

# ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

P.O. BOX 284 ORBOST VIC 3888



**President:** Heather Terrell  
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**Newsletter Editor:** John Phillips

## NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2010

*'Bairnsdale Advertiser, Friday, May 2, 1947:*

### Second Highway Through Gippsland East Advocated

#### STRONG SUPPORT FOR COASTAL ROUTE

#### Encouraging Outlook For Land Settlement

**T**HE PROLONGED CONSTRUCTION of a new coastal road from Lakes Entrance eastward through Orbost and Marlo and connecting with other coastal resorts offers vast possibilities for land settlement in Gippsland East and will traverse scenery of unsurpassed beauty of a typically Australian bland which should appeal to overseas visitors and all who travel the route. Support for this new road has been promised by many Gippsland public institutions, and also Shire councils. Those sponsoring the project are convinced it will be of tremendous value to East Gippsland.

In the earlier history of the road systems of the Shires of Tambo and Orbost, the roads eastwards followed the lower and flatter country, leaving Bairnsdale as the starting point.

It was possible to drive a vehicle from Bairnsdale to Lakes Entrance in the year 1900 but progress was slow and tedious, and for miles was only a bush track winding in and out among the trees. The popular means of transport between the two places was by

means of steamers, firstly the J.C.D., and later the Gippsland.

From Lakes Entrance a Royal mail coach operated as far as Orbost, travelling across the mouth of Lake Tyers and thence by Jonson's, at Hospital Creek, to Orbost.



S. S. *Gippsland*, leaving Bairnsdale



Jonson's Half-way House, Hospital Creek

From Orbost the road or track traversed the Snowy River to Marlo; then along the coast to Sydenham Inlet and continued on to Cann River.

Between Cann River and Mallacoota there was practically no road, and Mallacoota was only connected to the outside world by boat, and in the year 1918 it was not possible to drive a car from Genoa to Mallacoota.



As settlement increased, and Lakes Entrance became more important and popular, better roads were constructed and the existing old road from Lakes Entrance was abandoned for a relocation connecting with Nowa Nowa which was really the hub of the old road system, as from there roads radiated to Bruthen, Swan Reach, Buchan and Orbost.

The new road from Lakes Entrance via Nowa Nowa to Orbost is now known as the Princes Highway. and is familiar to all road users. This section of the road has fulfilled a very useful purpose, and will continue to do so, but it is felt by the majority of people in the area that in order to comply with the slogan "Advance Australia", a coast road should be constructed from Lakes Entrance to cross the mouth of Lake Tyers, and thence traverse the area adjacent to Ewing's Marsh, connecting with the present highway to the west of Newmerella. This road would have many advantages, the most obvious being that the distance between the two places would be reduced by about eight miles, or the return journey sixteen miles. The Lake Tyers area would be made accessible, and it is a well-known fact that the development of this beauty spot is long overdue; also the area of good land along the boundary of Ewing's Marsh will be opened up for settlement. This area is capable of carrying many settlers under ideal climatic conditions on fertile land which can all be easily worked. This part of the coast road will also avoid the congestion in the Nowa Nowa township, as well as the level railway crossings and poor alignment at Tostaree and at the approach to Newmerella.

This section of the coast road has been recommended for approval by the Tambo and Orbost shire councils, and has the unanimous approval of the Lakes Entrance Progress and Tourist Association, and advocated by the Greater Gippsland League as a sound proposal for the advancement and development

of this part of Gippsland.

From Orbost the old road via Marlo to Sydenham was abandoned for the new location which traversed more rugged country via Cabbage Tree, Bell Bird and Club Terrace to Cann River, and the reason for this diversion was on account of settlements being established at Murrungowar and Club Terrace, at which latter place there was a temporary rush to obtain gold.

This road was constructed by the Public Works department and a maximum grade of 1 in 19 was adopted, and as speed was not to be catered for the grade followed in and out round the spurs and gullies, resulting in a maze of turns and twists which required a good deal of skill on the part of the horse driver to negotiate. The surface was anything but good, and 30 years ago [c.1917] when cars started to use the road, it was anything but an all-weather track, and at such places as Sans Souci and Euchre Creek during very wet weather a good driver took the precaution to have chains on all four wheels. This road has been greatly improved since it was taken over as a highway, and now carries a good volume of traffic, but it is considered by road users and those who are endeavouring to promote the advancement of the district, that a continuation of the coast road on from Orbost is now essential in the best interests of East Gippsland.



**Euchre Valley, Old Princes Highway, near Club Terrace**

The Orbost Shire council, the Orbost Progress and Tourist Association, and the Orbost Chamber of Commerce are advocating the proposal, and the Greater Gippsland League is supporting it, and the Marto Progress and Tourist Association is unanimous in advocating the coast road as a means to greater development and prosperity.

The route of the coast road would pick up Marlo, Cape Conran, Sydenham Inlet, and Cann River, and would have many advantages in that the road would be easy to construct, would be straighter and therefore much safer and faster, would traverse better country for development, and would carry many settlers under ideal climatic conditions, would connect with the beauty spots and pleasure resorts along the coast, and cater for tourists who either desired to accept accommodation or park their caravans in ideal surroundings.

When one considers that this vast area known as Croajingolong only has one road running east through it between Bombala and the coast, it is not difficult to understand why settlement is not taking place, and why it is impossible to develop the "wide open spaces".



Bell Bird Hotel, 1927

The Hon. A. E. Lind, M.L.A., the champion of East Gippsland, is behind this proposed coast road, and he has demonstrated on many occasions that he is competent to look into the future, and as he now advocates, the construction of this coast road, it is definite proof that he believes that the construction of the road is really essential to the future development and prosperity of this part of East Gippsland.

It would be a fitting compliment to Mr. Lind, when the coast road is finally constructed, that it be named the Lind Highway.

By constructing the coast road it is not even suggested that the present highway be neglected, but alternatively that it be built up to the standard demanded by the traffic that will still use it, and maintained at that standard, and that the chairman of the Country Roads Board has already given that assurance.

It only now remains that to take the proposal seriously, steps be taken to have all the preliminary investigations made, with a view to having the route of the coast road established, and then land settlement and tourist business and accommodation will automatically follow.



VIC - N.S.W. BORDER.

It therefore behoves those in authority and those advocating the development of the district, to accede to the request of the various councils and advancement leagues, and make the coast road an established fact, in an active endeavour to advance Gippsland East.

'Bairnsdale Advertiser', Tuesday, May 13, 1947:

## COASTAL ROAD PROJECT

### OPPOSITION BY SETTLERS BEYOND ORBOST

(To the Editor Bairnsdale Advertiser)

Sir,— I would esteem it a great favour if you would allow me space in The Advertiser to set out the following facts which come to mind on reading your article advocating the construction of a coast road, particularly the section between Orbost and Cann River.



Bullock Teams, Cann River Road

First, with regard to the promotion of settlement; the article state that the old Marlo-Bemm-Cann road was abandoned in favour of the present highway, the latter route being necessary to serve settlements which grew up further inland. The area nearer the coast is unsuitable for settlement, as proved by the findings of

the government experimental farm beyond Marlo, and by the fact that the area was not more settled, but actually retrogressed, when the main and only road did go through it.

Secondly, the matter of scenic value arises. The tidal waters of the Yerung River and the Sydenham Inlet area would push the "coast" road completely out of sight of the sea and into the region of stunted eucalypts, ti-tree scrub, spear-grass flats and scrubby heaths. The colorfulness of the last is certainly attractive in Spring, but is infinitely less so than the ferny glories of such places as the Bemm and Euchre Valleys through which the Prince's Highway now goes.

The article states that "it is considered by - - - those who are endeavouring to promote the advancement of the district, that continuation of the coast road on from Orbost is now essential in the best interests of Gippsland East." This is incorrect. The Cann Valley Progress Association has made no move in this matter; and talk of the project so alarmed the settlers between Cann River and Orbost, that they tabled a petition to the Orbost Shire Council opposing the scheme.

The general feeling east of Orbost is that the present highway must be made usable before any new projects are commenced. The highway has been satisfactorily widened and realigned as far as McKenzie River and from Mount Drummer to the border; but further extensive work is urgently needed on many parts of the 35 mile stretch between; and then the bitumen must be continued to Genoa.

Because of the disposition of settlements, all passenger services, mails and trucks carrying foodstuffs and other commodities outward, and fish, timber, cream, livestock and other produce inwards to Orbost and the railhead, will always use the

present highway. It must hence be the lifeline of Cabbage Tree, Bellbird, Club Terrace, Combiobar, Errinundra, Tonghi, Cann Valley and the Genoa-Mallacoota district. At present this road is unbelievably rough, slow and unsafe despite the continuous efforts of a large power-grading unit.



Tonghi Creek Bridge, 1917

The coastal route, through unsettled and unscenic lands would increase business at Mario and Sydenham Inlet a little, and would provide a fast means of transit through the country. Hence it would be of use only to some private motorists outside the district, and though it is an interesting engineering project, it is obvious that any move for its construction before the Prince's Highway is sealed right to Genoa, would be contrary to the interests of settlers and a menace to future development in the area east of Orbost.

Yours etc.,  
N. A. WAKEFIELD,  
Cann River.

