

The opportunity to meet other people in the neighbourhood

It's broadened my reading

Gives me a focus for my reading



You feel part of the community library

**Gloria Thorns is part of a book group at Parklands Library that runs in partnership with non-profit organisation Book Discussion Scheme.**

Gloria appreciates many aspects of the partnership and how her book discussion group operates: that her group is made up of people from a wide range of ages; she gets to know people in her neighbourhood; that the library is 'neutral territory' and that takes the pressure off members to provide a venue and hospitality; and that a set of books arrives each month and the group doesn't have to scramble about to find enough copies for everyone.

*"I'm in my mid-70s and probably the oldest; we go down in age to a young mother in her 30s," says Gloria. "You meet different people with different views and it really is stimulating for the old grey matter. Inevitably we discuss all sorts of things other than the book!"*

Christchurch City Council Libraries has teamed up with Book Discussion Scheme for the past 5 years to offer two styles of book group:

- (a) daytime and evening groups for library users (high school age upwards), and
- (b) informal ESOL groups for men and women who want to practise talking and reading in English.

Currently 22 daytime and evening book groups meet at 10 different libraries. Each group has up to 12 people and is led by a librarian. There's a small fee for joining a group.

*"When you go into your library as a customer and you see staff you know, you feel part of, a belonging to, the community library," says Gloria.*

Gloria loves fiction and reading about history but now she's more open to all sorts of genres.

*"That's the advantage of these groups: they broaden everybody's reading."*

**This article is in memory of Gloria, who died unexpectedly a few days after this interview was conducted. Her family want to honour her love of the book group.**

For details contact your local library. Phone 03 941 7923 or email [library@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:library@ccc.govt.nz)