# DANTE NEWS

SOCIETÀ DANTE ALIGHIERI

*"il mondo in italiano"*

Newsletter of the Dante Alighieri Society Inc. Brisbane APRILE 2025



**DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY**
**26 Gray Street,**
**New Farm, QLD 4005**
**Postal address:**
**PO Box 1350**
**New Farm, QLD 4005**
**Mobile: 0401 927 967**
**Email:**
info@dante-alighieri.com.au
**Web address:**
www.dante-alighieri.com.au

**PRESIDENT**
**Claire Kennedy**
info@dante-alighieri.com.au
**VICE-PRESIDENTS**
**Rosalia Miglioli**
r.miglioli@griffith.edu.au
**Mario Bono**
info@dante-alighieri.com.au
**SECRETARY**
**Colleen Hatch**
info@dante-alighieri.com.au
**TREASURER**
**Kay Martin**
info@dante-alighieri.com.au
**EDITORS**
**Bernadine e Rosalia**


*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and their unique relationship with their ancestral Country. We pay respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging.*

## Inside


Dalla Presidente

Art exhibition

Foto A.G.M.

Dalla scuola

Foto di Carnevale

Dagli studenti

Dalla biblioteca



PRADELLA
Since 1959


# *Calendario*

*April 5 – Chiara Rostagno at the State Library*

*April 6 – Opening of the exhibition 'People and Places' by Franco Arcidiacono*

*April 11 – Last day of Term 1*

*April 21 – Start of Term 2*

La fioritura dei ciliegi nei giardini della Venaria Reale a Torino
https://www.viaggiapiccoli.com/hanami-la-fioritura-dei-ciliegi-in-italia-2/

*Date claimer*

*May 17 – Canta che ti passa!*

# Dante matters

## *from the pen of the President…*

Dear all,
March was AGM month as usual; thank you to all who came to the meeting and the convivial gathering afterwards to usher in the new Dante year. We will be sending the full president's report to members with next month's *Dante News*, but I'll summarise its key points here: 1) congratulations and thank you to everyone involved in a wonderful year in terms of the school, the cultural events, and the library; and 2) we need to bolster the Society's finances. Regarding point 2: **if you have suggestions – whether for new types of cultural/social/educational activities or new approaches to fundraising – please don't hesitate to get in touch!** In addition to electing the Management Committee for the coming year, the members present approved the reappointment of our auditor Luke Stevenson, honorary solicitor Giovanni Porta and honorary archivist Maurizia Turco, and warmly thanked them for their generosity in applying their professional skills pro-bono for the Dante. We sadly acknowledged the resignation of Lesley Given and Liz Jarvis from the Management Committee. Fortunately, however, we can still count on the support and efforts of both: Lesley remains as librarian and in the history sub-committee, and Liz has pledged to continue to assist wherever possible. We will be having a proper celebration with Liz soon, to thank her for her extraordinary service to the Dante on the Management Committee, including several years as secretary and 9 years as president!

Happily, we welcomed new committee member Valeria Capasso-Kruck, who will be familiar to many: she taught in our school some years ago and has performed in Danteatro presentations in the last couple of years. It will be excellent to have Valeria's energy and skills on the committee. Beyond the committee, a valued new collaborator for the Dante is Andrea Di Donato, who now brings her design expertise to artwork for our publicity, working closely with Tiziana Miceli; thank you Andrea!

As we relaxed over refreshments after the AGM, the reading of Mitchel Contessi's prize-winning story "*Da un sogno*" was a great treat; big thanks to Mitchel, his lecturer Sara Visocnik, and committee members Bernadine, Rosalia, Tiziana and Valeria.
World Poetry Day was then celebrated in fine style with an open mic session in which we were entertained by lively reading or reciting of poems in Sicilian, English, Italian, Neapolitan and Portuguese.

Well done Colleen, Daniele, Elena, Eleonora, Luna and Tiziana; it was delightful!
Regarding events generally: I have been reminded recently that it is important to make clear in our publicity whether an event will be in English or Italian or a bit of both. I apologise for having neglected to do that for our *Carnevale* event at the end of February - not having made clear that after the presentation in English there would be a conversation via Zoom in Italian. We will be more careful!

In April I'm greatly looking forward to the exhibition in our premises of works by Franco Arcidiacono, with our opening event on 6 April (see page 3), and the lecture by conservator Prof. Chiara Rostagno organised by our Consul Luna Angelini Marinucci at the State Library of Queensland on 5 April. It will be a great privilege to hear from such an expert as Chiara Rostagno, who was Director of the *Museo Nazionale del Cenacolo Vinciano* (Leonardo's Last Supper Museum; see https://cenacolovinciano.org/) from 2015 to 2018 and leads a multidisciplinary research project investigating the effects of climate change on the conservation of cultural assets. I enjoyed this interview with Chiara Rostagno by Alessandra Pellegrini: https://www.alessandrapellegrini.com/chiara-rostagno-il-cenacolo-e-il-turismo-fuori-porta/. She speaks of the "cultural impoverishment" in 2020 and early 2021, due to the COVID-related closure of museums and galleries. The deprivation of "bellezza" she says, was particularly hard on young people, for whom school excursions are an important way of being brought in contact with culture "*in modo forse omeopatico ma profondo*". I like the idea of school excursions to galleries and museums as a homeopathic treatment for the students!
There are two other events later in April to mention. The Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's launch of Richard Alston's book on Dante has been rescheduled to Monday 28 April, 5.30-7.30pm. On Wednesday 30 April, to celebrate Italian Design Day, Luna is organising a presentation by the renowned architect Alfonso Femia, 5.30-7.30pm at the Edge Auditorium, State Library of Queensland.

I'm on holiday at the moment, in Myrtleford, not far from Dinner Plain where Franco Arcidiacono was captivated by a snow scene (see page 3). It's a beautiful part of the country, and Italians have played a major role in its history and community since the 1920s; more on that another time!
Bye for now,
Claire

## Art Exhibition

# *People & Places*

**an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Franco Arcidiacono**
**opening event on Sunday 6 April at 4.00 pm**
**at the Dante Alighieri Cultural Centre**
**Entry is $20 (includes refreshments)**
**Please make a reservation at info@dante-alighieri.com.au**
**or call 0401 927 967**

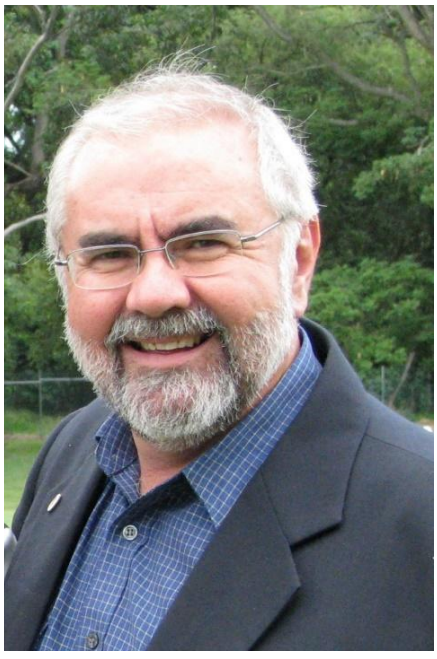
An exhibition showcasing the paintings and drawings of Franco Arcidiacono, an artist, educator and historian whose work beautifully captures the essence of people and places.

**During the opening event there will be a SPECIAL AUCTION of "Snow Reflections – Dinner Plain (Victoria)" a painting generously donated by the artist for fundraising at the Dante Brisbane.**

If you cannot attend the opening but would like to bid for the painting, please email your offer - above the starting price of $100 - with your phone number to info@dante-alighieri.com.au, with "Auction" in the subject line.
Before the auction, join Franco for an inspiring talk and hear about his artistic journey and mural painting in Stanthorpe and beyond. Discover the power of public art in sharing local stories.

These are the opening times of the exhibition – entry is FREE apart from the opening event!!

| Dates in April | Times |
|---|---|
| Sunday **6** | 4-6pm |
| Monday **7** | 2-5pm |
| Tuesday **8** | 10am-1pm<br>2-5pm |
| Wednesday **9** | 4-8pm |
| Thursday **10** | 2-5pm |
| Saturday **12** | 11am-3pm |
| Sunday **13** | 2-5pm |
| Monday **14** | 10am-1pm<br>2-5pm |
| Tuesday **15** | 10am-1pm<br>2-5pm |
| Wednesday **16** | 10am-1pm<br>2-7pm |
| Thursday **17** | 10am-1pm<br>4-7pm |
| Saturday **19** | 10am-3pm |



Franco Arcidiacono, artist, educator and history enthusiast, is a long-term friend and supporter of the Brisbane Dante. Franco's Australian awards, and his Italian honour *Ordine della Stella d'Italia* - Order of the Star of Italy - recognise his achievements in languages education including the establishment of the first Italian immersion programme in a Queensland school, and in service to the community more broadly: Stanthorpe's Italian Australian Welfare Association, and the Stanthorpe DAS committee, as well as his research, along with his wife Morwenna, on the history of Italians in the Granite Belt region to produce the book *Echoes of Italian Voices* (2009). Since retirement Franco has taken up painting and drawing as well as the study of art history. Following exhibitions of his work in Stanthorpe and Brisbane, he was commissioned to paint murals in Stanthorpe reflecting local history. Since then he and Morwenna have worked with community groups creating murals in various other parts of Australia.

# A.G.M. e Welcome Party

A big thank you to our Consul Luna Angelini Marinucci for providing and promoting the docufilm *Liliana* with the support of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Sydney, and for introducing it on the day.

# Dalla scuola

Questa edizione segnala sia la fine del primo trimestre alla scuola della Società sia l'inizio del secondo trimestre, un particolare leggermente insolito.
What is also unusual is the fact that the school will close for the holidays only for 1 week as we extend the term because of the rare weather event that wreaked havoc in Brisbane and other areas earlier in the month. Further, as you saw on page 3, during the period from 6 to 19 April the rooms of the Society will be open for the exhibition of Franco Arcidiacono's works. Luckily, all students will be able to admire the works of art when here for classes. Remember to bring friends and family at other times!

Now is the time to enrol for Term 2. Please do so as soon as possible, if not already done.

**Keep in touch with the office for any enquiries.**

**This is our website https://dante-alighieri.com.au/home/ our email info@dante-alighieri.com.au our phone 0401 927 967**

## CIRCOLO DI CONVERSAZIONE

Continuano le conversazioni di livello avanzato.
Il costo è di $22 per sessione.

LUNEDÌ pomeriggio dalle 14.30 alle 16.00.
7 aprile (ultimo incontro del primo trimestre)

Queste sono le date per il secondo trimestre
28 aprile, 12 e 26 maggio e poi 9 e 23 giugno

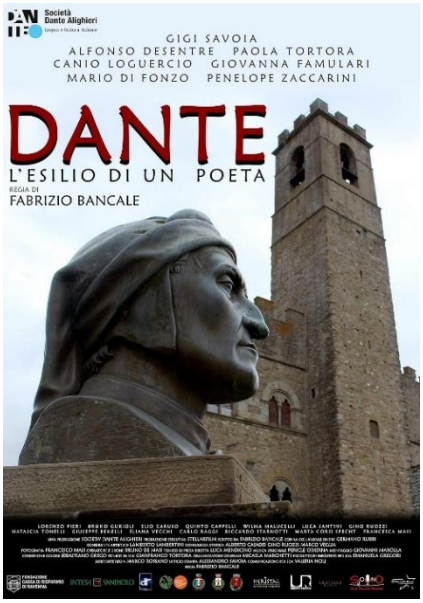
## NUOVO CIRCOLO IN ARRIVO...

Abbiamo in programma l'offerta di un nuovo circolo per gli appassionati di lettura.
Infatti sarà un circolo di lettura con variazioni sul solito formato. Ulteriori informazioni il mese prossimo.

# Canta che ti passa!

Refresh your soul with a *buon piatto* of Italian songs on
**SATURDAY 17 May**

Do you enjoy live singing, good company and delicious Italian snacks? We would love you to join us on this occasion for *Canta che ti passa*! The Brisbane Dante will again host a musical gathering where singers can share their love of Italian songs, whether opera, art songs or *canzoni popolari* for the enjoyment of the rest of us. We are pleased to announce that the pianist Jonah Patuto will be the accompanist. Who knows what musical gems we will discover?
Do check for updates on our social media channels.
If you enjoyed the previous musical soirée, join us for more excitement this time around.




## DANTEDÌ 25 marzo

Dal 2020 il 25 marzo di ogni anno si celebra in tutto il mondo il Dantedì, una giornata in cui si ricorda l'uomo, il poeta e il padre della lingua italiana, Dante Alighieri. Nelle classi abbiamo accennato a questa ricorrenza cercando di riflettere sull'aspetto di Dante che più ci stà a cuore. L'esilio di Dante è stato affrontato in uno dei progetti della Sede Centrale della Società Dante Alighieri per i settecento anni dalla morte del sommo poeta nel 2021. Il film prodotto s'intitola *Dante L'esilio di un poeta* ed è disponibile su Youtube al seguente indirizzo:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUlmjZUyBV8
Buona visione!

# Carnevale – foto e recensione

**RECENSIONE**

Venerdì 14 marzo la Dante ha ospitato un evento sulla storia del Carnevale. Ho partecipato e ho imparato molto. Le radici della tradizione sono molto antiche e sono mantenute vive in villaggi isolati nelle regioni montuose di tutta Europa.

Alla fine dell'inverno, i giovani uomini prendono il controllo degli spazi pubblici portando caos e rumore per spaventare l'inverno. Indossano maschere e costumi ricoperti di campanelli, festoni colorati e pelli di animali. Invitano il ritorno della primavera rievocando l'aratura e la semina, l'attività sessuale e la nascita. La loro interruzione include parodie di personaggi potenti e inversione della moralità. I ruoli femminili sono tutti interpretati da giovani uomini.

Il malgoverno termina con un enorme falò e l'uccisione del re del carnevale. Queste antiche celebrazioni vengono ancora messe in scena. Dobbiamo ricordare tuttavia che la vita è cambiata anche nei villaggi più isolati. Queste feste sono solo riflessi degli anni passati. Sono state modificate dal cristianesimo e la sensibilità moderna fa sì che elementi come la crudeltà sugli animali non facciano parte delle celebrazioni. Oggi, sebbene l'agricoltura ricopra ancora una grande importanza, molti giovani lavorano nelle città. **Lesley**

**Comincia qui una carrellata di carnevali italiani che i nostri studenti hanno individuato.**

*Il carnevale di Ivrea*.

Ufficialmente questo storico carnevale è la celebrazione del carnevale che si svolge nell'omonima città canavisana, è famoso sopratutto per la 'Battaglia delle arance' (queste normalmente sono arance non adatte al consumo alimentare).

ANNA

# Compiti sui carnevali italiani

*Il carnevale di Tufare* in provincia di Campobasso nel Molise.
Il protagonista è il diavolo, arcaico e misterioso. È una figura caprina con 7 pelli, un tridente e una maschera nera diabolica. Fa paura, corre per le strade del borgo ululando e dimenandosi.

Questo carnevale tramandato nei secoli ha radici pagane e agronome. Il protagonista ha un corteo di figure che rappresentano l'ignoto, l'inverno. C'è la morte, una figura simbolica e c'è un gruppo di maschere vestite in bianco con la faccia coperta di nero e con la falce fingono la raccolta di fauna mentre cantano. JAN O.

*Il carnevale di Acireale* si svolgeva dal 15 febbraio al quattro marzo quest'anno. E' un teatro di meravigliose maschere, coriandoli, luci, arte, fiori, musica e sopratutto tanto calore umano. Le storiche vie e piazze barocche del centro storico di Acireale sono la cornice ideale per uno spettacolo che raggiunge il *clou* con le sfilate dei carri allegorici grotteschi attraverso i quali gli artigiani esprimono la loro fantasia e bravura artistica. Tra il mare e l'Etna, il carnevale offre un'esperienza indimenticabile, senza dimenticare le delizie della tradizione culinaria siciliana nella suggestiva 'Riviera dei limoni', un contesto naturale, circondato da rigogliosi giardini di limoni, originate dalle dominazioni romane, arabe e normanne. JAN R.

*Il carnevale di Viareggio*

Comincia dal 1873 con grandi carri di cartapesta che fanno caricature dei politici ecc. I più grandi possono superare i 250 chili. La festa dura per quattro fine settimana precedenti al martedì grasso nei bar e ristoranti popolari. Ci sono sei corse mascherate, alcune con uno spettacolo pirotecnico al termine e si svolgono sul lungomare di Viareggio.
Nel 2019 il carnevale ha attratto l'attenzione del mondo quando c'era un carro con la caricatura di Donald Trump come l'imperatore da Warhammer 40,000, il gioco di guerra in miniatura più popolare al mondo.
Il carnevale è così importante per Viareggio che gli è stato dedicato un gigantesco complesso con 16 grandi hangar e laboratori per la costruzione dei carri, un laboratorio di cartapesta, tre spazi museali e un archivio fotografico e cinematografico. ROBERT

*Il carnevale di Sciacca* è uno dei più allegri della Sicilia e più importanti d'Italia. Peppi Nnappa, Re di lu Carnivali Sciaccatanu, è una maschera della Commedia Dell'Arte, la più antica della Sicilia, nata tra il Seicento e il Settecento. Peppi Nnappa, beffardo e gioviale ma anche pigro e molto goloso apre lo spettacolo che nei giorni successivi continua con la sfilata dei carri e gli spettacoli musicali, concludendosi con la mena a raga del re sulla piazza della città.
Il nome Peppe Nnappa deriva da nappa cioè toppa in siciliano. Il personaggio diventa simbolicamente sindaco durante i giorni di festa e ottiene le chiavi della città. Dal suo carro avviene la distribuzione al popolo di salsicce alla brace, caramelle, vino e spremute d'arancia del luogo. Alla fine, secondo una credenza pagana, il rogo avviene al centro della piazza con il popolo che balla all'inno di Peppe Nnappa che libera la città da tutti i suoi mali. LIANA

# Dalla biblioteca

## Cosa c'è di nuovo nella nostra biblioteca?

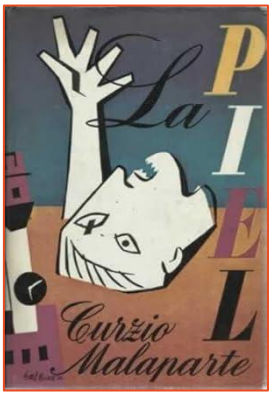
Truth! You can't handle the truth.

Jack Nicholson's character in *A Few Good Men, 1992.*

We are told we are living in a "post truth" world. How scary is that! How do we know exactly what to believe, who to follow, who to fear. We love a simple dichotomy – what is not true must be false – but truth has always been a somewhat moveable feast. There are some things that are undeniably true. Umberto Eco *was* born on 5 January 1932, and the film "Anora" *did* win the Best Picture Oscar at the 2025 Academy Awards. But, once we get beyond the simple and specific, things get rather murky.

Librarians, for ease of access, sort their collections into two categories: fiction and non-fiction. It is important to note that we do not call them FACT and FICTION as if only one holds the truth. Both sections contain narrative, opinion, speculation, and extrapolations. Both contain lies and deceptions, facts, and truths. So what is the difference? Sometimes it is easy to spot. Guy Grossi's sumptuous cookbook *Love Italy* can be found in non-fiction (641.5 GRO). *L'assaggiatrice* by Giuseppina Torregrossa, about a wife who becomes a cook after her husband disappears, is definitely fiction. Both books contain recipes, but one shares Chef Grossi's kitchencraft while the other is an imagined romance.

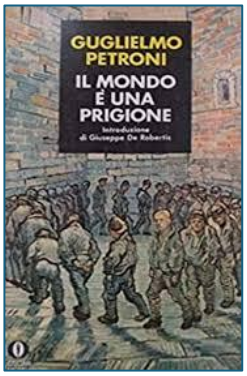
Let's consider two other books in our collection where the distinction may not be so clear.




The first, *La pelle* (1949) by Curzio Malaparte, is in the fiction section. The second, *Il mondo è una prigione* by Guglielmo Petroni (920 PET) is non-fiction. Both Malaparte and Petroni wrote about things they experienced during the Second World War while those things were still fresh in their minds.

Malaparte was working in Naples as a liaison officer for the American army, after the capture of the city in October 1943. The city had been devastated by the retreating German forces, leaving it with disease, polluted water and starvation. The lack of order in the city fostered crime and created room for the mafia. While the Americans and their allies tried to improve the situation, some also committed war crimes and contributed to the chaos. In *La pelle*, his protagonist, also a Liaison Officer named Malaparte, tells of violence and degradation of the Allied "liberation."

In 1944, Guglielmo Petroni, a member of La Resistenza, was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to death by the S.S. He was held in Regina Coeli, the historic Roman prison where anti-fascists, partisans and over 1,000 Roman Jews were imprisoned during the war. Many, including Leone Ginzburg, died there. Petroni was saved by the arrival of the allies. He wrote *Il mondo è una prigione* immediately after the liberation. In it he recounts his experiences at the hands of Fascist police and the Gestapo, his imprisonment, and the hardships he encountered on the long road back to Lucca, his hometown. Petroni describes the terror and brutality. He meditates on war and the survival of himself and his country.




In their respective books, Petroni and Malaparte are both seeking to convey the reality of their situation. They both reflect on the confusion, absurdity, and paradox of war. Both consider what sort of people they are and why they survived. And both write with great skill and perception. So, why is one book fiction and the other non-fiction?

In non-fiction, we expect to be able to verify the facts. The people, places, and events in *Il mondo è una prigione* existed. There are documents and evidence outside of the book that can attest to their existence. Petroni stands as a chronicler to the past. He wants to honour that past with truth and authenticity. *La pelle* certainly deals with facts that can be verified but Malaparte has created a line of imagination to connect these elements and reshape the narrative. He wants us to understand something about the nature of humans and how they survive. He foregrounds experiences that best carry his theme. He creates characters that give voice to his ideas. This shaping and creating is certainly the craft of a novelist but such literary devices and fabrications destroy the credibility of non-fiction works. So, it seems, the author's intention and the readers' expectation together play a role in deciding how a book will be classified.

But does fiction or non-fiction develop a truer understanding of our world? When Andrea Camilleri talked about books that shaped him, he nominated *La Condition humaine* by André Malraux , a novel about the 1927 Shanghai communist insurrection and its effect on a diverse group of characters. He also nominated Petroni's *Il mondo è una prigione*. These works, fiction and non-fiction, gave him something authentic on which to build his world view.

Lesley Happy Reading!