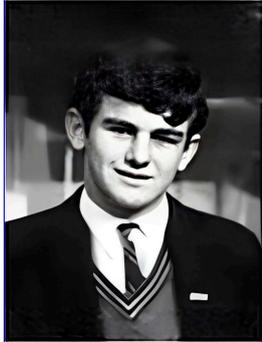


# LINDSAY CHATTERTON: COMPUTER PROGRAMMER

## Introduction



I was born in September 1949. My parents, Harold and Nina Chatterton, were living in Bundoora at the time, but they were in the process of moving to a new home, so three weeks after my birth we settled into a new home in Sydenham.

My Dad remembers ...

*We had bought a small poultry farm in Victoria Road along the railway line. The community facilities at the time included the railway station, a small general store, a one-room primary school, a tennis court, a grain handling facility opposite the railway station and a Presbyterian church. Sydenham was only a small settlement in the countryside in those days. The government proclaimed the township of Sydenham in April 1953, selecting that name because the former name of Overnewton was often confused with the Overnewton property in Keilor.*

*In the fifties there were only half a dozen properties clustered around the station and in our immediate area there were only two other families when we first moved there. The only noticeable council involvement was that the gravel road was scraped occasionally by a grader. The railway line ran right past our house and the station was only half a mile down the road, which meant we could get into town by train. That was helpful when the kids were due to go to high school because they would catch the train each morning for St Albans."*

## Attending Sydenham Primary School

Sydenham Primary was a one-room school with one teacher, which was enough to cater for all the local kids because there were never more than 32 kids in the school. For instance, in my last year at the school there were only 6 of us in grade 6. After Grade 6, I went to St Albans High where there were over 500 kids in the school and the Form 1 classes had around 30 kids in each class, which were as big as our whole primary school. My older brother Ray and younger brother Gary also went to St Albans High, and I suspect we would have had similar experiences with regard to school numbers.



Sydenham State School.

## Attending St Albans High

The big difference for us Sydenham kids compared to many other kids at the High School is that we had to catch the country train to get to and from school. The morning train came through Sydenham at 10 to 8 each morning. If you missed that train you had two choices: get out on the St Albans-Sydenham road and hitch a ride, or catch the Bendigo train at 9.00am and get to school late.

If you caught the 9 o'clock train, the stationmaster would have to ask the train driver to stop at St Albans because the train would not normally stop there. Even then, sometimes the train would not stop and you would finish up in Sunshine and have to take the red rattler back to St Albans.

With the limited train service to Sydenham the school day was a pretty long for us. We would be in St Albans from around 8 in the morning until 5.30 in the evening. Consequently we had to fill in time before and after school, as there was no after school program then. I was fortunate in that the grandmother of Geoff Landers, another Sydenham kid, lived in St Albans and I went with him to her place a lot of the time. I think some of the others just hung around the streets or the schoolyard.

In Form 1 we were split up and put into different classes from the other Sydenham kids. Given the change in scale of the school populations that was all a bit distressing. Unfortunately I don't remember much of High School. I have the classic Chatterton memory, not so much bad as just non-existent. I don't remember being form captain in Form 4 and if I was I am sure it would have been seen as a bit of a joke.



Mr Ziemelis sitting between Form Captains Barbara Teichmann and Lindsay Chatterton, 1964.

A normal school day, beyond the train rides, was two periods before the morning break and then out onto the field where we would pick sides for a game of soccer or keepings off. The picking of the sides could be harrowing: two would be selected as captains (the good sportsmen like Henry Goralski and Joe Attard) and then you would wait until you got picked. Again, being the smallest, I was often one of the last to be chosen. If there were odd numbers, I might get added to one of teams as an extra because there was little chance of upsetting the balance.

After another two periods it was lunch time. I would always have sandwiches and cake packed by my Mum and I was considered lucky by others who would only have a couple of pieces of dry bread ... with maybe something in the middle.

The rest of the afternoon often dragged a little, although Wednesday afternoons when we had sports for the last two periods was always welcomed.

In Forms 1 through to 4, mostly I remember doing as little as possible in class and having a bit of a laugh. It was more important what you did at recess and lunch time.

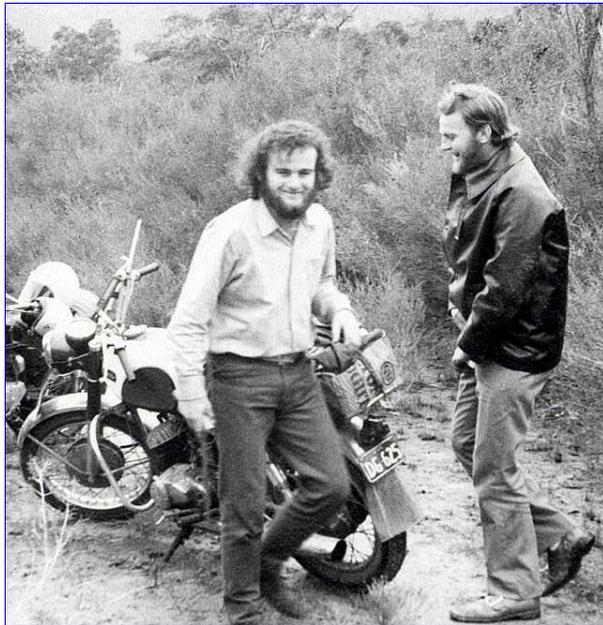
One time in Form 3 I remember the laugh being on me. Pavlov was our Maths teacher and as often happened I was caught talking or giggling about something and so he brought me out in front of the class. I couldn't stop giggling so he had me bend down and he was smiling and saying "You think this is funny?" and then he kicked me up the bum. I stopped laughing ... but I always thought he was a caring teacher, no hard feelings.

We would have exams at some time and typically I would study the year's work in the day or two before the exams because otherwise I couldn't remember it.

There was a time I would go directly to school from the train in the morning and Torpey was the Headmaster at the time. In his pre Headmaster life he had been a Maths teacher and because I showed some promise in that area he would have me come into a room in the main office and he gave me some extra coaching.

## **Sporting Activities**

In Form 4, I was still one of the shortest people in the school, which eliminates any "sports jock" status and academically I was quick at Maths but had no interest in anything else.



It was in Form 2 and 3 that my brother Ray and I played competition table tennis on Saturday mornings at Albert Park. Our team was called St Albans High and the third member of our team was Tom McIntyre. Now you need to be reasonably quick and agile in table tennis but interestingly Tom had a clubbed foot. Thinking about that now I am impressed that he was able to compete so well.

Anyway, Ray, Tom and I won the C Grade flag and it has St Albans High recorded as the winning team. I think Ray still has the flag.

I can remember more about sport in the early years at High School than things academic.

During the Wednesday afternoon sports time I would often play tennis. I think Stephan Czyz did also. I seem to remember going down to the en-tout-cas courts at the Errington Reserve. Then later the school had two bitumen courts built on the school grounds along the driveway off Main Road East.

I can remember playing rounders or baseball in our PE classes with Mr McLeish. One day McLeish took me aside and wanted to know why I was not trying out for the football team. I explained to him that I had trouble with my groins if I kicked the ball too much - but he prevailed and I did play in a school game. I'm not sure how long I lasted but the groins went and I didn't play a football match ever again.

## Socialising in the Senior Years

My main memory of the senior years at the school is about having repeated Matric.

In Forms 5 or 6, I remember doing some weekend bus trips to some fern glades in the Dandenongs - basically they were piss ups. We would drink on the way there, see some nice country, and then drink a lot when we got there. On at least one of those trips we went in a big furniture van with a bench seats on either side. It doesn't sound very appealing now.



Group picnic: Lindsay Chatterton is the one on the left wearing a hat.

I remember lots of get-togethers at the Hatjiandreas' house, Cathy and Michael. It seems now that we would get the music going and dance all night. I found the hospitality and friendliness of this Greek family overwhelming at times; I was not used to it, but it is one of my fondest memories.

Many of the Form 6 memories centre around a group of us who did "things" quite unrelated to our studies. Vova Karol was often the focus for these because he had his driving licence in Matric and he had a car, a 1963 falcon. Henry got a car too, an old Hillman; it was a bomb and he was very proud of it.



"Leader of the Pack" (L-R) David Dusting, Henry Goralski, Lindsay Chatterton, Geoff Landers, Peter Barbopoulos, Graham Snooks; Barwon Heads, 1966.

Vova always seemed to have a lot but he was one person that always had a go. He would put in 120% to get something. I have always respected him for that. He had a large influence on a lot of people in Year 12 and it was not a bad influence.

A group would often go over to Vova's place at night for cards. We would get a large Vienna loaf, a jar of jam, and play cards: simple needs, some company, something to keep your belly full. My parents wouldn't take me down to St Albans for these get-togethers so on a few of occasions I sneaked out of the house, walked to St Albans, and then walked home afterwards. On one occasion there was to be a midnight meeting, so I walked down there but nobody showed up so I turned around and walked the 4 miles back home ... past the 3LO tower in the dark of night.

Another occasion I remember going over to Joe Attard's at lunch time with a group of others and getting into a flagon of port. Then on the way back to school or maybe at the school we got picked up or were taken out to Mr Matthew's car, an old Vanguard. He read us the riot act, I am sure he could have done much more than that. He was a good person, big hearted, and would always talk to you first.

Miss Butler was a sweetheart. We gave her a hard time but she did not seem to give up. I can remember in Form 3 or 4 having Miss Coutts for French and she went running in tears from the classroom one day when one of the kids got out of hand and threatened her.

I was a Prefect in Form 6 but the only thing I remember of that is David Dusting and I think Graham Snooks refusing to become prefects ... they were not going to be agents of the ruling

class. These two were independent thinkers, a bit like Joe Ribarow who had the habit of "going fishing" whenever it got a bit much for him.

After finishing Matric in 1966 I was offered a place in Science at Melbourne University but I didn't get a Commonwealth scholarship. I was working in the butcher shop with my Dad when the scholarship notices came out and he said to me that they could not afford to send me to Uni. So I had two options, to go for a Teaching Studentship or to repeat Matric and get a scholarship the second time round.

I didn't want to do teaching so I repeated the year with Peter Nowatschenko and Marin Gunew who were in a similar situation. Marin got a car and the three of us did a number of trips.

## **Tertiary Education: RMIT and Melbourne Uni**

My main memory of the senior years at the school is about having repeated Matric. I met a lot of nice people in that second year and we had some good times.



Peter Nowatschenko, Maija Svares, Lindsay Chatterton, 1967.

By August or so I was bored and struggling to maintain the interest. To get a scholarship the second time around you had to get 10% better than first timers. I didn't get the Uni scholarship but I got one for a TAFE. So I did Civil Engineering at the RMIT.

Briefly, I started first year at the RMIT, got sick of it, went to work for a year at the MMBW as a draftsman while doing part-time study, didn't like doing work and part-time study so went back full time for three years and completed a Civil Engineering degree at the RMIT. A little later I did a B.Sc. at Melbourne Uni. The drive to do the B.Sc. had something to do with missing out on the opportunity to take it up the first time.

## **Brief Work History**

I will always remember in 1969 at the MMBW, my first year of work that I earned more than my Dad did that year. I don't think we can begin to realise how our parents managed to achieve so much on so little.

I worked as Civil Engineer for five years but since 1980 I have worked in the computer industry, first as a consultant, then as part of an IT support group at Melbourne University and for the last 10 years as a contract programmer.



## Family Matters

In 1975 I met the love of my life and my future wife, Kathy Lang. I had travelled to America to visit, among other things, the original Learning Exchange in Evanston, Chicago and Kath was working there at the time. Back in St Albans I had joined a few other former High School students in trying to establish a Learning Exchange based on the local Malvern model. Kath and I have now been together for 31 years and in that time we raised two boys, Zac and Casey, who are fully bilingual - Australian and American. We went through all the parent-kid growing up experiences: did the junior footy scene, the scouts scene, the camping sojourns, and like all parents, much much more.

Zac is now doing second year university. He has recently moved from home and is sharing a house with some of his friends. Casey is doing first year university and working on ways of moving out too. And so the cycle goes on.

I moved away from home when I married in the 'seventies though my parents were still there till the early 'nineties. My Dad remembers:

*We continued living at Sydenham and were always active in the tennis club right up to retirement age. Then we joined to bowls club in Keilor, as many of our friends were members there, and we took up playing bowls.*

*In 1991 we discovered that Nina had cancer and that her condition was inoperable; she died in 1992 within six months of the original diagnosis. About a year after I sold the Sydenham property and moved to a unit in Keilor Village within walking distance of many of my friends and the bowls club. I was a committee member, selector, player, team captain, and even a volunteer working behind the bar.*



Harold and Nina Chatterton raising a toast 1975.

Dad also developed cancer, which responded to treatment, but about four years ago he developed heart problems and needed more surgery. Dad passed away in March 2003. In those last 10 years, Dad would come to our place every Friday night for cards with Kath, myself and Joe. Joe and my Dad developed a strong friendship and in 1996 they travelled to and around America

with my younger brother Gary who also married an American girl and has lived there since 1989.

Kath and I are looking forward to stage 3 of our lives, one of growth and reflection. To prepare for this we have purchased our fourth home on wheels, a caravan this time, with which we plan to see a bit more of Australia. Our first trip will be to cross the Nullabor and head for Margaret River with good friends Peter and Olga Nowatschenko.



### **Lindsay Chatterton, 2006.**

PS: This story is based on a taped interview conducted by my life long friend Joe Ribarow in the presence of a pleasant Cabernet Sauvignon and a taped interview with my Dad conducted by Joe in 2002 in the presence of a good Shiraz.



Lindsay Chatterton (centre) at school reunion, 2006.

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Lindsay and Kathy Chatterton, Thanksgiving dinner, 2010.



Olga Nowatschenka (L) with Kathy and Lindsay Chatterton, Atherton, 2015.

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