Citation

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

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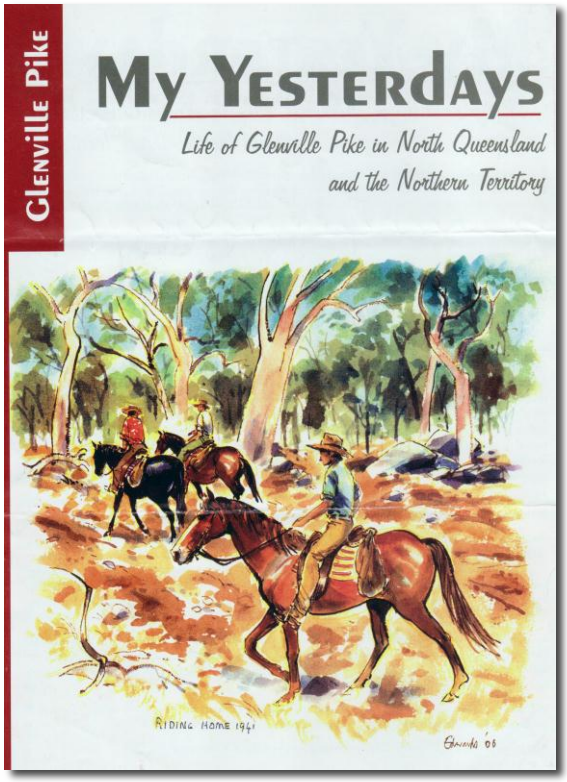
On Patrol at 6!

Commissioner Deserts!

Death of Police Supporter

Historian, author, publisher **Glenville Pike**, 85, above, died **at Mareeba**, Queensland, on May 4. Glenville, seen here at a former property he owned, was a supporter of ***Citation***, providing copy and ideas. With his mother and aunt, they ran **the Emerald Springs roadhouse**, north **of Katherine**, and lived in a basic iron and bush timber home, with a wood burning stove, on a five acre property at **the 23-mile**, south of Darwin. Former mounted police officers **Ted Morey and Vic Hall** wrote articles for his ***North Australian Magazine*** in the l950s. Both his **mother and aunty** admired the nearby home of retired police officer **Sandy McNab**. Unfortunately Sandy died from injuries received when **Cyclone Tracy** destroyed that house. Pike had a lot of **praise for outback police**, saying they had enormous responsibilities and were poorly paid. Pike was responsible for erecting a number of monuments to pioneers and explorers. Apart from publishing books he was closely associated with magazines which promoted the North.

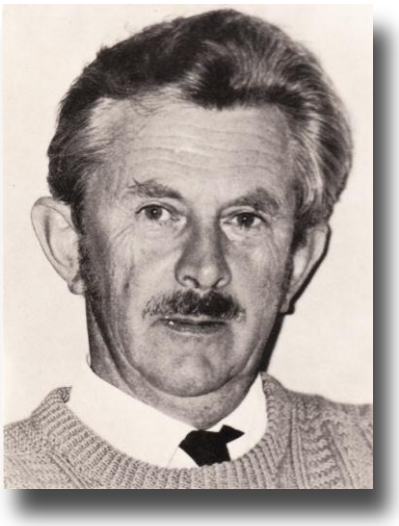
An early book about the history of the NT was printed at the Northern Territory News. See samples of magazines on page 21.



Alarming End to Night Patrol

New Zealand author /journalist Ross Annabell, who worked in Darwin in the early l950s and has supplied Citation with much interesting material in recent times, has stopped his night–time anti-crime patrol after an unfortunate incident. While returning from a 2 am citizens' community patrol in Waikanae, he inadvertently set off the burglar alarm at the police station.

Six police cars arrived from all directions and surrounded the office, from which Ross and his "accomplice" had decamped. He writes that despite his protest that the ruckus was due to a faulty alarm carried no weight, his resignation was accepted with regret. Ross says he now sleeps less soundly at night, having to rely on others for protection.



Fortunately, a son has a nearby vineyard and convention centre. Ross sent us the motor registration paper for the Velocette motorbike former NT Constable, Vic Hall, sold him in Darwin in l953. At the time Vic was employed as a patrol officer for the Department of Civil Officer at Darwin Airport.

One article Ross supplied for Citation was his eyewitness account of the Darwin Airport rescue of Mrs Petrov from her armed Russian escorts who were trying to fly her out of the country, following the defection of her husband.

The NT News recently recalled the dramatic event and ran the often used photograph of Greg Ryall with an armlock on one of the Russians. For some odd reason, the paper did not name Ryall, another indication of the Territory's history being lost or forgotten.

Moneybox Memories Linger

From South Australia came a query about the late Mounted Constable Tom Turner and his wife, an Army nurse in WW1, which resulted in an interesting story. Mrs Debra Philps said that when she was a child, her mother took her to see the Turners, who had retired to McLaren Vale in the l950s. On each visit she was allowed to play with a mechanical money box, the Turners making available small change to insert. As a result of that experience, she collected the same money boxes, one for each grandchild, diligently seeking the originals, not the modern copies. Mrs Philps, her husband an ex South Australian police officer, began to research the Turners and discovered that Sydney's Mitchell Library has some information about Tom. We were able to forward her a copy of a Citation article about the Turners On the death of Mrs Turner, Mrs Philps said she had been told Tom locked himself away and willed himself to death.

Surprising Claim About Commissioner

One of the Northern Territory's most colourful and controversial police chiefs, Major George Vernon Dudley, was a deserter, according to a reference book recently obtained by the Northern Territory Genealogical Society in Darwin. The book is entitled Royal Irish Constabulary Officers – A Biographical Dictionary and Genealogical Guide, 1816-l922, by Jim Herlihy, published by Four Courts Books.

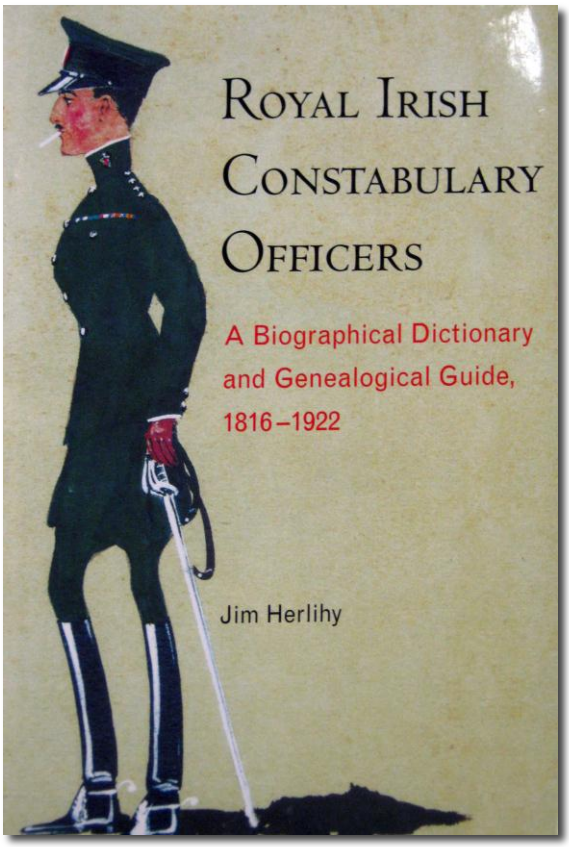
Major Dudley's condensed biographical details, P120-121, state he DESERTED on 5/1/l922 and was DISMISSED on 24/1/ 1922 by the Chief of Police. This was the time of the vicious uprisings in Ireland and the so called Black and Tans, members of the Irish Constabulary, were brought in to suppress the revolution. The Black and Tans, largely British WW1 veterans, targeted the Irish Republican Army and became notorious for numerous attacks on the Irish Civil population.

It is possible that Major Dudley became sickened by the brutal warfare in Ireland and deserted.

Records show that not long after , January 10, l923, to be exact, Dudley was far away from the madness, in Lautoka, Fiji, his wife and two children in Scotland. On that date he wrote to the Department of Home Affairs, Melbourne, wanting to know if there were any vacancies in the N.T. Police Force.

On September 27 that year, aged 38, he applied for the position as the first Commissioner of Police in the NT stating he had been in the Royal Irish Constabulary from June 1920 until "the demobilisation" in January l922, no mention of deserting or being dismissed.

A man of action, he had served in the British South African Police Force. While there he refused to cull hippopotamuses for a river regatta, worked in a mine at Johannesburg, joined the Royal North West Mounted Police, Canada, and during WW1 had seen action with the Royal Flying Corps, the Heavy Artillery Brigade and the lst Heavy Artillery School, rising to major, receiving the Military Cross and DSO. In his application for the NT post, he mentioned that his police experience in Africa, Canada and Ireland had brought him into contact with both white and black races.



At first, Major Dudley, son of an Oxford lawyer, made a big impression in the Territory as he travelled far and wide, inspecting police stations and meeting

officers. In one trip he clocked up 3000 miles and wore out the tyres on his car.

In 1926 the Administrator, Frederick Charles Urquhart, a former Queensland Police Commissioner, expressed concern about Major Dudley over his "want of discretion" in respect of visiting hotels and "occasional indulgences" in liquor, which had given "rise to remarks."

Another report said Major Dudley had always been hopelessly in debt to Chinese and other shopkeepers and publicans. On one occasion he was sent inland on a patrol in order to recover from a drinking bout.

His appointment as Commissioner of Police was terminated from December 31, l927.

In subsequent years he served for a short time in the Victorian Police Force, held several other jobs and enrolled for WWII, entering the Royal Australia Air Force as a drill sergeant. In later life he was a court attendant in the High Court of Australia, the Supreme Court of NSW and a commissionaire at the Rural Bank of NSW. After all his many adventures, he was crushed to death by a ferry at Sydney's Neutral Bay wharf in l949.

Roper River Police Station 1938

Preparation for the erection of the wireless mast at Roper River Police Station. From left to right, Lew Curnow, Inspector Lovegrove with cross marked above his head, and Charlie On. Inspector John Creed Lovegrove's son is featured in a story later in this edition.

Protecting the Pope on NT Visit

A recent acquisition at the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society is a copy of OPERATION LIGHT, instructions for the visit of His Holiness, Pope John Paul 11, to Alice Springs on Saturday, November 29, l986, part of a nationwide tour.

Prime purpose of the visit was a special service for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia held at Blatherskite Park where more than 10,000 people were expected.

Due to a controversy over Aboriginal artifacts held in the Vatican, it was felt that the event would attract considerable national and international media coverage and there could be demonstrations from "radical groups".

Possible protest action was listed as being initiated by Aboriginal land rights and associated interests; anti-uranium, conservationists and anti-Space Base activists.

On arriving at the airport, the Pope boarded the Pope-mobile after the greeting ceremony.

At Blatherskite Park, the Pope was slowly driven around the oval and then walked through a designated "Snake Walk" to the stand. One of the police officers on duty there was Constable John Elferink, now the Member for Darwin in the NT Legislative Assembly.

Gifts to be given to the Pope were stored at the Catholic presbytery and checked for explosive devices.

During the Pope's tour of Australia it was envisaged that up to 250 or more media personnel would follow the entourage. Media minders in Alice were Inspector K. Maley and Detective Senior Constable T. Neilson. The operation order was prepared by Senior Sergeant G. M. Fry and Detective Senior Sergeant T. L. Green. The Pope departed aboard an RAAF 707 at 6.05 that evening.

A Bouquet from "Flasher" Jim

Many journalists and cameramen descended upon Darwin after Cyclone Tracy. Tucked away in the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society archives is a letter from one of those newshounds, the late ace reporter and author, Jim Oram, thanking the NT Police Force for its cooperation during the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy. Addressed to Commissioner Bill McLaren, it reads:

Please pass on to your men my thanks for the help and co-operation I received while covering the Darwin disaster. Even though they lost everything and were exhausted, they still found time to help the Press. From what I saw, I believe the Northern Territory Police Force can hold its head as high as any in the world.

Oram had flown into Darwin from Sydney soon after Cyclone Tracy to cover the destruction of the city for the Daily Mirror. Arriving in a suit, he cut the trouser legs off at the knees with a pair of scissors to cool down and ditched the coat.

He and the former editor of the Northern Territory News, Jim Bowditch, were friends and teamed up to cover the disaster. A veteran reporter who had worked overseas, he had the odd nickname" Flasher", as a result of the excessive application of Newton's Law of Gravity upon his trousers from time to time after a drinking session.

Being a Kiwi who rebelled and ran away from his Plymouth Brethren home to join a circus and become a showman, riding motorbikes in the wall of death, may have contributed or been responsible for this odd behavior.

When I was working in New Zealand, a female reporter asked me if I had known Jim Oram when I was a reporter in Sydney. Indeed. Well, she said, James had "dropped his pants" at her wedding reception. It was clear that we were talking about one and the same person.

After a stint as a police reporter in Melbourne, Oram went to England in l960 and worked for *Today* magazine, involved in the beginnings of rock and roll, interviewing the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

Once, while working in London, Oram went on a bender with Irish author, Brendan Behan (Borstal Boy), and they flew to Ireland with Aer Lingus, being greeted like royalty on arrival. They continued drinking, Behan collapsed and was taken to hospital.

Returning to Australia, Oram worked on *Everybody's* magazine, which became Nobody's mag about six weeks after I joined the staff and it folded. Oram became Australia's top entertainment writer and author. He wrote ***The Business of Pop*** and the ***Hell Raisers*** (with Jim Fagan, editor of **Everybody's** when it closed.). Oram also covered the filming of the Beatles' ***Help*** in the Bahamas.

Joining the **Daily Mirror** in l970, Oram was a highly regarded reporter and lobbed in Darwin during the royal tour by Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon. Darwin millionaire Mick Paspalis died during the visit. Jim Bowditch, editor of the NT News at the time, watched by Oram, typed up an editorial about Paspalis. When asked what he thought about the editorial, Oram, with a laugh, said he would have used more clichés. Bowditch responded by saying Oram would, because he worked for the "bloody Daily Mirror". They both then adjourned to the Hot and Cold Bar. The editorial did not see the light of day, and ultimately led to Bowditch's departure as editor.

Then along came Cyclone Tracy and Oram was once more back in town working with his old friend, Jim Bowditch, in contact with police almost on a daily basis.

With his kneecaps exposed, accompanied by a photographer in a Mini Moke, Oram turned up at my battered Nightcliff house in Sandalwood Street. He is shown (page 8) talking to my wife. Longtime Darwin photographer Barry Ledwidge, who runs Four 22 Images, here during Cyclone Tracy, captured Jim Oram at the back of the Darwin police station in the media scrum with Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (top of story).

Oram was rushed to Poland when the new Pope, His Holiness, John Paul 11, was announced. In six hectic weeks he wrote the book, *The People's Pope.* Fellow journalists in Australia, on hearing that Oram was hot on the trail of the new Pope, gathered in pubs and conjured up extraordinary scenarios. They wondered if the Pope would grant him an audience. If so, would His Holiness be briefed by nervous Vatican officials in advance about this reporter with the strange nickname? Would the Pope, for example, know the meaning of flasher? Some reporters, in exaggerated, mock Italian voices, causing listeners to spill their beverages, described how a high official might inform the Pontiff about the reporter with the collapsing knickerbockers.

No doubt, it was said, the Swiss Guard would stand close by during any audience, their pikes ready to literally cut in if Flasher Jim consumed too much altar wine and felt the urge to undo his belt.

Oram's book about the life of Pope John Paul sold in vast numbers, snapped up by faithful Roman Catholics worldwide. After the success of the book, Oram went to a fancy dress ball in Sydney attired as the Pope and his companion was fetchingly garbed as a saucy hooker, representing the book's publisher who had not paid Jim any royalties.

Other books written by Oram: ***Hogan, Story of A Son of Oz ; Neighbours: Behind the Scenes; Home and Away; Flying Doctors*** **and** ***Reluctant Star, The Mel Gibson Story*****.**

The old Sydney Journalists' Club was the venue for Oram's 50th birthday at which American entertainer Ricky May sang. Oddly enough, the club's visitors' book contained the name of a Pope. Oram retired from News Limited in l990 and developed cancer. He was interviewed on 60 Minutes by Richard Carleton to warn about the dangers of smoking.

On December 22, l996, an article written by Candace Sutton in the *Sun-Herald* said Sydney had lost one of its great characters- the outrageously gifted James Oram. Knowing he did not have long to live, Oram had thrown a party in the backyard of his terrace, attended by a crush of actors, journalists and celebrities. Sutton wrote that at one stage Oram was deep in conversation with a killer, a bank robber and serial killer Ivan Milat's ex-girlfriend. "I am having a most excellent death,"Jim announced during the evening, Sutton reported.

He died surrounded by friends and his wife, Marie Ussher, and was cremated. The James Oram Award for Excellence in Journalism was set up to honour a man who through his courage and wit fought against mediocrity, complacency and being dull. – **By Peter Simon**

THE CREED LOVEGROVE DOSSIER:

Colourful Experiences of the Son of the Late Inspector John Creed Lovegrove.

1. Gun Toting Boy on Police Safari

At the age of almost six, Creed Lovegrove, in l933, accompanied an overland police party from Alice Springs to Darwin bringing alleged Aboriginal murderers, witnesses and interpreters to the Supreme Court. His father, Sergeant John Creed Lovegrove, in charge of Alice Springs, allowed him to go along with Constables "Camel Bill" McKinnon and Tony Lynch because the boy needed a dental examination and treatment, not available in the Centre. Parts of that fascinating trek are still vividly etched into the memory of Creed Lovegrove, now 84, who lives in Darwin with his wife Jean, a member of a well known Alice family, the Adamsons, her great grandfather having been a South Australian policeman.

Creed described the exciting overland trip in his book BROLGA AT LARGE, RECOLLECTIONS & PERCEPTIONS OF A TERRITORY BOY, dedicated to his wife, in a chapter colourfully headed **Camels, Cows and Constables**. In addition, the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society has the photographic collection of Bill McKinnon which includes graphic views of that arduous journey and a shot or two of young Lovegrove mixing with "the murderers" who were in chains. A small truck was hired by the police from a man called Joe Barton who acted as the driver. Creed recalls the vehicle became bogged down from time to time and everybody helped push and pull to extricate it from the mire. A Museum photograph shows young Creed in his distinctive cowboy hat, to which a rolled up fly net was attached, next to the stuck utility.

From Lovegrove's personal collection comes another outstanding snap of him, looking as proud as Punch, though nickamed Plugger, teeth missing, standing on the running board of the truck with Constable McKinnon's pistol, possibly a Browning semi-automatic in one hand and holding by its tail, a lizard bigger than himself, in the other. The caption says the "goanna" was bailed up by dogs and killed at Helen Springs Station.

Along the way, McKinnon shot an emu for food with the same pistol Officials in Darwin became concerned about the late arrival of the party and a small plane was sent out to search for them. One of the

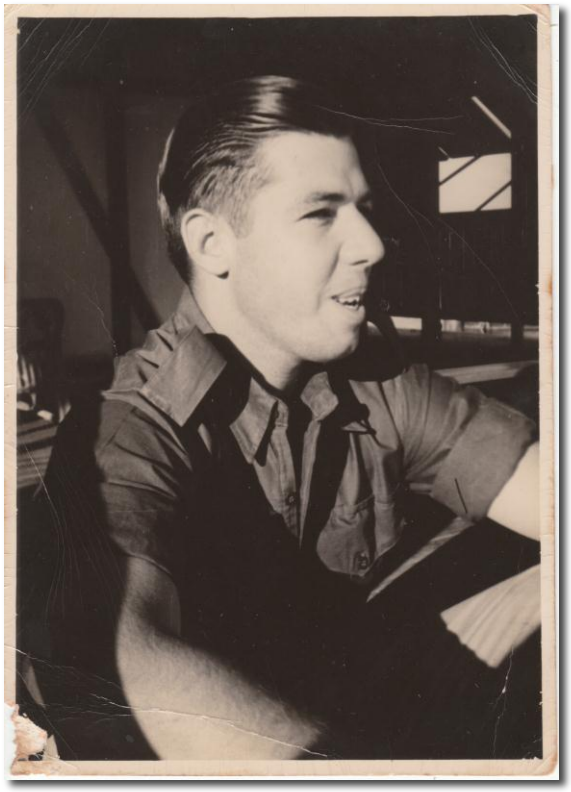
McKinnon photographs is of the letters O K in white on the ground. Creed told Citation that Constable McKinnon, having just made some dampers, grabbed a bag of flour and spelled out the message okay for the pilot.

Other photographs show mealtime along the way, a mass swim, the bogged truck, men in chains (below). Darwin was reached after two days travel on a train. After all the hard yakka getting to Darwin, the case came on in court. The outcome is expressed eloquently in a McKinnon caption: "A communist on the jury, self identified, caused the case to be thrown out and we had the pleasure of returning the whole crowd to Alice Springs."

Young Creed, probably did not care. While in Darwin, he stayed with Myrtle Fawcett, his mother's sister who was married to the manager of A.E. Jolly's store. While he mainly enjoyed himself in the big smoke, Creed underwent dental treatment which added to his fear of dentists. Creed returned to Alice in a utility with Reverend Harry Griffiths and his wife. The only real excitement during that trip, he wrote, was when Reverend Griffiths was speared in the arm by a souvenir spear packed in the back of the car which slid forward when he pulled up suddenly to avoid hitting a gutter in the road.

2. Memorable Patrols into Arnhem Land

A Native Affairs Patrol Officer, not long returned from Yirrkala, Creed Lovegrove became involved with police when reports were received that a buffalo shooter out East Alligator River way was acting strangely and intimidating his Aboriginal employees by threatening to shoot them.



Creed Lovegrove in the adventurous l950s.

The Commissioner of Police and the Director of Aboriginal Affairs decided there should be a joint investigation as Aboriginals were involved.

This is his personal account of the episode. I was instructed separately to inspect an area known as the Woolwonga Aboriginal reserve to get some idea of the extent to which Aboriginals were making use of this piece of land which had been set aside for "Their use and benefit" many years before. There was a feeling within the resource development areas of the N.T. Administration that too much land had been set aside as Aboriginal reserve in earlier days and some such as Woolwonga should be given a different status. It is interesting to note that maps of today show "Woolwonga Aboriginal Reserve" as the "Woolwonga Wildlife Sanctuary" and that it is the very core of Kakadu National Park which has been returned to Aboriginal traditional owners anyway under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

I drove down to Pine Creek in the old GMC one ton patrol wagon and there I met up with Tom Hollow, the local constable and Allen Lake, a constable from Darwin. With the Pine Creek police Chev. Ute and my vehicle we were well set up to patrol to the East Alligator river area. The two constables were as alike as chalk and cheese both physically and intellectually. Tom Hollow was a tall, thin slightly built chap with a suave air about him, a keen mind and well honed investigative skills. Alan Lake was a big strong man with a happy disposition and a no nonsense approach to life; the sort of bloke you'd like to have behind you in a blue. A "salt of the earth" English type Bobby who could quiet an unruly crowd without being too rough. Tom and Alan didn't hit it off all that well as their characters were so different. Apart from their police work they had little in common. As a result one or the other generally travelled in my car while Tiger, Tom's Tiwi Tracker travelled with either policeman in the police car.

We left Pine Creek at first light and made good progress along the rough bush road, arriving at Woolwonga in the late afternoon where we met up with Jack Gougo, of Macedonian origin, I think. He was a tall, powerful, swarthy man of sunny disposition. Jack had a metal fabricating

and welding workshop at Stuart Park in Darwin quite close the Stuart Highway. He also had a buffalo shooting and grazing license adjoining the Woolwonga reserve. Unlike the great old time buffalo shooters of earlier times whose names were legend (The Gadens, Cecil Freer, Bill Wyatt, Clarry Wilkinson and others) some of the more modern shooters were a tricky mob who frequently poached on the shooting licenses of other hunters and were not above frightening the herds from adjoining areas to their own. This caused friction which resulted in violent reactions. As a result of this sort of behavior someone had set fire to Jack's block and burnt him out so there was no feed for his horse plant. He was able to get permission from the Director of Native Affairs, Frank Moy, to agist his plant on the reserve until the next "Wet". That was why we found his camp in a beautiful shady glen near a billabong on the reserve. It was a comfortable but not ostentatious camp which ran to a kerosene fridge in the cloister like roots of a great shady banyan tree.

Neither Jack Gougo nor Alan Lake drank alcohol but Tom Hollow and I did and we were grateful when Jack miraculously extracted two large bottles of Emu bitter and poured then into two bushman's quart pots for Tom and I. I don't think I have since enjoyed a beer more than I did that afternoon after a long dusty trip.

Alan Lake (on the left) first officer in charge of Batchelor, with Max Sargent of Stapleton Station, on which a Japanese bomber crashed during WW11.

The next day Jack took us around this beautiful reserve. I was especially impressed by a shady billabong called Dreaming Waters which these days is recognized as an Aboriginal sacred site to which entry is totally banned. I found that there were no Aboriginals living in their natural state on the reserve at that time but that was really of little significance in respect of their relation with that land as those normally associated with the area, were either at Oenpelli Mission or working

for buffalo shooters where employment and the essentials of life were available (flour, tea, sugar, tobacco). An endless supply of beef, some clothing and meagre wages were also available.

A decade later a number of scientific reports were done on the area leading to the birth of the world heritage listed, Kakadu National Park and later still, anthropological reports followed and a judicial hearing of a claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act led to it being declared as Aboriginal land and subject to the Territory's Aboriginal Land Act and special conditions agreed to by the traditional owners, the Northern Land Council and the Northern Territory and Federal governments.

From Jack's camp we travelled the short distance to Mudginberri station where our presence was less welcome and our stay far more stressful. We met the lessee of the buffalo shooting license whom the Aboriginals called Cherry Handle. He was a nuggety, powerful man with rather piggish eyes. I had run into him earlier in Darwin, but I can't claim to have been his peer as there was a generational gap between us. I had a feeling that he was quite unstable and unpredictable. Our stay there soon proved that to be the case. The Mudginberri homestead was built entirely of bush timber with stringy bark roof and walls. Nevertheless it was quite weatherproof. It consisted of a store room with two bedrooms attached and a large open shed with cooking facilities attached to a mess area. There were bush timber tables with long fixed bench type stools. The buildings were strongly made and the big shed was airy and cool.

The thing that struck me as being quite odd was that there was a loaded high powered rifle at every window and a.303 pistol grip rifle at the door where Cherry Handle was sitting. It was strange that there were no sign of his Aboriginal workers and when asked where they were he replied that shooting had finished and they had all gone. During the course of the afternoon Cherry drank a fair amount of beer. The two constables questioned him about the complaints while I sat at the next table as an observer. He denied any wrong doing but it was clear he became less and less rational as the afternoon wore on. At one stage a small pig ran through the door near Cherry and past my feet towards the other door. As quick as a flash, Cherry picked up the pistol grip rifle and fired at the pig. He missed the pig and the bullet hit the ant bed floor just near my feet. The pig scuttled, squealing to the opposite door and I can tell you I got a hell of a fright too.

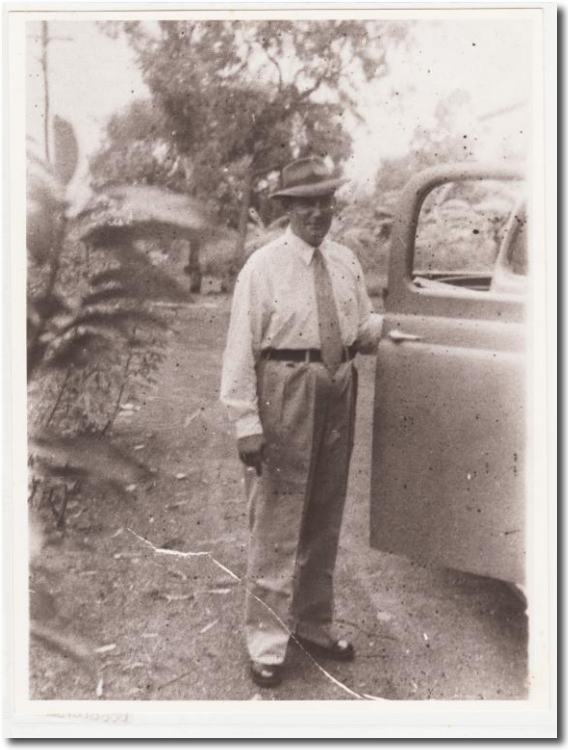
Our host announced late in the afternoon that there were only two bedrooms with two beds in one and a spare bed in his room. The two constables quickly claimed the spare bedroom and left me to share the other room with Cherry. I would far rather have camped away from the homestead but could hardly slip off at that stage. That was the most nervous night I have ever had in my life and I got very little sleep. I heard Cherry get up several times during the night and each time he loaded his gun and I heard it being discharged some distance away. I'm sure he was aware that I was not asleep and I heard him muttering, "No bugger better put their head above the skyline tonight." I am sure all the shooting was a warning to the Aboriginal workers and their families to keep out of sight.

In the meantime Tom Hollow's tracker had located the Aboriginal people and let the constable know that they would be available for questioning when needed. The next morning we went with Cherry into the bush near the homestead. He had a rifle with him and at one stage he sprayed half a dozen shots into the bush in a 180 degree arc. He was so irresponsible with

firearms that I was surprised the constables didn't whack the cuffs on him then and there. However he must have been given a stern warning as he left the guns alone after that. Tiger brought the Aboriginals to a place where they could be interviewed in safety. They alleged that Cherry Handle often got drunk and at those times he was quite unpredictable. He would fire shots over the Aboriginal camp and on one occasion, shot a billycan of water out of the hand of one of them and another he shot the hat off a man's head. The billycan and hat were produced as evidence. The same man alleged the boss was having uninvited sex with his wife and she confirmed this saying she was too frightened to refuse him. In some parts of outback N.T. there still seemed to persist, a belief that Aboriginals were "Fair game".

We returned to Pine Creek with the Aboriginal witnesses whom I later took to Bagot settlement in Darwin. They were no strangers to Bagot and were quite happy to stay there until needed for the court case against Cherry. I had to provide a report to the Director of Native Affairs and the Police to be used as evidence if necessary. On the advice of the Crown Law Officer to Police proceeded against this man by summons charging him with assault by threats and cohabiting with an Aboriginal woman. Cherry Handle did not appear in court as he had skipped the Territory but the case was heard "In absentia" and he was found guilty and sentenced. I cannot recall what the sentence was but it ensured that he would not return to the Territory. Some years later rumour had it that he had bought himself a yacht and was gun running on the coast of Papua New Guinea. Territory rumours, like many of its people, were usually colourful and earthy and I hope they stay that way.

1952 was a busy time for me for what I called, one off patrols as compared with routine inspections of the employment of Aboriginals in pastoral areas. One off patrols were generally done with the NT Police and were to do with law and order involving Aboriginals where the powers of a Protector of Aboriginals might be necessary or where an Aboriginal might be questioned by the Police for a possible indictable offence. Following my long patrols to the Yirrkala / Port Bradshaw / Melville bay hinterland between the beginning of June and the end of July 1952 and the patrol to Munginberri in the "Cherry Handle Affair" in August, the Director of Native Affairs got word from Oenpelli mission that Aboriginals had reported three white men had crossed the East Alligator river into Arnhem land. It was assumed that they were up to no good. At the least they had entered the Arnhem Land Aboriginal reserve without a permit which was illegal except in an emergency.



Detective Constable Gordon Raabe, posing with old International utility used for police work in the 1950-54 period. While not very good for bush work it was better than walking.

Constable Gordon Raabe and I were flown to Oenpelli by charter aircraft. I would not have been surprised if we had been told to walk as the taxpayer dollars were carefully husbanded and generally not wasted on charter aircraft for mere constables and patrol officers in those days as this story will show as it develops. But flown we were. The missionaries were anxious for these trespassers to be removed from the area as soon as possible and urged us to get on with the job of catching them and removing them. Because of the urgency they were happy to provide us with the means of doing this. This spirit of cooperation meant we were able to borrow a small horse plant, gear and an Aboriginal guide from the mission.

With three riding horses and two pack horses we headed south west from the mission to cut the East Alligator River about 15 kilometres away. From there we headed south east along the eastern bank of the river towards Tin Can Creek. As we rode slowly along, in the distance I could see a red lily billabong and what appeared to be a reenactment of the miracle of Jesus Christ walking on water. There was a tall, graceful, near naked Aboriginal man with a three pronged fish spear poised to strike and a woomera at ease in his left hand. He appeared to be walking on the silver surface of the billabong. As we got closer it became evident it was not another miracle but that he was standing on a bed of floating paper bark about a metre and a half square. This was the first time I had seen such a vessel although I had heard of them. I had often seen the dugout canoes cut out of the soft Milkwood trees and the giant ten man and ten dog canoe at Cape Don, hacked out of a giant, hard timbered Paperbark tree and the canoe made from the bark of the Stringybark tree. This fishing platform of a thick layer of light paper bark, readily available was an example of the acute innovation of these Aboriginal people. The material was readily available close to the billabong and the raft could be put together within half an hour and abandoned without a sense of loss when the fishing was over. I once again marveled at the ingenuity of these people in their own environment, quickly making use of readily available raw materials as tools to sustain life.

There was quite a large family camped on the banks of that waterhole. I have seen Aboriginals make string from the bark of a particular species of tree to secure a blanket as a sail for a dugout canoe without pondering about how the job could be done without shop bought rope. At the Wearyan River crossing east of Borroloola I once saw a metre long swordfish in the shallows. I thought," How interesting." My black companions, being more down to earth than me thought, "Tucker" Without pondering the problem of how to turn it into a gourmet meal one of them just broke off a thin sapling in the bed of the river, borrowed my pocket knife, sharpened one end of the sapling and before I knew it he had speared the fish and had in on the coals. That was a good cheap feed. No wonder they have been able to survive all those centuries without the mod cons of today. I hope they aren't losing those skills.

When we reached the junction of Tin Can Creek and the East Alligator River we came upon another camp of Aboriginal men. They had just caught a metre long crocodile and were preparing to cook and eat it. They showed us where a vehicle had crossed the river and headed towards the upper reaches of Tin Can Creek. Those in the vehicle had laboriously dug back the steep bank of the river on either side to enable the crossing to be made and had used sticks and paperbark to corduroy the deep, loose white sand. It all must have taken them many hours and a great deal of effort.

We followed Tin Can Creek North East for a few miles before deciding to make camp. The night was balmy and after knocking up a feed we decided to hit the hay, lulled to sleep by the eerie chorus of the Stone Curlews. We broke camp and got away fairly early on the following morning, travelling slowly up the valley of Tin Can Creek through smoky haze of Gunnemeleng, the pre- wet season time of the Gagadju people, as described by the late Big Bill Nargi in his book,"Kakadu Man." We headed for the base of the Spencer Range; the Arnhem Land escarpment or what the Aboriginals often called the "Stone country".

There were rumours that the deep in the "Stone country" was the home of a mysterious tribe whom no one had yet contacted. Some surmised that they were lepers from the coast who had who had travelled there to escape medical incarceration. I believe these were just rumours although I know there are caves in the Stone Country that house the ancient bones of many Aboriginal people. It was easy to follow the tracks of the offending party. At about mid afternoon we came upon a neatly and well constructed shed about half the size of a Sydney Williams hut i.e. about ten metres square, built of bush timber covered with paper bark. We met the three men who had obviously spent much time and energy in building this weather- proof store house. Two of the men were knock about Territory blokes who had a great deal of bush experience. The third man was what was called in those days a New Australian of European origin, probably from the Balkans. His spoken English was poor and I doubt whether we would have known the legal implications of being on the Aboriginal reserve without an entry permit. One of the Territorians had been a crocodile hunter and had spent the previous "Dry" hunting crocs in remote parts of the Territory. He told me, around the camp fire that he had bought one bar of Velvet laundry soap before heading bush for six months and he was proud of the fact that he had come back with one unused cake of soap and he had lost two. A very frugal washer.

Constable Raabe questioned the men and their story was a simple one. They had got the urge to join the uranium rush that was the "in thing" at the time. With their bushman experience they felt sure they could find uranium ore and other valuable minerals in the sparsely prospected wilds of the escarpment of North West Arnhem land where they could remain undetected. There would be great advantage in beating the big mining companies into the area while those companies spent their time trying to get the proper authorization to explore. They said that now they had completed their storage shed they were planning to head off in different direction on the following morning so we would have had a wild goose chase on our hands if we had been a day later.

It is interesting to note that they were in the general vicinity of what was to become the great uranium province of Ranger, Narbarlek and Koongara long before this province had been properly identified. They were under a false belief when they believed their location would remain unknown because the Aboriginals they had seen, at the East Alligator crossing, reported their presence on the reserve within 48 hours of their entry. They seemed quite decent blokes and showed disappointment but no resentment at us nor did they blame the Aboriginals but directed their ire at the "Bloody interfering missionaries" who radioed their complaint to the Director of Native Affairs. The constable arrested them for being illegally on the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve and (very loosely) took them into custody, mainly to get them off the reserve and because they would be charged they would have to return to Darwin to face court.

Apart from that we were dependent on their transport to get us back to civilization. We all camped at the location overnight and early next morning the policeman took off for Oenpelli in the prisoners' short wheel based Landrover taking the two main prospectors whom I will call Jim and Ted. They dragged an army type box trailer with all our gear stacked high. I returned to Oenpelli with the third man and our Aboriginal guide and the horse plant.

By the time I got to Oenpelli, Gordon had radioed Police headquarters and was instructed to return with the prisoners in their vehicle. I'm sure the missionaries heaved a sigh of relief at the incongruous sight of five large men piling into this small four wheel drive vehicle with a trailer with a dinghy on top and all our camping gear.

Once again we headed south west though the bush cutting the East Alligator River at the point where the prospectors had earlier crossed. The crossing was fairly easy as they had already done the road work necessary for this. We continued another 20 odd kilometres through the bush to Mudginberri Station. No one was in residence at that stage, the owner having scampered from the Territory since my visit there a short time earlier. We made use of the shelter which was useful as there had been a build-up of "thunderhead" clouds towards Coronation Hill at the head waters of the South Alligator River and fierce lightning that way during the night.

From Mudginberri we headed along a bush track which would take us to the small mining town of Pine Creek on the Stuart Highway. This was an interesting part of the journey with the congenial company of bushmen and not a care in the world as we passed pristine brimming billabongs with kangaroos and wallabies skipping through the scrub, feral pigs ploughing the water's edges and large numbers of buffaloes grazing the still green edges of the waters. The bird life was prolific with the stately brolgas and the sad old jabirus with their undertaker's demeanor, magpie geese digging for lily roots in the soft mud, myriads of wild ducks, and three species of Ibis. There were stilts, avocets, dotterels, corellas, lorikeets and lots and lots of little brown dickey birds which I was unable to identify. A veritable naturalists paradise which was later to become the world renowned Kakadu National Park.

By mid afternoon we reached the upper crossing of the South Alligator River which was running quite deep and fast. Sitting there for a while it became evident that the level was slowly falling. By sundown it was almost crossable but we made camp believing we would be able to cross a shallow stream in the morning. When we checked at daylight we found the river had risen substantially over night from overnight storms in the head waters. There was nothing for it but to settle down for the day and wait for it to fall. Ted went off with his .303 rifle and later returned with a large lump of rump steak from an old clean skin scrub bull he had shot. We cooked some steaks on a shovel. Talk about "Feed the man red meat". I've no doubt it was nutritional but by heck it was tough. But then, that was in our virile days so we made short work of it. By sundown the river had not dropped enough so we camped another night.

In the morning it had dropped to its lowest point so far but it was still over knee deep. We had breakfast and decided to give it a go. With four men pushing and the motor madly revving we finally made the opposite bank and crawled up using a block and tackle. We then winched the loaded trailer across and were once again on our way to Pine Creek. The going was slow and we tended to dawdle anyway as

there was so much to see so we camped on a billabong near the Mary River. Jim, the crocodile hunter, and his mates, decided to check the billabong for crocs so they unloaded the dinghy and spot lighted in the pitch black night hoping to see the red eyes of their quarry. Gordon and I stayed in camp. We heard a shot and a bit later they came ashore towing a croc. It turned out to be about two and a half meters long. Jim skinned it next morning and salted the hide then rolled it up like a small swag. We arrived in Pine Creek that day and the three men were formally charged at the Police Station and released on bail to appear in court in Darwin in about a fortnight. Jim took the hide to Jimmy Ah Toy's store and sold it for the going price, something like two and sixpence an inch measured across the hide at its widest part.

We all had a few beers at the Pine Creek pub before making our way separately back to Darwin. The three men appeared in the magistrate's court. I was not required to give evidence as they pleaded guilty to being on an Aboriginal reserve without a permit and were fined ten quid each. They were not criminals, they were adventuresome bushmen with a yen for prospecting who may well have been the first ones to discover that rich uranium mine that became known as Narbarlek if we had arrived a day later at their bush camp. These were the sort of blokes in earlier days would have been considered to be the backbone of the Territory.

As I sat before my companion of many hours, my "Brother" word processor and watched my reminiscences of long past patrols to Arnhem land and the Alligator rivers region of the Territory, metamorphose to hard copy, I could not help but contemplate with some nostalgia, the great changes that have occurred since my visits of over fifty years ago. I no longer see the vast herds of feral buffalo that roamed the Alligator and Adelaide rivers flood plains. They have fallen to the great reformers of the seventies and eighties who saw them as a threat to that fragile environment and a possible reservoir for brucellosis and the terrible foot and mouth disease which would run rampant through the herds if ever it reached our shores. What remains of these herds has been domesticated, tightly controlled and well husbanded behind barbed wire fences. Gone is the buffalo abattoir at Mudginberri which converted feral buffalo to saleable protein when shooting for hides only was no longer viable. It eventually succumbed to a great industrial dispute between its American owners and the peak beef industry unions.

The Aboriginal owners, who were the backbone of the buffalo shooting industry and otherwise had little influence over the fate of that country, have now been granted ownership of much of it and are a force to be reckoned with on matters that affect that land and them. Amidst great controversy a rich uranium mine was developed at Narbarlek within Arnhem Land and all its ore was removed within a few years without a great deal of disruption to the people or the country. The Green Ant dreaming which protected that site seems not to have been unduly disturbed.

The second uranium mine at Ranger is still being worked and has resulted in the thriving township of Jabiru which serves not only the mining industry but the tourist industry and the local Aboriginal traditional owners as well. But in the background, beneath mount Brockman, the dream spirit, Djidbi Djidbi growls and moves restlessly, worried that the second great load which he protects will sooner or later be disturbed. Further to the east, the enormously mineral rich Coronation Hill; "Sickness country" to the Djaun and Maiali people, abundant in sacred sites and considered by them to be fraught with

great danger, has been protected by edict of the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke.

The sealed roads and bridges which have replaced the rough bush tracks criss cross the area ensuring that human visitation has increased astronomically and with it has come great economic benefit and also the problems of civilization. Further afield in North East Arnhem Land, Gove peninsula which was found to be one enormous cake of bauxite, has spawned an enormous alumina plant where I once camped with a group of Yolgnu men on the beach near Drimmie Heads. Along with it was built the town of Nhulunbuy to accommodate the mines infrastructure. This dramatically changed the lives of the local people. It is great to see the way these people have coped and that they have not been suppressed by the invasion. Indeed there have been many advantages they have recognized.

I am philosophical about the changes that occur to the environment and to societies and am certainly not against progress. Having said that, I am thankful that I travelled that country in my vigorous years before these enormous changes took place. It will never be possible for my children or their children to see that country as I saw it. I am sure my parents and grandparents could have said much the same thing about me for the parts of Australia where they grew up. What of the next fifty years? Will that great national park be devastated by the hot fires of gamba grass, the invasion of mimosa pigra; introduced water weeds, cane toads and human visitation? I have faith that the wit of mankind will ensure that devastation does not occur even if enormous change is inevitable.

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Δ Creed Lovegrove also wrote **A Profile of an Early Territory Policeman, 1885-l954,** covering his father's career.

Lovegrove, on the left, mounted on a horse called Banana. Before the race, surveyor Vern O'Brien, on a dubious nag, Felicity, inspired by Spike Jones and his Wacky Wackateers in the crazy famous race song, Beetle Bomb, predicted Banana would slip through the bunch. Banana peeled back some of the field and came third. Creed received thirty shillings ($3) in prize money, spent on light refreshments. Wacky race caller Vern O'Brien had the biggest win- he spotted for the first time the redheaded girl he would later marry.

Iron Horse of a Different Colour.

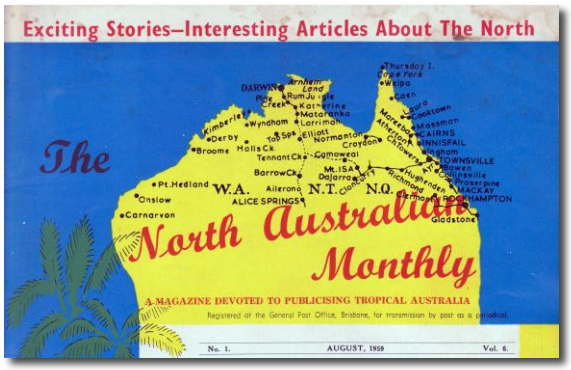
You may have seen a variety of different coloured police vehicles in the Territory recently. The colour revolution is not restricted to vehicles and by the printing of the next Citation the police force will be in the process of changing to a dark blue uniform.

3. The Lovegrove Family Treasures

An interesting document in the Museum lists the Lovegrove household possessions at Alice Springs on July 14,1937, valued at the grand total of 272 pound 11 shillings ($545.10), drawn up when Sergeant Lovegrove was to be transferred to Darwin. The most valuable item was the $90 piano. It had been bought for Creed's mother,nee Lilian Eleanor Styles, the eldest daughter of Tom Styles and Eleanor (nee Tuckwell), granddaughter of one of Darwin's earliest pioneer families, Ned and Eliza Tuckwell.

Creed's sister, Yvonne, became an accomplished pianist. Creed was supposed to tickle the ivories, but heard the Todd River was in flood, so dashed off to see the big event and his chance to become a celebrated concert pianist, decked out in tails, failed to get off the ground. Digging up lizards also distracted him away from music. The family often gathered about the wireless set, valued at $60 in modern currency. Rather flash for its day was the $60 kerosene Hallstrom refrigerator in which Creed said iceblocks were made, although his mother undoubtedly found it a boon for numerous other reasons.

Other furniture included two book cases, a Jacobean chest of drawers, fire screens, a smoker's stand, kitchen cabinet, a roll top desk, a ladies writing desk and 36 feet of coir matting. An unusual possession in the Darwin Lovegrove residence today is a Saudi Arabian wall clock with Arabic numerals, a present from a grandson who worked in the Middle East servicing the aircraft of the Saudi royal family



Magazine covers discussed in page 2.

The Grog Tree – My Criminal Past Revealed

By Peter Simon

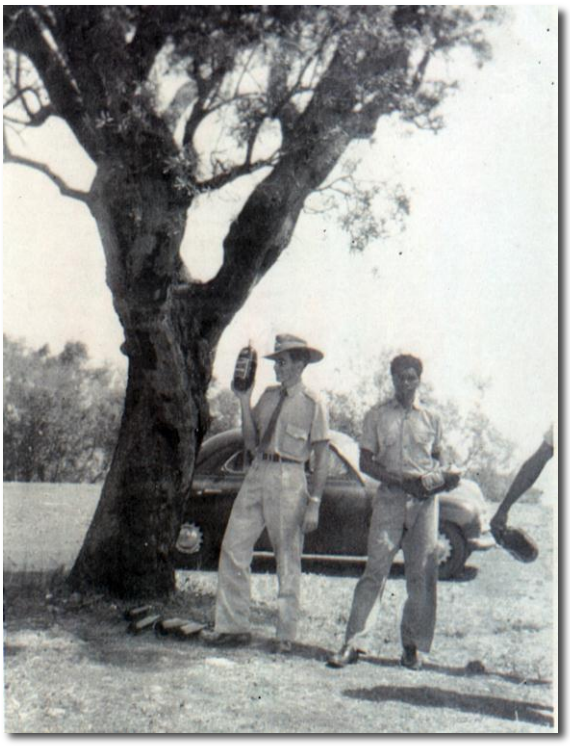
It came as a shock. My criminal past had finally caught up with me. There in the police files was a photograph of me. Not a flattering one at that, which may have been because it was taken from the rear, me buckling at the knees, not the usual mug shot angles – full frontal and side on. I hasten to point out that I was not on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted, nor the Interpol list of international crooks, but in a series dealing with THE GROG TREE.

This tree was situated on the Esplanade opposite the basic courthouses, not your modern airconditioned and carpeted palaces of today, when I covered the proceedings therein for the NT News from l958 to l962. Exhibits in court cases, including White Lady (methylated spirits and powdered milk), rum, plonk and flat beer piled up on top of a safe at the rear of the police court. A prisoner being escorted out of the court for a drying out spell at Fannie Bay grabbed a bottle and had a quick hair of the dog.

From time to time, confiscated grog was poured out near the Grog Tree. On one such occasion I took photographs with a 120 Yashicamat, one of which ran in Pix magazine, and was myself, unknowingly, snapped from behind in the process, by Constable Harry Cox, and thus ended up the NT Police Museum and Historical Society files.

A gentle giant, jovial Harry Cox had once been a masked wrestler. One day I saw him ushering a tipsy gentleman into the back of a paddy wagon. Suddenly Harry and his offsider were verbally assailed by a troubled and well - known woman, renowned for colourful language. Diplomatically, Harry said hello, addressing her by name, Ruby, and departed the scene in the vehicle faster than the Lone Ranger on his spirited steed. Not the action you expect from a beefy mat mauler. Looking through the Harry Cox file in the Museum, I came across this unusual photograph of Harry and Geoffrey Day arresting a large snake, easier to handle than Ruby which can be seen on page 24.

The Pix photograph I took at the Grog tree shows Saus Grant, Phil Mitchell and two Trackers emptying grog. A magistrate had ordered police to empty flagons of wine out in front of wards – Aboriginals - to show them where their good money had ended up.



That Grog Tree obviously meant a lot to Harry and his wife, Christine. In the Christine Cox photographic collection are several shots of the tree showing it had survived Cyclone Tracy, perhaps due to the fortified beverages poured into its roots over the years. One photo shows that while a metal telegraph pole had been tilted at a tipsy angle, the Grog Tree was still upright, although minus all its leaves.

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Northern Territory Police Force

Northern Territory Police Association

OFFICE ADDRESS:

House No.3
Peter McAulay Centre
Berrimah Northern Territory 0800
Australia

Postal Address
PO Box 39764
Winnellie NT 0821
Australia

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Phone/Fax: 08 8922 3374 **E-mail:** ntpolicemuseum@bigpond.com
Website: http://sites.google.com/site/ntpmhsociety/