

# HISTORICAL WALKS

## LORNE



*'A self guided walking tour which highlights the historical features along Mountjoy Parade in Lorne.'*

### THE LORNE VISITOR CENTRE

#### Stop at the front doors to the Lorne Visitor Centre

This site was originally the powerhouse with two large crude oil engines.

### WAVERLEY HOUSE

Cross the Erskine River and walk past the Caravan Park. Cross the road at the caravan park and walk to the corner of Deans Marsh Road & Waverley Avenue, and you will find the historic Waverley House (circa 1880). One of the very few freestone houses on the Great Ocean Road. This mansion was formerly owned by Edward Lascelles, one of the founders of today's wool industry. His descendants continued to reside here until recent times. Many famous people, including the renowned opera singer Dame Nellie Melba and other members of Melbourne's "high society", were known to have stayed at the property. The 1939 bushfires (Black Friday), which ravaged Lorne and much of Victoria, severely damaged Waverley House, which was abandoned for some years. In the 1950's the house was repaired and converted into two flats, one of which was reoccupied by the Lascelles sisters.

### ERSKINE HOUSE

Cross back over the river towards the Lorne Visitor Centre. Stop at Erskine House, located on the Foreshore opposite the Lorne Visitor Centre. Erskine House is of significant historical importance as the oldest guesthouse in Victoria and has been in continuous operation for 136 years. These days, the guesthouse is home to Mantra Erskine Beach Resort.

### CORA LYNN

Cross the main street and walk across to the two sculptured ladies on the corner. Lorne had two hotels and fifteen guesthouses in its heyday. The Cora Lynn was one of the last early guesthouses still to be seen after crossing the bridge. During 1998 the former Cora Lynn guest house was developed into 26 units.

The two large statues are named Cora and Lynn. These statues were made by Graeme Wilkie from Qdos. The name Cora-Lynn came from a gentlemen by the name of "Hunt" who had a property in Deans Marsh named Cora-Lynn.

### LORNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Turn around and face the white Community House across the road (playground at the front of the building). Lorne's Historical Society began in 1968 with sixteen members. There was an earlier society that had a large display of artefacts and memorabilia in the old Library hall on the corner of Smith and William streets. The society now has a permanent photographic display that depicts the whole history of Lorne in the building incorporating the Community Centre. The Society is open on the first Sunday of each month from 1pm to 4pm or on request.

### COWS ON THE MAIN STREET!

Pass Cora and Lynn and walk up this side of the main street towards the shops. Did you know?

Cows were a part of everyone's daily life because there was no effective way to keep the milk fresh. Before W.W.2 cows roamed about the town at will, creating quite a few problems. To stop the cows getting into certain areas, the entire town was fenced. Of note, as you walk up the Mountjoy Parade, you will pass a service station to your right. This was Lorne's second store.

### THE MOVIE BUSINESS

Continue walking up the street and past the service station and stop at the Lorne theatre. The Lorne Theatre was built in 1937 and construction took nine months. For several years this theatre had three large coloured floodlights illuminating the front of the building.

### UNITING CHURCH

Continue walking up the street and stop at the Uniting Church on your right hand side. In 1892 Andrew Sanger from Bath in England, built St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church in Mountjoy Parade. St Cuthbert's was lined with Baltic Knotty pine boards that came out as ballast in the old sailing ships.

You will see a gate and a path that leads you up to the Church. This gate is named after Annie Agnes Smith who was an avid horse lover and a benefactor of the Church who installed horse troughs in the main street.

### LILLIAN BEAUREPAIRE MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL

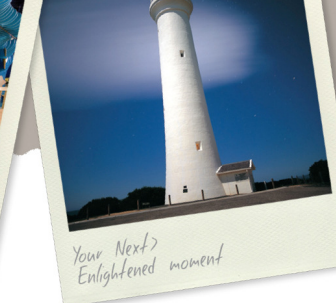
Turn and face the Lillian Beaurepaire Memorial Swimming Pool which is located on the foreshore opposite you. The swimming pool on the foreshore was opened by Melbourne City Councillor Ian Beaurepaire CMG in December 1967. The pool was respectfully named after his Aunt Lillian Beaurepaire. Lillian was Lorne's only lifesaver for many years.

### THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS

Look to the left of the Swimming Pool. Lorne has seen many interesting and some quite unusual commercial ventures throughout the years. In 1923 a two level theatre was built providing seating for three hundred patrons. Up until 1932 they were showing silent movies on the hand wound projector. The original theatre held dances and a separate skating rink which was built in 1935. Without a roof, conditions became very slippery and it was decided to build a roof on the skating rink and a spectator's gallery. Lorne had a very strong roller hockey team and would clean up most of it's out of town rivals. The theatre was later sold to Mr Waterhouse who used it as a fun parlour with slot machines and electric dodgem cars (in separate building). In 1958 the dodgems building was almost washed into the sea in extremely high tides and stormy seas.

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### LORNE BECOME COOL

Continue walking up the street and stop at the Arab restaurant on your right hand side. In 1957 Lorne residents and tourists' received their first taste of what has become the town's modern cosmopolitan character. Alistair and Robin Smith rented the dance hall (old theatre) and ran a very successful club they called "The Wild Colonial" and did they pack them in. The Smith family infused a lot of character into the town and their style really caught the imagination of the public. The Arab, the bohemian style coffee shop, was a refuge for beatniks (the coolest thing a teenager could be called in those days) and many others who were lured in by the aroma of Italian coffee.

### TOWNS SPORTING ACTIVITIES

Continue walking up the main street, stop at Marks Restaurant and look towards the foreshore. Before Lorne's central car park (next to the Surf Club) was constructed on the foreshore flat, most of the town's sporting activities took place there, as it was a largest level area in town. The local butcher grazed sheep to keep the grass down. The area was also popular for joy flights in biplanes in 1915. Even today, the flats remain the central focal point of the town.

### THE CUMBERLAND RESORT

Continue walking up the street and stop at Aqua Restaurant. The Cumberland resort, formally the "Summerland Cabaret" held dances and all you can eat crayfish suppers for .25 cents.

### LORNE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Look across the road to the foreshore. Lorne's first Surf Life Saving Club was formed in the 1930's. During this time there were four boxes on the beach which stored lifesaving equipment. In 1986 the club was extended and upgraded in 1986, and in 2003 a new architecturally designed Surf Life Saving Club was built.

### BATHING BOXES

Look to the right of the Lorne Surf Life Saving Club. Bathing boxes were part of the beach landscape and provided an amenity and a certain beachside charm for almost a century. There were approximately fifty boxes on the Lorne beach. In 1970 all the boxes were removed mainly due to vandalism and unregulated sub leasing.

### THE LORNE HOTEL

Cross the road and stop at the Lorne Hotel. In 1876 the Lorne Hotel was built. In 1919 the hotel was destroyed by fire and subsequently replaced by the new Lorne Hotel that stands on the site today.

### ALL SAINTS CHURCH

Continue walking up the street and stop at the All Saints Church. In 1880 the Anglican residents of Lorne decided it was time to have their own Church. The Church was originally built on the corner of Albert and Charles Streets. By 1884 it was decided that the steep hill leading to the Church was too much for the elderly, so the church was dragged by a team of horses and bullocks down to its present site near the Lorne Hotel.

### CALL THE DOCTOR

Continue walking up the street and stop at the Lorne Hospital. You will walk pass the Mountjoy heritage precinct, which years gone by saw many old homesteads and was the site of Lorne's first Police station with the jail near the house called "Weem". Western district farmers owned these lovely old properties. Farmers chose this site in Lorne due to the hill behind them which was protected from the prevailing winds.

In 1904, a first aid kit and two ambulance stretchers were kept at the Anglican Church for public use. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the township was fortunate to have the services of Dr Barker who visited patients by horse and buggy.

The Lorne hospital was officially opened in 1959, much to the delight of the proud Lorne residents. Ongoing fundraising from the Ladies Hospital auxiliary mainly through the opportunity shop, has funded much needed equipment for the hospital. There have been several additions and alterations since, and the current hospital complex was opened in 2005

### THE GRAND PACIFIC HOTEL

Continue walking and stop at the Grand Pacific Hotel. The Pier became a new focal point for the town's people, especially after 1879 when Henry Gwynne built an impressive three-storey Grand Pacific Hotel.

Henry Gwynne suffered a serious blow-out of costs during construction and the estimated \$12,000 ended up costing \$24,000. Opening day for the hotel was January 1880, and Cobb and Co Coaches provided a special express service for early guest.

### THE PIER

Cross the road and walk over to the Pier. The Pier was built in 1879, in response to a pressing need for a safe place for many small ships to dock. The main purpose of the pier in the early years was for shipping in supplies and passengers and to take away sawn timber. A new Pier was opened in Easter of 2007 which reflects the look of a 'spaceship' at night.

### THE PIER TO PUB

While at the pier, imagine 4000 swimmers entering the water as they swim towards the Lorne Hotel. The Pier to Pub swim race commenced in 1983. Over the past 20 years the event has grown in size and stature and now claims centre stage of a three day program that includes the Mountain to Surf Fun Run and the Surf Boat Race Classic.

### SURFING

Walk back into town using the path on the foreshore. Lorne has produced some successful surfing champions including Gail Couper and Wayne Lynch. Countless enthusiastic and talented surfers, young and old, have enjoyed the surf at Lorne for perhaps well over one hundred years.

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### SHIPWRECK PLAQUE WALK

As you walk along the foreshore, stop at the shipwreck plaques along the way to give you insight into the wrecks and some close calls of near shipwrecks on the dangerous rocks in Loutit Bay.

### SWING BRIDGE

Continue along the path until you come to the Swing Bridge, past the Visitor Centre. The Swing Bridge was erected over the river in 1937. The river bank housed boat sheds and a couple of jetties in the early twentieth century.

### GRAVE

Walk over the swing bridge and turn to your right. You will notice a grave beside the Great Ocean Road.

The grave is the site of two young boys - sons of Lindsay "The Splitter". The boys died while digging a tunnel in the sand. Unfortunately the sand gave way collapsing on them both.

### CARAVAN PARK

Walk towards the caravan park and the bridge.

The caravan park on your left used to be an island in the river, and on the south side of the river was a five hole golf course. As you continue the walk over the bridge, the Kia Ora Caravan Park on the right used to be a large vegetable garden and orchard.

*The Lorne Visitor Centre would like to thank **Doug Stirling and Eddie Armistead** for their contribution, without their knowledge and support, the tour would not be possible*

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