

Teacher Writes Home From Borneo Mission

The following news-letter was received at Christmas time from Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Herbison of Borneo. Mrs. Herbison is the former Agnes Klinck of Stouffville. With her husband and five children, they left Vancouver in August on a two-year teaching mission. Their eldest daughter, Kathie, is teaching in India. Wendy is married and living in Vancouver. She is an accomplished violinist, playing in a Symphony Orchestra in that city. Mrs. Herbison writes as follows:

— prawns and perfumes, rice and radios. There's a bank, a theatre, a swimming pool (SO refreshing these hot December days) and sidewalk eating places where the service is plain but the cooking is fancy. All this beside the famous tidal bore river, Batang Lupar.

Downriver are Malay "Kampongs", Moslem villages of fishermen and farmers. Even on the muddy bank their boats are graceful; but aloft, each with unique design and colorful passengers; they look like dreams of South-east Asia come vividly, unbelievably, true.

One day last month (on official duty) we found ourselves beyond the mouth of the Lupar, in a small boat out in the South China Sea. Singapore was westward, Vietnam a thousand miles to the north, Sarawak only a misty line on the horizon southward. Back to that shoreline, we snaked through sand-bars at the mouth of the Krian along low-lying swampy coast crowded with mangrove trees, then nipah palms (used for sugar, roofing, and cigarettes), stopped at a Malay fishing village where a thousand thatched homes crowded together on pilings above the mud. Along the river bank would sometimes be a sago mill, with booms of logs waiting to be ground into flour. Everywhere were low, muddy padi farms where cone-hatted Chinese or Iban men and women stooped under the torrid sun, planting rice. Tall coconut trees were in the distance.

Our travels took us overland through hilly country charred and smoking from fires set to clear ground for the planting of hill padi, a rice grown traditionally by the Ibans in dry jungle soil. Soon we came to the wide 350-mile long Rejang, went by speedboat (60-horse Johnson outboard made in Canada) for two hours and arrived at Sibul, where

ocean-going vessels were loading rubber, timber, and pepper. Someday perhaps, we'll ascend the Rejang to its "ulu" up-country, and see the Kayans, Kenyahs, and shy Punans ... but now ...

Here we are sliding along another river, this time a narrow stream meandering through quiet forest. We sit low in a long, slim native boat skillfully manoeuvred by a dark Sea Dayak. Monstrous vine-covered jungle trees arch across the clear waters of our winding waterway: an idyllic picture-perfect scene. By trail through a forest of rubber trees, to a real Iban longhouse. What would it be like, this typical communal home of the "Sea Dayaks", makers of legends about head-hunting, picay, and pagan beauty. Fifteen feet above ground for sanitation and protection, 400 feet long ... the front steps are notches in a sloping log. Inside (remove your muddy shoes) a far-reaching "porch" of bamboo strips covered by woven mats. Rice storage bins above, a few old heads hanging around. A young man in loin cloth squatting, trimming wifes for a fish-trap. The old Tuai Rumah coming to meet us — his kindly face smiling a welcome, tattoos on neck and chest, and on hands showing the number of heads. The women and children hesitant, intrigued by Nancy's braids and Brenda's coloring. Sound the gong! (a huge, shaped circle of bronze) with muted hammer; call everybody in — guests have come. We must bathe in the stream, and after a while tea is served, with sago biscuits. (Not a feast, but that's another story, about sinewy men dancing by lamplight, girls wearing silver dollars, gongs concupating till dawn ...). We squat on mats; admire the women's beautiful weaving, play with the pet monkey, pretend to exchange children (the wizened old ladies laugh in glee, their lips

ludicrously red with betel-nut juice). We ache to talk their language, trying by helpless gestures to close the wide gap between our cultures ...

Our students return next week for the Christmas holidays, to the kampongs, the longhouses, the homes above the Chinese shops — and try to relate the old to the new.

Brenda will be going home with an Iban (Sea Dayak) girl. Nancy has had no school to go to, so has made few friends her own age. David is in Kuching teaching a class of 46 grade fives. Kathie is finishing two years' teaching in India, may join us here in July. Wendy is both housewife and symphony violinist in Vancouver. The appointment here is under Canada's External Aid, Colombo plan: address, Government Secondary School, Simanggang, Sarawak. Please write.

We'll be thinking of you at Christmas time ...

The Herbisons, Hugh, Agnes, David, Brenda & Nancy.



Exterior Lighting Enhances Markham Home
Markham's several subdivisions took on a new look during the Christmas and New Year's season. One of the most eye-catching was the residence of Edgar Fisher, Paradise Avenue. — Staff Photo.

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Scattered around the hillside amongst hibiscus bushes and banana trees, the green jungle all around, are thirteen homes for teachers and cooks; dining hall, five classroom blocks; and six boarding houses for 200 of our 340 students. Houses are on stilts set in concrete gutters for the daily downpours. All have electricity, running water, and louvered windows.

Breakfast in the dining hall is at 7; classes from 7:40 to 12:10, and 2 until 3:30; then chores (grass cutting, weeding, sweeping) and games (soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton). After supper, study from 7 till 9, lights out at 9:30.

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rows. Another rarity was a Cowbird at Kinsale.

Some of the results of the day show that Woodpeckers are down in numbers, Northern Finches have not appeared as yet, and Cardinals are on the increase, as are House Sparrows and Starlings. After travelling 70 miles by car and a number on foot, here is the score:

Goldfinch, 260; House Sparrow, 235; Starling, 17; Chickadee, 116; Junco, 54; Rock Dove, 46; Tree Sparrow, 40; Blue Jay, 23; Cardinal, 15; Downy Woodpecker, 9; Northern Shrike 5; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; White-breasted Nuthatch, 9; Red-tailed Hawk, 4; Great Horned Owl, 3; Ruffed Grouse, 2; Black Duck, 2; Common Crow, 2; Field Sparrow, 2; White-throated Sparrow, 1; Cowbird, 1;

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Annual Census Rarest Bird Species In Conservation Area

By EDGERTON, PEGG
This census is organized and compiled annually by Dr. J. M. Speirs and was taken on December 26th. A full report, which is made in the interests of the National Audubon Society, is not available as yet. Last year's 60 species was a record for that date.

Those who took part in our section, which was bounded by Brougham, Claremont, Balsam and Kinsale areas, were Ken McTaggart, Don and Steven Goodwin, Charlie Christie of Oshawa, Hal Pegg and myself.

We found birds plentiful and feeders well sup-

plied at the homes of the Kortright's, Tremier's, Death's and at General and Lady Kitchie's. At Brougham, we stopped to count Bluejays and Cardinals as they flew to a feeder at the Storey home. A huge flock of Goldfinches caught our eye just east of Brougham as we drove up a sideroad.

Birds were coming from all directions at the Andy Bate's home and eight species were chalked up. Rarest species at this time of year, were found in the Claremont Conservation Area. They were a Great Blue Heron, a pair of Black Ducks, a White-throated Sparrow and 2 Field Spar-

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