

Jean Garner MICHELMORE

13/5/1916 - 28/2/2010

Jean Garner Rose was born on 13 May 1916 in a little hospital at Victor Harbor. She was the second daughter of Tom and Effie Rose, who lived on a farming property at Inman Valley. At the tender age of 3 or 4 Jean remembered their next door neighbour, Mr Crossman who carted wood by horse and wagon. Jean and her older sister Bobby watched as Mr Crossman coaxed the horses to climb a steep hill near their property, by saying "fetch-up, fetch-up," so they always called him 'Mr Fetch-up!'

In 1920, the family moved to Hindmarsh Valley. There were now three girls, all of which got the dreaded disease, diphtheria. Jean's father wasn't allowed to see them, but occasionally spoke to them through the window, which had disinfected curtains and a screen. Jean did not like her vegetables, so threw them onto the lino under her bed, where the elderly Nurse Jenson, who was looking after the girls, would find them. In 1921, at the age of 5 Jean and her family moved to Angas Plains, where they rented Mr Jack Rankine's property 'Woodburn' for 17 years. While there another sister and her only brother were born. The five Rose children walked 1½ miles to the one teacher school at Angas Plains, where her wonderful teacher Miss Isabel Matheson taught approximately 40 children from grade 1 to 7.

Jean was a good tennis player, winning a trophy in 1935-36 for 'Best Match results'. When Mr Davidson donated some land at the school, everyone including Jean helped to build the tennis courts and form an association.

Jean remembered Woodburn as a lovely house and farm where her mother together with all the children's help raised turkeys, ducks and geese which they dressed and sold in Strathalbyn for Christmas dinners. After passing her QC, Jean and her older sister Bobby had to ride their ponies 7 miles to attend Strathalbyn High School. Jean left school on her 16th birthday to work at home on the farm, driving a team of 4 horses and a plough. It was her job to plough, drill and harrow; Jean took great pride on being able to drill the crop in very straight rows. She used to halve the bags of super and roll them up the combine wheel to the super box. But by the age of 22 Jean was able to carry a bag of super just as well as her father. Jean also helped to milk cows, sheared lambs with the hand shears, kept pigs and trapped rabbits for pocket money. One day Jean was riding her horse 'Queenie' home from the paddock when suddenly she began cantering in a funny fashion and collapsed on the fence, which fell over under the horse's weight. Queenie had suffered a heart attack and died. Jean was able to free her leg, undo the girth, take off the saddle and bridle, kiss her lovely horse 'goodbye' and walk home. The paddock is now the Strathalbyn Airstrip.

One day when returning from the Langhorne Creek shop in the horse and cart Jean and her sister Molly hit a tussock with the cart wheel. Horse, cart, groceries and girls all capsized. They ran across to Cousin Fred Fischer's for help to sort out the mess, then the girls proceeded home with more care. They hid grandpa's damaged new horse harness behind some bags of chaff. Black scowls later from grandpa indicated he had found the harness, but Jean thought her mother applied a bit of pressure and nothing was ever said.

In 1938 the family left Woodburn and bought a property at Finniss. The young children went to school at Victor Harbor. Tractors with rubber tyres replaced horses and we've still got the McCormick Deering W-30 Mum drove in the war years. She hung a lantern on the front to light the furrow and see where she was going. Often when turning a corner the breeze would blow the lantern out and leave her in the dark. When cutting sheaved hay Jean drove the tractor while her Dad rode the binder. Sometimes she would miss a little strip of crop when turning the corner, much to her Dad's displeasure. Jean fixed this problem by running over the strip of crop next time round with the front wheel of the tractor. Grandpa didn't see it so no more dramas. At hay

carting time it was Jean's job to stack the sheaves on the wagon and make sure it didn't fall off. She sewed bags of grain with her dog 'Pompy' and could do 100 bags a day.

Mum was a tireless worker throughout her life and always led from the front, seven days a week. If anyone felt crook Mum's remedy was 'Get out and do some work—you'll feel better!'

On 13 May 1944 (Mum's 28th birthday) her only brother Flight Sergeant George Henry Rose was shot down over Germany with Bomber Command at age 19. He'd gone straight from Victor Harbor High School where he passed his leaving certificate with honours. His grave at Antwerp, where he rests with thousands of his fellow servicemen, is beautifully kept. Mum often said this was the saddest part of her life and birthdays were never much fun afterwards.

On 14 April 1945 Jean Rose married Robert (Bert) Michelmores of Sandergrove at the Finnis Church of Nativity and together they raised five children on their property near Strathalbyn. Dad built their house, milking shed and large fowl house himself and Mum ran chooks, turkeys, geese and ducks in large quantities for eggs and meat, supplying many people around Strathalbyn with their Christmas roasts. Many a night was spent cleaning eggs to send off to the Egg Board by train. As a young boy I remember Mum wading through mud and slush nearly knee deep in the cow yard to get more cows in to milk. The suction of the mud sometimes pulled her rubber boots off and left her stranded in the middle of the yard.

Pouring rain and dim lights made things tougher not to mention being 7-8 months pregnant with her next child. Dad was instructed to get more cement down and this made life a lot easier.

Soon Mum put in an order for a brand new brick dairy, so she could get a City Milk Licence and more money for the milk. So in about 1960 work began on Mum's new dairy, there were cement yards, walk through bails, lots of lights, steel fences, piped water, proper latches, a feed room, troughs, raceways, the lot! It was a pleasure to go to work and Mum milked more and more cows until son Charlie took over in 1976 when Mum turned 60.

When going to Primary School we would arrive home to find a large plate of Weet-Bix with butter and apricot jam on the table for an afternoon snack. Mum's capacity for work and making jam was enormous, be it apricot, fig, quince, peach, melon, plum, native currant or beautiful blackberry. Her jam was great with fresh bread and cream. What didn't go into jam went through Mum's Vacola preserving unit. You had to be quick to get some fresh fruit before Mum ploughed it all into jam. the cupboards were full of it and we NEVER EVER went hungry.

Mum joined the Strathalbyn Women's Agricultural Bureau in September 1941, she's been an active member ever since and received her life membership in 1965, her 40 year Award in 1983, 50 year award in 1992 and her 60 year award in 2002. Mum retired from holding office in 2001, after 31 years in various positions, including Secretary 20 years, President 8 years, Treasurer 2 years and Committee Member for 1 year. She was instrumental in helping the branch run successfully, organising the majority of 65 birthdays and 50 floral days, which in 1997 was awarded the Strathalbyn Community Event of the Year. Over the years Mum won many prizes for her flowers at floral days.

✓In 1983 she was the second Strathalbyn identity to be awarded the Australia Day 'Citizen of the Year' award. Mum also served this Church for many years, on the Church Council, as Church Warden, President and Secretary of Guild and Mothers Union. She joined the Associated Country Women of the World and attended

conferences in Perth, Fiji, New Zealand, Barossa Valley, Goulburn. Burra and Renmark. In her spare time Mum helped with Meals on Wheels and had a regular round of friends she took shopping by car every week, most of whom were younger than she was!

In 1985 we sent Mum and Dad to Kangaroo Island for their 40th Wedding Anniversary. They grumbled about going but had a great time together once they got there.

After 54 years of marriage Mum was widowed when Dad passed away in his sleep, alongside Mum, on 19 February 1999. Typically Mum soldiered on amongst her memories, but after a few years she got pretty lonely and wished she could join Dad. I said keep going Mum there's some great-grandchildren on the way; this kept her excited for a while.

Then depression set in again 'It's not the same without Dad,' she'd say. Again I said keep going Mum you'll be 90 soon. She screwed up her face and said '90! Fancy being that old, after all the work I've done!' She was right, living proof hard work never hurt anyone. We had a gathering here in the Church Hall for her 90th on Saturday then a family lunch and photo's at the Victoria Hotel on Sunday. It was a big weekend but Mum was in top gear all the way. Soon she was 91 and her quality of life began slipping away, home visits by her carers were not enough and amongst great protests Mum went into Kalimna Low Care Nursing Home in June 2007. After 6 months she shifted across to high care on 18 January 2008. She loved her bed and sometimes amazed the staff by putting herself to bed at 2, 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Her quality of life was gone but Mum still had good eyesight and could read better than most of her kids.

Her last outing was to her Granddaughter Yvonne's Wedding on 14 February, only a couple weeks ago. After this Mum went down hill rapidly, putting a scare into all of us. She left this world about 4 am last Sunday.

Mum left instructions for today. About 10 years ago she was talking to me about her life with Dad when she turned to me and said, 'Now when I die, I don't want people to be too upset - just put me up with Dad and get on with your life. '

We give thanks for the life of Jean Gamer Michelmore
With love to all who have gone before
From those of us here now
And those still yet to come.

Written by Rob Michelmore
Typed by Kelly Jackson