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Solomon Islands' Currency

Linda Puia

Key Words

trading, bartering, traditional, currency, valuable, introduced, ceremonies, protectorate

Long, long ago, our ancestors traded with each other. Trading is the term used to describe the buying and selling of goods. Long ago people traded without money. This is sometimes called bartering.

There were no coins or paper money, so people exchanged goods with each other. For example fishermen from the coast would trade fish and shells in exchange for yams and taro, produced by farmers.

After many, many years of bartering, people living in Solomon Islands started using valuable artefacts as their money. This means that the valuable artefacts were the currency of the time.

Local people were skilful in making beautiful jewellery, baskets, ornaments for decorations and a range of other things. Such artefacts took a lot of time to make and were highly valued. People would swap these things for food and household goods.



One type of traditional currency

On most of the large islands such as Malaita and Guadalcanal, shell money was used as a local unit of currency. Using the shell money, people bought other things that they needed. In Santa Cruz feather money was used as a

traditional form of currency. Other tribes made dolphin teeth necklaces for trading.

In Choiseul, the traditional currency was Kesa. Kesa are sets of rings made of the shell of a sea animal. In most parts of the Western Province, the Bakiha was used as the traditional currency. Bakiha were huge rings made from clamshells.

In 1899, Solomon Islands became a British Protectorate and for many years was governed by the British government. Solomon Islanders started using the British pound as money in 1916. On the 25th of September 1937, Australian currency was also introduced. Solomon Islands finally had its own currency in 1977, just before it became an independent country in 1978.

Although Solomon Islanders now use the modern currency of coins and paper money for trading, some traditional currencies are still used for cultural ceremonies. These include such occasions as buying a bride custom weddings.

Many of our traditional currencies cannot be produced anymore. Shells that are used for making shell money are becoming harder to find. The skill of making feather money on Santa Cruz has been forgotten. Hunting dolphins is banned, so people can no longer make dolphin teeth necklaces.

At the Central Bank of Solomon Islands in Honiara, there is a very special display of traditional Solomon Islands' currencies. Everyday tourists and locals visit the bank to look at the feather coils, dolphin teeth necklaces, strings of shell money and clam shell discs. The earliest coins and notes used in Solomon Islands are also on display. These include the English pound, shillings and pence, as well as the first Australian money used in Solomon Islands.

This display is an important part of Solomon Islands' history.

A Gift of Shell Money

An old Arab story

Adapted by Alison Blaylock

Some years ago, an old chief in the Langa Langa Lagoon, became very sick. Knowing that he was going to die he called together his family to say goodbye and to tell them how to divide up his property after he died.

The chief was not a wealthy man, but he had collected some strings of red money during his life. He wanted to divide these between his family. His family stood around his bedside and listened carefully to his last wishes. The chief had three sons and he spoke first to his eldest son.

“Son,” he said weakly, “you are the eldest and I want you to have the greatest share of my wealth. You must take half of my shell money.”



“Thank you father” replied the boy.

Then the old man spoke to his second son.

“My Son,” he said, “you are my second born son and I want you to have one third of all of my shell money.”

“Thank you father.” replied the boy.

When the old man spoke to his youngest son, his voice was weaker still.

“My Boy,” he said, “as my youngest child I want you to take one ninth of all of my shell money.”

“Thank you father.” replied the boy.

“Boys,” he said to them all, “be generous with what I have given you, whatever you give you will receive back for yourselves again.”

With these words, the old man closed his eyes and died.

His sons buried their father’s body and, after a period of mourning, their uncle called them together to share out the *tafuliae*.

When they had collected all the shell money they laid it out on the mat in their father’s house. They counted it and found that their father had a total of seventeen strings of fine red money. All they had to do was share it out according to his wishes.

Straight away they realised that they had a problem. The first boy was to take half, but what was half of seventeen? The second boy was to take one third, but how could he do this without cutting one of the valuable strings into pieces? The third boy was to take one ninth, but it was impossible to work out one ninth of seventeen. They had a mathematical problem on their hands!

As the boys talked about what to do, their wise old uncle thought carefully about their father’s dying words. “Whatever

you give you will receive back for yourselves again.” Then, he had an idea.

“I think I can help you sort out your problem.” he said with a smile. “I will give you one of my strings of shell money to add to your father’s and then you will have no problem dividing them up as your father wished.”

What the uncle said was true. The boys now had eighteen strings of money to share between them and they had no problem working out how much each should have.

“I will take half, as father wished,” said the eldest boy. He took nine strings of red money.

“Father wanted me to have one third,” said the second son, “so I will take six strings.” He collected his six tafuliae and put them in his basket.

Then the youngest son spoke. “Father wanted me to have one ninth of his wealth,” he said, “so I must take two strings.”

When he had done so the brothers were surprised and confused to see that there was one string of red money left over on the mat. How could this be? Who did it belong to?

“Think of your father’s last words,” said their uncle, “and you will not be surprised.”

“Be generous with what I have given you! Whatever you give you will receive back for yourselves again.”

Then the three brothers realised what they must do with the last string of red money. They gave it back to their uncle who had given it to them, to reward his generosity.

In this way all of their father’s dying wishes were fulfilled.

What You Can Do...

Keep Your Home Clean



Mosquitoes lay their eggs in still water. Do not leave pools or containers of water lying around your home.

Mosquitoes hide in bushes, tall grass and other dark places. Clear the area around your home regularly to get rid of mosquito hiding places.

Keep Your Village Clean

Public areas of the village must also be kept clean. Long grass around the school or church, rubbish dumps, stagnant pools and areas of bush close to the village can all hide mosquitoes.

Get the community together regularly for clean up days. Invite village health inspectors to advise on use of chemical sprays to control mosquitoes.



Key Words

containers, possible, pond, possible, certain, stagnant, avoid, regularly, public, symptoms, dusk

...to Control Malaria

Look After your Family



The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes. Buy a bed net for every member of your family and make sure you use it!

Do not sit outside in the early evening, and do not allow your children to play near areas where there are a lot of mosquitoes. Cover your legs, body and arms after dusk.

Malaria Kills! Take it Seriously!

If a member of the family has a fever, get a malaria test as soon as possible. Medicine can cure malaria if it is treated early. Do not wait until you are really sick when it might be too late.

Other symptoms of malaria include headache, sore aching limbs, vomiting and weakness. Take these symptoms seriously and see your doctor.

If you do get malaria, take the medicine regularly and make sure that you complete the course of treatment.



Crocodile's Toothache

Shel Silverstein

Oh the Crocodile
Went to the dentist
And sat down in the chair,
And the dentist said, "Now tell me, sir,
Why does it hurt and where?"
And the Crocodile said, "I'll tell you the truth.
I have a terrible ache in my tooth."
And he opened his jaws so wide, so wide,
That the dentist he climbed right
inside,
And the dentist laughed, "Oh,
isn't this fun?"
As he pulled the teeth out, one
by one.
And the Crocodile cried,
"You're hurting me so!
Please put down your pliers
and let me go."
But the dentist just laughed with
a Ho Ho Ho,
And he said, "I still have twelve to go —
Oops, that's the wrong one, I confess.
But what's one crocodile's tooth, more or less?"
Then suddenly the jaws went snap,
And the dentist was gone right off the map.
And where he went one could only guess.
To North or South or East or West?
He left no forwarding address.
But what's one dentist more or less?



I've Got a Cold

Roger McGough

I've got a cold
And it's not funny
My throat is numb
My nose is runny
My ears are burning
My fingers are itching
My teeth are wobbly
My eyebrows are twitching
My kneecaps have slipped
My bottom's like jelly
The button's come off
My silly old belly
My chin has doubled
My toes are twisted
My ankles have swollen
My elbows are blistered
My back is all spotty
My hair's turning white
I sneeze through the day
And cough through the night
I've got a cold
And I'm going insane
(Apart from all that
I'm as right as rain).



In Search of Excitement

Alison Blaylock

Key Words

enough was enough, yawning, brilliant, restless, instead of, exciting activities, longed to go, versus

Ramsay was bored. Very bored. He sat around the village all day listening to the radio. He wished that he could join in some of the exciting activities in town instead of just hearing about them on the radio. Football matches, concerts, dances, picnics, martial arts and aerobics classes, video shops and clubs all advertised on the radio and all Ramsay could do was listen!

“I’m bored!” he said to himself, yawning.

Enough was enough! Ramsay couldn’t stand village life any longer. He just had to get out and find something more interesting to do, so he jumped on a ship and headed for Honiara.

“Football! That’s what I like best,” he thought. So he went straight to Lawson Tama where a match between Laugu and Koloale was just kicking off.

“This is brilliant!” said Ramsay as he sat down happily to watch.

After the game he went to his uncle’s house to settle in.

“We’re going to play football,” said his cousin. “Do you want to come?”

“You bet,” said Ramsay. “I love football!”

So off they went. They played at the local football ground until it got dark and they couldn’t see the ball or the goal posts.

That evening his cousin got out some videos of football matches from the 2002 World Cup. They watched England versus Brazil, France against Croatia and Germany against Korea.



Halfway through the last match Ramsay yawned and thought to himself, "I'm bored with football!"

The next day Ramsay decided to try a different kind of entertainment. He headed for the Central Market where there were some pan-pipers from Isabel playing.

"This is brilliant!" said Ramsay as he sat down to listen. He really enjoyed the rhythm of the music and loved watching the boys playing their panpipes so energetically.

After the Isabel group, a group from Ngella started to play. Ramsay was getting restless. He wished he could join in and

play the panpipes too. After a while Ramsay was fed up.

“I’m bored just listening,” he said to himself. “I’m going to find something more interesting to do.”

On Saturday morning there was a martial arts class at the Multi-purpose Hall. Ramsay thought Tae Kwon Do sounded very exciting so he went along to join a class.

“This is brilliant!” he thought, when he saw all the people lining up in their white costumes.

Ramsay tried his best to follow the group but it was not as easy as it looked. He found it very hard to control his muscles and he got very tired. “Tae Kwon Do is boring,” he thought to himself and he crept out of the back of the class before the warm up exercises were finished.

That night he decided to go to a dance. As he went into a club there were coloured lights flashing and music playing loudly. People all around were dancing and having a good time.

“This is brilliant!” said Ramsay to himself. “I love dancing!” He danced and danced and danced until early in the morning.

He decided to go dancing every Saturday night but after three weeks Ramsay suddenly said, “I’m bored with dancing.” So he went home to bed.

The following morning Ramsay woke up and tried to decide what to do. He didn’t feel like watching the TV. He was bored with football, fed up with dancing and hopeless at Tae Kwon Do!

Ramsay was bored. Very bored. He was fed up with town life and longed to go back to the village where he could swim in the river, share stories with his friends and relax under the rain tree.

“I know what I’ll do today,” he said to himself. “I’ll go home to my village. Life is much more interesting there!”

Football Crazy

Lionel Damola

The victory of the Solomon Islands national soccer team in stages one and two of the World Cup qualifiers in 2004 secured them a place in the third stage of the competition.

After this victory celebrations erupted all over the country. The streets of Honiara and the provinces alike were filled with cheering fans. The prayers of the supporters back home in Solomon Islands, had been answered.



Jubilant die-hard fans celebrate Solomon's victory

Many Solomon Islanders are crazy soccer fans, but some are crazier than others!

Ronald, a lawyer by profession, is one of the craziest of all. He turned forty on the day the Solomons team played against Fiji. During the competition, he wrote to members of the Solomon Islands team in Australia urging them to make a victory over Fiji his 40th birthday present. He was not disappointed! Solomon Islands beat Fiji 2:1.

Ronald wrote another letter to the head of delegation and the entire team in Australia, in which he said, "On behalf of all the crazy supporters back home, I congratulate you all for the fine

showing to date. You have done exceptionally well and we are so proud of you.”

Next, Ronald wrote to the Australian High Commissioner in Honiara asking him to consider sponsoring the game between Solomon Islands and Australia live on Sunday over the SIBC radio. In his letter, Ronald said: “The Australian Government has done immensely well for the people of Solomon Islands for a long time now and more particularly since July last year with the arrival of RAMSI. Is it too much to ask to give us even more assistance so that we can all follow the match live on Sunday?”

When Solomon Islands played against Australia, sure enough it was broadcast live on the SIBC radio. The commentator was a well known broadcaster, Bart Basia. Ronald listened, glued to the radio at home in White River, Honiara. When Menapi, scored the first goal, Ronald grabbed his Solomon Islands flag and rushed out of the house. He ran to the main road with his son and two nephews, got in a taxi and it was not until he got out of the taxi next to the United Church that he realised that he was only wearing his shorts!

Unashamed, he sat down with a group of soccer fans in a small leaf hut near the church to continue listening to the game. Other soccer fans joined them there.

When Ronald heard that Australia had equalised he started to grow weak. Then when they scored again and took the lead, he whispered to the church Minister to pray in silence for the team.

From where he was sitting in the leaf hut he could see the cross inside the church. As the Solomons continued to bombard the Australian defence line, Ronald continued to look at the cross and ask God to intervene in the game. Not long after an Australian player was given a red card.

33 minutes into the second half of the game Menapi equalised. Ronald was holding his breath.

He walked away from the rest of the group and approached the main entrance of the church. He could not go in because he was only wearing shorts, but he put his hands together facing the cross, bowed his head and asked God to watch over the Solomon Islands goal area.

At the final whistle, the score remained at 2:2 and Bart announced that Solomon Islands had, for the first time in their history, qualified for the third stage of the World Cup.

Cheerfully and joyfully, Ronald and all the other soccer fans stood at the entrance of the church and sung two choruses. Then he asked the Minister to offer a 'Prayer of Thanksgiving'. He then gave the Minister all the money he had in his pocket and left to continue his celebration along the streets of Honiara from White River to King George Sixth School.

Football Crazy

Adapted from a Celtic Folk Song

1. I have a favourite brother
And his Christian name is Paul.
He's lately joined a football club
For he's mad about football.
He's two black eyes already
And he doesn't care about his job
Since Paul became a member of
That terrible football club.

2. In the middle of the field one day
The captain said, "Now Paul,
Would you kindly take this penalty kick
Since you're mad about football?"
So he took forty paces backwards,
And shot off from the mark.
The ball went sailing over the bar and
landed in New York.

3. His wife says she will leave him
If Paul doesn't keep
Away from football kicking
At night-time in his sleep.
He calls out, "Pass the ball now!"
And other things so droll.
Last night he fell right out of bed
And shouted "It's a goal!"

Chorus

For he's football crazy, he's football
mad.
The football it has taken away
The little bit of sense he had.
And it would take a dozen house-girls
To wash his clothes and scrub
Since Paul became a member of
That terrible football club

Chorus

For he's football crazy, he's football
mad.
The football it has taken away
The little bit of sense he had.
And it would take a dozen house-girls
To wash his clothes and scrub
Since Paul became a member of
That terrible football club

Chorus

For he's football crazy, he's football
mad.
The football it has taken away
The little bit of sense he had.
And it would take a dozen house-girls
To wash his clothes and scrub
Since Paul became a member of
That terrible football club

A Nation Celebrates Victory

Lionel Damola

The second stage of the Oceania Football Confederation World Cup qualifier played in Australia in May and June 2004 eliminated all but two nations from the third stage - Solomon Islands and Australia.

The match between Solomon Islands and Australia was the deciding game for our national team. A win or a draw against Australia would see Solomons through to the third stage.

The pressure was on! The Australian team were all professionals with training facilities that our boys could only dream about. The Solomon Islands team were on the other hand mostly amateurs who had grown up playing barefoot on wonky pitches.



*Commings Menapi and Batram Suri during the game
with the Australian Socceroos*

But against all odds, Solomon Islands stood up against the might of Australia. They pulled off a 2:2 draw and went through to the next stage of the competition for the first time in their history.

This game was broadcast live across the Solomon Islands on the radio and soccer fans across the country were glued to their radios.

With the final whistle, wild celebrations erupted across the nation with singing and shouting and dancing everywhere.

However the greatest celebrations were saved for the day the national soccer team arrived back in the country.

Dressed in national colours, a crowd of 20,000 people headed for the International Airport. Every car, bus, taxi, truck and bicycle was flying the national flag and the chorus of “Go Solo Go” rang out across the Guadalcanal plains as they waited for the squad to come out of the Airport Terminal.

The team was given VIP treatment and welcomed by government ministers on arrival before being led out to meet the crowd to an enormous cheer and the sound of beating drums, blowing horns and screaming fans.

“Go Solo Go, Go Gillet Go, Go Menapi Go, Go Suri Go, Go Fa’arodo Go” sang the crowd as other fans pressed forward trying to touch the players or get them to sign their shirt.

The welcome was a real surprise to the squad. They jumped in the air, hugged each other and raised their hands in joy to the rhythm of Go Solo Go as they boarded three waiting vehicles.

Thousands more people lined the streets of Honiara to watch a three hour parade from the airport to White River, then back to Lawson Tama stadium to officially welcome the heroes home.

Workers flooded out of their offices and stood on the railings outside to try and see the squad. Some even climbed onto roofs to get a better view.

Commings Menapi, who put two goals past the Australians, was dubbed the king and saviour during the wild celebrations. “Menapi, we love you” shouted the fans.

Menapi's name was on placards all along the roadside and on everyone's lips.

One placard read "Batram – Captain, Menapi – hero".

The parade eventually stopped at Lawson Tama stadium where the players met their families, waiting officials and fans.

"I did not expect this kind of welcome," Menapi said.

The national coach, Englishman, Allan Gillet was also overwhelmed by the fans response.

"This is truly amazing to see," he said. "I have never seen anything like this in my life. Solomon Islands is truly a soccer crazy nation!"

The other national players shared the same sentiment.

"This celebration is something that happens once in a lifetime. I am speechless to describe what it feels like to be part of it," said Fa'arodo.

One Solomon Islander summed up the feelings of many, when he wrote to the Solomon Star the following day. He said he had never been so proud to be a Solomon Islander. Solomon Islands will remember this day for a long time to come.

Choosing a Site for Your House

Lionel Damola

Key Words

construction, site, hazards, resources, guidelines, access, withstand, consider

When planning the construction of a new house the first and most important thing to consider is where the house will be built. For some people there is no choice of where to build, but if you are lucky enough to have plenty of land to choose from, these guidelines will help you to choose the best site for your home.

You should consider the following issues:

1. The best type of land;
2. The availability of resources in the area;
3. The climate and weather at the location;
4. Safety issues.

Land

First think about the land available. What makes a good site?

- Not too steep;
- Easy access;
- Good firm ground for foundations;
- Large enough for your family's needs.

Resources

Next consider the availability of resources at the site. What will you need?

- Construction materials;
- A good, clean water supply, not too far from the site;

- Good access.

Weather

The local weather conditions must also be considered in your choice of site. What sort of weather will the house have to withstand?

- Protection from strong winds;
- Shelter from rain;
- Breeze so that the house will not be too hot.

Safety Issues

It will also be important to think about any risks at the site. Will any of the following hazards be a problem?

- Cyclones;
- Earthquakes;
- Landslides;
- Flooding;
- High tides.

If you think about all these points and put your answers together you will come up with the right site to build your house.

The Dog's Side of the Story

Adapted by Lionel Damola

I don't know why people always think I'm big and bad! Let me tell you what really happened to me on that Sunday morning, then perhaps you'll understand that I am not as bad as all that.



It was my Grandma's birthday and I got up early to make her a cake, even though I had a terrible sneezing cold. We had run out of sugar and the store was closed so I went round to my neighbour's house to try and borrow some sugar.

He had just moved into the area so I thought it would be a good chance to make friends. His house was built out of grass, which I thought was a bit strange. Anyway, just as I knocked on the front door, I let out a huge sneeze and since the house was only made of grass, it fell down.

I don't know what killed him, but I saw that poor little pig lying stone dead in the middle of his ruined house. It seemed a shame to waste a pork breakfast. My grandmother has always told me not to waste food! So I ate up the pig and continued on, to see if I could get some sugar.

The next house a nice little leaf house, belonged to the little pig's brother.

"Good morning little pig." I called out in a friendly voice, "Can I come in?"

I didn't hear his answer because at that moment I felt another sneeze coming on. I huffed and I puffed but there was nothing I could do. Out came the most enormous sneeze and do you know what happened? That little leaf house just collapsed.

When the dust cleared I saw the second little pig lying dead. Poor thing! I think one of the crossbeams had hit him on the head as the house fell down.

I knew food spoils if it's left out in the open. So I did the right thing and ate up the second little pig too.

It was getting late and I still didn't have any sugar for Granny's cake. I decided to try one more house. This house was made of strong bricks and had an iron roof .

"Little Pig, Little Pig," I called politely, "Are you at home? Can I come in?"

He didn't respond, so I called again, "I only want to borrow some sugar"

But just then I had a fit of sneezes,

"Atishoo, Atishoo, Atishoo," I just couldn't stop!

It was at this moment that the three little pig's mother came by. She saw me huffing and puffing outside the house and immediately thought that I was trying to blow down the house!! Can you believe it?

“I warned my children about your type” she shouted angrily.
“Get away from here you wicked old dog and leave them alone!”

So I made up my mind there and then. This family of pigs were bad news! They were rude and unfriendly. Not the sort of people I wanted to have as neighbours at all. I decided that I would not be visiting any of them, ever again!

Poor Granny. She never got her birthday cake either!

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by Jackson Onahikeni

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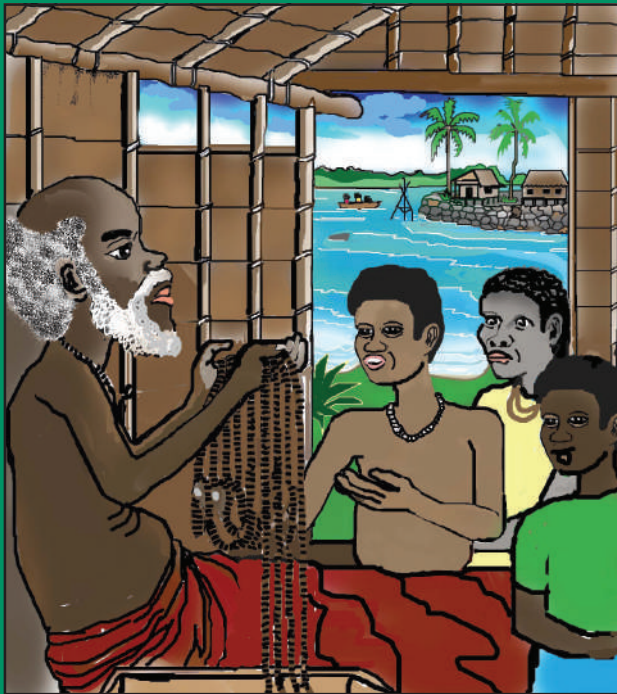
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Nguzu Nguzu English
Standard 5

A Gift of Shell Money

and other texts



Standard 5
Reader 3