

## LORNA CARRINGTON

The following photo was published in February 2014 on Penrith City Council's facebook page and featured NSW walker **Lorna Carrington** who was one of the most successful athletes to ever come out of that municipality. It was the first photo which I had seen of Lorna and it was a great find.<sup>1</sup>



*Lorna Carrington (left)*

Born at Moree in June, 1913, Lorna was the daughter of a garage proprietor in High Street, Penrith. Her father had been a prominent cyclist and runner in his youth and Lorna seems to have inherited that same sporting ability.

Her first walk was in Penrith on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1928, aged 15. A newspaper article of the time quotes her vital stats as weight 9 stone and height 5ft. 4in. On that occasion, she won the 880 yards walk in a time of 5:30. In the next two months, she reduced her 880 yards time to 4:11 and her 440 yards time to 1:59.

By January 1929, she had recorded an 880 yards time of **4:01.6**, the fastest ever by an Australian in the fledgling women's competition.

She came to national attention in September 1929 when she won the Interstate Premiership 880 yards walk at the Norwood Oval in Adelaide, defeating the South Australian representatives on a heavy track in a time of 4:08.5.

A month later, at the Sydney Show Ground, she competed in the Inter High Schools competition between Penrith and Katoomba, winning the 880 yards walk handicap from scratch with a time of **3:53** and breaking the world's best time of 3:54, held by Miss Hegarty of England.<sup>2</sup> In early November, at the club's ground in Penrith, she again equalled her record time.

She did not travel to Melbourne for the inaugural Australian Women's T&F Championships in 1933, on which occasion Victorian Mabel Moad won the 880 yards walk in a time of 4:00.3. But Lorna did compete in the next Australian Women's T&F Championships which were held in Brisbane in April 1935, winning the 880 yards walk in an Australian Record of **3:49**. This record was to stand until March 1951 when 17 year old Leslie Cabrera clocked 3:43 at the Sydney Sports Ground grass track.

She repeated her win in the third Australian Women's T&F Championships in Sydney in January 1936 in a slower time of 3:59.2, winning by 2 ½ yards from Mabel Moad. This meet doubled as the NSW Women's Athletic Association Championships where she won the NSW 440 yards walk in a record time of **1:38.8**.

These are her last recorded races. Soon after this, she married and quickly started a family.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/penrith.city.council/photos/a.10150124612174862/10152731156759862/?type=3&theater>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/16587978?searchTerm=lorna%20carrington%20880&searchLimits=dateFrom=1929-01-01|||dateTo=1929-12-31>

Sadly, her life was cut short when, only four years later, she died shortly after giving birth to her third child. The Nepean Times of Penrith reported as follows on Thursday 22 Feb 1940<sup>3</sup>

### **Death of Mrs. D. Leight**

Mrs Lorna Middleton Leight (well known to many Penrith folk as Lorna Carrington, formerly a very brilliant girl athlete) died at Guunedah on Monday, after a brief illness, at the early age of 26 years.

Deceased was the third daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Carrington, of Quirindi, formerly of Penrith, and about four years ago was married to Mr Douglas Leight, then of Penrith railway staff. Some two years ago Mr and Mrs Leight removed to Gunnedah.

Deceased had a wonderful record as an amateur walker, and is credited with a world's record for the half mile. She competed with uniform success in all leading amateur athletic sports over many years. She won the walking championship at the Highland Gathering for three years in succession. She started her athletic career as a school girl when she competed successfully in a big meeting on Penrith Showground.

She was a member of the old Nepean Athletic Club.

In addition to her husband deceased leaves a son and two daughters, and sisters, brothers, as follows: Edna (Mrs E. Hombsch, Tamworth), Thelma (Mrs E. Thoms, Werris Creek), Joseph (Sydney), and Jim (Penrith).

The funeral took place on Tuesday morning, the interment being in the C. of E. portion of Gunnedah cemetery.

When this brilliant athlete died as a result of complications from childbirth in 1940, at age 26, she held every Australian women's walking record, the 440 yards (**1:38.8**), 880 yards (**3:49**), 1 mile (**8:55**) and 1500m (**8:24.2**).

The Lorna Carrington Cup<sup>4</sup> was instituted by the Australian Federation of Amateur Walking Clubs in 1958 when they formed and was awarded to the winning team in the Open Women's 10km roadwalk. It was first presented in 1960 and it was held every second year from then on. However, in 1967 it became an annual event and has been contested annually since. NSW RWC has consistently won this event and has shown itself to be the premier club with regard to women's walking in Australia. It remains the standard on which the other clubs can test themselves.



**Lorna Carrington Cup**

Tim Erickson  
Monday 13 April 2020

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3 See <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/108717239?searchTerm=lorna%20carrington&searchLimits=dateFrom=1940-01-01||dateTo=1940-12-31>

4 See <http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/RWA%20Perpetual%20Trophy%20Names.pdf>