Country and community interests

Thomas Michael Anthony Ryan
Farmer
Born: July 23, 1906; Halbury
Died: November 5, 2005; Adelaide

THOMAS Ryan spent much of his long life as a farmer in various areas of the state. He was born in 1906 at Halbury, near Balaklava, the third child of Michael and Margaret Ryan. His early years were spent on his father’s Watchman Plains farm until 1911 when the family moved to the nearby town of Jowbok. In 1915 came another move to Puntuk in Victoria, just across the border from Pinnaroo. There on November 11, 1918, when he was 12, Thomas and his sister, Winnie, were returning home from school on their old horse Giny when they had to wait at the railway crossing for a train to pass. To their surprise, the train stopped at the crossing and the engine driver told them to get off and tell their parents that the Great War had finished.

The family bought a irrigated dairy farm at Jervis in 1928 and there Thomas met and married崇他同Cheromey, a homemaker Cora metres. They married in 1928 and had three children and shared 61 years of married life. The Ryan family bought a scrub block at Victoria Harbor in 1950 and 18 months later purchased another scrub block at Hope Forest, which was cleared and a dairy established. They lived at Hope Forest for 11 years until moving again to Aldinga Plains in 1965. While at Hope Forest, Thomas became a member of the Southern Districts War Memorial Hospital Committee. In 1948, he was elected a councillor for the Dingley Ward of the District Council of Willunga and in 1956 was appointed chairman of the council, a position he held until 1965.

From the 1930s until the 1990s, he was a justice of the peace, and frequently presided over court cases held in Willunga. In the 1940s, he became a member of the St. Joseph’s Catholic church committee and later secretary, a position he held until leaving Willunga in 1967 to retire to Somerton Park.

In retirement, Thomas, who had been a good tennis player in his youth, joined the Stanley Street Tennis Club and played twice a week to three a week until eventually deciding to give the game away at the age of 64. His Catholic faith and belief in God was paramount to him throughout his life. He is survived by son, Dennis, daughter Maureen, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Edited from a eulogy delivered by Dennis Ryan