

The Lane Cove History Prize commenced in 2016. Winning entries to date have provided moving and entertaining evidence of the lives of local people in Lane Cove, which testify to the value of recording local history.

The 2016 entry by Margaret Clark, was entitled ***Arthur, Luce and the Fleur-de-lis 1916-2016. A History of the Fence at 444 College Road South Riverview, NSW.*** This essay, which was very carefully researched, provided a well written and



well-illustrated history of a World War I soldier, Arthur Frederick King, and his French wife, Luce Marie Victoire, who settled together in Riverview after the War. Arthur served in the Somme and was badly wounded. While convalescing after his injury, Arthur met Luce, and the meeting changed their lives forever. Despite some disappointment expressed by Luce's parents, they married and travelled to Australia. Margaret Clark traces their story very movingly, dwelling in some detail on the home that Arthur built for Luce in Riverview, with its distinctive fence, made of wrought iron panels representing fleur *de lis*, the symbol of Luce's French family. The house is now gone, though the wonderful fence that Arthur built his wife remains, a reminder of their love story.

In 2017, Simon Cole provided **an oral history documenting the life of a local identity, 96-year old Les Heap**, whose varied life experiences included some memorable incidents working at the Cockatoo shipyards in the Second World War.



Simon recorded a long interview with Les, who had witnessed many changes in Sydney in the course of his long life. He grew up in Narrabri and in the Depression, he travelled to Sydney where he trained as a fitter and turner in Balmain. He worked on Cockatoo Island during World War II, and, among other things, had a role in building ships for the Royal Australian Navy. After the war, he set up his own successful business manufacturing rakes for sale throughout Australia. He settled in Lane Cove with his wife and has remained an active and highly regarded local identity, having been awarded the Lane Cove Council Citizenship Award in 2011.

In 2018, Penny Ransby Smith, wrote her prize-winning essay entitled, ***'Lane Cove Schools 1876 to 2018: A History of Lane Cove told through its Schools'***.



After attending Harmony Day at Lane Cove West Public School in 2017, Penny was inspired by the number of children dressed in the national costumes of their parents, grandparents and forebears. This caused her to reflect on the nature of Lane Cove as an area and how the local schools reveal a great deal of the character of Lane Cove. Overall, contemporary Lane Cove has a valuable history to reveal in all aspects of its schooling.

In 2019, the Lane Cove History Prize was awarded to two winners, Jill Curtin and



Susan Ingham. Like the winners in earlier years, the two women provide moving and entertaining evidence of the lives of people in Lane Cove. They also bear testimony to the values of recording local history. Jill Curtin's entry was an essay, **Charles Henry Rosman, Ferry Master**, while Susan Ingham's entry was **Vision and Reality: The Evolution of a House 30 Mary Street Longueville**. Charles Henry Rosman, the subject of Jill Curtin's essay, had gained his Ferrymaster's ticket in 1916, going on to work on ferries in Sydney Harbour for

the rest of his life. In 1938 Rosman and his ferry the "Rodney" were involved in a tragic accident on the harbour, leading to many deaths. The event badly affected Rosman, though he was absolved of criminal neglect, and he went on to serve for many more years on the Lane Cove River. He was a much-loved figure to his many customers over the years. The award-winning house, at 30 Mary Street Longueville, subject of Susan Ingham's essay, was built in the early 1960s. The architect, Neville Gruzman, was highly regarded and his house had an original design. The house was placed on the NSW Heritage Register in 1987 because of its distinctive character. The house offered both charms and challenges, because over the years of occupation by its various owners, it needed a number of amendments and changes. The history of its "evolution" offers an interesting account of an aspect of suburban life in Lane Cove. The two essays provide different perspectives on the history of Lane Cove.

In 2020, the Lane Cove History Prize was awarded to Dr. Susan Ingham for her



essay, "**Hold Your course. The Participation of Women in the Lane Cove Sailing Clubs**". This essay arose from Susan's considerable personal interest in the emergence of sailing as a sport and in the participation of women in the sport. Placed as it is on the Lane Cove river, the suburb has a well-established history of recreational sailing, dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first sailing club was created in 1918, while at least two others were formed in later years. Sailing was originally a men's sport though over the years the participation of woman has been greatly enhanced. Overall, Sue Ingham has written an engaging and lively account of the history of sailing in Lane Cove over the last century, demonstrating the ways women have become increasingly involved in the sport, while proving their excellence as sailors. In addition, they have

helped to draw in children and broader family groups, all enjoying the pleasures of life on the water around Lane Cove. The essay is thoroughly researched and very well presented. "Hold Your course. The Participation of Women in the Lane Cove Sailing Clubs" will be published in the Lane Cove Historical Society's journal in the new year. In addition, copies of all winning entries over the years are held in the archives of the Lane Cove Historical Society.

In 2021, due to Covid there was no Lane Cove History Prize.



*Ruth Benfield accepting her award from Mayor Andrew Zbik*

In 2022 the Lane Cove History Prize was won by Ruth Benfield, who produced an oral history, involving an interview with her mother Leah about **life at Carisbrook Historic House**. Ruth has created an affectionate and sensitive account of Ruth's family connections with the House in the 1950s and 1960s. Her entry involves both a recorded interview with her mother, Leah, talking about Ruth's two uncles, Wes and Jim, and an associated written account. Wes and Jim lived together as life partners at

Carisbrook, where they lovingly managed and maintained the house. Wes ran a bootmaker's business in Crows Nest, while Jim was a renowned milliner, famous in the city of Sydney as a skilled and creative man. They were artistic, hospitable and generous with their home. Uncle Jim organised the wedding of Ruth's parents in 1959, and this included preparing a wonderful celebratory dinner, for Jim was a skilled cook. Wes and Jim had a large number of artistic friends and they introduced Ruth's mother, Leah, to a world of theatre and ballet. The interview between Ruth and Leah makes clear the great affection they felt for the two men. Ruth wanted to pay tribute to two generous men who once lived in, and loved, Carisbrook Historic House .Listen to her talk [HERE](#).