

Ashendon Book Group Report 2024-25

We are a relaxed group that meet on a Thursday evening, once every two months, to discuss a book chosen and read during the previous months. The group has grown this year to around 20 members and we always welcome new readers from Ashendon and surrounding villages.

Whilst the village pub was shut we had been taking it in turns to host at members' homes but we were delighted to return to The Ash Tree for our meetings from January 2025.

Each meeting has around 8-12 members coming along to discuss the book in person and those that are unable to attend will often send in their thoughts to be included in the discussion.

Our blog <http://ashendonbookgroup.blogspot.co.uk/> has wide readership and gets good feedback.

We read a wide range of books. In the past year we have read the following books:

- Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte – a woman's search for equality and freedom on her own terms;
- Take Nothing With You by Patrick Gale – a novel of boyhood, coming of age and the confusions of desire and reality;
- Really Good, Actually by Monica Heisey – about the uncertainties of modern love, friendship and happiness;
- The Bee Sting by Paul Murray – an Irish tragicomedy about family dynamics with a great cliffhanger;
- This is Happiness by Niall Williams – another set in Ireland, this time in 1958 with evocative and highly descriptive language.
- "On Earth we're briefly gorgeous." By Ocean Vuong – a semi-autobiographical novel in the form of a letter written, age 28, by an aspiring American Vietnamese poet to his illiterate mother.
- The White Lady by Jacqueline Winspear – an historically interesting insight into the SOE (Special Operations Executive) and how women and children supported the wartime efforts.