



Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

July 2020

www.olderdykes.org

Dykes for Dinner is starting again!

New Dykes for Dinner team - Sue G and Robyn L.

Rob P & Gillian T have been organising dinners for Dykes on every second Thursday of the month for 6-7 years. A big thank you to them both. They have decided it was time for them to take up other activities.

First post COVID Dykes for Dinner Thursday 9 July

Time 6.30 PM

Venue: The Royal Hotel, upstairs.

156 Norton Street, Leichhardt.

RSVP: Sue Gee

suegee1@optusnet.com.au

Ph: 0413266483

Climate Change, our Insane summer and what we can do about it

Discussion/Presentation via Zoom

Saturday 11 July: 5-6.30pm

Register for an online Zoom Discussion (without dinner) presented by

Anne Fitzsimmons

How bad was this summer? We all experienced the smoke, the constant news stories of volunteer firies doing the impossible every day; the loss of lives and family homes and treasured memories, the trauma of seeing wildlife fleeing flames and many dying. We've heard all the statistics - 34 lives lost, 2400 homes in NSW destroyed, 9 million hectares and over a billion animals and counting.

Climate change supercharged this fire season, giving us all a taste of what a warming world looks like. So, is it too late? Absolutely not! July's talk and discussion will be about what is driving our climate crisis, what is being done and what we can still do to respond to climate change and live our best sustainable lives.

Contact Diann P to register:

maude_au@yahoo.com

Follow us on our FaceBook page

[Ten Forty Matrix NSW](#)

A DAY OUT AT KURNELL **8 July, meet at 10.30am**

Two Aboriginal artists, Julie Squires and Theresa Ardler, were commissioned last year to install two sculptures on the shoreline, out at Kurnell. One is the two Nawi (canoes) and the other the Whale and Baby, another artist, Alison Page, and organiser Nik Lachaczak, were involved too, creating the exhibition Eyes of the Land and Sea.

These sculptures were installed in December but because of Covid -19, publicity about the exhibition was not widely distributed. It's a short walk and all on flat ground so ideal for us to take as long as we like looking at it all. And it's all free. You can bring your own lunch or eat at one of the two cafes nearby.

To book in phone Pearlie on 0407 903 322



Zoom Discussion Report **13 June 2020**

WOMEN'S LAND

On Saturday the 13th June I participated in my first Zoom experience. I can see how it's taking off, and how it could be a useful means of discussion and decision making for a group such as ours. As a participant, (not a facilitator or organizer of the session), it was pain free and a couple of entertaining hours. It surprised me we went on for so long.

It wasn't dissimilar to a regular meeting, with adjustments and shufflings, faces disappearing and reappearing, instructions with no audio as some of us grappled with the buttons to push. (I should say "I" and not speak for others!)

It was an experience sharing event for those associated with the Women's Lands in New South Wales. Some of us, to this day, have never met. Despite long term involvement, there have been different eras of participating women. To see these faces all together was heart-warming.

Information for a new era, those interested in learning more or getting involved was also passed about. A bit of PR perhaps to reinvigorate us and inspire enthusiastic, strong and lithe new women to take the lands into the long-distance future alongside the old timers...

Sand acknowledged the Biripi Nation traditional owners and jump started us with a slideshow of early days of bush, bodies and buildings (sorry...can never resist alliteration) which fast forwarded into more recent photos, comparisons of then and now, of well attended gatherings and of the damage wrought by the 2020 fire season. Heart crushing to see some of the structures in Herland and The Valley; forty year plus repositories of memories, wisdoms, silliness and courageousness, reduced to blankets of ash and blackened stumps. The Mountain has been spared for the time being. As Margot pointed out, some of the structures were long past their use by date and we now have a chance to rebuild with less nostalgia to inhibit progress and, to keep the history alive, we do have diligent and significant photo records taken over time by, notably, Sand, Helen Grace, Margot (and many more). Some of the photos Sand showed

were new to me personally and I always get a buzz from previously unseen ones.

The very first slide, locating the lands in the ranges near Wirrikimbe National Park and Mt Boss State Forest, reminded me of just how magnificent the location is, how grateful I am to the foresight and determination of the founders and how fortunate we are to have this legacy of protected wilderness and women's space.

It was encouraging to see so many women gathered around the fire pit at last year's event. Sand indicated close to 90 went. At The Valley the year before up to 66 turned up. That's impressive and speaks of the dedication of all the women putting in the time and effort to make these events happen and to encourage interest from a new generation.

Some members shared anecdotes of their personal experiences. Sand and Margot provided genesis information and Margot reminded us that Herland was acquired by her and Janne Ellen, and somewhat more easily financially than Amazon Acres, (which I remember as being very difficult at the time.)

All in all, there are about 3000 acres of land in women's hands including Wanderground (formerly Tout's) and Forever Land. We didn't go into any differences in philosophy between the collective owned lands, if there is any. A subject it may be interesting to explore another time.

Anneke Deutsch talked about a women's retirement village being built in Daylesford which has a place in this discussion given it is another solution to the matter of women controlled spaces, albeit not as removed from the world as the women's lands, and a lot more appealing to ageing bladders and bones.

There was a query about animal life. Snake cautioning as ever, and there are populations of wild dogs, pademelons and goannas. Rabbits are not apparently prevalent on Herland, although they once were on The Mountain. We failed to mention quolls which have made a nuisance of themselves in sleeping hours and gallivanting on tin roofs.

Victoria, a new face amidst the oldies, told us she'd only recently heard of the Lands

and is interested in going to the next gathering. Sand advised of Tashe's presence in Wauchope, who is very willing to facilitate newcomers and she will pass on contact details.

As I don't know if I'll ever get to Herland or The Valley, let alone up to The Mountain again it was heart-warming to be reminded of the new, and it seems, increasing interest.

I apologise for not mentioning everyone who was Zooming. This is a bit like a bad job of taking minutes...

Thanks to Diann, Pearlie and Sand for organising, and Jan Aitken for her no nonsense cat wrangling facilitation.

DQ



After Two Weeks Of Naval Gazing

Carol - Balmain

Initially I was pretty anxious. Over the first weekend in March, I along with Sydney family and friends, headed to Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills to attend a nephew's wedding. Three days of celebration seemingly oblivious to what was to come. By mid March we were in lockdown.

I was one of the 'vulnerable' people. For the first couple of weeks I stayed at home ensconced on the lounge reading the SMH, and listening to dire warnings about these 'unprecedented times'. Cryptic crosswords, many books and games on my iPad, and much washing of hands.

I don't live entirely alone. I have two rescue cats, 'The Girls' Charlie and Moët.

My previously active and enjoyable social life had come to a standstill. Gym, book group, Mahjong, weekends away and a holiday booked for July cancelled.

My long time friend of forty plus years, twenty of which we lived together, continued to come over. Where we once

entertained, now we cooked a meal for two and caught up with friends on Zoom.

After two weeks of naval gazing, I contacted friends about going for a walk. Thus started a Monday to Friday walk with a friend. We have been doing this for a number of weeks now. It's wonderful. Daphne (Wednesday) early in the piece sent me a text re our walk the next day as 'g w and w p'. Took me a while to work out it was ... god willing and weather permitting...

The gym has reopened but I'm going to miss our one on one walks.

Moët visited the vet last week to get her nails done. The vet said 'Moët has put on weight'.

I replied 'she's not the only one'.

Caryl 19/6/2020



HERE'S HOPING

Kaye – Blue Mountains

Bushwalking energises me but my choices are VERY limited. Having only 3 nearby I'm mentally challenged to be present and witness-absorb the magic. These national park fire trails are busier than usual. Parked cars crowd the entrance. Cyclists outnumber walkers! With play grounds closed, some toddlers are playing in sandy parts of the trail or exploring nearby rocky outcrops; older kids are extending their skills to rough trail bicycling.

At my retirement village with the nursing home on the same site, management is vigilant, and all independent residents are spatially distancing to minimise jeopardising residents' and workers' health. Fortunately, to date, no one has been diagnosed with the virus.

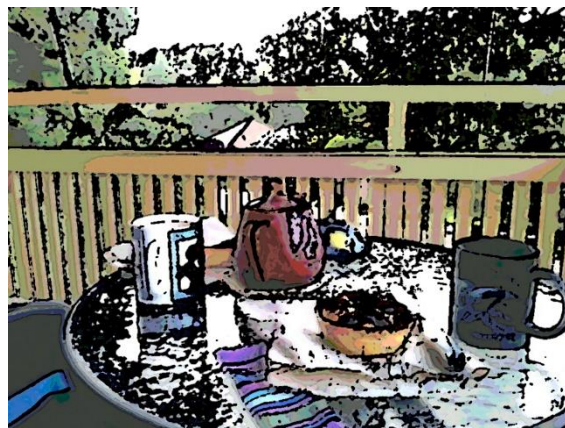
My local coffee shop has continued to offer take-away. I miss not being able to sit down, enjoy food and coffee with other regulars and have easy access to several toilets, It's pleasing to now see 2 young familiar faces resuming their part time shifts. It's my hub for comraderie survival to a new worthwhile normal.

Technology has been challenging me. The internet is unreliable. Extremely frustrating

when I've preregistered for a live event, and I can't get it. Now I pray, please work, every time I switch on my laptop. I'm keen to see a professional reading of Carolyn Gage's latest play 'Female Nude Seated'.

Looking forward to a Sydney mate driving up for a bushwalk tomorrow. It's been a long 7 weeks 'pause'.

Here's hoping my too brief moments of relaxation and calmness can expand, and I switch to a new normal 'thrive' mode, along with many others for a sustainable future.



IT'S HARD TO FEEL GOOD.

Marie - London - June

Driving to meet a friend for a walk yesterday I was humming along to a Kate Bush song the words "something good is going to happen".

But the words choked in my throat. I wanted to scream out "No, no it's not, no more bad is going to happen." I cannot separate how I feel from what is happening in the country where I am living now.

There is no doubt that the UK has completely messed up and messed around, and there is STILL no clear plan to get off the corona path of destruction. People continue to die (175 yesterday alone) And we have the worst economic forecast in the whole of Europe. I know the future will be full of 'more bad'.

The impact is that I feel depressed, fearful, disempowered and rudderless. Talking to friends, neighbours, and anyone I meet, we all feel the same. (Not talking to Boris Johnson and other members of the government who assure me we have world-beating positive responses). This

disjuncture only makes it worse unless of course you are measuring incompetence.

For sure I know personally I am lucky - I have friends, a full life and we will manage economically. But I cannot separate myself from out there. I feel frightened about what next.

Though, maybe, I do have one beam of hope – out of the tragedy of George Floyd there is a surge of energy exposing the grim reality of racism not just in this country but in the world. And thousands of young black and white people in particular are demonstrating and shouting out for change. I have felt very frustrated not to march, but using public transport to get there and to maintain social distancing feels too risky. But just maybe something good will come out of this. I hope.

COVID 19

Cheryl - Coogee

Did we have any relief between the bushfires and COVID19? It is hard to remember. Two periods of checking Apps for “Fires near you” and “COVID19 statistics” blend together. My daughter who had just moved to Geneva for a year with her family, rang to warn me that Australia was not acting fast enough. Then, miraculously, the government started listening to expert advisors and soon we had a mostly coherent plan.

I stopped going to therapy. My issues seemed petty. I left the house as quickly as I could each day and went to Coogee Beach to swim as long as it was open. After that I went to Balmoral a few times where the beach was open and social distancing was a rumour.

Every day that I didn't swim I walked at Coogee Beach and socially distanced myself from joggers and bicycle riders with my umbrella. There were plenty of women from the Women's Pool to chat with, and we began to share our enjoyment of social isolation, rubbing events out of our diaries, watching wonderful, free cultural events online. I felt peaceful and free.

Guilt and sadness were always in the background. Concern for the people in the four countries being managed by lunatics. Friends' children fled from the UK and USA to Australia and happily self-isolated in their childhood bedrooms while working from home online. When did the world change that much?

I attended the 4th School Strike online and was wonderstruck by the people as young as thirteen who managed that event perfectly. Most of those onscreen were girls. They spoke of pollution clearing and people in India seeing distant mountains for the first time. Surely, they reasoned, a planned recovery from COVID19 would include a plan for the future of the planet? The murder of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter and Indigenous Deaths in Custody became a tsunami displacing COVID19 as the major news item. The young were threatened not to attend the rallies and older folk were advised. We were told that those who attended would be virtually murdering others by spreading COVID19. It became a painful ethical issue for myself and others as we counted the lives lost in the race-based genocide of indigenous people, race-based arrests and deaths in

custody. I decided that I would not be able to watch the news the day after the rally and deal with my grief and anger if I did not attend. Twenty thousand people marched in Sydney. There were people of all ages, backgrounds and skin shades. White was just one of a myriad of shades as is the natural order of things.

My mood fell suddenly a few days later as blame continued to be heaped on the marchers and damage to statues became the main focus with very little analysis of history and the chain of events which led us here.

This mood shifted as the days passed as I remembered the committed young people, angry and hopeful and the older people who marched against Vietnam and Iraq and were marching again or sitting at home cheering.



COVID Days – the beginning

Diann – Glebe

Filled with social distance
But not always lonely
Not always alone
There is Zoom,
And Trickster – 500
And Zoom book groups
And neighbours
And finally allowing myself
To venture out.
First to the art supply shop,
Then birding at Landing Lights wetland
With Chris – she sat in the back seat
Social distance maintained

The phone is busier than ever
I have devoured books
And made a linocut print
My mind has done much processing
I have relaxed into the aloneness
Of my abode – alone, with my cat
And my garden,
Covid days have slowed me

But all this is really only
Because this country is not overwhelmed
With cases - and I
Have secure housing

And food to eat
And a network of friends and
acquaintances.

The streets are empty, almost
And silent
The shops are mostly closed.
The people who do walk by
Are wearing masks

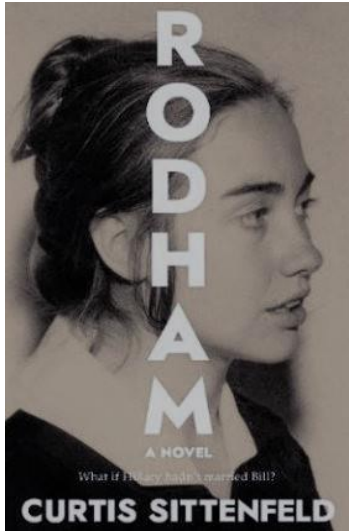
But the parks are full
People out, exercising
Walking too close to me!
The shopping centre evokes anxiety
With the silent spaces and closed shops
And a queue to get into Coles and Aldi
Sanitiser before entering Harris Farm
Social distance marked with X on the floor
Car parks only half filled.

No laughter or happy groups
No meetings of friends for lunch
Washing hands the minute
I get in the door of my house
Cleaning door handles
Worrying about shopping bags
They sat on a surface
While being packed
Even if they were packed by me.

I am still grateful
That we seem to have avoided
The crisis
happening in other countries
The horror that unfolds
in so many places.
These are the COVID days.



Book Review by Pearlle



Curtis Sittenfeld is an accomplished writer. Rodham is her eighth book. Impressive. I had particularly liked an earlier book **American Wife**, based on Laura Bush's life.

Here she explored how a Wisconsin born woman who valued privacy, who grew up an only child, earnestly bookish, would one day live in the White House as the First Lady? The character was not named Laura, no, she was Alice Lindgren. It was a fig leaf of protection but it worked and the book is a more powerful narrative as a result.

But there's no protecting fig leaf for Hillary (Rodham) Clinton in this latest *tell-all* (ostensibly reimagined) novel, beginning

with the cover. There's a young Hillary, a head and shoulders profile shot, fresh-faced, caught in a moment where her attention is elsewhere, but unmistakably Hillary Rodham. We are in no doubt that Curtis Sittenfeld fully intends to focus her attention on this young woman, fair and square. Her wholesome character springs from the pages, large as life, vibrant, well-meaning, some might even call her a 'do-gooder' but her decency, her honesty, her intention to make the world a better place for the less able people she meets as her clients, comes across as transparent as glass.

We read that she was just nine years old when a friend's father tells her 'you're awfully opinionated for a girl.'

Comments like these are hurled at Hillary Rodham frequently. Outwardly, she learns to leave them behind. Perhaps she views them as barbs of bitterness trailing in her wake?

She meets Bill Clinton page 12. Hillary doesn't understand why he's interested in her. Her kind of man is more likely to be '... smart but ordinary, not someone as magnetic and exceptional as Bill'.

And then they have sex. A few pages further along my concerns about this novel make me feel like squirming. How can anyone know what it's like for a person in the sexual intimacy of their relationship with another person?

It's one thing if this was truly a novel, but based as this narrative is, so firmly fixed on Hillary's life, I truly think Curtis Sittenfeld has crossed a line.

Was she scrabbling through rubbish bins, stalking or haunting Hillary to get such detail? And if it's simply made up then it's an intrusion that is more likely to repel readers (feminist readers anyway) rather than enhance their understanding of these two people.

There's much to admire about the writing and yet ... such is the level of detail used to describe sex between Hillary Rodham and Bill Clinton, I wanted to yell out *too much information*, and I can't help wondering how Hillary Clinton might feel about having her life scraped bare.

My hope is that she can treat this book as yet another barb of bitterness and simply let it trail in her wake.

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 the COVID days been like for you? What are you missing? Send us your stories and we will share them in the newsletter.

We are also collecting recipes you have discovered during these days.

contact@olderdykes.org

