1985-06

Sky Pilot News May-June 1985

Marella Mission Farm

Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd., Marella Mission Farm

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Aboriginal children at Marella in 1960 with Norma Warwick, Keith Langford-Smith and Isabelle Thorne. We hope to see some of these children at our reunion (see inside).
THE BULL AND THE LAMB. This story from the Sky Pilot's Log, 2CH Broadcast, was first told by Keith Langford-Smith on 2nd February, 1950.

Today's story is a little different from most of our other stories in that it only happened a few weeks ago—or, at least, that was when the final act took place. But I had better start at the beginning.

As most of you know, like old MacDonald, I have a little farm. There's not much left on the farm just now as I had to sell all the fowls recently, but we still have Tony. Tony is the bull. Of course, we have a few other animals too; there are a couple of cows, three pet lambs, three dogs and a few odds and ends of livestock. But Tony is the Head Man. We reared him from a calf. When he was very young, he followed us from paddock to paddock like a pet dog. Occasionally even now he follows us from paddock to paddock, but when that happens we go a lot faster than we used to, and we don't always stop to open the gates.

One day I was talking to an old man named Ben, who had been a friend for many years. Somehow the conversation turned to Tony.

"I say, Smithy, that there bull of yours is pretty well full grown now, ain't he?" Ben asked.

"You mean Tony? Oh, yes, he's full grown. He's in pretty good condition too, isn't he? There's plenty of feed just now."

Ben agreed. "He is that. Too good a condition for my likin'. You want to be careful. These pet bulls can't be trusted."

"No bull can be trusted," I answered with feeling, "unless there's a good tree handy."

"I wasn't thinkin' so much about you," Ben said thoughtfully. "I've watched you handlin' him. You've got him bluffed all right, but all the same I notice you never take chances. But then, you managed a cattle station for a few years, didn't you? No, I was thinkin' of young Stan. He's comin' over right now, that's what reminded me. He takes too many chances; he doesn't seem to realise the risk. You ought to warn him."

"I have," I assured Ben, "but he doesn't seem to take much notice. Here he is now. Hey, Stan! Wait a minute and I'll give you a hand with that cow. Don't go into the bull paddock alone."

Stan was full of confidence. "Oh, she's right. Tony wouldn't touch me; he's as quiet as a lamb."

"Maybe he is." I was not quite so sure. "But all the same, he hardly knows you."

The old man joined in. "That's right, young fellow. Never take no chances with a bull. You never know when you have them—an' that's just the time they have you."

I let the sliprails down and Tony behaved very well when I drove him aside while we put the rails up again. But I warned Stan again.

"Well, don't try to take that cow out by yourself, Stan. I'll be back this evening and I'll give you a hand. She'll be all right till then."

"Oh, Tony wouldn't hurt anyone," protested Stan. "I'm not scared of him."

Ben's years made him more cautious. "It's not a case of bein' scared, just bein' careful. You listen to Smithy, young fellow."

But Stan knew best—or thought he did. He did not wait till I was there to help him. What is more, he turned his back to the bull when he was leading the cow through the sliprails. There was a bellow from Tony, a sudden rush, and Stan landed on the other side of the rails without quite knowing how he got there. Fortunately, Tony made no attempt to gore him, as he could quite easily have done. All the same, it was a nasty toss and resulted in a cracked rib.

Old Ben nodded his head wisely. "It's just as I was sayin'. You can't trust any bull. You're mighty lucky to be alive, young fellow, and all because you wouldn't listen to advice."

Stan grinned ruefully. "You needn't worry, Ben. It's the last time I'll go into a bull paddock. I've learned my lesson."

And so he had. But from that time, Tony bellowed whenever Stan was in sight, and pawed up the ground as if issuing a challenge. Some time later, we were digging holes for fence poles to strengthen the bull paddock. Tony was feeding quietly away at the other end of the paddock and Ben sat on a stump to keep watch.

"You'll keep a good look out, won't you, Ben?" I was not anxious about taking any chances.

"I'll do that, Smithy. If I yell, you run like mad."

"You can trust me to run," I assured him, "but don't you forget to yell."

Ben lit his pipe while Stan and I set to work with bar and shovel and the pet Beaglehound went sniffing about in search of rabbits. It's a funny thing about this Beagle: he chases a lot of rabbits, but just when he is gaining on them he can't resist wasting his breath on baying, and the rabbits always get away. He actually caught a rabbit once. It was not the one he was chasing, but another one which lost its sense of direction and ran right into him. He's always hoping to repeat the performance, but does not have much hope, for he has very big feet and sounds like a young elephant on the warpath.

We forgot all about the dog and got on with
our work. It was a hot afternoon and Ben became a bit drowsy; the bull was so quiet that he became careless. Stan was on his knees with his back to Tony and I was leaning on the shovel—as usual—and watching him. All at once, we heard the sound of racing footsteps behind us. Ben's pipe fell from his mouth and he leapt from that stump and raced across the paddock.

That was enough for us. We did not waste time looking about. Stan took a five-strand barbed wire fence in his stride—almost. That is, he left part of his shorts flapping from the top strand like a flag at half mast. I did not see much of that chase, for I was going in the opposite direction, heading for the nearest tree. When I reached the shelter of the tree I looked round. Tony the bull was still feeding quietly at the bottom of the paddock, but Ben was heading for the blackberries, followed closely by the heavy-footed Beagle, whose footsteps sounded unnaturally loud on the dry leaves.

Stan came back looking a bit shamefaced. "'S truth! I thought it was the bull after me. Where's Ben?"

"In the blackberries," I laughed. "He's trying to get down a rabbit burrow."

Now that the emergency was over Stan thought of his loss. "You ought to shoot that dog! I've ruined a good pair of pants. No dog ought to be allowed to have feet as big as he has."

"He thinks it's a game." I felt someone had to take the Beagle's part. "Ben's a lot easier to catch than rabbits."

Stan calmed down and even managed a wry grin. "I guess it's the best day's hunting that Beagle ever had. He caught the three of us."

So he had, and he seemed very pleased with himself.

* * *

Only a fortnight ago I was going to the hospital to visit my wife and I left Stan in charge of the farm. "Now Stan," I begged, "promise me you won't go near that bull paddock. I've got enough worries without thinking about you."

"Don't you worry," Stan assured me. "Wild horses wouldn't drag me into that paddock. I'll shift the pet lambs into the other poultry pen. The grass is getting a bit high in those empty pens."

"All right, Stan. You can't come to much harm with the pet lambs. Keep away from the bull and I know you'll be all right."

When I returned I found Stan sitting on a stump. He looked a bit pale and he was nursing one arm, obviously in pain.

"What's the matter, Stan? You look sick. Did one of the lambs bite you?"

Stan was indignant. "It's all very well for you to laugh, but one of those dear little lambs broke my wrist. Ran clean between my legs, it did, and tripped me up. I don't reckon any of your animals are safe on this farm."

Poor Stan! At this very moment, with his arm in plaster, he is sitting over the radio listening to this story. He's feeling very sorry for himself—almost past caring. When I asked him if I could tell the story, he did not even object to my using his real name.

* * *

I think many of us are like Stan. We know, or we think we know, where danger lies. We expect Satan to launch his attack like a charging bull or a roaring lion. We are prepared for that, and he knows it. When first I went to the mission field as a young man, I expected to meet all sorts of difficulties and dangers: wild men and wild animals, vague and imaginary horrors from the jungle. I soon found that Satan launched his attack, not in the form of a raging lion, but in cockroaches, weevils, white ants, and the sinister trivialities of life. It was a glorious thought to face danger and death like a hero; it took more grace to face badly cooked weevily porridge served from a cockroach-ghosted kitchen.

And the moral of this story is: Christian, beware! Beware of the little, innocent looking things that will trip you and cause your downfall.

And the final entry in today's log is taken from the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, where St. Paul says: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

THE ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Latest reports tell of a sudden influx in the numbers of children coming into cottage care. Almost without exception, the mothers of these children have problems with alcohol. We are all aware of the trauma and degradation suffered by the Aboriginal people because of the introduction of this evil. However, we can be thankful that some parents are seeking treatment for their alcoholism, and that we can help show Christ's love and compassion to their families while they undergo such treatment. Please pray for these mothers and their children.

Pray also for a teenage girl who has been accepted into a foster home for three months, and for the foster parents, who do not always find their task easy. Indeed, we are concerned at the situation of many teenage Aborigines who are in need of care and who do not readily
find a welcome in the homes of others. Except in special circumstances, it is neither wise nor practical to accept young people with deep problems into cottages where younger children are being cared for, and yet their need is tremendous.

Another $3,000 (our regular contribution) has been sent for the upkeep of the Aboriginal children in cottage care. We are grateful to all those loyal supporters who continue to give generously so that this work can continue. The total amount sent for the benefit of the children since they left our direct care in 1979 to the end of this financial year (31st March) is $173,264.22. We praise God for His faithfulness.

FOOTNOTE: A reunion is planned for Monday, 7th October (Labour Day) in Parmatta Park. All former children and staff of Marella are invited to this informal occasion. ‘Mum’ and ‘Aunty Norma’ will be there for two or three hours to meet you and have a talk about old times. Bring a picnic lunch. More details will be given in our next issue.

NEWS SNIPPETS

Deputation meetings continue for both Marella and Vision Videos. Our General Secretary, Mrs. Norma Warwick, plans to be in the Ipswich-Gatton area of Queensland in September for Vision Videos, with at least one meeting planned on the North Coast on the way. If you are in that general area and would like to arrange a meeting, either to see the Blaiklock video series, A Mind Behind It All, or to hear about the work of Marella, please contact our office.

As the end of the tax year approaches, we remind our supporters that donations to Marella Mission Farm are tax deductible. From time to time we have heard of this concession being refused by the Taxation Office. If this happens to you, we suggest that you challenge the Department’s ruling, for you are entitled to receive the deduction. To help avoid this, the possibility of having your claim rejected, it is suggested that you quote our reference number (AF 1595C/SP 3380), which appears on Page One of every issue of this paper, as well as on all receipts.

Our grounds were looking superb for our Mini Fete, thanks to the efforts of our friends. A neighbour, Mr. Cigolini, put his slasher over the paddock used for parking, thus enabling cars to go in and out with ease. We do appreciate his kindness in performing this task so willingly. Jack and Glad Gardiner, also of Kellyville, have worked faithfully throughout the past year looking after lawns and gardens, as well as helping in other ways. We owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

Do you have a horse or a cow? We are short of chaff bags in which to pack salvage and would be glad of any you can spare for this purpose.

Best wishes for a happy and refreshing holiday to our Secretary, Norma Warwick, for the period of her long service leave, from 24th May to 13th July. She has received a good report from the surgeon who operated on her knees last year and is looking forward to the break.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Cairns will attend to mail and other office routine while Norma is away, so please address official correspondence simply to the Secretary, and not to any individual by name. Mrs. Gwen Langford-Smith, who is enjoying better health now, will ‘hold the fort’ at the times when Gordon and Wilga are not on duty. Please pray for these three friends as they see to these tasks in the midst of a busy life.

A Garage Sale is set down for Saturday, 7th September next at Marella, where second hand clothing and white elephant goods will be on sale. Preliminary notice is given so that you can keep the date free, and also sort out any odds and ends you may wish to contribute.

BOOKS AND CASSETTES

Use the handy blue form to order books and cassettes mentioned thereon, and those described from time to time in this paper. In particular, we commend Blaiklock’s Bible Handbook (price $5.95 plus postage), ‘the most up to date one volume paperback introduction to the Bible’, according to the publishers. We have ample stocks available, but once these are exhausted we will not be able to supply any, for it is now out of print. The Handbook is a very useful aid to anyone who wants to understand the background of God’s word, for it gives a brief outline of the circumstances under which each book was written, its historical setting, and a summary of its contents. For instance, the chapter on Habakkuk commences: ‘Habakkuk is known only from his book, but that small contribution to prophetic literature is eloquent about the man. Perhaps he was born about 630 B.C., and knew as a boy the new society which Josiah’s great religious reforms had created. He saw the tyranny of Nineveh destroyed, as a youth, and in manhood saw the vision fade, as visions of peace so often do.’

THE CENTRAL TRUTH by E. M. Blaiklock

Broadcast on Faith for Today (Auckland, N.Z.), September, 1982. Used by permission. I closed my talk yesterday with a word about the Resurrection (see Sky Pilot News, March-April 1985) and at that point I must resume. There came to me through the post
this week a book by my friend Michael Green, Vicar of Aldgate Church, Oxford, England. It was called The Day Death Died, and spoke (as you must guess) of Christianity's central truth, the Resurrection. Michael Green is a fine historian and classical scholar, and he would agree with me when I say that, having taught and written about ancient history all my life, I know of no better authenticated event than the Resurrection of Christ. But what came to me as I looked through the little book by the fire was a challenge.

Do we as a Church today stress the central truth that Christ lives, as the first Christians did in Jerusalem, where the garden and the grave could be visited before breakfast? Lord Ismay was Chairman of the BBC for ten years. He heard, he said, some six thousand religious talks, and one only, of all that number, had presented the Resurrection with clarity and confidence.

And Michael Green told a story nearly two and a half centuries old. In the London of the 18th century, Christianity was at a low ebb. This century of ours has no monopoly on scepticism! George Lord Lyttleton and his friend Gilbert West, as liberally minded students, decided to knock two pillars out of the foundation of the Church. Lyttleton was to look closely into the evidence for the Resurrection. West, similarly, was to study the conversion of St. Paul. It was a fair enough choice. Those bastions are vital. In due course they met, and ruefully admitted that close scrutiny had led to the opposite result. Their testimony was published in 1747 and I have written to secure details of the book. For a moment I thought I possessed it, and on a top shelf of my library I discovered the old worn leather volume I had in mind.

When I was in London in 1924 I found the Charing Cross second hand bookshops fascinating, and I bought this volume by the same Lyttleton and West on the Resurrection and the conversion of Paul, but dated, alas, 1783, two centuries ago. I turned the yellow crinkled pages in the still handsome calf leather binding, and found it contained a strange story, that of a group of lawyers from Gray's Inn, meeting as you can see them round those coffee shops still.

They had discussed the Resurrection and come to the whimsical decision to try the witnesses on a charge of falsehood. They elected a jury, prosecuting and defending counsel, with a judge of their number. The trial was held, with all the severity of law; the witnesses, Peter, John, Mary and the rest were cross examined scrupulously and hard. The jury retired and deliberated after the judge's summing up. The witnesses were acquitted of all deceit.

Hence my remark of yesterday's talk. The band of demoralised, shattered men had seen mists part and 'the spires of the city' appear. They could never lose that vision.

Nor can we.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

Thank you for sending the Sky Pilot News, which is a constant reminder of a people to whom we have an obligation and a privilege to help. Marella has made a fine contribution to doing just that, in a very practical way. May Almighty God continue to bless and prosper your endeavours in bringing the Gospel of the saving grace in Jesus Christ to these beautiful and talented people.

G.W. (N.S.W.)

I love to read about the children and the work you are doing. . . The Lord has really blessed the Mission over these many years and I know He will continue to do so until He comes again.

V.B. (N.S.W.)

I read it (Sky Pilot News) from cover to cover and enjoy it, and keeping in touch with your work, so much. Being a Pommy, an in-comer, I enjoy Keith Langford-Smith's parables so much and would love a copy of his stories (I keep them for my grandchildren), because I love the outback so much . . . With all best wishes and a very big thank you for all you do for the children, and for what your News does for me.

E.H. (N.S.W.)

I am 84 years and so on a limited income. However, I will always send what I can to help with your invaluable work to the children. Our great God is always there; He knows who feeds His lambs.

I.H. (N.S.W.)

Thank you for the Sky Pilot. I sure enjoy reading it and only wish I could be more actively able to help out, but age is my bar . . . I would dearly love to be able to attend your fetes, etc.—so I think a donation is the next best thing.

E.M. (N.S.W.)

Thought I would let you know that the chorus "J.O.Y." to the tune of "Jingle Bells" was taught to me by a class-room of Aborigi-nal children at M. back in 1944! It was a lovely experience for me to see their joyous smiles as they taught the words to the visiting "white fella" and recited in perfect unison poems they had been taught at school. My month spent (there) endeared the lovely Christian Aborigines to me then, and probably influenced me to become a Marella friend a few years later!

P.A. (N.S.W.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge with gratitude the following donations, receipts for which are held in our office and may be obtained on request. We remind you that receipts are not needed for
your tax returns unless requested by the Commissioner.

27-3-85—J.G.: Concord ...... ...... ...... $20
17-4-85—E.H.: Bilgola Plateau ...... ...... ...... $25
18-4-85—A.P. & N.G.: Waitara ...... ...... ...... $10
19-4-85—E.J.: Padstow Heights ...... ...... ...... $10

MINI FETE

We thought of the chorus, ‘The rains came down and the floods came up’, in the two weeks before our Mini Fete on 4th May. The rain came down in pencils, and it seemed that it would never stop. In spite of this, we had a good roll up of workers to our working bee on 27th April, and they performed a tremendous task in preparing everything for the following Saturday. Still the rains came, including heavy showers during the night before the big day. However, in answer to many prayers, not a drop of rain fell on 4th May, and we had a wonderful day.

The stalls were well stocked, thanks to those who had worked so hard — cooking, knitting, sewing, preparing stamps and plants — and many Mother's Day gifts were purchased; and bargains were sought and found amongst the great array of secondhand clothing, books and white elephant goods on offer. Our thanks are due to all who donated goods and to those who worked on the stalls, as well as the ladies serving drinks and morning teas. Our transport officer and the men supervising the parking did a marvellous job too, as did all those willing workers who cleaned up afterwards and left the shed and grounds looking remarkably tidy. The function would not have been such a great success if it had not been for the efforts of Mrs. Anne Dunne and her faithful, seemingly untiring, band of workers, who labour all year round preparing for our Mini Fetes and Street Stalls.

It was good to renew friendship with several former staff — including Mrs. Reta Round (sub matron) and Miss Betty Love (boys' housemother) — and former children, including Isabelle and her twin daughters, as well as Louise and Dawn. Many readers will remember that Dawn was one of the first children to be cared for at the old Marella, along with her brother and sister, Ron and Eleanor. It was lovely to see her again and to meet her husband and family.

For the first time, Mrs. Gwen Langford-Smith was not able to be present at the Mini Fete; she was greatly missed, especially by the former children who had come to see ‘Mum’. Gwen was in hospital for an intensive course of physiotherapy to her knee, which has been giving her trouble for some time. The treatment seems to have been successful, and we hope she will have no further problems.

We thank God for the financial success of the function, which will enable us to continue our support of the Aboriginal children. Following is a list of the proceeds from the various stalls:

Books (secondhand) ...... ...... ...... 82.42
Cakes, Jams, etc. ...... ...... ...... 200.77
Children's and Knitwear ...... ...... ...... 205.55
Drinks ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 21.25
Jewellery (Close) ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 29.10
Jewellery (Kelly) ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 27.01
Jumble ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 157.12
Memory Cloth ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 26.50
Morning Teas ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 55.40
Novelty and Variety ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 237.20
Odds and Ends ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 270.80
Plants ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 26.65
Stamps (net) ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 35.00
St. Stephen's Ladies ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 158.90
Books (new) and Cassettes (net) ...... ...... ...... 44.31
Donations ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 623.05
Donations by Mail ...... ...... ...... ...... ...... 281.50

This gives a total of $2,482.53, less expenses $30.45, leaving a net result of $2,452.08, which is $197.24 more than last year, and therefore a record for a Mini Fete.