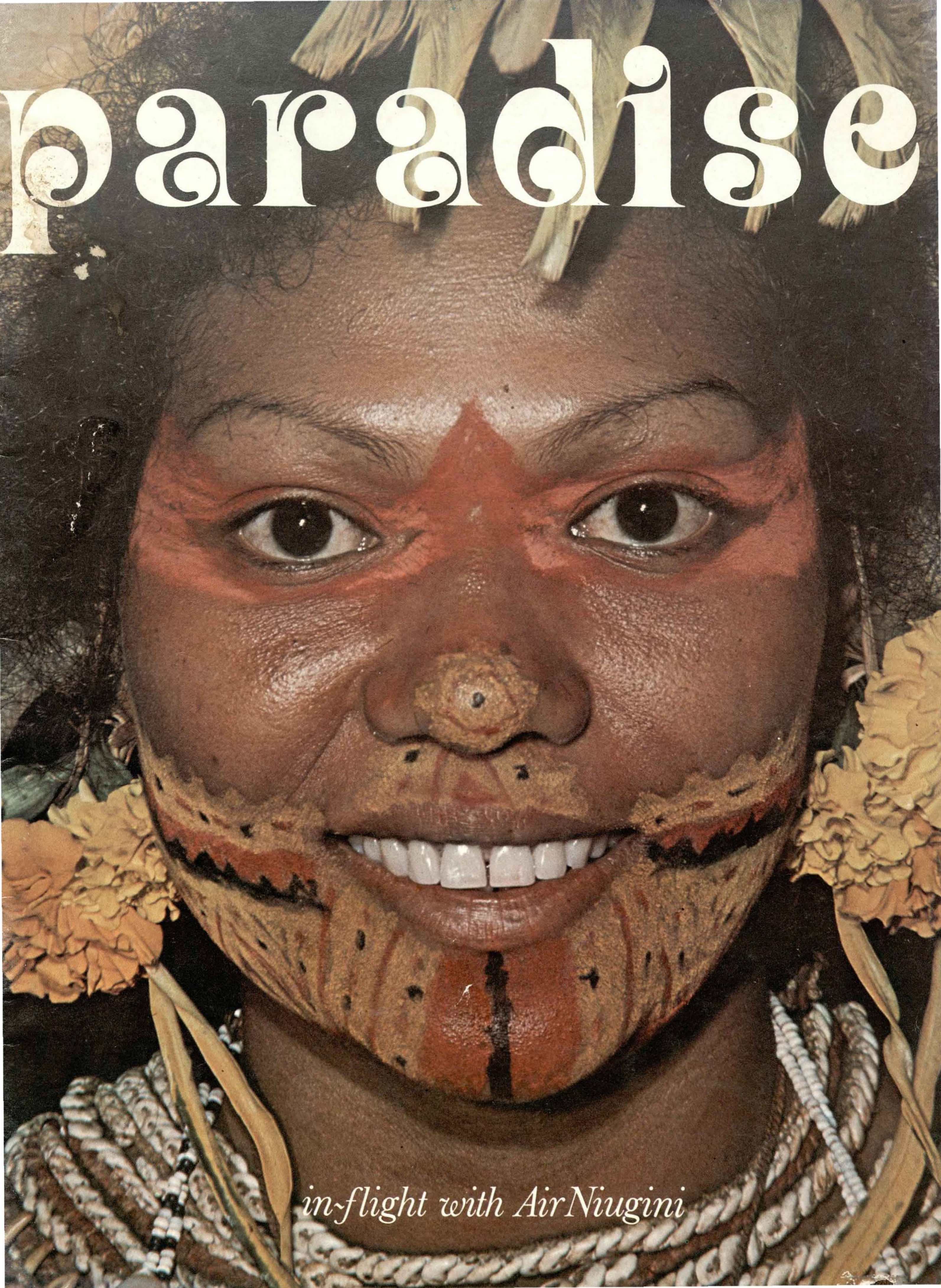
paradise



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No. 6 July 1977

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IN THIS ISSUE

5. Hiri happiness
10. Kauage
15. Star strike
16. Wewak
19. A task for Tami
25. Man bites croc
26. Sepik traveller
29. Feathered fury

Welcome aboard

Kagoshima, Hong Kong, Manila, Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns, Jayapura, Honiara. Air Niugini's list of international ports of call continues to grow. Air Niugini received a great welcome when it commenced its service to Kagoshima, as the picture shows. There was quite a reception committee awaiting our inaugural passengers.

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Air Niugini presents a unique opportunity for visitors to view a rapidly developing nation — one which has now fully passed the birth pangs of nationhood and is quickly establishing itself as an economically sound and stable member of the Pacific community.

And just a note about *Paradise*. We've been amazed at the response — from all corners of the globe — it has evoked since it first appeared nearly a year ago. And it's all been good. Obviously good news travels. A glance through the addresses of *Paradise*'s admirers shows that our in-flight magazine is finding its way much further afield than our aircraft fly.

C. B. Grey

C. B. Grey
General Manager

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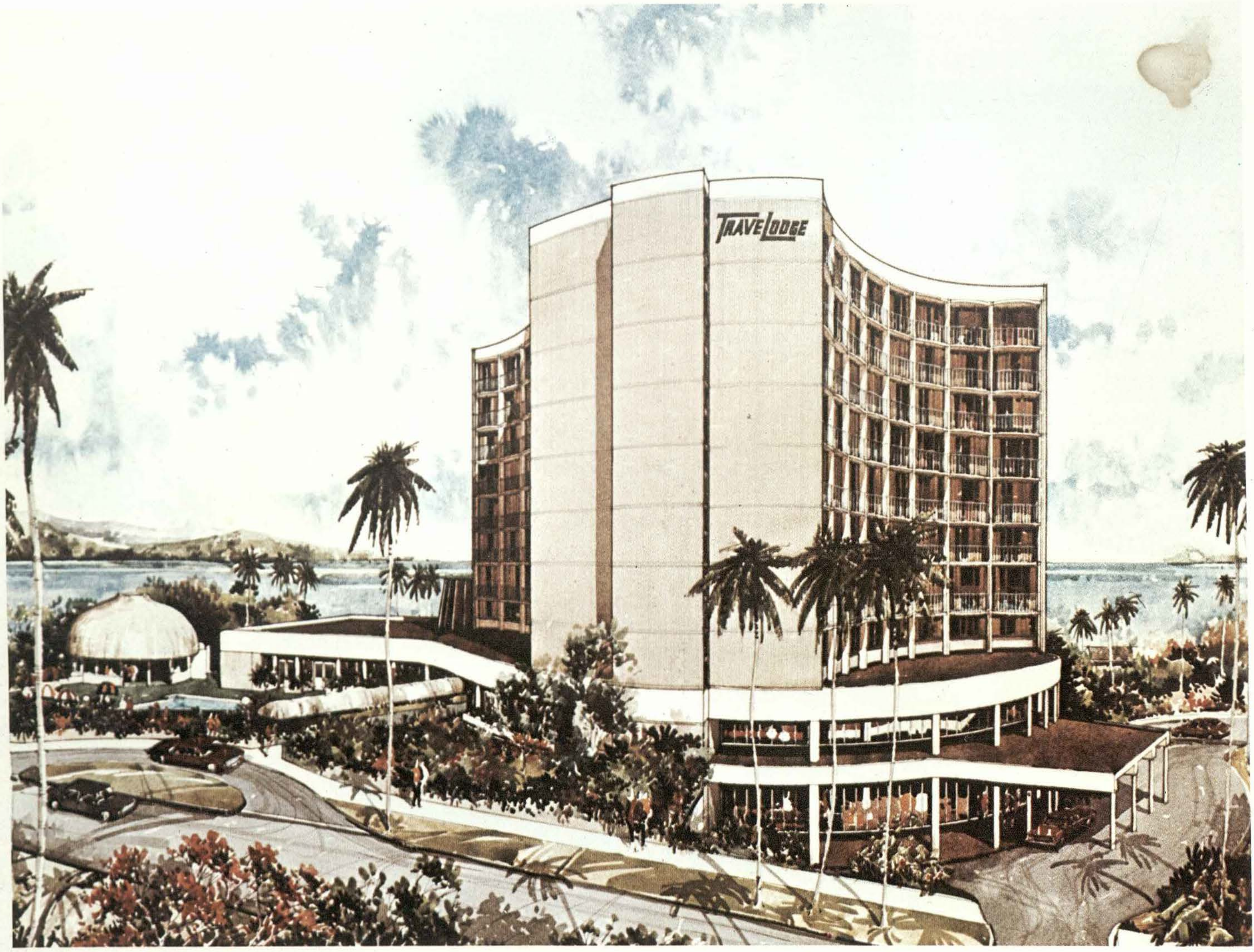
COVER

Eric Lindgren captures the look of Hiri happiness on the face of Marie Aburu at the 1976 *Hiri Moale* Festival in Port Moresby. Marie was an entrant in the *Hiri Hane Namo* (Hiri Queen) competition which attracts young Papua New Guinea women, in their traditional finery, from all along the Hiri coast.

Travelodge-
soon for Port Moresby.



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hiri happiness

By Geoffrey Heard

August/September in Port Moresby is *Hiri Moale* (happiness) festival time. Brightly dressed and painted dancers and serious canoe crews, with their slim, dugout racing craft, gather from villages up and down the Central Province coast.

The two-day festival recalls old and bold traditions, when adventurous Motuan crews, from the villages around Port Moresby, put to sea in giant, multi-hulled canoes known as *lagatoi*, to make the Hiri trading voyages up and down the coast.

They were trading for survival. A seafaring people living on islets and inlets along a semi-arid coast, the Motuans took with them on their voyages loads of fragile clay pots, such as can be bought from street vendors in Port Moresby today, to trade for food – sago – from the swamps of the Gulf of Papua.

They also took carved armshells, toea, a name now adopted for a unit in Papua New Guinea's currency, to trade for the giant logs they needed to carve out new canoe hulls.

The shells mostly came from the Mailu area, east of Port Moresby. But they might have been traded 500 or 600 kilometres, passing through a dozen hands, on their way from the outlying eastern islands of Papua to the Motu, who would take them another 300 or 400 kilometres west before trading them for trees in the Gulf.

As well as providing the Motuans with much needed food, the Hiri was of major importance for the opportunities it gave Motuan leaders to gain prestige by trading and gifts, for its significance in the religious life of the Motuan community and for the festivals which marked the beginning and the end of the Hiri.

The Hiri was an important link in a network of trading contacts which covered more than a thousand kilometres up and down the Papuan coast, from the Hiri in the west to the Kula, around the Milne Bay Province islands, in the east.

Although the Hiri has not been formally sailed since the early 1960s, it was a regular, annual event right up until the Pacific War, when it was banned on security grounds.

And despite the demise of the Hiri as an institution, its traditions live on in the life and stories of the Motuan people. It continues to have an impact on modern life in Papua New Guinea.

Port Moresby itself was sited with the Hiri in mind. Early administrators and missionaries, who moved into the area in the late 1800s, picked on Port Moresby as the site for a capital partly because of the fact that it was at the centre of the Hiri and associated trade links which made contact with the people easy for considerable distances along the coast. Another legacy of the Hiri is the language used by as many as 150,000 Papuans — Hiri Motu.

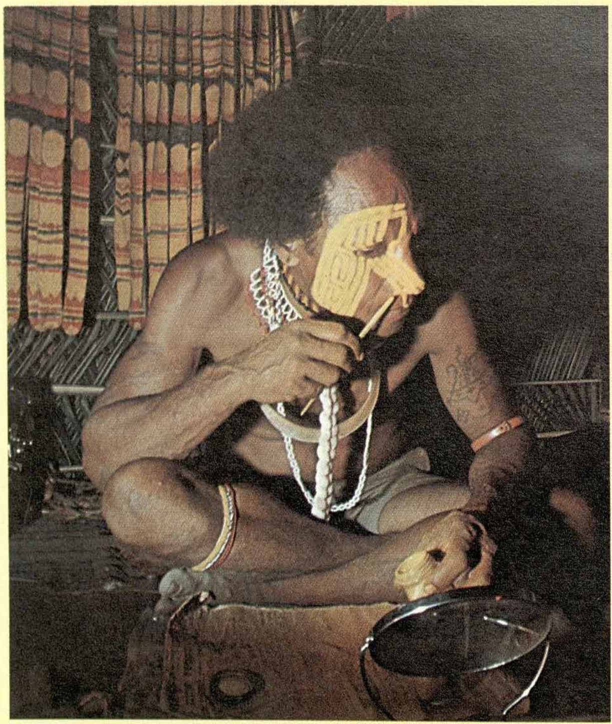
To facilitate trading, the Motuans and their trading partners developed this language, a pidgin, a simplified version of the Motu language with some foreign words.

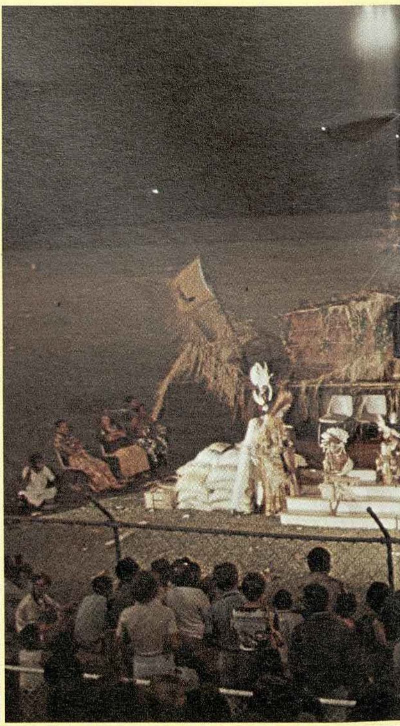
It was taken up as the language of village administration and mission teaching by the whites and, as such, spread far beyond its area of original influence, to become an important factor in binding Papuan people together.

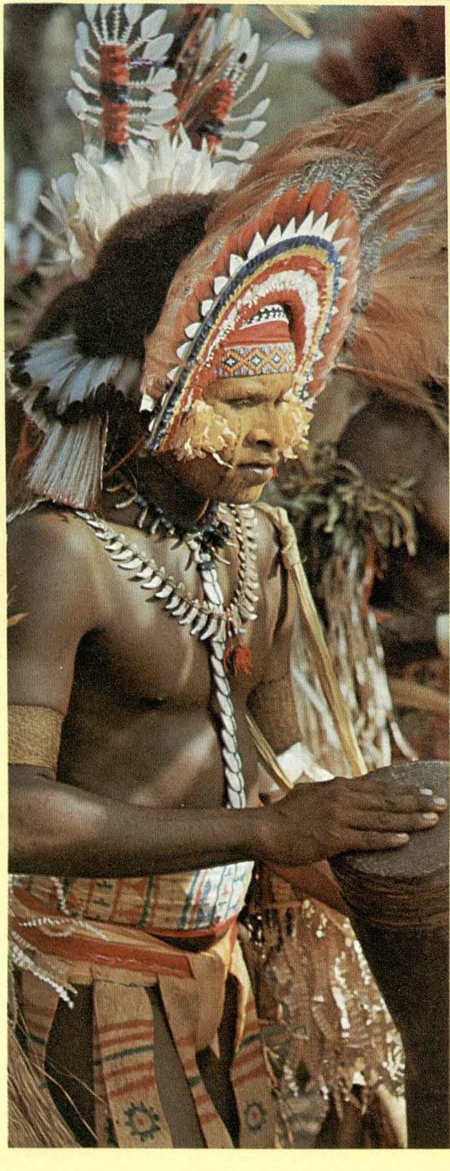
You will hear the language in the streets and markets of Port Moresby — sometimes soft and languorous, full of gentle vowels, at other times raucous and screeching, with each consonant picked out sharply.

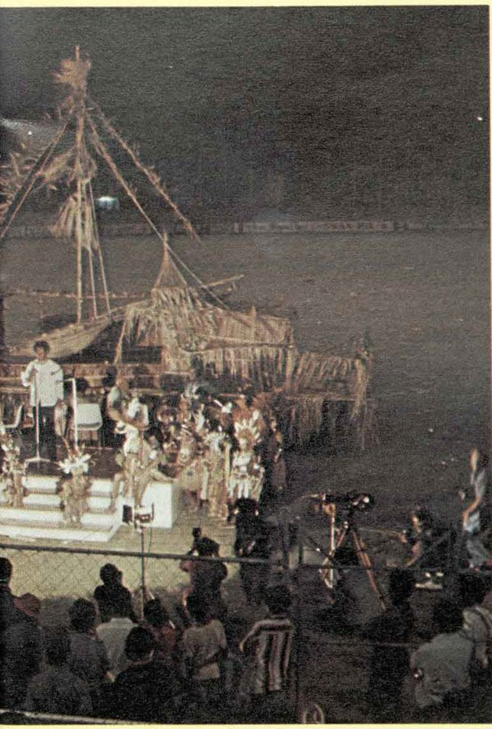
Legend has it that the Hiri began, aeons ago, at the behest of a *dirava* (a sea spirit of great importance to the Motuan people — just how important can be judged by the fact that, with the coming of Christianity, *Dirava* was adopted for God) who one day captured a fisherman, Edai Siabo by name, from Boera village, outside Port Moresby.

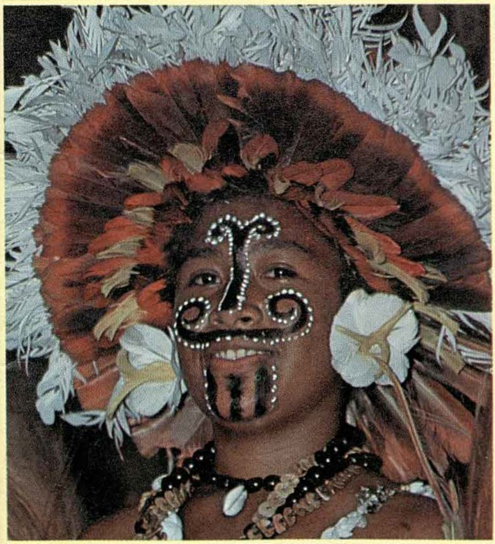
Friends thought Edai had drowned. They found him, after a long interval, apparently trapped in an

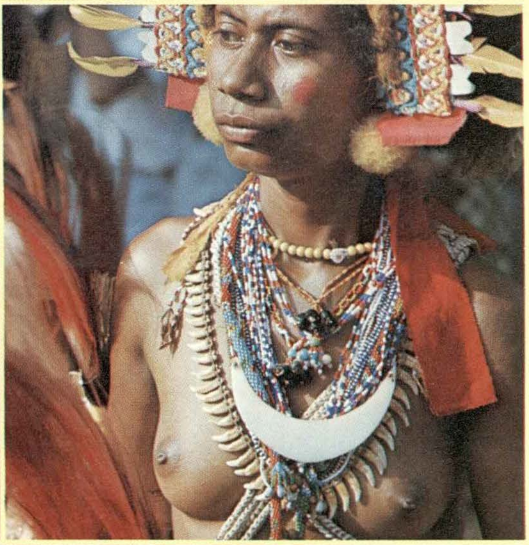












underwater cavern. But Edai had been under the protection of the *dirava* who had instructed him on the Hiri.

The *dirava's* instructions were minutely detailed and ranged from such practical matters as building the *lagatoi* and weaving the sails, through details of where to go, what to do there and how long it should take, to the formal ceremonial which must accompany the venture and the private lives of the participants (Hiri leaders had to stop sleeping with their wives when they started building *lagatoi*).

The instructions are reminiscent of the sort of thing handed out to old testament prophets and, like those prophets, Edai Siabo had some trouble convincing his people that they should get active and do what they had been told.

However, he managed to rally enough support. In due course, the first *lagatoi* sailed away from Boera, loaded with Motuan clay pots made by the women, to trade for sago in the Gulf Province.

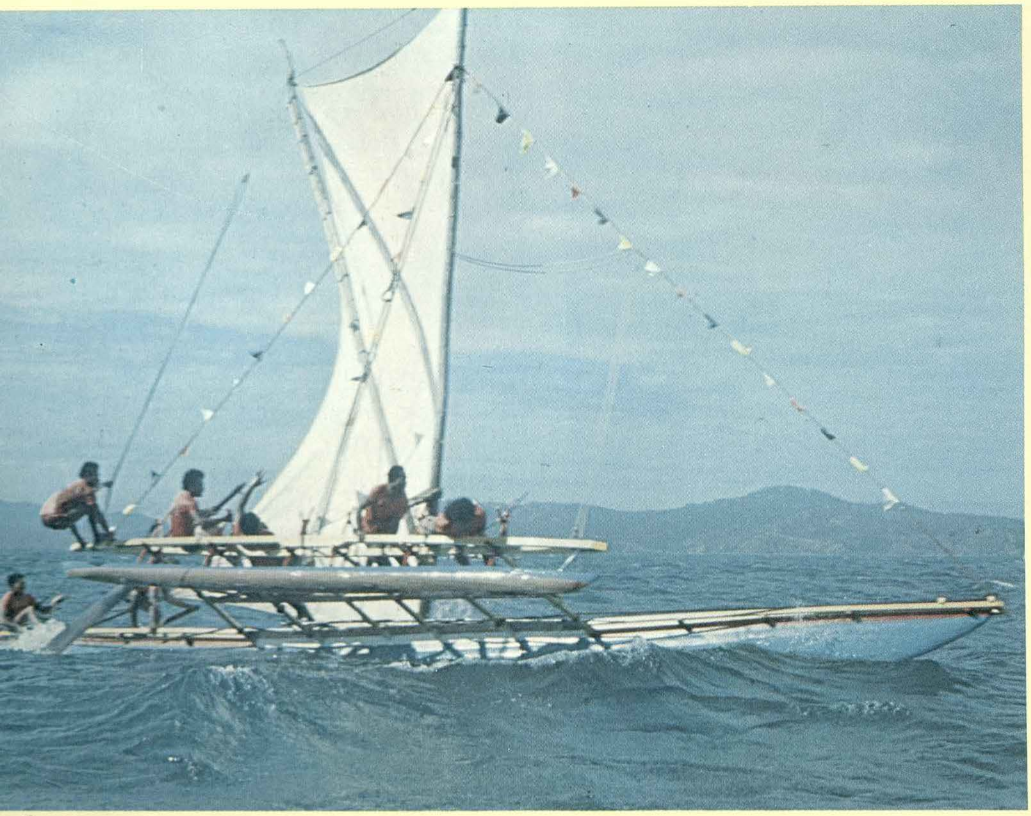
The voyage went as planned, except for one detail, time. The adventurers were away much longer than the 50 days forecast by the *dirava*, and many of the wives gave up their absent husbands for lost.

When the intrepid voyagers returned, late, many found their wives had taken other husbands, some were even pregnant! It can be readily imagined that the triumphant return of the successful traders, their canoes packed with much-needed sago to feed the village, was not universally joyful.

Edai Siabo's wife, Oiooio, who had been counting off the days, as instructed by the *dirava*, by tying a knot a day in a piece of string hanging in her house, was not among the faithless ones.

When her daughter-in-law shouted the news that Edai's returning *lagatoi* had been sighted across the harbour, Oiooio swept her house, washed, anointed herself with oil, dressed in her finest ornaments, and paddled out in her canoe to meet the adventurers. There was plenty of time to do all this, as a loaded *lagatoi* moved slowly.

Despite the behaviour of some of the wives, joy was pretty well unconstrained when the Hiri party landed and began distributing the



tonnes of sweet sago they had brought from the Gulf.

Edai Siabo's brother-in-law, a member of the agricultural Koita tribe, and others who had not gone along with the Hiri, were consumed with envy when they saw the good food. 'You need never go hungry in the bad season again,' Edai Saibo told his people. And they didn't.

From then on, fleets of *lagatoi* sailed each year from the Motu villages, taking tens of thousands of pots to the Gulf to trade for sago. Gulf people made return voyages too. The preparation for the Hiri meant months of concentrated work for the villagers, men and women alike. The villages would be alive with the chip, chip of adzes as the men repaired canoe hulls, shaped decking and prepared rigging; the slap, slap of the women's hands on clay as they produced the pottery ware which was the main currency of the Hiri; and the chatter of lively anticipation from everyone as they worked. Would the Hiri be successful? Would canoes be lost in the storms at sea on the return voyage (which was more dangerous than the outward voyage because of less certain winds and heavily laden *lagatoi)*?

When the canoes were ready, they met for competitive trials in a gala boat-race day on Port Moresby harbour. Grass-skirted and ornamented girls, dancing and swaying to the click of *sede* (bamboo percussion instruments — drums were banned from the *lagatoi* by order of the *dirava)*, were on the prow of each *lagatoi* as the fleet, crewed by youths from the villages rather than the Hiri crews, lumbered too and fro across the harbour.

Today's *Hiri Moale* grew from this pre-departure festival. A typical *lagatoi* leaving Port Moresby on the Hiri in those days might have four hulls, be about 14 metres long, carry a crew of 20—30 and leave its home village in the Central Province with 1300—2000 clay pots on board.

The Motuans sailed as much as 300 or 400 kilometres up the coast before the delightfully named and very reliable *laurabada*, the south-east trade wind. It was a relatively fast, safe journey, with the *lagatoi* lightly loaded and the gentle *laurabada* filling the matting sails.

The sago cargo on the return voyage was much heavier than the outward cargo of pots, and even with the extra hulls, *lagatoi* might sail with only a few centimetres of freeboard.

The return journey was not as easy. The wind for the voyage was the *lahara*, the north-west monsoon, which was as fitful and capricious as the *laurabada* was gentle and reliable.

The return of the *lagatoi* was the occasion for major celebrations. Clans met to share out the food, according to contributions made to the voyage in labour, pots and arm-shells.

The news brought back by the crews was not always good. It might be *namo bona dika* (good and bad) as the Motuans say. But even if there was some *dika*, there was always some *namo* to celebrate. And so there would be *Hiri Moale* (happiness).

The *Hiri Moale* festival generally is run for two days over a weekend — to give today's Motuans, many of them tied to desks, counters or class-rooms during the week, the maximum opportunity to participate.

Not only Motuans take part. Girls from all over Papua and even a few from New Guinea put on traditional dress, ornaments and paint for the Hiri Queen competition, the *Hiri Hane Namo*, in Motu. The Mekeo and Roro dancers from the western edge of the Central Province, with their beautifully detailed costuming, ornamentation and body paint tend to dominate the traditional dancing.

And the Motuans' cousins, the Hula people from 100 kilometres east of Port Moresby, are to the forefront in the canoe racing, although the Motu speaking Gabagaba sailors often give them a good run for their money.

Visitors to Port Moresby can see a traditional *lagatoi* at the Cultural Centre at Konedobu — but they won't see any of them in the *Hiri Moale* canoe race. In the race, the lumbering *lagatoi* are replaced by specially built, lightweight, single hull outrigger canoes, each fitted with one big, fabric sail. Given a good breeze, these sensitive, speedy craft, developed from the work-a-day utility canoes of the coastal villages, can skim across the harbour at up to 14 knots. — *Geoffrey Heard is a former PNG National Broadcasting Commission journalist.*

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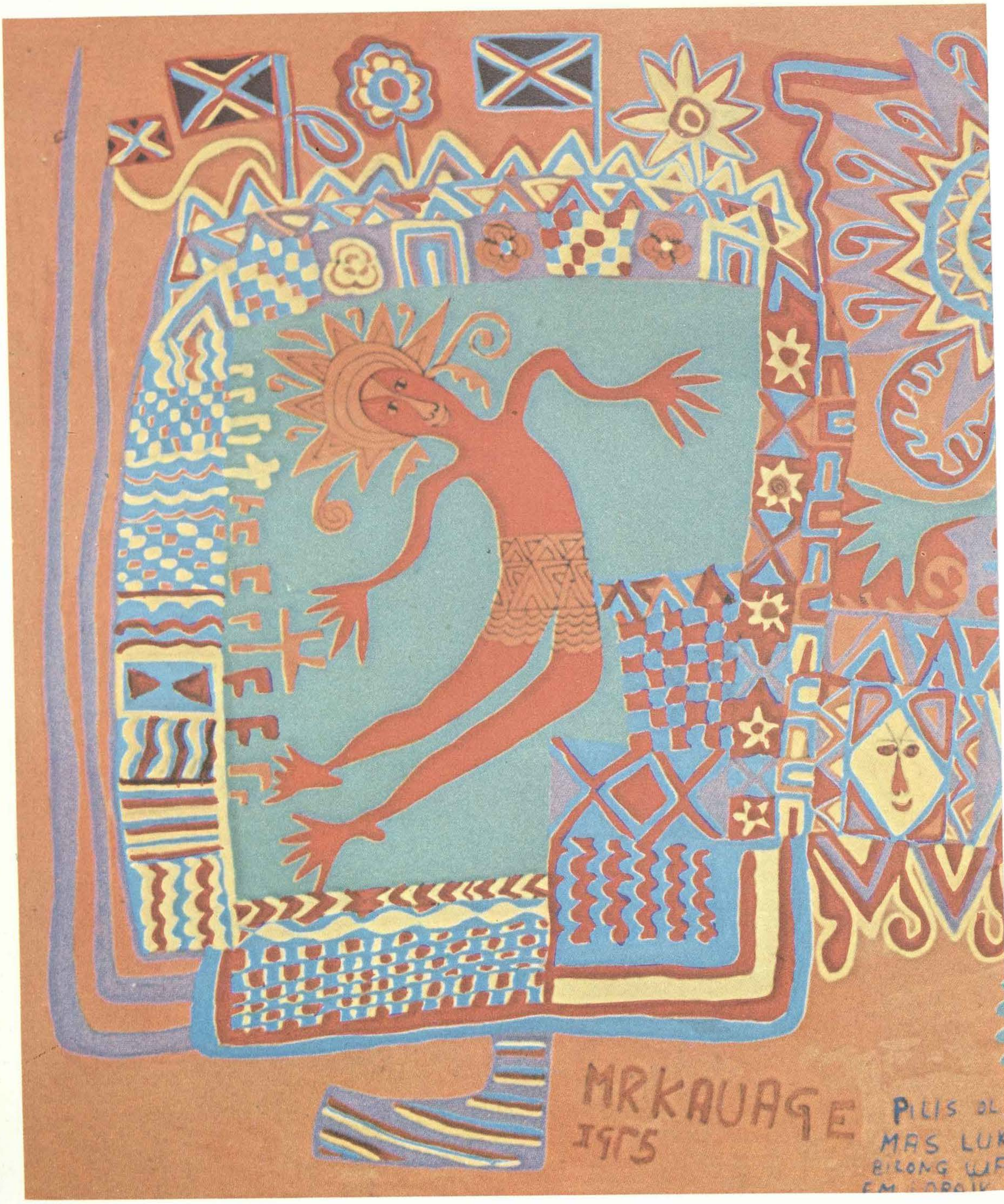
KAUAGE



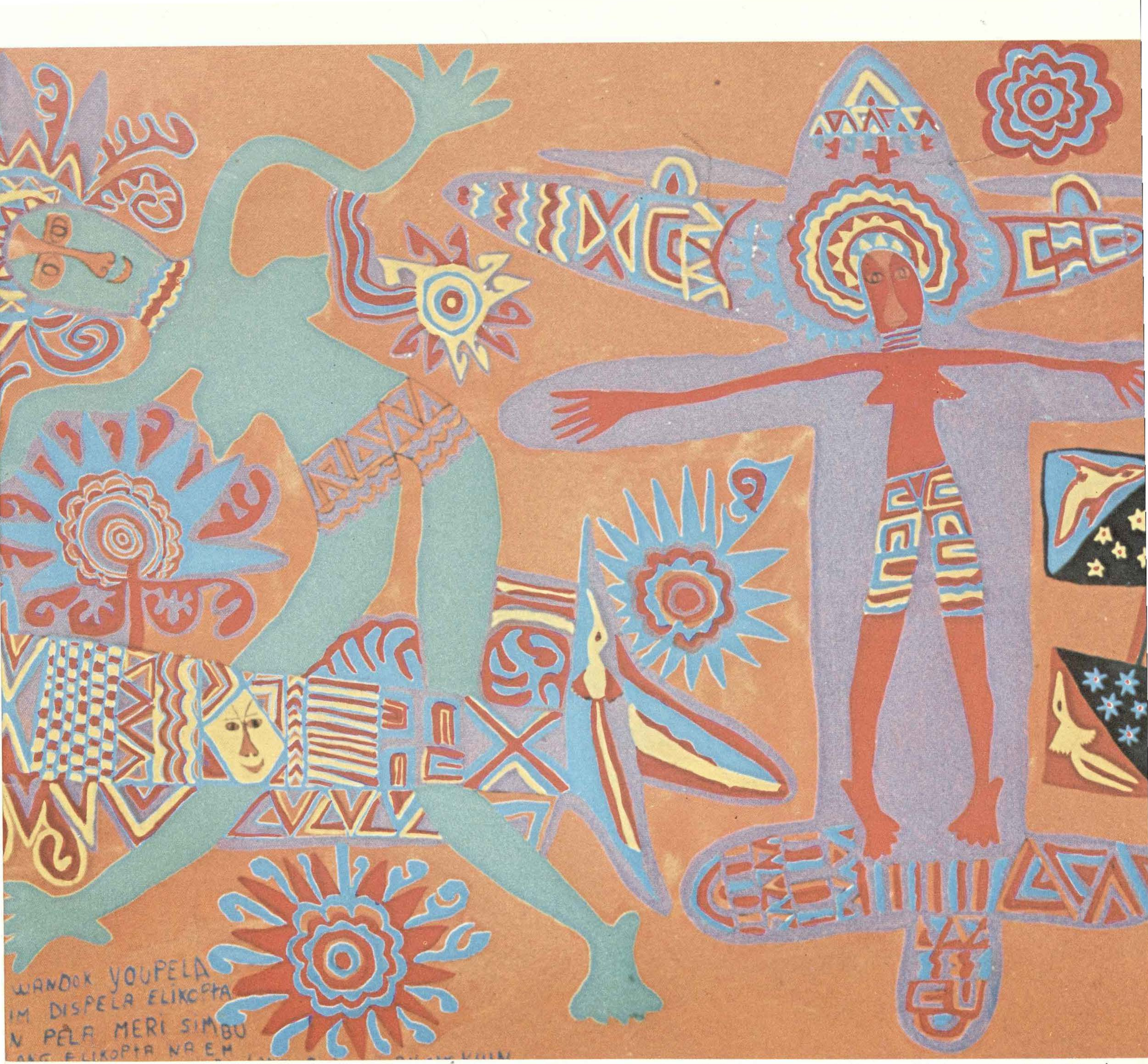
By Ulli Beier

Kauage is probably Papua New Guinea's best known painter — certainly on international terms. But when he came down to Port Moresby from Chimbu country in 1967, he had no idea he was going to become an artist. Like many of his *wantoks*, he was driven mostly by curiosity about the big city, its different life and the prospect of a job.

He did find a job — as a cleaner at the Administrative College in Waigani Valley. It was hardly inspiring for someone of his imagination: but what could a man expect, especially one who had no schooling at all?

But then, in February 1969, Kauage saw an exhibition of drawings by Akis, a Simbai artist. That was probably Port Moresby's first exhibition by a modern Papua New Guinean artist. It was 'modern' in the sense, that Akis' work had been created outside his cultural context. It was an individual's work — not the work of a craftsman, carrying on an age old tradition.

Crowds of Highland labourers flocked to the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) library to look at the Akis exhibition. Kauage was among them. He decided that he, too, wanted to make drawings. He did not know how to start. He got hold of a battered copy of *Winnie the Pooh* and covered a large sheet of paper with lots of tiny



Kauage's Independence painting, possibly his most exuberant work

drawings inspired by the book. He sent them to my wife Georgina at the UPNG because he knew that Akis had been working with her.

Georgina relates in her essay on Kauage in *Kovave* that though the drawings were poor, unimaginative copies, she was so impressed by Kauage's personality that she encouraged him to bring more work.

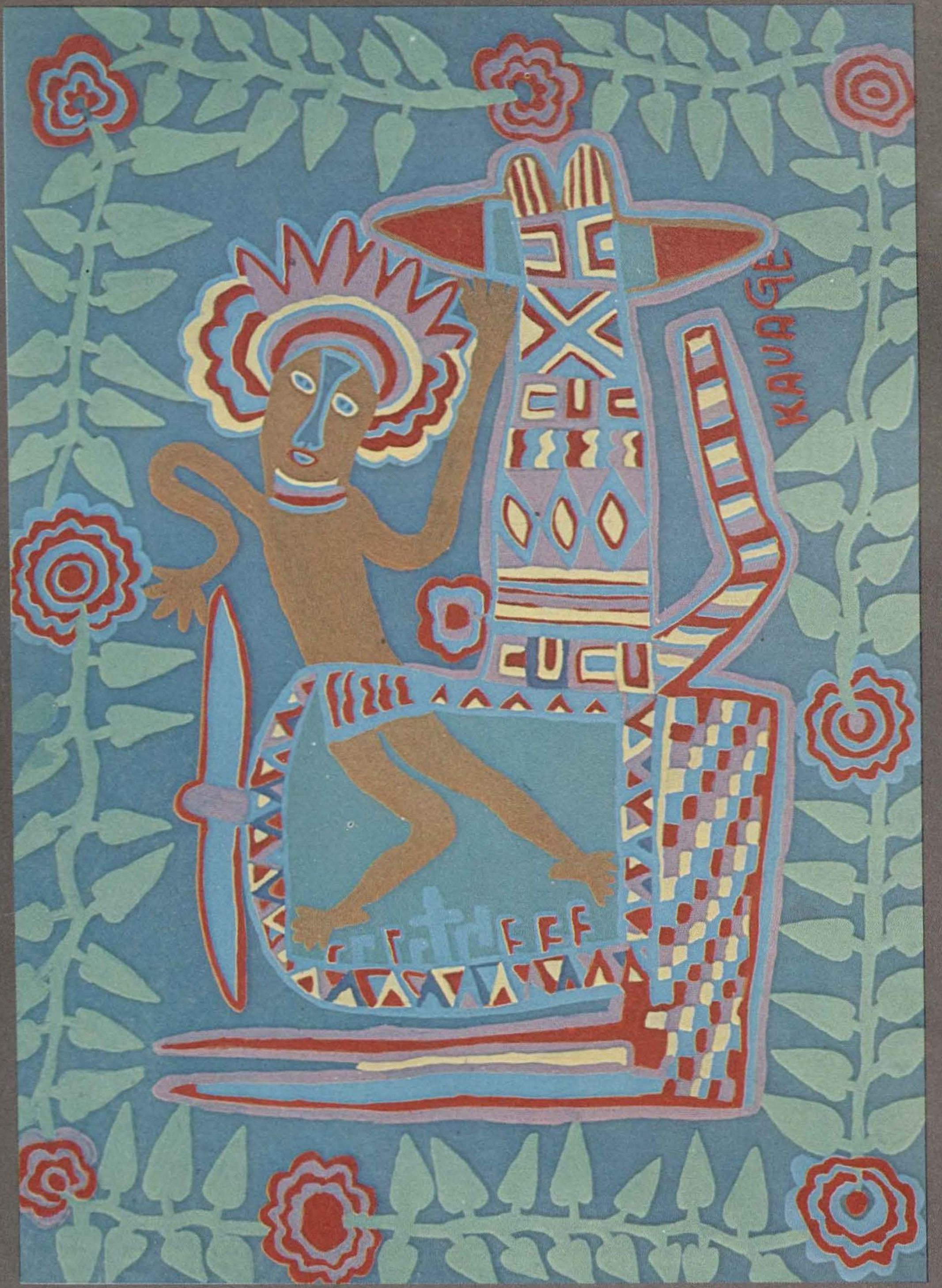
It was several months before he developed a style. But once he had found himself, he became really prolific. For several months he spent all his spare time drawing, pouring out innumerable ideas. Georgina described these early works like this:

'The first series of drawings that one can really call his own were insects. They were rather fantastic creatures, but he claimed that he had seen them back home in the bush. He worked on a series of horses and riders which reminded one of circus bareback riders, where horses are gaily decorated. These were in fact inspired by horses he had seen on the mission station in Kundiawa. But soon his imagination utterly transfigured the memory: riders were floating in the air, above the horses; horses' bodies were built up of an intricate pattern of faces.

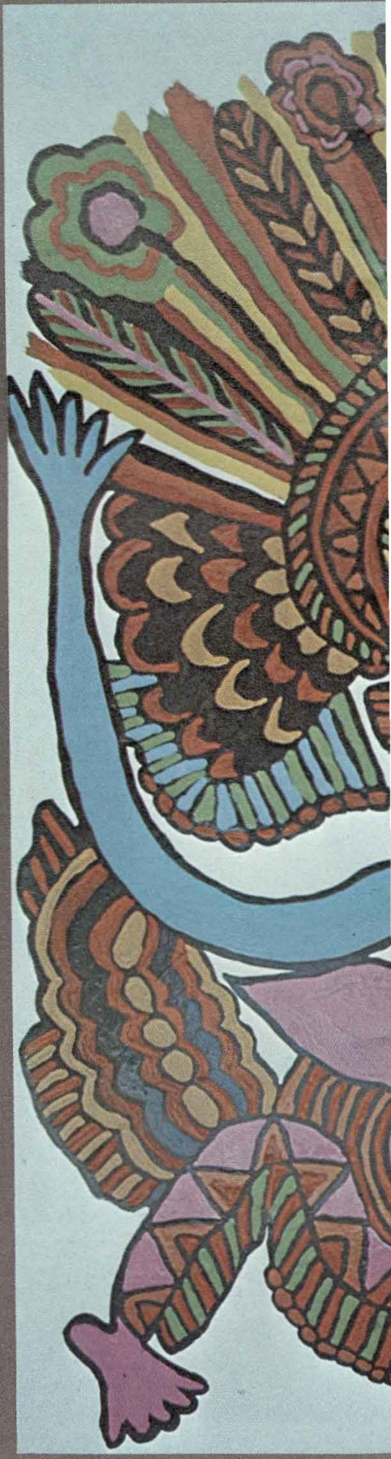
'Kauage then started his romantic period. Boys flirting with girls. The figures had a liquid, floating quality, like dream sequences of a courting scene. But in his pictures boy never succeeded in winning girl.

'The courting sequence over, Kauage began to draw lonely but more mature figures of men and women accompanied by animal fantasies. Women with fish. Men fighting dragonlike creatures. Men riding birds. Women carrying stars on their heads. Birds making nests. Immediately after that came a series of magnificent mothers. Big, powerful women, statuesque, like goddesses.'

Kauage's biggest breakthrough came when he began to beat aluminium panels. The ideas of months and months of drawing could at least be transposed into a more complex and permanent medium. His first exhibition of aluminium panels was at the University of PNG in April 1970. It was a



Helicopter

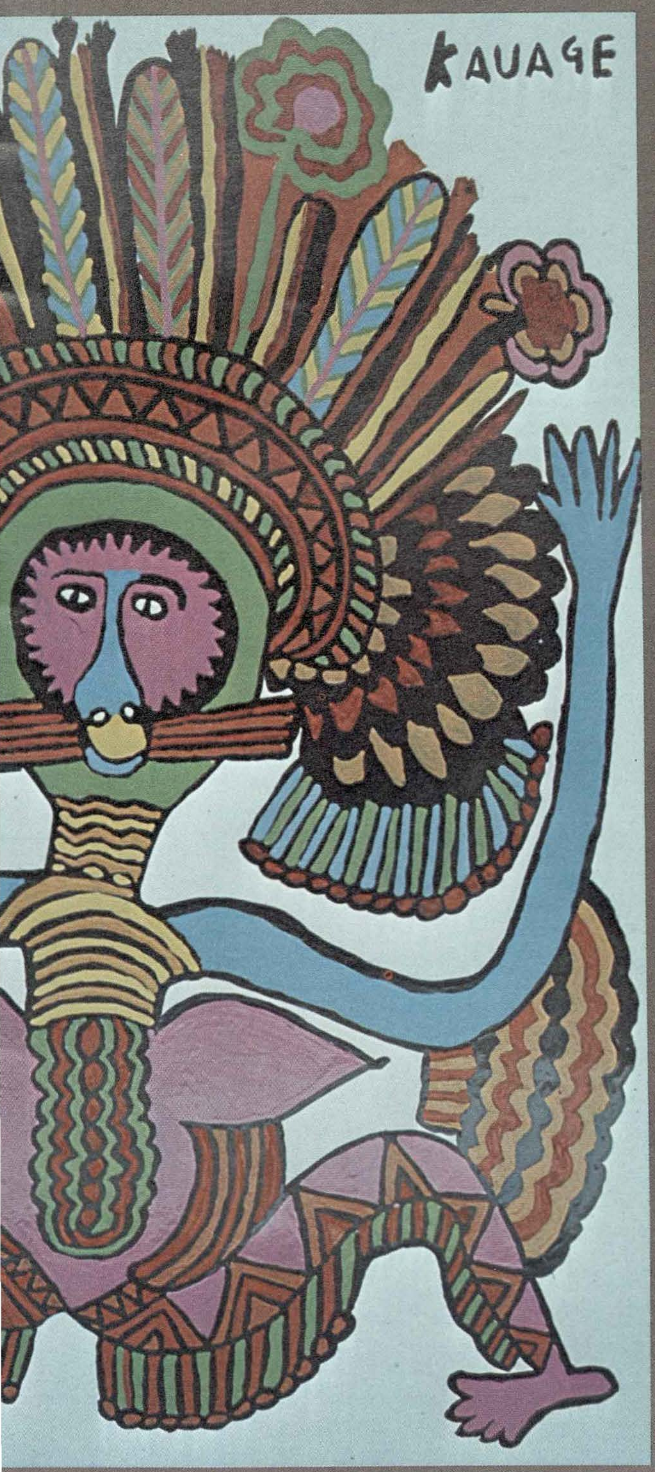


huge success. Overnight Kauage became a well known character in Port Moresby; and he now earned enough to give up his job as a cleaner. He had become Papua New Guinea's first professional modern artist.

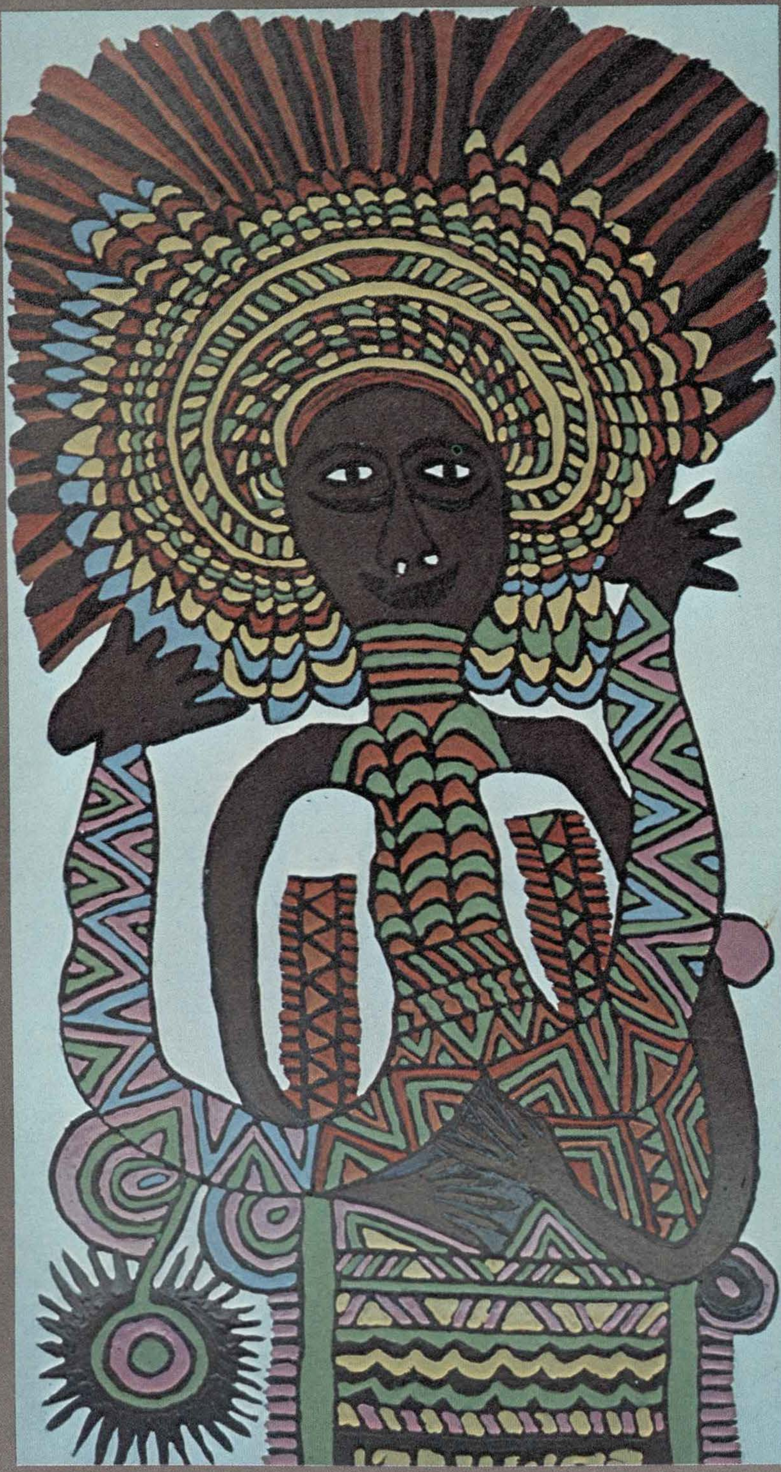
Kauage has remained prolific, imaginative and successful. His work has been exhibited in the major cities of Australia, as well as in America, Fiji, Nigeria and the Philippines. He has used many media: drawings, wood cuts, aluminium and copper beating, oil painting. Currently he is experimenting with acrylic paints, preparing for an exhibition at the National Art School in Port Moresby.

His subject matter has included not only the most fantastic and bizarre creatures from his imagination, but also the sights of Port Moresby. Cars, motor cycles, aeroplanes and helicopters have been amongst his favourite subjects. The city and its technology does not depress him. On the contrary. He clearly likes the variety, the noise, the colour and the liveliness of Port Moresby. He seldom feels the need to go home.

Like other artists, Kauage goes through stronger and weaker periods. Prolific and vital though he is, he too has his stale phases. One phase occured in the middle of 1975 — until independence lifted him out of it with a jerk. Seeing the independence floats go by on the street, with all the feathers and flowers and the singing and the joy, he sat down immediately and made two



Chimbu woman in full ceremonial decoration



Chimbu man at singsing

of his greatest paintings. They were two 1.3 by 2.4 metre panels. They are probably the most exuberant work he has so far produced.

One depicts an independence float. The other was inspired by the aeroplane on which Prince Charles arrived. On one of the paintings, Kauage wrote the following caption:

Pilis ol wantok yupela mas lukim dispela elikopta bilong wanpela meri Simbu em i draiv long elikopta na em i sindaun long sevenmail na sikan long pikini bilong kwin.

(Please, you must look at this helicopter belonging to a Chimbu lady. She has driven it to Seven Mile (Jackson's airport) where she pulls up and shakes hands with the Queen's child.)

Kauage's sister, a student at Sogeri High School, was a member of the welcoming group that met Prince Charles at the airport.

A few years ago Kauage was unique in Papua New Guinea. Now there are many other modern artists, some of outstanding talent. Several are technically superior to Kauage, some are more refined. But in sheer guts and joy and zing there is nothing like him. He is an artist with warmth and happiness and wit. His work can give you a lift the way few other paintings — anywhere in the world — can. — *Professor Ulli Beier is director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea studies.*

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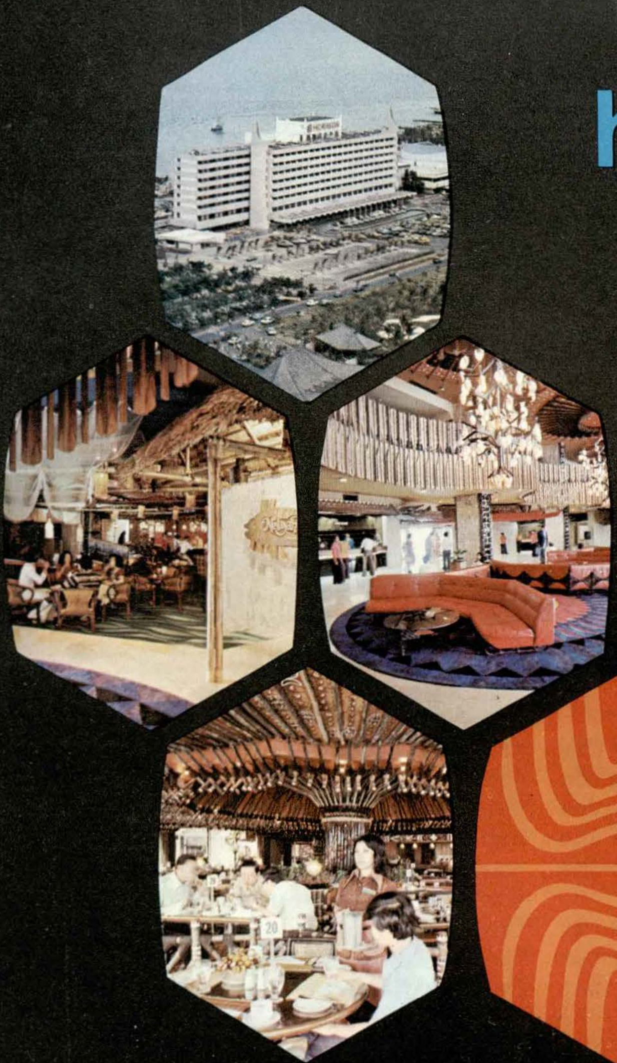

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star strike

Story and pictures by Bob Halstead

Do you get your luck from the stars? I certainly did, a couple of years back, while on a diving holiday in Madang. Snorkelling near Smugglers Inn, I spotted an unusual starfish about three metres below me on the sand. I dived to investigate. Carefully holding the star, I lifted it from the sand which swirled from the bottom revealing a glimpse of shining silver. Leaving the star, I felt in the sand — and pulled out a Seiko watch! I shook it — it worked!

As my own diving watch had just packed up and this watch, although not made for diving, had survived quite happily under water, I decided to use it for my dives. It's still going strong.

Checking at the hotel, it appeared that a visitor had bought himself a new watch and, with a few under his belt, had decided to get rid of his old one by throwing it out to sea. His loss — my luck!

The sea star that had attracted my attention was unusual in that it had six 'arms'. Occasionally you do find these perfectly symmetrical oddities with six or even four arms. However, five is the usual number.

Certain species — the infamous 'crown of thorns' for example — occur with many more arms and the related feather starfish or 'crinoids' have a multitude of arms which result in a feather-like appearance.

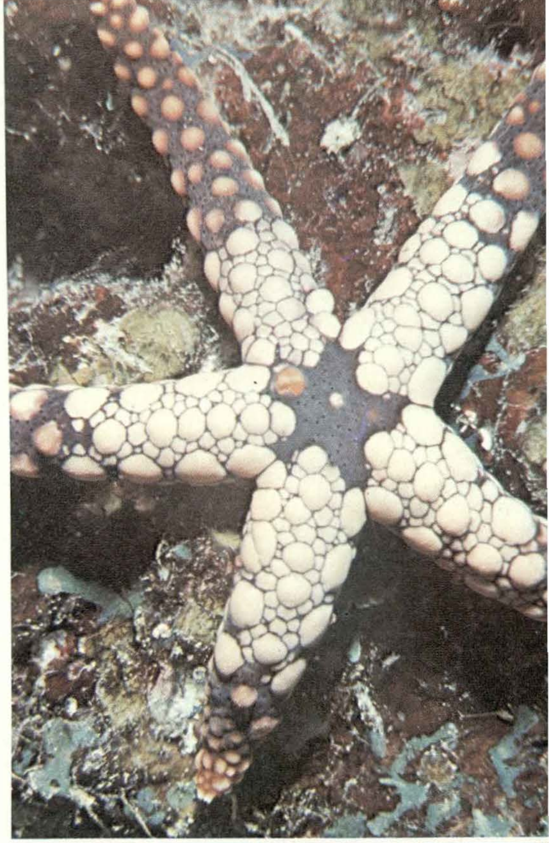
As stars brighten a dark night, so the many coloured starfish brighten a reef. The feather stars particularly are famed for their seemingly infinite variety of rich colours and patterns. Some even glow at night just like real stars.

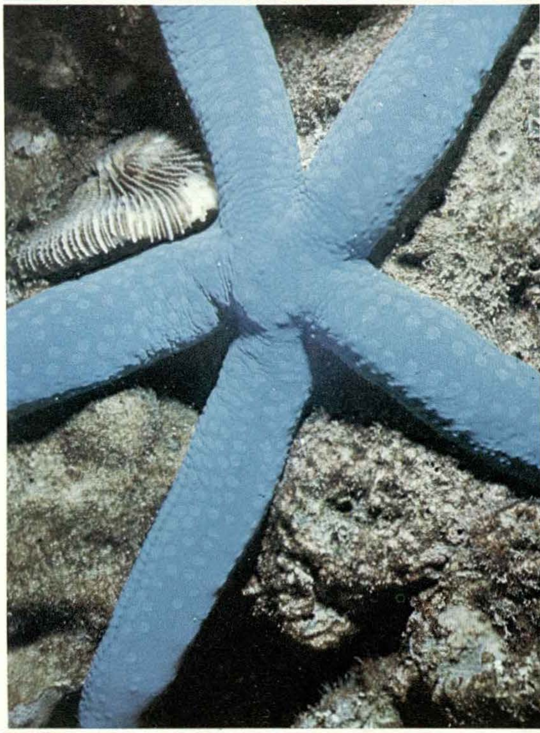
Starfish generally can be handled safely. However, the feather stars are very sticky and the crown of thorns should be left alone because of its sharp and, reportedly, venomous spines.

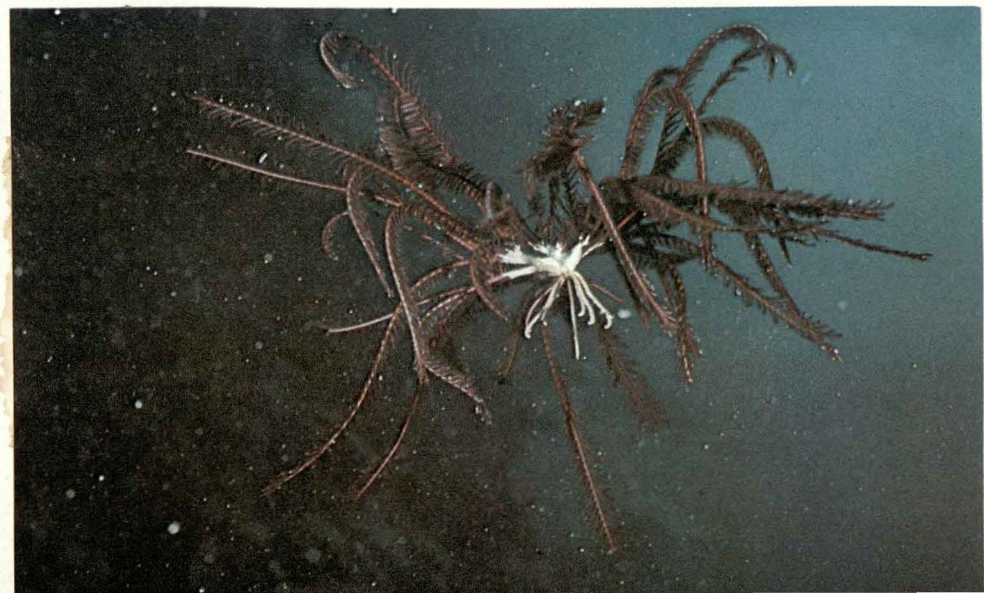
Most divers are content to admire these ornaments of the reef for which man has found little use. Usually they are found scattered over the reef slowly moving or just sitting as they munch their various meals.

I once managed to photograph a feather star swimming — a rare occurrence, a very rare photograph and an extraordinary experience watching the co-ordination of all those 'feather' arms.

To see these wonders for yourself, try wading in the shallows at low tide. With a diver's mask on any of Papua New Guinea's beaches you'll meet many more and even, perhaps, see a feather star swimming. Try your luck — its all in the stars. — *Bob Halstead is president of the Port Moresby Sub Aqua Club.*







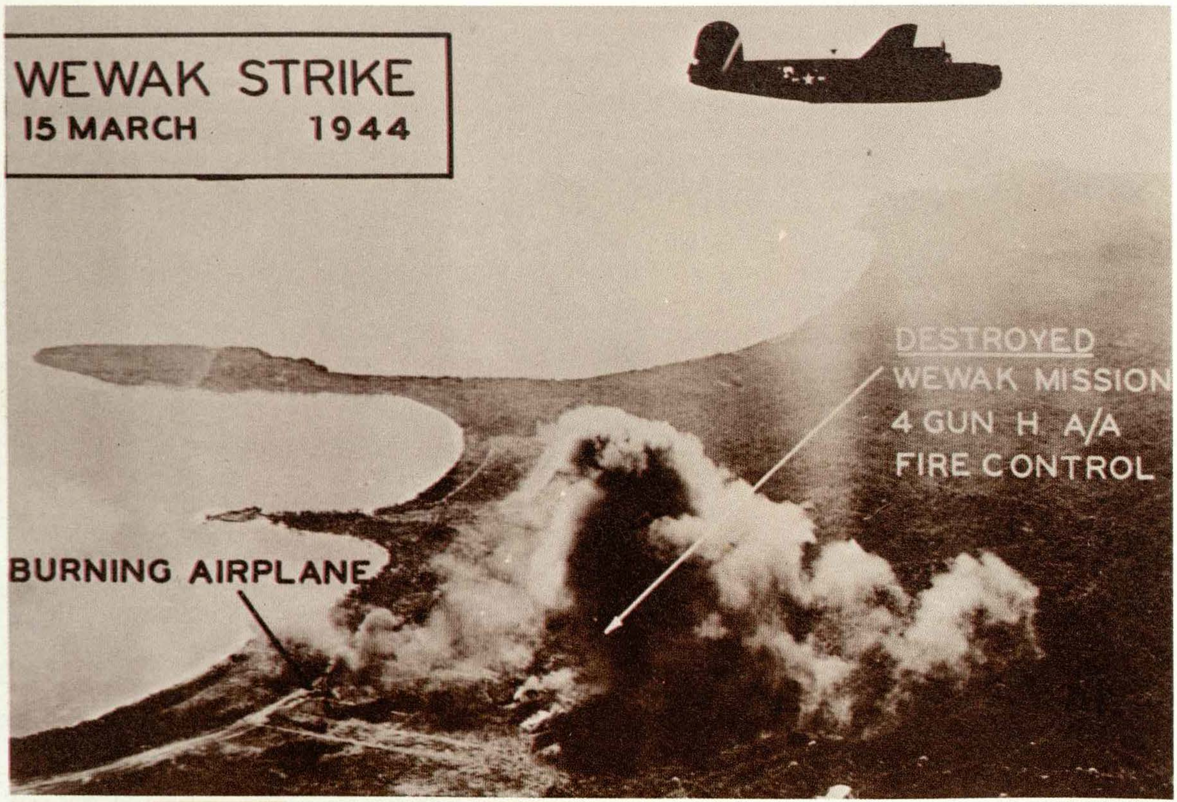
WEWAK

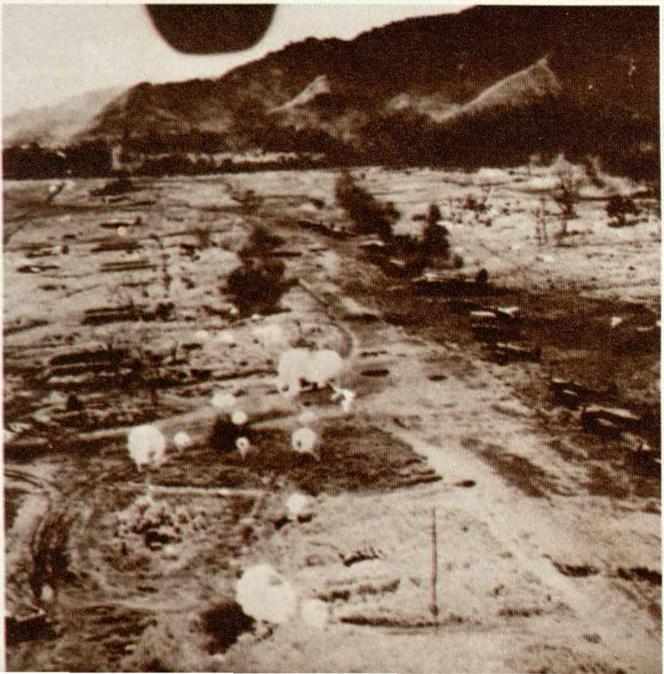
The scars of war — if softened by nature — remain along Papua New Guinea's north coast. Old bomb craters are clearly visible in Shisei Kuwabara's colour shot of Boram airstrip at Wewak.

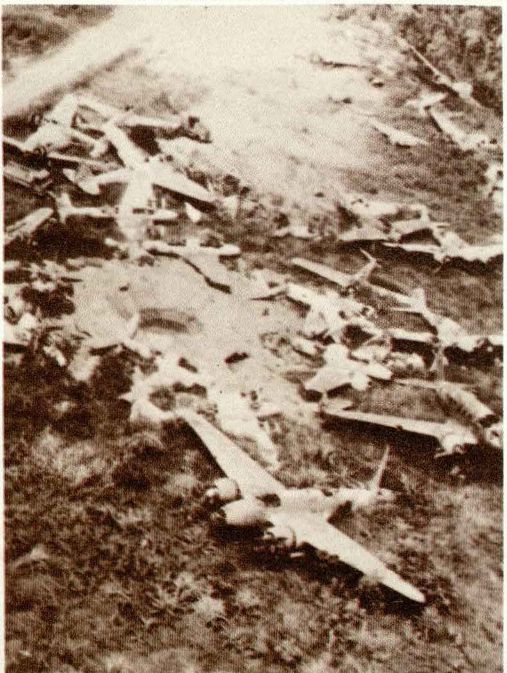
The sepia photographs on this spread, supplied by the proprietor of the Sepik Motel, Wewak, Glen Bolton, were taken during 1944 American bombing missions which were a prelude to the eventual recapture of the many north coast strips held by Japanese forces from late 1942.

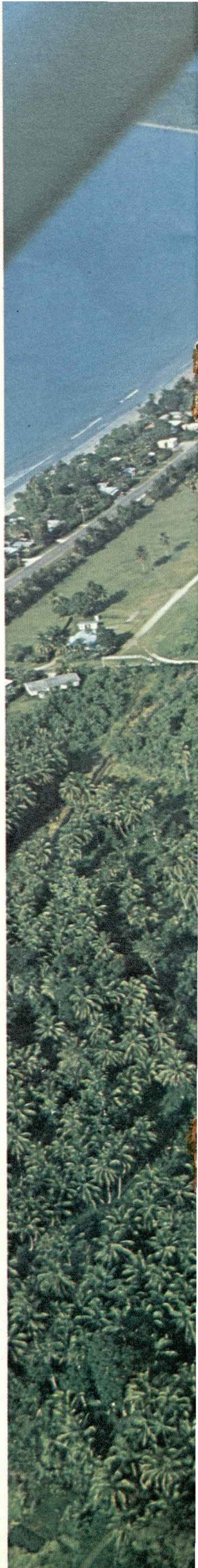
The picture labelled *Wewak strike*, with a Mitchell bomber overhead, provides a view of the Boram airstrip (near centre) with Wirui strip at bottom left and Cape Moem top left. The scene of scattered aircraft wreckage is unidentified but thought to be just off the main strip at Boram.

The shot showing parachuted bombs gently settling on their targets was taken at Dagua, about 65 kilometres west of Wewak. Dagua was eventually captured by Australian forces on March 21, 1945, after the destruction of 102 aircraft. Between September 1944 and May 1945, Beauforts and Boomerangs of No. 71 Wing, flew hundreds of sorties each month in the Aitape-Wewak area providing support for ground operations.









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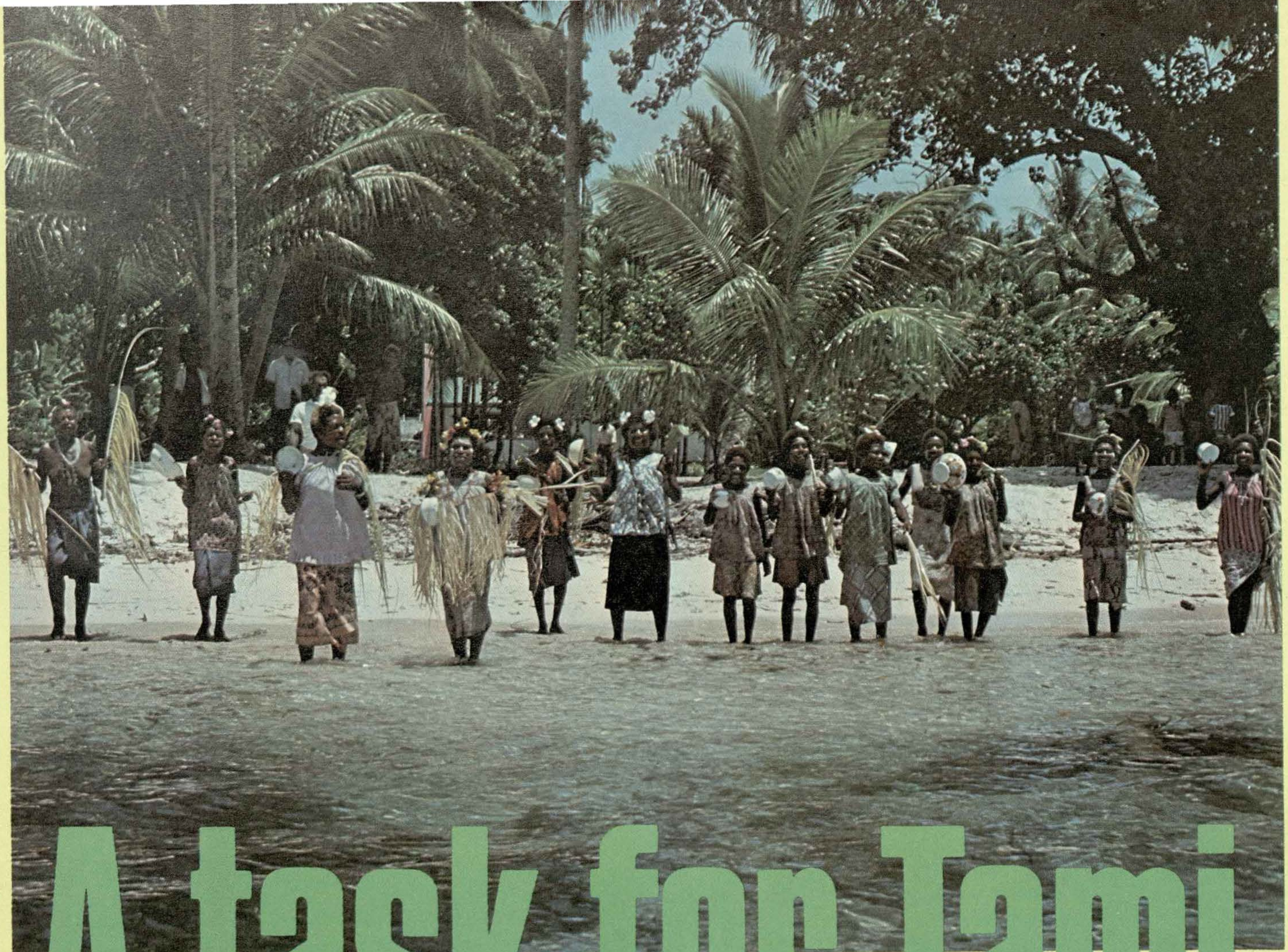


A task for Tami

By Bob Hawkins

A slender mirage of shimmering palms, dancing on the horizon, slowly firms to three tiny islands as the government workboat, the MV *Huon*, churns doggedly the 12 kilometres from the mainland.

Like a watery Eden, the waters come alive with leaping porpoises and tuna, lazy seabirds wheeling and diving for the pickings. The *Huon*, as the blue fuses to aquamarine to a light green marked by an occasional deep blue hole, starts to twist and turn its way through the reef.

On the sands sway a band of tiny figures. Soon their song comes waftting over. The young women of Tami, in traditional welcome, are paying tribute to the turtle — and waiting, smiles playing, to 'wash' the visitors.

Though Tami is another world, another language, another culture, the watery welcome — in which newcomers are showered with water before being allowed ashore — is common in coastal areas of the Huon Peninsula to the east of Lae in Papua New Guinea's Morobe Province. Forewarned, as a consequence of having a bowl of water poured over me and my camera at Malasiga village on the mainland, my camera this time is tightly wrapped in towelling and held under the dinghy seat. Cascades of water wet us through before it is shallow enough to step ashore and race for the beach — just in time to whip the towelling off before the water seeps through to give my camera a second soaking in two days. (No one suggested there were any taboos against taking pictures of the welcoming committee — but it's difficult to do so and get your camera under wraps before the torrent hits.)

The occasion is a visit to Tami by Morobe Provincial Commissioner Bill Warren accompanied by the Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, Tom Critchley. News has gone ahead of the party that Mr Critchley is coming to talk to the islanders about reviving their traditional craft of making and sailing mighty trading canoes. Mr Critchley, who has held talks that morning with Tami Island kinsmen at Malasiga, is there to listen.

He is offering to finance a new building program. But, as he had found earlier in the day, it's not just a question of putting up the money and waiting for a 12 metre, or longer, double-deck, cargo/passenger canoe to materialise.

At Malasiga, villagers had solemnly debated his offer while he sat, with Bill Warren and Australian Consul-General in Lae, Eric Hanfield, on woven mats on a raised platform under the shade of an open-sided village meeting hall. The Malasiga debate was inconclusive; as is the Tami debate.

So much has to be considered. Has the fund of knowledge which once launched ocean-going vessels to trade around to the Siassi Islands and down the Morobe coast dwindled beyond recall? Are the young men of the village ready to provide their muscle — and work under the direction of old men who have long since relinquished their influence over day-to-day affairs of the tiny Tami community?

Though these and other questions are answered in the affirmative, both on Tami and at Malasiga, the village headmen are not ready to commit themselves to the project. They want time to think it over; they want to be sure, before accepting Mr Critchley's offer of help, that at the end of their labours there will indeed be a vessel in the finest tradition of days gone by.

Something of the splendour of the last trader remains in Wanam village on the island of the same name in the Tami group. A weathered hull — about 13 metres long — with intricately carved prow and stern lies under the eaves of a house at the village edge. Four old men — they helped build it — solemnly stand alongside it to be photographed. Perhaps, not so clearly now, they remember how someone had been sent to Siassi to obtain the natural fibres for the ropes to bind the decking and rigging; how they had gone timber hunting along the coast toward Lae and when, having found just the right tree for the vessel, they had to negotiate with the villagers on whose land the tree stood; how they tackled the herculean task of getting that tree out to the beach and back to Tami.

Now, of course, those items will have to be purchased with money. Yesterday, the Tami people would have had something apart from money with which to meet the bill; perhaps a selection of their superbly hand-polished carvings for which the Tami people are admired.

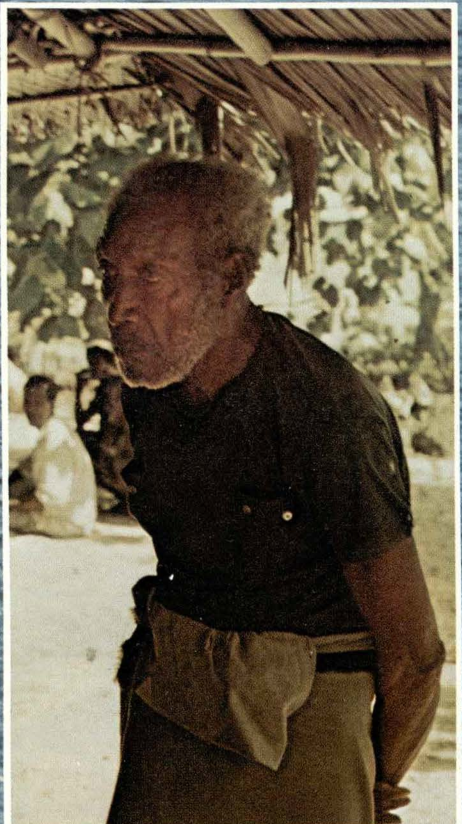
(Bob Matheson, a former patrol officer with the Australian administration in colonial Papua New Guinea, remembers the glory of the Tami canoe. He saw it under sail in the middle sixties and photographed it again in 1970, a year after it last sailed, when villagers rigged it with traditional pandanus sails. He remembers it as about '40 feet long with a carved out circular hull. It had beautifully carved side boards, three to four feet high, with cross beams on top to support the outrigger'. Above all this was the passenger platform. Standing on the beach at Tami, Matheson remembers the platform being seven to eight feet above the ground.)

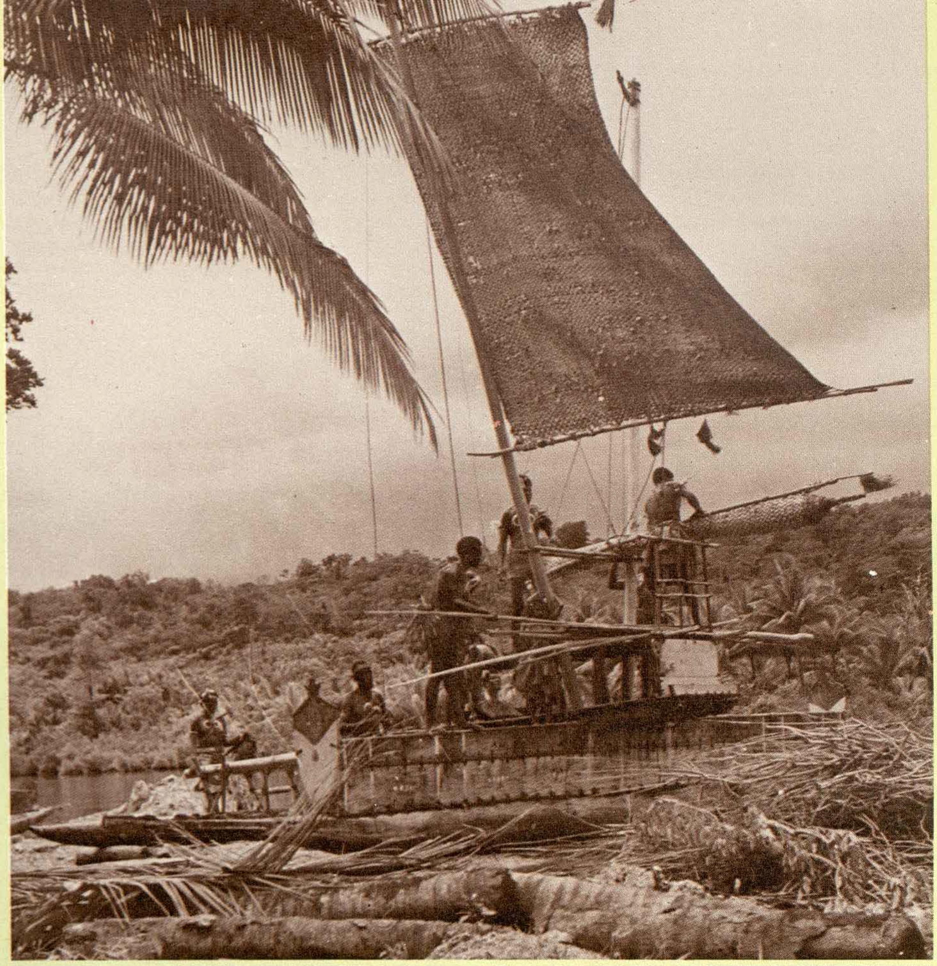
Provincial Commissioner Warren and party leave Tami just after lunch. Despite the reluctance of the people to commit themselves, Mr Critchley senses that the project will become a reality. But it is more than a month before his hunch begins to look good. The word comes from Lae that the Tami people have been looking around for a suitable tree. One has been found in Butibam village, just outside the provincial capital.

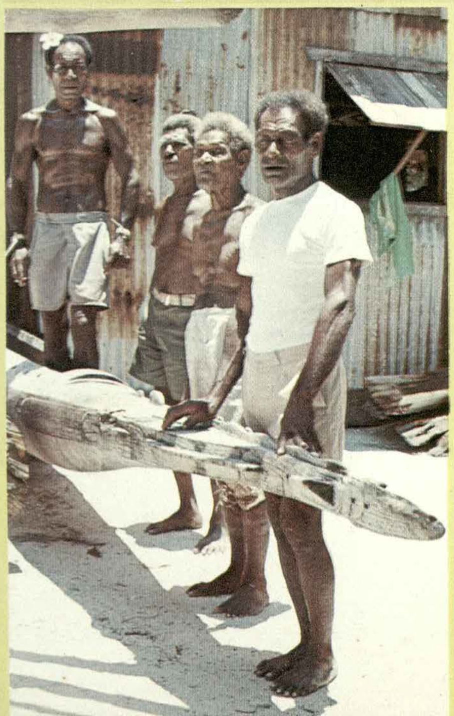
By now a deputation of Tami

Tami girls wade out to give a watery welcome to passengers and crew from the MV Huon; **above:** *sometimes the welcome gives visitors a funny sinking feeling;* **below:** *Mr Critchley and Mr Hanfield listen to Malasiga leader Sem Reuben describe the Tami canoes of old;* **below right:** *Daniel Abraan, born according to the village register in 1902, is one of the few Tami people who still knows the ceremony and skills required to build the canoes*

Sailing Kanu







Top: *The Tami canoe as Bob Matheson saw it in 1970;* **above:** *a welcoming committee for Provincial Commissioner Warren and Australian High Commissioner Critchley (pictured) at Malasiga village;* **left:** *villagers at Wanam on Tami, from left, Silas Matai, Makili Sagung, Jeremiah Abele and Banabas Matai, inspect the prow of the old vessel — and wonder if they could do it all over again.*

people will have visited Butibam to negotiate a purchase price with the immediate owner of the tree, old Samuel Bukaua. At the time of writing, old Samuel was in hospital, recovering from an operation. During their visit to Butibam, it was hoped that the Tami guests would stay in a house built for them on the site of the embryo Morobe Province Cultural Centre (MPCC) on land provided by Butibam.

The proposed Tami canoe project is one of many that the MPCC committee is encouraging. It feels a serious effort must be made to preserve the culture of the region.

The basis of the cultural centre at Butibam is already well established. The 2.45 hectares is fenced and an earthwork ampitheatre for traditional dance displays and other entertainment has been built.

As funds become available plans are to build a community centre, a number of residential units for visitors and traditional longhouse accommodation, a small village specifically for use by craftsmen from many areas and a traditional village embracing many architectural characteristics of the structures the people of the area built before European influence changed the face of their villages.

Chairman of the cultural centre committee is Muttu Gware of Butibam village, a former journalist and once editor of the Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin English) *Niugini Toktok* newspaper.

In his plea for support for the cultural centre, Mr Gware says: 'Lae, as the major industrial centre in Papua New Guinea, has had a particular need for a cultural centre to help preserve our culture and that of our ancestors as well as a need for the centre to see and understand the cultures from outside this province and from outside this country.'

By the time you read this, it is hoped the people of the Tami Islands and their relatives at nearby Malasiga village on the mainland will be well on their way to the launching of a new canoe.

If the project comes to fruition, Mr Critchley plans to equip the vessel with an outboard motor which will enable them to sail it, unworried by the vagaries of the wind, with ease along the Huon coast. The Tami people will be able to renew old trading ties with their opposite numbers in the Siassi Islands across the Vitiaz Strait — and will in themselves become a waterside attraction at Lae when they sail their grand vessel to the provincial capital to market their carvings. — *Bob Hawkins is an Australian Information Service journalist and is at present Counsellor (Information) at the Australian High Commission in Papua New Guinea.*

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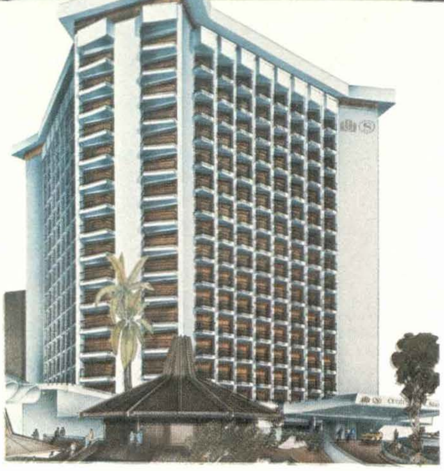

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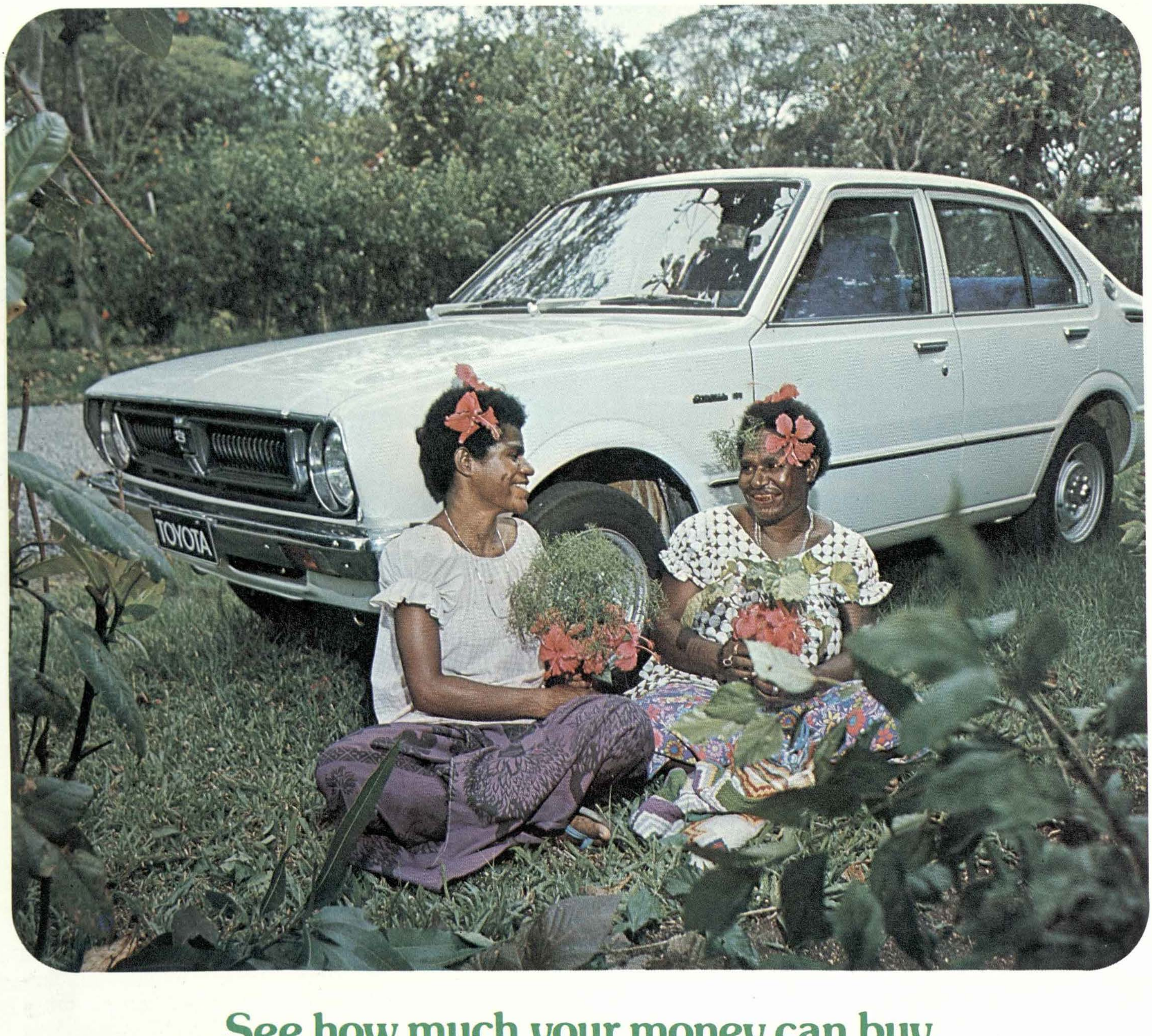

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PJP 264/76

man bites croc

By Geoffrey Heard.

'Genuine crocodile steaks, you ought to try them,' they told me. Every journalist is taught the old adage that if a dog bites a man, that's not news, but if a man bites a dog, that is news. Here was man biting croc! I had to see it.

A quick phone call put me in touch with Phil Wilcock the 30-year-old, 18 stone owner and chef of the Kokoda Trail Motel on the cool Sogeri Plateau, 40 kilometres by car from Port Moresby.

Phil, of Upwey, Victoria, and something of a wanderer since leaving school, was jovial hospitality itself. Crocodile steaks? Yes, of course, genuine crocodile steaks. Come up lunchtime Saturday and try them yourself.'

Gastronomically, I'm a cautious coward, so I phoned some friends and invited them to lunch. They would do the actual trying of the crocodile, or at least have the first taste, while your cautious correspondent recorded the great event for posterity.

Things were quiet when we arrived at the motel, a pleasant hideaway with its own swimming pool and lawns stretching down to the river.

We were there early so we could have a clear run getting pictures and talking with Phil. Seeing the cameras out, he hastily put on a shirt which matched his blue football shorts ('They wouldn't want to see me in my singlet, would they?'), produced two crocodile tails from his freezer for us to look at, and, in a mixture of English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu, organised banana leaves, tropical fruits and vegetables to decorate his barbecue booth.

As Phil sliced crocodile steaks, prepared a crocodile kebab and arranged the traditional-style cooking of some marinated crocodile in banana leaves, he told us how he got into crocodile cooking.

It began when Department of Wildlife crocodile expert, John Lever, took a couple of tails up to the motel for a barbecue. Phil put it on the menu and found he had an instant hit on his hands.

'Just about everyone who comes here takes the crocodile,' he says. 'They don't believe it at first — they think it's some kind of a trick. When we convince them that it's genuine crocodile meat, they just have to try it. It's pretty unusual, a bit of a thrill, I suppose.'

The crocodile flesh is a heavy, white meat taken from the tail of the reptile. It looks like fish, but is much firmer, more like veal or yearling steak. Its taste is in the same 'in-between' category. Phil describes it as a cross between lobster and veal. I would say barramundi and veal myself, but I would not be dogmatic about it. It's a very light flavour, not strong in any way.

John Lever has experimented fairly widely with the meat, and says he has found that with its light, mild flavour, it responds particularly well to marinades and spices, although care must be taken not to over spice or the meat's own flavour is lost.

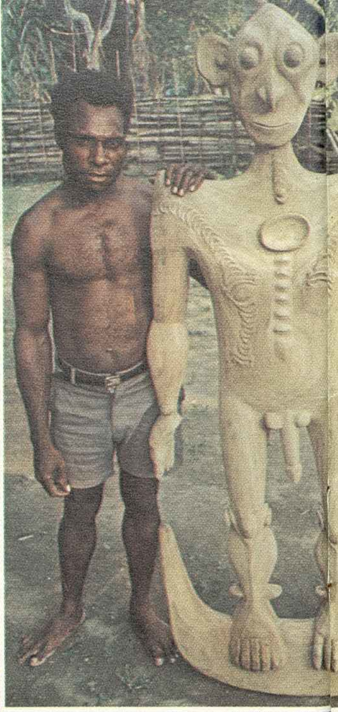
Phil serves the crocodile as a marinade, a kebab and a steak. Ever ready to experiment (he tried crocodile, didn't he?) he whipped up his own mixture in which to marinate crocodile. Local limes, coconut milk, ginger, onion, garlic and brandy goes into the basin.

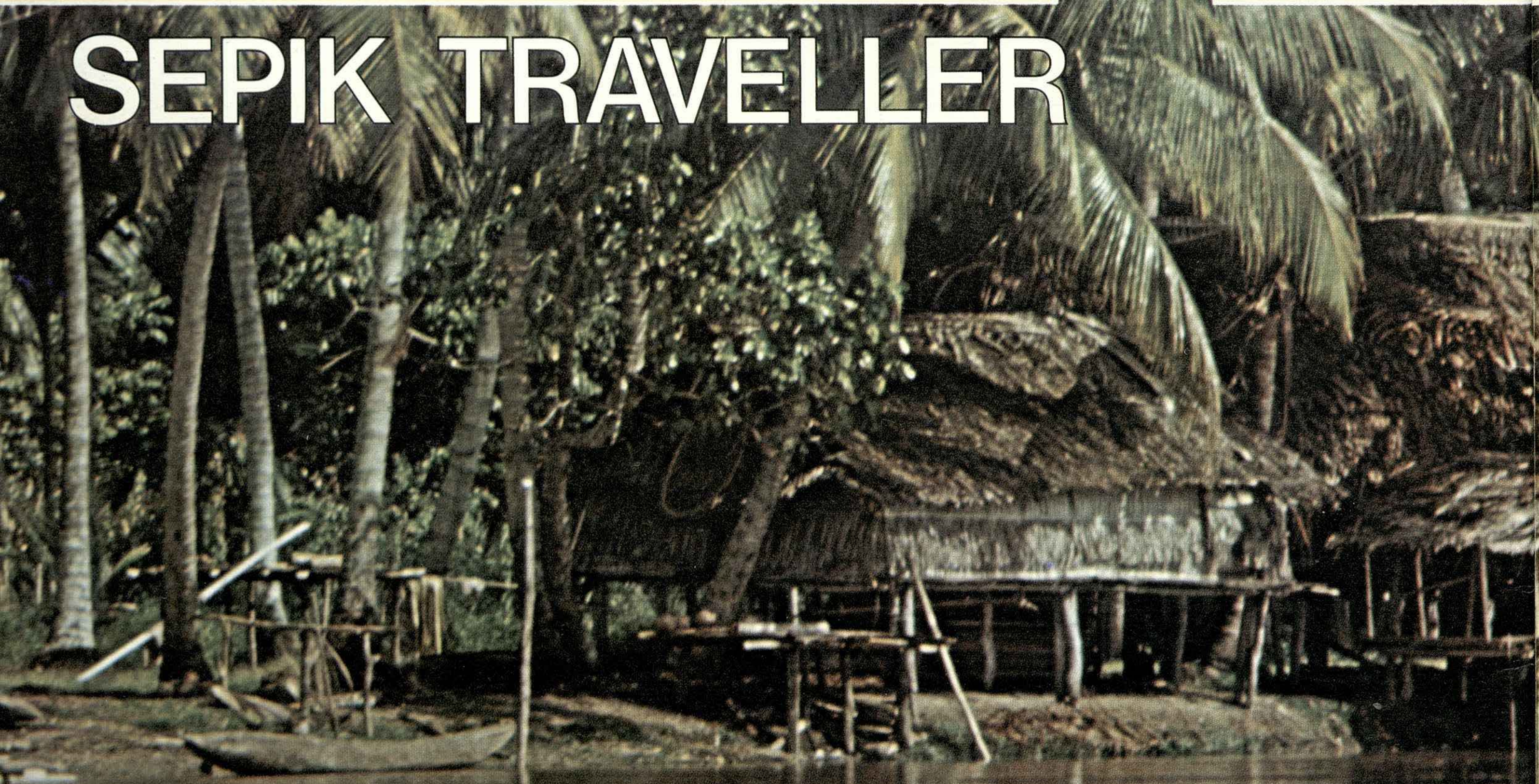
How much of each? Phil gets uncomfortable when you start talking quantities. He just puts in 'enough'. Anyone who finds themselves facing a holiday weekend with nothing in the freezer but a crocodile tail should remember, however, that the marinade should not be too heavy.

So what's the verdict? I like it. I could happily eat a fair amount of crocodile, always provided someone else caught it for me.

My official tasters, Ross and Seonaigh Stevens, expatriate New Zealanders living in Port Moresby, weren't so sure. They thought it was all right, but they wouldn't want to eat it all the time.

And lest you think crocodile meat is just a gimmick, get this: lots of villagers in Papua New Guinea have been eating it for a long, long time; and there is a certain French food firm which is looking for the stuff in tonne lots.





SEPIK TRAVELLER

By Peter Jackson

If you wear a pith-helmet and ignore the noise of the outboard motor, you can still explore the mighty Sepik River in much the same way as early explorers. Travelling on the Sepik, though, is much easier now than in the old days.

The starting point for the Sepik traveller is usually Wewak, administrative centre of the East Sepik Province. A delightful town with sandy beaches and inviting blue waters, Wewak is serviced regularly by Air Niugini.

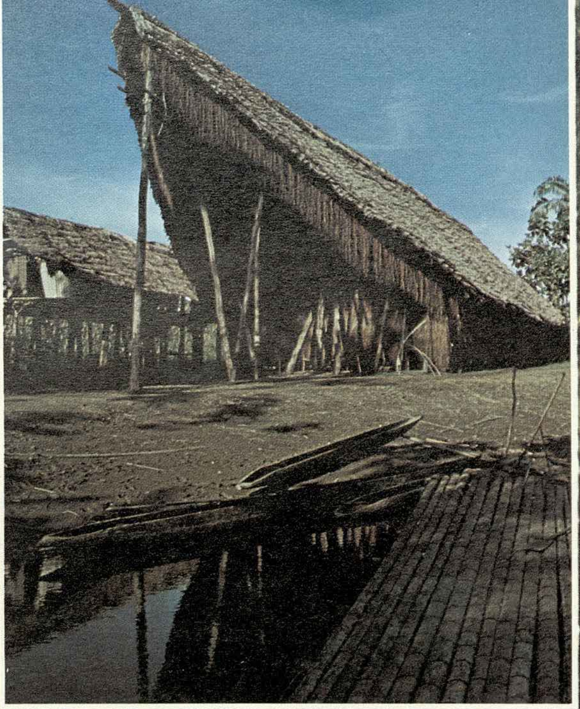
The whole of the province is renowned for its traditional carvings and while there is no shortage of these handicrafts on offer in the town, the variety available is much wider at places along the river, where it is still possible to see Sepik craftsmen at work.

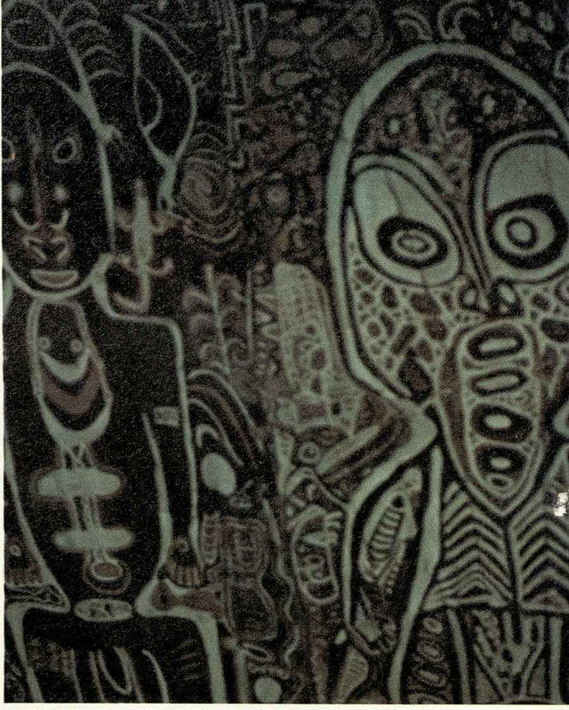
The most accessible part of the river is the stretch between Pagwi and Angoram. Motorised canoes mean the trip can be made comfortably in two days. The canoes call in at the smaller villages along the way, allowing a close-up look at Sepik village life.

Access to Pagwi and nearby Ambunti is by road or air. The journey by road is via Maprik, 130 kilometres from Wewak, and passes through changing countryside. Alternatively, Angoram, downriver is accessible by a daily light aircraft service from Wewak. A road has also been pushed through recently, connecting the town to Wewak.

Angoram is a quiet little town with a busy waterfront. There is a *haus tambaran* (house of the spirits), the focal point of a Sepik village. The people of the Angoram area worked for seven months building this magnificent structure, the deadline for completion being Papua New Guinea's Independence Day — September 16, 1975. The Angoram *haus tambaran* has its doors open to tourists who, upon entering, are confronted with a large display of local handicrafts.

As the eyes adjust to the dim light, the intricate artwork of the building's thatched roof becomes evident. The deftly painted figures





make up a treasure-house of Sepik stories and legends. Next door is the cultural centre which contains rarer and more highly prized artifacts, not available for sale to the public.

But it is along the river where you really see Sepik life. At the wharves, where they are unloading crocodile skins or mending the fishing nets, all you have to do is hire a canoe. The long dug-outs are very stable. Canoes with outboard motors are available. You'll need a guide of course and townspeople can organise a tour to suit your wishes — just for a couple of hours or all the way upstream to Pagwi.

Adequate accommodation is available along the river for those wanting to spend a leisurely couple of days getting the feel of the river. The cost for such a trip could be as little as K50, including accommodation, depending on how many people travel together. There is an excellent hotel at Angoram and another at Maprik.

The river banks and the numerous narrow backwaters are a real adventure. You can feel the tall, overhanging jungle grass and bamboo pressing upon you from both sides. You cannot always see them, but the crocodiles are nearby — usually sleeping during the day. The guides are skilled boatmen and know all the channels. Back on the languidly flowing, meandering mainstream, the river is the highway. Families pass in their canoes, always with a friendly wave for the visitor.

The boats stop at riverside villages which are centres of quiet industry amidst the stillness of the hot, tropical day. While the men and women are at work, little children offer happy companionship. You'll be welcome in these Sepik villages — and you'll be missing out on an interesting piece of Papua New Guinea if you do not immerse yourself in one of the two Sepik provinces for at least a day or two. — *Peter Jackson is a former PNG Post-Courier writer.*

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Feathered Fury

Story and pictures by Brian Coates

Cockfighting originated in eastern Asia. It was the role of the cock as a fighter rather than its value as a table bird which gained it a foothold in Europe. Cockfighting was popular with the classical Greeks and Romans and later became widespread. It is however a bloodsport and for this reason has been banned in the United States, Britain and some European countries since the mid 1800s. It does however continue secretly in those places. In the Philippines, Central and South America, some Mediterranean countries and elsewhere, cockfighting is still a popular public event.

In the Philippines, *sabong* (cockfighting) is held on Sundays, a strange anomaly in this religious country, explained perhaps mainly by the fact that most Filipinos have a six day working week.

Fighting cocks are a special breed derived from the same stock as barnyard fowls or roosters. They come in various plumage patterns but are characterised by a longer tail and more rangy build. These birds are individually raised in private homes and receive much care and attention from their owners during the many months taken to reach prime fighting condition.

They are fed special food and are frequently exercised. This includes sparring with other cocks, their spurs being padded to prevent injury. For a cock the natural tendency is to attack and chase off a rival. These fowls have natural spurs — a bony spike protruding from behind each leg — which are used in combat and which can inflict wounds on a rival.

To these natural weapons Man, in his wisdom, adds a third, lethal and decisive to the unwitting cock. This takes the form of a long, razor-sharp metal spike tied to one (usually the left) leg and used only at *sabong* time.

Anyone can see a cockfight in the Philippines though there are age restrictions in some places. Many people go to gamble and most are adult males. Cockfights are, however, sometimes televised and so, like it or not, it is a way of life in the Philippines.

The fights are staged in arenas called *sabungan* and may commence in the morning and continue through to late evening. At the one I visited near Manila, the fighting arena is an elevated square floor surrounded by a steel and glass security fence which also prevents the cocks from straying. The tiers of spectators start at eye level and rise behind as in a boxing stadium. All is enclosed within a large wooden building with an iron roof. In the arena are fight officials, owners of birds and several *kristos*, otherwise known as bookmakers.

I was interested to see and photo-

Right: Kristos *take the money, give the odds — and pay out. And not a note written anywhere. It's all in the mind;* **below:** *the referee allows the victorious cock to peck its victim just to make sure it is dead*

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graph a cockfight at close quarters and, with the help of my father-in-law, I was given permission by the chief official to enter the ring.

It was about seven in the evening when we arrived. Outside in the entrance to the building were many people standing and sitting about near food stalls, noisily chatting amongst themselves with a familiarity and friendliness so typically Filipino.

Cocks were lined up with their owners awaiting their great moment. A great roar of voices emanated from the auditorium and as we ascended the steps we knew a fight was in progress. Inside the air was electric and the excitement infectious, the crowd going wild, each shouting for his own bird.

It was all over in a matter of seconds. Then we joined the officials in the ring. Without delay the next pair were brought on. The birds, which had been matched by weight, like boxers, were held firmly and exhibited to the crowd.

Now it was the *kristos* turn. These bookies and their methods are quite remarkable. Looking into the crowd the *kristo* takes bets using sign language and, with amazing feats of memory, remembers the faces, the amounts and the odds of numerous customers. Nothing goes on paper. A plate on an overhead wire is moved from one side to the other depending on which cock becomes the favourite.

A balance is required to be maintained and, if the betting on one bird is too heavy, the book on that bird is closed until the other comes into line. Individual bets on a fight may range from 50 to 500 pesos and occasionally up to several thousand pesos.

The officials check the condition of the birds and see that the spur on each is correctly in place and clean. It sometimes happens that a bird is found to be in poor condition in which case the match is abandoned.

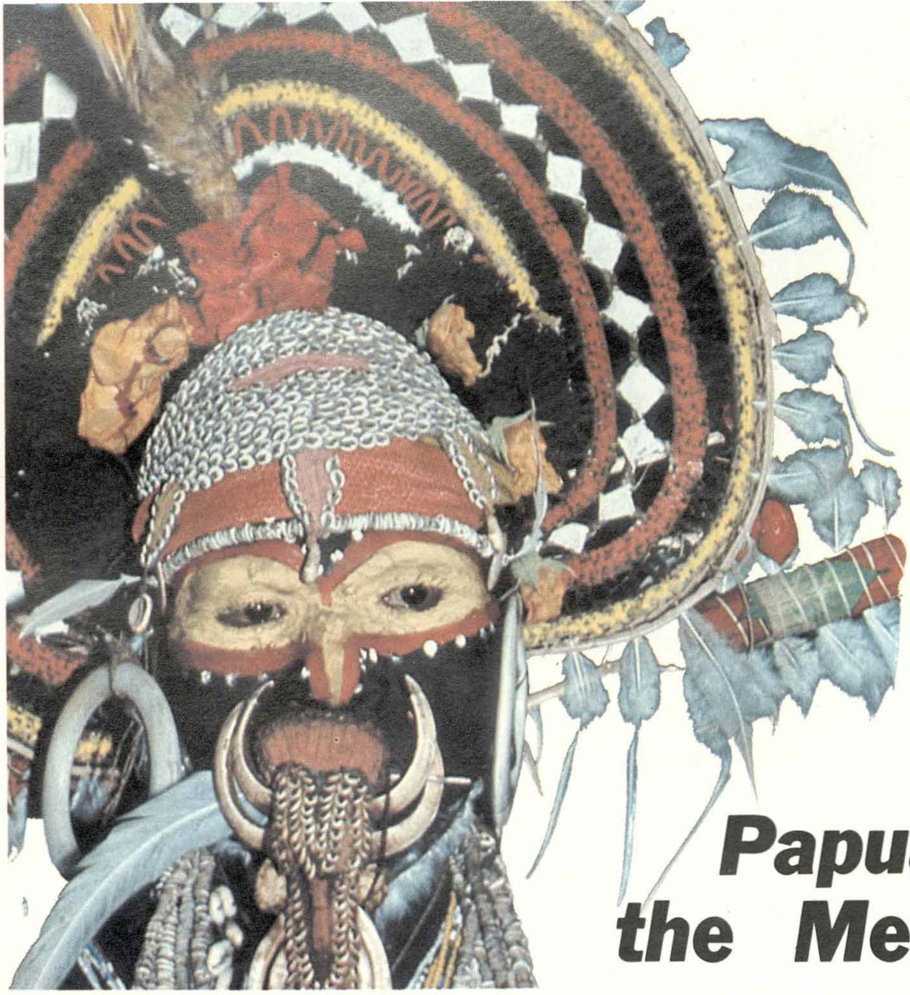
Before the fight starts the cocks' fury is aroused by holding them firmly within pecking distance for a few moments. Now, only several minutes since the end of the last fight, another is ready to begin.

The cocks are held at opposite sides of the arena and for a moment silence reigns, awaiting the signal to start. Go! They are released and quickly rush at each other, hackles raised. They leap into the air, feet flaying, the higher bird having the obvious advantage.

The noise of the crowd instantly hits an excited, wild crescendo. Spurs strike time and again as the cocks swiftly leap and tumble about the arena in a flurry of feathers and claws. It is a fight to the death and soon one bird weakens and collapses in a pool of blood.

The victor staggers above. He too is weakening and could also die from his wounds. The referee checks the fallen bird for any chance of revival and declares the winner. It's all over. The *kristos* move in again and rolls of notes change hands over the fence.

There is something rather pathetic about the hapless bundle of feathers now lying lifeless on the floor. But this is no place for lingering sentiment and he is quickly whisked away to make room for the next fight. He will finish up in the cook-pot while the victor, if he survives his wounds, may carry on to fight time and time again. — *Brian Coates is the author of* Birds in Papua New Guinea.



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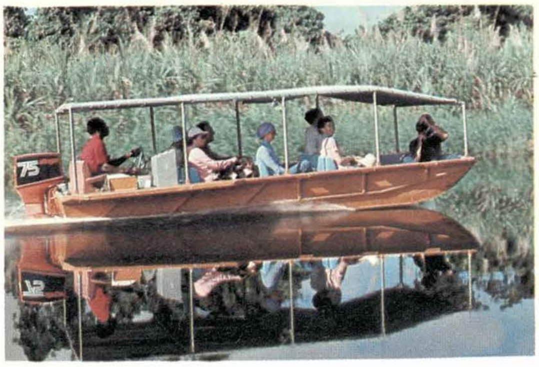

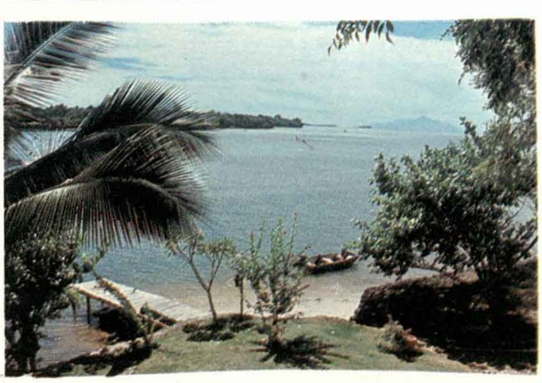

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Melanesian Tourist Services, PO Box 707 Madang. Tel 822975
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