**Essays on Mount Crosby - Shillito's Foundry**

One of the things that I noticed at an early age was the number of relics that are scattered around Mount Crosby as clues to its halcyon days. A good many of them are not only cast-offs, but old castings themselves, and if an item at Mount Crosby was cast locally (such as a valve body or a pipe segment or a sprocket &c.) then there is a good chance it was cast at Shillito's Foundry in Ipswich, for that was the board's favoured place for foundry work.

Shillito's engineering works began in Ipswich in 1867 when Mr Samuel Shillito located his engineering business in a tiny building in Brisbane Street. He later relocated to Nicholas Street, and in 1876 built a foundry on the corner of Limestone and East Streets that everyone of my generation (baby boom) can recall. Samuel's eldest son (Mr G.H. Shillito) became a partner in 1889, after which the business, predictably enough, went under the banner "Shillito and Son".

Shillito's made innumerable pieces for the Brisbane Board of Waterworks (at Mount Crosby), but their most appreciated works were the steel roof works and stair cases for the Mount Crosby pumping station and the large overflow pipes and fittings for the Cabbage Tree Creek Dam (now Lake Manchester). Don't underestimate the staircases - I have seen some re-discovered plans for them and they are quite breathtaking.

The following words from the Chief Engineer at Mount Crosby (8 May 1897) are typical of the respect shown to the service provided by Shillito's.

*"I beg to inform you that the 6" main steam pipe opposite number 6 and 7 boilers fractured at the inside flange, after steam was turned on 1 hour and ten minutes. The flange shows that it was not sound metal. To save delay, I took the old pipe into Shillito's and he agreed to cast a new one in three days time to stand a cold water test of 200lbs to the square inch for £5-0-0, which is a very reasonable price."*

Col Hester