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No. 22 March 1980

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Editorial Advisor – Bob Hawkins
Design and Art – Rob Kysely

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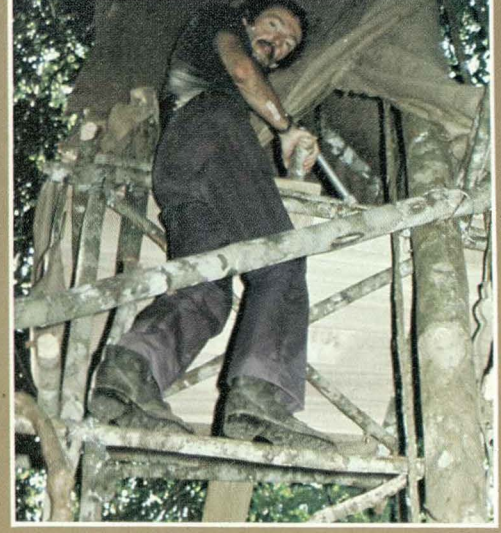

Welcome aboard

Englishman Brian Coates came to Papua New Guinea to work for our new nation's public service several years ago. But he had another reason for coming — to spy on the glorious birds of the country. There he is, up there, about to clamber into a hide he built specially to photograph the nest of the Wompoo pigeon in Brown River rainforest not far from Port Moresby. Brian, whose book *Birds in Papua New Guinea* was published in 1978, will go anywhere to photograph a bird in the wild. In this issue, he concentrates on several of the 51 species of pigeon native to Papua New Guinea.

Bob Halstead, diving instructor and defender of the environment, tells of the exciting find on a reef near Madang of a Mitchell B25 bomber which crashed in 1943 — and of its being vandalised within two weeks of discovery.

As you can see on page 8, the South Pacific Festival of Arts organising committee in Port Moresby is now moving in to top gear in the final weeks before the festival gets under way on June 29. In cultural terms this is the biggest happening since Independence in 1975. If you can manage it, come to see us at festival time and join in the fun.

We hope you are enjoying our bigger, brighter *Paradise*. Tell your friends about us. Even if they are not fortunate enough to enjoy a flight in our Birds of Paradise they can take out a subscription on a regular airmail delivery. There are more subscription details inside.

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General Manager

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Brian Coates
Tom Cooke
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Jim Fenwick
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COVER

Engine of B25 Mitchell bomber which crashed near Madang in 1943. Photo by Bob Halstead.

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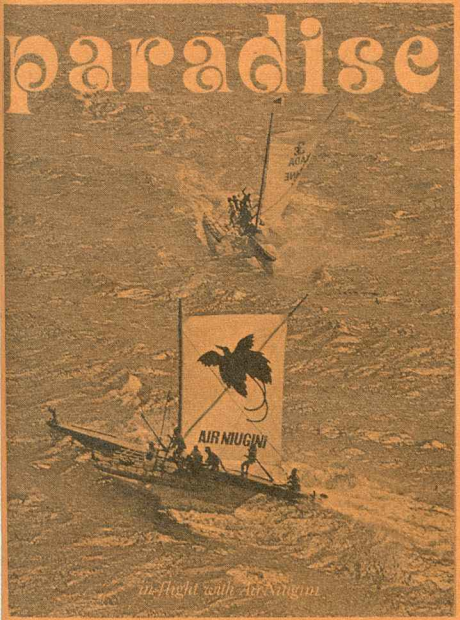

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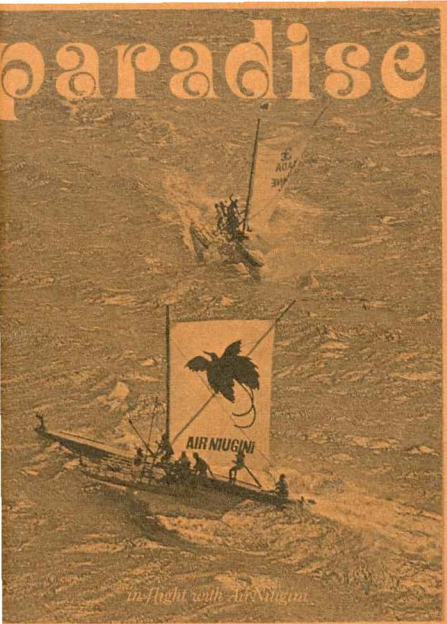

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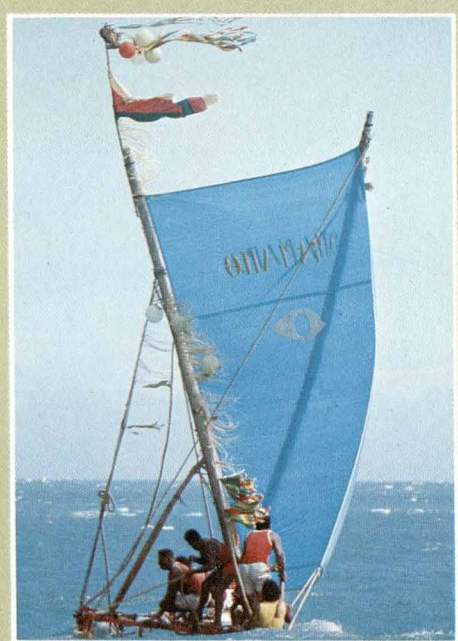
Traditional Hiri canoe racing will be a feature of this year's South Pacific Festival of Arts with the action centred on Port Moresby's Ela Beach, just down from the city centre. Traditional canoes from other Pacific Islands – including Solomon Islands, New Hebrides and Tahiti – will be on the beach and from within Papua New Guinea competitors are expected from Manus, Morobe and Milne Bay Provinces. At Travelodge Hotel, which overlooks the beach, there will be an exhibition of model canoes from all parts of the Pacific. In this article, Colin De'Ath describes the present-day canoe-racing scene in Port Moresby.

LAURABADA RIVALRY

Gone are the days when the Motu people east and west of Papua New Guinea's capital, Port Moresby, used their canoes primarily for fishing and ferrying people between villages. Gone too are the days when mighty rough-hewn hulls, powered by pandanus sails, took them on perilous *hiri* trading voyages west along the Papua coast.

But not gone is the Motuan love of the sea, or their love of competing among themselves, of proving their boatbuilding, sailing and navigational skills. Now, perhaps spurred on by the introduced Australian passion for gambling, Motuan men direct their marine skills and energies each year toward proving themselves the sailors of the fastest canoe afloat. Many are the modifications which have been built into the traditional Motu outrigger canoe known as a *vanagi*.

One day last year I looked down on Port Moresby's fine harbour from Burns Peak. It was the *laurabada* (south-east trade wind) season. Orange and blue sails dotted the water. A huffing afternoon tradewind powered them across the harbour. It was a splendid indication of the way



in which Motu sailing has been revived. Later I went to see Kukuna Raho and Diho Boa old, highly-weathered, doughty sailors to find out what was behind the revival.

We talked in Kukuna's house in Elevala village, sitting on the floor on mats. His house is on stilts over the sea. When the wind blows it sways not unpleasantly. Around the walls are photographs of sporting teams and his family and Catholic symbols. In a small cupboard are kept the sailing trophies of Kukuna and his father.

Kukuna told me of the importance of canoes to his family and clan and how they are intertwined with their history. Like the names of people, he explained, the names of canoes are recycled, time and again. For example, his canoe, named *Vanaba*, is the latest in a long line of canoes of the same name started by his grandfather. The name is that of a river from where canoe logs, traditionally, have been purchased.

But all is not tradition. Diho's canoe is named *Canoedrew*, a name coming from an incident involving a European in days gone by.

They told me that racing and bet-

ting on the results are not part of pre-Western contact culture. Kukuna thinks the racing trophies were introduced during the time of Governor Hubert Murray. The trophies won by Kukuna and his father date back to the early fifties.

Today, canoe racing on the harbour is a highly organised sport. There are three categories Class A (more than 10.9 metres), Class B (7.9 to 10.9 metres) and Class C (under 7.9 metres). Logs for the canoes are purchased from non-Motuan people. The Ilimo tree is favoured for the hollowed-out hulls because it is tough, durable and does not rot or waterlog easily.

There are many clubs from Motu villages both sides of Port Moresby. On a typical Saturday during the sailing season Hanuabada and Elevala villages might compete with, perhaps, 19 vessels in Class A, up to 15 in Class B and up to nine in Class C. On a festival day, such as the *Hiri Moale* — which marks the time of the year when *hiri* voyagers traditionally returned from their adventures along the coast to the west — canoes come from throughout the Motu region.

Building and maintaining a canoe in tip-top condition is an expensive business. A 10.9 metre hull log can cost as much as Kina 400, the superstructure Kina 100 and the single nylon sail Kina 200.

To enter a race costs Kina 5. Of this, Kina 2 goes to the promotion of sailing, the balance being added to prize money. Each crew is given food before and after the race. This can cost up to Kina 20 a crew, liquor not included. The crew and clan of the winning canoe must be feted.

Until a few years back, a racing canoe might last only a year but now if it is hauled out of the water and placed in scaffolding between each Saturday's racing, it might last five years. The rigging and hull require constant care. Nowadays logs are hollowed out under the close scrutiny of a professional canoemaker armed with calipers and mechanical sanding equipment. The traditional method before steel tools, was to burn out the hull.

Traditional laws and introduced rules have made outrigger sailing a complex business. For a crew to have any hope of success there must be harmony in each member's house throughout the previous night. Alcohol is forbidden to crew members during this time and some teams have imposed sexual taboos upon themselves. Captains must commit themselves to every Saturday of the *laurabada* season. They must familiarize themselves with currents, tides and wind corridors, have total confidence in their rigging, and accept without question the impartiality of the organisers.

On the morning of a race nothing must be allowed to hinder crew members as they prepare to board their racers. Fears in the minds of crew before a race include being attacked by sharks, lost in a heavy sea, disqualified or involved in a fight because of broken rules. Some crew pray that these dangers will be avoided.

During his 16 years as captain of a canoe Kukuna has been wrecked five times. He says that despite the use of ballast and the weight of the crew an outrigger can fly out of the water very easily.

Kukuna and Diho are not entirely in favour of the way canoe racing has developed. They say that during the season, with up to 300 men and youths from Hanuabada and Elevala in competition, large amounts of money are changing hands in bets from Kina 1 to Kina 200. And private enterprise has begun to sponsor the more successful crews. In all, say the two men, the sport has become so professionalised that captains without financial backing or personal wealth cannot compete.

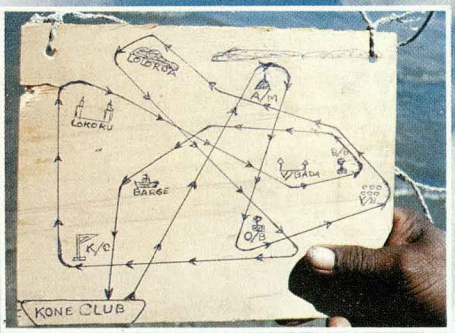
Other complaints they have are that the young men tend to give up

too easily if there is a mishap and, more seriously, the intensification of rivalry on the water is flowing over into rivalries between families and clans back on the land.

However, for the casual observer, a *laurabada* Saturday on Fairfax Harbour is a sight to behold. First there are the colours and the finely honed hulls. Then there is the precision work of the crews as they launch, put-about, fight to keep the outrigger down, and manipulate the large steering paddle. At full stretch the racers can rival canoes powered by 18 horsepower motors.

The actual running of events also is complicated. First there is handicapping, based on previous performances. The race route, around islands such as Laurabada and around hulks and buoys, is inscribed for each crew on a plywood plaque. The course may take up to two hours to navigate.

Despite their doubts about recent trends, Kukuna and Diho remain enthusiastic and dedicated to their canoes. Western boat building techniques and materials plus traditional design and sailing knowledge have produced a sport worthy of the traditions of the Motuans' seafaring ancestors.— *Colin De'Ath is a longtime resident of Papua New Guinea.*



FESTIVAL PLANS

Twenty-seven nations and territories have been invited to take part in the Third South Pacific Festival of Arts to be hosted by Papua New Guinea between June 29 and July 12 this year. Contingents of as many as 200 are expected to fly in to Port Moresby from Solomon Islands and Fiji while other islands will be sending smaller groups.

Papua New Guinea will have teams representing each of the nation's 20 provinces. While the national capital, Port Moresby, will be the major centre of attraction, regional festivals will be going on simultaneously at Mount Hagen, Goroka (where festivities will take the place of the Eastern Highlands Show), Wewak, Madang, Lae, Rabaul (where the programme is to be combined with the annual Frangipani Festival) and Popondetta.

Each regional festival will follow a theme. For example, Madang will feature bamboo and string bands while Lae's programme will be drama-orientated; Mount Hagen and Goroka will feature massed dancing for which the Highlands are renowned; and at Wewak the accent will be on the cultural riches of the people of the mighty Sepik River region.

Arrangements are being made to allow groups from other Pacific Islands to travel to the various regional centres to allow as many Papua New Guineans as possible to see the performances of their fellow-Islanders.

There will be several major exhibitions in Port Moresby including one sponsored by UNESCO featuring traditional Oceanic arts drawn from a number of European museums. This display will be at Papua New Guinea's National Museum.

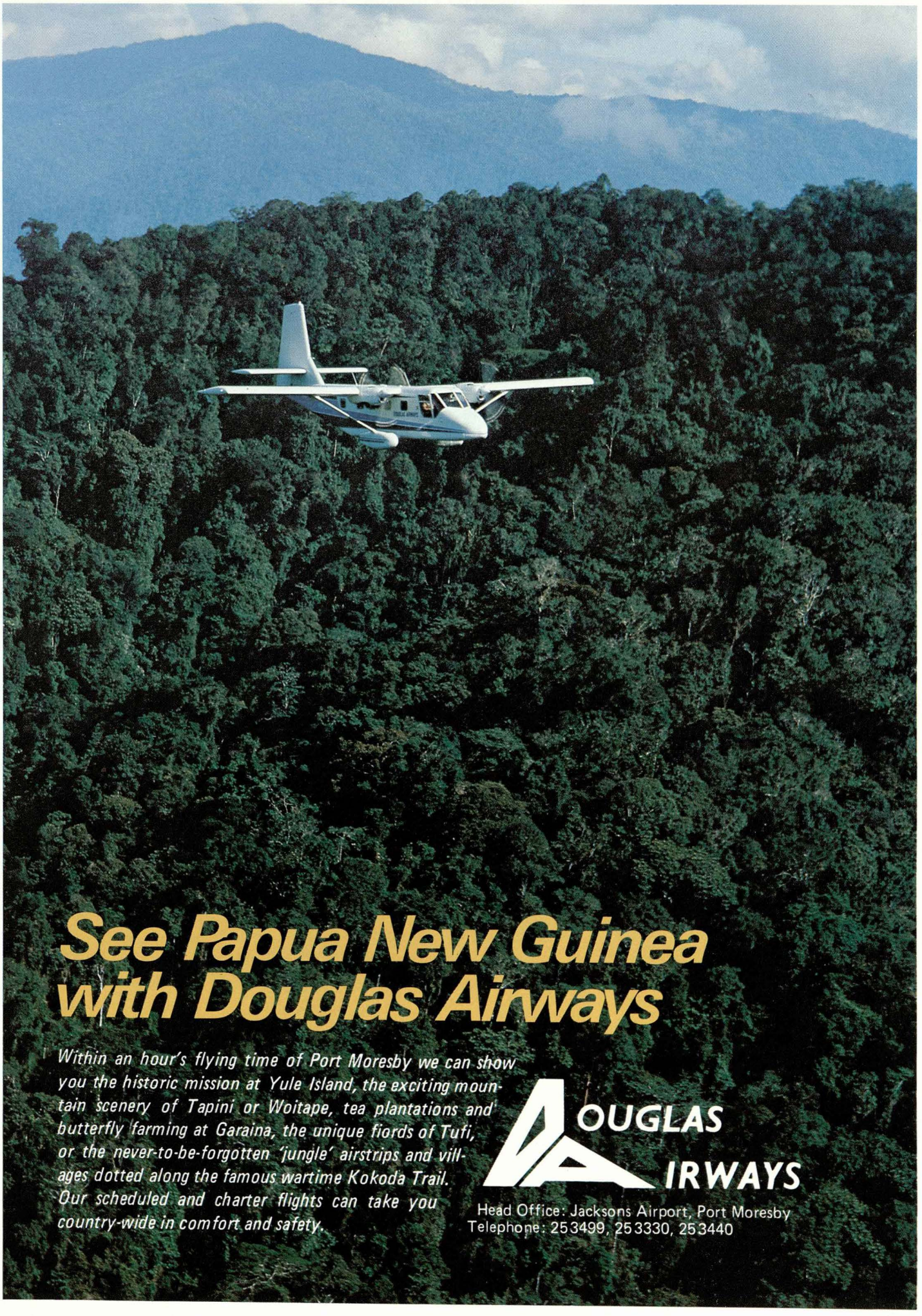
Other static displays around the national capital will feature musical instruments, voyages of 'discovery' in the Pacific by Captain James Cook, traditional navigation methods, orchids, shells, modern and traditional currency, birds of paradise, contemporary Papua New Guinean art and historical photographs.

There will be demonstrations of Pacific children's games, tapa making, weaving, the making of shell and other traditional money, carving and cooking.

The object of the festival is to encourage Islanders to preserve and revive the traditional ways of the Pacific. However, visitors from outside the Pacific are most welcome. Most important, if you decide to come, book now because hotel accommodation in Papua New Guinea during festivities is already drying up.

The PNG Office of Tourism is coordinating a 'home-stay' programme whereby visitors will be accommodated with families at moderate cost. Details can be obtained from the *Director, PNG Office of Tourism, PO Box 773, Port Moresby*. For festival details contact the *Director, South Pacific Festival of Arts, PO Box 6918, Boroko, Papua New Guinea.*

Although details are still to be worked out, here are a few firm dates: *Monday June 30* official festival opening at the Hubert Murray Stadium, Port Moresby; *Thursday July 3* Children's Day and opening of regional festivals; *Saturday July 5* canoe regatta at Port Moresby; *Tuesday July 8* regional festivals end; *Saturday July 12* canoe regatta, closing ceremony and mardi gras at Port Moresby.



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Cooktown

Story: Lawrie Kavanagh
Pictures: Jim Fenwick

The rags and riches stories of early Cooktown look out from a fading mural on the old wooden walls of the West Coast Hotel. The whole building radiates character — and many characters can be found in Cooktown today who, despite the changing times, are firmly in the mould of those pioneering gold-hungry types of a century ago.

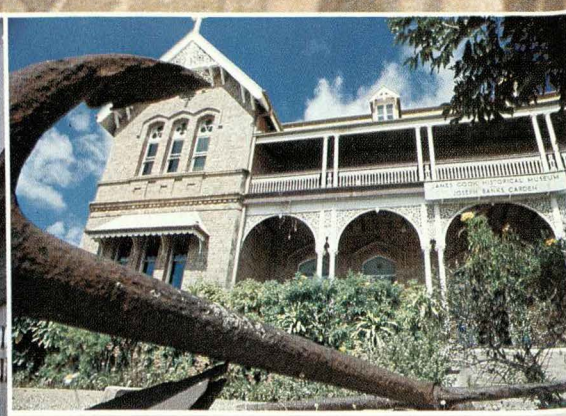
Today gold is a poor third behind the rush for prawns and tin despite the rocketing price of gold. When Jim and I flew to Cooktown recently we met an assortment of characters performing in the finest, sometimes bawdiest, traditions of the past.

Successful fishermen back from the rich prawn waters of Princess Charlotte Bay to the north and tin miners reaping their fortunes from the hinterland were celebrating, not with beer but with champagne. Traditionally, a 'stubbie' is a squat bottle of beer. We saw burly prawners ordering a 'stubbie' for breakfast and being served with a bottle of champagne — which they swigged down with bacon and eggs.

'They work hard and they drink hard,' explained Col Bax, mine host at the West Coast. The fishermen drank throughout the day and into the evening. Later on, one big raw-boned youth, the son of a prawner and a prawner of one year's standing himself, pulled out his pockets wondering what had become of the $100 he had started out with that morning. He too had been drinking champagne most of the day, the catch on their last trip having been a big one — and their pay packet the same.

Glancing back a century, statistics speak for themselves. As the major outlet for the Palmer River goldfield, Cooktown had 60 licensed bars and 20 unlicensed, half-a-dozen gambling dens, and an uncounted number of houses quaintly described as 'places of wild entertainment'.

According to records, 1.3 million ounces of gold passed legally

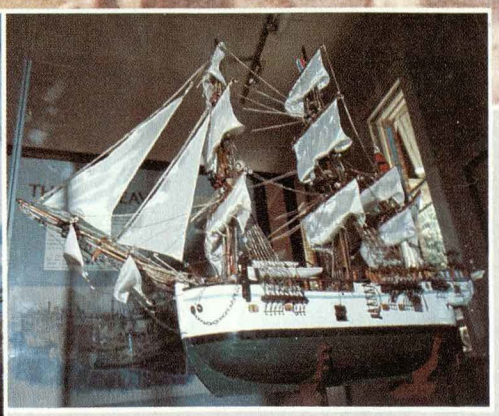


West Coast Hotel mural (above) and what some of those old scenes in Cooktown look like today

through Cooktown. Some believe at least twice that much was smuggled out to China. In 1885 it was estimated that 18,000 Chinese were working in Cooktown and on the goldfields.

Chinese influence in the town is still marked. Many leading businessmen are Chinese and, in an excellent museum, one of the major attractions is a colourful reconstruction of a joss house adorned with many relics of the Asian community in Cooktown last century. The museum is housed in a gracious old convent.

The first European known to have visited the site which was to become Cooktown was Captain James Cook himself. In 1770, having holed the *Endeavour* on a nearby reef, Cook and crew waited 48 days before their vessel was ready to sail on. Fifty years passed before another



European turned up, on that occasion in the *Mermaid*.

In 1865 John Jardine, an explorer, found what had been named the Endeavour River to be one of the few suitable harbours along that stretch of the coast. Seven years later another government-sponsored expedition led by William Ham named several other rivers in the area, one of them the Palmer after the premier of the day. Ham and party found traces of gold in the river and reported back to Brisbane. A year later an experienced prospector and bushman James Mulligan confirmed the presence of gold and the rush was on.

The gold was far from civilisation and local Aborigines did not take kindly to the invasion. Add to that the presence of bushrangers (highwaymen in Australian idiom), confidence tricksters, and hostile terrain, and even for those who did get rich, life was far from easy. Violent death was common and sickness a constant hazard. All this and more is depicted on the West Coast Hotel murals.

Check me out. If you get into town when the prawners and miners are celebrating you'll agree with me: nothing really has changed except the faces.

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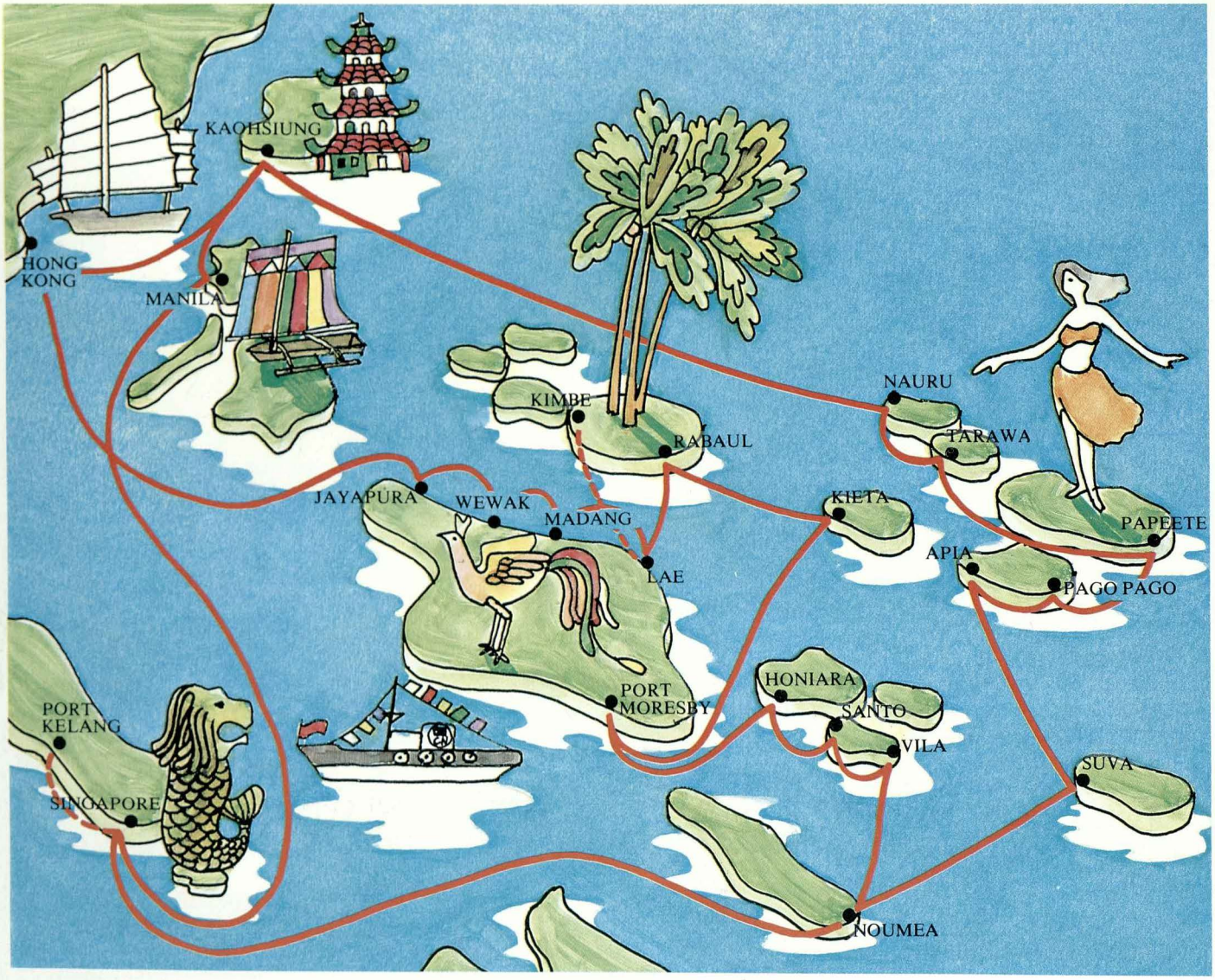

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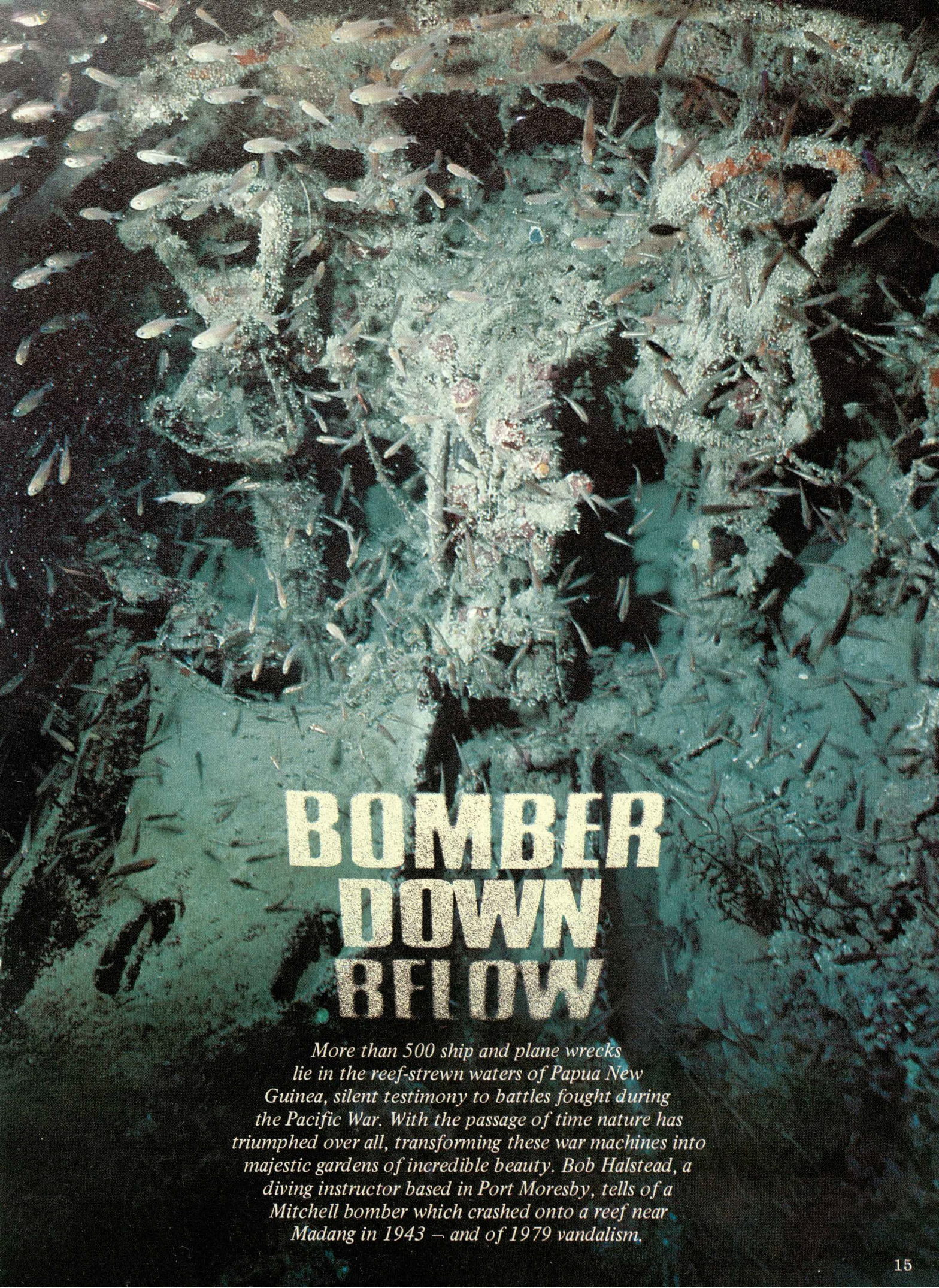


BOMBER DOWN BELOW

More than 500 ship and plane wrecks lie in the reef-strewn waters of Papua New Guinea, silent testimony to battles fought during the Pacific War. With the passage of time nature has triumphed over all, transforming these war machines into majestic gardens of incredible beauty. Bob Halstead, a diving instructor based in Port Moresby, tells of a Mitchell bomber which crashed onto a reef near Madang in 1943 – and of 1979 vandalism.

Every diver dreams of reefs strewn with cannon and treasure chests. Few realise their dreams. But one who found a treasure of another kind is Dave Pennefather who swam slap bang into a Mitchell B25 bomber, virtually intact and untouched by man since it was ditched on August 5, 1943.

Marine plane wrecks which look anything like aircraft are rare because the impact with the ocean usually smashes them into thousands of pieces. But on this occasion the Mitchell had settled on the water gently enough for it to glide to its grave, 20 metres down, with barely any damage.

After the war many wrecks of vessels were blown apart by salvage companies eager to take the wealth of copper and bronze in their engines and giant propellors. Where wrecks were regarded as hazards to shipping they were reduced to sheets of plate iron by military disposal experts. Divers over the years have souvenired portholes, ships' wheels and other bits and pieces so that marine archaeologists, who are beginning to pay more attention to the period of the Pacific War, are rarely finding evidence that has been undisturbed in the intervening years.

So, when Dave Pennefather came face to face with the magnificently preserved Mitchell he must have felt like the discoverer of pirates' treasure. His find was not by luck. An addict in endless search of information about Papua New Guinea's wartime days, Dave had been looking for the plane and had been talking to one Angmai Sub of Rivo village near Madang. Angmai's story went like this:

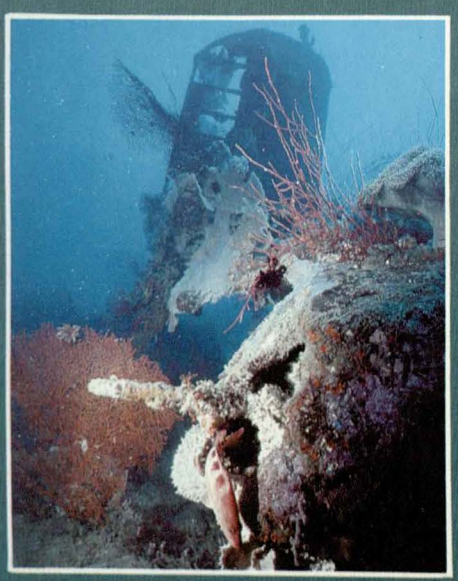
'The aircraft was one of many planes that came together and attacked Madang. The plane was shot down by a gun positioned in Nagada plantation following a bombing and strafing run on Madang and Siar. I was a child at the time, cooking salt for the Japanese at a station based near Rivo village.

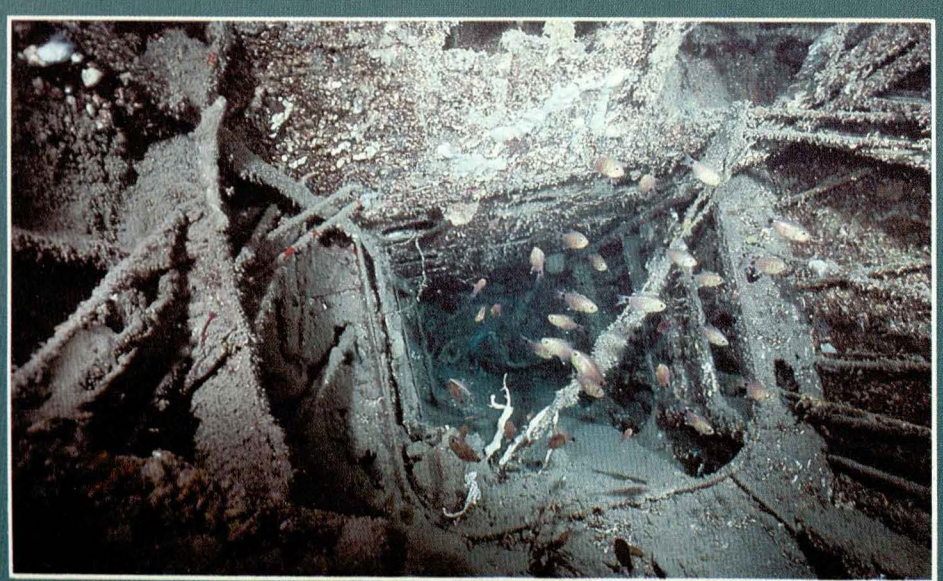
'We called out: "A plane is on fire". There was a fire in the left wing. The plane then crashed into the water close to Wongat Island. Five men, all Americans, swam from the wreck to Wongat Island.

'The Japanese then came from Amron, where the school now stands, and asked us if we had seen any survivors . . . The Japanese made our men take them by canoe to this island. Our men were scared that a fight may begin and they may be injured. The Japanese found four survivors on Wongat. These men were interrogated by the Japanese. They said they were the only survivors but one American had hidden himself on the island.

'The four survivors were taken to Panutibon Island where we had a village. This was in the afternoon. The whole village went and saw the survivors and were very sorry for them. Some of our old women gave food to them. One of the survivors was scared and did not want to eat. They were then taken to Rivo and

Scenes 20 metres down on the reef off Rivo village. At right, inset, the gaping hole in the fuselage caused not by the crash but by vandals





then to Amron on the mainland.

'That night the other survivor swam from Wongat Island to Tabard Island and then to Panutibon where he slept in the Lutheran church. In this church this man was singing songs and praying. We thought it was the noise of the devil. At 5.30 am he swam to Rivo village where he was discovered by an old man named Led. The Japanese knew there should be another survivor and they soon found him and the old man Led. The fifth survivor was taken to Amron. That is all we know of what happened to these men.'

According to Dave Pennefather's research at the Royal Australian Air Force historical archives in Canberra there were six crew members of the Mitchell which had the serial number 41-30118. Raymond Zimerman died in the crash and the plane became his grave. Lieutenant Colonel Williston Cox was sent to Rabaul and survived the war but little is known of the exact fate of the other crew members although two were later identified by dental records and remains found in graves in Madang.

The plane lost its port engine as it ditched before coming to rest on a reef slope 20 metres down. At the time of discovery last year it was intact apart from the one engine. Incredibly, within two weeks of its discovery, unknown divers removed two of its 13 guns, destroying once again the archaeologist's dream of an untouched relic.

These divers acted illegally because, on July 1 last year, the Papua New Guinea Government declared a moratorium on all collection, removal and export of war relics without its authority.

There is a saying among divers that if you find something in your garden it is junk but if you find the same thing underwater it is treasure. Ironically, unless pillaging divers are experienced, they do not realise that by bringing a souvenir to the surface they are usually guaranteeing its destruction because it corrodes rapidly on contact with air.

The message today from all responsible divers is look, take photographs if you want, but don't touch. In this way you will be helping archaeologists and historians to piece together the history of our nation and making it possible for future generations of divers to experience the type of thrill Dave Pennefather swam into.

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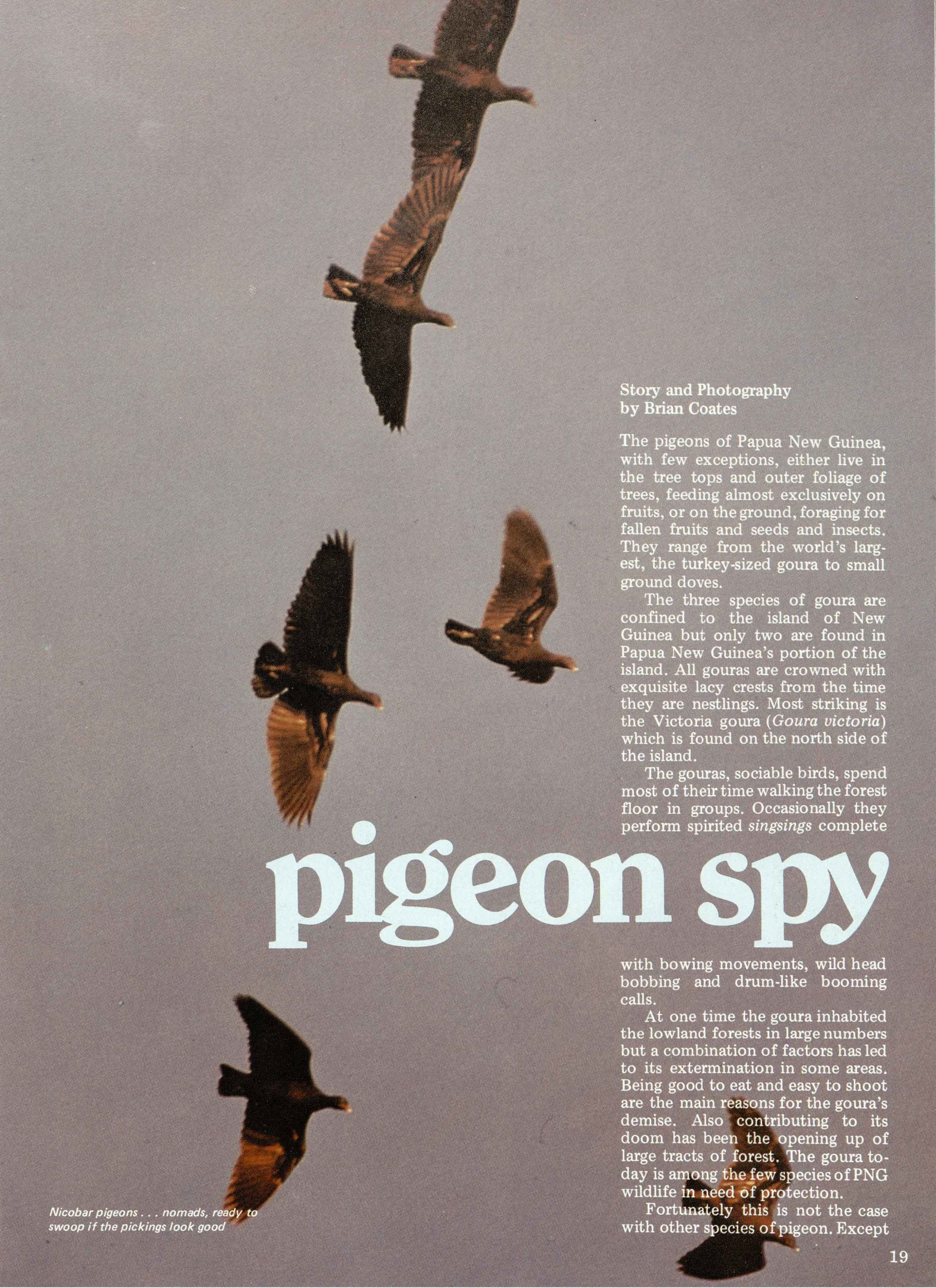


pigeon spy

Story and Photography
by Brian Coates

The pigeons of Papua New Guinea, with few exceptions, either live in the tree tops and outer foliage of trees, feeding almost exclusively on fruits, or on the ground, foraging for fallen fruits and seeds and insects. They range from the world's largest, the turkey-sized goura to small ground doves.

The three species of goura are confined to the island of New Guinea but only two are found in Papua New Guinea's portion of the island. All gouras are crowned with exquisite lacy crests from the time they are nestlings. Most striking is the Victoria goura (*Goura victoria*) which is found on the north side of the island.

The gouras, sociable birds, spend most of their time walking the forest floor in groups. Occasionally they perform spirited *singsings* complete with bowing movements, wild head bobbing and drum-like booming calls.

At one time the goura inhabited the lowland forests in large numbers but a combination of factors has led to its extermination in some areas. Being good to eat and easy to shoot are the main reasons for the goura's demise. Also contributing to its doom has been the opening up of large tracts of forest. The goura today is among the few species of PNG wildlife in need of protection.

Fortunately this is not the case with other species of pigeon. Except

Nicobar pigeons . . . nomads, ready to swoop if the pickings look good

Coronated fruit dove . . . father usually takes the daytime shift on the nest

at high altitudes, pigeons are common wherever suitable wooded country remains.

Easiest to see are those which fly above the forest or perch in the treetops in early daylight. This is the best time to watch for various species of green fruit doves. They have splashes of bright colour but if they didn't give their position away by the calls they make when feeding as a group, they would be hard to spot.

Largest of the fruit doves is the Wompoo pigeon (*Megaloprepia magnificus*). It rarely chooses an exposed perch but its almost human 'whoa-hou' call is often heard from within the forest.

The Wompoo, which can sometimes be seen flying across a break in the forest, builds its nest on a horizontal fork between four and seven metres from the ground. To photograph it at the nest requires the construction of a hide on a small tower.

Mountain pigeons (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) fly fast and high in flocks in their search for fruiting trees. Despite their name they often search way down into the lowlands for food. They can be identified by their grey and off-white plumage and only when they are still can the bright red skin around their eyes be clearly seen. One has to be in the mountains to watch this bird's special display flight. A lone mountain pigeon will leave its perch, rise almost vertically about 70 metres and then close its wings and drop like a stone until, at the last moment, it opens them

again, levels out and sweeps in to its original perch.

The 12 species of imperial pigeons are big birds and are frequently found on islands off the mainland. Nomads, parties of imperial pigeons will travel long distances across the ocean in search of fruiting trees. The Pacific fruit pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*), easy to recognise by the black knob on its bill, is found on small islands from Manus Province to the north of the mainland right down through the Pacific to Tonga and Samoa.

The Nicobar pigeon (*Caloenas nicobarica*) also is nomadic but is a ground feeder. An odd-looking specimen — more like a fowl with its long neck hackles — the Nicobar is found in the Indian Ocean islands, to the north of Sumatra, after which it is named, the Philippines, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The ground feeders, a mixed lot, often swallow gravel and grit which aids strong stomach muscles to grind hard seeds to pulp. Other ground feeders are the jungle bronzewing (*Henicophaps albifrous*), which has a bill capable of probing; the thick-billed ground pigeon (*Trugon terrestris*); a variety of ground and emerald doves, and the pheasant pigeon (*Otidiphaps nobilis*), which more resembles its namesakes from South-East Asia than a pigeon, being a handsome bird with a large tail and purple-reflecting black and chestnut plumage.

One small group — which does not fit into either the tree-feeding or ground-feeding groups — comprises six species of cuckoo doves. These are easily recognised by their long tapering tails and medium to large size. They live mainly at the forest edge — near tracks, waterways and clearings — and feed in low trees and shrubs, mainly on fruits but sometimes seeds.

All of Papua New Guinea's pigeons, whatever their feeding habits, need trees. Even the peaceful dove (*Geopelia striata*), a little bird which feeds on seeds on bare ground in open country, needs trees nearby to perch and nest on.

In Port Moresby, the national capital, peaceful doves are often to be seen on roadsides and in the driveways of suburban gardens, usually in pairs. This small bird is recognised by its barred light brown plumage and

Clockwise from above: *Pheasant pigeon; author at hide; Victoria gouras; Wompoo and squab and Pacific fruit pigeon on Tench Island, New Ireland*

medium length tail, and is found from Australia to India.

Despite the variation in size, colour patterns and ecological requirements, there are many common charasteristics among Papua New Guinea's 51 species of pigeon. Whether the nest is built on the ground, in a bush or in a tree, it is of the platform type. The male always carries nest material leaving the job of making home livable to the female. All pigeons indulge in much head-preening and caressing when courting and, though they vary, all species indulge in displays during courtship.

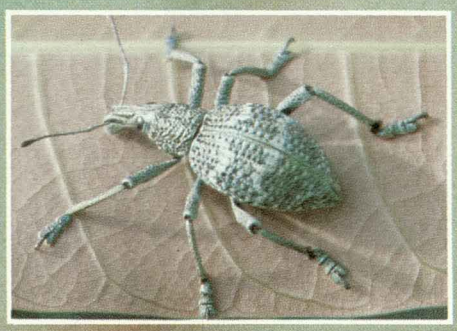
Pigeons lay one, sometimes two pale, unmarked eggs, and the parents take turns to incubate them and brood the young, the male usually taking the day shift. The newly-hatched squab grows rapidly on a protein and fat diet of pigeon's milk a regurgitated crop secretion produced by both parents. The wing feathers are the first to grow and the youngster is able to fly from danger when only a fraction of the size of an adult.

Many dangers await the innocent young pigeon. However, once it is past those first few months it has a good chance to live several years. But natural dangers always lurk for the smaller species. One day, when I was sitting in mountain forest, out of the tree-tops came a brown goshawk. It came crashing down and landed with a crash near my feet, struggling with a male white-bibbed fruit dove (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) which it had bowled off its perch in the canopy. The hawk saw me when I moved and was quickly gone. The dove, dazed, struggled up. Then it too saw me and was quickly gone. I had witnessed just one of the many dramas acted out each day beneath the canopy of Papua New Guinea's tropical forests.

— *Brian Coates is the author of* Birds in Papua New Guinea.

Evil weevils

Story: Brian Parkinson



Weevils are little brown horrors which ruin flour and cereals. Well, that's what most people think about them. But that's not the limit of their activities. The kitchen weevil is just one example of what might be the world's largest insect tribe. Entomologists estimate there are up to 40,000 species in the family *Curculionidae.*

Papua New Guinea has some of the most interesting weevil types, among them the most handsome – and most harmful. 'Most wanted' reward must go to the once uncommon genus Pantorhytes.

In Papua New Guinea's cocoa-growing areas a few members of this genus have adapted remarkably well as a result of the plantations being established. In all areas form-

Two specimens of the highly variable Eopholus *species found throughout Papua New Guinea*

Clockwise from right: Rhinoscapha; orybius *is probably more curious than ready to fight; the once uncommon* Plantorhytes plutus *has become a plague in West New Britain cocoa plantations;* Eupholus *is more common in mountain regions*

erly uncommon species have found the exotic cocoa tree to be an ideal breeding site for their larvae and now they are present in plague proportions. The failure of the cocoa industry in the Popondetta region of Northern Province is attributed in large part to Pantorhytes weevils.

Not quite as devastating but certainly a pest is *Pantorhytes plutus* which is found in the Gazelle Peninsula area of East New Britain Province. However, despite its unfortunate habits, it is a handsome insect and the PNG Wildlife Division's insect farming and trading agency has experienced sufficient overseas interest to feature it in its catalogue.

In the high mountains live *Pantorhytes lichenifer* which has fungi, algae, moss or lichens growing on its back which provide a home for smaller creatures such as mites and rotifers.

Weevils with more acceptable qualities in human eyes are members of the Eupholus and Rhinoscapha genera. *Eupholus schoenherri*, regarded as one of PNG's prettiest insects, won itself a place on a stamp some years ago. Both genera have species regarded as both attractive in appearance and less harmful by weevil standards.

Weevils have beady black eyes in their distinctly 'horsey' faces and, as they edge away from you behind a branch or limb, you could be forgiven for glimpsing some indication of intelligence which, probably, is not there at all.

They're damaging alive but weevils are being put to a useful purpose dead. Small industries established in the East New Britain and East Sepik Provinces are taking advantage of growing overseas interest in weevils by sealing them in resin for export sales. — *Brian Parkinson is a shell project officer with the Department of Commerce and Tourism.*

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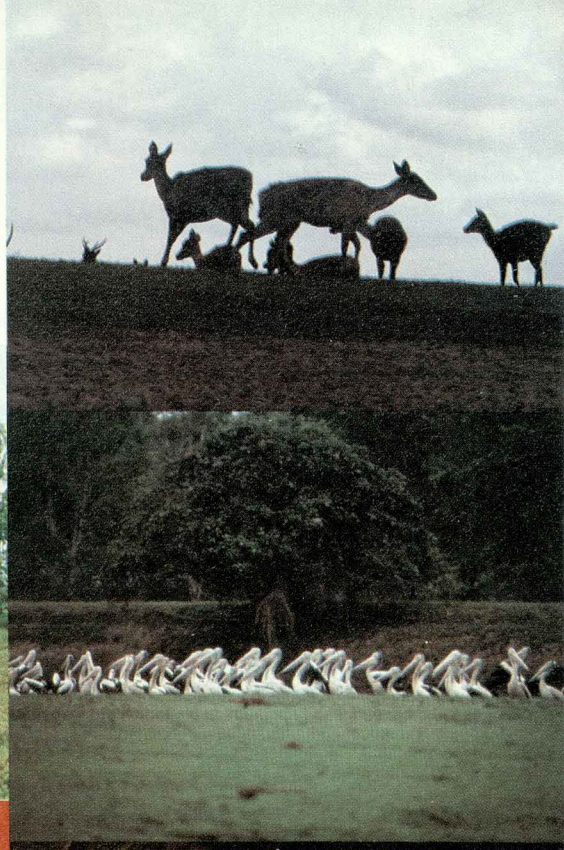

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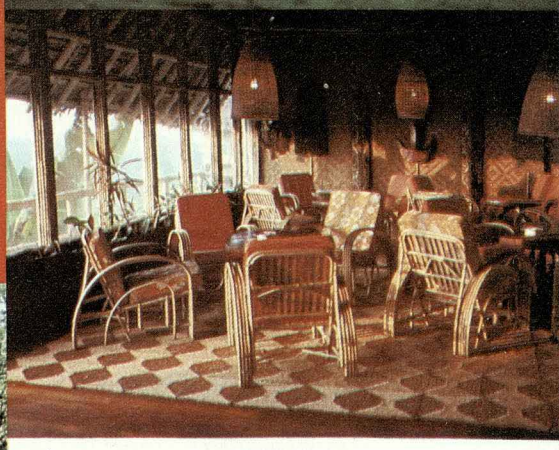

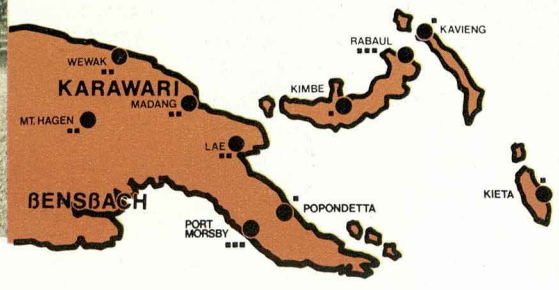

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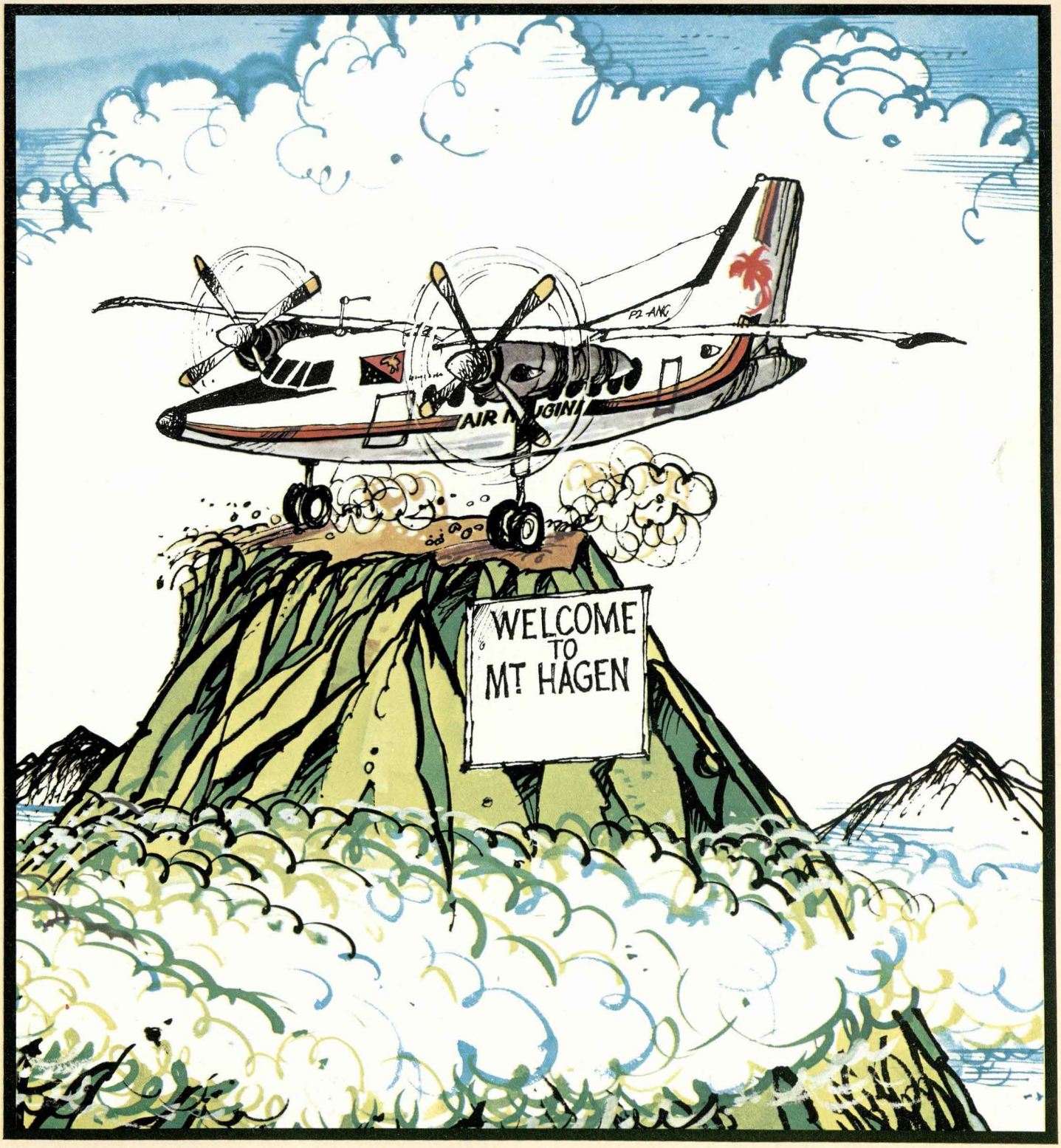
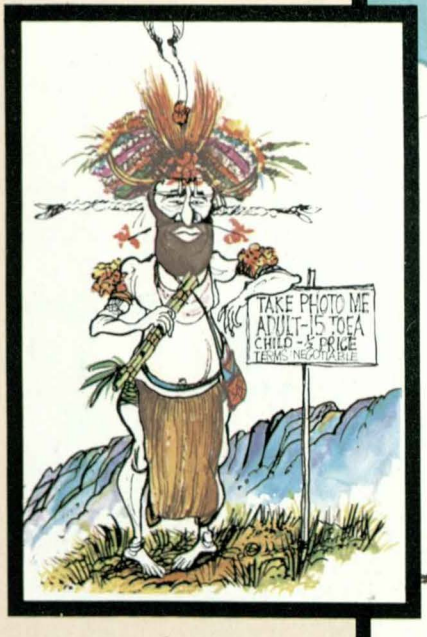
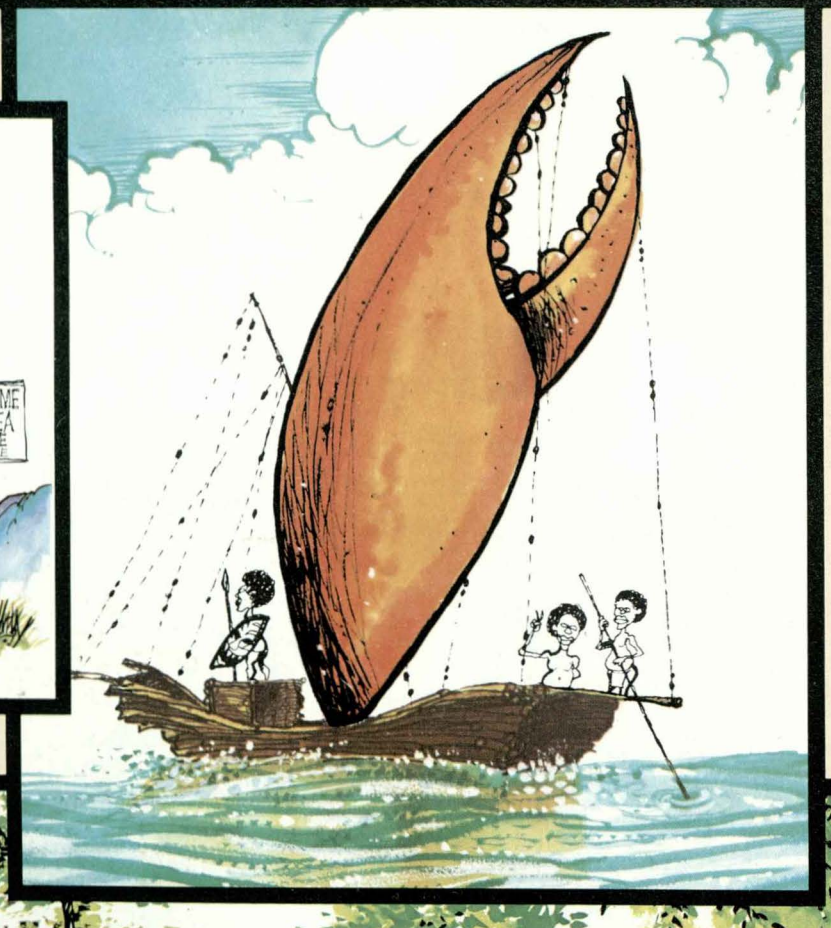
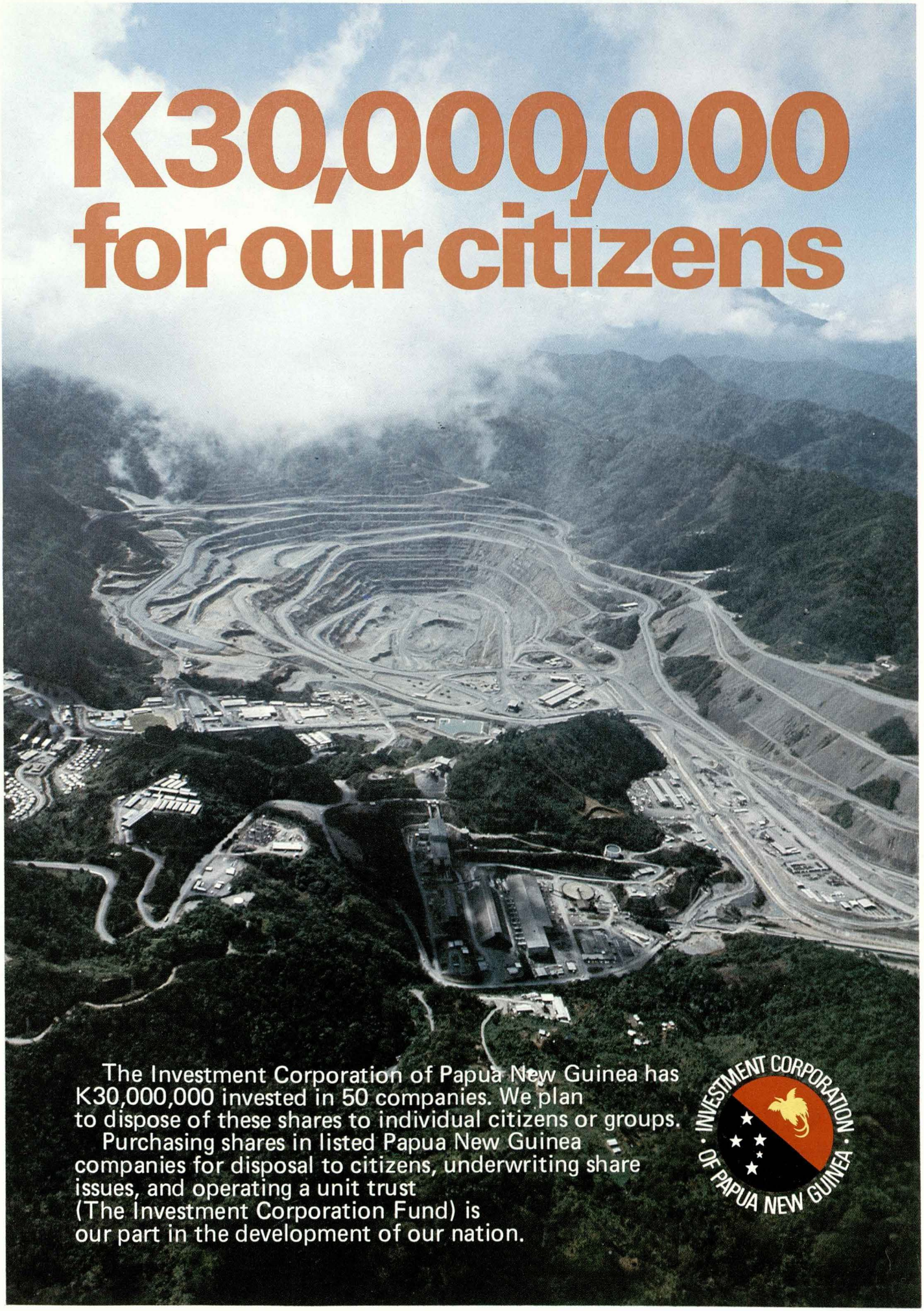
Morgan Chua, the Hong Kong-based Far Eastern Economic Review's *livewire cartoonist, visited Papua New Guinea with Air Niugini several months ago. We kept Morgan on the hop throughout his brief stay. As well as whisking him up to the Sogeri plateau and all around Port Moresby we sent him to Mount Hagen on our Fokker Friendship service. Even with the furthest stretch of the imagination, we doubt that anyone has ever actually pictured the take-off situation from the Western Highlands Provincial capital in the way Morgan saw it. Singapore-born Morgan has won wide acclaim for his incisive political cartoonery in the* Review. *But from this cartoon spread, you can see his eye for detail, colour and the humour to be found in Papua New Guinea through an Asian cartoonist's eyes.*







Right clockwise: *Morgan's first encounter with an Air Niugini hostess. 'A beautiful bird,' he says; Motuans would take issue with Morgan on his concept of their hull design but not the crab claw sail; have Asaro mudmen ever been seen at Mount Hagen market? Maybe not but after his whirlwind tour Morgan can be forgiven for this slip; Morgan found this gentleman on a drive from Port Moresby to Sogeri in the nearby mountains*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Shell~dom seen

Many are the reasons visitors come to the Pacific but more and more are coming with the sole objective of combing the reefs – either at low tide or by using diving equipment – in search of shells. Even the most common of shells can be a thing of great beauty. But there are some shells which will probably elude forever most of those who search for them – like the Conus excelsus *which today fetches prices well over K2000. One* Conus excelsus *was dredged from 200 metres of water last year in the Solomon Islands. Papua New Guinea's shell project officer Brian Parkinson tells us of other shells about which the experienced collector dreams.*

The brindled cowrie (Cypraea valentia) *is another shell which has become much more available in the past few years but still it commands prices up to K1000. Five specimens were found last century by pearl divers in the Torres Strait. Two of these are in the British Museum, one in the Cambridge University Museum, and one each in the natural history museums in Amsterdam and Brussels. The brindled cowrie was not rediscovered until 1967 when it turned up on the north coast of New Britain. A Californian shell dealer bought that one for an undisclosed price. Since then several have been found in the Philippines, one or two in Fiji by scuba divers, and some in the Rabaul area of New Britain by scuba divers employed by New Guinea Shells.*

Above: *Glory of the sea* (Conus gloriamaris) *is one of those shells which have come down rather than gone up in price. In the sixties one sold for K1500. Now they can be bought for as little as K25 in the Philippines and Solomon Islands.* **left:** *Golden cowrie* (Cypraea aurantium), *is a much sought after shell In the early 1950s a first class specimen could be bought for less than Kina 20. Now you would be lucky to buy one for K150. The first recorded sale of a golden cowrie was in England in 1786. Even then it went for what, in those days, was a whopping £3/5/0.*

Among the most beautiful of all cowries is the Cypraea guttata. *The proceeds from one found by a nursing sister near Rabaul, according to reports, were used to finance the building of a new hospital wing not far from where it was found. The one pictured here was taken from a fish's stomach by a villager near Vanimo in the West Sepik Province. A couple of years ago an artifact dealer in Madang paid K750 for a good specimen and another was sold recently in Port Moresby for K600.*

This Cypraea leucodon *is the only one known to have been collected in Papua New Guinea. It was taken from a fish's stomach near Buka Passage at the northern end of Bougainville Island. It is now in the museum of the North Solomons Provincial Government. I would hesitate to put a value on it but it cannot be worth less than K2000. As you can see, it is worthwhile for any fishermen to go through the messy business of checking out the contents of the stomach of any large fish he catches from deep water. Shells hold their gloss in a fish's stomach for a couple of hours after being taken. Parrot fish, however, have the annoying habit of chewing shells up, as I found out when I took the remains of a golden cowrie from one. Whole, it would have been worth at least K150.*

Gogodala

Carved and highly decorated canoes with crews of 40 or more paddlers are raced by the Gogodala people in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea.

The canoes are constructed from a single log felled in the forest and floated downstream through a maze of rivers and lagoons to the village. Canoes are essential transport for the Gogodala people who live on the flood plains of the Aramia River on the western side of the Gulf delta system.

This low lying region of the country is inundated for nine months of the year. Lagoons stretch for hundreds of kilometres towards the Irian Jaya border.

Gogodala villages are built on small hillocks near the lagoons. Canoes are used for communication between villages, for the women to fish or collect sago, and as toys for children.

Village carvers construct their big racing canoes under a coconut frond shelter at the waters edge near the village. The logs are hollowed out with axes at first and trimmed with knives. An essential part of a racing canoe is the intricate carvings of the prow and gunnels. Crocodiles are a favourite subject for canoe decoration. Often they are carved devouring a bird or animal. Completed hulls are painted with leaves or feathers.

Ceremonies are often held on the eve of major regattas. The races themselves, staged on the lagoons, are a display of strength of rival villages. Today the Gogodala are peaceful people but many years ago they contested their strength with head-hunting tribes, some of them semi-nomadic, who share the flood plains to collect sago.

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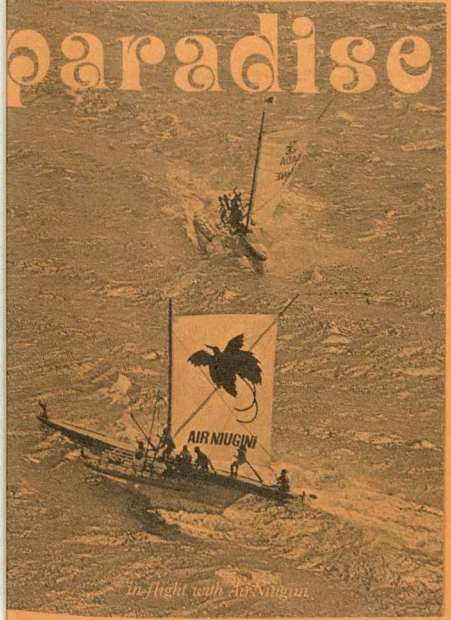

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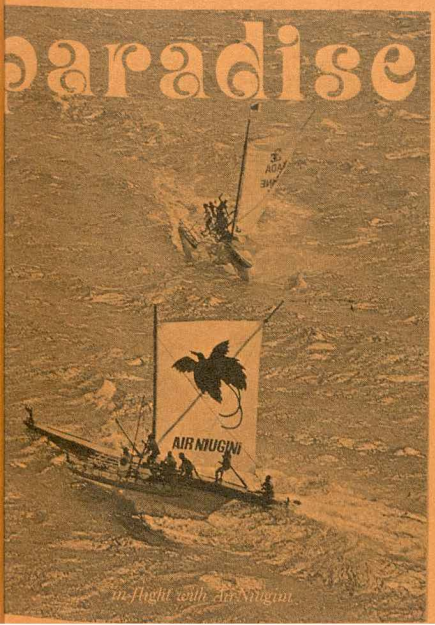

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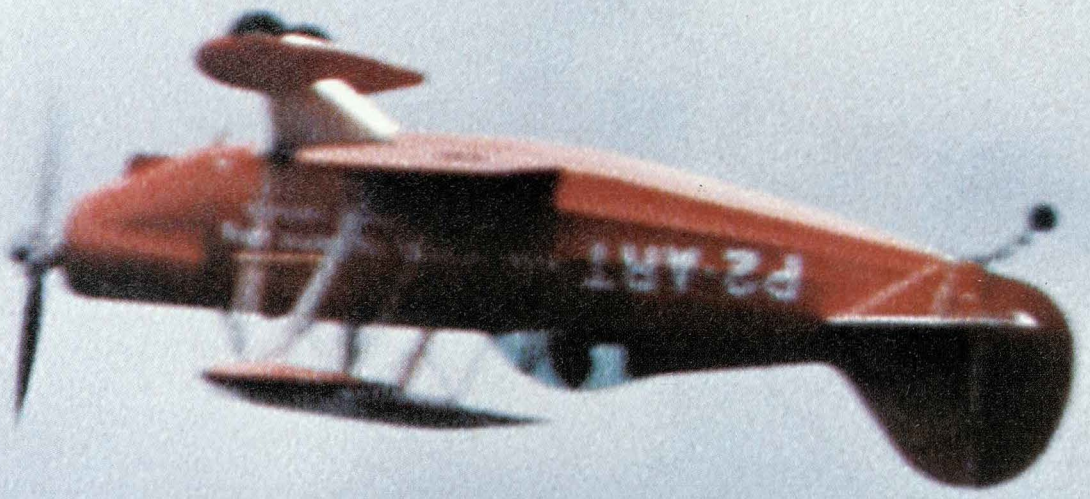


LIKLIK BINATANG

Story and photography by Judith Hollinshed

Just five months after Graham Weir and Tony Karas, of Mount Hagen, received their Pitts Special kit from Wyoming in 1978 it was ready for Honolulu-based flying ace Art Daegling to put it through its paces.

On the same day we rang Wyoming to tell them the big news. Back came the even bigger news that not only was Papua New Guinea's Pitts Special the first to be home-made; it had been assembled in record time.

When Captain Daegling, who flies with Hawaiian Air and runs his own aerobatic company, came back to earth he summed it up this way: 'A sweetheart.' He should know. His company, Polynesian Sport Avia-

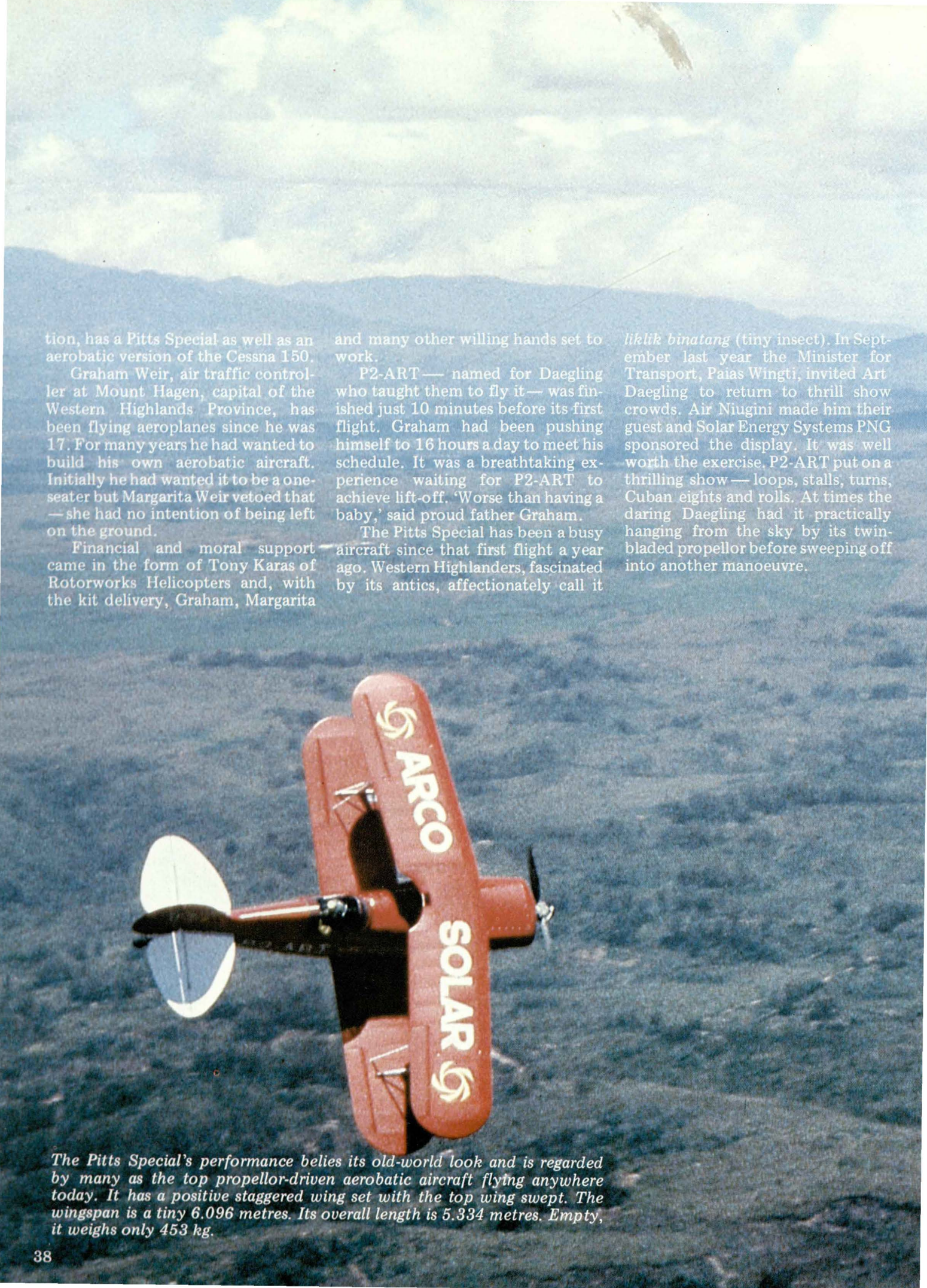
tion, has a Pitts Special as well as an aerobatic version of the Cessna 150.

Graham Weir, air traffic controller at Mount Hagen, capital of the Western Highlands Province, has been flying aeroplanes since he was 17. For many years he had wanted to build his own aerobatic aircraft. Initially he had wanted it to be a one-seater but Margarita Weir vetoed that — she had no intention of being left on the ground.

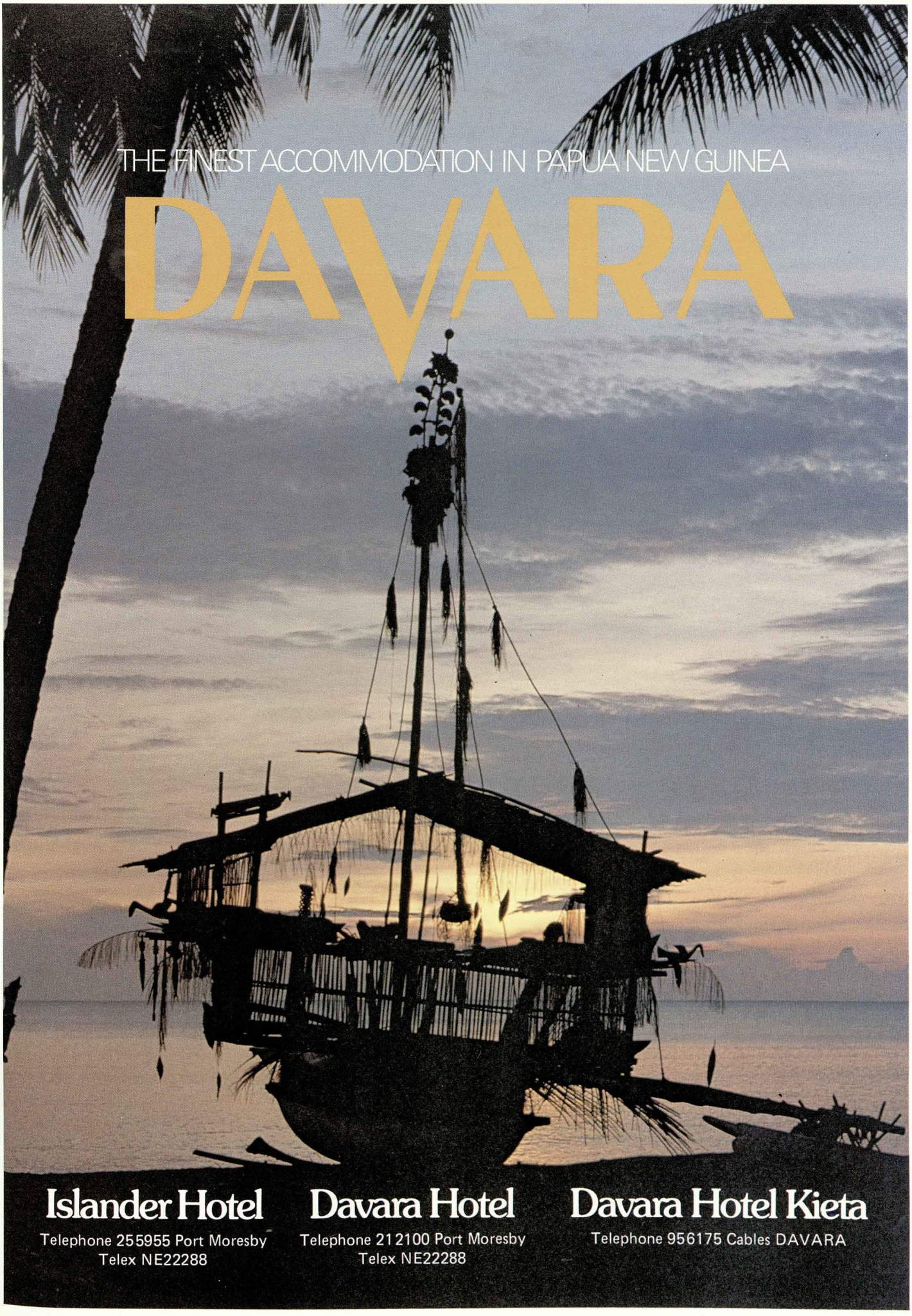
Financial and moral support came in the form of Tony Karas of Rotorworks Helicopters and, with the kit delivery, Graham, Margarita and many other willing hands set to work.

P2-ART — named for Daegling who taught them to fly it — was finished just 10 minutes before its first flight. Graham had been pushing himself to 16 hours a day to meet his schedule. It was a breathtaking experience waiting for P2-ART to achieve lift-off. 'Worse than having a baby,' said proud father Graham.

The Pitts Special has been a busy aircraft since that first flight a year ago. Western Highlanders, fascinated by its antics, affectionately call it *liklik binatang* (tiny insect). In September last year the Minister for Transport, Paias Wingti, invited Art Daegling to return to thrill show crowds. Air Niugini made him their guest and Solar Energy Systems PNG sponsored the display. It was well worth the exercise. P2-ART put on a thrilling show — loops, stalls, turns, Cuban eights and rolls. At times the daring Daegling had it practically hanging from the sky by its twin-bladed propellor before sweeping off into another manoeuvre.



The Pitts Special's performance belies its old-world look and is regarded by many as the top propellor-driven aerobatic aircraft flying anywhere today. It has a positive staggered wing set with the top wing swept. The wingspan is a tiny 6.096 metres. Its overall length is 5.334 metres. Empty, it weighs only 453 kg.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