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A Trip Down North Shore Lane

Mark Cummings

In 1991 Bob Hawke was Prime Minister, Steve Vizard was big on TV, Steve Moneghetti won the City2Surf and I spent a magical twelve months here with my girlfriend, now wife, Jo. Our first mission on our return was to recreate the journey to work from Chatswood to Hornsby. The stations we passed felt like old friends, Warrawee, Wahroonga, Waitara. These names with their hypnotic rhythm have never left me in all these years.

Opposite the station in Hornsby was the building where we sold insurance - apologies if I wrecked your evening meal by cold calling and trying to force superannuation on you.

In St Leonards we found our old home tucked away on tree lined Plunkett Street that hadn't

changed a bit. The cosy Victorian house was our happy place full of travelers and students with a beer fridge in our room dedicated to what seemed the only available brands at the time VB and

Tooheys Blue. We found the field where we trained for the City2Surf and discovered the bit of grassy land we used to slog around is now the hugely impressive Gore Hill Oval and the building where my broken foot was mended has become a hugely expanded and updated Royal North Shore Hospital.

Broadcaster and Travel Writer Mark Cummings returns to his old haunts on the North Shore where he lived 34 years ago. A trip down memory lane with shocks, surprises and a new friend called Brian.

End of City2Surf



Back Garden at Plunkett Street with Broken Foot



Brian at The Oaks



We had to see if The Oaks at Neutral Bay still held that wonderful vibe and it didn't disappoint. I showed our waiter Brian old photos of us cooking steaks on the barbie. He was working there in '91 and we had a fascinating chat about what has and hasn't changed over the years.

At Cremorne Point we sat by the water to unpick the experience. The Sydney Metro is a revelation, as good as Singapore or Tokyo. St Leonards and Chatswood stations are unrecognisable impressive transport/retail hubs.

The skyline has evolved dramatically with so much high-rise development and everywhere is far more multicultural. Chatswood has changed so much we couldn't find our old house or the café we worked at. However, this disorientation was tempered by the warm nostalgic glow heaped on us in Hornsby and St Leonards.

So, where to have dinner? Circular Quay or stay on the North Shore? Back to The Oaks of course, they have fairy lights, juicy steaks and of course my new mate, Brian.

You can follow all of Mark's travel adventures at <https://markcumplingsandgoings.com/>.