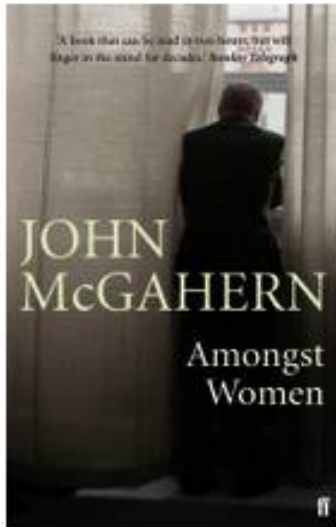


Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

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July 2017



Our book for July, [Amongst Women](#) by [John McGahern](#), came 97th in an article of the 100 best novels by The Guardian's Robert McCrum in July 2015. He is not a widely-known author but much loved and admired by contemporary Irish writers such as Colm Toibin who described him as "the Irish novelist everyone should read". The title is derived from the words of the Hail Mary in the Catholic rosary and flags the dominant themes of the book. The characters of this family drama are complex and the narrative describes what is probably a fairly typical dynamic with a domineering father Moran, who maintains power and control over

his wife, daughters and younger son with continued psychological and if not physical abuse. The three daughters particularly live in constant fear of their father and this generates a growing sense of menace with detailed and repetitive descriptions of mundane household and farm activities along side the monitoring of Moran's moods. Much of the back story is unexplained and we tended to keep reading in hope of finding out what happened to Moran's first wife and what precipitated the eldest son Luke's estrangement.

This book split our group quite evenly down the middle. About half of us thought it was exquisite; a masterful portrayal of interdependence with menace and fear permeating the narrative, well drawn characters and very credible situation. The other half found it flat, lacking in depth, repetitive and boring with a Famous Five-like, plodding style and about as much depth as a Woman's Day article. It certainly elicited a strong emotional reaction from all of us – we hated Moran, a bully who was bitter and twisted, “such an arsehole”. This polarised reaction made for a very lively and fascinating discussion as we tried to identify what it was about the book that worked or didn't work for each of us and why. Thank you for reading the book and giving it your consideration.

Read a positive review [here](#) and a negative one [here](#).

Ratings: Alexa 2.5 , Claudia 3 , Denise 3.5 , Gail 4 , Janet 2.5 , Judith 4 , Kim 4 ,Margie 2.5 , Nic 3.5, Penny 4 and Viv 3.

Next month we get together on the 14/08/17 at 6:30pm at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss the first volume of The Transylvanian Trilogy: [They Were Counted](#) by [Miklós Bánffy](#). This continues our year of European novels in translation. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

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Other Books We Read

July 2017

Our book of the month was [Amongst Women](#) by [John McGahern](#), but we also read other books.

Maximum rating is 5.

Die Wise by Stephen Jenkinson, 5

The Marvellous Misadventures of Ingrid Winter by J.S. Drangsholt, 2

My cat Yugoslavia by Pajtim Statovci, 3.5

The Mothers by Brit Bennett, 2.5, 2.5 and 3.

The Complete Stories of Leonora Carrington, 2.5

Fludd by Hilary Mantel, 3

Other chairs by Barbara Blackman, 3.5

One Year of Life by Cecil Roberts, 3

Gone Afield by Cecil Roberts, 3