

Visit to Lodge Discovery No. 8737 Vanuatu

The Prince of Wales Lodge 1338 EC

Under the United Grand Lodge of England

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2009

The Installation of Bro. K Thomas and Investiture of his Officers

Over the years this Installation has been supported by a group of English Masons from NZ.

Robin (my wife) and I were invited to go to Vanuatu to attend the Installation and to then go to the island of Tanna to follow up on the hospital equipment the Prince of Wales Lodge had donated previously.

The departure date in March soon arrived and we all gathered at the airport under the watchful eye of Camp Leader W. Bro. Gerry Burns.

The flight was only 3 hours, which passed very quickly without the aid of flight movies, which were not available anyway. The back of the plane was

filled with men from Vanuatu, returning from working in the orchards in NZ.

I was surprised how green and lush the area was, as we landed at Port Vila. We were greeted by a group of musicians and each given a shell lei.

The accommodation was at 'The Moorings Hotel' close to town, which was quite adequate for our needs with a swimming pool, bar and restaurant and nightclub.

The members of the Lodge of Discovery were very hospitable, beginning with a BBQ at the home of the Master Elect, where we could meet the other members.



Maternity Unit, Tanna Island

Our first full day there, was a free day, so we went to the township nearby to explore. That night we went for dinner at a nightclub and were entertained by a very talented group,

The third day ...

The third day we were booked for a boat trip to visit a turtle farm and to go snorkelling/swimming around a coral beach.

The departure was delayed due to the bus being 30 minutes early (according to us) and they found our group still eating breakfast. We eventually left

and travelled over roads with huge water filled potholes, which were apparently getting worse each year with the lack of maintenance.

The boat was a yacht, as the usual boat was being serviced.

The turtles were fascinating to observe at their various stages of development. Some of us went snorkelling, but support for this activity was limited due to the night before and one even felt seasick swimming.

Trips into town were frequent, as this was an easy walk and the coffee and food at the local French Café was very good.



Saturday and Sunday



Saturday arrived all too quickly for the Installation, which was at 1600hrs.

It all went very smoothly with addresses given by some of our group. Our wives were picked up at the hotel on the way and we then proceeded to the black tie dinner at 'Le Lagon Resort' This was a splendid affair with silver service and hotel staff attending to our every need.

The ladies were all given



gifts and the food was superb.

Sunday was the day we flew to Tanna Island. The trip was about 30 minutes in a very small plane.

We stayed at the White Grass Ocean Resort in separate bungalows with mossie nets over the beds.

The bungalows faced out to sea and had little visitors running around looking very like geckos. All

harmless and friendly it seemed. A trip to see the active volcano Yasur was planned for the day we arrived, so an adventurous group of us set off in 2 Hi-Lux 4-wheel drive vehicles.

The roads were a track and our trip was halted by a rising stream, in full flood at the base of the volcano. Back we went/ bumped to the Resort for a well-deserved dinner



The real Paramount Chief

Brian Westhead was determined to go and the next day he managed to get to the top of the volcano. He took some great photos.

We went to visit a market and then drove to the hospital and saw the equipment that had been donated.

The hospital was very 3rd World and the Canadian doctor we spoke with was very grateful for the equipment. We noted many areas within the

hospital that we could help with and these were duly noted.

The trip to a village to see the 'Black Magic and Kava Tasting Show' was quite an experience. Apart from the frights we had from the young villagers hiding in the bush it was certainly very entertaining.

They showed us the tiny schoolroom and we met the children, who sang very beautifully for us.

We met the real Paramount Chief and waited as Dave Roberts became the 'new' Paramount Chief with all the splendour befitting a King.

All good fun until we were invited to taste the very potent kava.

"The hospital was very 3rd World and the Canadian doctor we spoke with was very grateful for the equipment."

The flight back

The flight back to Port Vila came all too quickly and we braved the small plane again, with a pilot who didn't look old enough to be in charge. It was a perfect landing and he was congratulated.

The same night we were hosted by the local Lodge to drinks and nibbles at our favourite nightclub right by the marina.

We flew back to Auckland, leaving at the crack of dawn and arrived tired from the early start and the busy trip which was so well organised by our Camp Leader.

A big thank you is due to Gerry for organising such a wonderful trip and many thanks to all the others, who were so much fun to be with.

W.Bro. Graeme Martin
The Prince of Wales Lodge
1338 EC
Auckland 2009