

# SKY PILOT NEWS Aug. 1964

Published monthly by the Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd., Marella Mission Farm, Acres Rd., Kellyville, N.S.W. Tel. 634-2427

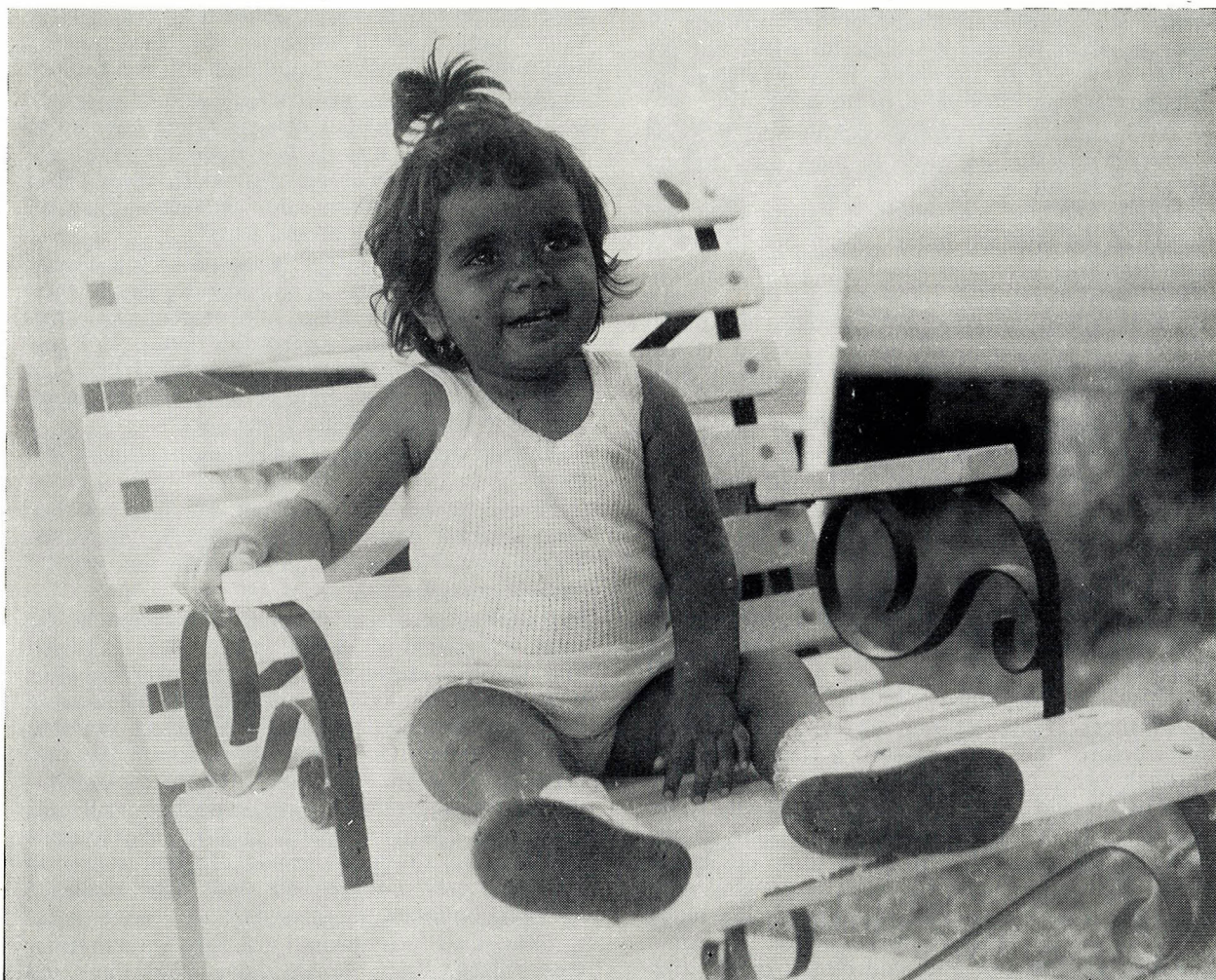
Director: K. Langford-Smith, F.R.G.S.

Secretary: Mrs. Norma K. Warwick

Postal address: P.O. Box 29 Castle Hill, N.S.W.

SUBSCRIPTION, 2/6 per annum

Registered at G.P.O., Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical.



"Cheryl, at Marella"

## JUST ANIMALS: FROM THE SKY PILOT'S LOG, 2CH BROADCAST

This story, written many years ago, refers to a time when Arnhem Land was a place of isolation; the few white men, living on the outskirts, did much as they liked. Most of these men were fine, tough pioneers who paved the way for the civilization they hated; and almost without exception they were kind and generous to the Aborigines. Some people might not have agreed with their morals, but otherwise they were law abiding, reasonable and kindly disposed to the Aborigines. There were a very few exceptions; today's story is about such a one.

Arnhem Land lay sweltering under a fierce noonday sun. No breath of wind stirred the drooping eucalyptus and mangrove leaves; no cat's paw ruffled the languid blue waters of the Arafura Sea that slid softly along dazzling white beaches and lapped the black ooze of the mangrove swamps. On mud flats at the river side lay crocodiles, too sleepy and well fed to take a professional interest in the bream and barrimundi which nosed the driftwood a few inches away. A thin barely visible whisp of smoke rose from a blacks' camp half a mile from the beach and



spread out to form a shapeless haze in an otherwise cloudless sky.

As the mission aeroplane SKY PILOT side-slipped over the timber at the edge of the billabong and skidded to a standstill, clouds of white cockatoos rose screeching from the branches of the melaleucas, and circling round joined the riot of frightened birds already on the wing. Ducks, pigmy geese, ibises, cranes, broilgas, jabiroos and pelicans all protested loudly at the intrusion of the aeroplane. It was a wonderful sight; but my business was with the white man who lived in a paperbark hut fifty yards to the west.

As I climbed out of the cockpit and stripped off my flying suit he came to meet me, dressed in a soiled suit of pyjamas. I knew that he was a buffalo shooter, even before I caught sight and smell of the stinking hides spread out to dry. I had been told his name was Tom; surnames were superfluous in Arnhem Land in those days. Tom's reputation was not good even amongst the rough and ready bushmen, and he was classed as unnecessarily cruel and heartless. I wondered what kind of a reception I would get.

Tom spelled out the name of the aeroplane and the words "Church Missionary Society"; Then he spat on the sandy wheel and chuckled: "Ha, ha, so you're a blanky SKY PILOT eh? You're a bit off your beat. Did you get lost or somethin'?"

"No, I'm on my way to the mission now. But they told me in Darwin that you were living somewhere about here; and seeing your hut I thought I would call and have a yarn. I don't suppose you have many visitors?"

"Visitors? Now let me see . . . yes, it was just before the wet season a fellow passed through here. Not the last wet, the one before it. That would make it about 18 months ago; the place is gettin' overrun. I came here to get away from people but it strikes me I'd better move further out now the place is crawlin' with visitors. Of course old Mick — he was the bloke that called — old Mick was a MAN — not a blanky SKY PILOT. Pity you blokes didn't stick to the cities in the south instead of comin' up here upsettin' the natives and turnin' 'em agin the white man."

"Have you ever visited a mission station"? I asked.

"No and I don't want to neither. What would I want with a mission station?"

"If you have never visited a mission don't you think it is a little arbitrary to condemn what they are doing, or trying to do?"

"I don't need to visit a mission to find out the harm that missionaries do to the natives. I wouldn't have a mission native in my camp, not if you paid me. They're all the same; cheeky, conceited beggars with their heads full of educa-

tion and a notion they're equal to a white man. Missionaries are at the bottom of half the trouble with natives."

"How," I asked, "would you treat the natives yourself? I mean, what should the white man's attitude be towards them?"

"Treat 'em rough. They're just animals and you've got to keep 'em in their place. Once you give 'em a bit of encouragement they'll get the upper hand. There's hundreds of blacks to every white man in Arnhem Land and you can't afford to take chances".

"Don't you think", I queried "they have some right to live? I mean, they have thoughts and feelings much the same as white men. They have laws and customs and beliefs that they respect. They have hopes and fears".

"There you go, talkin' a lot of silly nonsense like all missionaries! We've got to break their tribal business and make 'em respect the white man's laws, and the sooner the better. If I had my way I'd soon knock the silly tribal laws out of their heads; I've done it with this lot here; I'm their law now. What I say goes".

"Don't they resent interference with tribal laws?"

"Some of 'em do — at first. Ha, ha, but they soon knuckle down. I'm the boss, see; and what I says goes. Now come along to the hut and I'll explain what I mean."

I walked across to the hut with Tom. On the way we passed a blacks' camp and I noticed that the few aborigines crouching over the fires were miserable looking and cowed. They were mostly women and I noticed half-caste children amongst them. On the south side of the hut, towering above it, was a huge tor of rock pointing like a finger at the sky. The hut itself was dirty and untidy and after a brief inspection I preferred to sit in the shade of giant tamarind trees that grew near the hut and partly sheltered it. Tom continued his discourse:

"Yes, as I was sayin', the only way to treat these blacks is to break them from their old laws and customs and make 'em obey the white man. Sometimes it takes time; they are stubborn critters, but they knuckle down in the end; they're just animals, you know. I had a bit of trouble only this mornin'. There's a young black-fellow in my camp who helps me with the skinnin' when I go buffalo shootin'. He's a useful boy, too. He don't belong to this tribe, I brought him with me from Darwin last trip I made. Well he wanted a wife and I promised him as soon as we got our tally of hides I'd give him his pick of the young lubras in the camp. We finished shootin' yesterday and this mornin' I took him down to the camp to get his reward".

"And what was the result?"



"Well, he picked on a young girl and I said he could have her. She was a good-lookin' little piece, for a lubra".

"Was she pleased about it herself?"

"Not at first, but she'll get used to it. He might have to give her a beltin' to quieten her down but she'll get used to it. They all do."

"How did the tribe take it?" I asked. "It was probably against their laws. Didn't the old men make any fuss?"

"They kicked up a bit of a shindy, but I sent 'em bush with a few 303 bullets over their heads. Then the girl cleared out with the boy on her tracks. He'll catch up with her any minute now. She bolted just about the time your aeroplane came over I think . . ."

Tom paused as a wild scream rang out. It came from the top of the top of rock and we swung round. There on the edge of a sheer drop of a hundred feet or more stood the naked figure of a young girl. Behind her and creeping towards her was a leering, half-civilized black dressed in shirt and trousers. Tom laughed. "I guess she's trapped now. She put up a good bluff. It appears she was goin' to marry someone else accordin' to their silly tribal law. He's got her now. She'll fight for a bit but she'll soon get used to it. They all do. Now we'll see some fun. I guess . . . 'struth! . . . look out!"

The young girl faced the man who was creeping towards her; defiance was in every line of her slim young body. Then she lifted her head proudly and with one wild scream turned and plunged over the cliff. There was a sickening crash as her body hit the bottom, quivered and lay still. Tom cursed loudly.

"The silly young fool, fancy doin' that! Now I'll have to pick another one for Billy. They're just animals but some of 'em is mighty stubborn."

And the final entry in today's log is taken from the 49th chapter of Isaiah; "Thus saith the Lord; Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."

**THE OFFICE WORK:** This work has been growing so fast that the routine office work has almost got out of hand. Mrs. Warwick combines the positions of Secretary and Treasurer — as she has for almost 15 years; just how long this will be possible depends on several circumstances. First, we have been fortunate in securing the services of a very competent assistant for two days each week (for the present) in the office. This will enable us to catch up with the writing of leaflets and other outstanding work. We praise God for this wonderful provision for our needs; the more so as our assistant is a Voluntary Work-

er and it does not involve the Mission in further expense.

Second, we would ask our supporters to help us as far as possible by not making unreasonable demands on our time. Though our day starts with breakfast at 7 a.m. there is a lot of routine to be attended to before we can make a start in the office. There are children to feed, prepare for school and send off to the bus; there are farm jobs to supervise such as milking cows, feeding calves, fowls, geese, kangaroos, emus, etc. During this time the phone is switched through to the house and if friends phone to arrange a booking, or an outing for the children, or anything of that nature, it means going into the office block where the diary is kept. The same applies to calls in the evening. For this reason we do ask our friends to phone **on business** matters as much as possible during office hours. This does not mean that the office staff only works between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.; in actual fact almost every member of the staff is on call for at least 12 hours every day (except Sunday and — for each worker — one other day a week.) Of course personal conversations with Mrs. Langford-Smith or others that do not involve re-opening of the office, are different.

We have had phone calls to arrange bookings involving Mr. Langford-Smith as early as 7 a.m. and as late as 11.30 p.m. Surely it is a bit much to expect our staff to be on duty for 16 hours or more a day! Your co-operation will help considerably; most of our friends are kindly and considerate but they may forget that this work has grown into a very large organisation compared to what it was 16 years ago, when we had the same number of office workers.

**BUS PICNICS:** The dark children have been fortunate in having two bus picnics; one in July and the other in August. The first one was organised by the young people of Wentworthville Presbyterian Church (St. Stephen's) who took the children to Warragamba Dam. It was a great success, as far as our children were concerned anyhow, and we are grateful for those who so kindly helped in this way.

In August the Castle Hill Girl Guides, under the leadership of Mrs. T. Ryan, arranged for a bus picnic to Kurnell. The Guides not only paid for the bus, all the expenses of the day, but also gave us a large donation of what they had "left over" in surplus finance. It must have meant real self-sacrifice to those Guides; but the pleasure that showed on the faces of the dark children may have been some reward.

**NADOC:** The Annual ceremony in Martin Place to celebrate National Aborigines Day went off exceptionally well. More friends than usual were there and our children took part, as they have done for some years past. This ceremony



seems to be attracting greater attention each year and we trust it will continue to grow until the whole nation becomes interested in the welfare of the Aborigines. The kindness and sympathy of most white people is most marked — a very different attitude to that which prevailed a quarter of a century ago. There seems to be little, if any, colour bar in Australia; what does appear usually proves to be a matter of hygiene, when investigated.

**THORNLEIGH SCOUTS:** The Thornleigh Scouts organised a "food-drive" in aid of this work and the boys combed the district in their attempt to obtain tinned food for the dark children. The drive resulted in over 700 tins of food being presented to us by the Scouts. We are most grateful for this very practical assistance. Because of the variety of food it meant that the children's lunches were more appetising and varied than had been possible before. Those parents who have school lunches to cut every day will rearlise what a "chore" it is to have 18 or more lunches to cut every school-day throughout the year. Our task was lightened considerably by the kindly action of the Scouts.

**BUILDING:** The building programme is going ahead steadily and at least some extra building should be completed before the Sale of Work. While the builders are here we hope to be able to go ahead with: (1) Extra staff quarters, (2) new roof for the Mission House, (3) dining-room cum study and play-room for the dark children, (4) laundry and ironing room for the children's washing and (5) extra wing for boys' accommodation.

The whole cost of this work is expected to be about £5,000 and we are launching a Special Appeal to commence at our Sale of Work in order to raise this amount. The appeal will be open until the amount required is received — if necessary until the end of 1965; but we hope that it will not have to be extended as long as that. It is not our intention to ask individual people for money; that has never been our policy. But by means of the Sky Pilot News, or possibly by circular, we wish to make our needs known to as many of our supporters as possible. You can share in this appeal. We do not know your financial position and you may already be giving more to God's work than you can reasonably afford; but you can pray about our needs; you can make the work more widely known; you can, perhaps, assist at our Sale of Work by gifts for the stalls or by your help as a voluntary worker on the day.

The first £100 has been subscribed by the staff of Marella Mission Farm. We know that

giving is a sacrifice; but this work of bringing the dark children to a knowledge of the love of God demands sacrifice. To see that they are given love, shelter, security, understanding and the opportunity of taking their place alongside their white brothers and sisters is something well worth while. Paul likens the Christian missionary life to a battle: war always means sacrifice, blood, tears and loss. But Victory is assured if we go forward in God's strength and refuse to shirk what He calls us to do. Are we in earnest? Are we really in the front-line of the Christian warfare? if not, what excuse will we give to Him who commanded us to defeat the powers of evil and **feed His lambs.**



**THE DARK CHILDREN:** Most of the sickness has passed by now and the "virus" and the measles are, we hope, things of the past. But with a large family, most of whom came here suffering from malnutrition and other complaints, there are always those who have to go to doctors, clinics, hospitals and other places for tests, examinations and treatment. Mrs. Langford-Smith, Mrs. Warwick and the nurses have the time-consuming task of taking these children for medical attention. Our own honorary doctor and most of those at the various clinics are wonderfully considerate; but some hospitals forget to let us know when an appointment has been cancelled because the particular doctor to be seen is on holidays. We can ill afford this needlessly wasted time. Please pray that our staff may at all times be a true witness to our Master — even when it is a real strain to show patience, meekness and gentleness. It is not what we say but what our lives say that influences the dark children for good.