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Silk, white helmets and Malacca canes

Dull leisure hours were not known at Gavutu, unless fever had lain one low. Business visitors and others enjoyed the company of these fine fellows. One of their number, a Sports Committee in himself, organized cricket, football, shooting parties, tennis, launch trips up miles of beautiful inland waters, and picnic parties. The new chum, distaining these for more inspiring adventure, could supply himself with refreshments, a bag, boat and rifle, and wander into the mangrove swamps of Gela, near at hand, to stalk the elusive alligator.

— Joseph Dickinson, 1927

This chapter focuses on the 1930s, before the Pacific War brought destruction. Tulagi was a small outpost of the great British Empire and Empire Day (24 May, Queen Victoria’s birthday) was always celebrated. One clear indication of how rapidly change came to the protectorate is to compare Empire Day in 1914 with that in 1934. In 1914, the year before Woodford departed, a squadron of the paramilitary nationalist Legion of Frontiersmen2 sailed to Levers’ Ilu plantation on Guadalcanal, led by the government ship Belema and the Melanesian Mission’s Southern Cross, accompanied by a flotilla of 10 launches and schooners. The squadron formed a guard of honour as the official party landed and festivities and a banquet proceeded in a transformed plough shed. Florrie Woodford presented the prizes after a competition at the rifle range—one of them to

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1 Dickinson 1927, 32.
2 This was a paramilitary group formed in Britain in 1905, based on an idealised concept of empire.
her son, Harold. Dancing continued late into the night to the strains of a mandolin, the festivities ending with the national anthem and *Auld Lang Syne*. The next day, the same shed became a church for a commemorative service led by the Bishop of Melanesia before the vessels returned to Tulagi. It was a celebration conducted in isolation from the world. On Empire Day in 1934, by contrast, Royal Empire Society branches around the world held celebratory dinners. The speeches in Sydney were transmitted to Tulagi and wireless messages were sent from around the British Pacific, including from Tulagi.3 The sense of isolation had been overcome, although the loyal sentiment was the same.

The only prewar census of the BSIP was in April 1931, which established the protectorate’s population was 94,066: 89,568 Melanesians, 3,847 Polynesians, 478 Europeans, 164 Chinese, eight Japanese and one Malay. Tulagi and Gavutu harbours were the small hub of it all, with around 200 permanent foreign residents, a similar number of Solomon Islanders and an itinerant population of thousands of indentured labourers passing through. Outlying traders, planters and missionaries made trips to Tulagi to board the overseas steamers, purchase supplies, seek medical advice, pick up their mail, return labourers or just relax and socialise. Communications with the outside world had improved, not only because of radio transmissions but also through better passenger, postal and freight services. Although living conditions had become more comfortable, the costs of running a household were high.

In 1931, BP’s headquarters at Makambo was managed by J.C.M. Scott, whose house perched atop the hill, and Levers’ main base at Gavutu was under the control of Major F.R. Hewitt, whose home was down on the shore.4 Ashley, Resident Commissioner since 1929, was ensconced in the second residency, which was being eaten by termites and was condemned. Demolished in May 1932, it had large rooms but smaller verandahs than its replacement and only one bathroom, in a concrete bunker underneath—the moisture attracting the termites to the floorboards above.

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3 *SCL*, November 1914, 168–70; Hadlow 2016, 137.
4 Cameron 1923, 278.
Plate 7.1 The cooks at the squadron of the Legion of Frontiersmen’s outing to Guadalcanal, 1914
Source: BM, Thomas Edge-Partington Photographic Collection.

Plate 7.2 The participants in the squadron of the Legion of Frontiersmen’s outing, 1914
Charles and Florrie Woodford are in the centre of the second front row.
Source: BM, Thomas Edge-Partington Photographic Collection.
Plate 7.3 The armed constabulary marching with drums and bugles
Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.

Plate 7.4 The Tulagi Harbour in 1938, looking towards the port and Chinatown
Source: NASI, Nurse Talbot Collection, in ACOM Collection.
Plate 7.5 The Tulagi beachfront in 1939
Source: NASI, Nurse Talbot Collection, in ACOM Collection.
Plate 7.6 The third residency, completed in 1934, showing the armed constabulary guard house
Source: BM, Sir Ronald Garvey Photographic Collection.

Figure 7.1 The third residency, 1934
Source: WPHC Archives, 3166, 1932 BSIP Residency Building at Tulagi, redrawn by Vincent Verheyen.
The final Tulagi residency was completed in 1934 at a cost of £2,850 and was again a Queenslander-style wooden structure with broad verandahs. The High Commissioner advocated for a concrete building with plaster walls but was politely overruled due to the costs. That would have required importing sand and gravel from Guadalcanal and carrying it up the ridge, which would have more than doubled the expense; furthermore, a timber lining was considered to be cooler. There were three bedrooms, each opening on to a private verandah that could be used for sleeping, if desired. One bedroom abutted a screened section of the verandah and was designated as private quarters for important guests ‘from non-malarious countries’. The house was built by three Chinese and six Solomon Islanders, as well as convict labour, who were used to level the site and fetch and carry—all supervised by a Chinese ‘head mechanic’. The new residency was bigger than its predecessor, the main difference being the 4.3-metre-wide verandahs, which allowed greater focus on verandah living and entertaining. Similarly, the ceilings were 4.3 metres high, to aid air circulation. Each bedroom had a built-in wardrobe and its own bathroom with a plunge bath and shower, wash basin and flush toilet. There was a 24,200-litre water tank—twice the size of the previous one—and the toilets worked through a septic system. Reed shutters were provided around all the verandahs. The residency was the only government-owned house with electricity. The power plant also supplied the hospital and Carpenters’ store.

Social institutions and networks

When novelist Beatrice Grimshaw visited Tulagi in 1909, she described the port as a hard-drinking Pacific town dominated by men, where whisky flowed freely. When she returned in 1929, she noted that ‘Tulagi had given up violent drinking, now, and there were a good many more white people’. She was being kind to resident commissioner Kane, whose drunkenness sometimes prevented him from completing his duties.
Outside domesticity, there was a set of social institutions in the Tulagi enclave similar to those in other Pacific colonies. In the main, they were very British with Australian tinges, and relied on class, race, gender and sexual concepts that were standard in imperial and dominion settings during the first half of the twentieth century. The variation was the extensive Chinese community. Although there are valid comparisons to be made with other urban centres in neighbouring colonies, Tulagi housed a government in miniature with a touch of ‘Gilbert and Sullivan’. And we should not assume that we are dealing with a homogeneous expatriate community or that it was identical to urban communities in neighbouring colonies.

The Gela Group had been an Anglican preserve since the 1860s and 1870s, although—strangely for the period—Christianity was not central to the Tulagi community. In early decades, there was no formal Christian presence, probably because the Anglican base at Siota was nearby through Mboli Passage. There was constant traffic between Tulagi and Siota and, from 1911, an Anglican school operated on Bungana Island, about 9 kilometres from Tulagi. The government had erected a lighthouse on Bungana—the only one in the Solomons—to direct ships into Tulagi Harbour. In late 1919, the diocesan headquarters was moved from Norfolk Island to Siota, and a theological college for training clergy for the Solomons opened there in 1921. After long discussions during the 1910s and early 1920s, English officially replaced Mota as the language of instruction in the mission’s schools in Solomon Islands, and in meetings and services. St Luke’s Cathedral, beautifully constructed and decorated in local styles, was built at Siota in 1928, and was a beacon for Anglicanism until it was destroyed during the war. From the beginning of 1937, the Sisters of the Cross Order took over Bungana as a girls’ boarding school and orphanage. Soon after, the Anglican headquarters was shifted from Siota to Taroaniara, close to Bungana.9 Taroaniara’s proximity to Tulagi and Bungana made it more convenient than Siota (see Map 1.2). In early decades, there were regular Anglican services held in the court house on Tulagi, and there is evidence of an SSEM gospel meeting on the island in 1928, although there were no early church buildings.10

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9 Cross 1979, 21.
10 Maetoloa 1985; Fowler 1959, 178.
Plate 7.7 Anglican mission house at Bungana Island, 1906
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection, J.W. Beattle Collection.

Plate 7.8 The Anglican Melanesian Brothers when Charles Fox was a member, circa 1938
Source: NASI, Nurse Talbot Collection, in ACOM Collection.
Missionaries constantly came to and from Tulagi as they picked up supplies and staff from the steamers and saw off colleagues travelling overseas. They availed themselves of the wireless telegraph and postal, banking and hospital services, and purchased supplies from Chinatown and the big trading companies. Starting in 1922, a member of the clergy always sat on the BSIP Advisory Council. The Marist Catholics leased
land on Tulagi between 1915 and 1923, on the Sasape side of Chinatown, although their block was partly covered in mangroves. They seem never to have proceeded with any permanent presence until they constructed a church in 1936 on the site of what had been Elkington’s Hotel.11 Probably to counter this Catholic presence, the Church of England built its Christ the King Church on Tulagi in 1937. Map 8.1 (from 1942) shows the site of the Anglican Church on the beach between the Catholic Church and the prison. The Melanesian Brotherhood (an Anglican indigenous religious order) provided a service each day and had a base on the island. There were also monthly visits from the clergy at Siota. Once their church was complete, the Catholics based New Zealander Father James (Jim) Wall permanently on Tulagi. In the 1940s, Wall ministered to the Langalanga wharf labourers and other seamen at Honiara; it seems likely he did the same thing on prewar Tulagi.12 There were also small chapels for the labourers on Makambo and Gavutu, built from local materials.13 The Seventh-day Adventist Mission leased land on Tulagi (under the name Australasian Conference Association Limited), adjoining that of the Malayta Company. There is no evidence of churches on either block.

There were several ways to associate and seek camaraderie. A branch of the Masons began in 1934, with Anglican Bishop Baddeley serving until 1938 as the first Master of Lodge Melanesia. He was succeeded by J.C.M. Scott, BP manager at Makambo (in 1939), Spearline Wilson (1939–40), James Basil Hicks (1940–41) and M.J. Bernhardt (1941–49).14 Once the war began in Europe, in 1939, a Red Cross Society was established to raise money. Fairs were organised for residents of the Tulagi enclave and nearby plantations, with £800 sent to England in April 1940. The next year, in October, Tulagi held its first (and last) agricultural show, exhibiting produce from across the protectorate.15

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13 Fox 1938.
15 ibid., F.A.G. Wilson to J.A. Wilson, 27 September 1939, J.A. Wilson to Mary, 30 May 1940; Cross 1979, 27.
Plate 7.11 St Luke’s Cathedral at Siota, dedicated in 1928
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection.

Plate 7.12 The altar of St Luke’s Cathedral, Siota, when first built
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection.

Plate 7.13 The final ornate structure of the altar of St Luke’s Cathedral, in the 1930s
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection.
The Chinese community—always a major part of Tulagi—was self-contained and continued its own religious and cultural rituals. There was no central Chinese temple, although there would have been small altars in houses and trade stores, and a branch of the Guomindang operated on Tulagi from the mid-1920s. There must also have been annual celebrations for Chinese New Year.

War service

One of the social links across the European community was war service—in British India, the Boer War, other parts of the British Empire and World War I. Although this network was informal, in the period during which Tulagi operated, it would have provided an essential social glue. Several men always used their war titles of captain or major—an assertion of rank and respect. Men with no rank to flaunt would still have shared a sense of camaraderie with the others. There are patterns elsewhere of war veterans looking after each other, and with no formal veterans’ association in the Solomons, undoubtedly this occurred. They had something in common that others did not share or fully comprehend. Captain Norman Kidson, the long-serving Government Secretary in the 1920s and 1930s, and several times acting Resident Commissioner, gained his title from war service. Captain Ernest Nelson Turner, the Police Commandant, joined the Australian Army Flying Corps in 1915.16 Levers’ manager Major Frank Hewitt was awarded a Military Cross and resident commissioner Kane held a similar award. Major William V. Jardine Blake, Police Subinspector during the 1920s and acting Treasurer in the late 1930s, also used his military title, as did Major Eustace Sandars, who held many positions, including Government Secretary. Captain Francis Noel Ashley, Resident Commissioner between 1929 and 1939, always used his military title.

Some of the older men had served in India and the Boer War in South Africa. Owen G. Meredith, an Isabel planter, had property in Chinatown in the 1920s. He had been in the British India Army before heading to the Solomon Archipelago in about 1910.17 Long-serving public servant

Pop Johnson was in the British Army between 1896 and 1903, reaching the rank of sergeant in the Boer War.\(^\text{18}\) William de Courcey Browne, later an employee of both Levers and BP, served in the Boer War as a trooper in the 2nd NSW Mounted Rifles.\(^\text{19}\) William Bell, perhaps the most famous member of the protectorate staff due to his violent death in 1927, had fought in the Boer War.\(^\text{20}\) Harold (‘Marco’) Markham, later a trader at Ontong Java and a convivial planter on New Georgia, arrived in the Solomons in 1908, having served as a trooper in the Boer War.\(^\text{21}\)

Another Englishman, Philip Sydney Palmer, also served in the Boer War, then remained in South Africa and married Harriet Wheatley, sister of Solomons planter and trader Norman Wheatley. Harriet died during childbirth in South Africa, after which Palmer moved his two boys to England, where they were adopted by their grandfather and Palmer’s brother, who was a Staffordshire doctor. Philip Palmer arrived at Tulagi in August 1910, moving to New Georgia, where he became Wheatley’s partner on Laperti plantation for three years. Growing tired of Wheatley’s relaxed, rather unconventional style, Palmer became an independent trader and owner of Kaola plantation on San Jorge Island, in narrow Otanga Passage between San Jorge and Isabel islands. In 1914, he sailed to Sydney to enlist in the Australian Light Horse, returning to the Solomons with his two sons, Ambrose Ernest (Ernie), born in 1904, and Phillip Francis Donald, born in 1906. After spending a short time with his brother-in-law, Palmer took his sons to Kaola, where he lived with Anne Nancy, an Isabel woman.\(^\text{22}\) Ernie became famous as a labour recruiter and lived in the Solomons until his death in 1976. Philip junior became a plantation overseer and interisland skipper; he left the Solomons in about 1936 to marry and became manager of BP’s Fanning Islands plantations in the Crown Colony of Gilbert and Ellice Islands.\(^\text{23}\) Another son, Norman Kitchener Palmer, born in 1928, became the eleventh Anglican Bishop of Melanesia and the second Archbishop of the Anglican

\(^{18}\) ibid., 95–97; Frederick England Johnson, Boer War record, 5 November 1901, in the possession of Suzanne Ellis, Toowoomba, Queensland.


\(^{20}\) Keesing and Corris 1980.

\(^{21}\) Golden 1993, 244.

\(^{22}\) ibid., 334–37; Moore 2013, entry for Norman Kitchener Palmer.

\(^{23}\) Golden 1993, 103–08.
Province of Melanesia. The Boer War carried through in his middle name. The blood of the Palmers and the Wheatleys was in his veins, through an illicit liaison Philip Palmer senior had with one of his nieces.24

Several of the BSIP colonial elite had served in World War I. Resident commissioner Marchant (1939–43) had received a bullet wound in his throat during the war, an injury that caused him considerable discomfort for the remainder of his life. Resident commissioner Kane served in World War I, as did resident commissioner Noel, who in 1919 was an officer in the British Army in India.25 Ragna Hyne, Chief Magistrate in the 1930s, served in World War I.26 Anglican Bishop Walter Baddeley (1932–47) had been in the Royal Sussex Regiment, 8th Battalion. He then joined the Royal Survey Regiment, reached the rank of acting lieutenant-colonel and commanded a battalion. Baddeley received a Distinguished Service Order, Military Cross and Bar, and was mentioned four times in dispatches. He never used his military title, which would have sat badly with being a bishop.27 One important visiting official who also had war rank was Sir Harry Moorhouse, the 1928 WPHC Special Commissioner who investigated the Kwaio massacre. He had been in the British Army since the 1890s and returned to active service during World War I, reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He served at Gallipoli in Turkey, where he was awarded a Distinguished Service Order.28

Other members of the permanent administrative staff left to serve in World War I or served in the war before arriving in the protectorate. For instance, Ralph B. Hill first arrived in the Solomons in 1909 and was District Magistrate for Gizo and Malaita until 1915, when he joined the British Army. He returned in 1920 as District Officer at Aola (1920–25)

25 Planters’ Gazette, 3, August 1921, 3.
26 The Queenslander, 21 December 1918.
27 See Moore (2013) for entries on William Sydney Marchant and Walter Hubert Baddeley. During the Pacific War, Baddeley remained in the protectorate, living at Tantaulu in the Malaitan mountains in the early months, before returning to his Anglican headquarters at Taroriara on Gela. After the Allies arrived, he was appointed Chaplain and Lieutenant-Colonel to the Fijian Battalion. Baddeley also held a position with the New Zealand Navy. His refusal to leave the Solomons increased his mana (spiritual power) both with Solomon Islanders (for whom he became a rare symbol of British strength) and with the Allied troops, particularly the Americans, who admired him. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in divinity from Columbia University in 1944 and the US Medal of Freedom in 1945.
and Isabel (1927–29), and also acted as Resident Commissioner. There were members of the joint Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac); Captain Turner, mentioned above, was one of these. Plantation manager Geoff Clift, who featured in the 1927 attack on the Kwaio, and his brother Dudley both enlisted when World War I broke out. They joined the Australian Light Horse Regiment; Dudley was killed in action in 1917 and Geoff returned to take up his old life. Another Anzac was Spearline Wilson, who enlisted from Fiji, where he worked for the CSR. He joined the Australian Imperial Forces and went ashore at Gallipoli on the first day, was wounded, invalided out and then spent the rest of the war on the Western Front. His hearing was affected by his war service and for most of his life he wore hearing aids. Another man with a war injury was Leslie (Jerry) Keen, who served in the British Army during World War I. He suffered a serious head wound, which required the fitting of a steel plate in his skull. Trained as a fitter and turner, he was an ideal employee to take charge of a workshop and plantation, which was his position at Gozoruru and Hivo on Isabel. He and his wife, Amelia (Milly), then ran a trade store and he also worked as a labour recruiter.

Other residents were also involved in the war. Bob Crookshank joined the British Navy in 1907, served in World War I and then moved to the Solomons and used his gratuity to purchase the lugger Winton. An excellent navigator, he set himself up as a trader and labour recruiter. Kenneth Dalrymple-Hay (often just styled as Ken Hay) joined the Field Artillery Brigade in 1915. C. Maxwell, a planter and trader from Isabel, and F. Ashton (‘Snowy’) Rhoades, manager of Lavoro plantation on Guadalcanal, both served in World War I. Herbert Lockington (Bert) Freshwater arrived in the Solomons in 1913, working at Boroni plantation on Makira and later on another plantation on Uki Island. When war broke out, he returned to Australia, enlisted, fought in Europe and then returned to Uki and worked for the Melanesian Mission. Cadet officer Kenneth C. Lillies, who was killed with William Bell in 1927, had served in World War I. Born in London in 1899, he had been a lieutenant in the British Army and subsequently was employed in the

30 ibid., 164.
31 ibid., 341–43.
32 Struben 1963, 14.
33 See Australian War Memorial, Kenneth Dalrymple-Hay Service Record No. 9910.
34 Planters’ Gazette, 6, May 1922, 4; Hadlow 2016, 125–26; Horton 1965, 22.
35 Golden 1993, 309.
Federated Malay States by the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, before he joined the Colonial Service and was posted to the BSIP. Major I. (Dick) Harper served in World War I before leasing land and operating a copra plantation on Mandoliana Island in the Gela Group from the early 1920s until 1942. Charles Hubert Vivian (Viv) Hodges, born in 1899, enlisted in World War I from Australia and served on the Western Front. He arrived in the Solomons in 1921 and worked as an overseer and then plantation manager for Levers and for the Fairymead Sugar Company. Jim Buchanan, an English engineer, had a business on Tulagi before he established small plantations in the Gela Group. He enlisted in World War I, after which he returned to his plantations. Niels R. Schroder, a relative of the successful early traders Oscar and Theodor Svensen, arrived in the Solomons in the 1900s. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces in 1914, fought in France and returned to the islands after the war as a ship's captain and plantation manager and owner on Guadalcanal. Syd ('Pansy') Elder, well known as a ship's captain and engineer in the Solomons in the 1920s, had served as a seaman on a minesweeper during World War I.

This incomplete list gives an idea of the war service of some of the European men in the protectorate. In such a small community, they probably all knew each other, and when their paths crossed in the Tulagi enclave, war and its physical and mental consequences would have been discussed. The camaraderie of war and the British Empire, combined with Christianity, the Masons, the Red Cross, the Guomindang and Chinese religious ceremonies and celebrations to create the mix of social relationships that made the Tulagi enclave work. Race, ethnicity and class were also distinguishing characteristics in the enclave's society.

37 Golden 1993, 101. Major was his Christian name.
38 ibid., 189.
Ethnicity and class in the British Pacific

Most of Tulagi’s early settlers were of British origin, although often filtered through the Pacific and Australasian colonies. There were also Scandinavian,40 German41 and French42 settlers, many of them ex-seamen. Some had left ships passing through the Solomons and settled, took up work with existing traders and saved or borrowed money to go into business for themselves and later obtained land for plantations. Many were either migrants from Europe or the children of migrants, and arrived in the Solomons via Queensland, that colony having provided assisted passages for migrants from Britain and Europe, particularly from Scandinavia and Germany.43 Many residents had connections to New South Wales or Queensland, even dating back to the overseas labour trade days, which ended in the 1900s.44 Others had Fiji labour trade connections: even Charles Woodford had travelled on a Fiji labour vessel and William Bell had been a recruiter and a government agent.45 These early European residents were self-made men who rose or fell according to their abilities.

The most unusual expatriate resident was George Washington Ezekiel Richardson, also called ‘Dick America’, an African-American born in Philadelphia in about 1866. A sailor, he arrived in north Queensland and worked in Torres Strait, based on Thursday Island as a sailmaker, pearl-diver and lugger master. He arrived in the Solomons in 1905 and, after a beginning collecting and curing bêche-de-mer, he worked for Levers, settling on Santa Cruz Island with his local wife. The couple moved to

40 The Scandinavian element is extensive. Partly, it may relate to sponsored Scandinavian migration to Queensland in the 1870s and 1880s. See ibid., for Lars Nielsen (p. 68), Julius Walter Anderson (76), Solfren Nerdrum (131), J.G.B. Nerdrum (131), Carl Oscar Svensen (131–35), Theodor Svensen (131–35), Anton Daniel Olsen (151–52), Jack Svensen (153–55), Leif Schroder (170), Niels Reinhardt Schroder (172–73), Albert Molkin Andresen (183–85), Frederick Erickson (224), Charles Olsen (288), John Schroder (315–19), Bert Johnson (344, Julius Pien (372) and Paul Edward Allen Mason (Mikkelsen) (381–83). See also Hviding 2015a; Hviding 2015b.
41 See Golden 1993: for Fred Howard (p. 278), Charles Peter Munster (289), Harry Jacobson (291–92), Heinrich (Henry) Küper (292, 299–301), Franz Malcher (348–49), John Heinrich MittelheUSER (395), Frederick Christian Mittelheuser (397), Harry Hoerler (398) and Schwartz (398).
43 Hviding 2015a; Hviding 2015b.
44 See Golden 1993: for W.R. Withrington (p. 71), John (Jack) Cooper (127), Theodor Svensen (131), Claude L. Bernays (158), John (Jock) Cromar (221–22), William Hamilton (225–26), James Gibbins (235), Oliver Burns (239–41) and Stanley Bateman (281). See also McLaren 1923; Cromar 1935.
Marou Bay, Makira, where he accidentally blew off his right arm while dynamiting fish. One of the legends about him is that he sent for an artificial arm by mail order and fitted it himself. He remained a small-scale, never very successful, trader and planter, remembered for his excellent collection of gramophone records. Powerfully built, a good singer and father of many children, he referred to himself as the ‘biggest white man on Makira’ and was said to be totally accepted among the white expatriate community. He died in 1949.46

In the colonial Pacific, the strictures of class divisions from the empire and its colonies and dominions did not always survive. An aristocratic background was not a good qualification for success. Having attended Eton or Oxford meant little when sailing in cyclonic weather or dealing with a crowd of angry Malaitan labourers. However, class backgrounds did play a role and, particularly in the BSIP administration, education was important. Some residents, including several resident commissioners and district officers, had a good education from the best schools in England and degrees from Oxford and Cambridge. A working-class, middle-class or upper-class background in British society and in the colonies was always a factor to consider, although some residents achieved status through their positions and hard work in the protectorate. It seems that several ‘remittance men’ lived in the protectorate, maintained financially by their upper-middle-class and aristocratic families—on the condition that they stayed far away. They drifted in and out of respectable circles. Equally numerous were ‘beachcombers’ from an earlier Pacific era who lived a frontier life, often drinking excessively.

There were residents with Australian pastoral backgrounds, either the children of landowners or ex-pastoral workers. Just as colonial east New Guinea attracted Australian adventurers, so too did the BSIP. These were places where a young man willing to work hard could make good. There was also a flow of settlers and workers back and forth between the two colonial territories. However, as with New Guinea, in the BSIP, they brought with them an element of Australian frontier racism, which certainly would have guided the attitudes of men who earlier had participated in the Queensland labour trade. The treatment of labourers...
on Solomons plantations was often brutal and owed much to the way Australians treated Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders and immigrant Pacific Islanders, now known as Australian South Sea Islanders.

I know of only one person with a European aristocratic title in the protectorate: Spanish Castilian Baroness Eugène lived on Guadalcanal in the 1900s. Her husband was Thomas Harding, an Englishman who was part-owner with George Darbyshire of Pennduffryn (later Berande) plantation between 1905 and 1909. Their living conditions were lavish, replete with a substantial house, elegant furnishings and a fine garden. The couple had met in South America. Baroness Eugénie (Mrs Harding) supposedly spoke eight languages and kept her coronet and jewels locked up in an overseas bank. The most interesting long-term resident in terms of class background was Nicholas Charles Tindal, scion of an aristocratic English family. His father was a vice-admiral and his grandfather was Lord Chief Justice of England. Just how Nick Tindal reached the Solomons is unclear, but it was probably through either his life as a seaman or his Australian connections. He settled in the Shortland Islands in the 1890s and married Minnie Thursa Louise, daughter of Melinda and John Champion Macdonald of Fauro, one of the earliest expatriate families. Minnie had married Edward Austen in Santa Ana in 1883—probably the first foreign marriage in the archipelago. After Austen died, she married Tindal. They became prosperous planters and traders. Both died in the 1900s, although the family connections with Solomon Islands continued until the 1970s. As early protectorate residents, the first Tindals carried considerable respect.

The father of Commissioner for Lands Stanley Knibbs was a prominent Australian, knighted in 1923, but we can only speculate as to how this affected Stanley’s social position on Tulagi. However, there were many who readily assumed a class status that a casual observer might have thought exceeded that of Tindal, the baroness or the son of a knight. One of these was Donald MacKinnon, who arrived in 1914 from Calcutta and took up

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48 The Tindal (Tyndall) family pedigree dates back to the eleventh century, descending from Anglo-Saxon nobility from Northumberland, Norman nobility and the royal Scottish house of Dunkeld. Nick Tindal’s father was Vice-Admiral Louis Symonds Tindal (1810–76), son of Sir Nicholas Tindal (1776–1846), Lord Chief Justice of England (1829–45). His uncle, Charles Tindal, was a governor of the Bank of England, whose descendants formed an Australian branch of the family.
land at Jurio on Vella Lavella. He became a well-known plantation owner, served on the Advisory Council during the 1930s and was awarded an Order of the British Empire in 1938.\(^{50}\) MacKinnon was ‘locally grown’ upper class. Women seem to have stood by their class dignity more than did men, probably because their power was usually achieved by association with men rather than through a clearly defined job.\(^{51}\) Men also needed to be physically fit and capable of manual labour as part of their occupations, whether they were sailors, surveyors or plantation managers. Although headquarters staff could be less active, there was little room for class differences when clearing jungle, launching canoes through the surf or marching long distances into the mountains.

European women usually did not have to undertake physical labour, although on plantations and mission stations this was more likely. It was possible to be a ‘lady’ in the Solomons. For instance, Vera Clift considered herself part of the Australian late colonial upper class. She was brought up on Bellevue pastoral station at Wivenhoe on the Brisbane River, Queensland, which in 1920 played host to Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII.\(^{52}\) The next year she visited the wife of acting resident commissioner Ralph Hill, when she met John McElhone (Jack) Clift, an influential plantation owner. Against her family’s wishes, they married in the same year. She looked down on those she labelled Tulagi’s ‘dregs of Fiji’.\(^{53}\) Her husband was from a prominent NSW pastoral and political family, from Breeza pastoral station near Gunnedah and Potts Point in Sydney. That they returned to Australia financially ruined by the Great Depression seemed not to have mattered in Vera’s 1970s assessment of her high social position in the BSIP.\(^{54}\) Like the others, Vera Clift often passed through Tulagi, where presumably she observed class boundaries. Georgina Seton (née Cameron), another leading expatriate woman, also had pastoral links, having been brought up by Scottish parents on Welltown pastoral station near Goondiwindi, Queensland, a property running 100,000 sheep.\(^{55}\) In 1929, she married Carden Wyndham Seton, a planter from the Western Solomons. She was the only published woman

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\(^{50}\) Golden 1993, 263.


\(^{53}\) Golden 1993, 163–69.

\(^{54}\) Rutledge 1974.

\(^{55}\) ‘Obituary of Donald McLeod Cameron’, Queensland Country Life, 22 October 1943; Boutilier 1984a, 177.
author from the prewar protectorate, writing a novel set on a copra plantation. Both Setons were evacuated just before the Pacific War began and returned afterwards.56

Georgina Seton said: ‘The upper middle-class, was represented in the Solomons by a good many of birth and breeding from England and Australia with titled relatives and good education.’ She added that there were also expatriate women who were ‘very unsuitable’ and who ‘played poker and did not pay their debts’. Seton said that Solomon Islanders could tell ‘the difference between ladies and something-nothings’, meaning low-class white women. Somewhat grudgingly, she also said that the ‘right sort of woman of wherever status got the reputation she deserved. In the islands, class distinction disappeared, and recognition of character took over.’57

On Tulagi, the wife of the incumbent Resident Commissioner was always at the top of the female pecking order, followed by the wives of the Government Secretary, the Chief Magistrate and the Treasurer and Collector of Customs. Their only rival on the island was Dorothy Lotze, the wife of Carpenters’ manager Jack Lotze; however, she was from commerce and younger, which would have counted against her. She was also the daughter of Pop and Agnes Johnson, which gave her a mixed status. The wives of the managers of BP, Levers and Morris Hedstrom also carried considerable social clout.

There were middle-class female missionaries in the protectorate, such as Gladys, Joan and Katherine Deck, and their cousin Florence Young, the founder of the SSEM, who visited the protectorate for a month each year between 1904 and the early 1920s. While the Deck and Young families had wealthy Quaker connections, and came from prominent families in Australia and New Zealand, mission women were workers in their own right and had less need to flaunt superior social status.

There were also ‘rough types’. The pretensions to proper behaviour could fade quickly when faced with the dregs of the Pacific. Twenty-two-year-old Wilfred Fowler met one of the dregs when he first arrived at Tulagi in the late 1920s. He was in Sterling’s Hotel when the following altercation took place, which seems to contain a self-deprecating reference to Fowler’s rather prim and possibly ‘camp’ (homosexual) demeanour:

56 Seton 1944; Bennett 1987, 236, 289, 303; Golden 1993, 406.
57 Boutilier 1984a, 179.
As I turned to go, a gross giant of a man shuffled towards me. His paunch sagged over his belt and his shirt gaped open to his navel. He looked me up and down with affected surprise. ‘Well, for God’s sake, look who’s here’. He declared in a melodious deep base voice. Then, as though amused by what he saw, he tapped my shoulder and bringing his face close to mine he whispered, ‘She hadn’t up to yesterday, pal, but I know she will tonight’. I could smell the stale sweat on him and I felt crowded by bulk. There was laughter, but someone shouted over the din, ‘Sit down, Hector’. The drunken man looked back at me reluctantly as he rejoined his companions.58

Recreation

There were also particular events that drew residents together. Steamer day and the excitement of receiving visitors to the small community have already been mentioned. Some of the entertainment was aboard visiting ships. For instance, Joseph Dickinson arrived at Gavutu from Sydney on the ketch Ruby in the 1900s. The ship was immediately ‘crowded by the white staff at Gavutu, and some eighty friends belonging to the crew’.59 Parties were often held on board the larger vessels and groups from ships arranged excursions to local beaches or organised hunting and fishing parties.

One constant of Tulagi life was getting away from the tightly bound urban surrounds and enjoying the natural environment. This could be as simple as a family picnic close by on an undeveloped part of Tulagi. The Gela Group is beautiful; Mboli Passage is close by and a great place for recreation. Residents and visitors organised outings around Tulagi Harbour and into the passage. One fishing expedition from the Ruby consisted of five Europeans in a boat crewed by six men from Santa Cruz. They were ‘equipped’ with one dozen bottles of lager beer, two bottles of whisky, one dozen bottles of lemonade, veal, ham and pork pies, lobsters, cheese, pickled walnuts, six plugs of dynamite to obtain bait fish, fish hooks and lines and a Winchester rifle.60 These were hardly starvation rations or inadequate equipment. It was standard entertainment to take visitors fishing, such as in 1939, when high commissioner Luke spent an afternoon fishing not far from Tulagi.61

58 Fowler 1959, 4.
60 ibid., 33.
61 Luke 1945, 86.
Plate 7.14 Jack Barley and Stanley Annandale at a picnic in the Gela Group, 1910s
Source: BM, Thomas Edge-Partington Photographic Collection.

Plate 7.15 Pop Johnson, his children and friends at a picnic on Tulagi
Source: Suzanne Ellis Collection.
Ships became floating dining rooms. When BP’s ship *Moresby* was in port for Christmas 1910, Captain William Voy prepared a floating banquet for the local elite. Woodford and his wife, Florrie, treasurer Frank Barnett, Dr S.C.M. Davies from the hospital, Dr A.B. Lewis of the Field Museum in Chicago, leading planter Norman Wheatley, district officers and other planters joined the crew for Christmas festivities. When resident commissioner Kane arrived in the Solomons, the *Planters’ Gazette* of August 1921 carried news of a similar event, paid for by Morris Hedstrom and Company, on the *Minindi*, also under Captain Voy. Similarly, when Ernie Palmer and Inga Svensen were married, the European population of Tulagi shouted them a party on board the *Malaita*. And on his 1939 visit, high commissioner Luke was entertained at the residency and the Tulagi Club. He returned the hospitality with a dinner on his ship, *Wellington*.

Sometimes trips away could be an adventure. Soon after her marriage, Jessie Wilson accompanied her husband on a surveying field trip to Guadalcanal. Although she enjoyed the adventure, eight weeks camped beside a river in the mountains became rather wearing:

> I enjoyed it tremendously for the first 6 weeks, but when it got to 7 weeks & then 8 & the biscuits ran out & we had no milk & not many tins of meat. I began to think of my nice comfy home & used to actually dream about things to eat—especially tomatoes [sic] & peaches. You know we moved our camp up into the mountains towards the last & I had to walk three miles through the roughest country & waded 7 times through the river. Once it was up to my arm pits & I was terribly scared. Of course I was dressed for the part, khaki shorts & trousers—no stockings & very old shoes.

A better solution to combat loneliness when her husband was away occurred when one of Jessie’s friends married Bill Gibson, the manager of Rere plantation on the north-east coast of Guadalcanal. Jessie enjoyed spending time there: ‘I loved the plantation life at “Rere”. It is very much the same as farm life, excepting for the smell of copra that pervades the atmosphere.’

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62 *The Brisbane Courier*, 4 January 1911, [cutting], in PMB, Woodford Papers and Photographs, PMB 150, Reel 2, Bundle 8, 9/20; *Planters’ Gazette*, 3, August 1921, 3–4.
63 Struben 1963, 62.
64 Luke 1945, 86.
65 UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, J.A. Wilson to Mary, 8 April 1925.
66 ibid., 26 May 1925.
Plate 7.16 Jessie Wilson accompanied her husband on several surveying trips
Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.
Jessie does not mention the marital intrigue involved. Gibson, from London, had arrived in the Solomons in 1909, and with his partners accumulated land on Guadalcanal. He met his future wife during a trip to Sydney. She eloped with him to the Solomons, where they were married on Tulagi. Jessie would have been in the thick of it. In 1925, Gibson's wife returned to Sydney to reconcile with her parents, while her husband improved the previously primitive accommodation at Rere. Jessie Wilson's visit to Rere must have been soon after Mrs Gibson's return. Mrs Gibson did not like the isolation of Rere and the couple shifted to Aola, where life was more pleasant. Then Gibson became ill and they shifted back to Sydney, where he died in 1929. Their landholdings were wound up.67

Some of the regular Tulagi-based activities are almost invisible in the historical record, but logical when one considers the origins of the population. Australia's Melbourne Cup horse race in early November each year had its avid fans. They went down to the wireless station to listen to the radio broadcast or gathered around radios at home, ending up at the Tulagi Club or the hotels to continue the celebration.68 The latest cricket scores from test matches in Australia were also passed on

this way. The official records also ignore Tulagi’s eccentrics. Discounting the drunks, of whom there were many, others made Tulagi their home in personal ways. One of Spearline Wilson’s letters mentions a Miss Hackett, who ‘owned’ Bangi Island, a few hundred metres offshore from the hospital, where she had a leaf house and spent relaxing afternoons in 1939.69 One wonders if anyone told her that executions used to be carried out there? Likewise, early in his Tulagi years, Eustace Sandars had his own local-style house built:

It was situated in the second little bay from the police lines towards the club; a charming little spot with the water lapping at the trees on the beach. It consisted of a large open living room and two small bedrooms, one on either end, a kitchen and a bit of corrugated iron on stilts and a couple of water tanks. Rather primitive but quite sufficient and very much cooler than any of the European built houses.70

There were always public places available for relaxation, mainly the hotels and the club. From the 1910s and 1920s, these were at the core of Tulagi’s social life, just as similar places remain so in small Pacific towns today.

Alcohol

Alcohol was the social lubricant of choice and consumption began on the voyage from Australia to Tulagi. Sandars described the amount of alcohol consumed on the voyage from Sydney to Tulagi on the *Mataram* in 1928:

The first night out from Brisbane was a late night with much drink, the fellows on board were great drinkers and mostly used to play poker well into the night, some who could drink no more went to bed and their place was taken by the long cook Jack who would play all night and make some attempt at cooking the next day.71

Sandars shared a cabin with Captain Swanson, an elderly seaman about to take command of the Resident Commissioner’s steam yacht *Ranadi*, and who forced him to drink half a water glass of overproof rum in the evening before bed, to ensure sound sleep. Then in the mornings the passengers ambled to the saloon:

69 ibid., 6 October 1939.
70 PMB, Sandars, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 18.
71 ibid., 2.
As soon as I got up in the morning the drill was to go up top and enter the saloon where everybody was in pyjamas drinking. The first morning I went up there some bright spark was drinking gin slings and his remark to the bartender as I entered was ‘Give the poor bloody Pommy one Jim’ to which one of the others replied ‘Oh break it up. He ain’t a bad sort of bastard when all is said and done’. The gin slings were absolutely marvellous, they put new life into one completely and after a second one, one was fit to jump over the moon … three of these and you were well on your way to being drunk for the rest of the day.72

When the overseas ships arrived at Tulagi, they were boarded by local residents, mainly the men, who treated the ship as a floating bar:

Men in badly tailored tropical clothes came up the gangway, planters and traders meeting the ship for mail and cargo, men off schooners and out-of-works off the beach. They greeted the stewards boisterously and then sat around the smoking-room tables to drink.73

Ashore, there was a choice of commercial establishments where alcohol could be obtained or consumed. The Tulagi Club, with its wide verandahs and sports facilities, was the centre of the higher end of the Tulagi social scene. Members and visitors went there to read newspapers and magazines, to play sport and swim and to socialise and drink.74

Drinking was a major pastime for most of the expatriate men—often to excess. In the late 1920s, the Resident Commissioner’s male typist was partial to a beer, even at 9 am, and used the office messenger to deliver cold beers from Chinatown.75 Deaths from alcoholism sometimes occurred and ‘drying out’ alcoholics was one of the tasks at the hospital.76

It is an education to read Golden’s *The Early European Settlers of the Solomon Islands*. The number of alcoholics was high. There were always European men who ‘went troppo’, because of alcohol, isolation or from failure to adapt culturally. Alcoholism had a lot to do with this and was a constant problem among the employees based on Tulagi and for all expatriates in the protectorate. The single officers always made the Tulagi Club a comfortable extension of their social lives, although they were not

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72 ibid., 3.
73 Fowler 1959, 3.
75 Fowler 1959, 8.
76 WPHCA, 1919/552, Annual Medical Report, 1918, 2.
the only residents who found access to alcohol tempting. In the 1920s, resident commissioner Kane was far too fond of alcohol. Legend has it that in 1921, the year he first arrived, he was too drunk to perform the marriage ceremony for Jack and Vera Clift, who had to stop off at Visale Catholic mission station on Guadalcanal to get a Catholic priest to do the honours, on their way to their new home on Aruligo plantation. Dr C.R. Pattison, one of the government doctors, was likewise afflicted and had a fondness for sampling the hospital’s medicinal brandy. Eventually, Pattison managed to run the government launch Gizo on to a reef, which ended his career in the protectorate.

Newly arrived, Eustace Sandars had an unnerving experience with Jimmy Mutch from Aberdeen, foreman of the Public Works Department and a permanent occupant of the single officers’ quarters:

I was a bit tired after my first day and I turned in about 10 o’clock. I had been asleep for about an hour when there was a dreadful racket outside and a voice shouted down the verandah, ‘Go to bed Jimmy put that sword away’. The sword was apparently intended...
for me and Jimmy Mutch was cutting the mosquito wire in my bedroom door to pieces with his sword. Jimmy said ‘I don’t like policemen I’m going to stick this B … in the guts’. I thought this was a nice start off. I moved myself very smartly on to the opposite verandah. In the meantime somebody had disarmed Jimmy and all became quiet again.\textsuperscript{79}

This was not the only time Mutch attacked residents with a sword. Ernie Palmer told a story of Mutch attacking Monty Masterman with a two-handed Samarai sword, terrifying the Inspector of Labour, who was almost garrotted by a wire clothes line as he ran off.\textsuperscript{80} Mutch had another eccentricity. While drunk, he loved to go down to the wharf at night, call out the police guards and drill them, much to the displeasure of their commandant. A decade later, he had not changed. Dick Horton provided a graphic description of Mutch, who was still living at the single officers’ quarters. One night, dressed in his full whites and pith helmet, he tilted drunkenly at spectres with his sword.\textsuperscript{81} Mutch lasted two more years, until Spearline Wilson took over lands and surveys and public works in 1939. Wilson managed to get the Resident Commissioner to persuade Mutch to resign.\textsuperscript{82}

Other leading officials also succumbed to alcohol. Knibbs, mentioned earlier, who served the protectorate from 1913 to 1939, was clearly an alcoholic by the 1930s and was also persuaded to resign. Several sources say Kane was an alcoholic who neglected his duties and got into brawls.\textsuperscript{83} In 1928, as a new government officer, Sandars had a surprise first meeting with his resident commissioner:

The next day, the Resident Commissioner, Captain E. Kane was due to arrive back in his yacht ‘Ranadi’. I arranged with Captain Swanson, who was to take her over, to go down to meet the ship which was due in about 9.30 p.m. We went down to the wharf and saw her tie up alongside and then went on board. Somewhat to my astonishment on the after deck were two people locked in deadly combat. One turned out to be Captain Kane, the Resident and the other the Second Engineer.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{79} Sandars, PMB, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 9.
\textsuperscript{80} Struben 1963, 42.
\textsuperscript{81} Horton 1965, 17. See also Lever 1988.
\textsuperscript{82} UQFL, Wilson, 1946, Lands and Public Works Department: A Brief History, 3.
\textsuperscript{83} Boutilier 1984a, 186.
\textsuperscript{84} Sandars, PMB, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 9.
Others of lesser official standing were also alcoholics.

There is also another aspect to ‘going troppo’, and that is ‘going native’. Dress standards were usually kept up on Tulagi, but isolated Europeans on plantations often wore very little or clothed themselves in *lap-laps*. Charles Mumford, a down-on-his-luck plantation owner on Makira in the 1910s, fell into this category. He wore pyjamas all day, never washed, ate poorly, had homemade shoes and lived in an unfinished house with no walls.\(^85\) Betel nut was free and could also become the drug of choice for isolated Europeans.

**Visitors, science and the media**

Empire Day was the most important annual celebration.\(^86\) The day was marked with bonfires and fireworks and loyal declarations to the King and empire. There were also public holidays for the birthdays of the sovereign and the heir to the British throne.\(^87\) The resident commissioners reigned supreme, except when the WPHC high commissioners came to inspect local affairs. The first to visit Tulagi was Sir Henry Moore Jackson, who came for three days in October 1903 to check on Woodford’s temporary suspension of the labour trade. Other high commissioners visited if local circumstances demanded or when on circuit through their watery domain. British, German and Australian naval vessels called in regularly and occasionally dignitaries were on board. A few days before Jackson, the Governor of German New Guinea, Dr Albert Hahl, arrived from Herbertshohe on his steam yacht *Seestern* after inspecting the southern islands of his territory.\(^88\)

Other important visitors have already been mentioned, such as Sir Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Australian Papua in 1916, and in 1928 Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Harry Moorhouse, the retired Lieutenant-Governor of Nigeria.\(^89\) Jessie Wilson described Moorhouse, who lived in the house next-door for two months: ‘He is quite a simple old dear—plays his game of golf every day in the raggedest old clothes, like an ordinary

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85 ibid., 302–03.
86 It was renamed Commonwealth Day in 1958.
87 Armstrong and Joy 1939, 92.
88 BSIP AR 1900–01, 1, 17–18, 1903–05, 30; Hahl 1980.
person.90 The arrival of the British First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Navy, Earl John R. Jellicoe, in 1919 caused a flurry. He was inspecting Tulagi Harbour as a possible site for a major Pacific base. Rear-Admiral E.R.G.R. Evans, commander of the Australian Navy, arrived in 1930. Such occasions were accompanied by formal ceremonies and festivities, such as dances at the Tulagi Club. On these occasions, ships were dressed, flying their signal flags from their rigging.91

Other notable visitors had a more substantial impact on the Solomons, ensuring its place in world anthropology. In 1901, the Museum of Victoria sent Graham Officer to obtain artefacts. He visited Tulagi and Gavutu. Advised by Woodford to head for Guadalcanal and the Western Solomons, he obtained a large range of artefacts, including a war canoe.92 Other scientists visited, such as anthropologists A.M. Hocart, W.H.R. Rivers and G.C. Wheeler, who arrived in Tulagi in May 1909. They took advice from Woodford on fieldwork sites, choosing Simbo, Roviana Lagoon, the Shortlands, Kolombangara and Vella Lavella—all in the Western Solomons—which had significant impacts on anthropology worldwide.93 Another famous anthropologist, Ian Hogbin from Sydney University, visited the protectorate regularly between 1927 and 1933, stopping off in Tulagi on his way to Rennell, Ontong Java, Malaita and Guadalcanal.94 In 1928, Eugen Paravicini, an ethnologist from the Museum der Kulturen in Basel, Switzerland, visited the protectorate.

Many scientific visitors, as well as rich tourists who dabbled in artefact collection, also passed through Tulagi. It was quite usual for private yachts to arrive, some quite grand, carrying owners who were travelling the world in floating comfort. In the early 1930s, wealthy American Charles Templeton Crocker arrived to lead a scientific expedition. Crocker travelled on his own 125-ton, 34-metre-long and 7-metre-beam wooden-hulled, schooner-rigged yacht with an auxiliary engine, the Zaca. It was staffed with various scientific personnel, including anthropologist Gordon MacGregor of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Dr Sylvester Lambert of the Rockefeller Foundation in Suva, botanist Norton Stuart, Dr John B. Hynes and Malakai Veisamasama (both working with

91 Earl Jellicoe was visiting to assess the Gela Group as a site for a large British naval base. Fox 1962, 107; UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, Edna Campbell Diary, 22 September 1930.
92 Richards 2012, 111–16.
93 Hviding and Berg 2014, 6, 9; Lawrence 2014, 209–15.
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Lambert) and Japanese photographer Toshio Asaeda.95 Crocker did not stand on ceremony and while on board preferred to wear a lap-lap or a pair of shorts, with a bandana around his neck. The Zaca was luxurious: the gramophone had speakers wired throughout the ship, there was a powerful Morse code station and stewards to attend to every whim. The yacht arrived at Tulagi, then the expedition spent most of their time at Rennell, Malaita, Sikaiana, Makira and at Santa Cruz and nearby islands.96 In 1932, Julius Fleischmann junior of Cincinnati topped them all by arriving on his extraordinary US$625,000 1,000-ton yacht, Camargo, stopping off at Tulagi before sailing north.97 Today, the vessel would be worth about A$30 million. Tulagi’s residents were amazed. The collections and writings of these men helped make Solomon Islands central in the early twentieth-century literature on nature, material culture and anthropology. Their presence in Tulagi would have stimulated local conversations about the natural and ethnographic history of the protectorate.

The Rockefeller Foundation assisted medical campaign in the late 1920s and 1930s attempted to eradicate yaws and hookworm and the Whitney South Sea Expedition passed through in the early 1930s, collecting bird and botanical species. Yaws has faded from memory as a significant disease in the Solomons, but before the Pacific War it was a terrible scourge, which the administration had no ability to combat. Yaws is a chronic disease of the tropics, contagious and brings disfiguring ulcer-like symptoms. This debilitating disease now can be cured with two injections of long-acting penicillin—a drug not available until the 1940s. Often nearly everyone in a village suffered from yaws. Small children would develop a rash covering their whole body and then lumps would start to erupt. The head, particularly around the nose and mouth, was often affected, then the disease spread to the rest of the body. Flies swarmed around the eruptions and the appearance was repulsive. It was almost a stage of growing up and parents accepted that their children would get the disease. It usually passed, and in about half the cases the skin would clear up again. In other cases, although the body healed, one sore would remain, almost always on the lower limbs, and gradually grow. Sometimes it would continue for years until part of the victim’s foot had been eaten away or there would be a large ulcer on the calf. The smell was terrible and when one entered a village the stink from sores often pervaded the air.

95  Burt 2015, 59–61, 70; Anonymous 1934.
96  Lambert 1946, 335–55.
On Malaita and Makira in the 1920s, the infection rate was 60 to 65 per cent and up to 90 per cent among coastal people. The disease caused high infant mortality. Beginning in the 1920s, intravenous and intramuscular injections of neo-arsphenamine were used as a cure, aided substantially by the Rockefeller Foundation campaign. The director of the 1928–31 campaign was the already mentioned Dr Sylvester Lambert, with Dr Menzies in charge of one unit and Gordon White, assistant to Dr Hetherington from Tulagi Hospital, in charge of the other. Each European worked with two Islander assistants and a medical orderly. Native medical practitioners, missionaries and members of the foundation’s medical team gave injections throughout the protectorate, which brought huge relief from the debilitating disease. For instance, during 1930, the Rockefeller campaign gave 32,702 anti-yaws injections to 18,704 Solomon Islanders and treated 12,904 cases of hookworm. Hookworm was difficult to treat for cultural reasons. Diagnosis involved a stool sample, which contravened taboos on contact with faeces.

The Christian missions also participated in the campaign. In 1929, the Methodist Mission gave 1,748 injections in the Gizo district and the Anglican Melanesian Mission gave 696 injections at Fuambu on Malaita. Individuals travelled long distances to get their ‘nila’ (needle). In 1932, 21,628 injections were given for yaws; however, the drugs used were not totally effective and the effort of the 1920s–1930s was partly wasted. Penicillin made the real difference.98 The campaign staff constantly passed through Tulagi to collect supplies, for rest and recreation and on their way to other islands. One of them, Gordon White, stayed on and was appointed government yaws and hookworm officer during 1932; he was then acting dispenser at Tulagi Hospital, before joining Dr Lambert in a tuberculosis survey of the protectorate in mid-1933.99

The Whitney Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History began in the summer of 1920, funded by American businessman Harry Payne Whitney and his family. Its original purpose was to study the plants and birds of the Pacific Islands. This expedition visited hundreds of islands and was led by many different scientists and collectors over more than a dozen years. Administered by a committee at the museum, the expedition became a source of funds and equipment for collecting and research on

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98 BSIP AR 1930, 13–14, 1931, 6; Boutilier 1974, 28.
the Pacific Islands. The first leader was Rollo H. Beck, a veteran collector
and naturalist, who hired Ernst H. Qualye and Charles Curtis. Together,
they assembled most of the botanical collections for the expedition. They
arrived on the sailing ship *France*, stopping at islands large and small.
During 1929–30, the expedition worked in Solomon Islands, on Malaita
and elsewhere. The main collection of botanical specimens was sent to
the Bernice Bishop Museum, in Honolulu, Hawai`i.¹⁰⁰ These scientific
visitors all mixed with the Tulagi residents during the 1920s and 1930s.

**Contemporary media and literature**

While the BSIP was too small to have its own newspaper (the closest it
got was the short-lived *Planters’ Gazette*, from 1920 to 1923, and church
periodicals), the islands began to attract the attention of the media,
particularly from Australia. News from New Guinea, Solomon Islands and
the New Hebrides became a constant theme in the east coast Australian
newspapers onwards from the 1860s, and from the 1870s to the 1900s,
Australian papers carried a steady stream of stories about the labour trade
to the Solomons. The islands also featured in the media at the time of the
mass deportation of Pacific Island labourers between 1906 and 1908.¹⁰¹
From the 1880s and 1890s, journalists began to visit the protectorate,
reporting back to Australia through *The Argus* (Melbourne), the *North
Queensland Register* (a Townsville weekly), *The Queenslander* (a Brisbane
weekly), the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Sydney Mail* and the *Evening Star*
(another Sydney paper).¹⁰² Almost as soon as Woodford arrived in Tulagi in
1897, a special correspondent from the *North Queensland Register* visited
and eulogised about the future of the protectorate.¹⁰³ The Solomons was
an attractive prospect for a quick visit by journalists as the islands were
on a regular shipping route out of Australian ports and could be linked
with short visits to the New Hebrides, Australian Papua and German New
Guinea. In the 1890s, the *Sydney Mail* artist Norman Hardy made such
a trip and published articles, and later a book, on what he had seen along
this route.¹⁰⁴ In 1906, Randolph Bedford, a Brisbane journalist, arrived on
a vessel returning indentured labourers from Queensland to their home

¹⁰⁰ Eyerdam 1933; Mayr 1931; Mayr 1943; Akin 2013, 108–14.
¹⁰¹ Corris 1972; Moore 2000a.
¹⁰⁴ Quanchi 2014a.
islands. Bedford also visited the newly acquired Australian Territory of Papua and purchased land in Milne Bay. He published a series of articles in Brisbane’s *Courier-Mail* and *The Queenslander*.\(^{105}\)

In the immediate post–World War I period, when the Solomons was included in Australia’s subimperialist designs, photographer and columnist Thomas McMahon made a similar trip, publishing hundreds of photographs of Solomon Islands in Australian, British and American magazines and illustrated newspapers.\(^{106}\) He was followed shortly after by the American photographer and writer Merl La Voy, who then visited Sydney, where his photographs were published by the *Sydney Mail*.\(^{107}\) Roviana Lagoon in the Western Solomons was visited regularly and much photographed.\(^{108}\)

There were also literary and cinematic visitors. Jack and Charmian London arrived on board the schooner *Snark* in 1908. Jack London, the most popular (and extremely racist) American author of his time, published *The Cruise of the Snark* and *Jerry of the Islands* and his wife published *The Log of the Snark* and *Voyaging in Wild Seas, or, A Woman among the Head Hunters*.\(^{109}\) American photographers and adventurers Martin and Osa Johnson, mentioned earlier, arrived in 1917, although Martin first visited the Solomons as crew on the *Snark* in 1908. The Johnsons’ film footage contains the first ‘moving pictures’ from the Solomons and they also later wrote books including material gathered while they were in the protectorate.\(^{110}\) English travel writer Charlotte Cameron passed through Tulagi in 1922 on a quest for information for a book on the Pacific.\(^{111}\) Beatrice Grimshaw visited Tulagi in the 1900s and in the mid-1920s.\(^{112}\) An accomplished, well-published writer, Grimshaw would have been regarded as a celebrity, and it is also likely that her Papua plantation novels—full of her antiquated racial attitudes—circulated in the Solomons. American artist Caroline Mytinger, another 1920s visitor, travelled through the archipelago with a female companion and

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105 Boland 1979; Bedford 1906–07.
106 Quanchi 1994; Quanchi 1997; Quanchi 2010a; Quanchi 2014b.
107 Quanchi 2010b.
108 Wright 2013.
109 London 1911; London 1912, Ch. 6; London 1915[?];b; London 1917.
111 *Planters’ Gazette*, 5, February 1922, 14.
112 Boutilier 1984a, 191.
later published a best-selling account of their visit, *Headhunting in the Solomon Islands*.\(^{113}\) All of them began their journeys at Tulagi. Although writers, photographers and artists focused on portraits, material culture, customs and the ‘native’ way of life, the subtext was usually empire, British expansion and potential economic opportunities for Australians.\(^{114}\)

Plate 7.19 High commissioner Sir Eyre Hutson visiting Tulagi in 1927

The flags of the BSIP and the Crown Colony of Gilbert and Ellice Islands are flying or are draped about.

Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.

There were a few local authors who would have attracted attention; their books have formed part of the sources for this volume. One was *Jock of the Islands: Early Days in the South Seas—The Adventures of John Cromar*, published in 1935, which recounted Cromar’s voyages in the Queensland and Solomon Islands labour trade and his life as a planter.\(^{115}\) Stanley Knibbs was Cromar’s editor—a not-so-obvious social link. Knibbs published his own book, *The Savage Solomons as They Were & Are*.\(^{116}\) The repetition of ‘savage’ and ‘headhunter’ in these titles shows that the authors and their

\(^{113}\) Mytinger 1930; Mytinger 1943.

\(^{114}\) Wright 2013; Quanchi 1995; Quanchi 2004; Quanchi 2014b.

\(^{115}\) Cromar 1935.

\(^{116}\) Knibbs 1929.
publishers knew how to titillate the reading market. These books, along with those by Guppy and Woodford, circulated around the protectorate, as did hundreds of lesser-known publications that mentioned the Solomons. Although there was no public library, new books from near and far were available.

The Advisory Council

Until 1921, the Resident Commissioner had sole local authority over the protectorate, subject to approval by the WPHC High Commissioner. Then, on 25 April 1921, at the recommendation of high commissioner Sir Cecil Rodwell, a regulation was passed to provide for the creation of an advisory council. It consisted initially of the Resident Commissioner as president and not more than four members who were British subjects living in the BSIP, of whom one could be an official. The Resident Commissioner was empowered to request information and advice on any matters relating to the internal administration of the protectorate. The first meeting took place on 10 November 1921, with acting resident commissioner Jack Barley as president. Tulagi mustered all the pomp and ceremony it could manage. Captain Turner turned out a detachment of the armed constabulary and Barley took the salute. His opening speech was rich with classical allusions:

We cannot expect, Gentlemen, to spring like Pallas Athene full-equipped from the head of Zeus; we must first learn to exercise our limbs and prove our strength before we aspire to the same rights and privileges as the grown-up children of our great Imperial family.

In later years, the council was expanded to include the Resident Commissioner and seven members, three of whom could be officials. The official minutes of the meetings were published from 1926, and there were also substantial earlier reports in the Planters’ Gazette. Author and adventurer Captain Alan Villiers, who arrived at Tulagi in the 1930s on his fully rigged sailing ship Joseph Conrad, left us a description of a ceremony held when the council met. It was

117 Dickinson 1927; Collinson 1926.
118 For instance, Codrington 1972; Fox 1924; F. Young 1926; Ivens 1927; Ivens 1930; Hopkins 1928.
119 Planters’ Gazette, 5, February 1922. 4.
staged with all the pomp and show and banging of drums that could be mustered, and the sulu-dressed constables, all with fixed bayonets and very smart, lined up beside the weatherboard Parliament House for inspection. They seemed to enjoy it all, and the waters of Tulagi and Gavutu harbours sparkled below pleasantly in the sun.¹²⁰

The ‘Parliament House’ was actually the court house. Villiers described the members as ‘fine elderly gentlemen’ who ‘meet pleasantly together at intervals and discussed recommendations for the consideration of the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific at Suva in the Fijis’.¹²¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, discussions of labour dominated council meetings. Their deliberations were published verbatim after 1930. Elderly they may have been, but there were some astute comments and understanding of both the economy and the society of the protectorate, tempered by a touch of conservatism and commercial reality.¹²²

Plate 7.20 The new Anglican headquarters at Taroaniara, in the early 1940s
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection.

¹²⁰ Villiers 1937, 179.
¹²¹ ibid.
¹²² The council did not meet between November 1941 and October 1945 due to World War II, and there were no Solomon Islanders on the Advisory Council until 1951.
Plate 7.21 The bishop’s house at Taroanira, in the early 1940s
Source: NASI, ACOM Collection.

Solomon Islanders in the Tulagi enclave

In writing about Tulagi, I have endeavoured to include everyone who lived on the island, including foreigners and Solomon Islanders. I featured expatriate women in Chapters 5 and 6. Including equivalent material on Solomon Islander residents has been difficult. How many Solomon Islanders lived permanently on Tulagi, Gavutu and Makambo? How did Solomon Islanders socialise with each other and the foreigners? What did they do in their time off? How did they interpret what they saw and how was that knowledge of events on Tulagi passed around the villages? Solomon Islanders were motivated by their own epistemologies (ways of knowing). Answers to these questions remain unresolved, although some things can be teased out.
When Woodford purchased Tulagi, it was uninhabited. Access remained controlled and yet, reading between the lines, Solomon Islanders were always there and involved in many different activities. They could not gravitate to this new centre of wealth and significance as freely as they did to mission and trading stations, or even to other government bases. Permanent indigenous settlement was never encouraged and there was a curfew. Yet, tens of thousands lived there or passed through as police, labourers, servants, ships’ crews, mission workers, hospital patients and prisoners. We know that canoes from Gela constantly visited the administrative, mission and commercial islands and settlements. Some photographs indicate local-style houses in Chinatown, which were probably the homes of employees of the retail outlets. Solomon Islanders worked in the stores and houses, assisted with boatbuilding and crewed the schooners and cutters.

Plate 7.22 The seafront on Tulagi’s inner side, in the 1930s
Source: UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs.

123 Richards 2012, 136.
124 Barge 1938, 117.
The earliest oral testimony from a Solomon Islander about Tulagi comes from Samuel Alasa’a from the Kwara’ae district on Malaita, when he was a young labourer in 1918. He was on the schooner Maringe under David Edward Davies, a returned soldier from World War I who committed suicide on the ship when it was anchored between Tulagi and Makambo. Tulagi officials, including the Resident Commissioner, were soon on board and, although the suicide was clear, there was a suspicion that the labourers and crew had a hand in ending his life after he had cut his own throat. Alasa’a spent a week in Tulagi prison awaiting his court appearance. He described the cells as basic, and food was mainly water and hard navy biscuits. His account shows only a limited knowledge of what occurred in the court. He mentions the akalo (his ancestors) and their part in controlling proceedings. He was also involved in a second court case, which in part involved pig theft and a sacrifice to his ancestors. On both occasions, the officials would never have realised the connections being made between ancestral religions and court processes.125

There can be no doubt that a few Solomon Islander leaders got their start in indigenous and mission affairs and government service after working in lowly jobs on prewar Tulagi. Sir Lloyd Maepeza Gina noted that Willy Paia, Ben Kevu, Alec Maena, Daniel Pule and Jonathan Leve, all from Munda, began their careers as government clerks on Tulagi. Silas Sitai from Santa Ana was appointed in 1939 as a clerk in the Resident Commissioner’s office. In his spare time, Sitai learnt Morse code, which led to him being sent to Suva to train as a wireless operator during the Pacific War. His success in Tulagi in the 1930s led to a long career. In the 1960s and 1970s, he became a senior public servant and chairman of the Governing Council.126 Another early Tulagi resident was E.S.D. (Dick) Richardson, the son of George Washington Ezekiel Richardson, also called ‘Dick America’, an African-American mentioned in Chapter 7 who lived on Makira. Dick Richardson joined the armed constabulary in June 1926 and served until 1934, when he resigned with the rank of corporal. He rejoined the police on 1 October 1939 as a constable first class and was promoted to sergeant-major two years later. He was the first Solomon Islander to be promoted to subinspector when he attained that rank on 1 January 1951. He retired from the force in 1959 at the age of 50, and shortly afterwards joined the Marine Department and was employed as master-at-arms in Honiara. He died in 1972.127

125 Burt et al. 2001, 104–11.
126 Gina 2003, 58; Moore 2013, entries for Alec Maena, Willie G. Paia and Silas Sitai.
127 Solomon Islands Police Force Newsletter, June 1972, 18.
Plate 7.23 Samuel Alasa`a was involved in a court case and spent a short time in prison on Tulagi in the 1920s.
He later became secretary of the Kwara`ae Council of Chiefs. He is posed here in 1984 with a subi club and wearing the style of ornaments used in his younger days.
Source: Ben Burt Collection.
Plate 7.24 Shem Irofa’alu worked as a cook at the single officers’ quarters on Tulagi

From To’ambaita Malaita, he became an important leader of the SSEM and later a key Maasina Rule leader. Wearing a white shirt and tie, he is in the bottom right of this 1920s photograph. Back row, left to right: Dick Lioiaa, Livae Liufakona, John Kanakwai, Livae Irokula, Isikiel Surioa, Mr Waite, Robert McBride, Northcote Deck, Joel Kanoli, Joseph Naute’e, James Oto’akaloa, Ma’aruma. Middle row, left to right: Peter Abu’ofa, Othanila, Stephen Meke, Mrs McBride, Mrs Northcote Deck. Front row, left to right: Benjamin Kaniaa, Nathan Maltofana, Harry Fafanga, Stephen Kumalau, Samuel Laukana, Paul Iro’ota, Dauramo, Shem Irofa’alu.

Source: Deck 1928, facing p. 64. Full identification of individuals provided by Ian Frazer.

Jonathan Fifi’i (1921–89) from Kwaio district on Malaita was educated in Seventh-day Adventist schools at Sinalagu in Kwaio and at Marovo in the Western Solomons, before he worked on Tulagi between 1930 and 1941 as a house servant and cook. He became a sergeant in the Solomon Islands Labour Corps during the Pacific War and one of the 10 head chiefs of the Maasina Rule movement, from 1944 to 1952.128 Fifi’i formed the first Malaitan Local Government Council at ‘Aimela and was a teacher at the

128 Maasina Rule (1944–52) began in ‘Are’are, Malaita, in early 1944, at a time when many Malaitans were working in the wartime Labour Corps on Guadalcanal and Gela. Maasina means ‘his brother’ or ‘his sibling’ or even ‘his friend’. Maasina Rule aimed at a radical reorganisation of Malaitan society and wanted Malaitans to have more control over their own lives. The movement’s members were influenced by American servicemen, including African-Americans, whose humane treatment of them and political advice encouraged them to make a stand against the old colonial system. The leaders spread a message of Malaitan independence across the island. Maasina Rule advocated improvements in agriculture, concentration into larger and cleaner villages and, later, noncooperation with the protectorate government and missionary societies. These teachings were coupled at some stages with hopes for American liberation and millenarian ideas, although this aspect of the movement was often fabricated or exaggerated by government officials, and later by anthropologists and historians influenced by government accounts. The movement spread quickly to all areas of Malaita and to neighbouring islands, particularly Makira and parts of Guadalcanal. For eight years, the movement dominated the political scene in the southern Solomons. It was an indigenous proto-nationalist movement grounded in a desire for self-government and self-determination. Akin 2013; Bennett 1987, 202–310.
council school there from 1952 to 1956. He also became a member and later president of the Malaita District Council and a member of the BSIP Governing Council and the Legislative Assembly.\textsuperscript{129} ‘Abaeata (Abaeatha) Anifelo from east Kwaio, Malaita—the son of Basiana, who was executed on Tulagi for his role in the 1927 assassination of William Bell, Kenneth Lillies and their police—became a boy bugler, drummer and policeman on Tulagi, rising to the rank of corporal. Later, he was an assistant district headman and then a central Federal Council leader during Maasina Rule. He was involved in negotiating the final settlement with the High Commissioner and the district officer and became an early Malaita Council delegate from Kwaio.\textsuperscript{130} Shem Irofa’alu, who became the most important SSEM leader in north Malaita and a key leader of Maasina Rule, also lived on Tulagi. He had worked as a plantation labourer and at Auki, Malaita, where he was a cook for the district officer, before moving to Tulagi to work as a cook at the single officers’ quarters.\textsuperscript{131} Another prominent north Malaitan, Heman Ganisua Ioi, grandfather of Lady Margaret Kenilorea (née Kwanairara), was also employed on Tulagi in the 1930s, as was Salana Ga’a (Maega’asia) from west Kwara’ae, who later became the first president of the Malaita Council.

\textbf{Plate 7.25} Silas Sitai from Santa Ana was a clerk in the office of the Resident Commissioner on Tulagi
He became a senior public servant and chairman of the Governing Council. This photograph is from 1957, when he was an administrative assistant at Kira Kira. He is standing with subinspector Dick Richardson and senior clerk Walter Togonu.

Source: PMB, Photo 66_0999, James L.O. Tedder Collection.

\textsuperscript{129} Fifi’i 1989.
\textsuperscript{130} Information from David Akin, 12 October 2018.
\textsuperscript{131} Moore 2013, entry for Shem Irofa’alu.
Plate 7.26 Salana Ga`a (Maega`asia) from west Kwara`ae, Malaita, worked on Tulagi as a *haus boi* and an orderly for two resident commissioners. He became the first president of the Malaita Council, and is shown here with HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on Malaita in 1959.

Source: Clive Moore Collection.
Plate 7.27 As a teenager, Jonathan Fifi’i from east Kwaio, Malaita, worked as a haus boi on Tulagi

One of the 10 head chiefs for Maasina Rule, he became a member and then president of Malaita Council, the Member for Central Malaita in the Governing Council and the Member for East Kwaio in the Legislative Assembly. This photograph is from 1966 and was taken at Ngarinaasuru, behind Sinalagu Harbour, east Kwaio.

Source: Lot Page Collection.
Salana Ga’a said that at 12 years of age he began working as a *haus boi* for Gordon White on Tulagi in the 1920s, and then worked as an orderly for resident commissioners Ashley and Marchant. He became a member of the armed constabulary, as did Stephen Sipolo, a Malaitan from Ngongosila Island off east Kwara‘ae, who joined in the mid-1920s and became a sergeant-major. Sipolo was based on Tulagi in the late 1930s and in the 1940s was a senior policeman on Makira and Malaita. He was dismissed in 1947 for his Maasina Rule connections and reluctantly became a Maasina Rule chief for Kwara‘ae. Jailed with the movement’s head chiefs, Sipolo was released in 1950. In 1960, Sipolo became Vice-President of the Malaita Council.132 While there is no direct proof of the influence Tulagi had on men such as these, it must have been significant. They would have been able to view the colonial process and its foreign public servants at close quarters.

Fifi’i’s autobiography has a substantial section on Tulagi. He described the ‘colonial caste system’ and was scathing about the assumed racial superiority of the Europeans he encountered. Undoubtedly, this influenced his involvement in Maasina Rule and his future political career. One person in his sights was Monty Masterman, the Inspector of Labour:

Tulagi was strange place then. Let me recall some of the things that happened. Solomon Islanders, the young people of nowadays, wouldn’t believe what it was like—the colonial caste system, with the white people all segregated up on the hill, with their hotel and their club; and the Chinese down in Chinatown, who weren’t allowed to mix with Europeans. We Solomon Islanders were at the bottom of the heap …

Let me give you an example of how the British acted, as if they were our lords and rulers. When I was working on Tulagi, I was given a bicycle to use, so I could ride to Chinatown to get bread. One day I was riding my bicycle, and I saw Mr. Masterman. He was the Commissioner of Labour. He was coming in my direction, and I was going towards him. He called out to me: ‘Boy!’ I came to him. ‘Get down!’ He told me to get off my bicycle. I got down. ‘When you see a white man, you can’t go past him on your bicycle. You get off and stand to attention until he goes past. Then you can

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132 Information from Lady Margaret Kenilorea, Honiara, 7 May 2010; Moore 2013, entries for Salana Ga’a [Maega’asia] and Stephen Sipolo; Keesing 1980, 103.
get back on your bicycle. Because white people are the rulers here. You natives are nothing. If you see a white man, you have to give him proper respect.\textsuperscript{133}

In another example from the 1930s, Fifi`i mentions the cooks from the hospital playing soccer at lunchtime, when the ball was accidently kicked under Masterman’s house, which was beside the playing field. Masterman called for his servant to retrieve it, but rather than return it he confiscated the ball and gave it to the police. The police insisted that the boys play a game with the ball as the prize. The cooks lost, and the police kept the ball.\textsuperscript{134}

Masterman was an extreme, but he was far from alone in his racist attitudes and insistence on white supremacy. This thinking was built into the colonial system. Wilfred Fowler provided another example. He came across a staggering drunken European on the outskirts of Chinatown, whom he passed at the same time as did Johnny Sa’a, a petty officer on the government vessel 	extit{Tulagi}. Sa’a showed his concern and went to help the man, only to be brushed aside. The drunk then turned to Fowler:

‘Did you hear what he called me,’ he shrieked when he came up to me. ‘He called me Peter! The bloody black bastard called me Peter.’ He was almost in tears.\textsuperscript{135}

In the 1920s and 1930s, there were as many permanent Solomon Islander residents in the Tulagi enclave as Europeans and Chinese—about 250. There were gangs of wharf labourers from Malaita, mainly from Langalanga Lagoon, who regularly worked to unload and load cargo when the overseas ships arrived. There were Solomon Islanders employed in the administration and by individuals. They were in the armed constabulary, ran messages from office to office, undertook minor clerical duties or were house servants. The postmaster even had a local assistant whose main job was to cancel stamps on letters. There is an indication of mixed-race children in Chinatown and another clue of the Islanders’ presence exists in a photograph that shows houses built over the water, probably as accommodation for the Langalanga labourers.\textsuperscript{136} The Johnsons’ 1917 film seems to indicate Gela canoes beached to trade market produce at

\textsuperscript{133} Fifi`i 1989, 35.
\textsuperscript{134} ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Fowler 1959, 120.
\textsuperscript{136} WPHC 10/XV/325/009. This also appears in other collections.
Tulagi and, as mentioned above, there was an SSEM gospel rally at Tulagi in 1928.\textsuperscript{137} Clearly, some Solomon Islanders were well ensconced on Tulagi, although the photographic evidence is focused overwhelmingly on foreigners.

Solomon Islanders on Tulagi had to deal with sickness and death among their \textit{wantoks}. Hundreds of prisoners and hospital patients passed through, and some died there. On 3 August 1930, young Edna Campbell was out walking with a friend; they went first to Chinatown and then through The Cut to the police barracks on the outer side of the island. A funeral was in progress for two men who had died that day. She also mentions visiting ‘the village’, an indication that there was a separate Solomon Islander settlement—presumably, the labourers’ quarters.\textsuperscript{138}

Depictions of Solomon Islanders at Tulagi vary considerably, from police to labourers, to ‘boat-boys’ and house servants. In 1927, Mytinger described her first view of labourers loading copra at Gavutu:

\begin{quote}
I could see almost all of every one of them, for they were naked except for a strip of calico \textit{lap-lap} rolled up around the loins, but there were no individuals or personalities. There was a double stream of spindly figures with big faces, each head made bigger by an enormous mound of tightly kinked hair on top of it, a rippling line of skin drenched in sweat and coconut oil to the richness of henna-coloured satin. As these figures sped past, the sunlight played over their sharp muscles exactly as it does over the coat of a chestnut racehorse. No white-skinned runners ever looked so dazzling. We had heard a lot about the laziness of these ‘black swine’ on the trip up, but I had never seen men of any colour work so fast. I had never before seen a mass of naked men working either fast or slow. These first Melanesians were surely unlike any other aggregate of men in the world.\textsuperscript{139}
\end{quote}

Mytinger had an outsider’s view of the way the British treated Solomon Islanders and, on Gavutu, she could not help but contrast that with the way that Solomon Islanders, particularly Malaitans, were described as savages even while they were present. Yet, if one reads carefully, it is clear

\textsuperscript{137} Maetoloa 1985.
\textsuperscript{138} UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, Edna Campbell Diary, 3 and 12 August 1930; Innes 2017, 42–43.
\textsuperscript{139} Mytinger 1943, 23–24.
that Solomon Islanders were incorporated into many activities. Sandars mentions golf, tennis and cricket as his main recreations, and that cricket games included Solomon Islanders:

We had some very good cricket players, one particularly, I recollect was the launch driver Talena whom I grew to admire and dislike more everytime I played against him. He was a fast medium right arm bowler and extraordinarily accurate. I rather fancied myself with a bat but Telena [sic] was too much for me on almost every occasion I played against him.\textsuperscript{140}

Edna Campbell also mentions watching a cricket match between ‘the native boys’ at the armed constabulary barracks.\textsuperscript{141}

After the Anglicans built their Christ the King Church in 1937, daily services were taken by members of the Melanesian Brotherhood, which attracted Solomon Islanders resident on or transiting through the island. Reverend Charles Fox, the only European member of the order (1933–44), described their activities in 1938:

When we came back from Rabaul, Brother Peter and I first spent a fortnight at Kopuria, the Brothers’ Headquarters at Tulagi. It is in a mangrove swamp. From this swamp the Brothers issue daily in a small canoe to take services in the new church at Tulagi and in small native churches they have built at Makambo and Gavutu. They also visit the hospital and gaol. The daily attendance of workboys and houseboys, ships’ crews and police is about fifty. They are also growing vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers) for the white people on the hill behind the swamp. Brother Bartholomew Beve (Reefs [from Reef Islands]) is the Head Brother.\textsuperscript{142}

Solomon Islanders also learnt to follow some of the less savoury practices of the Europeans and Chinese. In 1928, a regulation was passed to allow punishment for any Solomon Islander found to have consumed alcohol, as well as punishment for the supplier. Although it was illegal, some Solomon Islanders had access to alcohol—as also occurred in urban areas after the war—on Tulagi, Makambo and Gavutu, and could occasionally be found inebriated in their quarters. In discussions at the 1959 committee into alcohol consumption, BSIP Advisory Council member Mr Kondovar

\textsuperscript{140} Sandars, PMB, Papers on the Solomon Islands, 13.
\textsuperscript{141} UQFL, Wilson Papers and Photographs, Edna Campbell Diary, 26 July 1930.
\textsuperscript{142} Fox 1938.
said that although access was unusual in other parts of the protectorate, on Tulagi, Solomon Islanders had easy access to alcohol, which was sold to them by less scrupulous Europeans and Chinese.\textsuperscript{143} It was also illegal to gamble, but they managed to do that as well and many became keen on games of chance.\textsuperscript{144}

Xavier Herbert, always sympathetic to the local people, was probably correct in his assessment that the British were not so much wantonly cruel, but worse—they treated the Solomon Islanders as if they did not exist.\textsuperscript{145} Racial segregation permeated Tulagi and was imbedded in colonialism. The hospital had segregated wards for Europeans, Asians and Solomon Islanders. The British behaved as superior beings and looked down on the Chinese and Solomon Islanders. At the top of it all, the resident commissioners figuratively and physically looked down on everyone from their house guarded by ‘straight-backed native police clad in polished Sam Browne belts and spotless blue lava-lavas, armed with rifles and fixed bayonets’.\textsuperscript{146}

There were occasions when Solomon Islanders witnessed behaviour they could not understand. In 1922, C. Maxwell, a trader and planter from Isabel, was arrested for murdering one of his labourers, with the charge later reduced to manslaughter. While an investigation was carried out over several weeks, and a judge imported from Fiji, Maxwell was confined under guard on his vessel at the Tulagi government wharf. He could exercise on the wharf, although not even his wife was allowed to speak to him. Solomon Islanders came from the surrounding Gela villages to view the spectacle of a captive white man—the first they had seen. The \textit{Planters’ Gazette} was outraged. The police were accused of ‘strutting about delighted at the opportunity of displaying authority and domination over the white prisoner’.\textsuperscript{147} The \textit{Gazette} asked how European prestige could be maintained in the face of such indignity. One wonders what the villagers made of it all.

Although always polite to the senior members of the administration, the armed constabulary often saluted in an exaggerated manner, noisily slapping their buttocks after any salute, much to the amusement of the

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{BSIPNS}, 31 March 1958.
\textsuperscript{144} Young 1928, 116; F. Young 1926, 145; Hodgson 1966, 42–44.
\textsuperscript{145} Keesing and Corris 1980, 208.
\textsuperscript{146} Ashby 1978, 60.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Planters’ Gazette}, 6, May 1922, 4.
European population, the police themselves and the watching indigenous population. Ostensibly polite, disciplined and proper, they may have been ‘taking the mickey’ out of established authority or were perhaps beginning a long tradition of colourful police parade behaviour that still exists today.148

It is not too long a bow to draw to conclude that the society of the Tulagi enclave influenced the future politicisation of Solomon Islanders. The worst example of all shows the barbarity of the British and their callous disregard of what we would now regard as common decency and humanity. When Basiana was hanged on Tulagi in 1928, his two sons were compelled by the British officials to watch the execution, to teach them a lesson. ‘Abaeata Anifelo, about 14 years old, had been brought into the police as a bugler and drummer. His younger brother, Laefiwan, was only about seven years old. Understandably, the terrible memory remained with them all of their lives and they remembered their father, about to climb to the gallows platform, putting an ancestral curse on Tulagi.149

Solomon Islanders who lived on Tulagi or were in regular contact with the enclave understood the advantages of literacy and further education. They saw the benefits of medical treatment and learnt the way government processes worked. They resented and could not understand taxation, which seemed not to provide any benefits. They were infuriated by the actions of many of the expatriates and had to come to terms with the concept of prison for supposed wrongdoing. Exactly how, and how much, this resentment was articulated is difficult to know. David Akin explored this in his 2013 book on Maasina Rule, colonialism and kastom (traditional culture). Anthropologist Ian Hogbin, who was in To’abaita in north Malaita in 1933, wrote that he only ever heard the people express discontent over specific issues such as taxation and adultery laws, and that it was rare to hear anyone condemn the government as a whole. However, Akin takes a more strident view, saying that Malaitans resented British law ‘as an alien imposition’. He provides an opinion from Aningari from To’abaita, to the effect that the heart of the problem was that Europeans demanded that Solomon Islanders should forget the ways of their ancestors and behave in ways that had evolved in Europe. Anthropologist Douglas

148 ibid., 7, August 1922, 7.
149 David Akin was a friend of the two brothers in their old age and both emotionally recounted this experience to him. See also Keesing and Corris 1980, 186–87.
Oliver (based on Bougainville) believed much the same thing, saying they were punished for acting ‘like a Solomonese when [they] should have acted like a European’.150

This growing feeling of resentment came to a head with the Fallowes Movement (also called the Chair and Rule Movement), a 1930s political protest grouping associated with Richard Fallowes, an Anglican priest on Isabel between 1929 and 1934. The Anglican Church’s system of government there included secular functions, which some district officers felt trespassed into areas more properly controlled by the government. The church had installed wardens in each village and Fallowes inflicted corporal punishment, with canings for some offences. He came under suspicion from Tulagi when he helped translate a petition asking that district officer Francis Filose, who had been removed in 1932 for brutality, be restored to his post. In early 1933, under investigation by the protectorate government, opposed by government headman Walter Notare and native medical practitioner George Bogesi, and suffering mental strain, Fallowes left for a holiday in Australia. On his return, he was arrested and prosecuted on 14 counts of common assault and convicted of three. He returned to Isabel but was still mentally stressed and went to Guadalcanal to recuperate. He left the protectorate in 1935, severely depressed.

Fallowes returned in 1938 and, after discussions on Isabel, he helped paramount chief Lonsdale Gado organise three big meetings, at Bughotu on Isabel and on Savo and Gela, which were attended by a broad range of leaders, from priests to police and traditional leaders. Participants came from Isabel, Malaita, the Gela Group, Savo, Russell Islands, Guadalcanal and Makira. The meetings were reminiscent of the Gela annual Vaukolu Anglican mission meetings of the 1880s and 1890s. At Fallowes’ suggestion, a speaker was elected to conduct the meetings’ business. The meetings produced lists of grievances against the government and missions and petitions, several of which were presented to resident commissioner Ashley. The government was requested to establish a technical school on Gela and a dispensary in each district, staffed by a native medical practitioner. Other requests were to build a government hostel in Tulagi, to allow the sale of cartridges, to stop married men signing back on to plantations for a second term and that Malaitans be given a higher wage

150 Oliver 1961, 227. See also Akin 2013, 88–89.
for plantation labour and as boats’ crews. The Fallowes Movement also asked for the Sydney prices for copra and shell to be posted publicly, and that the protectorate never be handed over to Australia or any other power. One request demanded, rather wishfully, that all wages be increased from 10 shillings to £12 a month. Lesser demands related to marriage, adultery and rights of appeal in court, compensation and customary payments for funeral attendants. Fallowes was also defended against the lack of support he received from his mission.

The third meeting was at Gela in June 1939. High commissioner Sir Harry Luke visited the protectorate immediately afterwards and, before he even reached Tulagi, he faced demands at Makira and Guadalcanal, where the discontent included unhappiness about goldmining, which brought no return to the people. Luke received the Gela petition when he arrived at Tulagi. He was disturbed at the degree of discontent and blamed Fallowes, who had done no more than facilitate the existing discontent. Interestingly, Sir Harry makes no mention of Fallowes in his book, which includes diary entries from his 1939 visit.151 Fallowes was deported on 29 July. The Fallowes Movement declined, but it had become known throughout the protectorate and was the precursor of future movements such as Maasina Rule.152

All of this was happening near and on Tulagi. Many Malaitans who later become involved in Maasina Rule and late colonial politics attended the Fallowes meetings. Jonathan Fifi`i and Basiana’s son `Abaeata Anifelo, Stephen Sipolo, Ariki Nono`oohimae, Harisimae and Hoasihau from ‘Are`are (the last three the key founders of Maasina Rule) were all on Tulagi during the Fallowes Movement years. They attended the meeting Fallowes called on Tulagi at Sasape.153 As Fifi`i recounted:

He [Fallowes] spoke in Pijin, ‘I’m an Englishman too. But I see the British Government here treating you badly. I see all sorts of wrongs being done to you. The Government only helps their fellow white people. You’ve heard the Government tell you, “Oh, that white man is crazy”? Well, I’m not crazy. My mind is working perfectly clearly, and I’m a well educated man. I’m not crazy.

152 Bennett 1987, 259–63; Akin 2013, 100–06.
153 Keesing 1980, 103–04; Akin 2013, 127.
‘I see the way you live in poverty. The Government collects lots and lots of money as export duty on the copra you produce with your labour. Why doesn’t the Government do anything for you? They haven’t brought you any education. I’ve been teaching people that they should have leaders to represent them. But the Government says, “No, we won’t allow it”.

He was right. The Government sent word that we were not to believe what the crazy man was preaching to us. Mr. Ashley, the Resident Commissioner, said, ‘He’s crazy. You aren’t to believe anything he tells you. I’m the Government and I have the power here. I treat you well. We’re not destroying anything of yours, He’s just lying to you’.154

Clearly, Fifi`i was watching closely and thinking about the process of colonialism. During the war, he learnt more about the outside world from the Americans, particularly the African-American servicemen. Then he became a leader of the Maasina Rule movement. Living on Tulagi was all part of the education and politicisation of Fifi`i and others.

There were also other results of discontent that were expressed in a more indigenous manner. Cults such as La`aka, a Malaitan indigenous mechanism for coping with the British presence, reached their height in 1939. La`aka was a powerful ancestress who spoke through the medium of Noto`i, a priest in the central Kwaio mountains, expressing discontent over the deaths of her descendants on plantations and at government hands. La`aka decried the growing power of the missionaries. District officer Bengough estimated that the La`aka cult had 2,000 followers—a large proportion of the inland population in that area. Her increased power can be interpreted as part of anticolonialism.155 In the neighbouring Kwara`ae area, the Bulu cult was one of several attempts to resist the Christian missions. As anthropologist Ben Burt explains: ‘They reflected the aspirations of those who wished to adapt to the changing times on their own terms, through a ritual system under their own control.’156 Similar types of reaction occurred elsewhere in Solomon Islands.

The power of traditional leaders had been weakened by mission and government activities, although the level of the effect varied from island to island. In trying to access the effect of life in the Tulagi enclave, as

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154 Fifi`i 1989, 40–41.
156 Burt 1994, 139; see also 135–39.
Judith Bennett says, we should not ‘impose values of a later age on the
government of a colonial backwater’. Interviews by Keesing, Burt and
Akin in the 1970s and 1980s are not necessarily representative of the
situation decades earlier, and we would be wrong to read too much from
our own contemporary perspective on to Solomon Islands in the 1930s.
Nevertheless, it is inescapable that the government viewed Solomon
Islanders as inferior producers and consumers on the lowest rungs of
British capitalism. A protectorate was—in theory—a lesser form of British
territory, quite different from a protected state or a Crown colony, and
should have been less exploitative, yet the British chose to ignore this legal
difference. Nevertheless, between the 1890s and 1910s, many thousands
of Solomon Islander men worked overseas and knew a great deal about
life in Queensland and Fiji. Others had viewed the circumstances in the
Tulagi enclave. They had rising expectations that were not matched by the
way Britain ruled their islands.

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The tropical beauty and fragrancy cloaked the controlled social structure of
the capital. Tulagi was a British outpost of empire where capitalism, class,
race, ethnicity and place of residence were ordered and controlled. There
were expatriate social substrata that included Christian denominations
and branches of the Red Cross, the Masons and the Guomindang, and
of course Solomon Islanders had their own motivations and levels of
understanding. Malaitans made up the majority of indentured labourers
and were the dominant indigenous group in the Tulagi enclave. This
pattern continued later in Honiara. Other relationships through common
interest among the Europeans in the Tulagi enclave were not as easily
discerned. The war veterans, particularly those from World War I, were
one group with an invisible link, as were the alcoholics and those who
lived with the ‘Black Peril’ (local women). Ceremonial occasions—
such as the coronation of King George VI in 1937, visits by the high
commissioners or the opening of the Advisory Council meetings—were
usually marked with a parade, a church service and a reception at the
residency. The officials lived high on the central ridge, potentates of their
tropical isle, although even they could fall from grace due to hard-drinking
or philandering. Soon, however, it was all to come to an end.
