

MALAGUNA ROAD



The Papua and New Guinea Diaries of
SARAH CHINNERY



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SARAH CHINNERY

Edited and introduced
by Kate Fortune

National Library of Australia
Canberra 1998

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Cover: Tolai women walking to the market in Rabaul

Photograph by Sarah Chinnery

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CONTENTS

Introduction.	1
Acknowledgements	7
Preface.	8
Swaying Palms	12
Living under the Volcano.	29
Return to New Guinea	53
Steamer to Salamaua	62
To the Goldfields	83
The House on Malaguna Road.	99
The Passing Parade	114
No Ordinary Tourist	121
Lantanas and Lavender Seas	125
First Stop: Awar	131
On the Sepik River	151
Orchids and Ancestral Songs	185
Eruption	205
Stone Sentinels	225
Epilogue.	234
Glossary	237
Index	240

INTRODUCTION



Sarah and Chin in Aylesbury, 1919

Sarah Chinnery was 34 years old when she first arrived at Port Moresby in 1921. Married for less than two years, she was well suited by temperament and talents for the life that lay ahead—one of only a small group of white women to live and travel widely at that time through the country now known as Papua New Guinea. She also came with the intense interest in both photography and anthropology which made her so perceptive an observer.

Born Sarah Johnston Neill on 30 January 1887, in Belfast, she had gone at the age of 13 to live in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, to keep house (assisted by a maid) for her three much older brothers who shared a dental surgery. One of the brothers, Bob, gave her her first camera in 1901, a Little Nipper. Later, when she became the second woman in England to ride a motor bike (registration number 187), she would tour the countryside to capture landscapes and interiors in different lights. She joined three postal camera clubs, whose members exchanged portfolios of work for comment and criticism, and began to win prizes for her work.

She qualified as a dentist and carried on the Aylesbury practice after Bob Neill's departure for service in France during the First World War, when he was 41. Many of her clients came from the big army camp nearby, and in 1918, she met Pearson Chinnery, a young Australian serving in the Flying Corps as an Observer Lieutenant. Pearson (or Chin) had worked in the magisterial service in Papua since 1909, and was keenly interested in native societies and culture. He had had papers published in scientific journals, and at the end of the war, he entered Cambridge University, studying anthropology under Professors A.C. Haddon, W.H.R. Rivers and others, and frequently lecturing on Papuan culture and administration.

Sarah and Chin married in April 1919, and lived on the outskirts of Cambridge. Sarah was invited to attend Professor Haddon's lectures with Chin, and became a member of the Cambridge Photographic Society, where she made the first 100 slides from Chin's photographs of Papua for his lectures. Chin was awarded a Diploma in Anthropology, and in 1920 won a grant from the Royal Geographical Society. The Chinnerys left for Melbourne in 1920, where Sarah

lost her first baby, a boy. Chin went to New Guinea to investigate a possible scientific research project, but soon decided not to proceed. He also resigned from the Papuan magisterial service, and instead commenced employment with the New Guinea Copper Mines in late 1920 as Director of Native Labour.

In Melbourne, Sarah began the diary entries she was to continue recording for the next 17 years. She took up lessons in watercolour painting, and went to visit the distinguished Australian watercolour artist Ellis Rowan (1848–1922), who had visited Papua and New Guinea to paint flowers and butterflies. Sarah read



Sarah was the second woman in England to ride a motor bike (registration number 187)

all she could find about her future home, including Judge Hubert Murray's *Review of the Australian Administration in Papua 1907–1920*; Irish travel writer Beatrice Grimshaw's *New New Guinea* (1910); and C.A.W. Monckton's *Some Experiences of a New Guinea Resident Magistrate* (1921). She also met Marnie Masson, then planning a visit to New Guinea, who later published an account of her trip in *Letters from New Guinea, 1921*, under her married name Bassett.

By the time Sarah arrived to live in Port Moresby in 1921, her brother Bob had also abandoned his previous career and had made his home in New Guinea. Commissioned by Lord Rothschild to collect butterflies for the museum at Tring, he arrived in Rabaul about July 1920, and continued to travel the country with Dr F.A. Pockley, using Port Moresby as his base.

The exotic appeal of the island of New Guinea has attracted outside interest since Spanish explorers first began to map its north coast in the sixteenth century. Dutch, English and French navigators visited the island over the course of the next three centuries, and the Dutch formally annexed the western half, now known as Irian Jaya, in 1828. The future of the eastern half of the island was settled in a flurry of colonial flag-raising in November 1884: Germany established a protectorate in the north, and Britain proclaimed its right to the south-east coast and the eastern islands. British New Guinea became Papua, a Territory of Australia, on 1 September 1906. German New Guinea was placed under an Australian military administration in 1914, and after the war it became the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, handed into Australia's care by the League of Nations in December 1920.

In April 1924 Chin was appointed Government Anthropologist in New Guinea, and the family moved to Rabaul, the beautiful township chosen as administrative centre by the Germans in 1910. Sarah had gone to Melbourne for the birth of her first daughter, Sheila, in February 1922, and again 17 months later for the arrival of twin daughters, Patricia and Prudence. A fourth daughter, Mary, was born in 1927. Then in September 1932, Chin was promoted into a more demanding job, as the first Director of the newly established Department of District Services and Native Affairs. Sarah promptly made arrangements to settle the children at boarding-school in Melbourne, and returned to Rabaul.

From this time, her diary entries became more detailed and she drew increasingly on this material to write short articles for local and overseas newspapers and magazines about life in colonial New Guinea. She contributed articles on a wide range of subjects to the *Rabaul Times*, often using pseudonyms such as 'Blanche Bay', 'Barringtonia' or 'Progress'. She sent stories, accompanied



Chinnery family in Sydney, 1932
From left: Chin, Sarah, Mary, Pat, Prue and Sheila

by her own photographs, to Australian papers, such as the *Sydney Mail*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Sun*, and Melbourne's *Star*, and sometimes signed these Sonia or Sara Chinnery. In March 1935 she had a three-page article published in the weekend magazine of the *New York Times*.

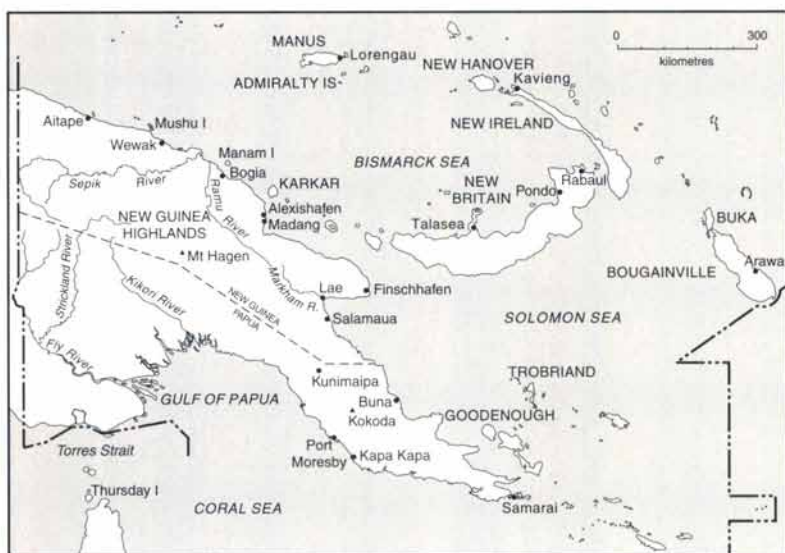
Her photography ranged widely over people, places, events, still life, landscapes, as well as the garden and harbour setting of her home on Malaguna Road. In her New Guinea travels, her quarter-plate Sinclair Una, with its tripod, would usually be carried by one of the household staff. From about 1935, she also used a smaller camera, a second-hand Rolleicord bought in Sydney. The Sinclair Una could be used with roll film, but Sarah mainly used glass plates, and would sometimes make one plate do for two pictures by covering one half with a thin metal sliding screen.

By the mid-1930s, she had begun to rewrite earlier diary entries into a series of chapters for a book, a project abruptly interrupted by the 1937 volcanic eruption. The garden where she sat to write (and where the story of the garden's creation and establishment had itself become a major thread in her tale) was now blanketed by ash and lava. The drama of the devastation of Rabaul, its evacuation and subsequent rebuilding became the unforeseen final chapter of her story, and one that was, in the end, perhaps too painful to complete. Sarah left Rabaul in December 1937, and after Chin was transferred to Australia at the end of the following year, she never returned. Although she continued the task of reworking her text sporadically over the years to come, Sarah's energies were largely diverted to photography, painting, gardening and family.

The work of retyping and annotating her manuscript was subsequently picked up by the four daughters, and it is this material—some 700 pages—which is now safely deposited in the Manuscript Collection of the National Library of Australia (MS 8974). In preparing such a lengthy text for publication, it was obviously necessary to leave out a great deal. I have chosen to follow Sarah's own method—continuing to select and condense diary extracts into a narrative in her own words. In the process, the original manuscript (which remains available to interested researchers) has been edited heavily. Words are omitted from sentences, sentences are omitted from paragraphs, and complete episodes have been bypassed; but for the sake of a general readership, such omissions are not flagged. Occasional metric conversions have been added to clarify measurements.

I have also changed Sarah's spelling of several commonly used words in pidgin English, partly because I have the benefit of a dictionary of Tok Pisin (the Melanesian pidgin English spoken in Papua New Guinea), which she did not, but also because some expressions carry quite different connotations in their English form. *Rausim* for 'move' or 'clear out' is a German word, not well conveyed by the English 'rouse' for instance. Other words like *bung*, 'market', have no English equivalent. For the most part I have left her original spelling, but it needs to be noted that Sarah—a product of her time—believed that pidgin was no more than simplified English, and that it would have been preferable to teach New Guineans to speak correct English. (It should also be noted that pidgin itself has changed. Today, Tok Pisin is more clearly codified and is a distinctive language, very widely used.)

In many respects, however, she was enlightened for her time and acutely aware of cultural differences that could explain puzzling behaviour. Her account of events as she perceived them may have been imbued with a confidence in the superiority of English civilisation in general, but it was equally insistent on the cultural integrity of New Guinean traditions. Sarah saw that she was witnessing a society undergoing massive change, and that the impact of missionary and trader influence had already introduced conflicting values. Her diary entries offer more thoughtful analyses than the often superficial and condescending judgements of some of her contemporaries. Alert and enquiring, she made her own judgements on the European community of the time. She observed the steady stream of British and American anthropologists who came to study traditional culture, and was conscious of the absence of attempts to record aspects of change that accompanied (or were caused by) the various levels of interaction between all these early European intruders and the New Guineans.



Papua and New Guinea, c.1937

I came to read Sarah's manuscript in the National Library of Australia in 1996 when I was a staff member of the Publications Branch, and it struck an immediate chord. My own acquaintance with Papua New Guinea began when I came to live in Port Moresby in 1974—more than 50 years after Sarah's first arrival. Obviously many aspects of life in the 1970s were vastly different (such as the reliance on air transport rather than Burns Philp steamers, and the development of roads and infrastructure). In particular, a new and exciting sense of national identity had emerged among Papua New Guineans, then on the brink of achieving independence. Nevertheless, I was struck by the validity and relevance of Sarah's experience as a significant strand in the rich fabric of Papua New Guinea's history. Her story deserves to be told for the sharpness of its perceptions, the freshness of its language, and, above all, for the liveliness and spirit of this warm and intelligent woman and her passionate attachment to New Guinea's rugged and beautiful landscape. Her care and dedication in recording her observations—in print and photographs—mean that some unique moments in Rabaul's history, as well as many valuable impressions of an interesting historical era, now survive for ongoing study at the National Library of Australia.

Kate Fortune, Canberra 1998

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I am pleased to record my special thanks and acknowledgement to the four ‘Chinnery daughters’—Sheila Waters, Patricia Tuxen, Prudence Neville and Mary Mansell. Their constant support, assistance and encouragement have included considerable checking of details and supply of additional information, as well as a generous willingness to share memories and to provide copies of photographs for publication. Sheila’s contribution goes far beyond completing the typing of the original material. Her methodical annotations (researched over several years) have provided details of dates, names and background information which expands and confirms many of Sarah’s comments and references. Her efforts greatly reduced the labour of crosschecking for publication and I am truly grateful.

I also acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Professor Hank Nelson at the Australian National University, who provided helpful advice and encouragement.

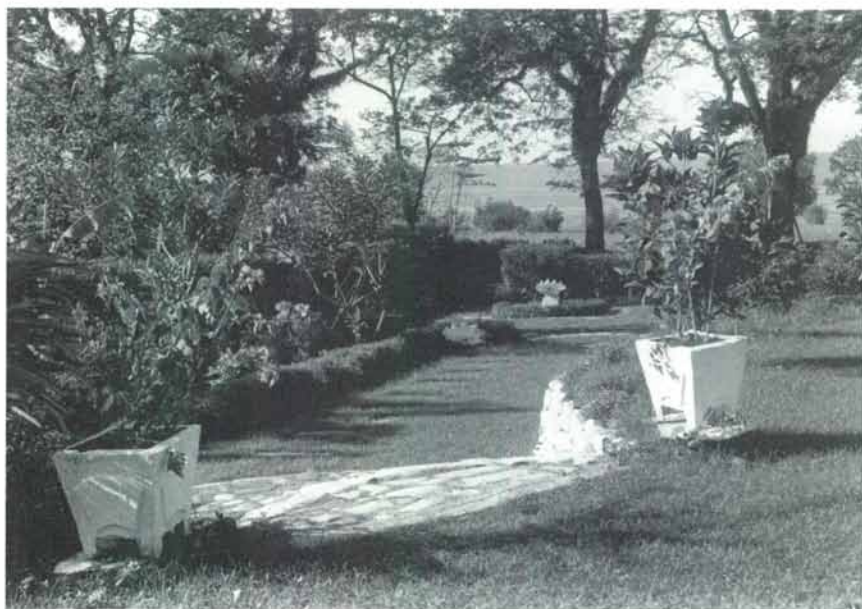
Kate Fortune

PREFACE

From the thatched octagonal summer house, I look through the pergola to the harbour of Rabaul, a volcanic harbour encircled by hills and mountains, with a narrow outlet to the sea. A big ship of the Japanese Maru Line is steaming slowly in, diagramming the blue sea with white surf churned by her propellers as she describes an acute turn, rounding to the wharf 100 yards away. A lovely island schooner, all sails set and gleaming white in the sun, has just passed Matupi Point and races in to meet the ship, her native crew making ready to tie up at Ah Tam's wharf, the little Chinatown dock a few hundred yards from the main wharf.

The pergola which frames this scene is covered with granadilla vine, bearing its luscious golden fruit and purple passionflowers nearly as large as the palm of a hand. Beyond the pergola, the lawn on the round terrace (where last night we entertained some distinguished anthropologists from America) is being cut by Aiau, who wears a scarlet *laplap* and a matching hibiscus in his hair. Perspiration beads on his bronze skin as he expertly swings his sharp *sarip* through the grass. Big blue butterflies with black fringes flit like jewels amongst the hibiscus, bougainvillea and colourful crotons that flank the flight of round steps leading to the sunken garden. At the top of these steps, rose-coloured Madame Butt bougainvillea is ablaze in the sunshine, in the white jars that were given to me by Ah Fa, head gardener at the Botanical Gardens, after I had given him a photograph I took in California of a Chinese bridge in a model garden.

Further down the steps, below the second terrace, a lovely Japanese lantern hibiscus sprays its scarlet blooms from long branches, heads down, their long tongues pendent. In the sunken garden, where a big white clam shell forms a centrepiece, grow the pink moonflowers—the crocus of the Pacific—anchusa and balsams. As background is a pale green cocaine hedge with scarlet berries—a prohibited plant, but the Agriculture Department gave me permission to plant it. I alternated these with scarlet crotons, seen to best effect against the



Sarah's garden on Malaguna Road with its view over Rabaul's harbour

dark green allamanda hedge with its deep-throated golden trumpet flowers. Beyond the hedge are the tall raintrees, planted by the Germans perhaps 50 years ago and now over 100 feet tall, extending in places over my garden and forming a shady place where I have made a rockery.

Here then is the place where I have sat in the early mornings and written my story. I came to live in Rabaul with my husband who was Government Anthropologist of New Guinea. New Guinea is a land of fascination, a large mountainous country with many glorious islands and atolls scattered over a wide area in the Pacific, with hundreds of different tribes—different customs, different languages—practising their own mysterious rites and ritualistic beliefs in remote villages. As civilisation began to creep into New Guinea, brought by missionaries, traders and later white government, Rabaul became the capital of the Territory in 1910—and became the mecca for the more adventurous young men who 'signed a paper' and became indentured labourers to work on contract for the white *Masta*. After a three-year term they were returned to their villages, so that they should not become alienated from their own people and land.

As Government Anthropologist—Director of District Services and Native Affairs, my husband's work took him to many of the outstations, newly

opened districts where white people had not previously penetrated. A schooner was allotted to him, one of five boats the government had for its work. He travelled by plane to the upland countries of Mt Hagen, where the big stone-axe men live; to the Wau and Edie, the mountains of the goldfields; and to other primitive communities whose ways and needs were to be studied. My children were in boarding-school—first in Sydney, later in Melbourne—rather lonely for me at times.

I had always been a keen photographer and found the natives most fascinating studies—first in Port Moresby, Papua, where we came (in mid-1921) and lived for two years, nearly in the village of Hanuabada itself—that lovely, though odorous, village built out on high piles over the sea. There the Hanuabadan men, with huge mops of fuzzy hair outstanding from their heads, are undoubtedly amongst the handsomest of all the Pacific Islanders. The women, wearing grass skirts and pearlshell necklaces, or beads, but (by government law) no blouse, were often really lovely, and I made many photographs.

Some years later in Rabaul, the government decided to build a European-style bungalow using entirely native labour—young trainees at the technical school at Malaguna, although formerly all houses in Rabaul were built by Chinese labour. This experimental house was to be allocated to the Government Anthropologist, and we were both excited at the prospect of getting a house with a glorious view over the harbour—to be built on lovely tree-shaded Malaguna Road, the promenade for colourful natives and all the interesting life of a tropical community. So—being somewhat lonely, although never bored, as the house and garden grew under the hands of these natives, I started to write this book.

The garden was the first reason for writing my story. I just wanted to tell how a bit of jungle land was made into a garden, and friendships were made with the simple, totally uneducated *kanakas* [natives]. These people helped me to make the garden, bending their backs in the heat and exerting all their muscles in my task. Manau, from Aitape (on the mainland about six days' sail away), is an engaging scoundrel who helped me make the garden from its first primeval wilderness, cutting the sod for the round terrace. In between wheelbarrows of soil to raise the terrace, he told me bloodcurdling tales of savage life.

Aiau, also of Aitape, really enjoyed the garden work, and would proudly tell you that the best work in the garden was his. On the day we finished making

some steps into the sunken garden, I saw Aiau making his name in the wet cement with a little bit of stick. I showed him how to do it properly, to be read going down the stairs from the top, and to put the date on it: 'Aiau—29 May 1936'.

Not only our servants but also many natives who passed the house on Malaguna Road on the way from distant villages took an interest in the new garden, brought us rare plants and orchids, and many of them became our friends. In May 1937, exactly a year after the day we finished Aiau's steps, I was writing what I intended to be the last chapter of my book while the famous eruption earthquakes were rumbling terrifyingly through the town; sitting out in the garden because it felt too dangerous to stay under the roof of the house. When the volcano blew up, devastating the township and destroying hundreds of native villages and taking many lives, Rabaul people fled to Kokopo. I saw Aiau there amongst the thousands of refugees, and he said: '*Misis*, garden 'e no more.' It was true: the eruption had damaged the garden dreadfully. It took months to clean up the town from millions of tons of ash and lava. I, too, set to work a few weeks afterwards, to clean up and rebuild the garden, and eventually we got it back to beauty. Then my husband was transferred to Australia. The war came—and what the awful eruption did not manage, the war and the Japanese and the frightful bombing from American and Allied planes did: destroyed utterly every vestige of garden and house.

But—I made a garden in New Guinea, and this is the account of how it came about. It is also, of course, the story of my life in Rabaul and the various trips to outlying islands and on the mainland, by schooner, ship, plane, mule and on foot. The story of New Guinea as I have seen and lived it. I did not intend to let New Guinea swamp the story, but it has elbowed its way in—I suppose because I love this land too much to keep it out.

SWAYING PALMS

PORT MORESBY 1921–22

Sarah and Pearson Chinnery arrived in Melbourne in 1920, and soon afterwards Chin left to commence work with the New Guinea Copper Mines as Director of Native Labour. In 1921 he returned to Melbourne to accompany Sarah to her new home in Port Moresby. From Sydney they travelled on the Morinda, via Brisbane and Cairns. Sarah shared a cabin with Mary Pinney (daughter of Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua) and her little girl. It was customary to allot cabins to women only, and Chin would have been obliged to share the separate accommodation provided for the men on board.

The European population of Port Moresby in 1921 was tiny—just 313—and grew only slowly in the 1920s and 1930s. There was only one bank, first established in 1910, and no airfield until later in the 1920s. Communications were by ship; road systems did not reach far out of the port area.

By the 1920s, the Motu and Koita people of the Port Moresby area had been living in relative peace and stability for generations. The coastal regions were long accustomed to the passing traffic of their own splendid Papuan sailors and traders, and villagers adapted readily to the presence of European settlers. The first Methodist missionary had arrived in 1874, and from the 1870s there had been a steady flow of coastal traders and explorers seeking adventure and gold. With a smaller indigenous population than the Mandated Territory, and a less favourable climate for cash cropping (Port Moresby is in an area of very low rainfall), Papua's commercial development lagged behind New Guinea's.

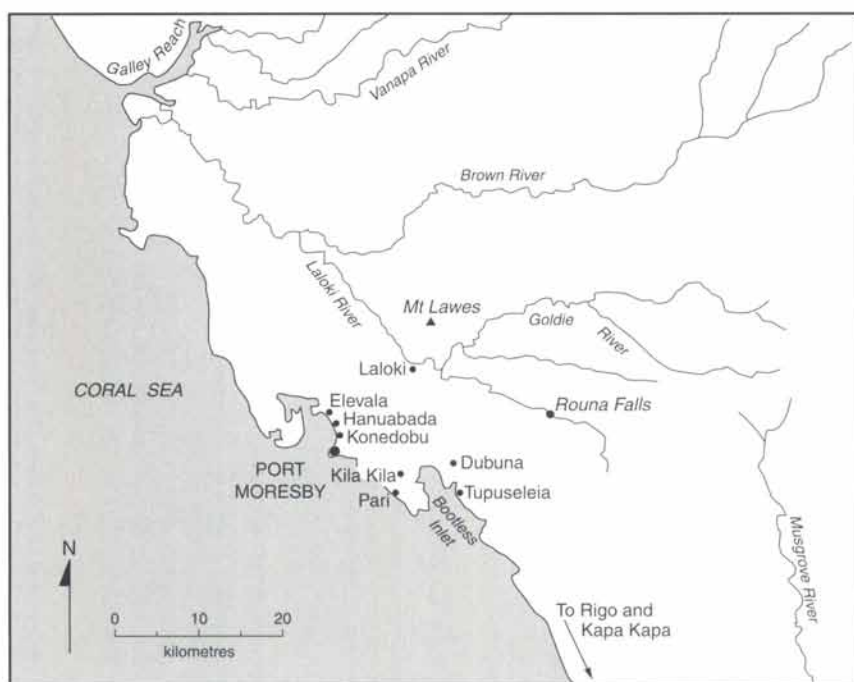
Konedobu, 5 June 1921

We arrived in Port Moresby on 2 June at 11 pm and disembarked next morning. I was rowed to my first home in Papua in the Governor's whaleboat by six stalwart men of the Papuan constabulary, dressed in heavy navy blue loincloths. Mrs Pinney's husband [Charles, a draughtsman in the Department of Lands in Papua] had met her on the ship and, as we were to be near neighbours, they offered to take me across the harbour to Konedobu with them, while Chin got our heavy baggage up—thus saving me standing about under the hot tropical sun. When the police-boys shipped their oars smartly, and the boat pulled into a little rickety jetty, I scrambled up to land to my first experience of swaying palms, and the music they make in a strong breeze. Mrs Pinney and her husband turned up to Government House after showing me my bungalow, and I walked on the few yards into my new home.

I had rarely seen a native before that morning and did not know pidgin English. Chin had said that I should get out an order for stores and send one of the boys into Port Moresby with it. In my home in Buckinghamshire I would be at no loss—but this somehow looked a horse of a different colour. Perhaps I should have waited for Chin to come with me and not have these black fellows staring at me like this—but then I suppose I should count myself lucky for having the trip over in the whaleboat. There was no transport in Moresby and it would have meant a 2-mile walk along a dusty, hot road, trying to get a little shade from coconut palms. Government House was just around the corner and the Governor did all his travelling around the Territory by whaleboat and launch.

The natives were interesting specimens with incredibly bushy heads of hair. They seemed friendly, but the house looked to me to be primitive to the last degree. We had been lucky to get it furnished—it belonged to the Government Geologist (Mr Evan Stanley), who had gone South [to Australia] for six months' leave, and, as is the custom here, the house is let. Chin arrived with the baggage and a mob of natives carrying all sorts of gear on their heads. The head boy prepared a meal. It all seemed very strange.

On our arrival at Port Moresby, my brother Bob and Dr Pockley had left to go on a trip across the range. This was rather disappointing, especially as the story ran that Dr Pockley had got laid up in hospital at Samarai with a bad leg, and whether or not they got away on the trip remains to be seen. Dr Pockley first came to New Guinea to see where his brother was killed—his brother was the first Australian soldier killed in New Guinea in the



Port Moresby environs

First World War. Later he joined my brother Bob, collecting butterflies for the Rothschild Museum. Pockley was a champion tennis player for New South Wales. [Antill Pockley's brother, Captain Brian Pockley, had died in September 1914, after going to the rescue of a wounded soldier, on the road to Bitu Paka. Both men died that day—Australia's first war casualties in Papua New Guinea—during the attempt to recapture the wireless station.]

Port Moresby is a very small town built fairly compactly on a hill overlooking the harbour, which is almost ringed around with pretty hills. The harbour is beautiful—deep blue, purple and green, with the surrounding hills changing and shimmering in most wonderful opalescent colours. A couple of miles out, at Konedobu, is the official residence of the Governor, but all the government offices are in Port Moresby, which lies within a 30-mile [50-kilometre] dry belt where for six or eight months of the year there is not a drop of rain. (There are very defined wet and dry seasons here.) The place was chosen for its very fine, almost land-locked harbour, and the position for the town was a secondary consideration, evidently, for it is perched on a steep arid hillside which grows nothing so well as stones.

Gardens are impossible except for the few wet months of the year, so no fruit or vegetables can be grown—a great drawback for people living in the tropics. Every three weeks the mail steamer from Australia brings supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables, which fetch famine prices. The steamer also brings up fresh meat and butter in the freezer, and when that runs out in a few days, as there is no freezer in Moresby, we must depend on tinned meat and tinned butter.



Carved and decorated platform, Hanuabada

Within the harbour, to the west of Port Moresby, lie the native villages of Hanuabada and Elevala, both marine villages—that is, thatched houses are built on high piles on the beach, and at high tide are just out of the water. Access is up long ladders to houses which are simply one large room with a platform in front. Joined together, these platforms form ‘streets’ where the family usually sit at work on their fishnets or their pottery, or just watching the passing scene. Pretty, fat babies roll in the sand at the foot of crazy-looking ladders, and dozens of dogs abound—all members of the community, as dogs for the hunt are as necessary as the fishing net. Though there is plenty of ground for them, these villages are built in the sea to retard or prevent attack from enemies in the bush.

The Hanuabada men are at present engaged in making a fine big canoe. It is just about hollowed out now, being merely a log which they first burn out and finish off by scraping. It would have come from the trunk of a tree that has grown in the hills. No attempt is made to ornament the canoe, though the fact that they are not without ideas of ornamentation can be seen from the nicely carved and coloured totem platform on entering the village. This is a rude platform built on four poles about 12 feet [4 metres] high, each pole having been carved with the representation of some animal—one an alligator, an iguana, and two others—I think a cassowary is one. When we passed through yesterday, the village street was laid out carefully with screens made of leaves, which will be used for roofing, etc.

The walk past Port Moresby to the village of Hanuabada is very interesting and pretty, part of the way being alongside a grove of coconuts that fringe the sea, and one comes across scenes for snapshots—like the native women gracefully balancing clay pitchers of water on their shoulders, or very laboriously carrying enormous supplies of firewood which are far too heavy for them. Today the village street seemed to be a jumble of yapping native dogs and very inquisitive children. Some of the men were engaged on the beach cutting large firewood which had been brought over on a canoe with an outrigger. A canoe laden with bananas, yams, etc., came from an island across the bay.

Most of the women are tattooed in a dark blue colour which is much more striking on some skins than others. On an ordinary photographic plate the marking does not show, so some people, when photographing a tattoo, paint it. One example of Mr Armstrong's was done in white, which is quite wrong as the pigment is darker than the skin. [W.E. Armstrong was Assistant Government Anthropologist.] They are not always tattooed on the face, but generally there is a broad vertical design down the forehead.

Yesterday we saw our first widow. In some districts the dress is really beautiful, being decorated with Job's tears, very pretty little grey bead-like berries. The garment covers them with a shawl over the head and then a long skirt. However, the one we saw yesterday was really widow's weeds. A very ugly turnout composed of grass such as *ramis* (grass skirts) are made from. A long skirt of this grass touches the ground and then a top dress with a cover over the face like a screen. This top covering had little white feathers stuck on it here and there, but they did not improve its ugliness much. Widows remain in the weeds for about a year and then go through certain ceremonies which relieve them from the necessity of wearing them further. This woman's husband did not, of course, die naturally. He owed some man £6 and the man put sorcery on him, and he was out in a boat one day and got caught somehow between the wharf and the boat.

For the last two nights tom-toms have been playing in the village—just a regular monotonous beating of a drum and a weird calling noise which I suppose passes to the village mind as melody. It is interesting here to watch boys or men walking along in daytime and making weird noises, which I suppose to them is music. At any rate, I dare say it whiles away the walk and breaks the monotony of bush silence, and one never knows, it may scare away evil spirits.

Mr and Mrs Brown came to tea this afternoon. She is a very interesting woman, being very capable and, I should think, bossy. She boasts that she has a proper bathroom—that is, she has a bath which she had fitted. Of course, hot and cold water are not laid on; the hot water she gets boiled in a kerosene tin outside. But I believe that most people in Moresby merely have a shower bath, a very primitive but ingenious arrangement. A half kerosene tin has some holes perforated in the bottom—the tin, filled with tepid water, is suspended from the ceiling and lowered to fill on a pulley rope. You pull a string and a jet of water runs out, soap yourself, and then pull the string again and rinse yourself.

We get our water from a spring about 200 yards [180 metres] from the house. Drinking water is supplied by two tanks which are standing in blazing sun all day, consequently drinking water is lukewarm. However, one gets in the habit of drinking a lot of tea.

10 June 1921

Today the *Tambar* came in. We heard that my brother Bob and Dr Pockley were at Buna the day we arrived at Port Moresby. If they have persisted in going over the Kokoda range, it will be some weeks before they come back.

I have been several times to the villages of Hanuabada and Elevala. The smell at low tide is something one is not likely to forget soon, but I have never seen finer specimens of humanity. The women work awfully hard, carrying all the heavy stores and wood. Elevala is a group of about 20 houses built on piles round a little green-topped mound of an island, not more than about an acre or two in extent. A little platform takes you out to it. Close by is the mission station of the London Missionary Society where the children are taught the three Rs and girls learn lacemaking. From the mission station, Elevala is as pretty a scene as could be wished for. There is a very nice banana garden at the foot of the mission hill.

Today the fleet of fishing canoes went out, and although I sent a boy to the village in the hope that they would have fish for sale, he returned saying that they had only caught a little. Now that food is so scarce, they keep more of their fish and bananas for themselves.

It is very pretty to see the women and young girls going into town in the morning with their netted *bilum* [carry-all] bags on their backs. They walk with a great swagger which makes their grass *ramis* swing boundingly from

side to side. One would almost think there was a competition between them as to who could swing their hips the most. When they return laden with their burdens, which they carry from their forehead on to the backs of their shoulders, one often sees them easing the band on their brow, and they do not walk in the same easy way, but very wearily. The amount that some of them carry is marvellous. Men fish, hunt and generally dig the garden, or go working in stores or offices in Port Moresby, while women tend and weed the garden and carry all the produce home. One sees them walking along in front of their husbands who carry nothing except a walking-stick, or sometimes a two- or three-year-old boy on their shoulders—while the poor wife staggers along under a load of 40 or 50 pounds [about 20 kilograms] in netted *bilum* bags from her forehead.

Around Port Moresby, the natives are quite varied. One sees Orokaivas from the north, Kiwais from the west, natives from the east and central areas, etc. The different types in juxtaposition are very interesting. Short, frizzly, close-cropped heads next to men with enormous shocks of hair that stick out much further than a guardsman's busby. It takes a long time to comb out the great spread of hair that Hanuabada men grow. The women are, of course, mainly Hanuabada, local women. There is one very nice-looking girl who goes by with, I suppose, her husband. She wears a very fine collar of pearlshell.

Today we got a new boy signed on from Goodenough Island, Tom—whose tribal name is Gosiago. [This was a name used by labour recruiters, not a tribal name.] He is quite smart about the house and swept it up in quite a practised manner. The other two boys we have are much younger: Keratin, lent by Mr Armstrong, and Omapi from Hanuabada. Omapi is by way of being a great nut [a show-off], he is always turning up with gorgeous flowers stuck in his armbands and behind his ears. Keratin has his ear lobes cut, but he never wears anything in them.

Tonight Omapi came and asked for sixpence for betel-nut. He, of course, did not say it like that, but used Motuan. I couldn't understand, and asked if he meant pawpaw, a fruit I want to get. They both said: 'Yes, pawpaw.' I was very disgusted when he came back with about 2 quarts of betel-nuts. This they chew with great relish; it makes their teeth black and tongue a brilliant vermilion, and also makes them drunk.

The view of the bay at sunset tonight was very pretty, with long lines of coconut palms on the foreshore, the bay reflecting the changing lights in the

sky, and the natives' quaint fishing fleets returning from their fishing grounds. The canoes have just one more-or-less-square home-made-looking sail, and each has an outrigger, on which a man sits to give it ballast—mostly they must get pretty wet.

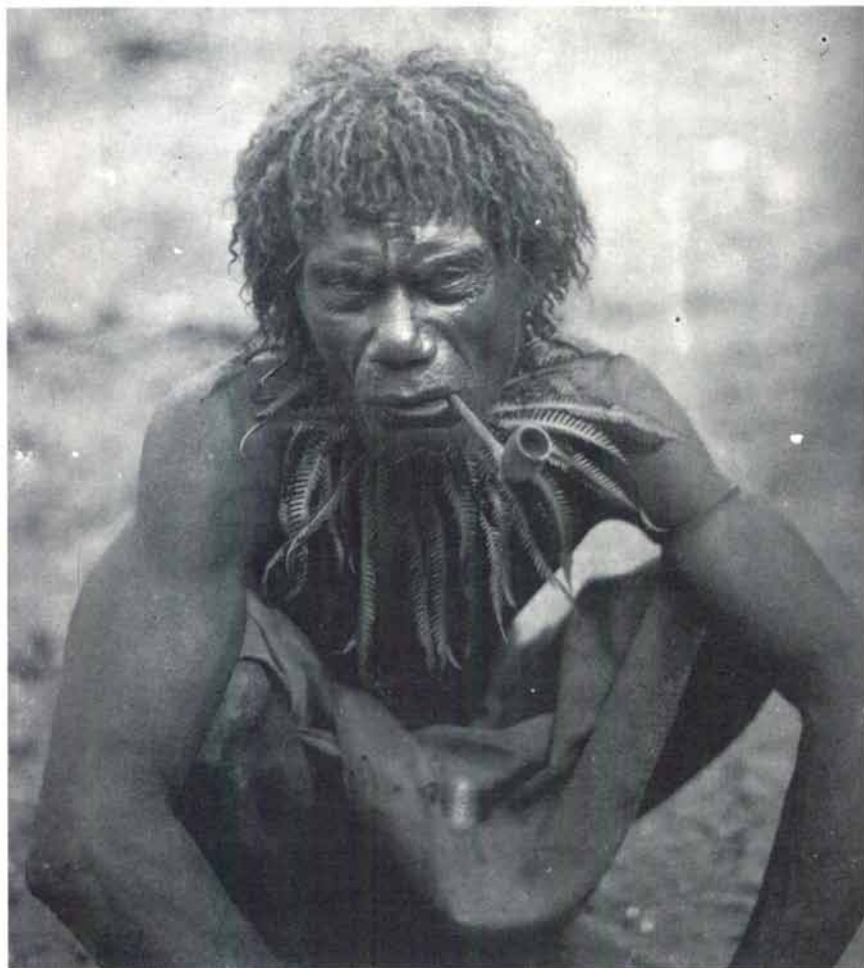


This morning I went down the road and made a little sketch of distant hills across the bay, with Hanuabada just halfway over. When I got home, I went into the kitchen and discovered Mari in all her warpaint—a dog's-tooth necklace, bone arm bracelets, a very fine ochred grass *rami*, and her hair all fuzzed up. Her husband is Judge Herbert's boy, and he is in Sydney at present. She has been to Sydney also. [Mari was employed as Sarah's maid. Judge Charles Herbert was Resident Magistrate in Port Moresby.] Another girl came in with her, also dressed in her Sunday best. She tried on one of the armbands so I wondered which girl owned them and asked Mari. She said 'who likes'—but I can't believe that such a thing as personal decoration should be communal. Mari brought her brother to be photographed—he wore a yellow bone in his nose and a *sibi* (perineal band of tapa cloth), with a lot of coloured flying ends painted with their usual designs. He fancied himself enormously.

Some Orokaivas working at Laloki Copper Mines came in to see Chin, and they sat on the verandah and smoked and then had *kaikai* (food). They walked in the 17 miles from Laloki on Saturday and were going to walk back on Sunday. Orokaivas are darker skinned than Hanuabada people and not so good looking, but they seem intelligent.

We went to lunch to Mr and Mrs Brown's, and she showed me the furniture she made. A four-poster bed, a writing desk, a cupboard for a sideboard, a set of shelves, a couch with back and sides, a little settee made from two kerosene cases and a crosspiece of plank, a commode, a cement sink, a set of kitchen shelves with a back, and a verandah mat made of pandanus. The mattress for the bed she made from teased coconut fibre, and slung a mosquito net from wires stretched from one bedpost to another. The couch and shelves come to pieces, as they are screwed together.

Long strings of men have returned to the village today heavily laden with bananas and sugar cane. Yesterday I saw a widow with a crowd of girls coming



Papuan villager with a fern collar

down the road. As I was out with my camera I got ready to take her, and she very promptly and in a practised manner started to pose. Someone amongst the group asked me if I would pay her. I said yes, having some tobacco in my bag. Well, when I had finished I told Omapí, who carries my camera and bag for me, to give her a stick of tobacco. I would just like someone to have photographed the look of contempt and disdain on her face. She wanted a shilling. So she glared at poor Omapí and said various things in Motuan with much mouth contortion. The words I didn't understand, but her expression was easy to read. Finally, with a flourish and a snap, she twirled the tobacco out of Omapí's hand, and we went our respective ways.

In the afternoon, I noticed from the verandah an interesting crowd congregating on the beach. An intervening belt of palms rather obscured my view, so presently I sauntered down to the shore. I discovered that a crowd of natives, who had come from some distance away, were gathering together to form a procession to go on to Hanuabada for a feast. Two men were to carry smoked hams and other parts of animals on a pole 20 to 30 feet long. One pole was very nicely got up with meat and bunches of bananas dependent from it. Some men carried enormous bunches of bananas; one I was able to photograph was gaily decorated with a big flower in his hair. One old man was as lean as an Indian famine victim—he asked for smokes when I snapped him. They rarely pose for a photo without reward. There were about 30 or 40 in the procession, including a number of children.

Today Mari did not turn up to do the washing, but she arrived about 10 o'clock, saying that she was going in a canoe with Mr Clark, from the London Missionary Society, to sing in another village and would not be back till the morning after tomorrow. So Tom did the washing for her. Two boys came round with fish to sell—one was a big fish weighing about 12 pounds [5 kilograms], for which they asked 8 shillings.

Last weekend I went to Bootless Inlet, where the copper company is building a railway to bring copper ore from Dubuna and Laloki to the coast. While at Bootless, I went and saw a large garden owned by a Mr Danby. He was producing practically for the copper mines people. He had a herd of cows, pigs, poultry, and grew granadillas, pineapples, pawpaws, cabbages and other European vegetables. He had a very primitive sort of house, large and built very high, and he assured us that if he had known we were coming, he would have had a shave.

I took the opportunity of going on to Tupuseleia, a marine village a few miles away. [Alternatively spelled 'Tubusereia', it is about 5 kilometres east of Bootless Inlet.] We paddled and poled there on a native canoe and sailed back. The sail the two boys hoisted was a tired-looking piece of sacking, with a crazy-looking pole for a mast. We arrived in two hours and immediately men came out on to the platforms of their houses, displaying their head-dresses and wanting to be photographed. How the news could get around in the time is astonishing. One canoe with two men and two women in it had joined us on the journey down. Both the women and the men took turns in paddling, and sat eating sugar cane at intervals. The older woman wore a sort of woven grass

mat fastened on her back by a string coming over her shoulders, as a protection from the sun—it only protected the neck and back and did not protect the head at all. They all gabbled to our boys for some distance together, and then they pulled away from us and got into the village about five minutes before us. It must have been they who spread the news about our coming to take pictures. The villagers told me that next time, they would dance for me.

I came home from Bootless by motor car. The road for some miles is just a track through scrub. We passed sisal hemp plantations that looked rather neglected, the grass being nearly as high as the bushes. The forest was on fire in several places—natives fire the scrub on purpose to catch *magani* (wallaby) which tastes something like mutton.

Sunday, 14 August 1921

Today, after five days' delay due to the boilers needing repairs, Bob and Chin and Pockley, with a nice deerhound Chin bought from Joe Sutton, the policeman, embarked on *Tambar* for Kapa Kapa (to the south-east). [Chin was collecting strains of sugar cane; Bob and Pockley were collecting for Rothschild.] The boat sailed at 10.30 am and Mike, my Airedale, and I came home. I had to drag Mike most of the way—he is a very strong dog and gets very determined, and he wanted to go back and see where Chin went.

On Monday I went to the company workshop and found Mr J.W. Puxley there. He had called for the car to go out to his Laloki vegetable garden and asked me if I would care for a run out there, about 8 miles to where they meet the boys who bring the vegetables over the rough ground to save the car. The boys didn't appear at the meeting place and so we went on over the bush track, the grass often higher than the bonnet of the car. The boys were just leaving the garden when we arrived, so we had a look around. The Laloki River takes a sharp hairpin bend and the garden is situated just at the bend. There are cabbages, beans, tomatoes (the latter grown under a grass roof to keep off the too-fierce rays of the sun), and lettuce which are nice and tender but they do not heart, unlike cabbage. It was all beautifully kept, never a sign of a caterpillar. Mr Puxley said on the way home that he and a friend had purchased it about nine months ago. Their Chinese gardener, Lee Sing, is in charge of six native boys and is paid £14 a month, which I suppose includes his wife (a Papuan from Samarai) who looks after the poultry.

Today a man and a little boy came by with a nice model of a native house which he would sell to me for 15 shillings. I asked leave to take the boy's picture with the house, and the man very astutely said: 'You pay him.' I said: 'Oh, no.' So after a little coaxing of me on his part, and coaxing by the boy of his father to be allowed to have a picture taken of him, the man gave in and allowed me to take the boy. I happened to be printing some negatives at the time, and said that I had a picture of a boy selling some fish, so I took it out of the frame and showed it to them. The small boy was very excited and recognised some friends of his in Hanuabada—so they went away mightily pleased with themselves and said that they would come back 'by and by' to see their picture.

16 August 1921

Yesterday a note came from Chin by canoe from Kapa Kapa. Unfortunately Magani, the cook-boy, let the messenger go, so I was unable to send a note back by the same. However, after some considerable parley with Magani, I discovered that he might be able to find a canoe at Koki going to Kapa Kapa. So I brought him down to Baldwin's [store], got a ham, and the man at Baldwin's put the broad arrow on it, so that it would go to the Resident Magistrate [R.W. Grist], and he would deliver it to Chin. I gave Magani two sticks of tobacco and 2 shillings to give the boy who left that night at 6 pm. Magani told him that if he lost the ham or the note, he would go to gaol, and the boy (his name is Sabadi, or Sunday) said he 'no like go to gaol and he no lose ham or note. S'pose *Taubada* stop (is staying at) Kapa Kapa, he give-im to him. S'pose he no stop, he give-im to Mr Grist and he send-im on.' (Papuan's do not use *Masta* and *Misis*; Chin is called *Taubada* and I am called *Sinabada*.) Magani reckons it takes two full days to go by canoe from Koki to Kapa Kapa.

When I was walking along Port Road yesterday, I met a woman carrying a quarter-plate reflex, and I commented on it being a heavy camera to carry on a hot day. She told me as we walked along together that she did press work, and when I asked for what journal, she said she was a freelance. I heard afterwards that she was a Miss Patterson of Thursday Island [Torres Strait]. She has been round the coast on the *Tambar*.

27 August 1921

The *Morinda* came in on 25 August, and next day a mail went out to Rigo [inland from Kapa Kapa], so I took the opportunity of sending a letter to

Chin and one to Bob, care of the Resident Magistrate. On Sunday morning, I went over to Bootless with Mr and Mrs Baker and Mrs MacDonald. We raised two *maganis* [wallabies] on the way—they jumped straight across the road. This afternoon, I am going out to Puxley's garden.

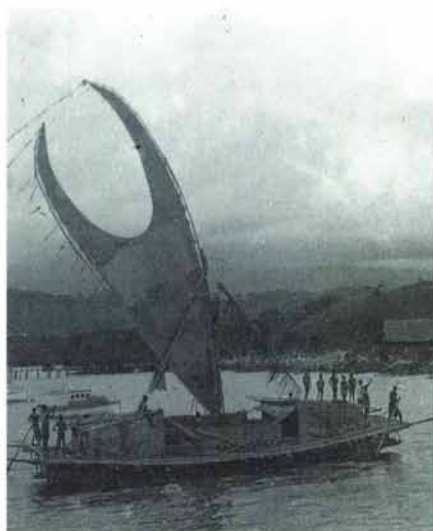
I went out to Sapphire Creek for a few days, to Mrs Wright's guest-house, where I hoped to get some decent photos. I raised my first wild pig on this trip. It was near the Laloki River where we were motoring over a bush track. The pig, a big brownly black fellow, suddenly came tearing through the bush less than a dozen yards from the car. He was terribly frightened and ran alongside us blindly for about 50 yards. Then he got ahead of us, crossed, and tore along on the other side of the bush. He took a gorgeous leap over an obstacle, went on again and finally disappeared. I could have photographed him easily if the pace had not been so great. We also went through a bushfire burning at one place right up on the road. Fortunately, it was not a big area, but it was frightfully hot while we were in it—when we got past, there were lots of smuts on my dress.

I have taken my first two rides on a horse along the beach. Miss Knolls was my teacher. For the first five minutes I was very uncomfortable and thought that I would fall off. After that, I got my nerve and began to quite like it.

Hanuabada boasts a thriving pot-making industry carried on by the women in the age-old way, being moulded laboriously by hand, baked on wood fires and painted. These they trade with the people of the Western District of Papua for sago. Regular industries of pottery and trading have been carried on by the picturesque people of Hanuabada for centuries, and involve businesslike preparation and arduous travelling in canoes to reach the markets. [The Hiri Motu voyages in fact involved trade with the people of the Gulf District. This great tradition of annual trading expeditions was eventually disrupted by the Second World War.]

Clay for pot-making is found close at hand. The women work it up to a suitable state, and afterwards mould it, kneading and patting it into shape with little pieces of wood and their hands. When the pots are well and truly shaped, they are set out to dry in the sun, then baked in open wood fires. The pots are quite undecorated and made in the most elementary shapes, some small and some tapering with narrow necks so that the contents won't spill. During the firing, women hold two long sticks and turn the pot occasionally. It is a very hot, tedious job, as quite big furnaces need to be kept going for hours.

As it is now towards the end of the south-east (dry) season, the men are getting ready for their part in this island saga. Big dugout canoes, minus the outrigger which they ordinarily use, have been prepared for the long journey by lashing them together. A little shelter is erected to protect the crew from sun and rain, sails are put up, and the vessel is then called a *lakatoi*. These are packed with pots. In about three months' time, when the winds have changed to the north-west, the *lakatois* return laden with sago and other foodstuffs which people in this



*A lakatoi returning with its cargo
from west Papua, 1922*

area, a dry belt, cannot grow. This trading journey is a big venture for these people. The *lakatois* look very fine and romantic with their crab-claw sails—a scene which has been taken for the Papuan stamp. The sails are made of coconut fibre by villagers working together. Great care is taken of them so that they will last for two or three years, but the people around Port Moresby have to buy their sails from villages further away, not being able to make their own.

Bootless Inlet, September 1921

[The Chinnerys moved from their rented home in Konedobu, near Government House, after August 1921, when the New Guinea Copper Mines recommenced operations, and went to live in a company house at Bootless Inlet. At the Copper Mines, the few European houses were scattered around on hilltops, linked by walking tracks only. Sarah made furniture from crates, learned to make bread, and managed to grow a few golden tomatoes in the harsh soil. A little launch was used to visit Port Moresby.]

A bad epidemic of influenza has broken out amongst the natives and some of the whites, too. Today we have 135 cases of flu on the copper mines alone. Out of 300 boys employed, 112 are in hospital and five have died. Practically no work is being done and, of course, the natives are all very scared. There has been a peculiar silence at night since the flu broke out—no drums with their

toneless, regular beat. Those who are not in hospital are just crouching round their little fires—no energy to sing or beat the drum. One just hears coughing come up from the huts.



The natives make good fishing nets from native string, using shells for sinkers—they look very pretty seen hung out on a pole drying. Generally the natives go out at night with lanterns to attract the fish, which they spear, or in some parts they use a net on a cane. There is a big oyster that grows in the mangrove trees which they call ‘wood oyster’. It is larger and tougher than the ordinary sort, but quite good. Fish are all colours of the rainbow, but most white people avoid the more colourful varieties as some coloured fish have a reputation for being unwholesome.

Of game for hunting, there is only wallaby or wild pig. One man and a dog will go after wallaby, but wild pig requires more preparation. A wild boar is a very ugly customer and has to be treated with respect. A pig hunt of any importance at all brings all the men of the village out with spears. The people have domesticated the wild pig and it is regarded as a very valuable asset. [Wild pigs were not indigenous, but domesticated pigs gone feral.] A pig is a princely gift for a friend. At the feast at Tupuseleia a pig is strung up from poles all day, and at night is roasted alive. The poor thing I saw looked dreadful—slung up by the feet from horizontal poles, and lifting its head up at intervals as if trying to get into a normal position.

The whole village of Tupuseleia was *en fête*, everyone looked decorative: huge garlands of fruit and vegetables were strung up on poles 15 or 20 feet high; people in extravagant dress—bird-of-paradise plumes and cassowary-plumed head-dresses for the men; gaily coloured grass *ramis* on the women; pretty dances and the mild melancholy of the drums; and then this poor pig strung up, head down, and a fire being guarded carefully close by. But really it is not so very far distant a time that it was the fashion to roast an ox on the public square in England on any state occasion.

Natives here are very interesting. They come into the kitchen to visit the boys, and incidentally get a bit of *kuku* (tobacco) trade, although you will quite often find they have native-grown tobacco in their little bundle all the time. One day a boy from Gila came in and I enquired if he had any bananas



Papuan dancers at Port Moresby

or sugar canes for planting. He said 'Plenty stop', meaning that he had plenty at his place. I asked him to bring me some, and he said he would next time he came. Then he asked me for some *kuku*, and unfortunately we were right out of trade twist, and so I said. His face fell just like a child's, and though I tried to cheer him up and tell him that next time he came I would have some for him, his face still looked very crestfallen and he couldn't smile. They can't hide their feelings as we can. Presently I asked him if he could grow tobacco and he said 'Oh—plenty in village', and actually produced a plait of light brown, faint-smelling tobacco, about 2 inches of it—but he prefers the stronger stuff.

I asked him if he could make fire '*Niugini* fashion'. They all can, but I am afraid it is becoming a lost art. Certainly when they go travelling any length of time, as for instance a canoe journey, they are careful to keep a fire burning all the time, and you will see them carrying a fire a long distance. On one occasion I saw a woman carrying a piece of fire from the village to the garden, about a mile away, guarding it very carefully from too much wind. Evidently this care is a relic of ancient days when they had the trouble of making fire with sticks—nowadays it is the bush people who bother with such primitive ways of making fire. It certainly is a 'sacred flame' to people without matches or flint.

The labour on the mines is drawn from all over British New Guinea (Papua)—and a strange and motley crowd it is. Some don't even know the

business end of a spade. Mostly they sign on for one or two years, sometimes three, and they usually bring their decorations and drums with them—and weapons! It is marvellous to see how in a short time they soon become efficient labourers and improve physically. It is interesting to see all these different tribes coming together and sharing the same conditions, but they never fuse nor get friendly. It is quite a business to prevent broken heads over the smallest disputes when parties of two tribes, who ordinarily are at enmity and would never dare to go through the other's country, have a difference over something and try to settle it summarily. Sometimes, by the time one or two heads are cracked with a club, they will begin to think of government and will take the grievance to the Inspector, but they always try to keep clear of each other off duty. Different gangs have their own cook-boys; they camp in with their own tribe and one boy belonging to them will be cook-boy. But on one occasion some Milu boys [probably Mailu, from the tiny island about 200 kilometres east] were put in with Goaribari—the latter as cook. The Milu boys went to company headquarters and said that they couldn't eat food made by another tribal boy. Suppose he wanted to *puri puri* [use sorcery]—‘he put bad medicine along their *kaikai* [food]’. They had to be moved apart, and a cook found who was not a hereditary enemy.

This copper mine is said to be richer than any in Australia. [This optimistic opinion was to prove false; the mine closed quite quickly.] The Dubuna mine, 4 miles [6 kilometres] from Bootless, is served by railway, and from Dubuna to Laloki an aerial line is to be erected shortly, the nature of the country not facilitating railways. The railway is the first in New Guinea and many funny tales are told of the natives' wonder at the ‘puff puff’. I have seen natives running up a field in great excitement to see a pony and trap go past, so it can be imagined what a sensation a steam engine, belching out smoke and tearing along at about 12 miles an hour with a dozen or so trucks after it, will cause. Natives used the railway track for a long time before the steam engine came up from Australia. The engine is fed with firewood, there being no coal in Papua.

LIVING UNDER THE VOLCANO

RABAUL 1928–29

There is no diary for the period 1922–27. If Sarah kept one, it may have been lost at the time when one of her trunks disappeared en route from South to Rabaul, probably mistakenly off-loaded at some port of call, and never located. During those years, the four Chinnery daughters were born: Sheila Margaret, on 15 February 1922; the twins, Patricia Mavis and Prudence Diana, on 19 July 1923; and Mary Georgine, on 16 January 1927. In April 1924, Chin was appointed Government Anthropologist in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, and the family moved from Bootless Inlet to Rabaul.

Rabaul, the well-planned capital established by the Germans, offered shady tree-lined avenues in marked contrast to Port Moresby's dry, dusty streets. The township had a sizeable commercial centre by the late 1920s, with two banks, although electricity was not installed until 1932. All construction was carried out by Chinese, who had been brought to New Guinea for this purpose by the Germans between 1901 and 1914. By 1928, the European population of the Mandated Territory was 2443, including 718 white women; probably slightly less than half of these were living in Rabaul. The Chinese population was about 1000, all confined to Chinatown. House servants—employment of three or four per household was not unusual—often came from the neighbouring communities of Matupi and Nordup, and were normally on three-year contracts.

The Tolai villagers of the Gazelle Peninsula, highly skilled in agriculture and business even before white settlers came, had acquired considerable wealth through copra (dried coconut) production by the end of the 1920s, and were finding a new way of life as entrepreneurs. The Rabaul market was well established, partly in response to Chinese demands for fresh produce.

Steaming into Rabaul at dawn as the sun peeps over the edge of the Mother mountain and glints the brilliant greens of the palms that fringe the harbour, a tourist leaning over the ship's rail sees one of the most magnificent volcanic panoramas in the world—a perfect amphitheatre of hills. Blanche Bay, the harbour entrance, has proved to be an enormous crater, formed when the land blew out and broke the edge, letting the sea in. Twin rocks, the Beehives, stand about 200 feet [60 metres] high, undoubtedly remnants of a mountain submerged in some past catastrophe. [More precisely, they appear to be the remnants of a disintegrating volcanic cone, with a growing fringing reef.] Here picnic parties go to swim from a beach of golden sand—quite unlike the black lava beaches that surround Rabaul—and all sorts of coral growths and weird fish are seen through the crystal clear water.

The sun climbs higher above the Mother, and all Rabaul is radiant in the tropical light which has a peculiar quality not found in the sunshine of colder climes. The angle of light is different, the sun is higher, and the light penetrates the water, making dazzlingly brilliant colours of greens, blues and purples that edge the shore like a colour fantasy.

Now the Customs boat comes out with the doctor on board for whom we must parade. Medical regulations are stringent. If there were a suspicion of measles or anything else, a strict quarantine would be put on the ship, for natives are very susceptible to European diseases, against which they have little resistance. Once more the ship steams along and soon we are at the wharf, where there is a miniature Babel. A mob of natives come aboard and seem to take possession as they swarm up the ship's ladder or gangway, all chattering excitedly. They wear loincloths all colours of the rainbow and most have a flower in their hair.

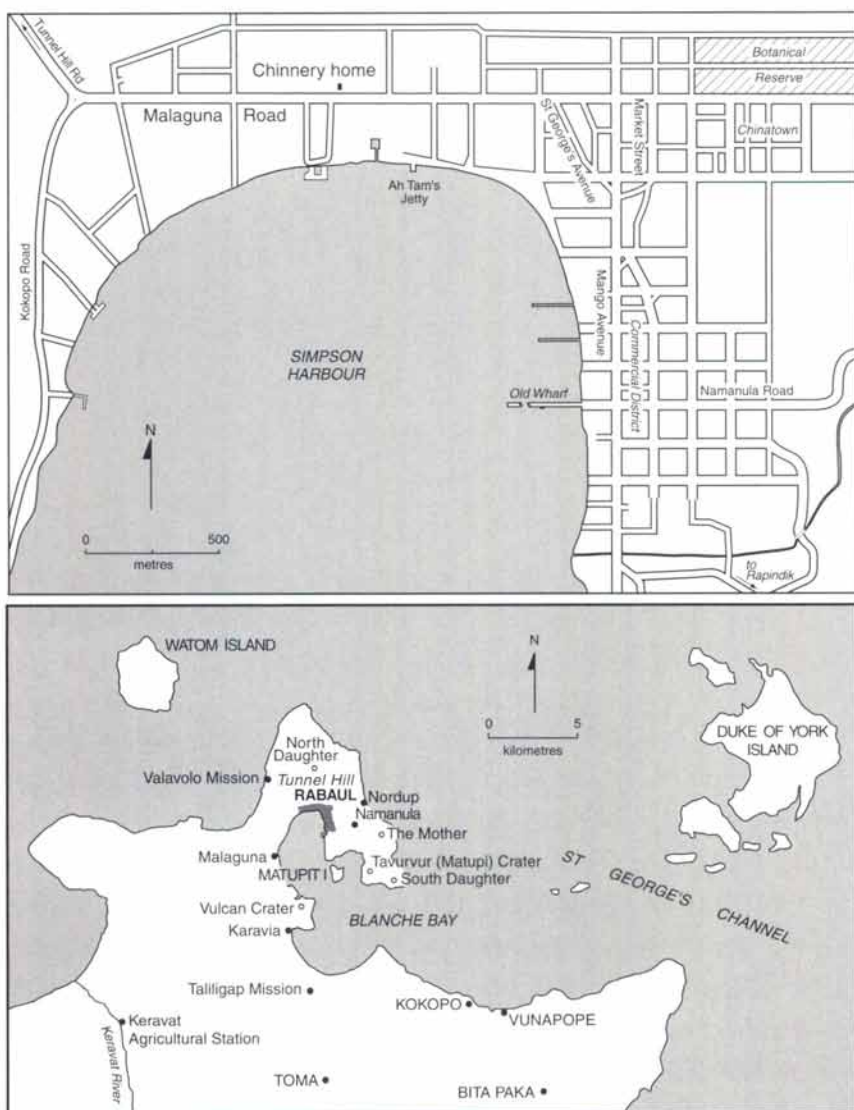
The beautiful North Daughter, 1700 feet [over 500 metres] high, is the centre background of Rabaul. It is said to be geologically older than the Mother, and is joined to the Mother by a saddle a couple of miles long, on which is built Government House and a few other residences at the end called Namanula. From this saddle, which is a mere razor-back, there is a magnificent view over Rabaul and the harbour, with the road to Kokopo and the mountains of Toma, blue in the misty distance, on one side, and on the other, the Duke of York Islands in St George's Channel with New Ireland beyond on the horizon. At the foot of the Mother is a huge extinct volcano, and on the south side is what we call 'the Crater', still smoking and belching

out strong sulphur fumes. Nearby are hot springs that Rabaul residents used to bathe in for medicinal reasons—so hot in places that one could not walk barefoot. To the south lies the South Daughter, and a mile or so this side is the native village of Matupi, where constant earth tremors occur and the level of the land between it and Rabaul has altered several times—rising once so that a causeway was formed, over which cars could go, where previously a canoe had to be taken.

This is the setting for the town of Rabaul—merely the fringe of an old crater with but room for one main road, called Mango Avenue, that runs from the eastern end near Matupi, making a sharp turn at the foot of Namanula Hill where it passes most of the administrative offices and stores, the Post Office and Treasury—then turns a sharp bend and becomes Malaguna Road, leading to the village of Malaguna, then on down the beautiful South Coast Road to Kokopo. The mango trees arching over Mango Avenue make a cool tunnel of shade where people may walk bareheaded, and it is too dark to take photos successfully. There are a few other short radiating streets at the wide end of the town up towards Chinatown—all planted with luxuriously deep-foliaged shade trees. Perhaps the most beautiful is Casuarina Avenue, its tall trees hanging with graceful pendent foliage, skirting the tennis courts and sportsground, and leading to Chinatown. Chinatown has fine shops presided over by dignified and courteous Chinese, and little dark stores simply crammed with silks and carvings and eastern curios. Pretty Chinese girls flit about in silk coats, with collars buttoned up modestly to their ears, and long blue trousers of silk, their shining black hair hanging down their backs in plaits. Chinese gardeners carry their wares in big round baskets slung fore and aft on a pole on their shoulders. Laundrymen push baskets of washing on wheels along the leafy avenues, picturesquely clip-clopping along in sandals.

March–April 1928

Mr Twycross, the wireless man, drove me to Bita Paka with Miss Margot Cowan, the Australian artist. She wanted to paint the landing, and also the place on the road where the first Australian fell, fighting the Germans in the First World War. The scene at the landing place was indescribably beautiful; great cumulus clouds piled up high above the coconuts, and reflected in the water like a mirror. I found my first conch shell, a large beautiful one with a blowing hole. A crowd of natives came along the road in the growing dusk,



Rabaul township (above) and environs

decorated in *singing* dress. They looked weird in the almost-dark, their colours and feathers showing up momentarily in the glare of our headlights.

August–October 1928

Chin is on tour with the Administrator on board the *Franklin*. Chin and Mr Murray, the Director of Agriculture, are making investigations concerning adequate food supplies to ensure the preservation of the Matty and Aua

people, amongst other activities. Chin returns on 19 October. Then he is to make ethnological investigations in the field from October 1928 to June 1929, with occasional returns to Rabaul; visiting the Mortlocks, South Bougainville, and on the east coast of New Ireland, tribes from Kavieng to Karu.

November 1928

We went to dinner at Judge Monty Phillips', where we met Dr and Mrs Reo Fortune. Mrs Fortune is the author Margaret Mead—they are both anthropologists. A few days later, Dr and Mrs Fortune came to lunch here. They are going to Manus to do fieldwork.

1 January 1929

Chinatown went mad over crackers and its dragon—the ground all around was a carpet of scarlet, deep with cracker papers, and the noise of detonating crackers went on all morning, having started the night before.

6 February 1929

Chin arrived home from fieldwork about ten days ago. Today we invited to dinner Mr and Mrs Brown (he is a barrister and solicitor), Mr Gregory Bateson (an English anthropologist), and Mr McAdam.

11 February 1929

I planted a granadilla vine which I wanted to train over a pergola, and as it grew up, I asked the boys to get some bamboos to build the pergola. The boys were lazy and I was not persistent enough until the vine was getting quite big. They put in a *diwai* [a stick, as a stake for the plant] that was not strong enough and blew down. At last I sent them out bush to get one stick bamboo for one stick tobacco per boy. Two boys went off in the morning and returned in the late afternoon with one stick bamboo. Now, they knew perfectly well it was not right, and I told one boy to go back and either get another stick bamboo or return the tobacco. He returned the bamboo to the village, and the tobacco came back to me. Of course I was wild, but that grows no bamboo. So, as there were some useless trees in the garden, growing enormously tall with small delicate foliage not giving much shade, I told them to cut them down to build the pergola, and now the granadilla is in flower.

I got some nice lengths of bamboo from the Agriculture Department and built a path leading up from the pergola, and the boys very enterprisingly planted some nice crotons along it.

22 February 1929

Chin sailed on the *Marsina* for Kieta. Chin has been out such a lot this last year—I just wish I had kept a calendar of his comings and goings. He has been out for five or six weeks and home a week or ten days—no chance at all to write up his stuff. I suppose that it will all accumulate until his next leave and then he will have to work on it.

Margaret Mead's book *Coming of Age in Samoa* came up last mail—clever writing. She tells very funny stories at dinner.

March–April 1929

Mr Humphries came out from Cambridge to collect some Sepik artefacts, and he returned with a trader, Mr Wauchope, and will stay with him on his plantation at Awar. (Later, I had a letter from Mr Humphries saying that a fine collection of stuff he secured on the Sepik was all lost on the river—he returned to America very disappointed, but Mr Wauchope has promised to try and get him another lot.) Mr Wauchope has a very nice plantation and is doing well. When he came here, he was on a modest salary in the government, but did a good stroke of business in the goldfields, getting some options, and founded the Adelaide Company. Then he put down enough to get him the plantation—I think it cost £30 000. Some of the plantations, in fact most of them, sold at too high a figure, and quite a number of the planters are sorry for themselves. Lately, too, the price of copra has steadily dropped, and planters are beginning to look around for other crops. Palm oil is being recommended, also coffee, and kapok trees [used for stuffing]. I don't know why they shouldn't grow sugar. [It would not have suited Australian interests, since sugar was being grown in Queensland.]

19 April 1929

Dr Hortense Powdermaker arrived by the *Montoro* out from London. She is a very nice American girl who did her anthropological studies under Dr Malinowski and Seligmann. She called on Radcliffe-Brown in Sydney, who referred her to Chin as being best able to give her information on a suitable

field here for work. Chin has advised New Ireland, and she sailed yesterday by *Montoro* and will settle down there to do—as she says—‘an intensive study of the natives of one tribe, chiefly women and children; trying to get a complete life history of a woman from childhood up, and endeavouring to find out if they suffer from the same repressions that modern life is imposing on our present civilisations’. [Powdermaker’s autobiography, *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*, was published in 1966.]

I cannot conjure up any idea of repression in the life of a native woman, certainly not sexual repressions. This reminds me somewhat of *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Dr Margaret Mead was also out to see if these repressions that are troubling civilisations were present in Samoa; and she found it anything but. Quite the reverse. The young people of Samoa, before they married, experimented and generally enjoyed themselves ‘under the palms’, and the still younger peeped and observed and learnt. I hope that Hortense will find that the young of New Guinea, although credited with being more savage than the Samoan, will be more circumspect.

Mr Gregory Bateson, who is out from Cambridge two years, and has been working with the Bainings and Sulkas, has gone over to New Ireland by the same boat and will assist Miss Powdermaker to fix up her first camp. She is a very plucky girl to attempt such a task straight off on her own without previous experience of camping—I wish her luck. [Professor Derek Freeman more famously challenged Mead’s views. His book, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, in which he offers evidence refuting Mead’s conclusions, was published in 1983.]

I had some people to tea the other day and the subject being discussed was the difficulty of getting carriers. It was said that natives were compelled to carry for government and that that was nothing short of forced labour. I see nothing wrong with forced labour if it is properly exercised and not abused. Under a white civilisation, all labour is forced, the belly being the taskmaster. For people to talk about forced labour in regard to the New Guinea male is bosh, or ignorance, or both. No one who has lived in New Guinea and observed at all can fail to notice that the hardest taskmaster is the New Guinea man. From time immemorial, women have been their slaves and drudges. At 30, they are practically worn out—certainly hags—though still able, poor things, to carry inordinately heavy loads while the men walk along like lords of creation, perhaps twirling a little *kundu* stick, or swaggering along chewing



Tolai women walking to the market in Rabaul

betel. Those women can be seen in Rabaul any day in the week coming into the native *bung* (market) laden up with anything from 30 to 50 pounds [15 to 20 kilograms] on their heads and generally festooned around them, and the men walking along carrying literally nothing. It makes me boil every time I see it.

Certainly in the villages, men build the houses, cut down the heavier timber, and do the heavier cutting out for the gardens, but the incessant toil of planting, cultivating, weeding and gathering taro, sweet potato and other crops is done by women. As they don't practise rotation of crops, but break new ground, gardens are necessarily some distance from the houses which means long treks to the gardens and back, laden with food. All water has to be carried either in pots, if they possess such luxuries, or in bamboo. Cooking, tending fires and cleaning up the village is done by women. Men do practically nothing. Admittedly, in the old days before government came, men hunted for food, wild pig or birds, and had intertribal feuds to maintain—all of which, I think, especially the fighting, kept the men fit, and provided a certain amount of employment. Now government objects to fighting, and although men still hunt, they domesticate pigs much more and can also trot down to the nearest store and purchase tins of meat.

The point I want to make is that when government came, life for the man in the village was entirely changed. Life for the woman went on just as hard, or harder, because so many of the able-bodied men were recruited, and old people, the young and the lazy were left on the shoulders of women.

23 April 1929

Malaua [the Chinnerys' garden-boy] came in today with his hair all covered with lime. I noticed as he was laying the table, white powder had shaken on to his shoulders making him look very untidy, and I told him to wash it off. He tried to evade, saying: 'This morning I wash-im, just now me put-im lime.' They have funny fashions. I know he has been getting at my bottle of peroxide that I keep in the bathroom—*not* to peroxide my hair. Plenty of boys pay 2 shillings for peroxide to make their hair a nice gold colour. I have seen emerald green hair, and a rich satisfying purple, and the vividest orange—extraordinary dyes.

24 April 1929

Malaua was washing down the back verandah in his usual fashion, plenty kerosene tins of water sluiced down, and scrubbing with a yard brush. He had just thrown the second, when up on the verandah jumped the cat with a pretty little kitten in her mouth, its eyes open—they were both half drowned. About three minutes afterwards, she brought up another—so that explained her recent long absences. Honestly, I always thought that cat was a he. Every night as I lay on the couch reading after dinner, she used to curl up beside me making the dog awfully jealous. She went away for two days and I questioned the boys and they said that they didn't know at all where she had gone, couldn't understand it. Native boys have the reputation of eating cats here, but I did not (as some would have) accuse them of having eaten it. Then the cat came back, but never for long. She would get something to eat, then off she would go—an amazing thief. So now we have three—the two new ones are very pretty, and the children are delighted. The cat had made her nest in an old cement barrel and when Malaua threw the water, it ran down the floorboards and nearly drowned the poor thing out. I soon dried them and put them in a basket, and now the cat looks quite a queen. She even lets the children look at the kittens. I railed a piece of verandah off so that the dog could not go near, and that keeps the children off, too.

25 April 1929

There was heavy thunder and lightning and a light fall of rain last evening, starting about 6 pm. The thunder was not so bad as the lightning, which was very vivid about 9 o'clock. Then there was a *guria* (earth tremor) lasting nearly a minute—it seemed to be in sympathy with the storm. This was not as bad as many *gurias* I have experienced which have rocked the house terribly, but it is the first noticeable one since I came back from South over a year ago. I went down the steps on to the grass and it seemed so queer to feel the ground giving and coming under my feet, exactly as if it were fluid. Prophets say that our sleepy volcano will burst forth again one day.

ANZAC Day was celebrated with the usual church services and sports afterwards at one of the outstations. The Administrator and Mrs Wisdom's children's party was a great success. It was the biggest I have been to up there—about 60 children present and a great number of mothers.

17 May 1929

Chin arrived back from New Ireland bringing two new boys for the household—one, a very good cook-boy, Undas, and Popingi, a houseboy. Undas is nearly as black as a Buka islander but Popingi is the usual brown colour; and his hair is ginger, having been limed. The day after they came, I started to make arrangements amongst them as to who would cook, there now being five boys. On one occasion, when we had only three boys, I had asked Sajam at 10.30 in the morning if their *kaikai* was ready. When he said 'boy no cook', I told him to cook the boys' *kaikai*, and he responded that he was 'not cook-boy *bilong* boy—not job *bilong* him'. So, with that experience, I decided to make definite arrangements, and it happened that Sajam was spokesman when I asked who should cook their *kaikai*. He promptly answered: 'Wash-boy, better he cook-im.'

So that being fairly logical, as the wash-boy is in charge of the outside fire, which merely consists of a couple of pieces of iron on which a pot rests over the fire, I agreed, and Sajam took it on himself to convey the tidings to Ossi, our Aitape wash-boy, that he was henceforth to cook for five sturdy natives. In about five minutes, Sajam returned to the house with his eye bunged up, and looking exceedingly sorry for himself. Ossi had objected. After feelings subsided somewhat, I called them all around and asked what arrangements they would like to make themselves. They must say definitely who was to

cook, or they could take it in turns, week about. To this they agreed. Funny how they dodge cooking, though so fond of their food. They reckon it is 'job *bilong meri* (women's work)'. They will hang about all morning till the pangs of hunger drive one of them to the cooking pot, and then by the time they have got the fire going and the stuff cooked, you find them ensconced in their houses, eating—the time being ten minutes to 12, and the table in the house not laid, though the family arrives home just after 12 for lunch. That problem, however, was now—I thought—satisfactorily resolved.

19 May 1929

Two days later, soft-voiced, soft-footed Malaua came on to the verandah after dinner. I was lying on the couch reading and he wanted me to make a *pas* (a pass—a written note of permission) for him and Ossi, both *wantok* Aitape ('one-talk', speaking the same language), to go walkabout—'*pepa* walkabout along 10 o'clock'. [They wanted to be out beyond the time of the regular evening curfew.] I gave him the pass and settled down to read again. Chin had gone to Komine's wharf to see off Gregory Bateson who was going up the Sepik. [Isokih Komine was a successful Japanese trader and shipbuilder. His wharf was used by inter-island shipping.]

About 20 minutes later, Kaup (the police-boy who accompanies Chin on his expeditions) came up to the steps of the verandah and started telling me that Sajam had lured Ossi and Malaua out to some boy's place, and when they got there, Sajam's friends attacked Ossi and Malaua without warning and a big fight ensued. As a matter of fact, I think the fight had been staged, arising out of Ossi's present of a black eye to Sajam, because as well as a crowd of Manus boys (Sajam's friends), there was a crowd of Aitape boys. Just then, Chin returned and Kaup told the story again, so Chin went up to have a look-see, but a policeman was there and a sort of order restored. The result—one black eye paid back to Malaua. Malaua had not been the offender, but that does not matter to a New Guinea boy. A boy *bilong* same place as the boy who had given his 'place friend' a black eye had been paid back. In short—intertribal warfare, over the small matter as to who was to cook for five boys.

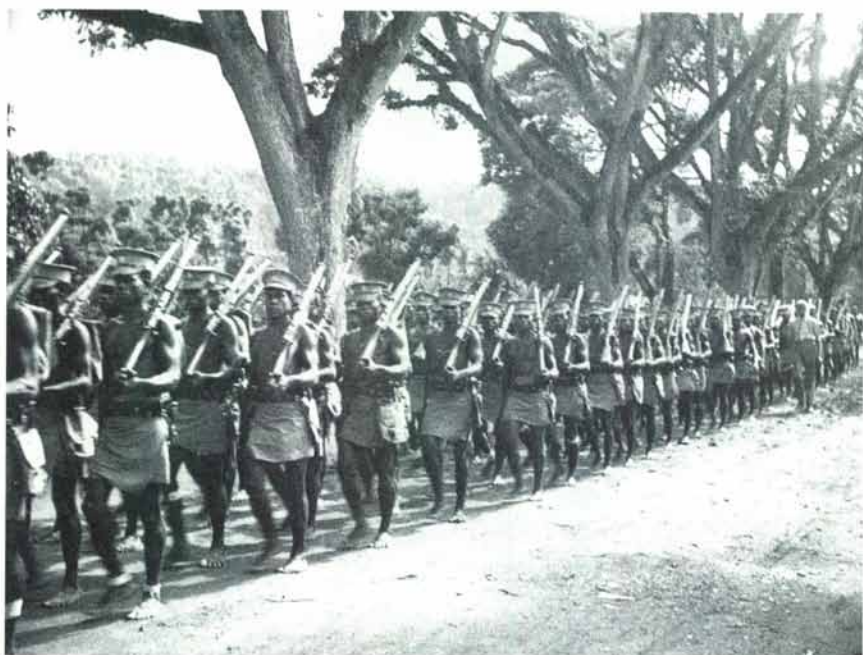
24 May 1929, Empire Day

To see a celebration of Empire Day in New Guinea is to get an insight into some of the mysterious workings and building up of our vast Empire. Rabaul,

being the place of residence of the Administrator and seat of government of the Territory, stages the big show *bilong gavman* [belong government], and does it extremely well for the benefit of the natives and the uplift of Empire. Preparation has been going on for some time, and when the day arrives natives come into town from outlying islands by schooner or from districts around Rabaul by motor lorry. Those who aren't lucky enough to get a lift walk in, and a great number ride on their bicycles. All roads lead to the parade ground at the native school, Malaguna. I have been present at several of these manifestations of loyalty, and they are not only picturesque, but a real entertainment. Our motor [perhaps a hired car—the Chinnerys did not own a car], going along Malaguna Road, turns off down a lane that leads to green lawns shaded with tall casuarina trees, in the midst of which delightful greenery the school buildings are situated.

On his arrival on the field, the Administrator, General Wisdom, inspects the guard of honour, the flag is unfurled, and 'God Save the King' is sung. It is extraordinary to see and hear this huge crowd of New Guinea natives, flanked by a large squad of Chinese, and a sprinkling of Malays and Japanese, with missionaries and officers from Germany, France and other European countries, lustily singing in pidgin and broken English—offering homage to an unseen emperor! The guard of honour is very smart looking. It is a picked squad from the native police force, and the men are trained to a pitch of high precision in the art of sloping arms and standing at attention. It is really remarkable to see these woolly-haired natives present arms. With their brown skins gleaming in the sun, short blue *laplaps* that do not reach the knee, scarlet cummerbund and pipe-clayed belts, they certainly look smart.

Prayer by the chaplain is followed by an address by the Administrator, the main point of which is that the great British Empire is in New Guinea to look after the natives and the Empire's first thought is the welfare of the native. There is a very large population of Chinese resident in Rabaul, and they attend under the auspices of the Catholic mission and the Methodist mission. It is very quaint to hear little children with so foreign an appearance sing a pretty little patriotic song with a strong Chinese accent in their high-pitched voices. [There were about 1200 Chinese living in the Territory of New Guinea in 1929, most of them in Rabaul, and the two Chinese schools had about 140 pupils. The Sisters of Mercy taught general subjects at the Catholic school; the Methodist mission employed Chinese teachers brought from Hong Kong.]



Marching squad of Rabaul's native police force

Some of the finest singing I have ever heard was by natives of the George Brown Mission. Founded 52 years ago by the late Reverend George Brown, the mission is still going strong, and anyone who has ever heard these natives singing will never forget it. An apt description is that it is like the musical booming of the Pacific on the great reefs that fringe their islands. Years ago I heard Welsh choirs sing, and thought it wonderful; but I never expected to hear in a place like New Guinea anything so wonderful as this. Those brawny natives, deep-chested from years of rowing and other manual toil in their primitive environment, seemed to combine some of the elemental music of their fierce ancestry with the cultured music of the Western world. [George Brown (1835–1917) was the Wesleyan missionary who established a mission in the Duke of York Islands of New Britain in 1875. He later became General Secretary to the Methodist missions in Sydney (1887–1908) and published the results of his ethnographical studies, *Melanesians and Polynesians: Their Life-Histories Described and Compared*, in 1910.]

The native elementary school, Malaguna, which is a brave attempt by the government to educate the natives in not only the three Rs, but also carpentering and other trades, also took part, giving a display of physical drill

and singing 'Rule Britannia'. St Paul's College, Taliligap—both sections—sing and do physical drill, and there is a fine address in faultless English by a dark brown native boy on the subject of the wonder of the British Empire and the majesty of the King. Finally, natives of Matupit do a *kulau* dance which is supposed to show the story of the young coconuts (*kulau*). Each dancer carries carved and painted wooden objects about 2 feet high—said to be the sticks with which coconuts are opened. It is a very pretty dance, and with the national anthem, brings a memorable Empire Day celebration to an end.

Yesterday when I was coming along Malaguna Road, I saw some police-boys who had just returned from an outstation on the *Montoro*. One was carrying a round native cage of liana vine which contained a large, handsome *kapul*—a tree-climbing possum. I approached the boy with the cage and asked if I could see his quaint cargo. It was a beautiful specimen of cuscus, white with large, round, reddish brown spots over the whole coat. I suggested to the boy that he might like to part with it for a consideration. 'No,' he said, he was bringing it as a present to his wife who had never seen one of this kind before. It was a variety not known at Kavieng, the 'place *bilong* wife *bilong* me', and she would keep it as a pet until he finished his work contract, when they would both return to their village and show the cuscus to their people at home.

I suggested that he would only eat it, but no, he assured me, it was furthest from his thoughts to eat the cuscus. All right; I asked him to bring it along to my house 'tomorrow, sun he on top, now I get picture', and he, promising, went off to join the others on their way to police headquarters. I hardly hoped, but this morning his wife turned up proudly bearing the cuscus, the poor thing all twisted round in the cage it had travelled in for about ten days without being allowed out—all the way from Manus. A couple of police-boy friends also came, giving advice on how most safely to release the poor thing, but themselves keeping well out of reach of its claws, and no doubt hoping by a show of helpfulness to share subsequently in whatever emoluments might accrue in gratitude from the white *Misis*.

I had previously rigged up a leafless branch to give a proper setting for the picture—so the cage was opened, and out came the beauty on to the lawn. It was tremendously active and bit out wildly at the boys trying to control it. Curiously enough, it was the native girl who did not savvy this cuscus who was most fearless. She held on vigorously to its tail, the *kapul* resenting

everything and casting longing glances up into the trees nearby. At last it was overpowered and one back leg fastened with a piece of liana twine to the branch. The cuscus hung and climbed by its tail and then, in the excitement of half a dozen natives and one white woman trying to get its picture, it suddenly got off the arranged branch, darted up a tall casuarina and was nearly lost. Only the slender string dangling from one of its velvety paws saved the situation, and it was retrieved. The photograph duly taken, the natives were rewarded and I tried again to make a bargain.



A liana vine cage containing an impressive kapul (possum) is displayed by its proud owner

'Suppose you eat *kuskus*,' I said, 'I buy his skin after feast.' But they had no intention of eating the cuscus.

Three days later, the girl and a friend came and told me that 'police-boys *bilong* Rabaul' had eaten the *kapul*. I was horrified, and yet not really surprised. After sympathising with her, I said that I would buy the skin if she would bring it. 'Oh, skin he finish. Altogether *gras* (fur) *bilong* him, he cook-im altogether *wantaim* in fire.' She declared that they took it unknown to her, and I am inclined to believe her, and did not ask what portion of the feast she ate. She was very pleased when I gave her a photo of herself holding the *kapul* in the basket, and one of it perched in the branch—so at least she has that to show to her people.

Sunday

In the house, natives are magpies—you would not like to say thieves. I have the greatest difficulty keeping little things like safety pins. Pencils, of course, simply walk out. A fortnight ago I got a dozen pencils in Chinatown for the children, who are always in need, and I thought surely we will have pencils now for a time. Not one remains today! Last evening, I put the pencil I was drawing with in the box where I keep my paints and brushes and this morning, hoping to get an early start at 8 o'clock, I went for it. Gone!

Being Sunday morning, the other boys have gone to *Lotu*—Catholic Church. I called Undas out of the *haus kuk* (kitchen) and asked: 'Where pencil he stop?' 'No savvy,' he replied.

I told him to look around and find it and said that he and the other boys would not go *limlimbur* [get time off work] till the pencil was found. He looked around in a desultory fashion for a bit and then said, 'Me find-im, find-im, find-im—me no *lukim*', which is the pidgin way of saying 'I look, look and look, and I don't see it'. So I said: 'Well, no *limlimbur* until you *lukim*', and then he gave me quite unwittingly a clue. He put his hand on to a ledge up on the wall just out of comfortable reach, found nothing: 'No, he no savvy.' So I allowed him to go back to the kitchen and I got a chair, stood on it, and on the other side of the angle of the wall on the ledge—my pencil! Their method, of course, is that if not too much trouble is made when a thing is planted away like that, it will disappear and you can buy another. But if you stop their *limlimbur*, or their tobacco, they will produce it in some innocent place where you have looked perhaps a dozen times before, and you feel such a fool when you find it there.

May 1929

This north-east end of New Britain is the centre of the Dukduk Secret Society. At one time, the demands of this society were so excessive and the ceremonies so persistent and time-consuming through the year, that the administration had them curtailed and confined to the month of May. The Dukduk is supposed to be a spirit of the forest, and waxes a powerful influence in native life. Women, children and the uninitiated are not permitted to see it, and there were death penalties for those who infringed its rights or discovered its secrets unlawfully. Children hide in their mother's arms when they hear the shrill cries of the Dukduk in the forest. Sometimes a procession is seen coming along the road from one of their hiding-places, on the way to a dance ceremony. They utter queer shrieking noises to frighten the women and children.

There are two deities in the ceremony: one is called Tumbuan [more commonly called Tubuan], the mother of the Dukduk; and the other is called Dukduk. Both these deities—bad *tambarans* or *debil-debils*—completely hide their identity behind huge conical masks that fit straight on to their shoulders. No trick or personal turn of the head can betray their identity—just as the



*Scene from the Dukduk ceremony, performed only on the
Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain*

heavy enveloping mask of leaves hanging from the shoulders completely conceals the shape of the body beneath.

The difference between the Dukduk and Tumbuan is shown in the mask. The Tumbuan, mother of the Dukduk, wears a tall mask painted with big white eye circles, and a pattern of white to represent a vague mouth. The Dukduk mask is a very elaborate affair of terrifying proportions, carved and painted with representations of symbolic design, probably known only to initiates. Both Tumbuan and Dukduk wear the heavy mask of very large pointed green leaves strung on to bamboos around the body in successive layers, which rustle heavily as the deities leap about.

In various parts of New Guinea, the rights to perform certain dances that are invented from time to time are bought and sold, and there is a regular trade. The infringement of dance rights would never be tolerated, but the dance of the dread secret society of the Dukduks is performed only by the New Britain people. No other group of people in New Guinea has anything approaching it. Much preliminary preparation is needed to arrange for the ceremonies, and much work is done in building temporary retreats or hiding-places for the parties of young men who are being initiated into the mysteries.



Beach scene following Dukduk ceremony of the Canoe Dance

The ceremonies and dances are done in sections, running into a month to complete. The first ceremony that outsiders are permitted to see is the ceremony of the Canoe Dance.

I went one morning, just at dawn, to the Matupi coast. The village of Matupi was weirdly quiet and empty; all the women were keeping out of the way. The sun was barely up when I arrived at the waterfront, which was lined with groups of old men and younger men. Chiefs and important people from many villages all over the hills that ring around Rabaul had come to stay at Matupi for its grand show of Dukduk. A dozen canoes were out on the water, laden to the gunwales, if dugouts have such, with a mass of full-grown males who could not have packed any tighter if they had tried. Only on two canoes was there a Dukduk, and they danced, waving their bodies about and bending nearly double as if in an ecstasy of excitement. The other occupants were chanting in loud tones as if to inflame the Dukduk. It became evident that there was a spirit of rivalry between the two Dukduks as they whirled and gyrated as far as the limits of a packed canoe permitted them. They had no foot room, of course—all they could do was dance from the waist, and their hands were concealed under the heavy cloaks of leaves. One old man stood up in a canoe with arms outstretched as if he were invoking some deity,

or perhaps he was merely master of ceremonies. The excitement increased as the canoes started to come in closer to shore. The gyrations of the dancers grew ever more frenzied, and the noise of the chanting increased.

On the foreshore, older men were sitting about watching the performance intently, slowly turning the cud of betel-nut in their old jaws. It seemed past endurance that these Dukduks could continue to dance in the hot sun and under their heavy weight of leaves. They came closer and closer, and the singing grew in frenzy. A very decorated canoe was the last to come ashore. The people milled about, sighing in relief at the end of the spectacle. A big feast had been arranged in the village, and a pyramid of choice bananas had been built with great care on a tall triangular erection in the centre of the village. Enclosures are built at each place of ceremony, and the Dukduks go into seclusion between each section of the rituals. No one dares even to go near the enclosure, let alone enter it. Certain death would result for any peeping Tom who tried. After the Dukduks came ashore, there was to be a dance on the beach, but they were so exhausted by their efforts that it had to be put off till the following day. There was a large *garamut* log-drum on the ground in the centre of the village, and one of the big muscular natives took up the stick that always sits in the slit gong and beat it heartily. Probably it was a signal to another village—possibly giving news of the outcome of the trial on the canoes.

Other ceremonies performed in the bush are just as colourful and spectacular as the Canoe Dance although, of course, they have not such an unusual setting—for who ever heard of a dance on the sea before? Another ceremony, Throwing Away *Tambu* (shell money), always causes a great sensation amongst onlookers. I saw it at a Malaguna village. The initiates knelt down in a long line, about 30 young men, most of whom at some time have attended—and probably still attend—the mission school and church. They kneel down in their green prehistoric garments of bush leaves, bending their heads and hiding so that even through the interstices of their masks they may not see the actors in this drama pelting them with long strings of valuable native money, their beloved *tambu*, straight from their own mint—precious little shells that are gathered on the seashore, drilled, fitted and strung. Ropes and ropes of shell money were literally hurled at each kneeling initiate. The *tambu* was carried in new plaited baskets by certain acolytes who follow the master of ceremonies around. [The money was made from the small shell, *Nassa immersa*, obtained from the north coast of New Britain.]

21 June 1929

Within the past fortnight, two Chinamen who keep trade stores have been murdered by natives and robbed—in one case, £75 was taken. One wonders if the *kanaka* is going to start a vendetta against the Chinese; two killed in a fortnight is some going, and they are not the first murders. Generally the motive is robbery, but if it should be revenge for the low price of copra, which the Chinese cannot help, it will go hard with the Oriental.

These little trading stations which the Chinese run are queer places. On one occasion I was away out in the bush, right off any beaten track, and I had to wait for some hours for some boys. The store was just off the track the natives use, and was only one room with a little outbuilding that had a cooking stove, and there was another small shed built of corrugated iron, used as a copra shed. Copra on trays of corrugated iron about 20 feet long by 3 feet wide lay on the ground, which is an offence, and an exceedingly lazy, fat native boy would bring a sackful of copra out of the shed and capsize it on to a tray. Several days are required to dry copra in the sun, a very unsure method that is giving way to the more modern kiln drying.

In one corner of the little yard was a big pile of coconuts, and some I noticed were sprouting. Natives would come and drop a few coconuts on to this pile, then go into the store and ask the little Chinaman for whatever they fancied to the value of what coconuts they brought. The Chinese are always thin to emaciation. Their patience is proverbial. Few own the trading stations; they are usually running them either for more affluent Chinese who employ them, or for white men who probably own several trading stations. The statutory distance between stations being something like 2 miles [3 kilometres], I suppose there is not undue competition for the natives' favours. A native comes in and perhaps, if he is shy, he shows the Chinaman two coconuts, and the Chinese will say: 'Put-im.' The native chucks them on to the pile and tells the Chinese that he would like a smoke of Capstan tobacco, and the Chinaman, who may be baking or doing any of a dozen things, puts everything down patiently and takes a quarter-pound tin off a little shelf behind him and puts a pinch of Capstan on to a cigarette paper, and hands it to the boy. Or perhaps the boy wants a box of matches for his two coconuts.

The Chinaman's little cooking stove is part of the workshop, because part of the stock-in-trade with the natives is the nice bread and quite good plain

sponge cake he makes. The sponge cake is just a trifle stodgy, but it is still quite edible, and the natives are very fond of it. It is a great treat to them and breaks the monotony of such things as taro and sweet potato. So the trading stores are carried on all over the place. I wondered that day how the little Chinese man slept at night, surrounded by all those natives who are so envious of his goods. He was extremely hospitable and made tea for me during my long wait, and some quite good cake which the natives eyed greedily. I gave samples to some little naked piccaninnies. The Chinaman asked some of the boys to cut copra, which they did for a stick of tobacco—half a dozen of them sitting on the ground (they never sit on the ground without a mat), cutting out the copra while waiting; and so the pile grows.

22 June 1929

Four native boys were to be hanged this morning in Rabaul and there was considerable excitement amongst the natives in town as they were to be allowed to see the execution of one Sepik, two Manus, and an Aitape. However, in the afternoon, the cook-boy came back and seemed somewhat disappointed. He said: 'They only hang *wanpela* (one) up, a Sepik.' I didn't ask him if he witnessed it; I thought it best to leave the subject alone—they were all murder cases. Capital punishment is very rarely inflicted. [It was extremely rare in Papua, but more common in New Guinea.]

Chin being away in the islands, I decided to take the children for a trip to see a plantation. It was Sunday morning; there had been a native *singsing* the night before and we had heard, as usual, the drums beating out their rhythm till late at night. I got a car from the town garage, with a native driver—the usual type of smart boy wearing a cotton *laplap* to his knees, with a red cotton sash securing it round his waist and the inevitable flower tucked behind his ear. One of our houseboys came to see us safely into the car—cook-boy had already got his best white *laplap* on, ready to go to church. We drove along the Tunnel Hill Road, so called because a tunnel had been cut into the hillside by the Germans. We were on our way to Mr Mullaly's plantation, Natava, on the north coast.

Mr Mullaly [who later became a Member of the first Legislative Council of New Guinea, in 1933] bought his plantation about three and a half years ago, when it was producing only 8 or 9 tons of copra a month. The first month he went into it, it jumped to 20 tons a month and has never produced less,

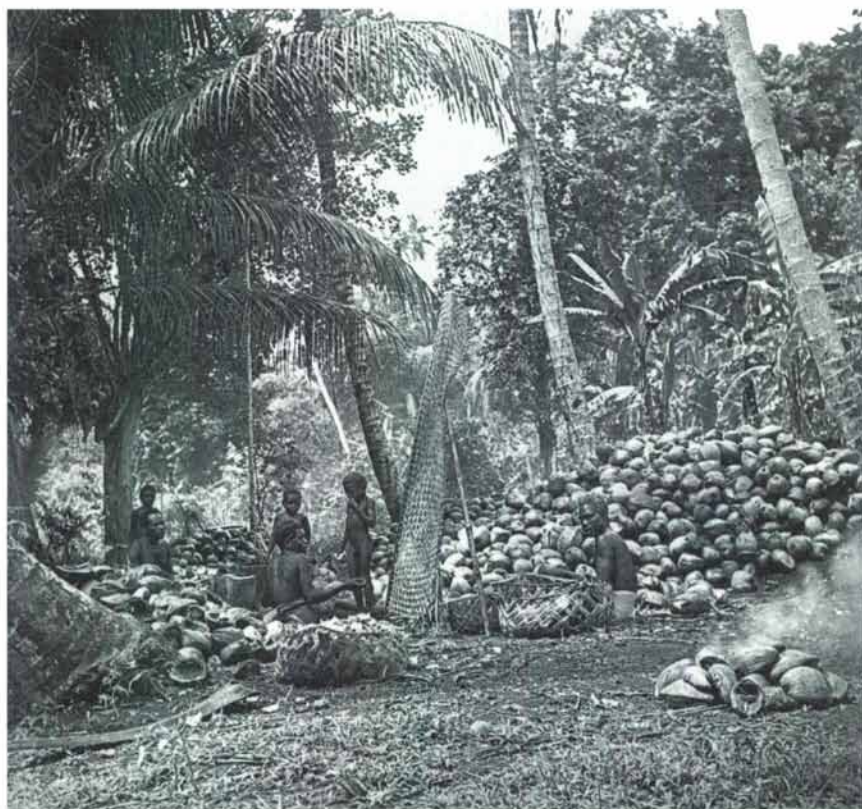
and has gone up to 25 tons at present. He has been planting cocoa lately, and has put in 12 000 cocoa plants since November. The light bush is left for shade for the young plants, and when they get to about a year old, the trees are thinned out until, at three years' growth, all the native trees have been removed.

29 June 1929

Mr Bishop, the Anglican clergyman of Rabaul, came to morning tea and asked me if I had ever seen the sunset on the North Coast Road. Having duly replied in the negative, he said he would pick us all up and take us out at 4 pm. Sunset is about 5.30 and the darkness drops swiftly. We were all ready at 4 o'clock and jumped into his bus, and set off along Malaguna Road, past Ah Tam's, reputedly the wealthiest man in New Guinea, past Komine's, the Japanese shipyard, where the inter-island schooners are pulled up on the slip for overhaul. It was a delightful run, but when we were about halfway, we ran into rainstorms—we would see a line of wet and dry across the road showing where the rain started. Some beautiful effects of light occurred through the showers. On our return the car went through rivers of water that had fallen in the short space of an hour or so. [Ah Tam (his real name was Lee Tam Tuck) was a prominent member of the Chinese community in Rabaul—a wealthy businessman who owned shops, shipyards, a hotel and several plantations. He had arrived in New Guinea about 1882. See page 102.]

July 1929

Mrs Fortune (Margaret Mead) came in about 10 o'clock—dropped like a bolt from the blue from Manus. She has been staying a day or so at Judge Phillips' and a day or so at Mrs Twycross's. Her husband, Reo Fortune, went on the *Montoro* to Samarai to cross to Port Moresby, from where he could go and get some pictures for the book he is to publish on his work on the villagers of Dobu. His camera was not working when he was there before. As Mrs Fortune did not want to go to Papua, she stayed here. [Mead describes her Manus fieldwork in her autobiography, *Blackberry Winter: My Earlier Years*, published in 1972. Monty Phillips (a Rabaul judge recently appointed to the Supreme Court) was responsible for introducing her to Phebe Parkinson (see page 116) with the idea that Mead should write her biography. Reo Fortune's *Sorcerers of Dobu* was published in 1932.]



Copra coconut plantation

Mrs Fortune and her husband have been six months on a little island on Manus, in a house built really in the sea. She has collected, she said, 30 000 drawings by about 50 children. She used to get 60 pencils sent up every six weeks. I don't know what colossal fact is going to be produced from the 30 000 drawings. The main facts that she seemed to gather were that boys drew literal things such as boats, men fishing, alligators, while girls conventionalised. One child drew the same identical drawing for about 60 days, and then suddenly produced the usual child's idea of a man (a stick figure), which was the sort of thing that the others were doing. All frightfully interesting. The patience of handling 30 000 monstrosities like these has me, as Americans say, beat.

She seems to be slightly biased regarding Miss Powdermaker. She doesn't like the idea of her cooking for herself—Powdermaker had said that the natives were not clean enough for her. Anyhow, I admire Hortense for refusing to eat

food the cleanliness of which she questions, but I don't know why she should wear shorts and stockings rolled below her knees, and wear a boy-scout knife on a belt around her waist. Still, these are trifles that the new-to-New Guinea soon grow out of—cooking will be the first, I guess.

Mrs Fortune seems to think that men work just as hard as women in New Guinea, which I have never heard before, but men evidently gather *saksak* (sago) in hostile country, work which women can't perform, and of course the fishing; and women have quite large families, eight or nine being common, but usually up to half die.

RETURN TO NEW GUINEA

RABAU 1932

At the start of 1930, Chin sailed for Vancouver on a Rockefeller Grant trip which gave him a month in the United States and about nine months with Professor Malinowski in London University. He also went to Geneva. Sarah spent the years 1930–32 in Sydney, while her three older girls went to school. She had intended to settle them into boarding-school at the start of 1933, and to return with Chin at the end of his leave. However, two events produced a change of plan. Sarah took the children to the Blue Mountains for a holiday and the children loved it so much that Sarah thought it a wonderful place to send them to school. Sarah also learnt that Chin had been appointed Director of District Services and Native Affairs—a very big job—and she decided that she must return to Rabaul immediately.

I had a wonderful trip up on the *Macdhui*. Mrs Doris Booth OBE got on board at Brisbane and shared my cabin. (She published a book called *Mountains, Gold and Cannibals* which I had the pleasure of reviewing in the *Rabaul Times* in 1929.) She was travelling incognito as she and her husband have had a major disagreement as to who owns the gold-mine which the miners gave her in gratitude when she nursed them (and the natives on the field) through a terrible outbreak of dysentery when there was no hospital nor doctor there, and she was the only white woman. [She was a trained nurse, and the administration supplied drugs and dressings. Her imminent divorce from Charles Booth attracted great publicity.] For this she got her OBE, and the gold-mine which she refused £40 000 for, and to which she is now returning to work. Anyhow, it was very pleasant having her as cabin mate.

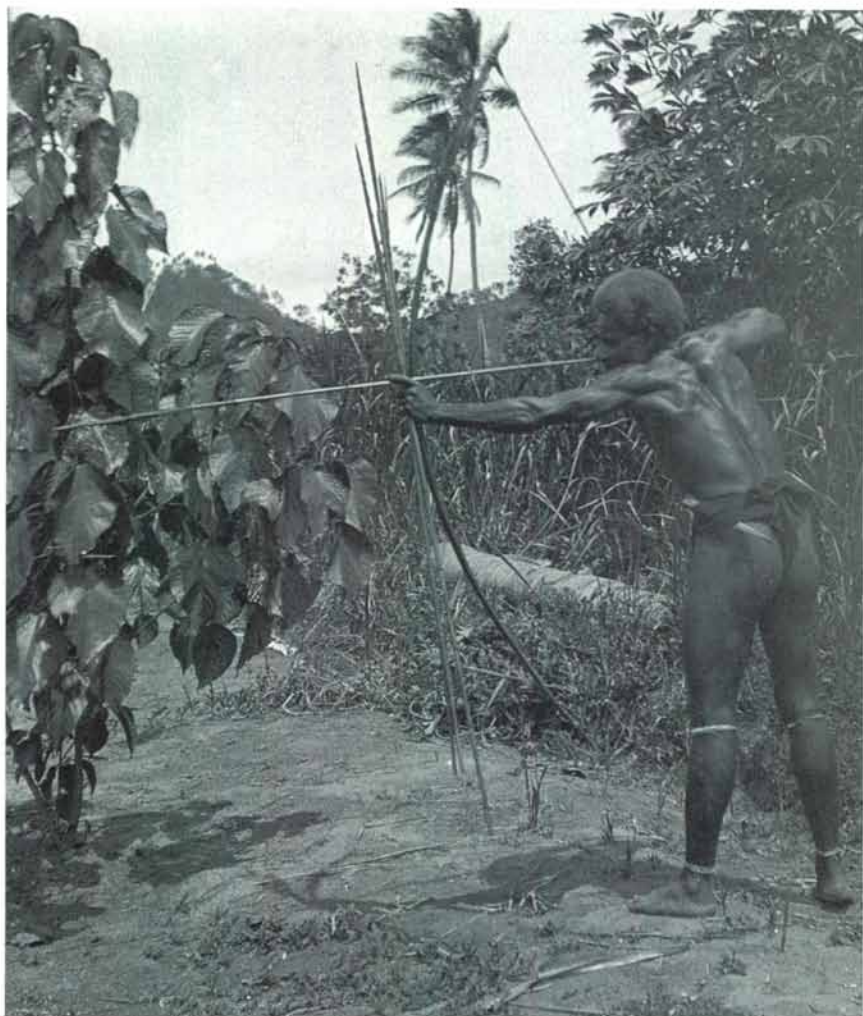
It is so mountainous in the wilderness they dig the gold from, that even horses are useless. Planes land about an hour and a half's walk from her place, Cliffside, so the poor thing is wondering how her ankle (recently broken on a skiing holiday in the Australian Alps) will stand up to the strain. The palatial mansion her husband, Charles, has built is ridiculously large, so I am told. He thought he would like a nice bungalow after having lived in a native hut for so long, so he built a mansion.

2 October 1932

We got to Rabaul on Sunday at 3 pm, having steamed slowly all morning, doing 4 knots so that the stewards would not get so much overtime. Burns Philp who runs this line is a Scottish firm and I suppose the few bawbees they saved were of much more importance to them than the time of about 100 planters, miners, government officials, and a sprinkling of tourists. Chin came out to the boat in the doctor's launch to meet me, and looked just the same old Chin who had left Sydney about a month ago. General Griffiths, the acting Administrator, came on board, and Captain Duncan [Harbour Master at Rabaul] introduced me to him while Chin was away directing the boys with my luggage. I had 14 packages in the hold, about seven in the cabin, and two large cane chairs on deck.

I was very glad to get home after the voyage—nine days from Sydney. The garden is lovely, but the house is unspeakable with appalling dust from the road. There is no stone on the roads here, and we are getting so many cars now. Chin has got some good houseboys. Malaua is still with us. His friend, Ossi, who was wash-boy before, has gone back to his village and got a wife and baby. The other two boys, who are new to me, are Dumunga and Manau. They are very alike, they might be brothers—I asked but they are not. However, they come from the same place, Aitape, and that accounts for it. The first couple of days I found it hard to distinguish them, but one has his septum pierced, and has a cicatrice pattern on his shoulder. Dumunga wants to *mekim pepa* [sign a contract] for one year. Manau is Chin's boy, and goes out to the bush with him.

They enjoyed putting up all the 'somethings *bilong Misis* along house', and we got the lounge painted and the pictures up. They got interested in putting up the New Guinea curios. We put up a number of masks, etc., in a panel, and just as I finished unpacking, I came on a bead mat, prettily made in



Manau, Chin's patrol cook and houseboy

colours in a geometrical design. I gave it to a boy and said: 'He mat *bilong* teapot, now teapot he no make mark along table.' The boy said: 'All right.' But the next time I went into the room, the mat was hanging on the wall under the masks, the pendent drop of the New Guinea panel.

Rabaul is surely one of the few cities on earth that can boast it is built within the bowl of an ancient crater. Mighty earthquakes shake us from time to time. We had one the other night. I heard some neighbours scream, my dog howled in terror, birds started twittering, cocks crew and lots of dogs howled. I got up out of bed and walked round the verandah. The stars were as

tranquil as ever. Except for the swishing of water in the tanks, and the noise of birds not yet settled down again, nothing might have happened.

November 1932

Miss Camilla Wedgwood from London arrived by *Macdhui* on 20 November. She is going to Manam Island to do anthropological work for a year. Manam is not so very far from where Dr and Mrs Fortune are at present—out from America for two years' fieldwork. Dr Margaret Mead's book *Growing up in New Guinea* deals with the Manus adolescent girl, and has been very well received. Her description of a marriage I cannot believe, however. I think she paints too sombre a picture of the outlook of the bride. That she is totally unwilling, and that the man simply takes an unwilling woman in a manner that is entirely unloving and unconciliatory—no society could possibly endure under such conditions. But, further, she says that once a child is weaned, it passes entirely from the care of the mother. It is taken by the father to his activities and the child is not taught to love nor honour its mother. Illustrating this, she cites a case where a child who was toddling and still at its mother's breast, went and had a drink from his mother and toddled back to his father and jeered at the mother. Margaret cites this as the normal attitude. Women in New Guinea undoubtedly work a dashed sight too hard, but that children do not as a general rule love their mother I find quite unbelievable.

I shall be very interested to see what aspect of women's relations is displayed in the work of Miss Wedgwood. As she had the advantage of studying under Professor Malinowski in London, Dr Haddon in Cambridge, and was with Professor Radcliffe-Brown in Sydney, her outlook should certainly be broad. She lectured in London, at the school, and also in Sydney. She will be on a nice island about 20 miles long and just across from Mr and Mrs Wauchope's plantation at Awar. They have generously offered to look after her and have already secured a married cook-boy whose wife also will assist her—all the more valuable as they both '*bilong* place' where she will work.

Then up the Sepik a couple of days' journey is Gregory Bateson. He has been sent out by Cambridge and this is his second trip up the Sepik. He went to the Bainings [mountains in New Britain on the southern border of Tolai territory] when he first came to the Territory but did not get on at all well with the people. Found them very uncommunicative, but as he is very

inclined to live rather rough, in native fashion, I don't think the people understand it. I think the white man trying to find out the secrets of native culture organisations still needs to be the superior—he should maintain the prestige of his heritage, and natives know that quite well. Gregory Bateson is an awfully nice chap—6 foot 4 inches and very handsome—but he gets terribly careless about his dress and lives on native *kaikai* practically exclusively. Anyhow, I do think it has its effect on the natives' attitude. I know some people think if they put on a *laplap* and squat round with the natives that they will get initiated into all the mysteries—but it does not necessarily follow. Missionaries know more of the natives than anyone else, and they always maintain their own position, introducing their own cultures, and enriching natives by these contacts. One has only to notice the difference in the country round a mission station and that of the country not under mission influence, to see the benefits of the new culture contacts.

I should personally be a very strong supporter of the idea that anthropologists who go out to live for a year or two in a district should be expected to bring a coop of fowls, a couple of pigs, and some good seeds, and be expected to make a garden introducing some European foodstuffs and fruits, and when they leave the district, natives would have that legacy. They themselves would inevitably benefit by the improved attitude of the natives.



For years I have wanted a sundial and when I came back this time I started in to design one. After weeks of weary, fruitless search I got a sudden inspiration that a standing stone, which was broken in three places, and which Chin had brought in from a village, might be used as a pedestal. These stones had queer carvings lightly cut on them, like the representation of a sun, circular, not rising or eclipsed by the horizon, and below the sun was a series of carvings in simple geometrical design. I worked out a design to use the three stones with the straight centre piece for the pedestal and the taller pieces with tapering ends to flank it. But when I revealed the great idea to Chin he refused to let me have them as they are absolutely prehistoric, and are supposed to bear out the theory of the Sun Worshippers or Movements of Culture founded by Elliott Smith. [Professor Elliott Smith, of London University, developed the theory that all cultures originated in Egypt.]

So I turned around again, and saw some old stone pots of different sizes and shapes, very crudely cut out, and I decided that three—one on top of the other—with a square tablet of cement would just give me the right height. I felt this would be even nicer than the other idea, but—again—these were priceless relics and could be used adequately nowhere else but in a museum. They were all of a piece with the ancient stone circles and standing stones of early Britain, and going back into the bowels of antiquity. Well! That was twice. So I enlisted the sympathy of a lady friend (Phyllis Froggatt) who has a car—and I said I wanted to go out and gather stones. We were told that there were a lot of waste cement steps and old house piles lying idle that had been foundations for the old native hospital, now removed to Rapindik. So we stopped there, and chose a pillar and some broken pieces that might do for foundations. Chin obtained government permission to take said pillar—although he was told it was a concession as all the concrete material is to be used to build a bridge. Next morning I went with Manau and the boys and showed them the pieces we wanted; the site is just three minutes from here.

Phyllis has been teaching me to drive a car. I learned quite quickly, as I drove all the way out and home, arriving back after dark on the second lesson—the first lesson only half an hour. After I had been riding motor cycles for years in England it seemed easy.

The Experimental House

In December 1932, I wanted some alterations made to our bungalow in St George's Road, and asked the Administrator if they could be done. He very kindly sent Mr MacGowan, Superintendent of Public Works, along to give an estimate. I was agreeably surprised when Mr Page, who is in charge of bungalows, then offered Chin a choice of two bungalows at present being erected. They are a new design and are supposed to be very superior in design and layout to the general run of bungalows we have at present.

Formerly all houses in Rabaul were erected by Chinese carpenters. They used a few natives for the rough work, but never permitted these stone-age people to use their sharp steel saws and other tools. Thus natives were not learning carpenters' and plumbers' trades. A technical school had been established on Malaguna Road, and here young natives from 14 years were being taught carpentry, etc., but up until now they had never been allowed to build a European-style house. Then General Griffiths decided an experiment

should be made and natives at the technical school in Malaguna Road should be given a chance to show what they could do. Two bungalows, identical in design, would be built in Rabaul—one by Chinese carpenters on the usual contract system, and one by the young technical students. The latter were to build a bungalow on Malaguna Road, entirely by themselves; every piece of wood sawn and fitted, and all plumbing, with the white teacher at the school and a Malay overseer to watch progress.

There is no reason why natives should not be taught to handle white men's tools and build white men's houses. People of New Guinea build fine large houses, and in parts of the Sepik they erect huge ceremonial houses built and decorated with wonderful carved figures and decorated house posts. All sorts of mythical gods, queer birds, beasts, crocodiles, snakes of the swamplands and big beaked hornbills are carved with stone-age tools in wood so heavy it would sink in water. Tami Island bowls and Trobriand Island bowls are made of wood so hard that it is difficult to drive even the sharpest steel pin through it, yet the most involved designs are worked with primitive native tools.

Good workmen in civilised society learn to keep their tools in order. The native has not only to keep his in order but also to find the natural raw material from which to make them. Often the raw material comes from a neighbouring island, or from quite a distance away, and may have to pass through the hands of a number of traders before reaching the craftsman. Such is the case where valuable shells are traded from the coast away up into the inland mountains. It takes many months for the shells to reach their final destination; therefore, shells that can be purchased on the beach for a shilling will be worth a pig or a load of sweet potatoes by the time they get into the mountains.

People who sell a particular stone or shell used for a tool may not have sufficient skill or ability to manufacture it—so you get the first steps in raw imported goods and manufactured goods, or secondary industries. Shell knives are used in fashioning and carving. These take a particularly sharp edge, sharper than stone, and would probably be used for incising the fine designs of inlaid strokes. Awls are made from the stingray. Scraping knives are made from bamboo, sharpened to a point or used as a flat scraper. Tusks of wild boar are sharpened and used, as are the teeth of *blakbokis* (flying fox), and the tiny teeth of the tree-climbing kangaroo. These are used as engraving points.

Primitive pyrography, poker work, is used to decorate lime gourds and bamboo utensils. The bamboo combs men wear in their hair are decorated



The Chinnery house, close to completion

with intricate patterns and elegant designs. Some of the best designers are jealous of their art, and have a copyright law of their own that none dare infringe without risk of starting a feud. The point I want to emphasise is that New Guinea natives understand the use of their own tools, and we can easily teach them to use steel tools and adopt our method of building by nailing, instead of their method of tying with vines. Since we have taken them more or less from their manner of living, we should substitute something worthwhile for it, and I hope that building a house entirely on their own, with only the supervision of their teachers, is one of the steps on the way.

The Chinese-built house, which has the roof on, is close to town on Namanula Road, with neighbours so close that one could imagine hearing three gramophones playing simultaneously! (As we live on open verandahs, all sounds carry.) Here there is no view. The house the natives have begun building in Malaguna Road is just past the road to the new wharf. It is on virgin land, hot and moist and full of green bushes and trees, and right at the base of the North Daughter. When we went along the famous raintree avenue to look at the site, native students were already busy sawing planks and big timbers ready for a start. Five-feet-high cement uprights were already in place as foundations for the house—much nicer than the old black-painted timber posts.

A sheet of tin is set on top of the uprights to keep ants and borers from attacking the house timbers, and the house is set loose on the cement piles to make it earthquake proof.

We chose the house to be built by the natives simply because it has such lovely views of the harbour from the front, and because it would be cooler. On the east was the Mother mountain where we would see the sunrise in the morning, and at night the moonrise over the cleft of an old crater. As a backdrop to the garden was the beautiful North Daughter, where a little village sits in a circle cut off the mountain-top by wild natives, who had evidently gone to live there as a refuge from fighting enemies. There, from on top of their wall-faced mountain, they could look down and see anyone approaching. Now the village is ringed around with coconut palms that make a wreath on the crest.

On the west side, the hills run away down between North Coast Road and Kokopo Road, which is the South Coast Road. On the east, the South Daughter is active and sends whiffs of sulphur across the harbour, which blackens silver and is pungent to the nostrils. The hills around the harbour are honeycombed with craters, now covered with foliage and trees that obliterate the scars of past earthquakes.

From the point of view of making a garden, Chin was at first inclined to doubt the merit of the site—said it was an awful piece of ground (it was!), because it sloped two ways at once; in fact it stood on its ear. At the back, the ground ran down so close from the North Daughter it seemed one with the garden, sloped down seawards; and then tilted in a despairing fashion to the east. But the views were so glorious that a little adversity like the lie of the land seemed of small account. True, we inherited holes in the ground where a lorry could have been buried, produced by our primitive methods of roadmaking. When dirt roads develop so many holes that travelling in a car is like riding a corduroy track, the natives go forth with a big shovel, scoop up some dirt from the nearest point on the wayside, and throw it into the holes. The government was to straighten the land out for us, and plant hedges before handing it over to us, a residence.

It was fitting that the man who should have the first European house built entirely by these Melanesian natives should be the Government Anthropologist and Director of District Services and Native Affairs. I am very proud to have the chance to live in this 'Experimental House'.

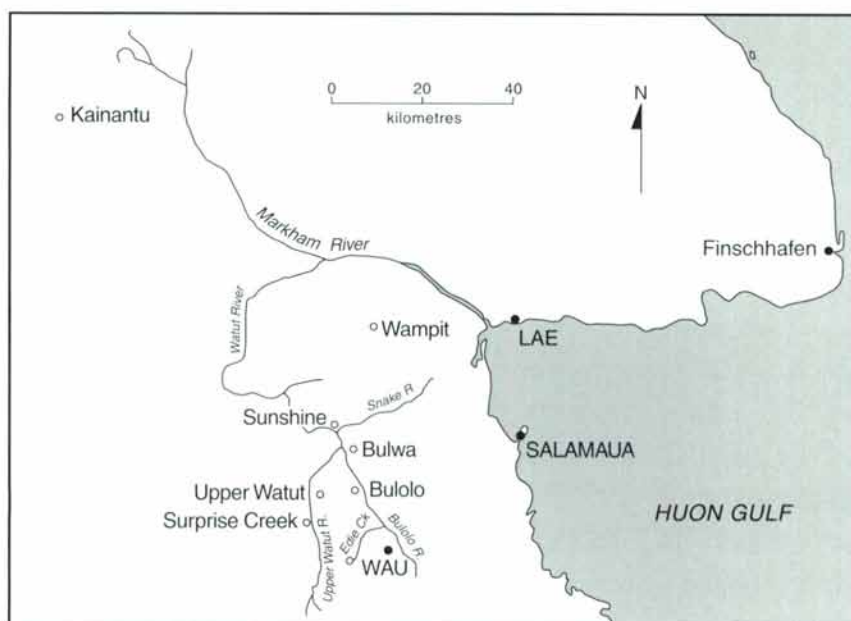
STEAMER TO SALAMAUA

Salamaua on the Huon Gulf was known as 'The Beach' by the men who swarmed there in the 1920s to prepare for the rugged journey into the interior, where gold had been found. In the high country above 1800 metres, rain forests give way to the moss forests where trees are lichen-covered and hung with wet green curtains of moss.

January–February 1933

To get to the famous goldfields of New Guinea, one leaves Rabaul by steamer and travels two days to Salamaua, government headquarters of the Morobe District and port of entry for the goldfields of Wau. The alternate three-weekly steamer takes five days, calling at different ports and plantations to pick up what is called the true wealth of these islands—copra made from coconuts. Goldfields come and go, but agriculture remains the backbone of a country's wealth. Nature hid away her store of gold cunningly, beyond jungles and crisscrossing torrential streams and swamps, behind ramparts of mountains 8000 feet [2400 metres] high in places.

Just ten years ago, big-hearted, strong-booted men with native carriers walked in from Salamaua and over the terrible mountains, travelling over country that even mules could not use. They climbed hand over fist, pulling themselves up incredibly steep slopes, using liana vines or branches, and sliding down where it was impossible to keep their feet. One man required a string of 10 or 15 natives to carry the packs of food and requisites for existence in a foodless country. The trip often took three weeks, and as a native can only carry 50 pounds, and eats the equivalent of 10 pounds of rice a week, meat and tobacco, etc., and must carry his own blankets, he would eat his load in three weeks. After trails were cut, a man in good condition could do the trip in seven days up, and five days down. The natives were often



Goldfields of Morobe District

antagonistic, wanting to fight the white men, raiding and stealing their stores. The village of Rabal, a couple of days in from Salamaua, was notorious for its hostile natives who repeatedly attacked those trying to reach the goldfields on foot. Many natives carrying loads for white men disappeared on the road, until at last it was almost impossible to get carriers to go up to the goldfields at all. But perhaps the greatest terror was not the antagonistic arrows and spears of incessantly warmongering, near-cannibalistic tribes determined to keep out the strange white invader, nor the crocodile-infested rivers, but that small, persistent tropical enemy, the anopheles mosquito, with health-sapping, deadly malaria in its sting.

Dreadful hardships were endured. Men lived rough, ate rough, and thought rough. Malarial dysentery swept the canvas camps, but hope always gleamed just around the next corner—a big pocket of gold would surely lie in that next riverbed. Eventually an aeroplane service was started and planes flew in, 40 minutes from Salamaua to the Wau Valley, terminus for the goldfields, 4000 feet above sea level. Fares then were £25 per head, so the natives still had to walk—and freight was charged at 1 shilling a pound weight. Some of the heavy machinery brought up for the gold-mining companies weighed up to 3 tons, and specially built

Junker aeroplanes were imported for that part of the service. Cattle, pigs and horses were also flown in. The climate at Wau is much cooler, and natives who work up at these high altitudes have to wear warm clothing. Edie Creek, one of the wealthiest goldfields, goes to 8000 feet altitude.

I decided to go for a trip to the goldfields at Wau. My brother Bob has a claim on the Edie Creek, and Doris Booth had invited me to stay with her at Wau. Bob has been holidaying with us in Rabaul, and he'll travel with me. We booked passages on the *Montoro*, due to leave Rabaul on 26 January, and calling at Kavieng, Pondo, Lorengau, Madang, and arriving at Salamaua on 2 February. Because Thursday was Anniversary Day and a holiday, the ship's cargo could not be discharged, and we did not get away until the following afternoon, 27 January. [Their journey followed an unusual route, since it would have been shorter to go from Pondo (New Britain), to Kavieng (New Ireland), to Lorengau (Manus) and then to Madang on the mainland. This would have brought them to Kavieng on Sunday, however, and Sarah explains that whereas Pondo could be worked on a Sunday, Kavieng couldn't. The revised trip took them about 200 kilometres out of their way.]

27 January 1933

When I got down to the *Montoro* and went to see my cabin I found they had put me in a top bunk in a cabin with two others—three in a cabin all bound for Salamaua, a six-days' journey in the tropics! I was told the other passengers were Mrs Hertz, who was just going out to Salamaua on a trip to see her husband, and Mrs Bradley, whom I knew in Papua. Mrs Hertz is having a holiday from her plantation in New Ireland, which she has built up single-handed. She is a very plucky woman and has had a very uphill fight, but now she is able to keep a manager and comes to Rabaul for a month or two at a time. She is a very attractive and charming woman. But the idea of sharing one wardrobe and one mirror was not to be endured if it could be cured, and although there was supposed to be a crowd of nearly 60 going round from Rabaul, Chin managed to secure a deck cabin for me all to myself—the cabin, I was told, in which the Minister for Territories travelled. And here I am lying on my bunk between afternoon tea and dinner, jotting. The music of violin and piano comes quite clearly from the music room but does not annoy me. I have the advantage of having two portholes on the bow and one to port, so I can see the scenery and get the breeze.

There are a number of administrative officials going round—Mr Eric Feldt, who was at Salamaua five years and has just returned from South with his bride, a very nice girl who is intensely interested in the new life she is seeing for the first time. They are going to Madang. Then Mr and Mrs Ted Taylor, who have been seven years at Kokopo, are going to Salamaua—Ted Taylor knows Morobe District well as he was there years ago. Jerry MacDonald and his wife have just returned from long leave, and are also going to a new district—Manus. Mr Knox, our new Director of Public Works, is going up the Wau. Also for Salamaua is Mr Ian Mack, and Mr Gerry Keogh is for Marienberg. [Ian Mack was later killed in the Central Highlands. See page 117.] Then there are some missionaries and miners off back to the fields. A good many women, too, and there is a very good-looking nun on board with whom I had a little chat—she is just out in New Guinea five weeks.

We passed Nusa Island and hove to for the night on coming to Kavieng, New Ireland. No one ever attempts to sail up the narrow channel through the reefs at night. Beautiful little islands line the channel, but to a mariner's eye they are probably anything but beautiful with their treacherous green shoal water, and curling white breakers that outline the underlying reefs. Although I took a number of photographs of the islands, never two alike, still I longed to be able to paint pictures of the most delicate translucent green water, going to blue and purple where the water deepened, the golden yellow sands fringing the islands, the deep green of the casuarinas that droop their feathery foliage towards the surf, and the brighter green of the coconut palms, with their tall, slender masts rearing towards a sky of indigo blue with heavy storm clouds.

Heavy rain fell in the night, and in the morning we awakened to find the storm canvas down on the weather side of the ship. We pulled alongside Kavieng just as the breakfast bell went. There was quite a cool breeze blowing and occasional scuds of rain slanted across the landscape. There is a pretty shoreline at Kavieng with the ubiquitous coconut palm and equally ubiquitous Burns Philp's store on the beach. We could see the flag flying over the Residency, and presently Mr Bob Melrose, the District Officer, arrived and Mr Knox introduced him to me. He kindly offered to take me in the car that Mr Knox was going in for a trip down the road later on.

After breakfast, my brother Bob and I strolled off to have a look around, and walked down past the Residency where we were told we could see the grave of Boluminski, a Prussian officer of the German administration who

built the Kavieng Road—I suppose that might be called his epitaph. The road is said to be paved with the bodies of the natives, so many died in its building. Boluminski died in 1913. Unfortunately we had been wrongly directed and missed the grave, it was in the opposite direction. I shall make an effort to see it on my return—on his tombstone is the conch shell that was blown to call the natives to work. [Franz Boluminski, who was of Polish descent, was District Officer of Kavieng 1900–13. New Guinean oral history confirms this account of his apparent brutality; but it also suggests that the conch shell was intended to soak up some of his power.]

I enjoyed our motor ride down the famous Kavieng Road. It is a very winding road, there hardly seems 200 yards without a sharp turn. Built of coral, it has a very good surface, although slippery when wet. Portions of road near the Methodist mission are lined with colourful crotons and bright pink califas, which makes a delightful change from the everlasting green. There is no European school at Kavieng. The government will provide one if there are 16 children to attend, and there are at present only 12. [A school did open later in the 1930s, with 14 pupils.]

Sunday, 29 January 1933

On Sunday morning at 6 am we got to Pondo, the site of the Carpenters factory where desiccated coconut is made. Here there is a good view of the Father mountain, over 7000 feet high. It is about 40 miles from here but dominates the landscape. A constantly changing plume of smoke issued from the mouth of the crater at the top of the mountain and caught the early rays of sunlight.

We went off in the launch to see the desiccated coconut factory. They pack it in cases 130 pounds each, and it is shipped to Sydney and repacked into 1-pound packets for retail—Primrose brand. When we reached the shore we saw Mr Bill Korn [who worked for Carpenters at Pondo Plantation] at the sheds helping discharge the cargo. He told us it was about 2 miles to the factory and residences, but he said that a railway trolley would soon be down and the boys would take us. We were to stop the trolley when we saw it and tell them to go back with us. We decided to walk along the rails a bit instead of waiting. Mrs Hertz, Mr and Mrs MacDonald, Mr Knox, Bob and I, were in the party. It was very hot. We were just discussing the fact that we had no intention of walking 2 miles through a coconut plantation, when the trolley

could be seen weaving through the coconut trees and, to our horror, three white people on it. That meant they would go on right to the wharf—we were about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile inland. So when they arrived, Mrs Hertz, who is not fond of walking, told them we had been told to take the trolley back when it arrived. The men laughed and said as they rolled away, 'We will send it back for you', so perforce, we waited. From where we were, we could see the launch coming across with another load of people, and Mrs Hertz got pretty desperate and said: 'There—now they'll all get on and there will be no room for us! I can see Eileen Taylor and Ted getting on now.'

Presently the trolley came back from the beach with, fortunately, only the Taylors on board. There was an upturned wicker basket in the middle of the flat trolley, which of course had no sides or seats. On this chair Mrs Hertz sat, while some stood at the back and some sat on the floor, and two boys pushed it along the rails. I had seen one of the boys measuring up Eileen Hertz with his eyes and wondering if he had to push her, too. It is marvellous how those two boys could propel that vehicle along, loaded with four big men and four women. There was a slight up-gradient which Mr Knox calculated at about 1 in 200.

When we got to the factory we sampled the desiccated coconut, and saw big ovens where they bake 60 loaves of bread a day for the boys. They bring flour from Sydney at £6.10s a ton and they reckon it is cheaper than rice. Mr Bert Evenson, the manager, very kindly allowed us to sample the bread. It is a golden brown colour, and I thought would be improved with a little more salt. Then on the opposite side of the same building was the long line of furnaces to provide hot air to dry the coconut. The furnaces were closed and cracks in the doors were plastered with clay. We went to Mr Evenson's residence, where we had morning tea, which was delicious after ship's tea. By this time the party had swelled to 17 and it required three trolleys to get us back to the ship.

We are due to leave at noon for Lorengau, Manus—360 miles from Pondo, a whole 24 hours' run and about 120 miles out of our way, because we had called at Kavieng first. All day the sea was as calm as the proverbial millpond, cumulus clouds were reflected in its lacquer-like surface. It looked in places like a vast sheet of shining steel with barely a line separating sea from sky—and only an occasional ripple when a flying fish broke through the mirror of water, skimmed along the surface and dived again. Not a speck of land on the unbroken horizon.

Monday, 30 January 1933

This morning was calm. There was a rainbow low on the horizon and four distinct rainfalls could be seen on the half-arc of horizon on our port side. During the morning I saw a whale blowing not much more than 100 yards [about 90 metres] from the ship. It came up regularly to blow, till we passed beyond where we could see it. About 2 pm we arrived at Lorengau, administrative headquarters for Manus District. Some fine schooners rode at anchor here, and the government schooner *Eros* came out to take the new District Officer, Mr Jerry MacDonald, and his wife ashore. The Residency is on a hill as usual, and is a fine large bungalow. A river comes into the sea here, and there is a leper island not far off.

We crossed from Lorengau at 5 pm for Lombrum, Burns Philp's copra sheds and store centre, and here the winches were at work for hours taking on copra.

Tuesday, 31 January 1933

It poured heavily just about lunchtime. People who knew the district said 'Manus weather, it rains every day here', but fortunately it cleared up so we could go ashore. We had to anchor at Lombrum as there are too many islands to steer out through. In the store was a good-looking Manus boy with a marvellous dog's-tooth necklace, each tooth very large and beautifully carved. I asked him to let me take his picture, and he came out and stood in the sun. Of course, a boy friend had to come; and then a police-boy, seeing the proceedings, decided he would like to be in it, too, so he lined up also. We sailed that evening for Madang.

Wednesday, 1 February 1933

I was up at 5.30 am and saw the Southern Cross constellation straight ahead, a lighthouse blinking on our right side, a big mountain peak rising up out of the sea, and another with its top obscured by clouds, further away in the distance. We were hove to and I watched the Southern Cross pale, and the first faint gleam of light appear. Presently when the stars had all gone out and just a faint grey light in the sky lit the sea softly, the ship started to move, but so gently you could hardly tell she was moving. In a few minutes a pale outline appeared above the sea line, and presently a very dim outline of mountains could be seen, which gradually got clearer as the light got stronger.

As we came nearer the mountains seemed to recede, and little islands of a few acres, all shapes and tones of dark olive against the now-silver sea, lined the road into Madang. I could see the bow of the ship going straight for a white pointer to the harbour, and islands, islets, around bays of incomparable beauty, were on all sides as we drew nearer the coast. Even though the boat was steaming very slowly, I hardly had time to photograph one point on the port side, and simply had to run to the other side of the ship so as not to miss some beautiful escarpment of island etched against a mirror-like sea.

Madang is a very pretty little port. It was formerly the German centre of administration, but there was not sufficient anchorage in Madang for the shipping. There are some attractive houses here with very fine high ceilings, which help so much to make a cool house. Here the roads are nicely laid out with very colourful crotons and califas, though they are only of a mile, and half a mile, in length. (Most patrolling is done by schooners.) This is the place where Mrs Ellis Rowan stayed when she painted the New Guinea birds and butterflies. But I didn't see one butterfly while I was on shore, nor notice one bird.

There are a lot of flying fish in the harbour. A canoe pulled into shore with a native on board and his wife in a bright red grass skirt. A piccaninny, aged about six, was in the stern. He dropped the anchor, a large round stone fastened to a rope, with a 'plop' into the mud at the bank and, grinning, showed a wide row of big white teeth. I got a photo of it, and another of a boy with his hair shaved off, except one bun tied at the back. His nose was pierced and a stick thrust through the septum. We called in at Chinatown and got some cheap silk. Very nice bead necklaces were on sale for 4 shillings each, done in beautiful patterns by the Chinese women.

I saw Mr Wauchope, the trader from Awar—he and his wife had been going to go South on this boat, but the manager he had on the plantation let the whole month's copra catch fire—21 tons of it. The manager got the sack, but it meant they could not get the trip. Mr Wauchope gave the *Luluai* [village official] of Manam some nails to build a house for Camilla Wedgwood, and soon after, decided they would go and have a look. When they got to the island they saw the *Luluai* and asked how the house was getting on, and he told them he had sold the nails. So Wauchope quite naturally got very wild with the man and told him what he thought of him. Camilla turned to Mr Wauchope and said: 'How dare you talk to him like that! Don't you know we are only the natives' guests.' Complete collapse of Mr Wauchope.

Quite a crowd got off the *Montoro*, and although we took several passengers on board, the saloon looks different. After recording that I did not see a single butterfly at Madang, I was standing on the deck about ten minutes before the boat was due to sail when a magnificent black and white butterfly flew right across, swooping over the deck—it was the largest I had ever seen.

A big crowd of natives going to work on the goldfields came on board—there must be 100 from all parts of the Territory. They were all lined up and had their identification discs examined to make sure none were stowaways. Every boy's name is down on the purser's list, and when his name is called out, he steps out and goes forward. Some complained that they had no *kaikai* except a biscuit. As each boy's fare costs 6 shillings a day, it amply covers paying for a proper meal for them, and since Burns Philp provide no bed or blanket, they have no further expense for them. The boys just sleep in the after part of the ship without bedding, and when it rains they are allowed to come up and sleep under the after deck.

I strolled along this afternoon and saw them in all stages of boredom. Most of them had enveloped themselves in dark grey blankets, completely covering their heads—how they could breathe I don't know. Some were sitting up eating the crusts that had been cut off the sandwiches served for supper in the saloon—they are very fond of these crusty bits, and my cook-boy always carefully reserves them for their own use. About the *kaikai*, it was unfortunate for Burns Philp's steward that they happened to forget the boys on an occasion when there were actually three District Officers travelling on the ship. The boys' complaint was brought to a *Kiap*, as the District Officer is called. He enquired into it and I believe it turned out that a number of boys had come on board about 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon after the midday meal had been served and so they got nothing but a dry biscuit to carry them on till the next midday meal. Usually they eat only one meal a day. Anyhow it was soon adjusted.

Thursday, 2 February 1933

We left Madang at noon, and arrived at Salamaua at 7 am next morning. There were rain squalls all night, and all the canvas was down round the decks. Heavy grey clouds partly obscured the mountains. At Salamaua the ship stands out, for there is no wharf. Hefty brown native labourers come off on tenders to meet the ship, and excitedly run round carrying cargo and



The narrow peninsula of Salamaua described by Sarah as 'a long string of scarlet and green jewels sewn on the sea'

travellers' gear. The Customs boat came out, flying the Australian flag and rowed by prison labour in pink-striped *laplaps*, and later the ship's launch was put over the side, and two large whaleboats were filled to capacity with the natives who were going ashore to Salamaua, in tow of the motor launch. All passengers and cargo are lightered ashore on rafts, and on the ship's pinnacle.

They were a funny crowd lined up on board waiting to go off, with all sorts of weird possessions. One boy had, of all things, a large blue-black roundish stone. He was obviously returning to his place where stone is scarce. Several boys had little puppy dogs tied to a piece of string—one was a jolly little terrier I would have liked to own myself. One boy was bringing a big bunch of spears out. Another hopeful individual had no less than three iron saucepans, one being a three-legged pot. One could imagine him going back to his village after a couple of years of living on a diet of tinned meat, and joyfully going forth one morning with bow and arrows and shooting pigeons, bringing them back home and giving them to his wife to cook in the fine new three-legged pot he has just brought back from Rabaul.

I am sure there is no town in the world like Salamaua. Just a sandy spit of land washed on both sides by the Pacific—seen from the approaching ship it looks like a long string of scarlet and green jewels sewn on the sea. The scarlet

beads are the painted iron roofs of bungalows, sheds and stores, and the green are the tops of tall waving coconut palms shining in the sun, with sapphire seas showing between their trunks from the other side of the narrow strip of beach that has been chosen as the site for a town. This ribbon of land has been formed by the wash-down of earth from the steep mountains, which, through the action of the Frisco River on one side driving it forward, and waves or sea currents driving it back, has banked up and gradually formed a strip of land about 2 miles long, with a knoblike hill at the end. Before the white people arrived a few years ago, huge calophyllum trees grew here, protecting the spit against erosion. Many were cut down to allow houses to be built, and the sea encroached to such an extent that now the calophyllum is protected. Coconut palms were planted, and at the mainland end there are some fine old calophyllum trees that hang their branches horizontally far out over the sea, making a delightfully cool place to swim for those not afraid of sharks.

Within the memory of some of the older natives this spit of land was not entirely joined up, so that they remember sailing their canoes through the gap right across the spot where the government now has its offices. It would only need a good strong tidal wave to wash right over and demolish it. Because of the problems at Salamaua it had been proposed to transfer the town to Lae, further up the coast, where it was claimed there was a better harbour. A lot of cranes and heavy machinery had been installed there, and then one night, suddenly, £20 000 worth of machinery and cranes dropped into the sea along with the cliff they were standing on. Conflicting tidal races—a river coming down and a tide-rip coming in—had undermined the earth, so Lae is impossible. [Lae was already a significant port with an airfield; subsequently, Guinea Airways made it their headquarters for New Guinea.]

Now Mr Knox is up to look at Salamaua and see to the strengthening of the town. It is surely on the narrowest strip of land that ever was made into a township, and a most unsuitable place for a town of such importance. The entire town is only wide enough for one very narrow roadway running its mile length between buildings, with high tides washing almost to their back doors. Houses, stores, native huts, offices, all jostle on this one small strip of land, presenting problems that may have far-reaching effects. A bad sickness would rage through the place like a wildfire—dysentery is not infrequent.

Officers of the administration are still living in native houses, though a number of bungalows are to be erected shortly. The hillsides are said to be

unsuitable for terracing and building on, as it is soft soil and crumbles and falls down into the sea once the weeds and bush are cleared off. Native hospital quarters appear to be in a shocking state—the grass roofs are very old and in bad condition, with patches of tin where rain evidently comes in. The Salamaua aerodrome is in a bad way and is frequently under water. It was constructed privately by the first company at a cost of £1700, and is now used by all the companies. In fact, it is a public aerodrome now and it seems to be nobody's job to keep it in order. It is not as large as the one at Lae.

Salamaua might be described as the railhead for the goldfields—the port of entry from which no less than three different air companies fly passengers and freight to Wau. Guinea Airways and Holden's Airlines are the biggest, and Carpenters have the smallest planes, carrying 600 to 700 pounds. Guinea Airways, a company with a large capital, has big three-engined Junkers. The aeroplane fleets are constantly increasing in size. Each company has just ordered another plane and obtained the services of more pilots. The only passenger car in Salamaua is owned by the aerodrome and is used to drive passengers from the ship or hotel about a mile and a half away. Then you are weighed before you get into the plane—if there are many passengers, a couple of bags of rice may be thrown off the plane.

Because of the competition, air freights are the lowest they have ever been, being now fourpence per pound. Even at that price, one man told me his freight bill per month was never under £100, and often near £200. And so the evergreen topic is the question of road or plane transport to the goldfields. If road transport could halve the costs, which it could at least, dozens on the field would benefit. The whole chance of the field being a financial success depends on reasonable costs of production. I have nothing against aeroplane transport. I admire the magnificent work they have done to open up this industry and recognise it as the coming long-distance transport of the future—but at present it is a luxury transport. It has got past the pioneering stage and a road will have to be built. A big responsibility rests on those who have the decision. [A road was at last built connecting Wau and Lae after the war.]

Another question that bothers the residents is the filling of the black smelly mangrove swamps that line the foreshore from the hotel around to the village of Kelaw and are breeding places for the dread anopheles mosquito. There is a good deal of malarial sickness in Salamaua. There are large swamp holes that would need to be pumped dry. I got a picturesque photograph of one with a

native house on the edge, and a graceful palm looking down on its reflection, as clear as in the original. A wooden bridge has been thrown across to give access to the house. Very pretty—and very unhealthy. A swampy part on one side has already been filled in and a cement seawall put along to protect the reclaimed section. The portion in front of the hotel is being slowly filled in with bottles—chiefly beer bottles—but gold-labelled champagne bottles also hobnob with lemonade bottles, wooden cases, kerosene tins, meat tins, jam tins and even the straw casing of bottles—all tossed in to fill up the horrible swamp. In scattered spaces between, where a little soil has been carried down in baskets from the hillsides, quite sturdy banana plants, pawpaws and even lemon trees hanging thick with lemons grow.

Here at the Salamaua Hotel one meets the interesting people who have been up at the goldfields from the days when things were not as settled as they are now. Mr and Mrs Les Peadon, who sit at my table, have had their house fired three times by natives. She thinks once might have been an accident, but no one else knowing the natives thinks so. It was, of course, a grass house; and once, it caught fire from the *haus kuk* [kitchen] when they were in it. Mrs [Mona] Peadon lost everything, including her camera, and had only the clothes she stood up in. Mr Peadon always keeps his arms at the ready but has never had to use them, so he says. She was the first woman to go up on the Ramu field with her husband, and is still the only woman there. [Lutheran missionary Wilhelm Bergmann and his wife, Louise, had made a home in that area in 1931, not on the goldfields but in the Highlands of New Guinea on the edge of the mountains of the Morobe District.]

It was uncontrolled country and the authorities did not want to give them permits, but Mr Feldt, I understand, allowed them to go. They walked in from Madang in April, bringing cattle and horses over terrifying mountains, and crossing and recrossing rivers somewhere between 32 and 36 times—she lost count after 32. It was a terrible walk. They were pestered with leeches and those dreadful bush *mocchas* that burrow under the skin and cause bad sores. She got them even up to her waist and they nearly drove her silly. At night there were mosquitoes, and the trouble of lighting fires for cooking at the end of a day's trail, when it was pouring with rain and they were too tired to eat, yet the carriers must be fed. She tramped for miles up to the ankles in mud, and scrambled up hills hanging on to liana vines or any sort of foliage to pull herself up, hand over fist.

When they got all their gear, cattle and horses brought up, they proceeded to settle down on their chosen spot. They had settled too near a native village—the people would not trade but would steal at the least opportunity. The local natives had a *kros* [a dispute] with the Peadons' servants and would give them no peace—they came out to fight with bows and arrows. When the fighting started just a few yards from their house, Les Peadon went out and, although he hardly knew a word of the language, demanded they return tomahawks and other stolen goods. Although the natives actually fired their arrows, he persisted in bluffing them, until they finally returned the stolen goods. On one occasion when the natives, whose village was just a few yards away, sent showers of arrows amongst him and his boys, he fired his gun off in the air to frighten them and they promptly sent another volley of arrows over; he fired again—as far as he knows he did not hit any of them, and they retired behind a bit of a hill and still continued to fire arrows. Yet, in spite of these demonstrations of unfriendliness (if not warlikeness), still this optimist continues to say that the natives were not fighting him—they only had a *kros* with his boys!

Then Mr Jim Taylor, Assistant District Officer, insisted on them moving—so they moved about three hours away. They are milking about 26 head of cattle, and have actually sent fresh milk down on the plane to Salamaua, about 60 miles. The first fresh milk Salamaua has ever seen.

The hotel is crowded with 40 boarders, and 80 diners who come in to all meals but have their sleeping accommodation at their offices or elsewhere. On boat days when the miners come down from the field on business, the hotel is generally overcrowded. It is useless to expect a bedroom to yourself, they have to be shared. Mr and Mrs Innes run the hotel very efficiently with a staff of eight Europeans, 25 natives who serve all meals and clean rooms, two Chinese cooks and a Chinese gardener. The billiard saloon and bar are separate from the hotel. They also have a Chinese trade store on the beach.

A marvellous calophyllum tree grows on the beach at the back of the hotel, spreading out over the entire beach and shading the water of the open sea. Hundreds of little ferns and orchids of many varieties grow on its broad branches, which reach close to the back verandah. Formerly, Mrs Innes actually grew tomatoes and salads on the branches. The roots go under the hotel and cross the narrow roadway to reach the swamps that were filled in just a few yards from the harbour front. That is an excellent illustration of the

width of this portion of Salamaua—as wide as the widest roots of that giant tree, with a few yards of swampy ground to spare! It is an incredible tree—the most wonderful I have ever seen. There is a wash-house built under its branches, and another portion of the branches forms a cool archway under which the laundry-boy operates. Looking up as I write I see an enormous cobweb stretching between two branches that are wide enough apart to accommodate an ordinary doorway, with leaves and stuff caught in the web. There are chairs and tables under other branches where the guests sit out and enjoy the cool breezes of the Pacific.

As I walked along the road, out with my camera, I heard sounds of natives singing sweetly in rhythm. As I came nearer I found it was a lot of natives bathing in the sea just outside the *kalabus* (gaol). A policeman was standing on the beach, watching, dressed in the new khaki uniform of shorts and a shirt, instead of the old navy blue deckle-edged loincloth. Some prisoners were still behind the barbed wire. I wondered why they were not swimming, until I came closer and saw that they were some of the Kukukuku tribesmen from the interior—who, of course, had never seen the salt water until they came down here, and they cannot swim.

I walked off the road on to the thin grass that fronted the prison compound—there was no fence of any kind. One of the Kukukukus was wearing a big bandolier of cowrie shells across one shoulder. I passed close to the barbed wire and photographed them as they stood looking out, rather longingly I thought. The Kukukuku prisoners are said to be implicated in the murder of German prospector Helmuth Baum and his carriers. Although here for some time, they cannot speak a word of pidgin yet, and as no one can speak their language, no information can be got from them. They have not yet been tried for the murders.

The crowd of prisoners who had now finished their daily swim came walking and running gaily back to the gate of the compound. They started singing out—‘Keys! Keys! Catch-im keys!’—and presently a native not in uniform came with a bunch of keys, opened the gate, and the crowd contentedly trooped through, and then stood looking out through the barbed wire. Home, for the time being, anyway. It is not to be thought that prisoners never try to escape—they do, and some of the famous Nakanai murderers who murdered several prospectors escaped from gaol in Kokopo and were never recaptured. It was assumed that they would quite likely be attacked and

disposed of by other tribes in their attempt to find their way back to their own village. [Nakanai, a rugged inland area of New Britain, was the scene of the murder of four prospectors in 1926.]

I went on past several native huts, some just in course of erection, and up the hill behind Salamaua to the house built by Captain Les Holden, the airman who started Holden's Airlines in New Guinea. It is the only house not built on the flat, and was initially called 'Holden's Folly'. (People said the soil was too sandy and friable to hold a house on such a steep hillside.) At the top there is a wonderful sea view. Of course there is no garden, just a sheer drop all round three sides, and the steep approach has been terraced to allow a very narrow track up. Bananas, crotons and pawpaws are planted close to the house, and relieve the wildness of the scene.

It was an arduous climb and I was very tired and thirsty when I reached the top. I knew that Captain Tommy O'Dea, the airman who now lives here, would be away flying somewhere, but all houses in New Guinea are open, and I walked in and sat on the verandah to rest. After a little while, as I was just on the point of moving to take a photograph of the town below, I heard someone come in. The boy asked me would I like some tea. I said: 'Oh, no matter. You *no gat* fire.' 'Oh, *maski* (never mind), I make kettle boil,' he said, and went and lit a Primus [cooking stove]. He made me a very nice cup of tea and brought biscuits on a tray, acting the part of courteous host. He stood chatting about one thing and another as I drank my tea. He had never been to Rabaul, but presently told me about his late *Masta*, Captain Les Holden, who, just a little while before, had been killed in a flying accident in Australia. He had been Holden's boss-boy. He told me what a good *Masta* he used to be, and how, when he was told that he had been killed, he cried and cried. 'Me *sori tumas* (very sorry) along *Masta* he die finish. Too bad he come down along plane like that.' To think that Holden, who had never had a mishap when flying over these dangerous mountains, should be killed when on holiday in Australia, flying to a fishing expedition. It seemed sad to me that I should be taking hospitality in his house, a house like an eagle's eyrie, with a lookout all round such as a flying man would wish for—and his boy continuing to chant his epitaph, 'He was a good *Masta*.'

The *Montoro* sailed away this afternoon, getting a good send-off as two new Fox Moth planes, brought up for Carpenters to do their own carrying for the goldfields, flew a farewell over the ship as a compliment to Mr de Haviland



Kukukukus at Salamaua, and their distinctive bandoliers of cowrie shells

[Sir Geoffrey de Havilland, British aircraft designer and manufacturer], who had came up on the ship with the planes.

Friday, 3 February 1933

Today I photographed the whole crowd of Kukukukus. They come from mountains about 7000 feet [2100 metres] up, where it is very cold, and I photographed them wearing the long cloaks they make from very heavy coarse bark cloth, which hang from their heads like hoods and reach almost to their ankles. They all wear ropes of white cowrie shells, like bandoliers across

their chests. One was wearing a tooth about 2 inches [5 centimetres] long round his neck. He had been 'shooting' lizards off the tree with a stone and had nearly a dozen lizards suspended from his belt, just as a fisherman would hang fish from a line. One very sunny-tempered chap smiled broadly and happily—and probably hardly realises he is up on a murder charge. I gave him the little tin the film comes in, and showed him how the lid fitted, and he received it with glee; then I handed the little yellow cardboard carton through the wire fence, and the piece of pink paper with the directions. He took them like a happy child at Christmas would receive a toy off the Christmas tree.

Two widow stranglers who have only served one year of a ten-year sentence were in *kalabus* with leg-irons on. Both old fellows, they were probably the official tribal widow stranglers. It is an old custom in Gasmatta that when a woman's husband dies and she is too old and cannot work in the gardens and no one will feed her, she is killed. The *gavman* [government] says it is a bad fashion, and put them in gaol for ten years. The mesh of the barbed-wire barricade is very wide, about 4–6 inches [10–15 centimetres], and the sea air has rusted it to a certain extent—and these two old chaps had been able to break it and get away. The poor fellows were so much 'bush' natives they didn't even realise that they wore a distinguishing *laplap*—the prison *laplap*,

white with a red stripe, is known to all natives anywhere near a white settlement—and they didn't try to get one of a different colour. They got away on 16 January and were caught about a fortnight later a couple of miles away. They had to rob some native gardens for food and did not move on after stealing, but kept working round the same village. Naturally the villagers soon noticed the thefts, and kept watch. They caught one, prison *laplap* and all, and took him down to the *Kiap* [patrol officer] and were suitably rewarded with tins of meat, tobacco, etc. Then the villagers heard two had escaped, and in a few days he also was brought in. Now they are both weeding the prison compound in leg-irons.

One can't help feeling sorry for the poor devils, but really it was the kindest thing that could have happened to them, for they would certainly have been killed, and probably cooked, in hostile country further into the mountains.

Saturday, 4 February 1933

I met Mr Nick Penglase, Assistant District Officer, at Mr O'Dea's place on the hill today. He has just returned from a patrol after the murders of two white prospectors and five native labourers, committed a couple weeks ago. William Naylor and Emile Clarius, the prospectors, had been refused permits to go into uncontrolled territory—but they evaded the officer in charge, went in anyway and were murdered. They were attacked by hostile natives on the headwaters of the Kiapou, a branch of the Tauri River—a river which enters the Gulf of Papua a few miles west of the Lakekamu. Two natives escaped and reported the murder to the government post, Otibanda, Surprise Creek. Penglase flew in and arrived at the site on 14 January. The bodies were found and buried—they had been clubbed to death. All the natives of the district had disappeared, but a government patrol will stay until the murderers are discovered. Mr Penglase goes out again on Monday probably. (It was three months or more before the murderers were found—they ran away into entirely strange country.)

The district of the Tauri headwaters was visited by the Papuan *Kiap*, Mr Hides, on his way to the Wau in March 1931, and he was attacked three times on the Kiapou. [Jack Hides was a famous early explorer, who later wrote several books about his adventures.] The Lakekamu was discovered in 1910 [the goldfields, that is; the Lakekamu area had been crossed by C.A.W. (Whit) Monckton in 1906]; and although Papuan patrols have persisted in their

efforts to bring the people under control, the Kukukukus appear to be as dangerous as ever. Papuan officials and prospectors have been attacked, and Mr Helmuth Baum, an experienced German prospector, was killed in 1931. The Leahy brothers were severely wounded in the Vailala watershed [west of the Tauri River].

On Saturday morning Mr A. Barnes, Police Master in Salamaua, told me I could get a good picture of Salamaua from the top of a hill on the opposite shore. He pointed out some coconut palms and said a track went from there to a native house on top, where a white man lived, and the police whaleboat would take me across from the government jetty. I arranged to go to his house at 3 pm. When I arrived, he had gone to cricket and there were no boys to be seen, so I went next door and saw the new *Kiap*, Ted Taylor, who went and got the boys who were to row me across.

When they turned up they were prisoners! I had no idea I was to have a crew of gaolbirds, especially without a policeman, but here prison labour does all sorts of work—gardening, foreshore reclamation, and seemingly any old job. Mr Taylor assured me they would be all right, but said I must not allow them to walk about the bush alone. There were four boys at the oars and one at the tiller. When we reached the spot on the other side there was no landing and the *kalabus*-boys rowed past. I said they were going the wrong road, but ‘no, they savvied’, and we went bumping slightly over some reed, where we could see crabs and different weeds growing, and past a point which we rounded to see three Chinese stores, and a new one being built. At last, after I was beginning to think I had been foolish to come, they pulled into shore where a little green painted canoe was pulled up on the beach. We could not get in close, so two of the boys made a seat with their hands, and carried me ashore, *Niugini* fashion. With two of the *kalabus*-boys, and the boy who was carrying my camera (a signed-on mountain-boy who was just returning to the goldfields to work), I started off around the island, and after a good long distance we started climbing a track into the bush. It was very stiff going, the soil was red clay and very slippery from last night’s heavy rains—I was breathless before we reached the top. One boy took an end of my umbrella, and I the other end, and thus he assisted me up the very steep slope.

The house site was useless for getting the picture I wanted, so we were compelled to go much further than I had expected. After a very steep climb with precipitous gorges on each side—where one boy said, ‘if a man goes

down there, he goes finish'—we at last came to the tiptop of the hill, and reached quite a large village behind some big knolls, with about 30 houses—Kila village. The women stayed in the houses or on the verandahs, but all the boys and men came to have a look. There were a good many old men, and I asked some of them to get me a *kulau*, a coconut to drink, as I was very thirsty. They sent a small boy to climb a tree for one and soon cut it open. One man sat over by himself with a big pig close by and three little pigs just about on his knees.

I got a stick of bananas for the mountain-boy—the *kalabus* said they had plenty *kaikai*—I think they preferred to get their shilling in their hand. After taking photographs of Salamaua, which looked just like a little ribbon connecting two mainlands, we went down another terribly steep track, and when we got to the beach one of the boys went round the road to tell the boat-boys where to meet us. While we waited a good many natives passed along the track from Salamaua going to the mission a couple of miles away. When we got back, the prison-boys said: 'Goodbye, *Misis*.' The boy who had the tiller was a very nice polite boy from Malaguna. He told me he was in gaol because someone fixed it. Murderers and incorrigibles are kept at Salamaua gaol, and native prisoners, if of good behaviour, have a remarkable degree of freedom here.

Sunday, 5 February 1933

I liked Kila village and its views so much that I decided to go up again by another route. This morning I started off with the Kaindi mountain-boy to carry the camera and walked round the beach by the swamps on a track that seemed to be made from a little silted-up foreshore, where the tides had thrown up the sand. Logs were thrown across small streamlets that cut a way through the swamps and out to sea. I suppose there would be about 20 of these rude bridges in a short walk of a mile or so. Quite a wide government track goes in from the beach and at once starts to climb steeply. There was almost no shade as the trees have been cut back some distance, and it was terribly hot. Nearing the top it rises still more steeply, and steps have been cut in the clay. Being nearly 4 feet [1 metre] wide, they are obviously government work, for when natives are forced to cut steps in too-steep hillsides, they only make a bare toehold, which is very trying for anyone wearing shoes, and no help at all going downhill.



A woman and her child carrying bilum bags full of coconut shells holding water

At the top at last, and a fringe of coconut palms surround the village with bananas growing just on the outer steep sides. It is quite extraordinary how these mountain people build their villages on the summit. The village site is not flat, each house is built on its own little hill, for there is not room enough for several houses on one level. They go piling up, one above the other—really a beautiful little village. The houses are quite well built with good wide verandahs, and most of them have timber walls quite well fitted together and pretty well planed—not plaited palm or *saksak*. There was a good canoe under one of the houses. ‘*Bilong* village,’ they said. I

thought it extraordinary to carry a canoe up and down all that way, one would think they would leave it on the beach and just bring the paddles home. They asked politely did I want a *kulau*, and soon a small boy was shinning up a coconut tree and sent several crashing down.

Presently a woman and a little girl climbed up the hill, the woman carrying a *bilum* bag full of coconut shells made into water-carrying vessels by plugging a hole in the top with a cone-shaped cork made from a plantain leaf. Her little girl, about eight years old, also carried a *bilum* bag slung from her forehead, like her mother, and she also had half a dozen coconut bottles. They have to go right down the hill to get the water.

TO THE GOLDFIELDS

The runway at Salamaua is so short in comparison to the height to be gained that some of the smaller planes have to circle around to gain enough height—like going up a circular staircase—for the flight over the towering mountains. This gives a very good view, and I got very good pictures from the plane. When at last we headed inland, the mountains loomed like a wall before us. It was so extraordinary to leave palm trees and come suddenly into country that was all pine trees pointing their tall shafts and spires across the skyline of peak on peak of mountains in folds on folds that seemed to go on into infinity in the blue distance. Presently we could see the gap that would let us through. A tremendous wind blew across the mountain tops here and the plane bumped and tumbled in air pockets, and that was not so pleasant. The wide valley of the Wau spread out before us and we began to descend. The plane landed in the middle of the Wau aerodrome, just a few yards from the bungalow hotel.

The township of Wau—headquarters of the Morobe goldfields and the first landing-place for planes bringing supplies and machinery to the field—lies in a beautiful grassed plateau nearly 4000 feet high, surrounded by higher mountains. Giant pine trees grow on the hillsides, and gardenias and harebells are native here. Bananas and pineapples still thrive at 4000 feet, and yet it is cold enough to grow cabbages, shallots, beans and potatoes.

Wau is a very interesting settlement. There is a District Office and a fine large hotel, very well kept with an excellent table and most comfortable verandah, lounges and bedrooms. They have now got a hospital, but only one nurse, and at present eight patients. There is only one doctor for the whole of the goldfields district. The hotel is at the top end of the aerodrome—looking straight down on incoming planes. It was so crowded that there was no room for me, and Mrs Stewart [known as Ma Stewart], manageress and proprietor, partitioned off one end of the verandah near the bathroom with boys' mosquito netting to shut off a section as a bedroom. It was terrible trying to

undress at night and get dressed in the morning. I pinned a blanket up on to the mosquito net to give me a patch to dress behind—I could see the men through the net all down the verandah.

At night the hotel is a very gay place. The billiard table is in the bar which is on the same verandah as the lounge, and bedrooms lead off this verandah. There is a crowd of miners down for a spell from Edie and Bulolo. They are a fine lot of men who work hard and have a very hard life. Naturally when they come into the 'pub', as they call it, for an occasional blow-out they don't do it on ginger beer. In the old days—only three or four years ago—when undreamt-of fortunes were being pulled out of the creeks, they would drink nothing but champagne. The cooking at the hotel is very good, and comparatively speaking the drinking that goes on is not excessive. There are nice flowers in the hotel garden, which is small, of course, with space so valuable. There are two fine turkeys gobbling around—the last of nine. The others, all full grown, had disappeared within two months.

The New Guinea Goldfields Company has erected a freezer at Wau, and meat from Sydney is sold by the company to their own employees. Other people can also purchase it if they deposit £5 and if they pay cash. Meat is rather dear at Wau and Salamaua.

One of the troubles on a goldfield is that there is rarely enough labour to spare from the job of getting out gold—labour is grudging for making a garden, or for a houseboy for the purpose of living comfortably. But the cost of freight makes it a sheer necessity to grow as much food as possible. A bag of rice costing 15 shillings in Rabaul costs £3.15s to land at Wau, yet still one finds miners loath to spend time making a garden. In some parts the difficulty is not only to spare the labour, but to get land suitable for a garden. Here at Wau, however, the beautiful tableland with its rich soil is very suitable for agriculture—and just around Koranga Creek the conditions are ideal.

The Koranga Gold Sluicing Company has been most fortunate in obtaining the cooperation of a wild tribe, the Biangais, who live a day or so from here in the mountains away up the Bulolo. The men, and even small boys who are just able to wield a mattock and would be at school in a civilised country, come down first and break some of the ground with mattocks. Their system of working is very peculiar. In a gang of 15 or 20, they do not form a long line and work at a little distance from each other, but work close up together so that their mattocks are almost in danger of coming down on another's

head. The women work the same way, immediately behind the men, all in a close bunch, following up with cuttings of sweet potato. The reason appears to be that the tribes have been fighting with their neighbours from time immemorial, and it is only in herding close together that they have any sense of protection or freedom from fear of attack. They come occasionally to stay and do a week's work and get paid in *laplaps*. It seems extraordinary that *laplaps* seem to be what they most desire. One would think they would want iron tools or tinned meat.

I met Mr Bill Parkes (known as 'Red Bill' Parkes in an earlier period) who is the oldest miner on the field. He is said to be 76, and still works his mine on the Black Cat, Bitoi. He came to Papua in 1909 and worked on the Yodda and afterwards on the Lakekamu, and came up here to the Wau in the earliest days of the gold rush. The field is five hours' walk away and there is no aeroplane. His boys do most of the mining now. He goes and overlooks them occasionally, but is carried part of the way. On one occasion, Bill wouldn't go home and the boy said it was time—so he put Old Bill's arms round his neck and carried him off pickaback. Bill kept on talking over his shoulder as he was carried off.

Yesterday I saw Mr Bill Anderson's workings on the Wau; he has a gang of 20 or 30 boys and is on a good piece of ground. Bill Anderson is terribly interesting, and has been in South America, South Africa, Australia and now New Guinea, mining. He found the Black Cat in 1930 but sold it; and he traded Golden Ridges to New Guinea Goldfields for the ground on the Wau which he is doing very well on now. His wife and little daughter have just joined him and he has built a nice bungalow which they will go into when the furniture arrives on the *Macdhui*.

Today I went over to Golden Ridges, a valuable mine which is reef as well as alluvial mining, and the ore is treated by cyanide—quite a complicated process with big machinery. A lot of difficulties were experienced at first separating the gold from the ore, but these have been overcome and a good recovery of gold is being made by New Guinea Goldfields. A winding, rising road has been cut as far as Golden Ridges. It is red clay, as red as ochre, in brilliant contrast to the emerald green of the *kunai* grass. The country at Golden Ridges is quite different to the Wau. No grassy plateau here; steep, broken hills and deep gorges make getting about very hard. The small hilltops are only large enough to put a house on, and the gardens are on steep

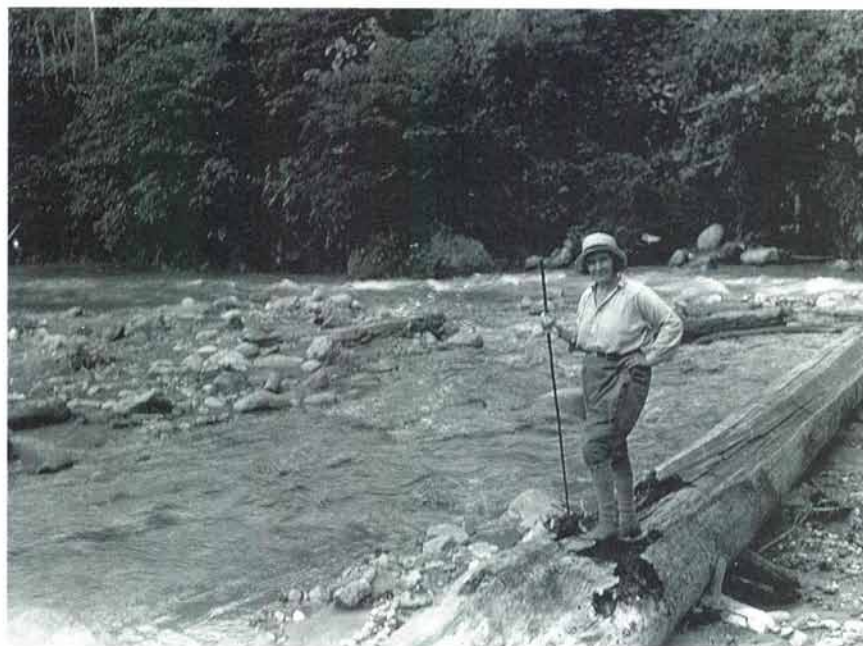
hillsides. Sites have to be levelled for mining. Natives call this mine 'Namie on Top', and another one on the creek below is called 'Namie Below'.

We walked up a greasy, steep track that was quite an arduous climb, to see the fine company gardens. Looking back the way we had climbed we got a splendid bird's-eye view of the machine shops, boys' house, and the settlement lying in a series of little shelves within the walls of the tall pine-clad hills surrounding all sides. There are some magnificent pines here, but the timber is getting cut out for building. A huge sawmill gets plenty of timber from the hillsides, chiefly beautiful straight pines. I saw a lime kiln in process of being built, with an Italian in charge of the job. He was burning charcoal in a big mound further away and asked me to photograph it. On my way back I left the graded track and climbed a hill from which I got a magnificent view of Wau valley, showing Koranga House, the Wau settlement, aerodrome and the lovely pine-clad hills around Koranga. I photographed it.

Saturday, 11 February 1933

I walked from Wau to Bulolo to visit Cliffside, the mine owned by Mrs Doris Booth, who first came mining up here in 1924 before the gold rush really set in. It was only a 6-mile [10-kilometre] walk, but took us about two hours. First the track ran through *kunai* country with the Koranga River lying below on the left, past some labour houses and across plantations of *kaukau* (sweet potato), then down a very steep cliff where steps, cut and timbered by some previous miner, were a great help in getting down to the river. Here the going was very rough indeed. We got on to the river flats and walked across rather muddy then sandy flats, jumping little rivulets and walking on stony patches for half a mile, where the path left the river. How George Arnold, our leader [Arnold had been a gold-miner in Papua from about 1905], knew where the path was I couldn't see, but we found a track on the right of the river again and there were innumerable bridges to cross over gullies—some of them quite narrow. The bridges are only rude round logs, generally laid three in a line, and I simply loathed balancing myself across them. I was told the correct way to do it is to walk on two logs.

The river valley along the Bulolo is very beautiful, with fine big hoop pines [*Araucaria cunninghamii*] growing on the cliff sides and even down into the bed of the river. The whole course of the river, all the way along, is scarred with gold workings. The first suspension bridge is reached soon after the Namie joins the Bulolo. I had always thought these bridges were most



Sarah by the Bulolo River

picturesque looking, but after crossing this swaying, giddy thing, I can't see anything picturesque about them. It was built chiefly of heavy fencing wire and bamboo, and some planks needed repair.

We came to Klondike Smith's house, a fine large house with a very high roof—nice and cool. Being very thirsty after our long walk, we went in for a rest and a drink. Although Klondike was not at home, his cook-boy did the honours and got us cold water to drink. I saw a bottle of Eno's on the table and helped myself—it is most refreshing, and what New Guinea person lives without a bottle of Eno's fruit salts in his house. Klondike Smith, so called for having spent 20 years at the Klondike diggings in his not-so-distant youth, is an interesting identity with curly fair hair and blue eyes.

The grading of the road into Cliffside is very steep—I was told it was done by native labourers and, of course, their idea of what is a reasonable grade is quite different to ours. It is also extremely narrow, and one has to watch every step. Doris Booth's house stands on a hillside about 300 feet [90 metres] above the river. The approach is so steep that steps have had to be cut in the hill to reach the top, and the hillsides are so steep that terraces had to be cut out to accommodate the house. Now another terrace and channel is being cut to

catch the rainfall and seepage from the hill above the house, which is so close into the hillside that the men joked about the improvement of the light for shaving in the bathroom after the terrace above had been started. More than 100 steps lead down to the lowest terrace next to the river, where there is a good earth tennis court. Large areas of hillside have been cleared to make gardens for the natives. Each *wantok* group is given a garden. Sepiks, Madang, Manus, Aitape, Biangais, all have their own patch of ground where they grow their own sugar cane, bananas, *kaukau* and pawpaws—so there is no shortage of fresh food for them and they all look remarkably well.

Some new recruits signed on yesterday, bringing five friends who said they also wanted to *mekim pepa* [sign a contract] for three years. The new boys are looked over at once to see what medical treatment is needed—Sepiks are generally full of fever and are put on a stiff course of 30 grains of quinine a day. Boys who have *kus* (a cough) are put on to cough mixture and cod-liver oil and malt, which they appreciate very much. Skin sores are treated with fomentations and strapped, and in a few days there is a marked improvement in the appearance of new boys. They put on weight noticeably.

Doris Booth's new home, still in process of building, is mostly of pine off the hillsides, with an iron roof. The wall between dining-room and bedroom is not yet finished and a huge canvas has been hung up for a partition. The dining-room will be panelled in cedar—the table at which I write is a long plank of cedar that seats 12. A gramophone was playing a delightful selection of chamber music and I found myself drifting into a dream for a few minutes, transported to concerts in London on an Aladdin's carpet of song. Then I awakened. Innumerable midges and moths were circling around the lamp. Natives in the kitchen, not yet finished the washing-up, were still pottering away, talking pidgin and instructing each other. One of the men had retired under his mosquito net on his bed, and I could see a match flare to his cigarette—a risky thing.

Wednesday, 15 February 1933

Heavy clouds hung round the mountains this morning. To see the mists rolling away as a breeze eddies behind a hill is very pretty, and then the sun gets up behind the hill, just catching the tips of the tallest pine trees first, and gradually as it climbs higher the trees are illuminated downwards until at last the floor of the valley is flooded with sunshine and the river sparkles, where before it ran a dull sienna stream. Mists invariably cover the hills in the morning; air pilots

call it the 'morning strafe'. Sometimes they cannot get through for days at a time, and it has been as long as a fortnight or more. But even though the clouds are so heavy, several planes have come over this morning. Up here, about 5000 feet [1500 metres], it may be covered in clouds, but it is clear at the coast and the planes are able to get out. The Fokker went over a few minutes ago—she has to circle round and round to get height when coming up over these hills, but has the advantage of being able to land at about 46 miles [74 kilometres] an hour. She is said to be very steady.

Since I arrived here not a fortnight ago, there have been two plane accidents—both Guinea Airways. One I saw at Wau while I was waiting for a plane to take me out on a trip. It was the big three-engined Junker—one of the engines cut out so that it did not rise properly, and it crashed into a new building being constructed for Guinea Airways. Fortunately no one was hurt. The propeller and under-part need repair, which can be done in a few days. The other accident was on the Markham. The local doctor and some natives were the only passengers. They had been flying for a good few miles and one of the engines seized for want of oil. The pilot, Mr Denny, was by a miracle able to land in a riverbed of soft mud just a few miles from the aerodrome. In all the years they have been flying here there have been very few accidents, and only two with casualties.

I went to the end of the race today, and saw the work being carried out. It is being widened and deepened about 12 feet [4 metres] deep to allow for the fall in the ground. Here on Cliffside there are about 86 boys working. Bill Chapman has 150; Jim Taylor, on tribute to Cliffside, has 40 boys; then there is Klondike Smith and Placer Development. Mrs Booth's ambition is to have one *meri* [woman] to every ten boys. She can't do it, I'm sure, but more women should come down with their men to work.

Today we left at 9.15 am to go to Mrs Tex Thomas to lunch. They are just on the mouth of the Edie where it runs into the Bulolo—their lease runs up the Edie, which is a very dirty brown stream as it runs past their place—several shades darker than the Bulolo which it joins at right angles. About three years ago the Edie was in terrible flood, and brought large trees and enormous boulders as big as a table thumping down. Absolutely terrifying, and the sound of the rushing water could not be heard for the noise of the boulders. Tex Thomas has now diverted the Edie up on to the top of the hill, and when we came along a boss-boy was yelling at the top of his voice: 'Turn-im on more water. Turn-im more water.'



A gold-miner's camp at Edie Creek

The Thomases have a little boy, almost three years old, and a duck of a baby, three months old. They reckon they will settle down and make their home here. Mr Thomas thinks the companies should never have been allowed to get all the land as they did. He thinks fossickers working around would have proven the ground better and brought the fields to a pitch of production more swiftly. They carried all their stuff in from Wau on their own mules—they have nine—and two horses and a herd of goats. They have over 120 native boys. The fireplace at their house is the length of the room. On

one side is a kitchen range, and on the other half, long logs lie on a built-up hearth. Three billycans and an enormous black oval cooking pot hang on suspended hooks. Smoke came up from the smouldering logs in big clouds and, as there was no chimney, escaped just where it could through one or two openings in the kitchen roof. Since the kitchen was not cut off from the dining-room by a wall, billowing smoke came over unrestricted to the dining-room—but fortunately the roof was pretty high, so one only occasionally got a whiff of it, though it certainly smarted when smoke sometimes got in one's eyes. But Tex had the idea that it was good for the roof as it kept out *binatangs* (insects). It would certainly also keep out rats.

There was another suspension bridge here and it was quite the worst I have struck. It was all wire except for a few planks across, and the wires were anywhere except where they should be. There was only a short portion across where you could reach the top rail, and there was no other horizontal wire to hold on to, the second on each side having slipped down to the floor level. Vertical strands, sometimes more than arm's-length apart, connected the top rail vertically to the floor, and the yawning gaps through which one might topple giddily are horrible even to remember; then occasional planks in the footing were missing, and one had to take a longish stride, not to say leap,

to bridge the gap. While crossing, I objected to its extreme apparent fragility and was assured that 1-ton loads were regularly carried over it, so I said to myself, 'this bridge carries a ton of rice, this bridge carries a ton of rice, this bridge carries a ton of rice', and so I got halfway across and then it didn't seem to matter. Returning on the track a gang of carriers overtook us, and then I saw them carrying nearly half a ton of rice on Doris Booth's bridge.

16 February 1933

I just received a letter from Chin with the *Macdhui* mail saying he was at Salamaua and would be going up to the Watut tomorrow, then to Penglase's camps at Purari, and will then be at the Wau and afterwards at Ramu and Surprise Creek, and would obtain my address when he arrived at Wau. He will be returning to Rabaul on the *Montoro*.

17 February 1933

We set off to visit Bill Chapman on his Bulolo lease. He is a very smart miner, but has had several unsuccessful attempts at turning the river. Each time his work was nearly finished, big rains have come down and floods have broken down his dams. We crossed the river by a suspension bridge and went up a steep hill, mostly *kunai* grass with a few bananas and pawpaws. We skirted the house on the hill built by Charles Booth, a fine big two-storey place, with a dome on top. The dining-room is magnificently panelled in cedar, and the entire woodwork of the house is finely finished. It cost thousands—but is at present unoccupied—and a fine garden is now going to waste. Then we went down a steep slope and round the head of a valley from where there was a fine view of the Bulolo nearly 300 feet below. After nearly half an hour's walk we arrived at the bridge that spans the valley just in front of Bill Chapman's house. It was the first bridge of its kind I had yet seen here, being made with one enormous solid log nearly 30 feet [9 metres] long, built up with girders and handrails all complete. It had a great appearance of solidity, and I honoured it by photographing it.

After we had a rest, all being very hot and rather wet, Bill Chapman took us to see the 'hole in the wall', which is the euphemistic name he gives the tunnel he has driven into the side of the mountain. The river is to run into this tunnel, through 527 feet to the other side of the hill, and the present course of the river can then be worked below the tunnel, which is expected to be

through in about a fortnight. The dam to divert the stream is being constructed of huge logs which are fastened together with heavy wire. After I had taken photos of the dam from above and below, clambering over rocks and down little ladders, we proceeded to climb up the steep hillside to the work, actually the steepest we have been up, I think. On the way there was another single-log bridge, even bigger than the one in front of Bill's house, and much longer.

18 February 1933

Bill returned to Cliffside with us and stayed to dinner, and as it was raining, he was induced to stay the night. This morning he went off before breakfast to find disaster awaiting him. His dam, which I photographed yesterday and which looked so good, was washed away by heavy rains last night! I went along to see and found it just as described—it was carried away at one end by a river that rose 6 feet [almost 2 metres] in the night. Bill was quite philosophical about it and said: 'I won't do any more to it till the rains cease in April. I will cut out a terrace and do some gold getting.' Some few weeks ago a similar disaster occurred to him on another place he has on the river. An engine and tools of every sort were buried under an enormous fall of earth that came down the cliff side after heavy rain. He didn't complain, but said it just happens like that.

Today we were crossing a very long log bridge, where the middle log of three had fallen about a foot below the outside two. Doris told me: 'It is best to walk with the heels of your shoes overhanging the log.' The gully was about a 20-feet [6-metre] drop. A handrail of *kundu* was laid along the face of the hill which, just here, was rock. Actually it was quite loose, and I'm sure if a foot slipped, would not have been the slightest use to save one from crashing into the gully. This is one of the tracks that the Assistant District Officer took Mr Knox to see. Residents who, quite naturally, want the government to assist in making passable roads, prayed for a nice wet day, just to show him the sort of thing they had to put up with. Sure enough it rained and he had to walk that frightful path. He says he will try and get a path made for them. They cannot get a horse or mule in on it, and a mule should be able to tackle any track a human being is expected to.



Everybody said I could not go up to Wau and Bulolo and not see Edie Creek goldfields. Wau to Edie is 14 miles [22 kilometres], climbing from 4000 to 8000 feet, and takes about five hours. My brother Bob came down from his place on Merri Creek, a tributary of the Edie, and brought six boys to carry my gear. I had arranged to get a horse from Mr Tommy Thompson and ordered it for 8 o'clock at the Wau Hotel, the day following my return from Bulolo goldfields. Long before that time my boy, Malaua, had my packing done and all the gear strapped and ready waiting on the verandah outside my curtained-off bedroom, and the carrier boys came and took charge of it. So off we started—allowing a few minutes to stop at Burns Philp's store for some things to take up.

It was a glorious morning to set out. My horse was quite a nice-looking nag, but I noticed he had a small ulcer on one of his hind legs, and he was not as sure-footed as the one I rode down from Bulolo. As we came to the nasty little steep, rocky drop down and up over the stony creek called the Little Wau, which was running pretty fast, I wanted to dismount and walk over, but it meant getting my feet wet and the discomfort of mounting again, so I sat tight and the horse plodded on, one foot at a time on the loose stones that rattled down as he put his hoof on them. I soon discovered that he was very bad on stony ground and picked out all the soft ground he could find—going ankle-deep in mud rather than walk on a stony bit.

We came upon a team of carriers with some heavy machinery for the goldfields—about eight boys to each piece—and there was a good deal of excitement for them, getting across the creek—all shrieking orders to each other. The stream was running pretty fast, though there was no danger from it, but the natives were, by the nature of their load, harnessed together—the machinery being suspended from two poles which they carried on their shoulders. There was a sharp twist in the track where it met the creek, and a nasty pinch uphill with a slippery mud surface. They evidently knew the treacherous part here, for in spite of all the noise they made, they exercised extreme care not to come adrift from their load. They got across safely and pulled in close to the high bank to let us pass along the track.

After the steep pull up from the Little Wau, the brilliant red clay track leads through sunlit *kunai* grass flats for nearly a mile before it starts to climb the mountain in a twisting zigzag, rising all the time. We passed many carriers along the road and several lots of small mules laden with packages on either

side of the saddle. The lower part of the road was made by the government, but further along it was made by the company—a very narrow track cut in the hillside with gullies of an incredible depth on the outside, and every few yards a twist to bend around a fold in the hills. At each bend a swift little rivulet must be crossed, as they were not bad enough to need bridging. Pretty ferns and flowers grew on the face of the cuttings, and fringes of little flowering plants often grew along the seepages of running water—lilac or heliotrope seemed to be the most usual colour—and on some bushes there were masses of large flowers. Wild raspberries were very plentiful, of a good size but with not much flavour—they also grow right up on top of Edie. About 1000 feet after we had left the pine trees behind there were some very fine spreading cedar of Lebanon, making a distinctive feature in the landscape.

We were resting at a little spring about two-thirds of the way along when boys carrying fresh meat for the company came along. As it seems the practice for all the boys to have a rest here, they took their hard biscuits and floated them for a minute on the pool from the spring before sitting down to eat them. The meat is carried in large galvanised metal containers slung on to a pole and carried by two boys.

The track was often only about 6 feet [2 metres] wide and my horse was absolutely determined to walk on the extreme edge, where the drop down into some of the canyons would be nearly 1000 feet. It gave Bob fits to see it and he kept insisting that I should pull the horse into the cliff side, but there were a good many stones there and the surface was a bit rough, so he kept getting back to the edge where there was a smooth pad made by the natives who walk in single file. I noticed all the mules we met walked on the edge. One slipped but did not fall, his foot went through a soft bit on the edge. Several mules have fallen over the mountain road into the gully below—they cannot be recovered but the cargo is generally saved if possible—the boys clambering down the gully somehow.

When we got up to the Edie we called in on Mr Abbey, who is said to be getting 80 to 100 ounces of gold in a month working an alluvial claim that has been worked before. We went in and had a cup of tea and it suddenly started to pour rain. We waited half an hour or so till it eased a bit, when Mr Abbey lent us an umbrella and we started off up the Merri Creek. There was nothing to walk on—no road, no track even, and no ground—only stones. We walked along a bank of stones thrown up from the riverbed to

make a race for some miner—a ridge barely a foot wide at the top, which had us watching every step to avoid crashing down the side into the race. Sometimes that ridge ended and we slithered or slid down the moving structures on to, perhaps, a wooden race built across a bit of creek.

It started to pour heavily and by this time the water in the creek was rising visibly. We crossed the creek about six times in as many minutes and then I gave up counting. The merest trifles made it necessary to cross that bally creek, such as where some miner had thrown up a mound of earth, or where there was a natural obstacle of rock. Sometimes the creek was narrow enough to jump across, then as we went higher it was swollen and we had to wade in it. Finally there came a place where we jolly well had to walk upstream. It was a dirty brown flood and the umbrella was totally inadequate. Brown water raced down between big boulders that had not been dynamited, and it would have meant wading knee deep, so two boys crossed hands and I was carried across and down a dozen yards. For nearly a mile the way led over a stony bed, over tree trunks and stones of incredible sharpness or annoying roundness and slipperiness. We got off the stones only to scale the steep side of a slippery red clay cliff, and what a climb! I thought Doris Booth's was a stiff climb—but this rise was about 600 feet, and you rise it straight up!

When we got to the steps leading up the cliff side, water was pouring down in a cascade. Hundreds of steps had been made—many of them a leg's-length apart and all well over an ordinary step in height. Little sticks supported the light logs that built up the steps, and we were very glad to hang on to these to assist in pulling ourselves up the steep ladderway—you couldn't call it a stairway. By this time we were wet through.

Bob's house was shut, and the boys well and truly in the boys' house up at the top of another little hill, but we soon got the fire going. All miners' houses up here on the Edie have big log fireplaces. Most houses are simply one large room in which they eat, sleep and cook; all tools and food are under the one roof. Some have a little bit of wall to separate living-room from bedroom, because the natives cook in the living-room. Some have a cooking stove in addition to an open fireplace over which dinner is cooked in pots suspended from hooks in the chimney. Most miners expect to stay only a short time till they clean up the gold, and naturally do not spend too much time on a mere house.

The company is building more elaborate houses, probably because it is here permanently. Formerly, before the company bought up the 14 square miles

that represents its holding, there were 300 white men living on the field working their claims. Now there are only 125 white men and most are employed by the company. Some are on 'tribute' to the company, working for a share of the mining proceeds. There are very few women on the field—practically all being company men's wives—but there are a couple of tributors' wives on the Merri Creek. A tribute usually only lasts a year or so. One tributor who has his wife up here has fixed up a very pretty little home with her assistance. The fireplace has been built with a mantelshelf hung with red calico, a cheery colour. The sides of the fireplace are lengths of canvas, deckchair width, tacked tightly down; and hung on either side are small bookcases, painted blue, and holding about a dozen books. Shelves and table are covered with coloured baize cloth, and the crockery and silver are arranged on side-tables looking very neat and orderly. A large mat is on the earth floor, and a long grass mat lies in front of the fireplace. These simple arrangements which are so pretty and effective are not seen in a bachelor's establishment.

The ruggedness of the country is almost indescribable. Moss grows everywhere. When I was developing pictures early in the morning, my hands steamed when they were first wet. You can see your breath in the morning. Here, shut up in the mountain fastness, there is nothing but steep wall-like hillsides densely covered with bush. Opposing walls form a canyon through which the gold-bearing reef runs. Where the distance between cliffs is wider, the riverbed and any small terraces have all been upturned and scarred in the search for gold. In sluicing, all soil is washed away down the creek, and only stones or tailings are left; grass cannot grow, and the creek bed presents the most forlorn and miserable appearance of desolation and destruction. Most, if not all, of these workings up here have been worked over several times, and a lot are getting worked out.

The Day Dawn mine is separate from New Guinea Goldfields Company and is a very prosperous concern, turning out a lot of gold and paying excellent dividends. [The Day Dawn was the first mining company to start a crushing operation on the goldfields. The first manager, V.L. Newberry, selected the site and built the plant.] We went up and saw it today—Malaua called it the 'hole in the ground'. We were shown a portion of the reef that is referred to as the 'Jewellers' Shops'. It gives about 3 or more ounces to the ton. There was another part where 10 to 12 ounces a ton was obtained—the miner there said it was the most marvellous sight he ever saw, and he never expects

to see it again. They washed a couple of dishes for us to show there was no deception. With a pick they secured a dishful of soil off an open cut, and when it was washed in a large kerosene tin there was quite a sprinkling of fine gold at the bottom. Reef mining is quite different to alluvial, and the gold is much finer.

It was raining pretty hard and the outside boys were wearing oilskin coats and hats. It was rather smoky in the mine—one of the miners who was in charge of a big cut said they had let off a charge of dynamite after lunch, and the smoke had not cleared off. The new manager, Mr McMahon, sent a note down asking us up for afternoon tea. It was very interesting—in the midst of all that desolate, scarred country, a delightful little garden was laid out. It was the usual awful steep climb up to the house—that simply goes for granted here—but when we got up there the garden was a reward. Naturally it was very small, just a terrace snatched from the hillside and very carefully laid out with a diminutive lawn of English clover on the top terrace, and on the lower terrace a footpath lined with a pinkish variegated foliage with a pretty red flower. In another garden, roses, nasturtiums, and lots of English flowers were doing well.

Bob and I went up to the upper Edie to the headquarters of the New Guinea Goldfields Company and saw the mines and alluvial workings and the wonderful gardens growing vegetables for staff. We went up the hill across to Edwards' place. Mrs Edwards met us on the garden path and at once asked us to lunch. She was growing marvellous sweet-scented roses, lupins, zinnias, pansies and all sorts of cold-country flowers. We were very grateful for her hospitality after our long walk.

When we were about to leave one of the machine-houses that was just being built, word came through by telephone that Chin had arrived at Edie Post and wanted me to call in there. I wanted to see the reward claims and it was just about the same distance to go that way as the way we had come, so we started off. A boy from the mine led the way—and what a way! First down a terribly steep hill, then up through a forest where the boy seemed to know some track—it was not visible. We were walking on deep tufts of moss that seemed to be growing over aerial tree roots. I had a stick which I always carried and it would constantly prod down well below the level we were walking on. Sometimes a foot went through in the same way—not a pleasant experience.

A small gang of boys were sawing what must have been one of the biggest logs of the forest. It looked beautiful wood, but there was a peculiar dank

feeling about the forest, a stuffy, overpowering feeling that I did not like at all. We came out on to an open bit, and away across an opening I could see Day Dawn mine which I photographed from near a little hut that looked abandoned. A bit further on we came on a shaft that had recently been sunk in the search for gold. This was one of the famous reward claims, but this particular one turned out to be worthless and the miner said he lost several hundred pounds in coming to work it. He was offered £300 for his claim in Madang: 'But,' he said, 'like a fool I didn't take it. I offered to sell it for fourpence the other day, and no one would buy it.' The claim next to his was won by a lady from Australia who knew nothing of mining. I saw her at her shaft manning a windlass. She was wearing a pretty muslin frock and a picture hat. I believe she went down the shaft herself and dug away while her two native boys were quite content to look on and smoke—they often take advantage of a newcomer like this. Two other reward claims are said to be quite promising.

Tuesday, 14 March 1933

Chin and I left Salamaua at 6 pm by *Montoro* for Rabaul. Just before going on board I photographed Mr MacDonald's trade store—he had it decorated with stone axes, stone clubs, disc clubs, and a lot of other island curios. It was extremely dark, with clouds over the sun, but I risked a film on it. When I went down to get the pinnacle out to the *Montoro* there was such a crowd that it was hard to get on to the little wharf, and the pinnacle could not take everyone at once. Forty passengers left Salamaua for South, which shows how the place is growing. A lot of miners are going away on holiday.

29 March 1933

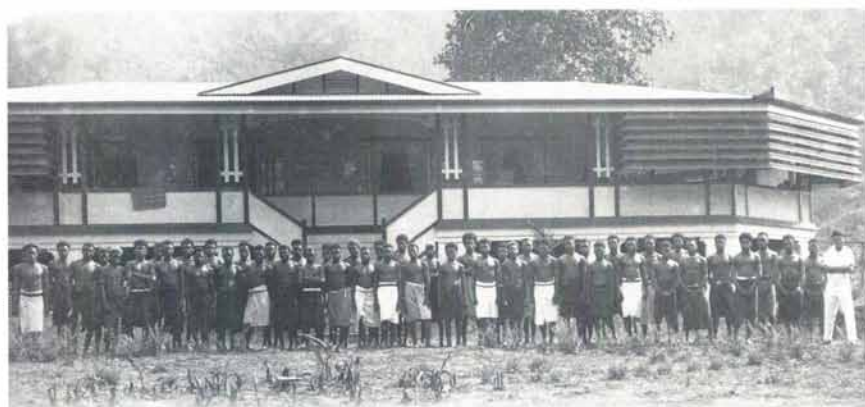
We arrived back in Rabaul from the goldfields on 18 March, on the *Montoro*. Chin and I had only just returned when there was urgent business for Chin on the outstations, so he had to catch the *Macdhui* on 28 March. I saw him off last evening and it poured a hurricane while driving home. There had been a sharp *gurua* [earth tremor] about 6 pm—the first for some time—and in the middle of the night there were two very bad ones a few minutes apart.

THE HOUSE ON MALAGUNA ROAD

Sarah wrote this chapter, which she named 'First Bungalow Built by Native Technical Students', using diary entries recorded over many months from late 1932. Parts of it, therefore, precede the trip to the goldfields; and the remainder overlaps entries which follow in the next chapter.

The building of the house proceeded slowly. Natives in the south-east corner of Papua say *dahori*, meaning 'wait a bit'. Rabaul natives say *maski*, meaning 'no matter'. Both very irritating to white men who, for some reason or other, are always in a hurry. So it was a case of *dahori* for the house, and *maski*, no matter how long it takes. Being an experiment to see if natives could be trained to build, time was not of the first importance. The important point, the Administrator said, was that they should build well. For the 60-odd natives who came down every morning in their school time with the schoolmaster, Mr C.J. Burch, and a Malay teacher, Mr C.H. Monger, instead of working in the workshops, it was rather a picnic. They worked the school hours, 8 am till 3.30 pm. Their ages ranged around the 20s. [Mr Monger was building and carpentry instructor at the Technical School.]

Chin sailed on 20 June for Morobe. Since he would be away for nearly a month, I planned to take the boys down to the new garden and get the tennis court laid out and the round terrace made. We were rather short of labour for a time, and then one morning a tall young lad from a village about 7 miles away on the north coast came in and said that he and three of his friends wanted work for a month. They owned their own good gardens but they had to make money to pay a tax. I am not certain whether it was a government head-tax that was due, or whether it was one of the missionary annual collections, but they had probably noticed we were busy in the garden and thought there was a chance. So we employed all four for a shilling a day each. They all had their own bicycles and



The technical school students with one of their teachers, in front of the house they built for Sarah and Chin, on Malaguna Road

rode over about 6 am and stayed till 4 pm. Out of that they feed themselves, but as they were living on their own gardens it was really all in their pocket.

They worked very happily, and soon got the ground levelled off, using earth they took off the top to fill in a hole lower down the garden. One day as I was watching operations I saw the big garden-boy from a house some distance away come and take some of our good newly dug soil. Manau saw him and said casually: 'Oh! He take plenty all the time.' I saw red! My good soil! I asked him what he was doing and at first he pretended he did not hear me. Then he told me that his *Misis* had told him to get some good soil from my tennis court work and fill up a hole in their garden. I asked how many wheelbarrows he had taken. He said five. 'All right,' I said, 'you bring-im back *faipela* (five) barrows ground now.'

Then his *Misis* came over, and was laughing. I did not see the joke. But she said she had only told him to fill a hole in their garden—not to take our ground. That of course was quite likely. The native always likes an easy way to do a thing and it was much easier to take ready-dug soil than to dig it out for himself further back in the bush. The lad came in later with a huge bunch of flowers to give me. He had dressed himself very carefully, putting on his walkabout *laplap*, oiling himself and wearing a flower in his hair. It was very nice of him to think of paying a little fine, or a salve to his conscience, and they were certainly lovely flowers. I hope he didn't pinch any of them from a strange garden.

The Cocaine Hedge

The hedges of government bungalows are always planted by the Agriculture Department, or the Botanical Gardens part of it, but we had arrived well into the dry season when they came to plant the hedges round the garden. They had been waiting for the tractor to finish, though it did not go anywhere near the hedge line. The weather got drier and the ground more pulverised. We had a record drought of six weeks without rain, while the tropical sun shone mercilessly down.

The hedge chosen was *Murraya exotica*, that beautiful small, glossy, dark-leaved shrub with a little white flower that is very fragrant. It is of the orange family but does not fruit. When I first arrived in Rabaul in 1924, there was a magnificent border of it in the Botanical Gardens which had been done in topiary fashion. But a previous director had it cut down simply because it offended his aesthetic taste. Fashions come and fashions go in gardening, as in everything else—he put nothing half so good in its place, and it had taken years to grow and train and trim, and bring to perfection. Our *Murraya* died a definite death a few days after it was planted. It had looked dying when put in, as if the young plantlings had been left lying in the sun to wilt before being planted.

A gang of ten natives from the Agriculture Department had come and put them in. Our boys said the department boys did not ‘savvy work’, and Manau said they were ‘lazy *tumas*’, while the department boys said we had not watered the young plants. The hedge was planted again, and again it died. So we decided to change from the delicate *Murraya* and plant a hedge of cocaine instead. It is a lovely bright green, and hangs pretty scarlet berries all the year around, and grows more quickly than *Murraya*. For some reason the Agriculture Department does not like putting in cocaine, in fact at one time it was not permitted to grow in Rabaul. Whether they thought the Chinese or others in the town would try and distil drugs from it I don’t know, but it is really too beautiful a shrub not to be grown.

We Sink a Well

The drought was so prolonged that our only source of water supply in the Territory was fast giving out. The tanks which carry rainwater off the roofs were running dry—in some houses the capacity is 2000 gallons [about 9000 litres], in some a more generous tank capacity up to 4000 gallons is

allowed. (Even 4000 gallons does not allow for sit-down baths, and in the dry season, only shower baths.) Generally one tank is kept locked so that natives cannot be wasteful and empty all the tanks simultaneously, and the last remaining rainwater can be kept for drinking and cooking, while native servants go to Ah Tam's well.

Ah Tam was a great old Chinaman. He came out to New Guinea in the very early days (in the 1880s) when a man literally took his life in his hands in dealing with these primitive people. He was granted freehold land by the Germans, and planted coconut plantations in various parts, which prospered. He built schooners in order to get around, and built a wharf in Rabaul where his schooners anchored and discharged, and were overhauled by his engineers. Ah Tam dug a well and built an underground concrete tank which has been a godsend to many in dry periods, when household servants bring laundry down and have communal washdays, a time for much chat and amusement. [Ah Tam moved from Matupit to Rabaul in 1907, when he was allowed to lease 17 acres of land on which to settle Chinese artisans, tradesmen and free migrants. The *Rabaul Times* reported Ah Tam's death in Hong Kong, aged 74 years, in August 1933.]

One wonders why more people do not dig wells in their own gardens to use as the garden and washing supply. There is a river about 30 miles away, but the problem of storing water is great because of earthquakes which it is said would break concrete reservoirs. As the capital grows, inevitably a modern sanitation system must be introduced, and a proper supply of water arranged. Our medical service is very vigilant, as it needs to be with the continual shipping intercourse with the East, Chinese and Japanese ports, and a strict quarantine system is in use to prevent outbreaks of dysentery or fevers that could be serious amongst the natives who are so susceptible. Vulcan Island, that mysterious place which came up in a night about 50 years ago, is our quarantine station—it lies just 4 miles from Rabaul.

When we run short in Rabaul, servants carry water from Ah Tam's well on a big pole on their shoulders—sometimes four kerosene tins full on each end of the pole. To prevent the water splashing they sometimes put fern leaves on top. Getting water to the households means a lot of work and worry in the drought season. Komine, the Japanese, also had a fine well that was supposed never to run dry. (He too was interested in schooners. He had a fine workshop on the waterfront, and built a slip where the island schooners are slipped annually and coppered and de-barnacled.)

Friends were sorry for me because the dry weather had set in so early and rapidly this season. The ground was barely cleared and levelled before the rains had finished. Then Betty MacKenzie, bless her, got a brain wave and said: 'Why not dig a well?' I argued its impossibility, but was willing to be convinced. 'Every little cottage in England has its own well and pump,' she said. I agreed, but said they had a craft of well diggers, who specialised in it. No householder had yet dug a well for their private needs, in Rabaul. We talked of Ah Tam's and Komine's wells, and Betty argued that if they could get water, we should be able to, for they were not much nearer the beach than we were. On the beach, of course, water can be obtained by scratching for it—slightly brackish, it is true. I took a photograph of two women sitting on the beach not 2 miles from Rabaul. One woman was washing her baby in one hole, and the other was filling several empty beer bottles at a hole barely an arm's length away. There is a little spring a few hundred yards further along, and there many natives go and fill long bamboo pipes with water to carry home—they stick a rolled up leaf in for a cork. The kitchen sink at the Pacific edge so to speak.

Many people came to look over the new house and admire the lovely situation, and one visitor, a keen gardener, told me the new bowling green had put down a well, and they would have a hose and pump. That was quite another matter—that bowling green was going to cost £1000 before it was finished! All I wanted was to get flowering bushes started before the next rainy season, when I would be off on my holidays and not in Rabaul to take advantage of the wet weather. Things could then be growing safely while I was South.

I decided we could get a well dug by our own houseboys when they were not busy at other jobs. They enjoyed going down to the new grounds and helping me with a bit of gardening—they too were looking forward to the new home, where we would get much more of the cool south-easterly breeze than where we were still living. I mentioned the need for a well to Chin. He was quite emphatic that we could not have one. 'Don't think any more about it,' he said. 'Why not?' I asked. 'Because it will be a breeding place for mosquitoes.' 'But I will put down kerosene on the well'—same as the public health do on our drinking water tanks. Half a cigarette-tinful of kerosene on each tank, fortnightly. No. That would not do. 'We can't have one—someone might fall into it.'

'I'll put a coping around it'—I had no intention of leaving it open for folk to fall into! But he would not be mollified by the promise of a nice fancy

coping, nor a windlass as a decorative feature—nor films of protective kerosene against anopheles mosquitoes. We can't have a well.

Of course, we got the well. Chin had to go out on a trip, and I got very busy. Not having him come home to a 12 o'clock lunch meant that the servants and I got finished household things much earlier—so we were able to get down to the new garden and do a bit of work there, Manau, Pellei, and I. Sometimes young Napam, a Buka boy as black as night with shiny satin skin and a straight little nose, could come down for an hour or so, but he was kitchen-boy and really had to keep the fire alight, so would be sent back early to have the fire going for lunch.

We found a site to dig the well and got to work. Mr Burch, the schoolmaster, told me all I needed was to sink about five drums and that would do for water for the garden. I tried to get drums from the Shell oil people and motor people, but none could be spared. So I mentioned it to Mr Knox when I met him—he very kindly said he would send some old drums down. Next morning Manau and Comon started digging. At 12 feet [4 metres], where I had hoped for seepage, it was dry, and there was quite an elevation of soil to show.

Chin came back, and as it was our custom to walk down each afternoon and see the progress of the building, I was concerned to keep him from wandering over to the far corner where the well-digging was progressing. We pottered about and admired how the new clover lawn was coming up in the garden at the back where I was planning an octagonal *kunai*-thatched summer house. Fortunately he never went in the unwanted direction, and if I helped steer him in other directions he has forgiven me now.

I telephoned Mr Knox and said we were making good progress and I would soon need the drums. But he gave me the fright of my life—he said I would have to be careful as the ground might fall in on the boys, and I would have to watch them. Well, this was certainly more than I had bargained for. I couldn't risk the boys getting entombed, and I couldn't watch every spadeful. The idea of giving up and doing without a well was too dreadful after we had worked so hard—so I rang the Administrator and asked for an interview. I saw him in his administrative office and told him how difficult it would be to get a garden without water, that only two tanks were up yet, and both empty. I wanted to sink a well and had already gone down 12 feet, but Mr Knox said it was dangerous—and I could not take the responsibility without help, having

only two boys on the job. The Administrator was very sympathetic and said he would see what he could do. He liked gardens, too, but could not do much with the small piece of terraced ground at Government House—it is perched on a hill that gives a glorious view over Rabaul harbour and town, but has no scope for a garden.

The next day a smart native came in from Nordup School, at the other side of Namanula Hill. He had dug the well for the school, so was an expert. His method of working was very primitive. He first covered his mop of hair with a big bandanna handkerchief of a gaudy scarlet pattern, stepped into a bucket which was tied to a rope, and was lowered down into the well by three boys who held on to the rope. Using a short-handled shovel he filled the bucket; it was hauled up, emptied, lowered, and hauled up.

A couple of mornings later, when I was standing under a hot sun watching them at work, and hoping for a sign of water soon, there was suddenly a bad earthquake. We had not had one for months. The big trees shook and rocked as though they would be twisted out—there was the rumbling noise that always accompanies a bad quake, birds fluttered about in excited fashion, cocks crew, and dogs all over town barked.

The boys holding the rope yelled excitedly to the boy below: 'Come on top! Come on top!' He stepped into the bucket and was pulled on top, panting and frightened-looking. He did not realise there had been an earthquake. He had no evidence of it and did not feel the earth shake, and, of course, could not see everything waving about as we could, but the excited yelling and terror in their voices made him think the ground had been giving way. When told there had been a quake he was quite casual about it, while we had been afraid he might be entombed or, as the boys say, 'planted finish'. A few minutes later he went down in the bucket again, and had not been down more than a few minutes when there was another bad quake and we hauled him up again. I got rather alarmed. The soil around Rabaul is very soft pumice and does not bind at all. Had we known that the soil here is just the bowels of the volcano that causes the earthquakes, we might not have been so casual all these years.

I was going off to lunch; the boys were stopping for their lunch. Some of the boys working on the carpentering on the house made a beeline for the big breadfruit tree, and several swarmed up its big trunk and were soon throwing down breadfruit which they would cook in a little fire on the ground. Mr Burch was just getting ready to have his lunch, and I asked him if he thought it

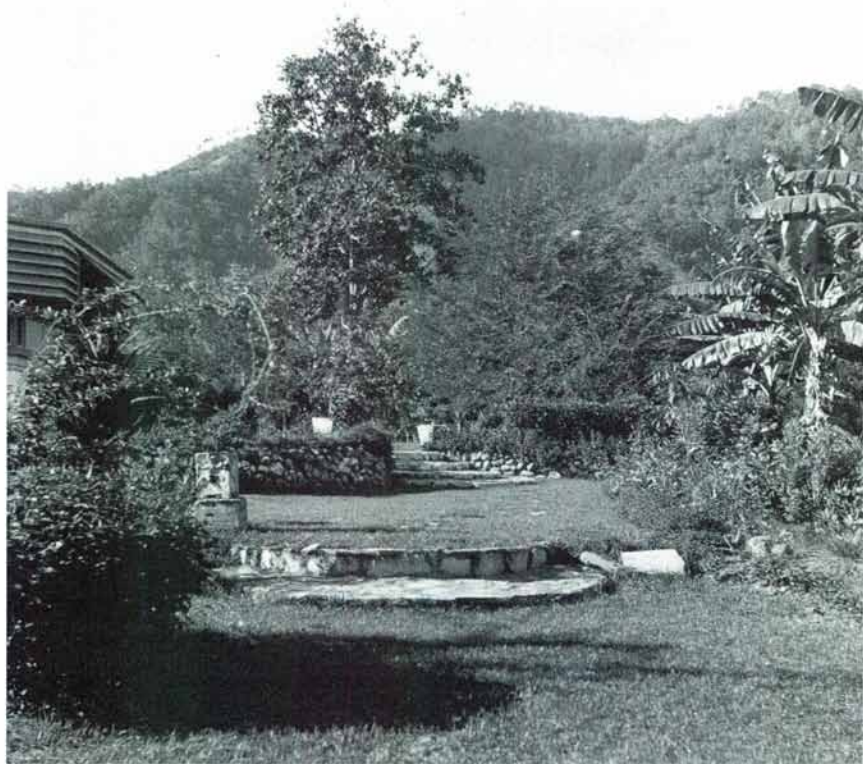
would be safe for the boy to go down the well again in case there were any more earthquakes. He said: 'My word, that was a bad one.' But he reckoned it would be quite safe, so off I went. When I got home, Chin said they were the worst *gurias* [tremors] he ever experienced—seven *gurias* in about half an hour.

When I returned about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I found all the inside wall of the well had been cased up with timbers, so evidently on consideration Mr Burch had thought it was not so safe after all. We had quite a number of quakes that day, but the boy down the well did not notice them. We kept on digging. Still no sign of water. Now they had erected a sort of derrick over the well-head. I was rather concerned about this, because I thought Chin would be sure to see it, and as our work had gone so far it would be a nicer surprise for him to see it as an accomplished fact. Fortunately there was a workmen's tent and sundry other gear that helped camouflage the derrick.

We had got down about 25 feet [8 metres] when Chin came in one day after he had strolled down to the new house. 'What is that erection in the corner?' 'That's the well,' I said. Poor dear. Everyone in town from the Administrator down to the small houseboy knew that I was foolishly digging a well. Whoever heard of such a thing. I feel very grateful to the boys for not telling *Masta*—whether they kept silent about it on purpose, or did not think of mentioning it I do not know. In any case they did really realise that they would get full benefit from it, for they would not have to go trudging down to Ah Tam's well for water in a drought.

At last, the government very kindly sent down 14 big old oil drums already tarred to prevent rust, to be used to line the well. We reached a depth of 28 feet, and 13 drums had been sunk, but the bottom was still not deep enough to get a bucket of water, so they had to put a ladder down the well and clean the hole out a bit more. Still, it had provided some water for the garden. We got water at 32 feet. Cheers! Before the house was finished the builders had to use the well water to make the big cement emplacements for the water tanks.

For months I had been making cuttings of hibiscus and all sorts of bushes in my old garden to stock the new garden, and many friends gave me cuttings of all sorts of things—there are no friends like gardening friends. One of the joys of gardening here is that one just cuts off a twig, sticks it in the ground, keeps it watered, and it is soon as big as the parent bush. Aaron's rod would have flourished, for here is the right place for it. But before we reached our own



A view of the round terrace where Sarah and Chin and guests could enjoy the beautiful view of the harbour and the tall raintrees

water supply, we had to get many a weary load of kerosene tins full of water carried from Ah Tam's well to keep our young cuttings alive.

Making the Round Terrace

The hills around Rabaul are covered with trees. Some of them are slightly similar to eucalyptus, the botanical name being *Albizia*. It blooms with a lovely scarlet blossom. This is the wood that natives use for making drums, being fairly good wood, not too hard. According to an expert at the Agriculture Department, it is a first cousin to wattle and stands up well against the growth of *kunai* grass. *Albizia* also soon recovers after bushfires.

In clearing the site for the garden we had to cut down a couple of lovely big breadfruit trees, to our sorrow. The fruit is delicious cooked in the hot ashes of the fire—it tastes something like a good chestnut, though not so dry, and is a staple food. One often sees natives walking home after a day in the bush

carrying breadfruit slung on a stick over their shoulders—but few residents in Rabaul like the trees, for the huge leaves are very untidy when they fall—they are as big as dinner plates. The wood of the breadfruit is terribly hard and useless for firewood. A crosscut saw could have been used to cut it into delightful tables for the garden, but we did not have either the saw or the type of native who could have made them.

We decided to make a round terrace at the lounge end of the house, where we could sit and look down at the beautiful view of the harbour and the tall raintrees. When the grass was cut and the trees and other stuff cleared off, we discovered there was a little track running through the ground. It actually served natives as a road from the main raintree avenue up to the quarry about half a mile away in the hillside, where there was practically a native village of work-boys employed. One day, Manau and I set off up the little track to the quarry to see if we could get any stone suitable for facing up the round terrace. Actually, the track was so overgrown with high grass that I doubt if an average white man would have noticed it. Manau carried a little stick that he thwacked the grass with. He told me very casually that a couple of evenings before, when going through this track to visit a friend of his at the quarry, he had killed a snake. I shuddered. ‘How big?’ He indicated a branch of a tree as the size, and I shuddered again. Actually I think Manau takes a sadistic pleasure in frightening me with gruesome tales of New Guinea reptiles and horrors.

A huge breadfruit tree lies just beside the track. Probably it is because of this tree that there is a track here. A good *galip* nut tree will always be a meeting and sitting-down place in a spot near a village when the nuts are ready. And so with the breadfruit tree—natives would strike off the road to visit it, and then would continue along to meet their *wantok* friends at the quarry. And the boys at the quarry will also visit the breadfruit tree—and so there is inevitably a track right through. This bears quite a lot on the making of the terrace. Had the track not existed, I probably would not have attempted to get the stone from the quarry, for it was quite a good way by road. The quarry is one of the buttresses of the North Daughter and contains a little blue metal which is used for heavy jobs, and a red, rather soft kind of clayed stone that is used by government to put on roads. It acts fairly well, as it binds better than the pumice soil. Government says that traffic needs do not warrant the expenditure of all metal roads in Rabaul. Most of the heavy quarrying is done by prisoners who are brought from gaol each morning, work there all day, and are returned to gaol in the afternoon.

Manau and I reached a clearing, coming on to it suddenly, rounding a grove of bananas that are always a sign of nearby natives' dwellings. Here the boys who worked at the quarry had their little grass houses built on piles 'alla same fashion *bilong* Rabaul'. On a wooden box at the entrance to one of the houses stood one of the finest Sepik drums I have seen, carved with a big crocodile running along it, curved to form the handle of the drum. The drum was the usual hourglass shape, and the alligator is one of the totems of the Sepik people. It is from this quarry camp we hear the sound of the drums tom-tomming at night. They are not allowed to play close to the town late at night.

Pretty gardens were planted around some of the huts, and here I saw growing for the first time in New Guinea, a kapok tree treated as an umbrella. The kapok tree grows one centre trunk to a great height. It is a very soft wood and natives never climb it. Three lateral branches grow from the trunk like great long yardarms at widely spaced intervals. This one had been cut as soon as the first set of laterals had come out a little, and the result was a delightful umbrella-shaped tree of great charm. A perfect canopy. The smooth bole of the kapok is very good to grow orchids on.

A big native, the boss-boy, advanced to meet us as we came into the quarry village. He seemed to be surprised at a white woman visiting the quarry. He was an Aitape native, probably about 40 years old. Manau introduced him. 'This is Tongoma. He Aitape boy from same place *bilong* me.' I was shown the garden and duly admired it: a few little flowers of white man's gardens—zinnias, purple bachelor's buttons, golden cosmos, balsams—and a few things that would stand the heat and drought, with always as the backbone of the garden, the natives' beloved dracaena, and colourful crotons, and the sweet-smelling herbs they tie round their necks when they go courting, or walkabout, or dancing.

Two natives were sitting on a high escarpment of rock. One was holding a chisel and the other hammering at it, ready to set the dynamite into it that will rock the town with noise when it explodes just before lunch, and at 4 pm when they finish.

There was plenty of softish, very weathered red stone about, and as that was just exactly what we wanted, I felt rewarded for my long walk in the heat. Tongoma lent us a wheelbarrow which the other boys began industriously to fill, glad to leave off work to carry bricks, or anything, for a change. With another wheelbarrow (borrowed from building the house), and two boys kept

on the job—Manau and Pellei, or whoever could be spared from his house duties at the moment—and a lot of overlooking on my part, we soon got enough stone wheeled along the track on to the site for the round terrace. But we had to cut through the long grass before we could get the wheelbarrows through the track. We got the necessary ground to fill in the terrace from a high bank of earth at the back of the house, which had been excavated out for the site for the boys' houses. It was all wheelbarrow work.

There was an enormous breadfruit tree by the site for the boys' house. When *belo* (12 o'clock) sounded on the whistle, about 50 hungry natives working on the house would make a dash for the breadfruit tree, and there was much rivalry seeing who could climb it first. Fruit and leaves would come hurtling down amongst the perspiring, happy, laughing natives, as pleased as kids let out of school when the bell goes. Then a little fire would be lit of a few twigs and bits of dried leaves, and the fruit would be cooked in the hot embers alongside rice boiling in a little billy or an empty meat tin used as a saucepan.

[Sarah added in 1935:] We tried to save the breadfruit tree, and it stood about a year, but it hung over the roof of the boys' house and they complained its leaves in the gutter spoilt their rainwater supply, so it had to be cut down. Fortunately it fell outside the boundary, and now lies overgrown with orchids and ferns, pointing its huge branches to the North Daughter mountain in whose shade it probably grew for nearly a century.

Never having seen a thing like the round terrace before, our boys saw no sense in it at first. To tell them to build a terrace meant nothing. At first they could not understand what was being done and were frankly bored, and I really had to work like a ganger to get them to go back and forth with that wheelbarrow, for with all their interesting *wantoks* at the quarry they would sit down for as long as it would take to make a trip. I realised what the people who built the pyramids must have had to deal with, hauling stone from the place where it belongs to a place where it does not belong. But as soon as they saw the terrace taking shape and understood the drift of it, that it was not just some foolishness on the part of the white woman, who—fashion *bilong* foolish white man—would toil when they could just as well lie in a shady place, and they realised that something interesting was being done, they worked with a will, as anxious as I was to see some result. They all pulled up their socks, or rather they hitched up their calico *laplaps*, and tightened said calico round

their loins—just as I suppose the Egyptians of old did, because if they did not give them a hitch occasionally they would fall off. (It would not matter how many leather belts you gave Manau to keep his *laplap* up, he never has one to wear, except on special occasions such as when he goes to church. They play cards, though it is *tambu* [taboo] by law, and bet their belts on it.)

The earth to fill the terrace, being volcanic soil and very soft and loose, was difficult to manage. It would not retain the shape I wanted until we mixed it with a quantity of stone, and put odd bits of corrugated iron, lengths of timber and other discarded odds and ends from the house-building to hold it in place until we got sufficient stone on the site. It looked awful.

Townpeople went past in their cars. Then I understood what was meant by ‘rubbernecking’. There was no hedge to hide the fearful atrocities we were performing; and it was strictly not the fashion for white people to get out in their gardens and really work with their own hands—lowered the prestige of the white man: ‘What were natives for?’ Of course there were one or two keen gardeners—I mean the sort who really did use a spade, or a trowel, sometimes. But you could have counted them on your thumbs, and I am not certain, but there might have been a thumb to spare! The whole scheme was laid bare to the inquisitive eyes of languid people (for we are all languid here), who never held a spade in their lives in the tropics, and any gardening they would do would be done from the shade of the verandah. I could imagine people dashing past in their cars saying, ‘What on earth now?’, and thinking what a fool I was to sweat in the sun when I could be bowling along shady avenues in a perfect breeze. And no hedge or privacy for all the congenital idiocy that was going on.

Well! Well! They were all friends, and waved me cool greetings with well-kept, unsoiled hands as they dashed by in cars. (No one walks here.) But there is no doubt they got interested in the first terrace laid down in Rabaul, and soon you could not count on the fingers of both hands the number of people who garden actively at times.

I think we got more fun out of building the round terrace than anything else. Certainly the boys did, for between each barrow-load they would sit and gossip and chew betel-nut with their *wantoks* at the quarry. Natives naturally get tired of talking pidgin, and when *wantok* meets *wantok*, time is forgotten, and such things as a barrow-load of stone is a matter of no importance. Tongoma came to see the newly walled terrace built with the stone we got

from the quarry, and pronounced it *nambawan* (number one)! Manau came to look at it with Tongoma, and said: 'Me build the wall.' We did not count the number of trips the boys made, nor how many wheelbarrow loads they pushed, but they all seemed to think it was worth the labour and are very proud of it. Tongoma became a good friend, and visited our garden, bringing a plant of dracaena—a sure sign of peace and goodwill and friendship.

In the mountains of New Guinea, after a war between tribes, they make a ceremony of planting a dracaena that has been drenched with the blood of a pig. The dracaena is grasped by the chief man of each warring tribe when it is put in the ground, and a guard set over it to see that no one destroys it. A man must have dracaenas in his garden so that he may be buried with honour when the time comes.

I was very sorry that our garden meant cutting out part of the little native track to the quarry that had doubtless been used for ages. Still, I realised they would soon make a new one—and so they did, using the ground at the side of the gully. Often on a Sunday noon you would see a little whiff of smoke from a fire lit on one of the spurs of the North Daughter where wandering natives have gone *limlimbur*, or walkabout. The little track that ran through our ground had opened the way to boys making concealed gardens behind the barriers of light jungle and tall *kunai* grass, and in cutting down the grass we discovered the remnants of their gardens where little sets of sweet potatoes, pineapples, pumpkins, melons and corn had been planted in long raised barrows. There were even little rough lean-tos—a few boughs crisscrossed to give them shelter from the sun. There they could camp out and rest when tired of the labour compounds that are built of hot iron, so unsuitable to a tropical country. They could escape their regimented existence and get back to the bush life they love—and the land, and their cool thatched houses.

In due course the house was finished. The last painter was gone. The natives had loved the painting job and had lingered over it. Every stroke of the brush might have been creating some masterpiece, so religiously slow and painstaking were they. So we took possession—leaving the old house in St George's Road which had been built for us by the Wisdom administration. It was Saturday, 29 July 1933. I stood on the verandah and watched the long procession of *meris* going down Malaguna Road from the *bung*. It was fascinating. Hundreds of *meris* and boys return to their villages after *belo*.

It was not until we came to live in the new house on Malaguna Road that we realised fully how much cooler it was down here, where south-east breezes blow straight across the harbour unimpeded by the mountains and the closely planted trees of the avenues. True, the trees give leafy shade on the roads, but there is no doubt they tend to make Rabaul the hot, airless spot it is. This is most noticeable near the magnificently beautiful Casuarina Avenue leading to Chinatown, where the trees tower to a great height. On one side of the avenue, where the sportsground and tennis courts are, a breeze comes in, but on the other side, where the hotel and various administrative offices are, the trees cut off the breeze as effectively as a curtain would.

It was a long time before we got accustomed to it. In the mornings we would say, 'What a lovely breeze', and in the evenings our guests would say, 'How cool it is here!' We look out across Rabaul harbour with its encircling hills tumbling down to the water, their sides covered with tropical foliage concealing some of the craters which make big purple shadows in the green verdure. We can see ships—the top deck, masts and stern anyhow—lying at harbour, and the Beehives. The long point of Matupit Island, round which ships have to come, thrusts out opposite the Beehives.

Behind the Beehives is Vulcan Island—a long, very low island, lying like a huge beast, surly and alone. It is the isolation or quarantine station for natives. No one likes it; I suppose because of its sinister reputation of having come up in a night during some volcanic upheaval in 1878. But it looks rather lovely in some lights when the afternoon sun pours across the blue-green foliage of the casuarina trees that have been planted all over it. So the Beehives and Vulcan Island furnish the harbour, like interesting bric-a-brac.

THE PASSING PARADE

RABAUL 1933

Saturday, 6 May 1933

I have a nice little American lady from the Middle West staying here for a couple of weeks, or until her husband comes in. Mrs Coultas and her husband and two assistants are collecting birds to stuff for the New York Museum, travelling on a beautiful schooner, *La France*. They have been working round the Baining where the natives are very unsophisticated. The *meris* like to come in and watch her skinning the birds, but they won't come near until all the men leave the camp, then they seem to appear suddenly and squat round and watch.

Mrs Coultas and I walked down to see Betty MacKenzie. The MacKenzies have sold the *Lady Betty* and bought a schooner, a very broad-bottomed boat that Betty has called the *Pato*, native for 'duck'. She has been doing a lot of carpentering on it; has fitted up the bunks and done all sorts of jobs that save a carpenter at 18 shillings a day. They have been making lifebelts and proofing canvas against mildew. I sent a pair of curtains down and got the anti-mildew treatment, which was performed in a canoe for a bathtub. Mrs Coultas, who lives in the bush, and has much experience with canvas packs, etc., was very interested to get a formula for treating canvas for waterproofing—a gallon of oil and a pint of Stockholm tar. It was interesting to hear these two little ladies, neither an inch over 5 feet, discussing this seagoing formula like a pair of old sea salts.

Tuesday, 9 May 1933

Mr Marr, the Minister for Territories, opened the new Legislative Council at 3 o'clock. Many receptions, gay parties and *singsings* had been given in his honour. The Administrator had kindly consented to my request to photograph the Council, and after the meeting, chairs were brought down into the garden and I got the historical picture—the Administrator sitting in the centre and the Members



*Betty MacKenzie landing from her schooner Pato,
Rabaul harbour, 1933*

wearing white tropical suits. No natives are on the Council. My photograph turned out well and I sent it down to the *Sydney Mail*. [It was published on 7 June 1933.]

Monday, 22 May 1933

On the *Macdhui's* return from the outstations, Dr and Mrs Fortune (Margaret Mead) and Gregory Bateson arrived from Madang, having all been on the Sepik. They came to tea and Greg stayed to lunch and dinner a couple of times. [Mead and her husband had gone into the lower Sepik area just before Christmas 1932, where Mead met Bateson, who was then working amongst the Iatmul people, for the first time. He had persuaded them to stay nearby, studying the Chambri (Tchambuli) people of the Sepik. As their fieldwork and many shared discussions continued, Mead later recounted in her autobiography, 'Greg and I were falling in love'. They all went their separate ways by the end of 1933, but Bateson and Mead were married soon after meeting up in the United States in 1935.]

The Fortunes and Gregory Bateson stayed in the bungalow this morning while I went down to the Customs House to see the birds that Mr Stevens, an ornithologist, has been collecting, using planes to get in. He is taking down over 400 skins with him, and this is his fourth consignment in a little over a year. I got a snapshot of Mr Stevens holding up some of his birds for me—

some birds of paradise with very long tails, and one with a sickle bill. He had a six-plumed bird of paradise which had three long wire plumes, with a little black disc at the end, coming out of each wing; some with peculiar plumes coming out as a decoration over the shoulders; and some with tremendously long tail feathers.

When I arrived home I found Mrs Parkinson there. She had come in especially to meet Mrs Fortune. (Phebe Parkinson—a Samoan—American—was the youngest sister of ‘Queen Emma’. Phebe came to Mioko in 1882 with her husband, Richard Parkinson, a German surveyor, scientist, botanist and author of *Thirty Years in the South Seas*.) [Queen Emma, the more famous member of the Coe family, had arrived from Samoa in the 1870s to become New Guinea’s first planter. She encountered Tolai resistance to her claims to great areas of land on the Gazelle Peninsula and in the Duke of York Islands in the 1880s. However, her trading interests flourished and she did not relinquish her company until 1911.] Some years ago, prior to Mrs Fortune going back to America after being in Manus, Mrs Parkinson gave her personal papers and photographs with the intention that a book be written. Margaret later got another grant to come out and work here with her husband, and they have been in New Guinea about 20 months now. Evidently Mrs Parkinson was rather concerned with the safety of her papers, and wanted to know what was being done about them. Margaret assured her that they were in a perfectly safe place, where there was not the slightest risk of them being either burgled or fired; and with that Mrs Parkinson had to be content.

Funnily enough, I had asked Margaret this morning, before Mrs Parkinson arrived, about the proposed book, and she said: ‘Well, of course it is not museum work, and I cannot do it in their time. I should want about four months’ holiday to do it.’ But she has had the papers and documents and photos for three years now. [Margaret Mead eventually used the material in ‘Weaver of the Border’, published in 1960 in a book entitled *In the Company of Man: Twenty Portraits by Anthropologists*, edited by J.B. Casagrande. In a footnote, she mentioned having sent half of the publisher’s advance payment to Mrs Parkinson, ‘so that she could use it before she died’, when she realised that a book would not be written as quickly as she had hoped.]

14 June 1933

A German cruiser, the *Koeln*, is making a first world trip since the 1914–18 war, and arrived in Rabaul to a great reception. The German Fathers of the Vunapope Mission staged a native *singsing*, and a dance was held at the picture house in Rabaul. A band performance was given in the Botanical Gardens on Sunday afternoon, playing in the same rotunda that was used for performances years ago, during German times. Germans from outstations who hadn't been in Rabaul for years were present. Serried ranks of natives sat on a knoll in the background, and in front of them Chinese, Malays, half-castes, whites and German sailors off the *Koeln* stood about or sat on the grass. Hundreds of canoes came in, and there was an enormous crowd.

15 June 1933

News came in that Ian Mack, the Assistant District Officer in Morobe District who was on the *Montoro* trip to Salamaua in January, was shot by bow and arrows on 13 June. This morning I heard that he was to be brought to Rabaul. They are going to put floats on a Junker and fly him in with Dr B.A. Sinclair to be X-rayed as there is an arrow splinter they can't locate at the Salamaua hospital. He is dangerously ill.

20 June 1933

They were not able to get floats to the plane, and Ian Mack died of his wounds on Sunday morning, 18 June. Chin arrived back from Port Moresby on the same Sunday, with ten new patrol officer cadets. Hearing of Mack's death while on board the *Macdhui*, Chin has decided to go out to Morobe District and the upper Ramu area and supervise patrols to bring in his attackers. He will probably return with the Administrator by the next *Montoro*. The ten cadets came to afternoon tea on Monday. They are generally fine-looking young fellows—and so they should be as they are chosen out of 2000 applicants.

July 1933

I spent yesterday afternoon out at Mrs Hertz's place (Madame von Seigler's 'let' cottage), painting the view. Mrs Hertz got reminiscent, talking of the glories of her past, when she was Mrs Whiteman. Mr Whiteman had come up here just for a trip, but was offered a job as storekeeper at Kokopo. This was 1898, in German times, when Kokopo was the seat of government, before

they moved it to Rabaul. When she married Mr Whiteman in 1917, Colonel Petheridge was Governor. She received a marvellous reception, no other person has had so many people welcoming them on the wharf since that day. Colonel Petheridge's car was at the wharf to drive her to her home, and triumphal arches had been erected along the road. There was terrific enthusiasm because her husband was so popular. She went to a Government House party, and thought what a funny place she had come to. Her life would be very interesting—I asked her to write it. She said she would be had up for libel if she wrote what she knew.

Wednesday, 12 July 1933

Chin returned by *Montoro* which he picked up at Port Moresby, having flown across from the goldfields after his enquiries into the murder of Ian Mack.

Thursday, 27 July 1933

Betty MacKenzie came to lunch today to meet Doris Booth and Olive Taylor [her husband, Jim, worked a tribute claim at Cliffside], who have come to Rabaul to hear Doris's case, *Booth v Booth*. It's an interesting one. Charles Booth is suing his wife. Says, according to law—the Old English law—married women have no property in New Guinea. But Charles Booth himself put the mine in Doris Booth's name.

Doris thinks that it is especially putrid that the *Pacific Islands Monthly* should be taking Ion Idriess's book on the goldfields (*Gold-Dust and Ashes*, 1933) as a correct account. She says none of the old-timers can bear to read it. George Arnold, who is a great reader, read two or three pages and then said: 'Here you are, *Misis*, you can have this. I can't read it.' Chin read it for a few minutes and then chucked it away saying unprintable things. He recovered it in a couple of days, curiosity getting the better of him, and had another go at it, but he was never able to finish it.

Saturday, 29 July 1933

From a powerful pair of lungs, in a lusty voice that could have been heard from one end of his native village to the other, Malaua yelled out to a passing native: 'You got melon? You got banana?' I was sitting at the table writing when Malaua, who had been polishing the dining-room floor, walked out quietly on his big broad bare feet and nearly rent my eardrums.

A regular procession of natives passes the house each morning, and Malaua had probably been on the lookout for some time. We are a good deal higher than the road and, from the verandah, we can see the natives pass behind the low hedge. Malaua had noticed the woman carrying a fine large melon on her head. He had probably been looking out on the road more than he had been polishing! All the women stopped at Malaua's call.



A regular procession of natives passed by the Chinnery house on the way to market

This was not his first attempt to get supplies we needed. Earlier he had sung out to a passing group: 'You got pawpaw?' 'Nogat,' a woman had replied, and walked on indifferently. (Native women know practically no English except names of vegetables and *nogat*.) Manau now also joined the throng. There were five women in the group and he took a pawpaw and examined it. We always eat pawpaw for breakfast, two sections being cut out, one for *Masta*, one for *Misis*. The remainder goes to the boys, and naturally they are interested! Manau examined the pawpaw with the eye of a connoisseur who eats pawpaw every day, and said: 'Tchk. Tchk. Pawpaw 'e no ripe!'

An old crone with the group then lowered her basket wearily, took out a precious big parcel wrapped in green banana leaves and untied the leaf she had carefully knotted and tied around the green leaves, disclosing a heavy golden pawpaw, ripened to a mellow perfection. If it had not been wrapped so carefully it would have bruised. The old woman's rheumy eyes barely flickered gratitude as she was relieved of her tender fruit. A stick of tobacco changed hands, and then she produced another bundle tied up in green leaves—golden brown *galip* nuts, cracked from their shells. Another stick of tobacco went to her. These *galip* nuts will have their thin skins removed by scalding in hot water, then we devil them. Delicious! Richer and less dry than almonds, they are a most superior nut.

Two young boys about 14 years old came along, carrying bush orchids in magnificent bloom. A lorry lumbered by, loaded to the tailboard with a crew of laughing natives bringing their goods to market the modern way. The lorry,

although driven by a native, is owned by a clever white man who sees an avenue for making a few shillings. Another boy came along on his bicycle selling fish all colours of the rainbow. About ten on a line, strung through the mouths with a piece of liana vine. I now joined the little group on the edge of the garden and said to the boy with the fish: 'My word! Plenty *tumas*. How you catch that?' 'Dynamite,' he said. 'Name *bilong* this fish *malambur*!'

The boy had shot it with white man's dynamite. A few years ago there were so many accidents—natives having hands blown off while dynamiting fish—that stringent regulations were made prohibiting natives using it unless under white direction.

Natives were now passing in dozens on their way to the *bung*. Today, Saturday, is the biggest market day. Later on in the morning we go up to the *bung*, in the centre of town. Here, laid out on long bamboo trestles is a colourful array of garden produce. All races of Rabaul rove up and down amongst the long tables making choices from the abundance of fruits and vegetables, eggs, live poultry, fish and plants, and samples of village cookery displayed before them. Native women stand or sit about on the floor in charge of their own wares, some suckling infants. Boys squat about on the grass across the road, under the shade of big trees, where they can watch the colourful procession at the marketplace, and chew and spit betel-nut to their hearts' content. When *belo* sounds at noon, the market shuts. Then begins the procession home down the leafy avenues of Rabaul for those trudging back to their villages by road. But the lucky ones paddle their own canoes across the harbour to their villages fringing the lovely palm-shaded waters of Blanche Bay.

14 August 1933

I left for South on *Macdhui* on Monday, 14 August; due at Sydney about 23 August, to take the children out of school for the September school holidays.

[In fact Sarah decided to move the girls from Springwood College after she had talked to them. She then rented a home at Manly where the girls went temporarily to a nearby day school. Chin joined the family at the end of September, on three months' furlough, and they subsequently made long-term arrangements for the girls to change to a new boarding-school in Melbourne from the start of 1934. Chin's mother and sister lived in Melbourne and could keep an eye on them.]

NO ORDINARY TOURIST

PORT MORESBY 1934

While packing for her return to Papua New Guinea after six months in Australia, Sarah learnt from a Melbourne newspaper report that Chin had been appointed Australian delegate to the League of Nations Mandate Commission, due to meet in Geneva in May 1934. She decided to return to New Guinea as planned, leaving Sydney on the Macdhui on 22 February 1934.

28 February–1 March 1934

This morning I saw the sun lift a golden rim over the purple tops of the mountains of New Guinea. Bright green on the sea line, the low foothills covered with soft foliage with filmy drifts of clouds nestling in the hollows; and towering above, the deep blue and purple sharp peaks of Mt Albert and Mt Scratchley, rearing their castellated heights over the ever-changing scene. The air remained delightfully clear—it was a day that airmen flying across the Territory would describe as ‘good visibility’; I would describe as a ‘good photographic day’; and passengers would say ‘it’s a glorious morning’.

We were steaming slowly in towards the mountains and I hurried and had a bath, running it myself without waiting for the steward so that I could get up and get a photo of Port Moresby harbour as we steamed in. Early morning tea arrived as I finished dressing. Up on deck with my camera, I was very surprised to see a magnificent big white ship in harbour. I knew the *Lurline*, a big passenger luxury liner from London, had been in five days ago—but this was a surprise. She was a Norwegian pleasure yacht, the *Stella Polaris*, carrying only 65 passengers, while the *Lurline* carried 1500. I got my pictures up on the boat deck—the *Stella Polaris* and some nice fishing canoes off to the reef, their square brown sails well filled out to the morning breeze.

Moresby lay in the shadow of her hill—red roofs colourless against the green. It was Moresby's wet season and everything looked fresh and green. Sometimes it is the cruellest looking place—when the dry is on and the stone laid bare, blistering hot under a tropical sun and cruel in its nakedness. Soon the sun rose high enough to send slanting rays down on the white catchment area on the top of the hill—corrugated iron about the size of a small lake laid on the hillside and drained into a catchment which supplies the inhabitants with water at the annual time of drought.

The Customs boat came alongside first, and later the doctor—Dr W.E. Giblin [medical officer in Port Moresby]—boarded the boat. We all walked past as our names were read out. We breakfasted—grapefruit, bream, an omelette—and I went on deck to find that Mr Wuth, the Resident Magistrate, had called to take me up to his wife. Charlie Wuth is a very old friend—he was at our wedding in Buckinghamshire 15 years ago. He reminded me he was in uniform then so I would not be so likely to recognise him now in tropical whites. [Wuth had been in the Papuan magisterial service for many years; like Chin, he had also enlisted for military service in the First World War.]

Going along the wharf he carried a little attaché case which I had put my camera into. Two lovely Hanuabada girls came swaying along with their gay grass *ramis* swishing as high as they could go—their tattooed bodies gleaming in the sun, wearing long strings of beads of black native seeds and pearlshell armlets, and flowers in their hair. I asked Mr Wuth for my camera and he told the girls to wait, so I got a snapshot of them. He met a man in Public Works and asked him if he could have the car, introducing me, so he was told yes. We walked up a little short cut to his house, and about half an hour later the car came to pick me up—I called at his office and we started off for the native dance that really was being held for the *Stella Polaris*.

It was not in the native village but on the parade ground—a nice green lawn—where about 150 native men and women were dancing. A few white people were sitting in a shady place and a lot of ladies were sitting up on the balcony of the policemen's house. We had been told to go up. 'There's whisky and soda there, if you want it,' a young officer told Wuth. We went up after I had got some pictures and had a soda.

The head-dresses were not much. There were a few bird-of-paradise plumes and quite a lot of beautiful shell and breast ornaments. The women made a

fine show decked out in their gaudy beads with grass *ramis* swaying, and the monotonous beat of the drums and short-scaled tunes they sang seemed strange and rather wonderful. Women danced in a big circle with the men, most of whom had drums. In and out—first a back is turned and then they pivot on one foot so that they turn three-quarters facing you. Kiwais and another race did a funny dance—men lying down in attitudes in groups of three, one lying flat and the other two resting on him—they had a ‘ballet master’ to keep them in time. Another group had enormous head-dresses—a large one represented a fish.

We went out then to Hanuabada, but there were only a few people there. One group sitting on the ground included a girl wearing a long black dress. Mr Wuth asked her if she had a paper to wear it, and when she said no, he told her to ‘come along office on Monday morning’. Native women must wear native dress, which is a grass *rami* and no blouse. If they are doing civilised work they can wear a dress because it will be kept clean—but dirty clothes are considered a danger to their health.

In the afternoon, Mr Wuth drove us out to Pari and Kila Kila. Kila Kila is up on a hill overlooking the sea, with a magnificent view, and with the old *Pruth*, wrecked about 12 years ago, lying out on the reef, apparently as good as ever. (I was living at Bootless, not far off, when she was wrecked, and remember the excitement there was and the salvaging of goods.) It was a terrible hill to climb in the car—rain had washed the road badly, there were terrible deep ruts which the driver miraculously avoided, and below a deep gorge down which I would rather not be catapulted. The village is on top of a cliff side, perched over the sea. I don’t know why they should build on the extreme cliff edge like this. Unlike deserted Hanuabada, there were plenty of natives here, and plenty of mongrel pups came out to bark—a native woman on a verandah got up and scolded them and they soon stopped when Mrs Wuth made a gesture.

We went down the steep hill again and turned off to Pari village, which was built in the sea somewhat like Hanuabada. The tide was out and I saw the most wonderful colours in the water—purple on the horizon, fading down through blue to deep aquamarine into iridescent emerald, and then a wonderful bit reflecting in their crystal whiteness a delightful cloud like a row of lovely castles. Then a dark rather seaweedy bit, and a muddy bit of foreshore. It was a picture I shall not soon forget.

Alligator Island lay all green down below Kila Kila, but here at Pari village there was no island. A canoe was lying out near one of the houses—I thought I would like to get a picture of a boy poling, but I do not know whether it will come out any good or not. I saw the landing ground for aeroplanes lying down below, and close by the vegetable gardens of the natives. Going along the road we passed a road gang at work and some *laplaps* were on bushes, white *laplaps* with a decorative mark. As we passed in the car I peered to have a good look, and saw the decorative mark was a broad arrow—they were prison labourers on the road.

We passed three nice-looking girls carrying water pots on their shoulders. Mr Wuth said we would be able to get them coming back—but they had gone. I bought a carved alligator, a very nice basket with a lid, a ‘hula-hula’ grass *rami*, and a Papuan magazine. I got some of the natives to pose for a canoe picture. They were having a lazy time in the village and did not turn up quickly. ‘*Kara haraga* (be quick),’ said Mr Wuth. It was years since I had talked any Motuan to my boys—I left Moresby ten years ago—but the old ejaculation of white man’s ‘hurry up’ to a lazy native came back. ‘*Kara haraga*,’ I said, in a peremptory tone. They all looked rather amazed. This could be no ordinary tourist with a camera *kara haraga*-ing them, so they got a move on. Two or three women laughed hilariously.

I got back to the ship in time for a cup of tea, and then went out again—got a picture of a canoe all loaded with natives ready to return to their village across the water. One young buck when he was told that a picture was being taken turned around, saw me, and put his tongue out and his hands up to the side of his face, somehow, and another one sang out, stretching out his hand: ‘Pay me, pay me!’ I was about 50 yards off. I had intended going nearer and getting another picture and walking on round the harbour a little further—but I turned and went back to the ship.

[Sarah returned to Rabaul as planned, arriving on Saturday, 10 March 1934, but immediately set about packing for the trip to Europe. She and Chin left Rabaul on 15 March for Sydney and Melbourne, and then to England. After the Geneva meeting and a visit to England, Sarah moved on to spend several months in the United States.]

LANTANAS AND LAVENDER SEAS

RABAUL 1935

March 1935

Just arrived back in New Guinea after a year's absence abroad—reached Rabaul on 7 March, four days late and with a decided list on the *Montoro*. There was a dreadful cyclone—from Brisbane we just ran out of one storm into another, and one afternoon we hove to off the Queensland coast. It was particularly unfortunate for Captain Williams because it was his first ship for six months.

I got home to Rabaul to learn that word had come through on the wireless from Aitape that Colin McDonald, a promising young Assistant District Officer, had been killed at Ambunti by his own police-boy, Constable Sipi, who had crept on to the verandah in the early dawn, had shot McDonald as he slept, and then tried to commit suicide. He had to pass another officer sleeping in the bungalow.

McDonald was one of the first batch of cadet patrol officers appointed to the New Guinea service in 1925. His father is the Mayor of Geelong, and they are a fine family. The pedal wireless set had only been installed at Ambunti a few days before McDonald's death—only one 'talk' had been sent to Rabaul, and the second 'talk' told us of his death.

We went to Phyllis Froggatt's to tennis this afternoon. Their garden looks very nice. Her husband at present is acting Director of Agriculture. I rode there on my bicycle, which caused a mild sensation. I am the first woman to ride a lady's bicycle in town. One woman rides to golf on a man's, but, of course, has to wear shorts.

Started the second terrace; I told the new garden-boy whose name I have not yet heard [it was Aiau] to plant *strongpela diwai*, that is, strong sticks or branches along the margin of the ground where I wanted the terrace. Gave him the mark, and told him to plant them sloping in for a terrace. But, boy *bilong Niugini* no savvy word 'terrace'. They know a lot of working words like 'on top', 'put him down below', and 'middle' or 'half'—so these simple words carry the work along

pretty well with constant overseeing. Anything that lies down 'sleeps'. When one boy tells another to lay a piece of timber on the ground he says 'put-im 'e sleep'.

So I described the slope of the ground facing the terrace and how the sticks we were planting for a support had to be sloped back a little so there was no overhang of earth, saying 'he sleep *liklik* [a little]'. But he could see no sense in that, and when I left him he started in and planted all the *diwais* straight up. After that had been righted we got the terrace faced up with big stones to match the round terrace. We gathered odd stones off the road and found a few big ones in the old riverbed that ran through the garden many years before there ever was a garden.

5 April 1935

The *Macdbui* arrived from outports at night—heavy rain. Guests at afternoon tea today included Mr Dwyer, botanist, and Mr McVilley and Mr H.E. Hamilton, cadet patrol officers. Mr Dwyer had a look at the garden and suggested Ah Fa, the Chinese gardener who has been at *Didimans* (the Botanical Gardens) since 1910, should come and have a look at it.

6 April 1935

A lorry full of natives had an accident—one boy killed, and several injured. Lorries are hired by native drivers to take boys to *singsings*, and often motor cars that are hired out to white people also convey parties of natives here and there. On Saturday mornings the great trek to the *bung* is no longer all by foot, for several lorry-loads come in, at a shilling a head.

It is the houseboy's duty to go out in the early morning before the sun is too strong and gather the flowers for the house. This morning, several ladies were invited for morning tea—the boys were pretty busy and to help things along I set out to cut the flowers myself. Hibiscus only last one day, at sundown they curl up, finished, but we always have sufficient. The lantanas were blooming profusely and I decided to make a floating bowl with them in a mosaic design. I sang out to a boy on top to bring me a Buka basket. Pellei sent his small son Segare down with the basket, and he came along and gravely helped me put the flowers in it. (He is three years old and savvies Tok Pisin.) When I wanted to pick up the basket and carry it to the next bush, like a gallant cavalier, he would not permit it—he carried it. So picture the small boy carrying a basket almost as big as himself, smothered with scarlet hibiscus, lantanas, etc. Segare calls the white buds on the gardenia '*pikinini bilong pulpul* (the flower's children)'.

The natives have 'borrowed' a patch of ground next to ours—it is actually a future road to go up to a future park at the back of our place. Here they have planted corn, como, beans, pineapples, tomatoes, pumpkin, and *pit-pit*, the canes of which I find very useful in the garden for small sticks—like young bamboos.

12 April 1935

Today Chin celebrated his 26th year in New Guinea. He was 21, a law clerk in Melbourne, and thrilled to receive the news that he had been appointed clerk to the Papuan government. He went aboard the *Arawata* at Sydney—calling at Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns and Cooktown, where they went on board the old *Moresby*. Having a District Officer on board, they called in at Yule Island, and a whaleboat manned by smart native police came alongside the ship. They briskly brought their oars to the upright position, and the District Officer was taken off. Many of the old-timers were on board—Ernie Oates, and some of the old miners, all standing leaning on the rail, looking up at the towering mountains of the New Guinea mainland. 'What is the name of that place in there?' Chin asked. 'Oh, that's a bad place. No one has been in there.' He little thought that eight years later he would be the first white man to go into the Kunimaipa. A little over two years after first landing he was made Assistant Resident Magistrate. Today he is Director of District Services and Native Affairs in the Mandated Territory.

The sun has been very hot lately. We are in what might be termed the doldrums—that is between the two seasons. The wet season, the north-west, is just finishing up, and the dry season, or south-east, is not well and truly set in yet, and we get hot, windless days. When the south-east comes in, the trade winds will blow from early in the morning till about sunset; then they die down a bit. The trade winds break the maidenhair ferns and upset flowers in their vases on the verandah, and in some spots exposed to the winds the shutters have to be kept up, and some folks get quite nervy with the incessant wind.

Being hot, I let the boys finish at 10 am, then called them at 3 pm, but Pellei sang out: 'Wait *liklik* [a little]; sun 'e hot *tumas*.' However, both boys soon came out of their shady spot on the boys' house verandah, and we began cutting out the steps between the two terraces. We cut them at the junction of the terraces and made them round and shallow, with an edging of cement slabs. They look very nice.



Today the sea was a misty lavender purple. It does not sound possible and I hardly believed it myself, and had to look again to make certain. I was sitting on the verandah overlooking the garden and the harbour, and could see Aiau who was down grass cutting. It was very hot, only 3 o'clock. Aiau had been taking it easy, working in a cool patch under the shade of the big peltopherum tree.

A couple of pretty young girls came along the road, chattering gaily. Native girls are very scarce in Rabaul which is like a camp of soldiers. There is such a preponderance of males, for the men sign on for work and leave their wives or sweethearts behind in their village. The girls were plainly visible over the low hedge as they walked along, wearing short gay calico blouses, their arms bare and a length of calico wrapped around their hips. One wore a dog's-tooth necklace, and long drooping rings of black *tambu* shell in her ears. (Black *tambu* shell is obtained only in the Duke of York Islands and is greatly prized.) She wore a small sweet-scented flower in her hair. Her blouse was bright scarlet with a black *laplap*. The other girl wore a green blouse. She was very modern and swish for she had bleached her hair, and had quite obviously been exceedingly generous with the lime, for her hair was white-blonde.

Aiau has been getting his forces ready like a field marshal looking ahead—and moved his long iron *sarip* and the sharpener out from the shade to a spot in the sun where he would be able to command the entrance to the garden as the girls approached along the shade of the raintrees. Thus leaving the shade that he had been so sedulously courting, lo, Aiau is ostentatiously cutting grass in the sunny drive just as it opens out on to the road where the girls would pass in a moment. He halts in his work and straightens up to sharpen the blade. A mere accident that he notices the girls. Drawing the sharpener across the *sarip* in a leisurely way, he says to the girls, 'Where you go?'

They don't talk about the weather in New Guinea, or say 'nice day'. They allow their natural inquisitiveness full play: 'Where are you going?' 'Me two-fella nothing [we're not doing anything],' answered Blondie in a high, sweet voice. I could tell she had not been long in Rabaul, for she did not savvy much Tok Pisin. Women never get as good a command of pidgin as the men, unless they take service as a maid or nurse in an English-speaking home. It is astonishing the number of Chinese women who speak no English though their children are going to school where English is compulsory. Chinese women sit in their husband's stores and sell goods and have barely 30 words of English to work on. I don't think Aiau was able to make a date with the girls, for he was very conscious of the

fact that *Misis* was on the verandah with the typewriter, but he bade them *ioko*, and they in return politely said *ioko*—goodbye.

24 July 1935

Ah Fa came to see my garden today. Just a complimentary visit. Ah Fa has been in Rabaul for about 28 years and was in the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens before he came here. He stayed about an hour and a half in the garden at midday, examining everything and very interested.

‘Of course, you have a beautiful position. You have the mountain at the back and the harbour in front,’ he turned to the east, ‘and a nice view of the Mother and Government House on the hill.’ We walked around and then came to the sunken garden. He liked the round steps, walked down two terraces and then said, looking back, ‘Oh, but this is very nice. It is same as Chinese gardens, very pretty.’ The topiary border interested Ah Fa. I had planted a dark green shrub with long spikes that carries a blue blossom, to clip into shapes. He said that the tamarind tree is also very fine for pruning into shapes, lasts longer and is stronger. The wild New Guinea shrub only lasts a few years.

When I got up this morning, not the slightest breath of wind disturbed the face of the harbour. It lay like a calm and peaceful sleeping beauty, still dreaming. The early morning sun seemed to bring out some normally latent rose tints in the Beehives, some reddish colours that do not show up when the sun gets higher. Matupi Point, violet in the distance, threw long reflections on to the tenderly lit, smooth surface of the water, and I told the Man: ‘The harbour looks as beautiful as a mountain tarn or the North Country lakes.’ Coming out of the bathroom, Chin said: ‘Cold mountain tarn. Why do you leave all your photographic dishes all around the bathroom?’ He didn’t even look out to see if the harbour looked as I said—some people have no sense of natural beauty.

Friday, 26 July 1935

Yesterday I photographed the famous ‘Mopos mummy’ in Dr Brennan’s office. It is to be sent to the Canberra Museum. This is one of 68 well-preserved mummies discovered in a sitting position around the walls of a limestone cave near Mopos, Morobe District. The villagers round about claim to know nothing about them. Their position—all sitting with their knees flexed as high as possible and their hands braced on their breasts—is so unusual as to make them especially interesting. The old fellow I photographed has scraps of curly hair still adhering to



Sarah's photograph of the 'Mopos mummy'

his head, and there is a bit of a beard and a few teeth left. The nails are well marked and a nice shape. There are two bad wounds in the skull. One looks like a blow from a club or slingshot; the other is a nasty long cut made by a tomahawk, which the doctor says is the cause of death. It looks as if there had been a battle and the remains of the fallen were put in the cave—whether by their enemies or someone who loved them is not known. The question arises, were the bodies mummified by the knowledge of the people who placed them in the

cave? Or did mummification or calcification take place by the conditions in the limestone cave? It is a tremendous mystery. [Sarah later noted:] The cave is evidently an old burial ground and the calcification occurred because of the very dry atmosphere—possibly the natives took advantage of the natural conditions for the preservation of the dead.

Sunday, 28 July 1935

The balsam seeds I sowed two days ago are showing, and there were dozens of variegated cosmos nearly an inch high when I went to look at them this evening—I sowed them the morning before yesterday. I am leaving a list of work for Aiau to do in the garden while I am away with the Wauchopes, travelling up the Sepik. Mr and Mrs Wauchope, who have a plantation at Awar, offered to take me in their schooner, the *Balangot*, on their next trading trip up the Sepik and its tributaries in search of orchids and curios, and recruiting native labour. As the only other way of doing the trip is by private charter of a schooner, I was very thankful for the offer. With just a few days' notice, I collected my photographic equipment, packed, sent a radio saying 'Coming *Macdhui*', and boarded the ship.

FIRST STOP: AWAR

Tuesday, 6 August 1935

For years I've wanted to go up the wild and fascinating Sepik River. It is full of the most interesting native customs, carvings and architecture, superstitions and sorcery. On the reverse side, it is rife with the anopheles mosquito—a perfectly deadly place for getting malaria. Labour boys brought from the Sepik to work on plantations and mines have to be heavily dosed with quinine to clear their systems of fever.

The *Macdhui* left Rabaul on a beautiful calm evening, just at dusk. There was the usual good crowd of people down to see the boat off: men all dressed in white duck, women pretty in their thin frocks. Lovely bouquets of frangipani came down for some. A friend brought me a present of three films, knowing I would need all the photographic stuff I could get hold of. There was an interesting crowd on board and important officials and administrative officers going to outstations. Sir George Pearce, Minister for Territories, was doing the round trip of the islands with Lady Pearce and his Secretary, Mr Reg Halligan. He became Minister last year but has never been up to the Territory till now. Mr Knox was going to inspect a new outstation being set up in Wewak. The judge and the Crown law officer were going to the goldfields to hear the first court circuit to be held at Wau.

Monday, 12 August 1935

At Lorengau, on Manus, Mr J.H. Jones, the District Officer, came out on the government schooner *Eros* to take off the ministerial party. I went ashore in a pinnace first and met Mrs Jones, who was carrying a big bouquet of orchids, corallita and pink lilies to present to Lady Pearce. She asked me to go up to tea, so when Lady Pearce arrived in the schooner and the salute of police-boys had been taken, and the inspection of *Luluais* [village officials] made, I walked up the steep hill to the District Officer's bungalow with them. There was to be

a canoe race, but we did not wait for that. The *Luluais* were a fine-looking lot, though a bit glum I thought. One, past middle age, had a bone thrust through the septum of his nose, and from it dangled a long bone that reached below his chin. Behind each ear he had thrust a bunch of green herbs. There were many collars of dogs' teeth worn by these representatives of the king.

There were 100 or so canoes lined up to meet the ship—some had three sails, some only two, and most had just the square single sail. A lot of canoes were being paddled and a race started between one with a sail and one with just a couple of paddlers. There was very little wind and the paddlers started getting ahead, so the boys with the sail also started paddling. Manus people are essentially a seagoing people. Most of the district is scattered about in islands, so the greater part of government work is done in the *Eros*. There are only two roads.

13 August 1935

Mr and Mrs Wauchope met me on my arrival at Madang, the starting point for our trip to the Sepik, destination Ambunti, the last government post, 250 miles [400 kilometres] up that twisting, turning river. We were to stop first at Awar, their plantation home, after making several calls en route. Ern Wauchope, or 'E.J.' as he is known, is very fond and proud of his schooner, the *Balangot*. 'It's not an ocean liner,' he said. 'You will have to rough it. We sail all day and pull in at night to a river bank to sleep.' Before Wauchope bought it, the *Balangot* was formerly in the trade for trochus shell and trepang fishing—trepang (sea cucumber) being that delicacy beloved by the Chinese.

Wednesday, 21 August 1935

At last the day arrived! I was up at early dawn, and soon after the native carried luggage and stores down to the sea wharf. Mrs Wauchope and I left the Madang Hotel (where I stayed for the few days till the Wauchopes were ready to start) about 7.30 am. The gong was just going for breakfast as we walked down to board the little dinghy that would row us out to the schooner.

Once on board, preparations were made for breakfast. Then it was discovered that the boys had loaded about 2 tons of cargo on top of the box of food which Burns Philp had sent down. The cargo was trading goods—calicos, tomahawks, knives, kerosene lanterns, torches, beads, mirrors—to trade for goods or curios, or inducements to sign contracts to work for the

white man. So we could not get at the sugar. Blast it! But, 'No matter,' the *Misis* said, 'we have sweet milk that will do for the tea, and we can get more at Sek, our first stop. Now, where stop ham?' It was also under 2 tons of cargo!

Meanwhile, the schooner was well under way, a spanking south-east wind blowing us along; it was most exhilarating after being cooped up for a week, beautiful though Madang is. We passed the most glorious scenery; little islands silhouetted against the sun, with narrow waterways between, giving passageway seemingly into the heart of the big, distant mountain ranges—on one side the Finisterres, on the other the Bismarcks, much further away and paler blue in the distance.

The cook-boy had been busy and cooked some big fat sausages which smelled good, and Yanson, the schooner boss-boy, took over the steering while we breakfasted. Yanson was a nice old boy who liked to wear a white towel turban-wise, and he smoked a long pipe. He was in disgrace when we started because he went *limlimbur* without permission—to purchase betel-nut, he said, without which these old men cannot exist, let alone work. Since he was standing at the wheel, close to my bunk where I sat breakfasting, I smuggled a scrap of sausage wrapped in bread into his hand. The bunk was my bed and my chair for the whole time I was on board. There was no place to walk about, and no extra seating accommodation. A big canvas kept off the sun. The toilet facilities were primitive in the extreme—but the ocean is deep and very sanitary.

Median, our engineer, was from Blup Blup Island near the Sepik. He was down in the hot engine-room and liked to come up and steer sometimes to get a breath of fresh air. He could still keep an ear to his engine and sing out to Kaimsi to 'come steer' if he wanted to go down. Kaimsi was a deckhand



*On the Balangot schooner, travelling
up the wild Sepik River*



Sarah's drawing of Gobet

and general rouseabout. He had white teeth and a big smile. White teeth are noticeable in a community like New Guinea where all the natives over 12 years are confirmed betel-nut chewers, and their teeth are stained a rather repulsive black.

The crew were all very tickled because I was putting their names 'along paper'. Marwash, Yanson's eldest son, was commonly called Wash-Wash, and was E.J.'s personal servant and the schooner cook-boy. Gobet was Mrs Wauchope's personal maid, and always travelled with the

mistress, taking care of her clothes and generally making herself useful. Gobet spent a lot of her time looking out wistfully through a lifebuoy hung on the deck side. She wore the usual knee-length Mother Hubbard garment and a length of calico *laplap* for a skirt, just twisted to a knot to fasten at the waist.

We landed at Sek and were glad to stretch our legs. [Sek, formerly called Alexishafen, was the home of the largest Roman Catholic mission of the Alexishafen District, under the direction of the Bishop, the Right Reverend Francis Wolf.] The mission schooner *Gabriel* lay at anchor with her sails up. While Mrs Wauchope bought iron saucepans and a bread oven (a saucepan with a lid), I went to the mission school and heard the children sing in pidgin English. We left Sek at 10 am.

The sea got not exactly rough, but the boat rolled a bit as we passed Cape Gazelle where the missionaries have put up a cross for the people wrecked and washed ashore there. Mt Orcan stands behind. We were to make three calls at Karkar Island which rises 4900 feet [almost 1500 metres] high and near the top has a crater 7 miles [11 kilometres] long and very deep, but which is not active. Karkar is very rich land with plenty of *galip* nuts and several other native nuts—untold wealth in a country where meat is scarce.

We reached Kurum, the first call, and put off cargo. Six bags of rice and one of flour were missing, thought to have been left behind. Two or three old *meris* [women] came to the beach when they heard the conch shell blow.

We pulled up the sails once we got out through the reefs again on our way to Marangas, where we would stop overnight with Mr Paisley. I saw a boy admiring his image in a basin of water, after putting a hibiscus in his hair. The sun was shining strongly on him, and gave a good image back to the black Narcissus. A lot of the crew had *bilas'd* (decorated) themselves with flowers when we left Madang, making a gala occasion of their trip homewards to Awar.

Thursday, 22 August 1935

[Their third call on Karkar was at the copra plantation run by Mr Middleton and Mr West. Dr Pockley also had a part share in it.] A big surf lashed the sea into foam as we got to Kalili plantation about 10 am. Sailing over a low reef we could see the coral below in glorious colours of jade green, emerald, purple and rosy tints, with clawed marine creatures darting about. Kalili has a very pretty garden, about an acre and a half around the house, which is generous by many plantation standards. So often coconuts are planted to the very doors. It happened that no orchids were blooming, but there were tall gladioli, lilac cleome, and a very showy bed of scarlet and yellow amaranthus, coreopsis, African daisies, zinnias, balsams and gerberas, as well as the usual hibiscus and crotons.

We went for a walk through the plantation with Mr West, into the bush and past a native village to a pool formed by a spring that bubbles up from the heart of the island. Tall lush timber and sago palms made a delightful background around it. Natives have dug out a deep pool in one part where they can bathe. There is another spring on the island near the sea, where the tide goes rushing in. When the women want fresh water, they wait till the tidal water rushes out, then quickly dip their buckets into fresh water.

We walked the last mile in the near dark, and arrived back at the house to find all the electric lights blazing—very refined and the height of comfort in a New Guinea island five days' sail from the capital. Dinner was laid charmingly in the dining-room with beautiful cocktail sets. Some of the boys had been out on the reef and had got seven good-sized crabs. A Witu boy had taught Mr Middleton's boys how to get crabs with a new gadget—they go down near the reef with diving glasses, find the crabs' long feelers, move the stones and get them out.

Friday, 23 August 1935

Next morning I saw the boys 'polishing' the cocoa beans—treading them with their bare feet round and round a long platform with built-up sides. When the nuts are first taken out of the pod they are put in bins and left in a closed iron building where the temperature gets high and sweats them, and the pulpy stuff comes off. Cocoa is one of the principal crops here—I think it is the first place in New Guinea to grow it commercially. It fetches ten times as much as copra, but costs more to produce, as more labour and greater skill is needed to grow cocoa.

Saturday, 24 August 1935

On leaving Kalili, and Karkar, we were given a joint of goat for cooking and were surprised to hear that the previous night's dinner had been goat. We were glad to have it—one gets tired of tinned meat.

The next call was at Dugumor, where we stayed Saturday night at Luffs' place [on the mainland, opposite Karkar Island]. Around the point near Luffs', the sea was full of glorious iridescent-blue phosphorescent fish. They were mere specks, like marine fireflies, but the bright light of the day was dull compared to their brilliance. Mr Luff had been an old Territorian pearl trader and had a fund of stories of the early days. Now he was trading in copra. I met him first when we were living at Bootless Inlet (1921–24). Luff had been pearling for years between Thursday Island and along the Pacific waters around Port Moresby.

Sunday, 25 August 1935

We made an early start. All along this coast the island of Manam was a constant source of wonder and beauty as the clouds round her furled or billowed. On our other side was the mainland, with native villages of thatch-roofed houses built close along the shoreline, plantations, and broken country where the mountains tail off into the flat land—gullies dark with timbers and hills bright with the green *kunai* grass.

'Splice the mainbrace!' Marwash knows what that means, and gets out the beer. There was an atmosphere of subdued excitement on the schooner now. Before we were alongside Bogia, the boat-boys said Awar could see us now—though we could not see them. We steamed another half-hour before we sighted a lonely little tree that stood right out in the ocean outside Awar, still to the east of the Ramu River mouth.

We had left the last hillock of rising ground at Potsdamhafen and were now in the true flat delta country formed by the two great rivers, the Sepik and the Ramu. A map of the Sepik River looks like a diagram of a coiled python, looping and twisting back on itself, so that after travelling several miles by river, only half a mile across country might be covered. The Sepiks have saved themselves many miles of arduous paddling by cutting waterways or *barets* across these loops and through many parts of the swampy country, making channels which allow their shallow canoes to skim across. Many little streams and *barets* (giving access to villages, or passageways for travel) run off these rivers, and through the ages have formed the low-lying swampy country, and the very rich soil that stretches out about 2 miles and forms the apex of Awar Plantation. Suddenly we raised a long low string of dark trees that at first looked like dark spots on the smooth sea. The boys raised a yell—it was Awar. Home at last for the crew. In about half an hour we were putting into a big bay.

The approach to Awar is beautiful. One long point of the bay leads out straight as a die towards Manam, which rises over 4000 feet from the sea in an almost perfect pyramid. Lying off is the island of Bam. It was 2 pm, and every plantation worker and houseboy had gone off *limlimbur*—to walk about, fish, work in their gardens or visit the villagers. There were only a couple of boys, a Chinaman, and several joyous dogs on the beach to welcome us. A white cockatoo hobbled about screaming ‘Gobet! Gobet!’—greeting Mrs Wauchope’s maid, now returned home.

The bungalow was very handsome with beautifully polished floors. My quarters were in a guest-room built off separately, a common arrangement in use in the early days when there was no accommodation for travellers in New Guinea.

Monday, 26 August 1935

This morning, I first heard the *garamut* calling the boys to work. The *garamut* drum is made from a long hollowed-out log of wood, maybe 2 feet [60 centimetres] high and a bit longer, and usually has long shafts, beautifully carved to represent crocodiles, projecting from each end. The hollow interior is beaten or rattled with a heavy stick to make the call. Messages can be sent to natives working in the gardens, a warning can be sent to a lookout at the approach of a stranger, or an individual message can be sent to, or concerning, a particular native.

The language of Awar is common to five villages around, and persists in a thin line, a mile wide, for 120 miles up the Ramu River into the back country. Outside this strip there are many different languages within a few miles. The bush people's great need for salt is the probable cause for the persistence of the language, allied to their custom of interchanging children in early infancy—children who then, when they grow up and return to their respective villages, bring the language with them and act as interpreters.

At Awar, mornings start early because the natives work by task—they have so many nuts to collect or cut, and then they are free for the rest of the day and can work in their own gardens, or go walkabout. Ogimaru is the boss-boy of the plantation—a fine tall Aitape man with a very proud bearing and a great swing to his carriage. Most of those working the plantation are Aitapes. Yanson is also an Aitape man. Though he actually comes from Walis Island, he calls himself Aitape boy because he lived in the Aitape District, which administers many islands off the coast between the Dutch [now Indonesian] border and Ramu River. He probably signed his papers to work at Aitape, while my cook, Manau, comes from Mushu Island [just north of Wewak] and is also called Aitape.

New Guinea people have such varying characteristics in their appearance that one gets to recognise different natives as belonging to one district or another by the shape of their face. The natives of the Sepik and outlying Aitape areas have high-bridged noses with strongly flaring nostrils, and this very characteristic is displayed in their carvings of the human face.

Yanson is a fine old stick, probably about 45 years old, with a head as square as possible. His mouth is red and always full of betel juice. It is practically impossible for him to speak until he has rid his mouth of a bucketful of scarlet-impregnated saliva. Natives claim that betel juice keeps them from feeling hungry; with it they can go all day without food. Yanson had a wife from Bam Island [north of Manam]. She had two piccaninnies and they all lived here at Awar, where she grew taro and other foodstuffs in the garden. When she died, Yanson took the two children back to his wife's people because, in this society, the wife's brother takes care of the children if the mother dies. Two of the Bam men returned with him to Awar, and stayed a month. While E.J. was away, they cleared all the food she had planted from the garden, and returned to Bam in the Awar canoe, which they have not yet returned—so we cannot go out turtle fishing.

Marwash, Yanson's son, is kitchen-boy, a smart little devil who tells us mythical stories of New Guinea after dinner, or any time he can claim attention. He and Pat, the Wauchopes' daughter, would swap stories. Pat is now at boarding-school in the Blue Mountains near Sydney, but will return home for the Christmas holidays, when a great feast and *singsing* will be held for her homecoming. Pat is full of the lore of these people. She knows many of their folktales and has learnt many of their string figures or cat's cradles, and sits singing the songs and twisting the string into unbelievably intricate patterns which tell the stories of fish, or wood-chopping, or sago. The sago-making figures require the use of toes and teeth as well as fingers, and some of the patterns need two people to make them—always accompanied by the songs—'now we pound the *saksak*, now we wash; pack it; tie it up in parcels ...'

Washing the sago is the most important part of the operation as there are certain poisons in the pith, and it is harmful if not washed well. Practically speaking, when the children are taught the string figures of making sago, they are being taught unawares how important thoroughness is. Sago palm grows wild in the swampy country around the Sepik and Ramu deltas. It is unnecessary either to plant it or look after it, so people live on sago and rarely plant sweet potato or taro around here, though they do have a swamp taro. The big palm fronds are used to thatch the house roofs and to make mats and baskets for all sorts of uses. Every man who walks abroad carries a little basket, maybe 8 inches [20 centimetres] long and not as deep, in which he keeps his betel-nut and other small trifles. The basket is plaited with a hole big enough to thrust his arm through.

Mrs Wauchope wanted a pergola made for the garden, so we went in the lorry about 20 minutes' drive to the mouth of the Baber River, which was chock-a-block with timber. This is one of the little rivers that drain off the Ramu, and all along the beach opposite Manam Island lay an enormous quantity of old bleached timber, washed down from the Ramu. Beautiful quela (a satin-like hardwood), tong, calophyllum, and *garamut* woods which no white ants or borer will attack, these are used for timber, and from these the natives make their big ornamental drums carved with totemistic designs, and totem poles carved with intricate designs of birds and snakes. At one time sandalwood was plentiful, and the Chinese came and got it for their famous sandalwood boxes.

There was a huge log of *kapiak* (breadfruit), nearly 100 feet (30 metres) long, lying with one end up off the beach and smouldering—a convenient method the natives have for keeping a supply of fire when working around in a country with no matches, and where fire-making is a tedious process. I have often seen natives carrying a bit of burning wood, carefully guarding it against an unkind wind, but this was the first public fireplace I had seen, and I was duly impressed.

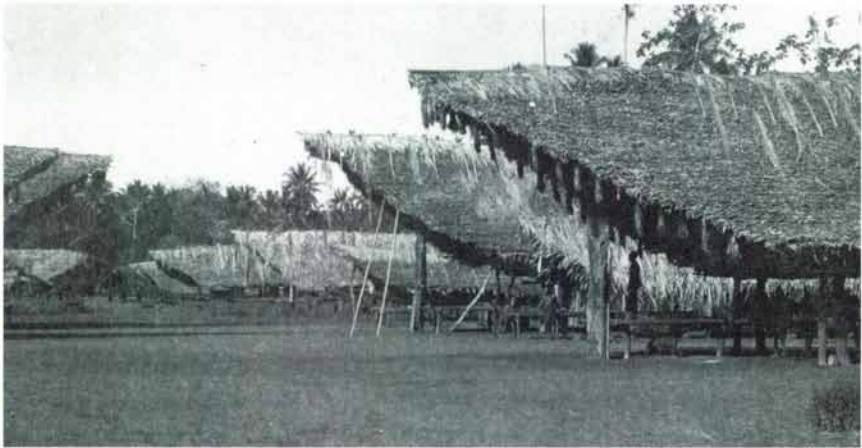
We had to cut off about 20 feet from this *kapiak* log to release some better timber lying under it. After this derelict timber has been lying a long time washed by sea water, it becomes an important source of salt. The wood is burned and the ashes are carefully carried home, stored and traded with the hinterland natives who have no salt. It is a valuable trading item. In the Ramu–Mt Hagen area a long way inland, a few ounces of salt will buy 40 pounds of taro or sweet potatoes. To use it, they pour water over some ash, then pour that salty water over the food in the cooking pot. Natives of the Sepik use lily roots for salt. But at Awar they did not need this primitive salt, and concentrated on getting the timber we wanted.

After a bit of prowling around and getting photographs, I had to get back in the lorry—I could not stand the sandflies any longer, they were nearly eating me alive.

In the cool afternoon we drove in the plantation lorry to within a couple of miles of Awar village, then we walked. The village is near the Awar River, a quiet little stream, cool and shady with big overhanging trees, running from the overflow of the Ramu River which pours down into the swamp behind Awar. Here in the river they had made traps fenced with tall bamboo stakes to contain and preserve fish.

Awar was a fine prosperous-looking place with huge houses of exceptionally handsome design, with overhanging eaves reaching up to heaven and decorated with tassels that formed a fringe. The houses were built in a double line, equidistant down the street in an orderly layout, unlike the average jumbled plan of a native village. They all had nice wide verandahs, and the *Haus Tambaran* ('Spirit House', the men's house for ceremonial use) had its front wall, which was well back within the overhang of the gable roof, painted in a design of men's figures and vague native decorations.

Barking dogs greeted us, as usual in native villages. Men and women were sitting about on their verandahs. It was the hour for their evening meal,



The village of Awar, described by Sarah as a 'prosperous-looking place with huge houses of exceptionally handsome design'

and laid out on the floors were their black carved bowls full of *saksak*, with a nice fish, a few little shrimps or legs of prawns as garnish or relish. In pidgin, the relish is called *abus*—sago is so lacking in all elements of dietary goodness that it must be '*abus'd*'. Sweet potato or taro can be eaten alone, but not sago—failing pig or fish, they would add coconut milk or scraped coconut. So, women really must be very industrious around the rivers and little creeks, catching crayfish, eels, or anything edible. Snakes and certain parts of crocodiles are also eaten; in fact there is practically no living or crawling thing too reptilian or verminous to use in making sago more nutritious and attractive. They cook the tender tops of ferns, also, and a pretty water weed called *kango* that grows at sheltered river edges where the tide does not wash too strongly.

As we walked through the village, we chatted to different groups, each at their own house, and saw the dishes of food laid out on the floor, waiting. Mrs Wauchope was very free and easy with the women, slapping them affectionately on the shoulders, and being slapped back just as heartily. We engaged a girl to come and look after me—carry my camera when I went out and look after my laundry, etc. She was a nice young woman, named Mo Mo.

Most men wore a *mal* made of tapa cloth strung between the legs, and the strong basket corselet belt, and had their hair done in big knots that poke out a good way on the back of the head. Some wore round their hair knots the gold and white spotted skin of a kind of cuscus, but this is a privilege for



Barong, chief and Luluai of Awar village

certain men. Women wore very thick grass skirts in bright red and yellow colours, and necklaces of dogs' teeth, or flying fox, and shells in their ears. They were all chewing betel heavily, and spitting profusely.

The chief man and *Luluai* of Awar village was Barong. The office of *Luluai* is an appointment made by the government, and entails certain responsibilities undertaken for the good management of the village and the people, under government direction. A *Luluai* is also known as a *Hat* because of the peaked cap which is the token of office. Barong

also wears the corselet belt which only distinguished men seem to wear. It pulls their figures into an hourglass shape, and certainly gives a man of good build a very statuesque appearance. The plaited basketry is made in three differently coloured sections, one red, one natural, and one black. One section fits over the upper waist, one over the middle waist, and one over the hips, all interlapping, and fitting so tightly that there is usually a slight roll of flesh over the top. They take a tediously long time to get into.

Putting on the belt is a ceremonial occasion, accompanied by a big *singing* which requires some time to arrange. Invitations are sent to friendly districts and villages, and the hosts must lay in large stocks of food—pigs and chickens are fattened, fish caught and dried, hams smoked, and bunches of bananas, and mountains of taro and sweet potato are gathered together. At these times a rich village can buy extra food with shell money they have been trading and hoarding to put on an extra good feast. Full-moon nights are chosen for feasts, and dancing goes on till nearly dawn.

Women get their best grass skirts and necklaces out of store, and men get out their best feathers, bird-of-paradise plumes and necklets, and make big bustles of native bush and colourful crotons, and gather hibiscus for their heads. Last of all in personal adornment is painting the face. Men will sit in front of a small mirror making hundreds of minute dots of different colours of

native pigment on their faces. To their own lovely ochre colours of reds and yellows they have added a particularly virulent blue, the laundry dye called Reckitts. A great pity, but they love it, as they don't seem to have any blues of their own.

Meanwhile, houses have been decorated with streamers from the bush; yard-long strips of pandanus ribbons, bush, and anything they can get to disguise reality. The word 'glamour' may not be in the vocabulary of the New Guinea native, but *bilas*, the art of glamorising the stern necessities of life, is evident everywhere. Their rough garden tools, a digging spade, the prow of a canoe, house poles, drums—all are subjected to the eye of the artist to see where they can be ornamented. So also are the ordinary personal wearing accoutrements: plaited belts, armbands, and carved bamboo combs with 3-inch-long teeth to anchor in their stiff, curly hair.

Barong shook hands, very civilised, with Mrs Wauchope and me as we chatted in his village. It was getting dusk and we started out on the walk home with about a dozen young natives accompanying us in single file along a native track. One of the plantation boys out *limlimbur* with his bamboo flute joined us, first darting into the bush and bringing four others. Now his tootling on his flute helped the weary walk home in the dark, and the others sang their native songs, partly to cheer themselves, for they hate walking out on moonless nights. They go long distances by moonlight, laughing and joyous, but in the dark of the moon they stay in their villages. If compelled to go out, they carry huge torches made of coconut palm leaves, and make plenty of noise to scare off the *tambarans* [spirits] that prowl round in the bush in search of the unwary.

As we filed along the track, the leader—the flute boy—said to one of the others trailing behind: 'You got light?' '*Nogat*,' he answered. '*Nogat* light. *Nogat* moon.' And a couple of others took up the refrain: '*Nogat* moon.' At a diverging track the flute boy said: 'You go catch-im light.' So the other boy went to a little village nearby and soon rejoined us, carrying a short thick branch of wood, the end glowing red and throwing out fiery sparks. Now we were much safer, but at the same time, as we walked through the bush and it got very dark indeed, they sang their songs quite loudly, and the flute boy played his flute. When Mrs Wauchope and I started chatting, he left off playing. He knew enough pidgin to get a word in here and there, and curiosity overcame fear.

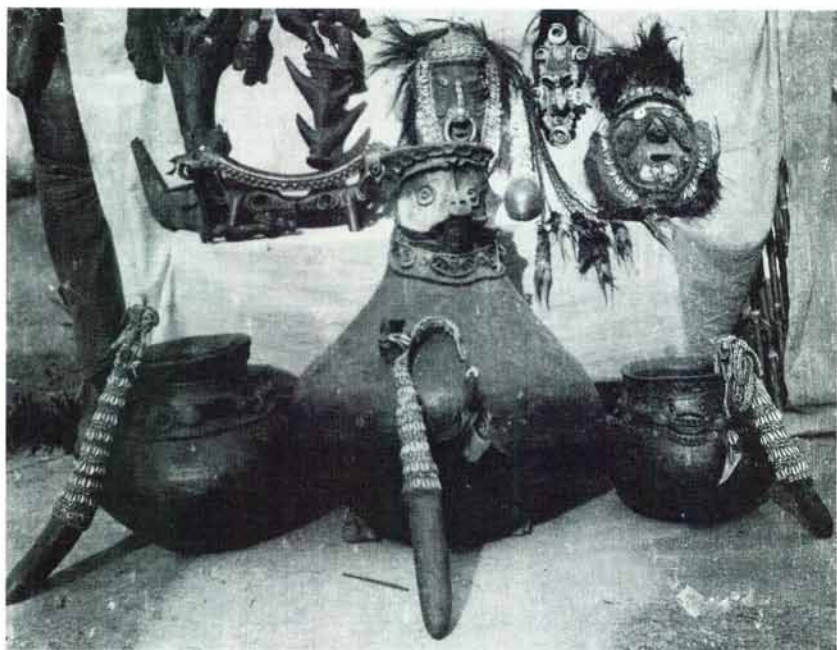
Wednesday, 28 August 1935

Just after an early morning cup of tea, I started out for Awar village. I had told the people that I would come again and take pictures of them and their village, but the place looked quiet when I arrived. Then Barong came down from his house and spoke to a fine big, rather lean older man wearing a *mal*, who went and played a long resounding tattoo on the *garamut* drum. Probably thinking it 'fashion *bilang* white man, humbug *kanaka* [native]', they had gone off to their gardens thinking I would not turn up. However, enough remained, and presently women came out of the houses with all their *bilas* on, and a few men put their best combs in their hair.

Two beautiful little piccaninnies dressed in little bunchy grass skirts wore strings of beads and small dog's-tooth necklaces and a flower in their hair—they looked like something out of a musical comedy. Shy and coy, they put their fingers in their mouths and scraped their little brown toes in the well-swept earth in the street. They had probably never seen a camera before. Some women wore great breastplates of shells strung together and worn at the back and front, in addition to rows and rows of dog's-tooth necklaces. They wore numerous layers of grass skirts, each layer shorter than the lower one, and each a different colour. Some wore wide bands of floating dried banana leaf overlaying the grass petticoats. These are very durable, and bleached to a cream colour; they are very decorative. Being light in texture, they billow out in the dance.

After taking my photographs, I went to the nearby river, escorted by about 20 natives, including Barong's brother, Gua. They put a lovely Manam canoe, carved to look like a long crocodile, into the water. One woman got in with her big round fishing net and another got in and paddled—the long prow of the canoe was just afloat, its carving intended to appease the spirit of any angry crocodile prowling about. Women stand in these narrow canoes with a flat pandanus matting bag on their backs to put the catch in, and some carry a baby slung from their shoulders, balancing themselves expertly.

Barong accompanied me and Mo Mo and the little boy who carried my camera back to the plantation. He spoke a little pidgin and we were able to keep up a friendly conversation as we walked the 3 miles home. When we reached the house I asked Barong up on to the verandah and showed him my photographs of Port Moresby natives in their really fine *singsing* dress. The men at Awar village had not put on their *singsing* dress for me. I did not say



Part of E.J. Wauchope's collection of curios from the Sepik River

much, for Barong had said: 'Now he *no gat* time; time *bilang tambu*; boy he no put on *singsing*.' [That is, the villagers were too busy to dress up in their *singsing* finery.] I had left it at that, but thought I would do a little propaganda by showing him what nice pictures they could make. He was very interested. He is an exceptionally big man, with a very large square head which he seemed to make wider by wearing earrings that stood out quite a bit. After he had looked at the photographs, which I usually print 10 by 8 inches, and looked again, he seemed visibly impressed, and said with an air of finality: '*Bihain* (later), me put on *singsing* dress', and I could photograph him.

Thursday, 29 August 1935

E.J. went up to the Sepik a few weeks ago and got some wonderful curios which he keeps in a building of bamboo and wire netting about 16 by 30 feet. It is full of examples of native arts which will eventually be sold to some museum. There were tables made out of a solid piece of tree, with legs carved as crocodiles or human bodies; long crocodile-carved stools; big *tambaran* [spirit] figures for house fronts; and masks of every description carved from solid pieces of wood, with ugly big noses and slits for eyes. All sorts of

wonderful accoutrements for ceremonial occasions had been traded in. There were beautiful ceremonial betel-nut gourds, heavily encrusted with *tambu* and other shells. One lime stick (used to extract lime from the gourd and convey it to the mouth when chewing betel) was a bird's head carved out of a long bone, and hanging from it were tassels of birds' feathers, each tassel representing a head secured in battle. The tassels on another stick were each a breastbone of a pigeon. One ceremonial headband was a solid mass of *tambu*, with a nose piece let in with four teeth.

The south-east breeze blew up so strong in the afternoon that only half the copra could be lightered off to the *Miawara*. She would now call in at Awar on the return journey next week to pick up the rest of the load.

Friday, 30 August 1935

As I didn't intend trading when I went up the Sepik, I brought only a few fishhooks, pearl buttons and mirrors, just for presents to give the natives. Then, seeing a number of old film wrappers—red papers lined with black—lying where I had developed them the night before, I decided to take them as gifts. I had lots of typing paper, quarto size, and decided to make little mats like children do in kindergarten, using the red and black paper from the film rolls. It made such pretty little mats I decided to make all I could get film wrappers for. I was sure that, being perfectly new ('Imported, Madam!' as the stores in Sydney and Melbourne say), they should be very popular and would make nice presents for the piccaninnies. Mo Mo was thrilled with her kindergarten lesson. 'He *nambawan* (number one),' she said with approval, and was simply itching for me to leave them and let her thread the coloured strips through the white slots cut in the typing paper.

The volcano at Manam is not continually active, but at times shoots out huge glowing flashes, and hot cinders roll down the mountainside. Years ago a devastating earthquake sent hot cinders across to the Awar harbour. The natives fled to escape them. At night it was possible to read by the bright light from the volcano. Since then there has been little activity, though the plantation boys still talk of the time Manam rained fire and stones. Old Barong told me vividly of the time of the tidal wave, when the big sea came in and out, leaving all the fish and sharks on the ground 'nothing'. 'Then *bikpela* water [big wave], he come in on top, *tumas* [too much]. Alla boys, he fright *tumas*. Now altogether *kanaka* [all the natives] run away along bush.

Long way we run. But Manam good place. *Maski* (never mind) fire. Plenty *kanaka* he stop. He no fright.'

This afternoon we went out and picnicked in the *Haus Kiap* (the house used by the patrol officer when in the district) near Nubia. A boy and Mo Mo carried our afternoon tea, and the lorry dropped us on the plantation about a mile from the house, and we walked till we came to the river. It was a lovely sight. Across the river was the village of Beach Awar—or Little Awar—and on the near bank some coconuts leaned out over the water. A bit of sandbank between the sea and the river was outlined dark brown against the white breakers of the sea.

We crossed the river and entered the village just as the women were preparing *kaikai*. A dear old lady who had her coiffure most immaculately done in tiny, long curls, thickly coated with red clay, was very friendly. Another *meri* had her hair shaved off in a ring round her head, and clay plastered on the hair that was left. A young woman was busy working over a basket of sago for the evening meal. On the low verandah in front of the house she had a basket made of a single leaf of betel, holding water; it is used to carry water and holds about 2 quarts. Another basket contained square chunks of dry, slightly pink sago. Little brown shrimps and pretty fish lay in a wooden bowl. First she broke the sago up into the water, then stirred the wet mixture into the cooking pot full of boiling water with the end of a branch of palm tree—stirring and turning it for about five minutes. Then she took up the leaf basket and poured some water round the fire to make it go slower and not burn the food. Meanwhile the *abus*, or dressing for the sago, was cooking in a smaller pot next to the big sago pot—there was a quantity of shrimps (now coral pink) and fish, ferns and green leaves: vitamins which they know quite well they must have. A little of the soup in which the fish and vegetables were cooked was poured into each wooden dish and the sago garnished on top with a little scrap of fish.

Leaving them, we walked on to the village of Sisimangar, which is a good deal larger, and where Mr Rouse has a trade store, which E.J. reckons is within the 2-mile limit [the limit between trade stores imposed by government]. Recently a fine big church has been built, for which the Father paid £1, a bag of rice, and five tins of meat.

We walked on until we came to the *Haus Kiap*, where we had tea sitting on the steps, from where we could just see the grass roofs of Nubia. After tea we went over to Nubia which is right on the beach and a tiring walk through deep

sand constantly blown up by the strong south-east trade wind. Nubia was a fine large village of houses built each side of a 'street', something after the style of Awar, but not so well built or decorated. We had a chat with the *Luluai*, and Mrs Wauchope gave out some Manam tobacco. It grew dark as we walked home—not quite dark as we crossed the river. Mrs Wauchope would not let the dog swim across for fear of crocodiles. Fireflies accompanied us all the way home, and there were many fires of dry coconuts burning on the plantation.

Monday, 2 September 1935

I walked out through the plantation to the villages of Little Awar, Sisimangar, and Nubia today. Mundau, the medical *Tultul* (responsible for the health and sanitation of his village), and Mo Mo came to escort me to the place in the bush near Sisimangar where sago was being made. People around here have had a great rush making sago to sell at the trade store to earn their tax money. They knew the *Kiap* was due soon to collect the annual 10 shillings per able-bodied man in each village. In some parts of New Guinea women make the sago, but here men make it. Cutting palms down and the washing process is certainly a tough, arduous job. I photographed the men who were working in a pretty little clearing in the bush with tall sago palms all around. One big palm was lying on the ground. They showed me some of the trees that would be cut down next—they are felled when they flower.

A couple of men sat astride the fallen palm which had been split open, and were hewing out the pink pith with adzes. All around were mounds of the pith which they quite indiscriminately walked on in their bare feet, and beat with wooden mallets to open up. When sufficient had been broken down, they carried it to a spot across the little track we had come, where another group of men were working at washing the sago, and where they had dug a big hole in the dirty swampy ground, which fills with water—the mud just roughly dug up and thrown out on top.

A little platform had been built there, and on it was set a cradle made of a spathe of sago palm. The pith was put into tall bags of pandanus matting, water poured over it, and the bag vigorously squeezed over the spathe of palm, below which a trough made of sticks lined with leaves was conveniently placed to catch the fluid. The water was quite unbelievably black with loose swampy mud. The waterhole was constantly churned as several men dipped coconut shells fastened to long poles and tipped the water over the pith. Water was poured into the bag,

the bag squeezed, and so on until they thought all the good meal was worked off the fibre. As the floury water was squeezed from the bag, the pith was thrown away. Meanwhile, the heavy sago sank to the bottom of the trough and, to let the water pour away, they just turned down the edge of the leaf lining.

When the sago has dried sufficiently and set in a solid mass, it is cut in blocks and carried to the village on men's shoulders, on large leaves as thick as a stout board, and stored in big clay pots. These pots, reminiscent of eastern storage jars for oil, stand 3 or 4 feet [about 1 metre] high; they are made for this purpose up near Chambri, many miles up the Sepik River, and often have a pig's head modelled in clay on the upper portion. Sago will keep a long time if necessary and is stored against '*taim* [time] *bilang* hunger', when the men of Awar pull their belts in. Then there is '*taim bilang* plenty', when there is taro, yam and sweet potato. Sago for sale is packed in green leaves of banana, forming a bundle called a *mekpas* (make fast), which sells for a shilling. A 20-pound sack [8 kilograms] is worth 4 or 5 shillings. They are bringing some in to the trade store tomorrow to sell for their tax money.

Walking home from Nubia, Mundau, who had carried my camera, said he would send word and let me know when the *Kiap* came to collect the tax money so I could get a photograph of them all. Several friends of his joined us on the way home.

Tuesday, 3 September 1935

E.J. has decided to start for the Sepik on 6 September.

Wednesday, 4 September 1935

The *Miawara* returned today to pick up the remainder of the copra, and gave us revised dates for the *Macdbui*. The date for Madang is 6 October, so I'll catch it comfortably at Madang after doing the Sepik trip. The *Miawara* is the last ship here for two months.

At noon Mundau came to tell us that the *Kiap*, Mr Jack Read, had arrived from Madang to collect the taxes, so we went out to have a look, and get some photos of it all.

Thursday, 5 September 1935

Some men from the Ramu village of Kumindi arrived and told Mrs Wauchope they had the *saksak* they had promised to cut ready to trade,

and their people are all waiting on the banks of the Ramu for us. They were to return home with us, and occupied their spare time till our departure by making salt on the beach. Another man arrived from Dugumor, a distance of 34 miles [55 kilometres] which he walked in one day—he slept the night and returned home the next day. By evening we had finished all the packing for the trip up the Sepik, and got the *Balangot* ready for an early start in the morning.

Everything had gone aboard except bedding for the bunks, the tuckbox, and a full equipment of anti-barrage against mosquitoes and sandflies. I have been eaten alive by sandflies ever since I arrived, and by another little insect, larger than a sandfly but white instead of black. Sandflies raise nasty lumps which cause a lot of trouble if scratched—poisoning sets in, and may take weeks to clear up. Biddy Wauchope said the sandflies had been bad because there had been such a drought. Mosquitoes breed most in the wet season in pools of still water, swampy ground, tins or coconut shells left lying about, or in the boles of trees. Banana trees are a great breeding place. The Wauchopes have put larvae-eating fish into the *barets* [waterways] round the house, and they reckon they have lessened the plague of mosquitoes around Awar, but on the Sepik there are always mosquitoes, and in the wet season, when they are at their worst, they drive white people nearly mad, and natives carry whisks of bird feathers which they flick about themselves ceaselessly.

To escape the mosquitoes at night, the Sepiks have designed bags woven in a thick, strong fabric similar to the heaviest sacking, supported by hoops of cane inside, and into this bag the whole family will crawl, and close the opening behind them. It can be imagined how terrible the mosquitoes must be.

They are swept off one's arms in battalions, and spatters of blood show down the arm; so long sleeves, long trousers and boots are worn on the Sepik in spite of the heat. I was lent a pair of rubber boots in Rabaul, but with leggings of white drill I did not think I would need them. I had a long veil of net to put on my hat. To our supply of mosquito bane, mosquito pencils and citronella, we added a collection of feather switches.

ON THE SEPIK RIVER

Friday, 6 September 1935

All last night there had been heavy thunder and lightning. We wakened before sunrise to lowering skies and then, after a drought of months, the rain started. It descended in torrents and the horizon was soon blotted out. It looked as if it would rain for a week.

We left Awar in a drizzle of rain. Manam was invisible. Yanson came ashore by boat and poled us out to the schooner. The engine was heating up—another boatload came aboard, and we were off. It was a grey, cold day, and not having warm coats we were glad to pull blankets around our shoulders.

It was very rough—a green sea and big breakers lifted the boat. Miles away we could see the Sepik trees that go out to sea on a long point in line with Blup Blup Island. The Ramu and the Sepik are the only two navigable rivers on the north coast of New Guinea. They empty into the sea within 20 miles of each other, but start from very different sources. The Sepik curves into Dutch New Guinea [Irian Jaya] and is navigable for over 300 miles for small boats—the Ramu comes from the opposite direction, rising away up in the mountains behind Madang. We passed Bam Island and came into the mouth of the Ramu. Big breakers came booming in, one after the other. The water was deep yellow and discoloured for some distance with the water of the Ramu.

A crowd of natives were on the point waiting with a canoe. They signalled to us, and Gobet waved Pat's doll to them to signify the *Misis* was on board. Marwash blew lustily on the conch shell to warn the villagers we were coming—rather as big ships announce their arrival into harbour. The canoe was a ferry, and the ferryman was paid by the government to take people across.

Rice was weighed, and the boat anchored while the boys went ashore to cook for the 14 natives on board. They set up a pole of bush timber and tied bunches of leaves on top and a bunch of casuarina needles—this was the 'totem' or *tambu* pole of visiting natives, meaning 'here I camp', and is a

tambu to the 'bush *tambaran* [spirit]' so that he cannot '*puri puri* [poison]' them or their food. Everywhere they camp they put up their mark.

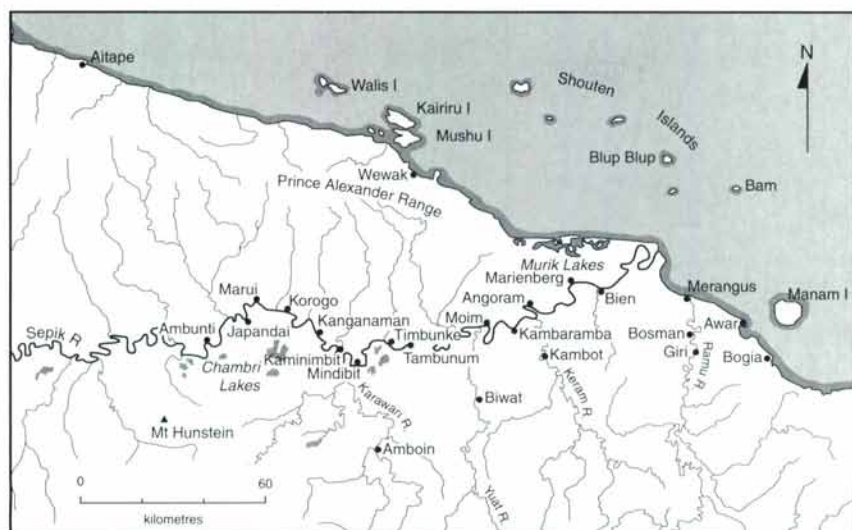
Yanson told the ferryman, who *bilong gavman* [government] and savvy pidgin, that we wanted to see some of the women and get photographs, so the message was taken and just before we pulled up anchor, three women came across in a canoe to talk to us. Their *pul* (oar) was beautifully carved. One woman, dressed in a nice grass skirt, stood up in the canoe—they wanted dresses *bilong kanaka meri* [worn by native women]—calico blouses and *laplaps*—but we told them we would be back in a few days.



People of the Ramu and Sepik have cut little *barets* or waterways through the bush to get about to their villages, gardens and trading places. We anchored to make our first camp at one of the *barets* that led up to Buliva village. The musket was brought out to shoot *abus* (such as pigeons, to eat with their sago) and the conch shell was sounded to announce that visitors had arrived. The natives cut bush and built themselves a little sleeping hut. It was a lovely spot with white herons flying across the sky and skimming the water, but the moment we pulled into shore, mosquitoes descended on us.

We got the boat down to go up the narrow *baret* to Buliva village. It was hardly wide enough for two oars, and the boys stood and poled through the extraordinary waterway—now in sunshine, now in shade—as it twisted its sinuous way between the big ficus trees with aerial roots dipping down to the watermark, betel-nut palms, wild sugar cane, and a stillness so quiet we could hear only the dipping of the oars and the soft cooing of distant pigeons. This is the home of the beautiful goura pigeon. The waterway got even narrower—sedge rushes closed in on each side of the boat, big lawyer cane vines with deadly sharp spears trailed across the water, and large tree branches hung down so low that only a canoe could pass under.

Suddenly we rowed into a big lake literally covered with pink waterlilies blooming in profusion, their petals as long as my hand. The broad green leaves were beaded with water drops which scintillated like diamonds in the sunshine, and grew so thickly we had to pole a pathway through them. Leaning over, we picked several lovely blooms. Behind us we could see the track of clear water we had left through the expanse of pink lilies, with an



Sepik and Ramu rivers

occasional gold-centred white lily. A few coconut trees grew on the banks, and white and grey-bodied herons stepped daintily on lily pads. They rose in the air as we approached, tucking their legs out in a straight line behind, soared on a few yards, then settled again as if escorting us through their grounds. At Buliva, herons are considered sacred, and it is *tambu* to kill them which is probably why they are tame. Further up the Ramu, people kill them and sell the egret feathers.

At Buliva, the *Luluai* and most of the men were away making some *baret*, but the people remaining were very hospitable. They shook hands, and women smiled amicably and went and got wooden platters filled with *saksak* and little fruits and crab claws, to which they added a good handful of bananas and a piled-up dish of taro and sweet potato. Biddy said she would put buttons in the dishes (as payment). The absent *Luluai*'s wife was an old girl with nice long ringlets dressed in red clay. They wore clean *laplaps* which I guess they went and put on when they heard visitors approaching, but the houses were pretty poor looking. As we were on the point of leaving, a parting gift was brought to us—a last sign of friendship—a little log of fire and a couple more little logs laid across it, and a bunch of native tobacco leaves.

Two men poled us back down to the schooner in their canoe, which was minus absolutely everything—no outrigger, no pole to sit on, nothing. We just

sat on the floor. Gobet and Mo Mo were washing in the *baret* when we arrived in the canoe, and they eyed the dishes of *saksak* greedily. When we reached the pinnacle, the goods box was opened, and the two villagers were all eyes to see everything. A card with a couple of dozen shirt buttons was put into each dish, and a few coloured rings of bone, and the same for the two men.

As dusk came on, the two visitors stepped off the pinnacle into their long canoe, and poled off into the night. The boat's crew and native passengers went ashore to sleep in the house they had built. I heard them talking close beside me where I lay in my bunk, tied close to the bank—they were not 12 feet away. I had to tell them to stop: '*Taim bilong* sleep now. Finish talk.' They were excited on the first day out.

Saturday, 7 September 1935

We were awake before dawn—millions of mosquitoes teemed around my bed, and Gobet sprayed flytox [flyspray] round the thick bush net before lifting it, but it was some time before they dispersed. It was a cold grey morning with mists lifting above the bush and hanging in the treetops.

The river had dropped about 3 feet [90 centimetres] during the night, and the boys had to push the *Balangot* off the mud close to the bank. The Ramus stood about on the bank watching proceedings with great interest. The stretch of river from Buliva to Bosman is wild bush; a tangle of liana vines and parasitic bush growth hanging in festoons and matted tangles that completely cover tall trees. Wild palm—the *limbom* (New Guinea hardwood) which we were going to cut down to build native houses on the plantation—and a few breadfruit trees grow all along the banks, but mostly all was covered with this growth. There was no sago palm around here, so there were no native villages from Buliva to Bosman, for natives settle where there is a supply of sago—thus it is possible to go for hours on the Ramu and never see a village or a native.

We anchored opposite the *baret* for Bosman, on the trade route which goes for 100 miles right up to the Sepik. There was a leak in the boat and E.J. had to go down into the hold to mend it. Two canoes loaded with people tied up alongside. They came aboard with much excitement, leaning down in ecstasy and staring into the engine-room. Here at Bosman they make conical-shaped pots—one had a laced design of rolled clay. These are traded right down to Awar, and the Manam people come across to Awar and get pots in exchange for

shell, salt and *kundu* timber. All the natives round the Ramu will *bung* together [meet up and trade], going on trading channels by canoe through the *barets*, and walking back and forth along their tracks from the Sepik to the sea.

We approached the *bung* place of another lot of traders who live about 15 miles away, and here saw the first outcrop of stone, after having passed nothing but mud banks. Then we got caught on a bank of stone and took the best part of an hour to get off, making a kedge anchor. The Ramus on board got very frightened, and Yanson was now taking plenty of soundings. Half a mile past Giri, E.J. decided he couldn't go any further and turned back, explaining to the Ramus it was not deep enough. He told us the mission steamer only goes as far as Giri now, and gets the *saksak* down in small boats. In fact, the mission has bought the bay anchorage there with tomahawks and knives. So we returned to Giri, and the Ramu men on board with us set off to walk to their village, Kominum, along a bush track that followed the river, while two of the *Balangot's* crew rowed the boat up to bring down their *saksak*. They would not return before night.

There were about 50 natives waiting at Giri. Some of the women wore big net *bilum* bags, and some of the men had steel adzes in their prehistoric hafts, legacy of the stone-age axe, but few of them wore any dogs' teeth or trimmings. One man wore a cuscus fur and a nice basket band round his mop of hair, and wore an earring of bamboo with a number of dogs' teeth hanging from it.

There was plenty of *saksak* already in the *bung* house waiting for sale, and we bought about a ton at £3. There was great excitement getting it aboard—the men stood about discussing it all and looking very serious. It was 3–5 shillings a bag, according to weight. A good-sized bamboo basket full of tomatoes, or a bundle of beans, cost a box of matches. A few rings bought a rice bowl. One canoe crew cooked sago for E.J. in the 'fashion *bilang* place (local style)'—they filled a bamboo with sago and cooked it on the fire. The natural juice of the bamboo flavours it and prevents it from burning.

The medical *Tutul* of another village—Gurim No. 2—arrived with more natives, all carrying *saksak* which we bought—until we had about 5 tons. E.J. says the *Balangot* carries 8 tons. Gurim No. 2 had broken away from Gurim No. 1, and had come to live closer to the Ramu. We traded with them till it was almost dark. The minute the first batch had got their money, they picked up their taro and spears and belongings and went off through the jungle to their place, about half a day's walk away.

The crew made a fire on the bank and cooked sago. I heard them talking: 'Maybe *pukpuk* (crocodile) he come *bihain* (later).' It was a lovely moonlit night with no gnats.

Sunday, 8 September 1935

After breakfast we set off along the Gurim track, a dirty greasy track littered with roots and liana vines that caught my feet several times and nearly tripped me. We saw glimpses of big timbers towering aloft, with fronds of ferns and long hanging liana vines. There was not a breath of air to stir the leaves, and the dank oppressive smell made the atmosphere like a hothouse. Very soon I was warm and moist, but my inquisitiveness and eagerness to see real jungle and some of this ancient trading track through the bush overcame my longing to get back into the fresh pure air and daylight. As we walked along a boy switched gnats from my legs.

Climbing some of the tallest and biggest timbers were 'ropes', as the boys call them, of flowering vines. There was a veritable carpet of lovely cream-coloured flowers with long stamens at the fork of one huge tree of red-coloured timber. The boys said it was the flower of the 'rope', not of the tree: 'Rope he hang-im up *pulpul* (the flower hangs on the vine).' We saw phosphorescent fungi, like a lamp; and tiny ground orchids like a mauve cup in a cream base; and a little red waxy plant like two candles growing from a base. But they were too fragile to carry back to the boat.

I tried to pull up a beautiful little fan palm and, like lightning, I was bitten in a dozen places at once by a nestful of big ants! They raised lumps, I raised a yell, and that was the last palm I tried to lift. There were some tall ants' nests, and one old nest had a green fern growing out of it. There was a remarkable variety of palms growing within a few yards of each other—I liked the fan palm best. We brought out four varieties of palms, some wild taro, and a few creepers. One huge tree had a root coming down at a great slant to the ground, which I photographed, and another had two big wings coming from the trunk that almost formed a room.

We heard the 'boom boom' of a *muruk*—cassowary—like the sound of the *garamut* drum. Later we heard a loud noise of wings going over the tops of the trees and I just caught a glimpse of the *kokomo* bird—hornbill—before it disappeared. The boys told me the *kokomo* is 'bone and rope, nothing'—bone and sinew, no use to eat; but white men make soup with it. When the *kokomo*

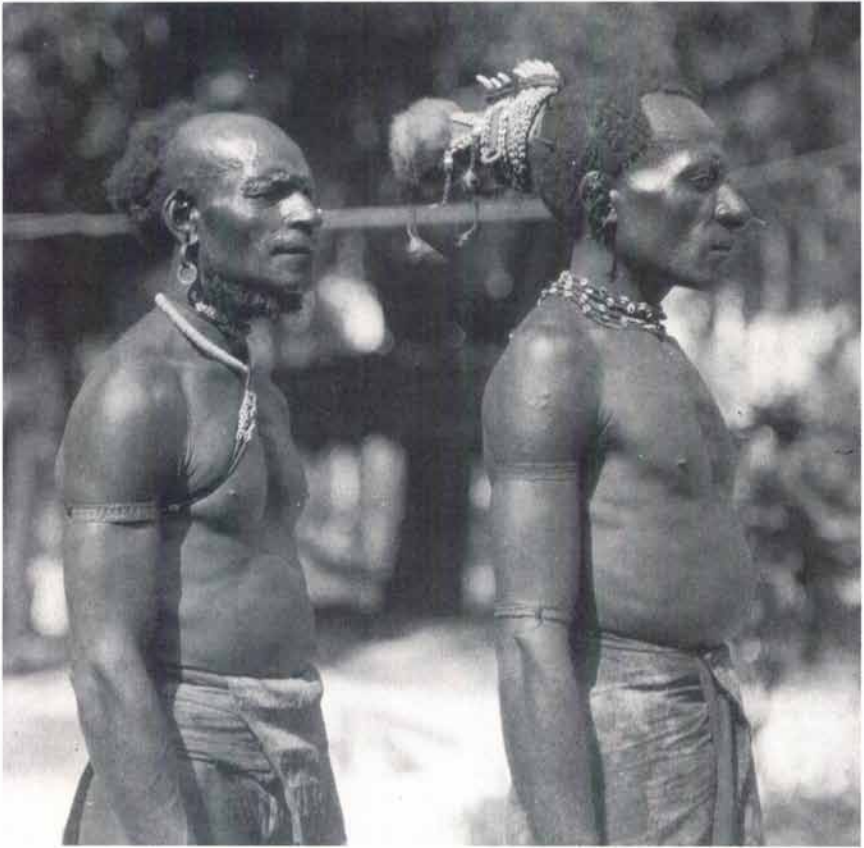
lays its eggs, the father bird stops up the nest with clay, making the mother a prisoner, then he comes and feeds her. When the young are hatched he breaks it open to allow her to come and go. They are most peculiar-looking big birds, with white heads and white tails.

When I got back to the pinnacle I was wet through and had to wash and change, although it was a dull, cool day.

The Ramus had returned from Kominum and their *saksak* was on board. One of their old chaps was wearing the basket corset so tight on his hips that his belly and upper flesh bulged over, looking very painful. I measured his waist over the basket; about 19 inches [50 centimetres]. The engine was started up and off we went down the river, being very careful not to get caught on the bank we had struck yesterday. Some distance down we saw a big crocodile lying half out of the water, not 20 yards from us—only big knobs showed on top of the water and a longer knob for his snout. E.J. was steering, but leapt for his gun and shot it. It turned in a sudden leap into the water, so fast I couldn't see it move, and only the splash of the water and its disappearance told the tale.

When we arrived at Bosman smoke was burning at the house near the *baret* entrance, and a group of canoes was waiting for us. We passed the *baret* and pulled into shore—the water was deep enough to anchor, and soon we were surrounded by Ramus, erstwhile head-hunters, villagers who last week had a man hanged for murder. This was the crowd who yesterday paddled off from their gardens without speaking to us—now it looked as if the whole village had turned up. Bosman actually has five villages in a group. They had fine long canoes with the ends carved like a man's head, and beautifully carved *puls* or oars. The women who came also rowed skilfully.

Not more than three of the men wore *laplaps*—one boy (perhaps a mission boy) wore a white singlet and *laplap*. Naturally, I refused to photograph him. There were some priceless old natives there, all sweetly amiable. Most of them were well decked out in dog's-tooth necklets and *tambu*—one man had mother-of-pearl shell, cut small, through the septum of his nose with about four discs hanging, and *tambu* shell and dogs' teeth hanging from his ears. But the *Luluai* was number one. He had the longest queue [braid] on his head, fastened with the basketry ring and a band of cuscus fur; *tambu* shell in his nose; a couple of long feathers in his hair; rings of *tambu* and dogs' teeth round his neck; the *mal* round his loins, aproned in front; and the basket corset.



Ramu River head-dress (right)

They came on board to trade. It rained, and the women stood patiently out in the rain while the men were on the schooner under the canvas. Women and children wore cloaks of matting, worn hoodwise. We bought a lot of the nice conical pots; also women's grass skirts and plaited waistbands like their corsets; and tobacco which they had dried and strung on twigs. Some of the tobacco was not sufficiently dried and did not find a sale. A few canoes went back to the village for more trade goods. We stayed a couple of hours with them, then started off downstream.

We reached Merangus river port about 4.30, went ashore, and saw the *Luluai*. The *saksak* was off-loaded and put under a roof to be cared for till we returned from the Sepik, the villagers promising to build a *banis* (enclosure) around it next day, to protect it from pigs.

Monday, 9 September 1935

We left Merangus at daybreak—a lovely calm morning. None of the villagers were yet about as we stole quietly away. As we left the quiet waters of the river, the Ramus looked very concerned as they saw the big breakers rolling in. The boat rolled a little as we got into the salt water, and when the sails went up, their eyes nearly popped. They had heard the noise of the engine before, but sails were new to them.

Usually the crossing into the Sepik River is very rough, with huge breakers, but our crossing was very pleasant. Looking back, Kadover and Blup Blup islands came into line

behind—the navigator's guide. There is no fresh water on the island of Kadover, so village women go a few miles out to sea in their canoes and scoop up the fresh water which flows out from the Sepik River, and which, being lighter, lies on top of the salt water and can be seen from a long distance as a wide brown stream on top of the sea. Obtaining fresh water is one of the big jobs in a New Guinea woman's life.

The first village on the Sepik was Kapan, where the people are a sophisticated crowd, having been recruited for years. We passed by. There is little timber on this section of the Sepik, just a little pandanus, sago palm, scrubby bush and grass flats for miles and miles. Tall pampas grasses wave their long plumes, just at the end of their blooming. We passed a magnificent d'Albertis creeper, brilliant scarlet, about 9 feet [3 metres] long and nearly as wide. E.J. is especially anxious to get some and we could have leapt from the boat to take it, we were so close to the side, but E.J. said there were stacks of it further along. We were travelling close to the grass—in this flat country the river could hardly be said to have banks—to avoid the force of the strong current.

Life on board the schooner never gets monotonous, although it is true there is no room to move about. Practically the only time I ever get off the bunk is



*Ramu mother and child with
bilum net head-dresses*

to go for'ard and get some photographs. The natives lie about for'ard on the hatches, with a canvas awning over them, and the engine-room is between them and our bunks. On top of the engine-room are the Primus lamps and food, and one side makes a bunk in the daytime for E.J.

After hours of seeing no one, except one man cutting sago, we approached Madjop Canal—which had been cut in 1919—and sounded the conch shell. There were three or four poor houses here, built as a camp, as the people of Madjop live on the beach and only come to the river to cut sago. They trade with *tambu* shell, and also trade beautiful baskets made by the women, and pouches of pandanus skilfully plaited with patterns woven into it. A trader had been along the night before and bought all their baskets, but we got a little *tambu*—one man sold a long rope with a double row of the *tambu* shells. A string of *tambu* and a few dogs' teeth sewn on to it makes a very nice necklace for a man or woman, and it seems a pity that they should be adopting the miserable practice of wearing shirt buttons. A necklace of 20 teeth and 3 shillings worth of *tambu* would be about 8 shillings, whereas the collar of a double row of shirt buttons one old boy wore around his neck was worth sixpence.

Tuesday, 10 September 1935

In the early morning near Sengarin the silhouette of the river against the first faint dawning was fascinating. Serrated fronds of the palms, tall spears of grasses and fluffy pampas, and the towers, spires, cupolas and minarets formed by creepers were mirrored in the smooth waters of the river. Clusters of pink blooms, big trees with yellow flowers, and mauve convolvulus trailing down into the water were all reflected, often with a greater glory than the original. A stately heron standing outlined amongst the reeds, then rising and stretching its long length to plane over its reflection in unhurried flight, was a sight never to be forgotten.

At 9 am we anchored at Bien where a mob of natives and lots of piccaninnies came to the water's edge, a very plain crowd with no decorations except mud plastered on the faces and bellies of some of the little ones. I got off the boat to have a walk around and a man came and constituted himself my guide: 'You like go *limlimbur*?'

'Yes,' I said, 'I like *lukim* place.' So off we went, a personally conducted tour of the village of Bien on the Sepik River. We were followed by a long tail of

chattering, laughing youngsters; girls wore the most diminutive grass skirts, boys wore nothing at all. I was told there were nine villages around there. Some of the houses had been fine at one time, large houses with deep roofs, but they were all now in a dreadful state of disrepair, with plaited palm leaves hanging broken.

The clay on their bodies was a sign of mourning. My guide told me one of the women had died and her husband was stopping inside his house. So the people have put clay on their bodies to tell the world their 'skin is no good'—their skin is sorry in sympathy with the bereaved man. 'By and by he stink finish, all he wash, make *kaikai*, put on *bilas* [decoration].' We thought when we arrived it was the mission influence which had induced them to take their decorations off—but it was mourning.

They did a little trading, not much. They bought a couple of grass skirts for 1 shilling each—they had cost a couple of coloured china rings on the Ramu—and we bought tobacco brought by canoe from the Bien River tributary. Tobacco grows prolifically on the Sepik. Around this part they make their tobacco into cigars, but they like newspaper to make cigarettes, and *Sydney Morning Herald*s are much in demand. More sophisticated natives prefer cigarette paper. One baby at its mother's breast wore a bib—collar of imitation dog's teeth in china. It looked just as pretty as the dog's teeth and is easily washed, but tends to debase their currency, thus making them poorer.

About 11.30 am, we passed Marienberg where there was a line of thatch-roofed houses on the beach and a two-storey thatched house on a little hill—40 miles from the river mouth. There was a slight rise of broken hills here, and the Catholic mission kept the grass cut which looked tidy.

We met two canoes, broadside on, right in the middle of the river, with half a dozen people in them—the canoes touching each other. We steered close to ask where they came from—it was Tambunum, about 125 miles up the Sepik. They were going down to sell their tobacco for beach shell, and, lazy-like, were letting 'Old Man River' drift them down. They would be doing about 2 1/2 to 3 miles an hour, sitting chewing betel-nut, so why paddle and get hot just to make another 2 miles an hour—today is the same as tomorrow, so long as they have *kaikai* and betel-nut. At night they pull into the side of the stream; all they have to watch out for is the crocodiles.

One canoe had a crocodile-carved prow, similar to the Awar canoe, but canoes at Bien and Madjop were carved with heads of men. When they go

back upriver to get home they have to row hard and hug the bank to avoid the full force of the current that sweeps so strongly down river, just as we had been doing all morning. In places, growth on the banks was as varied as if it had been deliberately planted—tall pampas grass waving its silky fronds; strong elephant grass with tall, broad spears almost as wide as a boat's paddle; the lovely small-leaved taro, like a species of caladium, reflected in a shining pool on either side of the small bank where it grew; perfect specimens of sago palm, some with big flowers signalling to the natives they were ready to be cut down; a tall stately breadfruit tree, its branches thrown out regularly with big spreading leaves; another magnificently beautiful tree, unknown to us, with its very small foliage closely set together in pale tender green; and the inevitable long ropes of trailing vines. I only wished I had more films with me.

Suddenly there was great excitement. Sailing close into shore, we had run on to 'white sand' and everybody was suddenly busy giving orders. We had just started lunch—E.J. took over the wheel and told the engine-boy to stop. The tide caught the boat hard by the head and she started to turn round. Yanson was asked what he was doing sitting up for'ard: 'Was he looking out, or was he chewing betel-nut?' Boa, the small cook-boy whose voice is cracked and who talks in a high girlish pitch, had gone for'ard and was talking to Yanson. He was asked: 'What for he talk along Yanson?' Boa answered that he was telling Yanson that the last time they came up here they went on a sandbank at this place! The *Misis* distributed a few smacks amongst the crew, indiscriminately—'just to learn 'em!' After that we came well out into the middle of the stream. Last time they got on white sand it took hours in the heat of the day to get off.

We arrived in Angoram about 3 pm where we camped the night—staying on the boat of course. I walked up and saw the government station, where Mr Hamilton is *Kiap*. [Hamilton had called on the Chinnerys in Rabaul; they had met his sister in London in 1934.] There is a fine native-built office. The land had been drained for fruit trees, so there were few mosquitoes just there, though this station is said to be one of the worst spots on the Sepik for mosquitoes, and that means worst in New Guinea. Yet everyone says that one does not get fever on the river—if people get fever here, they blame it on Madang which has a bad reputation for fever.

We had dinner at Mrs Bob Overall's, sitting under a 'room-sized' mosquito net. [Bob Overall was a trader with a store on the Sepik. The big mosquito net had belonged to Gregory Bateson; he left it behind when he finished his

fieldwork among the Iatmul people of the middle Sepik.] Mrs Overall told us thrilling stories of how big crocodiles come to within a few feet of the steps of her house in the night, then her dogs bark and she goes out with a torch but can see only two gleaming red eyes of fire in the darkness. Crocodiles get a lot of women who go fishing round the low, swampy parts of the river, and villages have actually been moved because the crocodiles were constantly taking the women. They also take pigs and dogs. The crocodiles throw out a bad smell and dogs go queuing around and, in a flash, are grabbed by the crocodile.

Hamilton told a funny yarn about the Tambunum people. They have a fine *Haus Tambaran*. Priests had been going around burning carvings and *tambarans* on the Sepik, so in order to protect their treasures, the head man got two old Union Jacks and put them both up on the *Haus Tambaran*, and when the Father arrived, said, 'This *bilong gavman*', and so saved their sacred relics.

Wednesday, 11 September 1935

We wakened to a dense fog, although it had been a clear moonlit night when we went to bed. Only Overalls' house by the edge of the river and a ghost of a tree were visible—the opposite bank was invisible. There was a wireless set at the government station, so we waited till 8.30 when Aitape and Sepik talk to each other. The news was that the government schooner *Hermes* would leave Aitape on Saturday, arrive at Angoram on Sunday, and continue up to Ambunti. Young Hamilton was to go to Ambunti for the trip and was very thrilled at the prospect. The *Hermes* had spare parts for the *Osprey*, the little government launch that had been out of commission for months. Captain Andy (J.A. Andrews, Master of the *Hermes*) will fix it when he arrives, and when they reach Ambunti, Hamilton will try and fix the wireless which is out of order there.

Mrs Overall had set off for a walk to Angoram village with two of her native boys just about the time we went up to the station, and she told us afterwards that her boys had told her she should put on a good dress and *bilas* [decorate] herself to go to the village. We saw her when she returned. Her hat was wreathed with large hibiscus flowers the boys had put on—so they *bilas'd* her.

We left Angoram about 10.30 am and turned off the Sepik to go up the Keram River, a tributary also known as the Little Ramu. We had taken on board four 'time-finished' boys who were at Bob Overall's, waiting to be taken back to their place, Korogopu—several hours up the Keram and then a good way up a little *baret*, which they would travel by canoe. They were going to

have three months' *limlimbur* and then get work at Awar. One of the men was Gobet's *liklik papa* (her uncle). He had a nice dog belonging to her which she said she had found wild in Rabaul.

Because of the ease of getting about the rivers, the people of the Sepik have been recruited to work for the white man for years, to such an extent that some villages have been closed to recruiters by the administration. (If too many men signed on for work, the welfare of the village might be jeopardised.) We had one boy on board who had been recruited from a 'closed' village, and he had to be returned to his place.

We met the *Tultul* of Magendo—that is, the assistant to the *Luluai*, also known as a *Hat* because of his peaked cap. He came out on a double canoe piled high with sago palm leaves plaited for roofing, and he had half a dozen stalwart men poling the heavy load. The Magendo people are very wealthy, with much teeth of flying fox and *talbun* (shell money).

They have gardens on the Keram, on the high river banks, and to reach them from their canoes in the water, the people have built ladders here and there along the banks, and always near a ladder is a little bush shelter—just a roof to keep the sun off, and a platform to sit on. At a lovely bend in the river, we passed two nut brown houses reflected against the greenery, which I photographed. Sometimes people working these gardens come many miles by canoe from their villages, which may be set in a lake or swamp. Lack of land is a great problem to the people of the Sepik, and it is quite a usual practice to 'catch' a small island of ground broken from the banks of the river by the swirling current, perhaps from many miles away, and tether it to an existing plot of land, or to the poles of a house, with liana ropes. Some drifting islands are quite sizeable, the earth bound by roots and vines, sometimes with trees growing on them, and perhaps even carrying a pig.

This stretch of the Keram was one of the loveliest bits of river scenery we have seen, with breadfruit trees, betel-nut palms, *daka* [pepper vine], sugar cane, bananas, and lovely blue convolvulus hanging in profusion. Green *sao*, a sort of watercress natives love, lay like a green carpet, swishing gently up and down as the boat rocked it in passing. Yam gardens were very plentiful here, and reminded me of hop gardens in Kent. The vine is grown on long poles, and yams grow to a tremendous size, several feet long.

The river twisted and turned, and one junction we passed offered a choice of three ways. We passed fires where the natives were burning down the big

bush timber to make new gardens, and huge clouds of smoke piled up. Then we ran into a heavy shower of rain, and canvas blinds had to be dropped—making the boat very steamy and hot with 17 natives and three white people on board. Every native, including Gobet and Mo Mo, chewed betel-nut or smoked incessantly. As they chewed the betel-nut, they constantly squirted copious streams of thick red juice over the side.

Just on 6 o'clock we drew into Kambot, a large village built on both sides of the river. In the middle of the village on one bank was a splendid *Haus Tambaran*.

An old, very black-skinned Morobe man named Casa had constituted himself chief and head of this vast tract of country and brought the place under his control long before any prospectors or recruiters came. He has a number of wives and many piccaninnies, and built himself a wonderful house about 80 feet [25 metres] long, up many steps. However, he has gone away up into the bush country, and is teaching the villagers to grow rice. Casa's number one wife is looking after his interests here. She is cousin to a friend of Gobet at Awar. There was much handshaking with the four 'time-finished' boys we put off here, and the old wife shook hands with them, too—she knew one boy had not been back to his place for eight years. The river was too low for the *Balangot* to take them to their village, so the *garamut* drum beat out the message to Korogopu to come and fetch them home. They told the name of each boy who was here, and spoke to their fathers.

Thursday, 12 September 1935

It was a glorious morning with just a light fog. As it lifted, one or two canoes shot out from the village, going here and there, but none came to trade, apparently because the mission stores supply their needs. A *garamut* message came through from Korogopu that they would come today and fetch the 'time-finished' boys.

I went for a short walk along the river bank with a few village children following along. One man was working a huge tree into a canoe—I stepped it out at 60 feet [18 metres] the tree, 40 feet the canoe. Several women were standing on lines of platforms moored to the river banks, washing *saksak*. They had their coconut ladles on long poles to pour river water over the *saksak* which lay in long bamboo chutes. One woman I photographed had her piccaninny on her shoulder—when I was 50 yards away the baby started

howling and the mother picked him up and set him on her shoulder to quiet him as she worked. One or two of the infants started back in fright when they thought I was going near. It seems that after Biddy Wauchope, I am the second white woman up the Keram.

Quantities of beautifully worked basket fishing traps shaped like cornucopia lay along the river bank. A dear old grandfather was sitting on the top storey of his two-storey house, making himself a belt of rattan, while his daughter down on the lower verandah beat *saksak*. She'd have made a wonderful drum-major for a marching regiment as she whirled a hefty baton, twirling it underarm or goodness knows where, so swiftly you could not see it. But each time she whirled it through a complete circle, it landed smack on the *saksak* and started on its round again. Marvellous! This was quite a different method to that used at Awar, where men make the sago—here women do it.

Some of the houses were *bilas'd* with chains of banana leaves, and blown bush-turkey eggs hanging in strings. A man in a red *laplap* and wearing the little disc of the church came poling across the river with a big-ended paddle. As I came along the bank, I asked him if he would row me over. 'Canoe small *tumas*,' he said. It looked big enough to me, about 20 feet [6 metres] long, but he left me standing on the bank, went across and came back in a couple of minutes with another canoe. I got in and sat down on the bottom, Mo Mo behind me. We landed by some quite good steps cut in the clay bank, and walked to the beautiful big *Haus Tambaran* which, viewed from either side, looked like the open mouth of a crocodile. The tall uprising eave formed the top of the head, with two small eaves inside, between which were paintings representing teeth. The lowest eave, a shelter roof, was the lower jaw of the mouth. In the 'ceiling' of the top eave was a tall painting about 12 to 15 feet long of the *tambaran* of the village, painted in blacks and colours.

These *tambaran* houses are full of wonderful spirit figures and curios made and carved by these people and kept for generations—native figures, masks, drums, decorated canoes, stools carved as crocodiles, betel-nut spatulas, oars, combs, armbands—items representative of everyday use are glorified in carving. I saw a *garamut* drum in Kambot, nearly 4 feet high, with the head of a man in sleeping position carved in deep relief at the drum end. Two long crocodiles were carved up the shaft, and heads of men were carved at each end of the crocodiles.

The *Haus Tambaran* is for men only, and strictly forbidden to women. It is here the spiritual beliefs of the people are centred. Old men terrify women with stories of the punishment the *tambaran* would inflict if they looked into the houses or heard the talk of the men. However, missionaries have destroyed or removed a lot of the old masks and figures in their efforts to break down old beliefs and instil their own teachings. In fact, they say one Father went into a *Haus Tambaran* and brought out the fearful carvings and showed them to the women. 'Look. Now this is the *tambaran* you are so frightened of—it's only a piece of wood.' Of course it was a great tribal sin for the women to see these things. The men were shamed, and everything there has been thrown away—the Father took all he wanted of ethnological interest to Germany.

These ancient *Haus Tambaran*, with their treasures of carvings and totemistic objects and taboos, under our government—and in one generation—are being allowed to fall into decay, and are being stripped of their artefacts for the glorification of any museum in the world that likes to pay a few shillings or pounds for them. These *Haus Tambaran* are the true houses of parliament, where elders made laws and by the force of fear, made people submit and 'hear their talk'. The missions, traders and ethnologists who come out collecting have depleted the country of its own crafts and cultures. Of course, many of the old practices are very cruel and cannot be tolerated by our government. But if the people's craft could be encouraged and organised, if in each village where carving is good, or pottery, or basket-making, industry could be commercialised by sympathetic trading—all would not be lost. The government do all they can to help the natives. They have made Kambot a closed area for recruiting labour.

We left Kambot about 7.30 am to return to the Sepik. Cumsat was close to my bunk, cleaning the paint with a rag and kerosene, and saw a canoe being poled upstream. The lad in front had his big spade-shaped *pul* (oar) decorated with a big plume of the *muruk* (cassowary). Cumsat made it clear that he was not impressed with this oar decoration. He said: 'Me no savvy this fashion *bilas pul*. Me Aitape—'em Sepik!', and so he cast scorn on the decoration of an alien culture. Cumsat was a jovial, carefree sort of chap, always grinning unless in direct trouble. He wore a net dishcloth round his neck and a tiny armband of yellow plaited banana fibre, with a leather belt round his *laplap*.

Median also wore a dishcloth round his neck, and a tiny brass earring. He had a bit of tattooing round his eyes, curly eyelashes, and wore a piece of cord to hold his mauve-and-red-spotted *laplap* which reached to his ankles.

He belongs to the island of Blup Blup—he is teased a lot because of his romances with the girls. Coga wore a crushed raspberry turban, and Kamo wore a dog's-tooth collar. Agamon is from Awar. 'Him *wantok bilong* me,' says Mo Mo. He is a tall well-built fellow with rather a big straight nose, and was messing about trying to clean *Masta's* rifle.

We reached the Sepik about 12 o'clock—4 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours to travel down the Keram, compared with 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours to go upstream to Kambot—and arrived at Magendo village half an hour later. Magendo was one of the earliest villages to be 'missionised', being near the big mission station. All the men wore *laplaps*, but women were not wearing the short dresses that most women at Kambot wore—possibly because it was raining and they would not want to get them wet. They have to wear dresses to go to church. One man had a black beard like a priest. He had a shilling stuck in his ear, and a string of old ring *tambu* [shell] across and down his neck.

Straight opposite Magendo was a *baret* which we went up. It was only half a mile long, but cut off 4 miles. The *Balangot* draws too much water to take advantage of most of the *barets*, but this one we could use. It was rather narrow and we passed several canoes poling back to the village—they were a bit nervous of the big wash we made. One woman was poling with a child who put her head down in the canoe when she saw the big water. Two men suddenly came poling around a corner, and one hurriedly started putting his *laplap* on when he saw us.

We reached Kambaramba about 3.30 pm, after sailing through big wide lakes with low banks of very short grass—in one place there was a small group of coconuts. The first we saw of the village was the top of the *Haus Tambaran* rearing skywards over the flats, then a long low line of houses stretching out into the lake. As we approached, canoes came to meet us from all directions. Almost as soon as we anchored behind the *Haus Tambaran* in the village 'street', we were surrounded. I counted 60 canoes before I gave up. It was like a Venice of the Pacific. But although they looked very picturesque poling down the waterways, on coming closer they were rather a poor-looking crowd with a frightful lot of *grile* (skin infection) amongst them. Many of their canoes were old and worn, little more than troughs, with the back end often broken away. Only a few canoes had any decent carving.

They bought *talbum*, the green snail shell which is their currency—first examining it carefully for quality, looking at the worm holes and rejecting



Men poling a canoe at Kambaramba

what they thought was not good enough. One old man sitting out in a canoe would examine it, try it for size, etc.; then grandpa in the next canoe, or two canoes away, would get it passed on to him and he would examine it, mutter advice or approval, or condemn it; then it would be passed back and dropped in its owner's canoe. They were anxious to get tobacco as they can't grow any themselves, and they bought a big leather football—though one wonders where they could play 'kick-ball'. Two gall bladders of crocodiles were brought aboard—the Chinese use them for medicine.

Friday, 13 September 1935

Canoes came out of the dark places under the houses and stole down the 'street' and across the water—off to work in the distant gardens. A few fowls started to crow. We left Kambaramba about 7.30 am, with five newly recruited men and women and their babies added to our complement, to go with us to Angoram where they would sign up at the station. Then we would return them to Kambaramba to await our eventual departure from the Sepik. One baby had just been born a few days earlier, and the mother had come out of her hut seclusion to come with us. The father wore the bone of a bird, or some such thing, round his neck, and he nursed the little scrap of a baby, supporting it on his hand with its feet on his knee.

At Angoram, the bushmen we had brought from the Ramu were in a big shelter where several pots of rice were being cooked over fires. There was also a

crowd of Banero men standing at the labour rest-house on the river bank. They wore very tight corsets, and had clay on their long hair which was decorated with Job's tears—little grey berries. One man wore a long strip of *kapul* [possum] fur. I got out and photographed them and gave them fishhooks as gifts. They did not understand English, but their spokesman was a 'time-finished' boy with short hair who told me they had come to 'make court' on a *Luluai* [village chief] who had broken a man's head after a fight with the *Tultul* [assistant village chief].

These Baneros live far away—up the Keram River and still further. They had come all this way in their dugout canoes to 'make court' according to white man's laws. It was a great treat to get pictures of them, and they were very pleased with the fishhooks, but when I gave one an empty cigarette tin, he could hardly control the smile on his face.

We had morning tea and lunch at Angoram, joined by the *Kiap*, Mr Hamilton. The mission pinnacle arrived with a young Father who came on board. He had the latest government gazette, from the *Stella Maris*, so E.J. took a list of the villages that were now declared open for recruiting. The Father was going up to some villages with a *tanker* [invitation] for the natives to have *saksak* ready for the *Stella Maris*.

We left Angoram to return to Kambaramba about 1.30 pm. The canoe we had towed from Kambaramba had left Angoram shortly after we had arrived—thinking we would not want to tow them back against the current. About 4 pm a sudden booming on a conch shell rent the air, several times repeated. We found that it was one of the villagers on the top deck sounding a warning for the canoe, which we had now overtaken, to get ready to take a tow. In getting them tied on to the rope at our stern, one of the canoe men tumbled into the water. Then I saw the reason for the flat bottom at the back, with the end of the canoe cut out—he had no trouble getting in again.

[After travelling on upstream past Moim, the *Balangot* turned into the Yuat River, the next major tributary on the Sepik after the Keram River. They called at several villages and stayed overnight at Alagunam.]

Sunday, 15 September 1935

We passed the village of Kenakatem, part of the Mundugumor District where Margaret Mead and her husband, Dr Fortune, stayed for three or four months. One native with us knew her, and said they gave her a good Christmas before they left: 'Plenty *kundus* [drums] go along *haus bilong* her—make plenty music.'

Soon we pulled into Bronda village, where they beat the *garamut* as soon as we stopped, evidently signalling the next village to come along. A boy stood on the bank wearing a good *laplap* marked 'TNG' with an anchor symbol, probably traded by some boy on one of the *Franklin* trips, or some other government boat's crew. Another *laplap* was marked 'Bank of NSW'. I also saw a man wearing a masonic ring.

One man walking through the village had a lovely lime por gourd, and his long dipping stick was serrated so that he made a big noise as he rattled it—usually the prerogative of an important man. Another man's lime stick was plumed, and he wore a big goura pigeon plume in his hair. Three old men came to trade and I photographed them. One wore big shell armbands from shoulder to elbow, big rings in his ears, a plaited waistband about 4 inches [10 centimetres] deep, and a hanging slack rope of deep ivory-coloured ring *tambu*. In one house I saw rows of pigs' skulls hung up inside, and a head-dress of the big black pigeon decorated with *tambu* shell and teeth.

[After leaving Bronda, they continued to Damkar to trade for artefacts. Then E.J. decided to go on as far as Boun, where he was told that 'plenty boys wanted to work', although the crew were doubtful about the depth of the river.]

Monday, 16 September 1935

We reached rapids that stretched across the river. We could have gone through on the right, but E.J. decided to turn back and anchor, and let the natives walk along the track. They would return laden with betel-nut and *daka* (the fruit of the pepper vine, which is chewed with betel-nut). Some boys went ashore to make a fire so that we could cook our bread. The noise of the rapids was like surf, and tall timbers lined the banks. On the point of the little island was a place called *masalai*, meaning that it was frequented by evil spirits. It was said that a woman and her baby were killed here. Natives never go up this part of the river, but use the road through the bush—we did not see one canoe on the river after leaving Bronda, about 6 miles according to our sailing.

[A party went off on foot to the village of Boun, and next morning the *Balangot* began its return journey down to the Sepik.]

Tuesday, 17 September 1935

The river had dropped a couple of feet between yesterday morning when we reached the rapids, and 6.20 this morning when we left. We saw innumerable

snags that had not been visible before, a high-water mark still wet on some of them, and whirlpools with water bubbling and swirling around. The atmosphere on the schooner was one of tension—all eyes on the steering, and when *Masta* sang out ‘go slow’, half a dozen voices echoed it—and the boy at the wheel tensed up a bit more, watching ‘hand *bilong* whoever’ was giving the course, and keeping a lookout on his own account for the bad *masalai* places.

At Andour there was a yelling mob of excited natives. The women must have heard we bought sago baskets, for they lined up with beauties. Two married couples came aboard—hundreds of natives on the bank showed great sorrow at their departure, their crying was free and unhidden. The old men would not let the babies come with the young mothers. One old man had his face plastered with wet green mud, in mourning. It is awfully sad to see these people leaving their own place. In their rituals and beliefs they have so many demons and *masalais* in strange places, and in the years of the white man’s occupation so many have left their villages and never returned, and plenty who have returned tell stories of grasping, overbearing white men who treat them badly. They are sometimes worked too hard, or the climate does not suit them; they are worn out and sometimes die. If they die their pay has to be sent back to their next of kin in their villages—small consolation to a woman who has perhaps waited years for the young man who was promised to her. Our civilisation has spread because down through the centuries adventurous men and women, mostly men, have left their homes and have rarely returned. But when you see it in the raw like this, naked savages, old men and young women, displaying tribal grief in the manner they would use when someone dies, it is a very sad sight.

Whatever they may have felt, the women who had come aboard looked placid enough. One had fever and had to be given two aspirins, but then they put on their dresses and sat smoking and chatting together, the four of them.

These people of the Yuat River are of the Mundugumor tribe of whom Margaret Mead says that, in contrast to the Arapesh who standardise their behaviour on womanly ideals, standardised behaviour for both men and women is actively masculine, virile and inalienably unwomanly. She says that a perpetual hostility existed between men of the tribe—fathers, sons and brothers—and there were no family or tribal affiliations, no common interests. She thinks they do not know love or charity, only hostility. She described the women as ‘these unsexed, masculine, virile women of the Mundugumor’.

She said the child is suckled in haste, carried in an uncomfortable basket from place to place, then put down and allowed to cry, not loved or nursed. That a man is resentful if his wife becomes pregnant and hopes that a girl will be born, as he may possibly exchange her for another wife for himself in the future; and his wife is also disappointed if she becomes pregnant and hopes a son will be born to take her side in her battles against her husband. That there is no pride of a young father in getting a son, he is jeered at by his friends, and taboos are put on him, and that there is hostility between brothers, except when one strong-willed brother may have weaker brothers who give in and abet his schemes against other men of the tribe. There is a definite undercurrent of hostility in her books on the natives of New Guinea. She is keen to study them but obviously does not like them.

Today I saw men of the Mundugumor tribes had put clay on their faces and bodies, a death mourning token, when their friends went off, recruited, and women cried openly and unashamedly. They paddled downstream furiously to say goodbye to the clans in the next village and give them presents. The people are devoted to their children and men will carry a spear and a child while the mother carries the *kaikai*. I saw dozens of women carrying their babies on their shoulders, many of them well able to stand.

Margaret Mead also said that the 'vase-shaped baskets for fishing are only plaited by women who were born with the umbilical cord round their throats'. I have seen thousands, so it must be a common form of birth, or those thus born must be very industrious.

At midday we reached the Sepik River and stopped to drop some men at Yurma, then went up the Sepik and anchored off the village of Krinjambit, while the natives went ashore to cook their food. It was terribly hot standing still in the sun by the sizzling river bank. Biddy Wauchope had been suffering from gastric fever which recurred every three days, and she now got another attack, so they decided to return to Angoram and hope a couple of days' rest would set her right, and then we'll go on down back to Awar.

Krinjambit was our last stopping place on the Sepik. By 2.30 the men had had their meal and we turned back downstream. Passing Moim we just called to some recruits to be ready the next day to go to Awar, and E.J. will have to go to Kambaramba to pick up the recruits there—all told there were 39 recruits. At Angoram, we went ashore to the government station.

Friday, 20 September 1935

The *Hermes* arrived on Thursday with Mr A.A. Bloxham, *Kiap*, and a medical officer on board. I did not return to Awar with E.J. and Biddy because I was very kindly offered a passage to Ambunti on the *Hermes*, and fortunately Mrs Overall decided she would also like to make the trip. I slept last night on the *Balangot* and today left Angoram on the 60-foot *Hermes*, with Captain Andrews, a native crew and a complement of native police, and with Mrs Overall and Mr Hamilton. One of the native crew who was cleaning the *Hermes* brass had the letters 'OK' tattooed on his arm. Captain Andy said he probably got it from an OK sauce bottle. He knew of a boy who had 'Kerosene' tattooed on his arm, and a woman who had 'Fully' across her chest and 'Guaranteed' down her arm. The people see these words at the places where they work and instead of doing tribal decorations they just copy the letters—tattooing with lampblack and four needles clamped together. They don't know what the words mean, but understand 'this is new culture *bilong* white man'.

We stopped at Tambunum to get a supply of vegetables and firewood. I went up into the beautiful big *Haus Tambaran*, climbing up a crazy bamboo ladder with several rungs missing so it had to be held by natives. It gave me the eeriest feeling as I put my head under the roof while the rest of me was at an impossible angle outside on the ladder. Inside, the usual *limbom* floor had rotted so that it was nerve-racking to walk on. There were a few weird *tambu* [sacred] things, and some wonderful carvings, but it was fairly empty. One of the bearers was carved in two crocodile heads meeting in the centre, and a big centre post was carved on each side with the head of a cuckamore bird, pointing outwards. There were all sorts of paintings done on circles of coconut shell hung up under an overhanging eave. Under the house there were ceremonial *garamuts* [drums], carved birds and crocodiles, dance carvings and a ceremonial chair. There was a very old carving of a woman's torso and head, just standing on the ground, covered with dust.

The women, who were shy and timid, had their hair in ringlets and wore big shell ornaments and ropes of human hair. One man with ringlets wore a big ear shell; another man was painted in a design with snakes running down all over him. I was offered a skull, painted and complete with hair, but did not buy it. These Sepiks preserve the heads of their dead; after drying the skull they remould the features with clay as they had been in life, then put the head in a special basket in a little nest of leaves, and put it on a shelf in the house.

We only had three-quarters of an hour at Tambunum, so I had to skip around to get the photographs I wanted.

Saturday, 21 September 1935

Between Mindibit and Kaminimbit we hailed some women fishing for *kindams*, and bought a quantity for buttons. *Kindams* are strange-looking water grubs [shrimps] which women go searching for as *abus* [garnish] for their sago. They have long feelers about twice the length of their bodies and they look almost transparent, so one wonders how much food value they have. At certain times of the year mayflies abound on the river and lie in millions on the surface of the water. The women scoop them up and pile them into their canoes for food, and eat them raw in handfuls. The fishing women wore two different kinds of shells round their necks, and one wore the big pandanus umbrella hood. Near here, at Kanganaman, Gregory Bateson had his camp while researching the Iatmul people, perhaps even these women, about 1931–33. Around Kanganaman the banks of the Sepik were covered with waterlilies and we could see the Chambri Mountains.

We anchored for the night at Korogo. One house had big cuckamores up on both roof eaves. I wanted to go ashore but it was too dark. Natives rowed to the schooner, and I asked them to bring me some little carvings, which the police-boy brought along a little later in a canoe that was half-full of water.

Natives at Korogo make a whistling noise that attracts crocodiles. Some villagers have their special pet crocodile. They go out in a canoe and make a whistling sound with hand to mouth, a gurgle in the throat, and occasionally slap their thigh—then the crocodile puts his head up to see who calls. Only certain people of the Korogo call the crocodiles and others rather tease them, so they ‘have shame’ and do not do it openly. Sometimes the little fishing creels the women put out in the water close to the banks catch a young crocodile—the flesh is very white and is considered a delicacy.

We all settled down for the night in our bunks. It was deliciously quiet—except for an occasional native heard slapping mosquitoes off his arm. We were anchored in midstream, and suddenly, water started lap-lapping against the boat. It went on for a few minutes—no one spoke—the boat rocked a bit. Then someone said out of the darkness: ‘It must have been a *guria* [earth tremor].’ Quiet came down again and we all slept. It rained in the night and the decks were wet in spite of the canvas awning.

Sunday, 22 September 1935

Just past Japandai, a straggling village on the left bank, we came up to two very long canoes. The Assistant District Officer, Jim Hodgekiss, was in one with a small awning over a chair. He came on board with three prisoners and his police-boy—he had been out on the job for ten days. He is very happy patrolling the Sepik by canoe, but thinks there should be a pinnace. I think so, too. Hodgekiss told us there had been dreadful *gurias* for the past two days, with shocks every ten minutes. One house fell down on a woman and two children, but they got clear and went for their lives, unharmed. At Marui, Father Puff's mission bell rang with the shaking.

It was dull and misty as we went along this part of the river, which is usual here. The mountains bring the mists down and they don't see the sun much, though the water temperature is very high: 78–80° [around 27°C] at 10 o'clock at night.

About 2 pm we arrived at Ambunti government station—a group of grass-roofed native buildings perched 250 feet up on a high rise above the river, much higher than anything we had yet seen. Behind it tall mountains receded into further mountains, partly veiled by distance, making a wonderful background to this wonderful river. We were dropping some natives at Ambunti, and after lunch on board, we went up to the government station. The fireplace is painted to look like brick, with a hurricane lamp screened by a red *laplap* for the fire. The walls were panelled, with small prints on each panel, and curtains hung on the windows. We had tea at the station and later walked up to see Assistant District Officer Colin McDonald's grave, which was fenced, covered with white schist stone, and marked with a simple wooden cross with his name and date. Jim Hodgekiss told me he was going to plant some crotons round the grave.

Monday, 23 September 1935

We breakfasted on Ambunti mountain goat before leaving at 11 am to return downstream. That evening we anchored off Kanganaman to sleep. The *Kiap* fired a couple of shots, but no one came from the village a few minutes inland. Captain Andy liked to stop by a village if there was one handy about nightfall, so that the native crew, the police and their wives could get off and sleep overnight in one of the houses. It was very tiring for that crowd to sleep

on board—there was little room for them to put up their mosquito nets, and one could be kept awake by the noise of them slapping themselves.

The boat was lowered and we rowed ashore, accompanied by a couple of police-boys with rifles. Two flights of steps were cut into the river bank and we clambered up and walked through a pretty wood of native trees festooned with ferns, and groves of betel-nut palms, the most slender graceful trees in New Guinea. Kosambi, the doctor-boy at Angoram station, got impatient waiting for a canoe and swam ashore, at which

some of the others said: 'Water *bilong pukpuk* (crocodiles). He savvy. Business *bilong* him.' Meaning that he need not be surprised if he was taken by a crocodile—he knew it was where they lived.

The village was very pretty—the first I had seen with a finely cut grass lawn. Usually villages are broomed round the houses so that not a blade of grass grows, but the approach to this one was very attractive. Two tall stones were set like guardians to the *Haus Tambaran*, which I thought was the loveliest I had seen, though Tambunum is generally said to be the best on the Sepik. Kanganaman's *Haus Tambaran* is tall—in the wall above were four tall windows like slots, and in each was a skull, probably taken in a head-hunting raid. These skulls were the *tambarans* of this particular *haus*.

I climbed a very tall ladder to step into the long dark interior, with a crazy *limbom* floor which I thought I might go through at any moment. There was a marvellous deeply carved centre pole, carvings of crocodiles, and masks of



*Woman with large fishing net and
pandanus bag, at Awar*

men, and fires glowing red in the big clay fireplaces that filled the place with smoke, which probably kills wogs [bugs] and helps preserve timbers and things in the house. A big crocodile was hung up, inside which the boy who has to be incised with the marks of initiation was said to go. A long row of the most gorgeously carved *garamuts* was lined up on the ground down below. Some must have been hundreds of years old.

Two women sat up at the entrance of a big house, one shaving the other's head with two pieces of slender bamboo. I gave the 'barber-ess' a razor blade, a present the people like very much. Inside the house there were tall pots—one contained bananas, one *saksak*, and another a woman's grass skirt. I bought an empty pot with a head on it and a mask. A woman sat making a grass skirt in a lovely shade of red, with strips of cream undyed grass.

One man said 'Come and see *Haus Tambaran bilong me*', and took us through the village to a place which was fenced off. Here was a big open house, and on the ground was a storehouse of weird and wonderful accoutrements for a forthcoming initiation ceremony. Two men stood leaning carelessly against a centre post, blowing rather sweet music of a monotonous few notes through long bamboo flutes. The sacred flutes are very highly prized, and most wonderfully carved. I saw one with the head of a cuckamora bird with an eye of pearl, and down the long shaft were carved seven miniature Sepik heads, the noses with the typical high nostril and perforated septum. Sacred flutes are valued almost as highly as women. One good flute will buy a bride. When I took an emblem off a hook, a flute fell to the ground. A man picked it up and started making moaning sounds into it that would be terrifying at night. He talked into it as though crying out—this is one of the dodges old men use to frighten women away.

Tuesday, 24 September 1935

There was a terrible earthquake during the night, and the schooner seemed to touch the bottom. The noise of the *gurias* came up clearly from the beach and the water started heaving and kept the boat rocking. Natives on shore yelled, then some laughed, and the *garamuts* were beaten. There have been really bad *gurias* since last Thursday.

We left Kanganaman by the light of the waning moon and a star in a dawning sky with palest amber tints just beginning to suffuse with rose. A cold refreshing wind blew away the persistent mosquitoes as the schooner got

up speed down river. We hoped with the aid of the current to do about 9 miles an hour, and if we were lucky, to get to Angoram by night.

Father Puff came aboard from the *Black Bokkis*. He told me that before a new *Haus Tambaran* can be built, a man must be sacrificed to prop up the posts and make the *haus* strong. Apparently a man is willing—he gets into the hole and after he is smothered with earth a post is rammed down. I saw a mound of earth at Kanganaman which was maybe 10 feet [3 metres] round, stoutly fenced around, and planted with crotons and other tall shrubs.

Father Puff also told me that in some parts, widows have to remain in the house where the dead body of the husband has been put on a platform. The stench is appalling. When all the flesh has gone, a feast is made and the woman is allowed to come out at last.

We passed Timbunke, Kanduman, then Krinjambit and Kambrindo, without stopping. We passed Yurma, then Moim. Then suddenly, rounding a bend, we saw the French barquentine *La Korrigane*, anchored. There was no mistaking her; a splendid, most picturesque, expensive-looking schooner. I wondered why she should anchor where there was no village and no *baret*. Then we saw a small motor boat and a canoe hovering around. As we drew near I took a photograph. She was stuck! Andy stopped to help her. *La Korrigane* was now owned by Comte de Ganay and his brother-in-law van den Broek D'Obrenan who, with their wives and party of ethnologists, were on a study tour around the world collecting for the Trocadero Museum, Paris. They had taken the precaution of getting a native pilot to steer them up the river, and it was unfortunate that just a few days before they reached that spot, an earthquake had disturbed the bed of the river.

We started to pull her off, and pulled for half an hour, until we heard the engines stop—the line belonging to the French boat had broken. We started off down the river again around 5 pm, but with no hope of reaching Angoram by night, and we anchored at the *baret* to Magendo. 'Another good innings for the mosquitoes tonight,' said Andy. There were two big grass fires burning on the banks, sending up huge clouds of smoke, sparks and flames that looked like a brilliant funereal display in the black darkness of the moonless, cloudy night. Between the two fires there was a constant display of faint flashes of lightning, then on the opposite side the lightning started behind a great piled-up cloud that looked like an illuminated fairy palace. We felt a couple of *gurias*, though not as bad as we had further up the river the previous night.

Thursday, 26 September 1935

We arrived at Angoram about 8 am yesterday and were invited up to the government station by Mr Bloxham. Today I walked up to the station and asked if they could let me have a boy to accompany me to the village—all the Angoram men were down at the *Osprey* to lift her up ready for Andy to repair her. It was a pretty, winding track to the village, with convolvulus and wild passion vine flowers trailing across the path. I watched women making sago. The *Luluai* who accompanied me was an old man, and after walking to his village he was tired and hot, so they brought me back in a big canoe with four women paddling, and the *Tultul* in charge. Wambo, one of the Angoram men, shot a pigeon and his friend shot a beautiful golden *kapul* with his bow and arrow. They gave me the skin and cooked the *kapul* in a saucepan, with salt.

Sunday, 29 September 1935

We heard a pinnace at 6.30 am, but heard it directly opposite the house, which meant, as Wambo said, up one of the waterways—up the Keram. But shortly after, the *Hermes* arrived back, and we heard that they had got *La Korrigane* off the sand about 8 am Saturday. They had had to take off all the pig-iron and casks of oil, and had got 20 natives from Moim to help, together with the *Hermes*, Chu Leong's *Win On*, and several other local traders.

As the *Hermes* still had other calls to make, she would not get to Madang in time to connect with *Macdhui*, which was due to leave on Wednesday for Rabaul, where I would get ready to go South and take the children out of their Melbourne boarding-school for the Christmas holidays. Luckily I was able to transfer to Chu Leong's schooner *Win On*, very comfortable, and the first I had seen with a closed, built-in mosquito-proof room.

Monday, 30 September 1935

We left Angoram on a cold morning after terrible thunderstorms during the night, which brought down a tree 30 yards from the house. At Marienberg I went up to the mission and was shown all over—the work rooms with two machines, the storerooms, and the sleeping rooms. The interior walls were of small *limbom*. I saw the big oven where bread is made, and tasted one of the cheeses.

We called at Bien to pick up *saksak*—as usual, all the village turned out. They were typical Sepik except that lots of them wore *laplaps*. One old man

wore a tweed waistcoat with only the top button in, as well as a *mal* [bark loin covering]; he carried a piccaninny on his shoulders. Women carried big *limbom* leaves filled with 40 pounds [18 kilograms] of *saksak* on their heads. The nicest thing I saw in the village was a little girl wearing a grass skirt, very short and split up one leg, with a head of red-clayed curls. Her head was shaved from under the hanging curls which gave rather the appearance of a wig sitting on top of her shaved head.

Later we stopped again to pick up another few bags of *saksak*. We were late and had to keep travelling to reach Kopar where we could anchor for the night—then it should be 16 hours to Madang. The last sliver of that glorious moon that had lit the long canoes of the Kambaramba men to their distant yam fields was low in the west, with one big star above it, making a slender path of light to the edge of my pillow, so that I might almost have touched it. But the moon never ‘stayed put’ on the winding Sepik—first on the port, and three minutes later it would be on starboard.

We reached Kopar and had dinner. The alarm went off at midnight and Chu Leong, after less than three hours’ sleep, got up and we started off down river. We got a dreadful bumping crossing out to sea—unlike the smooth passage when I came in on the *Balangot*. There was a big sea running and the schooner pitched and rolled. Some of the river natives who had never been to sea before were frightened and sang out when we took a few combers or rolled too much. I thought ‘this is my last schooner trip’. We rocked in the bunks like pendulums if lying on one side, but there were pauses, followed by sudden lurches just as one settled down to get used to it. I will never forget how my bones ached with the rocking and pummelling of that night.

Tuesday, 1 October 1935

We passed E.J.’s plantation, Awar, and stopped at Bogia. Natives were loading well-filled bags of copra into a shed to wait for the two-monthly *Bremerhaven*. Some bags weighed 200 pounds [over 90 kilograms]. Another 22 natives came on board—some were ‘time-finished’ police; some were new men who wanted to join His Majesty’s police force; some recruits for Salamaua and other parts; and several women in very primitive grass skirts.

Our next stop was at Johnson’s, who came on board from a canoe to drop ten bags of *saksak*—a dreadful anchorage with the schooner bobbing about like a cork. Mr Johnson brought word that Mr Luff wanted to go to Madang,



Ramu River men

so we called at Dugumor and found him ready with his baggage on the beach. Mr Luff brought a sick native on board, recently recruited from mountains up on the Rai Coast. Several natives he had brought to Dugumor got sick and one said he'd die, and did, pretty promptly. Then his pal said he'd die, too, so Luff decided to take him to Madang to see the doctor. Salamaua won't take these men, they say 'they all die'. (This man did not die but bucked up as soon as he saw Madang, and was able to walk ashore to be taken to the hospital.)

After Dugumor we got into a very bad sea. I was too tired to care how much she plunged as long as I was not thrown out of my bunk. I think of the children down South all the time. Then something went wrong with the engines and we stopped while Chu Leong tinkered. We were told it was only dirty fuel, but when they took the whatsit down to look at it, the oil pump was choked, too. An hour saw us chugging on again.

Wednesday, 2 October 1935

We stopped at Sek a few minutes, and an hour later reached Madang—the mountains looked lovely in the sunshine. It was 8 am and the *Macdhui* was due at 10 pm, so it was a pretty near thing. Missing the *Macdhui* would have meant a three-week wait in Madang for the next boat.

Chu Leong sent my luggage off in a small boat and I went on board the *Macdhui* from Mr Middleton's pinnace, standing on the roof as it rocked gently in the harbour.

Such a finish to my wonderful adventure—up the Ramu where it comes down near the Sepik, up the great Sepik and its tributaries, the Keram and Yuat—lily-strewn waters and graceful birds—the Kambaramba Lakes, and the magnificent *Haus Tambaran* of these fascinating, primitive people, with their sturdy physique and picturesque, stately motion as they pole along their ancient waterways. All this—with their arts and craftsmanship, their customs good and bad, their inherent friendliness and humanity—leaves an abiding impression of a truly wonderful people.

In Hospital with Malaria, 5 November 1935

Everyone warned me that I would get malaria if I went up the Sepik. I said I had been in this country 14 years and had not yet had an attack. I was given a bottle of quinine and told to take five grains with the soup every night. I didn't—and I got sick about three weeks after I arrived home last month. Ten days is the period of breeding the anopheles in the blood—why my sample should take three or four weeks I don't know.

I woke up suddenly one night to a fit of shivering—put extra blankets on and broke into a sweat. Three days later, I got another attack in the afternoon, so was ordered to bed and a blood test was taken—a second test—the first had shown negative, no wogs. The second test, again no wogs. Then I had to stay in bed and wait for the next rigor. We were all on the *qui vive*, waiting all day for a shivering attack that refused to develop. Doctor thought: 'Well, maybe it's not fever.'

Next day I felt much better, was bright and chatty but did not feel any strong urge to get up and doing. My arms were tired. After lunch I went to sleep and wakened stiff and cold. The doctor came in, took my temperature, and I said probably the feeling was my imagination, auto-suggested. But Dr Brennan said there was no imagination about the thermometer. Actually I felt cold but was given two aspirin as well as three blankets—one below, two on top, and an Irish Harris tweed coat on top of that for luck. Two hot-water bottles were put in for company and I soon started to sweat. Three nighties in two hours—I lost count of the sheets.

I was on the sleep-out verandah, on the western side—the sun pouring down on the iron roof. If I had not sweated, I guess I would have been ashamed of myself as in addition to all these kind attentions, they plied me with boiling hot drinks. The doctor took another test, brought the slide to the bacteriologist, and came back radiant with success—they had got the wogs at last. As he drove me up to hospital he said they were still not sure which of the three sorts of fever it was, so they will take more tests at regular intervals. The bacteriologist is very interested in the unusual form of the infection. Perhaps I will have the distinguished reputation of introducing a new fashion in wogs.

I am due to travel to Australia in eight days' time to go on leave for a few months, so it does not give me long to defeat a beastly parasite which only comes out in the open, so to speak, with irregularity.

[This was the only time that Sarah suffered an attack of malaria in her time in Papua New Guinea. Just a few days after the Chinnerys' departure on leave, in November, the *Hermes* was reported overdue; somewhere on the route from Rabaul to Madang, it disappeared with all hands and was never located. Sarah often wondered if the *Hermes* had been strained too much in its attempt to pull *La Korrigane* off the mud in the Sepik.]

ORCHIDS AND ANCESTRAL SONGS

RABAUL 1936

April 1936

The *Neptuna* was due to leave Melbourne on Tuesday, 31 March, with Captain Rothery—but we did not leave until 3 April. Chin went back to New Guinea (on the *Nankin*) on 8 February, so again I return alone—as so often before. The *Neptuna* was four days late into Sydney, delayed by a storm that lasted six days. There was a cyclone from the north, in rendezvous with a hard gale coming up from the south at the time of the equinox, 21 March.

Wednesday, 15 April 1936

Arrived Salamaua—midnight Tuesday, 14 April. The doctor was whistled for, and came aboard about 6 am. Chin came aboard on the next pinnacle, looking very well after his official visit into the new country of the Highlands and Mt Hagen. He had walked from Ramu to Mt Hagen with the District Officers, from 12 March to 9 April; walking over knife-like ridges of hillsides in preference to walking through swamps that are often waist-deep, where they just wallow along, pulling themselves along as best they can at a rate, in such places, of about 3 miles a day.

In this stretch of country, which has only been walked over by one other government officer [J.L. Taylor's patrol in March 1933], the practice was to break camp at 4 am and be on the march at the first streak of light. Accompanied by four police-boys and about 120 carriers, they would keep on till about 1.30 and then make camp for that night. Rain invariably starts about 1 or 2 pm—the hour can practically be calculated by the rain starting. Many rivers had to be crossed—swift, treacherous rivers, very difficult to combat. One took three days to cross. A chain of natives cross over, and a rope is attached. The white men get across, then help the carriers across by hauling them and assisting them to keep their feet.

Asavia, who has been with us for several years, went with Chin on this trip, and saved two women from drowning, at Mairi. Five village women carrying loads of food were trying to cross a terrible river. Asavia was washing clothes nearby, heard a shriek and saw the women struggling against the very strong current. He grabbed two of them and by hard work got them to safety. The other three were swept downstream and drowned.

Pit-pit, wild sugar cane, often grows along banks of rivers or in swampy places, and this is one of the real hardships in such trips. In places the ground is exceedingly rough—waist-high *pit-pit* covers all sorts of uneven surfaces, and it is not unusual to step into a hole up to 3 feet deep. The rough ground is partly caused because the natives have been making gardens all over this plateau for generations. The Wahgi Valley District is the watershed of the great Purari River which runs south to empty into the Papuan coast. Hundreds of tribes, all speaking different languages, occupy this valley. They are always at warfare. But war is not a full-time employment with them. It can only be indulged when other more important things like planting, or getting in a crop, have been accomplished. Chin asked one man the name of his place. He said 'China-siva'. Another was 'China-shiva', and a third group was 'China-maima'. They asked him his name and he said 'China-ri'. They all thought it was very funny and that they must be *wantoks* far removed.

Friday, 17 April 1936

Chin and I arrived back in Rabaul at daybreak. We had breakfast on board, knowing there would be no food in the house. Several friends asked us for lunch, but we were in time to get our own freezer supplies, meat and butter before they closed.

There are only two houseboys of the old staff left—Asavia and Aiau—and we have a new boy named Polian. Mostly they sign on for three years.

Manau was our previous cook-boy. About 30 years of age, he was short and stocky, very dark-skinned and exceedingly combative, as are all Aitapes. He was from Mushu, an island near Wewak. If the grass got beyond the garden-boy's control, Manau would sometimes take a *sarip* and go out and do a couple of hours in the garden. He also accompanied Chin on his field trips as patrol cook and handyman.

Last year Manau got interested in a birdbath we were making and he came to watch operations. 'He *nambawan* [number one] clam shell, *Misis*,' he

murmured complimentarily, as he just casually tapped the lip of the clam with a hammer he had absent-mindedly picked up. A precious corner of one of the lovely curves broke away, and very embarrassed, he giggled. I could just have murdered him with his own bow and arrow! 'By and by me mend-im along cement,' he said apologetically. Later that night, while he was assisting at dinner, I told Manau that I was putting it in my book, how he had broken the clam shell, and his big brown-black face was wreathed in smiles at the honour paid him. Manau was very likable, and a well-trained boy. He was a good cook—able to roast and bake and make stews and good soup. (Only the cakes and pastries are made by the 'lady of the house'.) He was also general boss-boy of the staff.

Only Pellei he did not try to boss. Pellei was tall and rather good looking. He had been working for the white man for many years, and because he was careful of his savings, he had got a nice little bank account. He also came from the Aitape District, and had not returned to his home village, the furthest tribe in the Territory, for a good many years. Pellei and Manau were both 'long-time' boys; both were working here in Rabaul in the German times. Pellei was our wash-boy, and also helped in the garden.

Although the villagers around Rabaul never allow their girls to marry a boy of a distant tribe, Pellei was allowed to marry Balaw, a very handsome girl of the Nordup village. Segare was Pellei and Balaw's lovely little infant son. The three-year-old used to run around, often mother-naked, as happy and unconcerned as if he were at home in his mother's village over the hill. Is it not very difficult to keep a miniature *laplap* round the loins of an active little *pikinini*? Out of respect for the *Misis* working in the garden, however, the infant would sometimes be dressed in half a yard of calico, safety-pinned, or maybe just twisted around his little waist. When I went into the garden he would run to meet me, take my hand—tugging at me and pointing to the *pulpuls* (flowers).

Malaua, our Aitape garden-boy, stayed with us for years. He was a big, easygoing, strongly built fellow and would cry with real tears when the children went South. He used to write to me when I was in Sydney with them (in 1930–32). He was always getting into rows on Saturdays when he played football. He would come home and pour his troubles into *Masta's* ear. He had quite accidentally kicked some boy in the belly instead of kicking the ball, and the boy was going to 'make court' against him. Malaua, the great big softie,

absolutely trembled at the idea as he came to do a bit of preliminary propaganda with *Masta*. If the worst came to the worst, and they took him to court and he got fined, perhaps *Masta* would pay his fine. Usually threats to 'court' Malaua came to nothing, but he was always a centre of disturbance on Saturday afternoon.

Aiau, who joined the household at the start of 1935, is very knowledgeable about ships, having been a schooner-boy on the yacht *Franklin* before the government decided to sell it. Then he lost his job, and came to work for us in the garden. He is a tall, very dark-skinned man of about 30, also from Aitape. Sometimes he shows me his lesson books—he goes to night school and has learnt to read and write. Occasionally little coteries of his friends come to his 'boy house' and he writes their letters to send to their village. Aiau is very proud now because *Masta* has got him special permission to wear a shirt. Natives are not allowed to cover the upper part of the body without a permit. He is keeping his permit in a box, as one keeps one's motor licence or some such thing.

It was Aiau who helped me make the birdbath from a huge clam shell, and I showed him how to make a nice level foundation for the pedestal. We made a path to the sunken garden, and with a few dozen bricks (a great rarity here) and white coral from the beach, we made a mosaic for the foundations. Many a bird has had a bath from my clam shell, including the blue kingfisher I have the softest spot for. Manau's little chip does not worry them.

Now, on our return after several months, the garden was looking very nice and Aiau was obviously proud of it. 'Plenty *Misis* come look-look this garden,' he said. So that is a great feather in our cap. New Guinea people are pretty blasé, too tired to walk a few yards to see anything. Certainly won't walk twice. It is the climate we must blame.

Friday, 24 April 1936

I went up to *Didimans* (Botanical Gardens) yesterday. Ah Fa, the Chinese head gardener, was very pleased to see me back: 'I no *lukim* (see) you long time now!' He showed me a lot of new plants he had got. I got a few for the rockery I am just going to make on the lawn under a tamarind tree. Every afternoon Aiau puts chairs down and we have afternoon tea there.

I was just off uptown to put the grocery order in to Burns Philp and Aiau told me to get him a round wick for his lamp. I suppose he wants a lamp



Aiau helped Sarah make a birdbath from this huge clam shell. When alive, these powerful clams could easily hold on to a man's leg and keep him captive

because we turn the electric light off in the boys' house at 10 pm—he is the only one who can read, so I suppose he wants to study at night.

Market Day

I think the native market—the *bung*—at Rabaul is one of the most interesting sights in the world; and Rabaul on a Saturday morning, especially if it happens to be a 'Ship Day', is a primitive saga. Ship Day is a good day for natives as well as whites, who get their mail. A big steamer comes in, blowing its horn as it rounds Matupi Point, and this horn will be echoed around the hills by the conch shells blown in the villages to warn other inland residents that a ship is in. In the hundreds of villages along the coast, natives see the big ship rounding the point from behind the shoulder of the Mother. There is high excitement, plenty of rivalry to paddle their canoes to the side of the ship

and make the first early sales. How often I have seen them, like an etching in the clear light of the tropical morning, mirrored in the deep waters of the harbour.

From the villages and grass-thatched huts that run along the lovely coast of Blanche Bay, canoes are paddled by women who are as at home in their dugouts as we are in an easy chair. They sit on the slender round saplings that span the dugout—in the bottom there is probably quite a lot of water swishing about. The cargo of bananas, pineapples and vegetables is piled high on a light platform of young saplings lashed together with liana vines across the dugout end of the outrigger. From early morning the canoes have been arriving in

fleets from Matupit Island, 3 miles away, and from down the south coast past Malaguna, where for miles the houses are built literally along the beach.

All manner of weird and interesting things are tucked away on board these primitive argosies. Arrived, they pull their canoes up on the beach. Then the women sometimes step into the salt water in the *laplap* they are wearing and have a swim. They rinse their teeth of the betel-nut they have been chewing, using sea water for the purpose, and spitting it back whence they got it—all very natural looking. Then they put on a dry calico *laplap* and bright clean blouse, and gather up their loads, helping each other to adjust the heavy baskets on heads and shoulders, for they are often too heavy to lift alone. Small boys shoulder little bundles, and off they go along the shady avenues in single file, and so to market.

Meanwhile, villagers who live on the mountainside come in to market by road. Women pass our house on their way to the *bung* carrying big baskets of garden produce on their heads, and often with a baby slung from a bandanna



*A woman on her way to the
bung (market) in Rabaul*

handkerchief hung round their necks. The piccaninnies are lovely, babies riding astride their mothers' hips, legs dangling, or if younger, fastened on by a length of calico to mother's back.

A little boy struts by wearing a small cotton *laplap* just like his father, proudly carrying a stick of sugar cane taller than himself, whilst his mother has several sticks of sugar cane nearly 6 feet [2 metres] tall. Along comes a plump smiling-faced woman carrying a big green watermelon on her head, upheld by two plump arms—a rather tiring way to walk, reckoned in miles. Her little girl proudly bears a smaller edition of some sort of squash.

Sometimes they bring in a couple of parrots, pineapples, or some item for which they hope to get a shilling; men prefer money for their goods, which helps to pay the head-tax. Women's goods—taro, sweet potato, *galip* nuts, *aibika* (a vegetable nice served with coconut sauce), eggs—usually sell for a stick of tobacco. This tobacco is jealously guarded and traded away up into the interior, probably changing hands many times.

For some of the villages a long distance out, an enterprising Chinaman brings women with heavy loads in a motor lorry—a stick of tobacco is the fare. The lorry carries so many standing women, about 50 perhaps, that they would have no room to sit down if they wanted to, but at least being so tightly packed has the advantage they cannot fall down with the speed and rocking of the vehicle. They love the adventure, and laugh and chat as the lorry swings along the tree-lined avenues. It saves them a walk of miles, heavily laden as they are. But plenty do walk. Perhaps they haven't the fare, or perhaps the lorry would hold no more, or perhaps they live only 3 or 4 miles away.

Bicycles are a very popular means of travel amongst native men. Women do not ride them. Before owning a bicycle, a lad would have carried baskets slung from a pole across his shoulders. Many of the young men, wearing a *laplap*, a flower in their hair, and a necklace of beads or shells, have been cycling in on their 'wheel-wheels', their handlebars festooned with palm-leaf baskets full of the vegetables—cabbages, beans, tomatoes, carrots, spinach, parsley, mint and spring onions—only recently introduced by the Department of Agriculture. They have given seeds to the natives around Rabaul and showed them how to grow them. Natives have acquired quite a taste for onions, but here only spring onions grow. Cabbages will grow only in the hills. Lettuces don't heart, but at least one gets a few fresh green leaves, helpful for salads. (Freezer cargo



Market scene at Rabaul, which Sarah described as 'one of the most interesting sights in the world'

that brings cabbages up from Sydney once in three weeks is expensive. Until recently we paid 3 shillings for a cabbage.)

No one who sees this native market can call the natives around Rabaul anything but an industrious people. It is a big industry to provide all the vegetables and garden food needed. They set out their wares on long bamboo tables under the shade of wide-spreading trees at the *bung*, where the government, objecting to the old way of setting foodstuffs on the ground amongst betel-nut chewing and expectorating traders, has arranged long stalls around a big cement market-hall with an iron roof, designed for wet weather use. On Saturdays, it is a hive of industry—Chinese, Malays, Japanese, natives, half-castes, whites, and servants out to purchase for the *Masta's* household, forgather around all manner of produce. Bananas, pawpaws, pineapples, mangoes, granadillas, oranges and native limes. Soursop, custard apples, scarlet mammee apples, native asparagus (*pit-pit*), sweet potatoes, taro, melons, corn, sugar cane, nuts and betel-nut. Many coloured tropical fish, cockeroos and cockerels.

One of the most interesting sections of food displayed at the *bung* is what might be termed the delicatessen service, but it is not in a section by itself—

you just happen on it. Little parcels of cooked food are wrapped up in green leaves for the gratification of native labourers in Rabaul, who get tired of tinned meat and rice. So women back in the villages cook parcels of sago, made into a tasty pudding with coconut milk, or a savoury mess with a little dried fish. Sweet corn is cooked in its own sheath of leaves in the hot embers of the fire, and what more succulent than a piece of pig that has been wrapped in leaves, the proper sort of leaves, and cooked in the hot ashes? The leaves are burned quite dry, but the parcel holds together in the most enticing way. I have even seen sweet potatoes ready-roasted for eating. Whatever vegetable or fruit fails to sell, the parcel of cooked pig, or cooked sago solid as a plum pudding, or the sweet corn, always finds a ready customer amongst indentured labourers. Even one's own cook-boys bring home village-cooked dainties—though they have every facility for cooking in the white man's home—clearly harking back to *tru* (genuine) native-cooked food.

Most produce is sold for a stick of tobacco, value threepence. A ripe juicy pineapple costs a stick of tobacco, as does a basketful of tomatoes, or a bunch of four young coconuts tied together by a piece of coconut fibre and probably carried to market on a woman's head—a rope-coronet with coconuts dangling. The natives amongst themselves trade a lot with their own shell money—tiny white discs of shell, strung on to native twine. A few inches of this is worth a shilling, and is still a necessity for weddings, death ceremonies, feasts and bartering for wives and other needs. To meet the needs of natives and to educate them to the use of a more lasting currency than the fragile stick of tobacco, which if kept too long goes mouldy and useless, the government has introduced native shillings, sixpences and threepences. These coins have a hole bored in the centre so that they can string them if they wish, just as through the centuries they have strung their own shell money. But even now, after the introduction of this *Niugini* currency, produce is still sold for sticks of tobacco.

The market is over at noon, and then begins the great trek homeward. Some go by canoe across to Matupi village. Others start the long walk home to their villages, going sometimes as far as 20 miles [32 kilometres], but at least returning lighter than they came. They all seem in much brighter spirits as they return, their goods sold, laughing and chattering, and probably carrying a 5-pound tin of meat for a feast on Sunday, or maybe a length of gaily coloured calico for a new *laplap* to sport on its first appearance at church.

Saturday, 9 May 1936

Lisbeik is a nice-looking, intelligent young man who lives on the north coast on what he calls 'up along *niupela kalabus* road (the new road made by prisoners)', where he has a fine garden. He first came in, very shyly, carrying on his bicycle two magnificent orchids which he found in the jungle. I photographed him holding them. A week later he arrived with a little bunch of zinnias. 'For you,' he said. I knew he wanted a photograph, though no word had been said at the time of taking it, and I had a print ready for him. A native never takes a present without giving one in exchange, and if you take a present without giving an equivalent one in return, you lose caste. It is *Niugini* fashion.

10 May 1936

Aiau and I were terribly busy in the garden yesterday. A friend brought me about 100 cuttings of different-coloured crotons in his motor car. Each cutting made at least three plants. Aiau went into the bush behind our garden and made several nursery beds, and cut long branches and made a roof of *kunai* grass to keep the hot sun off the young plants—and we got them all planted out. They are the most glorious colours.

Polian, who is about 20 years old, was going to iron his *Masta's* white suits and just happened to be under the house where I was sorting out the red and yellow crotons. He is a big, heavy-footed boy and always walks in a very slow stately way, like a field marshal on inspection. He fell in love with some of the brilliant yellow crotons and said: 'Me like some *bilong* garden *bilong boi* [some for the boys' garden].' I said all right, and he grabbed greedily at a good selection. He took the spade and we went off to the boys' garden—well, actually, he picked up his feet and ran, he got so excited, and he worked hard to get them in, and argued about where the colours were to go. When the boys made their garden a year or so ago they put in a dark hedge that has a pretty blue flower, but it is dark. Polian said: 'By and by, place he bright *tumas* [it will be a really bright spot]. Sun he shine along *pulpul* [flowers].'

'Plenty sweat,' says Aiau, his sweat dripping in big globules on to the ground as he bends over—sweat that is quickly absorbed by the greedy hot soil. I also sweat, and in half an hour's toil, even as early as 7 am, my frock is wet from waist to neck. Sometimes Aiau says sympathetically: 'More better you go along house, *Misis*. Sun 'e hot *tumas*.'

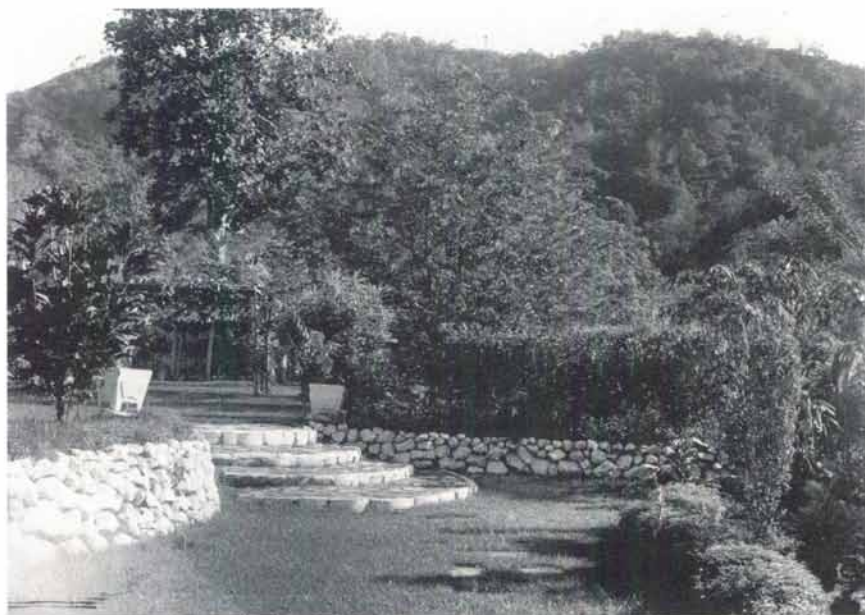


Villagers around Rabaul often brought orchids to Sarab

At present we are making the round steps, or 'ladder' as Aiau says, that joins the round terrace to the long straight terrace. I had started the steps last year—laid them out with much of my own labour and my own sweat, in wide grass treads and shallow steps, with a wide edging of cement outline. But it was impossible to cope with the grass—at the rate it grows in this Territory it would keep growing under the slabs of concrete and pushing them up. These were odd bits of concrete slabs that I had picked up from here and there, my habits of scrounging around to find odds and ends of cement are well known.

I had gone along to a place where an old-fashioned kitchen was being demolished and saw a marvellous quantity of concrete. There was a pleasant-looking old Chinaman on the job, who said: 'S'pose you like, you can take.' It was no use there and he would be glad to get the place clear. He was clip-clopping about in a pair of sandals, loose white jacket and pair of trousers cut pyjama-fashion, a fashion the Chinese in the town still wear. His eyes wrinkled up into a friendly grin while I marked the pieces we could use.

That was last year. Now, a couple of weeks ago I saw a load of broken cement lying on the ground. I asked the person concerned—government,



The round steps that Sarah and Aiau laboured to make in the New Guinea beat. After the steps were completed, Sarah helped Aiau write his name in the wet cement

of course—was it wanted? No, it was only lumbering up the yard. In a very short time the concrete came down in a tip-up motor lorry and was tipped on to our garden near the rain tanks. In working the capsizing arrangement of the lorry, a flowering cosmos bush was sacrificed. I pulled it up and threw it to one side. There were half a dozen natives on the lorry—one grabbed the bush and several of them pulled off the golden flowers and stuck them in their hair, and the lorry rattled off, careering down the drive, minus the stone but with the natives laughing and singing a song—bedecked as they love to be.

So having this good load of concrete, Aiau and I have been hard at work on the steps from 6.15 every morning. Portions of it are old concrete pipes broken up, and these we use to face the steps, their semi-roundness making a kind of scroll edge that is decorative in its way. We have had to do a good bit of stonemasonry to get them to fit in the shape we want. Aiau's stonemasonry is rather primitive. When the concrete breaks elsewhere than as he wants it, he says: "Tchk! Tchk! Concrete 'e no *gutpela* [good]. Stone 'e *gutpela*!" So he recognises the fact that stone has certain rules of cleavage—but who should know that better than the stone-age native who has been brought up to working in stone for his primitive and much-needed tools.

29 May 1936

It was a big job concreting the steps, and I had sweated under the tropical sun more than is good for a white woman. When the last slab had been laid one hot noonday, I turned thankfully and went up the stairs into the cool bungalow. Looking down over the verandah rail to see how it looked, I saw Aiau, very proud because he knows how to read and write a little, writing his name in the wet cement with a little bit of stick. He grinned up at me sheepishly, expecting to be told to wipe it out—his big brown face wet with sweat, his white teeth and the whites of his eyes gleaming out of his dark face.

I went down and read his name as he had printed it, very badly, upside down, as he happened to be standing when struck by the brainwave to put his mark on *Misi's* good steps. I showed him how to do it properly, to be read going down the steps from the top, and to put the date on it: 'Aiau—29 May 1936'.

We put a big pot of Madame Butt bougainvillea on each side of the round steps, at the top, and the long branches of rose-coloured blooms will be trained across to make a very slender arch that will enclose a view of the harbour seen from the top of the terrace, and a view of the mountain seen from below. Aiau pronounced the round steps: '*Nambawan tumas*. He *gutpela*.' Later we had plenty of visitors who admired the round steps, and because they were filled in solid as they went up to the round terrace, grass could not be bothersome.

31 May 1936

Mr and Mrs Street and George Murray came to tea yesterday. [Mr Street was in the Department of Lands; they lived on Namanula Hill.] Mrs Street admired the garden and asked me for some euphorbia—a kind of rock plant which, if a leaf is pinned on a bare wall, will send out little leaves. She came just after 8 am to get the euphorbia and brought me a slip of a lovely double apricot hibiscus she has. I was away up in the bush nursery sowing zinnia and sunflower seeds. I came down, and she had her two children with her. She told me she did not sleep properly last night for thinking of how nice my garden was, and how she wants stone steps like mine, and so on. Then she said: 'Oh, there are some boys coming in with orchids; I will buy them.'

'Oh, no—they are bringing them here for me,' I said, and I told her that for some time now natives have been bringing me all sorts of plants and flowers, knowing I will buy anything interesting. We both went down to the entrance to the garden where the boys had three wonderful orchids. I took two and

gave Mrs Street the biggest of the long flowering ones. They were so wonderful that I took eight photographs of them—I had had the camera ready to take my crufanic with its big yellow candle-like flowers.

Aiau is taking a great interest in the garden. He is getting almost as bossy as the old family retainer who says: 'You must NOT pick the flowers!' We have a young boy about 14 who goes out in the morning before 7—before the sun gets too hot—and picks the flowers for the house. For some time he brought so few in, although the garden had plenty, that I asked him why. He said: 'Aiau.' When I asked Aiau about it, he said: 'Me no *laikim* catch-im plenty *tumas*. Me like catch-im *pikinini* [seed] *bilong gutpela pulpul*—*bihain* me plant-im along garden. Now plenty *tumas* 'e come up—*gutpela*.' So, Aiau didn't want the flowers picked—he wanted to get the seed to plant, and bring on more '*gutpela pulpul* [good flowers]'.

It's dreadful pidgin, but that is how we talk here. So many different tribes employed in Rabaul do not know each other's talk—so they use pidgin. Chinese and Japanese talk pidgin—and if you talk English, only a few of the younger ones educated at the mission would understand you. They talk Chinese or Japanese amongst themselves, and only talk pidgin in their dealings with natives or white men. I believe that 'correct' pidgin is a misnomer. How I understand the word pidgin is any simplified form of English understandable by a native who has only a few dozen words at his command to carry him through his day's work and contact with whites. It is not essential to have a very large vocabulary. If a first English schoolbook could be given to all natives in Rabaul it would be a great advantage to us all. A lot of houseboys would be glad to go to evening class a couple of times a week to learn English.

Why should a native be taught to say: 'He *gutpela tumas*', instead of 'It is very good'?

—'You go long BP Store', instead of 'Go to BP Store'.

—'Me no *laikim*', instead of 'I don't like it'.

—'Catch-im *bikpela*', instead of 'Bring the big one'.

There are certain very useful pidgin words we can't displace or cut out, that are often used to express different things according to the circumstances—such as the useful word *bihain*. They say: 'Me bring-im *bihain*', meaning 'I will bring it later, or afterwards'.

—'Me *bihain-im* 'nother boy', meaning 'I will follow the other boy'.

—'You broom-im floor *bihain* you dust table', again meaning the difficult word 'after'.

This question of improving the English spoken amongst natives is one that needs more airing. Cut out 'fellow', 'long', 'me no like', '*nogat*', and adopt simple words, speak clearly, and don't lose your temper. It is an unfair advantage to take with the native, who is not allowed to lose his temper. ['Insolence' on the part of Papua New Guineans was a punishable offence.]

11 June 1936

Ah Fa is very learned about gardens. He gave me a cutting of the precious new, large, pure-white frangipani. Often improved specimens do not have improved perfume, but the perfume of this new frangipani is exquisite. He has also helped me several times in getting specimen blooms to photograph. Ah Fa, his wife, and several of his children (he has ten) came to see my garden. He gave me a lot of good advice, which I accepted—admired my round terrace and the flights of stone steps, especially the round steps. Later he faced the straight terrace at the Botanical Gardens with stone. Well, well! I feel that when a Chinese gardener from high quarters takes ideas, it is certainly the sincerest form of flattery. That straight terrace of the Director's had been there since the time the Germans laid it out. Ah Fa had some very pretty, quaint ideas which he carried out in the Botanical Gardens. One was a tiny miniature creeper grown over a frame of wire shaped like a lamp, and inside he planted a small scarlet flower, representing a flame.

Native Dance at Matupi

Early this morning Aiau told me, with an air of suppressed excitement, that there was to be a big native dance at the village of Matupi today. This was before breakfast, which we take before 7.30 am—offices and all business starting at 8 am. The dew was still sparkling on the grass, for the sun had just risen above Mother mountain, which gazed benignly down over a slowly awakening Rabaul. Blue smoke from the wood fires that natives had lit to make breakfast rose into the air amongst the treetops, while down on the harbour schooner-boys were hoisting their sails to dry in the morning sunshine, for there had been a shower during the night.

I was at the pergola fertilising the glorious purple blooms of the granadilla vine, as I do every morning, when Aiau came along so casually. These flowers close early, before noon, and if not hand-fertilised there is a much smaller crop of fruit—perhaps we have not enough bees or something. As I worked,

I gathered a basket of fruit ready for breakfast. There is no fruit on earth quite like it. It hangs a lovely long melon shape, with palest green satin-smooth skin, in amongst its big purple flowers. Having finished the fertilising and given Aiau the basket of fruit to take in for Cook to put on the table, I said: 'Yes? *Bikpela* [large] party *bilong* native?'

'*Bikpela tumas!*' said Aiau. 'Alla *kanakas* [natives] round about he go. All the Malaguna, Nordup, Karavia and plenty boys belong Duke of York Islands he come, too. Better you go, *Misis*. Plenty photograph *tumas!*'

'*Bikpela kaikai?*' I asked. 'Oh! Plenty *kaikai tumas!*' said Aiau. 'Plenty pig, plenty fish, plenty banana, sweet potato, taro, alla *kaikai bilong kanaka*, and plenty tin meat belong white man. This feast he *bikpela* payback.' Some time before, people of the south coast villages of Kokopo, Karavia and Malaguna gave a feast for some chief's death and invited the Matupis and Nordups. Now these two villages were paying it back—returned hospitality. Alla same white people who take a dinner and give a dinner! I asked him if he would like to come and carry the camera for me.

'Me can—s'pose you like.' So we agreed that we would start about 11 am for the trip to Matupi village, 3 miles distant. He would first have to mow the lawn, and do various little jobs, then his 'wash-wash', which means he would take a bucket of water and sluice himself down. Then he would spend an interminable time making himself beautiful with a flower in his hair so that he would not look out of keeping with all the bedizened and decorated savages at the dance. So off he went to the kitchen with a modest tread on his big flat bare feet, his heart jubilant because he could tell Cook and Houseboy that he was going with *Misis* to the *singsing* dance at Matupi.

The road to Matupi was a moving mass of happy joking natives all going one way—from the town to the dance. They had all chosen the brightest coloured *laplaps* they possessed. Many were dressed in fantastic head-dresses of feathers and flowers and whatnot, and wore the regalia of teeth and shells around their necks and on their manly chests, but much of the painting on their bodies, which would take hours, would be done in little private enclosures made of leaf hedges erected for the occasion at the dance grounds—for the markings of paint that would be put on their legs, for instance, would all be destroyed if they walked along the dusty Matupi road, which is only an earth track cut out of the grass and maintained by motor car traffic.

The dance was already in full swing when we arrived. Loud high-pitched singing from hard-throated natives going for all they were worth in full blast of song assailed our ears, and the rhythmic beat of drums sounded a dull low note booming through the song. A ceremonial entrance had been erected at the ground, which is a well-stamped area used for dancing, where grass is not allowed to grow, and is kept down by constant brooming each morning by women with little coconut brooms. The ground had been hedged off by the laborious erection of a wall about 10 feet [3 metres] high, made with plaited coconut leaves, just plaited loosely for a job that is not expected to be too permanent. There was only one entrance allowed and it was wide and hung with decorative palm leaves, stripped to a pale green fringe. Tall poles were decorated and hung with bunches of white feathers, scarlet hibiscus blooms and ornamental scraps.

At one end of the ground, well away from the dancers but not so far as to be out of their vision, was the feast side of the affair. Several pigs were lying trussed up, still 'alive-o' and very audible. They lay on the ground in a neat line, and were generally the centre of an admiring or calculating group of pig-loving, pig-hungry natives. Calculating, because often at the end of these feasts, whatever pig is left is divided up between certain visitors who have some rights to a special share, perhaps because they were hosts at a previous feast—and this is the payback feast.

A tall erection of bamboo 30 feet [9 metres] high was laced with bunches of bananas. Mountains of taro and sweet potato lay ready to be cooked. Corn gold and corn white lay with long purple shining sticks of sugar cane that would quench the thirst of perspiring hot dancers, as well as keeping up their vitality. Pineapples and pawpaws were there in great quantities, and I could see that this feast was going to go on well into the night, and perhaps last several days.

The noise of about 30 near-fanatical natives yelling out their war songs as they pranced up and down in a double line was nearly deafening. They were surrounded on all four sides by an admiring crowd four-deep, watching the steps and observing the wonderful personal adornments. There is nothing too bizarre for dancers to wear. This group who were swaying and shimmying their backsides as they pranced up and down the small area of dance ground^a were dressed in feathers and bedaubed with paint, and well hidden behind necklaces of shell and dogs' teeth, armbands and kneelets of clam shell. Only their roving, darting eyes and their sweaty chests or bits of their backs were

visible. Their eyes roved around to see if folk were admiring them, and some were dopey and rather red from betel-chewing orgies and the excitement of the occasion.

Most were dancing in a very ceremonial manner, all alike in step and well trained. The dust from the ground was awful. Sweet and acrid pungent smells from different sorts of oils, herbs and whatnot were overpowering. One group were holding little wands made of a branch with feathers tied to it; as they danced they moved the wands up and down like a slow juggling trick, keeping their hands at waist level. At one end of the rectangle sat the band, about 20 strong, all wielding big *kundu* drums fashioned like an hourglass and about 3 feet [almost 1 metre] long. The drummers sit on the ground, usually do not wear much decoration, and yell the songs, beating time and spitting betel juice so fast they can hardly keep the cud of betel-nut in the mouth. They are as if demented—a native who has probably been some *Masta's* respectable wash-boy yesterday, sedately ironing white shirts and tablecloths, is sitting there in a frenzy, bawling out the ancestral songs of his forefathers as though the ghosts of the same were now watching him.

This dance ends and another troupe comes in, carrying tall things in each hand. Weird objects carved from wood, expert little figures of men standing in queer attitudes, snakes writhing up a stick, and more men. The little men and the wood out of which they are carved are painted the brightest colours obtainable—brilliant blue and scarlet, and sun-burst yellow—and these they weave about in a pattern during the dance.

Then, in their turn, they retire and give place to a group who come in masked with huge hideous masks—painted to represent a leering face—that reach from above the head to the chest. The masks are of carved wood, above which is a big straw roof, and then a further erection of split cane decorated with feathers. They dance with their bodies flexed down into cramped positions, sticking out buttocks and elbows in exaggerated positions—leering at each other suggestively, one could imagine, behind the masks.

When they left the dance ground, there was a general air of expectancy and quiet before the next act. Suddenly, on the hush, came a distant sound of music, sweet singing in the true melodious voices that some Pacific islanders have. Looking out beyond to the enclosure where performers dressed for the dances, I saw a slow procession of beautifully dressed natives coming along very solemnly. Slowly they came out of the shadows of the palms where they

had been waiting, and across into the sunshine that illuminated their waving head-dresses. They carried little wands in both hands made of soft wood carved in pretty shapes and decorated with flowers and feathers painted all colours. This was the Dance of the Coconut Palms. The dancers came slowly on to the ground, singing, then they went through an imaginary evolution of the palm from the nut, to its breaking open, and growing up and flowering, and becoming nut again.

Dances come and dances go. Natives have their fashions in these, just the same as white people do, and natives often go to other villages and buy the rights for new dances which have been introduced. They may not dance them without paying the fee and buying the rights. So their culture is carried on. After the quiet beauty of the coconut palm dance there was a tremendously wild, exciting, uproarious dance of the spear fighters, when men rushed in with spears and fought imaginary battles. Great care had to be taken so that their spear did not hit a neighbour as they gyrated and pranced around in mimic battle, drummers beating time to their furious tempo.

We heard the squealing of pigs. The sun had crossed the sky. The place was seething with crowds of hot natives—the dust from stamping feet and the heat was terrific. So we started home along the road past the wicked Tavurvur (Matupi) crater that is hot and threatening, and will one day blow Rabaul sky-high in some nasty eruption. Already many natives were on their way back to jobs in civilised Rabaul, refreshed after this little jaunt where they had heard and joined in the songs and dances of their ancestors.

2 October 1936

News has come in that Assistant District Officer Albert Nurton is in a serious condition in Madang hospital, after having been attacked by villagers on the Rai Coast behind Madang. This is very broken mountainous country, with fierce primitive natives who do not sign on for work. Nurton recently went on a patrol and the natives sent word they were not going to 'line' for the *Kiap*. He sent two native police, and they came back badly wounded, so Nurton went out himself with police-boys and carriers, and built a stockade. Many of his police got dreadful wounds in their feet from hidden stakes or spears planted in the bush paths.

Then the people said they were tired of being bad friends with *gavman* [government]. Nurton invited them inside the stockade, and got taken

unawares. He was very badly wounded—he was taken to hospital at Madang where they sent for the doctor from Salamaua, Dr Sinclair, who went across by plane, quite a distance. They carried out a successful mid-leg amputation and a medical assistant will bring Nurton on the *Montoro* to Rabaul hospital.

[In October 1936, Sarah left Rabaul on the *Neptuna* for South, to rent a cottage and take the children out of school for the summer holidays. A few days later, Chin left Rabaul on the *Macdhui* on a tour of mainland stations. On 16 October, he set out from Madang with District Officer MacDonald for the Rai Coast, to investigate the attack on Nurton. He returned to Rabaul on 25 December on the *Montoro*, after completing his extensive tour. Sarah told the children that Nurton owned a small property on Phillip Island, near Melbourne, and he might go and live there.]

ERUPTION

RABAU 1937

In Rabaul we are all fairly accustomed to earthquakes, or *gurias* as we call them. They usually last only a few seconds, and since houses are built on piles, they simply rock slightly. But several weeks ago, Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries near Matupi, about 2 miles from Rabaul, told another missionary that they thought there was likely to be an upheaval—yet we had not been getting anything much in the way of *gurias* in Rabaul. Then shortly after 1 pm on Friday, 28 May, there was a most sudden, violent quake of peculiar and unusual intensity. The *Montoro* rocked at the wharf, the harbour receded long past lowest tide, and swirled back, foaming and churning black water and coming up to the level of the gardens built on the foreshore. This happened all round the harbour and round Matupi, and all afternoon there were many violent earth tremors.

Mr Furter's house at Karavia near Vulcan Island fell in a buckled fashion, breaking down in the middle, and the steps fell so that when Mrs Furter tried to go outside (after her bed fell under her and the wardrobe fell on top of her), she had difficulty jumping out of the house. [Gottfried Furter owned a store in Rabaul.] At 5.30 on Saturday morning, 29 May, there was a very bad quake, severe enough to awaken sleepers and cause pictures and things to fall to the floor. The shocks became frequent, occurring every few minutes. Instead of gradually increasing in intensity as usual, they started with sudden jerks, violent and angry. Most people rose early after the terrible night, and everyone was visibly shaken and worried.

Mr Furter rang Mr Murray, Director of Agriculture, at 7 am and told him he could see the water was getting warm, and he considered there was a great possibility of an eruption. Mr Murray said he had no one to send to look at it. Everyone was very tense. Natives muttered and started hinting obliquely that some friend had said '*guria* no good'. Government women employees were

told to go home—no one could work with these frequent, ferocious earthquakes.

I went for a short drive with some women friends in the administration down to the Ravuvu swimming pool and met Mr Furter there. He looked extremely serious, and said he thought something would happen, his house never stopped rocking all night and there were dreadful noises. Mr Furter had told me years before that activity of the crater must be very nearly under his house, he could tell because of the dreadful rumbling. We all felt very subdued, and returned to Rabaul. Lunch was about ready and the cook-boy and other boys were getting about trying to look unconcerned.

Chin had gone to Matupi to see some big cracks which had appeared and were causing concern. He said the older natives had appeared quiet and apprehensive. There had been several sharp shocks within a few minutes, and deep rumbling noises which he had not heard before, coming from the bottom of the sea in the direction of Vulcan Island. There had been a very bad fall of the cliffs along the South Coast—Kokopo Road—the road was impassable, and gangs of natives with hundreds of spades and wheelbarrows were sent out early in the morning to help the local natives clear the earth away. News had also come that a line of big rocks had come up in the harbour alongside Vulcan Island.

I could not stay in the house—it rocked too much. Chin tried to persuade me to have lunch at any rate, but I went out and lay in a hammock under the big shady peltopherum tree, trying to read, and there I had lunch. Mr Murray called about 2 pm to take Chin and me to drive out with him to see the land-falls and the new islands that had risen around Vulcan Island. We would go up the North Coast Road over the mountain and, if the road was clear, return by the South Coast Road. I would get some photographs—but I had only one film. So we set off, to drive over Taliligap.

We did not notice the earth's vibrations when driving, but when I got out of the car a few miles from Rabaul to get a photograph of Vulcan Island, the car literally danced on the ground. We were on the topmost ridge of hills—near where the new aerodrome lies on top of the world, where the Administrator landed later, for the first time. I got a splendid bird's-eye view of the mountains and harbour, with Vulcan Island lying hundreds of feet below, and our native driver standing in front, looking out over the harbour. Only one snap. Vulcan Island was only 10 feet [3 metres] or so above water, and was



A view of Vulcan Island one hour before the eruption

covered in light scrub and casuarina trees. It had been used as an infectious diseases isolation place for natives—but that had been closed when the medical officer said it was unhealthy. In fact, it was hot to walk on, and now no natives lived on Vulcan.

To my extreme astonishment I saw three large pieces of new land had come up on the far side of the island, and a band of new land along the near side enclosing a small lagoon. The new land was a reddish brown colour, unlike all the beach around Vulcan and Rabaul, which is black pumice. A Brother walking from the nearby St Paul's Mission stopped and told us the new land had come up during the morning and as late as 1.30 pm, so that accounted for the disturbed, reddish muddy look of the water at one end of the island. There before our very eyes, although we did not know it, the volcanic forces beneath the bed of the ocean were pushing up, making the water muddy in a pool of say half a mile.

We passed dozens of villages occasionally visible along this hilly bush country, with banana trees, sugar cane, giant bamboos and tall trees with orchids covering their big trunks. As we got down the hillside, many of the houses and a native church were decorated with colourful crotons and flowers, and the road lined with decorations and spanned with arches in preparation for the Corpus Christi Festival. Preparations had been going on for weeks,

and the Bishop and many of the outlying missionaries had come in for the occasion of the Corpus Christi Procession to be held next day, Sunday, at Vunapope Sacred Heart Mission, Kokopo.

We got out of the car and looked at the decorations. Though there were several sharp shocks the natives seemed too interested in their preparations to take much notice—they asked me to come back by and by and they would be dressed to have their photos taken.

We continued our tour. Coming down into the South Coast–Kokopo Road we turned towards Rabaul, and soon came to the place where there were many bad falls of earth from the cliffs. A big gang of natives were carting the ground away in their newly dispensed wheelbarrows and had already cleared a rough track. I got out to take pictures of the natives, and a big old man with a slight beard came up close to me and said very earnestly: ‘*Misis*, place ’e no good!’ He pointed down to Vulcan Island, now about 300 feet [90 metres] below, and said: ‘Stone ’e come up in water.’

‘Yes. Yes,’ I said in what I thought was a soothing voice. He caught my arm, a very unusual thing for a native to do, and said again, very earnestly: ‘Place ’e no good.’ The other natives just stood around and said nothing. My blood went cold. I felt quite shaken and awed, and thought of the Ancient Mariner and his warning. That old man possibly remembered the time 50 years ago when an eruption brought Vulcan Island up out of the sea.

‘All right. All right,’ I said. There was nothing I could do. I got back into the car feeling very queer, but trying to speak casually, and said to the others: ‘The old man says “place ’e no good”, and is very concerned about the stone that has come up.’ We drove on.

Mr Murray asked would we like to stop off and see the new dairy herd that had been brought up as an experiment to get fresh milk for the children, but we decided not to. We passed Karavia where Mr Furter’s house was down, and a short distance further on stopped at Carpenters slip where their island steamer *Durour* was being repaired. Two young engineers from the *Durour* were getting ready to go out in a small launch with a crew of about five natives to get photographs and a closer look at Vulcan Island, and invited us to join them. We went on to the tiny jetty by the slip and it started shaking violently, worse than anything we had experienced. One shock was so violent that I started to run back to land, but Chin said: ‘Come on, it’s all right.’ We stepped into the launch, and the men said they were going on the island.

I said I definitely was NOT going on any island, so they agreed, 'all right, we will just go for a sail around', and I would get a 'close-up'. I was nervous, but they said it was all right. A native canoe with about eight on board, including some women, shot out from nearby and passed right across our bow, crossing to go on the island. They were all laughing and excited. I thought how foolish they were to land, but they had heard a lot of fish had come up, and it was a good chance. Several natives were walking about looking for stranded fish, their canoes lying alongside.

I only had a couple of exposures left, but one of the engineers had a camera, and after discussing whether he should use a filter to make the new stones stand out, I soon had a picture of the reefs—just a long line of dirty reddish brown stone that had risen a foot high, like a fringe. A few isolated stones, not many, lay further out, forming rather a chain in the direction of the old crater, Matupi. I photographed one of the stones, about 2 feet [60 centimetres] high. We went right to the end of Vulcan Island. Four natives in a canoe crossed about 100 yards [90 metres] ahead of us and went over close to the new land, touching it practically. Again I thought how foolish to take the risk. Why I thought it a risk to go on Vulcan, I don't know. They reached the island—or did they? I never saw them land.

I was in the stern, the two engineers and Chin standing nearby, and the natives squatting about—one at the wheel. I noticed that the water was rippling in a most peculiar way, all in crisscrossed waves and I did not like the look of it. I peered round the shoulder of the person in front to see if we were moving out of the lee of Vulcan to cause this choppy broken water. We were not anywhere near open sea, and there was no wind. I just suddenly felt it was no good, and asked the engineer near me to tell the helmsman to turn back, and said quite frankly I was frightened. I had to say it twice before they turned, as slowly as they could go.

Immediately I noticed that one of the new rocks was twice the height it had been when I photographed it some seven minutes earlier. The men agreed that it was higher out of the water, and that another new one had come up beside it. I suddenly felt very frightened and told them to hurry the boat up. No one heeded me. I pushed the white man's elbow and said: 'Tell the boy to make the boat go.' He would not give the order and the launch was barely moving. I said: 'Something will come up.' One of the white men, Mr Murray, said: 'I'd like to see something come up.' I leaned right over and poked the native's arm



Reefs that suddenly emerged from the sea just prior to the massive eruption

and said urgently: 'Make the boat go!' He was only waiting for the order and immediately the boat went faster, heading back towards the jetty. Chin said: 'Look what's coming up here!' A couple of hundred yards away about 30 big rocks shot up like pickets stretching from Vulcan Island across to the mainland. There were spaces between each rock and then—ZIP—the spaces closed, and there

was a solid low reef stretching like a wall between us and the jetty, and cutting us off. More bits of land popped out of the water between us and the *Durour*.

We turned at right angles towards the nearest point of the shore, about 70 yards away; the pinnacle slowed and almost stopped to look at these marvels of nature. I heard not a sound but Chin said: 'Look what's coming up behind!' We all looked. Right in our wake a blackish spiral of water was spouting 30 feet up out of a wide, swirling puddle-like ring, perhaps 100 feet across, which rapidly enlarged as we watched. We had just passed over the spot. A man could easily have thrown a stone into it.

No need now to say 'make the boat go'. We got going full speed. I took another hurried look over my shoulder. The dreadful eruption was 100 feet up and enormously wide. Then it started to crackle and explode and thunder, hurling up black stones and things, and was indescribable in its fury. No one spoke. We hit a rock or something but bumped clear. In a few seconds we hit again and stopped—the sea bottom had come up.

The men sang out, calling to 'get the canoe out', but no one bothered, all jumped overboard into waist-deep water. I was over but a native got in front of me with his back turned ready to carry me. Chin grabbed my camera, I had my precious little native grass bag with yesterday's film in it. As we got nearer the shore I thought my carrier was getting exhausted but he refused to put me down till we reached the land. The others waded, except Mr Murray who, being somewhat crippled, was carried by two natives. There was no beach. The tall *kunai* grass grew down to the water. Here Chin took my hand and we started the race for our lives. One of the engineers took my other hand—we

did not run, the three of us leapt that awful race to safety through the bushy growth and long *kunai* grass.

The eruption was now in full force. Mountains of stones were being hurled thousands of feet high with deafening noise and sulphurous blinding smoke—black, black, black. You could see nothing but blackness. No thought now of picture-making, only to run till we nearly dropped as the black terror followed us. We got to the road where there was no foliage overhead, for the coconuts did not overarch. I wanted the men to run in the bush plantation so that this awful mass could not come down and crush us, but they kept me to the road. We were about a mile from where we had left the car by the jetty, but by good fortune, a Chinaman came along in his old Ford, he was giving a lift to some of the natives who were running to safety and he gave us a lift, too. I was put in the front seat—there were ten people in the car—one man with a baby—whites, Chinese, natives. Mr Murray had already got into it further up the road. I was speechless for quite a long time, my throat arid-dry from the long run and the sulphurous fumes which made the men in the back cough. My throat was too dry even to cough.

When we reached the jetty our car had gone, but we came on it about a mile further along the road to Kokopo, and the driver standing by. He had moved it when he saw the eruption. Four of us changed over, and Chin said: 'Now we'll go back to Rabaul.' I said I would not go back to Rabaul. A screen of stones and solid lava was pouring from the inferno. Huge boulders the size of a house were shot up higher than the mountain I had just an hour or so earlier taken the first picture from; then some of them split in midair and scattered amongst coconut plantations on the opposite side of the road. Hundreds of natives were running and bicycling along the road, fleeing to safety away from the direction of Rabaul. 'I must return to Rabaul,' Chin said, 'there'll be work to do.'

'All right,' I said, 'I'll get out and walk.' So he and Mr Murray decided to take me to the Vunapope Mission at Kokopo, and they would then return to Rabaul over the North Coast Road we had travelled such a short time before. Our driver was frankly terrified. He had evidently seen too much—the eruption chasing us. He kept looking back, turning his head to see where it was. The terror kept following us, but we gained on it, and after picking up a few people going for their lives, we got away. That was how I came to be the first refugee to arrive at Vunapope Mission from the Rabaul eruption.

After getting a much-needed drink of water at the mission, Chin got back into the car to return to Rabaul.

That evening the Bishop [Gerard Vesters] held a special service for the eruption, which I attended, very shaken after my experience. It was all in the native language which I do not know, but I heard them praying for *guria, guria, guria*. I was the only white person outside the organisation in the congregation. The children seemed to be very interested in the stranger, and their big brown eyes would stray to have a look.

The noise of the eruption was appalling. In the evening the mission Sisters and some natives and I sat out on a wide verandah of their home on the hill overlooking the harbour, and I told them what it was like at Vulcan Island. We looked down on to the terrifying spectacle of this enormous white-throated cauldron spitting out millions of tons from the bowels of the earth. The searing, white, incandescent radiance that came at intervals in lightning-like flashes was quite impossible to look at. You can look at lightning, but not at these blinding eruptions of a light beyond description.

The Mother Superior and Sisters were very kind, and fixed me up with a bed; but in the four nights I stayed at the mission I was never to sleep in it, but slept in a deckchair. The refugees came trailing in all night, many with faces blackened with smoke, ash and lava dust. A sick woman arrived and I thought she needed the bed more than I. Next night the same, a woman with a child; and the following night, the Matron of Rabaul hospital who had gone through the dreadful time while so many were cared for at the hospital, then evacuated to Kokopo.

On Sunday, the day after the eruption, it had been planned to hold the Corpus Christi Procession at the mission. All the grounds had been beautifully decorated with arches and flowers and crotons. They pondered on whether they should hold it under the circumstances, but on Sunday morning decided that as all was ready, they might just as well proceed with the procession. I did not have a film, but quite a few of the young missionaries were keen photographers and a film was found for me, and a good place from which to view the procession. The ceremony was carried out to the letter. The Bishop in all his lace, and the Fathers; the Nuns and the Little Sisters; black natives dressed in grey cotton frocks and long white veils over their backs; little brown piccaninnies marching sedately; and boys dressed in scarlet robes swinging golden bells and carrying the censer. The noise of the eruption was still



Corpus Christi Procession at the Vunapope Mission where Sarah found sanctuary during the eruption

deafening that Sunday morning and made a terrible accompaniment to the chanting of the Fathers and native converts, while towering clouds and funnels of smoke and ash were visible behind the procession. It was most awe-inspiring to see these missionaries carrying out this sacred ceremony under such conditions.

Early on Sunday afternoon the second eruption started. Matupi crater (Tavurvur), on the opposite side of the harbour and about 4 miles from Vulcan Island, blew up between 1 and 1.30 pm, ejecting stinking black mud, while Vulcan erupted mainly dry lava dust. Kokopo was made the centre of relief. It is about 14 miles as the crow flies from Vulcan Island, which is about 6 miles from Rabaul. Refugees came in by schooner and car from outlying plantations along the North Coast and South Coast roads. They were covered

with the grey pumice ash and rained on by a mud-like lava. It got black-dark before sunset so that they could not see anything.

Plantations were ruined, as were many of the missions which were in bad places. At Valavolo Mission they got dreadful showers of lava and sulphur and had to shut themselves in a room. Up at Taliligap the place was in ruins—one of the worst spots in the island, for it is directly over Vulcan, and the south-easterly carried the 15 000-foot-high eruption debris straight over it. St Paul's Mission was in ruins. Mission Sisters and Fathers fled to Vunapope Sacred Heart Mission, their headquarters at Kokopo.

Looking back on the event it seems foolish that we went for a sail on the harbour for a look around, but we never thought of a possible eruption, and certainly never thought it would come out of the harbour. But what about the temerity of the residents of Rabaul? People had been playing tennis, baseball, golf on that Saturday afternoon. On the golf course number 5 hole was bubbling—the ball would not stay in place. At number 6 tee golfers swayed, could not stand still, but kept on playing. When they heard the first sounds of the eruption about 4.15 that afternoon, they went down to the beach and harbour to have a look—and stayed watching until they got alarmed at the severity of it. The wind suddenly changed and smoke started to come over Rabaul. They dashed for their cars, picked up pedestrian friends and tore to Namanula Hill Road, thinking if they got over the Namanula Hill and down the other side to the beach at Nordup they would be safer from the bombardment of stones and stuff coming up from the harbour.

There was then no thought of getting to their homes to get clothing—the thing was to escape this terror of smoke, sulphur fumes and pumice now covering Rabaul. Before they had gone a mile they were blacked out by smoke so dense they could not see their hands before their faces—they put on their car lights, but on the narrow, hilly dirt road they got into a tangled jam. They were then a good 5 miles from where I and my companions ran for safety through the *kunai* grass—their danger was of asphyxiation from smoke. They tied handkerchiefs over their mouths. Eventually they reached the top, and that night all the houses on Namanula Hill, and the hospital, were full of refugees. Some sheltered up to 26—naturally the hospital had many more because it was the nearest up the hill by road. All were welcomed and given food and drink, and blankets if possible. Tea was made and sandwiches cut all night at the hospital.

About a dozen people had taken the backtrack up to Namanula Hill. A very rough track that is practically never walked on; it is an awful track in daytime. At times they crawled on hands and knees through darkness for the 2 miles up the extremely steep bush track. One mother, Olga Bliss, carried her two-month-old infant, covered with a shawl as well as she could—the smoke and fumes were dreadful and it was pitch black. [Mr Bliss was in the Department of Agriculture.] The baby's face was black—all one could see were its eyes. Government House is the first house reached by that route, and they staggered in and sat on the verandah, where just two weeks before hundreds of people had attended a reception in honour of King George VI's coronation. Next day all were evacuated to Vunapope Mission at Kokopo.

Other Rabaul residents fleeing for their lives drove off to the North Coast Road to escape behind the chain of 1000-foot-high hills. Some who left early got out to shelter, but later people got badly bogged. Trees had fallen—sometimes they managed to move them—but three big rivers caused by cloudbursts quickly formed. They were 30 feet deep and as wide as a road, and dozens of cars were trapped in them. New Britain is made of soft black pumice and even an ordinary heavy shower of rain makes dreadful washaways in the soil if there is no grass to hold it. Terrific rains, with heavy thunder and terrifying lightning, poured on the north coast for several days—these rains and the condensation of cloudbursts from the crater caused the rivers.

At 11 pm on the Saturday, the *Montoro* got the message of the eruption. They had just left Kavieng, and Captain Michie sent a wireless message to the American freighter *Golden Bear*, the only large overseas ship in harbour, that they were returning to Rabaul at once. At 11.30 pm, the night steward, sitting on deck, felt dust in his eyes and saw it settle all around him. In an hour the decks of the *Montoro* were thick with pumice carried from 130 miles [over 200 kilometres] away, and it got into cabins. The clouds from the eruption were reckoned to be 30 000 feet [9000 metres] high. Ash also dropped on coconut palms in New Ireland, and the owners thought it was some new pest. The *Montoro* did not enter the harbour but sailed to Nordup on the north side of the island over Namanula Hill, where hundreds of people had congregated. Just as she came in to stand out at anchor, at about 1.30 on Sunday afternoon, Matupi crater erupted—spewing up stinking black mud and steam and rocks. Naturally, everyone was terror-stricken. Captain Michie told me that 6000 natives and 150 white people

were put on to lighters at Nordup. They were rowed out to the *Montoro* in six hours, and brought to Kokopo.

Food supplies were transported from Rabaul by boat—and so people were fed at Kokopo. It was no small job to get stores transferred—big quantities of meat, boxes of cauliflowers and cabbages from South, and apples and other fruit which are kept in the freezer in Rabaul. All Rabaul, including natives, were evacuated to Kokopo, except a party of 20 men who remained to safeguard food supplies. Some houses sheltered 60 people, and killed cattle to feed them. Over 600 white people were evacuated to the mission. All were succoured by the Bishop, Fathers and Sisters, who worked ceaselessly, day and night, and gave up their own beds to the refugees.

In a few days' bombardment from the eruption, Vulcan Island rose to a height of 600 feet, and the hillside and villages on the North Coast Road were buried and rendered uninhabitable. Those who escaped were cared for by the government until other places had been found for them. Many natives took refuge in their grass huts to escape falling stones and smoke, but the weight of cumulative falls of pumice broke the houses in. Many people were buried in or under their houses, according to a native woman who, carrying her baby slung over a shoulder, told the story to one of the Sisters who immediately turned and translated it to me. That was on Tuesday morning. The poor woman cried a little, wiping a tear away. Many natives, she said, were killed by stones or coconuts hurtling down on them, and coconut palms were stripped, not a leaf left—just the trunk. Hundreds of natives were killed. Mr Ellworthy, the Rabaul electrician, was killed; and the wireless operator on the *Golden Bear* is lost—no one knows how. The natives gathering stranded fish at Vulcan were killed. The canoe full of happy natives which passed us was lost, only one man being strong enough to swim across to Matupi, 4 miles [6 kilometres] away—a feat of strength which took him four hours.

The launch we had abandoned blew up within seconds of our leaving it, and Mr Furter told me his house and the *Durour* went up in flames. The cattle we did not have time to see were lost, and that place buried by the eruption. Dogs and cats and birds for miles around Rabaul were killed. The harbour was covered with pumice. Rabaul was showered with pumice and mud—streets became quagmires and whole avenues of trees and gardens were devastated. The native villages close to Vulcan suffered terrible losses. Hundreds of these people—who used to walk into my garden to display their



Aftermath of the 1937 volcanic eruption. Many villages were buried under layers of pumice and mud

goods for sale, pineapples, long shining sticks of sugar cane, choice orchids they found in the bush, or colourful parrots tied to a stick with a little string—were never to see the Corpus Christi Procession for which they had been preparing. In just a few hours, their lovely villages and this beautiful countryside was annihilated under millions of tons of pumice dust and ash. [In all, 500 villagers died.]

After the eruption there was not a flower or a bud left, nor a leaf on a tree. Trees had been stripped of their branches by the weight of volcanic dust; every green thing had been killed by fumes and gases. Rabaul was a desert of pumice sand—rough, sharp, hot and evil-smelling. Little did I think it would be five days before I returned to find my lovely garden laid in ruins—many trees and nearly all the shrubs destroyed and the lawns covered in a thick blanket of volcanic ash. When I saw Aiau amongst the thousands of refugees at Kokopo he said: ‘*Misis*, garden ’e no more!’ Vulcan had erupted a year to



Sarah's lovely garden was destroyed

the day after Aiau had written his name in the wet cement on the round steps: 'Aiau—29 May 1936'.

After Chin had left me with the Sisters at Vunapope Mission, he set off with Mr Murray and one of the *Durour* officers to return to Rabaul along backtracks. Near the aerodrome a local planter who was on his way to Kokopo told them the road ahead was impassable, so they turned back to Kokopo. About 11 pm, after making preliminary arrangements with the mission and getting District Officers of Kokopo started in preparing to receive possible refugees from Rabaul, he returned to Rabaul in the mission schooner, landing at Nordup after midnight. For the rest of the night he worked with district officials in locating natives and making preparations for their evacuation, until 9 o'clock on Sunday morning, when the car crashed and Chin was admitted to Namanula hospital with severe head injuries. Chin was then evacuated to Kokopo as a hospital patient before the second eruption at Matupi.

Thousands of natives who escaped to Kokopo were given a rice issue, which of course has to be cooked. One of the Sisters told me that local villagers were short of food because there had been a drought, and besides, people had been rather busy making copra. The *Montoro* stood off Kokopo for three or four days, and made meals for several hundred natives until at last they said they could no longer cope. Their water stocks were also running low, for they were supplementing water supplies at Kokopo.

Eventually the Australian government ordered HMAS *Moresby* to take on water at Thursday Island to replenish *Montoro's* stocks. Bedding, mosquito nets, food, etc., were also shipped from Australia. The first schooner permitted to take 40 men into Rabaul left Kokopo at 7 am on Wednesday, 2 June. The men had

put their names down to get a permit to land, and were allowed to stay ashore for only three hours, to go to their homes and get personal belongings, clothing, etc. As it was early, there were not many people down on the wharf, other than their wives. The Administrator, General McNicoll, went in also.

The water was undrinkable in Rabaul—due to deposits of lava into the tanks. Mrs Miller, who lives near the tunnel, told me at Kokopo that after three days of thirst she drank the water. One swallow burned her stomach, and she could drink no more.

Friday, 4 June 1937

It being impossible to allow people to return to Rabaul immediately, the administration offered to defray the costs for the women and children to go South on the *Montoro*, *Tanda*, or *Neptuna*, and many did go, though not all. I did not go South, but instead decided to go on a trip to Madang to give the houseboys time to clean up and get the tanks emptied and refilled with fresh rainwater—sailing yesterday at noon, when the *Montoro* left for outports.



At Lae, there was wireless news that the Beehives had disappeared and that Father mountain was showing signs of activity. Sent radio to *Illustrated London News*, and *New York Times*, from Salamaua. Saturday morning, arrived Madang. Posted letters to Chin and children, and letter with colour film to *Illustrated London News*.

Thursday, 10 June 1937

Yesterday I left Mrs Oakley's place in Madang, where I had stayed for two nights, and came to stay at the hotel. It is very comfortable here. Tonight, wireless news was released in Madang that another bad earthquake and eruption occurred from Vulcan, and it was later reported that many people fled back to Kokopo. Meanwhile the *Montoro* has gone South with many women refugees, who extracted promises from their husbands they would not return to Rabaul.

Mr MacKenzie, Commonwealth Surveyor, says Rabaul is not fit to live in—eruptions may go on for years; Rabaul may get buried—it is hollow in places underneath. When the terrible rains fell on the north coast, rivers were so

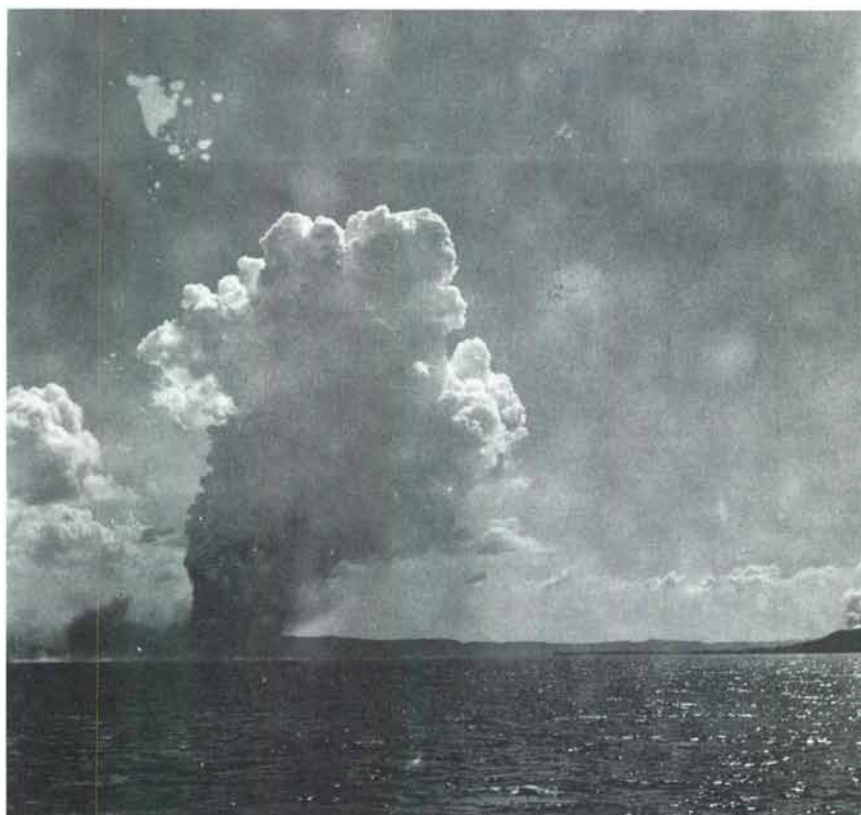
deep that some people held the view at first that the earth had opened and let out subterranean waters. I don't know, but they were terrifying, abnormal rivers. The nearest river to Rabaul is 30 miles away at Keravat. That is one reason why we cannot have proper sanitation in Rabaul. The soft pumice soil and the frequent earthquakes make it impossible to build an adequate concrete dam. The question has been discussed for years, and we have been told it is not practical. That will be an excellent reason to remove the capital to the mainland, where we can have a good harbour, apart from moving away from two active volcanoes.

I was having a chat with Bishop Loerks [the Right Reverend Joseph Loerks, Bishop of Central New Guinea] who said there is 500 metres depth on one side and 400 metres on the other two sides of the island in Alexishafen. No wharves need to be built, for you could put up seven or eight overseas vessels straight alongside the island, and a short bridge connecting to the mainland could be built at a small cost. There is good soil and plenty of land instead of being cooped up on a few acres of flat foreshore, backed by high mountains like a wall that cannot be built on, as we are in Rabaul. Matupit is an island joined to Rabaul by a causeway built on a beach that could formerly be crossed at low tide. So a roadway was built raising the level a few feet.

It was well known there was much volcanic activity under Matupi, and the old crater nearby still makes sulphur and black lava. Hot springs abound there, and the ground is so hot you could not walk on it a mile from Matupi village. So there is very little garden land at Matupi. Men steadily turned themselves into a trade union of Matupi wash-boys who came every day and washed some white person's linen, a job that usually took all morning, five or six days a week. I think it was about two weeks or so before the eruption that two ladies came in to morning tea, and one said: 'Would you believe it, my Matupi wash-boy wants 8 shillings a week.' And the other lady said: 'Well, you're lucky, a lot of the Matupi wash-boys are getting 10 shillings a week.' Of course, that is only for mornings—they would usually get away by midday, and some might work only three or four days a week.

12 June 1937

Radio from Chin, Rabaul 8 am: 'Home and well.'



Sarah took this photograph from the Montoro, five days after the initial eruption, of Mt Vulcan (left) and Mt Tavurvur

16 June 1937

On the Saturday night radio news, it was said that a qualified man would be sent up to see whether Rabaul is fit to continue. Parliament would discuss it on Tuesday—until the expert had made his report the matter was in the hands of the administration. Administrator McNicoll received advice that the Commonwealth Government was attempting to secure the services of a qualified scientist, probably from the United States, to report on volcanic and seismic dangers at Rabaul. There was news that over 4000 natives had deserted, but authorities were confident that the majority would eventually be rounded up.

Thursday, 17 June 1937

News came through by wireless that cars were able to resume driving in Rabaul for the first time on Tuesday, 15 June. Not allowed to proceed at more

than 15 miles per hour, and in passing each other, at 5 miles per hour [because of the fine volcanic dust]. This probably refers to private cars, since all cars were commandeered after the eruption, and no private cars were allowed. Pumice is still obstructing the harbour.

Friday, 18 June 1937

There is now quite a crowd in the hotel. It appears they had booked my room as from when the *Macdhui* arrives. I offered to double up with the other woman, but Mrs Lewis would not hear of it. Said the room was not theirs till the 23rd and to stay where I am. This is always considered the lady's room.

Visit to Alexishafen (Sek)

On Saturday, 19 June, *Michael*, the schooner of the Roman Catholic mission at Sek, came in to get cargo off the *Friederun*. The *Friederun* is not allowed to go to Sek to discharge, although *Macdhui* and *Montoro* do—there is a Customs shed there. Brother Gerloch—a rather handsome German or Swede—called for me, as Bishop Wolf had told him I wanted to go to Sek. I wanted to see the new land that belongs to the government. He came to lunch at the hotel, and immediately after we went down, went aboard the schooner and set out. It was a glorious noontime, very light ripples on the water. I took photographs of a number of interesting villages built right on the beach of numerous coral isles. We passed so close to the islands one could have thrown a stone on to the white beach. Black piccaninnies were stark naked and shining wet from swimming. A number were up the bare branches of a tree and dived off into the deep water that goes right up to the island.

I was in a deckchair—the deck was so narrow that I leaned partly on the hatch, and partly on the schooner rail. About three-quarters of the way across our journey our engine suddenly stopped. A native boy who had been lazily chewing betel-nut, sitting close beside me on the hatchway, got down and started to pump the little pump just in front of me. Water gushed out. He kept pumping and was obviously tired—another native just sat there, so I suggested he should help pump. When the engine stopped, Brother Gerloch turned to me and said: 'A little trouble.' I got nervous but that didn't help any. Eventually they got the schooner going. We arrived about 2.30, and Brother Gerloch produced an aerated water made by the Brothers and some biscuits. Then I went and saw and photographed the cathedral, and later Bishop Wolf

came and we had a chat. I showed him the photos of the eruption, and gave him prints.

I stayed the night with the Sisters and had the first good night's sleep I have had since the eruption. I did not waken once. Sunday morning they went to Mass—but the Sister first brought me hot water to wash. She had shown me one portion of the garden, where I had seen the *meris* [women] working, putting rich manure soil in the vegetable garden. I saw the taro planted for the natives. I also saw the mission kitchen—a large one with a huge stove and six big boilers on it, and half a dozen *meris* squatting on the floor cutting beans. On the table were two trays of coffee grown on the mission, the first crop. Asparagus, carrots, kale, okra, spring onions and beans are grown in the vegetable garden. I have been told that all they buy is flour and sugar, and for the rest they are self-supporting. The Sisters cook all the food for the Fathers and the Brothers and send it out to different stations.

After my good sleep I got up and walked up as far as the cathedral, but on the way picked up some *meris* with two little *pikininis*. It is funny the way natives will attach themselves to a white person—soon one was carrying my handbag. One older woman was wearing a good dog's-tooth necklace and plenty of bone rings and strings of beads around her neck. I photographed her. We went over a causeway bridge made of stone and coral that spanned some tidal water. A big tree with a glorious scarlet flower branched out over the water. I showed interest in it and one of the *meris* went on the land side of the tree to get some for me—it took her quite a time. I photographed one of the children holding it.

I had a very pleasant trip back to Madang in a pinnace, and when I arrived on Sunday, I heard that the *Macdhui* was on fire at Fortification Point, and the *Neptuna*, which we were expecting at 6 pm, had gone to her assistance. I sent the news back by note to the mission. Later news came through that the fire started in the engine-room. There were 35 passengers on board and they were quickly put into the boats on Saturday night. The fire was subdued and the passengers taken back on board, and next day at 1 o'clock, fire was discovered in number 4 hatch, aft. Meanwhile the ship was helpless, her engines would not go, and she drifted 40 miles in the night. She was reported to be in Dampier Strait, one of the few spots on the seas where Lloyd's will not insure. There is no anchorage, water is deep right to the walls of the land, and there are bad tidal currents.

The *Macdhui* was safely towed to Salamaua. It was only on account of the eruption at Rabaul that *Neptuna* happened to be anywhere near—she was calculated to be about 200 miles away. We heard of it in Madang because the radio officer decided to listen in to see if he could hear when exactly *Neptuna* expected to arrive—she was bringing a big cargo of rice to deliver at Madang because she could not, or did not want to, unload it at Rabaul. Now a tug will have to be sent for *Macdhui* (or perhaps they can fix her at Salamaua), and the *Neptuna* will bring her passengers to Kokopo. News came over the wireless that it is thought the fire is due to the eruption at Rabaul—pumice dust clogged some feed tubes and the oil got overheated and fired. The *Tanda* was reported to have the same trouble 40 miles away with its feed, probably due to the same cause. The *Neptuna* is due here on 24 June.

Manam blew up last Friday and again on Sunday. She had blown her top last October when dreadful showers of molten lava spread all down one side and stones cut the trees down. *Miawara* was there and up-anchored and got out. Huge boulders were shot up, and stones fell on Potsdamhafen, 7 miles away across the bay, and the light was so strong you could read the newspaper at night 7 miles away. At Bogia, 14 miles away, showers of stones came down, and for months the natives had to be fed with rice. Bam is active when Manam is quiet—both are frequently active.

The *Neptuna* would only take two passengers for South. As I had been intending to go on *Macdhui*, I got a passage to Rabaul leaving Madang on 25 June, 8 am—arriving Rabaul on Sunday, 27 June.

STONE SENTINELS

Thousands of natives were employed in cleaning up Rabaul. Special machinery had to be sent up from South—wheelbarrows and spades were no use in shifting the millions of tons of ash, lava and debris that fell during the several days' discharge from the eruptions. Devastating rain caused by the electric discharges poured down and nearly washed Rabaul away by erosion from the hillsides, and very deep gutters had to be cut to let the water get away. We had to have deep channels cut in our garden to release the water that poured down the face of the North Daughter. Piles of pumice and debris were lined along the roads waiting for lorries to come and cart it away—then rains came and washed it all back on the roads again. It was a race between the lorries and the rains. The natives were heroes in the way they worked to clean up the town. After the eruption had destroyed the lush tropical foliage and the bare soil was exposed, we could see that the long lines of hills around Rabaul were scarred with hundreds of pockets from previous blow-outs—scars of previous calamities.

My photographs of the Corpus Christi Procession turned out very well and I made many prints for the mission. Later my pictures were sent to Europe and the negatives lent to the mission so that they could send prints to their friends. As they had all marched they had not been able to take photographs themselves. I had a very nice letter from the Bishop, thanking me for them.

August 1937

After the volcanic eruptions a few weeks ago, there were dreadful cloudbursts; the water could not get away fast enough, and threatened to wash the house away. About 20 years ago, the same thing had occurred. A dreadful cloudburst had broken over the North Daughter that towers at the back of the house, and water had come pouring down, carrying huge boulders in its path and swirling in a raging torrent down the various gullies which seam the face of the mountain. One such gully alongside our block was kindly given me by Public



Wheelbarrows and spades were no use in shifting the ash, lava and debris

Works as a piece of useless ground. We had made it into a 'gully garden', and built a Chinese bridge over it.

The latest torrent broke the banks of the watercourse down our gully garden, crossed the tennis court which was built at a much higher level, and actually found its old course, where many years ago it ran away down to the sea. The road was a streaming river while Chin and the boys tried to clear the debris which was threatening to hold up the torrent and pour it down the house. As it was, water ran under the house piles. Hundreds of Chinese and natives got their bundles and suitcases and started along the roads to go up the hill. Some even tried to get away by schooner, they were so terrified. So history repeats itself. First earthquakes, then eruptions, then the cloudbursts that bring down rivers which tear the ground—and the Chinese who ran away had cause enough, for 20 years ago many were swept to sea and drowned, and their houses swept away, too.

One of the mission Sisters told me as she walked over the garden and saw the havoc, that in the storm 20 years ago the gardens of the natives who live on the mountain were swept away, and the natives came down and ate their taros and

sweet potatoes on the beach where they had been washed by the torrent. Talking of the beach, yesterday I saw natives out on a water-gathering expedition. The beach natives used to dig a shallow hole in the sand and get good enough water, though slightly brackish to European tastes. But since the eruption in May when the beach and the sea got covered with lava, they cannot get their water that way. They had found a gentle little trickle of fresh water coming down to the beach, and there they were, all gathered together, catching the water in a half coconut shell, and emptying it into a tall bamboo. You can imagine that there is much patience needed to get a village's supplies in water. And they will not be prodigal about washing day.



Devastating rain caused by the electric discharges nearly washed Rabaul away



Amongst the debris that came hurtling down from the mountain many years ago were two huge boulders, weighing about a ton each, which came to rest under the big calophyllum tree near the beach. When the house was being built, I was at work on the garden one day when the teacher who was superintending the building work suggested to me that the two fine big stones across the road would look well at the entrance. I looked at the stones, and did not look too hopefully. The teacher, Mr Burch, said: 'At lunchtime I will put a gang of boys on to get the stones over.'

When *belo* [the lunch bell] went, the boys had their meal, cooking rice with a tin of meat or fish in little tins and billycans on improvised fires of twigs, and roasting breadfruit in the ashes. After the meal they were shown the stones. They looked at the stones lying in the long *kunai* grass, and they realised instantly this would have to be tackled with strategy. So they got big sticks from round about—one boy went and fetched a rope from the building, thinking he would be able to pull it 'alla same *bulmakau* [just like the bullock]' that pulls the cart in the plantations. And so they got to work to shift the stones that had

stood for so many years like a young Stonehenge, on a field of soft volcanic soil or pumice. The rope was put under one stone, and big sticks were used as levers, and by very slow degrees the stone was got out on to the road which now had to be crossed—Malaguna Road, with its famous avenue of raintrees.

Here the stone became bewitched. It seemed as if it knew that it was leaving its proper place, the sanctuary it had found in the storm. Actually it was going back in the direction it had come, nearer the North Daughter. But it seemed as if there was a *debil-debil* in it—some perverse spirit that said: 'Move me not!' If the big team of boys got the stone forward a couple of inches, it would roll back what seemed like a half foot. The boys got wildly excited, and yelled and laughed, and hitched up their *laplaps*, and were soon a perspiring mob of near-fanatics, as different to the bored, disinterested crowd that work natives usually are, as is possible to imagine.

Several of them, in their too-eager determination to 'heave-ho' this thing across the road, slipped and fell. Then there were loud cries of jeering laughter from the others, and they became a tangled mass of happy, excited brown humanity around the stone, all trying to get a handhold on it. The stone would be moved an inch on to the high camber of the road, built rather high to let the rains run off, then it would roll back, to the imminent peril of the toes behind it. There were boys all round it. The yells and laughter of those who saw others being threatened by the stone, or were falling over themselves, might have been heard in Rabaul, a mile away. Some of them got tired of laughing, and staggered about. But it is no joke to get your bare toes nipped by a ton of compressed mountain. They found a small stone to slip behind the big one as a wedge to prevent it rolling backwards. At last the stones were across, ready to flank our entrance.

Three years later, about June 1936, all the 'road' boys came along one morning and with the help of our garden-boys moved the two big stone sentinels into position at the front entrance. I had concrete emplacements built ready for them, and about 20 boys struggled with big timbers and some large pieces of stone, with plenty of shouting and singing. After they fixed them in place, I got a photograph of the gang. I got the cook-boy to make them a huge jugful of fruit juices—pineapples and pawpaws and limes, with plenty of sugar in it; and one boy from the road gang stood with the jug on his shoulder in quite the Egyptian manner, looking 'savvy' with a big bamboo ring in his ear. He came from Talasea.



The 'road' boys and Sarah's garden-boys who helped to move the two big stone sentinels into position at the front entrance of Sarah and Chin's house

Later the stones were painted an ivory colour to match the cement foundations, but some day I would like to get them carved into a '*tambaran* griffin', if such an animal can be imagined! Like a protecting *debil-debil* at the entrance to the house—origin New Guinea mythology. There are ancient stones carved in low relief on the Sepik River, but mine I would liked carved in the round. I wonder—stone sentinel *tambarans*.

One of the boys who used to come selling flowers for my garden told me one day: 'Alla *kanakas* [natives] savvy this fella garden—place 'e got big stones along mouth (entrance). *Gutpela* garden *tumas!* (It's a very fine garden!)' But although they admire the garden, they ask shrewdly for payment for any orchid or shrub or little bunch of ferns they may bring. I show them some plant that I want more of, and they nod knowingly and say: 'Me got. Plenty stop along place'—meaning their village. And then perhaps in a few days or a week, one will arrive with the required flowers wrapped in a big banana leaf and tied with liana rope. They patiently untie the knots of vine, sensing the suspense aroused by opening it slowly and keeping me waiting. Then he will nod and say: 'He 'em.'



*Chinnery home—the first bungalow built
by the technical students in Rabaul*

Ever since I returned to Rabaul, the boys and Chin and I have been hard at work to clean up the garden. It has taken months to remove all the pumice and broken trees. Many shrubs had been destroyed. It was a frightful job when, in August, Chin and the boys started clearing the tennis court, which was covered with 5 inches [13 centimetres] of pumice. There was not a blade of grass where the mud fell thick, and

when they cut it with a spade the whole length looked like a layer cake—showing three layers: pumice from Karavia (Vulcan), mud from Matupi, and pumice again on top. Most extraordinary! That night the rain came down and at daylight our gully was running a banker. Chin worked away at the banks to keep the flood from coming up under the house.

I collected two different kinds of lava from the garden. One, a volcanic ash, was like a dry, grey dust; and the other was a dark, evil-smelling thick stuff. These I kept in two bottles for a long time.

But now, at last, the garden is blooming again. The frangipani was the first to emerge, better than before. And the gardenias truly blossomed. And eventually, we did get it back to beauty. I found that as the plants recovered, the good memories returned.

In New Guinea we exchange plants a lot and so I call my flowers by the name of the giver. When taking friends around the garden I rarely use the botanical name alone—but say: ‘This is Phyllis’s allamanda’, or, ‘Mrs Coote gave me the seeds of this beautiful baubinia’—it has flowers like large pink apple blossoms. Mrs Coote also gave me the euphorbia, a cactus with candelabra of bells that plop when you squeeze them. Mrs Hawnt gave me a little plant 2 inches high of that glorious creeper the ‘quisqualis’, which used to riot over the pergola like a shower of pink, hanging clusters of tubular-shaped bells, with a divine scent.

Mrs Moody gave me a precious little plant of red plumbago, and a plant of petrea, as lovely in a different way as the quisqualis, with drooping pendants of mauve star-shaped flowers that, from a distance, has the effect of wisteria. I planted it over the same pergola that carries the granadilla vine.

Mrs McNicoll, wife of the Administrator, gave me pretty reddish-coloured plants for edging borders. We put in a scalloped edging on the top lawn. Aiau was very concerned when laying out the scallops to get them symmetrical. 'Line alla same snake,' he said, to show that it must not be a straight line.

Sisters of the Sacred Heart Mission, who themselves look like flowers in their white coifs and robes of 'old master' virgin blue, visited me and the garden several times. They were very interested, and kindly gave me many little cuttings and some plants—amongst them that pink, curly blossom tree that is sometimes called Blushing Maiden, or Passionate Knight/Night, spell it as you will. Its botanical name is *Lagerstroemia*. They gave me the blue angeloma which, when stripped of its narrow green leaves, makes up very like violets. From the mission run by the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, up at Taliligap, I got a lovely white angeloma.

I took it as a great mark of esteem that an old chief of Nordup village brought me a beautiful dracaena of peace last year—a lovely white-leaved plant. He was most particular about telling me what virtue it had, and how it should be planted in a conspicuous place where everyone who came into the garden would see it. Aiau was not so terribly pleased about it, and indeed showed distinct signs of jealousy when I accorded a good position to the dracaena. In fact he gave it little water, and I had to look after it until it got established. There are dozens of different kinds of dracaena; all are wonderful—big, long, wide-leaved plants with very exotic colourful blooms. But to the natives, the two chief kinds are the red dracaena of war and the white dracaena of peace-and-shake-hands. Unfortunately, the white dracaena is not as common as the red.

Orchids came from many places. Some were brought to me by Lisbeik, who lives on the north coast. But perhaps the most wonderful was brought in by the visiting French scientists who came out on *La Korrigane*—a huge orchid from Ribiana Lagoon, British Solomons. It is white, with one lobe heliotrope—producing about 30 blooms on a spray of about 12 inches. We also have a wonderful orchid brought by a *Kiap* from the Sepik. It is a reddish purple with very convoluting spirals shading to deeper purple.

And I must not forget a present I got from half-caste Joe, Master of the schooner *Asakaze*, the handsomest schooner that plies around these islands. One day I saw her from the verandah, rounding Matupi Point. I got my camera, jumped on the bicycle, and was down at the wharf before she was

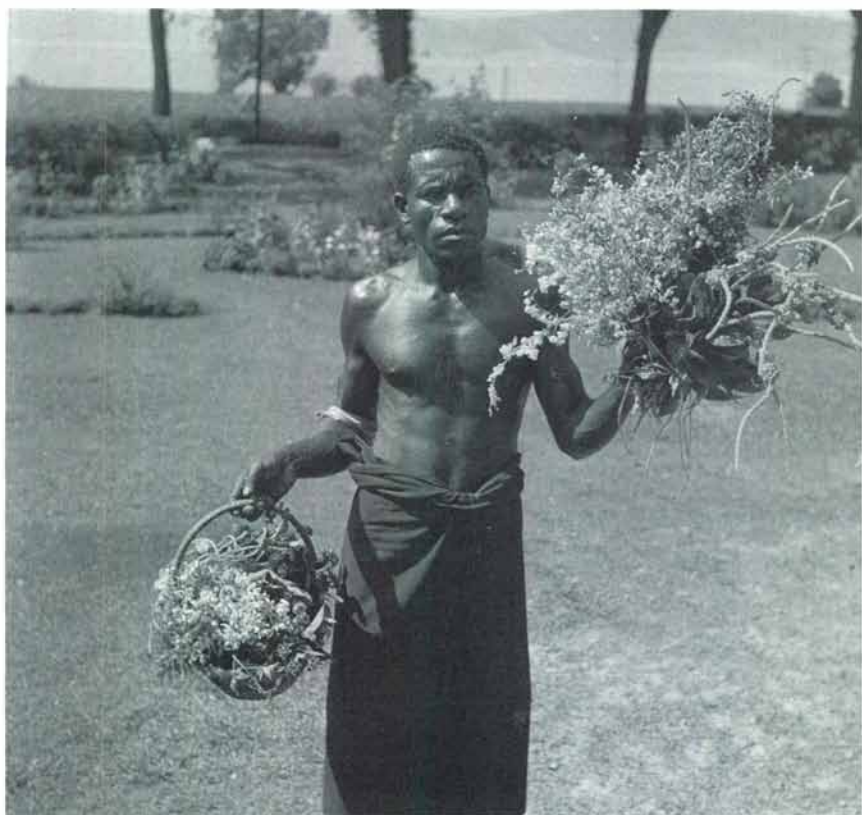
halfway across the harbour. I took a picture as she came near, made two enlargements and gave one to Joe and one to the Japanese owner, Nagahama. Next trip Joe brought me back an enormous orchid from New Ireland. It was a staggering sight, carried on a native's head and towering feet into the air; it stretched widely beyond his shoulders so that he was nearly invisible beneath it. Later, Aiau attached it on to the bole of a kapok tree above the tennis court, where he had been planting orchids for me.

The peltopherum tree under whose wide shade I sit, and from where I can see the island schooners and native dugout canoes gliding into harbour, I planted with the help of a native boy three years ago. Time has passed so swiftly—it is like a dream in the tropics. Now the tree spreads out like an umbrella, the branches measuring 18 feet from trunk to tip, and we have a hammock slung under it. If it recovers from the eruption damage, it will once again bloom long, glorious spikes of gold.

At the top of the round steps, the Madame Butt rose-coloured bougainvillea will soon be ablaze in the sunshine. Natives do not like the bougainvillea because the 'needles' prick them and the least scratch must immediately be painted with iodine, for tropical sores come so easily. But life is just like that—getting hurt and getting mended, and going on.

I remember when as a youngster I perched on a seat on a high branch of an apple tree and read the letters of Robert Louis Stevenson, where he tells of how he sweated in making a lawn out of a bit of primeval ground at Vailima, in Samoa. I wondered why he should work so hard in so uncongenial a clime, where the least exertion breaks one into a profuse sweat. Then I left behind the pale English sun, the apple blossom and bluebells of spring; the riot of roses of an English summer; the mellowing tints of autumn and the quiet winter ending the year's cycle. I came to live in New Guinea, just 2 degrees south of the equator, where the equatorial sun lashes the earth to perpetual fecundity, the flowers bloom all year round, and fruit is picked daily.

Now I know why R.L.S. worked so hard, for I too have sweated under a cruel tropic sun to get a garden from the jungle, and waged war against the incessant growth of the wicked spear grass. I planted the lovely young frangipani with my own hands, and gave it water from our precious rainwater tanks, and kept the greedy grass from choking its young roots. And that same grass, used to thatch huts, was used to thatch the octagon summer house the natives built for me, and where I wrote most of this book.



Aiau in the garden. When Sarah saw Aiau amongst the thousands of refugees at Kokopo after the eruption, he lamented: 'Misis, garden 'e no more!'

So, this is my story—how a bit of jungle land was made into a garden, and friendships were made with the people who helped me to make it. And it was not only our servants who became involved in the job, but also many natives who passed the house on Malaguna Road on the way from distant villages. They took an interest in the new garden, brought us rare plants and orchids, and many of them became our friends. This, then, is the story of my life in Rabaul and the story of New Guinea, as I have lived and seen it.

EPILOGUE

Sarah and Chin left Rabaul for Chin's long service leave, arriving in Melbourne not long before Christmas 1937. Sheila was nearly 16, ready to leave boarding-school, and Sarah decided that it was time to make a home in Australia for the children. Chin's leave expired in August 1938, but by then he was in hospital, suffering from an attack of shingles which afflicted him while he was touring the Northern Territory with the Minister for the Interior. When he recovered, he went back only briefly to his job in Rabaul. Within a few months he was transferred on secondment to the Northern Territory of Australia, appointed as Commonwealth Adviser on Native Matters and Director of Native Affairs. He arrived in Darwin in April 1939; Sarah might have joined him soon after, but the onset of war made it impossible—Darwin became a military base, and women and children were evacuated.

Chin resigned from the Native Affairs Branch of the Northern Territory in November 1946 and he and Sarah bought a block of land in Black Rock, Victoria—then part of a subdivision of the Sandringham Golf Course, allocated to provide land for returned servicemen, but today a suburb of Melbourne. Here they built a house and established a garden, creating a home which lasted for the rest of their lives. Chin's New Guinea expertise took him to New York in 1947, to attend the first session of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, and he continued to attend conferences and serve on commissions for the Department of External Territories until his retirement in 1949.

Sarah enjoyed a full life in Melbourne, surrounded by family and friends and maintaining her keen interest in photography and painting. All four daughters married and also settled in Melbourne. In spite of a mild stroke in 1961, Sarah remained healthy and active up until she died in March 1970. Chin continued to live in their Black Rock home until he died in December 1972.

Chin did return to New Guinea briefly in 1950, to make a census of the east coast villages of New Ireland (as a follow-up to his 1929–32 studies), but Sarah never went back. Rabaul recovered from the 1937 eruption within a year,

but further volcanic activity in 1941 encouraged the Territory administration to decide to transfer its headquarters to Lae on the mainland. The transfer was under way when the Japanese invasion of New Guinea began. Rabaul fell on 23 January 1942, and the war also ended the civil administration of Papua. Japanese troops swept through coastal missions and plantations, trapping many residents, and confiscating mission properties and ships. Sarah's brother Bob Neill (then 69) was still on the goldfields when the Japanese took Rabaul, but he was able to get to the coast, and was then taken to Port Moresby and safely evacuated to Australia. Eight Burns Philp ships were requisitioned for war service, and six were lost in enemy action. This included the *Macdhui*, destroyed off Port Moresby in 1942, and the *Neptuna*, sunk in an air raid on Rabaul in February 1942. Captain Michie was among the 45 lost lives. The *Asakaze* was another war casualty. Every settlement in the country was damaged by bombing. Both New Britain and mainland New Guinea were severely affected by military activity, with widespread destruction of property and immense disruption to the lives of villagers. Five airfields were built by the Japanese around Rabaul, and attacked by Allied bombers. Amidst the devastation to Rabaul, the Chinnery home on Malaguna Road was obliterated; and old Chinatown was completely destroyed. The Allied forces regained control of the country in 1944, and when the civilian casualty list was drawn up, it showed 333 missionaries dead, including Bishop Wolf and Bishop Loerks.

The separate administrations of Papua and New Guinea came to end with the Pacific war. A temporary union was established by Australian legislation in 1945, confirmed in 1947, and finalised in 1949. Port Moresby became the seat of government for the whole country, and a vast process of postwar change was set in train, involving considerable commercial, agricultural and educational development. Political changes to bring about increasing indigenous participation in administration lagged behind at first, but then accelerated in the 1960s, encouraged by the persistent interest shown by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. The first House of Assembly was established in 1964; the 1972 elections marked the end of Australia's direct control—only nine Europeans won seats. Official self-government was declared in December 1973. Michael Somare became the country's first Chief Minister, and full independence followed in September 1975.

Rabaul's precarious position amidst active volcanoes continues to threaten its survival as a township and administrative centre for New Britain. In 1984

volcanic activity threatened the town, but no major eruption followed. Then, on the morning of 19 September 1994, it was again obliterated by eruptions from Mt Tavurvur and Mt Vulcan. Once again, the beautiful town was devastated by massive amounts of pumice and ash, destroying villages, homes and gardens. This time, the town has still not fully recovered and the debate over its relocation remains unresolved.

GLOSSARY

abus (Tolai) tidbit, seasoning or garnish, a side dish of meat, fish or seafood

aibika (Tolai) plant with edible leaves (*Hibiscus manihot*)

banis (English: banish) fence, enclosure

baret stream, small waterway, ditch

belo (English: bell) loud signal, especially bell or horn, sounded for start and end of lunch break, work period, etc.

betel-nut fruit of *Areca* palm, chewed as a narcotic

bihain (English: behind) behind, after; afterwards, later, next; late

bikpela (English: big fellow) big, large, great, well known

bilas (English: flash) decoration, personal adornment; finery, showy clothes

bilong (English: belong, belonging to) of, from, in order to

bilum netted bag used as carry-all

binatang (Malay) insect, pest, small creeping thing

blakbokis (English: black fox) flying fox, fruit bat

boi (English: boy) native servant or indentured labourer

bulmakau (English: bull and cow) cattle, bullock

bung (Tolai) assembly, marketplace, market

copra dried flesh of coconut, used in manufacture of soap and margarine

dahori (Motu) to postpone or to proceed slowly

daka (Tolai) betel-pepper vine, root or leaf, chewed with betel-nut (*Piper betle*)

debil-debil (English: devil) spirit

didiman agricultural officer; in 1920s Rabaul, the botanical gardens—probably a Tolai corruption of Herr Biedermann, gardening overseer in German era

diwai (Tolai) wood, log, tree; wooden

Dukduk (Tolai) ceremonial dress including conical mask used by Dukduk Secret Society

faipela five

galip (Tolai) nut, especially the Tahitian chestnut (*Canarium indicum*)

garamut (Tolai) tree with hard white wood (*Vitex cofassus*); slit gong native drum

gavman (English: government) government, administration

gras (English: grass) grass; hair, fur, feathers

grile ringworm, tinea (skin disease); fish scales

guria (Tolai) earth tremor

gutpela (English: good, good fellow) good, well, attractive, fine

Hat (English: hat) term used for government officials (*Luluai*, *Tultul*, native police, etc.) who were given a hat as a symbol of office

haus (English: house) used in *haus kuk* 'kitchen'; *Haus Kiap* 'guest house for district administrative officers on patrol', etc.

Haus Tambaran (Tolai) ancestral spirit house, men's ceremonial house

Hiri Motu annual trading voyages undertaken by Papuan coastal villagers

ioko (Tolai) goodbye

kaikai food

kalabus (English: calaboose) gaol, prison

kanaka (Fiji) man, native; colonial term for native villagers, as opposed to indentured labourers

kango watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*)

kapiak breadfruit

kapul (Tolai) possum, tree wallaby

kara haraga (Motu) hurry, act quickly

kaukau sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*)

Kiap (English: captain) patrol officer, district officer, government official in the department known until 1955 as District Services and Native Affairs

kindam (Tolai) small crayfish or shrimp

kokomo (Tolai) hornbill

kros (English: cross) anger; a quarrel; to be angry or cross

kuku (Motu) tobacco

kulau (Tolai) a green coconut suitable for drinking

kunai (Tolai) tall swamp grass or grasslands (*Imperata cylindrica*)

kundu (Tolai) hand drum; type of wood used to make drum

kus cough or cold; a sneeze

kuskus cuscus or tree kangaroo

laikim (English) like

lakatoi double outrigger canoe with crab-claw sails, used by Motuan traders

laplap lava-lava or loincloth, worn round waist like a kilt

liklik little, small; a small amount

liklik dokta medical assistant

limbom (New Ireland) wood of a type of palm (*Kentiopsis archonto-phoenix*) used for flooring and walls of houses

limlimbur (Tolai) (to take) a walk or stroll, an outing, a holiday, a day off

lotu (Fiji) religious service, worship; *Haus Lotu* is a church

lukim (English: look) to see something

Luluai (Tolai) village or tribal chief appointed by government

magani (Motu) wallaby

mal (Tolai) breechcloth or bark loin covering; tree from which the bark comes

malambur (Tolai) scad, a fish

masalai spirits thought to inhabit streams and whirlpools

maski (German: *es macht nichts*) never mind, doesn't matter, who cares?

Masta (English: Mr, master) European employer, white man

mekim pepa (English: make a paper) to sign a contract, sign on as indentured labourer

mekpas (English: make fast) bundle, sheaf, parcel

meri (English: Mary) woman, girl, wife, female

Misis (English: Mrs, missus) a European woman, a lady

moccha type of leech

muruk (Tolai) cassowary

nambawan (English: number one) the best, very best, excellent

Niugini (English) New Guinea

niupela (English: new fellow) new, recent

no gat (English: no got) do not have, does not have

nogat no, not at all

pas (English: pass) permit, letter, note, recommendation; notes explaining or authorising various activities were widely required in the colonial era

pikinini piccaninny or baby, child; offspring of animals; fruit or seed of a plant

pit-pit edible cane, like a thin asparagus stalk (*Saccharum officinarum*); wild sugar cane, non-edible (*Saccharum robustum*)

pukpuk crocodile

pul (English: pull) oar or paddle

pulpul flower, shrub

puri puri to use sorcery to poison someone

rami (Motu) grass skirt

raus (German) to move, remove, chase out, get rid of

saksak sago; the sago palm (*Metroxylon sagu*)

sao watercress-like plant

sarip (English: sharp) sickle, grass knife

sihi perineal band of tapa cloth

sinabada (Motu) a European woman, a lady

singsing festival involving dance and singing (and usually feasting)

South used by expatriates as shorthand for Australia, as in 'going South at Christmas', 'arrived from South'

strongpela (English: strong fellow) strong, powerful, firm, solid

taim (English: time) time; term of contract

talbum green sea snail (*Turbo marmorata*); shell used for armlets and as money

tambaran (Tolai) spirits of ancestors; masks used in tambaran rituals

tambu (Tolai) a taboo; sacred or forbidden; small cone-shaped shell used as money

tanket (Tolai) victory leaf (*Taetsia fruticosa*), colourful shrub—erroneously called dracaena—used for ceremonial purposes: a sign of peace, an invitation; and in sorcery

tapa bark cloth

taubada (Motu) European employer, white man

Territory Mandated Territory of New Guinea

Tok Pisin Melanesian pidgin

tribute claim mining claim worked for a share of proceeds

tru (English: true) true, real, genuine; really, truly

Tultul (Tolai) assistant village chief appointed by administration; served as interpreter and sometimes as messenger for the *Luluai*

tumas (English: too much) many; very, very much; too much

tumbuan (Tolai) wooden mask; masked figure in dance, also called Tubuan

wanpela (English: one fellow) one

wantaim (English: one time) at once

wantok (English: one talk) person speaking the same language, one who is from the same district, a neighbour or compatriot

INDEX

(Page numbers in bold type indicate photographs)

- Abbey, Bill, prospector at Edie Creek 94
 Agriculture, Department of 8, 101, 107, 191
 Ah Fa, Chinese head gardener at Botanical Gardens, Rabaul 8, 126, 129, 188, 199
 Ah Tam (Lee Tam Tuck), Chinese businessman in Rabaul 8, 50, 102–103, 106–107
 Aiau, garden-boy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 8, 10–11, 125–126, 128–130, 186, 188–189, 194–200, 217–218, 231–232, **233**
 Alexishafen—see Sek
 Ambunti, main government station on the Sepik River 125, 132, 153 (map), 163, 174, 176
 Anderson, Bill, miner at Morobe goldfields 85
 Andrews, Captain J.A. (Andy), of *Hermes* 163, 174, 176, 179–180
 Angoram 153 (map), 162–163, 169–170, 173–174, 177, 179–180
 ANZAC Day 38
Arawata, Union Steam Ship Co. trans-Tasman steamer 127
 Armstrong, W.E., Assistant Government Anthropologist 16, 18
 Arnold, George, miner at Morobe goldfields 86, 118
Asakaze, Japanese-owned coastal schooner 231–232, 235
 Asavia, houseboy in Chinnery household 186
 Awar, village (and Wauchopes' plantation) near Bogia 34, 56, 130, 132, 136–138, 140–141, 142–151, 153 (map), 154, 161, 164–166, 168, 173–174, 181
 Baining, mountain people of New Britain 35, 56–57, 114
 Baker, Mr and Mrs, residents of Port Moresby 24
Balangot, schooner owned by Wauchopes 130, 132, **133**, 150, 154–155, 165, 168, 170–171, 174, 181
 Balaw, wife of Pellei 187
 Baldwin's store, Port Moresby 23
 Barnes, Warrant Officer A., police officer at Salamaua 80
 Barong, *Luluai* of Awar **142–146**
 Bateson, Dr Gregory, British anthropologist 33, 35, 39, 56–57, 115, 162–163, 175
 Baum, Helmuth, German prospector 76, 80
 Bergmann, Louise 74
 Bergmann, Wilhelm, Lutheran missionary 74
 Bien 153 (map), 160–161, 180–181
 Bishop, Reverend F.R. (Fred), Anglican clergyman of Melanesian Mission in Rabaul 50
 Bita Paka, wireless station near Rabaul 14, 31, 32 (map)
Black Bokkis, mission pinnace 179
 Bliss, Olga (G.E. Bliss was with Department of Agriculture in Rabaul) 215
 Bloxham, A.A., Assistant District Officer 174, 180
 Boa, cook-boy on the *Balangot* 162
 Bogia 136, 153 (map), 181, 224
 Boluminski, Franz, former District Officer at Kavieng 65–66
 Booth, Charles, miner at Bulolo 53–54, 91, 118
 Booth, Doris, OBE, nurse, author and mine owner at Bulolo 53–54, 64, 86–89, 91–92, 95, 118
 Bootless Inlet, near Port Moresby, site of Copper Mines headquarters 14 (map), 21–22, 24–28, 123, 136
 Bosman 153 (map), 154, 157–158
 Botanical Gardens, Rabaul 32 (map), 101, 117, 126, 188, 199
 Bougainville 6 (map), 33
 Bradley, Mrs, resident of Rabaul 64
 Brennan, Dr E.T., Director of Public Health 129, 183
 Brown, Betty (wife of Mr Brown, barrister; later married H. MacKenzie)—see MacKenzie, Betty

- Brown, Mr, barrister in Rabaul 33
- Brown, Mr and Mrs, Port Moresby residents 17, 19
- Brown, Reverend George, Methodist missionary and pioneer explorer 41
- Buliva village 152–154
- Bulolo, river valley area in Morobe District 63 (map), 84, 86, 89, 91
- Buna, New Guinea 6 (map), 17
- Burch, C.J., teacher at Malaguna Native School, Rabaul 99, 104, 106, 227
- Burns Philp, trading and shipping company 6, 54, 65, 68, 70, 93, 132, 188, 235
- Carpenter (W.R.) & Co. Ltd, trading and shipping company 66, 73, 77, 208
- Casa, a Morobe man 165
- Casagrande, J.B., editor 116
- Chambri, lake district on Sepik River 115, 149, 153 (map), 175
- Chapman, Bill, miner at Bulolo 89, 91–92
- Chinatown in Rabaul 8, 29, 31, 32 (map), 33, 43, 113, 235
- Chinese 29, 40, 102, 128–129, 132, 139, 169 in Madang 69 in Rabaul 10, 29, 31, 40, 50, 58–59, 101–102, 117, 192, 195, 198, 211, 226 in Salamaua 75, 80 traders 48–49, 75, 102
- Chinnery, Mary 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Chinnery, Patricia 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Chinnery, Prudence 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Chinnery, Sheila 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Chu Leong, Chinese trader and shipowner 180–183
- Clarius, Emile, prospector 79
- Clark, Mr, London Missionary Society, in Port Moresby 21
- Coe, Queen Emma—*see* Queen Emma Coe
- Comon, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 104
- Coote, Mrs (Philip Coote was Burns Philp manager in Rabaul) 230
- Copra production 29, 34, 48–50, 62, 66–68, 135–136, 181
- Corpus Christi Festival 207–208, 212, 213, 217, 225
- Coultas, Mrs, wife of American bird collector, owner of schooner *La France* 114
- Cowan, Margot, Australian artist 31
- Cumsat, deckhand on the *Balangot* 167
- Danby, Mr, market gardener in Bootless Inlet 21
- Day Dawn mine 96, 98
- de Havilland, British aircraft designer and manufacturer 77–78
- Denny, Mr, pilot 89
- District Services and Native Affairs, Department of 3, 9, 53, 61, 127
- Dubuna 14 (map), 21, 28
- Dukduk 44–45, 46–47
- Duke of York Islands 30, 32 (map), 41, 116, 128, 200
- Dumunga, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 54
- Duncan, Captain James, Harbour Master at Rabaul 54
- Durour*, Carpenters inter-island steamer 208, 210, 216, 218
- Dutch New Guinea—*see* Irian Jaya
- Dwyer, R.E.P., botanist in Department of Agriculture, Rabaul 126
- Edie Creek, goldfields in Morobe District 63 (map)–64, 84, 89, 93–95, 97
- Edwards, Mrs, wife of medical officer at Edie Creek 97
- Eleva 14 (map), 15, 17–18
- Elliott Smith, Professor in London, founder of Movements of Culture 57
- Ellworthy, William, Rabaul electrician 216
- Empire Day 39–42
- Eros*, government inter-island schooner 68, 131–132
- Evenson, Bert, Carpenters manager 67
- Father mountain (Mt Ulawun) central New Britain 66, 219
- Feldt, Eric A., District Officer 65, 74
- Fortune, Dr Reo, New Zealand anthropologist 33, 50–51, 56, 115, 170
- Fortune, Mrs—*see* Mead, Dr Margaret
- Franklin*, government schooner 32, 171, 188
- Freeman, Professor Derek, Australian anthropologist 35
- Friederun*, Norddeutscher Lloyd (NDL) vessel, of Germany 222
- Froggatt, Phyllis (J.L. Froggatt was Government Entomologist in Rabaul) 58, 125, 230
- Furter, Gottfried, general merchant in Rabaul 205–206, 208, 216
- Furter, Mrs 205

- Gabriel*, mission schooner at Sek 134
- Gerloch, Brother, Roman Catholic mission at Sek 222
- German administration 3, 102, 117, 199
- Giblin, Dr W.E., medical officer 122
- Giri 153 (map), 155
- Gobet, personal maid in Wauchope household at Awar 134, 137, 151, 154, 164–165
- Golden Bear*, American freighter 215–216
- gold-mining 54, 62–63 (map), 64, 73–74, 84–86, 90, 97–98
- Bulolo 84, 86, 87, 89, 91, 93
- Edie Creek 64, 93–95, 97
- labour 84, 88
- reward claims 97–98
- tribute claims 96
- Griffiths, General T., Administrator of New Guinea (1920–21, 1933–34) 54, 58–59, 114, 117
- Grimshaw, Beatrice, Irish journalist, travel writer and novelist 3
- Grist, R.W., Resident Magistrate in Papua 23
- Gua, Barong's brother 144
- Guinea Airways 72–73, 89
- Haddon, Professor A.C., anthropologist, Cambridge University 2, 56
- Halligan, Reg, Secretary to Australian Minister for Territories 131
- Hamilton, H.E., Assistant District Officer at Angoram 126, 162–163, 170, 174
- Hanuabada 14 (map), 15–19, 21, 23–24, 122–123
- Hawnt, Mrs (E.M. Hawnt was a postal services employee in Rabaul) 230
- Herbert, Judge Charles E., Resident Magistrate; Deputy Chief Judicial Officer in Papua 19
- Hermes*, government schooner 163, 174, 180, 184
- Hertz, Eileen (formerly Mrs Whiteman), resident of Rabaul 64, 66–67, 117
- Hides, J.G. (Jack), patrol officer in Papua 79
- Hiri Motu, traditional Papuan coastal trading voyages 24
- Hodgekiss, J.W. (Jim), Assistant District Officer 176
- Holden, Captain Les, pilot 77
- Holden's Airlines 73, 77
- Humphries, Mr, Cambridge collector and ethnologist 34
- Idriess, Ion L., Australian author 118
- Innes, Alan, hotel proprietor at Salamaua 75
- Innes, Mrs, 75
- Irian Jaya 3, 151
- Japandai 153 (map), 176
- Joe, Master of the *Asakaze* 231–232
- Johnson, Mr, planter 181
- Jones, J.H., District Officer at Manus 131
- Jones, Mrs 131
- Kaimsi, deckhand on the *Balangot* 133–134
- Kalili plantation, Karkar Island 135–136
- Kambaramba 153 (map), 168–170, 173, 181, 183
- Kambot 153 (map), 165–166, 168
- Kaminimbir 153 (map), 175
- Kanganaman 153 (map), 175–179
- Kapa Kapa 14 (map), 22–23
- Karavia 32 (map), 200, 205, 208, 230
- Karkar Island 6 (map), 134–136
- Kaup, police-boy 39
- Kavieng, New Ireland 33, 42, 64–67, 215
- Kenakatem, Mundugumor village in Sepik District 170
- Keogh, Gerry, patrol officer 65
- Keram River (Little Ramu) 153 (map), 163–164, 166, 168, 170, 180, 183—*see also* Kambot
- Keratin, temporary employee in Chinnery household at Konedobu 18
- Keravat, agricultural station 32 (map), 220
- Kila, (later Kelaw) village near Salamaua 81–82
- Kila Kila, marine village near Port Moresby 14 (map), 123–124
- Knolls, Miss, resident of Port Moresby 24
- Knox, Mr, Director of Public Works in Rabaul 65–67, 72, 92, 104–105, 131
- Koeln*, Norddeutscher Lloyd (NDL) cruise ship, of Germany 117
- Koki, Port Moresby 23
- Kokoda range 6 (map), 17
- Kokopo, near Rabaul 11, 30–31, 32 (map), 65, 76, 117–118, 200, 208, 211–219, 224
- Komine, Isokih, Japanese trader and shipbuilder in Rabaul 39, 50, 102–103
- Konedobu, site of Lieutenant-Governor's residence (and later of government) in Port Moresby 13–14 (map)
- Korn, Bill, Carpenters manager 66
- Korogo 153 (map), 175
- Kosambi, doctor-boy at Angoram 177

- Kukukuku, tribal group in the Upper Tauri River area of Morobe District 76, 78, 80
Kunimaipa 6 (map), 127
- Labour, recruitment of 164, 167, 170, 172
Lady Betty, schooner owned by Mac and Betty MacKenzie 114
Lae, administrative headquarters of Morobe District 63 (map), 72–73, 219, 235
La France, schooner owned by Coultas 114
La Korrigane, private French schooner on Sepik expedition 179–180, 184, 231
Laloki, site of copper mining 14 (map), 19, 21–22, 28
Leahy brothers, M.J. (Mick) and Dan, explorers and prospectors 80
Lee Sing, Chinese market gardener near Port Moresby 22
Lisbeik, Tolai gardener near Rabaul 194, 231
Loerks, Right Reverend Joseph, Bishop of Central New Guinea 220, 235
Lombrum, plantation port on Manus Island 68
London Missionary Society 17, 21
Lorengau, principal port and administrative headquarters on Manus Island 6 (map), 64, 67–68, 131
Luff, Mr, former pearl trader; planter on coast opposite Karkar Island 136, 181–182
Lurline, Matson Line cruise ship 121
- McAdam, Mr, solicitor in Rabaul 33
Macdhui, Burns Philp Line 53, 56, 85, 91, 98, 115, 117, 120–121, 126, 130–131, 149, 180, 182–183, 204, 222–224, 235
McDonald, E. Colin, Assistant District Officer 125, 176
MacDonald, Jerry, District Officer at Lorengau 65–66, 68, 204
MacDonald, Mrs (wife of Jerry MacDonald) 65–66, 68
MacDonald, Mrs, resident of Port Moresby 24
MacGowan, W.L., Superintendent of Public Works in Rabaul 58
Mack, Ian, Assistant District Officer in New Guinea, killed in the Central Highlands 65, 117–118
MacKenzie, Betty (wife of H. MacKenzie) 33, 103, 114, 115, 118
MacKenzie, H. (Mac), resident of Rabaul (builder, charter-boat operator, recruiter) 114
MacKenzie, Mr, Commonwealth surveyor 219
McMahon, Mr, New Guinea Goldfields mine manager 97
McNicol, Hildur 231
McNicol, W. Ramsay (later Sir Walter), Administrator of New Guinea (1934–42) 219, 221
McVilly, Mr, cadet patrol officer 126
Madang, New Guinea 6 (map), 64–65, 68–70, 74, 88, 98, 115, 132–133, 135, 149, 151, 162, 180–182, 184, 203–204, 219, 223–224
Magani, cook-boy in Chinnery household at Port Moresby 23
malaria 63, 73, 131, 150, 162
Sarah ill with 183–184
Malaua, garden-boy in Chinnery household 37, 39, 54, 93, 96, 118–119, 187–188
Malinowski, Professor B., anthropologist at London University 34, 53, 56
Manam Island 6 (map), 56, 69, 136–139, 144, 146–148, 151, 153 (map), 154, 224
Manau, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 10, 54, 55, 58, 100–101, 104, 108–112, 119, 138, 186–188
Mansell, Mary (née Chinnery) 3–4, 7, 29, 234
Manus 6 (map), 33, 39, 42, 50–51, 56, 64–65, 67–68, 88, 116, 131–132
Mari, personal maid in Chinnery household at Konedobu 19, 21
Marienberg 65, 153 (map), 161, 180
Markham River, Morobe District 63 (map), 89
Marr, Sir Charles, Australian Minister for Territories 114
Marsina, Burns Philp Line 34
Maru (Line), name of many Japanese ocean liners 8
Marui 153 (map), 176
Marwash (Yanson's son) 134, 136, 139, 151
Masson, Marnie (later Marnie Bassett, author) 3
Mead, Dr Margaret, American anthropologist 33–35, 50–52, 56, 115–116, 170, 172–173
Median, engineer on *Balangot* 133, 167
Melrose, Robert, District Officer at Kavieng; later at Rabaul 65
Merangus 153 (map), 158–159
Miawana, Burns Philp inter-island steamer 146, 149, 224
Michael, Roman Catholic mission schooner at Sek 222
Michie, Captain William, Master on Burns Philp Line 215, 235
Middleton, Mr and Mrs, plantation owners at Kalili, Karkar Island 135, 183

- Miller, Mrs, resident of Rabaul 219
- Mindibit 153 (map), 175
- missionaries 12, 17, 40–41, 47, 57, 74, 117, 134, 155, 161, 165, 167–168, 170, 180, 198, 205, 207–208, 211–218, 222–223, 225–226, 231, 235
- Moim 153 (map), 170, 173, 179–180
- Mo Mo, hired as maid on Sepik trip 141, 144, 146–148, 154, 165–166, 168
- Monckton, C.A.W., Resident Magistrate in Papua (1895–1907) 3, 79
- Monger, C.H., building and carpentry instructor at Native Technical School in Rabaul 99
- Montoro*, Burns Philp Line 34–35, 42, 50, 64, 70, 77, 91, 98, 117–118, 125, 204–205, 215–216, 218–219, 221–222
- Moody, Mrs, wife of copra inspector, resident of Rabaul 230
- Mopos Mummy 129–130
- Moresby*, Burns Philp Line 127
- Moresby*, HMAS, Australian naval ship 218
- Morinda*, Burns Philp Line 12, 23
- Morobe District, major goldfield area, mainland New Guinea 62, 63 (map), 65, 74, 83, 99, 117, 129
- Mother mountain 30–31, 32 (map), 61, 129, 189, 199
- Mt Hagen, New Guinea Highlands 6 (map), 10, 140, 185
- Mullaly, J.C., plantation owner near Rabaul; later Member of Legislative Council in New Guinea 49
- Mundau, medical *Tultul* of Awar 148–149
- Mundugumor, tribal group of the Sepik District 170, 172–173
- Murray, George H., Director of Agriculture 32, 197, 205–206, 208–211, 218
- Murray, Judge (later Sir) Hubert, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua (1908–40) 3, 12
- Nakanai murder of four prospectors in 1926 76–77
- Namanula 30–31, 32 (map), 60, 105, 197, 214–215, 218
- Nankin*, Peninsular and Oriental Line 185
- Napam, kitchen-boy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 104
- Naylor, William, prospector 79
- Neill, Bob, Sarah Chinnery's brother, prospector at Edie Creek 1–3, 13–14, 17, 22, 24, 64–66, 93–95, 97, 235
- Neptuna*, Burns Philp Line from 1935; formerly *Neptun*, owned by Norddeutscher Lloyd 185, 204, 219, 223–224, 235
- Neville, Prudence (née Chinnery) 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Newberry, V.L., first manager of Day Dawn Mine 96
- New Guinea Copper Mines 2, 12, 25
- New Guinea Goldfields Company 84–85, 95–97
- New Ireland 30, 33, 35, 38, 42, 64–67, 215, 232, 234
- Nordup 29, 32 (map), 105, 187, 200, 214–216, 218, 231
- North Daughter 30, 32 (map), 60–61, 108, 110, 112, 225, 228
- Nurton, Albert, Assistant District Officer 203–204
- Oakley, Mrs (E.W. Oakley was District Officer in New Guinea) 219
- Oates, Ernie, prospector at Morobe goldfields 127
- O'Dea, Captain Tommy, pilot at Salamaua 77, 79
- Ogimaru, boss-boy at Awar plantation 138
- Omapi, houseboy in Chinnery household in Port Moresby 18, 20
- Orokaiva, tribal group in the Mt Lamington area 18–19
- Osprey*, on Sepik River 163, 180
- Ossi, wash-boy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 38–39, 54
- Overall, Bob, trade store owner and recruiter on lower Sepik River 162–163
- Overall, Mrs 162–163, 174
- Page, Mr, 'in charge of bungalows', in Rabaul 58
- Paisley, Mr, Carpenters manager, Marangas, Karkar Island 135
- Pari, marine village near Port Moresby 14 (map), 123–124
- Parkes, 'Red Bill', miner on Black Cat, Morobe District 85
- Parkinson, Phebe, sister of 'Queen Emma' 50, 116
- Parkinson, Richard, author 116
- Pato*, schooner owned by Mac and Betty MacKenzie 114
- Patterson, Miss, freelance journalist 23
- Peadon, Les, prospector and farmer in Morobe District 74–75
- Peadon, Mona 74–75

- Pearce, Lady 131
- Pearce, Sir George, Australian Minister for Territories 131
- Pellei, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 104, 110, 126–127, 187
- Penglase, Nick, District Officer 79, 91
- Phillips, Judge F.B. (Monty—later Sir Beaumont), magistrate, Chief Court (later Supreme Court) in Rabaul 33, 50
- Pinney, Charles R., draughtsman in Lands Department in Papua; later Commissioner of Lands 13
- Pinney, Mary, daughter of Hubert Murray 12–13
- Pockley, Captain B.C.A., Australian soldier killed in World War I 14
- Pockley, Dr F. Antill (brother of Captain Pockley) 3, 13–14, 17, 22, 135
- Polian, laundry-boy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 186, 194
- Pondo, New Britain 6 (map), 64, 66–67
- Popingi, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 38
- Powdermaker, Dr Hortense, American anthropologist 34–35, 51–52
- Pruth*, wreck near Port Moresby 123
- Puff, Father, Roman Catholic missionary at Marui, on Sepik River 176, 179
- Puxley, J.W., employee of New Guinea Copper Mines 22, 24
- quarantine 30, 102, 113, 207
- Queen Emma Coe, plantation owner in New Britain 116
- Radcliffe-Brown, Professor A.R., anthropologist, University of Sydney 34, 56
- Ramu River, New Guinea 91, 117, 136–140, 149–153 (map), 154–155, 157–159, 161, 169, 183, 185—*see also* Bosman; Buliva village; Giri; Merangus
- Read, Jack, patrol officer (later District Officer) 149
- Rivers, W.H.R., anthropologist 2
- Rothery, Captain S., Burns Philp Line 185
- Rothschild, Lord (Sir Lionel Walter, 1868–1937), founder of natural history museum at Tring, near Aylesbury 3, 14, 22
- Rouse, Mr, trade store owner at Sisimangar, near Awar 147
- Rowan, Ellis, Australian artist 2, 69
- Sacred Heart Mission (Roman Catholic), in New Britain, New Ireland and Manus 231
- sago (*saksak*) 24–25, 52, 139, 141, 147–149, 152–155, 158, 160, 162, 164–166, 172, 175, 180–181, 193
- Sajam, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 38–39
- Salamaua, government station and port in Huon Gulf, Morobe District 62–63 (map), 64–65, 70–71, 72–77, 80–81, 83–84, 91, 98, 117, 181–182, 185, 204, 219, 224
- Samarai, headquarters of Milne Bay District 6 (map), 13, 22, 50
- Segare (son of Pellei) 126, 187
- Sek, formerly Alexishafen 6 (map), 133–134, 182, 220, 222
- Seligmann, Professor C.G., anthropologist, author 34
- Sepik River, New Guinea 34, 39, 56, 59, 109, 115, 130–132, 137–140, 145–146, 149–152, 153 (map), 154–155, 158–164, 167–171, 173–177, 178, 180–184, 229, 231—*see also* Ambunti; Angoram; Bien; Japandai; Kambaramba; Kaminimbit; Kanganaman; Korogo; Marienberg; Marui; Mindibit; Moim; Tambunum; Timbunke
- Seventh-Day Adventists 205
- Sinclair, Dr B.A., medical officer in Department of Health 117, 204
- Sipi, police constable in native constabulary 125
- Smith, Klondike, prospector at Morobe goldfields 87, 89
- South Daughter 31, 32 (map), 61
- Stanley, Evan R., Government Geologist in Papua 13
- Stella Maris* 170
- Stella Polaris*, Norwegian yacht 121–122
- Stevens, Mr, English ornithologist and bird collector 115–116
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, English author 232
- Stewart, 'Ma' Flora S., proprietor of Hotel Bulolo, Wau 83
- Street, Mr, resident of Rabaul (Lands Department) 197
- Street, Violet 197–198
- Surprise Creek 63 (map), 79, 91
- Sutton, Joe, policeman (gaoler) in Port Moresby 22
- Taliligap 32 (map), 42, 206, 214, 231
- Tambar*, inter-island steamer 17, 22–23

- Tambunum, village on Sepik River 153 (map), 161, 163, 174–175, 177
- Tanda*, Eastern and Australian Steamship Co. vessel 219, 224
- Tavurvur (Matupi) crater 32 (map), 203, 213, 215, 221, 236
- Taylor, E. (Ted), District Officer; later Assistant Director of District Services and Native Affairs 65, 67, 80
- Taylor, Eileen (wife of Ted Taylor) 65, 67
- Taylor, James L. (Jim), Assistant District Officer; explorer 75, 89, 185
- Taylor, Jim, prospector at Cliffside 118
- Taylor, Olive (wife of Jim Taylor, prospector) 118
- Thomas, Mrs 89–90
- Thomas, Tex, prospector at Edie Creek 89–90
- Thompson, Tommy, resident of Wau 93
- Thursday Island 6 (map), 23, 136, 218
- Timbunke 153 (map), 179
- Tok Pisin 5, 126, 128
- Tolai 29, 36, 56, 116
- Tom, houseboy in Chinnery household in Port Moresby 18, 21
- Tongoma, boss-boy at Rabaul Quarry 109–112
- Tupuseleia (Tubuseria), marine village near Port Moresby 14 (map), 21–22, 26
- Tuxen, Patricia (née Chinnery) 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Twycross, Mr, wireless operator, AWA's New Guinea manager 31
- Twycross, Mrs 50
- Undas, houseboy in Chinnery household in Rabaul 38, 44
- Valavolo Catholic Mission, Gazelle Peninsula 32 (map), 214
- Vesters, Bishop Gerard, at Vunapope 212, 225
- Vulcan Island 32 (map), 102, 113, 205–207, 208–210, 212–214, 216–217, 219, 221, 236
- Vunapope Catholic Mission, Gazelle Peninsula 32 (map), 117, 208, 211, 213–216, 218
- Wambo, an Angoram man 180
- Waters, Sheila (née Chinnery) 3–4, 7, 29, 234
- Watur 63 (map), 91
- Wau, administrative headquarters of Morobe District 10, 62–63 (map), 64–65, 73, 79, 83–86, 89–91, 93, 131
- Wauchope, Biddy (wife of E.J. Wauchope) 56, 69, 130, 132, 134, 137, 139, 141, 143, 148–150, 153, 166, 173–174
- Wauchope, E.J., plantation owner at Awar 34, 56, 69, 130, 132, 139, 145, 147, 149, 154–155, 157, 159–160, 162, 170–171, 173–174, 181
- Wauchope, Pat (daughter of E.J. and Biddy Wauchope) 139, 151
- Wedgwood, Camilla, British anthropologist; later at University of Sydney 56, 69
- West, Mr, plantation manager at Kalili, Karkar Island 135
- Wewak 131, 138, 153 (map), 186
- Whiteman, Mr, early resident of New Guinea, storekeeper at Kokopo 117–118
- Williams, Captain G.E., Burns Philp Line 125
- Win On*, schooner owned by Chu Leong 180–182
- Wisdom, General E.A., Administrator of New Guinea (1921–32) 32, 38, 40, 104–105, 112
- Wisdom, Mrs 38
- Wolf, Right Reverend Francis, Bishop of German Catholic missions in Alexishafen District 134, 222–223, 235
- World War I 2–3, 14, 31, 117, 122
- World War II 11, 24, 234–235
- Wright, Mrs, guest-house proprietor at Sapphire Creek, Papua 24
- Wuth, Charles T., Resident Magistrate in Papua 122–124
- Wuth, Mrs 122–123
- Yanson, boss-boy in Wauchope household at Awar 133–134, 138–139, 151–152, 155, 162
- Yuat River 153 (map), 170, 172, 183

MALAGUNA ROAD

The Papua and New Guinea Diaries of
SARAH CHINNERY

When Australian anthropologist E.W.P. Chinnery took his young Irish bride, Sarah, to Port Moresby in 1921, she did not imagine that the island of New Guinea would become her home for the next 16 years. Already a keen photographer, Sarah began recording her experiences in a daily diary.

True to her passionate nature, Sarah was no stranger to adventure. An intrepid traveller, she crossed precarious suspension bridges in the Wau goldfields; sailed up the wild and remote Sepik River; and trusted a crew of prisoners to guide her on a photographic expedition. But nothing could match the drama of the 1937 volcanic eruption that forced Sarah and her husband to flee for their lives.

Here in her own words and photographs is a lively, often funny account of indigenous and colonial life in New Guinea during the 1920s and early 1930s.

About the editor:

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