



Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

September 2025

www.olderdykes.org

What's On

Country Lesbians Association

A Zoom event

Sunday 28 September

Topic: Favorite TV shows

Why do you enjoy them and do they have any connection to lesbian life.

CLA is a Zoom event, aimed at connecting older lesbians, wherever in Australia you live. You don't have to live outside of Sydney to join us on Zoom.

If you want to join us, email Diann at maude_au@yahoo.com

Popcorn at the movies

Tuesday 7 Oct

This group is for anyone who is interested in having company to go to the movies and maybe have coffee or refreshments after the film. Palace Cinemas in Norton Street has \$10 tickets on Tuesdays. We meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month. Hope to see you at the movies.

More details will be sent out on Contact.
Krystyna

Dykes for Dinner

Thursday 9 Oct @ 6.30pm

Dolcissimo Haberfield
98/100 Ramsay St,
Haberfield

Please RSVP to Fiona
fionarimes@gmail.com

Afternoon events for Older Lesbians

Saturday 22 November 4pm-8pm

Annual General Meeting, special guest and members dinner. More details to come out on Contact.

Jimmy Little Community Centre, Cecily Street,
Lilyfield

Report of the Big Indoor Picnic Time To Shine 2 August 2025

This is the fourth Big Indoor Picnic organised by Ten Forty Matrix. The first event was in 2020 and because, due to COVID regulations we could only have an outdoor picnic with 20 women, while in a town hall that can hold several hundred, we could have 70 so, we decided to hold our picnic indoors. This was advantageous in regards to no stress about weather, and we had facilities like a kitchen, microphones and plenty of tables and chairs, not to mention nearby toilets.

The original plan was to hold the event on a Saturday near International Women's Day as we intended to celebrate the fact that 2025 is 50 years since International Women's Year. The Federal election got in the way so we found ourselves on a wet, cold August day in Leichhardt Town Hall.

Ruth from our IT group called Websisters, designed a terrific advertising flyer. We budgeted for 80 although with health matters and cold weather the roll up was 60. Some of the participants came from the Central Coast braving the cold and wet. Norma managed to negotiate the hall's sound system and played a variety of music, including the perfect song by Judy Small to introduce our speaker, Wendy Bacon.



flowers decorated the tables. Purple balloons signalled the right location.

Women arrived gradually after 11 am and there was much greeting of old friends and welcoming new participants. Two women attended who had never been before and said they felt most welcome by everyone. At 11.45am Sylvia welcomed us all. Then Lunch. The hired urn provided hot water for coffee and various teas. Sam of All Courses Elite Catering, who is based in Leichhardt on Parramatta Road, did her usual amazing job of catering for all diets even those that usually are hard for other caterers. Lunch was delicious.

Our speaker Wendy Bacon was chosen due to her long history of activism for women and all minority groups. Wendy gave her reflections on Australia at the time she was born in 1940s, a very oppressive place for women, limited expectations and those that existed included marriage and children. She talked about her involvement in the left movement and her initial rejection of an autonomous Women's Liberation Movement in the early 1970s. However, like so many feminists on the left she recognised the need for independent feminist action. She talked about the many direct actions the women's liberation movement was involved in, like Women's Prison action and abortion reform. She is still active in supporting women's rights and her training as a lawyer enables her to provide excellent support. Her talk was well received and she had to leave early as she was supporting a woman facing the courts.

Our fabulous team of volunteers set up the tables and chairs in record time. A huge thanks to you all. Purple cloths and small vases of Women were asked to take a nomination form for acknowledgement of individual women who has been feminist activists for over 50 years and send it to Sylvia. She wants to begin a roll of honour.

Norma put the dance music on and some of us warmed up with some dancing bringing a great day to a joyful end.

Sylvia



Wendy Bacon Reflections

When I look back, I think about my grandmothers and my mother. And just sort of very briefly, I would just say that one of my grandmothers, and this again is how I think we do move forward in some ways. I sometimes worry that we've moved backwards in things like protest, but you can see progress. Like my grandmother managed to get to be a primary school teacher before the First World War, but as soon as she married my grandfather she never worked again, could not work, was not allowed to work, as you know, and she became a force in the Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

She was probably, I think, the first woman on the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. She loved making speeches and she sort of talked to me a lot about that and even got me to make quite rebellious speeches at the Presbyterian School that I attended. So she had a big impact on my life. My other grandmother was born in England. Her father was a prison governor in a prison that locked up suffragettes. That was a bit of a shock when I realised that.

She met my grandfather, who was a first-year soldier in the First World War and migrated to Australia. Her father saw that as an extraordinary piece of rejection and never spoke to her again. She worked during the First World War as a bank clerk. She always described that as a highlight of her life. She never worked again in the workforce. She was good at maths, or she said she was good at maths. I never saw her doing maths, but the bank clerk thing in her mind was very linked with that.

She then lived in the South Australian desert, owned a post office, and was in fact a somewhat ambitious woman through her experiences. My mother wanted to be an interior designer, and in fact at 85, wore this really nice scarf I'm wearing today. She wasn't able to do interior design because it was during the Depression. She became a nurse and she had to stop work and was never in the normal paid workforce again when she became engaged to my father, who was in the Second World War. She had five children and very much lived the 1950s stay-at-home mother. She had five children when my father died. They were both 42.

She had to dramatically downsize her lifestyle and did that over 18 months after his death. And then she had what we used to call, and you may remember this, a nervous breakdown. Essentially, she tried to kill herself, not able to get any help. There was no grief counseling, no support.

She ultimately recovered from that and became a feminist, actually, before I did. When I returned home at the end of 1967, having been to university, she presented me with a book. That was Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*. And that book sort of described her life, to her. She said, you need to know about this. She went to work as a volunteer quite early on in the women's movement, in a women's refuge.

I was a little bit slow to feminism. I was an activist and I was a Libertarian, Sydney Libertarian. I very much believed in direct action. But some of you may find this quite awful in a way, I really had to be persuaded about women's only spaces. And that

took about, like, I was a feminist by, let's say, 1972. The first women's meetings were already happening. I think that wasn't that late. I was fairly quick to catch up.

My sister Jenny, who's 81 now, was raped at knife point in her house in Fitzroy, by a man who broke in in the early 1970s. She, by 1975, along with other women, had established the Rape Crisis Centre in Melbourne. Her solution, and my other sister, Janet's was to do something. That was very much, I think, the spirit of those times, to put into practice what you needed and to meet women's needs. Janet was the first doctor in the Aboriginal Medical Service in Melbourne, when she was 24. And she went on to be the first doctor in the Elizabeth Women's Health Centre in Adelaide.

And she remained a feminist. She died in the 1990s. This was my family. The women were very strong women and what they could do was very much at the core of my own experiences. I was a little bit slow on the ideological side, but once I was involved, I became very involved.

Now I might just go back to 1975. That's 50 years ago. And you can all remember back, about the groups you were involved with.

Now, about this time in 1975, I was working at the Liverpool Women's Health Centre, and in fact that's where I met Pearlie. I was hired, and I really had no expertise in this, as a researcher for the Liverpool Women's Health Centre. I did have

some research experience but no professional approach to it.

Nevertheless, we opened the doors of that centre with a mixture of workers in it, some of whom were feminists already, women's liberation people. Other women were women who had begun this centre out of feeling that if people were going to get a women's health centre in the city, they certainly wanted one out in the western suburbs. A woman called Kay Farrington, who lived at Green Valley, did a lot towards setting up that women's health centre. There were also women from the Communist Party on the management committee who had long working-class roots into that community. It was, I would say, very successful. From the moment we opened, lots of women came. Lots of women of all kinds.

Really, I think all we were trying to do was, first of all, listen. Secondly, believe. Because going to doctors, you probably had these experiences, I certainly did, doctors were quite punitive and did not believe what women were saying. And that was sort of like routine.

So, it was to believe, and then to listen, and empower. And partly the way we empowered was to empower ourselves. So, we did; even those of us who were not on the medical side. We had doctors and qualified nurses, but we also learned to do basic tests and examinations. And in fact, that was one of the things I'd done in the women's movement before I even went to Liverpool Women's Health Centre. I was in groups where we talked about our bodies and our vaginas and our clitorises. And when I was editing Tharunka, at UNSW, when I

was still a student in 1970, we put out a whole publication, produced mainly by a well-known feminist who died in, I think in 2020, Liz Fell. And it was called, on the front of it was get fucked, or getting fucked. And then inside, people just describing their first fuck. Some of it was very grim. In my case, it was a fairly grim story. We didn't all have our names on it.

We also had basic things about vaginal diseases. That was all very revolutionary back then, if you like. So, we brought that to the Women's Health Centre. It was one of the most heartening experiences in my life when we ran it. I set up this thing called the Premenstrual Tension Group. And people came to this group and we just talked about, you know, what people were experiencing in terms of symptoms, depression, backache, bloating, you know it all.

And then we started talking about nutrition. That was really important then, getting some sort of understanding. Back then it was to me about fluid retention and how one could do something about that. But we also more talked about our lives. And through that, I actually could see that we knew it from consciousness raising and big women's meetings that were happening in the city as well. We sort of understood that through talking and sharing, people can change.

I think that's incredibly important. And to some extent, I wonder if some of that activist sort of feeling at a really grassroots level was lost along the way in the women's movement. I mean, that partly happened because of neoliberalism and bureaucratisation. I won't go into all of that now.

But I do want to mention a couple of other things about 1975.

When the dismissal happened, in November 1975, I must have heard the news on a radio or got a phone call from someone. I was in a caravan park at Lansdale out near Liverpool, with two women who had got out of prison and were homeless. They got out of Mulawa Women's Prison, and by then, I was in a group called Women Behind Bars. We'd started that group a couple of years before, and it was always a group where it was very important that we have people who'd been in prison, not just like me, briefly in prison due to censorship court cases and that sort of thing, but women who actually had been in prison and in what we called ~~their~~ girls' homes, before that, and that we were a sort of group that worked out of real experience. I think that was very important. I was there trying to find them a caravan when we heard that the dismissal happened.

Women Behind Bars also became part of, in an understated way, the Liverpool Women's Health Centre. When we formed Women Behind Bars, one of the things we found is that the medical treatment of health facilities, and this remains true today, but back then the health facilities for women in prison were in a way the way that women were punished.

That idea that women were punished through their bodies, and I literally saw that happening in Mulawa when I first went there in 1971. Back then sex work was illegal and there were always quite a few sex workers in prison. I remember being in a whole room of them when we were all

going to have compulsory examinations and they were not to see if we had venereal disease. That was not a pleasant experience.

In every way, the whole experience for me of being a woman in prison very much reinforced that idea that I'd read in feminist books about women being punished through their bodies, but somehow in prison, I saw it actually happening in a very physical and visible way.

At Liverpool Women's Health Centre we organised, not terribly upfront, because I don't think the corrective services would have known that I was involved at all at that point, we arranged for a nurse to go into Mulawa. That was a woman also called Pearl. She went into Mulawa and actually just provided a decent, ordinary feminist nursing service to the women. Unfortunately, that was just outside what was within the parameters of Mulawa Women's Prison, and probably still is. She was thrown back out again after a few months.

It was during that period that I met and introduced her to other people, a woman called Sandra Wilson.

Those who don't know about the story of Sandra Wilson, I really encourage you to read about her life. Because when I found out, when I met her, Sandra had been in prison for more than 13 years. She was ultimately in prison for 18 years. She had committed a murder. She'd been found not guilty on the grounds of insanity and she was most definitely insane at the time when she killed a taxi driver.

When I read about her life and what it had been like for her as a young lesbian woman as she was

growing up in the 1950s and 60s and how she was punished and threatened; every bit of love she felt for anyone was crushed. That had a big impact on me. She went through the psychiatric system. She tried to be a psychiatric nurse herself, she went through the psychiatric system, she went through the girls' home system. And by the time I met her, she was totally sane. She was an intelligent woman. She'd been doing everything she could to educate and improve herself. She was very institutionalised, very much part of the system, almost helping run the prison, but very, very wrongfully imprisoned.

At that point, we had Women Behind Bars, but we broadened, and a whole lot of other women who weren't part of Women Behind Bars joined the Sandra Wilson campaign. And what we were trying to do was to just get her out of prison. Now, one of the reasons we got drawn into this was that we could see the difficulties we were fighting for. We were really abolitionists in the sense that we need prisons but only for those people who seriously are a risk to other people. I mean, clearly some people are very violent and need to be restrained. But those people, like most of the women in Mulawa Women's Prison, today and then, should never be in prison.

We also realised that was going to be a very tough battle, so we wanted also to work at an individual level, and that's how we started these campaigns. The first one we did was Sandra Wilson, and the second one we did, which was an even bigger one, was for a woman called Violet Roberts, who had killed a very, very violent husband, in a premeditated way, but she had killed him.

One of the key things in that campaign was to occupy Chifley Square. We set up a camp there, and just stayed there. We were right beside the heart of the New South Wales government, near the Goodsell building and the Premier's Department.

I don't know if any of the women here were there at that time. One of the women who was there was Virginia Bell, who was part of Women Behind Bars at that time. I think she probably became not the first woman on the High Court, but the first lesbian on the High Court, and certainly has been a pioneer in the law. But at that time, she was very much involved in Women Behind Bars. That campaign was successful. We did get that win.

Now, stepping away from that, I just wanted to mention another thing that was happening in 1975. That was the disappearance of Juanita Nielsen. Now this time, 50 years ago, some of us were putting out a newspaper, a small newspaper that mirrored that Juanita Nielsen had a newspaper called NOW, which was a King's Cross newspaper, and she was literally disappeared.

You probably all mostly know of this story where she went to the Carousel Club in the heart of King's Cross, something I would never have personally risked doing, but she went there to get advertising for her newspaper and she was never seen again. They wanted her to put an ad in.

Now, that was reported to the Darlinghurst police and the Darlinghurst Police essentially told us we were told not to report it, not to go

to the media at all, and just to deal with the police.

I had a good friend, she's dead now, Theresa Brennan who was a very strong feminist. And on a Monday night after Juanita disappeared, Theresa rang Triple J and it got through to the media. About an hour after that I was with her when she got a death threat over the phone. This was a very dangerous time and we put out this newspaper talking about this cover -up.

Now it's 50 years since Juanita disappeared and we've never really got to the bottom of it, but we do know that it was property developers, people linked with the property developers in Victoria Street, who organised her murder. Sort of organised crime people connected with the developers.

I just thought I would probably sort of end with that, but also to say that Juanita was a very significant person. I don't think she would have called herself a feminist or women's liberation, certainly not a women's liberationist. But she very much herself was a strong woman who'd grown up five years before I had.

She was probably five years older and, you know, had been a woman who had gone off overseas on her own. Even that was, you know, adventurous then. She had not gone along with her rich family's desire for how she should live. She had set up a newspaper. And even that was quite a revolutionary thing to do at that time. And to think that she could, in fact, go to the Carousel Club. She went there as a strong person. And while I say I might not have done that, she was a strong person to do that. Not everyone is in the full-on politicised movement when change is happening. I think that

we have to, I think change happens, you know, in a way it's like it ripples out and everyone gets affected. I think the 1970s were like that, when things rippled out, and people were suddenly caught up in change that they probably weren't expecting.

And that idea people talk about, oh, we're in this space, or I'm doing this in this space, or I'm doing that in that space. I feel that we imagine we could be in every space and move into every space. Things like Every Woman Press, which some of you will remember in Chippendale, printed the resource guide for the Rape Crisis Centre that Kris Melmouth and others had set up. Everyone sort of became connected. I think that's really important.

It's really a very serious issue in our city, those property developers, they succeeded in defeating the green bans although the green bans saved some houses. The green bans being builders labourers bans to stop working class housing and other buildings being pulled down.

They succeeded in defeating that, and I also really think they never lost the sway that they've held in our cities. And, you know, these days women in our demographic are the fastest growing group of homeless people in our cities. And a lot of those women end up homeless because they're fleeing violence.

I just want to end by saying I personally find it hard to negotiate that sort of idea looking back. Yes, we have achieved a lot. We wouldn't be sitting here if we hadn't achieved a lot. We just wouldn't be. But at the same time, we have so much that we actually haven't achieved

and not achieved it for all women, particularly. And, I think that idea is never going to happen unless people can envisage a different way of doing things, protesting, but also putting into practice the things they want, and perhaps not always expecting that the State is going to come to the rescue. In this occasion, tomorrow, we'll actually be defying the State when we protest.

(At this point there was a question-and-answer time. From that more reflections were shared by Wendy, particularly about the corruption of the police in the 1970s.)

...On one occasion, and I spoke about this at a rally not long after the first Mardi Gras, an Indigenous woman who was there told me about how she had been raped by Darlinghurst police.

Some of them (the police) were what we called 'incorruptibles'. They got badly punished. But one of them told me that when he was a young police officer in Darlinghurst, he was told by his superiors that when they went down to Woolloomooloo and other places to pick up homeless people and people who were drunk, which was then an offence as well, they used to pickpocket them and take the money in their pockets. Now that's about as low as you can go, and that's a very minor form of corruption.

But the Darlinghurst Police also actively covered up the murder of Juanita Nielsen.

We squatted in Victoria Street because in 1973, the buildings were literally being pulled apart from the inside by thugs who were hired by the organised crime people in the Cross. We moved

into the buildings to support the people who were still there, who were low-income people.

Later on, and there were quite a few women's liberation people involved with this, we squatted in a place next door to where Juanita Nielsen lived, called the Ashfield Hotel. And we established a pretty effective sort of community of about 50 or 60 people, attempting to live in a cooperative way, including homeless people. And what the Darling Hills Police people did was put a heroin dealer in there. Then when they got arrested, they'd be released and they'd be put back in there.

On one occasion, a group of women, including Carolyn Graham and other women went inside and tried to evict a man physically. He had raped someone after we were thrown out of this building. We went up there, a group of us. He had a glass flagon, and threatening to shatter our heads, so we left.

Afterwards, I was outside with a lot of people, we had not committed any offence. We were just standing there and the two police came up to me and said you're under arrest.

I said, Well, you know, what for?

They said, anything you like.

And they grabbed me, and at the time, I had some overalls on, pink ones, I think they were at the time, or mauve, I can't remember which. They dragged me into the middle of the Kings Cross. People started pulling me in one direction and the police were pulling me in the other direction. The hooks on the overalls popped off and I was virtually

naked. I didn't have a bra on. I was virtually naked in the middle of King's Cross. I was then put in a police van and taken up to Darlinghurst Police Station.

The Royal Commission later found in 1975 that the police were corrupt in a routine, everyday way. Like it was not unusual, like you planted guns, you made up evidence. Some of that still goes on, they're making up evidence today. It was a very violent time.

Can I just tell you one other really small thing. I might write a book later on, but at the minute I have been researching family history. When I did family history I wanted to do it in a feminist way, not to follow the male line. It's extremely hard not to follow the male line because all the obituaries and everything are all about the men. My story involved black and white relations at the Mouth of the Murray, and I'll just say I've done a huge amount of work on this. One day I'm looking at Ancestry.com and I see there was an Aboriginal farmer, the first Aboriginal farmer at East Wellington, a man called George Macrae. And I'm looking at this ancestry, I see George Macrae and then I see opposite Charlotte Edwards. And I think Edwards, that's a name I saw that my great -great -grandmother was called Edwards and she occupied with her husband, the mouth of the Murray. And then I realised that, in fact, the woman who had married the first Aboriginal farmer was my great, great, great aunt. I had been looking for the connection. In the end, I found it through the female line.

Thank you very, very much Wendy

Gangan's House in Liverpool 8 1940s-1960s- Sylvia Kinder

As a child I loved visiting my grandmother, who was called Gangan. Her name was Ada, a good old-fashioned name. She lived in one of Liverpool's less lovely suburbs, called Liverpool 8. Later I realised it was actually a slum. The terraced houses caterpillared the streets, each door fronted the pavement with a virginal white doorstep. This was whitened each day to prove beyond doubt it was a clean house. This contrasted sharply with the dirty streets pockmarked with potholes from the removal of air raid shelters. The only transport that came down the street was the coal delivery truck, milk man, postman on his bike, and the rag and bone man in his horse drawn cart. The rent collector and window cleaner carrying his ladder and bucket, walk to each house.

The front of the house faced directly onto the street, two sash windows at the front, one upstairs and one downstairs. The back of the house had two windows as well, a small yard with the toilet and door to the alleyway called a jigger. The garbage bin was in the yard wall and accessible on both sides so the bin men could run up the jigger collecting garbage! The windows were small and still had the jet, black blinds from the Second World War. Until demolition around 1970 the house had no electricity only gas for lighting and cooking. No hot water except what was heated on the coal fire or gas stove, and one cold tap in the kitchen. No bathroom.

Stepping on the white door step you enter the cramped, dark room called the parlour. There was a small, hard, horsehair, leather sofa, a treadle sewing machine, where I learnt to sew, a black, shiny piano, very much a status symbol, small highly polished oak folding table with twisty legs, a compact wooden armed comfy chair and a cupboard stacked with Tate and Lyle sugar, P.G. Tips tea, and tins of condensed milk, just in case war broke out again. There was a collection of dusty Victorian books. Some had the names of the family member who had won it at school or Sunday school. The gas light had a decorative glass shade. The only use I ever witnessed of this room was Gangan sewing one of my dance costumes. She had been a seamstress in a factory making safari suits before marriage. The floor covering was dark linoleum, a step up from bare boards, and a few home-made rugs.

In contrast the next room, the living room and kitchen, was well used. It was crowded with furniture. The steep stairs to the two upper rooms went from this room, with the cupboard under the stairs full of coal. Jammed against the side of the stairs was a rocking chair with the back of the rockers cut off so it would fit against the wall and under the round table. This had its drop down side always down, no room to ever be a complete circle. On either side of the table were wooden chairs, the one in front of the coal cupboard had wooden arms and was Grandad's chair. When visitors came, he moved to the armless chair on the other side of the table. Gangan had a wicker basket chair. The table had a mock velvet cloth, which was covered with a linen table cloth when

meals were served, and a thick cotton blanket for use when ironing.

Next to the arm chair was the fire. Clearly the builders of these terraces had intended the residents to cook on the two, tiny, iron, flat surfaces of the small ovens that were on each side of the fire. A large cast iron pot with a small tap was kept on one of the plates. This was the hot water supply. This fire was surrounded by a fender to prevent any hot coals falling out and setting the house on fire. It was also good for drying the tea towels, and towels used to dry oneself after a wash in the tin bath. This bath hung behind the door to the yard and outside toilet.

On the other side of the fire was a low, brown, stone sink, and one inelegant cold tap. An enamel bowl was in the sink and when in use made a scratchy noise against the base of the sink. There was no room for a draining board. Between the sink and a cupboard called a safe, there was enough space for a slim woman to stand and wash dishes. The simple safe had been made by my Grandad and it had metal wire sides to air the goods inside. This was the pantry. The top was the surface for food preparation, and all other kitchen action. Next to the safe was a gas cooker. Clearly introduced when my Gangan married in the 1920s. Her widowed mother could never have afforded one. As well as the tin bath the exit door had three hooks with a bag hanging from each. One for string, one for paper bags, and one for silver paper and milk bottle tops which were donated to the blind society to raise money. The

silver paper was from the cigarette boxes. Both my grandparents smoked. The cigarette boxes were unfolded and cut into strips, which were folded in half and kept in a container for lighting the gas from the fire. It saved matches. Nothing was wasted. The door to the yard was also the location for my grandfather's Mackintosh and trilby, when he came home from work.

The highlight of this room was a large mahogany dresser. A display of crystal glass bowls and other ceramic items lived on the top. I never saw them used. All the household crockery and cutlery lived in the cupboards and drawers. Above this was a high shelf. It housed a series of former biscuit tins. Most were used as the location for money for window cleaning, prudential insurance man, the coal man, rent collector, food and any other needs. One tin actually had chocolate whole meal biscuits in it.

My grandfather had built an enclosure of a section of the yard between the back door and the door to the alleyway behind the house. This housed the large mangle, for squeezing water from the washing. There was a galvanised dolly tub and dolly. The dolly was a small three-legged item attached to a pole with a handle. Water was boiled and put into the tub, with grated sunlight soap. Washing was put in and the dolly operated by hand did the work of an agitator. The dolly tub was next to the mangle and a basket was on the opposite side. Washing was lifted with a wooden stick onto the tray in front of the large wooden rollers. Then the mangle handle turned as the washing was squeezed between the rollers and

fell into the basket. The water ran back into the tub ready for the next wash. Later the water in the tub was changed for clean cold water. All the washing was then rinsed and the mangle process repeated. In the kitchen/living room the fire had been stoked up. A contraption of five spaced rods attached to a pulley was lowered from the ceiling. Washing was hung over the rods and then the pulley raised the rods near the ceiling. The whole room was now full of washing drying. This was always Mondays.

On Tuesdays I watched as my Gangan ironed. She had two solid, flat, smoothing irons. She had a thick cloth well used for holding the hot handle after the iron was heated on the top of the oven by the fire. She would flick a bit of water on the bottom to see what the temperature was. Place the second iron to be heated and on top of a thick cloth on the table iron away. I watched this process with great interest and never worked out how nothing ever got burnt.

Up the very steep stairs were two bedrooms. The back room had been my great grandmother Elizabeth Smith's room. She died when I was one year old. A tough resilient woman who had a hard life as a widow with four small children. Her husband had died of a heart attack at 33 years old. There was a small, old wardrobe and dressing table. The double brass bed had a wonderful sinking feather mattress and warm quilt. Under the bed was the chamber pot I used at night.

In contrast my Gangan and Grandfather's room was more modern, but still dated. Her dressing

table had a lot of cut-glass items and a bone comb and bone backed brush which I think were supposed to look like ivory. There was a picture of a young woman with glasses most likely in her late twenties. This was my Gangan's best friend. Also, a picture of her niece Elsie as a young girl in a dancing pose. Later she was my ballet teacher.

Each of the rooms was around 12 square meters, if that. Making the whole house around 48m², today this is the size of a studio apartment and at best a one-bedroom flat.

Gangan's house was my safe place. I think it saved me. She and Grandfather made it a safe place. They took me out and read books to me. I spent a lot of time there.



1958 Me and Viviane my friend both aged 10 when staying at her Gangan's. Willoughby Street Liverpool 8. GanGan knitted my cardigan. Sylvia

Vale Cate Turner 1928 – 2025

Cate was a beloved friend and inspiration many of us. Her story was in last month's newsletter and an interview she gave about her life is on our website. <https://olderdykes.org/podcasts/>



Vale Trish Molinari 1946 – 2025

Trish contributed a lot to many bushwalking groups and the lesbian community, offering to lead walks and as a regular walker, contributing to the social aspect of our community, she loved playing cards and was an excellent competitive player. Trish had a quiet, warm, personality, and her cheery smile and sense of humour made her fun to be with. Trish walked with other groups and was famous for her long backpacking treks in remote parts of Australia. She often carried only 11 kilos on these walks, her single-person tent, tiny stove, dehydrated food (made herself), maybe a change of underwear, top and shorts. I guess some sunscreen, cup, plate and utensils. She really was an amazing bushwalker. In recent years she no longer cycled but joined groups of cyclists, or other groups like van dykes in her beloved van, enjoying the social aspects of the events. Trish will be sorely missed by all her friends. Due to her modest demeanour, she was not always aware how much she was respected and loved.



Sylvia

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. 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.

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Sylvia

Contact email list: Diann, Ruth, Julie

Archives: Sylvia and Jan

Money Management: Fiona

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Diann, Julie

Newsletter: Jacqueline and Diann

Management committee: Jan, Sylvia, Pearlie, Diann, Fiona, Jacqueline, Krystyna

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Browse our Website: www.olderdykes.org