

November (1937?)

The people are taught to make their Communion only after proper preparation and so there is general Communion about once a month when most of them are expected to be there, and when most of them come. It is very nice to see the church filled...and to give mothers their Communion when their babies are on their backs...The Children come in large numbers now for the Sunday School, and I'm afraid that I shall be short of stamps etc. when Advent arrives.

I have about twenty boys who came along and asked if I knew anything about Scouting because they wanted to learn. So I have started teaching them the usual things that Scouts learn—though here they are called Pathfinders...Some of these boys can speak a little English so that is a little easier for me.

Grace sent me a cake which her Mother had made. It arrived in time for her Birthday and yours...It cost 3/9 to send and I had to pay 1/10 in duty when it arrived here. So it was an expensive cake. That shows that it's hardly worth while to send things...Still the cake was very nice and we all enjoyed it and had a small party.

We are still waiting for the rain. It is getting very serious now...I expect it will come just as we get the car going again, and then we shall have difficulty in crossing the rivers...

Undated (1937?)

...After breakfast...we went on about 34 miles to Mampies Stad and sang Evensong there about 2 o/c. There are not many Christian people there but there is a large School and the important thing is to get hold of the young people. This place is very barren and very little could grow there if there were plenty of rain because the whole countryside is very stony...We had slept at Mapies Stad on the Wednesday night in a very poor sort of hut. In the middle of the night I awoke wondering what on earth had happened for I found that I had fallen through my stretcher which had torn right down the middle...

[Handwritten marginalia: *I didn't relish keeping on the floor for there are so many ants.*]

The next evening I spent some time trying to mend it but it wasn't very successful.

...we started early homewards and about 11 o/c arrived at Garmarona where there is only a school. A church is to be built there...after the rain has been and gone. You can't build a in the rainy season for the water would soon turn the mud walls into a part of the river if it caught them before a surface had been pasted on them...

...Yesterday morning at 6.30 we went to Ditshipin about ten miles away and there was Mass at 8.0 o/c. These services last something like two hours and I get rather tired of singing. They never seem to get tired and I believe that they would stay in church all day if they thought it was necessary. Of course some of them come a long way and it would be a pity to send them away again quickly.

December 1937

...Last Monday I saw my first large snake. It was in a small tree about ten yards from my hut. Winnie came running saying; 'Father, there is a large snake here. I went out saying 'Where?'...'There', she said, pointing in front of her...'In the tree', she said. I looked in the tree but it was a long time before I saw it...By the time I was able to distinguish it several boys from the school had arrived, for the news had gone round quickly that there was a snake on the Mission premises. They came armed with heavy sticks. For a time they could do nothing for the thing was in the middle of the tree and refused to come out to be killed. After much poking about with sticks and the pelting of stones it gradually uncoiled itself and came out. While it was dangling from a branch...a boy slashed at its head with his stick. He hit it first time and it was dead. It was a puff-adder and very poisonous...[i]t was 5ft 1in [and] very beautiful to look at...

On Tuesday last we set off on a short journey round the Mission stations. The first stop was at Glen Red about 10 miles away. We examined the children in School and sang Evensong in Church...On Wednesday morning we had Mass at 7.0. There were about 10 communicants. But you must remember that Glen Red has not been started long and there are very many heathen there.