

**Day 1**  
**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Cairns to Wewak**

Our excellent journey started at 10.00am at Cairns airport 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005. There we met up with all other 26 members of our intrepid group the names starting with (of course) John & Ian then Julia, Helen, Ruth Peter (3 or 4 at least), Richard, Tas, Simon, Jane, Jane, James, Andy, Jim, Peg, George, Mavis, Lauris, John & Lorraine, Colleen & Gillian. If anyone amongst our group can put a face to each & every one of these names at this stage they deserve a substantial reward.

Our Flight, PX93 left Cairns for Port Moresby at 12.00pm, where we were transferred to our Domestic Flight PX12 to Wewak. Not one of our happy group was discovered chewing beetle nut (they are such an obedient group & heeded the sign).



It was during this time that we discovered John's past had caught up with him via the Immigration Department's computer & Joh BJ's strong arm came from beyond the grave and made it a little complicated for a short time. As in all good stories there was a happy ending and he eventually found us in the POM domestic terminal.

The flights were uneventful and at 5.40pm we landed at Wewak. Our guide at Wewak was Chris Karis, who offers Sepik River tours and can be contacted c/- PO Box 51, Wewak, East Sepik Province PNG. Phone 8561584 & Fax 6758 561584. He advised Simon that at the Headland where the Yacht Club is situated, the Japanese, during the second WW, built an underground Submarine base.



Our first bird sighting was a big white browed Willy Wagtail and he was a fine looking fellow. Another example of local wildlife was captured on film by Andrew, this nasty example was a large white striped Mozzie sucking Ian's blood through his T Shirt, we are (un) reliably informed that this little 'nasty' could be of the species that carries Dengue Fever. Simon also reliably informs the writers to beware of large Hawk Moths who 'scratch' exposed flesh.

From there we were loaded onto the bus for the short journey to MV Miss Rankin where we met our Skipper & his offside, James & Tony, (not necessarily in the job description order) at the Wewak Yacht club for the inevitable happy hour. Following that we transferred to the Miss Rankin in various stages of 'relaxation'. At about 8.00pm we were treated to a sumptuous dinner of Tarragon Mackerel caught by James' own hands. Suzie, Clare & Sabine's efforts were worthy of any 5 Star chef and we thank them.

We finally all started drifting off to our respective cabins at or about 10.00pm.

**The Crew**

Beginning at Wewak there was a crew of nine working the "Miss Rankin". The owners are James and Tony Collins. Tony is the skipper and James is the manager. They have done two other cruises for GO BUSH Safaris previously

Although few volunteer it readily all Nationals (the common way to differentiate indigenous New Guineans from those of non-indigenous origins) have a traditional name from language. They usually nominate and most commonly use their European names although their birth names usually have far more meaning. For example take the Nationals who are working as crew on the "Miss Rankin":

George (mainly skips the "Miss Rankin" on the Fly River)  
Suzie (or Suzie O Comes with "Miss Rankin")  
Clara (her first voyage - works with Suzie)  
Sabeena (works with Suzie)  
John Gai (our Sepik guide)  
Nolai (Sabeena's husband – general deckhand)  
Danny (general deckhand)  
John (engineer - Looks after things mechanical)

## Day 2 Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May Sepik River

You know, the thing that sticks in my mind most about our first day up the Sepik is the little known fact that Cane Toads make great tomatoes. That's after you catch 'em, put 'em to sleep tucked into a box attached to the exhaust pipe of your car, plant 'em in your garden and place the tomato seeds on top. Fair dinkum – this is from foremost authority Professor Ian Morris! It's got nothing to do with PNG so sorry about that but thought you'd like to know.

Back on the mighty Sepik it's been a memorable if sweaty day as we forged thru the night on the powerful (judging by the engine noise) former oil rig tender Miss Rankin, skilfully guided by skipper Tony under the watchful eye of CEO James. Of course we had the usual local expert along, in this case the very dignified John, herewith known as Sepik John to distinguish him from our fearless Leader.

We were heading way up river to Angoram, a once bustling town also linked to Wewak by road, but now according to the Lonely Planet "in decline". So there's no banks or shopping malls but there are plenty of people including masses of smiling kids just as interested in us as we are in them. Along the way of course we passed fairly frequent villages and many dugout canoes criss-crossing the very wide Sepik. At each village we waved, they waved back and a good time was had by all, particularly the Go Bush safarists when Sepik John ordered 48 muddies to be picked up on the way down river for our delectation.

The birdies among us enjoyed the circling kites and sea eagles tho expert Andrew is so far disappointed there aren't more varieties.

We passed a Lae-based small ship the Victoria which later anchored also at Angoram.

Now we're actually there, ferried to shore under the gaze of all those kids and their elders who hope to sell us their billum bags, feather masks, wonderfully carved crocodiles etc etc. Sepik John arranges a sing sing dance but we have to trek along the river bank for quite a way and some of it's via wooden logs over the wetter patches. Very tricky so after a thunder shower Peggy Craigie opts for the muddy path and slips base over apex. Only her dignity is hurt thank the lords.

We see many hundreds of carved masks and totems but we can't buy only a few smaller pieces. FL buys a model canoe for the grandkids.



Things warm up of the way back along the river bank as some of our stragglers encounter a nasty fight between two locals (our safarists are actually getting along fine). The loser is dragged off to be patched up while we see what used to be a thriving hotel.



We're told that despite the town's decline a court house is to be built soon so we hope that happens, along with an admin centre. And maybe they'll get the electricity back on.



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There's one more highlight – two spectacularly blue, head-dressed birds in a backyard. They turn out to be Victoria crowned pigeons, albeit the biggest pigeons in the world!

Then it's back to MV Miss Rankin and a delicious spag bol dinner courtesy of the marvellous Susie who takes good care of our culinary well being...



### Day 3 Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May Sepik River

Yesterday's fun wasn't over – we ran aground on a sandbank at 10:30 at night. The reversing propellers woke some of us from our reveries. All was soon alright and we were back on our way. We proceeded up river and found ourselves anchored at Kaminabit by dawn.

After breakfast Cyril came on board and introduced himself. Some people set off in the long motorised canoe for the shore. Others came afterwards and joined us for a buying spree of local artefacts, typical of the middle Sepik.

We were treated to an exhibition of fierce warrior dancers accompanied by sacred flute playing. The dancers had spectacular head dresses – cassowary feathers, cuscus, pig tusks, egret feathers, crescents of pearlshell etc. They had armbands with brightly coloured leaves tucked into them. At least two men featured penis gourds – fairly extravagant ones and all had anklets and chest ornaments. The two sacred flutes were made of bamboo and were at least as tall as their players, and being different lengths gave different haunting tones. Gathered outside the area was an interesting group of local men taking a great interest in the proceedings.



After lunch on board, we travelled down river to Timbunke where we visited the spirit house. We were asked to remove our hats in respect and given a demonstration of drum playing. These large drums were hollowed out trees with a slit down the length in the top, and solid ends. Instead the ends were decorated with carvings of crocodiles. They were hit both inside and out. The village had many traditional buildings and a footbridge over the stream. There was a surfeit of mosquitoes. Except for mosquito switches and fans not many purchases were made.



After a tea break, many exciting purchases were made on Tambanum which had a wide range of excellent carvings. Four members of the party had their faces painted to resemble traditional masks. A fearsome lot they looked! We left the village while the usual group of villagers, particularly males and children, lined the bank and watched us leave, their canoes lining the bank.



**Day 4**  
**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May**  
**Sepik River - Kumbarumba**

The grey weather disappeared and we woke to many canoes around the boat, full of locals and a smoking fire. A Papuan hornbill was acquired by James and is now very much part of the crew.

After a protracted start, two motorised longboats set off carrying 8 doubtful tourists each, plus some softies who chose to go in comfortable boats. Our first port of call was at Kumbarumba No. 1 – aka “Dirty Water” – where some were allowed to view the artefacts with No. 1 and No. 2 prices both indicated. No purchases followed. After motor trouble in one of the dugouts, we headed up the tributary towards Kumbarumba No. 2 – aka “Clean Water”.

The tributary was lined with cane grass, breadfruit trees, coconuts, sago palm and water hyacinth in flower. Traffic rules were strictly obeyed and we slowed down when passing houses and other water traffic, including older kids on their way to school. We entered a large open expanse of cleaner water and headed to a large village with many houses built on stilts over the water. We passed a Catholic church and family houses but were soon surrounded by the locals come to greet us, some wearing hats of feathers and one guy with a baby cuscus on his head and wearing it like a hat. After lengthy negotiations the cuscus ended up as a further member of the tour group and is now asleep in Ian's bed. The privileged ones on the less uncomfortable boat had a visit to the local primary school and watched the entire sago production process, including the disposal of the waste to a family of pigs. Prawn traps were also shown and a welcome extended to us by the 'teo'. Some small boats carried delightful children, some carrying bunches of blue water hyacinth flowers.



On our journey back to the boat we were welcomed back to Kumbarumba No. 1 by the Catholic priest called Gabriel but time was pressing if we were to see Manam Island before dark. So back to Miss Rankin for a 1030 departure down the river towards the mouth. The mission at Marienberg was an attractive mixture of Western and traditional styles of housing with lawns and cultivated gardens.



A short stop after lunch enables us to take on some black mudcrabs.

Approaching the mouth of the Sepik, we slowed down and fastened the tender “Half Moon” and the spare coffee mugs and got ourselves ready for a rougher sea once we were out of the river mouth. It was expected that the moon would rise in the direction of Manam and when it appeared it was just above a plume of clouds that resulted from the steam from the volcano. The colours of the cloud turned from pink to grey while the mountain went through purples, navies to grey; the sea was aqua. A brilliant sunset followed. The ship's path followed the silvery beam of the moon on the water, leading straight to Manam.

An exceptionally interesting and good day.

**Some Haiku Inspired by  
Kumbarumba**

Paddling their dugouts  
Negotiating the currents  
Their lives well balanced

Timeless rituals  
Extract and refine sago  
Sustaining good health

Seemingly flimsy  
Perched above the flood level  
With upright support

No contact with earth  
Isolated from outside  
Happy not knowing



### List of Sepik River Birds

Whiskered Tern  
Pied Heron  
Intermediate Egret  
Brahminy Kite  
Whistling Kite  
Common Dollarbird  
Blue-tailed Bee-eater  
White Cockatoo (exact species unknown)  
Blyth's Hornbill  
Pacific Black Duck  
White-bellied Sea-eagle  
Black Kite  
White-breasted Wood-swallow  
Spot-breasted Honeyeater  
Victoria Crowned Pigeon (captive)  
Western Black-capped Lory (captive)  
Torresian Imperial Pigeon  
Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike?  
Tree Martin? (Black with white rump)  
Friarbird (exact species unknown)  
Darter  
Little Black Cormorant  
Little Pied Cormorant  
Pesquet's Parrot?  
Channel-billed Cuckoo  
Little Egret  
Great Egret  
Rufous Night-heron  
Papuan Harrier  
Willie Wagtail  
Australian Reed-warbler  
Zoe Imperial-pigeon  
Purple Swamphen (young captive)  
Oriental Hobby  
Great Frigatebird (approx 10 km out from river)

## Day 5 Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> May Madang

The weather forecast proved to be right and most of us woke to rough seas and pouring rain. We all made it to breakfast, but some weren't up to eating!

As the skies cleared we entered beautiful Madang harbour about 9.00am, passing many small islands, and colonial buildings with grassy lawns leading down to the water. We docked at Tony's landing and met his wife, children and dog who were excitedly awaiting his arrival.

We scrambled aboard a well-worn bus – with the overflow (the bosses) travelling in Tony's Toyota.

First stop was at the Balek Nature Reserve where we were met by a pungent smell of sulphur, a sorry specimen of a cassowary, and some eels swimming about in the stream.

Further upstream the water emerged from the base of a nearly vertical, jungle covered hillside. Tortoises and fish could be seen against the stones on the bottom which were coloured white by the sulphur content of the water.

Our guide talked to us about the wild pepper trees which are used for natural medicines; the bark for diarrhoea and the peppers themselves for cuts and sores.

As we stood by the grave of Man Friday, constructed during the making of a Robinson Crusoe movie starring Pierce Brosnan, we heard the sound of wild kokomos (hornbills) flying overhead.

Our guide encouraged us to try betel nut, daka (mustard vine) and lime (made from crushed and burnt shells); there were no takers except Peter S who only got to stage 1. We watched as a boy climbed a coconut palm, then enjoyed the experience of drinking straight from coconuts which he had cut for us.



Back into the bus and along a very rough and muddy road to Bil Bil, a neat village of thatched houses, fronting a black sand beach. This was our first opportunity to see, up close, the one-man outrigger canoes used extensively in this area.

The village is famous for its pottery. Clay is brought down from the bush in large balls, then mixed with the fine black volcanic beach sand. This mixture is allowed to dry under the houses in the wind and then moulded into pots. A smooth stone is used to shape the inside of the pots, and a wooden batten is used to beat the outside into a smooth shape. No kiln is used, but the pots are fired twice in an open fire; the second firing turns the pot red, and sago putty (a by-product of sago washing) is used to shine the pots. These pots are used for bride-price or for trading with other villages and to sell to tourists.

To our great delight, as we were hot and bothered, we found ourselves heading for the Madang Club for lunch. With drinks in hand we sat on the wide colonial verandah overlooking the harbour, where a small boy fished from his outrigger canoe. A notice above the bar read "... 1 punch = 3 months' suspension".

Refreshed we set off to wander through the town with its shops and substantial people's market which offered a wide variety of fresh produce, some artefacts and clothing. After getting lost to various degrees all arrived back on "Miss Rankin" by the given departure time.

We were all really sad to farewell Sepik John. His pleasant helpful manner and extensive knowledge of the Sepik area (his home), endeared him to us and gave us an insight we would otherwise not have had.

A pleasant cruise through the harbour took us to a calm anchorage in the lee of Pig Island and a chance for a swim or exploration of the island.

Susie (our ever-cheerful cook), then emerged from her galley with bowls of freshly cooked mud crabs, bought yesterday from a village on the banks of the Sepik River. Joining us for happy hour for the first time were Eric the cus cus and Sepik the kokomo who are settling well to shipboard life.

Barbequed steak and sausages was cooked on deck by Captain Tony, and Susie produced yummy vegetables and cake for afters.

Rolling gently to the swell, and with an accompanying light show in the sky, we are hoping for a calm night and further adventures tomorrow.

(Copyright John L, Ruth and Julia)



## Day 6 Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May Nom Plantation, Sidor

A coastal fringe of coconut plantation, and the dramatic highland vista of the Finisterre Ranges, provided the backdrop to an eventful morning in the Bismarck Sea.

This was a morning of mourning, as Kokomo our pet Hornbill disappeared overnight, hopefully to freedom in the nearest rainforest. The joy and delight of seeing dolphins and Pilot Whales overtook our sadness. Breakfast was interrupted when a pod of Common Dolphins rode the bow wave, and we were then entertained by a marvellous display of Melon Headed? Whales and Bottlenosed Dolphins.

We anchored in the coral bay beneath Nom Homestead "The Palace" owned by Bernie, a relative of James and Tony. In 1943 Ben Hall, coastwatcher from Long Island established Nom as a coconut plantation. Bernie and his partner, a doctor from Brisbane have owned the 900 acre copra and cocoa plantation for 16 years.

On a seasonal basis cocoa is harvested from May to August, whereas copra is processed throughout the year. There are six permanent workers, and the remaining majority are locals from nearby villages employed as required on a seasonal basis.



We observed the processing of the cocoa. It commenced with the breaking open of the pods, then a four day fermenting period in one cubic metre vats. This is followed by seven days of drying in the sun in windrows on a long raised platform, before being winnowed and bagged, then transported by boat to Madang for market. Bernie owns two boats and on the return journey



from Madang brings back supplies to be sold in the plantation store.

Copra, the dehydrated white flesh of the coconut, is sent by boat, in hand-sewn hessian bags, to be processed by an oil mill in Madang. The trees are still considered to be in their prime, but need fertilising and inter row weed control. Both copra and cocoa are approximately equal income providers, with the addition of timber cutting from the estate and surrounding areas.

We lunched at the “palace” at the top of the hill and were able to talk with Bernie. His father, Danny Leahy, was the first white man to walk into the Wagi Valley, and up until then no one had appreciated that the Highlands were so densely populated. The house, which Bernie has extended considerably, was built of concrete blocks made on location utilising the naturally available limestone. In the dining room there is a magnificent timber slab table made from Beach Calophyllum finished in a rich mahogany colour. His family live in Foster, New South Wales and look forward to their annual visit to PNG and its lifestyle.



Back to the boat after a much easier walk downhill we cooled off with swimming, snorkelling or simply relaxing. Bernie joined us for the evening meal and Eric the cuscus entertained us with his fastidious table manners. He's becoming very photogenic and developing an eclectic diet. Most chose an early night as the boat started serious rocking and rolling.



### List of Madang Province Birds

Helmeted Friarbird  
Singing Starling  
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
Torresian Crow  
Blyth's Hornbill  
Blue-winged Kookaburra  
Glossy Swiftlet  
Shining Flycatcher  
Yellow-bellied Sunbird  
Eclectus Parrot (heard only)  
Black Kite  
Scrubfowl sp  
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (heard only)  
Dusky Lory  
Torresian Imperial Pigeon  
Black Sunbird  
Golden Myna  
Willie Wagtail

### Day 7 Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May Tami Islands

We had approached the Vitiaz Straits, separating the mainland from West New Britain, with some trepidation, as it is a somewhat notorious passage. Despite some heavy going after midnight it was relatively smooth journey according to the captain. This part of our journey took us along the north coast of the Huon Peninsula, where the spectacular Finisterre Ranges rise out of the sea to a height of 13,000 feet; However being dark when we passed, we missed it.

#### Geological Notes:

Sometimes the land moves upwards relative to sea level. This may occur, e.g., when a glacier recedes, when overlying strata are eroded off or when movement of tectonic plates causes blocks to move up or down. The coast near Sialum, north-west of Finschhafen, is moving upward relative to the sea at an average rate of about six centimetres per year. This movement has not been continuous however. The Steps of Sialum, which we sailed past, show that the upward movement stalled at various times and allowed enough time for the ocean to cut platforms or steps in the limestone. This is a very unusual structure but valuable to geologists when putting together the history of the area.

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The last of the Steps of Sialum were seen as we breakfasted 'on the move'. In addition to the moderate swell we moved through a small front. At the end of the Peninsula, rounding Finschhafen, the small island group of Tami appeared. The limestone islands looked very picturesque among the fringing reefs. Some parts of islands were elevated up to about 15 metres and the limestone was cut in underneath by the sea and weather.

The Tami Islands are structurally different to most of the Pacific coral islands with lush vegetation growing on elevated coral.

The islanders attempt to live in a sustainable way. Their villages are neat and tidy with gardens and they have pride in their achievements. Income from tourism helps various community projects (building a new church). They also attempt to keep the population at a level that the islands can support and there is an "overflow" settlement, which has been established on the nearby mainland.



Due to the lack of suitable timber on the islands, they use driftwood to make high quality bowls and other artefacts. The Islanders' reputation for fine woodwork was well founded and a great deal of "shopping" was done. Some explored the island and a general hunt was organised with Yana, the Community Chairman, to find the giant gecko that is resident on the islands.

The main islands have a large sheltered lagoon between them which was duly explored by our snorkellers. Both live and dead coral was seen with many colourful small fish darting about. Outrigger canoe trips were undertaken by some, which others lazed around in the peaceful surroundings. The day continued to be overcast but we were out of most of the wind. The M and C, with Danny, went off in *Half*

*Moon* returning with a tuna. Our menagerie/larder was added to after a visit by some locals in the form of two blue coconut crabs.

### Day 8 Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May Lae

During the night one of our fresh caught Coconut crabs escaped, Tony had expressed concern of feral coconut crabs aboard ship. Passing along the Huon Peninsular and the Rawlinson Range we had breakfast, and outriggers with sails were passing on either side.

08:15 we anchored offshore of Lae, the bundwall contained the sad remains of a small super-economic package boiler. Then everyone was ferried ashore to queue for late buses, that FL advised had been ordered for 09:00. It was noted that for once IG (uncle long nose) was in the inflatable waiting for FL. Our distinctive buses were from Guard Dog Security, each bus had a driver and armed security guard and wire grills over all the tinted windows. Dodging people, potholes and oncoming traffic using both lanes, was great fun! Passing the administration compound our driver said government employees receive free housing and education while everyone else pays.



Entering the University of Technology enclosed campus we followed the signs for several kilometres to the Rainforest Habitat. Through the gift shop we entered the walk-through rainforest aviary, which contained lush vegetation and birds of paradise, southern crowned pigeon, eclectus parrot (which posed for photos) misnamed freshwater crocodiles and forest paddymelons. We continued on with armed guards past the other caged native wildlife. Maschke's tree kangaroos put on a



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display with baby climbing onto mum's back to a privileged few. Exiting the Habitat the reptile keeper met us with an Olive Python for handling and photos.

On the bus returning for lunch at the Yacht Club, our driver told us that during the war the Japanese used the locals as slave labour to construct 360 miles of tunnels in Lae alone.

We drove out Laterto a Crocodile farm along the Hokuk Highway that winds its way into the highlands. Eric the French manager guided us through the process from egg to skin. Mainland Holdings LTD owns the crocodile farm and the chicken abattoir, Tablebirds, next door. Meat products were frozen and then sent to Australia, skins to France (to make \$20,000 handbags) for top grade and lesser grades to China and Japan.



Quick trip to the Australian Memorial and War grave. After a series of countries and comments in the visitors book were very interesting. Then our guards accompanied us into town to purchase trivialities, such as T-shirts. Throughout the day everyone was helpful, friendly and welcoming.

BBB (bolting back to bar) finished the day with a cold SP beer, and yesterday's catch of tuna.

### Day 9 Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May Salamaua

After a smooth voyage from Lae, we arrived at Salamaua in the early hours of the morning waking to find ourselves anchored in an idyllic setting, but it wasn't always so.

It was the main port and airstrip for the goldfields of Wau and Bulolo during the Gold rush days of the 1920s & 1930s. Later, Salamaua was the scene of some of the bloodiest battles of World War II. The Japanese launched their attack on Port Moresby over the Kokoda Trail

from Salamaua. Eventually in September 1943 Australian troops were flown into Wau and attacked Salamaua. The battle of Salamaua was fought in September, 1943 and the area reclaimed by Australian forces.

Salamaua now comprises a large village, and seventeen Ex-pat houses used as holiday homes, one of which is owned by James & his family.



We landed on Salamau and were met by a guide, Gillam, who showed us the anti-aircraft gun near the wharf, and then continued across the Isthmus and up the steep track through the rain forest, past the newly created New Guinean's gardens to the five gun emplacements on the Headlands and down an even steeper track to the Gold miner's grave sites. A severe Malaria outbreak in 1930 killed many people in the area. We marvelled at the ability of the Japanese soldiers and locals who man-handle the guns to the sites as well as digging the interconnecting tunnels and trenches, some of which are still visible. We were glad of the walking sticks provided by our Guide to make the Trek easier, and he commented on the fact that never had he led a group of Men & Women up this arduous track where the women had managed the entire trek. SUPERWOMEN!(??)



We then walked back across the isthmus, past the Ex pat houses and into the indigenous area. The village was very neat and tidy with very friendly residents. However, nature was not always friendly to the residents, as there was evidence of occasional storms eroding the Isthmus. The village people presently are constructing a very large canoe which will be used to transport in excess of twenty people to Morobe to attend a Lutheran Church conference which is to be held in October, 2005.

After lunch we were entertained by local football and basketball matches and were impressed by their sportsmanship and skill. The highlight of the game was when the football ended up in the top of a coconut tree. A new field position was obviously allotted when a player speedily climbed the tree to retrieve the ball - enter the "Vertical ball boy". The 'Half Moon' was dragged across the Isthmus by a group of able bodied volunteers so Tony could take any interested Snorkellers to visit the wreck of the Japanese Cargo Ship, the "Outiak Osaka Maru", which is the only known wreck to be accessible by snorkelling in PNG. Whilst the years in the sea have obviously done their damage, the engine, boiler, drive shaft and a large portion of the hull are still visible just below the surface. Other snorkellers enjoyed the quieter waters which contain excellent coral and fish inside the Isthmus.

Our day ended with a sumptuous dinner of baked vegetables and venison preceded by Sushimi, which was appropriate considering the historical Japanese influence in the area.

NATURALIST'S DIARY. After dinner Ian literally led Andy and James up the garden path. Equipped with headlights off they went in the dark to find what snakes, gechos and insects were about after nightfall. They climbed up through the village garden and down through the graveyard and during the three-hour trek found not one of the target species. A frog was some consolation. Most people were quite relieved that no snakes came back on board.



## Day 10 Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> May Lasanga & Surgund Islands

The light on the hill of Salamaua last night was Ian, Andy, James with Luke and Matthew, the sons of our guide Gillam, looking for creatures of the night. Their route was up the steep agricultural strip without the aid of steps. Spiny haired bandicoot, gecko, many lechriodus frogs calling through the lush green forests, grasshoppers, cricket shedding its exo skeleton, praying mantis, beautiful black and yellow weevils, sleeping butterflies (grass yellow and crow) a large black tiger beetle, centipede, millipedes, lots of insectivorous bats, and big hairy scary huntsman spiders.

Breakfast today saw us anchored off the beautiful unspoilt Lasanga Island. To shore on the rubber ducky for a very muddy, fallen pandanus palm frond walk and pristine fast flowing fresh water stream complete with small waterfall. Ian caught a one metre tree snake *Dendrelaphis calligastra*. A few hardy souls found on their creek walk a sago plantation. Signs of recent harvesting of one of the five types of sago were evident. This species is the sweetest and the long spikes on the stems are handy toothpicks. There are two large gardens on the island growing sweet potato, taro, cassava, bananas. Richard was rewarded for his patience by sighting an azure kingfisher.



The boat dwellers, not to be out of it, saw a flock of channel-billed cuckoo, blue eyed cockatoos and a gurney eagle.

Another up-anchor saw us lunching at Surgund Island, (aka "Thong" Island) a perfect coral cay complete with waving coconut palms, small sandy beach and the best snorkelling coral reef. Jane and George were the stars for persistence, sighting 2 white tipped reef sharks, 2 green



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turtles, 3 large black and white spotted clown fish. A lucky crayfish escaped George's grasping hands.



Eric Cuscus of Sepik graced the Island for a photographic opportunity but his dissatisfaction showed by his comment, "who turned the air conditioning off?"

Locals from Koi on the mainland joined us in their dugouts and gave us the local name for Surgund Island as Thong Island because of its shape. They spent a couple of happy hours learning about the intricacies of binoculars and we were rewarded by their knowledge of nesting Torresian pigeons on the adjoining island.

Now it's off to a perfect lagoon known only to skipper Tony.



### Day 11 Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> May Breakers Reef

*(The Reefs visited on this day have no actual name. The marine chart have the word "breakers" to indicate waves breaking over this long unexposed area of reef, 4-5 metres down).*

Our first day "all at sea" – ie, no landings today.

Breakfast saw 20-30 dolphins gambolling around the bow. The late risers saw only four (and the late, late risers saw none).

Early, our first stop was over a reef – known as Breakers – where fearless snorkellers and fisherman swam out around the boat despite a shark sighting. The fishermen demonstrated their craft to replenish the fish stocks for dinner. – diving and spearfishing very successfully to put a row of colourful football coral trout on the back deck – twice.

Gripping tightly to the rope, some snorkellers were towed around the reef by the 'Half Moon' to view clown trigger fish, a ray, a large greeny/blue humpheaded parrot fish, a white tipped reef shark, and lots of other fish on the beds of coral – deeper below us than we had seen previously. The coral here appeared larger than we had viewed elsewhere, but because it was further away from us, the colours weren't as bright.

We moved onto a second site, where we had lunch before heading out again. This lagoon had a post WWII wreck on the edge – we didn't explore the wreck at all, instead we went snorkelling over the outer edge of the reef around the lagoon. Some ventured part way inside the lagoon as well.

We saw giant clams with brilliantly coloured lips, which clamped shut when they were disturbed. Several medium sized hawksbill turtles were sighted – one at close range until it was frightened by our presence. Some mysterious transparent tubular egg sacks of some sort were seen, but haven't been identified as neither Tony, James or Ian have seen them before. Also sighted were Dory fish, 7-8 hump-headed parrotfish, a shoal of very long nice silver fish (approx 1.5 ft) with vibrant blue tails that swam around the snorkellers, enveloping them in the shoal. There were also quite large numbers of black sea slugs or cucumbers. A different type of shark was also sighted – larger and all grey with a stubbier head lazing around on the bottom.

Then we steamed on to try and make the main shipping channel before dark, as much of this water is uncharted and treacherous without daylight. Tonight's sunset was not spectacular due to the heavy rain clouds, but the luminescence at the bow wave in the dark more than compensated.



**List of Morobe Province Birds**

***Tami Island***

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
 Black Butcherbird  
 Koel  
 Frigatebird sp  
 Brown Noddy  
 Black Sunbird  
 Reef Heron  
 White-bellied Sea-eagle  
 Brahminy Kite  
 Torresian Imperial-pigeon

***Rainforest Habitat, Lae***

Northern Cassowary  
 Dwarf Cassowary  
 Blyth's Hornbill  
 New Guinea Scrubfowl  
 Southern Crowned Pigeon  
 White-breasted Ground-dove  
 Zoe Imperial-pigeon  
 Torresian Imperial-Pigeon  
 Palm Cockatoo  
 Blue-eyed Cockatoo  
 Eclectus Parrot  
 Dusky Lory  
 Western black-capped Lory  
 Pesquet's Parrot  
 Channel-billed Cuckoo  
 Barn Owl  
 Spotted Catbird  
 Yellow-faced Myna  
 Hooded Pitohui  
 Brown Sicklebill  
 King Bird of Paradise  
 Raggiana Bird of Paradise  
 Blue Bird of Paradise

***Samaraua, Lasanga & Thong Islands***

Black Sunbird  
 Hooded Butcherbird (Heard only)  
 Blue-eyed Cockatoo  
 Gurney's Eagle  
 Brahminy Kite  
 Uniform Swiftlet  
 Azure Kingfisher  
 Blythe's Hornbill  
 Mistletoe Bird  
 Graceful Honeyeater  
 Great Frigatebird  
 Eastern Black-capped Lory  
 Torresian Imperial-pigeon  
 Beach Kingfisher  
 Sacred Kingfisher  
 Rainbow Bee-eater  
 Shining Starling

**Day 12**

**Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> May**

**Tufi & Komoa**

Awoke in the lee of Cape Nelson and then sailed in sunshine to a 'ria' (an inlet lined by lava flows from Mts Trafalgar and Victory) in Kwafalina Bay. There were steep-sided cliffs with dense tropical vegetation as we went further up this fiord-like inlet.

In the second such ria we went ashore at Tufi Dive Resort, where we walked up the steep hill to see the airstrip (where Peter flipped his plane in 1976), the market (mostly selling betel nut), and the school. At the latter Peter Smith took a class in mental arithmetic and rewarded the winning student with a prize handkerchief. We marvelled at the discipline of the students. Past the school was the hospital with very neat gardens, a baby health centre, an Aids centre and a dispensary, but with only two inpatients who had mental troubles.

Other members of our party wandered up a lane through gardens of cassava and beans to a high point looking over the ria and the "Miss Rankin". Some called in to the resort with its comfortable verandah, and had cool drinks on the BBQ terrace overlooking the ria.



Lunch back on board was followed by a flotilla of outriggers tying up at the back of our boat and offering us bananas, kaukau, greens, beans and marrows. The rear lower deck was covered with tapa cloth, bilums and some necklaces made of shells and seeds and many sales followed.

We slipped mooring and went on to Komoa where a 'singsing' had been organised for our enjoyment. As we went ashore, many schoolchildren were on their way home from



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school in their individual outriggers. Eight men and three women danced for us to the sound of kundu drums and their chanting; the women kept time with shakers made from seedpods. Their head dresses were superb with a mix of feathers from many birds including birds of paradise, parrots, white cockatoos, cassowary, crested pigeon, eclectus parrot and lorry. The children in the audience were delightful in their enjoyment of the event and everyone was very friendly to the 'tourists'.



Threatening clouds and failing light and roughening seas forced us to climb another headland in order to get back on board. "Miss Rankin" had re-located to calmer waters of Tufi inlet to shelter for the remainder of the evening.

### Day 13 Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> June Cape Vogel & Goodenough

Woke this morning surprised to find the sea calm, after the threat of rough seas last night.

Arrived off Bogaboga village, stopping in the channel between a tiny island and Cape Vogel. Although we didn't see it, we were actually anchored over the wreck of a WWII B17 bomber, renowned as one of the most intact dives in the world.

Soon after arriving we were surrounded by about ten outrigger canoes, paddled by women, and carrying fresh fruit and vegies. These were bartered with Susie for rice, noodles and crackers.

One of these canoes had aboard a mother and her two tiny children whose eyes only just appeared above the side.

The water was rough, and suddenly a canoe filled with water when it bumped against Half Moon. The woman and all her produce ended

up in the water, and Danny was the hero of the day when he jumped into the water to assist. Eventually, as he made no headway James delivered him a pair of flippers so he could get the half submerged canoe to shore.

In this orderly foreshore village it was produce market day. Several of our group enjoyed sampling a cassava cake topped with coconut and tomatoes. We wandered along the customary line of artefacts with our enthusiasm for buying still undiminished, and found ourselves at the school which had the PNG flag proudly flying. As we found at other villages, the teacher was very pleased to talk with us and indicated he would be pleased to receive donations of exercise books, plain paper, biros and coloured pencils. We saw some of the drawings the children had done and were told they learnt their own language first before learning English. There were no desks or chairs, only mats on the sand floor.

Outside the boys were playing a lively game of soccer using a "ball" of coconut fibre in a plastic bag.



By this time the "singsing" had begun. The headdresses were similar to those at Tufi with bird of paradise and cassowary feathers. In contrast they used shells extensively – the men using them as skirts over tapa and the woman had a beautiful shell shawl. The beat of the drums was enhanced by the sound of these shells and the wail of the conch shell.

The dance was made more enjoyable for us by two tiny boys imitating the dancers, and later Mavis, Barbara and Colleen joined in too.

After a short 35 km run from Bogaboga we arrived at Galaiwa village on Goodenough Island. Some took advantage of snorkelling off the stern of the boat, some enjoyed a boat ride into the lagoon and some spectacular bird watching, and others visited the village where

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they met the elder. The teacher from this village has the same needs as at Bogaboga.

On returning to Miss Rankin we found a flotilla of 16 outrigger canoes clustered around the stern. We noticed one canoe with seven children and their father, and another in which a naked 2 year old was solemnly bailing with half a coconut shell. On being handed a newspaper the canoeists divided it up page by page and these were distributed amongst themselves.



They were also offering various products for barter and sale including a grey cuscus which Ian could not resist, (so much so that he increased the negotiated price of K15 to K20) and "Miss Rankin" now boasts her second furry creature. She appears to be frightened and quite feral and has not yet been introduced to her fellow passengers. Susie has named her Erica.

We will stay in this sheltered anchorage until the early hours of the morning.



### Day 14

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June

### Ferguson & Normanby Islands

The morning found us motoring towards Deidei on Fergusson Island via Dawson Strait and arriving at 8.00 am just after another delightful breakfast. Ferguson Island is the largest in the group of D'Entrecasteaux Islands. We observed a number of villages along the south coast.

Deidei is an active thermal region with hot springs, bubbling mud pools, spouting geysers and extinct volcanoes. We were greeted by Susan, a wonderful woman with an excellent command of English. This morning, she advised we were going to the hot springs...and what an experience it was. A 20 minute walk from the village of Palagwa took us to a virtual Rotorua, minus the sulphurous smells. The geyser area is named Seuseulina. Walking the edge of numerous bubbling cauldrons some over four meters wide, one could easily feel threatened. Susan told of four small village boys who apparently jumped in for a swim, with obvious results. A terrible story related by a fifth boy who ran back to the village with the information.



Susan wove a basket in a matter of minutes and cooked some yams and bananas. How capable these people really are. Bubbling water with steam clouding was induced to turn into a gushing geyser by the introduction of a couple of stones thrown into them. Within seconds they would erupt, and great volumes of water would be thrown skywards. Along the path were pink orchids (*spathoglottis*) and by the hot pools were melaleucas and pitcher plants, all found on Cape York

After lunch, (BBQ'ed coral trout) we motored for an hour and arrived at Dobu Island, yet another amazing village, this time off the northwest corner of Normanby Island. Here we snorkelled among numerous canoes, where,



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along the shoreline, just before the coral fell away to the deeper water, a 200 sq.m. area of bubbling gas rising through the coral and was spectacularly illuminated by the sun in the water.

The third stop was at Observation Point on Normanby Island where some snorkelled and some ventured ashore to explore the neglected house and overgrown garden and rainforest. Numerous birds were seen including two pairs of Eclectus Parrot (see bird list).



We were treated to a beautiful sunset and enjoyed a second BBQ for the day. Night activities included a trip ashore (by canoe) and a search for the errant Erica, who after only one day on board Miss Rankin has performed a Houdini trick.

### Day 15

Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June

### Skull Cave & Boiga Boiga Waga

The anchor went up at four am and we were off for the East Cape. The sea was mirror calm and we were delighted by the antics of a large pod of dolphins and a number of flying fish. Some of the dolphins leapt right out of the water, others swam at the bow. The flying fish wheeled out as if performing like the 'Roulettes'. We arrived off Hiliwau Village at 8.30 and the usual fruit and veggie market paddled out to meet us. We bought/traded some star fruit, red bells and giant cucumber (sygzigium) amongst the usual array of greens and yams.

After we were all ferried ashore we met our 'guide' and walk along the beach to a cave where hundreds of skulls (and some long bones) were situated. It was said that they were enemies of the locals – this fact borne out by the fact that number of skulls had large holes on top of their heads. For the reptile enthusiasts a small

ground boa was found at the entrance to the cave.



### List of Milne Bay Province Birds

#### *Goodenough, Fergusson and Normanby Islands*

Crested Tern  
Brown Noddy  
Brown Booby  
Brahminy Kite  
Eastern Reef Egret  
Torresian Crow  
Willie Wag-tail  
Torresian Imperial-pigeon  
Island Imperial-pigeon  
Coroneted Fruit Dove  
Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove  
Palm Cockatoo  
Blue-eyed Cockatoo  
Eastern Black-capped Lory  
Eclectus Parrot  
Channel-billed Cuckoo  
Shining Bronze-cuckoo  
Sacred Kingfisher  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
Varied Triller  
Curl-crested Manucode  
Double-eyed Fig-parrot  
Helmeted Friarbird  
Tawny Grassbird  
Yellow-bellied Sunbird  
Black Sunbird  
Common Dollarbird  
Rainbow Bee-eater  
Uniform Swiftlet

On our wander back on the village path, we passed a cus cus in a tree whose "owners" agreed to both the proposition that "it was a pet" and "they were going to eat it". Huge *Callophyllums* grew on the edge of the water. The wood from this tree was used in the beautiful table in Bernie's dining room. The wood is renowned for being resistant to the teredo worm and sea rot.

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On the point of cus cus, Erica was located last night and is gradually getting used to captivity on a boat.

Back on board we set off again for an hour or so, passing East Cape just after noon. We finally anchored off a quintessential tropical island. The sea was still flat and the colours of the coral and sand clearly defined. Our lunch of Susie's vegetarian specialty — the delicious aibika lasagna — was wolfed down.

The afternoon was spent snorkelling, preparing for the evening's performances, and lazing around, while a huge cloud built up but eventuated in nothing and the evening was balmy.

At 5.30 our last night's celebrations began. Prawns and BBQ coral trout and salad preceded the evening's entertainment. A great variety of acts emerged for the traditional end-of-voyage concert. MC, Peter Newman, introduced sixteen acts ranging from young Jane's clarinet to Fearless Leader & Intrepid Guide's skit on the Leyland/Collins Brothers together with a wide variety of dancing, singing and poetry. Even the female crew joined in with a rendition of their national anthem.

### Day 15 Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> June Alotau to Port Moresby

"Has anyone a piece of string? I need it to make this bag look smaller." The last day on the "Miss Rankin" had started. Breakfast with the last of the marvellous fruit — no scurvy here. It was shopping day in Alotau and people were streaming to the markets. A sombre moment at the Milne Bay War Memorial how easy to picture it all and to be grateful to our troops and the people of PNG.

Off to the supermarket but the deluge intervened and we were serenaded by a Christian group collecting money in a wheelbarrow. The rain stopped and the third supermarket sold the PNG coffee mugs so much prized on the "Miss Rankin". — At 2K each they were a bargain. Another deluge and we splashed through the rivulets to the open market — thongs aren't ideal footwear in the mud. The markets were packed and sold every sort of vegetable we've been eating. One section contained all varieties of dried fish, very dried pork legs (a lot of chewing required), small clams, a variety of scallop and what looked like mushrooms.

Time to go back to the boat. Of course it poured but Nolai and Danny were undaunted and eight

bedraggled safarists climbed aboard. Alatau was a lovely town to finish in, clean friendly and fascinating. Mixing with the people was the best part of it!

Transport to Gurney Airport was in a PMV. But that was well organized compared with the transport in Port Moresby. Despite the attempts to prearrange transport to convey us from the Airport to the Lamana hotel only one bus was there and the driver was expecting only one passenger. However after some guffuffle we all eventually reached the Lamana where confusion again reigned as we checked in. A nameless class conscious couple told the receptionist that they were on their honeymoon (after being belatedly married in Boga Boga) and were rewarded by being installed in a luxury suite. It was a great promotion from the sub-class they had previously endured on the "Miss Rankin".

There was much difficulty with our dinner order. Although we sat down at an uncomfortably arranged long table at 7.15 pm it was 9.00 pm before the main courses arrived. But the food when it did arrive after much consultation in the kitchen was highly commended. During the wait some had tried to access the Gold Club without success

### Day 17 Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> June Flying Home

After the interminable time it took to serve dinner last night, it was a pleasant surprise to have such a lovely breakfast waiting for us at 6.00 am promptly. Even the bus was on time (although there was only one when we needed three).

The PNG habit of turning on the unexpected was continued for the last bus load who found that their route to the airport was blocked off by the annual TruKai Fun Run with over 5000 participants walking and running around the very streets we had to pass along to get to the airport. Our resourceful driver ended up driving through a Sunday morning market at Gordon where few pedestrians were willing to make concessions for an intrusive bus. However he negotiated all the obstacles and the huge pot-holes of the back roads and at last rejoined the highway which took him to the airport. (The driver however was marooned in the sea of fun-runners on his return to the hotel.)

That is as much as this diarist (F.L.) can report as he sits wondering who, if anyone, had to pay excess baggage and whether the plane was able to leave the ground on time.



## ODE TO ERIC Gilly & Peter Cork

There once was a lady named Gilly  
She had been quite a spirited filly  
But when Eric the Red  
Jumped into her bed  
Her man said not on your willy.

Gilly looked at the little red man, noticing  
something familiar  
A little wet spot had formed under his dot and  
their bond was weakened asunder.

Eric vacated the cot while Gilly mopped up and  
the pair were then reunited.  
As the journey wore on, their bond got quite  
strong, but the wet spot was never  
required.  
Now Eric the Red has to find his own bed so as  
not to be chastised and cited  
But we hope once again, following this journey's  
end and that Eric's reputation is righted.



### Throwim Way Leg Barbara Dickson

I went to New Guinea for a "throwim away leg"  
But boarding the "Miss Rankin" I hit my leg,  
A few days later it was looking like Hell  
Better grab a doctor for a "show & tell."  
Lucky there's no shortage; there are lots aboard,  
Giving good advice but with no accord.

I do the best I can to put me in good stead  
While, you're out snorkelling, I'm lying in bed.  
My snorkelling days are over; I watch you swim  
At least a shark won't come and eat my limb.

But what's the use of talk like this I can't renege  
Better face the truth right now and throwim way  
leg

### Thoughts from Below Peter Newman

*(To the tune of "Click Go the Shears")*

Crash go the waves on the side of the boat  
Here I am a'thinking, "Will she stay afloat?"  
The Toffs are all upstairs, and I'll give you the  
rub  
There's ten souls down below in a Collins Class  
sub.



### My Trips With Go-Bush Helen Wolrige

My first was Tasmania —  
Rain sleet and snow  
And then Fraser Island —  
That's camping you know  
Reef and Rainforest —  
My first snorkelling view  
Led to top of Australia —  
Miss Rankin and crew.  
Into the Red Centre —  
heat, flies and red dust  
And then came the trip  
That I felt was a MUST!  
Off to New Guinea  
So different and new  
Jungles and rivers  
And wonderful views  
In dugout canoes —  
Up rivers we fly'  
Local markets where  
Trading skills we try  
Back to the oceans  
And into our gear  
Strange apparitions that  
The little ones fear  
Into the water to swim  
With the fish  
And check out the coral —  
That is our wish  
Islands to visit —  
Sing-sings to see  
And still there are places  
That we have to be  
Bubbling mud and geysers  
Of steam  
Butterflies and birds —  
Its been such a dream  
And now, dear friends,  
Both old and new  
FL, IG and all the crew  
The time has come to  
Say farewell  
With wonderful memories  
And stories to tell.



### Where is My Piano?

**Peter Newman** (*sans piano*)  
with apologies to Peter Allan

So you've been to places way across the sea  
But never a place like old PNG  
So remember when they ask, "Em tasol?"  
Tell them that you've had a ball

I've never sailed but I love being free  
So from Wewak to Tufi we did it by sea  
Only once can I say that I ran out of luck  
When I ran to the rails — for a chuck

Its hard to believe that the food is so grand  
When its rocking and rolling and so hard to stand  
But Susie and Clara and Sabina are there  
To carry the food up the very steep stair

Down in the bilges where the toilets are few  
Have to climb 20 steps just to get to the loo  
And when you get there My God! You must  
queue  
Was it like that for you?

The boys down the back have our interests at  
heart  
Like grabbing an oar when the outboard wont  
start  
They're always there 24/7  
I know they'll all go to heaven.

#### Chorus:

*We've been to places that you've never seen  
From the Sepik to Boga Boga and a lot in  
between*

*But no matter how far she pushes the foam  
We still call "Miss Rankin"  
We still call "Miss Rankin"  
We still call "Miss Rankin" home!*



### Sinclair's Sepik Safari Peter Smith

*We're off to the Sepik River!  
Our Fearless Leader declared.  
Great adventures I'll deliver  
And expenses will not be spared.*

*Immigration will be a breeze  
Customs can't get in the way  
The locals will approve me with ease  
They'll never guess that I'm "Schedule A"!*

*I'll bring along a TV star!  
Ian Morris is his name,  
Discussing cane toads in the bar,  
Explaining Wallace's claim to fame.*

*I can guarantee you pots of gold  
Will be found in them thar hills.  
Prolific reefs we will behold  
And the trip will abound with thrills.*

*The boys from Madang will see us through;  
Their prowess knows no bounds,  
They'll spear the fish from Rankin 2  
And we'll all pile on the pounds.*

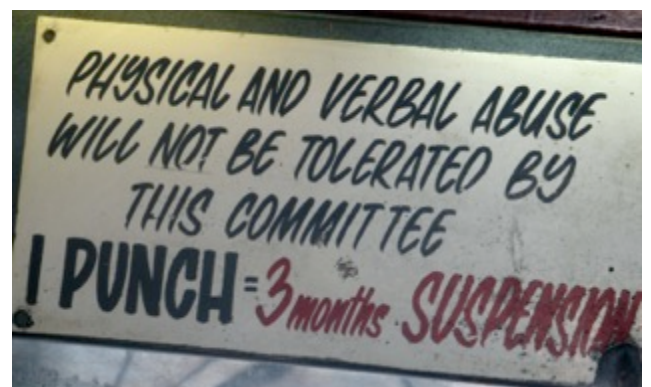
*Sabina, Clara and of course Sue  
As well as the boys on the deck  
Together they're the world's greatest crew  
They'll prevent us from being a wreck*

First class travel is quite OK  
But steerage is really the go.  
Artefacts and fauna to survey  
More spending for those down below.

Life in first class can be quite tough  
Things are not always so sunny  
Tax matters sometimes get quite rough  
Time to launder the money!

So up the Sepik we did sail  
Many artefacts bought and sold  
Millions of mozzies did prevail  
Proud peoples' enterprise to behold

Changing plans are part of the game  
When you book on Sinclair's tours  
Our Fearless Leader will always proclaim  
Flexibility and diversity are my lures!





## From the Bilges

Ruth Henty, Julia King, Helen Wolrige,  
Mavis Ladbroke

(To the tune of "Clementine")

In our cabins, in the bilges,  
Of "Miss Rankin MV",  
Were a motley lot of people  
Travelling round in PNG

Paid our money, packed our cases,  
Don't forget the mozzie spray  
Brought our flipper, left the grandkids,  
Hope to see a dolphin play.

In the villages along the Sepik  
In canoes and in Half Moon  
Bought billums by the boat load  
Spent our kina far too soon

First the Hornbill, then the cus cus  
Came and joined the file and rank.  
Eric stole our hearts completely,  
But the Hornbill walked the plank.

With our snorkel and our flippers  
We explored the coral cays  
Photographs, and fish for dinner,  
Reading books and lazy days.

Oh my darling, oh my darling,  
Oh my darling, John Sinclair,  
The rumour was that you would guide us  
To get us back and take us there.



## Pub with No Beer – last verse

James Robinson

F L says "Err now, tomorrow this is where we'll go",  
Tony says "Never heard of it, and I've looked high and low",  
Ian says "It's a long way", then James says "It's quite near",  
At least we'd know where we were, at the Pub with No Beer.

## "Miss Rankin"

Ruth Henty

To Papua New Guinea we came  
To board the "Miss Rankin" again  
For those who knew her from before  
Changes had been made galore.  
With the top deck enclosed  
We have been quite composed  
No clutching at wine glasses as the wind took its toll  
Mind you it made no difference with the rock and the roll.  
Added also was a cabin for four  
To enable "Miss Rankin" to accommodate more  
And "Half Moon" the tender  
Looks like she's been on a bender!

And so to the crew  
Who are more than a few  
There's Sabina and Clara and Nolai and Danny  
And Susie, who does far more than cook in the galley  
There was John, from the Sepik who was such a boon,  
And also John from the engine room  
George who at Madang did come aboard  
Was approved by all with much accord.  
And then there's the two who remain unchanged  
Her two skippers – Tony and James.

With these in charge she took to the river  
Managing sandbanks and bends with an occasional quiver  
Out on the seas she sailed with ease  
Taking us to many spots bound to please  
During this trip which is quite unique  
She has been our home for over two weeks  
White and blue, neat and trim  
She is truly the good ship "Miss Rankin".



## OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING

By Mavis Ladbroke

What can surpass  
The celestial beauties of morn?  
Gold and mauve, silver and purple  
Gentle shades on distant hills.  
Nature's art –  
In Oriental style.  
Sea so still, and calm  
Mirroring the colours of the morn  
In gentle Monet ripples.  
Sunlight outlining the clouds,  
Sending its rays to earth.

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Encircled in celestial colour,  
Next, the pelagic delights  
To fill the soul with joy.  
Flying fish skimming across glassy coloured  
seas,  
And dolphins gathering from near and far.

The stage was set —  
A dolphin ballet performance.  
The pod had gathered  
Awaiting our arrival — the audience!  
Lo! We nearly passed them by!  
What a show, what choreographic delights!  
Weaving and flowing, rising and lowering,  
Leaping and rolling in pas de deux ou trois,  
Such delight, such joy,  
Exclamations of admiration!  
Wonderful minutes,  
Jouissance!

oooOOOooo

### Happy Party John Ladbrook

Fearless Leader of Go Bush  
Announced to one and all  
There'll be another boat trip  
This time to another place

Faithful followers read the news  
And signed up very quickly  
Another journey on Miss Rankine  
They really must not miss.

Where is the destination  
They quickly asked FL  
To our neighbour in the North he said,  
And nary a white man goes there.

But what about the Rascalls  
Don't worry said FL  
We'll all put on our war paint  
They wont touch us in the jungle.

The due date soon arrived  
And we all met at Cairns airport  
In just a small time later  
At Wewak there we were.

The bus from Wewak airport  
It did not have a green slip,  
But when sipping a beer at Yacht club,  
We carted not even a bit.

First of many dingy trips  
Safely put us on Miss Rankine  
All soon found our cabins  
The guests said gee and wow

With shipwreck we were threatened,  
If whistling it was heard  
And if bananas were seen on board,  
We'd all be dead for sure.

Adventures did abound  
In longboats and a school  
With houses built on stilts  
And lots of things to buy.

Face painting on the Sepic  
It gave us quite a start  
And FL he did change  
To really one quite Fearful

New passengers came aboard  
A menagerie we became  
Cus Cus Eric won us over,  
And we loved our Hornbill too.

The adventure it continued,  
In waters blue not brown  
Rising moons and some volcanoes  
A Plantation it was the crown.

Then our Hornbill sadly left us,  
And we cried a little bit  
Then Tami, Lae and Lasanga  
Made us happy once again

There were reefs quite far from land,  
Where we snorkelled very bravely,  
And the Resort at Tufi In let,  
Was from another Strand.

Rumours did abound  
'Bout what we'd do each day  
But Ho Ho said fearless leader,  
Follow me I know the way.

The end of the adventure  
It was just on the horizon  
When a cave of human skulls  
It really did surprise us

Thanks to FL James and Tony  
For a really fantastic trip  
And thanks also to George and Susie  
And to all their willing helpers.

The Go Bush Catalogue 2006  
We eagerly await,  
Will it feature once again  
The good ship "Miss Rankin".

If it does I can assure  
The early bird places every one  
Will be taken by guess who  
Yes every one of us.



## Sailing over the Bismark Sea

By Intrepid Guide and Fearless Leader

Sailing over the Bismark Sea?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Are we where we're rumoured to be?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Climb the PNG family tree?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Can we whistle now loud & free?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Want to see some dolphins at play?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

What time do you think we'll get away?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Want to procure fresh food while at sea?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Do you want to ride a dinghy?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Want to explore the mighty Sepik?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Want to get mighty sea-sick?

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

In Lae for the finest security

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*

Madang where the best used clothes 'orta be

*Ask the Collins Brothers.*



### PAPUA NEW GUINEA ANTHEM (via Clara)

O arise all you sons of this land  
Let us sing of our joy to be free  
Praise in God and rejoice sing to me  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Shout our names from the mountains to sea  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
Let's raise our voices and proclaim  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Now give thanks to the good Lord above  
For his kindness, his wisdom and love  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
We are independent we are free  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA



### Ship's Mascot Jean Groves

Our ship's mascot Eric  
Sent us into hysterics  
Nibbling chicken bone, dainty of paw.  
If you think the wee beast  
Might prefer a fruit feast  
Think again, for he's straight omnivore