



Last Thursday a first priority for book club

## Description



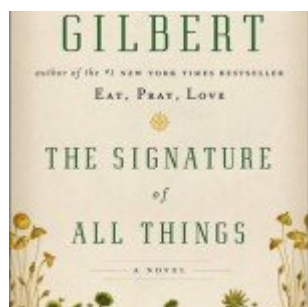
Catherine Ryan, left, and Brigid Foard are among the members of The Last Thursday Book Club, in Port Fairy, that provides a place for women to enjoy stimulating conversations about books.

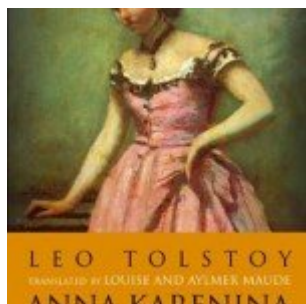
While there are infinite joys about becoming a mother, the loss of stimulating conversation or intellectual discussion can prove challenging for women who enjoyed such things before becoming a parent.

**Brigid Foard**, who lives in Port Fairy and teaches English at Emmanuel College, Warrnambool, remembers when growing up that her mother, **Sylvia Jones**, was part of a local book club for about 20 years and how it became a “staple of her life”.

When Brigid had the first of her two daughters, she tried to find a similar club to meet other women who enjoyed reading and talking about books, but without success.

“I remember feeling quite envious of what Mum had, because I was unable to find anything similar,” she said.





That changed around September last year when two local women, **Lucy Abbott** and **Meg Higgins**, started **The Last Thursday Book Club** in Port Fairy. The group is aimed at women with or without children who are looking for a place to indulge their love of books.

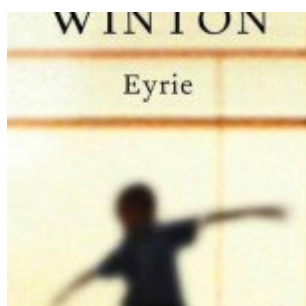
The group now has about seven members who all meet monthly at a local cafe or restaurant and, over coffee, dessert or a glass of wine, spend a couple of hours dissecting the book that has been chosen for that month.

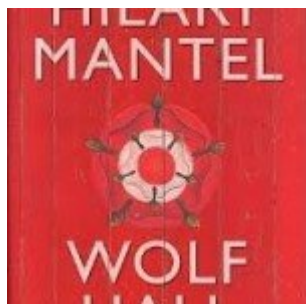
"I had been reading all these fantastic books, but I didn't really have anyone to communicate my thoughts or frustrations to about what I was reading, now I have met this great group of like-minded women and we share all of our ideas," said one member, **Kelly Wynne**, who has two young children and works part-time as a heritage consultant.

"It has also really broadened the types of books and authors that I now read," Kelly added.

**Catherine Ryan**, who has an infant son and also teaches English at Emmanuel College, agreed and said the group gave her an important social outlet that was not work-related, yet stimulating.

"Teaching English is working, whereas this is relaxing...it's something I do for myself," she said.





A [dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] A [dropcap]s to how it works, well each member of the club gets to choose a book, which is then either bought, borrowed or shared among the members who have a month to read it.

The books chosen so far have ranged from Tim Winton's new release, *Eyrie*, to the somewhat more hefty tome by Booker Prize winner Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall*. Tolstoy's classic *Anna Karenina* and the Elizabeth Gilbert's new book, *The Signature of all Things*, are also on the list.

"We trust each other's tastes: there hasn't been a bad choice so far," laughed Brigid.

And all three women laughed as they described how their monthly Thursday night meetings had become "sacrosanct" and their respective partners – and children – had learned to accommodate the club.

"The regularity of it is really important to me," said Brigid, "because once you become a mother, it is very easy to be defined only as a mother and to be trapped into talking about teething when, really, you might want to be talking about literature."

"We are just really fortunate to have something like this in a rural area."

**[box type="bio"]** Bluestone Magazine will check in each month with The Last Thursday Book Club to see what they have been reading...and what they thought of it! **[/box]**



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### Date Created

2014/02/02

### Author

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