

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

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NEWSLETTER No. 136 April 2017

CROAJINGALONG / ORBOST SHIRE

This Newsletter recognises that it is now 125 years since the formation of the former Orbost Shire.

Compiled by Lois Crisp.

SHIRE OF CROAJINGALONG/ ORBOST MAY 1892

John D. Adams wrote in *The Tambo Shire Centenary History*, "*An Orbost meeting in February 1891 endorsed the idea of a separate Shire and a committee worked out the boundaries of the proposed Shire. They were to include all of the Snowy River and Bendoc Ridings with the western boundary running from the junction of the Bell's Point Road with the Bruthen Cunninghame Road and south to the lakes along the western boundary of the Parish of Colquhoun. Cunninghame, Lake Tyers and Nowa Nowa were to be the new West Riding of the Shire*". [The original Shire of Tambo was formed in 1882 and covered a wide area including the Orbost district which was represented by Councillors of the Snowy River Riding, James Cameron, Charles Grove, and William Watt].

Early in 1892 the idea of severing a section from Tambo Shire for the new Shire of Croajingalong was revived and a petition was published in April with the blessing of the Lakes Entrance district people, William Hunter from Cunninghame, was one of three delegates who went to Melbourne to put the petition, and "*within a week their efforts were rewarded*".

ON THE 30TH OF MAY 1892 THE NEW SHIRE OF CROAJINGALONG WAS PROCLAIMED.

In the original plans, there were to be fifteen councillors, three each to represent five Ridings, West (Cunninghame), South (Newmerella), Central (Orbost and McCulloch), North (Bendoc), and East (Bemm, Cann and Genoa). However the first poll called for nine councillors, the results of were published in the S.R.M. 3rd of September 1892.

SHIRE OF CROAJINGOLONG.						
NOTICE is hereby given that at a POLL of the Ratepayers held on THURSDAY, the 25th day of AUGUST, 1892, for the Return of NINE COUNCILLORS for the Shire of Croajingalong, the following votes were recorded.						
Candidates' Names.	Polling Places.					Totals.
	Orbost.	Cunninghame	McCrangowar	Bendoc.	Cann River.	
Laughton, Thomas	175	39	128	1	7251	
Hossack, James, junior	163	38	128	1	7238	
Pardew, Edward James	160	38	128	1	7235	
Grove, Carl Henry	158	38	528	1	7235	
Herbert, Lancelot	155	38	31	1	7232	
Stocks, Joseph Dutton	158	38	126	1	7231	
Cameron, Hugh	154	38	127	1	7228	
Cameron, James	148	38	128	1	7223	
Reed, Hamilton	135	34	130	1	7217	
O'Meara, John Joseph	72	7	520	—	104	

I therefore declare the said Thomas Laughton, James Hossack, junior, Edward Pardew, Carl Henry Grove, Lancelot Herbert, Joseph Dutton Stocks, Hugh Cameron, James Cameron, and Hamilton Reed, duly elected.

T. F. STAPLEY,
Returning Officer.
Orbost, 20th August, 1892.

The new Shire was approximately 4,200 square miles in area, covering the whole eastern corner of Victoria.

A detailed description of the Shire of Croajingalong was printed in the **Snowy River Mail** starting on the 11th of June 1892 and continuing in the 18th of June. It divided the Shire into five sections, **LAKES ENTRANCE DISTRICT, NEWMERELLA AND ORBOST, BENDOC AND BONANG, BEMM, CANN AND GENOA, and lastly THE SEA COAST (CAPE HOWE TO THE LAKES ENTRANCE).**

THE SHIRE GENERALLY.

From the foregoing brief and imperfect descriptions it will be seen that the newly constituted Shire of Croajingalong is a land of mountain, flood and forest. It contains a large proportion of soil of the finest quality and the bulk of it is capable of being made into first-rate pastoral lands. It is no exaggeration to say that the timber on it is worth millions of money and the mineral wealth, when it comes to be fairly developed, must amount to millions more, as fully one-half the area is auriferous and valuable finds of galena and other ores have been unearthed. There is a great future for Croajingalong but it wants railways, roads and bridges, seaports and other means of communication. We live in hope that the construction of the alternate intercolonial railway will open up the country but our paternal Government does not yet appreciate the resources of this district or realise what a splendid investment would be the judicious expenditure of some of the public money in helping it forward. If it were not for the necessity of some material being found to fill up the weekly columns of *Melbourne Punch* we should probably be forgotten altogether by the colony at large. In the meantime the Croajingalongites are steadily progressing, and the formation of this large and important territory into a municipality is the latest evidence of the advancement which will undoubtedly continue until it becomes one of the most populous and flourishing districts in the colony of Victoria.

The first Council Meeting as reported in the **Bairnsdale Advertiser**, 15th of September 1892, "by electric Telegraph, from Our Own Correspondent"! [in Orbost].

Orbost Wednesday, September 14.

The newly constituted Shire of Croajingalong held its first meeting this morning at 10 o'clock in the mechanics' institute. Mr James Cameron acted as president pro tem and Mr L. Ross as secretary pro tem. Seeing that Councillors Laughton and Stocks were expected by the coach in the afternoon, it was agreed to adjourn till 3pm. The council reassembled at 3 o'clock when the secretary read the minutes of the meeting held in the morning stating that Mr. L. Ross had consented to act as secretary pro tem without salary. Councillors C. H. Grove and Jas. Cameron were nominated for President, and the latter was elected with an allowance of £50. It was agreed that a small monthly allowance be granted to councillors who live at a distance from the place of meeting to help them to pay travelling expenses. It was moved by Councillor Stocks and seconded by Councillor Laughton that the new shire be named the **SHIRE OF ORBOST, INSTEAD OF THE SHIRE OF CROAJINGALONG**, and that the Minister of Public Works be asked to have the new name gazetted. [The name was changed to Orbost Shire on 17 February 1893].

The **Snowy River Mail** of Saturday September 17 reported similarly but added that there was discussion on whether to appoint a salaried secretary/rate collector with a consulting engineer for an annual retainer or to combine the offices of engineer and secretary. It was decided to call for alternate applications, returnable at the next meeting.

ORBOST MECHANICS INSTITUTE — the first meeting place

The newly constructed Mechanics Institute was described by "Our Correspondent" to the **Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle** in July 1886, as a large building of weatherboard 56 feet long x 26 feet wide with 15 feet walls. It was built by David Williams [for more on David Williams, see Newsletter July 2010], with a floor of red pine "and when it gets hardened would make a capital skating rink". It was six years old when Council started meeting there.

I wonder if those new councillors had any idea what was ahead of them! The following gives an idea of the extent of the task.

Council Meeting of February 4th 1893 was reported at length in the **S R Mail** covering at least three full columns. Letters from official sources included some from the Public Works Department, Lands Department, Tambo Shire etc.

Letters from ratepayers, for example: from Wangarabelle requesting repairs to a road and a bridge; from ratepayers in the vicinity of Mt. Tanglefoot and St. Patrick River requesting a road; from N. Whitelaw-Clarkeville, soliciting a vote in the election of a member for the Gippsland Prospecting Board; from James Stirling asking Council to improve approaches to the Brodribb Punt and repair corduroy on the Marlo Road. Letters from Contractors, like James Granter, claiming sum of £870 due to him in respect of contract entered into with Tambo Shire for Snowy River Bridge and from J. Eves, contractor for Orbost Ferry, regarding wages! The list went on. And because Cunningham was now in the Orbost Shire, the Council were involved with the opening of the entrance.

Tenders were opened for footbridges at Cunnninghame –amounts were too high!

Crs. Laughton and Stocks were authorised to have a cheap crossing constructed at Lake Bunga; the other bridge to stand over for the moment. G. Beveridge’s tender for maintenance of Bonang road be ordered to stand over until the engineer had inspected the locality – tender deposit to be returned; G. Beveridge’s offer to construct a culvert at Goongerah, authorised to be carried out.

Orders of the day included Cr. Laughton moving “that plans and specifications be prepared and tenders called for the erection of the North Arm Bridge and formation of approaches leading thereto”, seconded by Cr. Stocks and carried.

Cr. Grove moved that tenders be called for the erection of the Snowy River Bridge, seconded by Cr. Hossack and carried.

Regarding the sub-division of the Shire, the President reported that Mr. Morkham would reconsider the petition for five ridings if it was shown to be necessary for the efficient working of council. (Five Ridings did actually come into being in May 1895 – North, South, East, West and Central until January 1913 when the West Riding was annexed back to Tambo Shire).

Sources:

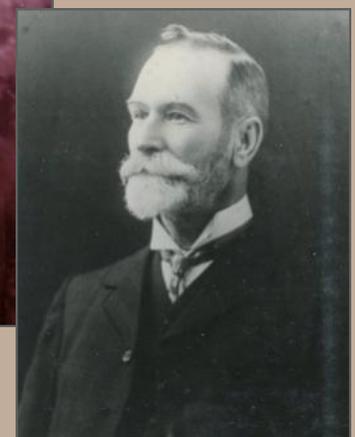
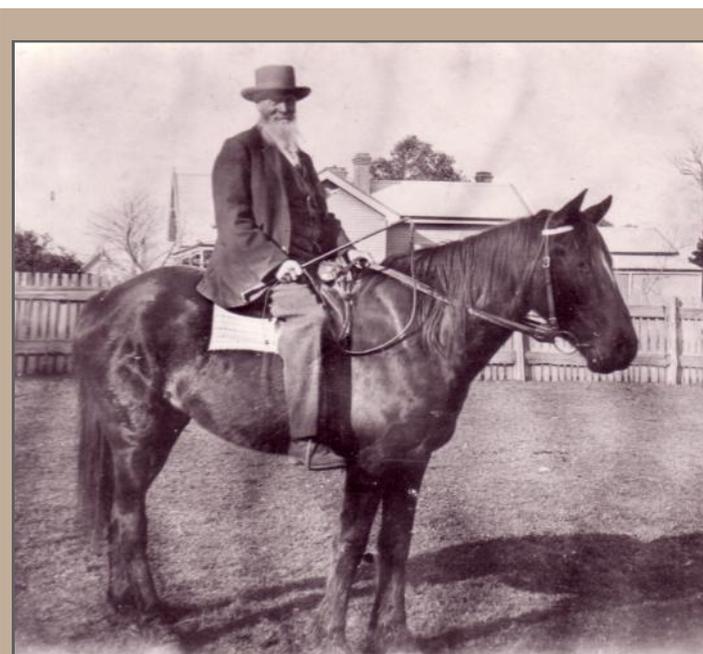
- Tambo Shire Centenary History – John Adams.
- Newsletter July 2010.
- Snowy River Mails 1890-1900



Shire of Orbost

The Coat of Arms of the Shire of Orbost has been designed in the form of a cross in which five stars are set on a shield. This was typical of those used by many shires and cities throughout Victoria and the Commonwealth. A small crown above the cross indicates the loyalty of the President, Councillors and Ratepayers to the reigning King or Queen. The inner circle of the shield contains four figures, a sheaf of wheat, a factory, a cow, and a ship, which represents the activities of agriculture, fishing, industry and dairying undertaken in the district.

Originally part of the Bairnsdale district, Orbost split away as part of the Shire of Tambo in 1882, and became a Shire in its own right as the Shire of Croajingolong on the 30th May 1892. The name changed to the Shire of Orbost on 17th February 1893.



LEFT: Clr Edward Pardew.

ABOVE: Clr James Hossack Jnr.

ABOVE RIGHT: Clr Charles H Grove

COUNCILLORS OF ORBOST SHIRE FROM 1892 – 1912

Compiled by John Phillips

COUNCILLOR			1892-	1893-	1894-	1895-	1896-	1897-	1898-	1899-	1900-	1901-	1902-	1903-	1904-	1905-	1906-	1907-	1908-	1909-	1910-	1911-
SURNAME	GIVEN NAMES	RIDING	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
CAMERON	Hugh	East					P															
CAMERON	James		P																			
GROVE	Charles Henry	South		P		P					P											
GROVE	Charles Henry	North																				Retired 12 Aug 1908
HERBERT	Lancelot																					
HOSSACK	James																					
LAUGHTON	Thomas	West			P																	
PARDEW	Edward James	Central						Tendered his resignation & retired 16 Sep 1896														
REED	Hamilton	North																				
STOCKS	Joseph Dutton																					
JOHNSTON	John	East														P						
JOHNSTON	John	South																				
BARKE	William Smellie	West																				
CUMMING	William	South											P								P	
LESTER	James Steel	West										P										
MORRIS	David Rhys																					
RUSSELL	John																					
HUNTER	William																					
McDONALD	Archibald R																					
PEARSE	Richard	North						P						P							P	
O'BYRNE	Lawrence Joseph	East																				
HOCKING	James																					
ROADKNIGHT	William								P													
HASSETT	John																					
FISHER	James																					
NICHOL	Alfred James																					
NIXON	James																					
CRAWFORD	Robert																					
MUNRO	Donald	Central								P												
PHILLIPS	George Robert																					
SIMPSON	Charles																					
MULFAHEY	John																					
RICH	Thomas Louis	North																				
CORBETT	Henry William	West																				
ALLEN	Frederick Pilcher	South																				
HEHIR	John	West																				
STEWART	William																					
LYNN	Samuel James	Central													P							
WATT	Percy Livingstone	South																				P
JAMES	Henry	Central																				
WIDDIS	John	West																				
NIXON	George	South																				
LAWRENCE	Christopher Fredrick	West																				
HUNGERFORD	Herbert Blomfield	North																				
MORGAN	William	West																				
HILLYARD	Alfred Burgess	Central																				
BILLS	John	West																				
RODWELL	Archibald Edward	Central																				P
LUKE	Henry Alfred	West																P				P
JONSON	David Norman																					
HOPKINS	James																					Retired
NIXON	Francis Arthur	East																				
COATE	Joseph Robert	West																				
HUTCHISON	George	North																				
CAMERON	Duncan	East																				