

# Mary-Lyn

• Australia's Premier '50 & Over' Holiday Resort •

• MARYSVILLE • VICTORIA •



Photos: TOP - Front cover 2006 brochure  
MIDDLE - Mary Lyn, as purchased in 1980  
BOTTOM - Memories from 1985



## Memories

My own memories of Marysville go back to the mid 1950's, when with my parents and sister I arrived in Marysville to stay at Mary Lyn Guest House during the school holidays. It was the aim of my father to teach me to play golf and most days were spent at the nearby golf course, then a nine hole course which had belonged to the Mary chain of guest houses.

In 1958 while training at Burwood Teachers College and the University of Melbourne, I worked regularly over five years during term holidays, becoming a semi-local in the process. My tasks were many and varied, from relief horse riding school operator to painter to wood splitter to dishwasher to gardener to waiter to assistant cook, to name just a few.

Marysville was, in those days, a small but thriving village, its major industries being timber, farming and tourism. Entertainment was to be found at the local picture theatre, built and operated by the Wallace family for many decades, and dances at the local hall or at the Crossways. It was the days of six o'clock closing.

I worked for Fred and Vi Fiske, who with their children, Kingsley, Norman, Shirley and Glen lived at Mary Lyn. The Fiske family had purchased Mary Lyn from its original owner, Eric Dowdle, who in the 1930's established the "Mary chain" of guesthouses. The flagship was Marylands which together with Mary Lyn and Mary Meadows (later El Kanah) were located in Marysville, Maryport in Mt Martha and Marybrooke (later Baron of Beef) at Sherbrooke.

In 1980 we purchased the property from the Fiske family, becoming only its third owner in 50 years. My idea was to operate the now rundown property as a school camp, alongside another camp I operated at Lake Tyers.

With no school camps during winter, it was suggested that we should try a series of "50 and over" holidays. They were an instant success, school camps were quickly forgotten and Mary Lyn "Australia's Premier '50 & over' resort" was born.

Nine whirlwind years followed, with complete renovations, extensions, purchase and rebuilding of Kooringa, the adjacent property, (known as Mary Lyn 2), etc., etc. The combined properties had 113 ensuite guest rooms, dining rooms, indoor swimming pools and spas, even a full size indoor 6 rink lawn bowls stadium. Mr Keating's "banana republic" with interest rates well in excess of 20% in the late 1980's proved the final straw in what had been a hard personal road, especially since the tragic death of our daughter Samantha at Mary Lyn on her 2nd birthday.

Mary Lyn was sold to new owners, the staff remained, and Jeni and I moved on to a new phase of life.

By then we were parents to Charlotte and Nick, and Young at Heart Holidays was born in May 1989.

*Malcolm Reed*