***‘HURRICANE HARRISON’***

***--Missionary,Teacher, Nurse, Organic Gardener and Lecturer—***

As shared with David Currie by Lorna Harrison-Down and family.

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***PREFACE***.

Roy was one of those people who accomplished unusual and attempted almost impossible projects and made them happen. I was just a young minister attending a Summer School at Avondale College. Roy Harrison was also there as a much older minister/missionary. On occasions when he took worships about some of his missionary experiences in the Islands of the South Pacific, I would come out in goose pimples. He was a most interesting and fascinating speaker and lived out his experience with God. As you will note in this book, God was with this man and his energetic wife Lorna.

Roy and Lorna went to Western Samoa the Solomon Islands and to Papua New Guinea where they had to overcome many difficulties and where there was little communication with the outside world. Travel was generally by mission boats and sometimes travelling in difficult and mountainous seas. But Roy was a man of prayer and God heard his prayers and often answered them in wonderful and even miraculous ways protecting him and his crew so many times.

They were days when preaching was often in the open and without microphones. At one time Roy was preaching to quite a large audience. No one knew, at the beginning, but the place arranged for him to stand and preach happened to be near a nest of ‘fire ants.’ These little ants began attacking his legs. He literally had ants in his pants! He would move from one leg to the other and while the onlookers and audience obviously enjoyed the message, they must have wondered at him standing on one leg and then on the other, as obviously his body language showed some discomfort. But, the message had to be preached and fearless Roy had to finish his sermon. However, as soon as it was over he raced to his nearby home where his family found him, under the shower, trying to get some relief from the stings of those ants.

Before the days of ADRA, church Dorcas Societies sent cartons of clothing to the Islands. The clothes were a new experience for most of the Islanders in those days. Men and women were generally dressed with meagre loin cloths, and that was it! However, the nationals were delighted to get some of the clothing and liked to dress up particularly for the church services. Roy was preaching one day when he noticed two ladies talking. One was obviously telling the other lady that she had her dress on the wrong way. She very carefully tried to change as Roy was preaching and for some reason the dress got stuck and she was in an almost hopeless situation. Roy had great difficulty in keeping his composure and at the same time preach God’s message to the rest of his audience.

Talks on health and nutrition were always popular for the nationals wanted to learn and better themselves under the blessing of Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist mission in Papua New Guinea, became known as the clean mission. The difference was that first of all, people came to know Jesus and His love. Then they followed His teachings and cleaned up their villages including their pigs. Now they could grow gardens, flowers and vegetables. The clothing gave them dignity and encouragement. The truth of Jesus’ soon return gave them hope, assurance and new direction in their lives. They sent their children to our church schools when many children couldn’t attend school for lack of funds. There was always a waiting list and children did well to stay in education. Let’s now look at more details of Roy’s life and work and perhaps why his colleagues and friends often referred to him as ‘Hurricane Harrison.’

***INTRODUCTION***

At the end of World War 11, Roy Harrison, minister, educator and nurse, was moved around the South Pacific to a number of developing regions. In each place his vision and goals were to widen the scope of the indigenous people; to better their living conditions; to have them come to know Christ and in so doing strengthen God’s church. In each place to which he moved, physical structures including schools were developed, churches built and the numbers of Seventh-day Adventist members grew. He was a man of prayer, faith and works and was blessed in His many endeavours to increase the family of God throughout a number of the Island fields to which he was called to work.

Roy was in charge of mission boats at different times and in different places. Two of these boats, “The Light” and “The Day Dawn” were his favourite vessels. It was well known that he never ventured into anything new for the Lord without praying about it. One day he was quite restless but what could he do? It was apparent to him that the Lord was directing him to take the “The Day Dawn” out to sea. They were soon covering the deep blue sea north of Papua New Guinea.

As they travelled on, nearly to the end of the north west coast of New Britain, they saw a white man on the shore, waving them to come ashore. Roy went with a couple of the crew in the dinghy to the shore.  The man said, “I am absolutely desperate, and I hope you can help me.” Roy asked him what his trouble was, and he said, “I have run out of cigarettes and I am in a bad way. Can you help me please?” Roy said, “I am awfully sorry, but I don’t smoke.”  The man then said, “What about your crew, would they have any?”  The problem was that all on board were Seventh-day Adventists and so the poor priest had to wait another day!

By this time it was quite late in the day and the man said to Roy, “What about staying the night with me, I would like some company.” So Roy agreed to spend the night there. During this time he told Roy that he was a Roman Catholic priest and was in charge of the church work all along the north coast of New Britain. During their conversation he explained to Roy that the native people close to the mission station were good Catholics, but back off the coast from where the boat had passed, were some coastal islands. He said, “They are the most fierce, hopeless people, and we have given up trying to convert them.”

When the priest learned that Roy was an Adventist missionary he remained quite friendly and invited the captain to eat with him. He was somewhat surprised to know that Roy was a vegetarian as he had not met someone like that before. Roy explained that a simple meal of sweet potatoes and native cabbage would be an adequate meal for him.

The next morning when the captain went back to his ship he told the crew that he now knew where they were to go.  The boat’s rudder was turned back toward the group of Kombe Islands mentioned by the priest. They had passed by there the day before.

Because it was late in the day Roy headed for the mission headquarters at Talasea.  When he arrived the missionary told him that all the chiefs of the Kombe Islands and the villages on the mainland, had arrived there and were trading their pigs. He suggested that Roy might like to talk with them, which he was delighted to do! He took one of his picture rolls from the ship and opened to the first picture and told its story. The chiefs asked for more, and Roy continued into the night and covered the whole of the picture roll of thirteen pictures. The theme was on Creation and the Plan of Salvation.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Roy made an appeal for each to get ready for the coming of the Lord. All of them asked for a missionary to come to their islands. The next morning Roy found his white clothes all covered with spittle from the betel nut the natives were chewing! As soon as possible, Roy returned to Rabaul to find missionaries for these new Islands.  This is where we see evidence of the provisions of God for such emergencies!

Back in 1914 Captain G.F. Jones was appointed to the Solomon Islands to open up the work. He went to the Moravo Lagoon, where the people were deeply into witchcraft and head-hunting. These people used big double-ended boats, and at the direction of their witch doctors, travelled in these vessels to other islands to bring back human scalps.  It is an understatement to say that these people were feared everywhere.  However, the Lord opened up their hearts as they listened to the messages from Pastor Jones. Church schools were established and everybody went to school, both adults and children. It was from among these people that Roy was able to find some of the volunteer missionaries to go to the new Islands of Kombe.

He sent an SOS to the Solomon Islands, Mussau and New Britain to get more volunteers to come to the new area. They were quickly found and Roy took all of them to their new stations. They were given a small stipend, a kerosene lamp with extra kerosene, soap, matches, and a laplap (cloth which they wrapped around the waist).

Several of these missionaries had a hard time at first, because the chiefs had asked for the missionaries without the people of the villages knowing anything of these invitations. The islanders were still quite primitive and wild and also wished to continue with their old life styles. Some of the missionaries were persecuted as a result.

One young Mussau couple, who had volunteered, were only recently married. Mussau men are very good fishermen and Uloulo, the husband, used to go fishing to get food for his wife, Lasi. When he brought the fish to shore the villagers would rush down and confiscate it all. This left the couple with very little food and Lasi, who was pregnant, unfortunately had a miscarriage at four months.  The night when this happened the couple conducted a private service and buried the baby in the floor of the little primitive house where they were staying. They knew that the local people would try to force them to have a pagan ceremony over the dead body.

Later, when Roy visited the islands, he discovered the situation the young couple were living under. He was deeply concerned and suggested that he take them away. They said they didn’t want to go, as they hadn’t had any fruit for their labour and besides their baby had been buried there.  A few years later when they were moved, the people were most distressed, for now they had learned to love and trust them and didn’t want to lose them. What miracles God performs in the hearts of people!

Another volunteer missionary called Verenga, from Matupit near Rabaul in New Britain, was very badly treated by the priest who occasionally came to the Island and endeavoured to convert the people to Catholicism. He would kick Verenga with his heavy boots, but the young missionary refused to defend himself.  When the district officer visited the place and the people told him what the priest did, the officer told Verenga to report the matter. The Government along with the district officers would make the man stop this bad treatment. Verenga said that he felt he couldn’t do this. The officer then decided to report the actions of the priest himself. Both Verenga and the priest, were required to go to Rabaul for a court case over the matter.

The Magistrate said to Verenga, “You are a strong young man, why didn’t you defend yourself?” He said, “ We are taught to love one another and not to hurt anyone, so I couldn’t do it.” Everyone in the court was very impressed with his answer – even the priest! There were other volunteers who were not well treated, but after some time, with much patience, love and care there came about an abundant harvest. Many of the young people went to Kambubu and in turn became missionaries for the Lord.

This was the beginning of a wonderful work as the Spirit of God opened the hearts of literally thousands of these island people who accepted Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer and soon began to proclaim the “Three Angel’s Messages” as taught by Seventh-day Adventists.

Such events encouraged the Harrisons and spurred them on to even greater exploits for their Master. At times they were placed under many physical and family trials but their whole lifetime was devoted to serving the Lord. Let’s look at just one of the physical trials at this point.

Papua New Guinea has the four most malicious kinds of Malaria in the world. On occasions each of the Harrison family suffered from strains of this disease. At times they worked under great privation and Roy was often away from home for months on end, opening up new territories and inspecting the work that his evangelists were doing. Often during his times away, one or two of the family would succumb to malaria. (*When the family returned to Australia for the college education of Anne and Peter, each member would at times be confined to bed with malaria fever that continued to linger on in their bodies*). Conditions, at the time of their service, made it very difficult to be missionaries. However, before opening up any new territory, Roy and his family would spend time in prayer seeking God’s plans for their lives. They knew that with God’s direction, wisdom and guidance they would be successful. They have often looked back on the many times they were blessed with abundant rewards!

***ROY’S BEGINNINGS***

His early life was spent in Gippsland, Victoria where he was born in 1914 at Wonthaggi, having an older brother Norman and a younger sister Eva. His father was a miner who was a very hard worker and generally took home a larger pay packet than his teammates due to the bonuses rewarded for his diligence. The family had a small farm and it fell on Roy’s shoulders to get up early and milk the cows, chop the wood and keep the fuel stove burning for its needed warmth and for his mother’s cooking. At an early age he also learned gardening, which, in later years, would be of inestimable value. Like his father he learned to work hard but also enjoyed recreational days by going out to sea in a small rowboat on fishing excursions. He loved it when the sea was rough and dangerous and his fearlessness at sea would also stand him in good stead years later in the much larger swells of the South Pacific Ocean.

Roy loved animals and the feeling was obviously mutual. His dog, name Sport, was at one time lost for several days. Roy finally discovered it in a foxhole in a very distressed condition but the reconciliation soon over-came any feelings of loneliness that Sport had endured. A cow he had reared from a calf became a real favourite. He would ride it around the farm and also to school at times. Others tried to ride the animal but were tossed off very quickly. It was Roy’s cow and the cow was his and none other could have the privilege of such a friendship! His favourite cat, Tootles, vanished from the home when Roy left for College, but came home ten months later when he returned for vacation.

He experienced his only physical handicap when a horse trod heavily on his left foot, causing a six-month rest in the local hospital. The wound developed into osteomyelitis and Roy’s dad decided it was time to take him to a Melbourne specialist. His son was not allowed to be moved from the Wonthaggi hospital without the father signing a paper exempting the hospital and local doctor from blame should he die as a result of the transfer. The problem was dealt with quickly in Melbourne, though a deep scar remained to his dying day.

As a boy he learned to love music and for eight years studied the violin from a nun at the local convent. He became quite proficient and even though very young he was offered a permanent job in a Melbourne orchestra. However, at the same time he was beginning to think about a future with God for he really wanted to be a missionary and therefore declined a reasonably secure future as a musician.

Roy’s father Alf never attended the local Presbyterian Church after he had married Roy’s mother, Agnes. But he didn’t mind her taking the children to the church on a regular basis. As she studied her Bible, she noticed that Christ exhorted the people to be baptized when they accepted Him as Saviour. Presbyterians didn’t baptize by immersion and so she transferred to a Baptist church and was baptized. As she attended this new church she was moved to look more closely into the Ten Commandments. Each week when she attended church she noticed the Ten Commandments had been artistically and conveniently placed above the church rostrum for all to see and read. She became convicted about the seventh-day Sabbath and was quite concerned that she was not worshipping on the correct day of the week. Perhaps she had made some mistake and thought there could have been a good reason for a change in the day of worship!

When a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist came to Wonthaggi and put out advertising promoting “Bible Prophecy Lectures,” she decided to attend. It was at these programs that Agnes soon discovered there had indeed been a change in the day of worship. After the first meeting, she was so happy about what she had heard that she sat meditating and hadn’t realised the audience had left. The presenter, Pastor Paap thought she might be unwell. She reassured the evangelist she was just so thrilled with all she had heard and learned. Agnes continued to attend the meetings and soon discovered the seventh day of the week, Saturday, was indeed the Sabbath of the Scriptures. At that time she became the only visible convert of that series of meetings and naturally the pastor was a little discouraged. If only he could have seen into the future!

Alf Harrison became angry at the change of direction in Agnes’ faith and worship practice and burned all religious papers and even Bibles that he found around the house. Meals became a battle ground and this was a difficult time for Roy who, after many a meal would go outside and vomit, for he couldn’t keep his food down due to the unhappy conditions at the meal table. He decided to stand with his mother and his older brother who at the time was engaged in an engineering course of studies.

No matter how hard Roy worked on the farm, Alf never appeared to appreciate what he did and this was very discouraging and frustrating. Roy seemed to be forever reminded by his dad, of the list of things yet to be done. His dad’s comments appeared to be always negative and it appeared to Roy always that he was ready to condemn all of his work.

One event, which left a deeply embedded scar in Roy’s mind, happened some time after he had assisted his father in planting 2000 strawberry seedlings. Roy offered to weed the growing plants during his coming holidays and this was one time when Alf showed a little appreciation. However, the whole work experience turned sour when the father came to pick up his son. Roy had worked diligently and conscientiously in this tedious, back breaking job and had hoped to finish the final row before his father returned. Time ran out on him. He had to leave a small section of that last row un-weeded. All the father could do was to severely scold him for not completing the weeding. Roy was left heartbroken. This event obviously made a big impression on him for he often spoke about it in later years.

One of Roy’s recreations in his mid-teens was to go to ballroom dancing. His musical ability and the rhythm of the music captivated him so much and he just loved to attend. However, one night he was propositioned by a young lady, and his conscience made him leave the dance hall immediately, never to return. On arriving home under the spreading branches of a gum tree and in the light of a full moon he made a full and complete commitment to God to be His child forever and to do whatever He planned for him. For the rest of his life he never faulted in this sincere resolve.

The situation at Roy’s home became unbearable about this time. Roy often slept with his window wide open, so that he could make a fast escape should his father come and try to hurt him. His commitment to God remained a personal blessing and it was this that inspired him to leave home and go to Melbourne to find work.

One evening his mother Agnes, who had been going through a rough time with her husband, was sitting in a prayerful mood gazing reflectively at the flames of the open fire when those same flames appeared to form a map of Australia with little beams of light going off in all directions from the area where Sydney was located. These rays of light appeared to stretch to the Pacific Islands. It was years later after Roy had been to several destinations of the Pacific that she understood the meaning of what may well have been a God-given vision.

Work was not easy to find in Melbourne and so it wasn’t very long before Roy decided, along with other young Adventist youth, to further his education at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales. He really didn’t have a clue as to what course he would take or how long he would be there – but to Avondale College he went.

***EDUCATION AND ROMANCE***

Roy lined up with other students in the 1935 registration line at Avondale College. He was just so happy to be there. Finally his turn came before the registrar who said briskly, “What course?” “I want to learn how to be a good Seventh-day Adventist,” replied Roy. “What is your educational background?” asked the registrar. “I have my Victorian Matriculation,” replied Roy who had done well to obtain it at sixteen years of age. “Good,” said the registrar, “Teaching for you!” With very little interaction Roy started the Diploma in Primary Teaching without a clue as to what other courses he may have been able to take.

Avondale life was very enjoyable and Roy did well at his subjects and also used some of his spare time in playing in a stringed quartet which was a necessary outlet from his rigorous study program. There were also other activities in which he occasionally involved himself. Avondale is a co-educational college and back in Roy’s time there were very strict rules regarding conduct between males and females. You were expected to regard your colleagues with utmost respect and call them Mister or Miss rather than using their Christian names. It was also expected that students would keep their distance from the opposite sex.

At times some students would exploit these rigid rules! There was one faculty member who had a very strong sense of duty with regard to the college rules and one night, when he was on duty, some of the young men decided to try him out. One dressed as a young lady and with another fellow at his side they attracted the attention of this faculty member by moving around arm in arm. As the teacher came towards them they ran toward Dora Creek (a river that meanders through the college property) with the teacher in pursuit. The two were young and very fast runners and the teacher was surprised and somewhat perplexed as to how a young lady could travel so quickly.

The two students managed to separate themselves from the teacher by some distance and then dived into the river and hid among reeds on the riverbank, which made them almost invisible at night-time. Even though the teacher’s flashlight was used to search them out, they were not to be seen. This was one of the many touches of humour of ‘college days’ that Roy would enjoy when reminiscing in later years. When his studies allowed he would occasionally enjoy some rowing excursions down this same river for boats had already become an integral part of his life.

All students were required to spend time working each week to keep the college structure functioning well and also to gain a balance between academic life and physical activity. This volunteer time could be spent in the kitchen, the gardens, the laundry, in cleaning the residences and classrooms or even in the Sanitarium Health Food Factory located on the same campus. This was in keeping with the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy strongly expounded by Ellen G. White in her book “Education” page 13. *“Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is a need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy or wider service in the world to come*.”

Time was always in short supply for Roy at college. He not only studied hard but also needed to work long hours to pay for his tuition and board. With no home support and no personal reserves, the college work program of those days allowed him to work the extra time needed to cover his fees above the normal voluntary work requirements in which all students engaged.

After two years at Avondale College Roy was invited to join the Victorian Conference teaching staff at the Hawthorn Central School. They urgently needed a teacher with matriculation for such were in short supply at the time!

For many years afterwards students from the Hawthorn School would speak glowingly of their teacher. He always did his best for his students both in and out of the classroom. Often he would be found in the playground assisting in their sports programs. One of his strengths was to enable mischievous or even underprivileged children to achieve good results and to experience self-worth through what the Saviour did for all.

One such student was Albert who had lost his parents and lived with his very strict and ageing grandmother. One day Roy was filling his fountain pen from the ink well on Albert’s desk. In front of Albert sat a fair-headed son of a doctor. Albert looked at Roy with a mischievous glint in his eyes and as he withdrew his pen, said, “Squirt it in his hair, sir!” The lad’s hair remained fair but Roy worked on Albert and became his friend. The young rebel responded very well and became a very good student gaining a much more stable character and good grades.

Even though he enjoyed working with the students, relationships with the head mistress of the day were not so easy. He believed his calling and his future was through the Pacific Islands where he would be able to proclaim the gospel message among the indigenous peoples. He believed he should spend time learning about medical work and to this end enrolled at the Sydney Adventist Hospital (The San) where he stayed for 2 ½ years from 1938 to 1940. The time spent was valuable training, for much of his later work in the Islands would often be carried out meeting varying medical needs. Ever after he could be seen carrying a medical bag to most of the places he visited!

Near the end of his course at “the San” he re-visited Melbourne and attended some revival and reformation meetings held at the Athenaeum Theatre by Pastors Stan Leeder and E.L. Minchin. Both were inspirational youth leaders and inspired many young people in attendance to become more involved in Bible study and prayer.

***ROMANTIC CHALLENGES***

During these revival meetings Roy couldn’t take his eyes off a young lady named Lorna. Somehow he was convicted that she was the person he would one day marry. At the time he didn’t have any clues as to who Lorna was and how he would ever get to know her, let alone propose to her.

When Lorna was just fifteen years of age, she met David Down at a tennis party held at the home of a friend of hers. (This young man later became a minister, a missionary to India and a well-known writer and TV presenter on Biblical archaeological matters) David also happened to be a cousin of her friends. He took a liking to Lorna and began to contact her as often as he could in outdoor activities such as tennis, swimming, horse riding and canoeing. He became captain of the Ivanhoe Grammar School old boys’ cricket and football teams and naturally took her to some of these events.

Their friendship developed over the years and when she was 19 years of age in 1939, he proposed to her. At the time he was in the Seymour army camp some 100 kilometres north of Melbourne. He would leave his car with Lorna and visit her on the weekends. She was involved in the business world working with another young lady five years older, who was also the owner of the business. They designed patterns of dress materials, which were printed in Japan. At one stage Lorna had 52 girls working under her. An office was opened in Sydney and Lorna went there to manage it for six months. When she returned to Melbourne she and David began another chapter of their lives.

One weekend when he was staying at his Uncle’s he saw an advertisement for what he thought was a political meeting to be held in the State Theatre, Melbourne. Hitler was marching through Europe at the time. The Nazis had already taken Poland and David thought the German’s were doing very well. The title of the meeting was “Five Words that Spell Hitler’s Doom!” Having an army connection he figured it would be of interest. His uncle said he would go with him and they also invited Lorna. David was shocked to discover that this was a religious meeting and was inclined to leave straight away. He was very embarrassed, for his uncle who had driven them there. The message was from Daniel chapter Two. The history of the world was unravelled in such an interesting manner by Pastor John B. Conley, who had recently returned from working in India. David stayed and was deeply impressed by this one meeting. He went into the city library and did some thorough research. He had never heard of Babylon and Medo-Persia before, let alone the connections of Greece and Rome with the Scriptures. He really thought that Conley was inventing these places to make a good presentation. As he researched he discovered everything was correct and the whole study intrigued him greatly.

During the week when David was at the camp, Lorna drove his car to the Bible presentations and Pastor Conley gave Lorna extra material for David to read while he was at camp. Eventually the two were baptized. Now David had a problem! He was in the artillery units in the army and had now come to the decision that he did not want to be involved in killing people. He asked the army for a transfer to a medical unit but was told that commissioned people, as he was, did not transfer without their commission and only commissioned officers such as doctors and dentists could be transferred. As he was neither and not wanting to embarrass the army further he decided on resignation. The army got in first and wrote and thanked him for his resignation letter, which he had not written, and honourably discharged him. In 1941 he too enrolled at Avondale College for Ministry.

Even though very young, Lorna was again sent to Sydney to manage that branch of the business. She had a very good sense of business and this was to serve her well in her married life. Most weekends she was able to travel to Avondale to meet with David. She would have loved to attend classes with him but she was not yet 21 and her parents would not support her attendance at the college. Her mother was very unhappy when Lorna became an Adventist, and certainly would not support her wishes to attend Avondale College. Of necessity, she waited until she had turned twenty-one years of age. This then meant that she attended Avondale in 1942 to train as a Bible Worker.

It was many years later that she discovered why her mother was so much against the Seventh-day Adventist church. Apparently her grandfather had left home at seventeen years of age by climbing down a drainpipe at night. He had decided he couldn’t handle the strict Anglican background that his parents insisted on. He was required to sit in the parlour on Sunday and attend church at least twice on that day. Apparently teen-age rebellion is not a just a contemporary thing!

There was also an Adventist connection that went back to the 1880’s. Adventist pioneers arrived and ran an evangelistic series in Melbourne and the teenager’s folks became Adventists. The rebellious lad, who became Lorna’s father, thought that seeing they had joined a cult, they would be even more strict and demanding and making it impossible for him to live at home.

Her grandfather was a designer of heavy machinery and owned a business, which was not doing well without Sabbath work. Someone from South Africa was helping in the evangelistic campaign and suggested they go there for work. They took his advice and went and lived in Turffontein, a suburb of Johannesburg. (*Later when Roy and Lorna visited Africa they stayed with a family in the very same town).*

Lorna’s mother never shared this part of her parent’s life’s journey until after the Harrisons returned to Australia from mission service. It was then that she shared a letter with Lorna written by her grandmother in Africa after her first husband was killed in the First World War. It was a letter expressing her regret at the loss of her husband. The expressions were very much Adventist related. “One day she would see him again at the resurrection if she believed in Christ.” Lorna says, “I look forward to the resurrection, for I will have some relatives in the kingdom, which will make it a wonderful reunion! For some reason these Adventist connections had soured Lorna’s mother!

Lorna’s life took a paradigm shift from her army officer fiancée, who was now becoming a minister. She broke off the engagement. He had retained much of what he had learned in the army as a commissioned officer! He appeared, to her, to be too “bossy” and she didn’t know if she wanted to be ordered around for the rest of her life. As Lorna explained many years later, perhaps her decision was based on immature choices. David became very upset at her decision. He declared that he would never get involved with another lady and certainly would never marry! What made matters worse was that Roy’s interest in her made David feel that she was “two timing.”

Roy had already determined that he would pray about it for a year before making any approaches to Lorna herself but had naively shared his interest with David her ex-fiancé. On Lorna’s part she never really knew how Roy felt about her even though during this time he believed he would marry her.

David’s romantic life took a turn for the better when six years later he married Goldie Scarfe whom he had come to adore. She became a wonderful wife and partner, particularly through his many missionary years in the sub-continent of India. Looking back Lorna knew it was providential! When David and Goldie went to India as missionaries, Lorna felt that Goldie fitted in with that part of the world and its culture more than she would have been able to at the time.

Perhaps we have jumped ahead in the story but let’s go back a little. After becoming an Adventist and returning from running the business in Sydney, Lorna could often be seen visiting homes and people with the Signs of the Times magazines and furthermore she also became involved in ‘street preaching.’ With a group of young people, she would preach on the corner of Flinders Lane and Elizabeth Streets. It was here that Roy first spotted Lorna and resolved that she would be his wife. Was this a God given intuition? At any rate he was going to let God work things out, for he had a good relationship with his Master and had learned to rely on His directions.

When she finally arrived at Avondale, Roy had also finished his two and half years at the Sydney Adventist Hospital. He was now enrolled in the Ministerial course and was quite amazed, when he went to the first meal at the College dining room, to find this girl whom he had seen witnessing for her faith back in Melbourne and about whom he had made such a strong mental note. The real problem was that David Down roomed near Roy, and even though the engagement had been broken, Lorna’s photograph was still on David’s desk. Neither David nor Lorna had mentioned to anybody at this stage about the broken engagement. This is what caused Roy to pray about the matter for a year. The first intimation that Lorna had of Roy’s real interest was in the graduation line at the end of that year. She wrote, “…this Roy Harrison held my hand for a long time and very firmly!” He was the President of the graduation class that year.

During the year, David Down was the President of the College Ministerial League, Roy was the Vice-President and Lorna was the Secretary/Treasurer. At the end of the year she was holding some funds from the league and didn’t know what she should do with the small reserve. She was on her way to Melbourne for the vacation but staying at the ‘San’ for a night on the way down south. Someone mentioned to her that Roy was working at the San for part of the vacation and she should get the money to him. She buzzed him but he was tied up for a while specializing on a person coming out of anaesthesia. The process appeared to take longer than normal!

When Lorna told him that she was going to Melbourne for vacation he said that he also would be going home to Gippsland for a while and therefore could he contact her when he got to the city. She gave her consent! Now, having her telephone number when he arrived in the big city, he called her. He invited her to a holiday on the farm at Inverloch to which she agreed. That was the beginning of a life-long friendship and soon a marriage relationship.

The following year, 1943, David Down, Goldie Scarfe, Lorna and Roy Harrison were attending Avondale College at the same time. It took years for David to develop another friendship but as mentioned earlier, he and Goldie were married 6 years later. During this year Roy lived out in the village. He was 29 years of age and mature students were given the privilege of living outside the college if they wished. To earn his fees and extra pocket money he did jobbing carpentry work. He felt the experience would be helpful in the mission fields where he hoped to be called one day as a missionary. He did quite a few jobs for Miss Arthur who was a supervisor at the Sanitarium Health Food Company located on the same grounds as the college. She owned ‘Sunnyside’ on Avondale Road, at the time, and it was “like a honeycomb of rooms with different people living in them.” Roy did a lot of carpentry work on this place. *(Later the South Pacific Division purchased the building, for this is where Ellen G. White lived most of the time she resided in Australia).*

Some of the carpentry jobs that Roy was asked to do were quite complex but he would ask his friend, Jackie Wilson, *(for many years an identity around Cooranbong)* for guidance on the best ways to approach various jobs. They worked out well and Roy was kept quite busy in the community. If any of the property owners were growing flowers in their gardens Roy would ask if he could take some for his girl friend. It seemed to be quite often that he presented these flowers to Lorna in League meetings, where David was present. At first Lorna was somewhat embarrassed over these gifts!

August 23, 1943 was Lorna’s birthday. The matron of the young ladies’ dormitory was Marjorie Grieve who had always been very helpful to Lorna since she arrived at the college. Knowing that Lorna’s mother never wrote her letters she went the extra mile to do many nice things to make life easier for this student. So, on Lorna’s birthday, Marjorie organised a ‘parlour experience’ for the two friends and it was right there that Roy proposed to Lorna who accepted and sealed their intentions with their first kiss.

***APPOINTMENT TO THE MISSION FIELDS***

As he was finishing his Avondale experience that year, Roy applied for a church appointment. When the appointments were chalked up on the board for appointees and students and faculty to see at the same time, Roy was appointed to teach in Western Australia. The following day the appointment was changed for Roy to be the Principal of Vailoa College, Samoa. His mother’s fireside vision was beginning to be fulfilled!

That appointment was not changed and so it became important to plan for their wedding to be held on the 21st December 1943 at the Moonee Ponds Seventh-day Adventist Church, Victoria. The couple had a honeymoon for one night only for they were required to go back to Cooranbong and work at the Sanitarium Health Food factory. This they did until they were able to set sail for Samoa.

World War 11 was raging and people couldn’t change their work even if they didn’t like it! Roy did 60 hours a week on a cement mixer, while the couple waited to get transport to go to NZ. They rented a spare room in the girl’s dormitory and each evening would enjoy sitting on the floor with friends as they consumed massive quantities of watermelon.

***MISSIONARIES TO SAMOA***

Roy Harrison graduated at Avondale College, firstly in 1942 from Teaching, when he was the President of the graduation class. The following year he added to his qualifications and experience by graduating from Ministry. When final appointments were chalked up on that blackboard, the Harrisons appointment was to Vailoa College, Samoa, where Roy was to be the Principal. What a huge undertaking for a graduate!

Let’s now read from Lorna’s pen. “We went by ship to Auckland to wait for another ship to take us to Samoa. There were no planes in those days! We stayed with Pastor and Mrs Stevens in Remuera for three months while waiting for a ship to Samoa. Pastor Reg Blair, Secretary-Treasurer of the Nth NZ Conference offered us work during that long wait. I worked as a secretary and Roy was given a job caring for the grounds of the beautiful church property at 12 Esplanade Road, Mt. Eden. The Conference office on the site was a splendid two-storey mansion converted into offices.

While in Auckland we met a delightful couple, the parents of the Townend family. They were from Yorkshire in the United Kingdom. He was very tall and both had delightful Yorkshire accents but their main quality was their commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist church. This has been manifest in their family, for at least three sons became ministers and a daughter, Lorraine (Pansy) Robson worked for many years in the Sth. NZ Conference office as ABC assistant manager.

There was only one ship travelling to Samoa, the Matua. This was 1944 and the war was still raging so military personnel had first priority for passage. There were also American soldiers in Samoa for Western Samoa had become American Territory. Eventually we were alerted to the possibility of berths. Roy and I together with Hugh and Royce Dickins embarked the ship to find that Royce and I were in a single berth cabin and Roy and Hugh in the lounge. The latter had been converted into a dormitory for men, containing forty double-berthed bunk beds. Life was a bit horrific for the two men due to a number of late army arrivals. There was a lot of carrying on among them which produced raucous laughing followed by heavy snoring during the nights. These discomforts were nothing for at last we were on our way to Samoa via Fiji.

While the boat was unloading at the wharf in Suva, the Dickins were taken with their goods to Fulton Missionary College. At the same time the brethren also took us on a sight seeing journey around Suva and some of the nearby country. This excursion was very interesting to us for we had never been out of Australia. Again we embarked on the boat which travelled some of the Pacific to Apia, the capital of Samoa. There was no wharf and our goods, with us, were transported by barge to shore. Somehow in the loose transportation methods we lost some of our belongings forever!

Missionary John Howse met us when we arrived on the shore. He was the superintendent of the Samoan mission at the time, and took us to his home, where we met his wife Merle and their four children. They were most hospitable to us, and were very helpful for the short time we were in Samoa. John soon arranged for us, with our meagre belongings, to be transported by road to Vailoa school, seventeen miles away. He also kindly helped to move us into our first home on the school campus.

We had been to an auction in Sydney, before we left, and with our meagre funds purchased a bed, a wardrobe, a dressing table, a dining table and four chairs. We also had a kitchen dresser – no refrigerator and no lounge furniture, as I remember it. We didn’t even have a spare single bed on which to place tall John when he came to visit us. To overcome this problem Roy made a bed from bamboo, and I made a mattress cover stuffed with kapok that floated from the many trees growing on the school property. The only problem was that Roy didn’t make the bed quite long enough, which meant that John’s legs always stuck out over the end!

Because we had no children, the staff of the College decided we needed an “aiga” (family). We were assigned four students to look after us when classes finished for each day. There were two girls, Fili Senimile (part Fijian) and Fofoga, and two boys, Saunoa and Meki Kuressa. Meki was a nephew of the famed Sauni Kuressa who cleverly played two trumpets at the same time and also composed the Samoan national anthem! These young people were splendid; the girls helped me in the home, and the boys helped Roy around our home and in the college gardens. Roy developed these gardens for the use of the students as well as for our own personal needs.

I still remember some of the staff! There was Pastor Afaese who was Roy’s assistant, Afele, Tini Inu, and Asatou. These teachers all had different personalities but Roy came to understand them quite well. I supposed this was because he was a very diplomatic and generous leader.

One of the first things Roy did was to establish a large garden some distance away from the school, in which he planted many root crops such as taro, sweet potatoes, yams and greens. Unfortunately, wild pigs sometimes raided the gardens and became a real nuisance at times. Periodically Roy and the two boys would stay at the garden, to deal with those feral pigs.

If the men folks were away, visiting other centres over Sabbath, the staff and villagers would bring me some food. Although they did this every week, they brought more when I was by myself. Often the kitchen dresser was covered with many really delicious vegetables cooked on hot stones but it was often beyond my capacity to deal with the quantities supplied. Such is the way with Samoan cooking!

Roy also did a lot of concreting. Vailoa was on a hill and he made cement steps and paths around the college campus for much easier access. It was not possible to buy cement because of the war, so he made his own, out of coral which was in abundant supply. Somehow he heated and treated it, and ended up with very white cement, which he maintained was of high quality.

At the drop of a hat or similar, the Samoans would stage a party. At these happy events food was placed on banana leaves, and most would sit on the ground and partake of the goodies. Behind us were our girls collecting some of the food to take home, for the use of our ‘aiga’ (family).

The Samoan students were very talented musically. And if we had a school concert little groups would get together and we would hear little bursts of singing and much laughter. Then a group would say, “We’re ready” and they would sing a song with lyrics covering some happening during the previous week. The harmony was amazing and really professionally presented. We were very impressed with the talent of the Samoans, the ‘gentlemen’ of the Pacific.

During our first term vacation Roy decided he wanted to start walking around the coast of Samoa to see it all. We had an invitation from Puni of Sumatau, to stay with them for as long as we desired. So we took our two young men helpers with us and started off. We first went to Apia by bus, and then walked across the island on an established track. The procedure on the journey was for the boys to go ahead of us. When we were nearing the end of the day they would go ahead and find a place for us to stay.

The people were very helpful and hospitable, and it was apparently not difficult for the boys to find someone who would accommodate us. We found ourselves in some very interesting situations. Enormous beds stuffed with kapok and enormous mosquito nets, which, as you can imagine, were very much needed and appreciated.

On our last night before arriving at Sumatau, we were in a house and apparently I was given a pillow loaded with lice. The next day, my head became very itchy. I asked Roy to check and he affirmed that my poor head was covered in lice. This was very disturbing to say the least. We were just about to arrive at Sumatou so decided nothing could be done until we arrived there. Puni and his wonderful wife Nukulau, who was most gracious and helpful received us. We found they had provided a small Samoan fale (home), made of coconut leaf shutters and thatched roof. We had two single beds, and table between with a kerosene lamp on it, and outside the house they had somehow provided a primitive shower that was very important for us.

By the time we had finished our visiting and got to the house to go to bed we decided that something had to be done about the lice in my hair. I had read somewhere that kerosene was good for killing lice, so we swamped my head with kerosene and then enveloped it in a scarf. So we went to bed, but there was no sleep for me. I found that the kerosene was now attacking the many bites I had on my head and the pain was horrific. I was lying on the bed with Roy asleep but I felt so poorly I had to get up. Roy heard my stirring and asked, “What’s happening?” At that I fainted and fell on the floor. I soon stood up and said, “I’m going to do it again.” Which I promptly did! We decided that I had better get rid of the kerosene as the effect was so powerful and the only way we had to do this was to get under the cold shower and try to get rid of it. What an adventure! It was early morning, the water was cold, and I was feeling totally unwell and finding it just about impossible to get a lather of soap. We learned that kerosene, water and soap are not compatible! The end result was that I was probably a little freer of the kerosene but still felt absolutely shocking!

We were due to go in a Tulula, a native row-boat, to the island of Manono. This is an open boat needing rowers. These were mainly Adventist women from the village who were expert rowers. Puni’s wife was the co-ordinator and cheerleader encouraging the activities of the rowers. They were all very concerned when they saw my condition and questioned the decision I had made to go; I said I would be better in the fresh air on the boat. Then they made up a bed for me in the stern of the boat, and Roy sat there with an umbrella and off we started.

Puni’s wife was leading the singing of some hymns and other music which encouraged the rowers. The lyrics were of their prowess and encouraged them to further their rowing efforts. While the whole effect was very harmonious and a real delight, my deteriorated health condition did not allow me to enjoy it as much as I would have liked. I was feeling absolutely terrible, and I realized that I needed some help. We were going to the island of Manono, where there was no medical help at all, and so eventually I said to Roy “I’m sorry but I think we will have to turn back, or I think I might die!” Roy was very concerned and relayed this message to Puni’s wife, who saw my need, and so started to sing another song. All joined in the lyrics which stated that the rowers had done a marvellous job but the tamaiti was very sick and they would have to detour - not back to Samatou but to the mainland. They thought I should get to hospital as quickly as possible.

All redoubled their efforts and I don’t know how much later we arrived at a coastal village. On enquiry we found there was a bus from there to Apia and we were able to get aboard. I was able to lie on a seat and shared the journey with villagers on their way to town. They had their pigs, chickens and who knows what else? Eventually I ended up at the hospital and when the doctor checked me out he said I had urticaria internally as well as externally and I was in a bad way. For a few days all were doubtful if I would survive the experience. After some time in the hospital, Carl Raphael’s wife joined me for she was to have an operation. They were also missionaries in Samoa. For some unknown reason they gave me a midline, I guess to see if there was any internal damage, and just as a precaution took out my appendix which they discovered was normal. By this time we missionary ladies had a very happy time together. We both had a sense of humour and spent a lot of time in laughter, hanging on to our stomachs and our operations to stop any pain!

The next term end, having recovered sufficiently, we went to the same place and went to both Manono and to Apolima. It was wonderful to see these two places particularly Apolima where the locals had never seen a white woman before. While American men soldiers had visited there they had never seen a white lady.

Roy talked to the people and worshipped with them and they were so appreciative of his messages. These people knew nothing of hygiene. For instance, pigs were upstream in the river but further downstream the women did their washing, bathing and drank the water and also used it for cooking as it flowed near their village.

We had an interesting experience getting into Apolima. The Island was a former volcano which had a very narrow entrance to the harbour. This had to be negotiated on an ingoing tide. Our inexperienced crew tried to go in on what turned out to be an outgoing tide, and for a while we were in a lot of trouble as our craft was thrown quite heavily on to the rocks. Thankfully the Lord saw us through and we eventually made it to shore.

On our return we struck very bad weather as soon as we reached the open ocean. The waters were really rough, and many of the rowers were very sick while at the same time having to row. Puni was on the trip encouraging them all the way. He kept saying, “Lelei tele lava the sami.” “The sea is very good.” He was at the bow of the boat, the crew were facing us and on either side were these mountainous seas. The conditions certainly weren’t looking very good for us. Puni endeavoured to hoist a sail to help in the situation, but it was touch and go for quite a while. One of the rowers was most unfortunate to lose her false teeth overboard from vomiting, due to seasickness. When we made it to shore I said to Puni, “Why were you saying the sea was very good when it was very bad,” and he replied, “If I had said it was very bad we wouldn’t have made it.” God was very good to us indeed and Puni had become a great comfort to help us get to our destination.

After more than a year in Samoa we regrettably had to leave because I contracted ‘filaria.’ We had enjoyed our stay very much and this was largely due to the Samoans being a very happy people and a real joy to have around. However, the treatment for filaria in those days was to live in a cold climate until the filaria bugs got out of the system, and so we were invited to go to New Zealand where we lived for a couple of years. Roy taught English and French at Longburn College for one year. During this time I taught a couple of classes in preparatory English and Home Economics. I relieved Ruby Bunny, the matron, on her day off each week.

Lorna had suggested to the Principal, the much-loved Pastor Vernon Wilkinson, that with her lack of training in home situations she was not the most knowledgeable in Economics. He laughed and said, “I will give you a text book, study it the night before the class and you will be OK.”

Some of the staff at that time were Zita Murch, (she later married Graham Miller and then both went as missionaries to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands *(now Kiribis and Tuvalu)*, Jean Gill who became Keith Dickins wife, and Noreen Weslake who later became Dr. John Knight’s wife. The Harrisons lived in the boy’s dorm near Charlie Summerfield who was the dean of men. They later moved into a house near the entrance to the College that was much more convenient and functional. Roy very much enjoyed this teaching experience but all the time felt called as a Missionary to the Islands of the Pacific.”

The following year the Harrisons went to Wellington and assisted Pastor J.W. Harvey as he conducted evangelistic crusades. They had no transport, and for some of the time Roy kept fit as he walked around with advertising posters pasting them on power poles. However, he developed a problem for he was not used to walking on cement, and it came to the place where he could no longer walk for he was almost a cripple. An amazing woman from the hills near Paraparamu ‘kidnapped’ the Harrisons and took them to her home until Roy could walk properly. She invited one of the Piper brothers to transport us. (Two of the Piper brothers were ministers and had met Ellen White when she was in Australasia). Lorna wrote, “It was the most hair raising journey I have ever experienced. It was all hair- pin bends and Brother Piper talked all the way, not seeming to look at the road at all but into Roy’s face!”

One night at the campaign meeting Roy was supposed to lift up the statue of Daniel 2 at a certain time. It was not working according to their plans and J.W. Harvey said, “there is something sinister about the rise of this image.” At that moment Roy poked his head out of the drapes at which the audience fell into laughter!

However, Roy was impressed that their call was back to mission service and after their two years in New Zealand and having no more health problems, they were called to serve in the mission fields in 1948.

Bob Frame who at the time was the President of the Bismarck Solomon’s Union Mission, which Union controlled all of the islands of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, welcomed them back to the Islands where they were to spend most of their mission service years. Their first port of call was to Belepa in Western Papua where they replaced Pastor and Mrs Martin Pascoe. This missionary couple had followed the Howells, who had opened up our work in this area. They were long-time missionaries at this particular mission station.

**Papua New Guinea**

When they first went to Papua New Guinea they lived near five villages each speaking a different language. These were not dialects and so the consequence was that there was no communication at all between any of the villagers. They were also most unfriendly toward each other.

Later the Harrisons were transferred to Manus Island. Before moving, an influenza epidemic struck the area. The people were really very sick with a number dying. Roy went to the Australasian Petroleum Company, about an hour away, and secured supplies of penicillin. This was a very new medication at that time.

Having injected people with the penicillin he commenced a program of visiting his patients every four hours. He kept this up for many days and would snatch sleep here and there but remained consistent in treating the people. As a result no more people died, all were very grateful and the villagers were delighted to have the Seventh-day Adventist missionary close by.

While in Western Papua, Roy had to take Martin Pascoe’s goods from Belepa to Port Moresby on the ‘Darbarere’. Among his personal goods was a 44-gallon drum of caustic that he used for making soap. This was placed in the front anchor hold. They set off for a journey that usually took about 18 hours. However, the seas became very rough and visibility was poor. The crew was made up of Western Papuans who weren’t good sailors at all. Fortunately, he had one Eastern Papuan who became a real blessing and probably saved the lives of all on board. The caustic soda drum was very old and due to such heavy seas the water got into the drum and it became lye. This was a very potent chemical to have on the ship. Real problems arose when the lye came out of the drum and began destroying the bowels of the ship. The Eastern Papuan managed to get to the front of the boat and simply tipped the drum overboard. The lye had eaten away the foundation of the anchor hold and water was pouring in. He baled water continuously for the rest of the time while they were on that journey!

During that time Roy had to be at the wheel because there was no one else who could handle it. If it hadn’t been for the Eastern Papuan continually bailing out seawater it is probable that all would have drowned. He not only saved lives that day but the boat was also brought safely into the Port Moresby harbour. However, by the time they arrived, Roy and the Eastern Papuan were totally worn out with the responsibility of saving the boat and the lives of all on board.

Lorna wrote: “From Western Papua we went to Manus where Roy was district director and principal of the Pisik School. He visited all the Islands in the area because he was so concerned to get the message to all. His burden was to preach the gospel everywhere. He went to all the Islands including the Island of Baluan where there was a cargo cult leader called Paliau. Cargo cults in this area, believed that materials coming into Manus were destined for the Manus people, but instead were being diverted by the Europeans. People like Paliau had a following of indigenous people who believed that all things coming into the Manus harbour at Loengau were actually meant for the locals. Because they didn’t get these goods a lot of ill feeling was created.

Paliau created quite a big stir among government circles. Roy decided to visit him and explained to him the reality of what was happening. The visit resulted in calming the sad scene!

Roy was ever looking to find volunteers who would ultimately work for the Lord. When they were ready he would take them on the boat wherever he went. If villages expressed an interest in the message and wanted a teacher to help them, Roy would have a volunteer ready and without the normal delays.

At one time he went to a place called Harengan on the north of the main Island of Manus. The people were very interested in the message but to his dismay he found wild pigs running rampant. He told the locals there was no way he could leave a teacher there for they would starve without being able to grow their own food before it was eaten by the pigs. The people built a fence, got rid of the pigs, by either selling them or killing them all and the teacher was able to develop a fine garden. Roy was not only keen on pioneer missionary work but also embellishing the diet of the people for whom he was working and to help them into a much better way of living.

When he was opening the work in the Bainings he needed to cross many rivers. He would often arrive in a village covered with leeches. He would then roll in the ashes of a fire to get rid of them all.

Lorna wrote at one time to another missionary, Ken Boehm, “We

had only been working at Belepa in the Western District of Papua for just over a year when in April or May of 1948 we received a call for Roy to be District Director of the Manus Mission. We were to take over from Pastor and Mrs Tutty, who had been there pre-World War II. They had returned to Manus as soon as possible after the war finished to resume their activities.

They had performed wonderfully there. Pastor Tutty had been used by God to totally transform the character of the Island. He encouraged the indigenous people to make small houses to which were attached metal pipes so that each house would have its own water supply. Each home had little flower gardens while the villagers still maintained their bigger village gardens. The church at Pisik was quite unique. The villagers had erected a sign at the commencement of the path which led to the church building and read, “Finis tok long here’ ‘Finish your talk right here’. This was strictly enforced, and the presence of reverence in the church and its surroundings was amazing.

On our arrival the Tutty’s took us all around the area that had been opened by the mission, every where they were following up Missionary Volunteer (youth) work, reading the suggested books to the people checking them for the Vocational Honour badges received for finished class work. It was just incredible to see them at work. Pastor Tutty’s normal plan was to arise at 4.30 am and go into the shower and throw buckets of salt water over himself to freshen up. This was one of the many things included in his day of work and recreation. I was very pregnant at the time, and felt that I would never be able to cope with all the activity of the Tuttys!

We were to have “The Light” which was the boat the Tutty’s were using. They left soon after our arrival, and the first thing Roy did, was to visit the whole district of Manus, visiting all the places both on the mainland and in the adjacent islands where we had no work. He opened up a lot of places to the Gospel. I can’t remember all their names but I know there was Harengan and Tong, Rambuto and Baluan – this was the island where Paliau the Cargo Cult leader lived. After Roy and he became friends Paliau became much less aggressive.

Everywhere Roy went he took new plants for growing food for the people. This became an urgent necessity for him and the green food eventually ended up being called “Harrison” in many of the islands as the result of his healthy obsession. He also taught the Adventists how to fence off their gardens to stop the pigs coming from the nearby heathen villages. These animals were a real pest, for if not controlled, they would root out the vegetables from the gardens.

Roy had a desire to go to the Western Islands as soon as he arrived, because he was essentially a pioneer missionary and wanted to get the message to every place he could.

Sometime early in our stay, in Manus, he heard from some official that the Roman Catholic missionaries were planning, in the near future, to visit the Western Islands and commence their work there. When he heard they were even contemplating chartering a seaplane to take them out there, he decided he would get there first by boat. He had probably heard this from friends on one of his visits to Momote, where the Australian air force was located, or Lombrum where the navy was positioned.

He immediately got “The Light” ready for the journey and fortunately there were enough trained volunteer missionaries to place in each of the island groups. He approached the Harbour Master at Lorengau, and asked for permission to go. The master was really quite reluctant to give permission for it was the monsoon season, and there was no radio on the boat. Roy assured him that all would be well and subsequently received the necessary permission. He said that Roy was either mad or a man of great faith to go at that time!

When Roy sailed early in 1949 to the Western Islands all of the island groups were visited. First of all they visited Luf, a village on the Hermit Islands, the Germans had built a mansion during the war years so it was easy to leave a missionary there. Another missionary was left on Maron. Missionaries were left in other islands such as Liot, Pihun in the Niningos. I believe all of the volunteer missionaries were from Mussau.

When they sailed to the Island of Aua it was a disheartening experience. The people there were fully Polynesian. Nobody knew how they had migrated there but now they were all extremely sick and unable to work. They had been visited by traders and unfortunately had contacted venereal diseases. They also had no clothes for they were very poor. On his return to Manus Island Roy began to collect clothing for these destitute people. He also had clothes from all over the mainland and when the ship returned to the Western Islands they were able to give garments to many needy people. What a wonderful missionary gesture on the part of our people of Manus!

Because there were some people on Aua who had relatives on Wuvulu whom they hadn’t seen for years Roy graciously offered to take them on “the Light” for a visit. They had only travelled half way there when the engine failed during a terrific storm. All on board became very seasick while Roy’s time was spent down in the engine room. For hours the engine crew tried to fix the problem in the swelling sea with a background of screaming and sick people. What a traumatic experience to endure! Eventually the engine revved to life to the relief of all, however, Roy was concerned that there may be more problems with the ship so reluctantly he returned in safety to Aua and left a missionary to work with the people.

On Roy’s return to Manus he alerted the health department of the condition of the Aua inhabitants, and soon the World Health Organization visited to give the necessary help following his report. They sent medical aid that involved many injections and other medical assistance. When Roy returned to the Island about six months later he found a totally different people!

The people on Aua were delighted to have a missionary left with them. After the World Health Organization had been there and missionaries had educated the people, within a few short years the people became strong, well and healthy. They were able to work and returned a substantial tithe to the Lord. This came from selling the copra harvested from the coconut palms growing on the Island. What an amazing turn-about as they didn’t have energy to anything before! To the visiting patrol officers the people of Aua became a living testimony of the life style of Adventists. By native standards they became healthy and very prosperous.

Roy made another trip to the Western Islands in early 1950. Ann was about four or five months old but I decided to go with him. It was wonderful to see the difference in the lives of all the people living on these islands. At one place, I believe it was in the Ninigos, the first thing we saw was a little house on stilts on the shore. This was a “tithe house.”

When Roy contacted the missionary, whom he had left on the Island earlier, he asked him how he had come to have a tithe house already. He said that when he came back from fishing he would count out the fish and put each tenth one aside. The people wanted to know what he was doing. He explained the tithing system from the Bible and from that experience the locals planned to follow those teachings. They had built their own tithe house for the Lord.

We had a wonderful trip around all the Western Islands and found the people were very happy with the training they were getting.

Some of the people from the Western Islands became missionaries in their own right. There was Michael who wanted to travel to Manus from the Western Islands. A trading boat docked in the harbour so Michael asked if he could travel with them and work to pay his way. The crew agreed. As they journeyed along the way it came to be Friday and Michael said to the skipper, “Do you know we are going into the Sabbath now and we will have to stop and prepare food for the Sabbath.

By this time they were actually anchored at another place. He said the people just messed around and didn’t make any food preparation for the Sabbath. He was most upset about that because he believed implicitly that the Sabbath was true and everybody should follow it, even the people on the boat. When the Sabbath came then the people began to prepare food and they wanted his help. But he said, “No I am not going to help. You wasted the time when you should have been doing it when it was Sabbath preparation time and so I won’t eat.” Next morning he wouldn’t eat because the food had been cooked on the Sabbath.

There was another person, a girl from this area who went to work with a trader’s wife in Laurengau. The young girl had a Sabbath School lesson book but she could not read or write. Each day she would go to the trader’s wife and ask, "Would you please help me with this story?" Mrs. Booker said to us, “I was the one who was teaching this girl but I now know all about the Adventist faith, due to this girl’s persistence in wanting to study her Sabbath School lesson every day.”

We were quite content on our vacation leave April/May in 1951,

knowing that so much had been accomplished in a relatively short time. Oh! The blessings of “The Light” to help us in this work. I trust that this letter will assist you in your research.” Sincerely, Lorna Down – formerly Lorna Harrison

After furlough the Harrisons were transferred from Manus to New Britain. They located in Rabaul, capital of New Britain, where Roy was appointed District Director. Later he was appointed President of New Britain. When Ken Boehm, was President of the Bismarck Solomon’s Union Mission it was also located in Rabaul.

The above letter that Lorna wrote to Ken Boehm gives us a real picture of some of the activities covered by Roy in his early work through the Islands north of Papua New Guinea.

In Rabaul where he worked for over five years, Roy was in charge of another mission vessel, the “Day Dawn”. There was one incident he well remembers with this vessel. At one time he was to take George Smith and his wife down to Kambubu.

He was told that George had been in the British Navy, so Roy thought he would enjoy the journey much better if he were to travel on the roof of the little Day Dawn, to experience the waves and enjoy the sights. Roy was busy with activities down in the engine room and when he went up to where George was, he was helplessly clinging to the mast of the ship, painfully sea sick and so glad to be rescued. He lay down on a bunk in the boat and took some time to recover from this painful ordeal.

Roy loved his boats and the sea life they brought to him. From 1957 to 1965 the Harrisons were appointed to Honiara, capital of the Solomon’s. Roy was the President of the Eastern Solomon Islands Mission. Here his boat was the “Vinaritokae.” However, there was a problem! The South Pacific Division officers believed it was too small for the work that Roy was doing in carrying students and workers and supplies, including materials for the construction of the hospital at Atoifi on Malaita. These were some of the things Roy needed to be involved in besides being a President of the growing and developing Eastern Solomon’s Mission! The territory during those years included Malaita, the Polynesian Islands of Rennell and Bellona and as well the larger Island of Guadalcanal.

Sometime after their arrival in the Solomon’s, Roy, who had a master’s ticket, was asked if he and a Solomon Island crew could fly to Fiji and pick up the “Lao Heni,” a 65 foot vessel, which was no longer required in that area. Roy flew there with four crew members and brought it from Fiji to the Solomons, travelling only by sextant because they had no sun for the whole journey. He was full of gratitude to the Lord for taking them through some very difficult seas and other trials on their trip.

When the Division officers visited on one occasion, they looked at Roy’s logbook and discovered that he was away from home at least ten months of the year. When the Harrisons were appointed elsewhere, this large territory was divided and the main changes included a President for the Island of Malaita. Pastor Percy Holmes was invited to take that appointment which greatly relieved the duties of the Eastern Solomon Islands president.

Lorna added more details to life in the Solomons. “We lived on the Mission compound at Kukum, which was a short distance from the centre of the city of Honiara, the capital of the Solomons. The basic shops were there, a hospital and a prison and the headquarters of the British Colonial Service, which at the time was caring for the territory. There was a Governor, a District Commissioner, and a number of other officials holding varying responsibilities in the Government.

At that time we had two other expatriate families who worked for the mission. Ray Richter and his wife were at Betikama School, which was less than a kilometre from Kukum. Lance Waddington and his wife had a medical clinic at Kwailabesi on the north coast of Malaita. They had the use of a smaller boat than ours; I believe it was called the “Dani,” in which they travelled around the coast to many villages on Malaita. They were able to treat the sick and especially give medication to lepers. These were treated at the clinic and on becoming stable were able to return to their villages, where they could remain as long as they received and took their medication.

While in Malaita, on one occasion, Roy was hit in the solar plexus by a demon-possessed woman. He couldn't get his breath back for ages!  It was all about a woman who had become an Adventist. When she died the heathen relatives wanted to bury her in their heathen ways. Roy wouldn't allow them to follow their traditional burial on this deceased Christian lady and so they brought the demon-possessed woman to get rid of the missionary.  Fortunately we serve a living and powerful God and Roy lived on to share the story and finish the work God had called him to do.

When we arrived in Honiara we had two children. Ann was eight and Peter about five. As there were no schools for expatriates at that time it was necessary to enrol the children in a NSW correspondence school called Blackfriars. This was a really wonderful service and a great help to missionaries who were in similar situations to ours. It was probably some of the pioneering work in Australasia for home schooling, which these days has become very popular.

As Honiara was the Headquarters for the British Colony, the church had set up a radio communication for all the mission stations throughout this field. This included all the people in the Western Solomon’s Mission, as well as our own in the Eastern area. There were radio stations at Batuna, Kukundu (headquarters for the Western Solomon’s Mission) at various schools, the Amyes hospital and several other places. Altogether there were ten locations, which had radio receivers and transmitters. We had a regular schedule each day when our expatriates and others could communicate and make their needs known. Because we were in the capital city and more able to make purchases, we did our best to supply those needs. As Roy was seldom home, the responsibility for this work became mine. It was a real pleasure for I found it a significant blessing to be in touch with so many people who lived in very isolated areas and had so many needs including being able to communicate with other expatriates.

At times one of the families would have a particularly urgent need. Boats going to their area were rare and it appeared that most days I would visit the town looking for appropriate vehicles and dispatching the precious items the expatriates needed.

My main home problem was home schooling. Ann was no problem for she seemed to enjoy her books. I would set her curriculum for the day and had the confidence that she would finish well. However, Peter’s personality led him outdoors at every opportunity when my back was turned. He would meet up with some of his indigenous friends and go collecting bugs, and other kinds of live insects and creatures. At times he would bring home birds, bats and even during one period of time, some little crocodiles!

It seemed to be that as soon as I left the house he would find some boys and then they would busy themselves until my return. Of course nothing was done on such mundane things as schooling! Once I was rather embarrassed to receive a note from Blackfriar’s Correspondence School, which read: “this child has need of greater supervision!” I felt rightly rebuked! It was a great day when the British Government established a primary school and the children were able to attend it rather than have home schooling. This British school was a great place and the children soon acquired nice British accents. Unfortunately they lost those lovely accents when we moved on!

Before the new school opened, expatriate parents often sent their five and six year old children on planes to attend schools back in England. England was the country where most of the government families, living in the Solomon Islands, had their roots.

Each year we made a couple of trips to Rabaul and called on some of the mission stations on our journeys and sometimes on our return. On one of these visits one of the missionaries offered us a cow. He said it was a ‘rogue’ cow and he couldn’t do anything with it. Roy having been brought up on a dairy farm, just loved cows and thought that maybe he could tame it. We loaded it on to the boat and brought it home to Honiara. Well, did we have fun with this cow! It was in calf and had to be tethered because of its unpredictable nature. Because of this we had to lead it to pasture each day.

Roy trained one of our house girls to lead it off into the bush to get some good grass. It was quite a journey each day and she was quite often the one who was being taken for a walk! One day the cow led her to a place where there was a pit apparently dug by marines during World War 11. For some reason the cow came back with no girl for she had landed in the pit and could not get out. Roy had to go back and find her. She pleaded with him not to be his cowgirl anymore!

When the heifer eventually calved, Roy tried to milk it. He had a boy at each leg one at the head and one at the back. The cow had other intentions and never became cooperative and even farmer Roy gave away trying to tame it. One day we had a visit from a missionary who was teaching further along the road at our Betikama School. Somehow the cow managed to chase her and she ended up hiding behind a tree as the cow tried to attack her. Children seeing this scene thought it very amusing, but the poor lady was not amused at all!

Roy regularly visited Malaita and at times went into the hinterland where it was dangerous, for the local people were very ferocious and some were still cannibals. However, the Lord protected him and he was able to establish mission stations in a number of new localities. On one occasion when he had left the crew with the ship and gone up to one of these dangerous places, he stayed for a few days. While staying with these primitive people, Roy taught them how to pray to the God of heaven before doing anything. The people were most impressed with this concept, for basically they are a spiritual people. When he needed to go back the people sent a little boy with him to show him the way. This act revealed that they had confidence in him.

When they got to the outskirts of the village and had said goodbye to the villagers, Roy motioned to the little boy to pray, the little boy pointed to Roy and indicated that he should pray which he did. When they arrived down at the coast they came to a village and there was a little boy crying for some reason. The boy with Roy had been given a bit of taro for his return journey. When he saw the little boy crying he went up to him, and gave him his lunch. This would mean he would have nothing to eat for a few hours. What a wonderful indication of the work of God on the hearts of even the very young!

One of Roy’s projects in this area was the commencement of a vocational school at Afitara near Auki in order to train students in practical skills. He was ever anxious to improve the lot of the people!

On his regular visits to Kwalabesi where the clinic was, he and Lance Waddington often travelled together on the smaller boat. This was because the bigger boat couldn’t anchor very well at some of the villages built on stilts over the water. Along the coast were some very wild villages, Government officers had been murdered there, and years ago we had lost a mission family.

**ATOIFI HOSPITAL BUILT FROM A MIRACLE**

Roy had medical training and was concerned about the patients who were sent back home after attending the clinic. He and Lance made regular visits to these patients whenever Roy could get over to Malaita in the course of his busy schedule. One day when they were travelling along the coast, they saw a crowd of natives on the shore signally them to stop, so they put out the anchor and waited to see what was wanted. They paddled out to the boat in a canoe and when they got to the boat, the men saw a woman lying on the canoe floor. The local men said that she had been in labour for over two days and they wanted help to make her better. They put the woman on the boat with her husband but waited nearby with bows, arrows and spears.

Lance was very cautious when Roy decided to pray but he was somewhat concerned and mentioned that the husband and the other natives there may not understand and could make trouble. Roy insisted! There was a nurse on board who always travelled to help the people. Roy started to pray and as he prayed the sick woman revived and to the amazement of all, the baby was born. The nurse set about and delivered the baby normally. The baby’s head was somewhat deformed by the pressure of spending those days in the birth canal, but the natives were delighted, and recognized the power of the God whose help had been sought.

Roy and Lance turned the boat around and went back to Kwailabesi as the woman and baby needed further care. The parents called the baby Danilyn. The Dani was the boat, and the nurse’s name was Lyn. Such is the way that children are often named in the Islands! The other men who witnessed this miracle went along as well still holding their bows and arrows.

As the result of this miraculous experience the village people who had been strongly antagonistic to the mission, asked if they could have a clinic near them. Roy found the land at Atoifi and then he negotiated with the Government who alone could sell land. They purchased it and then transferred it to the mission. The church decided to build the hospital and as mentioned earlier, Roy transported all the equipment on the boat including the tractor to clear the land. He had to build a wharf first so all the materials could be landed near the site.

Atoifi is doing a great work in Malaita and is a wonderful training ground for nurses. While it has had many ups and downs over the years it has remained a wonderful institution and a bastion for the Three Angel’s Messages. *(As an interesting aside, David Down – whom Lorna married some years after Roy’s passing - has a daughter Glenda, a triple certificated nurse, along with her husband, a specialist immunologist and physician together with their doctor son have been on trips to Atoifi as volunteer medical personnel.)*

Lorna wrote further: “We were in the Solomon’s for seven years and sometimes I would venture out on the ship. It was a privilege to see most of the Islands that Roy visited and the work that he had done. With the exception of Ysabel, Choiseul and Ontong Java, another Polynesian group, I saw all. Once very bad weather came up unexpectedly while the boat was anchored and there was only one crew member on the boat. Roy, knowing that he would not manage the vessel on his own swam out to help him through this difficult experience. God had blessed again! Another time when he was swimming to the boat he ended up with a water snake around his neck! These can be very poisonous. Like the apostle Paul on the Island of Malta when his boat had been shipwrecked and a snake hung on to his arm, God saved Roy from what could have been an early death.

Roy was a very committed missionary and as he moved from village to village often carried plants and other materials to improve the lot of local people in the work they were doing in and around their villages.

On one of the trips in which our family accompanied Roy, we called in at Tulagi, which was the HQ of the British Government pre-war. There was a large cave here that had springs of fresh water in it and where the American ships during World War 11 replenished their water supplies. When we visited this place, the entrance was quite deep and we all got very wet. We eventually ended up in the centre of an enormous cave with hundreds of little bats clinging to the ceiling. Young Peter had encouraged all the crew to fill their pockets and their shirts with them, and he had stowed them in all the cupboards! To my horror for the next few days every time I opened a drawer or a cupboard on the boat bats would fly out.

One of the joys of missionaries and ministers alike is when their children choose to be baptized. While we were working in the Solomon’s, Ann and a local native girl were baptized in the salt water at the foot of the hill where the mission Headquarters were located. There was a problem that had to be overcome to make the baptismal waters safe. During the war there were so many people who died in battle in these waters. This attracted a number of sharks to the area and made it very dangerous. Before and during the baptism some of the local boys kept moving the waters to make it a safe place for the baptism

On his trips to one of the Polynesian Islands known as Rennell, Roy made a close friend of the chief also called ‘Thunder and Lightning’ in the Polynesian language. This was because of his fiery and tempestuous nature. The chief also had two or three wives. Eventually the man became converted and ended up with only one wife, which was a wonderful evidence of the power of God to convict and save. Before he went to Rennell Roy had been told not to spend too much time with this man. We can never know what God has in store for people when we follow His directions rather than those of our colleagues.

One of Roy’s projects was to use the boat to bring students from the other islands to our Betikama High School and then to take them home at the end of the school year. In Roy’s mind it was important for as many young people as possible to get a Christian education. He sometimes met non-Adventists who desired their children to have an education in our schools. One such student called Kevisuni had a father who was a lay pastor of another denomination in a village on Malaita near Auki, the capital. Roy cultivated the friendship of the father, and managed to get his daughter to school. She became an Adventist and eventually a teacher in the Solomon’s. At one time she was invited to Australia and taught at Mirriwinni Gardens Adventist School, which is set up for indigenous Australians. The church ultimately invited her back home to the Solomon’s to develop a curriculum and train teachers there.

I became a very close friend of the District Commissioner’s wife, Derek and Vrai Cudmore. Vrai and I used to do Occupational Therapy together in the hospital. We would supply to the women patients pillowslips and embroidery cotton, teaching them how to embroider. I used to draw patterns on the cloth in pencil, so they could fill in the spaces. The women were really keen and produced some wonderful items!

We often visited the Cudmore’s home and sometimes they visited our home for meals. Later in our experience when we were travelling in the Caribbean we stayed with them in Government House at Tortola in the British Virgin Islands. Derek had been made the Governor, and they insisted we come and stay as long as we could when we were travelling through the islands of the Caribbean on our way to South America. They put on a dinner in our honour, with a dozen of the notables of the Government. It was full evening dress for the women, with me in one of Vrai’s evening gowns. I sat on Derek’s right hand and he was constantly protecting me from the alcoholic drinks that the stewards were incorrectly giving me instead of the grape juice Vrai had provided. We stayed there for over a week in the same unit that Princess Margaret had stayed in just three weeks before.

One day there was an interesting event in our suite. There was a refrigerator for our use, which had fruit juice and water. Apparently one of the stewards had also put in a bottle of gin. Roy was thirsty and went to the refrigerator for a drink of water. He opened the bottle of gin and quaffed quite a bit before running to the window and spitting it out of the window. Vrai said she could now tell people how her SDA pastor friend drank gin!

She arranged for the local pastor to come and collect us on Sabbath morning to take us to church. She said he must bring us back soon after sunset, which he did. Roy took the service in this church, and then the minister took him to about six other congregations around the island. Because the people from each church enjoyed the sermon they followed him to the next preaching appointment. Roy needed to preach six different sermons that day!

The Cudmores also took us on the Governor’s beautiful launch to the American Virgin Islands, where we lunched at the millionaire Rockfeller’s retreat. Vrai and Deryk Cudmore had a weekend house there and also a Land Rover. The driver was instructed to take us to see all of the American sections of this lovely Island group. From humble missionary living it was a rare insight as to how some people in the world live!

**NEW IRELAND**

In 1965 Roy was moved from the Solomon Islands to New Ireland, Kavieng as President, which meant he had responsibility for New Ireland and all the surrounding islands, including New Hanover, Mussau, Emira. Lihir, and Tabar. He was very thrilled at the prospect, as most of the territory, apart from Mussau and Emira, had not been entered. On this part of the missionary experiences they had the “Malalagi” a sturdy 45ft vessel.

The children were growing and it was time for further education. Ann moved to Australia and was accommodated in the hostel at Avondale. This was mainly used for the children of missionaries. From this hostel they could attend Avondale High School or Avondale College. She was planning to do the secretarial course at the college. It was planned for Peter to live with Pastor and Mrs Hawkes in Rabaul as there were no secondary schools in Kavieng.

Not long after the Harrisons moved to New Ireland, a new church was built near the headquarters in Kavieng, the largest town. The roof wasn’t on but during show time Roy decided to conduct a short evangelistic series. At first there appeared to be no harvest. However, a man attended from Cape Semens, way down in the south of the Island. He took literature from each of the meetings he attended and then went home where he shared the message with his wife who saw in them the truth that they needed. They invited one of our evangelists to come and preach to their neighbours and relatives. It was not long before a church was established and then followed a school with over 100 students attending from its commencement. Roy went down for a while and helped dig a 41/2 metre well where was discovered a beautiful stream of good drinking water. This brought much excitement to the school family and to the people of the village for they had never before seen a well dug.

Roy talked to the people about their decision to become Adventists. Their eyes gleamed and their faces shone as they described how Jesus had helped them give up alcohol, tobacco, the chewing of beetle nut and how their very lives had been changed for the better. They told him that they had lived in darkness but now the light of salvation had come to their villages and given them much joy. One lady who accepted Jesus as the Way, Truth and the Life, shared her joy and faith with all whom she knew. She had indeed helped to swell the harvest that had started with one man listening to an evangelistic series, taking tracts home and then sharing their messages with his wife. God works in wonderful ways!

At one time Roy said: “We want to continue to put up Gospel flags in new places to complete the work that God has given to us.” These new flags were planted largely with volunteer evangelists whom Roy trained. They would venture up into the mountains and down the coast of New Ireland. On Sundays they were often invited to attend other churches and preach. In one place one of the evangelists had quite a lot of opposition, but there were also many who supported him. He wrote to Roy on one occasion saying, “Now we have no opposition, for all of the people have come to Jesus and His last day Truth.” A school was built in the area and scores of students enrolled, not only from that village but from other areas as well. Roy’s own background in teaching helped in the training of teacher/evangelists who were most enthusiastic in sharing their faith and knowledge.

Lorna wrote the following: “I was not a good sailor. While I rarely got sick, I never felt very comfortable on the sea, and I understood that Roy would be away for most of the time. One day as I was walking outside the compound, a jeep pulled up beside me. A man whom I had already met spoke to me and said. “Would you be interested in a job?” When I asked him what kind of a job, he said they needed a typist in the Education Office; he was the Administrative Officer there. When I told him I could also do shorthand he was delighted. I said I would think about it and let him know. After praying about the situation, I decided this could have many advantages. It would give me something profitable to do and would be an opportunity to meet non-Adventists.

It was quite interesting and I gradually became adapted to the office routine, and an understanding of the scope of the activity of the Government services being offered. I had been there for a couple of months when the DAO (District Administrative Officer) the man who had originally asked me if I would like a job said that he was resigning and returning home.

When I heard this I approached the District Inspector of Schools, the boss of the Department and told him I would like to apply for the job. I knew he was happy with my work as his stenographer. When I told him of my previous experience in the first and only job I had before going to Avondale, he was very interested in my request.

As mentioned earlier in this book, when I left school I worked first of all as an artist and then as a designer in a business which designed the patterns on dress materials, which soft good suppliers in Flinders Lane then sent to Japan. They were returned as rolls of material to be sold for manufacturing as dresses, clothing and the like. After working there for a short time the business developed and we employed more staff and the owner, a very young woman, said she would train me in every section of the business, to have me become the manager. This included as well as the office side, the organizing of the 50 girls we had working for us, it also included being the person who presented the designs to the soft goods firms. So I received very good training in every aspect of business administration. After receiving all the necessary training, I was sent to Sydney. I spent six months in Sydney establishing the business and managing it. This gave me a fair idea of administration and is why I felt I could apply for the District Administrative Officer’s position.

The District Inspector said that he would support my application, but believed there were two things against the authorities granting it. Firstly I was a woman, secondarily I was married. To his amazement and mine, the authorities agreed to grant me the position. My duties included managing the staff in the office, about ten, as I recollect. We managed a big storage shed containing supplies for schools.

For the use of the District Inspector and the District Administrative Officer we had a three ton truck and driver, a Landrover and driver, also a motorboat and driver. (I learned to drive and got my license for the truck that was even accepted when we returned to Australia.)

We cared for all the schools in the territory, government and private mission schools including our own Adventist schools. My duties included visits to all of them from time to time where I checked all sections of the administration of each school. We also had radio connections to communicate with the schools. While in the office I was on the air for morning and afternoon sessions to enable us to meet the schools needs more efficiently.

Later, when Roy was transferred to Manus, the Education Department transferred me also, and I held the same position in that area. We were later transferred to Madang where I was first appointed as Registrar at Madang Technical College, and later to the job as District Administrative Officer in Madang until we left New Guinea on Roy’s retirement in 1978.

**WORKING WITH EXPATRIATES**

It was a pleasure to get to know many of the government personnel. There were a lot of young men and women working in the schools and government offices. The only social activities these young people had were at the pub and the local clubs so their environment was not very good. As I got to know them I would invite them for meals and after the meal was over Roy would take worship or if he were away then I would take it.

One of the government teachers, a young Catholic man, told me one day that his priest had shared with him that Lorna Harrison was the most dangerous woman in Kavieng. I found this very

enlightening and probably encouraging!

My position brought me into regular contact with the Treasury Department not the least that we received our funding through them. When first in my new position there were some changes in the Treasury. Michael Browning, who later became our son-in-law was appointed into the department. At times I would see his dog outside the pub and also regularly witnessed his ashtray full of cigarette butts. We would talk about these habits and of course I invited him to meals, and worship! While at Kavieng he celebrated his twenty-first birthday party in his flat. Even though it was down the street from us we heard the activity going on all night!

**THE HARRISONS AND THEIR PERSONAL WITNESS**

While living at Kavieng, New Ireland, Lorna Harrison tape-recorded the following information.

“We have two very interesting young people here whom I would like to introduce to you. On my left is a gentleman called Laurie Mynjies and on my right is Michael Browning. Both are young men and doing incredible work for Papua New Guinea. I believe it is good for them to share their stories in this way. Laurie is working for the Department of Trade and Industry at Kavieng while Michael is in charge of the Government Treasury also at Kavieng.

When missionaries first came to Papua New Guinea– they used a term that was used in Fiji as a form of polite address or a term showing respect to a lady. This term has caught on up here and these two young gentleman call me “Maram” which in Fijian means lady. First of all we will have Michael share his journey for He was the first of the two to come into our lives.”

**Michael Browning**

Michael says: “Maram, you know most of the story but I will go back to the start. I came up here to the territory about 4 years ago from my home state, Tasmania. I was only 18 years old at the time. I had just come from Moresby, where I had been for a time, being transferred to Samarai and the Milne Bay district. After fifteen months there I was transferred to Kavieng on New Ireland. Here I was fortunate enough to be in contact with Mrs Lorna Harrison. I am convinced this was the Lord’s leading. She invited me home on a number of occasions and through her friendship, food and talks I became convinced of the truthfulness of the Three Angel’s Messages. I have handed myself completely to the Lord now and consecrated my life to His service. I am a happier person than I ever was and a far healthier person too, I might add.”

Lorna continued, “Michael always had a fairly close connection with the Lord from when he was a little boy and the Lord has brought him to the place where he has tremendous dedication and consecration. Michael, what church did you belong to before you became an Adventist?”

“I was a member in the Anglican church. Actually my father is a minister in the Church of England in Tasmania and in fact he has been there all his life. The church didn’t hold a lot for me once I became 15 or 16. I had lost a lot of interest in religion, although I believe I still held a basic faith. The problem was that I had nothing much to base my faith on, and through varying circumstances I travelled down the wrong road. Now I am travelling a more secure route and signposts are all leading upward.”

Lorna asked: “What attracted you to the Adventist message?”

“You!” said Michael.

“You can’t say things like that.” Lorna replied.

“It was your example. A light shone out from your house and that was the main point that attracted me to the message.” Michael asserted.

“With regard to the doctrines of the church, is there anything in particular that rang a bell or impressed you?”

“I couldn’t pin point that there was any one thing in particular that impressed me but in actual fact the whole church greatly attracted my attention. There was the complete dedication of the people and especially your family, which made a profound impression on me. I had a few studies and very soon found the church’s teachings were backed up so strongly by the Bible. I was amazed that they were so completely based on the Scriptures and this further placed into my heart the tremendous hope in which other churches seem to lack these days. There was the wonderful hope of the soon coming of the Lord. There are so many questions that we may ask these days. One clear one to me is, ‘What is the meaning of life?’ This is truly answered by the teachings of this church.”

Lorna asked Michael, “Have you got any thoughts on the further guidance and the counsel we are given as a church body? Did the teachings of the Spirit of Prophecy make any impression on you?”

“It truly did! It seems to me that everything concerning life is covered. This really is wonderful for there is a tremendous amount of light in this church. We are very fortunate,” replied Michael.

Lorna further asked him, “You have no regrets whatsoever in the life which you had before becoming an Adventist?”

“No, not at all!” Michael replied

Lorna finished, “Good! Thank you very much Michael.”

**Laurie Myntjies**

Lorna: “Let’s have Laurie give a description of where his life was taking him less than three months ago. Why don’t you share this story Laurie?”

“Well let me try and start! Two and a half months back I was certainly not one of the Adventists in town. I frequented the local pubs. I was a heavy drinker in my day. I would leave the office at 4:00pm, go straight to the hotel and be there up until 12:00 mid-night. ”

“How many bottles would you have consumed in that time?”

“I suppose on average of fifteen bottles a night. I would often add to that a few glasses of spirits such as whisky or rum. I was quite fond of rum at the time. Well this was my usual program and unfortunately it had been going on since I first came up to Papua New Guinea in 1962.”

“Then a great change came about two and a half months ago.”

Let’s share a little bit of Laurie’s background and experience. He is in charge of co-operatives in the country and when he first came to the territory he was what they call a Kiap? These Kiaps are people of great importance in the eyes of native people for they virtually give direction to all the civil activities up here. We will let Laurie tell his story!

“A Kiap is from an old German word which means captain. The present English term is a trial officer. The trial officer’s work is to go into villages where they might on a yearly basis conduct the census and might collect the nominal head pack. On other occasions the Kiap visits a village when he might hear small court cases and will certainly listen and hear the people’s troubles. Where possible these will be solved. He will inspect things like housing, crops and coconut groves and offer advice where he is able. If he can’t help the people he will call in technical experts like agriculture and public health or even education. He is also an advisor to the people. One of their most recent works has been of course, advising the local government councils. Each council has an advisor and usually he is a trial officer or an assistant district officer.”

Lorna, “Originally you came to New Ireland as a Kiap and you were posted to Mussau. Could you share with us some of the experiences you had up in Mussau and what impression the people made on you?”

“I went to Mussau in 1967, in August, I believe it was, and started the local government council there and introduced the government patrol post. I was there for quite a few months and I have to say it was the basic contentment of the people that attracted me most. The population of the island was Adventist as we all know and their extreme loyalty to me was very attractive.

“Over there I had a young lad by the name of Penias who was our speed boat driver for the government post. He was tireless in his work to save me from my worldly ways and introduce me to the Kingdom of God. He worked on me slowly but was never forthright or too assertive. His personal example and that of his wife and whole family along with others around me got me thinking. I was still a long time coming into the message, however, after that time.”

“Tell us your experience with the speed boat especially when prayers were offered before ever you went out.”

“This was back in the time when I was not an Adventist 1967/68. Every time before we would go out in the speedboat we would have a short prayer. Penias would ask me to bow my head and close my eyes and then he would ask the blessing of God on our particular run. About 6 weeks ago, just prior to my baptism, just a week or so I went back for a short visit. I saw Penias and he and I went down to a little Island to a mission there. I noticed he just took off without praying. So I said to him, ‘I noticed always before, when we travelled, that you prayed before we left on any speedboat venture, how come you missed out this time? He laughed but I noticed that the next time we went out he offered prayer. He is very sincere and earnest.”

“Now you were up in Mussau and then went south on leave and contacted The Message down in Australia. What happened, Laurie?”

“Yes I did. It was one Tuesday night I recall In Sydney. I was watching TV about 9:30 in the evening. I saw this program ‘ IT IS WRITTEN’ by Pastor George Vandemann and it really appealed to me. I used to earnestly look forward to each Tuesday evening so I could watch his program. It was about 45 minutes each week. Towards the end of that series he offered a book, PLANET IN REBELLION, to any listener who wrote to the address. I think it was in Strathfield in Sydney. I wrote in and received the book, and was very impressed by the book.”

“Yes, and then you came back up here and were very keen to get back to New Ireland. Do you think the Lord had anything to do with your coming back this way?” “I think he did. As you and Pastor Harrison know, when I was down south and came back up here very briefly. I was then posted to Port Moresby. I wrote to Pastor Harrison and asked his advice concerning the message and he wrote back very good and most earnest counsel to me. As you realize when I did come back, I think it was in September last year, I sort of avoided you and Pastor Harrison, I don’t know why. Maybe I was sort of ashamed and a bit spineless at the time and didn’t have the courage to face my convictions. I think then the Lord did or must have seen the struggle I was going through and He opened the way so that I could come back to the Island and eventually I contacted you and Pastor Harrison and here I am today an Adventist. Wonderful!”

“Perhaps you could give us a little of your background. You were not born in Australia were you?” “No. I was born in South Africa. My parents were both born there. I am actually a second or third generation South African on my Mother’s side and second on Dad’s side. Anyhow I was grown up when I left there and arrived in Sydney. I wasn’t there for too long when I came up here to PNG to New Ireland, which was 1962.”

“What was your religious background before you became an Adventist?” “I was brought up as a Catholic. The whole family, Mum and Dad are still Catholic at present. The family has been an earnest Christian family even as Catholics. For many years I daily attended mass when I could. But then when I was about 15/16 I broke off all contact with the church just through sheer laziness and did not go to church for many years. In fact the only time I have been to church now is when I became an Adventist.”

“Did you go to a College with the idea in mind of becoming a brother?”

“Yes that is right. I was about 14/15 at the time and I went to a College to train as a Christian brother and spent a year there. It was in a town near Cape Town, South Africa.”

“You will understand how happy we are about these two young people who have joined our church up here.”

“Now I would like them to tell you about the mission activities in which they have been involved since they have been here. First of all Michael has been appointed as the Missionary leader in the church, and he really keeps us all on the job. Michael tell us what you do with us every Sabbath.”

“What we usually do on Sabbath afternoons is get together in several singing groups. The local people sing extremely well naturally and they harmonize with excellent precision. We get several groups together and visit the hospital. We usually go through all the wards and sing a couple of songs in each ward and someone gives a short talk too. Something simple on the Second Coming, or something to cheer a sick patient to give him a little bit of hope and the people there appreciate it very much.”

Lorna: “ And what other activities have you been doing?”

“Laurie and I have had some very interesting experiences, especially last Sunday.”

“Well, just a minute, let me tell them about the first time. Here we

have a plateau up in the hills about 1000metres in elevation and you will discover it is quite a walk when the boys tell you about it. But Michael had a tremendous burden to get the message to these people. We have a little weekend house about halfway down the road that we use for a centre for visiting people down there. He took off from this place up the hills, left about 10:30 in the morning and absolutely raced up there, talked to the people and was back here by 5:45 in the evening. And that I can assure you was no mean feat because most people who do this hike usually stay overnight and are completely exhausted, even in so doing.

Michael was exhausted when he came back, literally, completely worn out but he had great joy in his heart because he was able to introduce the message to these people. That was the first trip up there, now he can tell you about the next one.”

“Laurie and I decided we would do a follow-up trip to the place Maram mentioned, because as a result of the work that already had been done, there had been a call for us to do more. We sent a worker up to one of the villages but he had been ‘kicked out’ and he was forced to come back down again. However, seven men from one of the smaller villages made a very strong call for help but unfortunately the call hasn’t been responded to as yet for there hasn’t been a worker that we could send. Therefore, Laurie and I decided to do a follow-up trip.

Last Sunday we got together, left at 7:00am, and took two welfare girls with us. We took Mika who is the worker from Damon, the centre Maram was telling you about, where the little weekend house is. We took three carriers with us to take the load. There was Laurie’s servant, my servant, and another carrier who is a PNG boy from up in the hills. There were about nine in the group. We started our trek at 7:00 in the morning and it was a wonderful trip. This time we journeyed further than I did before? We took two big bags of Dorcas clothing. I don’t believe that people realize how important this Dorcas clothing is! It’s a tremendous boon for these people for it is 1000 metres up and it gets very cold at night. They really appreciate being warmer and it helps in sharing the message. Well Laurie I will let you continue!”

“The return of that hike was memorable for the slipping and sliding coming back down the hills after dark had fallen. The actual work we did was well worth it. We contacted a lot of people up there. We were able to visit four centres and although they are mostly Methodists up there except for a small Catholic presence they certainly weren’t anti-Seventh-day Adventists. I think times are good and we hope that we can get a firm call from them. We will certainly always remember them in our prayers and I feel something more will happen from this visit. I am sure it will.”

Michael continued, “The people there were keen to hear what we had to say. Both Laurie and I shared the Scriptures with them. I gave them a short study on the State of the Dead. That is a very important topic for these people. The people of New Ireland seem to have great fear of Tamboran, or spirits of devils and similar things around here. They have no understanding of the truth of it at all, and of course their churches don’t share with them the Scriptural position of what happens when people die. They imagine that their ancestors still float around and spook them and so they have huge feasts after their loved ones die. The spirits really have these people in their grip and there is a combination of their heathen customs and the Christian religion. So when you open up on subjects such as the State of the Dead and The Second Coming of Christ, this fascinates them and makes quite a profound impact too. I think we are going to have a great harvest among these people.”

Lorna said, “Tell the people about the trek down the mountain, what you left there and how impossible the people thought your activities were.”

Michael replied, “We left the last village at about 4:15pm. It was decided that we would have to go down all the way because Maram was waiting there still and would be worried if we didn’t arrive. However we took off, met a couple of natives on the road and they were amazed that we intended to go all the way down the mountain that particular day. They said we would never make it and would have to sleep on the road, or sleep in some village before getting down. Anyhow we did get down, although we were slipping and sliding it was very steep. I think about half way down I decided to sit down on my behind on my shoes and slide down as though I were gliding down in a canoe.”

Lorna: “It seems to me you wouldn’t have been able to make it unless you had the Lord guiding you because you couldn’t see where you were going.”

“We were getting to the place where we had to pause at different places. We would have a short round of prayer to ask for strength and ask for guidance too because the sun went down about 6:00pm and we didn’t get home until about 10:20pm. There was very little moon but this was completely covered in by the forest and bush overhead, and we couldn’t even see where to put our feet and it was very wet too. If the Lord hadn’t been with us and protected us on the way, undoubtedly we would have had an injury amongst us. There were nine of us remember and we kept up a good pace as well as we could under the circumstances. There were many crashes into the bush, but apart from a few skin abrasions there was nothing serious.”

Lorna: “We are very happy to have these two young men worshipping with us in our congregation. I should say that most of the time they are up the front preaching, for both take services in the church. In fact it is either one or the other each Sabbath, as Roy is away most of the time these days. It seems that every Sabbath and other meetings conducted we have the privilege of one of these men sharing with us. They really give us inspiring messages because their hearts are just filled with the love of the Lord and the wonder of knowing this message and being able to tell others about it.

“I would just like to say, in closing, that it’s a tremendously exciting place to be in New Ireland at this time. Places are opening up; new calls are coming in; people are calling for workers from our mission to go into their villages. In fact there are so many calls there are simply not enough workers to go around.

“Pastor Harrison is at Mussau at the moment taking camp meetings and already he has another seven volunteers and hoping to get more. As a matter of fact as many as he can get could be placed in areas and villages straight away without any hesitation. The calls are coming in and it is tremendous. We put so much of these exciting events down to prayer for everything about the mission is based on prayer. That is a very strong foundation for our work and that is why things are going so quickly. It is tremendously exciting! Unfortunately, at the same time it appears a lot of the church people here don’t seem to sense the urgency of the times in which we live and don’t appear to be pulling their weight. I’m surprised and somewhat saddened by this for I have a strong sense of the urgency of the times in which we live and what a wonderful message we have to share!

“Where are you going next year Michael?”

“I am going to Avondale College next year to study Theology and I am looking forward to it very much, and looking forward to have a part in hastening the coming of Christ in these marvellous times. That is about all I have to say.”

Lorna: “What about you Laurie as we finish this dialogue.”

“I certainly agree with Michael about the urgent need for workers here. The work, as he said, is going ahead very well. It pleases us very much. It certainly is an answer to prayer as we witness the growth of the mission here. We continually pray for the cause and that more workers will be found. It is true that some are answering the call but we still do not have enough personnel. My future, I haven’t quite the plans that Michael has. I do perhaps plan to go to Avondale in 1971, perhaps for a year to do a Bible course. I plan to settle in PNG, and hopefully in New Ireland if I am able to help the people here.”

Lorna: “Well thank you very much and thank you for all you have done for us. We look to the Lord to do tremendous things here in the future in New Ireland.”

“There was an interesting sequel to the trip the men made up to the plateau. I was waiting down at Damon for them to come back because I needed to be in Kavieng next morning to put some examination papers on a ship. I was the District Administrative Officer for the Education Department and no one else knew the need to send the papers, so I took off about 10:00pm when they hadn’t returned and had travelled quite a distance along the road. It was raining heavily and I drove on to a bridge near the Catholic mission. It was very slippery and I ran off the bridge into the river. The Catholic mission staff, who I knew well because of my job, extricated me from the river with my two dogs and pulled the car out and then one of them drove me back to Kavieng. I was pleased to be able to send the papers on the boat but it was a scary process to get them there.”

We had some very stimulating conversations with Michael for his father was an Anglican minister, as were many of his forbears as far back as he knew. His mother also had the same background and her cousin was a Canon for the church in Hobart. So Michael spent a lot of time defending the faith!

At about this time Ann had graduated and became the receptionist at the South Pacific Division Office. Unfortunately, she developed a very severe back problem, so I suggested she return home so we could care for her. I was able to give her work as a stenographer in my office.

Because Michael was often at our home Ann and Michael met. He became an Adventist and soon romance was in the air, which developed into a wonderful marriage. Michael felt called to the Ministry and enrolled in Theology at Avondale College. While at Avondale they lived in the house that Roy had built for us to use when we went on furlough. One of his teachers was Pr. David Currie the author of this book. Michael graduated, became a minister, and he and Anne spent many rewarding years in Church service in a number of churches and departments in Australia and some mission service on Pitcairn Island and the Solomon islands.

Another bank officer, who became very interested, left the Islands and we have had no further contact with him. A man who painted our house at Kavieng became an Adventist and on his return to Australia worked for the Sanitarium Health Food Company.

Another interesting experience was our contact with a French speaking social worker for the government. She said she was the daughter of a Belgium count and countess, both doctors – her father was killed in the uprising in Algeria and she had to identify his dead body, which was a great distress to her. She used to do a lot of her social work on a bicycle, she liked exercise and quite often I would find Arlette talking to me through the window in my office. We spent many hours discussing the message, and when she returned to Europe I received a lot of letters from her. When we visited England she showed us around the university city of Cambridge. It is an exhilarating experience to work for the Lord and to share Him with those with whom we come in contact on a daily basis.

**ROY’S MUSINGS AS HE TRAVELS DOWN THE COAST**

Roy gave some of his New Ireland experiences on tape as he was making a trip by boat down the west coast of New Ireland. This was another of his exploratory trips! Let’s tune in to his vocal diary.

“We have left Kavieng and are on our way to Djaull Island. We hope to start a new welfare program here this very day and will then travel down the west coast of New Ireland. From there we will move across to Rugen Harbour and then on to Rabaul.

“There was very good reception on our arrival at Djaull**.** We left a missionary lad and his wife there with a supply of welfare material, and the big man of the place gave us a very warm welcome and was happy to receive the materials. All we can do is pray that our missionary couple will be able to do something positive and worthwhile for this community.

“Now we have come down the coast to Kokola. Unfortunately, the man who is keen on our work is not here. He has gone across the other side of the Island to Matinai. It is a little confusing as to what we should do. I have just sent Marcinda and another young lady ashore and can see them shaking hands with some of the women folk. We would very much like to get into this village here. It is a good distance from any other place where we have workers. There are some nice folks here but we know there is an enemy here against us but then there is also the one man who would like our work to be established in this place. All we can do is to keep on trying and trusting that the Lord will open the way so we can start the work here.

“Our boat has now left Kokola and we are on our journey to Seumen. The sea is extremely calm but it is hot because we have no wind. It is a pleasure to have such a nice sea and we expect to arrive in Chomin in 15 minutes time arriving at 4:30pm. We will have time to get ready for Sabbath and spend the Sabbath here before going across to the harbour. I am sure that people at Seumen will be happy to see Job Kasavuli and his family for they have come to work here once again.

“It is now Saturday night. We left Seumen about 3 minutes ago. It is now about 7:30pm and we are heading for Rugen Harbour and the slipway. We have left the Kasavuli family and also Marcinda here to see if they can encourage the people. There is a need for stronger volunteer personnel and welfare work and hopefully we will be calling back here later on, before the end of the week, before going around to the other side of the Island.

You can hear the sound of the Gardner – (ships engine.) It’s a very quiet night, very dark. We have set a course 210 degrees. We are expecting the moon to come up in about 45 minutes and it looks as though we should have a very pleasant trip. This is always a nice bonus when travelling these seas.”

**EXPERIENCES ON WITU ISLAND**

Roy had a small boat while we lived on New Britain. He would load it at times with missionaries and on one trip he went up the North coast as far as the Witu Islands. When they arrived he left a teacher in a village where they formed a school. This was up in the hinterland. The teacher was very well trained and did a very good job.

The next time Roy went back to the Witu’s he saw a very old man sitting on a log on the beach surrounded by a lot of natives. They had many canoes pulled up and it appeared that they were trading pigs. The old man who was sitting on a log said to Roy, “Me want worker, me want missionary.”

Roy replied “Papa, why do you want a missionary?” Roy looked at this filthy dirty man. He had betel nut stained teeth, hair that was terribly matted, skin diseases all over his body and he looked terrible. His clothes were in total disrepair.

The old man said, “Me got two fella piccaninnies. Me send them along school where he put em up top and these 2 piccaninny came home belong me.” (Now in English) “They come to me and say they want soap and combs to comb their hair and they want new lap laps, and they just change. I said to them, “Why are you changing like this? Jesus is coming back soon and we want to go home with Him because He is coming to take all of His children home.”

So he said to them, “I want to go to heaven, I want to go to heaven too.”

They looked at him and said, “Papa you are a dirty old man and Jesus doesn’t want a dirty old man.”

This old man had tears in his eyes as he talked with Roy. He said, “I want a missionary because I want to go to heaven with my children when Jesus comes.” He continued, “I am the chief of this village here on the coast. If you can leave a missionary I will build him a house and look after him, so he took Roy up to show him where he would build the house and what he would do.”

Roy had a very black Boganvillian man who had a wife and six little children. They were great teachers! They built the house while Roy was there and they knew he would be well looked after by this chief.

When Roy came back he had just anchored the boat when this man came racing along in a canoe. Roy didn’t know who he was but he came into the boat and came up to the cabin. He said, “How Dee master, you no savvy me?”

Roy said, “No I have never seen you before!”

He patted his chest and said, “Me Kobolio.”

This was the old man who been sitting on the log surrounded by people and pigs. He was amazingly transformed in such a short time.

Roy said, “I don’t know how he did it but his teeth were clean, his hair was clean and cut, his skin was different, he had a clean lap lap on – he was just a transformed person.”

Kobolio said to Roy, “Master me new fella man. Before when I used to go into the bush I had no energy to use my little tomahawk. I couldn’t do any work at all because I was so tired. But now since the teacher has been here and teaching us all these things, I have plenty of energy, I can work.” He continued, “Master, when I go to the garden to work me savvy tok tok along God. When I go fishing I tok tok along God, whatever something I do I tok tok along God.”

This old raw heathen man had become a Christian in about 2 months and was totally transformed into a person whom you would accept as your brother. He was waiting for the coming of the Lord.

Roy said to him, “what about your wife Kobolio?”

“You savvy master, fashion belong all the Mary. They were very slow. She still had her little container for her tobacco and her betel nut, and I decided I would do something to help her.”

Roy said, “What did you do?”

Kobolio said, “When she went to sleep one night I got up and got this thing of tobacco and the thing for the betel nut and I got in my canoe and rowed out from the shore and when I got out far enough I tipped it overboard. Then I came back and went back to sleep. I watched when she woke up in the morning she was feeling around for her tobacco and her things.”

She said, “Kobolio, where’s smoke belong me?”

He said, “Mary go finish, you too slow.”

Roy said, “What happened?”

“Finish now master, em he good fella!” What a blessing Jesus and His truth has been to these people.

On another trip when he went back to Rabaul Roy took Kobolio with him because he wanted to make the journey. Roy found that the chief was a real joy to have on the boat. He would stand by Roy, the captain, and watch him and at times when the seas got rough Roy would smile. Kobolio would tell the others on that boat that he knew all was well because the master was not worried.

It was on the Witu Islands where so much happened for the church and at one time to Roy! On one journey to the Islands he could not anchor in the normal place for the seas were so rough. He took the boat to the other side of the Island where it appeared that there were some people who had been incited by the priest to come and attack the passengers as they disembarked from the boat and walked ashore. But because of the storm those from the boat were able to get up the hill to where a new house was being built. Roy got up on a platform and was talking to the people. At this time some people from non-Adventist villages were coming in waves to try and get hold of him but it seemed that they were held back for a time. Eventually they broke through and got him off the platform, hit him on the head and broke his nose and fractured his skull. They then they took off and left him.

Roy made his way back to the ship and later spoke to the authorities who said that they would deal with these people. However, Roy’s wounds were so severe he needed to go to Australia to be treated. It is wonderful how God works for eventually the ringleaders of this attack became Seventh-day Adventists. Roy felt it was worthwhile going through his trials in order to bring about such a result.

Peter and Dianne *(our son and daughter-in-law)* came to Madang and I got him a job as a Customs Officer working on the arrivals in the wharf and air. Dianne worked as a schoolteacher for the Education Department. Altogether I spent 10 years in the Department and found it a most rewarding experience contacting so many people in the towns where we lived.

**FAMILY MATTERS**

Peter, our son, also graduated from ministry! He wished to work for young people and so he applied for teaching at a secondary school and was first appointed to Murwillumbah High School. He and his wife Dianne spent about ten years in church service. Then they had a regrettable experience and went into Government teaching, Peter spent quite a few years in the Technical section teaching business subjects (he had a degree in Business administration). He then transferred to the Secondary section and finished up as the Principal of Toowong College in Brisbane. He introduced the concept of students not having to leave High Schools in year 10, but to do those subjects at nearby Technical Colleges, and still graduate from High School. This scheme was introduced nationally and he had to travel interstate to share the program. He then applied for another job as CEO of a Federally funded job, co-ordinating the training of registrars with doctors to encourage more doctors in Government services. He started the program in South and Central Queensland. There were twenty-five of these organizations covering all the States. After he had been in this job for a year or so, the doctor who was in charge of all of them in Canberra, told Peter he was going to retire and wanted him to apply for the job. Peter didn’t want the job and told him so, but with continued pressure did apply, but gave no indication of his training or experience. To his horror, he got the job, had to move to Canberra and put up with internal politics in the office, with the eight heads of departments under his control all power hungry, and the environment not harmonious, he resigned after fifteen months, and went back to his old job in Brisbane, where he still works today.

**RETIREMENT**

In 1972 I believe we were transferred firstly to Manus for a brief period and we were then located in Madang where Roy was president of the Madang/Manus mission, with headquarters in Madang. We were there until 1974, when Roy ‘retired’ and returned to Australia where we lived in a house he had built over several furloughs. However, Cooranbong was no place for Roy to live for there were so many Adventists and few places to find people who didn’t know the message.

So each year we travelled up north looking for two things, a place to ‘pioneer mission’ and also to find a property on which to grow all our own fruit and vegetables organically. Eventually, we discovered Alstonville, and there we were miraculously provided with two acres of land in an area, which was open to mission activity. Roy designed and ‘owner built’ our house and eventually had a wonderful garden.

He initiated groups from both the Ballina and Lismore churches to visit the countryside, conducting surveys to find out the matters in which the local people of the area were interested. Stop smoking seminars; cooking classes; healthful living classes; Bible Studies; vacation Bible Schools’ and the like.

He then organized programs to cover all these, using volunteers from the two churches. He established a church group, which at first met in local halls. Later, land was purchased on which a church was built. After several years a retirement village was built on land procured from the person who had sold us the church land.

First of all Roy was asked to take lectures in Organic Horticulture at the College of Advanced Education in Lismore. Later the classes were transferred to Adult Education classes which he ran two or three times yearly in the area. He also founded the Northern Rivers Organic Growers Association, and was ultimately made a life member.

In retirement Roy spent many months on volunteer service: one six-month period he went to the Sepik where he did medical work on the Pathfinder boat. Another second six months were spent in the Highlands at Kainantu, while I believe Bill Townend was on leave.He also spent six months in the Solomon’s, and then the following year the Division asked him to go to the New Hebrides, where he contracted cerebral malaria, unknown to us. It was this that eventually took his life.

**THE END OF A WONDERFUL LIFE**

When Roy died 21st October 1995, Ann wrote a eulogy to her father in the form of a letter, which she read at the funeral. I am going to take the liberty to paraphrase and shorten it but I believe it is a wonderful testimony to a courageous, battle scarred missionary father who was often away from his children.

Dear Dad,

I have so many wonderful and inspiring memories of you. I remember the old jeep that you often filled up with all those Chinese children for a branch Sabbath School. We would all pile into the back. We had wonderful fun in it except when the jeep stopped and we would have to ask all the local nationals to push-start it. I have to say they were some of the times that I was embarrassed and so we would all try to hide when the jeep stopped. One of those children you had in the truck, Magdalene, became a very fine Adventist Christian.

Then there was the old lady in the shed at the back of the hospital and on occasions you would take me with you to visit her. This wasn’t easy for she had yaws and this had eaten away her nose and ears. I was horrified at her appearance but loved the way that you treated her like royalty. You made her a comfortable bed and provided her food on a plate. You cared for her until she died. Hospital visitation was a sure certainty every Sabbath afternoon that you were home and you took us along with you.

I remember when you were literally carried off the boat after you had been attacked. They left you for dead, but God had more for you to do. But I can still remember how pale you looked for you were so ill. On another occasion you were going to take the boat to Kopiu and we were all helping to load it. But somehow I smashed my finger badly and so you sent the boat off with the crew and the load and stayed with me. You fought hard to keep my finger and personally cared for it. I was in so much pain that first night, but you stayed up with me all night and I still have that finger today.

I can never forget some of those rough seas that we went through in the mission boats. I would be hanging on for dear life and scared almost to death and you would be singing or whistling. You would say, “Don’t worry sweetheart, unless you hear me stop singing or whistling.” That only happened once when I was on the boat travelling with you. I was thrown off the top bunk by the huge tidal wave that just seemed to come from nowhere. Maybe an earthquake caused it! We saw the keel of the boat that night and you were silent and later admitted that you were afraid that we might go down.

I remember once when my hair literally stood on end. You had taken us over to the Baining Islands where so many people were involved in Devil worship and Spiritism. There was that terrifying night when the men were all dancing with snakes as they walked on those hot fire stones. I am pleased that I saw it for it has made me feel so good about the wonderful Gospel of Jesus in contrast to Devil worship.

There was the time that a hurricane came to Rennel Island. The boat was anchored just beyond the reef and you swam through the reef and through shark infested waters to try and save the boat. We had no radio contact with you and the authorities were quite sure that you would never have survived. We discovered how wrong they were when the boat finally limped back into Honiara harbour, the capital of the Solomon Islands. You had no rudder but steered by using the two diesel engines. For 36 hours you had steered the boat up and down on the lee side of Rennel Island to save the ship. For two days and nights you had not slept, and when we saw you after the ordeal you did look awful but you had saved the ship and you had survived. Everyone in the harbour said it was an absolute miracle. It was so obvious to all of us that God was with you and knowing how you prayed so much, it really was another of His miracles in your life. You prayed about everything. I think Peter and I were raised on miracles and answered prayers. How could we ever forget that you lived with God and you knew that he would answer your prayers?

You were an incredible man and a force to be reckoned with at times. You were fearless, undaunted, courageous, innovative and could even be eccentric at times. But above all, you were a man of Faith. God was real to you. We will miss you and always remember you with pride. We look forward to the resurrection morning when you will enjoy seeing the fruit of your labours. With love always, your daughter, Ann.

What more can we write about ‘Hurricane Harrison?’ Truly he was a man of prayer, of faith, of courage, of Christian motivation, of commitment and dedication. Yes, he was a man who was treasured for his capacity, compassion and direction in life. He loved all people! Above all he loved His Lord who answered his prayers and saved His life so many times. He was indeed, a missionary man used by God!

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Appendix

***TRAVELLING ABROAD***

For missionaries it is important to take vacations that the church policies allow. Sometimes when they go home it is also a time of visiting families, living out of suitcases and not always a restful experience. At times missionary families have taken the opportunities to visit outside of the South Pacific Division. While such visits may not be restful the challenges and places seen reinvigorate their minds and lives and give them new and lasting memories. And so it was with the Harrisons two years after they had moved to New Ireland.

In 1967, Ann was 18 and Peter sixteen and for teenagers a trip abroad prior to attending college would be a never-to-be forgotten experience. The Harrison’s six-month furlough was spent travelling around the Northern Hemisphere.

Lorna wrote about their trip: “We went first of all on a passenger freighter boat to Japan, spending a couple of days in each port while the ship unloaded. Our first stop was Yokohama – Roy gave quite a few talks and among other places we were invited to visit Japan Missionary College, where Roy gave some helpful talks about pioneer missionary work in the Islands. This is where we first met the Nelson family, Dwight, pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church at Andrews University, was a teenager at that time.

Japan’s history in contrast to that of China is characterized by great stability. It boasts the longest reigning imperial dynasty, a period of over 2000 years, and has never been subjected to outside rule. Unlike other East Asian countries Japan has no natural resources of importance. Their domination in worlds’ markets has been achieved by concentrating on the manufacture of consumer goods.

We then went to Nagoya, where we visited all the wonderful buildings in this area and the palace. From there to Osaka, and Kyoto, where a missionary met us and Roy had a few meetings to conduct in this area.

The ship then went to Taiwan, where again we were met and taken to places of interest near Taipei – the capital of Taiwan. In the evening Roy spoke – he was a wonderful speaker and presented material which was a real inspiration to his listeners. We were very impressed with the politeness of the Japanese and now the Chinese, for every person passing out of the meeting would bow deeply and express their appreciation.

Our final destination by ship was Singapore and we were accommodated in the College. One of the reasons we did the trip was to meet up with the Brodeur’s who were close friends of ours and living in Singapore. One of the pleasures of having friends is that they show genuine hospitality. On this occasion they drove us around the Malayan Peninsular and as far north as Kuala Lumpur. Roy spoke many times on this trip and was greatly appreciated.

When first arranging this trip I had very little co-operation from Roy. He expressed himself several times that it was a significant waste of money and he wasn’t interested in sightseeing. However, by the time we got to Singapore he had become enthusiastic because he could see the value of all the contacts he was making.

From Singapore we travelled by plane to Italy. Our first stop was Thailand where we were accommodated in the Mission Hospital guest rooms in Bangkok. We were taken all around some great places of interest such as the Buddhist temples, golden Buddha’s and pagodas. Our journey took us along the famous Klong canal. At night Roy spoke to the staff at the hospital.

Our next stop was Bombay (Mumbai), where we spent a few days. At Poona we visited Spicer College, where Roy was very enthusiastically received.

From Bombay, we purchased a train ticket to Delhi; we didn’t get a first class ticket, so we were able to experience some of the local habits of the people. On this trip we also saw many interesting parts of India, including the masses of people working in the fields as the train passed by.

Eddie Streeter, one of our contemporaries from Avondale was in Delhi, and we also met with David Down, who was there for some meetings. He took us to the Red Fort and out to lunch which was a friendly gesture. We stayed in mission accommodation, and from there visited the Taj Mahal at Agra. While visiting the Taj Mahal we were confronted by lots of Indian men wanting to buy Ann for she had attractive long blonde hair! Needless to say, they had to be disappointed!

From there we travelled by plane to Iran, and the expatriate pastor there, I believe it was Pastor Don Gray, accommodated us in Tehran and took us to quite a few places including the temple of the Iron Men. It was here where strong men were trained and did all sorts of physically demanding things, which entertained many onlookers. The Pastor also took us to the Taurus Mountains and all of their amazing beauty. Our visit to Iran was a great time for our family.

We then went to Lebanon, and stayed at the Middle East College. Ann and Peter were having a wonderful relaxing time at the College. They also reflected on some of the problems we had encountered on our journey, and with a little pressure from some of the faculty they stayed on at the college for a while. Roy and I left them there, and flew to Cairo. There we visited the Orphanage and some of our other institutions. Of course one can’t be in Egypt without seeing the Pyramids and the Sphinx. On our return to Lebanon, Pastor Ken Vine, took us to Tripoli, Byblos and Baalbek. He also took us south to Tyre and Sidon. We really enjoyed seeing some of these Biblical places first hand.

From Lebanon we flew to Cyprus. We were shown the special church of Barnabas and also the bush from which comes the crown of thorns. There was tension at the time between the Turks and the Greeks and there was a very clear line of demarcation beyond where you couldn’t go. We were on the Greek side of the Island.

From Cyprus we flew to Tel Aviv, and to Advent House where we stayed while we were in Israel. The church pastor there was wonderful. He took us to Beersheba, Bethlehem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Qumran, Jordan and Masada. We took a bus north to visit Galilee and its environs including Nazareth and Tiberius. Roy presented a few talks there for the church members, which were very well received.

From Tel Aviv we took a plane to Istanbul. Roy was next to a window, which fell out just before we left. All was well as the staff taped it up with some strong tape and we arrived in Turkey without further problems. The plane was a DC3, which we were used to, being our mode of air transport in New Guinea.

We stayed at the most horrible and decrepit hotel in Istanbul. I can’t remember how we acquired it, but it was shocking. The sheets were dirty; the place was filled with hippies, even some bodies lying in the hall. Quite an experience, but only for one night. The local pastor, Manuke along with his wife were very helpful in sorting out our problem. He took us out to a meal and took us to church, where Roy preached. We saw the Topkapi Palace, the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, and many sights of Istanbul. There were riots on the streets in different parts of the town, and it was quite an experience to navigate around them.

From there we flew to Athens by plane where we stayed in a hotel in the city. We saw all we could in the time we had available, including the Aeropagus, Mars Hill and Parthenon, which helped in making the Book of Acts come alive for us. We spent the best part of a day visiting Corinth where we travelled by bus. How wonderful it was to be in these ‘Bible Lands.’

We had joined the Youth Hostel plan before we left on this trip, because we knew we would be travelling all over Europe when travelling by car. So in Rome we had our first experience of a youth hostel. Boys to the right and girls to the left!

We visited the Colosseum, the Vatican, and many of the sights in Rome our first day there. We had previously ordered a Fiat 125 and so on our second day we spent time in getting the car from the Fiat dealership. It was really a beautiful car, cream in colour, and a dream to drive.

The next day Roy was at the wheel, and found it difficult for a time. The names of the streets were one thing but then there was driving for our first time on the right hand side of the road. But he eventually got to know all that was necessary, and we managed quite well.

We drove to Florence, finding all sorts of interesting places on the way and stayed at our College, Aurora Villa. This institution is in a delightful setting above the city. Again the members very much appreciated Roy’s talks. From there we travelled to Pisa and its leaning tower. Italy was so fascinating, especially in comparison to the Island fields where we had worked for so many years!

From Pisa we travelled across Italy to Venice. Somewhere on this route, we enjoyed lots of Italian food provided by the family of a man we had met on the freighter in which we travelled to Singapore. They fed us so much food we were literally stuffed!

Then we travelled along the French Riviera. The Mardi Gras was on when we were in Nice, which was quite exciting for us but of course things have changed these days! When we got to Menton, we had to turn back to Turin for our new car was giving us some problems and these could be fixed at the Fiat factory there. Soon we were on our way once again and visited the lovely city of Milan. Austria was next and the cities of Vienna, Salzburg and Innisbruck were in a real dream world!

We then travelled into Switzerland and visited the cities of Zurich and Bern. One of the memorable sites at Bern was their famous bear pit. We had never seen bears like those ones before! Neuchatel, Interlaken, Grindelwald, Lausanne and then Geneva were cities that we were also able to visit. At Geneva Adventists have a Health food factory and we stacked up our car with some of their enjoyable food products.

From Geneva we went back to France and visited other cities such as Lyon, Marseilles, Avignon, Nimes, Montpelier, and Perpignan. On to Spain to visit Barcelona, Valencia, Grenada, and Madrid. Across to Portugal to Lisbon and Salamanca. We had great trouble with snow and ice in both Portugal and Spain, and had some quite frightening experiences such as skidding. Of course, we were not used to these conditions especially when the children had to get out regularly to clear the headlights of ice.

We passed through Luxemburg, and went on to Germany where we stayed at our College at Marienhoe and met some lovely people belonging to our church. We travelled through much of Germany and then to Holland and down to Ostend in Belgium where we caught the ferry to Dover, England.

When we were on the ship, a very nice man got into conversation with us and was quite intrigued with whom we were and what we did. We spent the whole trip chatting with him. He said he lived in Deal, and we asked him if he knew of any hotels we could stay at when we got to Dover, as we were going to arrive at midnight. He told us he would get back to us before we got off the ship, but that he had to go for a while. When he returned, the ship had docked. He told us that he was the pilot and he had chatted with his wife and they wanted us to stay with them. I said to him, but we are four. He laughed and said I can count too! So he got into our car and gave us a travel discourse all the way to Deal. We had a wonderful few days with them, and after we left we continued communicating with them. It was a wonderful experience and our first spiritual encounter in the UK.

When we got to London we stayed at the Tolman’s who have looked after many Australians who visit London. This was our head quarters whenever we were in London, and as many others know, it is always a pleasant experience to be in their home.

We visited much of London including the Regent Theatre Adventist centre, where a contemporary of ours, Russell Kranz, was speaking. Since then the lease of the Theatre was sold and another central London facility purchased. Then we visited the Lakes district and on to Scotland. We went as far north as Inverness, back to Glasgow then to Manchester and Birmingham. We then shipped our car back to New Guinea on a Bank copra boat, which landed directly at the port of Kavieng. We were so pleased to have had this ease of transportation and delighted to be able to ship it back to Papua New Guinea.

From Heathrow airport near London we flew to Ireland. In this country we hired a car and visited many historical sites. My forebears came from both County Cork in Ireland and Edinburgh in Scotland so I have an interesting heritage!

From Belfast we flew to Toronto in Canada, and went to the Niagara Falls, Ottawa. We bought Greyhound bus tickets for a trip around Canada and United States of America and often slept on the back seats. From Montreal to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, St, Louis, Indianapolis, Albuquerque, the Grand Canyon, Pittsburgh, Kansas, Oklahoma, Phoenix, Arizona.

In LA we stayed with Dr. Gordon Hadley for the time we were there, they showed us around many of the places of interest, including Elmshaven- north of San Francisco, Loma Linda, San Diego and Tijuana.

We travelled from Los Angeles to San Francisco, travelled in a ship from there to Australia, the Iberia. On the way we called in to Hawaii, where some of the church members took us on a journey around some of the churches. They gave us many very tasty mangoes and all of these experiences have given us lasting memories!

Our next Island stop was Fiji where we visited the chief city, Suva. We then went to New Zealand and on home to Papua New Guinea after six months of a memorable journey. Apart from the first part in Japan to Singapore this trip was mainly sightseeing, although there were many occasions when Roy could speak at churches we visited on Sabbaths.

(BACK COVER)

There are countless stories of missionaries’ experiences through the Island fields of the South Pacific. Hundreds of expatriate couples and families had amazing encounters with Melanesians and Polynesians that live in these territories. Many went as teachers, others as nurses, some as secretaries and probably more went as ministers and administrators

Roy Harrison had the rare background of teaching, nursing and ministry. He was a capable ship’s captain and married Lorna who has given most of the material that you find in this small volume. Having heard many of Roy’s experiences first hand, I felt that at least some of them should be recorded. I also heard stories from Ann and Peter, particularly during their Avondale College years when for some of their tertiary education I was on the College faculty.

We trust that all who read this volume will understand better the blessings that missionaries have been to our church in the South Pacific. – David Currie

**** Roy Harrison

in his garden at Alstonville, NSW. during

his retirement.