

From John Wren-Lewis

Sydney, Dec. 22 1984

Dear Mrs. Robertson,

I am absolutely livid that my friends in Malaysia neglected to forward your letter in time to reach me before we left Sydney in October to go on a tour of Northern New South Wales and Queensland. I was actually in Brisbane at the same time as you, so we could have met even though I was away from home - but when I called your friend Joan Muston after getting back to Sydney this week and opening your letter, she told me you had had an accident in Brisbane, so maybe it wouldn't have been such a good time. I was very sorry to hear that the accident interfered with your plans for a U.S. holiday, but your friend assures me that you are now OK so I am writing without delay to thank you for your thoughtfulness in trying to contact us here.

Although I cannot recall specific details, I feel sure I have seen at least one of your films, though when I was in England this was not the kind of subject in which I had any special interest; in those days I had a full-time job managing research for ICI, and although I did a great deal of broadcasting both on radio and TV, this was mainly on questions of the relations between science and religion (several debates with Malcolm Muggeridge, for instance, and memorial programmes for H.G. Wells and T.S. Eliot) and so-called "primitive" cultures remained only on the periphery of my interests. In fact if anyone had told me in those days that my 59th birthday would be spent hacking my way through the jungle and crossing raging torrents up to my waist, pausing to take leeches off my legs only to have native guides urge me to hurry because we had to get to the next village by nightfall since they had sighted tiger-tracks, I would have said they must be mad. In the event, there were moments on that 59th birthday when I thought I must be mad, but I wouldn't have missed that year with the Temiar for worlds. (Ann says the same, though she paid the price of malaria, despite all the proper precautions). If you and Eric would be interested to see some absolutely up-to-date photos of the Temiar, ~~xxxx~~ a few of ours have been printed (along with some extremely valuable old ones given us by a former Malay civil servant named Harry Oppenheim, now living in retirement in Hampshire) in a long interview article in the November 1984 issue of the ~~p~~ Australian popular science glossy Omega Science Digest, copies of which must surely be available at Australia house, if nowhere else (and I suspect some of your former BBC contacts in the science field get it). We gave the interview following a preliminary presentation of our research results to the Anthropology Department of the University of Sydney, where the Head of Department introduced us by saying that where some seem to be born anthropologists, ~~xxxx~~ and some achieve anthropology, we seemed to fall in the category of having had anthropology thrust upon us - by our feeling that someone had to get at the truth about the alleged Temiar dream culture, and since the professionals who had worked in the area since Noone were all shy of committing themselves on psychological issues, there seemed no alternative but to go into the jungle ourselves.

We are now off to New Zealand for between six months and a year, in which time we hope to get a book written, or at least started, on the whole story. At the same time we shall be submitting applications to the Aussie High Commission to return to Australia as residents, since a lot of people in the universities here seem to want us and we find the country provides something of a mean between British and American cultural scenes, with on the whole better climatic conditions than either. So we have no plans for returning to the UK in the foreseeable future, and since Mrs. Muston thinks it unlikely that you will be coming here again, it looks very much as if our chance of chatting with you about your reminiscences has gone. We regret this very much, but you will appreciate that making a trip to England is rather a major step for a couple of wandering scholars like ourselves, even though you are not the only person we should like to talk

AEROGRAMME
Christmas 1984



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*written to Jane 12/1/85
giving Wren-Lewis
address AR*

TO Mrs. Eric Robertson

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COUNTRY OF DESTINATION ENGLAND

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DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS LINE

with about the Noone/Stewart story.

All I can ask is that if the mood takes you to jot down any of your reminiscences on paper in the upcoming months, or if you happen to have any spare copies of those photos taken on the famous recording occasion, do please put same in an envelope and mail it to us c/o Prue Bell, 12, Kohia Avenue, Epsom, Auckland 3. Meantime, in the hope that it may be some small recompense for the help you have already given, I have asked the Australian Institute for Psychical Research to send you, when it comes out at the end of this month, a copy of their Bulletin in which there appears my story (a transcript of a lecture, so it isn't in my very best prose style, but it's not bad) of the extraordinary thing that happened to me in Thailand last year when we went there for a holiday after our Malay jungle caper. From what Ivan has told me about you, and from your remarks about Sir James Jeans and J.W. Dunne in your letter, I infer (I hope correctly) that you have an interest in what might be called the "higher" reaches of human consciousness, which after a lifetime of scepticism about all things mystical, have suddenly been opened up to me by a close encounter with death (what modern scientific jargon calls a "near-death experience.") Any comments would be welcome.

Yours

Jae WLC