**1949, 1953Essays on Mount Crosby - Public Telephone at Mount Crosby**

Considering how early Mount Crosby began its engagement with telephones, we were on hold a long time before any local pressed Button A on a proper public telephone. In 1891, the Brisbane Board of Water Works proudly declared through the papers that the longest telephone line in Queensland connected its Brisbane headquarters with the Mount Crosby home of the Chief Engineer (and the engine house at the works), more than twenty miles away.

The telephones were lovely French made Barthon-Ader instruments described as giving great satisfaction, "every word spoken at the one end being distinctly audible at the other in spite of the large amount of atmospheric vibration contracted over the long distance". Having seen them work so well, and not being too slow at comprehension, the locals saw in the telephone some advantages for an isolated community, and no doubt decided that a public one would be a good thing.

However, it wasn't until 1938 that the local Producers' Association finally encouraged local minister (Mr A.W. Fadden) to enquire with the Postmaster General about a service, but unfortunately the request was turned down. To put that in perspective, a child who was ten when he first saw the Board's great innovation had reached the age of 57 before the government's office rejected interest in a telephone service for Mount Crosby.

It wasn't until 1949, when that child had been retired three years, that construction started on a service from Ipswich to a public phone located at the premises of Mr W. Butler (shopkeeper), available for use during the following hours: Monday to Friday, 9 am - 1 pm, 2 pm - 6 pm; Saturday, 9 am - 1 pm. Sunday (think again).

A coin phone was installed near the shop (for the ease of eavesdropping) in 1953 and that phone, I recall with a smile, could provide a voice to tell the time with great accuracy; along the lines of, "on the third peep it will be 8.05 pm and thirty seconds". This would have been very useful for setting a watch, but it wasn't used for that - it was used between Friday night sets of tennis for the simple joy of proving to a young man that something could be got for free.

Col Hester