

ORBOST HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

FOUNDATION OF THE SHIRE & TOWNSHIP OF ORBOST

Foundation of the Shire

What is now the Orbost Shire was at first a part of the Bairnsdale Shire. In 1882 the Eastern part of the Bairnsdale Shire separated, and Orbost and district was a part of the Tambo Shire. David Williams was President of the Bairnsdale and Tambo Shires at the same time. Meetings of the council were held at Nowa Nowa for a time.

At 10 a.m. on 14th September, 1892, Orbost and District was severed from the Tambo Shire and became the Shire of Croajingalong and the first council meeting of the new Shire was held on this day. Cr. James Cameron was elected President. Other councillors included John Cameron, Hugh Cameron, Fred Shapley, C.H. Grove, George Burn, James Stirling, Hamilton Reed, Lance Herbert and Edward Pardew.



Cr. Hugh Cameron

The first Secretary was Lachlan Ross, and the first engineer Mr Seymour.

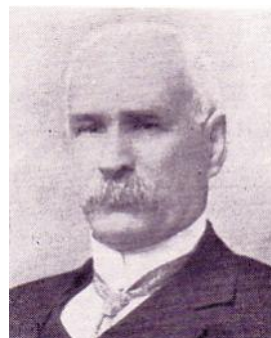
They had a formidable area to govern; the Shire was 3,676 square miles in area, the third largest shire in the State.

On the 17 February 1893 the name of the shire was changed from Croajingalong to Orbost, the name which it held until December 1994 when the Shires of Orbost, Tambo, Omeo and Bairnsdale and the City of Bairnsdale were amalgamated to form the East Gippsland Shire.

In the broader political spheres of states and later on Commonwealth, the Shire looked to others to see to its interests.

State members of Parliament:

Harry Forster	1889-1902
James Cameron	1902-1920
Sir Albert Lind	1920-1961
Bruce Evans	1961-1992
David Treasure	1992-1999
Craig Ingram	1999-



Hon. James Cameron

Federal Parliament Gippsland:

Alan McLean	1901-1906
George Wise	1906-1913 & 1914-1922
J Bennett	1913-1914
Tom Paterson	1922-1943
G.J. Bowden	1943-1962
Peter Nixon	1962-1983
Peter McGauran	1983 -

Foundation of the Orbost Township

(a) *Surveying:*

The first survey of the township into allotments was affected by the surveyor from Bairnsdale, Mr H.G. Robinson, in 1880. Section 1 was divided into 10 allotments (The present Club Hotel is situated on the north-east corner of the section). Allotments 1 - 4 were bought by W.J. Clarke – 4th March, 1881.

Later surveys were affected by Mr Bruce in 1883, 1887 and 1889; by Mr Robinson in 1886 and the subdivision of allotments 1-14 in section 10, on the eastern side of Nicholson Street was carried out Mr E.H. Lees in 1891. In 1881 on Friday, March 4th the first sale of township blocks took place, but it was not until the 17th April, 1885 that the township of Orbost was proclaimed.

(b) *Early Impression 1887:*

Mr A. E. W. Tobin, a surveyor in Mr Bruce's party, wrote of Orbost in 1887, "at that time Orbost was in its infancy, the town comprising one hotel, a coffee palace (run by Mrs Henderson), two general stores, a Post Office and a number of private residences".

(c) *Early Street Naming 1888:*

To discuss the question of naming Orbost streets, a public meeting was held in the Mechanics Institute on the 24th July, 1888 on a motion of Mr Borland. Nicholson Street was named after the veteran pioneer, the first man to blaze a trail from Monaro to Orbost. (With minor deviations, this track is still accepted as the best line for the proposed road. The next street of importance was to be called Clarke Street in honour of Sir W. J. Clarke, and the third street McLeod after the pioneer squatter. Regret was expressed at the resignation of Mr John Cameron from the Council.



Sir William Clarke

(d) *Town Growth:*

Some indication of the early growth of Orbost into the district's principle centre may be seen by the number of businesses and originations, which were established towards the turn of the century and by the number of people holding official positions.

1882:

The first sawmill was started at Tabbara on the Brodribb by Samuel Richardson and Sons of Ballarat, to supply paving blocks to Melbourne. (Three sons Harry, Alan and George had already selected land at Bete Bolong in 1875?). The entire plant was shipped from Geelong on the schooner "Glengarry", the freight being 11 pounds. The paving blocks were not a success, but soon they were barging their sawn timber to Orbost.



Richardson's Sawmill at Tabbara

1884:

Mr Archie Munro opened a boot shop in a corner of Lochiel Barn. He also acted as Post Master there.

The first store was opened by Messrs. Sam and John Blacklock. Mr Frank Luckins built it in Clarke Street, just round the corner from Nicholson Street.

Mr C. N. Henderson was appointed first Justice of the Peace.

The Club Hotel was built. Richardson contracted to supply the hardwood timber at 12/6d per super foot. It was boated from the Tabbara mill. The hotel was run by Tom Maguire, assisted by J Bruce who eventually married Kate Maguire.

George Morgan began a carrier's business by bullock team to Cunningham.

Richardsons cut the timber for James Stirling's new store and nine-roomed hotel at Marlo to replace the old bark buildings.



Marlo Hotel

1885:

Alfred Clarke, the first policeman and Mr J Thompson the first Registrar of Births and Deaths took up duty.

The Mechanics Institute Free Library was started largely owing to the efforts of Charles Grove. It was financed partly by money raised by the people and partly by Government Grant. David Williams erected the building.

The Rev. Robert Martin, the "Apostle of East Gippsland" and the first Anglican priest arrived. He stayed first with James Cameron and held services in Lochiel Barn, alternating with Bendoc and Buchan. When Mr Martin was absent, Mr Watt read the service.



Rev. Robert Martin

Mr James Nixon started a sawmill in the paddock below Mr Harry Cameron's dairy.

1886:

Lance Herbert and Mr Massey and R Coote established a store and transport business. With a string of packhorses brought gold out from Bonang and "packed" in stores.

The first baker, Mr Lamond, began baking bread in a camp oven.

The Colonial Bank of Australia began business under J McLeod.

The first blacksmith, W Borland, opened his business.



Borland's Blacksmith Premises

Dan Ward started a saddle and harness business.

E. J. Pardew began a fruiterer's business in McLeod Street.



Mr. Edward Pardew

A confectionery business was opened by Mrs W.W. Waller.

1889:

Dr James Kerr M.D. arrived from Scotland and opened his practice. He was sponsored by the M.U.I.O.O.F.



**Dr. James Kerr M.B., Ch.M.
1862 - 1928**

The Orbost Band began its life. It was first led by Mr Austin and later by Mr Spink; still later by Mr W Swan.

The first undertaker, John Talbot, opened his business.

The bacon factory opened.

1890:

The "Snowy River Mail" began publication, run by Messrs Reece and Ross.

1892:

The Butter Factory began production under James Nixon (a native of England, he arrived in the colony in 1853, and after a period of 21 years on the Loddon River, he went to Toongabie, then in 1885 to Orbost where he selected land on the Snowy. He also began a sawmill near Orbost.)



1897:

Mr H Cottman started as chemist and dentist.

1898:

Mr Edward Watt commenced business as auctioneer and Commission Agent.