



Welcome to LCHS FRIENDS

**The Lane Cove Historical Society
and the Friends of Carisbrook Historic House**

Bring your expertise to Carisbrook Historic House

Welcome to volunteering at Carisbrook Historic House.

For nearly fifty years a long chain of LCHS volunteers has transformed the house into a fascinating time-capsule of life in the 1880s. And they have had fun doing it.

Being a Friend is an opportunity for a satisfying, enjoyable and friendly volunteer experience. As curators, the LCHS and Friends groups maintain the high standard of historical presentation and enjoyable visitor experience that has made Carisbrook a valued heritage site.

You will find plenty of enjoyment participating in the Friends of Carisbrook as a whole and also by engaging with one of our smaller special task groups. These groups cover a wide range of jobs and we list them below for your consideration. There is plenty of variety so, whatever your interests and talents are, there is a place for you.

HOUSE GUIDING

Carisbrook guides take visitors through the house. You will join the roster for Sunday duty a couple of times a quarter. Assistance is also needed during the week when group visits are booked in, so there is a time to suit all. The training to familiarise yourself with the Victorian era, the furnishings and the story of the Brooks family, is not arduous and every guide is free to bring their own personality to the fore in guiding duties.

HOUSE INTERIORS PRESERVATION, CARE & PRESENTATION

This group is expert in the restoration care, cleaning and presentation of the antiques and old household items up to museum standards. There is no need for any museum qualification and on the job training is given. Handyman would be most welcome to assist this group in small general maintenance jobs as well. This group usually meets once a month on the fourth Wednesday and works closely with the Collection Management group.

EXHIBITIONS/SOFT FURNISHINGS PRESENTATION

Several times a year we change our display cases to exhibit more of the Collection than is usually on show. Artistic input and/or research skills are most welcome. Organising the borrowing of items from outside sources could also be needed. Soft furnishings involves the attention to drapes, etc. in the house and research into further acquisitions or reproductions.

COMPUTERS & IT: SOCIAL MEDIA, PRINT, PUBLICITY

We need 'webmasters' to upload information to our web site; we need help to maintain Face Book and other social media pages for Carisbrook. The skills for these jobs are easily acquired with a little instruction from other Friends. Editors are needed for our digital monthly Noticeboard as well as our periodic LCHS Journal. We would also value someone with skill in using computer graphics for our many posters that are needed throughout the year.

The publicity group is charged with promoting Carisbrook to the wider community under the guidelines of the marketing strategy within the Carisbrook Business Plan. It is up to this group to get as many customers through the doors on Event days. The generation and use of email contact lists, press contacts, social media and even telephone marketing is all within the job description.

You don't have to be an Andy Warhol or Bill Gates: if you have any interest in technology we would love to hear from you. Training will be given in the software used. The other jobs involve people connecting with people—what could be more fun than that.

EVENT ORGANISATION: GROUP TOUR AND EVENT CATERING

The LCHS has an annual schedule of open days for Carisbrook. They involve jazz concerts with wine and cheese; high tea afternoons, children's performances, and any other innovative entertainments that our group can come up with. These days need planning, promotion, catering, attendee and talent management and guiding on the day. You don't have to be able to do all the jobs, just co-ordinate the different groups. All groups of the Friends come together on these days and host Carisbrook's guests. It's a wonderful opportunity to mix socially with the community and visitors to Carisbrook.

Group tours occur during the week and require house guides and some volunteers to take care of the catering. Generally the groups are around 12 to 20 visitors and they opt for morning or afternoon tea, or a simple cold luncheon. Because they are mostly retired social clubs, or retirement home outings, it is considered a very worthwhile exercise to give these groups an enjoyable experience. And it gives us volunteers a warm and satisfying feeling in the heart.

Once or twice a year group tours consist, not of older citizens, but of youngsters. Then—if you dare!—it can be rewarding to watch several primary school classes crazily cavort around the courtyard and then come quietly, like little mice, into the house under your supervision.

SOCIAL OUTINGS ORGANISERS

Group outings are always fun, but it takes a few fun people to think up the fun things to do. If you're good at planning trips, you will be perfect as one of our outings organisers.

COLLECTIONS DIGITAL ARCHIVE & ANTIQUE ACQUISITIONS

The antique items in Carisbrook are catalogued in the Mosaic museum inventory system. Anyone with a general competence in computer-use can be trained in the Mosaic system to assist with this work. This involves the measuring, photographing and input into the computer of item description and details. These details sometimes involve internet research into whichever antique category the item fits: a job for born-shoppers!



A brief history of Carisbrook

Set in tranquil gardens that go down to the quiet waters of Burns Bay, Carisbrook is a survivor of a time when the Lane Cove River was a world away from colonial Sydney town. Built by the Brooks family around 1880-1884, it stands on an eighteen-acre grant of land first acquired by John Clarke in 1835.



By the late 1850s John Clarke's land and the adjoining Linley grant were owned by Rachael Brooks. It was occupied by Rachael and husband, Thomas, a customs officer, together with Thomas' two sons, Thomas Jnr. and Charles. They lived in a weather-board cottage near the water on Burns Bay, complete with a wharf, stables and gardens.

The land in Lane Cove at this time was commonly used for market gardens and orchards. Woodcutting was also a source of income for local people and small industries, such as tanning, were underway in the area. The barrier of the river made the area something of a backwater: transport to Sydney was by rowing boat across to the Hunters Hill ferry, or by riding or walking some distance downstream to Woodford Bay and other wharves.

In the early 1880s, as plans for the Figtree Bridge moved closer to realisation, the Brooks applied to subdivide their land. They lobbied to ensure that Burns Bay Road was the feeder road to the new bridge, even serving as Councillors in the local Willoughby Council, who administered Lane Cove at the time.

They set aside over an acre and built the house from the honey-coloured sandstone, quarried on their land. The rest of the estate was subdivided into standard housing blocks and put up for auction under the name of 'the Carisbrook Estate'. This land, mostly on Linley Point, was gradually sold, block by block, until well into the 1960s.

Carisbrook is in the Italianate style. Its asymmetrical façade, large bay window, and low-pitched slate roof are all characteristic of this style which was very fashionable in the Victorian period.

The house was retained in the family until 1904, when they left Australia to live in South Africa. It passed through the hands of several of owners and was occupied by tenants for most of its early history. It was advertised as a very desirable house for the aspirational middle-class of the period.

Some of the families who owned Carisbrook have given us a fascinating window on life in Lane Cove in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

Carisbrook is the oldest surviving house in the area with its fabric largely intact and was bought in 1969 by the Lane Cove Council for preservation of local heritage. A permanent conservation order was placed on the house by the Heritage Council of NSW in 1981. Maintained by the LCC and curated by the LCHS, it is the only house museum in Sydney to capture this era and to reflect the mores of the Victorian middle-class lifestyle.



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Slate cutting in Australia in 1880



The Friends meet at Carisbrook every second month on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.00am. This is the opportunity for everyone to get together and we welcome participation and feedback from our new members. Inbetween times, the other groups meet and work at Carisbrook independently. Feel free to contact anyone on the contact sheet and they will be happy to help you.

The LCHS also have monthly meetings on the fourth Tuesday of every month. There is a special guest speaker and tea and coffee after the presentation. The meeting starts at 7pm at the Lane Cove Library and there is free parking in the Council carpark under Woolworths from 6pm.