

Day 1
7th May

Port Moresby to Wewak

By about 23pm all the travellers had arrived on various flights into Port Moresby, John was counting and ticking off names as he wandered around the Domestic Departure lounge.

All were present and at 3.40pm on the flight to Wewak via Madang, a two hour flight.

Up over the thunderstorm and down to the coast at Madang. Here Joyce nearly left us but then was advised it was one more stop.

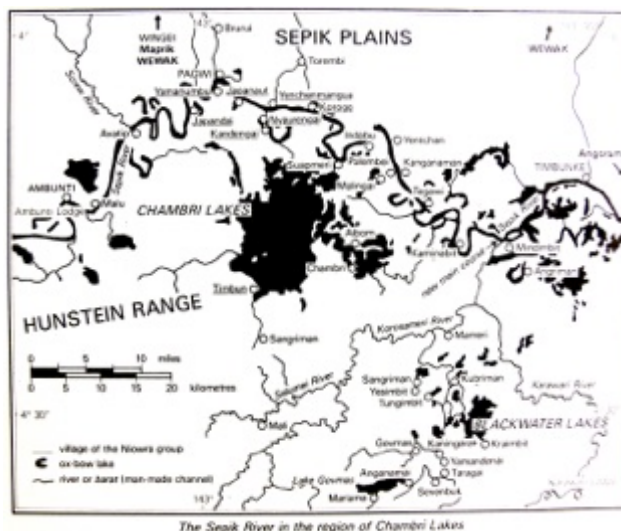
Past the steaming volcanic Manum Island and on to Wewak and a waiting bus to carry us the 1km to the Wewak Yacht Club.

Here was time to sample the local beer, which proved to be OK – in the end when the temperature is high there are very few bad beers.

The sun had set when we got on board the Miss Rankin. We sorted out cabins and luggage with one distraught traveller missing his rucksack with passport etc. Later this was resolved with the missing bag being found hiding on the bus. Our first dinner followed where we found how the self-serving arrangements worked and the requirement to “volunteer” for washing up duties.

The program was for the boat to leave at about 11.00 pm for the Sepik River mouth to arrive there at 6am.

Most travellers retired early to try out their sleeping arrangements – tomorrow will report how they found these to be.



The Sepik River in the region of Chambri Lakes

Day 2
18th May

Sepik River — Angoram

We travelled down the coast from Wewak through the night and entered the mouth of the Sepik at 5.30am when the roll of the boat changed to the flat calm of the river.

Thursday was a late start for some as they hadn't slept too well as we had travelled throughout the night. Landfall wasn't expected until after lunch and everyone moved between the air conditioning and the front & back decks. Lunch came and went and still we waited, the only excitement being a brief sojourn on a sandbank and no birds of note were seen.

Angoram finally appeared. We set out for the shore and were met by a small crowd where we landed. We were met by a man who welcomed us and pointed us up the bitumen road towards the village market. Earlier it had rained very heavily and everyone had gone home but they had set up again by the time we got there. They were selling bananas, betel nut, sago, ice blocks (a lady who had come up from Wewak) and even toothbrushes. Some kept on up the bitumen road and met a man who said he had a hotel.

Fearless Leader: turned up with the second group who had stopped off at a hastily arranged market and he had already purchased a storyboard. He asked about the carvings they had seen last year and the man said he could take us to the carvings which had been completed for the new Government Treasury. A lady carrying a large pawpaw told us that 10 minutes walk away were the pillar in situ at the courthouse. So off we went

and met lots of people coming into the village presumably to attend the SDA meeting which was going to be held in a large grass amphitheatre we had seen earlier.

On the way back, we follow a lady carrying a large bowl from which emanated the wonderful smell of freshly baked bread. She set up business in the market and one of our number sampled a bread-roll for 10 toya.

On our way back to the boats, the rest of us had a chance to see the goods laid out and a few more storyboards were purchased. It was dark by the time we got to the boats and returned for happy hour.



Day 3 19th May

Sepik River — Kambaramba

We were moored off the village of Kambaramba. Very still and quiet. Just lapping sounds. Few canoes around sticky-beaking. Going to take the desks and blackboards ashore to the village school today. There are two villages K1 and K2. K2 on the river is the “dirty” village was considered low class by the K1 or “clean” people.

We had brought 2 desks, bookcases and chairs, blackboards and writing gear for the school. John had visited last year and they had nothing. Ian had organised an aboriginal school in the Northern Territory to raise money to equip the school. We loaded the furniture on to a canoe including the “Chairman” in the chair.

The team got into the two boats; half in the zodiac and the rest in the Half Moon. We saw the labyrinth of interconnected channels behind the main river, lined with tall sugar cane and elevated huts every now & then. The first effort at getting

into the K1 village failed, as we couldn't get through the hyacinth blocking the channels.



Back to the boat for morning tea. We drifted down stream and had another go. The sky was clear & the sun was hot, but the mirror conditions on the inland waterway made for chocolate box photography. Finally got through into a large still lake with K1 on the other side. This was the birthplace of Eric the Cuscus. George advised that tourist would only visit this place every 3 years so it must have been quite an event for the villagers.

What happened next was a bit of an anticlimax for the poor Fearless Leader, who had worked hard to make this handover of cargo a major media event! Rather fortunate that the press wasn't there as it turned out. We found the school deserted and the teacher was away supposedly getting sago. A national teachers strike was in progress as the govt had not paid teachers salaries for some years so we turned around and went back to the boat. A decision was made to off load the furniture at the K2 school until the K1 teacher could collect them. Meanwhile, a spot of sago-bashing and some traditional retail therapy for Fearless Leader helped to make up for the lack of action in the schoolhouse. Then it was back to the Miss Rankin before we all turned into lobsters.

We had lunch including chilli mussels purchased downstream - bit chewy for the city palette!

Back to K2 but the village was still emerging from the recent floods. We couldn't get to the school building because of flooding but normally at this time it would stand on dry land and students climb up steps to the school. We were met by Tobias the headmaster. He was very articulate and described the school and its operation –two teachers and 150 students in preparatory and elementary school. The teachers in this region had not been paid for years and were supporting the strike action. John

and Tobias went off to his house so John could show the message from the NT students on John's computer.



Meanwhile the much-travelled furniture was finally offloaded from the removalist dugout into the school building. Hopefully it will be appreciated and well used. Tobias looked a bit overcome by the gift & we vowed to continue the support.

Then off to K2 for a sing-sing, but nobody seemed to be aware of who was supposed to be organising it. The senior character (see above) who became known as the "Pukpuk (Crocodile Dundee) Man" who was supposed to organise this crocodile singing said he would organise one for us on the way back down the river in a few days time. We shall see.

Back on board to re-hydrate in the air-conditioning and then at 3.40 the anchor came up & off upstream we steamed. At this point the river is meandering across a vast grassy floodplain interspersed with patches of rainforest. The sunset was splendid with silhouettes of canoes animating the scene while Vulturine Parrots flew overhead. The bow-wave provided the younger canoeists with quite a challenge – another great day.



Some Haiku Inspired by Kambaramba

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



A Sepik Creation Story from Palembei

Bukduma is unusual because of fish tail and pigs head. Bukduma is huge and looks fierce to many but is very friendly. The strange creature works and dwells only in the Sepik River. The destroying and rebuilding of the Sepik River bank is the sole responsibility of Bukduma. Bukduma is obedient and hard working just like a bulldozer and the operator. The strange fish is only controlled by a woman. The creature only listens to her people and no one else. Bukduma may attack the village's riverbank once in a while if commanded by his controller for some reason, but taking lives away is not the business of his controller. Mainly Bukduma and his controller may do the rebuilding of the second largest and the first largest river (the Sepik River) in Papua New Guinea. People do not say much or get cross with the two hard working and dedicated partners because they will know what they are doing. Mostly they don't take away.

Day 4

Saturday, 20th May

Sepik River: Tambanum - Kaminabit

By J, J, & J (Triple J)

After a stormy night and anchoring in the Sepik where we thought we were opposite the village of Tambanum we woke to the Morse code of a stick belting on the hull of the “Miss Rankin” to discover that we had overshot Tambanum by a few kilometres and anchored off Wainum (an overflow village of Tambanum) which has the greatest population growth for any Sepik community except for Kambaramba.

In the meantime Christa was willingly abducted from the “Miss Rankin” in a dugout and taken ashore from where she was retrieved by George and Nolai.

So it was back downstream to Tambanum where we overshot it yet again *Three times that little village we passed until finally it came to pass....*

After relocating to the appointed rendezvous we went ashore to a very muddy market area assembled around the landing point and were immediately besieged by vendors selling a rich assortment of crafts with a heavy emphasis on crocodiles as well as virtually the whole village assembled as inquisitive spectators. The craft was also adorned with some great hand painting and two of the writers as well as another J and Ron were subjects to some ticklish art of face painting. Looking appropriately fierce and intimidating they emerged with their acquired masks as permanent reminders as they posed frequently for photographs (without demanding kina).

The Intrepid Guide engaged with the locals and apart from acquiring a couple of turtles met the village magistrate and law enforcement officer, Gilbert (who in his spare time is a great carver of figures such as little Johnny).

With freshly acquired walking sticks, flying foxes, frogs, assorted bowls, serviette rings and other assorted items, and with F.L. minus one sandal and everyone minus many kina with returned to the “Miss Rankin”.

Heading up river we passed a rival tourist vessel, the “MV Sepik Spirit” moored opposite Timbunke village. It looked like a “three storey *white haus tambaran* on a raft” or “*an oversized cubby house with a flat roof*”.



We arrived at Kaminabit about 3.45 pm and were soon directed by the villagers to a banana plantation, one of the rare parts of the village was above water level. From the “Miss Rankin” we were amused at the alacrity with which the market was assembled as people travelled in canoes from all directions bringing in their wares. Almost as quickly lanes were established and corduroy and leaves were laid down to stop us becoming bogged. At the appropriate time we were ferried ashore. In the heat of the afternoon like mad dogs and Englishmen we were infected by a shopping frenzy. After the shopping frenzy we were ushered in to a cordoned off “Mes Only” (which included honorary men) area which had been quickly erected where a small sing-sing were quickly arranged. The dancers moved to the sound of two flutes played in harmony and some lime gourds which produced a metallic sound. There was a great photographic opportunity and some of the dancers proved to be great posers. The leader of the dancers Peter Kempa presented Fearless Leader with his necklace adornment.

At about 5.00 pm the market packed up and we all returned to the “Miss Rankin” to sort through our stunning photos and to watch the sunset with such absorption that F.L. forgot Happy Hour.





Day 5

Sunday, 21st May

Sepik River — Palembei & Minimbit

Sundays' dawn revealed the Miss Rankin sitting easily at anchor in a slower flowing section of the Sepik. A gentle breeze was clearing the cloud responsible for the previous night's rain. All good omens that the spirits were happy for the whiteman (dim dim) to attend Palembei.

After collecting our local guide, Junior, we headed (in *Half Moon* and the zodiac) up narrow passages between the enveloping buffalo grass until welcomed by the sound of tribal drums.

At the First Spirit House we were treated to an enthusiastic male initiation ceremony performance. The dance depicted the boys being protected from the prying eyes of women and children by the spirit (cousin it).



We then went inside the Haus Tamburan where Chief Councillor Aaron (Malangi) explained how the Spirit Chair is used by members to address the council. As they speak they place sheaths of reeds on the chair to gain guidance from the spirits. The chair itself was rescued from the previous First Spirit House which was destroyed by American

and Australian forces in 1942. Japanese troops had been in occupation forcing the villagers to provide food and shelter.

A fantastic array of artefacts were available for purchase and photography (except the Spirit Chair).

Back in the boats we toured the local markets set on the levee banks.

On to the second Spirit House which stored the older ceremonial items and second Spirit Chair. Although we entered the Haus Tambaram through the side the traditional entrance for all males is climbing a ladder at each end to ascend between the outstretched legs of women.



More artefacts were displayed for sale.

After lunch we visited George's village, Minimbit on the Karawari River. A tour around the lake gave the villagers time to set up their market. A small mechanical problem with the zodiac motor required them to be towed to the market. More purchases were made through George and market boss lady.

The day ended with a beautiful evening, sunset and happy hour on the aft deck.



Day 6
Monday, 22nd May

Sepik River — Kambaramba to Mouth

The day had started with clear weather at Kambaramba Village on our return from the Middle Sepik. Having anchored at about 10.00 pm at Kambaramba last night we planned to go ashore at about 8.00 am for the anticipated sing-sing (deferred from our visit three days earlier).

Unanticipated by us, the village was arranging a sing-sing as a thank-you for the school material. At almost 8.00 am the Programme Organizer, Max Avis came to see F.L and delivered a proposed outline of celebrations for the “Miss Rankin” assemblage which was scheduled to run from 10.30 am to 2.00 pm. However after explanations of our timetable were made the program was brought forward at short notice to enable us to get away by 10.30 am.

While we waited on board with anticipation the numbers assembling around the rear of the “Miss Rankin” grew but not as many as the assembly gathering at the school grounds. Soon we were greeted by old friends including the teacher and students from Kambaramba No 1 who came down personally to thank us for delivering the furniture etc and the master carver from Kambaramba No 1, Theo Abel. The dancers arrived and passed by canoe while we were waiting.



A short delay occurred when the duck's Outboard motor wouldn't start but all got under way by 9.30.

The following was the preface to the proposed Sing-Sing Thank-you program

On behalf of the people of Kambaramba Village 1 & 2, I would take this initiative to congratulate your organization for your donation and support in

terms of school materials to help education in the village level.

1.0 Village Description:

The village of Kambaramba comprises six major clans with many sub-clans with six village councillors.

Kambaramba is located in the swampy flood plain environment and covers approximately 80 square kilometres

1.1 Social Livelihood

The people are poor rural fisherfolk. there are few social services in the area. In Kambaramba where there are 5,000 to 6,000 people there is no Aid Post, no clean drinking water, no proper school building to cater for the village school age children.

Average life expectancy seemed to be approximately 35 to 40 years. There are no old people because of the diet and living conditions of the people.

The church groups like Catholics, Lutheran and New Apostolic are trying to assist to improve their livelihood through small educational spiritual convention.

1.2 Economic

There is hardly evidence of economic activity. The people are basically subsistence fisherfolk. Many are migrating to the cities which is a disease in our country (PNG).

When our “Miss Rankin” party arrived at school ground there were more than 1000 people gathered on the mud flat. The school children were all lined up and ceremonial dancers performed.



The 240 school children sang the National Anthem and recited the pledge. There were speeches and presentations but we were all overwhelmed by the generosity of these people with so little who showered on us so many precious gifts. The

dancers again performed with Rochelle and John C joining in.

Eventually and reluctantly at 11.00am we were able to get away for the long 6.5 hour journey to the river mouth. Our Sepik Guide, George, left as we passed Angoram after doing a very capable job over the last few days.

In the afternoon the “Miss Rankin” continued down the river. Finally we had our first sighting of a pair of hornbills to add to the growing Bird List. We entered the sea about 5.50 pm on the way to Madang. From here we could see several volcanic islands as we turned East towards Manum. We reached blue water away from the mouth of the Sepik (5 nm out) at 5.55 pm. People gathered on the roof & foredeck to view Manum, the sunset and the exquisite night sky –Milky Way, Southern Cross, Scorpio, Jupiter & Saturn.

Welcome Poem

*Feeling joy, Being love to celebrate
Celebrate in one God, one people.
We the students of D.P.S. in Kambaramba,
Would like to say, welcome, John Sinclair, and the
tourists.*

(Recited 2 times)

Farewell Poem

*Just a feeling of everyday, and,
You'll be on your way,
Travelling up and down the Sepik River*

*Good bye, good bye, Good-bye, All
Oh! You're free, You're free, You're free,
You're f,
To be in this D.P.S. in Kambaramba.*

*You're be on your way back to your country.
When you meet your families,
They'll say come in. You are welcome home.*



Day 7

Tuesday, 23rd May

Madang

By R, R, R & S

As the sun slowly rose over the Bismarck Sea, Master Mariner Mudbank gazed eastward towards home. His throbbing diesels, driving him forward to his date with destiny. Ms Rankin, a modern meri, was drawn seductively through the open mouth of Madang, her mother port, her own Haus Tambaran. Triple M's heart missed a beat, as the sound of his much loved family's calls careened across the azure water of “The prettiest place in PNG”

This bucolic idyll was quickly shattered by Tok Pisin shouts of “*Hurri up, hurri up, get those ropes on*”. Triple M, with superb assistance from 18 maritime experts managed this time to park his mini-cruiser in his back yard, but only just. He clearly is very worried how he will ever handle these manoeuvres on his own. -NOT

Elaine with consummate irony, awoke to survey her morning vista and remarked, ‘*Gosh the river has got wider*’.

With the first fruit free breakfast devoured we stepped lightly into our dead parrot bus, the best seats were reserved for the elite of the group who showed their appreciation by offering them up at every opportunity. Rochelle was generous enough to keep us up to date with minutiae of Ron's metabolism. Dead Parrot transport was staffed by a driver, a ‘door boy’ as well as a very well dressed man carrying some Christian tracts who seem to serve no particular purpose. Maybe he was there to care for the parrot's welfare?

First stop was Balek Reserve, a small wildlife garden astride the main Madang – Lae highway.



With unerring accuracy Rochelle and Judith spotted and identified the MAGNIFICENT BIRDWING butterflies hovering around the abundant Ixora as well as a pair of ORCHARD SWALLOWTAIL butterflies and fortunately for the success of the rest the trip an exquisite electric blue ULYSSES was shipped in from Dunk Island !! to keep “Lady Muck” satisfied



Frogs [‘roc-rocs’] were everywhere but not to be seen, mayflies, zodiac moths and dragonflies of all description were reported throughout this sulphurous, limestone, turtle, carp and eel abundant river.

Betel Nut’s use is epidemic throughout PNG. A small boy scrambled up a dangerously thin palm, his legs tethered to enable him to retrieve his mother’s drug of choice.

Fortunately Eric’s father won’t allow betel nut on board but the nationals look for every opportunity to get their fix as they crunch their way through betel nut, a local mustard and some sort of lime paste. The result is a very red mouth and spit that looks like great dollops of blood all over the ground.

A writing mutiny has just occurred and Rick-Ric friends of the cus-cus are now scribing to kick-kick this pace along by getting us to Bil Bil. We parked adjacent to the infant welfare clinic, being held under shady trees. The student nurse presiding over the weighing reported being happy with the weights of the babies. A small pottery market rapidly developed, and some shoppers purchased pots. Market dissidents went to the beachfront, which was lined with simple dugout outrigger canoes. Children were playing in the water (including girls identifiable only by men with very expensive German glass binoculars). We returned to Madang via a different road, having scraped bottom a couple of times on the way into Bil Bil.

We stopped at the Coastwatchers monument; a large but rather unprepossessing concrete pillar which was overshadowed by the magnificent adjacent CURTAIN FIG, before retiring for mostly unprepossessing eating at the Yacht Club (modelled in the Wewak (yacht-free) Yacht Club style). Following lunch we dispersed.

Pat & John went in pursuit of their bag; Garth found himself sitting next to George’s cousin on a park bench; Fearless Leader spent K85 on an exceptionally “ordinaire vin”; & IG purchased a child bride for Eric. Other people did more mundane things & everyone returned to the boat by 4:30 in anticipation of an early departure. Unfortunately the Zodiac was not ready, so we watched the sun set over the woodchip conveyor & waited for the barbeque to fire up. After a filling plate of variable beef & snags, we abandoned Eric to a life of connubial bliss & handed over to our Scott and Rochelle to drag this to a fitting conclusion.

PNG the land of the unexpected continues to live up to its reputation as we sit here tethered to Captain Cus Cus Collins’ backyard, EDT 0100 hours, crew uncertain, Nolai possibly off to another job, tenders changed, Anne Collins farewelled and Saidor and a Maroon Blues barney in the offering. ALL GOOD.



Day 8
Wednesday, 24th May
Saidor Plantation

The Miss Rankin left Madang harbour at 1.00 am (by the light of the moon – or so I am told). This time was not selected solely to ensure that every passenger was woken at this hour but also to time our arrival in Saidor at 8.00 am.

The sea was so smooth that we hardly could tell that we were not still on the river. After breakfast we started to see the Plantation house on the hill and anchored in the bay in front of the plantation.

Very swiftly the first passenger were into their snorkels, masks and flippers and into the warm sea. There are some very nice areas of coral and reef fish. A small fishing party also set perhaps fish for dinner? Also Ian caught a sea-snake which was much photographed and later released at the beach which scared some of the local kids.

Later, when even the uninitiated had completed their snorkelling practice, it was all ashore to see the plantation,

On shore we were welcomed by Bernie Leahy the plantation owner/manager. We saw copra being loaded from the shore in 80kg bags on to a small lighter taking about 1.5 tons to a small steamer which every other day went to Madang with up to 160 tons of copra and cocoa.

We then walked through the plantation (900 acres with cocoa trees planted beneath the tall coconut palms) to the factory where we saw the drying the coconut to release and bag the coconut flesh (the copra). The drying house has an open fire and this got out of hand and burnt the house on a quite regular basis.



The cocoa beans were picked when they had turned from brown to green to red and then yellow. They were bagged and transported to the factory where they were split and put into fermentation boxes for 5 days (turned regularly to ensure even temperature. This was followed by sun drying on concrete drying beds (which could be heated beneath with coconut fuelled fires in the case of wet weather. The dried beans were then bagged in 60kg bags and transported to Madang and sold to the cocoa wholesaler/exporters

We then walked up the hill to the plantation house (built in stages between 1985-1991) using cinder blocks cast on site and local timbers), The house

has beautiful views to the sea and mountains. Here we had lunch before returning to the ship.

A quiet afternoon of more swimming, snorkelling with Judith scamming a ride with a young male in his outrigger canoe.

Bernie joined us for happy hour and dinner. Dinner was the usual Wednesday spag bol in spite of the seeming success of the morning fishing trip. The NRL fans were in luck as Bernie's satellite dish was able to receive the first NSW Vs Queensland "State of Origin" match. An exciting and nearly even match with the NSW supporters going home happy. Others took to the bush in the plantation using spotlights to scare away all the fauna they wished to photograph.

Returning to the boat the anchor was up at 10.35pm and we were away to.... Somewhere... I guess you will need to look at tomorrow's diary to find out where.



Day 9 Thursday, 25th May Tami Islands

Hello Tami Islands!

We awoke to a brilliant bright day, coasting down the northern part of the Finistere Range toward our destination of the Tami Islands. The early birds saw 50 dolphins frolicking around the boat but the later arrivals' viewing was more sedate as they looked out on the low hills covered in kunai grass. These are the remnants of coral reefs which had been elevated by several cm a year, stepped upwards due to the pressure of the tectonic plates - hence the term "Steps of Sialum". Towering behind these steps were the Finisterre Ranges close to 4500m.

A couple of outrigger canoes turned up before lunch - quite substantial with their sides built up

higher. One of them brought Simon, the master wood carver checking to see whether we would visit his island. Lunch and then off to Wanan Island where we found a group of islanders displaying their wares of mostly wooden bowls, shells, necklaces and a few bilums. The wooden objects had been made from drifting logs which the islanders had pulled ashore, effectively turning flotsam into a thriving local industry. We later saw neat stacks of the timber along the seashore.

The island had a central village with an open area and a basketball court. Close by was a cemetery and the graves were bordered with bottles left behind by the American troops who were stationed on the opposite island. Some of the best outrigger canoes were sitting either along the shore or in the process of being finished by the local craftsmen.

Most of us enjoyed a peaceful snorkel in the lagoon where one of us spotted a large cray which we thought was better left behind for the villagers.

A group of intrepid explorers crossed to Kalal Island and saw the empty school as the teachers there are also on strike. A couple clambered all over coral outcrops to the heights of the vegetable gardens while about 8 walked along the shore and followed the track to Simon's village but he was not there. However, we were shown around the village, saw the partially completed Lutheran church with its carved wooden pillars which has not progressed since last year. We were shown where they were smoking longtoms which had been caught this morning and Pat bought two for Happy Hour. We were offered oranges for refreshment and set out to return the way we had come. Some opted to wait for a boat to pick them up but finally ended up walking back.

The Captain came by to pick up Brian to go fishing. Others had already decided to return home and a welcome G & T. while a few stayed on to have a swim and hope for a spectacular sunset which failed to materialise. Back on the boat the fishermen returned with a mackerel and 3 rainbow runners – dinner tomorrow perhaps?

Day 10
Friday, 26th May
Lae Day

Very calm night, less roll than in the river. Hazy morning. Cruised through the Huon Gulf to moor at the wharf in Lae. We headed off in the mini-bus at about 9.00 am under the watchful eye of Guard Dog security.

First stop was the Lae War Cemetery. A beautiful garden cemetery maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. War cemeteries must be the saddest places on earth. Rows and rows of markers, each representing the death of a young man (generally young and mostly men). At least their graves are recorded in a beautiful surrounding and immaculately maintained.

Then on to the Rainforest Habitat at the PNG University of Technology. The main feature was an expansive free form aviary housing Papuan King Parrots, Eclectus Parrots and lorikeets, Manucodes, Victoria Crowned Pigeons and at least 4 species of birds of paradise. There were also freshwater crocodiles looking very much like saltwater crocodiles in a small pool. Less appealing was the Gurney Eagle in a small cage and a 5 metre crocodile called 'Agro' in a pool the size of a domestic swimming pool. The shopaholics were able to indulge while admiring a Papuan Olive Python wrapped around the shop counter.

At 12.30 Collins Catering arrived with the fresh rolls, salads and barbecued chickens. Tony's brother John joined us for lunch. He lives in Lae and runs the stores at Wau and Bulolo. John was able to tell us about the gold mining in Wau and Bulolo when Lae was the busiest airport in the world flying equipment in for the gold dredgers. Copper and gold is still available in commercially minable quantities.

Then back to the "top town" where half the party wanted to visit the Post Office, buy post cards and T-shirts etc. The other half went back to the wharf. A Sing Sing was under way in the nearby stadium as part of the 3-day Morobe District Cultural Festival and a small group found their way there. The Yacht Club provided 'cleansing ales' for those who needed them, then back to Miss Rankin for tea. We slept it off while tied up to the wharf – departing for Lasanga Is at 3am.

Day 11
Saturday, 27th May
Lasanga & Thong Islands

Sailing through the glassy sea some watched another sunrise on yet another glorious day in Paradise. We were reminded of this as some watched the small dolphins surfing in our wake.

Our first destination was Lasanga. From where we anchored on a glassy sea in a small bay we saw the impact of a forest stripped of its greater trees by a Malaysian logging company.

Ashore the party set off to explore a pretty rainforest creek flowing from the jungle. Some turned back near the muddy flats with sago palms and lots of blue tailed skinks whilst others indulged in more serious rock climbing to reach many cascades and waterfalls. It was inspirational.

Those who waited ashore met some of the locals who called in and gave them the history of the logging.

It was then only a short hop on to Thong Island which shone like a jewel in a sparkling sea and which will indelibly be impressed on our memories as one of the loveliest islands we have ever seen.

Some enthusiastic snorkellers were determined to fudge an extra half hour by claiming that the departure time was 3.30pm instead of 3.00 pm. Michael had to ferry the errands back to the “Miss Rankin” poste haste.

Some of the other more memorable sightings for the day included the aerial acrobatics between three ospreys and a Sea Eagle over Surgund Island, some Hornbills, the swooping of the frigate birds feeding on bait-fish stirred up by the tuna, and a Killer Whale (which Rochelle managed to miss).

As we started off at 3.30 on the longest leg of our cruise we noted the sea starting to rise. By dinner some superstitious seamen were considering the removal from the “Miss Rankin” of the causes including all of the whistlers and the women. However by morning the sea had quietened down and the women and whistlers can feel safer for a while.



Day 12
Sunday, 28th May
Cape Nelson & Tufi

A grey dawn and wide ocean views greeted those hardy early risers and we had our first daylight rain storm. Mt Trafalgar and Victory gradually came into view.

The Miss Rankin sailed into a ria called Kwafalina. A ria is a fiord-like gorge formed when water erodes tuff (solidified volcanic ash). There was great excitement from the bird watchers when nine plus hornbills were sighted cruising in the ria.

Anchoring at Tufi we were informed that being Sunday there would be no sing sing or market. Instead, after lunch most headed into the Tufi Dive Resort to enjoy the panorama from their viewing deck. The Resort occupies the site that was formally the district manager’s residence during PNG’s colonial era and during WW2 became an American torpedo boat base.

The sighting of Orange-fronted Fruit-Doves and numerous dolphins were highlights of the day. The anchorage fee demanded for parking “Miss Rankin” for four hours in 45 metres was K100.



Day 13
Monday, 29th May
Bogaboga - Wagifa

The day dawned calm and we found ourselves anchored next to a desert island fringed in coral. Some early swimmers entered the water

Some enterprising villagers brought out fruit and vegetables which were traded on the back deck



Bogaboga was a nice tidy village with coral sand instead of mud to enter the houses. It was raked and clean with a market lining the main thoroughfare between our landing point and the school.

The villagers were very friendly. One very nice lady offered IG and Joyce some pendants gratis. IG rewarded her with his Coral Princess cap which she passed on to her grandson.

A cross commemorating the pioneering missionary Rev Tomlinson who died in 1889 was central to the village.

Meanwhile the dancers began their Sing Sing well before 10.00 am and continued until we left the village to return to “Miss Rankin”. They were very good with most colourful attire particularly the unique head-dresses.

The presentation of a New Guinea Amethyst Python did not disturb the rhythm or beat of the dancing.

Those who visited the school were most impressed by the enthusiasm of the teachers and the keenness of the pupils who sang for us. They were engaged in a lesson on transport.

Back on board we found that Brian had added a dolphin fish (Mahi-mahi) to his catches for the day and these we later enjoyed for lunch. While

waiting for lunch many snorkelled on the wonderful coral gardens and Alan circumnavigated the island, concluding this marathon as the anchor was weighed.

After lunch, as we cruised on to our next village, those on the deck were thrilled by the sight of Pilot whales and flying fish breaking the glassy surface.

We anchored on the southern end of Goodenough Island and were greeted by a flotilla of canoes. One Guide Francis led us to the island Wagifa. We were introduced to Josephine who then guided us around this small neat island Doudomana which has three small villages. We admired pigs, dogs, a cassowary, and very friendly traditional people.

We then crossed the channel to the main village on Goodenough Island, Alubaba, where we again walked through to an enormous and quite vocal reception from the children who particularly responded to the antics of our Channel 7 Film-maker.

There was a lot of interaction at the Wagifa Elementary School which attracts 260 students in Grades 3 to 8 and has 8 teachers (who never received a message to go on strike). Students pay K50 per year, the lowest school fees in PNG. During our visit most of the villagers appeared to assemble there, at our embarkation points or surrounding the “Miss Rankin”.

We lay at anchor off Wagifa overnight and after eating our second fish meal for the day we were visited by several of the locals from Wagifa.



Bogaboga school Headmaster Robert delivering a class in language to his pupils sitting on woven pandanus mats.

Day 14
Tuesday, 30th May
Wagifa & Dei Dei

Graffiti broke early over paradise lagoon. The bow of Miss Rankin had been plastered with hand prints and messages wishing us well by some of the Wagifa locals who had maintained a vigil throughout much of the night. Some minor pilfering also seems to have occurred which Francis, a local councillor found very disappointing.

An early start after a quiet night – first boat ashore at 7:30 – saw us at the Wagifa school for the singing. The soccer pitch was being cut for the weekend game by volunteers, doing community service wielding their *busnairs* with great skill.

The school was in session & Dr Ric was pressed into service to give a geography lesson, showing the kids where us travellers had come from. These village schools are taught their vernacular in the early years and are expected to be using English by about Y6. The fees for this school, which is supported by the Catholic Church, and donor agencies initially, were reportedly 50 Kina per year.

Francis had put out seats for us under some trees, and eventually the dancers assembled and the show began. A small troupe – 3 drummers, one with a conch shell horn, and about 4 dancers performed with narration by Francis, and then a group of kids came on to do some larger dances, led by the drummers. The show ended with a lovely cameo performance about a successful courtship despite a less than auspicious start! There was a small produce market, but almost no crafts, so perhaps with more warning the shoppers would be better catered for.

Wagifa had been a new destination for John and Tony. A local entrepreneurial young spokesman tried to levy an anchorage fee, but we explained we pay no “parking fee” at other villages, and paid a (reasonable) sing-sing fee as usual.

We were pleased that Ron and Rochelle, after some scratchy contact with home by Sat-phone, decided in spite of the very sad news of her mother’s death that they would stay with the GBS until we can exit PM on schedule. Anything else was just getting too flaky and too unreliable.

A definite confirmed pilot whale sighting was made by Joyce and Rochelle on the starboard side.

They reported it as “black and shiny and paradoxically very wet”. Elaine was on flying fish lookout and was rewarded with observing squadrons on display. For the first morning in a while there were no dolphins in the bow wave at dawn. This may be have been because the boat was stationary.

We departed for Dei Dei on a glassy sea. By about noon we had a quick energetic discussion as to how to classify the precipitation we were passing through. The Ricks from Melbourne, called it a “heavy downpour”, Brian from Weipa, a “bit of drizzle”, but whatever it was we were through it in minutes.

Dr Pat ran a “hunting and gathering” workshop turning green Okari pods into edible seeds, which could then be cooked or eaten raw. A great deal of work was involved to get to the edible form.

It is possible that Pat and Brian may form a food alliance and hold the rest of us “parasites” to ransom. Oh here comes Suzie with lunch we are saved again!

Paprika Chicken for lunch, Christa has requested the recipe.



GBS is the only safari that takes you straight from the frying pan into the fire. We left a sweltering fetid but oddly glorious bay near Deidei to head for the heat of the thermally active very hot springs out from the village.

Jill was greeted on the beach by Susan who when heights were compared became an instant friend. We were well briefed by a range of local guides who were quite emphatic about following their directions and to be vigilant throughout our trip through to purgatory and possibly to the even lower regions.

Visions of hell were easy to evoke especially given the 1985 suicide by a local woman into the

Siosiolina pools at the very top of the trek. The local villagers were able to give us details of how they integrate the range of temperatures in each of the pools for individual domestic purposes. Pools for cooking sago, rice, pigs, cows and the odd unlucky dog were individually pointed out.

Commander Collins brought up a couple of dozen eggs in the sweetest little local basket to be boiled, hard boiled – did Christa get the perfect egg? In just the right pool. The eggs dipped in salt and pepper were well appreciated. Susan took a particular interest in Carol and escorted her throughout the pools. Eventually Carol and Judith were taken off for secret women’s business and returned from the laundry pool and the trip bedecked with garlands. CC maintained his masculine calm throughout. Maybe next time.

Lighthearted discussion about gender division of labour occurred as were returning to the beach. Coincidentally some of the group witnessed a bashing of a local woman by a male as we neared the beach. Not enough information seemed to be available to understand this event but comment was made that men were encouraged by other men to physically keep their women in check.

Jack Africa met Harry Butler, as the reptile whisperer, IG, led a small but intrepid party of mud sloshers back on to the island at night, to discommode and capture a rainforest dragon and a slaty grey snake. The snake was released when Michael made it clear he would not operate any boat shared with the serpent.



Day 15

Wednesday, 31st May

Dobu Island and Boia Boia Waga

The ship’s company had to await with great anticipation Sir Longnose arising so that they could see the captured dragon the noble night warrior had literally caught before ascending to slumber. It proved to be beautiful sight and with that Sir Longnose taming the wild creature before being consigned to shore in the long boat. “Miss Rankin” then rapidly weighed anchor and for awhile it appeared that the ship’s commander might be trying to be well rid of the troublesome Intrepid Guide but our nocturnal warrior followed in hot pursuit and overtook us before we reached Dobu Island.

This, we discovered apart from offering the incredible experience of being tickled with bubbles, and having submarine symphonies to delight, was also the home of Michael’s uncle. Soon “Miss Rankin” was surrounded by a flotilla which included many relatives having a family reunion whilst our party revelled in the delights of this unique snorkel site at the base of a volcano. A similar volcano lay on the opposite side of Dobu Pass on Ferguson Island and some clouds of steam indicated further hot springs.

Back on board the “Miss Rankin” sailed along Normanby Island while the Captain and Fearless Leader plotted future forays in this remarkable region. Then on Clock calm seas we proceeded on to Boia Boia Waga, an island to rival Thong for idyllicness. The anchor was dropped about 2.00 pm but for the next 17 hours the chain remained unstretched. The stretching instead was done by the ship’s complement who jumped into the water and snorkelled until Happy Hour.



At 5.30 pm all of the complement dutifully reported in appropriate attire to the upper aft deck to watch the sunset and toast it in Champagne.

There was great shuffling whilst we worked out the rankings by both age and height. The former competition was won by the two Melbournian Rics and the later was won by the tallest man on the boat who oversaw everyone else's height, Ron Gooch.

Then it was into an orgy of prawns as everyone pigged out prior to a superb dinner of barramundi & yams with greens. Then it was on the main festivities of the evening with an immense array of talent being displayed. There was an award for the daggiest performance, which appeared to have been won by unanimous view by John Caldecott, (aka Channel 7).



Day 16
Thursday, 1st June
To Alotau & Port Moresby

There were some heavy heads this morning as we woke in Paradise to a stunning morning. As the morning progressed and more people became vertical the breeze grew to the extent that for the first time the anchor chain was stretched out by 7.00 am.

In the saloon, the scene of last night's celebrations the packing up began. For some it was in the scale of challenging to daunting. But by the time we reached Alotau it had been accomplished with significant success. The only apprehensions were how we were going to get it on to our respective flights and whether it would clear customs. The only disruptions to this activity were the group photographs and the appearance of yet more dolphins.

We arrived in Alotau and had an early lunch attempting to demolish the remainder of last night's prawns (but falling just short) before heading ashore.

In town most inspected the Milne Bay War Memorial and some had their appetites revived at the market at the sight of mud crabs being sold for such meagre prices.

The Fearless Leader didn't get past the resort where he called in to book an extra room at the Lamana for Curtis and Gill. He discovered that during our voyage the Lamana Hotel had cancelled our bookings preferring to let out their rooms for four nights to the delegates to the international AACCP Conference in Port Moresby instead. After some cursing he collected himself and began with the assistance of the Hotel Reception to seek alternative venues. Having rung 10 Port Moresby hotels, which exhausted all of the options that the Hotel reception could find, he went out and retrieved his trusty Lonely Planet seeking an alternative to camping at the airport. Hurray he had located a place well down market — "Budget" it was described as — which could fit us all in. Whew!

Fitting us all in was an extra dilemma when it came to loading our luggage and getting us to the airport. Eventually with 20 passengers plus three Nationals and luggage packed into a small and two suitcases stuffed in the bullbars at the front we still had some two passengers and lots of gear left over and this was crammed into a taxi and caught up in time at Gurney Airport just as the rain was setting in. It had held off so conveniently for so long which had allowed us to enjoy fantastic weather throughout our cruise.

In Port Moresby the chaos was in full flow. The accommodation we had managed to secure was the Magila. It turned out to be awful. Skipper Tony later described it "the local Knock Shop". 21 unsuspecting, naïve (and somewhat desperate) dimdins found ourselves suffering a grotty, noisy and chaotically disorganized establishment. Only Dr Ric escaped the experience having had the foresight to book his own accommodation.

There has been a happy sequel to the safari. Eric Cuscus who disembarked at Madang and who was most unhappy when he found that he not only had to share his cage with a new cuscus, Alice, but that she evicted him from his box and he was left out (Well it wasn't cold). After a week of this, there was some rapprochement and we can report the story seems to have a happy ending with Eric and Alice both now happily cohabiting in what was formerly just Eric's box.

PNG WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Bird List

Sepik River 18th May 2006

Black-capped Lori
 White-bellied Sea-eagle
 Dollar Bird
 Torresian Crow
 Collared Imperial Pigeon
 Fruit-pigeon?
 Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (Lower Sepik)
 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
 Pheasant Coucal
 Tree Martin
 Brahminy Kite
 Whiskered Terns
 Great Egret
 Metallic Starlings
 Eclectus Parrot Lower Sepik
 Willie Wagtail (big) - Kambarramba
 Pacific Heron
 Whistling Kite
 Black Kite
 Purple Swamphen - Kambarramba
 Rufous-banded Honeyeater - Kambarramba
 Pied Heron - Kambarramba/ Palambe
 Black Cormorant - Kambarramba
 Little Black Cormorant - Kambarramba
 White-browed Crake - Kambarramba
 Pied Imperial Pigeon - Kambarramba
 Chestnut-breasted manikin Palambe
 Grand manikin Palambe
 Comb-crested Jacana
 White-shouldered Fairy-wren Palambe
 Masked Lapwing
 Blue-tailed Bee-eater
 Rainbow Bee-eater
 Black Bittern Palambe
 Blue-winged Kookaburra Palambe
 Wandering Whistling Duck Palambe
 Pacific Black Duck Palambe
 Green Pygmy Goose Palambe
 Australian Reed Warbler
 Pied Cormorant
 Helmeted Friarbird
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Madang

House Sparrow
 Feral Pigeon
 Barn Swallow
 Black Kite
 Whistling Kite
 Varied Honeyeater
 Torresian Crow
 Vulturine Parrot

Saidor

Dusky Lory
 Shining Flycatcher
 Helmeted Friarbird
 Yellow-bellied Sunbird
 Torresian Crow (introduced)

Barn Swallow
 Varied Honeyeater
 Frogmouth sp. (calling at night)

Tami Is.

Crested Tern
 White-bellied Sea-eagle
 Frigate-bird ?
 Eastern Reef Egret
 Torres St Pigeon
 Yellow-bellied Sunbird
 Pheasant Coucal
 Beach Kingfisher
 Mangrove Monitor
 Green Emoia
 Blue-tailed Skink

Wewak

Whistling Kite
 Helmeted Friarbird
 Hooded Butcherbird
 White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike
 Vulturine Parrot
 Lesser Frigatebird
 Barn Swallow

Lasanga Is. 27th May 2006

Great Frigatebird
 Yellow-bellied Sunbird
 Hooded Butcherbird
 White Cockatoo
 Swiftlets?
 Blyth's Hornbill (3 pair)
 Rainbow Bee-eater
 Osprey
 Brahminy Kite

Thong Is. 27th May 2006

Brahminy Kite
 White-bellied Sea-eagle
 Beach Kingfisher
 Varied Honeyeater
 Yellow-bellied Sunbird
 Willie Wagtail
 Great-billed Heron
 Rainbow Bee-eater
 Great Frigatebird
 Torres St. Pigeon
 Brown Booby (immature)

Huon Peninsula (Kwafalina/Tufi)

Torres St. Pigeon
 Yellow-bellied Sunbird
 Willie Wagtail
 Emerald Dove
 Hooded Butcherbird
 White Cockatoo
 Eclectus Parrot
 Blyth's Hornbill
 Crinkle-collared Manucode
 Orange-fronted Fruit-dove
 Sacred Kingfisher
 Metallic Starling
 White-breasted Woodswallow

Torresian Crow
Rainbow Bee-eater
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Forest White-eared Meliphaga

Cape Vogel

Barn Swallow
Eastern Reef Egret
Varied Honeyeater
Metalic Starling
Torresian Crow
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Willie Wagtail
Orange-footed Scrub-fowl
Beach Stone Curlew

Goodenough Is. (Wagifa/Doudomana)

Torres Strait Pigeon
Eclectus Parrot
Greater Frigatebird
Yellow Sunbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Curl-crested Manucode
Dwarf Cassowary (hand rear)
Swift
Vulturine Parrot
Black Butcherbird

Fergusson Is.

(Deidei/Siusiulima/Palagwa)

Black-crowned Lori
Channel-billed Cuckoo

Eclectus Parrot
Varied Triller
Torresian Crow
Helmeted Friarbird
Papuan Frogmouth
Pheasant Coucal
Azure Kingfisher
Peaceful Dove
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Orange-fronted Fruit-dove
Varied Honeyeater

Boiga Wagawaga Is.

Willie Wagtail
Lesser Frigatebird
Varied Honeyeater
Lesser-crested Tern
Torres Strait Pigeon
White-bellied Sea-eagles
Torresian Crow
Flying Fox?

Fish from Thong & Tami

Moorish Idols
Angelfish — Blue, gold and majestic
Foxface
Striped triggerfish
Blue Tang
Lined Surgeonfish
Cleaner Wrasse (Blue streak)

Parrotfish
Anemone fish (including black with 2 spots)
Blue Damsel
Pullers — Blue and green
Horned Bannerfish
Batfish
Longtom
Garfish
Longnose Butterflyfish
Fusiliers
Midnight Snappers
Coral Rockcod
Blue -spotter Stingrays
Harlequin Tuskfish
Beaked Coralfish
Footballer Cod
Flutenose.
Humphead Parrotfish



Up the Mighty Sepik

Garth Abercrombie

There was movement at the station,
for the word had got around;
the Sinclair mob with Rankin Miss
was back in Wewak town.

We're going up the Sepik.
We hardly know the rules.
On waters tepid, with Guide Intrepid
we've cargo for the schools.

With Fearless John to lead us on
we will not let them down.
In villages muddy, they'll have to study
for jobs in wig and gown.

So we're going up the Sepik
with Tony as our skipper.
He's in his realm, when at the helm,
he is a bloody ripper.

And John and Pat are feeling flat,
their papers lost its true.
But they'll be right, and catch their flight,
without a big to do.

So we're on the mighty Sepik,
we're all in perfect nick.
And on the go, with hair a-flow
are travellers Jane and Ric.

And Scott of polar fame,
with name-bilong-the-same,
he was to spell, and ring the bell,
to run the "ages" game.

Ode to GBS— PNG06
Scott Rimington

We did not plan to visit bars,
but lofty Ron, would lead us on -
Rochelle would guide us by the stars.

We've Pats a-double, who cause the trouble,
and Judys one and two.
And Carol and Elaine have plenty to view.
But if nought to do, there are plenty of games of Su Do
Ku.

So we're up the mighty Sepik.
We hope we won't get sick.
To choose the pill, with loyal Jill,
will be our Curtis's pick.
He'll even run a clinic with help from roommate Ric.

And angler Blue with stories true,
will throw out bait galore;
and dainty Joyce, of such a voice,
will keep the fish in store.

So it's up the mighty Sepik.
The forest is getting thick.
And Doctor Pat, has lain down flat,
to search for possums priapic.

An active one was Christa,
and although she scored a blister,
to very English Alan,
she was quite the little vista.

For those of you I cannot rhyme,
you'll have to wait another time.
But if you're really pissed, that I missed you off the list,
you shouldn't get all shitty with the writer of this ditty:

for my thumbnail's dipped in tar,
and I don't know where we are.
I'm feeling awful down,
for in every boating party, there has to be a clown.

16 days stuck on a boat!
God only knows how we will stay afloat.
All of us odd, all of us old;
except in our dreams — We are the young and the
bold.

Went to the Sepik dressed like Dad's Army
Had a great time — must be barmy.
Most things are good aboard "Ms Rankin"
Eric would give any whingers a spankin.

The A.C. is great. I love it real cold,
But some of the purists are not quite so sold.
The other A.C. — He is a mighty fine skipper
No drinking; no swearing (when his mum's on this
clipper).

FL-IG head this great trip
Along with their i-Books they are joined at the hip.
The hard working crew look after us well
As they watch us old crusties, they just giggle like
hell.

Having slept in the bilges of this reliable old tub
I have now done my service on a Collins Class sub.
The grinding, the groaning, the throbbing, the
squealing.
I thought it was the boat; It's the couple above my
ceiling
But in the end it's the end of another great safari
No murder, no mayhem or even hari-kari.

Some Haiku from Lasanga Rainforest Creek

Sitting in the forest
Water falling both sides
I think I hear peace

A dangling vines dances
To the waterfall's rhythm
What has more meaning?

Montane origin
Splashing its way to the sea
Life's flow begins here

The cobweb flinches
Another victim falls prey
The ambush succeeds.

The water rushes
While snails slide so slowly
Speed means so little



Apologies to A.B. Paterson

Anon

..
I had written him a letter
which I had, for want of better
Knowledge, sent to where I met him at the Wheat
Board years ago.

He was chairman when I knew him,
so I sent the letter to him
just on spec, to make the point that "Howard
doesn't want to know".

..
And an email came directed,
not entirely unexpected
(And I think the same was written in some Middle
Eastern bar)

'Twas his CEO who wrote it,
and verbatim I will quote it,
"Trevor Flugge's gone to Baghdad and we don't
know where he are"

..
But when he left Australia,
he was going to meet with Alia,
A trucking mob in Jordan who were keen to grease
the wheels.

For 10% commission,
they could swing Saddam's permission
To get our wheat accepted: it's the mother of all
deals.

..
But I guarantee, Prime Minister,
that there's nothing all that sinister:
The chaps at DFAT told us that the sums looked
quite OK.

When you're selling wheat in billions,
what's a quick \$300 million?
If it keeps the Nationals happy, it's a tiny price to
pay.

..
Sitting here at Kirribilli,
I've been thinking, willy nilly,
That it's somehow reminiscent of the children
overboard:

But I can handle Rudd and Beasley
as I always do, quite easily,
By endlessly protesting that there's nothing
untoward.

..
I'll tell Bush next time I meet him,
at the White House, when I greet him,
That I'm sure he'll understand about the Wheat
Board's quid pro quo:
He'll forgive this minor error
in the global war on terror
When I look him in the eye and tell him "Howard
didn't know".

PNG 106 Thanks

Fearless Leader

Wewak to Alotau we've travelled on "*Miss Rankin*"

So there's many people from along the way we'd
like to be a thanking.

There's the galley crew of Suzie, Kianda and Zilla;
They've fed us well, washed our gear and provided
all the filler.

Don't forget Engineer John and deckies Michael
and Nolai,
They've been ever helpful in creating a great
holiday.

The of course there's Intrepid Guide whose bio-
rhythms are so out of sync.

His binocular, computer and camera leave him
little time to think.

Then there's our master and commander who faced
the Sepik in flood.

And only once did he manage to bottom out in its
mud.

With schools markets, sing-sings we've cruised the
Sepik and the coast.

We've had a rich experience. — We deserve the
right to boast.



On the Sepik

By Rochelle Gooch

(To the tune of "In The Navy")

On the Sepik — there are dugouts by the score

On the Sepik — there's no artwork anymore

On the Sepik — houses flooded doorto door

On the Sepik — singsings that number four.

On the Sepik, On the Sepik!

On the Sepik — there were hornbills for a few

On the Sepik — there's betel nut to chew

On the Sepik — smiling faces old and new

On the Sepik — many sago palms grew

On the Sepik, On the Sepik!

On the Sepik — cuscus and apple crumble

On the Sepik — up the ladders we all stumble

On the Sepik — little crocs can only mumble

On the Sepik — starry skies make us humble

On the Sepik, On the Sepik!

Papua New Guinea National Anthem

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

Two Other Anthems

Rick & Jane Begg

Safarists all let us rejoice
For we are old and free!
We've photographs and video ,
Our ship is girt by sea
And she abounds in souvenirs
And booty big and small—
At every port let every thought
Advance us, one and all!
**At every port let every thought
Advance us, one and all!**

God Save our Leader's hat!
Keep his hair nice and flat
And stuff like that.
Keep his grey matter cool
So when he speaks at school
He'll make good sense and you'll
Know where he's at.

Pledge

I love John and "Miss Rankin"
I will honour my bar tab
Serve the grog
And cheerfully deride
The Maroons, F.L. & I.G..

Anthem to Thongs

Anon

God Save our gracious thong;
Keep our feet safe and strong
And free from Pong.
Wear them instead of shoes
To Pubs and barbeques
Good health to all of youse;
God save the thong.

Sinclair of the Go Bush Tour

By J (Banjo) Begg

I had written him a letter, which for want of better
Knowledge sent to where I met, him on the Sepik,
years before;

He was trav'ling when I knew him so I sent the
letter to him

Just addressed as follows: "Sinclair of the Go Bush
Tour"

And the answer came directed in a writing
unexpected

(And I think the same was written on an Apple or a
Mac)

'Twas his tour guide mate who wrote it and
verbatim I will quote it;

"Sinclair's gone to Fraser Island , and he isn't
coming back".

In my wild erratic musing , visions came to me of
cruising

On the dive boat called "Miss Rankin" with her
passengers and crew,

Where snorkelling was splendid, and the SP
flowed unended

And the shipboard shopaholics bought a souvenir
or two.

Where the steamy heat soon hit us and the friendly
mozzies bit us

As we struggled with the mudbanks and delivery
of chairs;

Where F., I.G. and Tony produced some prime
baloney

And increased fees were liable to catch us
unawares;

Where Sudoku , not fiction, has become our pet
addiction,

Where sing-sings happened often and Jane's hair
was seen as weird;

Where Bluey caught us tuna (which we could have
eaten sooner,

But which made a fine sashimi when it finally
appeared).

But despite the present laughter we'll all end in the
hereafter,

A long way from PNG and all those sights we saw;
And I like to think of FL' ghost on Fraser where his
heart dwells,

Shouting "*All Aboard!*" forever as he leads
another tour.