

ORBOST HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

P.O. BOX 284 ORBOST VIC 3888



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NEWSLETTER

'Snowy River Mail', Wednesday, January 11, 1967:

River Trading on the Snowy

The first boats to ply for trade on the Snowy River were owned by Charles Petterson, who dealt mostly in wattle bark. A gang of strippers was employed and the bark exported to Germany. (Contributed)

Later these boats catered for inward and outward freighting, with maize and pigs but did not carry on for any length of time.

Next in line were Lachlan McLean, Fred Gill and Orlando Petterson followed by the Richardson Bros.

It was at this stage that the Snowy River Shipping Coy. was formed with J. J. Thomson as first secretary. Later he resigned and applications were called for the position.



James John Thomson
First secretary Snowy River Shipping Company

Applicants were H. James and Guy Hooper, James being successful.

Prior to this he was employed by John Cameron at Brooklands.



Harry James

H. James proved a very keen businessman and did well. He eventually practically owned that particular company; formed agencies, conducted an auctioneering business and controlled the bean market.

The paddle boat owned by Richardsons and the Snowy River Co. was the Curlip.

Another schooner, the Orbost, was built by Erickson and captained by Mortimer; and another The Bruthen.

Some disagreement arose between the Orbost people and the Snowy River Co. A meeting was called and the outcome of this was that Alex C. and Robert P. Cameron started in opposition with two barges.

Afterwards they built the paddle boat Cheviot (of very light draft) and sold out later to James and Bird.



P S 'Cheviot'

Seven miles down the Snowy from Orbost, was a depot always known as the Landing and used by all. Schooners were towed over the bar and up and down the river by boats manned by Captain McNeil and engineer Towner.



Last Landing on Snowy River - 'Curlip' & 'Cheviot'

The earlier boats were the Glenelg (lost on a trip from Lakes Entrance to Sydney) and the Glengary (lost at Marlo with material for the Post Office).



**William Rutledge Anderson
Orbost Shire engineer**

The material that was salvaged helped build the brick house which was built by W. Anderson, the Orbost Shire engineer and occupied by the late H. James. The occupants were troubled for years with the salt sweating from the bricks.

Later there was an influx of boats — the Allan brothers, Thomson and Hegarty and Geo. Fraser with their Stormbird and the Sea Bird.

These boats were built on the banks of the Tambo at Johnsonville, especially for the Snowy River trade.

Mr. Fraser was a well known show rider, with his own horses.



S. S. 'Stormbird'

These boats operated for some years but early in 1900 owing to vagaries of the bar at the mouth of the Snowy, uncertainty of prompt deliveries and excessive handling farmers began to cart their own produce to Lakes.

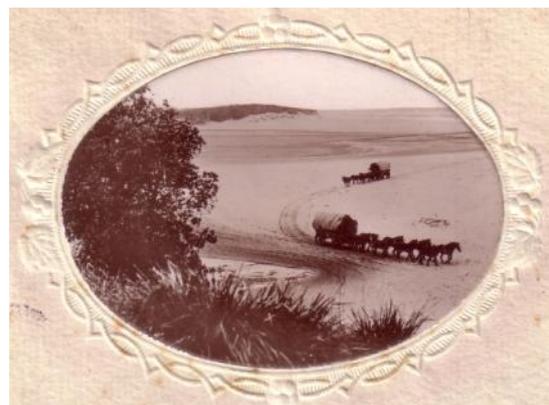
They had their own teams (horses and bullocks), but carting was not regular enough.

In about 1907-08 Mr. Charles Joiner and Mr. Alf Lay came together and conducted a regular service — Mr. Lay at Lakes with a five horse team (because he had to travel the beach at Lake Tyers) and Mr. Joiner, at Orbost, with four horses.

The two met half way and changed wagons. Asked why they did this it was said they met every boat and were at the jetty every day. This was why they cornered most of the inward loadings, and as this increased Mr. Charles Lay co-operated.

This move was the beginning of the end of boating.

Mr. Frazer sold one boat and went with his family to New Zealand in the other.



**Charles Joiner & Alf Lay's teams crossing the
sand bar at Lake Tyers**