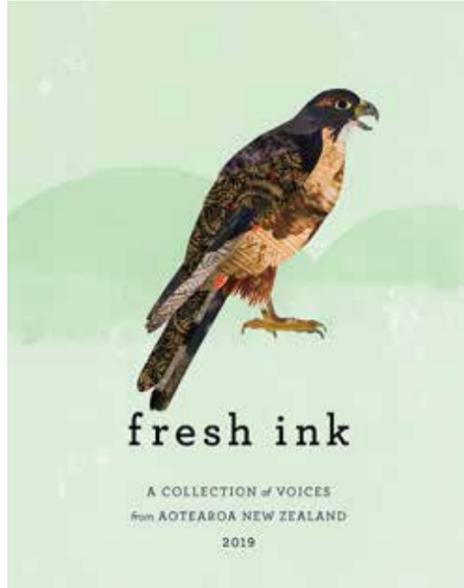


## ABC - Authors Book Corner

### Ōtaki Mail Author Features in Anthology

Vivienne Bailey who has written for the Ōtaki Mail for decades as our gardening, arts and Te Horo columnist is one of the New Zealand writers featured in a recently released anthology. Vivienne is a freelance journalist who has been shortlisted in several national short story competitions and broadcasts regularly with Coast Access Radio.

'Fresh Ink 2019', includes exciting new works from a diverse group of poets,



writers and artists. There is a variety of contributions including poetry, novel extracts, short stories and artwork.

It includes New Zealand writing at its best, exhibiting new stories and poetry from respected established writers as well as some lively 'fresh ink' from previously unpublished authors.

Published by Cloud Ink Press it is available now from David Bateman PO Box 100-242 North Shore Auckland.



## The Wild Card by Renée

When we finished the poetry course we said to Renée – 'Will you take another one?' 'No,' she said, 'not right now, but I've always wanted to teach a workshop on writing a crime novel.'

And that's how 'Breaking and Entering: How to write a crime novel' began.

Renée went home, wrote the ten-week course over January 2018 and on the first Friday in February we began. It was then, she says, she realised she needed to do the work along with the students. She needed to make sure the work she set was do-able. So she wrote the ten pages of homework per week along with us. By the end of the course she had a first draft of 100 pages. Being a child of the Depression, she thought, 'Waste not, want not,' and began a second draft. She asked a friend in publishing if she would give the manuscript a professional read. She would pay the going rate. The friend said, 'Send it. We're considering manuscripts now.'

It wasn't quite finished, but she sent it anyway and ten days later she got an email saying, 'We'd be delighted to publish.' Renée finished another draft, did some rewriting, sent it off, and *The Wild Card* was on its way.

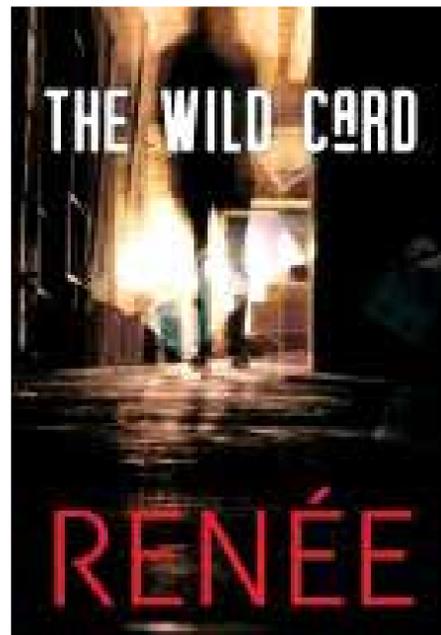
It was with delight that I picked up my copy this week to read the full work. As a participant of the workshop I'd heard bits and pieces along the way but never the full story. Renée has created a new genre – *Cosy Noir* – a murder told with humour.

Ruby Palmer has been dealt a rough hand. She was left in a kete at the back door of the Porohiwi Home for Children when she was a baby, and then at seven she discovered that Betty – who stopped the bad stuff happening to Ruby at the Home – has drowned. Now in her thirties, Ruby suspects her friend was murdered – her only lead is a notebook that uses the symbols on playing cards to tell a story she can't understand, but there are other clues too: the man in the balaclava who attacks her when she starts to investigate, and, break-ins at the local theatre where Ruby is playing Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. As Ruby goes deeper into the mystery of Betty's death, she starts to find answers to questions about herself that she hadn't dared ask before. To discover the truth, she needs to find the wild card, and fast.

The story is an amalgam of theatre, playing cards, small town New Zealand, humour, mystery and murder. Renée's skill as a playwright is obvious in the natty chatty dialogue as is her ability in pulling all the threads together. It's a hard ask to write about the abuse of children in state care and this is a multileveled work of beautiful prose.

But who are Heart, Spade, Diamond and Club and what are they trying to hide?

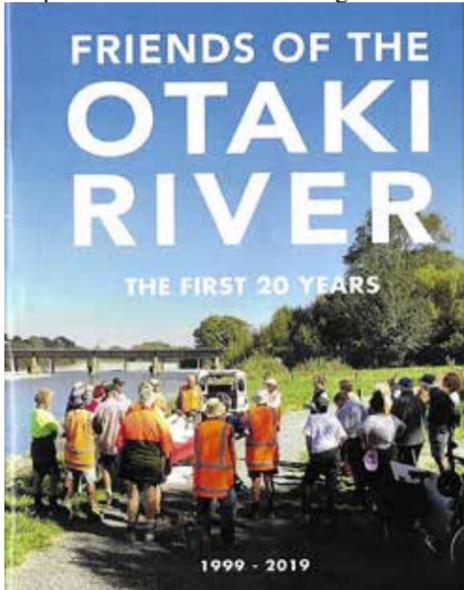
Published by Cuba Press. Copies \$35 available from Renée 021 261 3254 or good bookshops.



## The Friends of the Ōtaki River

After twenty years of vigilance, work, planting and care the Friends of the Ōtaki River (FOTOR) have published their 'memoires'.

This nice little book under the chairmanship of Max Lutz recounts the delightful trip from the early days when the management of the river changed from the North to come under the auspices of the Greater Wellington



Regional Council.

Formed in 1999 with Don Hunn as its first chair this group has remained vigilant and steadfast in its duty of care; to the river and its boundaries, to the environment and to the people of Ōtaki, ensuring that the river is in good heart for all of us to enjoy.

The book opens with a delightful poem by Barbara Simons, and traverses the Ōtaki Floodplain Management Plan, the community effort in planting thousands of trees, along with the advocacy, single minded and determined to make our river the best.

There are honourable mentions of all the players who have been involved in the past two decades, photos of the work that's been done and the beauty of the final product – a healthy clean river where we all can walk, fish and play.

What a great legacy FOTOR has left us. Their hard work and the sponsorship of many have ensured our grandchildren will have a rich playground in the future.

Contact Trevor Wylie for a copy; [geminiservices@xtra.co.nz](mailto:geminiservices@xtra.co.nz)

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