

Alice in Larundel Land¹

Sandy Jeffs, 2015

Alice
 fell
 down
 a
 rabbit hole
 & landed in
 topsy-turvy Larundel Land
 locked up
 captive to lunacy
 & a passing parade of
 Mad Hatters & March Hares
 eccentrics &
 musos & artists & a poet or two
 & ordinary folk
 with the
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 s
 t
 sorrows
 & in-con-ceiv-able lunacy
 sharing delusions
 like needles
 voices babbling in the background
 ECT before breakfast
 stelazine for lunch
 prothiaden for dinner
 melleril at suppertime
 & to bed with a hallucination & a moggi
 —a place full of hunger—
 hunger for
 —kindness,
 —friendship,
 —love
 a curious, (secluded) world
 its dark side
 kept well hidden
 shadow-haunted inmates longing for peace
 with themselves
 no one knowing the wars that raged within
 or the deep pain wedged between
 (spirit & flesh)
 destroying lives—
 friends & family picking up the pieces.

Larundel Land's
 red brick walls now rubble
 windows s-h-a-t-t-e-r-e-d
 graffiti telling another story
 once peaceful gardens
 dis-mem-ber-ed
 sombre ghosts roam the precinct
 calling us to remember them—

we will remember you
 sitting in smoky rooms
 crying alone
 laughing with deranged angels
 —muddled & paranoid
 —chaotic & manic
 —anarchic & confused
 prisoners stalking locked wards
 keys jangling
 medication trollies
 r-u-m-b-ling into melancholic rooms
 & the humour
 the-blacker-than-black-humour
 the-cut-through-all-the-crap-&-misery-humour
 you will not be forgotten—
 we shall erect a monument
 to commemorate all who
 passed
 through Larundel Land
 we *will* remember
 the hell-hole & sanctuary
 the bottomless pit of despair
 unexpected place of healing
 Alice landed on her head
 in upside down
 Larundel Land
 the madhouse that once stood on the
 —edge of town
 where time dawdled
 & everyone hid in the shadows.

1

Alice in Larundel Land is the name of a pantomime
 that was written by chaplain Len Blair and performed
 by staff at Larundel Psychiatric Hospital in 1979.
 Larundel was situated in the outer Melbourne suburb
 of Bundoora. It was closed down in 1999.



Image from the Larundel archives, photographer unknown

Song to Sue

Jenny Hickinbotham, 2022

Come listen now I've a story to tell,
About a young girl she lived at Larundel
She Lived at Larundel, Larundel

It's now called Polaris
A face lift, a re-build
For toffy rich houses
Community of families
Community of haunted ghosts

She's walking with ghosts now
Ghosts of her girlfriends
In meadows of wonder
In meadows of beauty
Mythical beauty
And Spiritual beauty

Builders are hammering and banging
She walks the grounds nature's true life-force
Her Pleasures and freedoms the sense of escape
her true autonomy truth of herself
She is a survivor, she's a lonely survivor

She's walking with ghosts now
Ghosts of her girlfriends
In meadows of wonder
and meadows of beauty
Mythical beauty
her Spiritual beauty

Signs say Aspire, Nova and Guardian
Another claims Heritage, Heritage of ghosts
Communities of families and haunting ghosts
Will they come to share their stories?

She's walking with ghosts now
Ghosts of her girlfriends
In meadows of wonder
and meadows of beauty
Mythical beauty
the Spiritual beauty

Graffiti tells inmates true stories, grief and
Torture, trauma, terrible cruelty, Isolation,
Shackling, heavy sedations, ECT all shocking abuses,
legally sanctioned murders, medical murders, murdered souls
behind closed doors, behind those closed walls.

She's walking with ghosts now
Ghosts of her girlfriends
In meadows of her wonder
and meadows of beauty
Mythical beauty
and Spiritual beauty

Legally sanctioned 'treatments' cause murder, murder
 Protected by law psychiatrists and doctors
 But Experimental Nazi doctors were forced into criminal trials
 Imprison those medicos, imprison those 'treatment' professionals

She's walking with ghosts now
 Ghosts of her girlfriends
 In the meadows of her wonder
 and meadows of beauty
 The Mythical beauty
 and Spiritual beauty

Inmates Graffiti cries
 Please Please save me
 somebody save me
 From these systems, this
 Violence, these punitive 'treatments'

She's walking with ghosts now
 Ghosts of her girlfriends
 In the meadows of her wonder
 and meadows of beauty
 The Mythical beauty
 Spiritual beauty

She's walking the grounds and dancing
 Souls are singing and sighing, singing and sighing
 Within and beside her, she welcomes them in
 They're touching her heart survivor's sensory healing
 They're touching her heart survivor's sensory healing

Larundle will Soon be gone
 Re-built and Plastered over
 With signs, Aspire, Nova, Guardian and Heritage
 Who will acknowledge their sanctioned murders?
 They asked for help, emotional help, they got murdered!

She's walking with the ghosts now
 Still walking with her girlfriends
 Still In the meadow of wonder and beauty
 Mythical beauty
 Spiritual beauty



Image from the Larundel archives, photographer unknown