

A note on nomenclature

One difficult issue is how to spell Solomon Islands geographic and personal names, which over decades have been written in multiple ways. Glottal stops and extra guiding letters in words to indicate pronunciation—such as ‘ng’, ‘ngg’ and ‘mb’, which are single consonant sounds—are difficult to render. Europeans have trouble hearing glottal stops, particularly at the beginning of words, and Solomon Islanders seldom use them at all when they write words. Often, words have been spelt incorrectly and the wrong spellings then become so common they are regarded as normal, and spellings also change over decades. For instance, I have chosen to use Gela, not Ngela or Nggela, as this is how modern usage has evolved. Generally, to write ‘ng’, ‘nd’ or ‘mb’ at the beginning of words is simply to add an unnecessary letter. Even so, I am not always consistent and have on occasion bowed to contemporary and official usage. I have used Mboli as the name of the passage between Gela Pile and Gela Sule islands and Mbokonimbeti as the original name of Sandfly Island, as this is still the usual practice. Solomon Islanders are aware of these sounds and manage to pronounce words correctly, no matter how they are spelt. I have left personal names as I found them and likewise names on early maps.

When individuals were always known by nicknames (for instance, Pop Johnson, Spearline Wilson or Monty Masterman), I have used their Christian names for the first mention and then only their nicknames. Chinese names also present a problem as they are written in many ways. On the first occasion the name appears, I have placed a standard pinyin form in brackets after the version found in the sources unless they are identical with modern forms. In subsequent usage, I have continued to use the original form.

TULAGI

I have converted most units originally in the imperial measuring system to the metric system: 1 acre is 0.404 hectares, 1 mile is 1.609 kilometres, 1 foot is 30.5 centimetres and 1 gallon is 4.546 litres. Ton has been retained, as tonne (0.984207 of a ton) is not an exact equivalent. I have followed the convention of not placing a 'the' before 'Solomon Islands'. For stylistic reasons, on occasions I have also used 'Solomons' as the short form for Solomon Islands.

This text is taken from *Tulagi: Pacific Outpost of British Empire*,
by Clive Moore, published 2019 by ANU Press, The Australian
National University, Canberra, Australia.