

# KPNG Kundu

DECEMBER 2021



**Papua New Guinea Association  
of Australia Inc.**  
[www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)





Twenty-seven years ago, on Monday, 19 September 1994, the volcanoes, Vulcan and Tavurvur, erupted and destroyed the once-picturesque coastal town of Rabaul. The town and most nearby villages were evacuated before the eruption but, sadly, five people were killed and many left homeless.

It is timely to republish the following story, originally printed in *Una Voce* in December 1994.

## Rabaul ... September 1994

Premier Sinai Brown had tears in his eyes. So did I. We were sitting across from each other at one of the four brown, dust-topped rectangular tables at the Ralum Club, now being used as the Rabaul Disaster Control Centre.

To the east, the sea stretched a deep blue until it surrounded the Duke of York Islands, then further still to the western shores of New Ireland. Slightly to the north over Blanche Bay, Mt Tavurvur looked a sight—still belching a thick greyish-white cloud of ash into the sky.

It was a beautiful day, even though I can no longer remember the exact date, it was during the second week since Mt Tavurvur and Mt Vulcan blew their tops off on that fateful Monday morning. So much had happened since Sunday, 18 September 1994, when Rabaul started to feel the tremors announcing the eruptions, that events have already begun to crowd my memory of that catastrophe into oblivion. Or perhaps, as I would like to think it, the human mind is built in such a way that it automatically shuts out experiences which are rather traumatic. It would be better like that, for the sake of all those 90,476 people who had nothing left from the eruptions but pain and loss.

The Premier and I were discussing Rabaul, the once beautiful and peaceful town which was the pride of Tolais in particular, and Papua New Guineans in general. The destruction of Rabaul and the surrounding villages was enormous, but the Premier was telling me how he was not going to abandon Rabaul, how his government was going to do everything in its power so that Rabaul would be back, better than it was ever before.

During my two-month stint in East New Britain, I had never seen Premier Brown talk so passionately about a topic. It was obvious how close Rabaul was to his heart. And I could understand why, even though I was not a Tolai.

Rabaul was a special place, not just because of its picturesque setting and colourful history—it was the living monument of a people's pride. It was home to the East New Britain men and women—the Tolai, the Baining, the Sulka and the Tomoip, the Taulil and Mengen, the Kol, Makolkol, Nakanai and the Mumusi.

Like me, you didn't have to be a Tolai or a member of one of the other nine tribes that made up East New Britain to at least understand what was going on. As a chief would grieve for his people, Premier Brown was grieving at the loss of his provincial 'home' but, I knew, more so at how the destruction had seemed to break the spirit of his people.

I had never felt so sad for a place or its people before. Rabaul, to me, was a beautiful haven, and I was grieving for it like a child might do so upon finding that his or her secret hiding place has been destroyed by a mob of bullies.

© GRACE MARIBU, 'The Haven That Was Rabaul', *PNG Post-Courier*, 1994  
(Photographs of the devastation courtesy of Chris Read)



**PNG KUNDU** is the official journal of the  
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Kundu is the *Tok Pisin* word for the hourglass-shaped drum that forms part of Papua New Guinea's Coat of Arms, and after which this journal is named—formerly called *Una Voce*. The Kundu has told fascinating stories for centuries, and through our PNGAA journal we will continue documenting history and the evolving special relationship between the two countries this association holds in its heart. Whilst *Tok Pisin* is one of the three official languages of PNG, please note that some authors still use the term *Pidgin* for *Tok Pisin*, and *PNG KUNDU* supports both terms.

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This is available to anyone with an interest in PNG. Members, who receive four quarterly issues of our journal per year, have access to all parts of the website, and are encouraged to explore and become actively involved with all aspects of the PNGAA. Please refer to the *Treasurer's Corner*, at the end of this issue, for more details. Application forms also are available from the Membership Officer at [membership@pngaa.net](mailto:membership@pngaa.net) or our website. For members receiving a printed copy of the journal, the address label shows the current status of your membership.

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**Deadline for the March 2022 issue  
FRIDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2022**

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Contribution guidelines are available on the website or by request from the editor



# PNG KUNDU

DECEMBER 2021

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'Faster, Higher & Stronger'	BC



**Front Cover:**  
Bennett's Feather Star  
(*Oxycomanthus bennetti*),  
a marine animal—one of the  
larger species of comasterids,  
growing up to 30 cm—pictured  
six metres deep on a coral reef in  
Papua New Guinea  
© Chris Newbert/ Minden  
Pictures





**President's Report**

As I sit to write this report for *PNG Kundu*, I am reminded that this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the formation of the Retired Officers Association of Papua and New Guinea (ROAPNG), the forerunner of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia.

The Retired Officers Association was initially founded to represent the interests of those civil servants who had lived and worked in Papua New Guinea (PNG) prior to Independence. Of special concern to the early members was the

**As well as organising PNGAA events, members of the Management Committee continue to network on your behalf, attending a wide range of events and activities, encouraging new members and possible partnerships to keep our association vital and viable. Featured here are reports and updates from the committee, other news of interest and a welcome to new members.**

maintenance of superannuation benefits, and to ensure that retired officers from PNG had an effective communication channel, given that the PNG superannuation scheme was not, at that time, part of the Commonwealth public service superannuation scheme. Please see John Egerton's article on page 14 for more information.

In addition to superannuation benefits, the Retired Officers Association provided a point of contact for the ex-PNG civil servants, producing a quarterly newsletter and arranging some events including the annual luncheon, which was held in Sydney. I personally remember that this function was a highlight of the year for many retired officers, including my father who joined in 1972 after his retirement from PNG, as it provided a welcome opportunity to catch up with former colleagues.

My father commenced his public service career in 1946 working for Colonel JK Murray, the first administrator appointed after the re-establishment of civilian administration after World War II. His first proper house was one of the 'paper' houses constructed of a wooden frame and walls of sisal paper, which provided a cheap and efficient way of providing low-cost accommodation to deal with the growing number of expatriates that went to Papua New Guinea

in the early years after the war.

Members may recall that in the last edition of *PNG Kundu*, I mentioned my desire to start looking for ways in which the PNGAA could increase its relevance and to interact more with Papua New Guineans to further build on the special relationship that exists between the two countries.

The committee has discussed some initiatives in this regard but unfortunately COVID-19 and the lockdowns in NSW have made any progress very difficult. I am hopeful that we will be able to resume some of the planned initiatives in the New Year.

COVID-19 has also meant that the committee has had to cancel a number of events for the remainder of the year. At this stage, the Christmas function is still on and the committee will advise further details in due course.

On a final note, I recently listened to a podcast produced by the Lowy Institute in which Richard Marles, Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition, discussed 'Why the Pacific Matters for Australia and How Australia Can Play a More Active Role'. Not unexpectedly, the subject of Papua New Guinea formed a good part of the discussion, with the bottom line being that Australia really does need to become more involved in the Pacific as a whole, including

PNG. Hopefully, some of the initiatives the PNGAA committee is considering can help in this regard by playing a small part. After all, given the accumulated experience and expertise of its members, the PNGAA is well placed to take a role.

The committee welcomes the following new members: Robin Cooke, Neville Crane, Ian Duncan, Roger Gyles, Tom Hayller, Roy Hogarth, Alexandra McCosker, Allan Orava, Catherine Ryan and Joan Winter.

Let us all hope that 2022 will be a better year for everybody and I wish all PNGAA members a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and 'normal' New Year.

**CHRIS PEARSALL**  
*President, PNGAA*

**From the Editor**

It is now a year and four issues of *PNG Kundu* since, with some trepidation, I took on the task of editing your journal. It has been challenging but rewarding too. The stories that come to me about your experiences in Papua New Guinea are always exciting to open, read and prepare for publication. The variety of your experiences and your story telling is what makes the journal of such interest to you all,



John Egerton

and I urge you to continue telling these stories. All illustrate in some way the contributions we made to PNG's nation building.

It is always good to get your responses to our stories. A good example is the article on page 40 from Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi and her comments on the fire people of Imuri who were on the front cover of the September issue.

Along with our Inside Front Cover feature, this journal has a story from another Papua New Guinean—Karolaine Fainu, our new committee member and a resident of Lae, is the author of 'Goroka's Lovely Loos' on page 25. I hope to be able to include more stories from writers in PNG in future issues.

My editor's task has been made easier by the support of many people. I am grateful for the help in proofreading given by Murrough Benson, Andrea Williams, Russell Wade, Paul Johnson, Chris Warrillow and Peter Rogers. I appreciate, too, the helpful advice offered by my predecessor, Andrea and Jeannette Gilligan, our production manager.

The COVID-19 pandemic, now in full spate in Victoria and New South Wales, has probably stopped members in those states meeting and socialising for much of the remainder of this year. Where it is possible to meet, do so safely, please enjoy that privilege and send reports of those gatherings to *PNG Kundu*.

Happy Christmas everyone.

**JOHN EGERTON**

**COVID Cancellations**

So many of us are looking forward to getting together at events and catching up with friends again—



Guest lecturer at the 2021 Oceanic Art Fair, Lesley Wengembo, with one of his paintings

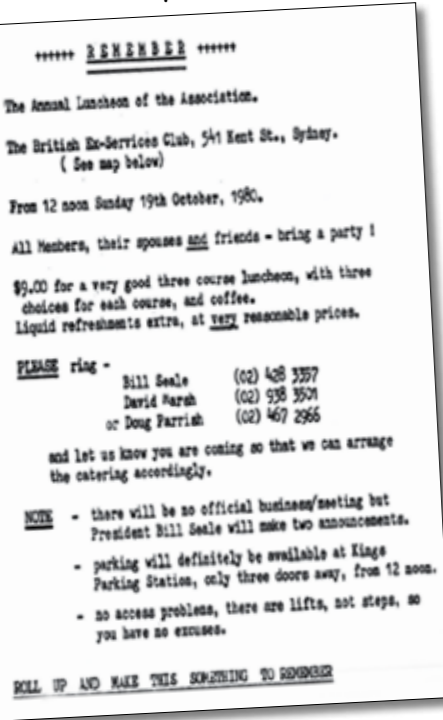
we had optimistically hoped this might happen sooner than later and planned for various events which were advertised in the September issue.

Some of the future events will be proceeding but, with continuing COVID lockdowns and restrictions in several states, decisions have now been made to cancel many of these events. The challenge, always at the moment, is knowing whether travel will be on—or off!

It is not easy on the organisers, or the venues. As soon as we can reliably hold events, they will be scheduled, and we look forward to seeing you there. We will keep in touch through *Tok Save* (PNGAA's email news), *PNG Kundu*, the PNGAA website, [www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org), and social media.

At present we have the following events from the September 2021 *PNG Kundu* going ahead. Please help organisers by checking deadlines for RSVPs and getting replies in, as venues need to plan staff and food orders and are abiding strictly to RSVP dates. Keep in touch with the organisers with any queries.

**PNGAA Sydney Annual Christmas Lunch**  
*Sunday, 5 December 2021*  
RSVP 19 Nov 2021



Notification of the 1980 Annual Luncheon, in the ROAPNG journal





**PNGAA Perth Christmas Lunch**  
Friday, 26 November 2021

**2021 Sydney Oceanic Art Fair**  
Saturday, 6 November 2021

Guest Lecturer Lesley Wengembo  
(Note change of date from 21 August)

**Please note that functions may be affected by changes to COVID-19 restrictions.**

Regretfully we had to postpone the Kokoda Memorial Walk, the Bush, Brush & Bubbles and PNG Tales 3 (the talk on the Coral Sea 2 Cable Project connecting Australia and PNG) scheduled during September for Sydney.

Going forward the following events have also been reluctantly cancelled:

**PNGAA Adelaide Reunion Lunch**—30 October 2021

**2021 South East QLD Ex-Kiaps Reunion**—14 November 2021

**ANDREA WILLIAMS & CHERYL MARVELL**

**PNG Kundu, September 2021 Corrections**

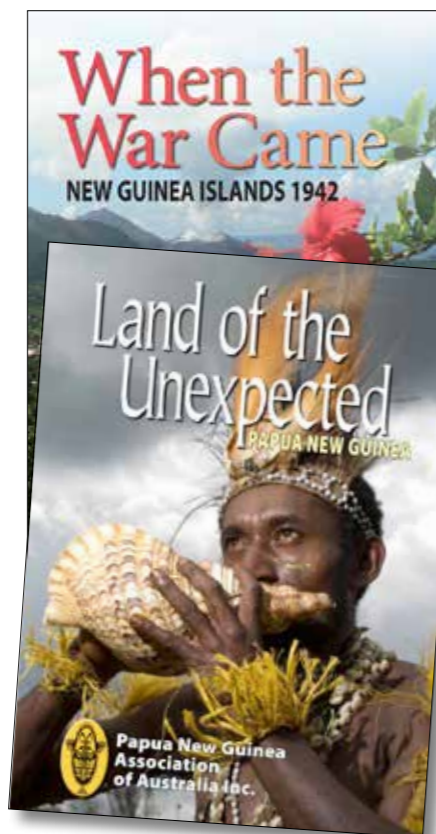
The vessel illustrated on page three of the September issue of *PNG Kundu* is the floating production storage and offtake (FPSO) facility, the *Northern Endeavour*. It is currently located between the Laminaria and Corallina oil fields, approximately 550 km northwest of Darwin.

Chris Warrillow has advised

that there is another vessel called *Northern Endeavour*, which was the one referred to in the last issue. It is a 56-metre multi-purpose geophysical and geotechnical survey vessel operated by the EGS Group. The *RV Northern Endeavour* is involved in mapping the path of a proposed undersea cable between Port Moresby, Honiara and Sydney.

Sara Turner, whose contribution to the Association was acknowledged on page 5 of the September 2021 issue, has advised that her husband's surname is Carroll, not Turner as printed.

Len Smith's place of training as



a teacher ('Life and Times at Talidig School 1961-62') was Malaguna not Malahang.

Unfortunately, the wrong day was published for the Perth PNGAA Lunch—it is actually on Friday, 26 November, 2021. Please see the details on the opposite page.

**PNGAA Store**

PNGAA's new publication, *Land of the Unexpected*, covers many of the different facets of Papua New Guinea—including a complex overview, public services, flora, fauna and the environment, industries, art, culture, sport, the diverse history and some of those who helped to shape the nation—and, as Kieran Nelson says in his report on the Brisbane lunch on page 6, will 'give you some great Christmas reading'!

*When the War Came: New Guinea Islands 1942*, published by the PNGAA to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of *Montevideo Maru*, will also make a good gift or addition to your library.

Next year will be the 80th Anniversary, with special events to be held in Canberra. Please see the next issue, our website and social media for more information.

More details are available about these and other items for sale in the PNGAA Store on our website at [www.pngaa.org/store/](http://www.pngaa.org/store/) and through the **Treasurer's Corner Membership & Order Form** at the back of this issue.

If you wish to renew your membership, have a friend or family member who wishes to join, order one of the publications and DVDs available, or book for a PNGAA function, then please use this form.



**PERTH**

**PNGAA Christmas Lunch**  
Friday, 26 November, 2021

All welcome—come along and share some Christmas spirit!

**Venue:** New Dining Room, RAAF CLUB, Air Force Memorial Estate, 2 Bull Creek Drive, Bull Creek 6149. Parking available.

**Time:** 11.30 for 12 noon lunch. Attendees order at bar for own choice of food and drink.

**Please Contact:** Linda Cavanaugh  
Manning Mobile: 0429 099 053  
E-mail: [lindam121@bigpond.com](mailto:lindam121@bigpond.com)



**PNGAA Sydney Annual Christmas Lunch**  
**SUNDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2021**

**A listing of upcoming functions and events of interest to PNGAA members—if you have an activity to advertise or promote, please send the details by 4 February 2022, to [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net) or [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**  
**Events also listed on our website, under Resources>Events.**

**GOLD COAST**

**Gold Coast PNG Club Christmas Luncheon**  
Sunday, 28 November 2021

**Venue:** Southport Golf Club, Slatyer Avenue, Southport (Noon)

**RSVP:** Five business days before scheduled date.

**Contact:**

Heather Kingston 0412 999 999  
[hkingston@live.com.au](mailto:hkingston@live.com.au)  
or Ru Taylor 0418 521 285  
[prrt7@live.com.au](mailto:prrt7@live.com.au)

**Special note:** After registering, lunch must be paid for whether you attend or not, unless notification of non-attendance is given five business days before the event.

**Advance notice:** We are celebrating fifty years in June 2023 with

planning underway for a *bikpela bung wantaim* to mark the occasion. Details will come out in the coming months.

**SYDNEY**

**2021 Oceanic Art Fair**  
Saturday, 6 November 2021

PNGAA are sponsoring a 'sale' table for members at the Oceanic Art Fair in Sydney. Do you have artefacts or memorabilia that are surplus to your needs and you would like to sell?

**Date:** Saturday, 6 November 2021 (Please note change of date from 21 August).

**Time:** 9 am–5 pm

**Venue:** The National Art School (NAS), corner of Forbes & Burton Streets, Darlinghurst (Sydney)

**Venue:** Killara Golf Club, 556 Pacific Highway, Killara. Plenty of parking—10 minutes' walk from Killara Railway Station. Disability access available.

**Time:** 11.30 am to 3.30 pm

**Cost:** \$78 pp two-course meal. Attendees to pay for their own beverages at members' rates. Price increase is due to increased costs from facility. NB: Please advise if you have any special dietary requirements when you book prior to the event. You are able to make up your own table or request seating with friends.

**RSVP:** 19 November 2021 to Cheryl Marvell E: [collection@pngaa.net](mailto:collection@pngaa.net)/ M: 0438 635 132 or Andrea Williams E: [coordinator@pngaa.net](mailto:coordinator@pngaa.net)/M: 0409 031 889.

**Payment:** PNGAA CBA/BSB: 062-009 / Account No. 0090 7724 (Ref: SYDX + your surname. Please email [treasurer@pngaa.net](mailto:treasurer@pngaa.net) when payment is made and include code (SYDX and first three letters of your surname) used in your transfer.

**PNGAA is celebrating 70 years!**

**Come along and join the fun—meet new friends and catch up with those you know—members and friends all welcome!**

*There will be further announcements closer to the day with an optional dress theme for the lunch and some different activities in light of the significant anniversary of the Association. Don't miss out this year!*

**Prior to booking, please make sure you check on the PNGAA website ([www.pngaa.org](http://www.pngaa.org)) and social media, for the latest COVID restrictions.**





PNGAA members may wish to bring along items for sale and add them to our table at the Oceanic Art Fair in Sydney. PNGAA asks that 10% of the sales on the day go to PNGAA.

Please note the PNGAA are always looking for artefacts for our Collection, if you would like them to stay a treasured item for future display within the association.

You may also wish to book your own table at the Oceanic Art Society's Tribal Fair.

If you have an item you would

be willing to donate to the silent auction on the day, that would be most welcome—20% to go to OAS and the balance to PNGAA.

The guest lecturer this year will be Papua New Guinean and National Art School Artist, Lesley Wengembo. Sadly seats are restricted due to COVID. Lecture bookings can be pre-booked online through <https://www.oceanicartsociety.org.au/event/sydney-oceanic-art-fair-lecture-2021/>

This is a wonderful opportunity for PNGAA and OAS

to complement and enhance each other's organisations and your participation helps both associations with fundraising. Andrea Williams, Cheryl Marvell and Bev Melrose are organising the PNGAA table. If you can help us on the day we would welcome any assistance, so please volunteer. We know from past years that it is a fabulous day.

Please let us know how you would like to participate by emailing Andrea on [events@pngaa.net](mailto:events@pngaa.net) or Cheryl on [collection@pngaa.net](mailto:collection@pngaa.net)

WITH THIRTY ATTENDING, our Annual Brisbane Lunch at the Ship Inn on 25 July 2021 went very well, despite the mask mandate, which may have deterred some of those who have attended in previous years from joining us on this occasion. All of those participating had a very enjoyable day catching up with old friends and making new ones with those who share the common bond of having lived in PNG, and sharing their experiences of the best years of their lives.

Joining us on this occasion

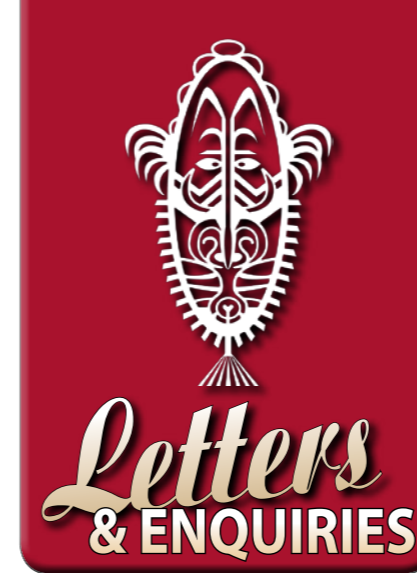
included Greg Anderson, Peter Blessing, Jim Fenton, Des Hoban, David Hook, Mick and Marg Horwood, Peter Howard, Bryan and Judith Iles, Wayne and Liz Johnson, Lucy Junker, Christine Leonard, Alice Michael, Kieran and Margo Nelson, Belinda Macartney, Eau Robbins, Arthur and Ida Smedley, Joan Winter and Don Wotton.

During the lunch Joan Winter shared information about her Baboia Gallery of Omie Tapa Art. Des Hoban had thoughtfully brought along his copy of the new PNGAA publication, *Land of the Unexpected*,

and spoke, recommending it very highly.

PNGAA members who contribute to the work of the association always appreciate when it is recognised—thank you! To have this unsolicited recommendation from someone who has read it is especially meaningful. All books sold will contribute to a fundraiser for the association, which will be announced soon so, if you haven't yet purchased a copy, it will give you some great Christmas reading!

**KIERAN NELSON**



### Photos of Port Moresby Golf Club

I am looking for any of you old-timers out there who could share photos of the Port Moresby Golf Club—Newtown site (pre-World War II), Kaugere site (post-World War II), Ward Strip site (around 1972–74) or the current site of Royal Port Moresby Golf Club (from around 1974).

**BRUCE MACKINLAY, OBE**  
PO Box 282 Port Moresby, PNG  
Mobile: +675 7626 977  
email: [bmackinlay86@gmail.com](mailto:bmackinlay86@gmail.com)

### Memories of Wau

My Mum, Dad, sister and I were living in Wau in 1941, and we lived on the left-hand side of the aerodrome. As I was only eight at the time, this is a memory of the aeroplane at that age.

I remember seeing the plane down in the gully every time I went to school.

I remember my parents talking about it going off the side of the



'Eros' VH-UQY after a previous crash at Watut airfield in 1936

**Featuring commentaries about previously published articles and news items, along with opinions of interest to PNGAA members. Also included are enquiries from those who require assistance with their research or finding someone from the past. Please send your contributions by the Copy Deadline, 4 February 2022, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

drome. Also, apparently there were a few 'near misses' because of the slope of the drome.

Actually it was a thrill for me to read something in *PNG Kundu* about my memories of my wonderful time at beautiful Wau.

**NORMA DEWICK**

**Editor's Note:** On 3 August 1940 DH. 60M 'Eros' VH-UQY ran off the runway during take off at Wau and crashed into the government store, wrecking it and the aircraft. <https://pacificwrecks.com/airfields/png/wau/index.html>

Please turn to page 31 of this issue for Ron Austin's account of another accident at Wau Airstrip, when a Bristol Freighter crashed in 1947.

### Remembering Norm Oliver

I have been a member of PNGAA for many years and have always enjoyed reading the Association's journal. I have been most impressed by the quality of recent editions of *PNG Kundu*.

Reading Ed Brumby's Vale for Norm Oliver in your most recent edition, I was prompted to reflect on Norm, Papua New Guinea's sport facilities and the contributions of so many people over so many years to encourage and support participation in sport across Papua New Guinea (PNG). I played at various basketball tournaments with, and against Norm Oliver, from the mid-1960s and in the early 1970s. The most enjoyable part of any tournament



Norm Oliver in later life  
(Photo courtesy PNG Attitude)

was sharing a few beers with Norm and his friends after the last game was played.

My background—towards the end of 1962, fifty-two graduates of the ASOPA Cadet Education Officers Course, travelled to PNG to commence their teaching careers. I was one of those teachers. I arrived in Wewak two days after my twentieth birthday, with one lecturer (Les Peterkin) and nine other cadets, for our last three weeks of 'practice teaching' experience.

We had all graduated as primary school teachers, but in early November we had received an offer to take up postings in various high schools. My memory is that only six of us took up that offer—it was one of the best decisions of my early



life and led to a wonderful fifteen years in secondary schools, in four different provinces of PNG.

Not only did I enjoy my time in PNG—I thrived on the challenges, the diversity, the opportunities, the friendships and the knowledge that we teachers were contributing to PNG's growth.

The attached 'A Concrete Legacy' is a tribute to all who made an effort to provide facilities, coaching, officiating and administration for sport in schools and communities across PNG.

**DAVID KEATING, OAM**

**Editor's Note:** Pressure on space in this issue has meant that David's tribute will be held over for a later edition.

### Origin of 'Kiap'

Recently, while going back through old PNG books, I noticed a photo which, unfortunately, drew me back to earlier discussions about the origins of the title *kiap*. The book, by Noel Gash and June Whittaker, was entitled *A Pictorial History of New Guinea* and the photo was on page 78, plate 152 (*below*). The caption read in part 'indigenous police in their naval style uniforms ...'.

You will recall *kiap* was thought to be a contraction of the title Captain—perhaps the rank of officers in charge of police detachments in German times. But this theory was gleefully

discounted by those pointing out the fact that Kapitan was a naval rank and Hauptmann would be more accurate for an officer in the police force. However, if indigenous police were clad in naval uniforms it is likely they were commanded by naval officers.

So, let the debate resume!

**IAN SPENCER**

### Blamey's Rabbit

I read Neville Threlfall's letter in the last issue with interest and have the following to add to his narrative.

My father was at General Blamey's parade at Koitaki when he uttered the now infamous statement: *'It's the running rabbit that gets shot, not the hunter with the gun.'* For the survivors of Kokoda, Isurava and Brigade Hill this was too much to bear and Blamey was booed. Blamey claimed that he was misunderstood as he was attempting to lift the troops' spirits. However, that evening in the Officers' Mess Blamey lambasted the officers from those battalions that they had let Australia down and were defeated by an inferior enemy.

In November 1942 the remnants of Dad's battalion paraded at Ward's Strip preparatory to flying to Popondetta and movement to Gona along with the rest of 21



General Douglas MacArthur and General Blamey having a tea break at a canteen in the forward areas during a tour of inspection, October 1942

Brigade. The parade was addressed by New Guinea Force Commander, Lieut General Edmund Herring, who told the assembled troops, 'Soldiers should expect to die.'

The reaction to what he envisaged were inspirational words was unexpected and caused resentful muttering among the assembled troops and they then began to 'count him off'.

This was a custom whereby the men would loudly begin to count to ten and if the offending person hadn't vacated the area by the time the count reached ten then they would take matters into their own hands and physically remove the offending person. In relating this experience to me, Dad told me that during the count he heard a rifle bolt being worked nearby.

What these events showed, perhaps, was how out of touch the Australian senior command were in the new style of close jungle warfare.

**ROSS WILKINSON**



### Celebrating the Terrells

We look forward to sharing the story of our parents, Tim and Judy Terrell, in the next issue of *PNG Kundu*.

Tim died in 2020, following a hard-fought battle with cancer. Judy pre-deceased him by nine months. We were deeply impacted by their deaths because they were an incredibly important and consistent presence in our lives. We struggled to come to a space to appropriately represent their contribution to making our world a better place and apologise for the delay.

Born in Darjeeling to Alec and Joyce Terrell, Tim lived a remarkable life devoted to helping others all over the world, particularly in Papua New Guinea.

Tim was a gentleman, a man of integrity, commitment and humility. He was deeply loved and is missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

He was the dearly loved husband of Judy for sixty-two years, beloved brother of Jill, Alan (dec.) and Mike (dec.) and adored father of Holly and Kim, father-in-law of Geoff and Maree.

He was the treasured grandfather of Jaimie, Kiri, Christabelle, Elise and Rian and their partners Brett, Evan and Dave and the loving great-grandfather of Henry and Mallee

His wisdom, generosity and kindness live on—a man of deep faith, at peace with God.

**Dr HOLLY NORTHAM, OAM**

### Vale Marjorie Walker

I was saddened to read of the passing of Mrs Marjorie Walker in *PNG Kundu*, June 2021.

I was a third-year student at St

Gabriel's School for Girls in 1968 and have fond memories of her. Mrs Walker (née Zeck—apologies if this spelling is incorrect) was my art teacher.

Miss Zeck entertained our class with stories of her time in Tanzania and surprisingly often asked questions about the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. One day she informed us that she had accepted a teaching position at Kerevat High School. As I was from Rabaul, I was delighted. I gave her our home phone number and asked her to call me when she arrived in Rabaul.

I was home for Christmas holidays so was pleased when Miss Zeck phoned to say she had arrived, settled in and was eager to meet my parents, Poppy and Cyril Holland.

Not long after Mum, Dad and I visited her at Kerevat. Mum and Miss Zeck became firm friends and thereafter we saw her quite often. She accompanied us on many of our Sunday picnics, joined us for lunch or dinner whenever she was in town and even 'saw in' the New Year with us as we partied

with friends at Chinatown. I also remember her running with me after the Chinese New Year dragon as the dragon 'terrorised' the folk of Rabaul.

St Gabriel's School for Girls (not St Gabriel's Girls Grammar School) closed in 1968 and in 1969 I commenced boarding at Ipswich Girls Grammar. However, I often caught up with Miss Zeck when I returned home for holidays.

I remember Miss Zeck with fondness and am saddened at her passing. And I am not surprised at her many accomplishments in Papua New Guinea. Her dedication and passion for teaching others was well respected, well known and very much appreciated. May she Rest in Peace.

In the accompanying class photo (*below*), taken in 1968, I am in the middle row, seated directly under Miss Zeck. If Mrs Walker's family would like a copy I would be happy to scan, print and send one.

Have a safe and Merry Christmas.

**SUELLEN HOLLAND**  
[info@suellenholland.com.au](mailto:info@suellenholland.com.au)







## Restriction on Mining Development

In a statement reported by *PNG Business News*, No. 2, 2021, Rodney Orioso, Minister for Minerals and Energy Resources in the Autonomous Government of Bougainville, said he intends to limit mineral exploration endeavours in new or greenfield sites until certain issues are resolved. Restrictions on existing mining in selected areas of Bougainville would remain.

He wanted to see in place a staged approach to mining development giving priority to ecological, economic and social sustainability.

Furthermore he wished to see parallel development of the government's regularity resources recognising the lack of human resources in this area.

'Let's put our house in order before creating more problems,' he said.

## Clean Energy for PNG

*PNG Business News*, 17 August 2021, revealed that the PNG government had signed an agreement with Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) to enter into an agreement that would revolutionise power generation and supply in PNG in the future. The instrument

**Featuring articles and news reports about contemporary Papua New Guinea—also included are the nation's sporting achievements and events, and stories about young people doing interesting things—we encourage young people to become involved in PNGAA to ensure the strong ties formed between Papua New Guinea and Australia continue into the future.**

was signed by the Minister for State Enterprise William Duma and Andrew Forrest of FMG and witnessed and co-signed by the Prime Minister, James Marape, and Fortescue Future Industries CEO, Julie Shuttleforth.

<https://www.pngbusinessnews.com/articles/2021/8/png-signs-agreement-with-fortescue-metals-group>

## Gulf Offshore Gas Project

Early in July the Government of Papua New Guinea and Twinza Oil Ltd agreed on the royalties to be paid for the Kena 27 billion (US\$ 800 million) Pasco A gas project in the Gulf of Papua. Under the deal the government would receive a total benefit package of fifty-five per cent calculated on a nominal cash flow basis, Petroleum Minister Kerenga Kua said.

These talks between the State Negotiating Team (SNT) and Twinza produced a deal that, according to Petroleum Minister Kerenga Kua was 'the best by far in terms of petroleum development in the country'.

A formal agreement had not been signed for the project located ninety-five km south of Gulf and one hundred metres below the surface. A company representative said that a final investment decision would be made in 2022 with the first production predicted for 2025.

The Prime Minister, the Hon.

James Marape, announced on 13 July 2021 that negotiations had concluded, with an initialling of the agreement scheduled for 19 July and for signing on 29 July 2021.

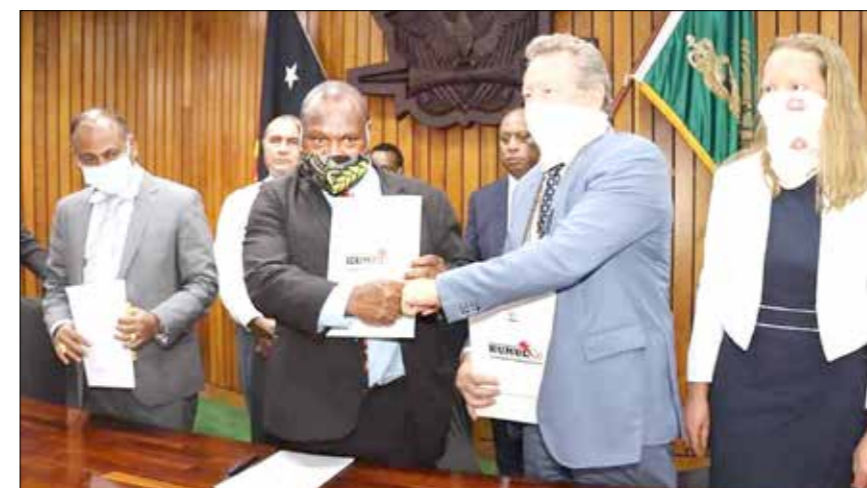
However, in a statement released on 9 August 2021, Twinza Oil said 'After a month of silence, the SNT Chairman returned an extensive mark-up of the agreement late on the 6 August. This document bears no resemblance to the agreement of the 6 July 2021, containing over 2,400 changes in only seventy-six pages, and is essentially a new agreement which was provided with endorsement of SNT, State Solicitor and Minister Kua. The agreement would be unacceptable to any investor and introduces new fiscal terms and inexplicable new conditions, several associated with Kumul Petroleum, that would make the Pasco A Project, or indeed any project in PNG, non-commercial and influenceable.'

*PNG Business News*, No. 2, 2021  
<https://www.twinzaoil.com>

## Mining in the News

This report by Elizabeth Beattie for *Nikkei Asia* on 24 August 2021 describes the continuing debate in Papua New Guinea about the role of mining, its contribution to development and its impact on the environment and social wellbeing.

It features the recent decision of the PNG government to reverse its efforts to stop Canadian Barrick



Papua New Guinea's State Enterprises Minister, Sasindran Muthuvel (left), Prime Minister James Marape (centre) and the chairman of Fortescue Metals Group of Australia, Andrew Forrest, sign an agreement in Port Moresby back in September 2020 (Photo: PNG Buzz)

Gold and Chinese partner Zijin Mining from running the Porgera gold mine in the highlands. Under a renewed deal, the PNG government has taken a majority stake in the joint venture.

The World Bank, meanwhile, says resolving friction over mining is crucial for the country's economic recovery.

Last year, nearly 8,000 people, backed by their provincial government, sued the Chinese-owned Ramu NiCo mine after toxic slurry leaked into the nearby Basamuk Bay. The company's vice-president, Wang Baowen, was quoted by Australian public broadcaster ABC shortly afterward as promising 'to address any compensation' arising from investigations.

The report also discusses the proposed Frieda River mine, which is expected to yield gold, silver and copper worth an estimated \$1.5 billion a year for more than thirty years. This huge operation will affect 16,000 ha of land in the upper Sepik region. PanAust, an Australian-registered company taken over by Guangdong Rising Assets

Management in 2015, is working to secure an operating permit.

The Frieda mine has met provincial resistance, with the East Sepik Assembly voting against it last year. In July 2020, ten UN special rapporteurs expressed concern that 'the project and its implementation so far appears to disregard the human rights of those affected'.

Frieda mine supporters are 'very much engaging with the idea that it will bring development' and employment, as well as much-needed infrastructure like electricity and roads.

The debate about the place of mining in PNG's economy is happening against a background in which the products of mining already account for the majority of PNG's export income.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Asia-Insight/China-backed-mining-deepens-Papua-New-Guinea-s-golden-dilemma>

## Telstra to Buy Digicel Pacific?

On 19 July 2021 *Reuters* reported that Telstra Corp Ltd was in talks to buy the Pacific operations of

telecommunications firm, Digicel Group, with financial assistance from the Australian Government. There has been speculation about the future of Digicel Pacific for some time. The company has previously denied a report that it was considering a sale of its Pacific business to a Chinese company.

Digicel, founded by Irish billionaire, Denis O'Brien, has a dominant market share in Papua New Guinea and uses a submarine cable from Sydney that was constructed with funding from the Australian Government to expand data services there.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/telstra-talks-buy-digicel-pacific-with-australian-government-help-2021-07-18/>

On 3 August the *Irish Times* had a report on a statement by Telstra's CEO about the proposed deal quoting him as saying 'Digicel is a very attractive and successful business in the Pacific region and we are having those discussions with government at the moment. We would only do it if we believed it was in the best interests of our shareholders.'

<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/technology/digicel-pacific-a-very-attractive-asset-says-telstra-chief-1.4638076>

Meanwhile, Papua New Guinea's telecommunications minister, Timothy Masiu, has warned that his government must be involved in any sale of its largest mobile phone network operator to Telstra and the Australian Government.  
<https://www.afr.com/policy/foreign-affairs/png-flexes-muscle-on-digicel-deal-with-telstra-20210730-p58eia>

## Investigation into Panguna Mine

Nick Toscano writing in the *Sydney*



*Morning Herald* on 21 July 2021, reported that mining company, Rio Tinto, had reached a deal with Bougainville residents to fund an investigation into the damage to the environment and human rights violations resulting from the Panguna copper mine operated by Bougainville Copper on the island.

Mining operations ceased in 1989 after the civil war erupted. In 2016 Rio Tinto cut ties with Bougainville Copper, giving its fifty-three per cent stake to Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government. During its operation, Panguna was of the world's largest copper and gold mines and accounted for forty-five per cent of PNG's exports.

Last year Bougainville community members were supported by the Human Rights Law Centre in Melbourne in launching a complaint with the Australian OECD Contact Point, a division of Australia's Federal Treasury with the power to investigate Australian companies operating overseas.

Rio Tinto, the Human Rights Law Centre and community stakeholders issued a joint announcement on 27 July 2021

that Rio would fund an independent assessment to identify environmental and human rights impacts and risks posed by the abandoned mine and to develop recommendations to address them. A joint committee of stakeholders would be formed to oversee the assessment, Rio Tinto said.

<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/hope-for-new-chapter-rio-tinto-vows-to-assess-abandoned-mine-pollution-20210721-p58bm7.html>

### COVID-19 News in Papua New Guinea

The latest report from WHO (27 August 2021) revealed that there had been a total of 17,786 cases of COVID-19 infection in PNG resulting in 192 deaths. An estimated 142,192 doses of vaccine had been administered to a population of about 8.5 million.

<https://covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/pg>

The World Bank has approved an additional US\$30 million (approximately PGK70m) in funding for Papua New Guinea (PNG) to provide extra support for the country's COVID-19 response.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/06/25/us-30m-boost-for-png-s-covid-19-response>

### Chinese Vaccines

In a recent broadcast *Voice of America* reported that Chinese state-owned media has claimed that Australian consultants in Papua New Guinea have been hindering the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines flown in from China. It was alleged that they had engaged 'in political manipulation and bullying' there.

Australia has strongly denied claims it has tried to sabotage China's efforts to boost vaccinations in Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea is currently using the AstraZeneca vaccine. Two hundred thousand doses of the Sinopharm vaccine have recently been flown in from China, but have yet to be approved for use by local authorities.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson warned Australia to 'stop interfering with and undermining vaccine cooperation between China and Pacific Island countries'.

Australia's minister for the Pacific, Zed Seselja, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation all international assistance is welcome.

'When it comes to the rollout, what we are focused on is making sure that we are providing as much assistance as we possibly can,' Seselja said. 'If other countries want to provide assistance that is wonderful.'

Australia has pledged to ship 10,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Papua New Guinea every week, along with medical support. It has also promised to donate tens of thousands of additional doses to other Pacific nations.



Panguna Mine

Papua New Guinean health officials are trying to stay out of any diplomatic arguments between Australia and China. They have said they are not concerned about where their coronavirus vaccines come from, but just want sufficient supplies to protect the country's population.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/china-accuses-australia-meddling-papua-new-guinea-vaccination-efforts>

### Australian Citizen, Born in Papua, Refused Passport Renewal

Stefan Armbruster, of television broadcaster SBS, had a report on 1 August 2021 about a citizenship case of interest to those with children born in Papua New Guinea, and to anyone concerned about how the Department of Immigration is administered.

He described what happened to Troyrone (Troy) Zen Lee who applied to renew his Australian passport only to be told he was not Australian.

Born in pre-independence Papua New Guinea (PNG) to parents who were naturalised Australians he was a victim of the Department of Home Affairs' stubborn misinterpretation of the Citizenship Act. They said he ceased to be an Australian when PNG gained independence from

Australia in September 1975. However, he was born in Port Moresby in May 1975, months before independence.

A letter from Peter Dutton, the Immigration Minister, in 2017 confirmed the department's position—that Troy, who had held an Australian passport for decades, was Papua New Guinean. Troy lost his job overseas as he stayed in Australia to challenge the department's decision in the courts. He was advised by citizenship law specialist, Professor Kim Rubenstein of University of Canberra. The Federal Court decided that Troy was an Australian citizen but the department appealed that decision.

The Full Court of the Federal Court dismissed the appeal in May and ruled that Troy is Australian and that the minister and department made 'mistakes'.

Professor Rubenstein told SBS that 'the court decision becomes the legal precedent, the law interpreting that aspect of Australian citizenship for those born in Papua pre-independence, and the department should be notifying the outcome to those individuals whose cases they are reviewing'.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/when-troy-went-to-renew-his-australian-passport-he-was-told-he-wasn-t-a-citizen-this-is-what-happened-next/b11531ba-4c64-43aa-a558-719594ee1acd>

**Editor's Note:** I contacted Professor Rubenstein and she provided these answers to my questions:

**In what way did the Department misinterpret the Citizenship Act?** In believing that Troy, as a child of naturalised Australian citizens living in PNG (with a grandparent also born there) was NOT an Australian citizen as they felt he did not have a right

of residence by virtue of his parents' naturalisation...

### Is there a need for a change in the Citizenship Act to avoid similar misinterpretations in the future?

Not really as this interpretation affirms Troy never lost his citizenship.

### If people born in what is now Papua New Guinea are not sure of their rights or legal position, what can they do?

Good question—perhaps approach the Commonwealth Ombudsman to explain they are not confident in going to the Department and perhaps the Ombudsman could assist them in working out how to approach the Department—also going to lawyers like those who represented Troy.

I also contacted Stefan Armbruster asking him to comment on the public response to his broadcast. An extract from his reply follows:

*Troy Lee's battle for his Australian citizenship against Home Affairs has been an extraordinary and bruising journey. The full bench of the Federal Court finally ruled in May it was due to 'mistakes' made by Home Affairs and successive ministers interpreting legislation and regulations.*

*Unfortunately, his is not an isolated case. The response to this report for SBS News has been quite overwhelming. Dozens and dozens of emails tell of people being 'treated like criminals', threatened with deportation, left stateless, and of years of people's lives lost, living in fear, often separated from family with careers and businesses stalled.*

*In many cases Home Affairs eventually relented and reinstated their citizenship, but people report that it was with little assistance or co-operation from the department. Many say they were ignored and obstructed. As Troy's barrister, Kim Rubenstein, said, the department has increasingly taken the position of 'exclusion rather than inclusion, and that is not consistent with the objectives of the Act.'*

*The outcome of Troy's case now becomes law, as the government didn't pursue it to the High Court, but when asked if the Minister Hawke recognises the judgement, the response was he is 'considering the implications.'*

**Papua New Guinea Independence Day, 16 September 2021**

**'Many Tribes, One People'**

Retired Chief Warrant Officer George Medo Aibo, the soldier who raised the PNG flag for the first time at Independence Hill, Port Moresby, when the country gained Independence forty-six years ago, in 1975, was featured in the celebrations this year.





# The Foundation Committee of the PNGAA

In 1951 the reorganisation of the administration of the New Guinea territories by the Commonwealth Government meant that many people who had worked there before the war, and those who now worked for the new, combined Territory of Papua and New Guinea were without a body to represent their interests after retirement. There was an existing Retired Officers Association of Papua but its constitution did not allow it to represent retirees other than those who had worked in the Territory of Papua.

The first step in creating such a representative body was the distribution of a circular to people who had retired after working in the Territory of Papua, the Territory of New Guinea or the recently established Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The names of these people were provided by the Department of Territories in Canberra. The circular, dated 4 February 1951, was signed by four people: EW Bastard, JT Bensted, LW Brown and JF Fitzgerald, and asked recipients to let the signatories know if they were interested in the formation of a retired officers' association. The circular included the objectives of the proposed association and said that an annual subscription of five shillings would be payable.

The result of that circular was a meeting held on 19 March 1951 at History House, Young Street, Sydney. This meeting established the Retired Officers Association of Papua and New Guinea (ROAPNG). More than fifty people joined.

The office bearers elected to the first committee were: President JT Bensted, Vice President EW Oakley and Secretary/Treasurer R Melrose. Committee members were: EW Bastard, EW Taylor and LC Roberts. The foundation committee included retirees from both the Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

A report on this meeting and the Articles of the Association were forwarded to the Secretary, Department of External Territories on 9 April 1951. The Articles of Association were headed 'Una Voce'.

JT Bensted, the first president of the association, joined the administration of the Territory of Papua as a clerk in the government stores in 1900. By 1912 he had returned to Sydney with an appointment as agent of the government of Papua. In the early 1920s he was back in Port Moresby in the Department of Public Works. He was Acting Director by 1922 and Director not long afterwards.

As Director of Public Works he was responsible for the planning and construction of some of the early permanent public buildings of Port Moresby. These included the post office and the general hospital.

Bensted seems to have left Papua by 1930. His whereabouts and activities between then and the 1950s are, so far, not known.

In the 1950s, apart from his role in the establishment of ROAPNG, he was a regular correspondent to the *Pacific Islands Monthly* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He signed some of this correspondence as 'Formerly Agent of the Government of Papua, Director of Public Works and member of the Legislative and Executive Councils'.

John Thomas Bensted, born in 1882, died in Katoomba NSW in 1963.

EW Oakley, the vice-president, was an officer of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs for twenty-five years. He was District Officer at Madang from 1936 until the Japanese attacked the country. He then returned to Sydney. He was active shortly after the Second World War promoting the Victory Loan Appeal.

R Melrose, the secretary/treasurer, was head of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs in the administration of the Mandated Territory before WWII and Government Secretary, TPNG, after the war. He had been a member of the Australian Naval and Military Expedition during the first World War.

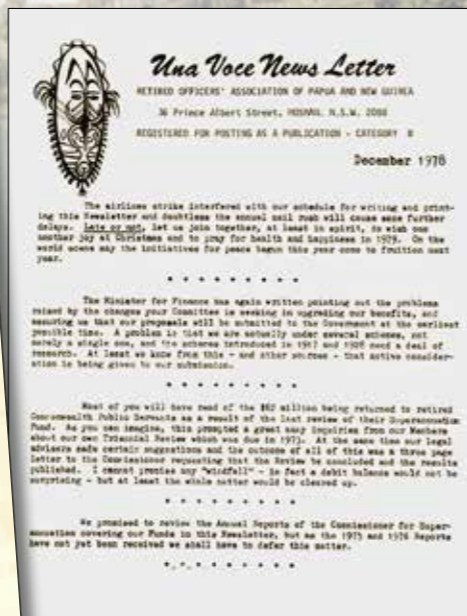
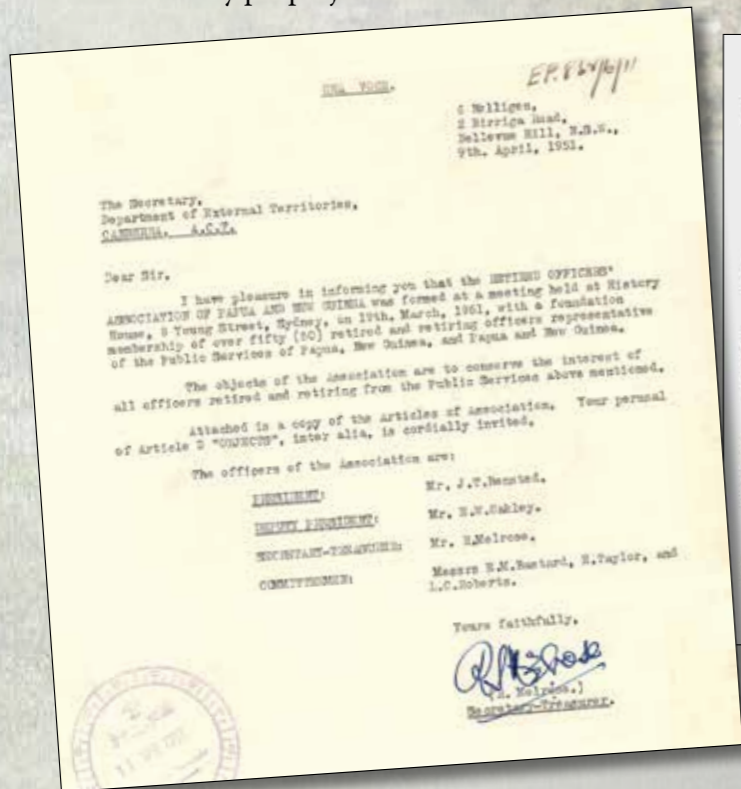
Just before the war Melrose, then a member of the Legislative Council, chaired a commission of enquiry into native labour in the Territory of New Guinea. Established in 1939 this enquiry reported in 1942.

During World War II, following the heavy bombing of Salamaua, which was seen as a prelude to landings there, Melrose led a party of civilians, who were physically unfit to travel overland, in a most hazardous escape trip, which started along the New Guinea coast in two small boats and canoes. The party survived the dangers of the journey and landed on the north coast of Papua, from where they made their way inland to Kokoda and thence by air to Port Moresby.

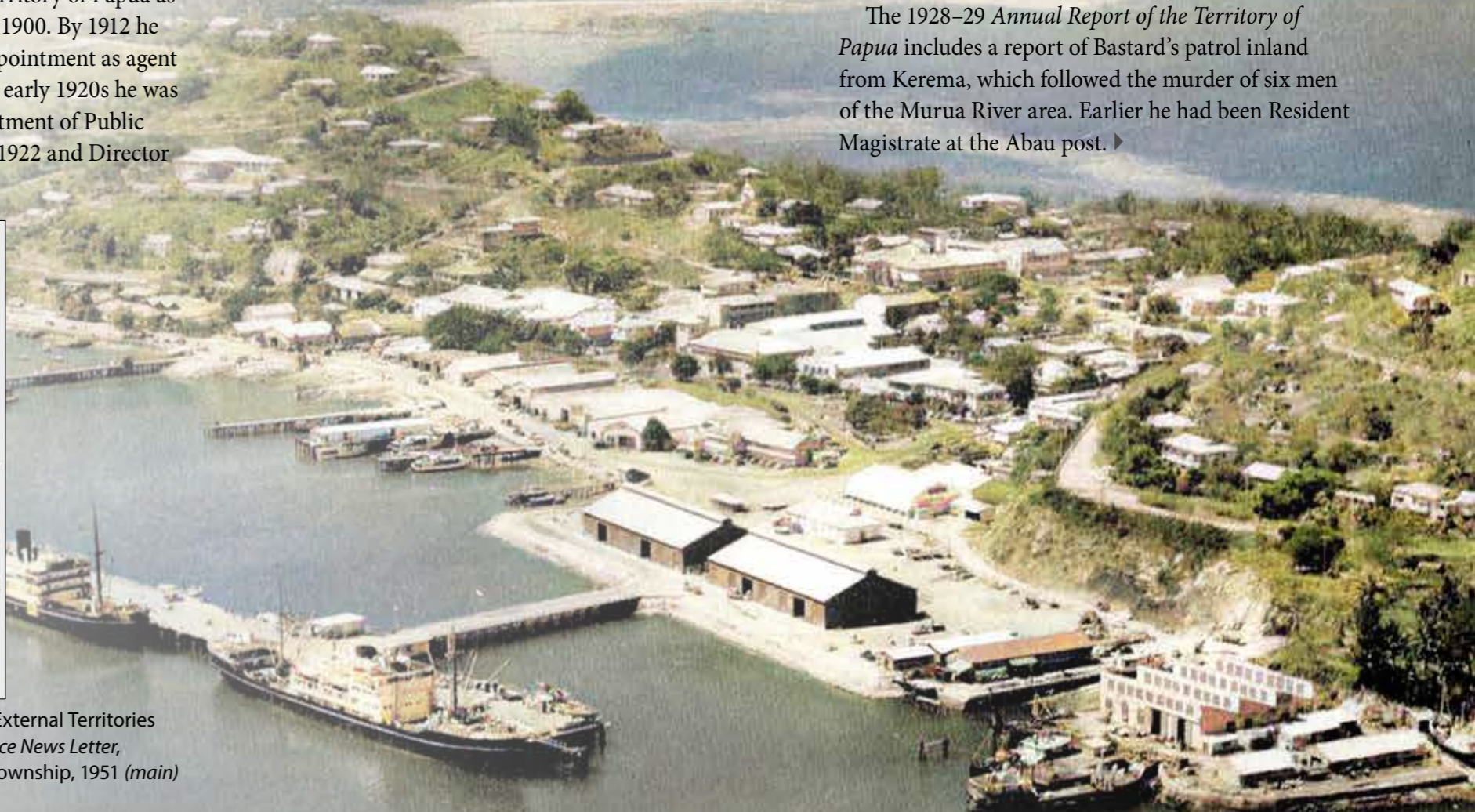
Robert Melrose retired in 1951 and died in 1959.

EM Bastard was a resident magistrate in Papua before World War II.

The 1928-29 *Annual Report of the Territory of Papua* includes a report of Bastard's patrol inland from Kerema, which followed the murder of six men of the Murua River area. Earlier he had been Resident Magistrate at the Abau post. ▶



The report sent to the Department of External Territories on 9 April 1951 (left); ROAPNG's *Una Voce News Letter*, December 1978 (right); Port Moresby Township, 1951 (main)







E Taylor, MBE, a long-serving officer of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs was a key figure in the evacuation of civilians from Lae and Salamaua as described in Ian Downs' book, *The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles—a History 1939-1943*.

The *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, reported on 2 February 1937 that Edward Taylor, District Officer Salamaua, was the first officer of the New Guinea Civil Administration to be honoured by the King with the award of the MBE. It went on to say that Taylor had first gone to New Guinea in 1914 and, until 1921, served with the military administration. Two years later he was appointed District Officer. In 1924 he led the patrol into the Upper Waria River area which enabled the opening of the Wau-Bulolo goldfields.

LC Roberts was a draftsman in the Department of Lands and Mines of the Territory of New Guinea in 1922, becoming Director of that Department before the onset of World War II. In 1948 he was appointed Chief Claims Examiner of the War Damage Commission.

As these people emerge from the mists of history we acknowledge with pride and gratitude their contributions to the development of Papua New Guinea and their initiative in establishing our association seventy years ago.

**JOHN EGERTON, AM**

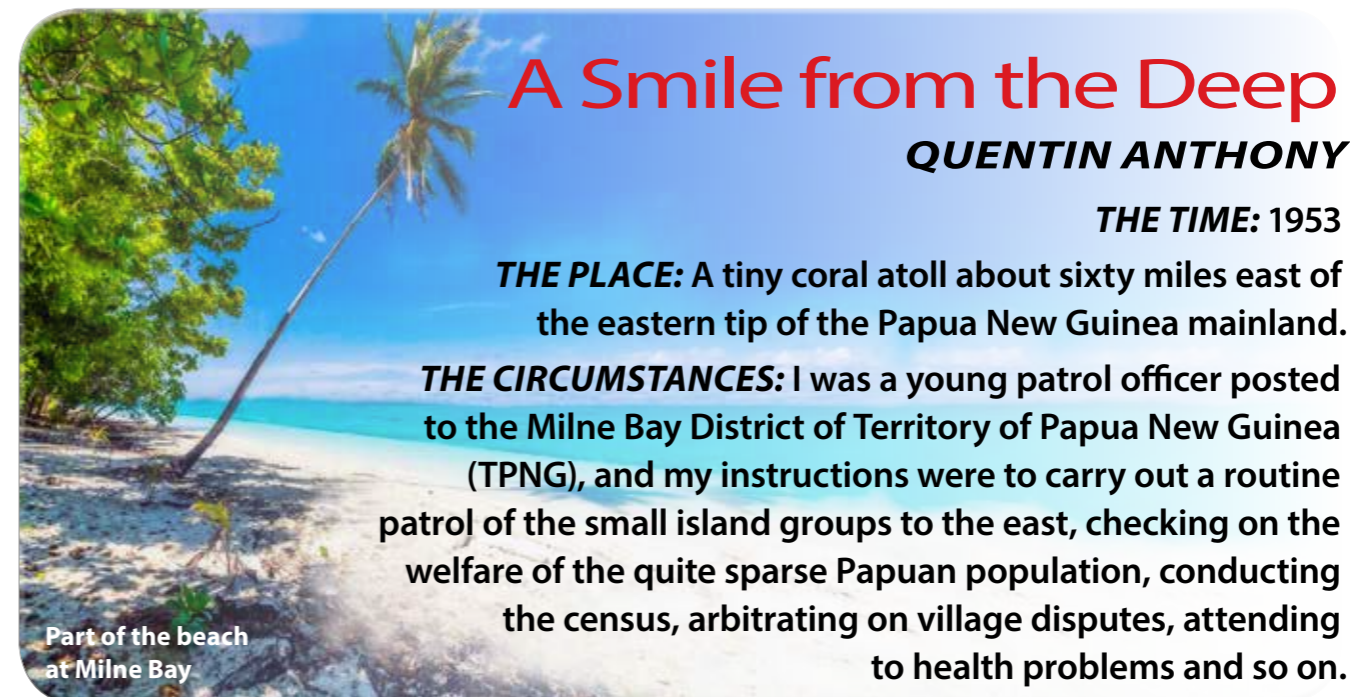
**Acknowledgements:** Information about the formation of ROAPNG in 1951 came from National Archives of Australia Digital file, 'Retired Officers' Association of Papua New Guinea; series 452'. Other biographical details of the members of the first committee came from *Trove*, the National Library of Australia. More details were provided by Phil Ainsworth, Quentin Anthony, Bev Melrose, Chris Warrillow and Andrea Williams.

The ROAPNG was incorporated under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act of 1984 in March 1996 under the leadership of President Harry West. In the following years, the associate membership base was broadened to include 'former residents of Papua New Guinea or other persons subscribing to the objectives of the association' and, with the vision and initiatives of Harry West and Treasurer Ross Johnson, the objectives widened to include 'friendly association of members, encouragement of contact and friendship with Papua New Guineans', and much more. These amendments were agreed upon by the members and, on 16 December 2002, the name was formally changed and registered as the

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.**

Since then, the role of the association has progressively broadened and changed to include activities such as supporting projects in PNG; working to strengthen the civil relationship between Australia and PNG to ensure the solid foundation built when Australia developed Papua New Guinea to become an independent nation is long recognised; as well as facilitating communication, interaction and education about Papua New Guinea.

*FEATURED:* Medical patrol in the Highlands, 1950s (1); Les Roberts, ROAPNG committee member (2); Ela Beach Pre-school Centre, Port Moresby (3); Mobile nursing clinic, Sogeri, 1950s (4); Harry West, OAM, first president of the renamed Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (5)



**A Smile from the Deep**

**QUENTIN ANTHONY**

**THE TIME: 1953**

**THE PLACE: A tiny coral atoll about sixty miles east of the eastern tip of the Papua New Guinea mainland.**

**THE CIRCUMSTANCES: I was a young patrol officer posted to the Milne Bay District of Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG), and my instructions were to carry out a routine patrol of the small island groups to the east, checking on the welfare of the quite sparse Papuan population, conducting the census, arbitrating on village disputes, attending to health problems and so on.**

Our mode of transport was the sturdy seventy-foot government trawler MV *Managuna*, skippered by the venerable Harry Cox, a rugged old sea-dog with vast experience of the seas and waterways of TPNG. The *Managuna* had a wheelhouse, engine room, cargo hold and three small cabins, with the four-man Papuan crew sleeping in the fo'c'sle.

My party consisted of a young cadet patrol officer, who, for the purposes of this narrative and for my own self-preservation and protection against possible litigation, I shall call Les Fletcher. Included also were a corporal and two constables of the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary, a Papuan medical assistant and a cook who attended to the culinary needs of the two European officers.

Les was a large young man, a proficient rugby player at school, cheerful, gregarious and good company. His philosophy was that life was for living, for working hard and playing hard. This was his first patrol and he was full of enthusiasm.

So we sailed from Samarai on this three-week expedition, the daily routine being usually a couple of hours travel to the next island, anchor in a reef-protected lagoon, and spend most of the day ashore attending to the multitude of tasks that our job entailed. In the evening it was back on board for a shower, a good meal and a leisurely chat with Harry on the foredeck before retiring.

Now it was always my policy, as it was with most

field officers, never to take alcohol on patrol, or allow my subordinates to do so. Life was hard enough physically without having to get up at dawn with a Force 10 hangover and prepare for the next day's slog. In those days also, and you may say, rather quaintly, we set some store on providing a good example for the native population and particularly our staff.

So, it was with some slight, albeit fleeting apprehension on our second evening out, chatting with Harry Cox on the foredeck after dinner, that I heard him say in his quiet, almost apologetic voice, 'It is my custom on patrols such as this to break out a bottle of Negrita at the start of the trip, just to wish my passengers a successful voyage.'

Now there was a widely-held belief amongst Territorians that Rhum Negrita, was the drop that made boys into men and women love them for it, and that no problem was insoluble once the level in the bottle dropped below the bottom of the label. The good folk of the Christian missions, on the other hand, justified their presence in TPNG by the need to neutralise the Negrita-generated fallout and the subsequent salvation of the people from a state of being, known as doom.

All that aside, these thoughts did not occupy the minds of Les and me when Harry produced his bottle. The scene was verging on the idyllic. The sun had set in a crimson glow. A slight breeze came in from the shore where the cooking fires flickered



in the village two hundred yards away across a glass-calm lagoon. One of our crew had a guitar and the sound of soft Papuan voices in a rendition of 'Ricemo Iania' drifted up to us through the fo'c'sle hatch. Above us the white stars blazed in a dark purple sky.

With firm resolution helped by the Negrita, my apprehension evaporated.

Harry, wily sea-dog, conscious of tomorrow's treacherous reefs and the need for a clear head, had one drink and announced he was retiring. 'Don't leave any in the bottle, boys. It won't keep, you know.'

Time passed. Two hours I suppose. It was pleasant. Very relaxing. The bottle seemed empty. Why did I feel so good a while ago and now I feel a bit crook? Why is the boat rocking when it's flat calm?

Les fell out of his chair but regained the vertical with the assistance of the rail. 'I think I'll sit the hack,' he mumbled, and hiccupped. He staggered off.

Somehow, I found my own bunk. It must have been in the pre-dawn hours that I was conscious of Les' cabin door banging open, the rush of footsteps to the rail, and the sound of a spectacular 'technicolour yawn'. With difficulty, I retained my Negrita in its allotted resting place.

Later, the morning sun shone through my cabin porthole. I was semi-conscious but thought I was dead. I wished I was dead.

I knew that Harry would be wanting to get under way, so I went to check on the welfare of my young colleague. I found him sitting on the edge of his bunk with an expression of horror on his face, a face which appeared strangely shrunken, hollow cheeks, pursed lips. In answer to my enquiry, a mumbled, barely intelligible explanation issued forth.

It seems that when Les was younger, a medical condition required the extraction of all his teeth and the consequent fitting of a full set of dentures. These were now missing. A search of the cabin proved fruitless and the inescapable conclusion gradually dawned that, in the course of Les' nocturnal dash to the rail and 'yawn' over the side, the uppers and lowers had been projected into the lagoon.

We approached the rail and looked over. Now it happened that the day before, Harry Cox had dropped anchor over a white sand bottom in sixty feet of the most crystal-clear water in the South

Pacific. It was a sunny, windless morning, the sea like glass, and we could see every grain of sand on the sea floor.

Les, facing the nightmare of a toothless, three-week diet of coconut milk and jelly, suddenly groaned with relief. For there, smiling up at us from the emerald-green depths, were Les' fangs.

By this time, Harry was showing signs of wanting to weigh anchor, but moved by the plight of his young passenger, called to his crew to go over the side and attempt to retrieve the clackers. These lads, being islanders, had been swimming and diving all their lives, but without diving gear (this was before Cousteau had popularised scuba), their depth limit was about forty or fifty feet. Not enough. After repeated attempts and despite the promise of a tin of tobacco for the successful retriever, they were forced to acknowledge defeat. Harry was impatient. Les was desperate. I was crook.

While this drama was being played out, there appeared on deck Solomon, the engineer. Now Solomon was an aged Papuan, who, like Harry his skipper, had spent his life on small ships. He rarely emerged from his engine-room into the daylight, and his life's parameters, it seemed, were his beloved diesel engine and the ancient, cracked briar pipe (unlit) that was perpetually clamped between his few remaining teeth.

Solomon sat for a while on the rail, surveying the scene. Then, without a word, he disappeared below, emerging a few minutes later with a length of fishing cord, a large spanner and a ball of putty the size of a grapefruit.

He tied the spanner to the end of the cord, tied the ball of putty under the spanner and lowered it over the side while the rest of the cast lined the rail with an air of curious anxiety.

Down went the contraption until, with a bit of dexterous jiggling, it was poised just above the teeth. Solomon dropped it, and Les' full set clamped themselves on to the putty. Slowly, slowly up they came, breaking the surface to shouts of congratulation from the onlookers.

Solomon allowed himself the barest trace of a smile and went back to his engine room.

Harry weighed anchor—I started to feel better.

And that night Les dreamt of a king-sized T-bone steak. ♦

## The PNG Star Mountains: Still Wild After All These Years

**CHRIS SHARPLES—Part Two**

**This narrative follows on from the first part published in the previous issue of PNG KUNDU and describes the culmination of our venture to the PNG Star Mountains summits after parting with our local helpers at Dokfuma Plateau.**

Previous Star Mountains ascents we knew of used a long route cleared by local cutters from the north end of Dokfuma curving north of Mt Capella. It looked very long and arduous through difficult limestone pinnacle country. We opted for a more direct route up the south-east side of Mt Capella, through patchy scrub and long grass, a short patch of intricate limestone pinnacles, and then relatively easy cloud forest, climbing above the marshy 'Lake' Sirius. After three days of light track-cutting and shuttling food and gear upwards, we reached a grassy glacial cirque basin just below the mountain's central ridgeline. At 4,000 m altitude we could feel the effects of thinning air, and with the daily heavy afternoon rain meant slow but steady progress, early morning starts and mid-afternoon camps becoming our daily routine.

The next day we left our tents before sunrise hoping to reach the summit before the regular

morning fog covered it. Reaching the skyline ridge crest, we were greeted by a spectacular clear dawn light on Mt Scorpio to our west. Other large, distant peaks soared across the border in West Papua. In cool, bright conditions, we threaded our way along the grassy alpine limestone crest of intricately sculpted 'lapies karst' rock forms, taking our time to avoid holes and other ankle breakers.

We reached the southern and highest summit of the mountain around 8.00 am, still in bright sunlight with a glorious view of mountains along the high central spine of New Guinea both east and west. However, the regular daily clouds were already rising up the southern slopes below, and less than an hour after starting back to camp, we were shrouded in mist with an icy hailstorm on the ridgetop. After perfect conditions on the summit, we returned to our tents in wet misty conditions and spent much of the dismal day in our sleeping bags!



The author on Mt Capella summit, with the central divide of PNG stretching away to the east beyond the back of Benstead Bluff, and the cloud-wreathed lowlands of the Ok Tedi basin beyond to the right  
Image by Grant Dixon





TOP: The author on the central divide of Papua New Guinea with the north (highest) summit of Mt Scorpio behind

BELOW: The author and Kavorabip villager, Jennifer, crossing the Harom River on the way back to the mine  
Images by Grant Dixon

We spent the next three days traversing west along the narrow ridge linking Mt Capella to our furthest objective, Mt Scorpio (local name *Milaywoong*). Having had a clear view of the route ahead during our ascent of Mt Capella, we crossed the Capella ridge at its lowest point and made our way down the other side across fairly open slopes. We had only one annoying stretch of scratchy alpine scrub to cross on the way—and easily avoided it coming back. One night was in a perfect campsite beside a delightful alpine tarn in a grassy saddle.

We spent the next two days walking the narrow and in places almost knife-edged ridge crest that is the central drainage divide of New Guinea here. This alpine grass ridgeline is mostly a delight to traverse and camp on—numerous alpine tarns above forested slopes dropping thousands of metres into the valleys

north and south. We could see at least one village far below to the north.

Our biggest obstacle was a daunting alpine scrub in the lowest saddle on the ridge, but astonishingly after struggling through a few hundred metres of it we stumbled on to a rough but recently-cleared track. We easily followed it almost to the western end of the scrubby saddle before we lost it again. Perhaps it was a local route between villages north and south across the central divide at its lowest and narrowest point, but we could not know.

We camped at a pleasant spot on the grassy slopes of Mt Scorpio on a typically wet misty afternoon. Below was a sizeable lake halfway up the easternmost of several glacially eroded valleys, studded with tarns radiating from the central cluster of steep peaks making up the Mt Scorpio massif. The rain and mist eased later in the day, so we spent a few hours looking around and scouting the route ahead to Mt Scorpio's summit.

Next day, 14 November 2016, was significant for me: the day before my sixtieth birthday. Here I was, in probably the most remote and wild location I have ever been—one that I had been wanting to reach for almost exactly half my life. Grant left camp before sunrise to get some dawn photos high up.

I slept in a few minutes longer before following in the clear dawn light. I caught up with him near the foot of a steep and somewhat sketchy climb up the eastern side of what we assumed was the main summit. When we topped the ridgeline we could see that it was but the lower south summit of Mt Scorpio, with the higher northern peak still a kilometre or so to our north.

An hour or so of straightforward scrambling along another partly knife-edge section of the central divide, then up some grassy and rocky slopes, finally brought us to the true (northern) summit of Mt Scorpio. It was marked by a small rock cairn, probably erected by the 1965 Star Mountains Expedition. It was not yet 9.00 am; despite the inevitable daily mists already starting to swirl around the peaks, we had spectacular views into West Papua. We discerned a line of rugged and no doubt formerly glaciated peaks far to the west across the international border. Elated to finally be here, I could not resist leaving a smug note in a small plastic bag in the summit cairn!

Returning to camp in the patchy mist was not difficult; it was hard to miss the ridge-crest. However—almost as if to take the shine off our elated mood—about a kilometre south of the summit we noticed several rock outcrops marked by pink tapes and hammer blows. Being geologists we realised these were signs of recent mineral exploration. Further on, we noticed tapes apparently marking out a helicopter landing site. Despite this little reminder that few places are beyond aerial access, our satisfaction at having walked every step of the way from the Ok Tedi Mine to the summit of Mt Scorpio was undiminished.

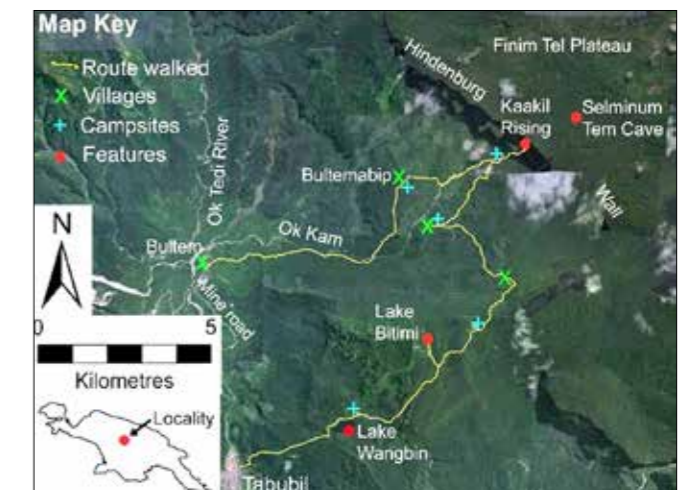
With lighter packs and a known and mostly downhill route, we returned from Mt Scorpio to Kavorabip village in only five days of mostly drama-free walking. None of the villagers seemed too surprised to see us back, so hopefully our bush skills had gained some degree of local credibility. Two Kavorabip people, Hans and Jennifer, offered to help us carry our gear back to the mine, which suited us well. Back in Tabubil a few days later we had a visit at the hotel from the Kavorabip headman, Abson, in town for meetings. He was clearly pleased to see us back alive and undamaged, vindicating his decision to let us continue into the alpine regions on our own terms.

With a week left before our flight back to Port Moresby, we wanted to take a trip up the nearby Ok Kam valley to the legendary Hindenburg Wall. This is a spectacular vertical wall of limestone reaching up 600 metres, a couple of days walk east of Tabubil. The valley has a number of inhabited villages, so as a courtesy we should use local guides to introduce us along the way. Abson was happy to help and we soon had four guides with close relatives living in or regularly visiting the Kam valley.

We spent six days walking between villages, including a nostalgic return to the pretty, peat-filled Lake Bitimi I had visited in 1996. The undoubted highlight was an afternoon we battled our way in warm torrential rain clad in shorts and T-shirts up the bouldered banks of the dramatically flooding Ok Kaakil towards the Hindenburg Wall. In fine sunny weather next morning we followed the by-then less dramatic river to the very foot of the Wall, where it cascades out of a hole in the cliff itself at a spring known as the Kaakil Rising. A British Speleological

Expedition to the Wall in 1975 proved that this spring is an outflow from the enormous Selminum Tem cave which descends within the wall itself from the Finim Tel plateau above.

Back in Tasmania, a friend who had made a series of caving trips while in PNG expressed surprise at how trouble-free our expedition was. I believe our success came by contacting local people well before our trip, logistics made easy by regular commercial flights to Tabubil, and a good supermarket for supplies. I am also sure we simply did not have the logistical nightmare of an old-style expedition: many people involved and many things waiting to go wrong. We were two guys going on a slightly extended bushwalk with a simple ethic of travelling light and being mostly self-sufficient. ♦



TOP: Grant Dixon photographing the Hindenburg Wall  
BELOW: Route and selected features between Tabubil township and the Hindenburg Wall (Google Earth imagery). The route is based on GPS tracks captured by the author using a Garmin GPS64 handheld GPS unit. The route was mainly existing walking tracks except between Bultemabip and Kaakil Rising where streams were followed.



# On Medical Patrol in the Highlands in 1969

RUPERT GUDE



Bomai children eating sugarcane

As the plane took off from the Unani airstrip I realised that it would be three weeks before another came to take us back to Kundiawa. I had volunteered to be a medical attendant to the annual patrol around Bomai in the south west of the Chimbu District. What I had not realised was quite how isolated we would be down in the tropical rainforest of Bomai.

However, there was no time to lose as people were gathering for the annual census and tax paying with sweet potatoes. There were disciplinary matters and disputes to be settled. The young patrol officer had already set himself up and was in conversation with the two policemen. The chief came up and was presented and he proudly paraded his thirteen wives. Many of these had been married to his two brothers who had been killed in fighting some years before and they now took refuge in his house and under his care. Unani had a population of 352, tiny compared to normal villages but was important in the Bomai. The roll call was taken and all births, marriages and deaths were noted. It was 1969 and the likely given year of birth this year would be *'taim man em i go sanap long mun'* (the time when man stood on the moon).

The people of the Bomai are said to have migrated here from Karimui about a generation ago, in order to act as agents for trade in feathers and fur. They had formed loose gatherings and had been persuaded to build a basic *haus kiap* (government rest house) in five different locations. The airstrip in Unani had been built in 1962 and there were villages in Sivika and Talabakul. To the west was an

extinct volcano Mt Au (*Suavi*) and we planned to walk around it, entering the Western District before returning to Unani to be picked up. It took us three weeks as we had to supervise the clearing of a new airstrip at the base of Mt Au for a week. The first patrol came through in the early 1950s and the first medical patrol was mounted in 1957 during which anti-yaws injections were given. In the following years three aid posts were established.

Bomai lies at a lower altitude than Kundiawa and although chest infections were less, they were greatly troubled by malaria. However, spraying with DDT under the Malaria Eradication Program had been effective and the population was increasing. There had been a medical patrol in the previous year for mass vaccination and an inspection for leprosy. This was repeated in February 1969 and in March a health educator had done his rounds. The first aiders were building up a rapport with the population, but the people still did not trust them for antenatal care or delivery. They were generally effective in treating gastroenteritis and pneumonia and skin complaints were common.

I examined most of the population, checking for the size of their spleens. There was a prevalence

of between 5% and 20% of enlarged spleens which indicated a fairly high malaria transmission. Scabies was prevalent and skin infections common. Twenty patients with leprosy were examined and some had rather irregular supplies of medicine. Half the deaths were in children under ten years of age. I treated the sores and scabs and tried to advise about backache but in these environments, where strong physical activity is essential, backache is normal.

After a couple of days we walked along paths through the tropical rainforest to Talabakul. The going was rough and we were glad of guides cutting back creepers from the path. Rivers were crossed by wading through and the way was wet and bumpy. I had a pair of 'jungle boots', which were very useful as they used to keep the leeches out. However, one evening as I took them off I found a particularly full and bloated leech under one of my toes. It had obviously enjoyed its meal and I had no problem dislodging it with a lighted match. One of my most useful medicines was *'wara bilong paia'* (fire water)—or iodine mixture in spirit, which I used liberally on all open sores or leech bites. That it stung like anything must have been a sign of its potency. It was well respected.

We worked our way round to Mt Au and came to the airstrip that had been partially cleared. The massive trees had been felled with axes and then pulled by a big team of men pulling on several lianas tied around the trunk. They had cleared a respectable area and on the last day we were honoured by the weekly flight approaching and making a pretend landing to encourage the team to finish the job.

At roll call later I was struck by the number of men with dramatic headdresses made of bird feathers. It turns out the nurse aide had a shotgun and birds had become fairly scarce in the vicinity. Soon we were on our way back round Mt Au and eventually arrived at Unani. The plane came on time and we were soon back in Kundiawa. It was an interesting trip with the intention of showing a medical presence and boosting the status of the aid post orderlies.

Shortly after this tour I moved to Angau Memorial Hospital in Lae to help in the paediatric ward and towards the end of the year I was called on to help on a two-week patrol in the remote and



Bomai patrol roll call (top); Crossing river on Bomai patrol (centre); Mothers and children waiting their turn at Jimi Valley clinic (bottom)





Bomai chief and his thirteen wives (top);  
Research doctor leading the Jimi Valley patrol (centre);  
Crossing the Jimi River (bottom)

isolated Jimi Valley in the north of the Western Highlands District. It is now in its own province of Jiwaka bordering Madang Province. At that time there were no roads into the valley so we flew from Banz to the one airstrip. There was a road there along the valley with just two vehicles in the area. A young researching doctor was doing a follow up of a survey into cretinism—an unfortunate byproduct of a diet rich in phytates in mountainous areas that blocks the absorption of iodine, and thus the manufacture of thyroxine. The children are born with lifelong mental problems and often die by the time they reach about five years old.

We spent two weeks walking down one side of the valley and up the other side looking at as many children as we could. The people were extraordinarily friendly and welcoming and progress was excellent. The paths between villages were good and the large liana bridges across the Jimi River, though wobbly, were strong and trustworthy. We examined many children and the researcher was well pleased.

When I returned to London, I finished my degree and started on the rotation of junior hospital doctor appointments. However, I then spent a year-and-a-half in South Africa, where I was able to put some of the skills I had learnt into use. I also found that the health service in Papua New Guinea gave a far better community health service than that which was on offer to the black people of South Africa. Then, after marrying my wife Annie in 1977, we went to the Solomon Islands for three years where I was really able to make a difference as a medical officer in Malaita then Gizo.

After that I was a general practitioner in Devon, England but, after retiring, I spent fifteen months working with my Annie, a nurse, in the HIV department of a mission hospital in Tanzania under the auspices of VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas). I became quite an expert in Tanzanian HIV! We were then so lucky to be able to spend a year in the third great Melanesian country of Vanuatu, again under the auspices of VSO. We were able to help, advise and care for another Melanesian group—though the taxi drivers always reckoned my *bislama* of Vanuatu was not authentic, but a corruption of Pidgin English from the Solomons or even Papua New Guinea. We were so pleased to be able to help and serve in all three countries. ♦

# Goroka's Lovely Loos

**KALOLAINE FAINU**

**After a number of delays, with time to reflect on why my flight the previous day had been turned around *en route*, I finally found myself travelling high above the highlands of Papua New Guinea. From my seat in the sky I could see mountain tops peaking through soft clouds and clusters of small village huts dotted throughout the jungle below. This was my first trip to Goroka, a location that had been on my bucket list for a while, and now, thanks to my involvement in a project with UNICEF PNG, I found myself about to land. Exciting!**

The fresh air and cooler temperatures immediately embraced me as I disembarked, and I took in a deep breath, instantly invigorated by the higher altitude. Exiting the airport gates, I was surprised to discover that we were driving through the centre of Goroka town, literally! Here, the airport meets the city centre; locals busily go about their daily business and the streets are lined with an array of market stalls selling everything from baskets to *bilums* and of course the ubiquitous *buai*!

The fresh produce market was a field of colourful umbrellas that seemed to extend for miles, protecting the vendors from the scorching sun and the rains when they came. I just love exploring markets so I was itching to jump out of the car and dive into the colour around me, but I was here for work and already a day late, so we headed straight to the office to meet the ground team.

I was about to meet the TTU (Touching The Untouchables) team who were working in partnership with UNICEF and European Union (EU) to implement the *Klinpela Komuniti Projek*, a pilot Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) project aimed at improving the standard of living for women, men and children through improved hygiene and sanitation practices.

I had heard a little about WaSH before my involvement with UNICEF, however, it would be my first real introduction to the initiative as I stepped foot into my role as a photographer and scoped out locations and talent for a series of videos our team was producing. The targeted community in this case were those living in rural areas on the outskirts of Goroka. As a documenter and explorer, I am endlessly excited about heading into unknown territories and collecting stories, however, there was an element to this brief that I wasn't initially too excited about: photographing people's toilets! First of all, I thought that people might feel ashamed or embarrassed to show me their toilets.



Iva Iso smells the roses in her garden





Kabiufa Community celebrate their ODF certification

Secondly, I wasn't completely compelled by the idea of getting up-close and taking detailed shots of places where people excrete their waste. I have to admit, it wasn't exactly what I had imagined doing on my first trip to a bucket-list destination!

I was to be proven wrong on all accounts, reminding me that my preconceptions echoed a life of privilege, where access to clean, safe water and modern septic systems was just something I took for granted. I was very happy to discover that far from being embarrassed to show me their toilets, the local residents took great pride in displaying what was the realisation of a major milestone within their communities. They had worked together to achieve ODF (Open Defaecation Free) certification through the implementation of VIP toilets (Ventilation Improved Pit), the installation of tippy taps or other water sources nearby with which to clean hands easily and effectively, and a range of other hygienic practices that have delivered positive outcomes.

The effects of poor sanitation and hygiene can have a crippling impact on virtually every aspect of life—nutrition, health, growth and development, the economy and also upon one's sense of dignity and self-empowerment, contributing to an omnipresent cycle of poverty and deprivation.

I very quickly came to understand why every person I met in the village invited me with a big smile on their face to check out their lovely loos! Inspecting each VIP toilet became a real delight. Each family had designed their toilet houses themselves, often adding personal touches to adorn and embellish their outhouses.

Decorative bamboo walls, flower pots and even

a vintage-styled outhouse with old number plates on the walls! I was super-impressed by the colourful, welcoming, clean outhouses and guess what? There were no smells! The VIP system produces a continuous airflow through the ventilation pipe. The airflow vents away odours, assists waste breakdown by drying action, and acts as a very effective fly control mechanism.

I have travelled through a number of developing countries around the globe, and I have experienced my fair share of smelly pit and squat toilets. I can without hesitation say that these pit toilets in Goroka were the most impressive and cleanest I've ever seen! I would stretch that impression to charming. And when nature called, I had zero hesitation in asking to use one. In a number of the villages I visited I learned that it was the women who were responsible for leading the drive in their communities to improve hygiene and sanitation practices.

In Kabiufa village I was told a story about a team of eight elderly women who took the initiative to dig out the pits for thirty-three toilets in their community. In Komegu, the story was similar, where women took charge of digging out the pits for the toilets, and the children were put in charge of digging the holes for rubbish pits and making the tippy taps. Both these communities received their ODF certification during my visit, with one woman from Komegu speaking passionately at the certification ceremony about the direct impact these changes have made on the people living in the village.

'Before the program,' Rose Ken said, 'the village was filled with rubbish; kids and mothers were sick

with diarrhoea, but now everything is much cleaner and people are healthier.'

Kay Kay Ezave was nominated the winner of the Kabiufa village 'Best VIP Toilet' for her innovations in creating a double-pit toilet that was separated by a wall, with one side each for males and females. She also used an old sink placed on the ground to collect grey water from her handwashing station to allow the water to drain away nicely and prevent it from creating a muddy mess.

As part of achieving ODF status, families are encouraged to implement the ten steps for health and hygiene, which include:

1. VIP Toilet
2. Rubbish Hole with Lid
3. Beautification
4. Dish Rack or Table
5. Animal Fencing
6. Nutritional Gardens
7. Clean Safe Drinking Water
8. Ventilated Homes
9. Family Planning
10. Immunisation

My favourite part was to inspect the beautification throughout the villages. Tidy pathways lined with well-trimmed trees and bushes; flower beds blooming with fragrant and brightly coloured flowers, showing off the best of Goroka's florals; and backyards with bountiful nutritional garden produce and fruit trees, replete with fruit easily plucked from their branches and offered to me to take home or to eat right there on the spot. Happy villages, with friendly, funny, thriving people unashamed to put their warm outgoing character on display, and proud to put in the hard work to better the lives of their community.

After a week on the ground it was time to head back to Port Moresby and back to a home that has all the modern facilities to which I've always had access. With me I took the experience of the engaging and unpretentious Goroka people who reminded me of the simple things in life for which we should be grateful—an adequate supply of clean, safe water for drinking, cleaning and washing in as well as a clean flushing toilet.

When I think back now on my first trip to Goroka, I see the many smiling faces that welcomed me without reserve into their villages and of the people who invited me to sit inside their newly-constructed outhouses with such pride that those smiles spread wide across their faces. It was an



A couple from Sami and their new toilet (top); Flower decoration of new loo (centre); Rebecca Sari points to her ventilator (bottom)

experience that demonstrated the power and impact guidance and leadership can have on a whole community; sometimes all you need to do is pick up that shovel and start digging. ♦

**Editor's Note:** This story was originally published in PNG Air Magazine whose editor has kindly agreed to its re-publication in PNG KUNDU.



# The Colony of La Nouvelle France and *Paradiso*—a Novel

STEVE CAPELIN

In 1880, one of the more bizarre stories of emigration took place when a French entrepreneur, the Marquis De Rays, dreamt up a preposterous scheme to annex and colonise New Guinea. He simply took a pencil and drew a line on a map and declared it Nouvelle France, and proclaimed himself as King Charles the First. De Rays had never visited New Guinea, but nevertheless described it in detail in his prospectus, and promised colonists wealth beyond their dreams and a sophisticated and flourishing colony as their destination. Nothing of this eventuated. It was all a scam.

De Rays sent four boatloads of colonists to the southern tip of New Ireland where he had identified a bay that he thought suitable. He had read about the site in the journal of the French explorer, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, who had stopped there to replenish his supply of fresh water. The colony was a disaster and a ship load of two hundred and fifty Italians eventually found their way to Australia.

As a descendant of those Italians, I was amazed and perplexed by the madness of this plan. Had their life in Italy been so desperately bad? Had they somehow, fallen under the spell of this charismatic Frenchman? Were they brave adventurers or hapless victims of a clever scam? I decided to write this novel in an effort to help me understand what motivated these three hundred peasants to make such a choice.

*Paradiso* stays close to the actual events and is peopled by real characters, but this is my imagined version of the expedition, brought to life through the eyes of two children on the voyage (my great-aunt and great-uncle).

Over a period of ten years, I visited Italy three times, explored the local villages of my forebears, attended a global reunion of my extended family and travelled the rail lines of Italy from Veneto to Marseille in France, using the rail network that had existed in 1880.

The missing link in my research was the expeditioners' experience in New Guinea. I had read accounts of the colony in a number of books, most notably Michael Moran's *Beyond the Coral Sea*. So, in 2016 I decided to visit New Ireland and the site of the disastrous colonial dream to get a personal perspective.

My brother agreed to accompany me. A friend, Gabrielle Samson, who had lived in Papua New Guinea as a young women's health worker in the 1970s, came along as our *Tok Pisin* speaker (on the condition that we schedule a side trip to Mt Hagen as part of the trip).

My first challenge was how to even reach the remote location. There are no regular services to the site—no roads, no airstrips, no ferry services. It is so remote that even the New Ireland locals call it 'The Last Corner'.

In 2012 a doctor from Australian Doctors International visited the southern health centres of New Ireland. She described the conditions: 'At the Puk Puk Health Centre, no doctor had been there for over ten years!' Further south (another two hours by boat) Lamassa and Lambom (the island off the Nouvelle France colony) were described as: 'even more remote than Puk Puk. The health centre is extremely run down. There's only one chair in the whole clinic and no running water.'

My friend Julian Pepperell, a marine biologist with a special interest in marlin fishing, put me in touch with John Lau who, together with his wife, Dame Sandra Lau, operate Tropicana, the general store in Kokopo near Rabaul on East New Britain. Of Chinese descent, and a keen marlin fisherman, John was born in the caves behind Rabaul during World War II. John had never met me but, on Julian's recommendation, had generously offered to take us on a ride across St George's Channel.

The day we arrived in Kokopo we checked into our accommodation and decided to contact John immediately. We found his 'emporium' (it sold everything from rice to motor bikes) on the foreshore at the southern end of Kokopo. John invited us to stay for lunch. 'Let's go tomorrow,' he said as we left. 'Be here at 6.00 am'.

The next morning John gently motored from his jetty (the only one in Kokopo) towards deep water at which point he opened the throttle and nearly catapulted me off the back of his game-fishing boat. Two high-speed hours later we found ourselves in a quiet bay protected from the prevailing winds by the Island of Lambom. The water was a beautiful turquoise, and the jungle thick to the edge of the pebble beach. Within minutes of our arrival a small flotilla of dugout canoes emerged from the shadows of Lambom Island enquiring of our business. John negotiated for a group of locals to take us ashore and show us the remains of the site. They knew the story well. They had obviously had a small number of pilgrims visit the site previously. John went fishing.

On the land that had been intended as home for 300 Italians, an export point for the rich minerals and produce that was to come from this venture, and a cathedral, there now lived one self-sustaining family in one dwelling. Coconut palms crowded



Garden surrounds—French bricks intended for a cathedral at Port Breton (top); Port Breton, New Ireland. Metal casing remnant from La Nouvelle France colony (below)



the site, native fruit trees and shrubs were scattered across the landscape; a fast-flowing stream gushed fresh water from the steep mountain range backing the site and flowed to the bay.

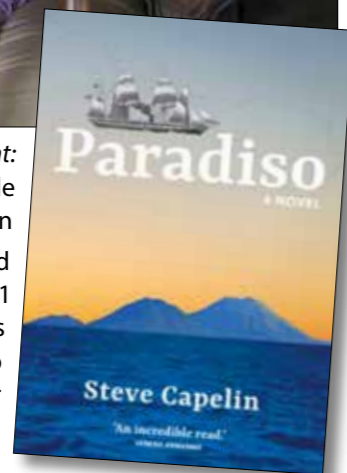
The only evidence remaining of the Italians was a large cast-iron casing for a mineral separator lying discarded on the beach, and a few hundred French bricks intended for construction of the promised cathedral.

It was eerie. We wandered the site; heard the stories told us by the locals; visited the burial site—a series of stone mounds on a headland facing east; sat by the stream and absorbed the stillness of this remote location and souvenired a brick as evidence of our visit.

Much of what remained when the colony was abandoned was salvaged by Thomas Farrell for his trading partner, Queen Emma, the infamous Queen of the South Seas. Recovered material became building resources, was traded across the islands, or in the case of the large marble slab intended as the altar for the cathedral, became the bar in Queen Emma's colonial mansion on the nearby Duke of York Islands.



Left to Right:  
Mick Capelin, Gabrielle  
Samson & Steve Capelin  
Steve's novel was reviewed  
in the September 2021  
issue of *PNG Kundu* and is  
available from AndAlso  
Books and AVID Reader  
Bookshop, Brisbane



Back in Kokopo we drove up to Rabaul to visit the local museum where, purely by chance, we met the renowned local historian, the late Gideon Kakabin, who introduced us to the story of the fierce Tolai warriors from New Ireland who had invaded New Britain and forced the original Baining people to retreat to the hinterland. We witnessed the dawn re-enactment of the arrival of the Duk Duk spirits (a secret society within the Tolai world) to the shores of East New Britain as the beginning of the Mask Festival. That night Gideon took us into the high country behind Kokopo to witness a rarely performed but spectacular Baining Fire Dance.

Our week at Kokopo included visits to the submarine caves the Japanese had carved into the Rabaul cliffs during WWII, the beautifully maintained Bita Paka War Cemetery outside Kokopo, the resting place of more than a thousand Australian and Indian troops who lost their lives in battle or as prisoners of war in New Britain. I was amazed by the rich local and contemporary history of East New Britain, a history of which I had been completely ignorant.

Naturally not everything went according to plan. The day before we were due to leave (and travel via Port Moresby to Mt Hagen) there was a pilots' strike and scheduling went haywire. We were told to arrive at the airport before dawn the next morning and we would be flown out on the first flight. That became a long day of waiting and hoping.

Ultimately, things did work out and we arrived in Hagen as the sun set over the rugged highland ranges for another fabulous week. Gabrielle found her close friend Teresa Bolga, from forty years earlier, which was a beautiful moment and we were privileged to make contact with and have Brian Leahy (the son of Daniel who arrived in the highlands in 1933 with his brother, Mick), as our guide for two days. Beautiful. A little dangerous. But I was overwhelmed with the care the locals showed towards us. There was plenty of razor wire but also plenty of smiling faces. I felt safe.

I came home changed. I became an advocate to my friends of this magical and mysterious land of contrasts and complexity, our closest neighbour and yet a neighbour so undervalued and underappreciated by us. ♦

## Bristol Freighter Meets Wau Airstrip

**RON AUSTIN**

**The ex-Pakistani aircraft described by me in a previous issue of *PNG Kundu* was not the first of the Bristol Freighters (B170s) to fly in the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG).**

In my early years in TPNG, experienced pilots conducted my flying endorsement training before they returned to Australia at the end of their posting. They taught us not only to navigate around the un-mapped Highlands, but how to survive this different aviation environment while flying in the extremely dangerous mix of mountains and cloud.

During this endorsement training on DC3s, we landed on the steep slope that is the airstrip at Wau. We learned to increase engine power immediately on touchdown to maintain our rolling inertia up the slope to the top of the grass field. We then swung the tail around until the aircraft was facing across the slope. The *bois* would then duck under the wings with the wheel chocks, fit them tightly against the front and back of the wheels and only then, securely held, could we stop the engines.

My trainer then told me about what happened to the first Bristol Freighter to fly in TPNG.

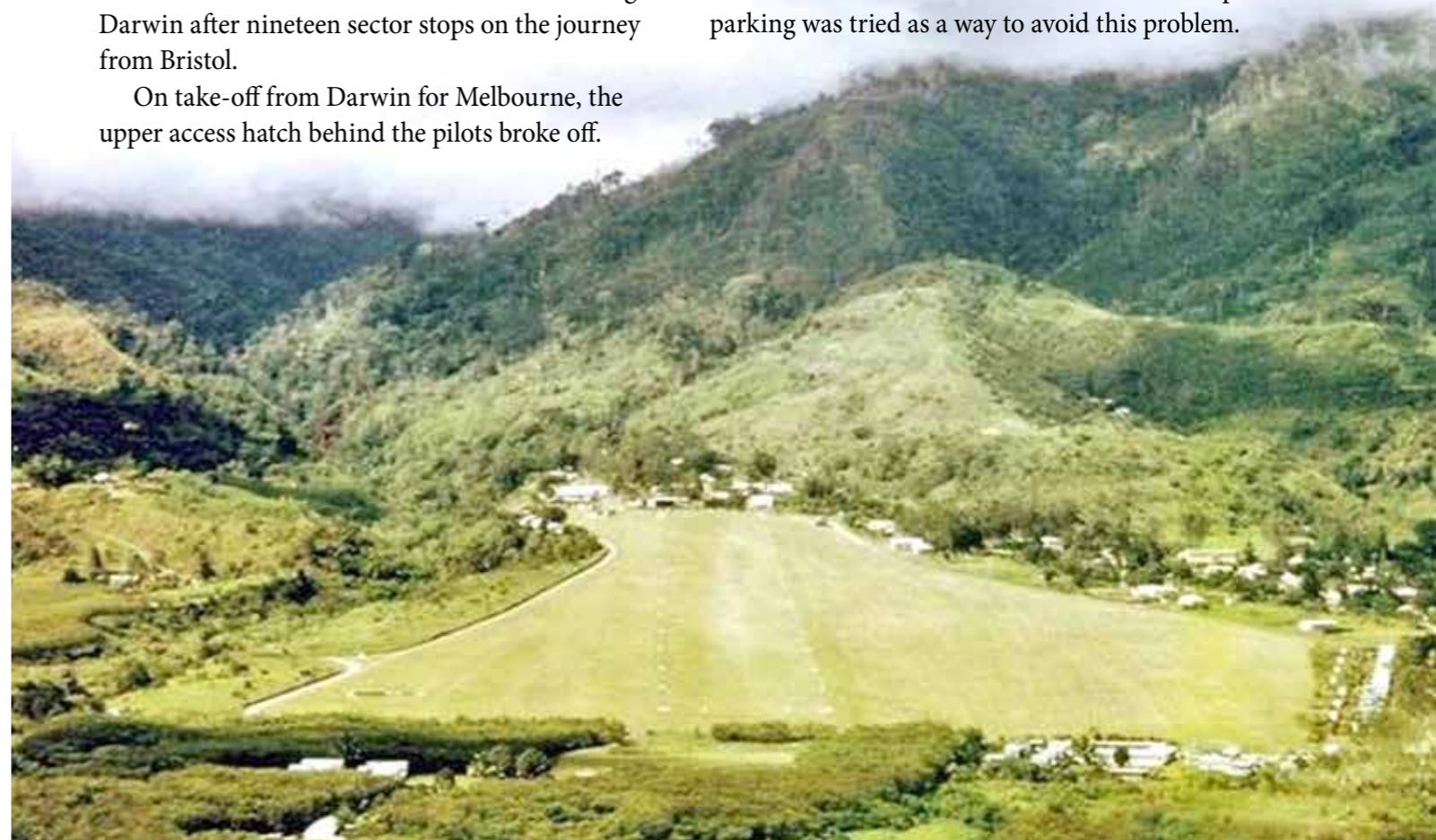
The Bristol Aeroplane Company in England sent a demonstrator Bristol Freighter 1701A, registration G-AIMC, on a sales tour of Australia, New Zealand and TPNG. It left the UK in March 1947, arriving in Darwin after nineteen sector stops on the journey from Bristol.

On take-off from Darwin for Melbourne, the upper access hatch behind the pilots broke off.

I can relate to this; I too lost a hatch, having failed to check that it was locked after a service in Madang. In my case there was no damage but in the Darwin incident the hatch damaged the tailplane. The demonstrator aircraft was repaired, and although this delayed the New Zealand tour, it commenced in July 1947. It was a huge success, as STRAITS Airfreight Express ordered twenty-three of them to carry freight between the North and South islands of New Zealand.

In October 1947, this demonstration aircraft was serviced and then loaned to Qantas for evaluation in TPNG. Part of the overall assessment was its ability to operate in the Highland goldfields of TPNG. It made several flights into grass strips at Wau and Bulolo. Remember, the Wau strip is 3400 feet above sea level and has a one in twelve slope.

On its last day the aircraft landed up the slope and parked at the top facing up, not across the slope as recommended. This was because, previously, sideways parking had been tried, but the slope distorted the aircraft fuselage and made it difficult to lock the front clam-shell doors. Thus, nose-up parking was tried as a way to avoid this problem.





After stopping, chocks were fitted under the wheels and the parking brake was applied. However, the nipple on the parking brake became detached from the brake lever and the aircraft ran backward down the hill with the personnel still on board. The engineer and one other jumped clear but the rest were carried down the hill and over a three metre drop at the bottom. No one was seriously injured.

On impact, the fuselage broke in the region of the rear door and the aircraft was damaged beyond repair. All equipment, including the engines, was removed for re-use. The fuselage remained there, and native employees of an adjacent coffee plantation used it for quarters. The aircraft had only flown 250 hours and was valued at £50,000. ♦

**Date:** Sunday, 23 November 1947  
**Type:** Bristol 170 Freighter IA   
**Operator:** Bristol Aeroplane Company  
**Registration:** G-AIMC **MSN:** 12793  
**First flight:** Crew 5 / Passengers 0 / Fatalities 0  
**Aircraft damage:** Damaged beyond repair  
**Location:** Wau Airport (WUG) (Papua New Guinea)  
**Phase:** Landing (LDG) **Nature:** Demonstration  
**Departure airport:** ?  
**Destination airport:** Wau (WUG/AYWU), PNG  
**Narrative:** The Bristol landed uphill on the inclined Wau runway. At the end of the landing run the brake cable failed, causing the aircraft to run backwards, ending up in a ditch.  
<https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19471123-0>



## The Mount Turu Cargo Cult of 1971

**GRAHAM EGAN**

**I learnt about cargo cults during teacher training at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) and, while teaching at Maprik High School, fifty years ago in 1971, I encountered one. Its focus was Mt Turu in the Yangoru area of the East Sepik Province. Mt Turu is one of the peaks in the Prince Alexander range of mountains between the north coast and the Sepik River.**

The cult developed within an organisation known as the Peli Association that was headed by the charismatic Matthias Yaliwan, who lived in Ambukanja village up high on the side of Mt Turu.

A team from the United States Air Force had, in the early 1960s, set up a concrete trigonometric marker on the top of the mountain to aid mapping. Cult members, suspicious of the marker's presence, believed that its removal would ensure the release of the wealth and goods that were trapped inside the mountain. This bounty could all be magically observed by viewing the mountain through a used flash cube that a photographer had discarded, and a cult member had rescued. It was all set to happen on Wednesday, 7 July 1971—the seventh day of the seventh month.

Peli Association adherents, numbering some 60,000 eventually, prepared for the event by reorganising their villages by constructing a settlement, which had houses and small token

garden plots. There were imitations of bureaucracy with villagers inhabiting 'offices' and distributing meaningless pieces of paper as if engaged in general office work. Unmarried girls, termed 'flowers', were employed to 'paitim dis' to ensure the increase of contributions given by cult supporters. This activity involved the constant movement, day and night, of coins in metal dishes. Cult workers communicated with each other using telephones made of tin cans and string. Large crates painted white to represent refrigerators stood in corners, ready to be filled with beer when the great day came.

The name of Agatha Christie, the author (above), somehow, became caught up in the cult. After all her surname contained the name of the saviour—Christ. The 50-cent piece issued in 1970 to commemorate the bicentenary of Captain Cook's landing in Australia (above) became a cult item, too. The reverse of the coin bore an image of Captain Cook which cultists claimed instead to be that of Agatha Christie.

The Administration and the missions were concerned about what might happen on 7 July and there was much interest from journalists. The Second Battalion of the Pacific Islands Regiment, based at Moem Barracks in Wewak, conducted rehearsals of what would happen if the civil authorities were unable to cope and had to call in the military to restore order.

The Administrator, David Hay, visited Maprik in May 1971 and called in to see us at Maprik High School. He assured us the Administration was watching the situation. When his motorcade left the school, on the way to Hayfield airstrip, our students ran towards the vehicles, throwing flowers, leaves and fronds at the car. Secreted in one of the bouquets was a stone which hit his car. If that happened today, there would probably be a full anti-terrorist reaction. Hayfield airstrip was named after David Hay, who had served there during World War II.

7 July dawned. At Maprik High School we kept on teaching but kept one eye on the road and an ear to the radio to see what would happen. Everything was very quiet in the normally buzzing Maprik township five kilometres away and attendance at Maprik Primary School was noticeably smaller. Journalists atop Mt Turu settled down to witness the events. Despite the fact that it was clearly against the law to interfere with such markers, the authorities had decided to be present but to do nothing to stop the removal of the concrete trig marker. After it had been solemnly removed it was taken down the mountain in a ceremonial procession, in complete silence. Thousands of local people watched with a mixture of awe and uncertain belief as it was carried along and presented to the Assistant District Officer at Yangoru Patrol Post.

Needless to say, none of the predicted bounty of cargo appeared. There was no miraculous increase of game in the bush. There were sporadic attempts to try again, to determine a different date or conclude that the cult adherents had not performed certain requirements and that the cargo would turn up later. But over the following months the cult dissipated and disappeared. We resumed normal activities at the school and life went on.

Not long after the trig marker's removal I

joined Bruce Skinner, kiap, and Paul Dennett, the Maprik Primary School headmaster to go over to Yangoru and visit Matthias Yaliwan in his village on the mountainside. Arriving there and dealing with the formality that attended this made us feel as if we were pilgrims seeking an audience with a sage. Yaliwan appeared and confounded our expectations—no arm waving or extravagant claims. He presented a modest and dignified demeanour, freely answering our queries. We didn't prepare our questions beforehand nor unfortunately did we make a record of his responses.

At the House of Assembly elections early in the following year, Matthias Yaliwan swept to an easy victory in his electorate. Unembarrassed at the failure of the cult, Yaliwan's new message involved swift independence, with himself as father of the new nation. He received very little support from fellow parliamentarians and he soon retreated from the public stage.

It was instructive and fascinating to be so close to one of the events that we had only heard about in anthropology lectures.

Acknowledgement: I thank Paul Dennett, then headmaster of Maprik Primary School, for help in the preparation of this story. ♦



Seated: Two children, Mattkias Yaliwan and Paul Dennett



# The Search for Nicolasa

## OTHERWISE, THE MOTHER CHIN HOI MEEN NEVER KNEW

### —An Historical Saga from Past to Present

ADAM PHILLIP LIU



Chin Hoi Meen  
and his mother, Nicolasa

#### Prologue: Origins Unrequited

Stricken with a cerebral glioma, a type of malignant brain tumour, and at the relatively young age of sixty-five, famous photographer, decorated war hero and entrepreneur Chin Hoi Meen (CHM) of Rabaul, and latterly of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, died without ever knowing his mother. The year was 1982 and in his last decades he had spared no expense, travelling and making fruitless enquiries in an endeavour to search for the mother whose name he knew but of whom he had no memory.

After Chin Hoi Meen died his youngest son and business successor, Raymond Chin, took up the mantle which was so dear to his father, and which was increasingly so to himself. Yet, tied down by a growing business empire, and with the passage of time dimming the truth and conflating legend and rumour, an impenetrable fog settled over the mystery that was Raymond's paternal grandmother. The ghosts of the past, it seemed, would not be so easily known.

#### A Fairy Tale Princess

The Chin family legend has various incarnations, however, certain basic facts are known. Chin Hoi Meen's father was the famous hotelier, Chin Yau Yee, better known to the world by the *nom de guerre* Ah Chee, and by 1915 he was well established in Rabaul as a successful entrepreneur and a man of legendary grace and geniality. By then, well into his forties, he desired a wife befitting his position, and to provide him with a son and heir. Here, the mysterious figure of 'Kulasa' enters our story, not a native islander as might be initially supposed, but as family lore had it, an 'olive-skinned beauty' who passed her complexion and exotic looks onto her son, Chin Hoi Meen. To the present day, her children and descendants continue to attribute their tall, distinct features from 'our grandmother, the Polynesian princess'. In actuality though, knowledge about her precise origin was hopelessly confused. Some thought she was Guamese, some from Saipan, some Filipino or Malay and others thought she even hailed further afield, from parts unknown.

Whatever her origins, Ah Chee and Kulasa were married in 1916 and Chin Hoi Meen was born on the 28 January 1917. There followed a daughter, Dolly, who was born and died in 1920 at the age of six days. Thereafter, Kulasa seems to have vanished from the record entirely.

Family lore is again contradictory, but variously says that she was kidnapped by a German man, or, that she ran away with a German man, or, that she was forced out by Ah Chee and then married a German man. The story begs a thousand questions, such as why did she leave her only son behind? Did she leave New Guinea and return to her native place, wherever that might have been? Did she remarry and have more children?

Or is the whole story of a German lover completely fanciful and did she in fact die in obscure ignominy shortly after her ejection from

the Chin household? Alternatively, a more mundane but rational explanation might be that she was simply another mother who died from complications of childbirth, as was common in those times.

#### 'Almost impossible'

The name Kulasa is the singular appendage to the entry of 'name and maiden surname of mother' on Chin Hoi Meen's death certificate, and reveals no other information. This information had been evidently drawn from an older, now lost, piece of documentation, and of which the certificate's informant had no recollection. Until two years ago this death certificate was the only piece of evidence that gave a hint of her identity.

Then, in late 2019 my father's first cousin, Raymond Chin, approached me with a proposition, to see if new life could be breathed into the search for his grandmother, Kulasa. He had heard of my ongoing research into the histories and genealogies of the Chinese in New Guinea and wondered if I could help. I was fascinated and intrigued and so I accepted, although I cautioned Raymond that the search may well prove fruitless. After all, the last anyone had ever heard of Kulasa was nearly 100 years before. The chances of solving this mystery, I thought, might be like trying to piece together bits of a broken needle in a massive 100-year-old genealogical haystack ... almost impossible.

#### The Evolution of Kulasa

Having the least information available can be a blessing in disguise; there is no surfeit of confusing information, and you take the most direct route available. In this case, the obvious place to look for Kulasa was at the registry of births, deaths and marriages in PNG, with the aim of obtaining the full birth registration information of Chin Hoi Meen.

Raymond and I made inquiries with the registry which is usually a difficult and unreliable facility to access. Yet, we were in luck, and after a few months of eager anticipation we managed to obtain an official transcript of Chin Hoi Meen's birth certificate, which provided us our next vital clue. In it, Kulasa was recorded as being of the tender age of eighteen at CHM's birth. Crucially, her place of birth was also listed and revealed as Saipan, Caroline Islands—a small but significant breakthrough.

In the months whilst waiting for CHM's birth

registration to arrive, I also consulted a little-known reference work, namely, the *Genealogical Index to Australians and other expatriates in Papua New Guinea 1888–1975*. This resource is a *pot-pourri* of indexed cemetery records, probate records, newspaper birth death and marriage records and other miscellaneous record sets.

As well as documenting the colonial European presence in PNG, the *Genealogical Index* is a valuable source of information on the Asian and Asian-mixed raced populations in PNG during that time. Consulting it, I discovered the indexed entries of both the marriage of Ah Chee, and, the birth of CHM. In both entries, where Kulasa's name was expected, was instead written the name of 'Nicolasa (Nicolasa) Asan'. The birth of CHM's deceased infant sister, Dolly, was also indexed, but with her mother's name as simply put as, 'Colosa'. Joining the dots, it then became quite apparent that Kulasa was merely a spelling variant on 'Colosa', but both were clearly shortened forms of the fully realised and exotic-sounding name of Nicolasa. The mysterious Kulasa of unknown place now became Nicolasa Asan of Saipan, Caroline Islands, and the identity of CHM's mother, and where to look for her, came into much clearer focus.

#### No Strangers to These Shores

The sandy beaches, crystal lagoons and verdant coastlines of former German New Guinea, were certainly no stranger to itinerant folk from abroad. As well as the usual contingent of pith-helmeted, starched colonials, there came large numbers of



A rare photo of Ah Chee (centre) outside his hotel with two Australian friends who no doubt benefited from his famed generosity



industrious and stoic Chinese merchants, artisans and labourers, of which Ah Chee stood among them. Then, in much smaller numbers, came the indentured Malays, Javanese and Ambonese, who often worked as clerks and labourers. There was also a sprinkling of adventurous Japanese artisans and businessmen. Others yet, were the Micronesian Caroline islanders, principally from the miniscule island colonies of Guam, Yap, and Saipan, the last being Nicolasa's native land. Saipan Island was sold by Spain to the German Empire in 1899, who in turn constituted it as a part of German New Guinea.

From that time on, surnames of Carolinian origin begin appearing in New Guinea, among them: Guerrero, De La Cruz, Conboy, Aquingo, Alden, Esteves, Marquess, Tadoi and Luhan. One of the witnesses to the marriage to Ah Chee and Nicolasa was one Titus Conboy, a fellow Carolinian, although he appears to be unrelated to her.

Nicolasa and her kinsfolk belonged to the Chamorro, originally, a dark-skinned, Austronesian peoples who originated in south-east Asia and migrated throughout the western Pacific islands. Gradually, starting with Spanish colonisation in 1668, the indigenous Chamorro became increasingly mixed with workers and migrants from Asia, most



Chin Hoi Meen, aged three or four (*standing*) and his mother, Nicolasa (*right*)

often from the Philippine Islands (also a Spanish colony), but also from China and Japan.

Their Spanish colonial masters themselves were not averse to intermarrying with the indigenous and immigrant locals, thus further colouring the mixing pot and in the process introducing their Spanish surnames. Centuries of genetic mixing characterise the modern Chamorro people today, whose complex features betray all of their islander, Asian and European roots.

### Following the Chamorro Grapevine

Armed with knowledge of Nicolasa's origins, and with the benefit of modern technology, I began a Google search for Chamorro historians and researchers, and was referred to Bernard Punzalan, the founder of the Chamorro Roots Genealogy Project, and amateur historian and genealogist, Herman T Guerrero, who has compiled the genealogies of hundreds of Chamorro families. Their copious research allowed me to fill in many of the details of her life.

### The Extraordinary Life of Nicolasa Lujan Asan: a biographical sketch

Nicolasa Lujan Asan was born on the 3 January 1903 in the little town of Garapan on the island of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. She was the first, and as far as we know, only child of Isidro Asan and Josepha Santos Lujan. Isidro was a first-generation migrant from the Celebes in the Dutch East Indies, present day Indonesia, and so we can reasonably suppose that he was of Malayan origins. On the other hand, his wife Josepha, was purely local and had roots in Guam and Saipan traceable to the late 1700s. Surnames in her family included Camacho, Espinosa, Santos and Castro.

Nothing is known of her childhood and how she originally came to New Guinea is still completely mired in mystery. What is certain however is that on the 23 December 1915 she came to be married to the thirty-four-year old Chinese entrepreneur, Chin Yau Yee, 'Ah Chee', in the local registry office of Rabaul in German New Guinea.

She was still a child, barely thirteen, and not the adolescent eighteen as was implied on CHM's birth certificate. One can reasonably suppose that her age must have been overstated at the time to give some semblance of legitimacy to the proceedings, for even

back in those times, marriage at the age of thirteen was rather less common.

Nicolasa was fourteen when Chin Hoi Meen was born. Then, at age seventeen her daughter Dolly was born, and then tragically died after six days.

On 17 June 1922 Nicolasa gave birth out of wedlock to a daughter, Anita Cecile Nicolasa Schumann, in Rabaul. Five days later, on 22 June she married her new daughter's father, Hans Max Christlieb Schumann, in Rabaul. In 1923, Hans, Nicolasa and Anita departed Rabaul, never to return. The only clue that we have as to what might have caused such a seismic shift in her life comes from the remarks of her daughter many years later. In her own words, '[Nicolasa] left him behind when she decided to leave her Chinese husband and live with my father whom she had met earlier.'

Together the Schumann family travelled to and settled temporarily in Hamburg, Germany. In 1925 Hans sent Nicolasa and Anita on a vacation to the Far East. Amazingly, we learn that Nicolasa and Anita returned to her birthplace in Saipan to visit her family, her mother and her maternal grandmother both very much alive. After leaving Saipan Nicolasa and Anita made a quick stopover in Shanghai, to visit an uncle of Hans, before returning to Germany.

Years of itinerant travel followed for the Schumann family, following the changing fortunes of Hans, and economic ebbs and flows of the roaring twenties and the slump of the thirties. From 1928–30 Hans and Nicolasa lived in Yaounde in the Cameroons, West Africa, whilst their daughter Anita attended a convent school in Germany. From 1930–35 they relocated to the British Gold Coast, now present-day Ghana, where Hans bought and operated a coconut plantation. It is here, in Kumasi, Ghana, that their second daughter, Victoria Maria Johanna Schumann, was born on 19 April 1933. From 1935–40 the family live in Lagos, Nigeria, where Hans worked as a representative for a German brewery.

During these years there Anita schooled in Germany but spent holidays where possible with her family in West Africa. Despite some hard economic times, several photos emerge from this period that demonstrate a close-knit family life. Hans and Nicolasa appear to have been a happy couple.

In 1939, with the outbreak of war in Europe, the Schumann family were interned by the British in

Ibadan, Nigeria. After six months, the Schumanns, along with the rest of the interned families were relocated to Kingston, Jamaica, where they spent the remainder of the war. It was here in Jamaica, after twenty-five years of marriage, that Hans Schumann died in 1947 at the age of fifty-five, ostensibly from liver cirrhosis, a long-term complication of quinine used as an antimalarial. Anita obtained a job in Caracas, Venezuela and, soon after, Nicolasa and Victoria joined her, and Nicolasa herself obtained a job with the American Embassy in Caracas. In 1949, Nicolasa was transferred to a post in Washington DC, where Victoria finished her schooling.

Throughout the fifties, sixties and seventies Nicolasa lived in various locations in the Western United States—Palm Springs, San Diego and Carson City, and she returned occasionally to Venezuela to visit and live with her daughter, Anita. Then, at the advanced age of seventy, Nicolasa married for the third and last time to Clarence Tyson. Their marriage lasted ten years until his death in 1983.

Nicolasa lived on for sixteen more years before she died on 25 December 1999 in Carson City, Nevada—outliving her son, Chin Hoi Meen, by seventeen years. She lived well into the adult lives of CHM's children, her New Guinea-born grandchildren, who always wondered about her, but never knew she was living but half a world away. ♦

**This is an edited extract from the original article, which can be accessed on our website at [www.pngaa.org/other-stories/](http://www.pngaa.org/other-stories/)**



Hans Schumann, Nicolasa and their daughter, Anita



# A Walk from Tapini to Kokoda and Port Moresby

**BOB HOAD**

**I walked the Kokoda Trail many years ago. Tasked to do an election patrol for the House of Assembly (I was the Returning Officer, amongst other things), I started from my station at Tapini. I crossed the Owen Stanley Range and followed down the north-flowing Chirima River. By the end of this I was as close to Port Moresby as I was to my station, so I continued on to Kokoda and in the next four days, walked from there to Port Moresby. (In those days walking Kokoda–Port Moresby was usually considered to take four to five days.)**

The last two days into Kokoda had been quite long days. After starting at 6.00 am, at about 10.00 I said to my porters: 'Where do we stay tonight?'

'In a cave,' they replied. We were travelling light with a couple of ballot boxes and no tents. At about 2.00 pm I asked: 'Where is this cave?' They replied: 'We don't know.' 'So how will we find it?' 'Oh, someone left earlier this morning and he said he would put a stick on the track with a red leaf on it.'

Sounded great, a stick on a thin track in the middle of the jungle, with leaf attached!

It reminded me of a trip about a year earlier whilst walking up a remote valley on a wet dreary day, through stinging nettles with leeches and mosquitos. When I came to the top of the pass I saw a bundle of long stringy sticks. They appeared quite out of place, like rafters for a house but with no houses. When the porters arrived, I asked what they were for. They replied: 'We knock the Bird of Paradise (*Raggiana*) out of the sky when they fly out through this pass.'

I was pretty exhausted and thought this sounded ridiculous but, just then, a flock of *Raggiana* flew low through the gap. I was astounded. I had never heard of

*Raggiana* flying in a flock, only in pairs, if that. Maybe there were twelve to fifteen birds. I took more interest and they explained that they hid in the scrub with their sticks vertical, absolutely still. At the first sight of the birds they waved their sticks frantically, hoping to knock a bird or two down. Usually, it was successful.

Back to the Kokoda Trail. At about 6.00 pm, with the last light disappearing in the jungle, I said: 'That's it. I'm stuffed,' and sat down in a puddle of water. My back to a tree, and rain still falling lightly, I looked at the leeches on my legs. They can stay there for the night, I thought. 'This is not so bad, at least no one is shooting at me.'

About 3.00 am I awoke. It was still raining. When daylight started to filter through the trees I got up, stretched a bit, and said to the porters: 'I'm heading off.' Within five minutes I found it. A stick on the track in the middle of the jungle with a red leaf on it. A sharp smooth cut and the end split and a bright red leaf projecting. As good a signpost as any. I waited for the porters to come and said: 'Well, let's have a look at this cave.' It was little more than a hanging rock. Places like this are rock hard and offer little comfort, often with little bitey things. But they are out of the rain. Today's walk was only for eight hours and so I arrived at Kokoda.

Kokoda had a rubber plantation and a government station with airstrip. A few miles away Mount Lamington had erupted violently in 1951 wiping out the government station at Higaturu as well as local villages. The people are the Orokaiva. I had some good police from there.

From Kokoda it is two days walk to the top of the pass (at 7,000 feet), Myola Lake (swampy) and Kagi village. The people on the southern side of the range are the Koiari.

At Kagi a couple of Australian backpackers struggled up. Huge back packs, heavy shirts, long pants with all pockets stuffed with gear, boots, hat and the first one with rope hanging off his belt. I don't know why. 'G'day mate,' I said, with a cheery grin. He looked at me with disdain. I was wearing a torn T-shirt and dirty boxer shorts. No boots. I had lost them long ago and was going bare foot. No hat either. He struggled past without a smile or curious gesture of any kind. 'Nice day,' I added, but there was no response.

His mate came along a couple of minutes later and I gave him another hearty 'G'day, mate,' but he wouldn't talk either. He was not impressed with me. Not a word was spoken. Clearly, I was not dressed so stylishly as these backpackers. Head down, he struggled past. The top of the pass is an old garden area and the track is, from time to time, overgrown. When it rains the grass lies flat. The track cannot be seen. On occasions trekkers have been lost or rather, they have lost their way. Now me, I would go bare foot, feeling the way of the track with my bare feet.

There were five villages and five airstrips on the way down to Owers Corner—Kagi, Efogi, Menari, Naro, and I forget the other one. Bodiunomu and Suria are further to the west and then you have the Goilala, where I had come from. The mountains are far more interesting in my opinion—11,000 to 14,000 feet. Mount Albert Edward is a large alpine grassland with deep glaciated valleys, rhododendron forests and lakes—very pretty and very cold.

The Koiari are a relatively small group of people, numbering little more than 1,100. They live in small villages. They used to live in tree houses built in the very tops of trees for their protection. Today they are outnumbered by Highland settlers who have migrated to the old and decaying rubber plantations, and to newer settlements around the Sirinumu dam. They are very different from their neighbours to the south-west, the Motuans, who live on the edge of the sea. Indeed, the Motuans lived in houses out over the sea in fear of their enemies, the Koiari.

The plateau rises up to the Kokoda pass (at Kagi). It is generally forested and drained by small streams which flow to the west into the Brown river. The Goldie River is to the south and it, too, flows into the swamps with the Brown River. Setting out from Kagi will take you down and up, and up and down, and



Jungle green rest stop

so forth, to cross more streams, to the Goldie River. After two days we climb up to Owers Corner, the start of the dirt/gravelled road to our destination, Port Moresby.

Approaching the top in the late afternoon I heard familiar voices and one boldly proclaiming: 'Kiaps never go on patrol anymore.' To my astonishment there stood Steve Cutlack, the former mature-age patrol officer, now tour operator, who had come up the range with a small group of tourists. I had to correct him, though I have to admit, it may be quite rare. Steve lived down on the Laloki River near 12 Mile. Although already crowded in his vehicle, Steve agreed to give me, and my boxes and ballot boxes, a lift to Port Moresby. There is nothing worse than finishing a patrol walking down a long hard gravel road. Thanks, Steve.

A couple of days in Port Moresby allowed me to complete my electoral returns before returning to my station, Tapini, by aircraft, in forty minutes. My five porters also returned to their mountain home, the Catholic mission at Yongai, but they had to walk. We had shared a tough, but interesting, journey together. Telling stories about the bush, the war, the government, the parliament, past and future—we forgot the rain and the cold.

The Catholic mission did a fantastic job in this area and the priests were among my best friends. But they have all gone, having returned to Europe or having died and been buried either on their mission stations or on Yule Island. So too have all the kiaps, albeit many stayed on in various other roles after Independence, but they too are now old and retired or dead. ♦



A Kokoda Trail crossing





## The Imuri Fire Dancers

LAURA ZIMMER-TAMAKOSHI

Vincent Kumura, whose fire dancers were on the front cover of the September issue of *PNG Kundu*, and I became Facebook friends several years ago. Having Gende (Bundi) friends in common, I was aware of Vincent's tourist business (Eco-Lodge) but, in visiting the Gende over forty years to do anthropological research, I neither saw nor heard of the Imuri fire dancers.



I do know Imuri. It is a tiny settlement on the 'road' between Karasokara and Yandera villages that I passed on treks to and from Yandera. I am also familiar with Snow Pass (*snopas*), a village high in the clouds that I passed by on my way in and out of the Gende area *via* the Chimbu route. I spent four weeks there in 2009 with a team of assistants carrying out a census/social impact study funded by Marengo Mining when they thought they might have found a valuable copper deposit in addition to one closer to Yandera village.

When Marengo's board of advisors dropped in, a local man dressed in *Mavi* (dog) costume greeted them along with other dancers. Traditionally, Gende male initiates called themselves *Mavi* in honour of wild dogs living in the vast forests in the area. While traditional male initiations are no longer carried out and haven't been since the early years I was in Yandera in 1982-83 and while I taught at UPNG in 1986 throughout 1989, young and not so young men continue to call one another *mavi* in friendly camaraderie. This was the case during my eleven visits between 1994 and 2016 to places like Ramu Nickel, Yandera and many other Gende villages.



Big events for tourists were rare, although the two mining companies in the area financed the occasional circle of women dressed in traditional garb meeting company personnel.

Tourist operations such as Kumura's and Betty Higgin's lodge up on nearby Mt Wilhelm provide work for local people as well as opportunities for traditions to be revived—and revised. After the COVID-19 pandemic settles down, I look forward to returning to PNG, seeing friends like Betty Higgins (whose father was a Big Man in Yandera who took me under his wing), and hopefully the fire dancers. Over the years, my work has focused on economic change and inequality and their political and social impacts on Gende society. The revival and transformation of old customs in the modern tourist industry would make an interesting study.

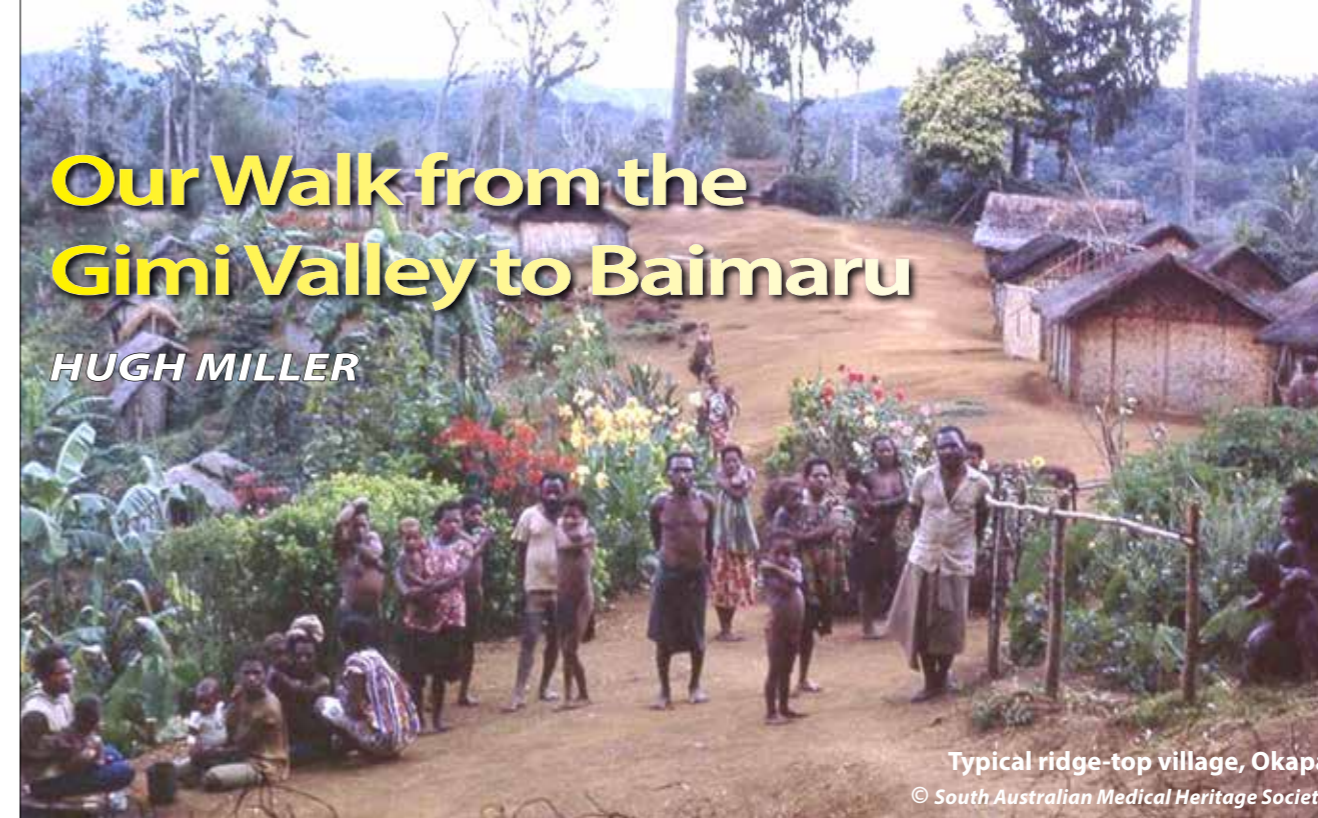
When I first worked with the Gende I witnessed two large exchange events (*Poi Nomu*) that included the whole Gende community but none of these recent dances. The events went on for weeks with multiple *singsings* and various ceremonies. Hundreds of pigs and thousands of Kina were exchanged. None of it was for tourism. It was for their own social and political ends. I am looking forward to getting back to PNG. Perhaps I will get to see and learn more about these and other new enterprises of Kumura and Betty. ♦

FEATURED: 1. Karasokara leaders entering Yandera to receive pigs at the *Poi Nomu* celebrations in 1982; 2. Gende Big Man Ruge Angiva giving away one of his daughters in marriage during the *Poi Nomu* festivities in Yandera village, 1982; 3. *Mavi* the dog man; 4. Dancers from Karasokara Village entering Yandera during Yandera's 1982 *Poi Nomu* All photos by Laura Zimmer (now Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi)



## Our Walk from the Gimi Valley to Baimaru

HUGH MILLER



Typical ridge-top village, Okapa  
© South Australian Medical Heritage Society

My reason for writing the following is that both the June 2021 and September 2021 issues of *PNG Kundu* had references to Kuru and Carleton Gajdusek. I never met him as he had departed Okapa in the Eastern Highlands before I arrived. Later when he was in Holland we swapped some correspondence about his traverses around the country. He was pleased to hear of our discovery of his tree blaze.

I worked for Jascar, a Kainantu trading company, in 1967-69 mainly in the Okapa area and then Ralph Trivett and I set up Okapa Trading Company in 1969-70. Our business premises were past the Kuru hospital built by the Lutherans. I remember seeing villagers lined up for census with virtually no females as they had been taken by Kuru. Also, any wetlands had people stricken with Kuru poking around trying to find the packages responsible for their Kuru they believed the sorcerers had buried there.

June 1970, Kainantu was all atwitter about Lawrie Cremin having navigated a dinghy from the Ramu to the Sepik via the inland route. Lots of people were planning similar trips including my boss, Mike Collins, who wanted to do Kainantu to Madang overland.

Ralph Trivett and I decided that we would try for Gimi Valley to Baimuru when the coffee season quietened down. We went to Goroka and spoke to Jim Leahy who told us it would take at least three months.

In late July in 1970 Ralph and I, in the company of John White of New Tribes Mission and the compass from a BBQ sauce bottle, we set off. The

promised carriers didn't show up so we marched off into the bush without them until some locals, feeling embarrassed, picked up our one patrol box and followed.

There was only one village in the lower Gimi that we passed and then it was up and down mountains often on all fours. Fortunately, for every long uphill there was a longer downhill as we headed for the lowlands. There were no sights to be seen as we were continually in dense jungle. Sometimes I could discern a slight difference in the vegetation so we may have been on an old trade route. I noticed that our carriers all plucked leaves as they walked along and this may have been how they marked the trail in days past.

We came at one point to the flimsiest and longest suspension bridge I have ever seen. No sign of population but I think it may have been the Lemari River. The footing was two canes wide and the very low side canes were only one. It was difficult to get our patrol box across.

After this the faint trail petered out and we started hacking our way along creek banks and if it got too steep felling a tree to cross to the other side. No signs of any habitation—just endless square



miles of jungle. Our BBQ sauce compass assured us we were heading south which was the right direction.

We now seemed to have reached the lowlands and we started letting off salvos of gunfire to see if it would attract anybody. On day five some Papuan nomads located us and they told us that a Kuru doctor and a kiap had passed through some years ago. They showed us a tree blazed with initials one of which I recognised as CG, Carleton Gajdusek.

The nomads have an interesting lifestyle. Finding a good patch of mature sago trees they make a temporary camp, process the sago, eat it then move on.

These nomads were unknown to the government and a patrol was sent down to 'discover' them when we got back and reported their presence. The men had had some contact with the outside world in that oil exploration teams had been up the big river in the fifties. So, they had old style everything including a transistor radio that must have been the first ever off the National brand assembly line. They had very old clothes on when we met them but when they realised we were not official they wore nothing.

One of the biggest banes of our travels were the leeches. They were there in their thousands. They managed to suck through our canvas jungle boots and socks. I counted thirty on one boot. In the morning when we were fresh we took great pains to brush them off but in the afternoon, when tired, we tended to forget about them. Come evening and the boots removed we saw lots of blood—they inject an anti-coagulant and the wounds keep bleeding.

So there we were, our two discoverers took us on a two-day walk to where there was a long house. The men were on one end and separated by a midway wall from the women at the other end. I inquired where they co-habited and they told me 'in the jungle'. There must have been some hilarious village stories about this custom considering the abounding leeches.

We never saw a woman as they were on the other side of the wall and food was passed across. This was mainly sago in bamboo tubes which is like eating sponge rubber. Speaking of food, I shot a hornbill bird and the old saying of put a stone in the pot and when the stone softens throw away the bird and eat the stone was certainly true in this case.

This settlement was on the banks of a fairly big stream. We sent word downstream that we needed canoes and two days later two showed up. It was a

very hairy ride in single dugouts over rapids until reaching the calm Purari River. Here we ditched one canoe and lashed bamboo on both sides of the other and with a couple of locals and three or four Okapaiaans set off downriver.

Being half starved we gorged on semi-green bananas and pawpaws on reaching the first permanent village. This had the effect of all of us being sick at both ends.

Through the Purari delta country by night, with loud ominous splashing, we eventually reached Kapuna United Mission Hospital where the New Zealand doctors, husband and wife, took care of us all. The New Tribes missionary with us was a guy from Hounslow near London airport. He and his wife had a small operation in the Gimi Valley. There was a bit of an undercurrent of friction when the United Mission doctors at Kapuna discovered that he was a competing missionary.

There was an MAF amphibian there that flew Ralph and me the twelve miles to Baimuru and the Okapa men and John White back to Tarabo near Okapa. This is where I feel all my film went missing. Kodak film was in plastic tubes which were much desired as a lime container for betel-nut chewing. So the only photos that survive are a couple of Polaroids.

Staying in the Baimuru hotel was an experience. There was no air conditioning in those days and hot as hell. My room had a wall mural of an alpine snow scene painted by some character who couldn't pay his bill and did murals to cover his costs. Lying there in a lather of sweat looking at an alpine scene was unforgettable. Baimuru had maybe a mile of road and a couple of government Land Cruisers but it had maybe thousands of miles of waterways and no government boat.

After a couple of days there I went onto the MV *Koki* for the voyage to Port Moresby. As it was the south-east season the boat did not travel at night and we anchored off shore at Kerema and at Kairuku on Yule Island. Yule island I remember well as it is the only place I have ever been that in the evening you could not see your bare arm as it was so densely covered by mosquitoes.

I flew back to Lae and then got a lift to Kainantu by Jascar truck—three weeks to the day after we left we were back where we started. ♦

# Recollections of a Plantation Manager in the New Guinea Islands

**IAN SMITH**

**In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Papua New Guinea relied heavily on copra- and cocoa-producing plantations to generate export income. Most of these properties were owned by two large companies, Burns Philp and WR Carpenter.**

I was employed by Coconuts Products Ltd in 1960, a subsidiary of WR Carpenter who owned about thirty large plantations throughout the New Guinea Islands. Their main office was at Rabaul.

Male plantation staff were recruited from Australia and New Zealand, however, other nationalities were employed, especially if they had tropical agricultural experience. The company preferred agricultural graduates as trainee plantation staff but, should an applicant have skills the company required, they would be considered for employment too. The latter instance is how I began working for Coconut Products, Rabaul, as I was previously employed as a foreman carpenter, having completed a five-year Sydney apprenticeship in building construction.

A contract became available for a four-month project in Rabaul to build a large factory that had been manufactured in Asia and left abandoned for many years, not assembled, in Coconut Products' storage yard, so it was a complete 'mess' of huge steel beams and no instruction book. The building had to be constructed over the existing one that housed the company's extrusion coconut oil manufacturing

area that worked twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week as dried copra was continuously arriving from their plantations. You could imagine it was extremely hot inside for the workers as the coconut oil was pressed out and the meal bagged for export.

With the factory construction completed I was asked if I would like to do Coconut Products' building work on their plantations which I accepted. It was interesting building brick furnaces for drying the wet copra and renovating employees' housing and managers' homes and the job required me to travel to various islands where the plantations were situated.

Travel between the islands for villagers, traders and church missionaries was usually by forty-foot (thirteen-metre) work boats. These were constructed of heavy timber with a wide beam and reasonably



A WR Carpenter Plantation, Rabaul



shallow draught and were a good sea boat, so most of my building materials and myself were transported in these vessels.

After about twelve months I gradually became tired of living out of a suitcase and having no permanent home, so I asked for a transfer to the plantation section of the company and this request was granted by the new managing director of the plantation division. This fellow, Leonard Clapan, had a background in the English Navy and had been captain of a destroyer in the Second World War. After it ended in 1945 he qualified with a tropical agricultural degree from the Imperial College of Agriculture in Trinidad.

As one would have expected, he managed all plantations and staff on Navy traditions, terminating employees' jobs if not up to the standard he expected. There was a big turnover of plantation staff—many expected it to be something out of the old Hollywood film, *South Pacific*, a sort of casual holiday, however, this was a long way from what a plantation manager's job entailed.

Early in a new cadet's career it was the government's legal requirement that all those employing native labour, especially in isolated locations, had to qualify and obtain a medical assistant's certificate. This required a six-week course at the emergency section at Nonga Base Hospital in Rabaul. It was not an easy course and a student couldn't expect to commit to memory all the treatments and diagnoses in such a short time, so the important handbook to consult was *Diseases Common in Malaysia and Polynesia* by Dr Clifford James. Now out of print, it was an excellent booklet on tropical ailments and so forth. Then there was the practical side of the medical assistants' course: injections, procaine, penicillin, morphine, snake bites, sewing up of wounds, etc. Of course, failing to pass the examination would mean dismissal from the company.

The company's advancement was for a new cadet to work with the manager of one of the large plantations with several others in their responsibilities. Training, bookwork and issuing of food supplies for the native employees meant long hours of work. Depending on one's enthusiasm, attitude and being able to cope, a cadet would advance to officer, then to relieving manager on a

smaller plantation, then hopefully be appointed to a junior manager's position.

With my previous experience with Coconut Products, I quickly progressed and over the next three or so years managed several plantations. The last posting was recognised as the best junior manager's property—situated on the east coast of New Ireland, it produced forty tonnes of dried copra per month. 'Pat Langat' encompassed about six km of beach frontages and extended into the hills for maybe six km. It was fully planted with coconut trees during the German occupation before 1914, so there was continuous replanting due to the age of the palms. The plantation manager's home was built on a coral headland overlooking the Bismarck Sea; it was a two-storey Queenslander surrounded by tropical gardens, completely isolated. The plantation's only access was by sea. There was an old 3BZ two-way radio that was of WWII vintage and near useless.

A plantation this size usually had a single manager and employed a native indentured workforce of 180 to 200. These were recruited from the New Guinea Highlands, mostly around the Mt Hagen area, Wabag, Minj, Chimbu and Kainantu, with about forty from each tribe. Having never ventured far from their villages, they signed a two-year contract with their thumbprint in ink. Half their wages were paid in cash every thirteen lunar months with the balance deferred until the end of the contract was completed.

One can only imagine leaving their homes, getting into a DC3 aeroplane for the flight to Rabaul, boarding a copra-carrying boat and travelling across an open and maybe rough sea to a lonely plantation. Government regulations required the manager to provide all meals, consisting of rice, canned fish and meat, flour and cooking oils and, if available, purchasing local produce of bananas and taro. Workers were issued with two blankets per person, a mosquito net and a weekly issue of tobacco, plus malaria tablets and wages. Those who had completed their two-year work contract would board the copra ship to return home; it was a time of much sorrow to leave their friends.

Many tonnes of food and general supplies had to be stored, including tractor and machinery parts, as sometimes it was two months before the ship would

*Continued on page 46*

## The Day I Gave the Bad News to Kela Smith



**The people who live along the Sepik River, who depend upon it for their livelihoods, are facing the fight of a lifetime. The Chinese-owned Guangdong Rising through its subsidiary, PanAust, is seeking approval from the Papua New Guinea government to establish the Frieda River copper and gold mine. If the Sepik people fail in their objections and the mine goes ahead, it is likely to cause far greater devastation to the environment than the controversial Panguna, Ok Tedi and Porgera mines.**

My interest in the mine stems from a visit I made to the site in January 1996 at the behest of the late Malcolm Roy 'Kela' Smith, CMG, MBE, DFC, the owner of Pacific Helicopters in Goroka. I had known Mal from the time he first came to Goroka as a chopper pilot around 1972, when I was Assistant District Commissioner in Goroka, and subsequently from 1988 to 1992 when I was Goroka Town Manager.

In 1962 I had spent six months at Imonda in the West Sepik establishing a new patrol post and airstrip on the border with Indonesia and in 1963 spent the year as officer-in-charge at Green River patrol post.

Mal contacted me in December 1995 to ask if I'd be interested to have a look at a joint venture proposal he was negotiating with representatives of the Frieda River mine site to setup an air charter business to ferry supplies from coastal ports to the Frieda River base camp. At the time I was comfortably ensconced in the inland Queensland town of Kilcoy running the family newsagency, but I was due to take a couple of weeks off to holiday

on the coast. Mal told me that if the venture got off the ground there would be an opportunity for me to take on a fly-in fly-out management position, so I decided to take up his offer to spend a fortnight in Papua New Guinea.

In January 1996 I flew to Port Moresby for a briefing, then went on to Goroka and, the following day, Mal and I flew by Cessna to Tabubil for an overnight stay at Cloudlands Hotel, managed by an old mate, Howard Mason. Here I met one of the landowners' representatives, a smooth-talking fellow who had been a minor diplomat in PNG's foreign affairs and was now working for Ok Tedi mines.

The next day we flew north to the airstrip alongside the Frieda River where I would spend about a week at the base camp. Mal flew back to Goroka. Within a day or two it became clear to me that things were not quite what I had been told. Even the expatriate base camp manager employed by the site's then owners, Highlands Gold, told me that Mal was not exactly welcome amongst the local people. He advised me to proceed cautiously.

I arranged meetings with local village people,



who came along reluctantly and only after reassurances that I was there to determine who the real landowners were. When they relaxed they informed me that the two men who were talking with Mal Smith had no authority to represent them, nor were they in any way related to anyone in that part of the Sepik, not even by marriage.

This information certainly threw a big spanner in the works and I spent the remaining time taking statements from the real landowners and compiling a list of their names. I also spent time pondering how I was going to break this bad news to Mal.

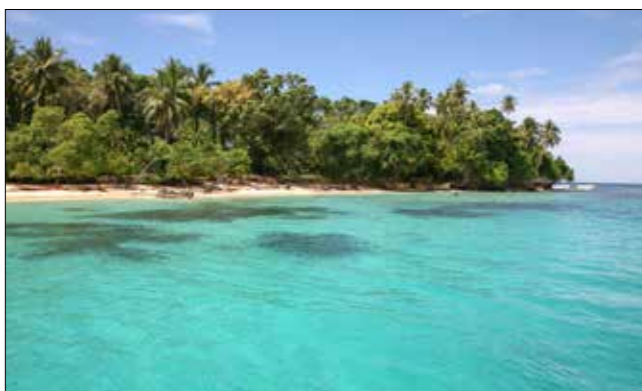
When I returned to Goroka he was out of town so I compiled a detailed written report of my findings, which I presented to him in his office the following day. His response was furious and littered with profanities. Needless to say, and to my great regret, my relationship with him ended acrimoniously. I was certainly taken aback by his attitude but could understand that it would have been quite

## Recollections of a Plantation Manager in the New Guinea Islands

*Continued from page 44*

arrive; usually it was the MV *Jason* owned by the Seeto family from Rabaul. The plantation had no wharf so in calm weather the ship would anchor on the edge of the coral reef and use a small dinghy to carry supplies ashore; 44-gallon drums of diesel fuel were dumped over the ship's side and floated ashore to be collected.

A plantation manager's job was very demanding with new tractor drivers to train, organising various work groups, maintaining machinery and, most importantly, making sure that health and hygiene requirements were strictly met. Accidents happen and these you had to treat, so all isolated plantations



View of the Bismarck Sea, New Ireland

humiliating for him to be informed that he had been conned by two smooth-talking crooks. After all, he had been a highly successful businessman, developing one of the biggest rotary wing aircraft operations in the southern hemisphere, and rarely, if ever, not getting his way in the world.

Overall, I really enjoyed this brief episode in my life, flying around some of the more remote parts of PNG, meeting the landowners and chatting about their activities and taking a chopper ride high in the mountains above the Frieda River base camp to see the engineers working on the prospect.

It's a beautiful part of the world. And let's hope it remains buried treasure. ♦

This story was first published in *PNG Attitude*, 8 July 2021 <https://www.pngattitude.com/2021/07/the-day-i-delivered-bad-news-to-kela-smith.html>

**Note:** A detailed account of the proposed mine at Frieda River and a description of its likely impact can be viewed at: <https://savethesepik.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Sukundimi-Walks-Before-Me.pdf>

were always well stocked with medicines for emergencies.

Disputes between tribes were common and it required a lot of diplomacy and tact on the manager's part to not let these situations escalate further. Old 'pay backs' and individual fights occurred but most times there was a warning that problems could occur. I had to be aware of my own safety too as there was no support or help in an emergency.

I had been manager out on this New Ireland plantation for more than twelve months, had had no holidays in five years and no social life to speak of. It had been an interesting time, sometimes alarming and sometimes fun, but as I was approaching thirty years of age I felt it was time to move on. I left Coconut Products Ltd on good terms but, inwardly, I was mentally exhausted.

On returning to Australia I married the girl of my lifetime and we purchased a cattle property in the New England area of NSW. Surprisingly, eighteen months after returning from Rabaul I was offered a senior plantation manager's job but, after discussing this proposal with my wife for some time, we declined. One wonders what the future would have been if we had returned! ♦

## Literature in Papua New Guinea

### Part One: TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING BEGINS

PHILIP FITZPATRICK

Although Papua New Guinea has a rich tradition of oral literature, it was not until 1970 that the first novel by a Papua New Guinean writer was published, *The Crocodile* by Vincent Eri.



Philip Fitzpatrick

While *The Crocodile* was the first novel, the first book was written by a New Ireland writer, Ligeremaluoga (also known as Osea). This book, *The Erstwhile Savage*, sometimes dismissed as missionary propaganda with no real literary merit, was originally written in the Kuanua language but was translated and published in English in 1932. It was republished under a different title, *An Offering Fit for a King*, in 1978.

Vincent Eri's novel came out of a concerted push by the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) to promote PNG literature in the years immediately before independence in 1975. The chief architect of this movement was Ulli Beier, a lecturer in creative writing.

UPNG's Literature Department's first Chair was Frank Johnson and most of his staff were Australians and New Zealanders. They were all enthused by the idea of creating a new literature in Papua New Guinea and purposely restricted the use of traditional English and American curricula. This proved to be a mistake. What Johnson and his staff failed to appreciate was the universal nature of literature. It was only after Beier arrived that young Papua New Guinean writers were able to experiment and merge their own traditional literatures into a distinct form that was recognisably Papua New Guinean.

Most of the material at that time was produced locally as booklets of poetry, short stories or plays with limited print runs. The *Papua Pocket Poets* series was particularly popular. Perhaps the most significant volume in the series was John Kasaipwalova's *Reluctant Flame*. Also popular were the literary collections published in magazines like the UPNG's *Kovave* and the government Literature Department's *Papua New Guinea Writing*.

In perusing those early works, the transition of the oral literary form into printed works can be clearly seen. In his introduction to *Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea* published in 1976 editor Mike Greicus said:

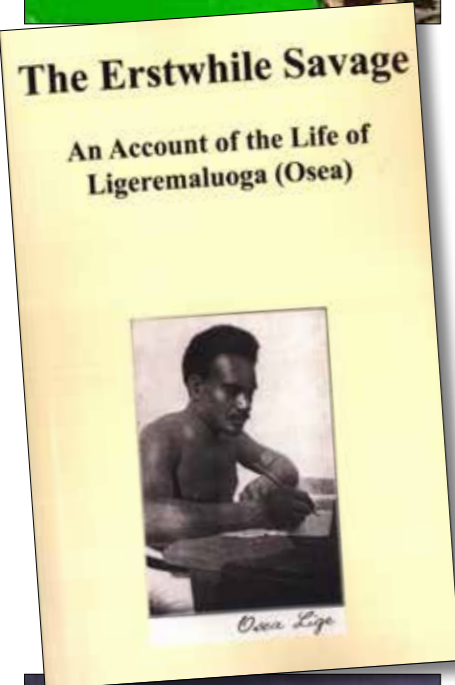
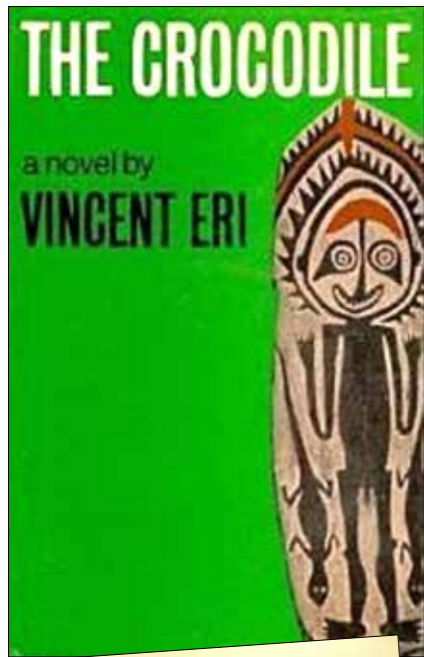
*While modern Papua New Guinea writing is founded on the oral literary traditions of a myriad of clan and language groups, it is as new as the emerging country itself, as vital and as exciting. That more will be heard from those writers and from this young literature there can be no doubt.*

Some other contemporary writers were Peter Lus, Wairu Degoba, Pokwari Kale, Allan Natachee (Avaisa Pinongo), Leo Hannett, Rabbie Namaliu, Arthur Jawodimbari, Turuk Wabei, Bob Giegao, Jacob Simet, Jack Lahui, Clemens Runawery, Peter Wia Paiya, Renagi Lohia, Joseph Saruva, Herman Talingapua and Ikini Yaboyang.

Under Ulli Beier's benign guidance, the first volume of the journal of PNG, *Kovave*, appeared in 1969. In this first volume, prose such as Peter Lus' *My Head is as Black as the Soil of our Country*, John Kadiba's *Tax* and Kumalau Tawali's *Island Life* appeared along with John Waiko's play *The Unexpected Hawk*. The journal was published until 1973 and then once in 1975 to coincide with the celebrations for PNG's independence. It was the first literary journal of real significance and after the first few editions Ulli Beier's students took over editorial control.

*Kovave* often published short plays, which were a popular genre for





Papua New Guinean writers, perhaps because the form most resembled the animated style of traditional oral story telling. Many of the plays were performed and broadcast on radio by the National Broadcasting Commission. One of the curious things Ulli Beier did was to write Papua New Guinean plays himself using the pseudonym M Lovori. He hoped his students would read the plays and model their own work on them. When four PNG plays were produced in Sydney in 1970 it was ironic that Beier's play, *Alive*, was lauded by Australian critics as the most 'authentic' while the genuine Papua New Guinean plays were labelled 'awkward' and 'moralising'.

*Kovave* ceased publication after the 1975 edition and *Papua New Guinea New Writing* ceased in 1977. It wasn't until 1982 that a new journal, *Ondobondo*, appeared. This journal was also a publication of the Literature Department, this time under the guidance of UPNG's Prithvindra Chakravarti, and followed the formation of a group of writers of the same name that met monthly for discussions and readings. The new journal included, for the first time, criticism of local writing by Papua New Guineans. It also contained extracts from unpublished novels and finally began to attract female writers. Unfortunately, lack of funding led to its demise in 1987.

The PNG Writer's Union was formed in November 1984. The president was Michael Yaki Mel, the vice-president was Francis Nii, the treasurer was Dr Steven Winduo and the secretary was Kevin D'Archy. This union published a magazine, the *PNG Writer*, in 1985 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of PNG's independence. There were articles by Ignatius Kilage, Kamalau Tawali, John Sari, Joe Kunda Naur, Sorariba Nash, Steven Winduo and many others. It was published to 'give young writers the opportunity to appear in print.' The magazine was sold at K5 per copy for adults and K2 for students. From the sales they hoped to fund young writers to publish their work.

In an interview that was also published in the magazine Ignatius Kilage pointed out that there was a wealth of creative talent in the country. Michael Yaki Mel added:

*Let's nurture it along so that PNG literature becomes a living reality: not just something academics talk about. The best way to do it is to join the PNG Writers Union or to set up a branch in your school, college or home district. Why not hold a meeting in your own area? You will be surprised at the number of potential writers who turn up.*

The Writer's Union was at pains to dissociate itself from what was generally understood as university writing promoted by Beier. It did this in part through forewords and editorials that were written in clear, simple English. Unfortunately, like many other literary magazines in the country, the *PNG Writer* did not survive and membership of the union never reached any great heights.

During this literary flush, and with Beier's encouragement, several UPNG students and alumni, including Vincent Eri, embarked on more ambitious works. To this end, Beier collaborated with Brian Clouston, the Brisbane-based owner of Jacaranda Press. Jacaranda had published



some of UPNG's magazines and was one of the few Australian publishers with an interest in material coming out of PNG. Until that time it had only published books from PNG by Australian authors, usually educational texts. These sold well and were popular in the PNG's schools.

Little of the literature produced in this period was particularly outstanding. An exception was Trevor Shearston's collection of short stories, *Something in the Blood*. The most common publications in this period were coffee table books, replete with spectacular photographs and designed primarily as souvenirs.

There was much anti-colonial rhetoric in the writing of Papua New Guineans which appealed to the left-leaning academics at the university, and this was consonant with trends in the newly independent African nations. Ulli Beier had previously worked in Nigeria and was familiar and supportive of this genre.

There were a few interesting autobiographies emerging, such as *Ten Thousand Years in a Life Time* by Albert Maori Kiki. The book, published by FW Cheshire in 1968, is occasionally disjointed, especially towards the end, but a straightforward style overcomes this minor drawback. It was an important book, not so much for its literary merit but because it presented for the very first time an account of what was in the minds of many of the Papuan intelligentsia as the colonial period drew to a close.

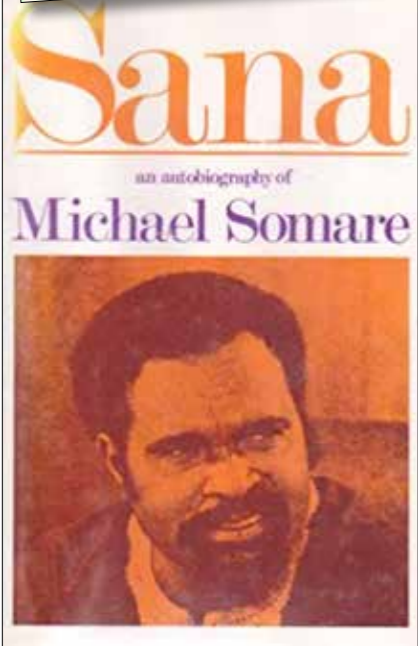
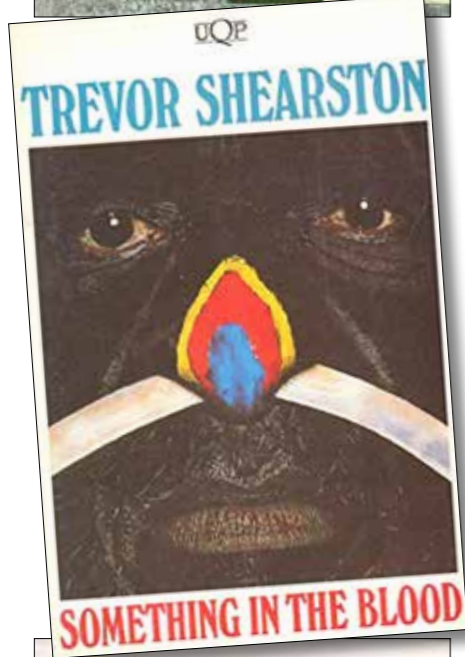
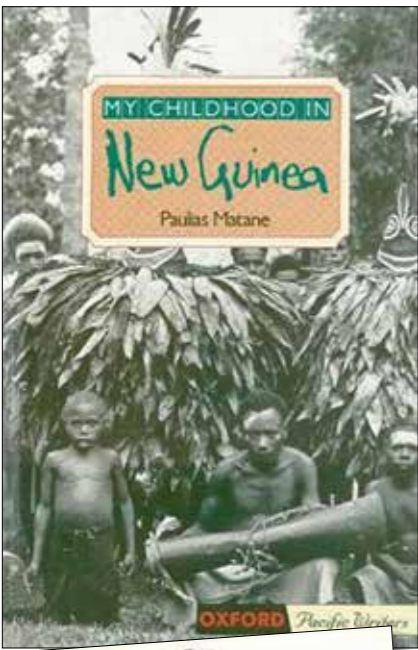
In many ways Kiki's work foreshadowed Vincent Eri's later novel in its account of a boy born into a traditional society in the 1930s and inexorably pulled into the world of the white man. Kiki described this transition with a beguiling and candid simplicity and frequently made the point that the old ways that formed his character were never forgotten and helped him cope in later life.

Kiki had a sort of benign intelligence which transcended and stood above the ruck and sometimes intimidated people, especially the denizens in the higher echelons of the Australian administration. Kiki was no saint; he was a brawler, metaphorically and sometimes literally. He went on to become a trade union leader, was one of the founding fathers of the nationalist Pangu Pati and Papua New Guinea's first deputy prime minister. In the run up to independence he represented everything that was perceived by the colonial administration and its bosses in Canberra as sinister and communist-inspired among the new Papua New Guinean elite.

When Jacaranda Press published Vincent Eri's novel, *The Crocodile*, in 1970, it sold out and had to be reprinted almost immediately. While most critics were refreshingly non-paternalistic and supportive, the reaction from Australian readers in Papua New Guinea were mixed. Some of them were still smarting from Kiki's book and did not like being lampooned again, even gently, by a Papua New Guinean, which, as Ulli Beier pointed out, was a bit rich from people who had referred to grown men as 'boys'.

Apart from the African influence invoked by Beier, the writers of this period seemed to take their lead from established European traditions





and they mostly wrote for an outside audience. Where they had a message, it was intended for Australian and international consumption. Few wrote for their fellow countrymen.

Paulias Matane was not connected to Ulli Beier's UPNG writers. His first book, *My Childhood in New Guinea*, was published in 1972. Sir Paulias adopted what was then an uncommon style of embroidering the autobiographical details of his childhood around Rabaul on New Britain into a novel-like narrative. The book takes the reader from his early days in the village, through initiation, wild days as a village delinquent, the war with the Japanese and his early days as a teacher. In it he outlines the principles that have since informed his steady and prodigious output:

*Reading is very important. Many of my people do not read at home because books are written by people whose background is not that of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Our people do not want to read these. True, some people want to try, but they cannot afford to buy books. I think I will try to write about this country when I leave school. The books should be small, simple, and cheap.*

Now well into his eighties, he has written over forty short books, most of them self-published. He has also been a strong supporter of Papua New Guinean literature, especially during his time as Governor-General, and has mentored several promising authors.

In 1954 Michael Somare, aged eighteen won the South Pacific Commission's Literature Bureau Competition with an essay about his favourite book, Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki Expedition*. The following year he picked up a Forsyth Examination Prize of \$40 worth of books. Before he entered politics Michael Somare was a teacher, first in schools and later in the publications section of the Education Department, where he wrote scripts for the *Listen and Learn* broadcasts on the ABC.

This training and experience showed up in his 1975 book, *Sana: an autobiography of Michael Somare*. The book was written on the cusp of Papua New Guinea's leap into the vast unknown of nationhood and necessarily articulates Somare's vision for the future. The book also sets out the things that influenced him at an early age and informed his political development.

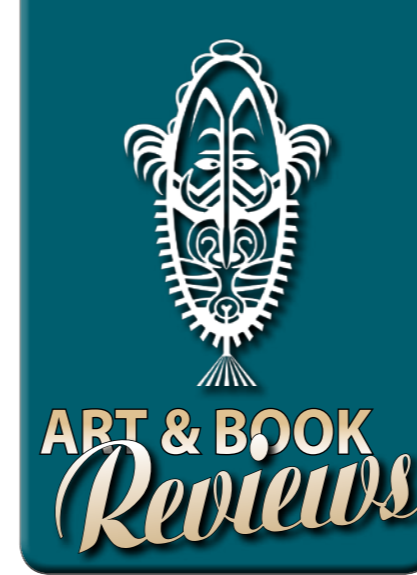
Sana was Michael Somare's grandfather and it was his wisdom that his son passed on to the grandson, Michael. Central to this wisdom was what Michael's father referred to as 'Sana's peacemaking magic'. The essence of this magic was the ability to make peace with one's enemies and turn them into friends.

Michael Somare's vision involved melding the myriad cultures and interests of Papua New Guinea into something new and unique which didn't owe its existence to what outsiders might expect or demand. For this reason he happily embraced innovation and new ideas. Of all the books published in those halcyon days, *Sana* is probably the most important and it bears reading again by any Papua New Guinean interested in both the past and the future of their country. ♦

<https://malumalu.blogspot.com/2011/04/ulli-beier-great-papua-new-guinea-art.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paulias\\_Matane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paulias_Matane)

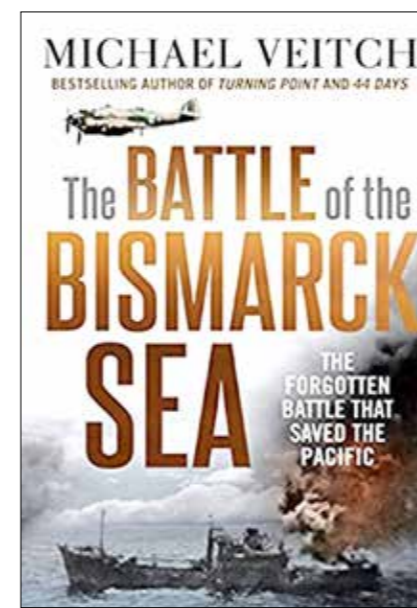
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Somare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Somare)



## MICHAEL VEITCH *The Battle of the Bismarck Sea*

During the first week of March 1943, Japan made a final, desperate attempt at controlling the South West Pacific. In the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, a force of land-based Australian and American planes attacked a massive convoy of Japanese warships. They were successful and Japan's hopes of regaining the initiative in New Guinea ended.

More importantly for Australians, their victory removed any possibility that Australia might be invaded by Japanese forces. It was a significant time in our history—a week when our future was in the balance.



**Featuring books about Papua New Guinea and reviews, art and craft exhibitions, interviews of interest to members and information for authors, artists and craftspeople—please send your articles and photos by the Copy Deadline, 4 February 2022, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

Michael Veitch tells the riveting story of this crucial moment in history—how the bravery of young men and experienced fighters, renegades and rule-followers, overcame some of the darkest days of World War II.

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352 pages; soft or hardback: soft cover; eBook also available.

Available from all major bookshops  
Cost: \$32.99 RRP; eBook \$16.99

## JAIVET EALOM *Escape from Manus*

This articulate, detailed, gripping autobiography is a powerful account of one man's journey from persecution and genocide.

Jaivet Ealom is the only person to escape from Australia's and PNG's offshore detention centre on Manus Island.

In 2013 Ealom fled Myanmar where his ethnic minority, the Rohingya, were considered stateless and being persecuted by the military dictatorship.

He made his way to a refugee camp in Jakarta, but quickly realised that he was likely to languish there for years. So, he paid to board a boat of asylum seekers bound for Australia, surprised to find that the boat had no compass or safety features.

During the chaos of the vessel's sinking, a small baby fell into the ocean. 'It never resurfaced,' remembers Ealom. '[The mother]

just screamed from the bottom of her lungs. It was traumatising.'

When Ealom was at sea, the then prime minister, Kevin Rudd, declared that asylum seekers arriving by boat without a visa would never be settled in Australia. After six months on Christmas Island where his plea for asylum was denied, he was transferred to the Manus Island Processing Centre. This turned into three and a half years of 'systematically designed torture'.

Asylum seekers were humiliated from the moment they arrived in Manus. Ealom lived in a modified shipping container, without a window, sweltering in the heat and without adequate water, medical services, basic sanitation or personal space. His rancid food was filled with debris. They lacked basic necessities like clothing, soap and shelter from the extreme heat. The inhuman conditions and stress of indefinite detention contributed to depression, anxiety and trauma. Some suicided.

Ealom was beaten up during riots that broke out between Papua New Guinean locals who thought the asylum seekers were terrorists; they shot at his accommodation, leaving bullet holes in the walls, forcing inmates to shelter behind their mattresses. They were terrified and, in their weakened state, this was magnified.

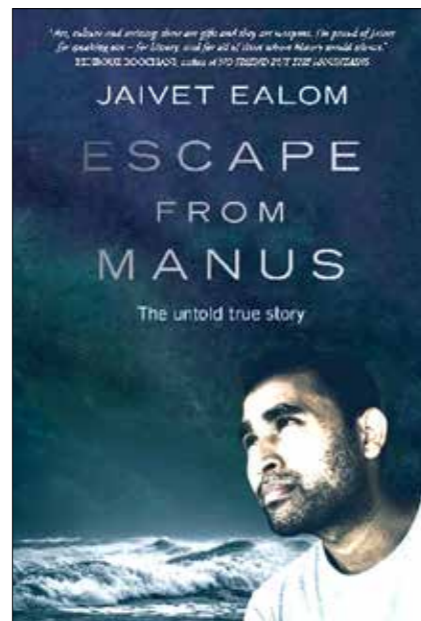
In 2017, Ealom decided, again, that he must flee. Ealom is clearly



intelligent, intuitive, resourceful, compassionate, with an analytical mind. He had studied industrial chemistry in Myanmar and was grateful to his mother for insisting he speak English

His escape, in May 2017, was the culmination of a year of meticulous planning and preparation. He scraped together enough money for a plane ticket to Port Moresby by exchanging rationed cigarettes for local currency. He carefully studied the movements of staff members flying in and out of the island, using these patterns to help determine the safest time to leave.

From Port Moresby, Ealom made his way to the Solomon Islands. He altered his appearance and mastered global visa rules. There followed a complicated journey to Fiji, Hong



Kong and then to Canada. He experienced continuing kindness from locals along the way.

On arrival in Toronto in the middle of winter, with no passport or winter clothes, he told the

Canadian authorities he was fleeing the genocide of the Rohingans and needed asylum. They listened to his story and their response was immediate. They acknowledged his refugee status.

With his keen attention for detail, an aptitude for language—and to adapt, pulling hope from the deepest corners, his story is one of tremendous courage and resilience. It is also another chilling account of the inhumanity and expense of the system adopted by successive Australian governments for dealing with refugees seeking asylum in this country,

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**ADAMSON,  
Marie Therese (Elma)**  
d. 6 May 2021

**ADAMSON,  
Charles (Charlie) William**  
d. 22 May 2021

Charlie was the son of CTJ (Bill) Adamson, the name which Professor Michael Bird (my main source) states in his book ‘... resonates as one of the greats of Papuan exploration between the wars’ (*Outside—The Life of CTJ Adamson*, 2013). His mother was Aiva Aua from Oroï (Nara language group), approximately ninety km north-west of Port Moresby.

Elma, born on 30 July 1940, was a descendent of an early white settler, Joe Bray, who married Nemate, also a Nara speaker. Elma’s father was Bill, son of Joe, and her mother was Rosa, née Solien, a descendent of Jimmy (Malay) Solien who arrived in Papua from Singapore in the early 1880s and married a Tatana (Motu) woman. Elma grew up in Kairuku and did her schooling with the Catholic missionaries on Yule Island.

Charlie was born on 11 January 1932, whilst his father was (as usual) away on a lengthy prospecting expedition. His mother named

**The recent history of Papua New Guinea is intimately bound up with the people who made PNG their home and, in many cases, their life’s work—it is therefore fitting, but also with deep regret, that we record the passing of members and friends—please send any information by the Copy Deadline, 4 February 2022, to [editor@pngaa.net](mailto:editor@pngaa.net)**

him Nou. Bill heard of the birth on 17 January, whilst with famed anthropologist FE Williams *en route* from Port Moresby to Yule Island. However, he did not find time to visit Aiva and see his son. It was a few weeks after the birth that baby Charles’ birth was registered at Kairuku, the Government station on Yule Island. This led to the discrepancy between Bird’s date and that on which Charles and his family would, in later years, celebrate his birthday (on registration day).

Bill did attempt to have Charles placed in the care of the Catholic missionaries at Kubuna, where there was a convent of French nuns and ‘Little Sisters’ (Papuan and mixed-race). Aiva refused although later, when she had a second child by a Papuan man in 1935, she relented.

Bill took little interest in his son during his early childhood but, after securing a position in the Government of Papua, did send an occasional cheque to the Kubuna mission. In 1936 Bill accompanied Ivan Champion on the longest patrol in Papua’s history. Over eight months they explored the country between the Bamu River and Lake Kutubu, thence around Mt Giluwe (highest mountain in Papua), into New Guinea near Mt Hagen and back to the south coast via the Purari River.

Bill visited Charlie at Kubuna on 26 December 1939, but left him in the care of the nuns. However, whatever Bill’s intentions may have been, as he seemed to soften towards Charlie, World War II intervened. Despite approaching forty he enlisted and spent the next five and a half years on Royal Australian Navy vessels in active service.

Father and son reconnected after the war and, when Charlie turned sixteen, Bill enrolled him in the De La Salle boarding school on Yule Island. The relationship grew. Charlie was invited to join his father when, in 1949, Bill settled at Ou Ou Creek Plantation, on the mainland a short distance from Yule Island. Charlie declined and instead obtained work with the Australasian Petroleum Company.

In January 1956 Charlie secured work as a fitter-plant operator with the Public Works Department in Wewak. He was responsible for



Charlie Adamson

## The Man From Ironbark

It was the man from Ironbark who struck the Sydney town,  
He wandered over street and park, he wandered up and down.  
He loitered here, he loitered there, till he was like to drop,  
Until at last in sheer despair he sought a barber’s shop.

**BANJO PATTERSON** ‘Ere! shave my beard and whiskers off, I’ll be a man of mark,  
I’ll go and do the Sydney toff up home in Ironbark.’

### Man Bilong Ironbark Em Gita Patterson I bin Raitim

Em man i man bilong Draipela Bus i kam long Moresby taun

Na emi i wok nabaut na i lukim ol sindaun;

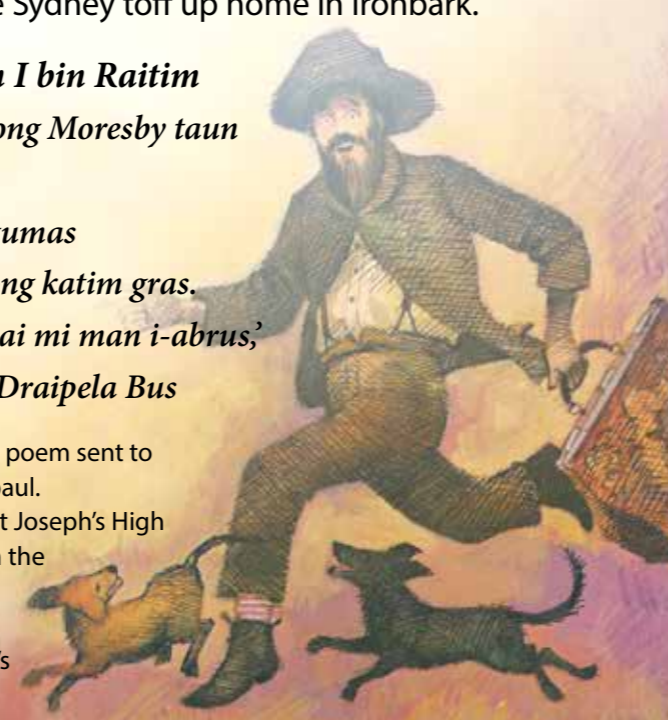
Na baimbai lek bilong em i pen na em i les tumas

Na em i painim haus bilong man i man bilong katim gras.

‘Oi, rausim gras bilong maus bilong mi na bai mi man i-abrus,’

Mi winim ol long hap bilong mi antap long Draipela Bus

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** This is the first verse of the complete poem sent to us by Paul Brigg who received it in the 60s while in Rabaul. His memory is that the translation was by Br Julian of St Joseph’s High School in Kieta, Bougainville. If the *Tok Pisin* varies from the expected perhaps the author exercised some artistic privilege to ensure the ‘flow’ of the verse. The complete poem may be viewed on the association’s website at: [https://pngaa.org/special\\_documents/](https://pngaa.org/special_documents/)







Charlie and Elma Adamson on their wedding day

the construction and maintenance of many roads and airstrips in the Sepik District. He managed to visit his father at Ou Ou Creek a couple of times and in August 1960 I met him when I stayed at Ou Ou Creek for a few nights on a 21-day patrol of the Nara Census Division. We enjoyed a few exciting nights together hunting wild pigs and wallabies. Charlie also visited my house at Kairuku during this period as he was courting Elma Bray. They married in Kairuku in 1961 and returned to Wewak.

In 1973 the family moved to Brisbane where Charlie became a foreman with the John Deere Company. As the family grew both Charles and Elma were determined to ensure that their children learned of their Nara heritage and also inherited their parents' passion for rugby league. The family were very active supporters and players in school and suburban footy teams.

Elma and Charles formed a dance group and named it Ume Lalo Nana (the happy group). They spent many hours creating items of Nara traditional dress such as grass-skirts, headdress and bilums. The singing group performed at many venues over the years.

In 2014 they put on a very much appreciated performance at the inaugural PNG Hunters game in the Queensland League, at the Redcliffe Oval in Brisbane's northern suburbs. The performance was repeated at subsequent games over the next few seasons.

Charles, and Elma in particular, were very community-spirited and proved great mentors, especially for youth, in the culturally diverse Logan City area of southern Brisbane.

Their telephones were constantly ringing with requests for assistance ranging from a visiting PNG netball team needing billets to female members of the Christian African community seeking Elma's help to learn the skills of sewing, dressmaking, crochet and making rosary beads.

Charles continued an active life for many years even after having endured cancer and a triple bypass. However, age finally took its toll and Elma became Charlie's fulltime carer in 2015. It was thus something of a shock when she pre-deceased him.

**Chris Warrillow**

**EDDOWES, Peter John**  
**d. 18 July 2021**

A wealth of knowledge and experience of scientific wood technology in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has now gone.

Peter Eddowes, born in 1935, joined the Department of Forests in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea in June 1961 as a forest ranger. Peter then moved to the Forest Products Research Centre, Hohola. He became the Department of Forests chief wood

technologist rising to Officer in Charge of the Timber Utilization and Marketing Section. He wrote the book, *Commercial Timbers of Papua New Guinea*.

In 1981, Peter left the Department of Forests. He went into private practice in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and worked with the Forest Industries Council until 1993. After 1993, Peter returned to Australia where he was actively involved in private consulting and timber importation activities from PNG.

For some years Peter had been working on his forthcoming publication entitled *The Forest Resources of Papuasias* covering the major and minor commercial timber species of PNG and including species from Irian Jaya and the Solomon Islands.

His wife Gabbie advises that son Matthew is co-ordinating activities to ensure that the book is published.

**Dick McCarthy**

**Editor's Note:** On 3 August 2021 the National Forest Service of PNG organised a function to acknowledge Peter Eddowes' contribution to PNG forestry. Prime Minister Marape was among those recognising the importance of Peter's work for the country.



Peter Eddowes



Prime Minister James Marape observes minute of silence for Peter Eddowes

**FAITHFUL, Denys**  
**d. 6 August 2021**

Denys was born in Dunedin on 16 January 1930, New Zealand. He loved flying and planes and went solo after 6hr/10m at the age of fifteen. He belonged to Otago Aero Club, Southland Aero Club and Canterbury Aero Club in NZ and to the Royal Aero Club NSW, flying clubs in Sunshine Coast, Alice Springs and Port Augusta, plus the Gliding Clubs at Gympie, Alice Springs and Port Augusta. He held an 'A' Licence, Commercial Licence and Instructors Rating.

He started work in 1947/48 with the Matura Ensign as a copywriter then in Auckland as a writer/illustrator before going to Dunedin as an advertising/copywriter. Here he saw an advertisement for patrol officers in New Guinea and applied. He was selected for an interview receiving a letter stating: 'The official Secretary to the High Commissioner of Australia, Wellington, has been asked to arrange an interview and you can expect to receive a communication from the official Secretary at an early date.'

On 4 September 1951 Denys was the first New Zealander to be appointed by the Department of Territories as a Cadet Patrol Officer in the Public Service of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea having completed medical examinations and interviews satisfactorily.

After the Induction Course he was posted first to Mt Hagen then Wabag (1951) then in succession to Wapenamanda (1952), Laiagam (1953-54), Wewak (1954), Ambunti and ASOPA (1955-57), Wewak and Nuku 1958-60, Mt Hagen and Porgera (1960-61), Laiagam (1962-68), Mt Hagen (1968-72) and finally to Port Moresby (1972-74).

He served as Assistant District Officer in both Laiagam and Mt Hagen, acting District Commissioner in Goroka and District Inspector in Mt Hagen and Port Moresby.

His art was another love—he completed a number of book covers for various authors, also painted the 'History of Aviation', which was displayed at the Bird of Paradise Hotel/Motel for many years. And quite a lot of folk own one of his oil paintings.

Denys loved his time in Papua New Guinea, in the Sepik and the Highlands. The collecting of tax from Mt Angukanak was an experience, the May River murders were another. In his Stinson L5-VH-BEN, he did a medivac from Paiella, Enga District, when the bigger planes couldn't get through. The finding of the gold lode in Porgera was another of many, many wonderful experiences.

Denys and Helen were married in Mt Hagen by District Commissioner Mick Foley, the reception being at the hotel with Marcia and John Bastow and others of the Hagen Mob. Their three children were born in New Guinea—Tony in Madang at



Bob & Heather Fayle, Brian Duffy and Denys Faithful (right) at the 2005 Kiap Reunion on the Sunshine Coast



Yagaum, Wendy at Mumbisunda, Wapenamanda and Iain in Goroka.

At Independence the family left for Queensland, settling in Mooloolaba. Here Denys spent time selling real estate. The old Mooloolaba airstrip was at the back of Amarina Drive, now the motorway. Denys did joy flights in the Tiger Moth, owned by the Maroochy Aero Club, over the ocean with aerobatics, if requested.

He and Helen devoted a lot of their time every two years assisting with the organisation of the Sunshine Coast Kiaps Reunion.

**Helen Faithful**

## GARNER, Michael John Patrick

**d. 1 August 2021**

Michael Garner was born in Windsor, Berkshire on 24 July 1933 and was educated at the Windsor Grammar School. After leaving school, he took civil service exams, which led to employment in the Naval Office at Whitehall.

After his call-up for National Service he was posted to the famous Scottish regiment, the Black Watch, Michael was sent for training to Fort George, a large 18th-century fortress to the north-east of Inverness. He later served in Malaya in the counter insurgency operations—a period known as the Malayan Emergency. He returned from Malaya in 1951. This service qualified for the General Service Medal—Malaya

After his army service, Michael returned to the Naval Office at Whitehall, but after a time sought more interesting employment. He became aware of an opportunity to become a police officer in the Central African federation, now

Malawi. His application was successful and after six months training he was posted there.

After his first year of service, a new intake of teachers arrived from Southern Rhodesia—one of whom just happened to be Maureen—and she and Michael fell in love and married a year later.

As things began to change in that country, they decided to return to England and have a look around. They also began looking further afield and heard that Australia was looking for police officers in Germany. This was a time before the wall came down and was remembered as an exciting posting. As First Secretary, Michael and Maureen were invited to many functions and they learnt a lot about the country.

Towards the end of 1996, the family returned to Adelaide and resumed a more normal life. Michael lived a full and interesting life. He is remembered as a gentleman who will be missed and always loved by Maureen and the family. For Michael we can say:

*Life's race well run  
Life's work well done.  
Now comes rest.*

Rest in Peace

**Rev. Brenton Daulby, OAM**

## GRAVES, Trevor Welford (Peter)

**d. 2021**

Peter was born in 1939 and worked for the New Zealand Forest Service from 1954–69 and then fellow Kiwi and Papua New Guinea (PNG) identity, Jim Riley (Peter was best man at Jim's wedding), was responsible for Peter's joining the Department of Forests in 1970.

Peter's first posting was to Mt Hagen where he was responsible

crime and disorder. So the family decided to move to Australia, settling in Adelaide. They spent six years there and during this time son Cameron and daughter Mandy were born.

For his service in PNG, Michael was awarded the Police Overseas Service medal, which he wore with pride.

In 1973, accompanied by the family, Michael was sent as a diplomat to the embassy in Cologne—one of the largest cities in Germany. This was a time before the wall came down and was remembered as an exciting posting. As First Secretary, Michael and Maureen were invited to many functions and they learnt a lot about the country.

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for the forest extension program in the Wahgi Valley using eucalyptus seedlings from Kagamuga Nursery. The objective was to make villagers self-reliant in their wood supply—house poles and firewood. Each village received twenty-four seedlings to plant and care for. In 1971, Peter had additional responsibilities for harvesting and marketing inspections of the dip diffusion process and compliance in Eastern, Western and Southern Highlands with follow up extension activities in other areas.

Forester Gary Archer recalls Peter's work promoting forest extension among the villages. They scripted a radio show in which two local characters, Nogi and Anis, discussed forest extension. This show was quite popular—when Gary went out later as a follow-up to Peter's work the people Gary met all knew about Nogi and Anis, and they were quite enthusiastic to have more forest extension visits from Peter and Co.

In 1973, Peter transferred to the Bulolo Forestry College as a lecturer on the forest certificate course, teaching students from

PNG and South Pacific countries in tropical forest related aspects of silviculture, mensuration, logging, fire control, prevention, and suppression, roading, survey, etc. Bob Johns did botany lectures. Peter enjoyed, in true Kiwi fashion, the interaction with staff and students and members of the Bulolo community including participation in soccer, table tennis and cricket matches.

In late 1974 Peter, Barbara, and family with their prized Falcon 500 station wagon (it stayed with the family for a further ten years), returned to New Zealand to work with Fletchers New Zealand.

Peter is survived by Barbara and family.

**Jim Riley**

## KERLEY, Fr Kevin

PNGAA notes with regret the death of Fr Kevin Kerley, SM, OAM in Sydney on 29 September, 2021. A Vale summarising Fr Kerley's life and work will appear in the next issue of *PNG Kundu*.

## LANGMAN, Peter Albert

**d. 15 June 2021, aged 86**  
Peter served in the New South Wales Police from 28 October 1957 to 31 January 1960. During this period he won two bravery awards: the Royal; Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society NSW Bronze Medal 1958 (courageous conduct in rescuing two elderly women from a burning flat) and the Peter Mitchell Trophy for the most courageous act by a member of the police force in 1958.

He was appointed to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary on 4 January 1960 and served as officer-in-charge Kila Kila Barracks and Port Moresby until resigning on 22 January 1962.

While in Papua New Guinea he enlisted in the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. He transferred, as temporary corporal, to the Royal New South Wales Regiment on 19 July 1962 and served in the war in Vietnam, in which he was mentioned in dispatches. He later joined the Australian Army Provost Corps and retired with the rank of Major.

He died at Paradise Point, QLD.

**MR Hayes**

## MELROSE, Leo

The Association notes, with sadness and regret, the death of Beverley Melrose's husband, Leo, on 18 September 2021.

## WOOTTEN, John Halden, AC, QC

**d. 27 July 2021**

'Hal' Wootten was born at Tweed Heads on 19 December 1922, son of a dairy farmer, Thomas Wootten, and Lydia (née Jarrett), on the Far North Coast of New South Wales. Four years later, and after his father died, the family moved to Sydney where Wootten attended Willoughby Public School and Sydney Boys' High.

Leaving school in 1940, Wootten joined the NSW Public Service, went to the Crown Solicitor's Office and enrolled at the University of Sydney first in an arts degree part-time and then proceeded to study law, again part-time.

In 1946 he joined a Sydney legal firm, Minter, Simpson and Co. By then his social conscience was active and he saw society's issues in a broader perspective. Wootten, after a meeting with the head of the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA),



John (later Sir John) Kerr, began fieldwork on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea (PNG). It was ‘a pivotal experience’ for him.

‘I felt it was very strange that having those ties with the indigenous people of New Guinea, I didn’t even know the indigenous people of my own country, and that was something nagging at the back of my mind,’ he said later. After toying with the idea of becoming a patrol officer in PNG, Wootten joined the staff of ASOPA and organised support for a regional law association, LawAsia.

In 1965, Wootten was briefed to oppose a push by indigenous PNG public servants to be paid at the same rate as Australians working in their public service.

Appearing opposite one Bob Hawke, Wootten argued that as painful as it was, the country could not afford the same pay scales for indigenous public servants. Hawke said he thought PNG would not be independent for 100 years, Wootten said it would be ten. Wootten won the case and was later thanked by the PNG administrators for helping the country remain viable.

In 1966, the year he took silk, Wootten became chairman of the New Guinea Committee of the Law Council of Australia. In 1969, he became secretary-general of LawAsia and was invited to become Foundation Dean of Law and Justice at University of NSW; Wootten, on his account, ‘couldn’t resist’ the appointment. ‘My idea about the Law School was that one of its major roles was to prepare people for the legal profession and that the legal profession had a duty to serve the whole of society,’ he



Hal Wootten

said. As Dean of Law, Wootten set up a law program for Aboriginals.

He said later: ‘I thought, on the basis of my experience, that there was a degree of sympathy and idealism in the legal profession that would make it possible to set up a permanent Aboriginal legal service, that would not just take the odd case but look after them continuously in the courts ... I circularised the profession and asked them to put their name on a panel to do free work for Aboriginals. I got a tremendous response, a lot of Aboriginals, young lawyers and university staff did the footwork in maintaining or establishing relationships between Aboriginals and lawyers that they needed.’

In consequence of a single brilliant letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, he had a phone call from the first Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, WC (Billy) Wentworth, offering help. Funding for an office and some staff quickly followed. Wootten became the first president of the Aboriginal Legal Service that followed.

‘I would say my interest was

not so much in social justice as in justice, although one’s always compromised in pursuing it,’ Wootten said.

In 1973, he took up an appointment as a Puisne Judge of the NSW Supreme Court, serving in the Equity Division. In 1976, he became chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission.

Wootten became chancellor of the NSW Institute of Technology in 1980. Stepping down from the bench in 1983, Wootten became chairman of the Australian Press Council. In 1986, dismayed by the changes in press ownership in Australia, he resigned to speak about the implications of its increasing concentration in one company.

He also became president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, pursuing an interest he had always had in nature, particularly in ornithology. He had participated in a campaign to save the Franklin River in Tasmania.

Wootten was appointed as one of five commissioners on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody In 1988. In 1991, Wootten, now a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) became deputy president of the Native Title Tribunal.

A private funeral was held for Hal Wootten in Sydney on 6 August 2021.

**Note:** This an extract from an obituary written by Malcolm Brown and published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 August 2021.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/lawyer-at-forefront-of-rights-for-indigenous-and-png-20210802-p58f0b.html>

# MEMORIAL News

## RABAU & MONTEVIDEO MARU SOCIETY

**The Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Society was established in 2009 and integrated into the PNGAA in 2013.**

**The society encourages students and adults to explore the significance of WWII in the Papua New Guinea islands and what the start of the Pacific War in 1942 meant for Australia, including its worst maritime disaster—the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru* on 1 July 1942.**

**If you have news for the members, please contact Andrea Williams on [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)**

## Evacuation from Rabaul on the MV *Macdhui*

*It is eighty years since the evacuation of the women and children from New Guinea during World War II, and Eunice Holden’s story gives a brief outline of her evacuation from the south coast of New Britain.*



My husband Harry and I were at Tol Plantation [with] its owner, George Nase. Our two children, Neville and Marie, were at school in Queensland. Harry was in the timber business, shipping logs to Rabaul where they were loaded on ships to Australia and overseas markets. We learnt that the Japanese had come into the war and were moving quickly down through the islands to the north of us.

On our tele-radio, we had orders from the administration in Rabaul to prepare for evacuation to Australia, and a small coastal boat would pick us up in a few days at Tol. Also, other women and children along the coast received the same orders. We would be able to take with us only a few personal possessions, so I packed only what clothes were needed on the trip, and a little case of private things. It was very sad to leave all behind, things that Harry and I had worked hard for in our home, and I had come to love Tol and the people in the area.

We arrived in Rabaul and were taken to the office of Burns Philp and Co., and there issued our boarding passes, for the MV *Macdhui*, which was at the main wharf. My pass was No. 3748 passenger for Cairns (*below*). We sailed on 22 December 1941.

Following the declaration of war with Japan on 9 December 1941, the *Macdhui*, as with many other local merchant vessels was soon involved in government







Originally painted black, MV *Macdhui* was painted white after a fire in June 1937 (top); the wrecked ship in Port Moresby harbour (below)

duties, conveying women and children from Papua, New Guinea, to Australia. There was excellent accommodation on the *Macdhui* for 138 first-class passengers in two-, three- and four-berth cabins. The main dining saloon, which could seat all the passengers, was decorated in shades of ivory with furnishings in blue; the music room decorations were predominately pale green and the smoke room was panelled in oak. A special dining saloon was provided for children.

It was not a tourist trip now. The ship was all blacked out, no lights allowed, portholes had black curtains over them. Usually these island boats were delightful ships to travel on—dancing, sports, and music played for dinner at night, but not this trip. It was a bit of a nightmare, as no-one knew what



Published in 2017 by PNGAA to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*, this book tells the stories of the civilian and military men, women and children caught in the leadup and aftermath of the Japanese invasion and occupation of the New Guinea Islands in 1942. Order your copy from the Treasurer's Corner at the back of this issue.

was over the next wave or in the air. A radio officer remarked that we were like a black ghost moving through the water. It was also reported that, indeed, a Japanese plane had flown over us.

When we arrived at Port Moresby, other ships carrying troops and supplies were tied up at the wharf and we had to anchor out till they finished unloading and sailed. We berthed, more women and children came aboard, and we left for Cairns in Queensland.

We arrived at the port of Cairns. 'What can one say?' at a time like this.

To the dear, faithful, wonderful *Macdhui*; her captain, her officers, and her crew who brought us safely to Australia—and home. I say 'thank you'. She is now a rusty hulk in Port Moresby harbour, having been bombed by the Japanese. Au Revoir *Macdhui* ...

A few of us were landed at Cairns. I was met by my father who said to me: 'My God, girl, am I glad to see you. Your mother and I knew you were on that ship, but you are safe now.' He asked after Harry, my husband, and I replied that like other men in New Guinea, the women and children came first, as the boats were loaded.

When we parted at Tol it was the last time that I, like many other women, was to see or hear of our husbands until the war was over.

Tol Plantation and Rabaul, which I loved very much, seemed so far, far away, but was still so very near. I will always have very happy memories of them all ... but sad memories of Harry, and the husbands lost there, and the hundreds of men who suffered and perished with them.

We will never forget them. Never.

I received a letter from the Military after the war saying that my husband had been captured near SumSum, taken to Rabaul and later put on a prison ship, and that he had perished at sea.

From the Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

*Advise that official records disclose that 1053 Australian Servicemen and civilians embarked on the Montevideo Maru June 1942 at Rabaul. American records clearly state that the Montevideo Maru was torpedoed and sunk by the US Submarine Sturgeon off Lingayen Gulf on 1st July 1942.*

Harry Holden is listed, Serial No. 136, age in 1942, 45 years, occupation: lumberman, Rabaul.

**Please pencil this anniversary into your diaries and keep a look out early next year when we hope to be able to confirm special events in Canberra commemorating all those who died in 1942 in the New Guinea Islands and perished on the *Montevideo Maru*.**



For further information please contact  
Andrea Williams—[admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)  
Mob: 0409 031 889

## Places of Commemoration

Patrick Bourke has recently updated the list of war memorials, honour boards and plaques related to Rabaul, Tol Plantation, Gasmata, *Montevideo Maru* and Kavieng. Access this through the Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* Memorial website.

## Mornington Memorial Park Chair and Plaque

The Mornington Council has approved the placement of a chair and plaque in honour of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, who lost their lives with Lark Force soldiers and other civilians in the New Guinea islands in early 1942. Negotiations are continuing and we will have more about this in the next issue. Donations to fund the chair are welcome. Please contact [admin@memorial.org.au](mailto:admin@memorial.org.au)

## WWII New Guinea Islands Education—Alert your local secondary school curriculum!

The Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* group's *WWII New Guinea Islands Education Package* has recently been updated on the website under the 'Education' tab at <https://memorial.org.au/Education/index.htm>

Included are lesson plans, background notes, worksheets, links, resources, templates and easy access to an electronic 15-minute version of the DVD, *Some Came Home*, all to be used in conjunction or separately to support this unit of work in the curriculum.



Activities can be completed by students, either as individuals or group work, over two or three periods. They can also be broken into stand-alone sections with a brief background overview. Developed by teachers, the project can be adapted to specific requirements, student needs and time constraints.

With thanks to Patrick Bourke, Karen McPherson, Andrea Williams and Nick Booth for assistance with research, presentation and website.

## AWM's Places of Pride website

Stories can be added to the Australian War Memorial's 'Places of Pride' website in the section related to the Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* Memorial at: <https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/memorials/238341>

Recently, Patrick Bourke added the story of Thomas Henry Herket to the Places of Pride website, and he writes: 'I am not aware of any other Australian who was a POW during WWI, a civilian internee during WWII and involved in two of Australia's worst military disasters. He was certainly a hostage to fortune.'

## Thomas Henry Herket

When Tom Herket enlisted in Sydney in August 1915, he would not have known that he would be one of the 5,500 Australian war casualties from a 24-hour battle on the Western Front during WWI (considered the most tragic event in Australian history) and one of over 1,000 Australians who would be killed in Australia's worst maritime disaster which occurred during WWII.

Thomas Henry Herket enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 10 August 1915 at Sydney. He was attached to the 2nd Battalion, 11th Reinforcement. His age was stated as twenty-one years and one month however he was more likely eighteen years of age. Tom's occupation was listed as a driver (chauffeur). He was born in Auckland, New Zealand.

By mid-1916 Herket was attached to the 53rd Battalion, which took part in the Battle of Fromelles on 19–20 July 1916. Almost 2,000 Australian soldiers were killed or died from their wounds. Around 400 Australian soldiers were taken prisoner by the Germans. Tom Herket was one of these POWs. Australian Red Cross records stated that he had a gunshot wound in his right foot and left ring finger.

Tom Herket returned to Australia on 5 January



1919 and, after many operations on his right ankle, he was medically discharged from the AIF on 14 June 1920.

Tom was able to find some work as an accountant on several NSW pastoral properties. In 1939 he applied to the Department of Treasury to work as an agricultural inspector for the Australian Government in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. Australian WWI Veterans with an honourable discharge were given preference for these government positions, and his appointment was then confirmed.

Tom was one of many Australian WWI Veterans who worked in Rabaul and the New Guinea islands between the two world wars. When Japan entered the war in early December 1941 most of the expatriate women and children in Rabaul and the New Guinea islands were evacuated to Australia. However, the Australian men were instructed to remain in Rabaul and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

The Australian Government knew that the small army garrison at Rabaul, Lark Force, would not have been able to withstand any significant Japanese armed forces that wanted to take Rabaul and the New Guinea islands. This was stated in a cable that the Australian Government sent to Washington on 12 December 1941 where the Lark Force at Rabaul were referred to as 'hostages to fortune'.

So, when Japan invaded Rabaul on 23 January 1942 Rabaul quickly fell to the enemy armed forces and most of the Australians in Rabaul and the New Guinea islands soon became POWs and civilian internees, many of whom lost their lives.

The Japanese prisoner of war records state that Tom Herket was captured at Kokopo, which is not far from Rabaul on the New Guinea island of New Britain. These records also show that he was one of the fifty-three WWI veterans who became an internee in Rabaul, and died on the Japanese prisoner transport ship MS *Montevideo Maru* when it was sunk by the American submarine, USS *Sturgeon*, off the coast of the Philippines on 1 July 1942. A list of names is on the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society's website at <https://memorial.org.au/Electronic/WW1.htm>

None of the prisoners survived the sinking of the MS *Montevideo Maru*. So ended the life of Tom

Herket—a POW during WWI and a civilian internee during WWII.

Thomas Herket's name is on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's WWII Commonwealth Civilian War Dead list for the MS *Montevideo Maru*. This list of names of Australian civilians who died on the MS *Montevideo Maru* is also in the Book of Remembrance, Vol. 7, in St George's Chapel, which is near the western door of Westminster Abbey, London.

On 1 July 2012 the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial was unveiled by the Australian Governor General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC, CVO, and her speech is on the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Society's website at <https://memorial.org.au/About/BryceSpeech.htm> Also, on the seventieth anniversary of the sinking of the MS *Montevideo Maru* the National Archives of Australia released the lists of the men who died on the Japanese ship. These lists were from the prisoner of war records that the Japanese Government gave to the Australian Government earlier in the year.

**PATRICK BOURKE**

This is an excerpt from the full article which is at <http://memorial.org.au/Electronic/Herket.htm>



'A Digger'—Portrait of Tom Herket, by Hilda Rix Nicholas



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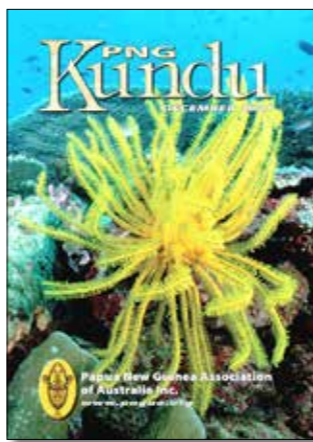
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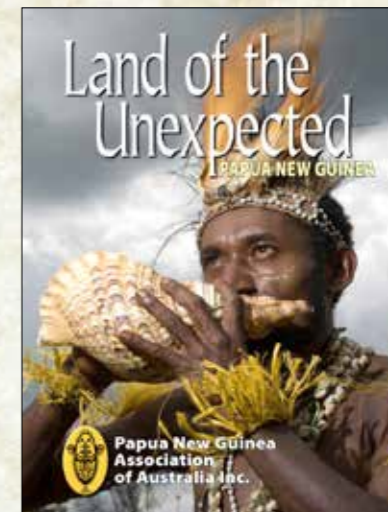
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### LAND OF THE UNEXPECTED: Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is a land of tremendous contrasts—of smiling people, mad keen rugby players and followers, complex cultural dynamics and displays, singing that is out of this world, stunning scenery, incredible artefacts, opportunities for adventurous activities and delicious tropical fruits—all in a terrain that is carved by steep slopes and jagged peaks of mountain ranges, interspersed by fertile valleys and over a dozen active volcanoes—and in a country that is Australia's nearest neighbour, four kilometres away and only a few footsteps from our doors. PNGAA's new publication, with 100 large-format pages and over 200 colour photographs, covers many of the different facets of this amazing country—including a complex overview, public services, flora, fauna and the environment, industries, art, culture, sport, the diverse history and some of those people who helped to shape the nation—in fact, everything you wanted to know about PNG!

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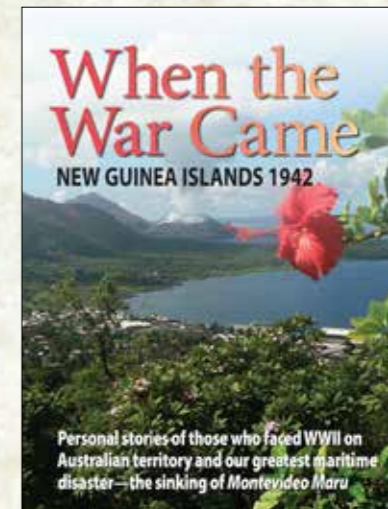
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### WHEN THE WAR CAME: New Guinea Islands 1942

Published in 2017 by PNGAA to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Rabaul and the sinking of MS *Montevideo Maru*, Australia's greatest maritime disaster, tells the stories of the civilian and military men, women and children caught in the leadup and aftermath of the Japanese invasion and occupation of the New Guinea Islands in 1942. The book brings into focus the actions and characters of young men who left home to willingly serve their country, and then literally vanished off the face of the earth; of nurses and missionaries who volunteered to stay to help both the war effort and the local people; and of civilians—both men and women—caught at home on WWII's Pacific front line. Alongside are incredulous stories of escape and survival in an environment that threw every obstacle in their path.

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## *'Faster, Higher & Stronger'*

The Olympic Games are the epitome of sporting competitions. They bring together the world, through love of sport. The Olympic motto of *'Faster, Higher & Stronger'* captures the determination of athletes from around the world as they strive to achieve their dreams in front of a global audience. Ever since their first Olympics in 1976, Papua New Guinean athletes have joined their counterparts in pursuit of Olympic glory, and on its way to the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, PNG was fortunate to have been part of the Olympic Torch Relay, which visited Papua New Guinea in May 2000.

At those first games in Montreal, six male athletes competed in three sports—boxing, athletics and shooting. But, at the recent Tokyo Olympics in 2021, Papua New Guinea was represented by four men and four women in the sports of weight lifting (Dika Toua & Morea Baru), boxing (John Ume), swimming (Judith Meauri & Ryan Maskelyn), athletics (Rellie Kaputin) and sailing (Rose-Lee & Teariki Numa). One of the superior performances was by second-time Olympian, Judith Meauri, who competed in the 50-metre freestyle event with over eighty swimmers taking part over ten heats. Her swim of 27.56 seconds beat the time she set in the 2012 London Olympics of 27.84, and she won heat four in the event.

Speaking after the race, Meauri said she was very happy with the race and that she was excited to compete, but felt she had faced the race calmly and achieved everything she had set out to do.

'This was the best race I have ever swum in an actual meet and I am happy with the time. This is only the second competition I've competed in, since the start of the pandemic.'

The 50-metre freestyle is the most competed event on the swimming program, as over 150 athletes swam in the men's and women's events.

PNG Chef de Mission, Tamzin Wardley, stated that every country competing at the Olympics is invited to send two swimmers to the Games, and most swim in this event, making it possibly the most global event at the Olympics. 'Sitting in the stands, cheering Judith on, we were literally surrounded by the world.'

The fastest time for the event went to seven-medal winner, Australian Emma McKeon, who set an Olympic Record of 24.02 seconds in the second-last heat, and went on to win the Gold Medal with another record of 23.81 seconds.

Although yet to win an Olympic medal, Papua New Guinean Olympians have shown that the nation is capable of competing at the highest level.

© PAPA NEW GUINEA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

FEATURED: 1. Members of the PNG Olympic Team; 2. The Olympic Rings at Tokyo; 3. Judith Meauri, winning her heat; 4. Dika Toua at Tokyo, the first woman to compete in weight lifting at the 2000 Games; 5. The Opening Ceremony at the Tokyo Olympics, 23 July 2021.

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