

Book choice reviews for 2018



<u>Month</u>		<u>Author</u>	<u>Review</u>
January	Vets in Love	Cathy Woodman	A very light hearted and easy read to start off the New Year. Some discussion as to why the book was called Vets in Love whereas one of them was a Doctor! You either loved it or hated it with one 2, two 3s and the rest mainly 5 and 6 with one 9. As we have been reading quite a lot of dark books lately it was a welcome change for some but others felt it was too horse orientated and was missing in content and a bit boring especially as all written in the present tense.
February	Two Brothers	Ben Elton	This was a story dealing with two boys brought up as Jewish twins although not blood related, one being born a Jew and the other not. The story concerns the lives of the family in the 1930's and their situation showing the power that Hitler had in building up his regime culminating in World War Two, and his escalating treatment of the Jewish people. Some of the situations were loosely based on people in Ben Elton's family. It was an eye-opening book for us all and was found to be very harrowing in places. It was cleverly written and the way the brothers interacted was clever even though they did not know until grown up that they were not blood brothers but were so close. It was a lengthy book, some finding it too long in places and although well written the constant flicking back and forth between years and characters was difficult but overall a very interesting read although rather disturbing that the treatment of the Jewish people was accepted so readily by non-Jews. Generally recommended with marks on the higher spectrum with the lowest being 7 and three 9's.

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March	The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society	Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Burrows	This proved to be one of our most popular books ever with our very first 10! It is set in 1946 and is the story of the memories of the local Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society of their life under the German occupation in the war. We all found it very moving, very informative and interesting and it details how the friendship of the members of the Society prevailed through the hardship of that time. Generally the marks ranged from a 7, mostly 9's with the aforesaid 10. We are all waiting to see if the film just out on general release at the end of April matches up to the book. You will have to read the book to find out how the unusually long title came about!
April	A long way home (original book of Lion film)	Saroo Brierley	Well I personally loved this. It is the true story written by the boy in question (now an adult) of his battle to find his birthplace again after being lost as a young boy in India on a train journey. After surviving alone on the streets of Calcutta he is soon adopted by an Australian family where he grows to adulthood and eventually manages through Google Earth to retrace his steps back to his homeland. Some members found it was not very well written and they found it surprising that such a young child could remember so clearly landmarks and names of his home town but as he was very poor and very streetwise being left to his own devices a lot at a young age I particularly found it very moving. Generally the marks were good from one 5, 2 6's and the rest 7's and 8's. Those who had seen the film found it was much better than the book.

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May	Miss Pettigrew lives for a day	Winifred Watson	This book was first published in 1938 and tells the tale of a poor unemployed middle-aged governess and how after attending at a prospective employer's house her life radically changes for the better in just 24 hours. Very mixed feelings by the book club with some finding it a very readable, happy and unusual story reflecting how Miss Pettigrew's confidence grew and empowered her and others feeling it went on too long and was a bit boring and subsequently causing lack of interest in the characters. Marks from 4 to 9 reflecting the different opinions.
June	Behind Closed Doors	B A Paris	The first novel for the author telling the tale of 'the perfect marriage' on the outside between a dedicated lawyer and loving husband and an elegant consummate housewife and how appearances can be very deceptive in what goes on 'behind closed doors'. This was a very easy read and a couple of the members found it hard to put down but others found it very far fetched and liked a bit more 'action'. However there were five 7's in the score with the rest on the lower spectrum.
July	Remarkable Creatures	Tracy Chevalier	Very unusual story based on fact concerning fossil hunting in the 19 th Century in the Lyme Regis area. Many of the book club found it fascinating with interesting details of the area and the lifestyle of Mary Anning the famous fossil hunter but some found there was not enough substance to the story and it was a bit boring and lame. Marks varied from 5 to the top end of 8 by 5 members. Written by the author of the book 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'.

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August	Black Rabbit Hall	Eve Chase	Tale of the Alton family's vacations at Black Rabbit Hall their summer residence and their idyllic lifestyle changing through a tragic event in their lives. The book group generally found it OK with marks of 6 to 7.5/8 but several found it boring and mediocre in the middle and the underlying story set decades later not very realistic.
September	A Tale for the time being	Ruth Ozeki	Various marks. 4 had read it, 2 were struggling but wanted to finish it and 5 had given up at various stages. Scores varied from 1-8. 3 people found it fascinating especially the parallels between the women's lives and the insight into Japanese culture. Most found the footnotes irritating and in parts unnecessary, there was no need for the use of Japanese words for every day things with barely a quarter of the footnotes needed for specific Japanese terms. The stories running through were interesting and had potential but the style of writing wasn't to our taste.
October	The Time Traveller's Wife	Audrey Niffenegger	Well some cheated and watched the DVD and/or read the book with the Group having mixed comments as usual! Half didn't like the way the story kept jumping backwards and forwards and had to keep referring to previous chapters to keep up. Some got bored and gave up as they found it too complicated and one found it didn't follow the rules of physics. Although it was felt it was well written overall the marks again varied from one 3, rest 5, 6 and 7 with one 8 proving that the Group as a whole have mixed tastes in reading.

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November	Larkrise to Candleford	Flora Thompson	Two readers loved this and liked picking out the various characters while the rest of the group's comments were that they found it heavy going; too much description and lists of facts. It was felt that it highlighted how much more content people were in those days and although it helped us to visualise life then it was found to be boring and dull. One of the Group had read it 40 years ago and loved it but when re-reading it in 2018 found it very dull and changed her opinion in that the book hadn't stood the test of time and now was a not so modern classic. We decided that nowadays we lead such full and busy lives compared to when the book was written and that was why it was found to be so dull. Marks 3 x 4; 1 4.5; 4 x 5 and 2 x 9.
December	We are all completely beside ourselves	Karen Joy Fowler	