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Papua New Guinea is rapidly becoming known as the adventure playground of the world. Divers from America are travelling here to explore the sunken wrecks of World War II, photographers are coming from Europe to capture on film our birds and beasts, speleologists from Australia are coming to find the bottom of so-called bottomless underground canyons, bushwalkers are tackling the famous Owen Stanley Range and young and not-so-young adventurers are running the rapids of our rivers in blow-up rubber boats.

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In May, a major expeditionary rally in specially equipped four-wheel-drive vehicles was organised to traverse some of the roughest terrain in Papua New Guinea. Participants from Germany, Italy, France, Holland and the United States battled across the top of the country for ten gruelling days. Their story starts on Page 5. They, like so many others, have discovered that Papua New Guinea is indeed Adventure Country.

**No. 36 July 1982**

Paradise is published by Air Niugini's Publications Department, PO Box 7186, Boroko, Papua New Guinea (telephone 27 3542; telex NE22225). Printed in Hong Kong by Progressive Printing Agency.

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*Australia* — Murray Publishers Pty Ltd, 152-154 Clarence Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 (telephone (02) 268 9811)

*Hongkong* — Progressive Advertising Agency, 11 Kam Ping Street, Kam Ming Yuen, Rm C, 2nd Fl., North Point (telephone 5-630145-6; telex HX65474PPAAE)

*Japan* — Universal Media Corporation, GPO Box 46, Tokyo (telephone 666-3036; cables 'Unimedia' Tokyo)

*United Kingdom* — Intergroup Communications Inc., 31 Lyncroft Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex (telephone 01-868 9289; cables Pacom Pinner)

## Subscriptions

Annual subscription rates for six airmail issues are:

USA, Europe, UK and Africa  
Kina 23 (\$US35)

Australia, New Zealand, Asia and South Pacific K19 (\$US29)

Papua New Guinea K13

Payment by international bank draft, please.

Please address all correspondence to Paradise, PO Box 7186, Boroko, Papua New Guinea.

Joseph James Tauvasa  
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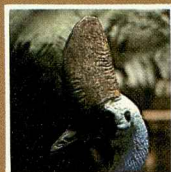
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**Cover:** The most spectacular bird of paradise of all. The Blue Bird of Paradise. Picture by Brian Coates



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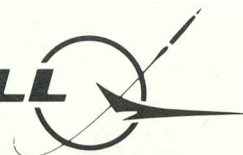
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# ADVENTURE AT THE TOP



Story and pictures by Bob Talbot

**I**N the second last decade of the 20th century, adventures are a rarity. Man has travelled to the four corners of the globe, descended to the depths of the oceans, climbed the highest mountain without oxygen, flown at many times the speed of sound and walked on the moon.

Modern technology has made our world smaller and eas-

ier to survey. Air travel allows us to move from one continent to another in a matter of hours. There are few places left where twentieth century man can experience the thrills of being a pioneer. The highlands of Papua New Guinea is one. In the remote areas of Papua New Guinea, which were first explored by Europeans only thirty years ago, many people still live the

way they have for centuries.

Their traditional cultures have survived the twentieth century untouched.

It's this area which has been chosen for the third annual Camel Trophy. The formula of the Camel Trophy is simple. Men of courage from countries around the world are offered the opportunity to take part in one of the last adventures of our age.

Volunteers are selected through a large scale recruitment programme in Europe and the United States. Teams are made up and with off road vehicles, fully equipped with expeditionary equipment, they are sent out to explore largely unexplored areas.

The legendary Transamazonica in the Amazonas region of Brazil was chosen in 1980 as



the first course for the Camel Trophy. The narrow dust track, full of pot holes, ditches or just mud, is only negotiable during the summer months . . . one thousand miles through the Green Hell.

In 1981 the Camel Trophy was conducted through the jungles of Sumatra . . . one thousand miles across the equator.

In 1982 sixteen different young adventurers, in the same eight fully equipped Range Rovers will tackle the Highlands of Papua New Guinea in a classic twentieth century expeditionary adventure . . . one thousand miles through the Stone Age.

This adventure is not a question of speed but one in which courage, driving skill, a good sense of direction, team spirit, the ability to adapt to local conditions and above all else endurance are in demand.

The best guarantee of successfully completing this expedition is good preparation. All of the competing teams, the Americans, the Dutch, Italians and Germans, have undergone extensive off-road vehicle training, organised by British Leyland in Germany. All of the competitors are amateurs.

The German team consists of a freelance copywriter, a doctor from the University Clinic of Frankfurt, a market researcher and an electronics engineer.

From the Netherlands there is a finance director, a policeman, a department store manager and a market researcher.

Included in the Italian and American teams are a mountain guide, a promotions consultant, a truck driver and former Green Beret, a San Diego policeman and a Los Angeles fireman.



Because scoring for the event is determined on a system of penalty points the team with the lowest number of points will win. Penalty points are awarded for tyre and vehicle damage, "getting stuck" and preventing other vehicles from passing, failing to complete special tasks, exceeding a prescribed maximum time and failing to maintain a predetermined maximum speed.

At 6 a.m. on Friday the sixteen competitors and thirty-five "hangers-on" including officials, a doctor, supply personnel, journalists and photographers gather ready for the commencement of "the event".

The first day has been planned to be relatively easy to allow competitors and crew to ease into the event. The first hitch in proceedings gives an amazing insight into the country and its people. Word reaches Mt Hagen that a group of villagers have blocked the road to Wabag because they've heard that the men in all these cars have come to kill the monster in a nearby lake. A call to the police station in Mount Hagen confirms that there is a legend that if the monster is killed the world will end.

Police are sent to reassure the local people and the event is allowed to commence; a 230 kilometre drive from Mount Hagen up through the Toma Pass to the provincial centre of Wabag.

Saturday sees the rally begin in earnest. The schedule calls for the competitors to complete 113 kilometres in eight hours. A simple division indicates an average of under fifteen kilometres an hour, an indication of the state of the track. Our worst fears were confirmed by a local Enga villager, not known for exaggeration: "You going to Porgera", he said as a smile crossed his face. "Then good luck". The words were meant more as a salutation. In the next ten hours definitions of road conditions were to take on a new meaning.

A bend in the road revealed a group of Enga tribesmen on their way to a sing-sing held to raise money for new equipment at the local school. A villager who said he was a teacher asked us for five kina donation to take pictures. We told him we were making an important film for the government expecting him to waive the charge. A toothy smile split his face from ear to ear. "In that case you'll have to pay 20 kina", he said. "That's what I'm charging the politicians to make their election speeches".

The road down the mountain, through dense rain forest, into Porgera is like a giant granite staircase. Punishing on vehicles and those inside them.

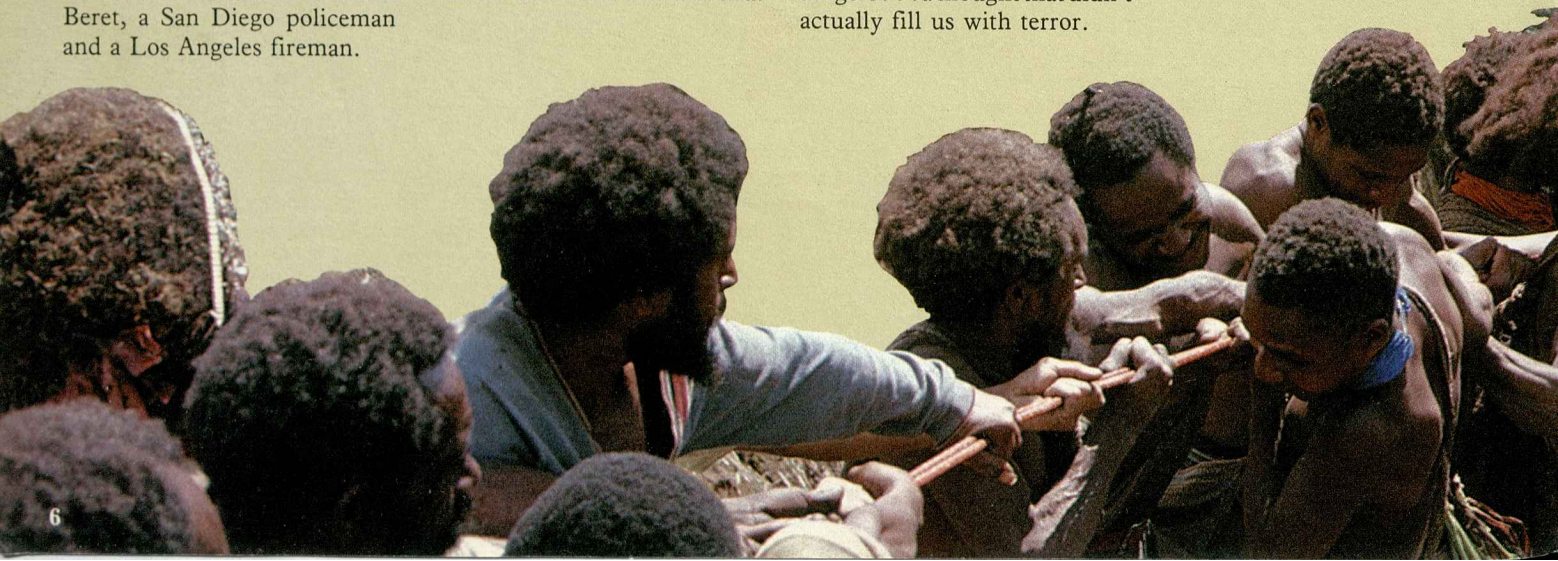
An Australian Army engineer tells us along the way that he's convinced the continuous shaking over the village tracks actually shakes weight off passengers . . . a thought that didn't actually fill us with terror.

He also tells about the history of road making in Papua New Guinea. When the country was a territory under the administration of the Australian Government many of the tracks into remote areas were carved out of the hills by hand. Every villager, man, woman and child, was expected to spend one complete day each week maintaining the roads. In many of the more remote areas this practice is still continued today.

At the end of this road there's the township of Porgera, bigger than you expect due to the condition of the track. Like many villages throughout Papua New Guinea, the main form of transportation is by air and at Porgera an airstrip bisects the town. Twenty minutes away there's a mining settlement which guarantees progress for the town and its people.

Many areas of the Highlands are deluged by an annual rainfall well in excess of four hundred inches. Fortunately for the competitors, this year has been uncharacteristically dry. In a dry condition the tracks are difficult, uncomfortable and slow; in the wet they are impassable, even with a four-wheel drive vehicle.

The following day the convoy backtracks up the hill and heads for Kandep. The 123 kilometre journey will take about twelve hours as the convoy climbs to a height of 3000 metres. In the process an Italian photographer will allow his borrowed truck to plunge 100 metres off the road to be saved from certain destruction by dense rain forest, the engine of a service vehicle will internally







inside half an hour almost three hundred men and boys have gathered around the green truck with a length of rope and a tide of enthusiasm. The rope is tied around the eye bolt at the front of the truck which the manufacturer mercifully put there for just such an occasion. Then begins an amazing tug-a-war with a green monster and a sea of red on one end and two hundred chanting villagers on the other.

The rhythmic chant of the locals and the high pitched, low gear revving of the truck fills the air as it slews this way and that through the clinging red mud. The noise stops, the truck seems hopelessly bogged; worse than before. Groups of young boys and women with arms full of rocks begin sinking stones in the mud around the four wheels. This task done, the men on the rope regroup and the job begins again. The chanting starts afresh. The men put their backs into the rope, the chanting reaches a crescendo as the truck lurches drunkenly forward, slowly at first then faster. The tempo of the chants increase as does the forward speed of the truck. Suddenly the front wheels bite into hard ground and the truck catapults forward scattering the villagers in all directions. They stand around and cheer and laugh as the cook thanks them and then they dis-



haemorrhage and thirty seven tyres will be punctured and repaired. The going is getting tough and it's going to get tougher.

The next stage is 100 kilometres from Kandep to Tari. The first twenty kilometres takes competitors across a swampy area which is usually covered by a half metre of water. The unseasonal dry means the swamp is not a problem and the first 56 kilometres are uneventful.

Then a sudden shower of rain demonstrates the capacity of the weather to dramatically change the road conditions. With forty-four kilometres still to go to Tari the track on a red clay slope is turned into a quagmire. The heavily laden food supply truck which left Kandep long before everyone else is the first casualty. Without warning the cook finds his truck bogged to the axles. Then follows a rare insight into the character of the villagers in the remote parts of the Highlands. From hill top to hill top the word goes out and







**Right:** Overnight stop at Lake Kapiago; **above:** Italian team driver negotiates one of more than two hundred bridges on the Lake Kapiago section; **above right:** German crewman barter for a bilum

appear back into the bush as quickly as they'd appeared.

In Tari, which has become the headquarters for a giant American oil drilling project we meet a former patrol officer, Englishman Ben Probert. Ben is one of the few European patrol officers left in the country. At the time of independence the Europeans were replaced by Papua New Guineans. Ben remained on as a district officer to assist the local council in the administration of the province.

He tells us that many of the local people are suspicious of all these cars driving around the area just for the fun of it. To the local people the prospect of driving around the country-side, particularly on these roads, just



for the fun of it is insane.

He recalls the difficulty he had explaining to the local people why he took a daily five mile walk. "They couldn't understand that someone would walk for five miles just for the hell of it", he said. "So they wouldn't think I was crazy I would tell them that I was going to London Airport". "Now when I'm out walking I'm often greeted by someone asking me if I'm off to London Airport".

Ben Probert is a great lover of the local people and has a deep

understanding for them and their intellect.

He explains that the much talked about tribal fighting in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea is usually centred around the satisfaction of a point of honour and is never directed at Europeans. He says that in most cases the warriors fight with blunted arrows aimed more at scaring off opponents rather than killing them.

The route the following day takes us deep into the jungle. It is one hundred kilometres over a



little used track to Lake Kapiago. The locals say that only three vehicles a week use the track. It is impossible to travel at speeds exceeding 20 kph. Even then it is grossly uncomfortable as you slide around like beans in a rattle. Frequent stops are made to repair the crude timber bridges along the way.

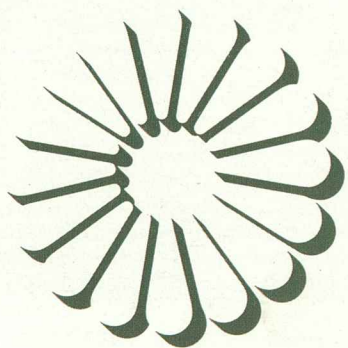
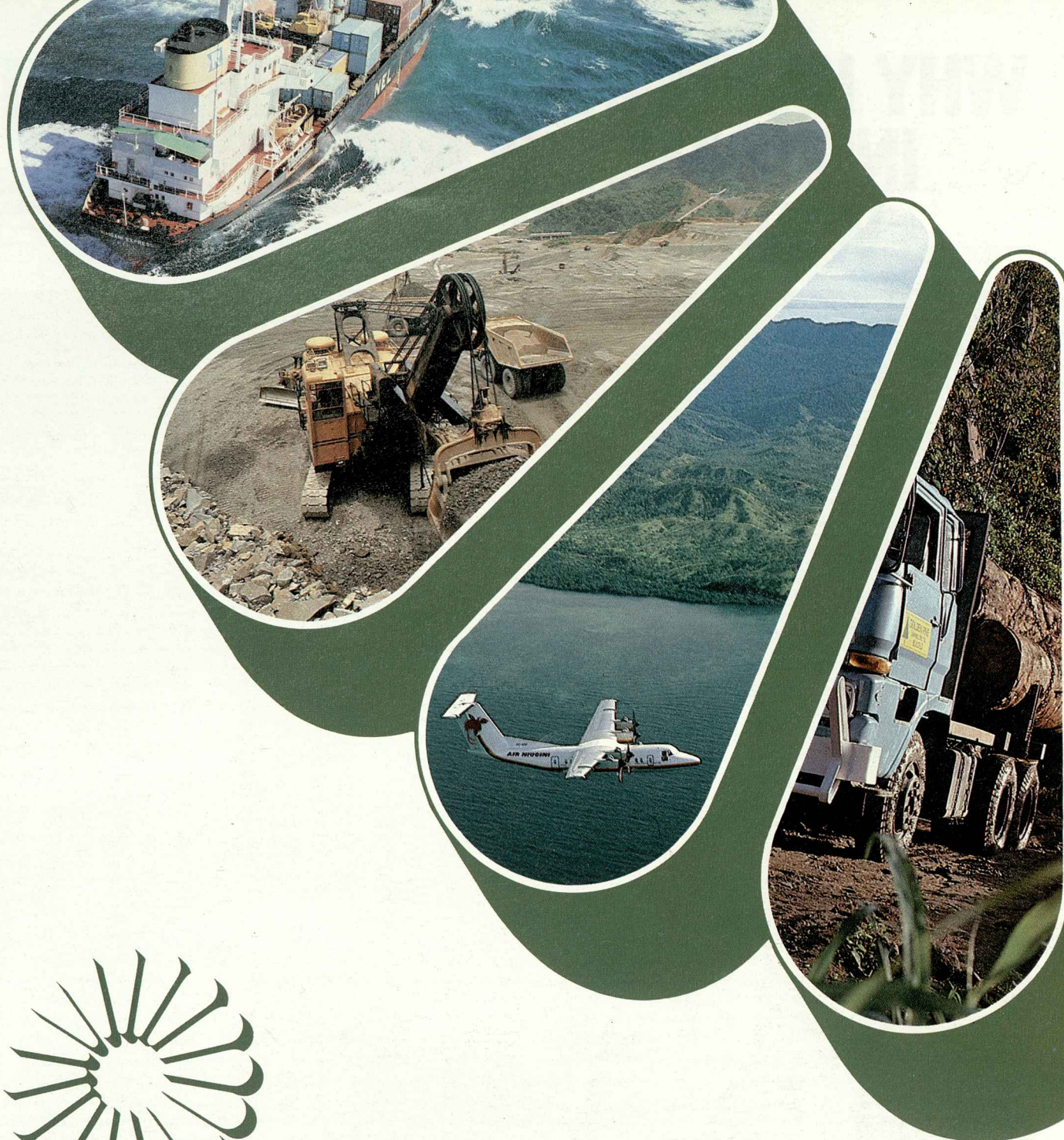
The Catholic missionary at Lake Kapiago tells us that the bridges are built by villagers to withstand twenty or thirty passes before needing attention. The infrequent use of the road they feel doesn't warrant extra attention. On this section of the road two of the competing cars will have their front suspension destroyed and one will roll over.

Now the resilience of the vehicles and their crews is being tested. Lack of sleep and good food compounds the stress of the event. One of the Dutch competitors is flown to hospital in Mount Hagen after injuring his leg in an accident. Meanwhile the competitors work late into the night to repair their broken cars ready for the following day.

Like every epic adventure the real pleasure for the participants comes in the re-telling. After ten days scrambling across one of the world's last wilderness adventure lands the crews will travel home with the story of a lifetime.

Meanwhile the people in the remote villages still talk about the men who drove one thousand miles over the rocks and mud across the top of Papua New Guinea "just for the hell of it". As Ben Probert says "You can't blame them for thinking we're bloody silly".





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# A CHIP OFF THE BLOCK

By Dennis Richardson

**T**HE natural forests of Papua New Guinea are havens for some of the most highly prized and sought after speciality woods in the world.

Of more than 200 different kind of trees in the country 30 species are exported to the four corners of the globe, often for exotic purposes.

Some of the species which seldom appear in PNG commerce are among the most highly prized.

The most famous, sandalwood, is not really a proper tree at all. It is in fact a parasite living on the roots of other trees. As a result it never grows to big sizes. Even in the days before it

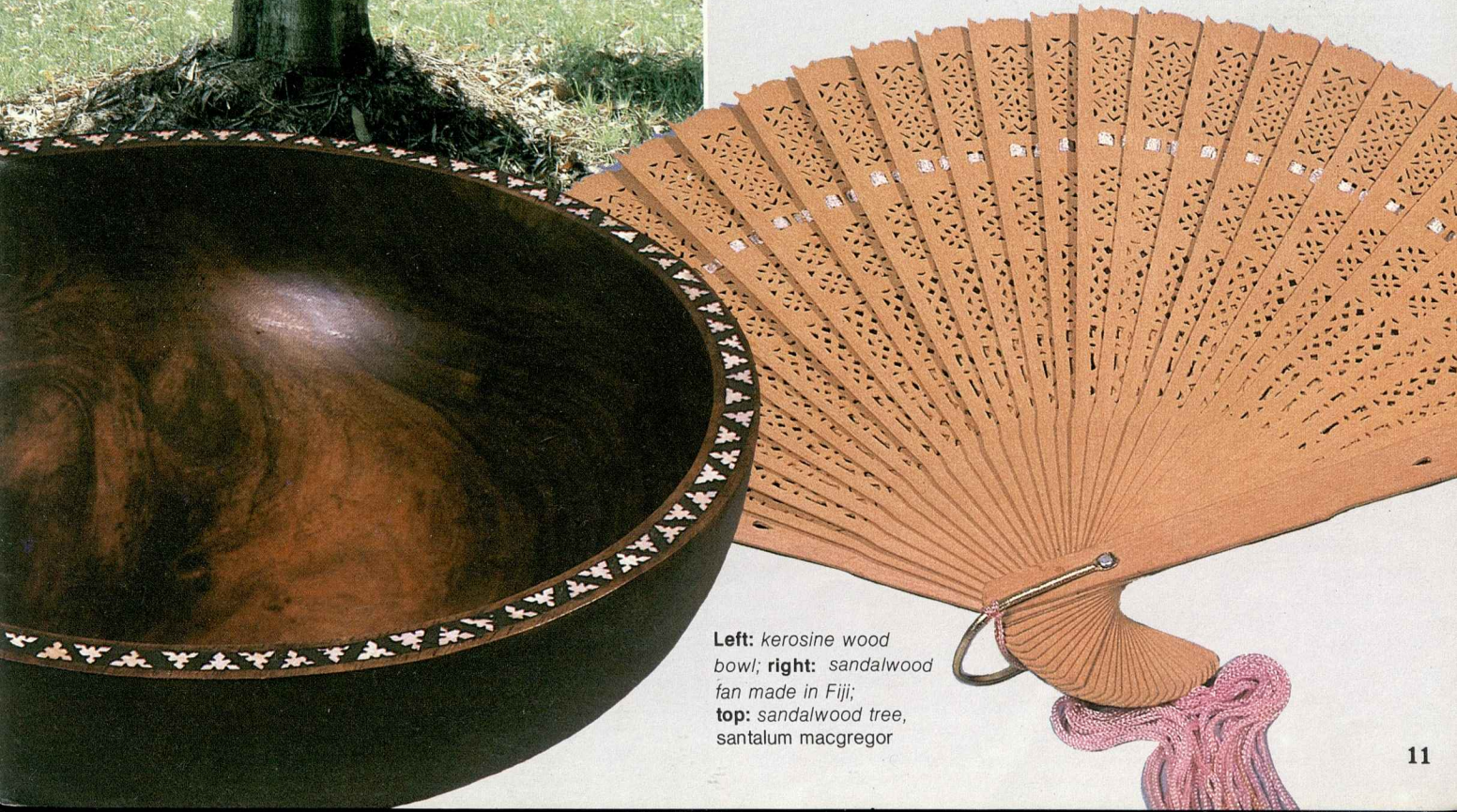
became rare and valuable, a sandalwood trunk rarely grew to a height of more than 8 metres and perhaps 60 cm in diameter.

Nowadays a small piece of sandalwood one third that size is a rare prize.

Sandalwood changed the course of Pacific history. The exquisite perfume which comes from the oil in its slow-growing heartwood formed the base of incense burned by Buddhists in India and China.

India had her own sources of precious wood but the Chinese had none. From the sixth century Arab and Persian merchants carried sandalwood to China from India and the East Indies to be traded for fine silks and tea.

In the fifteenth century they



Left: kerosine wood bowl; right: sandalwood fan made in Fiji;  
top: sandalwood tree, *santalum macgregor*



were joined by Portuguese, Dutch and English merchant venturers.

The substitution in the late 18th century of beer by tea as the national drink of the English and even the Australians called for drastic measures to replace scarce gold as the currency of the China tea trade.

The English solved their problem by trading with raw cotton and opium from India.

The Australians began trading with sandalwood, which had been discovered in the Pacific Islands.

From around 1820 until the 1850's the sandalwooders descended on the islands like a plague, ushering in the iron age, guns, hard liquor, missionaries and blackbirders.

As this happened traditional cultures were destroyed. Papua New Guinea played no part in the early sandalwood trade. Consequently there are still a few small trees remaining. Every year between five and ten tonnes of the wood is exported, fetching up to K1000 per tonne.

Sandalwood, which grows best in the open savannah-type country around Port Moresby, is still much in demand for the production of incense for carving sweetly scented fans and boxes.

Not quite so rare, but becoming so, is the regal ebony of the Milne Bay Province. Ebony is heavy, hard and durable.

The jetblack "King" ebony is traditionally the wood for high quality woodwind instru-



**Left:** Rain trees in Lae and (below) a table top exhibits the contrasting grain of a rain tree trunk

ments, piano keys, billiard cue butts, chessmen, dominoes, Japanese "go" buttons, brush back and marquetry. "Queen" ebony, with narrow red, brown or even green stripes, yields and attractive furniture wood and veneer.

Both varieties are in demand by the most skilled carvers in the Woodlark and Trobriand Islands. The world's best known ebony carvings come from the island of Bali in Indonesia.

Technically, ebony has little to recommend it. It quickly blunts cutting tools, it requires meticulous and slow drying to prevent warping and splitting, and it has no natural sheen so it requires regular polishing.

However, to these highly skilled craftsmen, the difficulties and the promise of an end result that can't be achieved with any other material provide the incentive.

In the Island Provinces of West and East New Britain and New Ireland and in the neighbouring Solomon Islands the preferred timber species for carving is commonly known as "kerosine wood". Its botanical name is *Cordia*. It is easier to work than ebony, is stable and can display a beautifully patterned grain. Appropriately the



island carvers have made the sculptures of fish and sea birds their own particular totems.

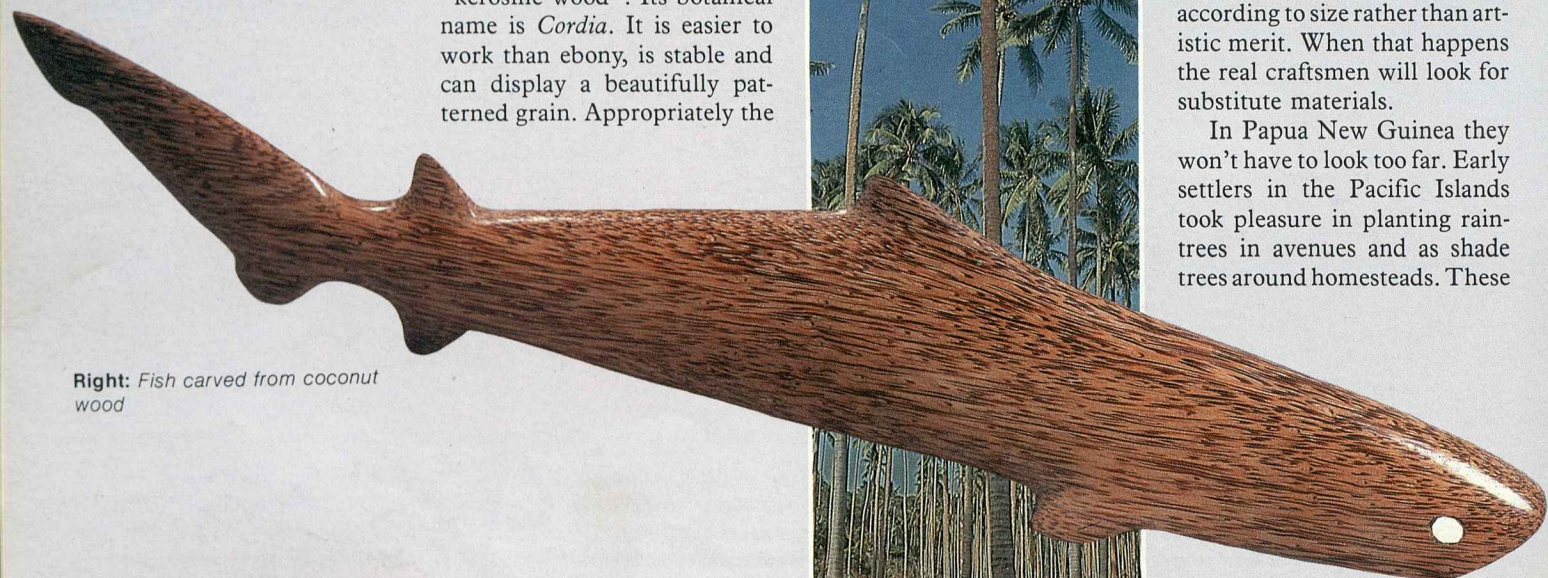
How long this can continue remains open to question. *Cordia* is a tree of the sea shore and does not grow to a large size. Because of its popularity with carvers it is now being cut more quickly than it is growing. There is no re-planting.

In the Solomon Islands the growing shortage of supply is reflected in the rapidly rising prices being commanded by wood carvings. The time is approaching when "kerosene wood" artifacts will be priced according to size rather than artistic merit. When that happens the real craftsmen will look for substitute materials.

In Papua New Guinea they won't have to look too far. Early settlers in the Pacific Islands took pleasure in planting rain-trees in avenues and as shade trees around homesteads. These



**Right:** Fish carved from coconut wood





Items made from ebony (left and right) ornament and wand from the Trobriand Islands; carved figure from the Woodlark Islands; high quality clarinet made in Europe



the rich heartwood and the pale outer ring of the sapwood survives the ravages of time.

Another common tree in Papua New Guinea, and one used for decorative artifacts in other countries is the multi-purpose Mango. It is grown in

many areas for its value as a producer of fine fruit, the best of which are to be found on the islands of New Guinea. On the mainland it could find its most valuable use as a carving wood.

The humble, ubiquitous coconut is also likely to come

early plantings are now mature and, although in Papua New Guinea little use is made of the wood, in Fiji and Hawaii multi million dollar furniture and artifact industries are based on it.

It is a very stable wood, easily worked and polished. Table tops formed of discs cut from the trunk or larger branches of the rain tree will not distort or crack, even if transported from a humid tropical atmosphere to much drier climates. The marked contrast between



Mortar carved from the heartwood of the mango tree



in for its share of attention from traditional carvers. Although it is not generally thought of as a decorative wood, coconut stems have been carved by Balinese artists for at least four hundred years.

The virtual disappearance of traditional ebony from Bali has triggered the revival of an interest in the humble coconut, an interest which is spreading



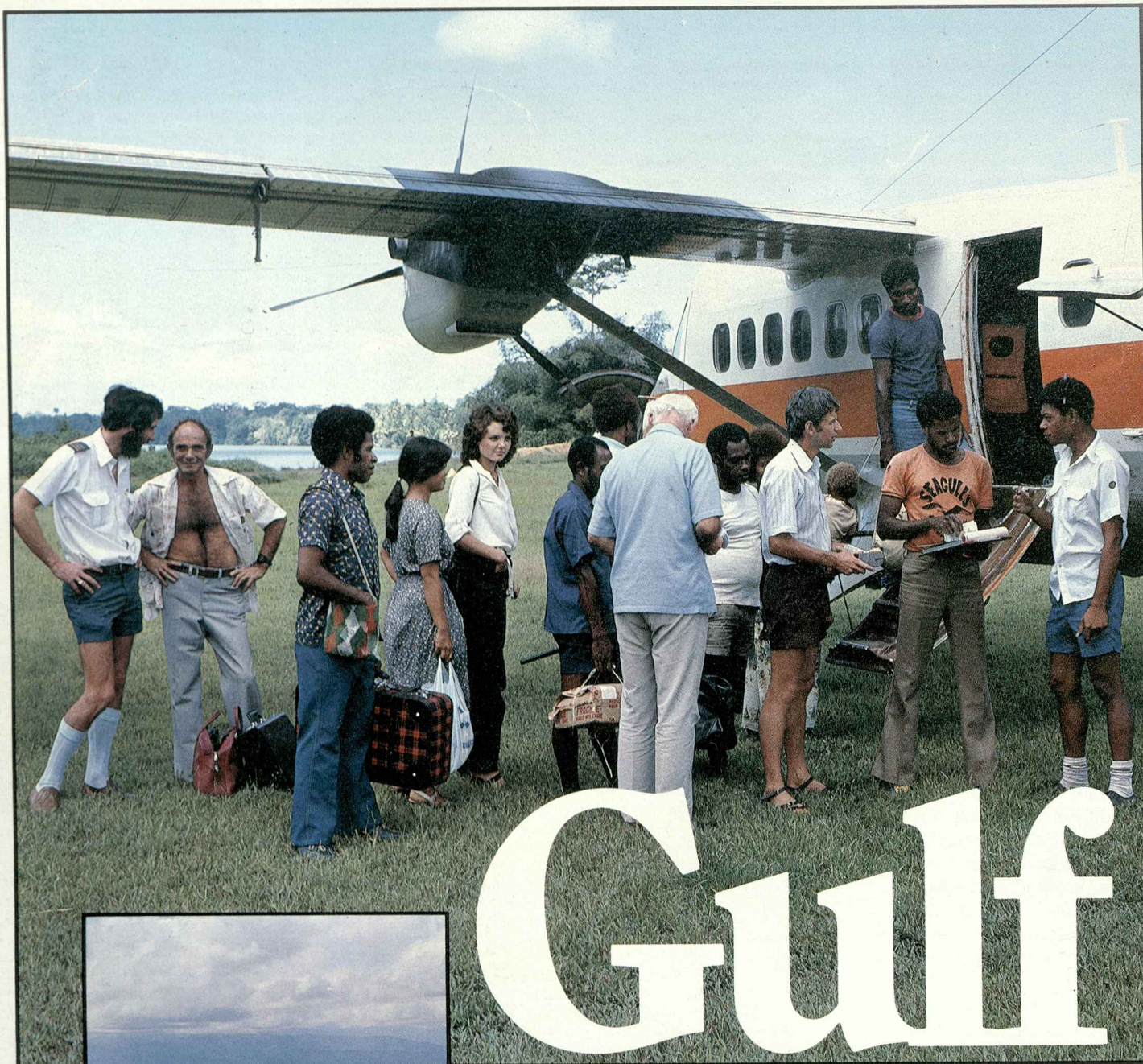
throughout the Pacific Islands.

In Papua New Guinea there are economic pressures on coconut farmers to replace over-mature coconut stems by more highly productive hybrid varieties.

The old stems cannot be left in the plantations to rot because they serve as breeding grounds for the destructive rhinoceros beetle. The discarded coconut stems must be burned, buried or used. To see them re-cycled through the artistry of local craftsmen is a pleasing prospect.

As new materials are introduced the fine quality work produced by local artesans from the rapidly dwindling supplies of specialty woods such as ebony will become increasingly difficult to obtain. — Professor Dennis Richardson is the Head of the Forestry Department at the PNG University of Technology in Lae





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# CASSOWARY

By Mark J. Rauson

A low resonant booming froze us in mid-stride. We had heard this jungle cry at dawn in the distance but now it was close by. As we plunged into the shadows of the rainforest we could hear a heavy crashing ahead of us.

In the soft earth were tracks which might have been made by a small dinosaur. They were surrounded by droppings, purple with cast fruit skins and seeds. But once again the flightless cassowary had eluded us.

This shy bird wants nothing to do with humans and will flee the moment it senses their presence. But if cornered it may turn and fight effectively with powerful kicks from its long, sturdy legs.

Before we began our search, we were told of a ruse to employ if we accidentally found ourselves confronted by an angry cassowary. We practised raising one hand above our heads to produce a crude silhouette, attempting to make ourselves appear to be an even larger (albeit clumsier) bird than any irate cassowary we might run into. Perhaps it's best we didn't stumble into one as we had little confidence in our ability to achieve bird-like silhouettes.

The cassowary is the largest and heaviest warm-blooded animal found in the rainforests of New Guinea and Australia. Reptiles, which cannot control their internal temperature, thrive in the warmth of the New Guinea jungle and grow large enough to prey on young cassowaries. But only humans prey on adult cassowaries.

Cassowaries are grouped with those large running birds known as ratites and share the order Casuariformes with emus and the now-extinct moas of New Zealand which grew to heights of greater than three metres. (Ostriches of the African savannah, rheas of the American pampas and kiwis of wooded New Zealand are not related to the Casuariformes.)

The cassowary differs from all other ratites in the adapta-

tions it has undergone to cope with the Australasian rainforest. In this scarcely penetrable environment, prowess in speed is usually impossible. Consequently the cassowary has lost the stunted wings still found in other ratites which act as rudders when quick turns are necessary. The cassowary is left with only vestigial wing quills and feathers resembling fur.

These birds readily take to crossing lakes and streams. They may be seen with only their heads above water, powerfully kicking their way along. Their leg strength is their main means of defence. Well-directed kicks, aided in no small way by the cutting action of a stiletto-like inner claw, can easily



The most common is the lowland double-wattled cassowary, identified by its bright blue and red neck wattles; inset: Bennets cassowary



photo: Brian Coates



**Right:** Cassowary on the move;  
**inset:** Cassowary bound in fencing  
 for ceremonial use at sing sing;  
**bottom:** Ornamentation, topknot  
 and bone dagger

disembowel a human.

Another adaptation is a horny helmet which the cassowary uses to part the undergrowth as it runs, neck outstretched.

The rugged terrain of New Guinea has isolated animal life, allowing many opportunities for genetic drift and diversion. The island has more than 650 species of birds including three species and 16 sub-species of cassowary.

The most common is the lowland doubled-wattled cassowary (*Casuarus casuarius*), which is identified by its brilliant blue and red neck wattles, knife-like helmet and large size, some adults standing as tall as 1.5 metres. It is found in northern Queensland as well as New Guinea.

The single-wattled cassowary (*C. unappendiculatus*), also a lowland species, resembles the doubled-wattled cassowary but is found only in New Guinea.

The smallest of all cassowaries is Bennet's cassowary (*C. benetti*) which is half the size of *C. casuarius* as a result of its adaptation to the altitudes (more than 3000 metres) through which it ranges in the cloud forest. Bennet's cassowary does not have neck lobes or the exaggerated helmet but it does have the bright blue neck skin of its relatives.

The people of the island of New Guinea have traded the cassowary (which has the pidgin name *muruk*) for thousands of years. It is valuable for its meat, bones and feathers. The meat is a valuable protein source, the bones become weapons and the feathers are used in ceremonial decoration.

The arrival of Westerners last century inflated the value of live cassowaries. Regional administrators and Christian missionaries, attempting to discourage tribal warfare, encouraged a system of exchange to settle disputes and, as this developed, cassowaries came to be regarded as more valuable than pigs.

To obtain cassowaries for

ceremonial use, hunters flush out a brooding male and then gather the chicks which are easily tamed. The juveniles are kept as village pets until they become aggressive. Then they are kept in crude pens.

Lacking protein and sunlight in captivity, the birds are slow to reach maturity. When they do they are usually in a weakened state. Consequently, the low production caused by these poor conditions, results in a failure to meet demand. This factor and vastly increased incomes through coffee production in the highlands have helped to inflate cassowary values.

In 1974 the government est-

ablished the first cassowary farm at Mendi, capital of the Southern Highlands Province, an area of high demand and low supply. Unfortunately captive breeding is proving difficult because of the aggressive nature of the birds.

Management areas have been established to preserve rainforest tracts where populations of cassowaries and other wildlife important to the people's cultural heritage can be protected at least temporarily — Mark Rauson is a wildlife biologist whose interest in subsistence use of wildlife in traditional ways brought him to Papua New Guinea.



photo: Brian Coates



Mark Rauson





# Protection need not be a burden

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photos M. A. Mackenzie

# BACK STAGE

**Bottom:** Bogeya men daub each other with red ochre; **far left:** doing it yourself with ochre

By Maureen MacKenzie

**I**NSIDE the crowded, smokey kunai grass hut bodies appear golden from the glow of the central fire; white shells and bones pierced through nasal septums glimmer from the darkening black corners. Sitting on their haunches the Bogeya people are busy making *bilas* for the next day's singing. Painting bark belts and spears with vibrant red ochre, white lime, yellow from a root like ginger and black carbon from the fire; and weaving intricately patterned armbands from finely-shredded pliable grasses.

It is the first time that these little known people from the southern slopes of the Muller Ranges have ever participated in a singing outside of their own area, and they have walked the three day journey to Koroba in the Southern Highlands to join with the Dunas (to whom they are linguistically related) and Hulis in celebrating the opening of Koroba High School.

Coming from a remote and highly inaccessible area the Bogeyas have had virtually no contact with the western world, and very limited trading access with other groups.

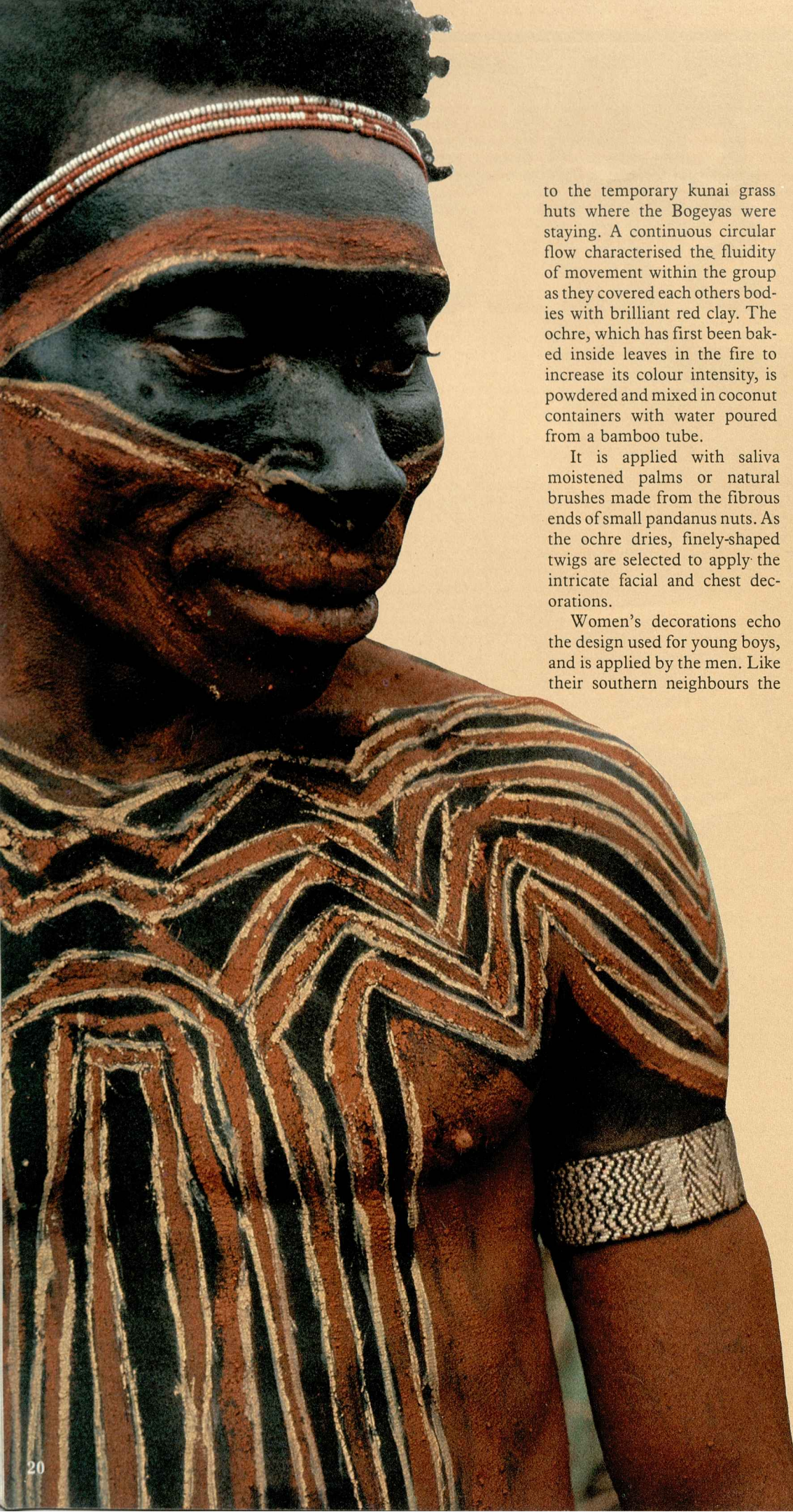
Consequently all their tools and implements for every day life and their materials for body decoration come purely from what is available to them in their natural environment. This provides an interesting contrast with the Hulis who have been subjected to European contact since the 1930's and have adopted, transformed and utilized a wide variety of modern materials in their body decoration.

The early morning mists were still clinging to the valley and a chill breeze filled the air.

Preparation for the singing begins early, and is shrouded in secrecy. I crept tentatively down







**Left:** Extravagance of complete Bogeya body decoration; **right:** delicate yellow ochre added with stick

to the temporary kunai grass huts where the Bogeyas were staying. A continuous circular flow characterised the fluidity of movement within the group as they covered each others bodies with brilliant red clay. The ochre, which has first been baked inside leaves in the fire to increase its colour intensity, is powdered and mixed in coconut containers with water poured from a bamboo tube.

It is applied with saliva moistened palms or natural brushes made from the fibrous ends of small pandanus nuts. As the ochre dries, finely-shaped twigs are selected to apply the intricate facial and chest decorations.

Women's decorations echo the design used for young boys, and is applied by the men. Like their southern neighbours the

Samo and Biami of Western Province, the decorations of the Bogeya women is restricted to two colours—the fine geometric grid lines of yellow hematite on top of the red.

The colours all have symbolic meanings, for example the red ochre in general is used to represent a feeling of well-being, and it is particularly associated with fertility and femininity. By contrast the men use a lot of black.

Many Bogeya men cover their complete face with this thick shiny black pigment obtained from mixing carbon from the fire with pig grease.

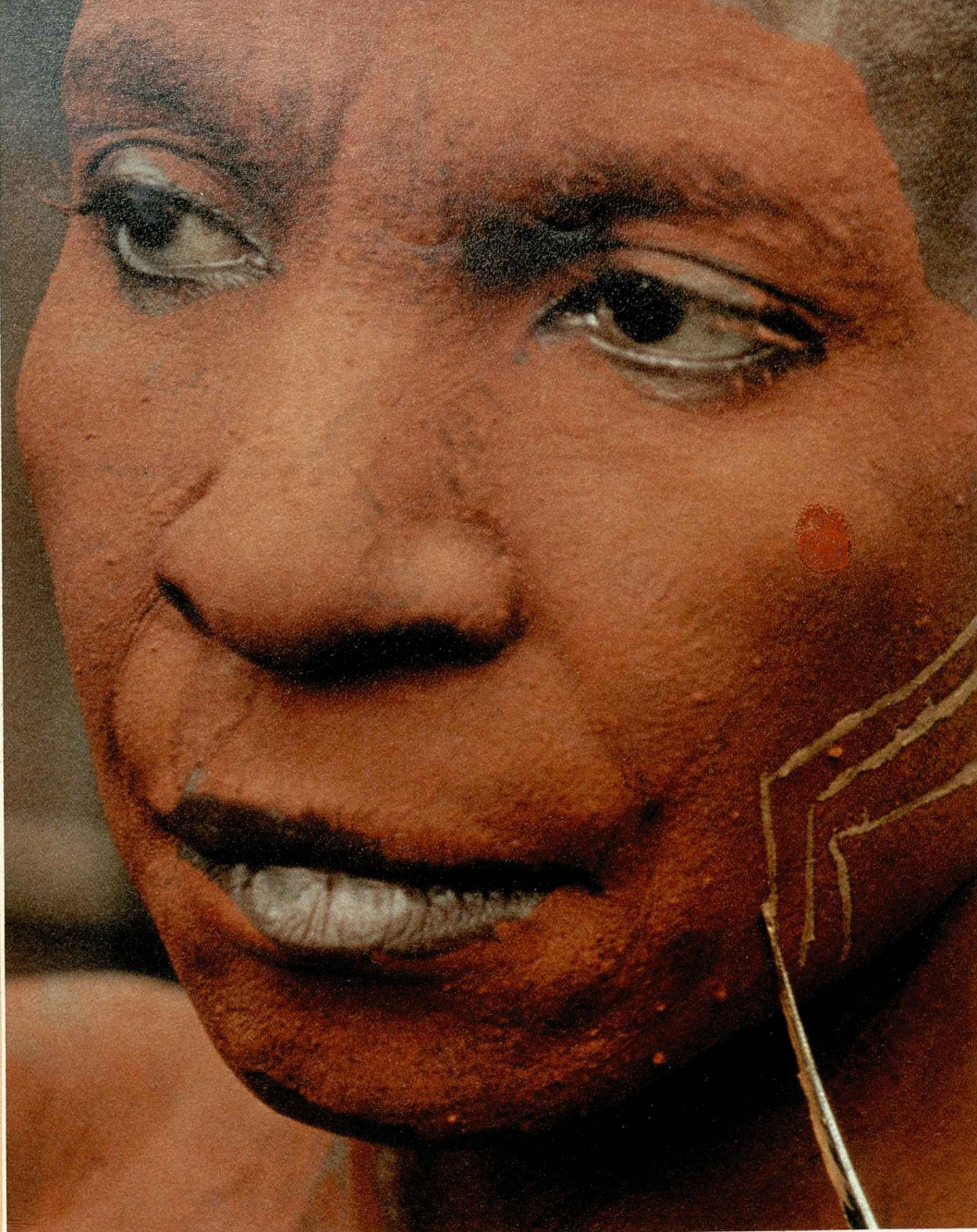
Each man decorates his friend with solid shapes of black around the eyes and nose like a diver's mask, and across the shoulders, chest and knees. These shapes are then outlined in vibrant yellow pigment made from ground-roots mixed with yellow ochre, creating a stunning almost skeletal design which Professor Andrew Strathern suggests may imitate the markings of a snake, which through its ability to shed its skin symbolises rejuvenation.

Headbands of Job's Tears seeds and tiny trade beads (the only material evidence of influence from another culture) are trimmed with possum fur, leaves, sprays of cassowary feathers and in some cases the russet flank plumes of the Raggiana bird of paradise.

Tufts of shredded palm leaves are tucked into the intricately woven armbands and bark belts. The longer, ceremonial bamboo nose plugs (which they consider to be much more attractive than the short, more practical everyday bones) are inserted, contrasting strongly with the blackened shiny skin, and creating a very refined "V" shape to the end of the nose which is stunning despite one's own cultural understanding of beauty.

No detail is overlooked, and in contrast to mirror orientated societies which focus on the front of the body, the Bogeya finally bilas each other's backs





**Below:** *Superb bird of paradise;*  
**bottom:** *Bogeya men put the finishing touches before the sing sing begins*



with tiny bilums (string bags) woven talismans to which are attached the full plumage of both russet and golden Raggianas, the luminous blue breast plumes from the superb bird of paradise and the delicate frond-like tail feathers from the King bird of paradise.

Cassowary quills trimmed with a single red seed and white cockatoo feather add another dimension to the visual spectacle, that of kinetic art as they quiver whenever the dancers move.

As the Bogeyas practise their dancing, hopping up and down to the rhythmic pounding of their kundu drums there is a marked resemblance in physical appearance and movement to the male Raggiana in full courtship display.

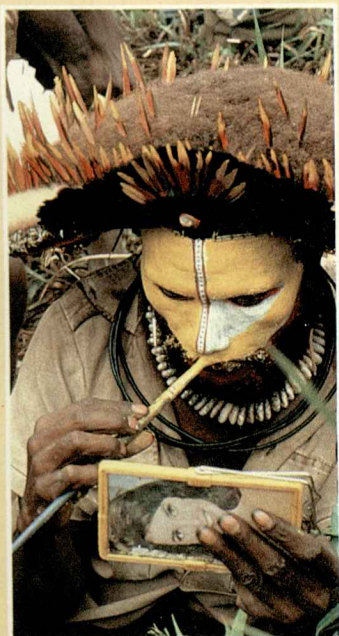
Bogeya aesthetics, like their culturally related neighbours the Samo, considers the Raggiana bird of paradise the most beautiful creature in the forest, and it inspires such awe and respect during its courting display that plume hunters are mesmerised and cannot shoot them. Similarly the Bogeya dancers with their elaborate body ornamentation, command awe and respect from those who view them.

Meanwhile, across the *kaukau* patch, over the thin log bridge which straddles the boggy stream, and behind the leafy glade there opens out a clearing in the wild *piipit* grass where 20-30 men and boys from Pureni Village are concealed from all passing eyes. Sitting and squatting, their sepulchral white faces topped with beautifully





**Clockwise from right:** *Pureni wigmen with full bilas ready for sing sing; young village girl Rose is made up by her uncle; chief Pareni dancer applies complex facial make-up with the help of a broken mirror; a "star" in the making*



decorated wigs give a surrealist-ic appearance.

As a woman I am particularly privileged to watch their ritualistic dressing, and I am fascinated by the intensity of their concentration and the sacrosanct feeling which pervades the clearing. I discover that the white facial covering is in fact an undercoat of white emulsion house paint which the Hulis use to make the top coat of yellow powdered pigment brilliant to a point of luminosity.

In contrast to the Bogeyas the Hulis have had access to many new materials, and like the house paint they adopt and use things from the west in a truly unique way.

They prefer the brighter colours of the commercial powdered artificial pigments; and as they aim ultimately for brilliance they no longer use any traditional earth pigments but have adopted the three basic primary colours red, yellow and







high pitched shrilling rings out across the valley in waves and an almost visible energy force field spreads with it from the Hulis as they leave their little clearing and make their way to the singing ground.

I am met by Ruth, a Duna girl who leads me excitedly to another leafy grotto.

At first I can see only bush; then there is a movement and I am confronted with a luminous yellow face, highlighted with red and white spots, just shining out from the green. It stops me in my tracks for it is Rose, a young schoolgirl from Koroba, and amidst hushed whispers and the greatest secrecy her uncle is adding the finishing touches to her bilas. It is the first time I have seen a female decorated in this way.

Her body glistens with a covering of Tigaso tree oil traded from the lowlands around Lake Kutubu, giving her skin a healthy shine which is a mark of beauty in Highland aesthetics. Her arms are crossed protectively over her breasts as she dances down to join the men, jumping feet together and throwing her feet slightly apart as she lands.

After hours of preparation the Hulis run into the arena proceeded by their loud shrilling — an explosion of colour and individuality within the group solidarity. By contrast the self-conscious Bogeyas hang back in a homogenous mass.

The dancers are ready to begin — *Maureen MacKenzie is affiliated to the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and is researching contemporary and traditional body decoration* ✨

blue, creating strong colour contrasts in their facial designs. A slash of red with white dots across a solid yellow face, stunning velvety blue lips.

The availability of mirrors has also had a marked effect in that by contrast to the Bogeyas each Huli man is now responsible for his own decorations. This has led to an expression of individuality within the predetermined tribal tradition, and there is almost a sense of competition to produce the most stunning design.

The men work intently with almost narcissistic pride and ac-

curacy, in marked contrast to the carefree group activity of the Bogeyas. Red and yellow are the predominant colours of Huli facial decoration and these are echoed in the exuberant sprays of red and yellow paraquet feathers, the yellow everlasting daisies (cultivated solely for their decorative value), the red trade store bead necklaces and the russet and golden flank plumes of the Raggiana bird of paradise which top their downturned everyday wigs.

Like the Bogeya the Huli are concerned with decorating every part of themselves. Bone

daggers are inserted into their armbands, three aprons are attached over their pubic area, the *dambale* woven knee length apron, the *pupai* of knotted bush string and orchid stems and finally the *nogo ere dambale*, a short ceremonial woven apron decorated with pigs tails. Long mother of pearl and cassowary quill earrings are hung from their ears and around their necks, the gold-lipped kina shells and cassowary quill necklaces decorate the front and the characteristic hornbill beak and pig's tusks adorn their backs.

As they finish decorating a



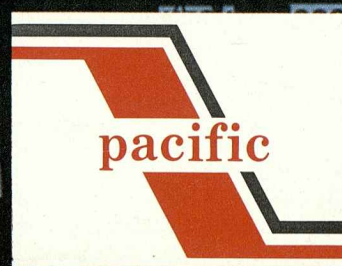
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# SEVEN MILE STRIP

**A**s aircraft stream in and out of Papua New Guinea's main international airport at Port Moresby few of the passengers or crews realise its historical background and the air battles that raged around and above during WWII, when this place was called simply . . . Seven Mile Strip.

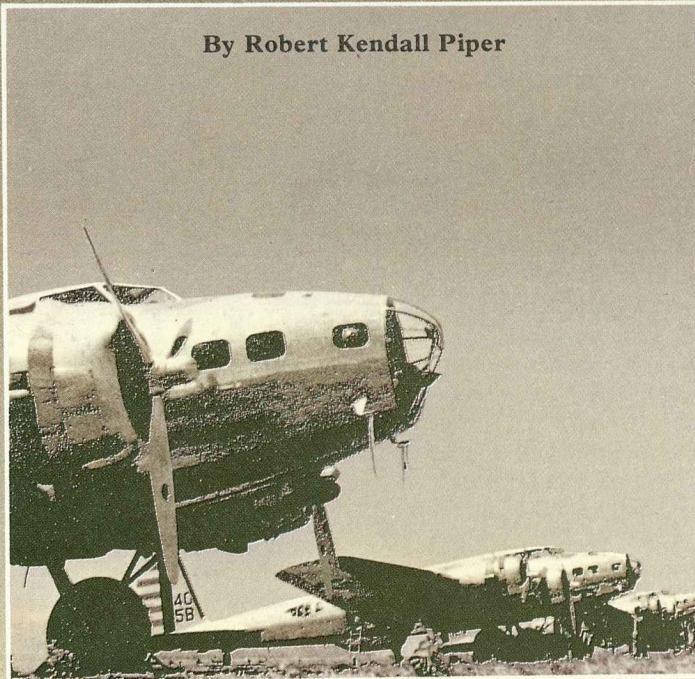
Remnants of that conflict exist today, mainly to the north and east of the field where rusting fuel drums, overgrown revetments and taxiways still remain as a stark reminder of those former desperate days.

Moresby's first landing ground had been at Ela Beach in the 1920's. This was satisfactory for the light planes of that era when the tide was out, the wind blew from the right direction and was not too brisk. A successful landing or takeoff also depended whether the pilot could manage to stay on the narrow strip of firm sand along the water's edge.

With the introduction of faster and heavier aircraft in the thirties a dirt strip had been formed on flat land just out of town at Kila Kila. Because of the surrounding high hills on three sides and sea on the other this small drome was naturally confined.

Unfortunately it also faced thirty degrees off the prevailing south-east winds. Air mail contractors at the time had made

By Robert Kendall Piper



numerous official complaints on the inefficiency and often dangers of operating at the Three Mile Drome.

On the scrub covered plain seven miles north of the town, along the Rouna Road, preparations had already begun by November 1939 for a new aerodrome.

War had commenced in Europe some two months earlier and airfield construction for Australia was now deemed one of her top priorities. Seven Mile was to be an advanced operational base for the Royal Australian Air Force and the defence of

New Guinea and North Australia, with civil flights then a secondary consideration.

Land was to be acquired, 246 acres in all, the sum of £600 being paid finally in settlement. Original construction costs were budgetted at a mere £13,000 but by July 1940 this figure had more than doubled to £29,500. For this outlay it was planned that the strip would be 150ft wide by 3600ft long and covered with fine gravel.

Trees were removed, stumps dug out and stones carted away. Construction was carried out by the PNG Department of Works.

Natural springs were encountered in some areas and drainage for both these and the wet season, November to April, had to be well planned for. It was important that this drome could be operated on in all weather conditions. The Rouna Road was diverted by looping it around the north-west of the strip.

Mr McDonald Richardson was obliged to operate his nearby quarries twenty four hours a day to maintain the urgent constructions schedule set by the Australian government.

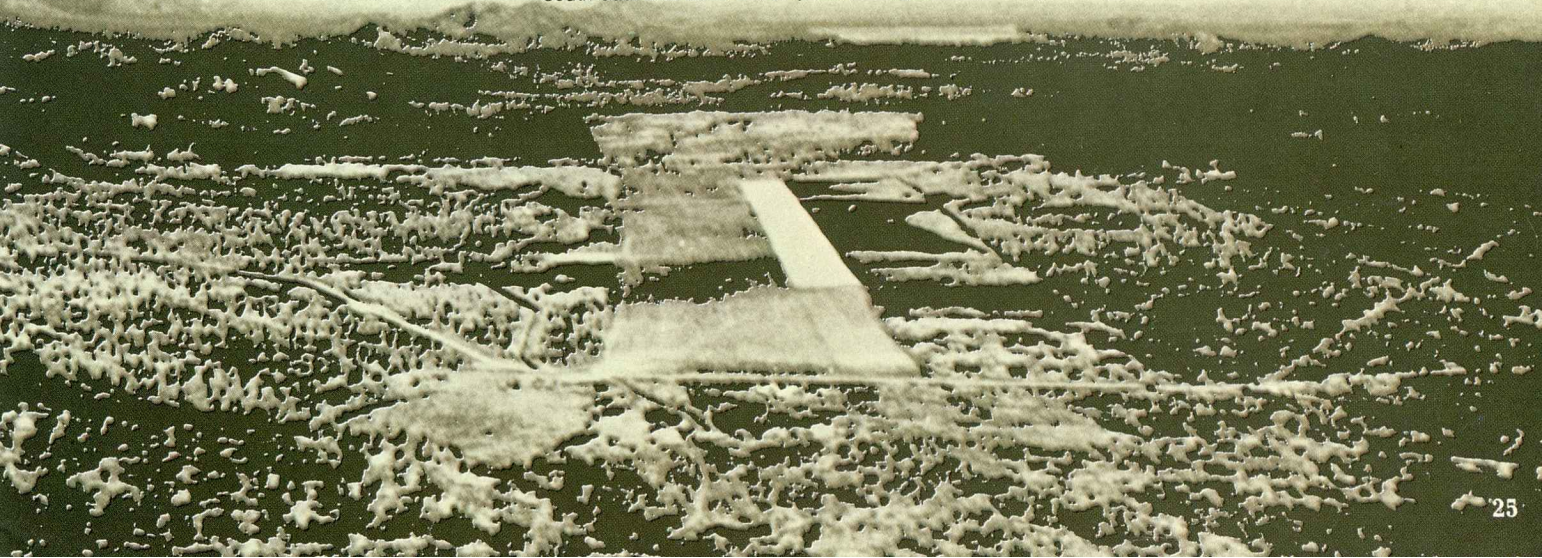
Completed first, in May 1941, the strip was a very large 900ft wide and 3,600ft long.

The following month Carpenter Airlines, in their then ultra modern all-metal Lockheed 14, were the first to test the completed main strip. Their pilots, D.G. Cameron and R.O. Cant, stated: "We consider this aerodrome is entirely suitable for the operation of Lockheed 14 aircraft in all conditions."

Closely following the civil crew were three RAAF Hudson bombers from 24 Squadron at Townsville, North Australia.

Arriving on June 17 the captains reported that fine pebbles on the grass runway had been flung up and chipped their aluminium propellers on take-off. They also said the area would be difficult to obstruct, because of its vast open expanse, should an airborne invasion be eminent.

**Above:** Early type Flying Fortresses at Seven Mile Strip en-route to the Philippines on September 10, 1942; **below:** a view towards the south-east and Bootless Bay taken August 1941





At this stage no facilities existed at the strip. The only building was a single shed for a tractor and tools with a 500 gallon water tank attached. A telephone was not installed, fuel had to be trucked from Moresby and was supplied by the Vacuum or Shell Companies using a hand pump.

American four engine B24 Liberators flew into the Seven Mile Strip in October 1941, carrying a U.S. lend-lease mission to Moscow. Their pilots were to comment that although there was a good surface and ample width the length was inadequate.

On the advice of the U.S. Army Director of Works, arrangements were made for the main runway to be lengthened and strengthened. It was planned that the aerodrome would become a vital link in the American ferrying service to Manila. Within four weeks a further £28,000 was hastily approved to extend the length to 5,100ft.



photo: Robert Piper

Satellite dromes at four mile (Wards), Bomana (Berry), Laloki (Schwimmer), Waigani (Durand) and 35 mile (Rogers) were soon to follow, speeded along by the entry of Japan into the war. (The latter names were later designated, being the surnames of U.S. fliers lost in the conflict).

Air raids against Moresby and the surrounding area were to total 113 during World War II. A large percentage of these were directed against the airbase at Seven Mile. First strike was on the night of 3 February 1942 by six aircraft. The last was 17

June the following year by four 'Sally' bombers.

One of the heaviest was that of 17 August 1942, the 78th raid, when some 150 bombs were dropped destroying five allied aircraft and damaging eleven more, as well as demolishing the control tower and operations room.

Attacks were to range from solo efforts to combinations of fifty or more fighters and bombers. Incursions varied from tree top level attacks by fighter aircraft to precision bombing runs by medium bombers.

Tropical skies reverberated to gunfire and explosions as allied planes wrestled for supremacy of the surrounding air.

First defender of Moresby's skies was No. 75 Squadron RAAF, led by Squadron Leader John Jackson DFC. "Old John" as he was affectionately called by his men (because he seemed so much older at 34 than the youngsters he commanded) was a former grazier of St George, Queensland and a veteran of No. 3 and 4 Squadrons in the Middle East campaign.

His unit arrived with their P40 Kittyhawk fighters on 21 March 1942.

During mid-morning on the 28th of the following month,





**Right:** Flying Fortresses of the 43rd Bomb Group in revetments at Seven Mile Strip; **left:** the result of the 78th raid on Moresby on August 17, 1942; **below:** an American Airacobra makes a low pass over the fragments of an aircraft after a bombing raid at Seven Mile Strip; **inset:** Jackson's Airport 1982

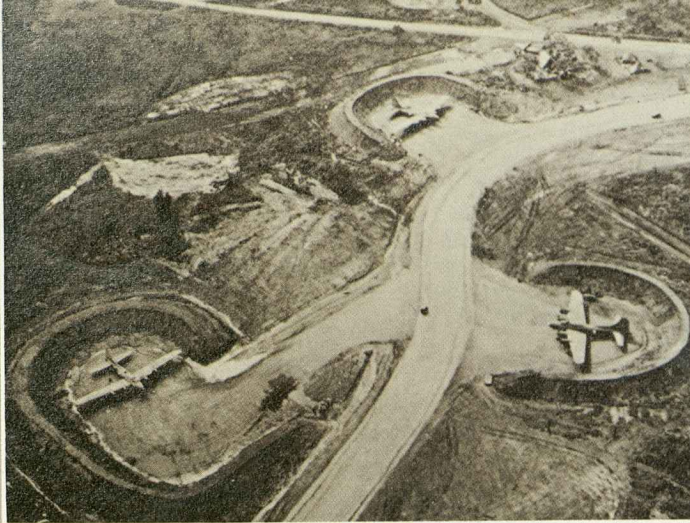


photo: Robert Piper

Squadron Leader Jackson led the last remaining serviceable fighters over Moresby at 22,000 ft to attack eight enemy bombers protected by a screen of fifteen Zeros. Vastly outnumbered two of the Australian aircraft plummeted to earth. One of the pilots killed was Squadron Leader Jackson whose aircraft plunged into the side of nearby Mt Lawes.

During the last week of December 1942, Seven Mile Strip was renamed Jackson's Field.

Numerous aircraft were to ditch during WWII in Bootless Bay off the south-east end of Jacksons. They either just failed

to reach the drome on approach or encountering mechanical problems shortly after departure elected for a crash-landing in the sea. Wreckage of two United States bombers, a B17 Fortress and B24 Liberator, may still be seen in the shallow waters of the bay today.

One of the airfield's worst tragedies occurred at dawn on 7 September 1943. A heavily laden U.S. Liberator struck trees

on take-off and dived, with a full bomb load, into an Australian assembly area at the south-east end of the runway. The entire B24 crew as well as fifty-nine men of the 2/33rd Infantry Battalion and 158th Transport Company were killed. In addition there were ninety-two injured. Most of the soldiers had been waiting to take-off for Tsile Tsile to participate in the

re-taking of Nadzab and Lae.

Jackson's became an important transit base in the latter years of the war as the battles moved further north. It is estimated that more than a quarter of a million take-offs and landings were carried out by military aircraft from Jackson's field.

Post war years saw the old main runway extended and repaired countless times, especially with the advent of heavy jet passenger aircraft.

Shortly after Papua New Guinea gained Independence in 1975, the present main strip was completed on the northern side

photo: Australian War Memorial



photo: Air North



**Below:** Squadron Leader John Francis Jackson, DFC (RAAF); **below right:** tail section of crashed American Liberator Bomber discovered near Port Moresby in 1980; **bottom:** U.S. Airacobras soar over parked B17 bombers

of the original. Sandwiched between these two is an unused WWII marden matting runway of interlocking metal sheets. All three are parallel, running approximately south-east and north-west at an altitude of only 125' above sea level. The original runway is still used by light aircraft.

Now under the administration of the Civil Aviation Agency of Papua New Guinea, Jackson's Field has grown to be one of the most prominent international airports in the South West Pacific. With some 4300 aircraft movements per month of which approximately 160 are international, flights include destinations as far afield as Honiara, Singapore, Manila, Honolulu and Hong Kong. Closer are Cairns, Brisbane and Sydney.



Aircraft as large as the giant Boeing 747 may now operate day and night. It's a far cry from the original biplanes, fighters, transports and bombers that once trundled up to its edge and roared down its length into tropical Papuan skies a mere forty years ago.

# THE END OF THE TALE

By Bruce Hoy



At 2.35pm, 22 March 1944, a United States B-24D Liberator, Serial Number 42-41081 was cleared for take-off from Jackson's Aerodrome, its intended destination being Nadzab. On board was its crew of three and nineteen passengers on their way to join their respective units based in the Nadzab area.

At 2.37pm, the B-24 lifted off the metal runway at Jacksons, and flew into oblivion. Despite an intensive search in the days that followed, nothing more was heard or seen of the aircraft until one day in 1980, two men from Manumu Village near the Kokoda Trail, stumbled onto the remains of the aircraft during a hunting trip. Barely 70 kilometers from Port Moresby, the B-24 and its crew and passengers had remained undiscovered during the intervening years.

In April 1982, a team from the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii and the Aviation, Maritime and War Branch of the National Museum of Papua New Guinea finally brought back the remains of the 22 American servicemen. For many families in the United States, the long wait for news of their loved ones is almost at an end, and another chapter in the early turbulent story of Jackson's Airport is completed.

**Footnote:** Squadron Leader John Francis Jackson (DFC, MID) now rests at nearby Bomana War Cemetery. The rudder pedal from his aircraft as well as photos and other information on him, 75 Squadron and the aero-

drome named after this famous pilot may be seen at the Port Moresby Aviation, Maritime War Museum.

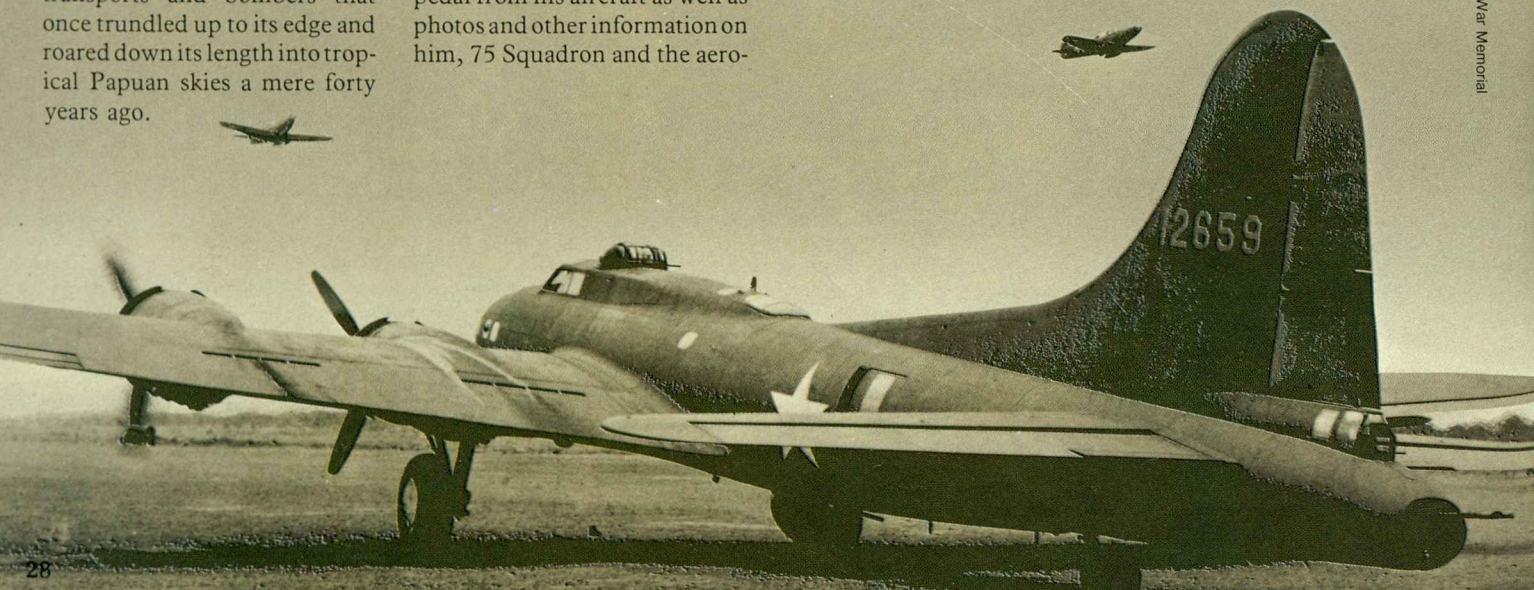


photo: Australian War Memorial



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# YACHTS

*Alasdair Jack is the Senior Flight Engineer for Air Niugini. This year he swapped the flight deck of a Boeing jet for the deck of a less comfortable, but never the less enjoyable, ocean racing yacht. He was part of the PNG team competing for the coveted Southern Cross Cup. This was his story.*

Australian Picture Library



**I**MAGINE spending days and nights on end being tossed around like a cork in the wildest ocean in the world and paying thousands of dollars for the privilege.

The wise seafaring philosopher who described ocean yacht racing as being akin to standing under a shower tearing up ten dollar bills wasn't far from the truth.

A group of Papua New Guinea yachtsmen who were invited to compete in the coveted South-

ern Cross series in Australia this year discovered there was some truth in the axiom.

The thrill of being invited to compete in the prestigious event was surpassed only by the dilemma of not having competitive yachts to compete in the world class event. The Southern Cross Series is the Australian equivalent of the British Admirals Cup. It attracts the best yachtsmen in the world.

The series consists of four races, of thirty miles, one of one

**Right:** Chartered X-Ragamuffin charges southwards to Hobart; **inset:** spinnakers fly as 159 yachts jostle for position in Sydney Harbour



hundred and eighty miles and concludes with the famous Sydney to Hobart ocean racing classic. The PNG Yachting Association was invited to enter the 1982 series with three yachts. PNG had previously competed in the 1975 and 77 events under the leadership of the dynamo of PNG yachting, Bruce Tardrew.

The task of assembling crews for the 1982 event was not difficult. There's never a shortage of yachties anywhere who will jump at the opportunity to compete in this prestigious event.

The real problem was securing suitable competitive yachts for the crews to sail in. Tardrew, not known to give in easily, approached a series of leading yacht owners in Australia. He soon arranged to charter Aetos, a Holland 44 and Mercedes V, A Kauffman 42. However, the team still lacked a super-competitive yacht which would give us the best possible opportunity to do well. Finally Tardrew managed to secure the right to sail the famous X-Raggamuffin which was built especially for Sydney yachtsman Syd Fischer to compete in the successful 1979 Admirals Cup team.

The yacht cost about half a million dollars to build so you would expect the cost of chartering it to be high. The PNG team agreed to pay a total of K30,000 in charter fees for the three yachts.

Next came the problem of raising the money to pay the bills. The hire cost was largely

met by the crews.

"If you're an experienced sailor it'll cost you K1,000 if you're just a sailor it'll cost you

K2,000", said a smiling but only half joking Bruce Tardrew to the assembled team. On top of this the crews had to meet the

cost of all other expenses associated with competing.

At the end of the three "mini-races" the PNG team was in eighth position with the big one still to come. Sydney Harbour on Boxing Day was an incredible sight as 159 yachts and a huge spectator fleet charged down the narrow waterway with the spinnakers flying.

X-Raggamuffin made an excellent start and was out of the harbor right behind the maxi-yachts Condor, Apollo and Helsal II. Aetos and Mercedes were buried in the fleet, facing a big swell and a freshening 25 knot breeze.

For two days on end the crews had their yachts beating into a strong southerly. Aetos and X-Raggamuffin were both doing well when Mercedes V broke a boom and was forced to retire, ending our chances of a good result. In Bass Strait the wind dropped to a gentle breeze . . . there would be no records set this year, except possibly for the amount of money spent on the race by competitors, but no-one was talking about that. A total of 159 yachts started, Aetos finished 35th and X-Raggamuffin 16th.

It was indeed like tearing up \$10 notes under a cold shower but some masochistic desire will lure most of the competitors back to do it all again next time. For some reason, largely unexplained, it's worth it. 🍀

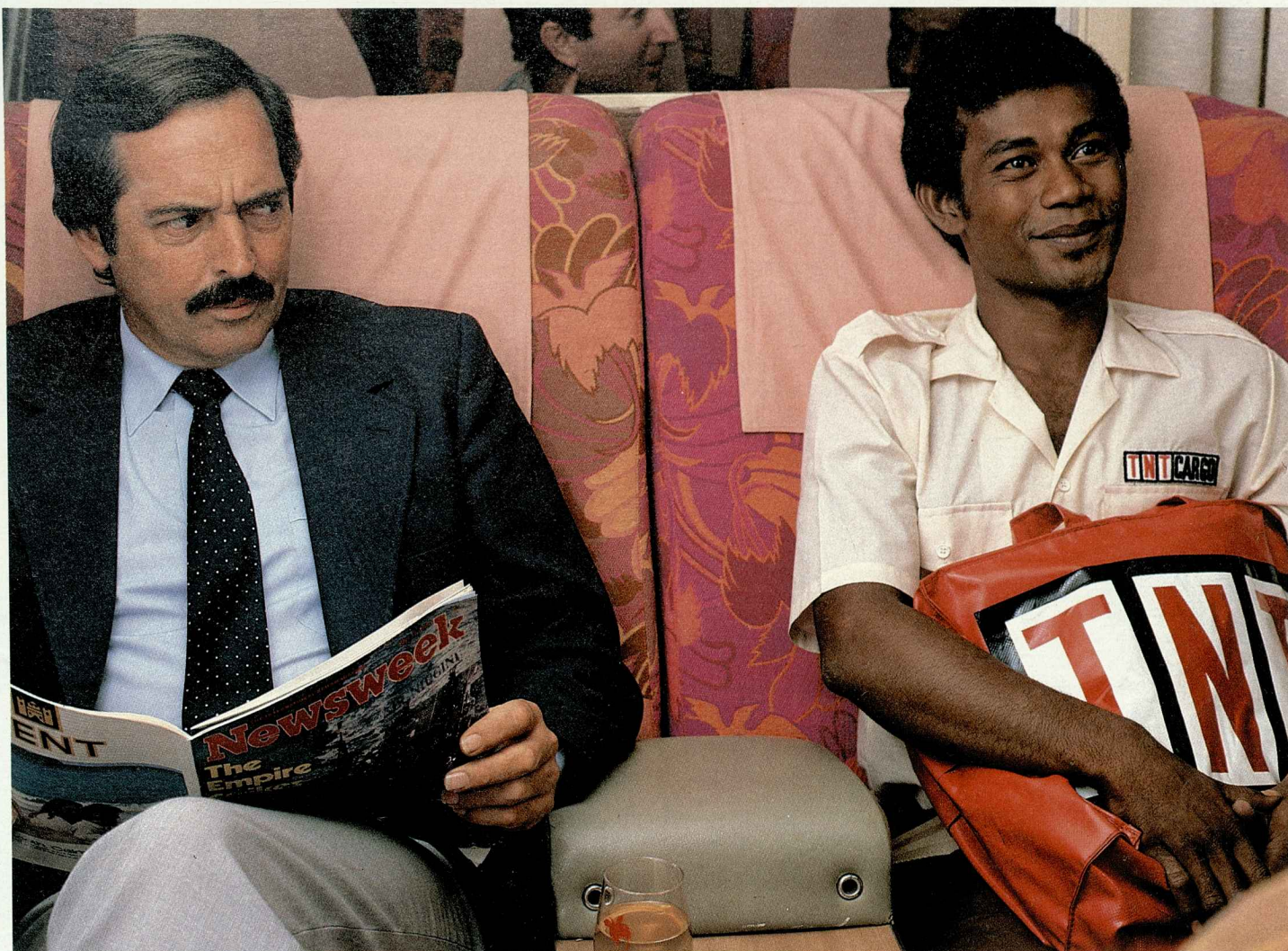
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Aetos on a close reach in Sydney Harbour; inset: Mercedes V in full flight







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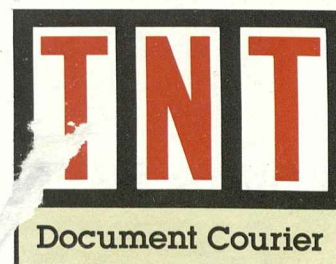
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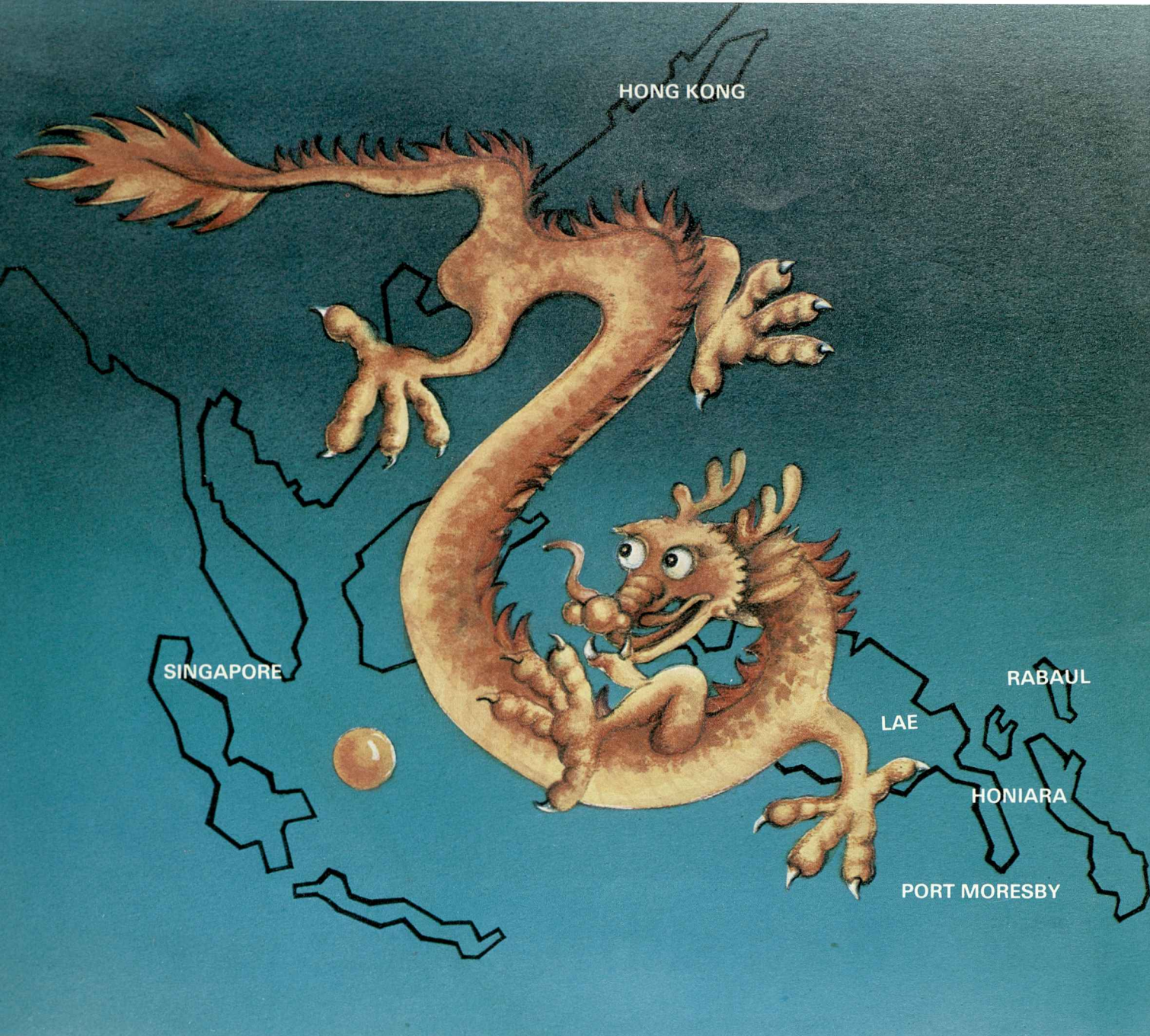
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# ONE DAY IN MAY

*Fifty years ago precision crafted stone axes were the "currency" of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Bride prices were largely paid in axes. The axes were traded far and wide, usually for pigs. The bigger and better the axe the bigger and better the pig. This whole trading tradition and the precision craftsmen who supported it was changed by a single event that occurred in May 1933. John Burton, from the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra, looks at the history of the kunjin axe.*

**N**OT everyone made axes. Very few groups in Papua New Guinea had access to the tough, fine grained rock, which holds an edge when chipped and ground into an axe blade.

Contrary to popular opinion the axe blades were not made out of basalt. All of the quarries lie in areas of complex metamorphism in the Wahgi Valley near Mount Hagen, hence the name "Hagen Axe". It is quite likely that you have an axe in

*The old and the new. Duri uses a modern steel axe as he demonstrates how craftsmen made traditional stone axes fifty years ago. Over the centuries two styles of stone axe evolved, the kunjin axe (right) and the Hagen axe which is illustrated on the back of the PNG two kina note (top)*





the well-known “Hagen”-style in your hip pocket. There’s an illustration of it on the back of the Papua New Guinea two kina note.

It is just as likely that you’ve never heard of the *kunjin* axe made by the Tungei people at Aviamp in the South Wahgi. In the Papua New Guinea highlands, however, it is widely known for its functional design and durability. The *kunjin* axe is legendary from Chuave to Porgera and from Simbai to the Southern Highlands.

It is not uncommon to hear of *kunjin* axes being traded all the way from the Wahgi Valley to the Fly River, over 30 kilometers away. The Tungei people mastered the art of mass production which other tribes manufacturing axes couldn’t cope with. Motivated by the power and wealth that the axes could bring the Tungei’s sustained production on a truly industrial scale. Their expeditions to hew stone from a line of clan-owned mining pits took as long as six months to prepare

and six months to complete. About every five years for centuries past the Tungeis would mobilise 200 men for the trek to the mine site and back. Extra food crops were planted and the youngest and fittest young men were selected to carry back the stone.

At the start of the dry season in May 1933 the Tungei people prepared for another journey to the mine, not knowing that it would be the last. Very soon strange things began to happen.

The first thing was the pec-

uliar noise the miners heard at their 200 metre altitude mount-ain-side work camp. Suddenly a “sorcerer” appeared in the sky, borne on a shiny shield.

Men and boys scattered into the bush.

Then rumours that the Yengi Yengi spirits were coming travelled up the valley from the east. Nobody knew what to expect.

Finally on the 2nd of May 1933 a detachment of New Guinea Police led by Jim Taylor in company with Dan Leahy, ar-





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1. Fine-grained, hand-ground stone axe blade is carefully fitted into one half of a wooden socket.

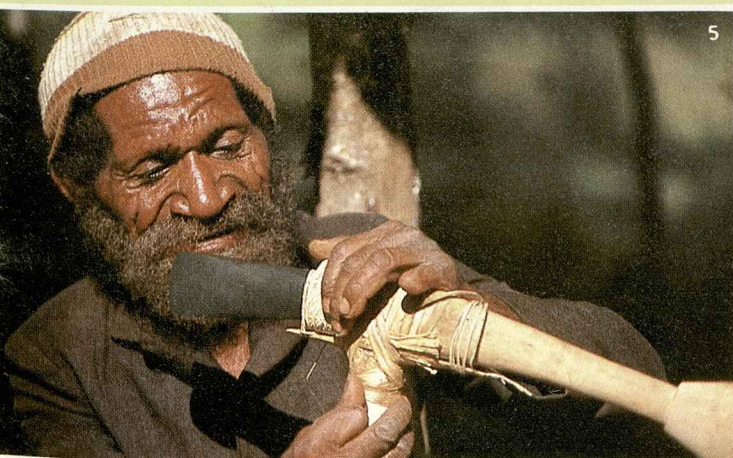
2. A woven band keeps both sides of the socket together.

3. Binding the socket counterweight with bush rope.

4. Tightening the completed socket to the T-shaped handle of Kueng wood.

5-6. Lashing the socket and handle together with bush rope.

7. Putting the finishing touches to the intricate woven cane work



5



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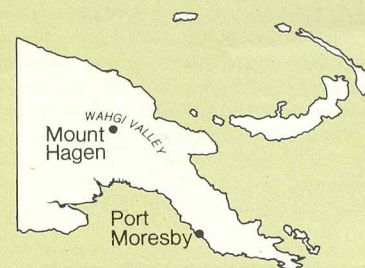


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Axes were once the currency of the Highlands, used to buy pigs and brides. Malimbe, aged 75 (seated left), and Duri, aged 60 (seated right), exhibit axe-making tools and part completed axes; **below:** Cutting firewood; **below left:** historic photograph by David Attenborough shows craftsmen grinding axe blades at Menjim in the Wahgi Valley



rived in Tungei territory. The rumours were true. In fact, the Administration had started patrols into the Upper Purari area, or what is known today as the Wahgi Valley, with Mount Hagen at its head. And what of the sorcerer in flight?

Now of course, everyone knows it was an aeroplane and laugh at their earlier mistake. It was probably the patrol's reconnaissance flight, made on the 27th March, 1933 in a DH 50 piloted by Tommy O'Dea.

It was that flight that signalled the end of the production of the *kunjin* axe. It is certain that the axe makers never mined again.

Some clans continued to make axes in remoter areas, but never again on such a scale. At Aviampt the Tungei initially continued to work from the batch of raw material brought down to their village from the mine. This continued, according to their five year cycle, until the late 30's. Then abruptly it all stopped.

The Tungei's had been put out of business by the increasing number of steel axes being



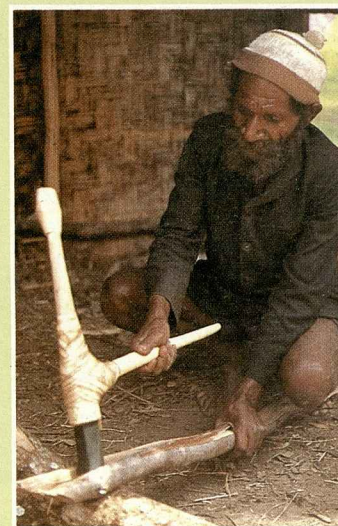
flown to Mt Hagen for trading purposes.

While the mine owners stopped turning out new axe blades in the late 1930's the work of a number of specialists was far from over. In every corner of the Wahgi Valley craftsmen continued to work for another twenty years, fitting and refitting axe blades into their handles and refurbishing worn out bush rope and wicker lashings.

While there are upwards of forty Tungei axe-makers still

alive few have clear sight and nimble fingers. Duri was only fourteen when the police patrol arrived in the Valley in 1933. He was too young to have been an axe-maker but he did become a canework specialist. Today he makes baskets and intricate woven belts. With a fierce pride he takes pleasure in demonstrating his skill at remounting a *kunjin* blade made many years ago by a Tungei clansman several years his senior.

Duri is by no means the only



man living with these skills but it is true to say that the demand for his services began to wane from that very day in May nearly fifty years ago when the great highlands axe factories were closed for the last time. It was the beginning of the end of a 10,000 year old tradition. ♣



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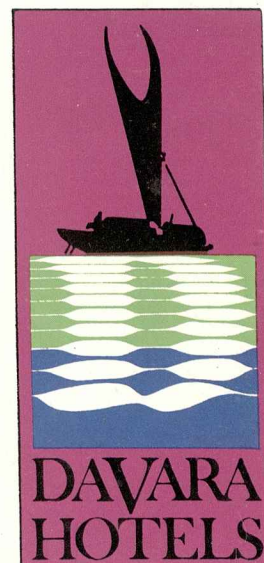
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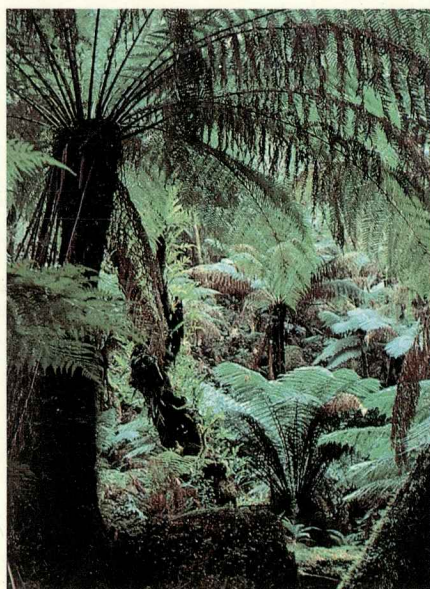
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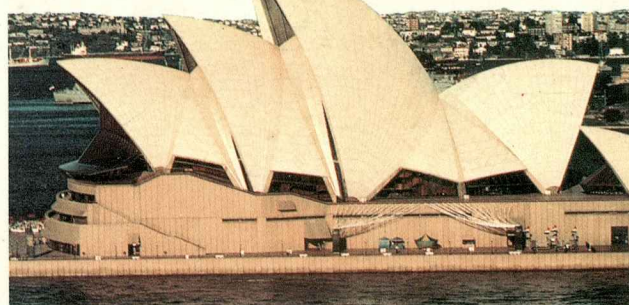


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