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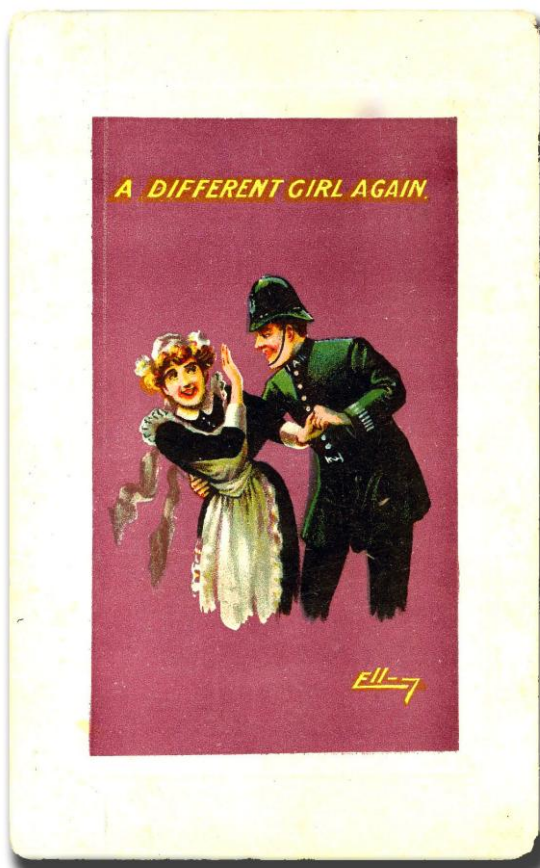
The Newsletter of the Northern Territory
Police Museum and Historical Society Inc.

Patron: Commissioner Paul White APM

Issued: November 2008



**“Hullo, Hullo -
What’s Going on Here?”**



(Postcards from Mounted Constable James Thomas "Tom" Turner- article page 3)

CHIT CHAT

Using the Citation as a guide, the **Tasmanian Police Historical Group** is planning to produce a similar publication. In writing to the NT Police Museum and Historical Society, **Inspector D.W.J. Plumpton**, president of the Tasmanian organization, said the newsletter would aspire to emulate the professional and informative approach of Citation. Nice to be able to inspire the Taswegians. The Territory could also influence fashion in WA. **Des Noonan**, secretary of the **Retired Police Officers' Association of WA**, was impressed by the **NT Retired Police Association shirts** during a visit to Darwin. He took a photograph of the shirts while being shown about the Museum building by **NTRPA secretary, Graham Rees**. Also a member of the SES, Des produces the Association's newsletter which goes out to more than 400 members. Des and his wife, **Noel**, were on a caravan tour and are likely to be back next year

A welcome visitor to the Museum was retired officer **Len Pryce**, now living in **Brisbane**, on a trip back to Darwin with his wife. He served 33 years in the **NTPF** and his son, **David**, is **Superintendent in the Major Crime Division**. Len has a daughter in **Florida, USA**, whose husband is a paramedic and they are planning to move to Queensland. He has been to America four times and had interesting information about the dramatic impact of the subprime collapse on real estate prices. During his time with us we discussed the world's problems over a cup of coffee.

Another visitor to the Museum was **Ian "Dutchy" Holland** who served in the **NTPF** from 1972-1995. He found the many photographs on display interesting and was able to pass on additional information and anecdotes about officers and events. Now residing in **South Australia** with his wife, **Gay**, he was a **plumber in Darwin** when he joined the force, and owned his own house. As free rent was one of the conditions of employment in the police in those days, an allowance was made to cover his home ownership- \$15.44 a week. A keen fossicker when he was in the Territory, he still has a collection of **old bottles** he dug up.

Nancy Litchfield, nee **Mannion**, brother **Robert Mannion** and some family and friends recently visited Darwin for a Mass in **St Mary's Cathedral** in honour of the late **Chief Inspector James (Jim) Joseph Mannion**, who died on September 18, 1968. A number of old Territorians attended and then some travelled to the McMillan's Road Cemetery where the **Police Chaplain, Peter Wright**, conducted a graveside service.

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| Editor | Peter Simon | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Phone/Fax: 08 8922 3374 E-mail: ntpolicemuseum@ntpa.com.au</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Tom Turner Kept Posted

In keeping with the custom of the day, **Mounted Constable James Thomas "Tom" Turner** regularly sent and received postcards when he was in the South Australian Police Force. These were often humorous ones depicting London Bobbies, sometimes armed with truncheons, dealing with cheeky street urchins and drunks supporting themselves on gas lamps. In some instances the captions were changed to indicate it was Tom or a fellow officer representing the law. A 1908 postcard sent to him at **Wirrabara** in SA addressed him as Mounted Constable Tom Turner. Other postcards were sent to him at **Kapunda, Jamestown** and the early German settlement of **Hahndorf**.



(A 1909 postcard about harvesting)

One postcard carried the message that the **camels had bolted** and seemingly used Afghan expressions of command. Another blank postcard without any direct link with Turner was a real photo of a police camel group which included an Aborigine in uniform.

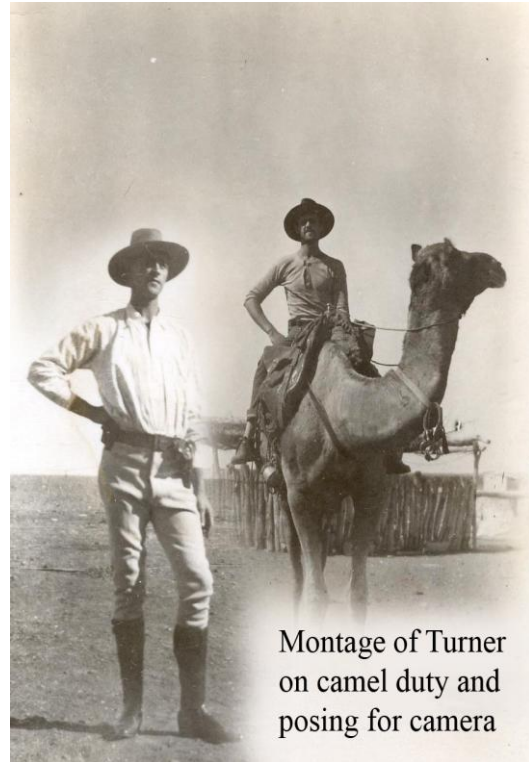
Born in **Victoria** on April 4, 1884, Turner matriculated, was employed in the iron and wire working trade and joined the SA Police Force in 1907 on a commencing salary of 298 pound (\$596).

His eventual wife, **Pauline Alma Rohde**, commonly called Alma, a nurse, first met Tom, 23, in 1907. **She** saw him off at Adelaide when he left for Darwin in 1910. Not only did he leave Alma behind, he also parted company with his trusty grey horse, **Yetta**. He and Alma maintained contact through correspondence on and off over a period of 19 years before marrying.

It seems Turner was something of an all - round athlete as he competed in bicycle and foot races at **Pine Creek** during Christmas -New Year celebrations in 1911 and 1912. He received two pound (\$4) for winning the one mile bike race and came second in the half mile event in 1911. Next year he repeated his performance in the bike races, picking up another two pound, and was narrowly beaten - by 18 inches, according to a report in the **NT Times and Gazette** - in a consolation footrace. There is also mention of him running in a hurdle race.

For a time he was stationed at **Horseshoe Creek**, halfway between **Katherine** and Pine Creek, the centre of a busy mining area where sly grog and supplying alcohol to Aborigines were matters of concern. In March 1912 he was nominated one of five officers approved to perform the duties of **Customs Officers** in the Territory to assist in the drive against opium trading which was "still prevalent". Each officer was to be paid \$10(\$20) a year for this duty. However, in February 1913, **Administrator J.A. Gilruth** objected to the payment, saying the officers should only be rewarded in special cases that he thought fit. The Minister concurred.

A file in the Northern Territory Police Historical Museum and Historical Society contains photographs of Turner, a tall person, on camel patrol in 1917. Another shows a line of camels passing through **Horseshoe Creek** in 1911, a rifle protruding from a pack. Aborigines are shown listening to a gramophone for the first time at **Borroloola Police Station**. Turner was on duty in Darwin in December 1918 when protesters marched on Government House, manhandled Dr Gilruth, burnt him in effigy on the front lawn, and clashed with police and special constables sworn in for the emergency. As a result of the wild melee, union leader **Harold Nelson** and a person called **Balding** were each fined \$6 for assaulting the **Inspector of Police, Nicholas "Old Iron" Waters**, but the convictions were quashed on appeal. Nelson went on to become the Territory's first Member of the House of Representatives.



Montage of Turner on camel duty and posing for camera

Turner's wife to be, Alma, spent eight years at the **Port Pirie Public Hospital** and was matron of the **Naracoorte Hospital** at the outbreak of World War 1. In 1917, at the age of 31, she enlisted in the **Australian Army Nursing Service**. Her service record shows she had changed her surname from **Rohde to Rhodes**. There is no explanation for this but it is likely that Rohde may have been German, her father being Gustav Rohde. Due to the widespread animosity towards anything or anyone regarded as German, many people changed their name during wartime.

She boarded the **SS Canberra** as a staff nurse and disembarked at **Bombay, India**. After serving in a military hospital she transferred to transport duty in the **Persian Gulf**, also off **Bombay and Marseilles**. During the war she and Tom kept in contact through letters.

After the war they eventually became engaged and married on March 4, 1926 while he was on leave from the Territory. Alma was 40 and Tom 42. Newspaper notices relating to their engagement and marriage gave Alma's maiden name as both Rhodes and Rhode. Her parents were listed as Rhodes in one item. The honeymoon was a car trip to Sydney where they boarded the **Marella** for Darwin.

When placed in charge of the **Batchelor Police District**, Turner took some trees and plants with him. The union owned **Northern Standard** said Constable Turner, a "keen horticulturist", would soon have the "one pumpkin garden part" of the community looking better than ever. This was a jibe at the **Batchelor Experimental Farm**, set up by **Dr Gilruth**, which it was claimed only ever produced one pumpkin at a cost of \$20,000. A stud bull which allegedly cost a king's ransom also became part of Territory folklore. The farm was one of three started by Dr Gilruth, the others at **Daly River** and **Mataranka**, all of which failed and became the butt of many jokes.

The Turners were at **Pine Creek** for several years. Mrs. Turner's extensive nursing experience was greatly appreciated during her time in the Territory and when the Pine Creek Hospital was closed she looked after the entire district and ran a home for 38 boys from the building some time during the period September 1931 to March 1932.

She is mentioned in Ellen Kettle's book *Health Services in the Northern Territory A History 1824-1970*. There were some wild incidents when unemployed men rioted in 1932 and took over the unused hospital building. When police forced the men out and arrested a man, it was claimed shots had been fired at the squatters. There were conflicting reports that blank cartridges had been used and that shots had been fired into the roof. A mob descended on the police station and demanded an arrested man be released. In the melee, Constable Turner was reportedly clubbed and "brutally assaulted."

Involved in the drama was longtime Pine Creek resident **Mayse Young** whose parents ran the **Pine Creek Hotel**. About 15 at the time, she said unemployed men became angry when her father cut off credit in the pub because of nonpayment of outstanding debts. The men had placed a black ban on the pub, not observed by some, and watched the pub from across the road. A wild clash had taken place in which bones were broken and blood had been hosed away. In *Northern Standard* accounts of the explosive situation at Pine Creek it was said that a threat had been made to bomb the pub because they had sent for police protection. Eight police reinforcements were sent down from Darwin on the railway quad.

At 2am the courthouse adjacent to the police living quarters was bombed. The Turners, Tom weak and groggy from the assault, "shot up" out of bed, according to Young. Some of Tom's possessions were badly damaged or destroyed by the explosion. A newspaper report later said Constable Turner had been taken to the Darwin Hospital and there was no danger of him losing the sight of one eye, as had been feared.

Another account of the bombing said Mrs. Turner had received a cut near an eye. A petition was signed urging the authorities to allow unemployed men to occupy the hospital building as it was the Wet season. When Mrs. Turner's 76 year old father, a retired farmer, died in Adelaide, after falling off the roof while painting, funeral notices spelt his surname several different ways, including Rhodes.

The Turners were based at **Daly River** for several years and had a highly productive garden. In the **NT Library** online photographic collection there are shots of Mrs. Turner and an Aboriginal woman with baskets of fruit, a banana tree in the background, and one of her with paw paws. Tom is also photographed with some large trombones. Apart from posing with a rifle, Mrs. Turner can also be seen with a snake, at a mine entrance and with a large bougainvillea. A snap shows Tom operating an Aerial Medical Service transceiver at the Daly. **Continued overpage.**

More Chit Chat

A hanging is soon to take place in Darwin. A photo of the old **Police and Citizens' Youth Club** in Smith Street is in the process of being made into part of two wall hangings for the **KPMG** building. **Ms Sue Hansen of the Palmerston and Darwin Quilters' Association** says the hangings will be installed in the boardroom of the chartered accountants. The large hangings will reproduce the buildings on the site, one being the club, from the time of the mansion of "**Wolfram Queen**" **May Brown**, a feisty lady who boxed on with her troublesome pub patrons.



Several views show Mrs. Turner displaying a patterned rug which may have been bought during her time as a nurse during the war. In this picture she is standing against a clump of pawpaws which appear to have straw or grass used like mulch around the trees. In 1933 the Turners motored overland to Adelaide on holiday and Tom was interviewed by the *Adelaide Advertiser*, the article rerun in the *Northern Standard*.

Turner, described as a quiet man not given to talking, expressed interesting views about life in the Territory. The Territory, he was quoted as saying, was “just a cast off” with nobody (in government) seeming to worry about the north. **Transport and communications** would have to be improved if the Territory was to develop. The cost of living was exorbitant and wages necessarily high because labour had to live.

As examples of the **high cost of living in the NT**, he said eucalyptus oil cost more than double the price of that in Adelaide. A blanket which sold for seven shillings and sixpence (75cents) cost 25 shillings (\$2.50). A bag of flour was more than twice the Adelaide price. Just about anything would grow in the Territory. At the Daly River they had put seeds in the ground and six weeks later were eating vegetables.

In the Daly region he was said to have looked after 3000 Aborigines in six tribes. Aborigines would work for tobacco, sugar and clothing. They would “do anything” for tobacco.” I don’t know what they did before the white fellow came to satisfy this craving.” Spearheads made from glass bottles were now something of rarity, they being replaced by shovel nosed ones made from fence droppers.

Mrs. Turner kept goats and chooks which led to some interesting correspondence. In December 1938 Tom Turner received what he termed an “uncouth ” and “unwarranted” letter from a Daly River peanut farmer complaining that the goats had trespassed on his land and damaged fences. A number of trees were also said to have been cut down by Turner's “servants.” In refuting the claims, Tom said Aborigines shepherded the goats and if the stock caused any trouble to anyone on the Daly River, they would be disposed of. The fences, he stated, were rotten and the property was traversed by wallabies and kangaroos which caused a lot of the damage. He pointed out a person hired to repair the fences had been unable to strain them because of their poor state. Furthermore, land the man claimed as his was actually part of the stock route and he may have ploughed over the grave of **Charles Jesse Howland** who had died in 1929. Turner advised that that he would take no notice of a threat by the farmer to knock his “bloody head off ”, if he ventured on his property, because he must have been suffering under “a delusion”.

The goats were obviously well and truly under control in 1940, when Tom wrote to Police Headquarters seeking a gate and a coil of No. 8 galvanised wire, asking the request be forwarded to the Administrator for his approval. The gate requisition had apparently been approved three years' previously. In the letter he offered to provide a picture of his wife

clambering over a barbed wire fence with a billycan of milk using stumps he had built to do so. Mrs. Turner, who had just returned from Adelaide after a serious illness, had to climb the fence three or more times a day. The goats and fowls were kept for their health reasons, as well as treating the sickness of Europeans and Aborigines in the district. He asked to be informed as soon as possible about the gate. If not supplied, he would buy one privately.

The reply from **Inspector J.C. Lovegrove** on 7/11/1940 read: As a result of the "Wet season" having commenced, with the attendant impassable roads, this matter can be again brought up next year when roads are trafficable. Meanwhile, with your considerable carpentering experience, and lack of much police work to do, you might put together an improved turn-stile that will tide you over this period.

This obviously irked Turner who on February 15, 1941 wrote that as his wife had been afraid of having an accident climbing the fence, he had sent telegrams to two Darwin firms but they had been unable to provide a gate. Buying tools from locals, he had constructed a gate. There is a photograph of a gate in the online collection which almost certainly was the subject of the one in the correspondence.

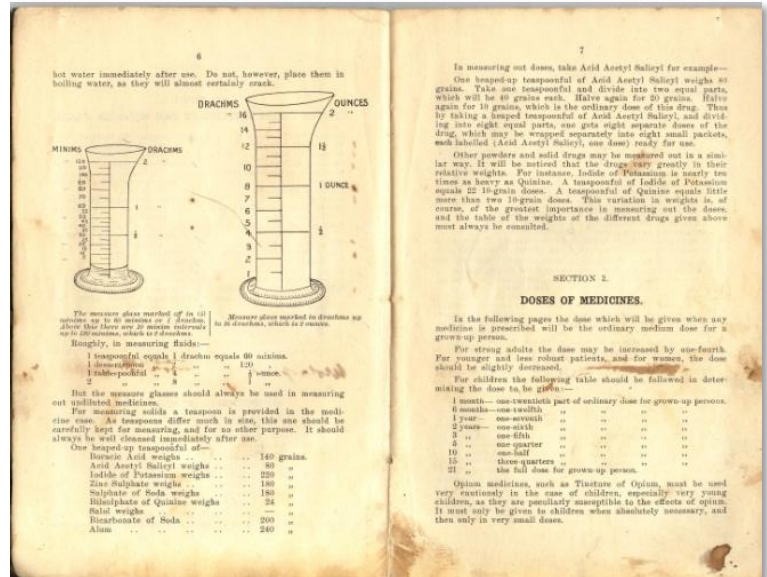
As to the supposed lack of police work, Turner told Lovegrove that since his return from recreation leave, he had not been "hibernating" and with the Tracker had found a great deal of work to do. It had taken days, in all weather conditions, to pull up the long grass growing about the building to prevent it from becoming a wilderness, as it had been on his return. As part of a drive to collect the history of the police force, Turner sent three old Daly River Police Station journals to headquarters for binding and preservation. These started from October 9, 1906 with entries by **Constable Maurice Murphy** and ran through to August 2, 1918 with **Sergeant Wood**.

After the bombing of Darwin, the Daly River Police Station was handed over to the control of the military and the **Independent Company** set up a camp opposite the station. Its members were nicknamed the Nackerroos because they made great use of horses on patrols (See **May 2008 Citation article by Barry Frew**.) There were fears that the Japanese would invade along Top End Rivers and the Independent Company kept a close watch on the main waterways. Several buildings in the Daly River area were stripped or demolished by the military and Turner wrote to authorities expressing concern about several matters, including the spread of VD. The police boat was commandeered and abandoned by the military after it lost the propeller and broke the shaft. Turner had to recover the vessel and it was rowed back to the police station. Aged 60, Turner retired on May 16, 1944 and he and his wife returned to Adelaide. Both died in 1960, Tom seven weeks after his wife.

By sheer luck, the writer of this article, attending an Adelaide deceased estate auction in the 1980s, came across a scrapbook, a photo and postcard collection and books which had belonged to the Turners. A badly blotched 1946 newspaper clipping referred to the death in Adelaide of **Bill Dale**, 76, one of South Australia's oldest and ardent supporters of cycling. Seeing that Tom Turner had won cycling races in Pine Creek, it is likely that he had some connection with Dale. The article said Dale, a foundation member of the **Norwood Cycling Club**, and a member of the **League of South Australian Wheelmen**, was a competitive racer in the earliest days of the sport. He had ridden against **Dick Davis**, a champion of the penny farthing era. In fact, Dale had won the last penny farthing race in Adelaide.

The Turners' photographic collection included views of the Daly River - the crossing, peanut farming, river life, crocodiles, buffaloes and barramundi - groups of people, **Catholic Bishop Gsell at Port Keats** and several of Adelaide River. Photos of Aborigines included a dwarf and a man with part of his leg missing.

Of particular interest was Tom Turner's own copy of the *Bushman's First Aid* for the Northern Territory, published by the Public Health Department in 1913. Written by **Mervyn J. Holmes**, Medical Officer of Health, for the guidance of people in charge of government medicine chests, it consists of instructions for the prevention and treatment of disease in bush districts. (Dr Holmes, who served in WW1, played a major part in combating the scourge of TB in Australia and during WW 11, a Colonel, was in charge of public health with the **Australian Army Medical Corps.**)



(Bloodstains in Turner's book)

There is an inscription, J.T. (James Thomas) Turner, Darwin, on the inside and it must have been anxiously consulted as there are bloodstains on some pages. The slim volume undoubtedly saved many lives and helped ease pain and suffering in the Northern Territory over the years. Of course, having a wife who had been a wartime nurse and the matron of a hospital would have been invaluable to Turner when dealing with medical emergencies. However, his book would almost certainly have accompanied him on patrols. If only those bloodstains could speak what interesting tales they could tell.

A prefatory note stated the advice offered was designed to prevent the greater part of the sickness amongst " **men outback**", an indication that it was regarded as no place for women in those days, despite the large Aboriginal female population. The list of drugs supplied in the medicine case had all been ticked off, presumably by him. Police officers in charge of these kits were given directions on how to mix medicines, determine doses, and how to treat such things as abscesses, anaemia, apoplexy, asthma, inflammation of the bladder, bronchitis, bubo (enlarged, inflamed glands in the groin), colds, colic, constipation, TB, convulsions, delirium tremens, diarrhea, earache, sore eyes, fainting, fevers (including typhoid), VD, granuloma, pleurisy, pneumonia, piles, rheumatism, snake bite, sunstroke, toothache, broken bones, malaria. The section covering malaria, which contains penned in corrections, must have been studied closely by Tom as he suffered from the disease.

If members of the modern police force could cope with so many medical conditions they would probably be quickly seconded to the stretched NT Health Department.

The scrapbook and Territory photographs provide an interesting insight into the life of the Turners. Both were mentioned in Sidney Downer's book about the NT Police Force, *Patrol Indefinite*. There is a picture of them on horseback in the book which reveals she

wrote letters to family members down south with interesting details of their life in the Territory, one unusual fact being that Tom never wore socks. Tom Turner did not just fade away into the mists of history. There are no less than two places named after him in the NT. There is Tom Turner's Crossing, a ford, and Tom Turner's Creek, a stream, near Peppimenarti.

The Case of the Disappearing Bibles

When Darwin based **Stipendiary Magistrate, Stuart Dodds**, went on a circuit court run in 1958 with his depositions clerk, **Andy Hogg**, it revealed a shortage of **Bibles** in police stations. After holding court in **Katherine**, Mr. Dodds proceeded to **Mataranka** where the court was set up in the police station.

It became necessary to swear in a witness with a Bible. However, no Bible could be found. The court was adjourned while the officer searched the station and his living quarters, but to no avail. He explained that defendants usually pleaded guilty so there was no need to swear in witnesses. Mr. Dodds, a lay preacher, said this was an unsatisfactory situation, so the court was adjourned to the next town, **Larrimah**, about 100kms away, where it was hoped there would be a Bible. However, it looked like a repeat situation at the police station. Until an elusive Bible, the property of the Tracker, was found. **Mine Host at the Larrimah Hotel** at the time was former **Mounted Police Constable Jack Mahoney**. When the Bible shortage made the newspapers the NT was flooded with offers of copies.

Trail Blazing Magazine Attracted Trail Blazers

When the pioneering **North Australian Monthly (NAM) magazine** was launched in 1954 two former NT Mounted Policemen galloped in to help make it a success. They were **Vic Hall** and **Ted Morey** who contributed articles to the publication which covered the nation north of the 26th parallel. Other contributors were pioneering men and women, drovers, station owners, missionaries and journalists. One was **Michael Sawtell** who wrote about riding from **Darwin to Derby** in WA during the Wet of 1908, swimming flooded rivers and not seeing one person along the way. Sawtell campaigned down south to divert northern rivers inland to flood **Lake Eyre** and in Sydney was the chairman of the **Committee for Aboriginal Citizenship**.

The ambitious magazine, launched and run on limited means, was a joint venture between historian/author/painter/publisher **Glenville Pike**, pictured below with a trunk filled with his stories and part of his book collection, and journalist **Mrs. Jessie Litchfield** who ran the **Roberta Library in Darwin**, the assistant editor. Mrs. Litchfield was renowned for strongly urging customers in her lending library to take out a **NAM** subscription for 30 shillings (\$3). A straight talker with strong views and opinions, she was not impressed by a certain Administrator and told him he was a fool.

Pike, 83, battling cancer, now lives in **Mareeba**, Queensland, and recently recalled the welcome input by Hall and Morey to the magazine. Their tales about the Territory were well received by readers who were as far afield as **Australia House in London**, the magazine's exotic content fascinating intending migrants. The idea for the magazine developed in 1952 when Pike, with his freelance journalist mother, **Effie**, and aunty, **Dorothy**, drove a Dodge utility from **Cairns to Darwin via the Gulf**. This same trio had in 1937 put all their worldly possessions on seven packhorses and trekked for three weeks from **Atherton** to a 1000 acre property at **Middle Oakey Creek, near Cooktown**, which they rented for \$1.50 a month. The owner of the property had made a fortune gold mining and spent most of his time in a **Cooktown pub**.

Aged 12 at the time, Glenville's education was continued by his aunty under a large mango tree not far from an abandoned blacksmith's shop at what had been a **Cobb and Co** staging station.



The nomadic writer **Ernestine Hill** who penned *The Territory* later rented the same slab homestead they lived in when she worked on the novel *My Love Must Wait*, about English naval navigator Matthew Flinders who circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land and the Australian continent.

Glenville's mother once slung a rifle over her shoulder, jumped on a horse and confronted a well known family of cattle rustlers, warning them what would happen if they stole her stock. On that first trip to Darwin, Pike was both astounded by the many interesting stories he came across and angered by the obvious government neglect of the North. His aunty had more than a passing interest in the Territory because in 1915 she had turned down a marriage proposal from a holidaying NT policeman in Sydney who wanted to take her back to the remote **Roper River**.

When the trio drove into Darwin's main business centre, Smith Street, it was not an impressive sight. **The Bank of New South Wales**, now Westpac, was still a wartime ruin, business conducted from a fibro shed between it and Cashman's **Store**. Most shops had mesh grill fronts, not glass windows. There was a shop called **Sweetman's** that sold an odd assortment of goods – vegetables, clocks, jewelry and clothing. There may also have been a pharmacy there or nearby.

Mrs. Litchfield lived in the back of her library and was delighted to hear Glenville's views which accorded with her beliefs. She was so enthusiastic about starting a magazine that she advanced him a loan of 250 pound (\$500). His mother recognised a book in the library which she had read as a child and Mrs. Litchfield gave it to her as a present.

When Pike returned to Cairns with his mother and aunty, detouring to **Alice Springs** where they froze in a tent, he launched the magazine which was printed in **Townsville**. After a year, the trio decided to pack up and shift to the Territory. They subsequently bought the **Emerald Springs** roadhouse at the **133-mile**, near Pine Creek, and for two years supplied truckies with hearty plates of steak and eggs, it being the only tucker they wanted. A regular customer was an Irish driver who carried a **shillelagh** in his cabin for protection. They later moved near to Darwin, the 23 –mile, on a five acre block.

The magazine ran for 12 years and Pike estimated he received an average of \$12 a week for all his efforts. In editorials Pike campaigned for better roads, completion of the **Adelaide to Darwin railway**, defence bases and provision of community services.

Because of their common interest in painting and writing, Pike and Hall had frequent conversations. Pike was a self taught artist whereas Hall had been an art student when he enlisted for World War 1. Records show that Hall's father, in the art trade, had moved to America at some stage. Pike said Hall, half blind, was inclined to be irascible and grumpy, nevertheless entertaining. With no great respect for the powers that be, Hall had a humorous way of describing people. While Hall's poor vision has been attributed to an injury sustained during the bombing of Darwin, Pike understood Hall's eyesight had been affected by coal dust which blew into his eye while travelling on a train between Darwin and Katherine. An eye operation may also have gone wrong, and he was left with greatly reduced vision. Pike laughingly recalled that, despite his impairment, Hall judged entries in the art section at the Darwin Show.

He lived in an army hut at **East Point** when Pike first knew him, and wore an apron when painting at an easel. **Jessie Litchfield** was not overly fond of Hall. At some stage Hall, almost completely blind, lived at **Nightcliff** and was looked after by his wife, a pleasant woman, who died suddenly.

Ted Morey was full of fascinating anecdotes about his time in the Territory. Pike visited Ted's widow in Adelaide and described her as a woman of great charm and character. Another Territory policeman Pike had dealings with was the late **Sergeant Sandy McNab** who, he revealed, had been hooked on jelly beans, which he bought from Woolworths in large quantities.

In Darwin Pike wrote a booklet called *Darwin- Australia's Northern Gateway* which was wrongly collated at the *NT News*. His mother was so annoyed it is a wonder she did not grab the rifle, jump on a horse and put the wind up the editor. Another book he wrote about the Territory – *Frontier Territory* - sold well, notching up sales of 15, 000. **Ted Morey** provided pictures for that book. It contains several references to NT police. Pike gave the NT Police Museum and Historical Society permission to run the following excerpts about Darwin in the 1920-1930s:

In the twenties it was a drab little town, a mixture of East and West with a polyglot population of **Chinese, Malays, Japanese, Filipinos, Koepangers**, and all the crosses in between. When the mixed blood girls and ladies dressed in their best on "picture nights", they appeared quite exotic. There were cattlemen in sombreros, "snake trousers", and high- heeled riding boots, buffalo shooters with beards and cartridge belts, pearlrs with their "boys" – a colorful population that gave life to a township mainly of corrugated iron shacks, with upper

Mitchell and Smith Streets still only tracks through dense bush with scattered houses. There were a few houses and some blacks' camps around **Parap** and the **2 ½ Mile** railway cottages. Smith Street blocks could be bought for \$10 and choice **Esplanade** blocks for \$40.

Motor cars were novelties until the early thirties. The only police vehicle was a buggy drawn by two horses aptly named **Judge** and **Jury**. They were no doubt an improvement in speed to the buffalo cart of 1909! The law was represented by only two policemen, and the "boss" was **Inspector ("Old Iron") Waters**, successor and pupil of **Paul Foelsche**. The **police headquarters and barracks were on the corner of Mitchell Street and the Esplanade**, practically opposite **Government House**. One day one of the two representatives of the law bet the other he could not hit the **Administrator's flagpole** with one revolver shot. The bet was accepted, the bullet slammed home. It is said the entire police force-the two men involved - turned out to investigate, but no arrest was made. It was, of course, just high spirits...

Yet no one could complain that life in old Darwin was dull. **The Don Picture Theatre** was the main place of entertainment, but it was not always without risk to patrons. There was the occasion about 1924 when a tough Territory bushman came in the entrance door and sighted his bitter enemy ahead of him, sitting in the front row. He let out a roar like a scrub bull to make him turn towards him, and in true Wild West style, whipped out his big "**Peacemaker**" **Colt** and fired! In the dim light the shot missed and killed an unfortunate Chinese in the next row. The jury returned a verdict of "accidental death!"

When **NAM** folded, Pike turned to book publishing as Australian publishers were not much interested in the history of the North. Cairns based bush pilot **Bob Norman**, later knighted, backed Glenville financially in the publication of seven books, sales paying for the loans. One of Glenville's books, **Pioneers' Country**, about North Queensland, won the \$5000 Foxwood Literary Award, went into nine reprints and sold 37,000 copies. His success caused other publishers to jump on the band wagon. Over the years he was responsible for editing and publishing more than 33 books, mainly dealing with life in the North.

In addition, he has written 27 books of his own which have sold in excess of 150,000 copies, seven of them still in print, his latest about his life in North Queensland and the Territory. For the past 60 years he has been writing a regular column, **Around the Campfire**, by **Sundowner**, for the **North Queensland Register**. Over the years he has been responsible for erection of **several memorials honouring North Queensland pioneers**.

Put on the 'Straight and Narrow'

An unusual and touching story came to light when **Mr. Ian Cowan**, 70, a former Territory resident, now residing in South Australia, rang wanting to make contact with any relatives of **the late Inspector John William "Jack" Stokes**, to express his thanks for the officer having put him on the straight and narrow about 60 years ago. Nearly 10 at the time, Ian had been caught stealing from a shop in **Tennant Creek**. He had also been wagging school and misbehaved in other ways. With his mother, he had been taken to see Sergeant Stokes, who seemed a huge man to the boy. Sergeant Stokes put the wind up him when he warned that he could be sent to a reformatory school. The lad "went straight" from then on. He no longer caused his battling mother, working in the hospital laundry and keeping two other children, one suffering from epilepsy, any further worry. There was a soft patch of red sand outside the

sergeant's house at Tennant Creek which was used by primary school boys to settle out of school fights. Like the Coliseum in Rome, the combatants faced each other, backed up by cheering supporters, and wrestled. Ian could not recall any police intervention in the gladiatorial battles.

In a subsequent contact with Ian and his family, it was recounted how a Mounted Policeman had once been a patient in the old **Maranboy Hospital**. Flat on his back, he looked up from the bed and said it was a terrible position for a mounted policeman to be in. This attitude is borne out by a photograph in the Museum's files showing the then Constable Stokes at Maranboy, sitting bolt upright in the saddle, on his horse, **Midnight**.

In a follow up letter, Mr. Cowan said he had another encounter with a police officer in Tennant Creek in 1960 when he was driving a **Kittle Bros** semi trailer down the main street about midnight. **Sergeant Alan "Fangs" Metcalfe** waved him down outside the police station and told him the lights were on high beam. "Must have been a quiet night!" Mr. Cowan commented. His father had been a miner who worked at **Hatches Creek, Maranboy and Tennant Creek, Marble Bar in WA, Cobar, NSW, and Cloncurry, Queensland**. The family has a letter written by him to his boss at Hatches Creek, where he supervised underground mining, asking if he could have the weekend off to build "a shack" for his wife and children.

With his mother and siblings, Ian was **evacuated from Darwin to Sydney** aboard the **Zealandia** at the end of 1941, arriving in Sydney early January 1942. Accounts of that voyage gave the impression that the overcrowded old vessel had been a horror trip. However, Ian's mother said she had been well looked after by the crew. The **Zealandia** returned to Darwin with military supplies and was bombed and sunk in the first Japanese raid.

During May this year Mr. Cowan went to **Renner Springs** trying to locate the Australian Blue Metal quarry where his brother, Keith, 26, who had died from an epileptic seizure while working on a truck in 1957. Two police officers from Tennant Creek, **Constables Honeysett and Healy**, had retrieved his brother's body. Unable to find the quarry, Mr. Cowan left a memorial plaque on a quartz hill overlooking a green and peaceful valley.

Jack Stokes, born February 1, 1910, was once described by a Darwin journalist as "the kindest and gentlest policeman of them all." His father was an inspector in the **Victorian Police Force**. He joined the NT Police Force at the age of 26 and in 1937 was sent to **Elcho Island** to deter Japanese pearlers from prostituting Aboriginal women. He also served in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Darwin as an **Administrative Inspector** when appointed the Australian Government's official representative in the newly acquired territories of the **Cocos (Keeling) Islands** and **Christmas Island**. When he died on August 3, 1995, an obituary in a Melbourne paper was headed **KINDEST POLICEMAN OF THEM ALL**.

Question:

Who was the Tennant Creek constable who kept Phantom comics in his desk?

Anatomy of a Territory Remittance Man

Much to the relief of their parents, many troublesome family members were shipped out from **England to the Antipodes** and paid to stay away. One such remittance man who had numerous encounters with Darwin police was **Donald Charles Duncan**, also known as **Drunken Duncan** and **Dapper Donald Duncan**. When asked by a Darwin magistrate why he came to Australia in the first place, Duncan brought the house down by saying his father called him in and said that as the town already had one **village idiot**, it could not stand two, so he had better go to Australia. This he did, arriving at **Fremantle** from London aboard the **Bendigo** in late 1924. He was 21, and gave his occupation as a clerk.

It is not known why he stepped ashore in the west to start a new life here as a remittance man. Research has uncovered the fact that he came from a distinguished family. The **1891 British Census** shows his father, **Charles G. Duncan**, 35, was a **senior assistant chemist in the War Department** and Donald's mother, **Lilla**, was 20 at the time. Donald's paternal grandfather, **Professor Martin Duncan**, was a man of many talents. A highly regarded paleontologist, he was part educated at a grammar school and in Switzerland. After studying **medicine at King's College, Cambridge**, he practiced as a doctor in various places, served as the **Mayor of Colchester**, and then took up scientific research in botany, geology and paleontology. Appointed **Professor of Geology at King's College in 1870**, he was a leading expert on coral fossils, became president of the **Geological Society**, and edited six volumes of Cassell's *Natural History*. He married twice and sired 12 children with the first; his second wife, 13 years younger, produced a daughter.

Convictions for drunkenness piled up for the Duncan family black sheep in WA. Eventually, he lobbed in Darwin and at some stage worked in **Jolly's Store** before Woolworth's came to town. One day he called at the **NT News** office, spoke to the editor, a fellow Britisher, **Jim Bowditch**, told him his office was messy, and offered his services as a cleaner. He was hired on the spot and also took on the responsibility of night watchman. As Donald was usually lurching about the town at night in an alcoholic state, it is unlikely that his office security responsibility was observed to the letter. From the time of his initial engagement, Donald not only cleaned the News, he perused each edition of the paper for incorrect grammar and spelling errors which he drew to the attention of the editor.

The editor, feeling thirsty and wanting to go to the **Vic Hotel**, at times told Donald to bugger off. Duncan's eyesight was such that he removed his glasses and held the newspaper close to his nose, almost cross-eyed, as he scanned it for crimes against the Queen's English. He reprimanded newspaper staff for throwing rubbish on the floor, especially in the factory, and added that his father had demanded a spotlessly clean estate where throwing a match on the lawn resulted in a stern rebuke. From time to time, Donald used profound expressions when talking to newspaper staff. One night he joined a party being held in the newspaper living quarters of the building known as the **Tin Bank** and made a nuisance of himself, lurching about and pinching a girl on the derriere. As a result, he was pushed into a cupboard and left there to sleep it off.

In the morning, office staff heard a strange noise in the cupboard, opened the door and out flopped Donald. In one of his many court appearances he wore **two left foot sandals**. Duncan helpfully co-operated with police by often presenting himself, in a drunken and disheveled state, at the front counter of the **Bennett Street Police Station** with a request to be driven home. It was a case of: "Home, James, and don't spare the paddy wagon." Dapper Donald

greeted red-headed policemen in an unusual way. “ **Hello, Ginger Meggs** ,” he would say. Meggs was the popular Australian cartoon character with red hair. He also passed comments about the dress of police officers and even queried the English accent of some.

In a dramatic episode, Duncan fell off the wharf at night into the harbour. He kicked off his clothes and floated on his back, in and out with the tide. A young girl accompanying her father, who was fishing from the wharf, peered over the side in the early morning light and saw Duncan drifting by. “Help!” he croaked. The girl reported that she knew he was not swimming as he only wore one sock. Donald was hauled from the briny, taken to hospital and made the headlines locally and down south for his ordeal in shark and crocodile infested waters. He attributed his survival to **Great Public School instructions never to panic** in a tricky situation. This was probably basic advice given to all British lads who could find themselves being charged by 100 bloodthirsty Zulus wielding assegais in a far flung outpost of the Empire.

The *Adelaide News* thought the “ don’t panic” advice – used to great advantage in the **Dad’s Army** TV series - was jolly good. It said the youth of Australia should follow Duncan’s dictum. Donald was delighted to be held up as a shining example to the nation’s youngsters, even if he was a sozzled scallywag. It is not known if he sent a copy of the editorial home. If so, they would have been proud and probably a bit puzzled about Australia.

Alas, **Duncan was killed** coming back to Darwin from a holiday in WA in 1963. The ship he was travelling on, the *Kangaroo*, stopped at a port and he went ashore sightseeing. The car in which he was a passenger was involved in an accident at **Roebourne**. The *NT News* ran a story across three columns with a photo of Donald headed DAPPER DONALD KILLED IN W.A. ROAD ACCIDENT .He was described as one of Darwin’s characters who would be missed around the place.

Editor Jim Bowditch, he of the messy office and thirsty at times, was contacted by WA police and asked what he wanted done with the body of his employee. Bowditch shocked police when he suggested Donald be cremated in the bush, his ashes gathered and sent to relatives in England. There are conflicting stories about what happened to Donald’s mortal remains. One suggestion was that he was buried in WA and a **memorial church pew or window** named after him back home. Another claim was that a relative came out from England, **checked to see if Donald had left a will**, and took his ashes back home.

VALE

Donald Clout

7/10/1932 – 6/8/2008

Joined the NT Police in November 1954 and resigned in February 1956.

Sadly missed by family and friends.

We of the Never-Never

Old newspaper clippings about the Northern Territory often contain interesting and unusual information. A batch recently came to light dealing with Mrs. Aeneas Gunn's 1908 book *We of the Never-Never* in which Mounted Constable Michael John Kingston was one of the many characters. Rejected for publication several times, the book eventually sold well in excess of 500,000 copies. A 1933 *Adelaide Advertiser* cutting covered the Adelaide reunion of four of the original 22 characters in the book, the first time they had been together for 35 years. They were John McCarthy ("Irish Mac"), Jack McLeod ("The Quiet Stockman"), T. Pearce ("Mine Host") and H. Bryant ("The Dandy Stockman").



Irish Mac, nearly 70, wore a tie for the first time in 35 years. Pearce entertained the Press by wielding a 15ft stockwhip to knock a cigar from the mouth of Bryant. The others were also handy with the whip. Mrs. Gunn, whose name was Jeannie, living in Melbourne, was unable to attend the reunion, but sent a telegram. According to the cuttings, Irish Mac, who lived in a "thatched hut" near Katherine, died in Adelaide Hospital a year after the reunion.

The World's News magazine of April 1945 stated that arrangements were being made to transfer the remains of another character "The Sanguine Scott", buried near the Roper River, to be moved to the Katherine Cemetery, which had become what it termed a "literary shrine". By June 1953, a *Walkabout* magazine cutting reported there were only two of the characters alive - Jack McLeod, 77, running a bicycle repair shop in SA, and Ernest Goss ("The Little Lad"), about 61, living in Swan Hill, Victoria. The magazine carried a picture of Mrs. Gunn, 83, living in Hawthorn, Victoria.

Mounted Constable Kingston, ("The Wag") in the book, died from blackwater fever in Katherine. He joined the SA Police Force on November 1, 1882 and transferred to the

Territory in February 1891, **serving at Pine Creek, Palmerston, Katherine and possibly Brock's Creek**. In 1896 he resigned and with his wife, **Elizabeth**, took over the running of the **Sportsman's Hotel** and the local store at Katherine. He died on May 2, 1908 at the age of 49. His wife continued the business until her death on March 22, 1912. It seems she was the first white woman to die at the crossing and was buried in the nearby old cemetery with her husband. The hotel was moved to new premises in the new town of Katherine in 1927 and was called the **Sportsman's Arms Hotel**.

Constable Kingston's remains may have been exhumed on June 11 1965 along with **Mounted Constable C.P. Johnston** and two others and reburied at the Katherine Cemetery. However, this is not certain as there is no record of **Constable Kingston's grave** at the cemetery. **The NT Police Museum has an early snapshot** of the grave of another *We of the Never Never* character, **Harry Peckham**, ("**The Fizzer**"), who drowned while swimming the **Victoria River**. The caption on the photograph says to look after the photo as the grave had "now fallen down".

Drowning Victim Honoured

Mounted Constable Thomas Charlesworth, who drowned in the NT in February 1884, has been honoured by the **South Australian Police Force** and his name added to the national police memorial in Canberra. Charlesworth, 32, from Birmingham, England, was a Trooper in the **Natal Mounted Police**, number 125, during the **Zulu Wars of South Africa** before joining the South Australian Police Force in 1880. His death raised questions about sending an officer unable to swim to search for an overdue mail coach during widespread flooding. His body was found at **Peters Creek**, not far from his horses tied to a tree.

Stationed at **Southport**, Constable Charlesworth was sent out to try and locate and assist an overdue mail coach thought to contain a large amount of gold. The floods that Wet were said to be **the highest since the great floods of 1879**. Up to February, Darwin had recorded more than 53 inches of rain. Flooding disrupted outback mail runs, mining and ore treatment. Charlesworth arrived at Rum Jungle and spoke to some diggers who were going up-country. He told them he would push on to the **Adelaide River** as there were no dangerous crossings in between.

That was the last time he was seen alive. When diggers from Adelaide River reported they had not seen him a search was organised and his body was found in Peters Creek, named after **Otto Peters, a Darwin merchant, who had drowned in the 1875 SS Gothenburg disaster** which claimed 102 lives. Charlesworth's body was clad in a waterproof coat, gaiters and ordinary clothing. It was presumed he had arrived at the creek after dark and while walking on the bank, rendered slippery by the rain, had fallen into the water. Unable to swim, and weighed down by clothing, he had drowned. Another theory was that he had waded into the water, perhaps in attempt to find out how deep it was, and had either slipped or walked into a deep hole. He was buried nearby.

A report in the *NT Times and Gazette* said Constable Charlesworth was not married but "affianced" to a young lady in Adelaide. His mother, brother and other family members resided in **Pietermaritzburg, the base for the Natal Mounted Constabulary**, in what was then the Cape Colony. He was reported as being a man with many estimable qualities and a quiet and obliging manner.

The newspaper said Charlesworth's death had been allowed to pass over with without any official inquiry. It wanted to know if the authorities had at first checked if he was the right person to send out on the mission. A letter to the editor of the paper, from a person who signed himself as "One Who Knew Him" at the **Union Mine**, asked why no inquiry was held into the death: "... there are circumstances attendandt on the death of poor Charlesworth which called for the strictest enquiry. Why was it, for instance, a man who evidently could not swim was sent to the aid people who were hemmed in by water?"

With the passage of time, the location of Charlesworth's grave was lost. However, he was not forgotten as he became the fourth officer listed on the original NT Police Honour Roll under the heading **DIED WHILST SERVING** which is held in the Museum.

A planned attempt in recent times to try and find the grave did not eventuate because of the dramatic and tragic event in which **Sergeant Glenn Huitson**, 38, of Adelaide River, was shot dead by deranged gunman Rodney Ansell, described as the original Crocodile Dundee. Ansell, affected by drugs, had been on a two day rampage shooting at people and buildings He shot Sergeant Huitson at a roadblock on the Stuart Highway on August 3, 1999 and was himself shot dead by **Constable Jamie O'Brien**.



(Official police funeral for Sergeant Huitson)

With a strong interest in police history, Sergeant Huitson had become eager to locate Charlesworth's grave. Some Army friends involved in a bush exercise in the Adelaide River area gave him a potential GPS reading for the grave site. Sergeant Huitson discussed this with Bill Roberts Works Manager at the Coomalie Council, another local history enthusiast, four days before he was shot dead, saying he would try and locate the grave in the very near future. Following the shooting, Roberts went to the Adelaide River Police Station to see if the deceased officer had left any information about the GPS location he had been given. Nothing was found in his papers. Roberts also contacted Sergeant Huitson's widow, but she also knew nothing about the matter.

In another twist, Sergeant Huitson, four months before his death, had suggested a memorial for officers killed while carrying out their duty be established in the Territory. Now, in the grounds of the **Peter McAulay Centre**, Berrimah, there is a **Memorial Walkway to Police, Firefighters and Emergency Services** personnel with a plaque honouring Sergeant Huitson; a memorial park has also been named after him at Adelaide River.

Still eager to find the grave, Bill Roberts searched the creek on several occasions and eventually found some rocks which could mark the grave site. He is hopeful that **ground penetrating radar** can be used to determine whether or not it is the long lost grave. The creek, waterless in the Dry, can become part of a swirling torrent up to two kilometres wide. Massive floodwaters over more than a century have scoured and changed the landscape.

In South Australia, Constable Charlesworth has been honoured in several ways. His name has been added to the memorial wall at **Fort Largs Police Academy**, the **Centennial Park Roll of Honour**, and at headquarters where there is a **plaque** and he is permanently **listed in the day book**.

FOOTNOTE : In 2005, a South African War Medal, 1877-79, **in the name of Trooper Walter Charlesworth**, Natal Mounted Police, was put up for auction in the UK, the pre-sale estimate being 220-250 Eurodollars. He was the **younger brother of Constable Thomas Charlesworth**. Both had joined up on the same day, 17/8/1876. Thomas had also been the recipient of the same medal. **The South African Military History Society** and **Rhino Research** provided the **NT Police Museum and Historical Society** with helpful and prompt information for this report. Another helpful contributor was Vern O'Brien, Research Officer of the Genealogical Society.

Comments about Camels Censored

Much to his surprise, Ernest Sell found himself transferred to the NT Police Force in 1941 and was soon riding camels, a painful experience... As he described it, he was **in the Army** in the morning and pounding the beat in Darwin **that afternoon as a police officer**. At the age of 20, he had joined the Army and in 1939 was posted to Darwin with the artillery at East Point, Darwin, where he was based for about two years. Near the end of that time, he went on leave to Melbourne and arranged to marry his girlfriend. Shortly before the wedding, he received a telegram from his commanding officer in Darwin to return for immediate discharge. Sell replied ; Being married three days time-request be allowed continue leave. His CO responded : Allow be first to congratulate –continue leave-return to Darwin for discharge.

The newlyweds duly arrived in Darwin. In response to **a request by the Administrator** to the Army for 12 men to boost police numbers, Sell and five others were discharged and transferred to the force after being declared medically fit. By 1.30pm that day, he and Dave Mofflin, after a cursory introduction, were out on the beat.

They wore part military uniforms with a police badge. Conscientious, they did not come back to the station until 6pm and were informed they should have reported in every hour on the hour. Next day, they followed instructions - and were asked what the hell they were doing back in the station when they should be out in the streets. Their duties involved maintaining law and order and protecting “womenfolk”, particularly in **Chinatown**. Nights could be a bit lively, and **wharfies** used to “cut up a bit” The understaffed police force tried to cope with the lawless element. As Sell explained in oral history tapes held by NT Archives, “Sometimes we won, sometimes they won.”

He was transferred to Alice Springs in June 1941 which was a small town of 600-700 where there was no viciousness and no major problems until the influx of troops. In the police station were a variety of objects such as cans of meat which were supposed to have been connected with Lewis Harold Bell Lasseter, he of the fabulous lost gold reef fame, which had been brought in by people. Sell related how Bill Buck, who had found Lasseter's body, encountered electric lights for the first time on a trip to Adelaide. Buck supposedly tried to turn the lights off like candles - blowing on them and trying to snuff them out with his fingers.

There were two other constables in Alice, **Tom White and R.J .Hamilton**. Sell being the junior constable, he did the cold night shift. He was sent out on a camel patrol with **Mounted Constable Vic Hall** chasing Aboriginal cattle killers into South Australia. Hall, he described as a character and a pretty good Pom who spoke a lot about being lost in the Australian bush.

Riding camels proved painful, Sell vividly recalled the skin being rubbed off his backside. When he sought relief by dismounting and walking, he found he was in danger of being left behind as the beast loped away.

Reluctantly, he clambered back and “put up with the misery. ” As they rode into **Erlunda Station** there was welcome news for Sell when he eased his aching body down off a camel. His wife, who had been evacuated to Adelaide and then to Melbourne with her mother soon after the bombing of Darwin, had given birth to a son, the information relayed by pedal wireless .

Sell was sent to the Alice Springs police paddock to pick up **Constable Bill McKinnon** who had just come in from a three month camel patrol out from **Finke**. A wire ran from the camel at the rear to the leading camel on which McKinnon had a battery operated radio. **Looking like a tramp**, bearded and filthy dirty after the patrol, McKinnon was dropped off at the **Stuart Arms Hotel**, and emerged soon after, a dazzling figure. Instead of a beard, he now had a pencil thin moustache, a dark pork pie hat, a striped charcoal suit and dapper black shoes, as if fitted out for Melbourne, not Alice.

When troops flooded into Alice policing became difficult. Australian troops caused a certain amount of trouble and there were “nasty incidents. Americans, after addressing a police officer as “**sheriff**”, usually moved along without any trouble.

Drivers of trucks which went in convoys to and from Darwin often helped police with any troublemakers at the Stuart Arms and **Underdown’s pub**. From Alice Springs, Constable Sell was transferred to **Adelaide River** and was involved with the **Army Censor Department** which collected mail and made sure letters did not contain unwarranted information, including the ransacking of Darwin homes after the Japanese raids.

Pine Creek was the next posting where he found nothing much to do, due to the chaos and panic that followed the attacks on Darwin. Pine Creek police seemed to have been forgotten – “nobody wanted to own us” - and getting food was a major problem. There were no stores open and they had no money. The food situation became so bad some of them drove a police ute alongside the slow moving train called the **Spirit of Protest** and helped themselves to Army supplies such as a bag of spuds, a few cases of meat, anything at all which they could eat. It got to a stage where the **808 US Engineers** were feeding them.

From Pine Creek he went to the **Daly River Police Station** where he “ sat on his backside ” for six weeks with “Old” Tom Turner during which time he did some fishing and shooting. After that relaxing spell, it was off to **Roper River** for two years, where he could have died on two occasions. In the first, he became lost on a patrol out to **Beetaloo Station** buying horses for the Army and the police department. With him was **Army remount officer Sergeant Col McNamara** Running short of water, they had left **Tracker Duncan** behind while they went looking for a spring. The two became lost and for three days and two nights they were without water until Duncan, sensing something was wrong, tracked them down and

led them to a billabong brimming with water. Sell was so thankful for saving his life that when they called into **Newcastle Waters** he bought Duncan a pair of riding trousers and a 10 gallon hat. Duncan thought it was Christmas. Years later, Sell went back to the Roper looking for Duncan, but he had died six months previously. However, Duncan's partner, **Doreen**, was alive and they talked about old times. The second time Sell escaped death was when a "renegade" member of the **Balamuma**, the group involved in the murder of **Constable McColl**, said he was going to "get rid of" Sell.

Trackers warned Sell what was afoot. As a result, Sell armed the Trackers with **Winchesters** and they surrounded and caught the man in the middle of an orchard near the police station as he approached, intent on killing Sell. An unusual form of punishment was applied when the man was lodged in a cell for several days. Aborigines, Sell said, hate being humiliated, it being the worst penalty you could inflict. To this end, **Sell threw wheat** through the cell window and **called out chook, chook**, as if feeding poultry. After this treatment, the man was released and was never seen again.

Sell found himself in **Darwin in December 1945** with special duties relating to vehicles. This saw him being appointed driver for the **Administrator, Mr. Abbott, and his wife**, who had returned to Darwin from Alice Springs at the end of July that year. Sell even had a room in Government House and drove Mrs. Abbott, a Catholic, to church on Sundays in a car registered as **C1**. Sell recalled taking Mrs. Abbott to **meet returning prisoners of war**. An encounter with an Army blitz truck saw a near new car he was driving written off. His career as an NT police officer ended in 1946. Commenting on his time in the Territory, he said "I loved life as a policeman. If our eldest lad hadn't taken ill up there, I guess I'd have gone right through to retiring age in the police force because I loved the job and I loved the fellows I worked with." Sell **praised the work of Trackers**, they having twice saved his life, and said they all should be commemorated in an appropriate way. **Tracker Roper Tommy** had been commemorated in some way, but there were many more deserving of high praise. (In Vic Hall's book, *Dreamtime Justice*, Tracker Roper Tommy is said to have foretold that a police officer would die.)

Sell also singled out an outstanding elderly **Aboriginal woman, Edna, partner of Tracker Mick**, who had cooked and sewed for him at Roper River. Even though she only used what he termed a bag stitch when sewing, she kept his clothes together. She had carried out duties for several other officers over the years. Many years later, Sell went back to the Roper and was surprised to see Edna still there. He told her she must be 100 years old. She replied: "Maybe, boss, maybe." Commenting on his experience with Aborigines, "Sell said; "I condemn the way whiteman's treated them, to a degree. A lot of white men were very good to them. But the permission to drink has put the black down. But the bush black was a very, very good man. And good woman, too. They were fine types. **I trusted them and Duncan could have left me out there.**"

WANTED

Stories and/or Photographs of Historical Interest
suitable for publication in this newsletter

Sherwood Forest Row over Superintendent Littlejohn

The repeated misnaming of a road honouring late **Superintendent Wilson Coleridge Littlejohn** in Darwin's leafy Litchfield Shire took on the aspect of a struggle by Robin Hood and his merry / angry men against the dastardly Sheriff of Nottingham and others. In maps and on a road sign, his surname was given as two words - **Little John**.

NT Police Museum and Historical Society committee member **Denzil McManus** spotted the error two Darwin telephone directories ago. He had led the move to have Superintendent Littlejohn commemorated in Darwin through the **Place Names Committee**. McManus firmly believed Littlejohn, a New Zealander, who spent 31 years in the force and was in charge of police who rescued **Mrs. Petrov** from her **KGB escorts at Darwin Airport**, deserved local recognition

In April 1985, aged 86, Littlejohn attended the **Centenary Celebrations of the Heavitree Gap Police Station in Alice**. Denzil McManus was at the function, went over, introduced himself to Littlejohn, seated, who at first did not recall him, but then beckoned him over and said, "I remember you." In subsequent years, McManus had discussions with **Littlejohn's daughter, Margaret**, a nursing sister, about having her father commemorated in some way.



(Offending Little John sign)

Thus began the schizoid subdivision saga of Superintendent Littlejohn.

Presenting a case to the NT Place Names Committee several years ago, Denzil was assured that Littlejohn would feature in a future new subdivision. The NT telephone directory containing a street directory and maps ran with **Little John Road, Girraween**. McManus, who served in the finger print section, took on the facial appearance of Will Scarlet, and angrily pointed the finger of scorn at the Place Names Committee. In its defence, the Committee said it was not guilty and that the offending directory entry was a misprint which would be rectified. However, ever - vigilant Denzil discovered the new 2008/ 09 NT directory repeated the crime against Littlejohn at Girraween .

McManus again blew the trumpet alerting his band of supporters, including the secretary of the **NT Retired Police Association, Graham Rees**, against officialdom's latest atrocity in the rural area. Rees drove out to Girraween and found that while one sign correctly stated Littlejohn Road, another pointer ran with the offending Little John which is the irrefutable pictorial evidence, Your Worship, at the head of this story. By now, officialdom seemed to be speaking with assorted forked tongues.

Long bows were restrung and unfortunate Magpie Geese plucked for arrow flights to once more rescue Superintendent Littlejohn. McManus agreed the situation was beginning to sound like an episode from Sherwood Forest, but could not work out who was Maid Marian, although several retired police officers could easily fill the part of jolly Friar Tuck. Eventually McManus and Rees were informed by the Place Names Committee that the Litchfield Shire Council would arrange for the offending sign to be replaced by the correct monicker.

Despite this assurance, Denzil, like a true Sherwood Forest desperado, continued to harass officials, in the nicest possible way, when he went to the shire office to pay his rates. As a result, he received a telephone call from a curt council official who tried to blame the subdivision developer for the misnomer. Denzil handled the situation with typical diplomatic aplomb: "Just fix it."

McManus pointed out that beefy Littlejohn who joined the force in Darwin in 1925 had given yeoman service to the Territory, once operating out of a tent in Alice Springs and with his wife, had lived in a slab hut with a dirt floor. He recalled that while he (McManus) was on duty **at Bennett Street Police Station**, Darwin, Littlejohn had appeared with two struggling combatants from a nearby pub brawl. One was in a headlock and the other subdued by a n arm lock. On another occasion, Littlejohn had physically ejected a reporter from his office. With all this heaving and grunting, it is not surprising then to learn that Littlejohn on retirement underwent a major double hernia operation.

Police Approved Blindfolded Drive

How come **Territory police chiefs** gave permission for a man to drive blindfolded around the Darwin central business district? The answer is a bizarre tale which involved **a chain smoking monkey, Tarzan, an American magician, a curvaceous songstress and two naked men who turned up at Bennett Street Police Station** after a swim in the harbour, one claiming he had been threatened with castration. It all began when the yacht **Sea Fox** sailed into Darwin in mid - 1959 with a most unusual crew.

The skipper was American film star –magician **John Calvert** bound for Sydney to tour the southern states with a stage show. In a cage on deck was a morose chimpanzee who was allegedly Tarzan's monkey, Cheetah. And then there was "Mrs. Calvert," an attractive Spanish songstress, Pilita Corales.

The yacht had sailed down from Asia where Calvert had put on several magician shows. Soon after arriving in Darwin, he went to the **East Arm leprosarium** and entertained the occupants. One of his stunts included making ping pongs balls appear from various places, including peoples' mouths. There were reported screams of laughter when he plucked cigarettes from the hair and robes of the **Catholic sisters**. Pilita wowed them with a song and dance routine.

Two naked crewmen turned up at Bennett Street Police Station one morning with a weird story about Calvert supposedly chasing one of them along the deck intent on cutting out his vitals. The man had jumped overboard with another crewmember and both had lost their shorts in the swim to shore. When the magician came up with a proposal to drive blind folded around the Darwin CBD to raise funds for the **Police and Citizens' Youth Club eyebrows were raised**.



Calvert went to **Daly Street Police Headquarters** to gain approval for the stunt. He was ushered in before **Deputy Commissioner Clive Graham and Inspector Jim Mannion**. As Calvert claimed he would use mental telepathy to pick up thought waves from bystanders to guide him through the streets, the police were extremely dubious.

Darwin was crowded the day the drive took place. Calvert was surrounded by yacht crew members in crimson uniforms out the front of **The Star** theatre. Former **Mayor of Darwin, Mr. L. D. Richardson**, placed two shilling piece coins over Calvert's eyes and then applied adhesive bandages, satisfied that there was no way he could see under or over the wrappings. Traffic police were on duty at every intersection and a police motorcycle led the way.

In a **Gypsy open air vehicle**, examined to make sure there was no radio to guide him, Calvert was reported as having **"rocketed"** along **Smith, Knuckey, Cavenagh and Bennett Street** at anything up to **25 miles an hour**, and parked. **Inspector Mannion, who had filmed the drive, examined Calvert's blindfold** before removing it from his face. While in Darwin, Calvert offered to swap his yacht for a **DC3 aircraft**. In America he had personally flown his show, which included a bevy of showgirls, about in a plane, which features in the above advertisement for his show.

VALE

Mavis Dorothy Conaghan of Foster, NSW

Widow of Sgt. Dinny Conaghan

6/9/1921 – 8/7/2008

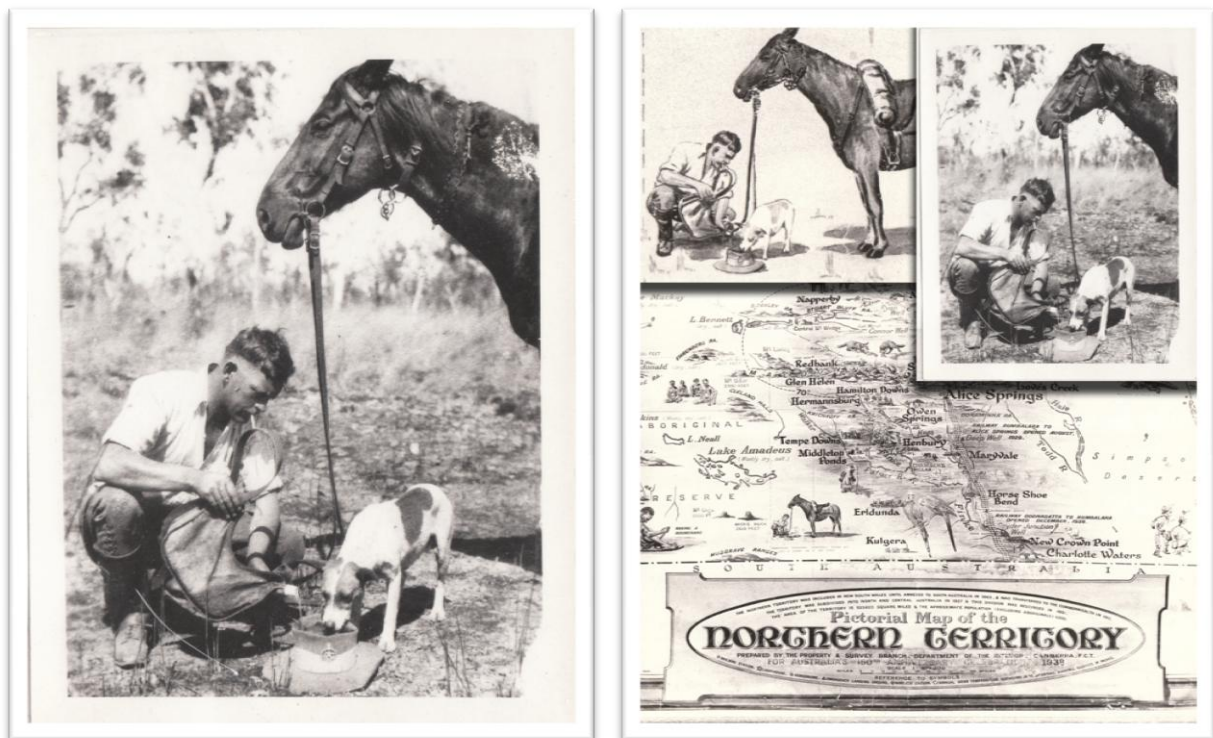
A life member of the society, Mavis was a great traveller who thoroughly enjoyed life. Sadly missed by her family and friends.

Broken Nose and Dog in NT Map

During a 1933 patrol, somewhere between Pine Creek and Oenpelli, Mounted Constable Alf “Broken Nose” Johnson was photographed using his hat to water his thirsty dog. Perhaps for the first time, it has been discovered that the photograph was reproduced in a spectacular NT wall map prepared in Canberra by the Property and Survey Branch, Department of the Interior, to mark the 1938 Sesqui-centenary of white settlement of Australia.

Now in the **Darwin Lands Branch**, the spectacular map includes a vignette of a police officer giving a dog a drink out of the crown of his hat. Comparing that image with the NT Police Museum and Historical Society Constable Johnson file it is identical. In a letter dated three weeks before his death, Alf referred to the dog in the photograph which he said had eventually chased a kangaroo, disappeared, and months later its remains were found in a creek bed.

The following article about **Alfred Stanley “Broken Nose” Johnson** is compiled from obituary notes held in the NT Police Museum and recollections of colleagues and friends. Born June 8, 1904, Johnson joined the force in 1928 and died July 25, 1986, aged 86. One of the last “Cameleers”, he served at Barrow Creek, Lake Nash, Daly Waters, Pine Creek, Newcastle Waters and Wave Hill.



(Original image left with map on right - insets comparing the map drawing and photo. A note on the hand painted map said it had been compiled and drawn in Darwin by E.P. Bayliss, FRGS, in 1937)

NT Police Museum member Denzil McManus has good reason to remember Alf. One day in 1960, strolling down Smith Street, Darwin, where the Post Office used to be, he heard a typical tourist type call out from across the street, “Got a minute young fella?” Approaching the “tourist” McManus formed the opinion the man had run into the back of a bus because of a battered nose like a pug. There was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes and a broad smile.

“Can I help you, sir?” McManus asked. The man stated he had been a “cop” himself, that his name was Alf Johnson, called Broken Nose for short. “Bet you can't guess why?” The two had

a great yarn that day. Years later (1982), McManus was having a quiet drink at the Police Club in Cavenagh Street when a voice boomed out, "Where's McManus? The bastard reckons he can fight!" It was Broken Nose, thirsty and with a bone crunching handshake. Their paths crossed again at the Roper River Celebrations in 1985 and in Alice.

Interstate Conscripts Bolstered Post-War Force

During WW 11 the NT Police Force was stretched to the limit and below strength due to members leaving to join the Defence Forces. There were also members working with the Army in the NT and with the North Australia Observation Unit (Nackeroos). Several members did not take annual leave during the last years of the war.

The **gazetted strength of NT Police was 80** at the end of the war, but the actual number was 50. Civil administration of Darwin resumed at the close of 1945 when the army handed back control of the Top End. Residents of the NT were returning and the shortage of police was acute. Arrangements were made for SA Police and WA Police to lend officers to the NT to fill the gap. SA Police sent five constables for the two years 1945 to 1947. WA Police were to lend two officers from 1946 to 1948. When SA advertised the vacancies 38 members of their force applied. They gave the NT some of their newer members.

In February 1945 the SA Police Commissioner chose five junior Probationary Constables for Territory service: **Kevin (Bobby) Breen**, aged 19 years; **Peter Delderfield**, 18; **John Donegan**, 19; **Bruce Evans**, 19; and **Ron Huddy**, 19. Although young in years and service, they were appreciated by the NT Police.

Constable Huddy was an amateur boxer and a footballer of some note. In 1950 he fought the **Australia Heavyweight Champion, Jack Cousins**, in a challenge bout. While a member of the NT Police he was injured (firearm wound to his leg) on a combined border patrol of the SA - NT border.

The WA Police sent **Constables John Dwyer and Gordon Reade**; they arrived in 1946 for two years. Older and more experienced than the South Australians, a difficulty arose at the end of their term-they wanted to stay in the NT. The NT Force would have readily accepted them. All returned to their respective states. Typical comments about the officers from interstate read- *It is with regret that the Constable is leaving. He is an outstanding type, an excellent horseman, a good and willing worker and quite capable in carrying out in a competent manner any duty he has to do....*

The SA Police appreciated the "***thrown in the deep end***" training their members received in the Top End. All the conscripts were promoted to the rank of Mounted Constable on their return to SA.

