



NEWS FROM NORBS ABROAD

WWW.MAF-UK.ORG/NORBURY

May 2022



Hello everybody!

TRACY WRITES...

Welcome to this month's bumper edition to mark our one-year-in-PNG anniversary! Due to some other brilliant stuff happening in MAF (more below), we couldn't fit in a party so we are using this update as our chance to celebrate. On the back pages you'll find a selection of pictures and snippets from my journal – we hope they are eye-opening!

But back to the present: we are feeling rested and reset having been out of town for a total of two weeks over the past two months. We went to our 'holiday home'/guest-house in Kudip for Fraser and my birthday weekends and spent a glorious week in Sangapi for our bush orientation.

In Sangapi we shared a house with an absolutely lovely young couple who run the village medical clinic. They very graciously allowed our kids to 'help' them with jobs and harass their newborn chicks each day. We discovered that, just as in the UK, the kitchen is the heart of the home; however, in PNG the kitchen is a separate building called a 'haus kuk'. It is cleverly designed to extract the smoke from the cooking fire and also has space for folks to sit, chat and warm their toes on the cold Sangapi mornings.

How was Sangapi?

- **Beautiful:** nestling on a ridge in the mountains of Madang province at an elevation of 6,200 ft, we were surrounded by incredible views.
- **Restful:** we read books! We went for walks! We ate instant noodles! We had naps IN THE DAYTIME!
- **Helpful:** we spoke lots of Tok Pisin and our kind housemates were good at teaching us. We learned what life is like when you can only get to the wider world on foot or in a light aircraft. We also had a go at planting food and cooking dinner over a fire in a *haus kuk*.
- **Refreshing:** our stay coincided with Easter weekend so we went to church five times in four days! It was a significant time in Oliver and Rosie's faith journeys and a privilege to be able to show The Jesus Film twice to a packed-out audience using a solar-battery, a sheet and a tiny video projector.

Upon our return home it was time to start preparing for the MAF four-day outreach event which took place in early May. This involved two HUGE tents, two hours of children's activities each afternoon, and an evening programme filled with the good news about Jesus and some insights into the work of MAF.

I had the joy and privilege of being part of the worship team and hanging out with some of the amazing musicians on the MAF staff. Our twelve or so hours of band practice in the week before and during the event brought us together with 'wanbel' (meaning 'peace/agreement' or literally 'one heart'). It was amazing to then spend four evenings with literally hundreds and thousands of folk from our part of town, praising God with many of them and explaining why we do what we do as an organisation – it's all for Him!

FRASER WRITES...

Life in the office carries on. Some days go well with new partnerships to contribute to, team members learning and growing and deadlines being hit. Other days the internet doesn't work, results don't come out as you expect and any hint of a deadline can be seen quickly disappearing in the rear-view mirror.

But I love it.

The mission, the team, the work. It is fantastic to be a part of it.

Even if you are NOT a person who prays we would love it if you could take a look at our election update on the right and maybe give prayer a try...

Our next newsletter is due out in July. To find out what is going on with us in the meantime please do look up 'Norbs Abroad' on YouTube and Facebook or simply email us!

Thank you for your interest, friendship, love and prayers. We simply couldn't do this without you, especially during election time!

With love and big grins from

Fraser, Tracy, Oliver and Primrose

ELECTION UPDATE

Thank you so much to those of you who have begun praying for PNG during this election season.

There was some civil unrest in Mount Hagen in mid-May as nominations opened but we are praising God that, since then, the streets have been largely peaceful (aside from the cars of political candidates patrolling the streets first thing in the morning and late at night to say 'good morning' and 'goodnight' to us all very loudly via megaphone!).

However, intimidation of voters and electoral irregularities are normal here and lead to a marked increase in community tensions.

Key dates:

- **Voting begins:** Saturday 9th July
- **Voting ends:** Friday 22nd July
- **Results published:** TBC

Please pray for WISDOM, COURAGE and RESTRAINT for...

...**police and army units** as they patrol the city

...**political candidates** as they campaign (it is normal for cash and beer to be distributed on the streets as incentives for voters)

...**community leaders** as they react to the tensions they encounter

...**church congregations** in Mount Hagen as they seek to be the hands, feet and face of Jesus here

Our mailing address:

MAF PNG,
PO Box 273/Kagamuga Airport,
Mount Hagen, WHP 281,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Sangapi: What an entrance!

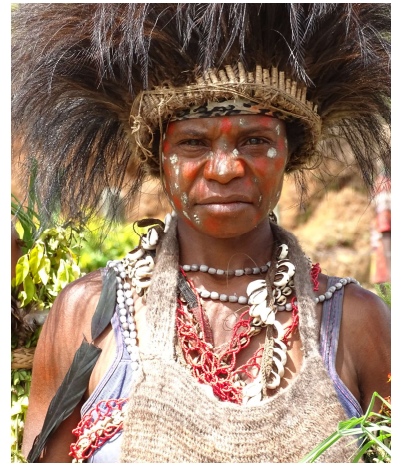
The traditional 'singsing' celebration that was being practiced as we touched down on the airstrip was not entirely/mostly for our benefit - our arrival coincided with a visit by the provincial governor.



This headdress features tree kangaroo:



While this one is all about cassowary feathers:



The view from our veranda in the mornings was good for the soul



Bilum dresses made from local materials



Watching the Jesus Film on Good Friday with a packed crowd



Jottings from my journal...

May 2021: *It's incredible that, out here at the limits of my known world, the folks who set up this hospital complex [at Kompiam] were able to get hold of some robust solar technology which means that we have electricity between 6 and 9pm. As it is currently 8.05pm this means I have almost an hour more in which I can sit under these two strip lights, revelling in this chance to write, and whooping my triumph over the voices that said I couldn't do this. That I couldn't be happy and full of peace without all the things I thought I couldn't live without.*



June: *On the dual-carriage highway that links town to the airport (only built last year so folk round here are still learning what traffic lights are for), I have been advised several times by experienced drivers to stay on the right to avoid folk stepping off the pavements into me and the little public minibus thingies pulling out without warning. I have also beaten my qualms into submission every time I've under-taken a Sunday-style driver who is taking that very same precaution (or who just doesn't know that there is a side they 'should' be on).*

July: *Although I feel like bursting into tears at some point on most days, there is nothing specific I can attach my upset to: my paranoia about crime and violence rates here has given way to confidence in the security features of our house/car, the buzz I get from making connections in the local community, and that peace which passes all understanding; my worries about the social lives and educational careers of my children are beginning to find their proper, more diminutive places in my heart; I'm not (yet?) resentful of the many things and people that wake me up most nights.*



August: *Last Friday I said yes to our first trip to the river. I clambered down the bank with the help of one of my companions and then clung to them for dear life as we headed out onto the riverbed in a twenty-metre stumble to the water's edge. I sat with my ankle in a pool in the water which made it feel just fine (although it looked pretty fat). Then when Rosie told me she needed a poo I whipped her quickly up onto my hip, clung to the shoulder of another companion and hop-along-ed my way to the long grass so she could get rid of her diarrhoea. It was clearly not ideal.*

September: I'm pretty sure that God's grace is very much at work here to keep MAF airborne. His grace is at work in the pilots, their trainers, those who find them somewhere to stay overnight and those who pack their lunches, the engineers who keep their aircraft in good shape, the stores guys who get hold of spare parts, the ground ops guys who refuel and pack cargo, the MAFCON team who work like crazy to monitor weather conditions, make flight plans and deal with contingencies, the finance folk who ensure all of these other folk get paid, the crazily-in-love-with-the-Lord country director who is determined that all of the above is done primarily for the glory of God and therefore to the highest possible standard.



October: Frase has now had the chance to check out the general extent of the rewards and frustrations he will experience at work. The kids have also been exploring the boundary fences of the life that the Lord has brought them to and have found that those fences are always pretty close-by. No strolling along our lane in the forest at supper time to smooth out the wrinkles in the day. (No strolling at all really as our city just isn't safe enough for that, and certainly not after 6pm!) No cloud of cousins to disappear into, only to reappear a couple of hours later with huge grins and stronger bonds. No church (because of lockdown), no singing along to the radio in the car (driving requires a LOT of concentration), no decent fish fingers...and you have to freeze pasta for three days when you buy it so that the weevils don't hatch.

January 2022: I was talking through [driving conditions in Mount Hagen] with my friend the other week, about how I was driving around feeling worried all the time. Her advice was this: just drive. Don't do the worrying part. It was amazing how talking this through with her and then hearing her advice was so freeing. She is a widow living in a settlement with her two children and no electricity or running water in her house. She lives here in Hagen which is not her 'ples' (home land/village). She entrusts her health and protection and that of her two boys to the Lord every day and does the same for me when we pray together a couple of times a week. So she just lives: she doesn't do the worrying part.



April: There are things that make me chuckle almost every day. One is seeing the hippest, coolest, 'streetest' young men here in Hagen walking around in women's tailored coats. It's the current thing to do if you're a fly-guy with a reputation. The flyest guys go so far as to wear ladies' fluffy dressing gowns. The UK equivalent might be seeing all the toughest blokes on a council estate wearing an array of shades of glittery nail varnish. Before arriving in PNG I certainly never expected to experience coat-envy when driving past a group of young men, especially in this climate!

Thank you for seeing us through the ups and downs!