

INTERESTING ITEMS FROM THE COLLECTION

It might strike you as funny to read about a newspaper inside a newspaper, but the editor F.J Morgan would have clarified that his 1933 publication *The Norfolk Island Monthly News* was not a newspaper, but a journal. The January edition (NIM442) is part of the *Norfolk Island Museum Trust* (NIMT) collection and is the only copy of the publication in the collection. It appears the museum has the first issue printed, however there were also indications that there were copies printed in 1932. With only one copy it remains unclear if the *Monthly News* saw out the year, however it still provides us a valuable snapshot of the Bean seed industry and a list of local businesses operating on the Island at that time.

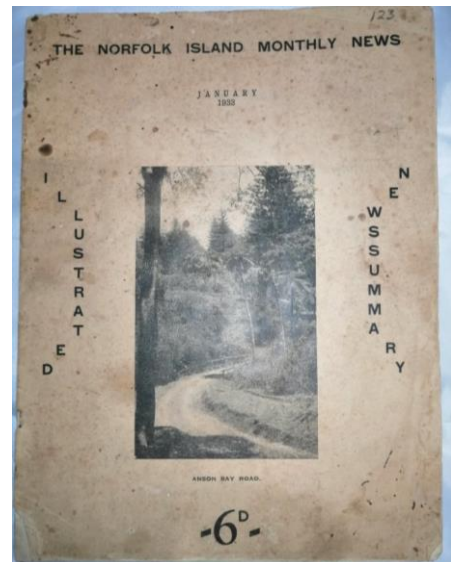


Image 1: Front cover of NIM442

Edited and published by F.J. Morgan, the *Monthly News* was created somewhere along Mt. Pitt Road. Morgan described his publication as a journal that aimed to share the local news and relevant Pacific updates having organised for correspondents from Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, and Lord Howe. He hoped the *Monthly News* would also be used as a tourism promotion that could be sent to friends overseas to help promote the Island.

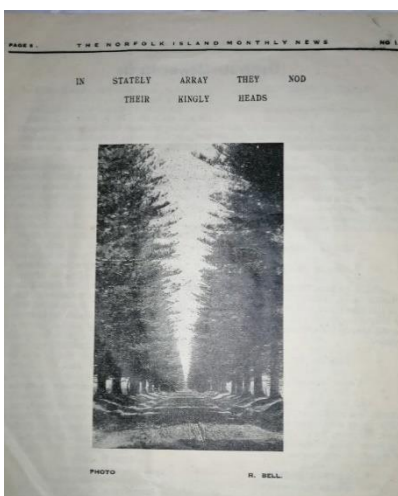


Image 2: Roy Bell's photograph of the 'Avenue of Pines' included to entice visitors to the Island

Newspapers, or journals, are always interesting as they provide an insight into what businesses were running on Norfolk Island at that time and what were current issues of concern. The publication includes advertisements for A.E Martin store (advertising woollen bathers), Norfolk House Accommodation, Mr B. Blake furniture, H.F Chapman as local representative for Farm Produce Merchants. Plumber H.G. Stewart and the photography studio of F. Parton at the Victoria Park Tea Rooms. It also notes that *Burns Philp*, a major South Pacific shipping and merchant company, were supporting two store locations on Norfolk Island in 1933, its original at Kingston in the Old Military Barracks building and their new store at Middlegate.

The advertising also lets us know that there was a competitive photography market on the Island. In addition

to F. Parton's photography studio, both the *Norfolk Island Photo Service* and Roy Bell were selling photography on Norfolk Island in 1932. The *Photo Service* were also selling the works of W.H Tustin's and even had a lantern slide specialist on staff. Postcards appeared to be a popular item as they were both sold by *Photo Services* and Parton. The newspaper has also reproduced three of Bell's photographs in the publication, an expensive accomplishment for the small journal.

Food growth and export takes up the majority of discussion. The Banana Industry was mentioned as it was experiencing low prices. The author recommended that the unreliable banana plantations be supplemented with Macadamia trees. Another article discusses the general health of the *Canadian Wonder* bean seed with only 4% of the Island's crop suffering from disease making it the healthiest bean crop in the world. It also suggested the Island add other varieties including *Shingless Green Pod*, *Bountiful Bean* and *Feltham's Prolific*. A. E. Martin was the president of the N.I Chamber of Commerce and local store owner who supplied an entire article on *Canadian Wonder* bean seed. He recommended islanders plant during August and described the seed ready for market as 'a very dark hue, kidney shaped' while rogue beans were unfit for sale or replanting and were 'irregular in shape, pencil points and ...discoloured'. The industry was to endure 3 decades on Norfolk Island, ending in the late 1960s.

The 1930s were the depression years in Australia and the Journal's preoccupation with food export, having included two advertisements from different Farm Produce merchants and agents, perhaps indicated that there was a strong Sydney demand for an additional supply of fresh fruit, and not just bananas. Interestingly the journal records a telegram sent from a Methodist Church in Sydney thanking the community of Norfolk Island for sending fruit and other gifts to be given to the poor in Australia.

Letters received from overseas also show that some tourists visiting Norfolk Island in the 1930s had travelled as far as England. One writer recalls being landed via whaleboat at Kingston 'after a safe but exciting run through the hole in the reef... watch the skilful manoeuvres of Louis, Shunner, Cobby, Carty, Tom, Ellis, Swain, and other stalwarts of the Boating Company. Then to refresh ourselves at inimitable 'Maggie Tom's.' The account sounds very different to the routine arrival of today's tourist on a Qantas jet.

If you would like to view this newspaper (ahem journal) or any of the other early newspapers held in the Norfolk Island Museum Trust collection, please feel free to ring 23788 or email us at info@museums.gov.nf to organize a viewing time.

Bethany Holland
COLLECTIONS OFFICER

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