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No. 14 November 1978

Paradise, the in-flight magazine of Air Niugini, is published bi-monthly by the Advertising and Public Relations Department, Air Niugini House, Jackson's Airport, Port Moresby. Typeset by Air Niugini Printing and printed in Hong Kong by Dai Nippon. For advertising or editorial contact the Advertising and Public Relations Manager, PO Box 7186, Boroko, Papua New Guinea.
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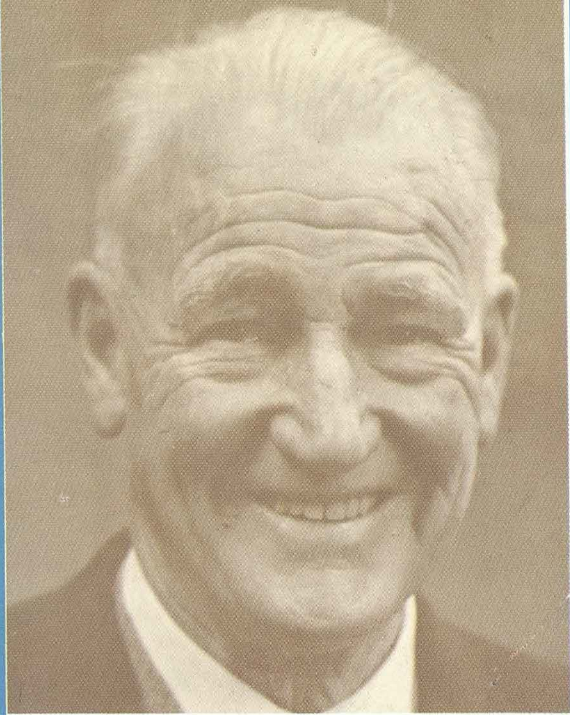

Pard Mustar

Welcome aboard

This month is the fifth anniversary of our operations as Air Niugini. Celebrations started early with our sponsorship of the Hiri Moale festival and in particular, the canoe race, featured in this issue. In the interests of preserving culture and at the same time promoting tourism we plan to offer a substantial prize for the winner of next year's Hiri canoe race, providing the winning canoe is fitted with traditionally manufactured sails. I believe this could prompt the revival of the traditional sail-making industry and make the Hiri race so spectacular it would capture world-wide attention. The story of Pard Mustar on page 28 is one of significance in our anniversary issue. Mustar, and other pioneer pilots such as Ray Parer, Frank Drayton, Les Trist, Eric Chater and Bertie Heath,carved a notch in the history of aviation, not only in Papua New Guinea, but the world. At one time the grass landing strip they used at Salamaua was the scene of the biggest airfreight service in the world. More freight was carried from that airport in one year than the world's airlines carried among them. Aviation in Papua New Guinea had come of age by the early 1930's.

C.B. Grey,
General Manager.

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COVER

A strong south-easter whipped up choppy seas for the competitors in the 1978 Hiri canoe race. Of the 92 crews that started only 12 completed the course. Veronica Williams took the picture. The story begins on page 17.

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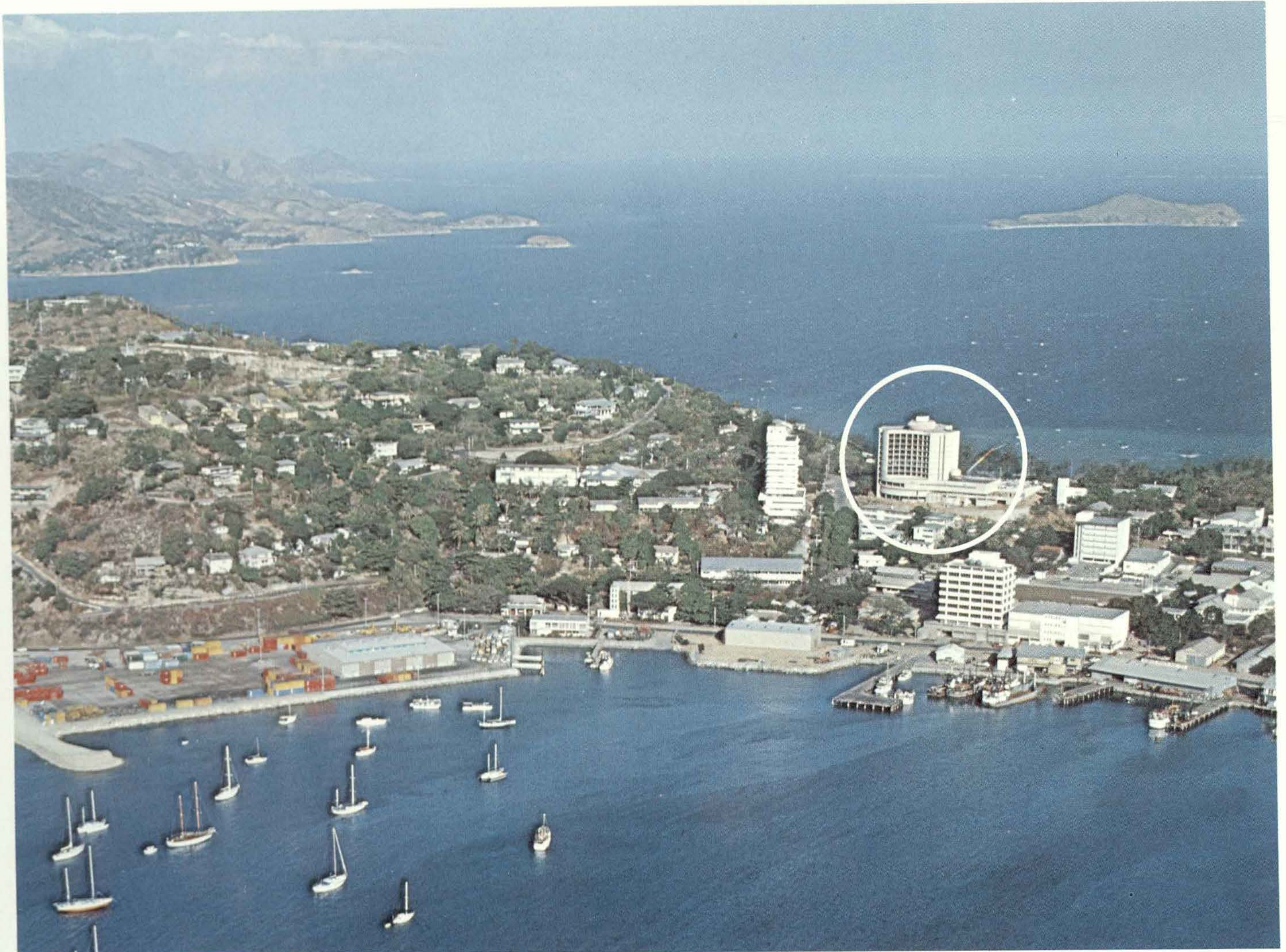

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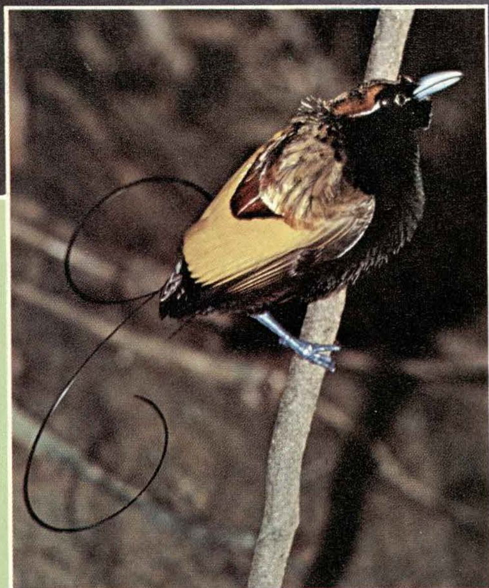


Tread softly on Tedi

Naturalist Eric Lindgren and ornithologist Brian Coates recently carried out a survey of birdlife in the areas of Papua New Guinea's Western Province affected by development of copper deposits known to the world as Ok Tedi. Their findings give cause for optimism.

It was the Ok Tedi Environmental Task Force which asked Brian Coates and myself to carry out the survey and recommend ways of minimising the impact of mining development. We spent two weeks in the area, our studies taking us through altitudes of 670 to 2400 metres. In that time we listed more than 160 of the 225 species of birds which might have occurred there. But we did not find the prime object of our survey — black sicklebills and splendid Astrapia birds of paradise — and we had only one sighting of Queen Carole's parotia and then it was the dull female. But we did find the vulturine parrot and Papuan hornbill, both now becoming rarities in settled areas.

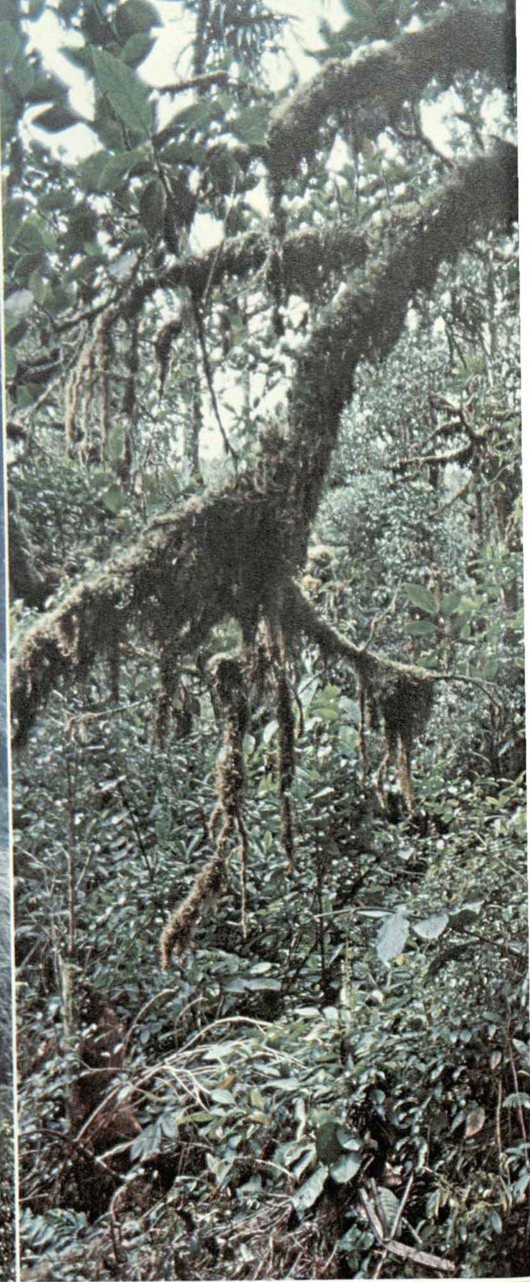
Our conclusion was that, hopefully, birds and man will be able to co-exist in this interesting area and, when mining is complete, the forests will still echo not the ghosts of the hunted but the voices of the birds themselves.

Here are some of the highlights and sightings of two of the days we worked on the survey:

Friday — The helicopter flight took us north up the Ok Tedi valley (*Ok* meaning river). On the Hindenburg Wall — a great flat-topped limestone barrier rising 500 metres from the valley — a giant white scar evidenced a landslip. Millions of tonnes of rocks lay at the foot of the Wall which had finally succumbed to internal pressures and shed what, to it, was no more than an offending fragment. Five streams now spurted from the scar. During the day we noted that the number and size of the streams changed, probably as a result of varying rainfall on top of the Wall. (Annual rainfall is about 10,000 mm or 400 inches.)

We passed Bultem at 1700 metres. The seven small houses, plus a males' *haus tambaran* (spirit house) were unoccupied. A few hundred metres further north we came to the Bultem 'suburbs' — two abandoned houses, only their framework remaining.

We pressed on to the north, along a track which dipped into damp pandanus forest and then wound its way upwards toward the mist forest. Here abundant mosses and lichens draped the trunks and branches of the trees. Here the atmosphere never changes — always damp and dull.



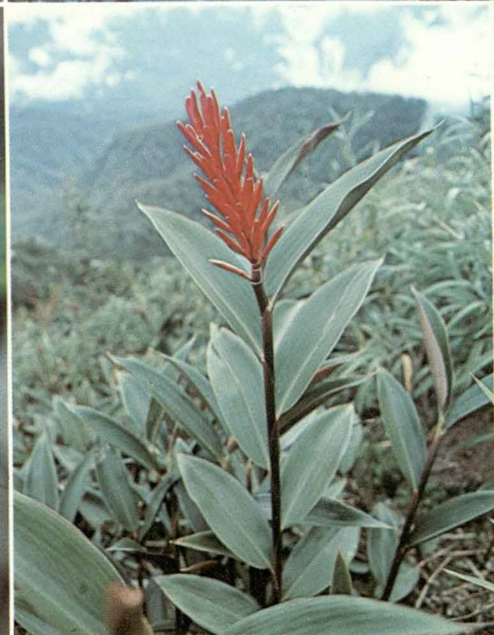
Slowly we made our way along this track, logging the birds as we went — jit berrypecker, superb bird of paradise female, golden honey-eater (dull grey and lacking the chestnut markings of its commoner relatives, the Sunday honeyeater), warning others with its harsh 'zwip zwip' as it spotted us.

We turned off into a smaller side track, following a stream, and entered a newly-cleared area planted with taro. From the clearing we had a good view of the edge of the forest and we soon found items of interest. A yellow-breasted Papuan microeca was feeding a young bird, reminding me to check out the mossy log by the track where a bird flushed out as we passed. Overhead, groups of mountain pigeons flew high toward the Wall — a flock of 14. Others of eight, two and four were noted.

A mystery bird — hard to see — was persevered with. It turned out to be a tiger parrot but of which species we could not determine. Commonest were parrots visiting a tree with cerise flowers, the plumage matching the colour of the flower. Among them, the little red lory, bright red with green wings and tapering tail, and tarry lory, surely one of the world's most beautiful parrots. It has a long undulating tail when flying. The black phase in this bird, in which the normal red colouration is replaced by black, seemed to outnumber the red phase. Also visiting these trees were the tiny black and red Rosenberg's honey-eaters, one of the gems of New Guinea birdlife.

Returning to Bultem, we added some new species to our list. In a grassy valley we heard a tawny grass-bird, a species which is found from lowland grassland right through to the alpine grasslands above the tree-line. A party of black and white wrens fussed through a tangle of bracken at the edge of the village and, overhead, the ubiquitous swift-lets darted after insects. And we found a nest. Once again the bird flushed out from the mossy log. Diligent searching finally revealed a well-hidden entrance to a domed nest. It was probably a sericornes — but which one? The brief flash of the bird leaving was not enough to tell us.

The beauty of Bultem impressed us. The men's *haus tambaran*, at the end of the village common, was back by the towering bulk of the Hindenberg Wall. A small fence surrounded it. *Tangket* was planted at intervals to warn off intruders. The gateway had been barred and it was obvious that the owners wanted no trespassers. The village square itself was carpeted in fresh green



grass though taller seed heads indicated that the villagers had been away a few weeks. Normally the village square is swept clean and weeded in the early morning each day.

Beneath the eaves of each house were piles of split firewood, out of the rain, dry and ready for use. By peeping through cracks in the split-log walls we could see more piles of firewood on a platform above the cooking fireplace.

Alongside the houses grew a broadleafed pink-flowering plant which reminded me of Nicotiana which I know from the breakaway country of the Australian desert. Dried and rolled, this would be a wild, strong tobacco — favoured by highland villagers.

During the day we saw more than 30 species of birds. Not a great total for Papua New Guinea birding where more than a hundred can be found in a day in lowland forest. But we had seen a variety of beautiful species and been left with some puzzles. There was an unidentified black bird of paradise; a wrongly-coloured berrypecker, perhaps a species known only by two specimens taken from opposite ends of the island of New Guinea; and the unknown bird whose nest we had found.

Sunday — Our best day in the hill forest. Our helicopter landed us at an old village site known as Il Tedi Tau, lying southwest of Babubil and overlooking the valley of the Ok Mar. The day was overcast but without rain. As the noise of the helicopter faded we listened for our first contact in a clearing surrounded by *kunai* grass. Here and there ground orchids pushed their heads through the grass. From the valley came a bubbling 'tit-chowee, tit-chowee, tit-chowee' and a small flock of birds came into view, flying south. Binoculars up. We both gasped at their beauty. The shape was cuckoo shrike. But the colours! Golden yellow body, black tail, black wings marked white. Golden cuckoo shrikes — surely the most handsome of the family. They landed not 100 metres away and we were able to sort the male from the female. Both were golden birds, the males with black throat and chest, the females blue grey. They must have been foraging. They moved restlessly through the trees and finally disappeared over a ridge.

A slight movement to the right. A tiny jewelled jumping spider. It had moved on a white ground orchid flower. It was a tiny gem of irrides-

Above: *Vulturine or Pesquets parrot, prized for its red and black feathers, was the first to disappear as a result of the presence of man;* **right:** *Papuan hornbill or kokomo is one of the more interesting species to be found in the New Guinea Islands.*

cent pale blue touched with burnt orange and gold on body and legs. Motionless on the orchid, it waited for an insect to visit the flower. Then, with a sudden jump, the spider would grasp its prey in a death grip. A deadly jewel.

We listened some more, listing 10 more species. Then we moved along the ridge and into the damp forest. The path was easy, fairly flat and walled on each side by ferns and gingers. Here and there a tall tree fern spread its umbrella of leaves above the canopy. Dappled light and shadow flecked the ground.

A short way along the track I stopped to photograph some flowers while Brian continued. It was two hours before we met again to compare notes. 'Did you see the vulturine parrots?' we asked each other. We were both eager to exchange news of the best sighting of the morning. A large parrot, the vulturine was one of the first species to disappear as a result of the presence of man. The red and black feathers are prized for *singsing* decoration. They are regarded by many people as the most desirable feathers of all.

We had both witnessed the never-to-be-forgotten sight of a small party of vulturines perched in a tree. Their calls gave them away — a hollow, rasping 'up up up', apparently a contact note to keep them together. I saw two males and a female moving slowly about their perch and showing off their vivid red abdomen and wing coverts. The males were hard to pick but careful search showed the red patch, lacking in the females, behind the eye. With a rush they flew — five in all — with a hollow 'tch tch tch'. They made a magnificent sight as they winged their way across the valley of the Ok Mar, their dull black bodies punctuated by brilliant red wing coverts catching the sun.

We had both seen greater birds of paradise. The spirited 'kau kau kau' calls had attracted Brian. He saw a fully plumaged male among a group of females and immature birds. The long golden feathers of this species are coarse and tipped brownish, unlike the shorter plumes of the lesser bird of paradise, which are softer and tipped with white. The birds were tame and curious, said Brian, so much so that they perched above him.

At Ok Tedi Tau, an old village site long abandoned, there was an abundance of birds. They were not hunted. Shotguns were a thing of the past.

Birds, normally wary when man is around, were tame. Birds of paradise, curious, lively, noisy, sociable and unafraid of humans, showed us their true colours. Other species were equally confident and we listed more than 30 species including some of Papua New Guinea's most interesting birds. There was the vulturine parrot, the hornbill, the boble ground pigeon, the parrot finch, golden cuckoo shrike, golden monarch, and the greater and magnificent birds of paradise.

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Thunder Woman's Bird

Story: Paul Sillitoe
Pictures: Brian Coates

'Up in the sky there lives a white-skinned woman whom we call sabkabyinten. *She is responsible for the rain and the thunder, which she causes by splashing with her digging stick in a large pond. The slap of her stick we hear as thunder and the water she displaces falls on us as rain.* Sabkabyinten *is also the guardian of some migratory birds which visit us — notably the cassowary. It was she who first sent this bird to us on earth. She sent them during a heavy thunder storm, and falling from the sky they landed in the tops of trees. Although these birds cannot fly, our ancestors knew that they had roosted in the tree tops because they found their droppings there, and from this we deduced that they must have fallen from the sky.'*

So the Wola people, who live in the rugged mountains of the Southern Highlands Province, account for rain, thunder and the origin of the cassowary. This large, flightless bird is a migratory visitor which comes to their region when the fruits on which it feeds are in season. When these finish and they leave, the Wola say that they return again to live with *Sabkabyinten* in the sky.

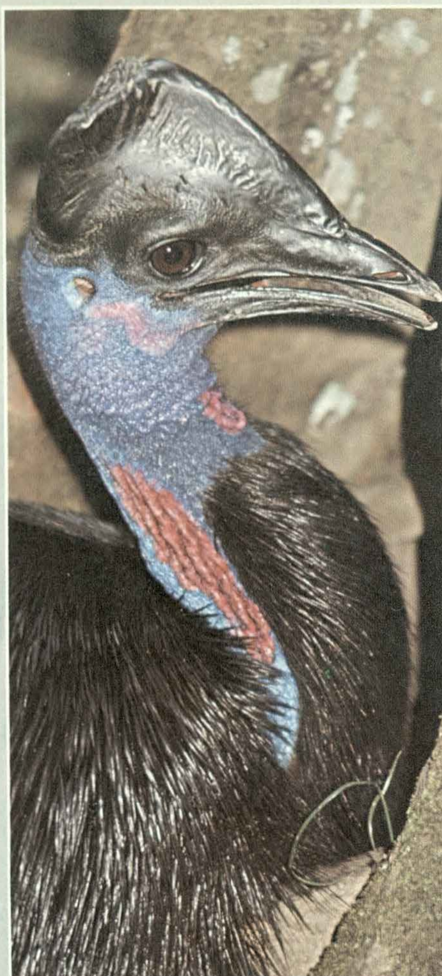
When they come, they nest in the mountain forests and lay small clutches of large, green-speckled eggs, which the people relish as a rare delicacy if they find them. There are no male or female cassowaries according to the Wola — they are all capable of laying eggs. A bird produces them by hitting its sternum sharply against a tree trunk, so causing internal bleeding. The blood clots and gradually turns yellow to form the yolk, around which the egg develops. When it is ready to lay eggs, the parent scratches together a rough nest of twigs, dead leaves and moss at the foot of a tree. It does not sit on it regularly but wanders around in the vicinity feeding. When the chicks hatch they follow the parent closely. They wander as a family without home or territory, feeding from one fruiting tree to another through the forest.

The Wola are Highlanders. They are subsistence gardeners whose staple is sweet potato, supplemented with pumpkins, various greens and other vegetables. Their houses are scattered along mountain valleys,

men living separately from women. Pigs, pearl shells, large marsupials and cassowaries constitute the wealth these people hand to one another in ceremonial exchanges that characterise all their important social events.

Men hunt for cassowaries in the forest in a variety of ways. A man will usually try to hit any adult bird he sees with an arrow, although the more reckless may try to catch it alive by leaping on its back from behind, grabbing the legs against the body as they fold under it. This method is dangerous. A cassowary has sharp claws with which it can inflict serious injury with a high kick of its powerful legs. Chicks and small adolescent birds are easier to catch alive if they are found hiding in the dense vegetation of the forest floor.

Another way to catch a bird is to set a trap under a tree bearing fruit around which are tracks showing that the cassowary has recently fed there. A trap consists of a sliding vine noose on the end of a sapling sprung over and secured in place with a delicate twig trigger. The bird puts its foot in the camouflaged noose, which releases the trigger and whips it more than a metre into the air.



The meat of the cassowary is a delicacy. Leg bones make daggers, spear and arrow points. The hard nail of the bird's claw also makes a good arrow tip. The wispy, delicate feathers make the pompons popular with Wola men. The strong quills which constitute all that remains of the grounded birds' wings supply the springy component in feather headdresses, in addition to nasal decoration when pushed through the hole in the septum. But the most important use to which the Wola people put the cassowary is as a valuable gift in ceremonial exchanges.

Valuables such as cassowaries are given mostly in social transactions and not economic ones. These social transactions, which include bridewealths, mortuary exchanges and compensation payments, are the very stuff of their society. They have no government, no leaders with authority, and no formal judicial system. Their society is what anthropologists rather pretentiously call

acephalous, which means headless or without leadership. An important ethnic character of theirs is that individuals should be free to govern their own actions.

Regardless of their outward impression Wola social life is orderly, thanks to the exchange of wealth. Exchange is vital to them and they accord high status to those who excel at it because, without infringing directly upon the autonomy of the individual, it serves an important integrative purpose within their loosely organised society and binds men together promoting social co-operation.

The dance and kill is part of a large exchange cycle called the *ser* which is a new fashion that has recently arrived in the Wola area from the south-east. It starts with the building of two exceptionally long houses parallel with one another on either side of a dance ground, and finishes a decade or more later with an enormous pig kill. The cassowary dance and kill is one of the middle stages.

A few months before such an event men start to prepare the dance and kill ground. They collect the stones for the ground ovens in which they will cook the meat and the firewood to heat them. They erect long horizontal poles about a metre above the ground on which they will display the meat from the animals killed. In the last week there is a frantic burst of activity as people collect tree ferns, banana leaves and greens for cooking the meat. Men who intend to dance borrow, hire or buy the decorations they will need such as feather headdresses, cosmetic oil, shells and large bladed ceremonial stone axes. Those killing pigs will display them staked out in long rows.

As dawn breaks on the morning of the dance those who will perform with the cassowaries wring the birds' necks. They carry the carcasses into the pitpit cane surrounding the dance ground and hiding there, decorate themselves with white clay and charcoal. Meanwhile at the village huts others paint their faces brightly, oil their bodies and put feathers in their newly made wigs. They will make up the main phalanx of dancers and slowly form squads

on the dance ground, seven or eight men wide and six or more deep. They stamp around in a large circle chanting in unison. When they are dancing, the cassowary dancers stealthily approach the edge of the dance ground with their birds on their backs. They burst out stomping in single file to dance beside the main body of dancers. This bursting forth of the cassowary dancers is supposed to surprise and frighten unsuspecting spectators. During the afternoon of the first day men pluck and gut the cassowaries, stuff them with greens, and truss them up for the oven.

The second day also starts with a dawn slaughter. This time it's the pigs. They club them, singe the bristles off the carcasses and butcher them. The dance ground resembles an open air abattoir as hundreds of men butcher hundreds of pigs. Next day, while the meat cooks, everyone sits around talking, smoking and roasting tit-bits of pork. Then the oven pits are opened and the cooked meat is cut into joints for distribution. There follows for the Wola the climax of the event. Each man distributes his meat in what for the outsider is chaos and bedlam but what in fact is the exact reverse — reaffirmation of exchange as the central element in their society.

No doubt *Sabkabyinten* views the event with considerable displeasure. The killing of so many of her cassowaries certainly seemed to incur her wrath at one dance I attended. A heavy storm put a decisive damper on the ceremony before it was an hour old. — *Paul Sillitoe is an anthropologist from Cambridge University in England who spent three years with the Wola people.*

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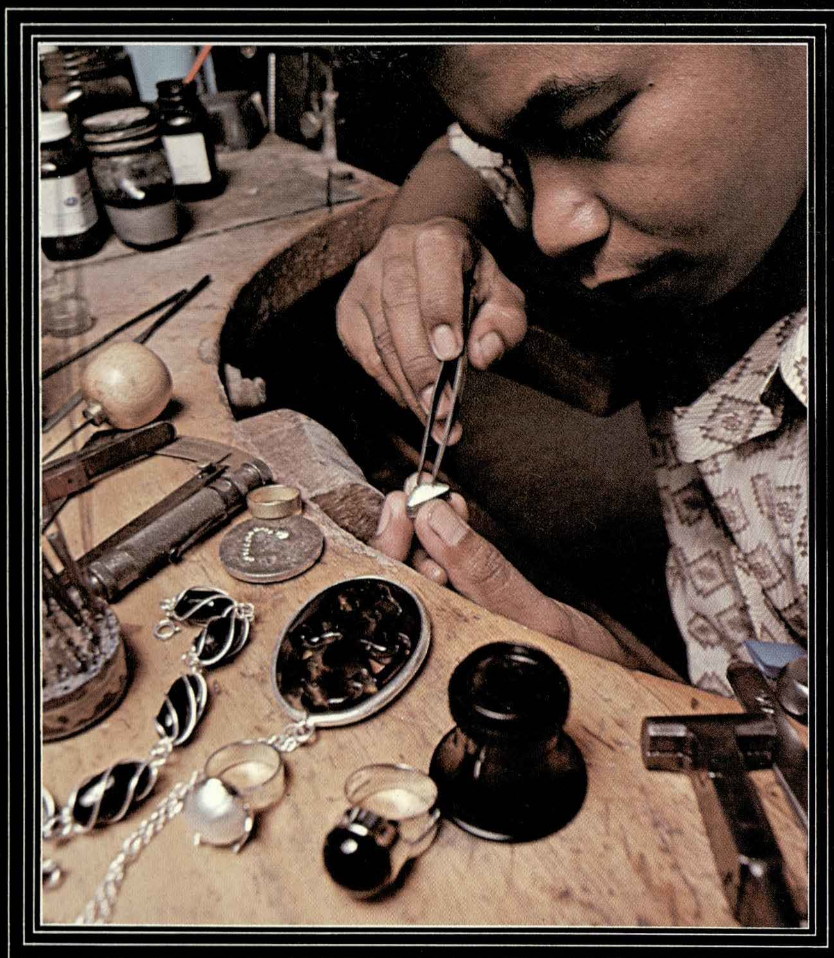

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HIRI CANOE CLASSIC

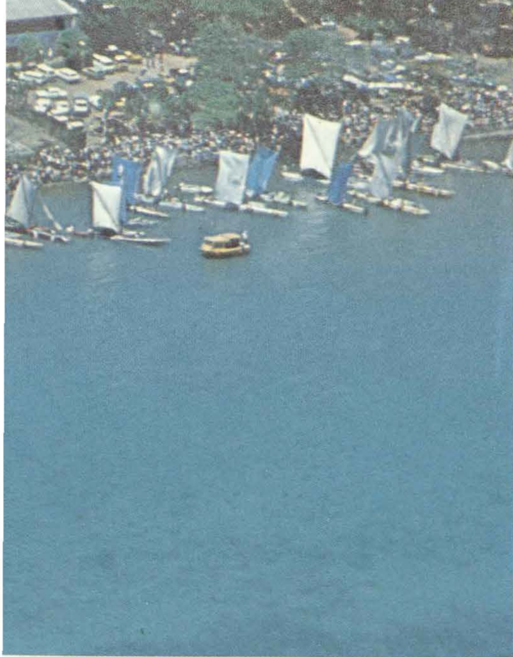
By Philip Spradbery

Highlight of the 1978 Hiri Moale festival held in Port Moresby during September was undoubtedly the great canoe race. More than 90 canoes with almost 750 crew lined up along Moresby's harbour beach near the city village of Hanuabada.

These racing canoes which are popular up and down the coast of Papua have changed little over the past fifty years although many are now sporting racing sails in terylene from Hong Kong sailmakers instead of the traditional woven coconut fibre matting or canvas duck. The design is a single outrigger canoe, the hull being carved from a solid trunk of hardwood with light buoyant timbers for the outrigger. As winds increase and the canoe begins to heel, the crew of between six and nine men clamber onto the outrigger to maintain stability. One of the most remarkable features of the racing canoe is its inability to tack. To change direction or to go around a buoy, the canoe has to be brought to a standstill, when the sail and the steering paddle are swapped to the other end, with the outrigger kept to windward throughout the manoeuvre. The helmsman simply runs from his old position in the stern to the bow, which then becomes the stern.

The big Hiri Canoe Race attracted canoes from along the Papuan coast, more than have been seen for many years in Port Moresby. The course was set to provide good racing, and plenty of action for spectators. Some ground rules were laid down to help control the more exuberant of these highly competitive sailors. A limit of 280 sq ft was made for the sail area but the canoes range in length from 28 ft to the powerful 42 footers, which can reach speeds of nearly 20 knots.

As the cannon aboard the P.N.G. Defence Force patrol boat *Madang* boomed across Moresby harbour, the crews pushed their craft from the beach. In the sheltered conditions at the start, thousands of



onlookers were thrilled by the sight of nearly a hundred sails pulling away from the shore with 22 miles of rugged racing ahead of them. As the harbour filled with canoes and spectator craft Port Moresby took on the atmosphere of Sydney Harbour on Boxing Day with the Sydney-Hobart fleet in full sail.

Once into the open water, the full fury of a vicious south-easterly wind took its toll of the craft, one canoe after another capsizing in spectacular fashion as gusts of up to 60 m.p.h. tore into the fleet. Worse was to come as the canoes raced up to the protecting reef which runs along the Papuan coast. Swells of more than 15 feet whipped to foam by the wind, greeted the leading boats and very few survived, with masts torn from hulls, sails split and shredded and many reduced to driftwood. From the reef, the course led to Koki Market and thence back to the finish in the harbour, giving more spectators the opportunity of seeing the canoes at close range as they tore along Ela Beach at speeds in excess of 18 knots.

Of a fleet of 92 canoes only 12 finished the gruelling course but, thanks to Moresby game fishing and ski boat enthusiasts, who supplied rescue boats, only two canoes were lost and more than 600 sailors were towed to safety. The winning canoe was *Island* from Keapara village, Hula, which won the Air Niugini trophy and a holiday for two in Hong Kong — *Philip Spradbery is the past commodore of the Royal Papua Yacht Club and a veteran of two Sydney to Hobart yacht races.*

MN&C WI/P41

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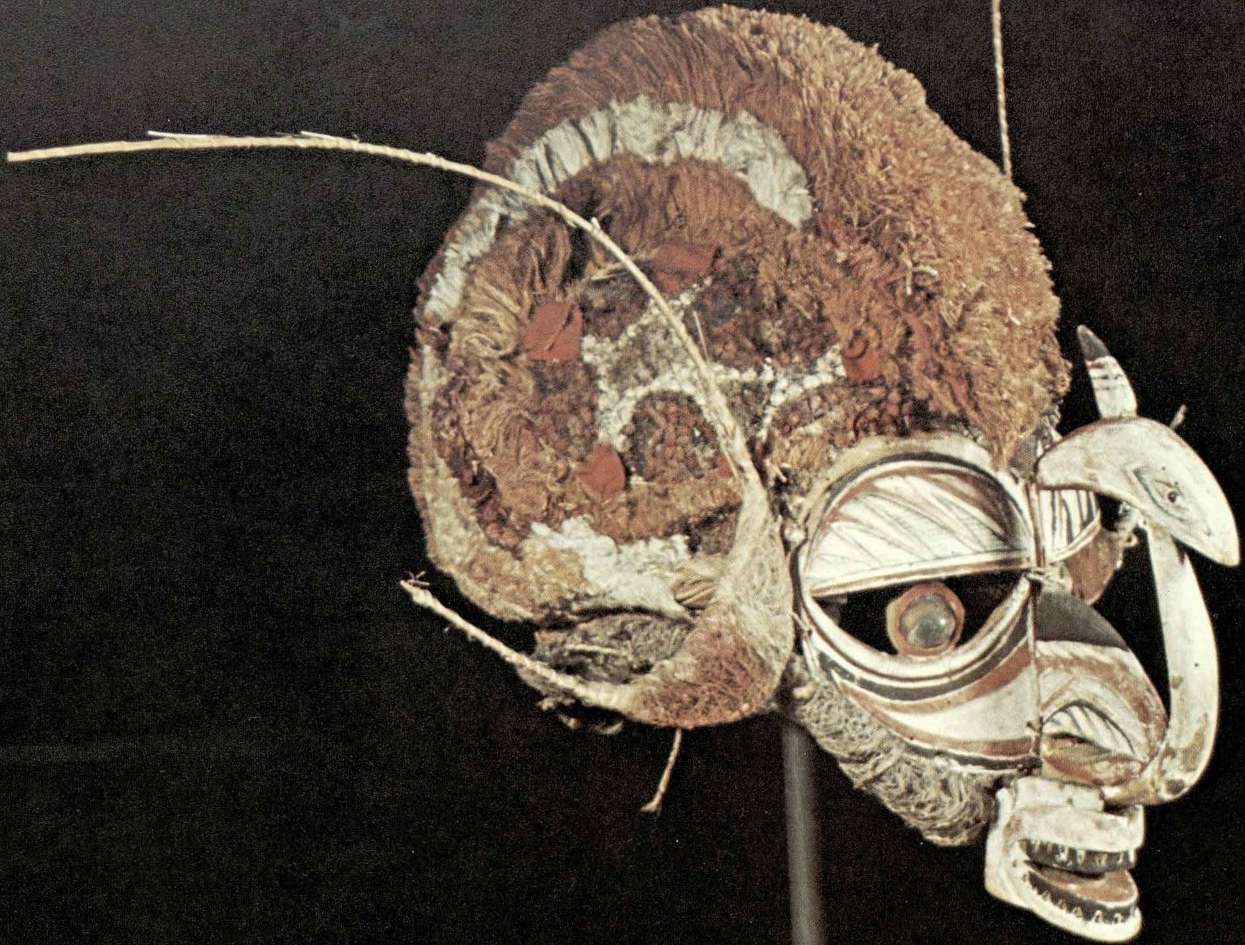
malanggan carvings



Story: Lindsay Wilson
Photography: Jennifer Steele

New Ireland, curving gracefully around the fringe of the Bismarck Sea, is more than a province of tropical beauty. It is the scene of the *Malanggan*, one of the most astonishing arts to be found in Oceania.

Malanggan is the generic term describing ceremonies to commemorate death, the initiation of boys, and the extraordinary carved images that are an integral part of such rituals.

Idyllic New Ireland, Papua New Guinea's north-eastern province, stretches north almost to the Equator. Wide reefs shelter clean white beaches. Neat villages nestled on the shores have coconut plantations that climb the foothills of the mountain range which stretch most of the island's length. Although the people are involved in cash economy, especially the production of copra, cocoa and the development of timber and fishing projects, their island is unspoiled by human or industrial pollution.

Carving *malanggan* ritual sculptures continues today and the ceremonies are practised with fervour despite the people's commitments to economic development. Perhaps some of the elaborate preparations of the past are missing and the carvings produced with steel tools lack the finesse and grace of former times.

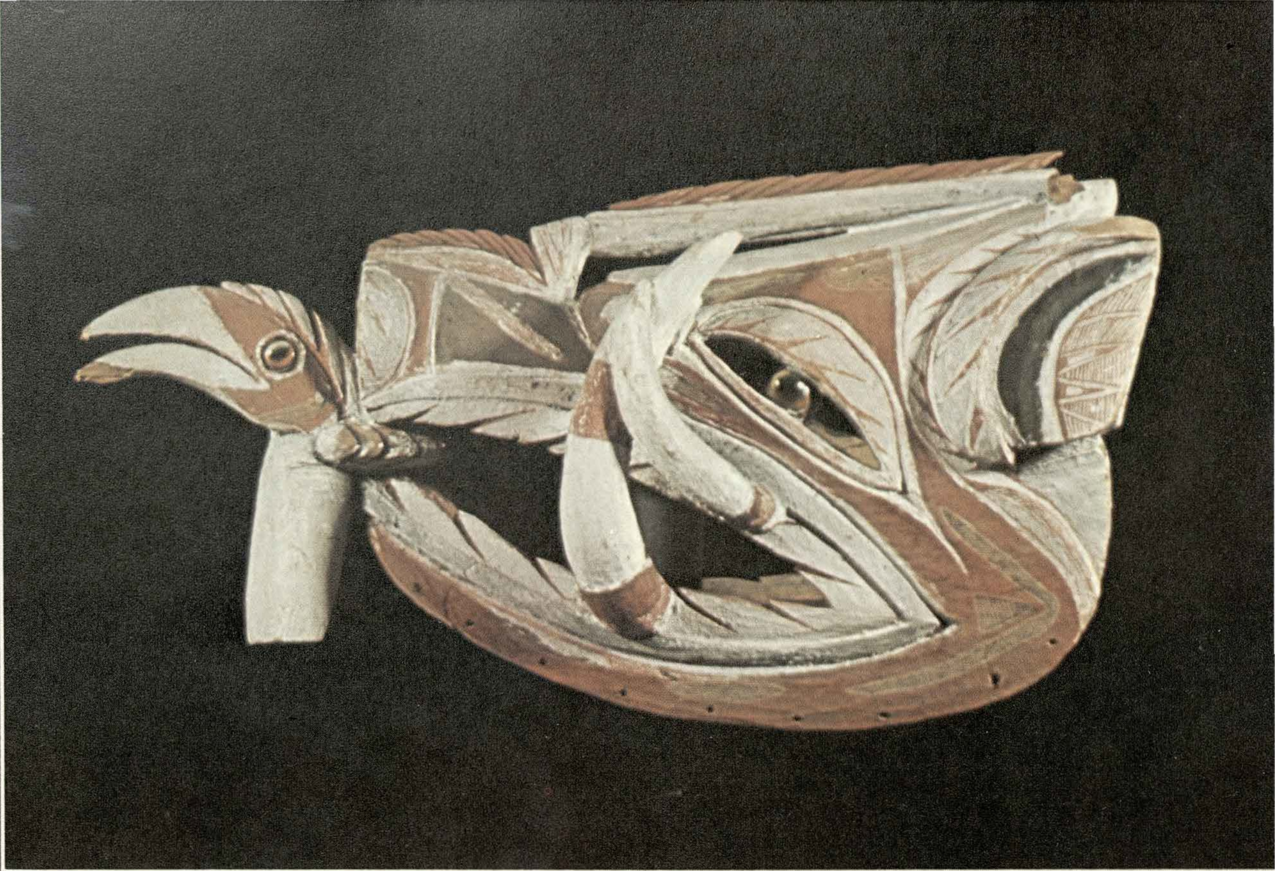
The finest artifacts were created by master artists commissioned by family groups who claimed design rights to certain types of carvings. Traditionally, the carver did little else and his time was fully occupied

filling orders for commemorative ornaments to honour deceased relatives or the initiation of boys. His every need was met — food and firewood provided, unauthorised persons kept from the carving area, and regular payments made as each stage of the carvings was completed. Payment in ceremonial form consisted of *rangap* (strings of finely cut shell money), betel nut or food.

While carving progressed series of small ceremonies and feasts, preliminaries to the final commemorative ceremony, would involve village folk for many months. At appropriate times masked dancers would perform, their regalia being permanent and carefully stored between use. The rituals of preparation, feasting, dancing and ceremony followed a strict pattern and involved everyone in the community including children.

But much of the ceremony, especially the carving of figures, was surrounded by secrecy and *tambu* in which the participation of women and children — and certain individuals through blood lines and their relationship to the deceased — was severly restricted. For those most involved in the rituals the preparation and eating of food, washing and passing of body waste, was also restricted.

Preparations in the village intensified as the carving of figures neared completion. Food was brought from gardens, firewood collected, pigs readied for killing, the people in neighbouring villages notified. Most importantly the display house for the *malanggan* was constructed. This open-fronted structure housed the completed carvings. It was built from bush poles, bamboo, and matting woven from coconut leaves. A

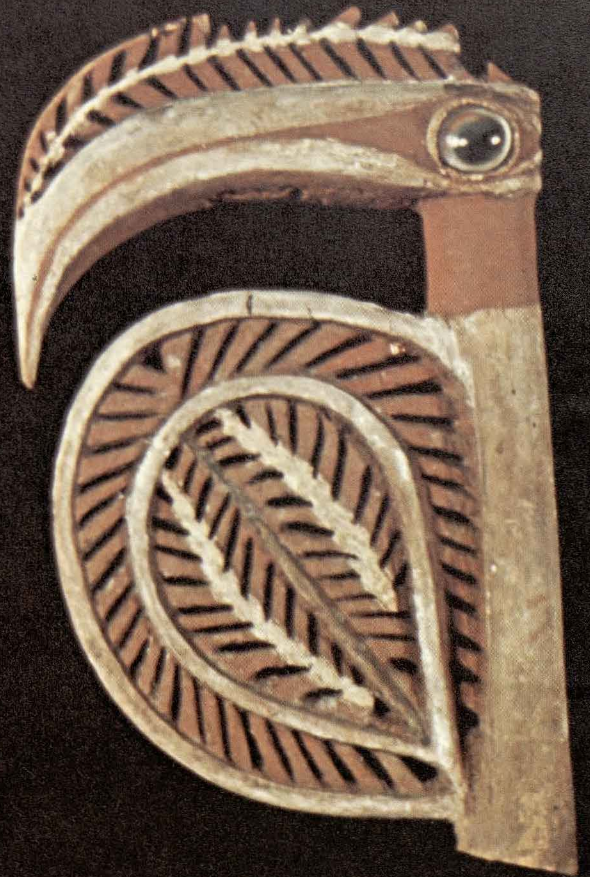


heavy fence of similar materials surrounded the building preventing entry and shielding the carvings from view.

Several days ahead pigs were slaughtered and pieces distributed to relations. Pork, fish and vegetables were cooked in big *mumu* pits (ovens constructed by digging holes in the ground and lining them with hot rocks). The culmination of months of preparation would see village and clan relations from nearby districts gather for the feast and ritual viewing of the *malanggans*. Dancing and exchange of shell money and food preceded the climax of the ceremony. Then the fence surrounding the display house was breached so that everyone could see the carvings which had been produced in secrecy over periods of many months.

Usually several people recently deceased would be honoured in this manner. Carvings would be of several types produced according to the instructions given by patrons to the carvers. Popular styles were the *marandang*, a seated figure with a woven fibre body with carved head and limbs, the free standing *totok* figure wrapped with fanciful bird and reptile figures or the intricate long-eared *sulunga* masked and mounted on a stake. The plumed *maru* mask often used in dance recalled hair styles of New Ireland men from the past. The sides of the head were shaved leaving a crest in the centre.

Custom insisted that after the ceremonies the *malanggan* figures be destroyed. They were not intended to be permanent memorials and despite their artistry and openwork designs they were made from soft timber and coloured with crude



ochres, lime and charcoal. Ritual burning or disposal in secluded areas far from the village were common means of protecting the people from further contact with the carvings. The belief was that physical harm would result from contact with the carvings which retained spiritual power after use.

A remote cave inland was often selected for the disposal of carvings, which would be left there to gradually disintegrate in the elements. The disposal site would be protected by common understanding and shunned by those travelling or hunting nearby.

The superb life-size figures of last century were created with endless patience. The carver would sit by a smouldering fire with hardwood rods of various thicknesses pushed in the coals. Withdrawing them one at a time he would blow on the end and apply the glowing tip to the sculpture burning a small area of the softwood. Scraping with shells, incising with sharks' teeth, smoothing with coral or sharkskin he repeated this process. The carvings were produced by an arduous repetition of 'burn and scrape'. This method created flowing, graceful forms that evade modern carvers.

New Irelanders want to retain their tradition but their daily routine dictated by the cash economy leaves less time for the construction of ritual *malanggan*. Where a master carver would work constantly for three months on a commission, he must today tend his cocoa or copra crops. Many carvings produced in recent years were created for money instead of ceremonial use. The use of adze, chisel and mallet do not encourage delicacy, a notable feature of early sculptures. Angular shapes and heavy openwork tracery in modern carvings are a direct result of changing technology and lesser commitment to spiritual ideals. They represent the twilight of one of Melanesia's unique traditional cultures. — *Lindsay Wilson, who is a teacher at Keravat National High School has studied the* Malanggan *for 12 years.*

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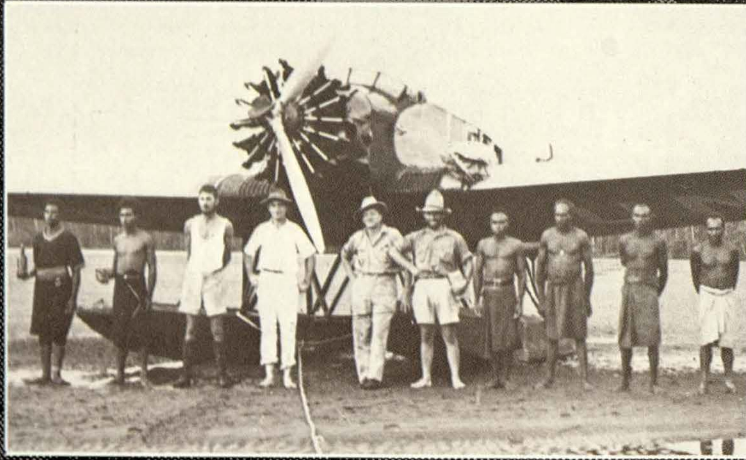
PARD MUSTAR



'I am no story writer, and zooming a bus up through the clouds with my hands on the joy-stick comes easier than piloting a pen over a flat white area of paper. But I am asked to tell how — well, anyway, here goes.

I enlisted in the Australian Engineers, attached to the Light Horse, and was in the first mob that got to Broadmeadows in 1914. I went right through the war to the Armistice. I was signal officer in the 4th Battalion in 1915, and I transferred from the Camel Corps in 1917 to No 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, as flight-lieutenant. I never got knocked — at least, not to speak of — and for that they gave me the Order of the Nile and the English Flying Cross.

I pause here to remark that this story-telling business needs an awful lot of capital I's. This, in passing.

When I got home to Aussie I went joyriding a bit in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, with a chap named Hall; we took passengers around. Then I went to the Air Force in 1921 for five years, and in July 1926 I went to the Aero Club as first instructor. From this you will gather that I am rather fond of flying.

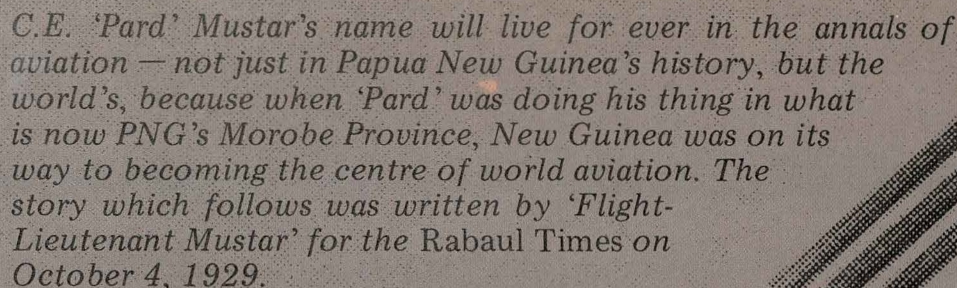
By the way, I notice they're off again exploring the heart of Australia by plane. Nothing new in that, for in 1922, while I was in the Air Force, Mr Halligan, the government geologist, of Tasmania, and I surveyed Lake Eyre, and took pictures. I was for six months with the Great Barrier Reef survey in 1925. I used a seaplane and took photographs. Interesting work, too. Used to come down in the lee of the reef, and have my machine hoisted aboard *HMAS Geranium*.

In 1927 I went up to New Guinea as chief (and only) pilot for the Guinea Gold No Liability Company — the GGNL we called it. It was a mining company only then, but they had acquired a small aeroplane to cater for the wants of the goldfields.

It was this way. On the coast of New Guinea proper, at the apex of the wedge-shaped Huon Gulf, is the village of Salamoa (Salamaua, just north of Papua — Editor), with about 50 to 100 whites. Just a little inland from Salamoa, as the crow flies, or would fly if there were any crows in New Guinea, is the goldfield; say about as far as Healesville to Port Melbourne (in Victoria — Editor). Nothing much of a journey, you will say, nothing at all, but the only way to get from Salamoa to the goldfields was to walk across, and that took a strong man eight days and nights, while an aeroplane could do it in 40 minutes. You see, there is a stupendous mountain in between the sea and the mines, and the goldfield itself is on Edie mountain, 8600 feet (2620 metres) up in the sky, with valleys 3400 feet (1040 metres) here and there on the way up.

And so I took the first plane, the DH37, up to Rabaul, which is about the nearest port to Salamoa, it being impossible to land goods at Salamoa itself. I took the plane along on the *SS Melusia*; it was her last trip, and the worst in her history, for we ran into a cyclone. I never believed that the sea could be so savage or that a steamer could survive such a doing as we got. In one 24 hours of the trip we progressed only 17 miles (27 kilometres) — backwards. The machine was damaged by the pounding seas which came aboard and everyone on the *Melusia* was damaged, too, I can tell you.

Anyhow, we assembled the bus at Rabaul and made an aerodrome of sorts at the foot of the Daughter volcano. It was merely a narrow runway. While we were doing this at Rabaul, another party was clearing the jungle at Lae, which is just across the point of the gulf from Salamoa, and levelling the ground



C.E. 'Pard' Mustar's name will live for ever in the annals of aviation — not just in Papua New Guinea's history, but the world's, because when 'Pard' was doing his thing in what is now PNG's Morobe Province, New Guinea was on its way to becoming the centre of world aviation. The story which follows was written by 'Flight-Lieutenant Mustar' for the Rabaul Times *on October 4, 1929.*

for the coastal terminus of our new airway. Up on Edie mountain, too, they were making ready a piece of grassland at the foot of the mountain. It had a slope of one in 15 (four degrees), and you can land on it in only one direction — up hill. As native boys (Papua New Guineans — Editor) had to be taken from the goldmining to do that Edie job, that aerodrome was expensive, as each boy is worth two ounces (of gold — Editor) a day — say £4/10/-. Labour is pretty dear.

When all was ready I flew the machine from Rabaul to Lae, 460 miles (740km) over sea and impenetrable jungle. Rabaul is on the island of New Britain, and they call New Guinea the mainland. On the trip I passed over an active volcano, and had to turn back and take another route, so the journey took me five hours and 20 minutes, quite a long time, and I was stone numb when I landed in Lae.

Our staff welcomed the machine, the first to land there. And the kanakas (local people — Editor)! Good Lord! They came in droves to see the 'big fella pigeon'. My engineer, Multius, was over six feet (1.8 metres) tall, while I am only five feet six inches (1.7 metres) short, and the kanakas couldn't understand why the little man was 'Number one master longa pigeon'. They examined the machine and decided it was 'strong fella too much. Me no savvy this fella fashion belonga white master'. Some of these natives had travelled for days down from the mountains to see the 'pigeon'. The word — the 'talk' they call it — had gone out, passed from mouth to mouth in their queer uncanny wireless, and they took full measurements of the wings and all parts of the machine with lengths of cane, to carry back to wondering villagers.

The Lae aerodrome starts right on the water's edge, but only about 400 yards (365 metres) length of it is needed, because of the trade winds which are always blowing there, even during the northwest monsoons, and always in one direction.

I only had a very hazy idea as to where the Edie field was, for I had only rough sketches made by miners to guide me, but I set off on Easter Sunday morning, 1927, on our initial flight to try to locate the goldfield. I had absolutely no idea what a goldfield looked like from the air, even if I did strike it, particularly in such jungle country. So I was not surprised that after two hours of flying I had failed to locate it. Back I came to Lae, and they told me to 'follow the biggest river to its source'. Off I went again, and flew for three hours, but still detected no symptoms of a goldfield. On the third attempt, I took a miner with me who knew the country — some of it — and within an hour we landed at the Wau aerodrome at the foot of Edie, on the goldfield.

We were received with the frantic cheers of the delighted miners and Mrs Miller, one of the two white women there, killed and cooked a duck for the banquet. We stayed there an hour, and with the information supplied we returned to Lae by a route which is now in daily use. To get to the field the way we had come we had to climb to 10,000 feet (3050 metres), crossing the Hertzog mountain. Our track back took us through a pass which was only 4,000 feet (1220 metres) above sea level, and only 500 feet (150 metres) higher than the Wau aerodrome.

The boys, as I have said, took eight days on this trip, carrying 50 pounds (22.5 kilograms) of stores for the field and 14 days' rations each for their own use. They had to tramp through gorges and over razorback ridges, down precipitous slopes, with hand grips cut in the rocks, and a rope of native kunda (vine) to hang on to. Sometimes they waded along running streams, or over matted beds of roots, and for five out of the eight days they never saw the sun, so dense is the jungle there. They went through tropical rains, wet and miserable, on the slippery tracks. With every hundred boys went a white man, but he and the boys all suffered in health, and had to be spelled from time to time.

To keep five boys working on the fields it required 10 boys carrying on the track. Eight days in, six days out! And our total time from departure from Lae to arriving back again was one hour 40 minutes allowing for unloading. I did two trips each way

regularly with passengers and back loading.

A month after I had been doing this, (Ray — Editor) Parer arrived, engaged to the Bulolo Goldfields Air Service. This was an opposition line, but it was very welcome to me, for you may imagine how lonely I felt, the only airman in New Guinea. So Parer and I were rivals and firm friends.

The air route from Lae to Wau is 60 miles (96 km) which is longer than a direct flight, but it obviates climbing to high altitudes over country dangerous in the case of a forced landing.

Our little machine could not meet the GGNL's demands, so I went off to Europe for one of greater carrying capacity. In the meantime we supplemented our fleet by two pilots and a D.11.9. At this time it was decided to form the aircraft side of the GGNL into a separate company under the style of Guinea Airways Ltd, and I was made managing director.

In Europe I decided on a German machine with a British engine, and bought a Junkers freight-carrier and a British Jupiter radial engine. This combination represented the most efficient unit procurable, the machine carrying 12 per cent more than its own weight. I bought spares and seaplane floats for the flight from Rabaul to Lae.

During the time I was in Germany I spent a fortnight in the Junkers factory learning the methods of manufacture of this type of all-metal plane.

It was odd meeting the Germans after fighting them so long. There was much raising of hats and bowing and politeness, but very little, and very execrable English. But presently the ex-consul of New Zealand came along, Herr Joosten, who had been 25 years out here, and talked real Australian — and smoked Capstans. I spent Christmas with him at his home in Leipzig.

Then I went to the Bristol works, and put in a week in the engine department. learning the overhauling and assembling, and so came back confident.

The Junkers is an all-metal wing monoplane, with a useful load of 2860 pounds (1270 kg). This meant we had a disposable load of over 2000 pounds (900 kg), as compared with 500 pounds (225 kg). The Bristol engine is similar to those used in the East-West air service.

At Rabaul I assembled and erected the plane on the beach, and flew it to Lae as a seaplane. Then I took off the floats and put on wheels and wheeled her up from the beach to the aerodrome. On our first flight we carried 2300 pounds (1040 kg) of cargo and one passenger. Our arrival was particularly cheering to the staff at Lae, as one of our two planes had made a forced landing at Bulolo river and was a complete wreck, and the other was on the fields out of action waiting for a new gearbox from London. So we started off on a new life with the Junkers, and ordered another one.

My biggest load of passengers in that machine was 14 men. That is, myself and another white man and 12 kanakas. I sat the kanakas in the cabin, four on the floor with their backs to the bulkhead, and four more sitting on their knees, then four more sitting in front of them. I sternly commanded, 'S'pose you move, you die finish quick time'. They didn't move.

Some of them enjoyed it as kids might on a merry-go-round ride; some were indifferent; and some wrapped their heads in rags and sat in a cold sweat of fear; but they all preferred it to walking. When they saw me gripping the controls they concluded I was holding the machine in the air, and declared I was 'strong fella too much'.

I have carried sick men, black and white, from the fields, ordinary cargo, and passengers at £25 a head — the fare to the fields is now £5 only — and without an aeroplane existence there would be impossible.

And now I am laid aside by malaria, and riding up Collins Street on the twopenny tram, I think wistfully of the good old machine soaring in the purple twilight over the inaccessible peaks of New Guinea. — *Pard Mustar died in 1971 and his ashes were flown from Australia and scattered over Lae from a TAA DC3 which bears his name and now stands in the grounds of Lae Technical College. (Many expressions used in Papua New Guinea's colonial years, and used by Mustar in this article, are today unacceptable to Papua New Guineans and most Europeans. Though they were used innocently enough they were clearly derogatory and, fortunately, are rapidly losing currency, particularly since independence. — Editor.)*

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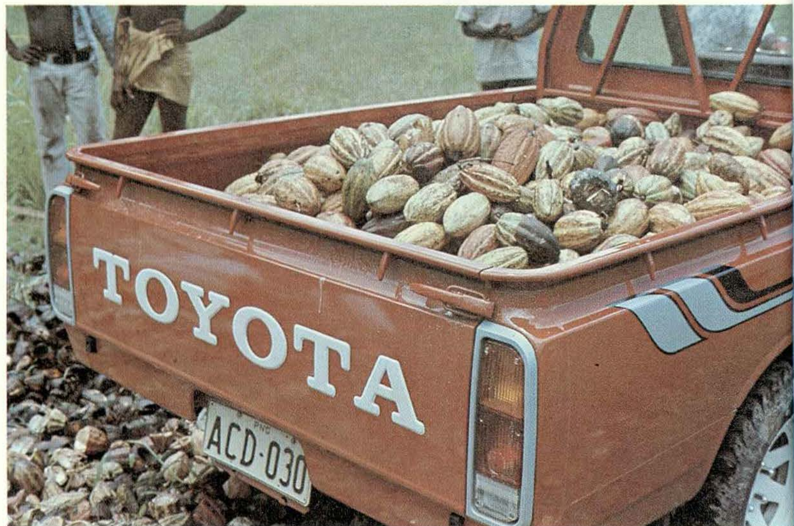

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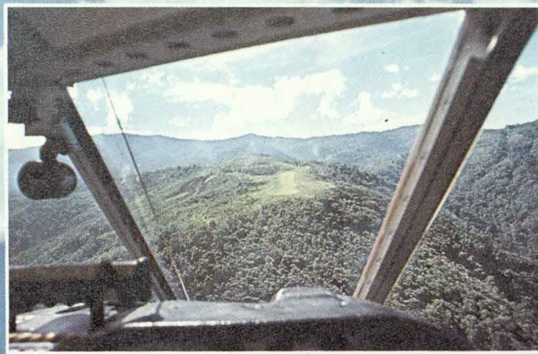

Jungle Run

Story: Gerry Dick

The *jungle run* is a grass-roots air service which provides the only communication — except walking — between the people who live in isolated villages along the Kokoda Trail and the world outside.

Traditionally the service operates on Sundays, partly because the village subsistence gardeners who use it are Seventh Day Adventists. Demand in recent months has resulted in a Thursday run as well.

Douglas Airways operates the route in Britten-Norman Islander and Nomad aircraft. Those small twin-engined machines are the only models available with the performance to use the very short runways at high density altitudes but are big enough to carry a worthwhile payload.

Village airports on the Kokoda Trail are Kagi, Manumu, Efogi, Menari and Naoro. From Port Moresby, at sea level, the flight to each of them is up-hill all the way. Kagi, the furthest from Port Moresby, is just 56km away but 1200m above sea level. The airstrip is built on the undulating crest of a razorback ridge. Strip length is 447m with a slope averaging at 12.5 degrees. The ground is so uneven that one section of the strip has a 25 degree slope. Across the valley on the next ridge is Efogi about a minute and a half by air — but a good day's walk away. Efogi is 1169m above sea level, has a strip length of 487m and a 9.5 degree slope.

About two minutes flying time south is Menari airstrip which is built in a valley. The strip is 769m above sea level, is 426m long with a 7.5 degree slope. All of the airstrips have grass surfaces which require frequent cutting during the wet season. All of them run one way (you land and

take off from one end only) with the villages perched on the only level ground remaining right at the end.

Douglas Airways makes two direct flights between Port Moresby and each of the five airports on Sundays and one direct service to each on Thursdays. Typical passengers are young village men off to seek their fortunes in the city, and returning to visit relations wiser for the experience. Older subsistence gardeners use the service to take their produce to market, where they spend the week selling it before returning to tend their gardens for more.

Typical cargo outbound includes empty boxes and bags, drums of kerosene for cooking fuel and lanterns, and trade store supplies. The boxes are used for collecting mandarin oranges and the bags for 'cabbages' — a term which to the village gardeners on the Kokoda Trail means any vegetable that is green.

I recently flew the *jungle run* with pilot Brian O'Sullivan (now assistant chief pilot for Douglas Airways) in an Islander. Our mission was to provide a photographic platform for Shisei Kuwabara who photographed a Nomad aircraft flown by Mike Waters (former chief pilot, now Air Niugini F27 first officer). The empty space in the Nomad was put to good use. One city worker, absent from his village at Menari for some time, took the opportunity to go home to visit relations who received him with tears and hugs. And of course we took home a load of 'cabbage'.

Douglas Airways is only too happy to invite you to fly the *jungle run* any Thursday or Sunday. The fare is not expensive and the rewards are many. You get to sample some real bush flying in well maintained aircraft flown by experienced pilots. There are some friendly people to be met on the way, and if you care to ask, they're happy to show you around their villages.

Always there is the nostalgia of the past Kokoda Trail battlefield — and the opportunity to see first hand just how important aviation is to Papua New Guinea.

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