

# THE COMMITTEE FOR LORNE

P.O Box 168, Lorne 3232. [info@committeeforlorne.org.au](mailto:info@committeeforlorne.org.au) [www.cfl.org.au](http://www.cfl.org.au) ☎ 0438 843 258

If you would like to receive this page each week via email, please contact us at [info@committeeforlorne.org.au](mailto:info@committeeforlorne.org.au)

## OUR FISHING INDUSTRY An Extraordinary Chapter in Lorne's History

### The era of the fishing industry in Lorne was a formative period in the history of our town.

Over twenty coutha boats operating from the Lorne Pier, a fishing co-op processing tonnes and tonnes of fish and employing many people. And the stories. Oh, the stories! Back in 2012, the Lorne Business and Tourism Association received an Arts Grant to develop and stage a production recounting the times when the fishing industry was at its peak. A group of musicians arrived in Lorne and spoke to some of the fishermen, some retired, some still active, and put together a one hour performance of stories and music. At the time, Richard Cornish, still a writer for the Age, wrote a piece about this project, titled Hook, Line and Clinker. Here is an excerpt from that piece:

"Two old fishermen sit in their club overlooking the Lorne pier from where they once launched their boats. As the swell rises and falls under the decking, tall stories and true fall from their lips. Sydney musician and cabaret performer Pip Branson hangs off every word, taking notes. Come Monday morning he will be joined by the rest of his ensemble, Mikangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen. They will spend the week working with the old local barracouta fishermen, transforming stories of their lives at sea into a 90-minute cabaret, The Salty Sea Dogs and Skeletons of Lorne, one of the headline acts for next weekend's second Festival of Performing Arts, Lorne.

Gary Norton, Pip Branson and Henry Love will relive stories of Lorne fishing. The heyday of that industry was in the early 1970s, when there were 25 commercial fishermen. "We'd head out to sea when the barracouta came in," Love says. "When the 'coutha came up from the deep, the boats would start circling. Twenty-

five boats. Out at sea. Watching each other. Competing for the same fish but working together."

Gary Norton, the other fisherman, chips in. At 65, he's still fishing for crays out of Apollo Bay. "In the days before radios and phones, no one went home until the last boat came in," he says. Love responds. "Yeah, we'd wait for them standing at the bar of the Grand Pacific Hotel." Norton continues, "And when we left there'd be a layer of barracouta scales on the floor an inch thick."

Branson writes furiously as the two men tell more golden stories. They have been polished with each retelling, mostly at the local pub. "One day the fishermen speared a shark in the back of its head," Norton says. "It swam away," Love says. "They thought nothing more of it until it came back at them full pelt and rammed the boat," he says. Branson's mouth is agape. "Well, it was a clinker [wooden] boat and the shark smashed a hole in it," he says. "Sunk to the bottom." Branson stares incredulously at the two, in awe of the wonderful material he and his band members will have.

Stories of whales, waterspouts, thousand-strong pods of dolphins surfing the breakers into Lorne beach and flocks of mutton birds so vast and dense they blocked out the sun for days are further raw material for Branson's show. "The 'coutha fishing went on for years," Norton says. "Then one year, 36 years ago, the barracouta never turned up." "Just like that," Love says. The fishing industry at Lorne dwindled and the final nail in the coffin was when the government department responsible for the old pier condemned it seven years ago. That was the end of the Lorne fishing industry. The new pier was opened in 2009."

As this piece of writing attests, it was a wonderful period of Lorne's History. The

Lorne Historical Society is now planning its next themed exhibition, focussing on the era of fishing in Lorne. We would welcome any material you may wish to offer as part of the exhibition; papers, photographs, artefacts etc. We are happy to accept loans or gifts and we are able to create electronic copies of papers and photographs and then return the originals to you.

We want the exhibition to pay tribute the all members of the community who were a part of this exciting time. Whilst we have some material, we want to ensure that we do justice to this story.

If you can help, please contact the Historical Society on 5289 1191 or email [info@lornehistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:info@lornehistoricalsociety.org.au)

**Gary Allen**  
President



Gary Norton, Pip Branson & Henry Love

## A word from the *Chairman*

The Point Grey - Lorne Redevelopment Project is entering an exciting phase following the jury selection of the winner of the Architectural Design Competition for the Precinct. The five person jury that assessed the submissions included the award winning Victorian architects John Wardle and Kristin Green, Richard Davies Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) former CEO, Bronwyn Hamilton Office of the Victorian Government and Jocelyn Chiew Monash University.

The winning design selected by the jury will be presented by the successful architects to key stakeholders on the 11th of May 2018 prior to public release immediately thereafter. It is certainly one of the most awaited and anticipated presentations in the history of Lorne. It is so pleasing to think that having been involved in such a lengthy, exhaustive process, a milestone is about to be achieved. This is an outcome that can largely be attributed to the decisive leadership of GORCC's Chairman, Ken Northwood and his team!

I thought I'd share with you a snap shot of the diversities of where we live and I know that many already know that I am a great supporter and subscriber to the 5am Club and this is how the first day of May unfolded. Leaving Lorne at 5.30am bound for a fitness session in Geelong, darkness on the Great Ocean Road was only interrupted by the occasional tradies or cyclists head lights. As the silhouette of the Aireys Inlet lighthouse was the first sign of the morning light so was the lingering after burn smoke from the previous day's work of Forest Fire Management crews behind the township.

Descending down into Highton off the Geelong Ring Road the backdrop dramatically changed from the Aireys lighthouse to the towering "Gillette" light towers of GMHBA Stadium and Corio Bay in the background. The next 45 minutes I won't describe as its not on my excitement list but I'm told I need to keep the 15 year discipline continuing as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. With an hour to spare before my first appointment I parked on the

edge of Corio Bay to complete a number of administrative tasks from my mobile office.

The sun was rising for the day, masts of the yachts were now casting shadows, joggers, walkers and early risers were out preparing for what lay ahead. The environment and backdrop was stunning as the first of May was preparing to deliver a 23 degree cloudless sky day. I thought, "how lucky are we" and things couldn't be much better and having completed my Geelong work commitment returned for my 11.30 Lorne meeting. Upon return and opening our meeting room blinds to expose the Lorne Foreshore in all her glory my immediate reaction, "The Geelong Waterfront is great - But!!! How lucky are we?"

Don't forget to put in your diary our next scheduled luncheon for Friday the 8th of June and remember you must RSVP to [nicole@greatoceanroadrealestate.com.au](mailto:nicole@greatoceanroadrealestate.com.au).

**Ian Stewart**  
Chairman - Committee for Lorne

## COMMUNITY PROFILE



JILL AND PAUL

It is amazing how many visitors to Lorne arrive with no intention of buying a house but leave having paid a deposit on one. Fifteen years ago, Jill and Paul were staying with friends one weekend, went for a walk down the street, passed a 'For Sale' sign on a house and bought it. After some necessary maintenance and some cosmetic changes, it has been their holiday house ever since.

Jill was born and educated in NSW. While training as a teacher in Newcastle, she met Paul on a blind date, a mutual friend had arranged. They married in 1974 and lived in Newcastle until 1991 when BHP Shipping moved them to Melbourne. They have three children and so far, one grandson.

Jill always wanted to teach and spent most of her career in Newcastle secondary schools. When the family moved to Melbourne, she took a break before taking on a job as an integration aide working with children. Many other BHP Shipping families they had known were also moved down, meaning Jill not only was able continue friendships but membership of a special craft group she enjoys. She loves her garden in Melbourne and Lorne, helps at the local Op Shop and The Information Centre. In Melbourne, Jill door knocks for the Salvos and for the Heart Foundation.

Paul was born in Port Moresby where he completed his primary education before going to boarding school in Brisbane. He had dreams of becoming a marine biologist, "but in those times, it was not possible to follow your heart because employment opportunities were rare; now it's a different story". Instead he started his career as a trainee marine engineer with BHP in Newcastle. After six years as a ship's engineer, Paul came ashore to study mechanical engineering at university. That led to him working on a wide range of projects in the shipping industry, from tug boats to large bulk carriers. In 1990, Paul and Jill spent a year in Singapore and again in 1999 where Paul was Superintendent Marine Engineer for the construction and conversion of large ships for off shore oil production.

Paul and Jill are now spending half their lives in Lorne. Paul is an active member of the SES and has a passion for cycling and "fixing things". He bought a 1975 Land Rover, (Jill adds quickly "...he means a derelict") which he is finding a much greater challenge to restore than he expected.

To me they looked pretty happy in the house they never intended to buy!

CW

## LORNE WARD EVENTS CALENDAR

### May

4-6

**Lorne May Music Festival Weekend**, various events at Cumberland Lorne, The Riverbank Café, Grand Pacific Hotel & Lorne Hotel. Book 2 nights accom at Cumberland Lorne, Grand Pacific Hotel or Lorne Hotel & receive 2 free tickets for 2 people to all events. More info [lovelorne.com.au](http://lovelorne.com.au) and [oztix.com.au](http://oztix.com.au)

19-20

**Great Ocean Road Running Festival**, Running, music, wellness.

5

**Lorne vs Otway Districts football and netball**, at Stribling Reserve, juniors matches from 9am, seniors at 2pm

6

**Winter Fishing Comp**, at LAAC at 8am. Weigh in at 12.30, BBQ from 1pm. All welcome.

19-20

**Great Ocean Road Running Festival**, Running, music, wellness.

COMMITTEE  
FOR LORNE