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No. 18 July 1979

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IN THIS ISSUE

Hello and welcome

This month we spread our wings and fly to Honolulu, Jakarta and Singapore. With our existing services to Manila, Hong Kong, Japan, Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns, Honiara and Jayapura, we have the Pacific covered north, south, east and west. Our route from Honolulu through Port Moresby to Jakarta and Singapore will be one of the most convenient of all between the United States and Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Singapore. It will save time and money.

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We know for certain that Papua New Guinea has much to offer our visitors, for business or pleasure. There's a bee-hive of activity underway here that would attract any businessman. There are more than 45% of the world's total languages, each of which represents a different set of cultural values and customs, spoken throughout Papua New Guinea in addition to English. Our people, climate, geography, flora and fauna offer the visitor the warmest of welcomes. And it starts aboard our *Bird of Paradise* jets.

G. S. Fallscheer
General Manager

PHOTO CREDITS

Brian Mennis
Bruce Adams
Sydney Palmer
Roy D. Mackay
Judith Hollinshed
Peter Lowenstein

COVER

Brian Mennis captured the magic of the newly constructed *lalong* (traditional canoe) on the beach at Bilibil, silhouetted in the early morning light shortly before her maiden voyage to Madang. Brian's report of her construction begins on page five.

Travelodge Port Moresby

Port Moresby, the Nation's bustling capital, now boasts a spectacular new Travelodge tri-arc hotel on a superb hillside location in the middle of the city. This 180 room property, now open for business, offers guests panoramic views of the magnificent harbour and ocean together with a full range of facilities including convention rooms. Travelodge offers the first truly international standard hotel in this exciting new nation to extend the Travelodge chain of hotels across the South Pacific.

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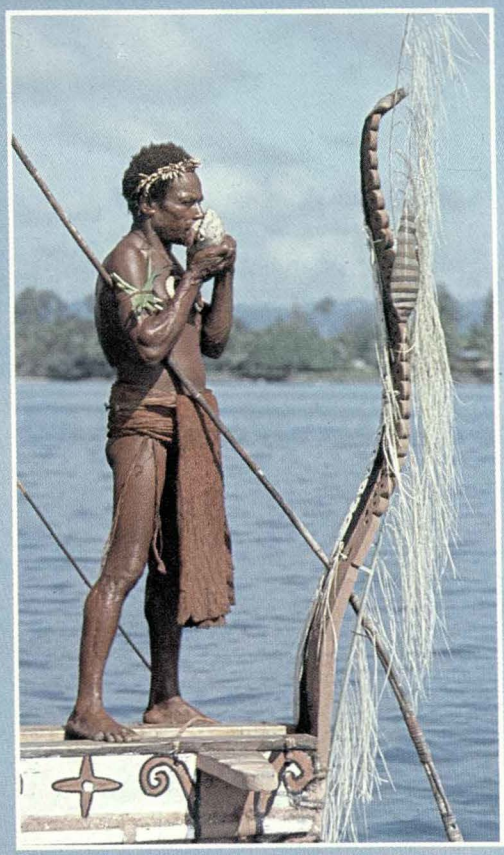
BILIBIL CANOE



Above: *Call to arms – Kube blows the conch shell.*
background: *abeam Yabob Island on the maiden voyage to madang*

Story and photography
By Brian and Mary Mennis

The Bilibil people were up early that March morning this year. To the beat of *garamut* (drums), they made ready their *lalong* (traditional canoe) for the voyage to Madang, moving quickly not to miss the *yawan* (wind) before it dropped.

The early morning sun picked out the red designs along the strakes and the fish painted on the sail. From the top of the mast, a carved cockatoo peered down on the activity. The sun warmed as the crew carried out their last minute chores under the eye of

Above: *Sailor Sesale and the oar he carved;* background: *preparations for the maiden voyage*

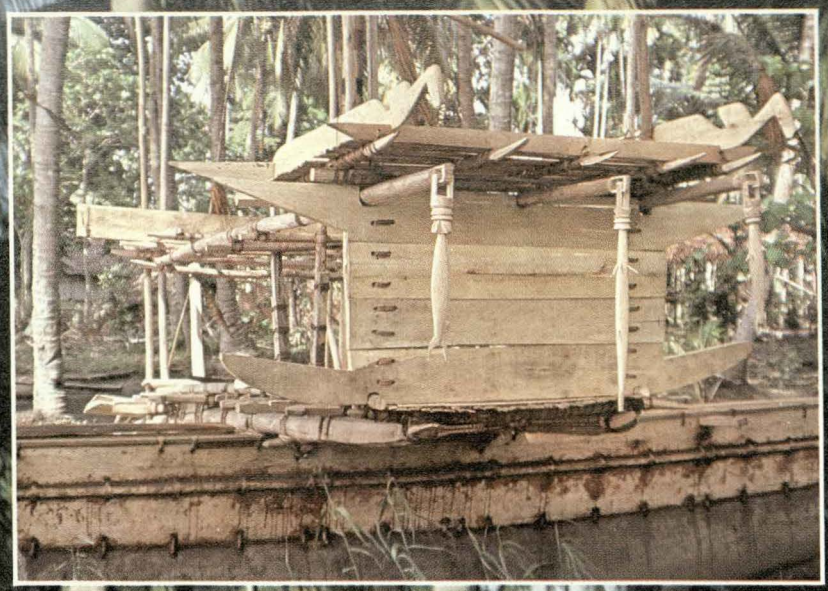
Old Derr. Among the sailors were Kore, Kube and Masel and others of the younger generation who had never before sailed a *lalong*.

Kube, in traditional garb of the *Mal*, blew the conch shell — the sound reverberated around the bay, an echo from past ages when dozens of these large masted vessels sailed the Astrolabe Bay. The Bilibil were not the only *lalong* sailors. But it was 40 years since they, or the Riwo, Siar, Kranket, Yabob or Bilia people, had built one.

The Bilibil people, until 1904, lived on an island just off the north coast of Papua New Guinea's mainland, not far from present-day Madang. The island, like a giant footprint, is mostly of limestone rock and has little soil suitable for crops. From their village on the 'instep' of the island, the Bilibil for centuries embarked on trading voyages, hundreds of kilometres in either direction along the coast. Sometimes they sailed in the mighty twin-masted *balangut*, up to 13 metres long.

The Bilibil were in search of food, utensils and clothing. In exchange they offered their unique earthenware pots, made by the womenfolk.

It was not a simple case of building a vessel and sailing away. The ritual leading to a launching was



Above: *The cabin decorated with carved fish*; right: *sailor Tomasin dresses the hull on Kranket Island*

intricate in the extreme. Hulls, bought from the Riwo or Kranket, when still trunks of trees, had had their *masalai* (spirits) placated and persuaded to live elsewhere. As the tree was being cut down, each evening all the loose chips would be gathered up and burnt in case the *masalai* decided to put them back in place. Sometimes, with nothing but stone axes, it would take up to four days to fell a tree.

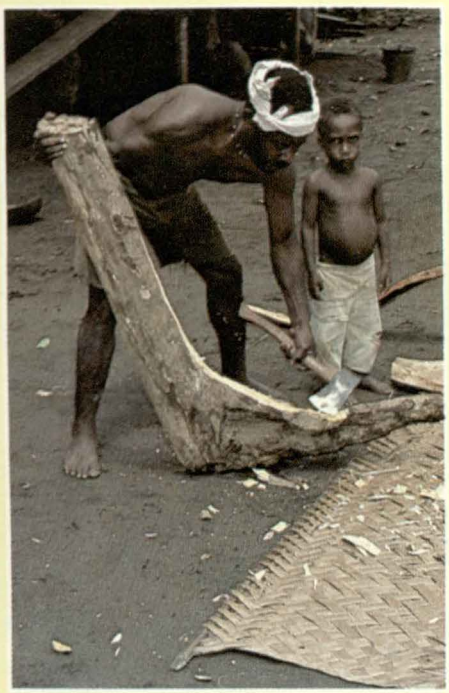
When the hull had been paddled to Bilibil, work would start on the superstructure with bush materials, logs, vines, bamboo and *saksak* (sago palm), usually bought from mountain people on the mainland coast opposite Bilibil. While the superstructure went up, the carvers were working on the ornate prows, to be fixed later fore and aft.

A platform was built to carry the pots and above this covered accommodation for the crew. Last of all the mast was raised and the plaited, decorated sails attached.

Then came the *likon* (sorcerer) whose job was to calm the seas or call up the right wind for the voyage.

As the women hurried down to load their pots, the men would flog the canoes with leaves to rid them of the last of the evil spirits. The conch shells sounded the start.

As land was alienated along the



Clockwise from above: *Shaping a knee to support the planks; canoe hull arrives at Bilibil; weaving the sail*

coast and trees suitable for canoe hulls were cleared to make way for plantations, and as the able-bodied began to leave their village to work on the plantations and goldfields and other young men went to school at mission centres, the art of canoe-making began to fade. When the Bilibil shifted to the mainland in 1904 they were no longer so dependent on sea transport although they continued to voyage along the Rai coast to the east.

The last major voyage was in 1934 and canoes continued to be sailed until 1943 when the Bilibil people returned to their island to escape the war. One night they sailed their canoes across to the mainland and fled into the bush. Later the canoes were bombed and that was the end of these beautiful craft. Many who knew the art died during the war and others lost interest.

Last year it was decided to see if a traditional vessel could be built again. Old men pooled their knowledge, the JANT Company provided a suitable log, the Area Authority came up with K700 and the PNG Home Affairs Department K200 to help in the costs of the project. At Easter last year the finished hull, worked by Tomasin, was shipped from Kranket to the village at Bilibil where it was inspected by the old men. They decided it was long enough only for a one-master *lalong*.

It is easy to list the stages of construction. But, even though the Bilibil stuck solidly to their task, it took seven months to finish it. The pride of the Bilibil in their achievement was obvious. Hopefully the example has been set for young people of Bilibil and surrounding groups to sustain this cultural revival. — *Brian and Mary Mennis are freelance photo-journalists based in Madang.*

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NEW GOLD

Story and photography
By Peter Lowenstein

No potential gold bonanza in Papua New Guinea has been more tantalising than the Lakekamu field, on the upper reaches of a river of the same name. Since its discovery as a source of gold in 1909 by prospectors Matt Crowe and Frank and Jim Pryke, 'colours' have been found in many tributaries of the Lakekamu. But payable gold has remained elusive, even though a continuous search was maintained from 1910 until the early thirties.

Terrain, weather and disease have never made life easy for the prospector in this hostile zone. In 1910 an epidemic of dysentery killed over a third of the 650 people employed on the goldfield.

By 1912 Lakekamu had produced 6500 ounces (202 kg) of gold; by 1926 (after which production virtually dried up) 37,170 ounces (1156 kg). Several companies persisted in their

search through the thirties but no records remain. After the war more hopefuls — individuals and companies — moved in again.

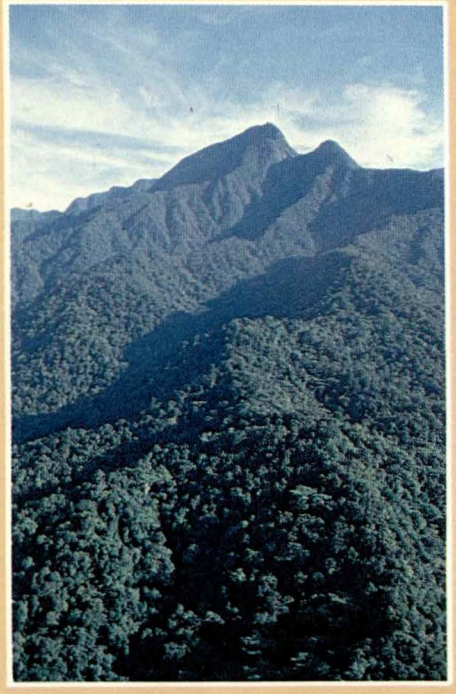
The frustration in working the Lakekamu lies in the diverse and often remote origin of the gold. The Lakekamu is underlaid by ancient gravels and conglomerates extending over an area of more than a thousand square kilometres. Unfortunately, unlike the Morobe goldfields to the north, none of these gravels and conglomerates is rich enough to be worked on its own. Only in those limited areas where streams are downcutting and reworking old gravels does payable ground occur. Best values are found where streams are bringing gold down from sources in Papua New Guinea's central ranges.

It was a report to the mining warden at Wau, over the range to the north in Morobe Province, which prompted me to visit the area last year. Papua New Guinean miners reported they had found a new gold area in a tributary of the Biaru River, which rising in the Morobe Province, runs through Central Province into the Lakekamu, which finally empties into the sea in the Gulf Province.

In October last year with a Papua New Guinean mining assistant stationed at Wau, I explored the area of interest.

The first stage of the journey was a 20-minute flight from Wau to Kakoro airstrip, the nearest village

Above: *On the bank of the fast flowing Biaru River;* **below:** *Mt Stanley on the short flight from Wau to Kakoro may be the source of the new gold*



accessible by air to the latest find. From Kakoro it was a 12 km walk along the banks of the broad, swiftly-flowing Biaru. The track was through dense rainforest and several small streams had to be crossed. High in the mountains the small party found Papua New Guinean miners working and winning gold from a creek bed.

After a few days on the site it became evident that the new locality, although small, was most interesting. The miners were working gravels containing rough, unworn alluvial gold that had travelled only a very short distance from its source. Although not likely to be of major commercial value, it is clear that the prospect will support several miners for a year or two. It is likely that this creek has, in the past, contributed gold to the larger streams which drain into the Lakekamu goldfield.

A careful search around the creek failed to turn up a major reef. But there were indications that the gold must be occurring in numerous tiny stringers, each too small to be individually located, in the rocks on the surrounding hillsides. But despite extensive sampling, crushing and panning, no gold was actually found occurring in the area.

A detailed survey of the area immediately surrounding the creek indicated a number of unusual features of great interest. Numerous outcrops of granitic rock, often found near gold mineralisation, were present. More interesting, however, was a line of partly-buried black boulders on the hillside just upstream from the workings. When broken open they were found to contain beautiful pink manganese-silicate ore (rhodochrosite) which had weathered on the outside to form crusts of black manganese oxides.

Although no gold was visible in the boulders it was suspected there might be some connection as similar

manganese ores do contain gold in the Morobe. Numerous samples were collected and taken back to Port Moresby for assay.

In all but three cases, assay indicated that values were below detection and it appeared in most cases the ores contained no gold at all. However the three remaining samples, although superficially similar in appearance to the others, contained significant gold values. Two contained several parts per million and one a spectacular 120 parts per million (about four ounces to the ton) of gold.

At first it was thought an error had occurred and on re-examining the top specimen with a magnifying glass no gold could be seen. It was decided to crush some of the material and pan it in a prospecting dish to see if 'colours' could be obtained. After several washings of the coarsely crushed material, a small but bright yellow 'tail' of very fine powder — 'mustard' — gold was obtained. The presence of gold in the sample had been confirmed.

Normally, when gold is panned from crushed source rock, the particles have an irregular shape, a rough texture and may contain inclusions of rock matrix. The shape of the particles to a large degree is determined by the texture of the matrix. If cavities are present in the matrix, crystals with well-developed faces or wiry forms of gold will sometimes occur.

Above: *Resting on the jungle trail to Biaru goldfield;* **below:** *the unusual pattern of gold viewed under a powerful microscope*

However, when the gold panned from the Biaru River sample was examined under a microscope it was found to comprise astonishingly perfect little spheres ranging from 20-280 microns in diameter (one micron is one thousandth of a millimetre). Their surfaces were highly polished and in some cases mirror smooth. The form was extremely unusual if not unique.

At first it was not clear how such perfect spheres could have been formed. But careful re-examination of uncrushed material under a high power binocular microscope revealed that the spheres were nestling inconspicuously along fine cracks and in small cavities in the rock matrix. They were almost completely enclosed in a matrix of soft, earthy, iron and manganese oxides.

A careful study of the distribution of the spherules showed that they must have been formed about the same time as the iron and manganese oxides were deposited along the cracks and into the cavities in the rock matrix.

Just how and why the gold spherules were formed remains a mystery. An extensive search through scientific literature has failed to turn up a report on anything similar anywhere else. It is clear a new kind of gold has been discovered in the Lakekamu samples.

Further investigations will have to be carried out to determine the mode of origin and the mechanism by which this unusual gold was formed. If answers are found to these questions it might be easier to decide whether the Lakekamu is worth persevering with. — *Dr Peter Lowenstein is acting assistant chief government geologist of the Geological Survey Division of the Department of Minerals and Energy in Port Moresby.*

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WONDUMI WATERS

Story and photography
by Sydney Palmer

Wondumi village is a long way from the ocean, not the kind of place you would expect to find natural salt water. I was in Wondumi, five kilometres along a winding, pleasant road from Wau in the highlands in the south of Papua New Guinea's Morobe Province, not aware of any particular feature which would make the village stand apart from any other in the area, when I was asked: 'Would you like to see the salt water?'

Of course I wanted to and followed my guide along a walking track to a curious rock outcrop. Not only was it of an unusual shape, it appeared to be coated with a dry reasonably smooth crust, and the stepping effect on its face suggested it had once been a waterfall.

From my angle, the rock appeared to be about four metres high and I had no difficulty climbing to the top. That's when it took my breath away. Down the other side was not just a four metre drop but a stepped fall of about 20 metres.

Composing myself — I am not very good when looking down from unguarded heights — I inspected the top of the rock. From a small hole came a stream of water, a reasonable flow, which through a series of channels, found its way to the steep side where it flowed smoothly down over the ledges.

When I had first approached the rock my impression had been that it had a drab appearance. Not so on

the other side. As I looked down I became rapt in a riot of rich colours — tawny brown, rich yellow, delicate green, regal purple.

A narrow, slippery track led to the base of the rock. I couldn't resist it. I wanted to explore and savour this spectacle from every angle. Partly down the track I took a photograph which captures all the beauty and glory of the effects of the Wondumi spring. As if this were not enough, at the foot of the rock I noticed the bole of a large tree which glistened like a huge diamond embodying a rich splash of red. On closer inspection I realised the bole was as hard as the rock above — it was completely petrified. The remains of a tree had been turned completely to stone.

The tree itself had been cut down many years before. One very old man could not remember when it had stood. Legend has it that it was cut down about 200 years ago when it was noticed that the bole was turning to stone. Villagers, responding to my curiosity, told me that at one time the water had cascaded all over the rock. However, when objects around the rock had showed signs of turning to stone, channels were cut in the top to divert the water away from the village.

The water must contain remarkable salts and minerals to produce the effect it has. It is indeed overpoweringly salty and when I left I took with me a large glass container of the 'magic' liquid. For some time afterward, each morning, I took a small dose as a mild laxative. It was certainly effective — I was often restrained from leaping over a chair in new-found youth and exuberance.

Something, however, told me I ought to stop taking it. You see, I was very worried that if at any time I might need a stomach operation I would have great difficulty explaining to an astounded surgeon that my technicolour stomach and hardening arteries could be blamed on my addiction to the wonderful salt waters of Wondumi. — *Sydney Palmer is a resident of Papua New Guinea and has travelled widely throughout the country.*

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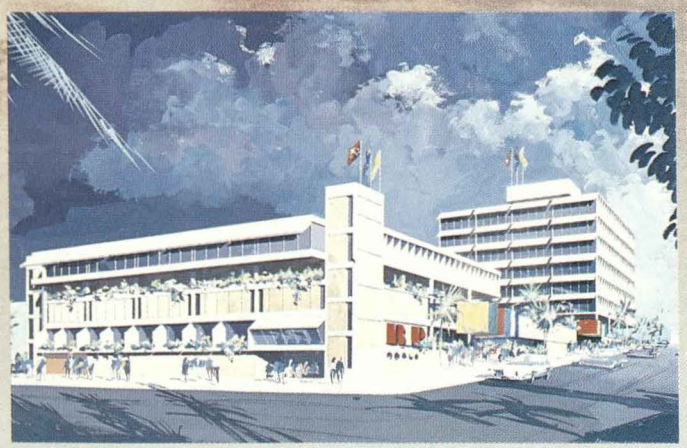

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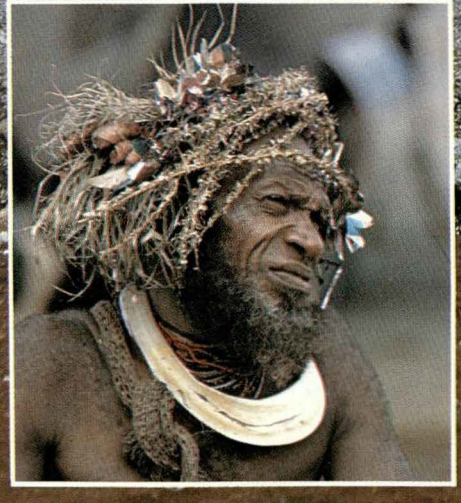
A BRIDGE FOR TARI

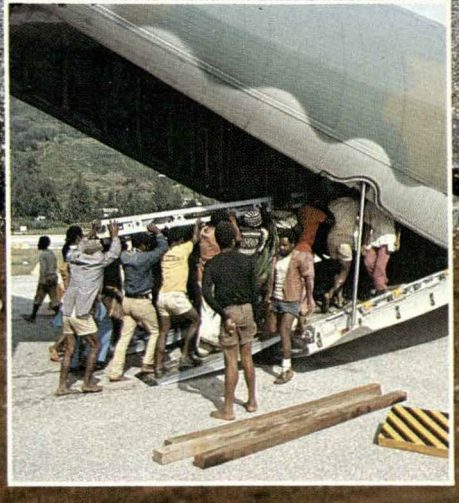
Story and photography
by Bruce Adams

Question: How do you move 40 sections of a steel Bailey Bridge weighing more than 24 tonnes across 65 kilometres of rugged mountains and jungle between Mendi and Tari, almost 2000 metres above sea level?

Answer: Call for help from 36 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, which operates a fleet of C130H Hercules transport aircraft.

The question was raised recently by the Papua New Guinea Government which has committed itself to



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Loading sections of the Bailey Bridge into the Royal Australian Air Force C130H Hercules at Mendi for the short flight to Tari in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea

an ambitious but difficult project to improve the lives of people in remote centres by building roads and improving communications.

In the Highland regions of Papua New Guinea, especially in the Southern Highlands where Mendi and Tari are situated, road building is extremely tough. But the lack of roads is holding the Tari district in particular back in development because, while the land there is fertile for agriculture, the only reliable access to the region is by light aircraft.

The sections of the Bailey Bridge had already been transported to Mendi, on the Highlands Highway, which is the country's only major road network. It links Mount Hagen with Lae on the coast.

The primitive track which serves as a road between Mendi and Tari made it almost impossible to carry the bridge sections by truck.

The Papua New Guinea Government knew that the only practical way of getting the bridge from Mendi to Tari was by air. The colonial masters in the early thirties had taught this lesson well because gigantic dredges had been flown from the coast at Salamaua over the mountains to the Wau goldfields. Never-to-be-beaten airfreight records were set on that short route in one year, more than the rest of the combined airfleets of the world in the same period.

Unfortunately for the PNG Government there were no suitable aircraft available in Papua New Guinea to undertake the bridge task despite the fact that theirs is an aviation minded country. Hence the approach to the Australian Government and the RAAF for help.

Squadron 36 wasted no effort during the resulting exercise, which was considered by its crew as being 'routine'. The aircraft left its base at Richmond near Sydney, laden with medical equipment and school books for the people in the Mount Hagen district.

When the Hercules arrived at Mendi to load the bridge, village people from miles around assembled at vantage points near the short runway to watch. More than 50 village strongmen were engaged to assist the loading of the steel cargo into the aircraft.

The flight from Mendi to Tari is just 20 minutes but involves some trying conditions for the pilots. The route passes over rugged mountain peaks and valleys prone to close in with cloud very quickly. Such a flight had to be operated on the basis of visual meteorological conditions. Tari airport is short and normally used only by light aircraft.

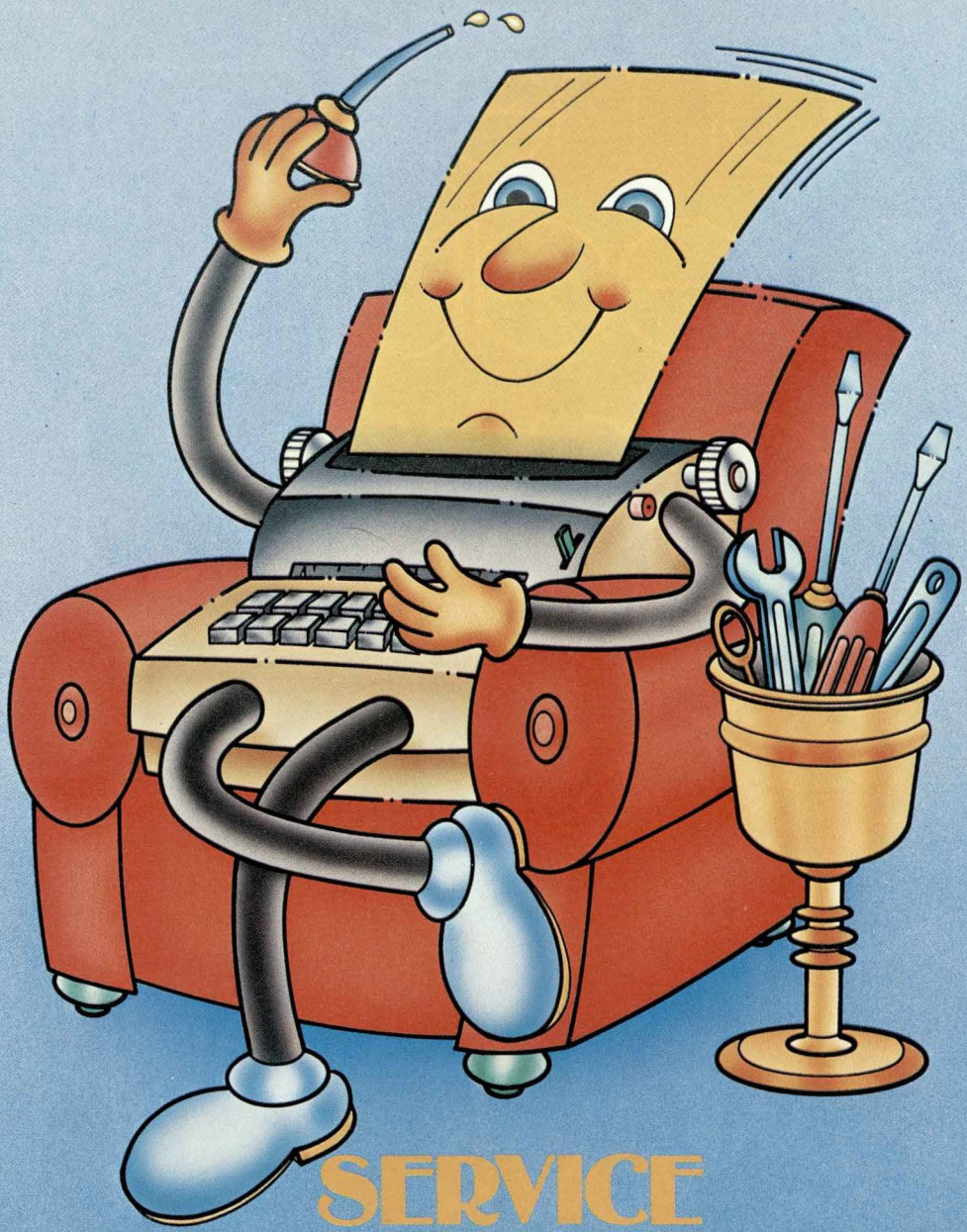
There's no doubt that the people of Tari were amazed to see such a gigantic *balus* (meaning pigeon — a term for aircraft generally in Papua New Guinea) touching down.

There were more than 200 willing volunteers to assist the RAAF crew to unload the bridge pieces from the Hercules, and manhandle them to the site where they would replace a rotten wooden structure which prevented motor traffic from crossing the river.

More village people arrived at Tari airport while the Hercules returned to Mendi for another load, and back to Tari to discharge it. In the carnival atmosphere, there was excitement as a celebration *singsing* was planned.

Many people wore their finery — hair wigs and flowers and bird of paradise feathers, grass decorations and shell money. Some old village men sat and watched the Hercules unloading its cargo in silent wonder and curiosity. Perhaps it was the big *balus* itself. The possibility of what its cargo would mean to themselves and their children could not have been ignored. Certainly there was a degree of confidence in and hope for the future.

On the national level, there were greater possibilities. For example the development of the Ok Tedi copper mine not far west of Tari and even more isolated, would rely heavily on air transport. — *Bruce Adams is the author of* Battlegrounds of the Pacific *and* Rust in Peace.



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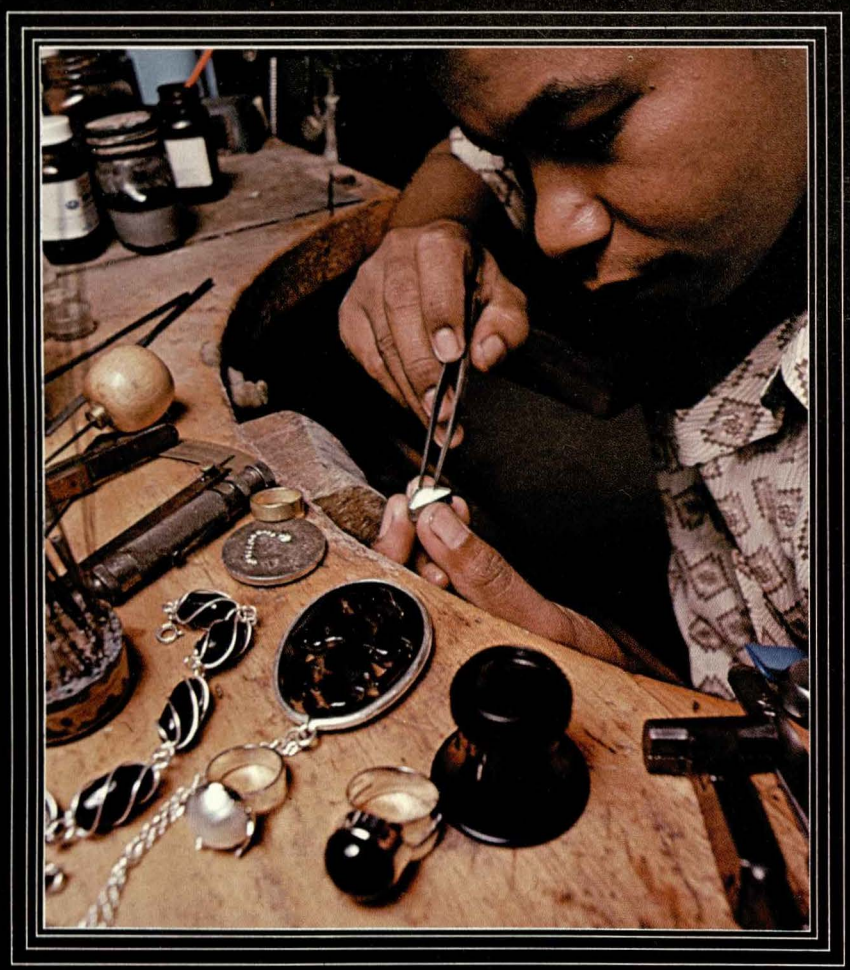

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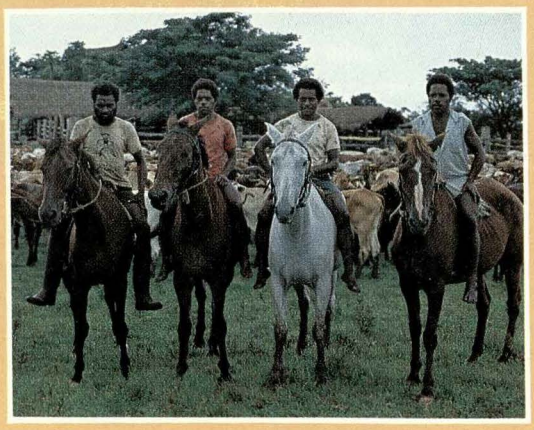

Jimi Cattle

Story and photography by Judith Hollinshed

For eight years, Dan Ottley has been flying beef carcasses in a tiny Cessna from his isolated cattle station — one of the biggest in Papua New Guinea — to the Western Highlands provincial capital, Mount Hagen. It is the only way he can get them out. There is no road to the Jimi River Cattle Company at Ruti, 490 metres above sea level, lying between the Lai and Jimi Rivers, and cut off from the rest of the province by an 1800 metre dividing range.

It's hardly an economic way to market beef but, indefinitely, that's the way it's going to be. For the sake of 30 km of road, what would otherwise be a guaranteed going concern — 47,000 acres and 5000 cattle — faces an uncertain future.

Dan Ottley comes from one of the most colourful European families ever to make its home in Papua New Guinea's Highlands. Dan's father managed cattle properties in Fiji, the Solomons and New Caledonia before settling in New South Wales, Australia, in 1955. Two years later Dan, with brothers Ian, Lach and Mike, came to Papua New Guinea, mother following a year later.

The 'Ottley Brothers' soon made their mark, Dan and Lach especially. They dressed in overstated cowboy gear, high heals and all. They swaggered when they walked, displayed a casual expertise in the saddle, and, out of the blue, might address you in French, with much courtliness. The blond young giants were great objects of curiosity for PNG's Highlanders.

The Ottleys' first move was to pioneer the first commercial trucking venture into the area. They established a mechanical repairs workshop which Ian supervised while Dan and Lach coaxed heavy Oshkosh trucks over the then execrable highway from Lae, about 350 km to the east on the shores of the Huon Gulf. In those days if you covered the distance in 24 hours' actual driving you had made good time. Next, Dan started buying passionfruit and coffee and later built his own coffee-processing factory.

Dan's marriage to San Franciscan and Pan American air hostess Yalonda will long be remembered in Mount Hagen. Groom and

groomsmen arrived on horseback, immaculately attired in morning suits and boots, horses decorated with ribbons and bird of paradise plumes.

Times have changed and the Ottleys have scattered. Few now know about Dan and his Ruti venture. But he is remembered — as PNG's representative at the amateur boxing titles in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1970; as the national lightweight lifting champion of 1977, breaking every record in his division; and as an accomplished guitarist, an instrument he has loved since childhood and which he learned to play, at one stage in Australia, under the tuition of Jose Luis Gonzales. That was back in the early sixties — when he was taking time out from PNG. It was on that Australian visit that he met Yalonda. On his return he put his guitar to work to raise funds for a fauna conservation society with a series of concerts. Today, at Ruti, he still plays each day and he is teaching the instrument to his three sons.

Dan first set foot on the land which is now Jimi River Cattle Company in 1965 when, with Lach, he set out to find suitable grazing land. A cattle venture was on his mind. It took them 14 days to cross the 2800 metre Schrader Range to the north of the Jimi Valley (they were coming into it after having spent time on the PNG mainland's north coast). With them were six Simbai guides who led them through tortuous, lonely country. Barely another person was seen for days.

Lach was sick with malaria and they were exhausted and hungry when they met up with a tiny clan at Ruti — the Meiwa people, numbering only 10. Theirs was a tough existence amidst a two-metre carpet of *kunai* grass, notorious for the death adders and anopheles malaria-carrying mosquitoes it harboured. The Meiwa were not unfriendly but had little to offer in the way of food.

The Ottley party pressed on and shot two young pigs. They sated appetites all round and, next morning, moved on through the jungles to the mountain divide to the south toward Mount Hagen. Behind them they left the Meiwa, angry at the loss of their pigs. Their leader, Ukan — now a director of the cattle company — sent two men all the way to Mount Hagen to demand compensation. Dan paid up.

That transaction marked the beginnings of a friendship and joint enterprise. Dan recognised the challenge of the untouched lands of the lower Jimi Valley — thousands upon thousands of unfenced hectares, scarcely a turned sod. He went back to the Meiwa and told them of his plan.

First it would be necessary for them to sell land to the government. Then they could pool resources (he, Dan, would sell his coffee factory), and they would apply to lease the land. For people whose land is their very life, it was a big decision to take. But the prospects were exciting. Dan left them to think about it and asked them to spread word to 25 other neighbouring sub-clans of the partnership deal he had suggested.

A deal was made, two clansmen became directors of the company with Dan the third; the land was sold to the government in 1967, the money being used to buy shares in the company; Dan sold his factory; a loan was sought; a survey for a road from Mount Hagen to Ruti was completed and the design was approved; and the Land Board approved their lease application. The company was registered in 1970 and Dan and Yalonda moved to Ruti on a part-time basis soon after.

Their first home was a rough, thatched, grass-walled hut with an upturned 44-gallon drum outside serving as a stove. The airstrip was completed in 1971 and the first stock and plant flown in. DC3s and Bristol Freighters were used. Of 1000 cattle from Australia which were flown in to Ruti, 800 survived. As an experiment, Dan tried walking in 150. He did not believe cattle could be pushed through the tangled jungle and up and down the mountain ridges. Twenty of them literally 'fell' their way down, destroying themselves. Walking cattle, in or out, was not on.

Things weren't getting any better. The road, from the Baiyer Valley not far from Mount Hagen, was under construction when, suddenly, work stopped, 30 km short of Ruti. Of the route unmade, 16 km ran through jagged mountain spikes and formidable tropical forest. Worse, the DC3s and Bristols were pulled out of service. There was no aircraft left aloft capable of lifting live beasts in or out. Alarmed, Dan learned to fly, bought a Cessna and

built a slaughterhouse. If the best he could was to bring out one or two carcasses at a time — depending on their weight — that was what he would do. He's kept telling himself it is a temporary measure but now, about 2000 flying hours later, most consumed by the 40 air miles between Ruti and Mount Hagen, he is still at it.

Momentarily, not long back, it seemed the communications barrier had been broken when a stock route was cut along the survey path. Theoretically Dan could now walk his cattle out. Not as good as trucking them but better than flying out carcasses. On November 9, last year, he wrote 'Big Day' in his diary and drove for the first time to his home from Mount Hagen. It took three hours to cover 36 km in a four-wheel drive vehicle. (Home by then — and had been for some years — was a Spanish-style white adobe brick house on the knob of a hill, built almost entirely with local materials, only the cement and some roofing iron being imported.)

Jimi River Cattle Company immediately bought Trauna Valley Farm in the Baiyer, a small estate, to be used for fattening up the cattle after their debilitating trek from Ruti, and as an outlet for the local sale of cattle. Within three months an airstrip had been built at Trauna and hundreds of cattle were being walked out of the Jimi. Then came the rain. Rivers flooded and the stock route bench collapsed. In Dan's last trek, with 260 cattle, only 68 got over the top. It took days to round up the rest and walk them back to Ruti. It was back to square one. The road to Ruti remains a dream, not even included in the 1979 budget.

Ruti is a far cry from the jet-set world Yalonda was a part of when she met Dan but she has shown all the mettle expected of an international air hostess who finds herself in a difficult situation. And she's far too busy ever to be lonely. She feeds the calves with powdered milk, teaching the awkward ones to suck ('I didn't even know they might have to be taught,' she says); wages a relentless campaign against the multitude of insects which have made Ruti their home too; runs a daily 'clinic' for all the cuts, sores and scratches of the people on the station; supervises correspondence studies for Lachlan, 12, Jesse, 11, and Adam, 8; and, once a week does a shopping trip to Mount Hagen.

Dan, despite Jimi Valley Cattle Company's uncertain future, regrets only the hours he has 'wasted' flying — loading, unloading, fuelling, preparing flight plans. 'I hate to think how many times I've done this trip,' he says gravely.

But, however much he flies in and out, he cannot carry enough beef to meet the needs of the butchery opened in 1975 in Mount Hagen, successfully establishing a cash flow for the company. It is still largely stocked by meat bought elsewhere. Things would not have been so difficult if the flooded rivers had not got their way. In 16 days, he could walk out more beasts than in a year of flying seven days a week.

The disappointment felt when the Ruti road failed to materialise went unspoken, but the Meiwa no longer have the optimism which spurred them to turn their land into a cattle station. More and more people have become involved in the company, including the Ugini group in the Baiyer Valley, who owned the land Trauna is now on, and the staff of the butchery.

Who knows what the future holds for Dan and Yalonda Ottley and the Meiwa people and their stock of 60 horses, 100 pigs, uncounted chickens and 5000 head of cattle? But, in the meantime, it's business as usual. While you are reading this, give a thought to Dan Ottley. At this very moment he may be winging his way over the divide into Mount Hagen, a freshly-killed carcass his silent passenger, looking down — down at where that road ought to be. — *Judith Hollinshed is correspondent for the* PNG Post-Courier *based in Mount Hagen.*

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Madang Fountain

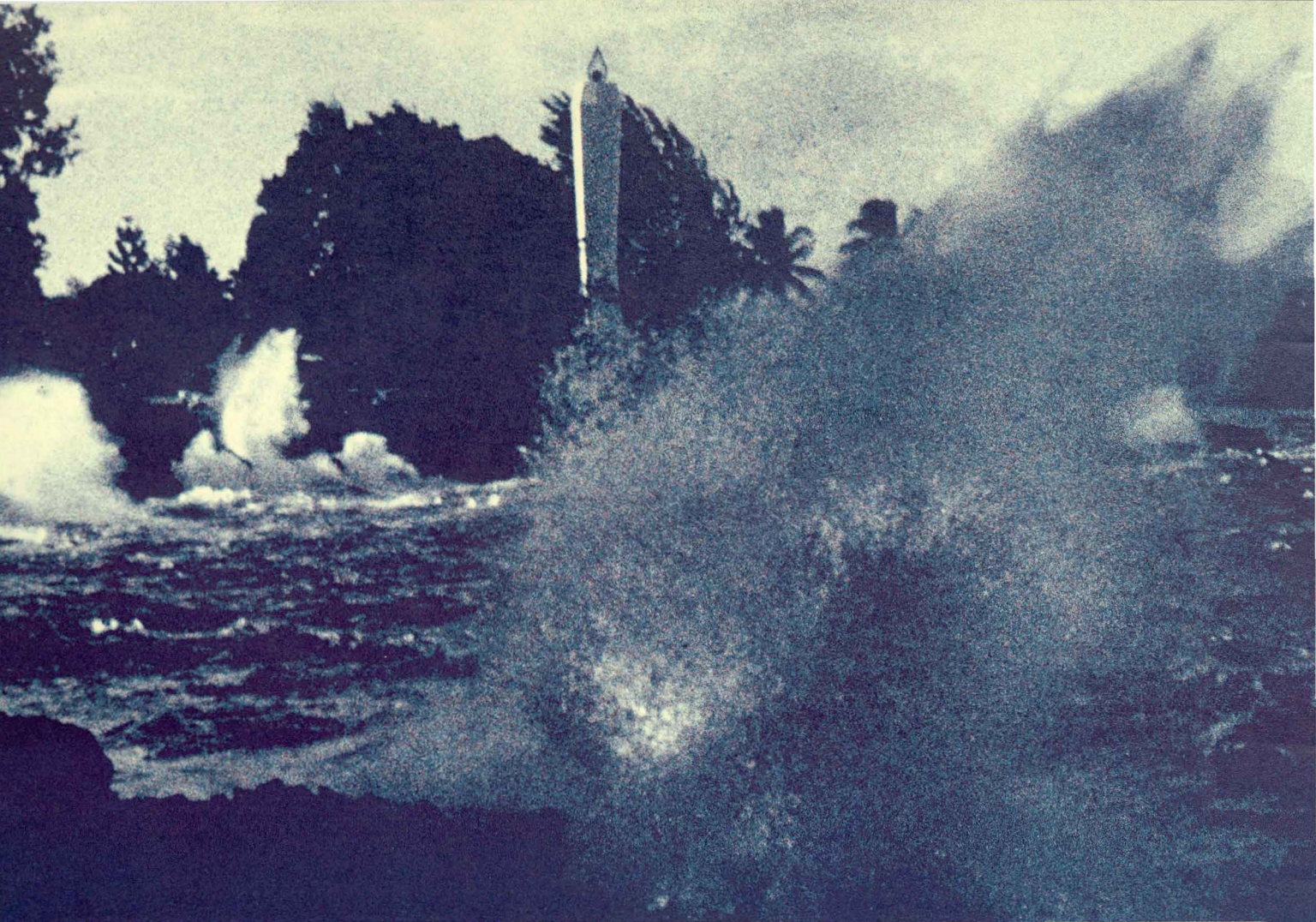
When the strong winds come in from the Bismarck Sea to Madang on Papua New Guinea's mainland north coast — usually from June to August — a team venture of land and sea sets up a spectacle which provides great entertainment for resident and visitor alike.

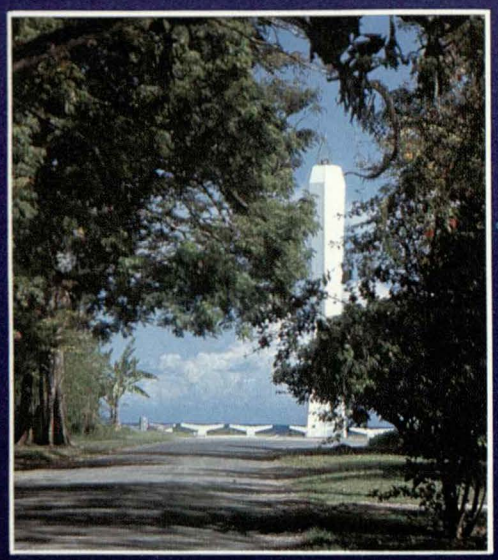
Often I have sought a name for this intriguing happening. The best I can come up with is the 'Fountains of Madang'.

Madang ranks among Papua New Guinea's most beautiful coastal towns. Some call it a southern hemisphere Venice, tongues of ocean licking into the urban development.

The 'fountains', as I shall always call them, are created by the sea being blown into the land — not with any tempestuous force. But this, in combination with the nature of the coastline, rarely two metres above water level, creates a unique display.

The shoreline is composed of tiny, sometimes sharp, fingers of dead coral. As the waves rush in the fingers break the sea into a delicate spray in a way that a solid wall of rock could not. Anyone who has seen heavy seas striking the rocky





coast near Sydney Heads knows the dramatic result as a mass of water leaps into the air. But this isn't how it happens on the Madang shoreline. As the waves come into contact with the shore it seems that, for a moment, the coral fingers play with the sportive sea before throwing it heavenward in serene, complete abandon, the water breaking into myriad sparkling, transient gems.

And, because the shoreline is so low, the onlooker is able to observe the display, almost from below. Were the shoreline a rugged, high cliff, there could be no intimate involvement for the spectator. As it is, one can venture so close as to be sprayed by these liquid diamonds.

The fountains can be observed from Smugglers Inn to a little distance past the Coastwatchers Memorial Light and in the Dallman Passage, the entrance to Madang Harbour. My favourite spot is a short distance past Coastwatchers in the direction of the golf course.

It has never been my fortune to encounter anything more than normal wind and seat at Madang, but I am told, on occasions, the shore road is awash and that some huge sprays have spent themselves on the roof of the golf club.

I have seen all the fountains of Rome; I have seen those at Fontainbleu; they are all splendid indeed. But I will always consider the Fountains of Madang to be unique. They are the union of sea, earth and air — and they are eternal. — *Sydney Palmer*

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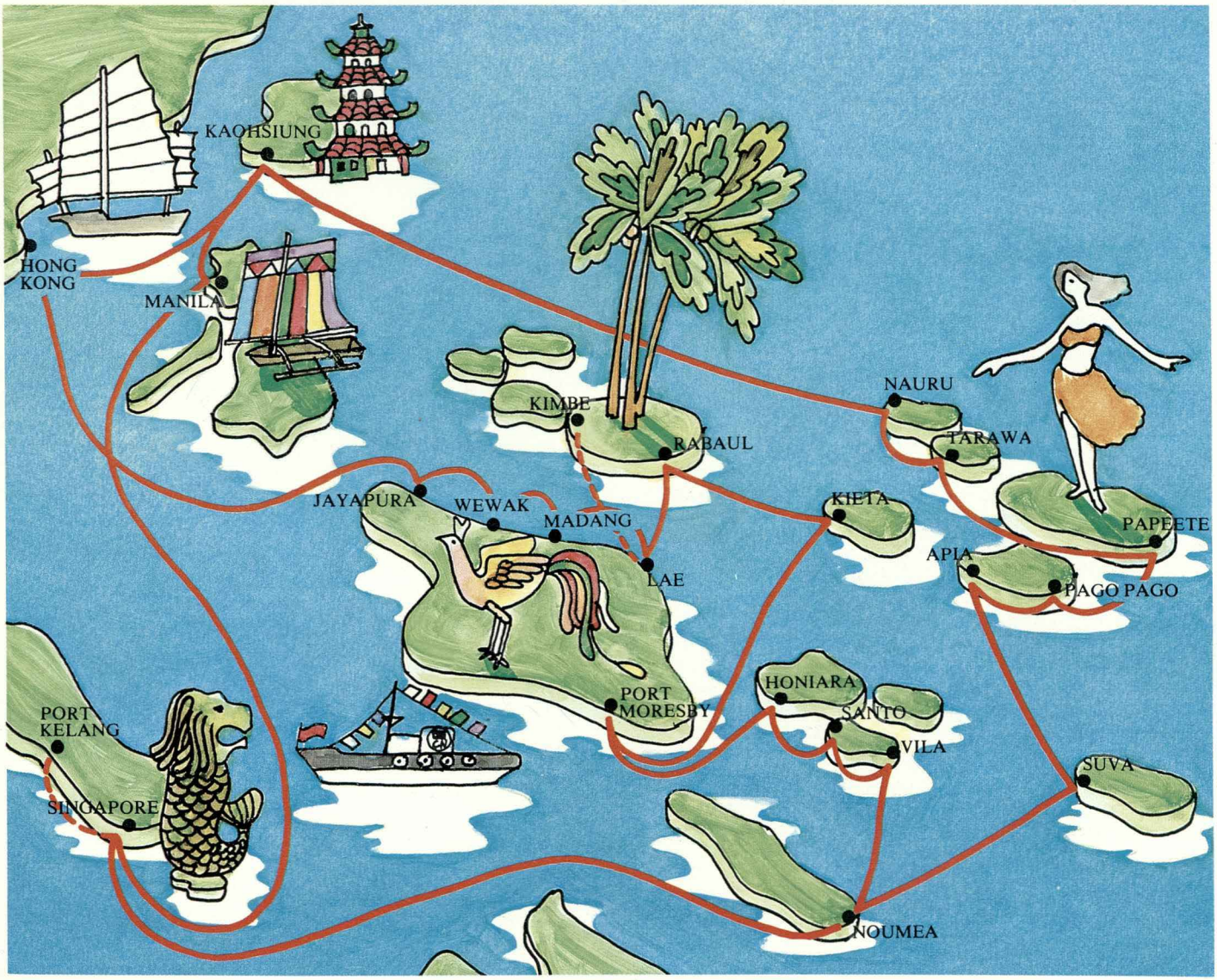

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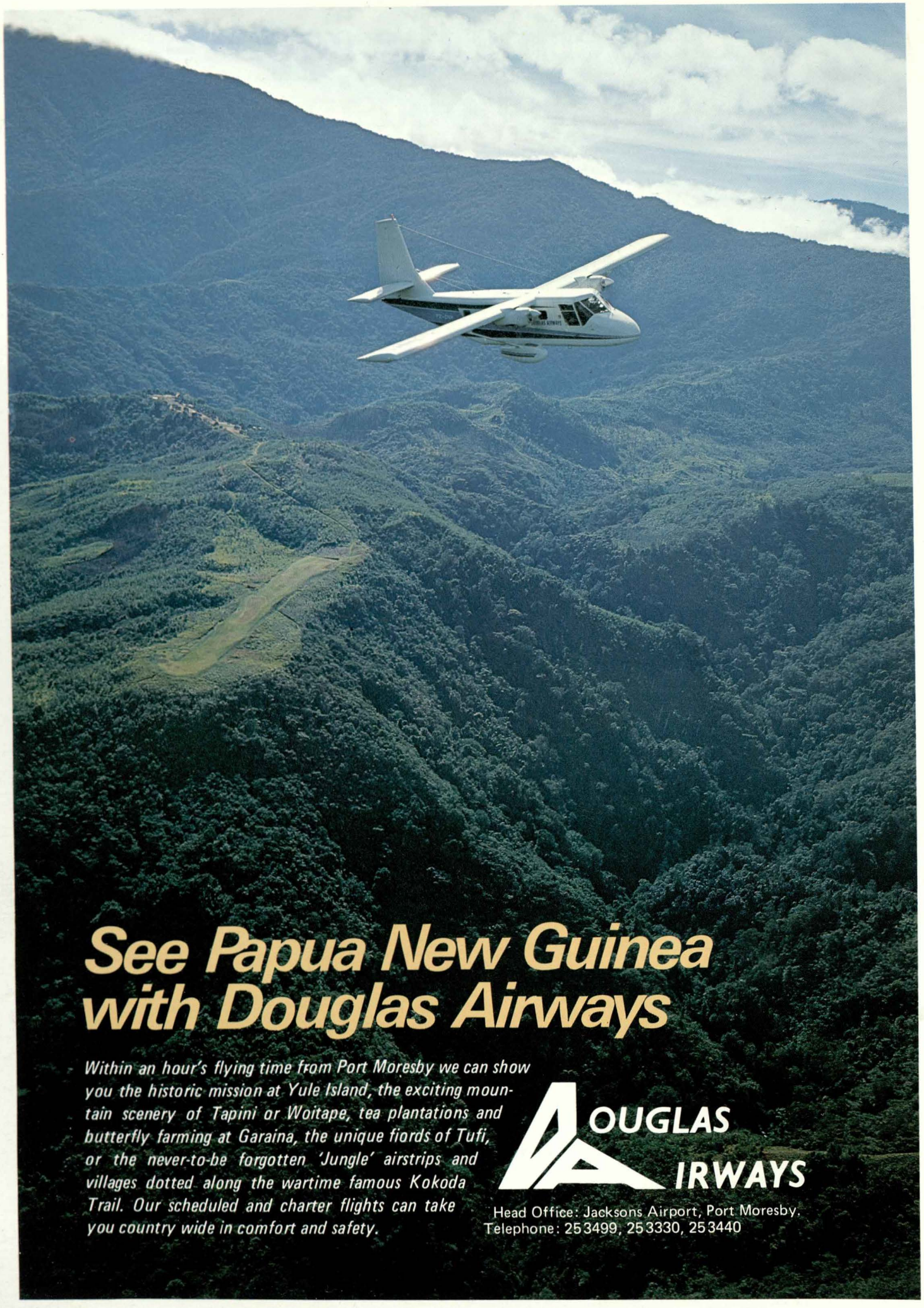

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BIAMIS

Story and photography
by Roy D. Mackay

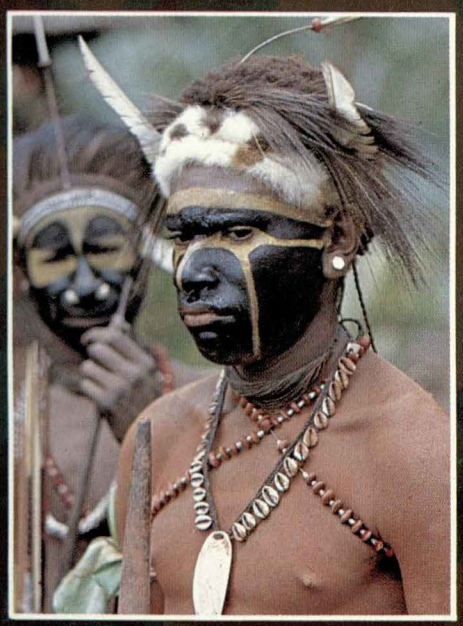
Alas poor Yorick, I knew him well Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times.
Hamlet: Shakespeare.

Holding a human skull in my hand, the above words came to mind. In my hand was the only material remnant of a man who had been a proud and notable warrior — and a cannibal too. I was well away from the usual haunts of men, in a very remote part of Papua New Guinea, Nomad River on the edge of the

Great Papuan Plateau, 300 kilometres north-northwest of Daru in the Western Province and only 120 metres above sea level.

My reason for going to such a remote area was to collect artifacts of these people, the Biamis, for the National Museum. I went there in 1967 and 1969, only 15 years after the establishment of a government patrol post at Nomad.

At this time, cannibalism was still practised and the men's role as guardians and warriors was no sinecure. As our patrol approached each village, our men would set up a musical whooping chorus to warn the villagers that friends were approaching and once, when we came unexpectedly upon a house, we were confronted by fierce men with drawn bows and threatening clubs. It took a few minutes to convince the excited warriors that we were harmless but once we had done so, they were, as usual, friendly and charming. They showed great interest in our tape recorders and other equipment and, in turn, took pride in showing us their beautifully-made weapons — archers' woven wrist guards and arrow proof bark belts, stone adzes and big sharpening stones, and all the other daily necessities of life.



Above: *Nomad tribesman dressed for a ceremonial* singsing. *The Biamis people of the Nomad region maintain one of the most interesting and diverse cultures in Papua New Guinea*

Unlike most villagers in Papua New Guinea, the Biamis live all together in one, sometimes two, large communal houses. Built in clearings in heavy rainforest, the houses can be as much as 20 metres wide and 50 or more metres long. Often they are constructed on the end of a knoll or hillock where the back of the house is built up on stilts with the front at ground level. There is a reason for this layout.

The usual plan of the Biamis house includes first, immediately behind the front door, a communal room. It is used as a kitchen, a store for food and water, dining, meetings and entertainment. Behind this is a raised central pavilion which is the sleeping quarters for the men. It is well protected by a long room on each side. Along each side of the central pavilion are sleeping benches with a small fireplace beside each — to keep the mosquitoes at bay. One of the long rooms outside the men's area is the women's sleeping quarters, the other is for the pigs. When a baby is to be born, one section of the women's quarters is partitioned off as a maternity ward.

The raised rear section of the house is the men's clubroom-cum-war office. It has no outside wall, providing a clear view of the surrounding gardens and appraoch paths. There are always lookouts on duty.

It is here, also, that the religious life of the community is organised and rites performed. Initiation ceremonies take place here amid the sacred charms, relics and symbols of Biamis belifs. The walls are often decorated with the plumes of birds of paradise, jawbones of pigs, breastbones of birds, parrot feathers and cuscus fur. There is usually an arsenal of weapons too — bows and arrows, stone clubs with star or double-star heads, palm spathe sheaths full of serrated bamboo spikes for setting along trails and two-metre long hardwood fighting sticks.

The arrows are the most intricately carved and elaborately barbed I

have seen in Papua New Guinea. There are arrows suitable for killing pigs or men, knob-headed arrows for stunning birds, many arrows specially designed for fishing and simple arrows for general purpose use.

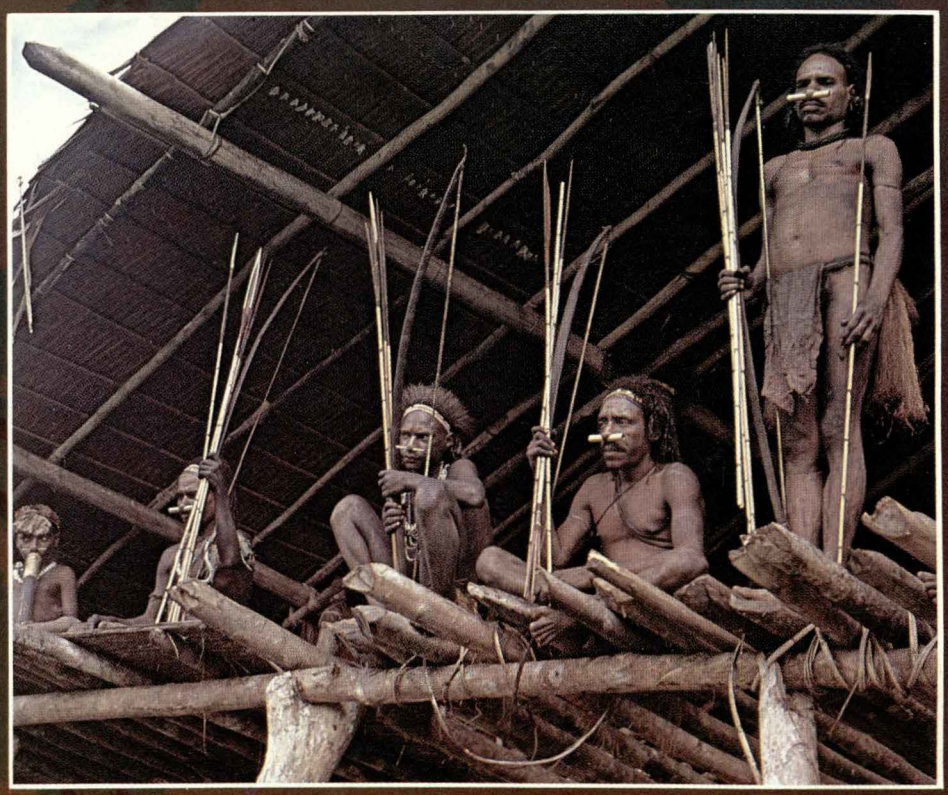
Along the sides and front wall of the house are holes through which arrows can be fired. The only entrance to the house is through an opening in the front wall. To go inside you have to step over a low wall of logs while above you are several logs propped up on forked sticks. At dusk, when everyone is inside, the forked sticks are taken away and the logs lowered on runners to seal off the entrance — and so the house becomes a fortress.

Until recently these houses were all beautifully constructed and the walls, of bamboo or *limbum* (the trunk of the areca [betel] nut palm), were often two or three layers thick. The visitor to Nomad is not likely to see such well made fortress houses now unless he goes on a long trek of several days to the farthest reaches of Biamis country, well away from the government and mission station where fear of the neighbouring communities has been allayed and there is no need for such strongholds.

The people live in one house for five to 10 years. Then, diminishing fertility in the soil and fewer game animals such as cassowaries, wallabies and pigeons, force the communities to move on to new ground, either new rainforest or maybe old village sites now covered with re-growth with some fertility back in the soil.

Before, communal houses were five to 15 kilometres apart. Although they usually distrusted each other, the people sometimes had periods

Below: *Tribesmen are guardians and warriors. The back section of their common longhouse is a clubroom area for the men. The arrows and spears are some of the most intricately carved the author had seen*



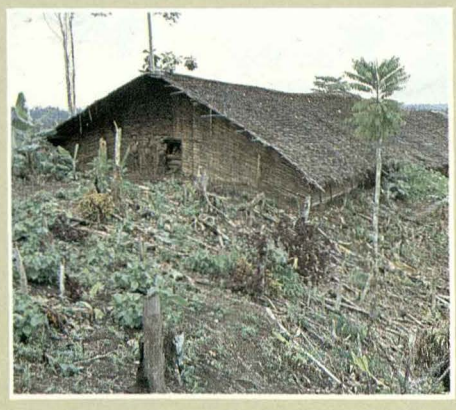
of relaxation of hostilities when they could visit each other for trading or marriage arrangements or for traditional rituals and *singsings*.

The gardens surrounding a communal house may be up to half a kilometre in diameter and planted with a wide variety of vegetables — several kinds of sweet potato (including one called *maami* which is very similar in texture and taste to the English potato), sugarcane, yams, bananas and taro. Planted in and around these are areca nut palms, tobacco bushes and *daka* (pepper vine).

During the day the women work in the gardens, always with one or two of the men on guard with bow and arrows. In the dry season, July to October, short expeditions are made to swamps where the sago palm (*Metroxylon sagu*) grows.

A mature palm will be felled by the men and the outer bark stripped leaving the pithy trunk bare for the women to work with their adzes. While the women pare away the pith, wash it in special cradles and flail it and squeeze it till the milky sago filters into a palm spathe receptacle, the men will ring the area on guard. The group will seldom stay overnight, not for fear of enemies but because of their fear of spirits which roam at night. The same fear will keep their enemies inside after dark.

Above: *Gone fishing;* **below:** *Biamis clans live in communal houses with a single door*



One wonders how husband and wife relations come about in a communal house. They don't. Sexual unions are usually in the seclusion of the gardens. In an area where neighbouring communities are either friendly or, if hostile, are very far away, small garden plots may be planted away from the immediate surrounds of the communal house and one or two families may live for a while in a hamlet built in one of these smaller gardens and so have privacy.

When an important man dies (a village leader or superlative warrior), a long ceremony takes place and afterward the body is left in an open cradle to disintegrate to the bare skeleton. The bones are kept, sometimes in a string bag under the house or, if especially important, they are placed in a bark-lined cup in the forked branch of a tree placed upright in the ground near the house. All the man's worldly goods are hung on this memorial — adze, bow and arrows, bark belt, strings of beads and smoking pipe. Food is also hung there for the hovering spirit.

Now and again a news item on these people will appear in the press and one oversensational book has been published on them but, for all that, they still live in their vast forests relatively uninfluenced by the spectacular developments in the towns of PNG. Cannibalism has been discouraged and many of the young people are now attending schools or working in towns far from home. Schools, missions, health services and stores are new features in the life of many of the people but most still live as they have done for aeons past in one of the most interesting cultures among the amazing diversity of cultures of this island nation.

— Roy D. Mackay is the superintendent of the Baiyer River Wildlife Sanctuary.

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