

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE



Kingsford Smith Oval

Kingsford Smith Oval, originally named **Longueville Park** encompasses the area, bounded by Kenneth, Stuart, William Edward and Dunois Streets.

In May 1900 Lane Cove Council received formal approval for the resumption of 3 acres of land at Longueville to be used as a cricket ground. This was the end result of a series of complex negotiations dating back to the 1880s. Joseph Palmer, local resident of Amalfi and Alderman on Willoughby Council at the time had commenced the process when the land was originally offered for sale. The Department of Lands confirmed the proclamation of Longueville Park on 27 February 1901 in the *Government Gazette*.

The recreational use of this land predates the official proclamations. Local history notes its use as a cricket ground for many years before the land was offered for sale and it was home to the Lane Cove District Cricket Club when it was inaugurated in 1893. Oral histories also recall the tin dressing shed, which was originally built on the corner of Stuart and William Edward Street. This was where the cricket, sailing and baseball clubs had their meetings and where the Lane Cove Sailing Club was formed in 1916. There was also a bush hut on the site with tables and chairs for picnics, built along the Kenneth Street boundary.

By the 1920s the tin shed was inadequate for the **community's needs**. In 1923 the Lane Cove District Cricket Club wrote to Council suggesting a new structure was 'an absolute necessity both for providing accommodation for the increasing number of spectators at the various Athletic fixtures that are held on the ground year to year, and as a more commodious dressing room for visiting players'. The Lane Cove Sports Pavilion Committee proposed the building of a new pavilion at the Longueville cricket ground in November 1924. This was approved with the Council subsidizing the cost. The tin shed was demolished and the pavilion was built during 1925.

In 1928, local World War I aviator, Charles Kingsford Smith and his navigator Charles Ulm made the first trans-Pacific flight from the United States to Australia in their plane, the *Southern Cross*. **Charles' parents had** resided in Arabella Street Longueville from about 1907 and Charles, born in Brisbane in 1897, spent his boyhood in the Lane Cove area. On 23 June 1928, Lane Cove Council and the citizens held a Civic Reception at the Lane Cove Picture Theatre for Kingsford Smith. He was presented with an illuminated address from the Municipality. An afternoon welcome home followed at Longueville Oval, which included an aerial display by members of the New South Wales Aero Club.

Longueville Park was subsequently renamed Kingsford Smith Oval with Smithy's approval in 1928. Charles Kingsford Smith was knighted for his meritorious service in 1932. The citizens of Lane Cove again gathered at Kingsford Smith Oval to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the flight of Kingsford Smith and Ulm across the Pacific in 1953. A naval helicopter hovered over the area and landed on the oval. A guard of honour was formed by Air League cadets, Scouts and ex-servicemen. At the conclusion of the ceremony the helicopter flew in a figure of eight over the oval before returning to its base.



The helicopter bearing a wreath to be used in the commemorative service for the 25th anniversary of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's crossing of the Pacific, landing on Kingsford Smith Oval in Longueville on June 14, 1953 (Courtesy of K. Knox)