

PEOPLE WE KNEW

DUBBO, HUMAN CHOCK Henry Bodman

'Dubbo Dave' Kesby was out Nordup way doing a spot of cuscus shooting when, to his great surprise, he spotted one.

Dubbo bounded out of his car, took a shot and glanced back just in time to see the vehicle starting to move gently off the mark.

Just as it began to gather momentum, the physical and resourceful Dubbo positioned himself on the downhill side, braced, slipped on the pumice road and, from the prone position by using his body length, managed to chock one of the front wheels.

Despite this Herculean effort, the vehicle retained enough inertia to push an unyielding Dubbo some distance down the road, leaving behind more than the regulation amount of skin.

Stabilising this crisis situation, Dubbo headed for Nonga Base Hospital for a patch up.

With the wide-eyed stare of a man in shock, Dubbo staggered into the haus sik - clothes shredded, body blackened by pumice, oozing crimson fluid and still bearing his trusty firearm.

It was an unannounced arrival that caused a reaction somewhere at the terrified end of the panic spectrum.

People opted spontaneously and unanimously for scattering and hiding.

One gutsy nurse took the apparition gently by the elbow and guided it into emergency where Dubbo was settled until the *polismasta* duly arrived.

EVERLASTING PEPI Keith Jackson

Bougainville is a magnificent pearl of an island. A green pearl.

In 1970, when I arrived, the capital, Kieta, was an idyllic seaport with white sand beaches, a fine harbour to sail on, offshore islands for picnics and the joie de vivre of plantation life.

The Bougainvilleans are a handsome people, black as night. They have ambivalent feelings about whites but regard fellow Papua New Guineans with scorn and refer to them derisively as 'redskins'.



Dave Kesby, Dave Argent, Les Lyons and an unknown mate 'chair' Henry Bodman on his wedding day

As I arrived, CRA was opening up a giant copper, gold and silver mine at Panguna and the end of the island's age of innocence was signalled.

The people's relationship to the land is spiritual. It's part of the soul, not a tradeable commodity. So, when a vast tract of land stretching from east to west coast, was acquired for the mine and its associated facilities, dumps, roads and towns - and when labourers from the rest of PNG were brought in to work the mine - the Bougainvilleans sense of difference became something more tangible. Talk of secession was in the air.

Radio Bougainville was my first station as a fully-fledged manager. Like Radio Rabaul, it had problems with the people it was broadcasting to.

Soon after my arrival, I did a stocktake and found the storeroom crammed to the rafters with new radios - still in their boxes.

To encourage radio listening, the Government gave radio sets away free. I asked why the radios hadn't been distributed. The village people don't want them, I was told.

Stories had come back to the station about people burning radios and chopping them apart with axes. "The Government station broadcasts propaganda," they said. "It tells us the copper mine is good for us. We know it isn't. So we don't listen".

Indeed, the Kieta station was notorious for its pro-Government, anti-islander broadcasts (it was known locally as 'Radio Ashton', after the District Commissioner) and the only instruction I'd been given by the Controller of Broadcasting was to regularise the situation as best I could.

In practical terms this involved getting the DC and his cohorts off the air and eliminating their influence over the station's programs. The police guard was removed from the studios. We took advice from village leaders and offered the people a greater say in what was broadcast. We held huge outdoor concerts for local string bands. We went on patrol to villages armed only with our tape recorders.

We did have some good days in Bougainville - but it ended up such a sad place.

One of my major tactics at the station was to recruit and train young Bougainvilleans to work there, especially people from the dissident (secessionist) villages.

The Controller of Broadcasting, an aggressive and impetuous bloke named Jim Leigh, later general secretary of the Queensland National Party, called me from Moresby to advise me how to conduct this process.

"Father," he said (he called everyone father), "there are only three rules for selecting staff. One, be rational not emotional. Two, put 'em under pressure, real pressure. Three, check their references. Over"

As chance had it, when I was interviewing, Jim was in Kieta for his annual inspection of the station.

This included intense scrutiny of the S-bend of the toilet, since Jim had recently had hepatitis and blamed unhygienic radio station toilets for this mishap.

A young hopeful from one of the secessionist villages came in for interview and Jim told me he'd sit in to see how I conducted it, reminding me of his three-point lecture on how it should be handled.

The applicant was a striking 18-year old Bougainvillean woman.

When she walked into my office, Jim was immediately infatuated, and simpered, "What's your name, my dear".

"Perpetua Tanaku," she replied, "but my friends call me Pepi", adding, "You can call me Pepi".

"Pepi," Jim sighed. And the delightful Miss Tanaku breathed, "Pepi is short for Perpetua and comes from the word perpetual which means everlasting".

Her references in front of me, I was just about to ask my first rational question that I hoped would put her under real pressure when Jim leapt to his feet and said, "You're hired".

Pepi was a charming woman but, alas, a poor radio announcer - and she left the station after just a few months.

Some years ago, 18 years after the incident I've described, I was watching the ABC news on television. And there was Pepi.

She was being interviewed in a jungle hideout to which she'd fled with her husband, the Bougainville rebel leader.

She appeared tired and ill and had lost her front top teeth.

Then, a couple of months later, a one paragraph story in the *Sydney Morning Herald* brought the news that the wife of the Bougainville rebel leader had died of pneumonia.

I shed a tear or two.

MEN OF THE CLOTH

Henry Bodman

At the baptism of our second child, Father Courtenay gave him every Irish name imaginable during the ceremony except the ones we had chosen, Henry Kent MacDonald.

"Who will be the guardian for Patrick Aloysius?"

Next time it was "Sean Shamus" and so on.

Courtenay's best contribution, which I still often use, is "(pick your topic or duty) is a bore and a chore", with appropriate Irish burr.

One day he drove off the Rabaul wharf in a blinding torrential storm and was drowned just three weeks before he was due to go on leave to Ireland, where he would have seen his mother for the first time in thirty five years.

When Simone was born in Namanula, Father Franke called daily and for ten days we didn't have a name for her (she was supposed to be a son).

Eventually, I came up with Tiffany from a James Bond book I was reading at the time.

"Wonderful," was his response, "Epiphany it will be!"

WONEM KAIN MAN ISTAP

Keith Jackson

Anthropologist Paula Brown and geographer Harold Brookfield did a lot of field work on land use in the Chimbu during the mid sixties.

Paula had a boyish figure and affected a pith helmet, calf length walking boots and jodhpurs.

All set off by a pair of severe, steel-rimmed spectacles.

If you're male and have been in the bush in that part of the world, you might have experienced the *lapuns* habit of the testicle squeeze as a form of comradely greeting between men.

After the first time, I was always prepared and took an obligatory backward leap as required.

Near Elimbari out of Chuave, Paula and Harold and their carrier line walked into a village and the *luluai* came out to greet them.

Harold got the squeeze ... and so did Paula.

Finding no evidence of testicular development, the *luluai* gave a sharp squeal, cried out something in *tok ples* and the whole village fled over the nearest ridge

The story soon got around the Chimbu about, "*Liklik wetman ino gat bol na kok tu i lus pinis*".

The translation is left to the reader's fertile imagination.

MEETING MARGARET MEAD

Henry Bodman

A mate invited Janelle and I to an evening meal with Margaret Mead at Kokopo.

After Ruth Fink's lectures, I was champing at the bit to share a bit of my experience in matters anthropological with the Great Lady.

Training my Rules team at Ulapia had to take preference so I arrived late, just in time to take a seat of clear advantage and influence at the table of twelve.

Margaret Mead was staggering around with the assistance of a stick with a 'V' top that tucked under her shoulder. "What's that?" I asked gauchely. The response, as she looked around for help, was a disdainful, "My thumb stick".

Never the shrinking violet, I took her on. "Pull the other one," I riposted. Madam, not used to such effrontery in the land that made her famous, attempted a put down. Not deterred by this show of imperiousness, I itched to expose her to my accumulated Ruthy Fink knowledge.

By now the host had me under surveillance and attempted a distraction by lacing my meal with a couple of tablespoons of curry powder. Despite gasping for relief and fearing a terrible death by curry, I persisted with the Great Lady, who had no difficulty deflecting the efforts of a sick man. With the haughty disdain of a world star, she ignored the intermittent falsetto shrieks squeezing through the fiery epiglottal cauldron. Nor was I able to kick her thumb stick from under her.

Fortunately I was able to brief her on the old cannibal who told me that "long pig was very yellow, very sweet". And forty years later, I wonder at the confidence of youth that would believe Margaret Mead might have been even slightly interested in anything I had to say.

THE LOONY KIAP

Col Booth

Saidor was the home of a loony kiap. Totally *longlong*.

When under pressure from his own paranoia, he used to drive the station Landcruiser in very tight circles on the airstrip until the rage subsided.

Rage was caused by anyone who didn't treat him with the respect he felt was his due.

He had a thing about pork.

Each time Burns Philp sent him a side of lamb, he would rant that they had substituted pork chops.

For the sake of peace, the Saidor old timers would agree with him but I didn't know what the go was.

So, the first time he asked me to verify the substitution, I said something to the effect that he must be mad.

I wasn't aware he was regularly taken to Moresby and locked in the padded room until he pulled himself round.

At these times, the authorities used to get his mother up from Australia to look after him until he returned to a more normal state.

You can imagine the reaction when I told him he was mad.

The poor Toyota got a workout that day.

And he wasn't real friendly to me, either.

THE JOHN WATERS STORY 1

Keith Jackson

I was posted to Radio Rabaul as John's assistant manager in early 1970. He was delighted, "Ahead of me at ASOPA, eh, Jacko," he said with that characteristic curled lip, "Look where you are now".

He was disappointed, though, because I was continuing my uni economics and had little time to party.

After a couple of years he went to Melbourne to make his name as a sports commentator, driving a cab to keep his family fed. He eventually got near the top but was unable to hang on.

He was 52 when he died of a coronary in August 1995 and the headline of his fine obit in the Herald-Sun summed things up pretty well - 'Footy caller dreamed of the big break'.

John worked for most TV and many radio stations in Melbourne, becoming best known as a larrikin footie commentator and also a writer-producer on the Don Lane Show

He was sacked from Channel 10 for inadvertently appending, "And that's fucking hot" to a weather report. Having exhausted other options, he then opened a seafood restaurant that folded after two years.

At his funeral one of the eulogists told how John explained his love of a beer or three, "It's not that I like drinking so much, but it makes the people around me appear more pleasant".

The last ten years of his life were spent pursuing various elusive propositions, including, as he explained to me when I ran into him on an aircraft in the late eighties, a desire to set up an independent TV sports production outfit.

It never happened. The promise being constantly compromised by the desire - so eminently fulfilled - to always have a real good time.

THE JOHN WATERS STORY 2

Henry Bodman

Waters was larger than life and never a shrinking violet. In Aussie Rules he had a prodigious kick and was a real hard man who was much loved by the hordes of supporters we drew to Rabaul's QEII Oval.

His team was a pack of thugs and Johnny would grind his stops into my native players bare feet and was always up to a sly one behind the ear. On one occasion he whacked one of my players on the nose, another guy took a swing at me and it was on.

The umpire, an inoffensive Catholic priest from Ulapia, couldn't handle it. Spectators gaped at the sight of the pride of the Education Department on New Britain demonstrating how the game should really be played.

Keithy described John's lopsided smile and I remember it well – while not always inclined to return it. His singing group at The Greasy Spoon was a classic and Rabaul has never seen its like. I had a lot of great nights on the slish there.

He returned to Oz and was a Channel 7 sports commentator who often got the race details wrong - to the fury of the punters and management.

When he dropped the f-word on air he became a backroom boy but still a huge force.

THE PORTRAIT PAINTER

Keith Jackson

In the mid-sixties my mate Hal Holman was a well known artist and bon vivant in Moresby.

He painted portraits of many local identities while, in his official role as DIES artist, designing the PNG bird of paradise crest among other national icons.

Of course, portrait painting as a consumer business has its drawbacks, the main one being that if the client dislikes the final product you're left without a sale having done all the work.

There is also the occasional problem of jealous husbands becoming suspicious of the relationship between artist and subject. Hal became sensitive about this after being forced to retreat at gunpoint, portrait clutched to breast, bailed up by a psychopath husband.

On a Saturday morning at the Badili Club, Hal and I were having a pre-lunch beer when through the front door sailed a 20-stone man with half-a-dozen framed paintings under one arm.

The giant hove to before the bar and purchased a stubby, which totally disappeared into his palm, before making a bee-line for Hal. I suddenly realised Hal had employed a marketing consultant.

Not Barry Stern, Christopher Day or Trevor Bussell, but a former heavyweight wrestler and Stadium prelim boy who was Moresby's debt collector when he wasn't moonlighting as artistic agent.

His sales technique was simple. He'd approach the hapless punter with a, "Yorta buy a pitcher, eh?".

"Hally Holman drew these.

"They're bloody all right.

"Yerl want one, eh?".

Subtle as a Peter's icecream truck hitting a brick wall.

MAUSGRAS OLSEM WONEM

Barry Vincent

You will recall there was no such thing as between term holidays for Territory teachers. The DEO would always find something for us to do.

During first term break in '66 many of us were conscripted as census collectors

I was assigned to Boroko, paired with an indigenous teacher. His main task was to collect details from the *boihaus* and to go in first if the house had dogs (just joking) and mine was to collect details from the occupants of the main residence.

We arrived at one house and noticed a mini van with a sign 'IRENE' on its sides. Irene ran a women's hairdressing business and actually made house calls. Very civilised.

Through the screen door, I could see a woman having her hair done. After identifying myself, I was invited inside.

Meantime my erstwhile offsider set about his task with the domestic staff and assorted hangers-on.

It transpired that my subject was Inga Burton-Bradley, the government psychiatrist's wife.

She remarked, in a German accent, that I was a clean-cut young man commenting that she disapproved of *mausgras*.

"Men who wear beards," she said, "really want to wear their penis on their face".

Irene looked towards the ceiling and Mrs B-B laughed loudly as I beat a less than dignified exit.

Later a friend who worked for the Health Department was unkind enough to suggest Dr B-B married Inga only so he had a permanent case study.

AMAZING SIR EDWARD

Keith Jackson

Sir Edward Hallstrom had a close connection with ASOPA over many years and the School's Hallstrom Pacific Library was named for him (the collection is now located in the University of NSW Library). He was the founder of Taronga Zoo Park and a director from 1941-67.

As part of our ASOPA program he gave two lectures to the Class of '62-63. One was entitled 'Capturing of Wild Animals', the other 'Wild Life in TPNG'. The first was something none of us ever dreamt of doing; the second not the wild life we really had in mind.

Sir Edward was also Head Curator of the zoo and, in this role, did away with the miniature railway, elephant rides, camel rides and performing seals saying, "It's a zoo, not a circus".

As a young man, on 5 December 1909, Hallstrom and four others took one of Australia's first aircraft, a glider, to the sand hills at Narrabeen and flew it as a kite to make sure it was stable and would support a man.

Hallstrom had begun his career as an artisan in a factory that made Australia's first inner spring mattresses. He interested his employers in manufacturing kerosene-powered incubators, which they did reluctantly and, as it turned out, briefly.

Hallstrom quit and adapted the power unit for Australia's first electric refrigerator, the Silent Knight, first sold in 1935 and soon making him famous and wealthy.

At his personal animal and bird sanctuary at Newport, Sir Edward had koalas, albino kangaroos and two rare sets of white wallaby twins.

The 1993 book, *Smuggled*, accused Sir Edward of illegally trafficking in rare Australian fauna during his time as zoo director.

He died on 27 February 1970, aged 83