

# SKY PILOT NEWS

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Members of the Apex Club erect shelter shed for dark children.

## CROCODILES: A Story From The Sky Pilot's Log (2CH Broadcast)

We were travelling north to the Roper River in Arnhem Land. Our party consisted of a number of blacks, a white man named Joe, and myself. We had practically no stores left and were depending on "native tucker". Joe hadn't been long in the country, and he was always complaining about food. Once more he voiced his grievance: "How long till we reach the Mission now, Smithy?"

I'm sick of this bush tucker. I'd give all I possess for a bit of bread."

"About a week," I replied. "But why worry? We've had plenty to eat all the time. You can't be hungry now; it's only an hour since you ate half a goanna."

"N-no, I'm not hungry now," Joe admitted. "At least, I don't think I am. Not for goanna, anyhow. But I never feel satisfied after

a meal; I've a kind of perpetual craving. Maybe I've ate too much goanna lately and its come to life and is gnawing at my inside. I can't get used to bush tucker; give me a slice of bread or damper, any day."

"You had damper yesterday. It was good stuff, too, made from the best grass seeds. The blacks wasted half a day getting it for you."

"They needn't have bothered; it was vile stuff, half full of sand. The weight of it has dragged my stomach all out of shape. And it was cooked without any baking powder."

"The blacks don't find baking powder growing in the bush, Joe. When you've been a bit longer in this country you'll get used to it. The trouble is you spend too much time thinking about food. Anyhow, here's a creek to swim. That'll give you something else to think about. I only hope the crocodiles in this area aren't like you—always thinking about food."

Joe pulled up suddenly. "Look here, Smithy, I'm not going to swim a creek that's full of hungry crocodiles. Not on your life. I'm going to walk round."

"You can't do that, Joe; there's no crossing for miles."

"But I can't swim much," pleaded Joe. "Maybe I could get across all right, but I'm no fancy swimmer and I'd be the first one the crocodiles would get."

"We'll look after you," I promised. "We'll swim in formation, with you in the middle."

"But you don't understand, Smithy. It's all right for you, you're just like a river black-fellow in the water. But if a crocodile attacked I couldn't keep up with the blacks, and they'd clear out and leave me, even if you didn't."

"It's all right," I told him. "I know these blacks, and they know me. I won't leave you, and they won't leave me. If a crocodile attacks, we know how to handle it. All you've got to do is to swim as hard as you can for the bank. Don't look round, and don't get worried if you can't see us. We'll be there, and we'll look after you. That's a promise. Now, in you go."

"Oh, all right, I suppose I'll have to. But I hate crocodiles. I'd sooner face a lion in the open than one of those things you can't see that attacks under water. I'll never come bush with you again, and if ever I get back to the Mission alive, I'll stick there. Well . . . here goes. If my poor old mother could only see me now. . . . Oh, well!"

And so we started the swim. Joe wasn't a bit happy, and, to tell the truth, I wasn't,

either. The water was too clear. To swim a muddy creek isn't half the risk; in clear water a crocodile can see to attack from underneath.

We were more than halfway across when a crocodile's head came to the surface. Joe saw it almost as soon as we did, and it was only the water he swallowed that choked off his wild scream. There was only one way to act. The blacks and I dived immediately and left Joe floating alone on the surface. He beat it towards the bank, and as soon as he found his voice he yelled till he was hoarse. He wasted a lot of energy in useless screaming and splashing, but somehow he got ashore and stumbled up the bank. In a few moments we joined him.

Poor Joe was in a bad way. His voice had practically gone, and he was crying in fear and anger. We were all knocked up, and lay there, panting. Finally, in an angry whisper, Joe abused me: "You dirty, sneaking coward, Smithy. I always thought a man could depend on you. And what happens? As soon as there's danger you forget all about your promise and leave me alone to the crocodile. I expected the blacks to clear out, but not a white man."

"Hold on a minute, Joe," I told him. "Where do you think we were all the time you were carrying on like a frightened school girl?"

"As far away as you could get, I suppose, looking after yourself. I looked round once and there wasn't a sign of you. You must have gone like greased lightning. I don't know how you got away so quick."

"We didn't leave you, Joe. That creek's not 10 feet deep. We all dived below you, then we walked along the bottom and stirred up the mud, so that the crocodile couldn't see you, or smell you. A crocodile doesn't attack on the surface. We formed a ring round you and could have almost touched you at any time, we were so close. You were the only one who was perfectly safe. The crocodile could have taken any one of us, but he couldn't reach you without getting one of us first. You ought to apologise to the blacks. It was a grand thing for them to do, and I'm proud of them. They risked their lives for you, and you only curse them."

Joe went to pieces then. He wasn't a bad fellow, but he just didn't understand.

Some of us Christians are a little like Joe. God has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and "Lo I am with you always—even to the end." If you search the Scriptures you'll find them full of such

promises. And when things are going well we are comforted and encouraged by the promises. Then all at once a crocodile's head comes to the surface of the placid water of life. Instead of keeping our eyes straight ahead and quietly obeying instructions, we get in a panic and do a lot of shouting and splashing and swallow a lot of water—sometimes we think that God has deserted us in our time of need. We can't see Him, and we judge His actions by our own imperfect natures. And all the time, if we only knew it, He is close beside us, and underneath are the everlasting arms. How it must hurt our Lord sometimes to know that He not only risked His life, but He gave His life to save us; and yet when some minor danger arises we immediately take it for granted that He has deserted us. Maybe we have blamed Him in our minds and felt that He has not honoured His promises.

Now, what I have to say to you goes for myself also. Look back on that time you thought your Lord had let you down and see if it isn't true that all the time you thought you were left defenceless you were really perfectly safe, for He was carrying you in His arms. Don't look back and get in a panic. Look up and quietly carry on as He told you, and leave the rest to Him.

And the final entry in today's Log is taken from the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy: "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

**DARK CHILDREN.** The dark children in our care are all well and happy. During the month another little girl of about five years of age joined our family. Her name is "Marj." She is very light in colour, but has had a sad and difficult time; we trust that this will be the beginning of a new life for her. This brings our total number of dark children to nine. Three of them are attending Castle Hill School, and two more should be able to commence school shortly.

A party of friends came out with three cars and took all the children for an afternoon's outing, providing them with fruit, ice cream, etc. Other friends took Coral and Janet for a day's outing. We are deeply grateful to these friends who have endeavoured to bring some happiness into the children's lives.

**WOMEN'S AUXILIARY.** The members of the Auxiliary are very busy preparing for Street Stalls and the Sale of Work to be held (D.V.) on November 3rd. We were glad to welcome several new members recently. The

work is growing so fast that there is room for all to help in some way or another. At the monthly meeting of the Women's Auxiliary a special time is always set aside for Bible reading and prayer for the work. Besides this, the women of the Auxiliary and friends observe every Monday as a day for special prayer in their own homes.

**AUDITORS.** It is with regret that we have to announce that Mr. E. H. Perrett, who has acted as our Honorary Auditor since the inception of the Sky Pilot Fellowship, has resigned. We are most grateful to him for his advice and help during the past years. This work is growing rapidly, and now it has been incorporated as a non-profit making company this involves a great deal of extra work for our Auditor.

We are very pleased to be able to announce that Mr. K. H. Pearce, A.C.A., has kindly accepted the position as Honorary Auditor. Mr. Pearce has his office in Blacktown, but his home is at Castle Hill, quite close to the Mission Farm. Mr. Pearce is a Council Member of the Blacktown and District Agricultural Society, and already his advice and help have been considerable.

**VOLUNTARY WORKERS.** From time to time we have had valuable help from voluntary workers, sometimes for a few hours, sometimes for longer periods. Mr. W. Clissold and his son, accompanied by two workmates, have done most useful work with the building. Mr. Woof, from Northmead, spent a number of days repairing fences, digging drains, mixing concrete and doing other useful, heavy work. Mr. Ivan Hinton and his friends are faithful visitors, and they never fail to ask for the axe, so that they can leave a heap of firewood ready for our use. To all these, and other voluntary workers, we extend our thanks on behalf of the dark children whom they are helping in a most practical way.

**ANNUAL RALLY AND SALE OF WORK.** The Rally and Sale of Work, to mark the eighth Anniversary of the Sky Pilot Fellowship will be held (D.V.) in the lower Sydney Town Hall on Saturday, 3rd November, 1956. Doors will be open at 10.30 a.m., and the Public Meeting will be held at 2 p.m. There will be special items given by dark children from our Mission Farm. We hope to make this the best gathering yet held, and would be glad if you will make it as widely known as possible. We would also appreciate gifts of jams, cakes, needlework, sweets, fruit and

vegetables, flowers and plants, books, knitted goods, and good, used clothing, etc. There will be a "White Elephant Stall", and possibly you may have some ornament, picture, vase or novelty which is not really required in the home and which might be turned to good account on behalf of the dark children. Think what dusting could be saved by a real "clean-up" of unwanted ornaments in your home! Maybe you do not realise that these things may help to feed and care for some of our less fortunate little ones.

**PANEL VAN.** Through the courtesy of a friend we have been able to purchase very cheaply a second-hand 1939 Ford panel van. This will be a great asset in the work. Mr. Langford-Smith has his own private car (which he uses for Mission work), but this has never been the same since it was rebuilt after the accident last September. In any case, it is not suitable for carrying goods to the Street Stalls or picking up the many articles of furniture, etc., offered to the Mission from time to time. Also, there was no way of taking all the dark children for an outing, or even to church (though we have the regular services on the Mission Farm for them). The panel van will enable us to do all these things and will also provide alternative transport in an emergency to enable Mr. Langford-Smith to fulfil his many engagements when his own car is not available. Mrs. Norma Warwick has had a driver's licence for several years, and Miss Margaret Langford-Smith obtained a licence recently. There is no shortage of "back-seat" drivers amongst the dark children!

**GEESE.** A fine pair of these birds was sent to us recently from a friend at Orange. They appeared a little disturbed in their new surroundings at first, and we found them, one day, on the main road, beginning the walk back to Orange. However, they have now settled down, and the goose is setting near the waterhole. The dark children are somewhat afraid of them and, perhaps owing to the hissing sound they make, Janet insists on calling them the "Heese"!

**VALE, "PETER"!** Much to the distress of the children and staff, our pet kangaroo died recently. The Vet. suggested that the cause was pneumonia. We were all fond of "Peter", and it has been a great loss to us. Anyone able to supply another kangaroo would be sure of a royal welcome!

**APEX CLUB.** We received a welcome visit from between 60 and 80 members of the Apex Club one day. The cars came rolling up in dozens, and the men got to work right away. They built an all-weather shelter shed, painted the children's quarters inside and out, supplied and fitted a "Dissolvenator" in the children's toilet, dug drains and repaired the drive from the front gate, pruned the roses and dug the rose bed, took the engine out of the van and took it away for repairs and overhaul, and then returned it and re-fitted it in the van. With so much willing labour available, buildings took shape as if by magic, and before the day was over everything had been finished, tidied up and left spick and span. What would have taken us months to do in our "spare" time they did in one day, and the children had the benefit of it right away. Words cannot express our gratitude to the members of this wonderful organisation, and they have actually promised to return again at some future date. The members of the Parramatta Soroptimist Club provided lunch and tea for all the men.

**GIFTS FOR THE MISSION FARM.** We are sometimes asked by visitors what type of gifts would be most useful for the dark children. Too many sweets or cakes are not good for the children, but they love fruit of all kinds, which is wholesome and good for them. We have plenty of plums (in season) on the Mission Farm, and a few oranges, pears and apples. But there is never a surplus of any fruit (except plums.) Many societies are now working to provide amenities for the children's quarters, but our greatest need is always good, simple food-stuffs. Groceries of any kind, biscuits, etc., are appreciated greatly. Clothing for the children, blankets, sheets, pillow cases, towels, etc., are always useful, and they need not be new; also soap, combs, bobby pins, ribbons, tooth paste, etc.

**SKY PILOT NEWS.** It is regretted that this news sheet has been delayed. The postal strike held up our mail, and the donations we depend on, and every available shilling had to be used for foodstuffs for the children. It is hoped, however, that things will soon be back to normal again. In conclusion, we wish to thank the many friends who have stood by us in difficult times, and we praise God for the evidence of His blessing on this work and in the lives of these little dark children who belong to Him.