

David William Small

Rushworth Chronicle

10 May, 1889

A few curious persons gathered around the band rotunda on Sunday afternoon last to hear Mr. D. W. Small, saddler, of this town, discourse on religious topics. The lecturer alluded to his birth, the various professions he had followed since that memorable event, his conversion to Christianity by the blacks while in the British Army, the definition of the Sabbath, and a host of theological questions far and away beyond the minds of mortal man to grasp.

The callous and indifferent crowd gradually dwindled away, until the speaker suddenly discovered that his listeners consisted of one man, three boys, and a dog. The treatise was, therefore, abruptly cut short. There was only one individual in the assemblage whose heart was melted by the grand and ennobling sentiments uttered by Mr. Small; whose eye was charmed by the graceful strides and lovely gestures of the preacher as, book in hand, he waltzed from one side of the rotunda to the other; and whose love of charity was so magnanimous through noticing the wintry expression on Mr. Small's countenance, that he (the individual) very generously donated sixpence towards the preacher's expenses and the price of a — bible.

Rushworth Chronicle

17 May, 1889

Mr D. W. Small made a second attempt on Sunday afternoon to convert and save the wicked and erring ones of Rushworth, but the effort was barren of results. Evidently there are no sinners in our town requiring the straight path pointed out to them, or else they prefer Mr Small's room to his theology.

Nothing daunted, the would-be evangelist sang and preached to his heart's content, and the publican and the heathen stood a long way — a very long way — off, and smiled.

Finding no person within cooey, and no hope of a collection, Mr Small picked up his hat and apparently left the rotunda in disgust.

Rushworth Chronicle

31 May, 1889

SUDDEN DEATH.

A magisterial inquiry was held on Monday, at Brice's Hotel, before Mr W. Wigg, J. P. touching the sudden death of Mr D. Small. The following evidence was taken:—

Sarah Small, widow of the deceased David William Small, saddler, deposed that she last saw her late husband about twenty minutes to three on Sunday afternoon; he appeared quite well and hearty then, and enjoyed his meals that day; he left his home on the Merrigum road with the intention of preaching at the rotunda in Rushworth, and before leaving took a quarter of a glassful of cold water; during the last three years that witness had been married to deceased, Small had always appeared well and slept well; deceased was 70 years of age on the 6th last March; he was born at Walhalla, Somersetshire, and received a quarterly pension of 4d a day, having belonged to the 15th Hussars; deceased left no property.

Emil John Birch deposed that he was a laborer, working at Mr Mason's farm, about five miles from Rushworth; he left the farm at half past two on Sunday afternoon to come into Rushworth; saw deceased on the Merrigum road, about half a mile from here. He asked witness to take him home, as he (deceased) felt very ill; Small took witness' arm, but could not walk more than seven yards; deceased then said that he could go no further, and asked witness to go and fetch the doctor (pointing in the direction of Dr Carroll's); witness said he had no time to go for the doctor, and deceased asked him to "go and fetch his dear wife"; left deceased in a sitting position alongside the road; went for Small's wife, and returned in about a quarter of an hour; deceased was then apparently dead, and was lying back; there were other people collected about the deceased at this time.

Thomas Bennett, senior-constable of police, Thomas Bennett, senior-constable of police, stationed at Rushworth, deposed that on Sunday, 26th, about 4 p.m., he was informed that the deceased was lying on the Merrigum road, apparently dead, witness asked if the doctor had been sent for, and was informed that he had been, but was not at home; went to where deceased was lying and found him quite dead; he had the body removed to Brice's; examined the body but found no marks of violence; deceased had no money upon him, but witness found a hymn book and a watch and chain in his pockets and a bible and walking stick laying alongside him; he had known deceased for the last two and a half years; Small was apparently in very poor circumstances, and deceased had told witness that he was a pensioner.

John Vickers Heily deposed that he was a duly qualified medical practitioner, residing at Rushworth; he had made a post mortem examination on the body shown to him by the police as that of David William Small; the cause of death was dropsy (probably of long standing) and pleurisy with chronic disease of the liver, which was greatly enlarged and pressed on the right lung; there were no marks of violence on the body.

The finding of the magistrate was that death resulted from the causes mentioned in the medical testimony.

Deceased was quite penniless when he died, and to prevent him being buried as a pauper, Mr H. Wootton very promptly and generously started a subscription to defray the funeral expenses. A list was taken round the town, and after a few hours' canvassing by Senior-Constable Bennett between four and five pounds were collected. In the meantime a telegram was received from Small's son, who resides in Warragul, which stated that he (the son) would pay the cost of the burial of his father. We understand, therefore, that the sum collected will be handed over to the widow, who is greatly in need of it. Through some misunderstanding no minister officiated at the grave. The undertaker (Mr Medhurst) had arranged for the funeral to start at eleven o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, but the clergyman who was to officiate, the Rev Mr Taylor, was informed by Mrs Small that his services would not be required until three o'clock that afternoon. Hence there was no minister, and as the funeral took place at the time appointed by the undertaker, only two persons followed the remains.

As complaints have been made by those who subscribed to the funeral expenses of the want of trimmings on the coffin and the absence of an inscription on the lid, it may be as well to state that Mr Medhurst's instructions were to make the coffin as cheap and plain as possible. As there was no guarantee at the time that the cost would be paid other than by the Government, the instructions were strictly followed.

Footnote: Cemetery records have no entry for David Small. From the above it seems certain that he was buried there.