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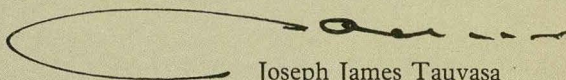
Arpège de Lanvin



Welcome aboard

Air Niugini reaches a significant staging post this year. In November, the airline celebrates its 10th birthday. In terms of some world airlines that may not sound a long time, but the genesis can be traced back something like 60 years to the pioneer aviation ventures in Papua New Guinea. Our lineage includes some famous names — a family tree that, through the vital part that aviation played in this country's development, contains a history of storybook adventure and plenty of plain, hard work.

The formation of Papua New Guinea's national airline was discussed early in 1973 and Air Niugini was launched on November 1 that year with a fleet of eight F27s and a dozen DC3s. Air Niugini far outstripped expectations in its first year, and it has continued to grow, both internationally and at home. The DC3s have long gone and the airline now serves many of its domestic centres by F28 jet and the latest turbo-prop aircraft. Soon, it is to take a decision on a new wide-body jet. Today, Air Niugini serves 10 international destinations and 20 points in Papua New Guinea, carrying more than half a million passengers a year. The accent is on growth, and I am confident that we will see that through the 1980s.



Joseph James Tauvasa
General Manager, Air Niugini

No. 39 1983

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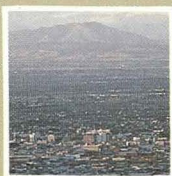
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Quality in Air Transport

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Preparing for the firedance in East New Britain is as important as the dance itself



We New Zealanders are known for a foot-shuffling, aw-shucks modesty about ourselves and our country that borders on self-effacement — except when it comes to describing the scenery down here. Then the prose gets as purple as the foreground shadows when the sun flames down at sunset past the pristine majesty of Mitre Peak, if you see what I mean.

Back in the old days — insofar as the South Pacific has any old days — the local writers used to risk the vapours from the frenzy of their own adjectives when writing about places like Milford Sound, the Southern Alps and the thermal regions. And readers risked suffocating on a surfeit of superlatives.

A nationally esteemed poet of a few decades ago, Blanche Baughan, having watched a sunset from the Summit Road, near Christchurch, wrote in orgasmic prose: “Suddenly the sun dropped clear and sheer, out of the cloud pall into the clear sky . . . O miracle! O effulgence! The sky was flooded with light, the plain with gladness. It was as if a great weight of despondence had been lifted off the world . . . Then the sun sank lower and the glory faded . . . faded . . . But wait! scarcely had the last ray left the earth, than the resurrection of light began, and, in the after-glow, Colour had a second and brighter birth . . .” (Have a rest. You probably feel a bit puffed after that.)



O Miracle!
O Effulgence!
...It's New Zealand

(As Gordon McLauchlan sees it)

Early writers were not the only ones captivated by New Zealand landscapes . . . artists, too. This painting, "Milford Sound, Looking North-west From Freshwater Basin," was the work of John Buchanan (1819-98), a pattern designer at a print and dye works in Scotland who emigrated to Dunedin and became a painter and naturalist. It was described by Gil Docking in his standard work, "Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting," as 'an early masterpiece in New Zealand landscape painting . . . a symphony in line and tone'

A famous Dunedin poet, Thomas Bracken wrote: "The romantic character of our New Zealand scenery is not surpassed in any other portion of the world . . . The sublime picture presented by Milford Sound when the crimson sunset is blushing on the snow-capped summit of Mitre Peak (My God, he beat me to it), and the shadows of the giant hills are melting away in the mirror of liquid silver which spreads at their feet, is a sight only to be realised by actual experience . . ."

(In a rare moment of restraint, by the way, Bracken wrote the New Zealand National Anthem.)

Baughan and Bracken, even in those far-off days, were actually writing for a tourist market in Europe. Bracken's descriptive piece is from a book he wrote for the Union Steam Ship Company, published in 1879. He began his preface with: "In this age of cheap and expeditious travel when a voyage round the world is looked upon as an undertaking of less magnitude than a journey of a few hundred miles would have appeared to our fathers . . ."

Everything, clearly, is relative.

Maybe it was the romance of sheer distance, but New Zealand actually had constructed a tourist industry as early as the turn of the century. The Government Tourist and Publicity Department was established in 1901 — which makes it the oldest Government tourism promotion organisation in the world. At that time it still took weeks to get here by sea from Europe and in fact Thomas Cook and sons were touting a short-cut — "Auckland may be reached in 32 days by the overland route across America". The passage from Australia took "rather more than four days".

New Zealand still is a long way from anywhere, but getting here in large numbers in jumbo jets is a lot faster than it ever used to be. And the trouble with selling remote and uncrowded scenic grandeur nowadays is that if you do it very well you're likely to destroy the product. That's a dilemma facing the

country in the age of what a book on mass tourism has called "The Golden Hordes".

And there's no doubt about the balm for the over-burdened urban soul if you stand on a stretch of beach at Lake Manapouri in the long twilight on a summer evening looking across the deep green mountains. You understand at once that God the Old Aesthete in the Sky really could knock together a stunning landscape given the time, the peace and the quiet.

Or if you lounge in the langour of the noonday warmth up north on the edge of Lake Waikaremoana, you can get the feeling you're the only inhabit-

ant of the earth.

Just being in these places, unwrapped, in the voluminous stillness, is a kind of purification rite. What happens is you get freed by the sense of space and timelessness with the skyline rolling away infinitely, freed from the tidied right-angles and studied curves of urban geography. And, to slip down an aesthetic notch or two from the sublime to the mundane, economically it's a non-depreciating asset — in the sense that you can watch it all day without wearing it out.

But start shipping in visitors by the jumbo load the way they do in Hawaii, Singapore and

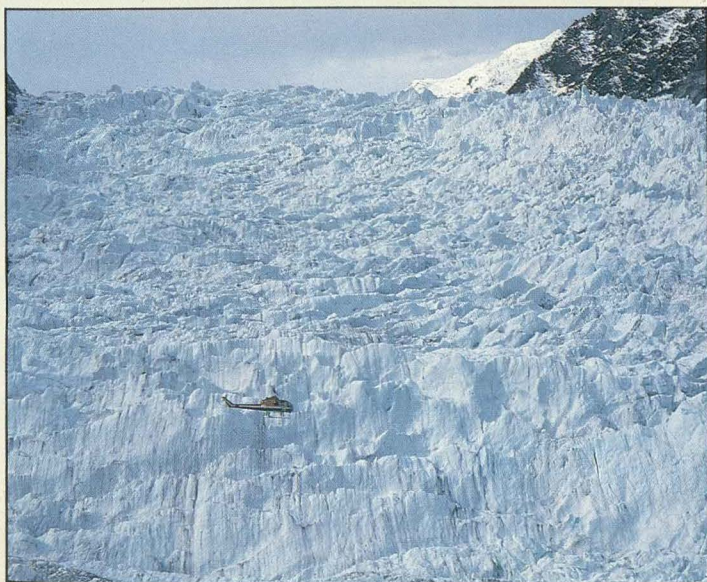
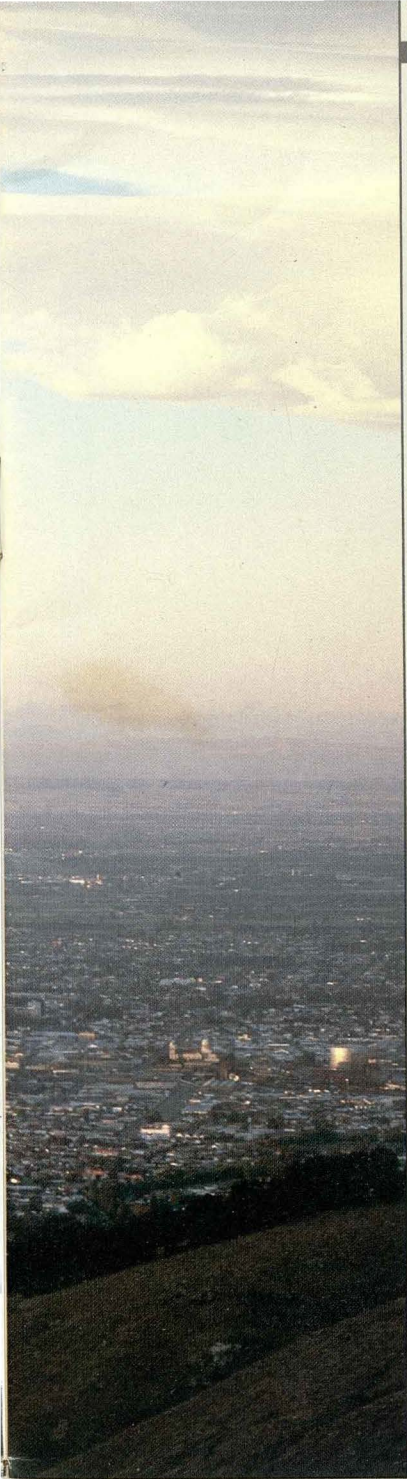
Hong Kong and you run smack into the contradiction of crowding out your uncrowded land.

The thing that is saving the stillness in the meantime is that the tourism infrastructure, outside Auckland anyway, is geared for small groups and couldn't handle the golden hordes.

Right. Now that I've explained that New Zealand's mountains and lakes will knock your eyes out, I don't want you to think we're the sort of species that shuffles down to the watering-hole every night to stand up to the ankles in liquid silver gawking at the sunset, narrow-eyed, slack-jawed with forever unsated wonder. The



The view over Christchurch that took Blanche Baughan's breath away, as it is today (left). Below, the aerial gondola ride that gives a stunning view of Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables range. Bottom, The Fox Glacier dwarfs a sightseeing helicopter in Westland, South Island



Auckland and most of the city guys I know are as limp and effete as a piece of tensile steel — like Knuckles Smith, a race-track habitue I haven't seen for the best part of a year, I'm happy to say. Let me tell you about Knuckles.

At the end of the holidays last summer, I had an acute liquidity problem. The family fortune was endangered because of rumours that my gold reserves could not match my debts, thus creating a run on my trading account which forced me into a craven chat with my bank manager.

Then out of the blue, or rather, out of the misty grey, came Knuckles Smith, this troglodyte from the concrete caves of downtown Wellington. (It was misty grey, by the way, even though usually reliable sources were claiming it was still summer.) Anyway, Knuckles is a man of limited achievement except as a sage and seer of the race track.

"What about putting me up, mate?" he said. "I'm here for the Cup meeting."

I looked into his eyes and it was solvency at first sight; so I nodded vigorously.

"My needs are simple," he said. "Just rest and quiet between race days and a large glass I can keep topped up."

I have known Knuckles for years. He belongs to that species of New Zealand fauna, the Inner City Bloke, which knows nothing of the heritage of back country and bush, of deer hunting and good keen men, of billy tea and wild pork. He battens down his windows every night against what he regards as the lethal intrusion of fresh air. To him New Zealand history is tales of piecarts at midnight, pub raids after hours, furtive bookies, sequestered crown-and-anchor games. He reckons cities are what God would have built in the first place if he'd had the time and the money.

He got his nickname from pulling his knuckles neurotically before picking up his cards, not from fighting as some of you might have suspected. Knuckles is a pacifist.

His true genius is revealed on the track. Over the years he has won more doubles than he

truth is we too have been lured by the music of the city with its upbeat rhythms of living, its percussive excitement; and most of us are thoroughly urbanised.

Traditionally I should now give you a portrait of the ruggedly independent countryman from the backblocks, a national emblem as indigenous as the kiwi and the silver fern — weathered face, powerful hands surfaced like sandpaper, standing firm against the intrusion of limp, effete, whimpering city folk. Trouble is the countryman nowadays is likely to be educated, suave, just back from wintering in Hawaii. I live in

Auckland Harbour, looking from the North Shore through the harbour bridge to Downtown. Bottom, a day at the races, with all its "atmosphere"

Air Niugini, in partnership with Air New Zealand, and Cathay Pacific Airways, serves New Zealand by direct flight between Port Moresby and Auckland.

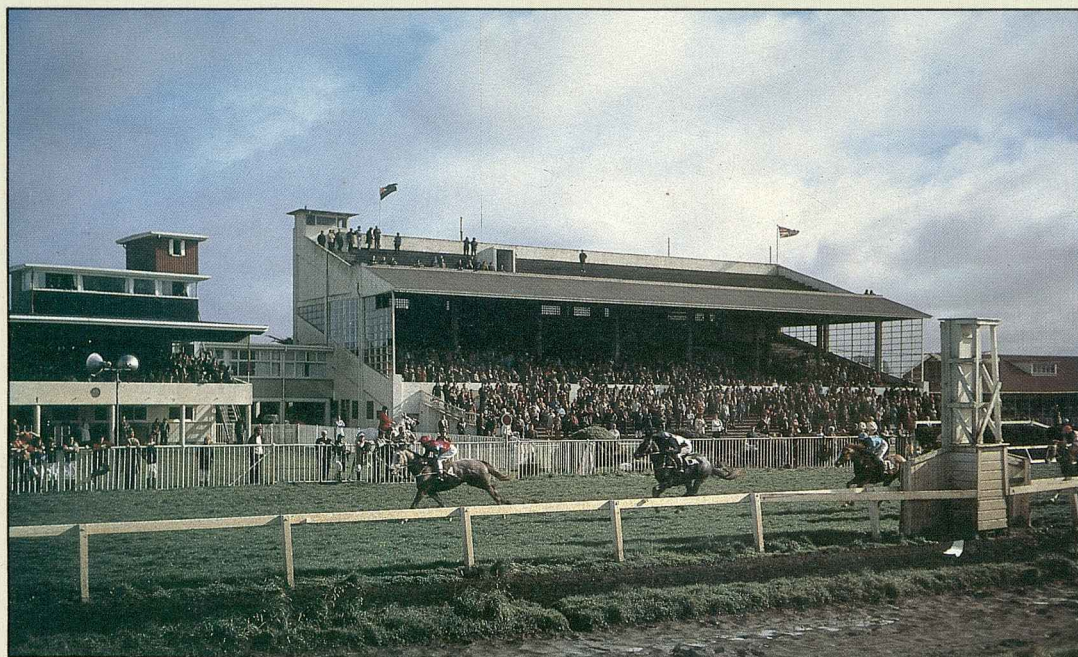


has drunk, and that's a lot of doubles. I planned to give him a few days to get the form sorted out and then accompany him to the course for a big clean-up on Cup day.

The morning of the big meet, I found him working out early on the dining table, three tip sheets and a race card spread out in front of him, calculating, muttering nervously and snapping his knuckles as he pored over the starters' names. Then he announced he would walk to the off-course betting shop for a warm-up look at the odds.

When we got to the track, I was going to follow his betting and restore my cash-flow but before the first race started he sloped off into the crowd and disappeared. I searched the course but didn't see him again until after the last race at a place we'd pre-arranged in case we became separated. I'd had my usual sort of day having bank-rolled more losers than Bonnie Prince Charlie, and it had rained as if the sky were a colander.

Knuckles looked like a Picasso portrait — both eyes seemed to be on one side of his face.



There was about those eyes the introspective look of advanced intoxication.

"I had a great day," he said. "Made myself a packet. How did you do? Didn't see you all day."

"My day has been a sort of personal Pearl Harbour thanks to your lack of guidance and support," I whimpered. "I

didn't even see you at the betting windows. Where the hell have you been?"

"In my favourite corner of the small bar. I wagered my roll this morning at the betting shop in case it rained, which it did, you know; so I watched it all on television."

"Why come to the course? Why stay here all day?"

"Atmosphere, old son. Atmosphere."

Even Blanche Baughan, I suspect, would have been lost for words — *Gordon McLaughlan is a New Zealand columnist, satirist, television personality and author whose books include a study of New Zealanders entitled 'The Passionless People'*

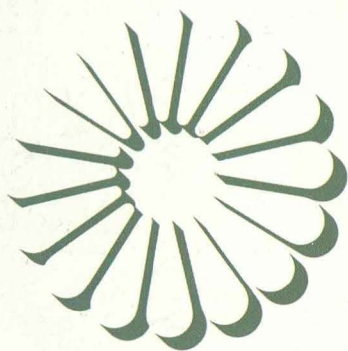
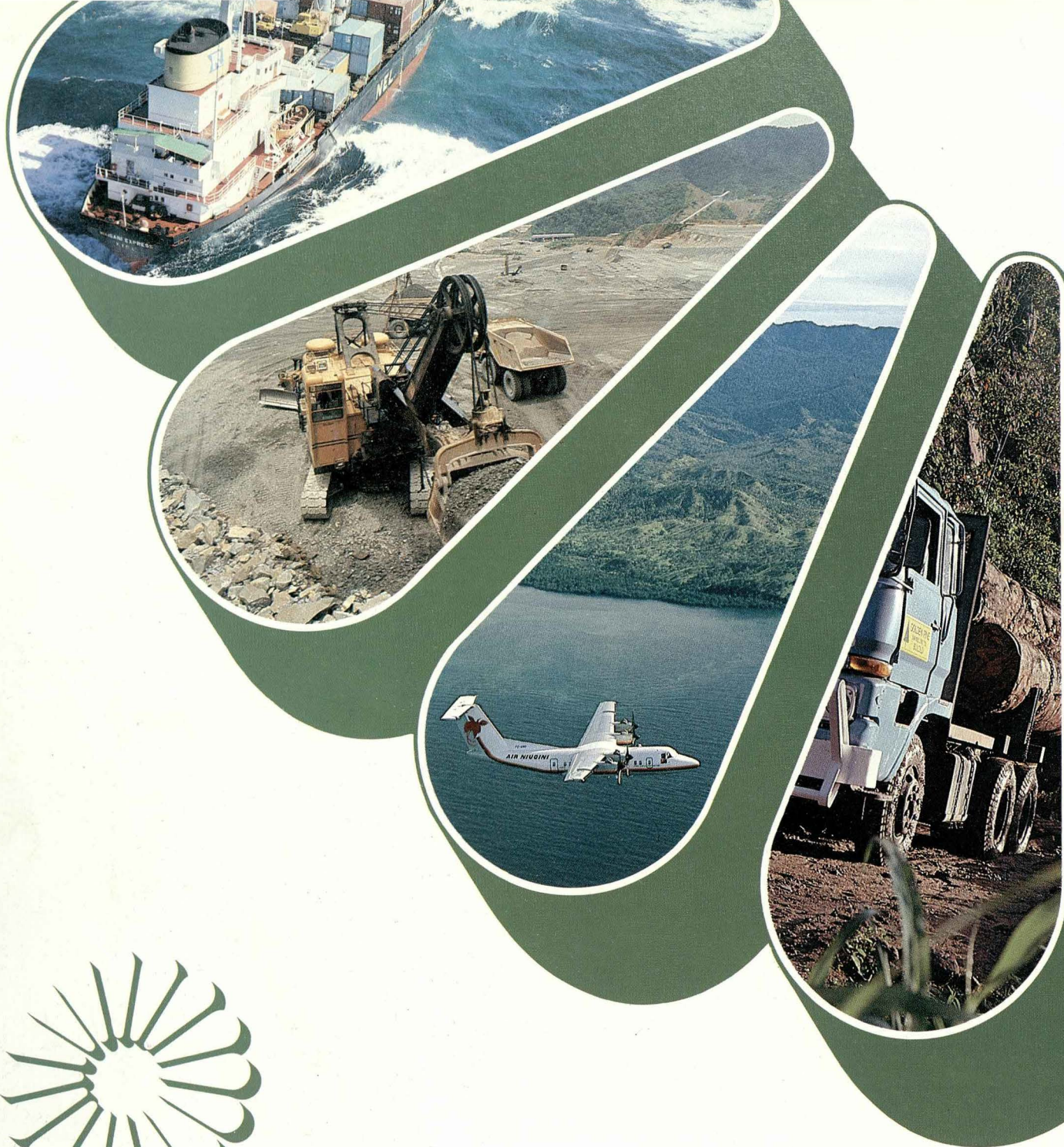


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THE BIRD THAT PAINTS

Story and pictures by William S. Peckover



PAINTING the inside walls of its bower is a part-time activity of the male Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, one of the common birds of Papua New Guinea's lowland tree-studded savannah.

Scientists call bower painting a 'displacement activity' because it is believed to have developed over the many thousands of years since the male was freed of parental duties. Fe-

males carry the full load of nest construction, brooding and tending the young.

Early romanticist ornithologists called bowers 'love arbours' because they are the focal point of the male's sexual displays to females. A male's mating season lasts about five months; usually commencing about June and finishing late November. A few individuals will start up to three months

early and others three months late.

Males build a new bower every season, nearly always close to the previous one, which is torn down if it is still standing. Sometimes the new bower is built on the base of the previous one. When this happens, bowers can become quite formidable structures of up to nearly two metres in length, a metre wide and about half a metre

An overall view of the bower constructed by the fawn-breasted bowerbird (right, top), with the male busily painting. The colour difference between painted and unpainted areas of the inside wall is clearly visible. Right, below, hanging a decorative piece

high. The bird measures less than 30cm from bill tip to tail.

Breaking off dead tips of tree branches about 15 to 30cm long, he first lays down a mat, usually up to a metre by half metre and oriented with the long dimension running east-west. When the mat is about 10cm thick, he commences to build two vertical walls, now pushing the sticks into the mat with strong sideways movements of the head. One wall runs along the south side of the mat and the other the north side. Initially the walls form an avenue up to about 15cm wide; as the season progresses more sticks are added on its insides until finally the avenue is reduced in width to a point where the bird can just pass along it comfortably.

It takes only three days to complete the initial bower construction.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds decorate their bowers with bunches of green berries, small green fruits and sometimes small bunches of green leaves. The western end of the mat and tops of both walls are decorated. The south wall is invariably longer than the north. Occasionally the whole bower arrangement is mirror reversed, decorations on the east end and north wall longer than the south. A left-handed bird?

A bower marks the centre of a male's territory. It is usually about 400 metres from those of its nearest rivals. Although he may appear to be the original liberated male, life for a male is neither idle nor idealistic. If he is to be successful in attracting females with whom to mate he must defend his bower from his rivals, who in a few minutes absence can literally tear it apart or thief his freshest decorations. Vigorous young males without territories of their own are always in the offering 'and available' to mate with the female he may have attracted if he does not keep them at a distance.

Males seem to have an uncanny sense of knowing when a female is in the vicinity. An ob-

server watching a male working and calling around his bower notices a complete change in behaviour; the bird becomes excited, his calls change too, mostly quieter but with occasional explosions of noise. The observer soon learns that shortly after this change of antics a female will appear silently from nearby bushes to alight on a branch not far from the bower.

Some species of Bowerbirds have crests at the back of their head. The Fawn-breasted does not; it is thought to have lost its crest whilst evolving because



one of its main display antics is to turn the back of its head toward the female — displaying to the female its non-existent crest! In a crouching stance it remains perfectly still for five minutes or more “churring” quietly — if the female also remains in her position, this quiet display performance may continue for half an hour or more. What appears to be a game of chasing around the bower is another part of the display and courting performance. Another is to stand with the tail cocked and yet another to pick up a bunch of berries from the mat as if he is offering these to the attendant female.

When the right moment is reached, mating takes place in the bower. Males regularly paint an inside area of each wall, doing this for about one hour or more each day. A mouthful of chewed-up green vegetable matter is brought to the bower and deposited on the avenue floor. The bird then takes a small portion and, working it in his mouth with saliva until it is



of the consistency of cream, he then daubs the resultant mixture on the walls pushing the bill into the cavities between the network of twigs. When the first mouthful has been deposited, he then takes more from the reserve on the floor and so on until the painting material is exhausted. The same area of each wall

is painted over and over again throughout the mating season. Green when wet, the paint dries to a reddish brown and can be seen in some of the accompanying photographs.

Activity at a bower usually follows three cycles of intensity in a season. As a cycle reaches its peak the quantity of decora-



The female has moved into the avenue of the bower (left, top) and the male crouches, calling quietly in encouragement. Another approach to courting (left, below), the tail-cocked display stance

to Irian Jaya). Five bower builders occur only in Australia. The remaining species of this group is the Fawn-breasted Bowerbird; it occurs in all three countries; Australia and Irian Jaya, where it is a rare bird, and in Papua New Guinea, where it is common.

What is possibly the rarest of all of Papua New Guinea's endemic birds is the Tomba Bowerbird, *Archboldia Sanfordi*. Its total population may number only in the hundreds. Very little is known about this bird ex-



cept for its type of bower.

The Tomba Bowerbird lays down a mat of dead fern stems, about oval in shape and measuring about one and a half by two metres. Off the edge of this mat it assembles two or three piles of broken snail shells. Above the mat the bird uses convenient horizontal branches, thick vine stems or half-fallen saplings to a height of about two to three metres over which to drape many hundreds of lengths (about one metre) of thin orchid stalks; giving the bower the appearance of being surrounded by green curtain drapes. A truly wonderful sight in the early morning sunlight; the thousands of water droplets clinging to the orchid stems sparkling. The photograph here of the Tomba Bowerbird re-arranging a fern stem is the first ever colour photograph of this extremely rare bird. *William Peckover is past president of the New Guinea Bird Society and co-author of the book entitled 'Birds of New Guinea and Tropical Australia'*

tions increases; the west mat being piled high with bunches of fresh berries. Then follows a down-run with much less calling; withering decoration is thrown off but most not replaced with new ones until there are only a few left. After a time the next up-cycle will start. It may be the up-cycle is an indication

of a receptive female in the vicinity.

Unlike the strong closely-knit bower construction, nests built by the females are flimsy loosely-knit open cups. Nests are built with twigs slightly finer than those used by males in their bowers; they are lined with fine rootlets. One egg is

usual but some two egg clutches have been reported.

Nineteen species make up the bowerbird family, four of which do not build bowers. Of the fifteen bowerbuilding species, nine are endemic to the island of New Guinea. Six of them occur in Papua New Guinea (the other three are confined

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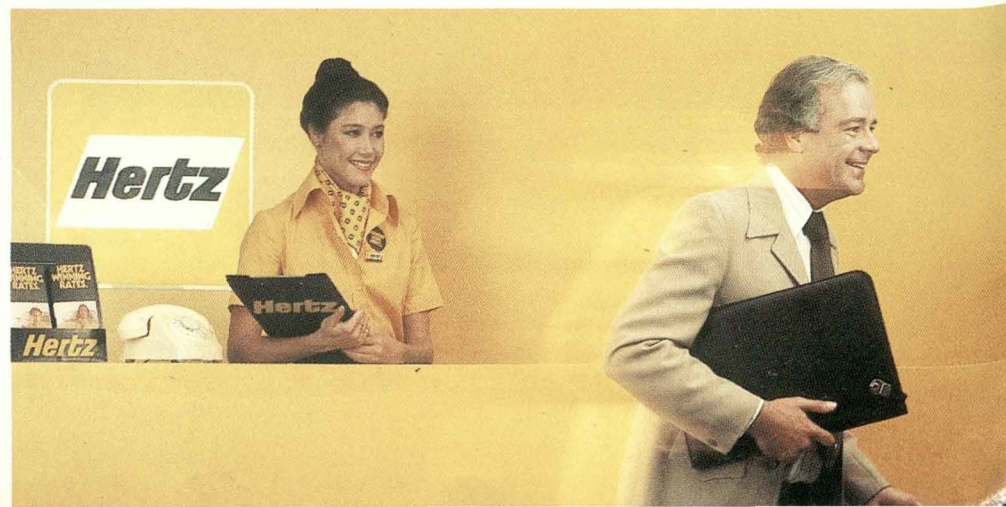
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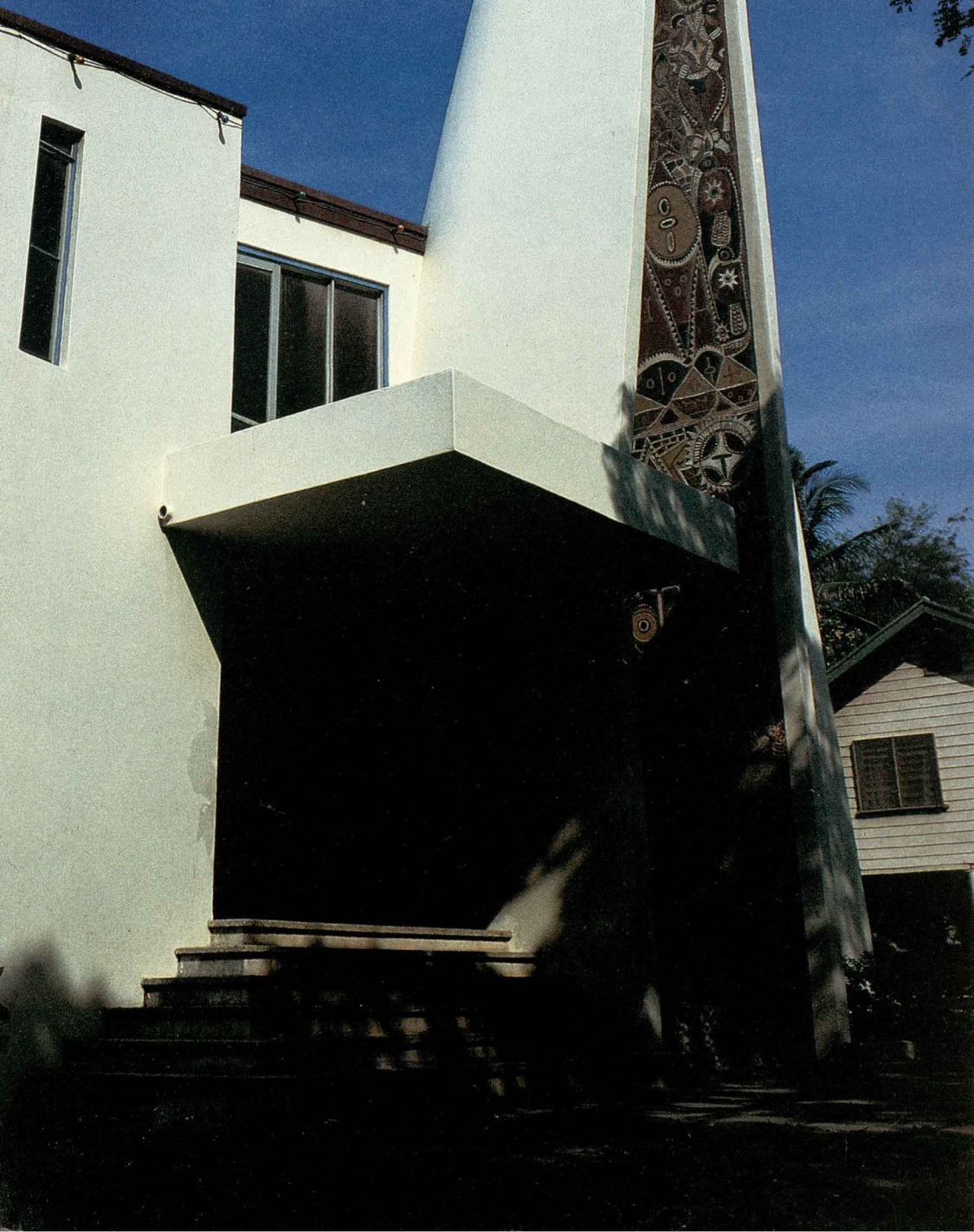
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Tambarana and Steeple

Story and pictures
by Tony Austin



INTRODUCED religion has had an enormous impact on Papua New Guinea — a country that counts itself amongst Christian nations to the extent of embodying an adherence to the faith in its constitution. Most major Western denominations have established themselves, together with many lesser known sects.

In addition to the more obvious effects religion has had on the lives and culture of the people, churches have added significantly to PNG's architectural diversity. This is seen most readily in the capital city, Port Moresby.

For those with a sense of history, Port Moresby proper boasts a church which is amongst the nation's oldest buildings. The tiny Ela Church



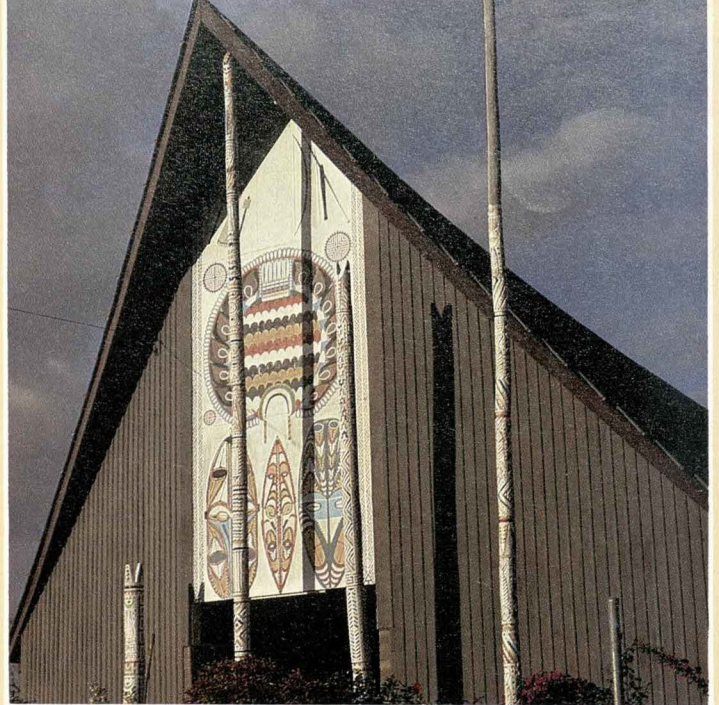
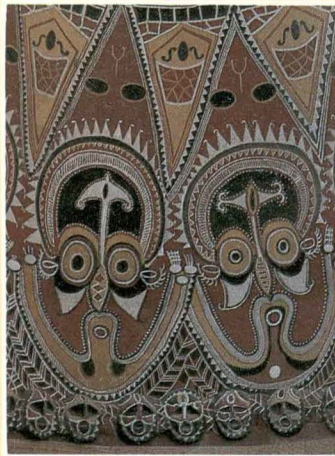
was built originally in 1892 by the London Missionary Society and is still in use. As spartan as it is small, the church reflects the poverty of the mission, not only when it first ventured to the colony, but equally in successive decades before becoming, in 1958, the United Church in collaboration with the Methodists.

The most ornate features of the building are the old brass plaques inside. These commemorate, among others, the father of the Mission in Papua, Rev. William Lawes, and the martyred evangelist-adventurer, James Chalmers.

Penury has been the lot of most missions and this naturally enough tends to be reflected in the quality of many of their buildings. Thus the 14-year-old St John's Anglican Church, though decidedly more imposing than Ela across the road, is marked by a brevity of design

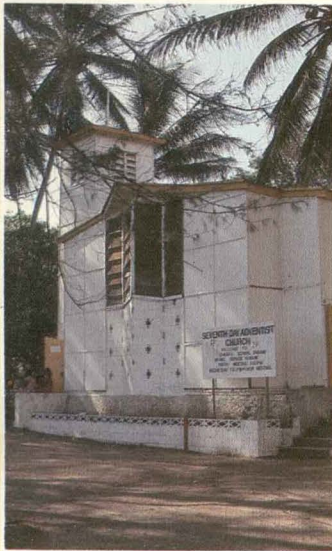
Right: Top, Mary Queen of the Pacific Church in Waigani.
Bottom, interior of the United Church, Hula

Below: Left, haus tambaran, East Sepik. Right, detail from the haus tambaran "steeple" of St Mary's Catholic Cathedral (pictured preceding page). Bottom, contrasting colonial design of Seventh Day Adventist Church, Ela Beach



— but one which is nonetheless aesthetically pleasing.

Very much poorer is the Seventh Day Adventist church on Ela Beach. Interesting in its colonial design, its extremely basic interior is no deterrent to the large numbers who flock there each Saturday morning.



For a long period, most missions took willing responsibility for the demise of Papua New Guinean culture. However, more recent and enlightened attempts to undo the damage have included the incorporation of local tradition into the design of many contemporary churches.

For instance, the design of St Mary's Catholic Cathedral is based on the architectural splendour of the *haus tambaran* — a building traditionally of great religious significance to Sepik people. Inside are to be

found borrowings from several cultures incorporating, for example, tapa cloth from the Northern Province and the spiritually significant Trobriand and yam house.

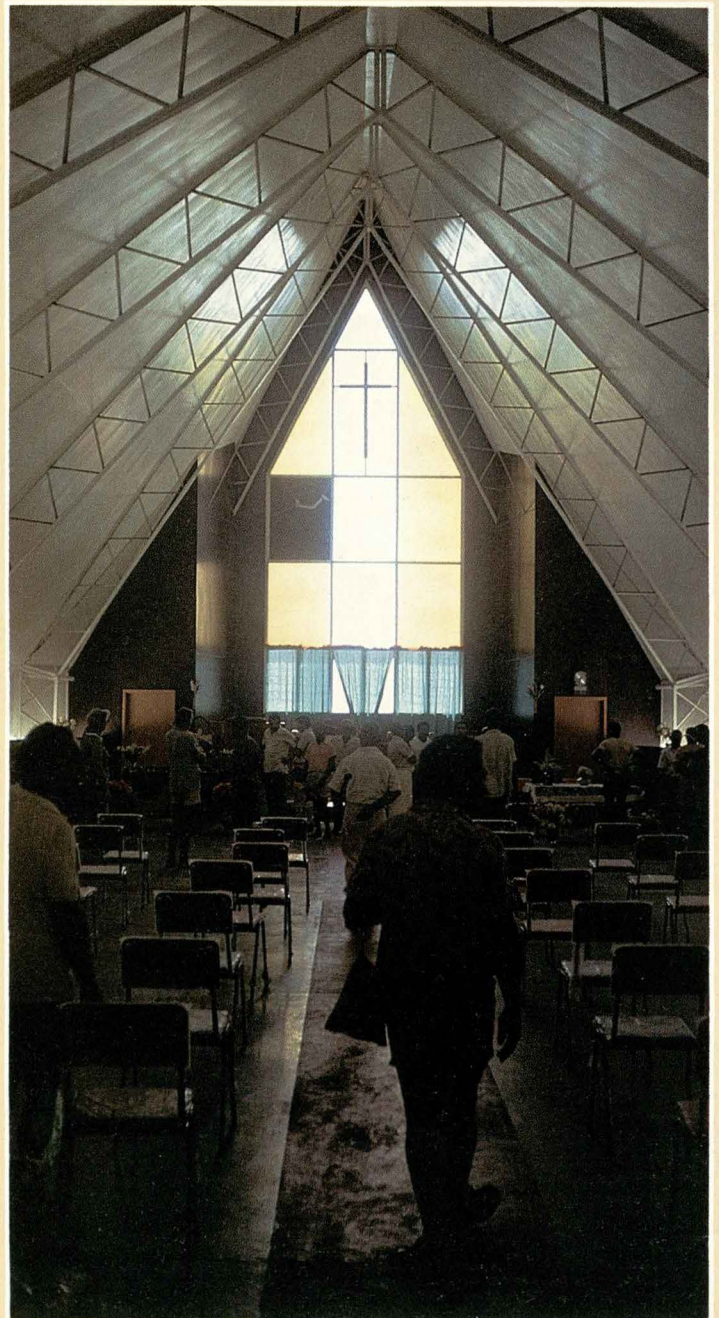
In the suburb of Waigani, Mary Queen of the Pacific is modelled on a Mekeo design. So is the adjoining Bishop's residence.

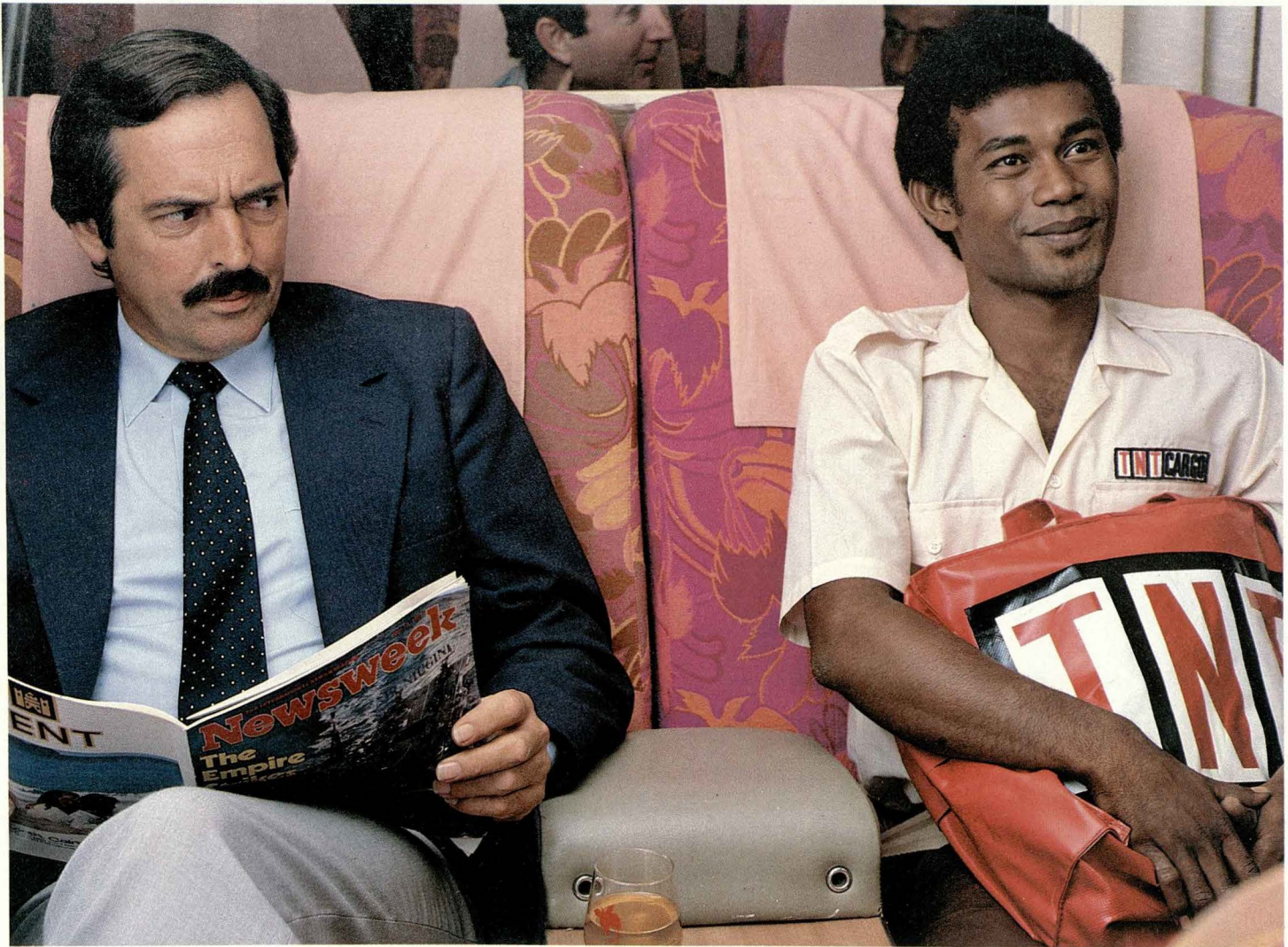
Not unexpectedly, the people themselves have played a telling role in the erection of their places of worship, not least in terms of money-raising. Especially in coastal Papua, villagers have required little inducement to raise large sums to erect splendid churches — often regarded as something of a status symbol.

In fact, villages have been known to indulge in fierce rivalry over the erection of their churches.

The United Church building at Hula, not far by road from Port Moresby, is evidence of a small community's willingness to make financial sacrifices in order to build a church of which it can feel proud. Completed in 1973, it cost well over K20,000.

Visitors to Papua New Guinea's capital, whether religious by inclination or not, can discover much about Papua New Guinea, its people and its history by visiting the city's churches. ✿





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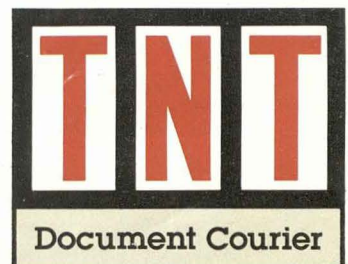
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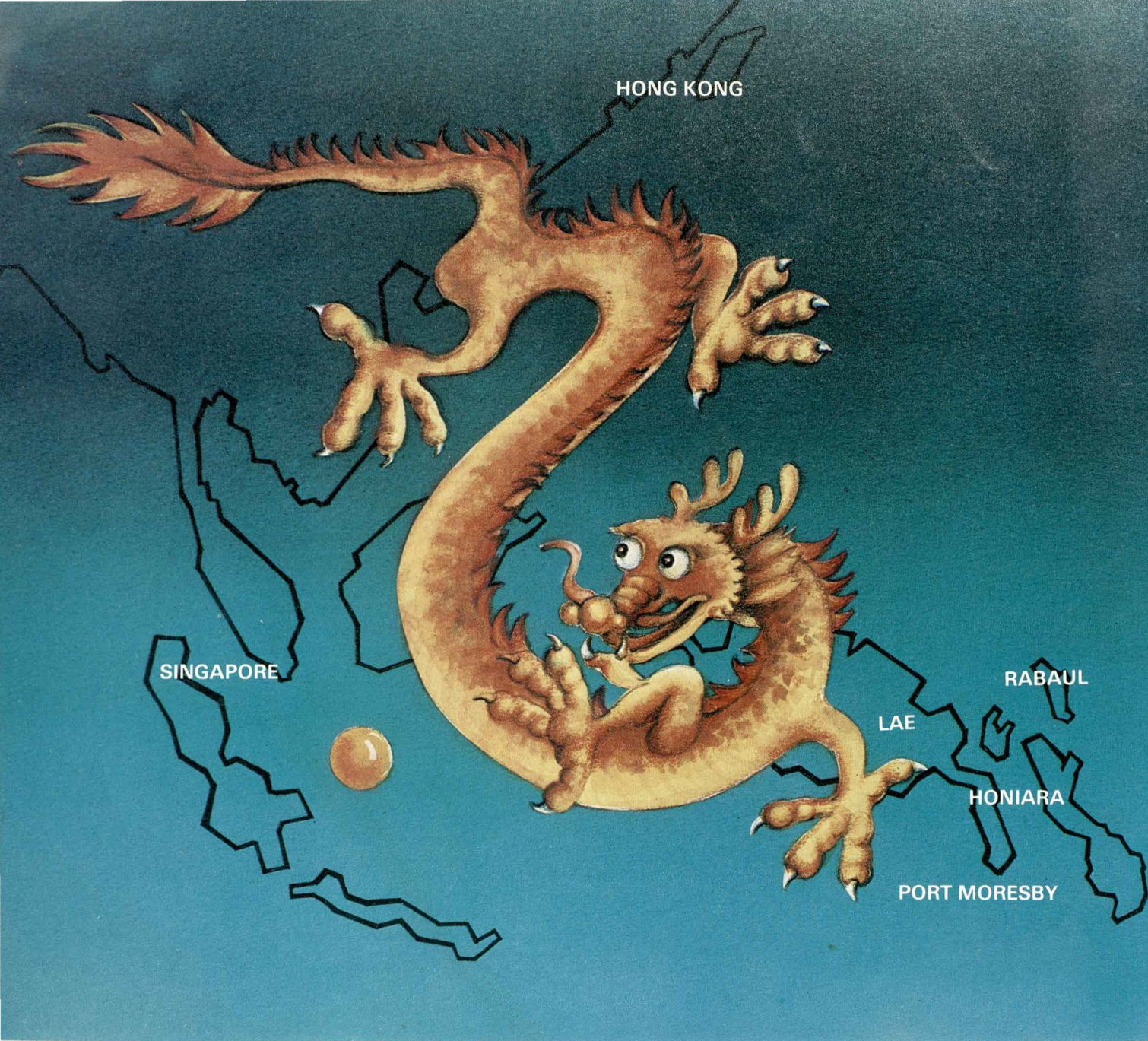
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NEW YEAR'S EVE in the drink



photo Air Niugini, inset Richard Buckley

WHEN Bob Halstead of Tropical Diving Adventures met us at the Gurney airstrip in Milne Bay Province, after a pleasant flight from Port Moresby, we already had visions of things to come . . . from the air it had seemed all reefs and brilliant shades of blue.

Nine divers, all feeling somewhat jaded and over-indulged after the Christmas round of parties.

It certainly felt good to hit water on our first dive, off the point of Donovan's Island, opposite East Cape, that same afternoon. A large groper languidly moved along the drop off, in beautiful clear water. It was an exciting start. Everyone

By Richard Buckley

returned to the boat with reports of excellent sightings.

We stayed three nights there, at East Cape, in a village house set aside for us. It was a captivating spot. The nights clear after stunning sunsets; the outlying islands stark against the night sky; lights sprinkling the water as villagers fished from canoes.

We had up to three dives a day and, in retrospect, it was some of the best diving on the trip . . . great natural beauty in the form of deep canyons going into the drop off, and superb coral gardens. Sea life was abundant.

Plenty of shark life, mostly

whalers and silver tips up to 2 metres in length. But for a few of us the best shark sighting was a 3m hammerhead, motionless for a few precious seconds, outlined against the blue of the deep water.

We were often able to pick a comfortable spot at 25-30m and just sit on a rock and watch the sharks parade by. They weren't alone: moray eels, small manta and sting rays, turtles, lion fish, moorish idols, humpheaded wrasse, trumpet fish, huge tube sponges and endless corals — the list could go on and on.

To cap off the first couple of days we hooked a 20kg wahoo on the way back to the camp, which we firstly had raw, prepared in lemon, onions and

Topside, tent accommodation in a peaceful village on Nuakata Island; bottomsides, Dinah Halstead strokes tawney shark down in "Shark City"

photographs by Bob Halstead

chillis, and then as barbecued steaks. We were fast coming to realise how wonderful a cook was Dinah Halstead. Throughout the trip she prepared culinary delights on nothing more than a two-burner camp stove.

After leaving East Cape, at Nuakata Island we anchored in a perfect little bay fringed with coconut palms and thatched houses. We put up tents here and soaked in a small stream to wash off the accumulated salt. Despite its beauty, the bay was only sparsely populated; a friendly group of people with whom we traded for garden produce.

The next day we went by Bob and Dinah's boat, "Solatai", out to a huge reef, charted as Gallows Reef, but quickly dubbed by our group "Shark City". The shark life was formidable. The reef also had plenty of giant clams, many with purple meaty flesh.

New Year's Eve brought a celebratory night dive at midnight, all of us going down directly under the boat moored at the Nuakata anchorage.

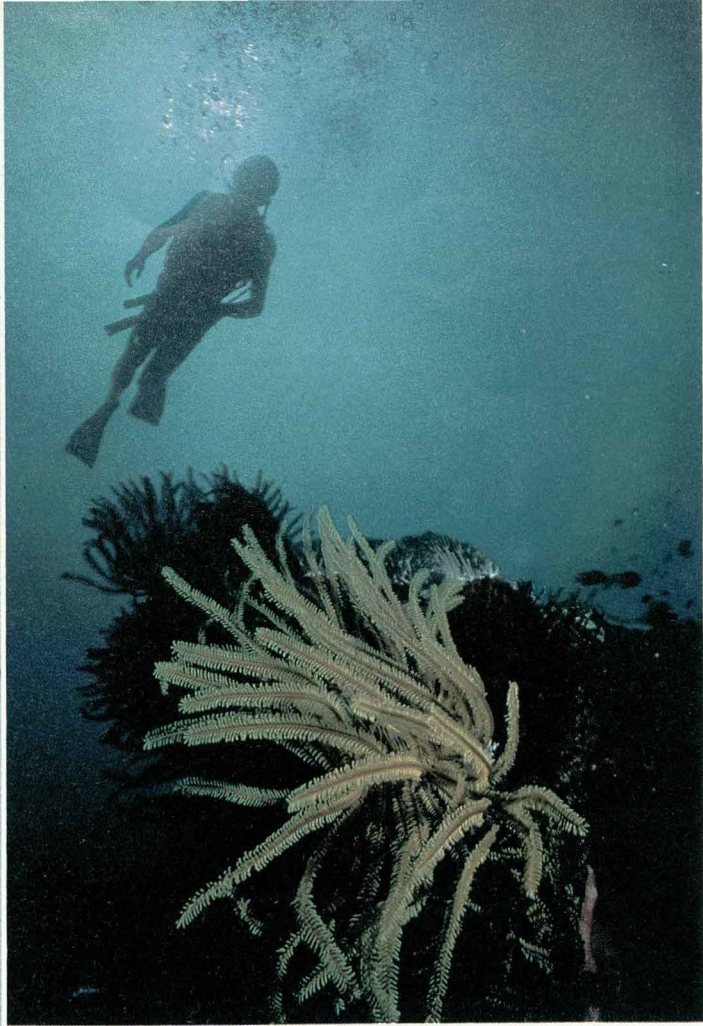


Bob took a group underwater photograph; followed by the traditional wine to celebrate the New Year's arrival. I think I got more salt water than wine! After humming "Auld Lang Syne" through our regulators, and at-

tempting a few face-mask kisses, we headed off for a 40-minute night dive along the sandy bottom of the lagoon.

Swimming through the inky blackness, watching the marine life picked up in the eerie torch





The colourful feather star, a crinoid or sea star, is much in evidence in the dive spots of Milne Bay

Below: *A traditional 'Kula' trading canoe on the beach at Egum Atoll*

snail-like foot and a strange siphon-like tube sticking up from one end; a pink-shelled hermit crab encrusted with sea anemones; a delicate brown sting ray, partially covered, asleep in the sand. Many of the fish we saw were sound asleep and they awoke in such a relaxed way that we could often handle them.

Once up on the surface, the real celebration got under way with champagne. The village people were having a party. Needless to say, we joined in.

We all finally tumbled onto lilos at about 5am, to blissful sleep. At 6am we were, one by one, prised from our beds and thrown into the lagoon by the village youngsters with a polite wish of "Happy New Year"!

Despite the lack of sleep we were packed up and were moving off by mid-morning to our

next stop.

Byron's Island has no fresh water, but it does have numerous mosquitoes, glorious sunsets, a golden beach, excellent diving and succulent lobsters. On the second night there, Dinah prepared lobster tails in black bean sauce, with plum pudding in brandy cus-

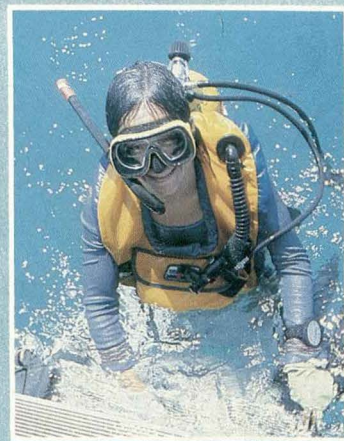


photo Richard Buckley

light, one was very much aware of the diving term "inner space".

We saw many creatures which just aren't to be seen during the daytime dives — the bailer shell, which has a huge



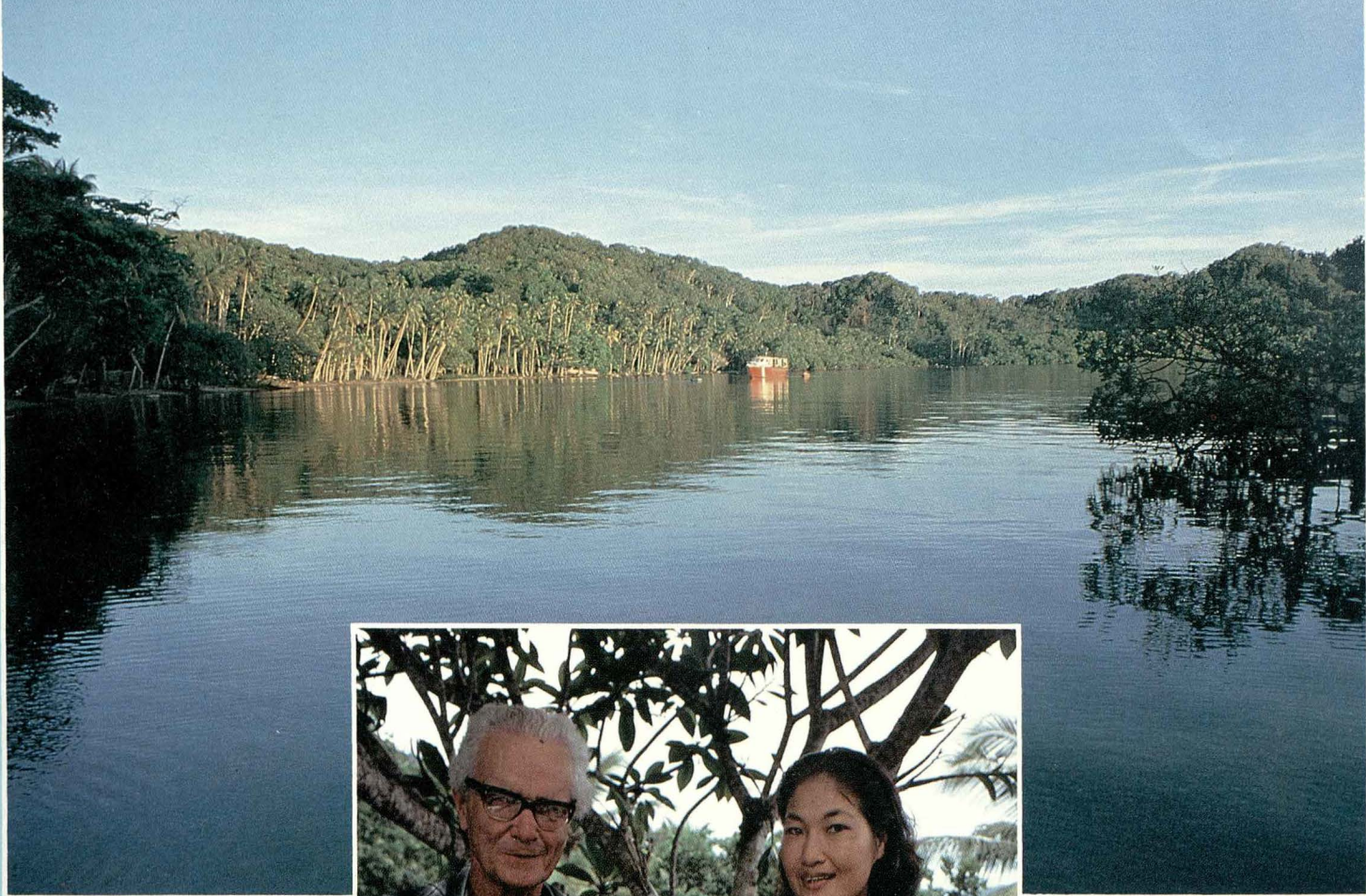


photo Richard Buckley

tard to follow. Superb!

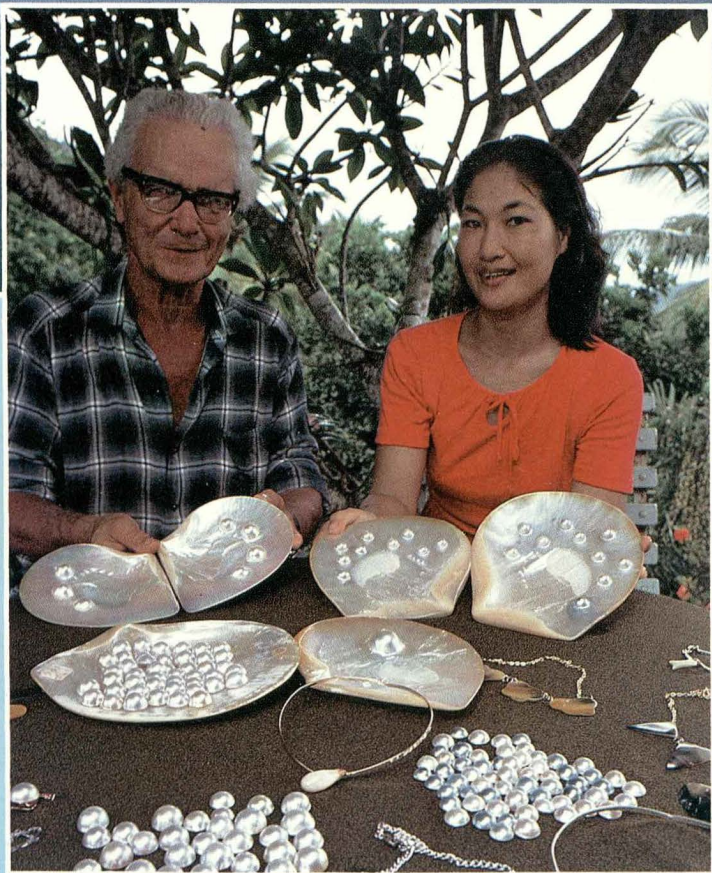
The nights were wonderfully clear and the roaring fire on the beach was the perfect finishing touch.

In the middle of the second evening we had a visitor when a canoe under sail loomed out of the night carrying fishermen from another island. They simply looked . . . then disappeared into the black, as silently as they had arrived.

Our next anchorage was only a short trip away at Tube Tube village, on Slade Island, one of the Engineer Group. After being salty and sticky for two days we were all looking forward to a fresh water wash at Tube Tube village. We were all just lathering up from a bucket at the well when it poured with rain; so we had the luxury of a shower instead.

As the group started to realise that time was fast running out, some had three dives a day as we moved on.

When we stayed for two nights with Denis and Yulie George, on Pearl Island near Samarai, we discovered a fascinating man. Denis George, as well as being a world authority on pearl farming, is also one of



The products of pearl farming on Pearl Island, displayed by Denis and Yulie George. The Georges are now living in Australia

photo Bob Halstead

the pioneers of scuba diving. He foraged around in his many workshops and storerooms and finally tracked down an old aqualung, made from aircraft oxygen bottles, a hand-made twin-hose single-stage regulator, and a hand-made camera housing made for a 2¼ Rollei-flex camera and museum pieces the lot of them — all relics of his early experiments with scuba in the 1950s.

There were more days of fas-

ination yet, but it would be hard to rival “drift dive day”. You could feel the undercurrent of tension among the group as we went out in the “Solatai” into the China Straits at 8am. Once out in the stream the boat was allowed to drift and a line with two large weights on the end was lowered down close to the bottom at 32m.

We were each given a 3-metre line with a hand hold at one end, which we had to tie to

the main line near the bottom. When Bob was sure we were ready, in we went; straight down the line, hand over hand, clearing our ears as we went; down, down through the deepening water.

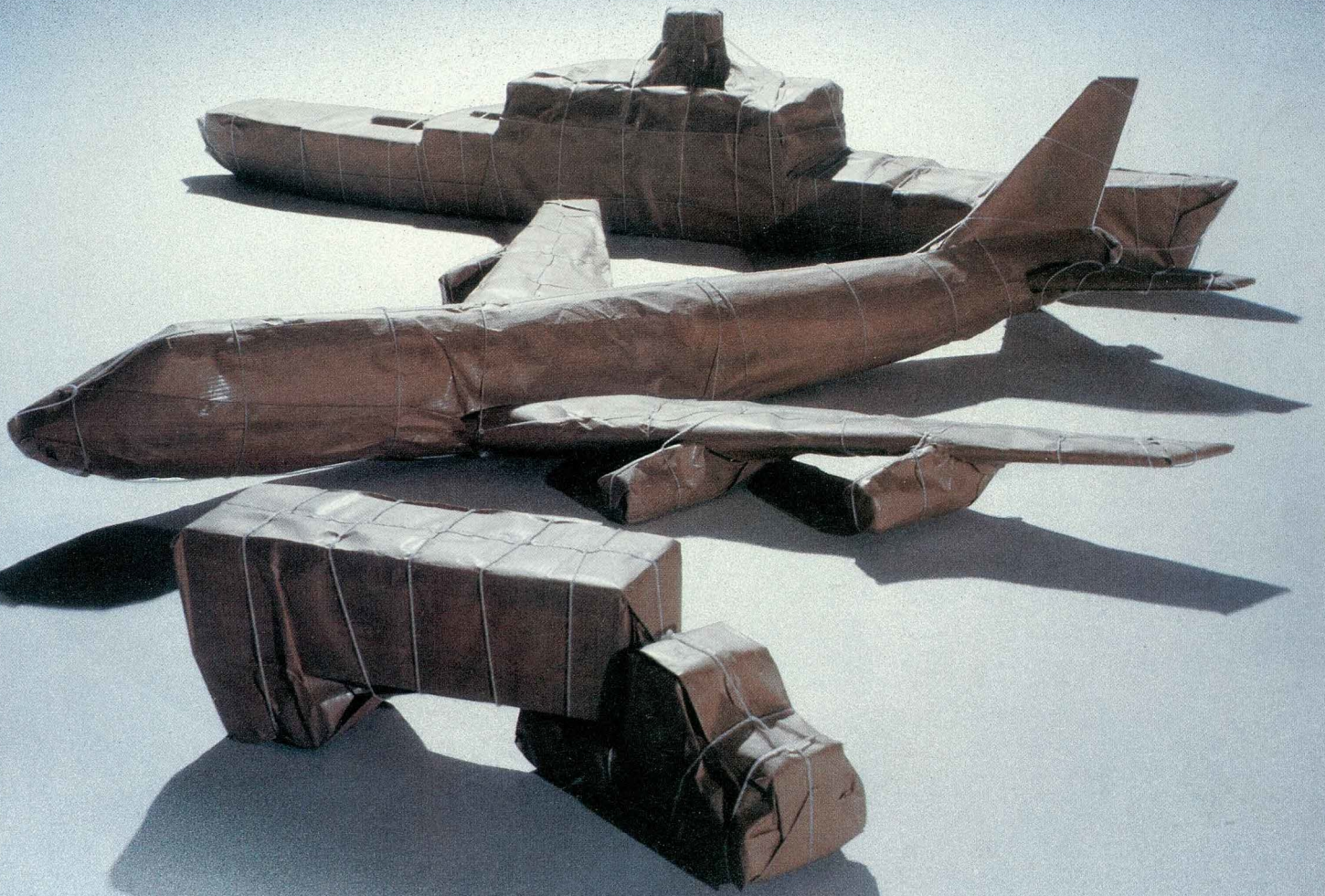
When the bottom came into view, the rapidly moving sea bed was strangely disconcerting. The four-knot current was pulling us steadily along. We each tied our hand ropes to the main line, let ourselves relax and trail on them. And away!

We swooped and soared, turned and twisted and plunged, went over and under each other, all the while the sea bed racing by. Startled fish had a quick look and scurried under rocks. Coral outcrops loomed out of the blue; one tug on the rope and you glided over them.

For 15 minutes we flew, screaming and laughing, feeling completely blown out. Our ascent was trouble free but the excited babble of voices once back on board took quite some time to die down.

It was like New Year’s Eve all over again. 🌸

We've got it all wrapped up.



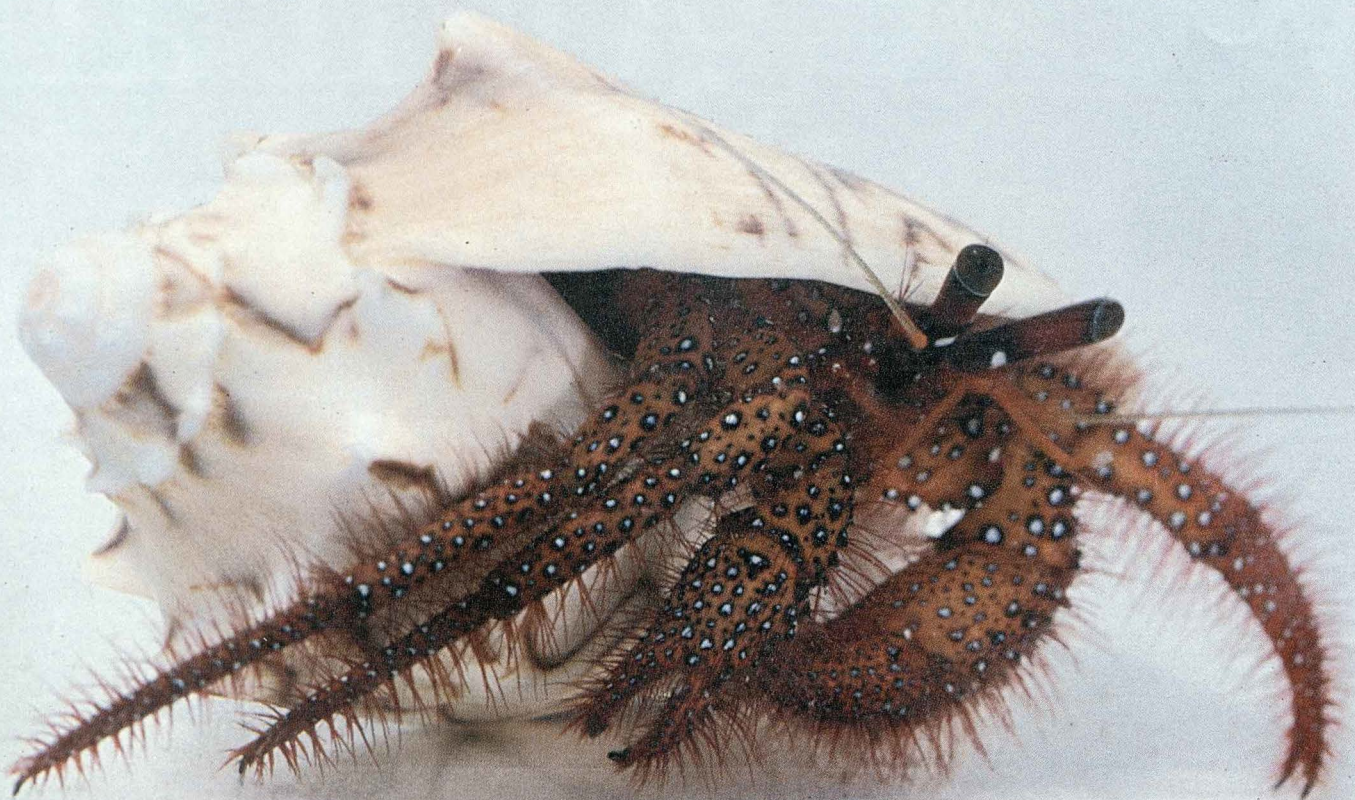
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THE LADY AND THE NAVIGATOR

By Bruce Hoy



photo J. L. Holguin

Nose section of B17E "Naughty But Nice" (above); Second Lieutenant Jose Holguin at Jackson's Airport, 1943, with his navigation equipment



photo J. L. Holguin

FOR young Second Lieutenant Jose L. Holguin, United States Army Air Force, June 25 1943 was just like any other day. Based near Seven Mile (Jackson's) Aerodrome, Port Moresby, with the 65th Bombardment Squadron 43rd Bombardment Group, United States 5th Air Force, Lt Holguin was the navigator on a B-17E Flying Fortress, serial number 41-2430. The proud crew had named their Fortress "Naughty But Nice", and had painted a young, scantily-clad lady on the nose to compliment

her nick-name.

Then aged 22, Lt Holguin was already a veteran with over 40 combat missions to his credit. His next mission was to Vunakanau, a large Japanese aerodrome near Rabaul, on the island of New Britain. He had been there with *Naughty But Nice* on many occasions, and this mission looked no different than the others, except that his usual pilot, Lt Hal Winfrey, would not be flying with them, as he was hospitalised with a badly infected arm.

That afternoon, Lt Holguin and the rest of the crew of 41-2430 flew over the Owen

Stanley Ranges to Dobodura, a large complex of aerodromes and base facilities not far from where Popondetta stands today. Here the aircraft was refuelled and made ready for the mission later that night. Shortly before midnight, the crew boarded the aircraft, and took off with seven other B-17s from the 43rd Bombardment Group and headed out over the inky Solomon Sea, passing through occasional tropical thunderstorms, the lightning flashes briefly illuminating the ragged formation. Approaching Vunakanau from the south-east, 41-2430 dropped its load of bombs on the aerodrome's aircraft dispersal

area at about 1.45am, June 26. After the bombing run, seven Japanese aircraft were seen burning. Suddenly, the aircraft was caught in the glare of several searchlights, and anti-aircraft fire, the pilot of 41-2430 elected to remain in the target area for another half an hour in order to draw some of the anti-aircraft fire away from the rest of the incoming B-17 formation. Accomplishing this action without suffering any damage, 41-2430 turned for home.

About four minutes away from Vunakanau, the aircraft suddenly received a hit from an unseen attacker in the Number 2 engine, setting it on fire and killing the co-pilot. The fire was extinguished by Lt Holguin, and all was thought well again; Dobodura or even Port Moresby could still be reached while flying three engines. Little did the crew know that at that very moment they were being stalked by a keen-eyed Japanese pilot in his twin-engined night fighter, a Nakajima J1N1-C, its allied code name being "Irving".

Then, ten minutes later, a

The crew of "Naughty But Nice". Lt Hal Winfrey, who missed the fated mission, is second from left back row, and 2nd Lt Holguin is third from left



photo J.L. Holguin

frantic call from the ball-turret gunner brought the news that the aircraft was being attacked by a night fighter. All the gunners then opened fire on the shadowy adversary, but the fighter had already done its mortal damage to 41-2430; the left wing caught on fire, and the aircraft started on a left downward spiral to the earth below. *Naughty But Nice* had made her last flight.

During this attack, Lt Holguin was hit in the jaw and leg by a bullet. The aircraft started to roll and the order to bail out was given. Lt Holguin was assisting the bombardier with his parachute when the aircraft gave a sudden lurch and he was propelled out through the open escape hatch. His parachute opened abruptly: *Naughty But Nice* continued on her death

plunge to the darkened jungle below.

While drifting down, Lt Holguin saw a small ball of fire crash to earth several miles away, which could have been the night fighter, or possibly the other 43rd Bombardment Group B-17 that was lost during the same mission. His own aircraft crashed almost directly beneath him, exploding on impact. He was so close to the ground when the aircraft hit, that he floated through the flames of the explosion. He then saw the trees illuminated by the burning aircraft, and in desperation, he reached for the branches, and then came crashing down through the foliage. He landed between two burning sections of *Naughty But Nice*, badly injuring his back. As he lay on the ground,

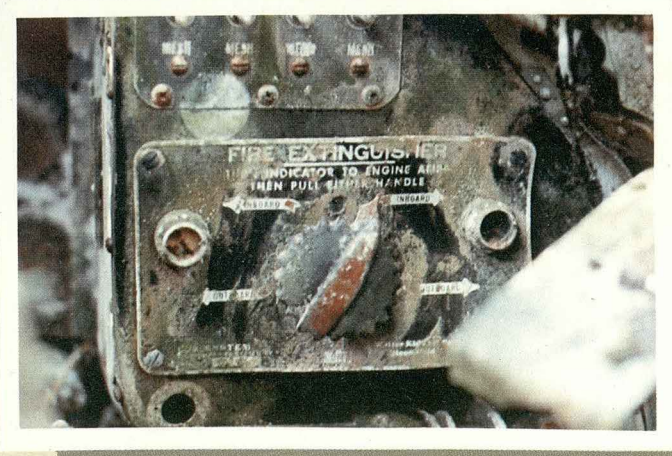


the fires continued to rage, and ammunition exploded. Several hours later, the fires died down, and all was deathly quiet.

As soon as it was daylight, Lt Holguin crawled to the nearby rear section of the aircraft and found two of his friends dead in their turrets and a third lying near his gun in the waist section. From then on, it was a matter of survival. For the next

three weeks, he clambered painfully down the bed of a river in an attempt to reach the sea and hopeful rescue. Just as his strength was all but gone he was found by some villagers and carried for several days to a village close to Rabaul where the Japanese took him prisoner. He was to spend the next two years

The wreckage of the American bomber, as it was found deep in the jungle. Below right, controls show the fire extinguisher for No. 2 engine still switched on



Photos Bruce Hoy

as a prisoner of war in Rabaul, dodging bombs that his squadron and others “threw at him”. His epic endurance while hobbling out from *Naughty But Nice* and the years spent as a prisoner of the Japanese in Rabaul is yet another story.

To his squadron friends, the loss of 41-2430 was another statistic; there would be another ten empty places in the mess-hall. For Lt Winfrey it was a very painful period, filled with feelings of self doubt, whether things would have been different had he flown that mission. It was not until September 1945 when Lt Holguin was released from captivity that the fate of 41-2430 became known. But it wasn't until 1948 when American engineers working on the Gazelle Peninsula stumbled across the remains of the aircraft and recovered the three bodies buried by the Japanese when they inspected the crash-site in 1943.

Lt Holguin continued with service in the United States Air Force serving in various capacities before retiring in 1963 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He then took up various positions with the California Education Authorities and is currently an assistant principal in a large Los Angeles high school. Over the years he often wondered if it would ever be possible to relocate his old aircraft and to say a few prayers for his friends who lost their lives in the dark hours of June 26th, 1943. Then, in July 1982, Colonel Holguin returned to Papua New Guinea with a quest to find 41-2430 if at all possible. It was a daunting task, but with

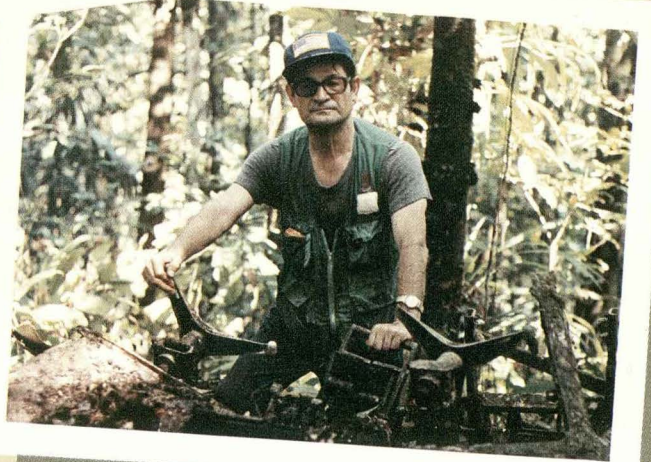
the aid of Brian Bennett in Rabaul, we studied wartime maps of the area where we thought the aircraft was lying, and checked through reports held in my branch of the National Museum, in the hope of extracting some clues. We were able to locate Mrs Arnui, who with her husband had given spiritual comfort to Lt Holguin on the eve of his capture. By piecing together all this information we knew that *Naughty But Nice* was lying somewhere in the lower Baining near Rabaul. Finally we had the area narrowed down, so enlisting the services of a helicopter, we flew to the closest village and talked to the people. They did know of one large aircraft and were prepared to show us the way. It was a grueling six hours walk, with the ever-present doubt that the wreck would not be the aircraft we were seeking.

Climbing and descending



photos Bruce Hoy

Colonel Holguin makes his reacquaintance with *The Lady in the Baining Mountains*, above. Standing in the remains of the cockpit, right, Colonel Holguin has his right hand on the co-pilot's control wheel and his left hand on the throttle quadrant.



several ridges and crossing two rivers, we left the track we had been following and cut our way into where the people thought the aircraft was lying. Presently, several unidentifiable pieces of wreckage were found, and then the biggest surprise of all, the almost intact, although badly broken nose section of what obviously was a B-17; but which one? On approaching it, we observed what looked to be part of the name of the aircraft. Levering the section up, it was an indescribable feeling to see the name *Naughty But Nice* and the painting of the scantily-clad lady, still looking cheeky, but nice, after all these years! For Colonel Holguin, it was an extremely poignant and emotional experience; memories undoubt-

edly came flooding back; the mission that night, the burst of fire from the night fighter, the sudden death of his friends, and finding himself all alone in the inhospitable and hostile jungle.

To have come all these miles from the United States and then to have been able to find the remains of his old B-17 was a stroke of luck and dogged persistence.

After much difficulty, we were able to locate the rest of the aircraft about 200 metres from the nose section. This comprised the rear fuselage and one wing. It was from this spot that Colonel Holguin started his long, lonely and painful trek a little over 39 years ago. Lying nearby was one of the aircraft's engines, the paint on one of the

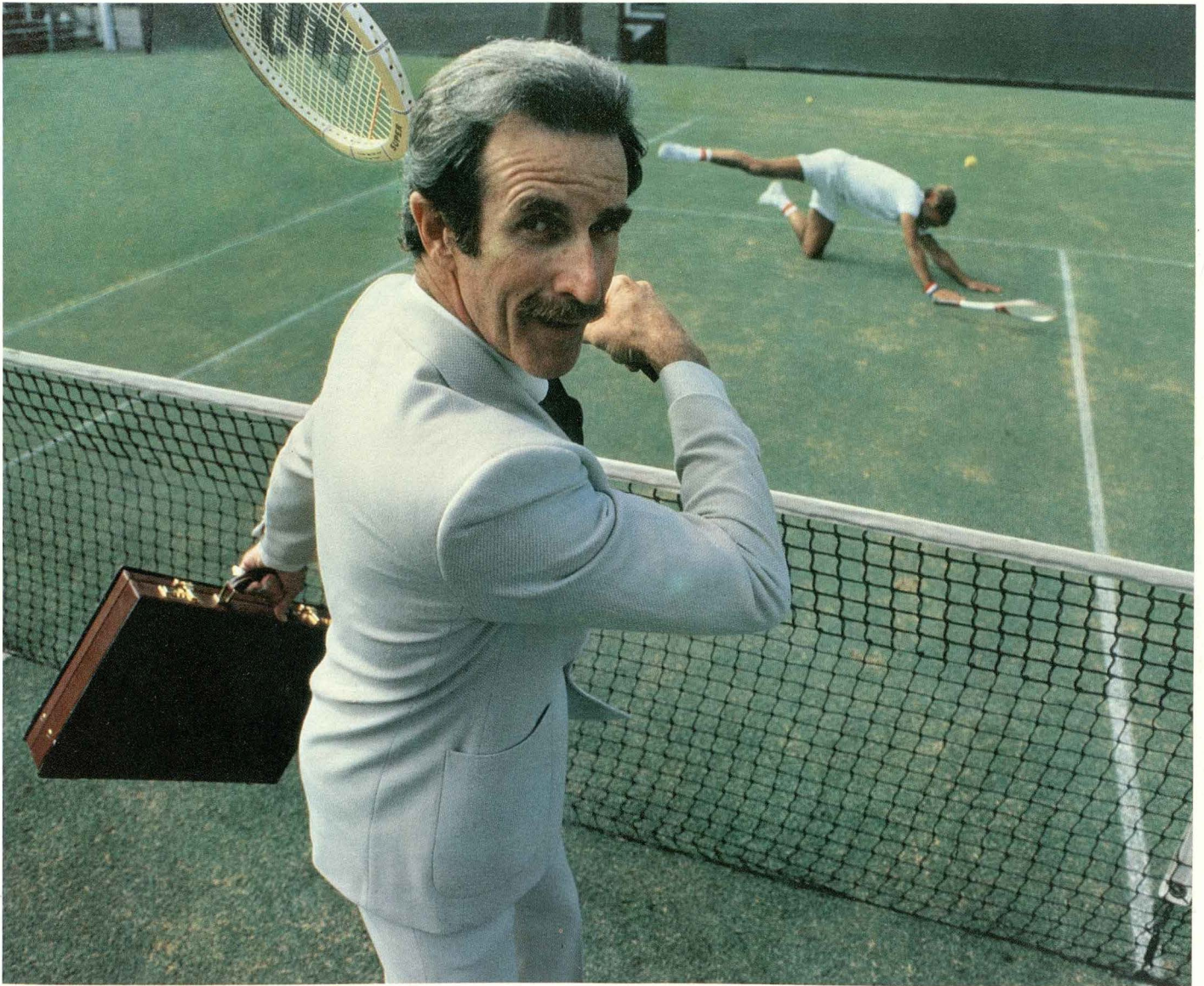
propellers still looking quite new after all these years immersed in a New Britain jungle.

A minute of silence, each in our own thoughts, and then it was time for us to reluctantly leave *The Lady* to the peacefulness of the jungle and return to Rabaul.

Footnote: As this aircraft still contains the remains of six of its crew and will be subjected to a thorough investigation by the United States Army's Central

Identification Laboratory, it has not been possible to indicate the exact site of the crash nor the names of the nearby villages or the people who made it all possible. On behalf of Colonel Holguin, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to our guides and to Pacific Helicopters who made it feasible to fulfil one man's dream — *Bruce Hoy is the curator of the National Museum's Aviation, Maritime and War Branch in Port Moresby*

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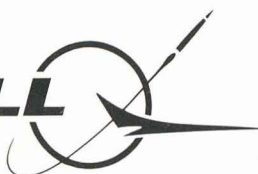
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THE SMOKED CORPSES OF ASEKI

Story and pictures by Bob Shaw



WE studied the smoked corpses with mute interest. They were poorly preserved; the primitive ritual of smoking and basting them over a smouldering fire obviously had its shortcomings.

Only scraps of mummified flesh remained . . . literally skin and bone.

The shells of decomposed eyes stared balefully from flesh-

less sockets. I handed the photos back to Dave, our pilot friend, and he informed us that the remote site was rarely visited by Europeans.

Within a month Dave, Susan and I were winging our way toward Aseki, an hour's flying from the coast in the forbidding central mountain chain of Papua New Guinea.

The diminutive Cessna was

making a valiant effort, but to no avail. Bruised cloud billowed ever higher, faster than our climb rate. Prudence prevailed and Dave flipped the aircraft around, one wingtip pointing at the ground. It seemed we would not reach Aseki today.

We skirted squalls and thunderheads to the south and eventually were rewarded by the sight of Marawaka nestled

in its highland valley.

We circled, undecided: Return, or attempt to proceed? A patch of blue sky beckoned us on.

Probing the gap we entered a corridor of cloud, always flying visual, always maintaining a rear way out as we dodged rebel tufts of cloud and rain.

"Cumulus Granitus," said Dave whimsically. We knew



Mount Piora was somewhere ahead to our left, disguised by “candy clouds” — those with hard centres.

We were at 9000 ft; the mass of stone must tower 3000 ft over us. Unfortunately we carried no radar like the airliners cruising 25,000 ft above us.

The stall warning sounded, the Cessna staggered, and suddenly we were over, nose dipped and the increasing airspeed evidenced by the louder slipstream outside. The bulk of Piora loomed to our left, and abruptly the rain was banished by brilliant sunshine.

Jumbled limestone ranges appeared below; heavily forested ridges torn by chasms, upholstered with clumps of beech and bamboo. The incredible internal forces of nature had buckled the land strata.

Aseki airstrip appeared below us, a symmetrical green rectangle, flanked by a river and sparse habitation. As we circuit-ed, Dave pointed out the wrecks of three aircraft, victims of the



treacherous uphill slopes beyond the one-way strip. Once committed on final approach, we could not “go-around” — the plane couldn’t outclimb the terrain.

Our first glimpse of the impressive portals of Aseki came at the head of the valley. Here two huge buttresses of limestone rear skyward. The opposing bluffs form a gap, and through here is the perilous approach to the airstrip. Dangerous wind

shear for 4000 ft on approach gives this strip an official caution rating. But it was a good touchdown, minimum brake required on the steep gradient.

The villagers weren’t the much-feared Kuku Kuku pygmies we had expected, but we were on the southern fringe of Kuku Kuku country and a few of the proud “warriors” stood nearby.

The villagers stayed well clear of these men dressed in

The portals of Aseki (top) provide a challenging approach that rates an official caution. Left, looking back along the Aseki airstrip to the limestone bluffs and the gap

traditional ‘bilas’ (regalia) of bark cloaks and ‘ass-grass’ (bushy grass sporans), with long black palm bows and arrows.

One carried a steel axe rather than the usual stone adze. A crescent shaped pig tusk hung through his nose. Another had a section of cassowary leg bone fully an inch thick through his nasal septum. A third was liberally smeared with pig fat and charcoal, his teeth sharpened like fangs by ancient tribal initiation and now stained bright red by betel nut juice.

Necklaces of human fingerbones were once to be seen, but these Kuku Kuku wore strings of dog teeth around their necks. Even these had been contaminated by western culture, the



teeth alternately spaced with bottle tops, ring pulls and even a safety pin.

A European missionary emerged from the crowd of murmuring native onlookers and welcomed us. Susan related the purpose of our journey and he pointed to a string of mist-shrouded mountains to the south east, indicating the distinctive peak dominating the horizon. The alcove of the corpses was a bare limestone re-

cess perched precariously in the foliage near the top of the sacred nameless mountain.

As Dave had been to Aseki before, initially he led along the wide, well-graded trail ahead of a large contingent of curious followers, who dwindled until only a few keen children trailed us. It began to rain and the track degenerated into a single file ascent through dense shrubbery, sometimes on all fours under a tight canopy of mist and drip-

ping greenery. The surface was slippery, making it necessary to haul ourselves higher using roots and vines.

As we reached the cave, rain teemed from the dark, morbid sky and mist obscured the view below.

Our first contact with the the array of corpses was a hideous sight. There were 15 of them in a line, each crouched naked in a coarsely-woven grid of wood.

Each container was about 10 ft tall, the upper half a funnel, mounted on a thick lower centre pole. The funnels cradling their corpses stood nearly vertical, gently leaning against the rock face. Just two paces away was a precipitous drop.

As the rain eased and the fragmented mist lifted, we took photos in the concave enclave. The area was obviously sacred, judging by the reverence of the young children who reached



up to stroke their departed ancestors.

Bleached bone was visible through dark, crusty skin wrinkled like the shell of an over-ripe passionfruit — a stark contrast to the polished mahogany of a wet-skinned piccaninny clinging to his forefather's bony mummified foot in silent awe.

Those well mummified, with remaining flesh and features, were daubed and smeared with red ochre clay. Others were near skeletons.

On some, the crouching stance was fixed by tribal arrows made of black palm tips and bamboo shafts. They pierced the bodies, impaling them,

the weight transferred to the woven funnel frame. A quick Pidgin conversation didn't reveal if the arrows were placed as support or the result of tribal combat.

The most recent addition had been placed about 17 years ago; the first, before anyone could remember.

A single wooden coffin, elevated on a platform near the entrance path, is said to be "a cousin" who died about eight years of age. It seems Christianity had led to this more civilised means of interment, but the missionary influence had not extended to burial.

With nowhere else to go we

settled on the rock shelf of rock and ate our lunch . . . surrounded by corpses.

Susan, backing for a better photo, was suddenly down and sliding toward the edge with a scream.

As her hand grabbed the centre pole of a funnel frame, it began to topple and momentarily pivoted precariously before stabilising and bouncing back onto the wall. It was enough time to grab her, and she scrambled back. As I studied the rocking basket threatening to empty its gruesome contents over us we reflected on a near disastrous end to our visit to the cave of the corpses.

As we moved briskly down again toward the airstrip, the sun burst clear, drying our clothes and causing a stifling humidity in the steamy undergrowth.

Once clear of the beech forest, I turned for a last snap of the mountain. It was gone, the peak and the corpses once again enveloped by a misty shroud — *Bob Shaw is a licensed aircraft engineer with Air Niugini*

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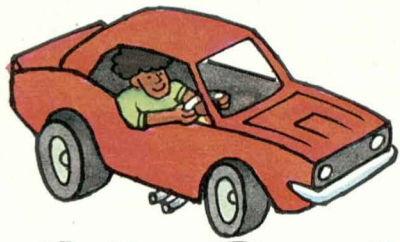
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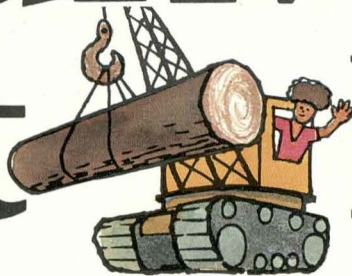
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THE BAININGS FIRE DANCE

Travelling to Rabaul from Lae or Port Moresby involves flying over the densely forested and sparsely populated Baining mountains before landing at the tip of the Gazelle Peninsula. Though a small minority group the Baining people have inhabited the Gazelle for much longer than the largest group, the Tolai people, who arrived only a few centuries ago from New Ireland. There are several dialectic groups of Bainings, the most prominent being the Chacet in the north, the Mali in the south and the Kairak and Uramat who occupy the land in the centre close to an area known as Gaulim.

By Peter Clark



SPEAK of the Bainings when in Rabaul and someone will inevitably mention the fire dance.

There is never a shortage of people wishing to travel by road for an hour to experience one, and even those who have waited patiently into the small hours of the morning will acknowledge that the fire dance is something special. A mixture of dramatic art, fascinating sculpture, anxiety and mystery, makes the dance a spectacle fit for a queen, as indeed it was when Queen Elizabeth II visited Rabaul as part of her royal tour in 1974.

Fitting as it does into the

customary life of the Baining people, the dance, for all its outside popularity, still retains a prominent role in traditional culture. The initiation of young men, the celebration of a newly purchased truck, the welcoming or farewelling of "wantoks" or the opening of a new house or church are but a few of the reasons for the staging of the dance in the present day.

A clearing in a village with a central fire is the setting. To one side a group of men are seated, beating the ends of lengths of bamboo onto logs of timber. The music is rehearsed to precision and the intricate bamboo

rhythm accompanies a narrative which is divided into four specific parts.

Each part speaks of an event in the life of the community. While the band plays and the dancers prepare in the nearby bush, women, young boys and girls circulate around the low fire. The women use a rapid shuffle step while young boys imitate the step of the dancers to come.

When all the fire dancers are ready, yet still hidden from view, the fire is replenished from a pile of brushwood so as to welcome the dancing spirits which have been successfully

called forth by the music and singing.

Each mask, be it a lingen, a kavat or a vungvung, is given an individual introduction as the music greets the arrival and accompanies a solo performance in front of the band before the next mask enters and the process is repeated. Occasionally a dancer will appear holding a leaf parcel containing pork — or perhaps a python; for which he will need the assistance of a young man. Following the introductory dance, the snake will be given to the female relatives of the dancer who will cook and eat it. Such food, with a taste

that is neither fish nor fowl, is a delicacy, as it is not easy to catch a python without killing it.

When the last dancer has made his entry, the rest of the masks who have stood on the edge of the area, break free into frenzied dancing.

Kavat masks, noted for their aggression and harmful nature, break through the fire, scattering the burning embers threateningly close to the onlooker; the lingen skips defiantly across the red hot coals; vungvungs, being benign by nature, dance with less energy and produce a low droning noise from the huge bamboo flute which is concealed by the ornately decorated side panels of pandanus leaves.

Those parents who wish to have their children reprimanded for disobedience will hand the offending child to a kavat, who carries the child around the area for several minutes, producing shrieks of fear and objection.

A vungvung is believed to have the power of healing and will stand droning over a sick infant to supplement the care being offered at the local health centre.

All masks can be identified by the name of the spirit, animal or insect they represent, having been made by the wearer of the mask in accordance with his creative ambition and the cultural norms. The diversity of the masks is often lost to the untrained eye, which fails to

identify variations in patterning and proportions as the mask quickly move across the clearing, celebrating the effort of weeks of preparation.

Unfortunately, few people can observe the vast amount of work required to present a fire-dance. Women are forbidden to witness any of the preparations as they will fall sick or, if pregnant, will give birth to malformed infants. Men who have observed only the make-up and decoration stage will testify to the hours of careful assembly and application of leaves to protect the lower legs, the application of black and white earth pigments to the body.

A variety of crotons, flowers and lemon grass is attached to the upper arms and back, while the penis sheath is ingeniously attached to the body. This causes much pain to the wearer but it is an ordeal which is an integral part of the whole socialising process of the dance.

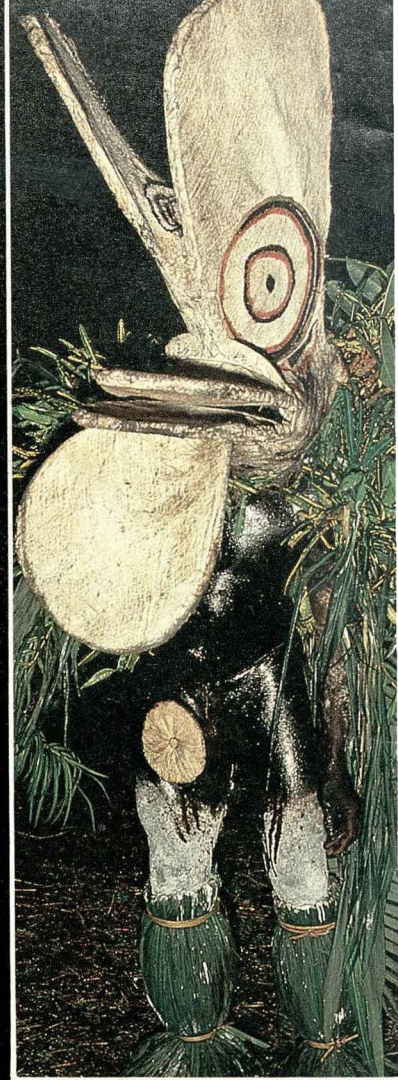
Finally the dancer has his upper body covered in a sweet smelling wild honey which is sprayed on by the mouth of an assistant. With all this completed, the dancer is ready to make

his entry into the clearing where people have been waiting anxiously for the first mask to appear.

Once the dance has begun it will last for several hours and in some cases continue through the night, ending only when the sun comes up and the masks once more retreat to the obscurity of the bush.

Preservation of social taboos and acknowledged roles of each sex is essential to the continuation of the fire-dance. An encroachment upon the accepted values of the Baining people will only threaten the existence of a unique art form that sustains a community while giving visitors an evening they will long remember — *Peter Clark was until recently a senior lecturer in expressive arts at the Gaulim Teachers College in East New Britain*

One can hardly imagine a more eerie spectacle than the nocturnal pyrotechnics of the Bainings Fire-dancers





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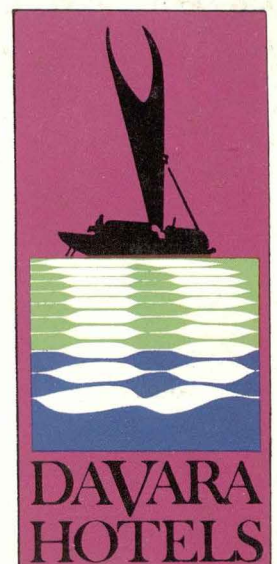
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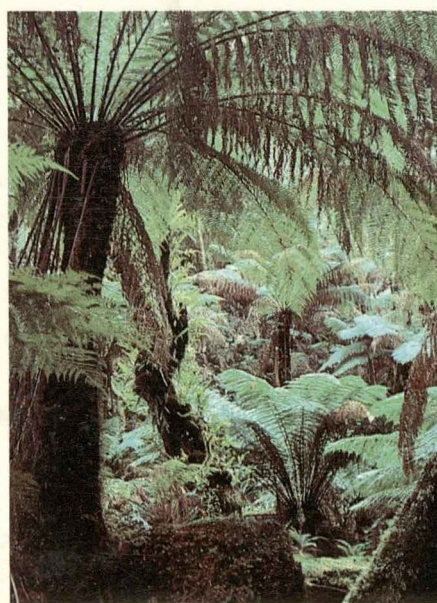
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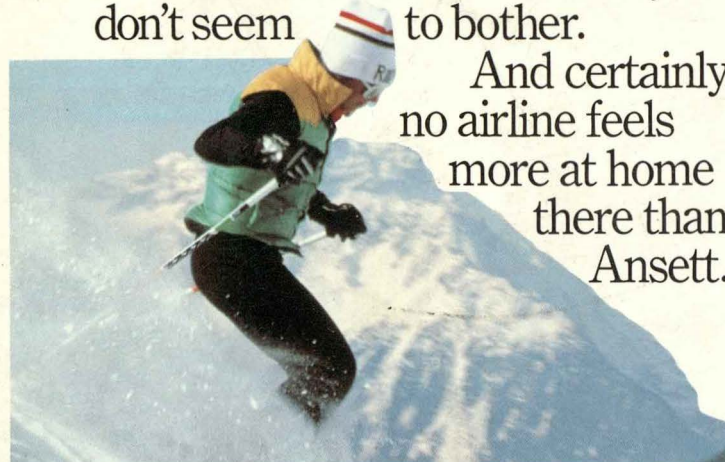
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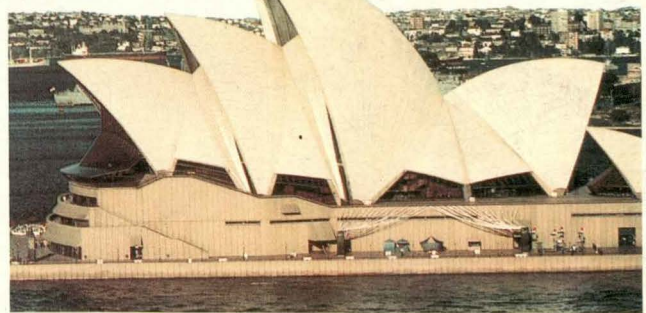
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