

# ❖ MERVYN JAMES MCLUSKIE ❖

## BACKGROUND

Mervyn McLuskie was born in Maryborough Queensland in 1921 and moved with his family from a dairy farm at Sexton, near Gympie, to Buderim seven years later. He attended Buderim Mountain School and often helped his uncles, the Mitchell brothers, who worked as cattlemen, timber-getters and bullock-drivers in the Buderim district. As a youth, he worked at small-crop farming and at his uncle's butcher shop, and was the first nightshift operator at Buderim's telephone exchange when it started a 24-hour service.

In 1940, he enlisted and saw action in North Africa with the 2/15th Infantry Battalion, 9th Division AIF, including 6 months during the siege of Tobruk, in Syria and at Operation Bulimba, El Alamein. He was severely wounded during the landing at Bumi River, Finschhafen, New Guinea. After months in hospital, he was discharged and returned to Buderim in 1945. He married Grace Mary Howe of 'Frimley', Woombye, in 1949 and they had two children, Margaret and Gavin. He farmed small-crops and cattle, ran a small Hereford stud and later worked in real estate in Buderim.



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

On his return from the War, Mervyn was elected as representative for ex-servicemen and women on the inaugural committee of the Buderim War Memorial Community Centre (BWMCC). He was also elected president of the Buderim School of Arts and remained on the committee for 21 years. He was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace in 1950. He was president of various BWMCC committees and community organisations over four decades including Buderim Mountain School P&C Association, Nambour Legacy, Sunshine Coast Real Estate Institute, Buderim Ginger Festival Committees, Sunshine Coast International Rodeo Committee and was the first president of the Buderim QATB Sub-committee. He served three terms as BWMCC Chairman and was awarded honorary life membership. He was the inaugural treasurer of Maroochydore Rotary Club and member of Maroochydore RSL, Headland Golf Club, Rats of Tobruk Association, Buderim Rural Fire Brigade, Buderim Cemetery Trust Committee, Buderim Water Reserve Committee, Dr Wherrett Memorial Kindergarten, Buderim Horse and Pony Club and the Landsborough Electoral Council. He was also assistant ringmaster and announcer for the Sunshine Coast Show Society and announcer at Eudlo May Day Sports and Kenilworth Shows.

In 1964, at the request of the Buderim Ratepayers Association, he stood for the Maroochy Shire Council in Division 4 and was a councillor for 12 years including six as deputy chairman. As a councillor and member of the Buderim Historical Society, he was closely involved in accepting the donation of Sybil Vise's house and its establishment as Buderim Pioneer Cottage. In 1968, he was instrumental in having reticulated water supplied to Buderim from the Wappa Dam near Nambour and, in 1971, co-signed the final payment of interest on the Buderim Tramway Loan. (As a schoolboy, he travelled on the tramway which operated from 1914 to 1935.) He retired from council in 1976 and later received the 4NA Community Award.

As an accomplished horseman, Mervyn competed in showjumping and camp-drafting events. At the request of Bill Bolton of Cobb & Co Ltd Toowoomba, he took part in the 1963 re-enactment of the Cobb & Co coach trip from Port Douglas to Melbourne, a 4800km journey raising funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

He served his country in its time of need and returned to become a tireless worker for the Buderim community and the Maroochy shire. His life exemplified the motto, 'Service above Self'.

Mervyn died in 1979.

*Donor: Grace, Margaret and Gavin.*