



Dante Review

"To preserve and disseminate Italian language and culture"

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 Canberra City ACT 2601 - Phone: 02 6247 1884 - Email: info@danteact.org.au - Website: www.danteact.org.au - Issue: November-December 2017

Regular Events

**Enrolments for Term
1/2018 are now open!**

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

**Conversation sessions finish
on Thursday 17 November**

**Formal courses end on
Wednesday 6 December**

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Have you read or heard of Italian author

Elena Ferrante?

She's Italy's most famous contemporary novelist, named by
Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential
 in the world, and her identity is a mystery

Come to a presentation by

Joseph Falsone

Director, Ainslie and Gorman Art Centres on

The truth of fiction:

Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan novels

Joseph graduated in Art History and Literature at University Sydney
 and then pursued his studies at the Università degli Studi di Firenze

8 pm Thursday 2 November 2017

End-of-year party!

Yes, we have reached the end of another academic year.

Let's celebrate together!

Entertainment ~ Dante Musica Viva choir and Sardinian
 Folk dancing by Bruna and Ottavio ~ and refreshments

7 pm Thursday 23 November 2017

Both events will be held in the Function Room
 of the Notaras Multicultural Centre (Level 2)
 180 London Circuit (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**

Visit us at **www.danteact.org.au** and click 'like' on *Facebook* to be up to date!

Please note that the office will be closed from 15 December to 15 January. During this period of time for all enquiries please email info.dantealighiericanberra@gmail.com

Library

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

Committee Members

President

Professor Franco Papandrea

Vice-Presidents

Cristina Giusti and Gordon McCormick

Treasurer

Tony Hanrahan

Secretary

Grant Doran

Committee members

Luigi Catizone, Julie Docker, Sam Palma

Journal Editors: Yvette Devlin, Luigi Catizone, Susan Reye

Note: the journal editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Alessia and Daniela in compiling this issue.

Upcoming Events

1 November - Enrolments are now open!

Plan in advance and enrol in one of our grammar classes or join our conversation groups!

2 November - Conversation groups @7pm

2 November - Cultural Event: *The Truth of Fiction: Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels.* A talk by Joseph Falsone 8pm.

5 November - Yarralumla Primary School Fete

9 November - Conversation groups @7pm

17 November - Conversation groups @7pm

23 November - End-of year function: Dante Musica Viva, Sardinian Folk Dancing, refreshments. Don't miss it!

15 December - the Office closes!



The poster for the Yarralumla Primary School 60th anniversary celebration features a green circle on the left containing the text 'Yarralumla Primary School fete'. To its right is a white circle with a green border containing '60 years'. Below these is the text 'FESTA FANTASTICA' in large red letters. At the bottom left is a black silhouette of a scooter with a balloon. To its right is a red circle containing the text 'Sunday 5th November 10am-3pm'. At the very bottom, the text 'PIZZA-PASTA-GELATO-FUN' is written in black.

Yarralumla Primary School fete

60 years

FESTA FANTASTICA

Sunday 5th November 10am-3pm

PIZZA-PASTA-GELATO-FUN

Modi di dire

Sayings - Francesca Foppoli

Hanno lavorato così tanto per poi vedere tutto andare in malora.

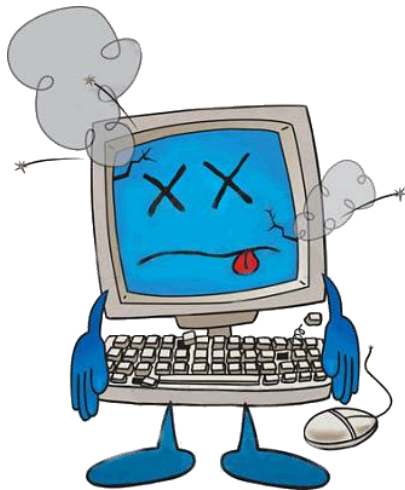
They worked so hard and then saw everything going down the drain.

Mi dispiace non averti chiamato ieri sera, ma la riunione è andata per le lunghe.

I'm sorry I couldn't call you last night but the meeting went on and on.

Eravamo pronti per compilare i dati sul censimento, ma poi il loro sito internet è andato in tilt.

We were ready to enter the data on the census website when their page crashed.



Chiara era preoccupata per il nuovo lavoro e invece è andato tutto liscio come l'olio.

Chiara was concerned about her new job but it all went very smoothly.

Dev'essere stato un progetto troppo ambizioso: alla fine è andato tutto all'aria.

The project must have been too ambitious; in the end it failed miserably.

I biglietti del concerto sono andati a ruba, ma ora sono disponibili su altri siti internet a prezzi più alti.

The tickets for the concert sold out but they are now available on other sites at a higher cost.

L'angolo della lingua

Language corner - Yvette Devlin

Here are four 'false friends' ie words that look similar in Italian and English but in fact have different meanings. It's easy to get them wrong.

The English *viability* translates as *fattibilità* (from the verb *fare* ie something that can be done) whereas the Italian *viabilità* is used to describe *traffic conditions, driveability*.

Luxury means *lusso, opulenza* whereas the similar Italian word *lussuria* means *lust, desire*.

The Italian word *bravo* is very common. It describes a person who is *good at something, capable, well-behaved*. The English word *brave*, on the other hand, translates as *coraggioso*.

L'ostrica is the *oyster* while the similar English word *ostrich* means *struzzo* – a very different thing – don't get them mixed up in your restaurant order!

And while we're on restaurant order, do you always remember to pronounce the word with the double consonant when you order the pasta *penne*? Otherwise you're order penises. It doesn't matter in Australia where most waiters are Australian and wouldn't know the difference, but it might bring a smile to Italian waiters' faces.

Finally, two words I heard recently that don't actually exist in Italian but are 'invented' by Italians living here and adapting an English word to Italian... Quite creative.

Tenca (meaning *tank* – in Italian it's *serbatoio/cisterna/vasca*)

Suicciare (meaning *to switch* – in Italian it's *cambiare/scambiare*).

L'angolo della poesia

Poetry corner - Yvette Devlin

November 2 marks the 42nd anniversary of **Pier Paolo Pasolini's** death. The motives for his homicide have never been satisfactorily ascertained or revealed. The young man who confessed to his killing was sentenced to nine years in goal and then spent the rest of his life on the wrong side of the tracks. He died this year carrying the truth with him.

Pasolini (1922-1975) was one of the foremost intellectuals of the 20th century, but also a controversial figure. He held left-wing views and frequently challenged authorities (both political and religious, accusing them of hypocrisy).

He was a poet (composing in Friulian as well as Italian), a novelist, an essayist, a film director and a painter. His best-known films are *The Decameron* and *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*.

Pasolini used to spend his summer holidays at his mother's small town of Casarsa, in Friuli. He loved the place and the people. He taught at the Valvasone junior high school for a few years and composed many of his early poems in Friulian. The following poem is from the Series *Poesie a Casarsa*, published as part of the collection *Bestemmia I*. The translation into Italian is found in the collection while the English translation is mine and therefore simply literal.

Ciant da li ciampanis

Co la sera a si pièrt ta li fontanis
il me paìs al è colòur smarìt.

Jo i soj lontàn, recuardi li so ranis,
la luna, il trist tintinulà dai gris.

A bat Rosari, pai pras al si scunis:
jo i soj muàrt al ciant da li ciampanis.

Forèst, al me dols svualà par il plan,
no ciapà pòura: jo i soj un spirt di amòur

che al so paìs al torna di lontàn.

Canto delle campane

Quando la sera si perde nelle fontane
il mio paese è di colore smarrito.

Io sono lontano, ricordo le sue rane,
il triste tremolare dei grilli.

Suona Rosario, e si sfiata per i prati:
io sono morto al canto delle campane.

Straniero, al mio dolce volo per il piano,
non aver paura: io sono uno spirito d'amore

che al suo paese torna di lontano.

The song of the bells

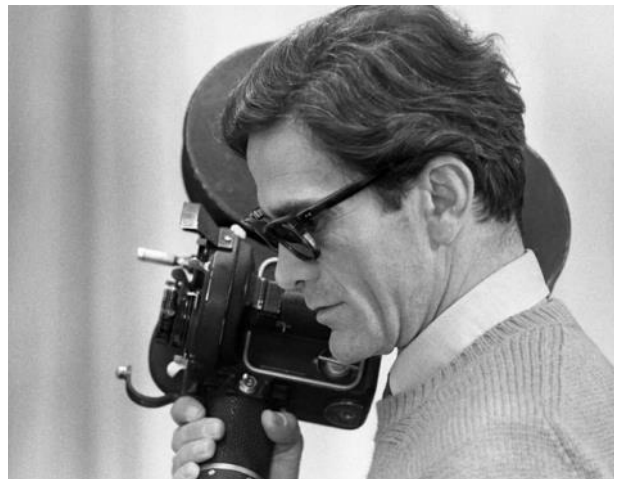
When the evening loses itself in the fountains
my village is a faint colour.

I am far away, I remember its frogs, its moon,
the sad quivering of the crickets.

The bells ring for the Rosary, they are breathless in the fields:
I am dead to the song of the bells.

Stranger, do not be afraid of my sweet flight
over the plain: I am a spirit of love

who returns to his village from afar.



Cenno storico

A bit of history - Yvette Devlin

Il Monte **Etna**, in Sicilia (3.329 metri di altezza – la più alta montagna a sud delle Alpi), è uno dei più attivi vulcani del mondo, con ben cinque crateri. Nel 2013 l'UNESCO l'ha nominato Patrimonio dell'Umanità. Tra le maggiori eruzioni vi è quella del **2 novembre 1928** – la più distruttiva del secolo scorso – che in pochi giorni distrusse la cittadina di Mascalì. Quella del 1669 era durata 122 giorni ed aveva emesso un volume di lava di circa 950 milioni di metri cubi. L'eruzione del 1971 distrusse l'Osservatorio Vulcanologico e la funivia dell'Etna e quella del 1991 fu la più lunga del secolo - 473 giorni! E in seguito all'eruzione del 16 marzo di quest'anno sono rimaste ferite dieci persone incluso un team della BBC.

I detriti vulcanici rendono la terra estremamente fertile per l'agricoltura rendendola particolarmente adatta a vigneti e frutteti.

Sicily's **Mount Etna** (3,329 m high – the tallest mountain South of the Alps) is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. It has five craters. In 2013 UNESCO added it to the list of World Heritage sites. Among the major eruptions is the one that took place on **2 November 1928**. It was the most destructive of the last century – in took only a few days to destroy the town of Mascalì. The 1669 eruption lasted 122 days and it emitted 950 million cubic metres of lava. The 1971 eruption destroyed the Vulcanology Observatory and the Mt Etna cable car, while the one that took place in 1991 was the longest of the 20th century – 473 days! And ten people were injured this year in the eruption of 16 March, including a BBC team.

Volcanic detritus renders the soil very fertile for agriculture making it particularly suitable for vineyards and orchards.



The Italian Chapel - The story of Camp 60

Christine Price

The Italian Chapel is the only building that remains of Camp 60, a Prisoner of War (POW) camp constructed in the latter half of 1941. From January 1942 until the Spring of 1945 the camp housed Italian POWs of the 6th Anti Aircraft Regiment of the Mantova Division and men from the Italian Tank Corps.

Most of these prisoners, renamed the 5th Italian Labour Battalion, were captured at Tobruk and Benghazi following the North African campaign during WWII. The men were distributed to three POW camps in Orkney. They were brought in to assist the contractors with the construction of causeways, to block off the eastern approaches to Scapa Flow, where the British Fleet often lay at anchor.

The prisoners worked in the block casting yard filling gabions with quarried stone and finally laying the asphalt road across the completed causeways.

The prisoners' civilian occupations covered a wide range of skills, from artists and sculptors to electricians and iron workers.

To make the camp more homely the prisoners laid concrete paths and planted flowerbeds beside the huts. The men constructed

concrete tables and benches so they could eat outside when the weather allowed. To entertain themselves, lavish productions such as "The Baker of Venice" were held in a makeshift theatre. They published a newspaper called "Il Corriere della Domenica", played billiards on a homemade concrete table and played bowls.

During the summer the prisoners organised sports competitions against other POW camps. In their spare time they crafted small trinkets which were sold to local people.

One thing the camp still lacked was a chapel.

The Italian prisoners in Orkney deeply felt the need for a place of worship. On September 30th 1943, Padre Gioachino Giacobazzi of the Order of Little Brothers arrived at the camp and through his enthusiastic efforts and the help of Major Buckland, the camp commandant, two Nissen huts were made available to the prisoners. They were placed end to end and were originally intended to serve as a school and a church. Domenico Chiocchetti, an artist, had originally constructed a concrete statue of St George Slaying the Dragon which presided over the camp "square". He gathered together a team of craftsmen and began work on a sanctuary.

As Chiocchetti worked, the imagination to transform the drab huts into a magnificent place of worship inspired his fellow Italians. As one area of the hut was completed, the need to design further works of art became necessary. Completed sections made the rest of the hut uninviting and the workers decided to beautify the whole interior.

All of the work was accomplished under Chiocchetti's supervision. Besides undertaking the pictorial and decorative work he also designed the altar, tabernacle, candlesticks, lamps, roodscreen, windows and coloured glass, and all the details of the ornamental



The Italian Chapel - The story of Camp 60

Christine Price - cont'd

woodwork. All of the work was expressed in terms of the simplest material – mostly scrap, wood from a wrecked ship and concrete sculptured with loving skill and care. Above the altar is Chiocchetti's masterpiece. It is based on Nicolo Barabino's Madonna of the Olives from a small picture given by his mother to Domenico which he carried with him throughout the war.

The chapel was in use for only a very short time. In May 1945, before it was completely finished, the prisoners were moved to Yorkshire for repatriation. Chiocchetti stayed behind to finish the font on which he was working.

La cappella italiana a Orkney, nelle Isole Orcadi, è l'unico edificio che rimane dell'accampamento 60, un accampamento di prigionieri di guerra costruito nella seconda metà del 1941. Dal gennaio del 1942 fino alla primavera del 1945 il campo ospitò molti soldati e prigionieri italiani di guerra appartenenti al Sesto Reggimento Antiaereo della Divisione Mantova e uomini del Corpo Carri Armati.

La maggior parte di questi prigionieri fu rinominata il Quinto Battaglione del lavoro Italiano e venne catturata a Tobruk e Bengasi in seguito alla Campagna Nordafricana durante la II Guerra Mondiale. Gli uomini erano stati distribuiti in tre campi di prigionia nelle isole Orcadi. Essi furono portati per aiutare gli imprenditori nella costruzione di strade rialzate e bloccare gli approcci orientali a Scapa Flow, dove la flotta britannica era spesso ancorata.

I prigionieri lavoravano nel cortile di colata riempiendo gabbioni con pietre estratte dalla cava, posando infine l'asfalto sulle strade rialzate completate.

Le occupazioni dei prigionieri erano le più svariate e comprendevano artisti, scultori,

elettricisti e lavoratori del ferro.

Per rendere più accogliente l'accampamento, i prigionieri costruirono percorsi in cemento e piantarono aiuole accanto alle baracche. Gli uomini costruirono panche e tavoli in cemento in modo da poter mangiare all'aperto quando il tempo lo consentiva. Nel campo si tennero sontuose produzioni come "Il Panettiere di Venezia" in un teatro improvvisato; veniva pubblicato un giornale chiamato "Il Corriere della Domenica" e si giocava a biliardo su un tavolo in cemento improvvisato e a bocce.

Durante l'estate i prigionieri organizzavano competizioni sportive contro gli altri campi di prigionia e nel tempo libero facevano piccoli ninnoli che vendevano alla gente locale. Una cosa che ancora però mancava nell'accampamento era una cappella.

I prigionieri italiani nelle isole Orcadi sentivano profondamente la necessità di un



The Italian Chapel - The story of Camp 60

Christine Price - cont'd

luogo di culto. Il 30 settembre 1943 Padre Gioacchino Giacobazzi dell'Ordine dei Piccoli Fratelli arrivò all'accampamento e, grazie ai suoi entusiastici sforzi e all'aiuto di Major Buckland, il comandante del campo, due capanne Nissen vennero messe a disposizione dei prigionieri. Esse furono collocate l'una di fianco all'altra. Originariamente erano destinate ad essere usate una come una scuola e l'altra come una Chiesa. Domenico Chiocchetti, un artista, costruì una statua in cemento di san Giorgio che uccideva il drago che presiedeva la piazza dell'accampamento. Egli riunì una squadra di artigiani e iniziò a lavorare per realizzare il santuario.

Nel momento in cui Chiocchetti iniziò i lavori, l'immaginazione di trasformare quelle tristi capanne in un magnifico luogo di culto ispirò i suoi compagni italiani. Completata una parte della capanna, la necessità di progettare ulteriori opere d'arte diventò un bisogno. Sezioni completate fecero il resto della capanna poco invitante e i lavoratori

decisero di abbellire tutto l'interno.

Tutto il lavoro fu compiuto sotto la supervisione di Chiocchetti. Oltre a intraprendere il lavoro pittorico e decorativo, lui progettò l'altare, il tabernacolo, i candelieri, le lampade, le finestre e i vetri colorati e tutti i dettagli della lavorazione del legno ornamentale. Tutto il lavoro fu realizzato con materiale semplice, principalmente rottami ferrosi, legno di una nave naufragata e cemento scolpito con cura e maestria amorevole. Sopra l'altare c'è il capolavoro di Chiocchetti, basato sulla Madonna delle olive di Nicolò Barabino, una piccola immagine datagli da sua madre che Domenico portò con sé durante tutta la guerra.

La cappella fu in uso solo per un breve periodo di tempo. Nel maggio 1945, prima che fosse completamente finita, i prigionieri furono trasferiti a Yorkshire per il rimpatrio, ma Chiocchetti rimase lì per completare la fonte battesimale a cui stava lavorando.

Dante Alighieri Society ~ Calendar of Activities

Formal Courses

| | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| Term 1 | From 6 February to 7 April |
| Term 2 | From 1 May to 30 June |
| Term 3 | From 24 July to 22 September |
| Term 4 | From 9 October to 8 December |

Thursday Conversation Groups

| | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Term 1 | From 23 February to 27 April |
| Term 2 | From 1 June to 3 August |
| Term 3 | From 14 September to 16 November |

Cultural Activities

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2 November | The Truth of Fiction: Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels - Joseph Falsone |
| 23 November | End-of year function: DMV Choir, Sardinian Folk dancing, refreshments |

Choir Rehearsals

Every Thursday from 2 February to 7 December from 5pm to 7pm in the Function Room at the Notaras Multicultural Centre

Explore Tuscany and Sicily with Julie Docker

August 2018 - not to be missed!

Four splendid Italian cities: Florence, a week in Montepulciano Tuscany, Palermo and Siracusa

Le quattro città più splendide del mondo! A visit to Florence, Montepulciano, Palermo, and Siracusa including a week in Tuscany!

Tour devised and hosted by Julie Docker with *Active Travel* Canberra

Dates: Arrival Florence 15 August - Depart Siracusa 5 September 2018

Even the French king, Charles VIII, when in 1494 he entered **Florence**, was impressed by her fine palaces, and by the refinement of its men and women! Four nights in **Florence** will give you time to enjoy Florence's famous galleries in the morning with guide, and, in the afternoons, to discover your own 'secret' Florence. A further highlight will be a visit to Fiesole to admire Cecil Pinsent's garden design in a Medici garden. And *naturalmente* we will enjoy many *gelati*, a Florentine invention!

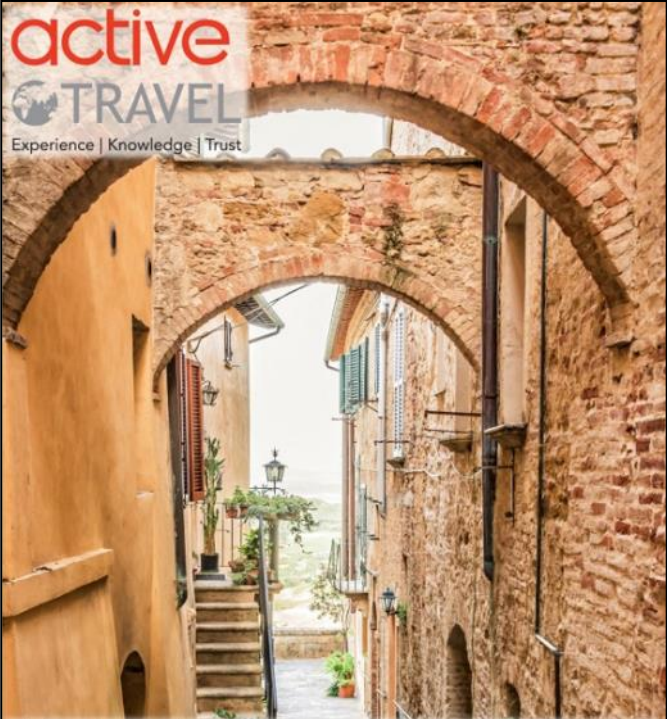
Montepulciano in Tuscany, too, is *splendida*: for you will be living like a local in this small, picturesque hilltop town, full of Renaissance palaces, for a week culminating in the town festival, the **Bravio**, 26 August, when its finest and strongest men compete to push wine barrels up the hill. Further highlights will include a night-time candle-lit procession of the local people dressed in rich Renaissance costume, and on Sunday the local choir sings Mass in the morning. Julie has devised a rich and involving program for this week, including a cooking lesson, some Italian lessons, and excursions to historic small towns nearby.

With the Norman Invasion of **Palermo** the clever Rogers allowed Arab architects to construct their churches, palaces, pleasure palaces and gardens. Such mixed Arab and Christian styles prompted

many contemporaries to describe this dramatic harbor side city as 'the most beautiful city in the world'! Later, the Spaniards conquered and built astonishing Baroque churches. We will have time to visit the Norman-Arabic church of Monreale, head for Carthaginian sites and visit Cefalu with lunch overlooking the sea.

Equally **Siracusa** was for a time the most beautiful city in the ancient Greek world! We have allowed two days for this city, to visit its archaeological museum, and admire Caravaggio's painting, the *Martyrdom of Santa Lucia*; her remains in her own church may have been stolen by Venice, but Caravaggio restored her beauty, to make this painting, arguably, his finest!

You are invited to express your interest with Active Travel, and, by so doing, you will have first place.



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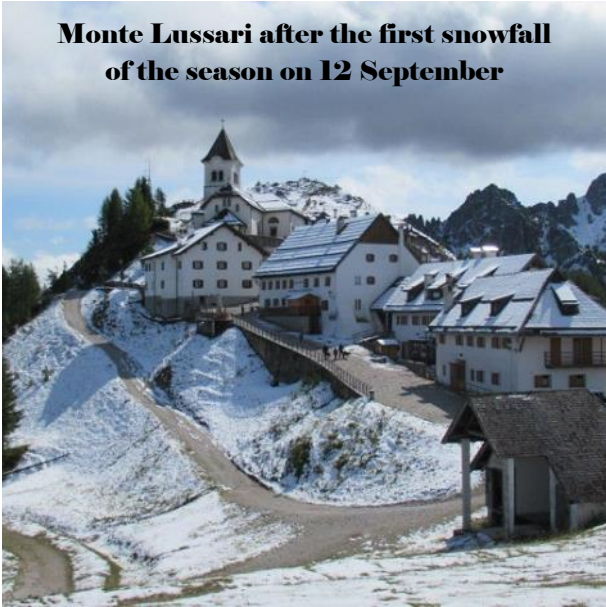
Explore Tuscany and Sicily with Julie Docker in August 2018

Taking expressions of interest now
askus@activetravel.com.au | 1300 783 188

Recollections of an Italian summer

Yvette Devlin

**Monte Lussari after the first snowfall
of the season on 12 September**



Since my departure from Italy in 1964, I have returned 26 times to my hometown of Vivaro in Friuli (situated in the North-East), including once a year for the past 20 years. I really enjoy spending 2-3 months there in the summer: the days are long, the summer fruit delicious, my many friends and relatives are happy to see me and are most hospitable, my house is comfortable, and there are so many outdoor events to attend that it's difficult to choose among them – but dancing at the 'sagre di paese' is a definite priority!

This year I welcomed three groups of Australian visitors (including poet Mark O'Connor and wife Jan) whom I gladly took around Friuli to show them fabulous spots. Friuli is an under-rated tourist destination that merits consideration by those who have already been to the popular destinations of Rome, Florence, Venice, the Amalfi coast and Sicily.

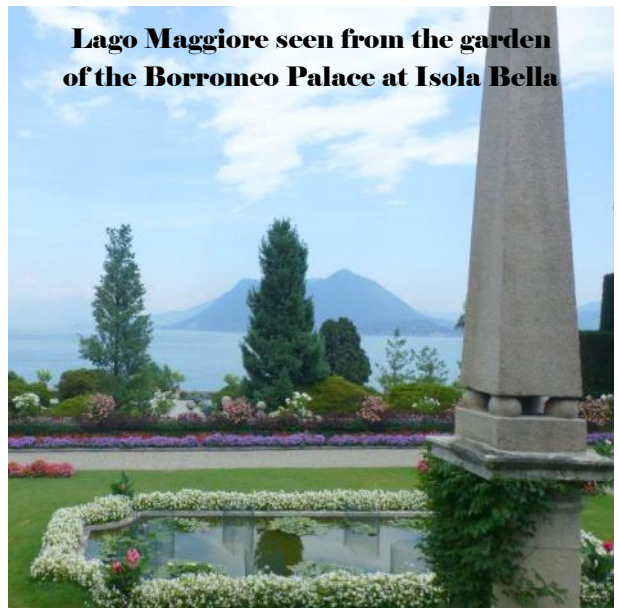
I should explain that while in Italy I im-

merse myself in 'italianness' to the point that I no longer feel Australian, or think about Australia. I have an Italian identity card and even a 'codice fiscale' (tax file number) that's required for many transactions. I read two newspapers a day – the national *Corriere della Sera* and *Messaggero Veneto* that covers the NE, and watch the news on the channels of the national broadcaster Rai.

Here is a summary of the issues that stood out for me:

The weather. Yes – it was hot and humid! Many cities experienced temperatures above 40 degrees and there was evidence of desertification in many parts of the country. There was talk of a record drought: the nine months to August 2017 were the driest since 1800, with 40% less rain than in the past. For a while now the North has been experiencing weather typical of the tropics. In Friuli, for instance, the number of summer storms has increased significantly, and they tend to be much more damaging

**Lago Maggiore seen from the garden
of the Borromeo Palace at Isola Bella**



Recollections of an Italian summer

Yvette Devlin - cont'd

than in the past. With its strong winds, the storm that hit the region on 10 August caused damages in excess of €138 million, mainly to agriculture.

Politics. More of the same, really. Berlusconi is still prominent in trying to manoeuvre the centre-right despite being unable to stand as a candidate due to past convictions, but his old party of Forza Italia (centre-right) is fractured and a coalition with the far-right Lega Nord seems problematic. The Democratic Party (centre-left) is also fractured. Renzi is no longer prime minister but as head of the party he is trying to heal internal rifts – a difficult task given the intransigence of the far-left faction. Beppe Grillo's Movimento 5 Stelle maintains considerable support (about ¼ of the country's votes) but it too has internal divisions.

The economy. Much to the relief of Gentiloni's government (Partito Democratico), there were definite signs of improvement. GDP was the highest in six years – in the June quarter it was 1.5% higher than in the same quarter of 2016. As for employment, it's like a curate's egg. On the positive side, employment has



One of Tracey Moffatt's photographs at the Australian pavilion

reached the highest levels since 2008. On the negative side, unemployment is still high at 11.3%, reaching 35.5% for young people. Furthermore, there was a drop in stable employment in favour of fixed-term contracts.

This situation, very widespread, creates a feeling of uncertainty that prevents young people from planning their future. Indeed, people in the 25-34 age category have lost the most in the economic crisis.

Tourism. While the contribution of tourism to the economy was strong and celebrated, the media also highlighted many cases of bad behaviour on the part of tourists, such as the three men who dived off the Calatrava bridge in Venice.

Boat arrivals. These included genuine asylum seekers fleeing Syria and other troubled countries, and economic migrants. The number of arrivals dropped significantly during the summer: 3000 in August this year compared with 21,000 in August last year. This drop was attributed to Italy reaching agreements with Libyan mayors – Italy sup-



Verona seen from above the ruins of the Roman theatre

Recollections of an Italian summer

Yvette Devlin - cont'd

plies aid in exchange for the mayors stopping the boats. Italy still carries the heaviest weight of arrivals: of the 126,000 arrivals on the European coast in 2017 80% had arrived in Italy, and of the 361,000 arrivals in Europe in 2016, 50% of the people had arrived in Italy. At a recent Paris meeting Angela Merkel

The large pond in Villa Pisani's back garden



made it clear that the whole of Europe needed to share the burden of these arrivals.

Terrorism. The August terrorist act in Barcelona justifiably drew a lot of attention and led to more intense and more visible security in Italian cities. For instance areas where pedestrians congregate in great numbers were blocked to vehicles and well guarded. In Verona in front of the arena I saw several army vehicles, carabinieri, police and soldiers, and I saw a similar thing in the places I visited in Rome – Piazza del Popolo and Piazza di Spagna.

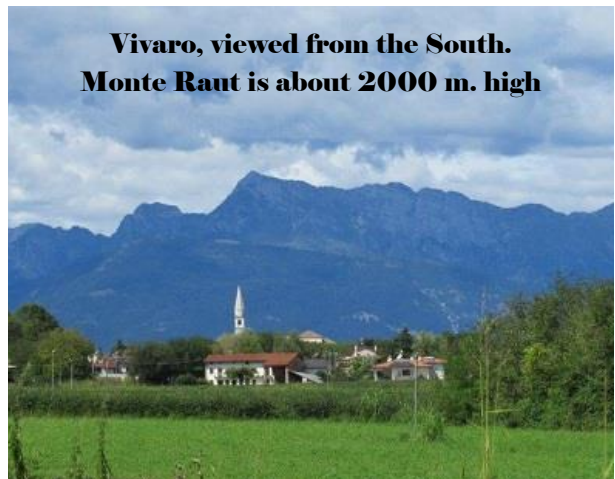
Earthquake at Ischia. A small earthquake hit the tourist island of Ischia, causing two deaths, a number of injuries and a few buildings to collapse. The tourists quickly left and there was an

immediate focus on reconstruction. In this context, the media drew attention to a Senate report that had found that the Friuli Venezia Giulia model of reconstruction following the major 1976 earthquake is the only one that has worked well in Italy. Key to the model were 'the role of mayors and a very active population'.

Australia was almost absent from the news. Apart from being mentioned in the context of our success in 'stopping the boats', there was an article on Qantas's announcement that by 2020 there would be a super-airplane that would reach London from Sydney in 20 hours non-stop; and another article on the government allocation of \$280m to eradicate fire ants.

But while in Italy I am also a keen tourist. This year I particularly enjoyed a visit to Turin where I saw an exhibition of Giovanni Boldini's portraits at Venaria Reale (one of the king's palaces), went to the top of the Mole Antonelliana and visited its cinema exhibition; and took the opportunity to go to Lago Maggiore and visit Isola Bella which used to be owned entirely by the aristocratic Borromeo

**Vivaro, viewed from the South.
Monte Raut is about 2000 m. high**



Recollections of an Italian summer

Yvette Devlin - cont'd

family. In Veneto I visited Verona including the ruins of the Teatro romano and the cathedral of San Zeno famous for its bronze door and a large Mantegna altarpiece. In Padua I visited the Palazzo della Ragione, the Basilica di Sant'Antonio and the university, which is the second oldest in Italy having been founded in 1222. Among other things this university is known for the teachings of Galileo; the graduation of the first woman in the world (in 1678 a Venetian noblewoman and mathematician – Elena Cornaro Piscopia – was awarded a PhD) and for having the oldest surviving permanent anatomical theatre in Europe, dating from 1595. In this city I also saw the font where Galileo's son was baptised in 1606, and the Scrovegni chapel with Giotto's stupendous frescoes. I was then taken to see Villa Pisani, a palatial Villa Veneta at Stra built for Doge Pisani.

It was acquired in 1807 by Napoleon and in 1814 it was taken over by the Hapsburgs, and was the venue for the first meeting between Hitler and Mussolini held in 1934. It features frescoes by Tiepolo. Finally, as per usual, I spent a day in Venice where I also visited the bien-

nale – the 57th International Art Exhibition where the Australian pavilion featured Tracey Moffatt's photography. All in all, there was plenty of art, architecture, culture and history to be enjoyed.

In my own hometown or nearby I enjoyed different forms of culture and traditions: theatre performances in the Friulian language; historical recreations of life in medieval times; a religious procession – with the statue of the Madonna – around the streets of Vivaro; and exotic performances at an international folk festival.

One day I got excited when I heard a didgeridoo being played in a portico of a town near Vivaro. As I approached, I realised that the player was not Aboriginal. I then discovered that he was a young Dutch man who had learnt to play the instrument in London, had never been to Australia and had made the didgeridoo with a tree from Holland. But that's not all: he combined the didgeridoo sound with that of a Tibetan brass bowl caressed with a brass stick. It seems hilarious, but in fact it was a terrific performance. A toy kangaroo appropriately sat next to his busking hat.

But the highlight of my summer was seeing the village of Monte Lussari covered in snow: the day before my visit there had been an early snowfall of about 10 cm. The village looked magical! And whenever I go to Monte Lussari (1790m. high, part of the Julian Alps and reachable by cable car) I drive an extra 15 km to walk around Lago di Fusine, a green lake with the Alps in the background. Nature couldn't be more splendid!



The fountain in Piazza di Spagna

Le meraviglie di una Puglia ancora da scoprire.

All'insegna dello slow food e non solo

Nicla Capuano Giannattasio - (*Insegnante d'Italiano a Bari*)

La Puglia, che la tradizione descrive geograficamente come il “*tacco dello Stivale Italiano*”, è una striscia di terra con spiagge meravigliose e per tutti i gusti: sabbiose a Torre dell'Orso e a Porto Cesario, ricche di scogli a Otranto e a Santa Maria di Leuca dove s'incontrano e si mescolano lo Ionio, cristallino e calmo, e l'Adriatico intensamente azzurro. Le spiagge consentono innumerevoli scelte: da Gallipoli, la “Gemma del Salento”, al Gargano lo “Sperone d'Italia”, fino alle splendidi Isole Tremiti.

L'entroterra offre il Parco Nazionale delle Murge e quello del Gargano, con la selvaggia Foresta Umbra, le saline ed i laghi. Sono anche da visitare la riserva marina di Torre Guaceto, in provincia di Brindisi, le profonde gravine di Laterza (la gravina è una incisione erosiva profonda anche più di 200 metri, molto simile ai Canyon americani) e le doline di Altamura (la dolina è una cavità superficiale, tipica delle regioni carsiche, di forma circolare o ovale, di varia ampiezza e profondità, formatasi per la dissoluzione della roccia calcarea ad opera delle acque superficiali filtranti attraverso le fratture del terreno).

La Puglia consente anche un interessante viaggio nella storia: dalla preistoria alla Magna Grecia, dall'età imperiale al Rinascimento, ai fasti del barocco di Lecce e del Salento. I famosi

trulli sono una suggestiva testimonianza del passato rurale della regione, assieme a numerosi castelli sulle coste più a Sud, che ci ricordano che un tempo le merci e i pericoli arrivavano dal mare.

Per chi ama la tradizione e la musica popolare, ricordiamo, tra tutte, la *Pizzica*, tipica danza del Salento, parte estrema della Puglia.

Chi decide di visitare la Puglia godrà quindi di un viaggio interessante, vario e rilassante tra paesaggi di incomparabile bellezza, viste suggestive in una natura splendida e selvaggia che è un'ottima cornice a sapori antichi e nuovi, di mare e di terra, che il turista degusterà in qualsiasi angolo di questo territorio voglia soffermarsi.

Diamo inizio al nostro *tour*, partendo dalla famosa colonia di Sparta, Taranto, affacciata sullo Ionio. Che dire dopo aver assaporato piatti tipici come *riso patate e cozze*, *le cozze gratinate*, *la 'mpepata di cozze*, *i cavatelli con fagioli e cozze*, accompagnando il tutto con la birra tarantina per eccellenza, la Raffo? Una vera bontà!! Non si possono ignorare i dolci profumati delle festività: *struffoli*, *carteddate*, *scarcelle* e *pettole*, semplici leccornie, che anche le famiglie umili hanno sempre servito in tavola.

Spostandosi nell'entroterra, concediamoci una



Le meraviglie di una Puglia ancora da scoprire.

All'insegna dello slow food e non solo

Nicla Capuano Giannattasio - (*Insegnante d'Italiano a Bari*)

visita alla signorile cittadina di Martina Franca, nota per la sua cattedrale barocca di S. Martino e passata alle cronache per l'enogastronomia locale con piatti principalmente a base di carne, tra cui spiccano i “*Gnummaridd*”, caratteristici spiedini di tenero fegato e altre frattaglie.

Nell'estremo lembo orientale della provincia ionica, merita una sosta la cittadina di Manduria, conosciuta per la produzione del suo famoso *vino Primitivo*, un rosso dal sapore pieno e vellutato da abbinare alle *orecchiette con le cime di rapa*, un piatto tipico e ricco di sapore diffuso un po' in tutta la Puglia.

Inoltrandoci verso il basso Salento, vale la pena fermarsi a visitare Maglie, sede ogni anno del pluripremiato *Mercatino del Gusto* nel periodo estivo: Cene in villa e in strada, Pasta Experience, Musica con gusto, Via della Gastronomia, Via dei dolci, Angolo della Birra artigianale, Orchestra itinerante e tante altre sono le iniziative che caratterizzano questo evento enogastronomico. Non sono da meno i *vini bianchi di Nardò*, frizzanti e dal profumo leggero, da abbinare a piatti a base di pesce, serviti nei panoramici ristoranti sul mare della rinomata Gallipoli.

Al termine della visita del “tacco pugliese”, profumi e sapori impongono di spostarsi nella parte alta della regione, dove risiede il capoluogo, Bari, con la sua affollata provincia estesa tra mare e terra.

Alberobello, famosa in tutto il mondo per i suoi *Trulli*, garantisce una cucina d'alta classe a base di terra; mentre a Polignano a mare è possibile degustare i numerosi piatti tipici a base di pesce. Leggenda narra che il paese sull'Adriatico sia il luogo natale del gelato.

Cotto nei tradizionali forni a legna e in pietra, il *pane di Altamura* si distingue per la sua fragranza, il suo sapore ed il suo aroma. Ha una crosta molto croccante e una mollica soffice di colore giallo paglierino. Si presenta sotto due forme tradizionali: la prima, denominata localmente “*U skuanète*” (pane accavallato), è alta; l'altra, più bassa, è chiamata “*a cappidde del padre de Simone*” (a



I Trulli di Alberobello

cappello di prete).

Insomma tra resti di antiche mura greche e messapiche, *castelli e cattedrali* di epoca medievale, chiese barocche, *masserie* con ulivi secolari e incantevoli spiagge dorate il turista vivrà un'esperienza tra passato e presente, assaporando i prodotti originari di questo splendido lembo di terra.



Varie tipologie di pane di Altamura

Il Natale che non c'è più

Luigi Catizone

Natale è la festa della famiglia (si dice infatti: "Natale con i tuoi, Pasqua con chi vuoi"), ma anche dei ricordi.

Credo che ognuno di noi abbia mille ricordi, mi auguro soprattutto piacevoli, specie quelli che si riferiscono ai Natali dell'infanzia.

Anch'io ho dei bei ricordi dei periodi natalizi di quando ero bambino, nei primi anni '50, a Magisano, un paesino calabrese alle falde della Sila, a 600 metri sul livello del mare.

Non si faceva l'albero di Natale e non c'era allora la tradizione dei doni di Babbo Natale, a grandi e piccoli. In qualche casa si faceva il Presepe e spesso con materiale riciclato (capanne ottenute da scatole di cartone rielaborate e la neve era fatta di cotone o farina). Il muschio era quello vero, facile da reperire nella mia zona. In tutte le case venivano appesi, come portafortuna, cespugli più o meno grandi di Vischio, una pianta parassita facile da trovare sui castagni, le querce e i pini, sempreverde e con delle bacche sferiche bianche traslucide.

Di tutti i giorni intorno a Natale, il più bello

Il fuoco di Natale in Piazza



per me era la Vigilia di Natale, il 24 dicembre. Al mattino, in piazza, davanti alla Chiesa, iniziava la preparazione del fuoco per la notte di Natale. Nelle settimane precedenti, veniva raccolta dai boschi circostanti il paese una gran quantità di legna, anche alcuni ceppi di vecchi alberi che erano il miglior combustibile. Naturalmente l'operazione di impilamento della legna in forma accuratamente piramidale era fatta da persone riconosciute da tutti come esperti. Chi voleva aiutare, poteva farlo, ma alle strette dipendenze dei "capi". Terminato il lavoro di formazione della "pira", si metteva in cima un bastone che innalzava un cartone con su scritto "BUON NATALE". Era ormai buio e tutti andavano a casa per la cena.

Il cenone di Natale del 24 dicembre era di magro. Essendo il mio un paese di montagna, si cucinava a base di baccalà, non essendo disponibili altri tipi di pesce. Raramente, qualcuno riusciva a procurarsi un capitone, grossa anguilla femmina, ricercata come cibo tradizionale nelle feste natalizie, ma a me non piaceva molto. Talvolta il capitone, mal custodito, scappava al controllo e girava per casa o anche usciva all'aperto, quasi volesse sfuggire al suo destino di diventare cibo per il cenone. Mia mamma il baccalà lo faceva in tanti modi: al forno, fritto, in umido con le patate e le olive nere. Il primo però era quasi sempre un bel piatto di spaghetti con le alici sciolte nell'olio caldo e il pane grattugiato tostato. Veramente buono e tuttora faccio io stesso questa ricetta, anche fuori dal periodo natalizio. Non mancavano i formaggi, ricotta e pecorino stagionato soprattutto, che ben si accompagnava con le olive seccate al forno. Sottaceti e sottolio erano anche presenti in abbondanza. Il vino era rosso ed era sempre abbondante.

Non c'erano panettoni o pandori, entrati successivamente nella tradizione natalizia, ma tanti buoni dolci fatti in casa, talvolta un po' diversi da famiglia in famiglia. Solo per

Il Natale che non c'è più

Luigi Catizone



Un'immagine dei tardilli, palline fritte di farina e uova ricoperte di miele

ricordarne alcuni, segnalo: le crispelle, specie di ciambelline fritte di forma varia di farina, con o senza acciughe, o di patate; i tardilli, palline fritte di farina e uova, ricoperte poi di miele (mi piacevano tantissimo); i taralli, particolarmente adatti ad essere immersi nel vino; le nepite, ripiene di marmellata; la pitta 'nchiusa, ripiena di uva passita e noci impastate nel vin cotto. Questi ed altri dolci, che si ritrovano simili in molti paesi e regioni spesso con nomi diversi, si conservavano a lungo e si mangiavano quindi anche nei giorni successivi.

Durante la cena, non era raro sentire sotto la finestra delle persone che cantavano delle filastrocche ben auguranti rivolte al padrone di casa. Erano le "strinne". Si interrompeva allora la cena e si invitavano i cantori ad entrare e bere un bicchiere di vino, mangiare qualcosa e riscaldarsi vicino al focolare che quella sera ardeva ancora più vivace che mai in tutte le case.

Di solito si finiva di cenare verso le 22,30 – 23.00, tutti molto sazi e qualcuno anche alticcio per il buon vino. Ci si avviava così alla Messa di mezzanotte, ma prima c'era tutto il tempo per assistere, nella Piazza davanti alla Chiesa, all'accensione del fuoco

che, nella tradizione, serviva a riscaldare Gesù Bambino appena nato. Era questa una operazione per me magica: vedere come, grazie alle arti dell'esperto compaesano, in pochi minuti la grande catasta prendesse fuoco con le fiamme e le scintille che si innalzavano veloci verso il cielo. Non mancava di solito qualche scherzo con braci e tizzoni, talvolta di dubbio gusto, nei confronti delle persone del paese considerate più sprovvedute. Per noi bambini anche quello faceva parte dello spettacolo. Il fuoco veniva alimentato e mantenuto vivo sino all'Epifania.

Per mezzanotte, si andava ad ascoltare la Messa. La devozione in noi bambini non sempre era altissima e ci andavamo un po' perché costretti, ma soprattutto per vedere tutti quelli, ed erano tanti, che dormivano e spesso russavano sonoramente. Il vino abbondante della cena e l'ora tarda favorivano facilmente il sonno. Per noi bambini, quello era uno spettacolo imperdibile e poi si poteva far tardi come non mai.

Il giorno di Natale il pranzo era altrettanto abbondante, ma il menu cambiava: pasta piena (detta anche al forno, con polpettine, salame, uova bollite, salsa, provola) o spaghetti con ragù e polpettine; per secondo piatto c'era carne in vari modi e poi abbondanti salumi (specie soppressate e capiccolli) e formaggi con sottolio e sottaceti. Oggi, per fortuna, si può dire che le tavole sono più o meno ben imbandite tutti i giorni, allora invece, all'inizio degli anni '50, Natale era una buona occasione per grandi mangiate e soprattutto per gustare cose che negli altri giorni dell'anno non si mangiavano.

Oggi, per Natale, prevale l'aspetto legato ai regali ai bambini e agli adulti, anche se il cibo resta sempre importante. Allora tutto era basato sul cibo e lo stare in compagnia.

Tanti Auguri a tutti di BUON NATALE!

Know your choir

A profile of Geraldine Triffitt



Geraldine Triffitt at Santiago de Compostela in 2015

At the age of four I played chopsticks on the piano, hit a tennis ball against the wall of the house and heard my sisters practising French and German words at the dining table. Today my interests are still the same – music, tennis and languages.

I was born in Hobart, Tasmania during the Second World War. My mother and my two sisters, Mary and Helen, were New Zealanders and my father, a Victorian, managed a life insurance branch in New Zealand before coming to Tasmania as manager in 1936.

Mum and Mary both played the piano but I had my heart set on the violin from the age of four. I had to wait until I could read music so that I was seven when I started violin lessons with Ronald McKay in Hobart.

My first public performance was playing *Greensleeves* at the age of eight in the Hobart Eisteddfod. I played in eisteddfods for many years but never won first prize, although I picked up a couple of seconds.

My most traumatic experience was playing in the New Norfolk Eisteddfod at night in the hall at the mental hospital. I was playing a Handel sonata when the pegs of my G and D strings both slipped. Not being a proficient tuner of my violin I stopped but the adjudicator did not realize the cause and thought it was the effect of a late night on a 10 year old! My friend Anne Walker (who later joined the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra) was the winner, but I was the only other competitor and was allowed second prize.

Anne had her violin lesson after me and I used to stay and listen to her. We both played in Ronald McKay's orchestra. I remember hearing about the death of King George VI at an orchestral practice on 6 February 1952.

My parents were very interested in classical music and had a subscription to the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra concerts. They had friends who bought long-playing records which were slowly appearing after the war. They played their new purchases on Friday nights, and I went to these evenings and also to the symphony concerts.

I went to the Friends' School in Hobart from the age of 5 to 17. This was a Quaker school which was very progressive. The headmaster had been recruited as a young man to teach at the International School in Geneva. He was a good pianist and was very interested in encouraging music in the school. We had a school orchestra which I led for a few years. In my penultimate year at school I played the Bach E major Concerto for Violin at Speech Night.

A great influence and joy at school was the gift from the Carnegie Corporation of 5,000

Know your choir

A profile of Geraldine Triffitt - cont'd

classical records and the set to play them on. Morning assembly started with silence and then a piece of classical music. This provided a calm and reflective start to the day.

During my school career I sat examinations for the AMEB, the London School of Music and Trinity College. These external examinations qualified as a subject for the Matriculation and also a university subject for my Bachelor of Arts.

At school I played tennis every day and regularly entered tennis tournaments in various parts of Tasmania. I found tennis a useful method of meeting people in a new environment.

My other lifelong interests have been languages and geography. In 1948 my mother and I went to New Zealand and the Maoris at their marae at Porirua fascinated me. A friend's partner was Maori and she taught me some words of her language.

At school and the University of Tasmania I studied French and German languages. I was keen to learn Italian but it was not offered.

My music career went through a dormant period for a number of years. I did a geography honours degree, followed by marriage to Tom Triffitt, a fellow geography student. Our son Iain was born in Hobart and two years later in 1966 we moved to Canberra where Tom took up a position at the National Library of Australia.

I worked at the Department of Treasury Library while I completed my library studies for the Library Association of Australia. Tom worked in the Training Section of the National Library and instructed me in the finer points of librarianship while we did the washing up.

In 1968 and 1969 I compiled maps for the

Atlas of Australian Resources and Queensland Geographical series in the Geographic Section of the Department of National Development. In 1970 while working as a research assistant in the Sociology Department at the Australian National University I gave birth to my second son, Ross.

In 1972 I joined the staff of the National Library of Australia and worked there until 1984. During that time I studied Indonesian language for a year at the ANU. At the library I was introduced to a different form of music. A bush band was formed to perform at the National Library Christmas Party one year. This introduced me to Irish music and folk music generally.

Another important event in the 1970s was our first visit to Fiji in 1973 on a tourist 10-day package. We met up with friends whom Tom had trained in librarianship. This had the eventual result of Tom being invited to the remote village of Soso. He had been a professional photographer, and was involved with audio-visual methods of training at the Library and these were considered ideal qualifications to record the culture and heritage of the village. He was adopted as the son of a prominent member of a clan in the village and as a result our whole family was adopted into the social structure. One condition was that we should learn the language of the village. This was a dialect of the Western Fijian language which is different from the standard Fijian language.

Our family was involved with the Fijians in Canberra and later a Tongan student stayed with us while he was a student at Narrabundah College and completed his Science degree at the Australian National University. While working I studied Linguistics at the ANU and one of my units involved a study of Tongan.

After some years of serious illness, Tom died in 1985. I had left the National Library and worked in special libraries. In 1986 I joined

Know your choir

A profile of Geraldine Triffitt - cont'd

the library of the then Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, later AIATSIS, as the language specialist. I moved to Kambah and joined a church which had a bush band. This led me to joining the Murrumbidgee Band which played at bush dances, church fairs and other events.

Since 1994 I have attended the National Folk Festival at Easter regularly and participated in workshops featuring different types of fiddle music. As well I attended a music camp in January located first in Tasmania and later in the Kyneton district of Victoria for ten years. After leaving the Murrumbidgee Band I joined Canberra Scottish Fiddlers and a group who play Irish music. This year I have joined the Brindabella Orchestra. This has proved a challenge to revive my limited technique, to learn to count the bars of rest and to be consistent with my bowing!

I retired from AIATSIS in 1997 but continued working under contract in libraries and government departments. In 1999, Lois Carrington and I compiled *OZBIB: a linguistic bibliography of Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait Islands*, published by Pacific Linguistics. This was followed by a supplement in 2006. AIATSIS bought the copyright, converted the printed works to a database and employed me to update it until 2015.

Since my retirement I have studied Italian with various tutors including Livio Chicco. He encouraged me to join the musicians for the Dante Musica Viva Choir. This is my fourth year with them. It has been a fun time. I enjoyed particularly the trip we had to Griffith, and of course our social events. It is inspiring to play music to groups who have not heard the songs of their youth for years. A happy coincidence was my trip to Spain to walk the Camino. I mentioned I was doing that one night at the Choir and was asked when my friend Penny and I were going. I said 17 June 2015 and was told that Yvette, Sue, Annie, Maria and her husband Bruno were doing the same thing a day earli-

er. We met up and together finished at Santiago de Compostela.

I have travelled widely, with several visits to Italy, where I studied at language schools in Firenze and Lucca. I have also studied French at Montpellier and German at Kassel. My family has kept in contact with Soso village over the years. We have visited there and members of the Nayato family have stayed with us each year since 2010. As a result I have been able to record the village culture by publishing a book of portraits of several generations of each family, *Soso families* (2012, 2014) and a recent publication with Onesimo Nayato, *Soso village* (2017), which describes life in the village and changes that have taken place over the years.

I have been extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to follow my interests of music, tennis, languages and travel, to have had interesting work using my skills and stimulating hobbies for my retirement. My family has supported me since Tom's premature death, and I have had the opportunity to learn about different cultures through my Fijian family and my travels. My only wish is that I was fluent in languages other than English. The more bits of language I know the more they get mixed up.



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Italian Trivia Night

Yvette Devlin

Five groups took part in this educational and entertaining competition held on Thurs 5 October: I piccoli (with 'honorary piccolo' Nicola), Ferro's Fillies (with 'honorary filly' Luigi), gli Scombinati, i Calabresi, e Sant'Antonio.

The knowledgeable I piccoli and Ferro's Fillies took out first and second place respectively. The winners rejoiced and the losers did not sulk. It was a lot of fun for everyone.

Lyndall Heddle read out the questions that had been drawn up by Francesca Foppoli. Questions covered a range of topics – including art, literature, history, politics, geography, cuisine, sport, entertainment – with some of these being quite obscure and 'challenging' for participants. The answer sheets were marked by Franco Papandrea, Cristina Giusti and Grant Doran. Cristina read out the answers and Grant kept the score on a whiteboard.

Wine and nibbles were available to help activate the brain.



Above: at the end of the Trivia competition, from L to R, Ferro's Fillies (2nd), the event organisers and I piccoli (1st)

Below: the groups work hard!





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Our newsletter is automatically made available to members electronically.

However, if you prefer the paper version, please tick this box

☐

Is this a renewal?

Yes / No

Are you interested in assisting with the activities of the Society?

Yes / No

I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the Dante Alighieri Society.

Copies are available from the Dante office on request.

SIGNED

DATE

Please make cheque payable to: "Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc"

or deposit at the National Australian Bank

Account name: **Dante Alighieri Society** BSB: 082 902 Ac No: 515 003 825

**Please include your surname and initial as the reference when paying by EFT
or send the deposit slip with your membership application form.
Your subscription will be completed when payment confirmation is received**