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# paradise

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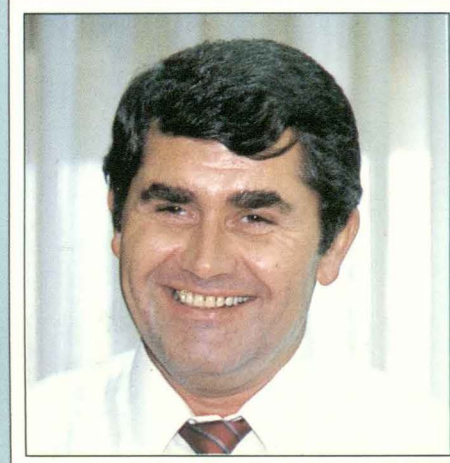
Beauty abounds among the unique flora and fauna of the 'enchanted forest', the subject of our featured article.

The forest also provides the raw materials for the ingenious traditional torches 'tumbuna lait' which brighten village homes at night.

In this issue we mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, and in other articles, we experience the refurbished Raffles Hotel in Singapore, climb PNG's highest mountain and visit Lihir Island.

Enjoy your flight.

Dieter Seefeld  
General Manager & Chief Executive  
Air Niugini



Dieter Seefeld  
General Manager & Chief Executive  
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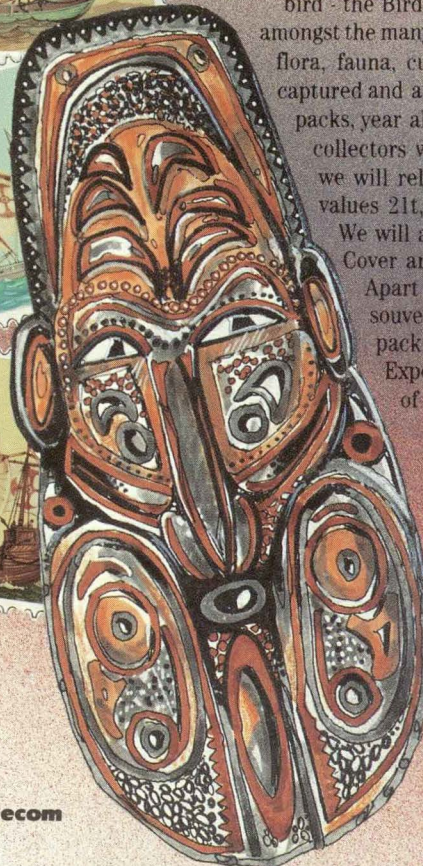
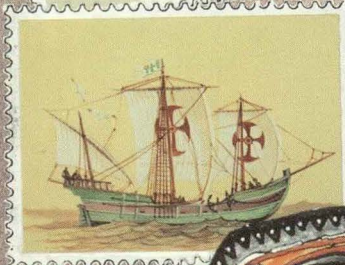
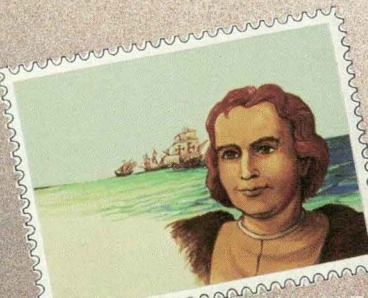
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**Cover:** Victoria crowned pigeon, a beautiful bird species of the PNG rainforest (see page 17).  
Photograph by Phil Chapman.

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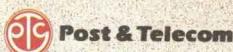


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# BATTLE of the Coral Sea

Story and photographs by Bruce Hoy

**F**ifty years ago, Port Moresby was under threat of invasion. Imperial Japanese forces occupied much of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea and seemed unconquerable. They had taken Rabaul and occupied Kieta, Kavieng, Gasmata, Lae and Salamaua. Japanese aerial attacks were being directed against the Allied citadel of Port Moresby, in particular its airfield at Seven Mile, and by May, 1942, the city was under a direct threat of invasion from the sea.

Despite Japan's spectacular achievements in establishing a new empire with strong defensive perimeters, giving it access to badly needed raw materials, there still remained the thorn of the American Pacific Fleet. An urgent need also existed to strengthen and enlarge the defensive perimeter to counter the growing Allied forces in Australia; a need that meant going beyond basic war plans.

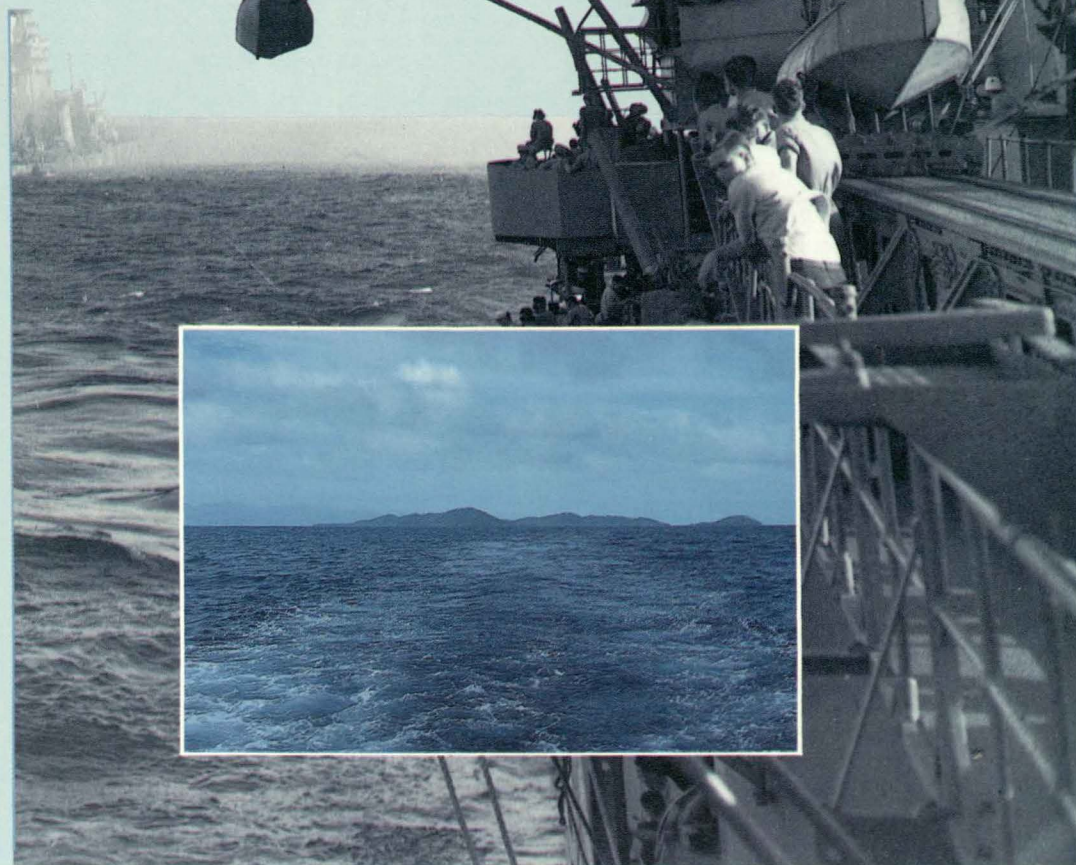
Planning for the Port Moresby-Tulagi invasion, code-named Operation MO, began in earnest in early 1942.

The plan was to invade Port Moresby by sea and to meet any challenge from the Allied naval fleet. The capture of Tulagi in the Solomons was an ancillary part of the operation, to protect the eastern flank of the Japanese on New Britain.

With planning completed, the harbors of Rabaul in New Britain and Truk in the Japanese Mandated Territory became a beehive of activity. On April 28,

1,400km to the north of Rabaul at Truk, the Main Support Force comprising four heavy cruisers and the Close Support Force of a light aircraft carrier and a destroyer sailed for southern waters, west of Bougainville.

**Right** Seen from the floatplane catapult of the cruiser Minneapolis, two destroyers evacuate crew from the Lexington. **inset** Deboyne Islands, a Japanese stronghold.



Next day, two light cruisers, a seaplane tender and three gunboats departed Rabaul to provide additional protection for the invasion force. The Tulagi Invasion Force of two destroyers, three minelayers, one transport and auxiliary craft left Rabaul another day later.

On May 1, the Carrier Strike Force, intended to trap any Allied interference to Operation MO, sailed from Truk. This Force comprised the battle veteran aircraft carriers Shokaku and Zuikaku, both of which had participated in the Pearl Harbor attack and the Rabaul invasion, two heavy cruisers and six destroyers. Three days later, the Port Moresby Invasion Force sailed from the comparative safety of Rabaul. The final chess piece of this complicated manoeuvre was the Attack Force, a light cruiser, five destroyers, one patrol boat and auxiliary craft which departed Rabaul on May 5.

The landings at Tulagi on May 3 were unopposed, the small Australian garrison having withdrawn the previous day. Although the Japanese knew that an American aircraft carrier task force was in the area, the exact composition and its whereabouts were unknown. The Allied forces knew of the pending operation as US Naval Intelligence had already broken the Japanese naval code. The exact plan was unknown, except that it involved a southerly expansion. On May 4, the Japanese at Tulagi suddenly became aware of the presence of an American task force, when 46 aircraft from the USS Yorktown swept in on the Japanese forces unloading, sinking the destroyer Kikuzuki. A second strike at noon sank two patrol boats and damaged an escaping transport, the Tama, which sank several days later.

The Port Moresby invasion fleet having just left the confines of Rabaul Harbor, the American carrier attack at Tulagi meant that the first carrier-versus-carrier battle in naval history was not far off. The Japanese Carrier Strike Force

from Truk was then 400 nautical miles east of Rabaul, sailing in a southeasterly direction. By nightfall on May 5, the fleet had rounded San Cristobal Island and was steering northwest towards the Solomon Sea, and Papua New Guinea waters.

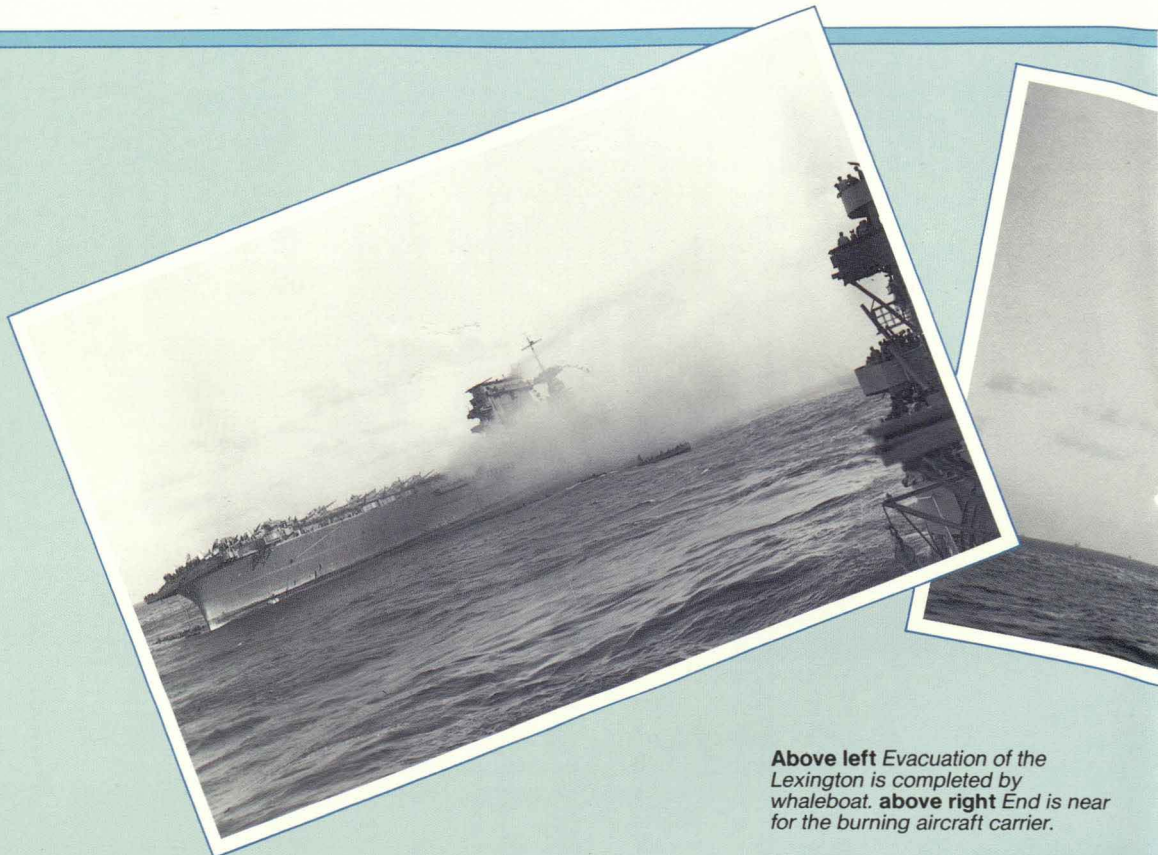
Meanwhile, the Yorktown task force, after its attack on Tulagi, had turned south and joined up with the aircraft carrier USS Lexington and its task force. As the Japanese and American battle groups started groping for each other, the Japanese invasion force, together with its covering ships, steamed towards Port Moresby.

On May 7, a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft came across an American oiler and its covering destroyer, incorrectly identifying them as being an aircraft carrier with a covering cruiser. Both US vessels were repeatedly hit by attack aircraft and sank. This was a costly mistake, for while Japanese aircraft were pounding both vessels, they missed the opportunity of attacking the main American fleet with its carriers. Meanwhile, the Americans had located the Carrier Strike Force from Truk and the Close Support Force from Rabaul.

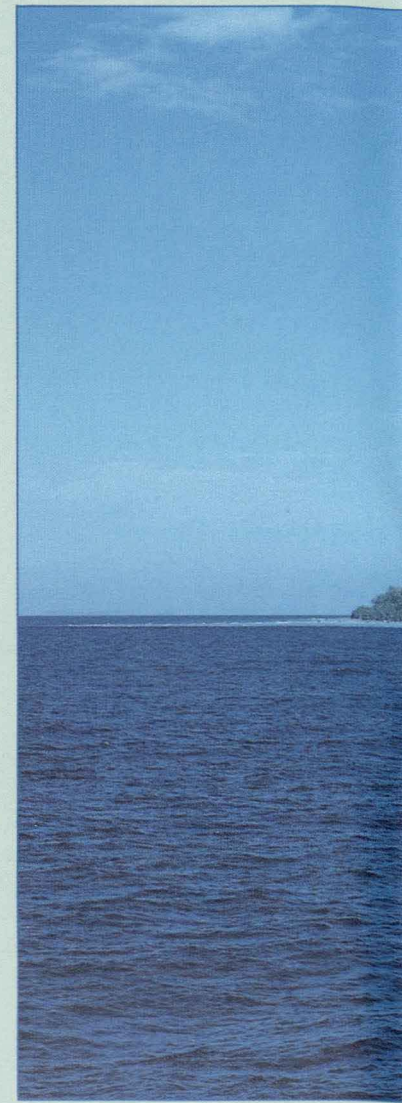
The American attack started a little after 11am, concentrating on the light carrier Shoho. It put up a valiant fight but was overwhelmed by the 93 attacking aircraft. Three defending fighters were shot down. The Shoho was sunk taking with it 21 aircraft and 638 of its crew. With their carrier beneath the sparkling waters of the Coral Sea, northeast of Misima Island, four remaining Zero fighters headed for the Japanese seaplane base in Deboyne Lagoon, where they were successfully ditched. American losses for the day were three Dauntless dive-bombers and four Wildcat fighters, the fighters during a skirmish against Japanese aircraft from the Shokaku and Zuikaku which in the late afternoon were searching for the American carrier fleet.

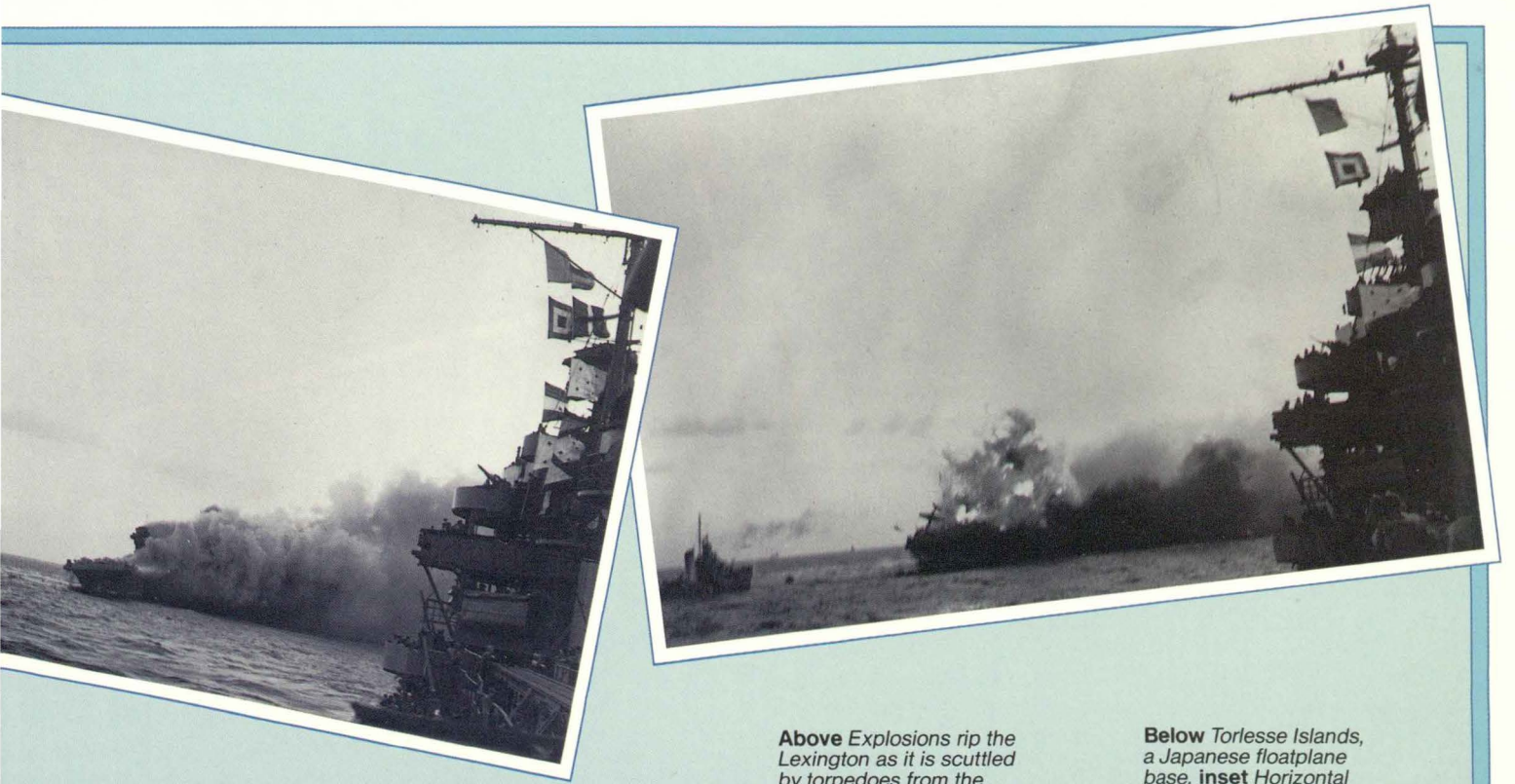
Interestingly, one of the Wildcat pilots lost during this action was Ensign Leslie L B Knox, who was born in Brisbane, Australia, and who had gone to the United States, joining the US Navy in April 1939. Knox is believed to be the first Australian killed during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The next morning, May 8, both opposing forces found



**Above left** Evacuation of the Lexington is completed by whaleboat. **above right** End is near for the burning aircraft carrier.





**Above** Explosions rip the Lexington as it is scuttled by torpedoes from the destroyer Phelps (left).

**Below** Torlesse Islands, a Japanese floatplane base. **inset** Horizontal tailplane from a Mitsubishi 'Pete' floatplane.



each other's carriers; aircraft from the Yorktown and Lexington attacking the two Japanese aircraft carriers. By the time the attack was finished the Shokaku had suffered damage from three bombs that had struck the flight deck and bridge, but the Zuikaku, having slipped beneath cloud cover, was untouched.

Meanwhile, Japanese aircraft attacked the Lexington, scoring numerous bomb hits, as well as torpedo strikes. The Yorktown

was not neglected, and although it suffered several bomb hits, it managed to evade the torpedoes aimed at it. By the time the Japanese broke off the attack, the Lexington was being wrecked by internal explosions which resulted in the ship being abandoned. Six hours later, torpedoed by the destroyer Phelps, the Lexington slipped beneath the waves, taking with her 216 men and 36 aircraft. Twenty other American naval aircraft were lost in combat during the day, as against 22 Japanese fighter, torpedo and dive bombers. A further 12 aircraft were jettisoned from the Zuikaku as being too badly damaged, for a total loss of 35.

Early on May 8, with the aircraft carrier Shokaku on its way back to Truk for repairs, the light carrier Shoho sunk, the Invasion and its Supporting



**Above** Smoke curls from the flight deck of the doomed Lexington.

Forces milling around to the north of the Trobriand Islands, the Japanese commander in Rabaul, Admiral Inouye, ordered the Invasion Force to return to Rabaul. Several hours later, this order was countermanded by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet, with orders to "annihilate remaining enemy forces".

It took two days to regroup the dispersed Strike and Attack Forces, by which time the American Task Force with the Yorktown was already well south and beyond further contact. On May 11, the Japanese Carrier Strike Force was ordered to return to Truk.

The first naval battle fought solely by aircraft was over. At no stage was there any ship-to-ship engagement nor any account by any sailor on either side of having sighted an enemy vessel.

Port Moresby was safe from an invader for the time being, but would soon come under the threat of another invasion, this time by land.



**Left** Lexington flight deck during the battle.





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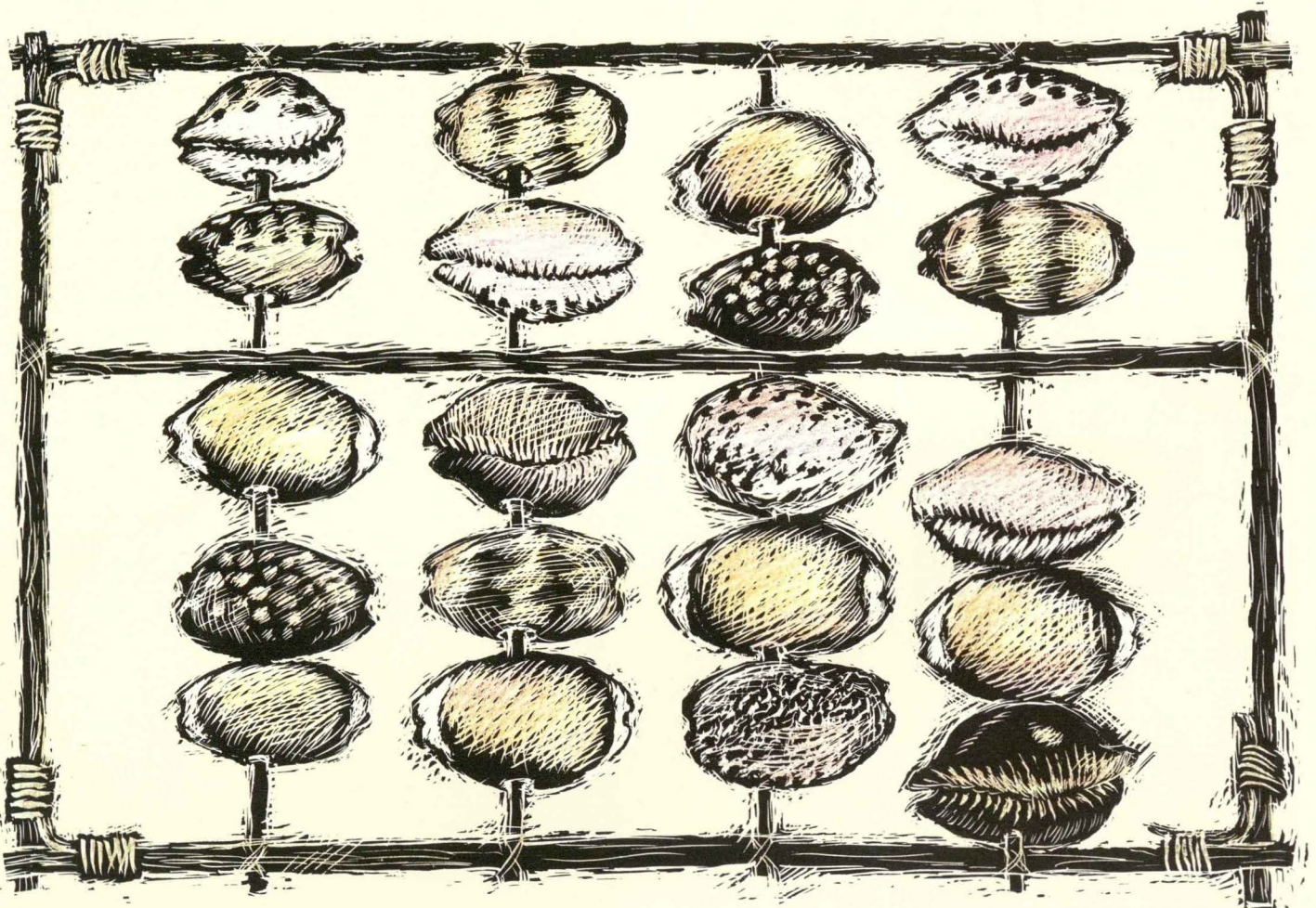
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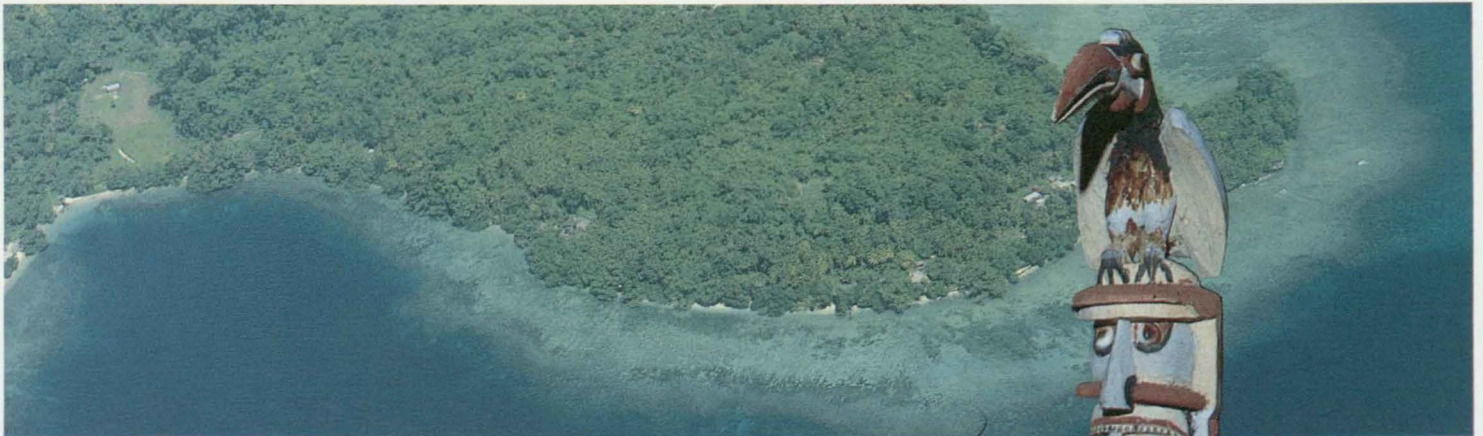
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# TRANSITION



**O**n Lihir Island off the north coast of New Ireland, Kennicott Niugini Mining joint venture is establishing what should be one of the largest gold mines in the Southern Hemisphere. Since the discovery of gold at Ladolam in Luise Harbor in 1982, the lifestyles of the Lihirians increasingly have been altered and will alter more as they adapt to the pace of a developing mine site and soon, a mining town.

In the early 1800s, Lihirians first saw big sailing ships which they called Anioakaka, meaning moving land. At this time, the people were cannibals. Big changes were coming and the biggest change came when the Roman Catholic missionaries established themselves throughout the Bismarck Archipelago, including the island groups of Tabar, Lihir and Tanga. The

Roman Catholic Church is still the dominant secular and religious power in this area being a provider of education, medical services and religious faith.

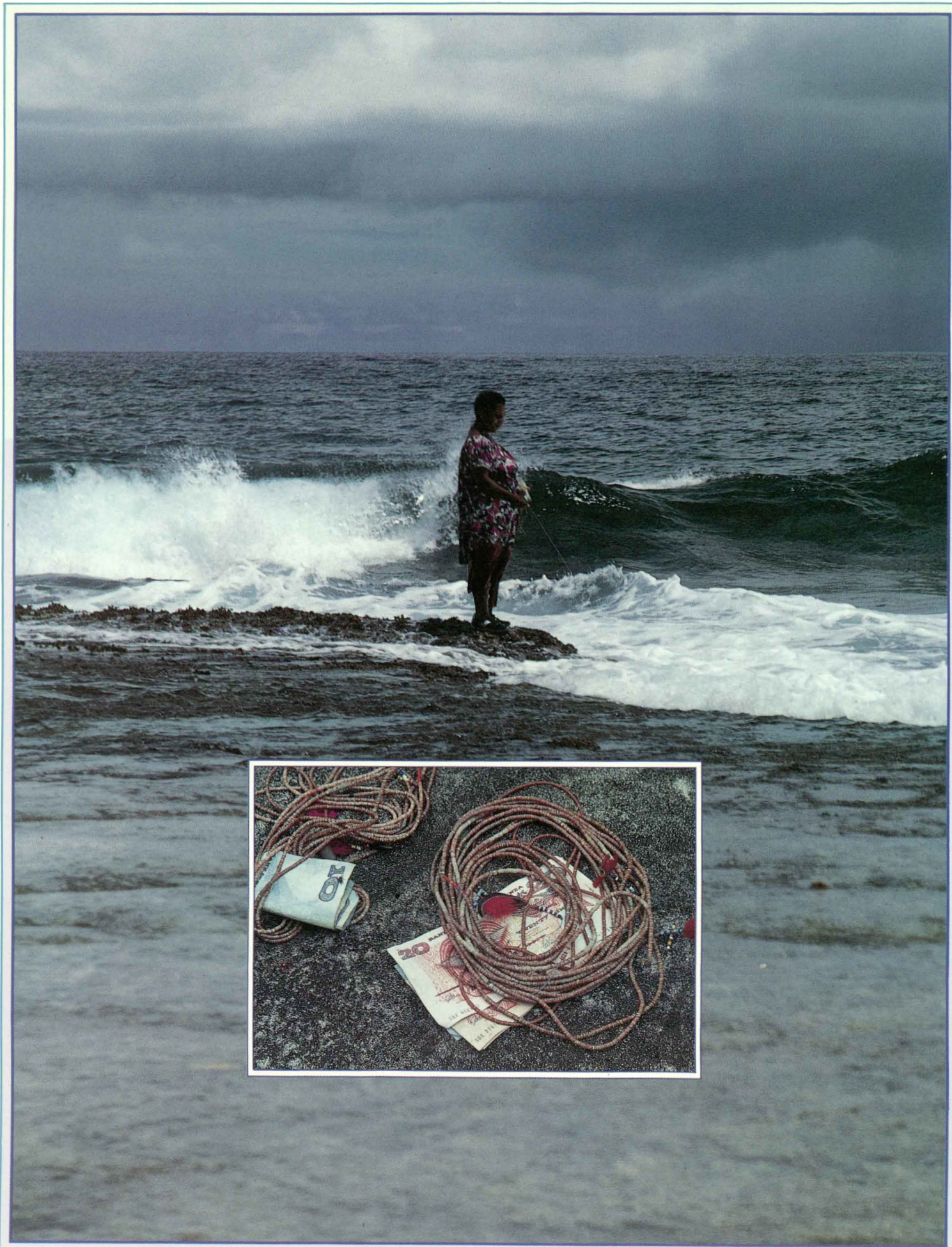
Cannibalism ceased with the arrival of missionaries, and associated malangan ceremonies, with their magnificent, delicate carvings, declined in importance. Malangan carvings are still made for special occasions but are made on contract by the carvers of Tabar and are very expensive.

A traumatic period affected the people in the 1940s when

Story by Roy D. Mackay  
Photos by Roy and  
Margaret Mackay

*Above* Paile Roman Catholic mission from the air - a centre for education, medicine and religion.  
*right* Funerary carving for malangan ceremonies.





the Imperial Japanese Forces occupied New Ireland and the offshore island groups. Young children were lured from the islands to the mainland (New Ireland) supposedly to go to school only to find themselves forced to labor in gardens for the occupation forces.

The Lihirians are very adaptable people and have coped well with the dramatic changes that have confronted them but probably the biggest change is to come. A jump into the technological future. Some people will cope, others will not and others will be trained to take advantage of the changes. These people will be the new Lihirians, able to stand alongside their counterparts in other parts

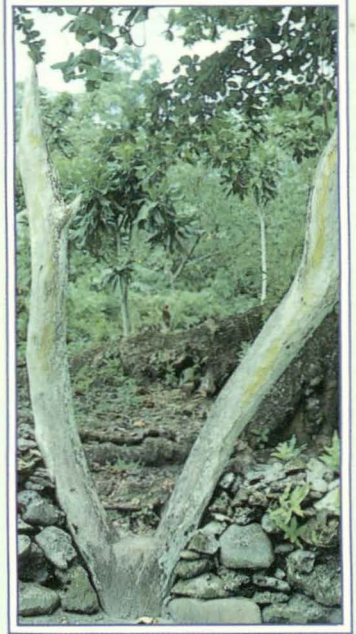
of Papua New Guinea. Village life will go on but many of the older traditions and social values will be lost or will be adapted to the new ways.

There are still examples and evidence of the old cannibal days: bones in coral caves, old spears and axes and the remains of the unique malangan carvings. The old men can repeat the stories of their past and can recite the names of people who were taken away in the days of the 'blackbirders' and of those who returned. Oral tradition is very much alive on Lihir.

Early this century, the islanders entered the era of the cash economy. They grew coconuts, either for colonists' plantations or for themselves, often as co-

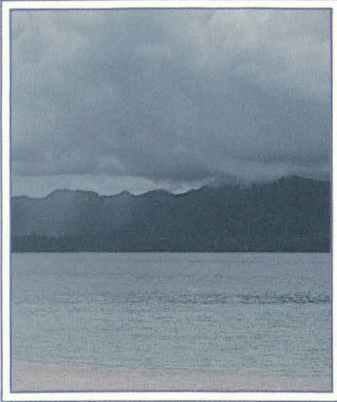
operatives. This industry, copra, is now virtually dead. Cacao also was introduced to these islands. It was a much more regulated industry and expensive licences were required before a fermentary could be built. The costs were beyond many of the local co-operatives. Infrastructure costs and low prices for cacao have affected this industry so much that there is little interest in it on Lihir.

The mine is a bold attempt to work with the people of the island to give them maximum benefit from the development. The benefits include compensation payments, royalties, new housing, new roads, new small businesses both within the mine complex and outside.



**Left** Fishing on the reef fringing Lihir Island. **inset** Strings of shell money 'mis' are used alongside modern currency. **top right** Forked tree is entrance to men's sacred house. **above** Lihir's surrounding reef. **right** Entrance to Puki tunnel, scene of cannibal feasts.





**Top** Base camp for the gold mine. **centre right** Author's accommodation on Lihir. **bottom right** Margaret Mackay and Tokis **(left)** record oral history. **above** Lihir Island.

These developments are really for the new generation of Lihirians. The old folks will maintain their old ways. We found the old ways interesting, relaxed, healthy and with a social diversity far more community-oriented than we have in our modern towns. We came to Lihir with Tokis and his family. Tokis had been away from his home village, Lipuko, for about 30 years, 23 of which were spent as a domestic servant with us. Tokis's life with us is another story. His relatives on Lihir were wanting him home as he knew the old land borders and there had been intrusions by 'foreigners', people from other clans on Lihir and from other tribes of PNG.

We stayed for over a week with Tokis and his family and friends, Pasap, Biries, Maras, Soldas and others. It was a wonderful time. We had a room in a bush materials house with an iron roof which collected fresh rainwater. Our meals were of yams, kaukau, pumpkin, saksak (sago), chicken, rice, canned meat, fish and various greens topped off with fruit and nuts, pineapple, watermelon, paw paw, laulau, bukbuk or pau.

We walked to various villages, saw their way of life, heard their stories of old, taped the songs, visited the special spirit sites, photographed everything, had boat trips to other nearby islands, met old friends of ours and gathered enough information about the people and the islands for a book. And all the time, we had the coral reefs, the coconut palms, the forest-covered mountains and the clearest tropical waters around us. Birds were always near and the seas abounded with fish, turtles and hundreds of dolphins sporting offshore. Lihir is a paradise now.

The gold mine has an initial life of 35 to 50 years and will physically affect one-eighth of the island. The old ways are going, the new ways are starting. Lihir Island will be entering the 21st Century on a surge of development, depending entirely on the price of gold.



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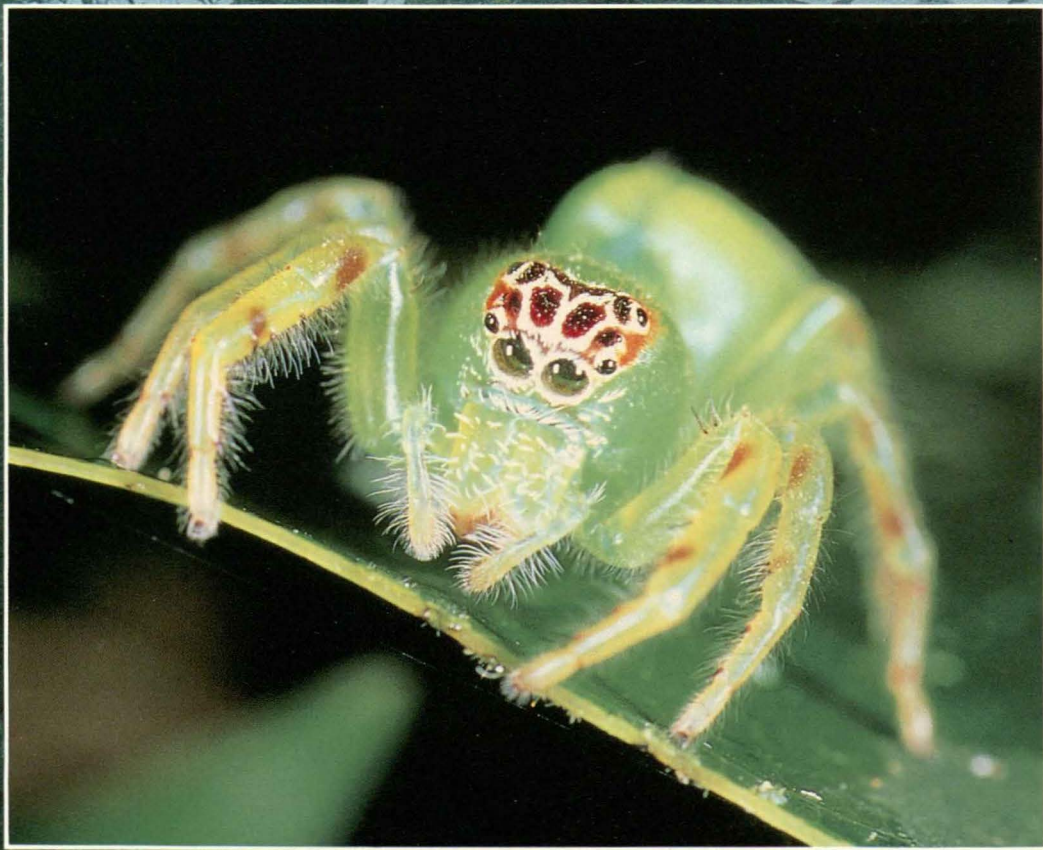
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**NEW GUINEA  
MOTORS**



# ENCHANTED FOREST



*Above Jumping spider from forest canopy.*

Story and photographs by Phil Chapman



**D**awn caressed the forested ridges. Above, the rocky fangs of the Doma Peaks, washed for an instant with gold, vanished in thickening mist. The whine of a truck in the Tari Gap mingled with the roar of mountain torrents.

Suddenly, the hillside behind me exploded in a rattle, like machine-gun fire. Joseph, my guide from Ambua Lodge, moved quickly uphill, peering into the trees. I struggled to keep pace, unused to the altitude. He stopped to point and we raised our binoculars. Cradled in the branches of a forest giant, strange shapes seemed to swim through the mist: cushions of rust-colored mosses, straggly beards of lichen, clumps of ferns and red ginger flowers clung and swayed, beaded in moisture. Shiny leaves at the branch tips identified a southern beech, a survivor of the primordial forests which spanned Australia, Antarctica and South America when dinosaurs ruled the earth.

There was a movement among the mosses. A crescent bill appeared in silhouette and a large dark bird with a long straight tail hopped up the branch, searching for insects. "Brown Sicklebill," whispered Joseph, "the biggest of the birds of paradise." I had





**Far left** Fruit bat feeding on wild bananas. **second from left** Newly emerged cicada inflates her wings. **third left** Papuan frogmouth. **left** Victoria crowned pigeon, a rainforest ground-dweller. **bottom** Giant hercules moth. **inset** Fruit growing straight from tree trunk.

expected a bit more dash and color. As we watched, the curved bill tilted up and back, then melted in a shaken blurr. The machine-gun sound reached us a second later, startling in its volume. "He is calling for a mate," said Joseph, and my disappointment was forgotten.

Cameraman Alan Hayward and I had been sent to Papua New Guinea by the BBC's Natural History Unit to film the wildlife and scenery of the mountain forests.

Later that day we watched a cousin of the sicklebill, the robin-sized king of saxony bird of paradise displaying from his tree-top perch. My 'Birds of Paradise' field guide describes the male's song as "like an insect or electrical malfunction suggestive of bad radio static". His appearance is equally strange. From the back of his head, two enormous plumes sprout way beyond the tip of his tail. Each appears to be lined with a row of pearly blue bunting and as he sings, little muscles on the back of his head lift and wave the plumes forward and back in a ludicrous kind of semaphore.

Deep in the valley below the lodge, I stopped to admire a row of fungi sprouting from a rotting log. Each was banded in subtle shades of brown and cream. The ground, the trees, even the

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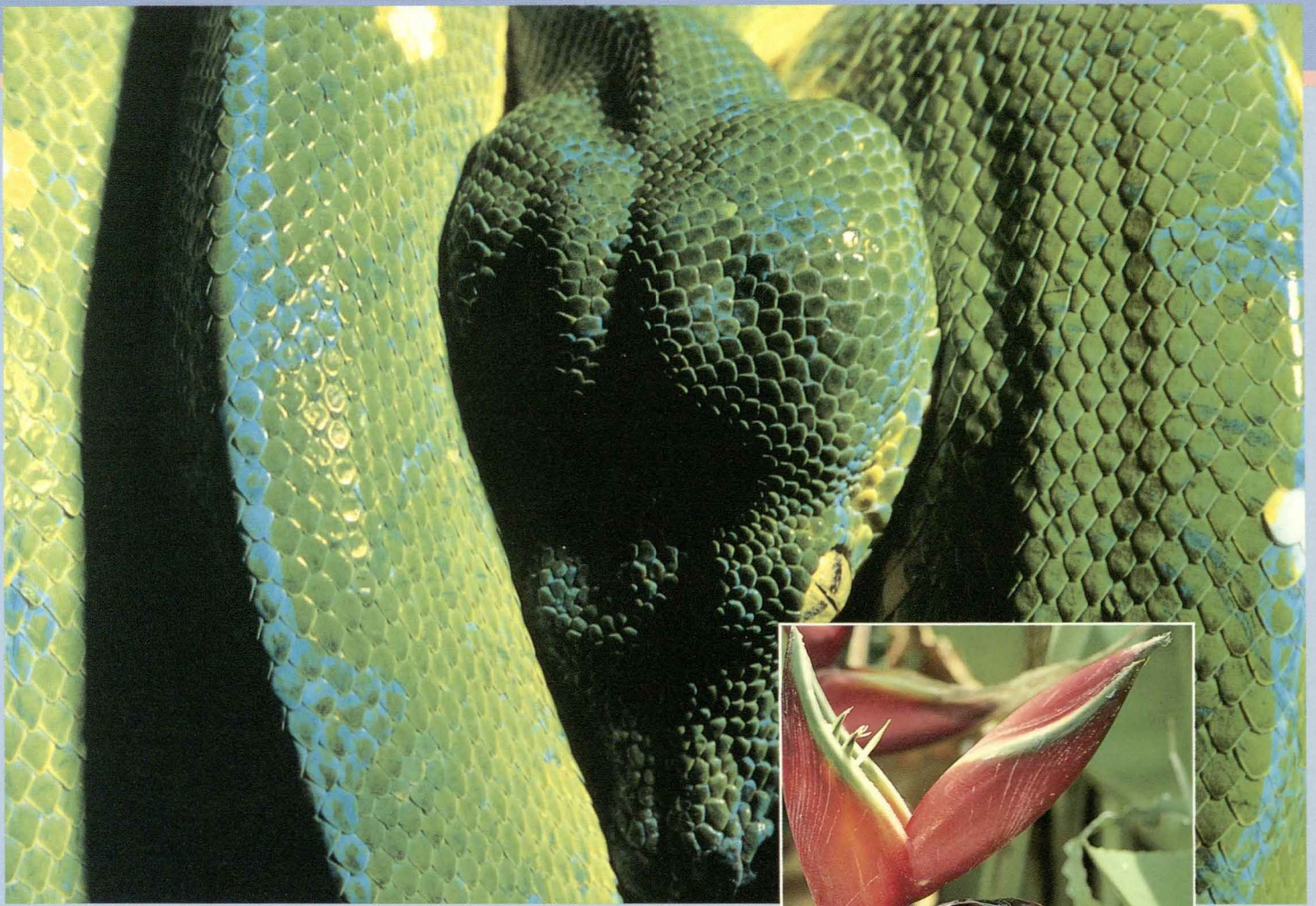
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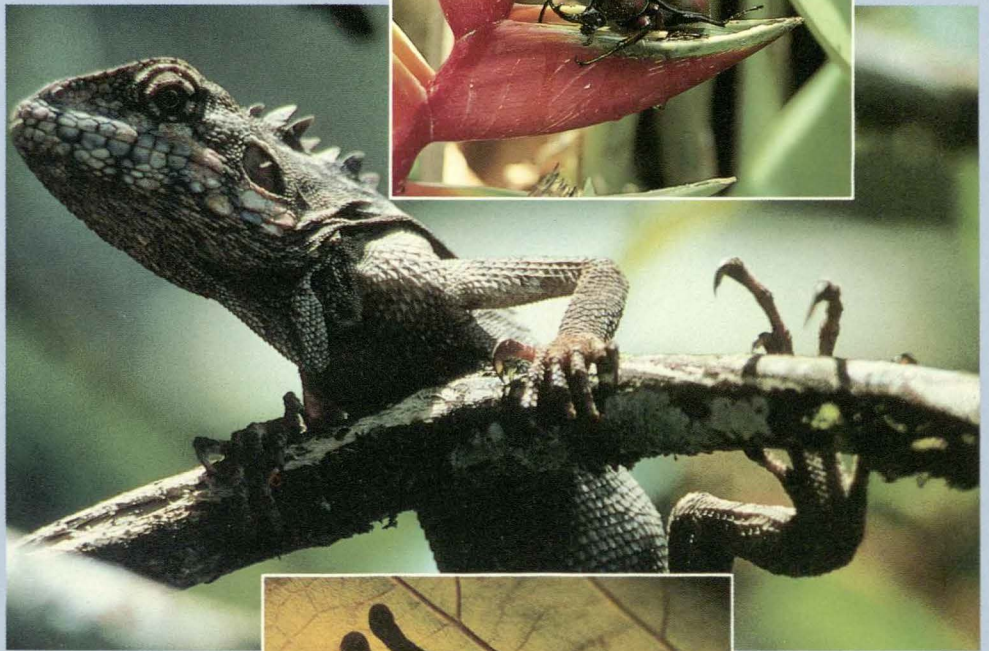
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rocks, sprouted soggy cushions of moss and delicate ferns.

The air was cool and wet. Somewhere overhead, the accelerating 'hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo' of a white-breasted fruit dove echoed through the mist. Tree ferns stretched up towards the light, opening their lacy umbrella of leaves just below the canopy, trunks festooned with lianas. One trunk bore a clump of orchids, clinging to a crevice in the bark. The orchid's leaves were criss-crossed with tiny moss-like plants covering the surface. A nearby vine dangled heart-shaped leaves, with long drip-tips acting like wicks to drain off surface wetness. Water, perpetually present, sustains the moss forest.

The moths attracted to the lights at Ambua demonstrate the incredible diversity of insect life in the forest. They range in size from the hercules moth, whose 23cm wingspan makes it the largest in the world, down to tiny 'micros' just a few millimetres across. A still, humid night may bring 100 different kinds to the Lodge's windows. For sheer numbers of species, beetles surpass all other



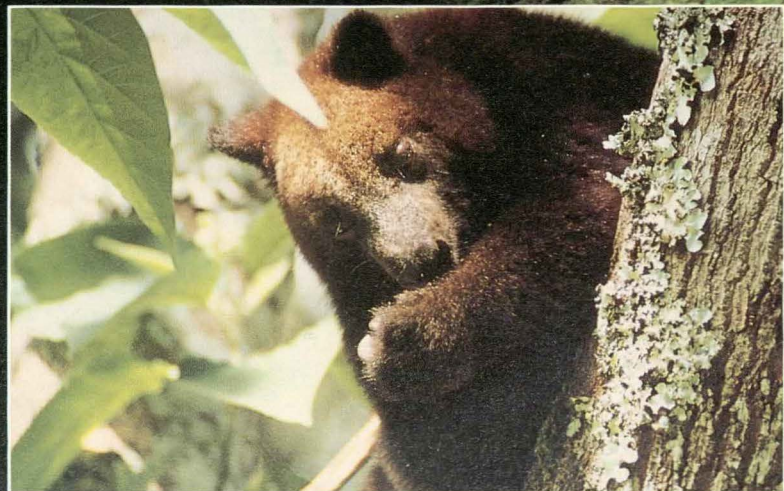
**Top** Sleeping green tree python. **inset** Rhinoceros beetle feeding on nectar of heliconia flowers. **above** Forest dragon lizard. **left** Tree frog silhouetted on a leaf.

rainforest inhabitants. Leaf-eating weevils dominate the fauna of the highland forests, while some longhorns and rhinoceros beetles reach huge sizes. So why was it that we were seeing so few insects on our daily walks? The moths provide a clue: many are green and leafshaped. Some are patterned to mimic diseased leaves. Still others match the texture and colors of bark, or of lichens and liverworts. They belong in the tree-tops, with the birds, the ferns and the flowering plants.

There are mammals too, up in the trees and cuscuses are a speciality of PNG. They are pouched marsupials, closely related to possums and come in several colors and sizes. The largest, the rare black-spotted cuscus may weigh 6kg and more, while the silky cuscus, which we filmed in Morobe Province, was the size of a half-grown kitten. The long, soft fur of the silky cuscus is ideally suited to the cool mountain forests where it lives, but I was surprised to learn that the spotted cuscus of the steamy lowlands is also densely and thickly furred. Surrounded by a cloud of giant mosquitoes in a Sepik swamp a few weeks later, I watched a young ginger-and-white spotted cuscus feeding on fruit in a riverside bush. Smearing on another handful of repellent, it began to dawn on me just how useful a close-fuzzed woolly coat might be.



**Above** Ground cuscus eating on enameled bush cricket. **top** Lesser bird of paradise males dancing, Baiyer River Sanctuary. **centre** Eastern Highlands rainforest. **right** Doria's tree kangaroo.



Later, in the Baiyer River Sanctuary, near Mt Hagen, we were to meet a most unlikely group of arboreal mammals.

Tree kangaroos owe their existence to an accident of geography and history. At the time Australia broke away from the great southern continent of Gondwanaland, monkeys and squirrels had not yet appeared on the scene and marsupials were all the rage. As Australia swung northwards, riding up over the floor of the Pacific Ocean, its leading edge was buckled and heaved skywards and the island of

New Guinea was born. The new land found itself in a latitude where mountains attract a high rainfall and it developed a cover of dense rainforest, in contrast to the bulk of Australia which retained a more open bush.

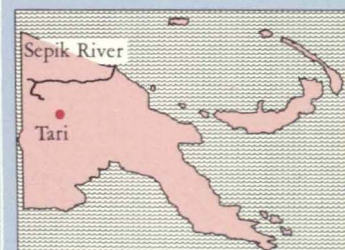
To the west, the forests of Indonesia were home to monkeys, deer and wild cattle and a host of birds, bats and insects. But the seas in between were deep and the currents flowed the wrong way, so that only two groups of mammals managed the crossing. The bats came by air, the rats by sea, and they thrived and multiplied

until they outnumbered the marsupial species two to one. However, deer and the primates never made it. In Australia, kangaroos were the dominant browsers and the move to forest life in New Guinea was inevitable. Wallabies, such as the dusky pademelon, adapted to life on the forest floor, while species with larger ambitions made a beeline for the trees. For those which could master the techniques of climbing, the rewards were great.

Goodfellow's tree kangaroo is, to my mind, the most handsome PNG mammal. Its rich coat of chocolate-and-gold adds distinction to a somewhat portly teddy-bear body, a chubby face, short, powerful legs and a long furry tail. Tree kangaroos are less able and adventurous climbers than the cuscuses, preferring larger branches which they climb at a hop, with hind legs together and arms gripping the sides. They descend backwards in an awkward fashion.

At higher altitudes, Goodfellow's is replaced by the even more bear-like Doria's tree kangaroo, a chunky animal with thick dark fur. In spite of their limited acrobatic abilities, tree kangaroos are able to reach a wide range of foods. Many forest trees produce fruits directly from the trunk and branches and orchid flowers are a firm favorite.

One of the striking features of the PNG forests is the scarcity of mammalian predators. The native quoll, a fierce marsupial hunter, is surprisingly rare, while feral dogs and pigs have not yet become a major threat. In consequence, a number of birds, such as the spectacular Victoria crowned pigeon, spend almost their whole lives on the forest floor.





*THE BEER OF PARADISE...  
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However, ground-hunting predators do exist. The lowland olive python may reach four or five metres and can deal easily with prey as large as pigs or forest wallabies. PNG's most famous snake, the nocturnal green tree python, also hunts on the ground, taking to the trees during the day, where its color provides defensive camouflage while it sleeps. Other nocturnal predators employ similar daytime disguises. A spectacular example is the Papuan frogmouth, an owl-like bird which flits around at dusk on silent wings in search of large insects, frogs and reptiles. During the day it perches stiffly in the crook of a tree branch with chin held high, looking for all the world like a broken branch itself.

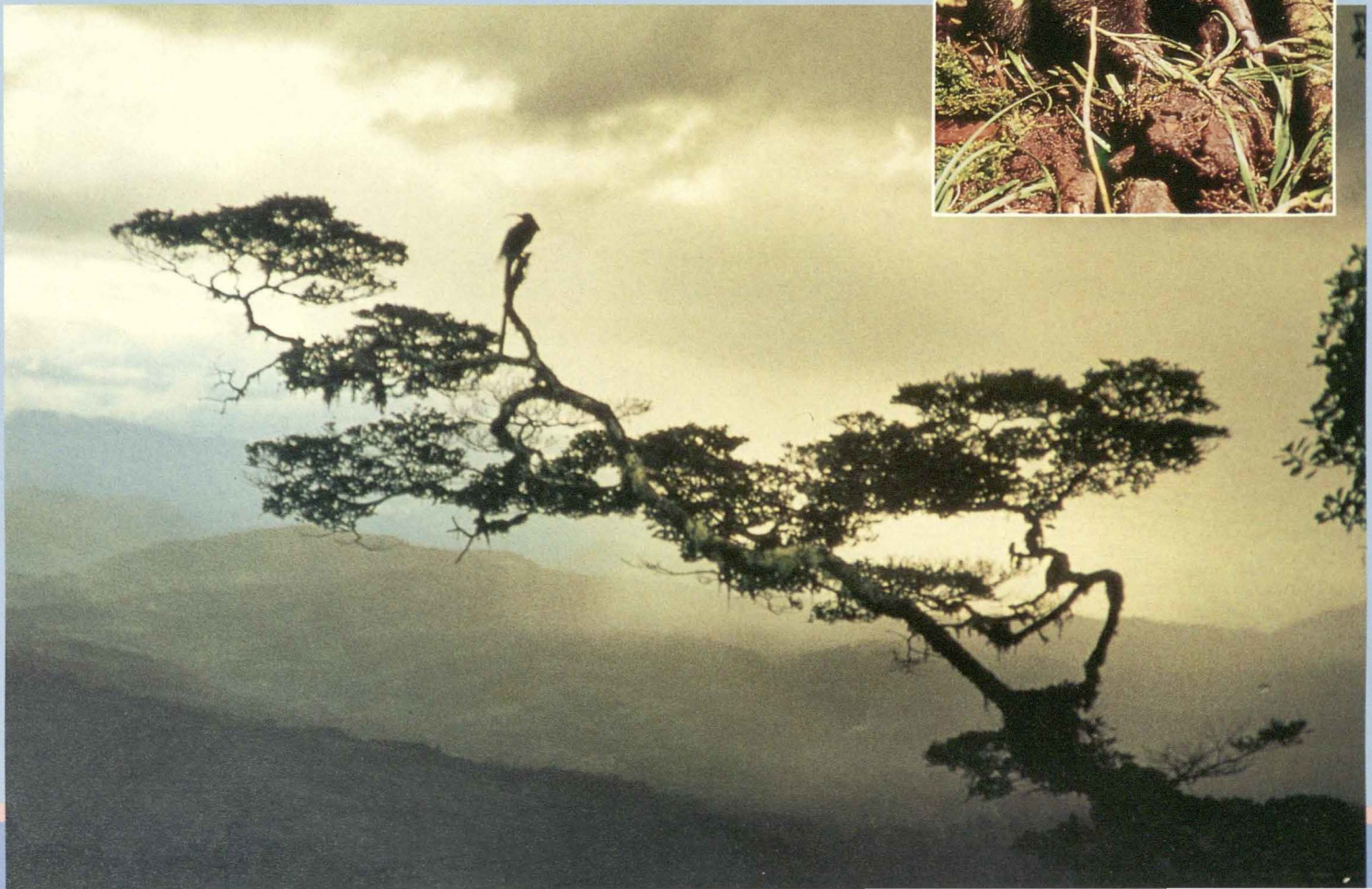
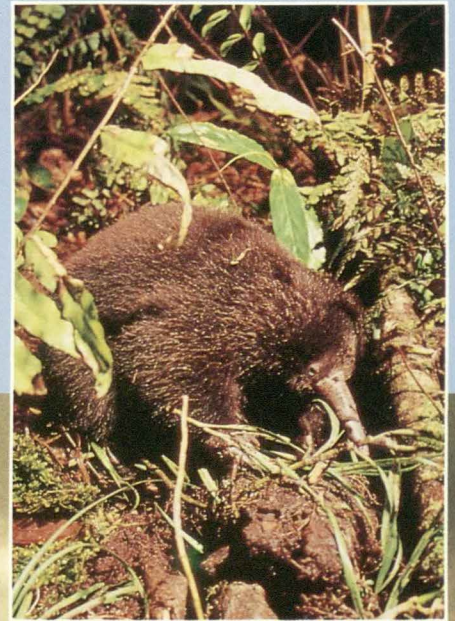
At night the forest comes alive. Giant stick insects, up to 30cm long, clamber through the canopy. Tree frogs call for a mate, their peeps and burps mingling with the wheeze of cicadas and the chirrups of geckos. Bats take to the air and tree rats and forest marsupials emerge to feed. A high proportion of PNG mammals are nocturnal, far more so than any other place I know. Perhaps the strangest of them all is the long-beaked echidna,

known exclusively from the mountain forests of PNG. Its evolutionary origins are obscure, but for a mammal it possesses some strange features. It lays eggs, passes its wastes from a reptile-like cloaca and varies its body temperature with its level of activity. Its thick glossy fur hides short sharp spines, it walks with a waddle, weighs up to 10kg and feeds on worms and insects which it sucks like spaghetti through a long, toothless snout.

Like many of PNG's unique and wonderful animals, the long-beaked echidna evolved without major predators. It is virtually defenceless against man and will only survive so long as the forests where it lives remain intact.



**Above** Jeweled weevil. **below** Rare and protected long-beaked echidna. **bottom** Male brown sicklebill bird of paradise on a lofty perch at Tari Gap.



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# To the Top of Mt Wilhelm



**Above** From the summit of Mt Wilhelm. **left** A schoolboy escort into Gembogl.

Story by Jean Barbeau  
Photographs by Jean Barbeau  
and Jim Allan

**T**he cool fresh mountain air I feel as I emerge from the plane in Kundiawa is welcome relief from the hot and humid coastal climate. At an elevation of 1,526m and located in the centre of Chimbu province, Kundiawa is our departure point for a trip to the summit of Mt Wilhelm, Papua New Guinea's highest peak.

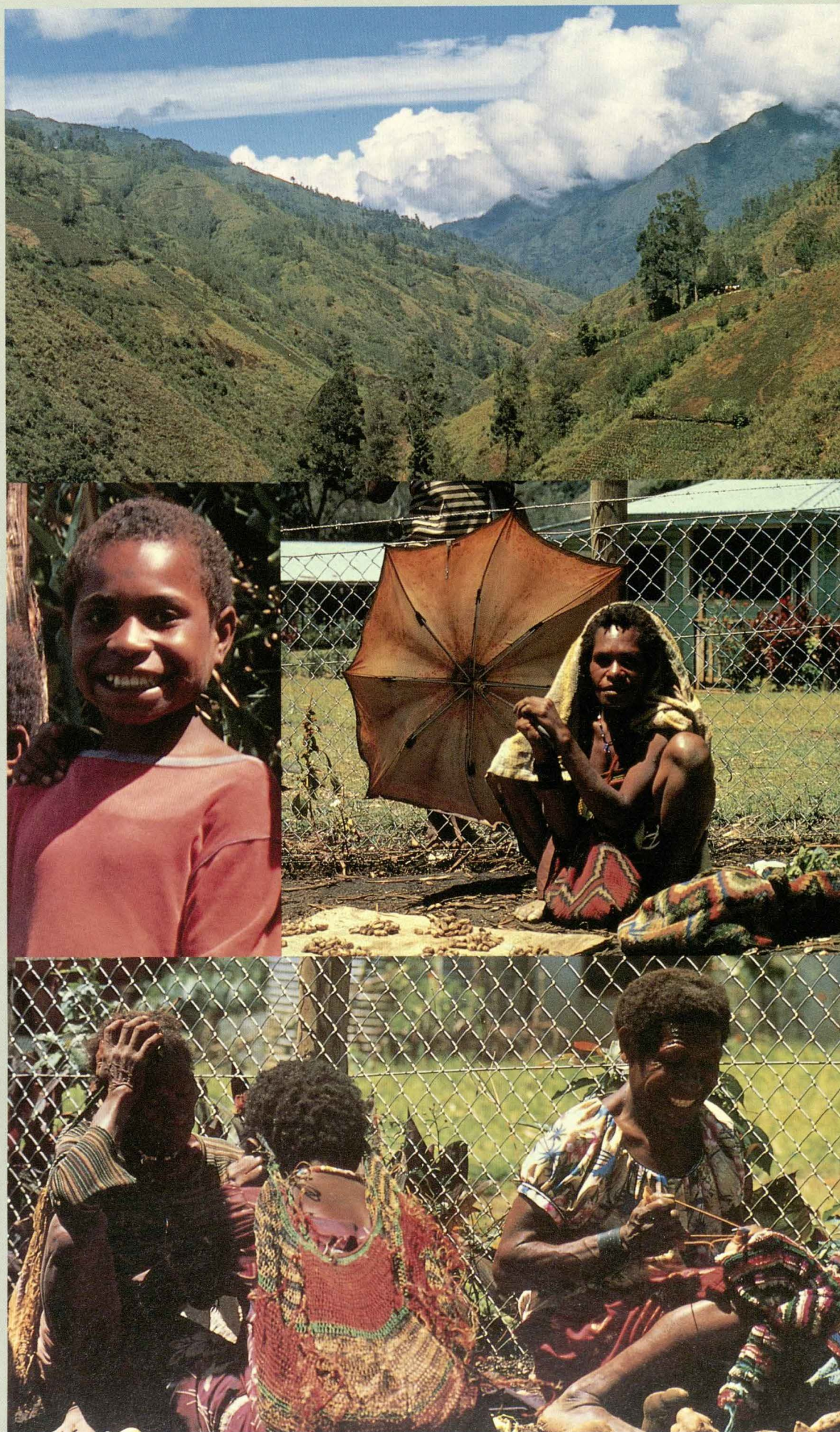
Near the market in Kundiawa, we locate a PMV (passenger motor vehicle) to take us the 60km to Keglsugl, the small town located at the base of Wilhelm. Expecting to ride in a vehicle similar to the buses of Port Moresby, I am surprised to discover that our ride is in the back of a small pickup with six other people, a baby pig and an assortment of vegetable crops. The other passengers treat us like visiting royalty and the two-hour drive is extremely enjoyable.

The spectacular vistas of the massive Chimbu Gorge give emphasis to accounts of difficulties experienced by the early exploratory expeditions into these areas. The first gold prospectors and missionaries to penetrate this region had to face the enormous challenge of a hostile physical environment and an unknown culture.

At Keglsugl, we are dropped off at the front door of Herman's Guest House, a small three-room thatched structure. Word of our arrival quickly spreads through the village producing two results. First, a congregation of curious on-lookers forms outside the front-yard fence. A few have some jewellery and weaving to sell, but mostly they have come to watch, to observe our every move.

The second result from the announcement of our arrival is the appearance of Joe Rime, a local guide and park ranger for Mt Wilhelm. By most accounts, the route up Mt Wilhelm is well-marked and can be undertaken by a well-organised group without a guide. A guide like Joe, however, is invaluable for the information he provides that is not found on the map or in the guidebook. He grew up exploring Wilhelm's slopes and had already reached the summit 41 times.

We depart early next morning with Joe and his younger brother Peter, a self-appointed porter. The elevation of Keglsugl is 2,500m and at this altitude a steady pace while carrying a pack means hard work for my heart and lungs.





Joe tells us that most people who fail to reach Mt Wilhelm's summit at 4,510m have been overcome with altitude sickness. To reduce our chances of succumbing to this condition, we plan to walk first to the Pindaunde Lakes at 3,480m. There, we will overnight and let our bodies acclimatise to the altitude.

After leaving Keglsugl and taking a short break for strawberries from Joe's garden at the ranger station, we enter the rainforest. Surrounded by dense lush vegetation, we slip and slide along the mud track for a couple of hours before emerging into a spectacular alpine valley, the Pindaunde Valley. We leave the protection of the forest canopy and begin to cross open ground in torrential rain. Fortunately, as we are half-way across, the rain changes to a fine mist letting us see a waterfall cascading down a rock face on the other side.

The respite from the rain does not last and by the time we arrive at the Pindaunde Hut about an hour later, it is again raining heavily. Lake Piunde, located only 50m from the cabin, is barely visible.

The warm hut is a perfect place to wait out the storm and prepare for the next day's predawn start for the summit. The best time for clear views from the top is early morning, one or two hours past dawn. After that, clouds from the lowland jungle plains rise to obscure the panoramic views.

We awake at 2.30am for a quick cup of tea and a bowl of cereal. There is no time to waste if we hope to reach the summit by 7am, when skies are usually still clear.

**Facing page, top** Valley view near Gembogl. **centre left** Chimbu boy. **centre right** Peanut vendor at Kundiawa. **bottom** Vegetable sellers at market.

**This page** Mt Wilhelm mountaineer at Keglsugl.





Joe knows the trail well and leads the way in the dark past the lakes and up towards Wilhelm's south ridge. We reach the ridge at 4,000m about three hours later. From here, we traverse for about an hour over barren terrain before reaching the final approach to the summit. It takes about an hour to climb the final 500m and we are rewarded for our efforts with spectacular panoramic summit vistas. There is little time to reflect on our accomplishment. My head is pounding from the altitude and the clouds are approaching from the south-east rising up, as Joe predicted, from the lowland jungle valleys.

Leaving the summit by 7am, we descend quickly and reach the hut before noon. The trails that we climbed in darkness a few hours before are now visible and look steeper than I had imagined. Through the patchy cloud cover, we can also spot neighboring peaks, isolated valleys, distant islands and the lakes below us.

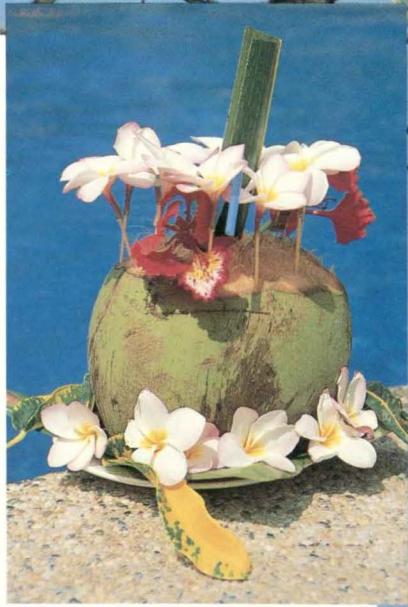
With so much of the day left, we decide to continue on to Keglsugl. Like the descent from the summit, it is a quick easy walk down, enabling us to visit with Joe and Peter. A few kilometres outside of Keglsugl, we are greeted by a group of young boys who escort us into town.

We overnight at Herman's and next day we decide to walk the 10km to Gembogl, where we are offered a ride on a coffee truck headed for Kundiawa. I am disappointed not to have more time to walk in this stunning province. The hospitality given to us at every instance is phenomenal; the scenery pristine and spectacular; and the adventure of climbing to the top of Wilhelm unforgettable.

**Top** Author and ranger Joe Rime at the summit of Mt Wilhelm.  
**centre** Looking down from the top.  
**left** Route up Mt Wilhelm.

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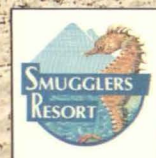
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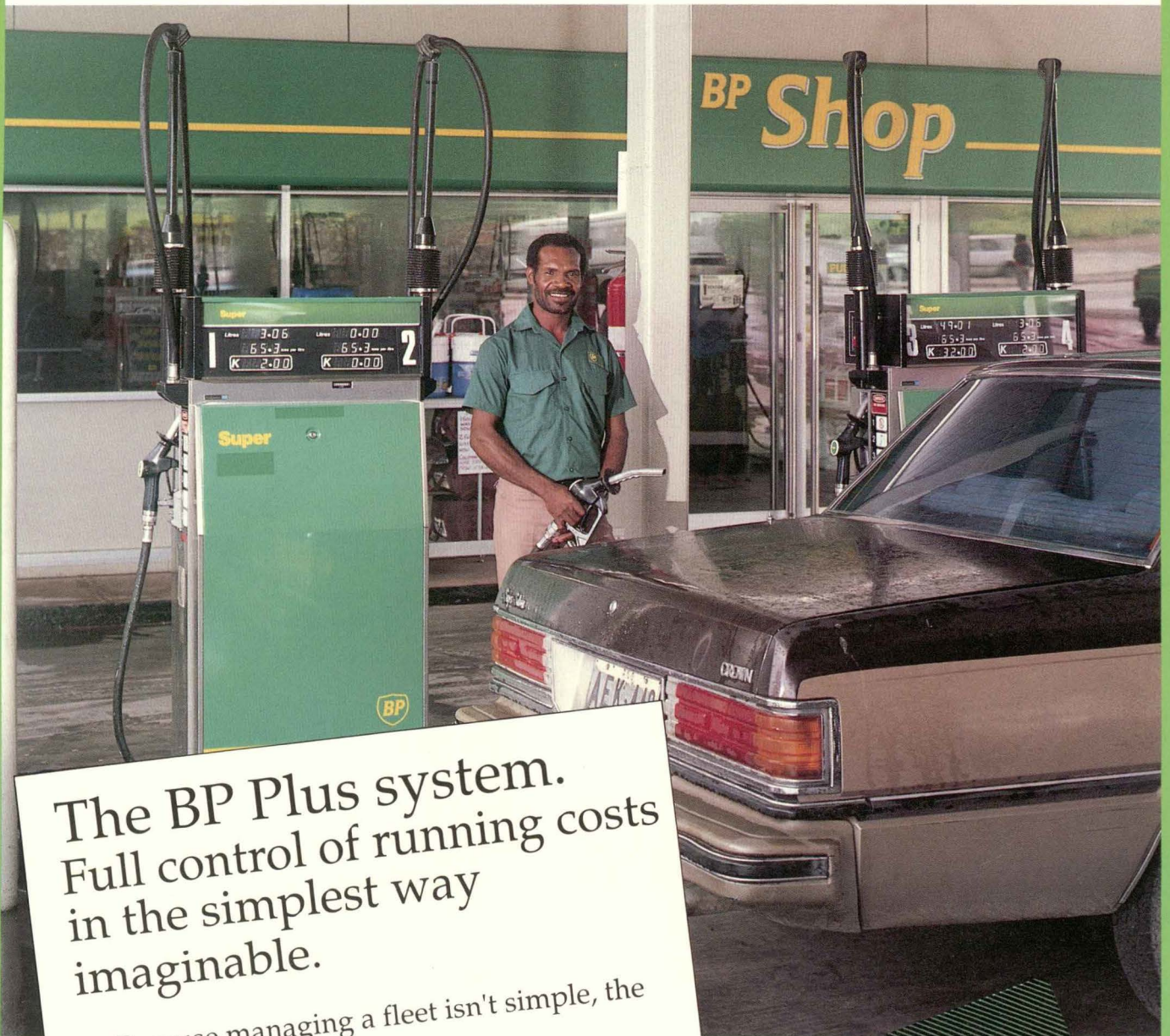
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# Raffles Restored

Story and photographs by Liz Thompson



*Raffles Hotel from Beach Road.*

A young woman wearing a dark velvet choker, with a large pink flower pinned to it, sets a tall drink on the table. Deep red in color, the famous gin-based Singapore sling is more potent than it might appear. It, and Raffles Hotel in which it is being served are probably the two most famous institutions in Singapore, and Raffles has recently reopened after an enormous K80 million restoration project.

A hotel with an extraordinary

history spanning more than a century, it remains today a beautifully designed building and a haven of peace in an otherwise hectic city. The Billiard Room in which the sling is being served, is in keeping with the elegance and style of the building in general. Teak furniture sits on hard-surfaced floors laid with oriental carpets. High ceilings and large windows lend a light and spacious atmosphere, the music an almost twenties American feel. By 12.30pm the room is full and

tables are laden with platters of fresh oysters and caviar, champagne and Singapore slings. Much of the furniture is Raffles originals, marked by silver crests, and cabinets contain original silver and china. Large billiard tables and a bar were the original focus of the room.

The restoration process which began in March 1989, and finished in November 1991, has laid tremendous emphasis on authenticity and retention of the neo-Renaissance architecture for which the building is famous. Twenty-five layers of paint were peeled back from the portico before the original color was revealed. The heyday in the 1920s is the period to which restorers have referred. Requesting any old photographs or information about the hotel, they used pieces sent in by former guests to assist them in their work.

Opening originally in 1887 as a 10-room hotel, Raffles was little more than an old bungalow at the corner of Beach and Bras Basah Roads. Bought by the Sarkies Brothers, proprietors of the Eastern and Oriental in Penang, it was named after Singapore's founder, Sir Stamford Raffles. From that it has expanded to feature 104 suites all with teakwood floors and 14-foot (4.25m) ceilings, a ballroom, billiard room, numerous restaurants, cafes, shops, swimming pool, health centre, boardrooms and a business centre.

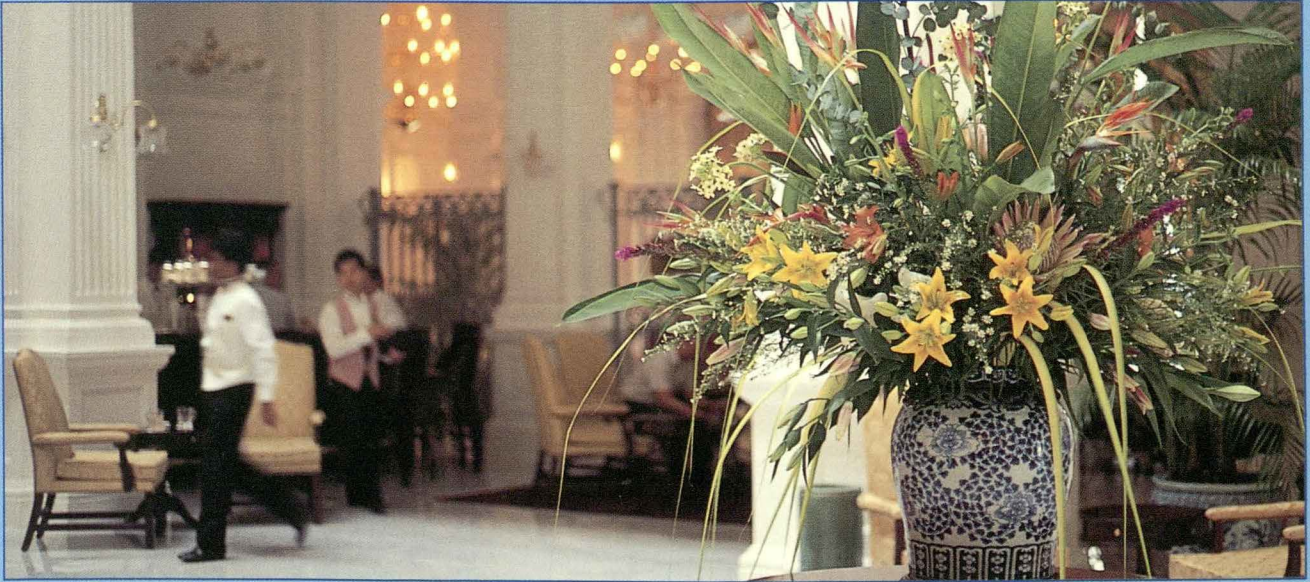
It gained its literary reputation from clientele which included Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham, (the Casuarina Suite is named after his volume of short stories), Herman Hess, James Michener and Maxine Hong Kingston. The Writers Bar contains a bookcase holding first editions and signed mementoes from visiting authors. In 1931, Raffles, like most other places was hit by the Great Depression.



Tiffin Room.



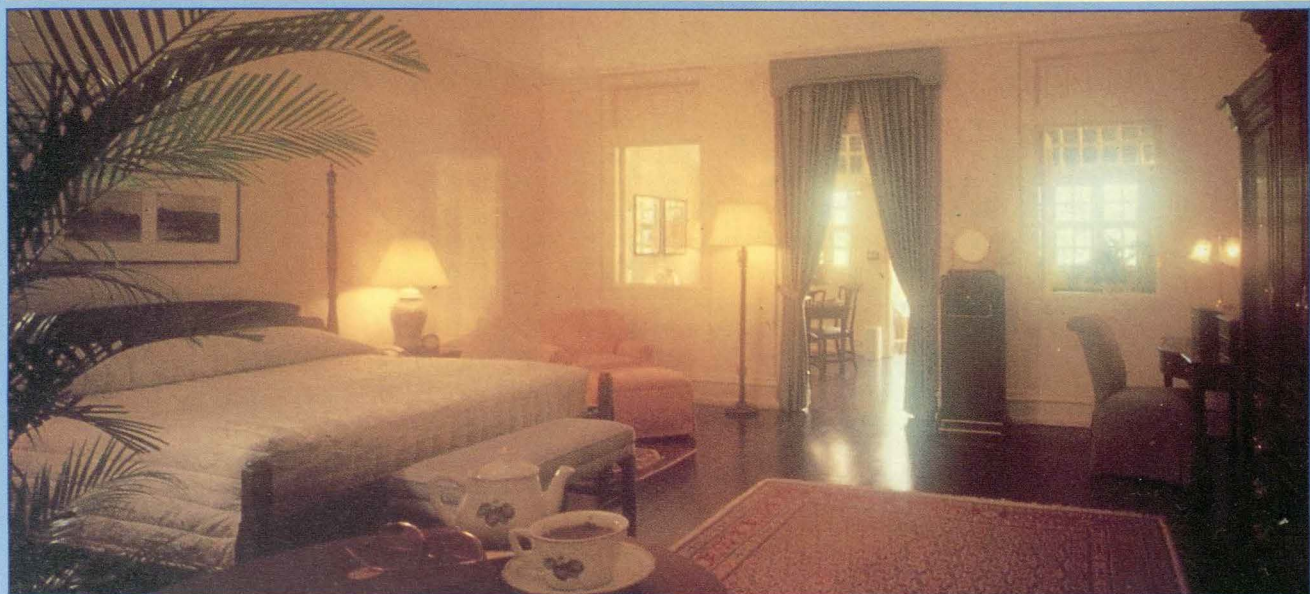
Raffles Hotel 1915, from a postcard.



*Hotel entrance.*



*Hotel suite parlor.*



*Hotel suite bedroom.*

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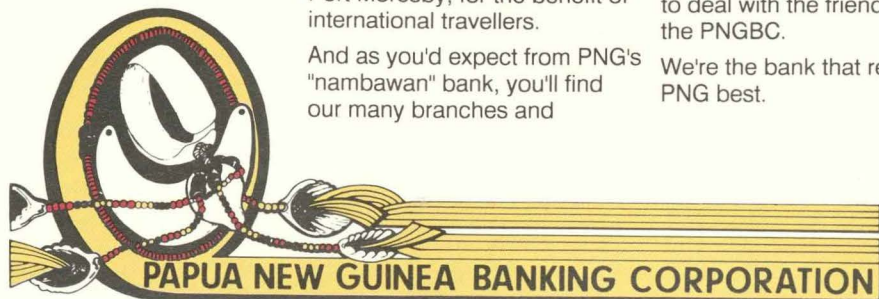
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Daimler's other side.



Hotel suite bathroom.



Raffles Grill.

The slump got rid of Raffles' main competitor, Hotel de L'Europe and Raffles survived. After being placed in receivership it became a new public company, Raffles Hotel Ltd. In 1945 it became a temporary transit camp for war prisoners released under the military administration and after this was in a state of decline. In 1987 it was designated a national monument by the Singapore government and shortly afterwards closed for restoration.

Leading to the main doors,

the gravel drive and portico are an impressive sight. Usually one of three burgundy cabs are parked in the driveway. Custom-designed London cabs brought from the UK, they are used to collect guests from the airport. Large, burly doormen are dressed in white turbans and highly-styled uniforms. Doors are swung open by small, often only 13 or 14-year-old, doorboys as one enters the grand foyer. Enormous bunches of flowers decorate the entrance and one of the hotel's extensive collec-



*Palm Garden fountain and East India Rooms.*



*Converted London cab does limousine duty.*



*The foyer.*

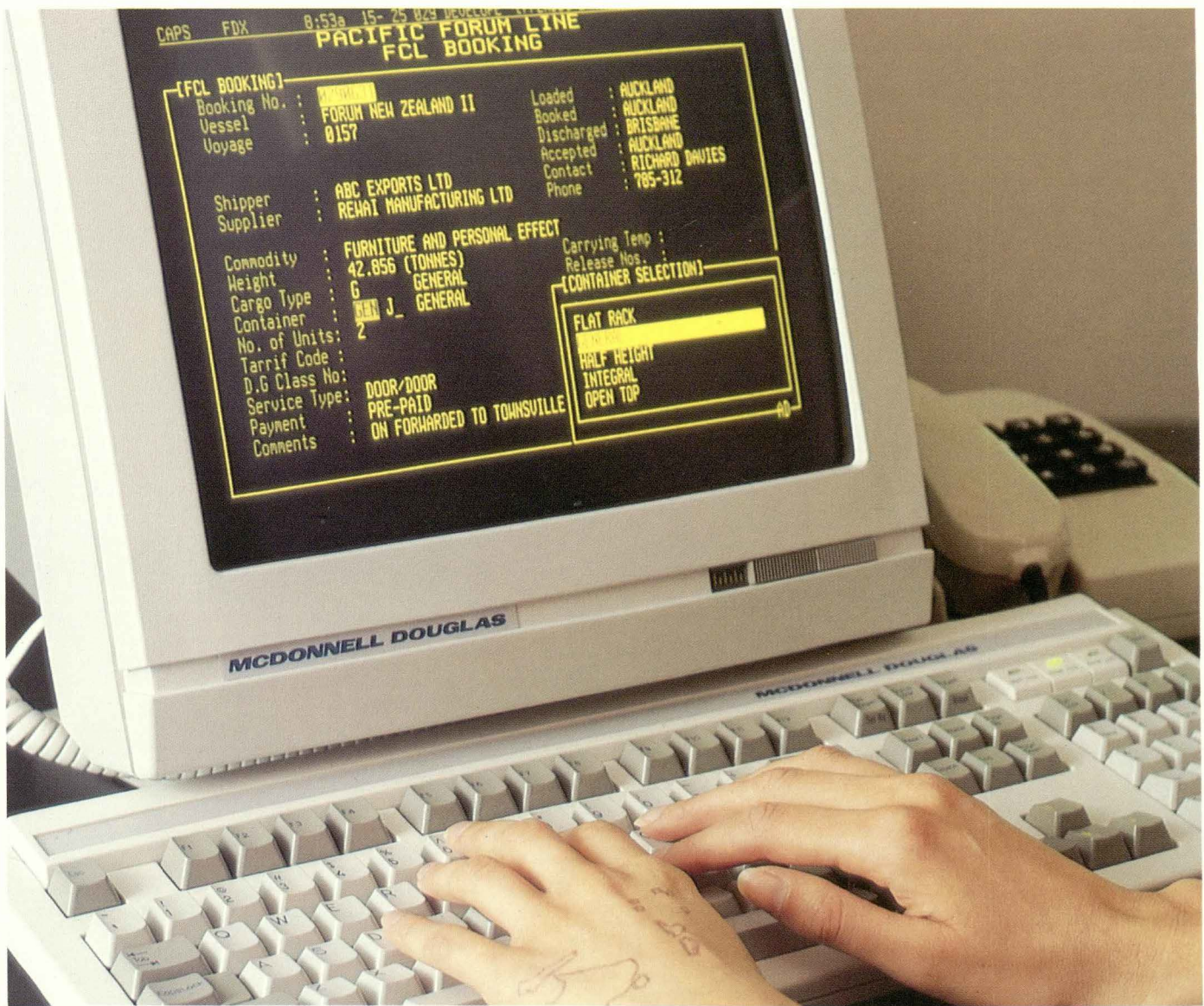
tion of 700 oriental carpets leads one's eye towards the winding stairway. The huge six-by-four metre carpet was woven by a master carpet maker in Persia between 1930 and 1935.

The main building was completed in 1899 and the ballroom was added in 1921. This area of the hotel was a centre of activity and often used for dances and gatherings.

The Tiffin Room leading off to the left of the entrance has been restored exactly as the original, from the tables and light fittings to the chef who has been with the hotel since the 1930s. He continues to prepare the numerous curries which constitute the Tiffin tradition.

The hotel welcomes non-resident visitors. They can sit on the leafy verandahs surrounding the Billiard Room, drink a deep red Singapore sling and watch the people pass by as the heat disappears from the day. It is not hard to imagine that is exactly what people were doing in 1903 when the drink was first invented and Raffles was in its first heyday.

*Raffles  
Restored*



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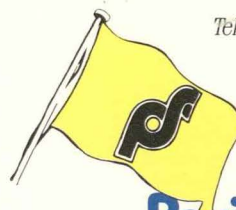
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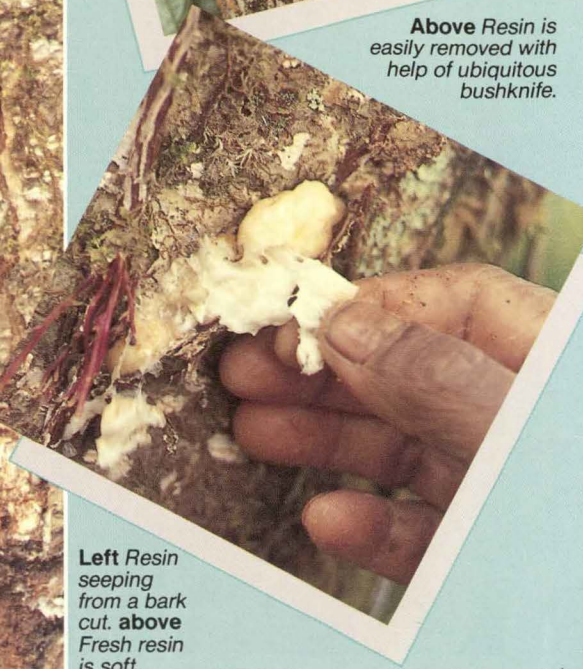
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**Above** Resin is easily removed with help of ubiquitous bushknife.



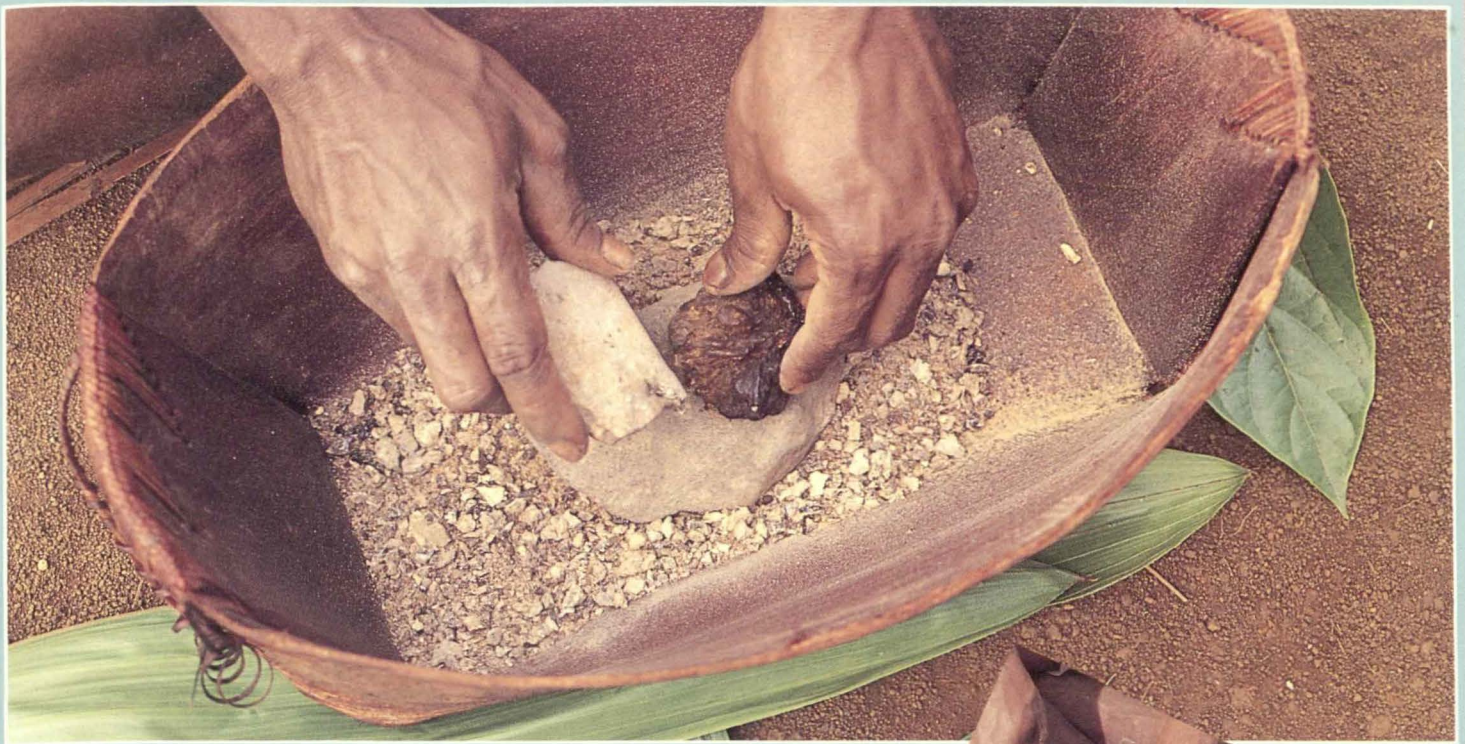
**Left** Resin seeping from a bark cut. **above** Fresh resin is soft.

**F**ire to cook food and provide light has been essential since the human race began. Various combustible materials can be used to provide light but most of them flare briefly and are not very controllable. The only traditional product to combine ready availability, portability and a steady, long lasting flame is the resin torch.

Several tree species in the Papua New Guinea bush exude a thick resinous sap when the bark is cut or bruised. Colors of the resin can be frosty white, honey brown or almost black.

# TUMBUN





Once dry, this resin is quite flammable and is the fuel of 'tumbuna lait', traditional light.

Villagers regularly cut the bark of resin-producing trees with a bush knife or axe to maintain a continuing supply. It is usually left to dry there on the bark in blobs or stalactites which are later prised off. If some of the resin is still slightly pliable when gathered, it will be left in a container on a rack above a cooking fire until it is dry and rather brittle.

A person making a resin torch places a smooth stone in a bark basin and, laying each piece of resin on the stone, pounds and crushes it to a coarse powder of crystalline granules.

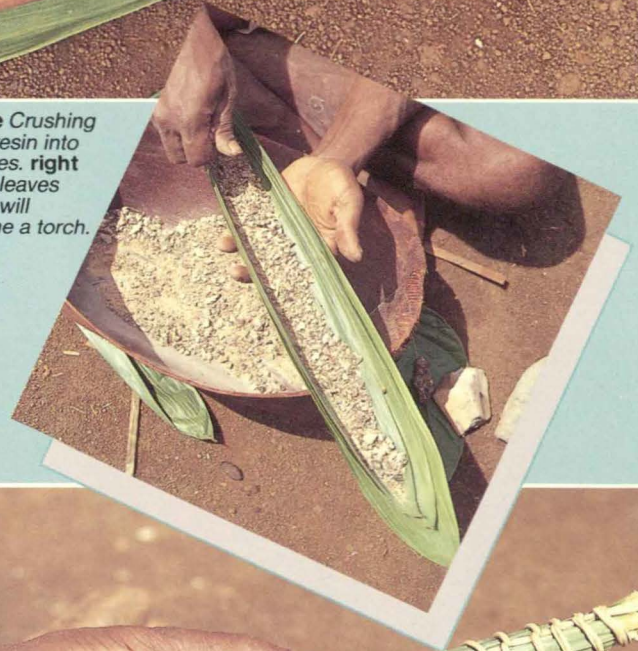
The torch maker has on hand long narrow leaves that have been softened by heating over the fire so they can be formed into a hollow trough-like shape which they retain when cooled. Laying two or three thicknesses of these leaves together to form a canoe like receptacle the torch

maker empties the crushed resin into it, ensuring it is evenly spread along its length. The top leaves are closed over to completely encase the granules and a few turns of fine string-like creeper around the parcel hold it together.

The binding is made by stripping the skin off a soft creeper. This is wound tightly around the torch and pulled firm by a series of half-hitch knots along its length. The finished torch is stuck into the under side of the roof thatch above the fire where it dries out completely. It usually stays there, safe and dry until needed.

The resin torch lights readily when poked into the glowing coals of a fire. Once alight it is propped up in a convenient spot in the centre of the main living room. As it burns, a black char forms around the rim at the top. This will grow toward the centre of the burning pool of molten resin, effectively sealing it off and extinguishing the

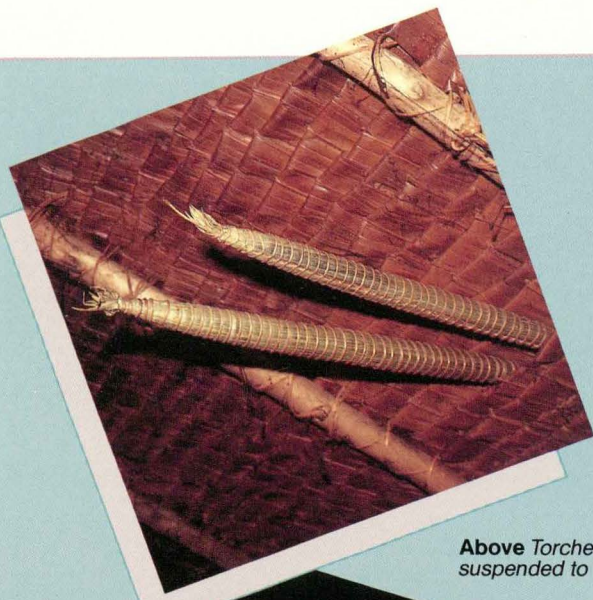
**Above** *Crushing dried resin into granules. right* *Filling leaves which will become a torch.*



**Above** *Soft cane binds the leaves full of resin.*

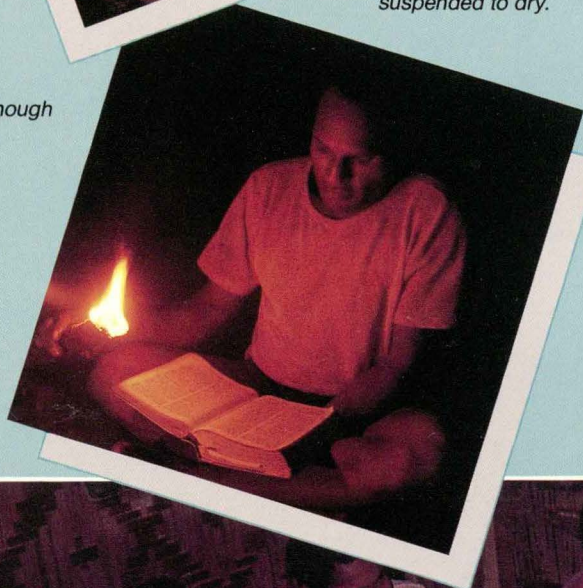
# IA LAIT

Story and Photographs  
by Keith Briggs



**Above** Torches suspended to dry.

**Right** Enough light for reading.



flame. To prevent this, there is always someone close by to scrape the char off with a small stick, chip or splinter of firewood, keeping it burning brightly.

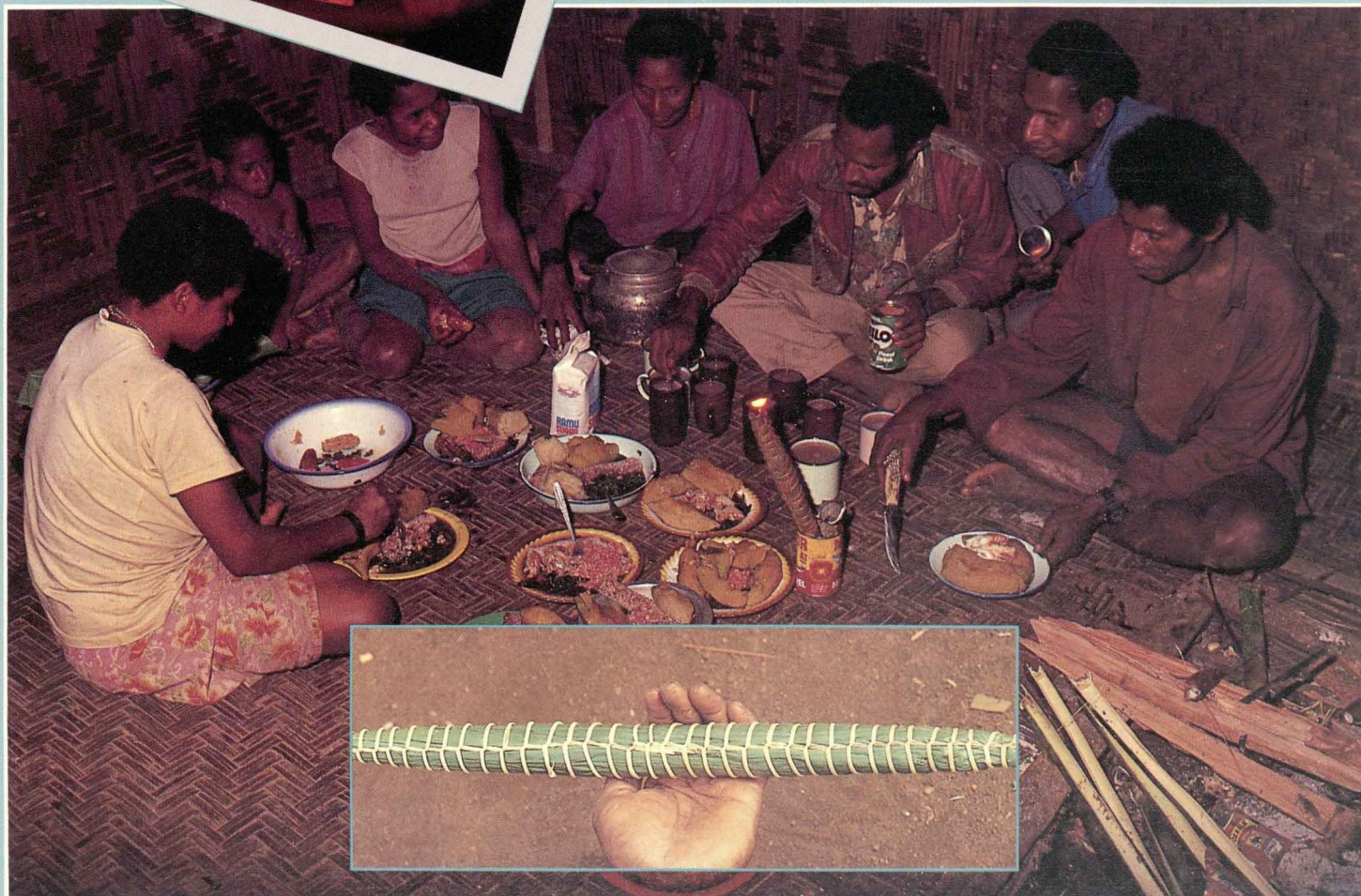
The lighted torch gives off a pleasant resinous smell and a thin pencil of black smoke. When men are decorating their bodies for a singsing, they hold the concave side of a piece of newly-cut banana stalk above and close to the flame, on which it deposits a layer of rich, black soot. Wiped off with the finger and mixed with tree oil, the soot becomes the shiny black paint so often seen on the skin of Papua New Guinean traditional dancers.

People travelling through the bush at night use leaves to form a hood around the flame so their movement does not douse the light. When spearing prawns or yabbies at night, the hunter binds or holds a large shiny leaf around the top of the torch in the shape of a reflector to concentrate the light, enabling him to more effectively spot

the tell-tale reflection from the crustaceans' eyes. This also shields the hunter's eyes from the glare, enabling him to retain his night vision beyond the torch.

In most village houses one can find the remains of an old kerosene lamp, with tank rusted out, the glass or some mechanical part broken or missing. Near the fireplace there will very likely be a spot that held the end of a cigar-shaped torch and a flat stone with shiny black blobs on it where the burning resin dripped. Lamps will come and go, kerosene may be hard to get in the bush or be too expensive to buy, but there will always be the resin trees, the leaves and the binding vines. Likewise, in the most palatial homes in any city where hydro, coal or even nuclear power generates electricity for lighting, one will find tallow candles in the cupboards.

**Below** Dinner by tumbuna lait. **inset** A torch ready for use.



**Travelodge**  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

*Port Moresby*  
**Travelodge**



**business**

With panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean overlooking Port Moresby City Centre, the Port Moresby Travelodge is the hub of business and social activity.

A truly first class hotel with friendly and attentive staff that offers everything for the business and tourist traveller.

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Papua New Guinea has three superb Travelodge Hotels.



*Rabaul*  
**Travelodge**

**pleasure**

Rabaul is a tropical island paradise with spectacular volcanic ranges, sandy palm lined beaches and deep turquoise lagoons.

Nestled on Rabaul's waterfront with sweeping views of Simpson Harbour is the Rabaul Travelodge.

Spectacular diving or tours of wartime relics make your stay a most memorable experience.

*The Islander*  
**Travelodge**



**recreation**

The luxurious alternative for the business traveller or visitor is The Islander Travelodge Port Moresby, situated at Waigani on 12 acres, surrounded by tropical gardens, The Islander Travelodge boasts two full size tennis courts, four squash courts, garden pool and gymnasium.

Port Moresby Travelodge Ph: (675) 21 2266  
Cnr. Hunter & Douglas Streets. Fax: (675) 21 7534  
P.O. Box 1661, Port Moresby. Telex: NE22248

Rabaul Travelodge  
Mango Avenue, Rabaul.  
P.O. Box 449, Rabaul, ENB.

Ph: (675) 92 2111  
Fax: (675) 92 2104  
Telex: NE92975

The Islander Travelodge  
Waigani Drive, Hohola  
P.O. Box 1981, Boroko.

Ph: (675) 25 5955  
Fax: (675) 21 3835  
Telex: NE22288



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