

Dunedin Athenaeum & Mechanics' Institute

Newsletter

June 2025

Kia ora koutou,

In the next few newsletters, we'll take the opportunity for each of our committee to say 'hello' to you, our members, and introduce ourselves.

My name is Tony Eyre and I've been committee Chair for the past 5 years and before that, a 5-year term as Treasurer. I became a member of the Athenaeum Library in 2013 when membership was at a low of just 33 members.

Thankfully, today our membership has grown to around the 100 mark, and we are working hard to further introduce new members to this wonderful institution.

I'm Auckland born, and moved to Dunedin with my wife, Yvonne Fogarty, in 1978. I've had a long association with the arts and literature in Dunedin, with advisory roles at the Dunedin School of Art and Dunedin's UNESCO City of Literature.

I am also a writer, with a special interest in creative non-fiction. Like you, I'm a passionate reader, and delight in my own large library at home. Some of you may have come across my book in the Athenaeum library – *The Book Collector: Reading and Living with Literature*.

Tony Eyre

What's Happening

We have a new puzzle table! Thanks to one of our members who donated this 'World Of' puzzle. Come in and

have a play. You are always welcome to bring in your lunch or to sit and read by the heaters.

We don't have any events lined up for July but keep your ear out for August. As always, we are open to suggestions for events or groups meeting here. We have a wonderful space and welcome visitors and enquires from members and non-members.



May 8th 155th Celebration
Photo credit- Alex Bligh

(more photos from events in the 'Gallery' tab on our website)



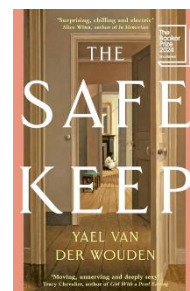
Book Review By Holly Fletcher

The Safe Keep
Yael Van Der Wouden

Winner of this year's Women Prize for fiction, this gripping and historically authentic novel explores the weight of history in post-war Netherlands. It examines repression and the ways in which this can manifest - particularly for women, who learn that it is sometimes safer to conceal their true selves.

Isabell lives in her late mother's house and is leading an uneventful life. She is consumed with maintaining the house and all its precious contents. When her brother Louis asks her to host his current girlfriend while he is away, she must comply. After all, the house has been promised to Louis and Isabel is merely its custodian.

From the moment we meet the three siblings and observe how the author captures their interactions; it becomes clear just how exceptional Van Der Wouden eye for detail is. She has a true talent for showing rather than telling, allowing the reader to feel the weight of the scene through the subtlest of observations.



The gentle tension that builds throughout this novel has been well crafted, creating a fully formed world that is wholly immersive. We are drawn into a creepy gothic tale of what it is like to be stuck in one's home with a stranger. At times it reminded me of a Victorian mystery, except that this is a very much a contemporary novel, and one that makes for an excellent addition to the queer literary cannon.