

DROWNED BUT NOT OUT

site for GTS DOLPHIN is near the Port River Sailing Club on Snowden Beach, which should provide an excellent venue for the proposed Water Activities training. The job of raising the money for the Centre is in the hands of the Water Activities Committee who are exploring all avenues of fund raising. One innovative scheme invites individuals or companies to "Buy a Sheet of Iron" for the proposed building; which could be endorsed with their company logo. The committee were unfortunate in that the Dept of Sports and Recreation, who have supported the Association in the past with contributions of up to one third of the cost of building, announced in February 85 that they will no longer be assisting recreation organisations, such as the Girl Guide Association, with building expenses.

They are hoping that people already caught by the enthusiasm of boating will understand their desire to bring this very exhilarating sport to girls (and of course boys) of all ages; some, who without GTS DOLPHIN, would never experience the fun at all.

The committee is endeavouring to encourage the public to donate, whether it be money; Buy a Sheet of Iron or materials that can be of use to GTS DOLPHIN. All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible and every donation of \$20 or more will be acknowledged publicly.

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MORE NEWS FROM ALPHA CENTAURI

Well here we are on 2nd February 86 back in PNG after two hectic months of welcome home parties, Xmas parties and once again farewell parties, thanks to all our very good friends. We have found it very easy to slip back into the slow pace of the Papuans.

Our friends in Madang who looked after ALPHA CENTAURI for us, met us at the airport and took us back to their home for dinner. As a huge thunderstorm and torrential rain started at 7.30 pm, we stayed the night with them and after breakfast the next morning were able to get out to the boat.

CENTAURI was in perfect condition, Alex had dived and cleaned off the bottom, had had the engine running and the frig cold. They had even stocked up with essential foods for us.

We had a quiet week exploring the Madang Harbor and nearby Islands. Christine and Neville were able to do some very interesting deep sea diving on coral, deep drop offs, caves and a wartime Mitchell bomber; they took numerous under water photos.

Alex and Kathy gave a farewell party to all the yachties who were heading off for different parts of the world. There were American, Australian, French, Swiss and Austrians present. It was a great night.

From Madang we motored across to Bagabag Island, Long Island, Tolokiwa and Umboi Is, the last three being islands we visited last October on the way to Madang. At Tolokiwa the Papuans we knew saw us coming and paddled out in their outrigger canoes to meet us. Once anchored, they brought out coconuts and bananas for us and then went out diving and came back with 9 crayfish for us.

A little 4 year old lad called Ningal was so pleased to see Ion again that he threw his arms around him and wouldn't leave him alone. We took Christine and Neville to meet the headman and to have a look

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around before leaving Tolokiwa for Umboi Is, a lovely village full of very happy friendly people.

There was no wind, so we had to motor to Luther Anchorage on Umboi. Once again, the villagers saw us coming and welcomed us with open arms. Mark, who took David Judell diving for crayfish the last time here, was first aboard.

In October they traded 17 pineapples to us plus other fruit and vegetables. This time they had 27 pines, 8 paupau watermelon, sweet corn, sweet potato, banana and tomatoes; all for a few packets of cigarettes and some lollypops and sweets. All the Islands are very mountainous, jungle covered and the air perfumed by the numerous tropical flowering creepers and trees. The air is full of huge butterflies, the size of swallows and beautifully coloured. The calm seas are full of flying fish and dolphin, but we have caught very few fish since arriving back in PNG. Fortunately, the Papuans have given us some.

Since leaving Umboi Is we have been following the NW coast of New Britain from West to East. We had a lovely weekend at Kellenge Village, our first stop on New Britain where 14 young boys swam out to the boat, most of them naked. They sang to us and told us Papuan stories which we taped. Later they took us for a walk through the steaming jungle and up the hill to the large Catholic Mission where we were given the full Cooks Tour before being escorted back to the boat.

We had a good breeze leaving Kellenge on the Monday and set off for the sail to Unea Is, 58 miles away. The weather closed in and about 20 miles from the island, we had 40k of wind gusting to 50k, large seas and heavy rain squalls. We had to use the radar to find Unea which is surrounded by extensive reefs. We were under a mile from the island before actually sighting it and would have had to spend a night at sea but for the radar.

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Neville was in the bow and managed to direct Ion through the breaking reefs and into the calm bay off Bali Plantation. The following morning we walked up the hill to see the Manager who was an extremely friendly Papuan. We were invited in for coffee while they had a late breakfast, and then we were taken for a drive around the plantation to see the copra being collected, and shown the cocoa trees which grow under the coconut trees.

He then took us across the island to the Catholic Mission run by German priest and nuns, up to the hospital where we were taken to the medical clinic and finally to the labor ward, with patients in varying stages of labor, and some with new born babies. The only beds are platforms 6ft x 2ft 6 ins and look like coffee tables with lino on top, no mattress or pillow!! They must be tough up there.

Our host, being a 7th Day Adventist, insisted we go and see their village and church, all very lovely in a lawn setting. On leaving the village, we were presented with a sack of sweet muli (grapefruit which are sweet like oranges.)

That night, we were once again guests of the Manager at his home for dinner. Our host, Neville, Christine, Ion and I sat on chairs with coffee tables in front of us. We had plates, knives and forks; the Papuans had plates and fingers or a spoon. Then a bowl of soup used as gravy, a bowl of sweet potatoes, another of "leafy greens", and a plate of chicken were put on each table so we could help ourselves. After a very long Grace, we were invited to eat. The rest of the family, including the wife, sat on the floor with a couple of bowls of food between them and all using their fingers. Any food the husband or we left was then given to the rest of the family - definitely a man's world.

Garove Island is a most interesting island. It is

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an extinct volcano which when the volcano last blew, part of the crater wall was blown out and you moor right inside the crater in very deep water. A number of very lovely villages surround the crater. We also spent one night in another very sheltered little bay on the outside of the island and visited a copra plantation managed by an expat.

Christine and Neville went diving on the reefs surrounding the island. A few of the reefs have been spoilt by the locals who use a stick of dynamite to kill fish for eating although some of them still use the good old spear to fish.

We then sailed back to New Britain and then along to Kimbe, arriving in torrential rain on the Friday afternoon. We did some shopping and almost swam along the road back to the boat.

On Saturday afternoon, Christine and Neville went ashore to have their air tanks refilled and were told to take CENTAURI about 10 miles along the coast to Walindi Plantation and Dive Centre. We stayed from Saturday afternoon until Tuesday morning, and in this time we had 16 inches of rain.

Saturday night, Max Benjamin, the owner of the plantation (an ex W Australian) invited us for dinner. It was a most enjoyable night. Sunday, Christine, Neville and another couple went diving with Max on the beautiful corals and hugh fans together with hundreds of coloured fish. Monday, while the others went out to lunch, Ion and I went through 8 hours of video taken during the early exploration of PNG and during the war. We really learnt a lot about the country, so although the weather was bad, the time wasn't wasted. We had them back to dinner on Monday night, and Tuesday set off along the coast and out to several islands and finally around to Rabaul.

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New Britain is a mass of volcanoes, quite a lot still active, heavily wooded and a most dramatic backdrop to the bays we anchored in. On entering Simpson Harbour and motoring up to the Rabaul Yacht Club, Matupit the volcano which has been threatening to blow for quite a while, gave us a welcome puff of smoke.

Rabaul I think is the most beautiful of all the PNG towns, surrounded by volcanic mountains, all jungle covered, and the whole town set in a botanic garden.

We have been jumping on and off PMV's (public motor vehicles), usually 15 seater buses used by the Papuans, and today we travelled 90km for \$2.60. We travelled out to see the caves dug out in the mountainside by the Japanese during the war to hide all their equipment, and also saw the underground sub base.

Christine and Neville have been diving with some of the locals and have been down to 120 ft diving on a Japanese ship bombed during the war. They will spend the next couple of days diving on ships and planes. They fly out of Rabaul on Thursday morning after 5 weeks with us.

Jenny and Peter Last will join us, and then we are heading off to Bouganville and down to the Solomons to Honiara.

MARGARET ULLETT