

As we were : New Guinea 1934



Michael Leahy in 1934

One of the most intriguing aspects of PNG is that it is only just over 80 years since “first contact” was made with the highland people of New Guinea.

Incredibly that first contact in PNG was made by an Australian prospector called Michael Leahy from rural Queensland, who fully documented his experiences in a daily journal and also took an extensive series of photographs using his Leica camera – thus providing a unique insight into an amazing series of events!

Prior to the discovery of significant gold deposits at Edie Creek on the north coast of New Guinea there had been no attempt by the Australian government to venture inland and explore the very rugged interior.

It was simply assumed that because as the highland terrain was so difficult, nobody could possibly be living there.



Most of us are interested in our family tree and our place in it.

Even more general interest is shown when it comes to how our parents and grandparents lived, worked and survived in their personal environment and what that environment looked like. Over the next few months The Digger will reproduce city scenes from around the country in a “As we were” series, that we hope you will enjoy.

If you have any memories and photo's of your city that you'd like to share please send to:

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Please do not send originals. If you would like photos returned include self addressed envelope. Or email PDF copy to:

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with short description of the location.