**The Heist – The Birkenhead Foodtown Robbery By Scott Bainbridge**

**Reviewed by Neville**

**It took 3 minutes to subdue the guards on the Armourgard truck and load into the getaway van what was at the time the largest such haul in New Zealand history, being an equivalent of $1.1 million today. The van and the 3 or possibly 4 robbers left the scene. They were getting away with the takings of 8 or more supermarkets on the Friday before Labour Day, one of the busier grocery shopping days of the year.**

**The Police had a surplus of suspects to consider. The author profiles the main suspects, those thought capable of carrying out a heist and those that might collude with them to launder this huge amount of cash, mainly in $10 or $20 notes. Drawing on his own and prior interviews, court and news reports he describes suspect after suspect, well known and small-time. Progress was slow and difficult. Those that might have “grassed” were too reluctant. Fantastical alibies were created to explain cash found or spent.**

**Step into this book and you step into the New Zealand criminal underworld. When you read it you will be like me, and wonder just how big this world is today. You might have a fairly good idea if you are part of the Justice system or the Police, or, if you are or have been a recent member of the underworld. Scott Bainbridge has written here, not only on this 1984 armed robbery but also on just about every notorious NZ criminal of the mid 20th century from Ronald Jorgenson to Mr Asia and has referenced scores of similar crimes by them and their cohorts.**

**The Heist has been written with verve and races along. The language and the slang of the times take some getting used to (a glossary would have been helpful). There is so much more to this story than the title suggests and this aspect intrigued me most.**