

Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

August 2020

www.olderdykes.org

Ten Forty Zoom tea party Sat 15 August 4.30 PM

Time to settle the debates; tea bags or tea leaves; milk first or last, to sweeten or not. We are having an afternoon tea party on zoom. Join us and share your tea stories, or your favourite tea pot, or recipes for your afternoon tea delights. An afternoon of conversations and sharing. Bring your stories and recipes to share.

RSVP: Diann at

maude_au@yahoo.com

I will send you a link on the day of the event. That is Saturday 15 August.



Dykes for Dinner Thursday 13th August 6.30 PM

Thai Pothong Restaurant, 294 King Street, Newtown. Mains average \$22-25, slightly more for seafood. Plenty of vegetarian options. Licenced.

Get in quickly as places fill up fast. Please RSVP by Monday 10th August at the very latest.

Numbers are strict during CO-VID. Maximum 20 PAX this time.

RSVP: Sue Gee

suegee1@optusnet.com.au

Ph: 0413266483



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[Ten Forty Matrix NSW](#)

Zoom Discussion Report Saturday 11 July

Climate Change, Our Insane Summer and What We Can Do About It Presentation by Anne Fitzsimmons

This was definitely a Zoom event not to be missed. It was not simply a list of dreadful facts about climate change. Anne, an environmental officer for Inner West Council, prepared a dynamic and informative talk. She also sent us interesting 'homework' we could do in advance if we wished, as well as preparing visual information to illustrate her talk. This visual information showed clearly the increasing damage to our environment as a result of world increases in carbon emissions.

Anne went on to talk about what is actually happening to mitigate carbon emissions. Instead of waiting for leadership from the Federal government and local councils, private entrepreneurs and companies are taking a lead in a range of actions to help stop the increase

in global temperature. Among these actions are the impressive increase in both actual and planned renewable energy projects, and council actions around recycling as well as other environmental projects.

Instead of feeling dismal about the current climate situation we were given a sense of hope due to the actions that are being undertaken in various states and territories.

Anne's interesting talk was followed by questions and discussion from the 16 participants. This generated more good information and raised interest in having a second session. It would be good to further explore more ways we can personally work towards reducing our own carbon footprint. We have a long way to go in saving our planet.

The huge question is, can we do it? How much can grass roots action do to save our planet? There is a real need for further thought and discussion.

Here's the link to a film Anne talked about, called "The Biggest Little Farm"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfDTM4JxHI8>

Sylvia

The Homework

1. Have you ever calculated your own carbon footprint? This tells you how much carbon emissions you release into the atmosphere as a result of your everyday life. See if you can calculate your footprint from just your electricity, gas, car use, air travel and how much meat you eat. We can talk about it on Saturday night. You can use a free calculator here:

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>.

Don't worry if you have to guess the figures - it's just for fun!

2. When we hear about climate change there is so much bad news! But there is also good news! Check out these films and a podcast from the ABC and be prepared to talk about one thing you found which inspires you!

2040 (Foxtel Now. or rent it on YouTube, Google Play Movies, Apple iTunes, Microsoft Store online).

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=13&v=UOt_xjUTwdM

Living the Change: Inspiring Stories for a Sustainable Future. Available for rent at Amazon, Google Play, iTunes.

Trailer: <https://filmsfortheearth.org/en/films/living-change>

How regenerative farming can help heal the planet and human health | Charles Massy |

TEDxCanberra <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et8YKBivhaE>

Australia's record year for investment and generation in renewable energy <https://reneweconomy.com.au/australias-record-year-for-investment-and-generation-in-renewable-energy-71153/>

ABC Podcast "Hot Mess" Episode 4: Hope. Despite all the gridlock on Australia's climate policy, there are moves towards a decarbonised economy. <https://www.abc.net.au/radio-national/programs/rn-presents/hope/12181032>

The Kurnell Walk

The message went out from Pearlie in *Contact*, inviting women to participate in a walk along the Kurnell foreshore in Kamay Botany Bay National Park. We planned to view two recent installations on the shoreline by Aboriginal artists Julie Squires and Theresa Ardler, and a third installation by Alison Page with Nik Lachaczak.

The project, called "A meeting of two cultures", was commissioned to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of Cook's arrival on the HMS Endeavour on April 29, 1770.

Fifteen women answered the invitation, and 15 came. We started with coffee at the 1770 Café at the end of Captain Cook Drive. Dark clouds loomed over us as we arrived, while a brighter sky peered out from under to provide hope for a finer day. It felt at first as if we were visiting a sombre place, darkened by the landing of Cook to meet the local Gweagai people, the custodians of this land. A plain obelisk marks the place.

The bright side of the day was viewing the dramatic sculptures. What better way to reclaim the space! The magnificent bronze *Whale with Baby*, and the bronze

representation of the *Nawi* (canoes) stood out.

Alison Page's ingenious installation of *The Eyes of the Land and the Sea* represents both the skeleton of the HMS Endeavour's huge ribs, and as well the ribs of the Whale, the Gweagai people's totem.

Along the way, visitors could read detailed explanations of the history from both local indigenous and colonial perspectives. At last a recognition of what was both heartbreaking and heartwarming.

We gathered afterwards for lunch at the nearby *Endeavour* café. All safely distanced and seated at two big tables. Following lunch a number of us went up to the National Park along the cliff to see if we could see any whales. Even though a few shouted "There's one!", unfortunately there wasn't a sighting.

A fantastic day! Thanks, Pearlie, for organising

Chris and Cas



Older Women In Co-Housing A Daylesford Women's Project



At a time when Melbourne is suffering a Covid-19 spike (or is it a second wave?), it is good to bring to your attention a good story about a Victorian housing project. And to highlight the work of two lesbian activists, both unpaid volunteers, at the heart of the action to provide housing for older women in the Daylesford area.

Anneke came to the project after ten years of volunteering with Matrix Guild. Her experience caused Anneke to reflect on her own future and what options she or any older woman would have for suitable accommodation in advancing years.

Mary-Faeth had organised children's holiday camps whilst still living in the USA. She is well versed in issues of community. Conveniently, these two women live right next door to each other in downtown Daylesford.

Following forum type meetings in Melbourne and Daylesford and Castlemaine, WINC (Older Women in Cohousing Inc) became a group of ardent supporters, keen to be part of this project. At present there are thirty-two members and they meet weekly, on Zoom, as things have hotted up and the cohousing dream is fast becoming a reality.

The Project site is situated on what was once farm land, two acres on a hill with 360 degree views. The existing 1880s sandstone house is to become a Commonhouse, providing the focal centrepiece for this older women's community.

At present a developer is getting the land ready for sale to a not for profit housing provider, by putting electric cables underground, creating streets, kerbing and driveways and, all going well, this developer will be able to begin work building this eco-village cohousing project later this year.

Anneke and Mary-Faeth explained that they have been using a handbook written by one Charles Durrett, entitled The Senior Cohousing Handbook, and from this manual WINC has been following the curriculum therein.

Stage 1. Building the group

Stage 2. Design the buildings, layout and style, accessibility

Stage 3. Work on guidelines to live with harmony, ways to deal with conflict, effective communication, and so on.

The group works always with a social conscience in mind and across the range of financial circumstances for those wanting to be part of this project.

Four units are already designated as rental, to be owned and run by a community housing provider. About a third of the group have sufficient funds to buy in to the project but there is a concern Anneke and Mary-Faeth expressed candidly, for another third of interested women who may have limited income and/or savings, and could wind up homeless if no thought or planning is given to their predicament.

Negotiations are taking place right now with the state government, philanthropic groups and individual investors, in the hope that some plan can be worked out whereby a number of the units are partially funded by investment amounts that are realised only when the property is sold, but the investor could wind up with a tidy profit

as the price of these properties increases.

There is much more I could tell you about this group but one interesting point about process is worth mentioning here. Each woman indicates her position during consensus decision-making by making use of a colour coded card. Green indicates I agree, Blue, I am neutral or have a slight reservation, Yellow, I have a question that needs answering before I can decide, Orange, I have a serious reservation but won't block, and the Red card indicates I do not consent. I understand from Anneke and Mary-Faeth this method of having a voice without talking over each other works very well.

I want to conclude with Mary-Faeth's words ... "This is our home, not a political arena. We are just trying to create a positive housing environment for the rest of our lives."

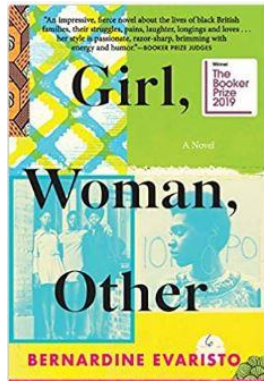
For more information on WINC you can contact Anneke
president@winccohousing.org.au

or check the website.

<https://winccohousing.org.au/location/>

Pearlie

Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo



This book won the Booker Prize in 2019. I can see why. The first Booker Prize awarded to a black woman writer. Although it is about the lives of black British women, I felt this book spoke to me too.

The book has four chapters, each giving a section to three women. The final fifth chapter brings all the characters together at the *After Party* of the opening night of Amma's play. The text is experimental with short paragraphs, no capitals or full stops. I didn't mind this lack of punctuation. Evaristo has said her work is a cross between prose and poetry, and as I read, I soon felt the flow of the text. I got used to the structure as I became immersed in the narrative.

The book deals with both the experience of women's migration to Britain from various countries in Africa and The Caribbean, as well as those born and living in Britain as second or later generations. Racism was not the only issue facing Evaristo's characters; poverty, social class, rape, violence, divorce, single motherhood, adoption, sexuality, work and more are the focus of many of the women's lives. These are issues common to women all over the world, a sharing of female experience.

The life of Amma, the main character, spans both the feminist, left, artistic and political experiences of the 70s, but also the changing dynamics of being a radical lesbian feminist and becoming a famous playwright. The book starts with Amma and finishes at the party after the opening night of her play, *The Last Amazon of Dahomey*. It would be a great play to see, a pity it is only a title.

The true female warrior army of Dahomey, now a part of present-day Benin, really did exist for around 300 years. Like so many African countries,

French colonisation brought the country to an end. While Amma is a strong character she is drawn with all her virtues and flaws. For example, she is thoughtless towards Shirley, another character in the book, and uses her casually for babysitting without considering Shirley's needs.

Amma's daughter, Yazz, at 19 years old, is self-absorbed and has little understanding of the struggles of many other women. She sees everything through the prism of disadvantage to those of colour. She, like most of us when young, is oblivious to the value of the love that others show her. She treats Roland, her doting sperm donor, and Shirley, her baby-sitter, rather rudely. Like many young feminists she gravitates to the support of trans-people but lacks any depth of feminist analysis.

Amma's strong, lesbian, feminist, friend, Dominique, ends up trapped in an abusive relationship. The way that relationship is drawn demonstrates clearly how such situations develop and how the victim loses her ability to get out of the relationship. Dominique is eventually rescued by lesbian feminists who help in her rehabilitation.

I have great empathy for the teachers, Shirley and Penelope and how they had to navigate teaching in a difficult working class, multiracial school. Penelope does not know she is of mixed-race parentage until much later in life. Shirley becomes a very conservative person but cares about her students. She experiences pain at not being appreciated by those to whom she has dedicated her life.

I enjoyed the way the characters were connected in some way, like LaTisha and Carole, who were at school together and Shirley who was their supportive teacher. Their connections were only for a brief time but had future implications.

Some characters are the mothers of other characters. Their lives are drawn in juxtaposition to that of their daughters, showing how complex culture can be for those who migrate, and their offspring, who experience a different life. Evaristo in a radio interview talked about those who move away from their class or culture, and become estranged from their family. She said they have to learn 'code switching' to enable them to change language and maintain connection with those they love.

This is an important and complex issue faced by many migrant background women in Australia too. It does not simply apply to language but also to ways of thinking and cultural engagement.

I really liked this book. I wanted to have conversations with the characters about their lives and why they held the views they held, why they acted the way they did and so on. Evaristo shows the different ways that 'black' women's lives are lived and experienced. This addresses the tendency in our society to lump people from any group; indigenous, refugees, etc. into one category.

This happens, of course, to lesbians too who are misread by many. *'You don't look like a lesbian. And older lesbians fade into the invisible group of older women.*

A wonderful book, beautifully written and full of life.

Sylvia

From Coping with COVID to cooking in COVID times.

In recent issues of the newsletter we've been reading stories about women coping with Covid-19. Now, in this issue we bring you stories of cooking in these semi-isolating/lockdown times. Have you been cultivating your culinary skills, or avoiding the idea of cooking altogether? Maybe you have a story to tell about a recipe you use a lot that has been passed down or has a story to it.

We hope Jan's affectionate description of her mother, and the two recipes Jan shared with us will inspire you to share your recipes and the stories behind the recipes with us. The third recipe, from another subscriber, speaks for itself.

Gladys was a reluctant cook!

Yes, my late Mum was called Gladys and the name of our Premier always makes me spring to attention. We kids did not mess with our Gladys.

She was English born, educated at Sydney Girls High and Sydney Uni and then sent by the kindly Education dept to teach maths at Ballina, my home town.

Her mother, my grandmother prefaced many sentences with (atomeinEnglandwe) and was a champion housekeeper, boasting of how many acres of floor they polished on a Saturday. She was also horrified to see my mother sent out of Sydney to teach, as Grandma regarded anywhere beyond Parramatta as total wilderness.

When Mum married my father, who ran a boat yard with his father in Ballina, she lost her job, as married women had to give up jobs to returned servicemen after the war.

She took on housekeeping as a chore, no joy in having white sheets or a shiny floor. Her greatest pleasures in life were a book, a cigarette in hand and a cup of tea nearby.

Cooking was a real challenge. We had a fuel stove, that is a black woodburning monster with old jam tins of dripping up the back and a big aluminium kettle. For quick meals there was a kerosene burning Primus which was indeed primed with methylated spirits. A fearsome beast. Everything was wood fuelled, including the chip heater for baths and the copper for boiling up the clothes.

Truckloads of mill offcuts would be delivered to the front garden and we kids had to learn to chop kindling. In the middle of the kitchen was a pine topped table, always covered in newspapers to preserve its whiteness.

When I was old enough to read I used to enliven drying up the dishes by walking round and round the table reading articles. Drove my parents nuts!

We finally gave up the ice chest for a refrigerator, a real boon in Ballina which is subtropical. Ours usually had lots of little glasses, former peanut butter containers, which contained the cream skimmed off the top of the milk. This was turned into ice-cream and the double lots of beating that were needed required wrists of steel.

This is the background to cooking for Mum. Lots of time, physical activity and she had to be an alchemist to get the timing of fuelling the stove right (how many bits of wood, how much draft) in order to cook cakes, roasts. But fish and chips was the great test. Dad was forever bringing home big fish given by grateful customers.

Mum would moan, Bill, not more fish! As Dad held up some giant snapper. But give her credit, Mum's fish and chips were second to none.

But, let me tell you, when Mum got a chance to go back teaching, she was out that door so fast!

In short order she had Myrtle in to do the housework and get Dad's lunch. Dad couldn't cope with the fact that Myrtle was a heavy smoker and devoted to gossip, so he ended up buying pies down the street. Such is life!

Jan

Glad's Jam and Coconut Slice

Biscuit mixture: 30 grams butter (1/4 of 250 gm pack is OK), 1/2 cup sugar, 1 egg, 1 & 1/2 cups SR flour. Cream butter & sugar, add egg and finally flour. Press into a standard size baking dish (the sort you use for a roast dinner) which has been greased and lightly dusted with flour.

Spread the mixture with a thin layer of jam, any sort not marmalade goes well: try plum, raspberry or apricot.

Topping: 1 cup desiccated coconut, 1 egg, 1 cup of sugar. Mix and spread on top of the jam - drop it evenly in small clumps.

Bake in slow to moderate oven, ½ to 1 hour - you need to keep an eye on it. Take it out of the oven and loosen it around the edges so that the jam doesn't stick. Wait till it cools a little (but don't let it get too cold or it crumbles) and cut it into squares and remove from dish with an egg slice or spatula.

This is an easy way to make a good quantity for guests (or the kids) and it is always popular. Some call this recipe German Tart.

Many of us have enjoyed Jan's pavlovas, so we persuaded her to include this recipe she found in an old cookbook many years ago.

Mrs Enfield's No Fail Pavlova

4 egg whites - Big eggs at room temperature.

5 oz castor sugar (2 & ½ level dessert spoon sugar = 1 oz)

5 oz crystal sugar

1 level dessert spoon cornflour

1 teaspoon lemon juice or vinegar

You will also need a scone tray or flat ovenproof dish, foil, a little cophia, a little water.

Line the scone tray with a piece of foil cut to fit. Grease the foil with a little cophia (other grease works but not as well. Ed.) and sprinkle very lightly with water.

Make sure bowl and beaters are quite dry at start. And separate yolks from whites over a separate cup one by one to keep out specks of yolk.

Beat the egg whites until stiff enough to hold their shape. A good test - carefully turn the bowl upside down. If the egg whites stay in then it is stiff. If a drip threatens, keep beating. Add the castor sugar gradually, and beat until no more grains are left. Add a small pinch of salt.

Fold in the cornflour, lemon juice or vinegar, and lastly add the crystal sugar. This last step gives a crisp sugary edge to the meringue - the dissolving of the castor sugar gives a soft marshmallow-like texture.

Pipe or spoon the meringue on to the prepared tray in any desired shape. Usually the best shape is oval, slightly hollow in the centre to take the topping.

Bake approximately one hour. Have the oven at 120 C, that is 250 degrees F, for half an hour. (oven's lowest temperature) Then cook in the stored heat, with the oven switched off, for another half-hour.

Allow to cool completely before filling with your favourite filling. Two delicious suggestions from Mrs Enfield are fresh fruit salad (drained thoroughly) topped with yoghurt, or whipped cream topped with passion fruit.



Busy Woman's dinner

3 cups frozen vegetables
Mediterranean delight garlic dip
Grated cheddar cheese (pre-grated)

Take vegetables and place in microwave for 4 mins. Place in bowl, add garlic and cheese.

Preparation time: 0 minutes

Cooking time: 4 minutes

Delicious and nutritious for every evening

Lizzy Bizzywoman



About Ten Forty and Older Dykes

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 <http://www.olderdykes.org> encourages national and international connections between older lesbians. Ten Forty is not an organisation you have to join, though members do get some discounts. 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.

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Sylvia, Diann, Wendy

Contact email list: Diann

Archives: Sylvia and Pearlie

Money Management: Loretta

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Diann, Pearlie

Newsletter: editing and layout Pearlie and Diann

Have you got something to say?

What have you been cooking these COVID days? Send us your recipes and stories behind the recipes. We would love to share them in the newsletter.

contact@olderdykes.org

