

## Biography

**MALACHI RICHARDSON, (1870 – 1919)**

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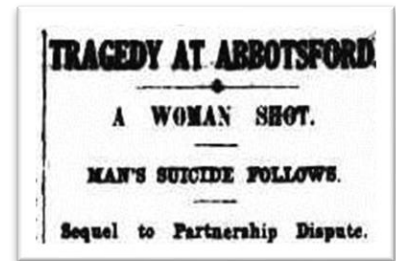
**RUEBEN ARTHUR (Known as ARTHUR or 'TOOTS') RICHARDSON, (1896 – 1913)**



Guns, accidents, violence, murder, and finally, suicide... Malachi lived a tragic life

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Malachi Richardson was born, 1870 London, England. His family left England for Australia aboard the 'James Nicol Fleming' 1874. He married Margaret Wright in 1894, they had four sons, William, Charles, Richard and Arthur. Malachi was to become the licensee of the Sir Robert Peel Hotel, Collingwood.



January 1913, their son Arthur, 'Toots' together with a group of friends went on a camping trip to Mount Martha. After breakfast, one of the boys, aged 13, picked up a Winchester rifle believing it to be empty as the guns were checked and emptied the night before. Jokingly he pointed it at Arthur, pulled the trigger, one cartridge was still in the gun. The bullet penetrated the side of Arthur's head. Even though assistance was rendered and police attended the scene, sadly Arthur lost his life the same day at a Mornington hospital. He was 16 years of age. At a magisterial inquiry the death was recorded as 'accidental'.

Following the loss of their son, tragedy was again to come to the family in 1919.

By then, Malachi no longer at the Sir Robert Peel Hotel, had worked at different hotels, and had become financially stressed.

Trying to get ahead he had taken a partnership with his cousin Mrs Harriet (Agnes) Aldous in the Newport Hotel Newport, Malachi being the licensee of the hotel. After six months Malachi was unable to get his licence renewed and the business was wound up. This left him feeling he had been treated unfairly by Harriet and had not arrived at a complete settlement of the business finances with her.

There were frequent quarrels between Harriet and Malachi, police were often called to the Yarra Hotel where Harriet's husband James Aldous was the licensee.

One occasion Constables were sent to the hotel and witnessed Richardson take a bottle of liquor out of Mrs Aldous' hand bag and saw her strike Richardson several times.

Another incident, after an intense quarrel between Aldous and Richardson, two Constables were again sent to the hotel to find Mrs Aldous with two blackened eyes and Richardson badly injured from severe head and scalp wounds. Mrs Aldous confessed to the Constables she had inflicted his injuries as he had struck her and her husband, she acted in self-defence. Richardson was taken to the Williamstown Hospital, he



remained there for some time and then left the hospital against doctor's orders.



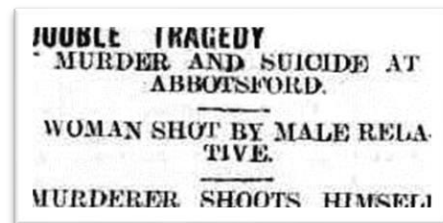
Again another incident, Mrs Aldous having her eye blackened complained to police saying Richardson had caused her injury and he threatened to shoot her, and he had a pistol to do so.

A police report states Richardson as being a determined and very troublesome man when drunk, and Mrs Aldous being frequently under the influence of drink when in charge of the hotel.

September 17, 1919 Malachi intended to settle the affair and approached Mrs Aldous at the Yarra Hotel, had 'high' words with her and made threats. She was so alarmed she telephoned the police. A police constable removed Malachi from the hotel, as he had been making threats he wanted to finish the affair that night. The constable took no notice as Malachi was again drunk and then went on his way.

Malachi returned that night, to the Yarra Hotel, threatening Mrs Aldous with a pistol, she escaped by running away, a returned soldier tried to intercept Malachi but to no avail.

Mrs Aldous ran into a confectionery and fancy goods shop operated by Mrs Holeman seeking refuge, frantically screaming 'save me! save me!'. She ran through to the parlour, followed by Malachi who fired two shots in quick succession into her head and neck, as witnessed by Mrs Holeman and her daughter Gladys. Mrs Aldous fell dead, with blood streaming from her wounds, she was 38 years of age. Gladys witnessed Malachi turn to his victim on the couch and shout 'I told you I would do this' at the same time raising the revolver to his head shooting himself in the temple, he fell to the floor, dead, close to the couch where Mrs Aldous lay. Malachi was dead at the age of 49.



Malachi being the aggressor in the incident, the rash act was attributed to his financial worries.

Malachi's wife Margaret lived on, died at the age of 86 in 1957.

Margaret is with Arthur and Malachi at the Coburg Cemetery, their grave is unmarked.

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*Compiled by Friends of Coburg Cemetery member, Colleen Burns.*

#### Sources

- *Bendigo Advertiser, January 27, 1913*
- *The Argus, January 27, 1913*
- *Mornington Standard, February 1, 1913*
- *Age, September 19, 1919*
- *The Argus, September 18, 1919*
- *Victorian Police Department CIB, September 17, 1919*
- *Victoria Police Newport Station, Melbourne Police District, September 29, 1919*
- *BDM Vic.*
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- *GMCT Records*

