

# Farewell to sheep industry matriarch

## Helen B. Brewer

Romney sheep breeder

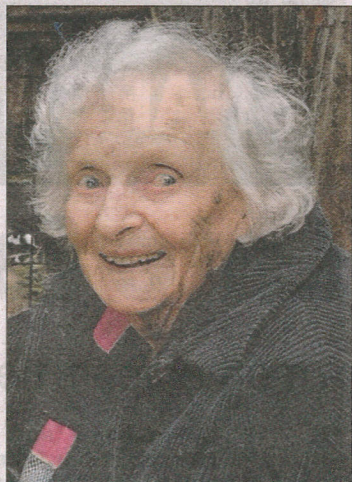
**Born:** August 24, 1920; Moculta

**Died:** August 24, 2012;  
Strathalbyn

**H**ELEN was born and bred on a large merino sheep station, Karinya, the daughter of Colonel and Mrs E.T. Dean. A natural horse rider from the age of three, she continued riding and competing at country and royal shows until her husband died in 1958.

She went to a private boarding school in Angaston from the age of five but was very grateful that tight budgets during the Depression meant she had to go to the local primary school and so could continue to ride her pony each day. Her senior years took her to PGC, now Seymour College, in Adelaide where she duxed her first year and competed in running events both there and at Adelaide Oval.

Soon after completing school, World War II broke out and the days of lavish dances, playing polo and helping run Karinya were gone. During those days, she had met her future husband



Charlie Brewer, an engineer at Horwood Bagshaw who saw wartime service as a Royal Australian Air Force engineer. They married during the war.

They bought their first property near Birdwood and in 1949 they founded the Radstock Romney Stud. In 1954 they bought a larger property near Strathalbyn and the stud grew to about 150 romney breeding ewes, a red poll cattle stud and became a key producer of prime lambs.

In 1958, when Helen was pregnant with daughter Leslie, Charlie died. Helen was left to run the romney stud and the property on her own except for the help of a shearer. Times were tough but something good always seemed to happen to keep things going. Helen put her sheep in the Royal Adelaide Show for the first time in the early 1960s, and did not win a thing, but the following year she took out the Champion Ram, with Rafferty, and Radstock Stud was soon selling sheep in Australia and overseas.

Helen ran the stud for more than 63 years and it continues to this day in partnership with daughter, Leslie Brewer, aided by grand-daughter Dusty Jones.

Helen scaled down to a smaller property with about 40 breeders but continued to show sheep and romney fleeces, including at this year's Royal Show. The stud continues to dominate shows in SA and Western Australia.

In January Helen was made a life member of the Australian Romney Association. She died on her 92nd birthday.