

CONNECTING COBDEN

COMMUNITY



NEWSLETTER

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ARTHUR MATHESON - A CHAMPION IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE

Arthur Matheson died on January 26th, 2013, at the grand age of 90. Below is an edited version of the eulogy presented at his funeral by Garry Matheson and Margaret Turner on behalf of their brothers, sisters and families.

Dad was born on February 13th, 1922, at Cobden, the fifth of ten children of Adam and Margaret Matheson of South Purrumbete. Dad's brothers and sisters were Lizzie, Jack, Ruth, Adeline, Adam, Donald, Flo, Allan and Ian.

His father Adam, born at Snake Valley near Ballarat, married Margaret Baker of South Purrumbete in January, 1914. Dad inherited a strong work ethic from his parents. Even though they were relatively poor and lived a simple life, good food was always on the table.

His parents were great providers, growing so many fruit and vegetables that they would drive around the neighbourhood with a horse and loaded buggy to share them with the community. Food was never wasted. They lived off "the fat of the land".

After buying a bush block at Naylor's Road, Jancourt East in 1940, when he was just 18, Dad cleared it with crosscut saw and axe, cutting the wood which he sold to make a living. Most was sold to the Cobden, Tandarook, Camperdown, Weerite, Pomborneit and Bostocks Creek milk factories. At that time Dad "batched" during the week, returning home to South Purrumbete at weekends.

He married our mother Ethel Lock on February 3rd 1945, and moved permanently onto the farm. They lived in a small corrugated iron house with two bedrooms, a kitchen, lounge and outside toilet. At first there was no stove or laundry and Mum cooked on a camp oven until they put in a wood stove.

Items were hard to come by in those days due to rationing. Clothes were boiled in a copper, with a blue bag added to the rinsing water in the cement trough beside the farm sheds. Later, a verandah, sleep-out and laundry were added to the house - the sleep-out for grandfather Matheson who helped on the farm.

Hot water for bathing was taken out of the laundry copper by bucket to fill the bath which was shared in order of cleanliness - usually the kids first, then Mum and Dad. Baths were a luxury as water was often in short supply - sometimes, there was only one bath a week.

Dad was very close to Granddad Matheson who stayed with us often in those early years. Granddad was a wonderful, gentle and kind man who worked hard alongside Dad and Mum on the farm each day. While they milked the cows, Granddad got breakfast for us and made sure we were ready for school.

Dad added to the family income by competition wood chopping which he loved and Mum was his number one fan. Dad would dry the cows off at the first sign of good prize money at "the chops" and enjoy a family holiday at the same time. He could generally win enough to sow the next crop.

His first win at 15 was at Gellibrand but, due to work, his entry into wood chopping was spasmodic. At 17, Dad was inscribed in the record books when he won three novice events in succession at South Purrumbete, Cobden and Dingee. During World War 2, all registered wood chopping ceased and there was a slow build-up in the post-war era.

Dad won his first major wood chop - the 40 inch underhand at Beaufort - in 1950 but his most outstanding win was the Australian underhand title at the Royal Melbourne Coronation Show in 1953. He held the world record for the 12 inch underhand log which he cut in 13 seconds.

In 1966, Arthur, along with Frank Whiteside, represented Australia in the touring team of axemen to the United Kingdom. One of his greatest memories was the team presentation to Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Dad competed at the Cobden axemen's carnival and won the Victorian open championship, chopping a 42 inch log in 25 seconds.



In 1972, he represented Victoria in Tasmania where the team finished second.

Again representing Australia in the 1979 team to the UK, they were billeted on farming properties. The friendship which Dad began in 1966 with the Rutherford families of Hexham, Northumberland, still continues today and, as a result, there have been many visits to and from the UK since that time. Three generations of Mathesons and Rutherfords have remained in touch.

Dad was elected to the Heytesbury Shire Council in 1980 and was shire president in 1988. He continued on council until 1990.

Former shire secretary Merv Whelan wrote of "several projects that typified Arthur's role and influence in council's decision-making.

"These included:

- Construction of the Cobden Technical School sporting complex in 1983.
- Construction of the social clubrooms at the Cobden Recreation Reserve in 1983.
- Obtaining the former racecourse with a view to allowing the first air ambulance to touch down on February 27th, 1984.
- Development of a shire conservation strategy in 1987-88.
- As shire president, Arthur provided strong influential leadership. His encouragement to those working on various projects and his fair-minded approach was indicative of his wide-ranging interest in community affairs."

Dad may have "done it all" but he will be remembered by his family for being a devoted and supporting husband to Mum, a caring and loving father, brother, uncle, grandfather and great grandfather. He also gave dedicated service to his community.

Dad, we remember you with much love, gratitude and respect. When we go to the Cobden Golf Club, we will miss you saying "I'm first shout" and "I'll have the fish".

Some of Arthur's achievements:

- South Purrumbete Football Club - and his finesse on the footy field with Scottie McCann and Neville Vagg.
- Made 50 runs off nine balls, and captained Timboon at Ballarat country week.
- Timboon Cricket Association life member for his years as a cricketer and umpire.
- Life member of Western Victorian Axemen's Association.
- Order of Merit Australian Axemen's Association.
- Many years service as barman (along with Ethel) at the Cobden Sports Club.
- Cobden Cemetery Trust for nearly 30 years.
- Board member, Cobden and District Bush Nursing Hospital 1974-1993.
- Jancourt Fire Brigade captain, life member and one of its founders.
- Country Fire Authority - 25 year Service Medal, Queen's Medal, National Medal.
- President of the Cobden Men's Shed.

PRESENTING OUR OUTSTANDING YOUNG CITIZENS



Connecting Cobden proudly acknowledges the young citizens who took out major awards at our local schools' presentation evenings at the end of 2012. We congratulate them, and wish them well for their respective futures.

Cobden Technical School

Back: Ashley Ovens (left, Camperdown Lions Club), Josh Fagan and Ryan Simmonds (Corangamite Shire), Front: Maddie McInnes (Progressing Cobden), Bonitta Taylor (Caltex All-Rounder). Inset: Courtney Mason (Rotary Club of Cobden).



Cobden Primary School

Back: Jacinta Henriksen (left, Duncan Morris award for outstanding academic achievement), Sarae Hickey (Progressing Cobden award for leadership and all-round performance), Matt Clarke (Elsie Denney encouragement award), Nell Blake (van Leer award for academic consistency and effort). Front: Mitch Kelly (van Leer award), Bernadette Bellman (Rotary citizenship/leadership award), Brooke Hallyburton (van Leer award), Ebony Davis (School Council award for overall commitment to Cobden Primary School).

COBDEN CALENDAR

February

- 20th Cobden Business Network, 5.40pm, Thommo's Hotel.
- 23rd Stirlo's Saturday Sausage Sizzle, 9.30am-11.30am.
- 23rd-24th Cobden Aero Club Fly-in.

March

- 1st World Day of Prayer, St Brendan's Church, 2pm.
- 2nd Heytesbury Show, Simpson Recreation Reserve.
- Stirlo's Sausage Sizzle, 9.30am-11.30am.
- 3rd CFNC Junior Golf Day, 10am.
- 4th Progressing Cobden, 7.30pm, Heytesbury Room.
- 18th CopRice Spring Festival, 7.30pm, Heytesbury Room.

Hampden Specialist School

Logan Pride (left, Progressing Cobden): He impressed with his co-operation, effort and readiness to take on challenges.

Ben Andrews (Elsie Denney Memorial, Cobden Quota): For exceptional effort, persistence, fine acting ability.

Jack Bell (Rotary Club of Cobden): For high achievement and effort in all curriculum areas, and on an inter-personal level.

Drew Semmens (Caltex All-Rounder): For consistently high performance in all areas.

Connecting Cobden - a Progressing Cobden Twenty20 Vision project.
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