

Mr James Charles Walbran

Rushworth Chronicle

3 January, 1941

Following the brief mention in our last issue of the death of the late Mr. J. C. Walbran, his career calls for further notice. It is interesting that the late Mr. Walbran was born of the first generation of the pioneers of Rushworth and few of his contemporaries survive him.

At the time of his birth, Rushworth was a goldfield situated in a wilderness of forest and he had seen the district, in keeping with Victoria, develop from primitive conditions to its present advanced state of progress.

Deceased received primary education at the seminary of the late Mrs, Smith conducted on the site upon which the Miller Homes are erected. With the commencement in 1872 of the present state system of education, Mr. Walbran became a pupil of the Rushworth State school and completed his education at Brighton Grammar School from which he passed the Matriculation examination of the University of Melbourne in 1880. Although qualified to pursue a university course deceased chose to return to Rushworth to engage in the business of his father, the late W. C. Walbran. In this he remained as employee and principal throughout the whole of his life.

Whilst possessed of attributes of a high order deceased felt no call to enter public life but gave himself wholeheartedly to all local activities of a semi-public nature. The institutions covering these varied with slight exception throughout the years but whatever their form, their objective being the welfare of the town and its people, the late Mr. Walbran was at all times prominent in their working. One outstanding institution is the Mechanics' Institute which is heavily indebted to deceased for his work and interest in it. His service to the Grand United Order of Oddfellows was also long and of value to it as a Friendly Society.

In all his public life deceased's viewpoint was based on sincerity of purpose from which he never deviated. On the higher side of life Mr. Walbran was prominent as a vestryman and member of the choir at St, Paul's Church of England, Rushworth, and will, with all of his communion be an honoured memory.

in his youth deceased was active in cricket and football and in later years was one of those who promoted and brought to its present high standard in green and play the Rushworth Bowling Club, an asset to the town quite apart from its recreative feature. The club honored him recently by election to life membership. He has also been an active member of the Rushworth Fire Brigade.

Towards life's close the deceased as others have done before, he experienced misfortune, but even in this his high character stood the test of the crucible from which he emerged and remains in the memory of all "an honest man".

Following a service at St Paul's, conducted by Rev. H. Tassel, the funeral, which was largely attended, took place to the Rushworth Cemetery where Mr. Tassel again officiated. The Oddfellows' Lodge rendered final tribute.

The pallbearers were Messrs H. P. Bedwell, W. R. Laurie, A. McMillan, T. J. Davies, E. F. Lyndon, W. C. Growse, G. Clyde and F. Burge; the coffin-bearers Messrs W. C. Geyle, F. Collins, J. H. Wootton, J. Burt Stewart, C. Price and L. C. Coyle, and the flower-bearers Messrs M. O'Donnell, A. Harley, R. Brice, R. Sudweeks, D. Wootton, G. Wootton, L. Spurrier, J. Collard, J. Koopman, J. Puckey, T. J. Coyle and J. Reid.

Amongst the numerous floral tributes were wreaths from Waranga Lodge G.U.O.O.F., the vestry of the Church of England, Rushworth Fire Brigade, the committee and members of Rushworth Mechanics Institute and the Rushworth Bowling Club.

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10 January, 1941

In our reference to the activities of the late Mr. J. C. Walbran during his lifetime we omitted to mention that he was a foundation member of the Rushworth Brass Band, and was for many years an active member of the band and was took a great interest in it. He had also been a trustee of the band instruments for a considerable period.

Rushworth Chronicle

24 January, 1941

RUSHWORTH MECHANICS INSTITUTE

The monthly meeting of the committee of the Institute was held on Monday 13th January. There was a fair attendance of members and Mr. Jas. Wilson, vice-president was voted to chair.

Members stood in silence in memory of the late president, the late Mr. J. C. Walbran.

The chairman, Mr. Wilson, referred feelingly to the death of Mr Walbran. He had not known him as long as other members but he considered him one of nature's gentlemen. His loss was a great one to the town and particularly to the Mechanics Institute, of which he had been president for many years.

Mr. Peart also spoke and referred to the late Mr. Walbran in sterling qualities as a man and his great loss to the town. He had come into contact with Mr. Walbran a great deal in business and found him always to be a man of the finest quality and whose word was his bond.

Mr. J. H. Wootton felt the loss of Mr. Walbran greatly as he had been a neighbour for many years. He felt the Mechanics' Institute would find it difficult to replace him. The present healthy position of the finances was mainly due to Mr. Walbran's efforts.

Mr. Lyndon and Mr. Power also spoke feelingly on the sad loss and added their deep regret.

A minute was placed on the records expressing the feelings of members and of the great service rendered to the Institute by the late president.

Mrs. Walbran was unanimously elected a life member of the Mechanics' and the chairman expressed the hope she would live long to enjoy the honour.