

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

December 2022



Nice things about a trip to Wellington

Some months ago Right Rev. Hamish Galloway, the current moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Aotearoa New Zealand, asked me a question. He asked me if I would be willing to travel to Wellington to take some notes at a meeting and then turn the notes into a report. He thought I would do the task well, and hoped that I would say "yes". Having spent the last seventeen years saying "no" to any suggestion that I should help the national church (given that its governing body, the General Assembly, had enshrined in legislation that people like me are unfit for service), I took a while to give an answer. But because I considered Hamish to be asking in hope and good will, and because the subject of the meeting seemed worthwhile, eventually I said "yes".

So this editorial is "what I did (and noticed and thought) in Wellington.

It is nice to buy a new shirt

With Jetstar reorganising my flight North a couple of times (for "operational" reasons), I arrived in Wellington well before check-in time at my hotel. Dressed appropriately for Wellington's gloomy normal, I had the delightful experience of sight-seeing around the city in four layers of clothes too many. Following significant perspiration, and finding myself therefore short of one change of clothes, I went to a convenient but overly-posh shirt shop. Having spent much more than I would usually have allowed myself, I felt very special - like I had had a treat. I decided to make sure that Te Whare Roimata has something in its Christmas box to help someone into a nice shirt.

It is nice to catch up with friends not seen for a long time

At the meeting I caught up with someone who had been the minister in a neighbouring parish when I was at St George's, Takapuna. I was so pleased to see him again. I give thanks for those non-funereal occasions where long-lost friends catch up.

It is nice that the church has some good people in it

Given my seventeen year absence from national church life, there were many people at the meeting whom I did not know, so was observing with a slightly detached (maybe objective) eye. I was struck by signs of intelligence, experience, goodwill, hope and quirky humanity (humanity is slightly but delightfully absurd). Sometimes we talk past one another, or hear what is not being said, but the church has a human richness.

It is nice that the church is realising that it has a cultural problem

In the discussions about structuring our policies and resources for a world that has changed significantly, we came back, repeatedly, to the insight that "without love, it's just a clanging cymbal". We noted that the national church normally only comes together for Assemblies, when business decisions are our food and battle lines are our configuration. The last twenty years of our national life are a stark and shameful judgment of our inability to live as Christ would have us live. It was widely and deeply acknowledged that (1) repentance is required, and (2) a better life needs to be found.

It is nice to sense that the church may be turning a corner

When some people were offering the church's treatment of the Rainbow community as an example of our twenty year failure to love one another, nobody seemed to be being compelled by conscience to trot out any of the usual anti-gay arguments. Rather, there seemed to be a conviction in the room that those arguments had had more than their day, and that the church needed to catch up with society's generally inclusive stance. Having been away for seventeen years, I don't know whether this is new, but I had not seen it before.

It will be interesting to see what comes out of the Wellington meeting. In the meantime, here at Knox Ōtautahi, we will continue to live the life of Christ in the best way we can.

Arohanui,

Matthew

"Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards."

Vernon Law



A church in Wellington



CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES

Matthew took a week's leave at the end of October and we were grateful to have Rev Margaret Garland to lead our service in his absence. In November Matthew was away again for a few days in Wellington, assisting at the General Assembly Strategic Hui. The Moderator of the General Assembly, Hamish Galloway, had asked Matthew to take notes of the discussions and write up a report afterwards. Hugh Perry took our Sunday service that week. Thank you, Hugh.

We are still working through the process of appointing a new organist following Daniel's resignation and we are grateful to Jeremy Woodside for providing us with fine music in the meantime. We opened the church to the public one Sunday afternoon during the annual Heritage Festival in October and the visitors greatly enjoyed Jeremy's playing. Thank you, Bronwyn, for organising the Open Afternoon.

Council agreed to a recommendation from the Finance Committee that we move some of our funds held in the PCANZ On Call account to a new PCANZ long term Investment Account. This should provide a better rate of interest over time. A new valuation of our buildings for insurance purposes has indicated a rise of 16% in replacement costs. Paul Westropp has agreed to serve on the Finance Committee and his knowledge and experience will be very helpful.

Upstairs in the Knox Centre the old Sunday School room has been painted and tidied, as has the small office opposite. These rooms are now available for hiring and Tangata Atua Motu staff are interested in using the bigger room for occasional meetings. We are grateful to the Knox Trust for providing funding for this renovation work. New blinds have been installed in the lounge, thanks to money donated in the Annual ReBirthday Appeal, and are proving very satisfactory. Council received an offer from Julie McGeorge to provide a piano on loan for the hall and this offer has been accepted with thanks, as it is of better quality than the piano in there at present.

Newer people at Knox were invited to an informal gathering with members of the church council and this was a very pleasant chance for us all to get to know each other a little better. Council decided to resume serving communion again and it is good to be able participate in the sacrament after the long pause for health protection reasons. Past elders will be invited to join with current council members after the December meeting to share supper and communion together.

Janet Wilson

COMING SERVICES

Sunday	18 December	10.00am	Nine lessons and carols
Saturday	24 December	11.15pm	Christmas Eve service
Sunday	25 December	10.00am	Christmas Day service
Sunday	1 January 2023	10.00am	Communion service



Henry the Tuatara from Invercargill

LIVING WAGE

Introduction

The Living Wage has emerged as a response to growing poverty and inequality that continues to hold back so many Kiwi workers, their families and our economy.

Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand brings together community/secular, union and faith-based groups to campaign for a Living Wage.

The Living Wage rate is voluntary and is paid by employers who want to make sure their workers get enough money to live with dignity.

The Living Wage is the income that is calculated to be necessary for a household to manage their necessary expenses and to take part in the life of its community. It is worked out annually for a family of two adults and two children, assuming that one adult works full time (40 hours/week) and the other adult works for 20 hours a week. It currently stands at \$23.65/hr. (The minimum wage is \$21.20/hr). Any employer can become Living Wage Accredited by proving that they pay all directly and indirectly employed workers the Living Wage. This includes contracted cleaners and security guards.

Living Wage's successes and what is done to achieve them

The Living Wage movement has the support of government. Public Service Minister Chris Hipkins said that core Public Service departments and agencies have been directed to ensure that contracts for cleaning, catering and security guards signed or renewed after 1 December must pay at least the living wage.

The main thrust of The Living Wage Movement is to work with civic bodies as larger and more accessible employers. All of New Zealand's major cities have become accredited as Living Wage employers or are well on the way to becoming so. Living Wage often makes submissions to Councils when Annual and Long-Term plans are open for public consultation to ensure that paying the Living Wage is part of the plan. Before elections are held, Living Wage seeks candidates' commitment to implementing the Living Wage.

A growing number of employers are recognising that showing that they value their staff by paying the Living Wage results in greater motivation and loyalty to the business. It can mean reducing stress at home and the family having some money to spend supporting local businesses. Over 350 Aotearoa New Zealand businesses and organisations are on the official list of accredited Living Wage employers. These businesses come from all parts of our economy, from big financial institutions to small hospitality businesses, and everything in between.

How things are at present in Christchurch

Christchurch City Council gained Living Wage Accreditation late last year. However, the Council owns eight businesses that collectively employ more than 3100 staff. These businesses include Christchurch Airport, Lyttelton Port and maintenance firm Citycare. These businesses are overseen by Christchurch City Holdings Ltd (CCHL). 31 direct employees at CityCare, along with an unknown number of contracted workers across all eight businesses, are still paid less than a Living Wage. That situation is still under negotiation. The following photos are taken from our deputation to Council on November 2 to encourage them to set a 2023 deadline for all CCHL companies to become Living Wage Accredited.

Norman Wilkins

Living Wage Calendar

Give your Christmas shopping a Living Wage theme this year. Explore the Living Wage Christmas

Catalogue https://www.livingwage.org.nz/christmas_catalogue

That shows the amazing range of 361 accredited Living Wage Employers and includes links to special offers and online shopping.



TE WHARE ROIMATA

Te Whare Roimata is the community trust to which we direct our weekly donations of food and other essentials, now that St George's Iona has closed. Recently Doug Shaw, Jean Brouwer and Janet Wilson visited TWR to talk with Jenny, one of the organisers, about the most useful ways in which Knox can provide support to this very hands-on community group.

TWR has an ethos of encouraging independence and has worked in the inner city/ Richmond/Linwood area for nearly thirty years. Its home base is in a house immediately opposite Christchurch East School in Gloucester Street but it also supports an op shop and a community garden. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week Tiny Shops are set up beside Avebury House in Richmond and a low cost cafe operates there. A monthly stall is held at the Linwood market and a weekly lunch is served at the home base. TWR also offers such assistance as counselling and budget advice.

People living alone are prevalent in their community but there are also a few single parent families. Poor health is wide-spread and loneliness is common. Our food donations are greatly appreciated, as are also hygiene products. Hand sanitiser is not required however, as they have plentiful supplies of that. Smaller portions are especially useful. As Christmas approaches the TWR staff will be making up small gift parcels - just little items from the \$2 shops - and preparing to provide a community dinner on Christmas Day. Donations of money to help them make Christmas a happy time would be gladly received. Vouchers for Countdown or Pak'n'Save supermarkets would also be most welcome.

In the new year Knox will be considering some other possibilities for practical help to the TWR community. Suggestions for consideration include providing baking that can be offered to visitors to the house and providing baking to be offered at the Tiny Shops cafe. Another suggestion is to offer some basic cooking tips and ways of living thriftily, particularly to the many single men living in the area. Another hope for the TWR staff would be to set up a fund that could offer small loans so that desperate people can avoid going to rapacious money lenders.

Te Whare Roimata does wonderful practical work in a needy community and it is good that Knox Church people are able to help them.

Janet Wilson

Dear People of Knox

One of the few upsides to receiving a terminal diagnosis from a specialist, is that it gives time to think of those you would like to thank for their part in your journey. For me, you good people of Knox are among those who have been important to me.

It began when Bee and I married in April 2010. Your warm and kindly welcome kept me coming back. Added to that is an approach to worship and preaching that I have appreciated for its depth and sometimes provocative thinking. On top of it all has been the musical contribution from Daniel.

In the last decade Knox has been my spiritual home, with some wonderful companions. Bee has been a parishioner here for over forty years. I know you will continue to support and care for her when I have gone- and for that I am profoundly grateful.

May the Peace of God in Christ surround you all.

Ken Booth





Gratitude for the life of Rev Dr Ken Booth

Knox people were saddened by the death in late October of Rev Dr Ken Booth. An active and greatly respected Anglican clergyman, Ken began attending Knox after his marriage to Bee Bryant and has contributed much to our Knox community since then. He was always happy to take a worship service if Matthew was on leave and gave us many fine and thoughtful prayers when taking his turn on the prayer roster. A keen member of the Knox Singers, he loved good music and enjoyed the high standard of organ music presented at Knox. He was a keen supporter of all Knox activities from discussion groups to Knox Cafe evenings and was always willing to lend a hand, even with mundane tasks like pouring cups

of tea. The courage with which he faced his last illness was an example to us all. We will miss him.

Ken read widely and thoughtfully and often gave most interesting book reviews to the Knox Life magazine. Reprinted below is one of his contributions, first printed in the Issue of August 2020.

On Reading the Bible

I was rung up recently on a blind call by someone. He began by asking me how I was doing. They all do that. What he really wanted was to persuade me to read a passage from Isaiah about the dire things predicted for the world and for those who fail to get the message and do the right thing. It was an attempted bit of random salesmanship for a view of the Bible that I do not share.

That approach stands in marked contrast to the way the Bible is handled at Knox. There we are treated to a way of engaging with Scripture that opens up the connections between the tensions and insights in the text and the tensions and dilemmas we face in our living. It's an approach I find much more congenial and helpful.

So, how should we read the Bible? How do we even begin to understand the text? I have not long finished reading a wonderful guide to these questions in *A History of the Bible*, by John Barton (Allen Lane: 2019; hardback, paperback and e-book). Barton was a professor at Oxford University and has drawn on his deep knowledge of the subject to produce this very large and deeply enlightening introduction to the Bible. It is also very readable.

Barton shows the complicated history of how the Bible came together, and the variety of ways in which the Bible has been read down through the ages. I was particularly interested in the way he again and again contrasted the ways in which Jewish people and Christian people might read the same text, but see quite different things in it. As he kept reminding us, the Bible is not a book but a collection of books with the variety that brings.

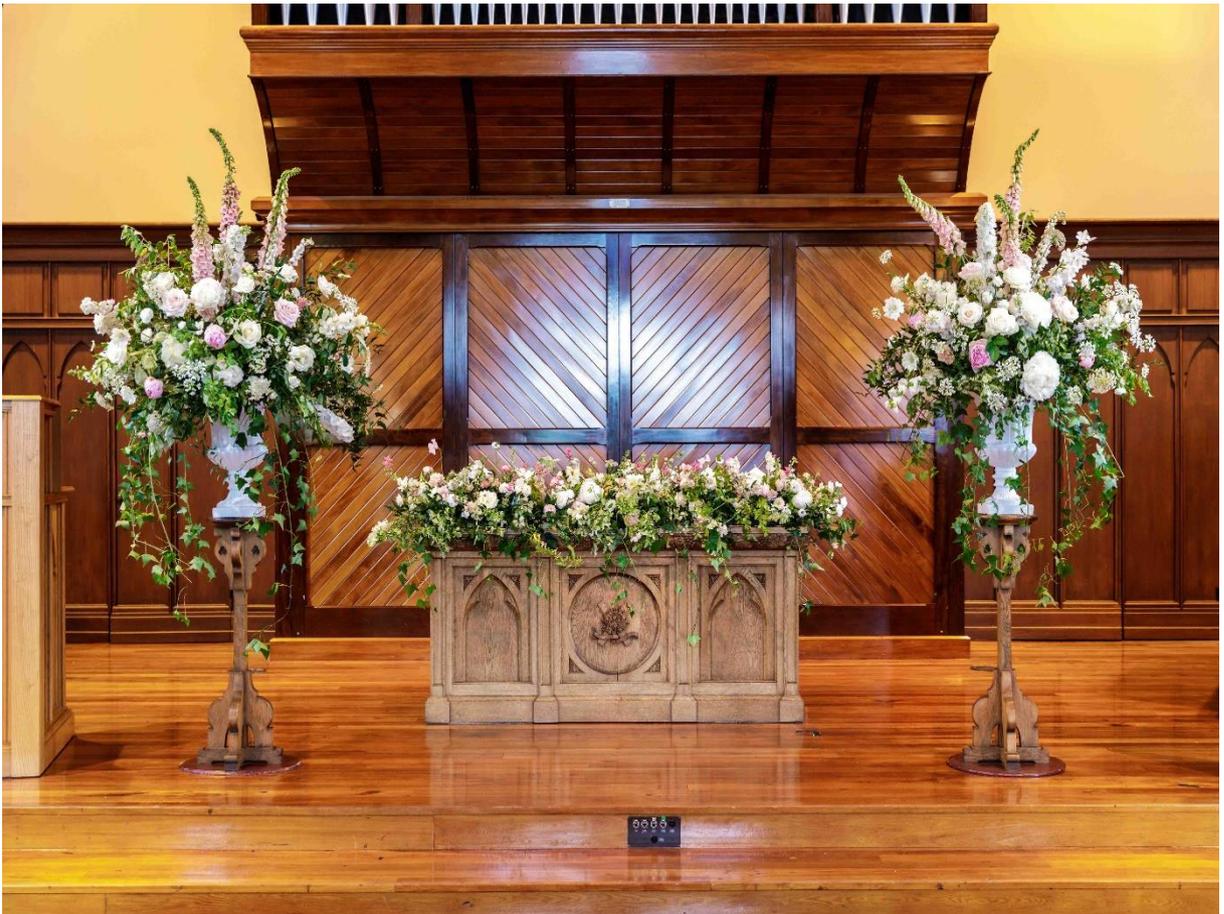
This is a book that will enrich our understanding of how our Christian faith grew and of the fundamental texts that underlie it.

Ken Booth



"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

Albert Einstein

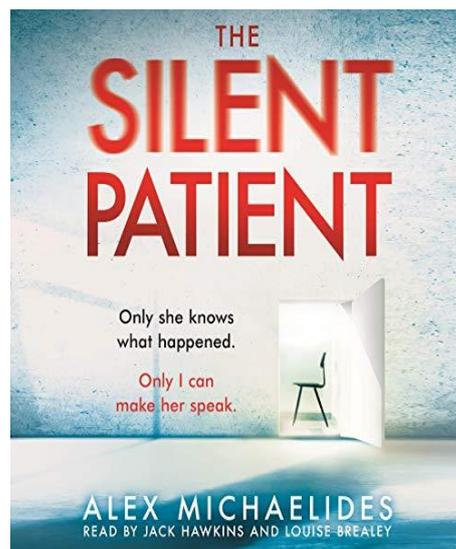


How beautiful did the Church look at a recent wedding?
One set of the couple's grandparents married at Knox 70 years ago.

FAITH, FILM AND FICTION...

Book Reviews:

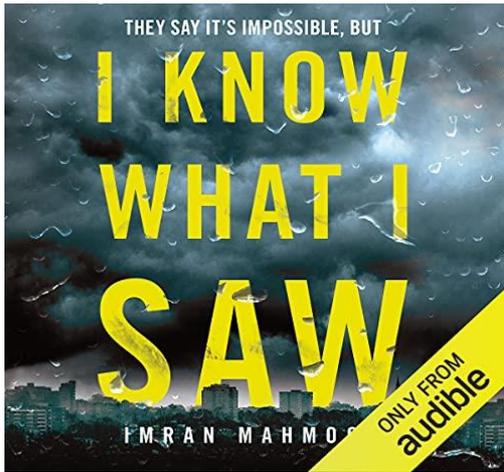
'The Silent Patient' by Alex Michaelides, Orion Fiction



If Artist Alicia Berenson lived a seemingly perfect life, why then did she shoot her husband five times in the head and then never speak again? Psychotherapist Theo Faber makes it his mission to get Alicia to talk again. Constant unexpected twists, especially the ending, make this book a riveting, compelling read.

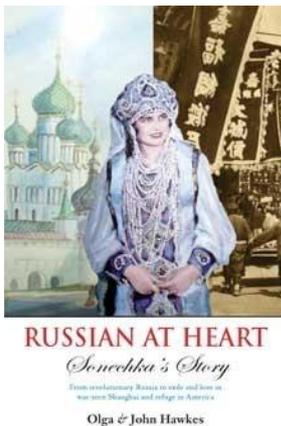
'I Know What I Saw' by Imran Mahmood, Raven Books

Whilst sheltering from the weather in an empty flat in London's affluent Mayfair suburb, homeless man Xander Shute, witnesses a gruesome murder. When finally informing the police Xander is not believed. Becoming increasingly distressed Xander is determined to find out what exactly transpired that fateful night.



The storyline twists and turns traversing the last thirty years of Xander's life from being a young, high flying city banker to choosing living life on the streets. I couldn't put this book down until the surprise ending.

Susan Peake



Russian at Heart: Sonechka's Story (2013) by Olga and John Hawkes, is part biography and part autobiography, published in Christchurch. From revolutionary Russia to exile and love in war-torn Shanghai, then eventually refuge in America, this is the true story of a remarkable woman's survival against the odds during some of the twentieth century's greatest upheavals. This book, illustrated with 70 historical photos and maps, comes out of the rich storehouse of memories and stories that daughter Olga heard from Sonechka and Dora, her aunt, and from the diaries that Sonechka kept.

Stephen Best

Some reading for the summer –

Looking ahead to some relaxing time for reading, here are some suggestions. Special thanks to those who gave us some extra ideas.

Some favourite authors from the Knox Book Table for relaxing reads:

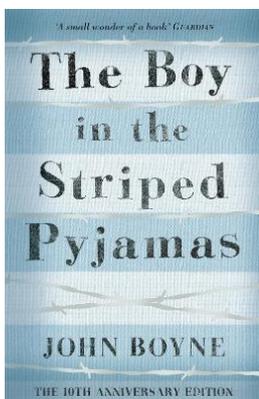
For fun, upsets and an interesting story and setting: Cathy Kelly, Marian Keyes, Rosie Thomas, Maeve Binchy, Nicky Pellegrino

For historical novels backed by research: Anya Seton, Philippa Gregory, Ken Follett (historical), Belinda Alexandra

Where the hero wins against all odds: David Baldacci, Clive Cussler, John Grisham, Jack Higgins, Lee Child

Detective series with interesting characters and relationships: Ngaio Marsh, Anne Cleeve, Rebecca Tope, Robert Galbraith (aka J.K. Rowling)

And for special recommendations which we will look at next year in our Book and Film Group:



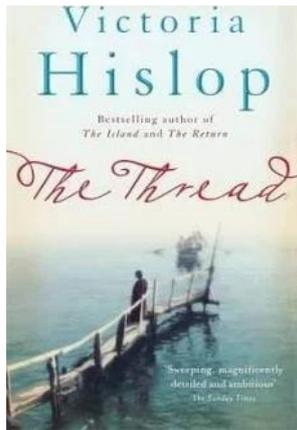
John Boyne is a prolific Irish writer who writes for both adults and young adults. His book **The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas** was first published in 2006 as a “fable” for young adults. Set in World War 2 Auschwitz, it tells the heartbreaking story of nine-year-old Bruno and his friend, the same-aged boy who wears striped pyjamas, and with whom he is never allowed to play. The book quickly gained international recognition and was filmed in 2008. This year John Boyne published the sequel **All the Broken Places**, written for adults, and catching up with Bruno’s sister Gretel,

now aged 91 and living a quiet life in London. She never talks about the past, but in the end must confront it and be brave, making a different choice this time.



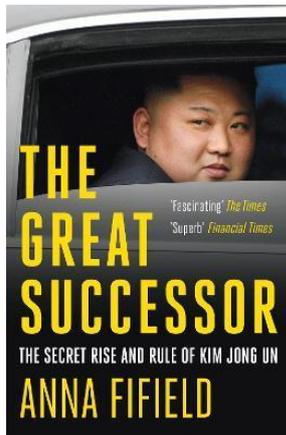
Their Faces were Shining by Tim Wilson (Victoria University Press, 2010) is a book with a difference. When Hope Paterson plunges into a construction hole at her local mall and saves a child from drowning, she believes it is a sign from God. People disappear. At the local high school kids float up through the roof in calculus class, their faces glowing with unearthly light. Hope’s daughter tells her: "Mom, it's the Rapture." As anarchy descends, Hope must fight for those she loved so poorly, and then for herself.

The novel cleverly explores what it means to *have* faith, *the* daily struggles of family and relationships and *the* meaning of life in general.



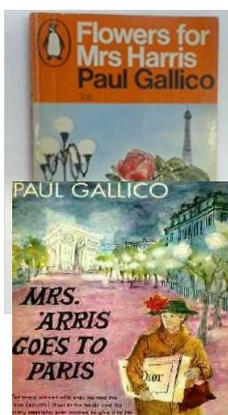
The Thread (published 2011) is by Victoria Hislop, author of **The Island** and its sequel **One August Night** (published 2020). Thessaloniki, the second city of Greece, was of special importance for the apostle Paul, as we read recently (Sunday 13 November). Paul exhorted the Christians to “work quietly... and do not be weary in doing what is right”. (2 Thessalonians 3: 12,13). **The Thread** is set in Thessaloniki. The author explains: “In 1917 the population comprised an even mixture of Christians, Muslims and Jews. Within three decades, only Christians remained”. How did this

happen? There are two timeframes in the novel: 1917 and 2007, as the Anglo-Greek Mistos meets up with his grandparents who lived through the events. It is a story of love, loyalty and loss.



North Korea is a topic that has interested Knox folk, especially since Janet Wilson’s unforgettable presentation of her trip there. Now, there are several books to enhance our insight into this mysterious country. Hyeonsoo Lee, author of **The Girl with Seven Names** (published 2015) escaped in 1997 from North Korea to China at the age of seventeen. Yeonmi Park, author of **In Order to Live** (published 2015) escaped in 2007 at the age of thirteen. These two true stories give us an insight into this secretive and brutal country. And to understand why the country is as it is, read **The Great Successor: The Secret Rise and Rule of Kim Jong**

Un: by Anna Fifield (published 2019). Subtitled “The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un”. The author interviewed a wide range of people who have had contact or experience with this leader.



For our first Book Group meeting on Sunday 29th January 2023, we will meet an old friend, Mrs. Harris. Written by Paul Gallico, there are four books in the series about the indomitable Cockney lady. We will look at the first, **Flowers for Mrs. Harris** (first published 1958) published in the USA as **Mrs Harris goes to Paris**. Subsequent titles in the series are *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to New York* (1960), *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Parliament* (1965), and *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Moscow* (1974). (The original U.K. titles were *Mrs Harris Goes to New York*, *Mrs Harris MP*, and *Mrs Harris Goes to Moscow*.)

In this warm-hearted book, Mrs. Harris, a London charlady, decides to go to Paris to buy a dress from Dior, similar to one she saw at her employer's house. The book has had several TV adaptations over the years, a musical (2016) and most recently a wonderful film (2022) which we will watch at our first Film Group of the year on Sunday 5th February.

Bronwyn Wiltshire



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