

BUSH TELEGRAPH

August, 2004

As the current Federal Government believes there should be no retiring age and because John (Sinclair) isn't really a retiring type, GO BUSH has planned a full program of safaris for 2005. In addition to those safaris in the brochure we have other (not advertised) safaris being conducted for other groups.

We have a full group for our Thailand trip which we foreshadowed in our last Bush Telegraph. It will tour the Golden Triangle before venturing down the mighty Mekong River to the World Heritage city of Luang Prabang. We are looking forward to this which we may also repeat in 2007.

Thailand-Laos though will not be our only overseas trip in 2005 because we are planning a wonderful cruise up about 200 kilometres of another mighty river, the Sepic, to discover the rich indigenous cultures of our nearest international neighbour. We will be living aboard the air-conditioned "Miss Rankin", a large steel vessel owned and operated by Tony and James Collins. We met them when the "Miss Rankin" was engaged at short notice to undertake our 2003 Top of Australia Cruise. They were born in New Guinea and were so enthusiastic about the scenic variety, the culture and the abundant marine diversity there that we decided that it was an opportunity not to be missed.

Our experience with the "Miss Rankin" on the 2003 Top of Australia Cruise was both wonderful and very fortuitous. At the last minute it was able to come down from its Madang base to take 28 very grateful and happy souls on a superb cruise exploring the Northern Section of the outer Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait, and some major features of coastal Cape York Peninsula. As anyone who was on the trip (including the two who met on the trip and who will be married this month) can attest, it was an adventure not to be missed. While the 2004 Cruise was fully booked out early there were some cancellations. **Presently two vacancies exist.** The "Miss Rankin" is not a luxury vessel but it is comfortable and meets our needs and can go to places that larger vessels can't.

Fitting in the PNG cruise into the most optimum time has caused a major reshuffle of many other safaris. It has meant that we will not be offering the Top of Australia Cruise as well in 2005 although we are planning to include another Great Barrier Reef cruise in 2006.

The ever popular Kimberley Adventure has now been pushed back to midwinter — July. This year the Wet season lingered into June dampening the beginning of our safari. So we are assured of drier weather next July for what may be John's final safari to the Kimberley where we have many friends.

The changed Kimberley Dates mean that extremely reluctantly we are giving our wonderful Tropical Rainforests and Reef Safari trip a miss in 2005 but we propose to revamp the itinerary for 2006 to include some new features.

Our trip to Shark Bay and Western Australia's wildflowers last September was again a most memorable and moving experience. This is Australia's hottest spot for biodiversity and one which has so far inexplicably been overlooked for World Heritage nomination by both state and federal governments. Although we couldn't fit it into this year's crowded agenda we are determined to include, (perhaps for the last time) in 2005

Also by popular demand we will be repeating the Uluru - Red Centre trip in 2005. Our 2004 trip (which we are still to do) was booked out 12 months ahead. It is a camping trip and as our Northern Territory based camping gear nears the end of its "use-by" date we don't anticipate running this safari again after next year.

Two of our ever popular safaris are Lord Howe Island and Kakadu. We prefer to visit Kakadu in *Gudjewg* (the Green Season) when we virtually have the park to ourselves and the place is in such a contrast to the dry season most popular with hordes of less adventurous tourists. Surprisingly though many people are put off because they think it will be too hot, Kakadu's February temperatures are not as hot as some other months.

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Lord Howe Island is one of those very special places which once seen will remain indelibly in the mind's eye because of its scenic attractiveness. We get more exercise walking forest trails than any other trip. The last 8 safaris there have been fully booked. We plan to continue to offer them as long as the justifiable demand continues.

The other island of incredible appeal as well as being the one with the greatest significance for GO BUSH Safaris is Fraser Island. It is where John first started leading camping safaris for the public back in 1968. In the 36 years since it has lost none of its draw and it is the place we return to with groups most often. Our safaris there enable us to develop the logistics to assist with removing some of the weeds which represent one of the biggest threats to the long-term integrity of Fraser Island if they escape the small townships into the National Park. In the last year our camping gear has been used for two weeding bees and they will doubtless be used more in the future.

We are often quizzed about what is John's favourite spot or favourite safari. The short answer is he loves them all. They are all different and all have special appeal. We are reluctant to give up any.

The advent of digital photography has made a big impact on all safaris as the use of these new cameras becomes more common. On most safaris now we can expect about five or six. At the end of the day there is competition to use our laptop computer. Photographers are keen to download their images and see them in larger format. The diary writers have continued to maintain a high standard of creative writing to record the events of the day for posterity.

The digital age has resulted in an explosion of images. Our wonderful Intrepid Guide, Ian Morris, who is also renowned for his photography has been converted to digital cameras. On each of the safaris he has accompanied us on — Top of Australia Cruise, Kakadu in the Wet, and Kimberley Adventure, he has presented everyone on the safari with a CD of the best images he captured during the safari. They are wonderful enduring records. We have been honoured to have Ian (or a number of other nick-names) accompany us on four GO BUSH safaris both this year and next.



This is a painting of the Wardaman People's Lightning Brothers, being presented to John by the artist and one of Australia's living treasures, Billy Harney. It was captured by Ian on his digital camera. Billy has been involved with GO BUSH for many years, but he is only one of many Aboriginal Australians who have so enriched our safaris which have access to culture that most travellers don't get to see. We thank, Billy, Willigan, Erica, Karranji, Malcolm, Badger, Rosanna and the many others who have shared their culture with us, not to mention Goyma.

Of course there have been many other helpers we would also like to thank. Su (Tokiko) Dawson has been involved in many trips. Because of her great culinary skills we take her on as many trips as she is willing to go on with us. Su adds a special personality to the trip and makes our catering loads much lighter. There are also the other helpers and assistants, Alan Notley, Bino Bill, Wamut, Smithy and George. GO BUSH wouldn't be the same without them. We thank everyone for turning our work into such enjoyable experiences.

As long as we enjoy good health and relish the experience of the many adventures we undertake we look forward to continuing to offer them even without the encouragement of our government to "work till we drop".

Trusting you enjoy your travels,

John Sinclair & Sharan Daly