

A short history of The Lindsay Davis Cup

Lindsay Davis

The Cup is named in honour of Dr Ronald Lindsay Davis who was an outstanding neutron diffraction scientist with AINSE (the Australian Institute of Nuclear Science & Engineering) and then ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science & Engineering Organisation) over two decades, ending with his untimely death in 1995.

A strong believer in Lucas Heights as a national facility, he resented red tape that inhibited access and, often by unconventional means, managed to get things done when many others would have buckled under. He believed wholeheartedly in everything he did, not just at Lucas Heights but also for associated institutions and societies and for the local community.

In particular, he was an avid supporter of the “Wagga” meetings and fought strongly against any proposal for radical change in its format or incorporation into other larger, more expensive meetings. A verbal stoush between Lindsay and Fred Smith at the 1987 meeting is impossible to forget – although on that occasion he was unsuccessful and the “Wagga” meeting was eventually incorporated into the bicentennial AIP Congress held in Sydney in 1988. Most of all, Lindsay had a contagious sense of humour and was the life of any event. He was a dedicated participant and teller of yarns at the “Wagga” Thursday night Trivia Quizzes.

The Lindsay Davis Cup's beginnings

The awarding of The Lindsay Davis Cup was initiated in 1999 by Bob Clark, of the University of New South Wales. Bob was Chair of the Wagga meeting's organising committee in that year. The contest to decide the winner was somewhat less decorous than today's trivia quiz and involved a 50 m sprint race on a sports oval at the Charles Sturt University's Wagga campus. The catch was that each competitor had to run with a glass of beer in each hand, cross the finish line with at least enough beer to fill one glass, drink it and then invert the glass on their head.

Following several elimination rounds and a final, it was only fitting that Shane Kennedy won the Cup as a representative of AINSE. Shane recalls that the judges (Rod Day, John Dunlop and Stephen Collocott from CSIRO) were pro-active but perhaps not entirely unbiased and that there was lively dispute over who was the winner of the final. Following that race, AINSE hosted the Cup for a year during which the brass annotation of Lindsay's Axiom, “You should try using neutrons”, was added.

Various criteria were employed to determine the Lindsay Davis Cup winner for the next couple of years. However, since 2003, the tradition has been to award it to the winning table at the “Wagga” meeting's Thursday night Trivia Quizz.