

---

## A Meeting

---

### north Queensland miners and Sudest Islanders

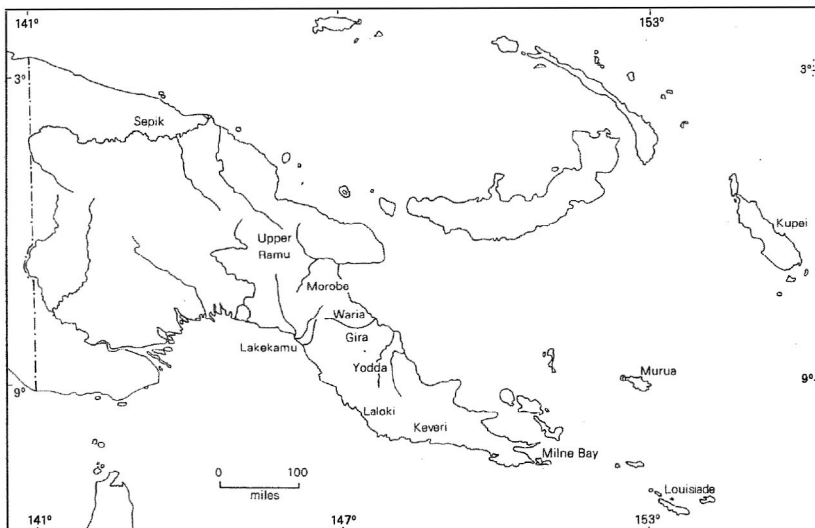
By the end of 1888 nearly 400 Australian miners had pitched tents on the beach near Griffin Point, at the Four Mile and Nine Mile camps, and by claims scattered along the gullies of Sudest, the biggest island in the Louisiade Archipelago. The miners talked of Sullivan and his party who had taken 200 ounces in fourteen days from the west of the island, the seven men who arrived on the *Zephyr* and won 50 ounces in three days, and the diggers who turned up 300 ounces in one shallow gully. It was, they said, 'good looking gold' likely to 'go very nearly £4 per ounce'. But when men began returning to north Queensland early in 1889 none took fortunes with them. The *Mercury* carried twenty-three men who told the Cooktown customs they had 150 ounces; the *Lucy and Adelaide* brought twenty men and 240 ounces; the *Griffin*, twenty-three men and 241 ounces. A few men had made more than wages, but most who followed the rumours of rich gullies further on arrived to find that all the easy gold had been taken. They could re-work the creek beds or open up the terraces for a few pennyweight a day, or they could 'loaf on camps' hoping a rich strike would be made before their stores ran out. The talk on Cooktown wharf was that Sudest was for 'gully-rakers' and 'tucker men', those prepared to scratch a bare living; but of course you could never be sure. Already men were prospecting other islands.

Until November 1888 the miners found Sudest 'cool and pleasant to work'. The anchorage was sheltered by the small islands of Piron and Pana Tinani and the long ling of reef running off the Calvados Chain; and beyond narrow tangles of mangrove near the beach were patches of grassland, rounded hills, casuarinas and coconuts, timbered creeks and forested ridges. Fresh water was plentiful and travelling fair. The diggers shot pigeons and introduced a few head of cattle. One miner, more accustomed to distances in the Australian colonies, said: 'One hop, step and jump and you're over — a good running jump and you're at the other end.' Sudest was 40 miles long and 7 miles wide.

In November heavy rain began to fall, and for a week it did not slacken; it was 'not ordinary rain, but regular sheets of water'. Men could not light fires or dry clothes. 'You lie on your bunk and gasp', a miner wrote, 'for there is not a breath of air to stir the humid muggy atmosphere'. Miners suffered from malaria and dysentery. Later the north-west which brought the 'wet' came in sudden storms, ripping away tents and exposing the sick to lashing warm rain. Gaunt men came ashore at Cooktown, some still trembling from the effects of fever, and on each trip schooner captains reported that they had buried two or three men at sea. The boats from Cooktown and Cairns generally kept the five stores on Sudest well stocked, but not all the miners could pay for rations. With money short and 'liquoring expensive' even the storekeepers were 'not getting rich at a gallop'. And the 'few shady members of the spieler fraternity' who joined the rush found no men who were both rich and gullible.

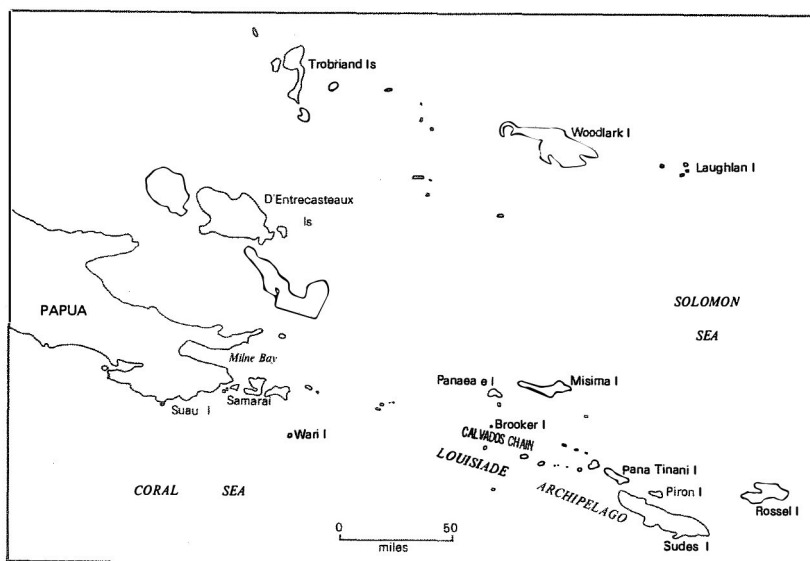
Before the arrival of the miners about 1000 people lived on Sudest. Slightly built and brown-skinned, they had few clothes and many decorations. The women wore leafy skirts bunched on their hips and the men a pandanus leaf drawn tightly across the genitals. In his cushion of hair a man might carry a long-toothed wooden comb, a flower or scented leaves; he had shell ornaments to pass through the septum of his nose and hang from his ears; he wore necklaces and armlets of shell, bone and woven fibre; he tied streamers of pandanus to his ankles; and he carried his betel nut, lime gourd and carved spoon in a basket. The Sudest lived in small inland villages of only four or five houses; each house was a curve of palm thatch over a raised platform up to 30 feet

Map 1 Papua New Guinea goldfields 1878-1930.  
The Waria and the Laloki were not officially declared goldfields.



long. The ground between the houses was swept clean, impressing many nineteenth-century European visitors with 'the cleanly habits of these savages'. The Sudest fished the lagoons and reefs with spears, lines and long woven seine nets. They cultivated yams, taro, sugar cane and bananas, made sago in the swamps, gathered fruit from their tree crops, and jealously husbanded their pigs.

Map 2 The South-East



A sub-group of the Massim people, the Sudest shared many characteristics of a culture spread through the islands of Misima, Woodlark, the Trobriands, the D'Entrecasteaux and the Louisiade Archipelago, and to the mainland villages around Milne Bay. The English anthropologist Seligman, who visited the area in 1904, called the Massim 'merchant adventurers', and Malinowski, who began fieldwork among the northern Massim ten years later, described the people as 'daring sailors, industrious manufacturers, and keen traders'. 'Sailing about' was a common pastime and the construction of sea going canoes, *waga*, was probably the most highly developed craft of the area. The main centre of *waga*-making in the Louisiades was at Panaeate. There the prow and stern boards were carved, the hulls shaped, the side boards fitted, the outrigger fixed and the canoe painted and decorated with shells and given the name it would carry although its owners might change. The *waga*, propelled by an oval matsail, carried men from the Louisiades to Woodlark, the D'Entrecasteaux and Wari Islands. Able to use the many reefs and islets of the area as camping grounds, the traders normally did not spend the night at sea; and when foreign captains

brought sailing boats into the area they too chose not to sail at night in waters so scattered with hazards. The men of some coastal communities spent two or three months a year away from their homes. Canoemen and villagers exchanged pots, stone axe-heads, shell armlets and necklaces, carved lime spoons, food and talk.

Before the arrival of the miners the Louisiade Islanders had encountered a variety of foreigners. Torres, Bougainville, D'Entrecasteaux, Coutance and D'Urville passed by without landing; and all except Torres gave islands and points names which continued to be used by later visitors. After the foundation of Sydney, boats going from Port Jackson to China sometimes threaded their way through the islands, and in the 1830s and 1840s whalers worked the Solomon Sea. By 1850 many islanders were accustomed to taking their canoes out to trade with the crews of passing ships; already some of the axes which men carried hooked over their shoulders were fitted with blades ground from hoop-iron, bolts, and fittings from wrecked vessels; and stories of how the Laughlan and Woodlark Islanders had killed more than twenty men from the whaler *Mary* in 1843 must have travelled the trade routes of the Massim.

When Captain Owen Stanley on a surveying voyage of the New Guinea coast in 1849 brought the *Rattlesnake* and the *Bramble* into Coral Haven, the Sudest had a chance to learn more of the foreigners, acquire their goods and test their strength. After their initial suspicions had passed and their 'violent gesticulations' had failed to persuade Her Majesty's boats to leave, villagers from Sudest and nearby islands traded frequently with the foreigners. They were 'greedy for iron', and when four or five canoes were alongside there was much 'squealing and shouting and laughing'. In one day the Brierly Islanders exchanged 368 pounds of yams for seventeen axes and a few knives; but for the month the *Rattlesnake* and the *Bramble* stayed in Sudest waters all men carried arms. The British sailors believed that the men who watched them were just waiting for a chance to attack, and the islanders who held the wooden swords and spears decorated with pandanus leaf pennants may have had the same fear. The Sudest heard the guns and saw the shot fall in the water when the sailors used their muskets against the canoemen, who took the iron used to anchor a tide-marker, but they did not know the sailors had fired to frighten and not to wound. After the *Rattlesnake* left Coral Haven three canoes from Pana Tinani came alongside one of the boats from the *Bramble*. In dull light just before sunrise they were seen by the watch and some men then came on board pretending to trade. Fighting broke out as the islanders on board grappled with seamen and those in the water attempted to drag the boat inshore and capsize it. Not deterred by the first musket shots, the islanders wounded two sailors before fleeing through the mangroves

pursued by shot from a 12-pound howitzer. News of the encounter spread quickly among the coastal villagers, and men at Brierly Island tried to tell the crew on the *Rattlesnake* that someone at Pana Tinani had been killed. Not having heard of the fighting at Pana Tinani, the British sailors did not understand the strange pantomime, but they did agree to a request to demonstrate the power of their guns by shooting some birds. Later, when the *Bramble* reported the clash, her crewmen were unable to say how many of their attackers had been wounded or killed by gun fire, but as they had moved along the coast of Pana Tinani men on shore had followed them brandishing their spears and shouting challenges.

From the 1870s foreigners and conflict were more frequent in the Louisiades. The foreigners, coming in boats with names of peace and innocence — the *Annie Brooks*, *Pride of the Logan*, *Daisy*, *Emily*, *Alice Meade* and *Lizzie* — worked reefs and lagoons for pearl and bêche-de-mer, or they offered the villagers hoop-iron, axes, knives, calico, jews-harps, tobacco and guns in payment for copra, bêche-de-mer or labour. Many of them left no records of their voyages but the lists of the crewmen who died showed the variety of representatives from the family of man to pass through the Archipelago. Between 1878 and 1887 Chinese, Malays, Queensland Aborigines, South Sea Islanders, Australians, Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, an Indian, an African and a Greek were killed in the islands of south-east New Guinea. New Guinea saltwater men from other areas survived long canoe drifts, wrecks or massacres to live in the Louisiades. In 1887 John Douglas, the head of the administration of the Protectorate of British New Guinea, picked up three Torres Strait women whose husbands had been killed in 1878, and men from Torres Strait, New Britain and Manus lived on Brooker Island for various periods. The Solomon Island crew on the *Retrieve* killed their officers, burnt the boat and, taking Snider rifles with them, settled on Brooker Island where they became men of eminence. The Reverend Samuel MacFarlane, calling at Brooker in 1878 to see if there were any survivors from William Ingham's boat, the *Voura*, was greeted by 'the unmistakable Australian "cooeey!"' followed by the clear tones of a voice asking in English "Who are you?" 'He assumed both came from 'Billy', a Torres Strait Islander who had previously served on pearling boats; but he thought it prudent not to land and check.

No Christian missionaries had worked in the Louisiades before 1888, but the islanders' trading partners could give contradictory reports about the missionaries' behaviour and success. From 1847 until 1855 Catholic missionaries worked on Woodlark Island. At first valued as a source of trade goods, the missionaries were unable to convince the Woodlark Islanders that their explanation of the world was either

intellectually more satisfying, likely to make men treat each other more generously and justly, or able to bring greater material rewards. For much of their time on Woodlark the missionaries were involved in an unproductive contest with the islanders, and when the missionaries left the islanders could believe that they had won. In 1877 the first Polynesian teachers of the London Missionary Society came to live on Wari Island and the Reverend James Chalmers established a mission station at Suau on the south coast near Milne Bay. Chalmers made his last visit to Suau in 1882, but several teachers, sustained by periodic visits from mission boats, became influential in the Milne Bay area where they helped interpret the outside world to the islanders. By 1878 at the latest Louisiade Islanders had encountered the missionaries at Wari.

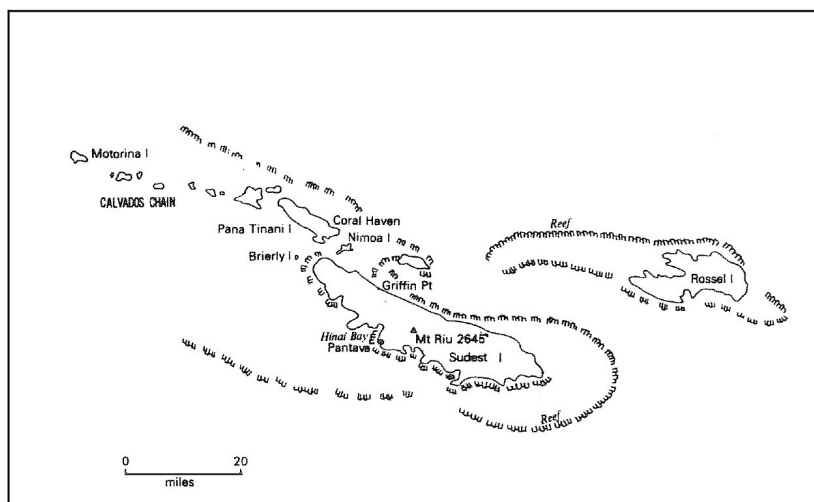
When Commodore James Erskine proclaimed south-east New Guinea a British Protectorate in 1884 he failed to include the Louisiades within the British Empire. It was an oversight. In January 1885 Captain Cyprian Bridge arrived at Brierley Island to tell the people

that the Queen had taken them under her protection, that they must give up fighting amongst themselves, cease to be cannibals — which they admitted they were occasionally — and on no account to injure white men but bring any grievances they might have before the first British officer who might come amongst them.

Bridge also conducted the ‘customary ceremonies’ at Pana Tinani, Rossel and Sudest, where the people were timid but ‘stood the feu de joie better than could have been expected’. As evidence that they had joined the British Empire, Louisiade islanders had flags, copies of the proclamation, and medals, and one man, Rulitamu of Sudest, had taken Bridge’s name. The ceremonies of 1885 were not followed by an increase in the number of government officers in the Archipelago; but other events had already occurred which greatly increased the turmoil in the area.

In January 1884 labour recruiters from Queensland entered the Louisiades. The crew of the *Lizzie* seized some Sudest men while they were asleep onshore and confined them in the hold until they were at sea, but most recruits were duped not kidnapped. Knowing a little of the ways of the bêche-de-mer fishermen, they went on board believing they would be ‘sailing about’ for a few months only. Kroos (‘Sandfly’) and Manboki (‘Dixon’), who had served on bêche-de-mer boats, been to Cooktown and learnt Pidgin, may have knowingly agreed to work on the canefields, but most were like Tacomala of Piron Island. Although he himself had not worked for the bêche-de-mer fishermen he had seen their boats and he knew five Piron Islanders who had worked for them; without being able to ‘hear’ (understand) the recruiters he joined the

Map 3 Sudest



Ceara for Queensland. Many from Pana Tinani and Sudest went out to the recruiting boats with food expecting to be able to trade and were tempted to leave their canoes. Tagalita of Sudest and five others took fish out to the *Lizzie* and after receiving knives, tobacco and calico, all except one agreed to go and work for three months to earn more trade goods. Touinsi, speaking through an interpreter, told the Royal Commissioners inquiring into his removal from New Guinea waters that the recruiter had spoken to him and shown him an axe and other goods: 'I did not understand his talk ... he showed me tomahawk and knife; the tomahawk talked to me; I went in schooner.' In spite of the Queensland law preventing returning labourers from taking firearms with them, nearly all hoped that they would be paid a 'gun and box' (of trade goods). At sea many learnt for the first time that they would be away for three years; they had little idea of the work expected of them on the canefields until they were in Queensland. Some wept when they learnt of the 'gammon along me'. Later in 1884 the *Sybil* and the *Heath* were unable to get recruits in Sudest waters, probably because stories had spread of men being tricked and forced to go aboard earlier boats and because those men who were thought to be going away for only two or three months had not returned. The Commissioners having decided that the recruits were taken by deceit and violence, 405 men were returned to south-eastern New Guinea in June and July of 1885. At six landing places in Sudest seventy-one men and thirteen bundles of trade to compensate the relatives of dead labourers were put ashore; at all places except one the villagers would have nothing to do with those who returned their country men. Another twenty men were landed at Pana

Tinani, and a few others were taken to Panaeate, Misima and to islets near Sudest and in the Calvados Chain. In 1887 another group returned in the *Truganini*. Included among those going to Sudest was Siup of Rambuso village, who had gone on board the *Forrest King* in response to the recruiters' invitation: 'You like tomahawk? You come in the boat you get them.' He returned to Rambuso after three years in Queensland carrying an umbrella and wearing a feathered cap and a 'full dress suit of spotless white'. His relatives greeted him with demonstrations of affection. The crew of the *Truganini* passed among friendly people to picnic in a landscape of many greens. The change in attitude of the Sudest towards the carriers of returning men was a result of other events in the area, and not a response to Siup's finery.

A year after the first recruits returned Captain T. Mullins reported that a 'lad' left on Nimoa Island to look after a bêche-de-mer station had been murdered by people from an island in the Calvados Chain and his head sold on Misima. On Sudest, Mullins said, the villagers were 'disaffected, dangerous and threatening'. The degree of turbulence was soon known widely: a few days after Mullins wrote his report, Captain J.C. Craig and his crew of three Europeans and five Malays were murdered and his pearling boat, the *Emily*, was looted by Pana Tinani and Sudest Islanders. Some of those who died were shot by a man from Pana Tinani using Craig's Winchester rifle. It was the seventeenth incident in ten years in which foreigners had been killed in south-east New Guinea. Some of the attacks may have been made by men who had been ill-treated by labour recruiters, or by the relatives of men who had not returned, or by men confident that they now had the knowledge and power to defeat the traders. But many conflicts arose from particular disputes between islanders and traders. At Panaeate in 1885 the people said they had killed Frank Gerret because he had beaten a man to death, and Kasawai of Pana Tinani claimed that Craig was killed after promising rifles to two men and then supplying only one. The Acting Deputy Commissioner and Government Agent from Samarai, Henry Forbes, who visited Pana Tinani two months after the attack on the *Emily*, heard two other explanations. A Cooktown pearler, J.B. Robinson, working in the area thought that Craig had been attacked by men who believed that they had been underpaid; and Nimoa Islanders said that Godaw villagers of Pana Tinani stole a woman from Ewia village and gave her to Craig. Becoming afraid that the Ewia would attack them when the *Emily* left, the Godaw asked for the woman to be returned. Craig refused and they killed him and his crew to forestall Ewia reprisals. But Forbes could find only one woman who had been living with a member of the crew on the *Emily* and she, he thought, had been 'obtained with consent'. On his second visit Forbes decided that the story about the rifles was the most probable. The Craig case showed



that while local people were likely to have specific grievances, foreigners were unlikely to know much about them.

The deaths of Craig and one of his crew, Walter Hollingsworth, left widows in Cooktown and cast 'great gloom' over the town. Within two years the miners were leaving Cooktown for Sudest taking with them their prejudices, their skills and a way of life. One of the early shanty owners on Sudest was 'late of the Royal, Cooktown' and Clunn's hotel with its iron lace balcony was taken in sections from Cooktown and put together in Samarai.

Unlike most other white Australians the Cooktown miners had already lived in a community where white men were in a minority. Established in 1873 to serve the Palmer goldfields, Cooktown was the port of entry for the 17,000 Chinese on the field by 1877. While the *Cooktown Courier* might deplore the 'hordes of Chinese which an idiotic Government permitted to swamp the best alluvial field ever discovered in Australasia' there were no vicious riots on the Palmer, and the *Courier* condemned the two drunks who helped themselves to the products of a Chinese fruit shop and pelted the women in charge. By the late 1870s the prosperity of Cooktown businessmen depended on the Chinese staying in the area: the business men opposed restricting Chinese immigration and spoke of the virtues of the Asiatic diggers.

The *Courier* recorded more violence between Aborigines and Europeans and showed more prejudice against those Aborigines who survived. On 20 May 1890 the *Courier* used the heading 'MURDERED BY THE NATIVES' for the third time that year. Under another common heading, 'THE BLACKS AGAIN', it told stories of miners and station hands being wounded, horses speared and the telegraph lines being cut so that tribesmen could obtain wire for spear points. Old diggers could recall the raids and counter raids of Battle Creek and Hells Gate where many white miners, Chinese and Aborigines had died, and others had sung the Old Palmer Song:

I hear the blacks are troublesome,  
And spear both horse and man.

And while the *Courier* did not object to a little smoothing of the pillow for those Aborigines who escaped disease and dispersal, it did think such acts of charity should take place away from Cooktown. When the police shifted the 'blacks' out of the town area in 1890 the *Courier* commented: 'This action will be endorsed by ratepayers as the squalid niggers were a great nuisance.' It praised the decision to make part of the annual distribution of blankets at the mission, so preventing the Aborigines coming to town where they were 'always a nuisance'.

The north Queensland diggers also encountered Pacific Islanders. In Cairns, the second port of the New Guinea goldfields, men were

debating whether the cane should be cut by white labourers or indentured Melanesians. To those who argued that the white man could not do hard manual labour in the heat of the canefields, the miners could reply that they had worked alluvial fields in the wet tropics for fifteen years. No miners wanted to change the Act of 1880 which excluded islanders from the Queensland goldfields. In Cooktown Melanesians working on luggers and schooners in the islands trade came ashore and unless they were like Whittens' Papuan crew who attended the Amalgamated Friendly Societies' Annual Sports in 'native dress', they attracted little attention. Cooktown's white community talked with heat about Melanesians when they killed the crews of boats which had often tied up at the Cooktown wharf; then the local press cried loudly for vengeance. The crew of the *Hopeful*, convicted of the murder and kidnapping of labour recruits, were 'martyrs' in Cooktown and the *Cooktown Courier* proclaimed with pride that no jury there would have found Captain Neils Sorenson guilty. Two historians have subsequently described Sorenson as a psychopath who bashed, murdered and kidnapped in the islands.

Believing Cooktown would be the main port for trade between the Australian colonies and New Guinea, Cooktown businessmen kept a watch on the way the government in Port Moresby regulated relations between black and white residents. When William MacGregor called at Cooktown on his way north to begin the administration of British New Guinea as a possession of the Crown, seventy 'leading and representative men' gave him a 'dejeuner' at the town hall. MacGregor had left a poverty-stricken farm in Scotland, graduated in medicine and served the Empire in Mauritius and Fiji before he was appointed to British New Guinea. Some citizens who dined with him in Cooktown were disappointed to learn that MacGregor was 'not disposed to recognize the superiority of the white over the "poor black"'. His early legislation concerned with land, labour and the supply of arms and drink to New Guineans provided further evidence for the north Queensland observers who believed that he was a 'niggerlover' introducing 'twaddling maudlin' protective policies to restrict the 'legitimate' interests of traders and miners in New Guinea.

In May 1888 David Whyte and nine prospectors left Cooktown on the *Juanita*. Whyte, captain of a pearler, had reported finding a gold-bearing reef on Pana Tinani and, encouraged by John Douglas, Cooktown businessmen helped meet the expenses of the expedition. By September 'knots of miners all over town' were talking of the 142 ounces of gold brought back by the men from the *Juanita*. Having found only hungry quartz on Pana Tinani, Whyte's party crossed to Sudest where they discovered alluvial gold in the Runcie River. Douglas had told Whyte that if he was unsuccessful on Pana Tinani he should try the big

island, for the engineer of the *Truganini* had collected samples of quartz there in 1887. Already the *Griffin* had landed another party which had immediately begun to work 'good gold'. On 18 September the *Zephyr* cleared Cooktown with sixty miners and three days later another fifty left on the *Sea Breeze*. By the end of October 200 miners were on Sudest and more were planning to try 'the islands'.

There was no frenzied rush with clerks dropping their pens, sailors deserting their ships and grocers casting aside their aprons and order books. Most men who went to Sudest had worked on the Palmer, Hodgkinson, Etheridge, and Croydon fields of north Queensland: they were 'of the right stamp ... experienced, strong and willing workers'. They were proud of their skills as prospectors, miners, bushmen and pioneers; after them came the settlers and businessmen. They knew that men had died of fever on the abortive rush inland from Port Moresby in 1878; but the death rate had also been high in the early days of the Queensland fields; and if the climate was so harsh why did the missionaries, Chalmers and Lawes, look so 'sleek and fat' when they came to Cooktown? They had heard too of the savagery of the islanders, but their prejudices were modified by unexpected reports from early diggers who spoke of the Sudest as friendly and useful.

The Craig 'massacre' of 1886, the most violent in a series of clashes between traders and villagers in south-east New Guinea, was followed by widespread demands for harsh reprisals. The traders' cry that now no white man would be safe in the area was all the more shrill because the Pana Tinani had taken fourteen rifles, four revolvers and ammunition from the *Emily* before they soaked her stored sails in kerosene and burnt her. The *Sydney Morning Herald* called on the government to shoot some islanders:

Killing a few pigs and burning a few huts, which is the usual punishment inflicted by the British authorities upon the aboriginal murderers of Englishmen, will not be regarded as sufficient punishment for the death of Captain Craig and his crew.

But as Queen Victoria's representative in Port Moresby, H.H. Romilly, pointed out, the government of the Protectorate of British New Guinea was uncertain of its powers to act and in the meantime 'the natives' could go on 'murdering away merrily'. A British man-of-war, H.M.S. *Diamond*, called at Pana Tinani but 'could do nothing'. Then Forbes fitted a gatling gun to the schooner *Coral Sea*, hired Nicholas Minister and his cutter, the *Lizzie*, at £12 per week, collected a force of forty-five men from Wari Island and the eastern Louisiades, and sailed for Pana Tinani. A bêche-de-mer trader already in trouble for seizing island men for work and women for pleasure, Minister led a force of irregulars ashore, each man wearing a red badge to distinguish him from other

islanders. The unofficial report said that when Minister returned next morning Forbes leaned over the rail and asked him if he had made contact with the man suspected of leading the attack on Craig. Minister replied, 'Yes, there's the bastard', and handed up a basket containing a head. In his official report Forbes said Minister and his troop shot Dagomi, a 'noted cannibal and robber' and father of the man who shot Craig, wounded some other men, burnt three villages and recovered guns and ammunition. The Pana Tinani retreated into dense scrub from where they fired guns on the government party. On Forbes's instructions Minister also attempted a surprise raid on Popagania, a Sudest village and the home of Mutiana who was thought to have killed Craig. After visiting Robinson on his boat and a delay in which 'Everyone was drunk, from the mate in charge to the blacks & their gins', Minister left for Sudest. Finding the village deserted, he burnt the houses, cut down the coconut trees and 'ravaged ... gardens'. Forbes hoped that now the Pana Tinani 'marauders' had lost some of their guns other islanders would 'pay them back in their own coin, and help to reduce a tribe whose reputation is of the worst character'. He banned foreign traders from Sudest and Pana Tinani.

Responding to Forbes's encouragement or deciding for themselves to take advantage of the weakness of their enemies, Brooker Islanders, sometimes acting in alliance with other groups, launched a series of attacks on Sudest and Pana Tinani. The raiders carried guns and some of them had served in Minister's punitive force. By the time the miners came to the Louisiades there were only a few people, 'ill-fed, [and] miserable in appearance' on Pana Tinani. Their one village was built on swampy land in the middle of the island and spear points set in the undergrowth guarded the walking tracks leading to the houses. On Sudest the people had been forced inland, their gardens had been reduced in size, some tree crops had been destroyed and they owned no canoes for ocean voyaging. When Douglas visited Sudest just after the men from the *Juanita* began work at Runcie River, the Biowa villagers were lamenting the loss of six dead and three children carried off by raiders; and an early miner, C.L. Bourke, reported seeing 'a grand shindy' in which raiders almost wiped out one group. Douglas rescued the Biowa children and Whyte took them to their homes. But the arrival of more miners ended the attacks on Sudest.

The miners had taken their first gold from the land of a people already responding to a variety of outside forces. For fifty years the Sudest had used iron, they had tested their strength against European guns forty years before the arrival of the miners, about one hundred men from Sudest and Pana Tinani had sailed as labour recruits for Queensland, men from different parts of Sudest spoke some Pidgin, and it is impossible to tell how much the intensity and style of warfare in the

area had been altered by the presence of foreigners and the use of guns. The Brooker Islanders may have been influenced by the Solomon Islanders who sailed with them; but the people of the Louisiades were headhunters before the arrival of any foreigners; and now that old alliances and trading partnerships had been broken, raiders carried firearms and violent foreigners had weakened some groups, it was likely that some islanders would exploit the situation to their own advantage.

In 1888 the Sudest were suffering at the hands of other islanders who had greater access to foreign goods and patronage, and therefore to wealth and power. Mutually suspicious and speaking different dialects, the Sudest were unlikely to unite against the raiders. They welcomed the miners because their presence gave protection and they probably hoped that later they could be exploited, enabling the Sudest to regain their position relative to other groups in the Archipelago. Had the miners arrived two years earlier they might have called the Sudest arrogant and savage; in 1888 they were largely unaware of the forces which now allowed them to report: 'the natives are all friendly'.

Much of the early information about mining is from the *Cooktown Courier* with a lesser amount from the *Cairns Post*. Brierly, Owen Stanley, MacGillivray 1852, Huxley 1935 and Wilcox wrote about the meeting between the Sudest and British seamen in 1849. The killing of the crew of the *Mary* is described in Ward, Vol. 4, pp. 8–9. Mission activity is recorded in L.M.S. Archives, MacFarlane 1888, Lovett 1903 and Laracy 1969.

*Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1887, Vol. 3, pp. 40–2 list conflicts between peoples of British New Guinea and foreigners. Bridge's account of his flag raising is in *Great Britain Parliamentary Papers*, 'Further Correspondence respecting New Guinea and other Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean', 1884–5, Vol. 54, pp. 100–5. The Report with minutes of evidence taken before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the circumstances under which labourers have been introduced into Queensland from New Guinea and other islands etc.' *Q.P.P.*, 1885, Vol. 2, pp. 797–988, is a most valuable document as it records the evidence of the islanders. Additional information from 'Correspondence respecting the return of the New Guinea Islanders' *Q.P.P.*, 1885, Vol. 2, pp. 1053–74; 'Return of Louisiade Islanders to their Native Islands', *Q.P.P.*, 1887, Vol. 3, pp. 611–19; Romilly 1886, 1889 and 1893; Wawn 1973; Corns 1968; Bevan 1890. Two historians who have written about Sorenson are Corris 1973 and Scarr 1967. The violence between traders and islanders, is recorded in Royal Navy Australian Station, New Guinea 1884–8, microfilm, National Library of Australia; *Annual Reports of British New Guinea*; 'Massacres in British New Guinea (Correspondence respecting, and reports of Special Commissioner upon)', *Q.P.P.*, 1887, Vol. 3, pp. 719–26, Records of the Protectorate of British New Guinea, C.A.O., G3–G29 (much of the correspondence is also printed in parliamentary papers); Mayo 1973; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 November 1886, and 10 February 1887; and *Pacific Islands Monthly*, December 1943, p. 43.

The experience of the diggers before leaving Queensland is taken from the Cooktown and Cairns newspapers. Jack 1921, Bolton 1963 and Holthouse 1967 provided general background. Binnie 1944 (the son of a mining engineer), Browne 1927 (a journalist), Corfield 1921 (a carrier) and Hill 1907 (a warden) have published their memories of Cooktown and the Palmer. The early development of mining on Sudest is recorded in the

## A MEETING

north Queensland newspapers; *Papuan Times*, 9 April 1913; Douglas 1888 and 1890; and see Chapter 2. Whyte's letter to Douglas of 24 August 1888 reporting the discovery of gold was printed in the *British New Guinea Government Gazette*, 1888, p. 49.

This text is taken from *Black, White and Gold: Goldmining in Papua New Guinea 1878–1930*, by Hank Nelson, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.