

November 2025

Kia ora koutou,

You may have noticed some changes in the library over the last few weeks. We have been freshening up the crime section. This makes space for new books and makes browsing more enticing and easier.

A warm welcome to those of you who have recently joined our library. A reminder that you can issue up to 10 books at a time. I am happy to renew items via email or telephone.

On November 25th we had a very special celebration for the unveiling of a plaque on the Dunedin Writers' Walk to honour of Sir Vincent O'Sullivan.



The event was attended by various writers from around NZ and abroad. We have a great selection of Vincent's books here at the Athenaeum, some of these have been kindly donated by his family.

Holly Fletcher - Head Librarian

What's Happening

According to our system, the most popular book to be issued out this past year was

James by Percival Everett

Christmas Hours

The library's last day open.
Thursday 18th December.

Re-opening on:
Tuesday 6th of January



Photo from a Southern Heritage Festival event - which took place here on the 28th October. Featured a presentation from Hocken Archivist Tom Riley.



Book Review

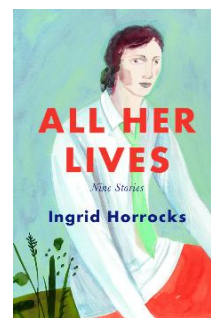
All Her Lives

By Ingrid Horrocks

In this short story collection by Wellington -based writer Ingrid Horrocks, we witness the intimate lives of women between 1795 and today. Each of the nine stories is set against a political or social crisis of the moment – from Wollstonecraft's revolutionary 19th century feminism to contemporary struggles with war, trauma, identity, and climate activism.

The stories are firmly rooted in New Zealand, taking observations that

are rich with rural landscape to urban place names. Horrocks bridges historical and modern feminism, exploring what has changed and what stills needs improvement. Particularly, when it comes to women's fundamental battles between duty and desire, safety and freedom.



Sometimes, the stories feel too real and the longing for a fictional place creeps in. Perhaps, the authors skill at non-fiction is at play, but I was left wanting to inhabit a place less telling. The book moves between quiet acts of caregiving and bold rebellion, capturing both the hesitations and demands for autonomy.

Overall, the text felt a little safe and predictable. Ultimately, the book is about women testing boundaries, pushing against constraints. Horrocks does well to investigate these themes, but whether she is bringing something new to the conversation is debatable.