

EULOGY – Robert John “Jack” CRILLY 9/9/1914 – 12/1/2010

Robert John “Jack” Crilly was born at Rushworth on 9th September 1914, being the second child and first son of John and Hetty (Davey) CRILLY and later to become one of a family of 8 children. During his childhood the family had many moves between Rushworth and Carag Carag and before finally buying the property at Hills Road Carag Carag in 1929.

Jack travelled many miles by foot and by pony for his education at Carag Carag primary school and then at Rushworth High School. He left school just short of his 14th birthday to work on his father’s travelling chaff cutter. Initially he was too short to manage the removal of the bags from the cutter and often spoke of Jack Borger stepping in and helping him. Over the years Jack spoke of the wonderful families whose properties the chaff cutter worked for, including their hospitality, and of firm friendships endured from that time in his life. Jack experienced tough times in his life, as most people did, but he never allowed anything to beat him. Jack was a terror for work and obtained work after his chaff cutting day, doing contract ploughing, grading and share farming crops. Breaking in horses added to his sources of income. He was very proud of his team of working horses and spoke of Captain and Duke all through his life.

In 1934 Tom and Milly Grinter and their three sons, Jim, Ron and Max moved into the Carag Carag farming district and became friends of John and Hetty Crilly. Shortly after the Grinters arrived, Milly’s sister Cath came to live with them. Eventually Cath and Jack formed a friendship which led to their marriage at St Marys Rushworth on 13th of June 1942. Jack and Cath started married life at their 40 acre dairy farm at Stanhope. Cath with the assistance of Meggsy Morris, took care of the milking whilst Jack continued with the contract cropping. On the 29 August 1943 their first child Paul, was born.

In 1947 Jack decided to look for larger acreage and purchased 440 acres at Strathallan. Jack, Cath and Paul took up possession in June 1947; no electricity and a white ant ridden house to welcome them. Jack continued to travel back to the Carag Carag area to complete his share farming commitments whilst Cath milked the cows and fed the pigs.

In 1949 Margaret was born followed by Robert in 1956 and Gary in 1961 and this completed the family. Jack and Cath both worked extremely hard to provide for their family. In 1951 they purchased the adjoining farm from Bella Parr, her sister Elise Parr remains a true friend to their family to this day.

Jack and Cath milked cows, had and ran pigs, ewes and lambs. In 1968 they gave up milking and turned to beef cattle. In 1966 Paul married Nola Atkins; in 1967 Margaret left the farm to study in Melbourne and in 1978 Gary left the farm to work in Melbourne. Gary married Linda Willis in 1992.

Jack and son Robert had a handy business of cutting chaff for the local trotting horse owners. Jack said at the time he never thought he would go back to cutting chaff. Jack and Robert had a shared interest in trotters and pacers, an extension of Jack’s love of horses.

On the 9th of May 1996 Cath passed away and Jack was devastated and took a prolonged period to recover from her passing. In August 2001 Jack suffered a series of brain traumas that left him unable to reside on his own and he entered the aged care facility in Rochester. He first resided in the hostel, then, following a fall which resulted in a broken hip that saw Jack transferred into the nursing home where he was cared for until he passed away on the 12th of January 2010. Jack always spoke so fondly of “his girls” and looked forward to seeing them each day.

Jack was buried at the Rushworth Cemetery with his beloved Cath.