
January 2023 - Newsletter

Three Sisters Social Group

Box 7074 LEURA NSW 2780

www.threesisterssocial.asn.au

info@threesisterssocial.asn.au

bookings@threesisterssocial.asn.au

Committee

President: Terence Preeo - president@threesisterssocial.asn.au

Vice-president: John Wilson - vice-president@threesisterssocial.asn.au

Secretary: Larry Singer - secretary@threesisterssocial.asn.au

Treasurer: Allan Kerr - treasurer@threesisterssocial.asn.au

Committee members: Thomas Naylor, Rick Hawthorne



UPCOMING EVENTS

Monthly **DINNER**

The next dinner is in February

MONTHLY Luncheon

The Grandview Hotel

**Great Western Highway
Wentworth Falls.**

12pm Tuesday

24 January 2023

**A choice of main course and
dessert**

Price: \$37

**Reservations: by the Sunday
evening prior**

bookings@threesisterssocial.asn.au

Dear Friends

Just a short message this start of the new year.

Last year was an eventful one that saw the Three Sisters Social Group have a very successful year.

Covid passed us, sort of. The Disco and Ball were a triumph. The AIDS Memorial was restored and dedicated all within 12 months from launching the restoration appeal.

The King's Birthday Long Weekend Disco and Ball were planned and launched.

There also appeared to be a renewed dynamism in the group which was reflected in the large attendance at the Annual Christmas Dinner.

This past year also saw the passing of Jacque, a distinctive figure in the mountains and a guiding personality in the Three Sisters for many years.

To all a happy New Year. I hope your celebrations are enjoyable.

Stay safe

Terry

On the Catwalk



Three Sisters Social Group presents

On the Catwalk

King's Birthday Long Weekend
11 June 2023
The Carrington Hotel, Katoomba

Tickets - \$195
On Sale - 1st February 2023
Ticket Sales - The Carrington Hotel, 02 4782 1111



Kings Birthday Long Weekend 2023

The news that you have all been waiting for.

The follow up from the stupendious Platinum and Ruby Ball will be held on the Kings Birthday long Weekend, Sunday 11 June 2023 at a new and sensational venue.

We are excited to announce that On the Catwalk will be held at the Carrington, Katoomba.

The Carrington is a marvelous venue, steeped in history and having a unique style of its own. A style that our community can well match, or outdo.



Venue Change

Our traditional venue, the Fairmont, is unavailable for On the Catwalk. The Carrington Hotel has stepped into the breach to ensure that we can hold our traditional ball in 2023.

Venue Capacity

The Blue Mountains is not blessed with venues that can accommodate the number of guests that the Three Sisters Balls traditionally attract. While the Carrington Hotel provides a fabulous experience, its capacity is smaller than we are used to. Because of this the number of tickets for On the Catwalk will be less than normally available.

It is expected that tickets will be in demand and we advise our guests to organise their tables well before time and purchase their tickets early.

Tickets

Tickets will go on sale on 1 February, 2023, from the Carrington Hotel, 02 4782 1111.

Ticket price is \$195.



We have attempted to keep the cost as reasonable as possible and this price is slightly below last year's ball as a booking fee will not apply.



Table Reservations

Tables for 8 and 10 will be available. A seating plan is available on the Three Sisters Web site

<https://www.threesisterssocial.asn.au/ball/>

Every effort will be made to allocate the table of your choice but this cannot be guaranteed. If your first choice has already been allocated the Carrington staff will give you the next best

available.

The Carrington has requested that all table hosts provide the name and contact details of the host and of the names of each of the guests in order to compile an accurate seating plan and for security requirements.

It would be appreciated that full payment for a table be made at the time of reservation.

Guests on a booked table who opt to pay for their ticket directly to the Carrington will be able to do so within 14 days of the table reservation.

Seat Reservations

A number of well sited tables will be reserved for small parties and individuals/couples who wish to buy individual tickets.

The Carrington staff will assist in table selection.



Accommodation

Arrangements have been made for a complete wing of the Hotel for ball guests. Traditional Rooms, with breakfast included, are available for \$110 per night. Further information at <https://www.thecarrington.com.au/stay/traditional-rooms/>.



The Carrington Traditional Wing is a perfect opportunity to meet like minded people. You can also avail yourself of the wonders of the Blue Mountains sojourn, to indulge in the delights of a rainbow weekend with Bent Art and the Blackheath Disco as well as sachaying On the Catwalk.

AIDS Memorial Medlow Bath Park

The following is a copy of the article in the Blue Mountains Gazette, 7 December, 2022, about the dedication of the restored AIDS Memorial, Medlow Bath Park.

New memorial to lost lives

BY JENNIE CURTIN

IT WAS a day of reflection and memories at Medlow Bath park on Thursday at the dedication of the new AIDS memorial.

Thirty years ago, the 250 Mountains victims of AIDS were memorialised with name plaques placed under trees.

But time and nature had taken their toll. Some had deteriorated in the weather, others had been lost completely.

A year ago, the Medlow Bath Residents Association contacted the Three Sisters Social Group about a small council grant received. Why not use it to remake the memorial in the park, was the suggestion.

Fundraising started in earnest and last Thursday, World AIDS day, the result was unveiled.

The new design groups all the plaques together, affixed to large sandstone blocks arranged in a circle around a beautiful forest pansy tree.

At the dedication ceremony, many who knew some of those people named on



Donors Kerry McKenzie and Maurice Cooper, Deb Brown (Residents Association) and Terry Preeo (Three Sisters Social Group). Picture by Jennie Curtin

the plaques recalled the tragic and terrifying times of the 1980s and 1990s when AIDS struck.

Maurice Cooper, owner of Bygone Beautys at Leura and a major donor to the project,

recalled those tragic times.

"At one stage I went to 17 funerals in 12 months. Seventeen funerals of people who had significantly contributed to my life," he said.

Mr Cooper was a member



Guests placed flowers on the sandstone blocks which display the memorial plaques. Picture by Jennie Curtin



A quiet time to remember. Picture by Brigitte Grant Photography

of the original park memorial committee and said he was "delighted" to be asked to be involved in the restoration/renewal project.

Three Sisters president, Terry Preeo, said working on

restoring the memorial had awakened buried emotions.

He recalled the 1980s when being openly gay was so new (homosexuality was decriminalised in NSW in 1984).

"We were all very young, if not in years, then in experience. For most, we still had our gay L plates exposed for all to see.

"We jumped into the cauldron of newness, excitement, creativity... A never-ending dance party - or so we thought."

All too soon the excitement of a liberated life "became ringed with the glaring starkness of mortality ... [when] the plague swept through our rainbow world", Mr Preeo said.

The AIDS memorial, established in 1991, at the time transformed a rather forlorn park into a quiet, peaceful area of contemplation.

The new memorial, with its poignant plaques remembering sons, brothers and lovers, erected by family and friends, also honours the neighbours, carers, health professionals, community groups and Mountains folk who offered much support.

In Mr Preeo's words: "This place is an important place in our lives and in our community, a place that is a repository of many stories. A place of remembered souls."

World AIDS Day and Dedication of the Restored AIDS Memorial at the Medlow Bath Park
Midday 1 December 2022.

A year ago the Three Sisters Social Group and the Medlow Bath Residents Association launched an appeal to restore the AIDS memorial at Medlow Bath Park.

The memorial was established in 1991 as a living memorial to the some 250 victims of AIDS from the Blue Mountains and consists of some 150 individually names plaques under trees and in garden beds.

Time had taken its toll and a restoration of the memorial was necessary. The Blue Mountains community response and help from the three tiers of government has been amazing.

Particular mention should be made of the contributions provided by the Commonwealth Government Stronger Communities Grant, Transport for New South Wales, Mr Maurice Cooper OAM and Mr Kerry McKenzie, Bendigo Bank, PFLAG Sydney and ACON. The Katoomba Men's Shed provided valuable assistance in cleaning and repairing the plaques and Lindena Robb painted our stunning project logo, a forest pansy, the tree which is centre point in the AIDS Memorial Garden. Restoration is now complete and the dedication of the restored memorial was held on World AIDS Day, 1 December 2022 at midday at Medlow Bath Park.



The Three Sisters Social Group 2022 Christmas Dinner at the Chalet



Christmas 2022





BentART and the Three Sisters have a long association having provided a consummate queer experience over the June Long Weekend for the LGBTIQ community. The bentART art exhibition has been an integral part of the then Queen's and now King's Birthday long weekend festivities.

As part of the fund-raising events bentART have arranged the following activities:

bent Barefoot Bowls (rainbow theme)

When: Sunday, 29th January 2023

Time: 3 pm – 6 pm

Where: Lawson Bowling Club, 2 Loftus St Lawson

Cost: \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members

Sip and Learn to Paint for non-artists

When: Saturday, 4th February 2023

Time: 2 pm – 5 pm

Where: Blackheath RSL, 2 Bundarra St, Blackheath

Cost: \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members

Art supplies and equipment provided

Trivia

When: Sunday, 30th April 2023

Time: 2 pm – 5 pm

Where: RSL Katoomba (Auditorium), 86 Lurline St Katoomba

Cost: \$20 members, \$25 non-members

More information at <https://bentart.com.au/events/>

Memories of Balls Past

Fixing the Belle. The time the committee did a Barilaro by fixing the Belle of the Ball. The prize was not a first-class ticket to New York City, but that did not matter. It was strictly for the prestige.

It was another time. It was more 'free and easy' then. Community groups were taking a lead from the behaviour of a succession of New South Wales Governments. Bad behaviour.

They might not have had the resources to pork a barrel or rort a bottom line, although a line may have been wrought from a prone bottom from time to time, but the precedent had been set by higher authority, the wink and the nod held society by the short and curlies.



Eunice Delicto

So, let's get the facts straight. There was a ball. A Mountaineers Ball held at that now famous, mid-mountains community hall that had a lifetime's memories ground into its hardwood floors, infused into its hallowed walls and impregnated into its smoke-stained ceiling. It had seen many an affair to remember.

This one took the cake.

Just who thought that Eunice deserved the major prize, no one admitted to. Just who convinced the cabal that was the Mountaineers' committee to support a virtual putsch to ensure Eunice walked away with the coveted sash and bouquet, supplied by florist Janice of Springwood, no one could identify. Just what the whole thing was about, no one knew.

All that was known was that it was a stitch up and betting on the result of the Belle of the Ball Parade was suspended.

Heaven knows, Eunice, as a woman, was as plain as a hat full of cane toads. As a man she was, well, ugly. As a woman she was worse. If looks didn't matter it still wouldn't matter. Her personality matched her appearance. Her manners were of the street.

It's obvious that she had something on the whole committee.

However, the show must go on. The ultimate Belle of the Ball parade was a triumph. Dazzling in its



Eunice Agape



Eunice Paucity

conception, astonishing in its execution, jaw dropping in its composition. The competitors were awe-inspiring in their talent and flair.

The compare was inept.

The parade was a triumph of talent. But no one knew who was who because the compare didn't tell them because he didn't know who they were.

The committee were diabolical in their efforts to ensure Eunice won the prize. They nobbled poor Stephan, the innocent they duped to compare. They kept him as clueless as the crowd.



Eunice je Veux Plus

At award time an air of smugness descended. It was generally known that fix was in. A hush of unexpectedness ensued. The committee was about to announce their decision on who was to be the Belle of the Ball, for they were judge and jury.



Les Eunices Le spectacle était formidable

Chief smug, President Haught, arose from his chair of authority. He cleared his many chinned throat. He milked the audience of all their absolute zero anticipation.

Flat was the atmosphere.

Haught ignored his less than enthusiastic reception. He was used to it. His Probus membership had taught him not to heed such irrelevancies. He was in charge.

The Bell of the Ball Award, he soberly announced, was wait for it Eunice. Quelle surprise, nobody thought.

There was an initial squeal somewhere about mid auditorium. It lasted a split second. A scraping of chair was discerned. A babble of interest arose.

Slowly figures arose from their tables in the gloom. In their ones and twos and then groups, the whole room seemed to explode.

Then as one body, they made a rush for the stage. Followed by another and then another, until the floor was a mass of heaving figures. The tumult spread as a hundred Eunices vied for first place in the race to grab the coveted sash and bouquet.

The committee was undone. Naturally a bunch of queens could not keep a secret. Everyone knew that the fix was in. So many of the attendees of that

year's ball had entered the Belle of the Ball competition under the name of Eunice.

Solo Eunices, couple Eunices, group Eunices.

One hundred Eunices, all in the race for the holy grail.

The melee descended on the stage. The anointed ones were dumb struck, paralysed by indecision, terrified by exposure and the realisation of doom. They will never be elected to high office again.

Which Eunice got the sash? Who knows. The bouquet was trampled underfoot. The sash was never found. Except.... well that's another story.



The Eunices Entre Nous

Disclaimer: This is a work of fiction based on possible fact. Maybe one or two facts. This series of ball tales may be salacious or frivolous or fatuous but always fun, and I hope, never nasty. Bitchy possibly, but not nasty. The facts that are there, the few that are there, may be highly embellished. I'll leave that to the reader to discern. Names have been changed to protect me.