

Mr. Stephen J. Hicks

Rushworth Chronicle

15 April, 1927

The residents of Carag Carag and the surrounding district, including Rushworth, received a painful shock when word was received that Mr. Stephen John Hicks had passed away suddenly at Echuca.

Mr Hicks had not been in very good health lately, but nothing serious was anticipated. He went on a visit to his son's (Ernest) place at Mathoura near Echuca, and seemed in his usual state of health. On Friday his son was engaged in chaff-cutting and Mr. Hicks was with him for a while and then went into the house and was chatting in a happy mood to his son's housekeeper when he suddenly fell back in an unconscious state in his chair.

Medical aid was summoned and he was taken to a private hospital in Echuca, but he did not regain consciousness and died on Monday morning last.

The deceased was the second eldest son of the Late Mr. and Mrs. John Hicks, of Carag Carag, and was born near Castlemaine. He came to Carag Carag with his parents and other members of the family in 1876, where his father took up land.

Deceased, three years later, also went on the land where he was engaged in farming up till the time of his death.

He married Miss Jewell of Sandhills, and had a family of 10 sons and two daughters, all of whom survive him. His wife predeceased him about six years ago.

The late Mr. Hicks was very highly esteemed by all who knew him and his sudden demise is deeply regretted. He was one of the oldest members of the Star of the Valley Rechabite Tent, Rushworth. He was an official of the Methodist church and had occupied various positions in the church activities, including the office of circuit steward of the Rushworth circuit, and had been one of the mainstays of the Carag church.

Prior to the Church Union he had been connected to the Wesleyan church in the Kyabram circuit.

The funeral took place on Tuesday afternoon, and was largely attended, the members of the Rechabite Lodge following the remains to the Rushworth Cemetery, which were brought from Echuca by motor hearse.

The coffin bearers were Bros. F. V. Hammond (Chief Ruler), L. C. H. Parrott (Deputy Ruler), G. Downing and G. Townsend (Secretary), Rechabite Lodge. The funeral service was read by the Rev. Brady, Methodist, of Echuca, and the Rechabite service by Bro. G. F. Hawking, P.S.

Rushworth Chronicle

3 June, 1927

An "In Memoriam" service was held in the Carag Methodist Church on Sunday, May 22nd, 1927, in memory of Mr. S. J. Hicks, who died suddenly a few weeks ago. Mr. Hicks was a tower of strength to the church he attended so regularly, and his place will be difficult to fill.

He held the offices of circuit steward (the highest office a layman can hold in Methodist churches) and church steward for many years, and discharged his duties with earnestness and ability. All who knew him intimately can testify to the excellency of his character.

The church was crowded for the service, and Rev. F. Haynes conducted it. He chose the words of Paul --- "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith." The preacher said that at such services the note of victory should be dominant all the way through, because death to Christian people was a re-birth. Special hymns were sung and a gracious influence pervaded the service.

Mr. D. Crothers writes:- "I could not let this occasion pass without paying a small tribute to the memory of my late friend, Mr. Stephen Hicks. My recollection of him goes back to the time when we attended the same Church and Sunday School together in a little wooden building at Donkey Hill, in the Castlemaine Circuit, and later in the same building, removed to the present site of the Yapeen Methodist Church. His father and mine were very close friends, selecting land in the Carag Carag district at the same time, where we were again neighbours and close companions. He, with his two brothers (Tom and Jim) assisted the father to build the home and fence the land. He then selected land adjoining the father's where he lived until the end.

Mr Hicks was a sterling friend and neighbour, one who would go out of his way at any time or hour to help those in need. He was converted in the first Carag Carag church during the ministry of the Rev. W. R. Cunningham, about the year 1884; a year later being married in the same church, where he, with his wife and family, was a constant worshipper and worker, both in the Sunday school and church until the end. It was always a pleasure to meet and converse with him, being one who always looked on the bright side of things. He is now, without a doubt, reaping the reward of a faithful husband, father and true friend."