The Library as 3rd Space: How our rural library is leaping into this concept – and daring to roar about it.

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The idea of the 3rd space was first raised by Ray Oldenberg in his book ‘The Great Good Place’ (1989). In the 21st Century the places where a person may have no expectations placed upon them, where they may enter into a world of social acceptance and feel instantly ‘at home’ are rare. For some the library is the one place where they can guarantee they will have a conversation or at least some kind of interaction with another human being. Many are lonely, elderly, restricted in some manner and have very small or non-existent social circles. The library is therefore becoming the ‘coal face’ for the disenfranchised, the lonely and the unaware. ‘You should expect your library to be a community space – a place for the interchange of ideas and the creation of whole new concepts.’ (R.D.Lankes, 2012)

In this Pecha Kucha session I will demonstrate how the Eltham Library is demonstrating the use of the community as the 3rd space. I will show photographic evidence and provide testimony from our members – relating their stories and their reasons for regular participation in our weekly sessions. The common link is the need for social interaction and companionship. ‘The individual with a 3rd place has a host of friends that are not limited by the narrowness of personal choice.’ (Oldenberg, 1989)

References:
