

- 19 Kala Waia, *Weaving "Sawalag" from Saibai Island* pencil on paper TR1791/274
- This sketch depicts the miniature version of how children are taught the weave in making the "Sawalag". The sawalag is assembled from swamp reeds. Its purpose is to store harvested garden vegetables of yam (gabau), taro (goeyn) and sweet potato (urugbau) for home and planting the next crops.
- 20 Kala Waia, *Children's game from Saibai Island* 10 May 1971 pencil on paper TR1791/273

This game is called Boerdth. The game teaches boys in coordination and accuracy skills. This is a fun activity and the spear is the mid rib of a bladey grass. The targets are trunks of banana tree or small shrubs, accompanied by a chant. "Apa kuikupa geth waniz" "Apa kuikupa geth waniz"

The chant is repeated until the aim reaches accuracy of the target.

- 21 Margaret Lawrie, *Flowers and fruit of mangrove (Biu) for Kamu Sagul (children's game) from Yam Island* 24 Apr 1972 watercolour on paper TR1791/215

This is a children's game and is played on the beach. The children use the mangrove flowers both red and brown to represent people (see artwork). Using one's imagination the story is told to an audience of other children, all taking turns or played in solitude by children.



- 22 Margaret Lawrie, *A mask worn by mothers to frighten children and description of its reaction from Murray Island* 11 May 1972 pencil on paper TR1791/240
- The purpose of this was to discipline children not to wander too far from the village so that they would not fall into harm's way.
- 23 Kala Waia, *Dogai Dagmet from Saibai Island* ink on paper TR1791/285



- 24 Francis Abai, *Fishing from Saibai Island* ink on paper TR1791/260
- 25 Segar Passi, *Fish: birds and fishes of Murray Island nos. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56* 8 Feb 1968 watercolour on paper TR1791/301
- 26 Segar Passi, *Fish: birds and fishes of Murray Island nos. 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48* 8 Feb 1968 watercolour on paper TR1791/300
- 27 Segar Passi, *Fish: birds and fishes of Murray Island nos. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25* 6 Feb 1968 watercolour on paper TR1791/296

- no. 21 Kaupai ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 362
- no. 24 Neggag ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 309; *Tales from Torres Strait*, pg. 10
- 30 Segar Passi, *Fish: birds and fishes of Murray Island nos. 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62* watercolour on paper TR1791/302

- no. 57 Kamosar ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 339
- no. 62 Melpalumen ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 322
- 31 Segar Passi, *Birds: birds and fishes of Murray Island nos. 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106* 20 Feb 1968 watercolour on paper TR1791/310

- no. 95 Serar, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 302
- no. 100 Bauger, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 348
- no. 101 Kaubet, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 275
- no. 102 Sir, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 275
- no. 103 Tote, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 345
- no. 104 Karor, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 345
- 32 Segar Passi, *Birds: birds and fishes of Murray Island nos. 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125* watercolour on paper TR1791/312

- no. 118 Kriskiriti, ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 348
- no. 119 Dibadiba ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 315
- no. 120 Norebiti ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 349
- no. 125 Kuduluk ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 37
- 33 Locky Tom, *Crab from Boigu Island* watercolour on paper TR1791/252
- 34 John Baud, *Walek, the frill-necked lizard bringing fire to Torres Strait from Mabuia Island* watercolour on paper TR1791/247

- ill. *Tales from Torres Strait*, pg. 2



- 35 John Baud, *Walek, the frill-necked lizard bringing fire to Torres Strait from Mabuia Island* watercolour on paper TR1791/249
- 36 Segar Passi, *Bird: birds and fishes of Murray Island No. 137* 24 Feb 1968 watercolour on paper TR1791/315

Traditionally young boys were trained in the art of making pigeon traps to snare birds as game or pets. Birds were considered a delicacy to eat and their feathers were used in decorating ornaments and dancing gear (zamiak).

- 37 Locky Tom, *How to catch a bird (part one) from Boigu Island* 21 Sep 1971 pencil on paper TR1791/254

- 38 Locky Tom, *How to catch a bird (part two) from Boigu Island* pencil on paper TR1791/255
- 39 Locky Tom, *How to catch a bird (part three) from Boigu Island* pencil on paper TR1791/256

- 40 Margaret Lawrie, *Kemus. The first landing place of the London Missionaries when Christianity was initially introduced into the Torres Strait, Darnley, Eastern Torres Strait* Jun 1966 TR1791/165 Album 3191

- 41 Margaret Lawrie, *Granite boulder, Dauan Island, Western Islands* Aug 1971 TR1791/173 Album 3201 Neg. 179125/25

- 42 Margaret Lawrie, *Murray Is, Eastern Islands* 25 Jan 1970 TR1791/164 Album 3190

- 43 Margaret Lawrie, *Low tide, Eger on Murray Island, Eastern Islands* 25 Jan 1970 TR1791/163 Album 3189

- 44 Margaret Lawrie, *All the teachers who worked with Margaret Lawrie including Kala Waia and Francis Abai. Teacher's Seminar, Thursday Island, Western Islands* 1965 TR1791/169 Album 169

- 45 Margaret Lawrie, *Waraber (Sue Island), Central Islands* 1964 TR1791/167 Album 3194

- 46 Margaret Lawrie, *Mabuia Island at Wagadagam toward Aipus and Pururai Islands, Western Islands* Oct 1967 TR1791/171 Album 3199

- 47 Margaret Lawrie, *Grinding stones, Yam Island, Central Islands* c.1964-1973 TR1791/166 Album 3193
- 48 Margaret Lawrie, *Game of Kamu Sagul, Yam Island, Central Islands* c.1964-1973 TR1791/166 (2) Album 3193

- 49 Margaret Lawrie, *Traditional canoe with dugong hunter and harpoon, Boigu Island, Western Islands* 1966 TR1791/175 (2) Album 3205

- 50 Margaret Lawrie, *Hillside freshwater spring on Murray Island* TR1791/165 Album 3189

- 51 Margaret Lawrie, *Coconut Island, Poruma, Central Islands* Aug 1964 TR1791/167/3194

- 52 Unknown photographer, *Mrs. Lawrie and the Anglican Church Mothers Union outside the Chairman's residence, Yam Island, Western Islands. Mrs. Lawrie's first visit in 1964* TR1791/166 (1) Album 3192

- 53 Margaret Lawrie, *Landing at Burugud, Dauan Island, Western Islands. The area is used for cutting dugongs* Oct 1968 TR1791/173 Album 3201

**List of loan items**

These props and adornments (jewellery) are used by dancers performing Torres Strait Islander dances (Western Islands). Craftsmen adopt and substitute materials that are readily available commercially. These examples of traditional props are replicas used in performances that tell a story through the choreography of dance.

- 54 Roy Ober, *'Mai katauza' dancer's necklace* 2009 pearl shell Private collection of Roy Ober

- 55 Roy Ober, *'Katauza' dancer's necklace* 2009 shells Private collection of Roy Ober

- 56 Roy Ober, *'Katauza' warrior's dance necklet* 2009 beads, seeds and pearl shells Private collection of Roy Ober

- Worn by male dancer when performing a warrior dance.
- 57 Roy Ober, *'Dagul' spear* 2003 bamboo Private collection of Roy Ober

- 58 Roy Ober, *'Marap' clapsticks* 2003 bamboo Private collection of Roy Ober

- Traditionally made two metres in length and used by Islanders at night to ward off snakes.
- 59 Roy Ober, *'Katauza' dancer's necklace* 2009 beads and seeds Private collection of Roy Ober

- 60 Roy Ober, *'Moey urucam' dancer's belt* 2009 kauri shell Private collection of Roy Ober

- 61 Roy Ober, *'Baku kusu' drinking cup* 2009 inner coconut shell Private collection of Roy Ober

- 62 Roy Ober, *'Abalau waku' woven mat* 2009 pandanas Private collection of Roy Ober

- 63 Roy Ober, *'Dhoer' child's head-dress* 2009 bamboo, string, vinyl, and painted decorations Private collection of Roy Ober

- 64 Roy Ober, *'Kuiku musur' dancer's head-dress* 2009 woven raffia and feathers Private collection of Roy Ober

- 65 Roy Ober, *'Zugu musur'* 2009 woven raffia Private collection of Roy Ober

- Worn by a male dancer on the upper arm.
- 66 Roy Ober, *'Kadthig'* 2009 woven raffia Private collection of Roy Ober

- Worn by a male dancer on the forearm.
- 67 Mary Betty Harris, *Woven basket* 2006 plastic Private collection of Elizabeth Fa'Aoso

This ladies woven basket is made from yellow plastic strips and decorated by colourful inter-woven flowers and geometric design. Traditionally woven from coconut and pandanas leaves, Islanders are now utilizing materials that are durable and longer lasting.

**Acknowledgements**

Meriba Gidhal means 'our stories' and is derived from the two main languages of the Torres Strait Islands, Meriam Mir and Kala Lagau Ya.

This exhibition was initiated and curated by Nancy Underhill and Elizabeth Fa'Aoso, Indigenous Resource Officer, Heritage Collections, State Library of Queensland. Special thanks to Roy Ober for the loan of material for the exhibition. Thanks also to Edith Lawrie, Colin Sheehan and the State Library of Queensland's Torres Strait Islander Reference Group – Janna Richardson (past member), Steven Mam sr, Thomas Sebasio, Edna Brown, Rose Eli, Barry Watson, Edna Billy, Leonora Adidi, Jacob Luffman and Roy Ober who provide advice and assistance on matters of cultural significance to the Margaret Lawrie Collection.

The Margaret Lawrie Collection within the John Oxley Library is available online at [www.manuscripts.qld.gov.au/](http://www.manuscripts.qld.gov.au/). Keyword search is Margaret Lawrie or TR1791.

Cover illustration: Item No. 4



# Meriba Gidhal

## Torres Strait Island Treasures of the Margaret Lawrie Collection

24 October 2009 – 28 February 2010  
Talbot Family Treasures Wall, Level 4  
State Library of Queensland





3 (detail)

**A remarkable Queenslander: Margaret Lawrie 1917 – 2003**

The Margaret Lawrie Collection in the John Oxley Library is the culmination of the work of Margaret Lawrie, documenting the history, languages and cultures of the Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Margaret Lawrie was a friend and colleague of noted Aboriginal poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) and travelled widely with her throughout the 1950s and 1960s. During this time they were both important influences on the development of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Later, Margaret Lawrie became interested in the history and cultures of the Torres Strait Islander peoples and spent significant periods within the various Torres Strait Islands communities. She gathered information and material about the myths, legends, languages, history, art and culture of the region between 1964 and 1973.



2 (detail)

Also contained within the collection are the manuscripts of the two works she published, *Myths and legends of the Torres Strait* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1970) and *Tales from Torres Strait* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, c. 1972).

c. 1972). The former book was published in both Australia and the United States and although out of print, is still widely considered an iconic work.

The Margaret Lawrie Collection complements the earlier work done by Alfred Haddon. His expedition team from Cambridge University visited the Torres Strait in 1898 publishing the results of their regional ethnography in six volumes between 1901 and 1935. Both bodies of research provided evidence in the 1992 Mabo case for Native Title.

The Margaret Lawrie Collection has been included on UNESCO's Australian Memory of the World Register.

Material gathered by Margaret Lawrie can also be found in the collections of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Queensland Herbarium.

**Memories of My Mother by Edith Lawrie**

Margaret Lawrie's daughter Edith Lawrie kindly shared the following memories of her mother with Elizabeth Fa'Aoso and Nancy Underhill who curated *Meriba Gidhal*.

My mother was born in Gippsland, Victoria but came to Theodore, Queensland as a child. She boarded at St. Faith's Church of England School in Yeppoon where her interests developed in English and especially music for which she received her Letters. While she never underwent formal teacher training, she taught at St. Faith's before marrying my father, Alexander Greig Ellis Lawrie (1907 at Lorn, NSW – 1978 at Rockhampton). Dad ran cattle on the family station, *Evergreen* at Westwood outside Rockhampton on the Emerald road where my brothers and I were all born and grew up. When he was elected to the Senate in 1964, 1970, 1974 and until he retired from Federal Parliament in 1975, she would go to Canberra for important occasions but much preferred to live at *Evergreen*.

I remember sharing with Jorn Harbeck when he was working on her collection the fact that the Queensland Government asked my mother, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Peg Wiley, a social worker from the Health Department to travel to Cape York and Torres Strait Islander communities and report on children's health and other issues,

such as children's educational needs in these communities. Her love of teaching prompted her to return annually between 1964 and 1973 to help run a teacher-training session for Torres Strait Islander teachers on Thursday Island during the summer school break.

Mother became fascinated with the various Torres Strait Island cultures and gained the trust of elders and members of the Mothers' Union of the Church of England. Her aural sensitivity allowed her to learn the Meriam Mir language and several elders approached her to record the stories and genealogies they felt were at risk of being lost. She did this in her own time and without formal official support, other than a grant from The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now AIATSIS) which allowed her to buy a good tape recorder. It was together, between 1964 and 1973 my mother would have spent at least two years in the Torres Strait, including some six months on Mer (Murray Island) during 1967/1968. She also met with people in Brisbane, Cape York and Thursday Island. Her interest in history extended to doing a yet unpublished account of the London Missionary Society and the white settlements of nearby Somerset and Cape York as well as Thursday Island since the arrival of white missionaries in 1870.



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Mother was also asked to write the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entries for Alexander Conron (1861-1940), Ethel Zachel (1877-1951) and Philip Raymond Frith (1900-1976), who before her made important contributions to education and the rights of Torres Strait islanders.

One of her proudest achievements was to ensure Torres Strait students were able to attend Rockhampton Girls Grammar School.

During short school holidays those girls often stayed at *Evergreen* or our family beach house.



27 (detail)



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**On the Margaret Lawrie Collection**

In 1970 the University of Queensland Press (UQP) published Margaret Lawrie's *Myths and legends of the Torres Strait*. As an habitu  of the university bookshop, I found this book, with its brightly coloured illustrations, its detailed maps and its 45 rpm recordings something quite apart from the other UQP publications. It sold well and I had no doubt of its immediate attraction for a reader. It was the first UQP publication in anthropology and its physical format suggested a coffee table book before coffee table books were fashionable. However this was no coffee table book!

In 1988, when I was Librarian of the John Oxley Library, I received a phone call from Mrs Margaret Lawrie asking if the Oxley Library would be interested in receiving her collection of papers relating to the Torres Strait and her detailed research that led to the publication of *Myths and legends*. The first part of the collection arrived in November 1988. About 6 months later fate decreed that I was seconded to work on the Mabo case that was beginning its journey through the Australian courts. Early in the proceedings in the Supreme Court of Queensland, *Myths and legends* was tendered in evidence by the Applicants.

Preferring life at *Evergreen* to the Canberra cocktail circuit and relative invisibility that was the lot of an Australian politician's spouse at that time, Margaret Lawrie accepted a challenge from the Queensland Government to report on child health on Cape York and the Torres Strait. This she did, together with Peg Wiley and the late Oodgeroo Noonuccal.

knowing Margaret Lawrie, this would come as no surprise. Its author, or more precisely, its compiler, was a woman – a little out of the ordinary in the field of Australian anthropology at the time. Ursula McConnell had departed the field disappointed. Catherine Berndt's *Women's changing ceremonies in Northern Australia* had been published in Paris in 1950 and she would publish several major works jointly with her husband, Ronald Berndt. Margaret Lawrie published a children's version – *Tales from Torres Strait* in 1972 – five years prior to Catherine Berndt's *Land of the Rainbow Snake: Aboriginal children's stories and songs from Western Arnhem Land*.

Margaret Lawrie was not an academically trained anthropologist, but a teacher and wife of a Senator in the Federal Parliament – Alexander Ellis Lawrie (1907-78). They lived at *Evergreen* via Westwood in Central Queensland. Westwood was in August 1867 the western terminus of the first railway in that part of Queensland and described in unflattering terms by English novelist Anthony Trollope as the railway that 'goes out thirty miles to three public-houses in the forest which call themselves Westwood'.

She was always conscious that she was not trained in anthropology and so sought out the advice of senior practitioners in the field such as Peter Lawrence at the University of Queensland. Margaret Lawrie was working in the Torres Strait when the distinguished anthropologists, Jeremy Beckett and Wolfgang Laade and the linguist Kenneth

In Torres Strait, she obviously ate the fruit of the wongai tree, as she returned there many times from 1964 to 1973 to carry out field work. In the best traditions of the participant observation of social anthropology, she stayed on the home islands, participated in the work of the community, especially with women (up to her waist in water with other women rebuilding fish traps on Mer), and looking after sea-sick crew and passengers of the *Melbidir*. She learnt Kala Lagaw Ya and Meriam Mir and set about in a determined and methodical manner to master the extensive literature that had documented Torres Strait since 1606.

She was never officially sponsored by any organisation or government, but she was given unprecedented access to Government records – Commonwealth and State and scoured the libraries of Australia (the National Library, the Mitchell Library in Sydney and the La Trobe Library in Melbourne) and the archives and libraries in the United Kingdom (the Public Record Office, the British Library, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and the Haddon Collection at Cambridge University). Fortunately for researchers Margaret Lawrie was a born photocopier and the results of this research work can be found in the papers deposited in the John Oxley Library.

AIATSIS provided a grant for a tape recorder, and with pad, pencil and sketch-book, she went about recording information from knowledgeable and senior people in the Torres Strait, in English, Meriam Mir, Kala Lagaw Ya and Broken. Part of that knowledge was the traditional stories, songs, and dances from all areas of the Torres Strait and these recordings are now preserved at AIATSIS and the John Oxley Library.



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It is interesting that among her interviewees were the grandchildren of some of those Islanders recorded by the Haddon Expedition of 1898-99 and they are now accessible to researchers as AIATSIS has recently restored the wax cylinders from that time. For example, the story of Pop and Kod is told in *Myths and legends* by George Passi, the grandson of Pasi, Mamus of Dauar and one of Haddon's principal informants when the Cambridge Expedition was on Mer. Benny Mabo, teller of the story of the Muair, was the late Eddie Mabo's adoptive father and the grandson, through his mother Akazi, of Gasu who sang Meriam songs with drum accompaniment into Alfred Haddon's gramophone – this particular wax cylinder has been restored by AIATSIS.

Margaret Lawrie's field work was carried out at an important time of change in the Torres Strait. The maritime industries – pearling and b che-de-mer fishing – had largely passed into history as the dominant economic force. Young men were leaving the Strait for work on the mainland – work on the railways in north Queensland and Western Australia or in the cane industry of Northern Queensland and into the later diaspora in the coastal Queensland cities. Moves for social and political change were stirring and the pillars of the *ancien r gime* – the State administration and the Anglican Church – were in the Indian summer of their influence.

Margaret Lawrie knew and worked with the generation of leaders in the Torres Strait of this transitional phase. These included leaders of the Torres Strait Maritime Strike of 1936 such as Marou Mimi (Mer), who also made his mark as Island Chairman along with Sam Passi (Mer) and Tanu Nona (Badu); pioneer Torres Strait clergy such as Senba Sagigi (Badu), Dave Passi (Mer) and Boggo Pilot (Erub); and importantly, women such as Rachel Pilot (Erub) and Mauari Eseli (Mabuiag). Today's Elders such as George Mye (Erub), Getano Lui Jnr. (Yam), Ron Day (Mer) were young men during her period there. The drawings of one of these young men, the late Ephraim Bani (Mabuiag), respected author and scholar of the Torres Strait, are found in *Myths and legends* and his drawing of Amipuru and the pelican graces its cover.

She was always conscious that she was not trained in anthropology and so sought out the advice of senior practitioners in the field such as Peter Lawrence at the University of Queensland. Margaret Lawrie was working in the Torres Strait when the distinguished anthropologists, Jeremy Beckett and Wolfgang Laade and the linguist Kenneth

Hale arrived to carry out field work. Research in Queensland flora owes Margaret Lawrie a debt of gratitude as she sought the advice from the Queensland Government Botanist and the Queensland Herbarium to identify poorly known species from Mer. It is interesting that in this regard, Ellis Rowan (1848-1922), the Queensland flora hunter, spent a period of field work on Mer. Like the Haddon expedition before her, Margaret Lawrie recorded the Torres Strait in audio recordings and photographs. Thousands of coloured slides are now in the John Oxley Library Collection.

Margaret Lawrie was devoted to her work and meticulous about not only the accurate recording of her informants' data and of her source material, but equally about the ethical considerations that surrounded her work. She had learnt well at Mer where the redoubtable Marou Mimi recounted the *Malo-ra gelar* – the law of Malo about property rights – 'Malo keeps his hands to himself; he does not touch what is not his'. This is one of the bilingual texts published in *Myths and legends*. She saw herself as a custodian of material that belonged to Torres Strait and Torres Strait Islanders. In *Myths and legends* she was adamant that she was the compiler of the collection. The stories, told by those authorised under *ailan kastom* to tell them, are each acknowledged. She assisted with the translations (where necessary) and provided references to previous literature.

She always wanted material to be available for Torres Strait Islanders in accordance with *ailan kastom* and this was one of the reasons she chose to deposit it in the John Oxley Library. When I met her, she still maintained active links with the Torres Strait and Torres Strait Islanders. She had a prodigious memory for small details and could always find a reference, no matter how obscure, to verify a particular point. She imposed a rigid discipline of preparation and accuracy on herself and expected others to have the same high standards. Preparation was fundamental to her approach to any research undertaking and I remember being told most firmly, when I set out in 1989 to do my own field work in collecting genealogies for the Mabo case, that I had to prepare thoroughly and that I did not own the work I produced. It belonged to the Torres Strait Islanders who provided it to me and that I had a responsibility to record it accurately, to keep confidences that I would be told and to ensure that copies went back to each of the families who assisted me. Some of

the senior people I spoke to on Mer had been interviewed by her nearly two decades previously. In post-Mabo days she used to spend virtually every day in the John Oxley Library working on her collection and, in her spare time, wrote several entries for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

For her, nothing was ever finished and nothing was ever perfect. We ran workshops on Torres Strait genealogy for Torres Strait Islanders researching their family history. It was always both entertaining and fascinating to listen to Margaret Lawrie's reminiscences about the participants' parents and even grandparents who had been part of her working and personal life. She participated in the first Native Title case – the Mabo case and lived to see thirteen determinations of Native Title in the Torres Strait. I should like to think that she is fully occupied cross-examining John MacGillivray, Samuel MacFarlane, Henry Marjoriebanks Chester, John Douglas, Hugh Milman, Alfred Haddon, Sydney Ray, and WHR Rivers with the same forensic vigour with which she dissected their written works.

Big esso and yawo.

**Colin Sheehan**  
Former John Oxley Librarian



25 (detail)

**List of Items**

**Collection: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland**

**(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitors are warned that this exhibition contains artworks and images of and by deceased Indigenous people)**

- Unknown photographer, *Mrs Lawrie, Mr Neville Hewitt, Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Tanu Nona, Torres Strait Western Islands Council representative at the book launch of Myths and legends of Torres Strait (QUP)* 9 Dec 1970 TR1791/0406/003
- "Australian Literature Conference: Torres Strait tales win literary award", *Townsville daily bulletin*, Saturday May 22, 1971. Margaret Lawrie presented the Foundation for Australian Literary Studies Award 1970 by The Governor General, Sir Paul Hasluck.
- Map of the Torres Strait* ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. XVI
- Segar Passi, *Torres Strait Pigeon eating the fruit of the wild plum* 23 Feb 1968 watercolour on paper TR1791/314 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 217; *Tales from Torres Strait*, pg. 16

The language name for the Torres Strait Pigeon as known by the two language groups of the Torres Strait is Geinau (Kalaw Lagaw Ya/Western and Central Islands) and Deumer (Meriam Mir/Eastern Island). In this artwork the pigeon is seen eating the wild plum Ubar (West. Is) and Eneo (East. Is). Before the designing of the Torres Strait flag the Torres Strait Pigeon and Wongai are seen and still are symbolic to the Torres Strait region.

The Wongai fruit has a legendary tale that once eaten by visitors to our shores they would be placed under a spell, always to return to the islands, time and time again, captivated by the beauty that these enchanted islands offer. The wood from the Wongai tree (Botanical name: *Manilkara kauki* in the SAPOTACEAE family) is prized for its closed grain texture making it excellent for carving traditional artefacts.

- Margaret Elizabeth Lawrie, *Tales from Torres Strait / collected and translated by Margaret Lawrie*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, c. 1972.
- Margaret Elizabeth Lawrie, *Myths and legends of Torres Strait / collected and translated by Margaret Lawrie*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1970.

7 Ephraim Bani, *Amipuru from Mabuiag Island* watercolour on paper TR1791/349 ill. Jacket cover of *Myths and legends of Torres Strait; Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 109

8 Kala Waia, *Gibar holding the new varieties of sugarcane, taro and banana which she brought to Saibai from the sky. Saibai Island* 13 Sep 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/347 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 191

Girbar was spirited away by the Zugubal (spirits) whilst she fetched drinking water at a well. During a violent storm a coconut tree was struck by lightning splitting the tree in half and out from the centre a third trunk appeared and grew to a full size tree. Girbar later returned from the sky climbing down this coconut tree. With her she brought saplings and introduced three of the basic staple foods of sugarcane (guru), taro (goeyn) and banana (katham). Upon arrival of the London Missionaries at Saibai Island (1871) who first introduced Christianity into the Torres Strait, they were in awe, as it was in the shape of a cross. Some of whom in the London Missionaries party were South Sea Islanders. The tree was recognised as a positive sign by them whereby they established their activities near this location on the island. Later this site was chosen for the present day Saibai Island Council office which is built over the remaining stump of this coconut tree. According to Western Torres Strait Island cosmology, the Zugubal are the spirit beings that summon the elements of weather (thunder, lightning, rain, wind and sea). They now reside as stars in the sky in the constellation of the Milky Way. Their leader is Tagai.

9 Kala Waia, *The coconut palm which grew in the shape of a cross after being struck by lightning from Saibai Island* 12 Sep 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/346 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 191

10 Ephraim Bani, *Kuaim in (New Guinea) from Mabuiag Island* Oct 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/348 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 96

11 Kala Waia, *Dugong hunter from Saibai Island* 29 Aug 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/342 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 15; *Tales of Torres Strait*, pg. 19

12 Kala Waia, *Nima and Poipoi with Binibin from Saibai Island* 28 Aug 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/341 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 159

13 Kala Waia, *Wakemab crawling out into the sea after being clubbed by two men of Ait from Saibai Island* 31 Aug 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/343

14 Kala Waia, *Baira and Agburug (as men) from Saibai Island* 3 Sep 1967 watercolour on paper TR1791/345 ill. *Myths and legends of Torres Strait*, pg. 187

15 Kala Waia, *Kusa Kap and Kaudab for the story Kusa Kap the Grand Eagle from Dauan Island* pencil on paper TR1791/284 ill. *Tales from Torres Strait*, pg. 28

16 Margaret Lawrie, *Boat "Papar" leaf of kupamal bisi from Dauan Island* 1 Sep 1971 pencil on paper TR1791/227

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17 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

18 Kuba Community, *Dugong with parts labelled in language and English from Moa Island* 5 Jun 1972 pencil on paper TR1791/209

19 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

20 Kuba Community, *Dugong with parts labelled in language and English from Moa Island* 5 Jun 1972 pencil on paper TR1791/209

21 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

22 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

23 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

24 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

25 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

26 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

27 Margaret Lawrie, *Pom – a device for catching serar (seagulls) from Murray Island* pencil on paper TR1791/239

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