

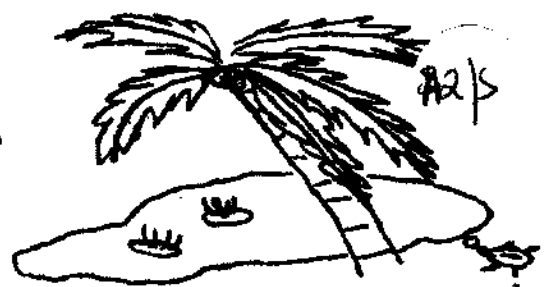
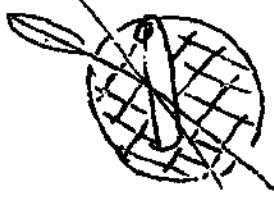
3 JUL 1972

MANINGRIDA

MIRAGE

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MANINGRIDA PATROLS:

The Gordon Sweeney School at Maningrida derives its name from a justly famous man; one whose activities in this area are of real significance. Surveyor, missionary, and then Government Welfare Officer, Gordon Sweeney was instrumental in making contact with the peoples of the north-central Arnhem Land coast many years ago. A walker of great endurance, he patrolled the coastal areas meeting people in their tribal habitats, mapping camping places, assessing seasonal movements, gaining insight into numbers and tribal boundaries, checking on health, food supplies, and helping where necessary, he took upon himself tasks of monumental importance.

We have a record of one such patrol, undertaken in 1939, in which he visited (he worked at Goulburn Island at the time) a number of tribal centres in the Boucaut Bay/Liverpool/Gunadir River areas. It makes fascinating reading and is unfortunately too extensive to be published here, but we will try, for your interest, to outline some of its features in fairly abbreviated form.

The patrol diary states that Mr. Sweeney and his party left Goulburn Island Mission, on 10/7/39, travelling in an open 17' launch. They went along the coast to Juda Point, landed there and then walked round Boucaut Bay to Jarala (about 5 miles from Blyth River mouth. It notes that they met two large groups of people, Gunavidji and Makara, both of whom were in the process of holding important corroborees. From Juda they travelled up river to the Tomkinson and spent several days in the Tomkinson/Gunbatgari area. They met large numbers of people (70 in one group on the Tomkinson Creek) and then walked through the 20 miles or so to the Cadell River to a place called Bulugadururu. People familiar with the country would probably know this place as being close up by Balkjam, the old stock camp. From there the patrol made its way back to the boat at Tomkinson, and thence pressed on up the Liverpool to the extreme of the tidal reaches (not far from the Oenpelli road crossing.) Mr. Sweeney then has this to say:

July 26th. "We left with a Gundeijime boy as guide to up the Liverpool River on foot, to visit the next group of people to the South (the Gundeijime). We passed the tidal head on the river at 3 miles. For the next 10 miles the river follows several channels, with good permanent water holes. The channels are separated by some good flats and loam banks The surrounding country is uniformly poor sandy soil with open forest of stringy bark, etc. Cypress showed at 7, 10 and 13 miles. At 13 miles we met sandstone outcrops increasing in size as we went further south. We camped 16 miles."

They actually went on for a further 17 miles before turning back, unable to locate any of the local people. On returning to the boat camp they found about 70 people waiting there for them. The diary notes:

July 31st. "Arrived at our boat camp (Ima-i-rut). There were about 70 people at the camp -- Gungaregumens, Muralidbans and a few Gumanwurrks and Goiyakbes who had followed us over. The Goiyakbe carried an invitation to the local people to a bone post corroboree shortly to be held at their camp."

The patrol stayed there long enough for Mr. Sweeney to hold a Church Service and tell the people something of the work of the Mission, using a Gunwinggu interpreter. They were ready to leave

then, but encountered some problems:-

August 1st "It was low tide before daylight and the spring tide had left our boat inclined on the sloping mud bank with the bow in the mud. As the tide rose the bow was held fast and before we could get control of the boat in the sticky mud, it was filled with water, the whole boat going under"

This meant a delay whilst things were dried out and the motor restored, but the patrol got away on August 2nd, setting out overland for Rolling Bay, and leaving the boat to rendezvous with them there. Two days and 25 miles later they met up with it in Wangbalgari Creek (well known to local fisherman). They then sailed around to Junction Bay, leaving the boat again to walk around the Gumadir River area where they met some more people (about 30).

The patrol ended on August 9th - 28 days later. They had covered 230 miles by boat and travelled to all the navigable heads of the Tomkinson and Liverpool Rivers, also 14 miles up the Gumadir. In his notes Mr. Sweeney summarises the social situation as follows:

"The coastal groups are on the whole better in physique, health and intelligence than the inland groups, due to a better and more regular food supply, the work entailed in travelling on and winning their food from the sea in all weathers, and the infusion of other blood (e.g. Macassar). A number of cases of yaws among children and adults, and several suspected cases of leprosy were seen among the inland groups.

Between the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers within 25 miles of the coast, the tribal groups are still substantially intact. To the south in the upper watershed areas of the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers and Mugurru Creek where native foods are relatively scarcer and harder to get the groups (Dangbon, Detyend, Kalagen etc.) are represented by only a remnant of the old people, the younger people having gone over to the railway, cattle stations and buffalo camps. West of the Liverpool River the tribal groups are in various stages of detribalisation.

The Muraldibans, a strong Gunwinggu speaking group, is still holding on, but there is an increasing drift of its younger people westwards. Among the Gungareguwens the drift is more pronounced. The Gunbalang, Maung, and Iwaija speaking peoples have lost of their ceremonial life, tribal authorities are breaking down and they are gradually losing their identity as separate groups. A number of small groups are extinct or represented by mere remnants which have merged with other groups. The drift of the younger people westward still continues.

The birth rate west of Liverpool River is decreasing and there is an increasing number of venereal diseases cases among these people. Contacts in buffalo and timber cutting camps to the west and with the crews of the Darwin registered pearling boats along the coast, have been the cause of much of this. And the breaking down of the ceremonial life of the people and their tribal authorities without any adequate sanctions being built up to take their place has resulted in the estrangement of the younger generation and a lack of desire on their part to fulfil their responsibilities to their people."

This was not the end, by any means, of Mr. Sweeney's work in this area or elsewhere. He later joined the Government Service and retired in about 1959 after, as we have said, a noteworthy and active career.

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MINERS' CORNER:

That well-known marine prospector, Billy Yirinyin, yesterday escorted a party of geologists out to his big copper prospect at Entrance Island. The decision, after an extensive search+

1. The sample was carried down the Liverpool River by the tides, or
2. someone threw it off a passing ship.

Bill's next project is to 'salt' the Happy Club with empty beer cans and offer the option to the Temperance League. Could be a big float, folks.

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PROSPECTING NEWS:

Representatives of CRA (Conzinc Riotinto) visited Maningrida on Thursday to deliver their Company's exploration offer for the Authority to Prospect. This will be considered by the appropriate persons and a decision made in the course of the coming month.

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VISITORS:

An interesting visitor on Thursday was Mr. Mick Campbell, business manager for the Catholic Missions. Mick seems an enthusiastic and vital person, and he took the opportunity during a short stay, to "look things over" at the store, craft-centre and sawmill. It is to be hoped that he can return some time for a longer stay, and especially to discuss matters of common interest.

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BACK FROM LEAVE: Mr and Mrs Peter Williams, sons Dean, and the latest and greatest, Scott. All the family look pretty fit and Pete is just rarin' to go and get stuck into what will be a pretty exciting year (one way or another).

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NEW ARRIVALS: Mr. John Carpenter, his wife Tricia, children Adam aged 3½ and Jason 10 months. John's home port is Devon, England and he is, of course, a fisherman by profession. He started off as a "boy" (apprentice in a trawler) at about 30/- per week. He got his ticket at 19 and has been on trawlers virtually ever since. He and his family came to Australia about 2 years ago; the reason, the weather. The sunny shores of West Australia were just the thing, and John skippered a prawn trawler as far afield as Fremantle and the Gulf of Carpentaria. He became interested in the "Top End" after a prawning trip into the Gulf and now - here he is, to apply his skills to a challenging venture.

We welcome John and Tricia to Maningrida and wish them all the best for the future.

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DEPARTURES: John and Robyn Stevens to Brisbane, where Robyn's father is very ill.

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BAD NEWS: News has been received that Merv Mason, in Vietnam, has been injured in a mine explosion. Fortunately it would seem that he has not suffered serious injury.

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BACK FROM SYDNEY: Barney Winniwuj and Gilbert Anburuma, after a wonderful time.

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DEPARTURES: Mrs. Jenny Tuite's sisters, Judy and Nancy, returned to Brisbane this week after a holiday at Maningrida.

BACK FROM BULMAN: Brendan Horne, where he has been acquiring a taste of life on the range. For his stirring saga see elsewhere in this edition.

ITS HAPPENED AGAIN

They say lightning never strikes twice in the one spot, but the Forestry Single Quarters is a well known exception to the rule. Last Monday night yet another intruder burgled the place, and made off with a stock of liquor. He has been located, and awaits a visit by the Law.

SHIPPING NEWS

Maningrida received a visit this week from the "Alanna Fay", the newest barge on the coast. She brought a cargo of mixed cargo for the Government and MPA.

A neat looking craft, if one can apply such a term to a "landing barge", she carries about 85 tons dead-weight at a speed of 9 knots.

STORE

When writing cheques, would customers please no longer use the name Maningrida Co-op. Society. This account was closed 6 months ago. PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO "MANINGRIDA STORE".

Thank you.
G. Bagshaw.

We've got a great thing going for you down at the Hasty Tasty. Don't slave over the hot stove these steamy evenings - just slip down to Maningrida's premier night spot and pick up a bit of fresh-cooked fish. Party orders a speciality.

The service is superb. Our chef comes to you with 5 years experience at the Fannie Bay (gaol, that is). He was supposed to stay there 10 years, but was expelled.

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A LOOK AT THE BULMAN

My recent week's trip to the Bulman was really my first taste of the Bush life in the Territory - and it was quite an adjustment from the comforts of Sydney suburbia. I didn't really know what to expect, what with the wild tales of ferocious buff's and pygmies told by Bert Ryan and Bill Armstrong!

The first feature to strike me from the air was the lush pastures. After the rock escarpment, it's a real contrast from the air. The airstrip is a good one, an old army relic, but with a little work would really come into its own. I was met and shown real hospitality by Lynn Watson. Danny had made a rushed trip to Katherine for news of his sick father, and left Lynn to very capably manage the old homestead. The weather let it be known that it was definitely not going to be nudged off the 100° mark, and the humidity about the same - without any breeze or fans at all this borders on a sauna bath.

There were about 12 aboriginal boys on the payroll at Bulman - 6 or so Maningrida lads and the others mainly from Mainoru Station. These are proving really good, solid workers, and stuck at the fence, cutting and carting right through Danny's absence. Lynn handled the Canteen and Beer issue - a real welcome drop, after a hard day's yakka for the boys in that sun.

After a shooting expedition pitting my skills against the boys, in which the gun exploded in my face, I retired from my big game career. The country around Bulman is really loaded with wild life - the most striking being the buff's, not at all the ferocious animal one is led to believe. In fact pretty docile, and more than content to wallow in the mud.

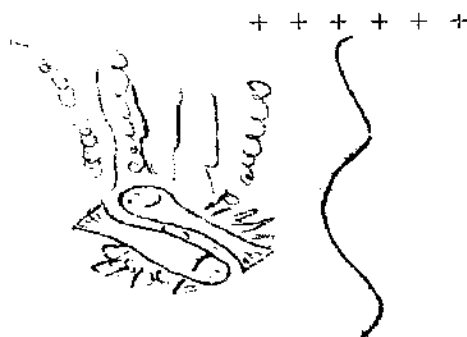
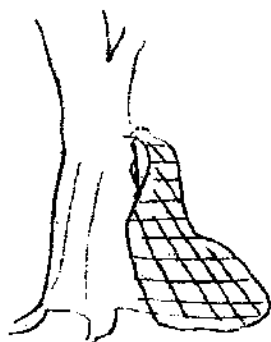
When Danny returned he was quickly into the work. He had 50ft of timber from Katherine, and within a day or two the old homestead had a new verandah and the boys a new 10' x 40' galvanized iron cookhouse with doors, windows and cement floors - thanks to a community effort. The place is a real pioneer homestead, with what looks as if it will be the best garden in the N.T. if Lynn has any say in it. Perhaps a few Cobb & Co. coaches would add the finishing touches.

On Sunday the family went for a picnic on the Bulman waterhole just off the Wilton. She's plenty deep and with the aid of a net the family had two 30 - 40 lb barramundi for supper. The boys knocked off and joined the group on the river and remained till night. A dip in the water was really called for, although I definitely wouldn't have tackled it had I known it was chock-a-block with crocs.

The Western Nuclear Mining camp about a mile up track and now abandoned for the Wet, really comes in handy for Danny and family. He keeps an eye on their equipment in return for using their fridges and shower facilities - really a godsend.

They say after I left the storm broke and the rain fell in buckets. Still they could do with a few inches, if only for the garden's sake. My thanks go to Lynn and Danny for putting up with my wingeing about prickly heat and blistered hands - and for their real hospitality for the week.

B.H. (P.O.I.T.) 21.1.71



Duty Duty Officer: Mr. Bert Ryan
Roster: Duty Sister: Sister Ena Pickersgill
Night Watchman: Peter Gangalara.

Star Fri. "Morgan the Pirate"
Theatre: Sat. "Around the World Under the Sea"

Church Sunday 9.30 a.m. Sunday Schools "The Problem of Evil -
attacking others"
Notices: 7.00 p.m. Evening Service.

Birth: To Lorna Nalarinda - a son, named Johnny Mace.

Rainfall:

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KIDS:

The two best entries in the colouring-in competition belonged to -

Westly Dickfoss and
Anne Enniss

These two young people may collect their prizes from the Post Office.

Look in the "Mirage" next week for another competition.

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Maningrida Mirage

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Maningrida Mirage NT Maningrida Community

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