

# Greensborough Gossip

## Greensborough Branch Newsletter

Branch No. 100133 Incorporation No. A0044936A

**FEBRUARY 2016**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dear Members,

At the January meeting members were given a Survey and asked to consider various activities to be offered in 2016. Members indicated their preferences placing a number in the corresponding box.

Additional information about some activities was provided to members, e.g. Beleura House & Gardens (COBA) will need to be spread over 2 days as the venue can only accommodate 50x per visit. Greensborough branch will travel on Thu 12 May, whilst members from other branches will travel on Fri 13 May - provided of course we can fill both buses.

Further explanation was given about the Tallangatta 7-day Tour. The majority of Greensborough members chose Sep 9-15 as their preferred date. Members from other branches will share the Aug 26-Sep 1 and, if required, Sep 30-Oct 6 dates as the tour bus can only accommodate 34 people. When the September tour is full, our members will be given the opportunity to participate in the Aug 26-Sep 1 tour (this was the second choice from our members).

If members wish to participate in the Tallangatta tour they must place their name on the appropriate list with Peter or Lorraine Oaten. **A deposit of \$100.00/pp must be paid by the March meeting for our reservation to be held with the tour company.** Completing the January 2016 Survey does not mean that you are automatically on the list for the tour.

Based on the Survey we have planned the following:

- February – Balwyn Palace Film/Luncheon
- March – Corio Bay Cruise & Lunch
- April – Norfolk Island Trip
- May – Beleura House & Garden
- June – City Sights Bus Tour
- July – National Gallery of Vic Tour
- August – Yan Yean Reservoir/Whittlesea Tour
- September – Tallangatta (North Eastern Vic) Tour
- October – Allowyn Gardens/Chocolaterie
- November – Christmas Lunch
- December – end of year activity

Weather conditions and costs were also considerations in compiling the 2016 activity program.

The Goulburn River Cruise was highly regarded, but as we had already commenced the planning process for the Corio Bay Cruise we will postpone the Goulburn Cruise until 2017.

Members also suggested a range of activities/ tours, e.g. Exhibition Building, Dame Nellie Melba's House & Garden, Daylesford Convent Gallery, Werribee Mansion & Zoo, etc.

The Committee appreciates the input from members and we will endeavour to accommodate these suggestions at a future date.

**Regards. Bob Goodyear**

★  
 ★  
**Acknowledgement** ★  
 ★  
*Thankyou to Greensborough RSL for* ★  
*donating 3 Venue Vouchers towards our* ★  
*Christmas Dinner Dance Raffle.* ★  
 ★

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Management Committee  
2015/2016

**President/Activities Officer/Zone 121**

**Chairperson**

Bob Goodyear 9435 2529

**Vice President/Activities Officer**

Peter Oaten 9434 6795

**Treasurer/Social Committee**

Lorraine Oaten 9434 6795

**Secretary / Newsletter Editor**

Marlene Goodyear 9435 2529

Email: r.m.goodyear@bigpond.com

**Publicity & Communications Officer/Branch Meeting Manager**

David Hewett 9459 0653

Email: dfhewett01@bigpond.com

**Membership Officer/Zone 121 Dep Delegate**

Ken Pickett 9435 0076

**Fundraising Officers**

John Brook 9432 1695

Ian Schuck 9434 3839

**Asst. Membership Officer/Travel Committee**

**Coordinator**

Marg Wood 9438 4219

**Speakers Sub-Committee**

Jim Kindness 9469 4469

Bob & Marlene Goodyear, Gaylynn Pinniger

**Welfare Officer**

Judy Harvey 9401 6752

**Door Attendants/Registration**

Barbara Crosling 9435 5020

Anne Schuck 9434 3839

Gail Young 9439 3601

\*\*\*\*\*

**Travel Committee:**

Marg Wood - **Coordinator**

Bob Goodyear

Marlene Goodyear

Lorraine Oaten

Frank Beale

Ian Schuck

\*\*\*\*\*

**Branch Minute Taker** - Lorraine Callow

**Speakers Gifts & Door Prizes, Coffee Club**

**Coordinator** - Gaylynn Pinniger

**Book Exchange Coordinator** - Ken Pickett

**Craft Books Coordinator** - Lois Williams

*Next Branch Meeting*

**Tuesday 15 March — 6.40 pm**  
(Doors open at 6.00 pm for dinner)

**Greensborough RSL**

**Speaker: "Beyond Blue"  
Organisation**



To members who are unwell or recuperating, your friends at the Greensborough Branch are thinking of you and send best wishes for a speedy recovery.

(If you know of any member who is unwell, please contact our Welfare Officer, Judy Harvey, on Tel: 9401 6752 or by email: judyh43@tpg.com.au)



To those celebrating a birthday this month



**Greensborough Branch**  
**Email, Website, Mail**  
**Zone Website**

**Greensborough Branch Email Address:**  
[greensboroughnationalseniors@gmail.com](mailto:greensboroughnationalseniors@gmail.com)

**Greensborough Branch Website:**  
[www.greensboroughnationalseniors.com.au](http://www.greensboroughnationalseniors.com.au)

**Mailing Address:**  
**Box 838, Macleod Post Office, Macleod 3085**

**Zone Website:**  
[www.vicbranches.org.au](http://www.vicbranches.org.au)

## COFFEE CLUB



**Wed 2 March - 10.00 am**

### Vorea @ Lower Plenty

81 Main Road  
Lower Plenty  
Tel: 9434 4885

*(Parking in front of Lower Plenty Shopping Strip, or in carpark at rear with entry to shops through Bakery Walkway)*

#### Coordinator:

**Gaylynn Pinniger - Tel: 9458 2603**



## Walking Club



Walkers meet weekly at **9.30 am** as follows.....

**Most Tuesdays:** Meet at the Henry Street end of Greensborough Memorial Park.

**On Branch Meeting days the group walk on Wednesdays.**

#### **1st Tuesday of the month:**

Meet at Kalparrin (opp. Skateboard rink).

#### **Last Tuesday of the month:**

Meet at Bottom Car Park, Lower Plenty Hotel, Main Road, Lower Plenty.



Confused ???

**Contact Coordinator:**

**Ken Pickett - Tel: 9435 0076**



## DINNER CLUB

**Friday 4 March - 7.00 pm**

### Montmorency RSL

Petrie Park, Mountain View Road  
Montmorency  
Tel: 9434 2085

**Contact: Carol & Shamus**

**Tel: 9457 3900**

**RSVP: Mon 29 February**

## Low Impact Walking Club



### NOT UP TO HILLS?

Walkers meet Tuesdays at 9.30 am at **Willinda Park Athletics Track**, end of Nell Street, Greensborough (*except on Branch meeting days when the group walk on Wednesdays*).

**On the last Tuesday of the month** the group meet at 9.30 am at the **Lower Car Park, Lower Plenty Hotel** for a gentle walk.

**Coordinator:**

**Margaret Lloyd - Tel: 9404 3393**

## LUNCH CLUB



**Thu 10 March - 12.00 noon**

### The Old England Hotel

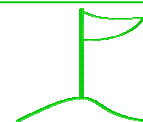
Cnr Lower Heidelberg Road & Yarra Street  
Heidelberg  
Tel: 9459 1166

**Contact: Margaret Thomas**

**Tel: 0419 574 058**

**RSVP: Mon 8 March**

## Seeking Golfers (Good & Bad)



A group of Greensborough branch members play golf on 1st Monday of the month commencing at 9.00 am at **Strathallen Golf Club** 100 Main Drive, Bundoora

**Cost - 9 holes: \$16.00/pp for Seniors**

**If you are interested in joining us for a game you would be most welcome**

***For further information - please see Ian Schuck at branch meetings or phone Ian on 9434 3839***

# UPCOMING BRANCH EVENTS



## Branch & COBA Activities

**Reminder to members:** \$20.00/pp deposit required when placing your name on an activity list.

**Thursday 25 February: Balwyn Palace Theatre Film/Luncheon**

Film "45 Years" with Charlotte Rampling & Tom Courtney. Time: 10.45 am-1.30 pm. Own transport. Cost: \$15.00/pp.

**Wednesday 23 March: Corio Bay Lunch Cruise**

Incl Coach, Morning Tea, 2-hour Lunch Cruise. Time: 9.30 am - 3.00 pm. **New Cost:** \$57.00/pp.

**10-18 April: Norfolk Island Tour.**

See below.....(fully booked).

**Thursday 12 May or Friday 13 May: Beleura House Tour & Garden (COBA)**

Incl Morning Tea, Beleura House Tour & Lunch in house. Max. 50x. Time 9.00 am - 5.00 pm. Cost: \$56.00/pp.

**Friday 9 - Thursday 15 September: 7-Day Tour of Eastern Victoria "Lakes & High Country"**

Full itinerary can be found on page 9 of the newsletter. Cost: \$595.00/pp from Albury. Seniors Rail Pass to be used to travel from Melbourne to Albury where we will be collected by bus.

To confirm your booking a **\$100.00/pp deposit** will be required by **March branch meeting**.

**For bookings see: Peter Oaten at Branch meetings or Tel: Peter on 9434 6795 / Bob Good-year on 9435 2529.**

## NORFOLK ISLAND



The Norfolk Island Tour runs from **10-18 April 2016**.

We catch flight QF438 from Tullamarine at 2.00pm on Sunday 10 April 2016 and arrive back in Melbourne on flight QF479 via Sydney at 8.20pm on Monday 18 April 2016.

All monies have now been paid by those undertaking the tour. We are awaiting the receipt of tickets and an updated itinerary which will be available for collection at the March Branch Meeting.

If you will not be at the March Branch meeting or have any queries concerning this tour please contact Ian Schuck on Tel: 9434 3839 or 0421 062 894 or email [ianschuck@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ianschuck@optusnet.com.au)

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- \* You will need a current Australian Passport or a valid document of Identity.
- \* Norfolk Island is not covered by Medicare. Travel Insurance is highly recommended.



## **ALOHA HAWAII.....**

**The Travel Committee is currently investigating options for our Hawaiian Islands Cruise in 2017. To get you in the mood we have attached an article written by members who went on the South Pacific Cruise last year.**



## TREASURER'S REPORT

### Lorraine Oaten

<b>Balance as at 01/01/2016</b>	<b>24,852.25</b>
<b>Plus Income</b>	
Film Lunch Balwyn Theatre	175.00
Nth East High Country Tour	350.00
Norfolk Island	66,320.00
Corio Bay Cruise	877.00
Attendance	315.00
Membership	185.00
Advertisers	100.00
Raffle	174.60
<b>Total:</b>	<b>68,496.60</b>
<b>Less Expenditure</b>	
NSA Q'land - Memberships	-185.00
Final Payment Norfolk Island	-77,200.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>-77,385.00</b>
<b>Balance as at 31/01/2016</b>	<b>15,963.85</b>

#### NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

*Members please note: The Greensborough Branch earns 'Grapevine' credits of \$3.00 for every person who pays their membership (new or renewal) through the Branch via the Treasurer. Payments can be made by cash, cheque or credit card.*

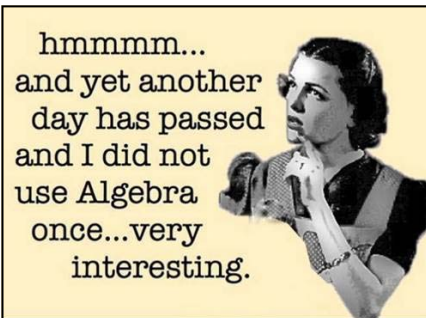


#### NSA Melbourne Investment Discussion Group

NSA members are welcome to join this friendly group which meets on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 10.00 am to listen to a guest speaker from the financial world followed by a lively Q&A session and then morning tea.

Meetings are held in Hayden Raysmith Room on 4th Floor of Ross House, Flinders Lane (near the Melbourne Library).

You can attend two sessions for free as a visitor - then if you wish to become a member of the group the cost is \$7.00/yearly membership, plus \$3.00 a meeting (to pay for the room rental/morning tea & a free Christmas party).



# NOTICE BOARD



## Are you planning to visit Thailand?

Member, **Marg Wood** - Tel: 9438 4219, is a regular visitor to Thailand and would be happy to advise you on:

- **The best shopping places.**
- **Where to buy tailor-made suits.**
- **Pitfalls for tourists.**
- **The wonderful, exciting experiences you can have.**

A must visit is to Kanchanaburi (the Thai Burma railway, the Bridge on the River Kwai, tigers living with monks, elephant rides & beautiful scenery).

Do not pre-book a tour from Australia for Kanchanaburi - you can do so much better if you deal directly with a local travel agent.



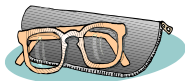
## Are you interested in knitting children's garments or maybe toys?

Member, **Brita Daly**, collects knitted children's garments/toys.

If you no longer knit, but have unused wool at home, Brita would be happy to take this off your hands as she can give this to her knitters.

Items can be collected at Branch meetings, or you can contact Brita on **Tel: 9435 2816**.

*(Don't forget you can always borrow one of the knitting books from the Craft Book Exchange!)*



## Spectacles & Sunglasses

The Fred Hollows Foundation uses second-hand spectacles and sunglasses to improve the sight of people in deprived communities in our Far North & Australian Islands.

You can assist by bringing along no-longer-used specs/sunglasses. *Cases for specs/sunglasses are also needed.*

**Member, Lorraine Callow, will be happy to collect them at Branch meetings.**

## BOOK EXCHANGE & CRAFT BOOK EXCHANGE

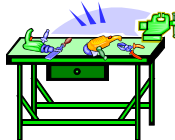


We operate a **Free Book Exchange** on Branch Meeting days. We ask only that you return the books to the Branch when you have finished reading them so that other members may have the opportunity to borrow the books.

*(Tables are set up at the rear of the function room.)*

Coordinators for this activity are:  
**Ken Pickett — Book Exchange**  
**Lois Williams — Knitting/Craft Patterns**

**Members, please bring along your unwanted books.**



## Banyule Men's Shed

Do you know men with spare time and skills to share?  
Men who enjoy tinkering with tools or getting their hands dirty in the garden?  
Well, the Banyule Men's Shed is looking to recruit men to volunteer and be part of the shed.

At the shed, you're free to work on your own projects or help others work on community projects.  
To get involved or find out more: **Call 9450 2000 or drop in any Monday 1.00 - 3.00 pm**  
**Cnr St Hellier & Edwin Streets, Heidelberg Heights**



## Anyone for Tennis?

If you would like to play social tennis in a very relaxed atmosphere on a Monday morning, between 9.30 am — 12 noon, please see **Glenda Sundstrom (Tel: 9435 4755)** or just turn up (weather permitting) at about 9.30 am for a game. The only criteria is that correct tennis shoes must be worn. The cost is \$3.00 per morning (incl a cuppa & biscuit).

The courts are located at the rear of the **Diamond Valley Baptist Church, 309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty (Melways 11D7)**.

## Garden Workshop Bunnings Eltham



Members are invited to attend the Bunnings Garden Workshop held in their Eltham store on 1st Thursday of the month at 10am - 12.00 noon. There is free morning tea. The topics are interesting and informative, with guest speakers and everyone has a lot of fun.

Bookings are required, for catering purposes - please contact: **Helen Philp - Activities Organiser on Tel: 9430 0100**.

## ADVERTISERS



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 2 bathrms/2 toilets. Sleeps 9. Sun filled open-plan living upstairs,  
 2 large decks - bay & city views. Large grassed backyard. Pet friendly.  
 Close to Peninsular Hot Springs & golf courses.  
**Rates:** From \$160/night or \$460/weekends. Negotiable for longer stays.  
**Tel: Ronni on 0427272221 for more details....**



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**Contact: Andrew Leeson - Mob: 0418 585 116**  
**Email: [service@aclplumbing.com.au](mailto:service@aclplumbing.com.au)**  
**[www.aclplumbing.com.au](http://www.aclplumbing.com.au)**



### Old Colonists' Association of Victoria

**"Currie Park Estate"**  
**58 Weir Street, Euroa**

"Currie Park Estate" is situated at the foothills of the Strathbogie Ranges, in the Euroa township, adjacent to Euroa Hospital.

Comprising 20 self-contained independent living units & 8 fully serviced apartments it is the ideal environment for independent seniors to enjoy a quality lifestyle in a safe & caring environment.

**We currently have a vacancy in our independent living units.**

This is the perfect opportunity to become part of a vibrant community. Accommodation is affordable to all Victorians regardless of their financial situation.

**To arrange an inspection, please contact:  
 Pauline Walters on 5795 1822**

**Or for further information, please contact:  
 Karen Ernest on (03) 9433 1100**



### Old Colonists' Association of Victoria

is a charity serving elderly Victorians  
 needing affordable, safe, dignified  
 independent community living and  
 appropriate, practicable continuing care.

Located at 339 St Helena Road, St Helena is an 81 bed Residential Aged Care Facility, incl 1 Respite Room.

Our facility "**Liscombe House**" comprises 3 sections:

- **Liscombe Wing** - 39 rooms
- **Currie Wing** - 22 single rooms, 4 double rooms located within a totally secure unit
- **Anne Jeffery Wing** - 12 rooms (dementia specific) located within a totally secure unit.

**For all enquiries please contact:  
 Residents' Coordinator - Karen Ernest on 9433 1100**



## **Tour North Eastern Victoria Holiday “Lakes and High Country”**

### **ITINERARY TOUR “A” ( 6 NIGHTS 7 DAYS)**

#### **Day 1. Pick up from Albury Railway Station**

Today we pick you up from the Albury Railway Station, and transport you to the Tallangatta Motor Inn via the scenic Lake Hume.

#### **Day 2. Hume Weir / Dartmouth**

This morning we travel to the Hume Weir Wall, for our morning tea, from here we travel east, through the very scenic and rich dairying Mitta Mitta Valley. Up at the Dartmouth Dam we can compare the heights of both storage areas, and if season permits see the truly spectacular cascades. We now return to the township of Dartmouth for our B.B.Q lunch. After lunch we travel home through the full length of the Mitta Mitta Valley, arriving back in Tallangatta for afternoon tea.

#### **Day 3. Rutherglen Wineries / Corowa / Yackandandah**

Today we're travelling west, through Albury, to Howlong, where we stop for morning tea. We then cross back over the border and head to Morris Brothers Winery, to sample the wines produced by this very highly regarded vineyard. From here it's back over the border to Corowa where we have our B.B.Q. lunch by the Murray River. We then travel through Rutherglen and Chiltern, travelling to Yackandandah and the bakery for afternoon tea on our way home to Tallangatta.

#### **Day 4. Corryong / Khancoban**

Travelling north east today, we head through the very large pine plantation at Shelley, on our way to Corryong for morning tea. This is where Jack Riley, the real 'Man from Snowy River' lived. Then it's on to Khancoban, for a short tour of this Snowy Township. The impressive Murray 1 Power Station is our next stop for a tour and our B.B.Q. lunch. We then travel back to Corryong for our afternoon tea at the newly renovated Corryong Museum.

#### **Day 5. Myrtleford / Bright / Mount Beauty**

South east is the direction we travel today, to the tobacco and hop growing area of Myrtleford, then onto Porpunkah where we have morning tea on the banks of the Ovens River at the foot of Mt Buffalo. Now it's just a short trip into Bright. We will complete a tour of the town, and while our B.B.Q lunch is being prepared, you'll have the opportunity to spend time walking and exploring this great town. After lunch we travel up the mountain to Tawonga lookout, here we look down on the spectacular Kiewa Valley, and across to Victoria's highest Peak, Mt Bogong. Then it's down to Mt Beauty for a decadent afternoon tea at the Mt Beauty Bakery. Tonight we take you into the Albury Commercial Club for dinner.

#### **Day 6. Yackandandah / Historic Beechworth**

Today we discover Beechworth, travelling through the historic gold mining town of Yackandandah, we have morning tea at Lake Sambell (site of the Old Rocky Mountain Gold Mine) before taking a tour of this most famous Gold Town, We visit the Murray Brewery and their famous Carriage Museum, then its time for our B.B.Q lunch, after lunch you have time to walk around this historic town, meeting at the famous Beechworth Bakery for afternoon tea. From here it's back home to Tallangatta for dinner.

#### **Day 7. Peard's Nursery and Café Borella**

This morning we take a tour of Tallangatta, then head into Albury and visit Café Borellas, set in the beautiful gardens of Peard's Nursery, for morning tea. From here we make our way to the Albury railway station.



# SOUTH PACIFIC CRUISE-2015

*Although it is almost 12 months since we went on our South Pacific cruise we thought you might be interested to read a more detailed account. As we will be doing a cruise when we go to Hawaii next year members might be encouraged to join us and have an enjoyable time as we did. It certainly is a relaxing and indulgent way to travel.*

On 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2015, 16 National Seniors members and 5 friends boarded a Qantas flight from Melbourne to begin our cruise on the Royal Caribbean ship “Radiance of the Seas”. Elaine Brook had a lovely surprise on the flight when she and 3 others were offered champagne to celebrate her birthday.

On arrival in Sydney we were picked up by a mini bus for our transfer to the ship and on the way were entertained by the driver who gave us a travel commentary intermingled with his jokes. What a sight the Radiance was when we spilled from the bus that seemed dwarfed by the size of this magnificent ship. To the left of the ship was our Harbour Bridge and on the right the Opera house which enhanced the view of the ship.

It was a seamless start to our holiday. Well, not all of us. Val & Jim Kindness had planned to travel to Sydney for a few days prior to our departure but in the end travelled on the same day but with Jetstar. Hours later, frazzled, they burst on to the scene. Their flight had been cancelled and they were forced to pay \$800 EACH to ensure their connection. Thank goodness for travel insurance. Once on the ship we were thrilled to find friendly cabin crew who knew and used our names whenever they met us and kept our rooms neat and clean. Gordon Wood celebrated his birthday aboard and Maria his cabin staff made a cake out of towels and quite a little display to sit on the bed. There were more celebrations with a small individual cake and candle presented to Gordon at dinner where our group sang happy birthday. The fun didn’t stop there. Back in the cabin there was another large plate of petit fours and savoury delights from the catering staff. What could they do with them? Everybody had already eaten so much, so they were shared with friends who were in the Colony bar late that night.

Our eyes popped at the sight of all the lovely food which we discovered at various places around the ship. In fact we could have eaten all day if that was what we wanted! Groan! The service at our dining table of an evening was just the best from charming staff. Nothing was too difficult for them. Our group was on 2 large tables next to each other and we moved around each night getting to know each other better.

For breakfast we went to either the buffet, or in the dining room where we were escorted to a table to share with others not part of our group. It was interesting to hear how many cruises some people had been on. Many were families who regularly took as many as 7 children with them. Asking one couple what their children did all day, they couldn’t tell us. We could see how cruises for a family are a good option! Most of us had buffet lunches and it was lovely to be greeted by a friendly wave inviting us to share a table.

After dinner there was a mass exodus to get to the theatre for the evening’s entertainment which was of a high standard including dancing, soloists and groups, a hypnotist and a comedian. Some of us then continued on to the Schooner Bar or Colony Club for more entertainment and dancing. Two of our most senior seniors, Val & Jim, bopped on til midnight most nights and sang themselves hoarse in the Schooner Bar. They were dab hands at quizzes too.

During the day there were quizzes, also demonstrations of napkin folding, towel folding, fruit carving etc. Some of our group (mainly friends) made good use of the casino and bingo. Unfortunately there were no big wins to report. Dress attire was mainly casual with 2 formal nights and some theme nights.

Our cabins couldn't have been in a better location. We were close to the dining room, theatre and casino and Centrum lounge where we often met each other during the day, or evening prior to dinner. Lifts took us to the buffet & pool.

Unfortunately one of our group had to contend with the noisy engine for 2 nights (not even ear plugs helped) however she was subsequently moved to a better cabin location. Jeanet Coomera and Val Johnson had to be treated by the onboard doctors - Jeanet had an ongoing problem with nose bleeds and Val lost a toenail (ouch)!

Visiting those fairly unspoiled islands with their friendly people was a real eye-opener. Despite having the minimum of benefits that we take for granted, we were all greeted with big wide smiles from the children and most adults. We often did excursions together sharing new experiences and cutting down on costs. On the Isle of Pines we had a drive around the village seeing the immaculately cared for homes and gardens. Then it was free time to enjoy the pristine warm waters and beaches and maybe indulge in a drink of fresh coconut water.

Just prior to departure Vanuatu was devastated by a cyclone and we were not able to go ashore there and to Mystery Island. Missing them was a disappointment but we were much better off than the cyclone affected communities. Because we had extra time on board we had a wonderful bonus when the captain manoeuvred us as close as we could be to an active volcano where we saw the red reflections on the clouds. This was the same night as a lunar eclipse. A magical night!

At Luganville a group of us shared a mini bus visiting a cultural centre to see women making music by beating water in a pool, a native dance and kava tasting. One of our group wrote "I am glad that we did not have to face cannibals as did the missionaries of long ago - but the tiny sip of kava that I tasted must have been just as numbing to those long ago travellers as they tasted it for the first time. I wonder if Captain Cook tasted kava and did it help him zig-zag his way home?" Marg was hugged by a very sweaty dancer and her body and clothes were smeared with brown war paint. Nothing a shower and soap couldn't fix. Then, on another mini bus we drove through the picturesque country ending up at a great bar with wonderful views.

At Lifou some of us hired a mini bus which had a non English speaking driver who for 2 hours drove at breakneck speed to cover the itinerary promised. One of the venues was to be shopping. Imagine our surprise when she pulled up in front of an out of the way poorly stocked supermarket. We made the most of it and bought ourselves an ice-cream. Returned safely to our ship we stayed ashore and witnessed some local dancing and wandered amongst the little market.

Champagne Bay was a hit with its beautiful views of islands and blue seas surrounding it.

In Noumea, many of us had booked an on board tour travelling on a tchou tchou train. It was worth doing as we learnt about the history and covered lots of territory.

On all of these islands we were able to enjoy a swim and on some a snorkel amongst the coral and sea life.

There was strong sentiment that being with our group made the experience even more enjoyable. We all had a wonderful relaxing social time together.