

MICHELSSEN is a famous name in Bendigo. Most Bendigonians have heard of the Michelsen Medal, which is presented each year to the Best and Fairest in the Bendigo Football League and named after former Bendigo mayor John Andrew Michelsen.

Annie Irene Michelsen was the wife of that man and the mother of Cyril Michelsen, Chief of Staff and later Editor of *The Bendigo Advertiser*.

Annie was born in White Hills in 1870, the daughter of Spero Tussup, a native of Dalmatia and Mary Tracy from Kilkenny, Ireland. Annie had the Australian's traditional love of sport and she was an outstanding horseman in her youth and an active breeder of horses.

She became a nurse and served at the Bendigo Hospital. This experience became invaluable when she later became a foundation member of the Bendigo Nursing Auxiliary. She married John in 1894 and they had three children.

Annie was a great believer in Bendigo, its appearance, progress and the happiness of its people. She was highly regarded as a kindly Christian woman of great vitality.

Annie was a pioneer in the field of social work in Bendigo. She worked for the Baby Health Centre and the Red Cross. The Red Cross showed its gratitude for her service by giving her its long-service medallion.

She was a committee member of the Ladies Rowing Club of St Paul's Church of England, where she worshipped. She was also a Croquet Club member and played bowls with the Golden Square Ladies Bowling Club.

As mayoress, Annie was noted for her sympathetic consideration to all and her happy disposition helped her to do her utmost for the city.

She and her husband had the



This family photo, circa 1920 by Ba

honour of entertaining the Duke and Duchess of York — later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth — when they visited Bendigo in 1927.

Throughout her 32 years as the wife of a councillor and three terms as mayoress, she gave freely of herself in the service of Bendigo and her fellow citizens.

Annie died after a long illness on June 7, 1955, at her home, Stoneleigh, in Lucan Street, Bendigo. She was 85.

Thanks to Betty Jackman and the Michelsen family for their help with this article.

■ **Jim Evans is the president of the Bendigo Historical Society, phone 0437 199 432.**