

# ORBOST HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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## NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER, 2005

ITEMS FROM THE

### Snowy River Mail

**Wednesday evening, November 6, 1935:**

Mr. J. A. Hayden, who took cattle to Gippsland recently, was the first to take a horse over the new bridge at Deddick, which he did on the 12<sup>th</sup> ult. History was repeating itself, as Mr. Hayden was the first to take a horse over the bridge previously erected there and which was washed away by floods. It was the same horse too.

**Wednesday evening, November 13, 1935:**

### OPENING OF MCKELLAR'S BRIDGE

The official opening of McKellar's bridge, constructed by the Country Roads Board on the boundary of the Tambo and Orbost shires over the Snowy River, will be officially opened by the Hon. G. L. Goudie, M.L.C., Minister of Public Works on Friday, December 6, at midday. Joint arrangements are being made by the Orbost and Tambo Shire Council, concerning details in connection with this matter.

**Wednesday evening, November 20, 1935:**

### CORRESPONDENCE

#### THE MCKELLAR BRIDGE

Dear Sir, –

In a recent issue you copied an extract from a New South Wales paper, which gave credit to Mr J. H. Hayden, as having pride of place in being the first to cross on horseback the newly erected bridge, to take the place of the one washed away by the disastrous flood in January 1934.

I beg to state that such is incorrect, as the honor belongs to Mr. P. McDonnell, of Buchan. I was working on the approaches to the bridge and can verify the fact that Mr. McDonnell made the trip some days before Mr. Hayden. – Yours, etc.

E. F. OLIVER, Orbost.

**Wednesday evening, December 4, 1935:**

## McKELLAR'S BRIDGE

Provided good weather prevails there is every likelihood of a large gathering at the official opening of McKellar's bridge, which will be performed by the Hon. G. L. Goudie, M.L.C. Minister of Public Works, on Friday, December 6 at midday. The bridge is situated on the boundary of the Tambo and Orbost shires, and arrangements for the official opening are in the hands of these municipalities.

The length of the former bridge was 750 feet. The present one has a length of 821 feet. The height of the former bridge was 58 feet to the decking. That of the present is 73 feet.

All the piers, with the exception of one remained intact, and that one has been rebuilt. The others have also been strengthened and the height increased. The extra length was made up from the old material of the previous structure.



**Wednesday evening, December 18, 1935:**

### BRIDGE AT McKELLAR'S CROSSING

#### Official Opening on Friday Next

Postponed through adverse weather conditions, the official opening of the bridge over the Snowy River at McKellar's crossing, to take the place of the one washed away during the disastrous flood of January 1934, will be held on Friday next, the occasion being a joint function between the Orbost and Tambo Shires.

It is expected that there will be a goodly gathering to participate in the ceremony, which is to be performed by Mr. Goudie, Minister for Water Supply.

#### A PREVIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT

##### Bottled Up and Thrown Into River

Residents around the district travelled to the Snowy River on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December for the official opening of the new bridge crossing the river at McKellar's Crossing, not knowing the ceremony had been postponed until the 20<sup>th</sup> December. They waited in vain, however, not to be disappointed, they held an opening ceremony of their own, finalising with a written statement showing their disappointment in the matter, signed by all. This they inserted in a bottle, and threw into the river. Those concerned are now anxious to know whether the bottle, with their message has been located in Orbost or elsewhere.

#### BOMBALA'S DISAPPOINTMENT

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Thus the "Bombala Times" – After making all arrangements for the official opening of the Deddick bridge over the Snowy River last Friday, a storm down Orbost way was the excuse for a postponement to the 20<sup>th</sup> inst. As the altered arrangement was not received in Bombala until ten o'clock on Friday morning the car containing the Shire representatives had already made a start. They heard the news at Delegate but decided to go on, and found the road in quite good order. As the distance from here is 77 miles it is not likely the party will make the second trip, and as the date now fixed is close to Christmas others who intended being present will not be able to go along. The weather seems to be playing pranks with the opening of this bridge. The original bridge was washed away a couple of days before the date fixed for the official opening.



McKillop's Bridge remains after the 1934 flood – 250 yards downstream

**Tuesday, December 24, 1935:**

## **SNOWY RIVER BRIDGE**

### **New Structure Opened**

### **Disaster of 1934 Recalled**

The bridge over the Snowy River at McKellar's Crossing, which was electrically welded, was lifted completely off its piers by the devastating flood on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1934. Engineering authorities scouted the idea of such a happening, but it occurred through thousands of trees and debris being choked at the top side of the bridge which dammed the river back three miles, and caused the superstructure to be levered off and hurled downstream. Portion of the wooden decking was deposited in a paddock near Orbost, 85 miles distant. The bridge was to have been officially opened at the end of that week. Since then the Country Roads Board essayed the task of building a new bridge at an increased height, using the piers of the old bridge which were not dislodged.

On Friday afternoon there was a gathering of 250 people representative of Bonang, Delegate, Bombala, Orbost, Bairnsdale and Bruthen, who attended to see the opening ceremony.

The President of the Orbost Shire Cr. Perry on behalf of the Orbost and Tambo Shires opened the proceeding by welcoming the Hon. G. Goudie (Minister of Public Works), the Hon. A. E. Lind (Minister of Lands and Forests), Major McCormack (Chairman of the C.R.B.), the Chief Engineer, Mr. Louder, and expressed his pleasure and surprise at the large attendance of the people not only of the large area the Bridge was intended to benefit, but of those from further afield. He paid high tribute to the C.R.B. in the completion of so magnificent and sturdy a structure and said the thanks of the Shires of Orbost and Tambo were due to Mr. Lind for the wonderful part he took not only in this matter but in everything that concerned the outback settler. It was a memorable occasion that he sincerely hoped the children present would remember all their lives as a red letter day.

The President was supported by Cr. Howlett (President of the Tambo Shire), and Mr. Lind next addressed the assemblage.

Mr Lind was presented with a gold and silver scissors (suitably inscribed) on behalf and Tambo Shires by Mr. Goudie.

Mr. Goudie referred briefly to the previous disaster and the building of the new structure at a higher level. He dedicated the bridge to the early explorer McKillop, who was the first man in Gippsland to cross the river. A plaque is to be placed at the bridge to commemorate the event.

He then called on Mrs Lind to cut the ribbon and declare the bridge open.

Mr. A. Lind, Minister of Forests, expressed gratification at the carrying . . . of such a function, the opening of the bridge being a feat in the development of East Gippsland, and he congratulated the Country Roads Board on its fine achievement in constructing a bridge, setting a new standard of bridge construction in this country, and he would say that at the present moment engineers were seeking information of its achievement.



#### **DIMENSIONS OF BRIDGE**

The new bridge is 825 feet longer and is 15 feet higher than the previous bridge, and 10 feet above the highest known flood. . . . .

Mr. T. W. Murphy, vice-president of the Municipal Association, stated that . . . years ago his mother, then 1 year of age, had crossed the river at approximately the spot where the bridge stood, when coming to Gippsland from New South Wales. This showed ample evidence of the pioneering spirit of the early days, which unfortunately was lacking in the present generation. The bridge was a standing monument to its builders, and a credit to the Government in helping the outback areas.

Mr. Woodhouse, of Gelantipy also spoke in terms of appreciation of the work, and its benefit to the settlers.

Other speakers were Cr. Howlett, President of the Tambo Shire; Cr. Gilsenan, President of the Bairnsdale Shire.

Mrs Rich, of Deddick River, was present and had in her possession a plaque representing the blackfellow days, and on which is engraved the following shibboleth:—

Tioa Wargunata, Varatroschung, Kroatua, Kurnac, Ngin, Yeerung, Wangani, Kanga, Djitta, Wanga, Vlayia – King Charles of the Snowy River.

