

Thomas G. Williams

Rushworth Chronicle

5 June, 1942

WILLIAMS:-- On 28th May, at his residence, Rushworth, Thomas Genders, dearly loved husband of Wilhelmena, and loving father of May, (late of Bendigo; also of the 11th A. I. F., W. A.). Aged 81 years. At Rest.

The sudden death of Mr. Thomas Genders Williams, on Thursday evening last at his residence, Rushworth, has removed one of the oldest active bandmasters in Australia.

He was 81 years of age and on the afternoon preceding his death busied himself writing music sheets for the use of the boys' band which he had formed here. Earlier in the day he had been out driving his car, so that his death was a shock to his wife and friends. His memory will be cherished by bandsmen in many parts of the State.

The late Mr. Tom Williams was a very active man for his age, and although recently he was subject to heart attacks it did not prevent him from getting about. He was bandmaster at Rushworth up to 1917, when he went to Mildura and took over a band of 32 players, Mr. D. E. Reid being one of its members at that time. Mr. J. Collard, the present bandmaster Rushworth was also a pupil of the late Mr. Williams and this week was presented by Mrs. Williams with a silver baton --- one of the prized possessions of deceased.

Tom Williams was always a rover and during his long career was an outstanding musician. He commenced his musical career at the age of 8 years and as he progressed through life he gathered a series of references, newspaper clippings and photographs and kept them in a scrapbook. These documents tell the long story of earnest endeavour and success in his profession. In 1909 he toured Australia with a Grand Opera Company and also visited New Zealand. At the age of 19 he joined up with Burton's Circus and toured all the States. Later on he was associated with the J. C. Williamson, Oscar Asche and Melba Opera Companies and then settled down as a bandmaster, in which occupation he became widely known in many provincial centres.

In September 1933 he celebrated his golden wedding. The deceased had a very warm place in the heart of Rushworth, and with his wife returned here a few months ago. The local band being forced into recess, Tom Williams set about getting a class of boys together and in a few weeks he had them playing simple tunes, and the boys made their first public appearance at the State School Empire celebrations where they acquitted themselves admirably. He had planned to hand the boys' band over to the Shire within a few weeks and made known his intentions to the editor of this journal only a week before his death.

To those of us who knew him intimately, Tom Williams will remain a cherished memory. As a teacher he was strict in discipline but he had the happy knack of imparting his musical knowledge to others, and his kindly disposition earned him the respect of all bandsmen.

The funeral took place at the Rushworth cemetery on Saturday afternoon when members of the boys' band acted as flower-bearers. Two boys played "Nearer my God to thee" at the graveside. The Rev. C. H. Partridge conducted the service at the graveside and Messrs Hilder and Kittle had charge of the mortuary arrangements.