



RGSQ Bulletin

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Patron: [H.E. Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland](#)

President: Dr IrAPHNE Childs

■ From the President

Dear members, greetings, may I wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year in 2018. I hope you have enjoyed the Christmas-New Year festivities and summer holidays.

I'll begin this message with an update on the sale of our Milton building. Settlement was successfully concluded on December 19th and ownership has been transferred to National Surgical, our neighbour. We now have a 6-month lease on the front part of the building, so the RGSQ administration will remain the same with Bernard and Lilia in their usual offices. Our new staff member, Rosemary, who started on January 9th will be on the reception desk on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Please take the opportunity to introduce yourself and make Rosemary welcome when you see her.

The Gregory House relocation committee is now engaged in earnest to find a suitable new home for the Society. We are seeking a building within a 7-10km radius of the Brisbane CBD. Our priorities are good parking facilities, ease of access, proximity to public transport, and ideally a building with an auditorium, which will afford opportunities for hire income, and continuing our arrangements with societies such as the Wildlife Preservation Society, Queensland Naturalists Club and Birds Queensland. We will keep you informed of developments over the next few months.

On weather and climate matters of interest to geographers, early January 2018 brought winter and summer extremes to parts of the globe. The east coast of the USA experienced a winter "bomb cyclone" with snow even in Florida, temperatures with wind chill factors in New York and other parts plummeting to -30deg. and with heavy snow drifts causing road and air transport chaos. At the same time in Australia, parts of NSW, Victoria and South Australia experienced severe heatwave conditions with temperatures over 40deg. In Melbourne, western Sydney and Adelaide, major bushfires resulted in some areas. On January 7th Penrith in western Sydney was claimed by *The Daily Telegraph* to be the hottest place on earth with 47.3 deg, just short of a 1939 Sydney record of 47.8 deg.!

Meanwhile for Queensland, the Bureau of Meteorology has observed that, while La Niña conditions are still present in the tropical Pacific Ocean, and cyclones could develop off our northern coast, the present La Niña event is expected to be shorter and weaker than the

previous one in 2010-12. La Niña typically brings above average rainfall to eastern Australia during summer, particularly in northern New South Wales and Queensland. The 2018 January to March rainfall outlook shows wetter than average conditions for southeast Queensland. However, with a weak event expected, this may mean less influence on Australian rainfall. So, as I write this message in mid-January, I am glad to be in Brisbane where our day-time temperatures in the low 30s have so far been rather pleasant compared with other places, and we have not yet had any cyclones or major floods.

As we no longer have access to our auditorium, our "Welcome to 2018" evening on Tuesday 6th February will be held at St Francis Theological College, Lecture Room 1.

For the rest of the year our monthly lectures will be held, as usual on the first Tuesdays of each month, at the Magda Community Artz Hall, 80 Boundary road, Bardon <https://www.magdacommunityartz.org/tablet/about.html>. I hope to welcome many members at our first social evening and to some excellent lectures during the year.

ABC News Saturday 6 January "Brutal cold spell grips US east coast after 'bomb cyclone' hits, death toll rises to 18" <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-06/brutal-cold-spell-grips-us-east-coast-after-bomb-cyclone-hits/9308030>

Daily Telegraph, Monday 8 January "NSW heatwave: Sydney the hottest place on Earth" <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/nsw-heatwave-sydney-the-hottest-place-on-earth/news-story/c13a74526eef37f69bfb1551b4fdffb0>

IrAPHNE Childs, President



2017 RGSQ Christmas celebration. Courtesy of Kay Rees.

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MARCH LECTURE

'Gorillas in my Soul'

by Annette Henderson, Author, Speaker and Conservationist

Date: Tuesday, March 6

Time: 7.30pm-9pm

Where: Magda Community Artz Hall, 80 Boundary Rd
Bardon <https://www.magdacommunityartz.org/tablet/about.html>

Annette is the author of the best selling African memoir - 'Wild spirit: how a year in the African rainforest changed an Australian woman's life' published by Random House Australia in 2009. She has worked as an anthropologist, university lecturer, and higher education manager, and now divides her time between many speaking engagements, some volunteering, and managing the 2 hectare Land for Wildlife property outside Brisbane where she lives with her husband, Win and their Ridgeback cross, Benteleigh. Her second book, 'Scorched: pushing the boundaries across the Sahara', a prequel to 'Wild spirit', was published in 2012. Changed forever by her intimate contacts with Western Lowland Gorillas in Gabon, West Africa, she is a passionate advocate for great ape conservation.



At the age of 29, Annette Henderson found herself unexpectedly living and working in an isolated mineral exploration camp high in the forested mountains of Gabon, West Africa, close to the Congo border. With no roads, railways or airfields in the region, access was by dugout canoe – a 10-hour journey upriver through one of Africa's great Equatorial wildernesses.

As an executive secretary with no experience of remote living, she found every day a challenge to all she'd ever known. But the great primeval rainforest surrounding the camp, home to a dazzling array of wildlife, soon began to work on her spirit. Little by little, she learned about the elephants, gorillas, leopards and monkeys, the aardvarks, pangolins, antelopes and hornbills. When an orphaned and injured baby gorilla was brought into camp one night, the greatest change of her life began to unfold.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We have much pleasure in welcoming Miss Chia-Yi Hu as a new member. We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.

FEBRUARY LECTURE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST

"Geography and its relevance to leadership in a regional university - the USC experience."

*by Professor Greg Hill, Vice-Chancellor and President,
The University of the Sunshine Coast*

Date: Tuesday, February 20

Time: 7.15pm-9pm

Where: University of the Sunshine Coast

Venue: [Lecture Theatre 2 \(K Block\)](#)



All universities need to understand their place in the world and how they interact with that place - classic geography!

For a regional institution it's a far more intimate relationship than may be the case for a sandstone institution. In a typical regional university setting demographic, economic, sociological and cultural

characteristics will vary widely across the catchment. If a university is to connect with its communities and aspires to be a transformational force for change, it needs to understand and interact with this geography. Maps and statistics and an understanding of people/place dynamics are powerful tools when it comes to facilitating an understanding of the relationships between institutions, people and place. And in the hands of a geographer-leader, they're a powerful planning tool and communication aid.

Professor Greg Hill has served as the Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of the Sunshine Coast since 2011 and previously as Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 2005-2010. As the University's Chief Executive Officer, Professor Hill has led the development of USC as a growing, comprehensive university that is increasingly research intensive and is becoming the primary engine of capacity building for the region from Brisbane to the Fraser Coast and at sites in Sydney and Melbourne. Professor Hill is recognised nationally for research, teaching innovation, technology transfer to developing countries, and Indigenous education. His research interests include: remote sensing, wildlife ecology, environmental planning, and education.

HOW TO DONATE TO THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND

RGSQ is a Registered Charity and all donations can be tax deductible if given for Educational or Environmental Purposes.

Donations can be made

- in cash
- by cheque
- by credit card, please contact the RGSQ Office on 07 3368 2066
- or directly crediting our bank account.

A tax-deductible receipt will be issued if required for every donation gratefully received.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Please note that the High Tea and Tour of Queensland Parliament House planned for Friday 24th November 2017 has been re-scheduled for Friday 23rd March 2018. This is due to the Queensland State Election on 25 November 2017. If you'd like to book, please contact the RGSQ Office 07 3368 2066 or email admin@rgsq.org.au.



Where: Strangers' Dining Room
Cost: \$47.00 and payable to the RGSQ office.
Parliament House, Brisbane, seen from the end of George Street, Brisbane. Image: Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0

High Tea will be followed by an optional tour of Parliament House commencing at 12.00 noon for approximately half an hour which will be followed by a visit to the O'Donovan Library at 12.45 pm. Tour numbers are limited to twenty so if you are interested please register now to avoid disappointment. All who attend are kindly requested to provide photo identification on the day. Failure to comply will result in your inability to take part in this outing. Dress is smart casual. RGSQ members will meet on the corner of George and Alice Streets outside the Parliamentary gate at 10.10am. We will then move on to the Parliamentary Annexe entrance where a member of the Parliamentary staff will escort us to the Strangers' Dining Room.

Please note: There is no visitor parking available at Queensland Parliament House. Hope to see you there!
Coordinator: Leo Scanlan

FEBRUARY: Welcome to 2018

Tuesday 6 February, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Venue: St Francis Theological College, Lecture Room 1
 Enter from either Baroona Road or Milton Road

Note: to help you navigate around St Francis, please see the last page of the Bulletin for a map of the College.

Please join us for the first social evening of the year when the Society's 2018 program of activities and events as well as an update on the Society's plan for new premises will be presented.

The Society's Australian Geography Competition Committee; Treks and Activities Committee (TAAC); and, Library, Map, and Archive Groups and RGSQ Traveller will provide an overview of their current projects and 2018 activities. Groups will display items of interest from the RGSQ Collection, and TAAC members will be available to discuss the 2018 events.

This is a social function with light refreshments served prior to the presentations and supper afterwards with plenty of time for conversation. All are most welcome. For catering purposes, if you plan to attend, please contact the RGSQ office by Friday, February 2. **Coordinator: Kay Rees**

MARCH:

TEA WITH SUGAR Thu 22 March 2018

Depart: 7.00am Eagle Junction Station
 7.30am Park N Ride Mains Rd Nathan

Cost: \$76-members/\$79 non-members
 (Includes: Morning Tea, Entry and Lunch).

Payable to RGSQ Office by Thursday 1st March 2018

Home: 4.00pm Nathan/4.30pm Eagle Junction Station
 (Depending on traffic)



You are invited to join us on a bus trip to Northern NSW. There, we will share the Madura tea experience. Madura is a Tamil word for Paradise. It is the only Sub-Tropical tea plantation which began production in 1978. We will tour the plantation and see the tea making process.

After Lunch at Tropical Fruit World, we will visit Robert Quirk's sugar cane farm. Robert has been involved in sugar and soil research for the last 15 years and is recognised for his innovative farming practices. He has presented this research to many domestic and international forums. In 2014, he won the National Carbon Award.

Tour numbers are limited to 25 so if interested please register with the office now to avoid disappointment.

Closed shoes must be worn.

Please state any dietary requirements and indicate pick up location when booking.

Hope you can join us!

Coordinator: Jeanette Lamont

APRIL: Field trip Mooloolah River Landcare Nursery

Tuesday 17 April, 9am-12pm

Location: 2670 Steve Irwin Way, Glenview.

Cost: \$10

Book and Pay: please contact the RGSQ Office on 07 3368 2066 or email admin@rgsq.org.au by Fri, March 30.

The Biodiversity Officer will demonstrate her biodiversity experiments pertaining to the "Cat's Claw Creeper" and the Jewel Beetle and the "Madeira Vine" and the Madeira Vine beetle, for approximately 30 minutes. A nursery representative will then show the process of preparing a plant for sale in the nursery, with some "hands on" experience by the participants, approximately 90 minutes. Members are encouraged to bring seeds in for the demonstration & allow MRWL to grow them for future sales. Time will be set aside for participants to purchase native plants. Please organize your own transport and bring your morning tea and chair.

Coordinator: Wendy Davis

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

KEN SUTTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY GROUP

When: Monday, Feb 26

Time: 9:00 am

Where: "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd.

MAP GROUP

UPCOMING GATHERINGS & EVENTS

Mon 5 February @10am

Gathering Key Event: "Aeronautical Charts", presented by James Hansen & Bob Abnett

Cost: gold coin donation for tea and coffee

Location: check with Co-ordinator for latest details

Co-ordinator: Bob Abnett, abnett@powerup.com.au

Tue 20 March @10:00am - 12:00pm

Event: Visit to the Brisbane City Council Archives, address [15/107-123 Muriel Ave, Skyline Business Centre, Moorooka 4105](#), followed by lunch at the Red Lion Hotel - [215 Beaudesert Rd, Moorooka 4105](#).

Details: See many historical maps of the Brisbane area plus aerial photos from 1946 onwards. Limited parking available, please consider car-pooling.

Cost: \$0.00 + lunch (\$10-\$20)

Co-ordinator: Bob Abnett, abnett@powerup.com.au

Mon 2 April @10:00am - 12:00pm

Gathering Presentation: *The Jardines and Exploring Cape York* by Grahame L. Jardine-Vigden.

Details: Grahame is a descendent of the Jardines and does regular photographic presentations on the Jardines to interested groups.

Location: check with Co-ordinator for latest details

Cost: gold coin donation for tea and coffee

Co-ordinator: Bob Abnett, abnett@powerup.com.au

Report: Map Group trip to Canberra

This was the first significant trip made by the Map Group to national institutions regarding their Map Collections or to national institutions with geographic relevance to the RGSQ and the Map Group. RGSQ's "brand name" opened up doors and the Map Group was invited to "behind the scenes" tours, all of which were excellent and quite educational and enlightening. All 4 institutions visited went that "extra mile" to accommodate the Map Group and all have been thanked for their efforts.

A total of 16 RGSQ members attended, of which 10 were from the Map Group (a number of partners attended with a Map Group member).

Institutions Visited:

- **National Library of Australia (NLA)** – Primarily its magnificent Map Collection (between 600,000 and 1,000,000 items) was the focus of attention, but there was also a General Tour of the Library (behind the scenes – including their robots Isaac 1 to 4!) and the special Treasures Exhibition. The restored 1663 Blaeu

Map of "New Holland" was the highlight of this Exhibition - see image below:



Rare 1663 map of Australia by Joan Blaeu painstakingly restored to former glory.

- **Geoscience Australia (GA)** – This national agency has prime responsibility for recording and archiving geological samples and records of Off-Shore Australia. It has an excellent geological display in its Main Foyer, plus displays of geological maps of Australia and GA's Off-Shore jurisdictional areas. The Map Group had a "behind the scenes" tour, including a viewing of GA's huge geological core samples archive covering exploration across Off-Shore Australia and a special power point presentation on the "Uses of LIDAR", one of the newer mapping technologies being used today.
- **Australian National Museum (ANM)** – The Special Tour focused upon Exploration of Australia and the various relics of these explorers. Sadly, one of the curators taking the Map Group on this Special Tour had to go home, due to a medical emergency, and the Special Tour was cut short. However, ANM has a very good bookshop and their large historic map replicas for sale were very popular viewing!
- **Australian War Memorial and Museum (AWM)** – The focus of the Map Group's "behind the scenes" tour was Military Maps and AWM went "that few extra miles" in this regard. Map Group members viewed **original** "administrative maps" used by the high command in World War 1 (they knew where the mud was and still sent the soldiers in!), "operational maps" used by soldiers in the field across a number of wars, Civil Defence Maps used in Queensland and a Japanese "planned invasion map of Australia" during World War 2, Vietnam war maps and the rarest of all – a map of Afghanistan in Russian with beautifully scribed Arabic Script (presumably Afghani) written on the map. It could have been a Taliban Map, souvenired by an Australian soldier and donated to AWM!

Bob Abnett

Co-ordinator, Map Group

Report: RGSQ Traveller

Papua New Guinea Cruise October 2017 Part II

Maclaren Harbour & Tufi Fiord Latitude 09 degrees 50'S Longitude 149 degrees 19'E

Maclaren Harbour and Tufi Fjords. This morning we moved slowly into the mouth of McLaren Harbour where we were met by the locals and transferred onto outrigger canoes for a short journey further up the valley where the local people showed us how to extract sago flour from the sago palm. Their extraction technique is quite unique because, other than a kind of metal adz used to chop into the core material of the palm, they use a palm frond as a kind of sluice where the shavings from the trunk of the tree are washed with water which then flows down into the curved leaf where the residue settles and is scooped out and cooked over a cane frond fire and then wrapped in a green palm leaf for safe keeping until the next meal time. I managed a sago tasting which seemed quite tasteless and much like unflavoured chewing gum.

Later in the day we moved around to the right-hand entrance to the harbour and entered the local village where we were warmly greeted by the locals with the customary sing sing and dance routine of the Tufi area. After a warrior greeting we witnessed vintage Tapa cloth painting and an example of local female tattooing on a young girl's face. Fortunately, this tattoo was a mock tattoo as the current generation are less likely to indulge in this facial art than previous generations.

The local dance finery here in Tufi was spectacular beyond belief with colourful headdresses rich in colour and adorned with Bird of Paradise Feathers sourced from the nearby mountains and heavy rainforest towards the back of Tufi settlement. We were informed that the headdresses were handed down from generation to generation and not collected from recently caught Birds of Paradise. I'm afraid I'm a bit cynical and didn't quite believe what I was hearing as the idea of performing for visiting tourists is a recent money-making phenomenon for local people and the message from the cruise company, a 'feel good message', to pander to many of the green and conservation tendencies of the visiting Western tourists. Despite these misgivings as to the origin of the current headdresses, I felt these were the most spectacular we were to witness on the whole cruise.

Towards the late afternoon we entered one of the rias below the Tufi Resort and after transferring to the Coral Explorer to transport us to the resort breakwater we proceeded to walk to the top of the hill and on towards the airport. A ria is a coastal inlet formed by the partial submergence of an unglaciated river valley. It is a drowned river valley that remains open to the sea. The view from the resort high on the ridge of the ria was quite spectacular and I'm sure many divers and snorkelers staying at the resort would have enjoyed sundowners from this very elevated position. Others in our party went kayaking for a couple of hours.

The Tufi Resort has a resident horn bill who seemed partial to nipping at anything that seemed to dangle into view and was attached to passing tourists wandering along the pathways around the hotel. This evening Coral Discoverer departed Tufi for the 170-nautical mile overnight journey to the Fly Islands.

Tuesday 10th October

Fly Islands and Siboma Village.

Fly Islands & Siboma Village Latitude 07 degrees 18'S Longitude 147 degrees 08'E

This morning some members chose to go snorkelling and diving off Biangatu Island in Morobe Province. The snorkelling proved to be more than successful with some pretty colours amongst the variety of corals and some very colourful fish.

After our customary lunch on board, we departed on Coral Explorer, our on-board transport to the coastal village of Siboma. Apparently, this village had been waiting for 5 years for Coral Discoverer to visit so on landing the locals were very excited and again we were greeted with the customary very enthusiastic dancing. I thought this afternoon the singing had much more vocal expression and rhythm than we had been experienced with on visits to other islands in the days preceding. The only disappointing factor

today was that this was the first day we had experienced good solid rain.

I witnessed one local in the village who had an extremely distressed Cus Cus on the top of his head and was carrying it around as a kind of trophy. I don't think pets are the go in this part of the world. The animal itself was quite interesting but I don't think I was the only one who was dismayed. I suppose the locals here were trying to show off anything they perceived would attract foreign tourists. Unfortunately, we had also seen a previous Cus Cus in a similar predicament when we were in the Sewa Bay Area in Milne Bay Province on day 3 of our tour

Wednesday 11th October

Dreherhafen & Tuam Island Latitude 05 degrees 56'S Tuam Longitude 148 degrees 02'E

On landing in Dregerhafen today we set out for Gingala Village where again the locals were out en masse to welcome us to their island. The men as usual seem to dress up in as much of their finery as they can muster and put on a dance equally as enthusiastic as we had become used to. However, in a bit of a twist this time the women were allowed to put on their own dance routine and from the look on the lady's face who addressed us at the end, she appeared quite emotional - so things 'they are a changing.'



Many of the Islanders escorted different people around their village. One young man had a couple of hornbills as pets. He had both a male and female

and both had their wings cut but despite that imposition on their freedom seemed to be in quite good shape and were well fed.

At 1500 hrs we set out for the Siassi Group of Islands - Tuam Island and village was our destination this afternoon. On landing we moved down a sand track to the village about half a kilometre away. This village, unlike some of the earlier ones we visited, had houses that were very solidly constructed with thick wooden planks which I suspect were imported from the forest in New Britain to the north east across the sea.

Again, we were enthusiastically welcomed with the local dance routine, the people in this part of the world just simply love to dance and it is an ingrained part of their culture. It seems someone may have complained to the ships company this afternoon that there was too much dancing but as this is a large part of how they express themselves through dance and song I think their complaint will fall on deaf ears.

Despite this rather repetitious entertainment at nearly all our landfalls there were many cultural differences regarding dress at different destinations, some had Bird of Paradise feathers and some had adopted a partly western convenience of using painted cardboard for head adornment while others had various pieces of western clothing such as t-shirts. It was obvious these people had a lot more exposure to Western Culture through missionaries, timber workers and exporters, and foreign mining operators who had established themselves in Papua New Guinea.

Tuam Village was built very close to the water with a wind break made from palm fronds built along the high water mark as shelter from the constant wind blowing on shore. Apparently, when there is a king tide or storm surge, the water comes up as far as the first pathway in the village. I managed to strike up a conversation with an older New Guinean lady who could clearly remember the Australian Administration when New Guinea was part of Australian Territory. She spoke absolutely perfect English.

As we left the island there was again an enthusiastic farewell with a large crowd of Islanders down on the shore many of whom were children. There were shrieks of laughter when the Coral Explorer revved the outboards and sprayed the kids on the shoreline with water in a very friendly farewell. Coral Discoverer is due to visit Tuam again in November.

Thursday 12th October Historic Madang

Madang Latitude 05 degrees 13'S Longitude 145 degrees 48'E

After an early breakfast this morning we were transferred to the onshore wharf adjacent to the Madang Resort. On landing the whole ship's company boarded 3 Toyota tourist buses for our trip around the sights of Madang proper.

Our first stop was the local museum which seemed to have quite a variety of artefacts and a good bit more stories in pictures from New Guinea and our own Australian past history of conflict with the Japanese during WWII. We were not allowed to take photos inside the museum which is a pity as this prevents us promoting, through our experience and photos, further visits to this museum from other tourist groups from home.



Bilbao, a village a dozen or so kilometres from Madang on the coast was our next stop. The natives here were dressed somewhat more traditionally than some of our previous encounters. Lots of swaying grass skirts, headdresses and lots of harmonising - they were really proud to show us their culture in the form of dance and singing. This village is very famous for their pottery - we were shown a demonstration right from raw clay mixed with sand through to the finished process of firing with a fire of palm fronds that seemed to generate a considerable amount of heat as the process of firing didn't seem to take very long. Again, we left this village with many fond waves of farewell.

Our last stop was the 'Coast Watchers Memorial Beacon', a rather poignant reminder of the very courageous role the Australian Coast Watchers played. The 30m high Coastwatchers Memorial is visible 25km out to sea, and is a reminder of those who stayed behind enemy lines during WWII to report on Japanese troop and ship movements.

In the early afternoon we returned to shore and while we couldn't see everything as Madang seems very spread out along the coast but some did manage a walk to the local market where the buildings seemed quite new and very clean. On show were numerous varieties of fruit and vegetables of very good quality. I took many photos of yams, cabbage of various variety, potatoes, oranges, passion fruit, lettuce, radish, coconuts, taro, sago bagged and ready to bake and wrapped in palm leaves, and towards the outer fences were various varieties of simple clothing items, and of course that item of necessity up here, the Bilum Bag.

While obviously part of the same complex, the local fish market was over the road from the main gate of the general produce market. There were many varieties of both salt water and fresh water fish on sale. I'm no fish identification expert but I noticed many reef fish, tuna, eels, cod, tilapia, and mackerel were just a few that I could identify. Tilapia have established themselves in one of the Gulf rivers in Queensland and the relevant department is mystified as to how they arrived there and even more troubled as to how they might get rid of them as they prey on the indigenous local fish and eventually take over. Tilapia have obviously established themselves in the local streams up here in New Guinea and one wonders whether it's already too late to intervene and stop a tilapia takeover. Tilapia is a native of Africa and the Middle East. There were large eskies full of fresh tilapia on sale at the fish market.

Friday 13th October

Sepik River, Bien Village and Manam Island Latitude 03 degrees 51.9'S Longitude 14 degrees 31.5'E

Coral Discoverer entered the mouth of the Sepik River right on time at approximately 6am. The mouth of the river was extremely wide, quite muddy, and fast flowing. There were two timber freighters, one Panamanian registered loading timber logs for export anchored at the mouth. According to one of the crew on Coral Discoverer there are always ships loading timber at the mouth of the river.

Timber is apparently cut in the Highlands and then trucked down to the river before being loaded onto a barge and pushed down river to the mouth by an accompanying tug. The logs are old growth forest which I suspect is not being renewed as I wouldn't think a

programme of renewal would be in progress here in New Guinea. This is not good news for the future of some of the only extensive areas of old growth forest which is still standing in this part of the world.

It is now nearly 7am and we are past the mouth of the river and moving to the Lower Sepik Region. I believe the original intention was to navigate further up the river but there have been

very dry conditions this year and the ship did scrape the bottom briefly this morning. The Sepik reaches further inland another 1100 kilometres and is one of the great river systems of the world and flows through a very significant part of this very large island. Right from when we first came in sight of the mouth and noticed the muddy current from the river there were large piles of hyacinth or river weed passing by on the flood tide created by rain which had fallen only yesterday. According to the locals, the river can rise quite significantly, and it takes time to flow down to the lower reaches.

The New Guinea community at Bien, is the largest community on this lower part of the Sepik River. Again, the villagers put on their finest dance and song/mime routine at the Bien Primary school grounds followed by a pantomime Sepik style which appeared to be extremely entertaining and funny, particularly to the local children. There was a large selection of Sepik art which is known the world over and was on display and for sale. Unfortunately, one would have to have significant wall space at home to accommodate some of the larger pieces not to mention the increased luggage restrictions on our homeward flight from Rabaul to Cairns. My own purchase this time was a Mosquito Man Mask to pair with my Sepik Man Mask carving I had purchased the day before in Madang. Many of the other travellers bought a selection of Sepik Face Masks while Bilum Bags seemed to be somewhat popular with the ladies.

The Sepik proved a huge disappointment for me. This was to be one of the highlights of the cruise and we only managed a scant 5 or 6 hours travel upstream. We witnessed another dance, had a half hour or so to purchase artefacts and then it was on our way. There were none of the Big House that I expected to see if we reached the Middle Sepik region of the river.

We returned to Coral Discoverer around lunch time and set sail immediately to try and reach past Manam Island Volcano in daylight. This volcano has an almost perfect cone and is 1,829 metres high and is one of the most active in Papua New Guinea. Our ship sailed directly past Boise Island and I expect most managed a couple of reasonable photos of Manam Island Volcano rising directly in front of the Ship. Unfortunately, at 6.20pm, it was blowing quite significantly outside so I was not able to see the glow from the volcano as the cone at the peak was shrouded in cloud. I consider myself very lucky as I have previously seen almost perfectly formed cone volcanoes in South America. It would have been nice to view this volcano earlier in the day.

Saturday 14th October

Tolokiwa Island Latitude 05 degrees 17'S Longitude 147 degrees 33'E

Tolokiwa Island. I don't think I have ever visited a more remote destination anywhere in the world than Bun Village, Tolokiwa Island Latitude 05 degrees 17'S Longitude 147 degrees 33'E situated in the Bismark Sea to the north of New Britain. Apparently, the villagers were given very short notice of Coral Discoverer's arrival but, to their credit, still managed a very warm welcome with their dance every bit as enthusiastic as we had witnessed on numerous other occasions. Because of its very remoteness, this village was really something special.

It is very difficult to compare varying degrees of wealth and poverty, but this subsistence community seemed to rank as the poorest we had visited during our cruise. Clothing was all that they stood up in, while implements for cooking and fishing nets, the resident pigs and chickens were the only other trappings that might assist in their self-sustaining existence. I'm sure their comprehension of where we came from or how we might live at home was very limited. I did note more than a few had a very good command of English which was very surprising considering the remoteness of their community and their contact with the outside world.

I asked one of the villagers what were their staple meals. Sometimes they ate pork, and sometimes chicken and fish, but it seemed vegetables as a staple was something of a rare commodity, and sometimes in the evening they ate very little. I saw some rather large fish cooking over an open fire in one part of the village. I'm afraid I couldn't identify the fish, but it had a rather ugly set of gruesome looking teeth. Although there was evidence of varying degrees of slash and burn agriculture visible on other islands we had visited there was not much evidence of that here on Tolokiwa. There were a few homes and a very simple Lutheran Church high on the hill to the back of the village while the lower stumped houses on the foreshore were obviously built to withstand the high king tides that came with the seasons.

Despite an invitation from the ship's company to fill all the water containers in the village, only one resident went to the trouble of paddling out to fill his plastic container with clean water. This was somewhat of a surprise as the only evidence I saw of tanks was beside the church high on the hill at the back of the village. One of the villagers indicated that a pool of water on the track near the coast was what was used for washing and to water the many pigs that were roaming around the village. Fresh water is apparently obtained from digging a shallow well and drinking the brackish water when it appears. Despite the obvious hardships, most of the people from the village seemed content with their rather spartan lifestyle.

There was some evidence of fire that obviously burnt through the forest higher up on the slopes of the volcano. Most of the houses near the shore were high on stumps with woven palm frond walls and palm frond roofs - I suspect not much protection when faced with extreme weather conditions. I think storm surges would well and truly inundate this village during extreme weather events, while high winds would absolutely destroy everything by the shore. As the whole village population didn't seem all that large, I expect during those stressful times The Lutheran Church on the hill might have afforded some degree of protection as it was obviously not new and had stood the test of time.

In the afternoon some tourists went diving and some went snorkelling and some viewed from the glass bottom boats. The coral on the fringe reef to the side of Tolokiwa Island seemed quite healthy with large clumps of different varieties of corals and healthy populations and variety of fish.

Sunday 15th October

Garove Island - Witu Island Group Latitude 04 degrees 41.434'S longitude 149 degrees 29.20'E

Garove Island - Witu Island group. This morning I was up early as we arrived in the Witu Island Group and was witness to a truly spectacular sunrise. Many of the ship's company rushed to get their cameras as this unfolded. There was much activity soon after as many of our travelling companions had an early breakfast and went snorkelling again this morning on an adjacent reef system.

In the past I must confess I had not previously given the term 'doldrums' very much thought and I would not have believed the sea

in mid ocean could be so calm. Last evening as we sailed from Garove Island in the Witu Island Group, Latitude 04 degrees 41.434'S Longitude 149 degrees 29.207'E, and as we were steaming so close to the equator, that imaginary line that bisects north and south, it gave new meaning to the phrase 'becalmed in the doldrums' mariners of old logged in their journals. The 'doldrums' was a nautical term used when referring to the belt around the Earth near the equator where sailing ships were sometimes stuck and motionless on calm and windless waters.

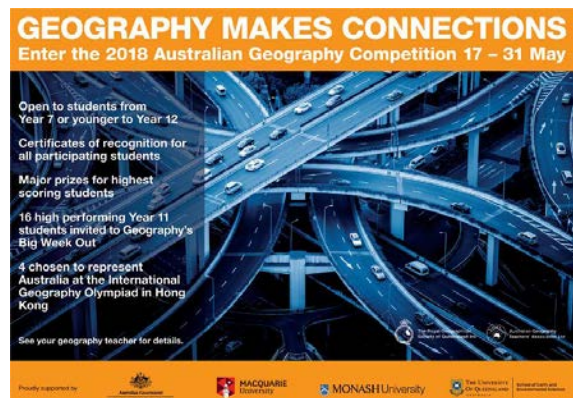
Later in the morning the ship moved further around the coast of Garove Island and entered Witu (Vitu) Harbour. This Harbour is the remains of a giant volcanic caldera, extremely deep, and offers some spectacular scenery as we moved into Garove harbour adjacent to Saint Michael's Roman Catholic Mission Church and School.

The high walls of this ancient volcano are covered in dense green foliage and in places covered in coconut palms which were the mainstay in the past when copra was the main export from this Island. I haven't been to Santorini in Greece but Vitu must surely be the Santorini in the Tropics and I might add hasn't been seen by near as many tourists. As we sailed in towards the coast of the island the tall bell tower of St Michael's Catholic Church was just visible above the surrounding vegetation - really a beautiful sight. I'm sure all the photographic lenses on board were working overtime.

On our arrival, the dancing and singing from the students of St. Michael's School choir must surely have been some of the most polished and harmonious we had witnessed during our whole cruise while the mission station itself appeared to be one of the more prosperous we had seen. These small outposts of civilisation must cost the churches a small fortune to service considering the remoteness and the infrequent visitation from passing coastal and tourist ships.

Photos courtesy of Leo Scanlan. ●

Volunteers to assist with the 2018 Competition



In 2018, the Competition will again require assistance from Society members. The following are the 2018 Volunteer days:

APRIL

Tuesday 24 to Friday 27, but not Wednesday 25 (ANZAC Day) – **Question booklets and Answer sheets mailout**. This mailout requires counting/weighing of Question booklets and Answer sheets and placing them in large envelopes, post satchels or boxes. This is a complex mailout which takes a few days to complete with 6-8 volunteers required each day. In the last few years it has taken about three days to complete the sorting and packing.

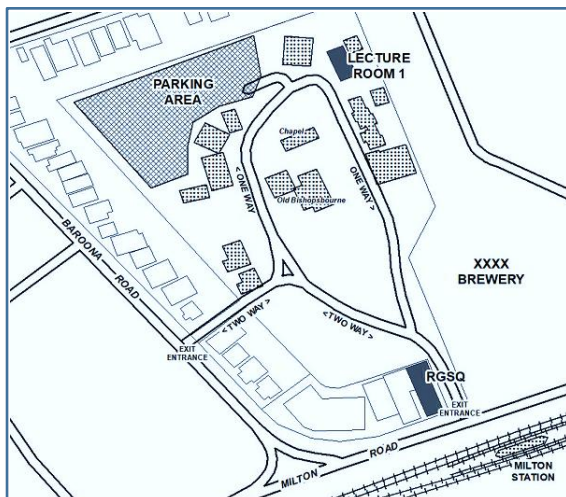
JUNE

Friday 1 to Friday 15 – **Scanning of completed answer sheets**. This task requires concentration and attention to detail. The days volunteers are required is dependent on the timing and number of returned answer sheets.

JULY

Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 July – **Certificate and Results mailout**. This mailout requires the sorting and packing of student certificates and results sheets into large envelopes, post satchels or boxes. This task requires concentration and attention to detail.

Your help on any of the above occasions will be greatly appreciated. Please contact the office, phone: 3368 2066, email: admin@rgsq.org.au and let us know on which day you are able to assist.



Dear members, please use the enclosed map as a guide when attending RGSQ's first event of the year "Welcome to 2018" on February 6. We hope to see you on the night.

RGSQ Bulletin

February 2018

February lecture on the Sunshine Coast:
Tue Feb 20 *"Geography and its relevance to leadership in a regional university - the USC experience", by Professor Greg Hill*

Tours and Activities:
Tue Feb 6 'Welcome to 2018'

Map Group: Mon Feb 5 – first meeting of the year: Presentation *"Aeronautical Charts"*

Ken Sutton Memorial Library: Mon Feb 26, 9:00am, "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton.
Council meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.

The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Inc
"Gregory House", 237 Milton Road, Milton Q 4064

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AUSTRALIA