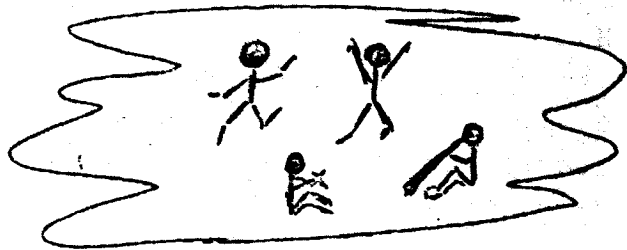


Maningrida  
Mirage

Volume 169



12. 1. 73

Apology 1.

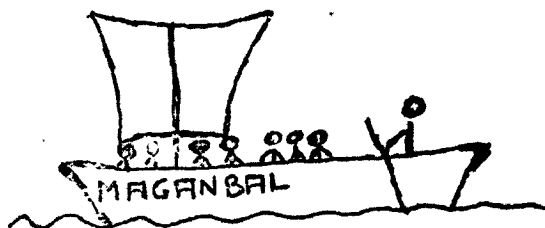
We apologise for the lack of a Mirage last week. There just wasn't enough news and certainly not enough copy. We hope we won't have to miss any more issues-- more copy and more news must be found. ed.

Ceremony Time:

Gowan Armstrong pointed out in a Mirage last year that ceremonies at Maningrida seem to come in cycles. Right now there is a busy period. Here are three reports:

INANGANDUA. The Kunapipi ceremony sponsored by Mr. Tommy Iberara, came to conclusion at Inangandua a few days before Christmas. Inangandua is a point immediately west of Cape Stewart. The scenery on the point is spectacular, with great stretches of sand, sandhills and masses of Casuarinas. Several red rocky islands (Falling Star Dreaming) are situated off the coast--some visible at high tide, others only to be seen when the tide retreats. The camp associated with the 'business' was located on a sand dune about 400 yds. from the sea. People came to Inangandua from Maningrida, Patngidjinera, Kopanga, Milingimbi, Nganggalala and Galiwinku; 7 or 8 languages were to be heard around the camp. Transport was varied, the fortunate few coming in motorboats, but most of the 250 people present at the finale came by canoe and footwalk. Some unlucky but determined Maningrida people walked all the way from Yiringba, where the road was blocked, to Kopanga--seven miles across the plains. After being ferried across the Blyth River they faced a 10 mile walk along the beach to Inangandua. "Close-up old men" Jackie Miribanga and Johnny Mundrugmundrug, achieved this with flare, big swags and good humour.

Two balandas arrived swagless and foodless at the site, but two good Samaritans--Frank Malkoda and Johnny Neliwa gave a helping hand with their launch next day. Fortunately there were no mosquitos and the rocky shoreline provided ample protein for survival. Salt water turtles and large oysters were a special feature of the Inangandua cuisine.



When the business was finished, David Bandarpi took people back to Milingimbi in his canoe, Maganbal (made by Big Barney Geridawanga). He sailed this back to Kopanga in 2 days. The rest of us made our way, in small groups, down the beach to the Blyth River. There, John Hunter gave a helping hand with Bob Collin's power-boat, Anderabaikada. President Ibarara and his family returned to Maningrida by moonlight, via the Cadell River.  
R.J.&B.M.

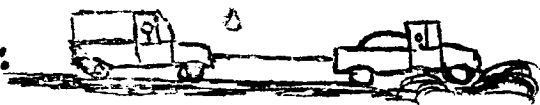
BAMYILI By now most of the people who are going to the ceremonies at Bam-yili have left. Ad. and Elfreda Boorsbom and some of the Jinang people who will take part in the ceremony left on Wednesday. They carried on the plane a very large Marritjiri emblem pole covered with feathers and string. Ad. Boorsbom has promised to send us a report on the Bamyili scene for publication in the Mirage.  
(continued overpage.)

YOUNG MAN BUSINESS. Six boys have started on the preparations for their young man business (circumcision ceremony). The boys are Ningle and Mark, from the Gunardpa group and four Burera boys-- Raymond and Stephen, sons of Harry Mulumbuk, Rexie son of Jacky Jabalali and Minnie, and Andrew, son of Molly. All this week the sticks have been sounding. Some Rembarrnga men are dancing for the two Gunardpa boys. Six young men at one time is probably a record for Maningrida. In the past, these ceremonies tended to be held in the Dry Season--"Burning Grass Time". A number of Aboriginal people have remarked that holding the ceremonies now will avoid any clash with the boys school time-- that is why a large group of boys is being initiated together!

D.G.

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## Kopanga Tucker Story:



Last Thursday (a week ago yesterday) the saga of the Kopanga supplys began. There was a huge supply of groceries to be taken so I joined the expedition with the gardens Toyota. The A.W.O.'s were in the other vehicle. It hadn't rained since Boxing Day and we gave ourselves a good chance of reaching Kopanga. The night before we left however, it rained almost all night. It rained all the way out and just before we came to the 1st gingotjula (the reedy ponds), we decided to turn around. That's when the trouble started. I put one wheel off the road and it disappeared-- then began a long series of bogs. At one stage we had both vehicles in and things looked pretty grim. We had to unload one truck. Eventually we backed the vehicles off the black soil plain into the forest before we turned them around...getting stiff necks in the process. We then returned to the town and on the way we met that famous grader driver Rusty Steele. Rusty said he would have to send a radio message to Maningrida which was awaiting his 2 hour schedules. Praise the Gods for such rescue services.

On Friday, a band of Phil Green's merry men took some of the supplies in a boat to Kopanga. It appears that somehow or other, some detestable agent made it's way into the petrol supply-- causing the motor to froth at the mouth. The crew of this boat walked back to Gudjerana where they were spotted by Larry Weipa and rescued by Phil.

On Sunday, Billy Yiriyin and some other Fisheries stalwarts got the offending and internally clean motor back into action and returned to Maningrida.

On Tuesday last, the balance of the perishables, groceries and sundries made their way to their destination in Anderabaikada, with Bob Collins and Warren Paull. Betty and Rhys have now taken up residence at Lala-Gajirrapa for the balance of the Wet Season. D.G.

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## More Still:

We spoke too soon about the number of young men. There are now eight initiates. The latest two are Andy and Mike. During the week there has been some fine dancing. On Sunday last there was a dance with Murray Murriapobas singer. His son Jimmy Mirritji Pascoe and Jacky Gumboa were leading the dancing. One of the dances was about the bird-Gumulu. It was very good to see many young men who don't dance very much joining in with the dances. Some people from Kopanga have come in for the ceremonies.

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## Obituary:

Died-29/12/72. The husband of Margaret Gowanbani, and father of Laurie Mugaldugi, Helen Gorila, Robert Banjawaidji and Peter Williams. In the earlier days of Maningrida a man who was always to the front when important things were being done. He will be remembered by balandas who were here in the early days as a spokesman among the Gunavidji people. On Sunday last the 'washing' ceremony was held at his house and some people from Goulburn were there.

Apology 2.

Our apologies to those people who receive "The Mirage" by mail. We have had a bit of a shortage of bodies lately to look after the mail order department, consequently you will receive a few Mirages in a rush after a bit of a draught. We hope that absence makes the heart grow fonder and that you can find the time to rest a while and read your several issues.

..... Editor.

EDITORIAL:

Whether the weather be cold  
Or whether the weather be hot,  
Weather the weather, whatever the weather  
Whether we like it or not.



Worrying about the weather is probably one of the most international of pastimes or preoccupations. A remark about the weather is a conventional way of opening any conversation. I remember once as a small child being seated with my mother in a hospital queue. Next to us came to sit a large, black-clad Italian lady. Though she spoke no English she soon had us understand by sign language that she thought it would rain soon.

The thought of 'raining soon' is of course the obsession of everyone in the Top End at this time of year, but at Maningrida I think we are more obsessed with waiting for the Wet - and with good reason -- Because the bloody thing just won't come!

The longer I live here the more I become convinced that someone or something is interfering with Maningrida's Wet season rains. It is now the end of a fortnight of the New Year and we have had about three decent showers since we saw the tailend of 1972's wet. There is no justice in it - every day we hear of someone else's rain - daily showers at Oenpelli, 1½" in Darwin and even 2" at the Cadell River - we have still got plenty of dust.

Can our lack of rain be explained by natural means, like ocean or air currents, or is there some sinister force involved? Has some nation of extra-terrestrial beings erected an invisible rain coat over our town - a force field umbrella? Perhaps we could ask Connair to do some cloud seeding for us - there is no shortage of clouds. But then there are dangers in trying to interfere with the weather. Darcy, one of the Kopanga residents, sang rain on Maningrida some weeks back as payback for an offence. The rain fell alright - but on Kopanga. Some of the Kopanga people were not a little annoyed with Darcy and Big Barney offered him some violence. Big Barney was angry because Darcy's rain might wash out the road and cut off the supplies truck.

So it seems that one way or another there is not much we can do - except perhaps ask N.T.A. Stores to supply us with seven days of rainy weather - but knowing our luck the barge they put them on would be held up by bad weather in Darwin.

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BAMYILI STOP PRESS:

Report from Jimmy Burinyila at the Bamyili ceremony.

A. Jimara and R. Berardangu they're over at Bagot Reserve. I didn't take them with me because they drink too much there. People I sent to Bagot they really put me down, but I done very well, get them to the bus and off we went. In Katherine that Dick Smith wanted more money from me for drink of grog, but I didn't let any money. So we here are the names:

J. Burinyila	Jack John
Ray Munyal	Mary
Mary	Mabel
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Smith	Mr. & Mrs. Hard Borsboom

Thank you Jimmy for writing this story and sending it back so quickly.  
(ed.)

# MARRITJIRI:

The trip south to Bamyili for my birth ceremony (Marritjiri) will have to go on without a few of us because of some inconsiderate people in the camp who give all their little troubles to us and make many worries for me.

But I want to tell you about this ceremony. It is not a sacred one but it is very interesting. Plans for it started when George Kijijilli- my brother- came here in September with the dancing men from Bamyili. The Rembarrnga tribe here gave him the cord from a new born baby to give to us the Jinang people in return for the birth ceremony. This cord was then used to collect together the ceremony and the ceremonial objects. We made three main things for this Marrangu (Marrangu is the group to whom this ceremony belongs- the men of the honey bee) ceremony.

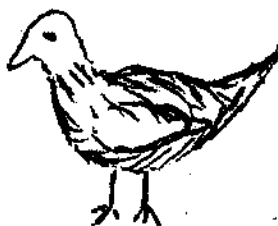
1.



DUBAN-- a short hollow log believed to be (in the Dreamtime) the nesting place for the KIKANG-GIA bird. It stands about 18" tall and is decorated with feathered string.

2.

KIKANG-GIA-- bird called the snail bird because it builds its nest with snails and dry grass. The ceremonial bird is made from assorted barks and tied together with feathered string.



3.

The birth cord tied with string.

MARRITJIRRI--

Hair from dead people interwoven amongst feathers and string.

Stands about three men tall.

The ceremony will last for about 2 or 3 weeks and the Rembarrnga people will strip the pole of the feathered strings and birth cord and let us come back months later and sing for the return of the pole which we keep. While the Jinang mob are there they will exchange white man's things like material, money etc. instead of the traditional nulla nullas, spears and dilly bags-- although some of these will be swapped.

The Rembarrnga mob will thank us very much for returning the spirit of the new born child-(the cord).

Told to Marg. Neale by Jack Mirritji.

COUNCIL NOTES :

Precis of minutes of meeting 1.1.73 - present 9 Councilors 1 Visitor

Permit System. Council talked about a letter from Mr Mc Henry asking them for their thoughts on some parts of the permit system.

Jobs: Some discussion about people who weren't coming to their jobs.

Houses. The Council talked about the new houses being built (2 & 3 bedrooms) They decided this was Housing Association business.

Accidents. When children go on a truck for swimming and picnics the Council said it is the drivers job to make sure they sit down properly.

Yuendemu. A letter came from Yuendeku asking the Council to collect some songs and dancing on tape to send to them. The Council thought it was a good idea to start this friendship with Yuendemu.

Council Money. President said there was a cheque for \$6,000 - what can we do with it - maybe buy a Council truck. Supt recommended putting it in the bank for the time being.

Meeting closed 7.45 pm.

Precis of minutes of meeting 8.1.73 present 10 Councilors 1 Visitor.

Permits. Cr Riala said we haven't cleared this business about the permit system. President agreed- he said its been long enough - the people in Darwin are waiting- he would write a letter to the Assistant Administrator.

Missing. President asked why the Jinang and Gunwinggu Council members had not been to meetings.

Night Wanderers: Cr Manalbui said some young boys have still got shame because they stole things from a European Christmas party. He also said the Councilors weren't helping when trouble came up - only he and the police look into these troubles. Cr Gunjibala agreed. Cr Riala said maybe he could punish wrong doers. The President said the Councilors must do something its their responsibility. The police look into these things and the Councilors should help them. The Supt said you should tell the people about these things from the Council meeting.

Trouble (Cont) Cr Riala said this place is in bad shape now. He said people were taking days off and reminded the Council of 4 Laws (1) Non workers can't drink beer. (2) Councilors should be on duty at the club. (3) They should look after trouble. (4) They should do night duty. There are some people who aren't allowed beer. Supt said he checked on the payroll on pay day before a man was given a beer ticket. The President asked the Councilors to watch out for the things they had spoken about.

INITIATION CEREMONY

Cr Gunjibala said an initiation ceremony will be held at Cadell this weekend. He asked for help to take the people there. Supt said he would try to help with transport.

Meeting closed 7.15 pm.

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WATCH OUT FOR...

Those star pickets that have been used as survey markers.-- now that a bit of grass has grown they can't be seen. They're just the thing to tear the wall out of a tree-- as I found out. For motor cyclists they could mean a lot of damage and some nasty injuries. (ed.)

Duty Officer: Mr. Grant Steele  
Duty Sister: Sister Maija

Weekend Duties

Star Theatre

Friday: Captain Newman M.D.  
Saturday: "Beach Blanket Bingo"

Church

Sunday 9.45 am Sunday Schools  
7.15 pm Evening Service  
Tuesday 7.45 pm Choir Practice

The Gospel preached in its utter purity exalts, frightens or shocks. It is bound to meet with violent reactions, as it is diametrically opposed to sinful man and to the world. When a man really hears the Gospel, his whole life must be reassessed, if he is sincere, for the demands of Christ do not recognise half measures. "You must not think that I have come to bring peace to the Earth; I have come not to bring peace, but a sword."

People

All the tourists who went on excursions to the South with teachers, Laurie, Robert, Jeffery, Ben, Stephen, Rixie, Ted, and Toby are all back in town sporting spoils of the trip.

Some Kupanga children we havn't seen for a while are also in town - Noela, Bonnie, Betty all looking well. Big Barney Geridawanga is also in town and living down at the beach like the great sailor and canoe maker that he is.

Harry Mulumbuk tells us that while at Inangandua he spoke to some people from Nganggalala who told him that Bob Bilinyarra, an old friend and fine bark painter is very sick. His brother, the irrepressible Baki is said to be OK. Harry also said that people he spoke to there said they would try to make more rain for Maningrida. So if it rains, you can thank Harry and our editorial.

The magic men from Kelvinator have conjured up an impressive looking cool room in a couple of days- behind the store. It will be used in the Progress Association's new fishing venture.

Letters from Gowan Armstrong Everyone is fit and the family is residing in The Adelaide Hills. They have acquired a Holden Kingswood - it didn't take long for the old city status symbols to get the best of them - 10 years of riding a bicycle through the Maningrida Sands wasted.

A.W.O. trainee Viddy Jermacans has gone to Yirrkala to study the council's operations there. Warren Paull, his colleague, looks like being left here for years.

John Gardiner returned from Melbourne on Tuesday, somewhat earlier than expected. He claims that Melbourne is still there, but advises prospective travellers to take their own water and many warm clothes. Within hours of his arrival our galliant gentleman found himself being the Connair agent for the next month or so.

Births

Both on the 16th December:  
Paula to Lena Jabilba  
Ken to Laraidbi and Gubargu.

Betty Meehan has been encouraging the ladies of Kupanga to make some of their traditional toys for children. Now Laurie Magiya and her mother Margaret Gandjaipa have made some beautiful toy dilly bags (called bulapur). Betty and Rhys have found the remains of these and other traditional toys in the old camps on both sides of the Blyth River. Another toy they have seen is a tiny dugout canoe with pandanus sails.

Change of Address

from a circular from the Director of Health. Information supplied by the Senior Sister:

As from the 1st Jan, Health facilities will be referred to as Rural Health Centers. The previous term, Settlement Hospital, is not to be used. Where separate buildings exist it will be necessary to distinguish between Rural Health Centre and Infant Health Centre buildings which correctly form a Rural Health Unit. Settlement Hospital terminology is unappropriate as it is not intended to register these buildings as hospitals Health Act.

**Maningrida Mirage**

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Maningrida Mirage NT Maningrida Community

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