

Charles Kempson Maxwell

Respected grazier, 83, dies

Charles Kempson Maxwell

Former Winton Shire chairman and respected grazier Mr Charles Kempson Maxwell died on Friday. Mr Maxwell, 83, who served a record 12-and-a-half years as shire chairman, retired to Toowoomba in 1978 with his wife Pat. Mr and Mrs Maxwell moved to Glenfield Grange Retirement Village in 1994, after spending 16 years at their Curzon Street residence.

During World War II, Mr Maxwell served in the 26th Infantry Division during the Bougainville campaign. He was promoted to staff captain in the 11th Infantry Division in the Pacific and finally battalion adjutant. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded an MBE. In his retirement Mr Maxwell was a keen gardener, being an organiser of Green Week and was convener of the Toowoomba Flower Show. He was a Legacy Club executive member, a member of the Probus Club, the Range branch of the National Party, Toowoomba Home Gardens Club, the Darling Downs Succulent Society and St James's Church choir. He is survived by Mrs Maxwell and their four children, Susan, David, Margaret and Cam. His funeral service will be held at St James's Anglican Church, Mort Street, on Thursday at 2pm.

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Civic leader, grazier left his mark on land

Kempson Maxwell,

(1917 - 2001)

There are some people who really make a difference in their community by their initiative and hard work. Kempson Maxwell was one such man. Born in Victoria on November 20, 1917, Charles Kempson Maxwell was the eldest of five children of Hal and Eileen Maxwell, who had purchased "Boowoomba", McKinlay, in the early 1920s. Kempson attended boarding school in Melbourne from the age of six. Returning home at age nine, he then went to All Souls School, Charters Towers, until 12. Drought and the Depression ended any further schooling.

While still a teenager, Kemp drove wagonettes accompanying flocks of 600 sheep to the markets, sheared, mustered, helped to maintain an orchard and vegetable garden, and ran 10,500 hectares of desert grazing land. Kempson was still only 17 when he successfully bid for land in the Winton district. The improvement of this property, which he named "Luckham", took place over 43 years, to make it one of the show properties of the district.

Kempson trained with the Winton Militia and was called up to war in 1939. Leaving "Luckham" in the hands of trusted friends and family, he joined the 26th Australian Infantry Battalion AIF serving in the defence of Cape York, Dutch New Guinea and he saw active combat in Bougainville. Kempson was awarded the Military Division of the MBE, and mentioned in despatches (MD).

In 1948, he married Pat Walker, and they settled into country life on "Luckham" with their four children Susan, David, Margaret, and Cam. Kempson was able to enlarge his landholdings over the years to a total of nearly 46,000 acres, and a further 50,000 acres in partnership.

Possibly the greatest public impact Kempson made was during the years he served on the Winton Shire Council. During his 18 years as a councillor (including a record 12 1/2 years as chairman), he instigated many projects, including the building of a new pool, rebuilding the shire hall, upgrading the aerodrome, establishing median strips of lawn on the major streets, and installing sewerage throughout the town. During Kempson's years on council, he kept all those cards and invitations sent to him, and on retirement presented them bound in a large album to the Winton Historical Museum.

As well as his work on the council, Kempson was also actively involved in the United Graziers Association, the Winton Club, the Show Society, the Race Club, the Pony Club, and St Paul's Church.

After all this activity, the only challenge Kempson had left to face was retirement, which took place in 1978, when he and Pat moved to Toowoomba.

Gardening, which had long been a passion, now became more of a full-time pursuit. He became involved in the Green Week committee, which led to his organising six of the annual Carnival Flower Shows. Kempson also spent much of his time restoring and maintaining St James's garden, and was a member of the National Seniors Association, the Legacy Club, the Range branch of the National Party, the Darling Downs Succulent Society, the Toowoomba Home Gardens Club, the Toowoomba Probus Club, and the U3A Investors Group. He enjoyed music, and took much pleasure in singing with the St James and U3A choirs.

Kempson Maxwell died in Toowoomba on November 2, 2001, aged 83. He is survived by his wife of nearly 53 years, Pat, and their four children.

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