

Remembering Tom Dutton

Tom was an early PNG friend of ours—Joice and I taught him linguistics at the government linguistics course in Goroka in 1960 and he spent the following Christmas with us. Tom rightly claimed that we got him started in linguistics.

From that time on, Tom and I stayed in touch and were good friends. We both studied at ANU in Canberra doing our PhDs in linguistics, and we lived side by side and even shared an office for a time. We loved to talk, argue, and discuss, mainly linguistics, but any topic was fair game. We even played a logic game during noon recesses, much to the awe and wonderment of some of our colleagues.

Tom and I were both writing grammars of the languages we were studying—Koiari and Kewa—but Tom was using the transformational grammar model and I was using tagmemics, a now forgotten and forlorn brand of linguistics. We were both also interested in comparative linguistics and Tom wrote several articles in that genre. For instance, he wrote a massive chapter of 122 pages for the volume on the Gulf Province that I edited. Although most comparative linguists disregarded “cultural” items due to concerns about borrowing, Tom carefully compared food and foodstuffs in languages throughout the country.

Prior to that time, Tom had been awarded a post-doctoral fellowship to study at MIT, then housing probably the most prestigious linguistics department in the world.

For several years Tom was the foundation professor of linguistics at the University of Papua New Guinea, so we saw each other often, particularly at linguistics conferences. Later Tom was a valued member of the linguistics department at ANU, where he edited volumes for Pacific Linguistics and wrote many books and articles. He was a specialist in Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu and promoted their use through practical handbooks and courses.

In 2001 Pacific Linguistics published a Festschrift in honor of Tom. It was called *The Boy from Bundaberg: Studies in Melanesian Linguistics in Honour of Tom Dutton* and was edited by Andrew Pawley, Malcolm Ross and Darrell Tryon. As the editors note, in 1997, while “still at the height of his powers, Tom took us all by surprise and decided to take early retirement.”

His bibliography is long, with around 125 entries as author, reviewer, and editor. Tom went on in retirement to sheep-farm learning shearing, wool classing, fencing and sheepdog training. He was a successful farmer and with his personality, stamina and high energy level, continued working until his mid-80s and only slowed down because of a stroke.

He died on December 22nd at the age of 87. He will be missed by all of his friends and colleagues. His lovely wife Corinne continues to live in Yass, near Canberra.

About Tom Dutton: Collage of Memories & Links

Craig Volker:

Karl is quite right in his description of both Tom's pleasant character and his contribution to PNG linguistics. Tom was extremely encouraging to me as a young scholar and a welcome addition at the early LSPNG meetings I attended.

Just two days ago I recommended his "Police Motu Iena Sivarai" book to a woman from Papua now living overseas who was curious about the history of this important lingua franca in her home. This book is becoming difficult to get. I wonder if LSPNG could obtain the rights to the book and make it available for downloading from our website? More PNG people should have easy access to it.

Don Niles:

I am also greatly saddened by Tom's loss. I had many encounters with him over the years in PNG and Canberra. His books on learning Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu were my bibles in my learning those languages before and after I arrived here. He also had a knack for writing with great insight and clarity, I believe, even for non-linguists. My wife was also his linguistics student at UPNG.

In addition to the some of his important writings noted by Karl and Craig, mention should also be made of his important writings on languages in Central, and his research on varieties of Hiri Trading Language (the languages used on hiri voyages for interactions between the Motu and their Gulf trading partners) and Hiri Motu (formerly known as Police Motu). In spite of Tom's work, the latter is often erroneously assumed to be the former.

Malcolm Ross:

Police Motu: Iena sivarai is self-evidently already in the public domain, so here is the link:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/133561>

Links to some of Tom's book publications on PNG languages follow - they all work, as do the download links on the pages they refer to.

Beginning Hiri Motu:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/146613>

A checklist of languages and present-day villages of central and south-east mainland Papua:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/146477>

The Hiri in history : further aspects of long distance Motu trade in Central Papua:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/133722>

The peopling of Central Papua: Some preliminary observations:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/146442>

Reconstructing Proto Koiarian: The history of a Papuan language family:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/146757>

The two links below to book chapters of Tom's:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&authority=07688fea-b1db-47c7-abe2-e4ed0c95fddc>

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&authority=1be4cf0c-8431-42fc-bef4-a1811697a6fd>

Tom Dutton's Writings

Police Motu: Iena sivarai is self-evidently already in the public domain, so here is the link:

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Reconstructing Proto Koiarian: The history of a Papuan language family:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/146757>

The two links below to book chapters of Tom's:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&authority=07688fea-b1db-47c7-abe2-e4ed0c95fddc>

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&authority=1be4cf0c-8431-42fc-bef4-a1811697a6fd>

Tom Dutton

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Dutton_\(linguist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Dutton_(linguist))

Tom Dutton (born **Thomas Edward Dutton** on 10 May 1935 in [Dayboro, Queensland](#), Australia) is an Australian linguist specialising in [Papuan languages](#) (particularly the [Southeast Papuan languages](#)) and other [languages of Papua New Guinea](#).^[1]

Early life

Thomas Edward Dutton was born on 10 May 1935 in [Dayboro](#) (near [Brisbane](#)) in [Queensland](#), Australia. Dutton's paternal grandparents were English, his maternal grandparents were German. He the eldest of five children and had two brothers and two sisters. His father, Lewis (Ted) Dutton, was the Head Teacher of Mayfield State School. In 1936, Lewis Dutton was transferred to a rural two-teacher school in [Gooburrum](#), located near [Bundaberg](#), where he worked for 37 years. As a result, Dutton spent most of his childhood in Bundaberg.^[2]

Education and career

In June 1957, he was Officer-in-Charge (Head Teacher) at [Rigo](#) Intermediate School, in Central District (now [Central Province](#)), [Papua New Guinea](#), located east of [Port Moresby](#). In 1959, he was promoted to Area Education Officer in Port Moresby Subdistrict (now the [National Capital District](#)) and was in charge of Administration and Mission Schools from [Manumanu](#) to [Gaire](#). In 1962, he obtained his BA in English from the [University of Queensland](#).^[2]

From 1963 to 1965, Dutton was a Research Fellow at the Queensland Speech Survey in the Department of English at the University of Queensland. While working as a researcher, he studied for a Masters degree in English linguistics. He finished his PhD dissertation at the University of Queensland in 1969 and obtained a research fellowship at the [Research School for Pacific Studies](#) (RSPacS) that same year.^[2]

Dutton worked as a researcher at the [Australian National University](#) (ANU) from 1969-1974, where he was a specialist on [Southeast Papuan languages](#). His research colleagues at the ANU included [Donald Laycock](#), a specialist in languages of the [Sepik](#) region; [Clemens Voorhoeve](#), a specialist in [West Papuan languages](#); and [Darrell Tryon](#), a specialist in the [languages of eastern Island Melanesia](#).^[2]

He was Professor at the [University of Papua New Guinea](#) from 1975-1977 and returned to Australia afterwards.^[2]

Dutton was the managing editor of [Pacific Linguistics](#) from 1987 to 1996. He retired in 1997, but continued to publish works in linguistics. In 2010, Dutton published a book on the reconstruction of Proto-[Koiarian](#).^[2]

Personal life

In 1962, Dutton married Corinne Scott from [Nanango](#), near [Kingaroy](#).^[2]

Publications

The following are Dutton's works published by [Pacific Linguistics](#).^[3]

Books

- Dutton, T.E. *The peopling of Central Papua: Some preliminary observations*. B-9, viii + 190 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1969. doi:[10.15144/PL-B9](#)
- Dutton, T.E. *A checklist of languages and present-day villages of central and south-east mainland Papua*. B-24, iv + 84 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1973. doi:[10.15144/PL-B24](#)
- Dutton, T. *A first dictionary of [Koiari](#)*. C-122, vii + 178 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1992. doi:[10.15144/PL-C122](#)

- Dutton, T.E. *Conversational New Guinea Pidgin*. D-12, xvi + 310 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1973. [doi:10.15144/PL-D12](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-D12)
- Dutton, T.E. and Voorhoeve, C.L. *Beginning Hiri Motu*. D-24, xviii + 276 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1974. [doi:10.15144/PL-D24](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-D24)
- Dutton, T. *Queensland Canefields English of the last nineteenth century (a record of interview with two of the last surviving Kanakas in North Queensland, 1964)*. D-29, xiv + 160 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1980. [doi:10.15144/PL-D29](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-D29)
- Dutton, T. and Thomas, D. *A New Course in Tok Pisin (New Guinea Pidgin)*. D-67, xxviii + 407 (3 maps 110 photos) pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1985. [doi:10.15144/PL-D67](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-D67)
- Dutton, T. *A dictionary of Koiari, Papua New Guinea, with grammar notes*. PL-534, xxvi + 424 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 2003. [doi:10.15144/PL-534](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-534)
- Dutton, T. *Reconstructing Proto Koiarian: The history of a Papuan language family*. PL-610, xii + 126 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 2010.

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- Dutton, T. editor. *Culture change, language change: Case studies from Melanesia*. C-120, viii + 164 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1992. [doi:10.15144/PL-C120](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-C120)
- Dutton, T., Ross, M. and Tryon, D. editors. *The Language Game: Papers in memory of Donald C. Laycock*. C-110, xviii + 684 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1992.

Articles

- Dutton, T. "Languages of South-East Papua". In Dutton, T., Voorhoeve, C. and Wurm, S.A. editors, *Papers in New Guinea Linguistics No. 14*. A-28:1-46. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1971. [doi:10.15144/PL-A28.1](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-A28.1)
- Dutton, T. "[Police Motu](#) of the Second World War: a record of interview with Nanai Gigovi, 1942". In Smith, G., Dutton, T., Voorhoeve, C.L., Schooling, S., Schooling, J., Conrad, R., Lewis, R., Wurm, S.A. and Barnum, T.) editors, *Papers in New Guinea Linguistics No. 26*. A-76:133-179. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, 1988. [doi:10.15144/PL-A76.133](https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-A76.133)
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