

Racehorses: respecting Country and a crucial council vote

Monday night's council vote on racehorse training at Levy's will also be a test of our true respect for Indigenous culture.

Writing from the heart about ADHD

Author Wendy Coyle has written about the experiences of her son, Jack, who grew up with an attention deficit disorder, and is taking her work into the online world in the hope of further de-stigmatising the condition...

Charming bookshop starts new chapter



Megan Langdon first dreamt of running her own bookshop 30 years ago and now operates the gorgeous The Little Bookshop, in Portland.

[box] Unfortunately The Little Bookshop closed in late July 2014. We wish Megan well for whatever she does next – she deserves every success.[/box]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] B
[/dropcap]outique bookshops are making a comeback and they don't come any cuter than the charming **The Little Bookshop** in Portland.

Anybody who loves books (and we know that because you are reading *Bluestone*, that this includes you), will find that their heart slows and they breathe a bit more deeply when they walk into the quiet, stylish haven that **Megan Langdon** has created in the historic town.

To be accurate, we should say *re-created*, because The Little Bookshop is in its second incarnation.

The original bookshop started three years ago in Percy St, which is one block away from its present Bentick St location, but the high overheads that came from being in the main street of Portland eventually proved too much and, earlier this year, Megan made the tough decision to close.

“It was such a huge, emotional decision,” Megan said.

“I got my son, Matthew, to announce it on my Facebook page for me, because he looked after all that side of things, and then I got to work on closing it down,” she said.

There was only one hitch: Megan’s supporters, customers and book fans from around the South-West were not having a bar of it. They responded to the Facebook post by the hundreds, saying that Megan couldn’t possibly close such a lovely shop that had made books into something special again.

“It sent me on an emotional rollercoaster, to be honest, because having made the very hard decision to close, I had to question all over again whether it was the right decision,” Megan said.



Megan stood at the crossroads earlier this year, having decided to close – then relocate – her bookshop: “I knew that I hadn’t finished being a bookseller.”

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] A [dropcap]s fate would have it, one of Megan’s friends, **Milly Cameron**, had a small shop available right on the waterfront that she had been using as a pop-up gallery to exhibit work by her sisters-in-law, **Pat Cameron** and **Anne Langdon**. Megan was invited to take on the lease for her bookshop and to keep the gallery going.

If only it were that simple.

In the interim, Megan had also been offered several jobs, based on her previous career in adult education, and had to choose between the stability and regular income of a teaching position...or still running her own little bookshop.

“Every time I thought about it, the books kept winning. I knew

that I hadn't finished being a bookseller," she said.



Beautiful antique French items are also for sale, reflecting Megan's love of Paris that she visited for her 50th birthday.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] T
[/dropcap]he Little Bookshop was a 30-year-dream in the making for Megan, who has devoured books since growing up as a child in Ballarat. She remembers moving from Ballarat to Melbourne as a 17-year-old and being so deeply lonely that it was only books that saved her.

She also remembers walking into a bookshop in Echuca more than three decades ago – “The Tangled Garden, I think it was called” – and being completely enchanted by the surroundings. It was then Megan decided that, one day, she would run her own bookshop.

Being a single parent, however, made it almost impossible for Megan to pursue her dream until many years later when, armed with her superannuation, she moved to Portland from Geelong after visiting it several times to see her son, Ben, who is a school teacher.



And then there are the books: wrapped to take home in paper and brown string.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] I keeping with her dream, Megan's bookshop sells only quality fiction and specialises in promoting Australian authors. She also sells a select range of beautiful French antique items, including French linen, that reflects her love of Paris, which she visited for her 50th birthday.

This specialisation means that Megan works in with Portland's other booksellers – there are five in total – who all have their own areas of expertise.

"We send customers to each other, because we all do things a

little differently," she said.

[box] You can find The Little Bookshop at 51 Bentick St, Portland. Ph: (03) 5523 1440. Visit The Little Bookshop [Facebook page here](#). [/box]

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Last Thursday a first priority for book club



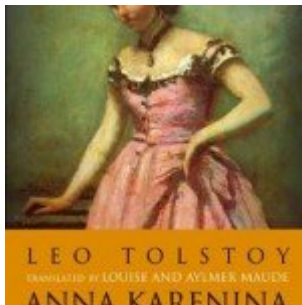
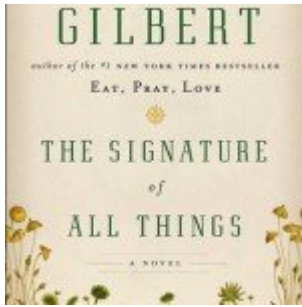
Catherine Ryan, left, and Brigid Foard are among the members of The Last Thursday Book Club, in Port Fairy, that provides a place for women to enjoy stimulating conversations about books.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] 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.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] T
[/dropcap]hat 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.

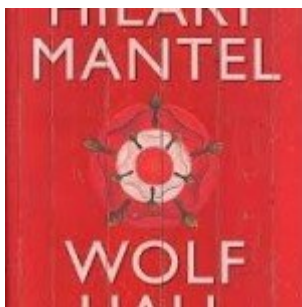
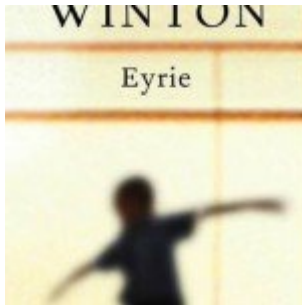
The group now has about seven members who all meet monthly at a local cafe or restaurant and, over coffee, dessert or a glass of wine, spend a couple of hours dissecting the book that has been chosen for that month.

"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.



[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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