

## Sam Lane

*Judith Lewis*

Cecil Rhodes (Sam) Lane was born in Riverstone, in a house where the High School now stands, on 19th March 1902 to George and Marian Lane. He had a brother Harry, and three sisters Rita, Davina and Celia. Sam's father then built a two roomed house in Garfield Road, later adding to the residence and building the bicycle shop. The first hand operated gasoline pump outside Parramatta was later installed. The house and shop still stand, almost opposite the junction with George Street and the shop is at present a barber's shop.

Sam attended Riverstone Public School when it was in the building that is now the Blacktown City Bicentennial Museum. It was Sam's description of the building that helped artist Pam Boyne sketch the building for the school's centenary logo in 1983 as, at that stage, there was no known photo of the building. When a photo did surface it was a surprisingly accurate sketch, which is really not so surprising when one remembers how vivid Sam's memory was.

As a youth Sam was a keen cyclist and also played Rugby League. In 1931 he was a member of the Riverstone team which won the Western District A Grade Competition. He once listed his other likes as Shakespeare, Lawson, Omar Khyam, the Labor Party, singing, tennis and bowls.

At 13 years of age he worked as a delivery boy at Bambridges' Store. Two years later he took up an apprenticeship in the motor trade, later transferring to lining and enamelling in the same trade. About 1922 he moved to Lithgow to drive heavy duty overhead cranes. He married Elizabeth Veitch in 1924 and they had one child, Jean. Sam and Elizabeth later divorced and 1927 saw him back in the Riverstone district.

Sam was an apprentice with Bennett & Wood as an Enameller & Liner, and became interested in cycle assembling. He set up a workshop in his father's shop on a part time basis. Frames were bought in parts and then front and back forks etc would be brazed together. This involved building a forge and when lit and very hot, a substance called flux was applied and this had the effect of welding the parts together. The complete frame would be sandpapered to smooth the joins and later painted, lined with scrolls and fancy lines and then completely assembled. The brand name sold by Sam was *Rivone* (obviously part Riverstone).

Sam married Mavis Butterworth on 10th August 1935. Sam had seven children, Jean from his first marriage, George (deceased), Ruth, Doreen, Miriam, Lyn and Laurie. The family settled in Station Street, (now renamed Bridge Street) Schofields. Ruth, Doreen and Laurie, still live in the district.

A strong interest in politics began in about 1938 and within two years he had joined the Australian Labor Party which, on 10th October 1983 honoured him with a life membership for his dedication to the A.L.P. and service to the community.

This service included seven and a half years as an Alderman on Blacktown Council. In 1953, with two other Aldermen, he was instrumental in the formation of Blacktown Workers' Club, Schofields Bush Fire Brigade, the Riverstone Swimming Pool, the Committee for the Electrification and Duplication of the Richmond Line, Progress Association, Parents and Citizens Association, Park Committee, the Amateur Theatre Group, Historical Society and Senior Citizens all benefited from, and in some cases owe their existence to, Sam's enthusiasm.

It was fitting that when the Community Centre in Riverstone opened in 1982 it was named *The Sam Lane Community Complex*. Sam Lane died in December 1986.

Sam Lane had three great loves, his wife and family, the Australian Labor Party and his home town, Riverstone. This love of Riverstone and its history was infectious. A Back to School Day for some senior residents at Riverstone Primary School in 1976, where Sam enthused young and old alike, saw the beginning of the school's Riverstone History Collection.



Cecil (Sam) Lane