



Ten Forty Newsletter

October 2016

www.olderdykes.org

Dinner and Discussion

6pm Saturday 5 November 2016

Topic: Caring for ourselves

An evening of discussion about stress, relaxation techniques and what works for you. Wendy will share hand massage and foot massage techniques. Those who want to will have short practice sessions.

Mervyn Fletcher Hall, 81 Dalhousie Street (cnr Dixon St), Haberfield.

BYO food to share and your own drinks.

Entry fee: \$10 fully waged, \$5 concession.

Entry to the Mervyn Fletcher hall is in Dixon Street, which has unrestricted parking after 6pm. By bus, catch the 436 or 438 buses which set down on the corner of Ramsay Road and Dalhousie Street.

Dykes for Dinner

6.30pm Thursday 10 November 2016

Jasmin 1 (Lebanese)

116 Marion Street, (near Elswick st)
Leichhardt

Licensed. BYO welcome

Please email

contact@olderdykes.org

by Tuesday 8 November.

6.30pm Thursday 8 December 2016

At Fernando's (Italian)

118 Norton Street Leichhardt

Licensed. BYO welcome

Please email

contact@olderdykes.org

by Tuesday 6 December.

Always a winner!

On September 3, the 'discussion' part of our Dinner and Discussion was replaced by 16 of us playing a range of board and card games.

Funny thing is, you can have interesting discussions and loads of laughs playing games!

Anyway, we all agreed it had been a very enjoyable get-together.



Ten Forty Matrix Inc. Annual General Meeting

5pm Saturday 12 November 2016

Mervyn Fletcher Hall, 81 Dalhousie Street, Haberfield

Refreshments will be served.

All lesbians over 40 are welcome. However, only women who have been financial members of Ten Forty Matrix Inc. for three months prior to the AGM can vote or stand for election to the Committee.

After the AGM, join us for a celebration dinner (at own expense) at O's Kitchen, 147 Ramsay St, corner of Dalhousie St.

To attend the dinner please email contact@olderdykes.org by 7 November.

For information about how Ten Forty Matrix Inc. was established and what it does, please see page 4 of this newsletter.

For your diary

A Solstice/End of Year Party is planned for Saturday 17 December at Margot's.

More details will be sent out on Contact in a few weeks time.

A Berry Fun Weekend 2016

Julie Hacker lives on joyfully in our midst! About forty members of Ten Forty Matrix Inc. enjoyed our second fun weekend in Berry, thanks to Julie's bequest.



Highlights included outdoor activities such as the 4km bushwalk on Saturday to Moeyan Hill, led by Sylvia, kayaking on Sunday, a bird walk led by Jan and Anne, archery and climbing sessions, boules, tennis and table tennis.

And there were lots of indoor events, too – the 500 tournament on Saturday organised by Pearlie, as well as many other spontaneous card games throughout the weekend. A fabulous collection of donated books and DVDs, plus a market table of books and cards for sale by Moira, resulted in lesbians lying about reading everywhere you looked. I also saw a couple of jigsaws being put together – a wonderful exercise in living in the moment rather than for a completed outcome.

Saturday ended with a lively and varied concert compèred by Sylvia, with a collection of outrageous jokes included in her patter. Sand, Jan and Viviane read from books and stories they had written, and Moira and Marg sang and played ukulele. Everyone joined in enthusiastically with Moira who led us in a new lesbian song she had just created.

On Sunday there was an opportunity for thoughtful discussion in a workshop presented by Helen on community support as we age, and a small committee undertook to do further research. The weekend finished with a lot of fun dancing to some golden oldies with music provided by Sylvia and Moira.



Tashe was too late back from the bushwalk to hold her workshop on Saturday, but if anyone wants an update from her about the OWL Village project on the mid-North Coast, please contact her direct tashelong@bigpond.com.



Here are some thoughts from women at the end of the weekend:

- a stimulating fun time with lesbians of my age and no cliques!
- interesting conversations with people I didn't know
- an opportunity to try new physical activities, to expand possibilities
- great down time to settle in, be with the environment
- an opportunity to confront my phobia with water and enjoy kayaking

- I saw magpies, magpie larks including one in its mud nest, wrens, kookaburras, honeyeaters enjoying all the wonderful blossoms that were out, and satin bowerbirds and a bower
- enjoyed lying under the trees speaking lesbianese
- thanks to Julie for the tranquillity and opportunities for friendship
- on the bush walk we saw three young bullocks, water dragons, climbed over stiles of unusual design, enjoyed magnificent views up and down the coast and up the escarpment
- the kayaking trip was very interesting for 15 of us who went, especially Nik's history of the Wodi Wodi building stone walls across the river to stop fresh water being polluted by the salty sea water, of steam boats carrying red cedar until everything had been logged clear, and of farmers still resisting more sustainable practices
- playing boules was fun
- enjoyed the garden show in Berry, where there were sculptures on the theme of refugees
- I researched the white cedar flowering in the grounds – it's a native Australian tree



Viviane

Seems as if everyone had a thoroughly delightful and diverse weekend.

Unnatural Acts – the Plight of Convict Lesbians

In the 1800s, expressing passionate love for another woman was fashionable, accepted, and encouraged in the United States, Europe, and especially in England. These relationships were termed romantic friendships, Boston Marriages or the women in society were known as 'sentimental friends'.

A woman in an intimate friendship with another woman was still considered virtuous, innocent, and chaste. In fact, female relationships were promoted as alternatives to and practice for a woman's marriage to a man. It was believed that many women who professed love for other women would change their feelings about such relationships after they had experienced marriage to a man and taken on the roles of wife and mother.

And here's a surprise. Marriages between women were recorded in England right up to the mid-1800s. They were rare, but they did happen, and they are recorded.

It wasn't until a woman became a convict in a Female Factory (17 were established in Australia between 1804 and 1856) that sexual intimacy between two women became offensive and termed 'an unnatural act'. (Lesbianism is a relatively recent concept; the term didn't even reach a dictionary until 1890.)

Since lesbianism wasn't a crime, what business did the management of the Female Factories have in attempting to regulate and

punish it? Conduct records indicate that female homosexuality was considered an offence on par with illegitimate pregnancy, public drunkenness, inciting a riot, or trafficking in forbidden goods such as alcohol, tobacco, and money.

Research has produced some fascinating records of how the women used their sexuality as a weapon of power within the convict system. By engaging in collective displays of brazen disobedience and same-sex licentious behaviour, the women not only responded to the excesses of male prison authority, they also exercised their combined power to challenge the male dominated social system.

To regulate morality married couples were hired to run the Female Factories in order to set an example of good, upright living.

In 1848 Dr William Irvine, the Superintendent of the Tasmanian Ross Female Factory labelled one partner in the relationship as the man-woman or pseudo-male. He reported how young girls cleaned themselves scrupulously, making themselves as attractive as possible before meeting with their chosen 'man-woman.'

He observed that a large proportion of the disputes in the Female Factories arose from disagreements concerning the choice of a pseudo-male, or jealous feelings, which resulted from changes in relationships. He seems surprised at the ways in which female convicts courted and seduced new lovers and behaved as two people would if they were

male and female. Dr Irvine applied for and was granted permission to build solitary cells at the Ross Female Factory in order to punish and prevent such behaviours.

There were harsh punishments meted out to women in steadfast, long-term relationships. The blackmarket trade within the prisons nurtured same-sex relationships between female inmates. Within the prison casual sexual activity was used as a way for the women to procure and trade illicit luxuries, most commonly extra food rations, alcohol, and tobacco.

Conditions in the Female Factory were always crowded and it was a standard for women to share cells and hammocks. Records detail frequent incidents of same-sex casual encounters between female prisoners.

The solitary cells became the place to send female convicts as punishment for same sex intimacy. They were considered to be hardened, reckless, miserable creatures said to be raving under the impulse of their ungovernable passions and indulging in such conduct without remorse.

So, what has changed for incarcerated lesbians? Today's prisons are cleaner and they get better food and legal representation but if *Orange is the New Black* can be believed, lesbians in prison are still persecuted by authorities and other inmates.

Extract from: http://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/docs/seminars/RobynEverist_UnnaturalActs.pdf

About Ten Forty Matrix Inc.

Ten Forty Matrix Inc. came into existence in 2014 after Ten Forty (see next column) received a bequest of nearly \$50,000 from the estate of Julie Hacker.

A condition of receiving the money was that we become incorporated.

Our aim, as stated in the constitution, is “to promote the wellbeing of older women in NSW who identify as lesbian”.

Our financial year is from 31 October to 1 November. The AGM is usually held in November.

Membership of Ten Forty Matrix Inc. is \$10 unwaged and \$20 waged, payable each year by 1 July.

On behalf of members a Management Committee organises a number of subsidised events each year. Most events, including the Berry weekend in October, are not fully subsidised, and members pay a small additional amount to attend.

Non-members are eligible to attend events organised by Ten Forty Matrix Inc. but pay the full (unsubsidised) amount.

If you would like more information or would like to contribute in any way, please come to the AGM on Saturday 12 November (see the notice on the front page.)

Current office bearers are:

Pearlie - President

Esther - Treasurer

Dorothy - Secretary & Public Officer.

About Ten Forty

The first national conference of Ten Forty in the mid-eighties attracted politically active feminists of all hues and sexualities. However, over time it became obvious that a huge majority of women attending follow-up meetings and activities in Sydney were lesbian feminists.

Today Ten Forty and Older Dykes refer to the same group of women. We enjoy discussion on the issues we face in work, life and at home, and hold regular fun events to keep us in touch with the lighter side of life.

Our website www.olderdykes.org encourages national and international connections between older lesbians.

Ten Forty is not an organisation you have to join, but if you want to receive regular information about our activities and the bi-monthly newsletter, email contact@olderdykes.org and ask to be put on our mailing list.

The Ten Forty postal address is PO Box 1312 Randwick 2031

Newsletter

To receive a free emailed newsletter, please email contact@olderdykes.org

The web edition and back copies of the newsletter are available for download from our website www.olderdykes.org/about_us/newsletters.html

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Diann, Gillian, Krystyna and Bronwyn

Contact listing in LOTL: Jan

Utilities box: Sylvia and Gillian

Money Management: Esther

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Dorothy, Diann, Sandy

Newsletter: editing and layout Ruth and Dorothy