



# Una Voce

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - INSIGHTS, EXPERIENCES, REMINISCENCES

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No 1, 2002 - March

This issue contains a special lift-out section on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the evacuation of women and children from PNG in December 1941, pp \*1\* to \*20\*

## ARE YOU UNFINANCIAL???

If you notice a red sticker on the address label of your copy of *Una Voce*, you are **unfinancial**. Please complete the enclosed Membership Renewal Form.

## AGM AND LUNCHEON:

This will be held on **Sunday 28 April 2002 at the Mandarin Club**. Full details are on page 23 and booking slip and payment form are on the separate yellow sheet. The AGM itself is usually very brief, and then the event becomes a social function like the Christmas Luncheon. (Would senior or incapacitated members who would like to attend but do not have transport please contact our secretary or assistant secretary - see overleaf for phone numbers).

Did you miss seeing the excellent display concerning the Dec. 1941 evacuation of women and children from PNG shown at the Christmas luncheon? If you did, the good news is that it will be shown again at the AGM/luncheon on 28 April.

If you do not wish to have your name and address included in the membership list which is published in the June issue of *Una Voce*, please advise the secretary.

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**Membership of the association is  
open to anyone who has lived in PNG  
or who has an abiding interest in the  
country.** The annual fee is \$12. The  
membership year is the calendar year.  
Membership application forms are  
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**HELP WANTED:** Sandy SINCLAIR, well-known former Senior Inspector of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (now aged 97), would like to locate his god-daughter **BARBARA-ANNE**. If you can help in any way at all, please contact Sandy's carer, Ross Swadling, 12 Morshead Street, North Ryde NSW 21131, ph. 02 9878 1366

**HELP WANTED:** Jim SINCLAIR is about to commence writing a comprehensive book on **MADANG** and would very much like to hear from anyone who has records, memoirs, etc., also photos. Jim is at: 5 Yoomba Crescent, Alexandra Headland Qld 4572, Ph/Fax 07 5443 6597

**HELP WANTED:** Max Hayes would like to contact **Jimmy MIDDLETON** who was the Rabaul Parks and Gardens officer responsible for burials at the European Cemetery. He assumed these duties somewhere around 1967 when he took over from Wally Sidebottom. The Rabaul European Cemetery was obliterated in the '94 earthquake and the records have been lost and the plaques plundered. Max hopes that Jimmy Middleton might be able to assist with some burial details. Jimmy is believed to be in Brisbane and was last known as a security officer at an arts or cultural centre until 'about two years ago'. Max is at: 03 9898 7459, 5 Peppermint Grove, Box Hill South VIC 3128 or Email: [makisrpngc@netspace.net.au](mailto:makisrpngc@netspace.net.au)

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## *From our President*

### ABOUT OUR NAME

Periodically it has been suggested that the name of our association should be re-evaluated with changing times, as has been the case with many other clubs, businesses and organisations.

ROAPNG was formed more than 50 years ago to safeguard the superannuation rights of retired officers of the PNG government services. Particularly in recent years, we have progressively broadened our (associate) membership base. We are now pleased to admit 'former residents of Papua New Guinea or other persons subscribing to the objects of the association'.

Similarly our objects, which are printed once each year in *Una Voce*, have been widened to include, 'friendly association of members, encouragement of contact and friendship with Papua New Guineans', and much more.

Although superannuant membership has dwindled, with the passage of time, to fewer than 100 (it is now 27 years since PNG Independence), overall membership has reached a record 1250. The threads of common background and interest that bind former PNG residents, including many who were born there, remain really strong as is witnessed by the fact that we had the biggest ever crowd of 240 at our last annual Christmas luncheon in Sydney, and some 600 attended a Rabaul reunion in Brisbane last September.

However, we still find many interested people distancing themselves from our association because, from its name, they believe it is restricted to 'retired officers'. Therefore the committee is taking steps towards the consideration of a name change, at a special general meeting to be held on 1 December 2002, immediately before the Annual Christmas Luncheon. This will give plenty of time for input from members and we invite submissions on the matter. The initial suggestion is that we become 'The Papua New Guinea Association of Australia', but someone may advance a more appropriate name.

Finally, it is emphasised that the safeguarding of the retirement conditions of superannuants will remain a prime objective of the Association, and only superannuants will be eligible to vote on superannuation matters. □ H.W. West, President

### HAVE YOU HEARD???

Mary WHITE of Charemont WA, wife of the late John Preston White, found some cuttings and sent them along for interest. One was headed 'Japs hid in N.G. jungle 10 years', and was in *The Sunday Advertiser*, Sat. Night, Feb 20 1955. It stated: 'Four cheerful Japanese Air Force men, who have been living with the natives in the Dutch New Guinea for 10 years, flew to Wewak yesterday to join the *Taisei Maru*, the Japanese war graves ship which will take them home...' It said that after their wanderings the survivors eventually stopped at a native settlement in the hills behind the Sentani Lakes where they were well treated. They heard rumours that the war was over, so they walked into Hollandia and surrendered to the Dutch authorities.

On her doctor's advice, Phyllis KEENAN (widow of coastwatcher Jack Keenan) has moved from Nambour Qld to Aspley, Brisbane, to be nearer to family. A friend described her move as 'a whirlwind upheaval'. Next to her desk Phyllis installed a set of narrow drawers with two larger ones on the bottom for files. She wrote, 'A senior member of staff tells me my room is unique, it hasn't the softness associated with an elderly woman usually, yet lacks the starkness of an office. Modern elderly!'

Joy DISHON is home again after being in Greenslopes Private Hospital for 21

weeks on and off last year with heart and other troubles. She hopes to have a better year this year.

**HONOURS** from the **ORDER OF AUSTRALIA** went to two medicos with valuable ties to PNG. **Ken CLEZY**, who was well known in Moresby in the '70s and was dean of the PNG medical school, won an award for services to surgery and international humanitarian aid. He's now working for a mission in Muslim-ruled Yemen. **Ian MADDOCKS**, the first dean of our medical school and who did pioneering work on diabetes in PNG in the '60s, won plaudits for palliative care work and for helping medical groups trying to prevent wars. He and family lived in Pari village for many years. His wife ran the aid post. (From Jim Toner)

Other medicos in the **HONOURS** lists were **John ALPERS** who was at Talasea before becoming a lecturer at the PNG Medical School (for service to respiratory medicine), and **Clive AURICHT** who was at Popondetta and elsewhere (for service as an advocate for rural medical practice).

At the Christmas Luncheon **Pat HOPPER** presented a cheque for \$1,000 from the Fred Archer Trust to Muttu Gware OBE for the ANGAU Memorial Hospital in Lae. In an article on 4 January, the *PNG Post Courier* informed readers about the gift and gave some publicity to *Tales of Papua New Guinea*.

**Ken WEARE** of Inala Qld who, along with wife Daisy, was in Goroka with Admin. Transport for 11 years in the '50s and '60s returned recently for a nostalgic visit after 34 years and claims the roads are just as bad as they were when Speed Gordon of PWD and the kiaps looked after them. He found the new Bird of Paradise Motel very comfortable, even 'flash'. The legendary **Les GILLIES**, who has lived in Goroka since he went there with his late brother Merv in the late '40s was the only *wantok* remaining. Now 85, and like **Mat FOLEY** who has been in New Britain for nearly 60 years, he says he is beginning to think about retiring to Australia.

## **NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: Jim Toner writes -**

**Otto ALDER**, ex-kiap, spent the latter part of his working life in Darwin before retiring ten years ago. However the NT Government has occasionally recalled its former Under Treasurer for some important tasks, the latest being Chair of the Remuneration Tribunal. The recent offer of a salary increase to Legislative Assembly members was rejected by the ALP majority. Well, you can't please everybody.

A mere stripling during the '60s, **Ed BRUMBY** is still in the workforce. The education officer who was stationed at Angoram and Moresby left Deakin University last year following many years of service. Universities these days are much given to 'restructuring' but after you are asked to re-apply for your position for the third or fourth time this becomes tedious. Ed has relocated and is now general manager (projects) at the ANZ Institute of Insurance and Finance in Melbourne.

**Dick HAGON** has had an eventful year. The Western Highlands identity, there since 1955, suffered the indignity of arrest by police in mid-2001. An interesting saga but not for these pages. Then he was awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours for services to the coffee industry. Also in that industry is **Terry SHELLEY** who is owner/manager of a plantation outside Goroka. He was a co-ops officer in the '60s who spent some time in the NT running the bar at the Humpty Doo hotel before returning to PNG and the arabica beans.

In March 1992 *Una Voce* reported the departure from Moresby of ex-kiap **Chris WARRILLOW** who after 32 years in PNG was Going South to find a cottage, mow a lawn, etc. Yet when I phoned the Aviat Club one evening this January on another matter,

I was informed 'He has just left the building'. That Elvis-like reappearance is less mysterious than another concurrently reported since the subject is deceased. Having known **Mike JOYCE**, education officer and champion distance runner, in the '60s I was delighted that a Memorial Race in his name is held in Moresby to this day. However the *Post Courier* says 'Legend has it that the 5 km stretch from the corner of Bava Street and Taurama Road, Korobosea down to Taurama Barracks was his favourite training course and that when runners on this route hear someone running behind and put on a spurt only to turn round and find no-one there, it is the spirit of Mike egging them on ...'

A road-runner seemingly far from deceased is **Ian MACKENZIE** current super-veteran star of the Moresby club. He was 20 years old when playing Aussie Rules with some panache for Koboni in the late '60s but has clearly become one of the senior Taubadas who 'stayed on'.

Thirty years ago **Jon BILTRIS** was a District Officer at Lae but he had previously served at Gembogl patrol post. He went home to Melbourne in the '70s but was spotted back in PNG before Christmas. Apparently the *luluai* at Gembogl - now recycled as its Area Authority President! - had invited him back so Jon took up the offer. 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot ...?'

I was saddened to learn in the last issue of the passing of **Eric CLEGG**. When he set up the driving school at Bomana Police College I was 'volunteered' for a 4-wheel-drive course. At one point he directed me to the top of a hill in the scrub where I was invited to descend a winding dirt track. It appeared almost vertical and I might not have attempted it solo. But I looked at the Inspector seated beside me, solid, unfazed, British. The man inspired confidence and we went down without mishap.

However Eric, like the rest of us, was not infallible and when he instructed me to 'bush-bash' the Landrover through some tall grass he was correct in that the ground beneath was flat and dry but he could not have known of the log which would jam itself under an axle. We tried a few tricks including me crawling underneath the vehicle only to emerge filthy with a torn shirt... So we walked back to the nearest bitumen where luckily a tourist bus appeared carrying ladies from a Queensland CWA. We clambered aboard, the burly uniformed policeman and sweaty dishevelled me, and took seats. I thought nothing of this until one busybody leaned forward to the Inspector and whispered 'So you've caught 'im, then?' RIP Eric.

Sport: So, you ask, 'Did Mahuru Dai go the tonk?' (*ie try to hit every ball to the boundary*). In the World Cup of cricket for under-19s held in NZ the young Hanuabadan batting dynamo started with that intention, scoring 66 against Namibia. But then the PNG lads came up against Pakistan; at least Mahuru broke his duck which is more than five other team-mates accomplished. The best 18 yr-old fast bowlers in Pakistan must surely be on the fringe of their own Text XI. Added to which only two of the PNG team had ever played on turf. Nevertheless their other opening batsman, Frank Joseph, scored 92 against England - that's always something you can tell your grand-kids about.

Track and field athletics got under way in PNG in 1961 under the leadership of **Cyril McCUBBERY** in Moresby and **Don BARRATT** in Rabaul. In May the Athletics Association there is to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and **Kevan GOSPER**, onetime Rabaul resident, is to be principal guest representing the IOC at the function.

There will also be a birthday bash at Goroka later this year to mark a half-century of Rugby League there. It is quite amazing how this football code has spread from Kavieng to Ok Tedi. I was amused to see that even Bundi has a team in a lower grade. Precisely where 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> of flat land for a playing field might be found at that station I don't know. Perhaps that is why its team is named the Bundi Landslides.

Another item to file under 'You can't please everybody': **Johnny STEPHENS**, ex Public Health Dept and Treasury, still has interests in retail stores in Lae where the local bakery presented two fine Christmas cakes to his native staff. Their response was, 'We are not babies that you should give us cake. Give us beer.'

And one more of the same: When the 200 boat-people from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan arrived at Lombrum naval base for refugee processing, the smiling Manus Islanders cheerfully served up a breakfast of egg and bacon.

### **NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** John Kleinig writes -

On the eve of Guy Fawkes Night 2001, an event still celebrated in Adelaide, the second **Annual ROAPNG Reunion** provided the usual unpredictable mix of characters and stories. More than 70 former PNG residents were present. Newly anointed 'emeritus' kiap, **Jack PAGE**, thanked guest speaker, former kiap and ABC broadcaster **Graham TAYLOR**, and then with much style and enthusiasm, Jack told of his recent emotional return to Madang. With him at the Reunion were his daughter, **Susan Benham PAGE**, and granddaughter **Myfawny STANFIELD**, both of whom were born in PNG. The entertaining speech by Graham Taylor was about the importance of the ABC both then and now. (An edited version of the speech will be in a future edition of *Una Voce*.)

Also present was former LAES (Lowlands Agriculture Experimental Station) Keravat, coconut agronomist **Hal GALLASCH**, now a curator of Pacific artifacts in Hahndorf SA and an investor in a recent film on PNG. Hal is a regular visitor to PNG and visited Rabaul soon after the last volcanic eruption. His story of the events leading up to the 1994 explosion make riveting listening.

Another former LAES resident, entomologist **Peter BAILEY**, who is becoming an almost regular ABC Radio commentator, has now retired as senior entomologist with the South Australian Research and Development Institute at the Waite Campus. He was also an affiliate senior lecturer at the University of Adelaide. At the reunion he was heard making plans to visit PNG sometime in 2002.

**Peter THOMAS**, a resident of the Barossa Valley, past District Governor of Rotary International and ex kiap, has recently returned from the Solomon Islands where he has been coordinating aid for Rotarians Against Malaria. In Brisbane he met with fellow kiap **Bernie MAUME**, and **Mal THOMPSON**, finance officer with Regloc. Bernie and Vicki operate Newstead Gardens Motel and Mal commutes to a mining project south of Tari where he is business adviser to the local landowners. Peter plans several trips during the next twelve months assisting the volunteer teams who will come from all over Australia. His attendance at the reunion was little short of a miracle as he had to negotiate his way home after the financial collapse and grounding of the only airline serving the Solomons. It is rumoured that he gained some strategic advice from **Peter LYONS**, another ex kiap and author of best selling novel, "The New Guinea Club". At the reunion, while dispensing copies of his novel, Peter explained how he had now sold over 7,000 copies.

Other authors displaying their books included the **Rev Rodger BROWN** now in his ninety second year whose book recalls his experiences as a Methodist missionary in New Britain before and after the war. His book was on sale along with **Margaret HENDERSON's** moving story about her missionary father, titled *Yours Sincerely, Tom* and **Robyn RADFORD's** book, *Highlanders and Foreigners in the Upper Ramu - The Kainantu Area 1919 - 1942*.

Stalwart reunion organisers **Ron and Josette STORER**, formerly Treasury, just

managed to get home for the event having recently returned from the UK, Norfolk Island and their annual sojourn to the south of France, aka 'the Sunshine Coast'.

The 2002 Reunion will be held in Adelaide on Sunday 27 October 2002.

### **Elsewhere in and about Adelaide –**

Whilst visiting Neriba GALLASCH at her Aboriginal Art Gallery in Hahndorf, SA Museum curator and former PNG resident Tim FLANNERY recalled how he has never been far from controversy and this particularly included his time in PNG.

Harry and Grace JACKMAN still reside in the Barossa Valley. Harry's work on his doctorate has slowed down somewhat due to difficulties caused by Parkinson's Disease, but he continues to persevere.

Heard enthusiastically reminiscing on local ABC Radio 891 about their time in PNG were morning broadcaster, Philip SATCHELL, ex 9PA, and Ken INGLIS, ex University of PNG.

Ray WHITROD's autobiography *Before I Sleep* (UQP), published last year, provides a very frank self-appraisal of his time as Commissioner of Police in PNG from 1969 to 1970. The book concludes movingly and with some tragedy in a nursing home in Norwood SA, where he struggles with the loss of his wife.

*(Our thanks to John Kleinig for becoming our SA correspondent)*

### **NEWS FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA:**

**Sale of largest bank in PNG:** The PNG Banking Corporation (PNGBC) is to be sold to PNG's only locally-owned bank, Bank South Pacific, in the Government's first major privatisation. The Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta, is a former managing director of the PNGBC. *Financial Review 30-11-2001*

**Autonomy for Bougainville:** In January this year the PNG parliament voted to grant autonomy to the province of Bougainville as well as the right to an eventual referendum on total independence. *SMH 24-1-2002*

**BHP Billiton exits Ok Tedi:** BHP Billiton has transferred its 52% equity in the copper mine to a development fund which will use future dividend payments to fund projects for the benefit of PNG landowners. The development fund will be the major shareholder in the mine, followed by the PNG Govt with 30% and Canadian group Inmet with 18%. *(SMH 9/10-2-2002)*

**Laurie LEFEVRE writes - Continuing the PNG Connection:** I am currently working for Ok Tedi Mining Limited in Tabubil in the Western Province, in what may well be my last paid employment. Although I formally retired from the Commonwealth government in 1995, I did not give up work, and have had about six jobs since then - mainly in the government sector. However, the experience at Tabubil is particularly special as it allows me to continue the PNG connection in a very tangible way.

The Newsletter is always a good read, and I can relate to the various stories about recent visits to PNG. The story Max Hayes tells, and the implied message of 'no heroics', serves as a warning to all visitors. Papua New Guinean people with whom I work are embarrassed and concerned by the problems arising from lawlessness and see clearly how it gets in the way of tourism.

(Question - why don't we just drop *raskol*, and talk about bandits or armed robbers? *Raskol* may be correct in pure Tokpisin, but the inferences drawn from the word are incorrect. I have made a similar suggestion here in PNG. It was well received.)

A current government study into impediments to increased tourism is picking up on issues such as the limited number of traders that take credit cards, but I am sure the

issue of lawlessness will emerge as the single biggest concern.

Looking at the number of Australians with a PNG connection, and the number of reunions being held, one wonders why the PNG government hasn't specifically targeted such groups as potential visitors.

It was two years since I was last in PNG on an extended visit, and a lot longer since I worked here. General warnings of 'everything has changed' came from all directions, and yes, a lot has changed; but we live in a constant condition of change.

But on the other hand so much hasn't changed, and has a comfortable familiarity about it. I can almost set my watch by the rain. The people in the street like to stop for a chat and a *seken* (shake hands). *Apinun* has largely given way to 'g'day mate', but the sentiment is the same regardless of the language. Sadly, respiratory disease remains a major health problem.

But there are the changes we would hope to see - a time when the Papua New Guinean who has a master's degree from an Australian university, or who is a medical specialist, or an airline pilot, is as likely as not a woman.

There is a greater egalitarianism than many of us would remember. First names are used right through the company up to Managing Director and board level.

One major change is that the public infrastructure Australia left behind has deteriorated badly. In the Western Province, it is only Ok Tedi Mining Limited today that builds new infrastructure. Under the Tax Credits Scheme, resource companies can build infrastructure and earn a tax credit. In the Western Province Ok Tedi Mining Limited has built schools, dormitories and schoolteachers' houses, installed solar-powered street lighting, sponsored water projects, and built bridges. It promotes primary industry, and employs agricultural extension officers and business development officers. There is a familiarity about this side of the Ok Tedi operation that invokes memories of the field officers in the old days.

**Noel WRIGHT - News from the Porgera Gold Mine in the Enga Province:** Early-closure planning is under way for the Porgera Gold Mine, which commenced mining under its present Managers in 1989. Current estimates are some five years of mining plus another five or six years of stockpile processing and rehabilitation.

As you can imagine closure planning will be of utmost importance in the coming years. If the establishment of the mine had a big impact on the Porgera Valley, the effect of its closure will be even greater because of the large numbers of people who have become almost totally reliant on it for their income and survival over the years of its existence.

Amongst the staff of just under 2000 nationals and 213 expatriates is a small band of ex kiaps and other long term PNG residents. Many of us carry out tasks very similar to those we performed in earlier times. Our ranks were thinned by the departure earlier in the year of Noel WALTERS, who has gone off to do some consulting, and Des FANNING who has retired to do some fishing in Darwin. Those still at Porgera include Kenn LOGAN, Jack SCOTT, Alan STEVENS, Marty BOS, Greg McNEE, Steve CUTLACK, Geoff HIATT and ex national kiaps Kai LAVU and Laka RUPA who are no doubt known to many.

Despite the lurid stories which come out of PNG, many of which are unfortunately true, it is still a very satisfying and challenging place to work.

**Noel later gave additional information:** As I am the Business Development Coordinator at Porgera (Business Development is a section of Community Affairs), I am very involved in the identification of sustainable sources of income for landowners. This is not an easy task given the isolation of Porgera. In the past most of our work has been

## ATTENTION

**Film Australia is researching a film about the history of West New Guinea from the earliest Dutch colonial times through to Act Of Free Choice until today. If you have any photographs, memorabilia or home movies or good stories to tell please contact -**

**Mark Worth or Janet Bell at Film Australia phone 9413 8777 or email [mworth@filmaust.com.au](mailto:mworth@filmaust.com.au)**

directed towards businesses that provide services to the mine. Business Development was set up to enable landowners to participate in 'spin off' businesses. We have over three hundred small businesses registered with us.

We have however been involved in the operations of a vegetable project at Wabag, which provides vegetables to the mine and exports to other parts of PNG, and a fishing project on Lake Murray. Both of these projects have excellent long term prospects.

Though many of the current businesses will no longer operate after mine closure, the practical skills that these people have learned through the operation of their businesses (and with our assistance and training programmes) will enable them to seek work elsewhere.

With closure a reality, there has been a marked change in the attitude of many landowners who now realise that they have to plan for the future. We are in the process of setting up a number of trusts and assisting landowners to purchase investment properties in Lae and Port Moresby using compensation monies, which have in the past been wasted. To date we have purchased six properties.

Our closure planning will also look at coffee in the lower areas and the utilisation of local timber resources for furniture making or export of fitches to other parts of PNG.

Obviously we will involve local government officials as the sustainability of many of these projects will depend on them after our departure.

## A NOTE ON IRIAN JAYA/WEST PAPUA:

Tim Dodd in *The Australian Financial Review* of 2 January 2002 wrote, 'A remarkable transition occurred yesterday in Indonesia's westernmost province, formerly known by its Indonesian name of Irian Jaya. The Jakarta Government officially recognised local aspirations by formally naming the province Papua and, in an autonomy deal which operates from January 1 [2002], has undertaken to return to the local government a majority of tax and royalty revenue from new resource projects. On paper, it is a very generous offer ...' The deal provides for a democratically elected provincial government and the Papuans' right to have their own flag and anthem.

However the article goes on to say that the army has always been free to do as it wishes and that 'The problem, under the new autonomy system, is that little has changed and the army remains the dominant force'.

\*\*\*\*\*

**HELP WANTED:** Peter Cahill is preparing an entry on **CHIN HOI MEEN** for a volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* to be published later this year and would welcome any comments/reminiscences about him. Peter is particularly interested in his community involvement in the immediate post WWII period - 1945/1955. Please send to: Dr Peter Cahill, 7 Wynyard Street, Indooroopilly Qld 4068 Email: [p.cahill@uq.net.au](mailto:p.cahill@uq.net.au)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR from Robt. R. Cole

### CONCERN OVER 'MY GUN, MY BROTHER'

Recently my attention was drawn to Pacific Islands Monograph Series 15 entitled 'My Gun My Brother: The World of the Papua New Guinea Colonial Police 1920-1960' by August Ibrum Kituai, published in 1998.

I read this Monograph with more than usual interest, since I was District Commissioner of the Southern Highlands District during 1954-1957. Dr Kituai writes in his Monograph of certain unsavoury incidents that he alleges took place in the District during this period.

I can only say that I have no knowledge at all of these incidents. I have checked with 26 officers and missionaries (including Mr James Sinclair, author of many books on PNG subjects, some of which are cited by Dr Kituai) who served in the Southern Highlands during this period, and without exception they all disclaim knowledge of the incidents. I believe that Dr Kituai has placed far too much reliance on the memories of 28 ex-policemen (out of approximately 3,000 serving at the time) of the events of more than 40 years ago.

However, it is Dr Kituai's account of one particular incident that has prompted this letter, for he has cast a slur on the character of a particularly fine field officer, Mr Roger Claridge. He has misquoted from the official patrol report submitted by Mr Claridge and from my own covering memorandum, and both of these documents are in my possession for perusal.

On p. 157 of his monograph Kr Kituai writes, 'I will now quote verbatim from a 1955-56 patrol report from the Southern Highlands ...' In his quote Dr Kituai made at least 25 errors and/or misquotes.

And on p. 159 Dr Kituai writes, 'The response from the District Commissioner Robert Cole, dated 10 November 1955, was short and to the point and is quoted verbatim...' Here again there are at least 7 errors and/or misquotes in my one page memorandum.

I particularly draw attention to small but very significant omissions in Dr Kituai's published version of Appendix B of the patrol report.

I also draw attention to the substitution of the word 'unpardonable' for the word 'unpredictable', which is the word I actually used in my memorandum. The effect of this word is to completely distort the meaning of what I wrote.

In my memorandum covering the patrol report I wrote, 'This report records another of the unpredictable incidents which have occurred in the district since its establishment.'

And Dr Kituai's quoted 'verbatim' version reads: 'This report records another of the unpardonable incidents which have occurred in the district since its establishment.'

Dr Kituai states at p. 160 'in this case a man was killed within 30 seconds of an alleged attack, and before an arrow was let fly by a man standing 15 to 20 feet away'. Whereas the patrol report makes it obvious that the patrol was in fact under attack at the time and had in fact received three flights of arrows from attackers. One arrow, meant for Claridge, hit a tree behind which he dived for safety.

I can assure Dr Kituai that there is little more chilling than the twang of a bowstring under these conditions. On what evidence does he conclude that the man who was shot had not in fact fired an arrow? Certainly many of his companions had fired arrows and Mr Claridge deserves credit for avoiding what could have been a much heavier loss of life.

Dr Kituai says (at p. 160) 'it seems that officially the patrol officer concerned earned himself a reprimand, but under the circumstances ..... no further action was taken against him, he was exonerated. Even if the officer seemed to have been operating within the rules, the point can still be made that .....inexperience at frontier work contributed significantly to violent death'.

The fact is that the finding of a properly constituted coronial enquiry, held on the spot three days after the attack, by a highly experienced senior officer, Mr D.J. Clancy, returned a verdict of justifiable homicide. Far from being 'reprimanded', the Director of Native Affairs, Mr J.K. McCarthy, in a memorandum dated 27 November 1955 officially commended Mr Claridge for his actions during the patrol. Dr Kituai also infers that Mr Claridge was inexperienced in frontier work. Surely, the most basic research would have shown the author that Patrol Officer Claridge was in fact a very experienced frontier field officer who had served in the almost totally uncontrolled Southern Highlands District since 1951.

Mr Claridge's work was consistently praised by senior officers during this period, and particularly by Mr Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories, in a letter dated 27 October 1953 which refers to field work conducted by Mr Claridge two years before the incident mentioned by Dr Kituai. Claridge was far from inexperienced in frontier work and if he had carried out his research thoroughly, Dr Kituai would have known that.

I acknowledge that Dr Kituai has produced a valuable work and appears to have gone to considerable lengths to research his subject. However, I note that he has cited over 400 references. I have identified significant errors (over 30 misquotes) in just two of these references. I must conclude that there is a possibility of error in other references that I am not in a position to check. To my mind, this casts a doubt on some of the conclusions that Dr Kituai has reached regarding Roger Claridge and others he mentioned.

Robt. R. Cole, Nerang, Qld, 7 November 2001

\*\*\*\*\*

**JEAN WESTMORE SEEKS FORMER PNG FRIENDS AND STUDENTS:** Jean Westmore would like to hear from anyone who knew her late husband Bernard, also from any of her former students or their family members. Some of her former students from classes at Konedobu in '60s were: Kwamala Kalo (and his son Gerald Kalo), To Puek To Nata, Sampson To Patiliu, Michael Somare, Vincent Eri, Sere Pitoi, Albert Maori Kiki, Kame Gabi, Toua Kapena, Lepani Watson (and his son Charles Lepani), Miss Rakatani Hitolo, and many others. Jean said she would answer all letters. Please write to: Mrs Jean Westmore, PO Box 29, Mount Beauty, Victoria, 3699, Australia.

**HELP WANTED:** The Morobe Tourism Bureau is in the early stages of establishing a museum and cultural centre at Lae. (Two ROAPNG members are on the Board of the Tourism Bureau - Fred Cook and Alan McLay.) The Tourism Development Manager, Sheryl Guthrie, wrote that they would be glad of any information, copies of photographs or other information which could be of use in a museum and cultural centre at Lae. Sheryl is also researching the history behind the tunnels in Mt Lunaman and would be very glad to hear from anyone who has information about the tunnels.

Sheryl's email address is [lcci@global.net.pg](mailto:lcci@global.net.pg) or [tony-sheryl@global.net.pg](mailto:tony-sheryl@global.net.pg) or write to her at PO Box 475 Lae, Ph 675 472 2340, Fax 675 472 6038, Ph A/H 675 472 2051 (Sheryl is also Exec. Officer of Lae Chamber of Commerce & Industry and asked members to contact her if she could be of any assistance.)

### 'BOARD, PLEASE'

The passing of Sir Ranald (Dennis) Buchanan notified in *Una Voce* in December 2001 has brought back a memory that I trust Dennis would not have minded if I shared with the ROAPNG membership.

Arriving in the Territory in November 1954, my first posting as an agricultural officer was to Bainyik Agricultural Station, near Maprik in the Sepik District. Six weeks later my wife (who had remained in Australia while I found scarce married accommodation) arrived in Wewak. I had flown in from Maprik to meet her, and the following day we were on Boram airstrip ready to fly back 'home' to Bainyik. The aircraft we were to board was a Norseman, one of Bobby Gibbes' fleet. Bobby's baggage handler cum boarding officer was a youth, generally known as 'Junior' Buchanan. (I doubt that many knew him as 'Dennis' or that his official name was 'Ranald').

The Norseman stood ready for take-off, and my wife and I were asked by Junior to 'Board, please'. The step-up into the plane's interior was rather high off the ground, and I thought it very gallant of Junior to stand by the aircraft step, to hand my wife up. This of course was in the days before the ubiquitous jeans that nowadays everyone wears. My wife, a very comely lass then (and, of course, still), helped up by an attentive Junior, took a mighty step aloft before she disappeared inside. Junior looked at me with a mischievous smile as he said, 'Best view in town, mate'. I should have decked him, but I appreciated his cheekiness and decided to take it as the joke he surely meant it to be?

*Vale, Junior, look after the passengers in the Big Norseman in the Sky, won't you.*

□ F.J. Brockhall



In Goroka in 1960 - Dennis Buchanan, centre, Sam Wanai (Dennis's refuelling boy who went on to become *bosboi* of the engineering section) left, and ??? right (can you help?).

(Photo supplied by Leo Butler)

**HELP WANTED:** Rodney Cantlay of Anula NT is seeking information on **James McNab CANTLAY** who was a PNG superannuant but not an ROAPNG member. He died on 19-7-2001, aged 82. His wife was Jean Sylvia Cantlay who we believe survives him. If you have any information at all, please contact Rodney at: Ph. 08 8945 3044, Email: [rodsan@austarnet.com.au](mailto:rodsan@austarnet.com.au) or write to him at: 64 Union Terrace, Anula NT 0812

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## *TWO REVIEWS OF OUR BOOK*

### **TALES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**- Insights, Experiences, Reminiscences,**

**Edited by Stuart Inder**

#### **(1) Review by Ian Hicks in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Spectrum', Jan 5-6 2002**

If they think of Papua New Guinea at all, most Australians have only a jaundiced view of the 26-year-old nation to our north. How could that be otherwise? The news from PNG seems usually to be bad followed by worse; yesterday's political instability and today's official corruption to be topped by tomorrow's new mining pollution scandal.

Some fortunate Australians have a different viewpoint. They are the men and women who lived and worked in PNG, particularly those who did so between 1945, the end of World War II, and 1975, when PNG became independent.

This book is their stories, told in their own words and in an unmistakably Australian idiom. Stuart Inder, the editor of the old *Pacific Islands Monthly*, chose them from hundreds of contributions published during the past 20 years in *Una Voce*, the quarterly journal of the Retired Officers Association of PNG.

In his foreword, Inder admits cheerfully to having edited the 60-odd stories, which range from several pages to a few paragraphs, with only a light hand. That's all to the good. Although these stories were written for an audience of insiders - the authors' mates and their families - they were without exception written with skill.

A few yarns fall a bit flat - perhaps, as the comedian said, you had to have been there - but the individual voices remain true. And what a swag of stories they have to tell.

Bill and Nancy Johnston's three linked stories are a powerful slice of personal history, the impact of a child's death conveyed with a calm grief verging on nobility. There is the saga of the life and death of a pet pig called Cabbage, a thoughtful contribution to the Kokoda Track debate and a surprisingly gentle view of the impact of beachcombers in the Trobriand Islands.

There is many a tale of back-breaking effort, not always rewarded, and of acts of considerable bravery. And there is humour, such as the days-long party thrown at Mount Hagen for a patrol officer diagnosed (wrongly, as it later turned out) with terminal cancer:

*Some husbands forgot their wives and partied on without them, while others forgot where their wives were sleeping and crawled into the beds of other wives by mistake. On the other hand, there were some wives so exhausted by the revelry that they did not know that their sleeping partners were not their husbands, while there were other wives who*

knew but didn't care.

That larky tale, *The True History of the Hagen Club*, is the work of former District Court magistrate, Chips Mackellar. It's great fun, and it tells you a good deal about the way Australians got things done in pre-independence PNG.

Mackellar is also the author of the best tale in the book, *A Family Matter*, which you'll not read without at least a lump in the throat. When you've finished it, you'll have been subtly introduced to a continuing PNG dilemma: how to balance family tradition and the Western way of doing things when the independent umpire has gone home.

I don't think there's been a better book of personal recollection from PNG since 1982's splendid *Taim Bilong Masta*, which is out of print (your local library either has it or can get it for you) but which ABC Books is thinking of reprinting.

*Tales of Papua New Guinea* is a modest but invaluable contribution to Australian history. It transforms deeply personal experience into a broader view of what Australians did, and what they sought to do, in a PNG now gone forever.

**Ian Hicks**, a former literary editor of the Herald, was the paper's correspondent in PNG from 1969 to 1973.

## **(2) Review by John Farquharson in *The Canberra Times*, 'Panorama', 2 February 2002**

When veteran London Missionary Society minister turned politician Percy Chatterton came to write his memoir of a lifetime spent in Papua New Guinea he called it *Day that I have Loved*. For Chatterton those years there were the happiest of his life and he found a profound love for the land and the Papuan people to whom he ministered. And the people came to love and understand him, giving him ample reward for his long years of labour and dedication.

That same theme and motivation comes through *Tales of Papua New Guinea*, a compilation of enthralling, but true, stories selected from more than 20 years of issues of *Una Voce*, the quarterly journal of the Retired Officers' Association of PNG. But these are not just *kiaps*' (patrol officers) stories.

They embrace the whole range of people from missionaries, planters and miners to public servants, parliamentarians, businessmen and individuals of varied ilk.

Sensitively selected and edited by Stuart Inder, former long-serving editor of *Pacific Islands Monthly*, who incidentally was the instigator of Percy Chatterton's memoir, the stories capture richly evocative images of the lives of people who loved what they were doing, accepting postings wherever they took them and then getting on with the job. Their experiences span three major phases in PNG's history and development - Time Before (World War II), War Time and Time After (the years between World War II and independence). Throughout that time PNG really marched to the administration's beat, as government control and other enterprises were stumblingly extended across a land making its way into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It was an era when, as Chips Mackellar recalls in his tale of *Life With Crocodiles*, 'you could walk for three months without ever seeing another soul except your own patrol personnel'. Over vast areas 'there were no roads or foot trails. It was a totally trackless wilderness'. Against that setting Mackellar goes on to tell the gripping but terrible tale of how a crocodile snatched a baby in a Fly River village. A mother had 'just finished breast-feeding her baby and put him in a *bilum* (string bag), which she hung from a protruding floorboard, about a foot (30cm) off the ground. The baby was sound asleep when I heard somebody cry, "Crocodile! Crocodile!" and I looked up to see an enormous crocodile running like a lizard on his two back feet. The crocodile swept past the house snatching the baby in the *bilum* on the way. People yelled, dogs barked, pigs squealed to

no avail. Within seconds the crocodile crossed the isthmus and plunged into the water on the other side, taking with him the baby in the *bilum*'.

That was a tragedy of indigenous village life. Europeans had their share of tragedy too, apart from plenty of hardship, on isolated outstations, where families had to be raised with scant or no readily available medical assistance. Nancy Johnston movingly describes how family dramas could arise out of nowhere. She and her *kiap* husband, Bill, were stationed at Kikori, in the Gulf, when tragedy struck. The resident medical doctor was several days walk away, in the mountains, inaccessible to aircraft when their daughter Christine, three weeks before her second birthday, suddenly took ill. In an hour, she had died in her father's arms. Radio contact could not be made with Port Moresby or anywhere else, being lunchtime. By the time the signal was picked up by the Department of Civil Aviation in Madang, it was too late.

They were more fortunate at their next posting to Bogia, between Madang and Wewak, when their daughter, Margaret, developed a high temperature. A doctor treated her for malaria, giving her an antibiotic as an added precaution.

Her temperature could not be stabilised and with the doctor concerned about her survival, an urgent message hurriedly brought Bill back from patrol.

Margaret's problem was later found by another doctor to have been exacerbated by overdosing with drugs. His pronouncement was that 'according to the book, that child should be dead!' However, continual vomiting saved her life.

Not all PNG experiences were as harrowing as that. Take Candy Parrish's and Kay Cole's introduction to PNG after leaving comfortable lives in Australia to join their *kiap* husbands. Candy's trip to New Guinea to marry Doug Parrish in Lae and then her first month of marriage read like the script for one of those old Hollywood comedy-of-errors movies. (*To save space, Candy and Kay's numerous mishaps have been omitted here.*)

That is just a taste of the wide range of gripping yarns and now never-to-be-repeated experiences that this fascinating, skilfully edited, book has to offer. The PNG Retired Officers' Association has produced an attractive, highly professional publication well deserving of a place on any bookshelf. It should go on the 'must-read' lists not only of old PNG hands, but also of general readers who, I've no doubt, will be drawn by something really different.

*John Farquharson is a writer and media consultant whose long-term interest in PNG began in the early '60s. He is a former deputy editor of The Canberra Times.*

#### HOW TO ORDER 'TALES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA'

If you haven't already purchased a copy of 'Tales of Papua New Guinea', you might like to order a copy when making your luncheon payment and/or renewing your membership. (See separate yellow sheet.) Cost to members is **\$25 plus P & P** which is: \$7 within Australia (+ \$3 for each additional copy to the same address), \$12 international (+ \$5 for each additional copy to the same address). Cost to non-ROAPNG members is **\$30 plus P&P**. Credit card payments accepted.

**HELP WANTED:** Dorothy Braxton is updating a book she wrote many years ago and never published. It is a biography of **SISTER ANNETTE HERBERT**, a Sister of the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Order, who worked in PNG from the 1930s until the early '70s. In that time she was responsible, along with Dr Joan Refshauge, for establishing the first registered nursing service for PNG women for which they received formal certificates. She did a great deal for infant and maternal health services in the country. Dorothy would like to hear from any members who met Sister Annette and can recall stories about her or her work. Dorothy can be contacted at: ph 02 6259 2407 or 3/9 Lidgett Place, Florey ACT 2615. Her email address is [dbraxton@pcug.org.au](mailto:dbraxton@pcug.org.au)

# PURIPURI\* AT OLSOBIP (Western District)

by Philip Fitzpatrick

One day in 1970 I was sitting idly in my office at Olsobip watching the clouds travel down off the higher ranges and along the steep valley wall. Very soon the gorge at the end of the valley would be clouded over and it would be impossible to fly either in or out of the patrol post. It happened every day and I was not surprised. When I looked up the valley again I noticed a small party of men descending the scarp opposite the airstrip bearing what appeared to be a stretcher. This was unusual and I got up and summoned Imbum the interpreter and Kasari the corporal. We went outside and waited.

The bundle the little group of men carried to the door of the office was indeed a stretcher. Flattened lengths of *sikin diwai* (bark) had been tied to a frame of saplings and padded with ferns and grass. On this bed lay a battered looking man who I guessed to be of middle years. I knelt down and poked about amongst the foliage to examine him. He was covered with bruises and swellings. His face was also puffed up but it was his eyes that caught my attention. He looked as though he had seen a ghost. My white face hovering over him didn't help. I patted him reassuringly on the arm and he recoiled to the edge of the stretcher.

'What happened to him?' I asked one of the stretcher-bearers. The question drew an interesting response. The man started and stood open-mouthed in confusion. I lifted my eyebrows and pointedly looked at Imbum who was staring in fascination at the stricken man on the stretcher. I nudged the interpreter with my foot. He looked down at me in surprise, then, realising what I wanted, turned to the group of men. As they broke into a confused babble I examined the man's limbs and abdomen. Nothing seemed broken and his chest, stomach and spleen seemed unharmed. Judging by the damage, I guessed he had been beaten fairly methodically with a piece of wood. He was going to be very sore in a day or so.

'Where is his wife?' I asked.

'What!' Imbum blurted.

'His wife?' I repeated.

Imbum shouted at the babbling men. They stopped moving and talking in the same instant.

'He isn't married!' one of the men relayed through Imbum.

'Then who did this to him', I asked. Sheepish silence. I stood up.

'Well?' More silence. I stepped towards them.

'It was a *maselai meri*', Imbum said quickly.

'Oh yes?' I replied, raising my eyebrows. 'And where is this *maselai meri* now?'

Imbum pointed with his chin and whispered. 'She's in the forest. Maybe she's waiting for nightfall when she can finish him off.'

'Where did they bring him from?' I asked, trying to hide the skepticism in my voice. Imbum consulted the group again and when the babble had died down turned back to me.

'They found him hanging onto a rock in the middle of the Ok Kinim on the track to Bolivip. When they shouted to him he told them what had happened and they became frightened and ran away but one of them stopped after a while and said he felt sorry for the man and was going back to help him. They argued about this for a while and finally decided on a plan.'

'A plan?'

'Yes, they decided to make a stretcher out of bark, creep back to the river, rescue the man and carry him here as quickly as possible.'

'So the *maselai* couldn't catch them?'

'Yes *kiap*.'

'And what are we going to do if the *maselai* comes looking for him tonight?' Imbum looked blank and turned to the men again.

'They say the police can shoot her with their rifles.'

'Ask them what really happened', I said to Imbum, 'Who beat him up and why?' Imbum looked puzzled and shrugged his shoulders. He was obviously wondering why I doubted the men's story. I sighed.

*Maselai* are malevolent spirits who lurk in the forest. Often they lure unsuspecting individuals into the forest and perform unspeakable acts on them. I've never been able to obtain a useful description of these unspeakable acts, old ladies cackle, children cringe and men look distinctly uncomfortable when I ask the question. A favourite trick of the *maselai* is to turn into the shape of a seductive nymph to lure men into the forest. The only way to get away from the *maselai* is to manoeuvre a body of water between yourself and the spirit. They won't cross water for some reason, hence the reason the battered man was on the rock in the middle of the river.

'They say it was definitely a *maselai*', Imbum announced.

'Okay', I sighed, 'Take him down to the medic and get him examined and then put him in the empty police house down by the store. Tell Kasari to put a guard on the door. The other men had better camp down by the river for the night. Send word up to Fiamnok at Loubip, tell him I wish to consult him on a matter of professional interest.' Fiamnok was the *Mamusi*, or village constable, in the village on the ridge overlooking the station. He was a little gamin of a man who habitually wore a cane hat. He was also the chief sorcerer in the valley and we had enjoyed a friendly sort of intellectual duel ever since I had arrived at Olsobip. He often came on patrols with me, probably for nefarious reasons, but I enjoyed his company anyway.

A camp of sorts, with rough shelters, had been established for people visiting the patrol post in an area just beyond the station on a bend in the Ok Bilak. I told Kasari I wanted the group kept there until we had gotten to the bottom of what appeared to be a criminal assault. Olsobip had never had a formal gaol built. The odd miscreant sentenced at Olsobip was usually given a red *laplap* (loin cloth) before being handed over to the charge of one of the station policemen. They usually served out their time working with the paid station labourers and sleeping in the policeman's cookhouse.

I thought it best to lock the injured man up in the empty police house as a form of protective custody. I guessed there wasn't a person on the station, except for myself, who didn't believe in magic and sorcery and for that reason the investigation would be difficult. I wasn't sure about Kasari. He was an intelligent man with a strong practical bent but I once had to dismiss a case where he had arrested a man for theft because his evidence was based on a dream in which his deceased grandmother identified the culprit.

Towards midnight I surfaced from a deep sleep into a dream full of voices and lights. As I gained consciousness the noise and lights remained. I rolled over and peered out of the bedroom window. There was shouting and flashing lights down by the police house. I looked at my watch, it was 2.30 a.m. 'What the hell is going on now?' I said aloud as I pulled on a pair of shorts. A flashlight was coming up the hill towards the house.

By the time Kasari reached the verandah I had fired up my Petromax lantern. The bright silk mantle lit up the surrounding lawn.

'It's the *maselai*', Kasari said, 'It tried to get at the man from under the house!'

'Is he okay?' I asked.

'He's scared and shivering, some of the men shot arrows at it and it's gone away.'

'Okay, let's go see him', I replied.

The night was cool and I involuntarily shivered as I peered under the house. There was nothing there except for a dozen or more long-bladed arrows sticking in the ground at odd angles. In the extra light cast by the Petromax one of the men worked up the courage to retrieve them. As he crawled out from amongst the house piles I noticed that there was blood on some of the arrow blades. Everyone else noticed the red stains and there was a collective shudder amongst the crowd. I peered at the blood, it was wet and sticky.

'Come on', I said to Kasari, 'Down to the camp. Look for dead chickens or someone with cuts on them, anywhere that blood could come from!' Kasari looked puzzled then grinned.

'*Yu tink oli giaman yumi long maselai?*' (You think they are lying to us about the *maselai*?) he said. 'Of course', I replied, 'It's a set up to reinforce their story. They beat the man up and got worried when he looked badly injured; they decided to bring him in to the medic but needed an alibi. I imagine they threatened him to keep quiet.' Kasari looked doubtful.

'Just do what I say', I demanded and he took off at the run for the river camp, swinging the Petromax wildly as he went.

When I got to the river Kasari had the rest of the men from the injured man's clan grouped in the firelight and was methodically going through each of the huts in which they had been sleeping. I motioned the bowmen to join their companions in the firelight. Kasari came out of the last hut and shrugged.

'Nothing!' he said. I peered at the group of men. None of them had any recent cuts.

'Give me the lamp', I said and started on the first hut. There was nothing, just as Kasari said. We scoured the ground and the nearby bush. Nothing. I checked the rocks by the river. Again, nothing.

'They're very smart', I said to Kasari, 'They must have expected us to come back here to check and they've cleaned up beautifully.' Kasari smiled weakly. I could see the doubt in his face. Who he doubted I did not know, the man's clan group or me? I stomped off towards my house on the hill.

'Tell them to stay put until morning', I said over my shoulder. 'And keep the guard on the injured man. Don't let these characters anywhere near the police house where he's locked up. Give me the arrows.' I didn't sleep very well and woke early feeling determinedly seedy.

Fiamnok arrived in the morning, stamped his feet and threw me a shuddering salute. I ducked involuntarily and saluted back. I presented him with the bunch of arrows. He sniffed one of the more bloodied ones and then popped the tip into his mouth. He sucked for a moment and raised his eyebrows.

'It's not human blood but it's not chicken or pig either!' he said. He grinned devilishly as he withdrew the wet blade from his mouth. I decided I didn't want to know how he could recognise the individual tastes of blood, especially human.

'Bring the man here and get a basin of water'. He made the order casually but I was surprised at how quickly the interpreter jumped up. The power in this little valley was complex and I had no doubt that my standing was not necessarily at the top. Fiamnok smiled pleasantly at me and I knew I was out of my depth. I looked at my watch. It was time for the morning radio schedule with the ADC at Kiunga. I padded up the office stairs thinking that I understood as much about *puripuri* as Fiamnok knew about two-way radios.

I waited patiently as the ADC Kiunga worked his way around the various patrol posts and base camps. I wanted a bit more of his time and was happy to wait till last. Finally he said 'Olsobip, Olsobip, Kiunga, do you copy Olsobip?'

'Olsobip here', I said, 'You're coming in strength five.'

'So what's up?' he replied. I explained the situation.

'I need some advice, I couldn't find anything in the ordinances or standing orders to hold anyone, let alone charge them with assault,' I added. There was silence at the other end of the radio.

I waited for a minute or two and then called again.

'Kiunga, do you copy?' Still silence. I called again.

'Olsobip, are you still there?' came the ADC finally.

'Olsobip here', I replied, 'What do you advise?'

'Olsobip, Olsobip, Kiunga, do you copy?'

'Olsobip here?' I replied loudly.

'Nothing heard Olsobip, where have you gone?' the ADC finally said. I twanged the mike. The aerial pinged perfectly. I tried again. Nothing. They couldn't hear me!

'Anyone else copy Olsobip?' the ADC asked.

'Nothing here', the OIC Ningerum chipped in. His was the closest radio and I never had trouble communicating with him.

'Maybe the *maselai* got him!' I heard from the Nomad River radio. There was silence and then all I could hear through the static was laughter.

I stomped back down the office stairs. Fiamnok was sitting cross-legged on the grass in front of the injured man. Between them sat an enamel basin filled with water. A small crowd stood at a respectful distance. Imbum stood up and came over to me.

'The *Mamusi* is going to ask the man about the *maselai*', he explained. 'If the water moves the man is telling the truth, if it stays still he is lying.' I looked at Fiamnok, he looked serene. The injured man, on the other hand, looked distinctly uncomfortable. The cunning old bugger, I thought, of course the water won't move, then the man will have to come clean!

Fiamnok put the question. It was short and to the point. Imbum interpreted.

'Did a *maselai* beat you up?' Fiamnok asked. The man twitched nervously.

'Yes', he said.

We all looked towards the enamel basin. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, a ripple appeared in the centre of the water. It bubbled and burst and a series of concentric ripples broke on the basin rim. No one was within a metre of the basin. Fiamnok stood up and the injured man followed suit. I was perplexed. Fiamnok bowed slightly and spoke.

'It was a *maselai*!' he said. There was a sigh, almost of relief, from the crowd. I thought quickly. The old bastard could have set the whole thing up, but why, it didn't make sense. I dismissed the idea.

'Thank you very much', I said to Fiamnok, 'Your help is much appreciated.' He gave me a sympathetic smile.

'Take the man to the medic', I told Imbum, 'When he is well he can go.'

When the crowd had dispersed only Kasari and I were left. I walked slowly around the basin, scuffing the ground as I went. There were no sticks or strings in the grass. I knelt down and tipped the bowl up slightly, careful not to spill the water. There was nothing there either. I looked at Kasari.

'Come here', I said and positioned him opposite me with the basin in between.

'Tell me the truth corporal', I asked, 'Do you believe it was a *maselai*?' Kasari thought for a moment. He knew what I was up to.

'I don't know', he said finally. The water stayed perfectly still.

\**Puripuri* - sorcery

(Philip said that the above is factual and the names real - the ADC Kiunga was Barry Creedy. Arthur Marks was at Ningerum and Robin Barclay was at Nomad.)

## FROM A GASH IN THE JUNGLE TO EFOGI AIRSTRIP

from F.J. (Terry) Brockhall

In the early 1960s I was posted to Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries (DASF) Central District staff in Port Moresby. Initially concentrating my agricultural extension duties in the lowlands, in about 1962 I received a visit from an extraordinary man, Village Constable Ubui from the village of Efogi in the Mountain Koiari area of the Central District's hinterlands. Ubui strongly urged a case for DASF to assist his people's economic development through agricultural projects. As a result I began to visit the area regularly by way of the Kokoda Track, reaching villages from Uberi near Owers Corner to past Isorava, including Lake Myola.

Staying with my friend Ubui's people at Efogi I noticed, in the jungle growth, what appeared to be a man-made gash without apparent cause or reason, beginning at the very edge of a frightful precipice and ending about 500 feet farther up the hill. Ubui's explanation was that at some time - he was not sure when - 'some people' (*missionaries or wartime army I asked, but he did not know*) had tried to build an airstrip but they had failed.

The idea of an airstrip at Efogi and the possibilities that this offered general development in the Mountain Koiari began to intrigue me. I had no engineering skills or experience whatsoever and I knew nothing about airstrip construction. Perhaps *because* of this complete ignorance, I stumbled on the idea that we, Ubui and I, would extend the gash to make it into a strip on which to land an aeroplane.

I first asked Ron Ferns of STOL Airways in Port Moresby if he would be interested in supplying a service to the area if our plan succeeded (STOL - Short Take Off and Landing). Ron was well known to 'fly anything anywhere any time', and he was most supportive of the project.

Armed with Ron's vital information that STOL aircraft needed a minimum 1500 feet of runway, Ubui and his people began to extend the gash - with me doing little more than measuring width and length of cleared bush. Uncertain that the original 500 feet that ran steeply uphill was at all usable, we eventually cleared 2000 feet of all growth, levelling large bumps in the terrain as much as possible.

Preparations completed to the best of our ability, I reported back to Ron who took me the same day on a reconnaissance flight over Efogi. Ron decided that the strip we had cut was usable and we returned to Port Moresby. The next day, as prescribed by the relevant Regulations, Ron landed solo on the Efogi strip. I was sorry in a way that I was not present on such a historic occasion, but greatly relieved also that without loss of face I was excused from such a potentially hazardous undertaking.

In recent years I have been touched to see on several occasions that Efogi strip is still in use. One occasion was when a television reporter accompanied a group of young people led by NSW MLA Charlie Lynn who runs a business taking groups along the Kokoda Track. A later television programme did the same with another group of Australians walking the Track. I even, though briefly, saw my old friend Ubui still proudly in his Village Constable uniform but now such an old man ... I realised that time had slipped past, too fast, since 1962 or '63 and dedicate this recollection of my association with the area to Ubui and the Mountain Koiari people.

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**HELP WANTED:** Ian Poole of Samarai would be most grateful for any photos of the big old DC's **HOUSE ON TOP OF THE HILL AT SAMARAI** for a project he is planning. Ian is at PO Box 1, Samarai 215, Milne Bay Province, PNG.

## SPECIAL LIFT-OUT SECTION FOR 60<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION OF PNG EVACUEES

(Our thanks to Pat Johnson, also Rosemary Brown and Margaret Carrick, for the tremendous amount of work they did to ensure that the reunion of PNG evacuees was a success and that details of those turbulent days were recorded and displayed.)

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### THE 2001 CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON, SYDNEY by Patricia Johnson

Early in 2001 it was realised that the coming December marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the main evacuation of women and children from what was the Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea (now, of course, Papua New Guinea) just prior to the Japanese invasion. The suggestion was made that the Christmas luncheon for 2001 should have as its theme a reunion of evacuees who were still with us and a general commemoration of these events.

With the decision made, announcements in *Una Voce* and word-of-mouth networking began. Calls were received from all over Australia and New Zealand. Evacuees unable to attend the luncheon were requested to write down their stories. A number of these were received, both short and long, and are reprinted here.

A poster display was assembled depicting the various ships and aircraft involved in the evacuations. Graphic photographs of the sinking of the *Macdhui* as well as a transcript of the report of the ship's master to Burns Philp were also displayed. In addition, some personal reminiscences and anecdotes of persons directly involved in the evacuations were on show. A table of memorabilia and photographs evoked much interest with the identification of previously unknown persons in those photographs. Evacuees were asked to sign an Evacuee Register, giving brief details and leaving a contact number.

President Harry West, in welcoming attendees, made special mention of those who had travelled from far afield, notably Queensland, South Australia and Victoria, specially for the luncheon. He also commented that the number of members and friends present represented the highest attendance ever at any of the Association's functions.

Next, Treasurer Ross Johnson (the MC for the day) called on each evacuee (table by table) to stand, give their name and if appropriate, their maiden name, and brief details of their evacuation. There was a large *Macdhui* contingent, however the *Neptuna*, *Katoomba* and various aircraft contingents were also well represented.

Then Diana Martell (nee Coote), representing the New Guinea Islands, spoke of her evacuation experiences from Rabaul (item 1 below); Wally Bock, representing the Papuan mainland, reminisced about his evacuation from Port Moresby (item 2 below); Rosemary Brown (nee Grant), representing the Papuan Islands, recounted some of her evacuation experiences from Samarai (item 3). Unfortunately Jill Lewis (nee Blackman), who was to represent the NG mainland, was at the last minute unable to attend, however reminiscences of her evacuation from Bulolo are included (item 4).

Lunch was a delicious Chinese banquet. Towards the end, Doug Parrish introduced the other big event of the day, the launch of the Association's first book *Tales of Papua New Guinea - Insights, Experiences, Reminiscences*. Doug spoke briefly of how the book came to be published, the wealth of material available (almost all from past editions of *Una Voce*), the difficulty in culling the material and the process involved leading to its publication. Special mention was made of the dedication of the editor, Stuart Inder, and graphic designer, Moyna Smeaton. Doug then called on the Association's patrons, Roma Bates and Fred Kaad, to formally launch the book.

Roma: *'I have been given the honour and pleasure of launching our book. I say OUR book because it is written by US about OUR lives in Papua New Guinea, AND the lives of our friends and families in the land we all came to love.*



**Roma Bates launches 'The Book'**  
*programme, I say –*

*For some of us it is where grandparents settled in the early days of the last century and started the Ring of Life under most adverse conditions. You will know everyone in the book either personally or by repute. Many of you are mentioned therein. It is a historical record of the years you gave to that beautiful country and its people. And it tells the story of our lives in Papua New Guinea interwoven with that of its indigenous people.*

*This book, contributed to by so many of you, is compulsive reading. So, in the words of a popular TV*

**MEMBERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION, THIS IS YOUR LIFE, ENJOY'**

Freddie Kaad then spoke again of the work involved and urged all to buy, if for no other reason but to allow Joe Nitsche to get his garage back as his new car needed room to park!

Following the launch, a cheque for \$1,000 was presented by Pat Hopper to Muttu Gware, OBE, from the Fred Archer Trust for the ANGAU Memorial Hospital in Lae.



**Bert Speer, Muttu Gware, Maurice Biscocho and Evarne Coote**

*(Note - The story of Muttu Gware's life and times, written by Jim Huxley, will be printed in a future issue. Muttu worked with Jim for many years at the Times-Courier. Bert Speer gave Muttu his first job as a medical secretary.)*

A lucky door prize and several raffles were drawn during the afternoon and the Association sincerely thanks those members who donated prizes. While all this was going on, several Committee members were heavily involved in selling 'The Book'.

To sum up, a happy day with many old friends and contacts renewed, new friends made and much story telling.

\* 3 \*

## RECOLLECTIONS

### **Diana Martell - Macdhui from Rabaul (Item 1)**

I was born in Rabaul, and in December 1941 had just turned eleven. My parents and I were living at Cape Tavui, about eight miles out of Rabaul. One bright sunny afternoon, when the tide was so low that the reef in front of the house was exposed, I couldn't resist wandering on it looking for cowrie shells. On returning to the house I was surprised to see my mother saying good-bye to an army officer. Then she turned to me and said in an



**Diana Martell and Beatrice Knight**

almost apologetic way, 'We have to leave here tomorrow because the Japanese might be coming. We can only take one small suitcase of clothes each'.

We began to pack immediately. Our cats kept getting into our suitcases. Hanna, who had been my nursemaid in my infancy, announced that she didn't care if she was supposed to take only her clothes, and firmly packed some sheets and cutlery as well. I was more concerned about leaving my dogs, who had been my constant companions and guardians in my

rambles along the beach and in the jungle adjacent to the house.

At dawn the next day I went down to the beach with lead in my heart for a long last look at the place I loved so well. The coconut palms were black against a grey sky. I picked up some shells to take with me to Australia so that I would never forget. My dogs, unsuspecting, played happily. In the afternoon Johnny Buka, our driver, drove us to the *Macdhui* which had been painted grey all over. There was a hushed atmosphere as the mothers and children gathered. Most of our fathers were still at work. When at last they came aboard, our parents were all talking earnestly, and there was the feeling that something really serious was happening. It was dark when I was called into our cabin to say goodbye to my father. I was not really distressed as I could hardly imagine that I would never see him again.

It was nearly Christmas time and Burns Philp had donated all the toys from their store for the children's Christmas party on the ship. I don't recall much about the journey itself, except for behaving badly and knocking Douglas MacGowan over to steal his water pistol, and punching Bruce Flynn on his ear. The sea was choppy for the first few days and there was an overcast sky, perhaps making us less visible to German raiders or Jap submarines. Someone claimed that the ropes on the lifeboats had been cut. Of course, as we were children we were not solemn for long, and I remember playing wild games on the decks in the early evening in semi-darkness. No lights were allowed outside - and all the portholes had been painted over. When night fell we had to stay inside as the opening of any door might display a flash of light to possible enemies.

In Sydney we stayed in a boarding house until my mother found a furnished house to rent.

Then began that long wait during that long war - a dreadful time for our mothers. Not until late in 1945 were we to learn of the fate of our fathers on the *Montevideo Maru*.

## EVACUEES AT LUNCHEON

	Name	Maiden Name (if applicable)	Comment
	Pat Baldwin	nee Partridge	<i>Katoomba</i> ex Port Moresby
	Derek Baldwin		<i>Katoomba</i>
	Rosslyn Barrand	nee Thomas	<i>Macdhui</i> ex Rabaul
*	Roma Bates	nee Bryant	ex Rabaul
	Terry Bignold		<i>Katoomba</i>
	Vi Bignold		<i>Katoomba</i>
	Wally Bock		<i>Katoomba</i>
	Rosemary Brown	nee Grant	<i>Neptuna</i> ex Samarai
	Gwen Carpenter	nee McKenzie	Aircraft ex Wau
	Margaret Carrick	nee Bishton	<i>Macdhui</i>
*	Peter Coote		ex Rabaul
	Janet Dykgraaff	nee Ross	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Diana Grose	nee Stanfield	Aircraft ex Rabaul
	Margaret Henderson	nee Simpson	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Clarissa Hennessy	nee Healy	<i>Katoomba</i>
	Wendy Hill	nee Clay	<i>Katoomba</i>
	Esme Johnson	nee Bock	<i>Katoomba</i>
*	Patricia Johnson	nee Bates	ex Rabaul
*	Ross Johnson		ex Wau (Edie Creek)
*	Vee Jones	nee Rogerson	ex Woodlark Is
	Beatrice Knight	nee Forsyth	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Muriel Larner	nee MacGowan	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Alison Marsh	nee Lambden	<i>Neptuna</i>
	Diana Martell	nee Coote	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Doreen MacGowan	nee Crawley	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Betty Muller	nee Gascoigne	<i>Macdhui</i>
	Pat Murray	nee Stanfield	Aircraft ex Rabaul
	George Oakes		<i>Macdhui</i>
	Eric Pizer	nee Ashby	Aircraft ex Rabaul
	Ivane Plant	nee Champion	<i>Katoomba</i>
*	Janet Robertson	nee Normoyle	ex Rabaul
*	Philip (Hooky) Street		Ex Rabaul
	Rosemary Turner	nee Brewer	Aircraft - Bulolo
	Joan Turner	nee Ashby	Aircraft ex Rabaul
	Alf Uechtritz		<i>Macdhui</i>
	Nari Watkins	nee Campbell	<i>Macdhui</i>

\* The asterisk before a person's name indicates those persons who were listed as 'evacuees' but were 'south' prior to December 1941 and not allowed to return to PNG because of the official evacuation order.

We apologise for any inadvertent errors or omissions.

## EVACUEES UNABLE TO ATTEND THE LUNCHEON AND WHO SENT BEST WISHES:

Shirley Lockhart (nee Feetum), Peter Foldi, Kathleen and Rodger Brown  
 Nancy Reason, Mabel Holland, Pat Boys (nee Wood), Bert Rowe  
 Rosalie Thacker (nee Skelly), Jillian Shadbolt (nee Hemming), Joy Brooks  
 Jill Lewis (nee Blackman), Bill Blackman

## **Wally Bock-Katoomba from Port Moresby** (with additional material) (Item 2)

Australians were officially at war in the Pacific on 8<sup>th</sup> (7<sup>th</sup> US) December 1941. The European women and children were to be evacuated from Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea by the end of December. The women and children were allowed one suitcase each and on 19<sup>th</sup> December boarded the *Katoomba*, a coal-burner built in 1913 in Belfast. 750 passengers embarked, 220 extra over the 557 usual cabin accommodation. Women and children had to sleep below, soldiers with malaria and dysentery, together with a stone-fish victim, on deck.

It was a pretty rough trip – I recall lying on the deck near the rear cargo hold and seeing rough water over the bow, then the stern, as the ship pitched and then to starboard and port as she rolled. We amused ourselves as children can with quoits, deck tennis, cards, playing catch and French cricket, and eating. The crew, however, drew the line at bedlam. Christmas on board was well organised by the crew and parents, with a gift for each child and a large Christmas cake with green icing – to this day green icing still makes me sick. The journey for mother and me ended in Brisbane on Boxing Day. Other families went on to Sydney. A lot of teenage children were at boarding school in 1941 and were not allowed back to PNG and the islands after their school year.

How did we feel about the evacuation? From 60 years away, a mixture of sadness, excitement and fear of a new life and school. Men over 45 years were evacuated from February onwards. Our father was 'posted' to the Canberra Government Printing Office where he spent most of four years as a reader. Mum and I 'trained' to Canberra to join him after the 1942 school year was completed - I was in Grade 4. The climate change was painful and there were no extra coupons for evacuees. How our parents managed our clothing requirements is not easy to answer. I knew it was cold but we always had an overcoat each, and gloves and beanies (the latter two knitted by Mum).

**Additional Material** : The mixed-race population also suffered hardship. Two groups were ordered to proceed to the island of Daru in August 1942. Adrian Matthews, a Medical Assistant, accompanied the first group and his father, Rev. Henry Matthews, the Anglican rector since 1927, volunteered to go with the second contingent. Although aged 66 he had refused to go South, and although his discharge was ordered, he was still a chaplain when he set off with some 72 men, women and children of mixed race and some Papuans on the little coastal vessel *Mamutu*. At noon on Friday 17 August, a Jap submarine was sighted about 30 miles from Bramble Bay – 4 shells were fired by the enemy craft and the *Mamutu* foundered. There was only one survivor, Mr Billy Griffin. (A brief account of this tragic event was in the poster display at the Luncheon). The Jap submarine which sank the *Mamutu* was itself sunk 12 days later by HMAS *Arunta*.

## **Rosemary Brown (nee Grant) - On Tolema from Fergusson Is., then Neptuna from Samarai** (Item 3) - extract from a comprehensive record

My father Ralph Grant was Chairman of the Methodist Overseas Mission (MOM) at the time of our evacuation. My mother Dawn, my two younger sisters and myself were evacuated from Salamo, Fergusson Island (headquarters of MOM) to Samarai on the mission launch *Tolema*.

We were told to be on the Samarai wharf at 9.30 am on Christmas Eve as a ship was expected in from Rabaul. There were rumours flying around that it could not take anyone as it was loaded to the gunnels with women and children from New Britain. The *Neptuna* arrived at noon and anchored a couple of hundred metres from the wharf (with engine running in the event of a surprise air attack). An official who had gone on board the ship

informed us that it could only take about 30 and a list was drawn up. All in our party were included. After lunch we assembled on the wharf.

The main stores on the island were distributing toys to the families. I think it was one per family. I remember we scored a large teddy bear.

About 2 pm a launch took our luggage out to the ship and we followed in the *Tolema*. We were hauled on to the deck in canvas baskets. I had kept my eyes closed on the way up in the basket and when I opened them after I felt the deck I was looking straight into the face of an Asian seaman. I was dumbfounded for a moment as I thought we had been put on a Japanese ship by mistake. All this talk of the terrible Japanese over the past two weeks was just too much.

At our reunion in Budgewoi on 7 December 1991, a Samarai friend and *Neptuna* shipmate recalled watching my mother going aloft in the sling with Pam firmly held to her bosom in one hand, the other on the basket rim to steady her, with Val and myself clutching her skirt with our eyes closed. My mother was in complete command of the situation. To her the operation was a piece of cake (and much more comfortable) compared with getting off rolling launches into bobbing canoes and then being carried ashore soaking wet (an experience she repeated hundreds of times in her 30+ years in Papua).

Most of the Samarai families were allocated the ship's lounge room for sleeping, and I thought, 'Wow, a beaut pyjama party tonight' - and it was. We arrived in Sydney on New Year's Eve but were not allowed to disembark until the morning. We stayed at Haberfield for a few days, then to Adelaide; Dad joined us mid-February 1942.

### **Jill Lewis (nee Blackman) - by plane from Wau (Item 4)**

I was evacuated with my mother, Eileen, and brother Bill (20 months old) in December, 1941. My dad was Harley Blackman, a dredgemaster for Bulolo Gold Dredging (BGD). At the time of the evacuation I was five years old. We lived in a comfortable bungalow near the Power House at Baiune. Dad had been in New Guinea as early as 1933, when he was with Daydown N.G. Ltd, Edie Creek. I believe the life was idyllic even though, looking back, war was on the horizon. Dad was a member of the NGVR at that time.

As a child I had no idea of the world's troubles and spent my days playing with imaginary playmates who were called Giggy and Pally. We had indigenous men to do the housework and I believed they were my friends. It was a bit lonely for a small child as we had no neighbours for some distance. Dad worked shift work on the dredge, and Mum amused herself with tennis and afternoon teas. Dad's wages were pretty good and I believe he didn't pay income tax.

During 1941 BGD set up a company school in the township of Bulolo. I was picked up every morning by a company car and driven to school and returned in the afternoon. I liked school very much. All ages were catered for in the school room. The teacher I remember was Iris White. She had a young family but managed to teach as well. I remember she played the violin to us and often fed her youngest baby while we were at school. We saluted the flag every morning and danced around the maypole on 1<sup>st</sup> May. There were children's birthday parties which the whole school attended.

One day in December 1941 I found myself with Mum and my little brother, Bill, at the airport at Wau. Until this moment I had no idea of what was about to happen. I certainly was not frightened but considered we were going on a big adventure. We had to leave Dad behind to face the coming Japanese invasion. We boarded a Junkers and inside sat on butter-boxes which were placed around the interior of the plane. It was a cargo plane, so therefore had no seats for passengers. At one end there was a curtained area

which I believe was a toilet.

We flew to Cairns (via Port Moresby) where we boarded a train for a journey down the east coast to Sydney. Mum was only able to bring one small suitcase with her and had to leave everything else in the house, which was later burned in the scorched earth policy. By this time it was nearly Christmas. In that suitcase Mum had Christmas presents for us from Santa. The train was not very comfortable, but we had sleeping berths. I remember passing a train with pigs on it - they smelt, and made a lot of noise.

At Mackay, Qld, some of the children were sick with an infectious disease and left the train to go to the hospital at Mackay. I was slightly off colour, so it was thought best if Mum, Bill and myself left the train and stayed at the hospital for a while before continuing our journey. Bill proved a bit of a handful at the hospital as he would run everywhere in the wards, so I believe the nursing staff took to sedating him. There was a Christmas tree in the hospital and a doctor who ate lots of nuts.

Shortly after, we resumed our train trip and later arrived in Sydney, where our grandparents welcomed us to their home. I remember grandfather had made me a dolly's cot complete with a lovely doll. Our adventure was complete.

### **Hilda Johnson - By air from Wau**

*Hilda Johnson's story was printed in the December 1999 issue of Una Voce, page 20 and in our book, Tales of Papua New Guinea, page 65. Her story is taken from a letter she wrote to a close friend in January 1942.*

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## **STORIES SUPPLIED TO US**

### **Kathleen Brown - Macdhui, from Rabaul**

I came up to Rabaul from Nakanai in September to have a baby in November - boats coming our way were so few that the District Chairman decided I should be in Rabaul with plenty of time to spare. On 20<sup>th</sup> November Graham, our eldest son, was born in the Namanula Hospital - the last European baby to be born before the Japanese arrived.

When the baby was three weeks old I went out to Raluana and on arrival learned that a boat was leaving for Nakanai from Kokopo at 5 pm, so booked to go on it. Because of a broken car axle, my husband and I missed the boat, which was very fortunate as the schooner had been radioed to pick up all the women and children along the coast and bring them into Rabaul to be evacuated. So I was saved the ordeal of a week on the high seas in a dreadful nor'-west as I would have had to come straight back, missing the boats going South and being flown out a week later. Of course that meant I brought nothing with me but the clothes I had in Rabaul.

On the Monday prior to leaving we went in to Rabaul to get our visa to leave the Territory, a wet and windy day. On Friday I packed up the few clothes we had and we left Raluana along the coast road in a howling wind, only to learn on arrival in Rabaul that the road had been closed owing to washaways, but we made it. The people who travelled in on the high road had a dreadful trip, trees down, holes in the road, etc.

We went up the Macdhui's gangplank under umbrellas which were blown all ways and arrived on board drenched to the skin, and were allotted our cabins. I was in a cabin with a woman and her 12 year-old son. I changed out of my wet clothes and changed Graham too, he was in his Buka basket but I had been unable to keep him dry.

In the late afternoon a schooner arrived from Bougainville with about 20 women and children, all looking like drowned rats, they had had a shocking trip. All cabins were

taken so they were given mattresses on the floor in the music room. We spent the day on board, our husbands with us for the day, and we sailed at midnight.

We all had mixed feelings, we were sailing off hoping we would reach Australia, leaving our husbands behind, not knowing when we would see them again. I don't think there were too many dry eyes amongst all.

The sky was heavy with clouds, next day with rain, no sign of any Japanese planes but we didn't know what might be lurking beneath the waves. Christmas day we had a good Christmas dinner and the children were each given a present from the New Guinea Club. Graham had a rattle.

The weather improved and we were able to sit out on deck. I had Graham in his Buka basket and when he cried I picked him up; a nurse from Bougainville going home to New Zealand said to me, 'Don't you believe in the Plunket system?' so my reply was 'Never heard of it, all I'm worried about is getting home to Adelaide in one piece'.

All sorts of rumours were rife on board - women in China raped and murdered by Japanese soldiers was one I remember.

We had a few elderly gentlemen on board who were not very fit and were being sent South with us. One man said to me one day, 'I go to wash my hands and the basin is full of nappies so I fish them out, wash, and then put them back again'. I thought, you should be thankful you are on this boat and going to safety while all our husbands are left behind, goodness knows what they may have to face.

On our arrival in Cairns a number of women and their children were put off to finish the journey by train as it was said, 'If we are torpedoed who can help a woman with two or three children'. One poor soul had a two year-old boy and twin boys aged 10 months - she had to go all the way to Perth by train, so one of the mission sisters whose home was in Perth got off too, to help her on the long journey.

We arrived safely in Sydney, spent one night there in a hotel, then left on the Melbourne Express for Adelaide and home. Nellie Simpson with Margaret, and me with Graham, had a room for the day at the Victoria Hotel in Melbourne, and left that night for Adelaide. Nellie had no family to meet her in Adelaide, she took a taxi home and her parents were away on holiday so a neighbour took her in and looked after her till her parents returned at the end of the week.

My mother and Rodger's parents were there to meet me (I'd sent a telegram from Sydney re our arrival), also representatives from the WA Overseas Mission group with the Overseas Mission secretary and his wife.

Home safe and sound, and received in the next week one letter from my husband Rodger, then silence for three months, when I got a wire:

'In Australia, Brown' - and a fortnight later he arrived home.

### **Beatrice Knight (nee Forsyth) - Ship from Rabaul**

Being very young my memories are few, but I remember -

- loudspeakers in Rabaul reminding all they had 24 hours to pack;
- my mother being seasick most of the trip;
- my loved little bicycle stored in the hold had disappeared when we went to get it.

### **Mabel Holland - Ambon from Pondo, then plane from Rabaul**

My children, son John 2 yrs 9 mths, daughter Ann 8 mths and I were evacuated from New Britain in 1941. We were living on the North Coast at Pondo plantation, a large concern owned by W.R. Carpenter, when the order came for all European women and

children to be evacuated, cost of fares to be borne by the Australian Government.

The first order was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> December and the third and final on 20<sup>th</sup> December. On 17<sup>th</sup> December the Administration chartered the M.V. *Ambon* owned by W.R. Carpenter. The skipper, J.C. Radley (Seventh Day Adventist Missionary), was ordered to proceed to Talasea as quickly as possible and pick up women and children along the coast. The *Ambon* was made ready with extra food, mattresses and blankets and sailed from Toboi wharf in strong winds and heavy rain. Had it not been an emergency, the ship would not have left the safety of the harbour.

Jean McCarthy, wife of DO Keith McCarthy, boarded at Talasea, Miss Margaret Harris (a midwifery nurse) from the Methodist Mission at Malalia. The *Ambon* arrived at Pondo on 23<sup>rd</sup> December and left next morning with 21 passengers, among them Mrs Evensen (the Manager's wife), Mrs Anderson, Mrs McKechnie, Mrs Morgan and three children, and myself and two children.

It was a sad farewell, but putting on brave faces all sang carols. Some of the men left behind were to later lose their lives. Most of the time was spent on deck, wet and cold, as we travelled to who knew what! The children were well behaved and we arrived safely in Rabaul on Christmas Day and were billeted at hotels. Customs opened their offices to provide us with permits to leave the Territory - the 'And Return' on forms heavily blacked out. I went looking for baby food without success.

The MV *Macdhui* had left for Australia with evacuees so other arrangements were made for the 75 late-comers from outlying regions. Two Australian National Airlines DC3s were sent to fly us out. Group Captain J. Lerew of the RAAF had everything on the ground organised. The planes landed (we each had a small case) and all were aboard and away within seven minutes. Two Wirraways escorted us for the first 100 miles of our journey.

We flew to Port Moresby, tea and sandwiches awaiting us on the tarmac, then on to Cairns and our various destinations by train: Mrs Evensen to Perth, the children and I to Innisfail and then by White Car to Mr Garnet where my mother and younger sister were living.

There had been no word from Frank but on St Patrick's Day, 17<sup>th</sup> March, a week or so after John's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, he woke very early and very excited saying over and over, 'Mummy, I saw my Daddy, my Daddy is on a big ship and my Daddy is coming home'. He then went on to give me all the details. John was a shy sensitive boy but from that day on any mention of his father and he would tell the world his Daddy was coming home. Matron at the hospital said, 'You mark my words, this is an omen'.

Frank arrived in Cairns on 28<sup>th</sup> March. He, with Keith McCarthy, had been instrumental in rescuing many troops and civilians and was later awarded the MBE. When he arrived in Mt Garnet he told us his story which was almost word for word as John had described.

Was it E.S.P.?

## **Lillian Evensen (in a letter sent to Pat Boys in New Zealand) Boat from Pondo, then plane from Rabaul**

It was on the second Sunday afternoon before Christmas 1941 that my husband (Albert Stanley Evensen), known throughout the Territory as Masta 3 Finger, in twiddling the dial of our tele-radio communication set, intercepted a 71-word message being broadcast to the people of Samarai to proceed to their nearest port and wait to be evacuated. This message which I also heard, was then broadcast once again, but to the people of Port Moresby.

After giving the matter some thought, Albert called his staff together and told them

what we had heard. We were a coastguard watching station for the Navy so it seemed fairly obvious that we would receive instructions through our 0730 call on the morrow from Rabaul. The *Macdhui* was also due on the morrow for our products and bringing our food supplies. Albert suggested husbands should face facts and let their wives return to Australia by this vessel.

Only Albert and I knew the codeword for messages – which was changed every month – and I did nearly all the tele-communication sessions, thrice daily. Under the circumstances, Albert considered he should be the one to receive such a message and for the next nine days returned to our bungalow from the office three times daily to receive and send messages, but alas – no message re evacuation was ever received. Our food supplies ran out and we had more than one meal of fish cooked in ashes.

As I finished the 1645 session on the 9<sup>th</sup> day, I saw a strange gentleman (strange to Pondo) coming up the garden path with Albert – he proved to be the Captain of a small trading vessel. I quickly called Rabaul and requested another call from them when they had completed the circuit because there would be a coded message. I guessed correctly, this gentleman had come to take us to Rabaul to await evacuation. He explained he had been tossed about at sea for some nine days like a cork. He knew that the ship that was to have taken us to Australia had gone six days previously. The storm was still raging and he wanted permission from the Government in Rabaul to remain at Pondo overnight and load with desiccated coconut for ballast. The coded message was sent but alas there was no Government official on duty to receive this message – nevertheless, he made the decision to remain overnight.

The vessel was loaded and off we went the following night into the dreadful storm, with a total of 23 women collected from the Bainings district, on this small cargo vessel which had accommodation for only two. We lay on the deck all night with waves washing over us – a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Rabaul itself was completely deserted and here we waited for three days to be rescued – running to air raid shelters now and again – by a plane which came up from Sydney and on which I was the last person to board.

A 'Zero' hovered around for some time but we 'lost it' ere we reached Port Moresby where our plane was refuelled and on we went to Townsville. From there we travelled by train to the various capital cities and myself to Geraldton in Western Australia by Jan 31<sup>st</sup> 1942. Different women's organisations met the train at each station and showered us with goodies. In particular, the ladies of Rockhampton will never be forgotten. They took the children and babies away, bathed and fed them, while the mothers and other adults had a lovely meal. They practically filled that long long carriage with home-made cakes, biscuits, fruit, sweets and magazines. People around the vicinity of the Canberra station were just the opposite; they laughed and jeered at us, calling out 'Look at the refugees' more than once, which was of course hard to swallow.

Then began the long wait for news of loved ones – five and a half years. During this long period I read in the *Pacific Islands Monthly* that Albert had been executed. A letter to the Editor asking where he had acquired this information brought no reply, likewise one to the Minister for Territories (Mr E. Ward) in which I requested that he insist on the *PIM* editor stating how he had obtained such information.

On 20 May 1947 I was advised by Canberra that my husband was now presumed dead on 15 May 1944. Having been given no reason for the date, I cannot accept this at all because our next door neighbour at Pondo (George McKechnie) who was one of the four who came out alive of 800 civilians, told me when we met in June 1971, that Albert was taken into Rabaul and put in charge of our prisoners' hospital and that he was talking to

Albert two months before hostilities ceased.

Finally to complete the story, Albert was in receipt of a war pension of thirty shillings a fortnight for injuries received in the first world war (which was the reason of his non-acceptance for the second) but Canberra never ever sent me sixpence of it during the five and a half years, or even asked how I was living. After the war I told the RSL in Geraldton who took the matter up with Canberra with the result that they sent me a cheque for £130.

Well might the question be asked – 'Who cared?'

### **Erice Pizer (nee Ashby) - Boat from New Ireland, plane from Rabaul**

Christmas 1941 I was evacuated from my home in New Ireland with my mother, brother and sister. It took several attempts – a hazardous drive over the mountains in the back of a truck and a long wait in a copra shed as appalling weather prevented us joining the boat. I do not remember leaving my home, nor do I remember that hazardous drive or the appalling weather.

People have told us of our rescue in two schooners by the Brothers from the Vunapo Mission and of a rough trip to Rabaul – I also do not remember those kind Brothers in their schooners nor the rough trip.

Apparently we were weighed and were being put aboard two DC3s to fly to Australia when enemy planes were sighted. We were thrust aboard for an immediate take-off. In the fear and confusion I lost one of my sandals. A horrendous flight followed before we landed safely in Australia. I do not remember those planes nor the good men who flew them. I do not remember that horrendous flight. But I do remember I lost my sandal – a safe thing to remember perhaps. Over the many years I have pondered its fate – its whereabouts – and wondered if I was given another pair to wear during the long train journey down the east coast. Now at last I perhaps can ask some of my fellow travellers –

'Did anyone see my sandal?'

### **Patricia Murray (nee Stanfield) -**

#### ***Paulus/Theresa from New Ireland, then plane from Rabaul***

From February 1940, when I was seventeen, until the evacuation I was employed in Kavieng in charge of the Post Office and also had some typing duties.

Everyone was aware that the Japanese would soon enter the war but no one envisaged the sudden onslaught and invasion that took place on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1942. Rather, it was expected that marauding parties, probably marines, would be landed to destroy the radio station, wharves, etc. Plans were prepared for the strategic evacuation of civilians to inland areas. As I recall, there were three alternative plans, which I typed, but they were never needed. We had no knowledge of the Army's intentions.

During the few weeks preceding the outbreak of the war with Japan, Kavieng had several unnerving visits by a small pea green monoplane, evidently launched by some ship. We could see the pilot, in helmet and goggles, peering over the side of the cockpit at us, and flying less than one hundred and fifty feet above the town.

On the Friday before the Pearl Harbour attack, there was a false alarm about evacuating women and children. At lunch time, as I was closing the post office, Mr Jerry McDonald, the DO (District Officer) and my boss, came and said to me, 'When you get to the Club (where I lived) pack a very small case of essential items and be prepared to be evacuated by plane this afternoon'.

My immediate concern was for my mother, sister and brother, 74 miles from town on Bolegila Plantation, and the other families 'down the road'. The DO assured me they had been sent the warning.

I returned to work with a hatbox crammed with as many items as possible and waited, and worked, through the afternoon, but nothing happened except that I handed over money, stamps, etc. to another clerk – I think it was Keith Norris.



Pat Murray, right, with her sister Diana Grose

So, on Saturday morning I went to Mr McDonald and said I wanted to go home to give my mother any help I could. I then hired a car and driver from Leslie Foon Kong, which cost me about a week's wages!

My father, Ernest Stanfield, a WWI soldier who also had five years' experience in the Indian Army, had joined the Papuan Infantry Battalion and was in Port Moresby. My elder brother, Jim, was in the RAAF, a navigator in a bomber in England. My mother was coping with the plantation, planting cocoa, and trying to teach my sister

Diana and brother John by correspondence. I knew she could use a bit of help preparing to leave.

I was horrified and very annoyed to discover that no warning had reached my mother the previous day. We spent the day clearing her desk and sorting accounts, keeping out the most recent statements and all banking papers and legal items. Everything else went into a kerosene box which we proposed sorting if we had time, and we put it on the veranda out of the way.

Having no family or close connections in Australia, our future was decidedly uncertain. I shared Mum's double bed that night and we talked for hours, reaching no real solutions, until we both fell asleep.

Next morning, Mum was up before six, being used to 'making line' (allocating work to the labour line) in Dad's absence, and she tuned in the radio news. I was roused from a half sleep by her shout of horrified amazement – 'They've actually attacked!' – and rushed out to hear the radio. A while later we went to collect the box of papers and found that an enterprising hen had been before us, scratched herself a cosy nest, and laid an egg. She did as good a job as a modern shredder and saved our consciences! I tipped it all out on the beach and set a match to it.

I returned to work, on a passing lorry, on Monday and that evening we heard definite evacuation orders had been received. My mother came to town on Wednesday (10<sup>th</sup> Dec.) to settle what she could re plantation labour, etc.

That night the men gave all the women a send-off in the Club at the Round Table, a privilege as it was the men's preserve. To this day I feel teary when I hear the Maori Farewell – it was the wrong way round for the men to sing it to us, and very few of them survived the war.

The evacuation plans included all women and children north of Maramakas plantation on New Ireland and all outlying islands – Lavongai, Emira, etc. – to go out via Kavieng. All south of Maramakas (including the Ashby family who lived there) to the south end of New Ireland and any from islands in the south, were to collect at Namatanai and leave from Ulapatur on the West Coast (opposite Namatanai). I had myself transferred to this group in order to join my mother, my sister Diana (aged 13) and brother John (11).

Our only vehicle, a truck, was broken down on the plantation and the necessary spare

was unobtainable. Fortunately, Claude Chadderton, of Kapsu and Lamerika plantations, had lent us one. On the Friday (12<sup>th</sup> I think) the Kavieng contingent left on the *Navanora* (Frank Saunders' schooner, skippered by Col Mackellar) in very rough weather; a slow trip to Rabaul and all were seasick. One unfortunate lady 'threw up' her dentures overboard, but the Rabaul dentist worked through the night to replace them before she left for Australia. We heard all this later – I think the dentist was probably Ian McLean.

On Saturday (13<sup>th</sup> Dec.) we (from Maramakas southward) went to Namatanai by lorry. It rained all the way and we were all soaked, sitting in the back and even in front for the truck had no doors.

Joe Kenny, the Namatanai publican, who made a hobby of grousing but ran a very good small pub, had fits when we all rolled in. He wasn't prepared for so many (someone had given him the number of evacuees but forgot to mention worried husbands who were naturally there too). Nevertheless he made us all comfortable.

In 1941, for about five or six months, we had had a most unaccustomed drought – creeks ran dry, native gardens withered and the town was reduced to water from wells and spear points. However, the nor'-west broke with a vengeance just in time to complicate the evacuation. In Namatanai there was a wild wind and rain in cascades. A huge tree came down with a crash that night, very luckily away from the pub.

On Sunday morning it was still raining, though a little less heavily and we left for Ulapatur on the West Coast, where there was a rough stone jetty from which we were to be picked up by a schooner from Vunapope. Of course, it was not there, having taken shelter in the Duke of York Islands, and we waited all day.

There were 27 women, 13 children (including some very young babies) and husbands and a few other men. I think we were the only family without a man to leave behind, which was a relief to us. The accommodation was one old leaky copra shed and two very old, very leaky sak-sak houses – they appeared to have never been more than casual shelters for fishermen and so on.

The German priest at the nearby Catholic mission offered shelter but his house was on the top of a steep slippery climb so most of us didn't tackle it. If an unlikely break in the weather had occurred, bringing the Vunapope boat, we'd have had to board as fast as possible.

We had sandwiches and biscuits to eat (from Joe, no doubt), and the Chinese manager of Ulapatur, which was really only a trade station, kept us supplied with boiling water for tea, which was a great help as we were all wet and cold.

The children were amazing – 13 of them in ages ranging from 13 to five babies, two of whom were only a few weeks old. There were no quarrels and even the babies didn't cry. The older ones helped amuse the small ones and played games with them.

During this uncomfortable and dreary wait, Greg Benham, patrol officer at Namatanai was trying to find out what was happening. He ground his way over the hill to Namatanai and back several times. There was no real road, just a track cleared through the bush with no gravel or *koronas* to hold the mud. It was boggy and slippery most of the way.

Benham was in touch by wireless with Rabaul but they knew no more than he did. In fact, they seemed to think that we were refusing to board a boat because of the wild weather (not an unwise decision if we'd had to make it!). The Vunapope schooner, of course, had no radio communication. Finally Greg became totally exasperated and said to the Government Secretary, 'I keep trying to tell you, there is no bloody boat here and they can't bloody well swim to Rabaul!' This evidently drew a mild reprimand about swearing on the air and 'over and out'. But at least it clarified the situation.

Late that evening we churned our way back to Namatanai, to Joe's horror – but a good dinner and a hot shower!

Next morning Mrs Warrant (wife of Syd Warrant managing Lossu plantation for Mrs Grose) got up at 4 am and made a large curry and a huge pot of rice so we all had a hot breakfast, after pulling on yesterday's wet clothes, in an effort to keep some dry somehow! And away to Ulapatur again at daylight, with rain still pouring down.

By mid-morning, it was obvious we waited in vain. The Government Secretary then advised that we should 'disperse and go home' as the ships (no names mentioned of course) could not wait in Rabaul any longer.

So we set off for home, as did the Ashby family, the Bells, the Warrants and anyone else who could, but the women who had come in from south of Namatanai, mostly on horseback, stayed in Namatanai. The rivers down the south end are large and by then running high. Fortunately I don't think anyone of us became really ill from our soaking.

We stayed overnight at Lamerika with Claude Chadderton, whose wife had gone south earlier. He had expected his truck back, but not us! Two of our houseboys had asked to come with us so we got them a lift home with the Bells who passed Bolegila. When we got home next day, it was to a well ordered house, beds made, flowers in vases, and even newly baked bread. How we wished we could stay.

We had a few nights at home, rested and unpacked our wet luggage to dry things out. Di and John, ever full of energy, rode their pony and swam most of the time. Mum and I continued the useless speculation about what we should do in Australia, only deciding to go through to Sydney as I had some school friends there – which was not really much help but better than landing somewhere without any acquaintances at all.

On Christmas morning the Warrants, who had been through to Kavieng, called in. Mrs Warrant said she had been looked on with amazement in town as all the women were long gone – felt like a reincarnated dodo!

We greeted them with 'Merry Christmas!' 'Merry Christmas be blowed', they replied. 'You have to be ready within an hour to be picked up by the Bells. We all have to be in Namatanai tonight. So we hustled Di and John out of the river, repacked our cases in great haste and were ready when the Bells came. We had no transport of our own then. We farewelled our house servants with heavy hearts and set off once more, only to find when we arrived that 'someone had blundered'. We needn't have been there until the next day!

Joe Kenny was, of course, full of woe! 'All this bloody rubbish I imported for Christmas – balloons, streamers and plum puddings and Lord knows what, and now it's wasted.' 'Not at all', we cried, 'let's have a party'. So the decorations were hung, the balloons blown up and the puddings duly scoffed with enjoyment. There was no point in sitting around with glum faces. On Friday 26<sup>th</sup>, while there were about a dozen vehicles, mainly trucks, clustered near the hotel, a Japanese plane came over and circled for a while, obviously looking at this. We fervently hoped they wouldn't drop a bomb on us! Luckily they didn't.

On 27<sup>th</sup> we made the crossing to Ulapatur one last time, in lovely sunny weather. The Vunapope schooners *Paulus* and *Theresa*, captained by two German brothers, took us off from the jetty of the little plantation, which was owned (or leased?) by a Jap! He wasn't there.

We spent one night in Rabaul, at the Rabaul hotel, where we met a small group of women and children from Pondo who had also been weather-bound.

To our astonishment, we were told we'd have to obtain 'Permits to Leave the Territory. 'But we have no choice', we complained. 'Ah, but it's a Permit to Leave and Return'. This made some sort of sense so we all trooped off and collected our Permits.

As I'd worked for 22 months in the Kavieng Post Office I was due for leave pay and badly needed it as I had exactly £16 when I set out. A bored treasury clerk asked me for my address in Australia so he could forward me a cheque when my request had been 'processed'. I demanded to see Mr Townsend, the treasurer, who was fortunately a friend of my Dad's, and I got my entitlement on the spot – I can't remember the exact figure but I was earning £8-16-8 a fortnight when I left, so it would have been around £50.

On Sunday morning, we all boarded two DC2s and flew out. I was very interested in my first flight and rather afraid I'd be airsick, but luckily wasn't, although it was rather bumpy crossing the Owen Stanley Range. At the Port Moresby airstrip (and that is all it was then) the few ladies still there were Red Cross or CWA members and they had arranged a big tent, urns for tea and more salmon sandwiches than I've ever seen since. We were told we'd be on the ground for twenty minutes.

Fortunately our take-off was delayed, and my mother was able to contact Dad. She saw a soldier crouching over a field telephone about fifty yards away, and to his astonishment, had him call various places till he located Dad. Mother had a quick word with him and he came out immediately, so they had a brief time to discuss all kinds of arrangements – financial and so on. Dad was naturally surprised to see us as he thought we'd left Rabaul in either the *Macdhui* or the *Neptuna*. He was able to tell us, quietly, that the reason for our delay was that we'd been followed by a couple of Jap planes and were being held until they had to give up and fly back to wherever they'd come from. From our point of view, it was a bit of luck and relieved my mother of a lot of worries.

That evening we arrived in Cairns where we were taken to various hotels. We were lucky as we were delivered to Hides Hotel, then the best hotel in Cairns and very comfortable. Some of the group were unlucky and spent their night in basic accommodation after dining on Devon sausage and bread and butter!!

At noon next day we boarded the special evacuee train to Sydney, largely filled with those who had arrived earlier by ship and had been kept in Cairns waiting for our group. They numbered about two hundred or more and included a large number of German women and children from the Lutheran Missions. They were treated exactly the same as the rest of us, and there were some in the same carriage as we were.

For the first two nights most of us didn't have sleeping berths, which were allotted to mothers with very young babies and old or ill women – and here the German women received the same consideration. However this didn't stop quite a number of them from being very arrogant and demanding. During the first night, some of them resorted to stretching out on the floor, rather than trying to sleep sitting up, which would have been quite acceptable had they not completely blocked access to the toilet compartment. When one of the women asked the guard to move them, he replied 'Walk over the top of them, same as they'd do to you in their country!!'

The Queensland Tourist Bureau made all the arrangements for our trip, as far as the Queensland border. Good meals were ready for us at suitable stopping places, which meant the times were a bit erratic but not too bad. These meals were provided, and at shorter stops we could buy refreshments if we wanted them.

Two VADs (Voluntary Aid Detachment) travelled on the train and doctors and nurses were on many of the stations, in case they were needed. At several stops Red Cross and CWA members met us with milk and biscuits for the kids and magazines for us. At one or two places, they supplied complete changes of clothing and some other items, such as

combs and toothbrushes, to people whose luggage had gone astray. We all hoped it would turn up later.

All along the route we had numerous stops, usually short, to allow other train traffic priority. People came hurrying down from nearby houses and farms and handed us fruit, biscuits, and in one case, a big bowl of hot buttered scones! 'But what about your bowl and napkin?' someone said, and the kind woman replied, 'Don't worry about that; you've lost a lot more. Good luck!'

During the first night, as we all tried to sleep sitting up on hard seats, John (my eleven year old brother) suddenly announced 'I just can't sleep. The train keeps saying "Bugger the Japs, bugger the Japs"'. Of course we all then 'heard' it all night too!

At both Rockhampton and Gympie about 40 or so VADs and Red Cross girls met the train, dashed up as soon as the train stopped - 'Any babies in here?' - grabbed the babies and small children and rushed them off to be bathed, dressed in clean clothes, and fed, giving weary and harassed mothers a short respite. Needless to say, the startled babies and toddlers yelled loudly and, as there were about 90 of them, there was considerable uproar. Only a few took it placidly. The most inconsolable were the poor German infants who couldn't understand a word the girls said to console them. They too were puzzled as they didn't expect German children.

On arrival in Brisbane we were taken to the *Canberra* where we were able to have welcome hot baths and to change into clean clothing.

We all noticed a surprising, and rather daunting, difference in the public attitude to us when we crossed into New South Wales. The Queenslanders had been totally friendly and extremely generous, but suddenly we were 'bloody reffos'. I never did know what authority took charge of the train trip through NSW but certainly there'd been little explanation of our origin.

As quite a large number of fellow passengers left the train at Brisbane, we had the luxury of sleepers for the third night, finally arriving in Sydney on New Year's Day, just one week after we'd been sitting comfortably on the veranda at Bolegila.

Sydney was under threat from bushfires that New Year and the smoke haze and heat was about the same as that caused by recent fires (Christmas/New Year 2001-02). We left the train to find the temperature was 107°F (approx 43°C), and being told 'But you're used to this sort of temperature, and you'll enjoy it!' Only about 20°F or more too high for us!

The beneficent Government paid to billet us for two weeks if we had nowhere to go, and we went to a King's Cross boarding house, which was simple but adequate. The Cross was rather more respectable in those days.

After that we were on our own.

*(Soon after her arrival in Australia, Pat Murray sent a letter to her brother who was overseas on active service, describing the events surrounding their evacuation. Her brother was killed in action before the letter reached him and it was returned to her. The above is largely what Pat wrote as a 19 year-old.)*

## **Nancy Reason - Plane from Madang**

We were living on Dylup plantation when that fateful message came over the AWA transmitter (we were all coast watchers then, in touch with Port Moresby at all times) 'proceed to Madang immediately' which we did. Without warning - be on the airstrip the following morning at 9 am, 33 lbs luggage allowed. A 12-seater Lockheed Rapide plane with Arthur Collings as pilot awaited - my sister-in-law, my mother-in-law and Ruby Luff

are the only names of the other passengers I can remember. I think there were some women from Wewak.

We took off but because the cloud cover was so dense, we could not fly over the Owen Stanley Ranges so we were held up in Salamaua and there we stayed for five days. The women had left the previous week and the male population were kindness itself. The stores were full of Christmas goodies which we could not have, owing to the luggage restrictions. Some days after our arrival the menfolk asked why we were continually patting our bosoms, and we admitted that was where we had pinned the £25 which had been all the money the bank could give us. There was lots of gold in hand in Madang, but no cash. Our shoes were almost worn out from walking to the mess for each meal - the oddities one remembers during a time of stress ... the *koronas* road was very sharp.

Eventually the mountains cleared and we left for Moresby - here we met officialdom and all its red tape. DC3 aircraft lined the aerodrome complete with hosties, who had been allowed to wear leg make-up instead of stockings because of the heat. Several had forgotten to do the backs of their legs, and this looked quite odd. The women and children who had been flown in from Wau and Bulolo joined us here. We were flown to Cairns, stayed overnight at the then Queens Hotel and the next day were herded to the train for the trip South. It was the oldest rolling stock in Queensland, 14 carriages of it. The last carriage was a Pullman fitted with bunks for the old folk and the sick, then it was decided the women with babies and small children should be there also. We had been allotted seats individually through the train, and there were several carriages left empty. In charge of this complex, unhappy and bewildered crowd of females and young children was one young, humourless, inexperienced man from the Tourist Department and one very young VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment member), freshly trained from the hospital with a starched veil and looking lovely, poor girl. The man from the Tourist Dept decided to move these poor souls to the Pullman at the end of the train. Instead of starting from the furthest away carriage and working down the train, he chose them from his list, the chaos was complete - he collected them and led them through that long train with their babies, little children and their luggage, the sick, the pregnant and the elderly, one group after another. We ladies from Madang helped as much as we could, but it was a ghastly afternoon that did not end until 10 pm. The afternoon tea was put on board tied up in a tablecloth, Dick Whittington style, with the tea in a kerosene tin bucket. It tasted good to the thirsty!

We had a 15-minute stop, the next afternoon, at a small station where there was a bar - at the sight of a thirsty lot of New Guinea-ites descending from the train all the locals left very quickly. We were pulled into a siding every time a troop train full of soldiers on their way to Townsville and New Guinea went by. There were many of them day and night. But we did witness a huge flock of brolgas dancing in the dawn light one morning. A wonderful sight it was.

We were running so late that Christmas dinner was the cold porridge laid out on trestle tables on Townsville station - that morning's breakfast. The various organisations, such as the CWA, were so very good and kind to us all the way down to Brisbane, although they had suffered from the previous lot of refugees from Hong Kong being unkind to them. Gympie surpassed them all - they had the platform lined with baby-baths full of hot water on tables, ready for the mums with babies and small children. The mums with more than one little one found themselves very popular - they were helped quickly by the folk without children just so that we could wash some of the grime off ourselves ... the water for everything except drinking had finished days previously.

Many small 'happenings' disturbed us on those long days - one little child threw another child's shoes out of the train window and it was the only pair he had. A very

foolish teenager tried climbing along the outside of the carriage from place to place. At long last we arrived in Brisbane. The streets from Central Station to the Canberra Hotel (since demolished) in Edward Street were lined with barricades that Brisbane then used for processions. So the crowd waited for us as we were marched across to the hotel. It was a temperance hotel - I must say they were very sympathetic 'Oh, they do look tired, poor things etc. etc.'. We felt more than sorry for ourselves by then. I have often wondered how the staff ever cleaned those beautiful baths we bathed in - no, more than bathed in, luxuriated in - for we left inch-thick lines of black train dirt behind.

The following morning we went to the south side of Brisbane for the last lap of that never-to-be-forgotten journey to Sydney. No-one to meet us, our schedule had been too uncertain. Some very kind officials, their names I cannot remember, were there to meet the train. Some folk had relatives to go to, others went to various hotels etc. I was fortunate I had my parents to go to, a warm welcome and a bottle of beer on the ice from ... my teetotal father.

### **Rosemary Turner (nee Brewer) - Plane from Bulolo**

My father Charles George Brewer went to New Guinea from Randwick NSW in 1932 and worked in the office of Bulolo Gold Dredging Company until the war. When he returned from the war he worked in the Sydney office in Carrington Street until 1960.

My mother Mary Brewer (nee McSweeney) left Sydney in 1934 and went to New Guinea on the *Macdhui*. Charles met the boat in Port Moresby and they proceeded on the boat to Madang and were married at Alexishafen on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1934 by Father J Weyer an SVD missionary. They lived as a married couple first in Bulwa and then in Bulolo.

My brother John, was born in Randwick in May 1936 and I was also born in Randwick in July 1938. We both returned to Bulolo when we were six weeks old. My younger brother George was born in Wau hospital in October 1939.

We were evacuated on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1941 on the first plane that left Bulolo. From my memory of tales told we made a forced landing somewhere near Kokoda and then flew on to Moresby. My father was in the office in Bulolo and got the message that the plane had gone down and he thought for some hours that all had been killed. It was not until the plane got to Port Moresby that they heard all was OK. From Moresby we flew to Cairns and then it was a train from Cairns to Brisbane to Sydney. There was an outbreak of dysentery on the train and George my brother was very ill.

My father stayed in Bulolo and joined the NGVR. He was one of the men that Fr John Glover was responsible for alerting the authorities about, that there were men trapped and ill in the highlands. He arrived home in May or June 1942.

In December 1960, Dad and I went from Brisbane on the *Bulolo* for a six week trip to PNG. We flew from Port Moresby to Wau and stayed in Bulolo with Mick and Gladys Shutt for Christmas and then went by road down to Lae where we boarded the *Bulolo* again. The ship called at Madang (we went to Alexishafen), Lombrum and Lorengau, Rabaul, Samarai and then back to Port Moresby, and then on to Brisbane. A great trip for my father who seemed to meet so many old friends.

About six months after this trip Dad was diagnosed with tuberculosis and spent a year in St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. Some few years later he developed emphysema and died in December 1970 (aged 70). My mother died in 1990 (aged 89).

## **Patricia Jackson and Clare Taylor (nee Perichon)**

### ***Katoomba from Port Moresby***

Our mother, Cecily Perichon, was evacuated on the *Katoomba* on 18 December, 1941. Enclosed is a photocopy of Evacuation Order, No. 149 (displayed at Luncheon). Many folk may still have their original copies which were on green paper. I send this as neither my sister Clare, or myself, can attend the lunch on 2 December. Mum will then be with you all in spirit.

In July 1941 my sister Clare and I were placed into boarding school in Sydney with the Anglican sisters at St. Gabriel's, Waverley, and so we had no experience of the evacuation traumas as such. Mum had only been back in Port Moresby a few months when the evacuation order was issued and she was really very shocked at the time as we had no real home or close relatives in Australia, making the future look very uncertain.

Our father was in the services as was her brother, Roy Field, and her parents were no longer living — Grandma Field (Vieuseaux) having died just the year before in Port Moresby. Mum never really talked about the evacuation or the war years very much because she found it very stressful.

**Peter Foldi** - Our evacuation party was Vera Foldi (wife of John Rollo Foldi, ARM Kikori), myself (born 23-5-37) and my brother Ian (born 14-4-40). I have very little knowledge of any details. I do remember we stayed at the Strand Hotel in Townsville. Vera kept reminding me throughout my life that I stood on the steps of the Strand and announced to the world "Peter Johnnie Foldi flying shene [to] Sydney".

### **Bert Rowe - Home!**

*This is included for general interest. The story of Bert's escape from Salamaua is available in the Mitchell Library and the Australian War Memorial.*

*M.V. Malaita* was overcrowded - when it sailed from Port Moresby it was carrying at least double its normal number of passengers.

As the New Guinea coastline faded into the distance we were told to assemble for lifeboat drill. Accordingly we formed into groups at the few lifeboat stations, where we were addressed by the ship's captain, a crusty, brusque old mariner. His address was short and to the point. He said, 'This ship is very overcrowded, and there are only enough life jackets and places in the lifeboats for about half of you. So, if we are torpedoed, or we strike an enemy mine, I don't want any trouble. I won't tolerate any fighting for life jackets or a place in a lifeboat. If the ship sinks most of you will drown, and it may as well be you as the next man!' He then ordered that the life jackets be distributed at random. I did not get one. After that most of us were to spend a very anxious 48 hours.

Because of the numbers on board there was nowhere near enough cabin accommodation for everyone, consequently most of us had to sleep where we could find a vacant space. Some managed to find a spot in the dining room, or the saloon bar, but most of us slept on deck. For two nights I, and many others, slept on the top of a cargo hatch cover.

We arrived in the port of Cairns, Queensland, on the 18th February 1942, two days after leaving Port Moresby. A special train was waiting to take us to Brisbane, which we reached three days later. Another special train took us on to Sydney. In this train I was in the care of Doris Booth, then a Red Cross officer. Doris was a famous early New Guinea identity, having been the first white woman to live and work on the Bulolo River goldfields, in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. Her book *Mountains, Gold and*

*Cannibals* told the story of her remarkable life on the goldfields in the pioneering years 1924-1927 as the wife of Charles Booth, planter and miner. From Sydney I travelled home to Adelaide, via Melbourne, on the normal interstate rail service.

I arrived home on Wednesday 25th February 1942, safe, but not sound, and possessing nothing but the clothes I was wearing: but with a treasure house full of memories of a year spent in the wild, untamed land of New Guinea.

\*\*\*\*\*



Doreen MacGowan (nee  
Crawley), Janet Robertson  
(nee Normoyle) and Muriel  
Larner (nee MacGowan)



Godfrey Oettle, Pam Barrie,  
Harry West (ROAPNG  
President), Wendy and Joan  
Stobo



Joe Nitsche, Pam Foley, Chris  
and John Downie  
(Joe and Pam have been  
responsible for luncheon  
arrangements for many years)

## ON ANZAC DAY 2002 - LET US NOT FORGET THE WESTERN FRONT AND PNG

by Nancy Johnston

Having a personal interest in both the Western Front and Papua New Guinea, I would like to share with other members a couple of items that impressed me when I read them. I am aware each Anzac Day that we seem to hear more about the veterans of Gallipoli and less of those who served on the Western Front. In February 1916, on turning eighteen, my dad enlisted in the AIF and spent just under three years serving in France and Belgium, two years as a stretcher bearer. From the letters written to my mother, I know what he went through. And many people may not have realised the terrible consequences and the suffering endured by the people of Papua New Guinea during WWII.

*An excerpt from the Daily Telegraph, 25-4-2001:*

### THE WESTERN FRONT

Australians have been long obsessed by Gallipoli, but isn't it time more attention was given to our great victory on the Western Front in the last weeks of World War I. As the *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* admits, not only did Gallipoli have no influence on the war, 'even if the expedition had succeeded in its aims, it is doubtful if the war would have been shortened by a single day'. The Western Front, on the other hand, involved far more Australian soldiers, and far more casualties. Almost as many in one six-week period as occurred at Gallipoli in eight months. And we won. Our successful attack on Montebrehain on 5 October 1918 marked the end of the mighty German Hindenburg line of defence and soon afterwards the war was over. As the *Oxford Companion* points out, 'the Western Front constitutes the major episode in Australian Military history'. It involved our great general, John Monash, and was where 'Australian forces, for the first time in their history, engaged the main army of the main enemy in the main theatre of war.' And despite the horror, it involved a great victory.

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Likewise, Milne Bay and the Kokoda Track in New Guinea, where in 1942, a small Australian force, including the particularly young 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion, stopped the Japanese on our doorstep - the first defeat the Japanese Imperial Army suffered. ....  
© The Daily Telegraph, 25 April 2001 - 'The Western Front' by Michael Duffy

.....

*And from the 1995 Latham Lecture by Peter Ryan entitled 'Some Unfinished Business from the Second World War'\*:*

In connection with the anniversaries of the Pacific battles, there have been passing references to the work of the native carriers. But the terrible general suffering and devastation of the people's lives have faded from the active memory of almost all Australians except the soldiers who served there and saw it. Yet, without the extraordinary exertions of the indigenous people, we could not possibly have won our bitter campaigns against the Japanese ... It was the considered opinion of Gavan Long, Australia's official war historian, that our conduct in the Pacific campaigns laid a far heavier burden, person for person, on Papua New Guinean shoulders, than it did upon Australian ones. ....

Some of you may have seen film of the work of the native stretcher-bearers who carried the wounded out from actions along the Kokoda Track. You may know less

of the bravery of the native constables who were the eyes and ears of our coastwatchers and intelligence patrols, or of the battles fought by the black soldiers of the Pacific Islands Regiment, with the distinguished complement of decorations of DCMs and MMs. You may not have thought at all of the entire village communities wiped off the face of the earth by the bombing of both allies and enemies, or of the thousands of native people drowned at sea in Japanese transport ships, or of the ravages of disease and starvation among the women and children in districts where military activity made gardening impossible.

#### LET US NOT FORGET

\* First published in the Sept. 1995 issue of Quadrant. Peter Ryan is the General Editor of The Encyclopedia of Papua New Guinea and author of the wartime memoirs *Fear Drive My Feet*.

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**RABAUL CEMETERY UPDATE** Following an appeal to members for information about burials (UV Dec 2001, p5), the response has been good. Names have been received from Alf Smith, Les Earley and Pat Boys. A remarkable find was contributed by Ken Humphreys who had a list of names running to five pages, together with details recorded from headstones by a woman who visited this cemetery in 1981. Thus we now have about 240 names many with additional details. A few photographs have also been supplied. Meanwhile Peter Cohen, in Rabaul, reports that many RSL Clubs in Australia have contributed funds for the restoration project. However, any more names, details of those interred there, and any financial contributions would be welcomed. The project, at last, seems feasible.

□ M.R. Hayes

#### MEMORIAL TO AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WWI CASUALTIES - 87 YEARS

**ON:** Australia's first battle in World War I was commemorated on 16 December 2001 when the first ever plaque to give recognition to this event in Australia was commissioned at Northcote RSL, Melbourne. This was a joint project of the Department of Veterans' Affairs 'Their Service - Our Heritage' program and the Northcote RSL.

In this battle on 11 September 1914, seven months before Gallipoli, six Australians were killed in the capture of a German wireless station at Bitapaka, near Rabaul, then in German New Guinea. Three days later, the Australian submarine AE1 was lost with its crew of 35, and has never been recovered.

The first of the six to be mortally wounded, Able Seaman W. Williams, came from Northcote. It has been a project of Northcote RSL for some years to commemorate the battle and the death of Northcote's 'son'. The death of Captain B.C. Pockley is also recorded on this 800mm square plaque. It was Pockley, a doctor of the Australian Army Medical Corps, who gave his Red Cross arm brassard (signifying that he was a non-combatant) to the stretcher party conveying Williams back for medical attention. Almost immediately Pockley was himself mortally wounded. That valiant deed has never been recognised.

□ M.R. Hayes

#### GROUP VISITING KAVIENG 60 YEARS ON, to commemorate loss of life on *Montevideo Maru* and elsewhere:

A group of PNG 'Before's' will travel to Kavieng, New Ireland, for 1st July this year with a double aim: the first, to pay homage to all who were lost on the *Montevideo Maru* 60 years ago on that date; the second to affix a memorial plaque listing all known civilians from the region who were lost during the war years. The list includes Chinese and mixed race folk - it is hoped it will be completed by then. If you are interested in joining the group, details can be supplied in the first place by Geoff Melrose on 02 6585 6307.

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 51st AGM of the Retired Officers Association of Papua New Guinea Inc  
will be held on **SUNDAY 28 APRIL 2002, at 11.30 a.m.**  
at the **MANDARIN CLUB, Oriental Room, 4th Floor**  
Corner of Goulburn and Pitt Streets, Sydney

### AGENDA:

1. Members present, and apologies;
2. Confirmation of Minutes of the 50th AGM (as circulated in June 2001 *Una Voce*)
3. Business arising from the Minutes;
4. President's Report;
5. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement;
6. Correspondence;
7. Election of Executive Committee:

President, Deputy President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Asst. Secretary,  
Editor *Una Voce*, 5 Committee persons, Hon. Auditor.

Note: Accompanying this notice, on the separate yellow sheet, is a Nomination Form for the election of office bearers. It would be appreciated if nominations (signed by the nominee, proposer and seconder) could be forwarded to: The Secretary, ROAPNG Inc, PO Box 452 Roseville NSW 2069, to reach the Secretary at least seven days before the date of the meeting. No nominations will be accepted after that date (this is in line with the Rules adopted at the Special General Meeting of the Association held in 1996 to approve incorporation.)

8. General discussion.

Members, Associate Members, their families and friends are all welcome - but please let us know you are coming by completing the booking form on the separate yellow sheet and returning it as soon as possible.

**The cost is \$26 per person** - this does not include liquor or soft drinks. We would appreciate it if members would pay in advance, and not at the door. Advance payment enables us to plan the seating and advise the Mandarin Club of numbers.

**Cancellations** advised to Ross Johnson on 02 9876 6178 or Pamela Foley on 02 9428 2078 by Friday 26 April will secure full refund. This is the date we inform the Club of final numbers; after this date the Association must pay for those unable to attend.

**Parking** is available at the Goulburn St parking station (cnr Goulburn and Elizabeth Sts) for \$8.00 flat rate between 9am & 11pm. The parking station is only 100m. from the Club.

**Booking slip and payment form on separate yellow sheet.**

### FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I, ..... (full name)  
of ..... (address)  
being a member of the Retired Officers Association of Papua New Guinea Inc hereby  
appoint ..... (full name of proxy)  
of ..... (address)  
being a member of that incorporated association, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf  
at the Annual General Meeting of the association to be held on the 28th day of April 2002  
and at any adjournment of that meeting.

.....  
Signature of member appointing proxy      Date

NOTE: A proxy vote may not be given to a person who is not a member of the association.

**CADET EDUCATION OFFICERS, ASOPA, 1962 Intake to be held 3-4 August 2002 at Port Macquarie** (40th anniversary of intake). Fifty-seven cadets commenced the course and only eleven remain to be 'found'. Missing are: Marie Burns, Philip Day, Maxine Grainger, Sonya Grainger, Mike Hatch, Sue Leger, Rory O'Brien, Warwick Ring, Val Rivers, Brian Smith and Helen Thomson. If you have a lead to any of the above, please contact: Henry Bodman, Ph 07 3378 8383, Fax 07 3378 3886 Email: [hmacdb@ozemail.com.au](mailto:hmacdb@ozemail.com.au) or Keith Jackson, Ph 02 9909 8486, Fax 02 9904 0960 Email: [benclong@bigpond.net.au](mailto:benclong@bigpond.net.au) or Col Booth, Ph 02 6584 1017, Fax 02 6584 1017 Email: [cswbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:cswbooth@hotmail.com)

**SAMARAI REUNION, HERVEY BAY, QLD, to be held 9-11 August 2002:**

The official dinner will be on the Saturday evening (10<sup>th</sup>) and there is to be a farewell BBQ on the Sunday evening. For those interested, there will be a Whale Watching trip on the Sat. morning and a day trip to Fraser Island on the Sunday. To confirm your interest, please forward a cheque for \$5 per person to cover administration costs (cheques to be made payable to Frank Hoeter Samarai Reunion A/c), by 15 March. You will then be sent details of accommodation and cost of trips, plus brochures and a map of the area. Enquiries to: F.G. Hoeter 07 4128 4490, 75 Denman Camp Rd., Hervey Bay Qld 4655  
Ted Thacker (07) 4124 4430, 6 Dean Court, Pialba, Hervey Bay Qld 4655

**SOGERI REUNION to be held 27-29 September 2002 at Quality Inn Garden City, Jerrabomberra Avenue, Narrabundah, ACT 2604:**

Since the 50th anniversary of Sogeri School in June 1994, reunions of past staff, students and interested persons have been held every 2 or 3 years. The next and fourth reunion will be in Canberra on the last weekend of September. The chosen dates coincide with Floriade and other special attractions in the ACT at that time. The Garden City is offering special group rates to those wishing to stay a little longer. For more details please contact: Marjorie Walker, 31 Josephine Ave, Mt Waverley 3149, Ph.03 9803 9071, or Robyn Warnock, 29 Barrallier St, Griffith 2603, Ph.02 6285 3191

**KIAPS' REUNION, SUNSHINE COAST, 11-11-2001 - Report Back by Chips Mackellar:**

It was Remembrance Day 2001, a most appropriate date, since most of us spent the first half hour trying to remember who everyone else was. For some of us, we had not seen each other for more than 40 years. Of course we all had name tags, but with eyes now dimmed with age, few of us could read them.

Attendance, including wives, was 125, and they came from everywhere. 97 from Qld, 9 from NSW, 6 from Victoria, and 13 we don't know where they came from but they came anyway. And the venue was superb: the Buderim Tavern, at Buderim, in the hills behind Queensland's Sunshine Coast - with huge plate glass windows overlooking Maroochydhore below, with Caloundra in the distance.

The reunion was unstructured - no welcoming speeches, no lucky door prizes, no raffles - just a gathering of kiaps, remembering old times together. And how we did remember, especially when everyone present was issued with a copy of the DDA Staff Posting List for 1 January 1966. This was when J.K. McCarthy was Director, and the list showed Harry West at Rabaul, Mick Foley at Mount Hagen, Des Clifton-Bassett at Madang, Bob Bell at Mendi, and Freddy Kaad was on accident leave. Among others of our members, Ross Johnson was at Rabaraba, Mal Lang was at Menyamya, Neil Grant was at Wonenara, Mick Cockburn at Maprik, Harry Redmond at Kunua, and I was at Esa'ala, in the Milne Bay District. What memories this staff posting list brought rushing back to us.

The day started fine enough but while the reunion was in full swing we were suddenly hit by a torrential downpour of driving rain. Not that it mattered much, because we were all safe and dry inside. But when the rain had stopped and the tavern became engulfed in swirling mist which blotted out the high rise down on the Coast, the effect was magic. Helen Faithful later said, 'You could imagine being in a rest house, high on a hill overlooking a valley in the Highlands'. And she was spot on. Can you imagine a big rest house, full of kiaps, looking down through the mist to the Wahgi Valley far below, because that is exactly what it was like, and none of us will ever forget it.

The brainchild of the Faithfuls and the Fayles, neither of them could have imagined when they planned this reunion, how successful it would have been. There was only one disappointment, and that was that the invitations did not reach all kiaps. I received an invitation, which I passed on to Harry Redmond, and which he passed on to Bob Bell, and that is how we attended. So a lot more kiaps might have attended if their whereabouts had been known to the organisers. But not to worry, a kiaps web site has since been set up by Pater Salmon. It is: [exkiap.net](http://exkiap.net)

All kiaps are invited to register their details on this web site so that next time around, the invitations will reach more kiaps. Whilst the tyranny of distance keeps us all apart, the miracle of the internet can at least keep us all in touch. And who knows, perhaps we could have another gathering of kiaps before time runs out on us, and hopefully it will be just as successful as the Buderim gathering.

## THE 'CONVERSATION PIECE' SET OF THE STAMPS OF PNG

### Attractive platter-size Placemats and Coasters designed as puzzles

*(Geoffrey Baskett of Port Macquarie NSW wrote, 'I don't gain anything for myself from this venture ...but I think that many of my PNG friends will be interested in seeing the stamps again and in reliving incidents related to them.')*

This set of six Placemats and Coasters consists of several hundred stamps of PNG photocopied and laminated to form serviceable and highly decorative placemats and coasters. The stamps portray the scenery of the country, and the art and history of its people, together with the beauty of the birds, fish and flowers of PNG.

Each Placemat has a question printed on the reverse side to challenge your powers of observation and encourage conversation as people swap memories of PNG.

As each set is individually photocopied and laminated, with excellent results, the cost is higher than if they had been printed. The sets will only be despatched to those sending their order with cheque to cover costs plus postage. Profits from their sale (\$4-20 for each complete set) will be donated to World Vision and Christian broadcasters.

**Total production costs incl. profit = Aus\$57-00**

<b>Postal costs (incl. packaging):</b> Australia	\$5.55 =	<b>Total \$62.55</b>
New Zealand (airmail)	\$8-80 =	<b>\$65-80</b>
PNG (airmail)	\$11-30 =	<b>\$68-30</b>
USA/Canada (airmail)	\$13-30 =	<b>\$70-30</b>
UK/Europe (airmail)	\$14-80 =	<b>\$71-80</b>

**Please send orders with cheques to:**

**Geoffrey Baskett, 20 Amaroo Parade, Port Macquarie NSW 2444, Australia**

**Note:** Placemats with Coasters may be purchased individually. For costs for less than the full set, please contact Geoffrey on 02 6582 3557, Email: [anut@ozemail.com.au](mailto:anut@ozemail.com.au)

## WANTED TO BUY

Pacific Island, New Guinea and Aboriginal Art and Artefacts.  
Only Material collected before 1960. Top prices paid. Will travel  
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Caspian Gallery, 469 Oxford Street, Paddington NSW 2021  
phone 02 9331 4260, fax 02 9360 1385. Outside Sydney free call 1800 818 056

## UNEXPECTED VISITORS

by John Chaning-Pearce\*

My family and I moved to Inus Plantation some years after Paul Mason's death, and spent fifteen very full and interesting years there before being forced to flee in 1990 after the onset of civil unrest on Bougainville. My son Rolf and daughter Susan shared in this experience with my wife and myself.

One night in August 1989 my family and I were at home relaxing after our evening meal, enjoying having our children back from boarding school and catching up with their news.

We heard a vehicle pull up outside at about 9 p.m. Shortly after this we heard a call at the front of the house. On going to investigate, we found five PNG policemen who asked if they could come in as they had something important to tell us. On inviting them into our home, the leader told us that they had come from Buka and had been sent by police headquarters in Arawa to investigate my family. They then told me that it was alleged we were aiding the fledgling BRA (Bougainville Revolutionary Army) and supplying them with firearms, and they had been sent to investigate the matter. They informed us that they wished to search our home for alleged unlicensed firearms.

Naturally the family were amazed at this absurd story, but we had to agree to allow them to search our house. Two of the men started a systematic search of every room, every cupboard being emptied on the floor. Another man stayed with my two children and started to examine some videos that we had, telling my children that he was searching for pornographic material.

While two men did the searching, the leader and one other interrogated both my wife and myself separately and also the children about their alleged claims. They started to write up a police incident sheet in a very businesslike manner. After a short while, the two men whom I had accompanied when they started their search let out exclamations when they discovered a toy rifle (wholly made from plastic materials) that we had stored in a cupboard. As part of the plantation we operated a large trading business, and in the course of ordering goods from a salesman from Singapore had agreed to purchase the entire contents of some of his sample suitcases, thus saving him having to take them back with him to Singapore. We had put away the toy rifle to be disposed of with other unwanted items on some future occasion. The toy rifle did look extremely realistic, even being about the same dimensions as a normal rifle, so could easily have passed as a real firearm. We pointed out that the gun was only a toy but they seemed delighted at their find. The interrogators continued to question us all one at a time, while either my wife or myself would accompany those doing the searching. When the searchers got to my office

they instructed me to open our plantation safe for them because they said their orders were to search the whole of the house and office.

Operating a large trading business as we did, we regularly stored large amounts of money in the safe and on this occasion it contained a considerable amount of money. I opened it for them, watched them make a cursory inspection, and then quickly closed and locked it once more. They then continued their search. Shortly after this I was told to go back to the leader of the group as he wanted me to write a statement on the reason we had a fake gun on the property. While I was engaged in writing the statement, my wife was requested to accompany the searchers. I was not aware of it at the time but they asked her to accompany them back to the office, then requested she unlock the safe. Once she had opened it, they told her to leave. Very soon after this the searchers reappeared, and on consulting their watches said that the search had taken longer than they anticipated and they would have to leave immediately as they were to join forces with a second contingent of police and proceed on down to the Wakunai area to make further searches of plantations in that area. By this time my wife and I were feeling that there was definitely something very wrong somewhere, but the police seemed to be conducting themselves in a very orderly manner, they were all dressed correctly, excepting that instead of the standard police cap they were all wearing red prison warders berets. We accompanied them to the door and as they left they were still brandishing our toy rifle. They told us they would be in touch the next day to formally charge us.

Once we were outside, a dilapidated yellow utility drove up and the police all piled in. Our suspicions were being confirmed that there was something very fishy going on! Police driving from Buka would need a 4-wheel drive vehicle, and this old conventional drive vehicle would not have been able to drive through the rivers. I made this comment to my wife, asking her where she had gone with the police. She told me they had made her accompany them back to the safe and ordered her to open it for them and then to leave. It suddenly dawned on us that the men were not police at all but were clever impersonators only intent on robbing us. We immediately went to the office only to find that our safe's contents had been stripped.

The impersonators had persistently told us they had to hurry as they had to make checks on other plantations in the Wakunai area. Once they had left and we had got over the shock of realising we had been robbed, we decided to contact the manager at Numa Numa and tell him to have a reception committee awaiting them - but we discovered our satellite phone was dead and that our phone line to our tower had been cut. Fortunately I was able to repair the line and finally able to make contact with Numa about an hour later. However by this time the impersonators had struck again. This time they bypassed Numa Numa and continued to Koi Koi plantation - they boldly walked into the homestead there brandishing the very realistic toy gun they had stolen from us. Very soon they had cleared that safe of its contents as well and made their getaway, and were on their way to Numa Numa to repeat the whole thing. However after I had alerted Numa Numa the manager there rang through to Koi Koi plantation to warn them, only to find they were too late and Koi Koi had already been plundered, and the culprits had only just left. The manager and a group of Numa Numa personnel immediately set out on the short drive to Koi Koi. As they drove through Numa Numa they came face to face with the impersonators' vehicle. The group from Numa Numa managed to force the impersonators' vehicle to crash and tip over on the road. The occupants fled into the nearby swamp, with the Numa Numa group in hot pursuit. While some of the booty was recovered from the overturned vehicle, the impersonators were able to take refuge in the swamp where they made their escape on foot.

A couple of weeks later two of the rogues were caught and we were asked to

attend an identification parade where we were able to identify them. They were both charged and imprisoned. None of the money was ever recovered.

Within a few months of this incident the BRA had taken control of Bougainville, and all plantations on the island had to be evacuated.

*\*John spent 33 years as a planter and trader in PNG. His family connections with the Solomon Islands and PNG go back to 1864 when his ancestors first arrived in the Shortland Islands in the Solomons as planters, traders and blackbirders.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## BOOK NEWS AND REVIEWS

**A LOT TO FIGHT FOR - The War Diaries and Letters of Squadron Leader J.F. Jackson DFC \$29-70 (incl. GST), plus postage \$6 Qld, \$7-50 elsewhere in Aust.**

John Jackson, Queensland grazier and businessman, joined the RAAF as a pilot when war broke out in 1939 and served with 3 Squadron in the Middle East. Returning to Australia, he became an instructor until given command of 75 Squadron. He was killed in action leading that squadron in its heroic defence of Port Moresby in March and April of 1942. The airport in Moresby used to be called 'Jacksons' Airport after him. This is a collection of diaries and letters from that time, edited by his two children (Patricia and Arthur) in which he records, in vivid and often humorous fashion, his daily experiences interspersed with numerous anecdotes. As it was against air force regulations to keep diaries on active service, and letters were often thrown away after being read, this is one of the very few surviving accounts written as it happened.

B5, 256 pp incl. maps, 31 pp of photos and extracts, index. ISBN No. 1-876194-24-3. Please send cheque or money order payable to P. & A. Jackson, PO Box 6057, St Lucia Qld 4067 and include name, full address and phone number.

**AN ANTHROPOLOGIST IN PAPUA - The Photography of F.E. Williams, 1922-1939 written by Michael Young and Julia Clark \$69-95 (inc. GST)**

Australian born and Oxford trained, F.E. Williams spent 20 years as Government Anthropologist in the Australian Territory of Papua. Williams took photographs in about eighteen different ethnographic locations scattered throughout the eight administrative divisions of the territory. The book documents his discoveries and fieldwork experiences. It contains 235 images selected from the collections of his photographs held by the National Archives of Australia and the National Archives of PNG. They provide an extraordinary record, often in Williams' own words, of Papuan cultures on the brink of great change. A substantial introductory essay provides the biographical, historical and anthropological contexts of Williams' ethnographic and photographic achievement.

The book is a testimony to Williams' courage in persevering for so many years with unfashionable ideas, a largely hostile bureaucracy, underpaid and unappreciated work, a tragic family life and incredibly harsh conditions. 320 pp, 285 x 240 mm, hardcover, ISBN 1 86333 200 6. \$69-95 + \$5 postage in Aust. Available from **any office of the National Archives** (or by phone, fax or Email) or can be ordered by contacting the Publications Sales Section in Canberra on 02 6212 3609 or through its website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)

Also available at the same price, + \$4-50 postage in Aust., from **Pacific Book House**: 17 Park Ave, Broadbeach Waters, Gold Coast Qld 4218 - Ph 07 5539 0446, Fax 07 5538 4114, Email: [mcgrath@pacificbookhouse.com.au](mailto:mcgrath@pacificbookhouse.com.au)

**THE LONG ISLAND MISSION by Lionel Veale \$35 plus \$5 postage**

This is Lionel Veale's third book, the others being *Wewak Mission* and *And Then There Were Two*, and is the story of a coastwatcher mission which Lionel and two other coastwatchers carried out in 1943-44 as members of the Allied Intelligence Bureau. This mission, of three months' duration, was on Long Island off Madang; its task was to report on Japanese movements on the island. This group was one of seven established along the north coasts of New Britain and in Vitiaz Strait in preparation for Allied landings. Available from L.P. Veale, PO Box 408, Ashmore City Qld 4214. (If you would like an autographed book please indicate.)

**THE SOUTH PACIFIC by Ron Crocombe. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 2001 - \$49-50 incl. GST plus \$9-50 postage within Australia**

**Reviewed by Stuart Inder**

At \$45 for a whopping, hard-bound, fact-packed, 790-page compendium on all the Pacific Islands, past, present and the likely future, there is no better book, and certainly no better book value, than this highly readable volume. It contains everything about the islands and the community of the Pacific that you, or anybody with business interests or any interest at all in the Pacific, will need to refer to – if not this week, then next month. So for heavens sake buy it now!

At least one of the reasons for its extraordinarily low price is that Ron Crocombe gets no royalties from it, as has always been true of the publications of the Institute, of which he is founding director. Another reason is that the present work has steadily been built up over the years from Crocombe's *The New Pacific* (1973), whose original 173 pages were systematically revised and extended, metamorphosing into *The South Pacific: An Introduction*, in 1983. That itself had later updates and reprints, the last in 1993. This 2001 edition, with its minor name change, has been further expanded considerably.

Ron Crocombe, a professor emeritus of the University of the South Pacific and now living in Rarotonga, in the Cooks, has been researching, lecturing, consulting in the Pacific, including PNG, for 50 years. He knows the islands, their problems and their personalities intimately, and there is simply no one else today who could have produced a reference book of this quality and scholarship, nor – with its gazetteer, detailed index and extensive bibliography – of such practical use.

**From Pacific Book House, 17 Park Ave, Broadbeach Waters, Gold Coast Qld 4218**  
Ph 07 5539 0446, fax 07 5538 4114, Email: mcgrath@pacificbookhouse.com.au

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**PRESERVING PATROL REPORTS -**

**A NOTE TO EX-FIELD STAFF from MICHAEL COCKBURN**

The National Archives is the official repository of government papers including those from PNG. In that collection there are only 19 patrol reports. Apparently that is all it was thought fit by the government of the day to supply. Other copies held at Konedobu have most likely gone to the tip. I discovered this when I viewed the Archives Catalogue to see if Daru Patrol Report No. 1 of 1953/54 was included. It is not. I then contacted the National Library to enquire how many copies of patrol reports they have. Well, they have a few more and are willing to accept more. They now have copies of some of the patrol reports I wrote including Daru No. 1 of 1953/54. The National Archives can only accept documents from government sources. The National Library is not so restricted. Therefore if any field staff have copies of their reports, the National Library may be pleased to receive them. Graham Powell is the man to contact at the Library. He told me that the reports they have are frequently used by people doing research.

# GENDER STUDIES by Jim Toner

Women in the Navy? Black silk-stockinged legs of WRANS as they pirouette around shore bases? Oh yes. But women aboard warships? At sea in cramped accommodation for weeks alongside sweaty sailors? Surely not.

But that great experiment is well under way and some 12% of officers and crew now putting to sea with the RAN are female. Will that great Aussie expression 'no problems' sum up the outcome? Not for any of us slightly observant of human behaviour.

I draw on an incident at a then isolated Highlands station. There were no European women except a few wives, and the dozen single men got along pretty well - much like messmates aboard a Navy craft. Then, out of the blue, Lois Niall dropped in. What a stirring of the loins this caused. And what peacock behaviour it provoked amongst some of the males - and not only the single ones!

The delightful daughter of Morobe's District Commissioner was working for the Women's Welfare branch of Dept. of Native Affairs and flew into Mendi one day and out the next. A huge party was instantly arranged and some splendid strutting back and forth by the hitherto deprived males could be observed. Little did they know it was all for naught for Lois's destiny was to become Mrs Frank Johnson (of Lae and Education Dept fame). The whole thing moved one dejected bystander to verse:

On the personal file of Miss Lois Niall  
Is written in bright red ink  
She does not swear, she does not smoke  
And she never touches drink

So what does she do, the curious say.  
What is her occupation?  
- 'Tis the saving of Fallen Women  
On every Papuan station'

Well we wish you luck, dear Lois  
In Mendi especialee  
And if you save any Fallen Women  
Won't you please save one for me?

The Navy even more than the other two Services requires comradeship below decks and other *lapun* readers may conceive no easier way to disrupt that situation than to drop a mob of sheilas through the hatch. Perhaps I resist progress - but as an erudite Member informed the parliament at Waigani, 'There is progress forwards. Yes, but there is also progress backwards'.

**WHERE THE MONEY IS GOING:** The \$1500 donated at the Samarai Reunion in Canberra in March 2001 remains in trust for the present, according to the coordinating committee for the Reunion. They advised as follows:

A significant quantity of dental instruments and equipment has been gifted by dentists throughout Australia. (Laurie Lefevre has already taken two small packages of valuable instruments to PNG with him as personal luggage.) The Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation, through the good offices of Les Douglas, has gifted ten computers and monitors for schools at Samarai and its environs. It is hoped to ship all gifts to Brisbane and thence to Port Moresby in the early part of 2002, with the assistance

of Rotary which operates a donations-in-kind for PNG program.

It is anticipated that freight expenditure (Canberra-Brisbane) will absorb most, perhaps all, of the monies at present held. The Committee will give a further report when the project is finalised. (From Derek Baldwin)

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## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR OLD HOME MOVIES

An important part of the work of ScreenSound Australia (formerly the National Film and Sound Archive) is the collection of personal records, usually known as 'home movies'. Home movies are important because they provide an unbiased snapshot of place, of the people involved and the era in which they live. Home movies can be significant research documents but only if they are responsibly preserved. ScreenSound also collects contemporary material and are encouraging people to donate their films *before* they become 'old'. This is because they can be preserved better and because all the contextual details are available. (Often home movie collections are sent in long after the photographer has died and essential information about their production has been lost.)

ScreenSound is particularly interested in **HOME MOVIES OF PACIFIC PEOPLES** - they would like to build a National Collection of Screen and Sound that represents the Pacific & Micronesian communities as strongly as any other. If you know any amateur film makers of Pacific Island descent living in Australia please let them know that ScreenSound would like to hear from them. Your home movies/videos can be donated to the National Collection, or master videos lent for copying if donors do not wish to part with them. They can assist with postage charges. Queries should be directed to: Stephanie Boyle, Home Movie & Video Project, ScreenSound Australia, GPO Box 2002, Canberra 2601, or McCoy Circuit, Acton ACT 2601. Tel: 02 6248 2178 (reverse charges accepted), Fax: 02 6248 2167. Email: [stephanie.boyle@screensound.gov.au](mailto:stephanie.boyle@screensound.gov.au) For more information on ScreenSound Australia, see website: <http://www.screensound.gov.au>

From *Pambu* Newsletter, November 2001

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**HELP WANTED:** Philip CASS (son of Les Cass of Department of Education 1953-76) is working on a doctoral thesis on the colonial press and independence movements in Melanesia. He wrote, 'I would like to make contact with anybody who worked on **GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS** aimed at national readers in the 1960s and early '70s. I'm interested in looking at what the administration was saying about the political changes taking place, the House of Assembly elections etc and comparing this with what the *South Pacific Post/Post Courier* and *Wantok* were saying. I am very interested in seeing copies of any pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers etc that were put out at the time and which might be in people's possession. I would also love to find a copy of a magazine that came out in Port Moresby in the late 1960s called 'BLACK AND WHITE'.' Philip was born in Wewak and after a varied career centred on journalism is at: Zayed University, PO Box 4783 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Email: [philip.cass@zu.ac.ae](mailto:philip.cass@zu.ac.ae) (work), [plcass@hotmail.com](mailto:plcass@hotmail.com) (home), ph: +971+2+4079805 (work), +971+2+6765860 (home). The UAE is AEST -6hrs.

**HELP WANTED:** Jennifer Wansey is seeking information on members of the **ROUSE FAMILY**, in particular an elderly couple who went to the Madang District in the 1960s, and died there. If you have any information at all on this couple, please contact Jennifer at 02 6365 2243, Email [jwansey@hotmail.com](mailto:jwansey@hotmail.com) or write to her at: 'Gundela', Borenore NSW 2800.

**HELP WANTED:** Rex Griffiths is seeking information on his father, **Robert Ernest GRIFFITHS** who left Thirroul NSW around 1932-33 to work in New Guinea. He worked for Burns Philp for a number of years, also in the Bulolo gold fields and elsewhere in PNG. During that time, his fiancée (also from Thirroul) went to PNG and they were married in Namatanai. In Dec. 1941 Rex's mother and two small daughters (she was pregnant at the time) were evacuated; Rex was born in April 1942. Robert joined the NGVR (Service No. N.G. 2130) and fought through the New Guinea campaign. About two years after the war Rex thinks his father was working with ANGAU. Rex said, 'From there we don't know what went wrong. The Death Certificate tells us it was a gun shot wound, accident murder or suicide ... on Manam Island. His body was taken to Madang and there he was buried.' Rex would very much like to learn more about his father and if possible find out where he was buried. If you can help in any way, please contact Rex at: 54 Redman Avenue, Thirroul NSW 2515, or phone 02 4268 4791

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## IN MY PACIFIC ISLAND GARDEN

(Iwi Plantation, S.E. Bougainville)

Betty Cropp wrote this in the 1960s

When we arrived, the sea was not visible from the house although the Pacific waves broke on a sandy beach only one hundred yards away. The house was old, dark and gradually disintegrating through the activity of white ants and borers. Cockroaches swarmed in the kitchen, mason wasps built festoons of earthy nests on the walls. The front entrance was smothered in a beautiful orange bougainvillea. Six weeks later we moved into a brand new house which had been built right next door, so close that the old and new roofs almost touched. Another month and the old house had vanished. Grass began to grow on the ground which had been sheltered from rain and sun for so long. The orange bougainvillea, revelling in sunshine on all sides, burst into a blaze of blossom and we began to consider the possibilities of a garden.

My husband had just taken over the management of this copra and cocoa plantation on the island of Bougainville (named after the same French navigator as the plant). Trees and small bushes which had been allowed to grow in between the palms, and which blocked the view to the sea, were removed. About twelve 50-year-old palms, some 80 ft high, were felled, carefully guided to the ground with long ropes of rattan vine so that they did not touch the house. The natives had an orgy of eating unripe coconuts which are considered a delicacy, and we luxuriated in "millionaires' salad", the delicious white, crispy heart of the palm. Next, a further clearing of secondary growth was made enabling us to see, at the end of rows of palms, a low rocky headland and fringing reef on which the waves break into white foaming surf.

Covered in a multitude of weeds and ferns, this cleared ground, now exposed to more sunlight, imperceptibly changed to grass mingling with one of the prettiest and toughest weeds (*Asystasia gangetica*) with a campanula blue flower which opens at sunrise and is dead by 10 a.m. The change was aided by regular grass cutting. Each man is armed with a piece of sharpened flat iron called a *sarif* which is used in a slashing action. Once a month a team of about ten men will cut the grass all around the house, an area of approximately seven acres. The cut grass is allowed to lie. After six years we have a remarkably smooth and green lawn. The original owner of the property had planted two avenues with croton hedges. These are kept cut short and help to give a very trim effect.

Opposite the house we have a large casuarina tree. The builder wanted to cut it down but it was reprieved at the last moment, and what a joy it has been. It provides a contrast with the multitude of palms and is a sanctuary for all kinds of parrots, kingfishers, wagtails and the rare visiting grey shrike. Unfortunately it also provides a lookout post for hawks. Throughout the plantation it is the only tree at which the natives are not allowed to fire their arrows, nor sling their stones. In a country where most birds live in the tops of extremely tall trees, and are not easily visible, it is a rarity to have such a good birdwatching post as our verandah. There is a wagtail sitting on her nest right now and we await the hatching eagerly.

The whole area of the garden is just a few feet above sea level and becomes waterlogged during the rainy seasons. Our dry periods are seldom more than a week or so at a time and the high water table is one of the main problems. As the soil is poor and sandy, however, a few days of unrelieved sun and most bedding plants are parched and wilted. So we are confined mainly to flowering shrubs - hibiscus of course (scarlet and pink), golden yellow allamanda, gardenia, jasmine (*Jasminum sambac*) ixora and frangipani. The latter waxes and wanes a little so far as flowers are concerned, but all the others bloom throughout the year. We have three different coloured bougainvilleas, orange, cerise and purple. The cerise suffered a very rare accident four years ago. A waterspout swept in from the sea straight for the house, abruptly changed course, flattened the bougainvillea, then continued towards the tractor shelter and other buildings where it sent sheets of corrugated iron whirling over the river like newspaper. It then collapsed and dispersed.

We have canna lilies, planted in a big semicircle as a gesture against the precise rows of palms and cocoa trees, and caladiums by the score. Then we have a little red bush rose which flowers all the time and grows more easily and quickly than any other plant I know. A very lovely strain of amaryllis we found growing around the old house. The bulbs were moved and these now flower around December and January. In fact one of their local names is 'Christmas Lily'. Another little plant which was flowering when we arrived and self-seeds with great vigour is *Torenia fournieri*, a pretty pansy-like flower in violet and pale blue.

Our nearest neighbour is a Roman Catholic mission station where one of the sisters is an ardent gardener. She has nurtured many delicate plants, and those not really suitable for the tropics, among them a hydrangea which bore a blue flower. She gave me some gladioli bulbs which I planted in the shade of one of the rose bushes. They now flower each September and are multiplying all the time.

That favourite among London office pot-plants, the 'Wandering Sailor' or *Tradescantia*, grows wild here in several varieties. For sentiment I transplanted some to the garden where they showed unwonted temperament but eventually decided to cooperate. The uncleared bush is filled with enchanting ferns, and myriad small green plants with leaves of all shapes and sizes. Many I have tried to domesticate with little success. An exception is one of the tree ferns which has grown two new fronds since being transplanted.

Orchids, on the other hand, are different - they transplant with great ease. First, find your orchid. It is generally growing about 50 ft in the air. Remove it carefully from the tree, select a suitable host tree in the garden (in our case a coconut palm) and tie the orchid on to the trunk. Very soon the aerial roots burrow into the bark of the new host. The great majority of tropical orchids are epiphytes and do not harm the tree they grow on. Our native orchids flower with great abundance. They are not very colourful, but one of the most common throws long spikes of pale cream feathery flowers with a delicate perfume, and about eighteen such spikes from one plant makes a wonderful display.

The beautiful bird wing butterflies, some with eight inch wing spans, give a charming mobile bonus to any garden. They are particularly fond of our bauhinia tree and when this is covered with its pink orchid-like flowers the butterflies flutter over it in their hundreds. The most common male butterfly has velvety wings shading from indigo to cobalt with a bright yellow body. A most rare one has wings of a bright electric blue. These butterflies shine in the sun like flying jewels. The females are somewhat drab, but no less large nor, in their way, attractive, having patterned wings in brown and fawn on cream.

When sitting at leisure we often marvel at the beauty of the green lawn dotted with palms and hibiscus against the glowing backdrop of blue sea and sky. I feel sure that Capability Brown would approve the vista although it is in a strange and far-away place.

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**HELP WANTED:** Joshua Bell, an anthropology Ph.D student at Oxford, is looking at **social change in the Purari Delta of PNG's Gulf Province**. He wrote, 'This project is historical in scope. Therefore I am looking for former patrol officers, staff of the Australasian Petroleum Company and any others who may have spent time in the Purari Delta and/or the western section of the Gulf Province (Kikori, Urama, Era River) from the 1940s to the '70s. Particularly, I am interested in personal recollections about the region and its inhabitants, as well as photographic collections of the area. The post-World War II period was a time of tremendous change for the Delta and I am looking for different perspectives that will shed light on these shifts.... I have come across the following names of Patrol Officers - **Francis P. Robb (Patrol Officer 1947), C.T. Healy (District Officer 1947-8), Ian A. Holmes (Patrol Officer 1947-8), F.A. Bensted (a/District Officer 1948)** ... Any information regarding these men's careers would be appreciated.' Joshua will be in the Purari Delta until 30 Sept. 2002. Please write to him at: Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Old Canberra House, Lennox Crossing, Building 073, Aust.Nat.Univ., ACT 0200. Mail will be held; on his return he will contact people.

**HELP WANTED:** Dr Helen Aquart of Artarmon NSW wrote, 'I would be very interested to hear from anyone who knew of, or heard of, **A GERMAN WHO WAS TRAVELLING BY CANOE AROUND THE SOUTH COAST OF NEW BRITAIN PRIOR TO WWII**. I have been researching a cargo cult in the Pomio district of East New Britain where this man has now become part of the local folklore. I need to find out who he was or whether he really did exist. The National Maritime Museum have traced the journey of Oskar Speck, a German who kayaked around the mainland of PNG on his journey to Australia, but it does not appear that Speck went to New Britain. Any stories/information on any Germans, in any canoes, at any time, would be greatly appreciated.' Please contact: Dr Helen Aquart, 501A Pacific Highway, Artarmon NSW 2064. Ph (AH) 02 9428 1873, Mobile 0407 462 144, Email: haquart@bigpond.com

**HELP WANTED:** New member, John Plunket, wrote, 'My uncle **Sydney George LAWRENCE** was Depot Manager for Burns Philp at Kieta on Bougainville from 1939 to Jan. 1942. He left Kieta following the Japanese invasion with a small group of friends on a lugger. They eventually reached Moresby by sailing along the coast and only sailing at night to avoid capture. I would like to contact anyone who knew of the journey.' John is at: Ph 03 9876 1774, Fax 03 9879 9652 or 37 Enfield Avenue, Park Orchards Vic 3114

**HELP WANTED: History of AGRICULTURAL CENSUSES/SURVEYS, 1945-62.**

Robin Hide is writing an account of some of the censuses and surveys of village agriculture that were done in PNG between 1945 and 1962. These include a 1945 survey of agriculture by Col. J.K. Murray, the sample study by Conroy and Bridgland for the 1947 National Nutrition Survey, the 1950 Census of Native Agriculture, the 1958-62 Survey of the Status of Agriculture, and the 1961-62 Census of Agriculture. He would like to hear from anyone with recollections of any of these surveys, in particular the two national censuses of 1950 and 1961-62 (both designed in relation to FAO World Censuses of Agriculture) which involved many field staff (didimen and kiaps) in data collection in villages throughout the country, as well as planners in Moresby and Canberra. He is especially interested in locating any surviving original documentation of the Murray survey, and of the original data forms (or copies of them) of the 100 village sites included in the 1961-62 Census (none seem to have survived in the Moresby or Canberra archives). Robin Hide is at: 7 Toms Crescent, Ainslie, Canberra, ACT. 2602. (phone 61 + (0)2-6247-7776) Email: rhide@coombs.anu.edu.au

*VALE - With deep regret we record the passing of the following members and friends -*

**Wendi Roberta CHOULAI** (10 November 2001, aged 47 years)

Wendi Choulai was the daughter of Mary English of the Solien clan of Papua and Bruno Choulai, a carpenter of Chinese and New Ireland descent. Bruno owned a trade store and with the help of his close friend Sir John Guise moved his family to Port Moresby. There he became a successful businessman and decided to send 8-year-old Wendi to Australia for an education. At the age of 18 she returned to Port Moresby and worked in her father's business, eventually becoming managing director of Choulai & Company. There she met David Tenenbaum who was to become her lifelong partner. Their son Aaron was born in 1982.

Wendi enrolled in a tertiary design course at the National Art School and was the first female graduate in textile design in PNG. She started PNG Textiles which enabled herself and other design graduates to produce work commercially and to exhibit. Wendi represented PNG at the Commonwealth Arts Festival in Edinburgh. In 1989 Wendi and Aaron moved to Australia, followed soon after by David, and she continued to design as a freelancer for Australian textile manufacturers. She undertook a Master of Arts in textile design at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and the art world began to notice her. She presented papers to a number of prestigious gatherings including the National Gallery, Canberra and the Museum of Victoria. She was invited to exhibit at the Asia Pacific Triennial at the Queensland Art Gallery in 1996. Her partner David Tenenbaum wrote, 'Wendi has left behind a substantial body of work and in the fullness of time her artistic contribution to Papuan women in particular, and contemporary indigenous art in general, will be realised.'

Wendi is survived by her partner David Tenenbaum and son Aaron Choulai Tenenbaum.

From an obituary by David Tenenbaum in the *Melbourne Age* 12-11-2001.

**Mr. Bernard WESTMORE** (8 December 2001, aged 91 years)

Bernard died at Caloundra Private Hospital after a long illness. During WWII he was captured in Singapore and later worked on the infamous Burma Railway. As a result his health suffered and he took early retirement (he was classified as TPI by Veterans' Affairs).

Bernard worked for the Department of Education in Port Moresby for 18 years, retiring in 1966. He then became a projects officer at the University of PNG for a year. He married his wife Jean (who also worked for Education) in Port Moresby. Their two sons were born there (both are now medical specialists in Sydney with their own practices). In 1993 Jean arranged for the family's former house boy, Efi G'nuu, to visit Australia. This was Efi's second visit to Australia with the Westmores. Efi stayed at the homes of both sons whom he had babysat many years before. Bernard is survived by Jean, sons Bruce and Ian and three grandchildren.

From Jean Westmore

**Mr Alfred Moxon SIMPSON** (11 November 2001, aged 90 years)

With PNG independence approaching, Moxon Simpson was appointed in 1971 by the then Minister for Territories, Andrew Peacock MHR, to enquire into the superannuation benefits of permanent public servants in PNG. Simpson travelled throughout the Territory meeting with Public Service Association members and others and eventually reported to Peacock on his findings. The Whitlam Government came to office in December 1972 and, to its credit, accepted the recommendations of the Simpson Report, ie that the Australian Government should take over from the PNG Superannuation Board the responsibility of paying superannuation pensions. Permanent public servants were greatly relieved at this decision.

Moxon Simpson, a member of a long-established South Australian industrial family, had a long career in Adelaide as an industrial and business leader. He became a director and later chairman of the family company; one of the company's best-known products was the Simpson washing machine. He married Elizabeth Robson Cleland, daughter of another of Adelaide's early families (Elizabeth is a relative of Sir Donald Cleland). Elizabeth survives him, as does their son Antony and two grandchildren.

From Geoffrey Gray

**Mrs Nancy CLARK** (8 October 2001, aged 82 years)

**Mr Norman CLARK** (27 December 2001, aged 81 years)

Nancy spent her early years with her parents in Uganda. She was educated in England and trained as a nurse at the London Hospital. She was a nursing sister during WWII and saw active service in the Middle East and India until independence there, and also volunteered on the outbreak of the Korean war. On the way to Japan in 1953 she met a soldier who was to become her future husband. After working for a time in England she flew to East Africa and she and Norman were married in Kenya.

Norman grew up in England, did Reserve training in 1938 and was called up in 1939. At war's end he was offered a permanent commission but declined - a decision he regretted. He later rejoined the army and saw service in the Korean war. After a short stint with the British Army on the Rhine he applied and was accepted into the Kings African Rifles. He was diverted to the Kenya Regiment and saw service against the Mau Mau. He left the army in 1958, when he and Nancy were married. He did a veterinary course and later was accepted on contract in PNG in 1962, working for the Department of Primary Industry. He and Nancy remained in PNG until 1983 when they retired to Ravenshoe, Qld. Norman's main interests were books, butterflies and birds - he was very knowledgeable on all three.

From Iain Holder

**Mrs Anna TUZA** (11 August 2001, aged approx. 79 years)

Anna, or Ani as she was known to friends, was born in Western Hungary. Her father was a teacher at the local high school and she grew up in a stimulating environment. Near the end of WWII, with Russian armies approaching, Ani married Frank (Fefe) Tuza, a young doctor who was called up for service. When his unit was ordered to move westward the newly married couple had to go too. At war's end they found themselves in southern Germany, living in camps and other makeshift overcrowded accommodation. Their daughter Anna was born during this difficult period.

Australian immigration teams in Germany encouraged the Tuza family to migrate to Australia. On arrival it transpired that Hungarian medical qualifications were not recognised in Australia, so Fefe accepted a position in the Territory's postwar medical service. The family first went to Buin on Bougainville, and it was there that their second child Jutti was born. Life of the Tuza family in Buin is described by Anna Phillips in her book 'As the Catalina flies'. Further postings were to Sohano, Daru, Lae, Goroka and Port Moresby. Ani, an avid reader, subscribed to a variety of journals and periodicals to keep abreast of world events. Although she herself was still learning English she successfully supervised correspondence lessons for her daughters. Ani was a born homemaker and, whether on outstations or after retirement in Sydney, her home was the centre of her activities. Her husband Fefe predeceased her. She is survived by daughters Anna and Jutti, their husbands Johathan and Paul, and three grandchildren.

From Anna and Jutti

**Mr Kevin Ingleby TOMLIN** (2 June 2001, aged 68 years)

Kevin grew up at Ryde and Parkes NSW, then in 1953 went to Bougainville to work for the Dept of Agriculture, Stock & Fisheries, having gained a Diploma in Agriculture from Wagga. He married Janet Helyar in 1957 - they had four sons. Apart from 6 years on Bougainville, Kevin worked in the Milne Bay area (6 yrs), Port Moresby (5 yrs) and Goroka (5½ yrs) and held the positions of Field Officer, Rural Development Officer (RDO) and District and Regional RDO.

Kevin and family left PNG in 1975 to live at Bateau Bay NSW and then Wamberal NSW. After running a private business for a while, then working as a Coordinator for Adult Education, the call of the wild got the better of Kevin. He completed further study at Hawkesbury and secured work as a private consultant agronomist in China, the Philippines, Malaysia and Papua. He retired to Stuarts Reach NSW and then Tanilba Bay NSW. He loved PNG, where he found 'a life's work, fascinating people and friends, and happiness for which I am eternally grateful.' Kevin is survived by Janet and his sons Aaron, Nicholas, Laurie and Ross and their families.

From Kevin's son, Aaron

**Mrs Barbara Anne BULL** (14 July 2001, aged 70 years)

Barbara was educated in Sydney and became a kindergarten teacher; after teaching for two years in Sydney she was appointed as teacher in charge of a pre-school kindergarten in Lae. While there, she married John in 1958 - Joan and John shared a love of travel and toured extensively in England and Europe, and later Hong Kong and Japan. Their two sons were born in Lae and in 1968 the family moved to Port Moresby. In 1973 they returned to Australia.

Barbara continued her career within the education system, eventually becoming director of the Blacktown Pre-School. Upon retirement the couple went to Wingham NSW where Barbara was able to devote more time to her beloved needlework. She transformed the simplest materials into glorious quilts which gladdened the hearts of those to whom she often gave them. Barbara's health became more worrying so the couple moved to Pine Needles Estate near Gosford. Here Barbara continued to involve herself in her needlework and, although increasingly incapacitated by emphysema, to involve herself in the lives of her boys and their families. Barbara had a great capacity to enjoy life and turn every event into a memorable occasion.

She is survived by her husband John, sons Michael and Andrew, their wives and five granddaughters.

From John Bull

**Mrs Iris SPINKS** (7 October 2001, aged 93 or 94)

Iris Spinks was the widow of the New Guinea Goldfields surveyor Kenneth Spinks who accompanied the Leahy brothers and Jim Taylor on their Wahgi expedition of 1933. Her fiancé Ken went to New Guinea in 1930 to work for New Guinea Goldfields (NGG) at Wau. After the expedition Ken returned to Sydney to marry Iris and to complete his final Surveyors Board examinations. They returned to Wau in early 1934 and lived at Edie Creek where Ken was engaged in routine mine surveying work for NGG. In early 1936 Ken joined the Department of Lands Surveys Mines and Forests under Chief Surveyor C.W.G. (Bill) Fox at Wau. Ken carried out some of the first surveys at Lae and Iris accompanied him.

Ken resigned in early 1939 and went to Malaya where he carried out work on the Thai-Malay border. Ken went straight from New Guinea to Malaya but Iris returned to Sydney and supervised the building of the house in Eastwood where she was to spend the rest of her life from the 50s on. She then joined Ken in Malaya. When the Japanese overran Malaya Iris was evacuated, but Ken, by then in a British Army survey unit, was captured by the Japanese and sent to the Burma railway where he died. The couple had no children, and Iris never remarried.

F. Pratt of Mendi, PNG, who wrote this notice, said he had been doing research in Sydney for Jim Sinclair's latest book *Mastamak*, and only found out that Iris was alive and well after the book had gone to print. He visited her and found her to be very bright and alert, still living on her own and looking after herself. He promised to take her a copy of *Mastamak* when it came out but she passed away peacefully over breakfast on the morning he was to visit her.

From F. Pratt

**Dr Terry SPENCER** (15 February 2002)

Dr Spencer died at Tenterfield NSW. Further details in next issue.

**Mrs Benny HIGHAM** (21 January 2002, aged 80 years)

During service in WWII Benny met her first husband, a RAAF pilot who was subsequently killed. After the war she married Bill Higham, a RAAF navigator, and around 1950 they went to Bulolo to work for Bulolo Gold Dredging for some years before moving to Port Moresby around the mid '50s. She quickly found work with the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and together with Erin Moroney ran the traffic office at the Port Moresby Police Station in Musgrave Street for many years. Later she worked for Steamships Trading Co. Some years ago she and her husband moved to Forster NSW. Bill died around three years ago. There are no survivors.

From E.J. Herbert and M.R. Hayes

**Matron Patricia Clare NOMCHONG** (29 October 2001, aged 76 years)

Patricia Nomchong was the last overseas matron in charge of Nonga hospital (Rabaul) from 1969-1975. During this time she established the first baby creche at a government hospital, to enable married women nurses to return to work.

From Ellen Kettle's book *That They Might Live*

**Mrs Elizabeth Cain GEARY** (21 August 2001, aged 78 years)

Elizabeth Geary was the widow of David James Geary who was Mechanical Equipment Inspector with the Department of Agriculture. The family were in PNG from 1952-59 and lived in Port Moresby, Bereina, Wewak and Rabaul. They had two children. From ROAPNG records

**Mr Noel Edward SOMMERFELD** (12 December 2001, aged 72 years)

Noel, after the sudden death of his wife, June, married Pat Edgar (nee Thick) in 1971. Pat is the only daughter of Jack and Joyce Thick (deceased), well known business residents of PNG. Between them, Noel and Pat have five children and 11 grandchildren. Noel was a hard working, multi-talented person who excelled in all that he attempted. Much loved and sadly missed by all who knew him.

From Allan R. Neilsen

**Mrs Helen Pearl SMITH** (10 September 2001, aged 78 years)

Helen was the wife of Ernest Yarwood Smith (dec'd). She and Ern were together in Rabaul for 13 years before the family was transferred to Wewak where they remained until Independence. Helen was in PNG from 1947 to 1974 - she was a typist/clerk with DDA for 13 years. The couple had four children, Susan, Ross, David and Andrew. ROAPNG records

**Mrs Noela B. ALCORN** (June 2001, aged 66 years)

Noela was the wife of Neil McKay Alcorn (dec'd). She was in PNG from 1961-74 at Rabaul, Kandrian, Talasea, Buka, Kavieng and Lae. She was a secondary school teacher, and a senior tutor at the Univ. of Technology, Lae. The couple had three children, Neil, Meredith and Ross.

ROAPNG records

**Mr David Henry HOUGHTON** (26 October 2001, aged 81 years)

David was in PNG from 1952 to 1975. He was a training engineer with Public Works, based in Port Moresby, but he travelled extensively throughout PNG. His wife Lorraine predeceased him. No further details available.

ROAPNG records

**Mrs Jeanne Gladstone LAMACRAFT** (12 November 2001, aged 83 years)

Jeanne was the wife of Ken Lamacraft, Chief of the Division of Technical Education in PNG from 1957-67. She was an Education Officer, teaching at secondary and technical schools in and around Port Moresby. For a time she was secretary to the Director of Health, Dr Scragg. At one stage she was on secondment to the South Pacific Commission. After she and Ken returned to Australia, Jeanne accompanied her husband on over 20 visits to Japan where they lived with people in various areas while Ken attended conferences and studied educational methods. The couple moved to the Gold Coast in 1984.

ROAPNG records

**Mrs Ellen Agnes EMANUEL** (29 November 2001, aged 83 years)

Ellen Emanuel was the wife of Errol John (Jack) Emanuel, District Commissioner of East New Britain District, who was killed by villagers in August 1971. No further details available.

**Mr David STEVEN** (7 December 2001, aged 75 years)

David went to PNG as a cadet patrol officer in 1949 and served in the Western, Madang, New Britain and Sepik Districts until independence. He is survived by Mary and their children Ruth and Bill.

**Brigadier Ralph Trevelyan ELDRIDGE, OBE** (19 November 2001, aged 84 years)

Brigadier Eldridge's army career spanned 35 years from his entry to Duntroon in 1937 to his retirement in 1972. In 1960 he was promoted to Colonel and served as Army Area Commander of PNG for nearly three years. He was then posted to London as Deputy Chief of the Joint Services Staff. In 1968 he was promoted to Brigadier and in 1969 was posted to PNG as Commander of PNG's Defence Forces. On his retirement in 1972, the *Post Courier* of 14-4-1972 stated, 'His measured approach to the delicate problem of securing the defence of Papua New Guinea utilising the soldiers in the making has been a contribution of some significance. With his impending retirement the Army's loss is also Papua New Guinea's.' He is survived by his wife Betty, two daughters and a son.

From Bill McGrath and M.R. Hayes

**Mr Alfred Richard (Cherry) LANE** (4 August 2000, aged 85 years)

Early in his working life Cherry worked as a medical assistant with the navy and later with the Dept of Health in PNG. He loved the Highlands and settled near Goroka to grow coffee. His wife-to-be, Lorna, joined him there. The family moved to Melbourne when his two children reached high school age - but his happiest days were in Goroka. *The Melbourne Age*, 16-9-2000

**Mrs Marjorie (Badi) Beatrice Mary Smeeton, nee Abel** (14 December 2001, aged 92 years)

Badi Smeeton was the youngest child of Charles and Beatrice Abel of Kwato. Further details in next issue.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

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