**Essays on Mount Crosby - The Mount Crosby Shop**

Over the years there have been a surprising number of stores at Mount Crosby (and their location might also surprise).

Although it is rather an inexact story, in general the stores followed the workers' needs (which emerged wherever the water board's latest engineering project was centred). It's best to imagine these stores as holding life's necessities for distribution at a price rather than anything more elaborate. In the early 1890s, a large tent store was located at the top of the Works Hill to provide for workers engaged in the pumping station construction; from 1913 to 1919 work focussed on treatment works at Low Level and Holts Hill and in response, shops emerged near Holts Hill (proprietor Mr Gough) and on Mount Crosby Road between Jamberoo Way and the water treatment plant (proprietors of their own shops at various times included: Messrs Lofgren, Hinks, Beatty, Brown and Rumicon). In the Russian, Rumicon ,there is certainly a story if I can ever unfold it.

After the First World War (1919), Mount Crosby entered its second great engineering boom, with the commencement of water treatment, construction of the weir and expansion of the pumping station - and the water board responded by constructing numerous houses in the area we now call the centre of Mount Crosby.

This undoubtedly triggered commercial activity in the location of today's shop. The first store in that location was owned by one Mr Herbert, and quickly Gunn's store opened close-by. It seems they were both trading in 1920. At about that time, Charles O'Brien opened a butcher shop as well (later owned by Sam Summerville then Jim McMahon). How all these stores disappeared is not clear, but we know that Pop Kerr opened a purpose-built shop about then and it forms the basis of the shop we see today. His sons traded as Kerr Bros well into the 1940s, after which the shop was taken on by Bill Butler. Bill Butler introduced the public telephone, post office and Commonwealth Bank to the district (following a short period during which the post office was located under Mrs Mitchell's house at the corner of Scriven and Brady streets). I have it on good advice that Ab Swenson provided the carpentry to convert an adjoining room into the sort of room required for a post office and bank.

Over the years, the Kerrs, the Butlers, the Kilpatricks and all the shop's subsequent owners have provided a diverse range of services to match the requirements of the town, including, at different times and sometimes altogether, a bus service, a goods and freight service, a fuel stop, a post and telegraphy office, a bank, a takeaway, and a place to catch up on the news about town.

A small town is made complete by such a shop.

Col Hester