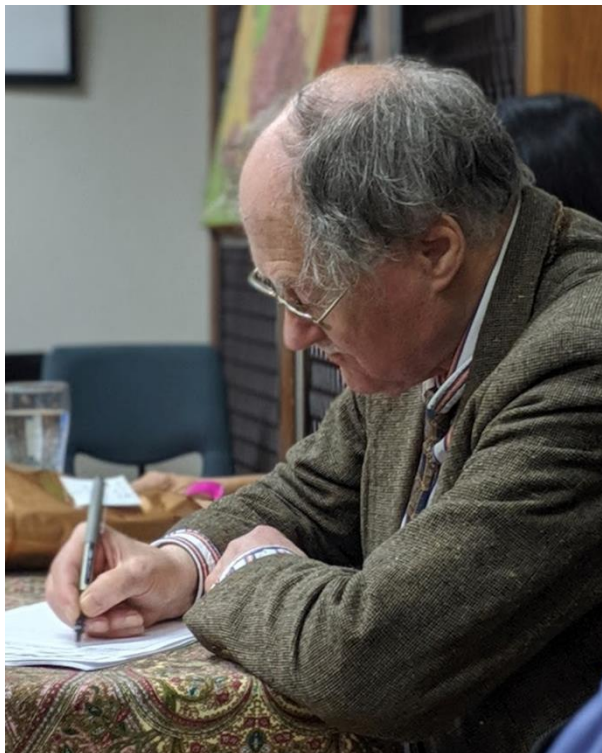


Vale David Duffy

David Duffy passed from this life in the early morning of the 10th November 2022.

David was born in England and came to Australia in the late 1940s as a child. He had fond memories of growing up in 1950s' Sydney and, in particular, riding the trams that criss-crossed the Sydney landscape at that time. He maintained this love of trams all through his life. In early adulthood, he travelled extensively in Southeast Asia. At one point, during these travels he became ill and was admitted to hospital. When he found out it was "just" malaria he said, "Is that all!" He was ready to discharge himself and continue his travels, but the doctors were able to convince him that he was actually seriously ill and needed to stay in hospital. It was as a result of this admission, or a similar one, that he developed trouble in his leg, which plagued him his whole life.



David described himself as "a political animal who didn't go into politics." He took over the *Open Forum* in 1973, held at Humanist House, and ran it every Wednesday (with some absence during COVID) until very recently. The *Open Forum* invited an eclectic range of the famous and infamous over its long tenure. Audience numbers reached 100 at its apotheosis.

David had a love of old books. His working life was as an antiquarian, tracking down rare books for clients. One aspect he liked about old books, and books in general, was their freedom from modern censors who might erase unpalatable words or attitudes in newer editions, or indeed digital editions which can be modified as fast as the *Zeitgeist* wills it. He was old school in many aspects and was loathsome of technology. At one point, he did acquire a mobile phone but refused to send or read an SMS. If he left a voice message on your phone, the expectation was of a prompt reply.

In the 90s, concerned about the decline of the Western tradition in Australia, he founded *The Fellowship of the Round Table* (FORT) – a study and discussion group to assist in rejuvenating the Western soul. The foundation of the organisation echoed the ideals of the Arthurian legend – "honour, chivalry, service, and nobility."

"The Fellowship of the Round Table, FORT, represents the embodiment of the will of Western people to regain their destiny as the most dynamic civilization in the world. By unity of purpose, we will vanquish the collective death wish of the Western soul."

In 2006 the FORT group started a series of panel discussions at NSW Parliament House called *The Round Table Forum*, dealing with contemporary issues "the sort of topics that keep you awake at night." The series is currently up to its 58th forum, which will be held in February 2023 "Western Art and Beauty in Peril?" The first was "God in Politics." Recently, for his life's work and contribution to civil society, he was nominated for an Order of Australia.

David was indefatigable. He ran the *Open Forum* every Wednesday, networking to bring a new speaker each week. He chaired FORT (which changed its name a decade ago to *Western Heritage Australia*) for nearly thirty years, convening a meeting each month (except in the silly season) for discussion, and from 2006 to organise the quarterly *Round Table Forum*. As a resident of the Blue Mountains, all this work involved many hours on the train. After some of the forums, he would not arrive at home until the wee hours of the morning and carried on this gruelling pace even as his health failed him. He eschewed anything that kept him from his mission. The lockdowns were a thorn in his side, robbing him of valuable time. In his final months, he said that he had been in perfect health all his life and this latest bout of trouble was puzzling. Then, as soon as the doctors had finished their examinations and treatments, he would be back on the train heading into Sydney. On the day before he died, he was in good spirits planning the next thing from his hospital bed.

David enjoyed the company of many friends. Often when one would ring him the answer would be "I'm in a café with a friend, can I call you back within the hour? That is a promise." David kept his promises. He leaves behind a legacy, many friends, and will be sorely missed.