"Pow again
Ed. Collins
1992."
FOREWORD

Even disasters of the magnitude of the cyclone that struck Darwin on Christmas Day 1974 produced many humorous incidents and as time goes by the memories of such occasions become very important to those who went through the experience. Edward Collins has captured in these cartoons some of the lighter side of that harrowing time.

Best of all the humour is expressed in such a way that even people who were not in Darwin at the time or may never have been in Darwin can laugh along with those who were at the time of cyclone Tracy.

The Board of the YMCA of Darwin is very happy to make it possible for this collection of excellent cartoons to be published and made available for the general public. The profits from the sale of the books will be given to the Darwin Disaster Fund to help with the rehabilitation of the people of Darwin.

The Right Reverend K. B. Mason,

*Bishop of the Northern Territory*,
*Chairman of the Board of the YMCA of Darwin.*
So much has been written already describing the disaster of Darwin that it seems that what I say will be treading over old ground and as the days go on one tends to forget and the present becomes the all important.

To some of us however, we will never forget and perhaps even Christmas Eve from now on will be a time of mixed feelings. One of happiness turned into anguish in such a short time. "Nothing was stirring, not even a mouse."

So goes a line from an old story of Christmas Eve and it was never so real as in Darwin after the cyclone struck.

For mornings before I had complained that the neighbours kids and even my own grandchild had wakened me very early by their crying or general mucking up. Not so Christmas morning. The silence was deadly, eerie and unbelievable.

The first shock seemed to be that you were the only family alive. Where had people gone if indeed they were alive. The devastation was unreal. London during the blitz was not like this. A mass of twisted steel, cars tossed around like toys, houses no longer existing only stilts to show where they once were. Rubble, corrugated iron (the scourge of Darwin), power lines and debris of all kind littered the landscape for miles. Just to get out of what existed of our house was a nightmare. The day before we had worried about leaving a door open which might let flies in. That morning we crawled through windows shattered by the storm and no doors existed to worry about. You might say that everyone had an "open house" on Christmas Day.

Now, days later and nerves and sanity returning to a state of normalness, or will they ever be? There is time anyway to recall the happenings of that night. The joys before and the tragedy after.

After having arrived only a few weeks before and ready to make a new life in Darwin with the family, we had occupied a small but neat four bedroomed house at Wagaman near Casuarina. Neighbours were wonderful and Darwin opened its arms to us. With a nice "nest egg" from my job in Papua New Guinea nothing was going to be too much for the family this Christmas to make their new life enjoyable. A new Volvo car, swimming pool, new furnishings for the house
and hang the expense. Life was good, everyone was happy and even the shopping on Christmas Eve for last minute odds and ends was wonderful.

Then all hell broke loose.

A night of horror followed. Tearing timbers, lashing rain, howling winds, sounds never heard before and fears never before experienced not even during war years. A night huddled together in the bathroom with Daniel, Gail and Rachael in the bath with a mattress on top. Lyla, Gary and I in the shower with cushions over our heads. Why we are still alive is beyond me. We never expected to be and the shock will be with us for many a day.

Perhaps it could be called the miracle of Darwin “Why weren’t more people killed?” Or were we left to tell the tale and show how insignificant man really is or how it takes a national disaster to get people to join together in the face of human suffering or to show that it is possible for man to drag himself from despair and start all over again.

Whatever it is, time will tell.

At dawn on Christmas Day, people began emerging from their ruined shells and looked for anything that could afford them shelter from the rain. We collected in what was left of our once proud Volvo car which was now skewered by lengths of timber. Later like most others we made our way to the local school and dragged, bit by bit, sodden clothing and what documents we could. Everything else lays, as it still does, under a mess of rubble.

The next few days were a continuation of the nightmare. Sleeping in wet gear on wet floors, mopping out continuously, catching rain water for washing and drinking, eating very little, attending to cuts, fearing infection, primitive toilet facilities, the stink of garbage and lack of sleep. All this soon started to take a toll of people and brought out the best and worst.

Then the news of the Air Lift. Like a message from heaven. Get out as soon as possible seemed to be the order of the day and then followed the organisation of getting women and children on to buses and into the Airport. This again was unreal. The hot Darwin weather took its toll of misery as bus loads packed to capacity with women and children were delayed at the Airfield for
up to one hour waiting to be told to disembark. When eventually they did it was only to find another long wait ahead for an allocation on a flight south. Destination seemed to go by the board. Next plane out, not mattering where to was all anyone was interested in. Then the shock of families being broken up. Husbands remaining whilst their families were hustled out to planes and emotions took their toll.

For some like myself there was another day and night to be spent at the Airfield before eventual evacuation. Time spent helping to unload buses. Carry children and older people to planes and during that night with more rain turning the terminal into a sodden mess to keep the kids high and dry and warm with the few blankets handed out by the Salvation Army.

Here I ring out praises for these people on the spot so soon after the disaster. The Salvation Army and Red Cross. A dry match for a cigarette, a nappy for a child, a hot cup of tea eventually. Those who were there know what I mean and words cannot express our thanks. This was to continue afterwards on our arrival south and in getting resettled in Adelaide, and elsewhere. Their efforts could not have been achieved without the help of everyone in Australia who have given so generously to the Darwin Appeal. The flight south will bring its varied stories of travelling in Hercules aircraft, Jumbo Jets, 707's etc., but by whatever craft the people gave thanks to the crews for their untiring efforts. Certainly they were angels from heaven and bugger it if they did break a few D.C.A. regulations. They should all go down in the Guinness Book of Records.

The reception down south. The untold stories of the taxi driver who goes out of his way to find your family and asks for no fare. The lady who offers your family her home for a week without payment and not even knowing you.

Finally the heartaches in trying to organise some more permanent accommodation to hold your family together to let you get back to Darwin and get on with the job of re-establishment.

All things to remember, register your name and your address as it changes. Social Services for pension payments, etc. Whether the car insurance will pay off or not. What is left in Darwin that will still be left on our return. What is important and what is not?
Wherever you go there are more forms to be completed. You go over the same details again and again. All necessary for identification purposes but at the time an emotional strain. Sleep is often a blessing after the lack of it for so many days but in this case it brings with it dreams of that night and worries of possessions left behind in the rubble.

Time is a great healer and the future will take care of itself. Like so many others we thank God we are safe and will start a new life.

A permit has been granted for my return to Darwin and the family will follow when things return to normal. That they should wish to do so is a miracle in itself and makes me proud. Darwin is a city to remember and will be a greater city in the future. Perhaps the greatest moral to be gained for people in despair in the future will be “Remember Darwin”.
"Better ring up the maternity ward - they tell me there are plenty of berths on the Patris."
"CYCLONE TRACY SURE MADE IT EASIER TO SCORE."
"ANGELS TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH"
"I'M GETTING BIG MUM - I CAN REACH THE CLOTHES HOIST."

Collins.
"SHOULD WE REQUISITION THEM FOR TRANSPORT OR CALL THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT?"
“WE’VE GOT A SQUATTER IN OUR HOUSE BY THE NAME OF GOLDIELOCKS.”
"I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL THEM HIGH RISE BUILDINGS"
"NOT MUCH NEWS THESE DAYS -
- BUT IT'S A RIPPER."

Collins
“MORE HAZARDS THAN ANY OTHER COURSE IN AUSTRALIA.”
"Tie Me Darwin Down Sport -
Tie Me Darwin Down -
Don't Go Lifting the Roof
Just Tie Me Darwin Down
Altogether Now -

Colin
Thanks Rolf."
"GIMI - GIMI - GIMI"

CASHIER

DARWIN BANKS RETURN TO NORMAL.

Collins.
“WHO PULLED THE CORK?”

Christmas 1974
Darwin.

Collins.
"No! It's not a stock car race - it's Smith Street Darwin."
"There I was enjoying a Christmas Eve and suddenly Pow! I was buffalowed by some chick called Tracy!"
"MUST BE WHY THEY CALL IT THE TOP END"
"With no draught beer in Darwin you should have no trouble building your craft this year."
"THIS WILL KEEP DARWIN TOGETHER - AERIAL SPRAY WITH ARALDITE"
"I TOLD YOU—YOU SHOULD HAVE FLOWN SOUTH
WHEN THE FLIGHTS WERE ON."
"I think he's stirring - keeps asking for a black and white."

Collins '75.
Darwin in Alice
"SO YOU RECKON YOU'RE CYCLONE TRACY?"
THE BARK PAINTING IS O.K. - IT'S THE MOVING THAT'S A B-
"This is something we can never top."

Alice Springs Hospitality.

Alice Springs to Appeal.

Collins
Darwin '75
in Alice
"Boy! That last scotch must have been powerful!"
"Sorry mate! We're taking over all housing for Darwin refugees!"

Collins '75, Darwin - in Alice
"WISH WE HAD A STRING SECTION - IT'S THE IN THING"

Collins '75
Alice.
"Two cyclones in one year is too much!"
"Two cyclones in one year is too much!"

Thomson  
Collins '75
BFORE TRACY  \rightarrow  AFTER.

keeps out. occupied.
“SO YOU THINK YOU’RE CYCLONE TRACY?”
"And they told me this was a bird sanctuary!!"
"ONE OF THE BEST CLEAN-UP MEN WE'VE HAD"
CLEAN-UP SQUAD

SHOULDER SPADES
"WE THOUGHT YOU WOULD LIKE A JOB YOU COULD GET YOUR THIESS INTO"
“GOT A DOGGY BAG MATE?”
"It's not a bulkhead - it's a wall!
It's not a deck - it's a floor.
It's not a deckhead - it's a ceiling!"

"The Nelson touch."
"If Cyclone Tracy couldn't bring it on—what will?"
"ROCK-A-BYE BABY ON A ROOF TOP —"
LIQUOR STORE
SELF SERVICE

"GONE WITH THE WIND"
"GOING TO PUT IT INTO THE ARCHIBALD PRIZE"
"If you rebuild down there your T.V. reception will be buggered up!"
"Now don't forget to wipe your feet."
"You might have an accident mate - your bootlace is undone!"
"HE LOVES ME - HE LOVES ME NOT ---"
"You're illegally parked."
"Boy! Sure must have been some hellva stampede!"
"It went that-a-way!"
"This is real togetherness"
"SURE I LOST MY HOUSE BUT I STILL HAVE THE FOUNDATION"
"This draught beer is a godsend after no air conditioning."