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VOL 5, 2008



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Airways Hotel Wins World Travel Award Once More

For the second consecutive year, Airways Hotel & Apartments Ltd has won the award for "Papua New Guinea's Leading Hotel 2008" from the esteemed World Travel Awards (WTA). Under the Australasia Category, Airways Hotel was internationally recognized by industry professionals and travel agents to be the best amongst several other hotels in Papua New Guinea.

World Travel Awards (WTA) was established in 1993 with the main aim of acknowledging and celebrating excellence in all sectors of the Hospitality and Tourism industry. WTA obtains votes from 167,000 travel agencies and professionals in over 198 participating countries and thoroughly checks the votes and voters for eligibility and accreditations. To have won twice as the 'Leading Hotel in PNG' essentially gives, as WTA has put it, "a reliable endorsement from thousands of professionals from around the globe" and has absolutely confirmed that Papua New Guinea has one of the best hotels within the Australasia region.

WTA holds annual gala dinners in various countries to present the awards and such dinners are attended by top business executives, most of who are the industry's key decision makers on the international scale. The 2008 World Travel Awards Gala Dinner was held on the 11th of June at the Observatory Hotel in Sydney, Australia. Airways Hotel was pleased to be a part of this presentation and was proud to send two of its national managers, Ms. Rachel Amene and Mr. Lister Boga to receive the prestigious award. Other prominent hotels that also won awards were the Four Seasons Hotel Sydney who won the award for 'Australasia's Leading Hotel' and the Observatory Hotel who won the award for 'Australia's Leading Hotel'.

Airways Hotel has spent the last 4 years in a continuous upgrade program that has seen such introductions as Deli KC's, hotel butler service, the new liaam day spa, the Health and Racquet Club and a transformation at the Poolside Restaurant. It is services and facilities such as these that have contributed to the winning of this award.

However, Airways Hotel General Manager Kevin Yaxley has his sights set on even greater levels of guest service. Speaking with the staff and management upon learning about the award, Kevin Yaxley said "This is recognition of our efforts, but at the same time means that our guests will have even greater expectations for even better service". This will be achieved through the spending of over K1,000,000 this year alone on staff training and the introduction this year of new guest services and facilities such as in room Nespresso coffee machines, the opening of the Executive Business Centre 24 hours a day and personal computers in the Orchid Club Floor suites.

With 2009 set to be the most exciting ever in the 21 year history of the hotel, Airways will see construction of 63 hotel suites in the luxurious new Dakota Wing, which is on track and due to open in June 2009. Additionally, plans are currently being drawn up to construct a stand alone Airways Hotel School which will offer courses in conjunction with the Emirates Academy from Dubai and L'Ecole Hotelerie Lausanne as well as Cornell University and other international educational institutions. This full time training facility will play an integral part in providing the training and service essential to match the facilities of the rest of the hotel. Courses will commence in September this year in temporary facilities and continue until the new hotel school is completed.

Having been the "Leading Hotel in Papua New Guinea" in 2007 and 2008, Airways Hotel is determined to continue to strive in leading the way for many years to come.

Jacksons Parade, Jacksons International Airport, P.O. Box 1942, Boroko, N.C.D., Papua New Guinea
Tel: (675) 3245200 Fax: (675) 324 5300 Website: www.airways.com.pg





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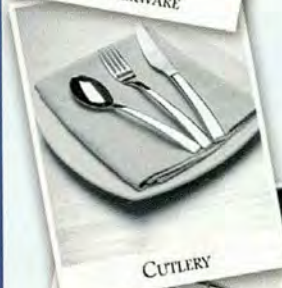


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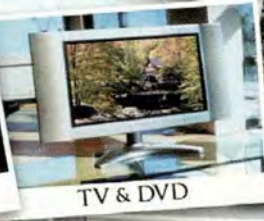
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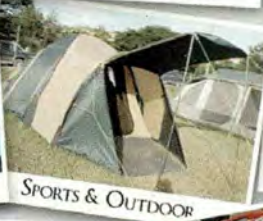
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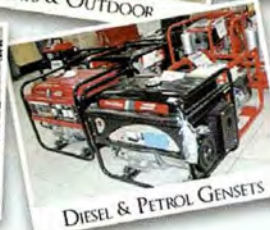
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Chairman's Message



Welcome aboard your Bird of Paradise service.

With the global economic slowdown and the rising fuel costs impacting on the airline industry world-wide, the board recently approved an increase on international fuel surcharge on some of Air Niugini's international routes.

However, the domestic fuel surcharge has remained unchanged: With the price now over US\$190 at Jackson's Airport, the airline cannot continue to absorb the significantly higher cost of fuel. With the latest increase, the airline will only partially cover its costs.

Many airlines have applied measures in response to rising fuel costs including reducing frequencies, cancelling marginal routes and cutting back on staff numbers. These are times for difficult decisions to be made and it is not easy for Air Niugini; tough measures will have to be considered and a review in the way we do business within this global environment is being assessed.

On July 15, the airline implemented a revised schedule that will meet its resources and maximise aircraft utilisation in the face of rising fuel costs, as well as offer more travel options and better connections with our international and domestic flights.

In the current schedule, we introduced the basing of a Dash 8 aircraft in Madang to operate flights to Wewak, Vanimo, Mt Hagen, Goroka and Lae - giving passengers direct services to their final destinations rather than having to travel through Port Moresby.

Other changes to the schedule include the upgrading of equipment from an Embraer 190 to Boeing 757 on the non-stop service to Sydney with an earlier departure time to provide excellent domestic connections to the southern states, including Canberra. The Honiara-Nadi services on Fridays and Sundays are operated now by the Embraer 190 with departures from Port Moresby retimed to 12 noon to enable same day connections for transit domestic passengers.

We commenced a double daily service between Port Moresby and Cairns in August, increasing the number of weekly flights from 18 to 28. This schedule is ideal for the business commuter as it gives a daily departure from Cairns at 7.15 am and the last flight back to Cairns at 4pm.

I am pleased to advise that the planned refueling programme has been completed with the addition of two Dash 8s and the latest F100 aircraft to meet the airline's schedule requirements. One of the Dash 8s will be a dedicated freighter on the domestic network while the second one will be added to the existing passenger fleet.

As this issue will be out during September, I would like to invite our visitors to join in the independence celebrations that will be held throughout the country during the week leading up to Independence Day on September 16.

Enjoy your flight with our stories on Rabaul and the mysteries of the Tubuan society, the cultures of the Tolai people, beautiful neighbouring Kavieng and other adventures you can experience in Papua New Guinea.

Sir James N. Tjoeng KBE
Chairman



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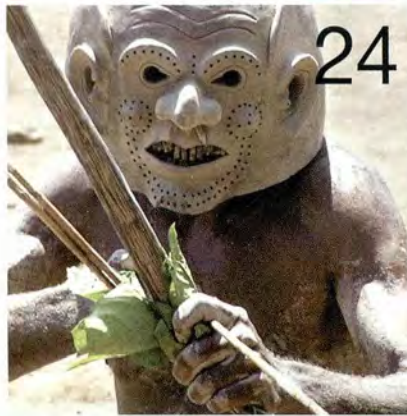
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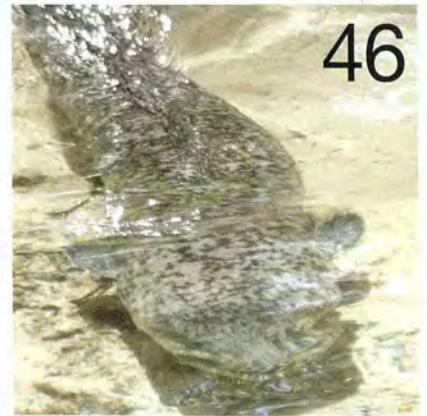
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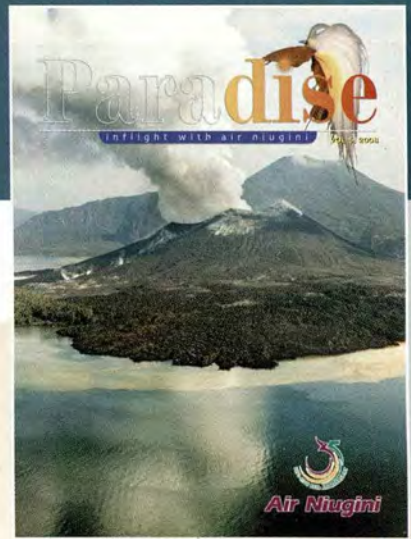
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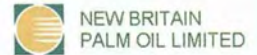
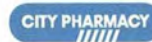


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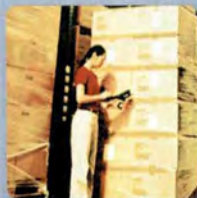


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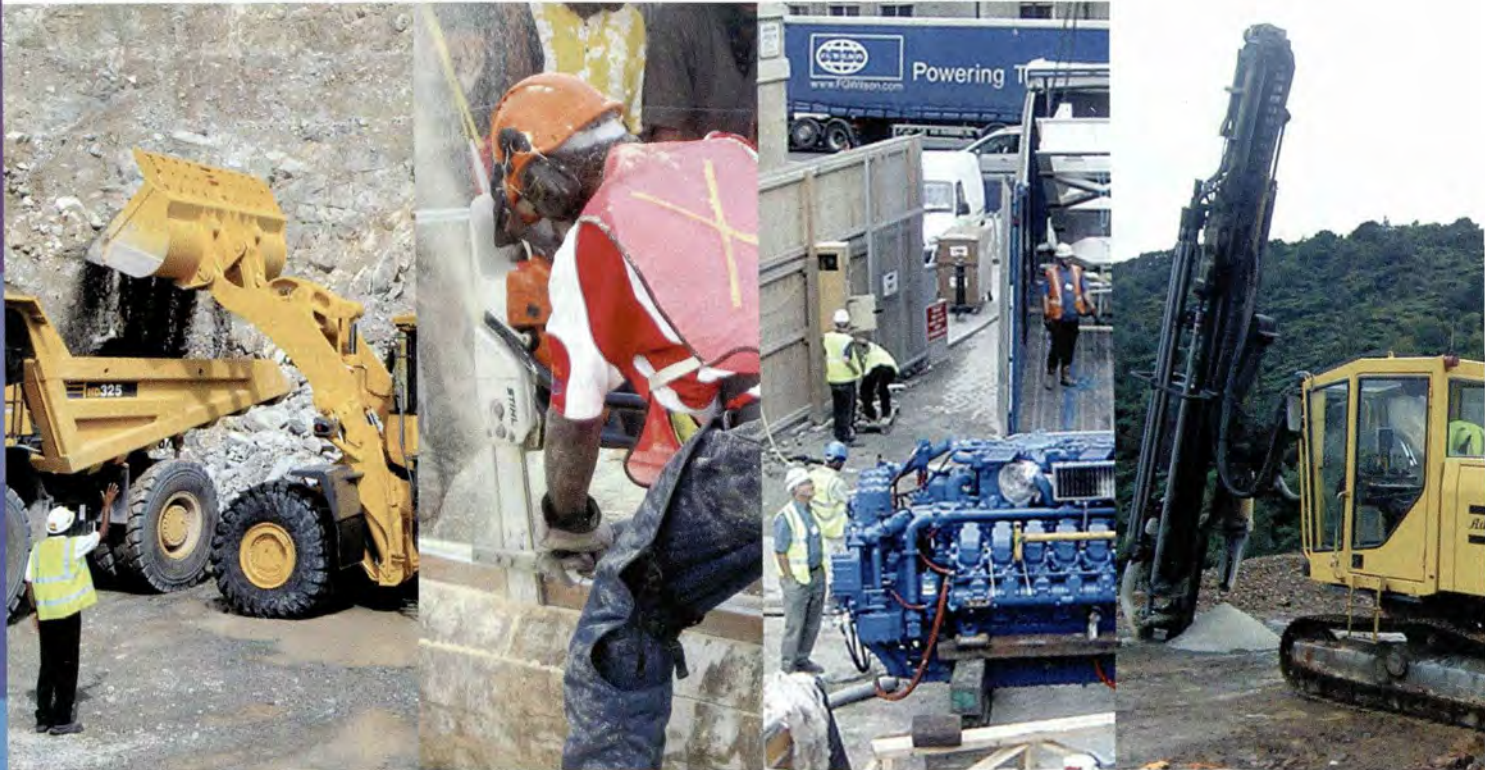
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Please ensure that your carry on luggage is placed in the overhead locker or under the seat in front of you.

Takeoff and landing

Ensure that your seat is in the upright position during takeoff and landing. Folding tables must be returned to their original position in the seat back or the armrest.

Safety first

Your seatbelt must be securely fastened during takeoff and landing or whenever the seatbelt sign is on. When the seatbelt sign is off you may move about the cabin as necessary. However while seated, keep your seatbelt fastened securely in case of unexpected turbulence.

Electronic equipment

Cellular telephones, TV receivers or radio controlled devices are not to be used at any time on board an aircraft. Electronic devices such as portable computers, compact discs or cassette players and video games can be used only when the seatbelt sign is switched off.

Children and babies

The cabin crew will also be pleased to assist in preparing your baby's food and bottle. Baby food and diapers are also available. Please do not hesitate to ask our friendly cabin crew.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on any Air Niugini flight.

Entertainment

A selection of movies and music including classical, modern, country and local are available on international services. Programmes can be found in the in-flight entertainment section of this magazine.

Pillows and blankets

On International flights, pillows and blankets are available on request from our cabin crew.

Cuisine

Our inflight meals have been specially prepared for your enjoyment. If you require a vegetarian meal or you are on a special diet, child or baby food, please inform us when making your reservation.

In-flight Duty Free

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Immigration and Customs Forms

During your flight, our cabin crew will distribute Immigration and Customs forms before each landing point. Ensure that you carefully read and complete these documents and have them ready for inspection with your passport at the Immigration and Customs arrival counters.

Before you leave

Please check your seat pocket and overhead lockers before you disembark to ensure you have not left any items of value. We look forward to seeing you when you next fly with us on our Bird of Paradise Service.





AIR NIUGINI FLEET

B767-300ER



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
B767-300ER	59.94m	47.57m	2 PW4000	857kph	11,000-12,000m	214 + bags	8100km

F100



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
F100	35.528m	28.076m	2 Rolls Roys Tay 650	780kph	11,000m	98 + bags	3000km

DASH 8-Q315



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
DASH 8-Q315	25.7m	24.4m	2 Pratt & Whitney PW123	440kph	7,500m	50 + Bags	1,800km

DHC-8-202



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
DHC-8-202	22.25m	25.89m	2 Pratt & Whitney	550kph	7,600m	36 + bags	1700km

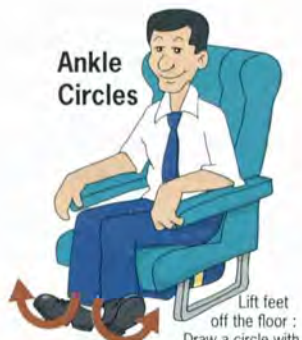




IN-FLIGHT EXERCISES

These exercises are designed to encourage a safe way to enjoy movement and stretch certain muscle groups that can become stiff as a result of long periods of sitting. They may be effective in increasing the body's circulation and massaging the muscles. We recommend you do these

exercises for three or four minutes every hour and occasionally get out of your seat and walk down the aisles if conditions allow. Each exercise should be done with minimal disturbance to other passengers. None of the following should be performed if they cause pain or cannot be done with ease.



Ankle Circles

Lift feet off the floor : Draw a circle with toes, simultaneously moving one foot clockwise and the other foot counter clockwise. Reverse circles. Do each direction for 15 seconds. Repeat if desired



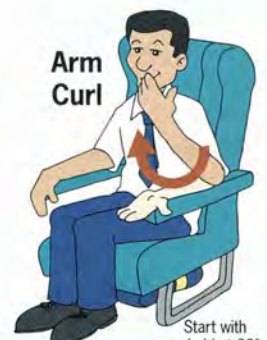
Knee Lifts

Lift leg with knee bent while contracting your thigh muscle. Alternate legs. Repeat 20-30 times for each leg



Shoulder Roll

Hunch shoulders forward, then upward, then backward, then downward using a gentle circular motion



Arm Curl

Start with arms held at 90° angle - elbows down, hands out in front. Raise hands up to chest and back down alternating arms. Do these exercise in 30 second intervals.



Foot Pumps

Foot motion is in three stages

1. Start with both heels on the floor and point feet upward as high as you can.



2. Put both feet flat on the floor.



3. Lift heels high, keeping balls of feet on floor. Continue these three stages with continuous motion in 30 second intervals.



Knee to Chest

Bend forward slightly. Clasp hands around left knee and hug it to your chest. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Keeping hands around knee, slowly let it down. Alternate legs. Repeat 10 times



Forward Flex

With both feet on the floor and stomach held in slowly, bend forward and walk your hands down the front of your legs towards your ankles. Hold stretch for 15 seconds and slowly sit back up.



Overhead Stretch

Raise both arms straight up and over your head. With one hand grasp the wrist of the opposite hand and gently pull to one side. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat other side.



Shoulder Stretch

Reach right hand over left shoulder. Place left hand behind right elbow and gently press elbow toward shoulder. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat other side



Neck Roll

With shoulders relaxed, drop ear to shoulder and gently roll neck forward and to the other side, holding each position about 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times





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YOUR HEALTH IN-FLIGHT

At Air Niugini we care about your comfort and safety. We have included the following information about your health in-flight that we hope you will find helpful and useful.

When you are flying you can be seated and be inactive for long periods of time. The environment can be low in humidity and pressurised up to an altitude of 2240 metres above sea level. Unlike other forms of transportation, air travel allows for rapid movement across many time zones, causing a disruption to the body's "biological clock". Although these unique factors do not pose a health or safety threat to most passengers, there are guidelines you can follow that will improve your comfort level, during and after a flight. We hope the following recommendations will help you have a more pleasant flight today and in the future.

Blood Circulation/Muscle Relaxation

When you're sitting upright in a stationary position for a long period of time, several things can happen:

- The central blood vessels in your legs can be compressed, making it more difficult for the blood to get back to your heart.
- The long inactivity of your body muscles in this position can result in muscle tension, back aches or a feeling of excessive fatigue during, or even after, your flight.
- A stationary position inhibits the normal body mechanism for returning fluid to your heart, and gravity can cause the fluid to collect in your feet. This results in swollen feet after a long flight.
- Studies have concluded that prolonged immobility may be a risk factor in the formation of clots in the legs (DVT - deep vein thrombosis). Particular medication and medical conditions may increase the risk of formation of clots if associated with prolonged immobility. Medical research indicates that factors which may give you an increased risk of blood clots in the legs include:

- Former or current malignant disease
- Blood Disorders leading to increased clotting tendency
- Personal or family history of DVT
- Recent major surgery or injury, especially to lower limbs or abdomen
- Oestrogen hormone therapy, including oral contraceptives
- Immobilisation for a day or more
- Dehydration
- Heart Failure
- Trauma
- Varicose veins
- Obesity
- Tobacco smoking

Recommendations

- If you fall into any of these categories or you have any concern about your health and flying, Air Niugini recommends you seek medical advice before travelling.
- Follow our in-flight exercises programme

Jetlag

The main cause of jetlag is traveling to different time zones without giving the body a chance to adjust to new night-day cycles. In general, the more time zones you cross during your flight, the more your biological clock is disturbed. The common symptoms are sleeplessness, tiredness, loss of appetite or appetite at odd hours.

Recommendations

- Get a good night's rest before your flight.
- Arrive at your destination a day or two early, to give your body a chance to become more acclimatised to the new time zone.
- Fly direct to minimise flight time. This allows you to relax more upon arrival.
- Leave your watch on home time if you're staying at your destination less than 48 hours. Also try to eat and sleep according to your home time.
- Change your watch to the local time if your stay is longer than 48 hours, and try to eat and sleep in accordance with the local time.

On longer stays, try to prepare in advance, adjust your meal and rest times to be closer to those of your destination.



- Increasing age above 40 years
- Pregnancy



Try some light exercise - go for a brisk walk, or do some reading if you can't sleep after arrival at your destination. It generally takes the body's biological clock approximately one day to adjust per time zone crossed.

Cabin Humidity/Dehydration

Humidity levels of less than 25 percent are common in the cabin.

This is due to the extremely low humidity levels of outside air supplied to the cabin. The low humidity can cause drying of the nose, throat, eyes and it can irritate contact lens wearers.

- Drink water or juices frequently during the flight
- Drink coffee, tea and alcohol in moderation. These drinks act as diuretics, increasing the body's dehydration.
- Remove contact lenses and wear glasses if your eyes are irritated.
- Use a skin moisturiser to refresh the skin.

Eating and Drinking

Proper eating and drinking will enhance your comfort both during and after your flight.

- Avoid overeating just prior to and during the flight. It is difficult to digest too much food when the body is inactive.
- Drink coffee, tea and alcohol in moderation. These drinks act as diuretics, increasing the body's dehydration.

Cabin Pressurisation

It is necessary to pressurise the outside air drawn into the cabin to a sufficient density for your comfort and health. Cabins are pressurised to a maximum cabin altitude of 2440 metres. It is the same air pressure as if you were at an elevation of 2440 metres above sea level. The cabin pressure and normal rates of change in cabin pressure during climb and descent do not pose a problem for most passengers. However, if you suffer from upper respiratory or sinus infections, obstructive pulmonary diseases, anaemias or certain cardiovascular conditions, you could experience

discomfort. Children and infants might experience some discomfort because of pressure change during climb and descent.

If you are suffering from nasal congestion or allergies, use nasal sprays, decongestants and antihistamines 30 minutes prior to descent to help open up your ear and sinus passages. If you have a cold or flu or hayfever, your sinuses could be impaired. Swollen membranes in your nose could block your eustachian tubes-the tiny channels between your middle ear chamber. This can cause discomfort during changes in cabin pressure, particularly during descent.

Recommendations

- If you have a pre-existing medical condition that warrants supplemental oxygen, you can order from us. Please give at least seven days notice before traveling.
- To "clear" your ears try swallowing and/or yawning. These actions help open your eustachian tubes, equalizing pressure between your middle ear chamber and your throat.
- When flying with an infant, feed or give your baby a dummy during descent. Sucking and swallowing will help infants equalize the pressure in their ears.

Motion Sickness

This ailment is caused by a conflict between the body's sense of vision and its sense of equilibrium. Air turbulence increases its likelihood because it can cause movement of the fluid in the vestibular apparatus of the inner ear. If you have good visual cues (keeping your eyes fixed on a non-moving object), motion sickness is less likely to occur.

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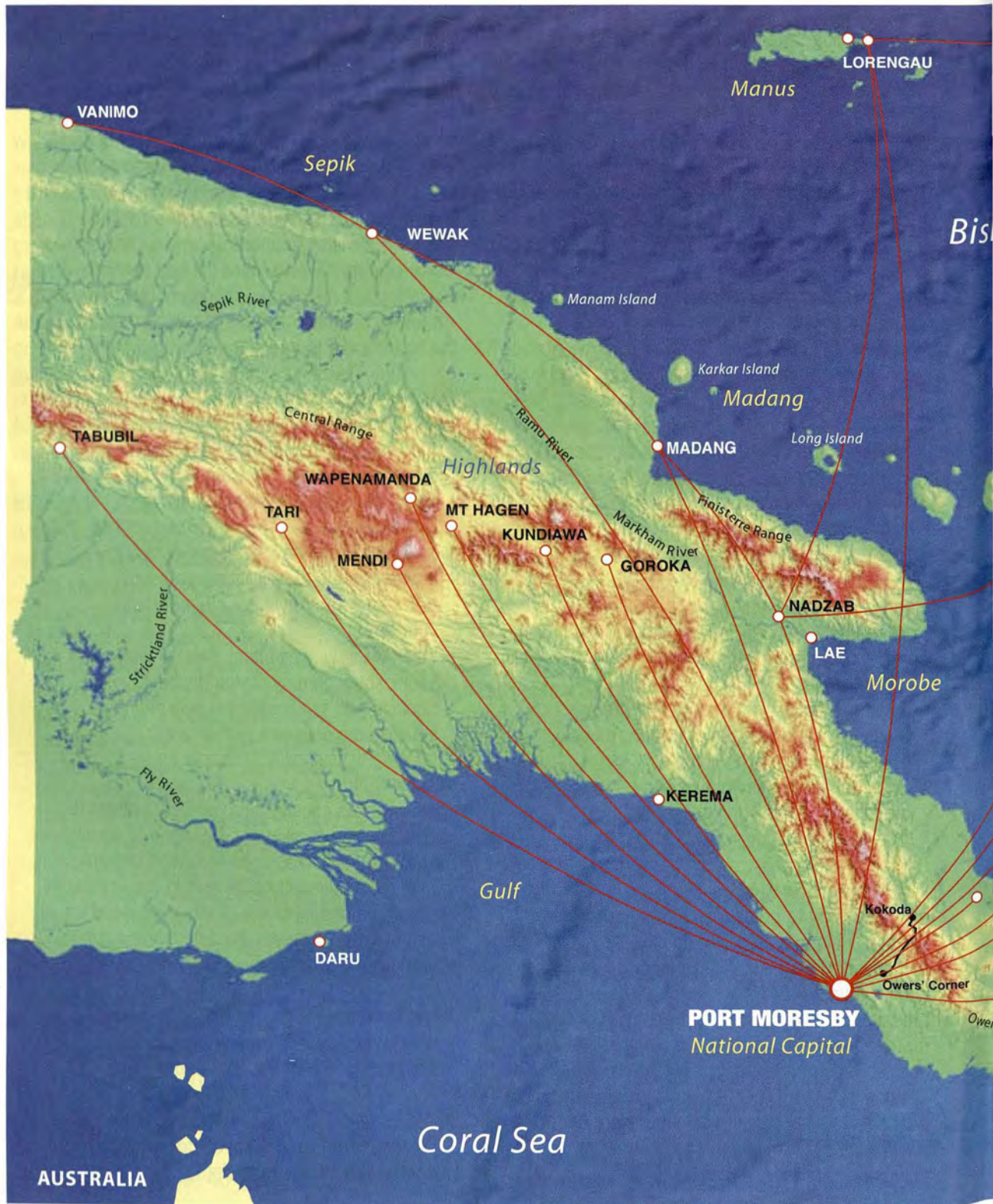
- When weather is clear and you can see the ground, sea or horizon, you are less susceptible to motion sickness.
- You can buy over the counter medications but we recommend that you consult your doctor about the appropriate medications.

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KOKOPO'S CELEBRATION OF MASKS

East New Britain
hosts another
spectacular festival

On the circular arena, imagine a triangle. At one end, firewood piled high.
On the second point, a fire is lit with flames leaping high.

On the third corner of the imaginary triangle, four planks of timber are being placed together to form a platform for the chanters to sit and hit their bamboo stick drums with.

Crowds of locals with camera-ready tourists filled the showground.

It's the biggest turnout so far in the four-day festival.

No doubt about it, this performance is the crowd's favourite, the fire mask dance of the Baining tribe up in the hinterlands of Kokopo.

Bare chested men - about 10 in all - wore elaborate masks all with duck-like beaks and danced around the fire in a trance-like state, their feet beating the dirt in

...no woman is allowed to have a front view although there are now some Tubuan dances that include women performers.

Traditionally, a Tubuan is only performed by men for men in the village's tarai, a secret land clearing in the bush on the outskirts of the village.

rhythm to that of the bamboo drums.

As the chants hit a crescendo, a dancer or two walk through the flame-leaping fire.

Some others kick their way through, the orange burning cinders flying off, some landing dangerously on the spell-bound audience.

Wave after wave, crescendo after crescendo, dancers walk, leap or kick their way through the flames.

The audience cheer each time a dancer goes through seemingly unharmed.

Welcome to the Kokopo Showgrounds, venue of the 14th National Mask Warwagira Festival in East New Britain province.

Warwagira is the local lingo for showcasing, Nelson Paulias tells me.

He is the executive officer of East New

Britain's tourism board.

Each year usually in the month of July, Paulias and a group of volunteers organise the province's very popular and most well-known cultural festival.

It usually runs for four days with funding from the provincial and national governments through the National Cultural Commission.

While East New Britain is undoubtedly the cultural mask capital of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby hosted the first national Mask Festival in 1995 and it was not until 2001 when the decision was made to make Rabaul (and Kokopo this year) the festival's permanent home.

"The undertaking was made because of the diversity and uniqueness of the various masks found in this province," Samson Kakai, Paulias' predecessor, wrote in a National



Writer Samisoni Pareti was in Papua New Guinea for two weeks collecting stories from Rabaul in New Britain and Kavieng in New Ireland which are being featured in this edition of Air Niugini's inflight magazine, **PARADISE**.

Tourism Council brochure.

Since then, the East New Britain Provincial Administration and the National Cultural Commission of PNG have been co-hosting the Mask Festival there.

The culture of masks in the province and to a large extent the entire ethnic mask cultures of Papua New Guinea owe its existence to the traditional male secret society of the Tubuan.

"Each clan even sub-clan will have a Tubuan," explains Paulias.

"So in a village, you may have two or three Tubuan groups."

Being a male society, women membership is strictly forbidden and this rule is religiously observed.

Even when a Tubuan is dancing, no woman is





You will never know who the Tubuan dancer is in any performance as he is clothed in sago-like leaves from the shoulders to the thighs.



allowed to have a front view although there are now some Tubuan dances that include women performers.

Traditionally, a Tubuan is only performed by men for men in the village's taraiu, a secret land clearing in the bush on the outskirts of the village.

"It is really our way of instilling discipline on our males," said Paulias.

"During Tubuan training in the taraiu, members learn respect for authority, for other people and property and how to help each other."

To join a Tubuan is the decision of a male's parents or his maternal uncle, given that most tribes in East New Province are matriarchal in nature.

There is usually an entry "fee", generally 100 fathoms of shell money.

Once the fee is paid to the 'owner' of the Tubuan, generally a village "big man", the new

member undergoes initiation.

What happens during initiation?

"Oh, I can't tell you that," replied Paulias.

But it generally takes two to three weeks, the senior tourism executive added.

Unwilling to explain what takes place during the initiation ceremonies is one of the many closely guarded secrets of Tubuan culture.

You will never know who the Tubuan dancer is in any performance as he is clothed in sago-like leaves from the shoulders to the thighs.

On his head sits a mask of different shades and designs, but all are conical in shape.

Experts like Paulias explained that male masks are referred to as Duk Duk whilst Tubuan is the female version.

The difference is in the length and design - Duk Duk tends to be taller and faceless than their female Tubuan masks.



As the Tubuans perform, the chanters - shirtless and many chewing betelnut - sit on the ground and chant or beat their bamboo drums, their kundu (wooden drums), or in some cases the wooden gong, the garamut.

Cries of 'amalem' are sometimes heard, which can mean "you are the champion". Amalem is also the name of the Tubuan elders whose roles are to look after and teach new recruits.

Amalems generally stand around the chanters to conduct the sing-sing and at times issue directions to the Tubuan mask dancers.

In the local dialect, 'lap' is the word for fire. In the Tubuan context, lap means "hurry up", or "keep it up".

All these were on show at the annual Mask Festival which always opens with the 'Kinavai' rituals, featuring the Tolai region's Duk Duk and Tubuan masks. This dance is performed out at sea before dawn breaks.

Duk Duk and Tubuans are ferried to the beach in banana boats (fibreglass outboard powered boats) accompanied by bare-chested male chanters.

From the Kinavai rituals on Kokopo Beach, the dancers and spectators then move to the festival's showground inland.

In July, Kokopo hosted the festival for the first time.

Constant ash eruption from the active Tavurvur volcano near Rabaul town forced the organisers to move the venue from the Queen

Elizabeth II Park to Kokopo Town, some 30 kilometres away.

This move was not without its critics although the proponents of the venue change were vindicated when Rabaul was blanketed with ash rain during the week of the Mask Festival.

Residents of Rabaul had to walk around with their heads covered with either a piece of clothing or an umbrella as protection from the volcanic ash.

Ash fallout also covered the concrete remains of the old part of the town - evacuated during the Tavurvur volcanic eruption in 1994 - giving an eerie moonlike landscape.

In addition to the Baining fire dancers, this year's festival also featured Tubuan dancers from tribes in East and West New Britain provinces, including a group from the outlying Duke of York Islands, led by its enthusiastic local government president, Isaac Ilom.

He, as a big man, is the owner of his islands' Tubuan.

So is Albert Buanga, the Mayor of Kokopo Town.

There were also dancers from the provinces of East Sepik, Madang, Morobe and New Ireland.

Perhaps in response to East and West New Britain's Tubuan culture, their north-eastern neighbours in New Ireland attended the Kokopo Festival this year to showcase their world-acclaimed Malagan mask tradition.

Malagan culture places strong emphasis on the intricate designs of their masks made from light timber and dyed with bright colours using special concoctions of tree barks, clay, local nuts and coral.

Each mask has a story to tell, generally revolving around the spirits of their ancestors.

And that, experts of Tubuan and Malagan cultures say, is the common link in the mask cultures of Papua New Guinea.

"The type or classes that have to do with the representation of spirits are found in West Africa, South America and Melanesia," the PNG National Tourism Council brochure had explained.

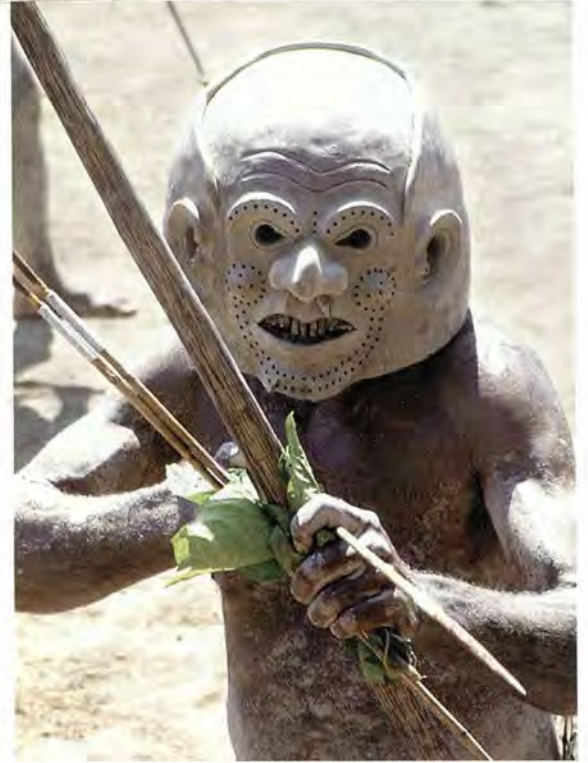
"Of this category, the Melanesian gene specifically has to do with spirits and mostly ancestral spirits."

At this year's Mask Festival, the Malagan mask dances revolved around rituals associated with their dead ancestors.

"One of those dances is usually performed when we install the tombstone of a dead relative," explains a festival committee member, himself a New Irelander, Daniel Biang.

"The chanters are telling the spirit of the dead relative that although we know that he must go (die), we will not forget him."

Mask Festival



Biang said another dance - the kipong - tells the story of a mischievous but harmless spirit who has the habit of pulling pranks on village women.

A tribe from West New Britain province displayed a traditional circumcision ceremony involving a handful of young boys.

The blood curling cries of a few of these young 'men' tell the painful story of using blunt bamboo razors without anaesthetic, of course.

Papua New Guinea's cannibalism past was portrayed by a victory war dance of the Lan tribe in the Baining mountainous region.

Wearing coconut husk wigs and with mud smeared torsos, the men dancers struck a ferocious picture.

Equally vicious were the Asaro mud-men from the Eastern Highlands. Theirs were a chant-less dance but the fearsome looking masks made of baked mud were enough to send shivers down any enemy's spine as the dancers performed, armed to the teeth with their bows and deadly sharp pointed arrows.

A welcoming feature of the 14th Mask Festival was the inclusion of many young boys in the various Tubuan and Duk Duk performances, some as young as four or five year olds.

"Participating in a Tubuan dance has always been part of our life growing up," Ilom explains as he led his Duke of York Islands dancers out of the performing arena.

"So now when we are older, we want to do the

...the fearsome looking masks made of baked mud were enough to send shivers down any foolhardy enemy's spine as the dancers performed...

same and teach our children the dance and culture of our ancestors."

Buanga, mayor of Kokopo town, agrees, saying that in addition to promoting their culture, letting young men participate endears unity.

For visitors like Friederike von Gehren, from Hamburg in Germany, the biggest attraction has been the authenticity if not the originality of the dances.

Dances are not performed merely for show. "I used to admire a collection of masks they have in the Hamburg Museum and I used to wonder what Papua New Guinea was like," said von Gehren, who teaches geography back home.

"Now I'm enjoying myself as people are very nice and friendly."

For the July festival, a large contingent of tourists mainly from Belgium, Germany, Holland and Japan were at hand to enjoy the festivity.

Many resorts like the popular Kokopo Beach Bungalows were booked out. Some of these visitors paid as much as 10,000 Euros to visit Papua New Guinea, a testimony of the popularity of East New Britain's annual festival.

Perhaps the reason for this lies in the quality of the shows; the performances, the hand and

feet movements, the costumes, the chants and chinters - they are as authentic as they are genuine.

On display is the original raw and unpolished PNG culture. There is no room to fake or stage manage it. And the festival's biggest fans are the owners of the culture themselves.

For the entire four days, the people of East New Britain - the old, the young, the big, the small, men, women, boys and girls - came in their hundreds to watch and enjoy the performances.

Because of this, many believe the Mask Festival of East New Britain will continue to be popular for a 'long time to come'.



• Information on East New Britain Mask Warwagira Festival can be obtained through
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Mt Tavureur...belching smoke.

RABAUL OF A TOWN

Living in the shadows
of a volcano

One look at an aerial photo of Rabaul town and it is easy to understand straight away why it was once the Pearl of the South Seas.

Well-planned suburbs with winding boulevards, a deep, natural harbour in its frontage and barricaded from the back by a mountain range, it would have been hard for anyone not to fall in love with Rabaul.

Important facilities were within easy reach - the Rabaul wharf at the waterfront and Rabaul Airport, a mere 10-minute drive from the town centre.

Hamamas Hotel was a favourite watering hole for visiting sailors and nearby plantation owners. It is still there but renamed as Rabaul Hotel.



Vehicle treads leave their mark on the mounting volcanic dust.



Rabaul town

At its zenith, Rabaul was home to 10,000 expatriates.

All that changed on September 19, 1994.

Mount Tavurvur, towering over the other side of the bay where Rabaul Airport was, erupted that day and spewed ash, rock and fire.

Most of the town's buildings collapsed from the sheer weight of the dust and hundreds of homes were buried in the eruption.

Fourteen years later, Rabaul is still a sorry sight.

Half of the town, to the old airport end, lies deserted still.

Tonnes of volcanic ash litter the road and sidewalk.

Skeletons of buildings lay in ruin, disturbed only at times by a cloud of dust whipped up by a passing breeze.

Vehicle tyres leave their mark on the mounting volcanic dust, providing an eerie resemblance of a moon landscape.

Gates to the New Guinea Club - once a white only building - remained to this date.

Beside it and covered with a thick layer of dust is the World War Two bunker of General Yamamoto of the Japanese Imperial Army.

This was the same general who planned the bombing of Pearl Harbour in Hawaii.

As you travel from this end of town to the other, the scenery is unchanged but the town begins to come alive.

The day, David, manager of Kokopo Beach Bungalow and his friendly office staff Sylvester, took me on a tour of Rabaul.

The sun was out. But the constant spewing of ash from the volcano created a deep haze.

As I wind down the glass window to take photos, ash fell on my hair and hands.

Even as David and Sylvester made a stop to buy lunch, ash began to fall like raindrops on the windscreen.

The town's market was full of people and vehicles filled up the main street.

Windows of vehicles were mostly winded up.

For those walking on the pavements, they had

their heads covered with an umbrella or piece of clothing.

The haze, the dust and the sight could be stifling.

But Rabaul town grinds on, many a visitor impressed with the resilience of the town and its people.

Tavurvur in 1994 might have taken away the glister of what was once the Pearl of the South Seas, but for the people of Rabaul, they have not let it take away their resolve to live and make a life from what they still have.



Business as usual...selling local handicrafts for visitors and locals alike..

OUT OF RABAU, KOKOPO BUNGALOW RISES

Foos set benchmark in holiday getaways



Out of the ashes of Rabaul's calamitous volcanic eruption in 1994 rises Kokopo Beach Bungalow - two rows of 11 timber bungalows nestled amongst a luxuriant tropical garden on Kokopo's sandy beachfront.

I fell in love with Bungalow 32 the moment I set my eyes on it.

Built to local architecture of steeped roof and high ceiling, it immediately gives that warm and breezy ambience.

The queen-size bed takes on a regal look with polished timber floors and Papua New Guinea artifacts cutting striking figures on the walls.

There is always an immediate calming effect whenever I step out of the door because of the delightful orchid nursery in the garden.

Flowers bloom in their many colours testifying to the rich volcanic soil underneath.

Just as soothing is the experience of turning to the other end of the cottage with its private balcony giving a commanding vista of the majestic Pacific Ocean.

In between the towering trees on the beachfront, the imposing Mount Tavurvur rumbles on in the north-west. The volcano is quite some distance from Kokopo and only occasionally volcanic ash is blown the new town's way.



For the owners of Kokopo Beach Bungalow, Simon and Evelyn Foo, the view of Tavurvur is a constant reminder of the Phoenix-like evolution it caused to their lives.

"Like everyone else here, we lost everything in the 1994 eruption," said Simon.

"My family owned nine homes and three businesses in Rabaul and the eruptions destroyed all that.

"When we moved to rebuild our home and live here in Kokopo, we literally had to start from scratch in addition to having to pay off our loans for our Rabaul businesses."

Kokopo Beach Bungalow was a result of that re-building experience, similar in no small measure to the mythological Greek Phoenix that burnt itself on the funeral pyre only to rise from its ashes later with a much more youthful and refreshing look.

Said Simon: "The Kokopo Beach Bungalow is really my wife's idea since she was the one who envisaged it and saw it through to what it is today.

"I was looking after our first accommodation lodge and this has been Evelyn's project from the start."

Evelyn is of PNG, Swede and German ancestry and grew up in Kerevat, East New Britain, although her matrilineal roots are from the Lugagun area in New Ireland.

"When we lost everything in 1994, my idea was that we should build something that

Kokopo will be proud off," explained Evelyn.

"My thinking was if other places can produce a good and beautiful resort, Kokopo can do it too."

The result is a delightful and charming chain of timber bungalows built in the surrounds of a thriving garden of orchids and other tropical flowers and shrubs.

For Evelyn, Kokopo Beach Bungalow should have a strong Pacific flavour which is why the cottages carry the distinct Papua New Guinea architecture.

Even the timber used - taun, malas, pencil cedar and kwala - were locally sourced.

"We sourced some from a friend's plantation and others we had to order and ship from West New Britain and Lae," said Evelyn.

Site clearing began in 2002 and the resort's first guests checked in around July 2003.

The second row of bungalows behind the beachfront ones are double storey, allowing guests on the first floor to have a bird's eye view of the resort, as well as the ocean.

From the double storey bungalows, it is a gentle slope to the restaurant and lounge to the right.

The left end of the resort is taken up by the row of beachfront single storey bungalows.

The restaurant which also houses the resort's bar and lounge are built to PNG leaf haus architecture; thatched roofing and wall-less.

Giant local hardwood is used as pillars in the lounge.

Perhaps by the time you read this, the restaurant would have undergone a huge transformation. Actually, the lounge and restaurant will swap places.

When I was guest of Bungalow 32 in July, the new addition to the resort was almost complete; a totally new reception area with the office, conference centre, coffee shop, internet café, lounge and bar were taking shape and will link the restaurant to the road.

So straight after check-in, guests can choose to walk down the timber flooring to the bar and restaurant with its bird's eye view of the ocean and the Tavurvur volcano.

The bar with its polished counter and high chairs was my favourite hangout.

It served as my meal table too, allowing me to do several things at once; enjoy my specially prepared meals while reviewing the day with other guests and bar attendants.

This is also where I realised that a seafood basket or chicken chow-mein go down very well with an icy New Guinea Ice.

Each day, guests are offered a wide variety of choices from the restaurant menu; you either order from the menu listing or look up the day's specials on the blackboard.

Choice is also offered in activities with guests having to select from a tour of Tavurvur volcano, the network of Japanese-built war

Kokopo Beach



tunnels and the Bitapaka War Cemetery.

Kokopo Beach Bungalow has its own tour company and hired car service. Sea-based activities range from fishing, diving, boating charters, kayaking or harbour cruise.

Through an arrangement with the Duke of York Islands - 45 minutes by speed boat - guests are also offered the choice of a village stay.

There, visitors get a feel of true island life with the opportunity to observe mat weaving, shell money production and gardening.

"This is a popular choice for guests because of the islands' pristine waters and white sandy beaches," says Evelyn.

The number of repeat customers is telling Evelyn that the future for the resort is bright.

With the completion of the reception block, the next stage of growth will be room expansion.

"From the current 27 rooms we have on offer right now, we intend to increase that by eight more. Of the eight, four we intend to turn

into suites each named after the distinctive language group we have in the province - namely Tolai, Pomio, Baining and Sulka.

"When all that is completed, we may then have time to put in a freshwater pool."

- For more information, contact Kokopo Beach Bungalow on Telephone (675) 982 8788 Fax (675) 982 8700, or Email: kokopobeachbungalow@global.net.pg; and their website: www.kbb.com.pg



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IN PEACE THEY REST

Bitapaka, home for the brave



One of the greatest ironies of life is found in war cemeteries.

Although most soldiers die a violent death in mainly chaotic and

terrifying circumstances, their final resting places are serene and peaceful.

At the Rabaul War Cemetery in Bitapaka in East New Britain province, some 1,111 men and women rest in peace.

A plaque had the inscription Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam. Its Latin meaning: For the Greater Glory of God.

The Supreme Being and peace seem to go together, complimentary of one another.

Bitapaka, a wooded settlement between Kokopo town and Tokua Airport, is more than being home to the braves.

Historians say it was a place of great strategic importance when World War One broke out in 1914 since it housed Germany's most powerful wireless station in the Pacific.

New Guinea then was under German rule.

Only two days after Britain declared war on Germany on August 6, 1914, Australia was urged to disable the Bitapaka wireless station.

Thirty-five days later, an Australian advanced party of 25 men landed near Kokopo and

slowly made their way through thick jungle to Bitapaka.

The German wireless station was eventually taken down but at the cost of six Australian lives.

They were members of the Australian Navy and Military Expeditionary Force and believed to be among the first Australian casualties of the Great War.

All six are buried at the Rabaul War Cemetery in Bitapaka.

The cemetery is well kept as it comes under the oversight of the Office of the Australian War Graves.

An information plaque inside the cemetery explains that out of the 28 soldiers from World War One who are interned in Bitapaka, 27 were Australians.

The 28th was a British soldier.

During World War Two, more Australian casualties came to have Bitapaka as their final resting place.

These included a bulk of those that attempted to flee the Japanese army invasion of New Britain in January 1942.

A group of enthusiastic volunteers now want to map the Australian soldiers' 'Escape from Rabaul' trek and turn it into a tourist attraction similar to that of the famous Kokoda Trail.

Writing in a travel to Papua New Guinea blog recently, Australian tourist Jacinta Bowman reflected on the Australians' trek to freedom.

"Their meals were taken on the move. Supper could consist of one can of meat between eight and a single biscuit.

"They were in unfamiliar territory with no guides and no plan other than to find freedom.

"Rest was an unaffordable luxury as enemy patrols kept them on the move. Fires often had to be hastily extinguished as scout planes buzzed over head.

They were poorly clothed and ill equipped, with no protection from thick undergrowth, a relentless wet season and bitterly cold nights at high altitude.



"Some drowned in the swollen rivers. Others perished from heat exhaustion, malaria, dysentery and pneumonia."

It is said that of the 1300 Australian soldiers that were stationed in New Britain before the Japanese invasion, only 339 survived.

With the help of a local guide, Bowman and her husband recently walked the proposed 'Escape from Rabaul' trek, which they said is 80 kilometres long and cuts through the island's Baining Mountains.

The information plaque at Bitapaka points out that bulk of the dead buried in it were from the army division, some 1042 lives.

Point of interest is the 614 Indians who are also buried here.

These were said to be prisoners of war from Malaysia.

Fiji's war hero and sole recipient of the Victoria Cross 4469 - Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu - also calls Bitapaka home.

His tombstone looks no different from that of his 33 other fellow soldiers buried in Rabaul War Cemetery save for the initials VC (Victorian Cross) written next to his surname.

He died on June 23, 1944 when he was just 26 years old.

The tombstone to his left belonged to 4602 Private Taniela Siko who was killed on March 30, 1944. He was 24.

To Sukanaivalu's right is the tombstone belonging to 619 Corporal Jesoni Tale who died aged 22 on March 23, 1944.



ABOUT RABAUL

The history of Rabaul is one of wreckage and regrowth. Modern historians will find a treasure trove of World War Two relics, tunnels and caves to explore within driving distance of Rabaul.

Close to the now thriving centre of Kokopo, are the remnants of the Gunantambu mansion, built in the 1880s by the legendary Queen Emma.

After the eruption of Tavurvur and Vulcan in September 1994, most of Rabaul's services were relocated to Kokopo, along the edge of Blanche Bay.

The town has grown rapidly and the busy market, selling fresh produce, local cigars and betelnut, is located on the main road from Tokua Airport, near Supabake Bakery. The waterfront is the place to find boats for travel to the outer islands or for a spot of fishing.

The drive from the airport, now located at Tokua, about an hour's drive from Rabaul, is along a narrow road winding its way around the glittering waters of the Gazelle Peninsula. East New Britain has a fascinating World War Two history and visitors can explore Japanese caved systems, barged tunnels, aircraft wrecks and submarines.

CULTURE

The people of East New Britain have been seen as culturally diversified with rich and unique traditions. The "tubuan" signifies spiritual dancers and traditional ceremonies that demonstrates a history well kept and used in today's society. The Tolai people of the Gazelle Peninsula have continued to use the traditional shell money called "tabu". They use tabu as a contribution to the Tolai male secret society of tubuan and duk duk, for distribution to people at death ceremonies, as payment of bride price, for settling disputes, to purchase land or even garden food from local markets.

THINGS TO SEE

Kokopo

East New Britain Historical & Cultural Centre: Located across the road from the golf course, this has good displays and collections of historical relics and photographs, with plenty of information.

Vunapope Catholic Mission

Pleasant views and the old colonial buildings in the hospital grounds are interesting.

Bitapaka War Cemetery

The graves of more than 1,000 allied war dead are in these well-kept grounds and gardens. Located several kilometres inland, turning off the coast road past Vunapope.

Malmaluan Lookout

Fantastic views over the volcanoes surrounding Simpson Harbour can be enjoyed from this inland highpoint. Take Burma Road, off the Kokopo-Rabaul Road.

Japanese Barge Tunnels

At Karavia Bay between Raluana Point and Vulcan are a network of tunnels and tracks connecting barges and buildings dating back to the war. In the main tunnel are five barges lined up end to end. Take a torch.

Rabaul

Some parts of Rabaul still function but most of it remains an eerie desolate wasteland covered by metres of ash. Beautiful Simpson Harbour is still the main port, guarded by the grumbling volcanoes. A market and a few shops still operate at the eastern end of town.

Tunnels and War Relics

Some of the 580 km of tunnels built by the Japanese are still open and aircraft wreckage can be seen beyond the old airport.

Duke of York Islands

These beautiful islands are undeveloped but are easily visited. Some have accommodation and tiny Mioko Island has an interesting history. Swimming, snorkelling and canoeing are good.

THINGS TO DO

Diving and Snorkelling

In Simpson Harbour, there are World War Two boat and plane wrecks, good walls and the Beehives (a small group of craggy islands) to explore. At Tavui Point is submarine base where Japanese subs pulled right up to the edge of the reef. It's superb for snorkelling on the flat coral beds and along the edge of the 75 m drop-off, which is also good for diving. Most resorts can arrange dive trips.

Climb a Volcano

The island of New Britain is dominated by both active and dormant volcanoes, some of them bellowing great clouds of black ash-laden smoke. All the volcanoes, except Tavurvur, can be climbed. Be aware that heavy rain can make the ground slippery and cause landslides. Vulcan is best tackled on the northern side and the deep fissures can make it a difficult climb. Take plenty of water.

Canoeing

Taklam Tours in Kokopo can arrange paddling experiences around the Duke of York Islands.

Fishing

Sport fishing for blue and black marlin, sail fish and dog-tooth tuna is good in the waters around New Britain and the Duke of York Islands. Baia Sports Fishing has a lodge at Open Bay. The Blanche Bay area is good for casual line casting. Boats operate from Rabaul and hotels and guesthouses can organize trips.

Swimming

Beaches near Kokopo are good. Hotels in Rabaul have pools and there are good beaches at Pila Pila and Ratung villages in Talli Bay north of Rabaul.

Trekking

Suggested areas are the Bainings Mountains, the Pomio area, where you can walk from Pomio to Navu and the Wide Bay area, walking between Milim and Sampun or Tokua and Merai.

HOW TO GET THERE

Air Niugini provides flights to Tokua Airport from Port Moresby. They also provide connections to Tokua from other centres in PNG.



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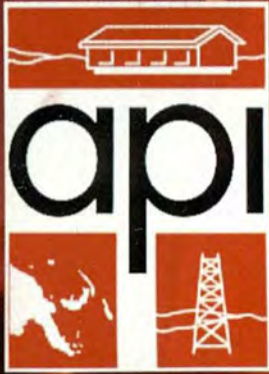
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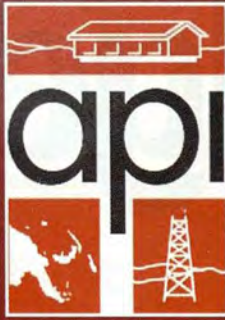
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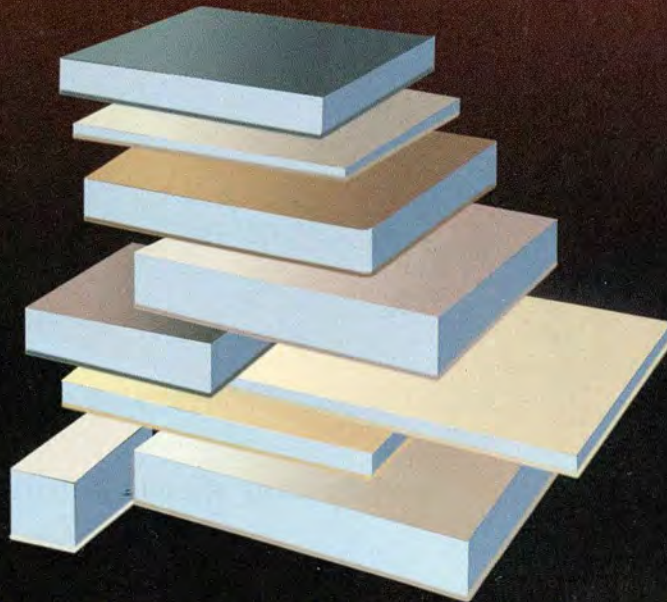
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SWIMMING WITH EELS

Cathy plays hostess to
sea creatures of the wild



The Eel Lady...Cathy Khibob.

For someone who tames wild sea creatures, Cathy Khibob is a beautiful woman.

"That's Kilo, Hotel, India, Oscar and Bravo," Cathy, sitting on a wooden bench beside the creek that runs beside her home, said in a matter of fact way when she saw the puzzled look on my face at the mention of her second name.

I tried to hide how impressed I was by writing away in a notebook.

"Why, aren't you impressed that I still remember my



Chow time...son Greg feeds the eels.

phonetic alphabets?"

Cathy, the Eel Lady, was clearly enjoying herself.

After 22 years of flying as an air hostess (as they were then called) for Air Niugini, it is hardly surprising that Cathy still remembers her alphabets.

Nowadays Cathy lives in retirement with her family at Laraibina village, some 40 kilometres down the east coast from Kavieng on New Ireland.

Just as she built a reputation as a beautiful and caring flight attendant in her days with the national airline, Cathy is still creating ripples even with her feet firmly planted on the ground.

"Are you writing a story about me? Then make sure you send me a copy of the magazine.

"You can address it to Cathy, The Eel Lady.

"It will reach me for sure, as there's no one else by that name in the whole of Papua New Guinea."

Apparently, she's been receiving numerous mails under that name from visitors who had called into her humble grass house to watch the eels she's tamed swimming freely in the creek nearby.

She recalled one such mail was a recipe book about eels. This was in response to her request to some Japanese visitors for information on her new found friends.

Her Asian contacts will be disappointed to learn that eels on Cathy's creek are not for the meal table.

"But some of my Australian friends did come and conduct research on the eels.

"Now I can explain to inquisitive visitors like you everything you want to know."

The eels at her 'farm' Cathy tells me are of the Pacific Long Fin species.

Their scientific name is *Anguilla reinhardtii*, and are common in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

They are what marine biologists call catadromous, in that they live in fresh water but breed out at sea.

Cathy's home is actually about 100 metres from the ocean, although quite strangely the creek where her eels swim does not flow straight into the sea.

Rather, as pointed out to me by her son Greg, as the creek nears the beach, it swerves right to run almost parallel with the beach for almost 40 metres before it veers left and straight into the sea.

In a good day, you will see seven to eight eels.

The trick as Noah Lurang, executive officer of New Ireland's tourism bureau, had remembered was to take along several canned fish.

No sooner had Greg opened the cans and cleaned them into creek did we see one eel. A couple of seconds later, two large ones swam right up.

They must be one or more metres long.

Then, two more swam up minutes later.

Greg doesn't feed them from his hands, I noticed.

Few inches from their faces, Greg releases





Curious...a child wants to feel the eels.

a chunk of fish and an eel or two dive to swallow.

"They have grate-like teeth," explains Cathy.

"If you feed them with your hands, they are bound to mistake your fingers as food and will bite them.

"Being grate-like, the trick is for you not to try

and jerk your hands free as their teeth will only sear your flesh.

"What I do now is when they grab a finger of mine, I will slightly jam my fist on it and that automatically causes the eel to open its mouth."

Cathy said she can explain the process now after spending many hours with the eels.

Her fingers used to be covered in band aid from eel bites during the first year.

Several times Greg had to retrieve a fish chunk to drop it closer to the eel's face.

"You might notice that they are partially blind," Greg explained.

"This only happens during the day since they do most of their hunting for food during the night."

"Did you touch the eels?" Cathy was directing the question at me.

"Actually I didn't.

"Oh, you should have. You would have noticed that their skin is not slimy.

"Their skin only turns slimy as a protection against predators and also helps during times of drought.

"The slime assists the eel to move through grassland from one pond to another in search for water."

A week before my conversation with Cathy, I was actually in Fort Lauderdale in the state of Florida in the United States covering the international coral reefs symposium through a fellowship offered by the US-based marine

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Photo by Jason Pini

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conservation group Sea Web. In numerous discussions with marine scientists, I was told of the spawning behaviour of fish, where they tend to swim to a reef passage to release their eggs.

These baby fish tend to number into the millions and out of the lot, some 10 to 40%, depending on which scientist you talk to, return to the reef where they were born.

Thousands of kilometres from the sunny Florida city later, in the tropical heat of a small village in Papua New Guinea, beside the paved highway engineered by the merciless German road builder Bolumirski on New Ireland's east coast, this retired flight attendant was giving a similar lesson in marine biology.

"When they have the urge to have children, the eels will swim back to sea to spawn.

"At the passage, they will release their eggs and after releasing 5 to 10 million eggs, the eel will die from exhaustion.

"The eggs will go through a metamorphosis and will turn into baby eels.

"At this stage, they look like glass eels because they don't have pigmentation, toothless and have transparent skin. Scientists call them elvers."

After swimming hundreds of kilometres

through predator-infested waters, a few of these eels will return to Cathy's creek, which is why she will never run out of these creatures to showcase to visitors.

How they are able to locate their parents' "creek" still amazes scientists to this day, according to information I collected at the Florida conference.

Work done in Papua New Guinea by some James Cook University scientists in Townsville suggested a link between this natural instinct to tropical rainforest leaves.

However, the means these eels use to return to their creek, all my 'wantok' Cathy and her son Greg know is that they do not want to get too close emotionally.

"Before, I used to name all of them. There was Solomons, Lock Ness, Broncos, Parramatta, Rosters, Cowboy, Kiwi, and many others.

"But when they have to leave, I get very upset so I no longer give them names now.

"They are in their natural environment so I don't have any control on how long they will want to stay."

How did it all start by the way?

Cathy said after flying for Air Niugini then again for Air Nauru (now Our Airline), she

wanted to have a pet.

In her travels, she visited numerous zoos and aquariums around the world, so when it came to pets, she decided it should be an "unusual" one.

That's how she came up with the idea of taming eels that swim freely in the creek beside her home.

Today, she charges K5 for each visitor that pops in.

"Many have said the fee is too low and that I need to raise it.

"I always say, why should I when God is good."



- For more information, contact Cathy Khiob: *The Eel Lady*, P O Box 60, Kavieng, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea.
Or contact her through:
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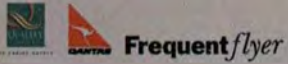


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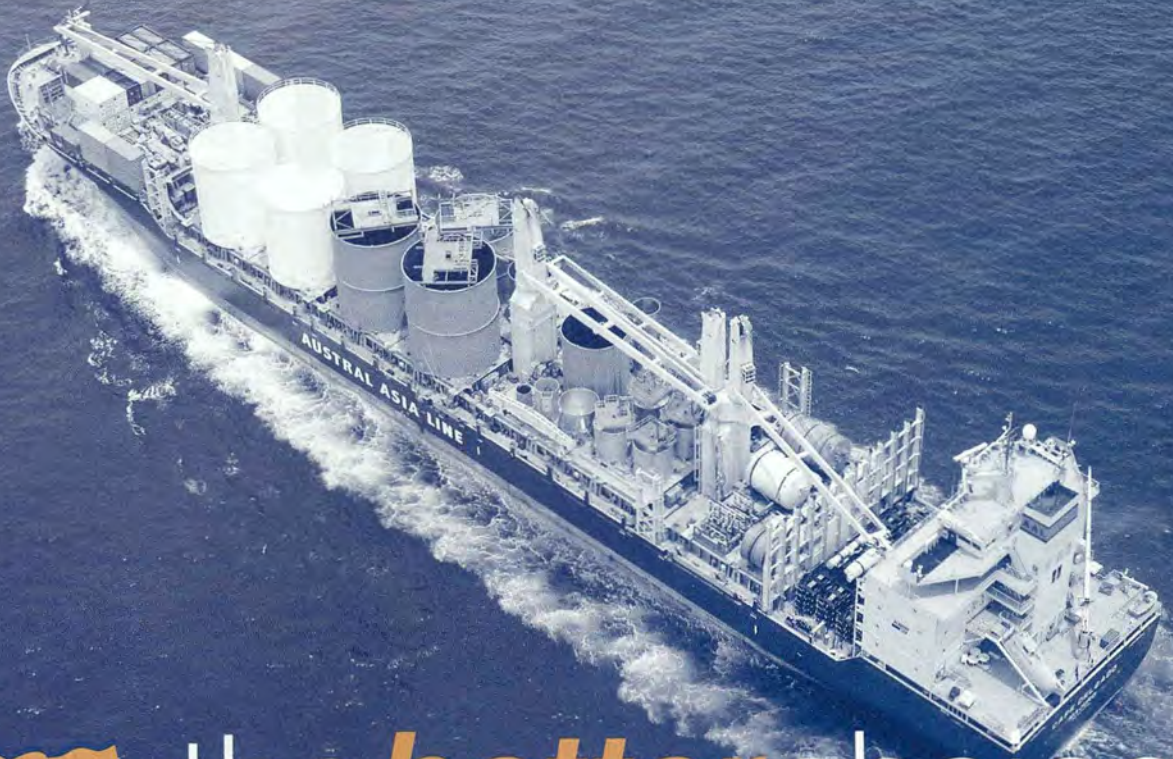
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ALEX'S MAGIC BAMBOO

A night out with Ulul's puripuri man



at the flash of a camera, Alex looks quit scary. His face is hidden by a crown of green leaves on his head. More green leaves are draped over his shoulders and across his waist in a skirt like fashion. So what the camera flash is showing is red-stained teeth of a shirt-less body draped in leaves.

That sight coupled with the fact that it's a very dark night makes an outing with a puripuri man blood-curdling.

"Just put one of your hands near the bottom of the bamboo, don't hold it, just let your hand touch it," Alun Beck, owner of Tree House Village Resort, was explaining to one of his two women guests.

This is their final night at the Tree House and Alun organised the special visit to the puripuri man as a parting gift.

One of the women tried nervously to follow Alun's instructions.

No word came from the puripuri man, yet.

Alex was holding one end of the bamboo stick which is about five to six metres long.

The other end was tied to a nearby shrub and there were more leaves draped around the stick.

With both ends held up, the bamboo is about a metre above the ground.

My eyes fell on the sharpened end of the bamboo near where the puripuri man was holding.

I made a mental point of staying as far away as I could.

Alex said something in pidgin.

"Now, what is your question for the puripuri man?" Alun translated for his guests.

"I want to know whether my daughter will live long?" the woman from Geneva told Alun, who quickly translated it.

Without warning, the bamboo stick began to swing to and fro, picking up speed wildly.

I seemed to think the puripuri man himself was doing the pulling and pushing.

The Geneva tourist was having trouble laying her hand on the belly of the stick.

After five or six seconds, the stick became motionless and Alex spoke.

"Yes, your daughter will live long," Alun told the woman.

Her friend's question was along similar lines.

She wanted to know whether her son's family will be fine.

Alex told her she doesn't need to worry.

But the two women tourists have been too timid perhaps.

Alun remembers the time he took a couple of Japanese tourists to Alex and his father.

The visitors, he said, were journalists from Tokyo on assignment. They had complained about their editor who they said was overly demanding, if not obnoxious.

When asked for their questions, one of the Japanese journalists wanted to know whether his editor will ever get married.

"As if privy to the background of the question, the puripuri man said no, she will never get a husband until she dies," said Alun.

"The journalists were so happy when they heard that and were actually rolling on the ground with laughter."

The puripuri experience is one of the many activities offered by the former Kiwi yachtie who abandoned his round the world cruise dream when he caught sight of Kavieng many years ago.

Puripuri Man



What do you want to know? Puripuri man Alex works his magic on an interested visitor.

The resort also offers river kayaking, bird watching, diving, bicycle expedition and many other cultural and eco-tourism activities.

The Tree House is to be seen to be believed. It is three-storey high, built on a giant hardwood tree locals call the kalapulin, or the Callophylum, some 80 feet tall.

Although he built it for his own private residence, Alun decided to lease the tree house and the 10 bungalows all built on the beach with stilts to a local hotel operator, Warren.

The first floor of the tree house is six metres above the ground and houses the lounge and bar.

A swirling stairs from here takes you to the bedroom on the second floor.

An attic bedroom is on the third floor, and both the first and second floors have timber balconies.



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FACE OF NEW IRELAND TOURISM

Noel Levi out to develop the province

For one of Kavieng's most well-known sons, Noel Levi works from a modest office. Actually he's not supposed to be working.

When he completed his second three-year term as secretary-general of the Fiji-based Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in January of 2004, he decided to head home with his family.

Home is the sleepy village of Ngavalus, about 30 kilometres down the paved Buluminski Highway from Kavieng town, on the east coast of New Ireland.

I am not sure whether Mr Levi knew he was heading home to retire, to put up his feet, relax and head out fishing whenever he likes.

For someone who had spent most of his life in the public service and as a politician who went on to hold the prestigious post of foreign minister, retirement for Mr Levi would - I am sure - far from his mind.

Even when he left politics, the man entered the glamorous work of diplomacy, becoming Papua New Guinea's ambassador to China and later as high commissioner in London.

Before he became his country's successful nominee for the powerful position of secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat - the organisation representing 16 independent islands of the Pacific - Mr Levi was secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and National Executive Council.

Today, the former Forum secretary-general, ambassador and foreign minister is either busy behind his desk at a small office on Coronation Drive in Kavieng town, or meeting staff of the New Ireland Tourism Bureau, just down the road.

In addition to running his own haulage business, Mr Levi is the new chair of the New Ireland Tourism Bureau board. He was appointed to it recently by New Ireland's Governor, a former political ally and former PNG prime minister, Sir Julius Chan.

So apart from Chief Noah Lurang who is the

executive officer of the province's tourism bureau, Mr Levi is the new face of New Ireland tourism.

"On my first meeting with the tourism board, I had posed the question, 'Is New Ireland ready for tourism?'" Mr Levi recalls.

"In my personal view, I don't think it is. There are a number of pressing developments that I would like to see done."

As a matter of fact, the former Forum secretary-general has a long 'to do' list.

"We have to clean up the town, make it more presentable and friendly to visitors.

"The airport terminal needs to be spruced up since for the time being passengers are made to feel they are arriving into a cage.

"The tourism bureau used to have a kiosk at the terminal too in past years. We plan to re-open that for the benefit of visitors to Kavieng."

On the macro level, New Ireland's Mr Tourism would like a newer and better status for Chief Lurang's tourism bureau.

A draft bill on New Ireland Tourism Authority is now with the provincial assembly and Mr Levi would also like to see the formation of a provincial culture council.

He would like traditional chiefs, government officers, community workers and tourism plant operators to be appointed to the new body.

Awareness on ways of promoting New Ireland's culture will be a key function of the culture council.

"My personal view is that we the people of New Ireland don't want to be just good subjects for photographs. I want to see the people of the province to become active players and beneficiaries of tourism."

Training for those in the industry is also a priority as well as an incentive

for investors in the hospitality sector.

Mr Levi, for instance, would love to see land tied up in abandoned copra plantations made available to resort investors.

Having worked in Fiji, the tourism board chairman would like to see Kavieng entice large integrated tourism projects, similar to Fiji's Pacific Harbour, where land is developed to house several resorts, golf course, marina, shopping centre and a small airport.

If he's not with Chief Lurang, Mr Levi will be in his small air-conditioned office which he is leasing from a Kavieng vehicle repair shop.

On his desk is a small bottle of pounded kava roots.

"I got this from a friend who manages a large kava plantation here in Kavieng," Mr Levi said proudly.

"He stopped over in Suva to see me some years ago and I urged him to take up kava farming."

"If I knew that someone from Fiji would be visiting me today, I would have arranged for a kava session," the former Forum secretary-general said jokingly.

On our return to Kavieng town from a drive along Buluminski Highway after our meeting, we saw a big red Toyota Landcruiser pulled up on the side of the road.

Chief Lurang, who was driving, slowed down immediately as he recognised Mr Levi's vehicle.

"Bula ambassador," I said, wanting to test whether Mr Levi still remembers the Fijian greeting.

"Oh, bula vinaka," came the response.

He had stopped to buy yellowfin tuna from two boys who were selling on the roadside.

He pulled out a 20 Kina note, kindly agreed to pose for my camera before he waved the two young fishermen goodbye, clearly a picture of a man very at ease with his own people.



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Kavieng Facts



THINGS TO DO

Diving and snorkelling

War wrecks, big fish, coral and sharks are just some of the things to be seen here. Local land-based dive operators are Lissenung Island Resort, which has gear hire, and Archipelago Diving in Kavieng, which takes courses and also hires gear. Mansava Adventure Lodge on Tsoi Island, off Lavongai or New Hanover Island, is an hour and a half by boat and has great diving and snorkelling.

Fishing

Rods and tackle can be hired from the Kavieng Hotel (984 2199) and they also arrange game fishing tours.

Surfing

There are many good breaks close to town, accessible by boat or vehicle. Nusa Islands Retreat, based on Nusa Lik Island, has accommodation and caters for surfers. Phone (984 2247).

Canoeing

Canoes and paddlers can be hired from the beach front in Kavieng to visit some of the islands or you can hire an outrigger from the Malagan Beach Resort and practice the art of paddling. Nusa Island Retreat also offers traditional canoeing as does Mansava Adventure Lodge.

Golf

The nine-hole golf course lies between Tabar Terrace and Tanga Street and the Golf Club is located on Coronation Street. Golf clubs can be hired from the Kavieng Hotel.

Cycling

Being flat, Kavieng is ideal for cycling and there is little motorised traffic. Bicycles can be hired from the Kavieng Hotel Ph: 984 2199 and Malagan Beach Hotel Ph: 984 2344 The Buluminski Highway on the north-eastern side of the island is flat and sealed for 74 km. Beyond here the crushed coral surface is smooth and easy to ride but very bright.

Offshore

New Ireland Province includes a number of offshore islands. From the northeast coast are the islands of Tabar, Tanga, Feni and Lihir. Lihir Island is the site of the Lihir gold mine, reputed to have the second largest gold deposit in the world.



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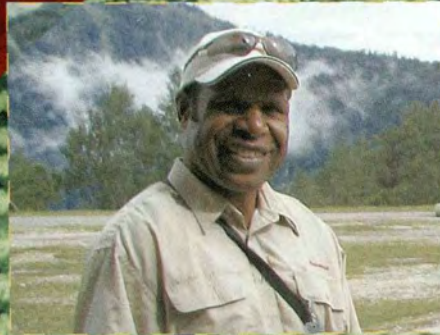
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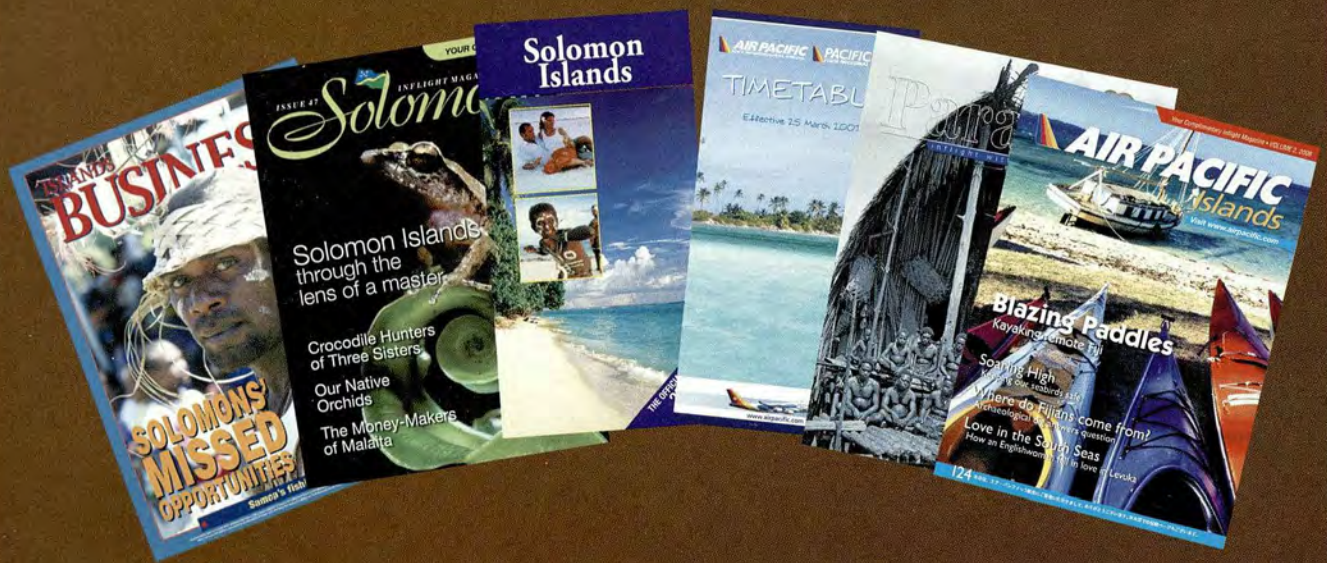
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A WALK TO REMEMBER

Experiencing “the bleakest, most depressing days in Australian history”

Words: Brent McKean

Photography: Brent McKean, Ted O'Donnell and Kori Chan



I don't know if it was the heart-bursting climbs, the leech on my lip or the thorny vines scratching the hell out of me that made me realise why I was in PNG.

In 1942, diggers based in the harbour town of Rabaul on the island of New Britain, escaped into the jungle to evade Japanese capture. How they survived is the stuff of legend and I wanted to experience it.

In the spirit of Kokoda Track, a PNG tour operator called South Sea Horizons has created a walking experience following the trail of members of the 2/22nd Battalion called Lark Force.

The Lark Force Wilderness Track is divided into several walks and we were on the four-day Lark Force Wilderness Track

I was told the walk had not been completed since the diggers fled into unforgivable terrain 65 years ago. Thus began what former Lord Chief Justice, Lt. Gen Sir E F Herring, described as “the bleakest, most depressing days in Australian history.” (!)

“Every man for himself”

On Friday January 23, 1942 after intense bombing, Japanese forces entered Rabaul. Aussie soldiers put up a fight but were outnumbered. Then a single order from the High Command was passed among the diggers, “Every man for himself”.

The soldiers quickly formed groups, organised supplies and disappeared into the jungle.

There were two main lines of retreat. One led



westward towards the north coast and the other led southeast towards the south coast. Which line each soldier chose would define their fate.

I kept thinking about this as our group arrived at the village of Vunga, at the start of the track. To get there involved a one-hour drive from Rabaul along dirt tracks and the four wheel drives had their work cut out.

The bush was lush due to the rain. As we took off early on our walk, it was hard to imagine the horror that took place all those years ago.

Our guides made full use of their machetes, hacking their way through the overgrown jungle while GPS coordinates were taken for future walks.

The further we walked, the thicker the jungles became. As the day got hotter and the trail became more challenging, the more I thought about the Aussie troops who were ill-equipped, suffering from malaria and dysentery, and not knowing if there would be Japanese soldiers waiting for them at the next turn. On top of this, Japanese soldiers were in the air dropping morale-sapping leaflets: "To the Officers and Soldiers of this island, SURRENDER AT ONCE! And we will guarantee your life, treating you as war prisoners. Those who RESIST US WILL BE KILLED ONCE AND FOR ALL. Consider seriously, you can find neither food nor way of escape on this island and you will only die of hunger unless you surrender." (2)

The directorate made some sense. As days turned into weeks the condition of the Aussie troops deteriorated. Their food source was limited - bully beef, coconuts, taro roots (a starchy potato-like vegetable) - and whatever they could scrounge in the villages. The rain soaked them and there was little to keep them warm high up on the tablelands.

"That night we built lean-tos to sleep in and tried lighting fires as our clothes were wringing wet. About 3 am, we decided that the only way to get warm and save getting pneumonia was to start walking, so our party of seven got going," wrote Private Percy Pearson of D Coy, 2/22nd Battalion. (3)

One of the saving graces was the local villagers who helped out the diggers, supplying them with food, water and sometimes a place to

'The bad penny has turned up'

- Mick Smith's story



Mick Smith with locals in PNG in September 1941.

Mick Smith, aged 80, is one of the 16 survivors left from the 1,600 strong 2/22nd Battalion unit. He was 25 when he spent three months in the jungle of New Britain. He spoke about his experience.

"I resolved the Japanese were going to land in Rabaul so I sent a telegram to my family telling them not to worry about me and that like the 'bad penny', I'd turn up.

"The day the Japanese landed it was chaos and confusion, let's make no bones about it. I spent the night at the top aerodrome called Vunakanau with members of the Royal Australian Electrical & Mechanic Engineers (RAEME).

"Everybody else had gone and we were absolutely the last party to cross the Kerevat River, the next day. Describing how it felt in the jungle trying to survive is as easy as it is difficult. But I guess I could say it in two words - bloody terrible. After some weeks in the jungle, we arrived at a plantation called Lassul, which was owned by a family called the Harveys. The plantation was about 70 or 80 miles down the north coast from Rabaul. A collaborator with the Japanese told them that there were Aussie soldiers there and virtually as the Japanese soldiers stormed through the front door, we took off out the back.

"The next five days were the worst I had ever experienced in my life. I was in charge of a small party and all we had for navigation was a prismatic compass. The north coast was only three or four miles but it took five days to get there. We'd walk for a day and come to just impenetrable jungle and then we had to retrace our steps, pick another spot and start again.

"Finally, we made it to the coast and from there we followed it south towards a small town call Pondo. We had to stick to the coast most of the way because the jungle was swamp-infested and so difficult to get through.

"When we were in the jungle we had bugger all to eat. Sometimes we had one tin of bully beef between the four of us each day. Conversely, when we got out of the Baining Mountains we were put up at a plantation called Notre Mal. It was owned by a family called the Adams and we ate well there, mostly bananas and coconuts.

"Three months after leaving Rabaul, we finally found transport that took us to Cairns. I was flattened with exhaustion and malaria and spent most of the time recovering. After being missing, one of the first things I did at Cairns was to send a telegram to my family. It simply said: "The bad penny has turned up."



sleep. We were greeted with the same smiling faces as we passed villages along the way. Our first night was at a small village called Baram. We set up our tents and then went down to the river to wash before a well deserved meal.

There was plenty of time to reflect on our first day's trekking which included crossing the Kerevat River several times and getting use to our loaded packs. One of the young lads in Baram befriended me and even though neither of us spoke the other's language, a warm smile and laugh went a long way.

The hard yards

The next morning we woke up to the sound of the jungle coming alive. Birds and insects joined in a chorus of chirps, clicks and whistles that continued on the whole of our walk.

The first half of the day we walked in and out of rivers, passed through massive forests and gained altitude without too much effort - except for my falling down a gully with my backpack acting as a centrifuge. I finally came to a stop, dusted myself off and got back on the track.

The jungle was blooming with wild orchids and we passed many types of hardwood trees including rose and teak. The towering trees created a light-excluding canopy that kept us cool. Even though some parts of PNG had been heavily mined, it was good to know there were places like this still untouched.

Birdwatchers would be in their elements as colourful hornbills (kokomos) could be seen and heard throughout the walk. Other species we spotted were wild pigeons (tomato nose), cassowary, cockatoos and parrots (malip in pidgin).

By lunch the sun was high and we found a gorgeous river to swim in. I was

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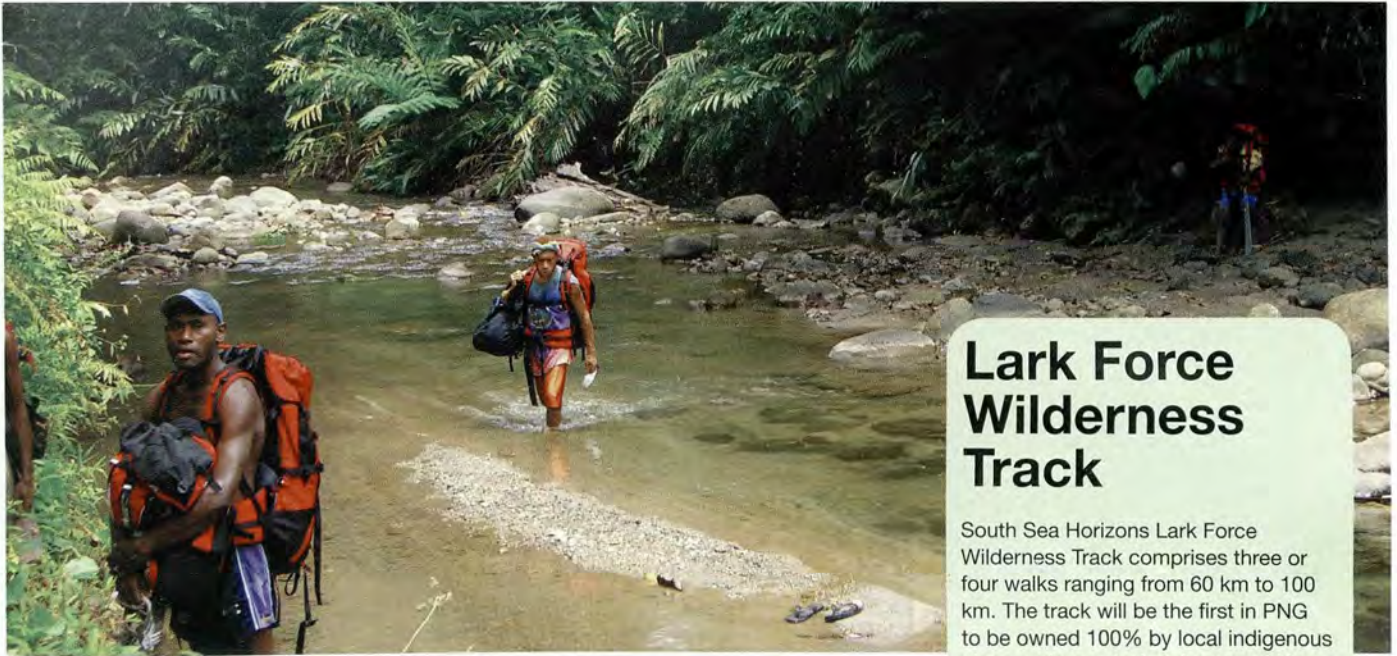
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Lark Force Wilderness Track

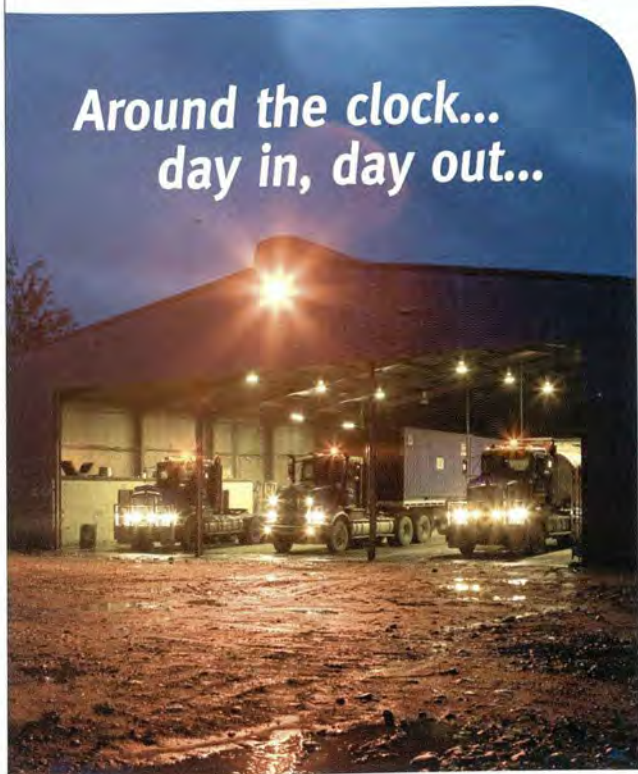
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told to make the most of it as it was all uphill from here. First, we had to cross the river by scrambling along a massive tree that had been chopped down. I was reminded of Indiana Jones as I took careful steps, not thinking about the rocks three metres below.

There were plenty of stories of defiance and heroism that came out of the jungles of New Britain in 1942, but there were just as many of suffering and death.

Private Pearson recalled the heartbreak of having to leave behind a sick mate. "We were caught in heavy rain in the afternoon and I think it brought Ivor's malaria on again...we came to a village called Tu, from which he could go no further. He lay down and we could do nothing for him...we left him some food and pushed on." (*)

I kept thinking about this as I struggled up the track. The trail continued to get steeper and



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steeper and often it was a matter of grabbing on to the base of trees and yanking yourself up.

With a full pack, this proved to be a challenge and even though we'd all just had a relaxing lunch, all that was forgotten as we guzzled down our water and soaked our shirts through with sweat. Then the heavens opened...And the leeches appeared.

I plonked myself down to catch my breath. My wide-brimmed hat overflowed with water as I watched the track turn to mud. After three hours of extreme uphill walking I was exhausted.

Maybe it was the diggers' stories I had read about but something inside told me to stand

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the hell up and get moving - and metre by metre I made my way up to the top of the ridge line with the others.

Our camp was a sight for sore eyes. Nestled amongst a massive green wall of vines and trees was the glorious Sren Falls to cool off in. It was like a modern day Garden of

Eden. Afterwards, we scoffed down dinner, swapped a few yarns and turned in. We all felt triumphant after having tackled the toughest part of the walk.

In the thick of it

The morning of day three involved a quick brekkie, breaking camp and heading to the next stop, the majestic Suneng Waterfall. We could hear the thunder of the fall way before we reached it. The day was already hot so we sat in the river that cascaded over the cliff and admired our 660-metre high view.

As I said from Rabaul, the Aussies had two main lines of retreat. One ended at the north coast and the other ended at the south. Our route was taking us south to the coastal plantation of Tol - the scene of one of the most horrific events in Australian war history.

The rest of the day involved walking up and down steep trails and crossing rivers. The tracks were as hilly as the ones the previous day but not as long, thus offering some respite. Still, it must have been so disheartening for the diggers, as without a map, these never-ending trails would have sapped any energy they had and for some, surrender was the only option.

"The river was very swift to cross. When we got to St Paul's (Mission), Les Pattle decided to give himself up...Sandy Kirkland tried to talk him out of it, but gave in...Les said his feet



would not take him over the hills. There were only three in our group," recalled Pte Andy Bishop, A Coy 2/22nd Battalion. (5)

We camped at the foot of the river and the sound of the water floated in and out of my dreams. The next day was a brisk two-hour walk to the last stop - Mondrabet - where trucks took our tired and smelly bodies to the plantation of Karlai for the next stage of the Lark Force Wilderness Track experience.

After a couple of days at Karlai where we saw a brilliant cultural show and were fed like kings, we took a boat to Tol Plantation, half-an-hour across the bay.

In February 1942, tired diggers began popping out of the jungle near Tol in increasing

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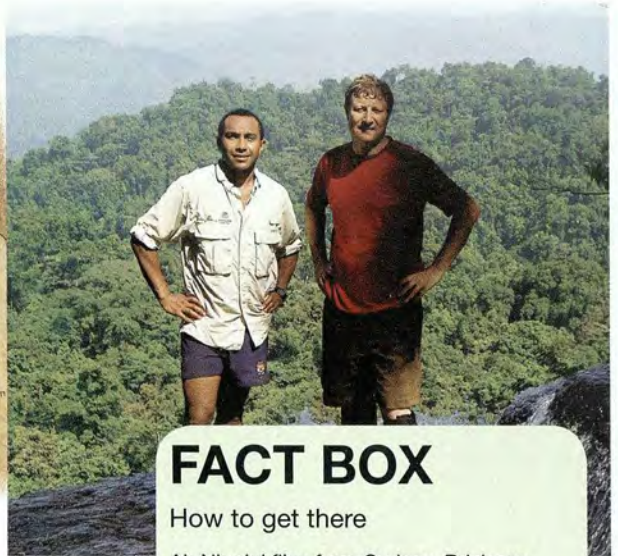
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Difficulty

Like the Kokoda Trail, these walks are challenging and require high levels of fitness to complete but the rewards are worth it.

When to go

The trekking season is March to December.

numbers as they realised they couldn't evade being captured.

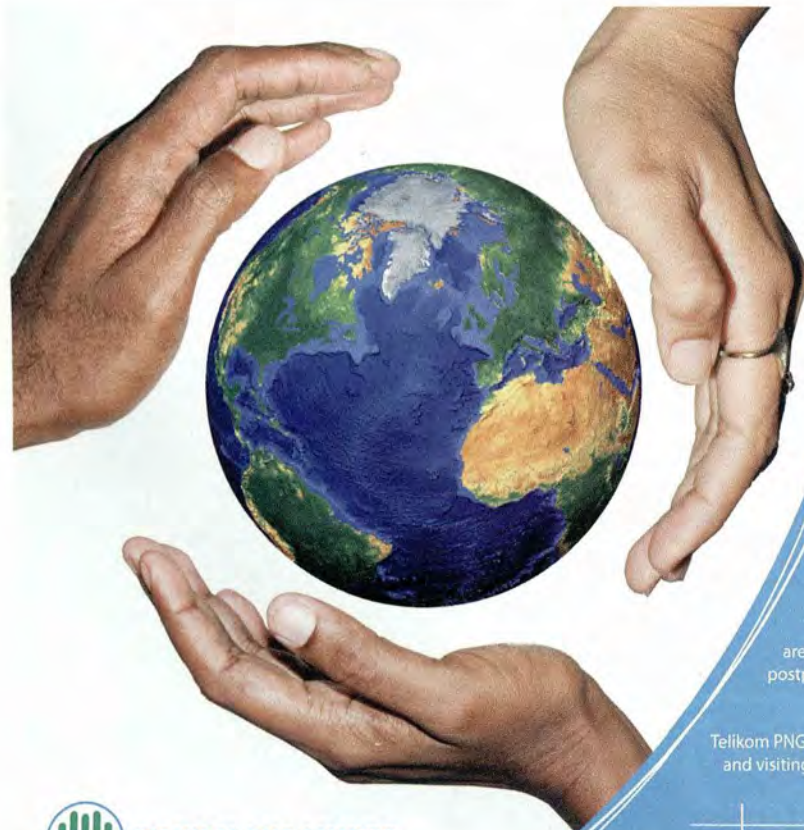
The diggers numbered around 160 but instead of being taken by boat, the Japanese took them in groups of about 10 back into the bush and killed them with their bayonets. They were then hastily buried in mass graves.

In 1944, after PNG was liberated, the bodies of the 160 soldiers were transferred to the war cemetery in Rabaul.

There, they were given a military funeral. This walk allowed me to experience just ever so slightly what the soldiers must have gone through.

The contemplation of their great sacrifice, for me, really defined the words, "we shall remember them".

- Sources
1,2 Rabaul 1942 by Douglas A. Alpin, Pacific Press, 1980.
3,4,5. Little Hell - the Story of the 2/22nd Battalion and Lark Force, compiled by Carl Johnson, History House, 2004.



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The Governor-General Sir Paulias Matane and Lady Matane.

There's a certain sense of history and awe in looking at the hillside above Konedobu and seeing the green gardens and the stately colonial structure of Government House with the flag of the Governor-General heralding Papua New Guinea's independence but enduring connection with Britain and the Commonwealth.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S RESIDENCE

Its history and heritage

By Diana McManus

That's about all most Port Moresby people see as they go about their daily lives.

However, recently, His Excellency the Grand Chief Sir Paulius Matane and Lady Matane opened the historic site for the first time to some members of the public as a Rotary Fellowship event, in appreciation of the voluntary and charitable work the club does for the country.

It was partly, also, to showcase the lovely renovations of the State House, which, as his Excellency pointed out, is only the beginning of what is needed to restore it to its former glory. Interestingly, the Governor-General was President of the Port Moresby Rotary Club during the 1970s and therefore has an appreciation of the time and effort given by Rotarians for the improvement of people's lives.

The Governor-General lives with his wife in the more modern private residence behind the State House and separate from the building which is used mainly for official purposes such as receiving foreign dignitaries and the important business of



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British Coat of Arms.



City view from Government House.

ratifying and signing proposed legislations on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Governor-General also receives overseas heads of missions and high commissioners before they take up office in the country. As Head of State, the Governor-General also conducts Investiture ceremonies here which recognise the valuable contributions made by

members of the public in both the public and private sectors.

His Excellency greeted his visitors warmly and gave a brief history of the Government House before current Rotary Club President Chris Smith responded and the official tour got underway.

The site was originally chosen in the early

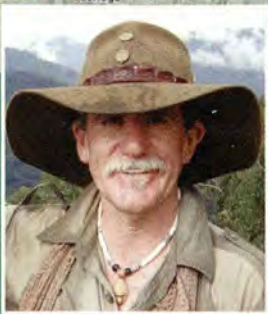
colonial days by Sir Peter Scratchley, Special Commissioner for the Protectorate of British New Guinea, because of the lovely view it offers over Fairfax Harbour and what is now the commercial centre of downtown Port Moresby. The first residence was started in 1885 and completed in 1886. It was made from imported, prefabricated timber shipped from Townsville.

Kokoda Trail Wall Map

The Owen Stanley Ranges

The Kokoda Trail
Papua New Guinea

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Charlie Lynn
Kokoda Trek Leader
PO Box 303, Camden, NSW 2570
charlielynn@veritel.com.au

The Kokoda Trail Souvenir Map has been compiled by Charlie Lynn with data collected during his 48 treks across Kokoda over the past 16 years. It includes data from wartime sketches in the Australian War Memorial, Australian Army Survey Maps, the PNG National Mapping Bureau and satellite images. Indigenous names of mountains and rivers have been provided by clan leaders from along the track. The Isurava Memorial is embedded in the Owen Stanley Ranges and the words etched in the granite pillars of the memorial: 'Courage, Mateship, Sacrifice, Endurance' are watermarked in the sky as a solemn reminder of the qualities of our diggers, and the PNG 'fuzzy-wuzzy angels', who saved Australia from invasion during the war in the Pacific in 1942. The map measures 850mm X 300mm.

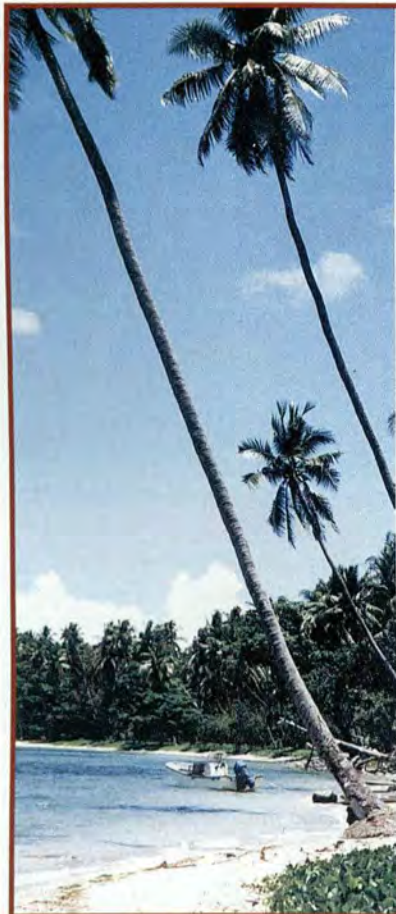
Order your copy now: www.kokodatreks.com – click on 'Kokoda Map'



Double glass doors connecting each room and offering verandah access.

The current Government House was actually built and completed in 1926. With high ceilings, generous verandahs and double glass doors connecting each room and offering verandah access, the house is a lovely example of colonial architecture. The design is that of a typical north Queensland station homestead, with a central living room, French door bedrooms opening into it and a wide verandah completely encircling the house. This house was the initiative of Sir Hubert Murray, KCMG, who was acting administrator of the then Territory of Papua and later as Lieutenant General from 1909 to 1940.

The site has a rich history. There was a time when Government House served as the American General McArthur's headquarters, during World War Two, overlooking the place where the American Army had built offices, and where the original barracks of the Royal Papuan Constabulary once stood. It was in front of the old house, by the flagpole, where Lt. Governor Robinson shot himself after being



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Governor-General's chair for State business.

criticised for his handling of the massacre of two missionaries who were eaten by cannibals.

It was in the early 1950s that the gardens were redesigned and extended by Sir Donald Cleland, who took over as administrator. His wife Dame Rachel later wrote about their time in Government House in her book, 'Pathways to Independence; Story of Official and Family Life in Papua New Guinea.' The book documents some of their precious family memories of the house where their eldest son was married and where two of their grandchildren were born and christened.

After independence in 1975 the first Governor-General, Sir John Guise was appointed. Grand Chief Sir Paulius Matane is the eighth



Bronze bust of Queen Elizabeth II mounted on a bronze kundu, symbols of the bond between the two countries.

Governor-General of Papua New Guinea to have called Government House 'home'. Since its inception more than a century ago, the site has been expanded to include offices and staff houses, but it continues to be an important ceremonial institution.

When visiting Heads of State are received at Government House, the first ceremonies take place on the small official Parade Ground, benched into the hillside below the house. Adequate once to cope with official entourages, the Parade Ground these days is somewhat small and in need of expansion.

From here, the dignitaries are accompanied

up a flight of steps to the front courtyard with its three giant shady trees and a covered area where entertainment may take place. In a small garden beside the stairway leading up to the house is a bronze bust of the Queen mounted on a bronze kundu, symbols of the bond between both countries.

Red carpet for the Heads of State, leads up to the entrance of the House proper which was shown to us by Mr Tipo Vuatha, LVO and MBE, Official Secretary to the Governor-General. Mr Vuatha is a long serving Official Secretary, officiating through the terms of three Governor-Generals - Sir Wiwa Korowi, Sir Silas Atopare and the present Grand Chief Matane.

New light fittings.



At first, we were ushered into each of the reception rooms flanking the main hall - all with gleaming polished wooden floors.

One is named the Sepik Room, after the province of the first Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare, and the other is named the Samarai Room, after the birthplace of the first Governor-General.

Spacious verandah.



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Both these rooms, as is the main hall, are splendidly refurbished with cream leather and rosewood furniture, plush drapes, attractive light fittings and carved carpets - a gift from the Chinese government.

Another small but equally attractive room to the side is reserved for the media. The main hall houses a gallery of chairs and a solid wooden table where the Governor-General sits when signing State Documents or conducting other State business.

A tour of the gardens was just as pleasant as the house itself. His Excellency puts this down to his wife's love of gardening and her 'green touch'. Advanced shrubs of the rosy and white Bangkok Rose line the lawns. Well kept stone retaining walls indicate the various levels and sections of the gardens, including a steep slope lined with bright green hedges which seem to flourish in Port Moresby's relatively dry climate.

Along the route we passed a black marble monument with the British Coat of Arms on it. Stately palms and huge shady raintrees add to the overall effect of grandeur. And, of course, in the middle of it all is the terrace upon which the flag of the Governor-General flies from its huge ship's mast, an appropriate metaphor of His Excellency's job in guiding his 'ship' through the ongoing shoals of political intrigue.

At the end of the evening after refreshments, Sir Matane thanked his guests for coming, commenting that they were a part of an historic occasion, and emphasising his dream of further restorative work for the historic House and restoring the old House of Assembly which he referred to as the 'mother' of PNG.

He said he hoped this occasion would pave the way for further visits by the public in future to appreciate their political heritage and inspire them to help preserve the historical monuments of the young nation.

Meanwhile, as the highest institution on the land, Government House will continue to uphold the constitutional and democratic rights of its people, and Papua New Guinea as a nation.



Media Room.

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Did you know that...

The Longest Lizard in the World is in PNG?

By John Brooksbank



Everyone has heard of the evil sounding Komodo Dragon - the largest lizard in the world. But who knows that the longest lizard in the world lives right here in Papua New Guinea?

Described by different people as a tree crocodile, a crocodile monitor or Papuan monitor (Salvadori monitor), it has a large bulbous nose, a drab olive green coloured skin with dull yellow spots and a yellow tongue. It is scientifically labelled as *Varanus salvadorii*.

Related to its cousin - the more common mangrove monitor, *Varanus indicus*, Salvadori's monitor was first described in 1878 from a specimen captured in what was then German New Guinea. It was described by Wilhelm Peters of the Berlin Zoological Museum and Marchese Giacomo Doria of the Genoa Natural History Museum and named in honour of the eminent Italian ornithologist, Conte Tommaso Salvadori.

This lizard species has not been studied very much and little is known about its lifestyle and behaviour, except that it seems to be found in the southern coastal and estuarine swamps, forest and mangroves from Port Moresby in the east across to Vogelkopf Peninsula in Irian Jaya in the west of the island of New Guinea.

Traditionally, all types of monitor lizard were hunted by coastal villagers for their meat and skin, which was used on kundu drums.

The creature more often than not can be found in the branches of mangroves and swamp plants since it is arboreal, meaning it can live in trees as well as on the ground. Salvadori monitor also has the largest teeth and claws of any lizard known to science - a characteristic that obviously helps it to scale trees with ease.

Whilst hanging around in trees, the lizard

survives on a diet of insects, birds, eggs, frogs, reptiles and small mammals such as rats and bandicoots; but is also a good swimmer, which is a useful skill in its usually waterlogged environment.

After mating, the females lay up to 12 eggs in nests above the ground and can lay at least two clutches of eggs a year.

According to many reports, the Salvadori monitor is the longest lizard in the world, with specimens apparently measuring up to 4.7 metres from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. In fact, the lizard is mostly tail...up to two thirds of its length can be tail.

There is, however, some controversy over this claim since, although a number of specimens have been caught, measured and described, creatures kept in captivity in recent years have been no longer than three metres. Lack of serious scientific study means there may still be some larger lizards roaming around the swamps of the great river deltas that discharge into the Gulf of Papua.

The lizard's tail is its most noticeable feature, prehensile and able to curl around branches. While the creature is on the ground, the tail is more likely to be curled up. The tail is also a formidable weapon, with reports of it being used by specimens in captivity as a whip to strike at their keepers when threatened.

So if you see one of these fellows when fishing in the mangroves - stand well back!



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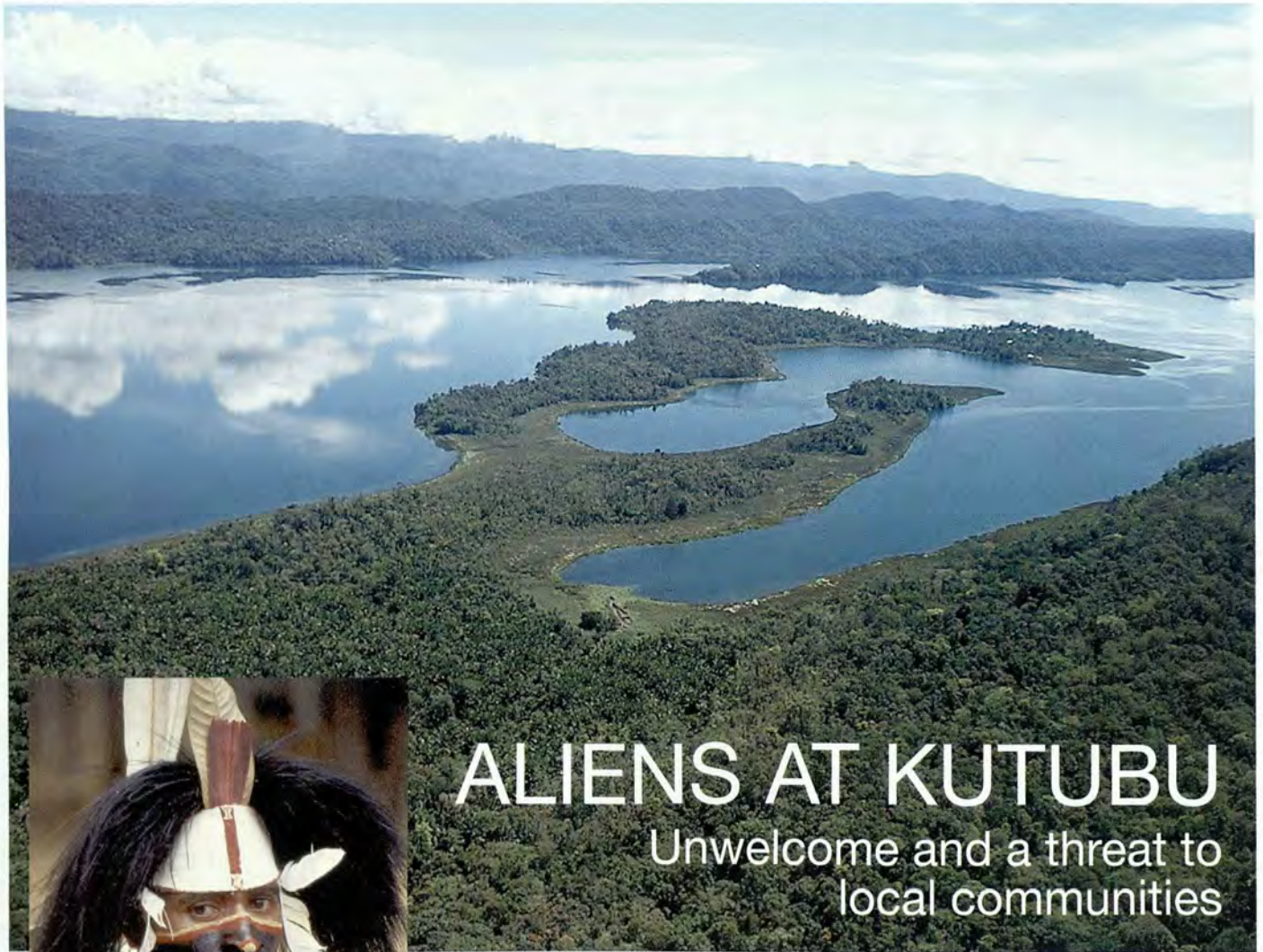
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ALIENS AT KUTUBU

Unwelcome and a threat to local communities

By Dennis Badi



WWF scientists predict that invasion of alien species into Papua New Guinea will, if we are not careful, result in a decline in biodiversity values in forests and wetland areas.

In the past, the country's vast forests and wetland areas formed natural barriers to invading species. Animals such as poisonous snakes or introduced plants would not have survived in the highlands.

Early human migration meant our ancestors introduced alien species such as pigs and sweet potatoes to satisfy their needs. But the magnitude and frequency of these movements were minor compared to today's global trade which involves constant movement of people and increased commercial activities in often fragile environments.

Invasive species are introduced plants and animals that can rapidly expand outside their native range due to lack of natural predators. They are unwelcome guests that pose a threat to many communities. They are also referred to by scientists as biological pollutants. Lowland plants can now be found in the highlands and vice versa. This dilemma

is accelerated by global warming and huge forest loss.

Bamboo piper (*Piper aduncum*), a non-native plant to this country, has been found in the coastal provinces of Morobe and Madang. Since the 1980s, it has been found as far as Lake Kutubu - 800 metres above sea level. The piper tree rapidly invades fallow land, apparently causing almost complete exclusion of native species at some sites.

European carp (*Caprinus carpio*), a native of China, was introduced in the country as an ornamental and aquaculture species and now found in many rivers. Carp can live in extreme environmental conditions making it a very successful species wherever it is introduced. It is considered a pest because of its abundance and tendency to stir up sediments and reduce water clarity and destroy aquatic vegetation.

Also a danger is the Mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*), which occurs in the Kutubu area. This fish species was introduced to control mosquito larvae in streams and lakes and has now spread nationwide.

According to the list of 100 of the world's worst alien invasive species compiled by the



Constant movement of people means introduction of invasive species such as pigs.

Global Invasive Species Database, biological pollutants have a serious impact on native biodiversity and human activities. Many of them are already found in PNG with six confirmed to exist in Kutubu of Southern Highlands.

These include the European Carp, Big leaf rope (*Merremia peltata*), Western mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*), pigs (*Sus scrofa*), house rats (*Rattus rattus*) and cats (*Felis catus*).

Some of world's worst alien invasive species that have entered the PNG territory have established their dominance with the help of humans. These species include pigs which have been part of the highlands culture, while others such as domestic cats, are used as pets to control house rats.

Other known alien species include breadfruit trees and coconut palm have become food sources for islanders. Such useful species become unwelcome only when they are not managed properly and their impact



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Harvesting of sweet potatoes.

leads to loss of wildlife.

The increase in temperature as a result of climate change is weakening the natural barriers to some species in the highlands provinces. Malaria bearing mosquitoes exist now in higher altitude areas, something that was unknown in the past. The range of foreign animals has expanded as they can survive now in most areas and, like invasive plants, they threaten the food security and

health of many landowners who rely on their environment for survival.

Papua New Guinea, together with Congo and the Amazon, is one of the few tropical countries on earth where forests still hold countless number of plants and animals of biological and cultural significance. In this environment of native biodiversity, many developers do not have adequate policies to counter the threat of invasive plants



and animals or even institute quarantine checkpoints in their project areas.

The Kikori River Basin encompasses 2.3 million hectares from Doma Peaks in the Southern Highlands down to Kikori River delta in the Gulf Province. A 1993 Conservation Needs study recommended that the

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Stringent monitoring is required in Kutubu.

area should be spared from destructive development due to its very high biological values. Wildlife in the basin ranks amongst the most spectacular on the planet including the world's largest orchid and a rich assemblage of Birds of Paradise species.

WWF has focused on working with resource



Industrial logging encourages the spread of invasives.

owners, petroleum operator Oil Search Limited and the PNG Government to protect the remaining tracts of forest and wetlands in the Kikori Basin from illegal logging and the imminent threat of invasive species. The intrusion of invasive species will affect such fragile eco-systems.

It is important therefore that landowners are educated about the impacts of their actions whilst the State and developers must be stringent in their operational policies to bring sensible development into rural areas.

State permits must be scrutinised before a stringent bidding process so that only developers who possess environmentally

responsible practices are invited into the country to operate. Currently, foreign and locally owned companies are possibly more concerned about profits than the welfare of the people.

In the Kikori River Basin, WWF is embarking on an invasive species awareness campaign as part of its communications strategy. This involves a local theatre group visiting schools and villages in Kutubu with the key message that invasive species are a threat to their environment.

WWF staff educate the people and company employees using posters to reinforce the dramatic messages and their role to help

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JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU & HIS LOVE FOR PNG ORCAS



It was in 1973 that the young Jean-Michel Cousteau first came to dive in the caves off the coast of Wuvulu.

By Euralia Paine

Jean Michel Cousteau's love for the warm tropical ocean waters had its beginnings in a humble little group of Micronesian islands in the East Sepik called Wuvulu. Jean Michel is the "77-year-young" son of the famous ocean pioneer, the late Jacques Cousteau. It was in 1973 that the young Cousteau first came to dive in the caves off the coast of Wuvulu.

He was mesmerised by the unusual blind fish and Orca whales in the caves, and has been enchanted by Papua New Guinea ever since.

When we met in June this year in Port Moresby his eyes lit up when my girlfriend Eva Arni introduced herself and said she was from Wuvulu. His spontaneous open arms and tight embrace was enough to make you think they were long lost friends. But that is the charm of Jean Michel.

The formal interview I had planned for **PARADISE** turned into a lovely afternoon chat with someone who obviously not only had a passion for what he did but also had a genuine bond with the people whose habitat he had ventured into and had explored.

The gush of warmth and enthusiastic energy was evident as he spoke; "I have a soft spot for Wuvulu". In a way he was trying to explain his all-embracing nature but at the same time, find a connection with Eva and I. Here I was in the presence of such a famous adventurer; ocean hero and philanthropist and he was speaking of the little known islands with such fondness! This was certainly a pleasant surprise and an inspiration for me.

As the conversation progressed, I discovered he had even bought a small island in Wuvulu for a mere \$20 in 1973 and it was still there with one coconut palm standing. During the conversation, Eva would recall the names of people from her childhood days who had



Jean Michel Cousteau with Eva Arni of Air Niugini. Ms Arni is from Wuvulu.

worked with Jean Michel on the islands, all those years ago. He remembered all the people and it was easy to see what a great mind he has.

Monsieur Cousteau is an architect by profession but has now become what you could call a roving ambassador for the vast ocean and its creatures. He travels the world raising awareness on the importance of protecting the marine environment. On his recent trip to Papua New Guinea, he was amazed at how beautiful PNG still is with its "extremely varied diversity of life" still intact.

"I could spend a lifetime here trying to understand the cultures and their connections to the environment," he said. "The environment is our life support system; whether we like it or not. Even our happiness depends on it!" Our meeting was after his two-week diving visit to Kimbe in West New Britain. The trip to Kimbe was especially dedicated to finding Orca whales. With a group that included Orca biologists, scientists, researchers and film makers, Monsieur Cousteau lived on Febrina live-aboard boat.

In his diary of Kimbe he wrote; "The coral reefs remain healthy as I remember when I first visited PNG in 1973. There are not many places in the tropics that one can still say that today."

Another entry read: "Today, June 17th, has been our best day yet even though we have not seen any Orca yet. But we have had sightings of four different whale and dolphin species including Spinner dolphins, Risso's dolphins, False Killer Whales and Bottlenose dolphins. We also did three dives on two different sites. As you all know, PNG is known for its high biodiversity of coral reefs. I have seen many new species of fish and invertebrates on every dive, making each dive really enjoyable. We are leaving PNG empty handed of Orca footage, but have captured their close cousins on film. We also filmed the underwater world of the tropical Orcas."

At the end of week two, Monsieur Cousteau wrote: "No Orcas... but we have given it an honest try. We covered just about the entire area of Kimbe Bay in the Bismark Sea, over 2700 sq miles, in search of Orca. We did enjoy the rich diversity of cetaceans that Kimbe Bay is well known for with sightings of five different species of whales and dolphins. In our hours and hours of search for Orca, we did our fair share of diving; logging more dives in two weeks than we did in the entire eight months in Amazon and three months on expedition in the Arctic. We logged 35 dives at 16 different dive sites, totalling more than 40 hours underwater. We all have our most memorable moments."

Who's Jean Michel Cousteau?

Explorer, environmentalist, educator and film producer for more than four decades, Jean-Michel Cousteau has used his vast experience to communicate with people of all nations and generations of his passion and concern for our water planet.

The son of ocean pioneer Jacques Cousteau, Jean-Michel spend much of his life with his family exploring the world's oceans aboard Calypso and Alcione.

Honouring his heritage, Jean-Michel founded Ocean Futures Society in 1999 to carry on this legendary work, including his role as executive producer of Jean-Michel Cousteau: Ocean Adventures. Jean-Michel has produced over 70 films, received the Emmy, the Peabody Award, the 7 d'Or, and the Cable Ace Award, among others.

Ocean Futures Society, a non-profit marine conservation and education organisation, functions as an ambassador for the ocean by communicating worldwide its critical bond with humanity and the importance of wise environmental policy. As Ocean Futures' president, Jean-Michel serves as a diplomat for the environment, reaching out to the public through a variety of media.

Travelling the globe, Jean-Michel meets with leaders and policymakers at the grassroots level and at the highest echelons of government and the private sector. He is dedicated to educating younger generations, documenting stories of change and hope and lending his reputation and support to energise alliances for positive development.

In 1998, Jean-Michel was honored with the Environmental Hero Award, presented to him by Vice-President Al Gore at the White House National Oceans Conference. His diplomatic achievements were also recognised in December 2003, when he was the first person to receive the Ocean Hero Award from Oceana, recognising his commitment to communicate the value of the oceans and their endangerment.



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Aerial view of Wuvulu.

This entry sums up the enormous potential PNG has to be the leading tourist destination in the Pacific: "PNG reefs are among the richest and most productive of any reefs in the world. Abundance and productivity is dramatically demonstrated by the large schools of jacks, barracuda, rainbow runners and unicorn fish that we have witnessed on just about every dive.

"Diversity and richness is demonstrated by the diversity of crinoids, soft corals, sea fans and a variety of reef building hard corals,

carpeting the bottom with almost 100% coral cover. There are many different architectural strategies that enable these living buildings to have rooftop gardens and make shelter and food for the entire community,"

The Cousteau group spent long days in Kimbe; starting at 5:30am and going to bed by 10 pm.

What is it about Orcas or whales that have intrigued Monsieur Cousteau since Wuvulu islands 35 years ago? It's simple he explained.

"They are mammals very similar to humans and very organised. They are not unlike us. They are very wistful and we are very wistful," he said. The difference, he said, was that humans were using the whales' home as a "big garbage can"; hence he has taken the plight of the whales and other ocean creatures to heart - to influence government decisions and leaders so that the marine environment is protected for future generations to enjoy.

"I want the young ones to have the same chance I had 35 years ago when I first came to PNG and saw what I saw, and experienced what I have."

He was very impressed with the work of the Nahonia na daria ("guardians of the sea") Research Centre at Walindi, Kimbe, which was involving young people in outreach programmes to carry out communications and awareness campaigns to promote environment protection. What he would like to see also is the deterrence of dynamite and cyanide on reefs and better fishing practices, especially for commercial purposes to be adopted.

His mission to protect the environment for future generations is explained perfectly when he says: "It has been a spiritual experience for me, personal and emotional. It's not only about saving whales but saving ourselves; knowing and being aware of our life-support systems. Everything on this planet is connected. We have an opportunity as the dominant species to do something about it."



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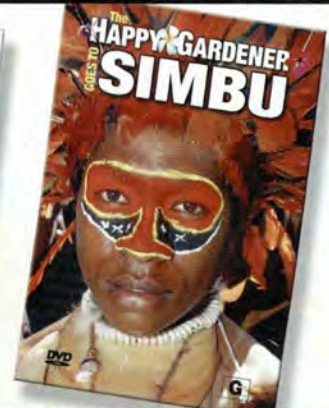
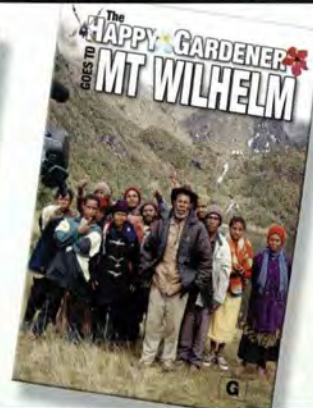
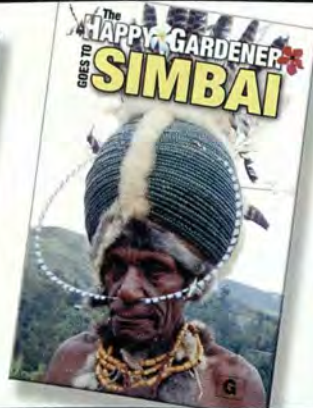


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Fools Go!

A much-loved affair with a fascinating history

By Matthew Knott

When thinking of carnival cities, most people would surely picture Rio de Janeiro or Sydney perhaps.

It is unlikely that Tokyo would spring to mind first, yet several summer events offer an eye into the heart of Japan's traditions, frivolities and community spirit.

This is best encapsulated by the spectacular Awa Odori dance festival in Koenji, a much-loved affair with a fascinating history.

It is a visual and aural feast featuring some 12,000 brightly-dressed dancers divided into 188 groups called ren, producing elegant dances and hypnotic rhythms.

The Yoshikono song, the heartbeat of the dance, neatly captures the spirit; "Odoru aho ni miru aho; onaji aho nara odarana son son." (It's a fool who dances and a fool who watches, if both are fools you might as well dance).

There are a reputed 1.2 million 'fools' here every year in the last weekend of August and the cosy streets are certainly crammed, but the distance between the performer and spectator is short in every sense.

Event organiser Shimizu explained to me: "Awa Odori is our culture. It was created by the people of Koenji for the people of Koenji."

For him the atmosphere is something unique. "The streets are so narrow that everybody becomes involved.

The crowd makes the atmosphere.”

There are overlapping influences on how Awa Odori developed. The origins are in the city of Tokushima (formerly called Awa), located on Shikoku Island, south of the main Honshu Island.

Some believe the Awa Dance emerged from Obon season; a 500-year old traditional holiday to honour the spirits of one's departed ancestors, often accompanied by a circular dance.

Another theory is that Awa Odori is influenced by a form of traditional Noh theatre called Fuyu - a performing art of the Heian period (794-1185). A Fuyu dance in 1663 at Shozui Castle is recorded in Miyoshi district records and thought to have shaped the Awa dance.

However, it is most widely believed that Awa Odori had a much more mischievous origin and that alcohol was responsible!

Legend holds that in 1585 Lord Hachisuga lemasu held a party to celebrate the opening of Tokushima castle. After too much sake (rice-wine), the guests began to stumble back and forth with limbs flailing. A song was improvised and a festival was born.

Until the Meiji period (1868-1912), various nervous governments, fearful of mob uprisings, tried to impose restrictions. But they were unable to subdue the people and the dance was staunchly defended as an outlet

for frustrations. The drinking and sociality certainly persist to this day!

How the dance landed in Koenji is a more straightforward story, but heart-warming nonetheless.

The town suffered many hardships after WWII while neighbouring Asagaya was prospering. In 1957, a group of local merchants decided to import Awa Odori in order to revive economic fortunes.



The gamble certainly paid off and also formed the kind of neighbourhood bonds that are rare in Japan's capital.

These days the town itself is a relaxed and hospitable place to visit. Koenji, named after a Buddhist temple, is rarely featured in guide books and could be described as one of Tokyo's uncovered gems with scores of trendy bars and cafes and treasures for bargain-hunters.

Fact Box

Summer Festivals

Awa Odori is one among many of Japan's events, including the spectacular Sumida Gawa Fireworks Festival. The Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO) website (<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/>) features information about these.

Awa Odori

Background details and information can be found at <http://www.koenji-awaodori.com/indexEn.html>.

Hotels

Room are limited in Koenji, but can be found at. Rooms are likely to be booked early for Awa Odori. A far greater range of options are available in Shinjuku, only seven minutes by train. See JNTO website above.

Eating

Recommended places with English menus are Baanesan (Koenji KS Building 1st Floor, 4-25-6, Minami Koenji, Suginami-Ku, Tokyo, Tel +813/ 3315 1005, <http://baanesan.pinoko.shop>) and Yonchome Café (Tel +813/ 5377 1726, www.yonchome.com).

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Koenji is located on the JR Chuo/Sobu lines. <http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/index.html>.



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It also features some of the most down-to-earth, hearty and delicious food in the capital. Diners are spoilt for choice with Thai, Indian, Chinese, sushi and plenty of alluring street snacks along smoky lanes, where the chargrilled chicken is a local speciality.

While visitors to most parts of Tokyo will spend their time with necks craned at the intimidating skyscrapers, Koenji is much more up-close and personal. The architecture is low-key but the fun usually lies inside.

Except during the dance of course! Magnificent colour is

painted onto the streets by the three-hour long procession that slowly edges around a circular route north and south of the station.

The costumes are delightful and each ren has its own distinct colours, with elegant lilacs followed by gaudy reds, chased by tiger stripes and an endless sea of performers.

The ladies wear a light summer gown called a yukata with a straw hat (amigasa) woven from rush grass, a costume that supports their elegant performances, while the men are traditionally more dynamic in a happi, a loose-fitting coat and split-toed socks. In truth, the energy of the performances aren't always decided by gender!

The sounds are just as integral to the festival and Shamisens (a kind of long-necked guitar-like instrument), flutes and gongs all compete for attention in a glorious cacophony.



However, it is the taiko drum that is the true star of the show. Some ren use the drums to build to a frenzied crescendo, while others offer a gentler workout.

The dance itself is deceptively simple. The one basic rule is that dancers move forward with left and right sides in unison while keeping the elbows above the shoulders and flitting the palms back and forth, in the Obon traditions - an offer to dead ancestors.

It is a feat of endurance to keep going for three hours, not least for the numerous kids involved. But the range

of generations participating is one of the most pleasing aspects.

Shimizu informed me that each ren represents each school, neighbourhood, sports club and company, and they can be found practising in open spaces throughout the year.

There are hundreds of intriguing festivals across Japan in the summer, but few are as close-knit and well-rehearsed as this. Nonetheless, the dance still thrives on moments of spontaneity and members of the audience can quite easily be thrust into the limelight by receiving an instrument.

It all makes very thirsty work and a few hours after the festivities the locals maintain long-held traditions by dancing and drinking long into the night. They would be fools not to.



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Air Niugini introduced a Madang-based Dash 8 aircraft in its current schedule to provide services to the Momase (Madang, Lae, Wewak & Vanimo) and Highlands (Goroka, Mt Hagen) regions to offer more direct flights for passengers wanting to travel within these regions without having to travel through Port Moresby. The Dash 8 will overnight in Wewak each Tuesday and Thursday and return to Madang on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, with the exception of Saturday when the aircraft will not operate any service.

There is also a reduction in the number of F100 services to and from certain ports. From Madang, flights have been reduced by four per week; from Port Moresby to Madang, there is a reduction to three weekly services; while Friday's flight from Port Moresby to Rabaul and Buka will not return via Rabaul. The flight will return directly from Buka. Saturday's service from Buka to Port Moresby has been trimmed to one.

The direct Port Moresby-Sydney service is now operated by the B757-200 with a returning flight on Saturday coming back via Brisbane. Sunday's flight remains as POM-SYD-POM. Departures from Port Moresby on Fridays and Sundays are at 1.30pm with arrival in Sydney at 5.25pm. The revised departure time provides excellent connections for passengers with onward domestic flights to Melbourne and Canberra. The B767 service to Brisbane on Friday is reduced to one and retimed to 10 am with the returning flight leaving Brisbane at 12.55pm and terminates in Port Moresby.

The Honiara-Nadi services on Friday and Sunday have also been retimed to depart at 12 noon from Port Moresby and the returning leg from Nadi departing at a later time of 10 am.

Changes to the schedule have been implemented to maximise aircraft utilisation and provide better connections and travel options to airline customers.



Embraer 145...being used on the Port Moresby/Cairns route.

INCREASED POM/CAIRNS FREQUENCY

Passengers travelling between Port Moresby and Cairns will have more options with flights being increased from 18 to 28 flights. The airline has introduced a double daily service utilising a mix of Embraer 145 and F100 aircraft.

Departures from Cairns are at 7.15 am and 12 midday while from Port Moresby departures are at 9.25 am and 4pm each day.

"Passengers will enjoy the option of flying either in the morning or afternoon in both directions - another service enhancement offered by Air Niugini," said Chief Executive Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri.

Flight times from Cairns offer excellent same day connections to all Air Niugini international flights to Singapore (Monday & Thursday), Manila/Hong Kong (Tuesday), Honiara/Nadi and the second Manila service on Saturday. The early departure from Cairns provides ample time to connect with domestic flights leaving Port Moresby from 11 am onwards.



2 MORE DASH 8s

Air Niugini has signed a five-year lease agreement with ANZ Bank for two more Dash 8 aircraft.

The lease instrument was signed by Air Niugini Chief Executive, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri (right) and Mr Garry Tunstall, Managing Director of ANZ Bank (left) on August 1 in Port Moresby.

One of the Dash 8s will be used to enhance Air Niugini's domestic freighter service capacity, while the other will be added to the existing passenger fleet.





PNG Cricket recognises national airline



Air Niugini was recognised as a sponsor of PNG Cricket during the recent "PNG Kriket Nite" at the Crowne Plaza in Port Moresby.

Under the sponsorship, two guest speakers were flown to Port Moresby, courtesy of the national airline. They were Greg Mathews - former Australian Test cricketer - and Martin Gleeson - the newly appointed PNG Cricket team coach.

In accepting the plaque, Chief Executive Officer, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri, said Air Niugini was proud to be a supporter of PNG Cricket.



Air Niugini Chief Executive, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri (right) accepts the plaque of appreciation from Mr Nick Nades, chairman of the PNG Cricket Board.

Nick Nades with guest speaker Greg Mathews, a former Australian test cricketer.



Air Niugini assists Light of Hope (Inc)



The national airline recently supported Pro-Ma Systems through its charity arm - Light of Hope PNG Inc - with its initiative to establish the St Peter's Literacy School based at Laloki, outside Port Moresby.

The school has been relocated from its original site at Baruni where it was mainly catering

for the Gollala children to its new location at Laloki where it will continue to serve the needs of children in the nearby communities. The school's main objective is to equip local children with basic literacy skills. The project involves the construction of classrooms. Air Niugini donated two major prizes towards the fundraising drive which was the inaugural dinner hosted by Pro-Ma Systems.

First prize winner M Vaisi (third from left) with Allan Duma (National Sales Manager Pro Ma Systems), Nori Maniana (Marketing Manager, Air Niugini) and Taita Terence (Marketing Officer, Air Niugini).



New pilot cadets

Seven new pilot cadets have joined the Air Niugini National Cadet Pilot Training Scheme with familiarisation tours of the airline's operations.

The seven cadet pilots - Thomas Linge, Solomon Amini, Kieran Tabara, Johnny Orosambo, Jehutha Juju, Rhoda Ilava and Russell Veoli - will undertake a 58-week course at the Combined Aviation Services, Coffs Harbour, Australia.

Also in the picture are Chief Executive Officer, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri (standing third from the left) and General Manager Flight Operations, Captain Daniel Wanma (in blue shirt).





Conveyor belts from Japan



Japanese Ambassador Hajime Nishiyama doing the honours. With him is CEO Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri.

Air Niugini was a recent recipient of 18 conveyor belts from the Japanese Government worth K2.6 million.

Chief Executive Officer Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri received the equipment from the Japanese Ambassador to PNG, His Excellency Hajime Nishiyama, in Port Moresby.

Mr Kumarasiri thanked the Japanese Government for its support and confidence in selecting Air Niugini from among a number of organisations.

Air Niugini successfully procured a total of K4.3 million from the Japanese Government through its international aid agency, Japanese International Cooperation System (JICS). The fund is part of a non-project grant allocated by

JICS to the Government of PNG through the National Planning Office.

Of the total K4.3 million, K2.6 million was used to purchase conveyor belts while K1.6 million was allocated for the purchase of over 600 aircraft tyres. As a non-project grant aid, Air Niugini will raise a counterpart funding which is 60% of the total cost (K4.3million).



Welcome to Papua New Guinea

General Information

Lying entirely within the tropics, barely south of the Equator and just north of the Australian continent is Papua New Guinea, the second largest island in the world. With a total land mass of 473,189sq.km it is the last of a string of Islands spilling down from South East Asia into the Pacific.

Apart from the mainland, Papua New Guinea comprises a remarkable collection of islands, atolls and coral reefs scattered around its coastline. The mainland is divided by the Owen Stanley Range—a rugged central spine with peaks over 4,000 metres high. Great rivers begin their journey to the sea from these mountains—among them, Fly and Sepik waterways. Below the mountain chain, fertile coastal plains, flooded delta regions and mangrove swamps exist alongside broad sandy beaches, sheltered bays and dense rain forests.

The coastal regions are tropical however in generally the climate is warm to hot and humid all year round. Temperatures on the coast vary between 25-30 degrees throughout the year. The Highlands regions enjoy a temperate climate, ranging from 20 degrees during day to as low as 10 degrees during the evenings. Rainy season varies from province to province, however generally the country is driest from May to December.

Fully independent since September 16, 1975, the country has a freely elected democratic government. PNG became the 142nd member of the United Nations on October 10, 1975 and is also a member of the British Commonwealth.

The population is just over 5 million with over a third in the Highlands region of the country. The people are Melanesian though in

appearance they are quite varied.

There are more than 800 distinct “live” languages with Melanesian pidgin and Hiri Motu being the two most widely used. English is the official language in education, business and government circles.

Papua New Guinea has a vibrant and multifaceted economy with two distinct systems operating side by side.

The vast majority of the people live a traditional, non-monetary barter economy that existed long before European colonization began. Co-existing with this is the modern economic system based on mining, petroleum, fishing, forestry and agriculture.

The main exports are gold, copper, oil, coffee, tea, copra, oil palm and forest products.

What to See and Do



Ideal Cruising Experience

The wonders of Papua New Guinea never cease to impress even the most intrepid traveller. Offering a multitude of ideal experiences, the visitors will find a country rich in culture, ethnic diversity and where little has changed over centuries. Cruising Papua New Guinea is relaxing since island life is slow-paced and informal. Rich in cultural and ethnic diversity PNG promises to reward cruise enthusiasts with unforgettable sights and sounds.

Diving

This is home to some of the world's most spectacular diving, dubbed as ‘underwater photographer's paradise.’ It is said to have twice as many species as the waters of the Red Sea, and up to five times as many as the Caribbean. The waters are a wonderland of elegant reefs, sunken wrecks, brilliantly coloured coral and marine life. The immense diversity of dive sites includes barrier reefs, coral walls (drop-offs), coral gardens, patch reef, fringing reefs, sea grass beds and coral atolls.

Trekking the rugged terrains

Trekking in Papua New Guinea is a challenge which portrays the real meaning of adventure in paradise. An extensive network of walking

tracks covers most mountain areas, and experience bush walkers are well catered for. The most popular is the Kokoda Track which continues to provide challenges and experiences beyond men's imagination. Others include Mt. Wilhelm, Bulolo, Wau and Madang. The Kokoda Trail, so significant to World War II continues to grow in popularity amongst serious trekkers.

Excellent Fishing

The country's reputation for excellent fishing localities and choices of catch is fully boosted by the wonderful climate.

Surfing the waves

Experience an unforgettable wave-riding adventure in the country's wave-breaking shores. From the breath-taking coastline of Vanimo that stretches down Madang, to the sandy beaches of New Ireland Province, where premiere breakpoints and scenic surfing sites are located.

Bird Watching

Bird watching does not only require dead silence, it provides the opportunity for watchers to take in nature's most eerie surroundings and eternal spring whether up in the Highlands or in a typical tropical weather in the coastal areas. Over 700 species of feathered fliers flutter across our island

including 38 of the 43 known species of the exotic Bird of Paradise. Not all the colours of the rainbow have been reserved for our feathered friends as there is an unlimited range of hues and shades to be seen in our 2000 orchids and countless magnificent butterflies including the world's largest, the Queen Alexandra Birdwing.

World War II Relics

Relics of World War II battles are found in most parts of Papua New Guinea's land, underwater, caves and tunnels.

Astounding Volcanoes

Located along the “Pacific Ring of Fire, Papua New Guinea offers distinct views of active volcanoes that captivates a land of tranquility. There exists a number of volcanoes in certain provinces, including the latest ‘basaltic statovolcano on Manam Island, Madang Province. Other recent volcanic location include Rabaul's two volcanic cones-Vulcan and Tavurvur-and West New Britain's Mt Pago.

Visitors to our country are guests and hospitality is an honour in our Melanesian culture. Tipping is neither expected nor encouraged.

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