



The history of Table Cape Farm Eric and Bill



Table Cape Lighthouse

Bill and Eric Roberts-Thomson took over the management of Table Cape Farm from their father, Major Alexander Roberts-Thomson, in 1936. The brothers farmed in partnership for over forty years, until 1981.

In 1936 the depression had not yet ended and the Major apologised to Bill and Eric that the farm was not really capable of supporting two families.

Soon after came the Second World War (1939) and Eric joined the Air Force as an aircraft fitter. Red-green colour blindness prevented him from becoming a pilot.



Potato harvesting at Table Cape Farm

Bill maintained the farm (as well as participating in the local Dad's army). By the end of the war (1945), through his skills and the changing fortunes of farming, Bill had accumulated enough cash to purchase "Ratho" on Tollymore Road for Eric and his new wife Kath. Farming during the war was primarily potato and chaff production.

Bill and Eric were very astute stud breeders. From Shropshire sheep in the 20's they moved on to Dorset Horns in the 30's and in the 50's they were fortunate to have the most successful Dorset Horn stud in Australia - right in the middle of the wool boom.

The success of the Dorset Horn stud funded entry into Poll Dorset and Poll Hereford breeding and also the purchase of a further 3 farms. The total area farmed from 1966 onward was 710 acres or 280 ha.



Bill showing a Dorset Horn

From the beginning of the vegetable processing industry Bill and Eric grew peas, and for about twenty years Eric was the President of the Processing Pea Growers Association of Tasmania. They later grew potatoes, beans and occasionally sweet corn and brassicas.

In 1981 Bill and Eric dissolved their partnership and then farmed with their sons, Andrew and Paul. Bill passed away in 1984 aged 77. Eric continued caring for the Table Cape Farm Poll Dorset sheep stud until he passed away, on the farm in 2004, at the age of 90.



Annual Farm Sheep sale



Farm sheds at Table Cape



Eric moving the Poll Dorsets