

Octogenarian poets launch latest solo collections



Dual launch... Poets Peter Bland (left) and Devonport’s Kevin Ireland, an advocate of the local coffee

Around 80 people attended the launch of new poetry collections by Kevin Ireland and Peter Bland at Devonport Library last week, being entertained by readings and reminiscences from two elder statesmen of New Zealand literature.

For Bland (86) *Nowhere is Too Far Off* is his 25th book and for Ireland (87) *Shape of the Heart* his 26th collection of poetry.

Both have had publishing careers dating back more than 50 years, with their first solo collections hitting the shelves in the 1960s.

Ireland’s collection contains some of his regular themes of clouds and landscapes, and the writing life, and Bland’s features images of

the sea and his late wife, Beryl. However, both books also feature the inevitability of ageing.

Meeting up with friends used to involve talking about “girls, parties and films; now it’s the times of appointments with doctors, mainly,” Ireland said.

Many of his poems contained images of the simplicity of life, such as making sourdough bread, growing up having baths rather than showers – and even enjoying a good coffee.

“One of the terrible things about travelling is the coffee is horrible everywhere...Devonport has the best coffee in the world,” Ireland said.

Bland said he was no longer a jobbing actor, he wasn’t travelling anymore, had had a stroke

in the last year and it was now a big effort getting to the supermarket. But he felt his poems were no worse for it.

“I don’t impose myself on the poems as much as I once did.

“I’m not going out much, but the garden seems to be growing into the house – it’s wonderful.”

Both collections are on sale at Paradox Books.

• Devonport Library Associates, who hosted the launch, have two further events planned for the year – a celebration of notable Devonport women and a launch of Dennis Glover’s letters.

Thank you North Shore!

It’s an honour to be elected as your Member of Parliament.

Thank you to all those who supported me. I am proud to represent our stunning electorate and to be your strong voice in Parliament. I am humbled and excited and look forward to serving the wonderful people of the North Shore.

As your local MP, I’m here to help. Feel free to drop in to my Takapuna Electorate Office at 15 Anzac Street or call us on 09 486 0005.



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