

# *Missionary Memories*



*The Gulf of Carpentaria*

# *Missionary Memories*



*Stories from young ABM missionaries over 160 years*

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Assisted by the Anglican Board of Mission

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## *Introduction*

**M**emories are elusive things. They are an important part of a healthy person's life as they are an important part of institutional life. This production was started so that these memories of the mission field, and in particular the ABM mission field, would not be lost in the mists of time. "Missionaries' Memories" is a collection of these memories, reflections and comments, past and present, from former missionaries. Some 80% of ABM missionaries over the years went to Papua New Guinea and so there are many more stories from Papua New Guinea than from anywhere else. There are however stories from Polynesia, Melanesia, Asia, Carpentaria and Africa.

Some of the stories were first presented as part of the 2010 Adelaide Missionary Conference and Re-union. Contributions were canvassed at that re-union and later by letter, email, word of mouth and advertising in the ABM Partners Paper. Over 50 replies were received. Some editing has taken place and some articles were abridged. Dr. Maurice Dowell, a gifted and prolific writer sent enough stories for several chapters and so some selections had to be made. Martin Chittleborough and John Cottier wrote stories that reflected on earlier history after a return visit to the mission field much later.

The stories cover quite a lot of historic events: early missionary work, pre war, wartime and immediate post war events, the Mt.Lamington eruption, the iconic cathedral at Dogura, the explosion of mission work in the highlands of PNG and the transition of many countries into growing, independent nations. The country and its perils feature in a number of stories and the harshness of living conditions, diet, transport difficulties and communication problems provide both a background and star in stories which can be humourous or serious. All of the stories attest to the spiritual undergirding and vividness of the missionary memories. The overall tone was affirming of the experience even when hardships were faced.

From the moment in 1850 when the Church delegates founded the Australasian Board of Missions and ran out into the streets of Sydney to excitedly tell passers- by "We have founded a Mission !", and right up to the present day, enthusiasts for missions have gone out proclaiming good news. If it had not already been taken, the title for this collection of stories could have been "The Acts of the Apostles."

Archbishop Philip Freier, one of the presenters in Adelaide, expressed his positive experience in a very apt statement about how missionaries feel about their calling and what they believe. We present this as the foreword. In editing the stories we have mostly tried to let the stories speak for themselves and omit any moralizing. We think that the stories do this quite well enough.

## *Foreword*



ABOVE: The ordination of Philip Freier

**L**ooking back on events, I recall that Joy and I were sent out as some of the last missionaries supported by ABM. We had a great passion for working amongst Aboriginal people and we both received the opportunity for me to be ordained and serve in Kowanyama from the end of 1983 as a fulfilment of our earlier experiences as teachers in a number of remote locations including Kowanyama itself. It meant a lot to know that we were prayed for regularly by faithful people all over Australia and to be financially supported so that we could minister in the love of Christ to people sorely tested by life events.

As I began to better understand the mission history of Kowanyama, from the time it was known as Mitchell River Mission, I became aware of the amazing miracle of the gospel taking root in the lives of many Aboriginal people in that place. Even the worst instances of hostile government policies or mission paternalism did not quench the thirst for the life giving transformation that is God's promise to all in Christ. The faith of the Aboriginal church members I served left an indelible mark on me in understanding, even in a way that I had not appreciated through my theological studies, that the gospel was God's complete promise for all people, no matter what they had experienced. Cross cultural mission is like that, shining a clear light on things that can easily be hidden in the shade of a monocultural setting.

I am grateful for ABM believing in me and believing in sending missionaries to cross culture in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier. Carpentaria 1983-1988.  
Bishop of the Northern Territory 1999-2006,  
Archbishop of Melbourne 2006**

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## *Jeremy Ashton, PNG 1960-1986*

Jeremy was an English missionary priest who came to PNG in 1960. He was the priest in charge at Eroro until 1970 and married Australian missionary teacher Betty Randall during this time. He served the Diocese in many leadership positions and was the first Bishop of the Diocese of Aipo Rongo when the Province of Papua New Guinea was formed in 1977. He left PNG in 1986 and now lives in Australia.

### *A* **mus**ing Moments

I was asked to come to Ambesipa in the Madang Province in order to dedicate the first church to be built in the village. The evangelist in charge said he wanted it dedicated to a female saint as it had been the women who had done all the work, so we chose Margaret of Scotland. I was greeted on the outskirts in the usual way with men brandishing spears and axes with which they threatened me. When I passed that test I was hoisted onto shoulders to be dumped where the people were gathered. An unusual addition was that wet mud was thrown at me and at those who accompanied me. After giving a blessing, I was led to where food was laid out on banana leaves on the ground. People were sitting around it and dogs seemed to be wandering freely. As I sat down still with mud clinging to me and began to eat with unwashed fingers, I had a vision of my maiden aunt in her London flat serving tea to me when I called on her. The contrast was acute, but the purpose was the same – welcoming hospitality.

James Ayong, one time Archbishop of Papua New Guinea, shared our house in Lae for a year while he completed a Diploma at the Lutheran Seminary there. On one occasion he borrowed our minibus to drive to Goroka. On the way he was stopped by police for not having a registration sticker. His response was that he had stuck it on the outside and the wipers had wiped it off in the rain. This was accepted as valid. I had failed to point out to him that the real reason for the missing registration sticker was that I recently had to replace a broken windscreen, a common occurrence in PNG.

On one occasion I was acting as Locum at SagSag in West New Britain while Fr Dan Teed, the Parish Priest, was on leave. Most of the out stations in the parish were along the coast. I walked to visit one of these with some people carrying my bedding and church requirements. They also acted as my guides. That part of their work became very

necessary when we reached the river and they set out to sea to find the bar which was not obvious to me at all. By this time it was raining heavily so I was thoroughly soaked as I walked through water up to my shoulders. I was relieved when we turned towards the shore again and then on to dry ground on the other side. A village, not our destination, was nearby and I was touched – and amused- to be offered an umbrella. It was still raining but I thought that I would not get any wetter than I was.

Brian Bailey was an American priest at Koinambi in the Western Highlands. He was a large man and something of a scholar, so perhaps it was appropriate that he once received a letter addressed to him as “Father Brain Belly”. On one of my visits the small Cessna aeroplane taking me there flew over the valley while beneath us we could see the shock wave of an earthquake flowing through the trees. On our arrival Brian was delighted to discover a packet of teabags that had been shaken out of a cupboard for he had not remembered they were there. On another visit he was away on patrol and a note welcoming me included the words, “Please do not bring the washing off the line especially if it rains.”

Nancy Waimi was one of three young Anglican women who had graduated from the Christian Leaders Training College run by the Evangelical Alliance near Mount Hagen. I am not sure who (if anyone ) sent them there. When I became Bishop I found her on my staff in Madang as a parish worker. Nancy had a better theological training than most priests in the Diocese. One year I invited her to come to the four day residential clergy conference held at the former R.C. Headquarters near Madang. I asked her to speak and she agreed. When the time came she spoke well, but not before putting me firmly into my place by saying, “I know it is wrong for me as a woman to speak to you and I only do it because the Bishop has ordered me.”



ABOVE: Melanesian Brothers with hearers in the Kobon, a first contact area



ABOVE: Celebrating the enthronement of Bishop David Hand at Dogura 1963

## *Una Bachman, PNG 1965-69 and 1973-4*

Prior to going to PNG, Una lived at Edwardstown, attended St. Mary's Church and worked at Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital. It was at St. Mary's Church that Una discovered the need for nurses on the mission field and felt moved to offer for service. Between trips to PNG she worked at Mt. Barker and Murray Bridge and in 1974 she returned to the Queen Victoria Hospital until her retirement.

### *The First Day of my First Medical Patrol*

The necessary packing of the rucksacks had been done. The children's record cards, medical needs, food (rice, and tinned meat) plus sleeping gear and personal needs were set to go. All was ready for a dawn start.

The beach looked eerie, the sea was choppy, the thunder rolled. At daylight on this stormy morning we were driven three miles from St Margaret's Hospital Erero to the coast in the mission jeep. I was accompanied and guided by a male senior nursing student whose name was Prout and a similarly trained female called Lena Joyce.

On this occasion we were to join council members in their motor boat. Only a short distance out to sea and we were buffeted around and drenched with spray. The decision was made to return to shore, unload, and with the help of locals in carrying baggage we walked back to Erero to dry out and try again next day.

Second time round we were delivered safely at Pongani. The greeting from a cluster of adults and chattering smiling children still remains with me. It only took a short time for an agile boy to shin up the coconut palm, knock a few nuts down to refresh us with the juice and flesh. The clinic was soon set up under a tree. Details would be a story in itself. Spring scales were attached to a strong branch. Infants large and small were weighed in their string bags and given health checks. There were cases of anaemia, mal-nutrition, skin ailments and ear infections. Pregnant women were examined on the floor of their house. Any with suspected problems were encouraged to make their way to St Margaret's. As the day progressed other women returned from their gardens. I was amazed at their enormous loads, vegetables, firewood and often a child on top.

An elderly man remained in his house observing proceedings. The strong facial features and toothless smile showed his appreciation of a visit from us. Lena later led me to an icy pool for evening ablutions. Evensong was led by a village evangelist. It was a moving experience with an awareness of God's spirit present in that remote situation.

Our evening meal was shared with village leaders. The women clad only in their skirts were graceful and gentle as they brought tasty vegetables. Prout spent the night with village folk and Lena and I went together to a deteriorating, exposed rest house on the beach, with a breeze blowing sand grit through the gaps. We continued the patrol through inland villages, returning to the coast for a calm canoe trip home. The peaceful splash of the paddles and gentle singing from the paddlers made it an idyllic trip back to base.



ABOVE: Celebrating the enthronement of Bishop David Hand at Dogura 1963

## *John Beiers, Carpentaria 1988-1992*

John worked as an ABM supported missionary in the Diocese of Carpentaria, from 1988 to 1992. He was Priest-in-Charge of the parish of The Southern Gulf, based in Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria, with a population of about 1,100 people. He was the assistant pilot for the Carpentaria Aerial Mission aeroplane and living, on average, one week at home and then one week away from Normanton.

**S***erving at Our Very Own Gulf*  
It was a fairly isolated place, especially at times when the Wet produced so much rain that the town was surrounded by flood waters for weeks on end, and travel was impossible. At times like these one caught up with accumulated office work, and town visiting. While we were isolated, supplies were brought in either by an army Hercules, a large cargo aeroplane, or by barge from Cairns around the top of Cape York Peninsula. The plane discharged the most important cargo first – pallets of beer! The barge chugged up the main street, and unloaded its cargo right outside the supermarket side door.

Ministry was very interesting, as the parish centres were widely scattered and very different in character. I drove weekly to Normanton, fortnightly to Karumba, monthly to Croydon, Georgetown, Forsyth and Burketown, whenever time allowed to Doomadgee and from time to time to various cattle stations. Days off were a problem. I could stop at home, which usually ended by working in the study. I could try sitting down by the Norman River ever watchful for local crocodiles or reading in some bushland area, but being eaten and bitten by mozzies and flies. Finally, I decided to work continuously through three months and then fly to Adelaide for a week of R & R. Predictably, this kept me poor, but happy.

Part of this ministry was to assist the Bishop at times when the clergy and people gathered at Thursday Island, which was where the Cathedral was located. While he prepared for the Synod, or Diocesan Council, or Retreats, I flew the Diocesan Cessna 210, the “Gilbert White II”, all around the Cape York area and the Torres Straits to pick up clergy and layfolk from the parishes to attend the events. Sometimes I would be away from my base at Normanton for two weeks doing this job. But it was no hardship as I loved the flying, and seeing the whole area from an altitude of around 10,000 feet. Willy willies or dust devils were common in the summer, but harmless to the plane if you kept out of them. The women on the cattle stations hated

them, especially after just cleaning the whole house!

There was a large indigenous population in the parish of The Southern Gulf, numbers of which were parishioners at St. Peter’s Church, Normanton. The Bishop, Anthony Hall-Matthews, had authorised the use of the plane to carry coffins to isolated places of burial, when the necessity arose. Of course, none of the aboriginal people would travel in a plane carrying a dead body, which was fortunate, since very little space remained when the coffin had been loaded. On one occasion, Rolly Gilbert, a former elder, was interred at the edge of the airstrip at Delta Downs. This station covers 400,000 hectares and runs about 40,000 breeders per annum. It is unique in that it is owned and operated by the local Kurtijar people, and is a good training ground for up and coming elders.

As Transport Officer I spent quite a lot of time on the islands in the Torres Strait collecting and off-loading passengers. Christian missionaries from the London Missionary Society landed on Darnley (Erub) Island on the 1st of July 1871, and converted the local people to Christianity, which quickly spread through all of the islands. This day is called “The Coming of the Light” and is celebrated every year with a big church service followed by a feast. On each island there is a memorial, usually a column topped with a cross with a light above the cross, sitting in a boat.

Local people are permitted to catch local sea life which Europeans are not. I remember that at my first feast, after a Confirmation in the village of St. Paul’s, on Moa Island, finding that my digestive system could not cope with dugong meat, and I spent two days in bed recovering, with the locals laughing at me and my delicate stomach.

My enduring memories are of many varieties of worship and songs of worship; of cultural customs that make perfect sense when one takes the time to listen; of churches built in a multitude of styles; and of a hunger for faith that transcends who you are or where you live.



## *Jane Bodley (nee Dudley), PNG 1967-1969*

Beginning and ending my time in PNG on February 28th. I spent two years at Dogura, discovering that there were privileges in the mud, the odd food, and in the people I learned to work with and value. Life in the jungle could be very basic and I think I learned to see how things physical were a part of things spiritual. Maybe we keep on learning that, but PNG gave me a very solid beginning.

**F**red and me and PNG  
My connection with Papua New Guinea began during World War II, when an American airman named Fred was shot down over Japanese-occupied New Britain. He parachuted safely into the jungle and spent the next several weeks living on snails from the river and chocolate bars. He was found by some local men and he recognized one of their songs as a hymn from his Sunday school days. He suddenly had a whole new understanding of Christian missions. The villagers looked after him, protected him from Japanese patrols, nursed him through several illnesses, and eventually returned him to his unit. He successfully lived out the war and returned to Minnesota, forever grateful to the people of New Britain.

While Fred was living out his gratitude to his friends in the South Pacific, I was growing up in our home state, Minnesota; both of us were members of the Episcopal Church. When the Toronto Convention of the Anglican Communion offered its members a way for the various dioceses to combine their talents and to more closely associate, it was a natural and obvious way for Fred to continue this gratitude. Minnesota and Papua New Guinea became partners through the Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence scheme developed at the Conference. My parish priest immediately announced that we were the luckiest people. PNG needed teachers and I asked if they needed nurses. He replied that he didn't know, but I could write to the bishop and find out. These were the days of written letters, not email. So I did, and the bishop did.

That's how it all began, these events which were to change the whole direction of my life. I never thought of myself as particularly adventurous, but when the opportunity was presented to me, I packed my things and flew far away, Minnesota's first personal installment in the Mutual Responsibility

and Interdependence program. Quite honestly, when I left San Francisco all those years ago, I felt like I had fallen off the edge of the earth. And when people commented that I had a funny accent, it seemed to imply that I was personally responsible for the Vietnam war, and challenged my nursing credentials. That feeling of being in limbo took a very long time to resolve. My first year in Australia was spent partly at the House of the Epiphany in Sydney, a place of interesting memories, unusual food (vegemite is food??), kerosene refrigerators, and an assortment of restrictions, all based on "what it was like on a mission station." I also spent six months of that year doing a course in infant welfare, also intended to prepare me for "what it was like on a mission station." In review, while the intentions were good, neither experience was very much like life on a mission station, with one exception, we had to live and work with people whom we didn't know and from whom there was little escape. My own escape was my particular role as the infant welfare nursing sister.

I was stationed at Dogura in Southeast Papua, where the 150th degree of longitude east crosses the north coast. Dogura is situated in an incredibly beautiful place, high on a plateau overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Much of my focus was on the babies and pre-school children of the surrounding villages. This involved week long walking patrols into the nearby hills where I learned to eat more unusual food, usually vegetables, to sleep on a mat on the floor, and to read by the light of a kerosene lamp. There were no fridges of any kind in the villages. Very slowly I was learning to be adaptable and sometimes I wept in the rain, as I slipped my muddy way down the mountains.

Another Minnesota beginning was the contribution of a boat to replace the MacLaren King which transported goods and people along the coast between the various mission stations. The MV 'Minnesota' is still there.

I, on the other hand, left PNG, married an Australian named Bill and our first child was born on the 28th of February, the date which coincided with my arrival time at Dogura. When God chooses to bless, She doesn't forget anything. I have remained living in Australia and Bill and I eventually had a total of five children. Sadly Bill died when the youngest was only 18 months old and I have been a single mother these 30 years. So it hasn't all been "happily ever after" but my life has been blessed in many ways and I am grateful for those blessings.

Just to bring this story full circle, I had news this Christmas that Fred recently died. "May his soul rest in peace". This gracious man has cast a long and pleasant shadow across my life: Fred and me and PNG.



*Alfred Hill was a ship's captain who, after sailing around the world in his early life and having many a tale to tell about the ports of call around the world (he particularly and regularly mentioned Rio in his numerous funny stories about his life), felt the call to the priesthood. He served in the poorer parts of London in what was then called the slums and now is usually known as the CBD inner city population density infill and can be extremely valuable real estate.*

*In due time Alfred was called to Melanesia where he was appointed as the principal of a school and later came to be the sea faring bishop of the island Diocese. Famous for his story telling and sense of humour he loved to tell of the time when the Melanesian Brothers were changing their uniform from a wrap around calico laplap, which were in different colours for different occasions, to shorts in similar colours. The brothers asked if they could wear their new outfits to display what they might look like.*

*The Bishop asked his housekeeper to make an outfit for him with which to surprise them after their display. Accordingly after they showed their new black and white shorts he excused himself for a few minutes and come back wearing a pair of purple shorts with the crowning glory shown when he turned around and showed a yellow mitre stitched onto the rear of the shorts.*

*The brothers were delighted with the joke.*

TOP LEFT FROM THE URA LAMBTON COLLECTION IN THE ABM ARCHIVES: The MacLaren King mission ship

BOTTOM LEFT: Loading the MacLaren King



## *Thea Wilson-Booth, PNG 1968-1971*

Fr John Booth, Thea, his wife and their newborn son, Timothy, were farewelled from St John's Dalby in March 1968. They were vaccinated for Sri Lanka but were redirected by Bishop Hawkey in Brisbane to assist in the Rabaul Parish in New Britain. They were totally unprepared, the culture change was unsettling and their new baby was on demand feeding. It was a tough initiation. They returned to Australia in 1971 with two sons. John Booth died in 2011. Thea lives in Brisbane.

### **M***ilk Runs and Milk*

Bishop David Hand met the Booth family in Port Moresby and sent us on the milk run flight to Rabaul. This flight took us to Lae. Then we went on a glorious flight to Rabaul, over the extinct "Mother" volcano and as we landed, over the sulphur-emitting Matape volcano. We were now in guria\* land with tremors often a dozen a day.

We were greeted lovingly by the Turleys and given a scenic tour of St Georges Church, later to become the Cathedral. Timothy, our constantly unsettled baby, reacted unfavourably to rectory doorbells, telephones and noise generally, including lots of lively, Bougainville house guests. Welcome to life mission style! It was difficult hosting visitors on a \$2.50 weekly income with a restricted food list that could be charged to the mission account. This was certainly so when our first cheque and meagre possessions were stolen by the house help. Being new, we could not speak Tolai or Pidgin, Housekeeping stores were often depleted by pilfering wontoks\*. Thank God for the wonderful Bung\* with its plentiful fresh produce including pink pawpaws, coconuts, taros, kau kau and even live crabs.

Motherhood meant dealing with continually damp nappies from humidity and regular daily rain. There were no disposable nappies in the 60s!! Unavailable formulas meant using alternative powdered milk. A parishioner who was a nursing sister was a life saver. Each day was lifted by the exquisite harmonising of the Melanesian Brothers' daily offices. This along with the services at Kokopo and visits to Vunapope were undoubtedly the highlights of parish activity. Rabaul was full of sounds and sights. These included World War II remnants and Japanese tunnels, historical stories, leper ward initiation and rumbles from below the ground which sounded like stomach rumbles from mother earth\*. From

Rabaul we flew up the Markham River Valley and on to the gold dredging company town of Bulolo, which like Mumeng was pioneered by the legendary Leahy Brothers. Then we were driven to Wau near the gold streams of Mt Kindi, amidst Watut tribes. It felt quite spring-like in the mountains and in the cool of the valleys there were real cows, a local dairy and fresh milk!! Bliss!

We added Nicholas to the family Booth and things weren't made any easier when the baby started projectile vomiting after feeds. Fortunately I was able to have some time out weekly playing for the Bulolo Forestry Students' Choir of Islanders. We worked between the two parishes of Wau/Bulolo for two and a half years. The house was protected with mesh windows and suffered from Peeping Toms and the roof was stoned on occasions. The Lae Road often disappeared in the rain, road blocks forced compulsory stops and often there was only room for one car on the road. On the 90 mile stretch there were no mechanics or petrol. It seemed that prayers and faith alone could save us in some parts of the road where it overlooked steep ravines.

We flew on another milk run to Popondetta, via Girina, Aiyura, Kainantu and Goroka. The School and Church of the Resurrection at the Popondetta Mission Station was built with remnants that survived the devastating Mt Lamington volcano eruption. The foundations and even the parish registers were happily termite infested. The bucket showers, the walls and the ceilings were a gecko's delight.

In the next six months life improved. John's hepatitis was over. The children's gastro cleared up. John's malaria was better. There were no more boiled pilchers in backyard coppers and washing by hand became a practised art.

However! I faced surgery in Australia for a prolapsed uterus. I also had to overcome a frightening

trachoma of the eyes. We were yet again robbed and attacked by an indigenous intruder and we had to attend a Police line-up. Life had become a mix of tricky situations.. I found it necessary to restore health and calm normality and attend to a low haemoglobin count and anaemia. So the boys and I sought TLC back home in 1971 leaving John to come a few weeks later. Our immune systems needed help!

We remember and give thanks for support by “before” expatriates, Sister Betty Hay, Rabaul and Lae parishioners, the Benson family in Wau for valued weekly vegetables, generous Bulolo townsfolk, the company of Franciscans, the Chittleboroughs, the Cottiers in Popondetta, Doctor Maurice and Mary Dowell from Oro Bay and indeed for Christmas parcels from ABM. It was a challenging time but some good memories also linger. Peace.

- \* “Guria” is the Pidgin word for an earth tremor or earthquake.
- \* “Bung” is the Pidgin word for a market.
- \* “wontoks” is the Pidgin word for relatives or clansmen and women, including very distant connections. Often in the cities the wontok system makes big demands because Papuans are obliged to help their clansmen.
- \* Rabaul was destroyed in a volcanic eruption in the nineties.



*Father John Sharpe was known to be a poor sailor but when the mission conference was being held in Lae, John surpassed himself in giving in to ‘mal de mer’.*

*John walked fearfully down the wharf at Oro Bay and turned progressively greener as he went. He continued onto the boat and walked to the cabin and went straight to the single bed where he remained for the next 48 hours without moving.*

*Beds were scarce so they were doubled up, topped and tailed, and neither John nor his other seasick bed companion cared who else was in the bed. So Fr. John and Dr. Blanche Biggs shared a bed for the journey each entirely engrossed in their own misery.*



ABOVE: Melanesian Brothers

*In 1925 Ini Kopuria, a Solomon Islander and former policeman, met with the Bishop of Melanesia and formed the Melanesian Brotherhood which continues until this day to be important to the growth of the church in Melanesia and PNG. Seven brothers were killed during an uprising when they were acting as mediators. The Brotherhood was awarded the fourth Pacific Human Rights Award for their actions. The story is well told in Richard Carter’s “In Search of the Lost”.*

## ***Margaret Buttfield (nee Lees), Melanesia 1965-1969***



Margaret was one of twin sisters who went to teach in the Solomon Islands in 1965. She is still active in her local church and is the secretary of the ABM committee in Perth.

### ***A Solomon Island Story***

St Hilda's on Bunana Island near Guadalcanal was a boarding school for approximately 100 girls in primary grades five, six and seven aged from nine to seventeen. The staff consisted of two missionary teachers, myself, and Rosemary Gordon and two volunteers, Pauline Meikle from New Zealand and Liz Tarren from England. It was a happy station with a lovely group of Melanesian students and four young teachers whose ages ranged from 18 to 30 years old. I went there in January 1968.

On weekdays we tackled the serious issues of teaching, growing food and keeping the station operating but on weekends and holidays we had lots of fun. The following story is taken from a letter sent home to my family and friends in Perth.

There are two other stations besides Bunana in the Gela Island Group, Taroaniara and Siota. At Taroaniara, which is 30 minutes away by boat, there is a boat building facility, an engineering and carpentry factory, as well as a printing press and a hospital. At Siota which is about two hours away by boat there is a theological college. We have a small canoe which is fitted with a seagull engine which we can use in emergencies such as getting a girl who needs treatment to hospital in Taroaniara. Rosemary mostly does the Seagull driving but Pauline and I have been getting in some practice in preparation for Rosemary's approaching furlough. We are not mechanically minded and our first journey to Siota resulted in a lost spark plug. The engine started spluttering when we were about two miles from Siota. Pauline decided the plug needed cleaning. There were mangroves trees all along the edge of the passage up which we were travelling so I had to cling to the overhanging branches while Pauline leaned over the rear of the canoe and investigated. We both foresaw the dangers of dropping the plug into the water but it did not stop it slipping out of Pauline's hands. It

disappeared into the reef below and, although we sent our schoolgirl companion overboard after it, we did not see it again. For the remaining distance we had to paddle with two fairly poor paddles and a cricket bat. Being a hopeless paddler I was given the cricket bat. The rest of our journey we found quite hilarious as we kept heading into the Mangroves and getting stuck. Darkness was falling rapidly as we thankfully reached Siota, my arms and body complaining from the unaccustomed action of paddling. Later a spare plug was found amongst the engine equipment.



ABOVE: Archbishop of Melanesia, John Chisholm

Another excerpt from my letters involved one of the famous missionaries to Melanesia who was also a noted collector of sea shells, Dr Charles Fox.

October 1968 was an exciting month. Our oldest mission staff member turned 90. The Bunana gift to Dr Fox consisted of shells which Pauline and the girls had collected. One of the shells Dr Fox identified as a Gloria Maris (glory of the sea). It was a very ordinary looking shell which he informed us was valued at \$300 an inch. Our gift shell was two and a half inches long. In his note of thanks Dr Fox told us to read 2Kings 18 v 34. It says, "and he said, 'Do it a second time' and they did it a second time. And he said 'Do it a third time' and they did it a third time." Unfortunately we did not find any more Gloria Maris shells!



## *Margaret Chittleborough, PNG 1995- 1997*

Margaret and Keith were in PNG for two years. In some way both of them are related to Martin and Anne Chittleborough who also have contributed to this collection of stories. Margaret was the Religious Education Adviser to the Anglican Church of PNG. This episode from Margaret and Keith's daily diary is about a tour they did of the highlands to visit schools and communities to see what was needed for writing the Religious Education Curriculum for Anglican Primary Schools. .

### ***It's The Journey That Counts ... They Say***

At 2.00 pm we made our way down to the road waiting 45 minutes for the Four Wheel Drive to take us to Kwima some 20 kilometres away by road. Margie entertained the crowd of about 60 bods who gathered around while a gambling ring (cards) played quietly 20 metres away. Eventually the truck arrived, driven by a bloke who was three parts in the breeze.

It began to pour, wetting all in the back including Bart (Diocesan Education Officer, Diocese of Aipo Rongo) and our gear. This made the track slippery and in places almost impassable with ruts a foot deep and fords over creeks filled with large boulders. The driver was good though drunk. He continued to say "Me, good driver, no worries, Ha! Ha! Ha!" and other babbling stuff we couldn't understand except "Road no good". At times we were in danger of tumbling down the 80 degree slope into the ravine below. At one point we skidded through 90 degrees and ended up across the road. The red clay was very slippery. We thought we would be very lucky to arrive at all.

At one point one bloke jumped out of the back of the truck when he thought it was going over and landed in the bushes. It was an extremely hairy trip, not to be repeated.

Margie thought that PNG would lose its RE advisor and 'bag man' (Keith) after such a short time in the country! What would ABM do if they heard that Margie and Keith had been killed on a precipitous road in pouring rain in the remote Western Highlands having been driven by a drunken mad man? He drove at 40 kilometres per hour around sharp slippery bends. We were glad to get out having arrived in one piece, albeit with wet luggage.

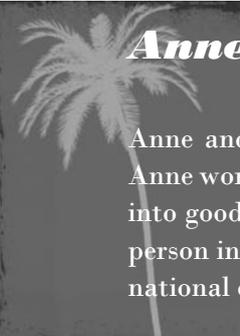
After one and a half hours miserable drive we arrived at the house of Alban the evangelist at Kwima, dried ourselves out and took ourselves inside. The house was made with wooden poles for the frame and with woven pitpit panels for the walls. The kitchen was separate. Margie spent the early evening with the women in the haus kuk\* talking to Margaret, aged 22, the family's only daughter. She had a six month old baby called John Baptist. She had attended Holy Name School and could speak English well. She spoke of expatriate anthropologists who had stayed in Kwima for a year or so and she seemed to hanker after their company.

The family ran a small flock of multi-coloured cross bred sheep. Their pig ate one the night before, so it was tethered at night under the house.

*\*haus kuk is Pidgin for the kitchen*

*Fr Hugh Andrew was well known for his ability to stretch the mission dollar. His handling of the mission station spending was extremely tight and he could indeed be called parsimonious in whatever sense of that word you might want to employ. No luxuries on the dinner table there.*

*At the Diocesan Conference at Dogura he stood up to complain about the waste he saw and to admonish people to be more frugal. He said that he only used one 4 gallon drum of kerosene a month for all of the needs on his station and had built a whole new house out of scrap and local materials and the total cost was only \$100. A voice from the back of the conference called out, "Yes! I've seen it. Where did you waste all that money?"*



## *Anne Chittleborough, PNG 1966-1976*

Anne and her husband Martin served in PNG for 10 years. After returning to Australia Anne worked as a librarian and was instrumental in voluntarily organizing the ABM library into good order. She was a member of the ABM National Board for many years and a key person in South Australian ABM circles. She later worked in Bibliographic research for the national database AUSTLIT.

### ***Mud Between My Toes***

How to begin to describe those years in PNG? From our bumping and slithering along the dirt road to Agenehambo in 1966 to our departure ten years to the day afterwards; through a period which encompassed the end of the colonial era, the time of self-government and into the beginning of Independence; through a time which saw me come as a raw 22-year-old and leave as the mother of two children; a time which was challenging, not always easy, but very precious.

Agenehambo is a mission station carved out of the jungle on the lower reaches of what was long ago made famous as the Kokoda Trail. Behind us the dormant volcano, Mount Lamington, Sumbiripa, built up a diurnal pattern of cloud as a reminder of the forces trapped inside it; forces that had blown away the side of the volcano in 1951 killing some thousands of people and wiping out the mission station of Isivita on its lower slopes.

We lived in what was considered a model mission house at the time, built of timber and with an iron roof, and shaded by an enormous rain tree hung about with staghorns and, on occasion, carpet snakes. Huge open windows allowed whatever breeze was available to flow through the rooms, and the big shutters were only ever closed against rain. There was running water in the kitchen and the bath room. Our cooking was done on the big wood stove, and a temperamental kerosene refrigerator succeeded, on the whole, in keeping our food cool. On the occasions when it refused to co-operate it had to be tipped upside down and shaken to move any air blocks in its pipes. Washing, done in a big copper in the sun at the back of the house, would have defeated me but for the assistance of the deacons' wives, whose duties, it seemed, included doing "Mother's" washing while she did whatever other duties she was called on to do which in my case meant teaching Standard V in the school just below the house.

I always thought that if I were to write the story of our time in Papua New Guinea I would title it "Mud Between My Toes". From this distance in time the mud image seems to have slipped a bit and been replaced by memories of people, lush green vegetation and riotously bright-coloured plants and flowers, but it is true that in our first years there, in particular, mud dominated our lives, especially the long, deeply rutted strip of mud we were pleased to call the "road" to Popondetta, fifteen miles away. Our vehicles were old war-time jeeps, dug out of the jungle and patched together by Rodd Hart and St Christopher's Manual Training Centre in Popondetta. They had few refinements and were considered driveable if they had a couple of workable gears and, if you were lucky, brakes. Our supplies were delivered every three months and I think I only went in to Popondetta twice in my first year there, but I travelled several times in the other direction to the government hospital at Saiho. These journeys were unforgettable as we slithered and slipped in the wheel ruts and, barefooted, pushed the jeep out of axle-deep pile-ups of mud. The road to Agenehambo was more to us than a road home. It was a road which led us to a world which few have been privileged to share, and to a relationship with its people.

The road crossed numerous creeks, and in the wet season we had to cross them before the afternoon rains began and the water level rose, cutting the road. In later years, bridges were built. The bridges, on the whole, were strong, but their approaches frequently washed away leaving them standing alone and disconnected as monuments to man's folly. The engineer in charge would shrug and rebuild the approaches. He had built bridges in India. "One day", he said, "they will not wash away". We smiled the smug smile of those who knew better, but he was right, and now a safe road runs all the way from Popondetta.

There was a thriving branch of the Mothers' Union in the parish. Once a month, a large number of its 350-odd members would walk from the outstations to Agenehambo, many arriving the night before the meeting and spending the evening sharing food and gossip. Inexperienced as I was, I was very nervous about my expected role in running these meetings, the more so as I was not even a member of the MU (a fact I didn't disclose to the women, and which I remedied as fast as I could on our first return to Australia six months later when we were shipped out temporarily for some urgent medical attention). I was expected to preach at their services, through an interpreter, and to be able to assuage their thirst for acquiring new skills such as dressmaking and bread-making.

Dressmaking! It was a skill I had never mastered myself and was totally incompetent to teach. I had been forewarned, and had enrolled for a dress-making class, but had proved to have little aptitude and spent most lessons unpicking my homework from the week before. The instructors had not seemed surprised or concerned when I finished the classes without ever having produced a wearable garment. The Agenehambo MU women, though, were both insistent and encouraging, so I bought myself some material and tentatively tried making a standard top and gathered skirt. It didn't look too bad, considering. We were in the bush, after all, not the fashion-conscious city. So I showed it to the women and said that if they were happy with this as a model we could give it a try. They were very enthusiastic, and so began our sewing classes. I bought a bolt of cheerfully coloured material and we began to cut out the dresses. What I hadn't taken into consideration, though, was that Papuan women did not fit the Australian fashion design of the 60s, with its uplifted busts and its gathered-in waists. Where Australian women went in at the waist, Papuan women went out, so the waistline darts I so proudly showed them how to make all had to be unpicked. Darts at the bust line were also a problem, as the women were bra-less and where, as was often the case, one breast hung longer than the other, a decision had to be made as to where, if anywhere, to put the darts. I can't say I was proud of the results of our classes, but if they felt the same they were at least too courteous to say so. And it did give them somewhere to pin their MU badges! At the first MU induction Martin carried out, he had been horrified to find that he had been sent pin-on badges, and with most of the women wearing only skirts, he had been left in a very awkward position!

The MU members were very serious about their membership, and to this day they remain a powerful force for good in the troubled context of PNG's social turmoil. On one occasion, after the women had walked in from the villages, about an hour and a half's walk away, stayed the night and attended the meeting, then shouldered their children and string bags and walked back up the hills to home, they found that the men in the villages had been gambling while they were away. Instantly they turned around and walked back down to Agenehambo, sought out Martin and handed their badges to him. "You will keep them for us, Father. We will go and see about these men and then we will come back and take the badges again." And back up the mountain they went. By what means they punished their husbands for their gambling was left for us to guess, but it was some weeks before they returned and declared themselves fit to wear their badges again!

Although we are all familiar with the image of PNG women bowed under the weight of their loads, and it is true that their burdens were not light, they were a strong community and had no real need of me except insofar as all of us need new blood and the stimulus of new ideas from time to time. To the end of our stay there, though, they maintained their deference to me as an Australian "mother".

In 1991, when we returned to Agenehambo at the time of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Anglican Church in PNG, we found our old mission house, no longer new but freshly painted in bright blue, in the possession of the MU, and they entertained us as guests in what had once been our home. It was a very moving experience, seeing their increased confidence in themselves and the consummate skill with which they hosted our visit. This was far in excess of anything that the young and inexperienced wife in the 1960s could have taught them. Feeling very conscious of this, I said as we sat around talking, "I was very young then. I didn't know very much". "Yes," they replied gently, smiling at me. I felt for the first time accepted as an equal rather than a figurehead. One of the women reminded me that when we had left Agenehambo in 1972 to go to England and then return to the Christian Training Centre at Jegarata, people had said that the Orokaiva women would never manage to run the 350-strong MU. "But we shared the leadership around," she said, "and now we have 400 members." And all wearing screen-printed tops and skirts they had printed and made themselves. My role in all this had been a very small one, I felt, but it was clear that it had been valued.



Dr. Charles Elliott & medical Evangelists of control near TALIPOTA NEW GUINEA



FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES:  
 Clockwise: Dr Charles Elliott, Ms Bettina Hough with PNG lady; Archbishop David Hand (centre) with the other Bishops of the Province. L - R: Bishops Kingsley Gegeyo, George Ambo, Bevan Meredith and Jeremy Ashton; L - R: Fr Gibson, Bp Phillip Strong, Fr Norman and Fr Jacob; Women under a Pandanus tree at Koinambe; PNG; tea time

## Martin Chittleborough, PNG 1966-1976



Martin served in PNG as the parish priest at Agenehambo and later as the Director of the Christian Training Centre at Jegarata. He was the Archdeacon for the Northern District from 1969. Back in Australia Martin was the Executive Officer of World Christian Action, Australia for five years. He was a parish priest in a number of churches and from 1991 full time with refugees who had been tortured and traumatized. He still maintains this passion into retirement

### Small houses I have known in PNG

The one dinner topic every member of staff in PNG could contribute to was, "Small-houses\* I have known." It was only touched on lightly in Tropical Medicine, where Professor Black assured us that a fly could not fly down a hole more than thirty feet. The only drop which got near to qualifying was at Dogura. There, built out over a ravine, was a long drop which was relaxing on a calm day. However when the wind blew from the sea, it shook with each gust, and the paper disconcertingly tended to stream upward with the draught. Unfortunately, being on the edge of a ravine, it was a hole only on three sides, and clearly the flies could count.



The Reverend Martin Chittleborough and Mrs. Anne Chittleborough come from the Diocese of Adelaide and are going forward to serve in the Diocese of New Guinea. They will be stationed at Agenehambo. Mr. Chittleborough was Priest-in-Charge of the parish of St. John's, Meningie. Mrs. Chittleborough has graduated in Arts and with her teaching experience will assist in the mission school.

Miss Langdon accepted the Diocese of New Guinea. a n e nurse wi experienc and Woc Epiphany of St. L

In the low-lying coastal stations, the water table was only a couple of feet below ground, and to get even a small drop it was necessary to use a 44 gallon drum stood on end and on top of a manmade hill dug from surrounding soil. When it rained, as it did most days, this formed a moat so that the small-house resembled a small castle in the swamp. Some of the coastal villages built their small-houses on fallen trees. You teetered out along the trunk, supported by flimsy handrails, to the throne. At high tide, the waves washed your contribution away. At low tide it fell into the eagerly waiting arms of the multicoloured crabs.

One of the first lessons every pilot learns was that as soon as you landed, you hopped out, and made for the nearest tree before the inevitable crowd arrived. Some airstrips didn't have trees, but if you used the nearest village small-house there was a risk of a disastrous collapse. I was almost twice the weight of the Papua owners, and often the floor with its hole, and coconut husks for paper, would groan or shift. This focused the mind enormously!

In a village way out near Ioma there was a guest house and small-house which, although it had been built years before, had yet to be used. Having drunk too many coconuts, I made a dash for the small-house. I walked round and round, becoming more desperate. There was no door. One of the amused bystanders took pity on me, walked up, and with a couple of strokes of his knife revealed the door. I was the first person to christen it. For many of us civilization was a flushing toilet, and the smell of Pine-O-Clean, which you probably take for granted. Consider how lucky you are.

\*'Small house' is the common expression in PNG for an outdoor toilet

Many a story can be told about the disaster of falling into such a trap. Not a pleasant experience!!



ABOVE: Bishop George Ambo adjusts his son's head dress



## *Martin Chittleborough, PNG 1966-1976*

This is the address that Martin gave to the missionary conference in Adelaide in 2010 as part of a project recognising the contributions of ABM missionaries over the years.



### ***In The Apostolic Succession***

In 1891 two priests Albert McLaren (left) and Copeland King (bottom left), along with layman C.E. Kennedy and carpenter Samuel Tomlinson and his wife Elizabeth landed at Dogura in Papua as the first missionaries. It was a disastrous year. At the end of that year 1981 the Sydney Morning Herald reported, "Two lives lost and two men ill, state of others uncertain, house unfinished, no leader, and the results of all this and many months of labour and time – nil"



Thirty years later when listening to a sermon in the Lady Chapel of St Peters Cathedral, Adelaide my father Colin heard of the need for missionaries in New Guinea, and resolved to offer himself. But he was also in love. So he approached Canon Murphy, to ask for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Canon Murphy said, "Certainly not. It is too dangerous a place for my daughter." They were devastated. My mother who was a sports mistress moved to teach at St Margaret's School in Brisbane to be as near as possible to PNG.

Colin travelled on the SS Morinda to Samarai and there met Bishop Newton. Imagine a tall bishop dressed in shirt, purple stock and glasses with a shovel hat on his head. Then he sailed on the McLaren King to Mukawa. There he met Samuel Tomlinson, a short white bearded man, dressed in dark trousers and a white helmet standing beneath a banner saying Eno, Eno, Eno. He had been priest there for 30 years, and had translated the Bible and BCP into Mukawan.

Canon Murphy relented in the face of true love and on 6th February 1930, my parents were married in Samarai by Robert Leck. After a honeymoon in Chinaman's Strait they returned to Mukawa. My

sister Jennifer was born in the hospital in Samarai, and later my sister Nancy was born in the Bishop's House at Dogura. These events happened before the existence of the wonderful drugs available today, nor was there the ubiquitous, but possibly life saving, radio sked. Medical help was either to the East at Dogura or the West at Gona with Doctor Cecil Gill. My mother had severe malaria and the girls became ill. In our shed is a small camphor wood chest which was bought, fortunately unnecessarily, for my sister's coffin.

In 2003 Anne and I with our son and his wife returned to Mukawa with corrugated iron for the roof of the priest's house as a thank offering for my parent's lives and to finish a job he had started nearly seventy five years earlier. Then he moved the station from the top of the escarpment to the beach as fighting had ceased between the local groups.

I tell this story to show how under God's grace the church grew from a disastrous start when death was very present, to a Church which has lessons for us to learn. It also illustrates how we are all part of a kind of apostolic succession. If you touch my hand, it has touched the hand of my father, who touched Samuel Tomlinson's hand and Fr. Tomlinson was at the founding of the Anglican Church in PNG, only a moment in time away.



FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES: Papuans and missionaries at Samarai

## *David and Alison Cobbett, Korea 1957-1965*

David Cobbett, the author of this article, was the first Australian missionary in South Korea after the Korean War. From 1957 he spent two years in Seoul in language study and other preparation before serving in various church positions in South Korea until 1965. He was an inspirational figure in the Australian church and an outstanding symbol of ABM mission activity. Later after many years back in Australian parishes he returned to Asia as the chaplain to the English speaking congregation in Taipei, Taiwan from 1991 to 1993. Now 81, he lives in retirement in South Australia with his wife, Alison. David and Alison were married in Ballarat in 1961.

### **S**outh Korea - a People on the Move

The South Korea and the capital Seoul that I knew in 1957 were very different from modern day South Korea and Seoul. The ancient kingdom had been broken in pieces by the 1950's Korean War and at the war's end the country was divided in two. Bishop John Daly appealed for priests to help the tiny Anglican remnant that fled South. After intense language study, I was asked by the Bishop to move South to a small congregation of refugees in a one time Japanese Church in Pusan City. On the day I was driven there in the Diocesan Land Rover through sporadic gunfire as citizen groups fought and the next day overthrew the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee. That was my first novelty: going through gunfire to one's first parish as a missionary priest!

The needs were vast so the work in Pusan City expanded quickly with the devoted help of Korean lay workers and clergy and ABM's support was always there. Soon the existing Pusan red brick church, hall and house were too small. So we extended and at the same time began schemes to help students afford school expenses and have safe places for out of school study. We began to help refugee widows to find employment by starting a parish sewing school and giving every graduate her own sewing machine. Soon it was wise to move from the inner city church to an outer suburb and create another parish.

With the financial help of friends and family in the Diocese of Newcastle and with local advice we bought a house and land and pioneered new work. This parish and the now Pusan Diocese sold the land and buildings for a good profit and bought another property nearby. They invited Alison and I back for the opening and dedication. We declined the invitation but sent our loving wishes.

Every Monday afternoon in retirement I am on

duty as a volunteer for three hours in St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide to help people with counselling. This March I met two Koreans who came to the Adelaide Festival. They were stunned to find a Korean speaker and before leaving they said two things, "People have a high regard for the Anglican University in Seoul and for the leading role played by the Church in work for human justice."

Those of our little band of eight English, twelve Korean and one Australian priests working there after the 1950's war who are still alive would smile at that report from March 2010!

It is quite remarkable that the war torn country of 1957 would become the industrial powerhouse and important nation of today but not so surprising that the church was part of that change.



ABOVE: David Cobbett in Korea



## *David and Alison Cobbett, Korea 1957-65*

David first went to Korea in 1957 and studied the language and culture before working as the first Australian Anglican missionary in the country. The A.B.M. Review in March 1958 recorded some of David's impressions, and the following story, as he started to work with the Korean people.

### **O**ne who gave thanks

One missed immediately the trees, the great tall gums and the animals of home: instead were the mountains, the small valleys and rice farms, round every bend in the road was something new and different. Eventually we reached Seoul and the Anglican Compound in which stands our lovely Cathedral. Two weeks ago the Bishop took me with him to a Confirmation in the parish of Eum Song. Along with us were two sisters of the Holy Cross, who were helping with a Teaching Mission in our new church at the small village of Pokae Ri. On the way we called to see the Revd. William Choi,\* who next year goes to St. Francis' College, Brisbane, for a period of study. William is one of our youngest and very active Korean priests. He loves his job and so marks are to be seen in the life of the parish. He told us of many

lapsed Anglicans who were being drawn back, and of some who had fled from North Korea and had been won back to the Church. At the moment of our departure from this parish, a leper came forward with a gift – his face scarred, his eyes covered, his fingers eaten away by the disease – the gift was 100 whan, less than two shillings in our money, and he said it was to pay for the petrol which brought the Bishop. The leper lived by begging, so both to him and the Bishop that gift meant much more than 100 whan.

• *The Revd. William Choi did come to St. Francis' College and became an identity in Brisbane before returning to Asia where he eventually became the Bishop of Pusan, where David had served.*



### How Times Change

from the ABM REVIEW, April 1963

From an article by Archdeacon David Cobbett in Korea.

*The most important step taken by our congregation this year was the formation of a credit union as it is called in Canada and the United States. In Australia I think we would call it a Savings Co-operative. For five nights in a row seventy five members of our congregation, some young, some old, sat in our small hall and listened to two of their own Korean men, one of whom had studied the co-operative in Canada, tell them this sort of thing. 'How to stay out of debt.' 'How to save when you are so poor there is nothing left to save.' At the end of the public lectures there were special lessons given to certain elected people on how to keep a set of books (simple accounting). All very thorough and fascinating to see this sort of thing happening in Korea where people had said some years ago 'It cannot be done!' ... the whole process is an education on how to live simply without luxuries and so save money for future needs.*

## **Frank Coppock, PNG 1983-1999**



Frank taught at Martyrs' Memorial School for two months in 1968. From 1983 he spent 15 years in PNG with a couple of short stints working with ABM in Sydney and Brisbane. In 1993 Frank was the Bursar at the Martyrs' Memorial School in PNG.

**S***tranger whom we know*  
Somebody, once a stranger to us, before  
Today, someone whom we know very well.  
For that someone, he is kind, honest, truthful and just-  
Out of these, he remains deep down in our hearts.

For love, care and concern, from him  
We felt the presence of our father.  
In bed, we sick ones lay under his shelter,  
At our side he sits and watches.  
So we are fast asleep, just like our real home.  
By our sides we feel our father's presence.

Looks old, inside his heart is young and strong.  
Works from morning to evening, each day,  
Even his own worthy time, for the school.  
For us, and then finally hitting the sack.

Old he is, you might say but some of us see a special man inside him,  
A man who loves, cares and protects us all.  
So, I say, Christ lives in him.  
Thank and praise God for giving Brother Frank to Martyrs School.

**Written by Magara, Year 10**

This poem is understandably precious to me because it was written for the school magazine by Magara, a Year 10 school boy who had TB and who lived with me during the period of his treatment because his medication needed to be supervised. He was then able to continue with his school work instead of having to be hospitalised. When his TB was cured he went back into the boarder's dormitory and later wrote this poem.

While I am the subject of this poem, I believe it has a wider and deeper relevance for all ABM missionaries who cared so much for the people of PNG over many years through their work with

the Anglican Church. It does suggest that we missionaries were seen to get some things right by our Papuan partners. I was often conscious during my years with the Anglican Church in Papua that some of our best efforts were at times insensitive and anti-cultural, but I believe that the love and care as expressed by missionaries through clergy pastoral care, through the Health Division of the Church, and through the Church Schools, were positive. Perhaps this literary effort by one of the students affirms this.



*The spelling of English is a problem for many. It is compounded when one's own language does not distinguish between l and r or p and f. It was not immediately clear what Manson, the evangelist at Foru, wanted when he wrote asking for a "cardboard rock" (cupboard lock) for the school. But there was no mistaking what to send Barnabas Ta'ani (later a priest) when he asked for "high biscuits" to plant at the Franciscan Evangelist College where he was studying.*

**Jeremy Ashton**



## *Judy Cottier (Nee Hall), PNG 1962-1973*

Judy came to PNG as a teacher and was the youngest missionary to serve with the Anglican Mission at that time. In 1965 she married Fr. John Cottier. They now live in Perth where Judy was the Principal of Perth College for 16 years. Both Judy and John have served on the Board of ABM for many years and Judy was the W.A. representative until 2011.

### **T***he Crocodile*

I was sent to join an English priest, Father Norman Cruttwell, and his mother Christian Cruttwell at Menapi. Mrs Cruttwell was an indomitable figure and a legendary personality in New Guinea missionary folklore. Father Norman Cruttwell was a botanist. When he was reporting to Bishop Strong about his first contact patrol into the Daga he enthusiastically described the many orchids and rhododendrons he had sighted. After listening to this passionate description for a while Bishop Strong acerbically asked, "Tell me Norman did you meet any people?" Years later we were thrilled to discover in the National Rhododendron Gardens in the Dandenongs, a collection of Rhododendron species which Norman had discovered and named from PNG.

My task was to head the Menapi School and administer the dozen other schools in the district. These included four schools in the newly contacted Daga district located in the interior mountains. My first major patrol was with Fr Cruttwell to the Daga to encourage the villagers to allow their sons to come and board at Menapi for further education because the Daga schools only went to Grade Two. We were successful in persuading the first eight boys to come to the coast with us and join the weekly boarders who came from the surrounding coastal villages.

Each afternoon the Menapi boarders who included boys from coastal villages too, would enjoy swimming in the bay just in front of the school. One afternoon I was at my desk when I heard frantic screams. Two boys had been taken by a crocodile. I was the only expatriate at the Station as the Cruttwells were on leave so I raced down to the village to get help. All the village canoes quickly set out for the bay and we probed the sea floor with long sticks to see if we could locate the bodies. The villagers said that the crocodiles stowed their catches under the mangrove roots. We

had no success. Next morning a severed arm and leg were left by the tide. The two missing boys were two I had recruited from one Daga village earlier in the year. Their parents would never have seen the sea or a crocodile. I prepared to set off with the local Papuan priest on the three days walk into the mountains to tell the boys families; the people I had promised wonderful futures for their sons if they could come with me to Menapi for further education!

In the mid-afternoon of the third day we climbed along a ridge which was bisected by a river gorge. On the other side of the river the village was built on a small plateau. Gathered at the edge of the gorge was a large group of chanting people, daubed with ash paint, brandishing spears. They had heard the news! "Would they kill me?" I thought and I was scared! We scrambled down the cliff to the water and climbed up the other side to the sound of ominous chanting. I pulled myself over the lip of the plateau and as I stood up a woman, the mother of one of the boys, threw herself into my arms wailing. I burst into sobbing tears and we both stood hugging and crying. The angry chanting stopped. Although they were still angry and shouted at me for not looking after the two boys, I knew the priest and I would not be harmed. After a night filled with lots of angry yelling and sorrowful chanting I left the next morning to go back to Menapi to care for the other six boys. Understandably two of the six ran away to their Daga homes, not to return.

Nearly fifty years later at Boinai, another coastal mission station, I met two old men who had been young teachers at Menapi in 1963. When we met the first thing they said was, "Sister, remember the crocodile!" and went on to recount the incident including my patrol. It was memorable for them too.

## *John Cottier, PNG 1963-1973*



John went as a missionary priest to New Britain as his first posting in 1963. He later married Judy Hall, a missionary teacher in Papua. They worked at Simbai for three years and then moved to the Popondetta area and founded the Christian Training Centre at Jegarata. After returning to Australia John served in a number of parishes and was the Director of Christian Education for the Diocese of Melbourne for six years.

### **A** *Tropical Paradise in the Arawe Islands?*

Kumbun is one of four inhabited islands in the 50 islands of the Arawe group on the South coast of New Britain. Coral reefs and the islands form a harbour that the Japanese used in World War II when they made a landing at the Arawe Plantation on New Britain. Fr. Bernard Moore was the Priest at Kumbun and Fr. John Barge the priest at Pomete about 60 miles further up the coast towards Rabaul. Fr. Bernard died the night that the Japanese navy sailed into the harbour and his death is shrouded in mystery. Fr. John Barge was beheaded on the beach near Pomete. At the site of Fr. John's martyrdom a cross has been erected similar to one in Melanesia, built where Bishop John Coleridge Patteson was martyred. On both crosses are written the words, "His life was taken by those for whom he would freely have given it".



The Bishop Patteson memorial cross where he was martyred

Just before the war, the Bishop of Melanesia (at that time New Britain was part of the Diocese of Melanesia) ordained two New Britain villagers as deacons in case of emergency. It was much criticised at the time and one died soon after. The other deacon was Julius Ayong at Kumbun who became the face of the church there for years to come and has lived into his nineties to see his son, James, become the Archbishop of New Guinea. When I arrived at Kumbun as a new chum in 1963, Deacon Julius and his family were providing leadership in church, school and village.

One night soon after arriving, I was called to a house in the village, where a woman was dying. We said prayers together and later that night when she died we talked about the burial service. "Will we have the service in a day or two?" I asked. The reply came back, "No, Father! It will be at daybreak tomorrow – otherwise she will smell too much." Next morning as I got out of bed in the dark, I heard the noise of Winston, her son, in the graveyard behind the church, digging his mother's grave in the hard coral. It had to be ready by 6.00 am for the service. Surely this was grief therapy at its most basic, the last act of care the son could do for his mother.

*At the clergy conference held at Dogura in 1967 the clergy were billeted together in a large dormitory. During the first night of the conference a mystery sleep talker started calling out loudly, waking up the entire gathering. Nobody knew who it was and nobody owned up to it even though it happened a few times more.*

*The secret came out, and there may be some who do not know this yet, when Fr John Cottier took his successor, Fr Tim Woodeson on patrol into a first contact area in the highlands around Simbai. On the first night when tightly wrapped up in his sleeping bag against the cool mountain air, Fr John heard shouting, "Put that axe down! Put that axe down!" He scrambled out of the sleeping bag in record time to discover that Fr Tim was still asleep but shouting out loudly.*

*The secret of the ghost talker may have been laid to rest that night but John did not get back to his rest so quickly. At least there wasn't an axe to contend with as he tried to calm his shattered nerves.*



## *John Cottier, PNG 1963-1973*

John went to Simbai in 1965 and again in 2008. This visit was the subject of the talk he gave at the 2010 Missionary Conference in Adelaide.

### **Going Back, Going Forward**

The first significant European contact for the Kalam people of the Simbai valley came in 1958 with patrols through the valley by Father Peter Robin. A prospector had discovered gold in one of the rivers and made occasional visits to the valley and a small mountain airstrip was built by 1960. Father Peter started the mission settlement near this airstrip at the headwaters of the River Yinink (the Simbai River) at 6,500 feet above sea level. This also became the government headquarters for the valley. The Simbai valley is located in the highlands of Papua New Guinea about one hour's flight from Madang. It takes over three days (using the bush tracks that the government maintains) to walk the valley and the going is exhausting hard work, dangerous, steep and slippery. The people are very small, being descendants of early native pygmy inhabitants who had been pushed up into the mountains by the new coming coastal invaders some hundreds of years ago. In the 60s very few knew Pidgin English and interpreters were needed for much of the work. When I came in 1965 to relieve Father Peter, there was a small school, a medical aid post, a small number of Papuan staff and a tiny chapel for the daily worship of the staff. I was told that there were probably 40,000 or more people in the valley but we saw very few without going out to find them. Part of this was to do with the fears and beliefs associated with their animistic beliefs. Evil spirits were very real to the local people and they kept a low profile in interacting with others. The seasonal sing-sing time was the exception to this and all of the traditional social, tribal and intertribal rituals and decisions were made under strict patterns of protocol that made this interaction safe!

In 1966 the first Baptism took place. About 100 people were baptised and this included many school children and our own son, John. We had, like the other people in the valley, given our son, John, a

name that would change with his Baptism. We had called him Strawberry because this was the other name we had chosen for the cow we had recently been able to acquire. The cow was named Arabella so our son became Strawberry until his Baptism. Among the schoolboys baptised were two who had been boarders and had taken to caring for our infant son. These were Amangwe and Kum, who became Andrew and Abel and they spent hours with John and they were quite special for us.



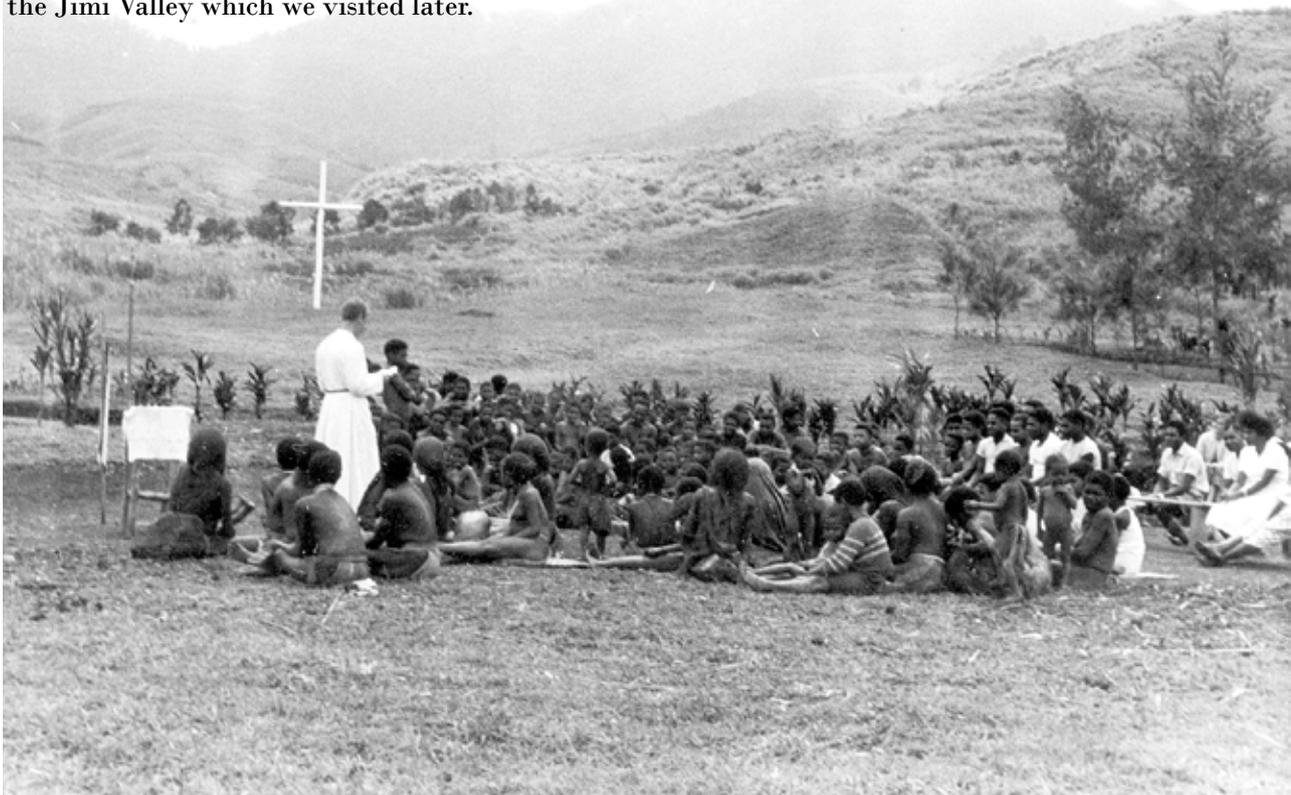
Our work at Simbai was much like other mission work. There were some tough times, some highlights including much first contact work, much routine work and the scenery was spectacular and the people usually delightful. We were there three years and were followed by Father Tim Woodeson and he was followed by Father John Donald. Father John Donald has his remains now buried at Simbai. All of the expatriate priests were only there for short spells and so the work at Simbai was taken over by Papuan and local people by the late 1970's.

In 2008 our children insisted that we take them back to see the place of their birth and early life "before we dropped off the twig" they said, and so we returned to Simbai. Our trip was one of wide-eyed amazement. In Port Moresby on our

way through we went to a Deanery meeting to discover that one of the priests was from Simbai. Then we flew to Madang where the Parish priest was from Simbai. Then we went to Simbai where the Parish priest was also a Simbai and the regional Bishop was a Simbai!! I was asked to celebrate and preach the next day being Sunday and I was a bit worried about my command of Pidgin English as I had not used it for nearly 40 years. Father Sampson assured me that the people were now all very proficient in Pidgin and I would be OK. As I spoke I was amazed that my knowledge of the language flowed back. It was quite a pentecostal experience. Even the Kalam language at which I was never very good, came back and there was much OOHING and AAHHING!! About 500 attended the service and Fr Sampson assured me that the other 14 churches in the valley, also with local Simbai priests would have similar numbers at their services. Thinking back to the first Baptism forty two years ago and seeing the growth of the church was truly humbling. The valley was still a backwater. There was still no road out of the valley and the people were a self-contained group. However now there were people everywhere. No more fears of evil spirits and no fears about other people. The people were united in a new faith which made for a wonderfully united community. We met about 20 of Judy's former schoolboys and one was the chaplain of the Evangelist Training College in the Jimi Valley which we visited later.

We looked for Andrew and Abel but Andrew was working in another place and Abel had died. We were sad to hear that, but we met his widow and his daughter and his grandchildren and we were able to tell them how we so highly regarded Abel. We were delighted that his daughter, Jessica was very active in the church, very articulate and was married to the first Simbai Bishop. Her husband, Bishop Nathan Ingen, had in fact been a product of one of the schools that we started just out of Simbai. Bishop Nathan is now the Diocesan Bishop and Judy went to his enthronement as the ABM Australian representative. We feel overwhelmed by the way in which all of this has happened. Not everybody sees the changes that take place over 50years and we feel privileged and humbled.

In 1Cor 3 Paul is chiding the Corinthian church over its divisions and remarked, "Paul planted the seed, Apollos watered it and God gave the increase". It was a privilege to go back 50 years after the first contact and see what Father Peter Robin had planted, the Cottiers, the Woodesons, the Donalds and the Papuan missionaries had watered, and the local people had harvested and replanted and watered and to discover that God had indeed given the increase. Isn't that what we are all about? How lucky we were and how certain we are that stories like this are present all over the mission field.



ABOVE: Baptism preparation at Simbai



## ***Maurice and Mary Dowell, PNG 1957-1971***

This is the amazing story of the dedication to purpose and the amount of time that Maurice spent in preparation for his work as a doctor in the mission field of PNG. Maurice remained faithful to that calling during 13 years in preparation, working in PNG for another 15 years as a mission doctor and later working for 5 years in the PNG Health Department. His wife Mary also had an incredible career in nursing. Mary died in 2011. Their son, Martin, was Director of Nursing at St. Margaret's Health Centre, Oro Bay, PNG in 1978-1979 and is still working as a Diabetes Educator for the Diabetes Association in Adelaide.

### ***Thirteen Years in the Making***

The invitation to contribute to the history of ABM made me consider the question, "How did I come to be a missionary, and what kept my vocation alive during the thirteen years which elapsed, from my responding to the challenge presented through Bishop George Cranswick in 1944 and our arrival at Gona in 1957, when I commenced working as a missionary doctor?"

One of my early Sunday School teachers was Christobel Storrs, daughter of our vicar. She was the first person I actually knew who became a missionary, when she married Rev Lionel Bakewell, and went with him to serve in Tanganyika.

The onset of war in 1939 brought our attention to the lands to the North of Australia, and especially so in 1942 when Papua and New Guinea were invaded by Japanese forces. It was about then that the work of ABM was brought to the notice of our parish. Our Vicar invited someone from ABM to send a speaker who knew about the situation of the Church in that war torn country. So I met Albert Bachelor, who had been in the areas of Papua where the Church of England was working and we got to hear about Bishop Newton and Bishop Strong, as well as the pioneers of the work, Albert MacLaren and Copeland King.

Much more telling was a visit to the Chapel of my school, Melbourne Grammar in 1943 by Bishop Philip Strong and Fr. Oliver Brady, warden of St Aidan's College for Teacher-Evangelists. They gave dramatic and intimate accounts of the impact of the Japanese invasion on the lives of the Papuan people, and of the missionaries working among them. Then after the war finished, I was privileged to hear Father James Benson give his testimony to the events during the invasion, leading to the martyrdom of his fellow workers, and the amazing way in which his own life was spared.

In 1944 the Chairman of ABM preached at our parish about the needs of the Church in Papua and the opportunity for young people to take up this challenge. I talked to him after the service expressing my interest and he arranged an interview with my father and me. At the interview he asked about my background and my thoughts for the future and whether I had considered training in Medicine, to prepare for ministry in this field. The outcome of this conversation was that I was accepted into Medical School at Melbourne University and spent the next seven years preparing to qualify as a Doctor.

ABM provided focus and encouragement during my undergraduate years through meetings of the Guild of St Andrew and the annual ABM Summer Schools. In January 1946 I attended the Summer School and Mary, who was later to become my wife, was there. From then on Mary's vocation also became clearer and eventually our vocations became united as one. Jean Henderson was present at the Summer School and she and Archdeacon and Mrs Thompson were sent forth from there to begin their work as missionaries.

Later on at Guild meetings we farewelled members of our group as they set off on missionary service. Father Keith Coaldrake went to Forrest River, and Dr Gordon and Kath Kays Smith went to Singapore in 1948. Missionaries on furlough would come and talk at our meetings and we had Margaret de Bibra from Martyrs School in 1950 and Bishop David Hand later that same year. Sister Pat Rawlings also spoke to us.

Mary and my wedding at St. Dunstan's Camberwell in November 1951 had a strong ABM flavour, with Canon W.G. Thomas performing the ceremony and one of our guild members Joan McGilvray playing the organ.

Acquiring a Medical Degree was the first step



The James Benson mural in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul at Dogura

that would equip me to be a medical missionary, but more was needed to prepare me to work in primitive conditions as probably the only person in the area with medical training. At the beginning of 1951 I wrote to the new chairman of ABM Archdeacon Robinson about this, outlining what might be the best way to get the necessary post graduate training. I had my eye on North Queensland to do a hospital residency, with the idea of acclimatizing to conditions more like Papua and gaining some experience in healing tropical diseases. I soon found out that Queensland could meet their staffing needs from their local graduates so they had no place for me at that time. I think I got the last residency job going in Victoria that year at the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital. I still had my eye on North Queensland and when I finished at Fairfield, I was accepted for a temporary position at Rockhampton Hospital. After this we received an offer to be hospital superintendent at Hughenden with the right of private practice, in a town with a population of 1700 and another 1500 in the surrounding district. Our son Martin was born there in 1954. My nearest medical colleagues were over 80 miles away and the nearest specialists were 200 miles away, but I established contacts with a number of the specialists in Townsville and found that when I applied for a position at Townsville at the beginning of 1956, I was accepted.

On the whole Townsville fulfilled my expectations, and Mary and I looked forward to moving on to whatever Papua had to offer. I made no secret of our long term goals to my medical colleagues, and no doubt this is why I was allotted two terms of six weeks each working in the hospital on Palm Island, a Government Mission for Aborigines. This was fine by Mary and me. I finally came into contact with some Tropical Diseases, particularly Leprosy and Tuberculosis. We also got to meet a marvellous old missionary Canon Ernest Gribble, then in his 90's, who had given his life in service to the Aborigines. In a roundabout way, my original

plan for preparing for Papua was coming together. After correspondence with Bishop Philip Strong it was agreed that Mary and I would work at Gona for a couple of years until the proposed new TB and Leprosy Hospital was built at Embi by the Government. It was to be staffed by the Mission under the supervision of Dr Blanche Biggs. At that stage I should take over from her as the Doctor at St Margaret's Hospital, Eroro. But it was proposed that I should first go to Sydney to undertake a course in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at the University, while we were accommodated at the House of Epiphany in Stanmore.

We finally sailed to Papua on the M.V. Bulolo in September 1957. At each port of call we were welcomed and cared for by the ABM or PNG Mission staff. Fr. Eric Hawkey made our brief stay in Brisbane enjoyable as did Fr. Lyle Turley from Koke Mission in Port Moresby. Fr. Daw and his family shared their home with us in Samarai. At Dogura I met my medical missionary colleague Ken Houston for the first time and Sister Pat Rawlings welcomed us as long lost friends. We received hospitality from Dorothea Tompkins at Mukawa, Helen Roberts and Fr. Lidbetter at Wanigela, and the Newmans at Sefoa. At Oro Bay we renewed our acquaintance with Jean Henderson and Blanche Biggs and saw St Margaret's Hospital which was destined to be our main base over the next decade. Then on to Gona to be welcomed by Fr. John and Mary Wardman, Sister Nance Elliott and Elsie Manley.

Thirteen years had passed in preparation for this. At each step of the way there was someone on hand to encourage and guide us. ABM provided some of this during undergraduate years in Melbourne but when we moved out into unknown places people with missionary experience and understanding crossed our path. Our Lord and Father had shown us that he is faithful to guide his children in all circumstances.

## ***Maurice & Mary Dowell, PNG 1957-1971***

Maurice set sail on the MV Bulolo in 1957 with his nurse wife Mary and three year old son Martin. After spending 20 years in PNG they returned to Australia. Maurice has become a prolific writer of short stories, many of which feature PNG, and we had difficulty in choosing a small sample for this publication. We have included two that highlight the medical aspect of his service. The other story that we have put in this collection "Thirteen Years in the Making" tells of his personal journey in faith.

### ***The River***

The Kumusi River in the Oro Province of Papua New Guinea has its origins on the northern slopes of the Owen Stanley Range, and it receives its first major contribution from the 3,500 metre Mount Monckton, whose summit is grass covered, since trees do not thrive at this altitude. Its source is a mere 50 kilometres from its mouth in Holnicote Bay as the crow flies but to follow its course through the convolutions of the mountain valleys which enfolds its rapids, cataracts and waterfalls, then its meandering through the flood plains of the lowlands, you would cover four times this distance.

With an annual rainfall of at least 180 inches over the mountainous part of its catchment area grading down to 100 inches near the coast, there is an assurance of significant flow throughout the year, and a rapid rise and fall in its levels after the heavy downpours of 10 inches or more, which characterise the monsoon season from November to April. My first encounter with the Kumusi was in November 1957, less than two months after arriving at Gona, our home on the coast for our first two years in PNG. It was a three day trek overland to Siai which was about halfway along the floodplain part of the Kumusi's course. The wet season was already well underway, and we had a couple of hairy experiences with flooded creeks along the way. In one instance we had to re-cross a stream we'd forded quite easily the previous afternoon; but an overnight deluge had added to its volume more than I'd bargained for. Jumping into what I thought would be waist deep water I disappeared from sight, except for my right hand, clutching my camera, which I somehow managed to keep above water-level as I struggled back to shore.

My Papuan companions were more prudent, and simply felled a tree so that it came down in the correct position to provide a bridge to cross the ten metre torrent. But the Kumusi was a different proposition entirely, being 50 to 60 metres wide and

obviously quite deep with a five knot current. Along this part of its course every riverside village had a ferry-man, paid a small wage by the government to transport all-comers during daylight hours across the river. His ferry was a dug-out canoe, with a platform amidships, and an outrigger lashed to one side for balance. Close to the bank he preferred to pole his craft along but he had to resort to a paddle in the deeper sections.

The land along this part of the Kumusi is home to the Aika people whose language is a dialect of Orokaivan. It was here that I encountered mosquitoes in plague proportions. Not just the *Anopheles* species which transmit Malaria parasites, and confine their biting to the hours of darkness, but numerous day-biting *Culecines*, who transmit *Filaria* (a cause of Elephantitis) and Dengue.

In the two years I lived at Gona I saw a steady stream of patients from all the Aika villages, presenting with skin lesions on different parts of their body. They were essentially ulcers with undercut edges and a floor of thick yellow grey material, which represented the now-dead layers of subcutaneous fat. The first one I saw reminded me of a condition that I had learned about at the School of Tropical Medicine at Sydney University, so I sent a specimen from my patient to Sydney and had it confirmed that it was indeed a case of *Mycobacterium ulcerans*.

Some years later, Dr Anthony Radford, who was in charge of rural training for medical students from the University of PNG made the Akai people his special interest in field work for his trainees. He noted that the occurrence of these ulcers was limited to people living along the Kumusi and published his findings in the Papua New Guinea Medical Journal, coining the term Kumusi Ulcer.



## **Pat Durdin, PNG 1950-1956, 1980**

Pat Durdin served as a missionary nurse with ABM in PNG from 1950-1956. On returning to Australia she joined the Community of the Holy Name in Melbourne, where she was known as Sister Patience. Later, with a small group of Sisters she came to live in Wangaratta, in the Community of Christ the King. Her twin sister Joan Durdin also served as a missionary nurse in PNG engaged in the training of nurses at Dogura, from 1966-1972.

## **Recollections of Early Days as a Missionary Nurse**

In February 1950 Isivita was an isolated Mission Station inland from the coast and some distance from Sangara. Father Henry Holland\* had pioneered the work in that area and it had recently been re-opened as a Mission district. I came to PNG and spent a few months at St Barnabas Hospital, Dogura, where I gained valuable experience with Sister Pat Rawlings who was in charge of the hospital. Then I went to join Mrs Barbara Lane at Isivita. For the first few months we were mostly without the services of a priest in charge, but just before Christmas the Reverend Robert Porter\* arrived. We were a group of three expatriate missionaries in this newly opened area, setting up medical work for the first time and ministering to the people living in villages nearby. There were very few Christians, but many locals were coming in for preparation for Baptism. Father Porter had been there barely three weeks when the eruption of Mt Lamington occurred and the whole of the Sangara area was destroyed and some 4,000 people including all the mission staff were killed. By a seeming miracle Isivita Mission Station escaped the full force of the blast of that eruption and after 24 hours we were able to leave and find safety at a little outstation called Waseta.

The 4,000 and more people from Isivita and other villages in the vicinity were evacuated to a refugee camp on the banks of the Kumusi River, and after a week or so Father Porter and I were able to join them and we worked there for the next six weeks. Then after Easter I was able to come back to Waseta, which by then was being set up as an alternative to Isivita and a safe place for the Mission to re-establish. The village men quickly responded to our request for help to erect two buildings which would serve as a dispensary and hospital ward. So it was possible now to get into some sort of routine to provide medical care for the crowds of children

and other village people who came each day for treatment. Some were admitted to the hospital, mostly accompanied by one or more relatives and it was not long before the ward was overcrowded.

One outstanding recollection from those times was when we were expecting a visit from our Bishop, Phillip Strong and Archbishop Mowll, the Primate who had been invited to come to the sixth Anniversary of the founding of the Mission. There was to be a big gathering of the staff from the northern Mission Stations at Gona. Nancy White, had joined me as the teacher at Waseta, and we were planning to attend. A few days before, one of the senior school boys was brought to the hospital suffering from a very severe form of malaria, lapsing in and out of consciousness. We were very worried about him and I asked Ambrose Isorembo, the Head teacher, to come and baptise him. The boy, Burimi was already a catechumen, preparing for baptism. Ambrose talked to Burimi explaining what we were going to do though we doubted that he was conscious and able to take in what was being said. He was baptised and given the name of Andrew. From that moment a quite dramatic change took place and Andrew began to show signs of recovery. He told Ambrose that he was very afraid of sorcery and had been fearful of dying. Ambrose was able to reassure him, telling him that having received God's grace through Baptism he was safe from all that had been troubling him. Andrew's acceptance was a wonderful thing to witness, and we all rejoiced as he gradually returned to health. Bishop Philip and Archbishop Mowll came to Waseta within the next few days and as we showed them around our little bush hospital they met Andrew and gave him a blessing.

\*Fr. Henry Holland was one of the New Guinea martyrs.  
\*Fr. Robert Porter, along with Mrs Barbara Lane, Pat Durdin and Rodd Hart, was given an OBE for his work at the time of the Mt. Lamington disaster. Fr. Porter later became the Bishop of The Murray in South Australia.



## *Joan Durdin, PNG 1966-1972*

I was a tutor sister at St Barnabas Hospital School of Nursing in the late 1960s when some Papuans were providing good leadership roles for their people. One such person was Jocelyn Wesley. Jocelyn was the housekeeper at Dogura House, a large two-storied building which accommodated about ten expatriate female staff members, and where all the expatriates gathered for their meals and occasional recreational activities. Jocelyn was in her mid-thirties. One day I found myself reflecting on her earlier life, her response to changes as she grew to adulthood, the role she played both in the village and in the European Community, and her potential for leadership in the future. I wrote this short account of Jocelyn and her work in 1968.

### **J**ocelyn, a New Age Woman

Jocelyn was born in Wedau Village before the Second World War. As a child she attended the mission school in Dogura, and had contact with members of the Anglican Mission staff who lived there. In the village she lived in a society that had little reason to change its pattern of living from that which had developed over hundreds of years. To a European, village life seemed simple. Time was of no significance and daily needs were met through the use of local products and materials. When Jocelyn left primary school, she lived for a time near Wedau in the household of the Guise\* family, some of whose members were skippers of the mission boats. In their home English was spoken as well as Wedaun. Being of mixed race origin, this family lived in some ways differently from their village neighbours. Jocelyn became familiar with other ways of cooking food, and with a more sophisticated way of living.

A few years later she married Stanley Wesley, the skipper of one of the vessels which provided transport for missionaries and carried stores to the Mission Stations up and down the Eastern coast of Papua New Guinea. The home base for the boat was Madang, where Jocelyn and Stanley lived. While Stanley was at sea Jocelyn cared for her small children and kept house for Bishop David Hand, who was based in Madang. Tragically Stanley died when their oldest child was four, the second child less than two and another baby was on the way. To return to her mother's home in Wedau was the obvious thing to do and for four years Jocelyn again lived in the village.

During this time she began to see a need to draw the women of the community together to broaden

their horizons and to share some of the skills she had learnt. She formed a Women's Club, encouraged by village leaders particularly Nicodemus Kederosi, another forward looking Papuan. To him she gave credit for the scheme. Nicodemus also conducted Bible Studies for the women, seeing in this an opportunity for their Christian education to be continued beyond what they learnt at school.

In the early 1960s the Bishop invited Jocelyn to become housekeeper for the European members of the staff at Dogura House. Through her experience in Madang, Jocelyn was accustomed to European ways of cooking and serving food but her new role was a big assignment. It included the major part of cooking and supervision of a group of girls who helped with the kitchen and housekeeping tasks. She also catered for conferences and other special events. Two of her children were now at school, and she had sole responsibility for them. They lived at first in a small room at Dogura House and later in a house of bush materials, around which she soon developed a garden that rivalled all others in the vicinity.

As time passed Jocelyn assumed other responsibilities and new functions. Through her interest as one of the members of the Department of District Affairs she was recommended for a course in catering and went to Honolulu in 1966 to spend six months in the East West Centre. On completing the course it was expected that she might be interested in work in some other sphere but family responsibilities, a sense of loyalty to the Mission and concern for her village community brought her back to Dogura.

In 1967 Jocelyn had the opportunity to visit Australia as the Papuan representative to a

Mothers Union Conference. Subsequently her involvement with the affairs of the Mothers Union extended. From Dogura she kept in close contact with the people of Wedau who looked to her as a leader and adviser. When asked to say how she felt about her work, she replied, "I'm glad to share what I've learnt but I wish that more women could have leadership roles. I wish that women could give sermons in Church. There is something that I want so much to say to the Wedaun women at present – something that I have just heard about, and I want them to think about what good they could do, and what harm could come from the way they are thinking at present. But I'll find a way of discussing it with them."

Jocelyn was very much part of their lives. At a wedding in Wedau, some of the bride's expatriate friends from Dogura went down to the village as guests. They waited long past the scheduled time for the ceremony and finally the wedding party arrived. Why were they late? Well, Jocelyn was making the dresses for the bride and the bridesmaid. She had not been given the material until rather

late. Then her time was unexpectedly taken when a village couple asked her to help them resolve their marriage dispute. Fortunately no one worries too much about lateness in PNG, except time bound Europeans, so there was no embarrassment. But Jocelyn's comment later was typical of her, "I think they are alright now."

*\* In the early 20th. Century the Guise family were prominent in New Guinea life. Descendants of a French settler and a local Papuan wife they were identities in the Anglican Church and the nation. Edward Guise was the skipper of the MV St. George, the mission vessel, and visited every coastal mission station over many years of service. He was decorated for his service to the Australian forces during World War II. Sir John Guise entered politics and was a member of the interim government that prepared the country for Independence in 1975. He was elected as a member of Parliament and was the Speaker of the House from 1973 to 1975. He was knighted in 1975 and appointed the first Governor General of the new nation.*



FROM THE URA LAMBTON COLLECTION IN THE ABM ARCHIVES: The Mother House at Dogura

## *Alan and Sue Dutton, Melanesia 1957-1968*



Alan Dutton served in schools and worked as a chaplain for much of his ministry. He was the Headmaster of St. Barnabas School, Alanguala when he first went to Melanesia. He served in three dioceses in Australia and as a school chaplain in Adelaide and Perth. He was the Organizing Secretary for ABM in Adelaide for three years after he returned from the Solomon Islands and now lives in retirement in Adelaide.



### **P**oor Missionaries

My successor thought that Sue and Alan Dutton had lived a Robinson Crusoe type existence at Siota where the theological college had been since 1896 for we had lived there for eight years. It was in fact three hours by sea from Malaita and three hours by sea from the capital, Honiara, if there was a boat available. So the college was moved to Kohimarama,

Guadalcanal, which is linked to Honiara by road. In the 1960's-70's the bridges were often down, swept away in the wet season so Kohimarama could be isolated too.

However we did not feel isolated. We had local visitors including the Dominican Bishop of the Western Solomons, the Head of the South Seas Evangelical Mission. We had distinguished overseas visitors including Nicholas Spalding, the Professor of Eastern Religions from Oxford, Henry van Dusen, the Head of the United Theological College in New York, Professor Charles Forman from Harvard and Howard Johnson who wrote *An Anglican Odyssey*. Nicholas was delighted that each day he was with us, while Melitza had a rest, two students would take him out on the reef and he could look for shells. Each morning he would talk to the students about Eastern Churches.

Charles Foreman was a joy. He responded to the lively reception, an armed attack given by the children of the students which they gave to the visitors by playing dead. The day before I went over to Honiara to meet him the students who always fished on Thursday afternoon bought three crayfish to Susan. "We'll have a tail each," she sensibly suggested, "and all the rest can go into a mornay". So at dinner in our home he said, "This isn't crayfish is it? In the States no clergyman could

afford to eat crayfish". While in Honiara I bought a shoulder of lamb which was sold in Honiara at export prices, about half the Sydney price. The next evening as I carved the lamb Charles said, "Is this lamb? In the States almost no one can afford to eat lamb." I had bitten my tongue on Friday. I did not do so on Saturday. "Then become a poor missionary!" I retorted.

We did eat well. We had mostly local produce although exotic food like onions, cheese and some tinned food we imported from Sydney. McIlraiths did a fine job and the diocese paid the freight. Talking about shopping, here's a story about Bishop Alfred Hill,\* who wanted kerosene but being English he ordered paraffin instead and got medicinal paraffin. Several gallons would sort out many constipated persons. Attempts to grow a vegetable garden in Siota were all too often frustrated by land crabs, but we had a goat which produced milk. It was an idyllic place to bring up children, though behind us we had a swamp and in front of us was the open sea where the Boli Passage ended. We found we had no problems with culture shock when we arrived but on our return to Australia to our "Christian" civilization we suffered a great deal of culture shock. It was in South Australia that we had to teach our children about 'Stranger Danger'.

Often people congratulated us on being missionaries, but on the Island of Ngela Pile (small Gella) we lived in a fully Christian society where everyone was an Anglican and nearly every one attended evening prayer daily. I have rather tried to become a missionary much more since I returned to Australia.

*\*An accolade for the Bishop of Melanesia, Alfred Hill, a former master mariner who when he became Bishop spent 300 out of 365 days each year visiting his clergy in the Solomon Islands which were then named the New Hebrides. Bishop Alfred was famous for his sense of humour, his ready wit and hilarious story telling.*

TOP LEFT: A Melanesian cross with mother-of-pearl inlay



## ***Bill and Chris Fairbrother, Carpentaria 1965-1968***

Bill and Chris served at Cape York in Northern Australia and wrote, "We spent a year at the House of the Epiphany in 1964, with our little son, Peter nearly one. This was a most exciting time. Peter was about a year old and attended lectures with us every day. There we did our ThA, Tropical Medicine, Anthropology, First aid basic language studies, and lots of other things, sharing with about thirty other students."

### ***Home Missions***

At the end of our training we went before the Directors of the Mission Board (with me very great with my second child). They asked us where we would like to go. Bill said, "Anywhere at all," and I said, "Not New Guinea, and I'd love to go to the South Seas." "Good," they said, and sent us to work with Australian Aborigines right here in Australia!

So off we went, stopping at Thursday Island on the way to give birth. When we got to Edward River, now Pormpuraaw, with a week old baby, and a two year old it was so exciting and strange. It was a rather good fibro house, from which they had pulled off the cabbage tree walls and roof. There were drums of water in the kitchen and bathroom, which were filled from the well every couple of days, and there was a little generator outside on a wheelbarrow. We were also advised that the next day a bookkeeper would arrive, and would live with us.

Our spiritual life was under the care of old Fr. Cyril Brown who kept a stern eye on all, even going round the village on Worship mornings with his bell, waking everyone up. Of course, the old British style Anglo Catholic worship for Aboriginal people who could hardly speak English, was rather strange, but they were always very faithful, dogs and all. There was a new church when we got there, with a shell grit floor, which was very painful to kneel on. The men sat to the left and the women to the right. Life was great there. Bill taught mechanics and I ran the hospital including the baby clinic when there was no nurse. For one term I was the only person with old Father Brown to run the school complete with slates and one pre-school reader and no other teaching aides. Our old yardman Mike was a wonderful help, and if Bill was away working when there was a medical emergency, he would sit under the tree for most of the day with our two toddlers, singing to them and keeping them very happy.

The women were extremely shy, and you would be threatened with a spear if you asked if one was pregnant. (They were entitled to a powdered milk ration if they were). So I worked out that when they came to weigh their little ones, I would say as they left "If you should be getting your milk ration, just take it", and after that we could talk about their condition, and arrange for checkups as the flying doctor only came monthly, and not for months in the wet. I must admit their babies always looked much healthier than mine, being so dark and shiny. I really wasn't equipped to deal with it when someone would walk in with a minute baby that they had squatted on the ground and produced.

The toilets were a bit difficult. They consisted of two 44 gallon drums side by side, with a hole in the top of one, and a seat over the other. One had to drop a heap of firewood in one, use it for one week, and then change to the other one and put more firewood in the first, a cup of kero, and a match. It would smoulder for days, but kept the mosquitos away. Of course that was down the back yard, and one had to watch for snakes of which there were many. We even had snakes coming up the cracks in the cement floor in the lounge. One of the missionaries, Jenny Nolan, once attacked a snake in her toilet with a 410 shotgun in the middle of the day causing all the men nearby to flee, thinking she had gone crazy!

After some time Bill decided that I should have a washing machine, and he found an old ringer one, and put a petrol motor on the outside of it, which I would have to straddle. Trying to teach Lizzie our house girl we were training, to use the wringer was pretty difficult. Our laundry was right near where all the men congregated for work, and they would all come and watch. Nothing like that had ever been seen before.

Bill, being the only mechanic in all Cape York, also

had to do maintenance work on Kowanyama and Lockhart. The old Land Rover was always the first vehicle out after the wet. One day in early 1966, we were driving with Matthew, Bill's mechanic, pointing to where the track would be, as the grass was above the vehicle. We hit a large log hidden in the grass and myself and baby Stephen were thrown through the air. His leg was severely broken, and we had to head on to two other stations before we were able to get the Aerial Ambulance to come. Bill and Matthew drove on to Lockhart, and Stephen spent 10 weeks happily in hospital. When it was time to get him home, and Bill decided to bring out the old Blitz truck from Lockhart, the track was so bad, it was six days before we even got off the mission property, and were bogged about forty times.

By then we had three children, and as the Government took over all the Missions in 1967, we left to trip around Australia to find somewhere to live. However on the way, the Bishop called us to go to St Paul's, Moa Island for six months asking Bill to look after the place while the priest was away.



What a magnificent place that was. The people were so open and friendly. In fact, they looked after us! Bill rebuilt the Ark, the original Mission House and the Theological College. Peter went to school there and the only hassle was that the teacher, a Torres Strait Islander, said to me that my child had to speak English if he was to be in her class! He had obviously picked up some of their dialect. We lived on crayfish, bananas and fish, and the people continually practised their spirituality. They spoke about the Lord all the time, and sang all day. It was a sad day when our job was done and we had to leave again.

We were so privileged to be able to have those few years in the Cape and we praise the Lord for it.



*John Coleridge Patteson*

*The Diocese of Melanesia has a history that is pure storybook material. The very first Roman Catholic missionaries in the 1600s were all killed and no mission activity took place until the Anglican church sent Bishop John Coleridge Patteson (above) as the first Bishop of Melanesia in the middle of the 19th century. After many extensive sea trips and much gentle persuasion he was slain on a new contact island because he was of the same race of people who were blackbirding the islanders. Blackbirding was the practice of kidnapping strong young men and taking them to work on distant plantations.*

*The Diocese comprised hundreds of islands and seafaring was the way to go. The mission boat "Southern Cross" had more than 20 manifestations over the years: some were sunk on reefs or in storms, others became obsolete and some just wore out.*

*Melanesia was right in the middle of World War II and the stretch of water off Guadalcanal is known as Iron Bottom Sound because of the number of ships sunk there. Many stories have been written about the conflict between the Americans and the Japanese in the 1940s. "Tales of the South Pacific" by James Michener is the basis for the famous musical "South Pacific." John Kennedy, later president of the USA, served there on torpedo boats and a book was written about this experience.*



## **Charles Fox, Melanesia 1902-1972**

Alan Dutton reminisces about a legend of Melanesian missionary activity who spent over seventy years in the islands.

### ***My Neighbour's Story***

Charles Elliot Fox, D. Litt. (below) known affectionately to thousands of Melanesians as Fockis lived at the southern end of The Mboli Passage at Taroaniara, where one of the world's largest natural harbours, which might have been the base for the British Pacific fleet after World War I, is located (but that's another story). "Fockis" had been turned down for missionary service in 1899 as "being too frail". He had been accepted in 1902 and with hundreds of others I had the joy of sharing at the Eucharist and the feast that followed when we celebrated his 60th anniversary of arrival in 1962. At that gathering Dr Fox said that some people criticize Christian missions but we have taken away fear and given joy to Melanesia in a present and future hope.



He thanked God that (as Bishop Patteson had hoped) the Melanesian Mission's members had mostly trained themselves out of work. Joshua and others were master mariners and the Press and marine workshops were run by Melanesians. Dr Fox had wanted to die in Melanesia. This did not happen but that too is

another story. He was a delight. When he came to stay Sue would say "And what world record have you broken since we last met?" No mean chess player District Commissioner Jim Tedder told me that when he first met Dr Fox he challenged him to a game of chess and lost three in ten minutes. Dr Fox had been the correspondence Chess World Champion. A man of many talents, he was consulted by the Smithsonian Institute as the authority on Pacific shells. He founded the first school in the Solomons, at St. Michael's, Pamua when the locals were still cannibals. He also wrote

the history of their social organization, a dictionary of the Arosi language and later a dictionary of the Nggela language.

He had a friend, Wakere, a local chief, to whom he wanted to introduce to a newly arrived Archdeacon. It had been raining heavily in the monsoon season. The very white but not happy Englishman found that a stream they could normally cross easily was a raging torrent over sharp rocks. A tree was cut and laid across it with some difficulty. Finally the tall Archdeacon crawled over the flimsy bridge. Dr Fox wrote, "It was quite a new sight to me – a tall Archdeacon with nothing on, about ten feet above my head, crawling along a slippery bough with somewhat the motion of a large white caterpillar and with a look of horror on his face. The lesser clergy ought not to see these things. I think he fell off and we caught him; anyhow we went on again". Dr Fox told the Archdeacon that Wakere with other chiefs would be sitting in state to receive us. "We must put on our clothes" he said. The Archdeacon's clothes were missing and I lent him my large bath towel. When we arrived Wakere, who was expecting something unusual, said in Arosi language, "Is that an Archdeacon?" Fox replied in Arosi, "Yes, they always wear unusual clothes." Which, of course, is true.

Wakere was not as friendly as he seemed and afterwards became quite surly. In fact he set an ambush of men at the side of the track to spear them on the way back. Dr Fox said, "We neither saw nor heard them and only heard about it later. I know not what, it may have been the sudden vision of a tall white Archdeacon with a grim, set, white face and peculiar costume that daunted the hill men."

## *Joy Freier, Carpentaria 1983-1988*



Joy had a long association with Northern Australia even before she returned to work at Kowanyama with her husband, Philip. They now live in Melbourne where Philip is the Archbishop Of Melbourne. Joy writes, "I've always had a strong sense of Christian service, something that grew with me in my life in the church for as far back as I can remember. I became a Home Economics teacher and in my training developed a strong sense of a Christian vocation to work with Aboriginal people. Baralaba, Mornington Island and then Thursday Island were the places in Queensland this vocation took me."

### ***Called to be there***

These were tough appointments in different ways for a single woman but were all very rich times of doing what I felt called to do. I met Philip Freier, another teacher, on Thursday Island and we married back in Emerald, Queensland in 1976 just before Christmas.

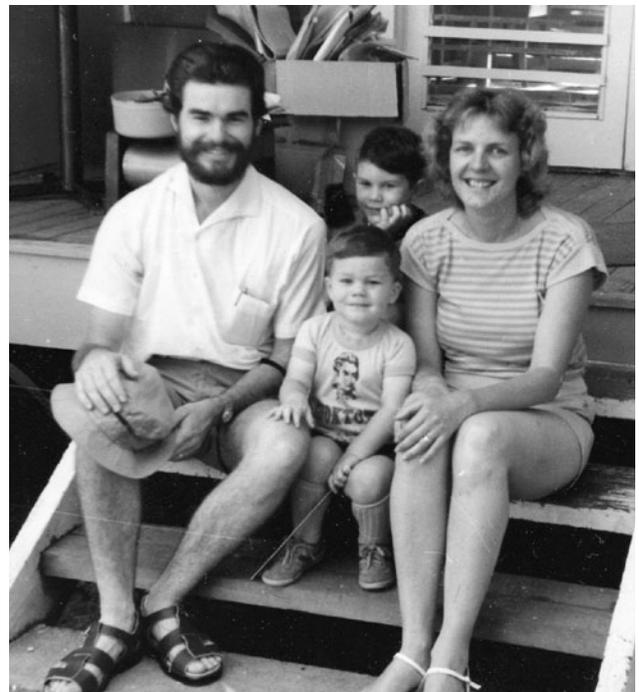
The school year of 1977 saw us off to start a new secondary school at Kowanyama, formerly Mitchell River Mission in Western Cape York Peninsula. Two years there and then the same exercise again at Yarrabah, outside of Cairns. Our first child, Michael, was born in 1979. We moved to Cairns in 1980 and then, unexpectedly to me, Philip started exploring whether he had a vocation to the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church. To further this exploration we sold our house in Cairns and moved to a theological college at Morpeth, just outside of Newcastle in New South Wales.

I didn't realise it at the time but my life had taken a turn that would be made several more times where it was Philip's calling, not mine, that shaped our future and where we would go as a family. Our second son, David, was born in 1981. Now in our late twenties we were poor and cold in a strange land! Despite this we pulled through and I was able to upgrade my three years teaching qualification to an education degree.

The unexpected opportunity for us to return to Kowanyama as ABM supported missionaries and for Philip to be ordained and serve in ministry there was welcome good news that we both responded to with excitement. Philip visited Kowanyama in September 1983 and came back with glowing reports of how great the Church House was and how much I would like it. This was at odds with what I had observed some five years before but I was glad that there had been improvement. How

I cried when I finally saw it and realised I was right and that he had been swept away by the anticipation of his new life as a priest!

There were tough times but also untold depths of learning during that period between 1983 and 1988. To meet a shortfall of staffing at the local school I went back to work and pioneered community based learning for teenagers at risk of dropping out from school. It was wonderfully rewarding and I think made a decisive difference to the life opportunity for some of those young people.





## *Alan and Jan Gate, PNG 1967-69, 83 - 94*

Alan and Jan Gate served in PNG altogether for 14 years. Alan served as the priest in charge at Koinambe when they first came to PNG. In 1983 they returned and Alan served at Dogura as Secretary and parish priest and in 1985 as Provost and parish priest at Rabaul. In 1989 they returned again to Dogura where Alan was Diocesan Secretary and Dean of the Cathedral for a time and then Holy Name School Chaplain. Jan served as Headmistress of Rabaul High School and of Holy Name School. They now live in retirement in Brisbane.

### **F**irst Baptisms in the Jimmi

At the conclusion of 1967, after spending nine months on missionary training in Sydney at the House of the Epiphany, the Gate family, Father Alan, Jan and their children Peter and Jannine were flown in a small aeroplane run by the Missionary Aviation Fellowship, into the Jimi Valley in the Western Highlands District of Papua Guinea.

The first mission priest in the Jimmi, Fr Peter Robin, was due to go on leave, and I had been appointed to run the station in his absence. We settled into the Donga, a house built of bush materials, and were quickly involved in the demanding life at the Koinambe mission station. Bishop Bevan Meredith, the Regional Bishop in the Highlands, was keen to come and perform the first Baptisms in the Jimmi at Kompiai, before the Robin family went on leave.

I soon became involved in station life, with two patrols each month in the Bismark Range. The first was to the outstations at Kompiai, Kupeng Kwima, Togban, and Koriom. The second patrol, a fortnight later took me to Bokabi and Kandambiamb. The daily routine whilst on patrol included celebrating the Eucharist, taking Giu\*, and making sure that the people knew their baptismal promises, sorting out marriages \*, (a complicated matter in the polygamous society) hearing confessions, and then at least a three hour walk to the next station.

On the eventful day in December 1967, the entire Kompiai village of 800 people were assembled together. There was also present a large number of observers from other villages, a reporter from the PNG Post Courier, and expatriates. The catechumens to be baptised wore traditional clothing, and were presented to Bishop Bevan, Fr. Peter and myself. The service was taken in the

Maring language and began with the baptisms near a fast flowing stream from which water flowed through three bamboo pipes at which the three missionaries were stationed. When all were baptised, each put on a white laplap, and processed behind the cross to the village church. Here Bishop Bevan duly confirmed them and they then received their first communion. After the service the whole village came together for feasting and a traditional Sing-Sing.

The Baptisms were a culmination of four years of Patrolling and Evangelising by the Mission priest and the Papuan teacher evangelists in the villages. Each candidate had spent two years as a Hearer, and a further two years as a Catechumen before their Baptism. So the Gospel, according to Apostolic practice, spread through the Jimmi with further baptisms at other outstations in the months following. Today the Jimmi River Mission is one of the large parishes in the Highlands with their own local assistant Bishop stationed at neighbouring Simbai.

*\*Giu is the Wedau word for Religious instruction*

*\*When a man came for baptism he was required to have only one wife. If he had more than one wife he was asked to put aside other wives. One man announced that he could not come for baptism because he liked number two wife, "more better", than number one! This requirement put a great disruption onto village life and the wife that was put aside became vulnerable. Lambeth Conference eventually tussled with this problem and moderated its firm line for first generation baptisms.*



## ***David Gill, PNG 1928-1933***

Peter Milburn, who is brilliant at keeping in contact with former missionaries and PNG personnel, is also constantly keeping us informed about PNG matters. He forwarded to his readers a copy of the following extract from an Address “In the Footsteps of Cecil and Romney Gill” delivered at a PNG Church/Partnership, 1994 London Day Conference. David Gill recalls his time in PNG before World War II and feels the pull of his famous family predecessors in the mission field. David has since died.

### ***F***rances Mary and her Namesake

I was eleven years old when my sister Mary died of whooping cough at the hospital in Samarai in May 1929. She was just under three years old. In May 1926 my parents had arrived in New Guinea to set up the first hospital and mission at Gona by the mouth of the Kikiri Creek.

I grew up at Gona. When I was five, my mother contracted blackwater fever, for which the only cure was to leave the tropics forever. We all returned in 1933, my parents to a new life very far removed from their experiences of the last seven years. But the memory of the sister I never knew was always kept very much alive in our family. Every year we remembered her birthday, July 1st. For me she was a little figure in the two faded photographs in my parent’s bedroom. In one she is standing in a white vest by the Kikiri with the old footbridge behind her, the other is of me astride our old black retriever, Jim hanging grimly to her hand

This March I returned with my family to Gona for the first time for 61 years. Nothing remains of the old mission. Time and war have taken their toll. But the beach was the same and so it seemed was the creek. I could see in my mind where Frances Mary had stood.

Ezekiel Boru, the Chairman of the Church Council, had been showing us around when he stopped to tell me something which took me completely by surprise. There was a lady, he said, Ethel Usuko, who now lived with her daughter in Popondetta who as a young girl had helped to look after my sister. I must see her. She had a daughter herself who now worked at the hospital. She was called Frances Mary.

Back at Popondetta, Blazius our driver from Newton College took us straight to the hospital and told us to wait while he went in to enquire.

After a few minutes he called us and there I saw my sister’s namesake. She was slim with bright eyes and a firm handshake that belied a shy smile. Yes her mother was very well, though getting a little frail. We arranged to meet the next morning our last day in PNG.

I still don’t understand the Papuans. I had expected a simple brief visit to her home and a little chat, just the three of us. But the next morning when we arrived there were twenty or more family and neighbours gathered in the garden, flower petals strewn over the grass, a table decorated with coloured leaves and piled high with fruit and gifts. A little grey haired lady came towards me; there were flowers in her hair and leaves tucked into a band around her arms. Her eyes looked at me with in disbelief as though I were a ghost. She didn’t speak but held me very tightly.

I sat surrounded by all their smiles and laughing faces. Frances Mary spoke for her mother. She had always been told about her namesake, how her mother had looked after her, and how she had died. Her mother had wanted to try and find the family of her namesake in England and just two years ago she had given up, after trying to trace us through the church. As we were leaving she said “You know when the man came into the office yesterday, and said there was an Englishman who wanted to see me – I knew it was you.”

This is when I finally surrendered to Papua New Guinea. In that moment was caught, all that we had seen and discovered in the last three days with her people, their faith, their hope and their love.

## **John Grainger, PNG 1963-1965 Melanesia 1966-1968**



John was a printer in Melbourne when he volunteered to serve in the mission field. He very quickly adapted to the new requirements when he arrived and became a valued member of the Diocesan building and maintenance team. Bishop David asked John if he would like to go and teach in the Solomon Islands. There, he was able to get back to his original trade as a printer and pass on his skills to Melanesians

### **M**emories

It was quite a sight a on Sunday mornings before Mass at Eroro to see the tractor and trailer arriving from St Luke's Hospital at Embi which was about three miles up the road. This was in the early days before the new St Margaret's Hospital site was settled, let alone with construction under way. Perched on benches were the dimdim\* contingent of Her Majesty Dr. Blanche Biggs, Nance Elliot, Dorothea Tomkins and Dorothy Osbourne with Bob Muntz (non-mission staff), all dressed up and driving the tractor, and the rest of the trailer carrying however many could squeeze on.

Alas we did not record these occasions by taking photos. My best personal memories however are of my wedding to Elaine at Eroro. There is nothing quite like getting married in the tropics, in the mission field at the church where you work and amongst the multicultural fellow workers that have become your friends in that setting.

The church had been decorated completely with frangipani. Dr Maurice Dowell gave Elaine away while his wife, Mary, prepared the breakfast. Alan White was the best man. Nancy Vesperman was the bridesmaid. Fr Byam Roberts was the marriage celebrant, Fr Hannington celebrated the Nuptial Mass. Ken Wynn, a local plantation owner, provided a white Peugeot for the wedding car and other major "players" on the day were a large contingent from Martyrs School and Popondetta mission station. I expect that the over-loaded tractor from Embi came again that day but I was a bit pre-occupied getting married to be sure.

This was the first European wedding held at Eroro up till that time, and I have not heard of any since although the priest at Eroro, Fr. Jeremy Ashton, now Bishop, and Betty Randall, the teacher, were married later in PNG.

\* "dimdim" is the Wedau word for a person of European descent, a foreigner to PNG.



*The Rautamara family in PNG has been involved in mission activity with three generations giving leadership over 120 years. Canon Peter (left) was the first Papuan priest to be ordained in the Anglican Church in PNG, Fr John lost his life in the Mt Lamington eruption and Fr Peter John, who started the Evangelist Training College in the Jimi Valley is living in retirement near Alotau. In 1966 Canon Peter preached at the 75th Anniversary of the landing of the first ABM missionaries to come to PNG. At a shrine at Kaieta, near Dogura, where the original landing took place, he recalled how as a youngster, he had stood with the village men as the whaleboat came across the bay carrying Fr Albert MacLaren, Fr Copeland King, Mr and Mrs Tomlinson and Mr Kennedy. The warriors on the beach had spears on the ground between their toes ready to kill the intruders when they landed. Small canoes went out into the surf to bring the missionaries ashore from the whaleboat. As the two priests boarded the canoe it tipped the men into the water and the warriors on the beach ran into the sea and pulled them to safety. This accident changed everything. Now that the Papuans had saved the lives of the missionaries, according to their custom, they were obliged to protect them. Undoubtedly the two men were annoyed at their dunking in the sea, but it actually saved their lives and made it possible for the mission work to begin.*



## ***Brian Harding, PNG 1953-1958***

Brian came to PNG as a young man in 1953 and has maintained his interest in mission ever since. He was priested in 1962 and now lives in retirement in Melbourne after serving as a priest in the Dioceses of Ballarat, Bendigo and North West Australia.

### ***Here, There and Everywhere***

I never wanted to be a Priest. I escaped to PNG as a 22 year old to serve as a worker in the mission field. There were 17 new and serving missionaries on the boat, including children; we were met by Bishop Strong in Port Moresby. The Diocese was running on credit from the three stores in Samarai. Bishop Strong did not know I was coming - it had been arranged through Bishop Hand and ABM. Bishop Strong said "We cannot afford to feed him - he must go home". Food and the 64 dollars per annum salary was a burden the cash strapped Diocese could not carry. Nurses, teachers and doctors were personnel who got Government funding but not agriculturalists and tradesmen.

At the Conference in the mid 50s, Bishop Strong told us that the three stores in Samarai were going to stop supplying the Mission because our debt exceeded 10,000 pounds. So the Diocese was preparing to close down all European involvement. We were never told why, but the stores kept trading. We suspect it was because Vivian Kinnear, a daughter of the big rope company owner in Melbourne, had come on staff and somehow the money was promised.

We missionaries disembarked in Samarai from the 'Bulolo' on the morning of the Coronation of our present Queen. It was a shock to go from the high living on a passenger ship to Mission tinned food. My work included building village style houses in Sasembata, carefully pulling apart packing cases, straightening bent nails and building benches for village style mission houses and the hospital, and helping a 75 year old retired plumber finish off the Bishop's house in Madang and building the Rectory & the "haus boi"\*. Water tanks were luxuries not seen on Mission stations. While turning iron to make tanks in Madang I did things too quickly and made a circle out of one sheet. I then made another and had my own water tank. Having been

reared in the bush of Gippsland and having worked in saw mills, I had the ability to cut weatherboards out of trees; the ones I cut in New Britain were used for the Kumbun mission house.

In New Britain I established a station for agricultural purposes, set up an aid post with no medical supplies except bandages and hot water, treated ulcers, carbuncles, cut legs etc up to 80 treatments a day. Babies and old people were dying as there was no aid post in walking distance. A Papuan trained nurse came to staff an aid post. While he was on holiday I was asked to give an old man an injection, something I had never done. With great agony for the patient, I succeeded. The next day I went back to ask if he needed another. "No, no, me wait for medical boss," he said. The fellow did live!

Bishop Strong was horrified to find I was living in such isolation and refused permission for me to return to the south coast of New Britain after my furlough in 1956. At one stage I was the only resident white missionary in the south west of New Britain. Because I had no refrigeration I was told the Mission could not afford to have one missionary opening a tin of meat every day.

My final 18 months were in Popondetta with Rodd and Maddy Hart, where I drove a 10 wheeler GMS ex army truck on trips from the coast Killerton up to Sasembata. The truck had no foot brake, and once no clutch. In my spare time I made furniture for staff members.

I have worked for the Church now for nearly 58 years, 48 of them as a Priest, not what I expected when I went to PNG to be a worker missionary.

\* "haus boi" is the pidgin term for the single young men's quarters. It was often used by all of the men as a sitting or meeting place as well.



## ***Jean Henderson, PNG 1945-1975***

Two significant people contribute to this story. They are Jean Henderson and Jelilah Unia. Jean was an Australian nurse who for 30 years was an Anglican missionary in Papua New Guinea. She died in July 2011 in Melbourne where she had worked for many years after returning from PNG. Jean was in her nineties when she died. Jelilah is a 62-year-old Papua New Guinean nurse. In 2011 Jelilah lives in Madang, where she is Manager of the Pathfinder International PNG office. Pathfinder is a Non Government Organisation which supports humanitarian projects in 25 countries throughout the world.

**Solar Panels for Safer Deliveries** In the 1940s Jelilah's parents lived in the Oro Province village of Eroro, close to the mission station where Jean conducted a small hospital, St Margaret's. Jelilah's mother, Jemima, was the first Papuan girl to undertake nursing duties at the hospital. After Jemima's marriage and the birth of her baby Jelilah, she asked Jean to be the baby's godmother.

In the years that followed, Jelilah received a sound education, first at the local primary school conducted by the Anglican Mission, then, at the Anglican High School for Girls at Dogura in the Milne Bay District. On leaving school she proceeded to Port Moresby to train as a nurse at the Papuan Medical College. As a newly-registered nurse in the late 1960s she was a member of the staff of St Barnabas' Hospital, Dogura, PNG, where Jean was now Matron. After Jean's retirement in 1975 Jelilah stepped into this role for a short time, having undertaken further training in midwifery. Later she took post basic studies in education and community health. Some of her preparation took place in hospitals, colleges and universities in Australia and in Hawaii. Through the years Jelilah maintained contact with Jean.

In 2006 Jelilah was in Port Moresby working with an AusAid-funded project on HIV-Aids. She was invited to apply for the post of adviser on training of health workers, a program to be instituted by Pathfinders International office in Madang. Before her appointment, Pathfinders arranged for Jelilah to have several visits to India to observe work in rural areas of that country. Subsequently her appointment as Manager of the Pathfinder office in Madang was confirmed.

In the course of her work to educate the community Jelilah looked for ways of providing practical solutions to some of the problems. The PNG

government had provided aid posts and birthing centres in rural areas but Jelilah learnt that whilst these simple facilities were accepted and used, the amenities were few. The absence of power, for example, meant that the facilities could not function effectively at night. If a mother had to be delivered of her baby at night the nurse had the use of a kerosene lamp. However the community, which was responsible for the provision of fuel, found the cost prohibitive. Failing this the nurse resorted to a torch, or even the light on her mobile phone. In 2009 while at a conference in Goroka, Jelilah heard of solar lighting. She met the representative of another NGO which was promoting the use of alternative technologies including solar power in rural areas. She learnt that a Canadian fund had provided the finance to purchase solar panels, and she ascertained that with appropriate training, local people could install and maintain the panels in health centres and birthing centres.

In September 2009, during a short visit to Victoria to see Jean Henderson, a small group of friends raised a small fund to help Jelilah's work. Soon after receiving this donation Jelilah reported that it had been used to provide solar lighting to three facilities. At one health centre and two aid posts staff were trained to install and maintain the units. With a further generous donation from friends who attended Jean's 90th birthday party in August 2010, arrangements were soon made for installation in 17 more facilities in the Madang area, including in Health Centres conducted by church organizations. The involvement of local people in the set-up and maintenance of the units is an important factor in ensuring that they remain protected and well managed. Jelilah is still busy with further developments in this service. Her Australian friends are proud of her initiative in introducing a new technology to an area of need, a service from which the local people, mothers and nurses in particular, benefit greatly.



## ***Bruce and Rhyl Henzell, PNG 1971-1974***

Bruce and Rhyl served at Sakarina in the Managalas District in the mountains behind Popondetta in the Oro Region of PNG. They then went for two years to Newton Theological College, when it was still located at Dogura. They returned to Brisbane in 1974 where Bruce returned to Parish ministry. He retired in 2006.

### **A *Medical Emergency in the Bush***

Word came in from Koeno village that Dorcas had been in labour for three days with her eleventh child. Thankfully Ann, our nurse had not yet left on her patrol, she had held back because of the pouring rain. She sent word, to bring Dorcas in here “pronto” as she packed her bag of tricks, and set off to meet them.

An hour later they met them half way in on a rough bush track. She found Dorcas very distressed and weak and writhing in pain on a makeshift stretcher: The baby’s head was stuck fast, though Ann could still faintly hear the heartbeat. She could do nothing to help there in the rain so they pushed on to the station.

She ran on ahead to radio for an emergency airlift to Popondetta because she knew she had no qualifications to provide the necessary help. However the cloud was too deep and too widespread to fly in those mountains.

“Hopefully, first thing in the morning,” they said. “BUT I CAN’T JUST SIT HERE AND WATCH THEM BOTH DIE!” Ann cried inwardly.

Bruce joined Ann as Dorcas was brought in, struggling in and out of consciousness as the contractions wracked her body. By mid-afternoon Ann lost the foetal heartbeat. She radioed the medicos in Pop. They were very helpful with advice to sustain Dorcas through the long nightmare ahead. Bruce, Ann and her assistants took turns to sit with her and pray, we all prayed.

By daybreak Dorcas herself barely had a heartbeat. Miraculously she was alive. If only we could save the mother. With a break in the clouds the plane from Pop was able to land and take Dorcas to the hospital.

Later in the day we listened in utter astonishment to the radio message from Pop. “MOTHER AND BABY BOTH WELL!”

Just six days after this ordeal, which included a hysterectomy in the hospital, there was a great welcome on the airstrip as Dorcas stepped from the plane with not an ounce of fat on her wirey muscles, a beautiful baby girl in her arms and a huge grin on her thin, drawn face. Her family had come to escort her for the two hour march back to their village in the mountains and we could stop holding our breath.

*The “Sked” was a fact of life at each mission station in PNG in the 1960s and 70s. Fr Peter Robin, who had served in PNG during the war as a coast watcher and whose father was the Bishop of Adelaide, was a particular devotee of the radio network. He often delayed setting off on patrol until after the afternoon sked. Peter was a real pioneer in the development of this communication system as well as in the opening up of the Highlands.*

*Mission news was quickly sent to all stations and isolated persons suddenly felt connected. News also had some strange twists. Nancy White, was a respected, single, old-time missionary who had taught many Papuans and consequently many Papuans were named in her honour. So when one sked notice announced that Nancy White was pregnant !!! Again!! It caused a laugh among the staff who knew the incongruity of the announcement.*



## ***Noelene Jeffs (nee Burke). PNG 1967-1972.***

Noelene Burke was an occupational therapist from Gosford NSW, working in S A and worshipping at St Anne's Felixstow. She attended the House of Epiphany in 1967 along with David Winters, Marjorie Charrington, Julie Redpath, Judith Middlebrook, Catherine Burden, Vere Richardson and Allan and Jan Gate in 1967. In PNG after some further training with Dr Clezy in Madang she worked with Blanche Biggs, Nance Elliot and Irene Markham at St Luke's, Embogo, TB and Leprosy Hospital. Irene moved to Popondetta where she worked with Meg MacLean at the Christian Training Centre. In 1972 the hospital was closing so she returned to Gosford. She married Douglas Jeffs in 1977 and had two children, both boys, now adult. She continued to work as an O.T. in Sydney and later the Central Coast, until her retirement in 2010.

### ***A Quick Learning Curve***

One weekend in 1971 when Irene was working at C.T.C., I stayed the weekend with her in her house near the Franciscan Friary. Along with some Papuans I waited for transport back to St Luke's Hospital, where I was working, when a rain deluge arrived. We were all sopping wet. When the transport failed to arrive, Irene and Meg asked us all in and fed us some scones. I ended up staying another night with Irene and Meg. We did not know at this stage that for young women to prepare and give food to young male Papuans, was an invitation to become much more friendly! When some unexpected approaches were made to us, one of the Franciscans later explained our error and assisted us by explaining to the young men that we had not intended courtship. Live and learn.

The next day a lift was arranged for me with a Papuan foreman who worked for the roads department, as he was going to Embogo to check on some works in the area. About half way there, the ute we were travelling in had a flat tyre. I expected a long wait. However, the foreman was a man of substance who knew a thing or two. There was a grader working nearby, and the foreman summoned the grader and operator with his whistle. He spoke with the operator, who placed the grader blade under the ute, and on the foreman's indication, raised the grader blade, thus lifting the side of the ute. The foreman then changed the wheel, motioned the grader operator to lower the ute to the ground, and we were all quickly on our way again. This was so smoothly done I wondered whether it had been a regular occurrence.

There was a flood about 1969 when the Embogo river flooded the hospital and washed away a bridge on the road to Popondetta and we were flooded

and cut off for weeks. I remember two things very clearly. In a massive cleanup and particularly our attempt to save the patients' X rays for the doctor, we tried washing the mud off them and the print ran on them. However we managed to save some, and they looked a trick hanging on a makeshift line. As well, a young AVA from Popondetta became a hero, bless his heart, by wrapping a large bundle of mail, and some treats into a waterproof and swimming across the river where the bridge had been washed away, to bring us our mail.... The bridge over the river on the road to Popondetta had to be rebuilt.



*Fr Peter Robin (above) spent some time in boats and with Fr Robin Fowler once visited an out station near SagSag on the North East coast of New Britain. When the boat was a mere hundred yards or so from the shore the engine stopped. The two priests started fiddling with the engine and after a short time looked up to find that they had drifted too far out to sea to paddle in. They continued to work on the engine till nightfall and drifted on. Luckily, some days later the boat drifted onto the beach at Manus Island, the last land before Asia, and the search for the missing boat was called off.*



## ***Ken and Helen Keith, PNG 1970 – 1972***

Ken and Helen were secondary school teachers in Queensland before offering to teach at Martyrs' Memorial School. They went with something less than full missionary preparation – a half hour chat with Bp David Hand while he was in Brisbane in late 1969. After returning to Queensland, Ken taught for two years then moved into land conservation extension. For Helen it was child rearing then teaching at a Lutheran College – while also coordinating a refugee support group and, after retirement, a thrift shop to raise money for the construction of a primary school in Tanzania.



### ***On coming to Martyrs' School 1970 – our mini culture shock***

On reaching Martyrs' School, we were relieved to see an expanse of well-cut grass, well-built cream-painted classrooms and the sturdy mission house. Then Ron Morris, the Headmaster of Martyrs' School who had met the plane and driven us up the 15 miles of dirt road to the school, led us to our house. The house had an iron roof but was mostly built of bush materials. It came complete with nipa palm push-out windows and carpenter bee holes pock-marking the bush timber beams. After pointing out the separate "sitting room" over a pit about 20 yards out the back and watching Helen open the oven door of the wood stove to see a tray of mouldy taro (overlooked during the clean-up for our arrival), Ron fled for the security of his office, fearing tears were about to flow and wondering how long before he would be booking a flight for two back to Brisbane.

Tears did flow when Helen observed the unsocial behaviour of carpenter bees which were spitting yellow gunk over the bed sheets from their hole above. But we slept well enough under our net, until woken at daybreak by the chatter of village women arriving at the food store right beside our house. They were there to trade vegetables, coconuts and fruit for kerosene, salt and kuku (blackstick tobacco). Those who lived in this house had the extra-curricular role of managing the food store. While gingerly plucking coconuts from the arms of a bare-breasted mother, I thought perhaps I should learn Orokaivan for this job. I soon dropped this idea when Martin Chittleborough from Agenahambo, adjacent to the school, gave me a booklet that began with an explanation of the 12 tenses of Orokaivan verbs.

When school started, inflows to the store would include sweet potato (one moon) from students' individual garden plots, contributing to school fee

payments. Outflows would be the vegetables and often rice and tinned fish or meat to the students on duty as cooks for breakfast and dinner, Fruit was given to students on their allocated day – bananas or pineapple or coconut or something special: with the prefect on duty admonishing any disgruntled customers with "Take what is given and don't grumble!".

Before school started I had the task of timetabling, even though I was rather unsure of how things worked, while Helen conferred with the English Master and School Chaplain, Fr Arthur Lidbetter, about teaching English as a second language. We certainly found we needed to adapt our approach to teaching. Helen learned to be wary of show-and-tell after her First Formers arrived for a lesson on insects and spiders with smiling faces and an array of spiders the size of saucers. Meantime, I was stalled by the prospect of teaching not only the use of, but also the principles of logarithmic tables to students returning from Christmas holidays, some from remote villages where counting in the language might consist of "one, two, three..... many". I wondered how they could cope with this double life.

The school was going through an upgrading phase. By the end of the year teachers had the option of living off the local national teaching wage (about \$1200 p.a.) or on mission provisions plus \$156 p.a. allowance. Most students were housed in double-story dormitories built by Allan Bews and Lindsay Bond's Oro Builders, with showers and toilets which was much better than using the Endehi River for both functions. And we moved into the luxury of a fibro and timber house built by Allan – in a coconut grove by the Endehi River. Life can be splendid in the tropics.

## *Ivan and Dorothy Lahey, PNG 1963-1968*

Ivan and Dorothy Jenks met at the House of Epiphany in 1962 and were married and went to PNG where they served in Dogura, Movi and Kumbun before returning to Australia. They now live in retirement North of Brisbane.

### **H**ow not to treat your Bishop

After we had beached and serviced the Kumbun Boat, the *St Christopher*, we set out for Pomete, the headquarters of the Melanesian Brothers. There we were to meet Bishop Bevan Meredith who was coming for his first Episcopal visit to the Kumbun District.



ABOVE: Bishop John Chisholm, Bishop Bevan Meredith, Bishop David Hand and Bishop George Ambo

There was no berth at Pomete so the *St Christopher* cruised back and forth while waiting for the Bishop. Suddenly we lost forward motion. When we serviced the propeller shaft a flange joining the Propeller to the engine was disconnected. I neglected to put a cotter pin in the nut when I rejoined this flange and the nut duly unscrewed itself and came off. A copper nail came to our rescue and when the Bishop boarded we resumed our voyage to Kumbun.

The next day, again in the *St Christopher*, the Bishop wished to visit the outstations of Kaptimete, Maklo and Jungpun. Between Kaptimete and Jungpun a bolt holding down one side of a fuel injector clamp broke giving us a tremendous “whoosh, whoosh” sound as the fuel mixture escaped. Slowing down did not help as the engine started to overheat.

It really was time now for serious prayer as we were about ten miles off the coast in an area of little traffic. We had no emergency food and were surrounded by coral reefs. Prayers were answered when, by slackening off the other bolt holding the clamp for the injector, the nut on the broken bolt was able to grip by a single thread, thus allowing us to continue the voyage.

Bishop Bevan still relates his memories of that visit.

*After leaving Papua, Fr Syd Smith served at the mission station at Apugi on the south coast of New Britain for many years and provided the coastal links between the stations as he skippered a number of mission boats including the MV St Christopher. On one occasion, when he was at sea in an old petrol driven vessel, the motor stopped running. Petrol engines were very scary at sea as they easily broke down and sometimes caught fire but Syd was a good mechanic. On this occasion he diagnosed the problem as worn out points and calmly sat down and started to carve new carbon points out of an old torch battery. He eventually finished the job and started the engine just as the boat was about to crash onto a reef and his passengers were about to have hysterics.*

*Fr Syd standing smoking at the helm was a most reassuring sight for his New Britain passengers even in the worst seas. Lionel Lucas who served with Syd for some years was asked once if he was ever seasick. He replied, “Seasick? No! Scared? Often!” But he too had confidence in Syd.*



## **Meg MacLean, PNG 1971-1975, 1982-1993**

Meg had two separate spells as a worker in the PNG mission field. She also had a long history in Christian Education work even before she came to PNG and in Australia since she returned has exercised a ministry with children all over the country. This incident happened when the Department of Christian Education had no Director and the Anglican Bible College had been operating for several years.

### **A PNG Funeral**

It was after I had read Bishop Kendall's biography that I realised that the villages around the Christian Training Centre had been some of the last in Oro Province to be evangelised. A young married man from Jegarata Village had been found hanging in the bush near Popondetta. Foul play was suspected and his mistress in Popondetta had been taken into custody for her own protection. On the day of the funeral she told a family member the name of the murderer. The Community of the Holy Name Sisters, the Franciscan Brothers together with the CTC staff had gathered in the village along with other mourners. We sat under a shelter on mats with the coffin in our midst.

Suddenly all hell broke loose as young men from the village came dancing and shouting and waving their spears in triumph. It reminded me of a scene from the movie "Lord of the Flies"! It was horrific. They had just slaughtered a mourner at the entrance to the village. He was the man named by the mistress.

The ute that had bought the coffin hurriedly reloaded it and set off for the burial site at the other side of the river. The Jegarata villagers, including the family, immediately started to pack a few things and leave the village to go into hiding. The Sisters, Brothers and CTC staff waded across the river to avoid seeing the slaughtered man. We made our way to the graveside. All other mourners had fled back to their homes.

The priest coming to take the funeral saw the slaughtered man and was redirected to the grave. The young man was buried without any of his family present. We all returned shell shocked to our homes and did nothing else that day. Later when things had settled down I said to the senior students that we must take some teaching to Jegarata Village. Most were too scared to be involved. Those that

were willing helped me to draw charts based on the teaching we would give. We arranged a meeting time with the village elders. Staff members, Frankford Gegeera and Rita Simeni, came with me. We used the village church and most of the villagers came. We had a good response. The young man's father said to me, "Why didn't you tell us these things when you first came?" When I first went to PNG I had assumed that they had been evangelised for nearly 100 years. Also the Franciscan Brothers and Holy Name Sisters had the spiritual care of them. I had not learnt very much about their culture then and could not have used the metaphors that I did which helped them to a deeper understanding of the Gospel. Later in the year one of the students who had refused to go, apologised to me saying, "I now know that what you did was the right thing to have done." They were able to use what they learnt from this experience when they went out on practical visits later that year and found themselves in a community torn about by logging. They brought healing to that community as they proclaimed the Gospel and exercised their spiritual gifts as the Holy Spirit led them.

*The mission coastal trawler, MV MacLaren King, sailed the PNG waters for many years under a number of skippers. The skippers planted coconut seedlings in each port so that in time the crews had the fruit in any port they visited. In PNG, while the land belonged to a specific person, the trees on any land belonged to those who planted them. Once when the boat docked in New Britain after a rough trip from Lae, one of the travellers came onto the mission "Sked" and asked the Bishop for permission to fly to Rabaul to visit the dentist. The Bishop asked why the missionary hadn't gone in Lae. The reply came back. "I still had my teeth in Lae" He had been seasick halfway across to New Britain and lost his false teeth overboard.*



## *Elsie Manley, PNG 1949-1963*

I came from Albany, W.A. and offered for the Mission in 1945, going to Sydney in 1946 and was at the House of the Epiphany (Purity/Purgatory) three years. Having offered as Secretary/book-keeper, typist and been accepted as such, I joined two SA girls Mary Willington (later married Bill Jamieson) and Madeline Swan (later married Rodd Hart) on the journey from Melbourne/Sydney on the Spirit of Progress. Peggy de Bibra was also on board.

### ***The Bishop's Secretary***

We were greeted in Sydney on the platform, as arranged, by Margaret Young, the Warden of the House of the Epiphany, knitting madly to be identified, and we were raced down and up stairs, clutching cases with all our goods to board another train for Stanmore. We were then raced up the hill to THE house to be greeted by two students, both dressed in green button down the front dresses, they were Helen Barret from Brisbane and Helen Roberts from Sydney. I thought, "Nobody told me we had to wear a uniform." There were several other people at the House including Zaza Ray and an Archdeacon and wife visiting from Melanesia. Dr. Blanche Biggs, Fr. Alvin\* and Connie Hatters, also joined us for a while during the year.

In 1946 we did the usual courses, Anthropology 1 and 2, OT and NT Linguistics and Tropical Medicine at the University, plus Church History, History of Missions, plus lots of gardening, and learning to be frugal and waste nothing.

At the end of the year, Bishop Strong arrived and informed me that he really did not need a secretarial person, but more teachers, and it had been arranged that Sydney Teachers College would take some of us as private students. In 1947/48 Joan Beglen from Portland Vic, who went to Melanesia and later died there of cancer, and Myrtle Greenwood from Sydney who later married Harold Palmer in PNG, joined together with me and the three of us became teachers. Of course, nothing ever went along as expected and the Bishop announced on my arrival in Papua in 1949 that at the moment he really needed a Secretary! And that I was for about six months when Peggy de Bibra went on leave and I was suddenly the Headmistress of the Martyrs Memorial School. When she returned from leave I went to Gona as Headmistress with 15 schools in the Parish, about 70 to 80 teachers and 1,500 kids and there I was until about 1963.

Later while I was waiting for a house to be built at Popondetta where it was planned that I should write teaching programs for most of the Northern Districts schools, instead of each individual teacher having to write and produce these, the Bishop asked me to act as his secretary again. Then Bishop Strong was elected to be Archbishop of Brisbane, and asked me to go down to Brisbane for the enthronement. Later he invited me to continue as his Secretary in Brisbane. I had already indicated that I felt I had done what I could at Gona and no house at Popondetta had been built, and so, knowing virtually nobody in Brisbane and, as there were no phones in PNG, I had not answered a telephone for 15 years. So I was thrown in at the deep end and, somehow, by the grace of God, managed to swim without causing too much havoc, I hope.

I am glad that I was in PNG when I was; there were tough times, the Mt Lamington eruption, shortage of teaching aids, teachers etc, long walkabouts to inspect schools etc etc. but the Mission family WAS a family and many of us keep in touch and know them better than we know some members of our natural families. We and the Government Officers and Administration were honest and did our work in the fairest and best ways we knew at the time. NO Papuan would have thought to try and bribe any of us, trick us maybe, but no corruption.

• *Fr Alvin Hatters had been one of the Rats of Tobruk. He and Con served in PNG for over 20 years.*



## *Elsie Manley, PNG 1949- 1963*

This article is taken from a 1970 publication "Tropically, Typically, Tropical" about small houses that Elsie wrote after she returned to Australia.

### **T***he Topic of the Tropics*

There are some words which take on a different meaning in a certain location or situation. Now in Australia we have toilets, out-houses, lavvies, conveniences, ladies and gents, privies, comfort stations or just plain dunnies! For nearly fifteen years I lived in Papua and there was but ONE description – a SMALL HOUSE. Every Papuan knows what you mean by a SMALL HOUSE, and he doesn't mean a cottage in the garden. The Small House is often a status symbol and inevitably a conversation piece.

From time to time Government Officers came through our area on patrols keeping an eye on law and order. Invariably they would stay a night on their way through. As this was usually at a stage when they were rather tired and a bit sick of their own company, we always tried to do the right thing as far as our limited budget would allow, and put on as much as a spread as we could.

On this occasion the younger officers were also keen to meet a very attractive young lady who had recently joined us. About the only special item on our shelves at the time were some jellies which had been sent to us in a mission parcel. After a hasty consultation Nance Elliott\* and I decided to make said jelly. Our fridge had stopped working, but we were getting a lovely new small house and a very deep hole had been dug in preparation. So we lowered the jelly carefully into the hole and hoped that the cold bowels of the earth would encourage it to set. After a couple of hours we hauled it up and "Horrors!" it was not set and ants were beginning to find it. Nothing daunted we strained them out, added a basin of cold water to keep them away, and set it down again.

The government officer had kindly sent his cook boy out to the kitchen to give our lad a hand. We had told our cook to wait till dark before pulling up the bounty. Alas! The officer called his cook at

the wrong moment. No answer. He called again, and a small boy relation of our cook appeared and made the speech of the year, "Sorry, Taubada, he has gone to get the sweet Kai (the sweets) from the small house."

On another occasion a nursing colleague had much patrolling to do and on one occasion had to spend a few days giving injections at a rather isolated village. It was situated on a spit of land with the sea on one side and a rather beautiful, though murky looking lagoon behind it, and behind that again, a sago swamp. When she arrived there the people had just completed a rather nice new rest house but the medical orderly was very disgusted to find they had not provided a Small House. He quickly gathered the men together and soon after returned to report that all was well. "But" he said earnestly, "I want you to come with me and I will explain the Small House."

Somewhat mystified she followed the orderly to the site. "Here I have put a pile of sticks and some stones, but there are not many stones in this place so most are sticks." The Nurse was not quite sure what she was meant to do with them so she asked him. "Well!" he said, "You know Sister there are many crocodiles in this place. In the day time they do not come but they come out here in the night time. You will throw some sticks and stones into the water to frighten away the crocodiles and then you can go into the small house."

She thanked him somewhat faintly for his thoughtfulness, but of course mentally decided the times when the new Small House would and would not be used!

*\* During the war Nance, the nurse at Gona, had served as an AIF nurse in the Middle East and Jerusalem. When she finally returned to Australia someone, who had known her and admired her dedication, anonymously sponsored her on a return trip to Jerusalem.*



## *Irene Markham, PNG 1963-1974*

This story was written by Meg MacLean. Meg and Irene worked together at the Christian Training Centre for many years. Irene died some years later after returning to live in Sydney.

**N***ot a Problem* Before coming to join the staff at the Christian Training Centre, Irene had worked with Dr Blanche Biggs at St Luke's TB Hospital at Embi. The hospital had a staff block where one wing had individual rooms that opened onto a veranda. One end of this veranda was extended to link the dormitories with a common area which had cooking and washing facilities. The patients' quarters were some distance beyond the common room wing. There they lived with their carers or family cooking their own meals. They had a toilet block but washed in the river that ran behind the centre. There was another block that was a dispensary and treatment room.

One of the patients had a very belligerent husband who had caused much trouble. Dr Biggs banned him from the site. On one occasion Dr Biggs was

away on leave and Irene was the only expat there. One night the husband returned and was causing trouble.

Irene went down and ordered him to leave. He was a big man and he put his hands on his hips and said, "How are you going to make me?"

"With the help of a friend," she replied.

"What friend?" he mocked in a loud voice and waved his hand towards the watching nurses who immediately disappeared. He leaned threateningly over Irene.

Without turning or flinching, she coolly and confidently replied, "Jesus Christ."

At these words he reeled back, turned and left without another word. He never came back.



FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES: Sisters of the Visitation at the Hetune Chapel



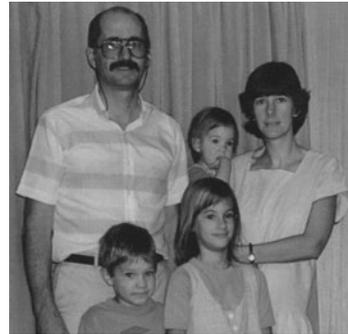
## ***Christine and David McAvenna, Zambia 1989 - 1992***

Christine and David went to Zambia with their children Sarah and Ben and worked at St. Francis Hospital, Katete. Jessica was born shortly after arrival. They were in the mission field for 4 years from Jan 1989 to Dec 1992. Christine, besides supporting David in his role, home-schooled the children and as a family had a ministry of hospitality. Back in Australia Christine commenced work at Tabor and is still there as an Administration Assistant.

### ***The Bee Swarm***

It was a Saturday afternoon, quiet, and there were only a few people about. Suddenly we heard the piercing screams of children outside and we dashed out the front. We saw three or four crying children running across the compound each with one hand on their head and the other waving about above their head. They were shouting out, but we couldn't understand what they were saying. Suddenly people were running everywhere. David, in his curiosity, jumped on our young daughter Sarah's small bike and foolishly, I thought, headed in the direction the children were running from. Two minutes later, he came back cycling extremely fast with knees nearly up around his chin, just missed the gateway as he skidded in with a very anguished look on his face, and he too was holding his head! The problem was a very aggressive swarm of bees and I extracted five stings from his head, neck and shoulders.

Kirsty, another staff member, came running over to say that a woman and a little girl had barged into her house for shelter. The child was covered in bees, and it seemed that more bees were following this unfortunate couple. David grabbed a can of insect spray, put on a hat and enshrouded himself with a mosquito net from one of our beds and



headed off again. He went to Kirsty's house to rescue the little girl, but some Zambian fellows had already reached her. David returned with another sting in his foot.

Kirsty then told us that Chris, another staff member, had also been at her place and had made a panicked dash towards the staff Mess. So we shut the children in the house and made a really nervous dash to the Mess to find Chris in a bit of a state and a couple of glass panels of the door smashed. He was chased all the way to the Mess by the bees and put his fist through the glass in his haste to get inside. I extracted 14 stings from his neck, shoulders and back.

There were a few sore bodies around that night. Even the milkman who delivered the milk on a bicycle came with a swollen lip where he had been stung. Funnily enough, the milk on that day curdled.

### ***The Blanket Thief by David McAvenna***

*He came in the night. A thief to steal blankets from the hospital patients. But he didn't get the patients' blankets: the patients got him. Someone spotted the thief and alerted others. Those who were able got out of their beds, got hold of the thief, wrestled him to the ground and then sat on him. Someone was sent to phone the police. Alas, the police were not able to come to arrest the thief because they had no fuel for the police vehicle. They asked if transport could be sent to the police station to collect them, then they could make their arrest. So, a vehicle was sent thirteen kilometres and the police officers were collected and transported to the hospital. They made their way to the ward to find the thief still being sat on by the patients - he wasn't going anywhere that night except to the police station. Police, patients and thief together made the journey to the waiting hospital vehicle. The thief was roughly manhandled into the vehicle and the vehicle disappeared into the night. The patients returned to their ward and went to bed, all very pleased with an excellent night's work.*

## *Christine and David McAvenna, Zambia 1989 – 1992*



David worked as the Accounts Secretary at St Francis Hospital, Katete, for four years. Back in Australia David spent several years working at Tabor College as the Registrar, and is currently the Principal's Personal Assistant at Southern Vales Christian College. David and Christine have since visited St Francis at least twice, including once with the children as teenagers, and remain in communication with the hospital and past staff.

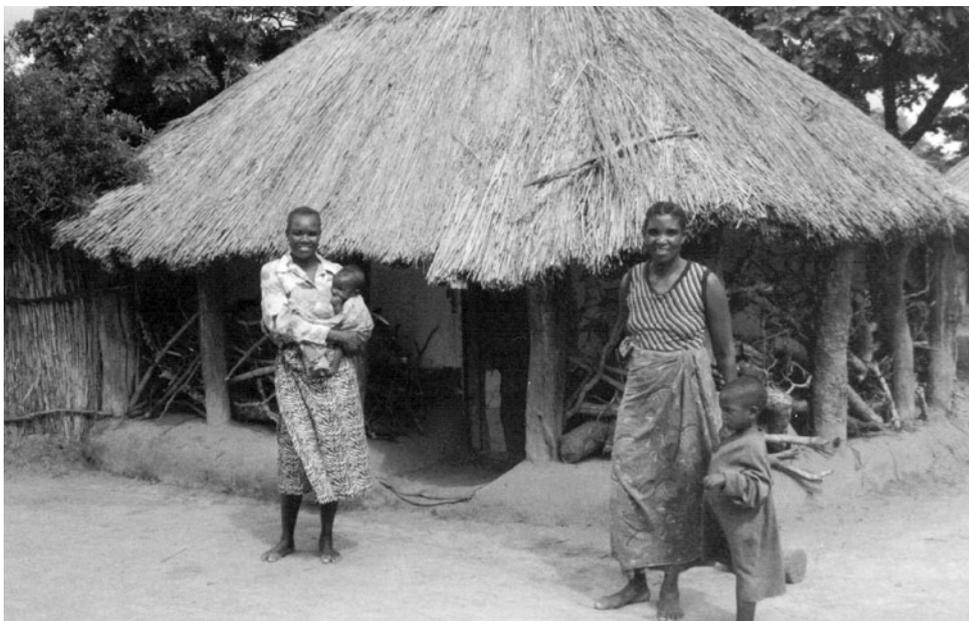
### **C***ulture shock on the first day*

We were eager to do our first grocery shopping since arriving the previous day in Lusaka, Zambia's capital. But my apprehension grew as we walked inside. We were the only white people in the place. I felt quite nervous, but pretended I had done all this before. The odour, the heat and the dirtiness of the building brought forth complaints from six year old Sarah and three year old Ben. The children verbalised what I was thinking. The shelves held little else but Vaseline and Ajax. There were no basic items at all. We decided to leave the less than fresh meat where it was. I became alarmed, as we were to buy initial food supplies to take to the St. Francis Hospital at Katete, 500 kilometers away, and our home for the next three years. Culture shock had set in. We walked despondently back to the Zambia Anglican Council guest house, a small guarded complex, surrounded by a high, wire fence, topped with barbed wire.

Lusaka was having a problem with the water supply and we only had running water for a few hours each

night. The bath was then topped up with water for decanting into the basin for washing. I was wondering why there was a cup of washing powder on the basin and no soap available. Thankfully I had tissues because there was no toilet paper available! "Lord, why have you brought us here?" I thought. "Maybe we've done the wrong thing; how are we going to manage? How are we going to last four years here?" I felt totally out of control of the situation. "When is the next plane home?" asked David, who felt the same way. Australia seemed a long way from us right then. David picked up his guitar and quietly started singing praises to the Lord and gradually we felt more at peace.

I realized we didn't need to feel in control of the situation, because God was in total control and we had put our trust in Him. I was reminded of the prayers we had prayed two years ago, with Fr Brian Horwood, the then South Australian Regional Director of ABM. He said we needed to pray for God's will and His strength to carry out His will and we used that prayer many times.





## ***Ron Morris, PNG 1965-1977***

Ron had a long career in Education and mission service. He was a chaplain at Canberra Grammar School over 10 years and teacher and headmaster of Martyrs' Memorial School in PNG over 13 years. He served another 10 years as a priest and high school inspector in various towns in PNG before retiring to live in Sydney

### ***The English Expression That Nearly Stopped A School***

At Martyrs' school, Holy Week and Easter were times of religious discipline and joy for staff and students. Most other schools finished term on Maundy Thursday but at Martyrs' term ended after the 7.00 am Eucharist on Easter Day and we added a few extra days to the holidays. Good Friday was especially holy. Quite often we had processions, plays and Stations of the Cross. These usually lasted from midday to 3.00 pm,. One year (early 70s) the Friars were to visit and present the passion play. We had just taken down a huge tree in a natural amphitheatre area. All that remained to do was to remove the stump. We planned to do that on work parade on Thursday, but it rained very heavily and work parade was cancelled.

I, as headmaster, called a meeting and asked for volunteers to remove the stump and (as I had expected) was overwhelmed with volunteers. Chains were placed around the stump and in a short time it had gone. The theatre for the Good Friday play was ready although it was rather muddy.

We had many volunteers (mainly from UK and Australia) on the staff in those days. Several weeks after Easter one volunteer came to me to complain that students were swearing at him (under cover of darkness). He was being given the cold shoulder, and the occasional rock had landed on the roof over his room. He had no idea why he was being treated like that. He was a teacher who was respected by everyone and was very popular with all the students so I could not understand this sudden change of attitude.

I called the prefects and discussed the matter. They knew about it but had no ideas, so I sent them to see if they could discover the reason. There was not much entertainment in the school at weekends so sometimes teachers would show their slides on a Saturday night. This teacher had shown some

slides the previous Saturday night and a large number of students had attended. The prefects reported that the teacher had shown some slides of the Maundy Thursday removal of the tree stump by the volunteer students and that when he showed the slides he had called them "Pigs and Rats". This had caused the problems. I had difficulty in finding a student who had actually heard this and the teacher denied that he had said anything like that. I believed him, but it was a mystery how this problem had begun.

The situation grew worse and the whole student body was sullen and resentful. After about ten miserable days, with the whole school suffering, the prefects came and told me that the students wanted to apologize at Evensong that night. So after Evensong students made moving apologies and the teacher responded well. The whole school applauded and the students carried him out of the chapel on their shoulders. It was all over. But how did it start?

I had no idea until one evening months later. It was during a prefects' meeting and suddenly the heavens opened and there was a terrific downpour. It was deafening. I found myself saying to the prefects, "It's raining CATS AND DOGS"!

I knew what happened! The teacher had said that. Some students at the back of the audience had seen the volunteer students dragging the tree stump in the pouring rain and heard the words "CATS AND DOGS". They jumped to the conclusion that the teacher was referring to the students on the screen as cats and dogs. And, of course, as the stories spread throughout the school it was easy for "cats and dogs" to be changed to "pigs and rats".

We often use expressions or idioms and assume that people from other cultures know what we are saying. That can lead to disastrous consequences.



## ***Don Mortimer, PNG 1963 – 1969***

Don writes, "After a year in the House of Epiphany seven of us were to go to the New Guinea Anglican Mission as builders. We tried to find out what we would be doing in PNG. A letter came from Bishop Strong welcoming us and advising he had asked his secretary to answer our questions regarding building. The answer came from her, "Be prepared to straighten bent nails. There would be no fancy building only bush building." This sounded strange to us as there were thousands of Papuans more capable than us of constructing bush buildings with local materials."

### ***Why Oro Builders?***

In January 1963, 26 of us set sail to New Guinea on the last trip of SS Malaita. We disembarked at Samarai and filled the Methodist Transit House. It took two trips by the St George to get us to Dogura. The second contingent experienced a very rough trip. We took part in the last full Missionary Staff Conference where Bishop Strong read his three day charge.

The building team was split up and sent to various Mission Stations. Two of us went to Eroro where we were to build the new St Margaret's Hospital. There were no plans, no material and they didn't know we were coming! To fill in time we built a bush toilet block for the school, water tanks and a permanent dormitory for the nurses and school girl boarders. We salvaged a lot of pipe and steel from World War II remains to weld trusses for the new St Margaret's Hospital. John Guise laid the foundation stone for the new hospital and said, "It was a new error" (not era) and how true that was as when the wet season arrived we found out that the water table was almost at ground level and there was nowhere to put the septic tanks. We had a conference with Bishop David Hand and he said to stop work and look for a better site, which we did and found it on a ridge overlooking Oro Bay.

After this we started to move around the Diocese doing work and so we needed a base to work from. With its proximity to the wharf, Oro Bay was the perfect site and to give the building workers a bit of status we decided on the name Oro Builders which meant "Happy Builders". From then on we had no difficulty in getting indigenous staff, as being one of the Oro Builders was seen as a status symbol.

There was always a shortage of money for building, so to set up the workshop we used the trusses we had constructed for the first hospital site and for Bishop George Ambo's house and the

Eroro Mission House. The rest of the materials were scrounged from various places. Langhorns Transport at Popondetta donated some materials which had been in their warehouse for years but never collected!

I found the indigenous staff tremendous to work with and very willing to learn. They were hard workers for the pittance that they received. One man went on to become a Foreman in a building workshop in Lae and others were able to go out on their own to stations to erect classrooms and other facilities.

The new St Margaret's Hospital was built and the rest is history! From 1964 to 1970 Oro Builders rebuilt the Martyrs School, St Barnabas Hospital Dogura, the Popondetta Cathedral trusses and roof (in two weeks) as well as numerous other jobs including starting the move of Gona Station inland from the beach and other smaller jobs. Most of the work was done by indigenous staff and not always with expatriate supervision.

After the wharf at Killeton was burnt down, Oro Builders looked after the road transport for the Northern District, distributing cargo from the ships. The workshop at Oro Bay became the centre for building trusses, school desks and tanks. Workshop staff were sent all over the Diocese to build facilities.

I met some terrific people, both indigenous and Europeans. One woman who needs special mention is Mrs Gladys Dahlenberg who was the housekeeper at Martyrs School. She heard that we needed money to build St Margaret's Hospital so she returned to Melbourne to raise as much money as she could. She later returned to PNG and died when she was housekeeping at Movi in the Highlands.



## *Rosemary Mortimer, PNG 1966-1969*

I met Don in Sydney when he was at the House of Epiphany. Then while he was on leave we were married at Christ Church St Laurence on 30th April 1966.

### ***T***he Builder's Wife

Although I went to PNG as Don's wife I was kept busy doing the secretarial work and ink drawings of plans for Oro Builders, looking after the Australian builders and the English VSO's as well as our own two boys. Our first son was born at the old St Margaret's Hospital at Erero and the second, appropriately at the new St. Margarets's Hospital at Oro Bay which his dad had built! As we lived at the port of Oro Bay we often hosted mission staff for meals and accommodation as they travelled the coast on the mission boats.

Our Papuan staff was wonderful. When Don was late home or away overnight they would join the

boys and I for a chat after tea until it was time for bed. They loved the boys and often took them for walks and we discovered them sharing their lunch in their quarters.

I remember losing a tooth filling and needing to go to Popondetta to see the dentist. There had been a lot of rain and when we got to the Girawa River the approach to the bridge had been washed away. No worries! I was not allowed to walk across but several Papuan men carried me over. It was most humbling and very much appreciated.

I really enjoyed living and working in Papua and met and made friends with some wonderful people.



FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES: Sr Nancy Vesperman of Cootamundra NSW



## *Jean Olsen, North Queensland and PNG 1959-68*

Jean taught at Yarrabah Aboriginal Mission Station in North Queensland for eighteen months, in Popondetta in PNG for six years and at St. Aidan's Teachers' College, Dogura, for two years. She returned back to Australia for spinal surgery where she continued teaching and educational administration until her retirement. She is still active in the organization of activities in the retirement village where she now lives in New South Wales.

### **A** *Wonderful Welcome*

In the 1960's I was the head teacher at the Church of the Resurrection school at Popondetta. A new outstation was opened at Umbuvora in the Managalas Mountains. A school was being established and I was privileged to be the first expatriate woman to visit the area. I always took a group of the senior schoolboys and schoolgirls with me when I went visiting any of the outstation areas. They provided company and led the way.



Jean Olsen on patrol in the Malagalas 1962

They also acted as interpreters and advised me on cultural matters. En route we visited established schools in the Managalas at Gora and Dea. Umbuvora was the best part of another day's walk with lots of climbs. As we drew near the village which was high up on a ridge we came across a group of villagers carrying a pig strapped to two poles still grunting. Suddenly a roar went up as our group was spotted climbing up to the station. Arriving rather hot and exhausted there were more roars and a wonderful sight of all the villagers; men, women and children lined up right across the deba deba (oval). Even though it was three o'clock in the afternoon they had all been taught to say "Good morning" which came out as "Good mooring". I shook hands with them all responding also with "Good morning".

Before the evening meal I saw the women coming to the Papuan teacher's house with their plates of food held high in one hand and noses being wiped right across their arms with the other. In the bush everybody seemed to have perpetually running noses and their hygiene was definitely different to ours. The teacher and family, school children accompanying me and I all sat around the

plates of food arranged in the centre of the mats. The villagers all stood around outside the house watching every move through the open windows and lots of chatter took place.

Fortunately I have always liked most foods. There was only one time when I had to refuse food given to me. This was at Ongoho, an Orokaiva station. The teacher's wife had prepared a very tasty corn porridge for breakfast. Then she produced a boiled bush hen's egg. When I cut it open, out popped the black feathers. My humblest apologies were given. However, this was quite a delicacy for them!! Meanwhile back at Umbuvora all eyes were on me as I took a little of everything offered, chewed and swallowed and hoped it stayed down but I was not too sure of some of the dishes passed to me including the smoked flying fox. However everyone seemed to approve and returned happily to their homes after the end of the meal given to welcome me. It was a wonderful welcome!

The following is an extract from a poem "Celebration-Papua New Guinea" which is one from a collection of poems "Do You See What I see" that Jean wrote and published in 2005.

*After the service on these festival days  
dancing on the debadeba would take place.  
Women joined in, wearing tapa cloth wraps;  
bodies adorned with ornaments and paint.  
Babies were in string bags that hung from the head  
which added to the splendour of the dance.  
Drums were held both high and low  
beating the rhythm for all to keep.  
Later in the day a celebration meal was served.  
Everyone sat on banana leaves which made a mat.  
Food was shared with all who were there;  
waited on by women who passed it around.  
These are the days that I still remember  
of celebrating festivals in Papua New Guinea.*



## ***Sybil Pawley (Nee McKenzie), PNG 1969-1975***

As a small child, Sybil knew Vivian Redlich\* who was one of the Bush Brothers ministering in her parish of St Barnabas' North Rockhampton, Qld. Later she was a member of the Comrades of St George, enjoyed the visits of missionaries and the MacLaren-King II, and read the ABM Review.

### ***Lots of Laughs and Some Sadness***

Popondetta is a small town from which roads then ran to Kokoda, Oro bay, Gona and Killerton. The town then had an A Curriculum primary school for expatriate children, two large stores (Burns Philp and Steamships) some small stores, the District Commissioner's Office, the Government Education Office, a Post Office, Elcom [the electricity board], a Government Hospital, the High School, the Agricultural Training College and a prison, to name most facilities. The Anglican Church and School of the Resurrection stood at the edge of the town, with St Christopher's Manual Training School nearby.

When I was young I was interested in mission work but it wasn't until years later, as one half of a broken marriage, with a 10 year old son, that I offered, with the encouragement of my priest at the time, for missionary service as a teacher, and was accepted! So I gave up my job and superannuation, had an auction sale of my few goods EXCEPT my sewing machine and our bicycles, and went to follow my God. I was pleased to see that in the sale, another teacher bought all my cake icing equipment. Ironically, the first thing I was asked to do after arriving at Popondetta Mission House, was to ice a 21st birthday cake for Bro. Jeremy, one of the novices at the Friary. It was at the House of the Epiphany that I performed my only miracle, that of turning bread into stones, using the wood stove in the back yard shed there.

On arrival at the Mission House at Popondetta, I was shown, as well as a shower, and an outside septic tank toilet, a gas stove! When I asked what happened when the gas cylinder ran out, I was told "Oh! Just ring John the Baptist at Steamships and he'll bring an exchange cylinder." Calling the roll in the classroom at Resurrection School revealed many other interesting names, but sometimes there

would be no answer. One time a friend replied "He has washed his shorts!"

One morning, we awoke to find the "Ambulance" standing outside the Mission House. It was an old van painted white with a red cross and nothing but a stretcher inside. A woman from the Kumusi River area had given birth to twins and bled to death. That morning, school assembly in the church was conducted around the woman's leaf-wrapped body, with her husband sitting cross legged beside, waving away flies with a piece of croton.

During my time at Resurrection, I taught Standard five, then Standard six, and was also headmistress after Mackenzie Daudi was elected to Parliament. After the Head Teacher's position was localised, I was asked to be District Education Secretary, and as such, visited all the Anglican Schools in the Northern (now Oro) District, on foot, by vehicle, boat or plane. I worked closely with the Government Education Officers on the posting of teachers, and was often kindly allowed to share their transport in school visits. On a visit to Banderi School, in the mountains behind Oro Bay, I walked with a patrol officer, up and down, up and down, so many times, until he said, "Well, that's the end of the up and down, now it's all up!" Eventually this position was also localised, and I sat in limbo for a week, and then a vacancy occurred at Popondetta (Government) High School. I moved there to teach English, Maths and Business Principles, and led the Scripture Union Group on Sunday nights. Sometimes a group from Martyrs' School would visit, and we'd have Bible Quizzes and sing all the latest choruses to guitar accompaniment. Fun Times!

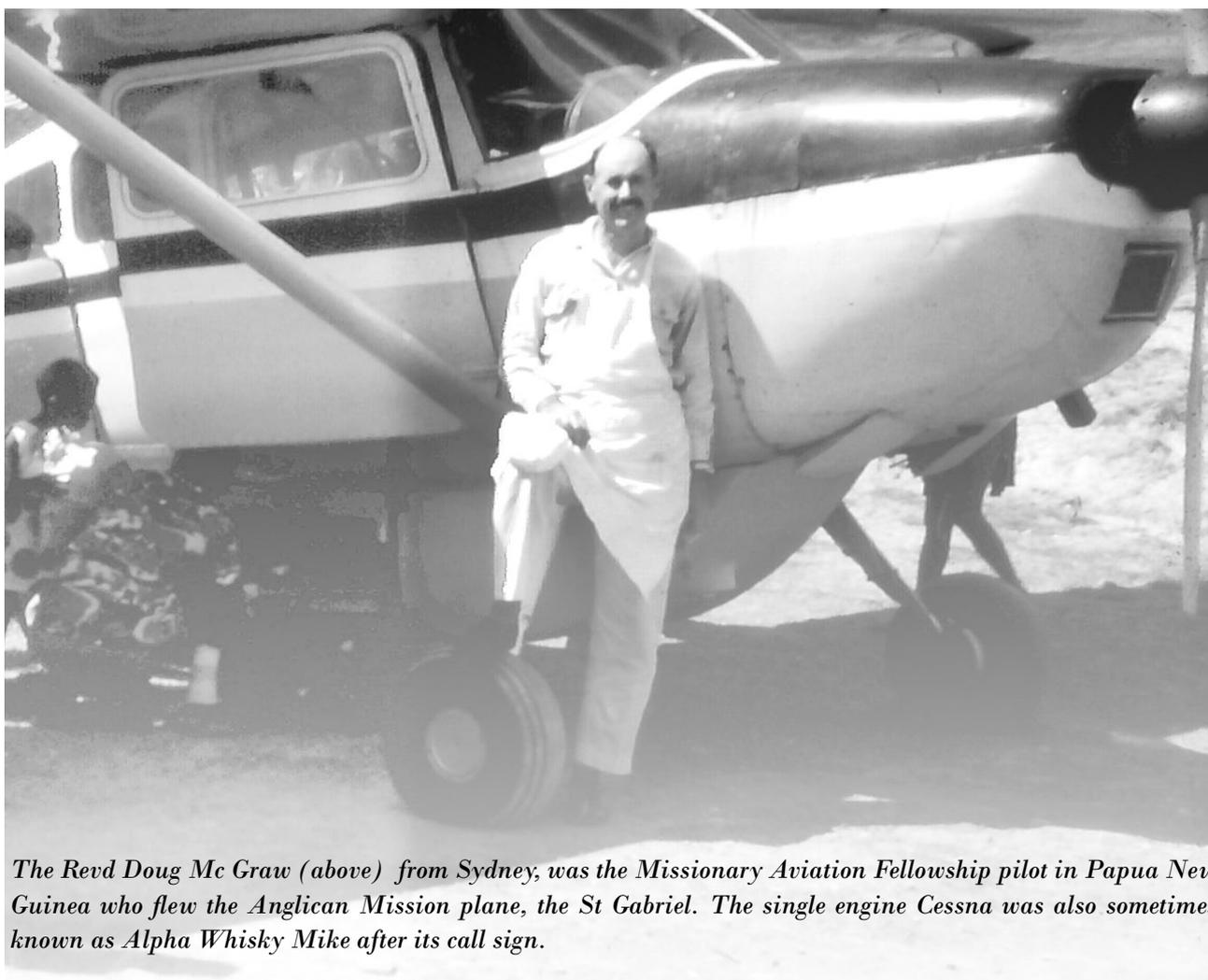
I was the mistress in charge of the girls' dormitories, and early one morning, three girls looking very serious, knocked on my door, saying a girl was sick. This often happened, so I quickly went across,

walked up and down the very tidy dormitory, all beds unoccupied, but could see no patient. All the girls burst into laughter saying, "It's the first of April!"

Independence was looming, the PNG Flag had been designed, the Kina had replaced the Dollar, and on that particular August night of 1975, I went to the floodlit Town Oval at midnight, with everybody else, and heard the Declaration of Independence proclaimed over loudspeakers from Port Moresby. I saw the Australian flag come down and the PNG flag go up, and watched the people weep. For me, this was a turning point. My son was coming to the

end of his secondary Education in Australia. Some time back, I had been notified that the other half of my broken marriage had died of alcoholism and viral pneumonia. Our futures did not appear to lie in PNG. After many farewells, I left PNG's shores in a Boeing 707 ( big, then) to begin the next part of my life.

*\*Vivian Redlich was one of the New Guinea martyrs*



*The Revd Doug Mc Graw (above) from Sydney, was the Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot in Papua New Guinea who flew the Anglican Mission plane, the St Gabriel. The single engine Cessna was also sometimes known as Alpha Whisky Mike after its call sign.*

*A story was often told to new missionaries just before flying with Doug, that if the flying got a little bit hairy, he would start to sing or whistle a hymn. Of course when the aeroplane started to fly among some clouds and mountains and maybe bounce around the sky, Doug would start to whistle while the passenger would be anxiously looking in all directions for the problem. Doug was quite capable of handling just about any scenario and the old missionaries would have a quiet chuckle at their discomfort. However Doug was such a good bloke, good company and so genuinely witty that he was quickly forgiven.*



## ***Dorothy Rogers. PNG. 1963-1970.***

Dorothy came to PNG in 1963 to work at Embi as a nurse and in 1964 went to Dogura. She maintained her close contacts with her many friends in Australia and this is an extract from an article Dorothy wrote for her Parish paper in Sydney.

***D***ogura - ***Another Place, Another Time*** We arrived at Dogura on the M.V. MacLaren King. We saw the magnificent cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul on the plateau. We were met and taken up the hill by Land Rover. The village at the lower level is Wedau and their language was the first used in the liturgy. The services at the cathedral were inspiring under the guidance of Bishop John Chisholm. Father James Benson had painted a beautiful mural behind the altar. The central panel has a picture of Christ the King, the dove under Him and God's hands above Him. The first missionaries, Albert MacLaren and Copeland King, are facing Him along with the early Bishops and Papuan priests. On the right is commemorated those who died in the 1951 Mount Lamington disaster and the other side depicts the New Guinea Martyrs killed by the Japanese and their cohorts in 1942.

I shared in the teaching of the students at the hospital and particularly looked after the obstetric side, but I had been sent to Dogura to start regular medical patrols in the district. My first patrol was eventful.

I went with Septimus, our senior medical orderly and two male nurses and Janet Trevelyan, a trained nurse. We had carriers to take most of our gear including lamps. We set off on our journey to Gadovisu, knowing that we had 35 river crossings to make (all over the same river). After lunch, each crossing became a little harder. We were starting to climb when we came across a swiftly flowing stream. Our carriers had gone on ahead and I was left with the three nurses and Janet. Septimus crossed with difficulty and then it was our turn. I could see that the river was coming up due to rains in the hills, so was keen to get across, not realising that it would not help as the next crossing was the same river. The Papuans started to take me but hurried me back as we nearly fell over in the river. It was just as well that we did come back because

the flood suddenly came down in earnest. We sat on a high spot listening to the boulders booming down the river and watching the debris rushing past. We were in quite a predicament. Septimus on the other side had matches, food and the bedding. We had nothing, not even a torch. However, by 5pm, the river had gone down quite a bit and we commenced the perilous journey across with the water tugging at our legs trying to upend us. By a great effort of will we moved one leg after the other and finally made it to the other side.

We set off knowing that we had 10 more crossings and the light would soon be gone. We climbed the dangerous pass with hardly enough light to see a step in front. Just when we could see nothing but blackness, we heard our carriers above us. We hurriedly lit the lamps and started the last climb up to Gadovisu.

The village is built on the side of a mountain and the Mission is right at top. We finally reached teacher Lawrence's house and his warm hospitality and a hot wash helped to revive us. After this experience I always carried a torch in my string bag when I went on patrol.

*There was a story that did the rounds in PNG that may or may not have been totally accurate but the story certainly sounds very likely. Father Syd Smith, a real laconic Australian bushman type, went on three month's leave and Father James Benson looked after his inland station for him while he was away. This was some distance away from Fr Benson's station at Gona and so he would stay for some days at a time when he visited. After a few days away, an urgent message came in a note carried by a Papuan carrier. The gist of the note was this, "Please send me a jar of marmalade immediately. This blasted Australian, Smith, doesn't have any and a man can't get a decent Christian breakfast."*



## **Peter Routley, Laos 1992-1995**

Peter has been a teacher since 1955. He taught in State Schools and Pulteney Grammar School in South Australia before he moved to England in 1959 teaching in Birmingham and London. He was then Headmaster of Ila-Orangun Grammar School in Western Nigeria for four years.

*Peter served for ten years in Papua New Guinea:*

- *Appointed initially to teach English to Public Servants at the Administrative College in Port Moresby. (1968)*
- *First Headmaster of Kimbe High School in West New Britain. (4 years)*
- *Transferred to Kerevat Senior High School as Principal. (East New Britain) (3 years)*
- *Retired in 1977.*

*He worked as a paid administrator with World Vision in Cambodia (Phnom Penh), Mauritania (Tidjikja) and the Republic of Mali (Gao). However he taught as a volunteer, with Catholic Relief Services in a refugee camp in Thailand preparing Cambodian refugees for immigration to Australia.*

*From 1990 to 1994 he worked in Vientiane (Laos) for ABM where he re-started the Church of the Holy Spirit as a Lay Minister. At the Missionary Conference in Adelaide in 2010, Peter presented the following story about the Anglican Relief and Development Agency (ARDA) Language Centre that he established in Vientiane.*

*Now he is involved as a Project Officer in World Families Aust. (Inc.). This is an organisation which raises money for disadvantaged children in eleven Asian countries, Ethiopia and Kenya.*

**L**ao People's Democratic Republic The driving force behind ABM's work in Laos was Dr Monty Morris who was, at the time, the Vicar of Christ Church, Bangkok. He negotiated an agreement with the help of the Australian Ambassador in Vientiane, under which the Lao government would permit public worship if we established an English-language Teaching Centre. The Lao language was not to be used in church activities. We were, after all, working in a hardline communist state dominated by the military.

Armed with a briefcase full of Thai Baht, I soon rented a lovely old French colonial two storey house with lots of rooms, ideally suited to our needs. It was only when the wet season set in that I found that the ground floor was regularly flooded because of Vientiane's poor drainage.

The Language Centre was an immediate success. Word got round very quickly that we had trained teachers whose first language was English. The fees were moderate, and we soon had six classes of senior students from the Vientiane High School and Dong Dok University.

The Church of the Holy Spirit, which had formerly worshipped irregularly at the Australian Embassy, now had weekly communion services where I used the Reserve sacrament. Some Lao students attended but they did so under the watchful eye of the functionaries from the Ministry of the Interior who loitered nearby on Sundays.

The Centre was called ARDA. (the Anglican Relief and Development Agency). The relief took the form of aid to primary schools. With the help of a local community we rebuilt their six-room school. We also gave thousands of text books to students in and around Vientiane. A small loan scheme for village women was started with \$5000.00 which Mr. Michael Mann, the Australian Ambassador, happened to find in his budget.

Initially in the early 90s we were funded by ABM and Christ Church, Bangkok with other generous help from Australia. Now ARDA is looked after by the Diocese of Singapore. The church meets in grander, flood free premises. The work of the Language Centre is impressive. I went back last year and cast a beady eye over it and found that ABM's work continues 15 years after its establishment in Laos.



## *Rolf Sherwin. PNG 1978 - 1981*

After spending many years with the Reserve Bank of Australia in the 1960's, Rolf worked in Chartered Accounting firms in Sydney, Darwin and Adelaide prior to going to Dogura in 1978 as Diocesan Secretary. In 1981 Rolf returned to Australia and worked in Chartered Accounting in Adelaide and Alice Springs. For about a month in 1984 Rolf acted as a locum for Len Emery as Provincial secretary in Lae.

**M***angoes* One of the many endearing aspects of the Dogura mission station in the early 1980s was the great number of mango trees dotted about the station. They were mature trees, planted by people with foresight many years before. The tree provided shade all the year round and, towards the end of the dry season, they bore fruit in abundance between August and November.

Dogura was able to grow almost no other food during the year for its large population, which consisted of school pupils and teachers at Holy Name School and St Paul's Primary School, other education staff, the medical people at St Barnabas Hospital and all other Diocesan employees. The station itself was situated then, as now, on a plateau that was blessed with indifferent soil and no water supply other than what was caught in rainwater tanks or was piped a great distance by gravity feed from a small dam at Aribi, upstream of the Wamira River. The Dogura people thus depended on regular shipments of imported foodstuff from Alotau and Lae, supplemented by any surplus vegetables or fruit available in season from villagers at Wedau and Wamira nearby, and from more distant villages as well.

The mango season was particularly welcome at Dogura because mangoes were available continuously for at least two months each year when the ripe mangoes were golden yellow. Because they matured in so short a time, a good many fell to the ground each day and night and could be collected under the trees. Some Dogura residents however, notably girls from Holy Name School, were accustomed to separating mangoes prematurely from their trees with the aid of sticks and stones. Often after eating the greenish fruit, those people suffered from indigestion and needed treatment at St Barnabas Hospital. Local fauna also welcomed the mango season. Fowls and other birds would peck at the windfalls during the day,

and at night time various pigs and piglets emerging from the scrub below the Dogura plateau took advantage of any green or ripe mangoes on the ground. Those marauders were unfazed by the prospect of indigestion.

"Mangoes", the following five verse poem, was written with a chorus to be sung by schoolgirls in St Barnabas Outpatients. (Tune: Hear the pennies dropping.)

1. Hear the mangoes dropping,  
Listen as they fall,  
Green and ripe they tumble  
Down for one and all.

Chorus:

Mangoes dropping, dropping, dropping,  
Hear them as they fall,  
We're not having any more,  
You can have them all.

2. Barnabas outpatients,  
Full of girls in pain,  
Victims of some mangoes,  
Eaten green again.
3. Sticks and stones help mangoes  
Fall before they're due,  
Those are now the problem  
From our point of view.
4. Little pigs and chickens  
Join us in the treat.  
Eating lots of mangoes,  
Ripe and green they eat.
5. What a painful season  
Mango time can be;  
Food for pigs and chickens,  
Stomach aches for me.



## *Philip Thirwell, Polynesia 1962-1973*

Philip was in Fiji for 12 years, a Mission to Seamen's Chaplain for 12 years and a Mission to Seamen's Chaplain again, in Japan, for another four years. He lives in retirement in New South Wales with his wife, Margaret. This memory is one of the eight stories presented at the Adelaide Conference of Missionaries in 2010.

### **V**iti Vignettes *Remembering Fiji*

January 1962: We're in a wonderful new 707, with the blue globe of Pan Am on the tail. We're dining on Peking Duck! How did this happen to us – the curate from Albury, and his teacher wife? Are we really missionaries? We wonder. We come down to earth at Nadi: midnight in the wet season. Steam off the tarmac rises up my trouser legs. This is the tropics.

On to Suva, where a silver haired bishop, veteran of remote Pacific years, meets us in his old Morris Minor. His foremost instruction is: learn Hindi! the language of the Indian community who are mostly Hindus, with a small Christian minority. A few days later we fly to Labasa, over the Koro Sea. It is a town where the Anglican Church has a long presence, a fine new church, and two schools.

Soon comes a long hoped-for pregnancy for Margaret. Our first daughter will be Fiji-born. There are hot afternoons at All Saints' Boys School, where a young Indian teacher stays back to lead two priests, New Zealander and Australian, into the Hindi language. A year later, I venture a Sunday Eucharist and sermon in Hindi.

There are nights sitting on hard mud floors – people packed in, young and old; a hand-pumped box harmonium; a finger-played drum; and bhajans – Indian faith songs - resound: Raja Yishu aaya – King Jesus has come. There is joy, and sweet, milky tea. There are Sunday mornings administering Communion to a magnificently diverse line of communicants – Fijian, Indian, Chinese, European ..... one in Christ.

Ba. 1964 – 1970: We are moved to Ba to break new ground. I invest in a light motor bike, to follow doubtful roads into the countryside. Our house has space underneath, which becomes a church on Sundays. We have a growing collection

of storybooks, donated from Australia. Margaret, as librarian, checks them out to kids going home from school. They queue back to the front gate, barefoot, happy. A few come back on Sundays.

A second baby daughter joins our family. Also an Indian teenage girl escaping a violent foster home. She is one of a group who are baptised in the new church dedicated to the Holy Spirit. A destitute widow with three hungry kids comes to our door. She's been told a priest lives here. We find her a cheap room to rent. Next year, baptised, she tells of her mother, on Makogai, the leprosy island. A Catholic Sister had told her about Jesus; mother told daughter; and now, her Hindu husband gone, she's free to become a Christian. Thus does God work.

1971: We move from Ba to Nadi for more ground breaking. While the church house is building, we live in a flat above a store which is also the taxi rank for nearby Nadi Airport. The drivers play their radios all night. Natali, the shopkeeper, has sweets for our children. Our third daughter is born. God is good!

There is constant travel on dusty roads, ministry with small groups, and tentative new contacts with the word of Christ .

A hurricane blows: our children revel in the fallen mangoes and I become, for some time, a kind of clerk of works for the Authority rehousing the homeless. There is always something new!

The wind of the Spirit is blowing too, and indigenous priests begin to replace the expatriates.

August 1973: We board a wonderful new 747, and wistfully leave Nadi but Fiji will always stay in our hearts.



## *David Thompson, Carpentaria, Polynesia, NT, North Queensland 1969-2008*

David was the chaplain at Lockhart River for eight years, priest in charge at Nadi in Fiji for three years, and then worked at Nungalinga College, Darwin for ten years (as Registrar then Extension Education Officer) before he started an association with Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Cairns, which lasted for another 20 years. He lives in Cairns.

### ***B****reaking new ground at Lockhart River*

I arrived at Lockhart River as chaplain in February 1969. The Aboriginal people were still adjusting to the Queensland Government's take-over of the Anglican Missions on Cape York Peninsula in 1967 which included a relocation of the Lockhart River community 80km to the north; I arrived part way through the building and moving activities. It was a time of turmoil as the people adjusted to different staff and the assimilationist pressures of the time.

It was also new ground for the church and chaplain and I soon realised this graphically when one man told me that "Church is not boss any more". The church was no longer integrated in community life as in the theocracy of the Mission order. Now the local church had to find its feet as a religious institution alongside the secular government administration. The burning question for me was "How do I share the gospel in this context?" The people were now turning a deaf ear to preaching, exhortation and the religious expectations of the old Mission order.

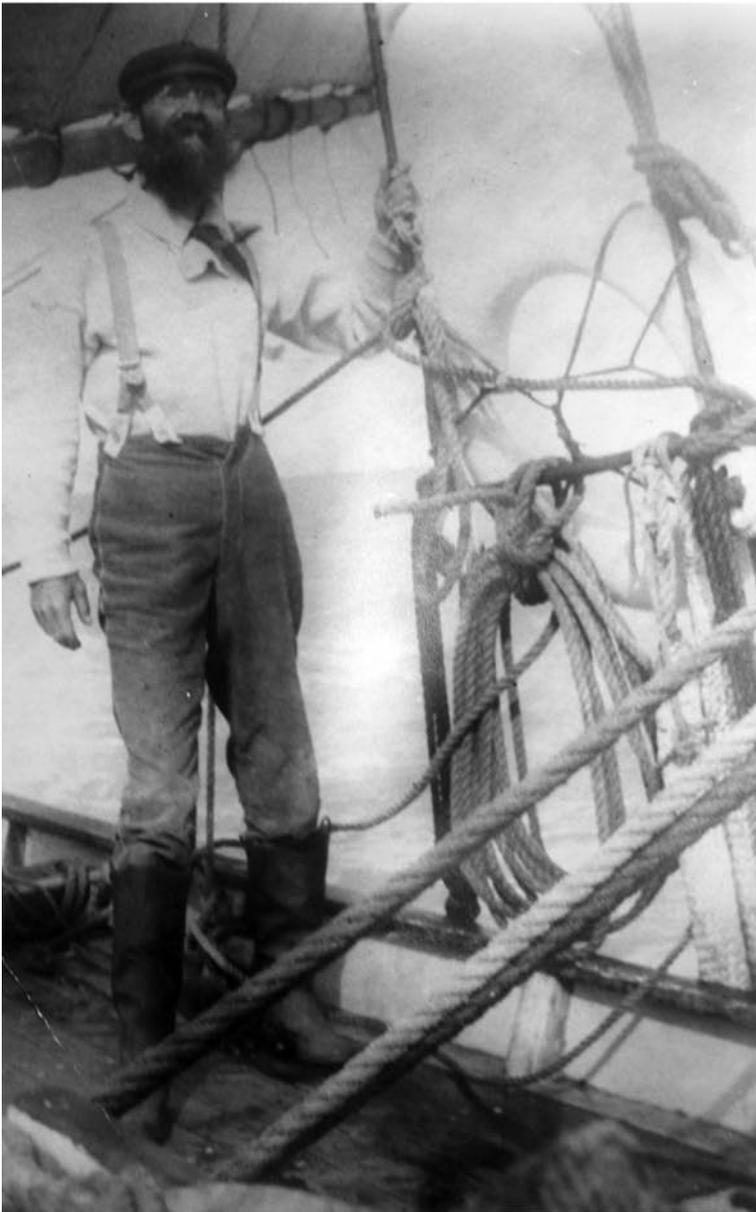
I came with my own expectations and hopes, fresh from introductions to anthropology and missiology at the House of the Epiphany and a three months course with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Assimilation was not on my agenda but a positive approach to Aboriginal culture was. I had read up on missiology in places like PNG and the Pacific but found none on Aboriginal missiology apart from the Mission-station approach. The feeling came, "If only ABM could tell me just how to go about communicating the gospel here," and then I realised that we in the field had to break new ground and find out the hard way, by making mistakes.

Learning the language was a good start. It is hard to treat a learner as a boss. You can laugh at his mistakes. He becomes a friend to relate to, give to

and receive from. Music was another bridge. There was so much talent in creating songs, singing in harmony, in dancing, so much identity wrapped up in it all. Tape recordings of their music returned to them in two custom records did much for our egos, theirs and mine. In all this I discovered that slowly building relationships in a serving ministry was the first step. My first significant breakthrough happened after five months.

The Aboriginal people were still attached emotionally to the old Mission site and its dilapidated buildings and the impressive church built of bush timber and bark walls. I arranged to travel there by road with a young man who had acquired a dilapidated old Land Rover. Transport was very scarce then. We loaded up and took off with some basic food supplies. We had driven about half way when the old vehicle decided to give up. We could not coax it back to life so were resigned to walking back to the new settlement. After about 10 kilometers, it was getting late and, to my relief, we decided to camp the night on a sand bar beside a creek.

My friend soon had a fire going and a billy boiling. After a basic meal, we settled down beside the fire and began to yarn about the old Mission days and the present changes. A revealing moment was his experience of being chased to church as a young boy, not by the missionaries but by older family members. Elders in the Mission accepted church as an integral part of life. It was a different story for the younger generation now released from the Mission framework into the more voluntary expectations in the new context. Anyhow, as a result of our fireside musings, my friend decided that I was OK and that he would call me "yapu," older brother. That to me was a real breakthrough, no longer friends, now brothers. The next morning a truck came to find us on the road. This relationship has endured over the years and he and his wife are now living in Cairns where he is on dialysis (which is another story) and there is often opportunity for practical support.



FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES

LEFT: Gilbert White, Bishop of Carpentaria

ABOVE: The Reverend James Noble and family.  
The first Aboriginal man ordained.



## *David Thompson, Carpentaria, Polynesia, NT, North Queensland 1969-2008*

David's long time involvement in the mission field and in developing communities translated into a keen understanding of the different societies where he worked. His anthropological insights expressed in this article and his willingness to be involved gave him a special relationship with those societies.

### **F**acing a Dilemma at Lockhart River

In 1969, Aboriginal people at Lockhart River, Queensland, were struggling to adjust to the new government assimilation doctrine in their community. The Anglican Missions handed over the administration of the settlement to the Queensland Government in May 1967, and the community was relocated in 1969-70. I came there as Chaplain and the lone non-government employee in 1969 and stayed there until 1977. I aimed to connect the Christian Gospel to the roots of traditional Aboriginal culture or at least to try to find connecting points. I began learning of the riches of their cultural life through language learning, music and daily interactions.

The main Aboriginal resistance to the pressure of assimilation was passive, but in 1970 and 1971 a more demonstrative resistance was given. Initiation ceremonies, known in Creole as "Bora", were mounted at an old Bora ground near the beach. This was both an overt declaration of cultural identity and values and also a conciliatory move as the elders chose to invite a few acceptable whites to take part. Government employees were discouraged from taking part but a teacher, an anthropologist and myself did take part.

As Chaplain, I faced a dilemma. Could a Christian, let alone a priest, take part or was I opening myself to a syncretistic compromise or something worse? I had been discovering that Aboriginal culture and religion was different to what I had read about in PNG and among the Pacific peoples. There was no worship of gods here, but there were beliefs in mythic totemic ancestors. They were human ancestors who had supernatural powers and eventually transformed into animals, birds or other objects after being instrumental in forming the landscape and instigating traditions. They were symbolic connectors of people to land, language and each other. As such they were represented in

the Bora ceremonies. In later years, Melanesian Brothers thought erroneously that they were worshipping a skull.

I had a fairly hazy understanding of this at the time but I was encouraged by a common saying of the people, "Bora is like Church". This indicated a positive relationship or parallel between the two in their minds and I felt then that the risk to my integrity was worth taking. All the same, it was a step into the unknown because, although I had witnessed the public side of the ceremonies, I did not know what was involved in the secret side, except that it did not involve anything physical to the body. The timing of the ceremonies was modified to follow after the working day of the community.

What I discovered from this experience was a revelation. While these ceremonies had a religious or totemic foundation, they were primarily conducted for social purposes. Each initiate was bonded to at least one person and given a guide in a brother-in-law relationship. This person, usually a distant relative, was designated a "godmother" and called "paapa", mother. The mothers had their dance for the initiates in the public ceremonies. These ceremonies bonded the mother (and her family) to the initiate in a strengthened relationship as an adult male now called a son and a brother. The building of multiple relationships through these ceremonies in fact strengthened their whole solidarity and identity as a people through strengthened and extended family life. This extended family life is the real foundation and heart of Aboriginal society. It is this network of relationship that endures and it maintains Aboriginal cultural identity even when there is a loss of land, language and customs.

The ceremonies were finalized by a washing ceremony, by splashing, that took place at the beach at dawn. This ceremony was clearly likened to Christian Baptism and showed that the parallel

between Bora and Church is that both build living communities in which members enter and belong through ceremony.

The effect that my participation had on my relationship with the Lockhart River community was quite significant. I had one main “godmother” and two lesser ones to ensure wider links in the community. There was now a deeper level of acceptance and openness and a sense of belonging to a second home. It was one step in building a sense of the church belonging to the people rather than being an external institution imposing a way of life.

My belonging to the community has continued since leaving there in 1977 through my education roles and in recent years, as anthropologist, in native title claims and in developing a language-learning program for the younger generations. It was sad but a privilege to conduct the funeral of my paapa a couple of years ago. I reflected in more detail about the initiation experience in a small book published by ABM in 1985 called “Bora is like Church”.



ABOVE: Nancy Dick, the first Aboriginal woman to be ordained Deacon

*The Gribble family is one of the most famous, and for some the most infamous, of Australian missionary families. The Revd John Brown Gribble, at the age of 37 went from NSW to Port Gascoyne, WA, where he started to work with the local Aboriginal people. A feisty and confronting man, he attacked the Carnavon pastoral landholders about their treatment of the Aboriginal men and women with such vigour that a massive campaign was launched against him. He was much vilified and eventually the Church removed him from his position under pressure from the settlers. History has shown him to be a much maligned man. He went East after being so badly treated and started missions in NSW and later at Yarrabah. He died in 1893 at the age of 45 years and his gravestone in Sydney carries the words, “Blackfellow’s Friend”.*

*Canon Ernest Gribble reluctantly took over at Yarrabah for ten years after his father’s death. He was asked to go to Forrest River in WA to revive the rundown station near Wyndam. Like his father, Ernest was aggressive and arrogant and for 14 years ran the Forrest River mission station autocratically but passionately for the well being of the local Aborigines. When he heard of the killing of some Aborigines by the police he went after the truth with his usual vigour. It appeared that in 1926, some 300 Aboriginal people had been killed and he would not let this matter rest. A Royal Commission was called and the lawyers for the police seemed to base their case on blackening Gribble’s name. Walter Nairn, who represented the 13 police on the patrol, said of Gribble, “(he) treats them as the equal of whites. He continually puffs up blacks and has been a source of great mischief in the Wyndham district. That is why he is so cordially hated by those amongst whom he has lived for 13 years.” There was no doubt that many Aborigines had been killed and history seems to have proved Gribble right, but the commission exonerated the police and Gribble was again much vilified. He went back East where he spent another 30 years in Aboriginal Ministry on Palm Island and at Yarrabah until he died in 1957. Gribbles have served all over the Pacific and Australia in many capacities ever since. “White Christ, Black Cross” by Noel Loos tells these stories and many more about the emergence of the black church in Australia.*



## *Michael Vine, PNG 1962-1968*

Michael and Lois went to PNG in 1962. Michael was the priest in charge at Agenahambo for four years and at Goroka for three years. When he returned to Australia, Michael was an Industrial Chaplain for 20 years.

### **A** *Healing*

One day I needed to take the mission jeep. These were dug out of the bush where the American forces had left them to rot eighteen years previously. A genius mechanic \* working for the mission in Popondetta kept them in good order. I generally preferred to walk but on this occasion I was not meant to, as you will see.

I arrived at Togaho a couple of hours later, took Mass, and was walking out of the church when a mother, distraught about her sick child, came around the corner imploring me to do something. I looked at him and realised that this, perhaps, 18 months old boy had all the symptoms of cerebral malaria: eyes rolled back, a high fever and limp as a rag doll. I had no choice but to take them back in the jeep with me and rush him into a hospital outpost about two or three hours away.

The teacher and I quickly packed our things into the jeep, seated the mother and her child as comfortably as we could in the back, and drove straight out of the village to make our way along the atrocious unmade road. Soon the mother began to wail, thinking her son was dead. We had come to a stream, so I deliberately stopped the car, turned to the mother and asked her, "Do you believe that God can heal your child?"

"Yes Father."

"Do you want your son baptised?"

"Yes", she said.

So, with the help of the teacher holding the child, I pulled out my stole from among my garments, cupped my hands in the river water and baptised the boy in the name of the Trinity. We then drove like the wind (actually at about five miles per hour along the bumpy road.) without a stop.

Thank heaven the doctor was there. We ushered the mother and child in and went outside to recover from the ordeal. It seemed only a short time later that the doctor emerged from the dispensary.

We expected the worst. He said, "I don't know what all the fuss was about, Michael. The child is quite all right." You could have knocked us over with a feather duster. When the mother came out a moment later, beaming, we could only think it was a miracle. I am sure that some who witness healings, which they say are miracles, are, perhaps, guilty of exaggeration if only to make a point. It doesn't help to gild the lily, but this was quite extraordinary.

*\* Rodd Hart came to work in PNG after the war salvaging war surplus items from the bush. He married an Anglican missionary, Maddie Swan, and stayed on as the Headmaster, Manual Arts teacher and Mechanic at St. Christopher's Training College at Popondetta. He went into the bush and salvaged and maintained the jeeps and trucks that kept the Anglican Mission mobile for many years.*

*At one Diocesan Conference, Rodd famously complained that he was overloaded with work and costs because the priests in the Popondetta area were rolling jeeps at the rate of 150 a year. Michael, the author of the above story, had been involved in one of three mishaps in one week on the treacherous roads and Rodd was using a little hyperbole to make a point. Rodd's acerbic comment brought the house down.*



FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES: A hospital scene



## *Michael Vine, PNG 1962-1968*

Michael and Lois went to PNG in 1962. Michael was the priest in charge at Agenahambo for four years and at Goroka for three years. When he returned to Australia, Michael was an Industrial Chaplain for 20 years.

### **A**hika

This was one of the more colourful events that happened while Lois and I were at Agenahambo in the Northern District of Papua.

Ahika, the local witchdoctor, who lived opposite the mission, took hold of his javelin sized spear and went after one of the school boarders. Ahika was still feared by the locals so nobody was going to stop him. One of the resident teachers ran to our front porch, the whites of his eyes betraying his great fear, and shouted that Ahika was swearing to kill the boy who had killed his prized pig. The pig was indeed dead and the young perpetrator, on hearing that Ahika was after him, was running like the wind to the next village down the road.

When the news reached me, Ahika was well on his way. But the teacher took me on a short cut through the bush to where the boy had gone and I arrived on the scene (it was quite a scene) before he did. The villagers were wide eyed with apprehension when I arrived from one side of the village and the boy from the other. He fell down behind me blubbing and holding my knees, as Ahika, shaking his spear with rage went for him. I was, I am sure, paler than them all! I couldn't think of a thing to do or say except some gibberish like, "Stop Ahika!" in Orokaiva.

He stood there deciding what to do. To back down was to lose face before the villagers, and to do battle with the priest was, perhaps, unthinkable. (I thought so too!) After about an hour (or so it seemed, though it was probably no more than a tortuous minute) he turned on his heel and headed to his hut. I immediately beckoned the teacher to follow me and help me translate what we wanted to say to Ahika.

It was important to help him save some face, so we pleaded with him all the way back to his house to

stop and talk about some restitution for the loss of his pig. He kept walking and without a word went back into his hut.

I crossed the road to our house and sat down for a cuppa tea. In the middle of tasting the soothing effect of this cuppa upon my soul, I noticed Ahika now striding across the debba debba (school grounds) towards the boarder's dormitory with a machete in his hand. I can't remember how it happened, but my Irish was up and I ran ahead and planted myself directly in front of him and said, "Stop!" in Orokaiva, "not one step more" or something like that thinking I would use my training in judo on him if he persisted. How stupid can you get? Not that it would have been of much effect I think. We were both shaking. He was shaking with anger; I was shaking with fear and exasperation. To my utter surprise and his too, I'm sure, he turned and went to his house.

We eventually paid him something to compensate for his loss. I cannot remember what. But the extraordinary sequel to this tale is that he came to me some six months later to ask to be prepared for baptism. What the villagers thought can only be guessed. We named him Matthew.

*Michael wrote four stories for this booklet. We have used two of these that are quite different to the memories sent in by other missionaries.*

## ***Fred Wandmaker, ABM 1973-1987***

Fred was the ABM State Secretary for NSW 1973-1977, Assistant to the Chairman of ABM 1978-1981, Secretary for Aboriginal Affairs 1982-1985, GS of Aboriginal Affairs 1985-1987. Fred contrasts the pace of city life with his country background before facing the contrast between field and office mission orientation. Fred was a fierce champion of Aboriginal concerns and full bottle on anything to do with working with and understanding Aboriginal people.

### **O**rientation

She was actually doing her makeup while the car was at the traffic lights! She was the driver. It is a long way from the mountain parish of Omeo to the rush hour traffic of Sydney. I was terrified every morning. At the next lights a bloke was reading the paper and it wasn't the tabloid version. As a new A.B.M. worker I had to face the traffic every day. For some months this required me to get to work by 8.00 a.m. for a 9.00 a.m. start. I could read the paper for 15 mins to get my breathing back to almost normal, say Morning Prayer in the Chapel, read the mail and then be ready to start when the others got to work. They were all used to the traffic.

After I had been the assistant State Secretary for a while it was time to be orientated. So off to Cape York I went. It was my first ride in a big plane but not as terrifying as my first flight in a crop dusting Pawnee over Bindi station. Omeo is a cool place so of course I had no tropical clothes for Cape York, and the tracks at Edward River Mission were 4 inches deep in sand. Blinded by sweat and bugged by 10a.m. each day I was not much company for Father Michael Martin and Cathy. They, however, were wonderful hosts and provided an excellent introduction to what an ABM assistant needs to know. I learned much about Aboriginal matters in a very short time. I have now spent another 39

years of searching, trying to unravel more of the story. You have to start somewhere but where does the discovery of new things Aboriginal stop?

Much later, after much sweat and another

small plane ride, this time over water, I came to Daru Island near the mouth of the Fly River. After an historic dismount from another little plane

I met the first Melanesian Brothers to come to Australia. They came to minister to Aboriginals on Cape York. This was a good idea that didn't work. It was historic though!

Then I went to Port Moresby and had my first encounter with the anti-ABM feelings of Australians working in the PNG mission. I stayed with the Franciscans in Port Moresby. Bro. Alfred was the boss; he soon got over the prevailing attitude, maybe because he was from the north of England, as I am, and he had a hard time being accepted by the Brothers as one who could work outside the kitchen. Type casting by regional accent was common in Australia, the church, the Order of Saint Francis and especially in England. Among my experiences in the church in PNG was the warmth and generous hospitality from ABM missionaries. They had little to offer in food or comfort but they gave it generously.

The orientation voyage ended in Rabaul. There was an old priest from Australia in charge and the lovely Isaac Gadebo as assistant. Immediately on arrival the old priest charged, firing everything he hated about A.B.M. and how unreasonable its policies were. This went on for an hour while the two priests showed me the glories of Rabaul. I had now been away from home for nearly seven weeks. That takes a lot of listening and learning, a lot of missionary food and no missionary position. Besides I was an assistant and not really deciding A.B.M. policy so finally I could take no more. I calmly asked him to take me back to the airport and leave me there. Otherwise, I suggested that I might punch him a couple of times. He refused my request and we spent some unhappy days together. Fortunately I enjoyed my time with Fr. Isaac and learned much of the possible future of the church in P.N.G. This was my orientation!!

LEFT: Phillip Freier and the "Gilbert White" mission plane



## Mary Wardman, PNG 1951-1961

This article comes from an interview with Mary Wardman in 2011 by Judith Cottier. Fr John and Mary Wardman continued a fine tradition of outstanding mission work at Gona and were significant leaders of the church in both PNG and Australia.



*The Wardmans were a link between the pre-war and post-war missionary activity in PNG. Fr. James Benson was the priest at Gona when the Japanese landed there in 1943. He was interned by the Japanese at Rabaul for the duration of the war and wrote of his experiences in his book, "Prisoner's Base and Home Again". Fr Benson was also famous for his art works around the diocese and the Dogura murals. Mary Wardman was his niece.*

*In 1948 Fr John Wardman was ordained a priest in Adelaide by Bishop Bryan Robin whose son Fr Peter Robin had been a coast watcher for the navy during the war and who later pioneered the start of Anglican Missionary work in the highlands of New Guinea in the late 50's. Both Mary and John had aspired to go and work in PNG before their marriage and eventually volunteered to go with their two young children. John and Mary took over the running of Gona Mission Station when they came to New Guinea in 1951.*

### **B**orn in Gona

At Gona, after a miscarriage, Mary became pregnant again and Dr. Blanche Biggs came up the coast from Erero to be available for the birth before going on leave. The baby was overdue and Mary was advised to get down and polish floors to induce the birth. She did so with great effort and stoic resolve. Eventually Dr. Biggs sent a message over the bush radio to Dr. Maurice Dowell at Oro Bay to come to Gona and assist in case the birth needed to be by Caesarian section.

Mary went into labour. The anaesthetic was ether administered by her husband: the ward was illuminated by Tilley lights. Ether and tilley lights are not a good combination. The operating table had been salvaged from a pile of discarded military stuff and Dr. Biggs who was quite short had to

stand on top of a kerosene tin for the delivery. Mary lost so much blood that her life was in danger. A runner was sent to Popondetta from where a radio schedule contact with Port Moresby was possible and a request was made to have blood flown over the Owen Stanley Range to Popondetta. The blood was flown in just half an hour before the airstrip was closed due to descending clouds. The track to Gona was sometimes accessible to a jeep but not this day. So a runner brought the blood down the track for about five hours where it arrived just in time to save Mary's life. Two years later for the birth of her next child, her son Simon, Mary went back to Australia where transport and communications are a bit easier to manage.

Mary and John returned to Australia to stay in 1961 and John became one of the most respected of Perth's clergy and also became quite famous for making jams to sell for ABM fund raising. Mary became involved with the ABM Women's Auxiliary of Western Australia as a member and president and still regularly attends meetings over sixty years since she started her missionary stint at Gona. John and Mary revisited PNG and Gona as honoured guests in 1991 as part of the Province of New Guinea Centenary celebrations and received a tumultuous welcome from people who still remembered their pioneering ministry. John eventually died at the age of 91 but Mary remains an ABM stalwart and supporter in her parish and State.



ABOVE: Mary Wardman; TOP: Fr John Wardman at the centenary celebration in PNG in 1991



## *Alan White, PNG 1963-1967*

Alan worked as part of the Diocesan building team at Martyrs' Memorial School and St. Christopher's Manual Training School. He stayed on and worked for the PNG Government in Rabaul in 1968 and 1969. This is an extract from a letter Alan wrote to his mother in Bundaberg, Queensland dated 31st October, 1963.

### **A** *Road Too Long*

Last Friday I had to go 15 miles (24 kilometers) towards Popondetta to the sawmill for timber to make a couple of school desks for St. Michael's school at Agenahambo. There was an exam on the Monday and they were short of desks. It was teeming rain when I got to Agenahambo mission house and I was to take their jeep and trailer. After an hour of rain, I decided that the rivers would be flowing fast, and so, too high to drive through. Father Michael Vine said that he never worries about rain and so encouraged me to go. He didn't want to drive down as he gets too much driving.

So off we went, taking old Deacon Andrew of Agenahambo and two of our workers. Along the road we gave a lift to a teacher and his wife, and then about a third of the way down, we couldn't get up a steep grade leading out of a creek as it was so slippery. We unhooked the trailer and after losing much sweat, pushed the jeep up the hill, turned around and got it started returning down the hill. Back in the middle of the creek and the jeep stopped again. This time the crank handle got it going so finally we got out of the creek, pulled the trailer up by hand and after this one hour delay,

covered in mud, we set off on our way. At the mill our timber wasn't ready contrary to what was expected but, after a mental check on what was required, it was obtained.

After we had finished talking with the sawmiller, we set off again on our return trip. It was now after dark. At the same creek we got stuck again. Finally we managed to get out and once more were travelling in top gear with the old lights, one shining across the road and the other pointing up to the trees, not giving much indication as to what was ahead. Deacon Andrew's torch would have been brighter, I'm sure he's been caught before.

I was sure it wasn't there before, but speeding around a corner we came slap bang into a wall of water. Our speed barely took us across to the other side before the flooded engine ceased to function. Wet brakes, as Wally will tell you, are useless, so we waited and a hospital Land Rover came along soon after and towed us until we got under way once again. Then we had a slow and cautious drive home. It was a three and a half hour's trip, but at least the students were able to sit for their exams in comfort. We made the desks on Saturday morning.

*Viv Kinnear and Elsie Manley were good mates but only saw each other on intermittent occasions. They sent gifts to each other for birthdays, Christmas and Easter, etc. In the tradition of poor missionaries they didn't spend lots of money on this practice but on the contrary they sent each other talcum powder every time and not only talcum powder but the same talcum powder each time. This took some careful management so that the container was in the right place at the right time. They both took great delight in receiving their surprise gifts!! Elsie has some of her stories in this book but Viv is remembered fondly by those who knew her and like Elsie is a legend in PNG circles. Her father was a businessman who ran a rope works in Melbourne. As he aged Viv had to look after him and felt unable to become a missionary as she thought she was called to be. On one respite leave she actually went to PNG to see what she was missing and realised that she had to tell her father that she had to be a missionary. When she returned to Melbourne to face him, he announced to her before she could say anything, that she could now move out of the house because he was going to marry his nurse and she was to be his carer. PNG had a new missionary.*



## ***Ron Williams, Polynesia 1966-72, 1974-79***

In 1966 Katie and Ron arrived in Suva and Ron began a year of fulltime language study in Hindi. This was funded by ABM on the recommendation of Canon Frank Coaldrake, the Chairman of ABM and iconic missiologist. Katie and Ron then served in Labasa until 1972. From 1974 to 1979 Ron served as the Dean of Suva. Later Ron was consecrated as a Bishop in Brisbane

### ***L*anguage for Mission**

Holy Trinity Cathedral Suva is a meeting place for the people and cultures of the Diocese of Polynesia. Its concrete walls lapped up the hangings, tapa cloth and mats of the Pacific and the beautifully painted banners made by local artists.

In those years I encouraged us to worship in three languages, Fijian, Hindi, and English at the main Sunday Eucharist. Occasionally we were also able to include some Tongan or Samoan. We did not translate anything, except the sermon from time to time. We made sure that the language used for sections of the liturgy varied each week. We printed a basic order of service in English for each Sunday, and included always at least one hymn in the Fijian language and one in Hindi transliterated so that non Hindi speakers could join in. European members sometimes found the Indian tunes as well as the words a bit of a challenge, but were prepared

to persist, especially when they learned that the highlight of the liturgy for some who travelled long distances to be there, was the singing of the Hindi hymn. It was their only language. After morning service we always shared morning tea and conversation at the back of the Cathedral.

One Sunday morning I came across an animated conversation over tea between Gordon the Australian High Commissioner, who only spoke English, and James Indar Datt the laundry man at the CWM Hospital, who only spoke Hindi. A third in this group was Mele, a beautiful Tongan lady who was enabling the two men to enjoy their talk by translating for them both. I gave a silent prayer of thanks to God. It seemed to encapsulate all that Holy Communion meant. And it was what the Cathedral's ministry was all about.

BELOW: Eucharist at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Suva





## ***Katie Williams, Polynesia 1966-72, 1974-79***

Katie is married to Ron Williams, and the mother of Martin, who was three months old on arrival in Fiji, and of Briony and Tom who were both born in Fiji. Katie received a Fiji Independence Medal in 1970, recognising her contribution to the arts in Labasa, work she continued later in Suva when Ron was Dean at Holy Trinity Cathedral.

### ***Finding Fiji***

A few nights after arriving in Suva, I was taken with Ron to visit a village out of Suva. I crossed a river by following a lantern bearer and walking along a horizontal palm trunk to reach the village on the other side. After a night of ceremonies and lengthy discussion, I returned the way I had come, via the palm trunk. Much later I went out again to this village in daylight, and was horrified to see that the river I had crossed so dexterously was so far below the palm trunk that I would never have crossed the river in this fashion had I known.

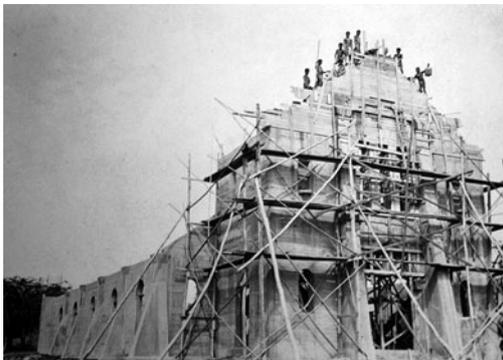
Labasa, a sugar growing centre on Vanua Levu, was home for five years. It was one of the few models of early 20th century mission-stations remaining in Fiji, and included a school and boarding hostel for regional students. This later grew to include a secondary school. I shall never forget the bright eyed Indian students who listened to my occasional religious instruction while I knew that they came from homes I had visited where mothers kept a

visible shrine according to their Hindu custom. I wondered what sign visitors would take away from my Christian home that described me as a person? I remember parents coming to say they remembered Miss Rowe and Miss Debbage, who had been teachers a generation ago. This reminded me that as Christians we are called only to sow seeds and others may reap the rewards.

Ron, later as Dean of Suva, was responsible for the organization of the consecration in the cathedral of the first Pacific Islander, Jabez Bryce. He was to be Bishop and Archbishop in Polynesia for 37 years. In Pacific fashion, this great occasion was attended by all cultural groups who later demonstrated loyalty through customary ceremonies. I felt sad that, as an Australian, I could not align myself with a national cultural ceremony.

My memory of time in Fiji is one of learning from different cultural groups, discovering personal gifts and owing much more to that country than I could ever give in return.



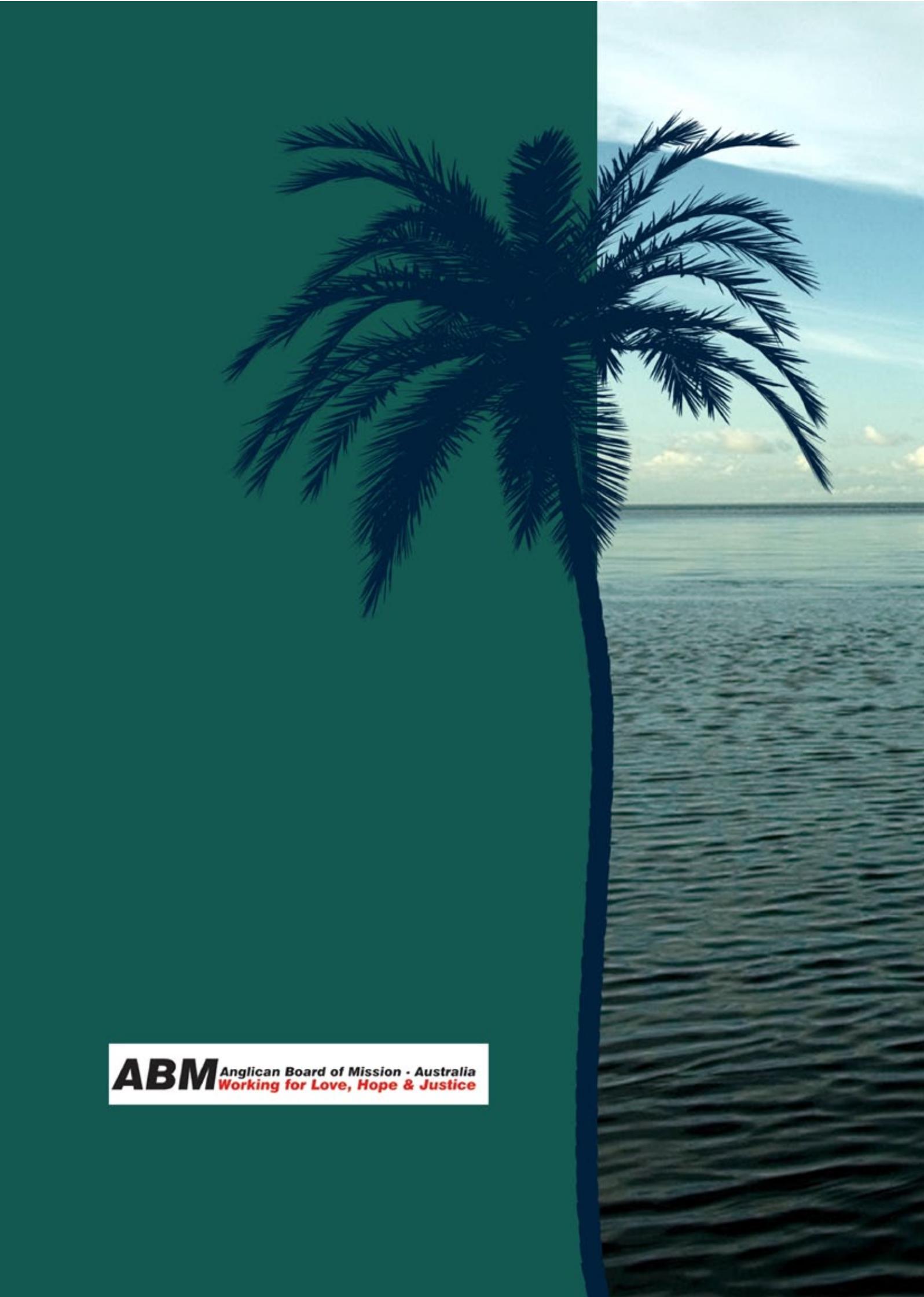


FROM THE ABM ARCHIVES

Clockwise: Bishop Richardson crossing the creek; large outrigger canoe in New Britain; Carpentaria; a church wedding PNG style; Fr Bill Houghton and Bp George Ambo in the Malagalas/Musa area, PNG; construction of the Dogura Cathedral in the 1930



*Papua New Guinea*



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