

# ISLAND TIME: 191 MELANESIAN DAYS

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## #191Days Travel Log Day 181:

The national general elections are brewing. “VOTE” posters are up all around town and plastered on just about every taxi in sight. Lately there have been visits to college from local candidates campaigning for votes. This afternoon there were a couple of them that popped by and held an open forum for those eligible to vote in the area, something that excludes most of the college students as the majority are registered in other constituencies in their home islands. Today also marked the beginning of the Church’s General Synod in Honiara. Whilst being mindful of these things we largely spent the day trying to get out our previous set of logs – 9.0 is more of a challenge than we anticipated!

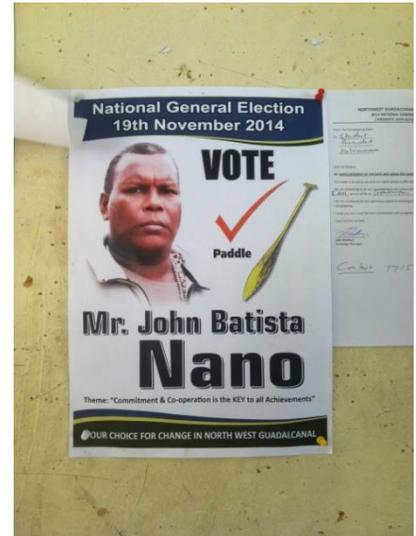
**Discovery of the day:** On the whole, and with less than two weeks to go you would hope so, most people have gotten used to us here. Some of the pikinini, however, still either giggle or shy away from us when we are wandering around the station! #OldHabits

## #191Days Travel Log Day 182:

This morning Peter assisted with communion, Melanesian style. This involved setting up and clearing away the altar as well as administering the chalice. It also involved being the thurifer for the first time during an actual service, under Fr. Kame’s watchful eye. All in all it went pretty well! After our 182<sup>nd</sup> day of sweating away we gathered for a Nine Lessons and Carols service in the evening (because the college community will not be together for Advent or Christmas). The service included a pretty good effort from the pikinini who have been practicing after chapel for the past couple of nights. Their nativity performance was a humorous and effective drama – even though Joseph was a bit violent in his rocking of the baby Jesus and the angels forgot some of their lines... #ChristmasIsComing

**Discovery of the day:** Although Kahu has been asked to share several recipes whilst we have been here, she now knows she has escaped from leading any actual cooking classes!

(8 November, 2014)



Above: Election candidates have been visiting the college.

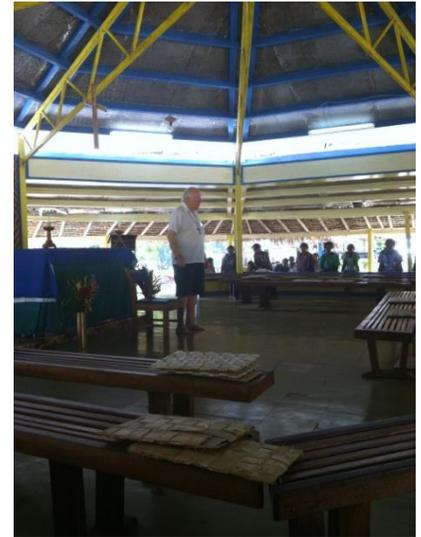


Above: the angels appear to the shepherds.

### #191Days Travel Log Day 183:

+George Connor, a foundation lecturer at the Kohimarama site and later bishop in New Zealand, came to visit today. He is over here for the General Synod which is being held in Honiara this week and has been busy preaching, speaking and leading the GS members in their pre-synod retreat. We almost missed the start of his visit here as when the bell went we had to rush back to the house to get changed! Thankfully we arrived just before the end of the singing of the college anthem, "Alma Matha." It was awesome to see him and hear some of his stories from his time at Kohimarama. We were not able to catch up with him properly but it was nice to see a familiar face as our minds increasingly contemplate returning to NZ. After +George's brief visit, we all carried on with our daily tasks. For the students, this meant doing what they can to make sure things are ready for the fast approaching graduation.

**Discovery of the day:** Water and pipe problems at college are not a new thing. Apparently they have been happening since before +George was here, when it was used for St. Andrew's Catechist School.



Above: +George Connor sharing some of his many stories.

### #191Days Travel Log Day 184:

We attended our second faculty dinner this evening – the second and final one for the year – mindful that it would be our last one. In addition to wrapping up the year, the main purpose of the dinner was to (allow the faculty to) farewell those faculty members and their families who will be leaving this year. Out of the seven of us leaving, five were there. Rev. Milton was busy finishing things off in his office, ready to hand over the reins tomorrow; and, Biu has gone back to the Western Province. The Deputy Principal, who is not leaving, was unable to attend because he and his wife are in Fiji for his own graduation on Thursday! We ate a whole lot of food and shared stories about our times together. The evening ended with a final glass of wine at the principal's house in the early hours of Wednesday morning, a nice end to a long night.

**Discovery of the day:** With just a week to go now we, and some of the college community, are beginning to get a little emotional about our impending departure! It is coming about very quickly. #HomeTimeSoon



Above: Faculty pikinini waiting for dinner.

**#191Days Travel Log Day 185:**

There were a few groggy faces and slow starts amongst the faculty this morning. The principal made it off to General Synod after what must have only been two or three hours of sleep. The rest of us took things quietly and surprisingly managed to be productive nonetheless. We are in the midst of feasts, farewells, and organizing what things we will take with us and not. There seems to be something happening each day (or rather evening) that manages to keep us busy and rather tired. Some ill effects are being noted a little with both of us suffering minor ailments. Kahu is getting a sore throat and runny nose and Peter has a sort of rash on his feet and fingers. A trip to the clinic was called for (for Peter) and one into town tomorrow to pick up some of the fancy Western remedies, like Strepsils, will hopefully do the trick!

**Discovery of the day:** Looks like we will need to get our wooden dolphin – a gift from our lotu group – certified by Solomons Biosecurity as being critter-free here before it can make the trip to NZ.



Above: Chaplain of the MBH, Fr. Nokia, keeping the spirits of those visiting the clinic up.

**#191Days Travel Log Day 186:**

Kahu’s throat continues to be about as fun as a pain in the neck this morning. So, with graduation on tomorrow we decided it was better for her to rest at home rather than have to endure the dust from town. This meant Peter got to make his first solo trip into town. The trip saw him spend a couple of hours in two separate lines at BSP in order to shut down our bank account and exchange some foreign currency. The time waiting in line confirmed for Peter what Kahu had initially said to him, “don’t choose a bank because of its colour.” Peter had liked BSP because it was green, just like Kiwibank. Unfortunately that was the only similarity between the banks – with our BSP experience being pretty much entirely disappointing. #LessonLearnt

**Discovery of the day:** Newspapers here are not like newspapers in NZ.

We had noticed this a while ago but sitting down to read one whilst waiting for the trip back to Kohi drove this point home for Peter. There are many church-related articles and the quality of the editing leaves much to be desired.



Above: The story about the U.S was so good they thought they’d put it twice.

### #191Days Travel Log Day 187:

Graduation day is here! Which means we got to play dress up. It was a big day for both the year four diploma students graduands, and their wives. They are the only ones to graduate today. Peter and Fr. Benedict got to wear their cool new masters hoods for the first time (as both graduated this year in absentia). Things ran a little late as the +James, who agreed to represent the Archbishop at the graduation, was only just leaving Honiara when the ceremony was due to start. The guest speaker, a leading civil servant, suggested we wait for the bishop and so we began about an hour later than we had intended to. That, thankfully, was the only setback in an otherwise great occasion. We were even blessed with relatively cool weather, meaning we did not drench our regalia! The speeches, graduation and feasting all went well and people seemed very content.

**Discovery of the day:** The last graduation for diploma students at Kohimarama precedes the first two STM diploma graduations by about two weeks, with these events scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November.



Above: The graduating Diploma year four students. Huge congratulations to them all.

### #191Days Travel Log Day 188:

The enevitable pack is here. It seems strange to look around our house now that the pictures and things are off the walls. We are trying to be super on to it and have things organised before we need to so that we can enjoy our last few days here at Kohi without the stress of packing. It is amazing to think how much we have come to love our little house. Sure it took a little while to get used to things – the water not running, the rats, the cockroaches, oh yeah and the ants – but they were nothing that we couldn't handle. People are bringing small gifts around to our place with great regularity and our suitcases grow increasingly heavy. Thankfully, we have been able to find many things we can give away or leave behind that will be useful. Helpfully, the principal has explained to the college that we will be employing an NZ custom, the garage sale, to help with that; most of our non-gift items go to the chapel and will be sold for a small amount to help with the chapel's fundraising.

**Discovery of the day:** We are beginning to suspect that Bonaventure knows we are leaving. It is not just that he is hanging out in our bags but he is smoochier than normal, too – this doesn't mean he is any less aggressive or gluttonous though! #CrazyCat



Above: Awwwww.

### #191Days Travel Log Day 189:

Today was a big day for the diploma students as they were commissioned for their sending out back into their dioceses. This morning also marked our last Sunday Eucharist at Kohi for the year. The day was filled of celebration and yet more food as the college dished out its various sporting awards and certificates. The Women's Programme participants received their certificates for completing the programme as well as their certificates for completing the literacy workshop and the Positive Parenting course. It was a long, hot day in the sun and under the mango trees. The atmosphere was relaxed and there were plenty of jokes to keep us from snoozing too seriously! In the evening we carried out our chapel duties for the final time. Peter sang and led most of Evensong for the first and last time, and Kahu read for the last time.

**Discovery of the day:** Our house is quite spacious. With most of the rooms now quite bare and things packed away, there is plenty of space to...look at!



Above: Commissioning day.

### #191Days Travel Log Day 190:

Sarah took us into Honiara for what was our last deliberate trip into town today. It marked the final chance to get any gift shopping done, which we mostly did. We visited the college bursar, Andrew, and Jenny's new baby in Skyline (a Honiara suburb near the American WWII memorial, which we also visited); it was a great to see a new baby and it was wonderful to celebrate a birth after mourning so many deaths around the college community. We had a good look around the markets and did all the last minute things we needed to – including buying our last cream buns! The temperature was a little cooler than normal and the dust didn't seem so invasive, which as nice. It was also a little strange not to come back carrying bags of groceries as we have done every other time we have been to town. When we got back to Kohi we joined in the graduation committee's breakup tea and coffee evening which also included a toast with warm SB...a weird end to our last full day in Solomon Islands.

#OneMoreSleep

**Discovery of the day:** DJ's Designs, one of the main tourist shops in Honiara, is clearly the place to buy gifts. We bumped into several people from college there who we later discovered were buying gifts for us!

(28 October, 2014)



Above: The American WWII memorial.

### **#191Days Travel Log Day 191:**

This morning we said see you later to Kohimarama. It was with a mixture of emotions that we farewelled our home, our cat and our community. We are definitely sorry to be leaving but also excited about returning to New Zealand. It will also be neat to be able to share some of the Kohi and Church of Melanesia story in NZ, as well as, of course, being a small part of it. The drive to the airport was an interesting one. We headed up a small train of vehicles from Kohi who came to farewell us at the airport. As we drove along, we encountered numerous candidates' campaigning convoys. These masses of people were decked out in their candidates colours and were beeping their horns and chanting (read: yelling) loudly. After negotiating our way through them and the traffic mess they were making we finally arrived at the airport and said our goodbyes. Then we did the whole airport thing, got on the plane in one country and get off in another, in this case Brisbane. It was great to be picked up at the airport by Denise Ferguson and her daughter, Cara. We look forward to staying with them for the next couple of days – a neat way to start our journey back towards life in NZ.

**Discovery of the day:** We will most definitely miss these Solomon Islands.  
#191DaysNomoa



**Above: Farewells at the airport. Ka kite BPTC!**