**Essays on Mount Crosby - Sharks at Mount Crosby**

Well, I'm mighty pleased no-one told me about that; there were sharks in the Brisbane River as high as the Mount Crosby weir (not that the sharks were that big, you understand - I mean that they went that far up the river). In my teenage years I liked to swim in the pool below the weir, and sometimes at Colledges Crossing, but mostly at the weir where I could walk along the spillways amid the crashing water or swim out around the retaining wall that separated the fast water from the slack.

Though I occasionally had unsettling thoughts about what Coleridge called "those slimy things that crawl with legs upon the slimy sea", and the sunken wooden bits of old bridge were, for me, not to be touched if they could be avoided, I never thought more of sharks than any boy of Burleigh Heads thought of Congo Eels.

And my ignorance was a happy thing because a kid has got to be a kid, and I loved swimming down the river and took to it regularly on weekends, even once or twice on the way home from school (not that I would have stopped swimming probably, but I suppose my mum might have impressed caution on me if river sharks had been invented).

Turns out sharks at Mount Crosby had actually been invented, in the peaceful July of 1935. That was when two schoolboys, kicking the afternoon sand at Colledges Crossing, made the surprising find of a "blue nosed" shark nearly six foot long, beached and breathing its last. Of course, they ran to tell their dad, who I think was Tom Mitchell, and the shark was captured and hauled atop a little shed and hung from a pole for its photograph to be taken, as though it had been caught by Zane Grey. That must have made a brilliant "show and tell" on Monday.

There followed a decade of shark sightings up and down our parts of the river, frequent and sizeable enough to shake up old norms about where sharks might be found. In 1942, two apprentice boys (again one Mitchell and probably the same other) caught a 3 foot 6 inch shark, this time with their bare hands. Those were the days, eh?

In 1947, an Ipswich man called Pettitt wrote to the Queensland Times to contradict an expert who held the opinion no shark would get as high as Colledges Crossing. Pettitt said he and a friend had caught a four foot one at the old Mount Crosby weir, which is a long way above Colledges and perilous close to my favourite swimming hole.

You know what, I think the older folk might have known about it all along. A tiny bit of me hopes they did, and that when they saw me down by the weir they were thinking how courageous I was swimming carefree with all those sharks.

Col Hester