**Essays on Mount Crosby - The Little Well**

On the Works Hill, near the pumping station, is a little well that has nothing much to do with the massive wells inside that nice old building (and indeed those are the true wells of the metropolis). The little well, that dates to about 1970, has a different job. For me at least, it recalls the succession of engineers and workers that made a gift to picnickers of the gardens around the works.

For much of the 20th century (but failing in the latter years) day trippers enjoyed localities where engineering could be seen from comfortably maintained gardens. Places like Toowoomba's Spring Bluff and the lake at Swanbank power station come to mind, along with the picnic areas at various dams, including our own Lake Manchester.

I talked one day with the last of the old chief engineers, and paraphrasing his words, he said he felt it was his civic duty to keep the place nice, and a sign of how his officers maintained the station and the pride they had in it.

All of the chief engineers understood the value of providing an attractive environment for the town's workers and many of their efforts were centred on the Works Hill, to the extent that it became a minor botanical garden and a place to be remarked on by pleasantly surprised visitors. In 1924, a group of visiting teachers commented favourably on the works and added, "*a move was made towards the pump station. Here a nice little flower garden in full bloom is to be seen, and it was much admired."*

At first the gardening was carried out by the workers in addition to their normal duties, but sometime during the occupancy of Chief Engineer Jack Dann the idea of a full time gardener was realised. From then on, a man, and very commonly a man whose body had been broken through public service, could be employed to a lighter duty - one might say gardener - but another might say the job was to provide a beauty spot for picnickers and a sign of how well the chief engineer kept his station.

It seems strange to mention it as history, but this type of beauty spot is rarer and rarer.

I am delighted to be able to say that a group of Mount Crosby's best are seeking to fix up the little ornamental well, and if they are successful they might even move on to bigger things. Perhaps you can guess at my wish.

Col Hester