

SKY PILOT NEWS

APRIL 1963

Published monthly by the Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd., Marella Mission Farm, Acres Road, Kellyville, N.S.W. Phone 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.

SKY PILOT FELLOWSHIP

RALLY and SALE of WORK

to be held (D.V.) in the grounds of

MARELLA MISSION FARM

ACRES ROAD, KELLYVILLE, N.S.W.

Saturday, 4th May, 1963

10.30 a.m. — 5 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING, 2.30 p.m.

ALL THE USUAL STALLS: REFRESHMENTS AND HOT PIES
AVAILABLE ALL DAY

Proceeds in aid of our work for needy aboriginal children.

Do your shopping while you enjoy a day's outing in the country; at the same time you will be helping this work for the dark children of our own land.

Make up a car party, including your friends. For children there will be swings, and slippery dip.

If you are unable to come by car, there are buses from Parramatta to Kellyville Post Office. The Mission Farm is about one mile from the Post Office, but transport between the Mission Farm and Post Office bus stop will be arranged for the following buses:—

Depart Parramatta Station: 8.50 a.m., 11.03 a.m., 12.21 p.m., 1.05 p.m.

Depart Kellyville P.O.: 1.22 p.m., 1.52 p.m., 5.07 p.m., 6.42 p.m.

If coming by car turn off Windsor Road at President Road, follow to end, then turn left into Greens Road and first turn to left is Acres Road. The Mission Farm is the third home on the left in Acres Road.

Gifts for the stalls will be greatly appreciated. They should be railed to the "Sky Pilot," Parramatta Railway Station, or brought direct to the Mission Farm before or on the day of the Rally.

For further particulars, please 'phone Marella Mission Farm, 634-2427.

BARK ROPE: FROM THE SKY PILOT'S LOG, 2CH BROADCAST

We were mustering down by the Limmen River, south of Arnhem Land. By "we", I mean George, Palmer and I. There were the stockboys, of course, and the usual black relatives that always followed them up. George fed all of them without questioning the closeness of their relationship to his stockboys.

"It's this way, Smithy," he said. "I could cut down the rations for the relatives and save a few bob, but my boys wouldn't be happy, and neither would I. Anyway, every black in the Northern Territory seems to be related to one of my boys. Maybe they are, and maybe they ain't; that's their business."

"But surely," I asked, "you can't get enough flour for all of them? You must have about thirty or forty blacks following you up, counting the piccaninnies — and they eat as much as an adult."

"No," he agreed. "I can't get enough flour; or tea and sugar, neither. But I see they have plenty of beef. The blacks are meat-eaters, and they don't mind goin' without damper. They get lilies and roots and nuts and things, and they make some sort of damper from grass seeds and lily seeds. Bullocks don't cost much these days, and I feel a lot happier to see the blacks contented and happy."

Palmer spoke up. "I tried to save expenses when I started farming," he admitted, "by cutting down on the rations. It didn't work. I lost most of my good boys, and the rest of them dug up and ate the peanuts nearly as quick as I could plant them."

George laughed. "You've learned a lot since then, Palmer. I don't think I've ever seen such a raw new chum as you were a year or two back! Do you remember how you brought your Missus along to see my hut, so as she'd appreciate all you had at your place?"

Palmer looked sheepish. "I don't know what you must have thought of me," he said. "It was a pretty rotten thing to do. I can see it now."

"Well, don't worry about it, lad, it's past and gone. You've had a few hard knocks since then, and you've learned a lot. There's always hope for a man who's willin' to learn."

"It wasn't that I was so willing to learn," Palmer told him. "I had it more or less forced on me. I guess I'll never make a real bushman, but the little that I have learned I owe to you."

"Don't get sentimental," George advised. "You're still workin' for me, and I've still got a few lessons to teach you. I wouldn't be surprised if you curse me again afore long, when I rub you up the wrong way. But it does a man good to be rubbed up the wrong way sometimes."

"No one could be annoyed with you for long, George. You take everything so calmly.

I don't know how you do it. I always get excited and all worked up. I'm not much good in an emergency."

"Well," I interrupted, "if you two would stop making remarks about each other we might get the day's work mapped out. The sun's been up for over half an hour, and we haven't started yet. The horses have been in since sunrise."

"Well," said George, "I reckon Silas had better work the riverside, and you and me can go into the scrub higher up. You can take Lefthand with you, Palmer, and he'll help you block the cattle afore they reach the scrub. You shouldn't have much trouble; the cattle along the river ain't as wild as the scrubbers."

"Good," said Palmer. "And where will I meet you for dinner?"

"I think you'd better meet me on the big plain — Lefthand knows that one I mean. You can see the Three Archers from there."

"The Three Arches? Are they arches of rock or what?"

"No, they ain't; they're three hills. I dunno why they was named the Three Archers. It don't make sense to me."

"The word is spelt ARCHERS, not ARCHES," I told them.

"I don't care how you spell it," George said. "An arch is still an arch, however you spell it."

"Not in this case," I insisted. "Leichhardt named those hills after three friends of his who were named Archers. The word is sometimes mis-spelt on maps, and I expected to find three arches of rock instead of three ordinary hills."

"Leichhardt ought to have thought up some better name," George objected. "Anyways, what I wanted to warn you about, Palmer, is that there is a bad stretch of quicksand at the bend of the river. It looks like an ordinary clay pan, but whatever you do, don't ride on to it. It's a death-trap for a man or a horse. It would suck you down in a couple of hours, and you wouldn't have a chance to get out."

"Right you are," Palmer assured him. "I'll keep a good look out for it. Well, I'd better be moving. See you later."

* * *

Palmer worked upwards along the river, gradually collecting the cattle that they discovered in the grassy pockets. By 11 o'clock he had come within sight of the big plain, and already Lefthand was minding a nice little herd they had collected. He decided to make one more sweep before he met George and me for dinner at the appointed place. He gave his final instructions to Lefthand.

"You keep well out with the coaches," he instructed him. "When I drive out the cattle, let them run into the coaches, and they'll stop

of their own free will. I won't be long."

"You mind out belonga quicksand," warned Lefthand. "No more you try to gallop horse over that bare pan."

"No, of course not. I'll be all right. You look after your job and I'll look after mine. We've done pretty well so far, and I think George will be pleased when he sees the cattle we've got. Take it steady, mind. I won't be long."

A short time later, Palmer cut the tracks of a small bunch of cattle, and soon he sighted them and raced his horse to wheel them back to Lefthand. A young cow and her first calf broke stubbornly to the left. Palmer tried to work round her, and came to what looked like a big clay pan. Although he remembered George's warning, Palmer thought he could skirt the edge without running any risk; it looked solid enough. He wheeled his horse to avoid a small bush, and next moment the horse stumbled and fell; it was up to its knees in the quicksand. In a panic, Palmer jumped off the horse, and immediately he, too, began to sink quickly. By a great effort, he managed to pull himself out of the quicksand and struggle back into the saddle. For a moment he was safe, but, to his horror, he saw that the horse was sinking; slowly, steadily, it was being drawn into the quicksand. Palmer lost his nerve and began shouting and calling for help. Only the echoes came back from the Three Archers.

* * *

George and I mustered the scrub to the north of the river, and the old stockman managed to drive a few cunning old bullocks into the open, where I was able to tail them with the coaches, as the quiet decoy cattle are called. Gradually we worked towards the dinner camp at the big plain. Passing a blacks' camp, I was interested to see an old native sitting on the ground making bark rope by rubbing the strands of bark on his naked thigh to give it the twist that is necessary for strength.

At the dinner camp there was no sign of Palmer, so George decided to ride on to meet him. A couple of miles down the river we found Lefthand waiting patiently with his coaches. George questioned him, and then said to me: "I'm a bit worried about Palmer. He ought to have showed up an hour ago. Maybe we'd better ride out to the quicksand. It ain't far, and . . . well, Palmer forgets easy. Lefthand will look after your cattle. Come on, let's canter."

When we arrived at the edge of the quicksand Palmer's horse had disappeared, all but its head. Palmer was clinging to the saddle, but we could only see his head and shoulders. He was hysterical with fright and could only jabber away incoherently when we called to him. We broke down some saplings and tried to make

a bridge to reach him, but the timber sank as soon as George put his weight on it. Our stirrup leathers and bridles knotted together were not long enough to reach the doomed man, and George groaned.

"It's no good," he said, hopelessly, "we can't make it. If only we had a decent rope . . . my heavens! to think we've got to stand here and watch him sucked into that! Isn't there anything we can do?"

"Yes, there is," I exclaimed. "I've just remembered. Quick, put my bridle back on the horse while I get the stirrup leathers in place. I know where there's a rope."

"I wish I could go instead of you. Every minute counts, and I can ride faster. But I don't know the place. Quick! do your best; poor old Palmer's nearly gone."

It was a frantic gallop back through the scrub. Branches and twigs slashed my face, but I hardly felt them. I prayed desperately that I could go straight to the blacks' camp, for I had not taken particular notice of the direction. By a miracle, I rode right on to it, and galloped down at the old rope-maker. He saw me coming and faded into the bush, evidently under the impression that I was intent on riding him down. I snatched up the coil of bark rope, wheeled the horse, and started back for the quicksand. When I arrived there was little more than Palmer's head and shoulders above the quicksand. The horse had disappeared completely. I flung the rope to George, who whipped a slip-knot on the end and began swinging the noose round his head, as if he was back in the stockyard. George was an excellent man with a head-rope, but it was a difficult shot, and he failed three times before the noose dropped neatly over Palmer's head and shoulders.

Our combined efforts were not sufficient to pull Palmer free of the quicksand. George doubled back his horse's tail, secured the rope to it, and led the horse away. Gradually the rope took the strain. For a moment I thought it would part, but it was well made, and the horse drew Palmer from the quicksand like a tight cork from a bottle.

An hour later Palmer told us his story. He was still shaken and trembling with fright and shock.

"Oh, it was awful!" he exclaimed. "I kept sinking deeper and deeper. I'd given up all hope when you turned up. Even then I couldn't see how you could get me out. Oh, take me away from here! I'll go back to the city. I'm no good for this life in the bush. I know I'm a coward, but I can't face it. I — I'm not made of the right stuff for danger and adventure. I'm not strong enough! I'll get right away."

"Steady, old fellow, take it easy," George

urged. "You've had a bad time, and you ain't yourself yet. You'll get over it in time."

"No I won't! I can't! I'm afraid! I'll never be strong enough to make a bushman. I'll go away."

"Palmer," I said, "did you know the rope that pulled you out was only made of bark? Look at this piece of bark, I can snap it between my fingers. And yet that's the material the rope was made of. It's the twist in it that gives it the strength. That old blackfellow rubbed and rolled it on his thigh till it had the right twist; then he put the strands together, and the weak bark was strong enough to pull you out of the quicksand. The poorest material, pushed into shape and given the right twist is capable of great strength. Think that out."

* * *

Many a man realises the weakness of his character. He cannot face up to life, with all its trials and sorrows and temptations; but if he allows God to work in His own way to mould, to shape, to twist, he will find the strength he needs for every emergency.

And the final entry in to-day's Log is taken from the 41st chapter of Isaiah: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."

HARVEST FESTIVALS: We have been helped greatly by the gift of several lots of Harvest Festival goods. It is indeed good to think that an ever increasing number of Churches are remembering this work.

FINANCE: We have not had to make a special appeal for finance for several years, though often the state of our finances has brought us to our knees. This is one of those difficult times that calls for very special prayer on behalf of all our Christian friends and supporters. Through unavoidable circumstances, several of our leaflets were late in going out, and we lost much support because those intended for before Christmas were not available, owing to printing difficulties, until too late for this purpose. The deputation meetings were interrupted first by the holidays, and then by Mr. Langford-Smith's time in hospital. All this has had a drastic effect on the finances for February and March.

We do not feel justified in cutting down either the number of children in our care or the attention they receive; but unless there is some immediate improvement in the position we may have to curtail our building programme. Money is not being spent on labour — we are fortunate in having an excellent band of voluntary workers — but materials are expensive. Some of our buildings are very shabby for lack of paint. Some-

times visitors criticise us for that without suggesting how we might find the money for the paint! But we are sure that God's blessing is on this work, and we know that there is no shortage with Him. We therefore ask all our friends to join with us in prayer that our immediate needs may be supplied, so that this work may continue steadily.

The Sale of Work usually helps considerably with the finances, but this time there is a very real danger that the money we expect to receive may be spent before we actually receive it. Many of our supporters are already giving more than they can really afford; but there may be some who have delayed their gifts under the impression that there is no real need. May we assure you that there is a very real need right now. Maybe God is testing our faith; let us show Him that we realise our need and our dependence on Him.

SALE OF WORK: As you will realise, the Sale of Work advertised in this leaflet will mean a lot to us. We have never yet had to postpone such a function because of the weather. But we must not take this for granted. We look to God to give us a suitable day, and it is only as we humbly seek His blessing that we can be assured of what we need. Many friends are busy preparing for this Sale, and a few gifts have already been received. If our readers can influence any of their friends to join in, it will be a great help to us. Gifts for the various stalls may be railed to Marella Mission Farm, Parramatta Railway Station; or they may be left at the Farm either before or on the day of the Sale. Please remember the date: Saturday, 4th May, 1963. We hope as many as possible will be present and that they will all try to bring along at least one extra friend.

CONCLUSION: This is an Evangelical interdenominational work, but we have also been helped considerably by many people who do not class themselves as definite Christians. We have welcomed this help in the spirit in which it has been given, and we have prayed that our example might be a true witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. To our great delight, several of our supporters have come to know Christ as Saviour during the time they have been helping us. God is no man's debtor, and while these kindly folk have been helping care for God's children the Holy Spirit has drawn them to life everlasting.

Primarily, our work is to care for the dark children of our own land and to win them for Christ; what a joy it is to hear month by month of others who have found Christ through their contact with this work. To Him be the honour and the glory; may He hasten the time when our Lord will return again for His saints and to set up His Kingdom upon earth.