

Dunedin Athenaeum & Mechanics' Institute

Newsletter

September 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.

Kia ora,

I'm Bridget, the new girl on the Athenaeum Committee. I'm thrilled to be part of the team. I've been involved in literary things for adults and young people for a long time.

I was a founding member of the Dunedin Writers and Readers Trust, and spent 9 years on there. I've been a judge on the NZ Children's Book Awards and have been involved in various literary committees and groups over the years, as well as participating in other community groups, events, and projects.

I'm a mad keen reader of anything and everything. I love books in all forms and most genres, and I set myself reading challenges all the time and am currently working on the Booker Longlist (4 to go). I work for the National Library as part of the Services to Schools Team. I've always loved the Athenaeum Library and am delighted to be part of the team.

What's Happening

The Dunedin Writers and Readers festival is coming up on the

17th-19th of October.

You're welcome to pick up your programme from here. Or to find out more online, or to book tickets visit:

www.dunedinwritersfestival.co.nz

We have a fantastic new set up for events. With four speakers, a podium microphone and wireless a microphone. We welcome enquiries to host your book launch, presentation or book club, etc. Please feel free to get in touch.



Athenaeum & Mechanics Institute 1950. From the Hocken Digital Collection. Allied Press collection.



Book Review

The Book of Guilt
Catherine Chidgey

Chidgey masterfully employs the voice of a child as her primary protagonist, a technique she has previously explored. This approach to storytelling is both challenging and bold and the writer handles it with nuance and skill.

Set in a skewed version of England in 1979, thirteen-year old triplets

Vincent, Lawrence and William are one of the last remaining residents of a home scheme run by the government. But with a change in government, the scheme is shutting down. The question of what to do with the remaining children - and how to integrate them into society becomes a point of contention. The unsettling mystery of why people seem to fear these children adds layers of tension, making this a gripping, page turning read.

The story is told from the perspective of Vincent, one of the triplets; Nancy, a girl who is not allowed outside of the house. And the Minister of Loneliness, who is trying to make meaningful changes. Chidgey weaves in history with a slant, which creates a world that is unsettling and realistic.



This book would make a fantastic TV adaptation, I can imagine it being one of those BBC mini dramas mysterious. Which is to say, it was an entertaining read and brings forth some interesting and relevant enquiries about fascism and nature vs nurture