

# ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

P.O. BOX 284 ORBOST VIC 3888



<b>President:</b>	Heather Terrell
<b>Vice President:</b>	Marilyn Morgan
<b>Secretary:</b>	May Leatch
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Jenni York
<b>Museum Committee:</b>	Lindsay and Noreen Thomson, Geoff Stevenson, John Phillips
<b>Collection Management:</b>	Marilyn Morgan, Marlene Robb, May Leatch, Barry Miller
<b>Research Secretary:</b>	Lois Crisp
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Jeanette Honey

## NEWSLETTER No. 125 March 2016

### JARRAHMOND SCHOOL No. 2745, 1886-1914

Jarrahmond Landcare Group installed two memorial plaques at the Jarrahmond Avenue of Honour in 2015 as part of district commemorations for the Anzac centenary.

Landcare member Jeanette Honey became interested in identifying the names on the Jarrahmond Honour Roll and in learning about the history of the school prior to World War I.

The National Library of Australia's [Trove](#) online newspapers website contains many of Australia's newspapers in digitised format. Not everything reaches a newspaper but I was interested to see what I would find about the Jarrahmond State School prior to WW1. Thirty-one male and two female students of this school plus two of their teachers served in WW1. What was school-life like for these students? I have recorded what I found but occasionally I have added points of clarification or interest. - Jeanette Honey

#### "Snowy River"

On March 15<sup>th</sup> 1883, the inspector-general of schools, Mr T Bolam, visited "the Snowy River" having learned "that a large number of children of school age in the area were unprovided with any means of education". He appointed two correspondents to report to him and promised that once two school buildings were ready, a teacher and furniture would be provided for two half-time schools. He felt it would lead to the "further development of the district" and "as the children were young and the majority of them were females, a lady teacher would be more suitable". He promised to "endeavour to find one".

The *Argus* reported on February 27<sup>th</sup> 1886 that the inhabitants of the Orbost District, Snowy River were "very indignant at the delay of the Education Department in not supplying a teacher". By this time they had two school buildings "completed some time ago" and "erected privately, one at Orbost, the other some few miles up the

river". [On March 19<sup>th</sup>, Campbell Mackay took up duties as Head Teacher, but left again after two months. Fortuitously John Rowe replaced him, teaching in Orbost until 1908.]

#### Jarrahmond School

The school "some few miles up the river" would become Jarrahmond State School No. 2745. It opened in March 1886. The building was erected by public subscription and the trustees received rent from the government for its use as a school. There were three trustees: Charles N Henderson, George P Morgan and Thomas F Stapley (Treasurer). [The school was built on the Snowy River frontage on TF Stapley's property "Jarrahmond" – see Newsletter No. 121, "*Tired, not retired*", Bob Trewin].

The first use of the name "Jarrahmond" appeared in the newspapers when TF Stapley advertised that his thoroughbred "Prince Charming" was standing at stud in 1884 and 1885 at "Jarrahmond", Snowy River.

The first uses of the words "Jarrahmond schoolhouse" were in March and July, 1886. Popular journalist of the day, Julian Thomas, known as "The Vagabond", visited the district in early March 1886 and stayed for a fortnight with CN Henderson, manager of Orbost Station. The leading "residents of the Snowy River" entertained him at the Orbost Club Hotel and escorted him around the district. Before departing he delivered a lecture at the Orbost schoolhouse entitled "Convicts and Cannibals", "the

proceeds of which were used to assist the mechanics institute and liquidate a debt on the Jarrahmond schoolhouse”.

On July 14<sup>th</sup> 1886 a concert was held “in aid of the Jarrahmond schoolhouse” in the Mechanics Institute. One hundred and twenty people attended what “was about the most popular concert ever presented to the public here”. The hall was decorated with tree ferns and fronds and there was a full programme of mostly Scottish songs, duets and recitations with one recital by Mr Rowe. Fourteen pounds [£14] was raised.

### **The Organ Dispute**

In 1887 a Wild Flower Show was held by the Orbost and Jarrahmond schools. Their second Wild Flower Show in 1888 was combined with a Cake and Apron Fair to raise funds for school prizes and an organ.

The School inspector gave a prize for the best collection of wildflowers “to infuse enthusiasm in the young people”. There was a splendid array of flowers and bouquets and it was a great occasion. “Every cake was sold. Every apron found a purchaser” and £53 was raised.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> 1891 a dispute escalated through a Letter to the Editor with 10 signatories. Enough money had been raised to buy organs and books of equal value for both schools. This letter suggested that the books were never distributed at Jarrahmond school. The organ had been delivered to Jarrahmond school, and because there was no music teacher, it was rightly used once a fortnight for religious services. Mr C N Henderson, who was on the show’s organising committee, had some time later, taken the organ home. The letter writers wanted to know why, and when it would be returned.

In the newspaper a week later, Mrs Margaret Jennings Henderson replied that she didn’t “merit insult” and that the school had been built five years ago “by the liberality and energy of the, then, very few residents of Orbost. The recent settlers in the Jarrahmond district have a school house free of cost to themselves” which was receiving rent from the government and used for the “benefit of that school”. She reported that the organ was broken and needed repairing. (Mrs Henderson was poetess Grace Jennings Carmichael’s mother, as a point of interest).

An advertisement six months later requested repair costs be deposited into the Orbost school bank account or the organ would be sold. By October 31<sup>st</sup> 1891 the organ had been repaired, paid for and returned to Jarrahmond.

### **Church Services**

In the early 1890’s religious services were held at weekends at the school. A few Wesleyan services were held in 1891 but the C. of E. and Presbyterian services were regular until the flood of 1893. The C. of E. held a service at Richardson’s in March 1894 and in Leatham’s

barn in October 1894. C. of E. and Presbyterian services continued to be held until 1914, in some years more than others.

Sermons covered topics such as Immortality, Gambling, the New Hebrides and Christian Perfection.

### **The Devastating Flood of late December, 1893**

In 1892 T F Stapley received word from the Department of Education that unless more students could be found the school would be closed. Before long, it would be closed, but for another reason entirely.

On August 11<sup>th</sup> 1894, a Shire report stated that the Jarrahmond school was hastily “pulled down by several well-meaning persons owing to the imminent danger of it being undermined by the river which carried away a large portion of the bank at that place.” It was so badly damaged that the trustees thought it impossible to reconstruct and decided to sell the materials to Mr Crabtree for 6 pounds [£6]. Due to public outcry by some of the original subscribers the sale was cancelled. Shortly after the flood the Department of Education sent a teacher, Mr Browne, who waited around for nearly a month and was then ordered to return to Melbourne since no effort was made to rebuild or set up a makeshift school. The Department then closed the school. This was not accepted well.

[The 1893 flood is on record as one of the big floods, unsurpassed till 1934 and 1971. It began raining on Christmas Day and flooding occurred into the New Year, badly eroding the river bank and gulch near Stapley’s.]

James Cameron, in a Letter to the Editor of September 8<sup>th</sup> 1894, threatened to make it a court matter that the trustees were receiving rent for a building which didn’t exist and had made no attempt to rebuild over the past eight months. He suggested they had received enough rent to rebuild plus provide a teacher’s residence. He felt the students were being deprived and neglected.

### **Jarrahmond School relocated**

Before long, in October 1894, tenders were sought to cart the material to a new site near Hector McLeod’s farm further up the river where it was to be re-erected. It would be carted through Russell’s farm and specifications could be viewed at TF Stapley’s residence.

District Inspector Bothroyd’s report, of November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1904, detailed that ornamental trees had been planted, flowers and vegetables were growing, classwork was satisfactory to very good, but maths was weak in Class 5. The building and furniture were satisfactory. He felt considerable improvement had occurred from their steady work throughout the year. The head teacher was Mr D Fitzgerald.

### **The School Boat**

In December 1892 Council called for tenders to repair the

Jarrahmond school boat and by February 1893 it was ready again to row students across the river to school from the Pumpkin Point/Bete Bolong side.

In March 1900 head teacher Mr Pescott reported to Council that the school boat was missing. It was popular with maize pickers and the general public and whilst they were free to use it, six children couldn't get to school. He also said it needed repairs and hopefully the Council would replace it. At its April meeting Council decided the school should have a boat exclusive to its own use and there be another boat for the public. Six months later the Council delivered a new boat and Mr Pescott consented to take charge of it allowing it would still be available at weekends for all to use.

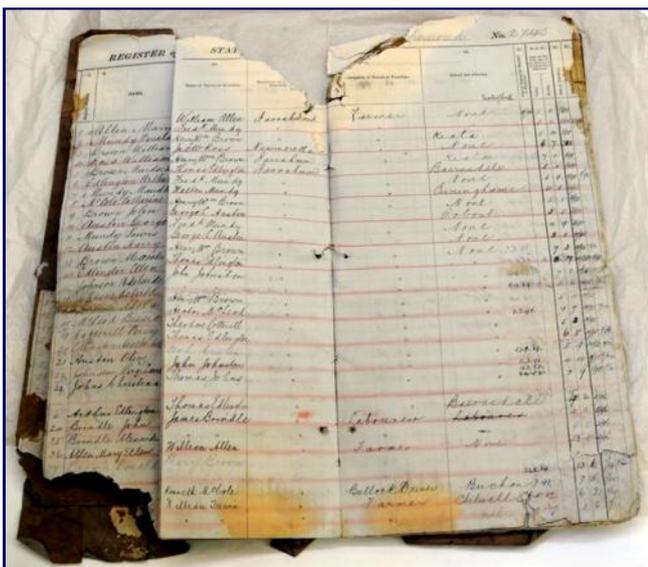
In December 1908 Council stated that a responsible person should ferry the children across the river.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> 1912 the school boat was put up for sale when Councillor Johnson stated that there were now schools on both sides of the river [the Bete Bolong school had opened in 1912], and the school boat was no longer needed.

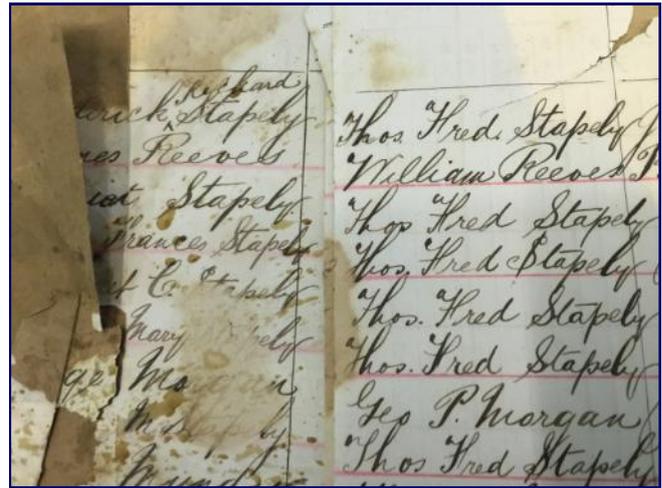
### Teachers, Picnics, Dances, Ceremonies and Concerts

Concerts, fairs, dances, picnics and even a wedding were held at the school across the years till 1914. Money was conscientiously raised for the School Improvement and Repair Fund. On a couple of occasions the school was used as a polling booth for council elections.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1892, the school year ended with a fun afternoon of sports with toys and gifts as prizes. Tea and cakes were served and the students gave three cheers to the



**ABOVE: Jarrahmond School Register 1886-1913.** Although extremely damaged and in fragile condition, this old Register is an invaluable research resource. It records the names of all students at Jarrahmond School from 1886 -1913. Orbost & District Historical Society collection.



**ABOVE:** These are the first eight entries in the 1886-1913 Register. Enrolled were the six children of T F Stapley (misspelt "Stapely"), one child of G P Morgan and one of W Reeves.

teacher and the ladies who helped make the day a success. A ball was held that evening.

The opening of the Orbost Suspension Bridge on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1893 was an important day for the district with a huge celebration and a public holiday. Jarrahmond, Orbost and Newmerella students marched in the ceremony directly behind the Orbost Brass Band, followed by the pioneers, councillors, magistrates & public functionaries, friendly societies and the general public.

The bridge was decorated with tree ferns and friendly mottoes linking Newmerella and Orbost. There was a picnic with sports for the children and a celebratory dinner for the dignitaries.



**ABOVE:** This old pine tree is all that remains to identify the second school site. Following the school's closure in 1949, children were bussed to Orbost. The school building was re-located to Brodribb School in 1950, and then to Orbost in 1968 following the closure of Brodribb in 1965.

Mr Walters, 1896-1898, was a popular teacher whose wife capably assisted him. In June 1896 they held a concert and ball; entry 1shilling [1/-]. In October there was a fair. Included were girls' wood-chopping, side-shows, a shooting gallery, a gipsy tent, wax works and sports, followed by a concert. In July 1897 a concert attracting 100 people was followed by a ball. In March 1898 Mrs Walters was farewelled with the gift of a silver egg frame, a generous supper and a ball. Mr Walters had already left for a teaching position in New Zealand.

In December 1899, Mr James Leatham's wedding was held at the school. It was a joyous occasion with flowers, vines, creepers and tree ferns decorating the school.

On May 17th 1900 head teachers Mr Pescott and Mr Rowe held an Industrial Exhibition of work done by Jarrahmond & Orbost students. Their idea was to encourage students to produce "beautiful and artistic displays", "stimulate a taste for natural history" and "habits of neatness and industry", "develop their good qualities" and to "protect them from vicious habits and tendencies". Needlework, drawing, natural history, cookery and school work featured. It was deemed "most creditable to the teachers and scholars".

[Of interest - Edward Edgar Pescott developed a great love of local native vegetation and explored the jungles collecting specimens to send to Melbourne. He resigned from teaching at Jarrahmond in August 1901 to pursue this passion. He became lecturer and later Principal of the School of Horticulture in Burnley, 1909-1931 and wrote a number of books.]

In 1908 Miss Foley became assistant teacher at Jarrahmond. In May 1909 she organised the Empire Day trip to Orbost for a ceremony and sporting competition with Newmerella and Orbost. Student transportation was difficult. Empire Day was celebrated over the next years with a picnic and dance. In 1911 there was a euchre competition and in 1912 they enjoyed a picnic with Bete Bolong students at the new Bete Bolong school. Miss Foley resigned from the Department in 1911 and the students gave her a set of furs at an afternoon tea. The parents held an open home and dance for her.

Popular head teacher Mr de Hugard, 1910-1912, held successful dances "on a new pine floor" and held packed concerts to aid the school. The students participated in the 1911 Orbost Agricultural Show and won prizes against the other schools and in open competition, bringing praise from School Inspector Davey that "these boys and girls will be enthusiastic farmers", "with very good prospects of success". Ion de Hugard received a silver-mounted Meershaum pipe and hair brushes as retirement gifts at a Christmas breakup featuring Father Christmas, a tree, gifts, supper and a dance. [His name is on the Jarrahmond WW1 Honour Roll, having enlisted



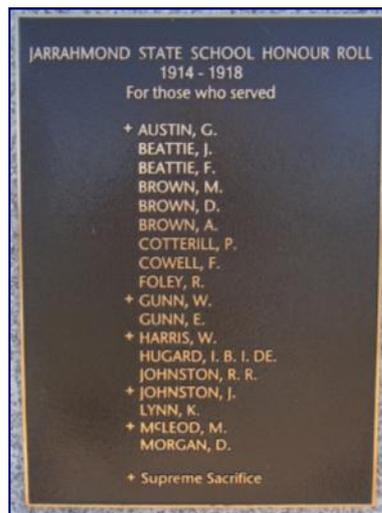
**ABOVE: Jarrahmond School children and teacher (Miss Foley) c. 1910.**

Students identified in this photo are: Jack Stephenson, Teddy Reeves, Phemie McLeod, Wally Mackieson, Jack Lynn, Jack Mundy, Angus McCole, Lindsay Trewin, Katie McLeod, Nellie Mundy, Mary Lynn, Eva Trewin, L. Mackieson, Elva Trewin, Ina McLeod, Maisie Trewin, Sarah McCole, ..... Reeves, Ivan Trewin.

in 1916. Mr (Ted) Perry, a junior teacher at Jarrahmond in 1911, is also listed on the Honour Roll. He was killed in action in 1917.]

In May 1914 a dance was held for Jarrahmond's School Improvement fund. The focus changes when Britain declared war on Germany on August 4th 1914. On August 28th Jarrahmond held a dance in aid of the Patriotic Fund and on September 2<sup>nd</sup> a Grand Patriotic Concert and Dance was held in Orbost. Funds raised from these were contributed to a local fund raising movement which arose, along with so many others across the nation, to support the war effort.

WW1 changed this small community forever.



**ABOVE:** These Honour Roll plaques were installed in May 2015 at the Jarrahmond Avenue of Honour. They stand beside a similarly designed memorial plaque which honours those who served in World War II and had attended Jarrahmond School.