**Essays on Mount Crosby - Mrs Powell Kills the Snake 1927**

Mrs Peter Powell, whose extended family once owned all of Karana Downs, had a moment of fame reported in the Queensland Times of September 1927. Mrs Powell was taking a walk when she noticed a death adder on the track. Ignoring the fact that many people bitten by snakes are trying to kill them, she felt an instinctive desire to be rid of the snake. The adder, for its part, seeing Mrs Powell striking at it with a stick, struck at Mrs Powell in a way described by the newspaper as "a vicious attack on her".

Mrs Powell prevailed and was declared the winner; but not the only winner. Upon killing the snake, Mrs Powell proceeded to the Mount Crosby State School and presented the death adder to the headmaster (Mr Robert Radford), for inclusion in the school museum. This story I can partly vouch for, because the adder's skin was, I think I remember, still in the white-panelled glass museum case 41 years later when I first joined the school and admired its collection of local antiquities.

The desire to kill snakes and yet remember them through their stretched-out skins still resonated in 1971, for in that year, I most definitely recall, happened an event capable of illustrating the difference between Mount Crosby students of the old town and today. Three or more of the larger boys arrived at school with a sizeable carpet python they had killed (my memory puts it somewhere over three metres) and they were allowed by the headmaster to commence skinning the creature on the parade ground with some impressive cutlery they had brought for the purpose, while we younger students took periodic glances from the schoolroom in between our lessons. The snake's skin, like that of the earlier adder, was stretched and dried and added to the museum - and I recall thinking the skin was a lot more impressive than the snake.

And, for the record, I have changed my mind, and hope today's children would agree with me.

Col Hester