



38 Years of Great Reading

Hello from us...

It's been longer than we'd have wished since our last newsletter, but the earthquakes (and snow) have made it a most unusual year. We're happy to report that we're operating normally despite a bumpy floor and a few cracks in the wall, all of which will be repaired eventually.

We would to thank all BDS members, but particularly convenors, for their patience as we recovered from the February quake. We'd also like to thank the groups for the many kindnesses shown to us. It has been most heart-warming, so thank you very much.

Our former premises, which we vacated prior to the September 2010 earthquake, have been demolished so we were very fortunate to leave when we did. Here in Sydenham, many buildings have been demolished including the buildings beside us and the hotel opposite. It will be a year that we'll be very pleased to put behind us – so much better when it's only a distant memory!

Barbara

Plans to grow

With the BDs office 'back to normal' and bigger than our former premises, we're in a position to be able to supply more book groups. We presently have 940 groups nationwide but we'd love there to be lots more! Megan Blakie has been employed to help us to grow (see overleaf).

Beat the rush for new books

Sixty new titles have been selected for inclusion in the scheme next year. They are listed in the 2012 Catalogue, which we will send to you when it's time for your group to re-enrol.

Many of the new titles are available now, as they have already been barcoded and covered, and book notes have been prepared. You are

welcome to go online and add new titles to your group's current reading list.

Visit our website and get a sneak peek of the great new books we have added to the scheme. To do this:

1. Go to www.bds.org.nz
2. Click on 'Catalogue' (4th tab down on the left-hand list)
3. In the search box at the top, click on the arrow next to the word 'Category'
4. Choose '2012 Title – New to Scheme'
5. Click 'Search'
6. Click on the relevant title you want to read about
7. Click '[Back]' to return to the full list of 2012 New Titles



In brief

- Good news for your wallet! Membership fees are remaining at 2011 prices for at least another year.
- As of January next year, BDS will no longer provide pre-prepared deposit slips with re-enrolment packs. Convenors will still be able to make manual deposits at the bank, but will need to fill out a slip themselves (making sure the group name or BDS banking ID number is given!).

Book notes

Book notes have been a feature of the book group experience since the inception of BDS over three decades ago. It seems that book notes are scrutinised as much as the books and we regularly receive feedback about what you think of them.

Book notes have changed in style and form over time. A recent change was undertaken last year following a book note survey, which the majority of BDS groups responded to.

This change in the way we produce notes was

primarily to reduce costs and to allow us to produce notes in a shorter time, so that new books can be offered to groups more quickly.

Material for book notes is currently being sourced in two ways. The first is by using online sites—such as *litlovers.com* or *readinggroupguides.com*—or using material direct from publisher websites. Copyright approval is sought before material can be used for the purposes of the scheme.

The second way is we commission our own writers; this is when appropriate online notes are not available. In the past, all of our book notes

were commissioned.

One feature of book notes that generates much comment from groups is the discussion questions supplied at the end. We are keeping a close eye on these in an effort to improve on the quality and usefulness of questions for book group discussions. Staff who have knowledge of a particular title often provide assistance with this work.

Although it is costly to implement major changes to a set of book notes, we do on occasion redo notes that have proven to be inadequate for whatever reason.

So conveners, please keep the feedback coming. We need to know how the book notes fare with your group.



Shelagh Murray, BDS staff
email her: bds@bds.org.nz

New face at BDS office

Introducing:
Megan Blakie, BDS staff



Many of you have been part of a BDS book group for years—sometimes decades—so that tells us our scheme is popular.

We want more people to enjoy the benefits of being part of a group (or establishing their own), so we have employed Megan Blakie to spread the word. She has taken

up a part-time promotions role with us and will be in the office Monday to Wednesday.

Megan is a trained journalist and has been writing for magazines and working in communication roles since returning to Christchurch from overseas about four years ago.

As you, our members, are our best advocates for BDS book groups, Megan is keen to hear your experiences and stories. Are you our longest member? What's your most memorable meeting? What books have you enjoyed most? Let her know of any exciting happenings!

email her: bds@bds.org.nz

Your Favourite Reads

We asked you to tell us your favourite book for the year... we've compiled the results and the top nine reads are:



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|----|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | <i>The Book Thief</i> | (Markus Zusak) |
| 2= | <i>The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society</i> | (Mary Ann Shaffer) |
| 2= | <i>The Help</i> | (Kathryn Stockett) |
| 4 | <i>The Industry of Souls</i> | (Martin Booth) |
| 5 | <i>Three Cups of Tea</i> | (Greg Mortenson) |
| 6= | <i>Crossing to Safety</i> | (Wallace Stegner) |
| 6= | <i>Lottery</i> | (Patricia Wood) |
| 8= | <i>The Coroner's Lunch</i> | (Colin Cotterill) |
| 8= | <i>Mao's Last Dancer</i> | (Li Cunxin) |

For the second year in a row *The Book Thief* received more than double the votes of the second pick. If you want to know the full list, please get in touch and we'll email it through to you.

New Books on the Shelf—available now!

Inheritance (Jenny Patrick)

Fiction, 2010 (313pp)



This is a story of friendship, family and the influence of the past on the present. Moving between Samoa and 1990s New Zealand, the author considers the weight of cultural expectations and the possible conflict between truth and love. A book to relish, rich in cultural and historical detail.

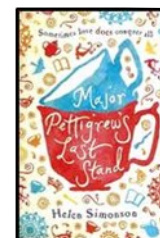
Comments from BDS Reviewers:

"An enthralling novel set in New Zealand and Samoa. It's heart-warming and gripping."

"The setting of 1960s Samoa was fascinating and gave an excellent cultural insight."

Major Pettigrew's Last Stand (Helen Simonson)

Fiction, 2010 (457pp)



Village politics, family disputes, property developers, religious conflict, hunting, a golf club and a good dollop of snobbery, the quintessential English village of Edgcombe St Mary has it all. A light-hearted and entertaining story with colourful characters and an underlying examination of stereotypes and cultural expectations.

Comments from BDS Reviewers:

"A very easy read. Humorous, slightly satirical. A very satisfying story in which you can relate to the characters."

"I loved this book, the witty dialogue and the wonderfully drawn characters."

"Delightful characterisation and a delightful read. Perhaps more for older readers."

Mornings in Jenin (Susan Abulhawa) **Fiction, 2010 (331pp)**



Palestine 1948. The Abulheja family are forcibly removed from their ancestral home in Ein Hod and sent to live in a refugee camp in Jenin. Amal's dramatic story threads its way through six decades of Israeli-Palestinian tension. *[Taken from the book cover.]*

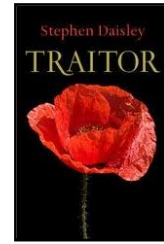
Comments from BDS Reviewers:

"One of the best books I've read. Beware of reading in public places if you are prone to tearfulness!"

"Although the book revolves around tragedy, its characters are human, funny, endearing and inspiring."

Traitor (Stephen Daisley) **Fiction, 2010** **(295pp)**

From the shores of Gallipoli and the horrors of the Western Front, then home to rural New Zealand – at its heart is David Monroe: soldier, pacifist, conscientious objector, stretcher-bearer, shepherd. A beautiful yet tragic story of war and love.

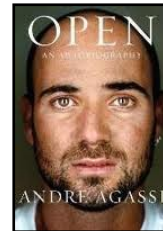
**Comments from BDS Reviewers:**

"I am quite sure this will prove to be a defining NZ novel. It tells a simple story in a complex way and the central character is at once a simple and a complex man."

"I enjoyed this book more than any I have read in a long time but it could be more of a 'blokes' book'."

Open (Andre Agassi) **Non-Fiction, 2009 (386 pp)**

It is shocking to discover that tennis great Andre Agassi hated tennis. With a refreshing degree of candour, this autobiography reveals the conflicted man behind the outstanding tennis career; the pitfalls on the path to maturity, the dysfunction and the success, and everything between.

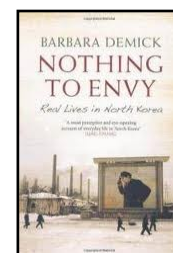
**Comments from BDS Reviewers:**

"It is very easy to read. My 15 year old daughter read it cover to cover and loved it as much as I did."

"There is a lot of tennis in the book, but not so much as to be off-putting for someone not interested in tennis."

Nothing to Envy (Barbara Demick)**Non-Fiction, 2010 (314 pp)**

Journalist Barbara Demick peels back the lid on life in the elusive Democratic People's Republic of Korea. With its fluent style and its excellent background information on the two Koreas, this book offers a rare insight into a mysterious nation that 23 million people call home.

**Comments from BDS Reviewers:**

"The book is valuable as it gives a rare insight into life in North Korea. The interviews with the refugees gives it freshness."

"This is a very powerful book giving a piercing insight into a way of life which is worlds away from how we live in New Zealand."