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Tel 6282 2573

# Improved club amenities by Christmas this year?

A S early as Christmas this year members are likely to be enjoying improved club amenities, following approval by members at a special meeting on 27 November of a proposal to go ahead with club developments.

www.wodenseniors.org.au

When vice-president Barry Hogan proposed, at the end of a meeting which lasted more than an hour, that "Members approve that the Committee of Management proceeds with Stage 1 of the development of the club", a motion seconded by Graeme Shoobridge, it was carried, 67 for, three against.

While final costing for the Stage 1 development can only be finalised following completion of the tender

# Extensions latest: contract signed

Since the special meeting, a contract has been signed by the club and Ric Small which authorises Ric to proceed with all necessary steps - such as obtaining planning approval, calling of tenders and supervision - to complete the work.

Ric is confident the extensions will be completed by Christmas this year.

Oversighting the project will be a club management group, consisting of Anne Murray (President), Barry Hogan (Vice-President), Ian Cleaver (Treasurer), and four consultants, Alan Hodges, Marcus Mackay, Graeme Shoobridge and Anita Cleaver.

process, the club is budgeting for expenditure of \$250,000, of which the club will provide \$100,000 (the club currently has \$161,758 in liquid assets), and borrow the remaining \$150,000.

This would be repaid over 20 years, at approximately \$16,000 a year. Again, it is not possible to be more precise, because of variable interest rates.

The club currently has an annual "profit" of between \$24,000 and \$28,000 (primarily from membership fees, activities revenue and room rental) after all expenditure. As Treasurer Ian Cleaver told the meeting, this means that the club will be able to service the loan without raising additional money. However, the club will boost its fund-raising activities and continue to press for ACT Government grants so as to discharge its debt earlier than it need do.

Having won members' approval, steps that will follow include finalising design, development application, tender documentation, building application, calling of tenders, and the work itself - in all about 12 months.

There will be minimal disruption to the club's activities.

Overseeing work will be Ric Small of Small Quinton Coleman Architects, who was responsible for the Master Plan.

A number of financial institutions have been approached, and at this stage indications are that the loan will be obtained through the Bendigo Bank.

Stage 1 involves the addition to the front of the building of a new lounge/sunroom which will also serve as a mid-sized meeting room. The room will incorporate a kitchenette. Importantly, access will be provided to toilets without causing disruption to activities in the main hall.

Addition of the new room is in itself a potential source of income, as it may attract annual rental of about \$5,000.

The club's Master Plan envisages a three-stage development, the remaining two stages to be undertaken when money becomes available, and subject to members' approval.

The decision to go ahead is the culmination of something like four years' exploration of possibilities. Members have been consulted and informed at every step, through

## Important dates for your diary

Two "must-be-there" events for your diary.

On Saturday 10 March (9am-2pm) the Annual Autumn Fete will be held at the club.

The Fete has proved to be a great success in the past, and this year it will be bigger and better than ever.

Then, on Sunday 18 March (2-4.30pm), a Sunday Afternoon Concert will take place at the Southern Cross Club. The concert will feature favourite songs from stage and screen, and is sure to be very popular. Cost is \$15 (\$10 for Seniors and concession), and tickets may be obtained from Woden Seniors' Club.

Lunch may be enjoyed at any of the club's restaurants prior to the show.

Further details see pages 3 and 6.

special and annual general meetings, a workshop, information posted on the notice board, minutes available to all members, and through the *Meridian*.

The Management Committee, largely through President Anne Murray, has pressed for government and business support but, despite encouragement from Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, who launched the Master Plan last year and invited the club to prepare a submission seeking full or partial funding, his government subsequently made it clear that such support would not be forthcoming, at least in the short term. Hence the Management Committee's recommendation to members that the club go it alone, at the same time continuing to press for funding, particularly for Stages 2 and 3 development.

The Management Committee takes the view that the club, in demonstrating its commitment to improving amenities for existing and potential members, is establishing a case for support difficult for the ACT Government to continue to ignore, without further losing credibility.

#### **EDITORIAL COMMENT**

#### Confidence in club's future

IN approving the Management Committee's recommendation to go ahead with Stage 1 development of Woden Seniors, members demonstrated their complete confidence in the future of their club.

Concerns were raised, very properly. They included the length of time it will take to pay off the loan, the effect of possible increases in interest rates, and what would happen if the club "folded"? (the answer to the last question being that the club's assets would be more than sufficient to pay off the club's debt to the bank).

In fact, the foreseeable problem for the club in the future will be to provide for the additional demands likely to be made on it. "Folding" is scarcely conceivable. It has been well documented that the number of older people in Canberra (and more particularly in Woden Seniors' "catchment area") will inevitably increase. As the Chief Minister confirmed, when he launched the Master Plan in March last year, as early as 2020 the number of people in Canberra aged 50 and over is forecast to increase from 76,000 at present to more than 128,000. Over the coming decade the number of people aged 60 and over will increase from 37,000 to 76,000, and the number of people in their 80s quadruple.

Woden Seniors (and Belconnen and Turner seniors' clubs and others that may be established) will inevitably be called upon to provide additional recreational facilities. It follows that they cannot adequately do this if they have little better to offer than "scout hut" facilities. Comfortable and spacious accommodation is a prerequisite if seniors clubs are to provide recreational facilities, and increasingly support and advice to members.

In making proper provision for older people, a government is contributing to maintaining good health, and thereby reducing demand for health and counselling services. In other words, governments should regard seniors' clubs as a valuable ally, and funding them as a sound investment, not as a drain on increasingly scarce resources.

In Canberra we are particularly fortunate in having many talented, energetic older people - and nowhere more so than in our own club - who give generously of their time and experience to further the welfare of others. It makes sense for a government to support and encourage such altruism. *Economic* sense. If those same people became discouraged, and said "enough", then a government would be required to rebuild from the ground up. And that would be big dollars.

The ACT Government, through Chief Minister John Stanhope, has acknowledged all this, and we are generous enough to believe that, were the Government's finances not in such a parlous state, it would have been more receptive to our pleas. But - and it is a big "but" - while seeking to be understanding, and patient, we *will* be looking with considerable interest at what the Government *does* choose to spend money on.

On a wall in our club is a plaque. The inscription reads, *This extension was officially opened by His Excellency the Hon Sir William Deane AC, KBE, Governor-General of Australia, on 29 November 1996.* 

When Stage 1 of our development is opened, in about a year's time, perhaps it would be appropriate to mount a plaque with an inscription that reads, *This extension was opened by one of our own, on behalf of fellow club members who got the job done* without *assistance.* - DB.



# Not too late to learn computing - Go on, just give it a try!

THE club's computing courses are continuing this year. Many of the members who were keen to learn how to get on the internet, send emails to family and friends or prepare letters, invitations etc, have already done the courses (which at normal club session charges are a darn sight cheaper than commercial courses - and they are run by seniors for seniors – no young trainers clicking buttons faster than the eye can follow!).

However it seems there are a lot of members who haven't given it a try yet. The club committee would like everyone in the club to be able to do simple things on the club computers - like look up information of the internet. The internet is an amazing resource which members can use free on

our computers. If you haven't already had a go, have a look at the courses on the Computer Notice Board. If you have done our courses why not encourage your friends to try?

There is so much information being put on the internet which is completely free that people who cannot access it are going to become something like "second class citizens" – and the last thing we want is for seniors to feel they are being deprived of something which the rest of the community is enjoying.

You can read newspapers and magazines around the world, book cheap tickets and accommodation, get more information on TV and radio programs, catch up on Radio National's Health and other programs – and that is just a

start! But the internet is not the be-all and end-all of computing. Long before the web and email came to prominence the computer was (and still is) an incredibly useful tool for the home office.

Why not try our Gentle
Beginner's course with Joyce
(who really is very gentle) then, if
you like it, move on to one of our
more specialised courses like
Word (typing letters, invitations
etc) with Judy, Searching the Web
with Mike, using Email with
Barrie, or learn a bit more about
Windows with Terry?

Alternatively, there is a combination of the beginners' and Windows courses presented as a two-day workshop - contact Dennis Granville on 62812607 for details.

Finally, if you can already do these things, how about volunteering to run a course?

Just give it a try!

Grahame Hellyer



#### WODEN SENIORS

#### ANNUAL AUTUMN FETE



Saturday 10 March 2007

9am - 2.00pm

at the Woden Senior Citizens Club, 2 Corinna Street

(OPPOSITE WODEN LIBRARY)

Sumptuous Stalls!

Creamy Cakes, Drought-tolerant plants, Clever Crafts, Gorgeous Jewellery, Naughty Novels, Magical Makeup, Fantastic Fortunes, Rewarding Raffles, Bouncing Buskers, Marvellous Milkshakes, Treasured Trash

> All proceeds go directly to the Woden Seniors' Master Plan for development of the Club's premises



# Making the most of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

If you need a lot of medicine in a calendar year, the PBS Safety Net helps you with the cost of medicine. Once you reach a Safety Net threshold, you can apply for a PBS Safety Net card. Your PBS medicine will be less expensive (or free) for the rest of the calendar year. The PBS Safety Net threshold from January 2007 is \$960.10 or 56 prescriptions for concession and veteran card holders. This year the maximum patient contribution is \$30.70 for general patients and \$4.90 for concession.

When writing a prescription your doctor may suggest a brand that could cost more than the usual patient contribution. When this happens your pharmacy can often change the brand of your medication to improve the price without compromising on quality. Just ask your pharmacy.

Keep a record of your PBS medicine on a prescription record form which you can get from your pharmacy. Each time you have a PBS medicine supplied, hand your prescription record form to the pharmacist so the supply can be recorded. Your pharmacy will also be able to keep an electronic record for you on their computer.

When you are close to reaching the Safety Net threshold, talk to your pharmacist about how you can apply for a Safety Net card. When your pharmacist has issued your Safety Net card, medicines will be cheaper or free for the rest of the calendar year.

Your doctor might give you a prescription for a medicine that is not available on the PBS, sometimes called a private prescription. Your doctor will indicate this on your prescription and you will need to pay the full price for the medicine at the pharmacy. The cost of these prescriptions does not count towards your PBS Safety Net.

If you buy a PBS medicine within 20 days of a previous supply of the same medicine, the cost may not count towards your PBS Safety Net threshold. Even if you have already reached the Safety Net you may have to pay your pre-Safety amount.

#### **PHARMACIES**

Cooleman Court 02 6288 1867: cooleman@apharmacy.com.au Erindale 02 6231 6550: Erindale@apharmacy.com.au Kaleen Plaza 02 6231 2453: Kaleen@apharmacy.com.au Lanyon Marketplace 02 6284 8555: lanyon@apharmacy.com.au Manuka Arcade 02 6295 0059: manuka@apharmacy.com.au Woden Plaza 02 6282 1414: woden@apharmacy.com.au

Head Office: 44 Sydney Avenue, Barton. PO Box 4078, Manuka, ACT 2603. Tel 02 6262 8177. friend@apharmacy.com.au

We offer a 10% Seniors' Discount on all items excluding scripts

All pharmacies open seven days

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Ambitious events planned

As club President, I wish all members all the very best in 2007. I would like to think that your club will play its part in making this year a happy one, providing you with interesting activities and the opportunity to meet old friends regularly, and make new ones.

I assure you that I will continue to do all I can to further improve amenities and encourage diverse activities, and I am encouraged by the enthusiasm and assistance generously provided by club office bearers and other volunteers.

Fund-raising activities will continue to be a important task -but a task that is rewarding in itself, and I am confident will provide enjoyment to members. Elsewhere in this *Meridian* you will read of the forthcoming Fete and the concert at the Southern Cross Club. Other projects are in the pipeline, and I will mention two.

Firstly, we are to have a musical review, seven or eight performances, at the Southern Cross Club, probably in July. The theme will be "baby boomers", and organising it for our club is Linda Tregonning, who is manager of Communities at Work, a former President of the Canberra Philharmonic Society, and who has been involved in numerous musical productions.

The review will be written by an accomplished writer, Louise Rostron, and musical director will be Lucy Birmingham, assistant musical director of the RMC Band.

Secondly, we are planning a "black tie" dinner and auction, to take place about the middle of the year. We have already received an encouraging response to our requests for donations, including responses from some embassies.

Please, take part; enjoy; and be assured that every effort is being made on your behalf.

Anne Murray

#### FROM DAVID TEMPLE'S DESK

### Jam session - and more fruit wanted

Anne Murray and I, with the enthusiastic assistance of table tennis and carpet bowls players, got into the jam-making business recently.

Came about when a member brought in bags of apricots, so Anne and I accessed a recipe for jam-making from the internet, took ourselves off to the kitchen, and got to work.

Neither of us had made jam before, but we received plenty of advice and assistance, and produced 25 jars of the most sensational jam. The really good news is that *you* may have a jar, when you attend the forthcoming fete. Cost you, of course. But, boy, is it worth it!!!

Actually, we have 85 jars. Twenty-five filled and sealed and ready to go. Sixty empty. So, members with fruit from their trees, apricots, plums, whatever, bring 'em in. I've got a real taste for this jam-making business, and

I'm sure people will be queuing up at the fete to buy it.

#### Car parking

Members are reminded that the club's car park is for their use at any time. However, when major events are taking place at the club and parking spaces are at a premium, members who are not attending the club, but going elsewhere (such as the library or the shops) are asked *not* to park in the club car park.

#### Key recall

We need to determine who has keys to the club - for the outer and inner doors. Members who have keys are asked to bring them to the office, or phone me at the club.

#### Who said it? In which films?

- 1. "A man takes a drop too much once in a while, it's only human nature."
- "Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put into this world to rise above."
- 2. "I love the smell of napalm in the morning".
- 3. "Houston, we have a problem".
- 4. "Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine."
- 5. "You've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?' Well, do ya, punk?"
- 6. "I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse".
- 7. "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."
- 8. "Mrs. Robinson, you're trying to

- seduce me. Aren't you?"
- 9. "Wait a minute, wait a minute. You ain't heard nothin' yet".
- 10. "You don't understand! I could've had class. I could've been a contender. I could've been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am."
- 11. "A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice chianti".
- 12. "In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, and they had 500 years of democracy and peace. And what did that produce? The cuckoo clock."
- 13. "You know how to whistle, don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together and blow".

Answers page 7

#### **WODEN SENIORS**

### Annual Sunday Afternoon Concert

A joyous afternoon concert of favourite songs from stage and screen, including singing duo Denise Stephenson and Michael Politi, Andrea Orwin's Singing Studio, U3A Warrani Chorale, Woden Senior Singers, Woden Valley Youth Choir, Brindabella Chorus, The ACT Singers ...

at Canberra Southern Cross Club's Top of the Cross

#### SUNDAY 18 MARCH 2007 at 2.00 - 4.30pm

Lunch may be enjoyed at any of the Southern Cross Club's restaurants before the Show Bar service available at Interval

TICKETS: \$15 per person: \$10 Seniors & Concession. Tickets must be purchased in advance from Woden Seniors Club, 2 Corinna St (opp. Woden Library) Phillip, Tel: 6282 2573

All proceeds go to the Woden Seniors' Master Plan for development of the Club's premises

# Images from the Christmas lunch



















#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A good idea? I don't think so!

WISH to comment on the delusion, rampant at the moment, that going into substantial debt is a sign of progress. To my way of thinking it is irresponsible.

Club facilities are simply superb. Any dysfunction within the club may be attributed to clashing of egos, or intolerance of others, rather than building design. Travelling down the passage way envisaged in the Strategic Plan would exacerbate rather than ameliorate the perceived problem.

Recently I attended a seventieth celebration in the main hall on a Saturday evening. This was a good money earner for the club, which charged market price for the event. Dancing was the main activity for adults. Children in the care of teenagers played happily in the car park. It was easy for an adult, positioned in the foyer, to keep an eye on both groups and summon the children when dances in which they could they take part, such as the Hokey Pokey and the Chicken Dance, were announced. Expensive and needless changing of the entry to the club will completely ruin the present felicitous arrangement of entry, office and main hall.

Reduction of the main hall to provide a passage way to the toilets may solve the problem of people passing through the main hall, and therefore disturbing people engaged in activities in it, but will create others. The hall will be substantially reduced in size, by as much as 10%. This will restrict some activities (dancing certainly), and reduce the hall's appeal to potential hirers, with consequent loss of income. Importantly, negotiating a narrow, claustrophobic passage way will be difficult for people with disabilities.

I know of course that the passage way is "temporary", until further redevelopment. But such redevelopment is not likely to take place for a considerable time.

Better by far, if the club is set on spending its money (or the bank's), to spend it on toilets and kitchenette accessible from the second hall. Then we would have two wonderful community facilities, and perhaps those who complain about being disturbed in the main hall would consider moving to the second (which is little smaller than the first), where they could conduct their activities without being observed or disturbed.

DAVID HILL

#### Mickey Mouse dollar

I can't agree with Dennis Blewett's assessment of the Australian dollar as being Mickey Mouse currency (*Meridian* October 2006). In fact, he contradicts his thesis by saying that a large number of pounds sterling will not buy a house which, were it in Australia, would be affordable.

What is ridiculous is the exchange rate, which bears no relationship to the traveller's experiences. It claims the dollar is worth about 40 pence, but when we buy a coffee (a poor one at that), we are charged two pounds, or five of our dollars. The real value of a currency is what it buys in its own environment. This is sometimes called the Big Mac unit of currency. Our coffee experience tells us the pound is worth about \$1.50, not \$2.50.

For most transactions the Australian dollar buys here what a pound buys in the UK. Many items, such as building materials and train travel are more expensive there (that is, the pound is worth less than a dollar).

On booking a train journey in England, an Australian tourist was shocked by the cost, and had to quickly pull a wad of notes from his pocket for the ticket seller who, with old-world courtesy, muttered that the tourist (not having his notes sorted properly) "was not used to real money." To which the would-be passenger replied, "If it had real value I wouldn't need a heap of it."

Unfortunately, globalisation of markets is forcing up the price of property in major cities, so that when we read that Sydney's house prices have doubled, we should really take this to mean that the dollar's value has halved, and those outside that market are rapidly becoming poorer. This is the disparity we should be concerned about.

PETER EDWARDS

#### Who said it?

Answers, from page 5

1. Charlie Allnut (Humphrey Bogart) and Rose Sayer (Katharine Hepburn): *The African Queen* 

2. Lt-Col Bill Kilgore (Robert Duvall): *Apocalypse Now* 

3. Jim Lovell (Tom Hanks): Apollo 13

4. Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart): *Casablanca* 

5. Harry Callahan (Clint Eastwood): *Dirty Harry* 

6. Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando): *The Godfather* 

7. Rhett Butler (Clark Gable): *Gone with the Wind* 

8. Benjamin Braddock (Dustin Hoffman): *The Graduate* 

9. Jakie Rabinowitz (Al Jolson): *The Jazz Singer* 

10. Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando): *On the Waterfront* 

11. Dr Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins): *Silence of the Lambs* 12. Harry Lime (Orson Welles): *The Third Man* 

13. Marie "Slim" Browning (Lauren Bacall): *To Have and Have Not* 

## A pirate's life is not easy

A pirate walked into a bar and the bartender said, "Hey, I haven't seen you in a while. What happened? You look terrible."

"What do you mean?", said the pirate, "I feel fine".

Bartender: "What about the wooden leg? You didn't have that before".

Pirate: "Well, we were in a battle and I got hit with a cannon ball. No problem. I'm fine now".

Bartender: "Well, okay, but what about that hook? What happened to your hand?"

Pirate: "We were in another battle. I boarded a ship and got into a sword fight. My hand got cut off. I got fitted with a hook. I'm fine. Really".

Bartender, "What about that eye patch then?"

Pirate: "Oh, one day we were at sea and a flock of birds flew over. I looked up and one of them crapped in my eye".

"You've got to be kidding", said the bartender. "You couldn't lose an eye that way".

Pirate "It was my first day with the hook".

# Strange - but effective - marriage customs of the Ribinawa

My first posting in Nigeria was to a teachers' college that experienced difficulties in finding enough schools in the vicinity where its students could practise their teaching skills. The principal talked to me about this.

"There's Ribina up in the hills, only 11 miles from here. They built a new school there about a year ago, but it's off the road, which means walking for over two hours. All the same, if there is a Sunday when you are not otherwise occupied and you'd like a bit of exercise, I'd very much appreciate it if you'd pay a visit. Have a word with the headmaster, explain what is involved and see how it goes. I'm told it's an interesting place. We have a couple of third year students who come from there. They might like to go with you. It would give them a chance for a quick visit home and stop you from getting lost".

And so, about two weeks later, I found myself on a steep path together with Choji and Audu. They were pleased that their village now had its own school, but when I asked if they intended to apply for any teaching vacancies that would occur there, I was surprised to hear only Choji say he would. Audu said, rather bitterly, that he would have to look for a job elsewhere. "You see, Choji has two exchange sisters, and I haven't any".

I was curious to find out what he meant by that and asked a good many questions, not only of the two students, and for some time afterwards I did all I could to find out more about the strange marriage customs of the Ribinawa.

They live in a fertile valley in the hills, and for centuries remained isolated from the Hausas in the savanna lands around them, keeping their own language and customs. Then early in the 19th century the Fulani, a nomadic tribe of horsemen led by a fanatical Muslim chief called Usman dan Fodio, invaded the sub-Saharan regions of West Africa where the Hausas lived, imposed Islam on everyone and proclaimed himself Sultan of Sokoto.

Since horses were unsuitable for mountain warfare the Fulani did not bother with the relatively small areas of hills in the centre and east of the region and had hardly any impact upon the Ribinawa who continued to practise their animist religion and lived as they always had. They cultivated gardens in which they grew yams, their principal food, and a variety of vegetables. They had poultry and some pigs as well as a few sheep and goats which were kept in pens as there was no grazing land. There was no shortage of arable land as tribal warfare and slave-raiding had frequently decimated the population in the past and an effective British protectorate had only come into being 50 years earlier. In consequence, anyone who wanted more land could ask the chief for an allocation and would usually get it. As every family had its own gardens and there was no landless labour for hire, family members had to do all the work that needed to be done. Children were expected to pull their weight from a very early age, and a family with many healthy children could produce more and live better than those without. Children were also the only insurance against a destitute old age, since it was a point of honour for sons in particular to look after their elderly parents and ensure that they were well-fed and comfortable. So, having children - preferably lots of them was vitally important.

As elsewhere in Africa, Hausas and Fulani were accustomed to paying a bride price for their wives. Usually this took the form of cattle or land, but the Ribinawa had no cattle and land was there for the asking. Nobody had more than a few pounds in cash and the few domestic animals that people had available must have been considered an insufficient equivalent for a nubile young woman, the potential mother of lots of children. Somehow the Ribinawa reached the conclusion that the only way a family could obtain a wife for one of their sons was by offering one of their daughters in exchange. Such exchanges were discussed and planned for many years but could only become effective after both girls had reached puberty.

This is fine for families with more girls than boys or equal numbers. But where there were more boys than girls a younger brother would miss out completely. Although in this case custom gave him the right to claim his first-born niece for exchange purposes before any of her brothers became entitled to do so. Where there were more girls than boys in a family,

without prior claims from single uncles, at least one boy could have more than one wife.

Now all this would be fairly straightforward if the Ribinawa had been prepared to take the risk of exchanging a potentially fecund young woman for a barren one. But that was too great a gamble for them to accept. Trial marriages were impossible because once the groom had ceremoniously escorted his bride from her parents' home to his own family compound, the exchange was considered complete and irrevocable. Premarital sex was forbidden and certain to invalidate all existing exchange arrangements. So how could both families be sure that the girl their son was to marry was not a barren one? The solution the Ribinawa had come up with was truly ingenious.

Each husband to-be nominated an unrelated friend. This person was known by a special term which loosely translated means "approved visitor". This man was thereafter welcomed into the family compound by the girl's parents and expected to share her hut. I was told that the girl had the right to veto the choice of "approved visitor" but very rarely did so.

All being well, both girls would become pregnant and then the exchange would be formalised. The fact that the two men were not the biological fathers of their first child did not worry them in the slightest. In fact, Ribinawa seemed surprised when I asked if a father would feel the same love for this child as for the later ones. They couldn't see a problem.

On the other hand, if one of the girls failed to conceive within a reasonable period - usually about two years - the exchange deal was off. Both approved visitors withdrew and a new exchange was arranged for the young mother. The other girl would be welcomed as an extra wife by a man with several children already and a bride price of goods and animals would be arranged.

Over 50 years have passed since I made notes on these customs. I have not been back to Nigeria but have heard that most of the remaining pagans of the region have converted either to Islam or one of the Christian alternatives. That would make it unlikely that the Ribinawa still adhere to the marriage arrangements I have described. But, given the circumstances, the Ribinawa certainly found a unique way to solve their problem.

Ralph Wingfield