



A word from the President

Kia Ora Dear Members

I hope you are all keeping cozy, by which I mean, I hope you have all found nooks to read books and other such activities. I love the word “nook”. It suggests a safe contained space that is close (as Eeyore would say) without being confined. Book nooks, nibble nooks, breakfast nooks all fall into this category. I think we at the FDNWC have found a “meeting nook” within the bounds of Level One in the National Library. Our last event was our AGM, which was held in the space at the far end of the General Reading Room, a small space which still allowed us to spread out some of the new gems of the collections (thanks to Mary). We are very grateful to the managers of the Reading Rooms for this.

It is certainly the weather for snuggling up with a good book or having brave friends around to informal dinners of soup and apple crumble (at least for me). For those of us who still put pen to paper it's a great time to reach out to more distant friends, and a time for planning.

On this theme may I reach out to you, dear members, with my electronic pen, to make a request – we need to promote our collections but also to come up with events that will entice yourselves and bring potential new members in. Could I ask, on behalf of the committee, that you have a think about themes you'd like us to explore or local authors you would like us to approach as speakers? Any suggestions are welcomed. Any ideas can be sent to the committee at friendsdnw@gmail.com

Until our next event keep safe and warm.

Corrina Gordon
FDNWC President



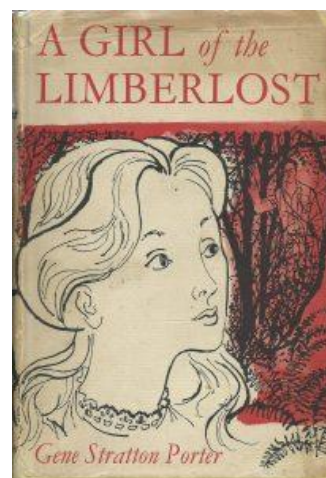
Events to mark Children's Book Week – Tuesday 18 August 2025

On the afternoon of Tuesday 18 August 2026 there will be a 'drop in and read' opportunity for Friends and anyone else who is interested in vintage children's books. We will have a selection of books from the NCC (National Children's Collection) available for a relaxed reading experience, and we have chosen a date range of 1940 to the early 1980s for a trip down memory lane. If you have a favourite book published between these dates that you would like to be included, please email me mary.skarott@dia.govt.nz. Of course, it will need to be a title that is held in the NCC. We can also include reprints of books that were originally published pre-1940.

<https://natlib.govt.nz/events/drop-in-and-read-explore-vintage-books-from-the-national-childrens-collection-august-18-2026>

We have planned this event to lead into the children's book week panel discussion “Thriving as a nation of readers” being hosted by the National Library that same evening. Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador Kate De Goldi will chair that session. For more information about the evening event see the [National Library website](#).

Mary Skarott
Research Librarian, Children's Literature



A girl of the Limberlost

by Gene Stratton Porter, edited by Olive Jones
(Leicester England: Brockhampton Press, 1959)

One of the books that will included in
“Drop in and read” on 18 August 2026.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held at the National Library on Tuesday 23 June 2026. The evening began, as is our tradition, with an opportunity to mix and mingle over food and drinks supplied by the committee (thank you!).

We then moved to the back of the first floor reading room where the Turnbull's Children's Literature Specialist, Mary Skarott, had a selection of informational picture books and picture book biographies added to the National Children's Collection in the past year. Thanks to Mary for arranging this interesting collection for us to see.

The formal AGM followed with 13 members in attendance. We were particularly delighted to welcome three new members to the meeting. Full minutes of the meeting are available on the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White website, as are the reports from the President, Treasurer, Research Librarian, Webmaster, and Facebook editor

<https://dnwfriends.nzl.org/index.php/home/agm/>.

Please do get in touch if you are unable to access the reports from the website and would like a copy.

Corrina welcomed attendees, with a special welcome to Sam Orchard, whose role at the library was recently extended to cover the children's literature collections. Sam introduces himself later on this page.

Highlights from the meeting include

- Three events were held during the year.
 - 11 June AGM 2025
 - 23 September 2025 *Celebrating the champion — Maurice Gee's contribution to children's literature* [report in Newsletter 69 December 2025]
 - 29 April 2026 *History, goodness and prejudice in Maurice Gee's 'The Fireraiser'* [see report later in this newsletter]
- The annual subscription rate for Friends remains at \$20:00 per year. Donations are always welcome.
- Newsletter 68 was published in June 2025 and 69 in December 2025.
- Examples of the FDNWC website have been archived by the National Library and can be found through the catalogue
https://natlib-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1s57t7d/NLNZ_ALMA11269565470002836
The website will be collected again in December 2026.

Joan McCracken
FDNWC Committee

Election of committee

All the current members of the committee were willing to stand again, and as there were no new nominations the committee was re-elected.

Committee 2026-2027

President: Corrina Gordon

Treasurer/Membership Secretary/Webmaster: Jeff Hunt

Facebook editor: Chantalle Smith

The roles of Minutes Secretary and Newsletter Editor will be shared by committee members on a roster.

Committee: Chantalle Smith, Joan McCracken, Kathryn Walls.

Ex officio – Research Librarian, Children's Literature Mary Skarott.

Introducing Sam Orchard



Sam Orchard

Photographer: Max Olijnyk (Department of Internal Affairs)

In 2025 Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga Archives New Zealand and Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa National Library redesigned our structure to deliver shared services and resources. As part of this structural redesign there was a change in portfolio areas for the curatorial team at the Alexander Turnbull Library. This included the development of the new curatorial portfolio of 'Cartoons, Comics, Illustrated books and Children's Literature'. The establishment of Children's Literature as a key area of focus highlights the important role that Children's Literature in Aotearoa plays in our national heritage.

A wide-ranging portfolio, such as this, presents a huge opportunity to explore the connections and differences that creators have in approaching these different formats and media. At first glance editorial cartoons may not appear to have much in common with Children's Literature given they are created for very different purposes and audiences. However, there are

political cartoonists like Trevor Lloyd, Chris Slane, and Toby Morris who have worked steadily across both. Similarly comic artists like Michel Mulipola, Mat Tait and Isobel Joy Te Aho-White have all drawn comics and children's books.

This new curatorial portfolio complements the important work that Mary Skarott continues to do as the Research Librarian for Children's Literature. We'll continue to build the collection of published material relating to children's literature in Aotearoa and the Pacific, and this portfolio also allows for focus on the unpublished material relating to children's authors - manuscripts, working papers, and original artworks.

Sam Orchard
Curator

From the Research Librarian

A full report of the year's activities and highlights was given at the AGM. This report can be found at the end of the minutes (and on the FDNWC [website](#)).

In the display cabinet

The display cabinet has now returned to the reading room, after taking a break during the move of the Conservation Lab to the new Archives building, Te Rua. There is no cabinet without the skills of the Conservation team, who prepare the books for display, create the mounts for them, and print out the captions.

The current display was originally prepared with a view to showing it in 2025, to mark 150 years since the death of Hans Christian Andersen. Better late than never!

#37 Hans Christian Andersen, 1805-1875 (on display from 19 May 2026)

Danish author Hans Christian Andersen was a prolific writer, and his works for adults included plays, novels and travelogues. However, he is best known for his literary fairy tales written for children, including *The little mermaid*, *The snow queen*, *The little match girl* and *The ugly duckling*. These stories are particularly notable for their emotional depth and poignancy.

Since his death in 1875, Andersen's fairy tales have regularly been published in new versions – either with his original text or as adaptations - and these have included the visual interpretations of hundreds of illustrators. Formats have ranged from cheap and cheerful paper covered publications to lavishly produced gift books. Andersen's stories are also a source of inspiration for authors who use them as the basis for new stories, such as *Tinder, the little match girl*

strikes back, and *Breadcrumbs* which are part of the display.

Titles in the cabinet are from both the Dorothy Neal White Collection and the National Children's Collection:

Andersen, H.C. *Stories from Hans Andersen*. Illustrations by Edmund Dulac. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911.

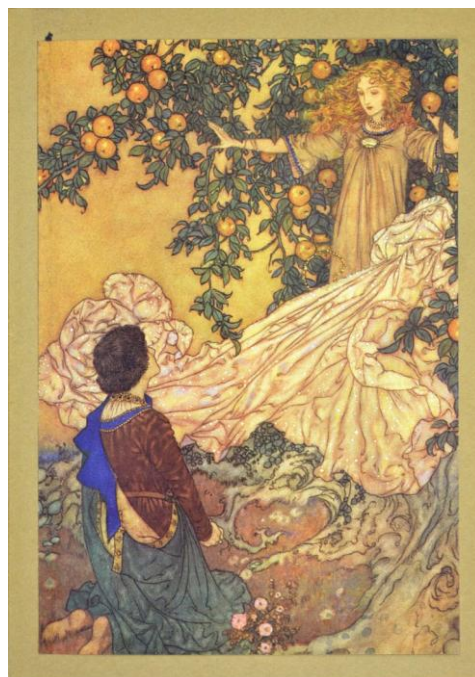


Illustration for "The garden of Paradise"
By Edmund Dulac in *Stories from Hans Andersen* (1911)

Andersen, H.C. *The ugly duckling and other fairy tales*. Translated by Mrs Edgar Lucas; illustrations by Maxwell Armfield. London: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1913.

Andersen, H.C. *The ugly duckling and other stories*. Edited by W.T. Stead. Melbourne: Review of Reviews Office, 189-?

Andersen, H.C. *The wild swans and other stories*. Illustrations by Mabel Lucie Attwell. London: Raphael Tuck, 191-?

Andersen, H.C. *Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales*. Illustrated by Jiří Trnka. London: Spring Books, 1959. Jiří Trnka received the Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration in 1968.

Carroll, Emma. *The little match girl strikes back*. Illuminated by Lauren Child. London: Simon & Schuster, 2022.

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The little match girl*. Emma Carroll sets her reimagining of Andersen's story in Victorian London, against the backdrop of the 1888 labour strike by 1,400 women and girls working in the Bryant and May match factory.

Gardner, Sally. *Tinder*. Drawings by David Roberts. London: Indigo, 2013.

Inspired by *The tinderbox*, Andersen's first published story for children. Sally Gardner has set her story in the time of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Soldier Otto Hundebiss is badly wounded in the Battle of Breitenfeld, but he escapes Death and finds himself on a darkly magical journey. In her author's note Gardner says: "A fairy tale is a fascinating medium in which to examine conflict, love and loss – for all good fairy stories have dark and light at their heart."

Ursu, Anne. *Breadcrumbs*. Drawings by Erin McGuire. New York: Walden Pond Press, 2011.

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The snow queen* and set in contemporary Minneapolis. Hazel and Jack are both eleven and have been best friends since they were six. Then, one day, Jack changes, and Hazel knows that something is terribly wrong. She bravely embarks on a journey into the frozen, enchanted wood to bring her friend back home.



The current display case in the General Reading Room.
Photographer: Mary Skarott

Additional photos and text from the display are available here:

National Library blog:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/blog/posts/from-denmark-to-the-world>

National Library Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryNZ/posts/pfbid0AQ65BoKsYHn6f9RAYMEupko549YWDhPWqWJs4eJkzL8dAHT5Go6V6Lh2BRnYnQl>

Mary Skarott

Research Librarian, Children's Literature

History, goodness and prejudice in Maurice Gee's 'The Fire-raiser'

FDNWC Event, 29 April 2026

It was a real delight to hear Harry Ricketts present aspects of Maurice Gee's *The Fire-Raiser* in the Stout Centre at Victoria University Te Herenga Waka. We are very grateful to our hosts at the Stout Centre for enabling this event.

This was the second of our externally hosted events and continued the tribute to Maurice Gee after his death in June 2025.

Harry began with setting the scene for the story – the fictional town of Jessop (a substitute for Nelson). The story is set in 1915 when World War I had been going for a year and touches strongly on the bias of the townspeople towards the Germans living there and the disturbing power of mob mentality. Kitty Wix and her friends, who are central to the plot, try to stop the arsonist who is terrifying their small New Zealand town.

Harry spoke about the main characters in the book - the fire raiser, Edgar Marwick, and the four children, and how skilled Gee was in bringing out all of their personalities within a fairly short book, giving a depth to each of them which captivates the reader.



Harry Ricketts speaking at the Stout Centre. Photographer: Corrina Gordon

Gee captured a real atmosphere of the social and historical events. In his talk, Harry revealed that some of the events described in this book were based on real life happenings, such as the smashing of the pork butcher's shop. Though it is a children's book, the

themes dealt with are as much part of the adult world as those of children.

Harry noted that it was interesting that the TV series of *The Fire-Raiser* had actually been aired before the book was published. Maurice Gee was originally approached to write the TV series and then later turned it into a book, rounding out the characters.

It was a cosy group which attended the event and was much enjoyed by all listeners.

I have linked the article below to give an insight into Maurice Gee's own story of how *The Fire-Raiser* came to be:

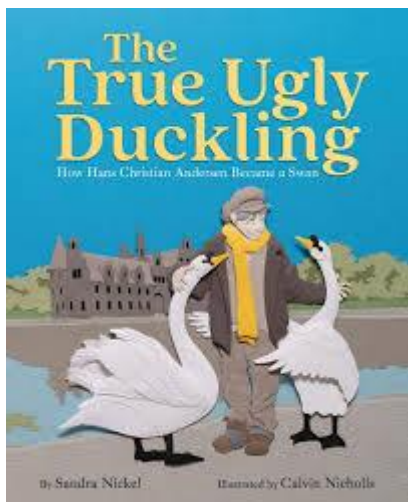
<https://www.nzonscreen.com/m/background/b8be743c-b849-4745-92d8-847b7be8c9d5/all-series/the-fire-raiser/>

Corrina Gordon
FDNWC President

From the National Children's Collection

These are two of the picture books that I selected for display at this year's AGM.

The true ugly duckling: how Hans Christian Andersen became a swan by Sandra Nickel; illustrated by Calvin Nicholls. Hoboken, N.J.: Levine Querido, 2026.

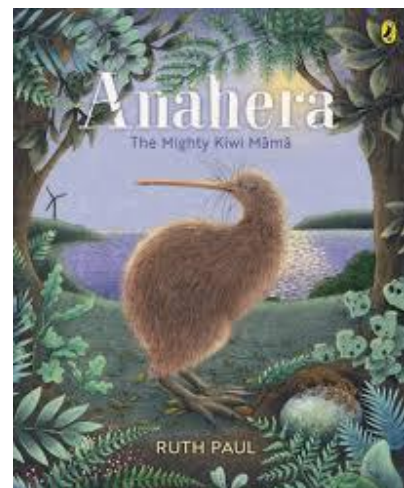


"There was once a poor shoemaker's son, who was tall and skinny. His nose was two times as long as everyone else's and his heart two times as tender." So begins this picture book biography which tells the story of Hans Christian Andersen's transformation from a poor, ridiculed country boy to an acclaimed author. As the title suggests, Sandra Nickel employs a fairy tale structure, modelled on *The Ugly Duckling*. With many setbacks along the way, our hero perseveres to overcome the difficulties in his path and achieve his goal.

The story refers often to Andersen's sensitivity and depth of feeling, which was combined with his deep creativity and desire to entertain. It is this tender-heartedness, and his understanding of coping with adversity, which fed into his stories and makes them so relatable. Sandra Nickel discusses this relationship of personality to story in her author's note. Andersen was likely to have been on the autism spectrum, and she "wanted to show that Andersen used his originality ... to find his place in the world."

The illustrations by paper sculptor Calvin Nicholls are quite remarkable. Nicholls created low relief paper sculptures which were then photographed. Bright, clear colours are balanced with soft greys, whites and browns. One of Andersen's favourite pastimes was cutting out shapes from paper, so the choice of medium is very appropriate.

Anahera: the mighty kiwi māmā by Ruth Paul.
New Zealand: Penguin Random House New Zealand, 2025.



Wellington author and illustrator Ruth Paul tells the heartwarming story of Anahera, a very special North Island brown kiwi. During her many years as part of the Otorohanga Kiwi House breeding programme, Anahera hatched over 60 chicks. Then, when she was in her 40s (the typical lifespan for her species being 25-50 years), she became an integral part of the Capital Kiwi conservation project. The story is told by a little girl whose kuia works at the kiwi house and has spent many years caring for Anahera.

With her calm temperament, determination and physical strength, Anahera was the ideal choice to help establish a breeding population of wild kiwi in the western hills of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. She and her partner, Nouveau, were among the first group of kiwi released as part of the project in November 2022, and their first chick to hatch in the wild arrived in October 2024.

The characterful, softly coloured illustrations perfectly capture Anahera's environment, her spirited personality, and the commitment and care of the people who have worked so hard to conserve the kiwi population.

Anahera is not the only mother bird who has played a crucial role in the conservation of her species. In similar vein, I can recommend this book about Chatham Island black robin, *Old Blue*. It was the non-fiction winner at the AIM Children's Book Awards in 1994:

Old Blue: the rarest bird in the world by Mary Taylor.
Originally published: Auckland : Ashton Scholastic, 1993. Redesigned and updated edition published 2014.

Mary Skarott
Research Librarian, Children's Literature

Kate De Goldi at U3A Wellington

In Wellington we are extremely fortunate to have a marvelous U3A programme. Kate De Goldi was a recent speaker, and on 29 May 2026 she gave a wonderful, thought-provoking presentation on *Reading for pleasure: more important than ever*.

Kate opened her talk with Jenny Bornholdt's poem "In the garden", published in *Selected poems* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2016) which talks about the onion flower

a plain enough thing
while underneath
the feelers are out
hooking into other systems
forming the network

which was illustrative of, I believe, how Kate sees the network of readers who reach out and pass on the joy of reading for pleasure.

In her role as Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador for Aotearoa New Zealand Kate advocates for, models, and inspires reading for pleasure in our young people, their whānau and communities. The role brings her into contact with young people throughout the country and in her talk she shared disturbing statistics about the number of young people (and older ones too) who seldom open a book for the pleasure of reading. It was disturbing listening – but Kate leavened the sad statistics with some stories of positive reading experiences she has had at schools throughout the country where she continues to meet enthusiastic young readers and the teachers, librarians and whānau members who support their reading.

Kate urged us all to become proselytisers for reading. Whatever motivates us to read for pleasure – entertainment, comfort, reflection, knowledge, excitement, connection – share it with others.



Kate De Goldi

Photo from the Reading Ambassador website

You can keep in touch with Kate's Te Awhito experiences – and read about the first two holders of the role, Ben Brown & Alan Dingley, through the Reading Ambassador website.

<https://readingambassador.nz/posts/welcome-to-my-reading-for-pleasure-blog>

Joan McCracken
FDNWC Committee & newsletter editor

Congratulations Claire!

It was such a thrill to attend the inaugural Lynley Dodd Children's Writer award presentation at Unity Books on 22 July 2026.

This was how Unity described the event in their newsletter "We are going to celebrate the opening of the new space on the evening of July 22nd. It's going to be quite an event. Aotearoa's foremost expert on children's books, Kate De Goldi, will speak, The NZSO will play. The Arts Foundation will be announcing the \$30,000 Lynley Dodd Children's Writers Award for 2026 and His Worship the Mayor, Andrew Little, will be mayorally cutting the ribbon."

It was an ideal venue for this special evening. Kate De Goldi, who with Anne Packer and Tim Tipene selected the award winner, introduced the award and Dame Lynley Dodd herself presented the award to Wellington writer Claire Mabey to great acclaim from the audience. You can read the selectors' citation and Claire's response on the Arts Foundation website <https://www.thearts.co.nz/awards/lynley-dodd-childrens-writers-award>

We had the bonus of hearing some reminiscences from Ann Mallinson, publisher of Lynley Dodd's wonderful *Hairy Maclary* books. Claire, the founder of Verb Wellington, LitCrawl Wellington, and books editor at The Spinoff, is the

author of *The raven's eye* fantasy novels. Her most recent book *Cass and the beast* (her first picture book) was available for purchase on the Award evening giving attendees the opportunity to buy it before the official launch in early August.



Dame Lynley Dodd and Claire Mabey holding the Children's Writers Award 2026 at Unity Books.
Jessica Palalagi, Kaiwhakahaere / Director of The Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi is standing on the left.
Photographer: Joan McCracken

I was very fortunate to have another opportunity to hear Claire speak a couple of weeks later. Elizabeth Knox chaired a session, "Sacrifice and rebellion", at Writers on Monday with Claire and Rachael King the guests. If you are in Wellington I highly recommend this series. You can find the programme here.

<https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/visit/events/writers-on-mondays-series>

Further reading and listening

NZ Society of Authors website pages about the Award
<https://authors.org.nz/2026-lynley-dodd-childrens-writers-award-to-claire-mabey/>

An interview with Claire on Radio NZ after her award
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/saturday/audio/2019044851/the-2026-lynley-dodd-children-s-writers-award>

Claire Mabey's website
<https://www.clairemabey.com/>

A conversation about *Cass*
<https://www.thesapling.co.nz/a-conversation-about-cass-claire-mabey-and-jill-calder-on-their-new-picture-book/>

Joan McCracken
FDNWC Committee & newsletter editor

FDNWC is on Facebook

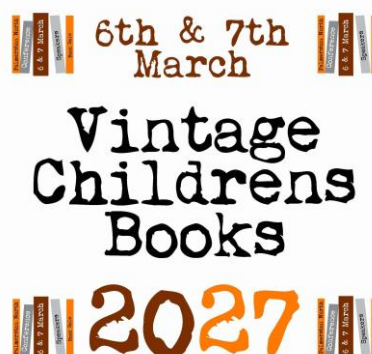
Follow us here:

<https://www.facebook.com/dnwfriends/>

Vintage Children's Book Conference 2027

The fifth Vintage Children's Book Conference will be held in Palmerston North on 6th and 7th March 2027. There will be our usual range of speakers on various topics relating to vintage children's books (including Harry Ricketts on *Narnia*), with a particular focus on 'girls own'. As well there will be a fiendish quiz and two wall quizzes, discussion groups, the book sale and the opportunity to meet other readers of our favourite books.

Registration opens 1 October 2026. Forms will be available from the Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064597426155> (note you will need to join the group to see posts) or a link / PDF can be emailed to you on request.
Email: vintagechildrensbooksnz@gmail.com



Barbara Robertson
Vintage Childrens Books

Gavin Bishop & Children's Book Awards

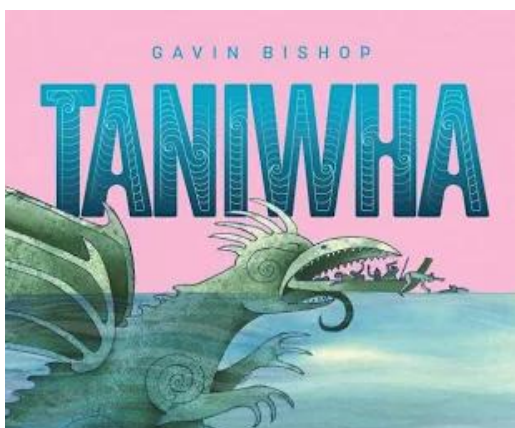
Gavin Bishop (Ngāti Pukeko, Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Mahuta, Tainui) has been shortlisted once more for the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young People. *Taniwha* (Penguin, 2025) has been shortlisted for the Elsie Locke Award for Non-Fiction and the Russell Clark Award for Illustration. Bishop is one of Aotearoa's acclaimed and decorated children's book authors and illustrators. He has published over 70 books over his long career, many of which have cemented their place in the bookshelves of families across Aotearoa, and has set the standard for what excellence in illustration looks like.

Bishop is a consummate storyteller, deftly weaving words and pictures together to immerse the reader in his worlds. His storytelling is intentional and sophisticated. As a graduate of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts, Bishop has a deep understanding of art as a medium for communication. Throughout his books you can see his skilful use of pencil, paint, scratchboard, collage, watercolour and more. He recognises how

these media produce meaning and is adept at knowing when to use what, and how to combine them. Beyond the mediums he implements, he incorporates visual metaphor, space, colour and shape to bring the readers with him.

His thirty years as a high school teacher likely informs the high trust he has for his audience to keep up with him as he plays with our expectations. *The house that Jack built* (1999) is a prime example of the way that Bishop provides a layered narrative that builds and complicates itself, weaving together Te Ao Pākehā and Te Ao Māori. Bishop uses a well-known rhyming verse throughout the narrative, while visually depicting the impacts of colonisation, and frames the story within both words and images depicting atua. The reader is asked to take all these elements into account in order to fully understand the message of *The house that Jack built* and our conflicting understandings of land and home.

Bishop comes back to history and place inviting us to have our feet firmly planted on the land as we learn about the Aotearoa we live in and love. He finds innovative ways to tell stories of Aotearoa, and it's a taonga to us all. Bishop is able to help children and adults alike re-frame our histories. Works like *Aotearoa: the New Zealand Story* (Puffin, 2017) and *Patu: the New Zealand Wars* (Puffin, 2023) combine historical research and art in order to shed light on stories that have historically been framed around Pākehā narratives. His work is contributing to our ability to retain important histories, pūrakau and understandings of te ao Māori – cementing these stories in an accessible, complex and visually compelling way. These books help us to understand our whenua, our whakapapa, our histories for Māori and tauwi readers alike.



Cover of Gavin Bishop's *Taniwha*
(Penguin Random House New Zealand, 2025)

Taniwha was published in 2025. This beautiful book recounts a variety of stories from across. Focusing on various taniwha, the book shares the way in which our

land has been shaped and the important lessons they bring.

The winners of the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young People will be announced at an awards ceremony to be held in Wellington on 19 August 2026. The full shortlist can be found on the Awards website <https://www.nzbookawards.nz/new-zealand-book-awards-for-children-and-young-adults/2026-awards/shortlist/>

Sam Orchard
Curator

Winnie-the-Pooh turns 100

Happy centenary to Winnie-the-Pooh! The first collection of stories which featured the character was *Winnie-the-Pooh*, published on the 14 October 1926 by Methuen & Co in England. Written by A. A. Milne and illustrated by E. H. Shepard it was an instant success, having sold more than 150,000 copies before the end of the year.



Introduction snippet of Winnie-the-Pooh from the Evening News, 24 December 1952

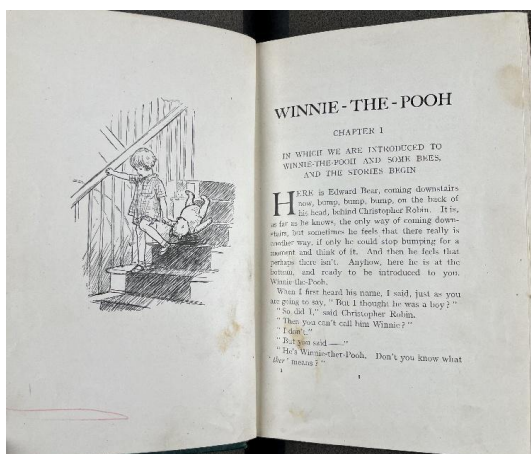
Although we celebrate 100 years of Winnie-the-Pooh in 2026, he first appeared in a commissioned story published in the Evening News, 24 December 1925. However, the illustrations in this story were by J. H. Dowd.

Milne and Shepard had already collaborated before *Winnie-the-Pooh* was published, having worked together for the magazine, *Punch*, and publishing an earlier book of children's poetry, *When we were very young* (1924).

It is well known that Milne's son, Christopher Robin Milne, was his inspiration for writing the stories. The stories were inspired by Christopher's toys. The main character was also inspired by a female bear named

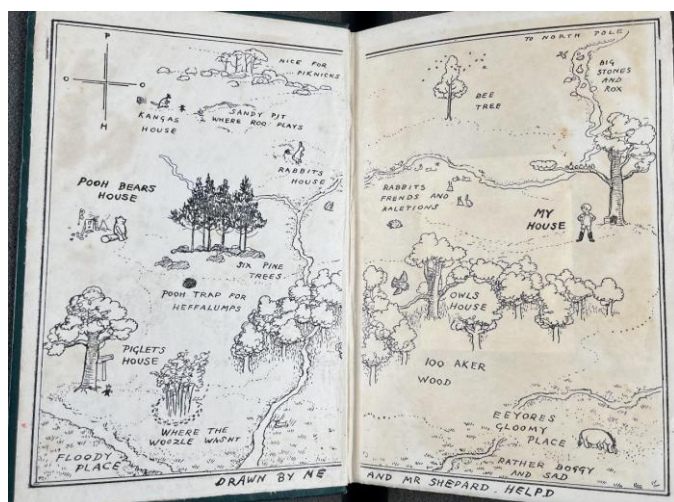
Winnie that they had seen at the London Zoo. Some of the stories were adapted from previously published writings from *Punch*. This includes the first chapter, which was adapted from 'The wrong sort of bees'. Many of Christopher Robin Milne's toys are now on display at the New York City Library. They were donated to the library in 1987. The inspiration for the Hundred Acre Wood is based on the Ashdown Forest in East Sussex.

Due to the success of the book, further publications were written. Next came the collection of poems, *Now we are six* (1927), then the sequel to *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *The house at Pooh Corner* (1928).



Winnie-the-Pooh by A A Milne
(London: Methuen & Co., 1926). Chapter 1 first page and illustration. Copy held in the Dorothy Neal White Collection.

Winnie the Pooh has been portrayed in many different adaptations over the years, including in theatre, radio, audio, film, television and games. In 1931 the merchandising and media rights to Winnie the Pooh were bought by Stephen Slesinger. It is Slesinger who is credited with giving Winnie the Pooh his red shirt for the first time.



Winnie-the-Pooh by A A Milne
(London: Methuen & Co., 1926).
Illustration by E. H. Shepard of the Hundred Acre Wood.
Copy held in the Dorothy Neal White Collection.

In 1961 Disney licensed the rights to use the Winnie the Pooh characters. From 1966 many films were produced, starting with *Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree*. The most recent film was the live action, *Christopher Robin*, which was released in 2018. From the 1980s Disney started producing television series as well.

Winnie the Pooh may be 100 years old, but he remains a favourite of children to this day. I am sure he will continue to delight children for at least another 100 years.

Further reading

'Winnie-the-Pooh', Wikipedia,

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie-the-Pooh>

'Winnie-the-Pooh' (book), Wikipedia,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie-the-Pooh_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie-the-Pooh_(book))

Chantalle Smith
FDNWC Committee

Storylines National Hui 2026

The 2026 Storylines Children's Writers and Illustrators' National Hui is being held at Dilworth School, Remuera, Auckland on 3 & 4 October 2026.

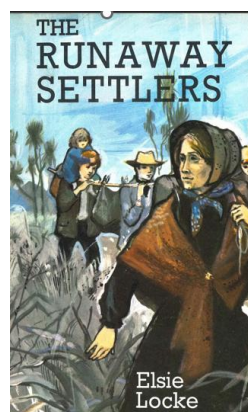
There is an amazing programme!

All the details can be found on the Storylines website.

<https://www.storylines.org.nz/national-hui-2026/>

How to find a forgotten book

When I was presenting my report at our recent AGM, I talked about some of the most common children's literature research enquiries that come my way. One of these is the quest for a fondly remembered book. Features such as plot, setting and characters are often still clear in the reader's mind but the title and author are not.



Depending on the level of detail provided, and its accuracy, I do track down a lot of these books. Very occasionally I have a good idea of what the book might be straight away - for example, I have had several enquiries over the years accurately describing the plot of Elsie Locke's *The runaway settlers* (image shows the 1st edition published by Jonathan Cape in 1965).

Otherwise, I employ strategies such as searching our online catalogue, checking printed subject indexes, and, of course, judicious use of Google.

But sometimes I must admit defeat and suggest that the researcher continues the hunt on their own. There are a lot of forgotten books out there and, fortunately, a lot of people willing to offer answers. The two sites below allow you to post a question about a book, and to rely on the online 'hive mind' to see what suggestions are given:

Name that book, on the Library Thing site:

<https://www.librarything.com/ngroups/724/Name-that-Book>

The children's books community forum on the Abe Books site

<https://community.abebooks.com/s/forum-topic-results>

Mary Skarott

Research Librarian, Children's Literature

The curious world of Pamela Allen

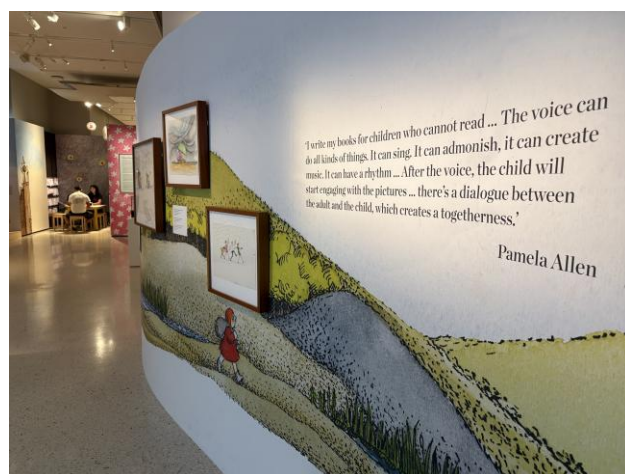
On a recent trip to Sydney, I called into the State Library of New South Wales and found that one of their current exhibitions is about children's book writer and illustrator Pamela Allen. "The Curious World of Pamela Allen" is a substantial exhibition that opened in September 2025 and runs until July 2027. Allen, now 92 and with over 50 books to her name, gifted her extensive archive to the Library in 2020, including 460 original illustrations and 76 boxes of manuscript material.



Because of Allen's choice to gift her archive to an Australian institution, and the subject matter of some of her books (such as the wayward duckling Alexander who lives with his family in Sydney's botanic gardens), I assumed Allen was Australian. To my surprise, her biography in the exhibition outlined that she was born in Auckland in 1934 and moved to Sydney with her husband and children in 1974. It was in Sydney that her

career in children's books began, first as an illustrator, before moving on to write and illustrate her own books, beginning with the hugely successful *Mr Archimedes' Bath* in 1980. After returning to live in New Zealand over 20 years later, Allen won the Margaret Mahy Medal in 2004 and was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2005.

The exhibition, curated by Sarah Morley and supported by Allen's longtime publisher Penguin Books, is a joyful celebration of Allen's work designed for both children and adults to enjoy. As promotional material says, "Play in Mr McGee's tree, flip through giant pages of *Bertie and the Bear*, and make a splash with the animals from *Who sank the boat?* Pop on a favourite character's hat and discover cosy reading nooks and secret hidey-holes along the way."



As well as the exhibition's overall design, including large reproductions of scenes and characters from the books on the walls, I particularly enjoyed the original illustrations and manuscript material that showed the development of particular books from initial mock-ups through to the final publication. It was interesting to see choices and changes made by Allen – for example, *Mr McGee*, published in 1987 and then the star of seven further books, was originally named Mr Me.



The exhibition extends beyond the Library's walls with a self-guided walking tour of the locations in *Alexander's outing*, which I sadly didn't have time for on the day I visited.

The Curious World of Pamela Allen is a wonderful celebration of one writer's impressive career and the magic of children's books for readers of all ages. You can read more about the exhibition and see more photos in this ABC article.

Further reading

Profile of Pamela Allen on Penguin NZ website

<https://www.penguin.co.nz/authors/pamela-allen>

State Library of NSW exhibition page

<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/mr-archimedes-moves>

Interview with Pamela Allen and information about the exhibition on the ABC

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-09-29/children-author-illustrator-pamela-allen-exhibition/105816018>

Text and images

Cherie Jacobson

Director, Katherine Mansfield House & Garden

<https://www.katherinemansfield.com/>

Obituaries

Three of our members have died in the last 18 months. We appreciate their membership of the Friends and extend our sympathies to family and friends.

Kathleen Sheila Williams (1939-2015)



I first joined the staff of the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1972. One of the senior staff at the time was Sheila Williams, the Chief Cataloguer. I worked in the Acquisitions and Reference sections so didn't often work directly with Sheila, but I was definitely aware of her – and rather in awe of her! In the following 50 years we were quite often at the same meetings and events, and it was special to have this long-time connection.

Sheila was the oldest daughter of Canon Nigel Williams and Nora Williams. Educated at Victoria University of Wellington and New Zealand Library School she worked at the Alexander Turnbull Library from 1961 to 1979,

ultimately as Chief Cataloguer. She then had a position in the National Library of New Zealand, before moving to the Victoria University Library in 1990. While at the Turnbull Library she was Assistant Editor of *The New Zealand National Bibliography*, volumes 1 and 5, edited by Chief Librarian Graham Bagnall. From 1993 she was a lecturer in the postgraduate library programme at Victoria University.

In the very first newsletter published by the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection (August 1989) there is an article about some books newly acquired for the collection. This notes "Through the generosity of Anne Burnett, Mrs N Williams and Sheila Williams, the collection now holds a complete set of A A Milne's best known children's books in a matched first edition set." The article goes on to talk about other books donated by the Williams family. Sheila remained a member of the Friends for the rest of her life, and generously donated items to both the Turnbull and the Dorothy Neal White collections.

Sheila was a dedicated member of the Friends of the Turnbull Library committee for 31 years (1993-2024) and was made an honorary member of FoTL in 2024. She was also an active member of the Library Association (LIANZA), becoming a Fellow in 1985 and an honorary life member in 2002.



Staff of the Alexander Turnbull Library at the farewell of Chief Librarian Graham Bagnall, 1973.

Sheila is 5th left, front row, next to Graham Bagnall. Photographer unidentified. ATL reference no: [1/2-C-028291-F](#)

Sheila often attended events with her younger sister, Priscilla, who worked in Foreign Affairs. They also regularly spent time at their beach house at Raumati (the house was designed by well-known Wellington architect George Porter) and also travelled overseas most years. Both sisters were enthusiastic about their family history (they descended from Aotearoa New Zealand's first Bishop of Waiapu, William Williams) and played a significant role in the Williams Family

Bicentennial Reunion held in 2023. Priscilla died in 2024.

Sheila died on 31 March 2025 and her funeral was held at St Peter's Church in Willis Street, Wellington, where she had been an active member of the congregation for many years.

Further reading

Death notice in the *NZ Herald* 5 April 2025

<https://notices.nzherald.co.nz/nz/obituaries/nzherald-nz/name/sheila-williams-obituary>

Friends of the Turnbull Library website

<https://turnbullfriends.org.nz/in-memoriam/>

A stalwart of libraries and librarians – blog post by

Rachel Underwood on the National Library website

<https://natlib.govt.nz/blog/posts/sheila-williams-1939-2025>

Obituary on the Heritage NZ website

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/news/stories/obituary-sheila-williams>

Joan McCracken

FDNWC committee & newsletter editor

Nancy Evelyn Hill (1931-2025)

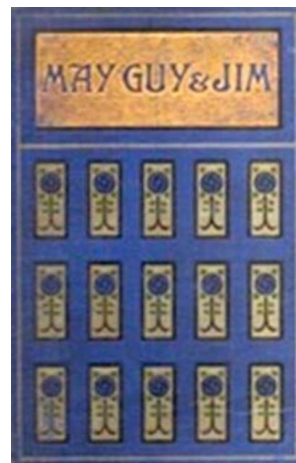
Nancy Hill (nee Forbes) lived a richly diverse professional and personal life. Graduating from Library School in 1954, she began her library career in Petone public library before moving on, as Librarian, to Oamaru public library. From there, she journeyed (then, by boat) to the UK where work experiences included travelling round Somerset in the mobile library van, an adventure she loved, teaching French in a challenging Stirlingshire school (Scotland), and gratefully landing a good job in Perth public library prior to taking off for Europe.

Back in New Zealand, Nancy joined the School Library Service's Head Office in Wellington and became one of the small team of book selection readers under the renowned Mary Hutton. She left in the late 1960s after marriage to Fred Hill, and Lucy's birth, but returned some 8 years later to rejoin the book selection team. A decade on, by then working in the new National Library building, she shifted to the Reference section where, as team leader, she was responsible for providing walk-in and mail-in services to general adult clients and senior secondary students.

Once retired, Nancy had more time to follow her many interests. To mention just a few: her delightful garden, Scottish country dancing, Chamber Music concerts, opera, CAB volunteering, social Italiano sessions with a few friends (results in Italy commendably successful!), travel (mainly local) and, of course, continuing to be a wide and discriminating reader.

Nancy was an enthusiastic supporter of the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection and, indeed, had known "Mrs White" personally. (From Oamaru it had been easy to get to interesting library events in Dunedin where Mrs White often played a prominent part). Nancy became a member of the Friends early on and, even after shifting to Waikanae after Fred's death, she continued to attend Friends' meetings (by train) until her late eighties.

Unassuming and perceptive, Nancy had a lovely dry wit. She was also a dedicated librarian and, as a colleague once said, "A joy to work with." Nancy will be fondly remembered by many.



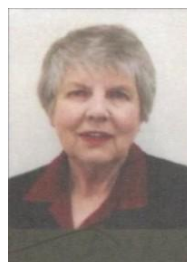
May, Guy, and Jim : with other stories for boys and girls by Ellinor Davenport Adams ; illustrated by John H. Bacon (London: Blackie, 1897)

Copy donated to the Dorothy Neal White Collection by Nancy Hill.

Alison Grant

FDNWC member

Barbara Rae Mabbett (1932-2016)



Barbara Mabbett was born in Auckland. She graduated MA with Honours from Auckland University. In the 1950s, after she graduated, Barbara and her husband Bill Mabbett moved to Kaitia. They later shifted to Wellington and after raising their four daughters and teaching for

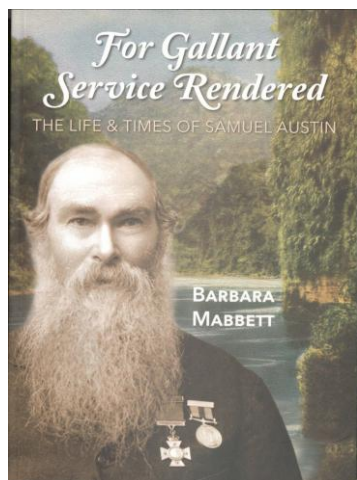
a number of years, Barbara took up the position of Manager at Learning Media.

Barbara was a life member of Music Therapy New Zealand. A tribute to her in their journal says "Barbara's skills in specialised writing and professional editing were invaluable to us, especially when she became a National Executive member in 1995 and editor of the music therapy journal in the same year." It goes on to note "Barbara's enthusiasm and willingness to help us

prepare and present materials to government officials” and details some of this important work.

Barbara received an MBE for services to education in 1993.

Barbara was an enthusiastic member of the Friends for many years. She was a regular attendee at the society events, and could be counted upon to ask relevant questions at the annual general meeting. In 1992, after the sudden closure of the Dorothy Neal White Room, Barbara joined a sub-committee to look at the issues and make submissions on the future of the collection. Although she played a less active role in recent years, she continued to support the Friends through her annual subscription.



While she was living in the Far North Barbara’s interest in historical research developed, but it wasn’t until her retirement that she was really able to pursue this interest. In 2011 *For gallant service rendered: the life & times of Samuel Austin, 1831-1903* was published by Steele Roberts. Samuel Austin was Barbara’s great-great uncle.

Bill also wrote a family history which is now held in the Turnbull Library. After his death in 2020 Barbara moved back to the north to be closer to family, and it was here that she died on 15 January 2026.

Further reading

Death notice in the *NZ Herald* 24 January 2026
<https://notices.nzherald.co.nz/nz/obituaries/nzherald-nz/name/barbara-mabbett-obituary?id=60612173>

Tribute by Dr Daphne Rickson in *MusT* (Music Therapy NZ) journal, April 2026 p.20
<https://www.musictherapy.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/MusT-April-2026.pdf>

Joan McCracken

FDNWC committee & newsletter editor



We also want to acknowledge the recent deaths of some well-known authors and illustrators of books for young people.

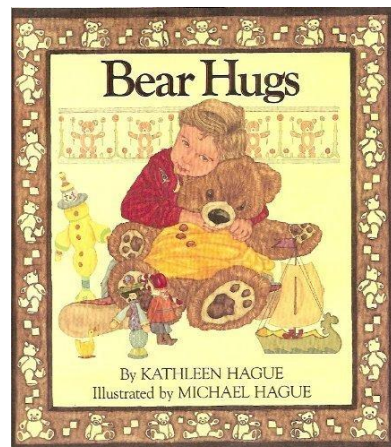
Michael Hague (1948 – 2026)



Michael Hague was an illustrator for many classic children’s book, including *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Secret Garden* and *The Hobbit*.

He was born in Los Angeles on 8 September 1948. His parents had immigrated from the United Kingdom following World War II. From a young age he enjoyed drawing, which his mother encouraged.

Michael Hague studied at the Art Centre College of Design in Los Angeles. This is where he met his wife, Kathleen Burdick. They married in 1970. The couple collaborated on many books including *Good night, fairies*, *Bear Hugs*, and *Out of the nursery and into the night*. In 2008 he collaborated with his son, Devon Hague to publish the graphic novel *In the small*.



Bear hugs by KathleenHague; illustrated by Michael Hague (London; Methuen Children’s, 1989)

Michael and Kathleen lived in Colorado Springs when he died on 10 March 2026, aged 77.

The National Library has 30 books of his in the National Children’s Collection.

Further reading

‘Michael Hague’, *Wikipedia*,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Hague

'Michael Hague Obituary', *Publishers Weekly*,
<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/99941-obituary-michael-hague.html>

'Michael Hague (1948-2026)', *The Bookwyrn's Hoard*,
<https://bookwyrmshoard.com/authors/michael-hague-1948-2026-obituary/>

Chantalle Smith
FDNWC committee

Jane Yolen (1939 –2026)



Jane Yolen was an author best known for her fantasy, science fiction and children's books.

Some of her well known books include the *Commander Toad* series, *The Emperor and the Kite*, and *Owl Moon*. By 2021 she had written over 400 books. The National Library holds 140 of her books. She co-wrote two books with her son, Adam Stemple, *Pay the Piper*, and *Troll Bridge*. She was also a journalist and editor for many magazines and publishers in New York City. During the 1990s she ran her own young adult fiction imprint, Jane Yolen Books.

She was born in New York City on 11 February 1939 to Will Yolen (a journalist) and Isabel Yolen (a psychiatric social worker who wrote short stories and designed crossword puzzles and acrostics).

Jane Yolen completed a Bachelor of Arts from Smith College, majoring in English and Russian Literature and minored in religion. Then completed a major in Education from the University of Massachusetts.

She was married to David Stemple, who died in 2006. They had three children. She died at her home in Hatfield Massachusetts on 11 June 2026, aged 87.

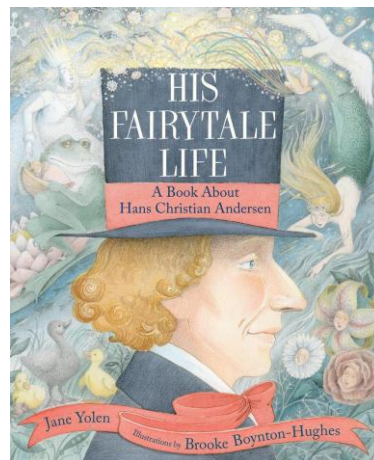
Further Reading

'Jane Yolen', *Wikipedia*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Yolen

'Janed Yolen Obituary', *Publishers Weekly*, 16 June 2026

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/100651-obituary-jane-yolen.html>



His fairytale life: a book about Hans Christian Andersen
by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Brooke Boynton-Hughes
(New York: Neal Porter Books / Holiday House, 1925))

Chantalle Smith
FDNWC committee

UPCOMING DATES

August

Saturday 15 to Friday 21 - New Zealand Children's Book Week, including two events at the National Library of New Zealand on Tuesday 18 August 2026.

- 2pm FDNWC Drop in & read
- 6pm Thriving as a nation of readers

<https://natlib.govt.nz/events/new-zealand-childrens-book-week-2026>

October

Thursday 1 - Vintage Childrens Books 2027 Registrations open.

November

Saturday 3 & Sunday 4 - 2026 Storylines Children's Writers and Illustrators' National Hui, Auckland

<https://www.storylines.org.nz/national-hui-2026/>

We expect to have a further FDNWC meetings this year – probably at the end of November or early December. Notices will be sent to members as soon as the date is confirmed.



FRIENDS of the DOROTHY NEAL WHITE COLLECTION MEMBERSHIP FORM



Members receive:

- Invitations to events
- Our irregular newsletter (usually 2 a year)
- Our occasional publication *Notes Books Authors*

The society has a Scholarship for a student at Victoria University of Wellington doing research on the collections supported by us. Donations for this are welcome.

To join the Friends you can pay by cash at meetings, but a bank deposit is preferred.

Our bank deposit details

BNZ 02-0585-0045879-000 . Please put your name in the reference field.

A scanned copy may be sent to the treasurer friendsdnw@gmail.com or bring it to a meeting, or post to the address below.

We are a registered charity. You may claim 33.33cents on donations over \$5. Our registration number is CC51738

Subscription year is 1 April to 31 March.

I wish to join / renew my subscription to the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

My subscription is \$20.00

My donation is \$ _____ to the FDNWC Scholarship Fund

I do not wish to receive receipts, notification of meetings and other Friends' events by email (tick.....)

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email address _____

The Treasurer

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