

Port Fairy bookclub review: *Eyrie*

[box] Bluestone recently profiled the [Last Thursday Book Club](#) in Port Fairy and invited members of the group to tell us about their book of the month. This month, **BRIGID FOARD**, is in the chair: [/box]



Brigid Foard (right), who is a member of The Last Thursday Book Club, in Port Fairy, gives us the rundown on Tim Winton's latest novel.

[quote]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] T
[/dropcap]im Winton's ***Eyrie*** commanded much discussion between the members of The Last Thursday book club, in Port Fairy this month.

The mark of a good read can often be the ripple effects of

discussion when there are no easy answers, no comfortable resolutions of character or motive. The ambiguous elements of *Eyrie* are its strength, with Winton going to great lengths to avoid sentimentality and cliché.

Our discussion ranged from what really was the stain on the carpet at the start of the text, to was Tom Keely trying to save himself by helping Kai?

Eyrie is a thought provoking work dealing with themes such as redemption, class and the future of Australian society (more specifically, WA).

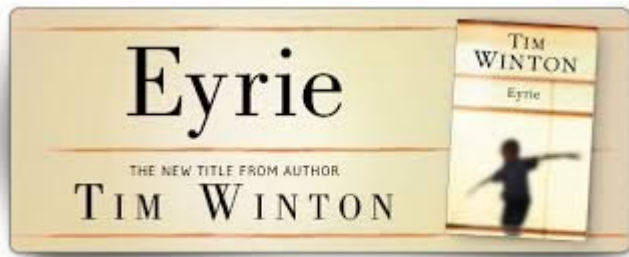
Most agreed that this is the most thrilling of Winton's books in that it had that page turning effect on most of us.

I felt that Keely's mother Doris was one of Winton's more convincing female characterisations to date. The humour in the novel was something we all remarked upon. There are some hauntingly beautiful images in the novel which I will remember for years to come (surely testament once again to the work's quality).

Winton has once again structured his writing around a few motifs: in 'Eyrie' they are birds, flight, falling; in 'Breath' – breathing, resuscitation, water.

This structural formula serves as both a functional and aesthetic framework, (including the title) and in my opinion solidifies the work as a classic.

Eyrie is one of those works that stays with your consciousness and makes you really think."



[box type="bio"] Have you read Eyrie? What did you think?[/box]



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**Last Thursday a first
priority for book club**



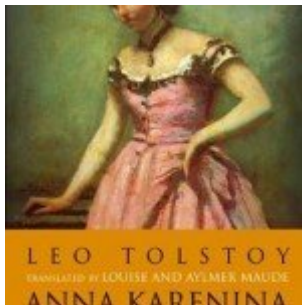
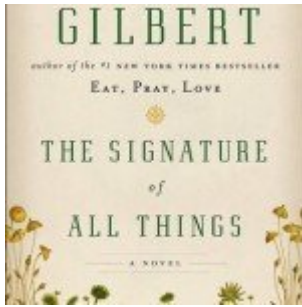
Catherine Ryan, left, and Brigid Foard are among the members of The Last Thursday Book Club, in Port Fairy, that provides a place for women to enjoy stimulating conversations about books.

[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.

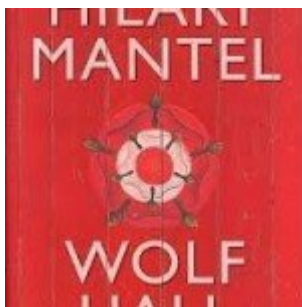
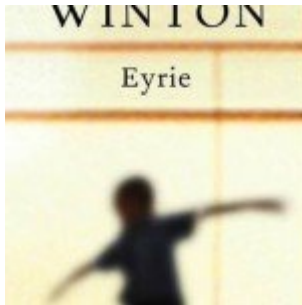
The group now has about seven members who all meet monthly at a local cafe or restaurant and, over coffee, dessert or a glass of wine, spend a couple of hours dissecting the book that has been chosen for that month.

"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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