



Interest Groups NEWSLETTER

November 2022

A new look for a month or so while the Interest Groups await a new Convener. The Photography Group Report is, as usual, the final article in this newsletter. Several of our members took an interest in the recent eclipse of the moon. Sadly, none of our individual efforts had a great outcome, but there were a few shots taken earlier on that evening that are well worth noting.

Chris Watson titles his: *Rising Moon* and, while he has lightened the foreground, the colour of the moon is as taken.



Graham Corbett went, literally, to a whole new level. He climbed up to the Soldiers' Monument and took these two photographs. Ann Wood (editor)



Art Collections Group

Facilitator: Anne-Marie Hutton
Monthly: First Tuesday 10:30
E: annemariehutton@gmail.com



Book Share Group

Facilitator: Trish Irvine
First Friday, 1:30
E: trishjockloch@gmail.com



Dining Group

Facilitator: Karen Wards
Third Friday, 7 pm
E: karendwards@gmail.com



Expanding Musical Horizons **full**

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



Film Group **full**

Facilitator: Bill Stanford
Third Wednesday, 1:30
E: w.stanford@protonmail.com



Gallery Group **full**

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



Gardens & Botanical Group

Facilitator: Robyne Selbie
Second Wednesday, 1:30
E: robyneselbie1945@gmail.com



Home Gardens Group

Facilitator: Carole Bezett
Fourth Thursday, 1:30
E: carolebezett@gmail.com



Luncheon Group

This group is temporarily in recess until a new facilitator is appointed.

Mahjong Group

Facilitator: Jean Tilleyshort
2nd & 4th Thursdays, 10 am
E: s_tilleyshort@xtra.co.nz



Monday Current Affairs Group **full**

Facilitator: Joy Hayward
Third Monday, 1.30
E: joyhayward@hotmail.co.nz



Photography Group

Facilitator: Ann Wood
First Thursday, 1:30;
Third Thursday, TBA
E: ann.wood14blaw@gmail.com



Poetry Group **full**

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



Singing Group **in recess**

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



Tuesday Current Issues Group **full**

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



Walking Group **full**

Every Thursday, 10:30
Joint Facilitators:



Averil McLean
E: averilmclean2@gmail.com

Janet Hewson
E: je.hewson@xtra.co.nz



Wanderers Group

Facilitator: Ailsa Williams
Weekly: Every Friday 10 am
E: ailsasx@gmail.com



Wanderers Group November

The Wanderers Group has enjoyed some great walks on the periphery of the city, ranging from the trails and roads of Ross Creek, attempting to apply our negotiating skills (to no avail) with a Delta supervisor zealously ensuring we didn't use a shortcut where a tree was being put through the woodchipper, to enjoying the



historic houses, modest to rather grand, discovering a park - and KuKu Coffee, whose hospitable owner roasts



magnificent rhododendrons along Barnes Drive by the Southern Motorway.

That path led us round to loop on to South Road where we took note of the



his own beans. We thoroughly

enjoyed sitting on a couple of benches and stools on the footpath,

excellent coffee and hot chocolate to underscore the excellent company.

Glenfalloch beckoned, in glorious sun, the rhododendrons and other blossoms still in remarkable display. Ailsa

Poetry Group November

The topic this month was Fantastic/Magical. Poems selected by group members ranged from those written by Lewis Carroll, JRR Tolkien, Robert Graves, Keats, Shelley, Lee-Hamilton through to Roald Dahl, and the one below by a woman who lived for a time in Dunedin and was known to the group member who chose this poem. Ani

Dragon by Elizabeth Isichei

Such a small, such a domesticated dragon.
She lies on her back in the fireplace,
breathing gently up the chimney, keeping
the whole house warm. In hot weather,
she stays outside in the rockery. So useful
at barbeques, sizzling the sausages to
perfection. She used to singe the aphids
off the roses, but our insurance company
said our policy did not cover this. They
said they had to draw the line somewhere.

Her great aunt wrote that it was the
eternal duty of all dragons to do battle
with knights. The knights always win.

Her uncle rang from China and told her,
“You can grow to be a mile high. You are
a dragon of inspiration.”

When we go on holiday we leave her in a
cattery. They charge double. She doesn't
seem to like it there, but it's hard to be
certain. Unlike the other members of her
family, she does not write, or speak.



From Wikipedia: **Elizabeth Allo Isichei** (born 1939 in [Tauranga](#), New Zealand) is a [Nigerian](#) author, historian and academic.^{[1][2]} Her parents are Albert (an agricultural scientist) and Lorna Allo.^[2] On 23 July 1964 she married Uche Peter Isichei (a chemical pathologist) and they have five children.^[2] In 1959 she earned her BA from the [University of Canterbury](#) in New Zealand, B.A.^[2] In 1961 she completed her M.A. at [Victoria University of Wellington](#), New Zealand, and in 1967 she completed her PhD at Oxford University.^[2] She was a Professor of [Religious Studies](#) at the [University of Otago](#).^[2] She has been a professor in the Department of History, [University of Jos](#) in [Jos](#), Nigeria since 1976.^[2] She is the general editor for *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts*.^[2]

Her works and books are centred on [Christianity in Africa](#) and the [history of Nigeria](#) particularly the [Igbo people](#).

Elfin Skates by Eugene Lee-Hamilton (1845–1907)

I

THEY wheel'd me up the snow-clear'd garden way,
And left me where the dazzling heaps were thrown;
And as I mused on winter sports once known,
Up came a tiny man to where I lay.
He was six inches high; his beard was grey
As silver frost; his coat and cap were brown,
Of mouse's fur; while two wee skates hung down
From his wee belt, and gleam'd in winter's ray.

He clamber'd up my couch and eyed me long.
'Show me thy skates,' said I; 'for once, alas!
I too could skate. What pixie mayst thou be?'
'I am the king', he answered, 'of the throng
Called Winter Elves. We live in roots, and pass
The summer months asleep. Frost sets us free.'



II

'WE find by moonlight little pools of ice,
Just one yard wide,' the imp of winter said;
'And skate all night, while mortals are in bed,
In tiny circles of our elf device;
And when it snows we harness forest mice
To wee bark sleighs, with lightest fibrous thread,
And scour the woods; or play all night instead
With snowballs large as peas, well patted thrice.

But is it true, as I have heard them say,
That thou canst share in winter games no more,
But liest motionless, year in, year out?
That must be hard. To-day I cannot stay,
But I'll return each year, when all is hoar,
And tell thee when the skaters are about.'

From Wikipedia: **Eugene Lee-Hamilton** was born in London on 6 January 1845, He was educated mainly in France and Germany. In 1864 he was sent to the [University of Oxford](#). In 1869 he entered the British diplomatic service. He was first attached to the Embassy at Paris, where, due to his early experiences of French life, and mastery of the French language, he was eminently suitable. After the Franco-German War broke out he took part in the [Alabama arbitration at Geneva](#). Subsequently he was appointed secretary in the British Legation at [Lisbon](#). He had to renounce this second position in 1873, when, suddenly, he collapsed altogether, losing the use of his legs, and suffering agonies of pain. He expressed it in one of his sonnets.

Gardens and Botanical Group November

The gardening group met in November for a ramble down the Otago Peninsula to visit Peter Cook and Anna More's garden at Hereweka, near Hoopers Inlet. The day was to start with a fish and chips lunch at the Portobello pub for those who wished. It was not to be, the pub was closed because of roadworks outside, so we managed to get the group together at Cafe 1908 where we enjoyed platters and chat.



We travelled over the hill to Hereweka and made our way cautiously

up the narrow gravel road until we arrived at the very private garden fully developed by Anna and Peter over thirty years of gardening. This garden has a real microclimate which allows them to grow tropical fruits and their latest experiment is to grow avocados.



Peter and Anna have a flourishing vegetable garden with soft fruits and an orchard of different fruit trees. The hens love this part of the garden, and an egg was laid during our visit.



The garden spreads down the steeply sloping hillside which they have terraced and planted with a wide range of speciality trees and shrubs, perennials, iris, hellebores, trilliums, and bulbs. The rhododendrons were at the height of their season and a bank of yellow azaleas stole the show.



Peter took us down to his South Pacific Garden where specimens from all over the Pacific feature. This project is very dear to his heart, and he was able to describe the different qualities of the plants and their requirements. It was a fascinating insight into the workings of the garden and the vision of these two experienced plants people. They have a small nursery on site so, you guessed it, a few plants left for new homes.

The day finished with a visit to my garden and afternoon tea outside on the deck. That was when the weather was kind to us!

Robyne Selbie

Gallery Group November



Our last out of town visit for the year was to Oamaru where Sue had arranged for us to visit the Forrester Gallery to see the famous landscape paintings from The Kelliher Art Trust Collection. This was part of the South Island Touring Exhibition 2021-2023. Thirty two paintings had been selected for the tour, some with special reference to the South Island, and many having won prizes in the competitions that are held each year.

Several well known artists were represented among the pictures on display, such as Douglas Badcock, Peter McIntyre, Dick Frizzell, and Colin Wheeler to name just a few.

Imogen Stockwell, curator of the Visual Arts at the Forrester Gallery, was a charming host who brought the paintings to life with her stories of the artists and anecdotes about the





paintings themselves. The landscapes were amazing, and the vibrancy of the works kept us absorbed for much of the morning.

We visited more exhibitions upstairs at the Forrester. Two of the artists were Kit Macgregor and Alison Bevers. Their exhibition was titled *Not Far Away* and concentrated on Oamaru and its environs.

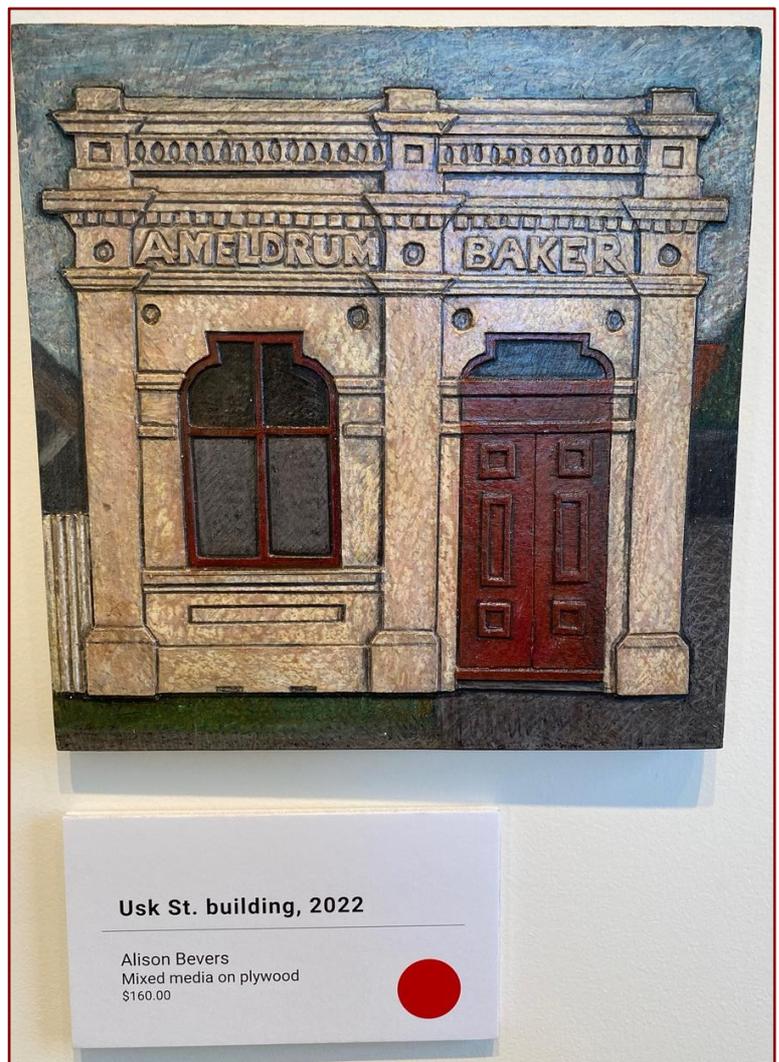
We had time to visit the historical streets of Oamaru before meeting for lunch by the wharf.

After lunch, a visit to the North Otago Art Society building and exhibition was very fruitful, as we were able to find out from the vice president how the Art Society operated and the pros and cons of owning their own building. The exhibition was extensive and varied, and one of our group bought a unique and beautiful bird feeder.

An absorbing and very enjoyable day in one of Otago's most historic and arty towns.

Thank you so much to Sue for organising such a worthwhile visit for the full turn out of the Gallery Group.

Tash Hurst



Usk St. building, 2022

Alison Bevers
Mixed media on plywood
\$160.00

Dining Group November

A wonderful meal was enjoyed by all at Plato in November. Only the remnants to show. Every plate a sheer delight: from the kelp encrusted warehou with lemon butter, the gurnard with spring onions and a ginger and garlic oil dressing, to the pork sirloin and clams with a garlic, white wine, and coriander cream sauce. Enthused? You should be!



Tuesday Current Issues Group November

Jenny R introduced our discussion on whether NZ should become a Republic, a fascinating topic with many ramifications. No wonder politicians are in no hurry to take on the debate.

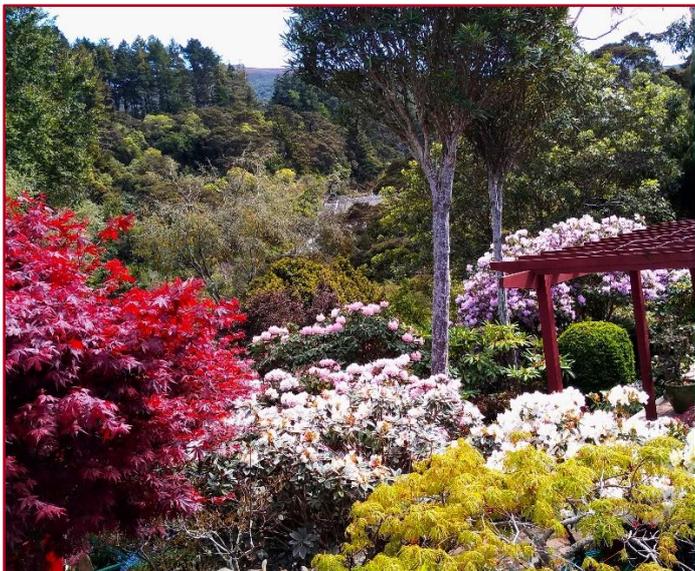
One starting point: there are 56 members of the Commonwealth, including 15 Realms (UK, Canada, Australia, NZ, PNG, the Solomons, Tuvalu, and a number of islands in the Caribbean), 36 Republics, and 5 countries with their own Monarch (Tonga, Brunei, Malaysia, Eswatini and Lesotho).

Discussion then moved to a recent statement by Sir David Skegg about the country's need for better preparedness for pandemics and epidemics. This morphed into NZ's current obesity epidemic, one cause of which is the low exercise levels of young people – now beginning to be addressed.

The biography of Helen Kelly brought us via the history of employment contracts to the Fair Pay Agreement, and from there discussion moved to another excellent law, in the wings, to remove the ability to appeal local alcohol policies.

Gretchen Kivell

Walking Group November

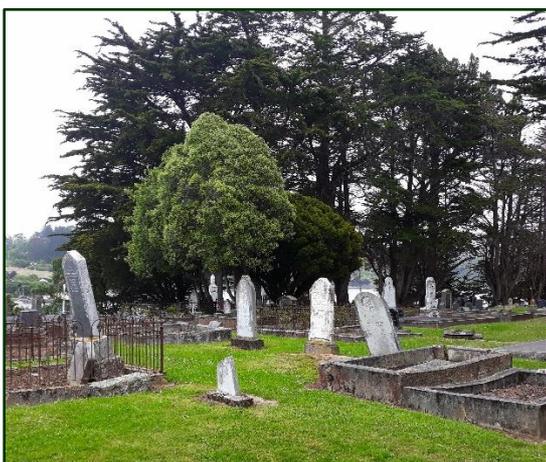


We did several walks, as long as it was not pouring with rain, over the last month or so.

Brian Tidmarsh on Rockside Road has once again been very hospitable showing us around his extensive and exceptional garden. We always combine a Ross Creek ramble before this visit.

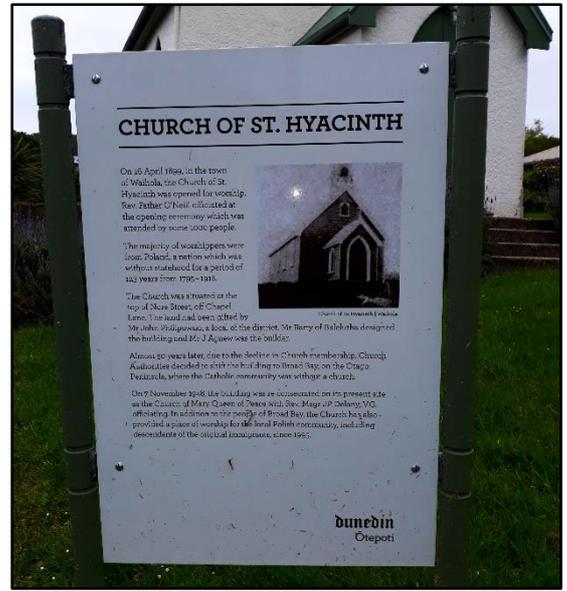
Getting into the 'other side' of Kensington and Caversham we ambled around the back of Hillside - what an enormous area under development. We discovered the backyard of Poppy's Café featuring loads of memorable tools and signage that all of us remember!

The isolated Broad Bay cemetery is worth a visit with special harbour views (watch your step).



On the same walk we happened upon a property on Cowal Street. The owner showed us some special plantings including a unique Southern Rata.





Then time for a quick look at St Hyacinth (who knew there was a saint by that name?) Polish church that was shifted from Waiholia to Broad Bay by barge in 1948, after being cut into two parts.

<https://polishhistorynewzealand.org/cecylia-klobukowska/> (Link to an interesting online read to

understand how this church has been reclaimed in recent years by the wider Dunedin Polish population. Ed)



And, finally, that week, a walk up Bacon St. to the Future Forest (featured in The Star the next day). Then, of course, the best place on the way back, Glenfalloch, for coffee.

This week a popular walk down Smalls Beach keeping clear of the Sea Lions.

Janet Hewson



Art Collections Group November



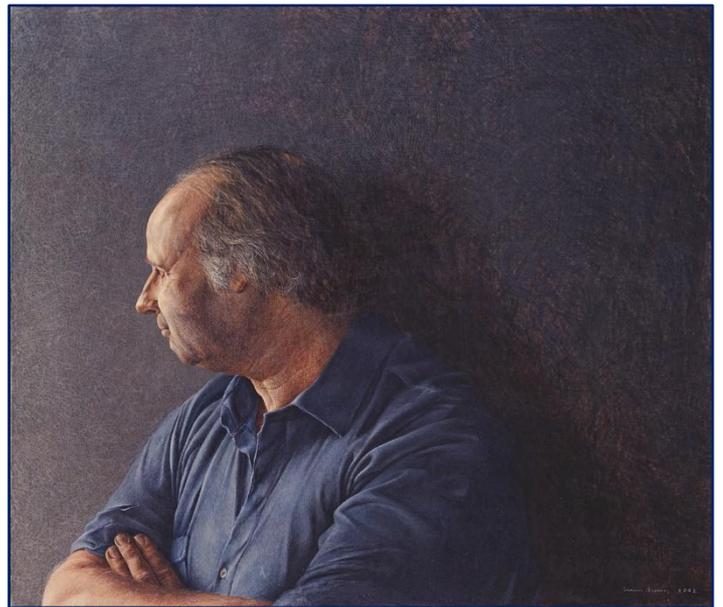
On the first day of November, we were hosted by Paul Aubin in his interesting, and very original, inner-city home. This visit was a real treat for everyone who attended because Paul, as well as having a comprehensive collection of Otago and New Zealand art, knew so many of the artists personally.



We started our morning in the dining room where we were served with tea, coffee and cakes, and Paul regaled us with tales of the artists he had known. He is a great raconteur with a lifetime of interesting stories. We learned that he is living just around

the corner from his childhood Dunedin home. The chat was followed by a tour of virtually every room in the house. There cannot be many people who have converted a shower cubicle into library shelving. How wonderful!

At R: *An egg tempera portrait of Paul Aubin painted by Grahame Sydney in 1982.*



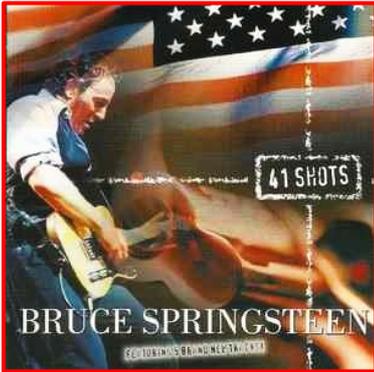
Paul's art collection includes original drawings and artist's preliminary sketches, photographs, watercolours, pastels, wood and lino cuts, plus oil paintings. A very eclectic mix that he obviously loves, and we certainly appreciated viewing.

This home is an absolute treasure trove of books, original art, vintage comics, lead soldiers, cricket memorabilia and much more and it was impossible to do his many collections justice in the two hours we were there.

Anne-Marie

Expanding Musical Horizons November

We started meeting in person again in September, after experimenting with sessions via email when pandemic statistics were still at a worrying stage. Our first face-to-face session for the year completed the series of three called “The Sound of Protest”. Protest songs we listened to included, among others, material written by the Beatles, Bruce Springsteen, Dire Straits, Ralph McTell and Herbs. Some of these performers are well-known for their social consciousness and willingness to speak out about issues that really concern them.



Bruce Springsteen, for instance, was horrified by the shooting of an unarmed 23-year-old immigrant in New York (police mistook him for a rape suspect). They fired 41 shots into him, and although they were charged with second degree murder, they were acquitted. At the time, it caused outrage over police brutality, racial profiling and “contagious shooting”. Regular reports from America show that nothing appears to have changed in the past 20 years.

October and November covered the first two sessions in a series of three, called “A Rough Guide to Recognising the Periods of Musical History”. It traced the development of today’s sounds from the monophonic chants of medieval church music around 800 A.D. onwards. It’s rather ambitious, covering the bare bones of six musical periods (roughly 1300 years in total), taking only an hour for each period, but with the help of YouTube clips, we could hear what the characteristic sounds were, see what the instruments of each period looked like, and understand a little more about the reaction of each generation to its predecessors as they sought to create new sounds and react in some way to what previous generations had been doing.



We pulled to bits a little of the opening chorus of Bach’s **St Matthew Passion** to see how some basic Baroque compositional techniques worked (we did this in lay terms for the “non-musicians” in the group). We listened to Luthers Bach Ensemble performing this, and the image above is of some of the boys’ chorus that participated in this clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7ECsfEEF2M>). Paul Wheeler

Book Share Group November

A wide range of books were shared this month, beginning with a war novel shared by Carolyn — **“Birdsong” by Sebastian Faulks**. The plot follows two main characters living at different times: the first is Stephen Wraysford, a British soldier on the front line in Amiens during the First World War, and the second is his granddaughter, Elizabeth Benson whose 1970s plot line follows her attempts to recover an understanding of Stephen’s experience of the war. Carolyn described this book as a gruelling, but worthwhile, read.

Elaine’s choices were **“All the Light We Cannot See” by Anthony Doerr**, a novel set in World War Two. Marie – Laure who is blind lives near the Museum of Natural History where her father works. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and she and her father flee to a reclusive great uncle’s house by the sea and with them they carry what might be the Museum’s most valuable treasure. The other main character is Werner Pfennig, an orphan in a German mining town who becomes an expert at building and fixing radios. Described by Elaine as an example of resilience and endurance and a good read.

“Behind the Beautiful Forevers:” Life, Death, And Hope In A Mumbai Undercity by Katherine Boo, who worked on this intimate account of life in Annawadi (a large slum close to Sahar International Airport) and spent much of her life documenting it between 2007 and 2011. The story focuses on three families — young Abdul, an expert sifter of garbage with a degree of success that transforms his family’s lives; Fatima, a cripple also known as “One Leg”, and famous in the slum for a sexual appetite her husband can’t satisfy; and the third family is Asha’s. She is a worker for the Shiv Sena , the extreme right-wing Marathi chauvinist party and hopes to one day become the slum landlord. A well written book which is an impressive view of life in a Mumbai slum.

Roz’s choice took us back to historical fiction. **“America’s First Daughter” by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie** is a richly researched novel that draws from the thousands of letters and original sources. It is the untold story of Thomas Jefferson’s eldest daughter, Martha “Patsy” Jefferson Randolph, who in the wake of her mother’s death becomes his helpmate, protector and constant companion, travelling with him when he becomes American Minister to France. In Paris, fifteen-year-old Patsy learns about her father’s troubling liaison with Sally Hemings, a slave girl her own age. Meanwhile, Patsy falls in love with William Short, a staunch abolitionist and ambitious diplomat, and she must decide how much she will sacrifice to save her father’s reputation. A compelling story.

Nola has been dipping into **“The Ground Beneath Us: From the Oldest Cities to the Last Wilderness, What Dirt tells Us” by Paul Bogard**. When a teaspoon of soil contains millions of species and when we pave the earth on a daily basis, what does that mean for our future? What is the risk to our food supply, the planet’s wildlife, the soil on which every life form depends? How much undeveloped, untrodden ground do we have left? This book’s author sets out to answer these questions. This is a fascinating story of the ground beneath our feet.

Trish’s choice was **“Growing Older: A Chronicle of Death, Life, and Vegetables” by Joan Dye Gussow**. This is a book about the author’s life path after her husband of forty years dies of cancer and how, six months later, she finds herself skipping down the street and realises she didn’t rely on him for her happiness. They had two years earlier bought a house and land on a flood prone part of the Hudson River, and she chronicles how she develops the garden which is a challenge. She also recounts decisions made by her, such as having her ears pierced to mark her 70th birthday, and the joy of making independent decisions.

An enjoyable read about life and gardens.

Trish Irvine

Book Share Facilitator

Home Gardens Group November

Today we visited the woodland garden of Tash and Peter Hurst. An amazing example of how best to use the space of a sloping, 'difficult', not very large, piece of land. Full of many garden treasures, it includes a delightful water feature, a bog garden, stunning rock garden, a small vegetable garden crammed with produce, and was, overall, a fantastic array of colour and variety.



Tash was a fountain of knowledge about the floral area and happily shared this with us. Peter showed us around his vege patch. After a nice afternoon tea and sharing of ideas

for future trips, we left for home, with many of us happily carrying plants.



A great start to this fledgling group. We

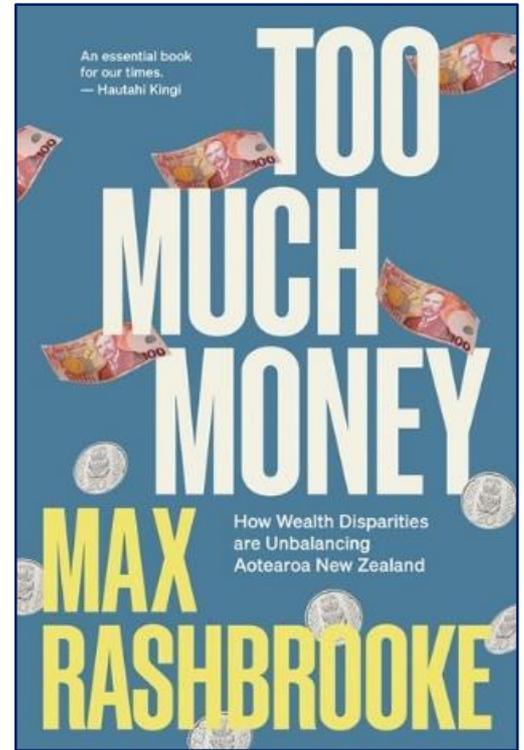
meet on the fourth Thursday of each month in the afternoon. We are accepting new members, and there is no need to have a garden to share with the group. If this sounds like you, please contact the facilitator: Carole Bezett.

Monday Current Affairs Group November

Our topic was an open ended one, "Too Much, Too Little". The wealth disparity in NZ came strongly to mind. We were assisted by information from Max Rashbrooke's well researched, and newly published book, *Too Much Money*.

Statistics from the book:

- In NZ the wealthiest 1% (40,000 individuals) own a quarter of the entire country.
- Until the 1980's the number of houses built for rich and poor was approximately equal. Since then, housing for the wealthy has soared, and housing for the poor has collapsed.
- Women earn an average of 16% less than men.
- 4/10 children in poverty have at least one parent in full time work.
- Wealth disparities compound over time. If you grow up in a wealthy family you are likely to increase in wealth as you age, and, conversely, if you grow up in poverty, there are fewer opportunities and no way out for the majority of children.



Our discussion centred around the impact on our society by this disparity, and the question as to whether the wealthy were more deserving by virtue of having worked hard and gained higher qualifications. There was also a counter argument to this.

One of the multiple ways to redress this disparity would be a wealth tax. Two members of the group have experience of Scandinavian countries, and whilst there is merit in their system, there is also unfairness, e.g. not being paid the same as everyone else despite doing things others couldn't, or wouldn't, because of not having a master's degree.

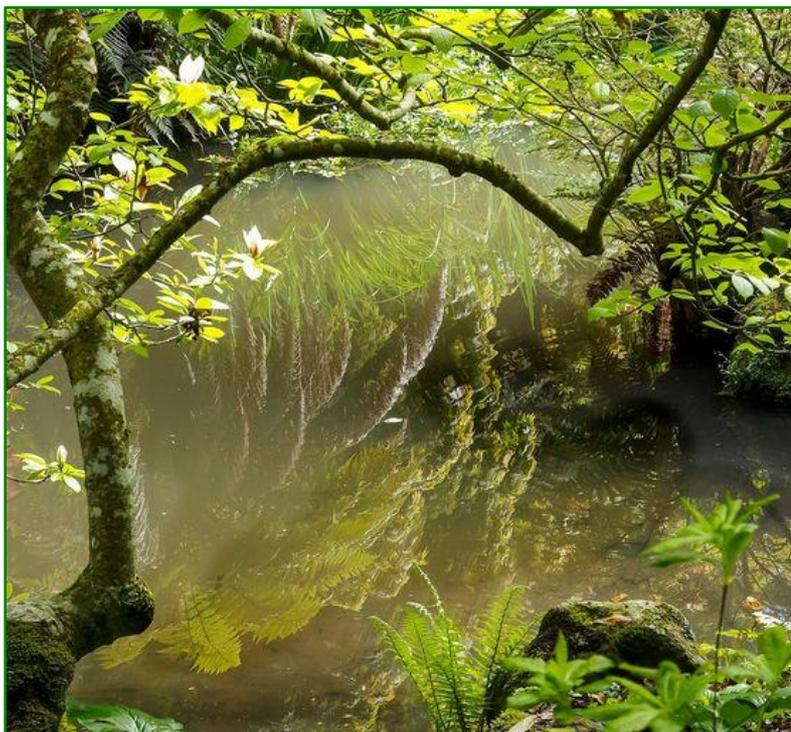
Maori disadvantage is also acute. Just 5% of NZ's total area remains in Maori freehold land. Despite this, one group member gave a moving account of attending a low decile, deprived, almost 100% Maori School and observing children's pride in Kapa Haka, and the warmth with which visitors and 'elders' were welcomed and honoured.

Three members who lived in Britain in the post war period remembered the very harsh tax take imposed by the government to try to get the country back on its feet.

We concluded the disparity discussion by noting the global parallels: the wealthy countries using more of the world's resources and being reluctant to offer support to those who are most affected by climate change.

Joy Hayward

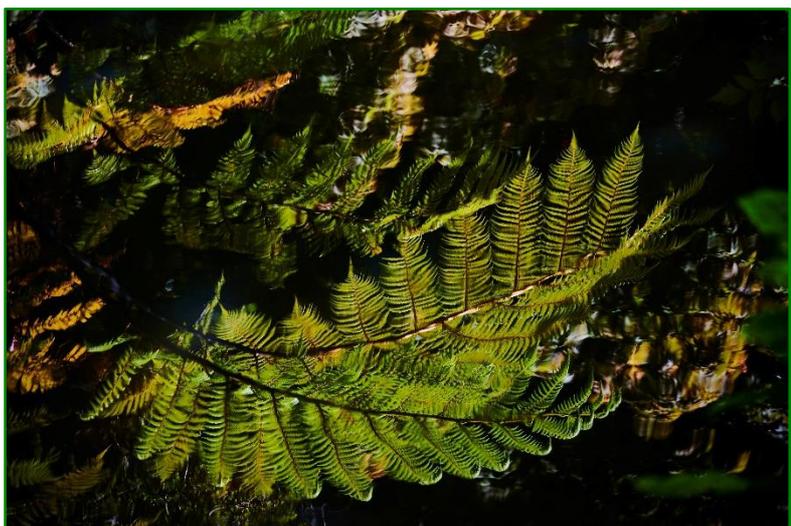
Photography Group November



Nine of the group met at Glenfalloch Gardens on a day that started out wet, but the sun eventually shone on us, and we were able to sit out on the deck and enjoy a coffee catch up. Lucky that, with us today, was Robyne Selbie, who volunteers with 'Friends of the Garden'. She guided us around the property and could readily put a name to some of the plants that many of us couldn't.



Above and below: Reflections in the muddy frog pond.

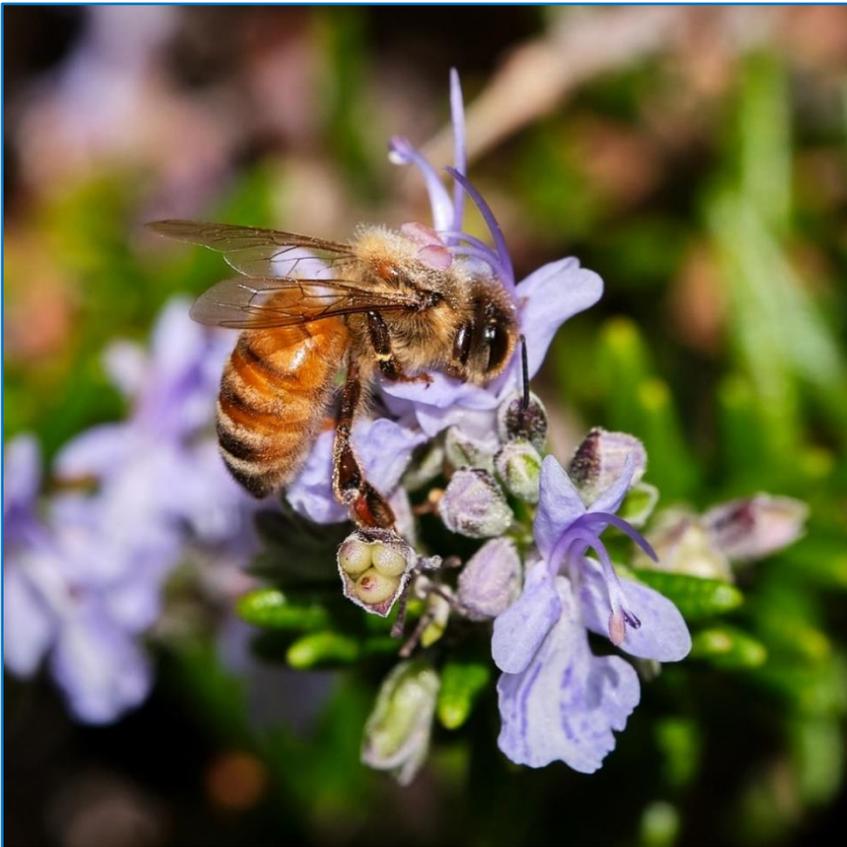


Not one of us tracked down the man himself. No sign, either, of his entourage.

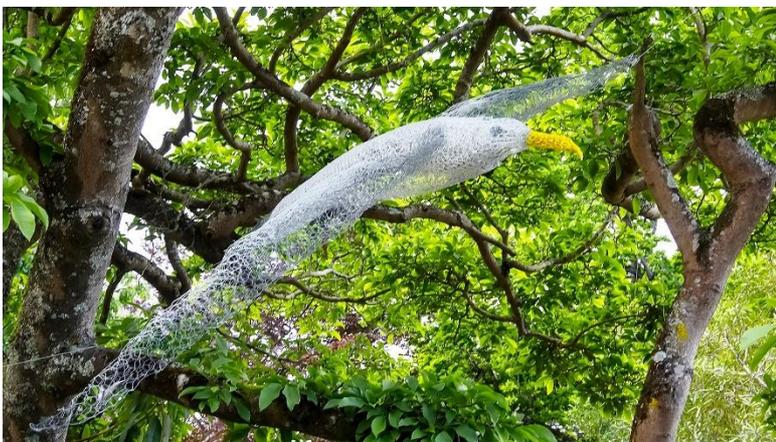




One of our group members relished his close-up photography.



Pic credits this trip: *Laurie White, Robyne Selbie, Hildegard Lubcke, Graham Corbett, Ann Wood*





17th November dawned very misty and mildly wet. We were due for a bumper turnout of the group today, but weather conditions put off a number. We visited the 1880's Pine Hill home and small farm of one of our members, Mary Jane Sneyd, and husband. The roosters could be heard in the distance when we arrived, but the property is classed as rural, so they live a riotous and full life with their harems. Harry (in full crow) has Meghan and Lilibet (all three are of the Sussex breed) for company. Octavius (behind the greenery) seems to



have a fair number under his command, Mildred (black) and Henrietta (speckled) plus many more, who came up the hill when called. Not just pretty feathers, these



chooks: they must be reliable layers, or they end up in the pot.

The ducks in Laurie's pic seem so perfect they are almost Lladro-like.





Mary Jane has a wonderfully warm and well-lit studio on site for her fabric work. This building would be the envy of every artist who works from home. Their large garden is on several levels and quite magnificent.

The rhododendrons were just starting to get past their best today, but there was so much else to see. We finished up with a great chat over a cup of tea and had a planning session for 2023.





Pic credits this trip:

Laurie White, Ann Trewern,

Graham Corbett,

John Burton, Ann Wood.

Off on a picnic trip to Broad Bay in December. Ani

