**Essays on Mount Crosby - Abermain Power Station 1953**

I think it's fair to say that the winters of half a century ago were colder than those of today. The lack of money for investment in post-war Australia and the threatening chill of "cold war" tensions between Russia and America just seemed to make everything worse.

These challenges became particular for the people of South East Queensland when it became clear that power generating capacity would not meet demand by the winter of 1953 because, among other things, two boilers at Brisbane's crucial Bulimba "A" power station were due for overhaul in April of that year. The international nature of the solution and its nearness to Mount Crosby might at once surprise you and illustrate the sort of relationship developing between Australia and the Americans at that time.

At the corner of Mount Crosby Road and the Warrego Highway (Tivoli side) there had long been a coalmine known at first as Rossend, then later as Haighmore (1895-1909 and 1945-1970s, respectively). It was proposed that a new power station called Abermain be constructed on this property. The United States supported the Abermain project, stating that it was a project necessary for its defence and allocated defence priority to the supply of American power generating equipment to be paid for using part of a $50 million International Bank loan made available to Australia for defence and national post-war development.

The 10,000 kilowatt Abermain power station was ready for the winter of 1953 and continued to operate until 1967. It was notable for being the first Queensland power station co-located on a coal mine and its fuel transport costs were completely eliminated through coal being fed to the station direct from the Haighmore pit head, only 70 feet away - quite probably the shortest distance from coal mine to power station anywhere in the world.

Next time you drive to Ipswich, on cresting the hill near Dan Street, look straight ahead through the trees and you will catch a glimpse of the little power station that could.

Col Hester