**Essays on Mount Crosby - Alternative Bridges**

In the planning of any large project there are ideas that seem worth exploring, but which later get scratched through some weakness or whim (or maybe the engineer just goes off the idea - a matter of style perhaps).

When the project is a bridge, those "never built" designs seem to hold out more hope and interest than usual. I find myself wishing to see them built.

I think I know what it is with bridges - we all understand bridges, we like to watch them come together. We feel entitled to an opinion on them and, after they are built, we all get to use them and expect nothing short of permanent graceful service from them.

Such a thing is the Mount Crosby weir and overbridge (for it is both) - let's call it "the weir". Have you noticed that it is born of the 1920s and hints at this through its raw art deco style - industrial, efficient and pleasing? A massive concrete structure could certainly be uglier and, as it is, I love the weir more than the immature alternatives that were briefly in the minds of its designers. To wit, a high trestle railway bridge that would span the river to the pumping station, or a longer and neat alternative weir design.

Whatever the designers toyed with, they settled upon a popular winner, because the weir has over the years been the most photographed and publically accessible place in Mount Crosby.

Not as much happens near it these days, sensibly, but I recall careless days when we swam in its wake and walked amid cascades of water on the steps of it, stood by and looked at it, fished and jumped from it, warmed our winter hands as we walked from it, and when we were exhausted swimming, hugged at it. I wouldn't, after all, swap its great concreteness for another, though I would like to have seen them built, just for a moment's look, then discretely put away.

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