



SOCIETÀ DANTE ALIGHIERI  
IL MONDO IN ITALIANO  
COMITATO DI CANBERRA

# Dante Review

*"To preserve and disseminate Italian language and culture"*

ISSN 1441-8592 Periodico bimestrale del Comitato di Canberra della Società Dante Alighieri - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Notaras Multicultural Centre 180 London Circuit  
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## Regular Events

**DMV rehearsals  
on Thursdays 5-7pm**

**Conversation groups  
on Thursdays 7-9pm**

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**Two great presentations  
to launch our cultural program**

## GORDON BULL

**Senior lecturer at ANU's School of Art**

**will introduce us to the life and works  
of the great artist of the early Renaissance**

## GIOTTO

**whose main works include the frescoes in  
Padua's Scrovegni Chapel and  
Florence's colourful Campanile**

**8 pm Thursday 9 March 2017**

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## SHAKESPEARE AS AN ITALIAN

**Why are Shakespeare's plays so often set in Italy?  
Did he live there? Was he a Catholic?  
Did Dante influence him?**

**Renowned Canberra Poet**

## MARK O'CONNOR

**will answer these and other intriguing questions**

**8 pm Thursday 6 April 2017**

**Both presentations will be given in the  
Function Room - Level 2, Notaras Multicultural Centre  
180 London Cct Canberra (entry via Civic Square)**

# *News from the office*

## Office Hours

The office hours of the Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc. are:

**9:30am-1:00pm Tuesday to Friday**

For all enquiries please call the office on **6247 1884** or send us an email to **info@danteact.org.au**

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## Library

The Dante library is open during office hours. It includes the following sections: Reading, Education, Literature, Youth, Geography, History, Art, Music, Cinema.

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## Committee Members

### President

Professor Franco Papandrea

### Vice-Presidents

Yvette Devlin and Tamsin Hong

### Treasurer

Tony Hanrahan

### Secretary

Maria Cristina Hurley

### Committee members

Luigi Catizone, Francesca Foppoli,  
Alessia La Cavera, Bruno Santagostino Baldi

### Co-opted members

Pauline Adams, Dominic Mico, Nicola Patini

*Journal Editor: Yvette Devlin*

*Note: the journal editor wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Daniela and Alessia in compiling this issue.*

## Upcoming Events

**2 March:** conversation groups (7-9 pm)

**9 March:** conversation groups (7-8 pm)

**9 March: Giotto - a presentation by Gordon Bull at 8 pm** (see p. 1)

**16 March:** conversation groups (7-9 pm)

**23 March:** conversation groups (7-9 pm)

**30 March:** conversation groups (7-9 pm)

**1 April: enrolments for Term 2**

*formal courses are now open!*

**2 April: Auto Italia** from 10 am to 3 pm -  
Lawns of Old Parliament House

**6 April:** conversation groups (7-8 pm)

**6 April: Shakespeare as an Italian - a presentation by Mark O'Connor at 8 pm**  
(see p. 1)

**7 April:** Term 1 formal courses finish

**13 April:** conversation groups (7-9 pm)

**20 April:** conversation groups (7-8 pm)

**20 April:** AGM at 8 pm

**27 April:** conversation groups (7-9 pm)

## HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

**Renewals are due on  
1 January of each year and  
can be effected by email,  
mail or in person.**

**Membership form is at p. 16**

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ONGOING  
SUPPORT!**

## Modi di dire

Sayings - Francesca Foppoli

Pino è pieno di belle idee, ma poi non le concretizza: tra il dire e il fare c'è di mezzo il mare.

***Pino is full of good ideas but then he doesn't put them into practice; easier said than done.***

Mario ha cercato suo fratello Carlo per mare e per terra; chissà forse lui non voleva essere trovato.

***Mario searched high and low for his brother Carlo; who knows, perhaps he did not want to be found.***

Hanno smosso mari e monti per ottenere il permesso di lavoro.

***They moved heaven and earth to obtain a working permit.***

- A che punto sei con il progetto?
- Purtroppo sono ancora in alto mare.
- ***How is it going with the project?***
- ***Unfortunately there is still a long way to go.***

Mi dispiace che Giacomo sia in un mare di guai.

***I am sorry to hear that Giacomo is in a lot of trouble.***

La loro casa è un porto di mare; c'è sempre qualcuno che va e che viene.

***Their place is like a sea port; people are always coming and going in this house***

Il Comune ha deciso di gettare a mare l'iniziativa dei commercianti.

***The Council decided to throw overboard the small businesses' initiative.***

Il nuovo sindaco ha promesso mare e monti ai cittadini disoccupati, ma senza industrie non si crea il lavoro.

***The new mayor promised the world to his unemployed citizens but you can't create jobs without industries.***

## L'angolo della lingua

Language corner - Yvette Devlin

English has a very useful verb - *to get* - that can be combined with adjectives to express feelings or sensations about to be experienced.

In Italian, you need to use reflexive verbs.

Here are some common examples:

- *to get angry* = *arrabbiarsi*;
- *to get tired* = *stancarsi*;
- *to get bored* = *annoiarsi*.

While on *annoiarsi*, note that it is a false friend: it does not mean to *annoy* or *get annoyed*, which in Italian would be *infastidire/scocciare* and *scocciarsi/irritarsi* respectively.

If you're already in that state, the translation is easier: *I am angry* = *sono arrabbiato*; *I am bored* = *sono annoiato* but *I am hungry* = *ho fame*; *I am thirsty* = *ho sete* (literally: I have hunger, thirst).

# Buona Pasqua!



***We would like to wish a  
Happy Easter to all our members!***

# L'angolo della poesia

## Poetry corner - Yvette Devlin



Regarded as an important contemporary poet, **Bartolo Cattafi** was born in Barcellona (Sicily) in 1922. A law graduate, he lived mostly in Milan where he worked in public relations and advertising, and died in that city in 1979. He published several collections from 1951 to his death, and an anthology of his poetry appeared in 1990.

Cattafi was marked by the fascist regime of his youth and the horrors of the second world war: his poetry reflects his sombre mood. Feelings of emptiness and solitude characterise his works, as can be seen in the poem presented here. A critic, Giorgio Barberi Squarotti, saw Cattafi's works as among the most unsettling of the post-war period adding that, filled with "bitterness, disappointment", Cattafi examines "the conscience of his generation".

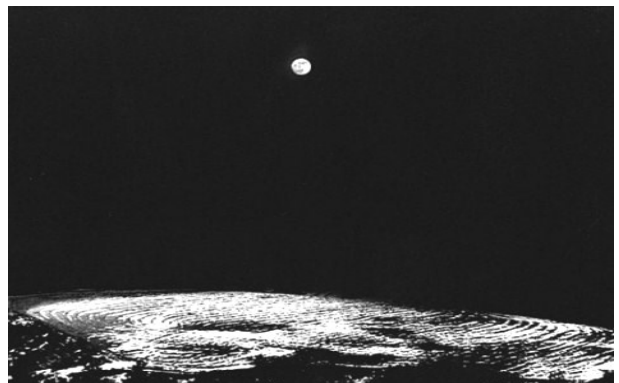
### Il buio

In un'ora di grande luce  
in una piazza lastricata  
di pietra biancastra  
il buio nasce come una fonte  
una bestia un volatile una pianta  
sparnazzante in silenzio  
cessa allora ogni alito di vento  
e puoi cadere in quei fili tesi  
là in mezzo impigliarti  
crollando in avanti  
ad occhi spalancati verso il buio  
sbattere la fronte.

Here is the translation by Lawrence R Smith found in his anthology *The New Italian Poetry – 1945 to the Present*.

### Darkness

In an hour of great light  
in a large piazza paved  
with whitish stone  
darkness is born like a fountain  
an animal a bird a plant  
scattering in silence  
then every breath of wind ceases  
and you can fall into those taut wires  
get tangled there in the middle  
tumbling forward  
toward the darkness with bulging eyes  
to smash your forehead.





# Cenno storico

## A bit of History - Yvette Devlin

Beware the Ides of March!

Julius Caesar (13 July 100 BC - 15 March 44 BC) was a great Roman general, a writer, a consul and reforming dictator of the Roman Republic.

Following Caesar's military success in the Gallic wars (during which Rome's territory extended to the Atlantic and the Rhine, and Britain and Germany were conquered) the Senate ordered him to step down as a military commander and return to Rome. But Caesar defied the Senate by entering Rome with his army, bringing about a civil war. However his military success allowed him to seize political power - becoming 'dictator in perpetuity' - and initiating a program of social and government reform which included the centralisation of the bureaucracy and the introduction of the Julian calendar. But political unrest continued until opposition senators led by Brutus assassinated him on 15 March 44 BC. Sixty people took part in the act, and he was stabbed 23 times.

Caesar's demise eventually led to Augustus - Caesar's adoptive son - becoming the first Emperor of Rome in 27BC.

Attenzione alle Idi di marzo!

Giulio Cesare (13 luglio 100 a.C. - 15 marzo 44 a.C.) è stato un grande militare, scrittore, console e dittatore della Repubblica romana.

Dopo il suo successo nelle guerre galliche (durante le quali estese il territorio di Roma fino all'Atlantico e al Reno, e conquistò la Bretagna e la Germania), il Senato gli ordinò di lasciare il comando militare e ritornare a Roma. Ma Cesare sfidò il Senato ed entrò a Roma a capo delle sue legioni, il che portò ad una guerra civile. Ciò nonostante, il suo successo militare gli permise di assumere il potere politico - diventando 'dittatore a vita' - ed iniziare un programma di riforme sociali e governative che includevano la centralizzazione della burocrazia e l'introduzione del calendario giuliano. Ma il malcontento politico continuò fino a quando un gruppo di senatori dell'opposizione, capeggiati da Bruto, lo assassinò il 15 marzo del 44 a.C. Ne erano coinvolti sessanta senatori, e Cesare ricevette 23 pugnalate.

Con il tempo, la morte di Cesare portò all'inizio dell'Impero romano sotto l'imperatore Augusto, che era il figlio adottivo di Cesare. Era l'anno 27 a.C.



# Il nostro sondaggio: risultati e commenti

Luigi Catizone

Nella seconda metà dell'anno scorso la Società Dante Alighieri ha inviato a tutti i suoi membri un sondaggio per appurare quali fossero le loro esigenze ed avere i loro suggerimenti su alcuni argomenti collegati alla vita societaria che riteniamo importanti.

Il sondaggio aveva 10 domande ed era stata inviato per email a tutti i soci e anche pubblicato sulla Dante Review di luglio-agosto uscita all'inizio di luglio. Il termine per la risposta (per email, per posta o consegna in Segreteria) era fissato alla fine di settembre. Sono anche state mandate a tutti delle email di richiamo per sollecitare una più ampia partecipazione. Voglio riportare i risultati di tale indagine e poi fare alcune riflessioni.

Hanno risposto 34 soci su oltre 200 iscritti alla Dante. Di essi, 23 sono donne e 30 hanno più di 60 anni. In 29 leggono regolarmente la Review; per 20, la newsletter va bene così com'è, mentre 13 vorrebbero più articoli. La grande maggioranza preferisce articoli sulla cultura, il popolo e il turismo italiano e riguardanti l'immigrazione.

Sono graditi gli articoli sia in italiano che in inglese. Quasi tutti (30 persone) sono interessati alle presentazioni culturali di vario argomento, mentre in numero minore (15) sono quelli che vorrebbero conferenze in inglese via Skype dall'Italia. Alla domanda se si fosse interessati ad una E-News mensile da inviare per email con notizie brevi su vari argomenti italiani, solo 7 hanno risposto di no, mentre tutti gli altri gradirebbero tale strumento di diffusione sia in italiano che in inglese.

Altro argomento interessante era quello delle sessioni di conversazione del giovedì sera: 12 non le hanno mai frequentate, 17 le seguono regolarmente e gli altri solo

saltuariamente. Otto lamentano che c'è troppo rumore durante le sedute e quindi, se fattibile, sarebbe meglio farle in un ambiente più piccolo e con un gruppo solo.

Proviamo a indicare alcune riflessioni, non delle conclusioni:

1. Il basso numero di risposte non consente di trarre conclusioni definitive, anche se quelli che hanno risposto sono forse i membri più interessati a dare la loro opinione.
2. I nostri membri sono per lo più donne e di età superiore ai 60 anni.
3. Tra quelli che hanno risposto, un'alta percentuale ama la Dante Review così com'è, forse con qualche articolo in più, nelle due lingue e su argomenti italiani.
4. Molti vorrebbero avere anche una E-News con notizie flash, sia in italiano che in inglese e su argomenti italiani.
5. Da considerare la possibilità di organizzare un maggior numero di conferenze su temi culturali.
6. Un discreto numero di persone apprezza anche le videoconferenze dall'Italia usando Skype.

Queste mi sembrano le riflessioni che scaturiscono dall'osservazione delle risposte ricevute.

Il Comitato Direttivo della Società valuterà attentamente questi risultati, e cercherà di soddisfare almeno le richieste più significative.

I dati grezzi del sondaggio sono presentati in calce.

## **Dante Alighieri Society Survey: Results and Comments**

In the second half of last year the Dante Alighieri Society sent all its members a

# Il nostro sondaggio: risultati e commenti

Luigi Catizone - cont'd

survey to understand their expectations of the Society and obtain their suggestions on some topics considered important.

The Survey instrument had 10 questions. It was sent by email to all members and also published in the July-August edition of the Dante Review issued at the beginning of July. The deadline to send back the answers was the end of September. The completed survey could be sent by email or mail, or be delivered directly to the Dante office.

I would like to report the survey's results and then offer some comments.

Of the 200+ members of the Dante Society, only 34 participated. Twenty-three of these are female and 30 are aged 60 or over. Twenty-nine read the Dante Review regularly. For 20 it is okay as it is, but 13 would like more articles.

The great majority likes articles about Italian culture, tourism, people and also about immigration.

Articles in English or Italian are equally welcomed in the Review. Almost all respondents (30) are interested in the cultural presentations on various subjects, and a smaller number (15) would like to attend videoconferences from Italy in English, via Skype.

To the question asking if they would like to have a monthly E-News sent by email reporting short news items on a variety of Italian topics, only seven answered No; all others would appreciate this proposed modality of news' diffusion, in Italian and in English as well.

Another interesting topic regarded the conversation sessions held on Thursdays: 12 respondents have never attended them

while 17 attend them regularly.

The remaining people attend only occasionally. Eight complained about the level of noise during the sessions and, for this reason, they suggest that it would be better to have only a group in a smaller room. In light of the above findings, here are some observations, not conclusions:

1. The low number of responses does not allow us to reach definitive conclusions, especially if we consider that those who responded are probably the most interested to give their views.
2. Our members are mostly female and aged over 60.
3. A high percentage of respondents loves the Dante Review as is, perhaps with additional articles, in the two languages, and covering Italian topics.
4. A substantial number of members would like to have an E-News reporting some Italian news flashes, using both languages.
5. It might be desirable to increase our cultural presentations.
6. A significant number also likes videoconferences on Italy, via Skype, in English.

These are my observations on the survey findings, although we have to remember that they are based on a relatively low number of responses.

The Dante Alighieri Society's Committee is considering these results carefully with a view to responding to at least the most significant preferences emerging from the survey.

**Here are the raw data from the survey**



# Il nostro sondaggio: risultati e commenti

## Luigi Catizone - cont'd

### 1. Do you read the "Dante Review" newsletter?

- ☐ **Yes** – Please tell us if it is:
  - ☐ Regularly **29**
  - ☐ Occasionally **5**
- ☐ **No**

### 2. Which articles interest you the most?

- ☐ Italian articles **10**
- ☐ English articles **1**
- ☐ Both Italian and English **28**

### 3. Would you prefer?

- ☐ More articles **13**
- ☐ Fewer articles
- ☐ OK as is **20**

### 4. Please choose 3 topics that you would be interested in reading more about.

- |                                                    |                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian tourism <b>18</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Prominent Italian topics <b>21</b>                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian people <b>22</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian sport <b>1</b>                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Migration stories <b>10</b>                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian culture <b>28</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please nominate <b>3</b> - news, politics, Italian language |

#### 4a. Would you prefer these topics to be available in?

- ☐ Italian language **13** - Enjoy hints on language of Francesca and Yvette. I print and collect them (1)
- ☐ English language **1**
- ☐ Both Italian and English **21**

### 5. Are you interested in our evening presentations on Italian cultural topics?

- ☐ Yes **30**
- ☐ No **3**

### 6. Are you interested in videoconferences from Italy via Skype (In English)?

- ☐ Yes, please indicate the topics which would interest you. **15**

<input type="checkbox"/> Italian Culture <b>13</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prominent Italian topics <b>13</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Italian Tourism <b>9</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Italian Sport
<input type="checkbox"/> Italian People <b>11</b>	
- ☐ No **12**

### 7. Do you attend conversation evenings?

- ☐ Never **13**
- ☐ Sometimes **4**
- ☐ Regularly **17**

If "Sometimes" or "Regularly", do you have any suggestions for change/improvement?

**Noise from other tables (1); Better in a small, quiet room (7);**

**Over coffee during the day (1);- They are too late in the evening (1)**

### 8. Would you like to receive a monthly email with Italian news and other topics of interest (E-News)?

**Please tick one option only.**

- ☐ Yes, in English **1**
- ☐ Yes, In Italian **12**
- ☐ Yes, in both English and Italian **17**
- ☐ No **7**

### 9. Please indicate your gender

- ☐ Female **23**
- ☐ Male **11**

### 10. Please indicate your age range

- ☐ 20-40 years **1**
- ☐ 41-60 years **3**
- ☐ Over 60 years **30**





**SOCIETÀ DANTE ALIGHIERI**  
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## 2017 Calendar of activities

### Formal courses

(6–8 pm Yarralumla Primary School or Dante Library - Notaras Multicultural Centre)

Term 1	Monday 6 February to Friday 7 April	(9 wks )
Term 2	Monday 1 May to Friday 30 June	(9 wks)
Term 3	Monday 24 July to Friday 22 September	(9 wks)
Term 4	Monday 9 October to Friday 8 December	(9 wks)

### Thursday Conversation Groups

(7–9 pm Function Room, Notaras Multicultural Centre, Civic)

Term 1	Thursday 23 February to Thursday 27 April	(10 wks then 4-wk break)
Term 2	Thursday 1 June to Thursday 3 August	(10 wks then 5-wk break)
Term 3	Thursday 14 September to Thursday 16 November	(10 wks) <b>Total: 30 weeks</b>

### Cultural Activities

(8–9 pm Function Room, Notaras Multicultural Centre, Civic)

9 March	Gordon Bull: Giotto
6 April	Mark O'Connor: Shakespeare as an Italian
22 June	To be advised
20 July	To be advised
05 October	To be advised
2 November	To be advised
23 November	End-of year function: Dante Musica Viva, cooking competition, refreshments

**AGM** (8–9 pm Function Room, Notaras Multicultural Centre, Civic): **20 April**

**CHOIR REHEARSALS** (5–7 pm Function Room, Notaras Multicultural Centre, Civic):  
every Thursday from 2 February to 7 December

**PUBLIC HOLIDAYS** during Term 2:

**Easter:** Good Friday on 14 April; Easter Monday 17 April; **Anzac Day:** Friday 25 April (during term break); **Queen's Birthday:** Monday 12 June (during term)

# Easter traditions in Italy

Yvette Devlin

Easter is the most solemn period in the Roman Catholic calendar and all churches in Italy mark *la settimana Santa* (Holy Week) in similar ways.

Traditionally, on Palm Sunday there is the blessing of olive branches – chosen because palms are hard to come by in Italy – to remember the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem when palms had been placed on the ground to welcome him.

On the Thursday in remembrance of the Last Supper, the priest celebrates mass and humbly washes the feet of twelve parishioners. The Pope himself follows this tradition in Rome, and last year much was made of the fact that Pope Francis washed the feet of refugees, including non-Catholics. Also on this day, after mass all

remaining holy hosts and holy water are removed from the church.

On Good Friday priests and parishioners undertake the *Via Crucis* – the Way of the Cross. The procession stops, reflects and prays at the fourteen Stations of the Cross that illustrate Christ's trial, his walk to Golgotha, his crucifixion, death and entombment.

In Rome, the Pope leads a torchlight procession from the Colosseum to the Palatine Hill, with thousands of faithful participating. On this day many practising Catholics fast while others eat fish rather than meat.

On the Saturday the priest blesses a beeswax candle – the Paschal candle – that

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## The Easter Dove, la Colomba Pasquale



# Easter traditions in Italy

Yvette Devlin - cont'd



Easter eggs

marks the start of the Eucharistic year, and blesses the water that will be used in the church for its various blessings.

On Easter Sunday the bells start ringing again (they had been silent since Good Thursday) and the priest wears festive vestments rather than the purple vestments worn throughout Lent as a sign of melancholy.

An example of these Easter traditions is

found in Assisi. An evocative procession (called *La Processione del Cristo Morto*) takes place on the Friday morning at which the statue of Christ on the Cross is carried from the cathedral of San Rufino to St. Francis's cathedral. In the evening, another procession takes place during which Christ's mother (*la Madre dolorosa*) is carried to the cathedral to be reunited with her son, after which they are both taken back to St. Rufino. The sombre procession includes hooded bare-foot *penitenti* (repentants) with thorn crowns on their heads and carrying wooden crosses.

Turning to the more prosaic side of Easter, the traditional cake is *Colomba Pasquale* (Easter Dove). This is a light cake, like the Christmas panettone, and is in the shape of a dove, which is the symbol of peace in the Christian calendar.

In addition to the Colomba, chocolate Easter eggs – normally with a surprise inside – are traditionally gifted and all children look forward to receiving them, both for the chocolate and the surprise.

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## The “Processione del Cristo morto”





# Know your choir

## A profile of Ondina Matera



**Ondina Matera in her choir uniform**

After thoroughly enjoying a wonderful performance by the Dante Musica Viva Choir held at the Italian Cultural Centre some 3 years ago, I decided I would join the choir after much persuasion from a close friend. Initially I was a little hesitant as I did not have any previous singing experience. However, as I always wanted to join a choir, I capitulated. I have not looked back since!

Now, I not only do I look forward to singing the traditional Italian songs every week, which never fail to take me back in time to my childhood days, I also delight in catching up with the individuals that comprise the Choir. I was surprised to learn that many of the members come from different parts of the globe and do not speak Italian. I am continuously amazed at the level of commitment, determination and persever-

ance these members display in order to be able to sing in a foreign language. In addition, as all members of the choir are all consistently respectful, friendly, helpful, enthusiastic and supportive, I enjoy their company immensely and today I consider most my friends. In addition, I am eternally grateful for their never ending understanding, patience and assistance as I endeavour to improve the quality of my singing. Prior to joining the Choir, I did not realise just how difficult it was to sing in tune or hit the right notes. At times, singing in unison can also prove to be a real challenge. However, I believe that even though the choir may not always be pitch or note perfect, it is always on key when it comes to its willingness to have a go and to do its best!

My love of singing began during my childhood as it was at this time I was being influenced by the passion my parents shared for singing (as my parents were Italian, I do not believe this to be an unusual phenomenon). This passion continued even after my parents and I settled in Australia.

Prior to migrating to Australia my parents and I lived in Trieste, a city situated to the North of Italy overlooking the Adriatic Sea. Whilst my mother and I were born in Trieste, my father was born in Cerignola, provincia di Foggia, Italy. As my grandfather was posted to Trieste for military purposes, the whole family relocated to the city. My father was 6 years of age at that time. Sometime, subsequent to the end of World War II, my mother and father met at a local dance. They immediately fell in love and later married. Several years later, and after I was born, my parents made the decision to leave Italy and migrate to Australia. In the past, I was slightly perplexed with respect to why my mother and father decided to make such a courageous deci-



## Know your choir

### A profile of Ondina Matera - cont'd

sion to leave their country of birth. I knew the decision was not one based on necessity as my grandparents were well off and my father was employed and providing adequately for the family.

Over the years, I came to realise that, whilst there were several reasons for the move, the post-World War II situation in Trieste was the most significant factor. Whilst the remainder of Italy was celebrating the end of the War, the aftermath of war proved to be a very difficult and uncertain time in Trieste because of a dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia regarding the border. I understand that in 1947, the Trieste United States Troops (TRUST) was established and a Peace Treaty was signed between the two countries which resulted in the Free Territory of Trieste becoming an independent state. Troops were stationed in the area along the Morgan Line which served to divide Trieste into Zone A (the Italian part) and Zone B, which included most of the Istrian peninsula and which was previously part of Italy but was being handed over to Tito's Yugoslavia. As a result, many Italians from Zone B fled into Trieste forced to leave everything behind. These events were a constant reminder of the war and added to the uncertainty felt by many. This was exacerbated by the fact that between 1947 and 1954 the situation in Trieste was not improving. American fighting ships remained visible in the harbour, tanks and air observation units were also present. In 1952, the 351<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment was established in the city. It had at its disposal a Heavy Mortar company; a Service company; infantry battalions including three rifle companies and a heavy weapon company. The Military Police were ever present as well. TRUST troops did not leave until late 1954. As this phenomenon was unique to Trieste post World War II, not only did it serve to impact negatively

on the psyche of many Triestini and its refugees, but it also led to a strong sense of betrayal. The impact was so severe that, subsequent to 1954, *Triestini were the only immigrants from an urban area in Italy to have mass migrated. They migrated in whole family units despite the fact that many possessed trade qualifications. I am sure this negative experience also influenced my parents.*

In addition, there were two other reasons that convinced my parents to leave Italy. The first relates to the apparent high cost of living at the time. For example, the cost of a banana, which my mother insisted on buying for me on a weekly basis, was the equivalent of one day's pay of my father's wages. The second reason relates to the fact that, at the time, my family as well as my paternal grandparents lived on an army base adjacent to San Giusto in Trieste. As a result, I was apparently being spoilt by both my grandparents as well as the soldiers who were continuously giving me lollies and the occasional sip of wine at the table when my mother was not looking. I understand that my mother was far from impressed and felt desperate to get away from the situation.

In light of the above, it is hardly surprising that my parents were enticed to leave Italy and migrate to Australia. Apparently, the advertisements produced by the Australi-



## Know your choir

### A profile of Ondina Matera - cont'd

an Government portrayed Australia as a wonderful place in which to live, full of opportunities, with grand homes overlooking beautiful beaches (a strong selling point for anyone coming from a beautiful harbour city). And so the family set off full of high hopes and somewhat unrealistic expectations.

On arriving in Australia the family first stayed at Bonegilla (a camp set up for migrants where living conditions were far from ideal). Life proved very difficult at first. We had no home, no possessions (other than some clothing), and a little money my father had earned prior to arriving. We suffered from a cultural shock, everything seemed alien to us: the food was different; we could not speak the language; there was no opera or cafés. In addition, there was no government housing (in particular no house overlooking the beach!); there was no rent assistance; no medical cover and certainly no English classes for migrants (my father learned English on the job and I taught my mother each day after school). However, despite the hardships we encountered, my parents were determined to succeed and, as a result of their dedication and hard work, they did. My father held down two jobs, whilst my mother did everything she could to help. As a result, things started to look up. Within a year my parents bought our first home in Queanbeyan (it was tiny but I did not mind). Several months later my father proudly brought home a little red car (it was a bomb but we loved it). Not many people owned a car in those days. I remember feeling such excitement and joy on hearing my father honking the horn from the top of the street. He had surprised me with it.

Then, unexpectedly, things got even better as several Italian families moved into the street and the endless dinner parties be-

gan during which we shared Italian food and wine. We also shared jokes, laughed a lot and sang all the traditional songs. Soon after my sister Linda was born. I thought I was in heaven! Slowly we adapted to our new life. Two years later the family moved to Canberra where my little brother Dario was born. The family had finally settled.

My siblings and I pursued a normal life. We all finished school, married and had children. Later, I attended the ANU. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Law and then I undertook a Diploma of Law. On completion of my studies, I found employment as a judges associate and then as a lawyer. I enjoyed working in my profession.

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# 2017 Membership

## Dante Alighieri Society Membership

Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc.

PO Box 979 Civic Square ACT 2608

## Receipt No

## Subscription for membership (from 01/01/2017 to 31/12/2017):

- ☐ INDIVIDUAL      \$40
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- ☐ CHOIR      \$10 (in addition to membership)

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