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# **Red Devils and White Men**



**Thesis submitted by**

**Susan Robyn McIntyre-Tamwoy BA(Hons) University of Sydney**

**in December 2000**

**for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the School of Archaeology, Anthropology and Sociology  
James Cook University**

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**This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother:  
Elsie Jane McIntyre - a strong woman, who if she were alive would  
have been fed up that I had taken so long but who would have  
loved me anyway.**

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## Abstract

Since European invasion of the region, northern Cape York has had a rich and varied history. This thesis presents that history as a 'shared' heritage. This is a heritage that has value and meaning for both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, although these values and meanings may vary between and within these groups. The stories of the people and events in the recent past that shaped the places described in this thesis have usually been told as non-indigenous stories (e.g. Stevens 1980) whereas in fact they constitute the recent history of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that exist in Cape York today.

Events of particular importance to the local people and their history are described locally through 'stories'. The landscape is important to the understanding and communication of these stories and specific parts of the landscape are referred to as *stori plesis*. These places have been absorbed into Aboriginal cosmology in northern Cape York.

The indigenous landscape is a sentient one, with a range of spirits associated with its different parts. The most important aspect of history for indigenous people in northern Cape York is the '*stori*'. The ongoing experiences of people who interact with the landscape and its spirits provide the 'evidence' to support and illustrate that *stori*. On the other hand, for non-indigenous visitors the story is not meaningful without

‘physical’ evidence such as ruins or buildings. It is through the fabric and relics that most non-indigenous people see and experience heritage.

I examine the history of the area and those aspects of the history that are fundamental to the indigenous *stori*, and give an overview of the places that relate to that *stori* and the extent to which these have been accommodated in indigenous cosmology. Arising from this I present a summary of the shared heritage of the region. The management and presentation of the physical evidence and places that illustrate this shared heritage are discussed in the contexts of landscape management and cross-cultural communication. As indigenous communities take over the responsibility for land management in the region and also move to exploit the benefits of cultural tourism they take on a responsibility to manage the heritage of the area in a way that recognises both indigenous and non-indigenous values. This thesis calls for a holistic approach to the management of heritage values, and presents a model for the management of the shared heritage of northern Cape York Peninsula.

---

## **Acknowledgements:**

I always enjoy reading peoples acknowledgments. They always appear to so wittily summarise the emotions, stresses and relationships which have accompanied the writing of a PhD. Writing them I now find, is much more difficult than reading them!

There are many people I should thank and I apologise in advance to those I leave out. I have been doing this project for so long that some of the people I need to thank are no longer part of my life. However, their vital contributions at various times throughout this saga must be acknowledged.

My immediate family has been one of the things that has changed over the time it has taken me to complete this project. My son Jacob was just under 3 years old when I commenced this research and so he has spent most of his life straddling the cultural gap between Sydney and Injinoo. I remember listening through the kitchen window as he practised Cape York Creole to himself. When he finally spoke out in Injinoo for the first time at age four, all the old women were amazed because he was completely fluent and spoke “jus like piccaninny blo Injinoo”. Dragged to Cape York and back on a regular basis, he still double checks the cool waters of the Hawkesbury River for crocodiles before diving in.

My PhD research area has been good to me. Not only did it provide the basis for my project but it gave me additional family members as well. Although my husband and I are separated we remain in contact connected through Injinoo’s community network and he helped out on several field trips. During the time I was undertaking this research I experienced Tyson David, my foster son; grow from a cute and cheeky 9 year old to a handsome young man. My stepchildren, particularly Ivy Bond, have lived with us for variable periods of time and have had to some extent to accommodate the demands of this project. Noreena, my youngest child, is yet another blessing bestowed by the love and generous spirit of Injinoo people, thank you Doyle, Gina and Karen!

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On my first visit to Injinoo, I was adopted by Meun and Clara Lifu. Looking back, I don't know if they expected me to take the relationship as seriously as I did. However, I hope that Mumma Clae and Daddy Shorty as I call them, get as much from our relationship as I do. They have truly fulfilled the role of parents to me at Injinoo, guiding and educating me and supporting me in all things, probably resulting in some discomfort to themselves from time to time as their daughter and her son often proved to be a couple of "strongheads". I will always remember an unforgettable stay in Injinoo when my parents came to visit my adoptive parents. Every time I said "dad" two men answered! It caused some amusement in the village. It was Daddy Shorty who introduced me to the spirits and landscapes of Northern Cape York and it was through him that people I met trusted and confided in me. He was the man who gave me away at my wedding, which was held in Injinoo. I can never really express the debt I owe this man.

As for the rest of Injinoo, it is true to say that I feel a true sense of homecoming whenever I come down that hill from Alau and see the village spread out before me with just a glimpse of tropical water behind it. Nearly every person in the village has at some stage helped me and my family. We have all lived together, experienced scandals and heartbreak together; rejoiced at feasts and weddings and cried together at funerals. In particular I would like to acknowledge the support of the Mr Daniel Ropeyarn (deceased) who was the Chairman of Injinoo Aboriginal Community Council and then Chairman of Apudhama, and that of his successor and daughter Mrs Gina Nona. The help and support of Mr Robinson Salee, who was Council Clerk throughout the period of my research has also been appreciated. Also special thanks to Mrs Ethel Sagigi (Mumma Elaine), Mrs Esther Peters (deceased), Mr Jardine Tom, Mrs Tina Pablo (deceased) Mr Alec Pablo (deceased), Mrs Caroline McDonald (deceased), Mr Silas (Snowy) Woosup, Mr Arthur Woosup (deceased), Mrs Miriam Crow for their stories which I have used and their advice and friendship.

I have now got myself into the dilemma of having not mentioned specific people, who while not actually contributing to my research, nevertheless befriended me and made life what it was in Injinoo. To all my brothers and sisters and friends, aunties and uncles...thank you!

My work took me to other communities and again the number of people who befriended me was over whelming. I would particularly like to acknowledge the following people who offered me hospitality and shared their stories with me:

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**Bamaga:** Mr Rusty Williams, Aaron Sebasio (in his early ranger days); Mr and Mrs David Sebasio my parents-in-law.

**New Mapoon:** Mr Stephen Mark (now deceased), Mr Jimmy Bond Snr and his wife Mabel Bond, Mrs Victoria Luff, Mrs Katharine Parry, Clara Bond, Tom and Rosie Ware, Mr Andrew Kennedy; Mr Charlie Lifu

(deceased) and his wife Mrs Josephine Lifu, and the rangers Gwen Toby and Geraldine York.

**Seisia:** Mr Joseph Elu, the chairman.

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**Lockhart River:** Where once again relatives through the Injinoo connection made me welcome and introduced me to people: Thank you to Dotty Omeenyo, Abraham Omeenyo, Mrs Rene Hobson, Mr Jimmy Doctor (deceased), and Daddy Rex Moses (deceased).

**Aurukun:** Aurukun deserves a special mention. It was one place which I visited in which I did not have relatives, as people here are not related to Injinoo people. Despite this, people accepted me and even switched from their lingua franca Wik Munkan and English to "*Broken*" as I had by this time fallen into the habit of speaking in Cape York Creole. When white residents of Aurukun cast strange glances at me in conversation, people kindly explained that I was *an Injinoo gel*. Thanks to Gladys Tybingoompa, Allison Woolla and my friend Norma Chevarton (deceased) for jumping in and claiming me as sister. Gladys and Norma also honoured me by braving all the strange faces at Injinoo and dancing at my wedding. Jacob Wolmby and his wife Joanne and Stanley Ngakkanwokka (deceased) and all my other friends in Aurukun including the rangers, made it one of my favourite places.

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people and gain some understanding of the heritage issues of importance to them. Later while working with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW), the emphasis placed on professionalism, research and research credentials by role models such as Robyn Kruk and Leanne Wallace, encouraged me to seriously begin writing up this work.

And what do I say about Shelley Greer who dragged me, not totally willingly, into Cape York to assist her on a field trip. How mature I felt in the face of her seeming infatuation with the north, little did I suspect that this “favour” would lead to me discovering my home, and a large chunk of family. How do you thank someone for this? In addition to being my ‘sister’ throughout most of my adult life, she has been a critic and support person throughout the preparation of this work and for the last stage of the project an official supervisor. Dr Maureen Fuary has also worked in the same study area. Maureen shared her anthropological perspective of Cape York and the Torres Strait and the logistic and emotional support of Cairns stop-overs!

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I have yet to entice him physically into northern Cape York but hope to do so soon. I am confident the spirits will welcome him and that trip will lead to yet more adventures.

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## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations Used

Term	Meaning in this document
ACC	Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council
Apudhama	Association of traditional owners of Injinoo Lands
Balkanu	Aboriginal organization to advise and assist Cape York communities with development and land management issues.
Bipotaim	Cape York Creole term for the distant past or dreamtime
Blaikman	Literally 'black man'. People use this term to refer to themselves and the creole language. So for example when they found it hard to understand something I was saying in English they would instruct me to 'tok blaikman'.
Broken	The Aboriginal term for Cape York Creole also referred to as <i>Blaikman</i> or <i>broken inglis</i> .
Bufordeiz	Cape York creole for an earlier time, usually within the speakers lifespan. As in childhood or young days.
Cape York Land Council	Representative body for Cape York Aboriginal communities
CCC	Civilian Construction Corp. during WWII carried out some of the construction and maintenance works e.g Iron Range aerodrome.
CDEP	Community Development and Employment Program. A federally funded work for the dole scheme whereby a community elects to forgo individual dole payments and pool the money to pay back as wages for work undertaken for the community. There is the benefit of additional funding for Capital expenditure such as tools and equipment.
Creole	A first generation language
Diskaintaim	Cape York Creole for the current time or 'now'
DNA	Department of Native Affairs, Qld (no longer the current name but many older Aboriginal and Islander peopler refer to DNA which was the department which ran the reserves in Queensland for many years).
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust. A post 'reserve' system of land tenure for Aboriginal communities introduced in 1985 by the Joh Bjelke-Peterson government in Queensland.
ESD	Ecologically sustainable development.
Gubman	Cape York Creole for Government
Gweeny	An edible part of the water lily.
Interlocuters	Someone who takes part in a dialogue- used here to refer to specific non-indigenous people who speak on behalf of Aboriginal communities when dealing with 'outsiders'.
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
kum	Cape York Creole word for 'come'

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning in this document</b>
Langus	Cape York Creole term for a traditional language. Usually an Island language but also used for northern Cape York languages.
Marakai	Island word also used in Cape York Creole for 'whiteman' or 'spirit' or 'ghost'.
NGO	Non-government Organisation.
NPA	Northern Peninsula Area – the name of the reserve that existed at the northern end of Cape York Peninsula until 1985.
NSW	Abbreviation for New South Wales
Pastaim	The olden days. Literally 'first time'
Ples	Cape York Creole term for 'place'.
Punja	Part of the waterlily –delicacy for Mapoon people.
Puri puri	Black magic or sorcery.
Qld	Abbreviation for Queensland
Soked tok	Called out. Literally 'chucked (ie throw out) talk (words)'
TAFE	Technical and further education. Vocational colleges that are a key part of Australia's public education system.
Taim	Cape York Creole term for 'time'.
Wata	Cape York Creole word for 'water'
WWI	World War 1
WWII	World War 2

## PART 1

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### THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

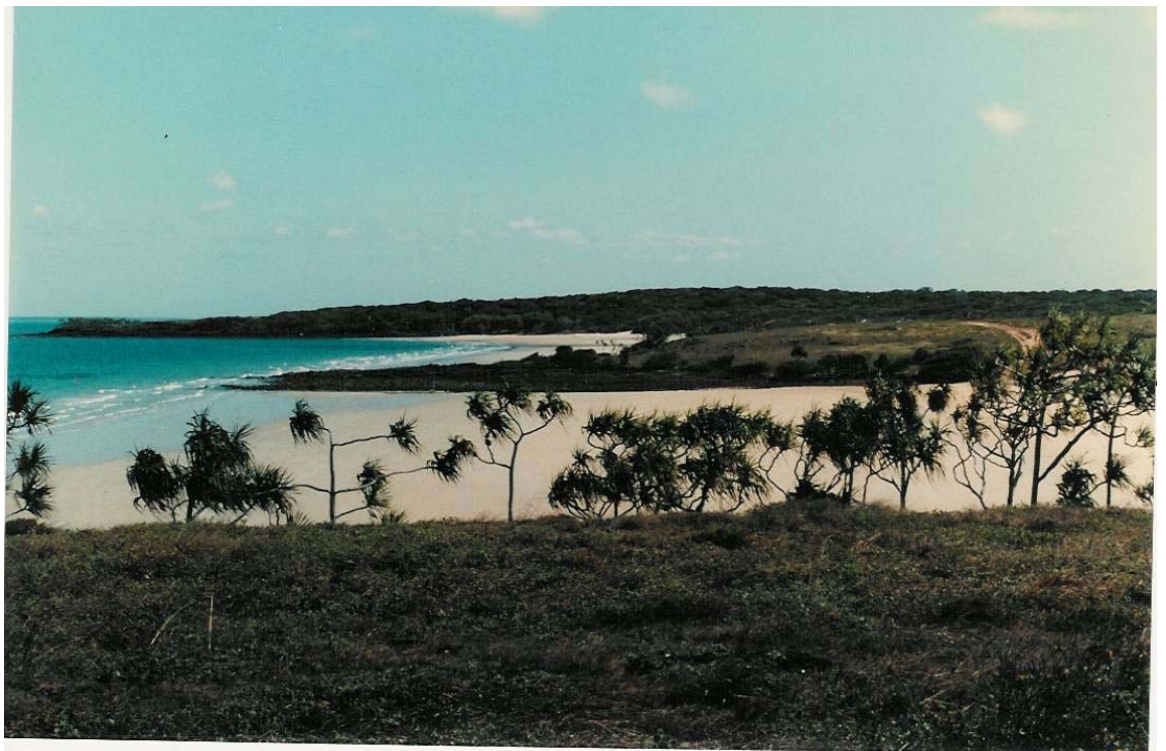


Plate 1: The east coast of northern Cape York Peninsula - a sentient landscape.



# Chapter 1

---

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

This thesis aims to describe the shared heritage of northern Cape York Peninsula by documenting the cross-cultural history of the area, through a community-based archaeological project. As a community-based research project it is essential that the outcome be of direct benefit and relevance to the communities concerned. To ensure this I have, together with the relevant communities, identified significant aspects of the cultural landscape. I then present relevant historical and oral information to facilitate their interpretation and discuss relevant long-term management issues. This thesis then is both the “*Stori blo Meinlan*”<sup>1</sup> and a framework for heritage management in northern Cape York.

The work presented in this thesis will overlap with work undertaken by others in northern Cape York in that:

- a) It covers a geographical area already studied in part although not in its entirety by anthropologists (see McConnell 1932, 1936, 1939; Thomson 1934, 1956; Chase 1980; Taylor 1984; Sutton 1978; Martin 1981, 1993, 1997; Greer and Fuary 1987, 1993); by archaeologists (see Cribb 1986a, 1986b, 1996; Moore 1965; Greer 1995); by historians (see Hall 1987, Stevens 1980, Mullins 1982) and others.
- b) Although I did not set out to implement Greer’s (1995) community based approach to archaeological research (the field work and research for this thesis was in the main undertaken between 1987 and 1992, that is prior to the completion of Greer’s work), it is clear that such an approach has been followed. The approach adopted is largely due to the nature of

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<sup>1</sup> Literally translated means ‘the story belonging to the mainland’. Spelt after the fashion of Cape York Creole. People often refer to themselves as a ‘mainlan’ man or woman and this can be despite a genealogy, which is essentially Islander. For many purposes people identify by their resident communities and the recent history of those communities.

the project, which of course required working closely with communities and individuals over several years to gain the understanding of local indigenous cosmology, views and aspirations. The outcomes of the research serve to endorse the principles of the community based approach as defined by Greer (1995: 222).

This work differs from other archaeological and heritage work in the area in that

- a) It takes a cultural landscape approach whereas most other heritage research (particularly historic heritage) has dealt with places in isolation;
- b) It is place based, whereas a lot of other work has concentrated on historical narrative without linkage to sites and landscape;
- c) It seeks to understand and present the indigenous voice in terms of both the impact of these places and the events that occurred at them and the community responses to those impacts which have shaped the history of the area;
- d) It seeks to present management recommendations which are consistent with community concerns and aspirations and which will protect those heritage elements of greatest significance to the communities involved in their long-term care and management;
- e) It presents a shared heritage that can provide insights for Australians and others into both the historic past and contemporary indigenous communities.

## **1.2 The Story as a Cross-Cultural Interpretation Instrument:**

Given the above aims, this thesis becomes an attempt at cross-cultural interpretation on a broad scale. Usually when the term 'cross- cultural interpretation' is used in heritage literature, it is in relation to the interpretation of individual archaeological sites or art works. In this thesis I am interpreting the cultural landscape of northern Cape York as it relates to the recent past and identifying

key places that resident communities have identified as important to an understanding of that history. In using the term 'cultural landscape' I am not merely referring to the collection or mapping of physical evidence of economic activity, material culture or settlement patterns. I am interested in these things as they reflect and reveal the 'sum of attitudes and perceptions of the landscape of those living in it' (Baker 1999:23).

Uptis (1988) points out that:

When interpreting cross-cultural sites or carrying out cross-cultural interpretative programs, interpreters require sensitivity to differing cultural perspective's, an ideological commitment to working together and good liaison skills (1988:2).

Lippman (1977) suggests that three basic premises are fundamental to cross-cultural education and interpretative programs:

1. recognition of human dignity and the right of others to hold beliefs and values discrepant from one's own;
2. the achievement of attitudes towards people from other groups of: fair-mindedness, respect for feelings, and some measure of empathy and friendliness;
3. learning to accept differences with interest and pleasure, as an achievement of one's own life and understanding rather than as an assumption of inferiority on the part of the different.

I would take this a step further and say that it is difficult to see how one could successfully interpret cross-cultural sites, or in this case landscapes, without having immersed yourself in each respective culture. Assuming that one adopts the principles as outlined by Lippman and Uptis above, the two most essential ingredients to cross-cultural interpretation are sufficient time and a shared language. Cross-cultural interpretation is best viewed as a *process* rather than a label or an event. The process involves identifying what are the integral points or themes in one culture and translating them into messages that can be understood by another. This process takes time to build understanding and trust and the

understanding of concepts and connections requires a common language (see also Greer 1995 regarding the importance of time and language in community-based archaeology). It is difficult to see how one could understand let alone interpret the significance of a place or landscape without first immersing oneself in the culture concerned.

### **1.3 The Study Area**

The study area is loosely the northern part of Cape York Peninsula from Silver Plains and Coen north to the Prince of Wales Group (see Figure 1). The project does not seek to cover the study area evenly in the level of detail of research or fieldwork undertaken. This thesis therefore does not include a comprehensive database of sites and places. The focus of field work and investigation has been the area previously known as the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) Aboriginal Reserve, but much of the history and the places resulting from that history are similar throughout northern Cape York and so where opportunities presented, investigative forays were extended beyond this area. This makes sense when one considers the interconnections between the Aboriginal and Islander communities in the area. For example an account of the NPA must mention Umagico community, which in itself cannot be described or explained without reference to Lockhart River community and Port Stewart as Umagico was formed as a result of the forced removal of Aboriginal people from these places.

### **1.4 Research Design and Methods**

Work on this thesis commenced in 1987 and flowed out of a field trip in which I had been assisting a colleague. Shelley Greer had commenced her fieldwork for her PhD in 1984 which culminated in her thesis "The Accidental Heritage: Archaeology and Identity in Northern Cape York" (Greer 1995). During this field trip I became aware of the interesting recent history of northern Cape York and was intrigued by the fragile, ephemeral and almost invisible nature of major sites attesting to this period.

Originally the project was designed as an archaeological survey with historical research to identify and assess these places and to discuss pragmatic management needs in a context of increasing pressure from relatively uncontrolled four wheel-drive (4WD) based, tourism in this area. However, as work progressed on this thesis I became increasingly interested in how these places have become inextricably woven into indigenous people's understanding of their past and are in fact integral to their identity as 'mainlanders'. In this context it became increasingly clear that there was a disjunction between the views that some white Australians had about these sites and how they should be managed, and the views of the local indigenous population. Increasingly, the inappropriateness of legislation and heritage management practices in Australia, which separate historical heritage into an essentially 'white' basket while prehistory and indigenous heritage are in the 'black' basket became apparent. This is explored further in Chapter 2 where I discuss the implicit and explicit issues involved in the interpretation of history and cultures (see also McIntyre-Tamwoy 1998).

As I studied the ways in which people interacted with the landscape and each other it became very clear that there were significant thematic threads that ran through time and place including:

- Invasion, conquest and re-alliance (*pastaim*);
- The impact of the missions – 'The Coming of the Light' (*pastaim/bufor deiz*);
- The impact and interactions arising from WWII operations in the area (*bufor deiz*);
- The NPA Reserve and government strategies of control such as erasure of places, forced removal of people, experimental development (*bufor deiz/diskaintaim*);
- The active spirit landscape and its ability to affect the past and the present (*bipotaim/diskaintaim*).

The research was undertaken according to the principles of community-based archaeology (Greer 1995:222). This approach is discussed further in Chapter 2. As the project direction developed and was influenced over time by the communities involved, I found it necessary to be both opportunistic and selective in the fieldwork and selection of case studies. Prior to the commencement of my research I had already established a relationship with Injinoo (formerly Cowal Creek) Aboriginal community (see Figure 1). I therefore based myself in Injinoo and my investigations radiated out from there as community contacts and logistical opportunities provided.

The methods used in this research have been highly collaborative in nature. Field surveys to identify places of historic importance were undertaken with the assistance and guidance of local Aboriginal people. Fieldwork was seasonal and consisted of three, six-week field trips in each of 1987, 1988 and 1989. These field trips concentrated on the Northern Peninsula area and particularly the recording of information and the location of places associated with Jack McLaren, the Jardine and Holland families, as well as World War II sites. On several occasions in travels with community members I also visited Weipa and Lockhart River. In late 1989 I moved to Injinoo to take up a position as Ranger Training Co-ordinator with Cairns TAFE. I lived there until early 1992. This provided the opportunity to visit and become familiar with Old Mapoon, Lockhart River, Weipa, and Aurukun Aboriginal communities as well as the Kaurareg communities on Nurapai (Horn Island), Waubin (Thursday Island) and Kirriri (Hammond Island). I also travelled to Muri (Mt Adolphus Island), Albany and Possession Islands and a range of mainland areas of importance to the various communities (see Figures 2-6). The bulk of the fieldwork and interviews were carried out during this period 1987-1992 although I frequently re visit the northern Peninsula Area and have used these visits to collect and clarify information as needed.

Historical research conducted to provide the framework for interpretation of the places identified was carried out in State archives in Queensland, and New South Wales and in Commonwealth Archives (Canberra) and the Australian War Memorial. Additional research was carried out in the Office of Public Records at Kew England, relating to the colonial period and failed settlement of Somerset. Oral information has been collected from Aboriginal people in northern Cape York, which demonstrates the important connection between the indigenous landowners and the places identified. Advice, particularly in the early stages of archival research, was obtained from Army and ex-army personnel (in particular Major. Bob Hall and Bill Benton).

My work as a ranger training co-ordinator with Cairns TAFE provided the opportunity to work with and discuss heritage management issues with a range of communities that I might otherwise not have had the opportunity to visit. My familial relationships through Injinoo community also enabled me to establish a kinship relationship with key people in most communities and these people were often happy to assist me with other contacts and information.

From mid 1995 to mid 2000 I was employed as a senior manager with the New South Wales, National Parks and Wildlife Service. I was responsible for establishing and managing the Cultural Heritage Services Division and this period while causing serious inroads into the time I had available to work on this project, confirmed for me the serious consequences of the artificial divisions between firstly 'Aboriginal' and what is often called 'historic' heritage and secondly, between the management and consideration given to natural values as if isolated from cultural values in Australia.

It will be obvious that my work experiences and my close relationship to the NPA communities, particularly Injinoo, have influenced my thesis and the approach to the subject matter.

### **1.5 Style and Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into Parts I, II and III as well as into more conventional chapters. This is to introduce some flexibility into the document so that it might reach a wider and more diverse audience than many such academic theses. While the intention is to produce a comprehensive document, which will meet academic standards and satisfy the requirements of a PhD thesis, the Parts have been written essentially for different audiences.

Part I contains the Introduction and discussion of theoretical concepts and frameworks, which are integral to the thesis, as well as a brief overview of relevant previous research. This Part is essentially inserted to provide the framework both theoretical and logistical within which this document has been prepared. As theoretical and methodological background, this information may not be of particular interest to community readers and in order that the document is accessible to the people whose heritage it describes, this information is segregated in this Part. Chapter 4 which deals with language time and place in northern Cape York, is a transitional chapter which provides an introduction into the local story and demonstrates how theoretical concepts are applied in the local domain.

Part II, is the '*stori blo mainlan*'. This Part has been written with the communities of Northern Cape York as the primary audience but with visitors to the area and others interested in the recent history of the area also in mind. It is a synthesis of the information collected both through oral accounts, observation and archival research about the recent history of northern Cape York and the interaction between the indigenous owners, the first wave of European invaders and subsequent settlers.



The history of the area and the accounts of fieldwork are included in this Part and are introduced by a narrative from the viewpoint of the red devils and spirits who occupy the landscape (the text of these passages is red so as not to confuse it with quotations). This approach was discussed with and approved by various elders in the research area as an effective way of describing the interest that spirits have in the activities of present day events and the power that they have to influence them. This artifice is instrumental in achieving two of the primary aims of the thesis:

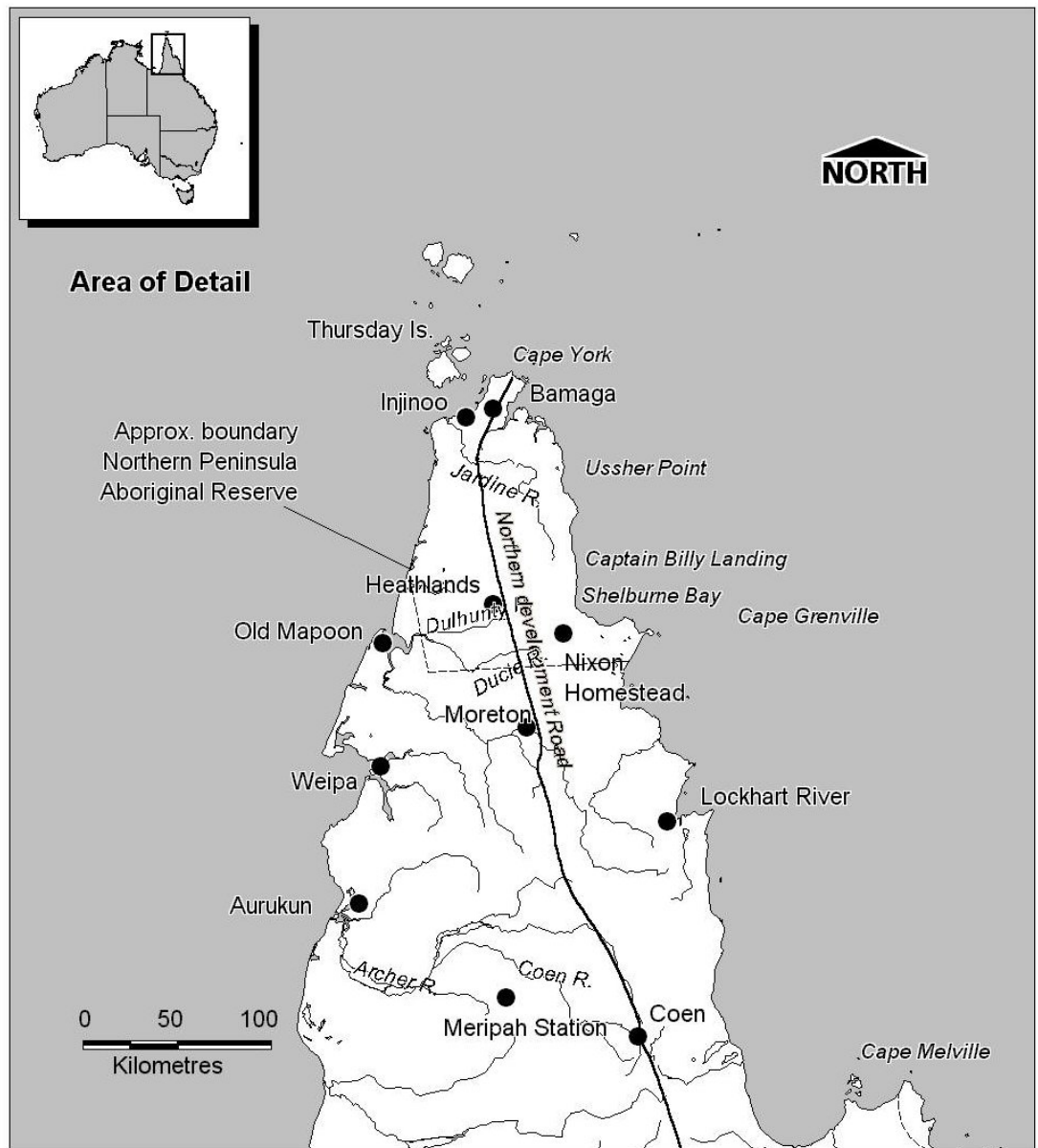
1. relevance and readability for community members.
2. communicating cross-culturally the complicated cosmology of the area which assumes the inter-relatedness of all those who have been and all those to come.

The events that the spirits and red devils recount are real, the attitudes ascribed to them are consistent with those indicated in indigenous accounts about them by Injinoo people. From time to time key stories are recounted as told by local people. These stories were recorded by myself in the field unless otherwise stated.

Part III is written with relevant heritage and land managers in mind. As well as individual heritage practitioners, this category includes the relevant Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Community Councils as well as associated groups such as Elder groups, the Cape York Land Council and community rangers. It also includes government agencies such as the Queensland Department of Environment, Queensland Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs; Australian Heritage Commission; and educational institutions involved in tour guide and/or land management courses eg Tropical North Queensland TAFE.

In Part III, Chapter 10, I attempt to summarise the land management framework operating in Cape York Peninsula, which

is influenced by competing resource use and conservation pressure. I discuss the implications for the indigenous communities who are often disempowered in this debate by assumptions that basic concepts such as biodiversity conservation and international protected area management principles are somehow synonymous with Aboriginal aspirations and that the only participative role available to people is to adopt this framework for land and conservation and become 'rangers'. I challenge the current heritage management paradigm in Australia that separates out European and Aboriginal heritage and looks at cultural heritage and natural heritage as separate and independent values in a cultural landscape where such values are inextricably interwoven. In Chapter 11, having set the framework by a discussion of conservation issues and heritage and landscape management in Northern Cape York, I re-look at the places which are indicative of the *stori blo Meinlan* and discuss their potential for interpretation and management. Chapter 12 includes a brief discussion of the role of cultural tourism in heritage management in northern Cape York.



**Figure 1: Map of the Study Area**

## Chapter 2

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# THEORETICAL AND EXPERIENTIAL INFLUENCES

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I summarise the theoretical and professional work experiences that have influenced the approach I have taken in the field and for archival research as well as the presentation of this thesis. As suggested by the emphasis on interpretation and place, this thesis is more about *heritage* than archaeology. However, the identification and management of heritage may be approached from a number of directions and I have an archaeological perspective based on my training and experience in this field. Of particular relevance are the emerging discourses regarding the archaeology of shared histories, the nature and description of cultural landscapes and the maturing field of heritage management and the issue of social value.

The concepts expressed in this thesis are grounded within some of the post processual schools of archaeological thought. The post-processual movement acknowledges that 'material culture is ... actively and meaningfully produced and ...the individual actors culture and history are central' (Hodder 1985:1). If one is interested in the interrelationship between people and their physical and spiritual landscape, then conventional processual archaeology will not provide the answers. According to Gibbs (1995) contextual archaeology on the other hand '...attempts to understand not only the functional uses of artefacts and associated behaviours, but also how past human groups actively manipulated the symbolic properties of their material culture and how this could contribute to cultural change over a greater or lesser period of time' (Gibbs 1995:17). Trigger (1989:377) refers to this as a humanistic

approach which reinforces the view that it is reasonable to employ a direct historical approach and to use non-archaeological sources of data, such as oral traditions, historical linguistics, and comparative ethnography, in order to produce a more rounded picture of cultures and to rule out alternative explanations that archaeological data alone might not be able to exclude.

I have deliberately not referred to this thesis as being one grounded in 'Historical Archaeology'. Whether or not this term has any real meaning in Australia is discussed later in this chapter. At this point though, it is sufficient to say that work carried out by so-called 'historical archaeologists' in Australia does not really provide any useful models for how to approach heritage management or archaeological work in an Aboriginal landscape. Historical archaeology tends rather to be the archaeology of colonisation with the focus on the colonialists rather than the colonised (Egloff 1994). For example in a paper entitled 'Man's Impact on a riverscape: The Hawkesbury Nepean', 'man' refers to the colonists and environmental and cultural 'impact' on the natural environment is seen as commencing with the advent of the colonists (Jack 1984: 58). This is in clear contrast to the reality, which is that Aboriginal people had a long history of impact on the river up to and during the contact period (see Rosen 1995). There are numerous other examples of work carried out by 'historical archaeological' consultants which fail to even consider the indigenous perspective. Generally, there is an emphasis on material culture and the finer points of technology rather than on people and relationships between them. In answering the question 'What are the skills appropriate to historical archaeological consultants?' Pearson and Temple (1984:232) listed the following.

As a basic requirement they must be familiar with:

- The history of non- Aboriginal occupation of Australia including detailed knowledge of the area in which they are working;
- Historical research i.e. the location of archival collections and their use and interpretation of this material;

- The range of artefacts from historic sites;
- Building styles, methods and materials;
- A range of industrial processes and aspects of technology appropriate to the understanding and assessment of the historical landscape and historic places;
- The techniques of excavation of historic sites

(Pearson & Temple 1984: 232).

Although the paper referred to is rather dated, in practice this is still the recipe followed by many consultants in the field. It reflects their expertise and is evidenced by their reports. Although the language of regulatory authorities has begun to change practice is lagging and by ignoring the requirement for social significance documentation and assessments the authorities (such as the NSW Heritage Office) collaborate with the objectification of heritage and the general de-peopling of history. An important step being undertaken by the Heritage Council of NSW over the last 2 years (this is 1999-2000) and in part enabled by amendments to the NSW Heritage Act has been to push via the compulsory endorsement process, for a consideration of indigenous heritage values in the Conservation Management Plans prepared for places of State significance. It will be interesting to see what impact this might have on the industry over time.

Where Aboriginal people are considered by historical archaeologists it is usually peripherally and/or as the phenomenon of so called 'culture contact' (for an overview of research areas of historical archaeologists in Australia see Paterson and Wilson 2000: 81-89). This is fundamentally different to my approach, which has been to subsume this contact within a longer-range view of the dynamic history and culture of the indigenous communities. In doing this, events and consequences of colonisation are still dramatically apparent but have been put into perspective against a long established 'prehistory' and a vigorous surviving contemporary history. The study of places and events of the period can be

analysed in terms of a long-term view of culture including evidence for previous responses to changing environments and can be viewed in terms of continuity and change rather than loss and impact.

## **2.2 The Archaeology of Shared Histories**

In contrast to much of the work carried out under the banner of historical archaeology in Australia, there is a growing body of research being undertaken which focuses on indigenous and non-indigenous responses to European invasion and emphasises the complexity of these shared histories (for example Murray 1996a: 200; Harrison 2000a; Byrne 1998). The level of current research interest and activity in this area was apparent at the workshop on the 'archaeology of culture contact in Australia and beyond', held in conjunction with the Australian Archaeological Association at Mandurah in 1999 (Harrison and Paterson 2000). Similarly, for the first time the Australian Society for Historical Archaeology (ASHA) has a large component of its 2000 Conference program devoted to papers in this area.

Harrison (2000a:49) working in the southeast Kimberley has examined archaeological evidence for sites associated with the pastoral industry at Old Lamboo station. He has demonstrated that in this period of rapid change for Aboriginal people there is ample evidence of cultural continuity and innovation as people renegotiated power, authority and access to country. In effect, the interaction between Aboriginal people and settlers recreated the cultural landscape as people adjusted significant practices to a new calendar that centred on the seasonal requirements of pastoral work and incorporated new materials into traditional functions. He challenges the popular notion that this 'contact' period caused such disruption to indigenous culture that it could not recover and that it signalled the effective end of 'tradition'. Rather, Harrison maintains that the high degree of continuity of beliefs and practice and the

level of utilisation of new materials is evidence that Aboriginal culture had a long history of innovation and adaptation.

By examining the archaeology of the contact period in isolation, we run the risk of seeing the changes that occur in post-colonial Australia as being somehow unique, and a direct product of the nature and experience of encounters between indigenous and settler Australians. Through an examination of the long term historical trajectories in the study area, it becomes apparent that the changes that occur in the post-colonial period are not unique, but mirror pre-European changes in social alliances and contacts with other surrounding indigenous groups. Changes in notions of social identity, alliance and the formation of social boundaries as well as the experience of re-interpretation of the symbols and material culture of other groups may have always been a part of the lives of the pre-colonial ancestors of the indigenous station workers of Old Lamboo (Harrison 2000a: 49-50).

This neglected area of contact or shared history is currently being addressed by a number of archaeologists (Byrne 1998; Harrison 1999, 2000a and 2000b; Baker 1999). In part the impetus for the increased attention being brought to the study of the recent past comes from calls by Aboriginal communities for archaeology to assist in the documentation of Native Title. Increasingly archaeologists are seeking new ways of interrogating the archaeological record of the recent past to assist with the documentation of Native Title rights and interests (eg. Veth 2000; Fullagar and Head 2000; McDonald 2000). Harrison points out that 'the study of post-contact material culture is one of the areas in which archaeology has the potential to make an independent contribution to Native Title in Australia' (Harrison 2000a: 50).

This work should not be confused with other studies into 'contact archaeology' which marginalise the indigenous input through assumptions that the control in the relationship between settlers and Indigenes is vested in the settlers and that indigenous people and their responses to change were dictated by settler attitudes and actions. Many studies focus on the technological and cultural *change* (which is for the most part viewed as negative, an erosion of the true culture or traditional way) rather than the continuities and adaptations in Aboriginal culture (Harrison 2000b).



Like many terms that are taken up by the broader profession and yet never clearly defined, the term 'shared history' is open to misinterpretation or ambiguity. In the context of this thesis it should not be taken to mean that Aboriginal and non-indigenous Australians share the same 'understanding' of history in northern Cape York. Indeed they often did not share the same understanding of events as they unfolded. Nor am I proposing a whitewashing of historical events to arrive at a history that downplays violent or contested events. Rather the term is used to acknowledge that both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians were present and participant in events since European invasion of the region and therefore the history is the heritage of both groups. Ownership of this history brings with it a level of responsibility for its documentation, and conservation and I would add a responsibility to review the history to try and understand the understandings of the 'other'. For this reason, and because I place an emphasis on the places that attest to this history, I have tended to use the term 'shared heritage' throughout this document.

### **2.3 Community-Based Archaeology**

The term community-based archaeology, first used by Greer (Greer & Fuary 1987) and then further defined in her PhD thesis (1995), has since been adopted widely by Australian archaeologists seeking to renegotiate relationships with communities whose sites they are investigating (for example Clarke 1995: 13-17; O'Connor, Veth and Carter 1995: 54-56). While many archaeologists are carrying out projects that involve people from the communities whose heritage is being investigated (Davidson, Lovell-Jones and Bancroft 1995), most of these projects do not meet Greer's criteria for a community-based project. In particular, asking permission to carry out research is not the same as involving people in the development of the research question. The bulk of these studies amount to little more than investigations of sites within community lands or projects that engage community representatives as field assistants. Such community participation is worthwhile and has not

always been normal in archaeological research although clearly this is increasing (Davidson, Lovell Jones and Bancroft 1995). In consulting archaeology in most states it is considered normal practice to provide for community participation but this does not in itself address the issues of community control and input into such work, nor has this practice resulted in changes to the archaeological paradigm in heritage assessment. In many cases little has changed in the relationship between the community and the archaeologist. The latter still develops the project objectives and methodologies and assesses the significance of the outcomes. The consultation serves to introduce Aboriginal people to archaeological discourse but does little to induce the archaeologist to embrace or understand indigenous heritage viewpoints.

The rationale for a community-based approach is both *moral* and *pragmatic*. To understand a place or site we have to learn as much as we can about it (this is also a tenet of the ICOMOS Burra Charter). Learning about a place includes understanding how others interpret, use and view the place. In a community-based approach to assessment the social or community values have equal merit to the technical specialist or scientific values. Greer (1995:222-226) outlines a model for community-based archaeology, which is characterised as follows:

- Proposals or projects are developed as a component of research by **both** the researcher and the community.
- Negotiation occurs throughout the project and at a fundamental level. Including the identification
  - of speakers for country, and
  - elements within the community which are the basis of contemporary identity
- Excellent communication which involves:
  - Discussions and negotiations in the language which most empowers the community

- Discussions and negotiations take place in the domain within which the community is most at ease (e.g village domain).
- Decision making is mutual and occurs throughout the project and covers areas such as:
  - Parameters of ownership and dissemination of cultural property
  - Community involvement.

Unless the archaeologist concerned is also a member of the community in question, the community-based approach necessarily involves highly developed cross-cultural communication and interpretive skills. However, the problem with cross-cultural interpretative work is that you have to accept from the start that whatever outcome you arrive at, it will not be a precise translation of the meaning and significance of the landscape, place or site to the community. This is in part because as others have observed (Basso 1996: 55; Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 8), the landscapes in question and their meaning or significance are inextricably entwined with the communities or individuals who shape them and who are in turn shaped by them. Their significance then can only be conveyed to the extent that language and comprehension allow. This does not negate the value in attempting such projects as the results may be better than those achieved before and can be refined over time as cross cultural communication improves. For example, at first glance and after some basic historical research one might interpret Somerset (see Chapter 6) as a European or early colonial site, the significance of which lies in the fact that it was an early outpost of the Queensland Colonial Government and that it held a strategic position for the British Imperial Government in the Torres Straits (see also Stevens 1980 and Reynolds 1987). After a little more research including some general discussions with local Aboriginal people one might also conclude that the settlement had an immense impact on local Aboriginal and Islander people and that therefore one could assume that it had significance as an

invasion site to these communities (see Sharp 1992). But if that were all, one would expect to find that there existed a clear 'white /black' dichotomy in the feelings that the site evokes, i.e. sadness and resentment on the part of the Aboriginal community contrasting with the pride in the pioneering spirit on the part of the 'white' community. While it is possible that the latter sums up most of the non-Aboriginal community's regard for the site, the former certainly does not describe how Aboriginal people feel about it. It is only after continuous feedback from Aboriginal people and multiple visits to the site with them that one begins to understand the complex views and beliefs that contribute to the significance that the place holds for Aboriginal people. The occupation of the place prior to the white invasion, the colonial settlement, the long and painful relationship between the community and Frank Jardine in particular, and the ongoing spirit presence in the area, all contribute to the strength of the relationship between Aboriginal people and the place called Somerset.

## **2.4 Cultural Landscapes**

The community-based approach adopted in this research involves a consideration of place, time and the sentient nature of the landscape. Understanding what this meant in terms of the evolving history of the area led me naturally into documenting the cultural landscape of northern Cape York. The cultural landscape is the result of a complex interrelationship between the indigenous and non-indigenous communities and their experiences with place and time.

The landscape is never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group or nation-state (Bender 1993:3).

The term cultural landscape, or similar derivatives (e.g 'social landscape') is being used with increasing frequency by researchers and practitioners in several disciplines including archaeology (Ucko 1994; Knapp 1997; Ashmore & Knapp 1999), geography (Clifford 1994:17-29; Cosgrove 1989; Gosden & Head 1994; Head

1993) and anthropology (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Morphy 1995). The term was originally coined by the American geographer Carl Sauer (1925) who 'formulated the concept of a *cultural* landscape fashioned from the *natural* landscape' (in Ashmore & Knapp 1999:3). Since that time however the term has been taken up by a diverse range of disciplinary practitioners some of whom have little knowledge of its application in other disciplines. Hence over time an amorphous range of studies have been undertaken often with little in common with each other.

The growing dissatisfaction on the part of both researchers and the broader community with focussing on isolated sites and objects, and the inability of this approach to address increasingly outspoken community calls for a more contextual approach has led to a range of studies and discussions. Increasingly, researchers and practitioners are using terms like 'landscape archaeology' and 'cultural landscapes' to describe a move away from the collection of representatives samples towards an understanding of the relationship between sites across a temporal or geophysical plane. But does this represent just a change in our language or a change in practice? It is clear that practitioners are using these terms to describe very different approaches.

Cultural landscapes are increasingly becoming a focus for heritage management organizations and authorities. This reflects a growing awareness that the discontinuous site based protective mechanisms entrenched in much state legislation do not succeed in protecting the range of values with which communities are concerned nor in many cases do they succeed in protecting sites or relics. For example in NSW the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the New South Wales, National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, is the agency responsible for the protection of Aboriginal heritage. This responsibility provides for blanket protection of Aboriginal relics. All relics are protected and the onus is on proponents to demonstrate that a site is not significant and seek the consent of the

Director General to damage or destroy sites. All 'relics' are covered in NSW whether on or off park. However, when a landowner at Plumpton NSW appealed against his conviction for blatantly bulldozing a registered Aboriginal quarry site his appeal was upheld on the grounds that while the site and its boundaries were recorded the legislation only protected relics and the NPWS had to prove that 'relics' were destroyed. The court did not necessarily accept the NPWS case that the ridgeline i.e. the stone in its context was a 'relic' and an appeal was lodged contesting any claim that 'relics' had been destroyed (for an account of the case see record of hearing # 50011-3 of 1994 Judge Pearlman in Histollo Pty Ltd vs Director NSW NPWS, judgment dated 15 August 1997). The reality is of course that protecting 'relics' outside their landscape context does not conserve heritage in its broadest sense, nor does it acknowledge community values.

On the world level UNESCO has moved to include landscapes within the range of monuments and places recognized as having world heritage values. In fact Australia already has landscapes of recognized world heritage value (for example Kakadu in the Northern Territory, and Willandra Lakes and the Blue Mountains in New South Wales) each of these landscapes has multiple values, but strong associative landscape values are one of the basis for their nomination. There are three categories of landscape recognized by UNESCO. These are

1. Clearly identified landscapes designed and created intentionally by man
2. Organically evolved landscapes subdivided into two:
  - o Fossil or relic landscapes
  - o Continuing landscapes
3. Associative cultural landscapes.

(Cleere 1996:40).

Ashmore and Knapp (1999: 10-12) also identify three landscape types but with a more overt cultural connection than those used by

UNESCO. These are: constructed landscapes, conceptualised landscapes, and ideational landscapes. Furthermore, they go on to identify four interrelated themes, which focus the direction of current archaeological landscape studies. These are *landscape as memory*, *landscape as identity*, *landscape as social order*, and *landscape as transformation* (Ashmore & Knapp 1995:10-19).

My understanding of the cultural landscape in northern Cape York is consistent with the model proposed by Baker (1999) in his study of the cultural landscape of the Yanyuwa people in the Northern Territory.

It (the model)...acknowledges the existence of an indigenous cultural landscape and its interactive relation with the European cultural of the immigrants. The two contemporary cultural landscapes in this model are the result of both groups responding to a new land. The newness of the land to Europeans has long been acknowledged but the fact that the land was in a sense new to Aboriginal people not only because of large –scale environmental changes brought by the arrival of Europeans but also because contact often involved the shifting of Aboriginal people to areas unknown to them.

The common ground in the two contemporary cultural landscapes represents accommodations each groups has made to the other. Both attitudes towards the use of the land, however, remain largely separate (Baker 1999: 21).

In this sense the landscape as described is so geographically and historically broad that it contains layers that can be divided into each of the three categories described by Knapp and Ashmore (1999), but perhaps the most useful is the concept of ideational landscape. It is clear that in the past (as today) the northern Cape York landscape was not characterised by structures and physical works but deep spiritual and emotive connections. In the case of the indigenous population the landscape reflected their spiritual connection to the land with the sentient nature of that landscape evidenced by the spirits, short people and red devils that peopled the inland lakes, rainforests and rocky coastlines. Today despite the history of government relocations and church and government interventions, the landscape is intrinsically linked to group identity

with people characterizing themselves as *salt-water* people, *punja* people or *sandbeach* people and even *mainland* or *island* people.

The European invaders on disembarking at Somerset, Cape York (see Figure 2), had a preconceived idea of the landscape. They had a very clear 'vision' of what the landscape would look like and what it stood for, that bore no relation to actuality. This vision is captured by the claims that it would become 'the Singapore of the north'. The land could be tamed and cultivated and 'civilised', a common theme in the colonisation of the New World and the conquering of its landscapes (see Thomas 1984:267; Hirsch 1995:11). Family fiefdoms could be carved out of the opportunity provided by territorial expansion. The land and its isolation represented opportunity, challenge, adventure and power and despite the lessons of history and the failure to establish a thriving European colony, the landscape of northern Cape York is still seen in these terms by many non-indigenous Australians with the added values of 'wilderness' and 'untamed nature'.

One could construct a story around the landscape of northern Cape York using any of the four themes identified by Knapp and Ashmore. Take a 4WD trip with Aboriginal elders now resident in New Mapoon back to Old Mapoon the community from which they were forcibly removed in 1963 (see Figure 1 and Chapter 7) and one poignantly visits the **landscape as memory** (see also Kuchler 1993). The landscape is mapped and recognized through stories and events and named places that reconnect the old people to an otherwise now unfamiliar country.

Look at the historical landscape established by European invaders who established a new range of places from which indigenous peoples were excluded and one can easily see and describe the **landscape as social order**. For example the colony of Somerset in which the physically transformed cleared and constructed landscape embodied rules about behaviour not only for the



indigenous people both displaced and neighbouring peoples but also for the groups of Europeans. The location of the Barracks on one headland and the magistrate's residence on the opposite one (see Figure 7) demonstrates tangibly the internal segregation of workers and those in positions of authority. These rules and divisions were dramatically and forcibly enforced. For example, when Aboriginal people were seen coming from Albany Island, an area from which Frank Jardine had banned them (he had his sheep and goats kept there), he shot them and commandeered their canoe.

Clearly one can collect evidence of the ***landscape as identity*** theme and to some extent this has been explored (although perhaps not under this exact title) by other researchers in Cape York (eg. Greer 1995; Sharp 1992; Fuary & Greer 1993).

The theme of ***landscape as transformations*** is also apparent particularly in the historic period. The degree of government interventionist policy in the area has meant that the physical and social landscape has altered dramatically with changing government policies and artificial demographic shifts. The frequency of such changes within a relatively short time span and in a relatively confined area has meant that people have witnessed dramatic changes in their landscape which have sometimes been reflected in rapid social change. For example the advent of WWII saw the forced evacuation of all white non military people from the area, the internment of Japanese friends and longstanding colleagues (from Thursday Island) and an influx of military personnel (see Chapter 8). These newcomers physically altered the landscape to an extent previously unparalleled creating major roads, airfields and jetties and setting up huge camps, hospitals and workshops. In the process large sections of the indigenous landscape were taken over, creating a new set of rules about access and exclusion.

It can be seen that both the strength and weakness of themes is that they often reflect the approach of the researcher rather than describe the landscape. Perhaps broadly applied the concept of 'nested landscapes' (Bender 1998; Bender et al 1997) can accommodate not only the complexity of linkages within landscapes occupied by one homogenous society but also the situation experienced in Cape York where multiple diverse societies occupy/share the same physical landscape. In such a case each of these groups modifies the landscape, triggering adaptive responses and a relearning of the landscape by the other groups.

## **2.5 Influences from work experience**

In addition to the theoretical influences, which I have just described, my career in heritage management has influenced the direction and development of this research project. Having worked for 19 years spanning each side of the three cornered fence of heritage management i.e.

- as an independent consultant archaeologist;
- developer (a archaeologist with a large mining and electricity generation and transmission organization); and,
- regulator/bureaucrat (senior manager in a state heritage agency).

I have formed strong opinions on some of the issues in heritage management in Australia including:

1. The need to move away from a focus on the protection and management of sites and relics to a more holistic landscape approach as a way of sustainably protecting our heritage;
2. The artificial separation of indigenous and non-indigenous heritage in terms of government regulation and protective mechanisms and the flow on effect that this has had in the relation to how Australians perceive their heritage places;
3. The need to focus more attention on developing methodologies for the effective assessment of social

or community value as a way of celebrating the attachment of people to places and protecting those places and landscapes that are important to communities rather than 'experts';

4. The need to redress the artificial separation of natural and cultural heritage values which has lead to the assessment of natural values being the domain of scientists and which has effectively sidelined indigenous (and other Australians) interests in natural heritage;
5. The dangerous emergence of heritage interpretation as a field in itself, focussing on mechanics of presentation and separated from the fields of enquiry that must inform it (e.g anthropology, social geography, archaeology, history etc).

### **2.5.1 Heritage Management and the community-based approach**

Gibbs (1995:18), although referring directly to the pursuit of historical archaeology, suggests that it behoves the archaeologist to pick and choose techniques and theoretical approaches to achieve a positive outcome in archaeological investigations, rather than to allow one to be hampered by purist notions of schools of thought. Greer (1995) describes a community-based approach to archaeology as 'embracing' other relevant disciplines to achieve the best outcomes for the community and project. These flexible approaches lead directly to heritage management where it is important to choose approaches and methodologies which best address the management needs or questions. In heritage management it is equally important to consider that there are other disciplines that might augment or supplant archaeology as the primary discipline involved in management of a heritage place. It is important to recognise the multitude of disciplines, which contribute practitioners to the area of heritage management, eg. engineering, architecture and history to name only a few. Looking at the reports

and assessments of heritage practitioners it is interesting but perplexing to note that archaeologists think that heritage is an offshoot of archaeology; architects believe that heritage management is conservation architecture and engineers believe it to be the documentation of old machinery in engineering terms etc. This is perhaps one of the negative aspects of the dominance of contract or commercial fields of heritage study, namely that practitioners have a tendency to become locked into formats which are usually aligned with their discipline bias and that they may become streamed or isolated from other heritage fields.

I suggest that most of the work Greer (1995) describes in her thesis is not 'archaeological' *per se*, but rather sits more comfortably under the banner of heritage management. In fact she goes so far as to point out the dangers of archaeological techniques to successful heritage conservation in some circumstances (1995:237). Greer's thesis demonstrates the strong contribution that the discipline of archaeology can bring to heritage management. When Greer, after quoting the definition of social value from the Burra Charter says that 'the community-based approach differs, however in terms of the emphasis given to 'social ' rather than other (eg scientific) values' (Greer 1995: 237) one must read '..differs from other prehistoric or classical archaeological approaches' rather than from other heritage management approaches, as the Burra Charter does not weight the various values.

Of course, Greer's real challenge to archaeology lies in questioning the legitimacy of any non-community-based archaeological work aimed at heritage management (implied), notwithstanding, the difficulties (especially time) and the limitation on the nature of research questions and direction that she acknowledges are inherent in this approach. I would suggest that the same challenge could be made to the heritage industry generally where even though the importance of 'social' or 'cultural value' is recognised, all too often it is the province of 'experts' to determine research

directions and significance, and community consultation is only minimally undertaken.

Until recently, heritage management has been little more than a banner under which a wide range of specialists have gathered but which was characterised by little cross-disciplinary dialogue. It really had few defined ground rules that were readily accepted by all practitioners. Hence archaeologists working in this field tended to continue to behave like archaeologists and see the primary values as archaeological ones, architects carried out heritage studies that were merely inventories of building styles and historians documented the history of places but were often unable to tie that history directly to elements in the landscape or place.

In recent years, however, we have seen heritage management begin to emerge as a field of endeavour in its own right, albeit closely related to other disciplines (eg. Kerr 1990; Ross and McDonald 1996; AHC 1998; Johnson 1998). Significantly, major universities in Australia are responding to the need for a framework for heritage management studies with a range of post graduate degrees, for example Sydney University's Master of the Built Environment and James Cook University's Masters in Cultural Heritage Management. As pointed out by Greer (1995:2), the 1980's saw the emergence of the field of CRM (Cultural Resource Management) and there is no doubt that CRM gave a sort of legitimacy to heritage management which had previously been seen to be the province of volunteers, non-professional groups and the middle class. Largely archaeologically dominated and with a high proportion of female practitioners, CRM introduced the notion that it was a worthwhile pursuit to seek to conserve heritage items in their own right and that this required a concerted and systematic approach. However, the emphasis in this approach was always on material culture or 'things' and did not embrace many of the aspirations or values of the broader community. Further it was never fully embraced by the other disciplines involved in heritage management, particularly those dealing with the heritage of post-

colonial Australia. Because 'things' were seen as independent of people there was also an emphasis on classification and representative samples. It followed then that energy should be put into keeping the 'best' and sacrificing the rest. In recent years there has been a move away from the term CRM which implies that resources can be managed, conserved and collected independent of, but for the general good of the 'people' or 'community', to heritage management which emphasises the integral relationship between people and place and which uses heritage items or places to demonstrate the 'values' that a community holds important.

### **2.5.2 The notion of non-indigenous heritage vs shared heritage in Australia**

In Australia it is common practice for heritage practitioners to speak of non-indigenous heritage, often called *'historic' heritage*, and indigenous heritage, which is often called *Aboriginal heritage*. For example, places nominated for registration on the Register of the National Estate must be divided into natural, historic or indigenous places (see Nominating a Place for the Register of the National Estate

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/register/furtherinfo/nominations.html>). Most other state and local registers are organized along similar lines. Practitioners often specialise in one or the other of the strands. But are these strands real or meaningful? What do they achieve? I would contest that the division is not useful and indeed it is a dangerous and counter-productive practice that results in a narrow, inaccurate and misleading interpretation of Australia's shared heritage.

At one level all Australian heritage is 'Aboriginal heritage', although obviously some places have greater and some places of lesser significance to Aboriginal people. While the language currently in use recognises that places may have differing values to different groups or individuals and that multiple and layered values are actually the norm, the practice is still for agencies and practitioners

to draw a division between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sites. The practice is virtually to regard the terms Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal as site types. This is of course a false division.

In part the division comes about as a bureaucratic convenience, allowing for different budgets and a dedicated amount of money focused on indigenous priorities. However, in practice this division serves conveniently to isolate Aboriginal people from having a say in many so called 'non-indigenous' sites that may nevertheless be important to them. In addition non-indigenous sectors of the community are also disadvantaged as they rarely get the same degree of involvement in decision making in relation to 'their' sites as Aboriginal people do in indigenous heritage. This is because the so-called field of 'historical' or 'non-indigenous heritage' has in the main been less politically fraught. Formal channels are still used in most cases as the only form of consultation. For example in the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) NSW, a lead agency in heritage management in Australia, the accepted practice relating to the conservation of a non-indigenous place is to put the Conservation Management Plan on public display for a set period if the item is of State or National significance or locally controversial. For sites assumed to be of lesser significance there is usually no display period at all. Increasingly we are finding that people are demanding more of a say in the long-term management of places, but practice is slow to respond to this demand. It is still the province of the expert to make decisions based on technical knowledge rather than emphasising community control and social significance.

Of course the whole heritage management industry is thrown wide open if you question the legitimacy of separate fields for non-indigenous or historical heritage. In a country where the indigenous minority live alongside the successfully dominant colonisers there can obviously be no such thing as a non-Aboriginal

site. All sites or places have some meaning or consequence in terms of Aboriginal culture. Significance then becomes a matter of 'values'. Some places, while of high value to non-Aboriginal people, will be of low value to Aboriginal people. By way of example, Fort Denison is a site that has all the accepted attributes of an unambiguous 'non-Aboriginal site'. Fort Denison sits in Sydney Harbour atop a small island rock outcrop, the natural surface of which has been totally removed to enable the construction of the fort. Ostensibly built to protect the colony from external invasion forces, it was built solely by the European labour force provided by the new colony. The values of this place have been documented for its inclusion on a number of registers including the National Estate and World Heritage. The assumption was made that this was a non-indigenous site and the values documented in the statement of significance relate solely to its technical development and do not even reflect the attachment if any that non-Aboriginal Australians have to this place let alone possible attachment by Aboriginal people.

'Fort Denison was built in stages between 1840 and 1862 and is evidence of the design and changes to harbour defence works and tactics of the colony from 1836 to 1866. It reflects the impact of events and changes to personnel associated with the place including George Barney (the designer), George Gipps, James Gordon and William Denison. Fort Denison is mounted on a rock entirely surrounded by the waters of one of the finest harbours in the world. Its tower, battery and terrace afford a superb urban and marine panorama. It is evidence of the use of techniques of masonry fort construction. It is the only one of its type in Australia. Martello towers are normally free standing and the combination of the tower and battery is rare' (Kerr 1986: 46-48 as in the NSW State Heritage Register Listing Item #00985).

What is the social significance of this site? What could this site mean to Aboriginal people? What might it mean in terms of



Australia's shared history? Fort Denison sits like a monolith in the Harbour built on what had been a small oyster strewn rock outcrop, where once Aboriginal people had enjoyed a reliable source of a favourite food as part of a landscape which had provided all their daily needs. Here a military structure now stands, off limits to indigenous Australians until very recently. The guns of the fort were not only trained in the direction of potentially dangerous inbound vessels but also out across the colony, a symbol of the new order and a reminder, visible from many of the Harbour fishing and hunting spots, that life had changed irreversibly! Clearly, evidence of our colonial past can have meaning for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians (McIntyre-Tamwoy 1998)

At the recent 5th World Congress Heritage Interpretation International held in Sydney, I posed the question "Who owns the sites and places like Somerset which remain as testimony to the period of colonisation/invasion?" (McIntyre-Tamwoy 1998). Is it the white community who see these places as evocative of the 'frontier' and 'pioneers' but who now live thousands of miles away or, is it the Aboriginal people of the area whose lives were changed for all time by this brief whimsy in the history of colonial England? Because this debate has never really been elevated to the main stage, Aboriginal people in the Northern Peninsula area like other parts of Australia have had to fight a continual battle to fend off a sporadic but ongoing push by some sectors of the non-indigenous community to interpret these places inappropriately so as to exclude the Aboriginal experience.

This problem is not limited to the heritage of early colonisation of Australia by Europeans. The entire heritage of the northern Cape York area since 1864 has evolved through the interaction of Aboriginal people and their country and their interaction with distinct waves of non-indigenous groups who for the most part did not aspire to permanent residence in the area.

World War II provides us with further examples of this problem of heritage ownership. I would like to share two anecdotes that illustrate how heritage administrators and bureaucrats view this.

While I was working at Injinoo several years ago, co-ordinating training programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait rangers, I took a telephone call from a retired brigadier who wanted to know who he could speak to about arrangements for a trip by the Army to salvage a Beaufighter which had crashed in the area during World War II [It is perhaps relevant here to note that the area was one of strategic importance for a while during the war and that the Coral Sea air battles were supported from here as well as attacks over New Guinea]. The brigadier seemed somewhat taken aback that I knew about the plane and was familiar with the crash site. He went on to explain that they were going to use the plane to 'do up' one in Canberra that was being restored for display.

I told the man that he would need to speak to Robinson Salee the Council Clerk of the Aboriginal community, but I expressed the opinion that I did not think that people would allow the plane to be removed for that purpose. The brigadier was outraged. He demanded of me, what right did they [Aboriginal people] have to hold such opinions? He bellowed that if it wasn't for 'us' they would have been over run and would all have slant eyes, speak Japanese and eat rice!

At that point I handed the telephone over to Robbie who answered it saying " Hello my Name is Robinson Salee, I have slant eyes, I eat rice three meals a day, I can't speak Japanese but I can find an uncle who can...What can I do for you?' (pers comm. R.Salee 1990). Needless to say the brigadier did not get his plane.

Clearly this man was surprised to find that the Aboriginal community saw as 'theirs' an item of heritage that he viewed as 'his'. More incomprehensible to him was their complete rejection of

his planned way of conserving and interpreting that heritage. And this was aside from his ethnocentric assumption that a defined boundary exists between Australia and Asia and his ignorance of the long history of Japanese pearling in the area.

This division of heritage into 'white' and 'black' baskets is deeply entrenched as this second anecdote illustrates. I was speaking to other heritage professionals who worked in the tropics, immediately following a seminar in which, as part of a larger group, we had been discussing at length the need for consultation with Aboriginal people regarding their heritage and more flexibility in bureaucratic requirements to cater for Aboriginal management preferences. All members of the group had agreed that consultation with Aboriginal communities was absolutely essential for any heritage work being undertaken in relation to indigenous heritage. During a conversation about the Australian Heritage Commission and the Register of the National Estate one person remarked that recently they had completed a list of all World War II sites in Cape York and the Torres Strait for the Australian Heritage Commission. The work had been done in a very rapid time frame. I expressed surprise that Aboriginal people had agreed to this so readily as my experience in the area had revealed that there was a lack of information in the communities relating to the implications of listing on the Register of the National Estate and a general suspicion directed towards the whole process of providing information and listing places on government registers. I therefore asked how they had been consulted. The person was surprised at my questions and replied that there was no requirement to consult as they were only dealing with World War II sites and not Aboriginal sites. Most of the sites referred to are on Aboriginal land, the events that these sites commemorate impacted on Aboriginal lives and the day to day management of these sites is in Aboriginal control, but because they are World War II sites (not an indigenous category in Commonwealth or State inventories) Aborigines need not be consulted. One can, I think, often detect an element of relief that

this means project costs can be kept down and processes speeded up, which is always the case when people are excluded from the equation!

The problem of assumed values generated by the clumsy division of sites and places into indigenous and non-indigenous is central to my thesis as most of the places discussed are regarded by authorities and many practitioners as non-indigenous or 'white sites' when clearly the Aboriginal community sees them as integral to their cultural heritage. I discussed this topic in a paper presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Heritage Interpretation (McIntyre-Tamwoy 1998). It was clear from the discussion at the conference that people do not question this false division enough. While everyone saw it as ridiculous if not outrageous that practitioners and governments did not consult long and hard with Aboriginal people over these sites in a place like Cape York, they could not really make the jump into the urban environment (which is where the vast bulk of historical heritage work is practised). One delegate commented that they regularly included the whole story in museum displays and that this was now general practice. However, when asked to clarify what was meant by 'the whole story' it became clear that the place or historical interpretation followed a Western time-line approach with the Aboriginal significance being quarantined to the past. Byrne (1997) has discussed the relegation of Aboriginal heritage to the deep past by archaeologists and heritage managers as a 'structure for forgetting' the events and consequences of the colonial invasion for Aboriginal people.

### **2.5.3 Celebrating *attachment* and studies into social value**

Although I had already conceived the format of this thesis and in fact had written a substantial segment of it, I was encouraged in this endeavour after a friend introduced me to the work of Janet Spector. In her book '*What this awl means*', Spector (1993) outlines her growing dissatisfaction with processual archaeology and its language, which avoided emotion and attachment to people. For

Spector (1993:13) the day finally arrived when she was forced to acknowledge that 'I no longer wanted to investigate the archaeology of the Indian people unless their perspectives and voices were incorporated into the work'.

To come across another archaeologist who had struggled with the same dissatisfaction with the discipline and who had documented this in what has become a fairly widely accepted work was enough to reaffirm me in my purpose. Like Spector, I had struggled with various ways of writing this thesis and for some time I had two parallel versions of the same work. One in the traditional dry third person and this one. I hope that this final version conveys the complexities of the history of the area, which are a result of the way in which 'history' is a very real part of the contemporary in northern Cape York. It is difficult to know the people in the communities mentioned in this thesis and still manage to describe them in a dispassionate way. Even the individuals in the historic record come to life as one tries to imagine them living out their lives in this familiar and sentient landscape.

There is a growing literature in heritage management that talks about 'attachment to place' as a more effective way of describing social or community values. This includes but is not limited to concepts of home (Read 1996; Massey 1992) and belonging (Read 1996; Read 2000). The approach adopted in this thesis and reflected in its structure emphasises this attachment or social significance by linking people with place and beliefs. Hence the red devils and short people introduce events and history in a *stage whisper* that emphasises contemporary values. This technique was discussed with community elders who endorsed the approach as an appropriate way of recognizing and conveying the sentient nature of the landscape. The thoughts and actions ascribed to the red devils, short people and spirits reflect the stories and description from local indigenous people but are my words. This technique possibly owes something to the folklorist tradition of

repeopling the landscape through stories and anecdotes (Ryden 1993; Glassie 1982).

#### **2.5.4 The relationship between natural and cultural values**

Working within a nature conservation agency and often representing that organization on working parties with green group representatives and other stakeholders it has become increasingly clear that the separation of natural and cultural values is leading governments increasingly into community conflict despite their best effort to address important issues in nature conservation such as 'biodiversity'.

The increasing emphasis on scientific analysis to reach quantifiable targets and conservation goals is creating a widening gulf between community aspirations and relationships with the environment and government management. This becomes particularly important in places such as northern Cape York where communities do not have access to the specialist language and knowledge of scientists and who quickly become disenfranchised in conservation negotiations and decision-making. This is especially the case in relation to wilderness, conservation and biological resources management.

#### **2.5.5 Heritage Interpretation**

The preceding sections in this chapter have addressed issues essential to understanding and communicating heritage. In other words, we have to learn about a place, event or heritage item to be able to interpret it but the way we go about that learning or the disciplines via which we approach our understanding of the place, event or heritage item to a large extent dictates what we 'learn' and therefore what we understand!

There is a growing literature in the field known as interpretation. However, a large proportion of the literature on interpretation focuses on the physical aspects of the presentation of information, for example, how to engage the public through innovative

information products, hands on experiences and visual displays (for example Lunn 1988; Uzzell 1989; Rabinowitz 1994; Luxemburg 1994). Here, however, I have been exploring interpretation in terms of the information that is being presented. This is how we interpret the meaning of a place, object or item, in effect our understanding of history and heritage values. Freeman Tilden, often seen as the father of 'interpretation' stresses the fundamental link between interpretation and research.

...Interpretation is a growth whose effectiveness depends upon a regular nourishment by well directed and discriminating research... (Tilden 1957:5).

The importance of research as the cornerstone of interpretation cannot be overlooked. However, the construction of heritage in Australia, or more importantly, our interpretation of the concept of heritage, to a large extent limits the effectiveness of much of the research undertaken.

In sorting through the growing literature on 'Interpretation' it is clear that much of it focuses on the *presentation* or the *techniques* for communicating the meaning of heritage rather than that meaning itself. Uzzell (1989:5) warns that there is a very real risk that "the medium will become the message" and the heritage experience will be more about the technological wizardry than about the place.

Contrary to the view of an immediate and complete understanding of a place via an interpretative work, a successful outcome would be one where the community and visitors are so engaged by the process leading to the development of the interpretation that they continue to come forward with insights and relevant information. They should not be overwhelmed by the supposed 'reality' of the interpretative work, whether it is a display or a document, and they should feel confident to challenge that interpretation.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In summary then while I have been strongly influenced in my approach by a background and training in archaeology, the dominant influence on this thesis has been the emerging discipline of heritage management and a conviction that unless we can understand the cultural landscape of Cape York and its evolution it is impossible to achieve effective management and conservation outcomes.

Far from building and managing inventories of places and objects identified by other disciplines, the field of heritage management is now tackling some of the difficult questions around what we as a society are conserving, as well as how and for whom. An even bigger question is: What is heritage, and how does one conserve anything so inherently dynamic?

One of the keys to promoting the conservation of heritage is of course interpretation. But the physical aspects of interpretation or techniques for engaging the public dominate the heritage interpretation literature. It rarely questions the process leading up to the decision to conserve and for the most part it does not get involved in documenting, measuring or assessing social significance. This is evidenced by the way in which the false division between Aboriginal and historic sites is not questioned for most heritage places in Australia unless they fall into the accepted overlap category of missions, massacre sites or other accepted so-called 'contact' sites.

This thesis has been so long in the birthing that I have at times determined to set it aside assuming that the need for such a discussion must surely be past. The emerging heritage discourse which focuses on the cultural landscape and values of places rather than sites suggests that practitioners and researchers are already focusing more on the relationship between people and place and the importance of places and their interpretations in supporting or undermining the belief systems of communities,



community values and heritage principles (AHC 1998; Australian Committee for IUCN 1998). However, on reflection and despite the rhetoric, which appears often to be limited to the adoption of the new language into the titles of papers, little has changed in the actual practice of heritage management.

One cannot underestimate both the Australian Commonwealth and state governments' roles in this regard. The Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) now subsumed within Environment Australia, has for many years augmented state funding for heritage management and as such has played a key role in the shaping of heritage management across the country through funding priorities and directions. But the cultural landscape as promoted by the Commonwealth is a sterile one, the language more important than the practice. Little has changed in the nature of the data collected or the manner by which it is collected.

Finally the potential for heritage places, if researched and well interpreted, to enhance cross-cultural understanding is immense. At present tens of thousands of tourists each year visit the places described in the following chapters of this thesis and yet little information is available for them regarding the significance of these places to Aboriginal people. In many cases the only information is misinformation that excludes Aboriginal values or frankly is racist.

The recent history of this area is complex and places have the power, if interpreted appropriately, to evoke understanding. Sometimes individual places can in themselves tell a powerful story operating as symbols of broader concepts, themes and events. For example Somerset has become to some extent a symbol of European invasion and the loss of a pre-settler traditional lifestyle. The latter has been romanticised similar to the way that non-indigenous Australians have romanticised the 'pioneer' or frontier experience. However, the best understanding of community, heritage and identity in northern Cape York can be gained from a

cultural landscape approach which acknowledges the interconnection of spirituality and land and sees the human experience and events woven as threads into this rich tapestry.

If one accepts that despite the best intentions and research the story produced is not quite the truth then one can through sound interpretative practice develop a dialogue both within communities and between communities and other stakeholders, which would in turn generate new information and a uniting sense of shared heritage. In the following chapters I have set myself the ambitious task of commencing this dialogue and describing this cultural landscape.

## **Chapter 3**

### **PREVIOUS STUDIES IN THE AREA**

#### **3.1 The range of studies**

There have been a number of previous studies conducted in the broad geographic area covered by this current research. These can be grouped broadly into the following categories, although some do cross boundaries between disciplines to some extent.

- Historical Research
- Archaeological Research
- Anthropological Research
- Linguistic Studies
- Natural Heritage and Resource Studies

##### **3.1.1 Historical research**

Many small historical articles have appeared from time-to-time relating to Cape York (e.g Farnfield 1973, 1974 and 1975; Bayton 1965). However, only a couple of major research projects have been undertaken which have a direct bearing on this current research. Adrian Stevens carried out research into the failed settlement of Somerset for his honours thesis (Stevens 1980) and Steven Mullins has undertaken historical research into Frank Jardine that has direct relevance to this project (Mullins 1982). He has also written a general history of the initial contact period for the Torres Strait (1995).

Elizabeth Osborne has carried out research for her BA Hons (1990) and PhD (1995) into the role and experiences of women in the region, although most specifically the Torres Strait during World War II.

Schoolteachers and amateur historians, often collect information for use in education and tourism, and have undertaken other less ambitious research projects throughout the Torres Strait and northern Cape York. For example the brief histories of Thursday Island State School (1986) and Lockhart River State School (Anderson 1987).

### **3.1.2 Archaeological research**

Relatively little archaeological research has been undertaken on mainland Cape York and the near off shore islands.

David Moore carried out research in the northern Cape York area in the 1960's. His Diploma of Anthropology thesis '*The tribes at Cape York: a reconstruction of their way of life from the literature and a consideration of its relevance to the archaeology of the area*' (Moore 1965), provides a good introduction to the area and particularly the period of early Aboriginal and European contact. This work was later published (Moore 1979) and his book *Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York* has become a popular starting point for people interested in learning more about the area.

While Moore sees the strong relationship between the Kaurareg and the mainland tribes he still sees an artificial barrier of sorts between Torres Strait and mainland culture that begins with the coastline. He observes

It seems that the lives of the Cape York Tribes had already been considerably disrupted by influences from the Torres Straits by the time of first European contact, but the fact that Islanders had not colonized any part of the mainland does not necessarily imply that the contact period between the two people was only of recent occurrence (Moore 1965:127).

It is interesting to note the use of the word disruption here and also the implication that there was a discernible period when these peoples were not in contact with each other. The implication is that somehow the Aboriginal culture of the area has lost 'integrity' through the disruption caused by a more dominant culture. This is a minor point in Moore's work but a thread which runs through a lot of

research undertaken in the area and which belies the complexity of the interrelationship between the mainland and Torres Strait peoples.

Archaeological investigation in the western Cape York area has largely focussed on the large shell mounds located near Weipa and Aurukun (Bailey 1977; Cribb 1986a, 1986b, 1996; Cribb, Walmbeng, Wolmby and Taisman 1988). These sites are of particular interest to archaeologists because they represent a sophisticated form of ecosystem management. The site type described however is confined to this western portion of the Cape York Peninsula. Other sites identified in archaeological and anthropological surveys in the area (Sutton and Cribb 1988) which do occur generally throughout northern Cape York (e.g Hynes and Chase 1982) include wet season occupation campsites along sand ridges behind beaches. Many of these sites exhibit evidence of domiculture (Bailey 1977; Cribb 1996:171) contributing to evidence of a rich and complex economic and social system prior to European invasion into the area. The documentation of the archaeological features of these sites appears to have started out as 'pure' archaeological surveys and database generation but close relationships with the local communities and custodians and partnerships with anthropologists and others working in the area have resulted in the incorporation of ethnographic data and indigenous explanations for archaeological phenomenon. For example Cribb provided the following background support his theory of a managed ecosystem in the area:

Plant communities maintained by generations of human management would take many years, perhaps centuries, to return to a 'wild' state once that management ceases. In Aurukun beliefs about 'looking after' country represent a pervasive cultural theme. Such beliefs always involved, in addition to rituals, practical measures such as controlled burning and clearing. Moreover some of the rituals are intended to make access easier or increase the availability of local resources. There is a strong belief that what causes country to go 'wild' is the prolonged absence of human smell and that the presence of human smell (i.e. human occupation) will cause it to 'go down again

(Cribb 1996:152).

Morrison (2000) has recently waded into the ongoing discussions regarding the Weipa shell mounds, reappraising past assessments and available data and reviewing the conflicting arguments relating to their formation and use from a Marxist perspective. He argues that current cultural ecological explanations for the mounds suffer from a highly selective and simplistic use of ethnographic data.

In her PhD thesis Greer (1995) has focused her case study on the Injinoo Aboriginal community. In critiquing models of heritage management she questions the way in which heritage has been defined up until that time, develops a model for community based archaeology and provides guidelines and principles for others seeking to carry out such work (see also 2.3 for a summary of the community based archaeology model). She concludes that:

In northern Cape York, archaeological sites are significant in terms of contemporary cosmology through the stories and beliefs and practices that are associated with them.... these memories stories, beliefs, practices and places provide the shape and form of the 'cultural landscape'. Moreover, it can be seen that this cultural landscape is the framework upon which contemporary notions of cultural identity are constructed. This view of sites and landscapes is in contrast with scientific models of scientific assessment and heritage management that focus on the more distant past.

(Greer 1995:Abstract)

While in general there is close agreement between Greer's approach and that adopted in this thesis it is likely that some of the conflicts she sees between contemporary heritage management, archaeological investigation and assessment and the community based approach stem in part from her understanding that there is or was an homogenous heritage management approach across all aspects of Australian heritage and that this was the one adopted by those working with Aboriginal heritage (see 2.5.2 for discussion of the notion of indigenous/non-indigenous heritage). She points out that social value is defined and accommodated in the *Burra* Charter (1988: Articles 1.5 & 2.5) but in *practice* emphasis is given to the scientific values. There is of course no weighting given to the consideration of different values in the *Burra* Charter in either the

current version of the document (Australia ICOMOS 1999) or the version Greer discusses which preceded it. The corresponding Articles in the new document to those cited by Greer are Articles 1.2 and Article 2 (1999). Article 5.1 stipulates that 'Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others' (Australia ICOMOS 1999).

There is obvious common ground between Greer's research and this research project. There are two main areas of commonality. The first is working with Injinoo Aboriginal Community. The experience of working with this community was the watershed for Greer in confronting issues of archaeological research and methodologies in relation to Aboriginal heritage. Similarly my understanding of Aboriginal cosmology and heritage in northern Cape York are largely learnt from my experiences and relationships with the Injinoo community and its members.

The second is the adoption of a community-based approach to archaeology and heritage management. As discussed in section 2.3 this term was first used by Greer (Greer and Fuary 1987) to describe her changed approach to working with the Injinoo Community. While not setting out to implement Greer's model (which was not fully described until 1995) clearly the approach adopted in my own research is a community-based approach. This approach is the product of close community involvement with Injinoo and other communities particularly Mapoon, Napranum and the Kaurareg of Horne Island. Therefore the outcomes of this research endorse the principles of community-based archaeology as outlined in (Greer 1995).

### **3.1.3 Anthropological research**

It is a well worn anecdote in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area of Cape York, that when a white person walks into

a beer canteen and sits down for a drink an indigenous person turns to them and says 'do not you want to know about my culture?'

There has been a long history of anthropological work in the area (Thomson 1933, 1934a, 1934b, 1935, 1939, 1956, 1957, 1966, 1972; McConnell 1936, 1940; Chase 1980; Sutton 1978, 1988, 1995, Sutton *et al* 1990; Taylor 1984; Von Sturmer 1978; Martin 1993; Fuary & Greer 1993). While Thomson and McConnell roamed broadly across the area focussing on observations of practice and social organization (McConnell 1939; 1940; Thomson 1935) and the analysis of specific myths (McConnell 1936, 1940; Thomson 1934, 1956, 1957); Sutton (1978), von Sturmer (1978), Chase (1980), Taylor (1984) and Martin (1993) have each carried out major research in Northern Cape York for their doctoral theses. Their research however has concentrated on the more isolated (and arguably more homogenous) communities to the south of the area known as the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA). In the main these anthropologists have tended to maintain close links with the communities that were the subject of their initial research and have continued to conduct targeted research in these communities often at the request of the communities themselves. (Altman and Taylor 1992, 1996; Sutton 1995, 1996; Martin 1981, 1997; Martin & Taylor 1995; Martin & Finlayson 1996). Fuary (Fuary and Greer 1993) is the only anthropologist to have carried out a specific project in Injinoo and that was in conjunction with an archaeologist. That project, conducted at the community's request, helped to establish baseline information for Injinoo families to document their genealogies and connection to land.

#### **3.1.4 Linguistic studies**

Similarly a range of linguists have carried out research over the years (Crowley 1980; Harper 1996; Laade 1965; Sutton 1976) but most have focussed on the traditional Aboriginal languages. Most relevant to this project has been the work undertaken by Shnukal (1988, 1995, 1996) in documenting Torres Strait Creole of which a



version, Cape York Creole (also known as *Blaikman* or *Broken*), is spoken throughout northern Cape York. The orthography developed by Shnukal (with provision for local variations) is used as the basis for writing Cape York Creole in this thesis.

### **3.1.5 Natural and resource studies.**

A series of natural resource studies have been undertaken in northern Cape York for a range of projects. Many studies have been carried out in relation to the assessment of environmental impacts and the rehabilitation to mining lands (for example Cameron 1981; Comalco 1987; Gunners 1984; Foster 1985). Studies have also been undertaken by students and researchers with ecological and conservation interests (for example see Stanton 1976; Lesslie, Abrahams and Maslen 1992). Environmental studies or natural resources studies have been undertaken in both the marine (Mulrennan 1993; Smyth 1993) and terrestrial environments of northern Cape York Peninsula. In recent years a range of studies have been undertaken as part of the Cape York Land Use Study (CYPLUS). Few of the studies carried out into the natural values of Cape York have focussed on Indigenous knowledge of or interests in the natural environment or resource under study but there have been some attempts at this (see Smyth 1993; 1994; Asafu-Adjaye 1994; Cordell 1994; Mulrennan 1993).

## **3.2 How this research differs**

In this thesis I draw on these previous studies especially Greer (1995), McConnell (1939, 1940), Thomson (1935) and the CYPLUS studies (Cordell ed1994). I have had the benefit of a snapshot view of each of the Northern Cape York communities through the work of anthropologists who have worked there (Sutton 1978, Chase 1980, Taylor 1984 and Von Sturmer 1978) and this has helped me to understand the complexities, similarities and differences of these communities. These works provided initial insights into both the degree of transformation and of continuity in Aboriginal communities in Cape York since European invasion, the

introduction of Christianity and subsequent government interventionist policies (see for instance Taylor 1984 and Chase 1980).

However most of this information has provided a background framework against which I have constructed a history of the early contact period in the region. I have relied heavily on oral testimony from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in particular from Injinoo, New Mapoon, Napranum and Bamaga, to provide insights into that history and the significances of key places relating to it. I have also relied heavily on archival records particularly those held in State Archives in Queensland and New South Wales as well as those in the Australian War Memorial, Commonwealth Archives and Public Records Office (England). The Uniting Church allowed generous access to their archives held in the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

I have used this information to explore the history of northern Cape York since the period of European invasion, to identify key places and types of places evidencing that history, and to describe and understand the importance of these places to contemporary communities and their identity. The combination of both oral and archival testimony has enabled me to construct a ***shared heritage*** of the region. Places of significance to northern Cape York communities have been used to illustrate the history of the region and the ability of these places to present this history to tourists and future generations of Cape York residents is also explored. From this work I believe that not only can communities and government heritage authorities find a way forward in the conservation and interpretation of heritage places in Cape York but also other communities and researchers will be able to gain some guidance as to the types of places that may be of significance to people in Cape York.

While conforming to Greer's model for a community based heritage project, I draw more broadly on a wider field of natural and cultural heritage management and I present the information relating to these places and history in terms of a complex cultural landscape drawing on a growing anthropological and archaeological literature relating to cultural landscapes and the notions of place, space and time.

Finally, unlike other researchers in the area, I discuss at some length the heritage management issues relating to specific places and types of places including their conservation and interpretation, and the challenges facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities now managing them. In doing this I draw on my experience in heritage management and the development of heritage policy and regulation in NSW.

## Chapter 4

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### UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE, TIME AND PLACE IN NORTHERN CAPE YORK

#### 4.1 Introduction

Whereas Chapter 2 discussed and overviewed the theoretical influences, which have a bearing on this research, and chapter 3 provided a brief overview of the nature and scope of relevant disciplinary work previously undertaken in the research area, this chapter explores the central concepts that underpin any discussion of the cultural landscape in northern Cape York. There are three concepts, which are fundamental to an understanding of this thesis. These are the concepts of:

- language (*langus*<sup>2</sup> and *Broken*<sup>3</sup>) as empowerment;
- Cape York Aboriginal 'time' (*taim*<sup>4</sup>); and,
- 'place' (*ples*<sup>5</sup>).

Because concepts of language, time and place form the basis of every person's worldview they are easily taken for granted. Therefore, if we are to achieve any understanding it is important to explore just how different the Western worldview of time and place might be from that of Aboriginal people in Cape York.

#### 4.2 Language as Empowerment

To understand the relationship between people and the land and their reactions, at times even nervousness and fear of certain parts of the landscape, one needs to understand that language is a powerful tool in managing a sentient landscape. *Langus* is the Creole term for traditional languages in northern Cape York and the Torres Strait. Due to the impact of missionary and later government policies regarding forced adoption of the English language on the mainland, there are relatively few fluent Aboriginal language speakers in the area from the tip of Cape York to Old Mapoon. This

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<sup>2</sup> Cape York and Torres Strait Creole refers to a traditional language.

<sup>3</sup> Cape York & Torres Strait Creole for the Creole language sometimes also referred to as *blaikman*.

<sup>4</sup> Cape York & Torres Strait Creole for the English 'Time'. Spelling after Shnukal 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Cape York & Torres Strait Creole for the English 'Place'. Spelling after Shnukal 1988.

is very different to other Cape York Aboriginal communities such as Aurukun to the south and those of Torres Strait to the north where most people have retained fluency in their traditional language.

In 1990 when I enrolled my son in the local primary school at Bamaga, I was informed by an earnest young (non-indigenous) teacher that they were 'concentrating on developing language skills in the children as without them they could not conceptualise' (pers comm. name withheld). I pointed out that the children in the class were already fluent in at least one and often two languages other than English by the time that they came to school and that undoubtedly they were adept at 'conceptualising' judging from their conversations. The problem was that he could not understand them. At that time it was still compulsory for the students to speak English exclusively when at school and children would be chastised if caught speaking *Broken* in the playground. This has changed in recent years and some language classes are conducted in the school and children are no longer punished for speaking in *Broken*. Indeed amongst education professionals there is a growing literature on Aboriginal languages, Aboriginal English and creoles and the educational issues associated with language (see for example Partington 1998; Malcolm 1998; Harkins 1994; Harris 1990) so that it is becoming recognised that:

The exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait languages and Aboriginal English from classroom communication is a symbolic exclusion of the identity and perspectives of those who speak them. It packages education as a one-way process in which only one culture and way of thinking are legitimised. It forces a choice upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, either to suspend or deny their identity, or to accept the status of 'outsiders' in the education system (Malcolm1998:131).

The anecdote above illustrates the Eurocentric view of the teacher and the way in which people have been stripped of their language in the region over the past 130 years since the initial attempts at education by missionaries. This has significant implications in terms of day-to-day negotiation of dangerous country. To get around this problem many people know key language phrases that

are used to 'call out' and introduce themselves to the spirits. Some places however are too dangerous and cannot be safely entered without a language speaker who can *soke tok* (literally chuck or throw out an introduction or call out an introduction to the spirits, for examples see also Greer 1995: 131; Strang 1997: 211).

While it is now understood by linguists and other researchers that Aboriginal Creoles are a legitimate first language of many Aboriginal people around Australia, this is not yet broadly understood or accepted by the general public. Many non-indigenous people consider *Broken* to be simply bad English. This is sometimes exacerbated by the politeness of Aboriginal people who switch to English when talking to white Australians. As the English is often flawed the non-indigenous person often makes the mistake of assuming that this is '*Broken*' and their ability to understand leads them to dismiss Broken as 'bad' English. Any researcher in Cape York could fall into this trap. While most people in Cape York Communities are multi-lingual and can speak English with varying degrees of fluency, their first language is either an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language or Broken. Broken is the lingua franca of the area and the only language that everybody is fluent in (except for Aurukun where the primary language is Wik Munkan but even here people can speak and understand Cape York Creole). This means that if a researcher is asking questions which go to the complexity of the local cosmology, custom, etc then they will not be able to operate in English, as very few people will have that degree of fluency.

When government officials and others conduct meetings in English it is quite common for people to contribute little to the discussion and they may even give the impression that they are in agreement. However it is only after the meeting that people begin to discuss amongst themselves the issues that concern them and try to clarify matters they did not understand. This has led to a tendency for communities to employ 'white' advisers or interlocutors to deal with

outsiders particularly government authorities. For example one only has to look at the range of staff in the peak indigenous representative bodies such as the Cape York Land Council or the number of Aboriginal community councils with white staff members. Even excluding those cases where the employee has a specific qualification other than language, which is essential to the position, there are a lot of non- indigenous employees in these organizations who carry out a lot of the direct interaction with government departments and others. Obviously this is a strategy employed by Aboriginal people to deal with situations where communities are disempowered by the language used in negotiations and discussions.

Clearly then in Cape York, fluency in *Broken* or a relevant community language such as *Wik Munkan* in Aurukun, is a prerequisite for understanding community aspirations and complex and layered meanings in oral testimony. It is also essential in feeding back research results and enabling informed consent or endorsement to research.

### **4.3 The Concept of Taim (Time)**

Cross-cultural studies of the concept of time in different communities suggest that understanding and suggestions of time are both divergent and embodied in social and cultural practice (Gell 1992; Owen Hughes and Troutmann 1995). Understanding that time is not linear in Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York is a pre-requisite to understanding the simultaneous occurrence of past and present which is a standard characteristic of a *stori ples*.

Time is the crucial element in all human activities and in order to understand it we do not need more refined means of measurement but concepts which can catch temporality and change. Humans are characterised by particular ways of creating and binding time (Gosden 1994:7).

The story of Wundrapine (see sub-section 4.3.1) illustrates the way in which Cape York people conceptualise time. Time is not a

straight linear continuum as we might see it, although in many parts of the Torres Strait and Northern Cape York there are words which might suggest that this was the case. For example time is often described as *diskaintaim* (now); *pastaim* (earlier as in my childhood or father and grandfather's time); *bipotaim* (before living memory). Occasionally people also use the term *bufor deiz*. This is a colloquial expression whose meaning depends largely on the context in which it is used. For instance if a man was jealous of his girlfriend's suspected relationship with an old boyfriend she might respond by telling not to be silly that was *bufor deiz*. The time frame is indistinct and the expression merely used to express finality and that things were in the past. The relationship referred to could have been recent as last week or alternatively it might have finished years ago. Alternatively an old man might complain that things were better in the *bufor deiz*. The expression can only be taken to refer to past behaviour or a way of life no longer practised and cannot be interpreted to indicate a standard time period. Strang found a similar division of major units of time in Kowanyama, an Aboriginal community on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula to the southwest of my study area. 'In Kunjen there are words for 'today', *Ugnall*, and for 'grandfather's time' or 'before Church time', *Ong*, but 'before that' was the Dreamtime' (1997:248). In the case of northern Cape York the pan Australian contemporary term 'Dreamtime' is referred to as *Bipotaim* which literally translate into English as 'before time'. Chase also records similar time categories *kuma* - the span of events witnessed by the speakers, *anthantnama* –a long time ago, and *yilamu* – the creation period. *Kuma* is separated from *anthantnama* by the advent of the white invaders (Chase 1989: 173). Similarly, throughout Aboriginal Australia time is divided into units that represent themes or socio-cultural practices rather than a linear or chronological sequence (for example see Cribbin 1984; Baker 1999; Kimberly Language Resource Centre 1996).



The years and experience of World War II sits uneasily between *pastaim* and *diskaintaim*. It is seen as separate to the mission days and the first days of European invasion but is not familiar to enough people alive today to be regarded as *diskaintaim*. As a result I have dealt with it here as a category of time and places within *pastaim*. It should be noted that on the Torres Strait Islands this situation might be very different as the social impact of the war was much greater. In some cases people were removed from some islands (e.g Horn Island and Thursday Island) that became the exclusive province of the armed forces. In addition more people served directly in the war as part of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Brigade than did on the mainland.

These parcels of time are not as strictly quarantined as in European concepts and often stories will contain elements of each. This has major implications for the interpretation of sites and places. In Western societies the site is often seen and interpreted as a snapshot in time. The site is nearly always significant because it can be seen as indicative of an important period or person or activity in time. The site may indeed have been added to over time, but fabric can usually be pinpointed through architectural or archaeological methods to a particular time. Therefore, one object or a piece of fabric is evidence of one point in time and that time only. For example a drain built in 1840 is always evidence of what happened then. While new fabric might be added for repairs say in 1900, that new fabric can be then dated to 1900 and is evidence only of activities carried out on the drain in 1900. In the presentation and interpretation of sites and places to the public it is common for the evolution of landscapes and complex sites to be graphically represented by a time line. This device is borrowed directly from natural evolutionary theory and reflects a widespread understanding of time in Western societies. In this context, to most non-Aboriginal Australians, all pre-1788 Aboriginal sites are in a prehistoric time category. This represents a fundamental difference

in the way sites may be interpreted by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Most *bipotaim* sites in Cape York while formed in a time beyond human memory, continue to be occupied by the spirits of the owners. Often these spirits co-exist with contemporary users and there are particular restrictions or activities designed to accommodate these multiple occupants/users. A site may therefore be interpreted in a multiplicity of ways, the true relationship between people and place being set in a multifaceted time frame. So in contrast to the interpretation of the drain which used Western concepts of linear time, material from a hearth on a campsite in northern Cape York constructed in say 500BP is evidence of activity carried out by people living at that time but may also be evidence of the continued presence and occupation of the spirits of those people. So while the archaeologist might point out that the hearth is evidence of past use that is 500 years ago, an elder or custodian might accept this, but point out that it is evidence of the activity of spirits in the present and proof that the site is occupied. Gosden has examined the issue of time more generally and he points out that:

only recently has the problem of bringing together measured time and human time been discussed within archaeology. Such discussion has raised the problem of how far the abstract measured sequences of radiometric time will allow us to understand the changing rhythms of social life and to investigate in the past the point Durkheim made in the present about the social creation of time (Gosden 1994:7).

The potential differences between *measured* time and *human* time are relevant to an understanding of Aboriginal attitudes towards heritage and places in northern Cape York.

For many Europeans the concept of linear time is so well entrenched as to form a truth in our understanding of the operation of the world and life within it. Time passes in measurable segments of seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years and in this way we can understand the creation of the universe and all life

within it. We have expressions which reflect this measured passing of time in our everyday language for example future events **unfold** past events **recede**. Past events and people are always firmly fixed in the past, and are unrelated to future events except in that we can, if so inclined, learn lessons from them. In this way we see socially significant places of the present become historical places or 'heritage' as time passes (Byrne 1993:79). This is contrasted in Cape York by a much looser partitioning of time. The past is often occurring simultaneously with the present. For example the *old people* or deceased past occupiers of a campsite may be present and occupying the same space as people camping today. The people and events of the past can actively shape events in the present. So for instance if a stretch of road becomes notorious as a place where many accidents occur this may be explained as being because the road is too close to a graveyard of the old people despite no foreknowledge of such a site. The past is interpreted or identified by its visible impact on the present.

#### **4.4 The Concept of Ples (Place)**

Upitis states that for her '... interpreting cultural sites is about understanding people- their needs, values and aspirations, and understanding how people see their place within the environment' (1988:3). Understanding how people see their place within the environment (which I would redefine as the cultural landscape) is central to this thesis. When asked to describe their place in the environment, Aboriginal people in northern Cape York almost invariably refer to *ples* and one's behaviour in relation to that *ples*. In other words, culture is described by insiders in terms of interaction with the landscape, and this in turn illustrates belief systems. This is to say, as has been observed elsewhere in Australia places are objects of Indigenous discourse (Layton 1995:214).

The Aboriginal perception of what has taken place in the recent history or '*Pastaim*' of Cape York is very different to that of most

non-Aboriginal people involved or interested in the same history. Most non-Aboriginal researchers have assumed that they know how Aboriginal people fit into the history and the environment. In fact, it is clear that Aboriginal people see their place in time, environment and history very differently. I explore this difference and thereby present a history of Cape York that describes the colonisation of this area from this perspective.

An analogous contrast between an emphasis on the particularity of places as seen from a specific (subjective) vantage point and an emphasis on the study of space, divorced as much as possible from a subjective position, has been the central concern to the way the concept of landscape has been taken up in geography and anthropology (Hirsch 1995:8).

To begin to understand how Aboriginal people in northern Cape York feel about and interpret places it is essential that one begin with an understanding of the landscape as a sentient element. The connection with the landscape is subjective and the relationship with place specific and personal. The landscape is peopled with red devils, short people, ancestral spirits and new and unknown ghosts. In general terms this is not dissimilar to other parts of Cape York and Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities in other parts of Australia. Strang writes of Kowanyama

....As well as being sentient in itself, the environment is alive with ghosts, 'placespirits' and devils. The new ghosts', oroleb, the spirits of the newly dead will stay in their country until sent on by the ritual that reopens the place...The old ghosts', inyiw-inyiw spirits of 'the old people' who lived there in the Dreamtime, might talk to the people or steal scraps from the camp at times they are quite malevolent, and will steal people away if they can. Strangers are particularly at risk. .... The 'old people' also protect the resources of the country refusing to give them to strangers.... The 'place spirits' are however only one manifestation of the power rooted deeply in the country. The ancestral presence is powerful and responsive; trees grow bigger and more fruitfully at sacred sites and in some places use or misuse of the bark, leaves or soil can act on human beings and the environment both positively and negatively (1997:255-6).

Similarly, in northern Cape York, the land, spirits and people form a complex relationship governed by rules. To damage the land or even to 'bad mouth' (swear) at the land can cause serious consequences to people as the spirits may take offence. In this

regard I proved something of a liability in the scrub as I had a tendency to swear at thorns, stony ground, green ants down my back, dense snake-hiding leaf litter and sharp oyster covered rocks amongst other things. It took a lot of remonstrance from family and friends in Cape York, as well as attribution of blame for various mishaps before I managed to get this habit under control. Some places in the landscape are more dangerous than others and because of a demonstrable lack of understanding about the rules; Aboriginal people in Cape York are often very nervous or concerned about the safety of white people in dangerous areas.

On the other hand by following the rules and sometimes actively maintaining country through specific practices at specific places the spirits may choose to reveal the abundance of the land or sea and people can benefit from increased catches, yields of fruit or yams discovery of fresh water springs and so forth. When language speakers accompanied me on field trips, they would point out for example, that the spirits revealed the finds because they approved or understood what we were trying to do. The language speakers had *soked tok* to explain this to them.

While cultural identity is made up of a complex interweaving of many factors, 'place' is the most important single material concept influencing it. The stories documented in this thesis illustrate the links between 'place' and 'identity'. This is evidenced by the term '*stori ples*' which is used by people in Cape York to describe areas of cultural significance and therefore identity. The significance is intrinsic to the place rather than any object or structure on it. This is why, for instance, the location of the old Mission at Old Mapoon is still seen as a place of great importance to people even though the mission buildings have been destroyed (see Chapter 7).

*Stori ples* are associated with a tale that is important to the way in which people view themselves and which influences the way in which people live. For example, the place 'Wundrapine' near Weipa

is both a place and a story. It is associated with a dreamtime figure (the white dog) and there are rules affecting behaviour at the place (e.g you cannot swim there). Greer (1995) relates the story of Wamera in which the creation of the landscape on the East Coast is described through the story. Again there are rules surrounding appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in this area. For instance you should call out in language to the spirits to announce yourself and your intentions, you shouldn't swim there, you should avoid loud and raucous behaviour and you should not wander into the scrub.

*Stori ples*, however, are not always directly related to the Dreamtime or *Bipotaim*, as it is known in Cape York. The failed settlement of Somerset is also a *stori ples* (see Figure 2). As for other *stori ples*, it is associated with stories about indigenous spirits but also those of Jardine family. There are rules about behaviour at Somerset, such as calling to the spirits in language, not sleeping near the graveyard on the beach, and it is dangerous to wander into the scrub areas.

Listening to people talk about *stori ples*'s, it is easy to see that places are important to people and that just by telling the story people are asserting their right to the story and their ownership of the land. Stories often include traditional explanations backed by recent evidence or eyewitness accounts of events, which prove the story. In this way people assert the current validity of the story. '*This ee no bipotaim, this one ee diskaintaim!*'

#### **4.5 Understanding *ples* and *taim* in northern Cape York through the *stori ples* - Wundrapine**

I recorded this story at Wundrapine near Weipa in 1991. It is a good example of how a creation story may be interspersed with more recent events from within the lifetime of the storyteller. This bears witness to the truth of the story or illustrates essential elements of the story.

Mrs Eva Yorke (*Atakainay*) is talking to Weipa Rangers (Apea Miskin, Tony Barkley, Eddie Keppel and Matilda John) and myself. Additional contributions can be heard from time to time from Mrs Ina (*Nggolpandan*) and Mrs Joyce Hall (*Kaynath*).



**Plate 2: Traditional elders Mrs Motton *Adheytha*, Mrs Ina Hall *Nggolpandan*, Mrs Joyce Hall *Kaynath* and Mrs Eva Yorke *Atakainay* at Wundrapine**

This is Wundrapine!

The story is about wild dingoes, not European dogs. The Europeans now today, they scared to swim. I think they [dingoes] are in the water here. If we put water on top their heads they alright. They can have a swim too. Oh there is a leech here too like in Anung (language discussion - to clarify this point).

This place was made when a big dog poked his head out. After that dog bin poke his head out em bin go in again. I do not know where em bin go now! Yeah, I do not know where em bin go, might em bin look around for wallaby now, might em bin come out nother place there. Because dogs must eat wallaby and (I do not know) which part em bin go a come back. (Language discussion not documented here).

Bufor deiz, we used to camp here. Then we move go nother place, like there now Peppen, but ee still got big water too. Go out for spear em, not shooting like there now today. Spear all brolga, ibis, ducks, and geese. When we look our parents come now, we make big fire, I do it. Alright, if ee some of the birds our mothers want to do earth oven - kupmari. They tell us “no more touch em now!” Alright, we go away somewhere play. No go near that place where the birds are dead one you know, ready for cooking. I do not know where them bin getting ti-tree from [for kupmari]. Plenty I think dat way or dis way down.

When the birds are cooked, our parents’ holla “Come on dinner time now” (they follow the sun you know, poor ol’ fellows. Them no bin have watch! Well today we do like that kind too when we ask one another “Where sun? What Time- What time today now? or What time?” and someone says “oh 8 o’clock” some say “ooh going on for 9 now”. Next minute you look boys there where mission comin in for have a cuppa tea).

Kathy Butler, she bin swimming here, European little girl who bin grow back here. She got sick. Then they bin find it was leech. It was in her stomach, I think. But she big girl now. I never seen her too, and she got children now.

So Sue, you could give stories to other Europeans if you want to tell stories to them. This one and there home Andoom<sup>6</sup> is a bad place you know for swimming.

[Rangers: Do you think that rangers should put up signs here saying that people are not allowed to swim?

(Joyce) Yeah. Yes and put proper name of Wundrapine.]

(Ina) When we stayed we wondered where this white dog came from because no one ever had a dog like that and real white! And later on it grew into a very big dog! Its name was “*Tweynuk*”. The owner of it came around here hunting and it must have had some connection between Wundrapine Swamp and the dingo. The dingo must have had something to do with the mother slut and the dog came out, because no-one ever had a dog like that - real white, fluffy hair. The

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<sup>6</sup> Andoom is a place between Weipa and Old Mapoon - now incorporated into a mining lease. The bauxite mine has the same name Andoom Mine. Here, Ina is referring to a freshwater swamp which has not yet been mined but is within the lease area.



owner used to look after it. It really stand out amongst all the dogs and the legend has that it came from here.

When the tribes came around hunting they really came around for the birds and fresh water turtle, what we call *rindi*. Always at night we would see the dogs come out at night and walk around the edge but the marvellous sight was the puppy that came from here. How did it come? Where did it come from? And the elder ones say it came from this Wundrapine Swamp.

And has anyone seen that dog from here ... that father dog?

(Joyce) It gets up certain times not all the time it just pops its head up. It stays under water.

(Ina) No but one wonders why that white dog was the puppy. Must be some connection with the father. It was a real fine dog. It was very pretty. Lot of Enterprise (mining company) boys wanted it for their own but the owner says "No, It's mine you can't have it!"

In this story Eva, Joyce and Ina all demonstrated their knowledge of their country, through first hand accounts of their experiences at the site and their knowledge of the taboos and the actual consequences of breaking those taboos. This story has particular significance in that it proves that non-Aboriginal people may be affected both adversely (the leeches) and positively although unaware. Certain Aboriginal people may also get inexplicable benefits at times. In this case someone benefited by gaining *Tweynuk* a white puppy that was obviously the offspring of the Wundrapine dingo and the envy of everyone. The power of the place is therefore reinforced.

In describing the question and answer sessions from their childhood, 'Always at night we would see the dogs come out at night and walk around the edge but the marvellous site was the puppy that came from here. How did it come? Where did it come from? And the elder ones say it came from this Wundrapine Swamp', the storytellers demonstrate how story telling is practised and recreated at each telling. The dynamic nature of the stories

means that they can accommodate the questioning minds of children and endless clarification.



**Plate 3: Wundrapine**

We can also gain an insight into the importance of language and place names. In response to the rangers' proposal for management of the area i.e. to erect signs prohibiting swimming in the lake, the elders demand that the correct place name also be indicated on the sign. This insistence on the correct name for places is common throughout the northern communities and reflects a growing concern that through loss of language and in

particular place names communities are losing their understanding and knowledge of the landscape.

While the naming of countryside is an ongoing process with places being commonly named after events that have occurred there particularly where these are significant events or have an impact on the broader community (e.g. *Bahnbridge*, where once an important bridge burnt down) there is concern with the practice of recent immigrants to the area, notably white tour guide operators and mine personnel to create their own landscapes through naming places regardless of whether or not they have already got local names and then promoting the new names (their landscape) via maps and signs. Language then and particularly place names becomes a weapon in the battle for control and ownership of the landscape.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Increasingly archaeologists are finding themselves struggling with the debates around time, space and place as we strive to find better ways of understanding and describing cultural landscapes so that they are recognizable to 'insiders' as well as 'outsiders'. This becomes more important as we move into the field of heritage management if we are not to disinherit communities from their heritage by appropriating it for tourism or for national heritage for the state in general.

While scientists and some sections of the Australian public may be interested in radiometric dating information which seeks to establish a chronology to affirm the oldest, most ancient occupations, such preoccupation with precision measurement of time does little to help us understand 'culture'. To understand the history and culture of Aboriginal people in northern Cape York we need to look at ways of accessing and understanding the 'human' time referred to by Gosden (1994).

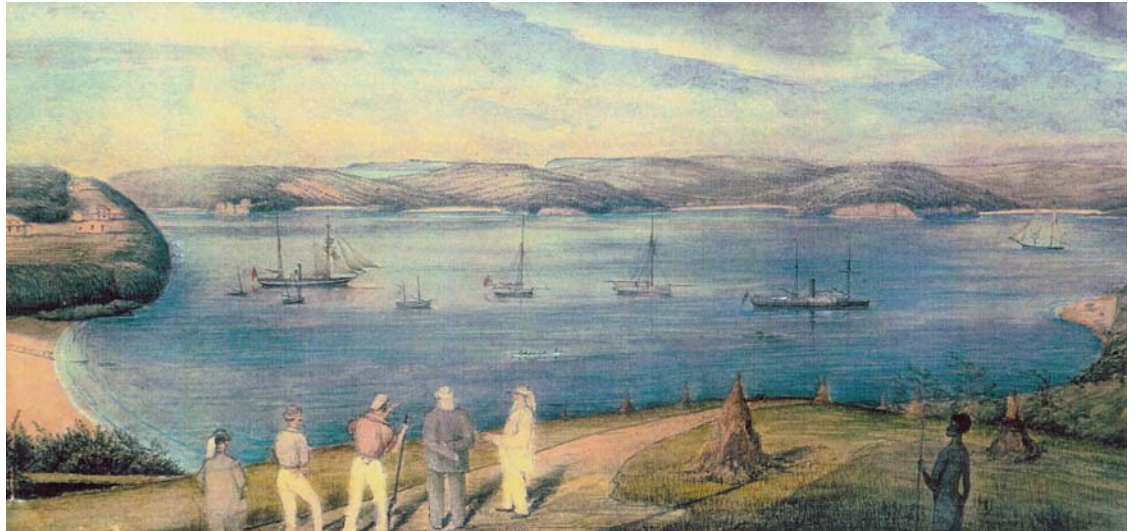
Aboriginal people in Cape York as elsewhere in Australia, are connected to their landscape through their occupation and use of resources in their day to day lives but most personally and specifically they are connected cosmologically through special places or *stori ples* which encapsulate their history, often back until the period of creation.

At such places Aboriginal concepts of time may be evident as a multi layering of spirits and entities from the *Bipotaim*, more recent *pastaim* and the present *diskaintaim*. Language is an important weapon in the management of such potentially dangerous places as it is the key to communicating with the beings that occupy these places and of re-affirming ones right to use and travel through such places. The information in this chapter serves as an introduction to the *Stori blo Meinlan* as detailed in Part II of this thesis.

## ***PART II***

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### **THE STORI BLO MEINLAN**



**Plate 4: Harbour of Somerset, Qld September 21<sup>st</sup> 1872:**  
Watercolour by unknown artist looking out towards Albany Island.  
(Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW. Original held in the Small Picture  
Collection DG\*D3 folio2)

## Chapter 5:

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### DISKAINAIM

#### 5.1 The Fourth Coming

*We watched the marakai as she rolled up her swag and gathered her belongings. Any minute now and she would realise they were missing!*

*Yes - There now. It wasn't the same if they didn't feel the loss. There was still a chance though that we would have to give them up. She was with two men of the people. But we did not recognize them and they did not appear to know us. The rules were that unless they spoke the words we could keep the prize. We were going to win, we could feel it!*

*Last night we had crowded around to listen, just outside the light of their campfire. The new tongue that the marakai spoke was harsh to our ears and hard to understand. We learnt that she had come to study the land, our place that **they** call Somerset. She has come to learn and observe but she did not see us as we crowded close to claim our prize. We had no doubt that she would be like all marakai, arrogant and deaf to the language of the land. None of them saw us take her knife and shiny silver pen.*

I had come to Cape York initially in 1986, to assist a friend on a project (Greer 1995). As a result of that first visit, I began my own research. It was my second visit to Cape York, and the first joint field expedition that Shelley Greer and I had undertaken. Joint survey had seemed to be an ideal way of maximising results. At that time in the early stages of her research she was searching for the elusive ideal site, which might provide evidence for 'intensification' in Cape York (cf. Lourandos 1983,1997), and I was looking for historical sites that were witness to European settlement and exploitation of northern Cape York Peninsula.



**Plate 5      Watercolour by unknown artist entitled ‘Cape York, Northern Point of Australia’ September 24<sup>th</sup> 1872.** Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, NSW. Original held in the Small Picture Collection DG\*D3 folio 2).

At this time I still felt alien in the landscape. The rangers, Jackson Sailor and Aaron Sebasio (employed by the then Archaeology Branch, DCS) were assisting us. We had just had a wearying day crossing through the rough “boxing seas” at the mouth of Albany Passage just on dusk. The waves hit the dinghy at right angles and it pitched alarmingly. Once through the entrance, the waters were calmer. We were aiming for Somerset as Jackson had said there was fresh water available in an old well. The boat did not have lights of course and it was dark by the time we made it to Somerset Bay. Aaron leaned over the front of the boat with a small hand torch and guided Jackson through the coral reef. I shivered with visions of crocodile jaws enveloping Aaron as he hung precariously over the boat. After a final nerve-wracking wade through shallow water in the dark, we made the beach. We were wet, tired, sunburnt Shelley and I, and plastered with salt, but at least we had arrived without accident.

Somerset appeared an overgrown and sinister place at night. The scrub encroached right down to the sand, and mangroves fringed either end of the small crescent of beach. The wind washed a chilly hand across my shoulders and I jumped as a small branch scratched my sunburnt neck and snagged my hair. Shelley responded with nervous laughter. It was the sort of place where



you knew it would be disastrous to let your imagination run wild. To camouflage our lack of valour we all played cards by firelight, but I noticed that both Rangers kept their rifles close to hand.

The men cheated at cards but it took Shelley and I a long while to realise it, after which loud protestations ensued. Finally, we slept. Our sleep was marred by the soft hand of the wind across our faces and the small skittering noises of harmless animals. At least I hoped they were harmless!

Later we were to hear the history of this place, and the dangers that lurk in parts of the scrub, and I marvelled in hindsight that the Rangers had suggested that we stay there. But for this stay at least we were largely in blissful ignorance of the stories of power and conquest, brutality and beauty that characterise Somerset.

In the morning the world looked decidedly different. The landscape now seen in daylight for the first time looked picture-postcard romantic. Coconut palms fringed the white sand, which now extended further as the tide had gone out. Before packing up we inspected the graves, which remain at Somerset, including that of Frank Jardine. We looked at the well and the scant signs that were all that remained of one man's dream and the endless nightmare for the Gudang and Kaurareg peoples.

It was not until we were about to get into the boat that I realised that my penknife (a gift from a friend) and my silver Parker pen had been lost. I had had them the night before. Perhaps I had dropped them in the saltwater as I jumped out of the boat, or perhaps I had left them under the tree where we had camped. Although I looked, I could not find them.



## 5.2 Experiences with Short Men and Red Devils

A week later back in the village of Cowal Creek (now Injinoo) I complained of the loss to my mother's sister, Mrs Sagigi (Mumma Elaine). Shelley and I had both been adopted by Meun Lifu (Daddy Shorty) and his wife Clara (Mumma Clae) and we benefited not only from their considerable knowledge of the area but also from that of their kin who generously acknowledged this relationship. Mrs Sagigi explained to me:

Dem Bulla Bulla dem short man, long ontop lo land ee alright ee make head go ron but dem wild one lo mangrove [um de red one (daddy shorty)] long arse, all red one, all dem shell ee stik lo arse. Dem all wild one, all red one blo mangarro. Dem alup shell, any kind shell outside lo sea. Em sit ontop lo shell but dem wild. Dem ontop lo scrub ee alright! Ip all look you got something nice or some all fancy ee dat thing lo you, something can cum just from hand blo you, if you gat watch and dey like ee watch and then you...

I commented that perhaps this is what had happened to my pocket knife that I lost when we camped at Somerset.

ee no gad ah?  
That one emm kin! Dat one steal em! Dat Somerset dat one! You should aske em back. Aske em!

Mrs Sagigi went on to describe the tricks that the short men get up to:

Them short man ee gad here too inside dem scrub. When you go rond one place ah dere lo scrub you sabbee its dem that makke your head no good. You marke dis place you go you walk go den yu come out here again. Mepla bin dis kind before.

She then described several experiences at Muri (Mt Adolphus Island see Figure 2 and Plate 7). The full transcript of her account is included in Appendix E. On one occasion she had gone there with her husband. While he collected clams just off shore in the dinghy she had gone to collect oysters.

An em I think em bin pigget to sokee talk or something like that. Dempla listen too! Em go wannem ere dinghy - and me I start por crackee oyster, I silly por dem oyster, kum straight in of that pointed hill, hill frontside, crakee oyster insidelo mangrove. I pigget now, I whistle, I talk myself and den whene wane elp I talk too rough. I got big mouth, I go EHEH! I go like dat! An I think dempla listen they think ' Mmm dis gel go too far!' You know anyway, I bin listen whisper! Asa man talking whisper kum and den my heart ee jump now! I mutta stop now I no wanne move! Ya gah! I bin

whistle then sing. Sing go go and when that sing bin stop that frightened feeling now bin kum long me. I listen whisper! And them some stone ee roll asa this kind straight, as if ee can kum and hit my head! This oyster i bin bust him I go raun this kind and kum back. Ee got nother one I bin bust em bust em leabe him. I bin take dis one here. An I kum back I kum back I go start em from begin kum rond this kind again. That big stone ee roll, I no bother for look kum ontap only wait. Ee hitee head blo me! Yeah I bin get that mark and I bin look blood! Two same time! I bin holler I no care only I wait em what time stone bin hittee mee but nothing stone bin fall down. When em bin heaya em bin sabbee straight away, em bin kum start ee engine "kum kum ontap" he broke his shirt tight em long that wannem ee put that shirt raun em say mutta go.

As soon as the stoning began both Mrs Sagigi and her husband knew that it was the short red devils and they also realised that they were transgressing in that they had not 'called out' or '*soked tok*' to ask permission to take the resources of the area. To add further insult Mrs Sagigi had forgotten herself to the extent that she whistled and called out drawing undue attention to herself.

Comparing the experiences of Injinoo people with the spirit occupants of the landscape, it was clear that there is a consistency of experience and descriptions about the beings themselves, the places in the landscape that they occupy or are likely to occupy and the behaviour on encountering humans. *Red devils* are described as short and red with scaly 'arses'. They occupy stony coastlines, concealed by mangroves at specific 'magic' places such as Muri Island (Mt Adolphus Island see Figure 2 and Plate7). Unlike *short people* who are mischievous and uncaring rather than malevolent, they are usually hostile to humans and delight in hurting them when they transgress hence the stoning of Mrs Sagigi at Muri (Appendix E).

On the other hand the *short people* who live in the scrub are more mischievous than cruel. They like to steal bright, pretty things and take a delight in making people disoriented and confused. This of course can have serious consequences if one gets lost in the scrub and is unable to find one's way out. However in all such cases that

were recounted to me the short people in the end relented (or perhaps got bored) and allowed the lost person to suddenly see the way out.

Stories such as these are everyday occurrences in the interaction of people and the sometimes, dangerous landscapes of Cape York and the Torres Strait. Some places such as the scrub around Lockerbie and Somerset are known to be the province of short people and others such as Muri (Mt Adolphus Island) and the coastal rocky shore around from Somerset are known to be even more dangerous and guarded by red devils. Language or *langus* is a powerful tool in securing protection in these landscapes (refer Chapter 4). There are several rules that apply to ensure safe passage through these landscapes.



**Plate 6: Mrs Ethel Sagigi (Mumma Elaine)**



**Plate 7: Muri –(Mt Adolphus Island) is a dangerous place and is occupied by red devils**

Ideally, one should be accompanied by a language speaker for that particular country who should call out, *sokee tok*, to announce or ask permission to carry out the activity. One should never whistle, as this is likely to draw you to the notice of such beings. You should not call out or shout or generally act in a raucous manner as this may anger *red devils* who will often retaliate by stoning you or causing accidents or bad luck. You should not swear, particularly at the bush or other elements of the landscape. It is also offensive to these beings to be too greedy and deplete resources and it is advisable to leave offerings for example if fishing leave part of ones catch.

Interestingly, since most people know these rules, there are clearly many cases where for one reason or another they are broken, otherwise such stories of misadventure would not be common. Sometimes, this is because people desire the resources of the

place and either do not have access to a language speaker or they are willing to risk the consequences. In other cases, it is because a long time may have passed since people visited a place and they may have forgotten that it is dangerous. At such times the *devils* and *short people* like to take advantage of their carelessness. There is some suggestion that if you are quiet and get about your business and do not go directly onto the land around places like Muri then you are often tolerated by the *red devils* or they choose not to notice your presence. However, to be loud and raucous is to press your luck. Hence Mrs Saiga's conclusion that when she called out loudly the *red devils* must have thought 'ee dis gel go too far!' (Hey this girl has gone to far!).

When younger people recount such experiences, it is often used by older people as a teaching opportunity. There are also times when new dangerous places are discovered or rediscovered and once again the experience and the recognition of what this signifies is the evidence for its identification as dangerous. Beings similar to these are known to inhabit the Aboriginal landscape in other parts of Australia and many ethnographers recorded stories of 'short people' or what they referred to as 'pygmy tribes' (see for example Winterbotham 1982:97 which is a transcript of interviews with an Aboriginal informant in the 1950's).

### **5.3 From Devils to the Mundane-Northern Cape York Communities Today**

At the time of my first visit the communities clustered at the tip of Cape York were in transition. There are five communities in northernmost Cape York (Figure 2). Of these, the oldest is Injinoo (formerly Cowal Creek), which was established around the first half of the twentieth century, probably around 1915 (see section 5.4) and comprised remnants of the local tribes, who had not been dispersed, massacred or lost to illness. After World War II the Queensland Government had moved to form the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) Reserve consisting of around 39,462

hectares, and since the late 1940s, four other communities had been established in the area (McIntyre & Greer 1994:5.1-5.26). At the time of the commencement of this research the communities had been handed back some control of their land through the Queensland Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) system and were asserting increasing autonomy over their day-to-day operations through local community councils. Economic and social growth, however, were still heavily influenced by Government policy and strictures. For example, it was not possible for a community to establish a commercial operation except a beer canteen, an irony that did not escape many Aboriginal and Islander people (Daniel Ropeyarn pers comm. 1989; David Byrne pers comm. 1989).



**Plate 8: The tip of Cape York Peninsula**

### 5.3.1 Changing Government Policies

Aboriginal people in Queensland as elsewhere in Australia, have long been buffeted by changing government policies. In Queensland however, the period of direct governmental control lasted significantly longer than in the southern states. Forced mass removals of Aboriginal people were occurring well into the lifetimes of today's middle aged Australians, with Port Stewart people removed in 1958 and those from Old Mapoon moved in 1963.

Greer (1995:69) has summarised the work of others on the State governments policies and legislation relating to Aboriginal people in Queensland but for those unfamiliar with this history, Anderson's (1981:55) four historical periods are a useful overview. They are:

1. 1830 –1872: characterised by the dispossession of Aboriginal people through violence and the use of Native Police;
2. 1873 –1896: a period in which experiments in the setting up of reserves (both private and government sponsored) were undertaken;
3. 1897 –1956: the beginnings of a legislative framework and life 'under the Act'; characterised by so-called 'Protectionist' policies;
4. 1957- early 1980's: the period characterised by the policies of "Assimilation"

(Anderson cited in Greer 1995:69).

In 1895 Archibald Meston completed a survey of Aboriginal settlements in Queensland and presented his conclusions regarding the management of the Aboriginal 'problem' in Queensland to the government (Meston 1895). Meston proposed that where Aboriginal people were not being adversely affected by white settlement they should be left alone to continue their lives, but where they were being adversely affected or exploited they should be relocated to areas of land set aside for them. He also proposed that Aboriginal people generally should be compensated for the loss of land and amenity they have suffered through white settlement. Sharp (1992:27) misreads Meston's comments and has assumed that he conformed to the prevailing opinion that Aboriginal

people were a 'dying race' and therefore only a temporary problem for the colony's administrators.

The Reserve system lasted in north Queensland well into the 1980s ending officially, but not in practice, in 1985 with the 'handback' of land under Deed of Grant in Trust by the Queensland Government in Cape York and the Torres Strait. However during the handback ceremonies in the Cape York and Torres Strait communities, the then Premier, Joh Bjelke-Peterson handed back empty envelopes in some cases and unsigned photocopies in others. Life following the supposed handback continued unchanged for a number of years with endless talk about 'the department' (that is the State Government Department administering the reserves which at that time was DCS) pulling out of the day to day management of the communities.

In 1949, the Queensland government formed the Northern Peninsula Area, a reserve of some 39,462 hectares that would eventually encompass the communities of Injinoo, Umagico, Bamaga, New Mapoon and Seisia. The reserve was administered and run by Queensland government staff based at Bamaga under the at times despotic rule of the 'Manager'. During the history of the reserve the department responsible for its management changed its name from the Department of Native Affairs (DNA), to the Department of Community Services (DCS) and finally to the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (DFSIA). Aboriginal people today tend to use these names interchangeably and in reality these were name changes only with the same staff being employed regardless of the department name. Each of the smaller communities, except Seisia (which the Department steadfastly refused to acknowledge as a community in its own right), had a community council and representatives from each of these formed the Combined Northern Peninsula Area Council, which was nominally the voice of local people in administrative matters. Bamaga became the focus of government



intervention, with government offices, schools, housing, a farm, a sawmill and other light 'industries' located here. This illustrates the Queensland Government's long-standing favouritism of Island people over Aboriginal people. Today all residences for government employed non-Aboriginal people are located here.

The one common factor in a review of government management of the reserves is the degree of control and intervention over adult lives, exerted by people who often had limited skills and expertise. One policy recommended that people should be herded together as there was more efficiency in managing people in groups. Within the confined area of the NPA, it was decided that people should decentralise onto farms and smallholdings and develop primary industries for the reserves. This was when areas such as Blue Valley (see Figure 2) in the NPA were cleared and settled. Such policies had significant environmental impacts (to the extent that these areas are still visible in aerial photos today some 30-40 years later) in addition to their obvious social impacts. These enterprises were doomed from the start, not being based on information such as soil capability, agricultural knowledge or experience in animal husbandry or business management. Once they failed, people were forced out of their houses and back to the villages. In most cases all structures relating to these enterprises were bulldozed to prevent people returning to live there. This physical erasure of cultural heritage was a consistent form of government control exerted over Aboriginal people in Cape York and a direct response to the most common form of indigenous rebellion i.e passive resistance. Hence, properties such as Somerset and Mapoon Mission were destroyed by the Queensland government without regard for their heritage value, after Aboriginal people resisted efforts by the government to persuade or coerce them to leave (McIntyre 1999).

All five of these communities in this most northern area are bound together by familial ties and intermarriage. However, different

cultural backgrounds and experience, exacerbated by governmental favouritism, resulted in the emergence of antagonisms and grievances. Today, while the spectre of the 'Manager' has faded and there is generally greater movement between communities, old tensions and suspicions sometimes arise to complicate matters. Since the end of the reserve system there has been greater movement between these communities and their southern neighbours and both kinship and political ties have been established and reinforced. In the following pages I provide a brief introduction to each of the NPA communities and their southern neighbours of Weipa, Old Mapoon, Lockhart River and Aurukun.



**Plate 9: Reclaiming Cape York - The first Cape York Land Summit - Inaugural meeting of the Cape York Land Council.**

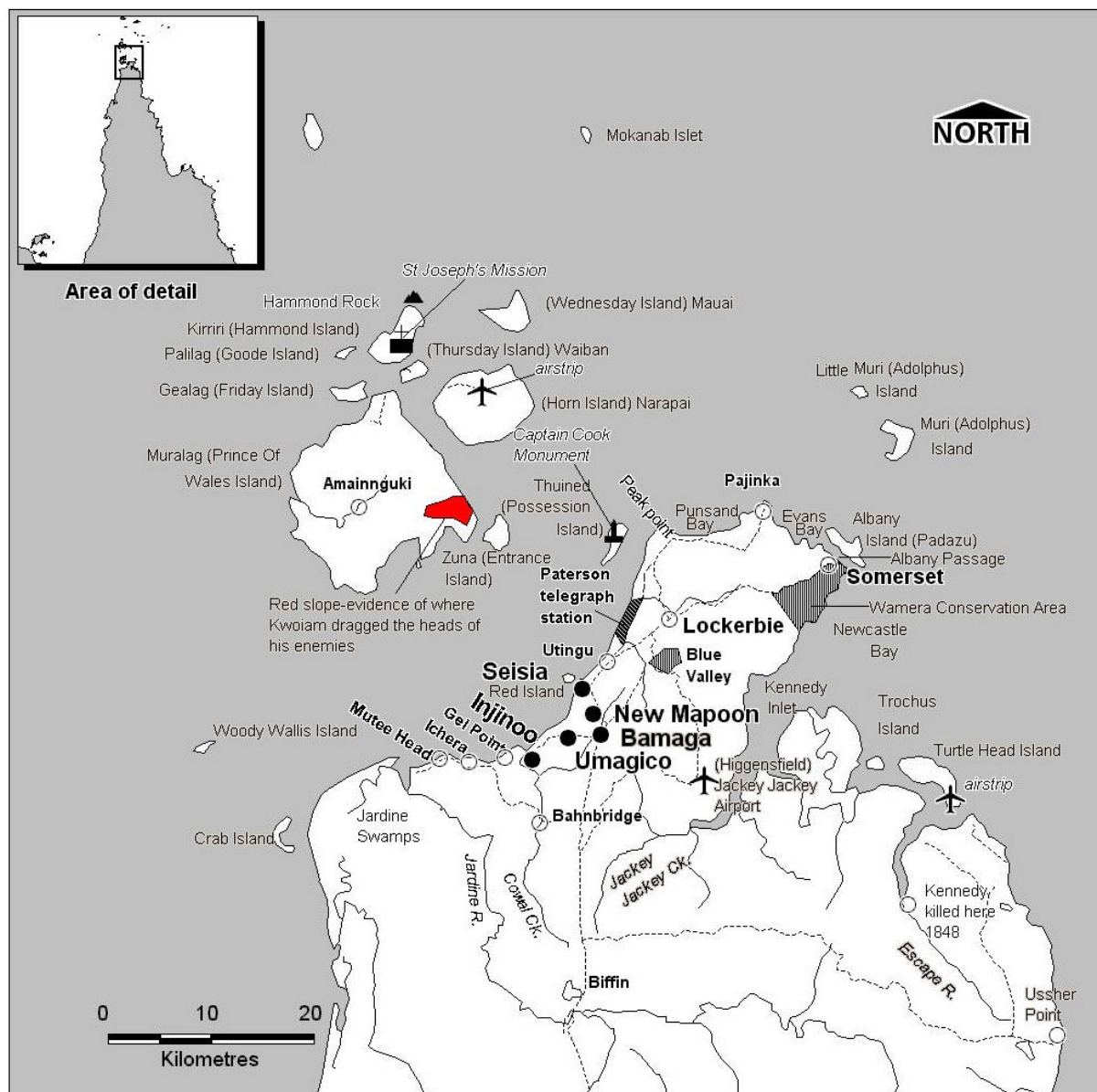


Figure 2: Locational Map Northern Peninsula Area

#### **5.4 *Marakai callem Cowal Creek but itse Injinoo***

The Community, now known as Injinoo Aboriginal Community, changed its name from Cowal Creek Community officially in 1988. Injinoo is a local word meaning 'Small River' and refers to the creek on which the settlement is located. The renaming was a political act through which the community sought to reclaim and redefine itself as it emerged from the reserve period. The assumption was that 'Cowal' had been a white imposed name, however it is likely that in fact *Cowal* was a European spelling of an indigenous word as local Aboriginal and Islander people always pronounced it '*Kohl*'. In fact they distinguished themselves from white people saying '*Marakai* (white people) *callem Cow-wal Creek*'.

Cowal Creek is an historical anomaly, as it was not established as a mission or government reserve. In 1918 the report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals referred to a small settlement that had been established at Small River (Cowal creek) by the remnants of the Red Island and Seven River tribes somewhere around 1915. Bleakly (1961:157) notes that people at Cowal Creek supported themselves by fishing and gardening and that the Chief Protector had decided to encourage this self-help by providing advice and some equipment but leaving the management of the community to an elected council. As this was not a government reserve or church mission there is very little archival information relating to it. In 1924 a Torres Strait Islander teacher was sent to Cowal Creek (Chief Protectors Report 1924). At some point, the Anglican diocese of Carpentaria sent a trained Islander Deacon there. In 1936 the Chief Protector of Aboriginals commented in a letter to the Under Secretary

It must be pointed out that the natives of this settlement at Cowal Creek are a very primitive type, being the remnants of the old Seven Rivers and Red Island tribes, who formed this voluntary native village, and are conducting the affairs of their little community with no other supervision than a Torres Strait Island Native teacher (QSA A/3866 1936/ 9033).

A commonly told local story maintains that 6 tribes of the area in northern Cape York came together and decided that they should settle down and form a community if they were to survive the effects of European invasion. These 'tribes' were the Seven River, McDonnell River, Red Island Point, Cairn Cross, Somerset and Whitesand people (pers.comm. David Byrne 1989). Some people amongst the most northern of these people chose rather to join their Kaurareg neighbours and relatives and went to Horne Island and were later removed to Hammond Island (Figure 2) and then Kubin on Moa Island. Thus strong links remain today between Injinoo and the Kaurareg and in particular people from Kubin. While Cowal Creek was not officially formed via government intervention there is clear evidence that not all people came in voluntarily. For instance, the account told by McDonnell River people of their 'calling in' is not quite so peaceful. Alec Whitesand, the Aboriginal man credited with drawing the tribes together, on this occasion was accompanied by police with guns (Goody Massey Tape # 1992/1). Actually the establishment of Cowal Creek with all 6 tribal groups must have occurred in stages. Bleakley records that in 1918 only the Red Island and Seven River people were present at Injinoo (Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals 1919). Alec Whitesand is reported to have been a Wuthathi man and unlikely to have been the original founder of Injinoo as he is likely to have settled at Cowal Creek sometime after it was established. The McDonnell River people who were brought in by Alec Whitesand were the last to be relocated to Cowal Creek, probably during the 1930's.

Injinoo today is a result of this alliance between the 6 groups. Mr Wilfred Bowie (now deceased) recalled to me how the village at first consisted of separate clusters of bark houses. Each cluster was comprised of a single traditional group. The original village was built on the sand in the area now known as the lookout or camping ground but was later moved back to firmer ground. The occasional

concrete stump foundation can still be seen towards the rear of the camping ground area.

The early years in Cowal Creek would not have been easy with people living so close to groups that they would not have previously had daily contact with. Interactions including marriage seem to have continued to follow traditional alliance patterns and to some extent this can sometimes be detected in the modern Injinoo. People were to some extent suspicious of other groups and hence more comfortable living in close proximity to their own people (Bowie pers.com 1989). Tensions must have run high at times and as Wilfred Bowie (pers comm 1989) remarked '*puri puri let fly*' [black magic was rife]. It is a testament to the people of Cowal Creek that despite this they managed to forge a community and a unique identity that continues today.

The fact that Cowal Creek was not a government station (until after World War II when it became part of the area managed as the Northern Peninsula Area Reserve) means that there is little archival information available about the village and its development. The only information in government records are passing references in correspondence based on visits by the Chief Protector of Aboriginals or other official visitors. Despite having a government funded Torres Strait Islander teacher in the village, detailed records relating to the school and its operation at Cowal Creek do not appear to have been kept. It is likely that many of these records were kept locally at Thursday Island and have since been lost. For instance there is not a complete record of annual school supply requisites for the school although one or two can be found in QSA A/15996 (e.g Dec 1941/ 53/40). Where documentary evidence does exist it is often of a dubious nature representing as it does only fragments of debates or conversations. For example a newspaper article in 1936 quoted a Professor Archibald Watson as saying that 'Cowal Creek should be wiped out as a pest hole...it

can never be made a healthy place.' He describes the place as follows

The soil was chocolate brown sand made dark and malodorous by decomposed seaweed and other vegetable matter. The youngsters sat down and slept on this. It was no wonder under such conditions that their teeth were bad, their tonsils swollen and their bones were getting soft (QSA A/3866/9033. Courier Mail Brisbane:1936).

It is hard to believe that the Professor was actually describing the village of Cowal Creek, which at that time was located on the white sand at the mouth of the river. The Chief Protector of Aboriginals at the time, J.W. Bleakley, vehemently denied the allegations that conditions at Cowal Creek were unhealthy. He pointed out that all cottages at Cowal Creek (which had been built by the Aboriginal people themselves) were raised on stumps, and set in clean sand with fresh running water nearby. He also went on to protest the Professor's claims that half caste Aboriginal girls at Cowal Creek were in 'moral' danger and forced to live with 'blacks' when they should be 'put in their right place amongst the whites, where their fathers live' (QSA A/3866/9033:1936).

Sometime in the late 1960's after the Department of Native Affairs had subsumed Cowal Creek into the Northern Peninsula Area Reserve, the village was moved back from the beach on to the red dirt and the old village was demolished (this area is now the camping ground or 'Injinoo lookout' as it is known). At the time of my fieldwork Injinoo was undergoing rapid change. The village currently has approximately 490 residents a high proportion of who are children. Housing standards have improved dramatically and substantial housing construction works have been undertaken over the past 5-6 years and the community infrastructure established over this brief period (i.e. since 1986) includes a large community hall, air conditioned council office and broadcasting station (BRACS), a large vehicle workshop, women's centre and child minding facility, a modern medical clinic, and a primary school. The re-establishment of a school has been one of the community's great achievements. The Cowal Creek school, originally

commenced after petition from the Aboriginal people at the settlement had been closed down by the Department of Native Affairs once they assumed management of the reserve. Injinoo has a local female Anglican Deacon (the first female indigenous deacon ordained in the Anglican Church) and local indigenous headmaster at the primary school.

The end of World War II and the withdrawal of troops from the region heralded a new era of government control over the lives of Aboriginal people in northern Cape York. The government began to encourage and coerce communities to resettle in what was to become the NPA. Those non-indigenous people who had returned to the area were soon to find their leases resumed to enable the establishment of the NPA Reserve. For example Stan Holland had in 1949 taken a 30 year lease over a pastoral holding at Cody Hill (not far his home at Red Island Point). This lease was resumed on 23/3/1966 for 'Departmental purposes' (QSA:DUP A/47706: Cody Hill Register Entry). McLaren and Graham's 20 year lease on Utingu had already expired in 1934 and Frank Lascelles Jardine's lease over Somerset which had following his death, been transferred to Hew Cholmondely Jardine (transferred on 26/5/1920), had expired in 1934 (QSA: LAN P489). Cowal Creek's neighbours were about to change.

## **5.5 In search of the promised land**

The first of the new communities to be set up were Bamaga and Seisia. In 1947, a group of people from Saibai Island (just off the Papuan coast) are said to have voluntarily moved to the mainland. They initially settled at Mutee Head where there was a WWII jetty for their boats and water tanks on the headland. However the water was not sufficient, nor conveniently located for a permanent settlement (McIntyre & Greer 1994:5-14). Lack of freshwater on Saibai has been quoted as one of the reasons that people moved from Saibai in the first place and the new settlers did not relish the



thought of carrying buckets of water over long steep distances. Local people from Seisia, Bamaga and Injinoo recall that Mugai Elu asked permission of the local people at Cowal Creek to stay and asked their advice regarding where to set up a permanent settlement. Representatives of the Saibai people, the Queensland Land Inspector, Jomen Tamwoy (Torres Strait Island teacher, based at Cowal Creek) and Canon Bowie (Torres Strait Islander Minister based at Cowal Creek) and a traditional owner representative Mr Pablo set out to look at suitable places. The area inspected included both Red Island Point (RIP) and inland to Ichuru. They were advised by Cowal Creek representatives that a place near Red Island Point (now known as Seisia), would be a good spot as there were reliable springs behind the beach and the site would also provide a berth for their pearling luggers (pers.comm. Joseph Elu 1994; Gordon Pablo 1990 and Daniel Ropeyarn 1990; Bob Jacobs 1993). Solomon Woosup, an Injinoo man, showed Mugai Elu and the Saibai settlers the wells along a small creek line behind the beach at Seisia (pers comm. Joseph Elu 1994). The bulk of the Saibai people, however, were told by a Department of Native Affairs (DNA) surveyor and Jomen Tamwoy (a Badu Island schoolteacher living at Cowal Creek) that they had to move to 'Bamaga' (or Ichuru as local people knew it), which they did in 1949. The government officials favoured Ichuru because they considered it to have a more reliable water source. In addition the soils were more arable and the government may have already have had plans to promote agricultural enterprises. It appears that Seisia was settled without the sanction of the reserve administrators. For reasons unspecified, the reserve manager continued to try and pressure people at Seisia to move to Bamaga. Initially the community was not recognised by the Government and so was refused housing or a place in any decision-making process. The community was regarded by the Government as a small camp or off- shoot of Bamaga.

Those who elected to stay at Seisia close to the sea and their boats did so in the face of strong and persistent Government opposition. The small community suffered years of Queensland Government obstruction and yet managed after all to develop the settlement as a successful Islander community.

### **5.5.1 The establishment of Bamaga**

This account of the establishment of Bamaga was recorded for me by Gabriel Bani and Robert Tamwoy in 1993. It is a firsthand account by one of the original Islander settlers who asked for his name to be withheld.

During the wartaim, Second World War, Don Company Battalion bin kum over for meinlan. All callem Red Island Point. Then we see the ples 'ere gud for meke living and we know from Saibai its so very hard to get sum wata in the summertaim. So we made our mind up: one day we are gathering three ilan, Saibai, Duan, Boigu. Yu know try wande shipt kum baek klostum < because hard to get something out for the life. We all agree we three Ilan people. The people we bin in the second war in the army.

Yeah we can't come though like mepla wannem way unless we get word from office. All dempla Jerry Wasu, Nadi Anu, Mugai Elu, Jimmy Carruthers, Makie Asai, we dem all the spokesmen from the fighting whats a name for mepla (reference to World War II). Well ee bin okay wid de Gubman (Government) before we bin shift cum. Mr Killoran (ee bin wid the Gubman), em speak yupla can makee ples ere, say any people can kum ere but not white people. [as for local people..] Dan's only the man bin ere and em bin go wid that churching ground. Pablo em like a mamoose blo dis place, well da spokeman em go wid him though and it bin okay. The word from Gubman bin 'yes' but Gubman talk about'is title das because place ere well ee < the Gubman so we asks for who-dat-now Pablo. He speaks 'All right'. He's de man bin wid us searching raun where we finde Bamaga ere today.

When taim, only the Saibai people bin move but bin split up. Sum dempla not like to be move from Saibai.

An we all agree we shift kum over ere Muttee Head. We look its a very gud pleis, we plant something like vegetables. Its most gud but wata, gud nice fresh wata, but -- long way for kare. Jus like the life wat we do em on Saibai. Akare em wid a bucket, tin kum ere. But we try meeting gain talk over if we can ask for the Gubman give a better pleis.

So Minister John, the pas minister Commonwealth Minister, wend over to Muttee Head wid Mr Turner bin Superintendent same taim and teacher, he's Gubman teacher but he coming wid us where Muttee Head. We ask em for thinking what we got in mind for the Gubman also akse em. Bamaga bin for Gubman. John tell em:

"Bamaga I do not know you I know only dat book ere where you bin work for so many years for Gubman DNA (yeah sametime DNA). When you move kum ere, ere where meinlan, I know you Bamaga. Well I try to do my best to help you. I went down for the, down south I'll send the lan

inspector, Queensland lan inspector, Mr Richard. yeah I send Mr Richard kum over ere.

Then we searchin round Muttee Head well I do not know the name, the language name, we got the two or three man from Cowal Creek- Canon Bowie and Mr Jomen Tamwoy, Mr Pablo. Yeah, they kum with us, we try searchin around wi that lan inspector Mr Richard. Searchin raun inlan route down to Seisia, yeah Red Ilan Point anyway, Red Ilan Point. Richard bin findee ere where we now today at Bamaga. But Bamaga they akse him gen for we all mostly the Ilan of the Torres Strait we are, we live on the wata front and seaside mostly. We ol'trade with pearl an trochus. So we try for centre for the boat where boat can anchorit. Das wat we decided we Ilan people, we know the life from the Ilan das all we can get the benefit of the money and from the sea.

Mr Richard said how we go find a better place where we go plant, wata for the vegetables and plenty of wata for yu can haul. He we can be put a peg on dere where the monument (Reference to the monument in the main street of Bamaga near the Supermarket), the build up name after em Bamaga. Now I myself, I'll be glad to live ere I got mine number of grandchildren. I love dis place is the meinlan.

Bamaga ee name after this place ere just because ee work for the Gubman for many years. But this removal and the spokesman I believe is Jimmy Caruther. He's the one man been against just like a battle ee fight with the office and with Mr Killoran, the Director. He's the spokesman do all that movement for wat day we bin decide to kum. That grave yard bilong em. The first man ee bin die at Muttee Head. He got tombstone and put in up. He's the wan bin spokesman. He removal bin emself before the other now. He put his foot at Muttee Head on the meinlan before his family kum. No Saibai people bin (live) ere before em. We settle down ere first...Tank with wata, army tank but all leaky so we leave, struggle luk raun wata, lovely wata. I think that wata I believe that more gud wata than we have ere lo Bamaga. So we who are ere today in Bamaga, well I talk prom Bamaga now, I settle down ere but I do not mention my name (Tape # 1992/1).

It would seem clear that while the Saibai people who moved to the mainland felt that they made an independent decision to do so, it dovetailed very well with government plans to establish the NPA reserve and introduce tighter controls over indigenous people in the area. The settlers from Saibai arrived in 1947, the NPA Reserve was established in 1948 and they were relocated in 1949 to the site selected by the government, now known as Bamaga. It would seem also that there exists the possibility that the identification of Bamaga as the leader of the Saibai settlers came after the move to the mainland and the involvement of the government. Bamaga had worked for the government previously and was someone that departmental officials felt comfortable with, while Mugai Elu and

Jimmy Carruthers clearly where prepared to contest the right of departmental officials to decide the future of the settlement.

### **5.6 Umagico: Chased from their Homelands**

In the 1950's a battle began between the local Protector of Aborigines at Coen and Mrs Prideaux of Silver Plains Station over the future of the people from Port Stewart on the east coast of Cape York, just north of Princess Charlotte Bay (see Figure 3). This culminated in their forced relocation to a new settlement called 'Umagico' which lies between Bamaga and Cowal Creek (Figure 2). The DNA later proposed to also relocate people from Lockhart to Umagico. However, the people at Lockhart resisted the move and only about 64 people were relocated (Long 1970:175) before the government agreed to keep the Lockhart River community but move it to a site they considered more suitable closer to Iron Range airfield.

The forced removal of the Port Stewart people was the culmination of a long running campaign by the Thompson and Prideaux families to remove Aboriginal people from Silver Plains Station (Appendix B). Mrs Prideaux suggested moving the people to the reserve at Coen or the Mission at Lockhart. In a letter dated 16/6/1955 Mrs A.E Prideaux wrote a letter to the Deputy Director Dept of Native Affairs in which she claimed that

These natives roam over Silver Plains Station accompanied by their dogs and disturb the cattle, chiefly around watering places. Also we know they kill beasts for meat, take what they want and throw the rest of the carcass into a stream where the alligators will destroy all evidence. boys employed as stockmen spend their time with the above natives instead of doing the work they have been sent out to do (Prideaux 1955).

In answer to a query for more details made by the Deputy Director of Native Affairs to the Protector of Aborigines at Coen, the latter responded that he was ...quite sure that the complaint of the Executrix of the Estate of H.J Thompson is entirely without foundation, and has undoubtedly been made in retaliation for the refusal of Harry Liddy, an aged Aboriginal to work on Silver Plains Station for 10/- per week and keep (Coen Protector A.V

Moylan, 1955 see Appendix B). Furthermore Moylan reported that Mr Wassell had threatened Harry Liddy that if he did not work for him then he would have all the Port Stewart natives sent to Lockhart River Station (see Letter dated 13/7/55 Appendix B).

A paper war ensued following these letters, with Silver Plains Station repeatedly pressing for the removal of the Port Stewart Aboriginals and the local Protector of Aboriginals at Coen disputing each of their claims. Notwithstanding the dubiousness of the claims made by the owners of Silver Plains about the 'welfare' and activities of the Aborigines, the Government agreed to remove them to Cowal Creek. In a confidential memorandum from Inspector Gill to the Commissioner of Police it is made obvious that the Aboriginal people were duped into boarding a boat for their removal.

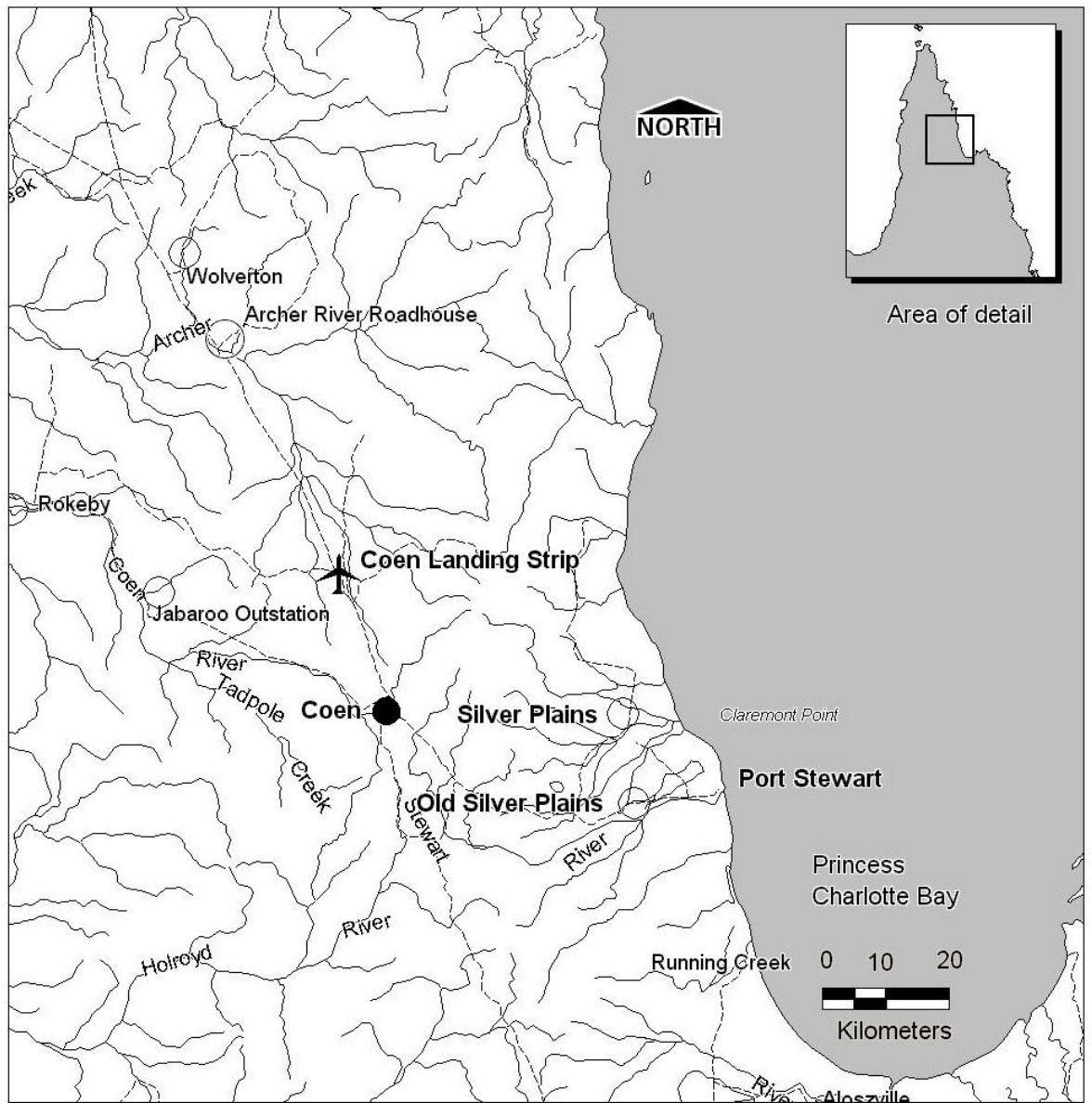
Although the natives are unwilling to leave Port Stewart permanently they are agreeable to travelling to Thursday Island for medical and dental treatment and should it be decided to move them, this may provide the means of making their removal less difficult (Gill 1960).

It is interesting to note that the removal of the Port Stewart people happened despite opposition to the plan from the local policeman and Protector of Aboriginals. Apparently other white residents in the area did not agree with the actions of the lease holders of Silver Plains either. In 1963, Harry Liddy attempted to walk home from Cowal Creek, a journey of around 400 km. He was apprehended at the instruction of the reserve manager and made to return. However, Jimmy Kulla Kulla another Port Stewart man, was allowed to return to Coen briefly for a holiday. While there he appealed to the local Policeman (T.J Newman) to be allowed to stay. In a memorandum dated 14/10/63 to the Director of Native Affairs in Brisbane, Newman presented an appeal on Mr Kulla Kulla and Mr Liddy's behalf (Appendix B). In it he states that a Mr Ian Boyd Pratt, who had a block of country at Running Creek on the coast of Port Stewart was happy to have the Port Stewart Aborigines live on his property. Alternatively Newman suggests that there would be ample accommodation at the Coen Reserve should

they return there (Newman 1963. See Appendix B). Unfortunately, the response from Brisbane was negative and decidedly paternalistic:

Whilst sympathising with the desire of the 'old timers' to remain in the Port Stewart area...The history of these people whilst at Port Stewart left much to be desired and there is no wish on the Department's part to condemn the young folk to a life of isolation, lack of educational opportunities or a reversion to a nomadic way of life (Director DNA 1963).

It would seem that the Department thought more of placating non – indigenous leaseholders than they did of protecting the rights and welfare of the Port Stewart Aboriginal people. The exchange of correspondence is also of interest in that it reveals the lack of influence that 'Protectors' now exerted. Departmental officials took little notice of the views and insights of the Local Protector of Aboriginals except in relation to the mechanics of how they might affect the will of the Department. Clearly the decision to move the Port Stewart people was not based on a consideration of their best interests.



**Figure 3: Location of Coen and Port Stewart**

In the late 1960's there was an attempt by the government to close the settlement at Lockhart River. Some of the people were at that time relocated to Umagico. Instead of closing Lockhart, the settlement was eventually moved from 'old site' to the present location closer to the Iron Range airstrip. In 1964 there were 64 Lockhart River people living at Umagico (Long 1970:175). As Lockhart River continued as a community at the new site many of the people in Umagico have made their way back home in recent years.

### **5.7 New Mapoon- Punja People**

There were three attempts by the Queensland Government to relocate Aboriginal communities to the new reserve. Firstly, some of the people from Mapoon were shipped to Red Island Point, settled temporarily at Bamaga and then taken to the present site of New Mapoon (previously known as Charcoal Burner (See Figure 2). Others from Mapoon had already been relocated to Weipa. This notorious incident has been widely reported (see Roberts *et al* 1975-6). Through this action the Queensland Government hoped to facilitate bauxite mining in the Mapoon area. Mapoon men who were at that time working for the prospecting company 'Enterprise' report that they were not told that their families had been moved but returned to find them gone and the village burnt (Jimmy Bond Snr 1990/1).

The Community at New Mapoon is comprised of older people who dream of their homelands, Mapoon the land of milk and honey, and younger people who have lived their whole lives in the cosmopolitan world of the tip! The young as a rule have no desire to move back 'home' and so there is tension in some families between some who would like to return to their land and the young who want to stay at New Mapoon. Even the young, however, see themselves as having a communal identity related to their homelands and hence the popular name for themselves "Punja People" and the name of the local football team Tongandji



(Tjungantji) Brothers. *Punja* is the Mapoon word for the waterlily seed that is a popular traditional food from the Old Mapoon swamps and *Tjungantji* is the local name for Cullen Point near the Old Mapoon Mission site.

In 1990 I took a group of people back to Mapoon in my role as a lecturer in the Ranger Training Program for the Cairns TAFE College. For some of the old people it was the first time they had returned to their homelands and it was therefore a very emotional experience.

*We have always provided for our people. Fresh springs line the beaches and the swamps are full of rindi, geese and punja. They did not need the white god that came but some gods are arrogant and he came anyway.*

*We listened to the men who came carrying his cross, they claimed they did not want to change the culture of the people, but they didn't like the old men having many wives. They did not want the people to talk to the spirits or use the language of the land. Today the language is gone! The people begin to return but how will they know us? The old ones are gone and they have none to teach them.*

*We watched the truck as it stopped under the almond tree. The ruin of the mission house is nearby. Some say it is haunted, well it is ours again. What do they want these people? On weekends some of the young come out from Weipa, they break all the taboos and they hunt and drink and then go again! But wait there are old ones, perhaps they will know us. The old ones yarn of days gone by. They tell of the evil time when people were torn from the land, when spirits were abandoned to wander the landscape alone.*

### **5.7.1 Jimmy & Mabel Bond's Story**

This is an extract of a story I recorded at Old Mapoon in 1991 as we camped under the almond tree in front of the ruins of the mission house.

**Jimmy:** Yeah there was a company here before Comalco, Canadian - Enterprise that one. You caught a plane to Agnew, that's where the main camp was. They had there camp there at Batavia first. They had some boys working for them before I joined and they all left. That Enterprise the Miller mob bin work there. Where this lot (Canadian) bin work first, up at Agnew. You know when they walk away dey growl first and den bin

walk away. I do not know (what they bin growl about) might be something bout the company, might be men never liked the way they were treated. Then when they picked me and one old bloke Freddy's grandad (Freddy Toby), Harry Toboy and William Parry.

Them two companies (Canadian and Enterprise) pulled out and left Comalco. I was working at Bramwell Station and I came down here and I joined with Canadian. I think it was in the 60's. (It must have bin early 60's yufla bin go from here in 63).

**Mabel:** Yeah. It bin during that time that Jimmy bin start to work...when they come back nobody was here. We bin stay at the back of the place with my sister.

**Jimmy:** Yeah. I was working at < > then at that time and when I go home I see all the people bin evacuated. I didn't know till we got back. Some bin shifted to Bamaga and some to Weipa. When I got back here, nobody was here. I didn't know where to find my family. All the houses everything was gone. (Tape 1990/1)

It is perhaps one of the cruellest ironies that men from Old Mapoon were employed to assist the geologists find the rock samples that would ultimately see the destruction of their village. It is also worth noting the callousness of the government of the time in that they failed to get word to people such as Jimmy Bond regarding events back home and the whereabouts and safety of his family.

## **5.8 Neighbours to the South**

The nearest neighbours to these five communities are the people of Old Mapoon, Lockhart and then Weipa and Aurukun (see Figure 1). The community of Injinoo are related through marriage, trade and friendships with the first three of these communities but are not traditionally affiliated with Aurukun although they have established connections since the first Cape York Land Summit (see Plate 9) and the formation of the Cape York Land Council. Old Mapoon, Weipa and Aurukun are located

on the west coast of the Cape while Lockhart is on the east.

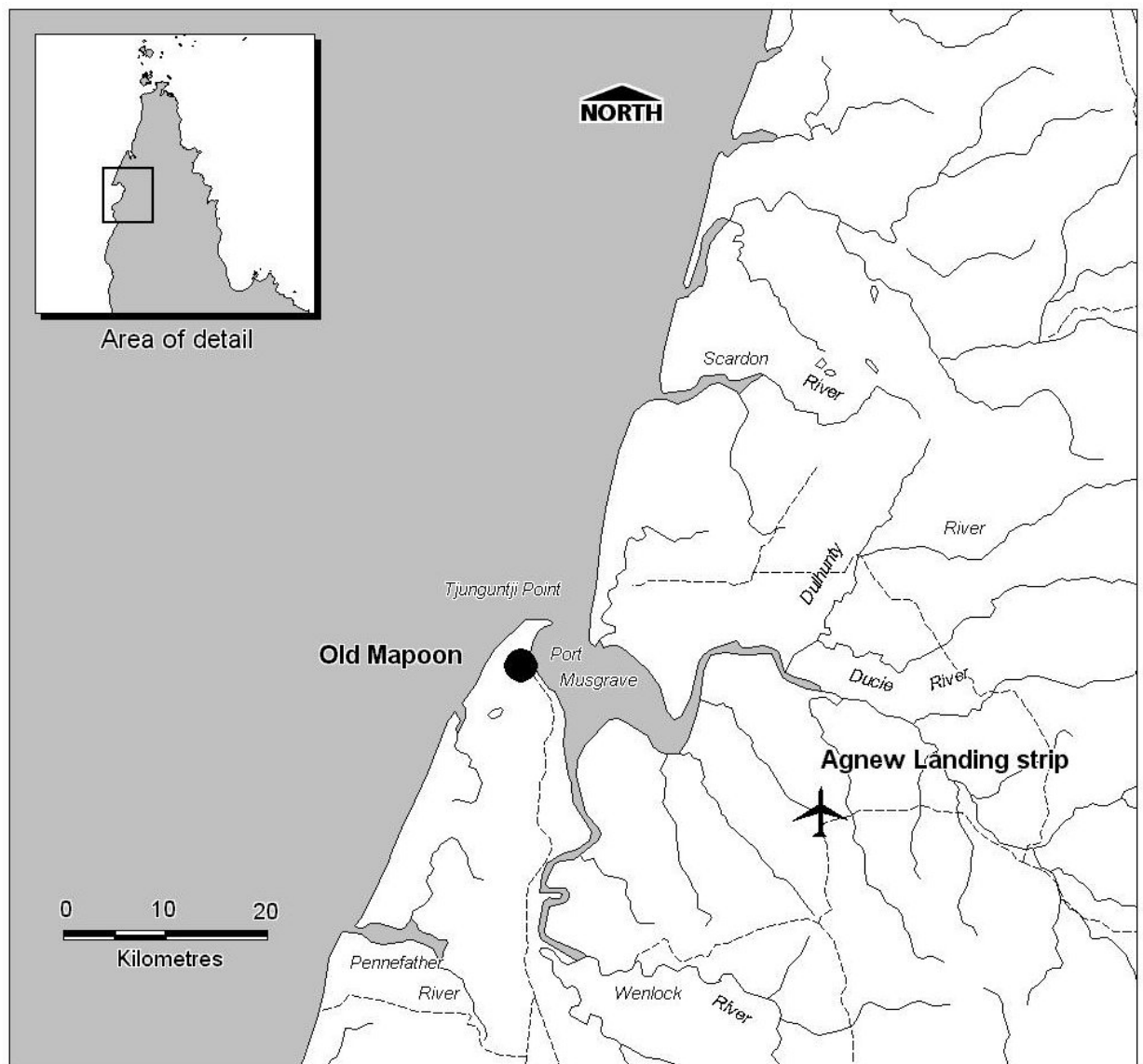
### **5.8.1 Old Mapoon**

Mapoon is located on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula at Port Musgrave and was established as a mission station in 1891 (see Figure 4). The Mission days at Old Mapoon are discussed at length in Chapter 7. As noted in section 5.7, the people of Mapoon were forcibly removed and relocated to New Mapoon in the NPA in 1963. Since that time however a growing number of Mapoon families have resettled in their homelands. The focus of the new community there is Red Beach although some families still camp along the beach where the old mission was located.

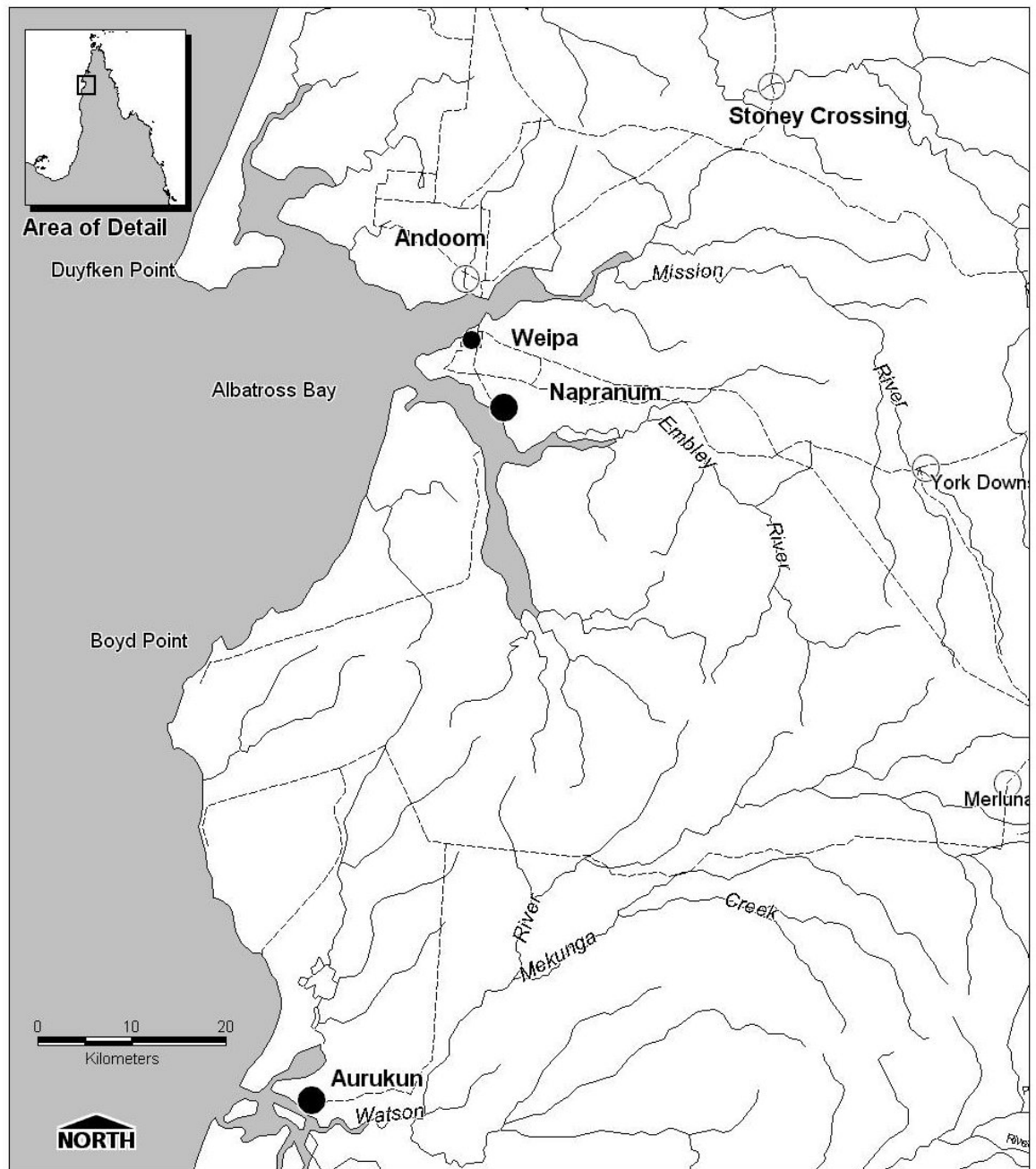
### **5.8.2 Napranum or Weipa South**

Weipa, on the western side of Cape York Peninsula (See Figure 5), is currently divided into Weipa North and Weipa South. The former was set up as a 'closed' (i.e owned by the company) company town to service the Comalco operations in the area. It has now progressed to an 'open town' which means that it is no longer under the direct control of Comalco. Weipa South is the Aboriginal community and is located at the site of the former mission. It is more commonly known as Napranum since the hand back of management through Deed of Grant in Trust in the 1980's. It is located approximately 14 km to the south of Weipa North.

The modern community of Napranum is in some ways quite different from other northern Cape York communities. The complexity of the community is partly due to the relationships between various local Aboriginal clan groups that are present there, the long-standing period of missionary influence and interactions with Comalco and its resources.



**Figure 4: Location of Old Mapoon**



**Figure 5: Locational Map Weipa and Aurukun**

Despite Meston's advice (1895) that the Aboriginal people of western Cape York were doing quite well on their own and should basically be left alone (see Chapter 7), the Queensland government supported the Presbyterian Church's drive to establish a chain of missions in the area. The Mission at Weipa was first established at a place known as '20 mile' but later moved to Jessica Point (in 1932), a more accessible spot for sea access and less affected by malarial mosquitos. The missionaries were still operational in the 1950's when serious exploration for bauxite was commenced in the area. However the post war period was a difficult one for the missions. Mission enterprises had never regained their pre-World War II productivity due to the changes that the war had brought to the regional economy.

In late 1957 the Queensland Government granted extensive mining leases to the newly formed Comalco under the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty Ltd Agreement Act of 1957. Aboriginal people were not a party to the negotiations relating to the mining agreements or granting of leases nor did they have any power over the future of the missions. The church represented their interests along with the Queensland government (the latter having a significant conflict of interest in the matter). The plan was to move people from Mapoon Mission to the Weipa mission and then relocate the Weipa mission to a more 'convenient ' location. When many of the people of Mapoon refused to relocate to Weipa they were forcibly removed to Bamaga (see 5.2). Finally the government, Comalco and the Church renegotiated a lease, which included the immediate surrounds of the Mission area although considerably smaller than the previous area (That is, 354,828ha reduced to 124 ha). In 1966 the government finally took over the administration of the community from the Church.

The Napranum community today is a mix of traditional owners from the immediate local area, Mapoon people who relocated at the time of the closure of Mapoon and those who have since moved there to

join family, and Torres Strait Islander people who were initially attracted to the mine at Weipa North for employment, who have married into families at Napranum. Due to its unique situation Weipa has some complex opportunities and problems. There is no doubt that the proximity to, and relationship with Comalco provides employment and training opportunities that the community would not otherwise have had. The proximity to a Comalco town also means that people have access to fresh food and Western goods at reasonable supermarket prices and people from further north or Lockhart to the east envy this. Similarly there is relatively easy access to buy greater range of alcohol at much cheaper prices than other communities. While people have the advantage of a range of education and vocational training opportunities, traditional owners must face the daily reality of large scale open cut mining in their country for which they receive no compensation and over which they have no control. The final injustice is that once the mining company has finished with the area and rehabilitated it, it does not, even then, revert to Aboriginal ownership. Due to the revocation of the original mission lease and special legislation proclaimed in relation to the mining interests, the area reverts to the Crown. This has been a particularly bitter pill for traditional owners who say that they were told by the Church and the mining company that the land would be returned to them 'as good as before' (Joyce Hall pers comm. 1990).

The links between the northern communities and Weipa are largely due to the presence of Mapoon people in both areas. Mapoon people had traditional marriage links with Seven River people, some of who had settled there while the rest went to Cowal Creek (Injinoo). In addition, since some people had moved to Weipa in the year preceding the forced closure of Old Mapoon, there is frequent movement between family members in New Mapoon and Weipa. Modern day Napranum has recent Islander immigrants many of whom are Kaurareg people with relations in Injinoo. The recent movement of Torres Strait Islander people (particularly Kaurareg)

has also increased the interconnections and movements between Injinoo and Weipa.

### **5.8.3 Aurukun**

The community of Aurukun is situated on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in the Gulf of Carpentaria (see Figure 5). The 1999 census records for Queensland records 866 people living in the shire of Aurukun. In 1996 it is noted that a total of 825 people resided there, 725 of who were Aboriginal Australians. Originally established as a Presbyterian Mission in 1904 the settlement of Aurukun reformed as the Shire of Aurukun in 1978 following the withdrawal of the missionaries and the transfer of management responsibility to the Queensland government and following resistance on the part of the people of Aurukun to being incorporated into the reserve system. The community was granted a 50 year lease over the shire lands under the administration of the shire clerk and an elected Aboriginal council.

This government structure meant that Aurukun was theoretically not subjected to the same level of direct control by the Queensland government as the other 'reserve' communities of Cape York Peninsula. However in practice this system did not achieve autonomy for the Aboriginal people of Aurukun as the criteria for selection of shire clerk ensured that the position was held by a non-indigenous person who was supported by predominantly 'white' council staff. The management role of the Aboriginal council members was a nominal one.

In recent years Aurukun community has suffered from the tensions created by a growing population of people from different clan groups who have been forced to live together. The affects of alcohol abuse have been exacerbated by the remoteness of the area, which has provided a niche for 'grog runners' who have been able to thwart community attempts to follow a 'dry' (i.e. alcohol free) community. The most serious cases of grog running have involved



non-indigenous people bringing in supplies of alcohol and selling them for enormous profits. In response to these and other community pressures some community elders have moved out of the village and back to their traditional lands taking their families with them (see also Martin 1981). The recent Wik decision handed down in November 2000 has recognised the Native Title rights of the Wik people and given an added impetus to the already strong outstation movement<sup>7</sup> in Aurukun.

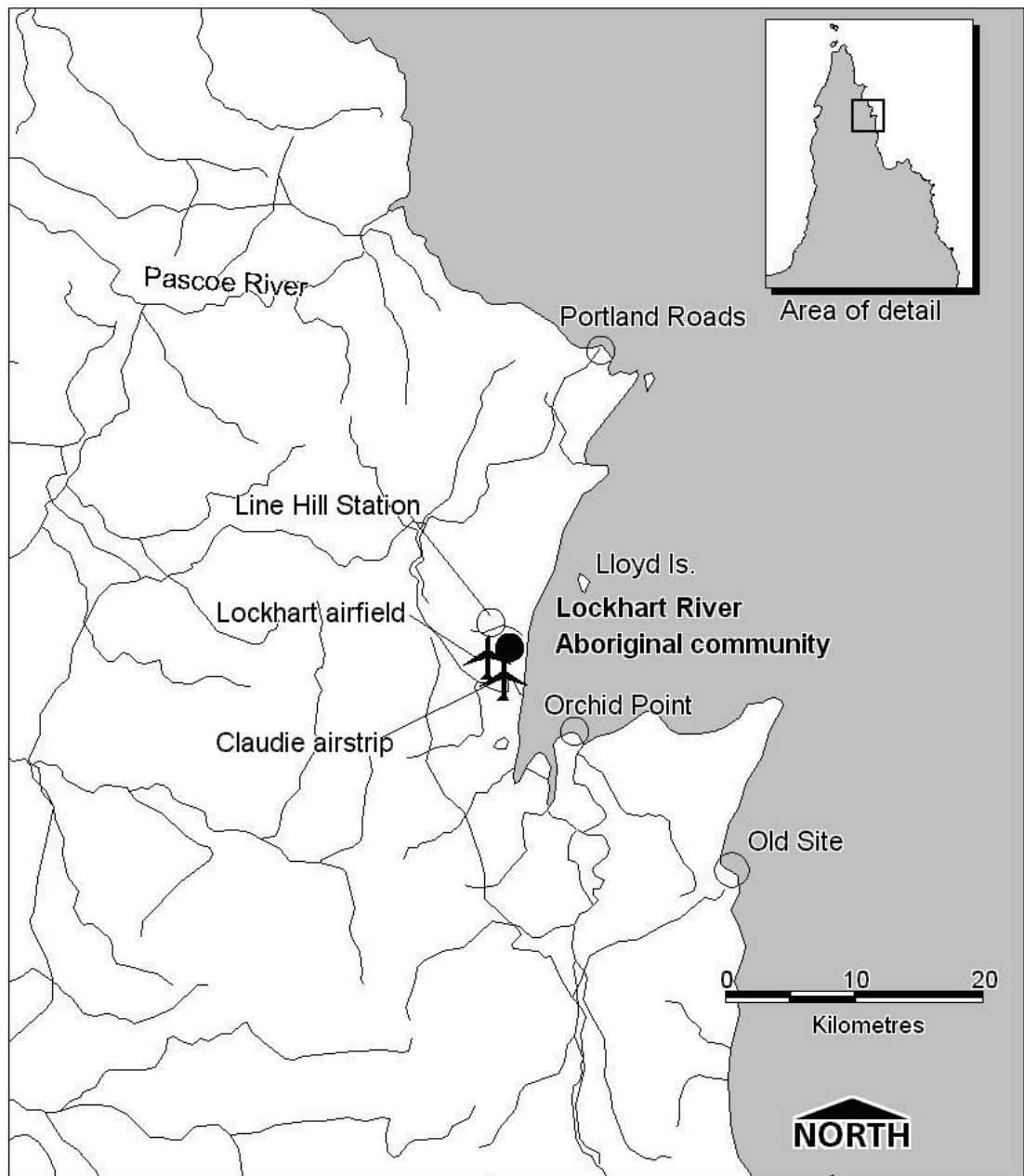
#### **5.8.4 Lockhart River**

Lockhart River Aboriginal Community is situated on the eastern seaboard of Cape York Peninsula at Lloyd Bay (see Figure 6). The community comprises a number of cultural groups including the *Wuthathi* from north of Olive River, the *Kuuku Ya'u* from Lloyd and Weymouth Bays, the *Uuthalganu* from the Lockhart River south to Friendly Point, the *Umpila* from Friendly Point to the Massey River and the *Kaanju* from the inland mountain country behind these. Over the years a number of Torres Strait Islander people have married into the community and have added to this linguistic and cultural diversity (for a more detailed account of the community and its culture see Chase 1980, 1994).

The Anglican Church established the Lockhart River Mission in 1924. Prior to this, Hugh Giblet a local sandalwood cutter who was located at Lloyd Bay appears to have provided a focal point for people to come together loosely as a community largely as a labour pool for the sandalwood trade. No doubt this was a symbiotic relationship with Aboriginal people providing an available if

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<sup>7</sup> The Outstation movement is the name given to the voluntary movement of small groups of people out of the townships and back to their traditional lands. Usually to pursue a more traditional lifestyle away from the pressures of the growing townships and villages.



**Figure 6: Location of Lockhart River Aboriginal Community**

somewhat flexible labour source and Giblest providing some protection from authorities and potential exploiters alike.

As at other missions in Cape York, dwindling post war productivity of mission enterprises and a refocus of evangelical attention to other countries such as China led to the closure of the missions. The Queensland government took over the control and administration of the communities. At Lockhart it was reported that a committee with Aboriginal representation was convened to consider the future of the settlement (Directors Reports 1962-3: 18-20 cited in Long 1970: 175). It was intended that Lockhart River people be absorbed into the super reserve, the NPA. The lease over Laradeenya Pastoral holding was resumed from Stan Holland as an option for the relocation. The Department of Native Affairs favoured a move to Alau near Bamaga (Long 1970). The location had been renamed Umagico, the name deriving from Umagi an important place near 'old site' at Lockhart River. However in the end it was agreed that Lockhart village would be re located closer to Iron Range Airfield but within the homelands of Lockhart River people.

While the Lockhart River community is one of the most geographically isolated in the Cape it has fought a number of key battles over recent years over threats and incursions into their land. These include opposition to the expansion of National Parks, the ill-fated Lloyd Bay Resort proposal, silica sand mining proposals in the Whitesand country immediately to the north of the community and the proposed space port near Olive River. There are strong links between Lockhart River and Injinoo people as witnessed by the fact that some Wuthathi people live in both places. There are also strong long-standing links between Lockhart River people and their neighbours on the Western side of the Cape. It was something of a shock to the defence forces stationed at Iron Range during World War II to find that people actually walked between these apparently isolated communities trading information and goods. An

investigation into security issues at Iron Range in May 1943 noted that

...Seven Aboriginals and halfcastes, some of whom had been previously employed by CCC recently returned from Mapoon Mission on the Gulf side of the Peninsular [sic] and were re-employed. It's understood that they freely discussed Australian and US troop concentrations in the Wyper River area and there does not seem to be any form of restriction on the periodic movement of this type of itinerants (cited in Marks nd: 30).

## **5.9 Conclusion**

The communities in northern Cape York today have each developed unique identities based on a synthesis of pre-contact and historic experiences and beliefs. There is increasing contact between communities as they develop both economically and politically in the post reserve era. There is also increased contact between these communities and the members of the broader Australian public. Whereas in the past most black/white relationships in northern Cape York have been set within the paternalistic framework of first the missions and then the government reserves now increasingly relationships are being forged on a more diverse basis. Examples of this include black employer/white employee or contractor, white tourist/black host, and even Indigenous religious leader/white congregation.

While there is increasing emphasis on new relationships there is also a strong emphasis on cultural continuity. Many communities are seeking way to develop and support community identity through times of change by promoting their history and taking a more active role in the formal education of their children (e.g the community school at Injinoo). Despite strong traditional bonds and in some case new political bonds there is still in some cases strong intercommunity rivalry and competition for resources. The following Chapters expand on some of the historical influences that have contributed to the character of the Cape York communities, as they exist today.

## Chapter 6

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### PASTAIM

#### 6.1 Falls the Shadow<sup>8</sup>: The Establishment of Somerset

*The strangers come more frequently nowadays. Once before they had come and sought to take the land. They caused the people much pain and the spirits and we grew restless, swelling rapidly in number as the marakai plundered and diminishing as traditions were trampled. Jardine! Ah yes, that was the name! We scattered his cattle and stole his tools but in the end we gave him his dream, to live here forever and to be held in awe. He is still here under the strange monument. Those who brought the 'light' made the people erect them to imprison the spirits of the dead, to prevent them living on, as they should. But Jardine has outsmarted the Light. Sometimes he emerges as a large taipan<sup>9</sup>, during the day he shelters from the sun under his concrete prison.*

*With the coming of the first marakai things changed but some things endure. We have reclaimed the forest where once his cattle roamed and where the soldiers lived. Inside the shade of the scrub we lie in wait for the unwary. Trespass here and we will turn your head until you wander aimlessly and all your pretty little things will be forfeit.*

For all that its flare in world history was tentative and short-lived, quite a surprising amount has been written about Somerset and the Jardine family who pioneered its settlement. As with many pioneer stories, most of the accounts are thick with romantic bias. In the title of his work '*A Barren Promontory: The Failure of the Colonial Vision at Somerset, Cape York Peninsula 1864-1877*', Stevens (1980) captures part of this. Isolated, failed attempts at colonial settlement capture public interest because of the poignant suggestion of failed dreams, struggles and hardship. Stevens discusses the reasons behind the rise and fall of the colonial dream

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<sup>8</sup> From T.S Eliot "The Hollow Men" '*Between the conception*

#### **And the creation**

*Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the shadow'*

<sup>9</sup> On one of my visits to Jardine's grave I was surprised by a large snake that had made its home under the headstone. I exclaimed about it (somewhat shakily as I had come upon it quite suddenly). Mrs Sagigi just said "that

at Somerset. The generally accepted history of Somerset has been summarised by Sharp (1992) and is contained in part in works like Prideaux (1988). These studies however are not based on systematic research into the history of the settlement and like most publicly accessible information they rely heavily on secondary sources and a large amount of hearsay, which has entered the public domain and taken on the dimensions of folklore.

In 1860, the HMS *Sapphire* was shipwrecked and the survivors had to sail 900 miles to Port Curtis, the nearest European Settlement. This was the catalyst that spurred the Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, to suggest establishing a station in the Torres Strait as a joint venture between the Imperial and Colonial governments (CO 234/2: 1860).

As a result, in 1864 the Imperial and Queensland governments determined to establish a harbour of refuge at Port Albany, Cape York. Governor Bowen selected the site himself after a reconnaissance voyage on the HMS 'Pioneer' which left Brisbane on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1862. (Austin 1949:218; see also QPP Despatch #24 Richards 1872 QSA Col/A216). 'On April 4th 1865, the first sale of Crown Land for the new settlement of Somerset took place in Brisbane' (Kennedy 1902:9). Seventy lots of land were offered for sale. Kennedy reports that they were bought for £20 per acre. In all 109 town allotments were sold at auction for a total of £2093.3.0.

The settlement was to be called Somerset and its primary purpose was to provide support to colonial shipping as a refuge to shipwrecked sailors and a re-fuelling and re-victualling port. A secondary aim was to secure the northern coast for the Imperial Government. Australia was a large continent with an unguarded coastline that was largely unsettled by the colonists. Therefore the government was ever conscious of the risk of rival empires annexing parts of the country. But the enthusiasts who purchased

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one em now-Jardine!". No one disputed this they all nodded solemnly. Somerset is like that, a place where things are

the land 'site unseen' at auction were obviously hoping for more than this, and no doubt they anticipated a thriving trading port to develop, consistent with the Government's sales hype that Somerset would become a 'second Singapore'. In 1865 Somerset was declared a 'free port' in the hope that this would act as a catalyst to trade development (Farnfield 1975: 70).

Somerset was established in 1864 and had a brief lifespan as a Government settlement until 1877 when it was abandoned in favour of Thursday Island. It appears that the selection of the site was made hastily and based on emotive first impressions rather than on sound knowledge of the landscape and environmental conditions. Once the reefs and waters of the Torres Strait were more intensively mapped, it became clear that preferred shipping channels would bypass the new settlement, as the waters of Albany Passage were difficult to navigate. Stevens (1980) cites hostility of the local Aborigines as a major factor in the decision to move the settlement. However, this appears unlikely as the traditional owners of Thursday Island, the Kaurareg, had been responsible for as many (if not more) hostile attacks on ships and Europeans as their mainland neighbours. The value of Albany Passage as a shipping route had lessened as its troublesome reefs were better mapped, and a new route which passed closer to Thursday Island had been mapped and was being used as the preferred shipping channel.

It is hard to believe that this settlement, which lasted only 13 years, could have had such a major effect on the future of the area and on the lives and livelihood of the majority population group, the Aboriginal people of northern Cape York. While the Jardine family remained in residence at Somerset until 1919, the site itself does not bear great testimony to colonial settlement. All that remains on the surface are the graves, some tumbledown stone garden walls, scattered broken glass, a well and a few isolated and dying coconut

trees (see site description and site plans in Chapter 11). What nature did not claim, the Queensland government bulldozed in 1967.

## 6.2 The Jardines Arrive

*We had seen their kind before. The people called them "marakai" and it is true that they haunted the landscape. Arriving from the sea, pale and wraith-like. At first we did not take notice, we satisfied ourselves by playing with their strange huge canoes getting them lost and entangling them in the reefs. Many times they strayed into areas that were forbidden and sometimes we revenged ourselves on them by sinking their vessels. We thought that, like the people, they would learn to live by the rules but they did not. They were peculiar and headstrong creatures who took from the sea and the land without ever paying their dues to the spirits or us.*

*Then came the old man. He came and put up a flag; many supplies were unloaded from the large clumsy canoes, which managed to stay afloat by some strange unknown magic. Later we heard the cries of the land and the people as the brothers slowly made their way north from the unknown void to the south. Scattered behind them, the people who had crossed their path lay dead or dying.*

The main family characters in the history of the area are John Jardine Snr who was the first Police Magistrate, and his sons Alex, John and Frank. Any account of the Jardine family and their influence in the area is bound to raise more questions than it answers. It is difficult to get a clear view of each of the characters and the role that they played in the history of the area. This is due partly to the fact that Frank Jardine, who had the longest and most powerful influence on the area, overshadows the other family members. In most local accounts he is simply referred to as 'Jardine' and even amateur histories (particularly those associated with the tourism industry) collapse all activities by the Jardine family into stories about Frank.



John Jardine Snr (1807-1874) was appointed Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Cook and Police Magistrate of Somerset in February 1844. He arrived at Somerset accompanied by his youngest son John Robert (1847-1911) aboard the 'Eagle' in June 1864, to take up his post as Police Magistrate. Prior to accepting the post he was Commissioner of Crown Lands and Police Magistrate of Rockhampton and before that he held the equivalent position in Dubbo, NSW.

Two more of John Jardine's sons became involved in the establishment of the new settlement. Frank Lascelles Jardine (1841-1919) his eldest son and Alexander William Jardine (1843-1920) led an overland expedition to drive cattle and horses to the new settlement. Alexander Jardine left Rockhampton on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1864 with a party of 9 other people and 31 horses. He met up with his brother in Bowen where they purchased more horses. The brothers again split up with Frank remaining in Bowen to purchase cattle and Alexander proceeding to Carpentaria Downs the most northerly cattle station in Queensland at that time. On the 11<sup>th</sup> October the Jardine expedition finally departed Carpentaria Downs into the unknown expanse of Cape York Peninsula. The party comprised Frank Lascelles Jardine, Alexander Jardine, Archibald J. Richardson (Government Surveyor), C Scrutton, R. N Binney, A. Cowderoy, Eulah (later killed in an uprising at Vallack Point in 1868), Peter Sambo and Barney (the latter 3 eventually executed by Frank Jardine in 1868). The latter four Aboriginal men were ex-native troopers from the Rockhampton and Wide Bay areas. While it was not uncommon to hire Aboriginal guides, no one ever seemed to question how Aboriginal people from areas far removed, without kinship and language, could be expected to *guide* people or communicate with or determine the intentions of the Aboriginal people that they came across on the journey. The expedition was taking with them 41 horses, 1 mule and 250 head of cattle (Bryerley 1867:7). There were of course no roads and the interior of Cape York had never been mapped. Only the river

mouths had been mapped by cartographers from the relative ease of ships, but while such coastal maps were of use to navigators they proved little use to travellers on foot.

By the time that they arrived at Somerset on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1865, they had lost 60% of their horses and 20% of the cattle and much of their equipment. They had also left a trail of dead or injured Aboriginal people marking most points at which the party and locals met. Jardine's journal (Bryerley 1867) reveals that approximately 95% of encounters between the Jardine brothers and Aboriginal people on their journey resulted in acts of hostility. Hostile encounters occurred near Cawana Swamp October 16<sup>th</sup>, Cockburn Creek November 14<sup>th</sup>, Staaten River November 20<sup>th</sup>, Camp 28 Staaten River area November 22<sup>nd</sup>, Camp 29 and nearby November 27<sup>th</sup> (in two separate encounters), Camp 42 December 16<sup>th</sup>, the Battle of the Mitchell December 18<sup>th</sup>, Camp 47 Mitchell River December 21<sup>st</sup>, Camp 54 December 28<sup>th</sup>; between Camp 68 and 69 January 14<sup>th</sup> (Bryerley: 1867).

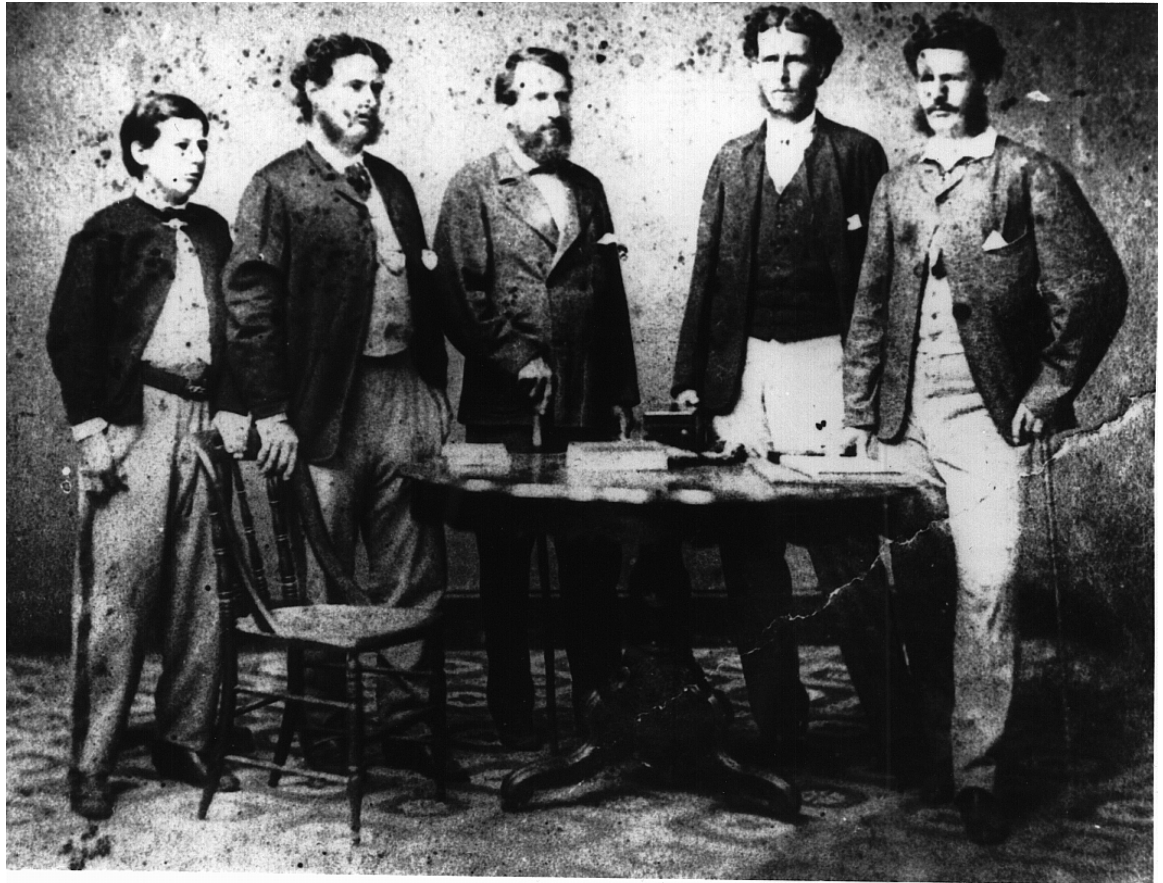
John Jardine Snr intended his stay at the fledgling settlement to be temporary. He had accepted the post on the understanding that it would last about 12 months at which time he would return to his post in Rockhampton (see extract of John Jardine's letter in Prideaux 1988:xv). Because of this he did not bring the rest of his family including wife, daughters and youngest son Charles Lennox (1855-1908) with him to Somerset.

Descriptions of the Jardines, their motives and nature are without exception polarised between those who see them as great white heroes of the frontier (Prideaux 1988), and those who see them as tyrannical despots, who were responsible for atrocities perpetuated on the local Aboriginal population (e.g Sharp 1992:65). Over the years there has been some collapsing of stories regarding the Jardines into a single Jardine 'bogey' man. Local accounts usually refer to 'Jardine' as single entity and if pressed people describe that

entity as Frank. For instance it is often pointed out that 'Jardine' fought with the missionaries (Jagg and Kennet) and the Commanding Officer of the Marines (i.e. Lieutenant Pascoe) however this was John Jardine senior, the marines had departed Somerset (in 1867) by the time that Frank Jardine took up his post as Inspector of Police in 1868. The actions concerning the harsh treatment of Aborigines, which were part of the disagreement between these people and Jardine, were the actions of John Snr not Frank Jardine.

The actions and rationale of the various Jardine men would be clearer if it were possible to gain access to family archives which are held at the John Oxley Library in Brisbane. Unfortunately the person who vets the access to this private collection claims that people only want to access it to discredit the family and tell lies about them. Restrictions on access to the archival material only add fuel to the theory that the family is hiding unpalatable truths.

Government records for Somerset are incomplete. Where correspondence exists it is not always possible to locate a response and one is forced repeatedly to read between the lines to attempt to answer key questions. The real nature and character of Frank Jardine is likely to be much more complicated than the secondary polarised sources would suggest. There is often a hint of hidden agendas in Government records relating to the period (for example the sudden appointment of Chester to the position of police Magistrate and Frank Jardine's departure for a year and then subsequent re-instatement - see correspondence Somerset Letter Book MSQ 589). It is likely that Frank Jardine was eventually seen as a limiting factor in the development of the settlement. Numerous complaints were made against him regarding his behaviour towards the Aborigines and Islanders, and throughout the pearling industry there were allegations that he stole pearling beds already claimed by others and illegally pirated ships (Telegraph 28<sup>th</sup> July 1873).



**Plate 10: The Jardine Men.** Photograph #7036 courtesy of the John Oxley Library.

### **6.3 Royal Marines and Native Troopers**

In August 1867, the Royal Marines left to return home to England. In effect their departure marked the end of official external scrutiny on the management of the settlement of Somerset. In discussions in England the matter of what police force might protect the settlement had centred largely on issues of costs to the Admiralty. Other more moral issues regarding the impact of policing options on the local Aboriginal populace were not really considered relevant although there is evidence that they were aware of them. For example the Admiralty had received correspondence from the commanding officer of the Marines, Lieutenant Pascoe criticizing the treatment of Aborigines by the Police Magistrate John Jardine (Pascoe 1864 CO234/14 XC2195).

From its establishment the settlement at Somerset was the subject of a tug of war between the Queensland and British governments. Neither government could be said to have embraced the settlement whole-heartedly. Despite numerous positive reports on the settlement (for example see Colonial Office files CO234/16 XC583 p179 dated 1865; CO234/19 XC583 *Extract from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of QLD 1867*) it is clear that the Imperial Government wanted to extricate itself from any active financial or other resourcing of the settlement almost as soon as it started.

Governor Bowen stressed the relief role that Somerset played in assisting shipwrecked and distressed sailors

It will be seen that the establishment of the station at Cape York is fulfilling the humane object for which it was so strongly recommended by as many distinguished Naval Officers. Doubtless this fact will be taken into consideration by the Lords of the Admiralty before they finally decide on withdrawing the guard of Marines (Extract from Colonial Office records CO234/16 XC583 from George Bowen to Edward Cardwell M.P).

No doubt Bowen would have ground his teeth in frustration if he had seen the hand written notes scrawled on his correspondence as it was passed from person to person in the Colonial Office.

Someone (signature illegible) has added the comment:

It is a satisfactory report and in acknowledging its receipt some notice might be taken of the assistance, which the Establishment at Cape York has already been the means of providing to the crews of the Vessels wrecked in the vicinity. If the Colony had not come forward and acted liberally in the matter the establishment would never have been formed.

Another person has added the comment below this that

I would not praise them too much...

And the commentary would not be complete without the public servant who was left out in the cold and wrote:

This is the first time that I have heard of a guard of marines stationed there. Before sending this to the Admiralty I'd like to know the nature of the arrangement proposed by the Colony and agreed to by the Home Government for the establishment of a Settlement near Cape York.

This of course was the problem with having a settlement dependent on joint funding and support from both the Imperial Government in London and the Colony of Queensland in Brisbane. There were

advantages and disadvantages to the distance between the day-to-day operation of the settlement and the complicated cross-government bureaucracy. While it took a long time for the powers to find out what you were up to it also took along time to get decisions made. One did not have the advantage of personal advocacy to influence outcomes and decisions.

After all official documents had changed hands the outcome was the same as had been predetermined by the Admiralty. The Marines were withdrawn from Somerset. Ostensibly the decision was based on advice from Commodore Wiseman who had visited Somerset on the HMS *Curacoa* and who wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 1867 suggesting that the Marines' health was failing and recommending that they be withdrawn. This was despite a report from the Governor of Queensland dated 12th September 1866 which claims that Dr Haran RN, the naval surgeon responsible for the settlement

...continues to report favourably on the healthiness of the detachment of the Royal Marines stationed there, and generally on the salubrity of the climate (CO234/16 XC583 file p177).

In contrast Commodore Wiseman proffered these opinions:

The men are scarcely adapted for the peculiar bush of Australia. I would strongly recommend their being withdrawn and replaced by native police who being taken from killers at variance with those in the vicinity of Somerset - would (in accordance with the well known fact regarding natives of Australia) be at deadly enmity with them and take every care that the settlement was not surprised.... Should the system of Native Police be decided on or that the Marines at Cape York are to be relieved by others, no time should be lost in doing so as the men although not suffering from any actual disease show signs of *incipient debility*, they have already lost one fifth their number and the present time of the year is the most trying and debilitating the rainy season (CO234/19 XC583 file p 14 Commodore Wiseman to the Secretary of the Admiralty).

It is worth noting that the recommendation for a detachment of Native Police to be stationed at Somerset was rejected by both the Governor General and the Council of Queensland and individuals in the Colonial Office in England if for different reasons. The Council of Queensland observed that

the Commodore Sire Wiseman and Captain Nares RN have suggested

that the RI Marines be replaced by a detachment of troopers of Queensland Native Police Corps. But this is not the opinion of most persons practically acquainted with the Country, and with the character of the Native Troopers. On the contrary it is generally agreed that it would be utterly unsafe (?) to place a detachment of Native Troopers at a distance of several hundred miles from the control of a European population at Cape York. They would probably mutiny on >? and would certainly carry on an >? war with the neighbouring Aborigines for the sake of their women (CO234/19 XC583 file page 36).

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1867 Commander Nares who had visited Somerset wrote to the Admiralty recommending that the detachment of Marines be withdrawn and replaced by 'black troopers' (Nares 1867: CO234/17 XC583). It is clear that the Admiralty was aware of the likely dire consequences for the local Aboriginal people should the Colonial government replace the departing marines with a contingent of native police.

As a handwritten annotation to a memorandum from the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, someone whose signature is indecipherable has added

It is clear that Commander Nares means a native force. It is lamented to be the first omen of extermination. But I recommend (if possible) to have nothing to do with it on the part of the Imperial Government. I would answer as prepared - only substituting the words in brackets "The employment of armed [sic] native police or any other native force in their plan would rest with the local govt. As in other parts of the colony" (CO234/17 XC583<sup>9</sup>). The initials are unclear but look like JN 20/12).

It is clear that although individuals in England were aware of the likely consequences of a native police force being stationed at Somerset, the real question for them was one of demarcation of responsibility between the Colonial Queensland Government and the Imperial Government. A handwritten attachment to Nares letter which is signed simply 'C' (assumed to be Lord Carnarvon) summarises the situation

The first questions to decide is whether the post is of Imperial or local consequence. Hitherto it has been treated as an Imperial station. Marines paid for from home have been placed there and its value in the care of shipwrecks has been strongly urged.

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<sup>9</sup> Although typed transcripts of some official correspondence exists as summaries for Parliamentary Papers relating to Somerset. Annotations such as this one are not included. The original documents although more difficult to access and to read can provide valuable insights into the behind the scenes bureaucratic discussions.

On the other hand if it is to be maintained for the protection of the individual colonists it becomes a local question.

The Admiralty works with studied ambiguity but it is necessary to force them to speak out their mind. If they distinctly decline to recognise it any longer as of imperial value then the question of maintaining a force there must be put to the Gov.- but until the Admiralty view is known no object will be gained by communicating with the Colony. Write therefore to the Admiralty in such terms as will force them to a distinct reply and an immediate one. It is no affair of theirs what the nature of the force is to be at the station if they decide on withdrawing the marines. If they consider the post to be imperially important to then and wish to withdraw the marines, they must pay – at all events in part- for any police or other force maintained there. In that case they will have a voice in the nature of the forces not otherwise. They must understand this (CO234/17 XC583).

And so the future of the Aboriginal people of northern Cape York and the neighbouring islands of the Torres Strait depended on a battle between governments over demarcation of colonial and Imperial responsibilities and budgets and the role of Native Police and their participation in genocide in the Australian colonies was well known but not considered significant enough to warrant intervention.

By the time that Frank Jardine took up the position of Inspector of Police in 1868 the decision had already been made to install a contingent of Native Police. This heralded a period of violence against local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that is still remembered today in the local accounts of history. In 1870 Chester records that the Native Police numbers had been increased to 8 and that 5 of those had been recently released from goal and in lieu of serving as Native Police they had considerable reductions to their sentences for violent crimes (Chester Somerset letter Book Letter Number 22-70 MSQ 589). Their crimes apparently ranged from robbery under arms and larceny and assault with intent to commit rape (Prideaux 1988:95). These then were the men who were expected to keep the peace and hold the local indigenous population in check.





**Plate 11: Frank Jardine on one of his luggers. Photo# 168783**  
**Courtesy of the John Oxley Library**

#### **6.4 Frank Jardine**

John Jardine Snr accompanied by his sons Frank and Alex left Somerset on board the HMS 'Salamander' to return home to Rockhampton in August 1865. Walter McClintock who was the Customs Officer and the Clerk of Petty sessions was in charge at Somerset until 1866 when Henry Simpson was appointed Police Magistrate. John Jardine remained behind at Vallack Point, the Jardine cattle station. John Snr returned with his son Frank briefly in October 1865. Frank stayed behind when John Jardine Snr left in November 1865 taking John Jnr with him. Little is recorded of Frank Jardine's activities between the point of his father's departure and his own appointment as Inspector of Police in 1868 (Letter from Colonial Secretary 21 December 1867). It appears that the position of Police Magistrate was downgraded and the pay reduced in 1868 and Simpson declined a further appointment to the downgraded

position. This downgrading appears to have been only temporary as Frank Jardine was once again signing as Police Magistrate in 1869 (see MSQ 589 Somerset Letter book).

It would be untrue to claim that Frank Jardine did not during his time at Somerset and elsewhere in the Straits develop an attachment to some Aboriginal and Islander people although it is hard to reconcile the man who rode up and summarily shot Peter, Sambo and Barney his three Aboriginal companions of his overland trip (for their part in a revolt against the homestead at Vallack Point) with the image of a man who could form deep attachments to indigenous people. He was, however, known to report accounts of unfair treatment against Aboriginal and Islander people by others, as can be seen in this routine report to the Colonial Secretary.

We have recently had anything but a desirable additoo[n] [sic] to the fishermen in the Straits in the shape of two West Indian blacks who have bought the "Crowns" long boat and settled on Murray Island, where with the help of natives principally women taken by force from other islands they are carrying on the Beche de Mer fishery. They have already become a severe terror to the Natives of the smaller Islands in the Straits, and in a recent affray with the Coconut Islanders about a woman shot one of them.

I am informed that several other boats will arrive next season - which will be exclusively owned and manned by South Sea Islanders, in which case the state of the Straits can be better imagined than described.-

On the information of Mr Tucker master of the Schooner "Margaret and Jane", I issued a warrant for the apprehension of Nine Rotuma men, who had stolen a boat and deserted from his vessel while at Campbell Island. (Captain Delargys fishing Station). John Larkins the person now in charge of the Station denied all knowledge of their whereabouts, but the men were afterwards apprehended with his party at "Murray Island", to which place the Station was then in the course of removal. The boat was discovered concealed in the scrub on Yorke Island but her oars were found on the Station in possession of Delargys people.- The deserters were brought to Somerset, some of them speak good English, and are Christians.- They give as their reason for absconding, the brutality of the Mate, (Thompson) who it appears was in the habit of compelling them to dive for shell by firing at them with a revolver. They also state that he sank a canoe full of Marbiack (Torres Id) Natives, who were making their escape from the Schooner, where they had been employed as divers, and fired indiscriminately among them killing two, Mr Chester verifies their statement, as in a recent visit to Marbiack, the natives complained to him of the loss of two men "Nukis" and Edowah who they affirm were shot by the mate of the "Margaret and Jane" - Mr Chester also tells me that the confident and fearless demeanour which formerly characterised the Marbiack people has given place to a cowed and sullen manner, and now instead of gathering on the beach to welcome a boats arrival, they make off with all their property into the

Scrub so soon as one heaves into sight. - This man Thompson, on hearing that it was Captain Tucker's intention to call at Cape York left the vessel and took a passage to Sydney by the "James Merriman".

...Although it may not perhaps be within the scope of my duties, yet I think it right to mention that several deaths have occurred recently among the Natives employed in the fisheries: no report is made in such cases; on the contrary, in some instances the facts are carefully concealed, and as the men are not on the "Ships article", it follows that no investigation ever takes place - Several of these vessels systematically avoid Cape York, but were they in need of assistance, would only be too ready to make use of it

F.L.J P.M.

(MSQ 589 Dixon Library "Records of Somerset Cape York 1872-1877" These are extracts from Somerset letter book #2. Entry 2.72 dated January 1<sup>st</sup> 1872 from Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary about the Pearl fishing industry).

Frank Jardine's time as Police Magistrate was fraught with controversy and allegations of improper conduct. It is difficult to determine from the government records just how much foundation exists in the allegations. Staff under his supervision generated some of the allegations against Frank Jardine. For example complaints by Constable Ginivan that police were being forced to carry out personal chores for Jardine at the Government's expense and that the Jardine brothers were short-changing the Government in relation to the supply of beef to the settlement. The letter cited below is a long litany of complaints (Somerset Letter Book. Letter number 26-68 MSQ589).

Copy

Police Station Somerset  
2nd Sept 1868

Constable Lawrence Ginivan? No. 41 respectfully begs leave to report to the Commissioner the ill treatment that the Police of this Station are receiving from the Inspector Mr Jardine on his appointment to his present rank, when men complained of being ill - he told them 'that it was only exercise they required, and that he would try and find the sufficient work to keep their blood in circulation' two of them in particular namely constables Ginivan and Healy, the cause of which they do not know accept that they assisted him. [>?] previous to his appointment...[>?] however he has put his threats into execution by keeping the men constantly at work, contrary to the Commissioners orders, clearing scrub for driving his cattle through, building stockyards, for slaughtering at the Police Magistrates residence and afterwards salting the meat which is sold when a ship passes, in keeping? the Government horses out of the bush for the amusement of civilians. They also had to draw timber and grass out of the bush a distance of half a mile, to build a boat house for his boat, while police boat is left out under the sun, but is celdom [sic] used except [sic] on exkursions [sic] of pleasure he has also compelled the guard to work during the day; and resume his duty at night under arms, and if not strong enough to endure the hardship he gets fined the

following money £2 or eight days imprisonment, for what he calls neglect of duty- he also when he meets the men in the morning after returning they salute, tells them that they are looking quite fresh and rosy and that they will [>?] be a fine a looking lot of fellows, as any one could wish to see - also when I complained to him about my legs breaking out with scurveys, he said Scurvy be damned it is only filth they/try [>?] lots of fresh water and if it does not succeed try lime juice it is splendid anti [>?]

The men are now also frightened to make complaints [>?] as he is always in a good temper and only laughs at them - he will take no complaints unless written ones, when he punishes as severely as he can, to prevent them as he says from coming again.

Even when the half? rations from the 5th of June to the 3rd of July in consequence of the flour being sold to traffic with the natives the men will still kept cutting scrub and finding themselves unable to continue working from fatigue and hunger they remonstrated with him and referred him to the Commissioners Instructions for the Police at Somerset, he said they are exactly what I go by- That the police as fatigue are to keep the barracks, other Government Buildings and their approaches in order, so do not talk about things you do not understand as the work has to be done and of course you must do it, if you do not wish to, say so, as for your rations I consider 5lb of flour, 2lb sugar, 1/4lb tea and as much meat as you can eat, quite sufficient - for any man- at any rate if it is not, I can't make the flour for you- The men here also consider his orders very unsafe, as he has laughingly told both civilians and Police from the bench, in future not to bring their Petty quarrels before him, but had better fite? it out between themselves on the flat, when he would come and see fair play if they wished it. It is also positively asserted by the natives that he has shot two Blacks Barney and Sambo he put two balls through Barneys head and one through Sambos back, as stated by the men who were looking on, also he leaves home sometimes in the middle of a dark rainy night with his troopers and we hear nothing of him for two or three days, the Blacks are in great terror of him, and will do anything for him so that it is useless anytime trying to get them to do anything, if he forbids them- the reason that they so dread and/not? Respect him is that he never breaks a promise or threat with them no matter what it may be so the name he goes by amongst them is Marmouchy, which means earnest and determined which is quite true of him as all the men know.

The medecine that was left at the hospital for the use of the men has somehow? disappeared and on one of the men in his illness going to Mr Jardine for a dose of oil, he told them that there was none, then he found him at the same time using Castor oil cleaning his arms, and to compleat[sic] his speshel threat he has suspended Const L Ginivan on the 26th August for not being able to endure more hardship that he actually is at present he was drawing water on the 25th from 8am to 4 o.c pm after which the Luit.? Inspector told him to commence painting, he Ginivan told him that he was unable to work any more that day after filling his tank with the horse and dray, and that he might report home to the Inspector, he got suspended next morning for not being obedient to continue working longer -

Instead of Police the men are private servants to the Inspector and if they grumble at their hard lot, they are laughed at or threatened with severe punishment, and we all know Mr Jardine to be just the man to keep his promises - Constable Ginivan hopes the Commissioner will be pleased to have these charges investigated, as there is nothing stated here but facts but what can be testified to by all the party, except his favourite men who like him because they say there is no >? About him as he always means and does what he says, and has always been kind

to them- although he makes them work just the same as the rest and fines them just as heavily - in conclusion Const. Ginivan begs to state that he and Const Healy would not tender their resignation if it was not for the hardships they have to endure.

Lawrence Ginivan Constable

The Inspector of Police Somerset  
(Somerset letter Book letter # 26.68 MSQ 589)

Frank Jardine, as might be expected, responded to this complaint with a letter of his own which accused the constable of laziness, drunkenness and fraternising with blacks. Jardine's correspondence implies that Ginivan is motivated by spite after being suspended for bad behaviour. In a memorandum dated October 9<sup>th</sup> 1868, Jardine concludes, 'Constable Ginivan is without exception the most unsatisfactory and troublesome man that I ever had anything to do with'.

As to the allegations that Jardine shot two blacks, he vehemently denied this sometime later saying (Somerset Letter book letter 49.68 MSQ 589):

In a complaint of Const: Ginivan's enclosed in No 26 -68 of Sept 2nd he accused me of shooting two Blacks; as the report was untrue I took no notice of it here - but now that the same report has been carried to Burketown, and returned in an exaggerated form - I think it only right to contradict the above story, which I now have the honour to do most flatly...

This statement does not ring quite true as in his previous correspondence to the Commissioner, Jardine denied all the other allegations listed by Ginivan but the letter was conspicuous by its avoidance of the allegation about shooting the two Aboriginal people. There were in fact 3 Aboriginal men killed in this incident. As mentioned previously they were his own companions of the overland trip who had been working as his stockmen ever since Barney, Peter and Sambo. Does this imply guilt? Or simply a recognition that the charge of robbing the government in relation to the supply of beef and use of government personnel for private work would have been regarded by government authorities to be the more serious of the charges? It is likely that in summarily

executing these men for their alleged involvement in the Vallack Station uprising, Jardine had exceeded his authority.

Other anomalies exist in the portrait of Frank Jardine as popularly painted. If the man were given to the unjust actions attributed to him in relation to his treatment of local Aborigines, would he have cared one way or the other about unjust theft of their canoes by station personnel? Yet this memorandum to one of his police force is recorded:

Some of the Mud Bay Blacks, have been complaining to me that the two canoes on the beach have been taken from them by some of the Police; So find out if the canoes have been fairly? come by - and if they have not; Launch the boat, tow the canoes into the middle of the pass; set them adrift- The Blacks will be able to pick them up as they float by Mud Bay (Somerset Letter Book letter number 48.68 dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 1868).

Of course someone who thought they had a right to kill Aboriginal people is quite likely to have also felt that it was justifiable to falsify records to provide evidence that indicated an impartiality that was not true. The tone of the memorandum certainly does not imply any acceptance of responsibility for the actions of his staff or apology to the owners of the property however it seems to suggest an acknowledgement of property rights on the part of the local Aborigines and also that local Aboriginal people felt confident enough to put complaints to him.

1868 was a particularly torrid year for Jardine in terms of allegations concerning his actions. The claims made by Ginivan and others whether true or not, made their way south and surfaced in Brisbane newspapers. At one point there was obviously enough concern to precipitate his temporary removal from the post. The reason for Frank Jardine's sudden and as it turns out temporary departure from his position in August 1869 is not specifically discussed in government correspondence. He was replaced by Henry M Chester until his return in 1870. Chester obviously believed that his appointment was to be permanent as indicated in

correspondence between him and the Colonial Secretary he states that

In reply I have the honour to refer you to the letter 543-'69 dated 6<sup>th</sup> July addresses to me by Mr Hodgson late Colonial Secretary, and to the Government Gazette of 17<sup>th</sup> July 1869. From these it will be seen that my appointment as P.M at Somerset was absolute and without reference to any leave of absence granted to Mr Jardine. I would certainly have declined an acting appointment of a temporary nature involving banishment from all society, in addition to a most expensive journey of upwards of 1,500miles, upon such terms more especially as I had at that time an offer of another appointment in Brisbane nearly as good in point of salary, and without these drawbacks.

Moreover, it is evident Mr Jardine did not regard my appointment as merely to have effect during his absence, for, in the first place, he then knew nothing of the 12 months leave of absence on full pay afterwards granted him, and, secondly, he asked me whether in the event of his getting another appointment I would be willing to exchange with him (Chester 1870 Extract from Somerset letter book FM4/2565 also CY837).

There is evidence that Frank understood the power he held over the local Aboriginal population. On his arrival Chester tells us that Frank Jardine urged him to leave the police magistrate's residence on the southern hill and settle on the northern hill where there was a similar house located with the old garrison. Chester recalls that

'Before leaving, Jardine urged me to abandon the southern hill as he said it was not safe for us to remain there with only four men. He strongly advised me to remove to the northern hill where there was a house similar to the one on the Southern Hill which I have described, because if we were attacked by the blacks the police from the Barracks would be unable to come to our assistance as they would immediately be speared from behind the trees without even seeing their assailants. "the blacks" he said " will probably burn this house and the Stockyard, but that you cannot help" (CY837 Henry Majoribanks Chester Autobiography and Parodies undated).



**Plate 12: Frank Jardine.** Photo # 9394 Courtesy of the John Oxley Library

There was obviously a great deal of rivalry in the pearling industry, and a lot of misinformation was generated which has obscured the true nature of Jardine's involvement in the industry. Frank Jardine gives this amusing account of deception by rival boats:

As an instance of the rivalry &c displayed by the 'Pearl Shellers' I give the following, which came under my notice a short time since - One of the Fishing parties having discovered a rich patch of shell, and wishing to keep it solely to themselves, made a practice of hoisting the quarantine flag, whenever opposition boats were seen cruising in their neighbourhood - On one occasion the Captain of a rival Station, came alongside and inquired why the yellow flag was flying - in answer, he was told that small pox! had Broken out on board the vessel, from which ten men had already died, and that 15 more were down with it, not expected to live; The information had the desired effect, that of



frightening away the trespasser, whose boat was allowed to get well out of sight, when those of the unfortunate vessel were at once started to work again, and collected a ton of shells (about 630) before dark - the ruse succeeded for some time, but ten tons of shell had been taken, before it was eventually discovered by a boats crew of Kanakas who ignored small pox and the "yellow jack". I think for the future that the yellow flag, among the fishing community in Torres Strait will be an attraction, notwithstanding the warning that it is usually understood to convey (MSQ 589 Dixon Library "Records of Somerset Cape York 1872-1877" Entry 25.72 From FLJ to Colonial Secretary dated April 1st 1872).

In 1873 Frank Jardine was removed from office, his conduct once again under scrutiny. The incident generated some media controversy in Brisbane and other southern ports (Telegraph 28<sup>th</sup> July 1873) and subsequent protestations from Jardine as to the unfairness of the allegations. He was suspended from office on October 16 1873 (see Prideaux 1988:120) and was not re-instated. 1873 was also according to Prideaux (1989:195) the year that Frank Jardine married Sana Solia, a Samoan woman who was the daughter of one of the missionaries in Reverend W.A Murray's party. I could not find a record of their marriage in the register of births deaths and marriages for Somerset so if they were formally married the ceremony may have been held elsewhere, presumably closer to Frank Jardine's family. Charles E. Bedomme was temporarily appointed to the position of Police Magistrate until the appointment of George Elphinstone Dalrymple in May 1874.

## **6.5 Deciding the Future of Somerset**

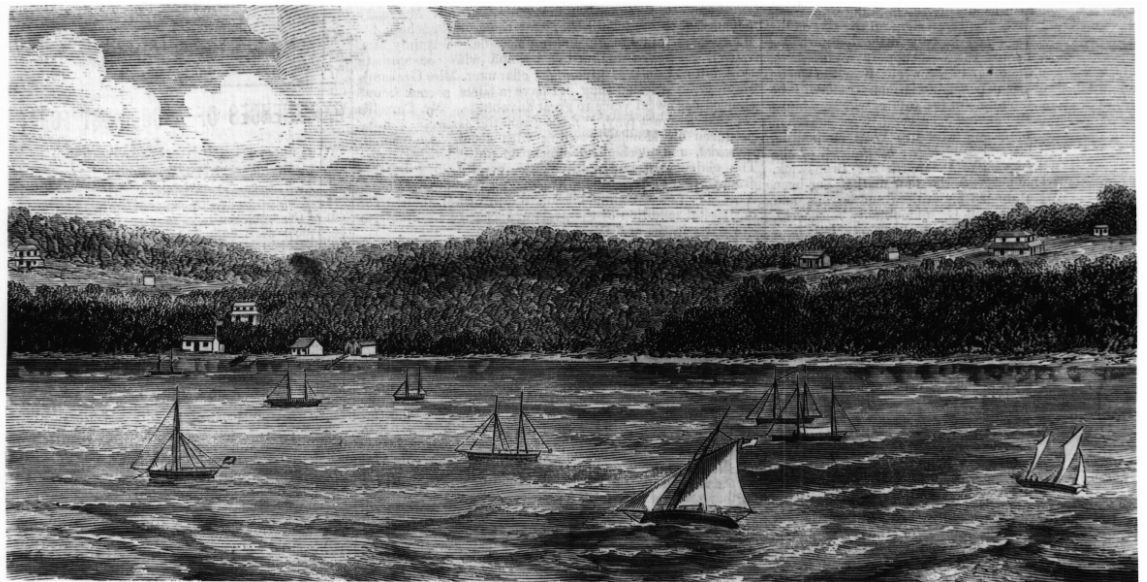
In late 1877 the Settlement of Somerset was removed to Thursday Island. At the time of the move London born (1832-1914) Henry Majoribanks Chester was the Police Magistrate. Chester was first appointed police magistrate at Somerset for the duration of Frank Jardine's leave of absence (1869-1870). Following Jardine's return, Chester remained in the area completing several exploratory trips to New Guinea and parts of the Torres Straits. He became Police Magistrate at Somerset again in 1875 and remained in that position until the removal of the government settlement to Thursday Island late in 1877. He continued to serve as Police Magistrate at the new Settlement on Thursday Island and in 1885 he was instrumental in

annexing a large part of New Guinea to Queensland.

At this time Frank Jardine had his pearling operations headquartered at Nagai, an island to the northeast. With the removal of the government establishment he again took up residence at Somerset in the old magistrates House. Captain Green in his *Memories of the early Days of Thursday Island* also reports that

The Shellers who had their quarters at Albany Island took up their quarters nearer the new settlement, some in Prince of Wales Island, Friday Island, etc.... (ML MSS312 A g56. Carbon copy of an unpublished manuscript "Memories of the Early days of Thursday Island" by Captn. S.G. Green.).

Once again Frank Jardine ruled Somerset, although in somewhat more isolation than before and with no official status. He lived there with his wife Sana until his death in 1919.



**Plate 13: Somerset Bay from Albany Passage**  
Plate # 51300 Courtesy of John Oxley Library.

## Chapter 7

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### THE COMING OF THE LIGHT

***“..the people who sat in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
light has dawned”<sup>11</sup>***

*We watched as the vehicle approached, sometimes they came from Weipa to hunt for geese. But always they would leave again and the wind in the almond tree would echo with the cries and laughter of those past children of Mapoon.*

*The vehicle pulled up under the almond tree. Some of the people were old, they looked about them. One old man said quietly to himself " At long last I see my home". He thought nobody heard.... we did. And we recognised one of the people who had been taken from us. One of the lost ones who new no language but who still belonged. The change had begun when that white man came with his strange and greedy god...they came and the world was changed forever...*

In 1990, I travelled to Old Mapoon (see Figure 4) with Victoria Luff, Katherine Parry, Mabel and Jimmy Bond, Stephen Mark, Tom and Rose Ware, and Rocky Tamwoy. On this trip other people visited our camp from both the new settlement at Red Beach and from Weipa. Andrew Miller from Weipa was one of these and he contributed to the stories about the mission days. Freddy Toby who lived along the beach adjacent to the old mission site assisted with camp necessities such as hunting and clearing the well and shared the benefit of the elders' stories.

The trip was arranged as the Traditional Management Module in the TAFE based ranger course that I was co-ordinating at the time, however the only Mapoon Ranger who attended was Tony Barkley from Old Mapoon. The Elders' Committee at New Mapoon, which was established to advise the rangers, had specifically requested that Mapoon Rangers learn about their heritage and the history of

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew 4,16

the community prior to the forced removal of people from Old Mapoon in the early 1960s.

This trip and the discussions under the old almond tree at the mission site brought home to me the important formative role that the missions played in developing the communities as they exist today. Equally important are the places themselves, the old mission sites, in contributing to Aboriginal community identity in northern Cape York.

One cannot discuss Aboriginal history in Cape York since European invasion without referring to the impact of Christianity and the people who promulgated it. Not all missionaries could be described as having an unequivocally negative effect, and the religion they brought has been embraced by so many that the church is often an important part of Aboriginal community life.

The story of the mission period is also important in contemporary accounts. Illustrating these stories are many places scattered across the landscape but focused around the mission establishments. The visit to Old Mapoon was the catalyst for reminiscing about those days that are often referred to as *pastaim* or *bufo deiz*. All of the communities that I have had contact with in Cape York have a wealth of mission stories. And it is not unusual for a storyteller in the one story to recall these *bufo deiz* with longing while at the same time cry over some forced indignity or loss that dates to that time.

There is an inherent tension between these two dimensions of mission history. With distance and time it has become easier for people to see what that period cost them, but they still harbour feelings for the place that they laboured in, and perhaps for the period when there was some certainty and, compared to the post mission days of Government control, a level of prosperity.



**Plate 14:        Camping in front of the old Mission House in 1990. Freddy Toboy, Stephen Mark, Andrew Kennedy, Tony Barkley and James Bond Snr.**

### **7.1        Early Missionary Attempts**

In 1870, the London Missionary Society conducted a survey of the Torres Strait. Around the same time the southern part of Cape York Peninsula was beginning to open up. William Hann successfully led an exploration team from the Lynd River to the Stewart River and back in 1872. In the same years telegraph communication was established to the Gulf of Carpentaria and perhaps most significantly James Mulligan discovered significant quantities of gold at Palmer River in 1873.

The 1870s and 1880s were a period of expansion and discovery. Two major expeditions were launched in the 1880s. The Queensland Government geologist, Robert Logan Jack, led the first in 1879 from Cooktown northward to Somerset. The second in 1883 was led by J.R. Bradford to explore Cape York. The need to establish telegraph communications with Thursday Island was probably the most organised push for colonisation. Throughout the

1880s a series of telegraph stations were established as the line pushed northward. They became the focal point of white/black contact and the implementation of government policy.

The churches launched the other concerted attempt at colonisation. Although missionaries had attempted to establish a Mission at Somerset in 1866, obstruction from the local government official had meant that this attempt was not successful. It was not until 1891 that a mission was successfully established on the mainland in Northern Cape York. This mission on the mouth of the Batavia River was later called Mapoon and was established by Moravian Missionaries under the auspices of the Presbyterian Board of Missions. It was followed by the establishment of Weipa in 1898 (the original site was on the Mission River), Aurukun in 1904 and Mitchell River (Kowanyama) in 1905.

One of the supporting arguments for establishing missions in Cape York was for the protection of Aboriginal people from unscrupulous Europeans and others. Roth (1901) the Northern Protector of Aborigines, was an ethnographer who travelled amongst and reported widely on Aboriginal people in the Cape York area. He mentions Mapoon in his analysis of problems caused by the shelling and beche-de-mer industries. Roth spent the period 24th September to the 8th November 1899, in the area of Port Musgrave to Albatross Bay. Alleged abuses performed by those in these industries included taking young boys against their will and often leaving them stranded (see also Howard 1907 cited in Chase 1988:128 re Lloyd Bay area). Exploitation of women from Mapoon presumably occurred, as the early Mission Death Register included many cases of women, many of whom were not more than children, dying from sexually transmitted diseases. Ganter (1999) has pointed out that the proliferation of statements about abuses in the pearl shelling and beche-de-mer industries, which imply eyewitness accounts of such abuses, must be regarded as suspect. To illustrate her point, she identifies two separate

submissions on the subject, one by Douglas (QVP Vol 2 1894 pp14-15 in Ganter 1999:273) and one by Hey (1897 Mf186 AIATSIS cited in Ganter 1999:273), which were written 3 years apart but have almost identical wording. While undoubtedly injustices in the industries did occur it is likely that these may have been exaggerated and that in fact the real issue with the industries was the increased movement of indigenous peoples from one area to another outside the control of Government authorities, the ensuing transmission of ideas and increased independence of those individuals concerned.

Missionary endeavour is inevitably by nature paternalistic, predicated as it is on the assumption that Christianity is 'right' and 'superior' to the beliefs of the subject tribe, nation or community and that the latter can only be improved by being converted to it. In Aboriginal missions the strategy was to take and mould the children, and in this the missions were useful confederates to the Queensland Government's assimilation policy (Loos 1988:113; Hey nd: 4 MLMSS 1893 item MLK2568).

All missions established under the auspices of the Presbyterian Board of Missions had common and clear objectives. The following extract is from a mission filmstrip lecture notes entitled 'Aborigines at Ernabella':

The purpose of the Mission is three fold- Firstly to act as a buffer cushioning the impact of Westernism on the primitive nomads, secondly to give them spiritual and mental certainty, economic capacity, and health security as the inevitable changed way of life comes to them; and thirdly gradually to build them up into a settled community with the new skills, knowledge and experience required for securing an independent livelihood as Christian citizens of a predominantly white Australia (Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions MLMSS1893 Item MLK2568).

Missionaries themselves differed widely, although operations were subject to the Board of Missions 'Regulations for Missionaries' and overseen to some extent by the Board itself. In reality due to the remote locations involved, the individual representatives of

Christianity who ventured forth to run these stations shaped a mission's environment and had complete autonomy in day- to- day operations.

## **7.2 Old Mapoon – A Case Study**

Mapoon is situated on the western side of Port Musgrave on Cape York Peninsula (see Figure 4). It was established on the 28th November 1891, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church by Moravian Missionaries, the Revd. J.G Ward (1857- 1895) and the Revd. J. N. Hey (1862 -1951).

### **7.2.1 Old Mapoon today**

When I travelled to Old Mapoon in late 1990 the skeleton of the old mission house was still standing as an eerie reminder of the once busy mission. All of the other buildings had been demolished when people were removed to New Mapoon. A new settlement had sprung up at Redbeach nearby as some people continued to move back to the Mapoon area and establish houses. Along the beach several people had re-established their families on the site of the old mission settlement. Mrs Suzy Madua had re-established a small farm on the outstation site. Of the old mission, only the graveyard had survived relatively intact, even if neglected.

At the time of my visit in 1990 the mission house still stood as a substantial ruin. Unfortunately since that visit I have been told that the frame of the old mission house has been finally demolished. All that remains then to draw the eye to the old mission site is the big bush almond tree (Terminalia sp.) that still stands in front of the site of the old mission house. One cannot over emphasise the impact that missionaries had on the people of the area. And one cannot express fully the power of the ruined mission house to evoke an emotional response from visitors. As it stood at the time of my visit, it was a powerful symbol of the tragedy that had been perpetuated on the Mapoon people with their forced removal.



The complicated emotions aroused by memories of Mission days are probably typical of people's feelings about other missions. Memories of missionaries themselves often get bound up with the place and all that is familiar leading to apparently conflicting feelings and attitudes to mission places. People can often express resentment at injustices both felt at the time and those events or restrictions re-interpreted in light of contemporary understanding and yet on the other hand recall a past time with fondness and nostalgia.

### **7.2.2 Mapoon -The history of a Mission Station:**

A lot has been written about Mapoon, particularly regarding the later years of the settlement and the forced removal of the people by the Queensland Government in the 1960s (Presbyterian Board of Missions 1961; Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement 1962; Roberts, McLean, Parson & Russell 1975-1976). Few of these documents focus on the early days of the mission (but see Hey 1923; Presbyterian Board of Missions 1946). However, the Chief Protector of Aborigines the Revd Archibald Meston (1896) commented on the fine work being done by the missionaries at Mapoon mission station. In his report he comments on the lack of arable land and of the 'problem' of old men taking multiple wives. He also notes that the missionaries intended to establish a new mission south of Batavia, perhaps on the Hey River. He recommends against the establishment of such a mission because of the undisturbed nature of Aboriginal settlement and occupation in that area. His recommendations in this instance appear to have been ignored and the Presbyterian mission at Weipa was established in 1898 on the banks of the Embley River.

By the late 1930s, the mission station was a thriving enterprise. Captain C.A.S. Mansbridge (1939) describes the Mapoon mission station as 'partly self supporting'. Copra was grown and transported to Thursday Island by the mission boats the '*J.G Ward*' and the '*Kuila*'. Cattle were also fattened for sale and home consumption.

Mansbridge's only insight into the lives of the local people is given in a description of a duck hunting expedition. He described how they waded into the swamp with a bush in front of their faces for camouflage. Seventeen ducks were shot with two cartridges. This method of hunting is still used today and the ducks and geese are still as plentiful.

Mansbridge (1939) describes the mission:

We were surprised at the neatness of and the huge number of native huts. These huts are mostly made of bark. Any cooking is done outside but a number of older people are partly fed by the mission... Among other things, building timber is transported to other mission centres and sometimes even to Thursday Island...cattle horses and many other things can be exchanged for the timber thus enabling the mission to support itself (Mansbridge 1939: 35).

It is interesting to note that Roth (1901) mentions the 'problem', reported to him by missionaries, of older men taking multiple and younger wives. This seems to have been a constant complaint raised by the missionaries to anyone who would listen.

Partly to address this situation and in part because of prejudices about the genetic strength and intelligence of Aborigines, missionaries practised a form of genetic experimentation by importing men from the Solomon and Cook Islands to marry Mapoon women. This was not a covert activity but one of which they were proud. So it was not unusual when introducing two people in a slide for the Rev. Hey to comment that:

... Jack himself is an Islander and was not trained at Mapoon but came here for a wife... It was quietly our endeavour to bring new blood into the race (Hey 1893: slide 48).

Ganter (1999:279) comments that

He [Hey] had now successfully appropriated the role of the male elders in allocating material resources and regulating sexual relations: he had restructured social relations from polygamous gerontocracy to monogamous patriarchy. Having condemned the elder males for having an interest in the liaisons of the young women, Hey now took it upon himself to order young women into monogamous marriage (Ganter 1999: 279).

Often missionaries, despite their good intentions, brought with them the baggage of their own ignorance and prejudices as well as the

current beliefs of their society and time. The records that missionaries kept often yield insights into these. For example, the Revd. Hey's notes, which were prepared to accompany a promotional slide show depicting the works of the missionaries in the Cape, describe Aborigines at Mapoon thus:

A group of wild natives taken just after Mapoon started 53 years ago. A careful study of their faces will show that they belong to a very low type. Strictly speaking they have no religion, in our sense - except we call a fear of evil spirits the innate [sic] good, the little of God is hidden and lies dormant, but it is not dead. He can be raised. The cord that has been Broken will rise once more. The Aboriginal belongs to the animistic races, a form of re-incarnation. Their ceremonials are mostly connected with various totems resting on superstitious beliefs - they have no revelations only traditions. Thus it appeared to the missionaries at first - Notwithstanding, we gradually found they possessed a considerable amount of intellect [sic] and ability, the young are responsive to kindness, to teaching, much might be said but time will not permit. The Gospel of Jesus Christ - the good news is able to transform the lowest, as the following slides will show. It should be mentioned that the Aboriginal is seen at his best in the forest home in his native element. If closely observed, there we realise his wonderful staying powers, his clear observation of nature, and endurance, and his good humour- but when aroused he is a dangerous savage (Hey 1893)<sup>12</sup>.

The Presbyterian Board of Missions Regulations for Missionaries dated 1948<sup>13</sup> clearly states that it is a requirement that missionaries learn the local language of the people amongst whom they are to work. The regulation provided provision for language examinations, which were compulsory. In mission stations elsewhere in Australia, such as Kunmanya this practice was observed and the result was that psalms, hymns and parts or the entire Bible were translated into these languages. However, for some reason this practice does not seem to have been followed at Mapoon, once again illustrating the amount of autonomy that existed in practice for missionaries.

The Revd. Hey quite openly boasted that:

The missions in the Gulf never went to the expense of printing parts of the Bibles or hymn books, nor did missionaries encourage pidgin English, which has been called 'crazy mixture of baby talk and slang' -

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<sup>12</sup> Revd. Hey in 'Notes for a Lantern Lecture showing slides relative to the Aboriginal Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the Gulf of Carpentaria' Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Mitchell Library MLMSS 1893 Item # MLK02568. [Note that Hey's spelling and grammatical errors have not been altered here]

<sup>13</sup> Paragraphs 54-58 in Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Mitchell Library MLMSS 1893 Item #MLK02570

The young Aboriginals learn the English language very quickly and in a few years almost the rich English literature was open to using. Almost from the first in our Gulf School we used the old discarded Government school books, without cost and today the young can hold their own in many ways with the European workers - As stockmen and sailors they earn often more than the white man in the same position. Many natives have a better Bible knowledge than their white co-workers that would not be possible if only the native language had been taught with its limited literature (Hey 1893)<sup>14</sup>.

One cannot help noticing that these 'benefits', if one can describe them as such, did not last beyond one generation and yet the 'cost' of the loss of language was absolute. The last known Tjunganjti language speaker died around 1990 in Weipa. At that time Stephen Mark, an old man himself, said that most of his generation, the first generation mission children, did not know any language as they had been taken into the dormitories and from that time taught only English.

In the example above we again see the view that European literature will 'better' the Aborigines. Significantly, the dormitory system was an orchestrated strategy practised by missions to separate and distance the young from their parents and traditions (Loos 1988:113; ML MSS 1893 ctn 4; Jacobs, Laurence & Thomas 1988).

Perhaps even more poignant is the comment provided by the Revd. Hey to accompany a slide showing children playing at the mission. He writes:

At play. To achieve the desired result, a variety of healthy games and clean sports have to be created, suitable for native conditions, otherwise their empty loveless lives grow sour and healthy strong development would be frustrated, hence a playground is to be found at every Mission Station (Hey 1893 ML MSS 1893 Item# MLK02568).

While one does not doubt that the children enjoyed the playground, the concept that this somehow filled their 'empty loveless lives' and

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<sup>14</sup> Revd. Hey in 'Notes for a Lantern Lecture showing slides relative to the Aboriginal Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the Gulf of Carpentaria' Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Mitchell Library MLMSS 1893 Item # MLK02568.

substituted for the loss of daily contact with parents and involvement in traditional activities is heartbreaking.

Mapoon people who were first generation mission settlement children do not know their parents' full names nor much detail of their lives and specific country. Missionaries gave people a single name based on either a play name that the individual may have already had or a borrowed Christian name. Children of these parents simply took on their father's name as surname. For example, Stephen Mark's mother was called Connie and his father Mark. Mark presumably did not really answer to this name, as according to Stephen he was not a resident of the mission but one of the 'wild natives' from up Seven Rivers way. Stephen was given his father's mission name as a surname (Stephen Mark pers. comm. 1990).

Hey was not sensitive to the issues of names and identity and he played down the cultural impact of taking over the role of naming children,

I envisage to give two names to each baptismal candidate, Deindidschi is Jimmy's real name, his father, brother and sisters have the same name...I have entered both names for him because we have several Jimmies. As far as I can tell Deinditscy [sic] has no special meaning. It is a very old name and there is a little bird here by the same name. I could not make out whether the name stems from the bird. I am not especially fussed about beautiful names or their meanings, otherwise I might have chosen a nicer name but I do not wish to interfere too deeply with the existing conditions, only to shake off the sinful (Hey 1897 in Ganter 1999: 270).

People feel this loss of language and genealogy perhaps more than any other impact of Christianity. Regardless of what they know of their culture, they are always more conscious of what they do not know and hence Stephen Mark's lament

And look today we no sabbee our own lingo, our languages, we no sabbee em. We bin lo dormitory all the time. Wish we could bin stay with our father and mother. Our Father or mother one well they speak language...today only English (Stephen Mark Tape #1990).

This is not to say that strong bonds of attachment, affection and in some cases respect did not form between missionaries and the people whom they sought to convert. Once again, the Revd. Hey summarised this well in the caption of one of his slides:

... One of the Missionaries recorded in her journal 'When I first came face to face on my landing, with the natives, what a scene. A crowd of dirty humanity covered with all kinds of sores and dangerous diseases, a breeding ground for swarms of flies. I said to myself I shall never love these people. I would have given anything to be home again in Europe.

This very place has in the course of time become a second home and to say farewell was harder after all than my arrival many years before (Hey ML MSS 1893 Item# MLK02568 slide 74).

Undoubtedly some missionaries, especially those like the Rev. Hey who spent a long period of time at this mission, came to recognise and respect some of the qualities inherent in Aboriginal people of the area. For example, in describing a scene at Aurukun, Hey writes:

Preparing for a fight probably ending in talk and threats. These people have a wonderful control over themselves, knowing very well that bloodshed (not murder) would mean serious prolonged trouble on account of their law of revenge (Hey 1914)<sup>15</sup>.

This recognition of logic and validity in the traditional practices suggests a greater degree of insight into the traditions of the Mapoon people than one would expect given the level of intervention imposed on the community by the missionaries. It is a good example of the ambiguities in the relationship between missionaries and the subjects of their endeavours.

The period of missionary control at Mapoon was not without controversy. In 1909 an incident in which a female Aboriginal person at Mapoon was physically punished by Revd. Hey became the subject of intense media debate. The *Messenger* August 27<sup>th</sup> 1909 ran an account of the 'Mapoon Inquiry: Government Resident's Report'. The *Brisbane Courier* dated Nov 10 1909 ran several letters to the editor predominantly supportive of the

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<sup>15</sup> Another lantern lecture This one written c. 1914 Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Mitchell Library MLMSS 1893 Item # MLK02568.

Missionaries, about the incident. The *Truth* ran a Sunday series colourfully critical of the missionaries and the government, outlining the inquiry and its findings commencing December 5<sup>th</sup> 1909. Interestingly the official mission records in the Mitchell Library do not contain information detailing the event but merely include tantalising references by the Hey's in their correspondence to their 'troubles'.

It is difficult to ascertain exact details of the alleged incident although clearly the missionaries were unused to have their freedom to punish those in their care questioned in any way. Regardless of what actually took place, it seems clear that the actual lodgement of charges against Hey by a disgruntled Mission employee Mr Baltzer, was motivated by spite rather than 'conscience', as they were brought to the attention of the authorities so long after they took place. One wonders then how often in the period that the mission was operational had similar questionable incidents occurred. The charge as relayed to the Police Magistrate, Hugh Milman, was that:

...one of the inmates of the institution namely a halfe caste girl named Ellen or Nellie was beaten in school for something that she had done to Mrs Hey, viz striking her, she being the teacher for the day: that in consequence in the course of an hour or so, i.e. after school was over, was taken and tied up to a post by Mr Hey and Mr Baltzer and that while there she was flogged by both these men with two stingaree tails, receiving more than 100 cuts in all: that the girl cried very much: that she had only light dress on at the time : that after receiving about that number of cuts her head fell back and she gasped, when Baltzer loosened the ropes quickly and the girl fell slowly to the ground: that Mrs and Hey and Mrs Ward and the children and a number of natives were present while Ellen was being beaten; that Mr Hey then took and anchor chain , passed it around Ellen's neck and round the post and locked it: that Mr Hey brought out a tar pot and painted her face over the eyes and mouth and that she laid there in the sand for two days and was moaning and was there for four of five days: that Mr Hey would take dirty water from the ends of the kitchen spout and pour it over Nellie's face and body: that Mr Hey ordered that she should only be given a small bit of food daily and that one of the native women was told that food was not to be given or she would be treated in the same way.

(Report from the Police Magistrate, Thursday Island to the Under Secretary Home Department. 16<sup>th</sup> August 1909. HomJ60 1910/ 4388).

The Police Magistrate goes on to conclude that following the Inquiry he finds that the charges were exaggerated in that

...Ellen did not receive 100 cuts but only 20 or 25. She had on at the time in addition to her dress a thick flannel petticoat and possibly a chemise in addition. She was not tarred over the eyes and mouth, but only on the forehead. Dirty water was not thrown over her daily by Mr Hey but possibly on one occasion that accident occurred. She was well fed and not kept on reduced allowance while in confinement; that in my opinion no bleeding took place from the wounds.

He also states that he found 'no suggestion of cruelty or harshness on the part of Mr Hey.'. The other Magistrate who heard the Inquiry was Mr Frank Jardine J.P and his opinions on the matter were in stark opposition to that of Mr Milman. He concludes that

After listening attentively to and carefully considering and weighing the evidence taken at Mapoon Mission Station on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> days of August 1909, in the case of the half caste girl Ellen- or Nellie- I am of the opinion that the punishments inflicted by Superintendent the Reverend Nicholas Hey and his assistants therein were carried out with unnecessary harshness and undeserved severity; more especially so when their calling is taken into consideration (Frank L Jardine HOM J60 1910/4388 QSA).

The Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Mr Richard Howard was also present during the hearing and believed that the charge against Mr Hey was serious and proved. He also states that it is clear from the evidence that other 'natives have been beaten in a more or less severe manner, with the full knowledge of Mr Hey'. Significantly he points out that

The Regulations give the Superintendent of a Reserve authority to administer corporal punishment but provide that if such punishment is given to the inmate who is over the age of 16 years the Superintendent must at once report the matter to the Chief Protector. I have no knowledge of any such reports reaching me (report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals to the under Secretary, Home Secretary's Dept 16/8/1909 HOM j60 1910/4388 QSA).

One of the problems of course was that at the time that the enquiry took place the incident was already 3 years old and so it came down to the word of a discredited former employee against the Mission Superintendent. It is unlikely that Aboriginal people when questioned would have answered very frankly so long after the event. No doubt the Aboriginal participants in the incident had no wish to rake up the matter and disrupt their lives and security. The fact that the incident was not addressed at the time that it occurred



and was only being addressed as a result of a fight between two white people would have clearly indicated to many that this was not about addressing an injustice against Aboriginal people but about one white person winning against another. One of the factors highlighted by Milman as proving that the incident was not serious was that Ellen had written to Mrs Hey on several occasions in the years following the incident expressing the wish to return from Thursday Island (where she was in service) to Mapoon. This does not necessarily indicate any great affection for the Heys but only a homesickness for friends and family in Mapoon. One could however ask why the missionaries had a barbed 'stingaree tail' whip if this was an isolated incident?

The Revd. and Mrs Hey ran the mission for 35 years. It seems to have been economically successful and visitors appeared impressed with its progress and appearance while Hey was in charge. The mission station appears to have deteriorated rapidly after he left. A report of an inspection of Cape York missions by the Board of Missions in 1941 states:

Mapoon has suffered greatly by the too frequent changes in the management and administration resulting in the lack of settled policy in the workings of the Station. Mapoon has been in existence now for 50 years. Of this period Revd.N Hey was in charge for 35 years. In the succeeding 15 years there have been no less than 7 or 8 changes in the Superintendents; this has had an undesirable effect upon the people who are unaccustomed to change, and on the working of the Mission, since each Missionary in charge has pursued his own policy. This lack of continuity in policy is detrimental to the Mission financially, and in every other way. As an example - At the outstation there is a good church building, erected some years ago because the Missionary in charge at that time considered it necessary to have a church building to meet the requirements of the people there. Today that building is not in use, the door is closed, the building is rapidly deteriorating because the Missionary in charge has centralised Church services at the Mission Station on the grounds that one well attended service is better than two poorly attended ones, and that riding out to the outstation in the heat on a Sunday afternoon, for the few people attending, does not justify the expenditure of energy necessary for this, and breaks in upon the Missionary's opportunity for rest necessary to keep them fit for the work of the week (Board of Missions 1941).

### 7.2.3 The economics of life at Mapoon Mission

Many non- indigenous Australians have only a vague idea of what life on a mission may have been like. There is often an assumption that people were freely provided with food and clothing funded from church fund raising efforts. At many missions however the reality was quite different. At Mapoon people had to pay for food and clothing and housing. Only the children in dormitories were provided with 'free' food and clothing. Others either got paid in goods for labour on the mission and mission enterprises or paid with money if they had outside work. In such cases the pay of the person went into accounts held by the missionaries and could be redeemed in goods from the mission store. Fishing and hunting remained important to adequately feed the family. Stephen Mark recalls (Tape # 1990/2):

Well when we come up in age, we come out from dormitory Well you gotta work we gotta go work lo Boat, we sign lo boat now we go lo Sarree Tinkler, we sign lo Sarree Tinkler he send mepla go trochus? Island. We stop there. .... we buy all red calico, buy all singlet we no get enough wages we only get about £2.10 a month. When we discharged now well when we come home we chuck that money here by the shelf big (Sign language, laughter [Sue - I don't think that can translate to tape- Baby boom days!] laughter). if we no got enough money we got stop two or three months. We watya callait got £2pound 10 a month, not enough money when we come home we can't pay our own tucker. When we stop here lo mission we got to have dry coconut for damper bread. Ee got work for them man who work but they only give em like ration. From mission before ee bin very hard we bin live a very hard life. Like we, you look today we no worry if we get small tucker. We can stand because we didn't ...from our early days we bin learn the hard way until today we luk when we swim. Mus be im bin dead, I no luk im I luk father Hey and Mrs Ward but them two lady bin two sister one bin married to father Hey and one to Mr Ward.

The swamps at Mapoon are still renowned amongst Aboriginal people in northern Cape York for their magpie geese, duck and other waterfowl. They also supply the Mapoon delicacies *rindi* (freshwater turtle), *gweeny* and *punja* (the latter both parts of the water lily).

Oh small wanyu callit but you get when swamp all dry. Unless swamp ee dry ee hard. Them sort of bullrush the sort of grass- you look under them kind and ee got them round... good when you smash em up, roast em in ashes Yeah. No that swamp ee no gad. They got what you call "gweeny" but you no got. If you go inside today that alligator come out lo you you either got a speedboat or something. We all the time go swim

inside unless that lily ee too much you get caught you know... you follow that stem go up. The flower ee dead you got that fruit ee called gweeny and underneath that fruit ee we call em quafu them old people ee go. skin bark carry em go home. Thats how we bin live before if ee no got punja and them lily we wouldn't be here today. (Mark 1990: tape #1990/2).

#### 7.2.4 The destruction of Mapoon

In 1963 the Queensland Government removed the residents of Mapoon at gunpoint, put them on a boat and took them to Bamaga.

Stephen Mark recalled this event:

Mr Stephen policemen. Proper cheeky policemen that one before. Em bin com here. All bin right down there. It bin low water take all people make em all walkabout go round down lo beacon there, I sit down I no follow them go. All tie em up them wannem you call coconut leaf - make light. Right down there lo beacon All jump go lo boat, the *Gleam* - morning em leave. Big lo water like all sit down there watch all take em lo boat then morning I bin go for drop my swag I want to catch that boat to but them bin tell me - no you stop you're not coming. I said what for they said no you go look after this place. Everyone bin go All big lo water right down there lo what you call it.

Everyone bin go... nobody. I bin sleep dere first down lo Jubilee Harris house. All go lo boat all sleep morning drop anchor and go but What could we do now. Them other mob em bin go Weipa My two sister there lo Weipa, Ethel and Margaret all stop there...wife blo Billy Miller. Ethel...em and Margaret bin go there now, Till today all stop there. But I stop here lo Bamaga because I bin here when policeman bin come long boat. Me and that coon there Billy and George Williams. And I bin go morning and sit there lo point.... all bin sleep lo boat but I bin stop here lo < and that Jim Harris bin tell me 'I kum after' so. Then that school hose and that Church bin go up lo flame ... too bad! Thas ol Barkley who bin build all lovely big church Old man Barkley father blo Willy Barkley.

That Tower [Church] they bin take em go Aurukun and all... bin go. ... We can't do nothing now because what the government say it goes. We can't do nothing If the government says remove you from Weipa then we gotta go. We got own policemen there. They police and they take you .. The black policemen ee get paid by the government our own colour ee's a policemen for DNA too. The moment you punch him you go Stuart Creek<sup>16</sup>.

I bin here, when all my people bin shift from Mapoon- I bin the only man bin live here. I stop there down where Jubilee Woodley house I stop there, I stop there where Mission house I got 3 carpenter, bin come for break the church lovely church. Where they go ee called sweet corner - I no bin go, my wife bin go I stop here. Dempla speak for Flora - Stephen Mark em still live? I live long coconut! Jim Harris say he go come back but I sit down here but no noise, I sit lo point but no noise I sleep here down and then 3 carpenter bin come DNA bin send them Dem all bin die, non alive now. What I say ee go be long long time before I die.

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<sup>16</sup> Stuart Creek is a Queensland goal at Townsville, well known to Cape York Aboriginal men.

### **7.3 Other Mission Stations in Northern Cape York**

The experience of people at Mapoon was not dissimilar to the experience of other people living on a number of mission stations operating at that time in Cape York.

#### **7.3.1 Weipa**

Weipa Mission was originally situated on the Embley River, which runs into Albatross Bay about 100km south of Port Musgrave. The mission was about 80 miles upstream from Albatross Bay. The mission was later relocated to the location of present day Napranum Aboriginal Community at Jessica Point (see Figure 5).

The Mission was founded in 1898 by the Revd. and Mrs Brown, despite the Revd. Meston's (Chief Protector of Aborigines) advice to the contrary. The word Weipa is recorded by the missionaries as meaning 'hunting ground'.

While from time to time tensions arose between the Queensland Government or its representatives and the missionaries, on the whole, Church and State worked hand in glove. The Chief Protector of Aborigines therefore was an occasional visitor to mission stations. From the 'Event Diaries' at each mission, however, it seems as though his visits were of short duration and spent entirely in the company of mission officials. It is therefore unlikely that these visits placed any real scrutiny on the missions, in spite of the fact that missions were dependent on the goodwill of the Government for part of their income and a trouble-free existence. At times the Chief Protector would be called in to add weight to missionary directives or endorse their approach (for example see outline of the Chief Protectors ruling at Men's Meeting at Jessica Point dated 25-10-31. ML MSS 1893 CY Reels 874). Missions were expected to enforce Government directives pertaining to Aborigines such as the official memorandum regarding sale and use of liquor by Aborigines on reserves.

The Diary of Events at Weipa contains frequent references to work being carried out on the extensive gardens and plantations. A system was in place where people worked for pay on the mission farm/plantation and also maintained a separate community garden. Several outstations were established.

The Court Books for Weipa illustrate the total control of all aspects of people's lives that the mission wielded. The vast bulk of charges were for adultery and even temptation via the sending of messages. For example, a Mr Y was charged with having sent a message to Ms X suggesting that he wanted her to join him 'in sin'. The suggestion never came to anything so Ms X was completely exonerated, however, Mr Y was suspended from work as a stockman.<sup>17</sup>

Often the punishment for these offences was carrying loads of wood and other menial tasks for the mission. It seems then that it was in the interests of the missions to encourage such petty charges. These courts operated with selected community members and the missionary presiding over them. The fact that Weipa appears to have had more recorded incidences of temptation and adultery whereas Mapoon had more charges of fighting and/or arguing with only some temptation and occasional adultery, probably says more about the focus of the missionaries than about the behaviour of Aboriginal people in these communities. The court books poignantly illustrate the amazing intrusion into the personal lives of adults that was part and parcel of life on a mission.

### **7.3.2 Aurukun**

Aurukun was established on the Archer River some 80km south of Albatross Bay. It is approximately 8km inland. It was opened by the Revd. and Mrs Richter in 1904. The word Aurukun is recorded by

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<sup>17</sup> This is a real example of one such entry however I have deliberately not recorded dates or names so as not to embarrass anybody. See Weipa Mission Court Books 25<sup>th</sup> March 1936- 24<sup>th</sup> May 1943. Item 6(8) CY Reel 3568 Mitchell Library.

the missionaries as meaning 'lagoon'. In addition to the mission settlement, a large reserve comprising over 7000sq miles was set aside by the Queensland Government at this time for the sole use of the natives in the care of the mission. Aurukun mission although established contrary to Meston's recommendation, was supported by the Queensland government who subsidized it to the extent of £500 per year.

The Queensland Government also assisted the Mission by 'stocking the Mission reserve with suitable cattle for grazing, to develop the country and to help the natives successfully to establish a pastoral industry. Fat stock is sold in the markets of Queensland' (Hey 1893 slide 23).



**Plate 15: Church house at Aurukun:** (note the steeple which is the handmade steeple from Mapoon Mission Church that Stephen Mark refers to).

### 7.3.3 Lockhart River

Until his death in 1923, the area around Lloyd Bay, now known as Lockhart River (see Figure 6), was controlled to a large extent by an Irish settler named Hugh Giblet who had established a trepang station there. Following his death the Anglican Church with the support and sanction of the Queensland Government established the Lockhart River Mission Station at Orchid Point in Lloyd Bay. However, they found the location to be unsuitable and moved it a year later to Bare Hill.

From the outset this mission appeared to struggle economically for its survival. This was perhaps because of the era in which it commenced as well as because it was not part of a small relatively close network of missions such as those established by the Presbyterians on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula. In the 1960s the Anglican Church successfully negotiated with the Queensland Government for its withdrawal and the commencement of direct Government control.

The experience of people at Lockhart<sup>18</sup> was similar to that of Aboriginal people at other missions in some aspects, but it also differed from some of them on several significant points. This may be due to the later establishment of the mission or to the promotion of the

..'holiday' system where people were encouraged to go bush for extended periods in the early dry season, after the monsoon rains had ceased, to reduce the mission expenditure on rations at a time when funding was miniscule (Chase 1994: 74).

Unlike at Mapoon, a significant degree of Aboriginal ceremony survived the mission period at Lockhart River and while people were, as in other parts of Cape York, discouraged from using their own language, some language survived (this is also true at Weipa). Other people in Cape York for whom language and ceremony are

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<sup>18</sup> At the time of most of my visits to Lockhart River I was predominantly pre-occupied with locating and identifying places related to World War II. I did not record any stories relating to the mission period.

indications of power and knowledge acknowledge this difference as significant. Hence Lockhart, Weipa and Aurukun are known to other Cape York peoples as places where individuals have strong magic. The magic or sorcery of others is still feared in Cape York and in fact to some extent protection from sorcery may be one of the considerations in conversion to Christianity. Blessed oils, blessing salts and holy water feature heavily now in the daily protection against sorcery in northern Cape York communities (see for example Chase 1988:136).

While at some communities, Aboriginal ceremony was completely absorbed into the church resulting in indigenous ceremonies, which were primarily Christian, at Lockhart River Aboriginal, and Christian religious ceremonies have survived as separate but complimentary practices.

At Lockhart River old and new religious forms were practised side by side. These are the traditionally based Bora initiation ceremonies, and Christianity focussed on a local church. The latter is marked both by the mission-planted tradition and Aboriginal adaptations. While each is perceived as a discrete tradition with its own structure and leadership, there has inevitably been some interaction and cross-fertilization between them (Thompson 1988:263).

Thompson also comments that:

Both Bora and Church, however, are under severe restraint because of the secular institutionalizing of beer drinking and the subsequent alcoholism, which inhibits other community - scale activities (Thompson 1988:273).

Since that time *Bora* practice has become even more disrupted with longer periods between ceremonies. Several powerful figures have died which, combined with the lengthening time periods between ceremonies, threatens the survival of *Bora*.

Contrary to popular belief the location of *Bora* sites is widely known amongst the community and when I visited Lockhart with family from Injinoo in 1989, I was warned to be careful in the vicinity of the



beer canteen because there was a *Bora* place not far behind it in the scrub and at all cost I was not to go there.

In 1963 when part of the Lockhart community had been relocated to Umagico, the practice of *Bora* was still strong and a *Bora* Ground was created there almost immediately. The location of the old *Bora* place behind Umagico was generally known to older Umagico residents during one of my visits in 1989. While some people were a little wary of this area, others advised that it had not been used for many years and so had 'lost its power'. The area has now been redeveloped for housing in a recent expansion of the community.

#### **7.3.4 The area north of Seven River**

In 1866, two Englishmen the Revd. F.C. Jagg, an Anglican priest and Mr William Kennet an Anglican lay teacher, arrived at Somerset to establish the first mission in Cape York. They had been sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. They commenced a small school for Aborigines, which concentrated on English language lessons and practical skills such as carpentry and sewing clothes (Bayton 1969).

They did not have the free reign to carry out their task that characterised the other mission endeavours in Cape York. There were many tensions between the Royal Marines stationed there, Jardine and the missionaries (see again Chapter 6). With the withdrawal of the Royal Marines in 1867, resulting in the total control of day-to-day events by the Police Magistrate, the missionaries found their situation untenable. Consequently, in 1868 Kennett and Jagg left the settlement. It was not until 1871 that missionaries, this time the London Missionary Society, again set foot at Somerset and then it was only as a springboard to New Guinea.

Following the early but failed attempt at establishing a mission at Somerset there were no official missions established on the

mainland north of Lockhart and Mapoon. However the settlement of Cowal Creek, which was established sometime around 1911-1915, came under the religious oversight of the Anglican Archdiocese of Carpentaria and a Torres Strait Islander deacon was stationed there around 1923 (Long 1970:165).

Not much is known about the catalyst for formation of the settlement of Cowal Creek. There are several versions of the story of how and why the settlement was formed (see Chapter 5). The community was never organised as a Mission Station as such, although clearly the Church of England representatives wielded great influence over the community. Jomen Tamwoy (see Appendix H) one of significant figures in the history of Cowal Creek, talks of being sent there in 1936 by the government to take over the school from the Church 'missionaries' although a government Torres Strait Islander teacher had been stationed there in 1924 by the Chief Protector of Aborigines (Bleakley 1961:158). Today the rectory next to the local church at Injinoo (Cowal Creek) is still referred as the '*mission house*' even though technically there was never a mission. This reflects the great influence that the Islander teacher and deacon wielded in Cowal Creek. They have become important figures now commemorated in local monuments and family stories.

#### **7.4 The Last Years of the Mission Period**

Towards the end of the 1950s the cold winds of change began to blow across the northern Cape York area. The post-war environment was not as profitable for the missions and discussion at the Board of Missions and General Assembly level began to focus on the need for re-organization and rationalisation of mission stations.

During 1956, Enterprise Exploration Pty.Ltd,. carried out extensive prospecting for bauxite in the area. Based on the outcomes of the survey, the parent company sought mining leases with tenure of 100 years over large parts of the Mapoon, Aurukun and Weipa

mission areas. Suddenly the very landscape which supported life was being threatened. The Church was very aware that they had not prepared Aborigines for an invasion of this magnitude.

Mission policy has been set to progressive tempo of spiritual and temporal progress aimed at assimilation over 2 or 3 generations... The Mining Development envisaged in such a large scale means the sudden penetration of reserves with white community life.

From the first they did not dispute the right of this invasion, although they sought to accommodate the mining and Government interests while securing some concessions for Aborigines.

The 1957 Annual Report to the General Assembly of Australia deals at some length with the issue of mining and its potential impact. At that time the favoured proposal was to merge Mapoon and Weipa and move Weipa to a new site to accommodate the development of the mining village and infrastructure at Jessica Point.

The mission set about negotiating on behalf of Aboriginal people with the mining company. It is not at all clear from the Board of Mission records just how much input Aboriginal people had into developing the basis for these negotiations. In the 1957 Annual Report it was stated that the safeguards and concessions by the Board of Missions were:

- Compensation claim
- Recurring maintenance costs
- Provision of pastoral leases on areas of Reserve ceded to Company under the mining tenure
- Grant of lease at Weipa Mission Station for Mission compound to preserve historic setting of Mission and enable chaplaincy and welfare work to be carried on for white and coloured population.
- Provision of houses in the township for carefully selected aboriginal families, on the same favourable terms as white families.

- Guarantee of Port and Airfield facilities at Weipa and Mapoon.
- Preservation of hunting and fishing rights on continuing reserves and their water borders.
- Preservation of Aurukun, Mapoon, Weipa compound and cattle outstations situated on mining tenure as Native Reserve subject to present provisions of the Act for the protection of the aborigines
- Guarantee of labour preference for aboriginals of Reserves on an agreed basis.
- Annual consideration of the Company of certain Scholarships for higher education for suitable scholars.

Up to the present, unanimity in negotiation [between the Qld Govt, mining company and missions] has been reached on the following points:

- (a) Neither Departments of Health and Home Affairs nor the Queensland Committee on Aboriginal and Foreign Missions would raise objections to mining lease being granted subject to certain safeguards.
- (b) All were agreed that it would be in the best interests of the aborigines at Weipa for the present site to be ceded to the Company. Present thinking of Company was that Jessica Point area was logical site for port, township and airport.
- (c) Under questioning Mr Mawby unhesitatingly assured the Conference that the Company felt obliged to assist the Mission to lift standards of living of all Mission Stations in consonance with new standards to be introduced into the reserve by the erection of a new village, provision of water and electricity and in assistance to other Missions such as Aurukun.
- (d) It was agreed that no difficulty would be raised in relation to exclusive pastoral rights for the native people. The Government could grant the 100 year mining tenure applied for; the Company could designate each decade the area required for mining, thus freeing the rest of the area under mining lease to the Mission for pastoral pursuits.
- (e) The white inhabitants of the township would require some area of land in the environs for freedom of movement for hunting etc
- (f) The Company would be prepared to make houses available within the township to aboriginals recommended by Government and Mission in conformity with their policy.

In the thinking of the Committee and the Department of Native Affairs, the majority of the Weipa natives should be transferred from the present Weipa site. Aurukun must also be built into a first -class Mission calculated to condition the people spiritually to the new factors penetrating the reserves, to raise living and educational standards so that skill of the aborigines in homecraft, hygiene and white men's trades might bring them closer to absorption within the new social conditions that will exist in a decade's time (Board of Missions 1957:MLMSS1893 MLK2569).

This document is particularly interesting in that it corroborates the recollections of Weipa Elders, including Joyce Hall (now deceased) who told me in 1990 that one of the big injustices was that Aboriginal people had been told that the land would remain theirs and that areas mined would be rehabilitated after mining and given back to the Aboriginal people but they had now found out that the government was keeping it (i.e the land reverts to Crown Land not the reserve or DOGIT).

Around the time that the Presbyterians were negotiating the closure of Mapoon and the possible closure of Weipa, the Anglican Church was also negotiating to withdraw from Lockhart. The days of mission stations were drawing to a rapid close.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The mission period has been largely overlooked as an unfortunate aspect of Aboriginal cultural experience, which was responsible for the loss of traditions and culture. Few of the mission sites have been maintained and several have been deliberately destroyed, resulting in a convenient erasure of the physical heritage of the period. However, in northern Cape York the mission stations continued into the early 1960s. Therefore for many people 40 years and older, life on a mission was part of their life experiences. These experiences contribute to their identity and that of their communities.

The mission period also provides an opportunity to study the transformation of Christianity by Aboriginal people into an Aboriginal cosmology as well as the process of cultural change in ceremonies and practices. For example, the adaptation of Bora ceremonies at Lockhart to accommodate Christian belief systems or perhaps the Christian belief system to accommodate Bora (Thompson 1988). House opening ceremonies in Edward River (Taylor 1988) and Aurukun and tombstone openings in Injinoo also provide examples of the incorporation of Christian elements into traditional ceremonial

activities. In all of the missions it was necessary to maintain traditional fishing, hunting and gathering skill for the day-to-day survival of the family and in some instances these were developed into large-scale economic enterprises. Custodial practices in relation to land and resources continued in many places with increase sites and ceremonies still widely known and practised.

An understanding of the history of this period is necessary to understand the character of the present day communities in Cape York. Through tracing the cultural continuities and transformation one can provide a much more dynamic view of the Aboriginal heritage of this period.

## Chapter 8

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### WINDS OF WAR AND TIDES OF CHANGE

#### 8.1 Pioneers, Soldiers and Adventurers:

*It was never the same after that first old man. The strangers would come and play mischief with the people, but they always went away in the end. Even the first old man went back where he came from into the sea. But his son stayed. He made another strange camp at our spring close to the people's ceremonial ground and called it Lockerbie. It was strange; perhaps he sensed our presence selecting our spring, making inroads into our scrub. At first we let him come building his small dwelling. But then he began taking over the land, making it obey his will and bending it to his way. The scrub grew smaller and the spring water no longer spilled free for the people. The stranger planted trees: mangos, limes, cassava, tea, and rubber.*

*And here so many years later the marakai woman was tracing his steps. Into the scrub she ventured, too fresh to be afraid. Perhaps we could have fun with her. But wait, she had been here before! You could see by the way she glanced quickly into the shadows that she knew us now. Some of the people had told her about our ways...but did she really know the rules. This was our scrub and those who entered were in our power unless they knew the language that spoke to all of us and even then we might choose not to grant safe passage. Many of the people had ventured here in the past. Sometimes we would confuse them and lose them in the scrub. We could play tricks with their minds, which would keep them lost for days. Yes, let's lead her this way, to where the track disappears.*

It was 1989 and my fourth trip to Cape York, I had planned to record the site of Lockerbie, but things as usual were not going to plan. I had brought a theodolite with me but as was my luck in this strange country, it was not working. Now I would have to wait until another one was flown up. I could almost accept that as Mrs Sagigi would explain, the *short people* had a hand in this. Every field trip since I had commenced this project I had had problems with technical equipment. Cameras, tape recorders and now theodolites! Before each field season these things would be carefully tested and cleaned but invariably these would fail me when it came to the crunch in Cape York. It is common knowledge amongst the communities of northern Cape York that the various mischievous spirits such as the *short people* of the scrub and the *red devils* of the coastline and islands, take great delight in interfering with gadgets, especially anything electronic or technical.

While I was waiting I decided I would go and look for Jardine's rubber trees that were reputed to still exist inside the scrub behind Lockerbie. I couldn't quite suppress the slight shiver of nervousness as I passed into the cool depths of the tropical scrub. This is another of the haunts of those short people<sup>19</sup>. Shielded from the forest by my 4WD I plunged on down the track which ran clear and fresh until all of a sudden it petered out and I found myself stuck, jammed tight between two trees which did not look quite strong enough to hold me but obviously had been underestimated. My companion Kerry Navin and I got out and surveyed the situation. The saplings would not budge! This would be a long and hot job as we had left our axe back at camp. The only likely tool we had was a small folding geo-spade.

I called out into the forest: "I sabbee yupla!" and then I called the words I had been taught and, not knowing the language of the area I explained in 'Broken' what I was doing here. Kerry thought I had gone quite mad but I shrugged, better safe than sorry. To banish the last vestige of nervousness we started to chop down the tree to sound of Motown at full blast singing "*Good Lovin*". Had we been accompanied by Injinoo people they would have pointed out that we were breaking the rules by drawing the attention of the *short people* to us with loud music. It took a long time but we got out without further incident.

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<sup>19</sup> These are not the red devils of some stoney coastal areas who are partially covered in shells and of a non-human appearance. The Lockerbie scrub is the province of short people (see Chapter 4) who are not so malevolent but definitely not to be trifled with.





**Plate 16: Tangled up in Lockerbie Scrub**

Lockerbie was, according to local accounts, a sort of experimental farm, established by Frank Jardine. The permanent spring at Lockerbie which is now marked by a large stand of bamboo, provided water for his orchard, and the soils were better than the sands at Somerset. A visitor to Lockerbie on 25/7/1896 found corn, pineapples, bananas and pawpaw growing there (Jack 1921:342). However, I have been unable to find any official records of a lease dating back that far.

Lockerbie is also significant as one of the places where Wymara fought a running resistance fight. Ann Hall claims that Wymara came from down the east coast. However the Mapoon Mission register of Births, Deaths and Marriages notes the marriage of Wymara Snr aged 60 and a widower married Betty Fletcher, spinster of Mapoon, in 1940 and it lists his occupation as a gardener at Cowal Creek and his tribal affiliation as Seven Rivers (MLMSS 1893 MLK 2544 CY 3568). Using the shelter of the rainforest, Wymara was able to mount forays into Lockerbie and

steal flour, horses and other items. Ann Hall, the daughter of Dick Holland and sister of Stan Holland (both of whom ran cattle in the area for a time) who used to live at Lockerbie, claims that by his old age both Wymara and Jardine felt a 'sort of respect for each other' <sup>20</sup>. This sentiment appears unlikely and out of character for Jardine. It is also unclear how Mrs Hall could have possibly have had memories of this, as Frank had died before she had arrived in Cape York. It is more likely that these memories emanate from tales that she heard from her father who had been in the area for some years and which had been softened by the passage of time and through translation into stories suitable for children.

Another Aboriginal person who never became resigned to Jardine's presence was Kaio. Kaio is described in Ion Idriess's novel 'My mate Dick'<sup>21</sup> (1962). Kaio is described by Idriess as '... an old rogue or Aboriginal patriot, whichever way you look at it' (Idriess 1962: 11) and referred to him as 'Kio [sic] the cunning'. He reports that Kaio was a constant threat to Frank Jardine. Idriess's first meeting with Kaio was on his trip northwards after escaping from police custody over 400 miles from home.

During the construction of the telegraph line Frank Jardine discovered some good cattle country around the Ducie River and established Bertie Haugh as an out station there (Jack 1921:342).

## **8.2 Neighbours in the Wilderness**

In reading contemporary and post contemporary accounts from white settlers in Cape York one is struck by the consistent images of 'pioneer, isolation, lone frontiersman, hardship and danger'. While there is no doubt that life would have lacked the convenience of the cities it is surprising to note how far from reality these images were when applied to this northern most tip of Cape York.

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<sup>20</sup> Ann Hall pers comm. 198? Anne is the daughter of 'Ginger' Dick Holland who worked at Lockerbie with Frank Jardine in the latter years of Jardine's life.

In particular one must remember that the Torres Strait and for some time Albany Passage were major world shipping ways and most boats which passed through this area would have stopped to trade news and supplies. In addition, once Somerset was established, other entrepreneurial types were drawn to the area. One of these was Jack McLaren who established a coconut plantation on the west coast not far from Somerset. He wrote an account of his sojourn at Utingu called 'My Crowded Solitude' (McLaren 1926). The title of his book could be taken to mean the solitude of a white man amongst the indigenous population or a contrast between his expectancy of solitude and the amount of sea traffic and visitors that this brought.

Certainly on reading this book one does not realise that at the time that it was written, Frank Jardine and his family were near neighbours to the North at Somerset, Alice Jardine was living at Pyra and that the telegraph station<sup>22</sup> and the resident operator and his family were only a few kilometres north along the coastline. Cyril T. Dick Holland (known as "Ginger" Dick Holland) was also resident in this area by 1913. Reality, then, belied the romantic claims of McLaren that "neighbours were non existent" (McLaren 1917).

Amazingly McLaren embarked on his venture apparently with no other labour or assistance because he assumed that the local Aboriginal people would work on his plantation. It doesn't seem to have occurred to him to discuss this with them prior to his arrival with his equipment and coconuts, nor did he enter into labour agreements with them, as, for example, Hugh Giblet did in the Lloyd Bay area (Chase 1988). It appears that unlike Jardine, McLaren was able to develop a reasonable working relationship

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<sup>21</sup> The title is a reference to another Cape York character, Dick Ahern, a gold miner from the Wenlock gold field during the 1930's.

<sup>22</sup> The Telegraph stations at Paterson and McDonnell were built in 1886 and were opened the following year.

with local Aborigines. He depended on them for the success of his venture.

More [Aborigines] showed up later and proved very helpful. They had a useful knowledge of axe work, and their intimacy with the characteristics of the local bush was of great value. Of trouble with them I had very little. At first some of the older men were inclined to resent my taking their land, but a little diplomacy soon fixed matters. Most troubles with blacks can be got over by the use of discretion. In all the years I have been at Utingu- the native name of the place I selected for the plantation - I have never known them to steal anything (McLaren 1917).

The picture presented is a very different one than that painted by Jardine who at various times justified his actions on the basis of claims to have had cattle and equipment stolen from him. McLaren also met Kaio who reportedly caused Jardine so much trouble and found him a skilled bushman and reports that he was originally gaoled for a tribal killing which was within traditional law (1926:53).

Although it is hinted at but not explicitly discussed in his book, McLaren had a relationship with an Aboriginal woman. The Mapoon Mission Register of Births Deaths and Marriages records that in 1940 a Nicholas Wymara, bachelor of Cape York whose parents are listed as Jack McLaren and Annie got married to Marjory Warwick, spinster from Mapoon. It may have been his willingness to engage in physical work with the men, combined with his relationship with Annie that helped to establish what appears to have been a more congenial relationship than that of Jardine.



**Plate 17: Jack McLaren at Utingu.** Photograph 9396  
Courtesy of the John Oxley Library

It is interesting to note that of the 25 acres of coconut trees planted by McLaren few remain today. McLaren held this land as joint tenant in common with William John Graham. The latter does not appear to have ever resided at Utingu. The land was held on the basis of a 20-year agricultural farm lease<sup>23</sup>, which commenced in 1914 (even though McLaren claims to have got an official lease in 1911 McLaren 1926:26) and was cancelled on the 20-1-1926. McLaren and Graham's lease was over portions 3 and 6 County of Somerset, Parish of Seymour.

McLaren's account of his time at Utingu is frustrating in its lack of detail and tantalising with the insights it sometimes reveals. For example, he never says what name the Aboriginal people called themselves although it appears likely that they were the remnants

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<sup>23</sup> Qld State Archives LAN P489 Torres 1-7

of the Gudang. It is clear that they were separate and often in dispute with what he calls the 'bush-tribe' people who presumably were remnants of the Yaidagahna. McLaren gives an interesting account that frustratingly lacks detail about a visitor from this tribe who incited the people at Utingu to strike. One wonders whether this was Wymara who was active in the area and as has been noted apparently involved in long guerrilla battle with Frank Jardine. McLaren describes this man as being a visitor from another coastal tribe brought back by the people to Utingu. Sometime before McLaren left Utingu, Ginger Dick Holland arrived in Cape York; in fact one wonders if he was one of the visitors mentioned by McLaren in his book (perhaps the crusty gold prospector) that stayed at his house. Holland stayed a mere two years in the area when he departed to serve in World War I. He did not return to Cape York until 1931 when his family accompanied him. He left again during World War II and did not return until 1953 (People magazine 1953:12-13).

Anne Hall (nee Holland), his daughter, claims that 'Ginger' Dick Holland worked as Frank Jardine's partner and that as a result of this 'partnership' Jardine bequeathed Lockerbie to him. Such a bequest does not appear to be documented and would appear surprising if true considering that Holland had only spent 2 years in the area and had left some 4 years before Jardine died. Actually Cyril Thomas Holland did hold a pastoral lease at Laradeenya<sup>24</sup>. His son Stanley William Holland whose address was given as Red Island Point, held leases at Cody Hill and Richardson. The latter was further down the Cape and in 1952 was transferred to Roderick Clever Heinemann and is now part of Bramwell Station. The lease for Cody Hill (Holding number 4707) was issued to Stanley William Holland on the 1.7.1949 and was due to expire on 30.6.1982 however it was resumed for 'Departmental purposes', to create the Northern Peninsula Area Reserve, on 26-3-1966 (QSA

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<sup>24</sup> Qld State Archives c/331-593

DUP A/47706 Cody Hill Register Entry). It is likely that there was much more interaction between the white settlers than one is led to believe in McLaren's romantic account of his sojourn at Utingu.

### **8.3 Northern Cape York in World War II**

World War I caused scarcely a ripple in northern Cape York. It is likely that the Aboriginal inhabitants of the area were unaware that Australia was at war. World War II, however, brought the action right to the doorstep. This time war brought permanent changes to the Cape, partly because of the legacy of infrastructure left by the departing forces, which made the area more accessible. With improved infrastructure came more travellers and greater government intervention. As elsewhere in the country the post war economy spelt the end of many rural ventures including the mission stations and the pearling and beche-de-mer industries, which never regained their pre-war status.

After the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific in December 1941, the Japanese offensive developed southward towards Australia along two main lines of advance<sup>25</sup>. The first was from Malaya, through what is now the Republic of Indonesia, towards the Northern Territory and North Western Australia. This advance reached what is now West Irian (then Dutch New Guinea). This eventually precipitated the Allied response, which included the occupation and the defence of Merauke, a response that was organised and supplied from North Queensland. The second advance began from Truk, in the Caroline Islands, on to New Guinea and to the British Solomon Islands protectorate, and probably posed a more direct threat to North Queensland Wilson 1988:5).

So many years after the end of the war there is still debate on whether or not the perceived threat of invasion to Queensland was

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<sup>25</sup> For more details on Australia and its role in World War II see 'Australia in the War of 1939-45' edited by General Gavin Long and produced by the Australian War Memorial. It comprises 5 series of various publication dates.

ever real. Some sources maintain that in reality Australia was never under any real threat of invasion and was only a target in so far as it may have been necessary to eliminate key military targets. However in hindsight it appears more likely that North Queensland was saved from attack by the debate that diverted the Japanese High Command. The Japanese High Command was divided into Navy/Army loyalties and opinions. The Navy favoured the immediate invasion of Australia; the Army felt that this would overstretch its resources. At an Imperial conference held on March 1942 it was agreed that the focus would be on capturing New Guinea including Papua. From this vantage, air supremacy could be established over North Queensland and the Coral Sea.

Whether or not Australia was ever under direct threat of invasion or not as the war moved closer and New Guinea was attacked North Queensland became the most important Allied base in the southwest Pacific area. It remained important until 1944-5 when the war moved away from New Guinea.

Australia was in an extremely vulnerable position. The United Kingdom was fully committed in Europe and the Middle East and fighting desperately to keep sea-lanes across the Atlantic open, therefore Australia could expect little help from them. In mid March 1942 the United States of America agreed that it would take primary responsibility for the Pacific Area, including Australia and New Zealand.

Luckily, the need for the Japanese forces to consolidate their gains plus the foray of the Japanese Navy into the Indian Ocean in April 1942, allowed some breathing space for the Allies and by the time the Japanese advance resumed in the New Guinea/ Papua area in late April some of the AIF had returned to Australia from the Middle East and the American ground forces and substantial air forces had been committed to the Southwest Pacific. Those forces were initially based in Australia.



At the time of the Battle of the Coral Sea, there were many unsolved logistical problems for the forces in Australia, particularly the air force. Of these, long distances combined with a relative lack of infrastructure, was probably one of the greatest (Craven and Cate 1983:423-424; AWM 54 243/6/54; AWM 54 628/2/1; Casey 1951). This created the problem of transporting and storing large quantities of high-octane fuel when all the bulk storage facilities were located in the South of the continent, for example. Rail gauges were not standard and road infrastructure in the north was non-existent. The only solution was transshipment over water (at a time when a shortage of shipping was another of the problems facing the allied forces) with exposure to the possibility of enemy attack and requiring a large supply of fuel drums. The evidence of this can be seen in large dumps of rusting fuel drums scattered around the Peninsula.

Heavy Japanese attacks on coastal north Queensland remained a distinct possibility until the USA and the Australian strategic victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea (4-11<sup>th</sup> May 1942). The Battle of Midway early in June 1942 (see Craven and Cate 1983:451-462 for an account of the battle), severely reduced Japan's aircraft carrier force and probably meant the end of the real invasion threat for Australia. This was not known however at the time, in fact the term 'strategic victory' is a very much a view from hindsight. At the time however the Battle of Midway did not look anything like a *victory* for the allies. The issue was not really clear until by early 1943, the Japanese had been defeated at Milne Bay (near the southeast tip of Papua New Guinea); on the Kokoda Trail (Northeast of Port Moresby); and at Gona and Buna (east of Kokoda on the east coast of PNG), with a parallel American victory in the southern Solomon Islands around the Guadalcanal Island.

In 1942, North Queensland felt threatened and exposed (Wilson 1998). As the apparent balance began to swing in the favour of the Allies, with increasing numbers of troops, aircraft and war materials

reaching North Queensland, the area began to reach its full potential as a forward operational base. Most combat contact was through the air forces. American and Australian aircraft based in North Queensland, patrolled and fought over vast areas under Japanese control. Townsville and Mosman were raided briefly by night, while Horn Island received a number of daylight attacks. North Queensland ports and bases supplied the nearby Papuan and New Guinea battle areas. Ships using the northern naval facilities were operating in the dangerous waters of the Coral Sea, opposed by Japanese air strength based in Lae and Rabaul.

From the end of 1942, the focus of the war or at least the immediate threat of attack, began to move away from North Queensland, which slowly changed a forward operational base to a replacement, repair, re-enforcement and retraining base.

### **8.3.1 Relationships between the Defence Forces and the communities of Cape York**

The war years were an interesting mass of contradictions. For the first time Aboriginal people in the area met white men *en masse* who did not necessarily regard them as inferior. There are some detailed accounts of the relationship between Torres Strait Islanders and the army and analysis of the political and social change that ensued (Beckett 1987:84-5). However, relatively little is recorded about the relationship between Aborigines and servicemen on the northernmost mainland. This is despite the fact that there were several large bases on the mainland and in some areas there must have been regular contact with the various defence personnel (for example Goody Massey talks about camping near Mutee Head and the friendly soldiers). It seems clear that there must have been trade and other relationships established and in some areas it is likely that the servicemen became, to some extent dependent on Aboriginal communities for supplies of fresh

food. For instance a confidential report of the early construction progress on the Higgins Field landing strip notes that 'rations were extremely poor. Some native fruits and vegetables were purchased locally from a nearby Aboriginal village to help supplement the diet' (Official American War Records of WWII. Base 2 the Bayonet of Australia Vol1: 28). This was particularly the case with radar stations, which were often remote and poorly resourced and only intermittently supplied and often distant from other allied resources.

March 16 Arrived Archer Bay. Welcomed by Missionary and natives. Selected camp site and camp struck inside Northern Point of Archer Bay.

March 17 Mission natives helped unload approx. 100 tons of equipment via two boats lashed together

(Series 64 # 311 Radar Station ARCHER BAY –Aurukun. See Appendix E).

Similarly, passing remarks in unit histories note that Aborigines provided assistance to Allied Forces when on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1943 a Beaufort crash-landed at Mapoon on the west coast. A ship was sent from Horn Island to rescue the crew. The war diary of 25<sup>th</sup> February notes

08-11 berthed Horn Island at 1210 hours after a rough trip from Mapoon. Rescue carried out without mishap. Hospitality, received by personnel from the Mission Station was excellent (Ball 1996:219)<sup>26</sup>.

In most cases the larger bases, airstrips and other infrastructure required to mount the war effort were situated close to existing Aboriginal missions or settlements, for example Iron Range airfield and Higgins Field. However, official correspondence relating to the construction and siting of these facilities (AWM 64 16/1; AWM 60 168/2/59 and AA Series MP729/6 Item 16/401/631) does not refer to the existence of these communities and the location of neighbouring communities is not shown on plans and maps drawn by the defence forces. It is likely that the co-location of these facilities with Aboriginal communities was not accidental. After all, these communities had existing services and infrastructure of sorts,

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<sup>26</sup> Extract from official diaries of the RAAF #28 Operational Base Unit at Horn Island in Torres Strait Force (Ball 1996).

such as jetties, landing strips and telecommunications, which could be utilized to unload and construct additional facilities. In general the RAAF history sheets for radar installations contain more references to interactions with Aboriginal people than can be found in army references and even these are scanty. It would appear that the more remote and isolated radar stations which were not close to other defence force units for example #313 Radar Station (Mornington Island) and #320 Radar Station (Mitchell River) had a greater dependency on the Aboriginal people at the nearby missions for both provision of food and labour than did those that could call on army labour (see Appendix D).

During the period of my research in the area, whenever I came across people who had served in the area I questioned them about relationships or contact with local Aboriginal people. However, I was usually met with the answer that they had all been evacuated. While this was true of Hammond Island (Esileena Nawia and Melita Lutta talk of being forced to move to Moa during this period Tape# 1991/4), Horn and Thursday Island it was not the case elsewhere in the Torres Strait nor on the mainland. On Thursday Island all non-serving personnel were evacuated south (AA Series A518 Item# FK16/2/1), as were the women and children of Hammond Island. Hammond Island at that time had a Catholic Mission operating which included an orphanage. These people were all evacuated to Cooyar. Most of these children were not returned at the end of the war but appear to have divided between various other places (QSA A/15996 Mission Schools 1938-41).

It is likely that social interaction with local Aboriginal people was actively discouraged because of perceived security risks due to their unknown loyalties and relative freedom of movement. One government report notes that:

...Seven Aboriginals and half castes, some of whom have been previously employed by CCC [Civilian Construction Corp] recently returned from Mapoon Mission on the Gulf side of the Peninsular and were re-employed. It's understood that they freely discussed Australian

and US troop concentrations in the Wyper River area and there does not appear to be any form of restriction on the periodic movements of this type of itinerants (Marks nd: 31).

Further north on the mainland and in the Torres Strait there were often questions raised about the 'loyalties' of locals due to the long relationship with Japanese people in the pearling industry.

Much of the initial construction work was undertaken by the US Engineer corps, which had a large contingent of black Americans (Lee 1966: 603-4). Although the period of their involvement in the region was brief they must have been a source of conjecture and curiosity for Aboriginal people in Cape York. Here were black men in uniform acting and speaking like white men and yet official files once again fail to provide any insights, rather confining themselves to nonhuman details in official memorandums and reports such as:

The construction of the airfield [Iron Range], and the improvement of the access road to the port were undertaken by the 46<sup>th</sup> Engineer Regiment of the U.S.A.F.I.A as a directly controlled U.S.A.F.I.A project (A705/1 Item number 7/1/1484)<sup>27</sup>.

One can speculate about Aboriginal impressions of the US 46<sup>th</sup> Engineer Corps, the black Americans. For many people in Cape York these black men who talked so differently must have been intriguing. After being told about them by Caroline McDonald but unable to find official accounts of their time in Cape York I had begun to doubt that the Engineers had been one of the black American contingents until I came across this reference:

16<sup>th</sup> August ... Two signal personnel were sent to Cape York with a 101 Set to provide communications with a U.S Engineers Company (Coloured Unit) which was constructing an aerodrome approx. twelve miles from Red Island Point (Ball 1996:195, see also Lee 1966)<sup>28</sup>.

History says little about the relationship that developed between the missionaries; mission Aborigines and the Servicemen who often found themselves stationed at these isolated outposts. Hall (1987) describes the active involvement of some Aboriginal and Islander

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<sup>27</sup> Memorandum from the Secretary of the Allied Works Council to the Director General of Allied works Qld. Austarlaina Archives Mitchell A705/1 Item# 7/1/1484.

<sup>28</sup> Extract from War Diary of the Signals corp in Signals(the Story of the Aust Corps of Signals 1944 as quoted in Torres Strait Force by Reg Ball 1996 p 195.

men in the war effort but does not for the most part go into the relationship between the services and the surrounding communities. In some cases while it is clear that missions supplied labour and food to servicemen Hall points out that:

While these mission histories mention the impact of the war years on northern mission stations, they leave many questions unanswered. The Mission histories are really the history of the white missionaries and the Aborigines merely the backdrop to their activities (Hall 1987:9).

At Iron Range, near Lockhart River Community, one ex-serviceman Bill Moran (who was a photo interpreter attached to S-2 in the 90BG at Iron Range) recalls borrowing an outrigger canoe and blasting fish with grenades. The resultant catch was shared with Aborigines who roasted them on the beach (Marks nd: 27). Every so often in historical accounts of the war in this area there is a fleeting mention of interactions with local Aboriginal people, often in circumstances where they are lending aid and even though few details are recorded such as names or conversations, it is difficult to believe that further social interactions did not ensue from these contacts. For example, one of the officers, Jim Trench, sent to pick a site for an airfield at Iron Range records the expedition, capturing the isolation and ruggedness of the countryside. The party had left their Rapide aircraft on the beach and was able to locate a suitable site after a long walk through the scrub, with the aid of a local miner, Jack Gordon. Trench recalls:

With the help of an Aborigine we made our way back to the Rapide by a far more direct way than we arrived. Without a word the Aborigine led us through a sheet of water about half a mile wide and about 5' deep in the middle (Marks nd: 21).

### **8.3.2 Life goes on**

As previously mentioned, all white residents of Thursday Island and the northern Cape York area were evacuated. A few white civilians apparently remained around the Portland Roads area near Lockhart. Only the Aboriginal people remained in the northern peninsula area and despite the unsettling presence of so many strangers and the world events unfolding around them, for many

Aboriginal people in Cape York life continued on much as it had been before. The Aboriginal population were used to the environmental conditions, which played havoc with the construction plans and health of the RAAF and the army. The Americans in particular were affected by the continuous rainfall. Dale Kruger US Service Squadron recalls:

...We had two closed trailers for a machine shop and we mostly devised or made our own shop buildings- at Iron Range it rained and rained so we had it pretty miserable...One time out of the blue there came 2 Aussies and 3 of the natives driving several ranch cattle through the jungle. We couldn't believe our eyes. Here we were in a war area and these guys didn't seem to care (Marks nd: 29).

Aborigines from Lockhart and Cowal Creek, for a time at least, dispersed into the bush after the bombing of Horn Island. This was in part a response to the direct threat of attack but also a necessity born of the lack of government rations, which had previously augmented their diet. One government report records in relation to the Lockhart community that,

...Owing to the failure of Government rations to arrive a short time ago a large number of natives have again 'gone bush' for sustenance in the area (McDonald in Marks nd: 31).

At Injinoo there were mixed reactions to the influx of people from the war. Several of the men served in the war working on pilot boats and coast watch but most did formally participate. The Aboriginal elders are reported to have been concerned for the people, especially as there were a couple of instances of nearby aerial shooting. However the young undoubtedly enjoyed some of the excitement.



**Plate 18: Caroline (Samurai) McDonald (deceased) and son Roy 1988**

Caroline 'Samurai' McDonald (nee Tom) was 20 years old when she married her husband Jerry McDonald. They had a house at Red Island Point near the big almond tree, and worked at Lockerbie where Jerry was a stockman. Samurai helped Mrs Holland with the cooking. Together Jerry and Samurai travelled out mustering stock. They supplied meat to the army. She recalls (Taped interview # 1988/4) that the Americans came only briefly to build the jetty, road and airfield and then they left and it was Australians who replaced them. The Australians were friendly and people used to like to yarn with them.



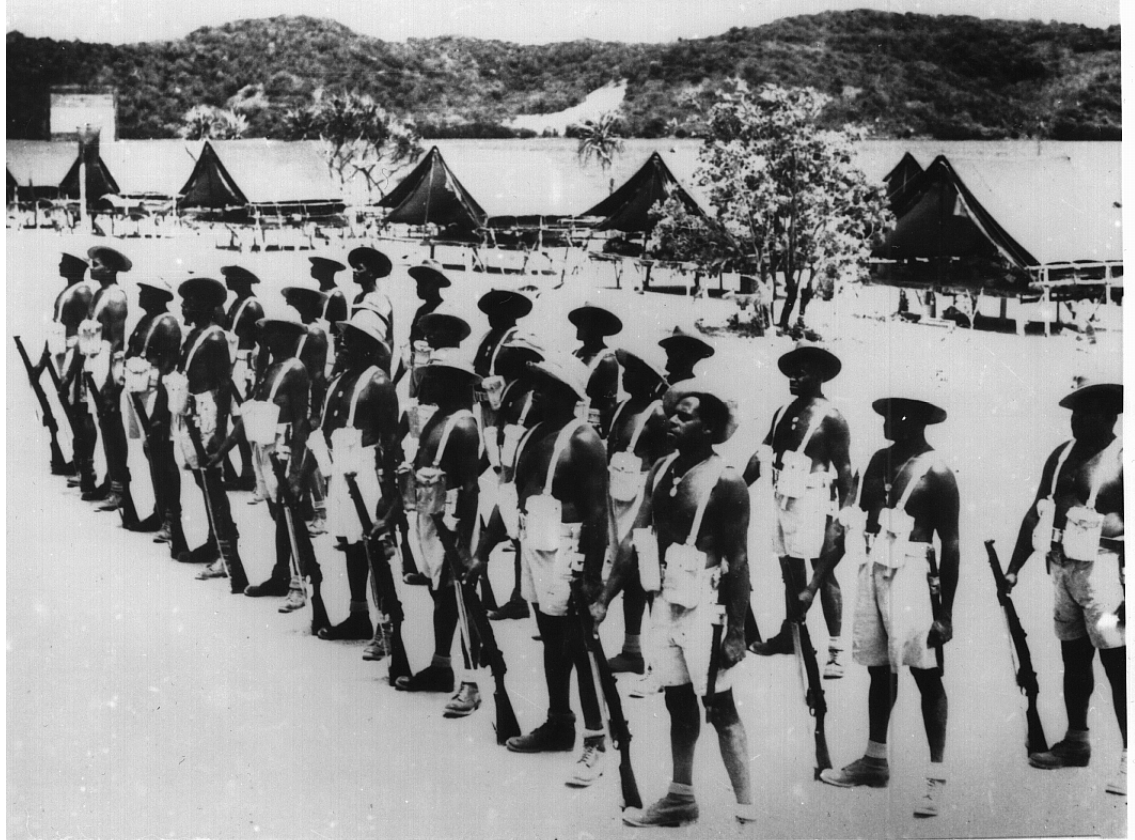
One of the things that Samurai remembered about this time was the excitement of the dances and the first picture theatre, which operated at Higgins Field. Every Friday, Badu and Murray Island men stationed at Mutee Head would walk come down to Cowal Creek. Young people enjoyed the excitement that these activities brought to their lives but older people were not so enthralled with the changes that these strangers brought with them. The old people were frightened of the noise of gunfire and so the people of Cowal Creek moved back 'inside' the scrub but only for a day or so.

### **8.3.3 Aboriginal involvement in the Armed Forces**

At the outbreak of the war the Aborigines were discriminated against in terms of jobs and working conditions (See Beckett 1987). Hall (1987) highlights the dilemma faced by the armed forces, that is the need for manpower vs taboos against Aborigines enlisting. The war also had another indirect but nevertheless significant effect. It meant that finances were directed away from McEwens policy for advancement of Aboriginals towards rearmament. The Commonwealth government now had a chance to put assimilation policies into practice in the armed forces. Throughout the war the services remained torn between their desire to maintain the 'stability' of the Services by excluding the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders from enlisting and their desire to tap this manpower, to exploit potential military skill, such as bushcraft, local knowledge and survival skills.

Hall points out that by 1941, the army had begun an aggressive recruitment campaign which saw the enlistment of over 800 Torres Strait Islander and Aborigines for the defence of the Torres Strait (AA Series MP742/1 Item#247/1/194; AA Series MP508/1 Item#247/705/56). This was despite the army's official policy of opposing Aboriginal enlistment. However, the Army's concern with preserving the status quo in the area resulted in the adoption of various discriminatory practices against its Islander and Aboriginal

soldiers. Despite armed forces policies isolated Aboriginal men did serve in the regular forces. One Cowal Creek man served in the Middle East, Mr Solomon Woosup (uncle of Mrs Samurai McDonald and father of Mr Snowy Woosup).



**Plate 19:**        **Torres Strait Light Infantry in training.** Photo  
T117218 Courtesy of the John Oxley Library

Wilfred Bowie was around 19 years old when news of the war began to effect life at Cowal Creek. He was employed by the army in the boat patrol engaged mainly in transporting supplies and equipment between the mainland, Thursday and Horn Island. Wilfred recalled (interview Tape # 1988/3) that although the Americans built the main road, wharf and the jetty at Red Island Point they then 'went home' (actually north to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea) and the Australians took over. It was once the Australians were settled in the area that Aborigines had most contact with the soldiers. Every weekend they would have dances with both '*inglis and ilan dans*'. There are corroborating references to 'native dancing' in the operational records for the Mutee Head

radar station. For example an entry for February 1945 notes that the 'Commanding Officer invited by Lieutenant Lane to see the natives dancing at the mission-Cowal Creek' (see Appendix D).

A group of 'Island boys' were based at Mutee Head. They were involved in building the road and camps at Jacky Jacky, reporting planes sighted and trading fish. Wilfred's youngest sister was a nurse on Thursday Island during the war and he had an uncle (Solomon Woosup) in the Middle East.

Phillip Wasaga was 22 years old when he joined the Army. He rose to the level of Corporal before leaving. He helped build the water reservoir at Bamaga and Higgins Field air base. He recalls that both American and Australian forces were involved in building Higgins Field camps and an underground hospital at Goode Island. In an insight into the darker side of the occupation of Cape York, Mr Wasaga claims that he was drafted into the army. "If you did not volunteer there were guards with guns that shot you!" (Tape # 1988/3). Conscription of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people was not official practice and was certainly inconsistent with army policy. Mr Wasaga's story though provides some insight into the pressure and fear through misinformation that were felt by Aboriginal communities in the area and it is possible that local white authority figures 'encouraged' active co-operation/enlistment in this way.

Thomas Silas Woosup (Tape # 1988/3) was 10 years old at the time the War came to Cowal Creek. His father, a Seven Rivers man, was in the water transport unit and stationed on Thursday Island. He recounted the popular belief that the Japanese did not bomb Thursday Island because a Japanese Prince had died there. A searchlight was installed on Cowal Creek football field so that people could watch for enemy planes. He reports that there was an underground hospital at Higgins Field as well as underground wireless operations. It was a repeated story amongst people who

had been around during the war that there were extensive underground installations around Higgins Field but it is generally accepted that these were filled in with army debris, although it is unclear whether the bulldozing was done by the Department of Native Affairs or the army. The former is likely given their propensity for bulldozing other places such as Somerset and Blue Valley. This was usually done to prevent people from moving out of the communities and squatting in these structures. Regardless the area around Higgins Field must be viewed as having high archaeological potential for research into the World War II period.

#### **8.4 Conclusions**

The war was another watershed for change in the northern Cape York and Torres Strait area. Prior to that the far north had been largely dominated by a small coterie of white station owners (Frank Jardine, Ginger Dick Holland, Stan Holland, Jack McLaren and the Telegraph Station personnel). The recorded history of the area is dominated by their exploits and against this background Aboriginal people are seen variously as a potential labour force or as an irritating impediment to development. Closer scrutiny however, reveals that the Aboriginal people of this area had a strong will to survive and a desire for independence which is signalled by the establishment of Cowal Creek, and the continuing resistance of key figures such as Wymara and Kaio. Further south the missions had consolidated their positions and control over peoples lives and most had also developed successful enterprises.

Following World War II the situation throughout Cape York was markedly different. Many of the Europeans and Japanese from the area, who had been evacuated or interned, did not return. For many there was nothing to return to as the armed forces had taken over, used and often destroyed property and business premises. The previous trade and economy no longer existed. The missions were all closing their operations and the government determined to take over the active management and control of the area. Soon

after the end of the war the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) Reserve was established. And yet there were also undercurrents of unrest amongst indigenous peoples of the region. In the Torres Strait particularly, people began to more actively question conditions of employment and the amount of government regulation (see Beckett 1987:62).

The physical changes to the landscape of northern Cape York have proved more ephemeral (see Chapter 11). Most of the sites created by the armed forces have been reclaimed by the tropical vegetation and suitable materials have been recycled. The more permanent physical legacy of the period such as the jetties and air fields have been totally incorporated into the lives of the people to the extent that they do not retain a noticeable identity as World War II monuments.

## Chapter 9

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### BIPOTAIM

*We are the short people. Red devils occupy parts of the adjacent stony coast but our home is here in the sand dunes and forest. Before the Marakai came to our land the people were plentiful and they roamed the land. They understood the land and called out in the language of the country to seek permission, as they should. Many of the people lived at Putta Putta and Sandago. Their fires flickered, bright stars in the blackness of the night dunes. Freshwater springs yielded life-giving water. The reefs provided crayfish, billum and jarum and behind the dunes the people encouraged the man and woman yams and the fruit trees to grow. The people did not want for food and they were happy and belipul.*

*Sometimes we would see canoes coming down the coast from Muralag and Nurapai. We would watch as they stealthily approached to attack the people and steal their wives and daughters but these attacks were few and if the people saw them in time they would run to the lakes where the spirits are strong and the spirits would shelter them. The marauding parties were never game enough to venture there, the opportunity for ambush and counter attack were too great.*

*The people also moved to the lakes when the weather turned fierce. There they sheltered from the wind, which would turn the dunes into a blinding fog of stinging sand. We would watch as they mended their tools. The lake country belongs to us but we recognised the language of the people when they called to us. Long ago at the start of time we had taught the people how to call out when they entered our country.*

*Times change! Diskaintaim we stand guard over the bipotaim sites left by the people. Their tools lay forgotten. Their spirits still gather on the western shore of the lake. Occasionally the strangers enter in their machines but we do not show ourselves. We lie in wait for the unwary who will trespass in our country without observing the rules. From time to time we amuse ourselves by getting them lost. We make their 'head go round' and they sometimes wander for days before we release them. Sometimes we stalk them, letting them feel our presence as a shiver down their spine so that they break pace and run in a panic. We will not allow harm to our places or those still occupied by the spirits of the people, these must be protected.*

*In the shadowy half-light of evening we watch the shades of the bipotaim spirits as they go about their chores, and it is almost as if the strangers had never come!*

#### 9.1 Prehistory as Part of a Continuum

'Bipotaim' literally translated 'the before time', is the expression used to describe the days before people's living memory and experience (see Chapter 4). This includes all the events which led to the formation of the landscape - the time of the spirit ancestors.

In northern Cape York, particularly Weipa, Injinoo (formerly Cowal Creek), Mapoon, and Umagico, the effects of removals and general

dislocation have resulted in many events and associated places which occurred earlier than say a generation before white invasion being relegated to the *bipotaim*<sup>29</sup>. For example, the stone arrangements at the tip of Cape York and nearby areas are described by Injinoo people as belonging to *bipotaim*. There is to my knowledge, no one alive today who has a direct knowledge of how these places were used but they can understand them within the context of similar places elsewhere in their country and they recognise them as being part of their ancestral past, *bipotaim*.

*Bipotaim* relates back into what archaeologists might call the prehistoric record or the pre-contact and beyond that again into the genesis of the earth itself. However, unlike Western concepts of 'prehistory' and 'antiquity' *bipotaim* is active in the present in that the spirits at *bipotaim* sites can effect human activities in the present and therefore work to modify the current events. The archaeological sites at Putta Putta (see Figure 2) relate to the *bipotaim* and such places are often described as belonging to the *bipotaim* people. Putta Putta has also a more recent connection to *pastaim* (see Chapter 5) when the Jardine brothers first settled nearby and even *bufor deiz* when people alive today still utilized these sites and recall events and incidents from their youth. One of the known massacre sites occurs in this area. The coastal area adjacent to this place is still used for seasonal camping and is an important fishing place. In fact public access to Putta Putta site has only really been curtailed since it has been recognised and protected by the community as an archaeological site in recent years. Other areas used by the community nearby have not been set aside in this way but still show evidence of archaeological material and are also understood to be occupied by the spirits of the people who lived there before. In this way *Putta Putta* demonstrates continuum of time from the most ancient days of the *bipotaim*,

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<sup>29</sup> This is consistent with the use of the word 'bipotaim' in the Torres Straits which Anna Shnukal notes 'commonly refers to the period before the coming of the light' in Broken: an Introduction to the Creole language of the Torres Strait. pub ANU 1988

through to *pastaim* the historical past, and into the *bufor deiz* of people's actual experience and into the present day or *diskaintaim*.

There are many places that are evidence of *bipotaim*. Whereas in western society we might interrogate the past asking numerous questions about how and why things may have been, Aboriginal people in northern Cape York do not display a comparable curiosity about *bipotaim* but rather an acceptance. That is not to say that there is not an eagerness to hear the stories describing *bipotaim* events of people, but once told, the details are taken to be self-evident. For instance, if a place or landscape is ascribed to events in *bipotaim* people rarely exhibit curiosity about material components such as artefacts. The fact that the landscape or place exists is proof of the veracity of the story. If artefacts are present this is taken to be no more than expected, given the truth of the story. If artefacts are not present, this is immaterial and it is likely that the spirits have chosen not to reveal them to you. It is assumed that such places are still inhabited or at least watched over by spirits of *bipotaim* people. When as an archaeologist I have seen artefacts not previously noted by people it is often remarked that the spirits must like me (meaning they 'approve' of me and my purpose) and that is why they are showing me things. Therefore there is an interesting interaction between the act of discovery by the archaeologist and the act of revelation by the spirits, which is in itself evidence of the continued activities of *bipotaim* in the present.

Bipotaim places include sites that are obviously of a ceremonial nature. For example Ida Point near Evans Bay where there are extensive stone arrangements comprising large peaked and elliptical stone arrangements; the tip of Cape York where there are large stone circles and Peak Point which is an important story place associated with the increase of turtles. They also include places which evidence occupation such as *Putta Putta* campsite, *Murine* stone quarry and campsite, *Roonga* campsite (see Greer 1995), the *Pudegah* (Evans Bay) campsite that was a trading place



between mainland Aborigines and Islanders (Moore 1979) and the large shell mounds at Weipa (Wright 1971). People rarely express surprise when one points out an archaeological site that was not known to the community as it is accepted that this must be a *ples blo dempla bipotaim* people.

The concept of *bipotaim* is best described as a tapestry arising from the beginning of creation that forms a backdrop into which, the threads of *pastaim* and *diskaintaim* are woven. Unlike western linear concepts of time, the *bipotaim* does not stop at *pastaim* but exists alongside it. Therefore, beings from *bipotaim* can affect/interact with people today at certain places or in certain circumstances. The landscape is the constant around which time, people and events unfold, converge and separate.

Often I have found that a place, which is known to be important to the *bipotaim*, also contains archaeological evidence, even if that evidence has not previously been recognized by people as belonging to the *bipotaim*. Obviously such places are important verifiable evidence of cultural continuity. One such place is the series of lakes that string along the East Coast behind the dunes. Several of these are quite extensive and they are known as dangerous places and not just because of the crocodiles that lurk within. These are the lakes reported by Greer to be an important *stori ples* in the Wamera Story (Greer 1996). A number of archaeological sites are present at these lakes.

Wamera was a boy who left his mother after accusing her of greediness in keeping the best yams for herself:

The boy dug up a water vine and went underground at Inangapudan [Fishbone - near Jacky Jacky Creek], dragging it with him. He passed through the earth like a corkscrew or fence-post digger, emerging at a number of spots. At such points a pool of water was left behind...This story explains the creation of the many lakes and waterholes along the east coast. Finally the boy emerged at Payra near Somerset, and as he passed he formed the Albany Passage which separates the mainland and Albany Island" (Greer 1996:113).

## 9.2 What happened in the *bipotaim*?

In the *bipotaim*, the landscape as we know it today was created. This was not a cataclysmic event but the ongoing effect of beings and their interaction with the physical landscape. I know of no accounts of *bipotaim* in northern Cape York that deal with the formation of the land mass itself. There appears to be rather, an assumption that it was there before people, although not perhaps before the *short people* or the *red devils* as these were also here before people (see for example Laade 1967:91-94 who records McDonnell River peoples stories and McConnel 1936). Thompson discusses the complementary accommodation of Bora and Church in Lockhart and points out that:

Traditional religious beliefs begin in a created world in which totemic ancestors formed features of the land and imparted their traditions. These ancestral beings had unique powers but they are not conceived of as divine in a theistic sense (Thompson 1988:273).

Hence in the story of Wamera the land already existed but as a direct result of Wamera's actions the water bodies were increased with the creation of a series of lakes and springs and the Albany Passage, as well as the incidental creation of a least one island (Albany Island). Greer (1996) has suggested that this story might be a description of rising sea levels and the creation of the Torres Straits. This gives the *bipotaim* a depth of greater than 6,000yrs B.P.

It is not surprising in an area where European invasion and subsequent interventionist policies have had such a great impact, that stories of earliest creation of landscape features may not have survived. It is not possible therefore to draw any conclusions therefore about the maximum time depth of Aboriginal occupation in the area beyond that it appears to date to at least sometime prior to 6,000 B.P as people were present to observe and explain the effects of the rise in sea level. Few radiocarbon dates have been undertaken in Cape York and no deep archaeological chronology has been developed for the prehistory of the area (but see Wright 1971 and Moore 1979).

Several other *bipotaim* accounts add weight to the notion that Aboriginal people in Cape York observed changes to the coastal landscape. One such story is that of Shiveri (pronounced Chiviri in Injinoo)<sup>30</sup>. McConnel (1957) recorded this story and compared it to stories of Kwoiam from the Torres Strait concluding that the stories related to one individual. In this story Shiveri creates the Islands and sandbars of the Torres Strait as he travels to Mabuiag Island from Old Mapoon on the West Coast of Cape York Peninsula. Below is an abridged version of the story as she recorded it,

Once Shiveri [sic] and Nyunggu lived at Langanama (Janie Creek) [near old Mapoon]. Shiveri's home was on the north side of the creek and was called Mbranyapwana (sandbeach). Nyunggu lived on the south side of the creek at Kuringa...

Shiveri was always making dances. He did nothing but dance-morning noon and night. When the sun grew hot, he would spell, then begin again and dance all evening till midnight...

Shiveri made a drum out of pandanus tree wood with a hollow stem and another out of messmate wood so as to make both soft and loud sounds. He put an iguana skin over the ends of the drums and beat them. He himself beat the drum with his hands and sang. He made many songs. The dance was called kwa.ra. When Shiveri went to Maubiyag [sic] Island he took this dance with him and showed it to the Maubiyag people. The Maubiyag people now have a dance, Kwoiyam's [sic] dance, which resembles Shiveri's dance, in that both are seagull dances. Shiveri had a bow and arrow, he was the only man who had one. Shiveri made canoes. One of these capsized and may be seen now by the edge of the water on Shiveri's side...

The daughters of Nyunggu wanted Shiveri, so they made signs to him across the river. He replied with signs that he would come over. So one day he went over in his canoe... [he] put them in his canoe. Then he pushed off. He just gave one push with his paddle and the canoe went straight down the creek and out the mouth and up the coast. It went of itself. The hole which this paddle made as he pushed off is the well that is there now. One girl had a sore breast. Shiveri left her at Red Point (opposite Crab Island). He left the other one behind at Red Island because his canoe smashed there. Then Shiveri just took one step out over the sea and an island came up, then another step and then another island came up and so on. Wherever he put his foot a sandbank or an island came up. Thus he made the islands of the Torres Straits. He went to Maubiyag Island and taught them his dance there...

Shiveri made a song about all his children that he had left behind him on the mainland. The Maubiyag Islanders have a song which they say was made by Kwoiyam and was brought to them by Kwoiyam from the Tyongandyi [Mapoon people] (whom they regard

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<sup>30</sup> Mentioned in Greer op.cit p114. For full account see McConnell 1957. McConnell refers to this figure as Shiveri, while Donald Thompson spells it Siviri but people from Injinoo use the pronunciation Chiveri.

as brothers") when he came from the mainland. This dance...also belongs to the seagull.

Nyunggu went after Shiveri and his daughters. But instead of going to Maubiyag Island he went right on to Papua and never came back. It is said that Nyunggu (the white pigeon) is there in Papua somewhere now. His spirit walks about there still. Now every year the pigeons leave their home and go to Papua to nest and their children come back every year to Kuringa...

Nyunggu gave his dances to the Papuan people. His songs were all about his children, the birds, the shells, whom he had left behind, and about the things he used to do when he lived at Janie Creek. He used sometimes to lose his canoe. He made a song about it... A song and dance belonging to the Papua natives on the Fly River is said to resemble this song of Nyunggu (McConnel 1957 Totemic Hero Cults in Cape York Peninsula, North Qld Part II).

*Kwoiam* is the Torres Strait Islander name given to what McConnell has deduced to be the same culture hero as *Shiveri*. It is difficult to say just how similar the two stories are today and whether people in the region share this sense that the two heroes are actually one. The only full story of *Kwoiam* told to me was by Mrs Waiu Whap (1999). Mrs Whap however read me the story as it appears in Margaret Lawrie's (1970) *Legends of the Torres Strait*. The story is the Torres Strait Islander version of the legend and heavily anglicised. Aboriginal people do not tell the story of *Kwoiam* they speak of *Chivrri* and provide other details specific to his trip and events immediately adjacent to the mainland.

Below is an abridged account of *Chiviri's* story told by Miriam Crow.

Chiviri came from Janie Creek near old Mapoon. He grabbed two cousins and travelled with them in a canoe to Gel Point. The youngest sister bin get sousou [breast] pain – so he left here at gel point. That's the stone there now with the right sousou down and the left one still stannup.

He travelled up with older sister now to Entrance Island. That night they bin climb the hill and the girl looked kum bak and cried for her sister so he left her there.

Chivri go somewhere near Thusday Island. His canoe bin turn over there near Blue Fish Point [Hammond Rock?] you can see the canoe there. He swam from there go to one of the Islands and then to Poid [Moa Island]. He find a woman there. People blo that place bin fight with him and son of Kwoiam bin fight with him. People of Poid [Moa Island] bin hang him long tree but when they bin listen he turned into a bird-hawk (Miriam Crow pers comm. 1999).

While there are some discrepancies in detail between the story McConnell recorded and the version now told in Injinoo. The basic details remain constant. That is that he came from Old Mapoon area on the West coast of Cape York Peninsula and that he travelled up the coast creating landscape features as he went. He then travelled on to the Islands where he spent the rest of his life. This story is significant because it provides a very detailed account of cultural exchange where the transfer of tradition emanates from Aboriginal Australia and out to the Torres Strait and Papua. Not only did Chiviri create rocks and sand bars and islands, he invented the bow and arrow, canoes on the mainland, he invented the island drum and took it to the Torres Strait and he invented dances and taught them to the people of Mabiliaug Island. The Mabiliaug people recognise the cultural contribution of Chiviri and according to McConnell call the *Tyongandyi* (this is a traditional name for Mapoon people) brothers. Nyunggu also invented dances and taught them to the people of the Fly River in New Guinea. This is in stark opposition to current archaeological theories (as evidenced by papers presented in the Torres Strait session of the Australian Archaeological Association's 1999 Conference McNiven unpub; Lilley unpub; Carter & Veth unpub), which are premised on cultural change and influence coming from the north and 'impacting' on Torres Strait Islanders and mainland Aboriginal people in the region.

### **9.3 Archaeological Evidence for the Bipotaim**

There has been little archaeological investigation conducted on the northern Cape York mainland and those works which have been carried out were all small scale or test excavations which yielded little data (see Chapter 3).

Although *bipotaim* places are not reliant on archaeological material for confirmation and indeed many people do not readily recognise such material, there are several cases of archaeological material

occurring at known bipotaim sites. For example, the East coasts lakes. In addition, where archaeological material is brought to the attention of people in areas where they are unaware of any stories existing, this material is usually ascribed to bipotaim people.

There is a precautionary principle, which appears to be invoked in daily activities in the scrub or other places outside the village environment, which reinforces the role and importance of someone who is authorised to speak for country. That is, you may not know each specific place that is linked to bipotaim so you treat areas with the respect and caution. In places where you know there is such a connection. For example, dangerous country or areas you may be entering for the first time you **must** take a language speaker to ensure safety. In other areas it is desirable. In the latter case, introductory words and phrases can be used to introduce yourself and your purpose, and this may suffice. This applies to archaeological investigation. Investigation of certain sites known to be occupied by *bipotaim people* must only be attempted after careful consideration and formalised introduction to the spirits (see Greer 1996). At other places it may be sufficient to have a language speaker 'call out' or in some case 'call out' yourself. The purpose of this is not only to introduce yourself, but also to announce your intent. The implication being that the spirits may decide to reject that intent. The researcher therefore, is held by the community to not only be accountable to them but also to *bipotaim people*.

The questions that could be asked here are

- what has archaeology been able to contribute to our knowledge or understanding of *bipotaim*?
- Has archaeological work undertaken to date corroborated or challenged indigenous notions relating to *bipotaim* and the events which occurred then?

This is similar to the positive challenge posed by Harrison 1999

What are the prospects of archaeology being instrumental in developing and articulating new stories that provide a way of

understanding the trajectories of indigenous lives from the deep past to contemporary times? (Harrison 1999).

Certainly Greer (1995, 1996) sees archaeological practice and techniques as a fundamental intrusion into indigenous identity in the area. In describing her interaction with the community of Injinoo prior to, during and post excavations and her growing understanding of the relationship of the sites to the communities belief systems she found herself questioning the fundamental value of this line of research.

...while formal discussions were aimed at illustrating the value of archaeological work, informal discussions were having the opposite effect. I found that the more I learned about the community's beliefs in relation to the landscape, the more challenged I felt about the archaeological interpretations and their potential value to the community. While the results of the excavations were interesting in relation to cooking methods, the use of beachrock as cooking stones and its possible storage and re-use, I felt that this had fallen short of my portrayal to the community of the potential of archaeological research to present a picture of the past. This was exacerbated by the fact that I now knew that the site was located physically and cognitively, within a strong cosmological framework. This uneasiness grew as these explanations became more personalised and particular (for example that the fireplaces were still used, albeit by the dead who occupied the site).

I began to wonder about the destructive element of what we were doing. In removing these 'features', were we perhaps also removing part of the story? This was especially worrying as those we had chosen were the largest and best preserved. Moreover, we were removing the physical evidence from which such stories were created. What were we offering to replace this? (Greer 1995: 138).

The only other archaeological work carried out on the mainland in northern Cape York has been the excavation of several sites by David Moore (1979) which have yielded recent dates for Evans Bay (*Pudegah*) and Red Island Point and excavations and subsequent investigations at the Weipa shell mounds (Wright 1971; Cribb 1991; Bailey 1991, 1993). These excavations did not reveal evidence of the depth of time that people understand to relate to these places, however neither did they reveal evidence that significantly altered the communities' outlook or understanding of these sites. It is clear that the investigations at these sites was not designed to inform community questions and therefore the results are seen as mildly interesting but largely irrelevant by the community.

The case of Weipa shell mounds is of more interest in the negligent controversy that it spawned. Stone (1989,1991) alleged that the Weipa shell mounds hitherto accepted by archaeologists (Wright 1971; Bailey 1977) as being unusual cultural sites due to their enormous size and extent (i.e up to 30' high and covering several hectares in extent), were a natural phenomenon caused by prehistoric turkeys scratching nests repeatedly in the same spot. A far-fetched theory and one formulated without having spoken to any local people or the archaeologist who had excavated them. He quoted as evidence, the lack of cultural material contained within the mounds, the homogeneity in shell size, the relative lack of soil/humic material and no extant local knowledge of the sites and their uses. This was quite extraordinary claim was not based on personal experience or familiarity with the sites, reference to the published excavation information which clearly refers to cultural material or discussions with local people many of whom have clear first hand accounts of the use of these mounds (e.g. Arthur Androm pers comm 1990).

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of this controversy was that it reached the status of an archaeological debate with full-page media coverage in Sydney and papers for and against flying backwards and forwards at various conferences (e.g. AAA Darwin 1990) and in the journals (Bailey 1991; 1993; Cribb 1991; Stone 1991). For the people of Weipa, the consequences were both more devastating and puzzling. Outside experts were carrying on a debate that challenged not only their understanding of their history and their relationship with the landscape but also questioned the credibility of their cultural tourism enterprise (Unigan Nature Reserve walk incorporated these sites – see Unigan a Guide 1988). It also called into question the validity of their traditional knowledge in their relationship with Comalco the mining company that operates on their traditional lands, who had also hitherto accepted these sites as cultural landmarks.



#### 9.4 Emerging Research, Emerging Issues

While there may have been little archaeological work carried out in the region to date, which contributes to the understanding and interpretation of the *bipotaim*, there is currently a resurgence of archaeological interest in the Torres Strait. Papers delivered at the AAA conference held in Perth 1999 covered excavations and research being undertaken into topics ranging from the origin of agriculture in Torres Strait (Carter 1999 unpub); settlement expansion and antiquity and its relation to geomorphological and environmental events (Barham 1999 unpub); the nature and antiquity of male ceremonial sites (McNiven 1999 unpub); to the migration of peoples and culture from Papua to the Torres Strait and the possible migration of peoples and culture from the northeast to the Torres Strait. Clearly, these research projects have the potential to challenge Torres Strait Islander identity and moreover assume a one-way cultural transfer from north to south, which flies in the face of cultural evidence such as the culture hero myth of Kwoiam and Chiviri.

There are a limitless range and number of archaeological projects, which could explore the *bipotaim* in northern Cape York Peninsula. Community based projects will need to consider the potential impacts of research outcomes on indigenous identity in the region. The exploration of the connections between archaeological evidence and the *bipotaim* will be enhanced by a co-operative research team approach incorporating anthropologists, archaeologists and communities.



**Plate 20: Hammond Rock**

## **PART III**

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### **MANAGEMENT ISSUES RELATING TO THE HERITAGE OF NORTHERN CAPE YORK**



**Plate 21: Meun Lifu and Katua Rattler – Cape York Rangers**

## Chapter 10

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# MANAGING THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF NORTHERN CAPE YORK

### 10.1 Introduction

In Part One I discussed the theoretical background to historic heritage management in Australia, and outlined the clear separation of the consideration and management of indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage as 'prehistoric' (indigenous) and 'historic' (European) heritage. In Part Two, I endeavoured to present a history of the Cape from the viewpoint of the Aboriginal communities that currently live in Cape York. What should have been clear from Part Two is that indigenous people understand the recent history of Cape York in quite different ways to the ways in which that history has been written thus far, and that this relates to the differences in the way in which time, place and landscape are understood by Aboriginal people. It should also be clear that post-colonial history is incredibly important to Aboriginal people in this area because of the many changes that have occurred over this period. In this, the third part, I will outline the current state of play of heritage management in Cape York, focussing particularly on the way in which natural and cultural heritage have been managed separately, and outlining why such a position is at odds with indigenous models of heritage management. Finally, I suggest an integrated model of cultural and natural heritage management for the shared cultural heritage of Cape York.

This current chapter explores

- the current state of play regarding heritage management in Cape York,
- the interrelatedness of natural and cultural values and

- the effectiveness of current practices both in delivering outcomes for the community and in their adoption and implementation by the community.

From an indigenous perspective there is no doubt an assumption that traditional custodianship **is** heritage management. This diverges from traditional Western heritage management as practised in Australia in two main ways. Firstly, this is contrasted against a clear tendency to date for non-indigenous accounts to focus on an sanitised and hero driven approach to the colonisation of the country which is exacerbated by the specialist practice of separating the management of indigenous and non-indigenous heritage into two often mutually exclusive strands/professions. Secondly, Aboriginal communities clearly do not conceptually separate natural and cultural values and their management (see for instance Bird-Rose 1996; Morphy 1995; Strang 1997; Greer 1995). In contrast however, in Australia as in Canada and the United States, there is an entrenched separation between the management of natural values and cultural values. There is increasing discussion of the need to 'integrate' the management of these values as exemplified for example in the Visions Symposium in NSW (Visions for the New Millennium, NPWS 1998). However, in practice these interrelated values are managed, funded and conceptualised separately.

These two points will be discussed at some length in this chapter in light of indigenous aspirations to exert responsibility for heritage and land management in northern Cape York.

## **10.2 Relationship with Country today**

Clearly the Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York maintain an intimate relationship with the land and sea around them but this is against a background of competing use, management and ownership from other groups within Australia mainly Queensland

National Parks, green lobbyists, mining companies, tourist and tourism operators, Queensland Fisheries and operators in the fishing industry (see Smyth 1994; Rigsby 1981; Chase 1994; Sutherland 1996; Rigsby and Chase 1998;).

### **10.2.1 Natural area management in Cape York**

Cape York has long been an icon area for the conservation movement in Australia. Geoff Moseley then Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) had this to say when he introduced Peter Stanton's seminal work on the identification of proposed protected areas in Cape York.

The Australian Conservation Foundation believes that Cape York Peninsula is one of the most important areas for nature conservation in Australia. A comparison with other great Australian natural areas such as Fraser Island, South-west Tasmania and the Alps readily comes to mind. Cape York however, has something none of these possess in anything like the same extent – vastness.

North of the 16 degree latitude the Peninsula covers an area twice that of Tasmania, and while the rest of the tropical world is being transformed by agricultural development, the Peninsula still retains much of its virgin quality. What is more it is situated opposite the northern part of the Great Barrier Reef. Where else in the world is the chance to save such a wide range of natural types of country, including the marine environment on such a scale as the north east tip of Australia (Stanton 1976:5).

More recently the Queensland and Federal governments have recognised the significance of the natural values of the area and this has resulted in a number of state parks, terrestrial and marine, and the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef world heritage areas. Consistency in comparing protected areas across Australia and measuring the level of protection afforded to Australia's natural heritage on a world stage is achieved by the allocation and use of an internationally defined set of management categories, known as IUCN (World Conservation Union) categories. There are six IUCN protected Area Categories, although only the first four are generally funded under the National Reserve System Program (this is the Commonwealth/State Government co-operative program for the establishment of protected area reserves). The six categories are:

**Category Ia: Strict Nature Reserve:** Protected Area managed mainly for science. Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

**Category Ib: Wilderness Area:** Protected Area managed mainly for wilderness protection. Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

**Category II: National Park:** Protected Area managed mainly for ecosystem conservation and recreation. Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to

- a. protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for this and future generations:
- b. exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area: and
- c. provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

**Category III: Natural Monument:** Protected Area managed for conservation of specific natural features. Area containing one or more specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

**Category IV: Habitat/Species Management Area:** Protected Area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention. Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

**Category V: Protected Landscape/Seascape:** Protected Areas managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation.

Area of land, with coast and seas as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, cultural and/or ecological value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

**Category VI: Managed Resource Protected Areas:** Protected Area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long-term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

The aim of all countries that have adopted the IUCN categories is essentially to develop a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system, which forms the backbone of their land management and conservation program. The existing names and classifications of park categories in state systems within

Australia cannot necessarily be taken to indicate which IUCN category they meet. The various state legislations pre-date the IUCN categories and the level of interventionist management and visitor access in Australian Parks is often defined by management documents (Plans of Management) and restrictions in statutory definitions embedded in legislation.

In order to assess and plan a National Reserve System comprised of a representative sample Australian natural landscapes there has been a great deal of work undertaken over recent years to describe the different bio-geographical regions which can be used as the basic units for description, assessment and ultimately acquisition and management strategies. The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) is a biogeographic framework for regional planning of conservation and sustainable resource management (Thackway & Creswell 1995: see Appendix C).

There is a growing problem in that the protected areas system in Australia (and the world) is being subsumed into a focus on the conservation of biodiversity only (significantly humans have been excluded from practical consideration in the application of biodiversity).

The development of a representative system of protected areas is but one of the conservation management measures available to jurisdictions as we endeavour to conserve biodiversity on a landscape scale. The Draft National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity clearly incorporates the principle that the conservation of biodiversity will not be achieved through reserves alone, but rather will depend on managing threatening processes over as much of the landscape as possible. Principle 8 of the draft

National Strategy recognises that viable protected areas are only a component of an overall conservation strategy and program, and that these areas need to be integrated with measures to protect biodiversity outside formal reserves (Environment Australia; Protected Areas Homepage).

Despite Cordell's rather optimistic assertion that 'today the IUCN recognises and accepts the principle that cultural diversity and



biological diversity need to be conserved together if they are to prosper' (Cordell 1994:13-3), there is little evidence to suggest that this is understood, accepted or translated into protected area management strategies in Australia or other similar parts of the world such as the US and Canada. For many purists in the conservation arena whether conservationist or scientist the more restrictive protection category i.e category 1a and b are the only categories that provide true long-term protection. These people would argue that categories II and V which relate to National Parks and marine parks are only effective in conserving natural systems and biodiversity if they restrict recreation and human egress through strict zoning and statutory management plans. Hence there is continued pressure on protected area management organisations (e.g Queensland National Parks and National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW) to effectively elevate category IV and V parks through increased legislative or regulatory restrictions on use and access, to Category I and II status.

While the official definition of protected areas adopted by the Australian government does mention cultural resources. It is a secondary adjunct to the protection of biodiversity.

Protected areas (e.g national parks, nature reserves and marine parks) are defined internationally as ' areas of land and /or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means (<http://www.biodiversity.environment.gov.au/protect/intro.htm>).

The Natural Reserve System Strategy which is the document by which the Commonwealth and the states seek to design, create and manage the protected area reserve system does not mention cultural heritage at all.

The attitude of scientists, conservationists and protected area managers to cultural values ranges from an off hand disregard which relegates them to a secondary or non existent role in any reserve design or plan, characterised by 'Well if there are sites there

we'll do the right thing by them and we can work out what is there once its reserved' to the treatment of cultural heritage as an intrusive element in a landscape that must be taken back to an assumed prior 'natural' state. For an example of the latter see the long running debate over the historic huts in Royal National Park in NSW (NPWS files A/2230C, 92/A/12746C and 92/P/1262C).

Much of our society's current approach to biodiversity springs from the school of 'deep ecology' (Sessions 1996). The dismissal or denial of cultural heritage by many nature conservationists and scientists is based on the conviction that humans do not have a greater right to exist than any other species and that other species have an equal right to prosper and flourish. It therefore follows that wherever possible natural systems and species should be encouraged and the evidence of human intervention in the landscape eradicated and their further impact prohibited. There are 4 fundamental characteristics of deep ecology:

1. The well being and flourishing of human and non-human Life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent are independent of the non-human world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realisation of these values and are also values in themselves
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease

(Naess quoted in Sessions 1996: 138).

It is relevant to note that the focus in the debate over the role of cultural heritage in protected areas is about the evidence of human impact on nature and usually centres on the removal or remediation of Western or post contact cultural heritage. So for instance, in a symposium on Wilderness Management one speaker asserts that he acknowledges that virtually all natural landscapes have been subject to interaction with and exploitation by humans and that the

management of such areas should 'consider this history' but that in his view there can be

...no justification for retaining remnants of exploitative activities in wilderness. If such items are considered to be of heritage value, they should be removed and placed on display elsewhere to demonstrate the priorities of the past generation (Lembit 1993:189).

The implication of this statement is of course that the priorities of a previous generation were wrong and are now being put right. There is little or no concern about the intrusion of pre-contact or so called' prehistoric cultural heritage which is easily transformed into the 'natural' realm (see also Byrne 1998:90).

There are two reasons for this hostile focus on contact and other remains from the historic period. The first is pragmatic, post contact relics or cultural heritage items such as the huts in Royal National Park are likely to attract more humans and therefore prolong the impact or intrusion of people onto the natural system. Roads in National Parks, Wilderness Areas or areas of identified high conservation value which have not yet been gazetted as parks (e.g Cape York) increase the ease of access for 4wheel drivers and other users and therefore open up new areas to human impact. In this way they can be seen to contribute to loss of habitat and biological diversity. Similarly, suggestions that Aboriginal owners or custodians wish to set up an out station in a protected area to carry out cultural practices is likely to cause serious concern and controversy amongst deep ecologists because of associated activities like prolonged camping, hunting and resource use. On the other hand the cultural heritage of the distant past in their minds has been depopulated and is associated with old concepts of the noble savage in harmony with nature. This belief has its roots in the period of 'Enlightenment', 'the period when the notion of opposition between nature and the state of society or of education suddenly gains great prominence...the status of nature becomes much higher in this period...' (Bloch and Bloch 1980:27).

In this period philosophers such as Rousseau argued against the progress of culture and idealise pre-industrialised 'man' as a man in harmony with nature.

In the later *discourse on inequality* (1755) he goes further by contrasting social man (man created by man), whom he sees as depraved, enslaved and unhappy, with man in the 'state of nature' (which includes group life on the family level) whom he believed would have been good, free and happy (Bloch and Bloch 1980:28).

### **10.2.2 Wilderness**

The culmination of the deep ecology approach in Australian conservation is the concept of 'Wilderness'. The primary value recognised in Wilderness protection is biodiversity and the opportunity for that biodiversity to evolve free of human impact and intervention. It would seem however that the ecologists and scientists have taken the concept of wilderness well beyond the definition used by Myles Dunphy, considered by many to be the father of wilderness in Australia.

Wilderness or primitive bushland...one of the really indispensable necessities of modern existence in its soundest sense, for where else can man go to escape his civilisation...more and more people want back the forested and mountain wilderness which has been lost...to preserve for the human race that connection with things natural and wholesome which is now more than ever necessary (Myles Dunphy 1934 in Moseley 1994: 205).

Somehow the concept has progressed from the concept of natural places in which to revive and restore the human spirit to places from which all but certain humans should be excluded for the benefit of non-human species.

While the Queensland government has proved loathe to develop and implement Wilderness legislation because of its pro mining and natural resources development focus, it has not stopped the identification of Wilderness areas through the National Wilderness Inventory project (Lesslie, Abrahams and Maslen 1992), nor has it silenced the long campaign by environmental groups to have wilderness qualities in Cape York protected.

Wilderness definitions vary slightly but can be taken to mean the wildest areas where natural processes rather than human intervention currently contribute most to the landscape. The wilderness value of an area is assessed based on the following criteria:

- Biophysical naturalness
- Apparent naturalness
- Remoteness from access
- Remoteness from settlement

*(Moseley 1994:211; Lesslie 1992 et al.)*

Wilderness legislation in other States e.g NSW provides for the highest IUCN category protection allowing only passive recreation i.e walking and no mechanical intervention. The level of seriousness with which this human free focus is approached can perhaps be judged by the somewhat amusing case of Bob Carr (the NSW Premier) being air -lifted into a remote wilderness area in NSW in 1998 by helicopter, only to spark a media debate about whether or not this breached wilderness restrictions and constituted a potential threat to the human free development of the biodiversity. Even fire management in wilderness areas is a matter for controversy (see debate in Barton 1993).

‘Wilderness’ as envisioned by most of its proponents today is an anathema to Aboriginal people. The concept that land should be ‘left to itself’ abandoned if you will, and that people should be excluded is not a model of custodianship with which they are familiar. This is not to say that there are not areas from which Aboriginal people would like to see ‘others’ excluded but generally the Aboriginal relationship between the land and custodians remains intimate and at times interventionist.

Cape York Peninsula has long been hailed by environmentalists to be a large wilderness repository and due to the various large-scale

development proposals such as silica sands mining on the East Coast and bauxite and kaolin mining on the West Coast, they have long agitated for its protection.

In the state elections of 1991 the green groups ran a number of candidates throughout north Queensland and Cape York Peninsula and were clearly shocked at their poor performance. They had assumed naively that there was a high correlation between Aboriginal aspirations in the Cape and their own and that Aboriginal people would support them in their quest for increased protection through statutory protected areas. In reality however Aboriginal peoples viewed the conservation movement as another 'threat' to Aboriginal control of their lands. The creation of National Parks and reserves was just another example of a vested interest group taking control of the land away from them and excluding them from using it. In this way many Aboriginal people saw little difference between Comalco's proposals and National Parks.

Since that time the green groups have spent considerable time and energy in building links with Aboriginal communities and peak bodies and coming to grips with Aboriginal aspirations for the area. Generally, there is now a much higher level of understanding of Aboriginal attachment to land in sectors of the green movement. In 1981 Rigsby (1981) challenged the Australian Conservation Foundation to consider two things in pursuing the fight to the conservation of wilderness in Cape York Peninsula i.e

1. It is ethnocentric (culture bound) and mistaken not to recognise that many Cape York Peninsula Landscapes and plant and animal communities either have been or may well have been substantially modified by the work of Aboriginal people over perhaps 40,000 years of occupation. This statement applies even to the Jardine and East Cape York Peninsula areas that meet the narrower A.C.F. criteria. The 'primitive' and pristine character of the Peninsula environment ended a long, long time ago, just after Aboriginal people became part of the ecosystem.
2. It is true that large areas of the Peninsula are 'free of human occupation' today, but it must not be forgotten that their depopulating is due to several historical processes. Among them

was a deliberate government policy of the removal of people from their homelands and their concentrations on mission and reserves.  
(Rigsby 1981:3)

On the surface it appears that wilderness proponents today understand and are sympathetic to Aboriginal interests and land management practices or at least the political climate has changed to the extent that they have to acknowledge them. However, there is little evidence in land management and conservation agencies that specialists support or believe in the efficacy of Aboriginal practices.

It would seem however, that there could be a correlation between the concept and management of wilderness and those places where spirits and devils are most active. These areas tend to be areas from which if given the choice Aboriginal people would like to see others excluded, largely for their own safety. There also seems to be a remarkably high correlation between these places and the areas of highest assessed conservation value. If conservation groups were to focus less energy on trying to convince or change Aboriginal views about the value of an unpeopled landscape and more on understanding the sentient nature of the Aboriginal landscape in Cape York and the interrelatedness of natural and cultural values they might find that common ground that they are seeking. This would require a re-definition of Wilderness at least in Cape York Peninsula to incorporate the cultural element.

### **10.2.3 The 'Cape York Land Use Study'**

In 1994, I and a colleague Shelley Greer, (McIntyre & Greer 1994) were commissioned to write a profile of the 5 Northern Peninsula Area communities (i.e Seisia, Bamaga, Injinoo, New Mapoon and Umagico) as part of the CYPLUS Indigenous Management of Land and Sea Project & Traditional Activities Project (Cordell 1994). The Cape York Land Use Study known as CYPLUS was a joint Commonwealth and Queensland state project. It was a broad-scale, multidisciplinary assessment of the resources and values of the

Peninsula to guide future land use and planning in the area. In scale, design and timing it was a precursor to the Regional Forest Assessments carried out as joint Commonwealth and State projects in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South East Queensland.

Despite well known Aboriginal interest in most of the Cape York Peninsula area and the predominance of Aboriginal people in the population of the Cape York area, Aboriginal interests and values were only included as an after thought and only once a Labour Government came into power in Queensland. As in the Regional Forest Assessments, cultural heritage was not considered to be a major consideration in the resource-based assessment of the values of the area. Again there is the assumption that cultural heritage values will be localised to isolated structures or sites and that these can be conserved/ managed within any tenure or proposed land use and recognised via listing on the Register of the National Estate. In fact this exclusive focus of the Australian Heritage Commission on the assessment of National Estate values in such projects with no integration of these into State government statutory protective mechanisms means that even where high conservation values are identified there is no long term protection nor a process for incorporating their protection into the long term management of the area.

The *Indigenous Management of Land and Sea and Traditional Activities Project* represented a belated attempt to identify and document Aboriginal interests in the area but it was not resourced with adequate funds to cover field visits or community consultation. Given the tokenistic resources available the methodology employed was to commission 'specialists' who had a known research interest or community presence in each of the communities to write the reports.



In the case of the Northern Peninsula Area Communities the authors however felt it necessary to visit the communities and discuss the project. Given limited time and resources the outcome of these profiles were brief and at the request of the communities concerned did not include a list of important economic or social places. Communities naturally felt very reticent given their past exclusion from the CYPLUS project to supply details to the government of places that were important to them for cultural purposes, including resource use. Few people in the communities had heard of the project and those that did were suspicious of its aims, linking it to proposals for silica sand extraction, bauxite mining, extension of National Parks into Aboriginal lands and fisheries controls.

In excess of 64 individual studies were undertaken of which only 1 was an Aboriginal project. Joint State and Commonwealth teams compiled information from all the various studies and came up with three thematic overview reports, which summarized the information now available for Cape York Peninsula. These reports were:

- Overview Report 1 (Thematic Report 1 of 3) Natural Resources and Ecology. [www.erin.gov.au/states/cyp\\_on\\_1/reports/overview/nre.html](http://www.erin.gov.au/states/cyp_on_1/reports/overview/nre.html)
- Overview Report 2 (Thematic Report 2 of 3) Land use and Economy [www.erin.gov.au/states/cyp\\_on\\_1/reports/overview/landrep.html](http://www.erin.gov.au/states/cyp_on_1/reports/overview/landrep.html)
- Overview Report 3 (Thematic Report 3 of 3) Society and Culture. [www.erin.gov.au/states/cyp\\_on\\_1/reports/overview/socult.html](http://www.erin.gov.au/states/cyp_on_1/reports/overview/socult.html)

The overview documents suffer because they again regard the value 'type' as separate independently measurable entities. For example In Overview Report #3 which deals with 'Society and Culture' while there are clear statements as to the all encompassing nature of indigenous interests in the landscape one gets the impression that these could have been written about almost any Aboriginal group in any part of Australia. For example

Most Aboriginal communities retain close links with their land and have strong understanding of its religious importance. This generally reflects as a web of interrelated places interwoven with each other – not as individual “dots on the map” of “sacred sites”. There are also archaeological sites which increasingly are of contemporary importance to communities as evidence of past associations with the land, and may be politically useful to land claims. Historic places are also important to Aboriginal people as part of their recent past and their links with non- Aboriginal settlement on the Cape (CYPLUS 1995).

While there is little wrong with this statement it is merely rhetoric when it has no interplay with the other resource-based studies undertaken. For instance in assessing the National Estate Values of Areas for possible inclusion on the Register of the National Estate there is no assessment of the value of these areas to the Aboriginal Community (who in many cases are the legal owners of the nominated areas eg Lockerbie Scrub and parts of the Jardine River Catchment). There is an assumption that by stating that this consultation has not been undertaken, as an exclusion of the projects brief, somehow means that the outcomes of the project are valid and that consultation and an assessment of Aboriginal values can be appended to this at some later unspecified date. This is clearly a result of the separation of natural and cultural values in the assessment process and a belief that somehow these can be operated as independent assessments with their own exclusive methodologies.

It is now accepted that not enough work has been done to identify and assess cultural heritage values in the region and Natural Heritage Trust funds are being used to try and patch this information gap. However there is a fundamental problem that works against the likelihood of a positive outcome and this is that indigenous communities are being asked to provide information to the government so the ‘experts’ can make decisions about the future of their land and resources.

#### **10.2.4 Relationship between biodiversity and other values and the non-indigenous community**

Many scientists and conservationists do not favour the term 'natural heritage' at all. The inclusion of the word 'heritage' implies a human ownership or stake hold in non-human species, which is antithetical to their view of equity amongst species. Terms like biological diversity (biodiversity) and species habitats etc are preferred. In this way for instance they can make a separation between an agreed scientific definitions of say 'old growth' and the social value or attachment that some people might have to places that they perceive as old growth. The separation is that the scientific definition is 'correct' (as it meets their criteria) and the expressed community value is 'incorrect' as it is not based on their criteria.

In identification of 'heritage' there are no correct or incorrect values. You cannot tell someone for instance that while **they** might feel they are attached to a place they are actually wrong. Instead we talk of 'thresholds'. Thresholds are used to translate heritage values and places into a regime of statutory protective mechanisms. To some extent these thresholds are discussed and agreed to by the community for example the Australian Heritage Commission through public consultation and the NSW Heritage Office through the Heritage Council of NSW. In this way government departments and others involved in heritage management use agreed thresholds to sort places into protective regimes without (at least in theory) challenging individual or group attachment to those places. Protection is given to places that meet the threshold.

On the other hand, in the old growth scenario scientists define the boundaries not by human attachment but by observable defining criteria. The power in the assessment process lies with the scientist or expert who assesses the vegetation to ascertain whether or not it has these scientifically observable traits.

### **10.2.5 Aboriginal attitudes to the land and caring for the environment**

Aboriginal people have a very different attitude to the land and the relationship of human and non-human species and other elements of the landscape. We have seen from previous chapters that the country itself in Cape York is alive not only with plants and animals but also spirits, short people and red devils. This is true of all Aboriginal lands in Australia although the spirits and beings may be known by different names. So for instance we get a very similar picture from north-western Australia:

For many Aboriginal people, everything in the world is alive: animals, trees, rains, sun, moon, some rocks, and hills and people are all conscious. So too are other beings such as the Rainbow Snake, the Hairy people and the Stumpy Men. All have a right to exist, all have their own places of belonging, and all have their own Law and culture.

Many of the super-ordinary beings interact with people. Stumpy Men, for example, give people new songs, as do the Munga Munga women. Many of these beings also act as guardians of country – taking care of the people who belong there, and harming people who do not belong there. They are powerful and unpredictable beings, and are often associated with particular places where people ought not to go. Some of these beings are regarded as secret and thus are not to be discussed publicly; they guard the country especially during ceremonial activities when people and other beings may be particularly vulnerable (Rose 1996:23).

We see from this that while Aboriginal there are areas from which some humans should be excluded, the reasons are cultural rather than based on a desire for equity amongst species. So rather than despairing of all that humanity has become or feeling shame about humanities impact on other species and their continued viability, exclusion from these places is more likely to be a matter of concern about the safety of others and in some cases the inadvertent effects on resource abundance caused by offending spiritual custodians.

The relationships between people and their country are intense, intimate, full of responsibilities, and, when all is well, friendly. It is a kinship relationship, and like relations among kin, there are obligations of nurturance. People and country take care of each other. I occasionally succumb to temptation to sort these relationships into categories - there are ecological relationships of

care and social relationships of care, and spiritual relationships of care. But Aboriginal people are talking about a holistic system, and the Aboriginal people with whom I have discussed these matters say that if you are doing the right thing ecologically, the results will be social and spiritual as well as ecological. If you are doing the rights spiritual things there will be social and ecological results (Rose 1996: 49).

This is not to say that Aboriginal people do not see any value in scientific or specialist advice on how to manage the environment especially where this relates to remediation of the impact of non – indigenous land uses such as pastoralism, agriculture, tourism and mining. In many communities in Cape York, Aboriginal people feel strong concern for the rate of environmental change brought about by development pressures. They also are concerned about loss of knowledge about country brought about through government practice of forced removal of people from their homelands and high mortality rates which have both contributed to the break down of traditional knowledge transfer processes. However, their attitude is that the role of the specialist should be to offer assistance and advice and generally communities deeply resent ‘rules’ introduced to control traditional practices. Such rules are different to negotiated management practices, which are shown to be mutually beneficial. There are areas of convergence between cultural responsibility such as increase rituals and practices and the protection of spirit places and western conservation philosophy aimed at the conservation of ecosystems, although there are also many areas of divergence.

So for instance in the matter of fire and the implementation of community fire management regimes there are conflicting ideas on the part of scientists and specialists who argue that in many areas of the Cape the long period of time since regular firing regimes have been in place have led to changes in biodiversity which will now be affected if the land is now burnt. This is not an argument that is well understood by Aboriginal people.

The ambivalent quality of fire-its power for destruction as well as regeneration –is ever present for many Aboriginal people. They also know that people of

European origins understand fire quite differently. Aboriginal people have brought fire within the domain of human control, working with it rather than against it. Settlers, in contrast have sought to control fire primarily by suppressing it, and then fighting it when it refuses to be suppressed (Rose 1996:70).

Externally imposed rules about firing the vegetation are generally ignored by Cape York communities. Given the isolation of parts of the Cape and the lack of resources experienced by land and sea management agencies there is little value in applying such rules to communities in Cape York as they cannot be enforced.

### **10.3 Trying to play by rules *blo whiteman***

In recent years as Aboriginal and Islander communities in Cape York have finally thrown off the restrictions of the 'reserve' era and emerged as both large community landowners and local government authorities in Cape York, government departments and non government organisations (NGO's) have realised that any effective management of the land and sea environment is dependent on their co-operation. This has led to a change in the make up of committees and other stakeholder advisory mechanisms, which now regularly include positions for Aboriginal representatives. To a limited extent there has also been increased participation in the workforce of the various authorities as positions have been identified as Aboriginal positions.

Aboriginal people have been quick to recognise that their views on the environment and specifically on the management of natural and cultural values are not always taken seriously. They are considered under sufferance due to their powerful position as stakeholders/landowners but their input has often been devalued because of their lack of scientific expert credibility. Indigenous response to this has been varied and ranges from political agitation for different processes, abandonment of co-operative process such as committees because of frustration at not being taken seriously, through to attempts to jump through all the hoops and attain the

same specialists skills. There has for instance been a tendency as elsewhere in Australia for Aboriginal communities to adopt some of the scientific jargon, acquire white environmental advisors and to establish with variable success models that mirror the protected area model for land management.

Because of the documented and widely appreciated natural values of the area there is a pressure on communities to adopt a protected area model of land management for at least those areas outside the village limits. This model or the version understood by the indigenous communities has to some extent been embraced and modified by the communities as evidenced by the eagerness of the communities to develop and train indigenous rangers and initiatives such as the Kowanyama Land Management Unit (Sinnamon 1994). Although Sinnamon also claims that Kowanyama's Natural Resource Management agency is committed in its fight to prevent the government from applying a protected area regime to Aboriginal Trust lands it is apparent that this is not a matter of a philosophical divergence in the model of management but a concern for the autonomy and land ownerships rights of the community (1994). The problem with much of this is that it assumes that the protected area management model is superior to indigenous holistic approaches to land management and it privileges the precepts of the scientific paradigm over the cultural one.

### **10.3.1 The emergence of indigenous rangers**

In recent years indigenous rangers have emerged as community response to the increased legal responsibility for the day-to-day management of land in Cape York. The term ranger is understood and accepted in the context of natural area management and the concept is readily acceptable to indigenous groups on the Cape not only because they are anxious to exert day to day management of their land but because the term 'ranger' visually recalled as a uniform and vehicle embodies for many recognition, authority and

practical management skills. While some individual rangers are traditional owners of at least some of the land that they manage, traditional ownership has generally not been a selection requirement for the position. For the most part funds to employ rangers would not stretch to employing a representative of each traditional owner group in a community even if it had been a selection requirement (although many communities state this as an ultimate objective if and when funds become available). Some community rangers are also community elders, although once again this has not necessarily been the normal case.

There are problems in this direct transfer of a ranger based natural protected areas model to Cape York. These problems of course can be overcome and are not presented here to invalidate the model but to assist in its refinement. Firstly, in many cases where participation in a formal ranger-training program (e.g Tropical North Queensland TAFE course) is involved in the duties of a ranger, elders may be inadvertently discriminated against as they are often older, with more distant or less official schooling and have a lower literacy level in English language. The role of the ranger in Cape York communities is therefore a custodial one i.e they are responsible for caring for the land according to the wishes of traditional owners and community elders.

Secondly, it means that Aboriginal people are never on an equal footing. They are participating under western rules and there will always be someone more experienced and more 'expert' on the other side of the table. They have become reliant then on a range of white spokes people and advisors. So much so that even their own administrative structures must employ such people to be able to operate (for example see Cape York Land Council and Balkanu). This is not to denigrate the service that these people provide which is often essential given the current framework.



This has not been a sudden phenomenon. While it is true to say that indigenous resource management has always taken place in Cape York, it has not been constant in either the range of resources managed or the methods used to manage them. This is of course due to the major disruptions to traditional lifestyles and systems of knowledge transfer in Aboriginal communities caused by the white invasion of this cultural landscape and the usurpation of land management rights. In hindsight it is apparent that Aboriginal people had a complex land management system which had developed over time and which had modified the landscape to suit their lifestyle. It is equally clear that the early European settlers and the colonial government had no inkling of this relationship or the changes which would ensue once this system was disrupted.

Under white occupation Aboriginal management of land and sea resources did not cease but rather was radically restricted in area, confined in the most part to the immediate environs of reserves and missions. Religious and government educators also played a role in the breakdown of traditional environmental management systems by de-valuing traditional knowledge and practices, and often actively forbidding rituals, ceremonies and language. Of course some aspects survived, particularly resource use, but many of the custodial practices did not. In some instances the environment has so radically altered from long periods of abandonment that traditional practices no longer apply to that landscape.

In recent years the Cape has seen a tourism explosion. Just 10 years ago it was difficult to get permission from the government to enter parts of the Cape. Now parts of it are subject to 15-20,000 visitor vehicles per year. Other modern land use activities such as mining and commercial fishing are heavily industrialised and therefore their impact on the environment is on a much larger scale than such industries in the past. The resultant environmental pressures are way outside the scope of traditional experience and

indeed exceed the resources of the Queensland Government in this region.

There have been various attempts by Aboriginal people to respond to these pressures over recent years by tapping into non-Aboriginal Land management initiatives where possible including:

- **Archaeology Branch Rangers:**

The Dept. of Community Services employed Aboriginal and Islander people as "Rangers" in the Archaeology Branch of that Department up until the late 1980's when that department went through a restructure. The employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rangers may be viewed as a limited response to the demands of Aboriginal people regarding management of cultural aspects of the environment. It also reflects the lack of understanding that most non-Aboriginal people had about Aboriginal cultural concerns and their custodial responsibilities and aspirations. The basis for management of these 'sites' was largely for their antiquarian value.

Not all DCS Rangers were Aboriginal; some were Islander people now living on the mainland. All rangers were subject to the control of the Department and could be transferred to various geographic locations. In many cases the rangers may have had difficulty in managing sites to which they had no traditional rights of access. There were no formal processes of consultation with communities that had custodial rights for these sites. And these rangers were not answerable in any way to the custodial owners. All sites and relics belonged to the Queensland Government. The inclusion of indigenous rangers in the management of heritage was therefore offered on the basis that indigenous people were being offered the opportunity to participate in Western environmental management practices and structures. This initiative cannot therefore be seen as contributing in anyway to

the local indigenous communities' control of their heritage or a stake in its management.

In some places such like Bamaga, sites such as Somerset <sup>31</sup> and Lockerbie were actively managed in recognition of local values, despite not being covered by the legislation at that time. This was a clear example of indigenous rangers being responsive to community concerns and managing places of value to the community despite the lack of statutory protection. With the transfer of the Archaeology Branch functions to the Dept. of Environment and Conservation, this system, which was at best patchy, came to an end.

- **Savanna Guides:**

The Savanna Guides were established in the gulf area in the late 1980's. The focus of the guides duties were cultural or eco tourism. While some Aboriginal people (e.g from Kowanyama) participated in this program they did not "own" it. In 1985 Aboriginal communities in Cape York gained limited tenure over some of their lands through the Deed of Grant in Trust system. As communities took over more infrastructure and land-use roles they began to become increasingly concerned about how to balance the needs of the community and modern day environmental pressures against traditional values.

- **Kowanyama Land Resource Management Unit:**

Communities began to see an area in which they required training. One community in Cape York took the initiative to establish a system of environmental Land Management so that when training became available they were well placed to gain the most benefit from it. Kowanyama developed the Land Resource

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<sup>31</sup> Somerset was actually bulldozed by DNA which later became the Dept. of Community Services acquiring responsibility for archaeological sites.

Management Unit, which covers a variety of land based functions including the Ranger Service. The Land Resource Unit is responsible to the Committee of Elders.

- **The Community Ranger Program:**

With the hand back of some Aboriginal reserves and mission sites through Deed of Grant in Trust (D.O.G.I.T) in Queensland, Aboriginal and Islander people again gained some legal control over the management of their lands. It soon became clear to many Aboriginal communities that the land that was being returned was in a degraded state and that there were many competing demands placed on the environment many of them outside the range of pressures managed by traditional land management skills (e.g commercial fishing, tourism, community infrastructure development, mining etc.). Clearly resources and skills were needed to manage and in some case rehabilitate the environment.

The Aboriginal communities approached Cairns TAFE through the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council (ACC), requesting a course to train Aboriginal community employed rangers in Natural and Cultural Resource Management.

#### **10.4 The Role of Elders/custodians**

Terms such as 'elders', 'traditional owner' and 'custodians' have entered the popular literature/press as Australia generally struggles to come to terms with issues such as land rights, native title and Aboriginal deaths in custody. In many instances these terms are used interchangeably although to many Aboriginal people in Cape York and elsewhere they have very different meanings. It is worth then distinguishing between these terms as I see them applying to communities in Cape York and have subsequently used in them in this chapter.

*Traditional Owner:* A traditional owner is any person who is accepted within an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community as having a familial relationship to a tract of land. In some communities a person is defined by 'rules' of connection such as being related through their mothers side or their fathers side. In other communities, which have suffered more disruption, especially where many children have been removed the term is taken to mean anyone with a direct blood-tie relationship to the land managed by the community. Actual practice is sometimes a mixture of both.

*Elder:* Amongst traditional owners there are some people who are recognised as having a leadership role and more of a say in relation to matters relating to the land, culture and society generally because of their special knowledge of cultural practices (including magic) or relationship to specific localities. In Cape York elders often have a knowledge of traditional language relating to particular areas. A person's position as an 'elder' is not defined by their age! This is in distinct contrast to most popular use of the term in the press which describes old people regularly as 'community elder'. It also contrasts with the use of this term in places such as NSW where often the term is used now to refer to any elderly community member as a term of respect based on age.

*Custodian:* A custodian is someone who is recognised as the appropriate carer for a site, place or tract of country. A custodian may be an elder or someone elected from amongst traditional owners. Community rangers if backed by authority from a committee of elders or with consensus from traditional owners from a particular area are regarded as 'custodians'. A custodian does not necessarily own the land himself or herself but is authorised to care for it within proper practice for the owners or in the case of orphan country for the sake of the spirits and the land itself. It is not uncommon for communities in Cape York to concur that a person with strong historic ties to a place should act as a custodian.

## **10.5 Managing a Shared Heritage**

Clearly there is a responsibility for a shared ownership of the shared history of the development of contemporary Australia. This means that owners and custodians have a complex responsibility to manage not only what is important to them but to consider and somehow account for what is important to 'others'.

Heritage management, particularly cultural heritage management, is increasingly being seen as a field in its own right in Western civilisations. It has principles, charters and guidelines that define the parameters of the field and it has a suite of specialist disciplines as its tools of the trade. These include conservation architecture, history, archaeology and increasingly anthropology and interpretation specialists.

Given the specialist dependency of the heritage management field in Australia is it a support framework or a nemesis to indigenous custodianship? The role of 'community' in heritage management is enshrined in documents such as the 'Burra Charter', however in practice it would be true to say that community involvement is limited to the specialist 'consulting' with the community often by way of allowing a mandatory period for comment on a draft document. Local knowledge is in this way used to corroborate or test specialist conclusions or proposals.

In other words, the specialist: -

- works out what is best, and,
- constructs the meaning of the place, item or landscape based on the theoretical framework of their discipline(s), and,
- community knowledge is used to corroborate or endorse that meaning and outcomes.

Under such a model it is unlikely that fundamental challenges to the specialist view arise, unless from other specialists, as only they have the qualifications to comment on the technical basis of the opinions/ conclusions.

### **10.6 Managing Both Natural and Cultural Values**

'Heritage' management on the other hand should be about the identification, conservation and management of multiple values, accounts and histories. Isn't it a curious point that we do not separate out the natural and cultural environment in archaeological studies it is only when we come to the present day that we treat these values as if they are separate? For instance the archaeological record often reveals information about the natural environment in the past. Indeed, archaeologists scrutinise the evidence for such signs. Was it wetter, warmer, colder? What plants and animals were present? What impacts both positive and negative did people have on this environment? The lists of environmental and biodiversity based questions which have been asked and researched to date goes on and on. To go one step further, except for the farthest reaches of time there is no ancient environment that can be studied where people have not been likely to have some effect or interaction with nature. Why is it that we now think that it is acceptable to study biodiversity and natural values as if they are somehow independent and unrelated to human activity, health and culture?

Theoretically through effective community-based investigations and interpretation these apparently conflicting values and histories can be accommodated and explored. The relationship between natural features and conditions and sites and places can also be emphasised.

- Why did white settlers constantly comment on the isolation and yet Aboriginal people had extensive active social networks throughout the same area? For example see *My Crowded*

*Solitude* (McLaren 1926) and also recall the army's surprise at the distance travelled by people from Lockhart and the level of information exchange (Marks nd: 31).

- Why did planes crash and why is their location both a constraint and a benefit in regard to their conservation?
- Why were shipwrecks so prevalent and how did this contribute to the establishment of the first settlement in the area?
- How has the Aboriginal/Islander economy changed over time and what things have stayed the same and how does this affect the biodiversity of the area?
- How did the environment effect the development and effectiveness of the area in terms of strategic and support roles in World War II?

Significantly 'choices' can be made about what is interpreted, presented and conserved based on the significance of the place, so, for instance, scientific evidence is not privileged over community tradition.

The identity of Aboriginal and Islander people within the study area is inextricably linked to their relationship with the land and sea around them. Many people learn to operate a dinghy and outboard before learning to drive a car (if they ever do). They are dependent on their environment for cultural practice and sustenance and this includes hunting for food and ceremonial purposes, ceremonial activities, escape and respite from crowded community living, travel routes to homelands and relatives and so forth.

## **10.7 Conclusion**

There are some archaeologists who have expressed concern that '...recent changes to the heritage policies of all Australian governments (both Federal and State) now privilege an Aboriginal interest in heritage above all other interests' (Murray 1996a: 202). From the discussion in Chapter 2 it should be clear that this is far from the case. In practice through the artificial separation of Aboriginal (prehistoric) and European



(historic) heritage, Aboriginal people are excluded from consideration in a large amount of their heritage where it relates to the history of Australia over the past 200 years. In this chapter we have considered how Aboriginal control of their heritage in the Cape York area is further undermined by the separate consideration of natural (defined by the scientific concepts of biological diversity management) and the cultural (defined by the non biophysical impacts of humans on the landscape) heritage. In light of this discussion Murray's concerns reveal the archaeocentric view of heritage which plagues many of our profession and conflates the concepts of 'heritage' and 'archaeology'.

It should be clear that the separate and independent consideration of natural and cultural values does not work in Cape York if it does anywhere and that the current range of protective mechanisms and agency driven participatory management programs for environmental management of the Cape do not adequately allow for indigenous control and management.

In particular the international juggernaut of the protected area model designed, imposed and managed by specialists pays scant regard to the intimate and local relationship of people to the landscape in Cape York. The Australian concept of Wilderness has been largely developed by urban-based white Australians in an effort to

- a) secure the biodiversity of the planet (by statutory gazettal of someone else's backyard, in this case the Aboriginal and Islander communities of Cape York Peninsula), and,
- b) secure places of respite and renewal from the stresses of the modern urban and industrial lifestyle.

This concept is alien to Aboriginal views of custodianship and the overtones of restriction and exclusivity are likely to be strongly opposed by indigenous communities.

On the other hand it would seem that Aboriginal communities have a clear concern about aspects of environmental protection, they are

concerned about how to educate and control visitors, they see certain areas as unsafe and would like to control access into these areas, many of which coincidentally have high conservation values. They are also seeking to understand the impacts of modern developments like mining and tourism on the landscape, cultural sites and resource abundance, while at the same time acknowledging that the rate and level of impacts from such activities are often outside their expertise to assess. It would seem therefore that there is plenty of scope for a dialogue to be developed if the process recognised Aboriginal community ownership and if governments and non- government agencies were prepared to develop a different range of statutory protection not bound by the definitions in current legislation. It is against this background that we must consider the management of the cultural landscape of the last 140 years and it is through such a process that a shared heritage can be acknowledged.

## Chapter 11

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### **SUSTAINING THE *STORI*: THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE MANAGEMENT**

Part II of this thesis recounted the recent history of northern Cape York and tried wherever possible to integrate the archival record with an indigenous voice in relation to those events and their consequences. Chapter 10 looked at the vexed question of the artificial divide between natural and cultural heritage and what it means in terms of heritage management in Cape York. This chapter looks at some of the places that illustrate the recent history of Cape York that Aboriginal people have identified as important. In looking at these places and the management issues associated with them it addresses the following questions:

- How can essentially Western disciplines such as 'archaeology', 'heritage interpretation' and 'heritage management' contribute to indigenous custodianship? and,
- How can those government agencies responsible for heritage conservation, work with communities to support the retention and conservation of a vital community heritage which will both sustain community members and provide educative and tourism experiences for other Australians and inbound tourists.

To ensure that information in this section is not misused, it is not appropriate for any information in this section to be used by government agencies for the purpose of constructing or enhancing registers or inventories of sites. This project did not involve

comprehensive surveys for heritage sites nor was the information collected to create government site registers. At present the Queensland Government's register of Aboriginal sites is problematic as there is no public access at all (pers.comm. M. Rowlands 1999). This means that information added to registers effectively leaves the community domain and is not accessible to planners and developers or *bonafide* researchers to aid in responsible planning and site management. Hence, the register is not a viable protection or planning mechanism for communities throughout Queensland.

### **11.1 Identity, Culture and Heritage**

Before one can start to discuss "heritage management" or even assess the impact of archaeology as a method, one needs to have a understanding of the nature of culture and identity in Cape York and the interrelatedness between historical accounts and that identity. In particular, it is necessary to understand how communities see their own identity. This as others have discovered is hard to achieve from the position of 'outsider'.

From the work of previous researchers in northern Cape York (see Chapter 3) and from the personal accounts of Cape York people incorporated into this thesis, it is evident that identity and culture in Cape York communities are complex concepts for 'outsiders' to understand and yet seemingly straightforward to those 'inside' the communities. For example the issue of ethnicity is not straightforward in many communities. In Injinoo a person might identify as Aboriginal, Islander (of a particular island) or more generically as a 'mainlander' depending on the situation or social context. Complex intermarriage networks and/or past relocations (forced and voluntary) all contribute to the ways in which an individual may choose to identify or be identified in any given situation.

Greer has explored the relationship between archaeological investigation and identity (Greer 1995:210). She in turn draws heavily on Fuery's (1991:3) discussion of the development of notions of 'identity' and 'ethnicity'. Greer points out that in some areas, such as Cape York, "...individuals may subscribe to a number of identities that are invoked in particular contexts" and thus "...a number of identities may exist even at the local level" (Greer 1995: 207). This concept of co-existing difference and similarity is relevant to any discussion of identity in Northern Cape York and has particular implications for the discipline of archaeology and its effect or contribution to 'identity'.

I have previously referred to a quote from Moore (1965:127; see also Chapter 3) which referred to the 'lives of the Cape York tribes' having already been 'disrupted by influences from the Torres Straits by the time of first European contact'. This quote reveals an 'outsiders' perspective on cultural identity in relation to Cape York communities, particularly those at the northernmost part of the peninsula. The assumption that Islander influence was/is a "disruption", suggests that Moore sees homogeneity amongst Aboriginal cultures in the area and separateness from Islander culture. It is true that there are differences between people, which allows them to identify as Islander or Aboriginal at a community level. There are always people who are fully integrated into each community and who would identify differently on the individual level. However, if the influences observed related not to the Torres Strait but to Aurukun, would Moore have seen this as a disruption? Certainly Aboriginal people in the northernmost communities and Lockhart see more difference between themselves and Aurukun people than between themselves and Islander people. The idea that the physical entity of the continental coastline is a cultural barrier is more to do with our Western view of the sea as a barrier than with reality. In contrast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this area see the sea as a landscape, which is continuous with the

terrestrial landscape. The story of Chiveri or Kwoiam (see Chapter 7) provides a powerful demonstration of the connections between mainland, the seascape and the islands of the Torres Strait.

I have argued also that European concepts of power and intellectual and political progress have dominated the understanding of the relationship between *Islanders* and *Mainlanders*. For example the concept of 'colonization' referred to by Moore, must be regarded almost totally as a European concept with no place in Aboriginal or Islander culture, associated with alien concepts of taking other people's country. While undoubtedly, communities did expand into unoccupied country or country in which clan group numbers were dwindling for whatever reason, no doubt they would explain and facilitate this move through the emphasis of connections through marriage (Peterson 1983:142).

In practice archaeology focuses heavily on investigations of similarity and difference as it looks for continuities and disruptions in the archaeological record and uses these to draw conclusions about culture, history, affiliations, innovation and displacement between different groups of peoples (eg. O'Connor 1996; Morse 1996). Therefore one would expect that the cultural heritage of northern Cape York as manifested in the archaeological and story places could be interpreted to show evidence of these continuities and disruptions.

To date whenever the heritage resource of Northern Cape York has come to the attention of administrators, government regulators and non- government heritage organizations, it has done so where it is consistent with contemporary national identity and its associated heritage themes. Little or no consideration has been given to how this national identity may or may not be compatible with local indigenous identity. So for example the heritage of the European pioneering endeavour has been emphasised and that has coloured

the interpretation and directed the funding expenditure related to Somerset (see for example Lawrence and Reynolds 1986 and Lawrence, Scott, Cutler & Lawrence 1987); monuments have been erected to Jacky Jacky and Kennedy for their ill fated expedition, and a monument has been erected on Possession Island commemorating its acquisition by the European invaders. Similarly, the theme of pioneers struggling on the wild frontiers is so revered in Australia that families have returned to 'lost places' (after Read 1996) throughout the Peninsula leaving small commemorative plaques and square concrete monuments to ancestors, that stand like lonely un-maintained shrines littering the landscape. Examples of these can be seen at Lockerbie and Somerset (see Figure 2).

Another national theme relates to the role of Australians in World War II. There are no publications relating to any of the battles or wartime activities which that were fought from the bases in Northern Cape York that relate to the impact of the war on local Aboriginal communities or the interaction between the forces stationed there and the local people. Little attention has been given to the experiences of the service men that were stationed there and the difficulties of adjusting to the country and climate. And yet there must have been many stories that could be told. Of course this is because of the focus on military 'heroism' and in part to the data sources from which these accounts are drawn. RAAF history sheets were recorded throughout the war and have been used as the basis for official histories. These history sheets rarely included any information that might elucidate 'relationships'. They merely recorded events and to consider relationships or inter-relationships involves a high degree of inference (see Appendix E). It would be difficult to seem heroic while recounting the loneliness and isolation of time spent at a seemingly forgotten radar station in the gulf country or the dependence on local Aboriginal missions for the basic of life, no matter how vital was the role to the defence of the nation. The Aboriginal communities, which to varying extents

supported and tolerated the various wartime forces, have largely disappeared from the wartime history to the extent that some visitors assume that they were evacuated. No wonder then that the documentation of World War II sites has been undertaken by State and Commonwealth agencies with little consultation with Aboriginal communities.

A national heritage depends upon the prior acceptance of a national history. This is the writing and usually more important, the teaching, of an historical narrative that explains the distinctiveness of a nation through time stressing its longstanding and fundamentally different characteristics from other nations and most usually tracing an unbroken evolution from as far back in the past as possible to the present (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996:46).

Byrne has discussed the acquisition of Aboriginal heritage relating to the deep antiquity of occupation of the continent as a way for settler Australians to deepen the history of the nation.

What was involved was not an appropriation of the Aboriginal past by Anglo-Saxon Australians but an appropriation of that past for and by the nation. In the act the geographic mass of Australia took on a meta-persona which subsumed the identity of all cultures within it (Byrne 1993:145).

In the past heritage studies and work in northern Cape York have been limited but where they have occurred they have largely ignored the local voice and the end result has been the establishment of a heritage which is at best irrelevant and at worst in conflict with local community identity and heritage. This is exacerbated by the tiered system of significance ranking linked to funding that is promoted throughout Australia. Commonwealth government funding is directed to places of national significance and state funding is prioritised on the basis of State significance leaving few funds for those places assessed as being of local significance only. Increasingly significance is assessed against a framework of State and National historic themes that inadequately deal with the range of social and indigenous values.

### **11.2 Place and Identity in Northern Cape York.**

Place is an essential ingredient in people's sense of identity in Cape York today. Stories may be about people but they are also about 'place'. It is clear that this is also recognized by non-indigenous



sections of society in Australia as knowledge of named places and demonstrated attachment to them is accepted as evidence of Native Title and people's right to speak for country. New concepts such as archaeology are absorbed easily into this relationship with the land. Archaeological remains are also explained through the relationship of people to place and may serve as acceptable evidence that stories, claims and realities are in fact true.

Others have discussed the possibility of conflicting or at least different histories and meaning being reflected in places and the way in which we choose to interpret or present these under the label of heritage 'dissonance' (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996). Byrne (1996) has coined the term heritage 'erasure by substitution' to describe the way in which governments and the heritage industry avoid acknowledgement of heritage dissonance relating to sites of human disaster and conflict. In such cases he observes

For the most part there has been no concerted effort to physically eradicate the remains of these events. The remains are there but at a public level they are neutralised and rendered voiceless (Byrne 1998:18).

Clearly some sites provide particular interpretive challenges and opportunities for the heritage manager. There is of course the potential for messages to be misread or for the transfer of unintentional messages and there is the chance of alienation of the community or sections of it that may be uncomfortable with some of the heritage themes conveyed. However there is also the opportunity to facilitate cross cultural understanding and reconciliation through the consideration and interpretation of such places.

Somerset is one such site (Figure 2). It is a site which one might assume would be an anathema to local Aboriginal people including as it does graves and massacre sites as perpetual reminders of past

violent dispossession. If there is any one site in northern Cape York, which represents repressive occupancy and the end of the old ways, this is it! From the symbolic trespass of Jacky Jacky, to the establishment of the settlement and the erection of barriers and restrictions through to the final bulldozing of the site in opposition to Aboriginal wishes by the Department of Native Affairs in the 1960's, over one hundred years of repressive activity has centred on this site and left its mark in stories, relics and icons. However contrary to what one would anticipate, the regard in which this site is held cannot be easily categorized. The site has become a complex monument to all of the history of white occupation in the Cape and the persistent survival of local culture but it is also a living site occupied by ghosts of conquerors vanquished by age and a decaying system, spirits of the *Bipotaim* people who occupy the east coast campsites, short people who guard the forests from intruders and red devils along the stony coast who have continually claimed this area as their own territory. The landscape of Somerset has become absorbed into the complex cosmology of the Aboriginal people who live there.

The interconnection of places is an important feature of identity. A place is important as the focal point of a story but most stories are also part of a bigger story. In the *Bipotaim*, places which otherwise might have remained nameless were created by heroes who moved through the landscape endowing it with features. Somerset too, is linked with other places both through the activities of *Bipotaim* people and those of the Jardine family who also moved across the landscape seeking their fortunes and in the process creating havoc and catalysing change amongst the local inhabitants. Any consideration of Somerset therefore must also look at the cultural landscape of the East coast. Here large Aboriginal campsites such as those at *Putta Putta*, from *Bipotaim* cover the sand hills. The sites are occupied by the spirits of ancestors who continue to occupy the sites and guard the landscape. Activity in

these areas is proscribed by ritual and tradition. Injinoo residents and members of other communities continue to camp and exploit the resources of the area. However there is a recognition of these large campsites as belonging to others and permission must be sought to safely occupy the area. Aboriginal people recall a massacre site behind the dunes at *Putta Putta*, not far from Somerset (pers. comm. Meun Lifu 1986). Frank Jardine reportedly rode to the camp and killed all the Aboriginal people who were camping there.

Somerset is also linked to Lockerbie, another of the Jardine family homesteads, and to Vallack Point. While these are important historical sites they are not imbued with the same spiritual qualities by Aboriginal people as Putta Putta and Somerset themselves, despite both places having historically been the scene of insurrection and resistance. At Vallack Point, the outstation operated by Alex Jardine, some of Jardine's Aboriginal stockmen (not from the local community) joined forces with local Aborigines to ambush the homestead. Lockerbie was reputedly (Anne Hall pers. comm. 1987) the scene of multiple raids by Wymara in his guerrilla style resistance to Frank Jardine. Other places are known through their associations with Jardine's exploits. An example is Mosby Creek, where Jardine killed a camp of women and children.

In the following sections in this Chapter I have selected and describe places, which are both important to the communities concerned and also representative of the *stori blo mainland* as described in Part II (Chapters 5-9 inclusive).

### **11.3 Places Which Illustrate The Story In Northern Cape York**

How can heritage reflect and support local identity? The following section describes some of the places that are indicative of the local heritage of peoples in northern Cape York as it has been describe in Part II of this thesis. This is not an exhaustive list nor is it a full

recording of each of these places but rather an overview of places, condition and significance. There are of course many more cultural heritage sites and places in northern Cape York and many others that I visited that are not detailed here. The communities concerned identified all the sites described as being significant to their cultural heritage and they are considered here on that basis.

These places were identified over field seasons principally in 1987 and 1988 although during the course of discussions and subsequent field trips additional sites were also visited. The sites were selected by Elders who were recognised within their communities as being knowledgeable about such matters.

After talking to people about their history (this is *Bipotaim*, *pastaim*, and *diskaintaim* and the slightly anomalous *wartaim*), I asked them to identify places from these times that were important to them. My main guide and advisor in this was Meun Lifu although at various times the Rangers from Injinoo, New Mapoon, Umagico, Weipa and Old Mapoon accompanied me to places and/or introduced me to people who knew of places. In the case of Lockhart River I only spent one brief visit of a week in 1987 looking at sites relating to World War II and mining. Once again Meun Lifu and his wife Clara provided an introduction into the community via their family. The sites were shown to me by the brother in law (now deceased) of Mrs Rene Hobson.

The places were photographed during the original site visit and in the case of a sample of the most significant places were more fully recorded during subsequent visits. It was intended at one point to map all World War II sites with the aid of the army but this did not eventuate. The sites were too large and too geographically dispersed to attempt this alone.

### **11.3.1 The legacy of *pastaim***

This period of time encompasses events from early European settlement up to and including the earliest memories of those living today. By definition then this time division is expanding as people grow older and die and younger people mature into adults and the custodians of heritage. World War II is on the cusp between historical time and now as it recedes into *pastaim*. The same can be said for the end of the mission era and even the discovery of bauxite and the events surrounding its initial exploitation.

#### **11.3.1.1 Invasion and Settler Activity**

As we have seen there are many places that attest to this period. There are massacre sites for instance associated with the Kennedy expedition and there are individual stories from up and down the Cape regarding the expansion of white settlers and the consequent displacement if not death of Aboriginal people. For example, Silver Plains station at Port Stewart was a prime example of treacherous dispossession (see section 5.6 and the documentation relating to the removal of Port Stewart people Appendix B). Other places, for example, Utingu, seemed to develop through experiences that seemed more harmonious and of mutual benefit (McLaren 1946; Sharp 1992).

#### **Somerset:**

Somerset is located on the north east coast of Cape York Peninsula it is approximately 9kms Southeast of Cape York or the 'Tip' as it is known locally and to tourists. It is directly opposite Albany Island (see Map 2 and Figures 7,8 and 9). The historical background of Somerset is outlined in Chapter 6.

The settlement of Somerset occupied the two headlands Somerset Point and Sheriden Point, either side of Somerset Bay, and from the Bay itself back into the elevated area immediately behind the bay for a distance of approximately 700m. There is considerable relief at

the site with elevation varying from sea level at the shoreline to over 40 m at the plantation site (see Plate 4). Figure 7 shows the general extent of the site today. The cross section in Figure 7 indicates the changes in the elevation of the site from Somerset Point to Sheriden Point.

The surrounding vegetation is tropical rainforest although the coconut plantation itself is likely to have originally had slightly sparser vegetation due to its elevated sandy soils. Since being cleared for the plantation the area has been slow to regenerate. The slopes down to the bay and the garrison area are covered in thick vine cover and there is no visibility at ground level due to the thick cover of leaf litter in these areas.

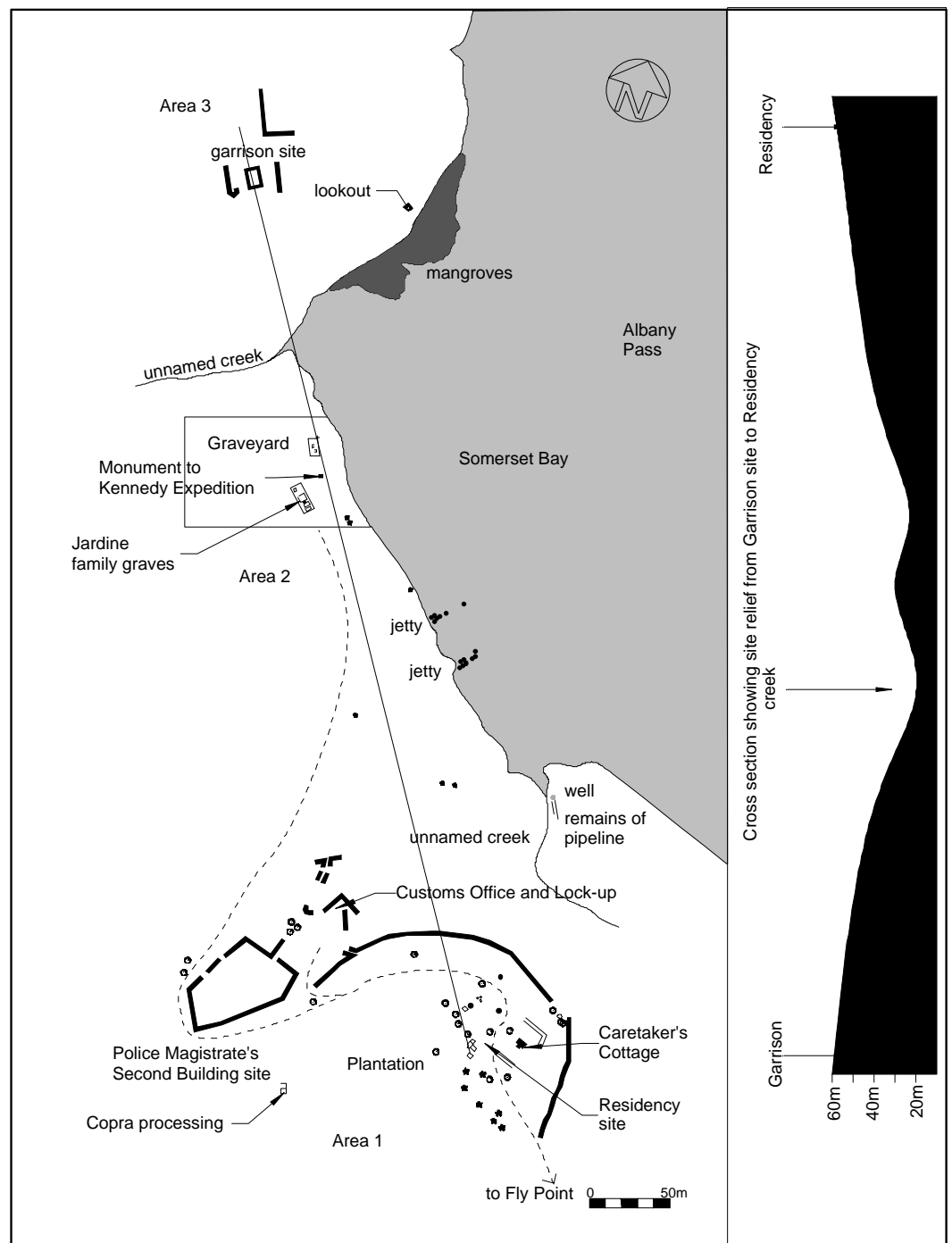
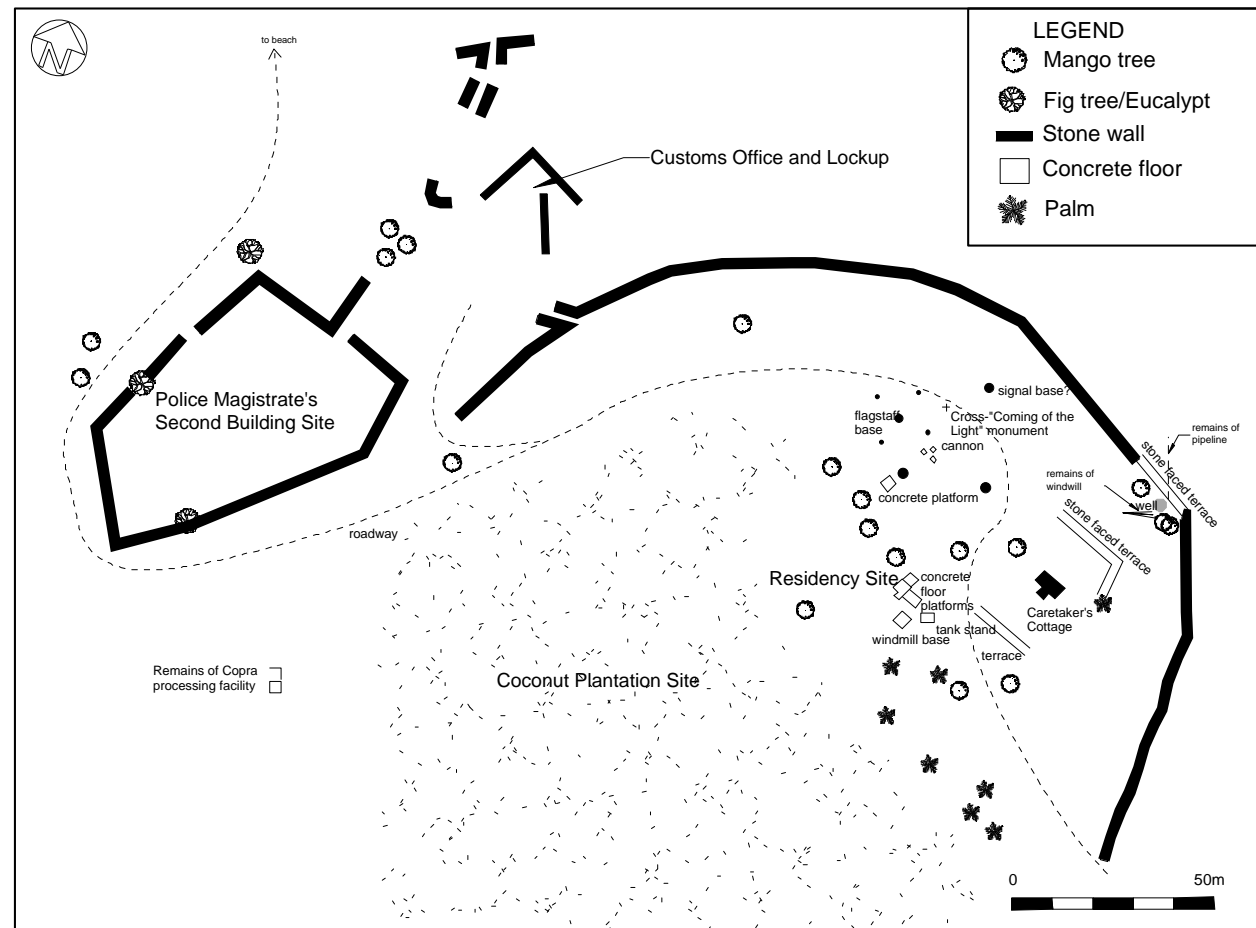


Figure 7: The Site of Somerset today.



**Figure 8: Detail of Residency and Plantation area, Somerset**



In the bay itself there are mangroves fringing either end of a sandy beach. The sand extends to just above the high water mark. As the bay is so sheltered there are no dunes instead the area beyond the sand is grassed and shaded by native fruit trees making this a popular picnic area. At low tide there are sand and mudflats that extend out to the low water mark from which point coral reef extends out into Albany Passage. At the south-eastern end of the beach just inside the mangroves a freshwater spring has been turned into a well.

The geology of the area is interesting in that this is one of the few places on the northern mainland where weathered sandstone outcrops. There are sandstone shelters to the northwest of Somerset Bay with Aboriginal art dating to the pre and post contact period. Most of the northern part of Cape York is granitic and there are few rock shelters or art sites. The sandstone extends to the offshore islands, and Albany Island for instance has several rock shelters around its shoreline.

Initial mapping of the site was undertaken by David Lawrence and a team from James Cook University (Lawrence, Scott, Cutler & Lawrence 1987). Lawrence kindly provided me with a copy of his initial draft field map, which I was able to take into the field in 1987 and annotate during a field inspection. The current Figures 7 and 8 are based on this recording.

The settlement of Somerset was divided across this landscape with the Imperial Garrison located on Somerset Point, the northwest headland (Area 3 Figure 7). The customs office site, the graveyard, wells and jetty foundations occupy the low -lying area of the beach

and the area immediately behind it (Area 2 Figure 7). On the high ground immediately behind the bay and east to Sheriden Point were the magistrate's residency and the planned township, which later became the site of the Jardine homestead and copra plantation occupies the south-eastern headland (Area 1 Figure 7).

For these newcomers who planned to wrest the land from both the Aborigines and nature, the modification of the landscape was a statement of ownership, power and intent. Bender points out that 'in the contemporary Western world we 'perceive' landscapes, we are the point from which the 'seeing' occurs. It is thus an ego-centred landscape, a perspectival landscape, a landscape of views and vistas' Bender 1993:1). Understanding this provides an insight into the reasoning which saw the wholesale modification of a small bit of land at the northern most part of the Colony of Queensland (see Plate 4). This creation of a landscape of conquest provides the rationale for the energy expenditure that went into the construction of the endless stone walls that terraced the headlands and which are still visible today amongst the encroaching tropical forest.

There are no substantial structures remaining at the site apart from the extensive but overgrown stonewalls and terracing. The Queensland government bulldozed the house itself ostensibly because it was seen as a fire hazard. The veracity of this excuse is clearly questionable as there are no other settlements or homesteads nearby and the bush is burnt off regularly anyway as part of seasonal burning practices. It seems clear that the building was really bulldozed to prevent Aboriginal people from choosing to live there. This was during a period when Aboriginal people were being concentrated back into the villages after a brief period where some had been encouraged to settle on small farms.

The visible physical remains of the settlement are scanty. In Area 1 there are scattered remains and relics dispersed across the homestead and plantation site. There are several graves no longer maintained, secluded within the bush on the margins of the plantation. Few coconut trees remain alive in this area, although in the late 1980's the lines of the plantation were still visible. The small hut known as the 'caretakers hut' remains but post dates the Jardine involvement at the site.

In Area 2, the most obvious remains are the graveyard, the monument to the Kennedy expedition, and the stonewalls that can be glimpsed either side of the access road. There are several posts remaining that were part of the jetty and boathouse, and a well that still provides freshwater to travellers is located in behind the mangroves at the southern end of the beach.

Area 3 is the more difficult to access, as it requires one to travel through thick scrub up the side of the northern headland. The garrison site is overgrown and there are no extant structures. However there are stone edgings that probably relate to small gardens around the barracks and several bottle dumps have been located as well as a look out across Albany Passage, which is cut into the bedrock (see Plate 22).

The site has substantial archaeological potential, particularly when compared to other sites on northern Cape York. Given the length of occupation of the site and the varying numbers of people there and the amount of interaction with outsider groups there is the likelihood that even given the extensive disturbance that the site has suffered, there is subsurface material.



**Plate 22: Garrison Lookout, Somerset**

**Significance:**

Of all the places discussed here, Somerset is the place most widely known to all Australian people. As the site of the first seat of government in the region and the earliest settlement it is symbolic of the hopes and dreams of the new Queensland Colony and the individuals who sought their futures there. The place is a testament to the massive disruption that European invasion caused to the Aboriginal people of the region and their resilience in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Ultimately too, Somerset is the place from which Europeans retreated away from intractable nature. It set the scene for progressive invasions and retreats in the Cape with the intervention of the missionaries and their retreat (or as old people in Mapoon see it 'abandonment'); the reserve years and the rule of the reserve managers, which ended in 1984. Perhaps this experience of

Europeans as an ephemeral if somewhat disruptive presence explains why many see the tourists as a passing nuisance. It is reported that some Native Americans had a word for Europeans, which meant 'the ones who are passing through' (Allison 1999:273). History would suggest that this is an apt description of Europeans in northern Cape York.

For local Aboriginal people Somerset is also significant as a place where short people, red devils dwell. While Somerset Bay is a popular camping place for tourists few Injinoo people will stay there overnight. The resources of the area including the native fruit trees on the beach area make it a regular stopping point during the day but the nearby East Coast area is preferred for overnight stays. Occasionally young men will venture into the scrub hunting wild pig but many have stories about experiences where short people have tricked them and got them lost. It stands to reason that Frank Jardine who dominated the area throughout his lifetime still haunts the area in spirit form adding another unsettling element to the sentient landscape.

### **Management Issues:**

The principal management issues that relate to the site, its integrity and the likelihood of long term conservation are accessibility and visitor impact, lack of onsite management and supervision, visitor safety, and the lack of interpretation or sympathetic planning. In 1984 a Conservation Plan was prepared (McIntyre 1994) which addressed these and other issues for the site. However, due to a lack of funds and expertise the Injinoo Community has not implemented the plan and management proceeds in an *ad hoc* manner each dry season when tourist numbers are at their peak.

*Accessibility and visitor impact:* tens of thousands of four-wheel drive vehicles per year visit this site as it is on a main (although dirt) road. The site is listed in many guide books, most of which emphasise the pathos of the failed settlement, the isolation and struggle of the invading Europeans, and what was once there over the physical reality that there are scant visible remains (Pike 1983).

*Lack of on site management and supervision.* There is no onsite management presence at Somerset. In view of the high visitor numbers and the fact that these vehicles drive through the site there is great potential for damage to occur to the site. During my time working with Injinoo rangers I attended a number of routine patrols of this area and on various occasions found tourists

- polluting the well (the only source of fresh drinking water for kilometres) by washing themselves, shampooing their hair and washing their clothes in it;
- knocking down coconut trees from the remnant plantation to get a coconut;
- driving their vehicles through the stone walls to get past a boggy patch on the road;
- driving across the homestead site (through a fence) because they were too lazy to walk across and see what was on the other side;
- driving across the homestead site to avoid a sandy patch on the access track;
- removing brass nameplates from the Jardine graves for souvenirs;
- sleeping on the graves (considered by the community to be not only sacrilegious but dangerous and foolish);
- hunting through the site and surrounding forests with steel bows and arrows and various firearms;

Signage does not adequately protect the site from the potential for damage and desecration. As recommended in the Conservation Plan (McIntyre 1994:36), an on site presence is required at least during the peak tourist season.

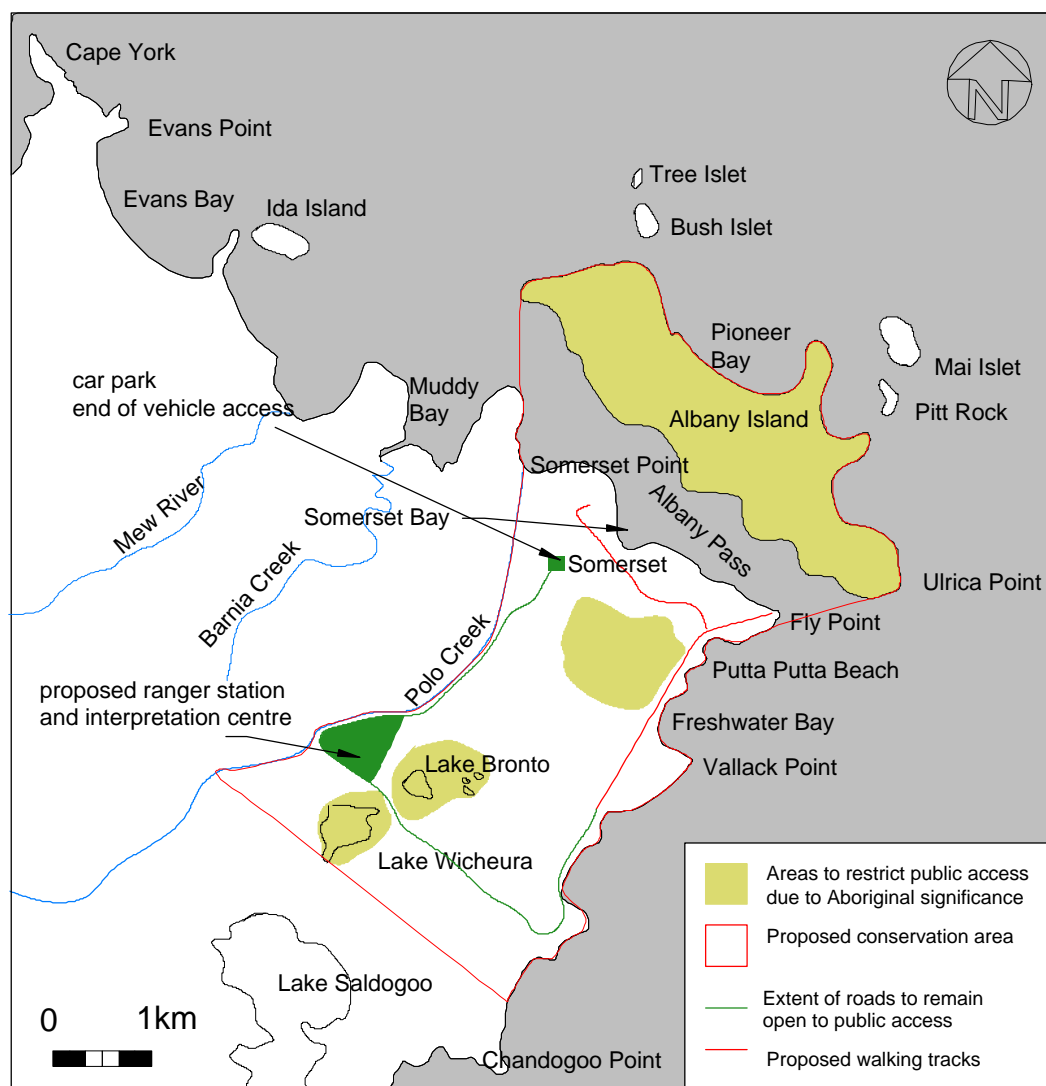
*Visitor Safety:* As there is no nearby official or ranger presence in the area, visitor safety remains an issue here as in many other parts of Cape York. In addition to the usual hazards which might include snake bite, crocodile attack, and vehicle accident there is the added concern of the generally dangerous nature of parts of the surrounding scrub. In the main it is recognised that visitors to the area do not like to travel far from beaches and roads and so the risk of people straying far into the realm of the short people is currently minimal, although some community members express concern about campers sleeping near the graveyard. Any interpretation of the area previously occupied by the garrison or the forested areas would need to be by way of guided tour with some familiar with the way in which to safely traverse the area.

Saltwater crocodile attack remains a very real possibility as tourists often swim here and have even been discovered *skinny dipping* at night. Saltwater crocodile warning signs appear to have only limited success in educating the visiting public.

*Lack of interpretation and sympathetic planning:* The challenge in presenting a site such as Somerset arises from its status as an archaeological site. Apart from signs, which announce the presence of the homestead and graveyard, there is no onsite interpretation. There are a couple of plaques privately erected one to commemorate the Vidgeon - Jardine family and one the Kennedy expedition but in themselves these do not adequately reflect the significance of the site.

Permanent weatherproof signage is very expensive and is only part of the answer to adequate interpretation at the site. Ideally site interpretation should be by guided tour so that people can *experience* the site. For this to work of course the management of the site needs to be planned. The first step is to limit vehicle access to the site. It is not possible to protect this site given the number of vehicles that pass through it each year. The Conservation Plan prepared by the community (McIntyre 1994) recommended that the through road to Fly Point be closed to all but emergency and authorised traffic and that a Visitors Centre be built on the junction of the Somerset and Lake Bronto roads (Figure 9). At that point people could pick up a guide and proceed either to the east coast or Somerset. Tourist camping would either be prohibited altogether at Somerset or heavily restricted and managed (see Figure 9).





**Figure 9: Proposed conservation area, Somerset and east Coast**

### **11.3.1.2 Other Colonial Homesteads and Outstations**

Of course the heritage from this period is not simply represented by this one place. In the Northern Peninsula Area alone it would be sensible to integrate the management of other Jardine family homestead sites such as Lockerbie (Figures 2, 9 and 10) and Bertie Haugh (Figure 1). There is also the site of Utingu (Figure 2) not far from Somerset which was occupied by Jack McLaren (McLaren 1946) from 1911 until 1919, although there is little to remind one of its past use.

#### **Lockerbie Homestead Site**

The site of Lockerbie is located approximately 20kms west southwest of Somerset on the road from Bamaga to Cape York and Somerset (Figure 2). It is set on the edge of a sparsely treed plain on the foothills of the Carnegie Range. There is a distinct vegetation change from the plains in front of the homestead site to the rainforest covering the hill, which rises directly to the southeast of the site. The red soils at Lockerbie are richer than the sands at Somerset, which is reportedly why Jardine established a farm there. Freshwater is available from wells, which are spring fed.

I first visited this site in 1986. In 1987 I returned accompanied by Ann Hall nee Holland whose father and brother had worked at the site. Mrs Hall was re visiting the site where she had spent part of her childhood as research for a family history she was writing (Hall 1989). In 1988, I surveyed the site (Figures 10 and 11). At that time the site consisted of a grove of mango trees of different varieties, stone edging around what was once a garden, mounds which were obviously foundations for structures of some type, a number of wells and a spring. In addition, there were more recent stockyards and a house which had been used by stockmen in the past but which was now used as an

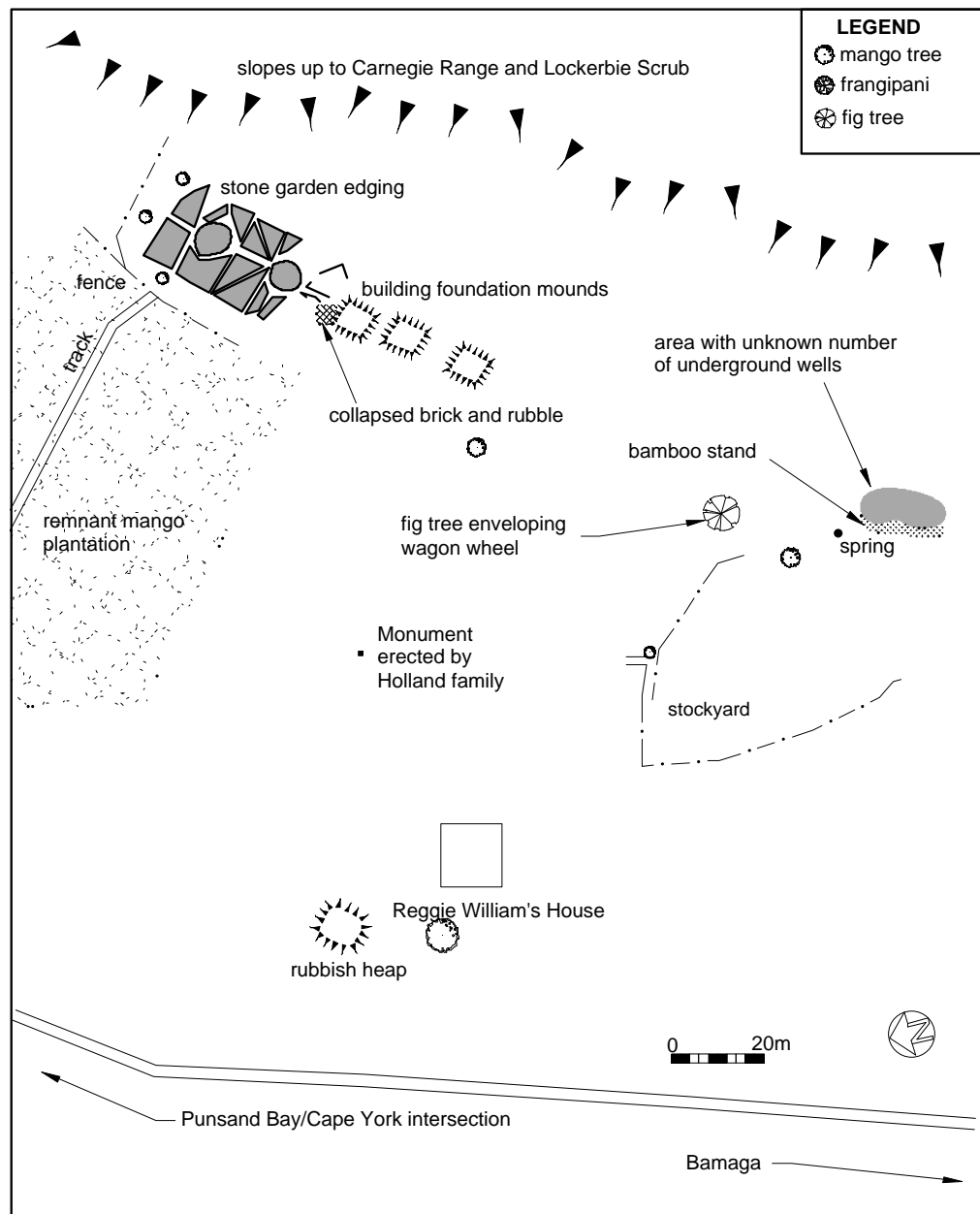
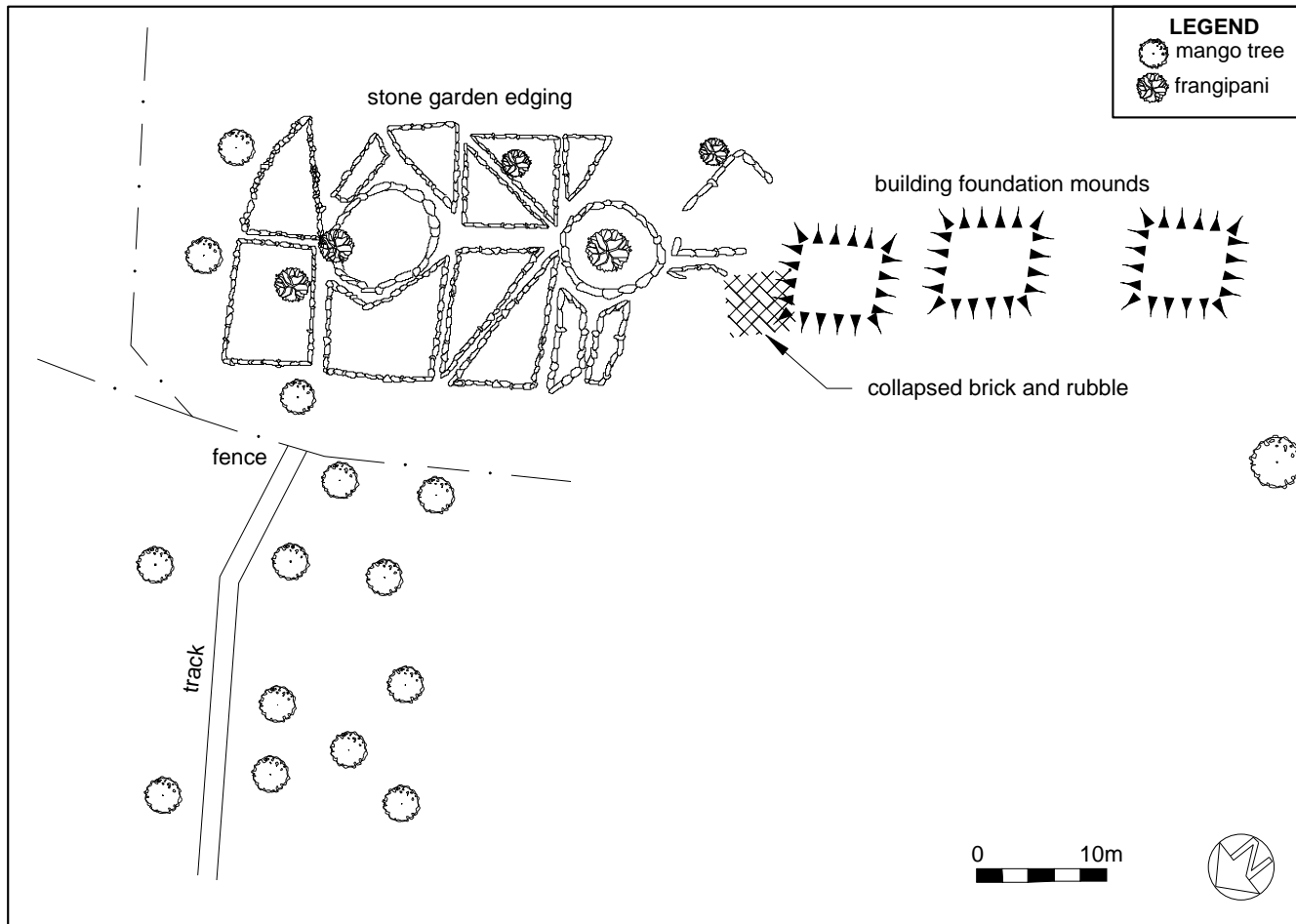


Figure 10: Site plan, Lockerbie



**Figure 11: Detail of garden and old homestead area, Lockerbie**

occasional weekender by a person from Bamaga who held a lease over the area.

No plans or maps could be found of the Lockerbie Homestead however Ann Hall recounted her memory of the site (Anne Hall pers.com 1987). The mounds that can be seen to the west of the stone gardens were the location of buildings. She remembers 4 houses in succession being located at Lockerbie. The original Jardine residence burnt down and a weatherboard building was built in 1938 on Frank Jardine's old kitchen site, another house was built in 1946 with an additional building in 1947. Mrs Hall also recalled avenues of coconut palms, which she says were cut down by the army during the period in which the family was evacuated from the area (i.e. 1942-46). Aboriginal people apparently worked on the property and were camped nearby. She remembers Mary and Charlie Lifu camping near the springs. A men's ceremonial site was apparently located about 2 km along the Punsand Bay Road. She recalled that a 'corroborree' site was located at Black Hill near a campsite.

Lockerbie dates to the latter part of Frank Jardine's life when he diversified his farming operations. He and his family established an experimental farm of sorts here including growing multiple varieties of mangos, limes, tea, cassava, and rubber trees. Dick Holland and his family later occupied the site while Jardine employed him. People from the local Aboriginal community of Injinoo (then Cowal Creek) worked the property (Anne Hall pers.com 1987).

There is little official documentation dating to the period of Frank Jardine's occupation and Mrs Hall's memories of the site relate to the later use of the site for cattle grazing by her father Ginger Dick Holland and her brother Stan Holland. However excavations at the site in the vicinity of the foundation mounds may help to

understand the changes that have occurred at this site and verify the sequence and purpose of the structures.

**Significance:** The site has community value to the people of Injinoo several of whom had immediate family who worked there or in the cattle industry associated with its occupation by the Holland family. The site has historic significance because of its association with Frank Jardine who established a diversified garden there growing mangos, tea, limes, cassava and rubber. The site also has significance as a site of resistance as Wymara a Yadhaigana (or Mapoon Mission records say Seven Rivers) man reportedly inflicted raids on the property, on several occasions emerging from the cover of the scrub on the hill.

In addition Lockerbie scrub which provides a backdrop to the homestead site is another province of short people. Lockerbie scrub is notorious amongst the local community for encounters with short men that 'make your head go round' or in other words leave you confused and lost. Experienced hunters have wandered for several days in the scrub before finally making their way out, often emerging close to where they entered the scrub with no idea of how they got lost. There has been talk of re cutting Jardine's bridle track from Lockerbie to Somerset to offer tourists the opportunity to travel between the two places on horseback but for safety reasons such a group would have to be accompanied by a language speaker. It is interesting to note that Lockerbie scrub has significant natural values and the preservation of this area not only safeguards the home of the short people but contributes to long stated natural heritage conservation objectives in northern Cape York.

**Management Issues:**

At the time of survey recording, the site had archaeological potential, although there were unsubstantiated reports of bottle

collections having been made at the site by descendents of the white settlers. As the site is located so close to the Bamaga-Cape York Road it has always had a high level of visitation. In fact the road runs through what was part of the gardens and mango plantation. In addition, the 'Croc Shop' (a transient shop selling cold drinks and trinkets) set up across the road from the main site for several years during the dry season and directed tourists over to look at it. This visitation had led the Aboriginal Rangers (then employed by Department of Community Services) to fence the stone gardens off sometime in the early 1980's, so that vehicles didn't drive through the mangos and disturb them.

The archaeological value of the site may have been severely compromised in recent years as since my recording of the area, a non-indigenous person has moved in and severely vandalized this site (field visit 1994). Despite heritage laws protecting this place, this person has bulldozed part of it and set up a sprawling makeshift squatters residence in the location of the old homestead and gardens (Plate 23). Unfortunately the fence erected by the rangers so many years ago to protect the site leads many uninformed tourists to assume that what was inside the fence was the whole site. This person obviously knew little about the site and assumed they were not adversely affecting it. On the contrary however the disturbance is severe and includes laying a cement slab digging latrines and cutting down part of the historic mango plantation. Ironically she told me that she was occupying the site to set up a tourism enterprise to interpret the site to tourists! Prior to this disturbance however the garden layout was visible, the area where structures had been located were evident by mounds of rubble and there was a scattering of material between the gardens and homestead site and the wells (see Figures 10 & 11). Without appropriate planning controls in place in the region this type of uniformed exploitation remains an ongoing risk to the heritage of northern Cape York and almost without fail destroys the potential

of the place to inform visitors or to support cultural tourism enterprises.



**Plate 23: Destruction of Lockerbie homestead site**

Most of the other homesteads in Cape York other than Somerset, relate to the later establishment of the cattle industry in the area. However a Cape-wide heritage management strategy should look at the contribution of all the stations to the heritage of the area including the involvement of local Aboriginal people in the cattle industry as practised at these places (for a generalized history of Aboriginal involvement in the cattle industry in northern Cape York see May 1983). Such places are likely to have strong values to both Aboriginal people and those non –indigenous people whose families have worked the properties. It has become unfashionable to recognise that non-indigenous Australians can form deep attachments to landscape and that for many people there is a spiritual dimension to their perceptions and feelings about places.



It is clear that there is considerable heartache amongst pastoralists in northern Queensland over the demise of their livelihood, which is forcing the small family operators to sell out to large generally non-resident pastoral enterprises. Economic values are likely to be the predominant interest of non-resident pastoralists and also overshadow other expressed values for pastoralists facing the imminent loss of their livelihood but it would be an oversimplification to draw a black/white dichotomy here (for such an argument see Strang 1997 and 1999). In many cases the division between pastoralists who run family based operations which have spanned several generations, and Aborigines is false, as Aboriginal people have married in to the cattle farming families (for example at Bramwell Station the matriarch Theresa Heinemann is from Old Mapoon). Contrast this to the work of Peter Read in documenting 'attachment' (Read 1996) and for a more complex view of non-indigenous Australians relationship with the land and the issues of Aboriginal ownership (Read 2000).

### **Patterson and Punsand Bay Telegraph Stations**

Patterson Telegraph Station site is located on the west coast of Cape York approximately 11km north of Bamaga (Figure 2). Although abandoned with no structures remaining the reserved area is still indicated on the current 100,000 topographic map series (Thursday Island Series R631 Sheet 7376 Edition 1-AAS). The area is lightly timbered and includes approximately 3km of beach frontage. The area is bounded in the north by Laradeenya Creek and in the south by Paterson Hill.

The site is one of a series of telegraph stations associated with the construction of the original telegraph line from Cooktown to Thursday Island. The line connected Australia to the rest of the world. The route for the line was surveyed by J.R Bradford who left Cooktown on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1883 and arrived at Somerset on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1883.

There were telegraph stations built at Fairview, Musgrave, Coen and Mein, Morton, McDonnell and Paterson. The Paterson Station was later moved to Peak Hill in 1894. Work commenced on the telegraph line in 1885 and was completed in September 1887 (see Appendix A).

The buildings at each of the telegraph stations were of a standard design.

All stations ...were built like forts to protect staff and equipment from the 'wild blacks'. The buildings were constructed of heavy gauge galvanised iron and on two diagonally opposite corners, a protruding gun port was built. Each port gave a clear view along two sides of the building as well as forward viewing. All windows were fitted with steel shutters which could be bolted from the inside... some water tanks were built inside the building so that no-one had to venture outside for water, nor could the blacks spear the tanks or poison the water. The buildings were built on special stumps and under the building was protected by iron also. There were a set of stairs going down from inside the house as well as an external set...The buildings comprised a number of rooms surrounding a closed in verandah area with open verandah at the front. They were officially described as eight roomed (Sheehy 1987:16).

Despite the robust sounding descriptions of these buildings only Musgrave remains. The Army Engineers rebuilt the later building at Punsand Bay near Peak Point in 1942 when they took over the line. There are only fragmentary remains of this site visible today. These include coral lined garden beds, a small concrete structure approximately the size of a phone booth (Plate 24) and rusted pieces of equipment scattered across the surface.

### **Significance**

The construction of the telegraph line was an important step in 'securing' the north. Imperial Germany had a foothold in New Guinea and in 1883 the Queensland Colony decided to annex Papua. It provided the colony of Queensland with a connection to the outside world (particularly England). For many years, first as the telegraph and later as the telephone line, it connected the isolated communities and stations along the Cape. Many of the stations became a focus for Aboriginal activity and settlement and retain special significance to Aboriginal people today as

homelands. Some became targets for resistance to the European invaders.

**Management Issues:**

Unfortunately little remains at these sites. There is limited archaeological potential at some of the sites including the one at Peak Point near Punsand Bay. There are few visitors to these sites because there is so little to capture their interest and most tourists would be unaware of the location of the stations.

The McDonnell site has been resettled as an outstation by Mrs Miriam Crow and it is known by its Aboriginal name Attambayah. Interpretative attention and conservation works should focus on the Musgrave station, which is still standing. Musgrave is now a cattle station, which operates as significant tourist operation as a café during tourist season each year.



**Plate 24: Remains of telegraph station, Punsand Bay**

### **11.3.2 The Legacy of the Mission Period**

Until recent years archaeologists and anthropologists have largely avoided studies of Aboriginal missions and the missionary period in general. Swain and Rose say that this is due in part to the assumption prevalent prior to the 1960's that

...Aboriginal cultures could not adapt to rapid change...that responses lying between these polar opposites [i.e. complete traditionalism and total assimilation] were decried as embarrassing and unfortunate bastards whose existence was best ignored. Certainly these 'sports' were not considered worthy of serious scholarly investigation (Bird-Rose and Swain 1988:2).

Research into this period has gained popularity and credibility since a growing number of Aboriginal people have begun to actively

research their own families and communities creating something of a demand amongst professional researchers.

What are we recording when we describe the Mission period? Contemporary observers of the Missions in Cape York as elsewhere, focussed on the exploits, and achievements of the Missionaries themselves. There was an untried assumption that such endeavours resulted in an improved lifestyle for the Aboriginal communities involved and this view is rarely challenged (for an exception see the official enquiry into events at Mapoon Mission station). Nowadays, this era is viewed with the benefit of our political awareness and hindsight and the focus is often on oppression and loss. Very few heritage professionals understand and describe the time as interpreted by those that lived it. Is the heritage of the mission era one of nostalgia for the past, perhaps pride in ones endeavours working on the mission or one of loss, heartbreak and alienation? Mission heritage is the most difficult for everyone to come to terms with. Nearly every white person who writes about this period (who isn't a Church representative) deals with the subject very emotively. There are some sad, frustrating and outrageous actions and events documented from this period and so to some extent this is perhaps understandable. However it is advisable to guard against telling people how they should feel, for example that white Australians should feel guilt and Aborigines that they should be angry. Sometimes people experience such a pressure to experience these emotions that people feel they will be attacked or at least judged if they do not express these sentiments.

This obscures the real heritage of the period. It is rarely as clear cut as the politically correct would have us believe. Aboriginal peoples reaction to the mission period involves complex layers of emotion and attachment that should not be denied. All communities feel the impact of the double-edged sword that best represents the missionary endeavour in Cape York. People who once lived on a

mission sometimes feel anger; they may also feel frustration and inadequacy when they realise how much cultural information or family history they have lost. However, at other times they feel homesick for the people and the mission environment, for a time when it appeared there were clear and common village objectives to work towards. Many feel pride in the accomplishments of this period, for example, the Church building at Mapoon. Many Aboriginal people are Christians who formed strong bonds with the missionaries and other church members and who do not believe that all the old mission way were so bad especially when they look around at the problems facing their communities and kids today. While it may not be logical or necessarily popular with the young in each village many old peoples strongest feeling are feelings of betrayal and loss at the Churches' perceived abandonment of them.

Young people in Cape York, on the other hand, never experienced the missions first hand and generally regard with abhorrence the stories of their elders that reveal the discipline and lack of personal autonomy characteristic of mission life. Some also feel cheated of their culture and a sense of belonging to the homelands of their parents and grandparents, particularly if they were forcibly removed from it as in the case of Mapoon. However despite this, or maybe because of this, they may see places at the old mission as important ties to the past and as symbolic of the survival of their culture and heritage. In a large and unfamiliar landscape a structure or a named place from their grandparents or parents stories becomes an important icon representing a much broader story and providing a physical link to their heritage. Such places serve to bring the past into the present reinforcing the continuity of ownership of the landscape.

### 11.3.2.1 Structures and Fabric

Maintaining structures in the tropical environment was a problem throughout the history of the missions. Resources for renovating and rebuilding structures essential for mission operations always occupied a large part of annual reports to the Board of Missions and also was one of the main features of Mission daily Event Diaries maintained by each of the missions. For example in the annual report to the Board of Missions for the period 1949-51 the following report regarding buildings was given:

The government of Queensland erected three cottages on Thursday Island for use of our Mission natives during their stay on the Island for medical aid and other reasons. Mr Cane supervises the property with the help of a native caretaker. A new cottage has been completed at Aurukun; but though the timber for the new Manse is on the ground it has not been possible to proceed with the building.

Many of our buildings are old. Originally built of galvanised iron they are hot to live in. Some are in need of renewal; others are utterly inadequate for their purpose. The climate is hard on the buildings. A new house (Manse) has been completed at Thursday Island. An attempt has been made to finish the Mission Houses and install refrigerators. The Mission house at Mapoon is in good repair now but the Church is falling down. Money for the new Church at Aurukun is being collected. Weipa has had installed an electric light plant; the schoolhouse is almost complete and several tons of concrete have been used there and on the other stations for foundations etc.

Some serious talking is being done on the question of removing all the buildings at the present site of Mapoon to Red Beach nearby. This would answer the question of rebuilding worn -out structures<sup>32</sup>.

Difficult to maintain without a ready and to some extent captive workforce at hand, it is no surprise that the buildings deteriorated rapidly once the missions ceased. In most cases the buildings, structures, vehicles, boats and landscapes associated with missions have either been lost or altered beyond recognition. In 1990 I visited Old Mapoon with a group of elders and rangers from the Mapoon community. At that time very little remained of the mission buildings most of which had been destroyed at the time of forced removal of Mapoon people to discourage them from ever

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<sup>32</sup> Extract from the Queensland Aboriginal & Foreign Missions Committee- Report to the Board of Missions of the G.A of A 1949-51 Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Mitchell Library MLMSS 1893 Item # MLK02570



returning. The Mission House however had been spared that fate but all that remained of it was a skeleton of the old structure, the rest having been destroyed by nature and vandals. At the time of our visit however it was still recoverable as an historic building either for maintenance as a ruin or rebuilding to a habitable structure. However, a year or so later I heard that it had been completely burned to the ground. The graveyard, the almond tree and small ephemeral traces are probably all that now remain to attest to this very important place.



**Plate 25: Graveyard at Old Mapoon**

Around the same time I visited Aurukun and discovered that the main dormitory building of the mission still stood in the middle of Aurukun village. It was more intact than any other mission building I had observed in Cape York and was the last remaining mission dormitory in the Cape. At that time I approached the Aurukun Shire Clerk and suggested that he apply for a heritage grant to restore the building to a useable state. He responded however that it would



be better demolished and that it was likely to be burnt to the ground. Somewhat grudgingly he agreed to me preparing an application for heritage assistance funding through the Qld government. Unfortunately the grant was unsuccessful because it did not meet the priorities that year. Soon after the building was completely destroyed by fire by persons unknown.

In 1991 the Church at Aurukun still stood although being a simple structure of fibro, iron and wood and no doubt subject to many repairs and renovations over the years. It is not clear how much original fabric remains in the building. At the time that my photographs were taken the church had just been renovated and a number of internal decorations and paintings had been removed and discarded. The steeple made by the Mapoon people, which was moved to Aurukun at the time of the forced removal of people from Mapoon is still on the church.

The mission hospital and missionary's residence at Weipa still remained (as at 1991), although with very little original fabric. CDEP teams have renovated these buildings for community use with whatever materials the community had available but have not had the benefit of conservation plans or heritage advice to guide their work.

At Lockhart River, I did not get the opportunity to visit 'Old Site' where the mission was situated but in 1986 both the church and school buildings were substantially intact (Anderson 1987). Architecturally these buildings were interesting, utilizing bush timbers to achieve some classic church features such as arched doorways. At that time the buildings were well roofed so there is a chance that these buildings are extant.

Though most of the buildings relating to the mission period in northern Cape York are either derelict, or destroyed, it is clear

when talking to people who recall the mission days (Stephen Mark pers.comm 1991; Clara Bond nee Martin pers.comm. 1987) that the places which they occupied in the landscape are still held dear in people's hearts. It would be a mistake to assume that Aboriginal people did not care for these places or that they had consciously set out to destroy them. Nevertheless, most of the buildings marking 70 years of missionary endeavour across northern Cape York have been effectively eradicated. While many people, particularly the elderly, in these communities speak with fondness of the missionary days the government has failed to respond with appropriate heritage conservation and community councils are ill equipped (in both skills and funds) to deal with the conservation requirements of built heritage. Community members who grew up on the missions often express a sense of loss and abandonment when they speak of the mission days. They may acknowledge on the one hand that the missionaries cost them a lot of information about their culture (particularly language) but they recall positive aspects of those days including friends and family and the freedom to carry out certain activities such as employment all of which was lost or forcibly taken from them in the ensuing era of government control through the reserve system.

Some people particularly from the middle-aged bracket have begun to research their community and family histories and avidly collect photographs of mission days and stories of mission days are eagerly sought from those left to remember them. Graveyards remain at each of the mission sites and are important sites to the communities concerned. Given that many markers in these graveyards were wooden, and the area prone to termites and cyclonic weather, a lot of information has already disappeared from them. It is imperative that work is undertaken to map and identify as many graves as possible as more and more people are trying to piece together the histories of their families and the geographic map of that history.

**Significance:**

Christianity has had and continues to have a strong influence in many Aboriginal communities and there is a strong attachment on the part of Aboriginal people in Cape York to the places and structures associated with the mission period. The Mission stations in northern Cape York as elsewhere in Australia restructured lives and social affiliations and for some communities (for example Mapoon) life on the mission is the tradition that they remember.

Of course much of the heritage of missionary effort lies not in structures and places but in song, practice and ritual. Many community songs, not only hymns but also children's and popular songs<sup>33</sup> are derived from that period. Also church services, practices such as house and tombstone openings and even bora ceremonies (Thompson 1988), have all been influenced by both pre missionary tradition and missionary influences.



**Plate 26: The church at the Sacred Heart Mission, one of the few stone mission buildings.**

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<sup>33</sup> many of these songs have a moral such as girls should be wary of boys and so forth. For example a commonly sung local song in Injinoo is 'One starry night' which describes a group of girls going for a walk, being approached by some boys to walk with them but the girls told them to go away because otherwise the boys would get the girls into trouble.



**Plate 27: Most of the other Mission buildings are timber and have suffered from white ants and the weather.**

### **Management Issues:**

This thesis is not a heritage identification and assessment exercise. It is not my intention to tell people which items must be kept nor is it to provide a list of places to be added to state and national registers. Rather I have tried to distil my understanding of the history of this period and of the connections that local people feel to that history. Therefore this will provide a sound-starting place for discussions between heritage management agencies and communities about how the former may assist those communities to conserve what is important to them.

The complex emotional response to mission heritage can only really be found through **oral testimony**. In interpreting the physical remains of mission sites it is essential that archival research be supplemented by oral histories. This of course adds an element of

increased urgency to the conservation of this heritage, as there are dwindling numbers of people alive today who can provide this sort of testimony.

What is inarguably important is 'family'. Increasingly Aboriginal people are researching their family trees and mission records are an invaluable source of information. Graveyards, however, while not always very informative because they do not tend to be well marked and are in bad repair, are important physical connections to family. Each of the missions had cemeteries and as well as being important resting-places of spirits they are also poignant reminders of life. Without question funding should be provided by heritage agencies to communities to map, record and maintain cemeteries for community records.

There are so few remaining mission buildings in Far North Queensland that the government should assist communities to retain these buildings. There is a great tendency in Aboriginal communities to tear down old places as soon as possible to build new ones. This is partly because the government has for many years provided housing funds on a replacement basis. In other words communities are given funding for new places to replace old substandard buildings and conditional on the demolition of these older buildings. This was an effective way of getting rid of a lot of physical evidence relating to management of reserves, which are a potential embarrassment to the government now that there are large numbers of tourists accessing the area. This policy not only affects the erasure of the recent heritage of Cape York but it also serves to quarantine the memories of those people who lived through those times. Without the physical evidence of the buildings to illustrate the story it is easy for young people in the communities to shrug off the stories and adults often express frustration that they are unable to make the young realise just how much has been achieved in a relatively short space of time. Should any buildings

remain, the focus should be on finding a community re-use for the building and communities should make all decisions about the re-use. Mapping the places in the mission landscape would provide an insight into changes in land use associated with mission life and the areas of continuity in practices.

### **11.3.3 The legacy of World War II**

World War II sites feature heavily in the local heritage of the Cape York Peninsula, particularly in the most northern area, Coen and Lockhart River where there were significant airbases. Northern Cape York and the Torres Strait were seen as strategically important areas to the defence of Australia and the protection of allied shipping lanes during the war. The area was also significant in supporting the war in New Guinea and the Pacific. Higgins Field and Horn Island landing strips were part of a chain of aerodromes from Townsville to Port Moresby.

The war years saw massive construction activity with the building of roads, jetties aerodromes, radar stations and other infrastructure. As well as the large areas that underwent physical transformations there was of course a major social impact. Not only did Aboriginal communities have to adjust to the large temporary male populations but also once again they had to adjust to sharing their landscape with outsiders. What is more, the armed forces demanded exclusive rights to occupation and of course traffic within certain areas was curtailed. In the case of the northern most part of Cape York Peninsula and Thursday Island around 363 Japanese colleagues, friends and acquaintances were imprisoned and communities had to adjust to the news that these friends of only days before were now considered to be the enemy. Some local people actively participated in the war effort via the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion. Others supported in other ways through the supply of fresh food and the supply of coast watch information. A wireless network was established and controlled by

Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion at Thursday Island. Such stations were set up on Horn Goode, Daru, Hammond and Prince of Wales Islands. On the northern Peninsula itself stations were established at Somerset, Bamaga, Mapoon, Weipa, Aurukun, Edward and Mitchell Rivers, Lockhart River/Iron Range and Coen. It was no accident that these stations were set up adjacent to Aboriginal communities as they relied on the infrastructure and access facilities provided by these communities.

Table 1 below provides an overview of physical remains that are to some extent visible and /or likely to be present in the archaeological record at places in Northern Cape York and those Torres Strait islands in immediate proximity.

#### **11.3.3.1 Airbases, landing fields and crash sites:**

##### **Higgins Field and Iron Range**

Airbases, landing field and crash sites are probably the most obvious of the World War II sites in Cape York. Of the landing fields and airbases probably the bases at Lockhart (Iron Range) and Bamaga (Higgins Field) probably provide the greatest heritage potential, due to both their size and their strategic importance during the war. The physical evidence at Lockhart River which included two landing strips is less disturbed than at Bamaga, partly because one of the strips, the Claudie strip, is no longer used and has been reclaimed and protected by regrowth vegetation.

At Higgins Field (now Jacky Jacky airport) there are plane parts in the terminal as a monument to the war effort. The defence site at Higgins Field was larger than the current airport and extended into the surrounding bush to accommodate all the personnel and paraphernalia associated with an operational base and RAAF headquarters. In the surrounding bush land today there are still the roads and lines of stones from stone edged campsites, piles of rusting fuel drums and other metal and a number of crashed

planes. For example Plate 28 shows a water tank that has been adapted for an unknown purpose still standing in the bush not far from Jacky Jacky airport.

Location	Radar Station	Airfield	Signals	Navy site	Port/jetty	Operational Base		RAAF Station	Crash site	Hospital	?? WWII remains structures
Archer Bay (Aurukun)	X	X						X			
Batavia (Wenlock)		X									
Coen		X									
Galloways/ Red Island Point					X						X
Higgins field (Jacky Jacky)		X				X	X	X	X multi	X	
Horn Island	X	X	X			X	X	X	X multi	X	
Iron range		X						X			
Lockhart River		X							X		
Muttee Head	X		X		X						
Portland Roads	X				X						
Somerset		X									
Thursday island			X	X	X						
Weipa		X									
Roonga					X						X
Blackwater											X
Punsand Bay											X
Vrilya Point		X									X
Putegah									X		
Goode Island			X	X							
Wednesday Island				X							
Hammond island			X								
Prince of Wales			X								
Entrance Island			X								
Booby Island				X							
Duyfken Point									X		

**Table 1: Summary of remains associated with WWII places in northern Cape York.**





**Plate 28: Modified Water tank, WWII**

### **Coen and Iron Range Airfields**

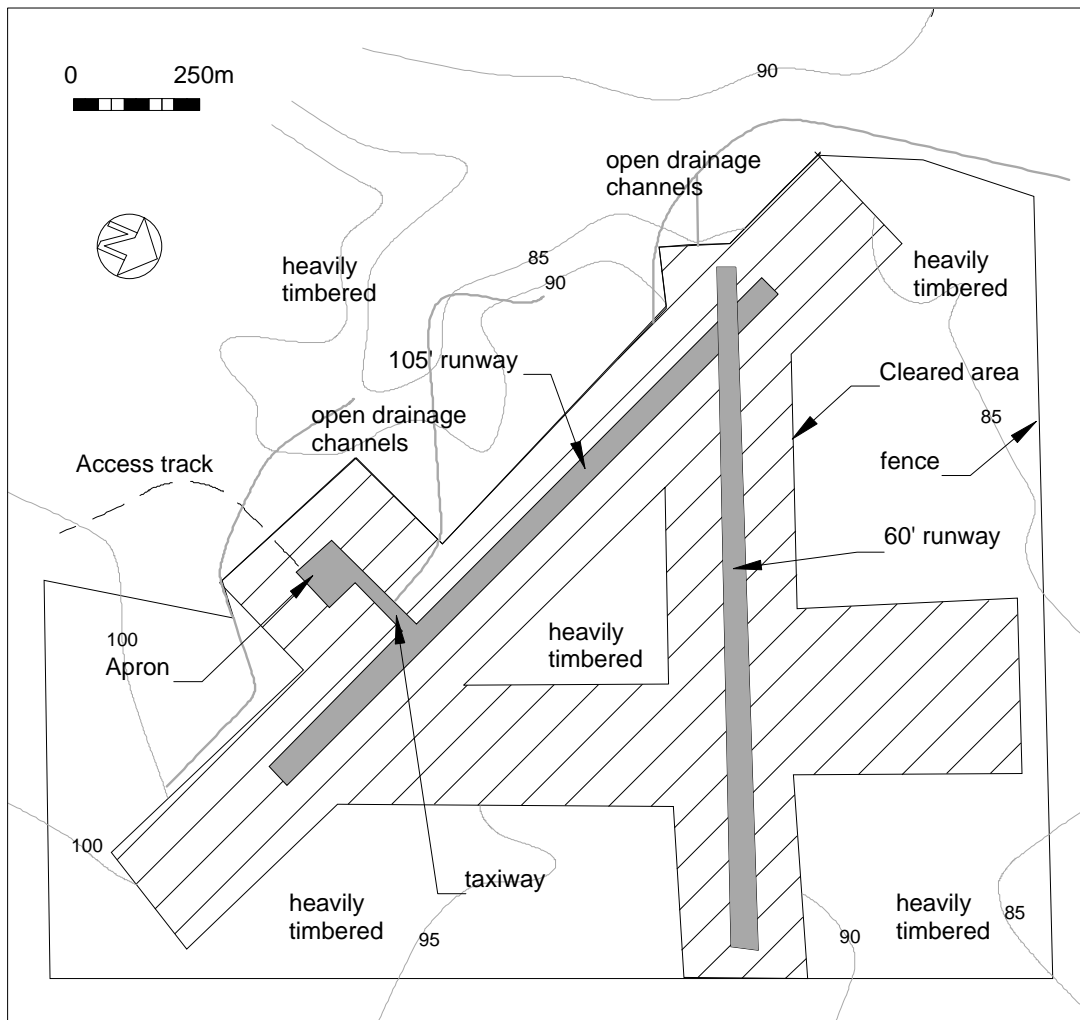
There is evidence of the war effort up the entire length of Cape York. Further south the Coen (for location of Coen see Figure 1) airstrip today is the replacement strip built by the Department of Civil Aviation on instruction from North Eastern Area Group Headquarters (see Figure 12). The landing strips constructed during the war have become an essential part of the current services available to people in Northern Cape York today. At the outset of the war the existing local strip closer to town could not be viably converted to an all weather strip nor extended to cope with the type of allied aircraft used. The infrastructure development that occurred in Cape York put a heavy financial burden on the federal government and the cost of requirements and the fight for allocation of funds to meet those costs dominates a lot of the files dating to that period (see Appendix G). Not only were the costs burdensome but also the selection of suitable sites was also difficult. Much of the reconnaissance had to be done on horse back as prior to the war

little money had been spent on the development of Peninsula roads or infrastructure. There were two strips developed at Lockhart River only one of which is in use today the other proving to be less safe and more costly to maintain.

Originally it had been planned to facilitate a large operational air base. Coen already had a small fairly rough landing strip when the decision was made to develop the potential for an operational base at this location. The old strip however was not suitable because it was too close to the town and the area was low lying and inclined to be swampy. An all weather landing strip was required by the proposals so a new landing ground was developed (Figure 12). The strip is still there today and operates as the Coen airport.

Due to concerns that the Coen Strip might not be accessible in all weather conditions due to cloud over the range it was decided that an emergency back up landing strip would be constructed at Iron Range. This latter site also had the advantage of have a nearby shipping access at Portland Roads and so it proved of greater convenience than the Coen site.

The Iron Range airfield and the improvement of the access to the jetty area at Portland Roads were constructed by the 46<sup>th</sup> Engineer Regiment of the U.S.A.F.I.A. (Australian Archives A705/1 Item7/1/1484). The difficulty in selecting suitable sites in unknown terrain and the high costs of constructions of these airfields is discussed in interdepartmental correspondence (Appendix G). It is clear that the communities in Cape York would not have attracted such costly infrastructure if not for the needs generated by World War II.



**Figure 12: WWII landing strip, Coen**

### **DC3 and Beaufort Plane Crash Sites**

Known crash sites are protected by local Aboriginal communities as far as resources allow. One such site is the DC3 crash site between the current Jack Jacky airport and Bamaga Village (Figure 2). This crash site is at the end of the runway. It is fenced and signposted for visitors and is accessible from the main road from Cairns to Bamaga. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1945 a DC3 'Courier' (VH-CXD) crashed as it attempted to land at Higgins Field at 5.20am (see AA Series MP1665/1 Item 1/101/1072). The pilot and four crewmembers were civilians. Two U.S nurses were also aboard. The plane was carrying a shipment of frozen meat to forces in Merauke, New Guinea when it crashed. It missed the runway and crashed amidst tents full of sleeping men. All on board were killed but amazingly none of those on the ground were seriously injured. Although the area has been 'cleaned up' the faint mounds which were the bases of the tents can still be seen so it is possible to imagine the shock, horror and relief at their escape that the soldiers camped there must have felt. The mounds are probably only visible because the site was fenced (originally by Department of Community Services Archaeology Branch Rangers) and so has been protected from land clearing activities. The fencing of the crash site has resulted in the campsite seeming to be strangely isolated from the surrounding landscape. At the time of the crash the surrounding areas would have housed many people in large camouflaged camping areas.

As one might expect at a large operational air base there were many crashes in its vicinity. Many of the planes landing there were returning home damaged from action in New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific. In July 1944 a Beaufort bomber crashed near Fishbone Creek adjacent to the airfield. Three RAAF crewmen were killed. Despite being so near what is currently the Bamaga airport the crash site is well shielded by vegetation. Local

Aboriginal communities have fenced off this area so it is not publicly accessible. The crash itself is cordoned off and local feelings are that the spirit of the dead are nearby and so the site should be left undisturbed.



**Plate 29: DC3 crash site, Higgins Field**





**Plate 30: Beaufort Bomber crash site, Higgins Field**

#### **11.3.3.2 Radar Stations, water tanks and workshops**

Landing strips, crashed planes and concrete gun emplacements (such as those still visible at Thursday Island) are some of the more easily recognizable remains from the war. However many of the sites are less easy to interpret and consequently are more prone to damage and disturbance through ignorance. The large bases such as Iron Range, Horn Island and Higgins Field had substantial infrastructure associated with them. Higgins Field for instance had a cluster of other important places around it including Red Island Point and Mutee Head.

#### **Mutee Head**

At Mutee head there were both army and air force units. The remains of the radar tower can still be seen as can the concrete foundation of the bitumen coated water tank (see Figure 13) and the large Jetty supports. The army built both of the latter features, and also the weir and the water reticulation system that was in use by the five northern peninsula area communities up until its

replacement in 1999. The history sheets for the Number 52 Radar Station located at Mutee Head mention a number of interactions with the local Aboriginal community of Cowal Creek (see Appendix D). However I was unable to find similar references in army records.

The history sheets also contain references to social excursions to neighbouring places such as Somerset. For example the record for November 26 comments that 'The commanding officer took a party to Somerset and a lot of coconuts and mangos were brought back' (Appendix D).



**Figure 13: WWII water tank, Mutee Head**

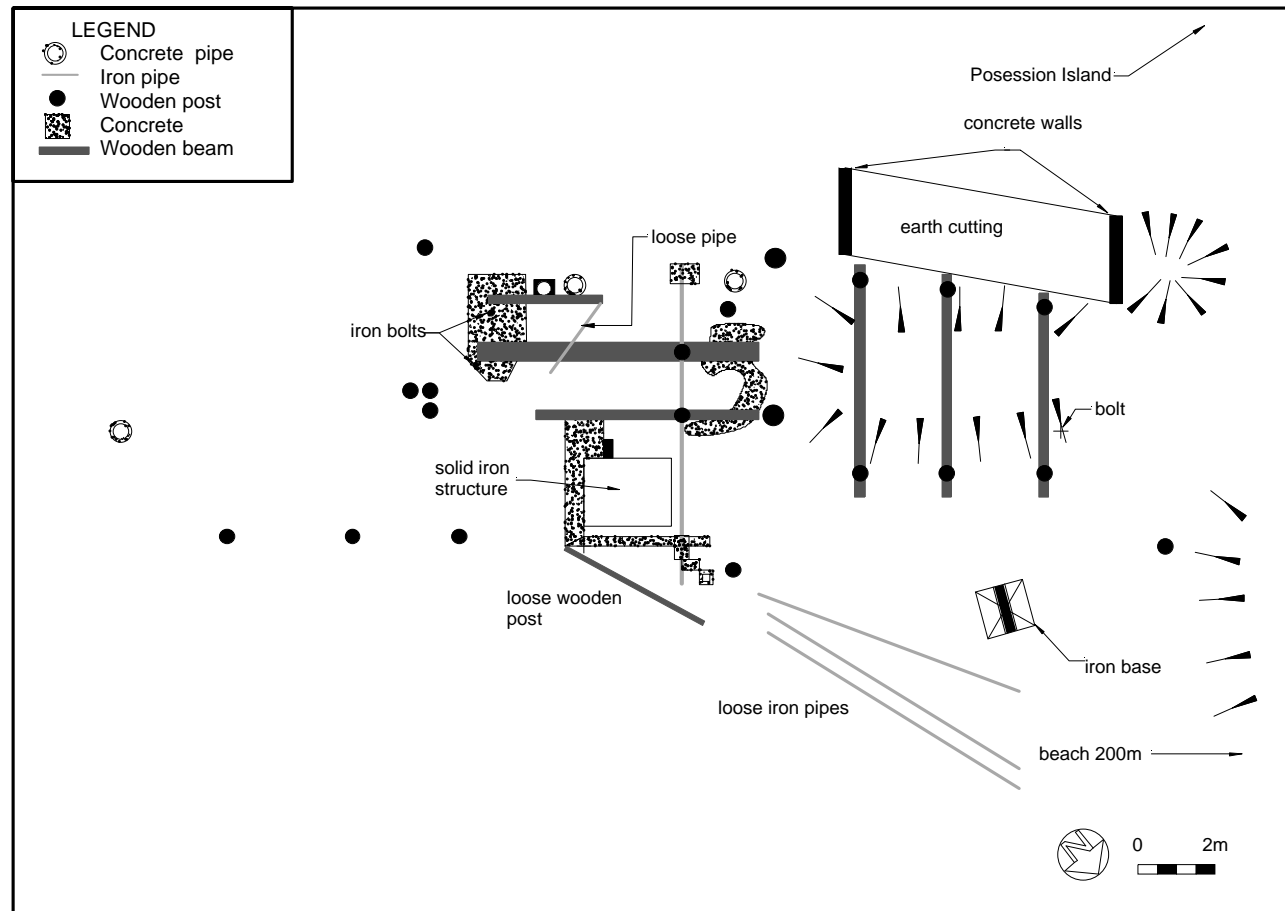


## Roonga

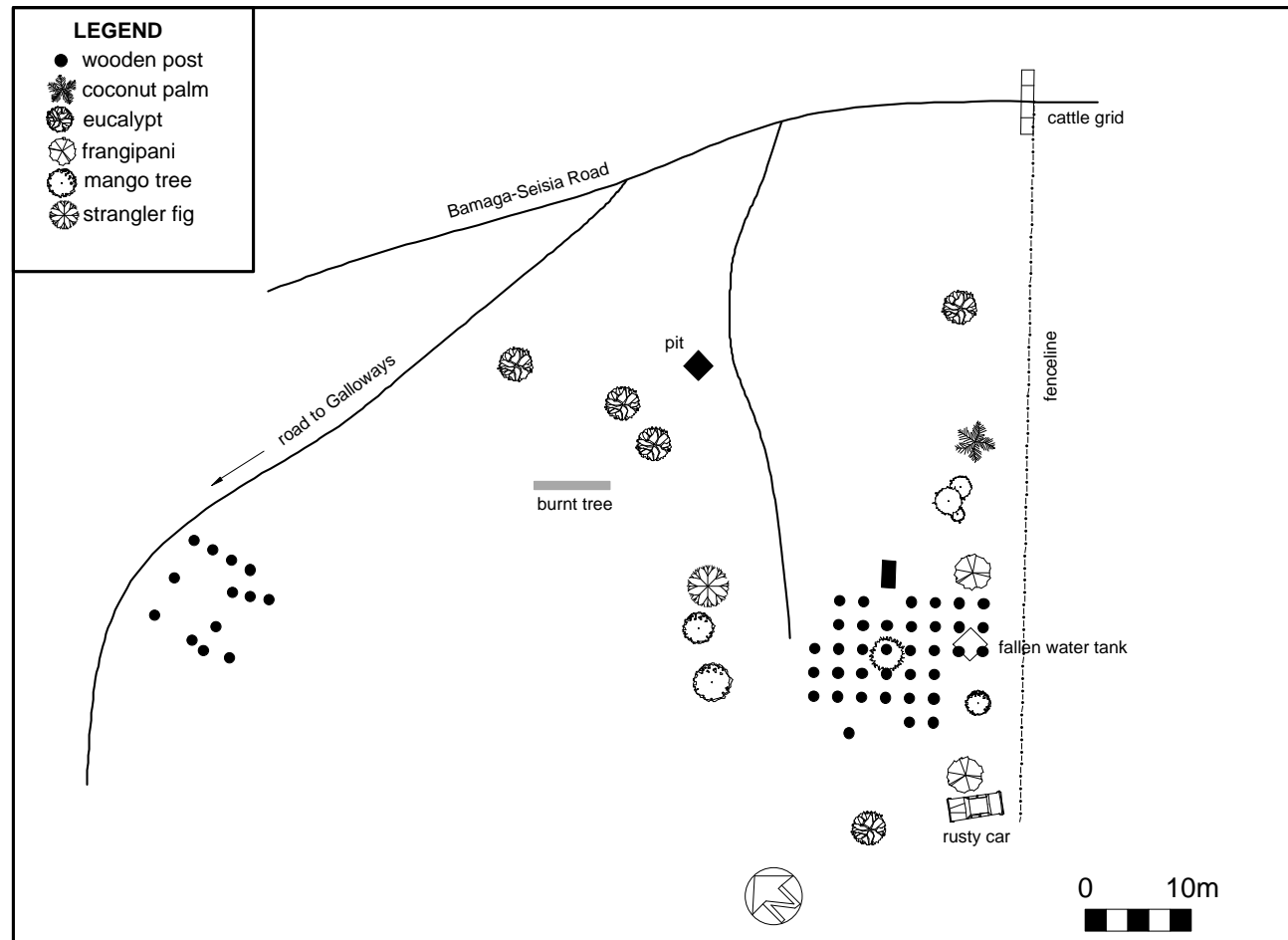
The remains of an army workshop is still visible at Roonga (Figure 14). Defence forces in this area had to be self-reliant. They had to be able to service and repair equipment including vehicles and earthmoving equipment. This site includes undercut areas presumably to facilitate access to the underside of vehicles. There are large iron support girders, concrete and timber.

Another such site is the army site at Red Island Point on the road to Galloways (Figure 15) that consists of scattered remains including a piano frame, iron water tanks, numerous 44 gallon drums, some wooden framework, concrete, postholes and a pit (probably a latrine). Local sources seem unclear as to the purpose and function of this site. No archival information was uncovered which referred to it specifically. It may have been a recreation centre given the location of the piano frame. It is not far from the village of Seisia at Red Island Point, where the remains of a shark proof swimming enclosure built for the soldiers can be seen.

Like most other WWII sites the buildings have been removed and the timber foundations left are partially burnt. The area is subject to regular burn off at *bahngrass taim*. This is the annual burn off during the latter part of the wet/early dry season and once buildings are no longer present the need for care would not be considered. There is potential to learn more about the site but recording and mapping surface artefacts and features. There is also some limited potential to recover additional information through controlled archaeological excavation, which might assist in its interpretation.



**Figure 14: WWII workshop site, Roonga**



**Figure 15: WWII site, Red Island Point**

## **Significance**

Clearly one of the legacies of the war period in northern Cape York was the infrastructure that was to become part of the basic structure of life on the Peninsula for the next 50 years. This sudden change to the living conditions of both Aboriginal and non-indigenous people living on the Peninsula affected both accessibility to other places and the provision of goods and services.

These sites are of varying significance to local Aboriginal communities. In the main they are recognized as part of the history of the area and people are generally aware of their location. If people come across previously unknown sites while travelling or hunting they recognise them as 'something to do with the wartaim'. But for most Aboriginal people in northern Cape York unless they or their fathers were involved in the assisting the defence forces or served in the Torres Strait Light Infantry (TSLI) Brigade the sites are a curiosity only. This is likely to be different to how such places are viewed in the Torres Strait Islands where both more men served in the TSLI and the war had a much more dramatic social impact.

Crash sites tend to be of more significance than other sites because of the loss of life. Aboriginal people respect these places and protect them as far as limited financial resources allow. It is recognised that these places are occupied by the spirits of those killed.

The significance of these sites to the broader Australian community is actually very similar. For most people visiting Cape York these places are curiosities only. There is no interpretation apart from a plaque at Jacky Jacky airport and so the historical importance of the area to Australia's (and the Pacific) defence during the war is not understood. Once again the sites are likely to have a very

personal significance to those who served or whose parents or grandparents served at these locations during the war.

### **Management Issues**

Many sites consist of little more surface evidence than piles of rusting fuel drums and scatters of burnt timber and rusting iron. Such sites tend to be affected by road works and in areas where space is more limited (such as at Seisia and New Mapoon) by community expansion activities). Most sites have some but limited archaeological potential for subsurface remains. The most sensitive in this regard of the sites that I have visited are Thursday Island gun emplacements, Higgins Field, Lockhart River airfield sites, Mutee Head and various crash sites. Apart from the crash sites each of these places had large numbers of people located at them over a significant period of time. Many of the sites are today overgrown. As they clustered near infrastructure and in fact generated new infrastructure they have tended to experience continued re- development pressure. For example in recent years there have been major upgrades to the road leading to Jacky Jacky Airport (once Higgins Field aerodrome). The widening of the road and its relocation to a slightly deviated route has impinged into the campsites that surrounded the airbase. Obviously after the cessation of hostilities a lot of material was removed and salvaged by the defence forces themselves and since then in an isolated area where building materials are scarce material has been recycled to the extent that most World War II sites appear ephemeral. They are often indicated by piles of rusting fuel drums and other scanty and unsalvageable remains as well as overgrown tracks road and campsites edged with stone. The two biggest issues affecting the management of these places are firstly lack of sound planning for ongoing infrastructure development which incorporates a concern and respect for heritage values, places and items and secondly the lack of interpretation to explain what these places are and their historical significance.

#### **11.3.4 Evidence of Changing Government policies and community life**

One of the challenges facing communities in northern Cape York as in other parts of Australia is to protect the emerging heritage while struggling to meet the day-to-day requirements and aspirations of community members. Most communities have under-developed planning processes. It is usually the younger to middle-aged people who are involved in the community councils. Often traditional custodians and knowledgeable elders may not always be consulted over basics such as where to put the community sewerage works and so forth. Where people are asked it may be that they feel pressured by the urgency of the village 'need' to agree to developments. Some communities have instituted safeguards to ensure that traditional custodians are involved in such planning decisions regarding land. In Kowanyama for instance the council does have a planning arm – the Land and Natural Resources Management Office and it has a traditional custodians component as well called the Council of Elders (Strang 1997:141; Sinnamon 1994). Together these two groups advise the community council on such matters. Injinoo community established *Apudhama*, an association of traditional custodians relating to Injinoo lands, with the intention of providing a similar function of advice to council on all land related matters. Unfortunately however, its founder Mr Daniel Ropeyarn fell ill soon after founding the association and had to move to Cairns for treatment. He has since died. Without his guidance the association did not survive through its formative period and failed to achieve a strong relationship with the council. It ceased functioning soon after Mr Ropeyarn left.

This whole planning issue and its relationship to heritage conservation is not unique to Aboriginal communities but is exacerbated wherever socio-economic factors are such that there is a pressure on emergency catch up works such as the provisions of adequate housing and basic hygiene and living standards. The other factor that mitigates against an active heritage identification

and conservation program is a lack of funding. Funding for heritage conservation is a luxury outside the budgetary capacity of most communities in northern Cape York most of whom subsist on Community Development and Employment Funding (CDEP). Specific (limited) heritage funding is available through competitive grants schemes via both the Commonwealth and Queensland state governments however this is not allocated according to local community priorities but to State and Commonwealth government priorities. For example Commonwealth funding is available for the management of places on the Register of the National Estate or for thematic identification programs to identify and nominate places to be included on the Register of the National Estate. State funding allocations for cultural heritage in Queensland are extremely limited and rarely make it to places this remote. They are usually focussed on conservation of buildings and structures rather than archaeological sites.

Communities need to consider retaining and adaptively re-using places and structures that have become unsuitable for their constructed use. For example housing conditions including size and design have altered markedly in northern Cape York. In 1986 at the time of my first field trip to Cape York, many people were living in small-unlined galvanised houses of about 12sqm of total floor space or less. Thus the average house was slightly larger than a single room in an average Sydney home such as my own. As the houses were unlined they were hot, drafty, wet and humid in the wet season. They were extremely hot to cook in, even if people were lucky enough to have gas stoves. There was no hot water at all in Injinoo when I first went there and showers were usually in a separate galvanised structure 'out the back'. Many houses officially had multiple adults and many children living in them although in reality given the conditions houses were often used more as cupboards for storage (this is they held the things people owned such as bedding, clothes and so forth) and most of the living happened outside under the mango or almond tree on benches

made of pallets or marine ply or what ever came to hand on top of fuel or flour drums. These benches were the hub of family life and I have many memories for instance of sitting with Mrs Esther Peters on her bench and listening to her stories ranging from her life as a child at Red Island Point to the latest village gossip.

These houses have rapidly disappeared over the intervening years (much to the relief of those who had to live in them) but older people will sometimes remark on the positive aspect of 'how things were'. For instance people note that many people now keep more to their house, and the communal focus of the bench has lessened. No one would advocate going back to the old houses but they are important illustrations of the substandard living conditions that Aboriginal people have had to endure from the earliest reserves until very recent times. Tourists now visit these places and see new construction activity and large 3 or 4 bedroom homes with running water and indoor bathrooms and must wonder what all the fuss has been about in relation to housing conditions in remote communities. It is important to keep physical examples of the range of housing that has characterised communities over the years. In addition to being just as valuable to history as government buildings and private residences in southern cities, they are important statements about our society. They are powerful educational aids in bringing home to non –indigenous Australian the history of Aboriginal people and the reserve system in Australia and also for young children in the communities to help them understand what their parents and grandparents have achieved for them in terms of the development of their communities. The tendency is however to demolish these places that were often sub standard. This is exacerbated by the funding arrangement for housing in communities, which for many years has been 'replacement' funding. The government over the past 10 year period has striven to improve not just the living conditions for Aboriginal people in remote communities but also its image in relation to those living conditions. Therefore, the government through its housing strategies seeks to tear down this



evidence of past inequity, in effect to erase the heritage of injustice, and it has found a way to make communities collude in this erasure of their own heritage.

What strategies can communities put in place to effectively conserve not only 'old' heritage but the legacy of *diskaintaim*? What should be the role of State and Federal governments in supporting these initiatives?

Communities need to conserve and find other non-residential uses for these buildings that are significant to their recent past. Government heritage agencies could assist in this process by providing heritage expertise to work with the communities and tailored to community needs, and providing funding for the identification and recording of such buildings in the communities. Conservation works and financial assistance should focus on viable adaptive re-uses for such structures.

Not all places of cultural heritage value need to be conserved by the collective group (i.e. community council or government). Some places, while valued collectively by a community, may be within private (family) management. Often the relationship with particular places is a very personal thing and people re-affirm their connection with those places through the act of caring for them. An example of this type of place is freshwater springs. As elsewhere in Australia, springs in Cape York are important. While today communities can exist away from springs because of reticulated water systems, in the past such places were truly the font of life. On most of the islands in the Torres Strait, water is relatively scarce when compared to the mainland. Water shortage on Thursday Island for instance has plagued the white settlers since their first year of settlement. Attachment to and dependence on springs has therefore remained a strong characteristic of people living on the islands in the Torres Strait. Springs (like the freshwater lakes on the east coast of Cape York) were created in the *Bipotaim* by those beings

that shaped the landscape. Springs are named places within the landscape where spirits live, guarding against threat and abuse. While visiting Hammond Island with *Kaurareg* rangers in 1991, I was shown one such spring, which was regularly tended by the family that depended on it.

It would be beneficial for community by-laws to explicitly recognise the beneficial relationships between the human and spirit landscape and so promote and encourage the retention of such custodial relationships. This may sound a strange recommendation to outsiders but is perhaps more understandable if one knows that the by-laws of many communities do already explicitly acknowledge the local cosmological landscape but that recognition focuses on *puripuri* or black magic as it is also called.



**Plate 31: Named springs are important stori plesis**

#### **11.3.5 *Stori* places and *bipotaim* sites and social value**

The heritage emphasis in northern Cape York should reflect the on 'social' or community value to indigenous communities, in addition to historic value. A place, structure or site is important not simply

because it is old but because it means something to the community i.e. it contributes to community identity. In this way community councils or other community organizations need to also protect those places in the natural environment, which are important in the everyday lives of community members. If necessary, this means protecting such places from development or use/overuse by tourists where this affects community members' ability to enjoy, use or experience the place. For example Laradeenya, not far from Lockerbie (see Figure 2) is an important recreational area for people in the five communities at the tip of Cape York. It is a favourite swimming hole and is free from the dangers of crocodiles and marine stingers, which exclude swimmers from other areas for the whole or parts of the year. The place is especially important to people from New Mapoon because it is within their small Deed of Grant in Trust (D.O.G.I.T) lands, which they manage, and to people from Injinoo because they have traditional and historic connections to the land there. However, when I last visited this site in 1991, at the request of New Mapoon Rangers it was being destroyed by the encroaching gravel mining operation, which was located nearby. Earth moving equipment had pushed soil into the swimming hole and the surrounding area was also bulldozed which affected its amenity as a recreational area. The solution requires co-operation between two different community councils as at that time the gravel quarry was operated by Bamaga Council while the swimming hole is in Mapoon Community D.O.G.I.T lands. This gravel quarry operates with no environmental controls, as do many of the operations, which have been initially run by the Queensland government as operations or enterprise with the Reserve system and have simply been handed over with no rehabilitation or other safe guards to the communities to run. Clearly the government has an obligation not only to ensure that its operations are ecologically sustainable but also where they have not been, to ensure that they are brought up to industry standards before handing them over to the communities. Community councils of course need to bring themselves up to speed rapidly on matters such as ecologically

sustainable development and environmental impact assessment as their people's attachment to the landscape is fundamental to their role as owners and custodians. The rapidity of change due to development pressures and tourism and facilitated by more and larger equipment has the potential to catch people unawares and perhaps irreparably impact places of significance before people realise the danger. This should not be taken as an objection to progress and development but rather a call for governments to ensure that they are applying at least equivalent environmental standard to those used elsewhere when determining and allocating funding for projects and for them to foster and encourage the appropriate range of skills in communities through active educational, cadetship and other programs. Communities themselves can take the initiative in lieu of government initiatives and incentives and indeed to a certain degree the communities have been doing this collectively through the involvement of the Cape York Land Council and Balkanu in environmental impact and heritage assessments although these tend to be the larger strategic projects rather than the day to day development concerns of local community councils.



**Plate 32: Development damage to Laradeenya**

The situation regarding development impacts and planning issues around recreational and story places varying throughout the Cape. Around Weipa, for instance, because of the scale of the development and potential impacts, people are more concerned with the impact from Comalco operations, than those of their community council. On the other hand, as a large corporation, Comalco in the main has developed formal and informal processes with the community. With the very notable exception of the large Weipa shell mounds, which themselves have stories associated with them that extend back into the *Bipotaim* (pers. Comm. Arthur Androm 1990), the places of concern are story places (for example Wundrapine see Chapter 1, Peppen, Anung) rather than archaeological sites (pers.com. Mrs Joyce and Ina Hall and Mrs Motton:1990).

*Stori ples* and named features are an important cultural links for people. They are evidence of continuing traditions and an abiding connection with the landscape. It is therefore important to acknowledge local authority over such places including the naming of them. Too often when maps are prepared and documentation of places either for heritage listing, tourism purpose or land claim and native title purpose the emphasis is placed on finding Aboriginal place names (the inference being that these are more authentic). However, this denies people's historical connections to the land which are often more important to them and more accurate. This tendency tends to disenfranchise Aboriginal people as it is often the white adviser or researcher who has uncovered the "real" place name and Aboriginal people may feel "corrected".

Places that evidence the *Bipotaim* also include archaeological sites. Static heritage management practices, which conserve these places forever as they were when first found (by archaeologists) and recorded, may not be appropriate. Many places continue to be used for traditional purposes and so the process of change and

sedimentation that occurs throughout the formation of an archaeological site is still progressing.

Despite this, communities may choose in some cases to manage sites as 'relics' of the past. This is likely to occur where the places either are no longer in current use and therefore people assume (such as in the case of an archaeological site brought to their attention by a researcher of which the appropriate custodian(s) had no prior knowledge) or know (such as sites known to the appropriate custodian) them to belong to the Bipotaim and recognise that the spirits of the 'old people' are active at the site. *Putta Putta* on the east coast near Somerset is managed in this way. The site is fenced from the public to protect it from four-wheel drive vehicles and an official generic government heritage sign is displayed indicating that the site is protected. The community also raised their own sign, which explained why the site was fenced off to try and get the understanding of tourists.

Archaeological sites and stories can be very important in cross-cultural interpretation and presentation as well as sustaining community identity. People identify more closely with places rather than with documents. Through identifying and interpreting such places it is possible to access the way that people perceived events in their history. Aboriginal histories are experiential. They are told from within a landscape perspective and therefore the 'place' has the potential to reveal and reproduce indigenous conceptions of history (Harrison 2000b).

The power of places to evoke emotional responses, understanding and empathy means that they are an important cross-cultural interpretative tool. Documents rely too heavily on the literacy of both the writer and the reader to achieve an effective cross-cultural engagement or understanding. Quite often documents are written from one perspective only and in the case of heritage places this is often the perspective of the heritage *expert* that is not even



representative of the broader European viewpoint. Places, however, require only imagination, feeling and a relatively small amount of information to be able to involve people in history in the broader sense.

#### **11.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the nature and condition of physical remains and places attesting to the history of northern Cape York as outlined in Part II of this thesis. It is clear from the description of these places that they have suffered from a lack of a conservation strategy for heritage places in Cape York and a lack of recognition on the part of heritage agencies of their heritage values. Because in most cases the physical remains are limited to ruins, there is potentially an important role for archaeology to add information that can assist in the interpretation of these places.

While these places are of obvious importance to communities in northern Cape York and are important places in the maintenance of community identity it is clear that the communities themselves do not have the financial resources nor the technical expertise required to conserve and interpret them. It is therefore a matter of urgency that heritage agencies respond to this crisis. However, this response needs to be tailored to the communities and will require agencies to think beyond the models of heritage inventories and funding based on State and National levels of significance for individual sites, to adopt instead a landscape approach that assesses significance of a landscape of shared attachment and memory spanning over 200 years. In northern Cape York we have a region as large as some of the smaller states in Australia and yet because most of the individual sites are assessed as being of local significance they are not conserved nor resourced in any way. Without a change to this situation, before the end of the next decade we are likely to see the total destruction of all physical remains of over 200 years of shared indigenous /non-indigenous history in the entire region.





## Chapter 12

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### **COMMUNITIES, RANGERS AND CULTURAL TOURISM IN NORTHERN CAPE YORK**

Tourism has been heralded as the world's largest and fastest growing industry. Worldwide we are told that one in every 15 workers is employed in some part of the tourist industry (World Tourism Council 1992 in Nethery 1993:1). During 1999, the number of tourists who spent at least one night in Tropical North Queensland (i.e. in the region from Cairns to the tip of the Peninsula) was 1,236,000 (Queensland Tourism 1999). Such numbers can be very enticing in terms of the potential dollars to be earned. These numbers can also be terrifying to Indigenous communities in remote parts of Australia in terms of the numbers of tourists that they signify. In communities where most communities subsist on CDEP (Community Development and Employment Programs a form of work for the dole scheme) the thought that so many people have so much money to spend on the luxury of travel is hard to believe and sometimes very confronting. This chapter touches on some of the cultural tourism issues relevant to northern Cape York and also looks at the role of the community rangers in this industry.

#### **12.1 The Role of Cultural Tourism**

For the past 5-10 years communities in Cape York (and elsewhere in Australia and other areas of the world) have been told that first 'eco' and now 'cultural' tourism are essential industries for them to engage in (Hill 1992; White 1993; Office of National Tourism 1996; Department of Tourism 1994). Yet it is difficult to identify a single cultural (or eco) tourism enterprise that has generated significant wealth for a community in northern Cape York. Lack of expertise, lack of partnership equity and many other business management

issues contribute to the lack of viability or economic success of these arrangements and it is clear that the government could play a more significant part in ensuring that thresholds of equity and viability are employed. New South Wales Tourism has an Indigenous Tourism Policy, which it requires all operators to comply with but Queensland Tourism currently does not.

ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism have jointly published a National Indigenous Tourism Strategy (ATSIC & Office of National Tourism 1997). In the foreword to this document, Federal Ministers Senator the Hon. John Herron (Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs) and the Hon. John Moore (Minister for Industry, Science and Tourism) state that:

Indigenous tourism can contribute significantly to the Australian tourism industry while at the same time fostering economic independence and cultural preservation for many participating indigenous communities.

With growing international demand for indigenous tourism experiences, and as custodians of some of the world's oldest living cultures, many opportunities are emerging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in tourism.

(ATSIC & Office of National Tourism 1997:iii)

As an introduction to the need for the strategy the authors quote an un-named Aboriginal person as saying

Tourism is this industry we have been hearing about for a long time now, we are not getting any closer to an understanding of it, of whether we should get into it, of how we get into it, of where we go for information about it (ATSIC & Office of National Tourism 1997:1).

These two perspectives summarize the dilemma for Aboriginal communities. There is obviously a demand for indigenous cultural tourism from both the domestic and international markets and yet with a few exceptions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been unable to significantly make headway in developing viable, sustainable tourism enterprises.

### **12.1.1 The good, the bad and the ugly of cultural tourism**

Clearly there is a potential economic benefit to developing cultural tourism enterprises. Governments love it because it means dollars to the state and federal economies. It woos local communities, and struggling pastoralists with the promise of easy money as an adjunct to their otherwise limited funding sources. However, it is important to ensure that the tourism enterprise is sustainable and that it protects and enhances the cultural heritage asset otherwise the very basis of the enterprise is gradually diminished and the enterprise will fail (Harris & Leiper 1990; Martin & Uysal 1990). A significant portion of the monies generated by the enterprise must be channelled into heritage protection or the claim that one is 'selling out' or exploiting ones heritage is justified (Moulin 1990:8; Hall & Zeppel 1990:94). The nature of the tourism operation must not impact unduly on the heritage place and this requires community councils to carefully assess the potential heritage impact of proposals put before them or those that they develop themselves. Tourism needs to be managed. At the present time in Northern Cape York there is almost no management of tourists. This is despite the fact that around 15,000 four-wheel drive vehicles travel up the Peninsula each year (estimates from Injinoo Council based on Jardine River Ferry returns). Tourists are required to buy camping permits but there are no limitations imposed, based on the carrying capacity of the land or sites of numbers of tourists or tourist vehicles<sup>34</sup>. Without effective management, mass tourism pressure in northern Cape York is currently exploiting the natural and cultural values and contributing to the rapid degradation of cultural sites.

One of the greatest potential benefits of cultural tourism is the potential to achieve a level of cross-cultural understanding through interpretation of history and culture, and the places relating to that history. Cultural tourism opportunities give communities the chance to access the minds and to some extent modify the behaviour of visitors through education (Manfredo 1992) and increased

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<sup>34</sup> Kowanyama in the Gulf of Carpentaria has an advance purchase permit system that allows them to set a limit on the number of vehicles accessing their land at any one time.

understanding of the significance of particular places to both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. The power of physical remains is such that they can, if presented correctly, bring history alive. The power of material objects and places to reveal history has long been acknowledged.

The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm beyond the reach of the intellect, in some material object (the sensation that the material object will give us) which we do not suspect (Proust 1966:57-8 in Gosden 1994:6).

Visitors to cultural sites are eager to see tangible evidence of the past. If such remains are not obvious they may search for them, driving into fragile areas or even digging in search of relics. In addition to these forms of intentional intervention, if remains are not obvious people may assume that nothing exists at all and think nothing of digging rubbish pits, latrines and burning loose timbers. Effective interpretation can protect sites by providing the visual evidence required and at the same time imposing restrictions on behaviour.

An important consideration in providing for tourists is the impact that proposed activities will have not only on the places themselves but on the communities that own them or have cultural affiliations to them. Prior to the Injinoo community taking over the Cape York Wilderness Lodge (now called Pajinka), it was owned and operated by Australian Airlines. The resident managers of this resort had a history of intimidating local people to discourage them from using the area and interacting with the lodge's guests. To provide privacy for guests they illegally closed off a public road to try and stop Aboriginal people accessing *Pudegah* or Evans Bay, which was a favourite place for the collection of oysters and *wongai* (an edible fruit). Cultural tourism enterprises should not result in local communities feeling like trespassers in their own land (see Plate 33).

### **12.1.2 Understanding customers and the resource**

In Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York there is sometimes the belief that non-indigenous Australia is an homogenous community group. Of course this is not true. It is important for Aboriginal communities to try understanding non-indigenous visitor perspectives if one is to be able to communicate effectively in a cross-cultural context.

The assessment of visitor needs and aspirations is an important first step in planning cultural tourism projects. While it may be an implicit agenda of communities to 'educate' visitors, it is a waste of effort if a medium or place that no-one is interested in is chosen because ultimately no-one will visit the place and hence there will be no-one to educate. One of the fortuitous characteristics of Cape York is that because it is so remote and there is little economic activity to distract tourists communities have an advantage in that any information they provide is eagerly absorbed by an information starved, captive market. But to take the relationship further and create a viable cultural tourism enterprise requires communities to understand the needs, interests and culture of their market. Another advantage for some Cape York communities such as Injinoo and Lockhart is the vast areas of land that they control (note this is not the case for New Mapoon, Bamaga, Umagico and Seisia who are located in much smaller non-traditional lands). This means that assuming that they can develop the infrastructure required to support their project, they can if the community so desires operate a cultural tourism enterprise with minimum impact on their villages. For the communities that have resulted from relocations such as Umagico, Bamaga, New Mapoon and Seisia this is not an option and they have had to think of other strategies if they want to take advantage of cultural tourism opportunities. Seisia for example is developing a position as a gateway to the Torres Strait utilizing that community's cultural connections with the Torres Strait Islands.

Having said all this about 'understanding' visitor aspirations, once communities understand the people who are currently visiting northern Cape York, if they do not like what they learn about them (or some of them) they need to have both the confidence and skills to try to discourage negative elements and target other tourists. Nethery has commented that 'the most positive aspect of the projected growth in tourist numbers is the opportunity to pick and choose the kinds of tourists we wish to attract and to adjust promotion and pricing strategies accordingly' (Nethery 1993:9). Ideally from the view of conserving heritage places it would be useful to determine what messages or *stori* one might want to present and to identify the places that best illustrate that *stori*. It is important for communities to target markets who will appreciate what they have to offer and who will respect the local culture. While this might seem an obvious strategy, community members often feel powerless in the face of the waves of tourists, which began as soon as the reserves and missions began to be dismantled. When Injinoo first built a campsite for tourists they did so in their village at one of their favourite gathering places. The rationale behind this was that since Injinoo people enjoyed being there others would too. In addition it had beautiful views and running water and facilities which community people valued. I asked a council employee at the time whether she thought it might be intrusive to have strangers camped in the village, and since Injinoo people liked the place so much why have the tourists there? The response was 'but we can't stop them, they are coming anyway, so we might as well let them come and make some money out of them' (pers.comm. name withheld on request). This reflects the way in which many people see tourism as a tide, which they must yield too and in doing so maybe they can get a financial recompense. They do not consider that they can control tourism. Of course this particular enterprise failed as community members still wanted to use the area and resented being made to feel that they should hand it over during tourist season and so continued to use the area and the tourist facilities. Council, too, began to 'improve' the area in ways which

they assumed would enhance it for tourists but which did not. For instance they gravelled large sections of the area, which of course provided better access for tourists, who no longer bogged their vehicles, but the red bauxite rich gravel and clay was not as attractive to tourists as the white sands and much harder to camp on.

This leads to the other fundamental, which is of course to understand the place or places that are being presented in the cultural tourism enterprise. There is the opportunity for one place such as an historic homestead or a landscape, to be introduced and better understood through several key places and the journey from these places to the main site itself. Communities should avoid endorsing projects (or commencing them) which do not adequately describe an understanding of the resource and its main values and which also cannot convincingly estimate the impact of the type of use or visitation proposed.

To ensure that appropriate funds are made available to assist communities in planning viable and culturally sustainable cultural tourism projects it is important for the government to assist in the development of an indigenous cultural tourism strategy for Cape York. This work could be managed, for instance, by the Cape York Land Council in partnership with the communities they represent and with funding from State and Federal government. Such a strategy could identify opportunities for different communities which complement each other and it could also identify the capacity and skill levels required of communities to realise these opportunities. Future funding assistance whether from government or private sources could then be aligned with the identified priorities

## **12.2 The Role of Rangers in Cultural Tourism**

Chapter 10 discussed the basis for the current model of land management in Cape York, which incorporates indigenous rangers employed by community councils. This model is based on Western models of nature conservation and protected area management.

Communities have moved quickly to adapt this model to reflect their aspirations and needs. One such innovation we have seen is the introduction of Elders groups to advise and instruct rangers on their activities in certain areas.

In the protected area management system in Australia, rangers have a diverse role backed up (in most states) with university level training in a relevant natural or cultural heritage discipline. Traditionally, most have a background in natural heritage and a view of their role as guarding or protecting the environment from the impact of humans rather than guarding it **for** humans. However, due to the nature of the agencies for which they work, which depend almost solely on the tax dollar of all Australians (and therefore on the goodwill of the public to some extent) they have an uneasy role as cultural and natural tourism operators. This has tended to take an educative slant that legitimises it as an activity to those involved in the conservation and management of protected areas.

One of the assumptions that seem widely accepted is that 'managing' and 'regulating' tourists is equivalent to cultural tourism (see for example Strang 1998:26-27). For the most part in northern Cape York this is as far as communities have ventured into cultural tourism. There are exceptions such as Pajinka, Australia's most northerly tourist resort, which is now owned, and run by Injinoo Aboriginal community. In discussing her observations at Kowanyama, Strang places a lot of emphasis on the role of rangers in managing cultural tourism (Strang 1998:26) and educating visitors (Strang 1998: 27) and to an extent as being knowledge brokers for the community (Strang 1998:27). She draws attention to the positive strengths of the Cairns TAFE course that trains the rangers for the work in their communities.

I was the northern co-ordinator for the Cairns TAFE course from 1989 until early 1991. The course has evolved somewhat since that



time, as one would expect, and hopefully in that process has become more closely attuned to community aspirations. However it is not now nor was it ever intended to be a course that would prepare communities to embark on successful cultural tourism operations. The issues affecting the success of rangers and the Cairns TAFE course have been touched on previously in Chapter 10. In relation to cultural tourism and a communities ability to embark on successful cultural tourism projects, on their own or in partnership with private operators, it is clear that other skills and training are needed to support communities and that this will involve other community members in addition to rangers. For example there are a range of courses currently available in eco-tourism or natural and cultural tourism from TAFE. These include small business management components as well as components that deal with the assessment and mitigation of impacts of the proposed enterprise on the natural and cultural values.

Of course Indigenous rangers do have an important role to play and there are elements of it that are educative. To a large extent though their role centres on management, regulation and monitoring of impacts on the environment. So for instance it is rangers who implement community by-laws in relation to both tourists and community members as they relate to damage to the environment and infringements. In effectively doing this they will educate people where possible about the significance of particular places. They are also responsible for liaising with community members especially Council and elders about how to manage places and this may involve patrolling or erecting signs and so forth. The monitoring of developments and tourism enterprise and the documenting and reporting of impacts is also important. In particular communities where there is a cultural tourism enterprise in operation rangers may be called on to provide their expertise, for instance by conducting a bushwalk or talking to tourists but the emphasis here is on contribution rather than sole management responsibility.

### **12.3 Conclusion**

Cultural tourism is an opportunity available to Cape York communities because of the nature of their heritage resource with its richly interrelated natural and cultural values and because of their location at the northernmost part of Australia. Cultural tourism can be used to generate significant funds for the community, which if partly channelled back into heritage conservation will ensure a viable heritage resource into the future. While Cultural tourism should not be seen as heritage management *per se* it has an important role to play as long as commodification of heritage does not proceed at the expense of the conservation of its significant values. On the other hand poorly instituted attempts at cultural tourism such as the vandalism at Lockerbie (see Chapter 11) threaten to destroy the values of significant heritage places and in doing so diminish community heritage.

Both to take advantage of the opportunities presented by this industry and to protect against its worst impacts an indigenous Heritage strategy is required for northern Cape York. While community rangers will continue to play an important role in tourism management, they have broader responsibilities to the environment and heritage. The development and management of viable cultural tourism enterprises and programs will require additional skills and training for other community members and probably at least for the initial period imported specialist assistance if communities are to really benefit from cultural tourism opportunities in Cape York.



**Plate 33: An example of tourism negatively impacting on the community**

### CONCLUSIONS

Since European invasion of the region, northern Cape York has had a rich and varied history. One of the definitions of history is 'a narrative of events; a story; a chronicle' and this is in fact how Aboriginal people describe their history as the *stori*. Places at which important events occurred or which are imbued with special significance are referred to as *stori plesis*. Some of these are evidence of the shared indigenous and non-indigenous history of the area. Indeed some of these places evidence the dissonance of the heritage of atrocity (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 94). Others evidence shared experiences which were much more positive. The most significant of these places have been woven into the rich tapestry of Aboriginal cosmology and are governed by specific rules of conduct and respect.

This history is a shared history of significance to both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians but more importantly it is an Aboriginal history, which documents the relationship of the Aboriginal people in northern Cape York to the land and everything in it. This includes their relationship with those who have moved into it (bidden or unbidden) and their responses to the changes that have been brought about by these newcomers. This process of history including the forming and reforming of relationships to new people and cultures is continuing today. Social and environmental change is happening at a greater rate than ever before. In the last decade communities have seen the introduction of new technology such as television (1989) and cars and other vehicles (in 1987 there were only 2 cars in Injinoo and now almost every second household has a car and the council has a fleet of vehicles). They have undergone social and political changes as they moved from

the 'reserve' system to self management and they have had to try to understand the potential environmental impacts from increasing pressures of tourism, mining, commercial fishing and other industries vying for a stake in the region.

The heritage places in Cape York include *stori plesis* without physical remains, archaeological sites and sites with the remains of structures, graves, wrecks and other built structures. It also includes places being generated as part of the evolving history of the area.

Historically missionaries and government officials have worked to control and disempower Aboriginal communities in Cape York through the disrupting the transmission of language and through the destruction of *stori ples'* and other significant heritage sites. This disempowerment through control and erasure of heritage continues today although in the main the government agencies responsible appear largely unaware of the effects of their actions, policies and neglect. There are a number of key issues upon which the successful management of heritage in the area depends.

Firstly, a holistic approach to the consideration of heritage in northern Cape York is required. The division of heritage management practice into discrete strands of historic, indigenous and natural heritage works to obscure Aboriginal interests in the management of their heritage as a cultural landscape which nurtures and sustains community identity. The continuation of this practice in northern Cape York is inconsistent with the desire to conserve heritage. A contraposition has been suggested in this thesis, which centres on the recognition of social or community value to overcome this division and attendant problems.

Secondly, arising from the need for a holistic approach, rather than focussing on national or state levels of significance a focus on value to the local community will ensure that the heritage of the

region is protected. This is not to suggest a naive approach of simply 'doing whatever the community wants or anything goes'. It is recognized that from time to time individual actions and proposals may be inconsistent with the conservation of significant values. Rather, the suggestion is that heritage places contribute to both individual and community identity. Technical specialists should focus on trying to understand that identity and assist in identifying and conserving places, which contribute to that identity in partnership with the communities and those authorised custodians of places. The emphasis on community value means a shedding of power on the part of the expert or specialist and an increased faith that communities have values and that these should be recognised.

Thirdly, a landscape approach to the understanding, documentation and interpretation or presentation of heritage is required. Inventories and registers serve a useful but limited purpose in flagging important places when considering development planning and impact assessment but are not an end in themselves. The heritage of Cape York should not be broken up into a list of isolated World War II sites, for instance, nor a scattering of known pre-contact Aboriginal sites. The heritage of Cape York is the story of people, time and landscape. Therefore it is the *stori* of how things were in the *wartaim* or *Bipotaim*. Physical sites help to illustrate this *stori*. The *stori* of *diskaintaim* or now interweaves all these places in the landscape with events unfolding now in peoples' own lifetimes. Therefore the landscape of *diskaintaim* includes places from *Bipotaim* and *wartaim* and *pastaim* that are known and important to the community and equally it includes places that are now the focus of important activities and events in their lives. So for instance it will include favourite swimming holes and the villages themselves.

Fourthly, to achieve a landscape approach and heritage conservation regime based on community value requires

acknowledging that **heritage sustains identity**. While perhaps it is difficult for community councils to find time to turn their attention to heritage conservation issues given the urgent day-to-day matters facing their communities, the conservation of heritage is strategically one of the most important challenges facing communities today. The heritage of Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York is what defines the people as unique amongst other Australians, it underpins their claim and ownership of land, and it empowers them in negotiations over the use of resources and the development of industries relating to that heritage. Communities can choose that the heritage that they bequeath to their children reflects what they considered important in their lifetimes or they can let external influences dictate what is passed on through a process of elimination by environmental and external political factors. For example they could choose that it is important for their children and grandchildren to see and understand the living conditions they endured and the struggle that they have undertaken as a community to improve conditions or they can let a distant government erase these places as embarrassing evidence of recent inequities. This would eradicate any material evidence of the claim that it was “much harder when we were young”.

Of all cultural elements, ‘sites’ are often the most contested in terms of control and ownership and the right to interpret. Archaeological research can contribute to reducing the credibility of Aboriginal informants within their own communities, as many sites are not recognised by Aboriginal people as *Bipotaim* sites until they are pointed out to be so by archaeologists. Often there is a lack of real interest in these sites on the part of community members because, even if the archaeologist's claims are accepted, they are considered to have belonged to someone else because they are not part of the collective memory of the community.

Named places in the landscape invariably are as important, if not more so, to Aboriginal people than are places where there is physical evidence of prior occupation. This is not so hard to understand when one considers that some archaeological sites were created so far in the past that no one has living memory of them. Aboriginal people have only the word of the 'specialist' that these bits and pieces are in fact evidence of past occupation and this may challenge their worldview. After all traditions have been handed down from generation to generation, and if it was important they feel that they should know about it. In many cases archaeology is evidence of a competing and perhaps destructive reality.

Protection of the diverse heritage of northern Cape York requires a concentrated injection of funds and expertise directed to the identification of heritage, emphasis community values and shared although sometimes dissonant history. Capital investment is required with a focus on cross cultural interpretation and adaptive re-use and sustainable community driven cultural tourism. Training and assistance with the development of appropriate cultural and natural heritage planning protocols for community council employees needs to be undertaken as a matter of priority. Community councils should be encouraged to articulate their heritage goals and protocols for assessing heritage impact should be documented. These goals and protocols need to reflect specific concerns of the indigenous community members rather than be cloned from southern Local governments.

### **Heritage Management Priorities for Government Agencies and Community Councils.**

- A heritage strategy for Cape York Peninsula needs to be developed in partnership between relevant heritage agencies and the communities themselves.



- The emphasis of such a strategy should be on identifying heritage places of high community value and prioritising their conservation and management within a landscape context.
- Communities need to consider the sustainable use of cultural tourism to communicate cross culturally to other Australians and Inbound tourists.
- Cultural tourism needs to be tailored to community's needs and aspirations and be designed so as to sustain the *stori* through practice. Therefore it must be recognised that the role of Elders/Custodians is integral to the development and implementation of cultural tourism projects.
- To equitably participate in the cultural tourism industry, communities need to ensure that community members are appropriately trained and skilled.
- Heritage is evolving and people in the communities in northern Cape York are engaged as apart of their everyday life in generating the future history of their communities. This idea that the legacy of *diskaintaim* is also important to protect needs to be discussed and workshopped by communities in order for them to determine what are the important stories of their lifetimes (and the places associated with them) that should be passed on to future generations.
- In recognising that heritage can effect very recent events there are some issues that have obvious and immediate urgency that require funding from state and federal heritage agencies:
  - Funding is required by communities to map, record and maintain cemeteries for community records. The older cemeteries or parts of cemeteries are losing physical markers and information rapidly.
  - It is essential that archival research in general be supplemented by oral histories. As there are dwindling

numbers of people alive today who can provide this sort of testimony an oral history program should be funded as a high priority.

- Mapping the places in the Mission landscape to provide an insight into changes in land use associated with mission life and the areas of continuity in practices.
- Government heritage agencies need to provide specific funding for the identification and recording of heritage buildings in the villages.
- Government heritage agencies need to provide conservation advice and expertise to councils. An example of how this might work is the program operating in NSW where the Heritage Office contributes to the retainer or part salary of a conservation architect who normally works on a shared basis with other councils to provide conservation advice. This assistance needs to be tailored to community needs.
- Works and financial assistance should focus on viable adaptive re-uses for such structures.

In this thesis I have attempted to outline the history of northern Cape York since European invasion. In doing so I have rejected a position on either side of the heroes and villains divide, which characterises other histories of this period (for example Sharp 1992; Mullins 1982) into promoting either a view that reflects a long held national romantic view of pioneers and explorers or a more recent championing of indigenous interests by focussing on atrocities and denying non-indigenous attachment to people and land. I have instead attempted to recount that history as it is understood by local indigenous communities who have a much more complex view of their past. I have used archival sources to augment oral accounts. I have looked at places which illustrate this story as told by Aboriginal

people and tried to develop an understanding of how people view these places and their relationship to Aboriginal cosmology and identity in this area. Finally I have looked at the management issues and implications for these places and the legacy that they represent for Aboriginal people as part of their heritage and for other Australians as part of our shared heritage of the area.

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*Base Two: The Bayonet of Australia.* Photocopies of original records purchased from the General Services Administration National Archives and Record Service Washington D.C. Volume One contains Notes from American War Records of World War Two.

Other:

Jomen Tamwoy: Handwritten signed but undated manuscript photocopy of original held by David and Bekara Sebasio Bamaga.

Personal Communications:

Wilfred Bowie –Injinoo Aboriginal Community

David Byrne -previously an Employee/advisor to Injinoo Aboriginal Community Council) now a resident of Topaz , Far North Qld.

Miriam Crow –Injinoo Aboriginal Community

Daniel Ropeyarn (deceased)- previously Chairman of Injinoo Aboriginal Community Council during most of my research.

Meun Lifu- Injinoo Aboriginal Community

Ann Hall nee Holland

Arthur Androm- Napranum Aboriginal Community, Weipa South.

Mike Rowlands – Dept of Environment, Queensland.

Joseph Elu – Chairperson Seisia Community.

## Appendix A

### Key Historical Dates for Cape York Peninsula

Date	Event
1606	Torres & Pedro sailed through the Strait
1623	Coen River named by Jan Cartensz a Dutch explorer who sailed down the West Coast in the Pera (NB Not Coen River at Coen but the one Mapoon people refer to as 'Con River')
1770	Cook sailed through Endeavour Strait
1789	Bligh in Bounty's launch landed at Lockhart River Mission (Old Site)
1792	Bligh sailed through the Strait from eastern Group to Mabuiag
1793	Bampton and Alt land at Treachery Bay, Darnley Island
1802	Flinders in the Investigator sailed through Strait from North to South
1819	Phillip Parker King surveyed the waters around Cape York
1835	Post Office established at Booby Island
1842	H.M.S Fly surveyed the Eastern islands
1846/8	H.M.S Rattlesnake surveyed the Peninsula, Strait and Port Essington
1848	Kennedy Expedition- Departs Pascoe Camp, Weymouth Bay 13 <sup>th</sup> November. Jacky Jacky –sole survivor of the Kennedy expedition arrives at Cape York 23 <sup>rd</sup> December.
1859	Colony of Queensland Proclaimed
1862	Governor Bowen sailed for Cape York to investigate a site to form a settlement
1863	Qld Government instructed John Jardine Police Magistrate at Rockhampton to go to Cape York and set up outpost there
1864	Settlement at Somerset officially began Frank & Alex Jardine left Carpentaria Downs Dec 18 <sup>th</sup> Battle of the Mitchell where Jardine and party record their biggest slaughter of Aborigines (possibly occurred on the Alice River about 3 mile west of where Koolatah station was later situated)
1865	Frank & Alex Jardine arrive at Somerset Vallack Point Cattle Station established
1866	Missionaries Jagg & Kennet land at Somerset First English mail passed through via Torres Straits
1867	Marines withdrawn from Somerset. In March Peter, Barney and Sambo (3 of Jardine's stockmen) appeared before Simpson for killing 10 Yaidhaigana. Barney accused of murdering a Gudang woman.
1868	Frank Jardine replaced Simpson in January. 10 <sup>th</sup> May Gudang attack Vallack Point Station and kill Eulah(Jardine's stockman). Barnery, Sambo and Peter join with Gudang. 20 <sup>th</sup> June FrankJardine and brother John find Barney and Sambo camped with Gudang about 2km from Somerset, shoots them and leaves them to die in the bush. Police contingent assigned to Somerset consisting of half Euroepan police and half Abroiginal troopers.
1869	Frank Jardine goes on 'leave' and is replaced by Henry Majoribanks Chester. <i>Sperweer</i> atatched at Maurura (Wednesday Island).
1870	Chester supprises Islander camp at Maurura and executes 3 men alegedly involved in the attack on the <i>Sperweer</i> . Survey of Torres Strait by London Missionary Society
1871	1 <sup>st</sup> of July – The coming of the light. The official advent of Christianity in the Torres Strait.
1872	William Hann party from Lynd River to Stewart River and return Telegraph Communications opened to the Gulf of Carpentaria Captain Moresby returned to the Straits with the power to police pearling industry re practices such as kidnapping of native labourers
1873	James Mulligan found Gold at Palmer River Intercolonial conference recommended a lighthouse for Booby Island. Massacre occurs 40km from Somerset on the mainland. Crews from two pearling luggers allegedly avenging the killing of James Atkins.
1875	In June of this year a measles epidemic decimated the Gudang population.
1876	Work commenced on the building of a new settlement at Thursday Island

	Telegraph line completed to Maytown and then through Palmerville to Junction Creek linking Brisbane to the then second largest settlement in Qld (Cooktown).
<b>1877</b>	M Chester, Police Magistrate at Somerset took up duty on Thursday Island
<b>1877/8</b>	Gold discovered at Coen River
<b>1879</b>	Robert Logan Jack (Qld Government Geologist) expedition from Cooktown northward
<b>1880</b>	Robert Logan Jack Expedition Cooktown to Somerset
<b>1882</b>	Lalla Rookh Station taken up by the Massey Brothers. It covered most of the headwaters of the Stewart River (later incorporated mostly into Silver Plains). Peralers request lighthouse to point out entrance to Normandy Sound and Prince of Wales reefs.
<b>1883</b>	McIlwraith government decided to annexe Papua New Guinea Langi cattle station on the Archer River was taken up by A.W \Knott
<b>1884</b>	H.M. Chester leaves on the 'Pearl' to survey New Guinea. Rokeby Station on the South Coen river was taken up by John and Charles Massey. Charles shortly afterwards killed by Aborigines
<b>1885</b>	Cape York Expedition led by J.R. Bradford Tenders called by Post & Telegraph Dept. To construct the telegraph line to Cape York York Downs Station was established by Lachlan Kennedy on Myall Creek
<b>1886</b>	December- the following telegraph stations opened in this order: Fairview (on Boralga Holdings/'Olivevale'), Musgrave and Coen. Northern section of line also commenced. Telegraph station at Patterson and McDonnell built. Cable laid Patterson to Thursday Island Lighthouse at Goode Island built (completed 1887)
<b>1887</b>	The following telegraph Stations opened in this order: Mein (July), McDonnell, Patterson and Thursday Island (August) and Moreton (September) Reef gold found at Wilson Reef, near Coen Pine Creek Station near Mein telegraph station was established by Patrick Fox. Bertie Haugh station established by Jardine Also Lockerbie on Laradinya Creek and Galloway on Black Gin Creek
<b>1888</b>	Merluna Cattle Station on Lagoon Creek at the head of the Watson River, taken up about now by the Watson brothers
<b>1890</b>	Booby Island Lighthouse built
<b>1891</b>	Mapoon established by Moravian Missionaries J. T Embley formed Thronbury Station on Black Gin Creek near the Telegraph crossing
<b>1893</b>	Great Northern Mine was found near Coen
<b>1894</b>	Paterson Telegraph station moved to Peak Point
<b>1898</b>	Weipa Mission established
<b>1899</b>	Cyclone hit Bathurst Bay area of Princess Charlotte Bay Worst cyclone on record
<b>1901</b>	Commonwealth PMG Dept, took control of telegraph services from Qld Dept. of Posts and Telegraph
<b>1904</b>	Aurukun Mission Established
<b>1905</b>	Mitchell River Mission established Trubanaman established
<b>1907</b>	Govt. Gazetted a reserve for South sea Islanders at Moa
<b>1911</b>	Jack McLaren starts plantation at Utingu
<b>1913</b>	Ginger Dick Holland went to Cape York
<b>1914</b>	Mornington Island Mission established
<b>1915</b>	Ginger Dick left for World War I London Missionary Society pulled out of the Torres Straits and handed over to the Anglican Church Likely to be the year that Cowal Creek settlement was established (mentioned as existing in Chief Protectors report for 1916)
<b>1917</b>	Site of Mitchell River Mission shifted
<b>1919</b>	Frank Jardine died aged 77, buried at Somerset Jack McLaren leave Utingu - plantation abandoned
<b>1923</b>	First lay missionary at Cowal Creek Sana Jardine nee Solio died and was buried at Somerset
<b>1924</b>	Lockhart River Mission established Cowal Creek gets first teacher -
<b>1927</b>	Herbert Somerset Vidgin tourist tour to Cape York

<b>1929</b>	Telegraph facilities at Musgrave, Mein & McDonnell withdrawn
<b>1931</b>	Ginger Dick Holland returns to Lockerbie with family
<b>1933</b>	Miriam Crow born at Cowal Creek
<b>1937</b>	Holland built third home at Lockerbie Jomen Tamwoy appointed to Cowal Creek school
<b>1939</b>	Outbreak of WWII
<b>1942</b>	Horn Island bombed by Japanese Europeans evacuated from Thursday Island First raid on Darwin Hollands evacuated
<b>1943</b>	Telegraph line and installations handed over to the army for the duration of WWII. (Sheehy says maybe not???)
<b>1945</b>	Severe cyclone hits Coen Maintenance Operation and control handed back to the PMG after hostilities ceased
<b>1947</b>	Holland left Mackey to return to Lockerbie July 1 officially approved by the Qld Govt as a special day of celebration on Island reserves
<b>1948</b>	Cape York Reserve established/gazetted (i.e NPA) Saibai migration to Muttee Head
<b>1949</b>	Bamaga settlement established
<b>1951</b>	Holland tries tin mining
<b>1954</b>	Australian Board of Presbyterian Missions meeting - decided to merge Mapoon and Weipa
<b>1955</b>	Four man team led by geologist Harry Evans (Enterprise Exploration P/L subsidiary of Consolidated Zinc Corporation) sent to search for possible oil bearing structures in Cape York Peninsula -found rich deposits of bauxite
<b>1957</b>	Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Ltd Agreement Act 1957 (Comalco Act) passed Weipa Mission lease of 354,828 ha revoked and granted as part of mining leases to Comalco
<b>1960</b>	First shipment of ore from Weipa Cape York Telegraph Station personnel moved to Bamaga
<b>1961</b>	Port Stewart People forcibly removed to Cowal Creek
<b>1962</b>	New port opened at Weipa Dept of Native Affairs attempts to establish small family farms in NPA
<b>1963</b>	Con O'Leary Qld. Director of Native affairs retired. Pat Killoran appointed Qld Director of Native Affairs. Dept. Of Native Affairs sent police to remove Mapoon people to Bamaga New lease for Weipa Mission negotiated by Comalco, Presbyterian Church and Qld Government 124ha
<b>1964</b>	Cyclone 'Dora' destroyed Mitchell and Edward River Missions First 3 Torres Strait Islander J.P's (Justice of the Peace) appointed: Tanu Nona, George Mye and Jim Mosby
<b>1967</b>	'Peninsula project' upgrading of Telegraph Line
<b>1970</b>	Father Patrick Brisbane an Injinoo man (McDonnell River) became the first Aboriginal man in Australia to be ordained an Anglican minister.
<b>1970s</b>	People start to return to Mapoon
<b>1985</b>	Queensland Premier, Joh Bjelke Peterson hands over empty envelopes in the TS and unsigned photocopies on mainland, as part of Deed of Grant in Trust handover ceremonies
<b>1986</b>	Sue McIntyre's first field trip to Cape York
<b>1987</b>	Old Telegraph line made obsolete by completion of radio microwave system
<b>1988</b>	Injinoo joins CDEP (Community Development and Employment Program)
<b>1989</b>	Mapoon Interim Council given D.O.G.I.T (at Old Mapoon)
<b>1990</b>	TAFE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ranger Training courses commences.
<b>1991</b>	Sue McIntyre and Robert (Rocky) Tamwoy get married at Injinoo St Michaels and All Angels. First wedding there in 6 years...very big party.
<b>1999</b>	Mr Daniel Ropeyarn retired chairman of Injinoo, founder of Apuhdama died

## **Appendix B**

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### **Correspondence relating to the forced Removal of Aboriginal People from Port Stewart.**

The attached documents have been selected from documents provided to me by Injinoo Council and the Kulla Kulla family and relate to the discussions leading up to the removal of Port Stewart people from their homeland. Unfortunately the documents are photocopies of poor quality originals however their content and its implications are still clear.

20 JUN 1958

10/46

36 Sandon St  
 Graceville

16<sup>th</sup> June 1958.

The Deputy Director,  
 Department Native Affairs,  
 Brisbane.

Dear Sir,

I attach a list of Indigent Natives residing at Port Stewart, Cape York Peninsula. These natives roam over Silver Plains Station accompanied by their dogs and disturb the cattle, chiefly around watering places.

Also we know they kill beasts for meat, take what they want and throw the rest of the carcass into a stream where the alligators will destroy all evidence.

Boys employed as stockmen on the station spend days with the above natives instead of doing the work they have been sent out to do.

We ask if these indigent natives could be removed from Station country.

There is, as you will know, a reserve in Gair district of Pt Stewart and a Mission Station to the north. We would be grateful for a favourable consideration of our request.

Yours faithfully

A. E. Purcell

for the Secretaries in the State of Queensland  
 the late H. J. Thompson & E. A. Worsell

2 copies taken  
 of 5/7/58  
 6 copies taken  
 of 5/7/58

PJR/SMed.

30th June, 1955.

The Protector of Aborigines,  
COEN.

Re Indigent Natives Residing at Port Stewart.

Attached is copy of letter received from Mrs. A.E. Prideaux for the Executrixes in the Estate of the Late H.J. Thompson, complaining regarding the indigent natives whose names are supplied in the list forwarded with her letter. It is obvious that if the complaints regarding these indigent natives are based on fact, action must be taken to remove them from private property.

As you will doubtless have knowledge of the circumstances, particularly as the natives are drawing indigent rations, your comments on the situation are sought.

If the facts are as stated, it may be desirable to transfer these people to Lockhart River Mission and in anticipation of the possibility of such happening copy of this memo is being sent to the Director of Native Affairs, Thursday Island.

R

Deputy Director of Native Affairs.

The Director of Native Affairs,  
THURSDAY ISLAND.

For your information. Mrs. Prideaux called at this Office and discussed the position with me and was requested to submit her complaint in writing. I take it that if these aboriginals are creating a nuisance on private property there will be no option but to arrange for their removal to a Mission or Settlement. These natives are indigent but are in possession of substantial Child Endowment funds which by reason of their isolation they have been unable to expend.

Miss Flannery

R

24/7/55

R  
 D.D.N.A.  
 30/6/55.

copies taken for  
 personal files.

Sh. 1  
 14/7/55





10/96

*Native Affairs*  
Queensland  
*Office of Protector of Aborigines.*

18 JUL 1955

Ocen.

206/55.

13/7/55.

195

The Deputy Director of Native Affairs,  
BRISBANE.

Sir/,

Re Indigent Natives Residing at Port Stewart. Ref. 1D/96 of  
30/6/55.

I am in receipt of yours abovementioned and wish to advise that I am quite sure that the complaint of the Executrices of the Estate of H.J. Thompson is entirely without foundation, and has undoubtedly been made in retaliation for the refusal of Harry Liddy, an aged Aboriginal, to work on Silver Plains Station for 10/- per week and keep.

When I first arrived in Ocen, in September, 1951, it was customary for Harry Liddy, Jimmy Jealous (Sellers) and Jimmy Kulla Kulla, to be worked by the late H.J. Thompson unloading shipments of goods at Port Stewart and on his Station, Silver Plains, without Agreement or payment. When I became aware of this State of affairs, I instructed the Natives not to work for Thompson. I took this action because they are all old men and not in a fit condition to work hard for the very small wage they would receive. I would mention that Thompson held and the estate still holds a franchise to collect payment for all goods shipped through Port Stewart. It was customary for the wharves of goods to pay £1 per ton of goods landed. Since the average shipment would be about 60 tons, I felt that payment could have been made to the Natives at ordinary wharf labourer's wages, but on considering their age it appeared better for them not to be employed, since certainly Thompson would not pay them the amount.

Subsequently about 12 months ago, Harry Liddy informed me that Joseph Leatham Eola Wassell, husband of Eileen Amelia Wassell one of the Executrices of the Estate, had been trying for some time to get him to agree to work on Silver Plains Station. About this time Mrs. Wassell approached me with a request to employ Harry clearing timber at a small wage. I considered the work too hard for him, but told her that if Harry agreed, I would make him available. When I mentioned the matter to him he did not desire to take the job. He then told me that Wassell had again asked him to work for him and threatened him that if he did not agree he would have him and all the rest of the Port Stewart Natives sent to Lockhart River Mission.

*Return*

F.T.O.

I do not doubt this statement of Harry Liddy, particularly as Wassell was seen by a reputable citizen of Coen to have several conversations with Liddy at Port Stewart, after which Harry repeated to that person the text of the conversation.

This took place to the best of my recollection at the time that Rupert R-122 left the employment of E.J. Thompson to work a gold find that he had made at Mulla-bidgee, and which was the subject of an attempt by Wassell to gain possession, vide my E/c Report No. 186/55 of 27/6/55. It was evidently the desire of the Estate to replace Rupert who received 10/- a week from them with Harry Liddy.

I regret that at the time I did not follow out my intention to take a statement from Harry Liddy. However that can still be done.

These natives are under constant supervision by myself and members of my Staff and as you know are regularly supplied with indigent rations, whilst their children are just as regularly supplied with rations from their Child Endowment Accounts. Consequently there is no necessity for them to indulge in indiscriminate killing of Silver Plains cattle.

With regard to this allegation would you not consider it reasonable that if such took place, a complaint would be made to me as Officer in Charge of Police? No such complaint has ever been made to me and I can find no trace in my Office Records of one having been made prior to my taking over this Office.

The persons making this complaint are the Owners of Silver Plains Station, of 1,100 square miles, the Exchange Hotel, Coen and a General Store in Coen. It is noteworthy that their first choice for the Natives to be removed to is Coen, where no doubt they could hope for greater expenditure on the child endowment accounts.

I would mention also that these Natives are the sole remaining members of the Luma Luma tribe, who were noted fishermen and lived mainly on products of the sea. From my own knowledge of the Port Stewart natives, I would say that 80% of their food requirements are obtained from the sea and they have constructed outrigger canoes for this purpose.

With regard to the old native woman Nellie who is also complained of, I understand that she is identical with Nellie Tuchadigee referred to in my report No. 205/55 of 2/7/55, Your Ref. 6F/13 of 21/12/55, whom Mr. Murray of Lockhart River Mission reports died at the Mission on 12/4/55.

These people apparently subscribe to the idea that unless a Native can be used to their advantage he should be denied the right to live in his ancestral domains, and for your information actually the old natives do not reside on Silver Plains Station but on Reserve 11, a Reserve for Public Purposes, held by the Estate under Occupation License No. 488.

I attach hereto a copy of a communication from this Office to the Shire Clerk, Cocktown, who advises that the matter has been referred to the Superintendent of Stock Routes and that he will advise me later of that Officer's comments. This is to illustrate the attitude of this family in Aboriginal claims.

The staff of this office is at present one of the strength, with more work to do than it is possible to carry out. I have therefore made this report in the hope that it will meet the circumstances. However if it is desired that an investigation be carried out I shall undertake it as soon as possible. Please advise.

Copy to Director of Native Affairs.

Protector of Aborigines  
COEN.

20th July 1955.

The Director of Native Affairs,  
THURSDAY ISLAND.

Sir,

Re. Indigent Natives residing at Port Stewart. Ref. 1G/26 of  
12/7/55 D.D.N.A. Ref 1D/96 of 30.6.55

In the above connection I refer to my B/c File to you of 13/7/55  
No. 206/55, wherein I explained the probable reasons for this complaint  
to the Deputy Director of Native Affairs, Brisbane.

I have no doubt that the Superintendent of Lockhart River Mission  
will be only too happy to receive the Natives concerned into his care,  
as he is with all others whom I consider should be received there for  
various reasons. Mr. Warby is most co-operative and in the past has  
received into the Mission, Natives from this Protectorate, who were  
unable to care for themselves upon my request.

The leader of the Port Stewart Natives is Jimmy Kulla Kulla, but  
he is very difficult to converse with. Accordingly on 19/7/55 whilst at  
Port Stewart I interviewed Harry Liddy, with whom it is possible to  
converse easily and who I am quite sure is a very honest and reliable  
Aboriginal. Harry informed me that at no time have any of the Port  
Stewart Natives killed any Silver Plains cattle or in any way disturbed  
them. Without any prompting from me, he explained to me that they were  
not interested in cattle as a source of food, as they preferred, as their  
tribe always has, to live on the sea and its products, together with the  
rations supplied to them by me. He stated that none of the people  
ever hunted very far inland as the principal game they require is wild  
pig, which abounds in the swamps and salt pans within a mile or so of the  
coast, and since they live largely on dugong, fish, crabs and shellfish,  
they did not need to go inland in search of game.

Personally I am much better acquainted with these Natives than  
with any others and I know of my own knowledge that Harry Liddy's  
explanation of the natives food requirements is correct. I know also  
that they are easily the most tractable and honest Aborigines in this  
Protectorate where incidentally, it is exceptional to find fault with  
the behaviour of the natives generally.

As mentioned in my B/c File abovementioned, I am operating this  
Office understaffed and consequently have a great deal of work to attend  
to, consequently a full investigation of the complaint of the  
Executrices of the Estate of H.J. Thompson, would place me very much  
at a disadvantage, particularly as I am quite satisfied that enquiries  
could have no other result than I have already outlined.

However, should you so desire it a full investigation will  
be carried out. Please advise me of your decision.

A.V. MOYLAN.  
Protector.

B/c. Deputy Director of Native Affairs,  
BRISBANE.

For your information and attention please.

B/c

31/8/55

*[Signature]*  
23.7.55

T.G. 42.

Sch. C. 6322  
5/1990

This Telegram has been received  
subject to the Post and Telegraph  
Act and Regulations. The time  
received at this office is shown  
at the end of the message.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

**TELEGRAM**

The date stamp indicates  
the date of reception and  
lodgment also, unless an  
earlier date is shown after  
the time of lodgment.

Office Date Stamp

T.  
C.  
B.

Chl. No.

Office of Origin

No. of Words

Time of Lodgment

No.

1- COEN 48/47 3-55PM

NATIVES BRISBANE

1807



REFERENCE MY REPORTS 186 207 AND 209/55 PORT STEWART AND NULLABI  
DGE NATIVES WASELL DESIRES PERMISSION ENTER COEN RESERVE TAKING  
TAPE RECORDINGS ABORIGINALS NOT MY POLICY TO PERMIT WHITE  
VISITS AM PARTICULARLY DISINCLINED THIS CASE IN VIEW PREVIOUS  
DEALINGS APPRECIATE ADVICE AIR MAIL HERE 12TH

MOYLAN 4 22PGH

*Awan*

WD/EG.

10th August, 1955.

The Protector of Aborigines,  
COEN.

Re Application by Mr. Wassell to Enter Coen Reserve.

It is noted that you consider it inadvisable for Mr. Wassell to be granted permission to enter the Coen Reserve for the purpose of taking tape recordings from aborigines resident on such Reserve. Naturally the Department will be guided by you in this matter in view of your knowledge of the particular circumstances of the case.

It will, therefore, be in order for you to refuse the necessary sanction to Mr. Wassell and your action will have the support of the Department should the matter be referred here.

*B/n*  
*27/10/55 ✓*  
*18/1/56 ✓*

*D*  
Deputy Director of Native Affairs.

*22/7/55 ✓*  
*31/8/55 ✓*

CCFY.

~~Carne~~  
Lockhart River Mission,  
Iron Range.  
27/2/58.

Protector of Aborigines,  
Coen.

Dear Sgt. Moylan,

I understand there are a number of Aborigines living at Port Stewart. These people have many relatives here who have requested me to write to you in the hope that these people may be permanently removed to the Mission. We have many more single men here than girls, which leads to the usual problems, and it seems that there are a number of marriageable girls at Port Stewart who could easily find husbands here.

Should you agree to their removal, our boats could be made available to collect these families and transport them here. I understand that some of the old people are in a poor state of health also. As it would appear that nothing but good could come from such a proposal, I trust that your approval to this is forthcoming and look forward with interest to your reply.

With all Good Wishes,

Yours Sincerely.

Sgd. John A. Warby.

Superintendent.

*Copy letter  
24/4/58.*



17/3/58.

Memo for File:--

During my visit to Coen the Protector of Aborigines advised that he was in receipt of an application from the Superintendent, Lockhart River Mission, requesting that approximately 25 Aborigines, at present residing at Port Stewart, be removed to Lockhart River Mission.

The Protector of Aborigines, Coen, informed me that the Aborigines residing at Port Stewart have been there for many years and he is of the opinion they do not desire to leave that area.

The Protector of Aborigines, Coen, was requested to forward the copy of the Superintendent's letter to the Director of Native Affairs with his recommendations.

P. L. Murphy.  
18/3/58.



# Sub-Department of Native Affairs

Queensland

## Office of Protector of Aborigines

Coen.

11/4/58.

19

Port Stewart/1

The Director of Native Affairs,  
BRISBANE.

Sir/, Re Aborigines at Port Stewart.

I am in receipt of a letterf from Mr. John Warby Superintendent of Lockhart River Mission, requesting me to agree to the removal of the Aboriginal population of Port Stewart to Lockhart River Mission.

This is a matter which crops up from time to time, and it is refreshing to find that on this occasion it comes from Lockhart River Mission. The natives concerned, Harry Liddy, Jimmy Kalla Kulla and Jimmy Jealdus, (Sellars), have repeatedly informed me that they have no desire to leave their tribal locality, to go to the Mission, and you will no doubt recall the strenuous efforts of other interested parties to have them removed against their will.

I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Warby is motivated by the best possible motives, but it is possible that he is being used without his knowledge and although he informs me that "some of these old people are in a poor state of health", I have no knowledge of this.

The way the wet season is progressing it should not be more than a month or so, before I can visit Port Stewart. It is my intention to take the first opportunity of doing so and ascertaining the views of the Aborigines there, to Mr. Warby's proposal. In the meantime I recommend no action at present.

Copy to Supt. Lockhart River Mission.

Copy of letter attached.

A. T. K. L. Protector.

Copy to Mr. Warby 20/11/58



O'L/ED.

11th August, 1959.

The Deputy Director of Native Affairs,  
THURSDAY ISLAND.

Recently Mr. Nassall, Manager of York Downs Station, adjacent to Port Stewart, called on Dr. Fryberg and then on me with respect to living conditions of the aboriginals at Port Stewart.

He stated that there were up to 50 people living around the area but the number comprised mainly the members of three or four families. He mentioned Harry Liddy with two adult daughters and five children, Jimmy Culla Culla with two adult daughters and two other children, and Jimmy Jealous (could be construed as Sellars), with three adult daughters.

It seems that the only employment being carried out by the people is the gathering of salt for some of the cattle stations adjacent to Port Stewart but the main idea behind the old men's refusal to go to Lockhart River Mission is that they are trading their adult daughters to stockmen employed on adjacent cattle stations and visiting crews from boats calling at Port Stewart.

Mr. Nassall tells me the position is particularly bad and the welfare of these people warrants urgent rectification.

B/C The Protector of Aborigines,  
COEN.

Director of Native Affairs.

For your information.

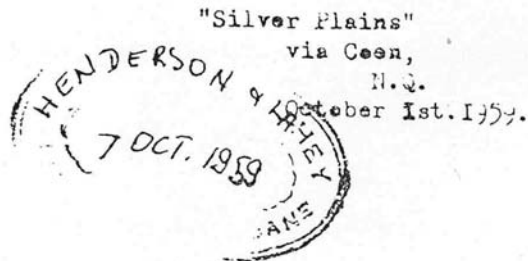
Copy in folder for Ministerial  
visit to Hopevale, Lockhart  
and Port Stewart.

3/9/59.

D.N.A.  
11.8.59.

Cards for  
Harry Liddy  
Jimmy Culla Culla  
Jimmy Jealous

Messrs. Henderson & Lahey,  
Solicitors,  
Queen Street, Brisbane.



Dear Sirs,

Further to our recent conversations re the Aborigines at Port Stewart on Silver Plains Pastoral Holding. We now wish you to interview the Lands Dept. Brisbane ; Dr. A. Fryberg, Director-General of Health and Medical Services ; and Mr. C. O'Leary , Director of Native Affairs and read this letter to them , we wish you to retain the letter and our signatures on your files.

In asking you to contact the Lands Dept. we feel that they will request the removal of the natives from Port Stewart on our behalf. We do not desire that Mr. O'Leary , who was very sympathetic towards the natives' plight and our own problems during our recent conversation , should be made to feel that we are forcing his hand . Being sure that he does not know the real conditions under which we and the natives live, we feel that it will make his future dealings with his local Protector more harmonious if the move did not originate from his own office.

After my talks with Mr. O'Leary and Dr. Fryberg I understand that Mr. O'Leary contacted Sgt. Dunlop of Coen , the local Protector , and asked him to comment on my report. Sgt. Dunlop was very hostile and told my son that I was trying to run his office and the Port Stewart natives. Sgt. Dunlop sent word that Mrs Wassell was to come up and see him immediately , my wife had no transport and was unable to do so. We have not seen Sgt, Dunlop since my return but expect to do so next week. We wish to go further in the matter before seeing him. As I did not ask Mr. O'Leary to withhold my name and as the Sgt. is to comment on my report I feel it is necessary to give a great deal more information , particularly

as I have heard that the Sgt. is talking of removing the young natives and leaving the adults at Port Stewart.

Pressure may also be brought to bear on him by several Coen families to have the natives left there to be used in the future as they have been in the past. I will deal with a few generalities and probabilities first and then give a few facts regarding the problem and the conditions of the Port Stewart natives.

In general, the natives live an isolated and unprotected life at Port Stewart, Silver Plains has repeatedly tried to sign on one of the three families and our young Aboriginal stockmen wish to obtain wives but the old fathers and mothers receive too much food, money, clothing and alcohol from the prostitution of their daughters to agree to any change. The only work they do is the help they give in unloading small craft that put in to the Port with supplies and the gathering of salt for various stations. They do this work without being signed on and receive what people think fit to give them. None of this work is vital to the stations or the inhabitants of Coen.

Silver Plains Station has left the Port Stewart salt pans untouched for many years and we gather our salt with signed on labour from pans further away. As freight charges are heavy a petition to leave the native there may be made, or a resolution, suitably garbled, maybe passed by the Coen Progress Ass., this would allow stations to get salt and cheap labour easily. The natives are also used to get fish and crabs for people coming to Port Stewart and sometimes used to help haul unlicensed nets in prohibited places, i.e. mouth of Stewart River.

Boats, including the largest that comes to Port Stewart, use one of the families to mark the channel by hanging torches on stakes, payment being made in "goods". This service is unnecessary, vide the record run in and out of the Port

by the motor vessel "Weewak" on a recent date without markers. A responsible person to mark the channel after each "wet" season should be sufficient to enable all the supplies to enter Port Stewart.

Some facts concerning the condition of the natives and the problem they are to us.

Cattle Breeding

Port Stewart is situated on Silver Plains Pastoral ~~Holdings~~ Holding and is surrounded by some of our best breeding country and is stocked with our quietest cattle, yet our records show that the only section of the station where the herd is not increasing is around Port Stewart. There are 23 natives at the port and sometimes up to two dozen dogs, there are many times when there are native stockmen from surrounding stations, with their wives and families, holidaying with the natives, sometimes we find crews from mission boats camped with them.

All these people are meat eaters and we and our own employees have seen calves worried and/or killed by Port Stewart dogs, to our knowledge there is one and possibly two rifles owned and used by the Port Stewart natives. Mission crews say they come in for water but, as coastwatcher for this area I know that they water in Massey Cr, and do not use the poorer and scarcer Port Stewart water.

It has been the practice of Silver Plains Station to allow the Port Stewart natives full freedom over the country south of the Coen--Port Stewart road, yet they have brought their dogs as far north as Breakfast Creek and, one occasion, the dogs got into our bullock paddock and the northern bullocks took the north fence and the southern bullocks the south fence, this entailed the loss of months of work, the loss of a cancelled sale and the expense of fence repairs. Port Stewart dogs have repeatedly torn open bags of flour and other goods landed at Port Stewart.

Cattle Mustering

Whenever our native stockmen muster other parts of Silver Plains their feed supplies are adequate and usually a little is brought back but when mustering around Port Stewart and/or the southern end of the Station they repeatedly run out of supplies and send a boy home for more, giving various excuses.

During the first week in September this year the plant returned home hungry and without tobacco, three stockmen tried to obtain tobacco from their wives and one wife refused and had her teeth smashed through her top lip, she reported to my wife that the boys had visited the Port Stewart natives and given their supplies to them. They were not supposed to be near the Port on this muster.

Health

When it was found this year that one of our native stockmen had V.D. we traced it to his relations with Port Stewart girls. Sgt. Dunlop asked us to bring the natives up for examination and as usual I intimated that we would transport them free on our station truck. When the time came to take them to Coen the truck was unserviceable. My youngest son undertook to take them up and bring them back later in his own truck. He is 18 years and trying to pay off the truck by carting, when he presented a bill for transport at 30/- per head for adults, something for goods and nothing for children Sgt. Dunlop said he had no authority to pay. Whenever a native is sent away by ANA I believe they have to pay the 30/- a head from Coen to the aerodrome, a distance of 16 miles of made road with bridges. If this is so then there is authority and further, they are carted by ANA agent who is already receiving payment by mail perterage and freight charges for the trip. My son's trips were 45 miles each time over tracks, bad ranges and a little made road near Coen. As he is a miner I have re-imbursed out of my own pocket.

Here I would like to state that all carting is charged for on the peninsula and the ANA agent charges at the rate of 1½ d. per pound or £14 per ton for the 16 miles Ceen to aerodrome but that I have repeatedly carried the indigent rations from Ceen to Port Stewart free of charge and , further, that Silver Plains has twice recently taken the Port Stewart natives to Ceen and return on special trips to allow them to obtain their polio injections and not asked for payment. On many occasions in the past few years we have taken them to Ceen for the annual races so that they may have the outing and collect rations and child endowment.

Many times various ones come over to my wife for treatment as Mrs Wassell is a 3 certificated sister. We are only 16 miles from them and Ceen is 45 miles. Last week we returned ,by vehicle, 4 adults who had come over with a child with sore hands, they also wanted .22 ammunition , this party sat under the trees for a week and caused us to send to Ceen for flour as we ran out and the boat did not come until today.

Native girls are sent from cattle stations to Thursday Island to have their babies, stations having to transport them to Ceen. None of the Port Stewart girls have received any attention ,to the best of our knowledge, Mrs Wassell is an obstetric sister and we have several times notified Ceen (not Sgt. Dunlop) re deaths and imminent births. Sometime ago Mrs. Wassell notified Ceen of the urgent need for medical aid for a four year old girl, on examination the child's blood count was so low that the Doctor expressed amazement that she could live.

#### Alcohol

When we have been to Port Stewart for supplies we have repeatedly seen signs of drunkenness. On one occasion I found it necessary to help one of the fathers who was constantly falling down amidst mangrove stumps. On another occasion I arrived at Port Stewart and was approached by this same native with a bad "hangover", he asked me for a bottle of rum and offered his

young daughter as payment , she would then have been about 13 years old.

#### Orchids

The totally protected orchid Dendrobium phalaenopsis grows in dry scrub land south of Port Stewart and I have seen bundles of these plants being taken aboard the "Woewak" by the natives. On one occasion I made a complaint about this practice to the ,then sergeant of Police but it is still going on.

#### Fishing

It is illegal to net fish at or adjacent to the mouths of creeks and/or rivers. There is a fish net in Creek that is brought down to the Port and natives are often used to help haul it at the mouth of the Stewart River.

#### "Wet Season"

Many years ago it was the habit of the Port Stewart natives to come over to Silver Plains Homestead for the wet. While at the homestead they received fresh and salt beef ,small supplies of tea,sugar,fleur and tobacco and left with new shirts and trousers for the men and dresses for the women. More recently the local Police had a Land Rover and supplies were taken down. There is no police rover at present and this wet season we took the feed to the homestead and rationed it out to those who came over. When at the home the natives were expected to pull weeds , this wet we had the responsibility of the natives but had to mow the weeds ourselves. We do not want the tribe at the homestead or at the Port.

#### Tourists

Recently a launch with several young Dutch men arrived at Port Stewart , while they were working and wading about their boat without clothes two of the natives arrived. The visitors,thinking that there might be people around,asked the natives if there were any women around and the natives said " You got sugar ,tobacco ,we got plenty girls." Just recently a party of tourists,2 single men and 2married men with their wives came to Port Stewart



via Coon in 2 Land Rovers for a fortnights fishing holiday. After a few days at Port Stewart they drove over to the homestead and asked if there was another fishing spot that they could finish their holiday at. The two wives told my wife that the behaviour of the native girls was unendurable and that the men could not leave their camp without several girls following and accosting them in an endeavour to obtain tobacco, sugar, tea etcetera and following them where ever they went. As we had no bullocks in the paddock at the time, Mrs. Wasseil told them they could go to our own fishing spot on the coast. They finished their time there but were cut off by flooded salt pans and had to cut the fence in two places to get out, as they could not repair the fence they were upset and left here very disgruntled with Port Stewart and its appalling conditions.

All the foregoing is true to the best of my knowledge and I accept the full responsibility for it and anything arising from it.

*J. Russell*

No matter what is done by the Port Stewart natives we always seem to be involved in a loss of time, labour, supplies or something. We are trying hard against great difficulties to improve the stock, improvements, pastures, water and living conditions on Silver Plains and are heartily tired of having this uncontrollable body of natives 16 miles from the homestead. There is 1/ A mission station on our northern boundary, 2/ A native reserve and camp on the Coen River near Coen and 3/ a new building site in Coen for aged natives or pensioners. We request, therefore, the removal of all natives from Port Stewart to a place where they can be watched over.



Removal of the younger members and the leaving of the older adults at Port Stewart would serve no useful purpose, benefit no Aborigines, prolong the nuisance to us and only be of value to a few people who are too avaricious to worry about anything but their own pockets.

Yours faithfully,

*E. A. Wassell*  
..... (E.A. Wassell)  
Administratrix of Est. H. J. Thompson

*J. L. Wassell*  
..... (J.L. Wassell)  
Justice of the Peace, Queensland.

1D/96

O'L/BD.

30th October, 1959.

The Secretary,  
Commissioner of Police,  
BRISBANE.

Sir,


Attached is original telegram received at this office at 10.45 a.m. today. Attached also is copy of letter of the 11th August, 1959, addressed to the Deputy Director of Native Affairs, Thursday Island, following call at this office by Mr. Wassall.

It is understood that discussions on matters raised by Mr. Wassall have occurred between the Deputy Director of Native Affairs and the Protector of Aborigines, Coen.

The matter is referred to you as it appears to be one purely for your administration.

Yours faithfully,


B/C The Under Secretary,  
Department of Health and Home Affairs,  
BRISBANE.

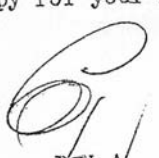
  
Director of Native Affairs.

For your information. Attached is copy of the urgent telegram referred to.

B/c.  
The Deputy Director of Native Affairs  
THURSDAY ISLAND.

Copy for your information.

  
D.N.A.,  
30.10.59.

  
B.N.A.  
4/11/59.

MR CON OLEARY

DIRECTOR NATIVE AFFAIRS

BRISBANE QLD

BADLY BASHED BY POLICE STOP TRUMPED UP CHARGE DRUGS  
AND ENTERING PORT STEWART ALSO NEW RIFLE IN SCABBARD  
PLEASE ADVISE .....WASELL

14/96

PJK/JG.

Memo for File:-

Telephone contact was made with Sergeant Dunlop, Protector of Aborigines, Coen, and the following information was furnished by him:-

Wages Agreements:

All but 3 or 4 are held by him, duly completed, and he will forward them by airmail, leaving Coen on Thursday the 11th instant. The delay in lodging such was because he was retaining all Agreements until they were fully completed. He was informed that Agreements should be submitted as completed and should any individual Agreement take some time to complete, details of the Agreement should be furnished for the purpose of checking wages etc. This he undertook to do.

Pension Claims:

Sergeant Dunlop stated that 20 persons were involved in his area. A number of the claims were held, duly completed, but some time might elapse before all were signed by the aborigines who are spread throughout the area.

Sergeant Dunlop was requested to forward all claims whether completed or not by airmail on Thursday, to enable tentative claims to be lodged with the Pensions Department, thus protecting the rights of the individual. A further claim form could be completed later by the individual when contacted. Sergeant Dunlop undertook to forward these also on Thursdays plane.

Port Stuart Natives:

Sergeant Dunlop intimated that he had now completed his report on the natives at Port Stuart and intimated that he was recommending their transfer north. He further intimated that all of the persons at Port Stuart are willing to go to Thursday Island for complete medical check up etc. and he is suggesting that this action be taken and that the aged and infirm be provided for on one of the establishments or Missions of the Peninsula.

9/2/60.

INSPECTOR OF POLICE

26th Feb. 60

10M18

CAIRNS

COMMISSIONER

For your information.

CONFIDENTIAL

B/c.  
Director of Native  
Affairs,  
William Street,  
BRISBANE.

For your information.

(sgd.) F.E. Bischof  
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
2/3/60

You may be pleased to arrange for the Department of Native Affairs to be advised the result of inquiries regarding the welfare of Aborigines living in the Port Stewart area. These aborigines are unwilling to move from the Port Stewart area but it would probably be in their best interests if they were moved, chiefly on account of the lack of control and supervision over them for six months in the wet portion of each year and the lack of educational and other facilities.

These natives are fish eaters and Sergeant Dunlop suggests their removal to Cowsl Creek Aboriginal Settlement on the North Western tip of Cape York Peninsula.

Inquiries have not disclosed positive evidence of the prostitution of young female aborigines but there are definite indications that the aboriginal women have been sexually associating with white persons. It will be noted that David Barton Wassell, the son of the original complainant on behalf of the welfare of the aborigines, is alleged to be the father of an illegitimate child born to a half caste girl named Joan Liddy and that no action has been recommended. As there is no definite proof of the allegation and this person is the son of the complainant, Joseph Leatham Hole Wassell, you may consider it advisable that this information be withheld.

Although the natives are unwilling to leave Port Stewart permanently they are agreeable to travelling to Thursday Island for medical and dental treatment and should it be decided to move them this may provide the means of making their removal less difficult.

(sgd.) J.V. Gill  
Inspector  
25 Feb. 60

B/c.  
The Commissioner of Police,  
BRISBANE.

Your file is returned herewith.  
Contents of it have been noted.

D.N.A.  
14/3/60.

O'L/HH

11th November, 1960.

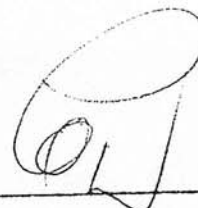
MEMO for file:-

On the 9th instant when discussing other matters with the Protector of Aborigines, Cairns, he stated that Mr. Wassal of Silver Plains was complaining against no action by this Department concerning Port Stewart natives whose circumstances are mentioned on this file.

On even date message went forward to Mr. Killoran asking him to contact direct the Protector of Aborigines, Cairns, informing him of the present position.

The telegram in which Mr. Wassal was complaining against the police was given Mr. Killoran.

B. H.  
20/11/60



11-11-60.

COPY

POLICE STATION. COEN.

14th October, 1963.

Re: Aborigines Jimmy KULLA KULLA and Harry LIDDY. Thursday  
Island Ref. Nos. 8H/154 and 8J/541.

Sir,

I have to advise that old KULLA KULLA recently came to Coen, from Cowal Creek, for a holiday for approximately one months duration. He now states that he does not want to return to Cowal Creek and desires to stay in the Coen District.

Old Harry Liddy absconded from Cowal Creek a few weeks ago with the intention of walking to Coen. According to letters he has written to his sons and one to Mrs. Armbrust of Coen, he was made return to Cowal Creek. It is requested in correspondence from Thursday Island that Liddy's four sons visit him at Christmas. I have interviewed them and they stated that they do not want to go to Cowal Creek but that they would like their people to come to Coen and visit them. It is also requested that his sons send him money. If he is in receipt of the Aged Pension I do not see why this should be necessary.

I do not know under what circumstances Liddys and Kulla Kullas were removed from Port Stewart a few years ago but their removal appears to be a sore point with some residents of this area. Apparently Port Stewart had been their home but I understand where they lived was on private property.

Ian Boyd Pratt who has a block of country at Running Creek on the Coast of Port Stewart said that if they returned to Coen they could live on his property. There would also be sufficient accommodation at the Coen Reserve should they return.

It is suggested that the Liddy and Kulla Kulla families could return to the Coen area if you concur.

T.J. NEWMAN  
O/C POLICE, COEN

The Director of Native Affairs,  
BRISBANE.



PJK/VNW

17/96  
18 NOV 1963  
Office of Deputy Director of Native Affairs  
Thursday Island  
aw

12th November, 19 63.

Protector of Aborigines,  
Police Station,  
COEN.

Dear Sir,

Your communication of the 14th October to the Brisbane Office has been forwarded to me with respect to the Port Stewart Natives at Cowal Creek.

Whilst sympathising with the desire of the "old timers" to remain in the Port Stewart area, I would refer you to reports from the Coen Protector in 1959/60 and particularly Report No. 1/59.

The history of these people whilst at Port Stewart left much to be desired and there is no wish on the Department's part to condemn the young folk to a life of isolation, lack of educational opportunities or a reversion to a nomadic way of life.

Harry Liddy has been promised a trip to Coen on similar lines as Jimmy Kulla Kulla who has gone forward to you.

When Jimmy Kulla Kulla comes back, arrangements will be made for Harry to go back in keeping with the assurances given earlier.

Yours faithfully,

B/c.  
Director of Native Affairs,  
BRISBANE.

Director of Native Affairs.

For your information.

*[Signature]*  
D.N.A.  
12/11/1963.

*[Signature]*  
no storie  
so note  
19.11.63



## Appendix C

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### **Definitions used in the National Reserve System An Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation For Australia: A Framework for Setting Priorities in the National Reserves System Co-operative Program.**

31<sup>st</sup> March 1995 R Thackway and ID Cresswell Eds, Reserves Systems Unit, Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Canberra.

#### **Comprehensiveness**

The degree to which the national reserve system encompasses the full range of biological/biophysical diversity and other values as identified by an agreed nationally recognised system of scientific classifications.

#### **Adequacy**

The capability of the national reserve system to maintain biological diversity and ecological patterns and processes and other values, given temporal and spatial perturbations, both natural and human-influenced.

#### **Representativeness**

The extent to which the areas selected for inclusion in the national reserve system sample known biological/biophysical diversity and other values.

#### **Protected area**

Defined according to the IUCN CNPPA definition of protected areas viz: An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.

#### **Biogeographic region**

A complex land area composed of a cluster of interacting ecosystems that are repeated in similar form throughout. Region descriptions seek to describe the dominant landscape scale attributes of climate, lithology, geology, landforms and vegetation. Biogeographic regions vary in size with larger regions found where areas have more subdued terrain and arid and semi-arid climates.

#### **Ecosystem**

All of the organisms in a given area in interaction with their non-living environment.

**Reservation status**

A measure of the percentage of land area within a biogeographic region which is dedicated as protected area.

**Bias**

A measure of how well the reserve network samples known environmental variation in the same proportion as it occurs within a biogeographic region. Bias in the comprehensiveness of protected areas was defined as the extent to which the existing system of protected areas fails to include examples of the most extensive ecosystems (or land systems); those that characterise entire sub-regions.

**Context**

Context describes the degree of alteration to the biodiversity at a landscape scale that has occurred due to European land management influences. This is described in terms of the current land use, grouped into three classes.

**National reserves system**

The national reserve system encompasses the existing reserve systems which are managed and / or administered by the Commonwealth, State or Territory nature conservation agencies. One of the primary goals of the national reserve system is the conservation of biodiversity. Conservation may be achieved at a regional scale through a range of management measures including protected areas as well as off-reserve conservation approaches.

**Conservation management measures**

Conservation management measures are techniques for achieving conservation of biodiversity. Within any biogeographic region these measures may include land acquisition, binding legal agreements, planning instruments, and non-binding conservation activities.

## **Appendix D**

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### **List of WWII Radar Stations in Cape York and Extracts from RDF History Sheets**

#### **RADAR STATIONS**

The following extracts from RDF Operational records are from records held in the Australian War Memorial. The following information may contain errors as the original history sheets were mainly handwritten and completing them was obviously not a task that filled officers with enthusiasm as there are occasional memorandums on file that urge the units to fill them out regularly. Where I have been unable to make out a word it is indicated by '?'.

**Series 64**  
**# 36 Radar Station**  
**Hammond Island**

1942	Oct 5th	Colonel Langford & party visited Island on inspection of future gun emplacements. Camouflage; dummy roads, RDF station and gun emplacements.
	Oct 31 <sup>st</sup>	28 (actual) people 64 (establishment)
	Nov.11	Flying Officer Naylor, Armanent officer from Horn Island visited to instruct in the demolition of RDF
	Nov.30	29 (actual) 49 (establishment)
	Dec. 24	4 RDF operators posted to station to await arrival
	Dec.31	27 (actual) 49 (establishment)
1943	Jan.22	Pilot Officer JH Davies posted to station to command
	Jan. 27	Davies arrives with 5 operators
	Jan. 31	25 (actual) 49 (establishment)
	Feb. 28	30 (actual) 49 (establishment)
	Apr. 24	Japanese recon aircraft 2125 hours 88 miles, 240deg followed in overhead about 20min. Followed out at 300 deg for 128miles at 2303 hours.
	Apr.30	35 (actual) 45 (establishment)
	May.17	Major Quanlan of US Army signals , visited the Station
	May. 21	?hose on screen. Trouble experienced by the unit with wireless communication at same period. Attributed to sun spot activity.
	May.31	34 (actual 38 (establishment)
	Jun.17	at 2358 hours. Japanese raider seen at 94miles on 275deg and followed in to 18 miles at 0026 hours. Followed out to 120miles on approx. 292deg at 0133.5 hours
	Jun. 30	33 (actual) 38 (establishment)
	Aug.2	Advance party of 8 airmen proceeded to Horn Island by Invasion barge with equipment
	Aug. 23	F/Officer G. Morrison arrived at Horn Island to take over command of No. 36 RDF Station
	Aug.24	No.36 RDF Station Hammond Island ceased operating at 1933 hours and commenced movement of equipment to Horn Island
	Aug. 27	Move completed. Operation performance of A.W Mk. 1 for period operating Total Hours= 551 Number of hours off air 20 hours 36min.
	Aug. 31	Horne Island 30 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	Sept. 27	Three additional slit trenches provided
	Sept. 28	Camp building known as the store completed and handed over for use by the Station. Serious breakdown in receiver. Station off during the early night period for 3 hours. Several faults occurred all due to poor construction.
	Sept.30	34 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	Oct. 31	34 (actual) 35 (establishment)

	Nov. 10	Moved #1 prime mover (Lister 20kVa set) to new concrete igloo and installed in position.
	Nov. 14	Installation of Selsyn motors & PPI section arranged for plotting
	Nov. 30	34 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	Dec. 30	34 (actual) 35 (establishment)
1944	Jan. 19	Erection of a bomb blast wall around the Radar. Technical installation was completed this day.
	Jan. 21	The commencement of period of strong radar jamming from unknown source. Continued nightly for several nights
	Jan. 31	35 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	Feb. 29	Camouflage working party commenced erection of structure for supporting camouflage around technical installation. 33 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	Mar. 31	The camouflage of radar installation is progressing satisfactorily. 80% complete Camouflage consists of dummy rock work and machine cut net. 33 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	Apr.	34 (actual) 35 (Establishment)
	May. 2	Camouflage inspected - now complete
	May. 31	Total number of echo tracks for month was 570. 129 of these are over 100 miles. these are record high figures for the station. 34 (actual) 35 (establishment)
	June. 30	# of echo tracks and good ranges were again a record high. Total # 892. Total # over 100 miles = 222. Average of the 6 highest ranges recorded = 164.5 miles. 36 (actual) 35 (establishment) [Appendix A for June 1944: Lack of fresh food although this changed in the latter part of the month. Cricket- popular matches between No. 32 Filter Centre, No. 28 OBU Signals, No. 6 Post of the 75th Searchlight battery.]
	July. 18	Directed lost aircraft to Higgins
	July. 20	The unit rifle range was completed and put to use
	July. 24	Again directed lost aircraft to Higgins
	July. 31	Total # of echo tracks 515. 98 of these at distance greater than 100 miles. 35 (actual) 35 (establishment). Appendix A: "messing this month has been very satisfactory due mainly to the good standard of rations supplied and many airmen report that they are increasing in weight. A fish trap was constructed on the reef adjoining the comp and it is hoped that this will produce a welcome and beneficial variety in the menu." also mentions welfare; cricket etc.
	Aug. 9	Arrangements for water to be delivered while unit has storage capacity for 6,000 gal and piping to kitchen and ablutions. There is no catchment for these tanks.
	Aug. 13	Recreation party for non essential personnel to Wednesday Island for fishing, shooting and swimming. Lost a dinghy during the night due to king tides.
	Aug. 28	Anti jamming exercise carried out by Lt. Wiggs of USA A.C
	Aug. 31	791 tracks. 127 of these were over 100 miles. [Appendix mentioned voting for referendum, recreational concerts etc] 34 (actual) 35 (establishment)

Sept.	Electrical power installation mentioned. 815 tracks, of these 135 tracks over 100 miles. 34 (actual) 34 (establishment). [Appendix A: Total # of tracks 815; 135 of these picked up at a range greater than 100 miles. The 815 tracks represents 85% of total number of targets in area and of that total 80% were either in the southern or northern sectors. Most of army have now left the island. Rations obtained direct from No.28 OBU. Isolated atmosphere. Following a visit by Welfare Officer it has been decided to erect a recreation hut. Practice for next months cricket match.]
Oct. 5	Instructions were received from No32 Zone Filter Centre that quarantine conditions were now in force in the Torres Strait area due to the presence of small pox suspects.
Oct.19	At 2100 hours a very good track was commenced on a Ventura of No.13 Squadron. The aircraft indicated at 2130 that it was in distress it was then tracked until it alighted on the sea at 2200 hours. It is understood that the entire crew survived and were rescued by motor launch in a very short time. 34 (actual) 34 (establishment) [Appendix A Oct 1944: This was the first month during which the unit came under the Administration and Technical and Operational Control of #32 Zone Filter Centre (only 4 miles away by road). The number of aircraft flying in area continue to increase. This month station recorded 892 tracks. Visit to Island of the team of International and Interstate cricketers. Played Island team successfully. "messing this month has been satisfactory due mainly to the large proportion of fresh meat and vegetables supplied. several meals of 'home' caught fish and turtle provided a welcome change.....A crate of Ducklings and chickens were received from the NEA and these together with those the unit already have bring the poultry strength to quite a satisfactory number. A larger fowl house and chicken runs have been built to accomodate the new arrivals" W.B Ross Flying Officer OIC#36RS]
Nov.	897 tracks of these 70 were greater than 100miles. 35(actual) 34 (establishment). [Appendix A discusses weather- approach of wet season; water rationing. Food rations were good regular supplies of fresh vegetables; meat, eggs and fruit. Mention of sports ground at No.32 Zone Filter Centre]
Dec.	Wet season commenced. 807 tracks recorded. 35 (actual 34 (establishment) [Appendix A: includes description of Christmas celebrations. No.28 OBU practically completed their disbandment. Complaint about lack of letter 'n' on typewriter.
1945 Jan.	"At 0001 hours GMT on 31st January 1945, this station ceased to operate on a continuous basis and was placed on a 'care and maintenance' basis... also No.36 Radar Station became a section of the Air Defence HQ Higgins.....No.32 Zone Filter Centre completed their move to Higgins and this unit together with the Marine Section detachment of No. 33 OBU are the only

remaining RAAF establishment on the Island and together comprise the majority of personnel still residing on the island.”  
856 tracks 36 (actual) 34 (establishment)  
Feb. Mention bi-weekly trip to Thursday Island picture theatre. 34 (actual) 34 (establishment)  
March 28 Handover from F/Lt wB Ross to CPL Nicholls. C.H Radar Mechanic (G) now became NCO in charge. Drop in establishment and hence cricket curtailed due to lack of numbers. 12 (actual) 8 (establishment).  
April 9 (actual) 8 (establishment)  
May 7 (actual) 8 (establishment)  
June Marine Section 33 OBU left island. “36 Radar Station only personnel except Torres Strait natives residing on the island” {*This is the first mention of Torres Strait Islanders in the records of this radar station!*} 7 (actual) 8 (establishment).  
July 31 Preparation for installation of diesels near the campsite. 7 (actual) 8 (establishment)  
Aug News of peace 7 (actual) 8 (establishment).

---

**Series 64**  
**# 52 Radar Station**  
**Muttee Head**

1943 Jan. First entry in Operation Record Book. Total 13 personnel. F/O G.R Terry (A3279) posted from Radio School Richmond to command. At this point the radar station was located at Mascot.  
Feb 18 Terry to 101 RDF Station to Command. F/O H.P Simpson A6216 Posted from 101 RDF Station to 52 RDF Station to command. Station left Mascot for Townsville.  
Feb. 21 Arrived #1 RPP Townsville. 21 (actual) 57 (establishment).  
Mar 22 Left Townsville  
Mar 23 Arrived Cairns  
Mar 28 Arrived Horn Island  
Mar 29 Left Horn Island for Muttee Head. Arrived Muttee head in company with F/O Metcalfe. 38 (actual) 57 (establishment) vehicles - nil  
April 39 (actual) RAAF 59 (establishment)  
HO#312 59 (establishment) Vehicle 1  
May 38 (actual) RAAF 40 (establishment)  
HO#692 ? (establishment)  
Vehicles 1 Vehicles 1 } establishment  
Dinghy 1 Dinghy 1 }  
June 15 Capt. A B Yeates of 5th Australian Field survey company and

Party surveyed the area on sea and land. *{where is the map????}*

40 (actual) 40 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

July Multiple visits relating to telephone installation.  
38 (actual) 40 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

Aug 2 CPL Glover No.1 Maintenance Party 42 RDF wing visited for installation and alteration of Mains, Transmission lines connecting RDF and Diesels.

Aug 30 Hostile aircraft reconnaissance at 1100 hours  
37 (actual) 40 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

Sept 35 (actual) 40 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

Oct 7/Lt K.M Williams 256275 arrived from the 42 Radar wing to takeover.

Oct 22 F/O H.P Simpson 256216 relinquished command- posted to 55 Radar Station.  
38 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

Nov 23 Mr J Stubbs contractor for new camp. Construction work is to begin 1st week in Dec. Direct telephone line to IR&S U was opened for administration traffic .  
39 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

Dec .8 Construction of new buildings commenced. Four new buildings in progress.  
40 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

1944 Jan. 37 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

Feb. During the month work on kitchen, airmen and officers mess; admin building; store; one airmen's barracks was completed. In progress - 3 barracks buildings for airmen; one building containing medical section, officers and sergeants quarters.  
36 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

March 4 0147 hours mobile Fighter Section advised unit of an air raid.



“Alert, hostile reconnaissance plane in area at 0151” A horn was sounded, the all clear was notified at 0312 hours. No Target was sighted by this unit. Weather was unfavourable for visual sights, the sky was overcast.

March The following units have arrived in area during month: 27 Field Company(approx. strength 160); 2/18 battery + 2/9 field regiment (approx. strength 170);B Coy. 5th Australian Machine Gun Battery (approx. strength 90). With the exception of B Co. these units are supplying labour for the constructuion of a jetty approx. 1/2 mile on the Red Isalnd Pt Side of Muttee head. the proposed Jetty is to be 900’ long and work is well under way. Buildings erected by this unit during month - 3 barracks for airmen (acc. 10 airmen in each building); 1 building containing officers and seargents quarters and medical section.  
35 (actual) 39(establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

April 15 At 1053 hours local time the 32 Zone Filter Centre advised unit of an Air Raid warning “Yellow” Unidentified aircraft sighted on bearing of 70deg at 40 miles- Air raid warning “red” at 1057. All clear at 1059 hours. “yellow” at 1101 hours “red” at 1103 hours and green at 1106 hours. Aircraft identified as friendly.

April Building completed :- 2 buildings to house diesel motors  
-Traverse 11ft high enclosing transmitter and receiver rooms; 2 A Machine Gun pits: 1 building used as armoury.  
35 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

May 22 Camouflage of all new buildings began  
36(actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 1 dinghy 1

June Camouflage work completed 16/6/44. 5th Aust Machine Gunners ‘B’ Coy. moved to their HQ at Horn Island. 27th Field Coy. moved to Merauke.

June 28 Jetty built by army completed 600’ instead of 900’ as planned. Road to Higgins almost completed bar 2 miles.  
37 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 0 dinghy 1 *What happened to the dinghy!* July  
Road to RIP and Higgins completed.  
36 (actual) 39(establishment)  
vehicle 1 vehicle 1  
dinghy 0 dinghy 1

Aug 17 Concert Philip Hargreaves *{can’t read my writing}*

Aug 28 Demo of anti jamming

	36 (actual)	39(establishment)	
	vehicle 1	vehicle 1	
	dinghy 0	dinghy 1	
Aug 31	Only ship to dock at Jetty this month “ Matthew Flinders” to load up army equipment.		
Sept	During the month army unit No.4 Marine Food Supply Unit arrived a made camp within 1/4 mile of this unit and adjacent to 57th Field ? Coy. Role to supply units in the area with fresh fish (strength approx. 30). 57th Field ? Coy. the only other army unit remaining in the area is preparing to move out.		
	Visits by aircrew of 7th Squadron		
	36 (actual)	39 (establishment)	
	vehicle 1	vehicle 1	
	dinghy 0	dinghy 1	
	[Appendix : No.4 marine Food Supply Unit net the fish in the Jardine River Lt. Peters in charge; approx. 30 men; 1x45 ft launch with built in refrigerator; 1x25ft launch and several dinghies. Water supply will be pumped from Army 80,000 gal tank, but this unit will maintain the pumping station at the Jardine River, although plant itself will be on charge to the Army at Thursday Island. Fuel and oil will be supplied by army. Army mobile cinema last picture 3/10/44. Army had constructed tennis court; Batminton [sic] court and sports oval. 52RDF will now use these.		
Oct 4	57 Field P? Coy. moved out of area at 0730 hours		
Oct 5	Telephone line to 32 Zone Filter Centre connected.		
Oct 9	Lieut. Ring and Lt. Silcock, Torres Strait Forces arrived with approx. 80 personnel by “Queen Mary” from Thursday Island to load equip left by 57 Field P? coy.		
Oct 10	No. 4 Marine Foods Supply moved to Horn Island		
Oct 12	Tug from T.I “Castlecliff” berthed at Jetty to tow 2 barges to T.I		
Oct 13	Outbreak of Variola at Merauke. Full quarantine applies to T.I and Horn Island.		
Oct 15	3 small boats pulled to jetty at 1300 hours carting water. SS Marnoo berthed at 1600 hours to load army equipment.		
Oct 17	Cricket with visiting international team.		
Oct 19	Distress signals picked up at 2114 T.T 25 1090 - 307deg 31 miles.		
	2119 operations advise a/c with one motor failing coming in from west.		
	2125 T.T LN 2008 -319deg 53 miles		
	A/c sighted onscreen at 2127.5		
	2127.5	320deg	51 miles LN2305
	2730	325deg	49 miles LN3107
	2731.5	325deg	47miles LN3504
	2135	334deg	43 miles LN4905
	2137	337deg	41 miles LN5403
	2140	340deg	40 miles LN5803

2141                      340deg                      41 miles                      LN6407  
when picked up by this station A/c was flying due east and showing distress signal. First plot was at 320deg 51 miles LN 2305 approx. 2 miles from position given by Zone Filter Centre 2 minutes earlier. Aircraft was tracked for another 20 mn, the last plot being 346deg 41 miles LN 6407 on point 1 mile NW of Hawkesbury Island. After echo faded the distress signal was still sighted for about 1 min but no further echo from a/c appeared. The aircraft echo faded at 2148 .

Oct 21                      Handover/ Takeover betw F/Lt Williams and F/O Cook  
Oct 22                      Receiver caught alight. [Appendix: "This month a fishing crew has come to camp. personnel have caught a lot thus supplying quite a few meals. the welfare committee bought one doz ducklings to be fattened up for Christmas. These are being well cared for. Several men have started a garden. Quite a few tropical plants and watermelon have been planted. A dinghy is in the process of being built by several enthusiasts. A piano and miniature billiard table have been welcome additions to the recreation" E.B. Cook.  
Appendix also indicate that the plane in distress was the same "ventura" aircraft as reported from Horn Island.  
39 (actual)                      35 (establishment)  
vehicle 1                      vehicle 1  
marine craft 0                      marine craft 1

Nov 9                      "Dilga" which loaded all army vehicles left Muttee Head. details in records are mainly of social events cricket games, card games, swimming in Jardine; pictures at Higgins etc., runs to RIP etc. Obviously a fish trap has been constructed several accounts of good hauls.

Nov 14th                      Crocodile 7' long caught in fish trap  
Nov 17                      Small ship called into Mutee for 75 tons of water.  
Nov 26                      Commanding Officer took party to Somerset. A lot of coconuts and mangoes were brought back.  
38 (actual)                      35 (establishment)  
vehicle 1                      vehicle 1  
marine craft 1                      marine craft 1  
[Appendix: Garden thriving. Prefab hut obtained for shift workers to sleep in . Recreation room remodelled with palm trees and deck chairs. pipeline from Jardine broke twice due to heat.

Dec                      wet season . Construction of drains, army fires around camp drove mosquitoes into the camp. Several rooftops tarred or relined with corrugated iron because of leaks. Flowers coming out in bloom. rains causing roads to disintegrate between station and 33 OBU. Pipeline pulled apart another 4 times. Only one more coupling left.  
Operation Record - mainly deals with social events; films at Higgins etc.

Dec 8                      ship called in for 75 tons water.

	Dec 13	F/Lt Long and Father Law visited the unit and F/Lt Long brought a selection of gramophone records which were appreciated by all.
	Dec.14	"A party comprising F/L Durre and personnel visited the mouth of the Jardine River to erect a Mark II IFF Set. the position was found unsuitable . One the way back a large turtle was caught laying eggs."
	Dec. 18	2 ships in for water.
	Dec.	Also account of Christmas dinner. minor problems for month etc.
		38 (actual)      35 (establishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
1945	Jan	Operational record - minor events/ wet weather
	Jan. 5	F/Lt Lane came over to see Lac Tibbett who was stung by a 'man - o- war.'
	Jan 7	Party took a launch up Jardine and got large haul of fish with net.
	Jan 8	Unit tender took Cpl Collins to No. 33 OBU suffering from severe wound in leg- stepped back on unprotected fan.
	Jan. 27	Personnel went to No. 33 OBU to hear Prof Brown of Melbourne University, speaking on post war reconstruction. Received a signal that this station would be put on care and maintenance from 31st Jan 1945.
	Jan 31st	Signal received - this station will operate daily 0600-1200hours and to be effective from 0001hrs GMT 31st Jan. 1945.
		42 (actual)      35 (establishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
		[Appendix notes: More melons sown, more leaking roofs fixed; road to 33 OBU fixed where it had been washing away.]
	Feb. 4	Lecture by Lieut. Gray of USA on radar jamming.
	Feb. 5	Hudson aircraft demonstrated 3 types of jamming of radar equip.
	Feb 9	Commanding Officer invited to see the natives dancing at the mission by Lieutenant Lane. <i>[This must have been Cowal Creek]</i>
		38 (actual)      22 (establishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
		[Appendix; new drying room erected]
	March 6	F/Lt Sheaffer and J.W Reed of the C.S.I.R visited this unit. Mr Reed gave a very interesting talk on the use of A1465.
	March 28	F/Lt Sheaffer arrived for handover-takeover.
		24 (actual)      22 (establishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1

April 4	F/O K. Chillingworth took over temporary command. F/Lt Sheaffer left for Higgins.
April 10	Fish trap completed and provided excellent results. 20 (actual)      22(estabishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
May 15	The new commanding officer of AD HQ Higgins, S/Ldr P.L Strahan inspected the unit.
May 18	New Diesel engine transported from RIP 15 (actual)      22 (estabishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
June	[Operation record includes social stuff - picture shows, table tennis etc.]
July 8	Inter unit sports event
July 10	Station ordered "on air" at 1328 hours in order to track 3 Wirraways which departed Higgins for Port Moresby. Closed down 1510 hours.
July 17	F/Lt W.B Ross returned from leave to take charge at 1200hrs.
July 23	Handover/takeover from F/O Chillingworth to F/Lt Ross completed. 17 (actual)      22(estabishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1 [Appendix A: Inter unit sports event held on 8th at Higgins. "The native boys of the T.S.L.I Battalion won the majority of the events and put up a very fine performance."]
Aug.10	News received of japans proposed surrender
Aug 15	Officially announced hat Japan would accept allied terms.
Aug 27	Notified by A.D HQ that an American C.47 had made an emergency landing at approx 0430 hours local time, possibly in the vicinity of this unit. Investigation revealed that no one had heard an aircraft and nothing could be seen on the beaches.
Aug 28	At 1045 LAC Tonkin who had been working on the wharf reported wreckage which could be a canvas dinghy floating 200yards north of the wharf. The unit dinghy was taken to the beach and four men put off to investigate. No trace of the wreckage could be found but investigation disclosed that at about 1000 hours men of the T.S.L.I battalion camped nearby and had dumped an old tent fly and some cases off the pier and it was assumed that this constituted the wreckage. 19(actual)      22 (estabishment) vehicle 1      vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
Sept 1	Party - trip to Cape York
Sept 3	Station resumed operation until 1730 hrs local time in order to cover the liberation aircraft in search of American C47 lost on the 27th.

Sept 11	Advised by A.D HQ Higgins to cease operations from 1800 hrs local time and to carry out disbandment procedure.
Sept 24	Camp will be vacated and personnel temporarily quartered at Higgins.
	19 (actual)      22(establishment)
	vehicle 1      vehicle 1
	marine craft 1   marine craft 1

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**Series 64**  
**# 311 Radar Station**  
**ARCHER BAY (Aurukun)**

1943	Jan 5	No. 311 RDF formed to establishment HD 319 at Mascot on 5/1/43. Under control of HQ Eastern Area. The purpose of this unit is to provide early warning of approaching aircraft and shipping. 5/1 F/O Keighley (A63110) appointed CO in place of F/O Durre.
	Jan 27	F/Lt H.V. Bassett (1818) posted from 1RDF School Richmond to command.
		27 (actual)      39(establishment)
		vehicle -      vehicle 1
		marine craft -   marine craft -
	Feb 10	Unit embarked at mascot for Horn Island per M.V “Wanaka” and rail.
	Feb 16	Arrived T’ville after rough voyage during cyclone. Serious damage by saltwater to technical equipment. Unit under control of H.Q NE Area.
	Feb 17	Embarkation- proceeded to Horn Island
	Feb 21	Arrived Thursday Island transferred to Horn Island.
		balance of the month spent replacing and ...?.. equipment and rations. Numerous cases of Dengue Fever.
		35 (actual)      39(establishment)
		vehicle 1      vehicle 1
		marine craft -   marine craft -
	March 13	Notification of formation of 42RDF wing to command and administrate all RDF Stations in NE Area as from 17th March.
	March 15	Embarked personnel for Archer Bay per MV “Wombat”
	March 16	Arrived Archer Bay. Welcomed by Missionary and natives. Selected camp site and camp struck inside Northern Point of Archer Bay.
	March 17	Mission natives helped unload approx. 100 tons of equipment via two boats lashed together.
		36 (actual)      39(establishment)
		vehicle -      vehicle 1
		marine craft -   marine craft -
	April 1	Battery Charger temporarily repaired. Maintaining a 24hr watch with difficulty due to accommodation position. Many

P.E's sighted some doubtful. Suspect enemy vessel in vicinity.

April 3 Unidentified vessel in vicinity . Unit prepared for emergency

April 4 Unidentified vessel again located

April 5 Submarine sighted visually and located by RDF. Action Stations maintained.

April 12 Again as above

April 30 Maintain generator-type "Howard "generators  
All general posts and lit trenches completed and camp area camouflaged. All RDF and visual sightings reported to Fighter Section Cairns.  
38 (actual) 40(establishment)  
vehicle - vehicle 1  
marine craft - marine craft

May 19 Unexpected visit of 4 x American P.T Boats under command of Commander Bulkley who was responsible for the successful evacuation of General Macarthur from the Philippines.  
Ongoing problem with availability of spares.

May 27 Many improvements were effected in the camp are including filling of sandy floor spaces with clean shells carted from the beach area. This necessitated constructing 2 miles of bush track for light utility truck. lack of water transport is a problem.  
39 (actual) 40(establishment)  
vehicle - vehicle 1  
marine craft - marine craft

June 1 Arrival of 2 American PT Boats under command of Lt R.J Buckley.

June 20 Arrival of lugger "Morning Star" with mail and postings and fuel from Aurukun Mission strip.

June 25 Arrival of lugger "Sheila" with essential spares and aviation fuel from mission strip.

June 29 Arrival of lugger "Galston" with spare, oil and kerosene; aviation spirit and oil from mission strip. During the month the foundations of a stone pier were laid utilizing stone deposits some distance along the beach. When completed the pier will be 150' long and 8' high.  
37 (actual) 40(establishment)  
vehicle - vehicle 1  
marine craft - marine craft

July 1 F/Lt Bassett relinquished command. F/O S.A Keighly appointed OIC.

July 3 Arrival of Walrus

July 20 Arrival of lugger "Ward" with mail and spare parts.  
Construction of pier proceeded. Also constructed were the store, new showers, orderly room, recreation room. The kitchen was altered and concreted. A 200 yds range was constructed and range practices, bayonet and anti gas training were continued.

	36 (actual)      40(establishment)
	vehicle 1      vehicle 1
	marine craft - marine craft 1
Aug 6	Construction of new lavatories and grease traps
Aug 13	Arrival of M.V “Butha” from Karumba with rations.
Aug 15	Walrus arrived with emergency canteen supplied.
Aug 23	Calibration flights commenced by Anson and Hudson.
Aug 25	Arrival of lugger “Bacton” with petrol from Thursday Island.
	25 yds of rifle range constructed.
	34 (actual)      40(establishment)
	vehicle 1      vehicle 1
	marine craft - marine craft 1
Sept 3	Single aircraft without IFF Followed approx. 40 miles.
Sept 9	Arrival of “Dragon” aircraft from Townsville with first consignment of fresh butter, eggs, vegetables.
Sept 14	Arrival of lugger “Bacton” with mail
Sept 27	arrival of Catalina with mail - landed successfully in Bay but unable to unload because of strong current and lack of dinghy.
Sept 29	Passing visit by Lt/Col Grith and staff during an aerial reconnaissance of the Gulf area. All huts were re-roofed for wet season. Construction commenced on new engine room.
	33(actual)      40(establishment)
	vehicle 1      vehicle 1
	marine craft - marine craft 1
Oct. 2	Anson aircraft left strip for Townsville.
Oct. 4	Lugger “Sheila” arrived with 6 personnel on posting.
Oct. 10	Building of garage commenced.
Oct. 11	Anson arrived with F/O McKenzie (42 Radar wing equipment officer) and mail.
Oct. 14	Anson departed.
Oct. 15	MV “Britha” arrived with stocks, rations and fuel for strip.
Oct.16	“Britha” departed
Oct. 20	Arrival F/O Davies new commander by Anson aircraft.
	Handover/takeover. Arrival of dragon aircraft with fresh supplies and mail.
Oct 21	New range commenced.
Oct 24	One Catalina arrived ex Karumba with inspection party.
	38 (actual)      40(establishment)
	vehicle 1      vehicle 1
	marine craft - marine craft 1
Nov 1	“Morning Star” from Thursday Island with mail
Nov 4	Dragon aircraft ex Horn Island for Karumba.
Nov. 8	SS “Poonbar” arrived ex Cairns with dinghy, 9 tons rations, fuel, oil and canteen supplies.
Nov. 9	One Dragon ex Karumba; 2x Airacobras ex Horn Island. SS Poonbar departed for Mitchell River.
Nov. 12	Dragon aircraft arrived ex Townsville with fresh rations and comfort..?.Wet season began.



	Nov. 24	1x Catalina followed to 62 miles with IFF.
	Nov. 25	Arrival of lugger "J.G.Ward" with mail and 3 personnel returning from leave. during the month a barge of estimated capacity 3 tons was constructed. An armoury was built, improvements in kitchen , new food store almost completed. Timber was cut for the construction of a wooden tower and the garage completed. 38 (actual)      38(establishment) vehicle 1          vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
	Dec. 4	"Leisha" arrived
	Dec. 9	Walrus arrived
	Dec. 11	Lugger "J.G Ward" arrived with equipment.
	Dec 13	Anson aircraft ex Townsville with mail and equipment and .. comforts".
	Dec. 17	Anson aircraft ex Iron Range with Radar installation party.
	Dec. 18	1 aircraft followed to 68 miles without IFF
	Dec. 23	3 Fighters , 1 med. bomber followed to 65 miles without IFF, 90 miles with IFF.
	Dec. 29	"Glenda" arrived ex Thursday Island with equipment. Improvements on kitchen and foodstore were completed. Timber cut for construction of wooden tower transported to station.Engine shed partially walled in with bark. 37 (actual)      38(establishment) vehicle 1          vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
1944	Jan 1	MV "Britha" ex Thursday Island
	Jan. 2	MV "Britha" and MV "Glenda" departed.
	Jan.8	MV "Britha" arrived ex Burketown.
	Jan. 9	2 sick people evacuated to 28OBU by Walrus aircraft MV "Britha" departed
	Jan 14	Dragon aircraft ex Horn Island with mail
	Jan.21	Mail arrived overland from Mapoon Mission by native courier.
	Jan. 23	MV "Leisha" with equipment and Fordson tractor. Fourth improvements to kitchen; airmen's mess re-floored; new latrines and shower constructed; and w/t hut re-organised. Electric lighting installed throughout the camp. camp cleared of grass as precaution against snakes. Basketball and Batminton courts constructed.  36 (actual)      38 (establishment) vehicle 1          vehicle 1 marine craft 1   marine craft 1
	Feb.15	Anson aircraft ex Townsville with pay
	Feb. 19	Anson aircraft ex Horn island with mail. New workshop commenced; material obtained from the building of a new airmen's mess, kitchen flooring improved; grass constantly cleared re snakes. 36 (actual)      38 (establishment) vehicle 1          vehicle 1

	marine craft 1	marine craft 1
March 3	Norseman aircraft ex Townsville with maintenance party	
March 5	Norseman aircraft ex Horn Island return and take guy on leave	
March 11	Norseman departed to T'ville	
March 15	Lugger "J.G Ward" ex Thursday Island with mail.	
March 17	MV "Leisha" inspection party. This month new airmen's mess commenced, new defence positions were dug; Ration storehouse re-organised; New technical workshop completed.	
	35(actual)	40(establishment)
	vehicle 1	vehicle 1
	marine craft 1	marine craft 1
April 4	MV Leisha" departed for Horn Island	
April 16	MV "Glenda" ex Karumba with rations.	
April 19	Lugger "Francis Pritt" ex Thursday Island	
April 23	Lugger "J.G Ward" ex Thursday Island with personnel	
April 29	"J.G. Ward" departed for Thursday Island with personnel.	
	This month new airmen's mess and recreation room were completed. new defence positions were finalized and new armoury built. A corduroy road was commenced in order to obviate difficulties in driving the truck over loose sand.	
	34 (actual)	34 (establishment)
	vehicle 1	vehicle 1
	marine craft 1	marine craft 1
May 2	Beaufort from Higgins dropped sealed bags	
May 3	Norseman landed Aurukun Mission with mail and fresh food.	
	Signal received advising proposed move of station to Townsville.	
may 4	Norseman departed for Townsville. Oxford arrived at Mission.	
May 5	Oxford departed. Signal advising effort being made to move station per sea shipment.	
May 10	Dragon landed and departed - inward mail. Lugger "Francis Pritt" departed with outward mail to Thursday Island.	
May 11	Norseman landed at Mission with mail and equipment from T'ville.	
May 12	Volte Vengeance from Higgins dropped sealed bags with mail.	
May 28	Beaufort from Higgins dropped sealed bag, letter mail and small supply of tobacco.	
May29	Army lugger "Pearl" arrived direct from Thursday island with rations, canteen stock. Dragon landed at Mission and took part mail out.	
May 30	Lugger "Pearl" departed for T.I carrying outward mail	
	This month personnel packing and preparing equipment for shipment. No further improvements.	
	24 (actual)	37(establishment)
	vehicle 1	vehicle 1
	marine craft 1	marine craft 1
June 1	Station ceased operating on instruction from North East Area	

June 6	Signal received advising service aircraft would arrive Aurukun strip AM 7/6/44 to uplift 17 personnel.
June 7	Aircraft didn't come- men billeted at mission. Personnel returned to unit in batches. The only transport was 1 dinghy.
June 9	Signal advising departure of Norseman from T'ville enroute to Aurukun for ferrying personnel to Higgins.
June 10	negotiations re sale of supplies to mission.
June 11	Norseman arrived and departed with mail and 8 men.
June 12	Norseman departed from Higgins with another 4 men and returned to mission stopping overnight.
June 13	Norseman departed for T'ville with 5 men and mail. Only 7 men remain. Dragon arrived from Higgins with mail.
June 23	MV "Glenda" ex Thursday Island going to Karumba.
June 24	MV "Leisha" arrived and departed Aurukun taking outward mail to Thursday Island. 08-11 arrived ex Karumba, enroute to Merauke, stopped overnight at mission.
June 25	08-11 departed carrying outward mail. Station has been non operational since 1/6/44 . equipment all packed. 7 (actual)        40 (establishment) vehicle 1        vehicle 1 marine craft 1    marine craft 1
July 7	Dragon arrived ex Higgins with mail. Lugger "J.G.Warrd" departed for T.I carrying outward mail.
July 13	MV "GLenda" arrived ex Karumba enrouet to T.I with one bag potatoes and small quantity of onions- first since Nov.'43. MV "Britha" sheltered overnight in river on trip from south to T.I. A.83 (naval patrol boat) arrived to destroy landmine on coast 12 miles from unit.
July 14	MV "Glenda" departed for Thursday Island with mail .
July 19	"J.G. Ward" ex Thursday Island but no mail or canteen supplies (latter urgent) came.
July 21	Signal received - canteen supplies held at 32 ASP since 8th July.
July 23	Lugger "J.G Ward" departed for T.I with mail.
July 25	Signal received advising mail and canteen supplies would be forwarded on RAAF lugger within few days. Only one mail delivery received this month, although transport available for more. Part of supplies exhausted since 12/7. Representations made but not satisfactorily answered. 7 (actual)        40 (establishment) vehicle 1        vehicle 1 marine craft 1    marine craft 1
Aug 1	Lugger "J.G.Ward" ex T.I neither mail nor canteen supplies
Aug 8	Canteen supplies and mail delivered
Aug 9	Lugger "J.G Ward" departed to T.I with outward mail.
Aug 25	SS Poonbar arrived for removal of unit
Aug 26	Balance of personnel and equipment transferred to SS Poonbar enroute for T'ville via T.I

Aug 27	SS Poonbar arrived at T.I - 6 personnel off loaded and transported to Higgins for on transport to T'ville. One airman escorted equipment on boat.
Aug 29	Higgins to T'ville by Douglas aircraft then to No. 42 Radar wing HQ. 15 (actual)      40 (establishment)
Sept 1	Demand..? to re-equip
Sept 2	SS Poonbar arrived T'ville. Most of month taken up with admin stuff packing , unpacking etc

*N.B This unit later moves to Green Island near New Guinea*

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**Series 64**  
**# 312 Radar Station**  
**Horn Island**

Squadron Leader R. Jaggard- Commander.

1942	March 8	Advice received from 42 RDF wing that Mitchell River had been surveyed to select suitable site. Departure of 312 deferred.
	March 19	Submitted indent to ASC T.I for supply of rations for payment of native labour being made available by Mission station at Mitchell River.
	March 29	"Wombat" arrived T.I loading commenced.
	March 30	"Wombat arrived horn Island ETD Mitchell River 0900 1st April. Advised by signal that 312 RDF destined for Mitchell River to be held at Horn Island pending selection of site at Cape Wessell by AOC NWA. 34 (actual)                      39 (establishment) Prime Mover 1                  Prime Mover 1
	April	[Incomplete records available for the 312 RDF from the appendix were at Wessel Island -ref to "natives"]
	April 29	Natives report green vercy lights at 2230 hrs; also search lightbeacons from east. Sent native runner to Naval watch who went out to investigate.

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**Series 64**  
**# 313 Radar Station**  
**Mornington Island**

1943	April 7	Aircraft landed approx.16 miles north reported by natives
	April 8	Visual observation of aircraft believed to be Catalina.
	April 14	Aircraft ex Townsville with ...accumulator and battery charger.
	April 15	Aircraft departed for T'ville

April 22	MV "Leisha" with mail and 24 tons of rations
April 23	Problems with Howard generating plant.
April 24	MV "Leisha" departed Groote Eylandt
April 25	MV "Bretha" arrived
April 27	MV "Bretha" departed for T.I
May 5	Water supply dried up
May 7	Surveyed country north of Island -recommended unit remain where it is.
May 10	Mail service commenced with sailing boat to Burketown with mail.
May 22	Sailing boat ex Burketown with mail
May 24	Anson with U.S Officer
May 25	Anson departed for Cloncurry
May 28	MV Bretha with posting and mail
May 29	MV Bretha departed for T.I
June 2	Struck water in well at 6' but saline. Water carted from Creek 3 miles inland.
June 3	Problem with Katolight Petrol Electric Genrator
June 8	Walrus aircraft arrived with personnel
June 9	Walrus departed
June 10	Launch departed from Burketown
June 11	Aircraft Anson arrived.
June 14	Launch returned from Burketwon with 9 bags of mail
June 16	Handover/Takeover
June 17	S/Ldr Matheson ( <i>outgoing commander</i> ) departed on "Bonny" posting to Townsville.New commander F/O H.J Jasper.
June 18	Aircarft walrus arrived -evacuate ...?... parties
June 19	Aircraft walrus departed.
July	Series of visits by SS "Bretha" and walrus/c delivering stores
Aug	Series of visits from launch; Anson aircraft walrus etc. Calibration test with Anson
Aug 8	Mr and Mrs McCarthy arrived on "Leisha" to relieve missionaries.
Sept	Visits from SS 'Bretha'; "Bonny"(unit launch);"Angelica" (sailing boat captained by M.Thus with survey party; Catalina a/c. The number of satisfactory targets for the month declined attributed to decrease in air traffic. Howard generator troublesome; General camouflage repaired and improved; fresh water supply low - source creek 8 miles inland-trucked. Landing strips- on 6/9preparation of landing strip commenced. "It is situated in a north westerly direction of Mission Station, 110 yds long, and running on a bearing of 315 degrees. The work should be completed in early Novemver". Kitchen and mess hut 40' x14' nearing completion. As no galvanised iron is available- bark roof and sides used. Sleeping hut of similar dimensions to be commenced.
Oct.	Visits and departures MV "Leisha"; "Angelica"; Catalina from 43 Squadron; Anson EF924; sailing boat "Sheila".
Oct.18	Unit launch "Bonny departed for Burketown

	Oct 19	“Bonny” returned after an encounter with wild natives on Sweers Island. Under instructions from 42 Radar Wing F/O Jasper proceeds to Sweers Island with Mr McCarthy Superintendent of Mornington island.
	Oct 20	Ineffective contact made with Bentinck Island natives, Buried one native body on Sweers Island. Party proceeded to Burketown to report incident to civil police.
	Oct 22	Launch party made further inspection of Sweers Island accompanied by Sgt Nuss of civil police. 36 (actual) 31 (establishment)
	Nov 11	1,100yds of landing strip completed
	Nov 12	Anson EF 9224 landed on new air strip. P.O R.J Brown to takeover command.
	Nov 18	Water shortage acute, aggravated by lack of petrol, bad tyres and tubes. Source of water 10miles over rough bush track.
	Nov 19	Preparation for wet season commenced. Large mess hut and kitchen constructed of bush timber and bark with raised stone floor. Work commenced to raise tent floors. Visits during month from Anson a/c 'MV “Britha”'; Catalina a/c; MV “Leisha” 38 (actual) 39 (establishment)
	Dec	Visits from MV “Britha” Anson a/c; walrus a/c
	Dec 15	New 200 yd rifle range commenced
	Dec 17	Store for rations constructed of bush timber and bark completed
	Dec 26	All power supplies unserviceable. Station no-operational pending supply of new parts. 38 (actual) 39 (establishment)
1944	Jan 3	Spare parts arrive. Throughout month there are visits from Walrus a/c; Dragon a/c: RAAF boat “Glenda”.
	Jan 10	Commenced building officers mess
	Jan 14	Unidentified a/c plotted. Appeared to be viewing island 10 -15 miles north of unit.
	Jan 15	natives reported large black ship made 4 unsuccessful attempts to land at beach approximately 15 miles NW of unit. Disappeared in direction of Rocky Island. Description suggested a tanker. Investigation was immediately carried out by officer in charge and W/O Dunlop, Aerodrome Defence instructor. No trace found. Natives making the discovery were again questioned but were adamant. from further questioning it was revealed that they were first attracted from the bush by the sounding of the boats horn. before leaving the area 8 natives were posted in pairs, as lookouts about 5 miles apart.
	Jan 16	At dusk an unidentified surface vessel was plotted from Rocky Island to within 10 miles of the unit. the track showed the vessel to be fast moving and travelling directly toward the station. All precautions were taken and blackout strictly

observed. All station personnel manned guns throughout the night.

Jan 17 At dawn, no trace was found. Natives had nothing to report. OIC and party made observation of Rocky Island from high peak inland. Nothing unusual sighted.

Jan 18 Construction of machine gun emplacements commenced.

Jan 25 Work commenced to build up jetty and approaches approx. 4' using rocks and gravel, so that new Ford power supplies due beginning of February can be unloaded.  
36 (actual) 39 (establishment)

Feb 2 Rain. Catalina a/c instructed "Glenda" to proceed to NE tip of island and commence salvage of two American Boston aircraft.

Feb 5 jetty and approach completed.

Feb 12 Very heavy rain- 11 inches in 15hours. Tents and marquee leak. New reservoir overflowing - further re-inforced with rock. Landing strip wet but solid.

Feb 19 Catalina arrived- departed for salvage location and returned with sick native- departed for Karumba.

Feb 21 Commenced gravel surface on strip rendered boggy by heavy rains. MV "Glenda" arrived with P/O Rhodes, marine officer Karumba. It collected rations from Mission for the natives working on salvage.

Feb 24 Heavy rain- gravel unworkable. Commenced widening strip using 15 natives.

Feb 27 Walrus a/c arrived with mail and rations for native salvage workers. Refueled and left for salvage location. Returned, refuelled and departed for Karumba.

Feb 28 natives working on strip did not report for work. Unit personnel continued gravel spreading.  
35 (actual) 39 (establishment)

March 3 Walrus aircraft arrived from Karumba and departed for location of salvage. Returned heavily loaded. Unsuccessful attempt to take off. Unloaded and landed on strip- bogged. Surface gravelling recommenced using some native labour.

March 31 Completed gravelling landing strip. Surface now gravelled from end to end and in excellent condition.  
36 (actual) 39 (establishment)

April Miscellaneous visits recorded in operational record include: MV "Glenda"; Catalina A/c Walrus a/c etc.

April Miscellaneous visits recorded in operational record include: MV "Leisha"; Norseman a/c .Completed widening of landing strip - now 90yds wide and 1100 yds long with gravel runway surface.

May 7 F/O R.J Brown OIC departed with mission superintendent per launch "Bonny" for Bentick Island in an endeavour to contact hostile natives.

May 11 "F/O R.J Brown returned after landing at several points on Bentick island inspecting recently used camps and leaving turtle and dugong. Natives were called but none could be sighted. camp was made on an adjacent island from where

natives could be seen carving the turtle. Launch developed engine trouble - proceeded to Mornington under sail.”  
 [Summary of operational record includes details of miscellaneous visits of Norsemen aircraft].  
 26 (actual) 39 (establishment)  
 June 1 Ceased operations and began packing  
 June 13 Norseman arrived to evacuate personnel  
 June 21 Evacuation of advance party complete. Seven remain to guard and load equipment.  
 June 22 MV Britha arrived  
 June 23 MV Britha departed .....?...  
 26 (actual) 39 (establishment)

No further records until 1945 when 313RDF was at Green Island

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**Series 64**  
**# 320 Radar Station**  
**Mitchell River**

1943 July Records not written up until 5/8/43.  
 Visits from Seagull amphibian a2/3  
 Anson EF924  
 ANA Aircraft with Royal Mail  
 Construction of cabbage tree huts for kitchen; orderly room; w/t station all completed.  
 “Mention is made of the continued and valuable assistance rendered to the unit by the Mitchell River Mission Station.”  
 Aug Two Ansons and a Lockheed Hudson used for calibration.  
 Lugger “sheila” from T.I 8/8 with rations. because of tides it could not get closer than 2 miles to landing - stuff ferried by dinghy Rations in poor condition. “Vegetables grown by the unit have been in use in small quantities throughout month.  
 The Magnificent Creek on which this camp is situated has fallen some 4’ since June 9 but there is no reason to doubt the permanence nor quality of the water.....”  
 Sept 2 Elevated ramp from bush timber for maintenance of unit tender completed. The bulk of entries relate to rifle and tommy gun practice etc  
 Spet 19 Vegetable gardens extended to an area 40yds x 15 yds  
 Sept 23 Additional slit trenches located for covering fire were dug  
 Sept 24 Construction commenced on the recreation hut 36’x 16’ from bush timber and cabbage tree palms. Kitchen, radar hut, w/T hut, hospital and orderly room huts already in use-constructed from above materials.  
 Sept 28 F/O Ray DWO arrived for survey of an air strip



Sept 29	Visit by Lt Col Frith, Commanding Officer 43rd Australian Infantry Battalion. He is also officer in charge of defence of the east coast of the gulf. Fresh vegies from garden in use. Visits from "Francis Pritt " etc.
Oct 9	The mess hut was completed and put into use. The airmen's section has comfortable accommodation for eight 6'X3' tables and a separate officers mess is partitioned off at one end. The structure provides a cool and airy mess and recreation hut and is regarded as a worthy addition to camp facilities.
Oct 15	The shelters for the motor generator sets were extended and the roofs raised at hip so as to provide quicker run off from the heavy downpours experienced here.
Oct 16	A well approx. 20' deep with a plan areas of 25sq feet has been sunk in order to provide auxiliary water supply. Owing to sandy nature of the soil it has been found necessary to line the well completely with timber. This work has been put in hand, ti-tree being selected as having the least effect on the drinking quality of the water.
Oct 18	River sinking rapidly. Water has developed a strong weedy taste and slight odour. All supplies boiled before use.
Oct 23	During the past week all tents were mounted on elevated platforms constructed from a log framework filled with earth. This provides a deck approx. a foot above the surrounding ground in preparation for the heavy rains which are expected shortly. Drains have been dug to discharge surface water from low lying areas to the River.
Oct 24	A span of the low level bridge over Magnificent Creek on the road to the landing was dismantled , new foundations out in and decking reconstructed. A creek crossing further down towards the Mitchell River was provided with a complete new decking of heavier timber. This work was done with native labour supervised under RAAF supervision. {Other entries relate to the delivery of provisions etc.}
Nov	Supplies bought by SS Poonba. Lugger "Francis Pritt operating as pilot [obviously difficult to navigate to RDF Station when river is low.]
Nov 24	Well completed. [Other entries relate to delivery of stock and general operation. Note a diminishing number of aircraft in the area].
Dec 9	Extensions to kitchen completed. Extension of roof in three directions making interior cooler and reducing the number of flies.
Dec 10	Road to landing in bad condition due to rain.
Dec 15	Road closed.
Dec 31	"An offer was made by Mr A W McLeod Superintendent of the Mission to supply 10 milking cows for the unit. The offer was unsolicited and is gratuitous. A yard is being constructed together with bails etc. Delivery of cows is expected in a few days."

		[Long complaints about delivery of equipment and stores from T.I and Horn Island]
		“All necessary timber for the elevated platforms for the radar equipment has been collected and dressing of timber is well underway. The platform will give an elevation of 21’ making the centre of the array 36’ above the ground.”
1944	Jan 5	Work commenced on construction of tower for elevation of radar equipment, bloodwood and ti-tree local hardwoods are being used.
	Jan 24	The Magnificent Creek has risen 7’ in last 2 days another 5’ before reaching camp but as tents have platforms of approx. 1’ above ground we anticipate no problem.
	Jan 25	Tower for Radar equipment completed.
	Jan 30	New overhead transmission and telephone lines constructed. Severe electric storms experienced during month and a native woman at the mission was killed by lightening strike. Vegetable garden suffering because of heat and grasshopper plague. Cow yard completed and 5 cows on loan from mission provided . Producing approx. 5 gals of milk per day.
	Feb 28	Magnificent creek has risen 6’ since 20 Feb. High flood level now been reached. precautions taken earlier have proved adequate and no inconvenience has resulted. The creek is now 14’ above min level in Nov and is flowing at about 6knots. The surrounding country side is completely flooded except for the aerodrome which is still serviceable condition except for the cross strip which is boggy at the south end.
	Feb 29	Vegies doing poorly due to weather and insects except for [potatoes planted with slips from the mission.. Few aircraft sighted suggest 6 months maximum life of the unit. Complaint re service of unit with supplies.
	March	Complaint about equipment at Horn Island awaiting delivery to this unit in excess of 7 months. Serious problem with equipment due to lack of spare parts. River back to normal level. Work recommenced on vegie garden.
	April 4	Commenced grass cutting on strip. Road to landing not available for traffic for another 3 weeks.
	April 8	OIC visited Mission to examine communication system (message arriving by radio are sometimes addressed to Mission- Mission strip. Mission runners frequently convey info to unit relative to shipping movements) and generally further goodwill.
		Visits by :- C47; 4x Boomerang (No.5 squadron) on cross country exercise. Walrus and Norseman
	April 26	Trip to landing 1st since wet season. track good but very overgrown.

Visits by:-DC3; Dragon; Boomerang; and Lugger 'Francis Pritt'

New mechanics workshop is being fitted in centre section of tower. Electric wiring system renewed. MV 'Glenda' with supplies from Horn Island disabled between Aurukun Mission and Horn Island. Tomatoes about to ripen in garden.

May Norseman. Indication that unit may soon move out.

May 8 NEA instructs arrangements be made with Mission superintendent to hold aviation fuel after movement of unit. [Reference to security risk of/to? Mission].

May 31 Cabbage tree has been placed over roof and walls of top section of radar operation tower. Further work deferred because of impending movement. MV "Glenda" unserviceable near Mapoon Mission.

June 2 Commenced dismantling of Radar equipment. Unserviceable packing cases replaced by others from Rutland Plains Cattle Station. Local grass used to pack delicate equipment. Bush Timber used for sturdy crates. 2x DC3 (C47) aircraft evacuated 18 personnel.

June 12 Temporary camp set up. All equipment at landing and personnel. The river landing is 15 miles from Mitchell River and approx. 16 miles from old campsite. [No "landing" constructed - just the point where the mission unloads stores. Includes description of the spot and its unsuitability for long term camp].

June 13 "In response to this units request to HQ NEA and 42 Radar wing HQ that the RAAF should assist the Mission whose food stocks were extremely low and which was unable to secure transport of 33 tons of general cargo awaiting shipment from Horn Island, aircraft Norseman arrived with 1000lbs of flour, sugar and rice. Norseman was in process of evacuating personnel from 311 Radar station (Aurukun Mission) to Higgins. 320 Radar owes debt to Mitchell River <Mission for general assistance, provisions and native labour."

June 28 Someone got dengue fever " The existence of mud flats and close proximity of natives probably is responsible for the incidence of fever in this area"

June 30 Notes thank people by name: Late Mr A McLeod and current superintendent Mr W.F Carrington, Mr W Wilson and Revd. Sailor Gabriel of Mitchell River Mission. Mr W.F Kreidemann of Rutland Plains Station. Sisters Pike and Shaw of Australian Inland Mission Hospital Dunbar; and No. 5 Squadron for mail and supplies

July 8 Tender sent to Rutlands to purchase supplies. Aboriginal guides to River mouth to await arrival of MV "Glenda".

July 20 Signalled that vessel "Britta" was in Gulf and could uplift unit if heavy items of equipment could be dismantled and packed. Other entries deal with discomfort and inadequacies of temporary camp. Can't swim because of sharks and water

snakes. 10 personnel left- 7 of which are at Mitchell River camp.

No further operation record sheets until Jan 1945 when the unit is in T'ville and ready to go to New Guinea.

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**Where and when these RDF units were about**

No. 312 Radar Station	Mascot	
	Horn Island	21.2.43 - 23.4.43
	Wessel Island NT	
	Marsden Park NSW	
	Strathpine Qld	
	Morotai Island	
	Tarakan Borneo	
	Deniliquin NSW	
No.313 Radar Station	Mascot NSW	
	Horn Island	21.2.43 - 25.3.43
	Mornington Island	25.3.43 - 3.9.43
	T'ville	
	Green Island	
	Jacquinet Bay	
No. 320 Rada Station	Mascot	21.4.43 - 23.5.43 en route to
	Mitchell River	9.6.43 - 5.9.44
	Townsville	5.9.44 - 1.1.45 en route to
	Bouganville Island	6.1.45 - 6.12.45
No.2 Air Ambulance Unit	Horn Island	1.3.44 - 30.4.44
No. 113 Air Sea Rescue Flight	Rathmine	1.2.46 - 22.4.46
No 9 Mobile Fighter Sector HQ	Horn Island	9.10.42 - 3.11.42
(later renamed 109)		
No. 12 Mobile Fighter Sector HQ	Horn Island	28.6.43 - 6.4.44
(renamed no112 18.10.43)		
RAAF Station	Archer Field	17.6.40 - 1.7.42
RAAF Station	Rathmines	14.8.39 - 1.10.47
Air Defence HQ	Higgins Field	31.1.45 - 16.1.46
No. 75 Wing HQ	Townsville	30.9.43 - 24.10.43
	Horn Island	27.10.43 - 7.2.44
	Higgins	18.2.44 - 25.8.44

No. 26 Operational Base unit Iron range	7.6.42 - 9.12.44
No. 27 Operational Base unit Cooktown	24.4.42 - 26.4.46
No. 28 Operational Base unit Horn Island	15.5.42 - 29.12.44
No. 3 Operation Training Unit Rathmines	17.12.42 - 1.2.46
No. 13 Stores Unit Thursday Island	12.6.43 - 27.10.43
No. 23 Air Stores Parts ? Thursday Island	15.1.44 - 18.9.44

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Notes on DC 3 Crash at Higgins Field  
 Information from Australian Archives at Mitchell  
 A705/1  
 32/10/3557  
 Subject: Investigation re accident USAAF Aircraft operated by ANA at Higgins Field 5-5-45

DC3 call sign VH-CXD occurred at Higgins Field near Cape York at 5.18am.  
 Captained by Australian National Airways - Capt W.E Clarke  
 Crew - W/O W.H Hornibrook (2nd pilot)  
           W/O A.H Gidley (radio operator)  
           F/S N.T Brown (extra 2nd pilot)  
 2x US passengers ex Brisbane were on board. viz S/sgt Gorghty and Cpl Cozens.  
 Plane left Brisbane about 8.30 pm on 4/5/45 on courier trip to New Guinea. Crashed while circling on approaching to land at Higgins Field and caught fire. All occupants were incinerated.  
 Director General of Civil Aviation to Minister.

## Appendix E

### Transcripts of conversations with Mrs Sagigi regarding experiences with red devils.

Them Short man ee gad here too inside dem scrub. When you go rond one place ah dere lo scrub you sabbee its dem that makke your head no good. You marke dis place you go you walk go den youm come out here again. Mepla bin dis kind before . Mepla all school gel. We always go inside por sorbee ( look dis tree ee standup here front lo Mumma Duck heaya Sorbee tree .All wild one grow lo side lo road.) So dere were you go for dat depot now,before that same scrub ee wannemere now, Alau scrub or Bamaga scrub the wanem we call em, mepla all go inside dere, Mepla all school girl, ee bin got dans there too ontop ee think mepla bin wagabout go ontop por dat business sorbee mepla go inside alsame angoon andaipah -"eye open" like dat ahh? Go por wanem dere sorbee , nice black one we keep go go. Go alright we sitdaown an kaikai pas. Satisfy now enough for carry em go house and when we go inside we marke dem tree markem like dat! Come we sit down nice log ee got asalike black antbed ee stuck. Sitdown dere. Kaikai Okay pinnis satisfy. Alright. Tie em up em now por carry em go outside por road now. Alright here we go start wagabout now. Wagbout which way we go take em we go take dis course thas way we bin cum. Which way go? Go go cum out lo same antbed were we bin sitdown. Cum dis way dis way we go cut dis way we cut dis waynow gogogogo cum back por de same ant bed were we bin sitdown. Okay em now make head go ron. Ey! Which way north,south, east or west? East but we cum por de sameplace. An you know what the sun ee cum afternoon now. Sun ee cum afternoon now. We start sitdown now. We bin cry mimi or margie ? one small gel ee cry "Mamma!" ( Alfie alfie too) I stuck em "no cry no cry" you me go amen now. We start pright now we prayer. Prayer, prayer, prayer pinis! We talk eh somebody have to climb up ontop lo tree.Alight nobody wanem, so I bin climb up no too wanem I bin cum down again. You me go take dis course we wagabout go sitdown Prayer Prayer Prayer prayer pinis talk "Mepla wannee cum out por go house now go Bamaga" Talk por dempla "youpla make road por mepla go straight Youpla sabbee youpla, youpla wanne mepla like dat." Talk por dem short man alright sitdown pas spell . Nobody bin bother for touch dem sorbee where you carry dem nothing ! Everybody pright. Mutta carry dem sorbee inside lo dress. Go standup, short wagabout sitdown mutta spell Talk gen, chuckee talk por dem short man When talk lo mepla pinis. Mutta bullock ee hullaa MAAAA! Dat one lo pence ! Thank god bullock here! Mepla mutta wagabout straight, he hullaa gen three times. Dat number three, mepla dere outside pinis cum out from scrub. Follow fence now down dis one ee fence go por road, ee got gate wad. We bin small kin, mepla bin tightee all sorbee now before sundown . Ee got big feasting dat day. Mepla bin wanna walkabout for dem kind business now. Wagarouns dere one place all day. From dere I never go inside lo scrub for sorbee. till today!"

Do they hurt you or just get you lost?

Only get you lost thas all. But them ones outside [off the mainland i.e on the islands] sometimes when dey wild maybe por someting like that, all can go for you. (all make you go silly {shorty} assa dis Mickery here {mumma Clae} everyone go firelight)

## Mumma Elaine's experience at Muri:

Me two fella bin go , me and olman. Metwo bin go dere lo Muri. I listen em bin tell ee this kind haunted place . We go - when I be go gettee clam shell (I no bin kaikai clam shell too !) I bin you know, too glad dis kind. I bin speak for that old man: You go takem out all dem clam shell, big big one sitdoen inside and the water just ready for go down ee bin high water. EE just ready for go down ee bin go down slowly, EE big wannem just straight here and other one dere you can look! An em I think em bin forget to chuck ee talk or something like that. Em listen too! Em go wannem ere dinghy - and me I start crackee oyster, I silly for dem oyster, cum straight in of that pointed hill, hill frontside, crakee oyseter inside mangrove. I peeget now, I whistle, I talk myself and den whene wane elp I talk too rough. I got big mouth , I go EHEH! I go like dat! An I think dempla listen they think ' Mmm dis girl go too far!' You know anyway I bin listen whisper! Asa man talking whisper cum and den my heart ee jump now! I mutta stop now I no wanne move! Ya gah! I bin whistle then sing. Sing go go and when that sing bin stop that frightened feeling now bin cum long me. I listen whisper! And them some stone ee roll asa this kind straight, as if ee can cum and hit my head! This oyster i bin bust him I go ron this kind and cum back . Ee got nother one I bin bust em bust em leabe him. I bin take dis one here. An I cum back I cum back I go start em from begin cum rond this kind again. That big stone ee roll, I no bother for look cum ontop only wait. Ee hitee head blo me! Yeah I bin get that mark and I bin look blood! Two same time! I bin holler I no care only I wait em what time stone bin hittee mee but nothing stone bin fall down. When em bin heaya em bin sabbee straight away, em bin cum start ee engine "cum cum ontop" broke his shirt tight em long that wannem ee put that shirt ron em say mutta go. Me two bin run dis way we run go, em show that where them old people bin camp em sow me 'see look that ontop lo dat hill dere ee got road. Ee got cave dere.' Me two go go go eeh talk about mutta allee all dem pissing wannemere carry sea cum all mullet nuther kind, nuther kind ! Pass one cum, second one cum. Then look them wannem two catch ee spear. em speak for me lokk all piss ee cum you catchee outer [outboard] I no sabbee outer. This school ee now cum inside . Em speak I mus go spear em. Ee stand up lo forehead, then there em let go em spear, outboard Whooa! mutta spear then em go through (SHOE??). Spear go pas em go behind! Sa dere when em be cumup em em swear now go ontop . F & B fly! anyway me two bin go small ilan dere, ee got all dem 'saraiegg' only small wannem diskind sand bank dis kind sand place. Isa mangaroo stoney place me to go dere em spek go pick up all egg mutta go em speak you go make fire here. I speak no no no no I no wanna make fire, I pright! Em speak my foot ee sore, ee sore. I said I pright! ee said anyway ee no got nothing here isa that big rubbish ilan dere standup. Ee haunted ilan em speak dat one I supposed to talk too talk langus! . Anyway, I wagabout go ontop an pick up all dem saraiaeg. I pick up all saraieg go pas all sairai ee ply cumm sittdown back al bornee egg gen go. You cum back look where bin pickem em , gottee all egg dere. An from ther I speak I no wannee roast all fish here. Anyway speak no ee got nothing here. I chuckee wannem catchee jaremJarem I cas em three. One billa , an roast em kaiakai pinis .. no go longside that Ilan it make alsa wannem, go outside way! Nice and fine too the day.

## Appendix F

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### Jomen Tamwoy's Story

This account was written by Jomen Tamwoy for his family the unpublished and undated manuscript was kindly provided to me by Bekara Sebasio.

I Jomen Tamwoy, I was born at Badu Island on the 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 19... I was educated by European teacher the late Mrs ..... At the age of 16 years I was appointed an Assistant teacher assisting my head Teacher in all school work. Also I was appointed a 1<sup>st</sup> Scout Master to Western Group of Torres Strait Islands and taught the Boy Scouts about scout movement and activities and displays.

In 1924 I got married on the following year 1925, I went across to Thursday Island to meet the World Chief Scout, Sir Baden Powell and his daughter Chief Girl Guide.

In 1930 I was transferred to Duaun Island near New Guinea as a head teacher. In 1931 I was called back to Badu for further training course until 1933. In 1934 I was again transferred to Mabuiag Island then in 1935 I was sent to Yam Island.

In the beginning of 1936 I was called to T.I by the Director of Aboriginal Affairs who advise me to go across to the mainland to take over the school work from the Church mission (Cof E) at Cowal Creek.

After arriving at Cowal Creek Reserve to commence my school duties it was discovered that the village was in shocking condition (Humpy Day). No teachers accommodation, no school House. Children at the time were schooling in an part of the Bark Church. There were no decent buildings. People lived in humpies.

After settling down I started to work on the house with some men helping me, also we work on gardens, making big community garden, planting sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, pineapples and bananas.

Those early days were ration days simply call hand- out or spoon fed.

My wife and I have to get up at 6am to cook for the old people and children.

I had several works to do each day namely 1<sup>st</sup> give the rations out at 8am; medical attention at 8.30am, 9 am at school.

Later years past the Director and I.I.B (Island Industries Board) appointed me to run the Store, as Branch manager. Then last of all I was elected community chairman until today.

In 1941 to 1944 when the World War was on. I had a very difficult occasions high vacuated people to Muttee Head with stores and supplies of all sorts. We first build humpies to live in. The most difficult time I have, when the people and kids got sick, I have to send a man to army medical aid post for a Doctor. Its often or sometimes comes to my memory my old struggle days.

As I am an ex school teacher I've started my school career in 1936 on Cowal creek Aboriginal Reserve until I have finished my course in December 1971.

I have retired.

Before I come to conclusion I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, the Director (Mr Killoran) the Minister Mr Hewett and the Premier Jo-Peterson for their great helpfulness in the past. (Tamwoy undated)



## **Appendix G**

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### **Selected Correspondence Relating to the Coen and Iron Range WWII Aerodromes.**

**The following records are held in the Australian Archives Repository  
(Mitchell ACT).**

p411- p414	A705/1 Item 7/1/672
p415- p423	A705/1 Item 7/1/1484
p424	A705/1 Item 7/1/672



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

In reply Quote 215/102/125

DEFENCE		
R.A.A.F.		
7	1	672

Telephone :  
M 3751 (8 LINES)

Telegraphic Address :  
"AVIAT, MELBOURNE."

5449

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION,

"ALMORA HOUSE,"  
522-538 LITTLE COLLINS ST.,  
MELBOURNE, C.I.

MEMORANDUM FOR -

The Secretary,  
Department of Air,  
Victoria Barracks,  
MELBOURNE. S.C.I.

PREPARATION OF R.A.A.F. ADVANCED OPERATIONAL BASE NEAR COEN  
AND EMERGENCY LANDING GROUND NEAR IRON RANGE - NTH. Q'LD.

In reply to your memorandum 9782 dated 26/3/40 on the above subject, it is desired to advise that, since writing my memorandum No. 4563 on 18th March, a detailed report has been received from the inspecting officer (Mr. Augenson) who surveyed the Iron Range site and a copy of same is attached.

2. This slightly modifies the layout suggested in our memorandum of 18/3/40, but it is submitted that the NW-SE runway shown on plan Z-1137 attached should answer your requirements.

3. Early advice regarding your wishes would be appreciated as the wet season is now ending and the Main Roads Commission is making arrangements to commence work on the Coen site.

*Handwritten:* 215/102/125  
3/1/40

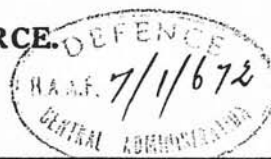
*Handwritten signature:* A. B. Cornett  
(A. B. Cornett)  
Director-General of Civil Aviation.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

MINUTE PAPER.

(This side only to be written on.)

G.11814/20.



SUBJECT: PREPARATION OF R.A.A.F. ADVANCED OPERATIONAL BASE NEAR COEN  
AND EMERGENCY LANDING GROUND NEAR IRON RANGE - NTH Q'LAND.

D.W.B. *1/10. 5/4.*

The position regarding Coen and Iron Range aerodrome sites is not clear from this file.

2. In A.S.7463 of 13th March you asked Civil Aviation whether Coen site would be suitable for the operation of Service aircraft, and referred to a conversation I had with Mr. Augenson. The point was that in my conversation I discovered that the proposed aerodrome site itself at Coen was not so liable to fog as the old site nearer the town. But this is not the whole crux of the matter. The Coen district is hard to get at by contact flying in all weathers owing to the mountainous nature of the country between Coen and the coast. Therefore, the fact that Coen aerodrome may be sufficiently big for Service aircraft is not the whole point.

3. In Civil Aviation's 4563 of 18th March it is apparently proposed that an emergency ground nearer the coast should be prepared, presumably to be used when Coen is not accessible, and in paragraph 5 of this memorandum Civil Aviation asked us to concur in this course.

4. Again, attached to Civil Aviation's 4801 of 20th March was a submission from the Property and Survey Branch asking, in view of rumours, whether Coen was likely to be abandoned, and urgent advice was again required. The Air Board's reply (9782 of 26th March) has not at all made it clear to Civil Aviation whether we propose to go on with Coen and Iron Range or only with Iron Range. I notice in a report by Mr. Augenson that he thinks that an emergency landing ground suitable for all weather use could be prepared near Iron Range for £1500.

5. I would like to make the requirements of this Directorate clear -

- (a) We require to be able to operate from a base or bases at or near Coen. This has been laid down on the policy file for advanced landing grounds. If Coen is not accessible in all weathers, due to cloud on the mountains, then an emergency landing ground which is accessible should be made.
- (b) If the emergency landing ground is accessible in all weathers it would be preferable to have that ground only, provided that petrol and oil and telephonic communications could be got at that ground.
- (c) If the communications mentioned in (b) above cannot be provided except at excessive cost, then the best arrangement is to have two grounds, Coen for normal use and the emergency landing ground so that aircraft can at least get down after the end of their patrols.

6. I do think that the question should be cleared up for the benefit of the Civil Aviation Department.

*W. H. A. G. O.*

W. H. A. G. O.

Wing Commander. D.O.T.

## MINUTE PAPER

SUBJECT EMERGENCY LANDING GROUND FOR R.A.A.F. NEAR IRON RANGE, N.Q.

G. I. G. O.  
-----

In my opinion it would be alright to give an assurance to the R.A.A.F. that an Emergency Landing Ground, which would be suitable for use in all weathers, could be prepared on the site inspected near Iron Range.

2. Plan of the suggested preparation is shown on Z-1137 attached to file.

3. Estimates of the preparation are as follow :-

- (i) Grub out to depth of <sup>9</sup> 12 inches all trees and stumps on the area edged red on Plan Z-1137.

Approx. 50 acres @ £5 = £250.

- (ii) Fell timber stump high on area hachured in red on plan.

Approx. 50 acres @ £5 = £250.

- (iii) Grading and rolling surface of area edged red

Approx 40 acres = £300

- (iv) Contingencies and gravelling likely soft patches

= £650

£1,500

4. Alternatively two narrower strips 5 chains wide might be prepared, and timber felled back 1 chain from sides and 20 chains from the ends. However, such preparation would be somewhat more expensive and would not leave any surplus for gravelling any soft patches which might require attention. The winds are consistently E.S.E./S.E. and occasionally N.W. and it is considered that one strip would be sufficient.

5. It is considered that items (i), (ii) and (iii) should be completed first, and the funds remaining be utilized for gravelling any low patches or areas likely to be soft in wet weather.

6. Good gravel can be obtained close to the site.

7. The above estimates do not provide for any approach road or telephone to the site from Iron Range where there is a small Radio set. However, if the preparation is carried out in the dry season no difficulty should be experienced in using the old Portland Road.- Wenlock Road - as far as I can remember, when I proceeded to the site by motor truck. Some creek crossings might require a bit of temporary corduroy with timber. I think that the mining community at Iron Range would clear a more direct track to the site if it is prepared.

*V. Augerson.*  
.....(V. AUGERSON).....  
Inspector of Aerodromes  
1/4/1940.

# AIR BOARD.



Referred by \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Meeting AIR MEMBER FOR ORGANIZATION  
AND EQUIPMENT  
Present \_\_\_\_\_

AGENDA No. 3920  
1942

## SUBJECT—

AERODROME AT COEN. QUEENSLAND.

C.5200/41.

Urgent advice has been received from North Eastern Area that the runways at the Advanced Operational Base at Coen, Queensland, require to be extended to accommodate B.26 type aircraft.

2. The runways (one ESE/WWN and one NE/SW) are now gravelled 1,200 yards long and require to be extended to 2,000 yards. The approximate estimated cost of the work is £40,000 and approval is recommended. This figure is to be regarded as tentative only, as sufficient data is not at present available to prepare a close estimate. For this reason also, schedules and plans of the proposed work are not available, but, subject to approval, these will be prepared on the spot by an Aerodrome Officer of this Department in conjunction with engineers of the Department of the Interior.

3. The additional land required is believed to be State Crown Land and will probably be available at a nominal rental. Action will, however, be taken to approach the State Government in this regard.

4. The work is essential for <sup>allied</sup> war operational requirements and approval is recommended.

5. Owing to the urgency of the matter, it is recommended that the Minister be requested to exercise his powers to approve pursuant to the provisions of War Cabinet Minute No. 1573.

6. Funds: Provision has not been made in the existing programme for this project (B.196) and it is therefore recommended that additional funds amounting to £40,000 be approved.

*M. Henderson*  
Air Vice-Marshal,  
Air Member for Organization and Equipment.

24/4/42.

## AIR BOARD MINUTE.

Date of Meeting: 24th April, 1942.

Present: A.M.O.E., A.M.P., D.G.S.P., B.M., F.M., D.C.A.S. (A.F.R.25(4.))

For submission to the Minister,

The Board concurs in the recommendations in paragraphs 2 and 5.

A.M.O.E. Int'd. W.H.A.

A.M.P. Int'd. H.N.W.

D.G.S.P. Int'd. G.I.

B.M. Int'd. W. S. J.

F.M. Int'd. H.C.E.

Sgd. F. J. MULROONEY.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY.

Enc 7C

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
Office of the Deputy Director General of Allied Works  
Queensland.

Allied Works Council,  
Department of the Interior,  
Box 1412T G.P.O.  
23rd December, 1942.

MEMORANDUM :

IRON RANGE AIRFIELD

The following information is submitted for the Director-General's information, for direction as to whether the completion of the scheme is a U.S.A.F.I.A. or an Air Board project, and for direction as to the extent of the work involved in completing the air-field, and incidentally, the access road from the Airfield to the shipping point at Portland Roads.

The state of the airfield, as given below, has been summed up from a brief inspection by the Deputy Director-General in September last, from notes by the Main Roads Commission Northern Engineer's representative who visited the area, and particularly from information obtained from the Public Estate Improvement Branch Foreman (Mr. Moulden) who has been on the job with the civil force assisting the U.S.A. 46th Engineers since the inception of the job, and who left the job, on approved leave, on the 11th inst.

The construction of the airfield, and the improvement of the access road to the Port were undertaken by the 46th Engineer Regiment of the U.S.A.F.I.A. as a directly controlled U.S.A.F.I.A. project: Attached to the 46th Engineers was a civil constructional force organised and operated by the Public Estate Improvement Branch of the Main Roads Commission: This force had been building the Coen Aerodrome, an Allied Works project, but that job was closed and the P.E.I. force transferred to Iron Range to work with, and under the direction of, the 46th Engineers.

The Iron Range Airfield is in the Allied Works Council's Priority List as part of A1 project, Serial No. 1084, to which £500,000 was allocated. The Air Board's reference to the project is DWB.1207. In the original division of this amount of £500,000, as decided by Air Board, and as set out in Department of Interior Order No. 10167 issued on the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works on 19.6.42, £50,000 was allocated to Portland Roads (Iron Range) Airfield. Recently Mr. E.T. Doig, Superintending Engineer, Department of Interior, Townsville, forwarded an amended allocation of the £500,000 prepared in collaboration with the Base Section Engineer, Base Section 2, Townsville, in which the allocation for Portland Roads Airfield is reduced to £20,000. Copy of original and amended allocations is attached hereto. You were advised of this re-allocation in a letter dated 9th inst.

The project comprised :-

No. 1 Flight Strip :

A strip gravelled 100' wide in a clearing 250' wide: The strip is 7000' in length. The strip was formed and a quantity of gravel laid on top of the formation and rolled into it with a sheepsfoot roller finished with a cylinder roller: Mr. Moulden was not there when this strip was made but his observations indicate that the gravel is very thin. (NOTE: Mr. Pollock stated that it would be about 2".)

The U.S. Engineers are about to bitumen surface this runway.

This strip is on higher, sounder country than the other and will be less likely to cause trouble: However, observations made during the Deputy Director-General's last visit to the



field were that the strip surface may fail after bitumen surfacing, under heavy aircraft traffic in the wet season. Numerous shrinkage cracks in the runway surface were observed.

#### No. 2 (Claudie River) Flight Strip:

Strip 100' wide and 7000' long in a clearing about 250' to 300' wide. Formed on low country. 8" depth of red clayey soil with a little gravel, applied to surface and consolidated with sheepsfoot roller finished off with cylinder roller. The surface tar and bitumen surfaced:-

Primer Coat Crude Tar  
1st coat bitumen covered with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " screenings  
2nd coat bitumen covered with pea-size screenings.

Subsoil drains put in at each side of sealed strip: these contain an 8" earthenware pipe covered with broken metal for 6" then creek gravel to surface level. There is a bush timber (mostly tea tree) 6' x 3' culvert under this runway.

This strip is in wet low country and it is considered that the Claudie River overflow will submerge one end for some considerable distance.

#### ROADS AND TAXIWAYS :

- A is a taxiway leaving No. 1 runway and going towards Headquarters Camp: Provides a 40' wide taxiway made with red clayey soil: Very greasy in wet weather. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile long, with 3 hard standings of same material.
- B is a taxiway off No. 1 Runway, formed as in A but bitumen surfaced:  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long with 3 hard standings.
- C is a taxiway about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length, built similar to A joining Nos. 1 and 2 Runways: 18 hard standings.
- D is a "ring" taxiway off No. 2 strip about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length: 17 hard standings.
- E is a "ring" taxiway. Approx.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length with about 20 hard standings. (Leaves No. 1 Runway and joins A Taxiway.
- F. Taxiway is a new one under construction: About 1 mile long with a number of hard standings.

There is a number of bush timber culverts under the taxiways, and one culvert made of a double row of 44 gal. drums with the ends taken out. Each drum attached to the other by welding: A similar "drum" culvert being put in in F taxiway.

Mr. Moulden's general impression is that the drainage provided in the field is inadequate.

#### ROAD TO PORT :

Generally on sound country with some low sections on clayey soil which require gravelling to carry traffic in wet weather: A few sandy sections aggregating more than 1 mile - heavy sand difficult for motor traffic in dry weather. Distance from field to Port 29 miles (Speedo). The road generally would be at least 25' wide and would be fit for two way traffic if the surface were sound throughout, except on some small bridges and culverts which are single track only. Mr. Moulden's rough estimate of the nature of the road, working from the Port to the field, is:-

00 - 1.00 Loose sand requires a hard pavement

## 3.

1.00 - 2.00	Sound country.
2.00 - 2.50	Loose sandy - requires hard pavement
2.50 - 2.75	Short steep grade - greasy in wet weather - narrow bridge - Requires sound pavement: Grade not steeper than 1 in 10.
2.75 - 5.00	Sound country : Requires grading and light gravelling.
5.00 - 5.50	Some heavy clay soil requires proper gravelling.
5.50 - 8.00	Patchy - Sand stretches.
8.00 -14.00	White gravelly soil - good going. Wants only grading to formation.
14.00-15.00	Bad soil. Wants permanent pavement.
15.00-23.00	Formed and lightly gravelled by U.S. Engineers: About 3" gravel from Iron Range rapidly wearing off. Really requires sound gravelling throughout with, say, 5" to 6" gravel.
23.00 - end	Road greasy in wet weather, including sections along taxiways.

COMMENT:

The exact requirements to complete the airfield require to be defined by the responsible authority. If the U.S.A.S.O.S. contemplate completion to mean completing where the 46th Engineers leave off, the requirement will comprise completing any unfinished taxiways and drainage, final trimming, and any improvement to the road in hand but incomplete. However, reports indicate that runways and taxiways strengthening may be necessary to ensure that the field is fit for its required purpose of being an operational field for heavy bombers, particularly in view of the fact that it is situated in a rain forest area of heavy rainfall.

The following preliminary estimate is furnished to indicate the extent of the work, and the cost thereof, if strengthening of runways and taxiways are decided upon :-

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>QTY</u>	<u>COST</u>
1. Gravel in place, complete with binder, watering and rolling on 2 runways.	23,000 c.yds. @ 17/-	£19,550
2. Bitumen surfacing 2 runways, as per standard specification.	155,555 s. yds. @ 2/3	£17,500
<u>TOTAL FOR 2 RUNWAYS:</u>		<u>£37,050</u>
3. Gravel, as above, on taxiways	28,500 c. yds @ 17/-	£24,225
4. Sealing taxiways with 1 coat primer and 1 coat bitumen.	191,111 s. yds @ 2/-	<u>£19,111</u>
<u>TOTAL FOR TAXIWAYS</u>		<u>£43,336</u>
<u>GRAND TOTAL OF ABOVE</u>		<u>£80,386</u>

In addition, completion of the works, outside runway and taxiway surfaces, such as flanks, drains and possibly renewal of bush timber culverts, together with necessary improvements to the access road to the port, will bring the total requirement to £100,000.



4.

The Main Roads Commission District Engineer at Townsville has been directed to augment the civil force at present on the field to the extent necessary to complete it as early as possible. However, an urgent decision in the above respect is necessary so that he will know the extent of the work required.

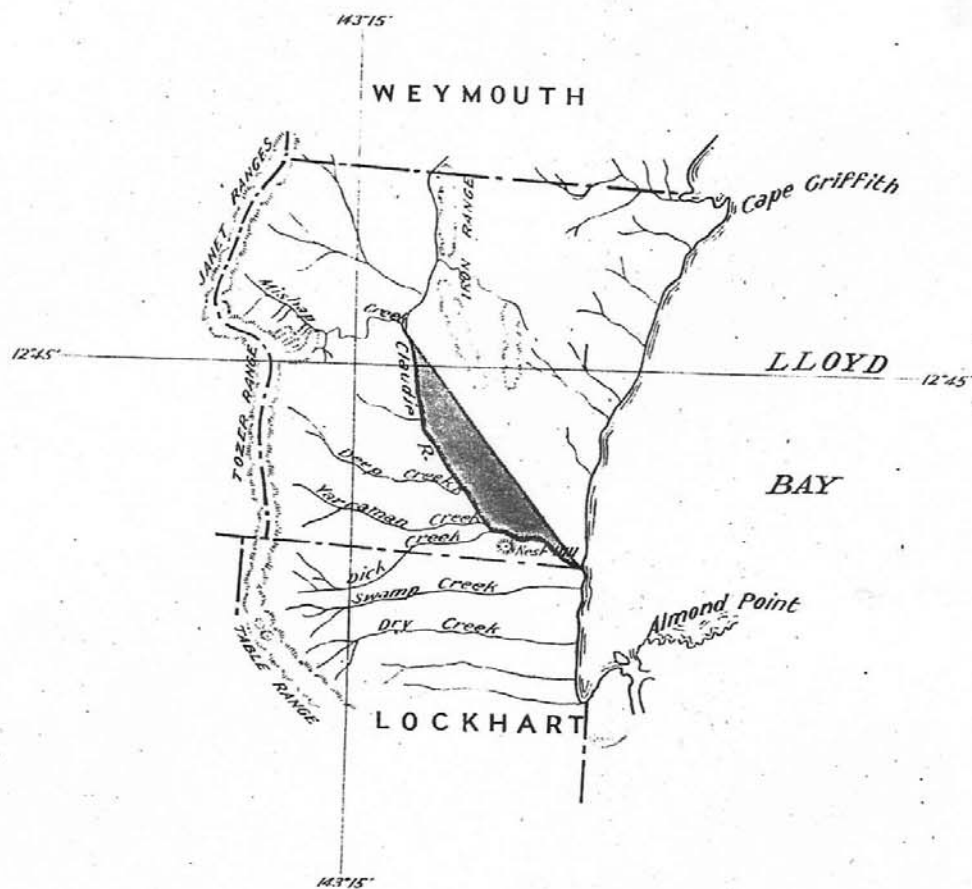
Financial authority to the extent indicated above has been provided: However, the revised allocation provides only £20,000 of which approximately £12,000 has been expended, to date.

Any additional funds could be provided from the unallocated balance of £100,000, shown in the revised allocation subject to the Director-General's approval.

(Sgd) W.A. Rogers.  
Secretary.

The Secretary,  
Allied Works Council,  
271 Collins Street,  
MELBOURNE C.1.

PARISH OF LLOYD  
COUNTY OF WEYMOUTH  
QUEENSLAND



Note:-Measurements shown in

PROPERTY AT IRON RANGE QLD.

Scale:- 1 inch equals 4 miles

Locality Plan No. 4 M. 122

Drawn by N.A.K.

Checked by N.M.W.

Property No.

Acq.  
Hrg. 2782

Date 20-7-43

DWG. 43/44-115

WORKS DIRECTOR (AIR SERVICES)

**SECRET**

COPY NO. 22

IRON RANGE AERODROME, NTH. QUEENSLAND - AERODROME AND DISPERSAL WORKS AND OTHER FACILITIES.Introduction.

1. War Cabinet (vide Minute No. (2146) dated 15th May, 1942) approved of programmes of Australian-American works projects submitted in Agendum No. 223/42, the estimated costs of such programmes totalling £14,679,665. Provision of £500,000 was included in that programme for the construction of a number of advanced operational bases in Northern Queensland.

2. Of that latter amount, £50,000 was allocated for the landing ground at Portland Roads, the site selected being at Iron Range. This agendum relates to additional costs of that particular project.

Responsibility for Construction of Iron Range Aerodrome.

3. The initial work of construction at Iron Range was originally commenced by U.S.A. engineers as a directly controlled U.S.A.F.F.E. project. Attached to the engineers was a civil constructional force, organised and operated by the Queensland Main Roads Commission.

Cost of Aerodrome Construction to Date.

4. The cost of aerodrome construction at that stage totalled £75,000, War Cabinet approval having been obtained (vide Minute No. (3005) dated 6th September, 1943) for the provision of additional £25,000 required to cover that commitment.

Additional Works Requested by U.S.A.F.F.E.

5. Requests for additional extensive works to be undertaken at Iron Range have since been received from Headquarters, U.S.A.F.F.E. Brief details are as follows :-

## (a) Provision of additional runway and dispersal facilities -

- (i) Construction of a new sealed 160<sup>0</sup> runway.
- (ii) Improvements to the existing 120<sup>0</sup> runway and taxiway system.
- (iii) Construction of blast pens.

The estimated cost of these works is £135,000.

## (b) Reconstruction of existing road and provision of additional facilities -

- (i) Reconstruction of existing road between Portland Roads and Iron Range.
- (ii) Construction of camp sites, provision of water supply and final sealing of two runways, etc.

at an estimated cost of £88,000.

6. These projects are an urgent requirement of the U.S.A.S.O.S. and have been co-ordinated with, and are in accordance with, strategical and operational plans.

7. In accordance with the terms of War Cabinet Minute No. (2897) it is certified that no alternative Australian accommodation is available, and the Allied Works Council have been requested to make a general oversight of the works to ensure that no material departure from the existing American standards involving additional expenditure is approved without the matter being brought to the notice of the Minister for Air.

Works Priority and Manpower Certificate.

8. The Works Priorities Sub-Committee have allotted an A.1 priority to this project, and certified that the manpower can be made available within the resources of the Allied Works Council.

Reference to Business Board.

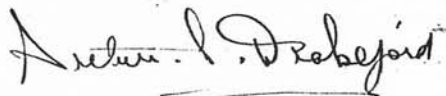
9. These proposals were referred to the Board of Business Administration which "had no views to record".

Recommendation.

10. I recommend that War Cabinet approval be given to the granting of an authorisation allotment of £223,000 to cover these additional works, expenditure to be charged to Department of Air Appropriations vide Estimates 1943/44. (Division No. 117 - "Reciprocal Lend-Lease", Item No.2 - "Expenditure on Joint Australian-U.S. Account.").



11th January, 1944.



(Arthur S. Drakeford)  
MINISTER FOR AIR.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Pre-PLANNING CAMOUFLAGE SECTION - NORTH EASTERN AREA

REPORT

Prepared by W. Bryan after inspection of site with  
F/L Edge and F/O Storey.

SERVICE. Department of Air.

LOCALITY Iron Range. N.Q.

ESTABLISHMENT R.A.A.F. camp site for operational base.

DESCRIPTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Iron Range comprises two strips situated about 25 miles  
S.W. of Portland Roads jetty.

The area in which the strips lie contains two totally  
different types of country. Firstly, there is extremely  
dense jungle on the low-lying, poorly-drained areas.  
Secondly, there is fairly thickly-timbered parkland  
country on the higher ground.  
Although they presented extraordinary possibilities as  
far as camouflage was concerned, the jungle areas were  
discarded as possible camp sites for health and drainage  
reasons.

A good site, that had previously been considered by  
R.A.A.F. officers, was also written off the list of  
possibles due to the fact that, since their last visit  
(accompanied by the Main Roads Supervisor) a large  
percentage of the timber there had been felled by  
Main Roads for corduroy.

When taxed with this fact the supervisor was unable to  
present any reasonable excuse or explanation. In fact,  
he denied that they had cut it, whereas his foreman later  
admitted to doing it.

Eventually a site was selected, in a position shown on  
the accompanying plan adjacent to taxiway "C" which  
links the two strips. This site will prove very handy  
for access purposes.

The site had formerly been used by an American Unit and  
they were leaving a building on the site that R.A.A.F.  
proposed to use as Barracks Store.

The general site was on a well drained gravel ridge, and  
the following buildings were pegged out in positions:-

1. Barracks Store (already on site)
2. Operations Building
3. Sick Quarters
4. Kitchen and Mess
5. Meat House and Cool Room
6. Store
7. Vegetable Hut
8. Ablutions and showers (officers and Sgts.)
9. " " (airmen)
10. Latrines (officers and Sgts.)
11. " (airmen)

The best use possible was made of the natural cover,  
which was quite good, the area being covered mostly  
with fairly large spreading Eucalypts.

Despite the fact that Main Roads were informed that this  
site was to be used and that timber should be preserved,  
a gang of their men felled a large amount of timber  
adjacent to the site and were actually encroaching on  
the site itself when they were discovered.

Mr. Cameron, the supervisor, was again taxed with this point, but merely procrastinated.

R.A.A.F. personnel are building the camp themselves and wavey eaves are incorporated in the standard drawings being used.

It was suggested that, out of possible surplus iron, wavey eaves be added to the existing American building in accordance with a design left on the job.

It was recommended that the smaller buildings be dulled down with Khaki Green, and the larger ones painted in disruptive patterns in Black and Khaki Green in accordance with plans also left on the job.

Personnel will live in pre-fabricated huts and tents. General sites for these were selected, but all tents will need to be dull painted.

Sufficient access should be provided by a single narrow loop road that already exists and passes directly through the camp.

It is understood that a camoufleur will probably be supervising the concealment of the Iron Range A.A. Battery. In this case he could also look after the camp site and strips generally. At present these do not warrant a full time camoufleur being stationed there.

It is recommended that careful control of tracking should be exercised.

*John Pincher*

COPY

9th August, 1945.

enc. 69B.

Superintending Engineer,  
Dept. of Works & Housing,  
BRISBANE.

COEN AERODROME.

Coen Aerodrome was visited by Mr. Greenwood and myself on the 12th July.

The runways are of gravel and are in reasonably good condition. Some of the stone averaging up to 2" with odd pieces as large as 6" are unravelling from the pavement, particularly on the 1050 runway towards the inter-section of the two runways. The unravelling is due partly to the washing out of the binder during the heavy wet weather and also due to the fines being blown out by aircraft slipstreams.

The loose stones on the surface are causing some concern to the pilots of light aircraft. Steps are being taken by Mr. Greenwood of the Townsville Office to obtain quotations from some of the local contractors to have the stones removed and certain sections loamed. It is proposed to carry out this work under funds provided by an R.A.A.F. Maintenance Requisition.

Couch grass is making good progress in covering the runways and probably about one third is now covered and it is believed that if the runways were watered occasionally it would not be long before they were completely covered with a mat of couch grass and maintenance then would be little more than keeping the couch grass watered.

It is strongly recommended, therefore, that when a permanent maintenance gang is established at this aerodrome, they be equipped with a suitable tank to enable the watering to be carried out, portable pump to facilitate filling the tank, and to keep weeds and grass in check until the couch grass had properly covered the runways, a suitable mower would also be of an advantage.

It is understood that during the dry season, the provision of sufficient water may provide a problem as the existing bore is reported only to be capable of delivering 2,000 gallons per day. However, if the grass could be given a good hold during the period when ample water is available very little watering would be required to enable it to survive the dry season. At the time of visit, there was ample water in adjacent creek and from indications this would last at the very minimum, another month probably much longer.

The extensions shown on drawing attached were never completed and are so uneven as to be dangerous if used for aircraft landings.

L.G. REMOND (SGD.)

AERODROME ENGINEER.