

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

JULY, 2010

The next series of Newsletters will feature items relating to the formation and development of the Orbost Shire Council and some of the personalities who were elected to represent the various Ridings over the years.

As a starting point this Newsletter begins with the pre-Orbost Shire period which includes both the Bairnsdale and Tambo Shires.

ORBOST SHIRE - HISTORICAL SUMMARY



The Orbost district was at first part of the Bairnsdale Shire which was created on 18th July 1868. In 1882 the eastern section of the Bairnsdale Shire was separated, and Orbost became part of the newly formed Tambo Shire. Mr David Williams represented both the Bairnsdale and Tambo Shires at the same time, and was President of both Shires in consecutive years. Meetings of the Tambo Shire 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 Croajingolong. The first council meeting of the new Shire was held on this day. Cr. James Cameron was elected the first President and other councillors included Hugh Cameron, Charles Grove, James Hossack, Thomas Laughton, Hamilton Reed, Lancelot Herbert, Joseph Stocks and Edward Pardew. The first Secretary was Lachlan Ross, and the first engineer George Seymour.

On the 17th February 1893 the name was changed from Shire of Croajingolong to Shire of Orbost and on 31st May 1895 the shire was divided into five ridings, each with three elected councillors for the North, South, East, West and Central ridings. On the 3rd January 1913 the West riding was annexed to the Shire of Tambo to become its Cunninghame Riding, thus reducing the Orbost Shire to four ridings, North, South, East and Central.

The Council had a formidable area to govern; even after the West riding was severed the Shire was still 3,676 square miles in area, making it the third largest shire in the State.

The Orbost Shire Council serviced the far eastern portion of the State until 2nd December 1994 when the Shires of Orbost, Tambo, Omeo and Bairnsdale, the City of Bairnsdale, and a section of the Shire of Rosedale were combined to form the East Gippsland Shire.

Two Orbost personalities played prominent roles in the newly constituted East Gippsland Shire. Former M.H.R. for Gippsland, Mr Peter Nixon, was sworn in as Chief Commissioner on 26th June, 1995, following the death of the inaugural Chief Commissioner, Mr George Bates. With Bruce Evans, Duncan Malcolm and Peter Wood, Peter Nixon governed the shire until the election of councillors in March, 1997.

On 12th May, 1997, Cr Brenda Murray, O.A.M., was elected inaugural Mayor of the East Gippsland Shire Council. A Justice of the Peace, and a former Orbost High School teacher, Cr Murray had previously served 16 years on the former Orbost Shire Council (1972-1987), with three consecutive terms (1980-1983) as Shire President.

TAMBO SHIRE COUNCIL 1882-1891



The Snowy River, Bendoc and Cunninghame Ridings of the SHIRE OF TAMBO were severed in 1892 to form the SHIRE OF CROAJINGOLONG.

The name was changed to SHIRE OF ORBOST in 1893.



The Shire of Tambo was gazetted on 6th January 1882 - *Victoria Government Gazette* 1882 No. 2 (6 January 1882) p. 4.

The Tambo Shire was more or less the East Riding of the Bairnsdale Shire plus the recently settled districts of Orbost and Newmerella. The northern boundary was the New South Wales border and the eastern boundary was a line drawn from a point about 10 kilometres east along the New South Wales border from where the Snowy River crosses the border to the mouth of the Yeerung River on the coast near Cape Conran, with the southern boundary being the Ninety-Mile Beach.

The Shire was subdivided into four ridings - Bruthen, Bumberrah, Buchan, and the Snowy River Riding which was the eastern section including Orbost, Newmerella and Marlo. Each riding was represented by three councillors to form a twelve-person Council. The first elections were held on 23rd February 1882. Alan Burn, the post master at Newmerella, was the appointed Returning officer for the Snowy River riding and the polling place was the Newmerella Post Office which, at that time was located on the flat.

However there was no contest in the Snowy River riding as only three candidates nominated. James Cameron, Charles Grove and William Watt were elected unopposed.

The first meeting of the Tambo Shire Council was on 15th March 1882 at the Bruthen School. All councillors were present except Cr. William Watt. At this meeting Cr. John Merry, who was a Bruthen riding representative, was elected inaugural president and Thomas Telfer Stirling was appointed acting secretary and his position as Secretary was confirmed at the April meeting. He held the Secretary's position until July 1903, when his son, Robert Stirling, took over and was Secretary of the Tambo Shire until 1923.

Councillor William Watt attended three out of ten Council meetings before submitting his resignation at the December 1882 meeting. John Cameron was elected to the Snowy River Riding vacancy at the August 1883 Council meeting and took his place at the council table on 7th September 1883.

In January 1885, the Public Works Department informed Council it was recommending the annexation of the area from the Tambo Shire's eastern boundary through to the border to become part of the municipality. Despite the Government offering the Council £1,000 for the years 1885 and 1886 as a sweetener, the Council was reluctant to

accept the additional unknown territory. At this time the Bendoc area was rapidly developing due to gold mining prospecting and the settlers had forwarded a petition to be included as part of the Shire. In August 1885 the Council accepted the outlying territory, it being named the Bendoc Riding and annexed to the Shire of Tambo and recorded in the *Government Gazette* of 11th September.

The new riding added 14,248 square kilometres and about 500 additional ratepayers to the Shire. The election of representatives for the new Bendoc Riding did not take place until August 1886, when Charles Grove, James Stirling and William Roadknight, jnr. were elected. It should be noted that none of these councillors were residents of the Bendoc Riding - Grove lived at Lochend, Stirling at Marlo and Roadknight at Cunninghame.

In 1885 a motion was moved and carried that Council meetings be held each month on the Friday preceding the full moon so that Snowy River Riding councillors had extra moonlight in which to ride home after meetings.

James Cameron was elected President of the Tambo Shire in October 1890 and during his term as president moved that Council meetings be held at Nowa Nowa. Thomas (Moses) Faithfull had built a hotel at Nowa Nowa in January 1890, which was used as a coach stop on the inland route between Cunninghame and Orbost, and so provided a venue for Council meetings. Despite enduring very crowded conditions when all councillors, officers and reporters were present, the hotel sitting room served as a meeting room until the formation of the Croajingolong Shire in 1892, when Tambo Shire meetings were once again held at Bruthen.



Nowa Nowa Crossing, Old Orbost Road, with the first Nowa Nowa Hotel built by Moses Faithfull, in 1890, in background.

COUNCIL MEETINGS



TAMBO SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING AT FAITHFUL'S HOTEL, NOWA NOWA (INCLUDES SNOWY RIVER RIDING COUNCILLORS)

Photograph includes: John Butter BESLEY, John William BORLAND, Charles Begg IRVINE, William J. LAMBOURN, James LARKIN, Ronald McDOUGALL, Donald McRAE, William ROADKNIGHT jnr., David WILLIAMS, James CAMERON, Charles Henry GROVE.



Thomas (Moses) FAITHFUL 1836-1901

NOWA NOWA HOTEL,
Midway between Bruthen and Orbost,
M. FAITHFUL, Proprietor.

HAVING obtained a license for the new and Commodious Premises recently erected at Nowa Nowa, is prepared to cater for the requirements of excursionists and the travelling public.

The Hotel is situated on the north arm of Lake Tyers, a new well-known pleasure resort, affording an abundance of sport in the shape of Boating, Shooting, Fishing, &c.

The Coach from Bruthen to Orbost passes the Hotel.

Advertisement: *Snowy River Mail*, Saturday, November 1, 1890

Moses Faithful came to Australia from England with his parents on the *Royal Consort* in 1844. After living at Bulla, Pakenham and Wurruk he and his wife moved to Hospital Creek in about 1885 where he took up the first selection of land at Upper Hospital Creek. As well as farming he built the first hotel at Nowa Nowa in 1890. He had charge of the hotel until 1895 when he sold to Mary Stirling. Moses died on 8th July 1901, aged 66, at the residence of his son-in-law, David Price, at Newmerella, and buried in the Orbost cemetery.

THE TRAVELLING COUNCILLORS

Tambo Shire meetings were held each month on the full moon to enable the Snowy River Riding (Orbost) councillors extra light to see to ride their horses home after meetings.

Then when the Croajingolong / Orbost Shire was formed, meetings at Orbost were scheduled to start at 4 p.m., as the coach bringing the West Riding councillors from Cunninghame (Lakes Entrance) did not arrive until 3 p.m. or often later. The meetings would go late into the night, so these councillors, and the ones from the North and East ridings, would stay overnight and return home the following day.

Two long standing members of the Shire of Tambo who also had close connections with the Orbost area were the Shire Secretary Thomas Telfer Stirling and Councillor David Williams .



Thomas Telfer STIRLING (EGHS collection)

Thomas Telfer Stirling was born in Glasgow in 1834. He arrived in Geelong in January 1842 with his father James, mother and six brothers and sisters, on board the *Robert Benn*, having sailed from Greenock, Scotland.

His father opened a store in Geelong, and during the Gold Rush which began in 1851, his sons, Peter and Thomas, transported supplies from Geelong to Ballarat by bullock dray. The family then moved to Winchelsea where they became prominent members of the community.

Thomas Telfer Stirling came first to the Old Station at Corringale in 1857 and in partnership with William Roadknight held the leasehold run extending eastwards from Lake Tyers to Bemm River and northward from the coast to Buchan. He made his home at the Old Station, taking responsibility for the Snowy River end of the run, whilst William, who lived at Pine Hill in a house he named *Merrangbaur*, looked after western section so as Mrs Roadknight was not left alone with the children for long periods of time.

Thomas Stirling was the first white man to ride through the bush from Orbost to Omeo and was recognised as one of the best bushmen in East Gippsland. He left the Orbost area to reside at Bruthen in 1866 and on July 29, 1867, was elected a Tambo district member on the Bairnsdale district Road Board. Thomas was a Bairnsdale Shire councillor from 1872, serving as Shire president for two terms, 1874-75 and 1875-76. He was appointed acting Secretary of the Tambo Shire on March 15, 1882 and then to the position of Shire Secretary as from the April 1882 meeting up to the end of June 1903, when his son, Robert, took over and was Shire Secretary until 1923. Thomas then retired to Nowa Nowa. He died at Nowa Nowa on 26th June 1911, aged 77.

His wife, Mary (nee WILSON), took over the Nowa Nowa Hotel from Moses Faithful in 1895. She died at Bruthen in March 1922, aged 86.

They had a family of seven:

- Helen Stirling (Mrs Alexander CAMERON);
- James Telfer (m. Mary O'ROURKE);
- Robert Wilson (m. Elizabeth SANDY);
- Annie Jane (d. 1872, 20 mths);
- Jean Roadknight (Mrs John LUGSDIN);
- Janet Mary (d. 1878, 2 yrs);
- Ann Maude.



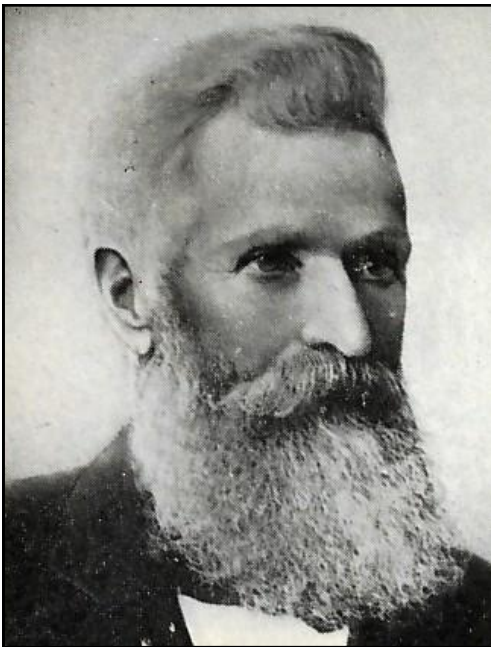
James STIRLING, jnr. (ODHS collection)

James Stirling followed his younger brother, Thomas Telfer Stirling, to East Gippsland. Thomas held the Corringale run and when he moved to Bruthen in 1866 James took over the Old Station at Corringale. His belongings were brought by bullock wagon to the Old Station by Mr William Roadknight. Later he moved to Marlo where he was hotelkeeper, storekeeper, postmaster and coroner. He retired in 1894 to his home near Stirling Creek. Together with Charles Grove and William Roadknight, jnr., James was nominated and represented the Bendoc Riding on the Tambo Shire Council from 1886.

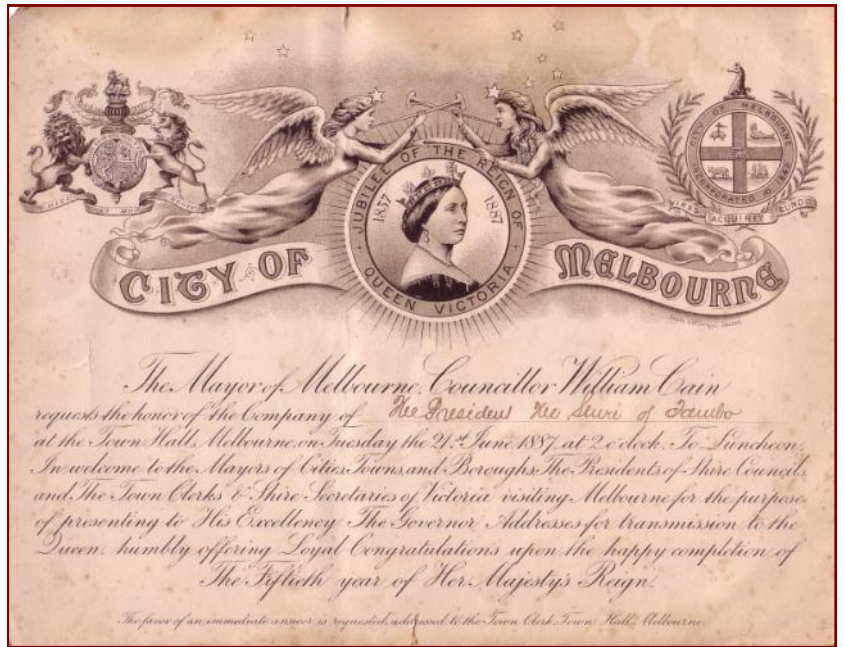
James died on 12th June, 1917, aged 63, and was buried at the Marlo cemetery.



The Stirling Home, Willis Avenue, Marlo



David WILLIAMS



An invitation received by David Williams in 1887 during one of his terms as Shire President of the Shire of Tambo (Margaret Dewar collection)

David Williams was born in Wales in 1883 and landed in Melbourne in 1853. He met Mr Owen Williams (no relation) and they decided to walk to Gippsland and came on to Bairnsdale in 1860. A report in the *Bairnsdale Advertiser*, 7th April, 1914, states that on the trip David Williams was "carrying his boots in his hand to save the leather". David and Owen apparently worked on Bairnsdale Station before they got a job, in 1863, clearing a track for a racecourse on the river flat for the Bairnsdale Racing Club. According to Hal Porter in his book *Bairnsdale - Portrait of An Australian Country Town*, it was on McLaughlin's Flat between the present-day Mitchell and Wy Yung bridges, and known as the Mitchell Valley course. In 1864 they set up a sawpit in Nicholson street where they cut timber for new buildings. In the same year they built the Mitchell Hotel, at the corner of Main and Bailey streets. Other significant buildings that David Williams was involved in was a new brick post office, with granite foundations, built in 1875-76 on the present-day Post Office site; the first School of Mines adjacent to the Mitchell Gardens camping park, as well as several stores and shops in the town.

In 1882 he became a councillor for the Bumberrah Riding of the Tambo Shire Council, being a landholder in that shire. He was growing hops at the time and held one of the largest hopfields.

In 1884-85 he became president of the Tambo Shire, being elected to that position again in 1886-87. He continued to add to his holdings in the Johnsonville area, being re-elected councillor for many years. He was President of the Tambo Shire again in 1891-92 and 1894-95.

In 1896 he became a shire councillor for the Bairnsdale centre riding. He still retained his seat on the Tambo Shire, and was the first and only councillor to hold seats on both councils at the same time.

He became president of the Tambo Shire again in 1897-98 and again in 1900-01. In 1902-03 he was elected for the first time as Shire President of the

Bairnsdale Shire, and was again shire president of Tambo in 1903-04.

He retired from the Tambo council in 1908 after 26 years, and fought to regain the Bairnsdale centre riding seat which he had lost to W. H. Martin in 1905, and winning.

He became shire president of Bairnsdale again in 1910-11. In 1911, Sir Albert Lind opposed him for the centre riding seat, but was defeated.

David Williams played a prominent role in the community in many ways, most are listed in the Obituary on the next page. He was also a member of the hospital committee.

David Williams died on 2nd May 1923, at his home, Williams Parade, Picnic Point, Bairnsdale, aged 89.



David Williams' Home, Williams Parade, Bairnsdale (Margaret Dewar photo)

Williams Parade in Bairnsdale runs from Bent Street in the east to Pope Street in the west, skirting the Mitchell River embankment. It was named after Cr David Williams, one of the earliest pioneers of the district.

OBITUARY

BAIRNSDALE'S OLDEST PIONEER

Mr David Williams, who had been a resident of Bairnsdale for 63 years, and who had attained the advanced age of 89 years, passed away peacefully last week at his home, Williams Parade, Picnic Point.

Until about 10 years ago he was a familiar figure in the public and business life of the town and district. For over 40 years he served the ratepayers as a councillor in the Bairnsdale and Tambo shires, and in sundry other ways took a hand in helping forward the progress of the community. Of a quiet disposition, and cautious in all he said and did, his judgment on most public questions was sound, if, at times, just a little bit conservative, while the practical knowledge he had acquired as a builder and land owner often served him in good stead.

Mr David Williams came to Bairnsdale in the year 1860. He and the late Mr Owen Williams (they were not related in any way) struck up an acquaintanceship in Melbourne. They were both young men under 30 years of age. They decided to walk to Gippsland, and came on to Bairnsdale, which was then a very small settlement. They got a job of clearing a track for a racecourse on the river flat, a piece of land which subsequently became the Struan hop fields, and is now the property of Mr J. D. Scott. Afterwards these two men made a sawpit in Nicholson street on the site now occupied by the Salvation Army Hall [now Aldi's], and they cut timber for the buildings that were being put up in the new township that was then beginning to grow, and also themselves undertook the erection of buildings.

In 1864, Mr David Williams, under contract, built the Mitchell Hotel, at the corner of Main and McMillan streets. On this building being destroyed by fire nearly 40 years ago, the Victoria Hotel was raised on its ashes. [now the site of Warren, Graham & Murphy] For many years afterwards Mr Williams continued in the building trade, until having some parcels of land in various parts of the district he devoted practically the whole of his time in grazing and agricultural pursuits, taking on occasionally the oversight, as clerk of works, of the erection of buildings, etc. He was a foundation member of the Loyal Mitchell Lodge, Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows, established in 1866, and of the Freemasons' Union Lodge of North Gippsland, founded in 1870. He was twice married, and leaves a widow and a family of four children. — Bairnsdale "Advertiser".

David WILLIAMS and his wife, Grace (nee ELLIS) had the following children:

David b. 1862, Gippsland, d. 1867, aged 4 years.
John b. 1865, Gippsland, d. 1866, aged 11 months.
Hugh b. 1866, Bairnsdale. (m.1 Annie WALKER;
m.2 Catherine MARRIOTT)
Jane b. 1869, Lucknow. (Mrs George ROSS)
David Ellis b. 1873, Lucknow. (m. Nina MARRIOTT)
William John b. 1874, Lucknow, d. 1878, aged 3 yrs.
Ellen b. 1876, Bairnsdale. (Mrs Owen NEWTON)

David's first wife, Grace WILLIAMS, died at Lucknow in 1882, aged 44.

Thanks to Margaret Dewar for providing Photographs, Documents and Obituary relating to her great-grandfather David Williams, and grandmother Jane Ross (nee Williams).

Three of the children, Hugh, Jane and David, lived most of their lives in the Orbost area.

Hugh WILLIAMS was born at Bairnsdale in 1866, the son of David WILLIAMS and Grace ELLIS.

Apart from three years spent in Africa, he spent his life in Gippsland. He came to Orbost in 1904 and worked as a carpenter. He carried on business as a building contractor and was also a sawmill proprietor. For many years he carried out the duties of undertaker in the Orbost district, disposing of this business to Reg. Macalister on 30th June, 1948. Hugh was an excellent horseman, a noted rough rider and a keen angler. He died at Orbost on 15th June, 1950, aged 83, and was buried at the Orbost cemetery.



Jane WILLIAMS
(Mrs George ROSS)
(Margaret Dewar collection)

Jane WILLIAMS was born at Bairnsdale in 1869. She came to Orbost about 1894 and started a dressmaking business. The journey from Bairnsdale was by pushbike over a very rough road. She married George ROSS in 1901 at Bairnsdale and in 1905 went to live at Corringale where she spent the rest of her life.

Jane had undergone an operation in Melbourne and was returning to Orbost when she passed away on 20th January, 1944, shortly after the car had left Nowa Nowa. She was aged 75.

David Ellis WILLIAMS was born at Bairnsdale in 1873. He was a builder and bricklayer, and came to Orbost about 1903. Prior to his marriage to Nina MARRIOTT in 1912, he and his brother Hugh, visited South Africa and worked there for some time. In his heyday David could lay 1000 to 1500 bricks a day, and even when aged 80 years he was still actively engaged at his work and laying 1000 bricks. He built quite a number of residences in Orbost and laid many of the bricks in the former Shire Offices. David was a noted bicycle rider, winning many championships, a keen fisherman and a member of the Masonic Lodge.

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