teaching from Dunedin College of Education. She still combines teaching with her art.

Over the years Rod has produced a real variety of artwork, including pen and ink drawings of rocks and landscapes, paintings featuring landscapes, rocks, themes based

variously on cocoa, tea, glass, swans and her current passion, botanical works. Rod says she "finds beauty everywhere".

She has a strong interest in rocks and enjoys fossicking for them. She is also a creative gardener with a fantastic garden which she has developed from scratch. We were lucky enough to get a guided tour of the garden as well as her studio.

Anne-Marie



Mahjong Group October

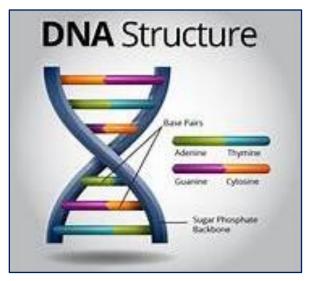
The group has been practising for the Mahjong competition being held on 2 November. It should be a great day, with social and competitive grades.

Welcome to our new members, Elizabeth, Liz, and Gay.

Jean T



Genealogy Group October



We have been exploring how DNA analysis can support family history research. We compared the different approaches and tools different companies offer. It's great that DNA results can be uploaded to different databases to increase the information gained.

Our members are also enjoying using the resources in the library and online to build their family histories, finding all sorts of interesting information.

Jean T

Next month, we hope to visit the Hocken Library, another great repository of Dunedin history.

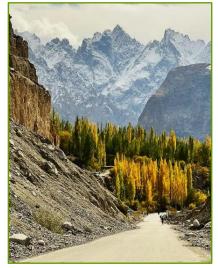
Lunch Group October

Three members of the group met this month at Emerson's for lunch. We enjoyed a great meal with pleasant company.

It was a lovely day and, despite the restaurant being quite full, the noise level was fine, and no one felt crowded because a lot of patrons were sitting outside in the sunshine.

Ngaire Bates

And the adventures of the regular lunch convenor, Anne Stratford, continue apace. She has been in the mountainous region of Pakistan for the last couple of weeks. The terrain, the transport, the terrifying drop!







Poetry Group October

The group decided today we had space for one more person to join us, so if you are keen, contact Carole.

What with travel and a memorial service, a smaller number of us met up today to share our selected poems and enjoy a shared lunch. A lovely topic this month: Friendship.

Our choices ranged from Shakespeare's **Sonnet 104**, through to **Us Two** by AA Milne. The poem that led to the most discussion was **Portrait of a Lady** by T.S Eliot.

Alfie, the dearest little soul, kept a weather eye on the group, but didn't beg at the table.



Ani

Old Friends by Freya Manfred

Old friends are a steady spring rain, or late summer sunshine edging into fall,

or frosted leaves along a snowy path—a voice for all seasons saying, *I know you*. The older I grow, the more I fear I'll lose my old friends,

as if too many years have scrolled by since the day we sprang forth, seeking each other.

Old friend, I knew you before we met.
I saw you at the window of my soul—
I heard you in the steady millstone of my
heart

grinding grain for our daily bread. You are sedimentary, rock-solid cousin earth.

where I stand firmly, astonished by your grace and truth.

And gratitude comes to me and says:

"Tell me anything and I will listen. Ask me anything, and I will answer you."

To my Favourite 17 Year Old Girl

by Billy Collins

Do you realise that if you had started building the Parthenon on the day you were born, you would be all done in only one more year?

Of course, you couldn't have done it alone, so never mind, you're fine just as you are.

You're loved for just being yourself.

But did you know that at your age Judy Garland was pulling down \$150,000 a picture,

Joan of Arc was leading the French army to victory, and Blaise Pascal had cleaned up his room?

No wait, I mean he had invented the calculator.

Of course, there will be time for all that later in your life,

after you come out of your room and begin to blossom, or at least pick up all your socks.

For some reason, I keep remembering that Lady Jane Grey

was Queen of England when she was only fifteen, but then she was beheaded, so never mind her as a role model.

A few centuries later, when he was your age,
Franz Schubert was doing the dishes for his family
but that did not keep him from composing two
symphonies,

four operas, and two complete Masses as a youngster.

But of course that was in Austria at the height

of romantic lyricism, not here in the suburbs of Cleveland.

Frankly, who cares if Annie Oakley was a crack shot at 15

or if Maria Callas debuted as Tosca at 17? We think you are special just being you,

By the way, I lied about Schubert doing the dishes,

playing with your food and staring into space.

but that doesn't mean he never helped out around the house.

Walking Group October

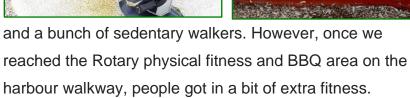
A stimulating walk in the wind and cold around the harbour yacht / rowing area. Note the Kuri Dog along with a real dog, Molly















On a favourite hike up to the top of St. Clair near Cargills Castle, we took in the excellent scenery so close to town.



Almost lost a walker to the cliffs but did a head count on the way down and everyone was accounted for.



For those who have a dog to walk or just want to get on some trails around the north end, try Forrester Park and the Spooky Forest.





We did the beautiful McGoun's Creek track again as several members missed it last time. Very lush and enchanting.

Everyone should know by now the St Leonards to Port Chalmers walk/cycleway is complete. We started at St Leonards walking and then



bused back. Wonderful addition to walkers' paradise.



There are so many walks to try in Dunedin. Get on to the DCC map and have a look. Some tracks share with cyclists but there is room for everyone.

Janet Hewson

Gallery Group October

This month we visited the house and studio of Claire Beynon who lives at Broad Bay on the Otago peninsula. The setting is stunning with beautiful views across the harbour to the hills beyond. Usually a very peaceful place, the road works shattered the calm that Claire is used to. However, we managed to squeeze past, though some people parked at the bottom and had to climb the steep street.

Claire enchanted us with the description of her approach to her work and all the many projects and experiments she has underway. Her present passion is ancient languages such as I Ching, an ancient Chinese language, and markings on which many present works are based. Artist John Cage also consulted I Ching to help with his artistic inspiration. The processes to reach artistic satisfaction are exciting delves into previously unexplored territory using heat, honey, and waxed paper.

Many works reflect our troubled world and are often a homage to a certain person who has dedicated, and sometimes sacrificed, their life to improve the world.

R: The painting on the right, behind Claire, in this photo was developed when Russia invaded Ukraine. The stork is a protective bird in Ukraine. The Banner of Peace is also included.

Claire often uses grids in her art as this helps with the structure and gives a sense of freedom.



L: Examples of her work using extracted meaning and form from language.



Claire's two visits to Antarctica have also provided inspiration for a range of work from this time, including



rolls of paper she had on the floor that everyone walked over and made marks that are now significant to her memories.

L: Another technique Claire enjoys using is the honeycomb.

These are works in progress and new things can be added as they occur. Claire is keen her work transcends barriers.

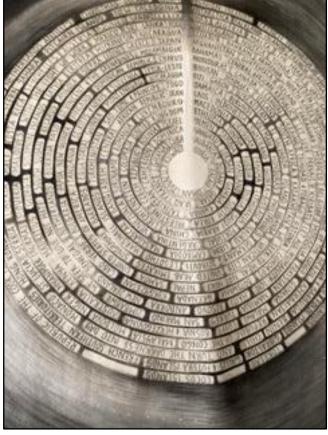
After the Christchurch earthquake she painted a broken ankle beside the fractured ground implying the human body is in a close relationship with the earth.

R: Her work is also universal as shown in this circular painting which includes every country in the world.

An inspiring visit with an exploration of new ideas and a depth of feeling and humanity.

A big thank you to Claire, and to Peter for organising the visit.

Most of us met up afterwards for a well-served and delicious lunch at the café at Glenfalloch Gardens.



Laurie and Rosemary are organising our November visit to Port Chalmers.

Monday Current Affairs Group October

Topic: The Election

Meeting less than thirty-six hours after the election we had plenty to talk about. We were a smaller group than usual so comments may not be reflective of the entire group. Most of us, however, were very disappointed. We felt Chris Hipkins was a decent man who had been handed an impossible task. The ongoing media narrative, constant polls and undermining negativity about the

government were difficult for any incumbent to





Most of us felt concerned

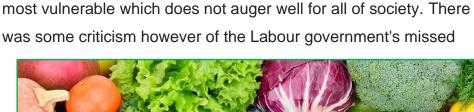


will go backwards despite both Te Pati Maori and the Greens success. Change in opposition is difficult to

achieve. We fear a number of the policies of the right will disproportionately negatively affect the



opportunities, particularly around a capital gains or wealth tax and removing GST on fruit and vegetables.







The other particularly bad news was the Australian Voice referendum. Although we were aware there was some Aboriginal opposition to this, it seems incredible that most of the country did not support their first nations people.

The only cheering notes were the good company and excellent muffins.

Joy Hayward

Dining Group October

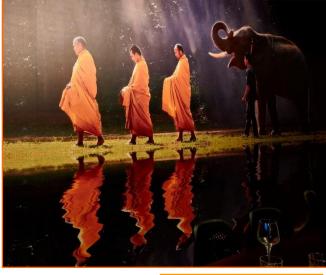
The six of us very much enjoyed the food at Thai Opal in Filleul St on a recent cold Friday evening. Lots of space between the tables and an excellent menu. The meal sizes were on the large side and at least three of us, armed with our plastic doggy bags, were planning a repeat feast for dinner on Saturday.

We thoroughly recommend this place for the food, space, and the ability to converse without having to shout over noise. The only downside was a certain lack of ambience.











Poetry extra: Dressed for theatre Serie Barford

Child-me bought paper doll dress-up books with coins garnered from selling eggs. Pressed out cardboard figurines. Snipped garments onto varnished floors.

Handcrafted sumptuous frocks with pastels, glitter and luncheon paper. Decorated bodices with petals dipped in flour 'n 'water glue seasoned with salt to prevent mould. Embroidered hemlines with sticky grass seeds resembling tiny beads.

Gently folded paper tabs around shoulders, waists, hips. Created narratives for red carpet events. Shawls for warmth and glamour.

Arranged dolls under coloured spotlights - beams from handheld torches filtered through glossy cellophane. Smoothed garments with bitten nails. Mixed and matched accessories.

My dolls wore faux chiffon nighties. Slept in bespoke chocolate boxes

until my nipples budded. Heralded a world beyond childhood. I ran to greet it.

Dressed

undressed myself, others. Gave away my dolls.







Photography Group October



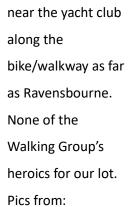
Thanks Anne H for organizing today's walk. Very sorry you couldn't make it. Wonderful parking map you supplied.

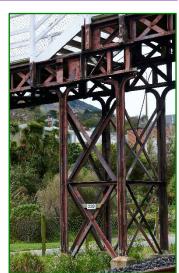




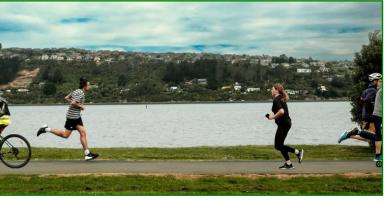
Eight of
us joined
the
joggers,
cyclists,
walkers,
and dogs

to stroll from





Graham, Chris, Ani







Our second meeting this month, also organized by Anne H – thank you very much – was to Brighton. A good turnout, and we had lunch at the café followed by an amble wherever it took our fancy. Chris tried out his (not used for a long while) underwater camera. R: is a still from a video he took.







Graham came complete with his tripod and Peter brought along a sack to take home some of the very abundant kelp for his compost heap.











Meanwhile I watched the surfer have a great ride from a long way out on a big wave.





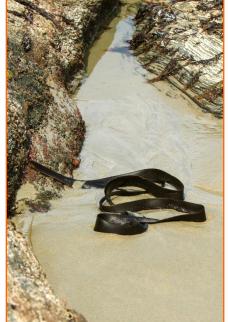
The pic below was taken using a long exposure contrasted with the next pic taken with a much quicker shutter speed.





Sue achieved this effect on long exposure while quickly moving the camera.

"Peter, you've missed a bit".









the canoes paddling up the creek over the summer. A duck mustn't set sail without his tailfeathers suitably arranged.









Pics at Brighton: Chris, Graham, Anne H,
Ani, Eunan, and Sue. Ani

