



ORIGINALLY & ALWAYS

SPEECH TRANSCRIPT

The Largs Pier Hotel is a book full of many chapters. Every day adds another story that's a real page turner. Before you walk through the doors, you know that The Largs Pier Hotel is different to other SA pubs.

So synonymous is the Hotel to the suburb it is named after, that when you think of Largs Bay 5016 you don't immediately think of the ocean or the jetty, but your first thought is of the arches which adorn the outside of the famous Largs Pier Hotel.

Be it, driving down the Esplanade, sailing on the ocean, walking along the beach or taking a dip on a hot summer's day, the iconic arches are a constant reminder that you're in beautiful Largs Bay.

The Largs, as it's affectionately known was originally built in 1882 as a seaside resort. In fact, The Largs was the first port of call for many passengers aboard the ships from England.

After months out to sea what a great sight it would have been off in the distance.

Imagine the size and detail of The Largs getting bigger as you approached shore. The anticipation of knowing when step off the boat, you'll walk into an establishment that'd welcome you with open arms and more importantly, serve you a cold beer and a great meal. On second thoughts, perhaps the Poms wouldn't have been too keen on the cold beer.

The tales that would have been told in this very room would have been ones of excitement, hardship and fear from people who had left their home never to return. Their stories are an important chapter of The Largs Pier Hotel and the setting in which the yarns from yesteryear were told, was nothing that the early settlers could ever have imagined.

Throughout its story The Largs has had many moods and personalities. One thing's for sure though; she's always been in fashion and up to date with the happenings of the time.

Imagine the roaring twenties in The Largs. Men in fine suits and Ladies dressed to the nines. During the thirties The Largs would have been a friend and a place where people came to forget about the hardship of the great depression. During the forties, South Australian soldiers would have returned from service to share a story and a coldie with their mates at The Largs.

Skip through to the seventies and the stories that emanate from The Largs are told with a wry smile. It was the seventies that she threw her doors open to live music. In no time at all, live music in South Australia had found a home. Most of you in the room would have heard or maybe even laid witness to some of the legendary stories that came from this very front bar.

The Largs supported the local music scene like no other hotel. Household names were forged here. A who's who of Australian music has walked these boards. Cold Chisel, AC/DC front man Bon Scott, The Angels, Masters Apprentices and Paul Kelly are just some of the names we all know, and they played their early gigs right here at The Largs.

It's often said, 'If these walls could talk they'd tell some great stories.' In the case of The Largs, it'd be if the windows had survived, they'd tell some great stories. Each of the windows in the ground floor arches is slightly different. And it wasn't uncommon for the windows to come off a little worse for wear after a big night of pub-rock. So the story goes, it was so common in-fact, the glaziers had all the specific measurements for windows a, b, c and so – back at their shop so they didn't have to come and measure up before replacing them. The Largs knew how to party.

Jimmy Barnes in the prime of his vodka swilling days was a regular here, as he fronted Cold Chisel. Such was 'Chisels' love of The Largs, that from October 10 1974, they've played here no fewer than 53 times. You can just imagine the crowd belting out Khe Sanh, the atmosphere would have been electric.

Another great story relates back to Bon Scott from AC/DC. He met his wife here at The Largs. Bon's wife, Irene Thornton tells her story of love at first sight.

Legend has it her tale goes a little something like this. Bon had just come off stage with his band at the time, Fraternity. "He had really tight jeans on so she said: 'What a wellpacked lunch.' And he said: 'Yes, two hard-boiled eggs and a sausage.' And they took off from there."

I'm sure that's not the only romance to have been struck up here, at The Largs. I think a number of people that have stepped in here for a quiet ale may have fallen in love with the place and made it their local watering hole for many a year.

They're the sort of people that The Largs has been built on. The Largs is about the locals and even the not so locals. It's about the friendly face that walks through the door and straight away the bar staff know their pour. They're the people that will continue to call the Largs their local. They'll do this because it's a great place for breakfast, a great place for a mid week catch-up with mates and with a view like this, a great place for a lazy Sunday.

I was speaking with Peter Johnson the General Manager and he wanted me to thank a few people. Mark Folland, the Architect along with his team for the work they've done on the Largs, also the builder Michael Harlitski from HT Constructions, the Largs Pier staff and management – he told me not to forget this man Tim Dean the director of the hotel for giving the project the green light.

Now everyone that visits The Largs will create another page for the story, which adds to the many chapters of the Largs Pier Hotel. Originally and always the Largs Pier Hotel.