

MANINGRIDA MIRAGE



Friday 18th February 1972

Vol. 124

The Drop-in Club

A roaring success! The club started on Wednesday night under the auspices of Bob Collins - a man we are very lucky to have amongst us for his great experience with young people. The attendance exceeded all expectations - the old kitchen almost had its roof lifted off. The club was designed for young people of 12 years and upwards but Wednesday night produced people from every age group - babies in arms to old stalwarts such as England Bangala and Harry Mulumbuk - who was so moved by the spirit of the occasion that he felt constrained to make a speech.

Though most of the littlies were kept out for reasons of safety to life and limb, parents were invited in to have a look at what sons and daughters were up to. A great array of activities and games were available - draughts, darts, all kinds of table games, dancing, musical instruments, magazines, drawing and painting materials and just plain chit chat - as well as screaming for enthusiasts.

Everone entered into the spirit of things with great gusto - some high points of the night:

Douglas Marinya's go-go girl routine
Ray Munyal's draughts playing
Bob Stutchbury, T.J. King and George Gumandji's dancing
Sam and Albert's noisy crap game.

Such nights as this fill a big gap in the life of the young people at Maningrida and more power to them for the future.

D.G.

The "Ibis" Paddles Again

"Ibis" - the ex-Fisheries cutter which has been sold to a private individual, went for a small swim the other day while no-one was looking. The vessel has recently been caulked and had been anchored close in off shore. It is believed that there is a proposal for the vessel to be towed to Darwin by the barge.



With the tide and recent dirty weather, the boat's mooring proved inadequate, and it swam around a little and came to rest in the rocky mangrove section below John Carpenter's house. Trish Carpenter says that a plank had sprung on the "Ibis" and a good volume of water was pouring through.

Old salt Silas Roberts is very dubious of the chances of towing the "Ibis" to town. He has some sad stories to tell of similar projects he was involved in, in his days with coastal shipping, which met sticky ends.

D.G.

Silas and the Snake

On Tuesday Silas Roberts was walking along the cement path beside John Carpenter's office. Suddenly a large snake sprang from the long grass beside the path and shot straight between Silas' legs. Silas identified the snake as a king brown. His feet were wet and sandy at the time and he was able to show his footprints on the path and two footprints in soft mud showing that he had covered 12 to 15 feet in two bounds. He still cannot believe he did it, with his bad back.

The snake took refuge in the foundation of the building. D.C.

Getting A Fair Price.

In last week's Mirage, Dan G. reported on a visit to a Southern House selling art. Round about the same period I was able to make some worthwhile calls on old customers and received a barrage from a man interested in tourism. His straight from the shoulder comments indicate the other end of the scale.

"You people on settlements and missions are trying to push prices up too high. Look at this didjeridoo from (it was a well painted instrument about the same size as the hairier \$37 specimen on sale in the South). They charge \$9. (about the same as Maningrida). I have to make a 70% profit to pay my way so that puts the price at \$15. The tourists won't buy - its too high."

(Continued below Council Notes)

The Village Council

14.2.72 Present 14 Councillors
8 Visitors

Mr. President asked the council for their opinions on Bob Collin's new club for the children. Cr. Joe Fry said that in his opinion the club was a good idea and was one way of occupying the children at night. Cr. Baliya seconded his approval.

Cr. Riala inquired as to the types of games the children would be playing. He said they could be of an educational type as well as being very popular.

Cr. Fry addressed the council and reminded them that they had previously set a course of action to deal with trouble makers which was to be "no ticket - 3 weeks". However with the widespread fighting last fortnight he had taken the matter upon his own shoulders and had the club shut down for three days. Cr. Baliya, Cr. Riala and Mr. President then agreed that this is definitely a council decision but council "made up of "dead people"

Cr. Riala asked the council who had the jurisdiction over the punishment of trouble makers when the new police arrive; the policeman or the council. Cr. Muryal and Secretary answered by saying that it was a P.C. job, but maybe P.C. and council can work together.

Cr. Putti asked if it is OK for an individual council man to stop trouble-maker's beer. Mr. President said that this was a council decision.

Cr. Muryal says that people were still speeding around and that the new speed signs had not been erected.

Continued from Above.

"See this didjeridoo!" he went on. "Its made by New Australian fellows. They say they bought it from an Aborigine. I can buy it for \$7. You people are cutting your own throats."

Well maybe not.

There is a difference between the shop selling a lot of souvenirs to Dick and Dora who've almost used up all their pocket money and the Art dealer who puts up his painting and waits for the occasional customer to walk in and pay his high prices. We have to consider the earnings of the man who makes didjeridoos for a living and try to secure a just reward for him.



Items sent away from Maningrida come into 2 broad categories -

- The best work - regarded as Art - such as the barks now being packed for the Adelaide Festival of Arts, for which we ask a higher price.
- The average good work - particularly the smaller barks and other smaller items which come into the category of "airport art".

Wanted: Clothes for Infants Classes Play Time.
OLD ADULT CLOTHES

C n.

Talk About 'Walkabout' Seen in Sydney

Professor W.E.H. Stanner in 1968 delivered an excellent series of lectures on the aboriginal people, entitled "After the Dreaming" - (these were the A.B.C. Bayr Lectures - copies obtainable from A.B.C. Publications Dept. - very cheap and highly recommended). In these lectures Stanner treated various aspects of the problems facing the Aboriginal in confrontation with the technological society.



A large portion of one of these lectures was devoted to what could be called 'White Man's Mythology' - the store of myths, half-truths, popular misconceptions and old-wives'-tales which the European population of Australia have built up over the years of contact with the Aboriginal people. Stanner was particularly concerned with the dangerous effects these myths had on the European attitude - e.g. half castes inherit all the bad traits of both races, therefore (Q.E.D.) all half castes are inherently bad.

The film "Walkabout" is mischievous for the same reason. At the very outset the film sets itself up as an authority on Aboriginal people - beginning with the blank screen and the didactic statement "In Australia, the Aborigines do so and so, so and so, and so and so", with the unuttered command "Now watch this, folks, and you'll learn." Readers should remember that they are not the average type of audience that views this film. In the main, it is being viewed by city folk who have had little, if any, experience with Aboriginal people. They are prime targets for pop-anthropology and mythological bulldust and they get it in good doses.

The film's prime story line is an Aboriginal on walkabout, which, ironically enough, Stanner singles out in his lecture as one of the prime pieces of White Man's Mythology. That hoary old gem that says that every so often every Aboriginal gets a glassy look in his or her eye and staggers off into the wilderness. I once met a school teacher who told me that she had a boy in one of her classes whose mother was of Aboriginal descent. She swore to me that every full moon the boy would spend hours walking around the classroom, humming to himself. She believed it - "It's in their blood, you see", and plenty of others believe similarly outlandish propositions - films like this teach them to do so - all to the detriment of the European attitude to Aborigines.

Another excellent example of this was David's all night love dance, - all Aborigines do love dances all night - even the Women's Weekly agreed! I'm sure many of the people who sat in that theatre with me left feeling that they had really learnt something about Aborigines - all of it incorrect, romanticized or completely out of context.

Another thing that dismayed me was the piffle the film purveyed on the Australian fauna and its habitat. Many of you know that much of what you saw was ridiculous, but many city people seemed quite prepared to accept that wombats, four different vegetation zones, and cockatoos that have to be hit behind the ear with a stick before they move, are all par for the course in the Simpson Desert - either that or the average Aboriginal, on the average walkabout, covers 3000 miles in the round trip. More mischievous and untruthful flummery.

Artistically and intellectually, I found the film condescending and barren. Our director and producer presume to relate to us the fable of the noble savage versus the technological society - a topic which enjoyed some popularity in certain anthropological circles many years ago. They approach this task, however, with the subtlety of a club-footed tap dancer. They never let up - brick walls with the desert behind them, college uniforms in the desert, shots of Sydney lunch hour crowds to the accompaniment of didgeridoo, David chops kangaroo - flash - butcher chops meat in air-conditioned butcher shop. On and on go the reminders and the half-smart symbolism.

And that's not all, folks, - these boys have been to the movies before - they make use of every tricky little cinematic device invented since 1947. They give us:- inane, meaningless dialogue (compliments of the Absurdists) - clever juxtapositives (e.g. Jenny Argutter's limbs and the boughs of gum trees) - very artistic - flashback upon flashback and nauseum - the meaningless interlude (e.g. the sexy weathermen in the

contd. next page.

desert) - very symbolic - and, of course, the statutory public hair and swimming scene with camera shots through water and front-on - goodness, we're daring!

A tawdry, deceitful little piece of pseudo-symbolism with added travelogue, that represents another victory for the forces of general ignorance. If, as a previous commentator in the 'Mirage' suggested, the film is to become a classic, it could only be to qualify for an award for "Mischief-making in Bad Taste".

D.G.

Parents and Friends.

A meeting of the Parents & Friends, as advertised in the last 'Mirage', was held at the school on Tuesday evening. In the past I have heard complaints, from time to time, that the Parents & Friends is a teacher dominated organization. Efforts have been made in the past to attract Europeans from outside the school and these have met with little success.

On Tuesday afternoon, parents of all European children attending the school were invited to the meeting by personal note. On Tuesday evening only one lady who has children at the school found time to attend; - enough said!

At the meeting the proposed new Constitution was outlined, discussed and in some parts altered.

Next Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. there will be a General Meeting to ratify the Constitution and elect officers for the year. All nominations must be in writing with the signature of the persons nominating and seconding and a signed acceptance of nomination by the nominee. All nominations to be in my hands before the commencement of the meeting. Nomination forms will be obtainable at the office or the school.

PUBLIC NOTICE

D.G.

I hereby give notice that a General Meeting of the Parents and Friends will be held at the Maningrida School at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 22nd of February, 1972.

The business of the meeting will be: -

- (1) to consider and, if thought fit, pass the following motions:
 - (a) That this meeting adopt the proposed Constitution as advertised (see Appendix).
 - (b) That the Parents and Friends Association take steps to become an incorporated body, registered with the Registrar of Companies, in accordance with the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Ordinance 1963.
- (2) To elect the following officers as required under the new Constitution:
 1. Aboriginal President
 2. European Vice President
 3. Aboriginal Secretary
 4. European Secretary
 5. Aboriginal Treasurer
 6. European Treasurer.
- (3) To transact such other business as is placed before the meeting.

D. A. Gillespie
(President)

For Sale

Mini-Moke 4,000 miles
Price \$1,400 in cash
See Jim Hussig

THE 3 MUSKETEERS

Rodger P, Bob S, and Dan G, leaders in the "Maningrida Get Fit Campaign" visited the Cadell River Health Resort in the weekend. Under the expert guidance of the physical fitness supervisor, Mr. Bob Collins, they undertook several complicated calisthenic exercises such as raking seed beds and digging out stumps. I can't vouch for the benefit which the exercises had on the man, but I greatly appreciate the benefit given to the garden.

D.G.

Reporting Reporters

Last Saturday Mr. John Graham arrived at Maningrida and stayed till Tuesday. John is a Government journalist of the News and Information Bureau, and has seen many strange lands in his time; he has just come back from a stay in the U.S.A. At the moment he is on "loan" to the Dept. of the Interior to carry out a fact finding mission, with the idea to obtain personal and inside information for the minister, and generally to keep Canberra informed.

From Maningrida, he moved onto Groote Island, and from there back to Canberra.

J.G.

Where Did They Come From?

The first decent rain does queer things to the local bird population, and one change that several Maningridian Birdos have pointed out to me is the very sudden occurrence of Finches (sparrow like birds) about the settlement.

These particular Finches are called the LONG-TAILED FINCH, having the scientific name of "aruticauda", which, translated from the latin, means "sharp-tailed" - for the tail is not only long, but quite slender towards the tip. In fact it is a beautiful bird except it is so small its pastel colours can only be appreciated by the use of glasses. It is a blend of white, grey, black and brown, and to top it all off, the race of this area has a striking red bill. As a family, finches love water and they will never be far from it; they seem to be always drinking, but actually feed on the grass seeds of the dry savanna country they inhabit (which may explain why we normally don't see too many of them at Maningrida). Also interesting is the belief that this bird avoid s going near human settlement - certainly not the case at Maningrida at the moment.

A unique habit of the "grass finches" is the rapid bobbing of the head up and down (the origin of which is thought to be from the courtship dance in which some species hop up and down with a piece of grass or feather in their bill). This behaviour is often seen as a greeting gesture between grass finches (not necessarily of the same species), and, in fact, if one bird does not do it, you can be sure it is looking for a fight.

The Long-tailed Finch will build its nest in the topmost branches of high eucalypts (sometimes in Pandanus palms). It is not the ordinary cup-shaped structure, but shaped rather like a wasp's nest with a long entrance hall. Usually 5-6 eggs form the clutch.

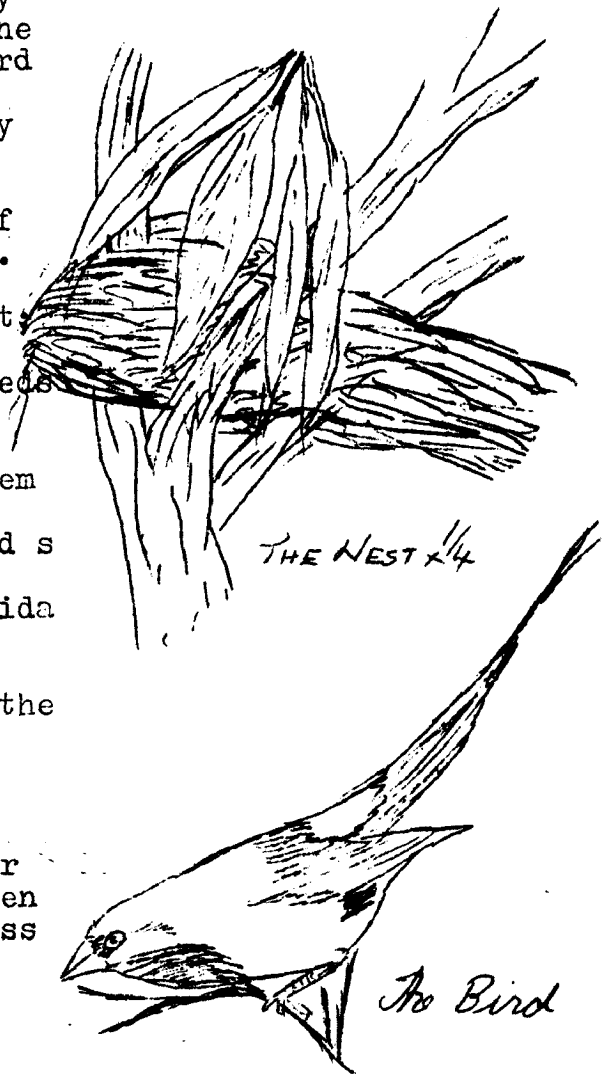
Apart from these, roosting nests are often constructed; these are much smaller and have no entrance tunnel. They serve the purpose of an overnight shelter.

Why their sudden appearance at Maningrida? I don't know. One would naturally think that the movement was in response to the seeding of grass or the availability of water after the rains, but these changes have taken place all over the range of this species, and offer no real reason for their sudden occurrence here.

J.G.

Found.

One Kodak Instomatic Camera with a partly used film in it. Found near the Pre-school on Saturday morning by some children. Loser please see G. or S.K. Armstrong.



Weekend Duties

Duty Officer Ron Berryman
Duty Sister Sister Sherry

Star Theatre

Friday: Another attempt will be made to show "Flight of the Phoenix" which was washed out last week. From what has already been seen, it looks like a good one.

SATURDAY: "MAD DOGS AND ENGLISH MEN"

Church

Sunday: First Sunday in Lent

9.30am Sunday School

7.00pm Evening Service

Wednesday 7.30pm Crusader's Fellowship.

Satan has many tricks. He showed the fruit on the forbidden (mo'mo) tree to Eve in the garden. As he talked it looked to be really good **tucker**, and as she listened she forgot God's command. Eve let Satan push her. She ate the fruit and gave it to her husband. Then trouble came.

Satan tried to push Jesus in the Desert place. Jesus answered Satan with strong and true words from the Bible, and presently Satan went away.

During Lent, Christians remember Jesus and his way of fighting Satan. We are weak in ourselves and give in sometimes as Eve did, but the Spirit of Jesus helps us to walk on the right track that leads to our Heavenly Father.

Wrong Monday!

Rev. Bradley Harris and family are due to arrive on Monday, Feb. 21st. Just goes to show you should NEVER believe everything you read in the "Mirage".

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People - Old and New

Miss Elizabeth McClellan (teacher here '67) who always had a knack for doing the unexpected, is reliably reported to have launched upon the matrimonial journey after a whirlwind courtship. We expect a report from Liz. herself in due course.

We are happy to report that Miss Yvonne Scott has taken the change from teaching to the student's life in her stride. "I'm thoroughly enjoying every minute of it" See Jack for a fuller account.

The Seymour holiday got off to a bad start when Mr. Connair decided that Rod and family were NOT to meet their connecting flights. However Rod took it in his stride with a "Just my luck". We wish them all the best in Qld.

Mr. Ron McCulloch will complete the bricklaying work on the new buildings by the end of this week. He hopes to leave for Darwin on Monday, and Rosemary will take the opportunity to visit Alice Springs. They will be returning to Maningrida when the brick walls are ready to rise on the Community Hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Strand have had to delay their return to Darwin (from Melbourne) while the surgeons perform another operation on Val's eye. Mercifully this operation is not quite as serious as earlier on

Tom Dudanga, Tom Wogbara, Tom Wadidi, Joe Gwanga and Frank Melgurde are hoping that weather conditions today will enable them to fly across to Goulburn Is. to take part in some ceremonies for a deceased relative.

Budding Journalists and Invertebrate Letter Writers

Contributions are always welcomed for the Mirage. If you have something to say or a meeting to advertise, set pen to paper and deliver your creation to either one of the following.

Editor -in-chief, - Gowan Armstrong

City Editor and Treasurer - Jack Gardiner.

Industrial Roundman - Dan Gillespie.

Sporting Editor - Jimmy Matjiri (On special leave at Guruk-muk).

Maningrida Mirage

AIATSIS Library, RS 29.7/2

"Maningrida Mirage Volume 124" February 18th, 1972.

Maningrida Mirage NT Maningrida Community

(r000005900888_v124_a.pdf)

To cite this file use:

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