

Frederick Rich

Rushworth Chronicle

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With the passing of Mr. Frederick Rich on Sunday morning last, another of those who have had a long association with the history of Rushworth, has passed on to reap his reward in the hereafter.

His death came as a shock to his many friends as his illness had only been of very short duration and quite a gloom was cast over the town when his passing became known.

The deceased gentleman was a man who, by his sterling character and honest and obliging disposition had made a host of friends, not only in Rushworth, but also throughout the surrounding district and in neighbouring towns.

Born at Bacchus Marsh in 1870, deceased was in his 70th year, and had always been hale and hearty. He came to Rushworth when about two years of age and had lived the remainder of his life here, following his vocation as a plumber and tinsmith until the time of his death.

With the advent of the motor car he ventured into the garage business but forsook it in favour of his trade during the Great War.

Owing to his long association with the town and district the late Mr. Rich had a fund of reminiscence at his disposal and was an authority on the old identities of the town as far as their ancestry was concerned, his memory being generally reliable. He was also a keen student of the wildlife of Rushworth and used his best endeavours to have the wild flowers of the district identified and brought to the notice of those interested in the study of nature.

He was the first child christened in St. Paul's Church of England and was educated at the Rushworth State school. The late Mr. Rich was married to Mrs. E. Lord in Melbourne in 1913 and took up his residence in Phillips street.

He joined the Rushworth Brass Band at an early age and had been associated with it for practically the whole of the 58 years of its existence. In the early part of the Great War Mr. Rich took over the position of bandmaster in an honorary capacity and has held that position ever since. He has given many years of sterling service and many of the lads of Rushworth have to thank him for their knowledge of music. He was especially proud of the success achieved by some of his former pupils in the music world and many bandsmen of note began their career under his baton.

As an athlete the deceased gentleman was no mean performer and, with the Rushworth Fire Brigade he had some fine achievements to his credit, the chief of which was along with Mr. E. A. Muhlhan and the late Mr. F. Smith, breaking the record for the old three-man manual engine at the Ballarat Country Fire Brigades Demonstration in 1902. The late Mr. Rich had 25 years service with the brigade and held the long service medal and three bars.

Mr. Rich was a faithful disciple of St. Paul's Church of England and was superintendent of St. Paul's Sunday school for a great many years at different periods and at the time of his death was serving in that capacity.

At all times the deceased gentleman had taken a keen interest in local affairs, ever ready to lend a hand for a deserving cause. Among organisations with which he had been associated were the Grand United Order of Oddfellows, of which he was a Past Noble Grand; the Swimming Baths committee and committee of management of the Children's Playground, and Cemetery Trust. Although not a returned soldier, Mr. Rich had rendered many services to the local branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A. and was held in high esteem by all its members.

He wielded a power in all those institutions, which was shown pre-eminently in the welfare of the young people of the town and district, and it is safe to say that no one here has ever done so much to mould the characters of our growing boys and girls, many of whom owe their qualities in later life to his teaching discipline and example. His example at fire brigade demonstrations in the days when the band accompanied the brigade will never be forgotten by the older generation.

In his church he became a lay reader, assisting where wanted, even to the end of the old parish at Dargalong.

It was not, however, his public duties which showed his real character. Many a stranger to Rushworth owed his introduction to the church and town wholly to Mr. Rich, who quietly, but effectively, worked when most of the other citizens were absorbed in other matters. To this day former residents visiting Rushworth always found their way to Moora street to see Mr. Rich, who was typical to them of the soul of Rushworth.

He was a regular sick visitor, and never allowed creed, wealth or poverty to interfere with his visits. He had that happy manner which endeared him to his friends, a manner which made his visits an inspiration to those whom he visited. He had a high conception of chivalry, which he was not afraid to show when reason warranted.

A family of two sons (Bruce and John) is left with a sorrowing widow to mourn the loss of a devoted father and husband.

The funeral, on Monday, to the Rushworth cemetery, was very largely attended and gave marked evidence of the respect in which the deceased was held. The service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. H. F. Goss, Th. L., who also conducted a short service at St. Paul's prior to the cortege moving off. The mortuary arrangements were in the hands of Mr. Graham Diggle. Members of the Rushworth and Stanhope branches of the R.S.S.I.L.A., the Fire Brigade and Rushworth Brass Band marched in front of the hearse to the cemetery.

The pall was carried by Messrs J. McLeod, R. Darroch, E. F. Anderson, A. Harley, R. Sudweeks, H. Lloyd, D. Wootton and D. McGowan; the coffin-bearers were Messrs J. H. Wootton, R. F. Cocks, W. Budd, F. Parrott, G. Wootton and L. C. Coyle, and the numerous floral tributes were carried by Messrs C. King, T. Lanigan, R.H. Treganowan, G. Cummings, T. J. Coyle, J. Koopman, J. Richards, W. Johnson, C. Williams, E. F. Lyndon, G. Fielding, N. Merryful, R. Muir, Graeme McLeod, R. Marshall, S. Hilder, M. Cox, G. Ewart, E. Still, S. Beck, B. Thompson, and W. Darroch.

The service of the G.U.O.O.F. was read at the graveside by Bro. H. Evans.

Among the numerous floral tributes were wreaths from St. Paul's Church of England, Mooroopna Brass Band, Rushworth and Stanhope Returned Soldiers, Rushworth Red Cross Sewing Circle, Rushworth Fire Brigade, Waranga Lodge G.U.O.O.F.