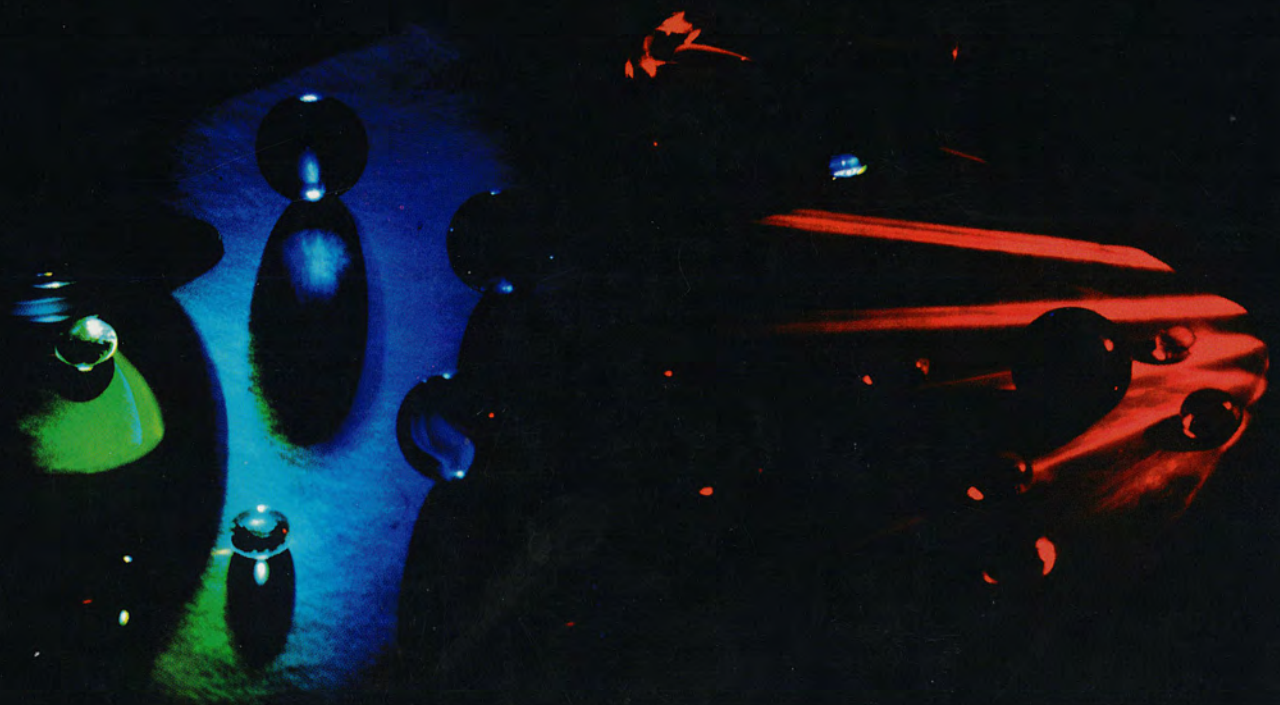


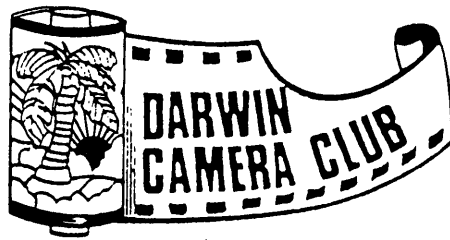
DEVELOPED 1947



Darwin Camera Club to 1995



DEVELOPED 1947



Darwin Camera Club to 1995

Geoffrey Neely

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Bruce Molloy designed the book, set the type and arranged printing.

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The past and present members whom I badgered by telephone and in person all responded willingly with recollections of names and events, and many of them spent much time searching their albums for photographs. I hope they enjoyed it all as much as I did.

Thanks are due to Connie Gregory who read the manuscript; to Clive Jarratt, Barry Ledwidge and David Silva who made the preliminary selection of feature photographs; to the club members who collected and printed photographs; and to Ken Conway and others who read the proofs.

The advertisement for a Box Brownie camera is reproduced by permission of Kodak (Australasia) Pty Ltd.



A note on sources

Most of the Darwin Camera Club minute books and many letters are extant, having survived even Cyclone Tracy. These were my primary sources. I also referred to newspapers and other documents, which are named in the text. I interviewed a number of past and present members. Where I was able to check their reminiscences against documents, I give no reference. Otherwise, their remarks are attributed to them in the text.

About 1700 documents and folios were numbered, and notes on about 400 of these were entered in a database. The original documents, database reports and notes of interviews will be deposited in the Northern Territory Archives. Some newsletters had already been deposited at the Northern Territory Library.

I decided to write this book as a narrative, without endnotes. I am preparing an approximately parallel text in which all sources are referred to in footnotes. Copies of that text will be deposited at the Northern Territory Archives.



Preface

Club members come and go but a club is more than the sum of its parts and it has a life of its own. Many times the Darwin Camera Club has faltered; once or twice it has ceased to show any vital signs but has revived of its own will despite the withdrawal of life support by its members.

When I decided to write a two-page article to commemorate what we thought was the fiftieth anniversary of the Darwin Camera Club I asked whether there were any old minute books. I was given the key to the clubhouse and told to look behind the door. There, in containers ranging from a wooden suitcase to vinyl cloth bags, I found a nearly unbroken set of records beginning with the minutes of the first committee meeting in 1947. The two-page article grew into a book.

The records tell of a different Darwin and a different time — a time of picnic parties, film showings at Douglas Hot Springs, and the Vicar's flower show. They illustrate the universal behaviour of clubs. It is all there: the early enthusiasm; the working bees; on one hand the ambition for a National competition in Darwin and on the other a motion to ratify the president's purchase of a light bulb; the clash of personalities; the low points when the few remaining members almost gave up and the arrival each time of a newcomer who was not yet burnt out and who led the club out of the pit. These events drew me on until the project took control and requisitioned my spare time so that sometimes I wondered why I ever took it on.

The story of a club is the story of its people, and this is what I went looking for. The club records provided me with the bare facts but it was when I asked members and past members about these facts that the real stories began to emerge. Rather than recite lists of competitions and prizes, or write about the history and technique of photography, I have taken the stories that people told me and fitted them into the history of the club.



*Old Stockyards,
Gippsland, Victoria*

© Chris Brandenburg



Beginnings

Darwin in 1947 was a small town. People made their own amusements. There were fewer competing interests and there was at once more time available and more time required for a hobby like photography. Cameras were not automatic, film speeds were slow and photographic supplies were not readily available. The progress of the new camera club was reported almost weekly in *Diana's Diary*, the social page of the local newspaper.

Most civilians had been evacuated from Darwin in 1942. Civilians began to drift back to the Top End soon after the war ended in August 1945, at first being allowed only as far north as Pine Creek.

Victor Tarhanoff seems to have been the main mover in the formation of the Darwin Camera Club, and the first clubroom was built on his property in Smith Street.

Victor and Veronica Tarhanoff first came to Darwin from Brisbane in 1935, when Victor worked as a steel erector for Evans Deakin. He began taking 16 mm films in 1939. A little fair-haired boy appears in a number of sequences in Victor Tarhanoff's 1941 movie, walking on to otherwise static shots. Fifty-three years later I located the fair-haired boy, Victor Tarhanoff the younger, and he told me about the family.

The Tarhanoffs were among the civilians evacuated from Darwin shortly before the major Japanese air raid in February 1942. Victor Tarhanoff returned after the war and set up in business. The family followed later. Tarhanoff, A.A.C.S, had been making movies in Sydney and was known in interstate competitions. Hunt and Tarhanoff had a display advertisement in the first post-war issue of the *Northern Standard* on 31 May 1946. They advertised electrical welding and steel construction work from premises "in the vicinity of Jolly's Store". There was plenty of

such work in the rebuilding of Darwin after the war.

Veronica Tarhanoff advertised as a dressmaker and designer, embroidery a specialty. On 30 May 1947 Veronica Tarhanoff was one of seven exhibitors at a fashion parade at the Hotel Darwin in aid of the Country Womens Association. Afterwards there was dancing until 1 a.m. to sound systems provided by Mr Charles See Kee and Mr V Tarhanoff.

Hunt and Tarhanoff took one of the five-year leases offered after the war until permanent blocks could be surveyed. The block was in Smith Street, overlapping about half of the present Manolas Building and most of Edmunds Street. Edmunds Street did not exist at that time but was surveyed later, when permanent blocks were laid out.

Veronica Tarhanoff's dress shop fronted Smith Street and behind that was the engineering shop. Both of these were housed in one of the ubiquitous Sidney Williams huts (many of these were disposed of by the Army after the war) which Tarhanoff had re-erected on the block. The Tarhanoff dwelling was behind the Sidney Williams hut. In Smith Street outside her dress shop Veronica maintained a prolific garden, and kept caged birds.

Victor and Veronica Tarhanoff left Darwin in 1949 for Brisbane, where Victor worked at Evans Deakin Rocklea works. He continued to make cine films and there was a public showing of his films in Brisbane City Hall. Victor Tarhanoff died in 1985 and Veronica in 1993.

A Photographic Society, both cine and still

On 8 May 1947 a Public Notice appeared in the *Northern Standard* announcing a meeting at the Tarhanoffs' home to form "a Photographic Society, both cine and still". The *Northern Standard* reported on 30 May, under the heading "Photographers' Club Clicks", that twenty-five people attended and that the Darwin Photographic and Amateur Cine Society hoped to have a membership of a hundred in a very little time. Dennis Green, an architect, was the first President. Victor Tarhanoff was elected Liaison Officer. Mr Jack Veal gave a short address on "The 16 mm film". Members were to have "a busy bee on Sunday week to put the premises in working order".

Planning began straight away for a "Cabaret Ball and Screening of Technicolour Films", to be held in the Hotel Darwin on Thursday 17 July 1947. Formal dress was to be worn. Two frocks were created by Veronica Tarhanoff, and given to the Society by an anonymous donor, to be raffled at the ball. The ball made a profit for the club of £147 17s 6d after giving £14 10s 0d to the Red Cross and £18 0s 0d to the British Flood Relief Appeal. The donations were the proceeds of a raffle and an ugly man competition.

The minute book opens with the minutes of the first committee meeting, held at Victor Tarhanoff's residence on 10 June 1947. There had been a general meeting on 4 June, at which 11s 6d was collected for supper. Mr Tarhanoff was reimbursed 6s 6d for the cost of the supper. Fifteen members and one associate member had joined so far. The Rev Grant asked the society to organise a competition for the Flower Show.

The club has always enjoyed sponsorship from many Darwin businesses and individuals. The pattern was set at this first meeting, when thanks were given to:

Mr Wilkshire for two trucks for use on outings

Mr Haritos for the offer of his launch

Mr Coleman for his offer to print suitable photographs in the *Northern Standard* [but there were no photographs in the newspaper of the day].



In an article in the newsletter of a southern cine society Victor Tarhanoff said there had been donations of "20 tons of cement, 1 electric urn, 20 forms, 1 photo enlarger, use of launches and several trucks for outings, use of an aeroplane for photography, a microscope, and steel work for a 40 ft x 20 ft building". Some of these were given to the club by Tarhanoff.

Here is a description of the building of the first clubhouse, quoted from a letter dated 1950, after Victor Tarhanoff had left Darwin:

The clubrooms of the Society are ... adjoining but separate from the premises previously occupied by Mr Tarhanoff as a dwelling.

In 1947 when it was decided to inaugurate the Photographic and Cine Society in Darwin, Mr Victor Tarhanoff, who ... was a most enthusiastic cine photographer, offered the society the use of this block of land which was then vacant, for the purpose of erecting a club room ...

At that time the society had a very strong membership of something over seventy members, and materials for the building were either donated or purchased from club funds. Mr Tarhanoff donated the framework [there is, however, an invoice from Hunt and Tarhanoff for £48 4s 5d for materials] and other members, the identity of whom I do not know, donated the iron arc-mesh, etc.

The building was erected by club members during weekends entirely by voluntary labour. Light was installed out of club funds [Mr See Kee's quotation of £20 was accepted at the first committee meeting], and at each meeting the amount of light used has always been paid for by Mr Tarhanoff [this is not so: Victor Tarhanoff invoiced the club for electricity].

The first meeting in the new clubroom was held on Tuesday 1 July 1947. According to the *Northern Standard*:

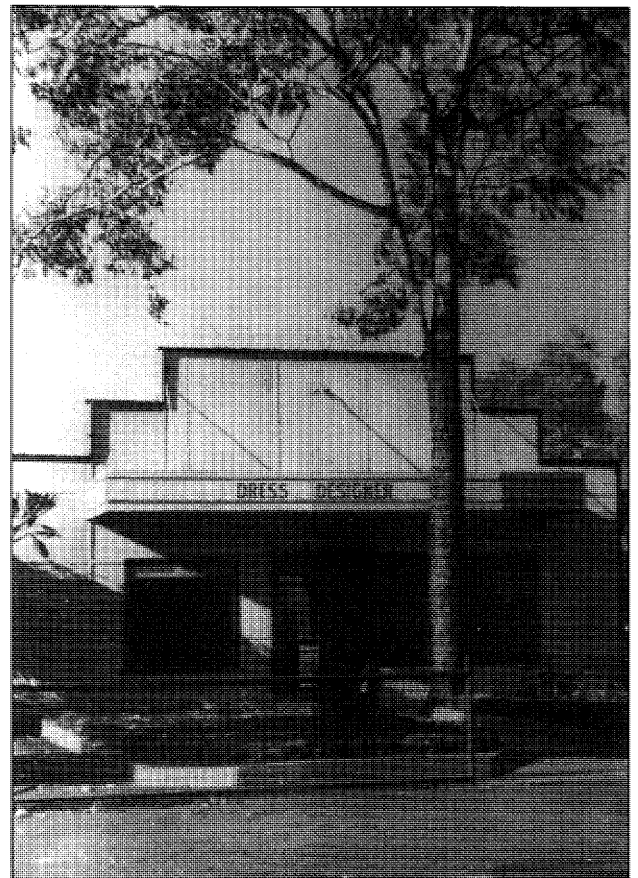
Over sixty members and friends attended, and were well rewarded with four excellent reels of Technicolour ... A light supper was then served, after which the still photographers came into their own with a most representative exhibition of over seventy prints contributed by eleven members. Mr Derham Green ... demonstrated with one of his own prints how a picture can be ruined by an unsuitable mount.

This apparently took place in an unfinished clubroom because when the Society of Arts asked whether they could use the clubroom for their monthly meetings they were put off with the statement that the building was not yet finished, and eight months later the club was buying sand and gravel and calling a working bee to lay this on the floor.

The clubroom was 12 x 6 metres. It was set up for showing films, with 120 seats and a silvered screen 1.8 x 3 metres, which Victor Tarhanoff said was "the largest amateur cinematographic screen in Australia". There was a proscenium arch and coloured lights.

For a time in 1948 the clubroom became a chicken shed. Cathay Pacific Airways rang the Tarhanoffs to say one of their aircraft was unserviceable and they had a consignment of thousands of chickens on their hands, dying in the heat. Tarhanoff never found out why they

came to him for help — their only connection with birds was the cage outside Veronica's shop. At any rate the Tarhanoffs cleared out the clubroom and put the crates of chickens in there. They bought feed and cared for the chickens until they chirped up, then the family could not sleep for the noise. The only reward they ever got was a letter of thanks.



Veronica Tarhanoff's dress shop in Smith Street, about 1947. The Darwin Camera Club's first clubhouse was behind this building, which housed Hunt and Tarhanoff's engineering workshop as well as the dress shop. The site is now occupied by the Manolas building and by Edmunds Street.

© Northern Territory Library, Roderick collection.



Some character

© Ian Johnson



Early triumphs

Both members' films and library films were shown at meetings. Some of these were: "Diving Displays", "The History of British Pedigreed Stock" and "Buffalo Hunting". Competitions were held at many of the monthly meetings. Sometimes a club member or an invited guest spoke on subjects such as elementary photography, choosing a movie camera, and printing and retouching.

Suppers were provided by a ladies' committee and the committee approved the purchase of two tea towels and a dish cloth. The committee authorised Mr Tarhanoff to buy a new light globe for the front entrance. Name tags were provided for meetings: blue for gentlemen, pink for ladies and yellow for juniors.

Reports of social meetings were sent to the Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth cine societies and to the Editor, *Australian Photographic Review*.

There were club outings, including picnics at Doctor's Gully, Talc Head and Tumbling Waters. The Secretary's report for 1949 said "On account of the open structure of the club rooms and uncertain weather conditions, the Society goes into recess for most of the Wet Season".

In August 1948 there was an open photographic competition at the clubroom. There were prizes for the best picture taken by a lady, won by Miss T DeLaine, and the best picture taken with a box camera, won by Jessie Litchfield, as well as for the best picture taken with a miniature camera and the best taken by a junior. The competition coincided with a visit to Darwin by Eric Joliffe, a long-time cartoonist for *Pix* magazine, Frank Bagnall of the Department of Information and Mr Samuel A.R.C.A., and these three were invited to judge the entries. The open section was won by Capt Tom Shaw and Mr V Tarhanoff, and the junior by Master V Tarhanoff.

C P Mountford, who made an important series of films in Arnhem Land in 1948, visited the club with Mrs Mountford and members of the expedition.



THE DARWIN PHOTOGRAPHIC AND AMATEUR CINE SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER
1949

Cover of the 1949 programme. Woodcut by Mr L. C. Lucas. Program supplied by Victor Tarhanoff the younger.



Running out of steam

Victor Tarhanoff left Darwin about November 1949. He donated to the club the money due to him for painting the hall and left the projection screen and some furniture for the use of the club. He was elected a life member in December 1949. With the letter telling him of his election to life membership, the secretary Jessie Litchfield sent him a piece of the club's Christmas cake.

To say that an era ended when Victor Tarhanoff left may be putting it too high but his leaving had an effect on the club. The clubroom was on Tarhanoff's land and after he left the committee resolved to ask for a



Coming ashore from a chartered boat at Mica Beach, Darwin Harbour, on the 1960 Harbour cruise.

© Burnie Riley.

Government grant for a block of land and a projector. The Rev A Green's projector, as well as Victor Tarhanoff's, had been used at club meetings but the club needed its own. Just then a new member, George Kenny (or Kennon), a cinematographer, arrived and brought his projector with him.

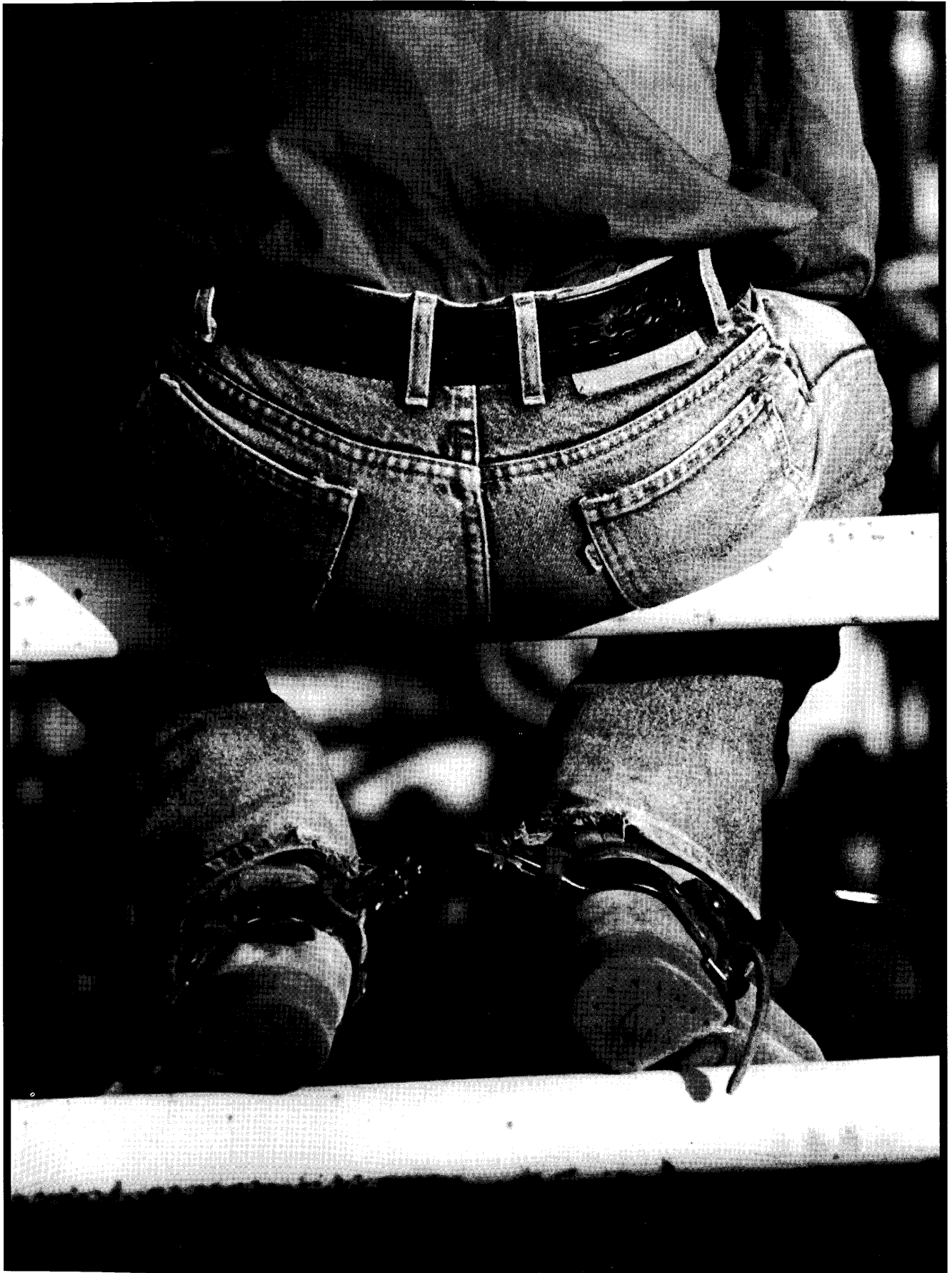
Meetings continued at the clubroom for a year or two. In November 1950 His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory was invited to open a Salon of Photography at the clubroom. The Salon was for "Prints only, 6in x 8in, properly mounted".

The outgoing Administrator, Arthur Driver, had been Patron of the club. The next Administrator, Frank Wise, took office on 1 July 1951 and although only six people came to the 1951 Annual General Meeting the club lost little time in getting the patronage of the new Administrator. He accepted on 7 November 1951.

In July 1953 the name of the club was changed to Darwin Camera Club.

The clubroom had been dismantled at the beginning of the wet season. An undated minute of 1953 says that since the club has been without the use of its clubroom it has met at Mrs Litchfield's premises [the Roberta Library]. It says "We have lost three good members in Miss June Waters, Mr Darcy [?] Ormond and Mr Charles Meade who for nearly two years was our secretary - treasurer. He came at a time when the club was almost in extremis".

These were the signs of a losing battle that ended in the collapse of the club. There is a gap in the records after this, from July 1953 to March 1956.



Jeans & Spurs

© Ian Johnson



We have the potential for a first class club

In June 1957 Mr Harry Butler, manager of the Commercial Bank, said he could not understand why there was not a thriving camera club here, as there was in Alice Springs. He told the *Northern Territory News* "We have the enthusiasts, the scenery – all the potential for a first-class club". He invited interested people to contact him at the Bank.

Soon after this eighteen people attended "a meeting of citizens to re-form the Darwin Camera Club". Mr S W Manning, one of the original members in 1947, gave an outline of the past history of the club. He was elected president, and Harry Butler vice-president. It was moved that the club affiliate with the Musical Comedy Society but once again nothing came of this.

Enthusiasm ran high after this new start. It was resolved that a noticeboard be put up at the Showground, and that meetings be announced in the press and on the radio. There were to be monthly competitions in colour and black and white.

A general meeting decided that there should be fortnightly meetings at the Masonic Hall, with a charge of 1s 0d per head to cover the cost of the hall, until such time as the club could meet in its own building. But even a shilling a night must have been too extravagant because the committee later

decided to meet at the home of the president, Mr Manning, to save the expense of the hall.

Sixteen people, including six new members, came to the September 1957 meeting. It was decided that notices would be put up in shop windows and radio announcements would continue but that advertising in the *Northern Territory News* would cease, and the account of 12s 0d be paid up.

After that forward-looking meeting the minutes cease without explanation and resume three years later on the next page of the same book. Twenty people came to a public meeting in August 1960. The indefatigable S W Manning was there again, moving a motion to re-form the club. Among other people who were to support the club in the next few years were Jim Dewey, Henry Shepherd and the Rileys. The old club's bank balance of £24 1s 2d was transferred to the present club with the same signatories, thus maintaining the club's identity.

In August 1962 the Darwin Camera Club was invited to send a representative to a meeting of the committee for the establishment of an Art Gallery and Museum. The club replied that there was no one available to go on that night but it promised moral support.



Comfortable middle age

After its confident start in 1947 and its loss of impetus in the 1950s the club entered a mature phase in about 1960, which lasted until 1974 when Cyclone Tracy delivered a shock. In 1963 the loss of Victor Tarhanoff's movie projector was at last made good when the club bought a Bell & Howell 16mm projector for £100.

This is not to say that the club never faltered. At the 1964 annual general meeting the retiring president, Jim Mannion, "bitterly criticised the lack of support by members, particularly in attendance at meetings and support for club competitions". Then in September the secretary was dismissed for his lack of interest in the club's affairs. Despite this pessimism, it does not seem to have been a bad year for the club: there were outings to El Sharana and UDP Falls, and the club's entrant Yolande Hosie won the South Australia division of the Miss Photography quest. The faithful ten at the annual general meeting were entertained afterwards by a 16mm film called "Kosciusko Slopes".

Twenty-one people came to the next annual general meeting in 1965 but the bank balance had fallen to £34 11s 10d, out of which the rent of the hall had to be paid. The meeting agreed to donate £15 to the Uniting Church for the use of the hall.

There was gloom and despondency again at the 1966 annual general meeting when the president, Jim Dewey, told sixteen members that the club was going backwards after a good start to the year. There was only \$10 in the bank. The cine society had played its last show – the rather poignant entries in their minute book contain fewer and fewer names until they tail off to nothing in March 1966 – and they offered to join the camera club and bring a dowry. Their president, Allan Seipel, said the cine club had no members but plenty of finance. The camera club voted to accept the members and the money. The next bank

statement showed a balance of \$230, and the movie projector made its appearance in the camera club's balance sheet.

Once again the pessimism was not justified. The club faltered again but it never fell. Outings and competitions continued, including the competition at the Royal Darwin Show. There was some interest in audio-visual slide shows and the club bought a tape recorder for \$160.

There were ten people on the membership list in 1970 and eight people came to the 1971 annual general meeting but the committee nevertheless made a program of competitions, outings and meetings for the coming year.

There were mystery slide nights. At one of these, Les Seipel guessed Philippa Riley's slide "Fording the Todd River". It should be explained to southern readers that the Todd River, although it is the site of the Henley on Todd Regatta, is normally a dry bed of sand. It was unrecognisable in this slide because it had water in it.

In 1974 the first Northern Territory inter-club competition was held. After this we must digress to the subject of cyclones, which occupied all of Darwin at that time.



Mystery slide - "Fording the Todd River"

© Philippa Riley



Owing to cyclonic weather conditions

The Darwin Photographic and Amateur Cine Society announced in the *Northern Standard* that its 1948 Christmas party would be held in the new clubroom on the first of December. New films, in both Technicolour and monochrome, would be shown by Mr V Tarhanoff. But there were to be two further press notices: on the third of December the Society apologised that "The picnic set down for Sunday, December 5th had been cancelled because of inclement weather" and on the tenth of December "The committee regret the unavoidable last-minute cancellation of the Xmas meeting...owing to cyclonic weather conditions, and extend SEASONS GREETINGS to members and friends".

These advertisements were somewhat understated. A cyclone came close to Darwin in December 1948 and 100 kph winds uprooted trees, brought down power lines, destroyed two houses and unroofed others. A hundred and eighteen millimetres of rain fell in three days.

Once again Victor Tarhanoff took the interests of the Society to heart and offered to buy the case of beer that had been bought for the Christmas meeting.

Cyclone Tracy, which struck Darwin on Christmas Eve 1974, has been well documented. I will only deal with some of its effects on the camera club. Many photographs were lost in Cyclone Tracy, including all those of the *Northern Territory News*.

There were many personal losses. John Gorrell's enlarger was ruined by water in the lens and he stuck to colour slides after that. He was on holiday in Sydney but a friend went through his house, found his slides in wooden boxes and tried to dry them out. About a third of them survived and the rest were ruined by water or mould.

Les Seipel lost most of his possessions in Cyclone Tracy. People put their electrical

appliances in the street to be taken to the tip. But there was a couple of weeks of good weather and generators were being installed by the electric supply authority, so Les brought his TV set in again and plugged it in and it worked! The Seipels kept food in their neighbour's refrigerator and the neighbours cooked on Seipel's gas stove.

John Waldmann lost his darkroom and all his photographic equipment in Cyclone Tracy. As well as that he had a set of prints of Darwin scenes, belonging to the Northern Territory Government, at home after an exhibition and these were lost. His new darkroom is also their cyclone shelter. It is crammed with enlargers, copy stands, Hasselblad and other cameras, all acquired since Cyclone Tracy. If ever there is another cyclone he will have plenty to keep him occupied in his cyclone shelter.

Wilf Spear had his movie films and slides scattered around the backyard. All were lost except for a few films in plastic food containers.

Max and Philippa Riley and Les Seipel still have pre-Tracy photographs.

The Victorian Amateur Cine Society wrote offering help after Cyclone Tracy. They said they were planning a function to raise money for the Darwin Camera Club. The Echuca Camera Club also wrote to offer help. In her reply, the secretary said "All our equipment was safe but new clubrooms had to be found".



Live Music

© Ian Johnson



Life after Tracy

Cyclone Tracy struck Darwin on Christmas Eve 1974. The committee of the Darwin Camera Club met again as early as February 1975, at Les Seipel's place in Dashwood Place. Les Seipel was a motor trimmer and he was busy supplying and repairing the tarpaulins that nearly everybody needed to keep their remaining possessions dry. Those at that committee meeting were Les Seipel, Cecily Harding, Donald Marshall, Ken Hancock and Philippa Riley. The minute book continues as before, after a note following the September meeting which says "All other notes for 1974 were lost during the cyclone".

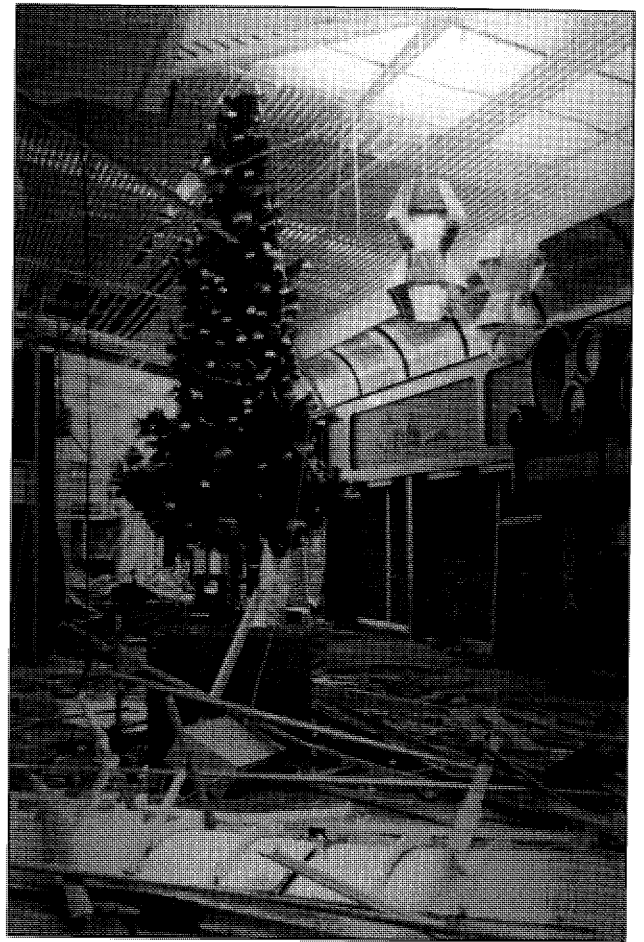
The first general meeting was at Spillett House in March, when a film on Cyclone Tracy was to be shown.

Brave plans were made for club outings to Katherine, to Gove and to Alice Springs for Henley on Todd, and also for a second inter-club competition. In the event, everybody was too busy repairing cyclone damage to go on extended trips. The Beercan Regatta competition fell through. There was, however, a successful outing to Douglas Hot Springs in July.

The 1975 Royal Darwin Show was held outdoors, in daylight hours, on 24 - 26 July. As usual, the club organised the photography section. The year ended in a cheerful mood when the Charlie Chaplin film "The Gold Rush" was shown at the club's Christmas meeting.

At its February meeting the committee decided to make an audio-visual record (colour slides with a commentary on cassette tape) of the damage done by Cyclone Tracy. By May 1975 a set of slides was ready to send to Kodak for copying. Allan Seipel wrote the script but he was away on holiday in October 1975 when the time came to record the commentary. The club hoped to raise money by the hire of the audio-visual. The Victorian Association of Photographic Societies sent

congratulations on the show, and said a large number of clubs had seen it. It was also sent to South Australian and Queensland clubs. One photograph was sold to *Time* magazine and a year later the club was still asking for the royalty of \$54.



Casuarina Square, Christmas 1974.

© D. Rafiqi



Battling on

Now we see a piece of classic behaviour by a club that had come to rely on the enthusiasm and drive of one or two key people. Les Seipel was a strong president in 1967 and from 1969 to 1971. Often other members are happy to leave the work to strong office bearers but some thought the club was not sufficiently democratic. However that may be, Les Seipel left for Brisbane in 1976 and in 1977 the club reached another low point. The annual general meeting was attended by four office bearers and two other people. No one could be found to act as president or secretary.

But the club kept on. An inter-club competition was run again in 1977 and club competitions and outings continued. In September 1978 the club began the moves that led to the siting of a demountable at the Showgrounds.

The annual reports for 1981 tell another story of depression: the same five or six members came to all the club barbecues; more members left than joined and the club was down to eleven members; the Show competition was spoilt by an airline strike; the Katherine outing was a photographic success but a financial disaster; the slide projector had been inoperable for 18 months; the president (said the secretary) started with enthusiasm but became more and more discouraged by lack of support for club functions; the secretary complained that while he was on leave someone else had declined participation in the Top End Arts Festival and when he returned he had to organise a display practically single-handed and at short notice; and the Public Officer (said the treasurer) was responsible for failure to sell thirty diaries that the club had bought for resale. During the year the secretary and the treasurer resigned. It was not a happy team.

To add to their troubles the books and documents were stolen. That's right, stolen!

John Waldmann tells me the books were in a suitcase in a shared house. Someone cleared out and took the suitcase, expecting to find something valuable.

Despite all this the financial statements showed a profit of \$321.31 for the year and twenty-five new members joined in response to newspaper advertisements for photography classes.

Ten people came to the annual general meeting in 1984. They were at the point of winding up and looking for a like-minded body or a charity to give their money to. Margot Cox, then competition secretary and later president, told me that someone said to her "Never let the club wind up", and she and Sheryl Klaffer determined to keep it going.

It must have been hard work: only the four office bearers came to the 1985 annual general meeting. Monthly competitions were suspended. There were still only ten financial members in 1986.

Margot Cox thought that prospective members were being frightened away by talk of high-level techniques when what they wanted was basic help. She designed a beginners' course, called "More better photos from your camera". It was so successful that she repeated it in subsequent years. She taught such things as the use and care of the camera, light, composition and use of flash. Course members were sent out to photograph unusual subjects such as street lights, fire hydrants, seats and playground equipment. Jeff Want in his president's report for 1987 called it "Better photos from your camera, an epic opus in five parts composed, orchestrated and conducted in scintillating fashion by Margot Cox and played by a small group of enthusiastic photographers".



Wall of Water

© Geoff Neely



The wandering club

When I joined the Darwin Camera Club in 1992 one of the club's urgent ambitions was to find a suitable venue for meetings, with a darkroom. When I researched the records I was able to tell the members that this has been a topic of discussion since 1950 but none of us felt much better for that.

After Victor Tarhanoff left, the club was not to have its own clubroom again for 30 years, and after less than ten years the 1979 clubroom proved inadequate for the number of members. The club has never enjoyed continuous use of a darkroom. Most of the time members have made their own arrangements for the use of various darkrooms, including that of the Crafts Council of the Northern Territory.

In 1950, eight months after Victor Tarhanoff left, the committee wrote to Hunt and Tarhanoff asking for permission to continue their use of the clubroom. Alternatively, and rather plaintively, they asked whether if ever the premises were sold the club could buy the building for re-erection on another site.

The clubroom was dismantled at the beginning of the wet season of 1952 - 3 in the hope of re-erecting it on land belonging to the Darwin Arts Society but this never happened. The Darwin Amateur Musical Comedy Society offered space on their land and Scotty Turnbull offered space behind his business premises. I can find no evidence that either of these offers was taken up, and I do not know what happened to the dismantled building. Perhaps the club was now too weak to find voluntary labour to re-erect the building.

In 1960 the club was still asking the Musical Comedy Society for space to re-erect the clubroom, which had now been lying in a heap, I don't know where, for seven years. But the Musical Comedy Society said they were not interested in affiliation with the camera

club and did not want the building on their land.

Meanwhile the club met at the Chung Wah Society hall. Near the end of 1961 the committee asked about the Uniting Church hall, and meetings were held there until Cyclone Tracy. This building was a servicemen's recreation hall during the Second World War. After Cyclone Tracy it was a church drop-in centre called The Fisherman's Hut. It has now been replaced by another building.

The first club meeting after Cyclone Tracy was at Spillett House, the home of the Northern Territory Pensioners Association Inc, in March 1975. Perhaps the rent was a problem but in any case attempts were made to find other venues. The Uniting Church was asked again about their hall, and some meetings were held at Darwin, Casuarina and Nightcliff High Schools. The cause was probably not helped by a letter to Darwin High School quibbling at their request for \$20 for two nights' use of the theatre.

A number of demountables had been brought to Darwin for emergency accommodation after Cyclone Tracy. By 1978 these were no longer needed and some were being given away and the rest auctioned. The club applied to the Minister for Community Development for two demountables, and to Darwin City Council for land. The Council refused but the Minister approved the grant of one demountable. Now at last the club was on the road to its own building.

The presidents at the time of this important development were Ken Hodge and Roy Sheppard. The secretary was Mark Walker. Bill Bradley played an important part in arranging donations of materials and services for the demountable.



In September 1979 the Royal North Australian Show Society allocated a site at the showground. Within weeks the demountable was taken to the showground. "Our immediate task", said the committee, "is to lay the foundations".

A site plan was drawn and a building permit obtained. U-cart Concrete supplied concrete for the foundations and Brambles donated the use of a crane to place the demountable. These donors were rewarded with photographs of their business premises.

One end of the demountable was partitioned off as a darkroom and the major part was used for meetings and for the photographic section of the Show. Within

three years the space was found to be too small for the increased membership and enquiries were being made about other venues. The darkroom fell into disuse and members began to use the Crafts Council darkroom.

By 1992 the demountable had fallen into disfavour as too small and too inconvenient, and the club resumed its wanderings from one venue to another. In 1993 it settled at the clubroom of the Darwin Motor Sports Council at Hidden Valley Road, Winnellie. Some people regard it as the hidden clubroom, situated as it is at the end of a lonely road.

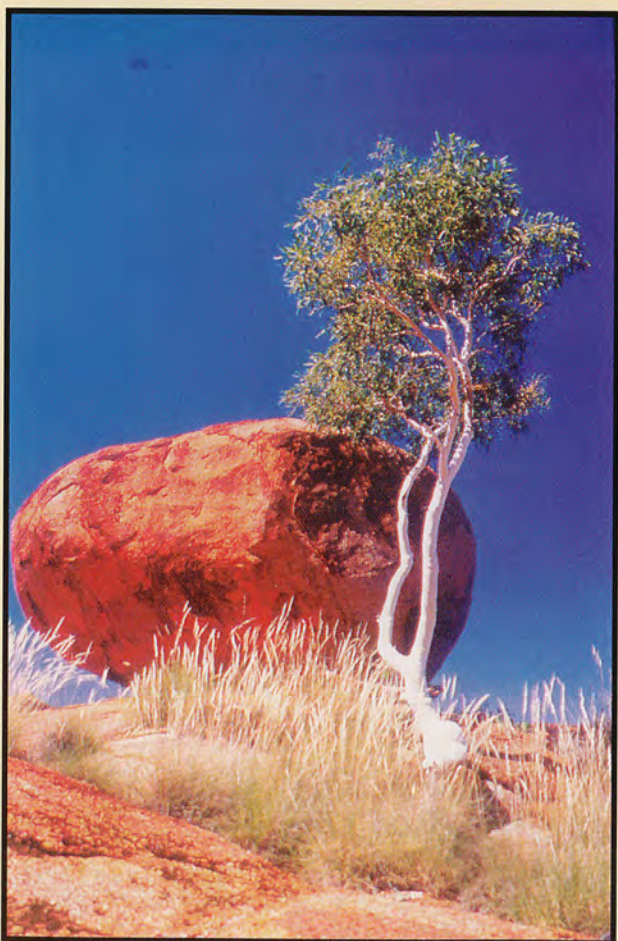


Club members in 1972 on an outing to Tumbling Waters. L to R: John Gorrell, Margaret Gorell, Michelle Riley, Helmut Schuller, Les Seipel, Philippa Riley, Cecily Harding, baby Wolfgang Schuller.

© Les Seipel



Top Shots



Devils Marbles

Patrick Nelson



Weathered Timber

John Gorrell



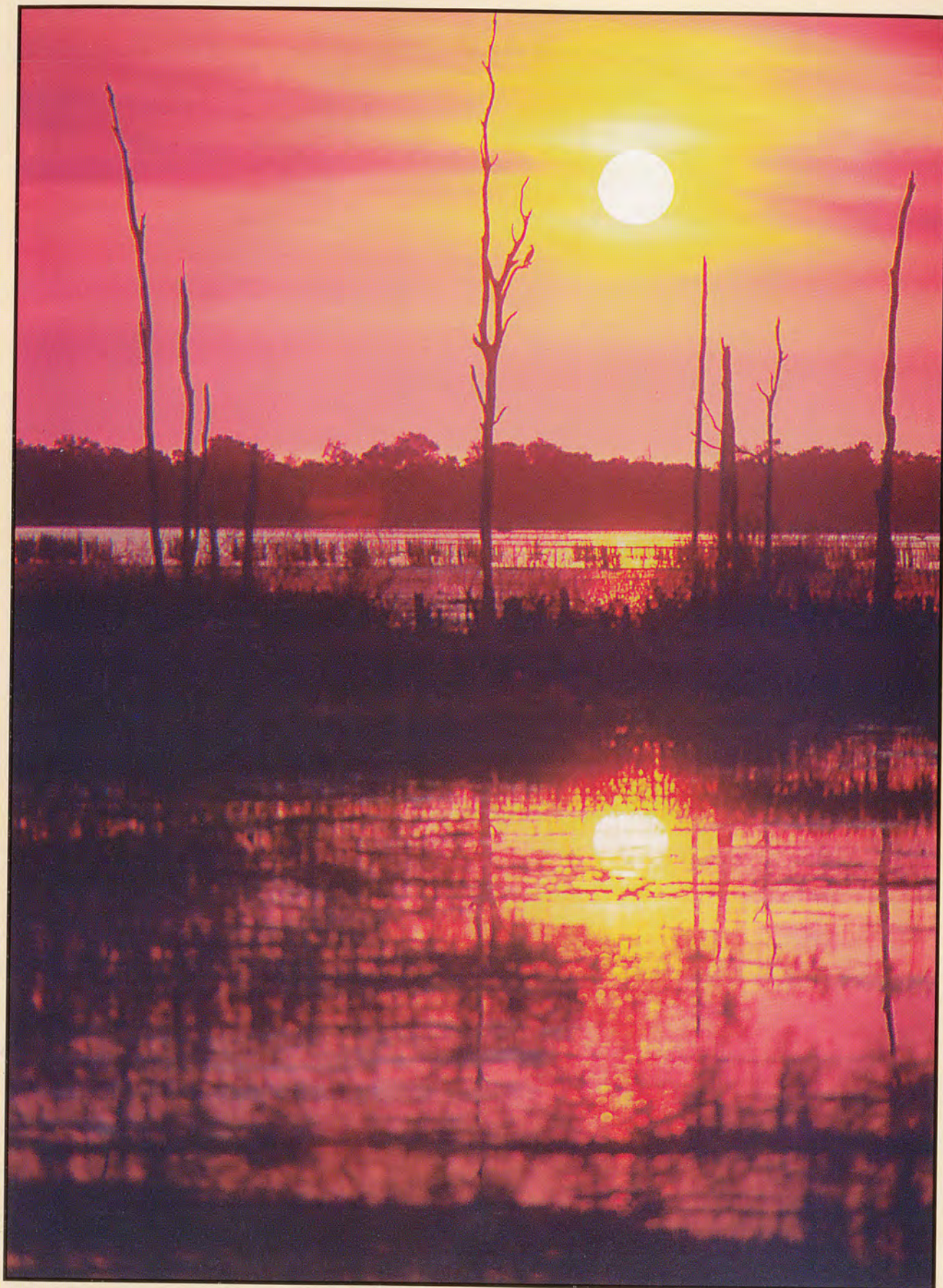
Coloured Room

Patrick Nelson



Whirly Ride

Bruce Molloy



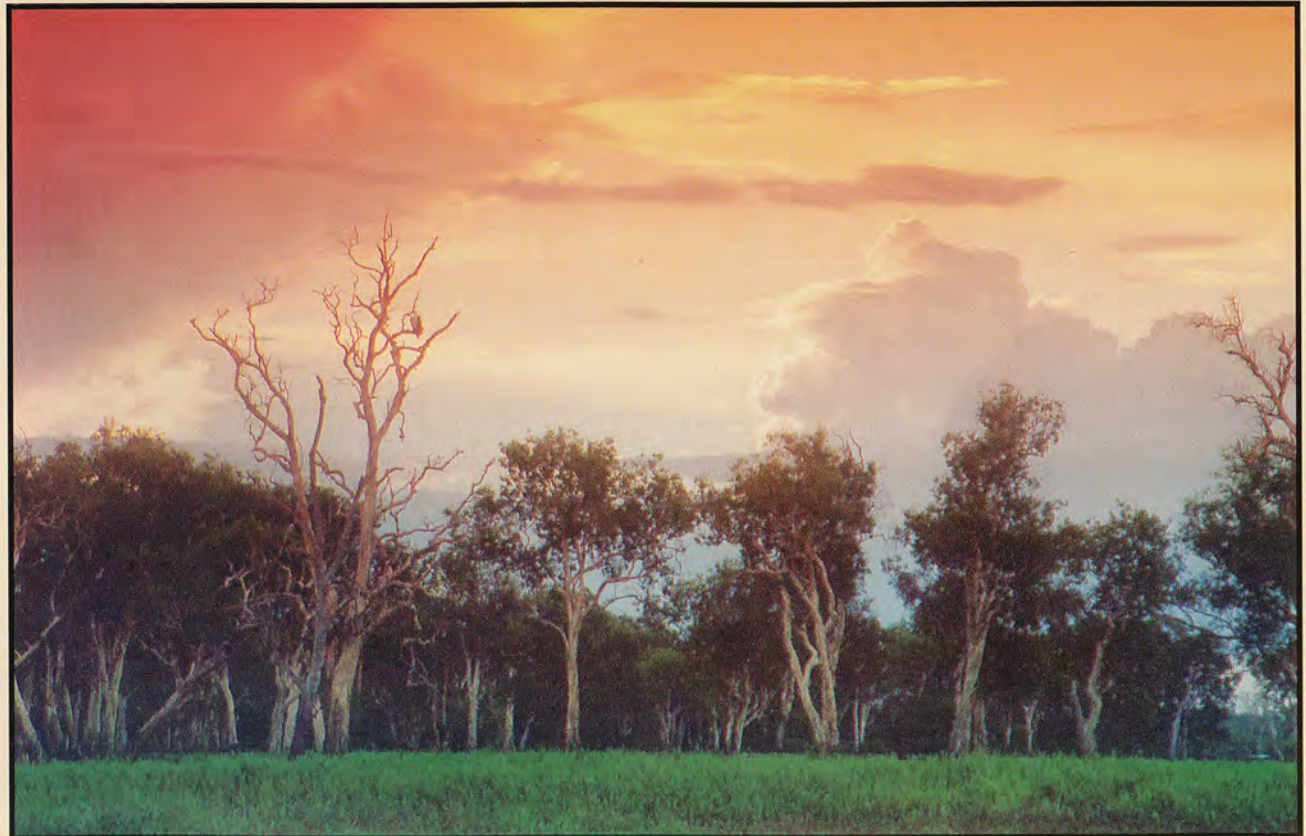
Reflected Gold

John Gorrell



Manton Dam

Bruce Molloy



Cloudy Shapes

Gordon Roberts



Of river crossings and wild buffaloes

Club outings were well attended in the early days. There was of course no television, and hotels closed at 6 p.m. except that on Thursday nights one hotel opened by rota.

Darwin Camera Club outings ranged from evenings of night photography to extended trips to Katherine and Nhulunbuy. Naturally the usual Darwin picnic spots were visited: Tumbling Waters, Berry Springs, Lee Point and later Fogg Dam and Territory Wildlife Park, and there were harbour cruises as well. At the Tumbling Waters outing in September 1974 Allan Seipel was named top quoits player.



Will she cross? Julie Schuller, Philippa Riley, Diana Riley, Bill Pretty, John Gorrell and Helmut Schuller contemplate the Darwin River, with Philippa Riley's car on the wrong side. Club outing 1971.

© Les Seipel

Twenty people went on a harbour cruise in October 1960. The highlight was climbing on to the re-floated "British Motorist". This was a tanker sunk in a Japanese air raid and later salvaged by a Japanese firm. It was not a good subject for photographs – all there was to see at this time was the bottom of the upturned hull.

Some people flew to Snake Bay on Melville Island in August 1965. They went, probably on a scheduled service, on a DC3.

Max and Philippa Riley came to Darwin in 1956. Philippa remembers camping

weekends, including one to the Mary River where the Arnhem Highway now crosses (there was no bridge then), when they swam freely in the river and lagoons. Nowadays one would not dare to swim for fear of crocodiles, but they were being hunted in those days and were not so bold. There were few bridges then and getting a car over a river crossing often provided entertainment for all. Once at Frying Pan Creek they were rained out but Philippa remembers John Gorrell pouring dye into the river so that he could see the swirling flow patterns.

In 1966 there was an exchange of correspondence with Frank Muir of Muirella Park Skytel Tourist Lodge in what is now Kakadu National Park. There was an airstrip at Muirella Park (since decommissioned) and the trip was to be an aerial safari. Frank Muir suggested that an advance party come by road. He said that once the El Sharana road had been graded it should be possible to get a car along the 110 km bush track to the camp, and he would provide a 4 wheel drive vehicle for a trip to Nourlangie Rock.

I can find no record that the trip was actually made, but Willy Pedersen, vice-president in 1972 and president in 1976 – 7, flew to Muirella Park at Easter 1974 with Ken McManus and



Following the walk-through to test the depth, all members turned out to help the Rileys' car through the Darwin River. Club outing 1971.

© John Gorrell

another man. They had previously dropped food from an Auster aircraft near Jim Jim Falls. They walked to Jim Jim Falls, about 45 kilometres each way, and were picked up again a week later. As usual in the Top End in the wet season, before they could take off they had to walk the strip and kick down the termite mounds that had grown up during the week.

On their first night out, McManus lost his spoon. No one was carrying any unnecessary weight, so thereafter he had to wait for one of the others to finish before he could eat with a borrowed spoon. On the way back Pedersen was navigating by compass through head-high spear grass and the others began to worry because they could not see anything. Willy had his moment of triumph when he found not only the camp but the lost spoon. It can rain at Easter and the plains are very flat. They spent most of their last night up a tree. Ken McManus



Ellen-Marie Pedersen behind a camera on a club outing to Twin Billabong in 1972.

© John Gorrell

took 8 mm movies and Willy Pedersen brought back Ektachrome slides and black and white negatives.

There were a number of weekends at Douglas Hot Springs. At the Queen's Birthday weekend in 1972, Les and Allan Seipel brought a generator, a 16 mm projector and a large screen and showed Laurel and Hardy films to the whole camp.

At Leaning Tree Lagoon in March 1973 those who were game took rides on an aquaplane behind John Gorrell's outboard dinghy. Gorrell says others should have some photographs but he was too busy driving to take photographs.

The ultimate club outing must be the trip to London. Admittedly many of the group were recruited to the club for the purpose. In 1968 a private person in Darwin, Bill Mason, arranged the charter of a Boeing 707 from Qantas and set about filling it with club groups of fifteen people. Les Seipel was not able to go but he organised a group from the club. Anna Firman, Robyn Meldrum, Jock McKie and Mary Ehm were among the people in this group.

It was reported in February 1975 that a planned outing to Berry Springs and a harbour cruise had not been successful, but of course there had been the intervention of a cyclone.

The year following Cyclone Tracy was one of repair and consolidation but there was time for a successful combined outing of the Darwin and Katherine camera clubs to Douglas Hot Springs. "So successful" said the secretary, "that one carload of Darwin members extended their stay with the 'excuse' of car trouble".

Perhaps energies were roused and an adventurous spirit engendered by the rebuilding after Cyclone Tracy. At any rate, one of the happiest trip reports concerns a visit to the Katherine Camera Club at Easter in 1976. The president, Les Seipel, wrote:



Springvale Homestead was the venue for Saturday night's entertainment which included dinner and dancing, and a display of excellent dancing by Aborigines from Bamyili. Sunday took in a trip to Mataranka thermal springs and the nearby zoological park (where that clicking sound was heard again) then we all journeyed to old Elsey Homestead and graves [sic] and for a brave few of the group a canoe excursion on the Warlock Ponds waterway was a highlight of the day.



Getting in touch with the subject on a club outing at Fogg Dam, September 1985.

© Margot Cox.

Some of the members envied Mark Walker's 6cm slides and contrasted them with the "postage-stamp images from their cameras with bottle-top lenses". The club's big marquee was put up at the home of the secretary of the Katherine club, Mrs McClelland.

The big marquee was to be in use again in May, at UDP Falls.

In the same year a few members drove to Nhulunbuy as guests of the Gove Camera Club. The LandRover Owners' Club, of which John Gorrell was a member, was involved in this trip.

The Katherine outing seems to have been one of those happenings that can not be repeated on demand. In 1981 the club hired a bus for a trip to Katherine. But everything seemed to go wrong that year. The committee was persuaded to hire a bigger bus so that members could travel in comfort. The bill was an unpleasant surprise and the committee were left to chase members after the event for an extra \$20 a head.

Fogg Dam is always worth visiting for its bird life. Wilf Spear, who came to Darwin in 1959, lived at Humpty Doo for many years and there were many camera club outings to his place. His son's mango and citrus farm was burnt out once and they had to start again. Now it is watered automatically and Wilf has come to live in Darwin.

On one outing to the flood plains at Woolner Station, John Gorrell's LandRover was the only 4 wheel drive vehicle and he obliged the others by herding wild buffalo towards their cars. One big bull repeatedly turned on the LandRover, finally putting a dent in it which it carried for the rest of its long life. Helmut Schuller got it on film.

In recent years, outings have continued despite the competition of alternative activities. Twenty people booked in for a boat trip on the harbour in 1993 but it was cancelled because of the weather. Ten people went to a barbecue at Dripstone Park late in 1992 to see a typical wet season display of rain and lightning. The barbecue was abandoned in the face of rain and fire ants but they got their lightning shots.



Willy Pedersen avoids the smoke. Club outing to UDP Falls, 1972.

© Les Seipel



That's the way the entrant presented it

The camera club movement has been criticised for maintaining conservative values, often calculated to please long-serving judges. The Darwin Camera Club seems to have escaped this malady, perhaps because it has nearly always had to use judges from outside the club and often from outside Darwin. At first, it is true, there were only a couple of professional photographers in Darwin but this phase did not last long enough for tradition to build up.

Lillian Dean, as the only professional photographer in Darwin, was probably called on from the earliest times. With Steve Gorman, she was still judging monthly competitions in 1961.

In December 1950 the First Annual Salon of Photography was held at the RSL hall. The president Mr C R Bannerman, the secretary Clare Reidy and Mr Dalrymple formed the hanging committee.

The next year the club conducted the Photography section of the first Darwin Show. This was the Jubilee Year Exhibition held by the Maranga and Rural District Progress Association in September 1951. The camera club's association with what is now the Royal Darwin Show has lasted from that first show to the present day.

The photographic section of the show was judged by camera club members for some years. In 1961 for instance, Mr B Broderick and either Mr Mick Reynolds or Mr Henry Shepherd were to be the judges.

The South Australian Photographic Federation (SAPF) was formed in about 1962 and the club quickly resolved to affiliate with the Federation. The SAPF later developed a country clubs judging scheme. In 1963 the Darwin Camera Club asked whether the Federation would happen to have anyone in Darwin at show time to help with judging, and in 1965 the SAPF was asked to judge a club

competition called "Activities in the sun".

Willy Pedersen, the president in 1973, was a Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer and this probably accounts for the Port Darwin Motors and Darwin Aero Club Competition, in which the first prize was an hour's flight. This is the first reference I have found to external judging; the entries were to be sent to the SAPF for judging.

The Darwin Camera Club held the first Northern Territory inter-club competition in 1974. Entries were received from Gove and Katherine clubs. The competition was judged by "Peter Kerrish of the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau; George Chaloupka, local artist and Mark Walker, local photographer". There were two more inter-club competitions, in 1976 (when Les Taylor of the Alice Springs club won a Kodak silver medallion for first place) and in 1977.

For some years the club maintained a relationship with Edwardstown (SA) Camera Club. This was no doubt initiated by Ray Price, who had been a member of the Edwardstown club and was an accredited judge in South Australia. Edwardstown Camera Club judged the entries to the 1976 Royal Darwin Show and there were inter-club competitions between Darwin and Edwardstown until 1982. Entries in the 1977 Show were sent not to Edwardstown but to SAPF for judging.

External judging of Show entries was causing a lot of trouble. Volunteers had to collect the entries, send them away for judging, keep in touch with the judges, make sure the photographs came back in time, and hang them for display. Margot Cox, who became competition secretary in about 1981, says there always seemed to be an airline refuellers strike at the critical time and the last straw came in 1981, when the photographs did not get back in time for the Show. Judges' comments were announced and prizes were

awarded but there were no photographs to be seen. John Waldmann ran around at the last minute and got together an exhibition of prints by photographers of the *Northern Territory News*. A darkroom was set up at the Show in order to have something to offer the public. Photographs taken at the Show were processed and shown on the spot.

There was some opposition to local judging but by now there were a number of professional photographers in Darwin, independent of the club, and although it is not easy to get three of them together for judging, it is a lot easier than sending photographs away. Whilst the club does not suffer the inbreeding (bordering on cretinism, according to the worst cynics) that goes with a small number of long-serving judges, the pool of judges is small and their preferences are known. You soon learn that A will not fail to notice an over-exposed sky, that B has seen enough sunsets to last a lifetime thank you, and that C can not be roused by any picture that does not tell a story. The trouble is alleviated by inviting two or three judges in almost random combinations, depending on who is available on the day.

The people who help the judges by arranging the entries for them are usually known to them and they must be careful to hide the identity of their photographs. Margot Cox tried to sit po-faced while the judge panned her favourite image and remarked that another one must be upside down. "That's the way the entrant presented it" said Margot, in the best offhand voice she could manage.

Philippa Riley said someone made off with one of her husband's nudes while the photographs were being taken down.

There were of course regular club competitions on every subject the committee could devise, including mistery [sic] slides, legs, people, glamour, child study, portrait nights, photographs taken on outings, lightning (a natural for the Top End), and in 1948, the Rev Green's Flower Show.

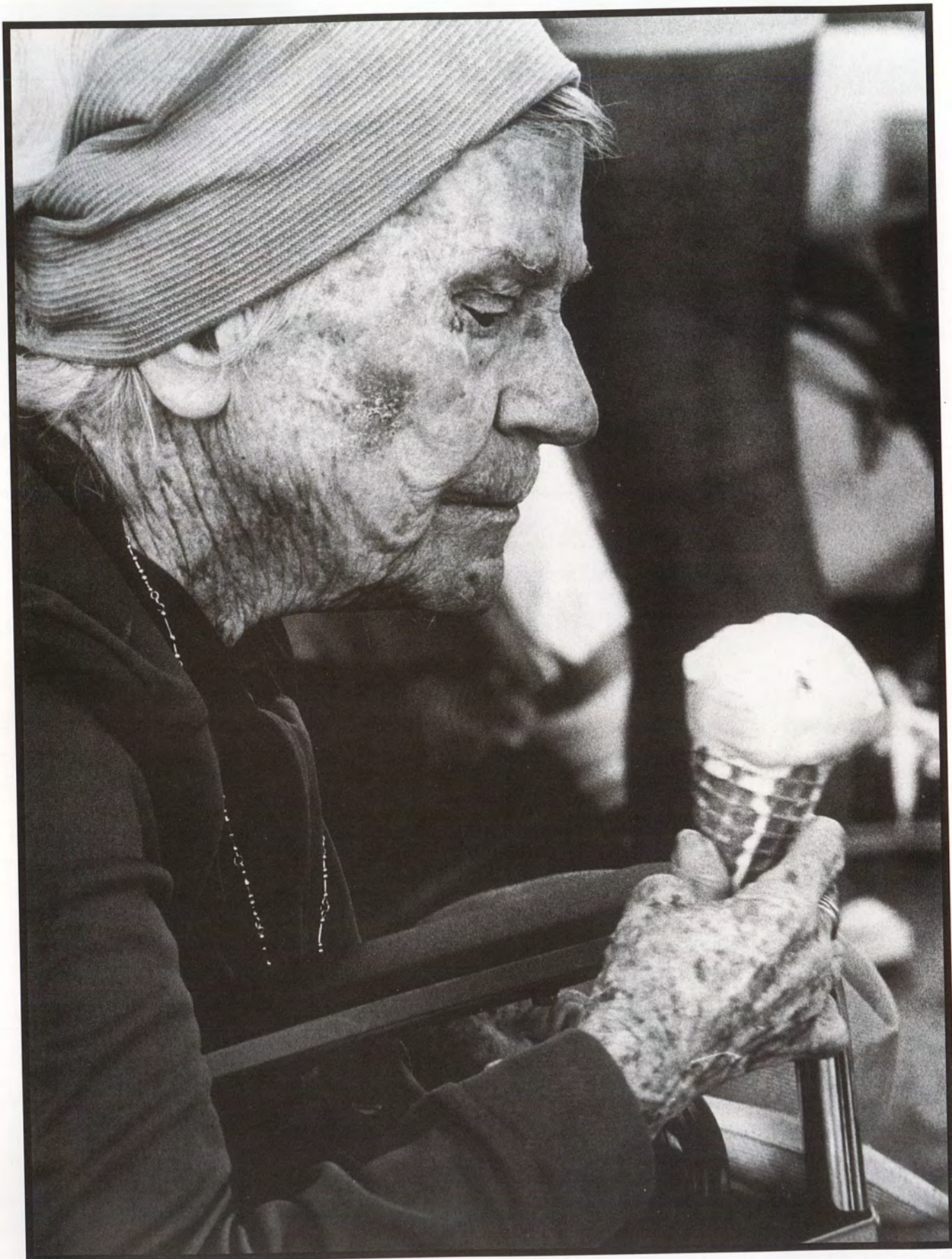
In the International Year of the Child in 1979, the Darwin Camera Club organised a competition on the subject of "the world seen through the eyes of a child". Selected photographs were shown at Casuarina Square and medallions and cash prizes, donated by eleven Darwin businesses, were awarded.

Club awards for photographer of the year, slide of the year and print of the year were established in 1981.



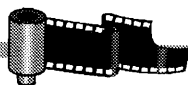
Prints on display at the 1993 Royal Darwin Show

© Ian Johnson



A Treat

© Ian Johnson



Life begins at forty

The newsletter for April 1987 proposed a fortieth anniversary celebration: "Folks, we often thought we'd never make it! But come to the AGM on April 2, the club will officially celebrate its 40th birthday. We're not sure whether it is a matter of life just beginning, or being over the hill and on the downward slope. Still and all, survival for that many years is a matter for some note..."

In 1992 the club arranged an exhibition of selected entries in the Nikon Press Photographer of the Year award. A public exhibition of more than 70 prints was mounted at the Atrium Hotel.

The club rose again under strong and innovative teams of office bearers led by presidents John Wilson and Ian Johnson. Membership trebled and there were record numbers of entries at the Royal Darwin Show.

One of the judges, Clive Hyde, said the print quality was high and the display was far and away better than any he had seen before.

Some members sold photographs that they had taken, by invitation, at the Arafura Games in 1992. Patrick Nelson, who worked at the *Northern Territory News*, arranged a half page story in the newspaper.

A competition was held in 1991 for the design of a club logo. Tom Smith, sitting quietly on his back porch with a pencil and pad, designed the present logo.

About sixty previously unpublished photographs, donated by club members, were copied and printed to form part of the Cyclone Tracy 20th anniversary display at the Northern Territory Museum in 1994.



Darwin Camera Club members at a Portrait night, 1992.
Standing, L to R: John Connell, John Gorrell, Robin Howarth, Ian Johnson, unknown, Bill Davies, Tom Smith.
Sitting and kneeling: Amanda Monk, John Wilson, Paul Rampant, Michelle Rampant, Nick Vanden Hoek, Gabi Caswell.
© Ian Johnson



Making a club movie in one night

At the beginning the Darwin Photographic and Amateur Cine Society was as much a movie-makers' club as a camera club, and this remained true for much of its history. It is nearly impossible to unravel the two strands of history of movie and still photography. The movie group was at different times a separate club, an integral part of the camera club, and an interest group within the club. It died for a time, re-started, separated, amalgamated with the Darwin Camera Club and finally withered away. Some of the film people were John Gorrell, George Kenny, Otto Liebig, Fred Morley, Philippa Riley, Les and Allan Seipel, Helmut Schuller, Victor Tarhanoff and Wilf Spear. Victor Tarhanoff, Fred Morley, G Spence and Otto Liebig, if not others, were working with 16mm. Most of the others used the various 8mm gauges.

The movie men have told me there was great satisfaction in making a film with a story, a sequence of action, and titles. Wilf Spear says a movie must be planned. It must tell a story and must have visual continuity [some Show entries had not, according to the judging sheets]. Wilf hoped to use 80 per cent of the film he shot in the final movie, compared with something like 10 per cent in a professional production. Film was too expensive for the amateur to use it up like that. Despite the cost of film, many of the movie men used Kodachrome.

Titles could be provided by Kodak Australia. The movie maker told them the wording required and they would shoot title sequences. Victor Tarhanoff the younger says that the 1948 titles are on nitrate film and they are now deteriorating, although the Kodachrome is still colourful.

The prominent Australian film director Cecil Holmes ("I the Aboriginal" was one of his films) lived in Darwin and his advice helped the cine group.

They craved synchronous sound. Victor Tarhanoff played a stack of 78rpm records to provide music, practising until he could change the record at the right time. John Gorrell ran a tape-recorded commentary and kept the film in synchronism by trimming the projector speed. Later he became an expert in audio-visual slide shows, which must have seemed child's play. In 1964 Otto Liebig laid a sound track on the club's football film.

In the days when still photography involved focusing by distance scale, composing in a view finder or a ground glass screen and exposing either by trial and error or with the aid of an expensive exposure meter and a working knowledge of speed/aperture/exposure computations, and when flash meant magnesium bulbs, movie making was comparable with still photography. Later, as still cameras became easier to use with their coupled range finders, exposure needles and twin lenses, movie making seemed more tedious. Furthermore there was a battle of the gauges to rival the Australian railways: 8mm, super 8, double 8, 16mm, sound on film and magnetic stripe.

Perhaps photography became all too easy. At any rate all the Norises, the Eumigs, the Bolexes, the Kodak 8s, the H16s, have gone where the Rolleiflexes, Retinas and Mirandas have gone. Only Wilf Spear took the trouble to buy a super 8 camera in recent years, in Singapore. The club had operated a cinema at the Show until 1971 but in that year three people worked full time for an income to the club of \$46 and it was decided not to operate the full-time cinema again. Sadly, in 1973 there was a proposal that the club's old cine equipment be displayed at the Show as a museum piece. This was not the end of movies however: the cine section at the Show continued until 1978. In its heyday the Cine Society had the use of a Siemens 2000 16mm projector. But by 1986 the Darwin Camera



Club's Bell and Howell projector, bought for \$375 in 1968, had been sold.

A Darwin Branch of the Australian Amateur Cine Society was formed in June 1963. The cine society met at the old town hall, near the site of the present Beaufort Hotel. The town hall had a corrugated iron roof, and Allan Seipel says that in the wet season it was a good idea to show sub-titled films. The cine society showed films to patients at Darwin Hospital (no television then). The history of the present Darwin Film Society is involved with that of the cine group.

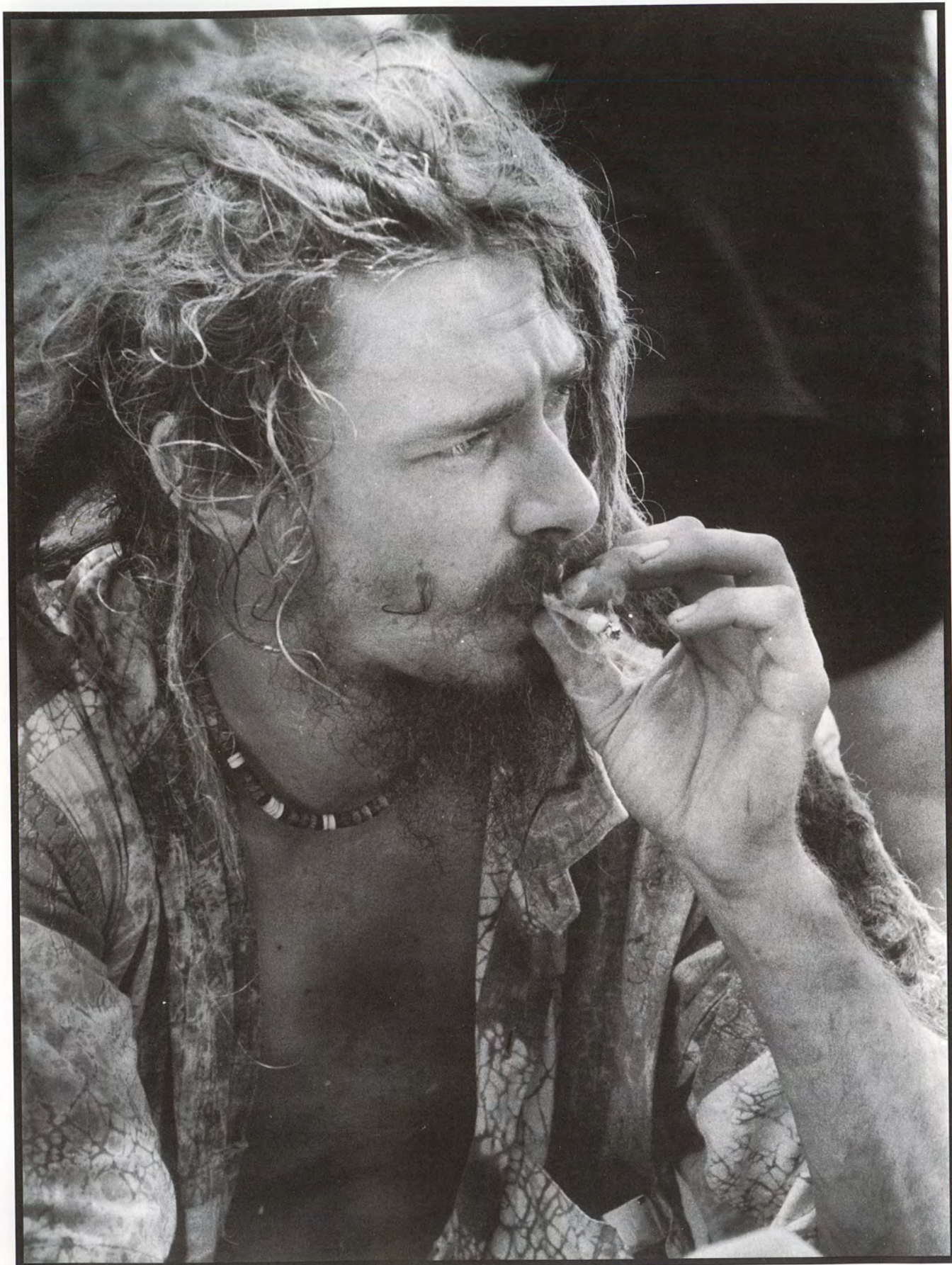
The cine enthusiasts made films as a group on club nights and on outings. They applied the full Hollywood treatment, with producer, director, lighting and camera men, continuity girl (yes, girl, in 1962) and for all I know, a key grip. In May 1962 they set out, with what borders on hubris, to make a 16mm film called "The Removalist" in one evening. It was directed by Fred Morley and starred [sic] Col Featherstone and Joy [surname left blank in the minutes]. "Progress proved to be very slow and at 11:30 p.m. shooting finished with the film uncompleted. It was then decided to continue the film at a later date". I have found no record of any completed film.

Allan Seipel joined the theatre group when he came to Darwin in the early 1950s, and he was interested in acting in films. One of the cine group's productions was "The King In The Bath And The Blind Lady". In this version the blind lady miraculously recovers her sight. Some of the film was shot at Tumbling Waters – yes, they took a bathtub. Allan Seipel played

the King, Marlene Smith the herald, Philippa Riley the page, and Cecily Harding the blind lady. None of these can remember much about it now and the film does not seem to be extant. Marlene Smith is said to have stubbed her toe on a crowbar but I can not ascertain whether this was in the script. John Gorrell says one of the sequences was spoilt by a fly landing on the lens and that since it could not be re-done, a shot was substituted in which Philippa Riley approached the lens with a can of *Dust-off* and the film took up again from there.

John Gorrell took film and slides of an expedition in 1974 to recover a Mitchell bomber from its crash site about 100km west of Tennant Creek. A copy of the film is at the Darwin Aviation Museum. Gorrell also filmed an expedition led by John Haslett in 1978 to build a memorial cairn and water tank at the place where the Kookaburra aircraft made its forced landing in 1929 while searching for Kingsford Smith in the "Coffee royal affair".

The movie makers were dedicated. Helmut Schuller was sometime president of the Darwin Camera Club. His wife Julie was a successful breeder of show cats. One day they came home to find that a cat, fortunately not one of the show cats, had formed a very big bulge in a very big python. Helmut fancied snakes and he wished the python no harm. In any case it was too late to do anything for the cat. His first act was to get his movie camera and film the snake.



Smoker

© Ian Johnson



Camera buffs

Those present at the first committee meeting on 10 June 1947 were C R Bannerman, Mr Dempster, Dennis Green, Mr Johns, Mr Charles See Kee, Mr McConchie, Victor Tarhanoff and Scotty Turnbull.

Lillian Dean, one of the early judges of camera club competitions, opened a photographic studio when she returned to Darwin in 1947. She had been here before this, and the Northern Territory Library has photographs of hers dated 1939. Some time after 1958 she moved to a studio in Knuckey Street, north west of Smith Street. The building still stands, next to Murray Oakley's Discount Store.

Dean continued to work into her seventies. She retired to Sydney in 1971 and died in 1980. Her 5 in x 7 in camera and lenses are now in the possession of Joe Karlhuber, who bought her business.



*Jessie Litchfield, Secretary 1948-49
Portrait by Lillian Dean.*

© Northern Territory Library, Roderick collection.

There is a story that one day when Dean was photographing at a funeral with her camera on a tripod, she repeatedly stepped back until she disappeared from view, into the open grave. One night someone broke into her studio but in the morning it could be seen that the burglar had got his foot caught in the housing of Lillian's big enlarger as he dropped from the window and had been obliged to leave without taking anything.

Jessie Litchfield, 1883 - 1956, was a member of the camera club. She was born in Sydney and was married in Darwin in 1908, shortly after her arrival in the Territory. Her story has been written by a grand-daughter, Janet Dickinson, in a book called *Jessie Litchfield — Grand Old Lady of the Territory*. She is remembered by postwar residents as the proprietor of the Roberta Library, located in Mitchell Street beside Tamarind Park. Jessie Litchfield was Secretary in 1948. She donated the prize for the best photograph taken with a box camera.

Jessie Litchfield was still on the committee in December 1951, when a special meeting of the committee was called to consider reimbursing Mr Bannerman the £4 19s 0d he had spent on beer for the Christmas party. The meeting lasted 15 minutes and Mr Bannerman, having produced the receipts, got his cheque.

Ninety-six albums of Jessie Litchfield's black and white photographs are now in the possession of one of her grandsons, Edward (Teddy) Roderick. Copies of many of the photographs are held by the Northern Territory Library. In 1949 a Litchfield photograph called "Tumbling Waters" was exhibited at the Maitland Salon.

Mr S W Manning was an original member and he was one of the people who re-started the club in 1957 and again in 1960. Other than that, I have found out nothing about him.



There were of course, other photographers in Darwin in those years. Y Murakami advertised in the *Northern Standard* in 1941, giving the address "Stone Houses, Cavenagh Street". This is the present location of Sue Wah Chin's store, north-west of Knuckey Street. Murakami was interned during the Second World War and died at Tatura camp in 1944.

Siri Mendis is remembered by Victor Tarhanoff the younger as a photographer in Darwin before the War. He used to carry his gear on a bicycle. He came to Darwin in 1939 from Thursday Island. He made 16 mm films of Thursday Island and Darwin until 1942. He says he introduced Victor Tarhanoff, who had a Leica, to movies. Siri Mendis's father had an import business in Cavenagh St, selling Kodak film as well as pearls, gems and arts and crafts. Mendis is now Chief Lay Supporter of the Brisbane Buddhist temple.

Victor Tarhanoff was elected the first life member, in December 1948. Life membership seems to have been the thing in the early years, and Scotty Turnbull was elected a life member in 1951. He seems to have been continuously on the committee from the start. He worked as a wedding photographer until the professional Lillian Dean arrived, then he gave it up. He continued a black and white developing and printing business near the south corner of Cavenagh and Daly Streets. His leg was badly injured in a motorcycle accident and he walked with difficulty after that.

Les Seipel was appointed a life member in 1978. He had been secretary and president and, with his brother Allan, had not only served the camera club but had been a mainstay of the cine group. Les Seipel first came to Darwin in 1960. He went south in 1963 but like so many people, he was back the next year, this time staying until about 1976. He was a motor trimmer, at Dashwood Place.

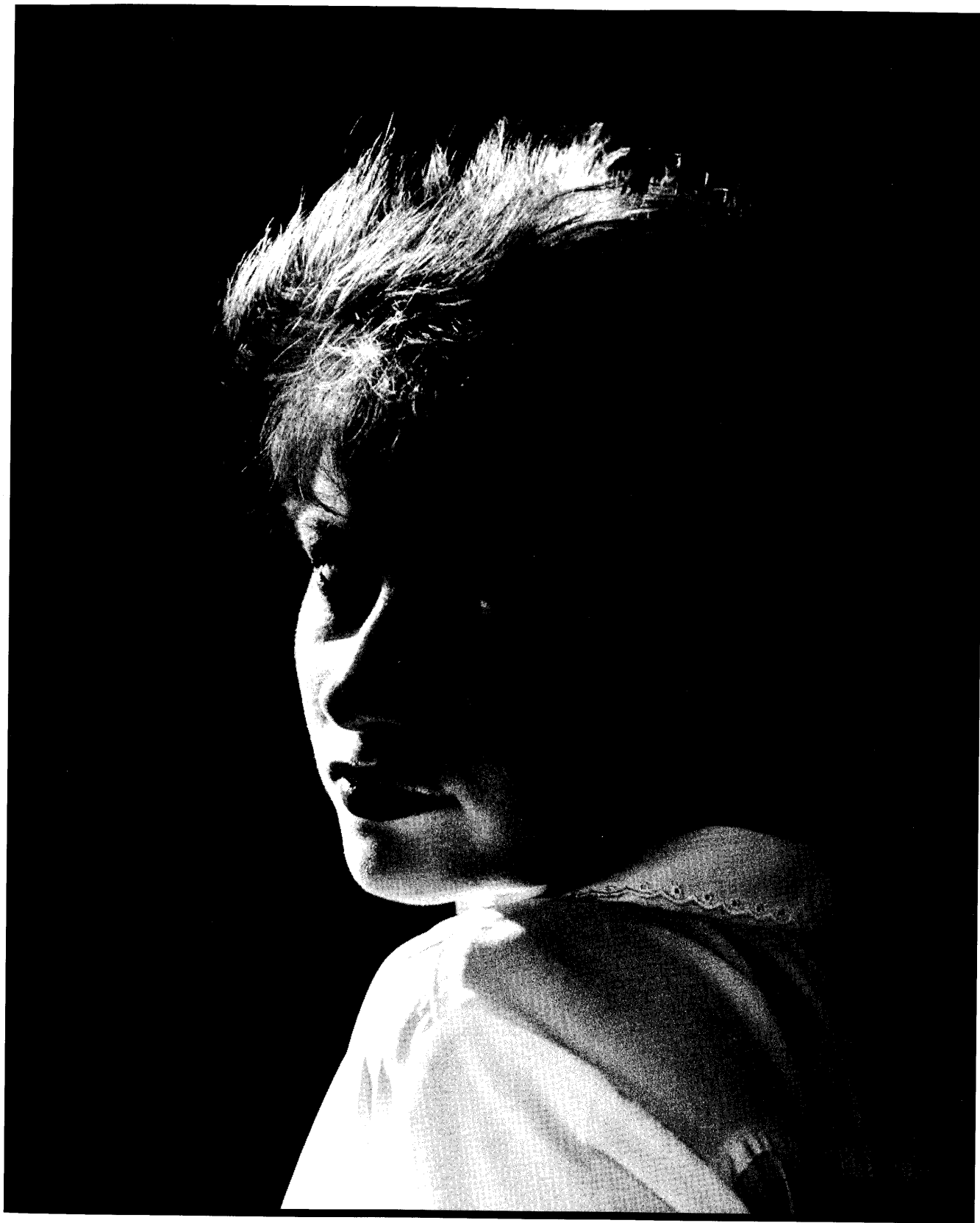
Allan Seipel was offered life membership in the same year but he declined.

Jim Mannion appears in the *Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography*. He joined the Northern Territory Police Force in 1936. He received a gunshot wound in Katherine and in 1956 he was awarded the George Medal for bravery in a fire at Tennant Creek. He returned to Darwin in 1957, gaining a good conduct medal and rising to the position of Chief Inspector of Police. Bill Fong remembers the tall, quiet policeman sitting at the back of a meeting at the Chung Wah hall. He said nothing and people began to wonder why he was there. He turned out to be a valuable member, serving as vice-president and president (in 1964). He died in 1968 at the age of 56. He was publicity officer at the time of his death. The club founded a Jim Mannion Memorial Prize at the Royal Darwin Show. This was apparently a club prize because in 1971 the show society asked the club to reimburse the \$10 prizemoney and the committee resolved to continue with the prize. The prize no longer appears in the show catalogue.

Harry Forday came to Darwin in about 1962. Apparently a man of many talents, he taught photography and Chinese cooking at the Council for Adult Education. He was a black and white photographer specialising in family portraits, and the club sometimes used his home darkroom. He lost his negatives in Cyclone Tracy. Harry Forday got his brother Tim to demonstrate his professional video equipment to the club.

The Harry Forday memorial award is given at the Royal Darwin Show for the champion black and white print. There is a trophy, donated by the *Northern Territory News*. The background to the award is given in a letter to the show society, dated 23 March 1979.

One of Darwin's most experienced and respected photographers passed away early last November. The photographer was Harry Forday, who was responsible for a fair amount of progress in teaching black and white photography for over twenty years. The Darwin Camera Club feels that an appropriate memorial should be made in his memory. An appropriate award which the Club would like to propose is the re-citation of the Champion Black and White Print Award to read as follows:



Stephanie

© Ian Johnson

Harry Forday Memorial Award
Champion Black and White Print

The award will be made in the form of a perpetual trophy which is situated in the Photography Demountable... Further discussion is needed on the type of perpetual trophy and the donor.

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Many a photographer started his career with a box Brownie. Wilf Spear's was given to him by his grandmother when he was a child. With encouragement from the local pharmacist, he developed his own films and made contact prints in his bedroom. (Cecily Harding developed her films and prints in the wardrobe in her room at the Mitchell Street Hostel). John Gorrell's brother gave him a box Brownie for Christmas, when he was sixteen. Mine was somehow in the family.

As they progressed (I will not recite a progression of cameras) some members bought light meters and range finders. John Gorrell kept a card index of exposure details and results for different conditions such as

indoors, night and indirect sunlight. Les Seipel says that although a light meter and a tripod were essential for movies and he carried a tripod (wood, not aluminium in those days) up Katherine Gorge, few members used one for still photographs. (Tripods were of course used for portraiture with large cameras).

Kodachrome in 1960 had a speed of 10 ASA. In 1962 John Gorrell's boss, a pharmacist, gave him a roll of the new, faster Kodachrome — 25 ASA. Prewar Kodachrome cine film must have been faster: the apertures quoted to me suggest 100 ASA. Les Seipel started with a box Brownie but was interested in movies from an early stage.

John Waldmann acquired his box Brownie at the age of 17, and followed his father into photography. He processed colour prints and Ektachrome at an early stage. He and Maureen lived in a country town in South Australia and the only way to get nine containers for the processing chemicals was to buy nine jars of salt and empty them (down the sink, not on their dinner). Ektachrome film has an opaque white appearance when it comes from the processing bath but it clears as it dries. The first time Waldmann processed an Ektachrome film he thought he had ruined it. Crestfallen, he hung it up to dry and went on with something else. Maureen saw it hanging in the kitchen window and rushed in to congratulate him on his success.

Joe Karlhuber was at one time a member of the Darwin Camera Club. When he began as the photographer at the *Northern Territory News*, he developed prints in a bucket and hung them on a clothes line to dry. He had to be ready to bring them in when a storm came. On one occasion the accountant went into the darkroom to take stock and opened every box of printing paper to count the sheets of paper. The printers used to melt their type metal in an open crucible on the verandah. Later he bought Lillian Dean's business.



Street parades and beauty queens

In 1962 the committee resolved to enter a float in the Mardi Gras, "representing an old time studio with model and old fashioned camera". Philippa Riley says they used a truck belonging to Pat Gabel, a builder. It was encased to look like a box camera but the driver could hardly see and he had to deflect the inquiries of the Police as he turned from Knuckey Street into Smith Street.



Holly Secrett, Miss Darwin Photography 1968, packing for her trip to Adelaide to take part in the Miss Amateur Photography contest at the second International Exhibition of Photography.

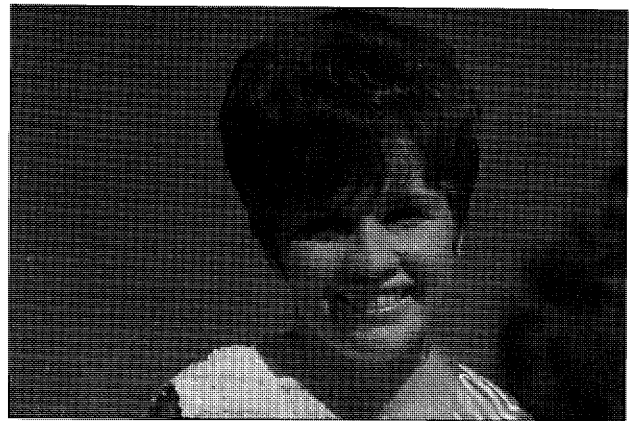
©Wendy James

The club's first fund-raising effort, at the cabaret ball, was an ugly man contest but by 1964 the fashion had changed to pretty women. The club called for entrants to a contest for Miss South Australian Photography. Club member Brian Hosie persuaded his sister

Yolande to enter and she won not only the Darwin heat but the South Australian division as well and was highly placed in the national final of the telethon. Back home in Darwin, she was naturally much in demand by the camera club as a model. She later had a long and successful career as a professional model.

At the Adelaide Festival of Arts in March 1968 there was a second International Exhibition of Photography and the South Australian Photographic Federation held a contest for Miss Amateur Photography. As in 1964, an airline donated a flight to Adelaide for Miss Darwin Photography. Fifteen entrants appeared before five club members at the Uniting Church hall in January 1968. The *Northern Territory News* said the judges were as nervous as the contestants. The public were invited, but were asked to contribute 50 cents towards the winner's pocket money. Holly Secrett was the winner. She is a daughter of Stan and Poppy Secrett of Darwin and later Katherine. Secrett Road is named after her father. She is now Mrs Peter Morgan.

Holly Morgan says Harry Forday had earlier asked her to pose in a bikini. This was agreed to, provided her mother was there. Gordon Treloar, a neighbour and a member of the



Rosemary James, chosen by Lillian Dean as the club's entrant in the Darwin Festival Queen competition in 1969.

© John Gorrell



camera club, persuaded Holly to enter the contest. She had nothing to wear until a friend of her mother's, Mrs Honey Soar, lent her a black and white dress which the judges said was ideal because it would photograph well. She says the win and the trip to Adelaide gave her self confidence.

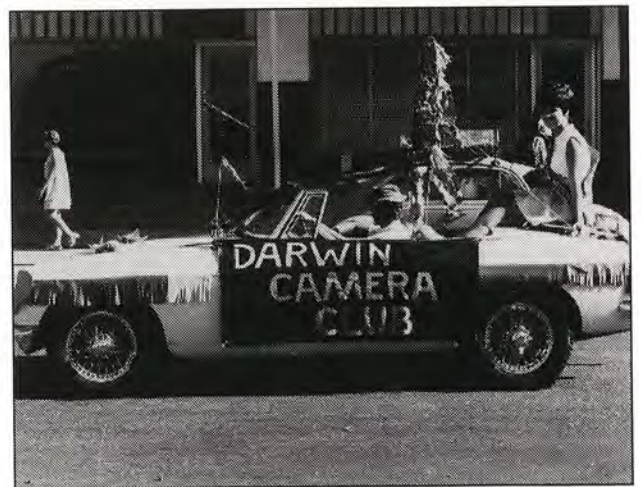
The centenary of Darwin was celebrated on 5 February 1969, commemorating the start of Goyder's survey. The club announced a national centenary photographic competition. Prizes included a bronze inscribed trophy donated by Kodak and \$100 cash. Photographs were to be judged by the Australian Photographic Society in Brisbane and displayed in the Civic Centre, then under construction.

A proposal for another Miss Darwin Photography contest fell flat – for one thing, the Festival committee turned down a request for prize money – and the committee decided instead to ask Lillian Dean to choose a girl to represent the club in the Darwin Festival Queen competition. The lucky winner was to be asked to raise \$50 towards the entry fee. Dean chose Rosemary James. The *Northern Territory News* had inherited the *Northern Standard's* old pun and her photograph was headed "Clicked with camera club".

The contest was held in the Gardens Amphitheatre on the evening of Saturday 7 June. The contestants were driven to the event in cars lent by Port Darwin Motors. There was a street pageant on the Saturday morning and Miss James was driven in the parade in an open car. The club borrowed a red MGB and sent Jim Dewey out to buy a white sash with green or black writing. The car carried a camera club banner and the headlights were covered by cut-out red cloth hearts. The contest was won by Christine Taylor.

Among the local and patriotic events celebrated by competitions and exhibitions were the Jubilee of the Federation of Australia in 1951; the Queen's visit in 1963; the

International Year of the Child in 1971 (with an exhibition at Casuarina shopping centre); the Beercan Regatta of 1977; the Margaret Else-Mitchell Prize in the Bougainvillea Festival of 1983; the Arafura Games in 1992 and Senior Citizens Week in 1993. Most of these carried prizes donated by national photographic companies and by local businesses. The Bicentennial year, 1988, seems to have slipped past unnoticed.



Rosemary James, the Darwin Camera Club's entrant in the Darwin Festival Queen competition, 1969, in Cavenagh Street during the Saturday morning parade. The Festival was a celebration of the centenary of Goyder's survey of Darwin.

© Les Seipel



Monkey Business

© Ian Johnson



Grass

© Mark Walker



Other clubs

It is possible to find out some of the history of camera clubs at Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy from references in the records of Darwin Camera Club but such history is necessarily incomplete. I expect the Alice Springs Camera Club has had a continuous existence, with its own records, therefore I will make only passing reference to Alice Springs. The earliest reference to Alice Springs Camera Club is Harry Butler's statement in 1957. In 1976 the Alice Springs Club advertised its sixth photographic salon and the 17th Show.

In 1973 the Katherine Camera Club wrote saying it was not entering a competition but the record does not say what competition this was.

The first Northern Territory inter-club competition in 1974 drew entries from Gove, Katherine and Darwin clubs. There were

inter-club competitions again in 1976 and 1977.

Letters arrived in 1976 from F Reilly and Alexander Quine of Tennant Creek asking for advice on forming a camera club. Reilly was a teacher of photography at the Council of Adult Education. That club must have been short-lived, because Tricia Rehmie wrote in 1981 to say she was secretary of the newly formed Tennant Creek Camera Club.

The names Bill Pretty and B Milburn recur in correspondence with Gove Camera Club. In 1978 Bill Pretty said that when Milburn returned from overseas he would try to get the club going again. Apparently he failed, because in 1979 Bill Pretty said "the club is moribund". The struggle continued, and in 1982 Ross Kenner wrote from Nhulunbuy to say the Arnhem Camera Club had been formed.



Members of Darwin and Katherine camera clubs at the outing to Katherine in 1976. L to R: Unknown (Katherine), Dorothy McClelland (Katherine), Mark Walker, Allan Seipel, Marlene Smith, Les Seipel, Barbara McManus (all Darwin), unknown (Katherine).

© Cecily Harding



A birthday anticipated

Many people delay the announcement of their fiftieth birthday but a camera club should be creative and the Darwin Camera Club brought its celebration forward. The committee decided to celebrate what it thought was the fiftieth anniversary of the club in 1995. The main activities are that:

The Cyclone Tracy audio-visual show has been refurbished

Professor Des Crawley, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, will hold exhibitions at Darwin Performing Arts Centre, Katherine Town

Council Gallery and at Alice Springs. The works on show will be selected from his exhibition "Listen to the Shadows", held in Brisbane in 1994.

An exhibition of previously unpublished photographs of Darwin from the years before Cyclone Tracy is to be shown at Casuarina Square shopping centre in June 1995. It is hoped that movies taken by club members will be shown at this exhibition.



And now?

This is not the place to speculate on the future of photography. The Darwin Camera Club is trying to arrange a demonstration of digital imaging equipment: this waits only on the availability of necromancers of this black art. So far, no member has a digital camera and no one has entered a modified image in a competition but this is surely something the committee will have to face.

Clubs of all kinds sometimes wonder whether people will continue to put their time into voluntary club work in this age of instant gratification. Club outings are not the social affairs they used to be. Getting stuck on a muddy track might not have been all fun but it did bring people together. Now we just

breeze along over bitumen and bridges. Despite this, the Darwin Camera Club in 1994 does not look in the least like either winding up or running down. People still come into the club wanting to know how to get "More better pictures" from their automatic cameras, and members still co-operate in club projects.

On the other hand it may be something of a shock to the optimists that the amateur cine film-making that was a mainstay of club activity in its early years has died out for a variety of reasons. Still photography could go this way, it could adapt to new technology or it could preserve the old personal art of making pictures.



Office bearers

No consolidated record of office bearers was kept. This information is taken from available minutes of meetings and is therefore incomplete. The author apologises to any past office bearer whose name has been omitted.

Office bearers were elected in March in some years and in November in others.

Year	President	Vice- president	Secretary	Treasurer
1947	Dennis Green	J Neal C R Bannerman	Charles See Kee	Charles See Kee
1948	Dennis Green	Victor Tarhanoff	Jessie Litchfield	J Lucas
1949	Victor Tarhanoff	A J McKenzie	Jessie Litchfield	J Lucas
1950	C R Bannerman		Clare Reidy	
1951				
1952			Chas Meade	Chas Meade
1953				
1954				
1955				
1956				
1957	S W Manning	Harry Butler	Mrs Stegar	Mrs Stegar
1958				
1959				
1960	S W Manning	Mick Reynolds	Jim Dewey	Jim Dewey
1961	B Broderick			
1962	Fred Morley			
1963	Jim Mannion			
1964		Jim Dewey	Mr. Waite	Henry Shepherd
1965	B Laurenson	Jim Dewey	Philippa Riley	Henry Shepherd
1966	Jim Dewey		B Broderick	Les Seipel
1967	Les Seipel		Philippa Riley	Allan Seipel
1968	Jim Dewey	Helmut Schuller	Philippa Riley	Les Seipel
1969	Les Seipel	Helmut Schuller		Julie Schuller
1970				
1971	Les Seipel	Helmut Schuller	Philippa Riley	Julie Schuller
1972	Helmut Schuller	Willy Pedersen	Les Seipel	Norina Dragovic
1973	Willy Pedersen	Les Seipel	Philippa Riley	Cecily Harding
1974				
1975	Les Seipel	Willy Pedersen	Mark Walker	Cecily Harding
1976	Les Seipel	Ray Price	Mark Walker	Cecily Harding
1977	Willy Pedersen	Ray Price	Mark Walker	Cecily Harding
1978	Ken Hodge	Ray Price	Mark Walker	Cecily Harding
1979	Roy Sheppard	Ken McManus	Mark Walker	Peter Hendrix
1980	Mark Walker	Ken McManus	Bill Bradley	Andrew Cooper
1981	Bill Landon	John Waldmann	Mark Walker	Mark Walker
1982	Ulf Larsen	John Waldmann	Ross Kenner	Margot Cox
1983	Ulf Larsen	John Waldmann	Ross Kenner	
1984				
1985	Ross Kenner	Hugh Warren		
1986	Les Seipel	Willy Pedersen	Philippa Riley	
1987	Jeff Want	Hugh Warren	Hugh Warren	Sheryl Klaffer
1988	Jeff Want	Hugh Warren	Sheryl Klaffer	
1989	Margot Cox			
1990	John Wilson			
1991	John Wilson	Wilf Spear	Tom Smith	Ian Johnson
1992	Ian Johnson	Wilf Spear	Tom Smith	John Connell
1993	Ian Johnson	Paul Rampant	Patrick Nelson	John Connell
1994	Guy Cameron	Brian Doctor		Peter Slade
	Graham Scott			
1995	Ian Johnson	Brian Doctor		Peter Slade



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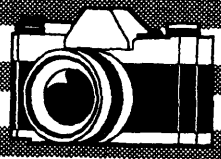
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Steve carries out all work at his premises in Darwin and no work is sent south. Steve repairs all makes and models of cameras, lenses, flashguns and projectors. Steve also carries out restoration work to antique and vintage cameras.

The business is family orientated with Steve's wife Jean providing customer service and liaison. Steve has recently employed a trainee technician, Jonathan Brunton, who is studying electronics associated with the industry at Darwin University.

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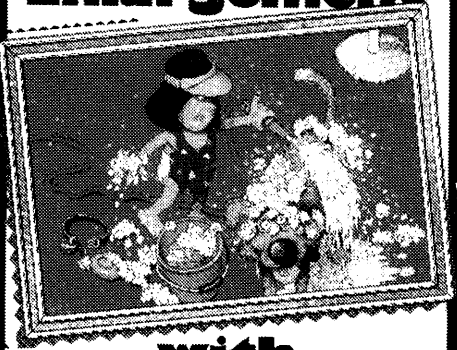
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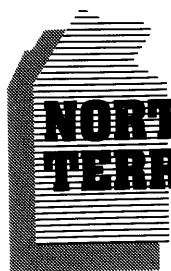
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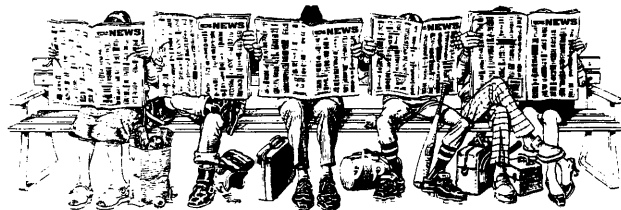
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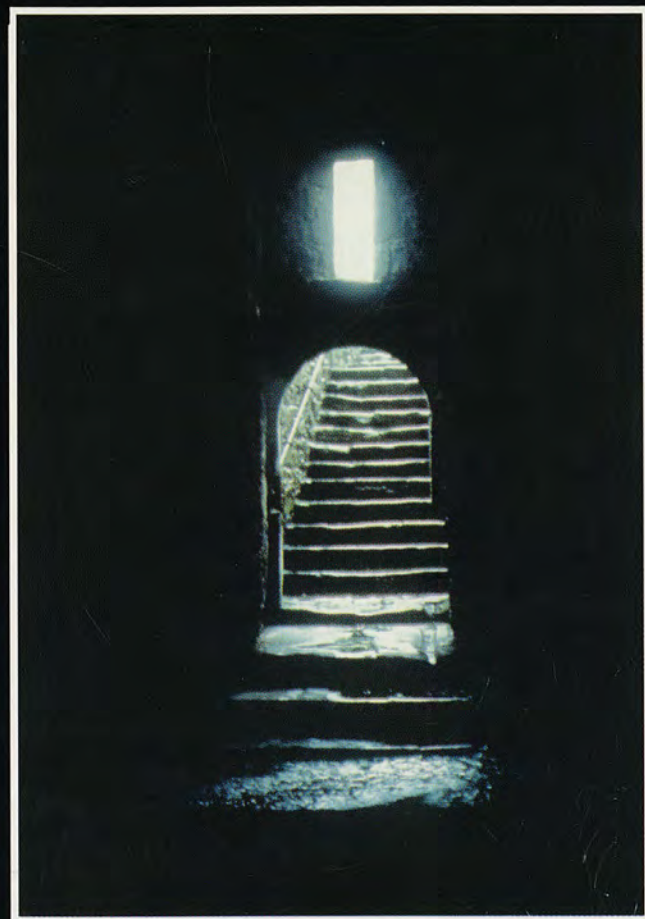
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