

## Ted Read

Rushworth Chronicle

30 August, 1912

A SAD DEATH.

To those acquainted with the late Mr "Ted " Read, the news of his death on Saturday night last, as the result of his own hand, came as a great shock, to say nothing of the regret felt that one whose many upright, honest and amiable qualities had made him so popular should thus end matters. There is, however, consolation in the knowledge, fully borne out at the magisterial inquiry, that deceased was not in any way responsible for his actions.

For some considerable time past Mr Read had suffered from acute rheumatism, and he was also afflicted with Bright's Disease. Rather a peculiar circumstance connected with his illness was a belief held by deceased that he still had three years to live—a martyr to the complaints above-mentioned. No doubt this preyed on him to such an extent as to gradually unhinge his mind and led up to the final act which terminated his existence.

Having secured a double-barrelled gun and a couple of cartridges he calmly lay down on the floor of his bedroom at the Criterion hotel, where he resided with his son-in-law (Mr Alex. Wilson) and his daughter, put a couple of pillows beneath his head, placed the gun in his mouth, and then pulled the trigger. The result was terrible, for his head was nearly blown away.

Deceased was better known in the Murchison district from the fact that he resided there for so long, but his name was a familiar one right throughout the Goulburn Valley. About thirty years ago he kept the Swansea Arms hotel at Murchison; then later he had the Shepparton hotel, Shepparton, and while here was at one time strongly prevailed upon to contest a seat in Parliament. He did not do so, however. Later, he took the Perseverance Hotel, Murchison East, and it was here that he brought into vogue the first telephone established in the district, arranging a connection with the Commercial Hotel in Murchison so that he could converse with old town friends.

"May we prosper," was his motto, and he eventually came to be more familiarly known under this sobriquet. Whatever his fortunes chanced to be he certainly at all times displayed a general wish for the prosperity of his fellow-man—a kinder and more considerate man never breathed.

Deceased also had a lease of the Caledonian hotel, Murchison. He was a carpenter by trade, and at one period set out as an orchardist. He was a brother of the Rev. Alfred Read, Methodist minister, who at one time held service in this district, and he also has a nephew in Chicago who belongs to the ministry, while another brother at Lilydale conducts service in the absence of the pastor.

As a publican, deceased had an unblemished reputation, and would not tolerate cards or dice in his house, which was always well conducted. His was a varied career and throughout it all he bore himself in such an exemplary manner that the one regret is that his star should set in the manner indicated.

The remains were interred in the Rush worth cemetery on Monday afternoon in the presence of a large number of friends, the funeral service being conducted by the Rev. J. R. Walker.

A magisterial inquiry was conducted by Dr Heily, J P., at the Court House, Rushworth, on Monday last, touching the death of Edward Read, who was found dead at the Criterion hotel on the previous Saturday evening.

Eva Wilson deposed that she was the wife of Alex. Wilson, licensee of the Criterion hotel, and daughter of the deceased, who was 66 years of age. She went into his bedroom on Saturday evening about 11.20 and found him lying on the floor dead. He had a gun in his hand, and the upper part of his head and face had been blown away. Deceased had been very peculiar in his mind, and for the past week they had been watching him closely. Her father had never been the same since he met with a buggy accident in February last. He was also a great sufferer from rheumatism. For the last few months deceased had been very temperate. She last saw her father alive between nine and ten o'clock.

Alex. Wilson deposed that he was husband of the last witness and licensee of the Criterion hotel. He remembered Saturday evening last. He saw deceased alive about 9 o'clock on Saturday evening. He saw him again about half past eleven o'clock. He was then lying on the floor of his bedroom and had shot the top of his head off. Deceased had two pillows under his head. Deceased had appeared peculiar in his head of late. The gun produced was his property, and was kept in the lobby at the hotel.

Thos. J. Tighe deposed that he was a civil servant residing at Brunswick. At present he was staying at the Criterion hotel, Rushworth, on holidays. He knew deceased, and saw him alive about 9 o'clock on Saturday evening at the hotel. He was sober and appeared all right. He next saw him at 11.30 p. m., when he was lying dead on the floor of his bedroom with his head partly blown off. He knew the gun produced, and had been shooting with it on Saturday afternoon. He placed it in the lobby about six o'clock on Saturday evening. It was then unloaded. He placed the bag of cartridges on the shelf in the lobby.

Dr Christie deposed to having been called to the Criterion hotel on August 24th, about 11.45. He would say that deceased had been dead about two hours. He had attended deceased for some considerable time for Bright's disease. At times deceased did not appear quite sane. He found that the top portion of the face and head had been blown clean away. Mrs Wilson showed him the gun produced and he found that it contained a full cartridge and also one that had been discharged recently. Deceased had been very temperate for the past few months.

Constable Harry deposed to finding the body of deceased at the Criterion hotel on Saturday evening in the circumstances as detailed by the previous witnesses.

A finding was recorded that deceased had met his death by a gunshot wound, self-inflicted, he being of unsound mind at that time.