



Queanbeyan Reading Circle

Newsletter March 2017

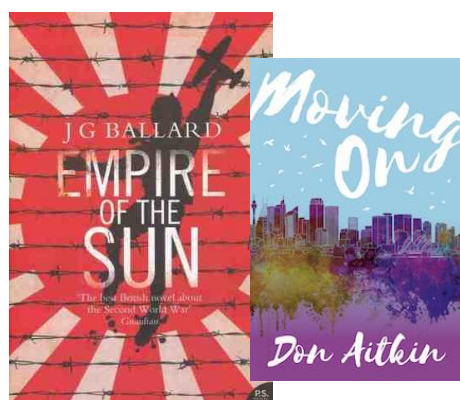
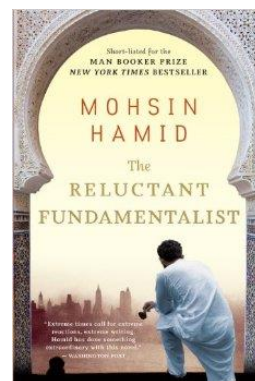
Next meeting 5th April at COUNTRY HEIR 1.30 TO 3.30 pm

Theme – 3 literary figures (real or fictitious) you would invite to dinner and why

It was great to see so many of you this month, with 11 happy faces including new member Jo. Everyone got into the spirit and there was some lively discussion on a variety of topics. I believe everyone now has a calendar of meeting dates and themes; if you happen to have misplaced yours or not received one we are meeting at Country Heir Café next month.

This month I put Jo on the spot asking her to speak first. She enjoys a good mystery, particularly likes James Patterson and has been recently reading Harlan Coben. Megan suggested Norwegian author Jo Nesbo, having recently completed a trilogy of his work.

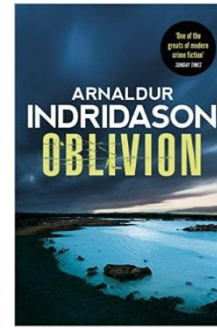
The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid is a monologue by a young Pakistani named Changez who relates his life story to an unidentified American man in a cafe in the city of Lahore. Changez, a Princeton graduate who once worked as an analyst for a Manhattan financial firm, tells us how his optimistic view of America began to darken in the aftermath of 9/11. Lyn read this book from a suggestion and thoroughly enjoyed it. This led to discussion of *Richard Flanagan's The Unknown Terrorist* which is basically the story of Gina who turns on the television to discover she is one of the most wanted terrorist in the country! After a night spent with an attractive stranger, she becomes a prime suspect in the investigation of an attempted terrorist attack.



Leonie read **Empire of the Sun by J.G. Ballard** the classic, award-winning novel, made famous by Steven Spielberg's film. It tells the story of a young boy's struggle to survive World War II in China. It is a semi-autobiographical account of Ballard's interment as a child and teenager in a Japanese camp outside of Shanghai. The story is a grim, but strangely compelling depiction of the chaos of war. The library doesn't have the book but we do hold a copy of the 1987 film adaptation. Leonie also read **Moving On by Don Aitkin** set in Sydney in 1999. The Millennium is weeks away, and four people are hoping for a new era for themselves. All of them want to move on, but

moving on is not necessarily easy nor do we always recognising it for what it is. Their lives intersect and by the end of the novel they have all moved on, just not necessarily as they'd planned. Leonie found it interesting, and there were some 'raunchy' bits!

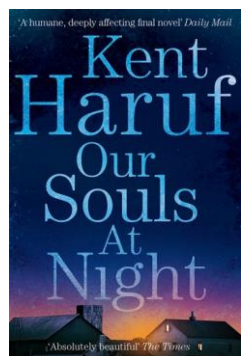
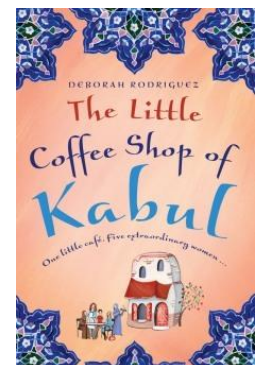
Gerardina discussed three books that she'd read over the month. The first was *The Sympathiser* by **Vien Thanh Nguyen**, which started well but ultimately she was unable to finish. She had more success with *The Good People* by **Hannah Kent**. The novel is set in 1825 in a poor isolated area of Ireland. Elderly widow Nora is left with the sole care of her developmentally delayed grandson. At a loss to know where to turn she seeks help from the local healer who declares the child a fairy changeling. Nance believes she can communicate with 'the good people' (faeries) and get the real child back using a variety of supernatural cures. Gerardina thought the book was fabulous, and compulsive reading.



The other novel Gerardina enjoyed was *Oblivion* by **Arnaldur Indridason**. This novel is a prequel in the Detective Erlendur series, with two separate investigations focused on during this novel, set in 1979. The history of U.S. military relations with Iceland is revealed in the novel. Icelandic Arnaldur Indridason has the rare distinction of having won the Nordic Crime Novel Prize two years running. For a full review have a look at Gerardina's review on the library's good reads on the webpage.

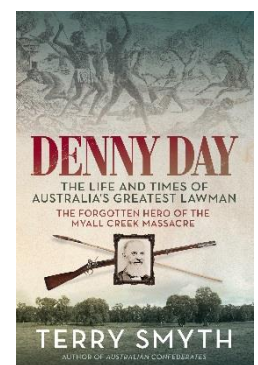
Whilst treated with respect faeries from Irish folklore are often accused of stealing humans and spiriting them away to the faerie realm. Those most likely to be stolen are babies and children, as well as handsome young men as they are taken to become lovers of the female Faeries.

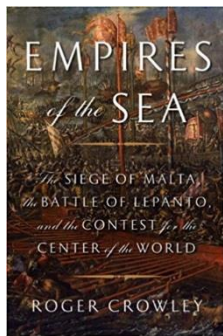
The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul by **Deborah Rodriguez** is the story of a remarkable coffee shop in the heart of Afghanistan, and the men and women who meet there — thrown together by circumstance and united in friendship. Marie enjoyed this novel, admitting she did skim a bit, and is now going to tackle Shantaram based on recommendations from last month's meeting (even though the author looks unsavoury!).



Vanessa was disappointed with *Kent Haruf's Our Souls at Night*. Based on the good reviews she was looking forward to this quite short novel. Addie and Louis are neighbours, but not friends. Both in their 70s, widowed and living alone. One day, Addie approaches Louis and asks if he would consider coming to her house sometimes, to share her bed. For such a well-reviewed novel Vanessa felt it was wishy-washy, frivolous rubbish! Hopefully Vanessa will find lots of good offerings to add to her to-read list from her old Good Reading magazines that she is sorting through. Hopefully the list won't get too long! But honestly, do they ever get any shorter!

Denny Day, the Life and Times of Australia's Greatest Lawman by **Terry Smyth**. Day was the lawman who brought criminals to justice at a time in Australia's history when it was an unruly place. In June 1838, a party of mounted police led by Day was sent to arrest white men accused of having killed at least twenty-eight Aboriginals at Myall Creek on the Liverpool Plains. Eleven were caught, tried and found guilty; seven were hanged. Elizabeth thoroughly appreciated this book, which has left her with very strong feelings about the injustices our Indigenous people faced and continue to face.

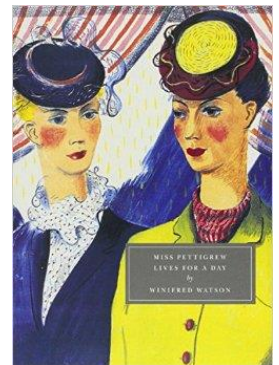




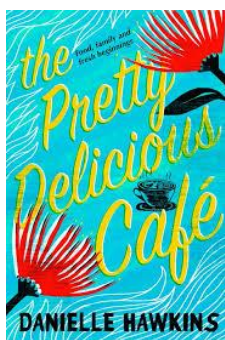
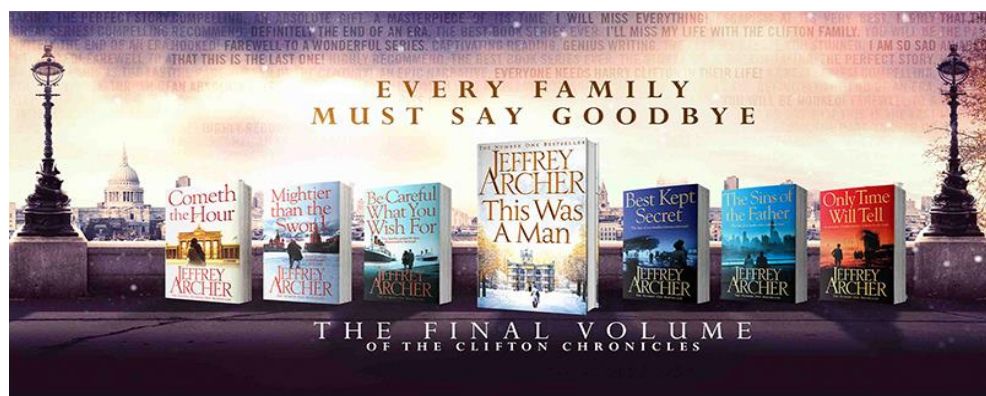
Linda has been enjoying ***Empires of the Sea*** by **Roger Crowley**. This is an exciting account of the fierce sea battle between Christendom and Islam for the soul of Europe in the 16th century that lasted decades. It appealed to Linda because of her love of history and the sea.

Megan is finishing up on the Oslo trilogy by Jo Nesbo that she's been loving, and has recently read ***Miss Pettigrew lives for a day*** by **Winifred Watson** for her National Library Book Club. Miss Pettigrew, is a 40-year-old woman who until now has lived an innocent, and rather boring life as a governess. Through her employment agency she ends up at the home of a nightclub singer. Over the course of a day her life changes forever. Written in 1938, it reflects some of the social attitudes of that time period. Having read it Megan doesn't feel she'll ever re-read it. For those who are interested the library has a copy of the book. The web link below has some interesting information on governesses.

<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-figure-of-the-governess>



Rather be the Devil, no 21 in the Rebus series by **Ian Rankin** opens with Rebus enjoying a dinner in Edinburgh, grappling with the notion of retirement. The location for the dinner is the site of an unsolved murder from 40 years ago which starts him mulling over the cold case he could never solve. His former colleagues have their own ongoing investigations focusing on money laundering. Kerry found this latest instalment very interesting and recommends Rankin's Rebus series always! She's also loved the ***Clifton chronicles*** by **Jeffrey Archer**. They are really a good read. With 7 in the series and each one sitting at around 400 pages you'll be investing some time to the series – however well worth it. This multi-generational saga of fate and fortune follows the Clifton and Barrington families from 1920 all the way through to the present. The final 2 volumes were released last year due to reader demand.



Maria has once again tapped in to her bookshelf and reread ***The Lake Frome Monster*** by Australian author **Arthur Upfield**, which she feel compelled to do every few years. She just loves Upfield! Her other read this month was **Danielle Hawkins' *The Pretty Delicious Café***. Lia and Anna work long hours running their restored café in seaside New Zealand. Anna is about to marry Lia's twin brother, and Lia's ex-boyfriend doesn't understand it's over. When a handsome stranger knocks on Lia's window it's a sign! A warm, humorous novel, brimming with love, friendship and eccentricity. Maria only put the book down when she had to and often found herself getting the giggles. She would definitely recommend for some light hearted fun.

Don't forget....

Heritage Festival....Leaflets are up in the library, so please take one and book for some of the great local events coming up.

Books discussed

Denny Day, the Life and Times of Australia's Greatest Lawman by Terry Smyth

Empire of the Sun by J.G. Ballard

Miss Pettigrew lives for a day by Winifred Watson

Moving On by author Don Aitkin

Oblivion by Arnaldur Indridason

Ours Souls at Night by Kent Haruf

Rather be the Devil by Ian Rankin

The Clifton Chronicles by Jeffrey Archer

The Good People by Hannah Kent

The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul by Deborah Rodriguez

The Other Wives Club by Sharie Low

The Pretty Delicious Café by Danielle Hawkins

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid

The Sympathiser by Vien Thanh Nguyen

