

The Medhurst – Rustin Families

Society member Faye Fort (nee Partington), a descendant of the early settlers of the Greensborough district, recalls her memory of other families in the district. In this article Faye writes about the Medhursts and Rustins.

The Medhurst Family Story

David Thomas Medhurst was born in London in 1823 and came to Australia in 1850 aged 27. Charity June Pink was born in Kemsing, Kent in 1832 and came to Australia in 1851 aged 19. She was one of eleven children and her father was James Charity Pink. David married Charity in Melbourne in 1855. They had a son named David Thomas born two weeks after his father David had died at the age of 32, in 1855. After David's death Charity and her baby moved to Tasmania, where she met George Charles Westcott.

George a convict from Plymouth England had arrived in Tasmania in 1843. When he and Charity met and wanted to get married, being a convict he had to apply to the authorities for permission to marry. Permission was given and he married Charity in 1856. They had four children, Dorothisa born 1857 who died age one, George 1859-1947, Charles 1862-1866 and James 1863-1866. George and Charity, with sons David Thomas (Medhurst), George, Charles and James came back to Melbourne and lived in Collingwood. Sadly Charity aged 33, Charles age four and James age 3, died within two months of each other.



The Medhurst's shop in Grimshaw Street
(almost opposite Church St)
Greensborough

George Westcott brought up David Thomas and George at Collingwood. He passed away twenty years later in 1886. Son George was later given a Police Valour Medal for bravery, for saving the life of a colleague in the line of duty. David Thomas (Medhurst) was married at Collingwood in 1882 to Martha Ruston. Martha was the daughter of Martha (Roberts) and Peter Rustin. Martha and David had eight children, their sixth child David John born 1894, was later engaged to Edie Bester from Greensborough, where the family was now living behind the shop in Grimshaw Street. He had won the best and fairest for Greensborough in 1914. In 1915, aged 22 he went off to war. In 1916 he was killed in action in France, his remains are still in France.

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David (left) and James Medhurst

Youngest brother of David John, James born 1900, was a very tall boy, over six feet and, being too young to go to war, went to Sydney. There he changed his name to McPhee, put his age up and joined up. He was one of the first to go to the Middle East in WW11. Luckily he came back. He passed away at Bright in 1986 but had lived a lot of his life in Warwick Road, Greensborough. He had a beautiful singing voice and sang in a number of choirs including the Philharmonic Choir, as did his niece Jessie Partington. Jessie sang with the Philharmonic Choir in front of the Queen during the Royal Tour of Australia in 1954.



Rustin's bullock team at Pantan Hill
(ca 1860)

Martha ran the store which was almost opposite Church Street. David went carting with his team and he used to write for the local paper. He wrote a journal of the area from 1835 to 1935. They owned land in Howard and Jessop Streets, and land at the back of the shop. They moved to East Brunswick about 1920, David passed away in 1939 aged 82, Martha in 1943 aged 83, they are buried at the Greensborough Cemetery in Jessop Street.

The Rustin Family Story



Peter Rustin

Peter Rustin from Yorkshire came alone to Australia, arriving in 1849. He was a very tall man, six feet eight inches. Soon after arriving he bought his own horses and wagon and

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worked as a carrier; after that he became the first baker in Greensborough. His shop was behind the Hotel in Hailes Street, after two years as a baker he went back to being a carrier. He carted, and made a lot of money from onions, which were in great demand in the gold fields at Bendigo, he also carted the steam engines and crushers to the mines in Pantan Hill.



The Rustin family

Peter married Martha Roberts in 1858, they had five girls and two boys, Martha their second daughter, was born in 1860, in a bark hut on the Plenty, she and her sisters went to the first school, which was in Church Street, Greensborough in 1867, later they went to Pantan Hill school.

The second child born to Martha (Rustin) and David T. Medhurst, Annie May, was born 1884, she married William J. Partington in 1905, and they lived on a farm of 160 acres at “Willis Vale”.



Log Bridge over the Plenty River near
Partington's Flat, Greensborough
(Partington family)

William passed away in his sleep in 1941, Annie stayed on at “Willis Vale” until she was in her late 50's, still using the log over the river as a bridge, now with a walking stick, as well as going up and down about thirty steps each side. Later Annie went to live with her daughter Jessie in Green Hills.

Vandals destroyed the old “Willis Vale”, then in the 1960's fire finished it off. Annie died in 1965 aged 82.

Fay Fort (nee Partington)
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