**Essays on Mount Crosby - The Plane Crash that Never Happened**

For a few moments in 1933, while air travel was still a novelty and for many people (leave aside those who had fought in the war) just the sound of an aeroplane was enough to get the blood racing with excitement, Mount Crosby experienced the best type of plane crash. I know you are surprised to hear that there is one, but I mean the type that elicits all the drama and expectation of spectacular and awful things, in which well-meaning locals can run to stations that are mighty helpful, and word of the crash is spread with equal measures of speed and graveness, and then it turns out that the crash never happened.

All of the excitement and yet none of the awfulness - but still enough interesting theories to fuel a small town's conversation for days.

That's just how it was on a clear June afternoon in 1933, and the Queensland Times reporter found precisely the right tone in which to report the mistaken matter:

"A plane has crashed at Mt. Crosby!"- the news flashed round Ipswich yesterday at a speed which rivalled even the achievements of modern aviation itself. Shortly before noon residents of the northern suburbs saw an ordinary biplane emerge from the blue with usual grace and swiftness; but there seemed to be something unusual about the roar of its engine, which groaned extra loudly, it seemed - probably because the plane's altitude was lower than is the general rule.

The machine had passed over Brassall, when, with alarming suddenness, its mechanism seemed to cease its groans, and the plane dipped speedily below the fringe of trees on the north-eastern side of that suburb. "He's crashed!" almost hysterically cried one lady, who had left her ironing to gaze admiringly in the wake of this fleeting knight of the air ("I'd Just love to fly, " she said later when she heard the true story of the incident). Her opinion about the fate of the aviator was evidently shared by others in the locality, who had been watching the plane's course and when a wandering horseman later in the afternoon told a tale of a plane crash at Mt. Crosby, followed by a loud explosion, the "news" soon spread. Inquiries had already been made in authoritative quarters, and they revealed the fact that there was a crash; but instead of being a plane crash, it was a "plain crash" of the rumour that, like a snowball, had grown in dimensions as it rolled along - one person had even heard that the pilot had been killed and two passengers injured.

Telephonic communication with Archerfield elicited the information that the plane in the case was one flown by an employee from Longreach, and it had landed safe and sound at Archerfield at 3 p.m. Residents at Mt. Crosby had seen the machine swoop downwards and fly low over the river, apparently to allow its occupants to photograph the excellent scenery from the air in that locality."

How I enjoy imagining the "ironing lady" ..

Col Hester