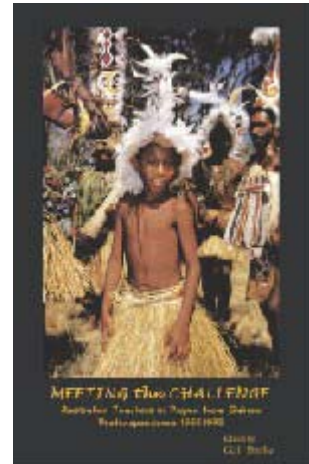


## ACTS & INCIDENTS



*Gail Burke's book 'Meeting the Challenge' [Copyright Press] includes more fascinating stories of Australian teachers in pre-independence Papua New Guinea*

### RED CROSS CONNECTION Molly Kreidl

Upon being appointed head teacher of Goroka West, one of my innovations was to establish a branch of the Junior Red Cross.

The group was very enthusiastic and had great fun learning elementary first aid, health and hygiene.

The local CWA was persuaded to make white dresses and red capes and the forty girls looked terrific.

During Red Cross Week, we were visited by Alva Clark, the General Secretary of the TPNG Red Cross.

My school went in boots and all. We got all the girls fund raising, which concluded with a celebratory evening in the local hall in the presence of the General Secretary, the District Commissioner and the district bigwigs.

We decided each girl would individually present the money she had raised to Mr Clark. The hall was packed with dignitaries, parents and their *wantoks*.

The concert was fabulous - singing, dancing and verse-speaking - but it was to be overshadowed by the presentation of the money.

We started with the littlest girl and one by one they came up to Mr Clark and presented him with their money.

He would say something nice and everyone applauded.

The six-year olds proudly handed over their ten and twenty cents. And as the girls got older, the amounts got larger.

People responded with increasing enthusiasm when the two and three dollar collections were handed over.

Then we came to three girls in their final year of Primary School. Three good-looking, buxom young women. The first came forward with \$85. There was pandemonium.

The next presented \$123. I couldn't think for the noise but by now all I wanted was for the floor to open up.

Finally the oldest girl moved forward and presented Mr Clark with \$320.

The General Secretary took the money, expressed his thanks and his delight, and then asked the three girls what they had done to raise the money.

He was told.

I will never forget that moment. All I wanted was a bolt of lightning.

The District Commissioner who, like me, still dines out on the story, told me later he felt he should approach each of the men in the audience and thank them for their contribution.

The Red Cross General Secretary's face made an unforgettable picture.

The poor man even made a futile attempt to return the money.

## **THE MATTRESS**

### **Col Booth**

I thought all my accommodation problems were solved when, at the same time, old Frank Boisen got Dubbo Dave Kesby an E Course aluminium hut at Nordup school and me a shared Single Officers Quarters behind the Rabaul post office.

When I moved into the SOQ, the first thing I did was to turn the mattress.

By that time I should have known enough about the Territory to leave well alone.

The mattress was covered in blood stains and had an extra strong smell about it.

Upon making inquiries, I found out the previous occupant had blown his brains out with a .45 and had lain, undisturbed and rotting, on said mattress for a few days.

Old Frank, the tyrant, was disdainful in the face of my urgent request for a new mattress, so I gave him both barrels, metaphorically this time.

I got a new mattress and, a couple of months later, a new SOQ, but I failed to get the admiration of Boisen for the next three years I spent in East New Britain.

## **BYE-BYE MR BACSKAI**

### **Barry Vincent**

1965 was my second year at Tubesereia, 30 km south-east of Port Moresby. My *hausboi* had a son, Gari, who was in Standard 5.

At that time, as you know, a good pass in Standard 6 was like the HSC so, when I transferred to Pari, my *hausboi* asked if Gari could come with my wife and me.

We agreed that Gari would live with us during the week, returning home for weekends and holidays.

Gari had a wicked sense of humour and his Standard 6 teacher, Frank Bacskai, from the E Course, was a very dour chap indeed.

One day Frank kept the class back for a detention after the final bell.

Having set the pupils a task, he adjourned to his *donga*, next door to mine, leaving the class unsupervised.

Shortly into detention, Gari came home to use the toilet.

Frank challenged him and, his explanation accepted, Gari trudged back to class where his mates – who'd seen the incident - wanted to know what had transpired.

The resourceful Gari told them Mr Bacskai had said they could all go home, which they promptly did.

Some time later Frank wandered back to find a deserted classroom.

Over dinner that night, Gari confided in me what he'd done.

The next day Frank tried to get the story from the class. No-one spilled the beans.

I was interested to see that none of Frank's detention classes were left unsupervised again.

## **CASE OF THE MISSING CADDY**

### **Bob Davis**

Apart from a few wayward hits while at ASOPA, and I'm sure Les Lyons and Dave Argent will verify the adjective, I never played golf, but harboured aspirations to one day do so.

Posted to Wau in '67 I was delighted to discover a rather hilly but welcoming golf course and so took up the sport.

Those of you who have never played golf might find it difficult to understand the passion this game can arouse.

I was quickly smitten and played most afternoons, chipping in my backyard and putting along the hallway of my house. Golf magazines and articles littered every coffee table and bookcase.

I began to associate with golfers and forsook other sports except snooker - when it rained.

One of the advantages of playing golf in TPNG was that there was always an eager bunch of school kids hanging around the golf course and keen to tote your bag for you.

At about 20 toea a round a caddy was an affordable luxury.

After two years I transferred to Lae, which had a larger golfing community and a bigger and better golf course.

It also sported the ubiquitous caddies and I never played golf without one

One of their many talents was to act as forerunners. They would race down the fairway dragging the golf buggy and bag in anticipation of the next shot and then fox the ball if it went out of bounds.

Unfortunately I still had accuracy difficulties and became infamous for straying far and wide. My caddies certainly earned their 20 toea.

Gradually my game improved and I found my handicap reduced to 15, earning me the reputation as a solid B grader.

When on leave in Oz, my habit was well-entrenched and I had to play golf at least two or three times a week.

After arriving in the nation's capital, I raced to the Federal Golf Club and put my name down to play with three complete strangers in a Saturday competition.

I had acquired a fair degree of competence and confidence by this and felt comfortable playing with people I did not know. I reasoned the quality of my game would speak for itself.

From the first tee I banged a boomer of a drive right down the middle and when we'd all played, I strode rather jauntily 300 metres down the fairway and turned around to hand my driver to the caddie and select my next club.

The caddie was still in Lae.

I mumbled apologies to my playing partners but the statement that I'd never played golf without a caddie seemed hollow and didn't engender sympathy.

After retrieving my clubs I raced back to my ball and proceeded to duff shot after shot, finishing with a course record for the most number of stokes.

I never played on that course again - with or without a caddie.

## **THE SCORPION**

### **Henry Bodman**

It was out at Kabagap where the nearest white man, the Catholic priest Father Krumpel, was two miles away as the crow flies but a two-hour drive along washed out pumice roads.

I recall a D6 bulldozer pulling another D6 that had slipped into the chasm that used to be the road until there was a cloudburst.

The message was clear - if you needed urgent medical attention, forget it and prepare to die.

One weekend I threw a load of very light twigs into the combustion stove and felt a burning sensation on the wrist. As I cast my eyes to the source of the sting, I spied a scorpion on the floor.

I realised I hadn't been burnt by a flying ember. The bloody scorpion had reacted in its instinctive way and let fly as it neared the heat of the fire.

As fate had it, I had just succumbed to the salesman's pitch of "a full library in the best binding you'll ever wish to see". The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Opening the page headed 'Scorpions', to my dread I fixed on a sentence stating, "Death is not uncommon".

It described symptoms which included dilated veins and other things I had lived with forever as indications of the first signs of impending death.

I was very proud of my reaction, "Hurry up that roast and let's see if we can't fit in a feed and a naughty before I kark it".

I then instructed Janelle to ensure I didn't go to sleep.

Seven hours later I hauled myself out of one of the best sleeps I've ever had and was outraged that Janelle hadn't been more devoted and that she was prepared to become a widow at such an early stage in our marriage.

## **THE DISAPPEARING DUNNY**

**Sonia Grainger**

At Dregerhafen Girls School there were chronic water problems.

During the day, the 70 or so girls made their way down an idyllic path to a quaint but sturdy sea toilet. How it operated is left to your imagination.

After a stormy night, there was a knock on my door at an early hour and I was informed by an indignant student that the sea toilet had disappeared.

I was scornful of such a possibility but donned dressing gown and thongs and swept along the path accompanied by 70 excited girls to be greeted by a sorry sight.

The timber floated on the now tranquil waters of the bay whilst the galvanised iron had sunk to the bottom of the lagoon.

"Summon the carpenter," I cried and by morning recess the local handyman and his offsider were genuflecting and inspecting the woeful remains.

They promised a new sea toilet the size of Buckingham Palace.

In due course, a most magnificent five-seater edifice was constructed on the site.

We marked the occasion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and applauded the magnificent architectural design of a couple of mere bush carpenters.

By whom the new sea toilet was christened has been mercifully lost in the mists of time, but it was not moi.

## **ON BOARD ENTERTAINMENT**

**Val Rivers**

During those few weeks of final prac in Lae a group of us girls were invited to go on a TAA social charter for a picnic to Butaweng near Finschhafen.

The plane was a TAA DC3 in cargo configuration and most of the people on board were TAA staff. The cabin had webbing seats along the sides for the lucky and the rest sat where they could on boxes in the middle.

Strategically located at the rear of the cabin was half a 44-gallon drum filled with ice and drinks.

Now, as slight movements take place on an aircraft, the pilot usually adjusts the trim. On this trip, with mischievous intent, people started moving to the back of the aircraft at 20 second intervals.

Then, with stability re-established, and at a pre-arranged signal, we all raced to the front.

The aircraft nose dived and I, along with others, thought my time in TPNG did not have long to run.

The pilot, however, proved the capability both of himself and the DC3 and quickly corrected the situation.

And, yes, we had a great picnic at the waterfall.

## **CHARTER FLIGHT**

### **Col Booth**

On a charter flight between Madang and Saidor, I asked the pilot about instructions taped to the instrument panel telling how to restart an engine in flight.

The pilot explained in detail how they were all wrong.

At four that afternoon, long after dropping me at Saidor, the bloody Cessna was still on the strip awaiting a mechanic from Madang to start the engine.

The pilot couldn't even get it going on the ground, so I don't know what hope he thought he might have had of restarting it mid flight.

The Missionary Aviation Fellowship used push/pull Cessnas, the front engine providing 40 percent of the power and the rear 60 percent.

MAF pilots may have known where they would end up in the event of a crash, but I was never so certain.

On this flight, our MAF hero tried an old trick: kill the rear motor in flight then restart it using instruments.

The inevitable happened.

The motor wouldn't restart.

The implications of landing at a controlled airstrip like Madang, then the busiest in Australasia after Sydney and Bankstown, were horrendous.

Plane impounded, motor stripped and, if no fault discovered, pilot disciplined.

So Mr MAF did the only sensible thing - radioed in that he was diverting for some sightseeing, landed in a patch of kunai somewhere in the vicinity of Bogia, managed to restart the engine and took off.

He wasn't concerned that I was totally packing it.

## **PAPUAN PUGILISM**

### **Richard Jones**

In the early 1970s, Papuan pro boxer Martin Beni was rated one of the Top 10 Commonwealth welterweights.

So dedicated was Beni to his calling, and so magnetic his drawing power, Port Moresby's Sir Hubert Murray stadium was packed each time a fight was staged.

The surrounding trees were a prime vantage point for non-paying patrons and, although a few hundred metres from the ring, the branches were always laden with Beni fans.

Twice the Central Province fighter was matched against Adelaide's Colin Cassidy, also Top 10 ranked.

After knocking out Cassidy in nine rounds in Moresby, Beni was drawn to fight the South Australian in a return bout a few months later.

Interest in the rematch was so high that tickets were impossible to procure.

The capacity crowd was amazed on the night of the bout to see a long line of official cars drawing up outside the main gate.

The House of Assembly had adjourned at Chief Minister Michael Somare's urging, deciding sport would take precedence over parliamentary proceedings that balmy evening.

Standing orders were suspended and a host of politicians made their way to Konedobu to watch the big fight.

Beni despatched Cassidy in six rounds and everyone went home happy.

I was ring announcer for stadium bouts and called the important matches live for the National Broadcasting Commission.

The call was in English with a between-rounds commentary in Pidgin and Motu.

In the 60-second break between rounds, each co-commentator would sum up the action in 30 seconds.

It was a unique experience.

## **A LESSON LEARNED**

### **Roger Stanley**

There was a native teacher, Bumbu, whose lesson notes I was obliged to review.

On one occasion, when I asked to see them, he said he'd left them at home.

As the weeks passed my demands became more strident as his excuses for not producing them multiplied.

Finally, totally exasperated, I told him to go home and get the notes while I looked after his class.

Bumbu – "You don't care do you?"

Me – "What do you mean I don't care?"

Bumbu – "You don't care that my fiancée has died."

Me – "I'm so sorry, I had no idea. If only I'd known... How insensitive of me. How long were you engaged?"

Bumbu – "Twenty years"

Now given that Bumbu was only about 25, I was taken off guard.

My mind raced through the works of Margaret Mead and lectures by Dr Fink and finally settled on a picture of Bumbu watching a girl develop to maturity over 20 years.

I mean, I'd be getting pretty toey too.

Me – "How long since you've seen her?"

Bumbu – "I've never seen her."

Me (totally disillusioned) – "I'm giving you the rest of the day off on compassionate grounds. I expect you to have your lesson notes up to date tomorrow."

They were

## **THE LOCAL RAG**

**Keith Jackson**

At Kundiawa in 1964, I started a newspaper called the *Kundiawa News*, which, in a roundabout way, eventually led me to Port Moresby, the ABC and journalism.

The KN was what you'd call scurrilous. It published gossip, opinion and fact in a pretty undifferentiated way.

Each fortnight's issue was dumped on the respective bars of the Chimbu Club and Kundiawa Hotel and avidly fallen upon by the punters.

As they absorbed the scuttlebutt and malice, niggling would start, then a bit of verbal blueing and occasionally a fully fledged brawl.

Attempting a hard-hitting style of prose, I inadvertently called the local PWD heavy a "dissolute reprobate".

Later, he caught up with me in the front (Euro) bar of the pub and asked what 'reprobate' meant.

I could tell by the look on his face that he didn't imagine it was a compliment.

I volunteered it as a mild term of reproach, whereupon he grabbed my shoulders and began to shake me.

Given that there was a fair bit of him and not much of me in those days, it was like a rottweiler wrestling a wet handkerchief.

At this point, my mate Bladders entered the fray, accosting the man and saying mildly, "Hey, leave him alone".

My assailant, wanting real sport, king hit Bladders, knocking him to the floor.

Now Bladders was a pretty popular guy around Chimbu, so a bunch of other fellas joined in.

Before you could say, "I'm outta here and off up the Club" all 20 guys in the bar had decided this was the night to settle old and new scores and were hoeing into each other.

The barmaids screamed, the lights went out, tables rolled over, glasses broke.

Dick Kelaart threatened to ban everyone for life except he would have gone broke.

I took Bladders to the *haus sik* and we watched Dr (now Prof) Tim Murrell finish off a Caesarian in the pitpit operating theatre before he stitched up my mate.

It was a terrific brawl.

Those implicated boasted of their involvement for months afterwards and those who missed out were disappointed and felt cheated.

I was quietly pleased that something I'd written could have such a spectacular impact on the local community.

## **TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE**

**Jeff Chapman**

For me, professionally, Hood Lagoon – 100 km east of Moresby, where I taught in 1965/66 – took the prize.

The panel marking the Standard 6 exam papers in Moresby didn't believe the high scores and the whole class had to re-sit the exams a few weeks later.

The 'second chance', as the kids saw it, was held at Hula, a four hour walk away. The class had to leave home in the dark without breakfast and do another exam. They were watched over by two supervisors whose presence they found intimidating.

Fortunately, the results were better than the original and had to be accepted.

## **WRIGGLE IN THE BAG**

### **Wendy Booth**

Returning from leave down south, we were put aboard an unlined DC3 to fly from Port Moresby to Madang.

We tracked directly across the highlands instead of taking the usual route through Lae.

As we flew through the mountains, the rain became intense and the temperature plummeted. It seemed close to freezing.

A call went out for cardigans and coats for the children while Col plugged holes in the fuselage with toilet paper to stop the rain coming in.

Huddled in the back seats, under the only blankets, were the hostesses.

IN 1971 WE DECIDED to weekend in Kundiawa, where my brother worked with the Commonwealth Bank.

We boarded a Cessna in Madang and, after we'd been in the air for a while, I realised the bag on the lap of the local sitting behind me contained something alive and wriggling.

As I went to check that the fellow had a tight grip on the bag, we ran into cloud.

The pilot didn't have a clue where he was going, and began to circle.

I could only think of what was in the bag.

Arriving at Kundiawa, not the most confidence-inspiring strip in the world, I had a raging headache and spent the weekend worrying about the flight back.

Never did find out what was in the bag.

And I won't get on anything smaller than a Jumbo these days.

## **SNAKE STORIES**

### **David Westover**

Goulburn Island, NT: Having asked the kids to take out their books – something teachers do from time to time - a young, lively and resentful snake decided to escape the intrusion of a child's hand. Its preferred route was through the inkwell hole.

No less than 25 kids went through the door at the same time, all in fine voice.

Lorraine's class next door felt obliged to join in the general melee.

So the school had an early, and extra long, recess.

Groote Eylandt, NT: Introducing agriculture to the school included helping with the chooks and once a year moving the young pullets from one yard to another.

Despite my emphasis on the importance of careful and quiet handling, the well regimented exercise dissolved into disarray when a young student looked at the not very high bush timber rafter and spied a 4-metre python in its own personal paradise.

This time, 25 kids, countless chooks and a teacher went through a door at the same time in even finer voice.

Egg production was down considerably for some weeks.

## **HOW TO TAME A SNAKE**

### **Col Booth**

The head teacher at Dansai was in Madang Hospital, so Wendy and I stayed with his wife and two infant daughters, driving the 10 km to where we taught at Namau each day and returning in the afternoon.

One morning, when the wife went to get the younger daughter, she was confronted by a large python wrapped around the louvre blades near the end of the cot.

I grabbed the child and deposited it in the safe arms of her mother.

Then, with difficulty, I prised the mongrel snake onto the polished floor where it didn't have much grip.

My plan was to broom it down the hallway and out the back door.

So I called to the woman to hold open the screen door.

When I got to within a couple of metres of victory, however, she bolted and the door slammed shut.

So there I was, trying to sweep a snake through a closed door, which I have never learned to do.

At the same time, I was seeking to prevent it climbing the broom handle while simultaneously keeping both my feet off the floor.

This proved to be a considerable act of skill.

And while this unequal struggle was occurring, my brave wife, Wendy, was standing in their lounge room - on the table.

## **GURIA**

### **Henry Bodman**

The *guria* is not uncommon in New Guinea, especially in the islands region.

Malabunga was built on the side of steeply sloping gullies. The house supports consisted of 4" pipe ranging in height from two feet to 25 feet above the ground.

A good *guria* establishes a wicked whipping action, strong enough to fling a refrigerator around the kitchen and sometimes into the living room.

One hit Kabagap at 7.30 am, just before school assembly.

My daughter, Simone, just one year old, had learned to walk with confidence but these little seismic ridges moving in excess of 80 kph threw her to the ground.

Even so young she showed her pater's impatience in the form of a temper tantrum directed at this unknown intrusion in her domination of the world.

The locals rolled around in mirth at the tyke' rage at Mother Nature.

I shared the moment of humour but became sombre as I observed the two water tanks bouncing as each successive seismic wave hit the house.

When the tanks inevitably burst, a precious 4,000 gallons of water rushed down the gully.

With three kids under four this was something of a minor disaster.

But we were lucky to have town water as an alternative - full of microbial nasties though it was.

## **AFTER THE GURIA**

### **Col Booth**

When the Richter strength 7.6 *guria* hit Madang in November '70, there was considerable damage.

Just one teacher's house at Namau escaped unscathed. While our place had relatively minor damage, a few others were demolished.

Although it was 3 am, Wendy and I decided to walk around the school and check out the sit.

As we stumbled around, we were greeted with an, "Excuse, Mr Boot, my house want to fall down".

So we lurched our way to Jonga Gabby's concrete-block quarters.

The beam of the torch went in one end and out the other. Every internal wall had collapsed.

How he wasn't killed, I'll never know. His bed was a mess of crumpled iron piled high with concrete blocks.

Every water tank at the school was concertinaed and most every classroom wall had disappeared.

The next day, I observed what I saw as the indolence and thoughtlessness of the locals, who fled their coastal villages to congregate at the school.

We expats cleverly gathered at Dangsai, right on the waters edge, for a birthday party.

During the day, there were 76 aftershocks, many of them Richter 4 and 5. However, we celebrated the birthday at the ocean's edge..

The single most dangerous place to be after a *guria* is at the ocean's edge, as tragic events in the Sepik showed a few years ago.

Our major problem, however, turned out to be trivial - a smashed porcelain WC bowl. An appeal to PWD in Madang made it clear we were on our own. So I obtained a tube of plastibond, sat on the toilet floor and painstakingly, piece by piece, put the bowl together.

## **OUR MAN AT THE TSUNAMI**

### **Keith Jackson**

A subterranean landslide somewhere off Bougainville set off one of those low but remorseless tidal waves: the initial phenomenon of which is an outrush of water leading to an inundating tide.

Reports came in from outlying islands that the wave was on the way, so I despatched a junior reporter from Radio Rabaul to the harbour foreshore to get a description of the scene.

Two hours later he returned to the station sodden and shaken. My first question was one of concern about whether the tape recorder was OK. Yes, he replied, and not only that, he'd recorded Mr Tidal Wave. Oh goody, I thought, sounds like scintillating radio.

The commentary went something like this:

*Nau mi sanap insait long Rabaul Haba tasol i no gat planti solwara. Ol wara igo pinis long bigpela solwara na ino gat man isave tumas long dispela samting.* <CLICK> [I'm standing in Rabaul harbour but there's not much seawater. All the water's gone into the deep sea and no one knows much about what's happening]

*Mi wokabout igo antap long wetsan istap long plua bilong haba. Planti siton istap nabaut nabaut na koral na rabis tu. Uh. Ating wara ilaik bekim long bigpela solwara. Uh. Mi mas hariap.* <RATTLE> [I walking on the sand on the harbour floor. There's lots of stones, coral and rubbish. Oh, I think the water's coming from the sea. I must hurry]

*Olsem solwara i kam kwiktain nau.* <RATTLE - PANT> [The seawater's coming in quickly now]

*Nau mi ranawe nogut tru. Olsem dispela si ilaik kilim mi.* <CLICK - RATTLE - WHEEZE> [I'm running like crazy. The sea's trying to drown me]

*Uh. Uh. Solwara i karamapim su na sok na laik karamapim trausis.* <CLUNK - GRUNT> [Oh, the seawater's covered my shoes and socks and is coming up my trousers]

*Mi sotwin na lek i hevi. Brus bilong mi a pen nogut tru. Nau mi mas kilim taip rekoda na ranawei kwiktain moa.* <END OF RECORDING> [I'm out of breath and my legs are tired. My chest hurts. I have to stop the tape recorder so I can run more quickly]

## **DISTRICT OFFICE WEDDING**

### **Diane Bohlen**

Swiss artist Kurt Pfund lived in Port Moresby in the sixties and, with Bill being Swiss, we made an effort to meet him.

He lived out of town in the bush where he painted and drew cartoons for the *South Pacific Post* and *Black and White* magazine.

Kurt drew a cartoon for our wedding invitation when Bill and I married in Port Moresby - because we didn't want to upset parents by choosing Switzerland or Sydney.

We were married in the District Office with the wedding reception at the Purple Parrot restaurant.

We invited 60 friends to the ceremony on 10 May 1969. This had to be held in office hours and we made it at 5 pm Friday so most people could make it

When we got to the District Office we were surprised to see no friends, except for the witnesses. I thought they must be detained at work or getting ready for the reception.

The ceremony was simple and sweet; the District Officer was more nervous than us. We were very happy with the ceremony and much looking forward to the celebration to follow.

But we were concerned at the whereabouts of our friends.

Driving back from the ceremony, we saw a crowd of our friends clustered outside a building. We stopped and were greeted with a, "Hurry, you're late!" "But we're already married," we replied.

It was the Registry Office and they mistakenly thought we were to be married there.

## **FEAST TILL YOU DROP**

### **Bill Bergen**

At an in-service day on an island west of Buka in Bougainville we were welcomed with singing, speeches - and a prepared meal.

Not being too hungry after breakfast, we did our best and found ourselves urged along by people especially chosen for the task of encouraging us to eat up.

At lunch, we were called to yet another feast.

This one was prepared by a second village who were determined not to lose face and employed even more severe haranguing techniques to encourage a full eating performance.

The afternoon ended what had been a most satisfying learning day but, before we could escape, the third and only remaining village insisted their honour had to be satisfied by us again tucking into a meal.

I actually lost count of how many varied ways there are to present fish.

We had it with green vegetables, yellow vegetables, curry, coconut, smoked, dried, boiled steamed, roasted....

## **SPECIAL DELIVERY**

### **Richard Jones**

The Porebada Coast isn't far from Port Moresby but in the wet season the dirt roads became almost impassable.

Getting to town from Boera, where I was posted as head teacher, could be tricky.

In 1967, in the embryonic stages of my journalism career, I was the twice-weekly rugby league writer for the *South Pacific Post*.

Night football is commonplace now, but in the sixties, Friday night league in Moresby was the highlight of the sporting week.

So on Thursday morning the sports editor required the rugby league preview for type-setting in the Friday paper.

The state of the Porebada road meant innovative procedures were needed to ensure copy arrived on time.

A Standard 6 lad did the run for me. Gonogo Ganiga boarded the Boera village truck armed with my story and clad in my rain-proof jacket.

Gonogo's truck arrived back late afternoon and, when he told me what had happened, I was thankful for Papuan ingenuity.

Because of road works, the truck was forced to stop near Idubada Technical School.

The Boera people disembarked and trudged in pouring rain past Hagara, Hanuabada and Konedobu to Lawes Road.

Gonogo determined where the newspaper offices were and dropped off the packet.

The South Pacific Post sports desk never complained about material arrived dripping wet. The weekend rugby league preview appeared as normal in next day's issue.

## **SLIGHT CASE OF EMPATHY**

### **Keith Jackson**

Max Orken and I started the Central Highlands Cricket Comp, which brought together teams from Kundiawa, Kerowagi, Chuave and Minj.

My home ground was Kundiawa airstrip that projected from the surrounding valleys like a table top.

We'd rip out stumps, leave the coir matting to its own devices and hare off the pitch whenever planes landed.

We grew tired of MAF Pastor Doug McGraw's habit of arriving like a bat out of hell and landing across the runway.

Having bested the all-PNG Minj 2 team one Sunday, I invited the players to the Chimbu Club for a beer.

Their captain was taken aback and - looking hard at this deeply tanned youngster with curly Mekeo-like hair - protested, "*Nogat, Kit, dispela haus itambu long ol kanaka*" [No, Keith, natives aren't allowed in such places].

In the sixties the Chimbu Club was one of very few in the Territory to have a multiracial charter and I was able to reassure him it was OK

The Minj team was delighted and the captain bought me a rum. I would've preferred beer but a drink's a drink

When I went to return the shout he jumped up and bought again

When it happened the third time, the one-sidedness began to embarrass me

Eventually I stirred myself to ask, "*Olsem wonem yu baim buka meri long mi na no laikim mi baiim yu?*" [Why won't you let me return the shout?]

"*Aaah,*" he said slowly, "*Mi gat sori tru long ol yupela hapkas*" [Oh, I feel really sorry for you half castes].

## **A VERY IMPORTANT VISITOR**

### **Sonia Grainger**

All of us who served time in the far-flung outposts of Australia's modest collection of territories will remember how inventive we became in order to relieve tedium and loneliness

At one remote outpost, two female members of staff schemed and plotted to enable a 'Miss Brown', a very important visitor from Moresby" to present an oration to some 200 assembled students

Miss Brown was introduced -a most resplendent figure with long flowing blonde hair under a shady sun hat, immaculate white gloves, blouse, skirt and, unusually

for TPNG, stockings and high heels - all topped off by exquisite make-up and big sunglasses

She gave a fine speech that rivalled that of any previous visitor to the school

On completing her address, Miss Brown removed her hat and sunglasses. Then, as the wig also came off, a long and stunned silence descended

For half a minute, 200 speechless students stared in awe before a surge of hysterical laughter rolled out

This was accompanied by falling about, clutching of sides and writhing. The chaos took a long time to subside

Considerable self control was also required for the rest of the day

For months after, students would spontaneously point and burst into laughter

The catch-cry around the school became, "Remember when Mr D dressed as a man!"