**Essays on Mount Crosby - Chuwar**

Chuwar, the land between the Brisbane and Bremer rivers, has an unusual sounding name and that is a clue to its story. Sure enough, there' s more to Chuwar than meets the eye. You will have noticed that Australia has a large number of placenames that honour people (such as Brisbane, Moreton, Fraser ...), but there were early advocates for naming things in the aboriginal language and other ways. Surveyor James Warner was one of these, and his name for the Parish of Chuwar was derived from an aboriginal word he heard in the district. When he tried to spell it (more or less phonetically), it came out as Tchew-worr, which you will not be surprised to hear was later anglicised to Chuwar. Today, nobody knows what the word meant.

Chuwar first appeared on maps in October 1848 and has been giving good service ever since, though the popularity of the name waned a little after its early days. I say this because the first hotel in North Ipswich, opened by Mr David Rodger at about 1860, was opened as the "Chuwar Hotel" but soon became the Tramway Hotel (1862) when the prospects of the Moreton Bay Tramway Company (who promised a private tramway from Brisbane to Toowoomba) seemed so bright. And when the investors in that company bailed out and the tramway was supplanted by the real railway (1864), the fickle pub became the Railway Hotel and stayed that way for the rest of its days.

From the highpoint of having a pub named after it, Chuwar changed course and from about 1870 started to be known for an emerging coal and coke industry, mainly centred on what we call Tivoli but spilling over into the area we recognise as today's Chuwar. Tivoli and Chuwar coal was renowned for its suitability for coking, but the quality got poorer to the north, and even very poor under what we call Karana Gardens - a blessing today that broke a lot of prospectors' hearts in yesteryear. Sometime coincident with the expansion of coal and the creation of dozens of coke-making ovens, there was placed on maps a design for the township of Chuwar, bounded approximately by Mount Crosby Road, Dan Street and Rea's Road. A regular little township it was too, with neat rectangular blocks and all - but nobody bought them for purposes other than speculation until after the 1960s.

In the meantime, Chuwar found its most distinctive asset and the one it will remain known for. In 1927, the Moreton Shire Council declared 67 acres at Colledges Crossing to be a recreation reserve and it was a popular success. So successful, I think, that the name Colledges Crossing became synonymous with this northern part of Chuwar. As a result, the name Chuwar drifted from public view until the 1980s when, coincident with a nearby development, a little signpost emerged at the south end of Colledges Crossing proudly declaring the old name, "Chuwar". I remember it well enough, if not the exact date, because at first I thought it unfamiliar, and then difficult to pronounce.

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