



Unity Books

Issue 11

April/May 2002



NO CRIME FOR A DIME

Have you noticed just how slick the 'crime' genre has become? Movies like *Ocean's Eleven* or TV shows like *The Sopranos* have elevated what was once regarded as B-Grade material into a professional format that is cooler than cool. The same can be said for crime novels. No longer are they mostly second-rate, dime store paperback stuff. Now there is big money and some really innovative writing to be found in this arm of publishing. We've chosen ten new crime novels that we think are pretty mean and that you should take a look at. If you're already a hard-boiled fan you'll need no encouragement – if, however, you think that Patricia Cornwall and John Grisham are all there is to the world of crime writing, prepare to be enlightened!

Robbers CHRISTOPHER COOK

(No Exit Press) pb \$29.95

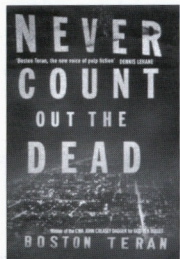
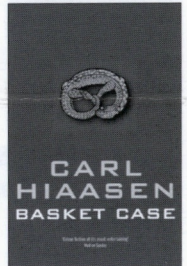
Simply the best American crime debut in years. Two drifters and a girl on a bullet-riddled odyssey across Texas, pursued by a Texas Ranger. It comes on like the bastard son of James Lee Burke and James Ellroy, and never lets go.



Basket Case CARL HIAASEN

(Macmillan) pb \$37.95

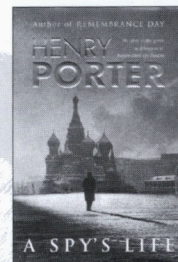
A slight change of style for Hiaasen as this one's written in the first person. Don't be alarmed as he remains at the top of his form with this story about an obit. writer on the trail of a dead rock star, his 'Courtney Love-type' widow, and a 'lost' comeback album.



Never Count Out the Dead BOSTON TERAN

(Pan) pb \$39.95

The follow-up to the searing *God is a Bullet*. Cop John Victor Sully survives a murder attempt and a frame-up to return, ten years later, to clear his name. A little less excessive than his previous novel, and all the better for it, one for those who like their crime pitch noir.



A Spy's Life HENRY PORTER

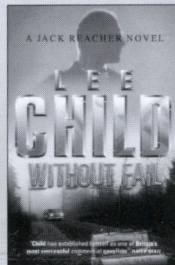
(Orion) pb \$22.95

Rave reviews for Porter's follow-up to *Remembrance Day*, this one is even better. Ex-spy and plane crash survivor Robert Harland's comfortable life as a U.N paper pusher starts to unravel. With the Balkan Crisis as a backdrop Porter explores the genre staked out by Le Carré in fine style.

Without Fail LEE CHILD

(Bantam) pb \$34.95

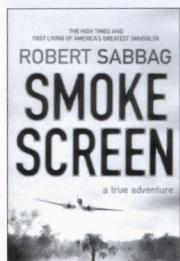
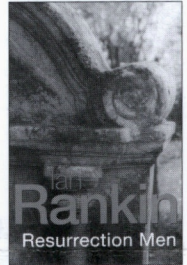
The newbie from blockbuster writer Child sees Jack Reacher hired to assassinate the Vice-President as a test for his security team. Reacher discovers that a team of forewarned assassins have their own plans, and only he can stop them.



Resurrection Men IAN RANKIN

(Orion) pb \$37.95

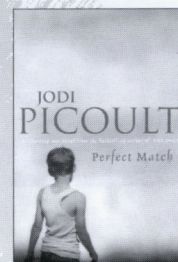
The 13th in what is arguably Britain's finest crime series sees D.I. Rebus back on the job... well, sort of. Sent to the Scottish Police College for "retraining" (read: punishment) Rebus and his fellow officers with attitude problems are asked to solve an old case and soon cupboards are opening and skeletons emerging. For those disappointed by *The Falls*, *Resurrection Men* is a return to form.



Smoke Screen ROBERT SABBAG

(Cannongate) pb \$35.00

One of the doyens of new journalism returns after a long hiatus. *Snowblind* has achieved classic status and now Sabbag moves from cocaine to marijuana. In the 1970s Allen Long, documentary maker, decides to fund his film on dope smugglers with a bit of participant observation, resulting in a decade-long career in the illegal drugs industry, all told in Sabbag's inimitable style.



Perfect Match JODI PICOULT

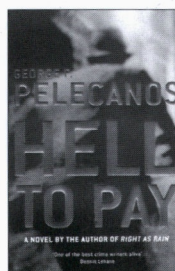
pb \$35.00 (Allen & Unwin)

Assistant DA prosecutes child molesters. When her own son is revealed to have been sexually abused by the family priest, she is unwilling to let the courts decide and shoots him at the arraignment. The only problem is... she's killed the wrong man. For those who love Ruth Rendell, Picoult deals with serious issues and delivers fine writing.

Hell to Pay GEORGE P. PELECANOS

(Orion) pb \$44.95

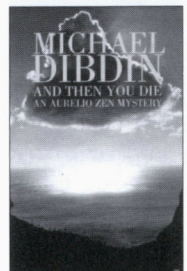
The protagonists from the superb *Right as Rain*, black private dick Derek Strange and his white partner Terry Quinn, return to Washington DC's mean streets. Strange is looking for a killer of the nine-year old quarterback for the football team he coaches, while Quinn is involved in extricating a teenage prostitute from her pimp. Rich in detail and characterization, Pelicanos is the best.



And Then You Die MICHAEL DIBDIN

(Faber) pb \$34.95

Aurelio Zen has survived the Mafia bomb attack in the last book and is recuperating at a beach resort on the Tuscan coast. The upcoming Anti-Mafia trial is imminent and people start dying around him as it becomes clear that the Cosa Nostra are intent on finishing the job they started.

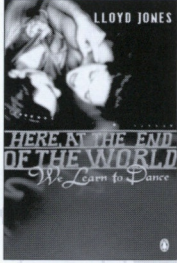


FICTION

1: *Here at the End of the World We Learn to Dance*

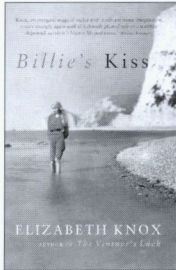
LLOYD JONES (Penguin) pb \$34.95

‘If you haven’t fallen in love by the end of the dance, you haven’t danced the tango.’ So says Rosa fiery Argentinean restaurateur to nineteen-year old, bumbling dance partner Lionel. This fine new novel from Lloyd Jones is a stunner and should give him a clear shot at winning the Montana fiction award again. It’s passionate, fascinating and beautifully written. Enough said!



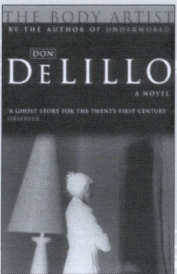
2: *Billie’s Kiss* ELIZABETH KNOX (Victoria University Press) pb \$29.95

Who hasn’t read *The Vintner’s Luck* by now? Why not? Well, Elizabeth returns with another exceptional novel set this time on a remote Scottish island to which Billie Paxton finds herself without family or friends. Gloriously inventive, this densely plotted, Edwardian mystery twists and turns and will have you captivated. Irresistible!



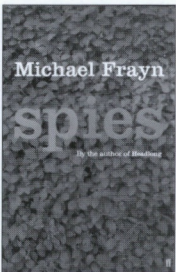
3: *The Body Artist* DON DeLILLO (Picador) pb \$27.95

A very small read in comparison with its predecessor *Underworld* but why shouldn’t Delillo turn out a novella or two if it takes his fancy? Despite its size, the big issues are still to the fore – ‘space, love and death’, and the prose is still pure Delillo – it’s lean and beautiful and sad. So yes, it may be small but it is perfectly formed.



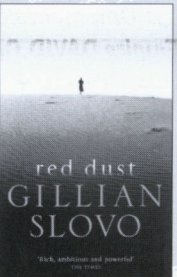
4: *Spies* MICHAEL FRAYN (Faber) pb \$34.95

Fans of *Headlong* will be delighted. Frayn’s new novel is outstanding. Two boys are growing up at the time of the Second World War. Their adventures are full of war heroes, agents and Germans. But when their imaginative underground world emerges from the shadows they find themselves engulfed in mysteries far deeper and more painful that they had ever bargained for.



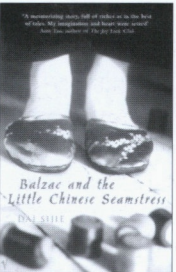
5: *Red Dust* GILLIAN SLOVO (Virago) pb \$22.95

Slovo’s *Every Secret Thing* was one helluva biography about her fervently anti-apartheid South African parents and her mother’s subsequent assassination by a letter bomb. In this new novel Slovo turns her critical attention to South Africa’s ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’ where apartheid perpetrators are granted amnesty in return for telling the truth. Set in a small dusty South African town in the 1990s, the part thriller, part courtroom drama will keep you guessing until the end.



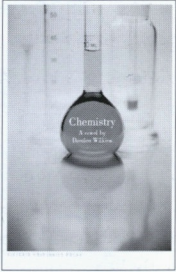
6: *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* DAI SIJIE (Vintage) pb \$26.95

Set during the Chinese Revolution this simple story concerns two young men condemned to spend every day of four years hauling excrement up a hill. However their story-telling ability liberates them from the daily grind and entertains the villagers. When they steal a suitcase full of forbidden romantic European novels, the lives of the main characters are, of course, changed forever. A little charmer.



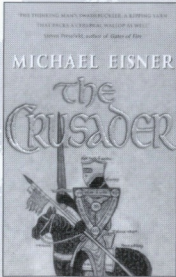
7: *Chemistry* DAMIEN WILKINS (Victoria University Press) pb \$29.95

Jamie is a forty-one-year-old drug addict and he needs surgery for kidney stones. He’s also reached rock bottom and decides to go home to Timaru for family support. This is a story about bad choices and those who ultimately suffer the consequences. Dark, yes, but also funny and positive.



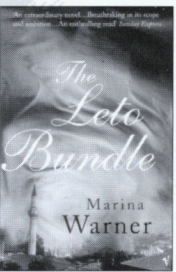
8: *The Crusader* MICHAEL EISNER (Doubleday) pb \$34.95

Francisco de Montcada, a Spanish knight returns from the Crusades a broken man. His former friend, a Cistercian monk, is sent by the Inquisition to save his tortured soul. Tentatively Francisco begins to tell his story and as it unfolds it becomes apparent that the real question of salvation does not concern the knight alone, but the monk as well. Meticulously researched and artfully told, this is a first-rate historical novel.



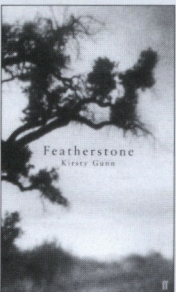
9: *The Leto Bundle* MARINA WARNER (Vintage) pb \$26.95

The scale of this novel is truly immense. Warner weaves together the legend of the ancient goddess Leto with the eternal theme of ‘the refugee’. In different guises Leto slips through time from prehistory to the Middle Ages to Victorian Europe and then to the present day, forever on the run. A big enthralling read.



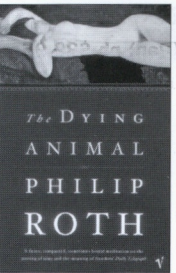
10: *Featherstone* KIRSTY GUNN (Faber) pb \$34.95

Kirsty is the author of the exquisitely written *Rain*. Her new offering *Featherstone* once again reads like poetry. Set in a small rural town over the course of a weekend, the reader comes to realise that nothing is as it seems. The people that inhabit this town all have secrets and the homecoming of Francie Johanssen will unravel any precarious stability. Haunting.



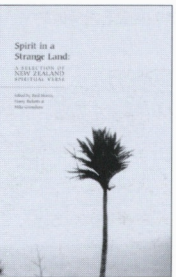
11: *The Dying Animal* PHILIP ROTH (Vintage) pb \$26.95

A curious new novella from Roth, this has produced mixed reviews. The narrator David Kepesh is a sixty-two year-old college professor who routinely seduces his female students but in his relationship with twenty-four-year old Consuela he finds himself enslaved by his lust for her. Is this a masterful treatise on lust and aging? You decide.



12: *Spirit in a Strange Land: A Selection of New Zealand Spiritual Verse* Ed. PAUL MORRIS, HARRY RICKETTS AND MICHAEL GRIMSHAW (Godwit) pb \$39.95

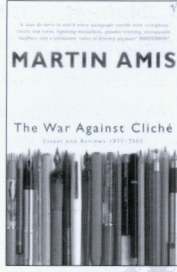
This is the first-ever collection of NZ poetry that focuses on a rich vein in NZ writing – our spiritual experience. The collection is religiously diverse and includes works by the expected such as Allen Curnow and James K. Baxter, as well as writing by those who may or may not be a surprise such as Jenny Bornholdt, Andrew Johnston, Lauris Edmond and many others.



NON FICTION

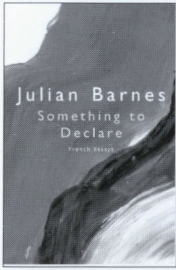
1: *The War Against Cliché: Essays and Reviews, 1971–2000* MARTIN AMIS (Vintage) pb \$29.95

If you’re a member of the Amis fan club then this is a must. A fierce critic and commentator on the literature and culture of the late Twentieth Century, this collection touches on whatever takes Amis’ fancy. Whether it is his hero Nabakov, books on chess, Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, football, sex manuals or Thomas Harris, Amis is always shrewd, funny, graceful and very passionate.



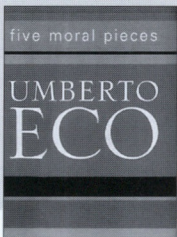
2: *Something to Declare* JULIAN BARNES (Picador) pb \$27.95

Prolific Barnes has had a long passionate relationship with France. This collection of essays attests to his clear-eyed appreciation of the ‘Land Without Brussels Sprouts’, and ranges widely from landscape to literature, food to Flaubert, film and song to the Tour de France. Humorous and intelligent. (“I wish he’d shut up about Flaubert” – Sir Kingsley Amis)



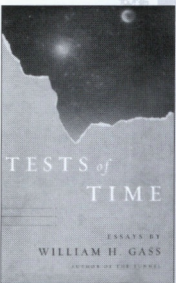
3: *Five Moral Pieces* UMBERTO ECO (Secker & Warburg) hb \$34.95

No, Eco is not too tricky! This collection of five essays is really readable, highly relevant and not too long. Eco questions the place of war in a world where the flow of services and information is unstoppable, he discusses the presentation of ‘the news’ and its consequences, and he asks what does it means to be moral when one doesn’t believe in God?



4: *Tests of Time* WILLIAM H GASS (Alfred A. Knopf) hb \$72.95

Gass is hugely intelligent and can write exquisitely so these fourteen essays are classy stuff. Writing on writing Gass examines the nature of narrative, literary lists, the canon of Western literature, Rushdie’s fatwa, the joys and strains of the book addict and, yes, Flaubert gets a mention. Nabakov states that Gass’s high-wire act of thinking and writing produces “an indescribable tingle of the spine”.



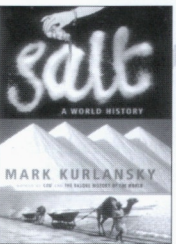
5: *Gallipoli* LES CARLYON (Pan) pb \$39.95

Yes, another book on Gallipoli, but Carlyon attempts to bring the campaign alive for a new generation. By combining countless personal stories and private tragedies with meticulous scholarly research this award-winning journalist has produced a powerful page-turner. This intelligent and down-to-earth book will appeal to the broadest range of readers.



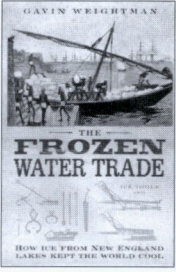
6: *Salt: A World History* MARK KURLANSKY (Jonathan Cape) hb \$49.95

Remember *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*? Well, Kurlansky returns with another fascinating history. Although now taken for granted, salt was one of the first international commodities and was often used as currency. Intriguing, well researched, amusing and entertaining, this will appeal to just about every reader of non-fiction. The historical trivia throughout is wonderful: eg the Anglo Saxon word for ‘saltworks’ was ‘wich’, so Norwich, Greenwich etc were – yep – ancient salt works.



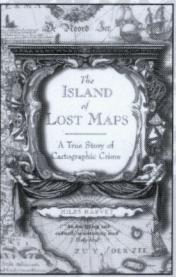
7: *The Frozen Water Trade* GAVIN WEIGHTMAN (HarperCollins) hb \$34.95

After you’ve lapped up *Salt* you’ll be on the look out for more cultural history. Look no further. Here’s one helluva story and it’s all about ice. In 1806 Frederic Tudor set about harvesting ice from New England and selling it to the tropics. Within 30 years the ‘frozen water trade’ had a world-wide market and had revolutionised domestic life forever. An astonishing venture. (Delayed until June).



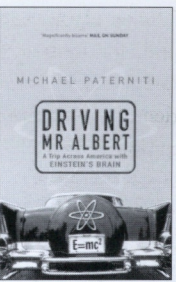
8: *The Island of Lost Maps* MILES HARVEY (Phoenix) pb \$29.95

Since men have drawn maps, others have stolen them. Columbus discovered America with Portuguese charts and Drake had Spanish maps to help him out. Then there’s Gilbert Bland (who?) – the biggest map thief in history! Map-collectors, map dealers, map-thieves – this is a terrific tale of obsession and greed, superbly told. Heartily recommended by Unity.



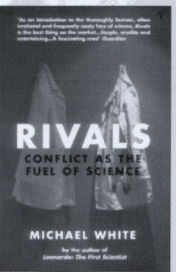
9: *Driving Mr Albert* MICHAEL PATERNITI (Abacus) pb \$24.95

There’s this threesome – a freelance writer, an elderly pathologist, and Albert Einstein’s brain (honest!) and they’re driving across country in a Buick to visit Einstein’s grand-daughter. Partly a road-trip book and partly a biography of the pathologist Dr Thomas Harvey (who performed the autopsy of Einstein and then made off with the grey matter) this is definitely stranger than fiction.



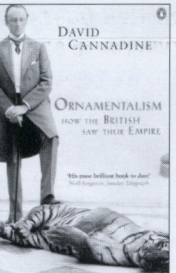
10: *Rivals* MICHAEL WHITE (Vintage) pb \$27.95

The world of science is much like a sports arena where personal and professional rivalries flourish, forcing all the participants to excel themselves. This feuding produces some astounding results as scientists determine to thrash any competition. This is White’s theory anyway and to illustrate his case he recounts a number of feuds including Newton’s hatred for Leibniz, Crick and Watson squabbling over DNA, and the battle of the cyberkings. A fun read.



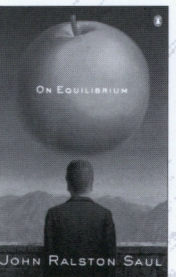
11: *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* DAVID CANNADINE (Penguin) pb \$24.95

Cannadine opposes Edward Said’s ‘orientalism’ thesis and argues that the British took a hierarchical view of their empire, not based on race but instead on class and status. In undeveloped nations such as NZ the British could attempt to replicate their own stratified society from scratch, while in India and the Far East they sought to preserve the already established hierarchy and rule through the princes or the sultans.



12: *On Equilibrium* JOHN RALSTON SAUL (Penguin) pb \$24.95

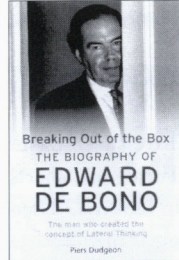
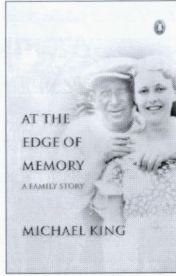
The author of *Voltaire’s Bastards* has produced another thought-provoking work in which he explores the essential qualities of humanity. Saul argues that when certain qualities are worshipped in isolation they become weaknesses. Instead, they must be recognised as having equal universal value and it is this balance that is essential for an ethical society. John Ralston Saul will be visiting NZ in June.



BIOGRAPHY

1: *At the Edge of Memory: A Family Story* MICHAEL KING (Penguin) hb \$34.95

This exceptional writer investigates a mystery within his own extended family. Just who was his great uncle and where had he come from? The answers King finds are astonishing and link his own Irish-Catholic family back to Australia, the USA, England and ultimately Poland and the discovery of Jewish roots. An intriguing, poignant read.

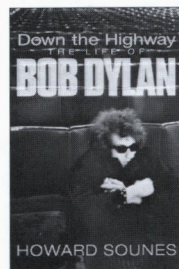
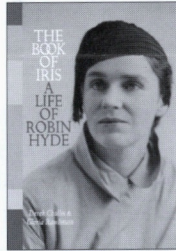


2: *Breaking Out of the Box: The Biography of Edward De Bono* PIERS DUDGEON (Headline) pb \$24.95

Since the publication of his first best-seller *The Use of Lateral Thinking* in 1967, de Bono has revolutionised the way we think. This definitive biography tells us how he developed his thinking systems, and how his ideas have been employed by international companies all around the world.

3: *Book of Iris: A Life of Robin Hyde* DEREK CHALLIS (Auckland University Press) hb \$59.95

Brilliant, beautiful, difficult and doomed, Iris Wilkinson (Robin Hyde) led a short, tumultuous and productive life. Told for the first time, her story included appalling hidden pregnancies, drug dependency, mental breakdown, deep friendships and hurtful betrayals. How did she manage to produce such amazing work with all of this going on?

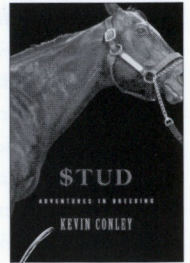


4: *Down the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan* HOWARD SOUNES (Black Swan) pb \$24.95

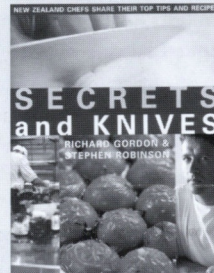
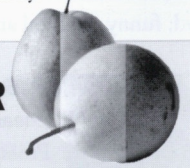
Dylan, the reclusive artist, has always been an enigma. In this big biography Sounes interviews more than 250 people in the know (lovers, friends, relatives, former employees and music stars) many of whom have not spoken before – and they really have info that is worth sharing! Essential for Dylan fans.

5: *Stud: Adventures in Breeding* KEVIN CONLEY (Bloomsbury) hb \$59.95

The wonderful biography *Seabiscuit* was a big seller for us and here's another equine winner. This time it's a voyeuristic glimpse into the strange world of American horse-breeding (the most expensive thirty seconds in the sport) and the billion dollar business behind it. Breeders, bookies, sheiks, the handlers and the temperamental studs and mares – it's all fabulously exotic, extreme and more than a little nutty.



FOODIES' CORNER

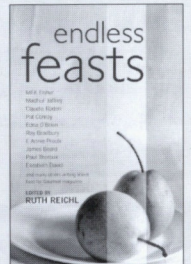


1: *Secrets and Knives* RICHARD GORDON and STEPHEN ROBINSON (HarperCollins) pb \$49.95

Are NZ chefs as eccentric or nasty as those celebrity chefs on telly? Nineteen leading NZ chefs chat about how they started in the business, their passion for food and their secret tips for cooking. Gorgeous food photos along with scrumptious recipes – and no, not one of them seems to be a closet Gordon Ramsey.

2: *Endless Feasts: Sixty Years of Writing from 'Gourmet'* Ed. RUTH REICHL (Allen & Unwin) pb \$36.95

Ruth Reichl (author of *Comfort Me with Apples*) has put together a fabulous collection of stories, essays and descriptions of wonderful meals in wonderful places. Contributors include James Beard, Elizabeth David, M.F.K Fisher, George Plimpton, Annie Proulx and Paul Theroux. A delight.



PLEASE SEND ME —

QTY	TITLE	RRP	TOTAL
		+ POSTAGE	\$ 3.00
		TOTAL	

☐ I ENCLOSE A CHEQUE (PAYABLE TO UNITY BOOKS) FOR \$ _____

☐ I WISH TO PAY BY ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ BANKCARD ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ DINERS

ACCOUNT NUMBER

EXPIRY DATE _____
CARD NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

MY POSTAL ADDRESS IS — _____

MY PHONE NUMBER IS — _____

PLEASE NOTE: PRICES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Send orders to:

UNITY BOOKS AUCKLAND
19 High Street, Auckland
• Ph (09) 307 0731
• Fax (09) 373 4883
• unitybooks@xtra.co.nz

UNITY BOOKS WELLINGTON
57 Willis St, Wellington
• Ph (04) 499 4245
• Fax (04) 499 4246
• unity.books@clear.net.nz
0800 4 UNITY
0800 486 489