**Essays on Mount Crosby - How Mount Crosby was Named**

One thing is for certain: Mount Crosby didn't always have that name. When explorers John Oxley and Alan Cunningham visited the district in 1824, they had two goes at naming it, and the exact sequence is a little bit of a mystery. On Oxley's map, which might have been prepared at the end of a strenuous day of exploring, our mountain is clearly marked as Station Mountain in reference to its usefulness as a survey point, but his diary tells us that on climbing the mountain Oxley was struck by the beautiful view from its rocky top and this encouraged him to give it the name Bellevue Hill.

It's really impossible to tell which of these names Oxley intended for the bump, and in any case neither became stuck to it. Several theories have been put forward to explain where the term Mount Crosby eventually came from. None, I think, is convincing enough to believe - but there is a little truth in each of them and, for what it is worth, here they are:

1. That there was a gold and mineral prospector by the name of Crosby that scratched about on the mountain and though he never found any gold he left his name for posterity. I'd find that a lot more convincing if old Mr Crosby had found some gold ...

2. That there was works foreman by the name of Crosby that spent a good deal of time in these parts. Unfortunately, that would place him in the era of the waterworks and that is twenty years too late to be the cause of the name. Still, I suppose, since he was a decent sort of bloke it would be nice to remember Mr Crosby with a namesake hill.

3. That a locality by the name of Comprosonby (and variously Compassenby, Comprossomby and numerous other ways) was nearby to present-day Mount Crosby, and its shortening to Mount Crosby has been proposed as the reason for the name. That's a crafty idea, especially since a place of that name does seem to have existed somewhere between Kholo and Ugly Gully, but on balance there's not enough evidence to support the contraction. Also, if you asked a hundred people to contract Comprosonby, I doubt many would give you Crosby.

4. That some of the earliest settlers in the district were from Crosbie-on-Eden in the Scottish lowlands and they conferred this name on their new situation. This has long been the favoured story since some did come from that district and, at least, it fits the approximate era in which the name appears (which incidentally was about 1870). It's also true that a lot of Australian placenames arose by this means - but more research is needed before we accept this theory.

I suppose there is a chance we'll never know, but don't be despondent. It changes nothing about Mount Crosby and, at the same time, gives us four times as many clues to the past as most other placenames do.

Col Hester