



Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

March 2014

www.olderdykes.org

Dinner and Discussion

6pm Saturday 5 April 2014

Aged Care Rights with Pat Joyce

Pat is the manager of the Aged -care Rights Service (TARS) advocacy service.

She will talk about:

- TARS: what services they provide
- Aged care options in community and residential settings
- Care recipients' rights and responsibilities
- Complaints processes and client advocacy
- Older Persons' Legal Service

There will be time for discussion, questions and answers.

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

Doytao Thai

6.30pm

Thursday 13 March 2014

207 Lyons Road Drummoyne

BYO

Please email

contact@olderdykes.org by Sunday 9 March

Doytao Thai

6.30pm

Thursday 10 April 2014

207 Lyons Road Drummoyne

BYO

Please email

contact@olderdykes.org by Sunday 6 April

The Imogens 2014 has been rescheduled

You haven't missed your chance to enter! We have decided reschedule the Imogens competition to give women more time to get their entries in. The categories have also been changed. The new categories are:

- **Wild things**
- **Interaction**

Exhibition and prize giving will be held at **2-5pm Saturday 26 July 2014**

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

The new closing date for the competition is **5pm on 11 July 2014**

Prizes will be awarded in each category:

First prize: \$200.00

Second prize: \$100.00

Third prize: \$50.00

Entry is free and as easy as emailing a photo to a friend. Just fill out the entry form that will be sent out on contact and email it as an attachment with your photograph to imogen@olderdykes.org

Three carefully selected members of Ten Forty with a background in photography have agreed to be judges.

Entry forms and terms and conditions plus more detailed information about size and acceptable formats will also be available on our website www.olderdykes.org.

Women who have already entered the competition are welcome to either put their existing entries in under a new category or to send in completely new photos.

Suffragettes as political artists

1040 Dinner and discussion night with Spider, 1 February 2014

The dinner and discussion nights got off to a terrific start this year when Spider presented her research on suffragettes as (political) artists to a group of approximately 20 women on 1 February. As Spider pointed out, the term “suffragettes” was initially used by the media to describe more radical women who broke away from the liberal suffragist movement to form the WPSU and to take more direct subversive action to obtain the vote. The term was adopted by the women and by the generations of feminist and women’s liberation activists who have succeeded them. Spider also reminded us that the women’s liberation colours, green, white and purple, were originally Green, White and Violet, standing for Give Women the Vote. That colour symbolism was powerful and, clearly, enduring, demonstrating how closely politics and art are intertwined through women’s creativity, in so many—and mostly unrecognised—ways.

Spider began her talk by honouring the life and work of Minnie Appleby (née Birch), an English suffragette of working class background and former Communist Party electoral candidate who emigrated to Australia in the 1960s. She joined the Adelaide Women’s Theatre when already in her 70s (thus combining politics and performance art) and performed in *The*

Redhead’s Revenge, which won an Adelaide Festival Centre award for best production in 1978. Spider was co-writer of the play and knew Minnie personally, as did Sylvia who also shared her memories. Sylvia remarked that Appleby, although not lesbian herself, was clearly comfortable with lesbianism (the focus of *The Redhead’s Revenge*). A video of Appleby’s life, *The Loyal Tubthumper*, is held at the State Library of NSW. (The term tubthumper comes from the practice of suffragettes using beer barrels cut in half and upended as platforms from which to speak.)

The rest of the talk, like these opening remarks, was extremely well researched and rich in detail, combining a historical and political overview of women’s suffrage movements and key dates in women obtaining the vote around the world, although most of the talk focused on the British and Australian movements. A number of Australian-born suffragettes were for a time active in Britain, and vice versa. Through her narration of the development of the movements—which involved considerable subterfuge and illegal activity, and thus risk-taking and jailings, and even a death—Spider developed in parallel a narrative of suffragettes as artists. (The death occurred in 1913, when Emily Wilding Davison raced out onto the track at Epsom and was trampled by one of the racing horses. In the month following her death, suffragettes caused some £54,000 worth of damage to private and public property in London.) Posters, embroidery, enamel work, paintings,

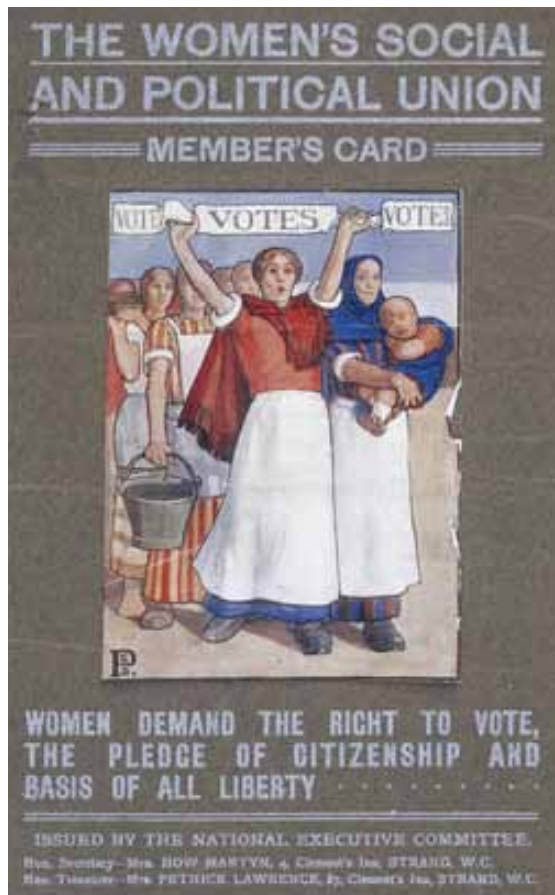
photographs and cartoons, often employing a great deal of humour and created by gifted and trained artists, called on women to act, sometimes violently, to obtain legal equality.

One of the stand-out direct actions was the 1914 slashing, by Mary Richardson, of the Rokeby Venus. The painting, by Diego Velazquez, leading painter of the Spanish Golden Age (17th Century), had been purchased for £45,000 by the British National Gallery in 1906. In her letter to the Women’s Social and Political Union (WPSU), Richardson affirmed that she had destroyed this painting “of the most beautiful woman in mythological history” in retaliation for the destruction, through harassment and jailings, of Emmeline Pankhurst, “the most beautiful character in modern history”, and for the government’s hypocrisy in claiming to celebrate female beauty while simultaneously destroying it.

These often highly creative risks taken by suffragettes remind us that advances in women’s rights, including the vote, have never been “given” by those in power, but obtained by women after a long fight and often great personal sacrifice. Moreover, the historical detail of when women obtained the vote around the world shows that developments have been patchy. For example, if Indigenous Australian women obtained the vote in South Australia in 1894, that right was removed at Federation when Australia became first country in the world in which (white) women obtained *both* the vote *and* the right to stand for election (they had

voted nationally since 1893 in New Zealand but were not eligible to stand for national election until 1919)

Among the suffragette artists celebrated by Spider was Sylvia Pankhurst, one of Emmeline's three daughters (the other two being Christobel and Adele), and more radical in the suffrage cause than her mother. Sylvia Pankhurst was a trained artist and created



many of the posters that have become famous. She also worked in ceramic and enamel, creating a special WPSU tea set in 1909. Although suffragette poster and painting styles often reflected the Art Nouveau-influenced artistic fashions of the day, the artists often did this with subversive intent, such as Sylvia's "goddess" poster celebrating the life of Emily Davison. Suffragettes were also artistic innovators, however—Sylvia's WPSU tea set, produced some twenty

years before the more famous Clarice Cliff's work began to come to prominence, being a case in point. Sylvia Pankhurst also designed and made the "Holloway Brooch" (1909),

awarded to suffragettes who had served time in prison.

I do not have the space here to continue to report on all the fabulous suffragette artwork discussed by Spider, but Australian painter Dora Meeson must be mentioned. Meeson moved to London in 1898 and became active both as a painter and a campaigner for women's suffrage. She is best known for the banner "Trust the Women Mother, as I have done", which was carried by Australians at an important women's suffrage rally in London in 1911 (the point being, of course, that Australian [white] women already had the vote and the British should follow suit). The banner was returned to Australia at the time of the Women's Constitutional Convention in 1998 and now hangs in Old Parliament House in Canberra.

Spider asked at the end of her talk, "how many of you have learned something you did not know this evening?", and every single woman present raised her hand. It was in every respect an illuminating talk: on art and activism, on the price paid for any advance in women's rights, on the pioneering (but largely overlooked) roles played by women's suffrage activists in workers' and peace movements, and on the importance of becoming informed about our own history, against all attempts to invisibilise it.

The best mark of the success of this talk was, for me, the long and engaged discussion that followed, with numerous participants, in which the last question raised above was dominant: how to ensure that feminist (or



womanist, the term preferred by Spider) knowledge is passed on and used by younger generations? How do we break through the backlashes and co-optations? It was even asked, "Why hasn't feminism succeeded as well as it should have?" Well, we got the vote! Spider's presentation was a salutary celebration of that huge success, obtained thanks to the courage and creativity of passionate, political and not at all polite women.

Bronwyn

The history of the fight for Australian women's suffrage is documented in Clare Wright's *Utopia Girls*, extracts of which can be viewed via YouTube, the ABC website or Vimeo.

Update on Ten Forty Matrix Incorporated

Ten Forty began as a national conference in 1987 and became active as a political/social group in Sydney in 1990. In 1994 a separate group was incorporated as Matrix Guild NSW, its focus being on the housing needs of older dykes. The costs and logistics of providing accommodation for such a diverse group plus the demands and costs of incorporation proved too much and in 1997 Matrix Guild was de-incorporated. Funds belonging to Matrix Guild were offered to Ten Forty with the proviso that Matrix was included in the name Ten Forty and that the money was used to establish a website.

Ten Forty Matrix continued to run as an unincorporated association with a budget in the vicinity of \$2,000 to \$3,000 dollars.

In early 2013, Julie Hacker, a long time member of Ten Forty Matrix, died and bequeathed a proportion of her estate to us. Because Julie's solicitor was reluctant to send such a large sum to a single individual, it was decided to form an interim committee and incorporate Ten Forty Matrix. The interim committee consisted of active members of the Websisters and the Ten Forty Matrix Coordinating Group. Incorporation was accomplished in record time.

On 24 September 2013 a cheque for \$43,424.52 was received by Ten Forty Matrix Inc. and banked immediately.

The Constitution needed to be refined to suit our particular needs and to enlist members.

The first step in this direction was a meeting held on 26 February 2014 at the Mervyn Fletcher Hall in Haberfield. Fifteen women were present, with five apologies. The aim of the Association was confirmed as "To promote the wellbeing of older women in NSW who identify as lesbian"; an official membership form requiring a proposer and a seconder was accepted; and it was agreed that the Annual Membership Fee would be \$20 waged and \$10 concession.

There are now two membership categories for Ten Forty Matrix: the Contact mailing list (free) and the Incorporated Association membership list, which involves a membership fee. Women don't have to be a member of the Association or be on the Contact mailing list to attend events.

Membership of the Committee: It was agreed that the committee would consist of 5 office bearers and up to 6 ordinary members. A quorum for meetings will be no less than five members.

The Interim Committee which dealt with the incorporation process Krystyna (Chair), Diann (Deputy Chair), Secretary (Dorothy), Treasurer (Cheryl), Public Officer (Esther) was re-appointed until the next meeting.

A draft constitution, with suggested changes, will be presented for discussion at the next meeting to be held on

7pm, 26 March 2014 at Mervyn Fletcher Hall, Haberfield.

Party Time!

Julie Hacker loved to have fun, so we are planning to have a big party to honour her generosity and celebrate her life.



If anyone would like to propose ideas for a celebration please email contact@olderdykes.org

OUT and ABOUT

Out and About is an active social group for older lesbians that offers a variety of activities on varying days to bring women together. The outstanding attribute of the group is that any new face is warmly greeted, introduced all around and made a part of the gathering. Activities vary from lunches, movies, picnics, walks (usually involving lunch) to river cruises and day train trips.

Walks are often along the foreshores of the harbour and back, ferry rides to Watsons Bay or Manly for lunch, lunch in various eateries around Sydney, Hawkesbury Postman run or along the waterways of the George's River. All offer an opportunity to meet new people, chat, enjoy the day with old friends and new friends.

Age range is 40s upwards - or thereabouts.

Participants are encouraged to offer suggestions for outings. There is no membership fee but occasionally contributions could be requested to cover the cost of a venue - like \$5 a head to be able to sit on chairs at tables for a BYO BBQ at the Kokoda Trail Park in Concord. Well worth it not to have to join the ants on the ground.

If you are interested in joining Out and About for one of our dos just watch for the next event listed on Contact and email the organiser. You are more than welcome.

Rosie



The Importance of walking

Walking can add minutes to your life This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional five months in a nursing home at \$4,000 per month.

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

Every time I hear that dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

About Ten Forty Matrix

Ten Forty Matrix is an informal group of lesbians over forty, many of whom have been socially and politically active in Sydney since 1987. We enjoy discussion and debate 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.

Ten years ago we established the website www.olderdykes.org to encourage national and international connections between older lesbians.

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

Please note our new 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

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Cheryl, Daniela, Diann, Frances, Gillian, Helen, Krystyna, Rob, Wendy

Contact listing in LOTL: Jan

Utilities box: Sylvia and Wendy

Money Management: Cheryl

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Dorothy, Diann, Margot, Sandy

Newsletter: editing and layout Ruth and Dorothy

If you would like to become involved in any of the above, or have some ideas about social events and/or topics for our bi-monthly dinner and discussion evenings, please email contact@olderdykes.org