

THE COMMITTEE FOR LORNE

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Memories of Chris's Restaurant a Lorne icon

This week, we feature a trip down memory lane for many people who remember Lorne of a few decades ago. George Biron most recently chef at the iconic Sunnybrae Restaurant at Birregurra, (now Brae), recounts his experiences of working at Chris's Restaurant in Lorne in the 1980s. Chris Talihmanidis ran the restaurant until the development of the new Cumberland commenced and then went on to establish Chris's at Beacon Point Lodge at Skenes Creek. In part one of his article, George Biron reflects on life at Chris's Restaurant during what was to be the last summer at the restaurant:

I was a latecomer to Chris's. This little unpretentious 40 seat café had already made its name for decades as the place to be in Lorne for honest simple grills and sensational seafood. Chris would start the day early at the pier bagging the best seafood of the day, big sacks of crayfish, tubs of proper calamari. Gemfish was the most popular fish du jour. He would make Kakavia, the Greek fisherman's soup, pure pistachio Baklava and a mess of chocolate mousse before finalising all the orders and preparing breakfast for his elderly parents who came from Greece for the southern summer. By the time I started my day around 3pm Chris had already ensconced himself at the sidewalk table spruiking the

day to the passing parade of regulars booking tables and running to and fro to the TAB for the day's bets.

Stevie, Sammy and all the other Greek old boys who ran the café scene in Lorne would gently break each other's balls over coffee and gossip. Kosta, Chris's younger brother, would often call in to "borrow" a few crays and take the parents up the road to his café to see the grandchildren.

This summer was different; the pressure was on from the big developers. David Mariner was hovering. He had to get Christos to sell up to realise his big development. A serious charm offensive. Eventually he made an offer too good to refuse and the countdown was on.

The staff were a motley crew of local grommets, super smart university students and a few experienced hospitality tragics. Many lived or camped out the back of the shop.

It was a small restaurant with a small kitchen that did seriously big numbers. A big thick flat grill ruled as the kitchen piano. Chris had a remarkably simple system of service that echoed how Chinese restaurants worked. One of the young Einsteins would receive the orders and place the raw produce; a bowl of scallops, a couple of steaks, a clutch of calamari and give it to the cooks while

verballing the whole service to the 2 cooks on the grill and stove. Aboyeur and Garde Manger in one. Crays were dispatched to order with a swift cut through the head down the centre for a quick death before going on the grill or under the salamander.

The caller had to have the skills of an air traffic controller and the patience of a saint to talk through the often 3 sittings that would smash us on the grill every night in the season. The seafood was simply seasoned with garlic, oil salt and pepper. Broiled on the flat top and served. The crays were the same or finished with a brandy sauce made "a la minute" for each one. There was a real Greek salad with the finest Fetta and good herbs and the famous roast potato.

Stay tuned next week for more of George's recollections of Chris's Restaurant and the secret of the "roast potato".



A word from the *Chairman*

What an amazing weekend! – "Where else but Lorne?". There are times that I might get a bit carried away about how lucky we are to be able to embrace, enjoy and appreciate every day of our life in the natural beauty of what is Lorne, but I never ever take it for granted. But there is also another side to our town that continues to evolve as every year passes and at times, it's difficult to describe but let me give you a snapshot.

Last week the atmosphere around town was building as artists erected their amazing creative works, our "Shedders" with truck and forklift, proudly sat "Couta" where it looked so at home, Dick moved a rock that the Ocean couldn't, one of the world's most famous motorcycle chapters were preparing for a weekend away, final touches were being made in preparation for multiple Lorne wedding celebrations, State and Federal Police were on high alert for angels of any background and our local lawn bowlers were waiting anxiously to learn who they would play in the Grand Final.

And this was all before the weekend had even started, autumn in Lorne quiet and slowing – I don't think so! Friday evening saw a large number of both uniformed and plain clothed police enter town in highway patrol vehicles, motor cycles, foot patrols and with drug and booze buses greeting visitors this was a weekend like no other. The sensational Sculpture exhibition was officially opened and thousands walked the

trail in summer warmth of what can only be described as a truly international experience – just brilliant.

Lorne was presenting at its absolute best, the weddings looked spectacular adjacent to the water's edge, our motor cycle visitors were angels and the police presence is still being talked about. Nightfall on Saturday was like a changing of the seasons with the warmth and still skies seeing in darkness and then it all changed, our first rains for over a month, gale force winds and temperatures dipping to the low teens and the first reports of bush fires to our south, it was more like spring than autumn and again Lorne had delivered on all fronts.

With the bush fires and the devastation that we have all seen across national media our local bowlers have to wait another week to see who they will play in their Grand Final. Organisers of the competition have rescheduled the preliminary final for this Saturday with the winner taking on our Lorne team in the Grand Final on Sunday – Good luck Lorne!

On another note, following the Lorne community's experience with the Wye River / Jamieson Track bushfire in late 2015, the Committee for Lorne (CfL) placed a high priority on helping the community to become more resilient when faced with an emergency, such as a bushfire. That is, being prepared, coping with the emergency, and recovering from it.

To that end the Committee embraced a community-driven program launched by the State Government in several towns across the State – Community Based Bushfire Management (CBBM).

A Working Group of the Committee has been established to implement this program. It consists of five community members and is facilitated by a DELWP representative and readily assisted by Surf Coast Shire, CFA, EMV and other key stakeholders.

The Lorne CBBM Working Group has already met several times and (among other projects) is keen to be able to measure the Lorne community's progress towards becoming more resilient. So to provide a baseline against which to measure this progress, the Committee for Lorne is distributing an initial survey as widely as possible to members of the Lorne community. When you receive a copy of this survey through one of our communication channels, please complete it promptly and return it as directed. This survey will also help identify gaps in our resilience, on which the Working Group will focus its attention. You can complete the survey on line at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/lornecommresiliencesurvey>

Please contact Birgitte Hutchens (CBBM Facilitator, DELWP) on 0407 716 676 for more information

Ian Stewart

Chairman - Committee for Lorne

COMMUNITY PROFILE



CATHIE AND PHIL JENNINGS

Cathie, being a member of the Stirling family in Lorne, has a long association with the town. In 1929 the family moved a timber mill house down to Clissold Street. It began as one bedroom holiday home for Cathie's father and his brother. Cathie remembers attending the local primary school whilst her father added on a living area in 1956. A major renovation took place in 1978 at was now known as the "Shack", enabling Cathie and Phil and their three children to have regular holidays in Lorne. Cathie is proud of the fact that their grandchildren are fourth generation inhabitants of the "Shack".

Cathie and Phil were born and educated in Melbourne. After qualifying as a physiotherapist Cathie worked in Horsham for two years before embarking on a working holiday overseas. She spent most of that time in London. A career in Melbourne followed, as they raised and educated their children. For over 30 years Cathie has devoted many hours as a volunteer, facilitating English conversation with newly arrived immigrants, as part of the Home Tutor Scheme.

Phil had always wanted to be an accountant in a public practice. For 40 years he worked in various Melbourne firms until retirement in 2012. As often happens with accountants, their skills are sought after for committees and organisations. Phil is honorary treasurer of the Victorian Jazz Club and involved with his local church in Melbourne as well as with St. Cuthbert's in Lorne.

The Jennings escape the cold in winter and travel north to either Darwin or north Queensland. During the summer months Cathie volunteers at the Lorne Visitors' Information Centre. They enjoy the variety of walks that Lorne offers and also exploring central and western districts of Victoria in their car. Grandparent child-minding duties take them regularly to Colac and Sydney ".
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LORNE WARD EVENTS CALENDAR

March

22 -2/4 **Lorne Sculpture Biennale.** A vibrant festival celebrating the best of Australian and international sculpture. A free event on the Lorne foreshore. www.lornesculpture.com

25 **Deans Marsh Festival,** Live music, local harvest, market stalls, dog jumping, kids events, sheep dog demos and much more. 10 am – 5pm at Deans Marsh Oval.

29-2/4 **Lions Easter Art Show,** at the Senior Citizens Centre.

31 **Lorne Kinder Easter Market,** Located on the Lorne Foreshore 9am – 4pm.

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