



Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

Nov 2019

www.olderdykes.org

Dykes for Dinner

6.30pm Thursday 12 December

Fernandos Italian Restaurant
118 Norton Street, Leichhardt

RSVP by 5th December to
robynplaister@yahoo.com.au

Please Note: There will be no Dykes for Dinner for the month of January. Check out Contact of the next newsletter for details of our February venue.

Ten Forty Matrix Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 23 November,
5.15pm for 5.30pm**

Michael Maher Room
78 Dalhousie Street, Haberfield
(across the road from our regular meeting place). Followed by Dinner.

RSVP to Kel Loretta.kelly.1040@gmail.com
by 8 November so we know how many to book for the dinner.

Annual Solstice Party



7pm Saturday 22 December 2019

For participants of Ten Forty Matrix, Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians and friends.

At the home of Margot O
13 Florence Street
St Peters

Please bring some party food to share and any drinks you want. Margot supplies plates, cutlery and glasses.

You may wish to join the surprise present giving by bringing a gift costing no more than \$20. To help in your choice of gift bring something you would like to receive.

RSVP margooli2000@yahoo.com.au

2020 Dinner Discussion Murder and Mayham

6 to 8.30 PM Saturday 1 February 2020
Mervyn Fletcher Hall
81 Dalhousie St, cr Dixon St, Haberfield

Pearlie McNeill; writer, tutor, editor, has a fascination for crime fiction. Are you a crime fiction reader too? No previous detection for this discussion is needed but do bring your most wicked laugh, your devilish imagination and be prepared for a hands-on approach.

For more information, email
contact@olderdykes.org

Friends of Dorothy Camp

**Friday March 13 to Sunday March 15
2020** at Berry NSW

If you have attended our camps before you know how much fun they are. Can you let lesbians friends over 40 know about the camp. We are keen to communicate with older lesbians in regional areas, and those who are not on our contact list.

For more information, contact
Sylvia Kinder skinder@bigpond.net.au

Being Aboriginal, Adopted and a 78er... Terra Nullius

Report on Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians 12 October 2019

Over twenty women gathered for the final Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians of the year. Following animated conversations and enjoyment of the plentiful food provided by participants, everyone got ready for Annie Pratten's presentation.

Annie had done an enormous amount of research for this presentation and the following is just a brief summary.

First, she put up a map of Australia with all the indigenous lands marked. Next, she handed out copies of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Three young helpers assisted Annie. They were warmly welcomed to the event.

Annie asked us to think about our own ancestral heritage. Did we know where we came from, stretching back into the distant past? She was adopted as a baby in 1957. Adoption can cut you off from any connection with your family's past, especially if, as for many indigenous adopted children, you are told lies about your background. These lies could be that your parents had died, or you were given another ethnic background, or maybe never even told you were adopted.

Annie went on to talk about Terra Nullius which was adopted as the statement enabling the establishment of Australia as a penal colony without any acknowledgement of the rights of indigenous people. Joseph Banks was largely responsible for Terra Nullius, insisting that there was sparse occupation of the land.

Annie's map on the wall showed the contradiction of this point of view.

Annie then went on to provide a quick timeline of the events that lead to erosion of any chance of rights for indigenous people. The initial attempts by authorities to protect the rights of indigenous people were often put aside due to demands of settlers to remove them. They sought the right to 'shoot the blacks'.

This conflict, between white settlers and the indigenous people, now starving and ill due to loss of food sources and introduced diseases, became open war. There has been much denial of these wars and resulting massacres. By 1889 Terra Nullius became legal. It has taken many years for indigenous groups to regain any legal rights to their land. Then only very few. In 1993 Mabo refuted any notion of Terra Nullius.

Following the 'Black Wars' there was enforced removal of indigenous people into 'missions' and their virtual imprisonment there. They were without any rights even to marry without the permission of the person in charge of the Mission. It was not until 1967 they could even vote. The removal of indigenous children of which Annie was one, continues even today in a somewhat altered form. Incarceration of indigenous people is much higher than that of other groups in the community.

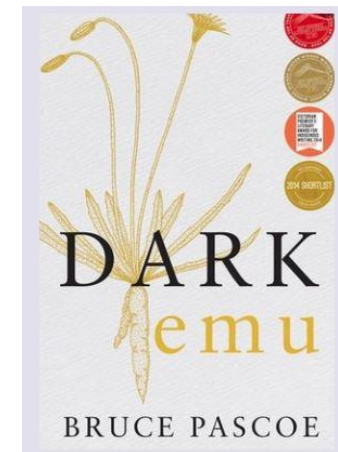
A brief discussion of 'The statement from the Heart' followed. Annie outlined some of the limitations in the demands in the document which would not ensure real participation of indigenous representatives in the democratic process of government.

Annie had her guitar with her and sang a song about indigenous youth in detention in the Northern territory.

A lively discussion followed. For anyone seeking more understanding of pre-white settlement and the true lives of indigenous people Annie's strong recommendation is to read 'Dark Emu', written by Bruce Pascoe.

Feedback was very positive and acknowledged Annie's passion and the excellent information she provided. Younger women present thanked the group for welcoming them and expressed the value of the evening. Overall feedback indicated a lot of learning had taken place and all had a rewarding and informative evening.

Sylvia Kinder



Book Review

Crimson By Niviaq Korneliusen

Virago Press 2019

Translated from Danish by Anna Halager

Niviaq Korneliusen is a proud Greenlander, 26 years old, a lesbian, and now a published writer with her first novel.

Crimson, originally published in 2014, in her native language Kalaallisut (Greenlandic Inuit), and Danish, was translated into English in 2018.

With a small population of almost 57,000, Greenland is a very large country, an autonomous country of Denmark. I attended the 2019 Sydney Writers Week and listened to Niviaq Korneliusen talking about her book.

Raised on an island in the South of Greenland, Niviaq has a strong affinity with the land and culture. She has lived in Denmark but has chosen to return to live in Greenland.

Niviaq speaks English, (her third language), fluently. She explained that her novel is based on her own experience and that of her friends.

The social problems in Greenland; high suicide rate, alcoholism, high rates of HIV, domestic violence and unemployment, are reflected in the lives of Niviaq's characters.

The book opens with Fia, the main character. Her heterosexual partner is trying to reach her emotionally, but their relationship is falling

apart. Fia later falls in love, unrequited, with the partner of another woman, and in a process familiar to many of us, struggles to understand her sexual longings for women.

Each of the five chapters focuses on a different character. We meet Ivik. She is in a lesbian relationship but is tormented, trying to figure out if she is male or female.

Arnaq, an intelligent journalist, is plagued by the abuse suffered in her early life. At first I disliked her promiscuous behaviour, her insensitivity to others, the heavy drinking and so on but gradually we see, as the story unfolds, a sad, damaged woman whose faults lay in her social situation more than her personality

Inuk, Fia's brother, sees Greenland as a prison and has to escape to Denmark where he sees himself as recovering from the damage done to him by living in Greenland.

An interesting aspect of the Kalaallisut language is the lack of gendered pronouns. In addition, many names can be male and female. The old culture had fluid relationships with monogamy being just one option. The overlay of western culture on Greenlandic youth and the three hundred years of Danish control, has led to many of the problems faced by all indigenous peoples today.

Niviaq's writing style is intriguing; for example, she uses internal monologues, standard narrative styles and phone text communications.

Greenlandic words are included in a glossary and names are explained for their meaning.

If you are wondering what the outcome of these stories, this novel, is - can I suggest you read the book?

Sylvia Kinder November 2019

Mata Hari - story of a female spy

Alas, alas, the sorry tale of the ill-fated spy.

Alfred Hitchcock's thriller film, Notorious, starring Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant, was released in 1946. It is a tale of love, spying and murder. The film has been re-released this year. (I am told you can view it on YouTube). Hitchcock's inspiration for the film came from a Dutch-born woman, Margaretha Geertruida Zelia, known to her family as Margreet. As an adult Margreet renamed herself Mata Hari, a Malaysian term meaning sunshine.

You've probably heard this name before. I grew up imagining this woman as some sort of sea siren, singing to shiploads of men, drawing them off course and into her demonic clutches. Few people today know much about her.

She was born 7th August 1876, and executed in France 15th October 1917, accused of espionage, that allegedly, caused the death of some 50,000 French soldiers. Mata was fluent in several languages; Italian, English, French, Dutch of course, and probably German. Maybe it was this skill, obvious to all even in her early years, that contributed greatly to her downfall. That, and her easy ability to get her way with so many men, beginning with her father.

Mata vehemently denied the charges against her, claiming at her trial that she might have been a harlot but never a traitor.

The nature and extent of Mata Hari's spying activities remains even today, clouded in misinformation, and conflicting accounts of just who her contacts were supposed to be. Her guilt is widely refuted.

(Mata Hari cont.)

A string of films from the late 1920s on made sure the Mata Hari story was kept alive. ***Dishonoured*** starred Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo played the lead role in ***Mata Hari***.

The 1960s saw the emergence of the Bond girl in ***Dr No***, and right on cue came the sensational story of Christine Keeler and the Profumo Affair, a scandal that rocked the upper echelons of British society.

You can track Mata Hari's story yourself on the internet and maybe check out the Hitchcock film ***Notorious*** but what I want to focus on here for the moment is a significant 'big picture' detail from 1916. The war wasn't going well for the French. The newly introduced ghastly horror of poisonous gas had led to the death and maiming of so many hundreds and thousands of French soldiers. Some troops even laid down their arms and refused to fight. What to do? What to do?

Georges Ladoux, head of the newly formed counterespionage unit in France came up with an idea. What if they arrested a prominent spy? Surely that would galvanise the men and spur on the war effort. His idea began to take shape and then he had a real brainwave. What if it was a female spy?

As we say, the rest is history.

Pearlie

Klemp

Have you heard about this woman?

Her name is Pia Klemp. She's thirty-five years old and comes from Bonn, In Germany. The Italian government want her jailed. If they succeed, she'll be put away until she's sixty.

Sicilian prosecutors have spared no expense in investigating Klemp. They have used undercover agents to track her movements, intercept her phone calls, determined to prove that she is aiding and abetting illegal immigration. Klemp estimates she has saved thousands of lives in just six missions, as captain of a private vessel: Sea-Watch 3.

Klemp moved to Indonesia a decade ago, immediately after finishing her biology studies back home. She took a temporary job on a ship with the marine protection organisation Sea Shepherd. Once she had learned enough seamanship to manage on her own, she became captain of her own vessel.

When private boats started pulling people out of the sea, she was quick to make her way to the Mediterranean. She said at the time she couldn't imagine anything nastier than drowning at sea. Klemp was shocked by the state of the migrant boats, the physical and mental stress of those on board and, more importantly, that no one, apart from private vessels, came to their aid. She and her crew encountered fifteen boats and up to one hundred and fifty people in one day. Everyone was saved.

Later, she was on the Libyan coast. Inflatable boats this time. More people in trouble, too many of them floating in the water for the rescuers to reach in time. They managed to save sixty. She reported that at least twenty didn't make it.

Being dragged through the court makes her angry but, surprisingly enough, she is not feeling fearful. Her view is that these charges are politically motivated. She's probably right. There is a right-wing Italian Interior Minister who carries on about civilian rescuers in the press and makes overt racist remarks against migrants.

So now Pia Klemp cannot rescue people but they are still drowning. She and nine other crew members are forced to stay on land and that's what bothers her the most.

She is facing a year- long 'show trial' estimated to cost in excess of 150,000 euros. The Solidarity at Sea group is collecting donations to pay legal costs.

According to a survey published in 2018, 75% of Germans support the rescue work. More than 250 organisations have signed an open letter to Chancellor Angela Merkel calling for a refugee rescue plan.

"The real terror happens to these people on the run," insists Klemp, "not me."

(Special thanks to the Big Issue for bringing this story to our attention.)

Pearlie

Guidelines for forming a Memory Work group for older women

Rationale

Our purpose in forming a Memory Work group is to help older women to cope with the multiple challenges, physical, emotional, social and spiritual, of growing old in a society which values the young, and where older women are often underestimated and overlooked. We believe that we can do that more effectively in a collaborative framework (a group) rather than each of us trying to carry on alone. We empower ourselves and thus gain more control over our own lives. What is important is what each participant contributes to the group, not how each is helped as individuals. We are all empowered by the process.

Our focus is on what older women have to say about their experience and not the professional opinions that abound among the medical or gerontological community. The professional literature on old age is often objectified, medicalized and catastrophized. The focus is on decline and efforts to delay that decline. The literature seems overly negative and does not recognize our own very positive experiences since retirement.

There are three steps to memory work:

Step one: having agreed on a trigger topic each person writes about a personal memory associated with that trigger topic, usually one positive memory and one negative memory. This is written in the third person using a pseudonym to enable some personal distance from the event.

Step two: the members then share their written memories and meet as a group to discuss them. This group discussion looks for common themes in the memories. The discussion is recorded.

Step three: one or two people then go through the memories and the discussion and document the common themes that occur. They compare these themes with what is generally stated in the press or in the academic literature. They share this summary with the group.

- memory work is not about improving one's memory.
- It is a way to access how one feels about a topic in all its social, political and individual ramifications
- The group works best with 5 -7 members, who know and trust each other.
- We write down our memory because setting it down on paper clarifies how we delineate and feel about the event.
- The memory relates to something that has happened in the recent past not in the far past.
- We should avoid biography and justification, but simply describe the event or events, including the emotional reactions, in as much detail as possible.
- The writing is done between sessions and is emailed to the rest of the group members who then read them and come ready to discuss at the next meeting.
- Each person's experience is valid and makes a contribution to the group.
- By contributing our personal experiences, we arrive as a group at the universal themes faced by older women.

Triggers

First trigger: Who Am I, now that I am over 65?

Other Triggers:

- Older bodies require higher maintenance
- Being connected
- Taking up a new challenge
- What we fear

Jenny Onyx

Old Bodies require higher maintenance

By Jenny Onyx

Bloody nuisance

So what are we?

No better than an old car

Break lining worn out

Old engine needing an overhaul

Steering a bit wonky

Only one good eye left and that is fading

Can't trade it in on a new model.

But think of the old vintage models-

They are valued, cared for, beautiful.

Maybe that's what we are- beautiful vintage models....

Or should be...



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. If you want to receive regular information about our activities and our bi-monthly newsletter, visit our website and put yourself on our email list.

Newsletter

The newsletter comes out on our email list. If you do not receive it, email us at 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



Have you seen my nouns?

They were in my head a minute ago...

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Sylvia Kinder, Diann Payne, Wendy Freeman, Wendi Watkins

Contact email list: Diann Payne, Traci Arkinstall, Ping Ho
listing in LOTL: Jan Aitkin

Utilities box: Sylvia Kinder

Money Management: Loretta Kelly

Websisters: Jan Aitkin, Ruth Butler, Diann Payne, Pearlie McNeill, Traci Arkinstall, Barbara Fleming

Newsletter: editing and layout Pearlie McNeill and Diann Payne