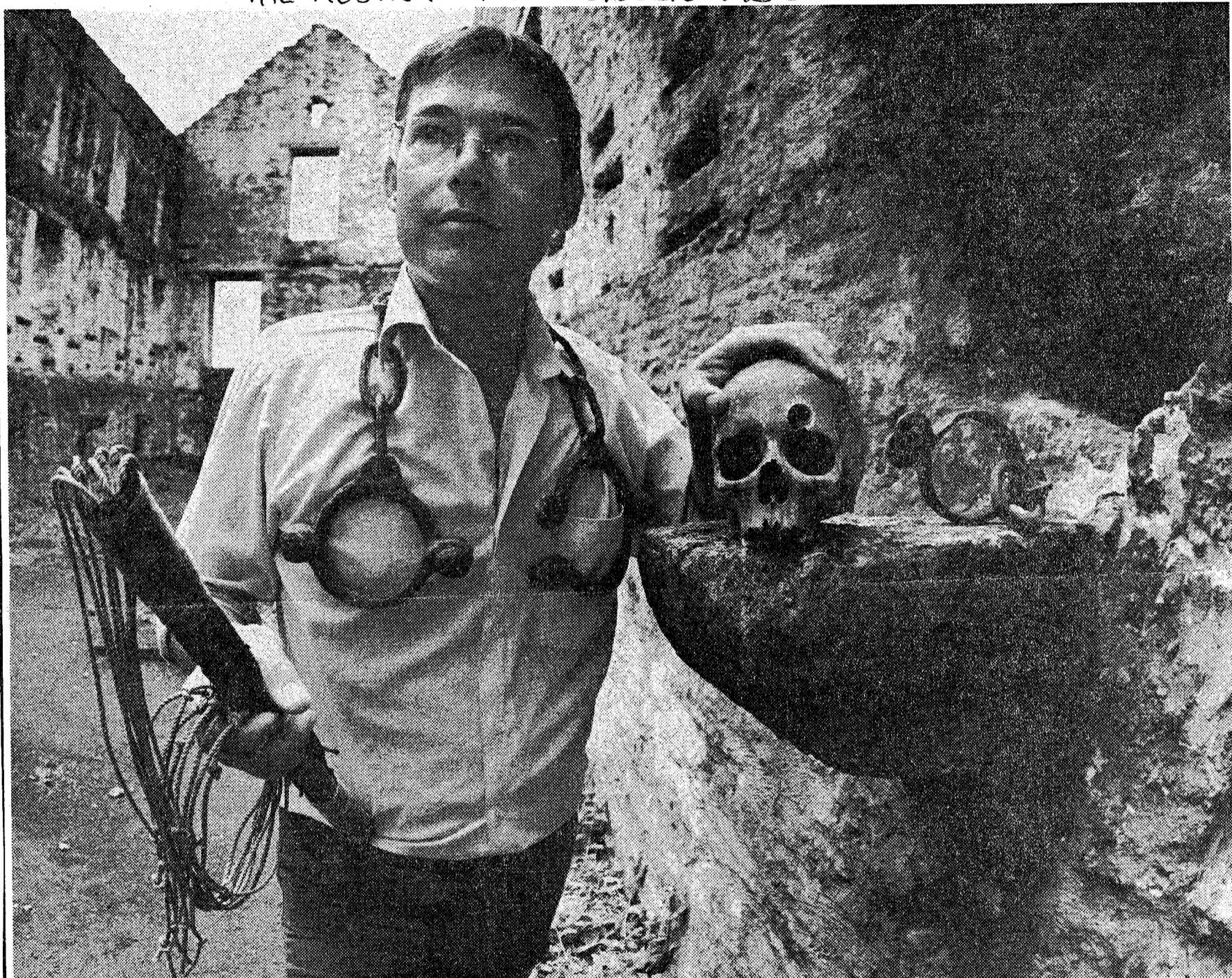


Alas, poor Jorris, they drilled him 02. 10/88

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ABOVE: Historian Mr Robert Varman with Jorris and the cat o' nine tails. BELOW: Australia's windswept Pacific territory of Norfolk Island, 1500km from Sydney.

By BERWYN LEWIS

JORRIS, a macabre local, grinned quietly yesterday during ceremonies to commemorate Norfolk Island's place in Australian history.

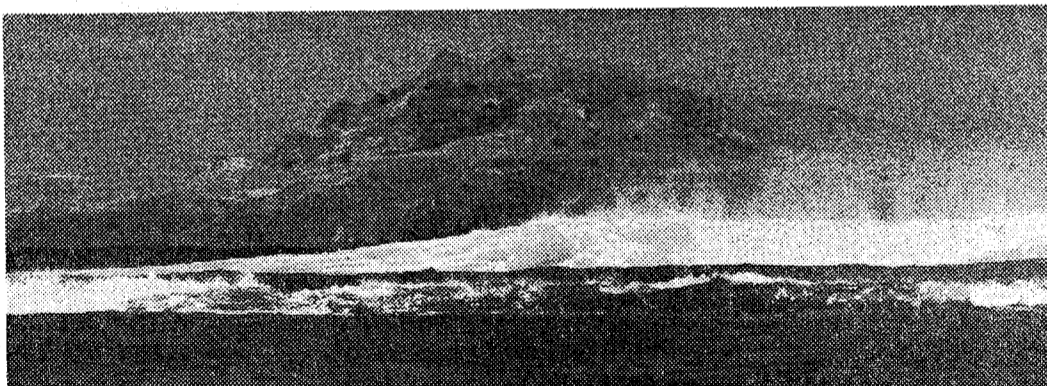
Jorris had no choice. He's a skull.

Nobody is sure where Jorris came from but he keeps popping up in unlikely places.

When His Grace the Duke of Norfolk unveils a plaque to commemorate the wreck of HMAS Sirius, from the First Fleet, Jorris presides.

He's there when the new House Museum at Kingston is opened by Sir Richard Kingsland, the Australian Bicentennial Authority chairman for the ACT and Island Territories — and at the launching of Dr Nobbs' book, *Norfolk Island First Settlement 1788-1814*.

With a hole about the size of a 20c coin just above his left eyebrow, believed to be the work of a hand drill, Jorris is one of the exhibits in the new museum. On Monday he stole the scene at the local agricul-



tural and produce show.

Jorris, so named by archaeologist, historian and curator of Norfolk Island Museums, Mr Robert Varman, was discovered in a cupboard of the Kingston Administrative Building by a cleaner. She took some time to recover.

Jorris had to go and he disappeared for a few years.

Recently he was rediscovered by Mr Varman and Mr George "Puss" Edwin Anderson, the restoration foreman,

when they found a plastic bag in the museum's basement.

Jorris isn't the only grim relic of Norfolk Island's past, with shackles found everywhere on the island.

But the new House Museum, in an 1825 building, has a brighter side.

It's also the home of what could be the prototype billy, a sort of cauldron known as the Bounty kettle, ideal for boiling up salt beef stews or knocking together a sea biscuit mush.

A huge blackened pot, the kettle reached Norfolk after being handed down through Pitcairn Island families since the Fletcher Christian mutiny days: Norfolk became home to the mutineer families in 1856 after they left Pitcairn.

Despite magnificent scenery, stands of Norfolk pine and fine architecture Norfolk Island was once the most cruel and forsaken place in the English-speaking world.

A natural prison, it is girded

by fierce seas, harborless cliff-bound beaches and treacherous reefs.

The museum is chilling testimony with leg irons, ankle manacles, shackles, and ball-and-chain fittings and arrow-printed outfits looking like national costume.

Cat o' nine tails may seem innocent enough lying on a display shelf but in the hands of an experienced welder they delivered a horrific lashing.

The "cat" displayed in the museum, handed down through the William Young family and originally from Pitcairn, has its "tails" fastened with fine cotton so they would not fray with continuous use.

Varman has documents which vividly describe how the convicts were "half naked, screeching, screaming and sweating as they worked" at the wheel.

And as for Jorris, no one will be any the wiser about why he had his head drilled.