

William Andrew Michelmores
16.3.1919- 11.6.2000

Andrew was born in Strathalbyn, 16th March 1919.

He was the second child of Frederick Andrew and Annie Gordon (nee Watt) Michelmores. He was called Drew to his Strathalbyn family and friends, Andy to the farmers of South Australia, Andrew to his own family and other friends. The only people to refer to him as William were door to door salesmen reading off Electoral Rolls!

His siblings were Bert, Gordon, Grace, John (Jack) and Annie. His family and childhood friends all called him Drew. The family names were all remembered with the little ditty 'Bert Drew Gordon while Grace Jacked up Annie'

His brother Gordon and 'little sister' Annie are still with us.

Andrew spent his childhood on the family farm called Glenfield. It was a typical dry land farm – crops and sheep, house cows and work horses. His father owned one of the first tractors in the district.

It was while spending countless hours working farming implements that Andrew identified with a series of 'words' on so many of those implements. The Bagshaw family of implement makers use the motto IFWO RTHDO INGDO ITW ELL which is not Latin or Greek but plain English – If Worth Doing Do It Well. He lived by that motto.

Andrew attended Strathalbyn Primary and High Schools, gaining a Scholarship for Roseworthy College in 1937.

After Graduation from Roseworthy in March 1940, he joined the Army, serving with the Veterinary Corps, looking after sick horses. Yes, horse transport saved a lot of petrol in the major camps throughout Australia. In March 1944 he transferred to the Air Force and trained as a Pilot until 'Services no longer required' in September 1945.

In 1956 he renewed an earlier friendship with Elizabeth Pugh from Murray Bridge who had been on a working holiday in England for three years. She had not found an Earl there, so settled for Andrew. They married on 2nd June 1956. Their three boys, Kim, and twins, Philip and Michael were born in Keith.

The Second World War

In February 2000 Andrew Michelmores recorded some important points regarding the role of horses in the period 1939 to 1945.

In February 1939 I was a student at Roseworthy Agricultural College, South Australia, where there was a small group of staff and students in the Army. They were a Veterinary Unit attached to a Light Horse Regiment made up of 600 young farmers from nearby farming areas. They all had horses and were in training because it was becoming obvious that Hitler was leading Germany to war in Europe

The Veterinary Unit was expanded to 25 (nearly half of the students and a few recent students) and I was one of the volunteers.

The Regiment met for training once a month, and we would go into camp with them. When War was declared in September we were told that we could finish our studies at Roseworthy, then join the Regiment and be ready for overseas if needed.. (The Agriculture course included more Veterinary study then because all farms had horses and there were few tractors).

The Light Horse training continued until 1941 when it was seen that horses were not needed in the Desert war of North Africa.

We also had over 2000 horses in use as light transport around larger Camps. This saved large quantities of Petrol which was needed for essential services. We had up to 83 horses on the sick list some times - most with cuts and sores - some with more serious diseases. We used Sulphanilamide drugs, which had just been invented - some had not been tried on humans, so it was important that we record carefully. I was in charge of the Dispensary and kept the records..

When Japan entered the War, we helped train 600 donkeys for Pack Transport in the Islands if needed. Aeroplanes and men were used in this area, so we were not needed, but still classified as 'Specialists' and could not transfer to other Army work. We were allowed to transfer to the Air Crew training if acceptable, one every few months. I eventually got into the Air Force in March 1944 and trained as a Pilot, flying Tiger Moths and then Twin engine planes until the War ended in August 1945. I was stationed at Pt Pirie at the time. The whole town lit up, with lights strung from one chimney to another. We were all glad that the Americans had perfected the Atomic Bomb before the enemy. We knew, and they were warned that something dreadful would happen if they did not surrender. Unfortunately for them, the leaders did not heed the warning and took too long to reply after the first Bomb, so the second was dropped!

The War finished in August 1945 and I was Discharged in September, after serving more than six years in the Services, doing what I was told (most of the time!), and did not get out of Australia.

After the War, Andrew went home to the family farm at Strathalbyn to help with the harvest, then a short period at Roseworthy College as Cadet Plant Breeder before joining the Department of Agriculture in September 1946.

Department of Agriculture

After serving as Cadet Plant Breeder at Roseworthy College, Andrew joined the Department of Agriculture as Field Officer in September 1946 stationed in Adelaide. His early expertise in pastures generally was recognised and he was appointed to judge The Chronicle Pasture Competition.

His first country placement was as a Project Officer at Minnipa Research Centre in May 1950. In October 1953 he took on the position as Agricultural Adviser, Crops and Pastures stationed at Streaky Bay.

This was an exciting time as work included the finding of the need for special fertilisers to correct deficiencies which limited production on much of our farming land. It was a period of rapid change with the development of new fertilizers, new chemicals for crop protection and completely new methods as farming progressed from the horse teams to power farming techniques.

Andrew played a vital role in the transformation of agricultural production on Eyre Peninsula with research, testing and promoting the use of medicos. In addition he assisted with research into Rhizoctonia, paving the way to the present understanding of this disease. His expertise in experimental plot design and layout – relevant to farmers – helped the Department in gaining acceptance and recognition among local farmers.

In May 1955 Andrew moved to Keith in the Upper South East as Agricultural Advisor. This was during the opening up of the Ninety Mile Desert. He worked closely with Kelvin Powrie in research on trace element deficiency leading to the introduction of super phosphate and trace element application to the 'poor' soils. This area is now some of the best agricultural land in our State.

His work concentrated on lucerne management strategies, fodder conservation, fertilizer trials and the issue of non-wetting sands.

In 1961 Andrew accepted a job as a Rural Officer with Commonwealth Development Bank based in Adelaide. The job involved providing important information regarding the projected profitability of farms as part of development loan approval process. This was not a task that Andrew enjoyed. In many instances he had a gut feeling that a farmer would be successful despite the odds. Unfortunately he could not provide the necessary hard facts and many lost opportunities occurred.

In 1963 Andrew rejoined the Department of Agriculture and he took his family back to Minnipa – he with a new title of Agronomist. He was able to see the results of changes he brought about by the use of medic in the mid 1950's.

He finally moved to Nuriootpa in the Barossa Valley in 1965, as Agronomist and Senior District Officer, covering the area from Gawler to Clare and from the coast to the Murray - a diverse agricultural district.

While based at Nuriootpa, in what was most probably the most significant part of his career, Andrew began his work on Annual Ryegrass Toxicity. He became recognised as the National authority on this problem and was invited to Western Australia and Victoria to address farmers and advisors.

Across his whole career Andrew showed an interest in entomology and insect damage to crops. He undertook significant work in the areas of web worm on Eyre Peninsula, Pink Cutworm and Etiella in the lucerne of the South East and stem nematode of oats and pea crops in the Lower North.

He was the sole author or major joint author of many Department Bulletins and Fact Sheets.

In 1980 Andrew was appointed to the Roseworthy College Council.

Andrew was an active supporter of the Agricultural Bureau movement across South Australia. He spent many nights traveling the back roads of our State on his way home from yet another meeting. He saw face to face contact with groups of farmers as his most significant role. If it wasn't Bureau meetings it was clearing sales. It was not uncommon to see Andy Michelmore 'holding court' with a group of farmers gathered at a country clearing sale.

His methods differed greatly from current trends in the relationship between 'The Department' and farmers. Maybe that is why most farmers remember him so well.

Andrew Michelmore 'retired' from the Department of Agriculture in March 1984 at the age of 65 years.

His retirement celebration filled the main dining hall at Roseworthy with farming friends traveling from all parts of South Australia to celebrate with Andrew his 38 years of service to the agricultural community,

He continued to be actively involved in the field of agriculture and made a point of keeping up to date with current trends. He regularly participated in the 'Retired and Distinguished Agronomists Group' and always attended the Rural Media Royal Show breakfast.

In February 2000 Andrew noted the increasing resistance of Annual Ryegrass to modern herbicides. For one who so often recommended a spray application in the 1950's to 1980's this was a major recognition of the need to seek solutions using 'old fashioned' methods. He wrote *'The development of herbicide resistance in annual ryegrass suggests a few comments re non-chemical control of weeds and ryegrass in particular - remembering that weeds and be controlled by the Four C's : Cutting, Cultivation, Competition and Chemicals.....'* He went on to spell out in simple terms his philosophy.

Scouting

Andrew was never a member of the Scouting movement as a youth but a true supporter of his three sons who were all members for many years. In 1967 he joined the Parents Committee of the 2nd Angaston Group. In 1968 he took on the position of President which he held until 1976 – the longest serving President in the 50 year history of that Group. During that time he oversaw the unique scheme to pay off the Scout Hall and the establishment of a fleet of scout canoes and boats.

In recognition of his services to Scouting he was awarded the 'Thanks Badge' – the highest award to a non-uniformed member of the Scouting movement.

Lions International

Andrew joined Lions as a Charter Member of the Lions Club of Barossa Valley in 1967. He served as Save Sight Chairman, and was responsible for the organisation of the first combined Glaucoma and Diabetes tests when 1040 were tested for Glaucoma and 780 for Diabetes. It was amazing how some of the samples of urine were collected - how did they get it into a H.P. Sauce bottle with the drip stopper still in??

He then served two years as Secretary, gaining the 100% Award, three years Vice President, then as President 1974/75, again receiving the 100% Award. Andrew maintained 100% attendance at Barossa until transferring to the Rostrevor Lions Club in 1985, and serving on many Committees, including one year as President in 1992/3. One of his main jobs was to organise the Football Raffle from 1994 to 1998, with considerable help from members, raising over \$5,000 for Club funds.

1999 was a highlight year when Andrew was awarded an O B E ("Over Bloody Eighty") on his birthday, then at the Lions Club of Rostrevor Hand-over in June, received the 'Melvin Jones Award' for service to Lions – the highest award in Lions International.

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ANDREW MICHELMORE

It was with great sadness that I report the passing of our Past President, Andrew Michelmores on Sunday 11th of June.

Andrew was a member of the Lions Club of Rostrevor and before that, the Lions Club of Barossa Valley. He joined the Barossa Valley Lions Club as a Charter member in 1967 where, amongst other roles, he served as Secretary and in 1974 – 1975 as President. When he and Elizabeth moved to Rostrevor in 1985, Andrew transferred to the Rostrevor Lions where he continued to be an active Lion serving on many committees and becoming President in 1992 – 1993. Andrew maintained 100% attendance throughout his 33 years with Lions – a record only a few Lions in South Australia could match.

Our club benefited enormously from Andrew's wisdom and experience not just in Lionism but in life. His characteristic good nature and keen sense of humour always won him friends. We were proud to have Andrew as a member of our club and, in recognition of his many years and selfless service to Lions, we unanimously nominated him for the Melvin Jones Award – which is the highest award that can be presented to a Lion for service to the community. Andrew received that award on June the 15th 1999. It was a fitting tribute to a man who dedicated so much of his life to Lions and helping others.

Andrew was always ready to help. Whenever volunteers were called for his hand would almost invariably go up. In his last few years, when the spirit was willing but the body was weakening, he would often sidle up after the meeting to whoever was organising the activity he had volunteered for and quietly say 'I don't know how much use I'll be but I'll do the best that I can'. And you knew he would – whether it was selling raffle tickets on a bitterly cold night at Football Park (at some cost to his health), cleaning up a resident's yard, selling badges for charity in windy King William Street or trudging up and down hilly streets in Rostrevor selling Lions Christmas cakes.

One of the greatest strengths of Andrew's character was his good nature. In the 16 years I knew him I never once heard him express a word in anger. Often during intense club debate on some issues he would quietly wait his turn to speak and then, after putting his view would gently add 'Well that's how I feel about it anyway'. No-one ever doubted his sincerity and whether you agreed with him or not, his manner had a calming influence on the debate. What he did say more often than not turned out to be right.

Andrew had a wonderful sense of humour. When he stood up to be fined during the Tail-twist, we knew he would often have a joke on us. In fact, when he paid his fine and didn't have a joke we were disappointed. He would often personalise a joke by modifying it so that he appeared to be telling a story about one of our members. By the time he was about half way through the story (and, with Andrew, that could take a while) you would find yourself thinking 'Hang on a minute, this is a bit far fetched' – and then the penny would drop – you'd realise he was leading us into one of his jokes.

Andrew was a Lion who was absolutely true to the ethics of Lionsism. He was a gentleman in the truest sense – a man who always showed compassion and goodwill towards others. All who knew him are the richer for the experience.

Andrew will be dearly missed, but the happy memories he left us will remain forever.

Members and partners of the Lions Club of Rostrevor extend their deepest sympathy to Elizabeth and their sons Kim, Philip and Michael and their families in this time of loss.

John Saunders

President

'Retirement'

Soon after retirement in March 1984, Andrew suffered his first heart attack. He wanted to be closer to specialist heart care so they made a decision to move. Andrew and Elizabeth moved to Rostrevor in 1985.

He lectured for one year at Roseworthy in Graduate Diploma in Agriculture.

Family, including five grand children and Lions activities are his main interests.

He was a guide at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and worked most Mondays at the State Herbarium (now called the Biodiversity Centre) with Elizabeth.

Andrew's spare time activities include photography, gardening and travel.

Andrew was a passionate photographer. He commenced taking slides in the 1930's – black and white in glass mounts. After the Second World War he made the transition to colour slides. In those days he picked up his slides from Kodak in King William Street – they would take him upstairs and show him his slides on their projector. Andrew has amassed thousands of slides but, unfortunately, he did not catalogue the many agricultural slides. In the 1980's he made the switch to colour prints. Those on his Christmas card list would know of the exceptional quality of his photos of flowers taken on a modern point and push camera.

Andrew and Elizabeth traveled extensively across Australia with their young family but it was not until 1978 that Andrew first ventured out of the country. He first went to Fiji for a taste of different cultures. This was start of a thirst for travel – over the next 22 years, Andrew and Elizabeth made 11 overseas trips visiting Europe and England (5 times), Papua New Guinea, India, South Africa, USA and Canada and New Zealand. His passion with photography and gardens means his sons

have a massive collection of photos of flowers from across the world. on a recent trip to Europe he returned with nearly all photos of flowers!

Andrew was Computer literate – he bought his first computerised typewriter in the early 1980's and his first real computer in 1996. He then produced his Coolabah Newsletters and ROCA Digests on his computer. In February 2000 he commenced recording some of his memoirs. Unfortunately he still had plenty to record.

Roseworthy Old Collegians Association (ROCA)

After graduation from Roseworthy College in 1940, Andrew joined the Roseworthy Old Collegians Association. In 1946 he paid up as a Life Member of ROCA.

During his work in the 1950's on Eyre Peninsula, he was instrumental in developing the Eyre Peninsula Branch of ROCA and continued to play an active role in that Branch when he returned to Minnipa in the early 1960's. upon his return to 'the Mainland' Andrew continued his association with the Eyre Peninsula Branch, leading a family pilgrimage to Port Lincoln each February to the ROCA Dinner at picnic.

In 1965 Andrew became the Eyre Peninsula representative on the ROCA Committee, a Committee member from 1970 to 1976, Vice President from 1976 to 1978 culminating in the position of President from 1978 to 1980. While most would have quietly enjoyed their continuing fellowship, Andrew then became actively involved in the production of the ROCA newsletter – ROCA Digest. He continued as Editor of this newsletter through to early 2000.

His services to Agriculture were recognised in 1981 when he was awarded the Roseworthy Old Collegians Award of Merit for outstanding contribution to agriculture.

Coolabah Club

In 1967 Andrew joined the Coolabah Club – a small group of mainly farmers who recognised the need to plant trees on farms and in rural communities across the State. This was long before it became trendy to be environmentally aware – long before Men of The Trees, Trees For Life, Greening Australia and Land Care.

He was an active member of the Coolabah Club holding positions of Secretary and President at various times. He has been a long time Editor of their Newsletter.

The End

In early 2000 Andrew's heart problems became more developed. Soon after his 81st birthday he realised he could no longer drive with confidence or safety. He was admitted to hospital on 31st May after yet another minor heart problem. As he said --he was 'buggered'. His dry sense of humour was retained to the end – he died telling yet another joke to the nurses.

'It was a good life'

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