

Book choice titles for 2016

<u>Month</u>		<u>Author</u>	<u>Review</u>
January	The Miniaturist	Jessie Burton	Interesting book set in Amsterdam in 1686 when an 18 yr. old bride was given a miniature dolls house depicting the family home by her new husband. Marriage unconsummated. Miniaturist of the title was elusive throughout the book and was employed by the bride to make miniature furniture for the house. Her tiny creations eerily rang true to the workings of the main house. Readers felt there were too many unanswered questions and miniaturist never fully explored and ruined story because of it. Marks varied from one 5 to one 9. Mostly 7s and 8s.
February	Case Histories	Kate Atkinson	Detective story starring Jackson Brodie as detective investigating 3 separate murder cases which somehow become interlinked throughout the story. Lot of going backwards and forwards and most of us (especially those reading on a Kindle) found it very frustrating! Margaret loved it and gave it an 8, Linda a 4 whereas the rest of us gave it 5 or 6!
March	The Invention of Wings	Sue Monk Kidd	Book based on the Grimke sisters (Sarah and Nina) and their fight for the abolition of slavery. The two main characters were Sarah and her slave girl Hetty (Handful) given to her at age 11 and the different views of their lives seen from Sarah the daughter of a wealthy slave holder and Handful who was her slave girl and the horrendous lives of slaves and

			<p>punishments meted out by their owners. As slaves were not allowed to read or write Hetty's mother Charlotte embroidered a "quilt" telling in pictures her life and showing her life story. Everyone loved this and great discussion at the meeting as to various aspects of the book. Wendy gave it a 9.5 and the rest of us unanimously gave it a 9.</p>
April *	<u>NO MEETING THIS MONTH</u>	*	*
May	The Taxidermist's Daughter	Kate Mosse	<p>General discussion about this book with people either loving it or hating it or liking aspects of it and not others! Many felt the descriptions and the writing were very well done but a bit too gory for some and too much detail. Several had been to the Sussex areas where it was set and so found that interesting. The ending was thought very far-fetched but it was pointed out that in the era where it was set where the villains were highly thought of in the community how else were they to be punished legitimately as the authorities would not have believed any allegations if made. Marks varied from 2, 6, 6.5m, 7 - 8 with one possibly 9.</p>
June	Longbourne	Jo Baker	<p>A very interesting sideways look at life below stairs and the daily humdrum of life from the servants' point of view compared to the "upstairs" and the family on which Pride and Prejudice was based. Very well researched and descriptive, with a love story running throughout. Everyone loved this but marks varied from 6-9 mainly because some felt the</p>

			army/fighting segment was a bit overlong and the ending very rushed with unanswered questions.
July	Lord of the flies	William Golding	School boys are marooned on a remote island after their plane was bombed and the adults all missing or killed. Initially Ralph is made the leader and proceeds to stress how important it is to have a fire burning at all times to guide ships to their whereabouts. Piggy an overweight but very sensible boy aids him. Jack another of the boys eventually gets bored and manages to split the camp by turning hunter for food and allowing the fire and prospective rescue to slide. Very dark storyline as the boys cause Piggy's death and then turn against Ralph who is saved in the nick of time by a passing ship. Very varied marks but all agreed the storyline made you think and was disturbing as to what could happen without adult supervision. Marks from 5-9.
August	Pretty baby	Mary Kubica	Everyone had a lot to say about this book! Interesting storyline about a disturbed mother concerned about a young girl with a baby seemingly homeless and out in all weathers. She took her home and looked after her eventually monopolising the baby. Some felt it was a bit staid and boring in the middle as nothing much happening but thought the storyline was good with a somewhat abrupt ending. Marks varied again from 5-9.
September	After You	Jo Jo Moyes	The long awaited sequel to Me before You (subsequently released on film). After the original

			<p>book scoring a unanimous 9 in the group this was felt to be not as good. Most were disappointed that Lou had ended up working in an airport bar wearing a ludicrous uniform without doing anything much with her life and the bequest left to her by Will.</p> <p>There were some similarities to the first book ie near fatal accidents and a clever ending where Lou after failing to save Will succeeded in saving her new love interest Sam, but ended with her going to New York to work for an unspecified time. The parallel story of Lily and her grandparents running through was thought to be weak as the supposed age of Will's parents and their behaviour towards everything was found to be unrealistic in this day and age and they seemed too far behind the times for their ages.</p> <p>Average marks varied from one 5, 2 6's with mainly 7's.</p>
October	Go set a Watchman	Harper Lee	<p>Sequel to To Kill a Mockingbird and set two decades later. Scout returns home from New York to visit and finds it difficult to accept the racial issues of the time and civil rights tensions and political turmoil affecting the south at that time. We all found it very hard going and hard to read with not much of a storyline. A lot of discussion about the racial issues of the time. Mostly marked 3-4.</p>
November	Penny sweets and cobbled streets my East End childhood	Nanny Pat	<p>Written by the Nan referred to in the Only Way is Essex series on TV. A great deal of discussion about this book with consensus being that not enough</p>

			research had been done by the “author” of her memoirs such as her being evacuated from East End of London during the war but couldn’t remember where to etc.etc. Some found it interesting learning of her factory and home life but on the whole the marks were only 2’s and 3’s!
December	Silent Night – The Remarkable Christmas Truce of 1914	Stanley Weintraub	Unfortunately this book outlining the famous Christmas truce between the German and English soldiers on the frontline in the First World War was a big disappointment. It had obviously been researched thoroughly but had far too many different descriptions and facts from numerous people with dates and names by the hundred making it a very monotonous and boring story. Hardly anyone liked it and it managed to gain the lowest score ever of mainly 1’s!!