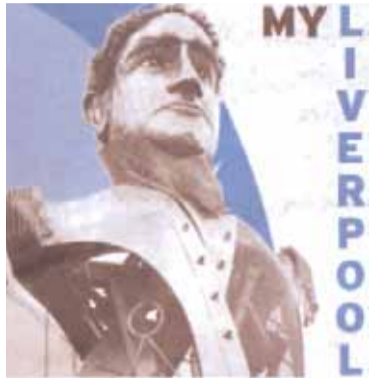


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Boy from Greece helped shape the city we know today



After a brief absence, My Liverpool returns and, in the hot seat is retired Liverpool businessman Lenny Stathis who spoke to Eric Kontos.



Memory lane: Lenny Stathis walks down Macquarie street last week picture: Simon Bennett

IT WAS the 1950s and the horse-and-buggy was king in the main street of Liverpool.

Leonard (Lenny) Stathis who had arrived in Liverpool in 1951 as a 14-year old migrant from Greece- lived in a room above Mainsbridge Hotel.

Now, 59 years later, he recalls how there were water troughs for the horses in front of the pub in Macquarie Street.

“If a motor vehicle went past the main street it certainly caused quite a commotion. It was such a rare event.

“Everyone would rush out to see this new form of transport”, Lenny said during our interview, held in the hotel that was home for his first three years in Australia.

These days it is a modern 21st century pub that goes by the name of Macquarie hotel.

His first job was working in the Monterey Cafe and his time there left him with one of his best memories.

“Of course we knew everyone in the main street, as they all came to the Monterey”, Lenny said.

“One of them was Mrs Edmondson, as we all called her”.

Maude Elizabeth Edmondson was the mother of Liverpool’s World War II hero, John Edmondson, and she took a liking to the young man who served her tea.

“Mrs Edmondson said I reminded her of her John and

one day she brought in a letter he had sent her from Greece, where he had posted it just before he got killed.

“My English at the time wasn’t very good so I took the letter to my Auntie Christine [Stathis, the mother of well-known Liverpool lawyer Harry Stathis] to translate it for me.

“In it John Edmondson asked that his mother not fret or worry for him, because, he wrote: “Mum, I am being looked after like one of the family by the Greek people”.

“This was the last letter John Edmondson sent home.

“Two weeks later he was fatally wounded in Tobruk in a torrid battle with saving the lives of a number of his com-

rades to earn a posthumous VC.”

Lenny continued to work at the Monterey but as the 1960s zoomed into view he and his brothers decided to take on their own business.

They bought the Victory Cafe in Macquarie Street, at the site where the Commonwealth Bank was for many years.

“By then the main street had changed a lot as the horses and buggies started disappearing and more and more cars came along,” Lenny said.

“I remember also how the footpaths outside the pubs in Liverpool would be packed.

“These were the days of six-o’clock closing - it was an incredible sight.

“Also in those days the soldiers from Holsworthy, Moorebank and Ingleburn would pour into town. “Some nights all you had in the main street were army personnel”.

Towards the end of the 1960s Lenny became involved in a push by local Greek migrants to establish their own church in Liverpool.

“We bought the property for our church off the horse trainer Jim Barker, who was a real gentleman in our dealings with him.

“His real-estate agent was Jim Cornish and we shook hands on the deal. It’s how you did things in those days.

“As Barker’s property included his stables we needed a place to hold our church services while the work was going on.

“The chairman of the Liverpool hospital board, another fine man - Don Everett - offered us the use of a hospital hall for just \$1 for the next two years.

Lenny Stathis and the other foundation members went on to raise the money to build a church that was described by then Liverpool mayor Noel Short as the “cathedral of Liverpool”.

“I’ve had a great life here in Liverpool - no regrets, even though things were very hard in the beginning,” he said.

“I’ve met some great people, including Gough Whitlam before he became Prime Minister, Mark Latham and many others.

Article from the Liverpool Champion

Mum’s fight to cure pain

GEORGE Kranitis of Sans Souci loves to ride his bike but some days it’s just impossible.

George, 11, has juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), a painful autoimmune disorder that causes stiffness and inflammation of the joints.

The condition causes the body’s immune system to attack joints as it would a foreign object.

A few years ago, George’s mother, Mary, decided it was time to find out what causes the condition, which affects one in every 1000 Australian children and, hopefully, a cure.

She founded the George Kranitis Juvenile Arthritis Scholarship to raise money for medical research.

The scholarship has raised \$160,000 to date. The Leader is a major media partner of the initiative.

Funds were used to open a juvenile arthritis re-

search laboratory within the faculty of medicine at the University of NSW in 2008.

The laboratory was the first of its kind in Australia, New Zealand and South-East Asia.

The university’s Jeanie Chui was appointed its first George Kranitis research fellow.

Dr Chui examined the role newly discovered genes played in the development of uveitis, an eye condition linked to arthritis.

George requires chemotherapy for his uveitis and arthritis, which his mother has been trained to administer at home.

The family’s next juvenile arthritis fund-raiser is a gala dinner being held on September 17 at Doltone House, Sylvania Waters.

Article from The Leader BY DEBORAH FIELD



Joint effort: George, Mary, Katerina and Chrystiane Kranitis are excited about the research into Juvenile Arthritis by the foundation which received two \$10,000 donations from office supply company Pelikan Artline and Radiomathon recently. Picture: Chris Lane