**Essays on Mount Crosby - Bell's Property at Kholo**

If you are an old enough local to remember petrol at the price of 40 cents per gallon or trousers wider at the bottom than the top, you might also remember a swim at Bell's Property, Kholo, for something like twenty cents a dip (or for many, a lesser fee depending on circumstance). That a swim could be had at Bell's was a generous fact known to most - and one reason (besides generosity) was its location - it was easy to reach from North Ipswich and almost the first farm on the river upstream of the water board's resumed land.

The original Bells were Mr and Mrs Geo Bell of Newcastle-on-Tyne, Northumberland, and so it will come as no surprise that George worked from the age of eleven at hewing coal in the old country. At 24, he married a farmer's daughter who was a notable at making butter and, with a view to bettering their prospects, they sailed to Australia in 1869 on the Black Ball ship Light Brigade.

At first the Bell's resided in Pine Street, North Ipswich, and George worked at the Tivoli Mine for James Gulland, whose name you will find on a street of that suburb near a geological fault that also carries his name. George was a lay Methodist preacher and became great friends with the old names of Ipswich; Messrs Shillito (foundry owner), Hughes & Cameron (lawyers), Hooper (Mayor), Wright, Thomas and Stafford (mine owners) &c.

After a few years of mining, George purchased a farm at Riverside near Pine Mountain and interested himself in the establishment of a provisional school at that place, he having been appointed the teacher. Some 19 children attended and the school was open for seven years.

In 1881, George purchased a farm on the north bank of the river at Kholo after its owner, Reginald Davidson, accidentally drowned. This is the place we know as Bell's Property. At Kholo, George and Mrs Bell made farming pay a little, mainly through the growing of cotton and the sale of hand-made butter in North Ipswich - neither activity being particularly easy or profitable.

Just how far back the public were swimming at Bell's, I cannot say, but their successors are remembered for making their place available and I think them worthy of my little rhyme (with apologies to John Donne):

"Ask not for whom the Bell's toiled, the Bell's toiled for thee."

Col Hester