**Essays on Mount Crosby - River Plums**

If I told you that men once went down to the old weir and Colledges to harvest river plums (often at the beckoning of their ladies) you might think "What a lark" or "Stuff and nonsense, I'm having none of it". And if you did, I'd put on a serious look and follow up with "Sure they did and, not only that, they put a lot of them into the concrete things we see all around".

"What manner of strange men were these, and was it a superstition or something odder?".

"Neither. You are thinking of the wrong plums. Just as there are bats and other bats, there are plums that taste well and plums that are river stones of great usefulness when bricks and reinforcing iron are in short supply".

So that's it, the plums of Mount Crosby are the lovely round river stones that abounded on the gravel beds of old and were replenished there, or at least uncovered, with each of the floods that annually cleared the river before the days of big dams.

In the bushland between the sportsground and the river (where the terminus of the aerial ropeway was) a modest pile of them still patiently await a lift to construction works, long finished and disinterested in them. I like to imagine, and I think I am right, that they were put there in the summer of 1930/31 when along came a great flood and washed away the aerial ropeway towers and any hope of their lift.

In the early years of the 20th century, plums reinforced the Cabbage Tree Creek dam wall and went into short supply for a piece. To wit, the engineer said the appointed contractor was permitted "the use of hard clean stones as plums up to an average of 25 percent" provided they were "embedded efficiently and placed as directed by the engineer". Shortly after this, the contractor, Arthur Midson fell into dispute with the Board about the shortage of expected plums in the creek bed. The Board said it was too sad for Arthur, and he would have to make do.

Nearer home, the gardens of houses in Mount Crosby were often made with cement and plums. But I'll warrant not many good tasting plums were ever grown.

Col Hester