

## KTA Get-Together 2007

*Patrick J Somerville QPM (MC for the event)*



*Councillor and Mrs Dow with the Kiribati Tungaru Dance Group*

On Saturday 28 July 2007 at the Brockenhurst Village Hall local dignitaries, including Councillor Ken Thornber CBE Leader of the Hampshire County Council and Councillor Bill Dow, Leader of the New Forest District Council and Mrs Dow, attended the Kiribati Tungaru Association Annual Independence Celebrations.

The Association is the membership organisation for people from The Republic of Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands) now living in UK and brings together many I Kiribati people and their families and people from elsewhere in Britain, Holland and Germany, who have close associations with the islands going back to when it was a British Colony prior to Independence in 1979.

The participants, many of whom camped for the weekend at the nearby Foxlease Girl Guide Camping ground at Lyndhurst, first held an annual general meeting and then formally welcomed their guests. Mr Michael Walsh, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Kiribati, welcomed the guests, proposed the toast to the Independent Republic of Kiribati and invited a senior member, Mrs Mary Douglas, to cut the ceremonial cake.



*Councillor Ken Thornber welcoming the Association.  
Hon. Consul Michael Walsh seated*

There followed a traditional buffet meal including roast pig and island foods including taro, breadfruit and other delights.

The highlight of the afternoon programme was the display of traditional dancing by the Kiribati Tungaru Dance Group comprising people of all ages wearing traditional costumes hand made here in England.

The group dances at various events during the year, most recently at the British Museum in London. Councillor Thornber welcomed the Association to Hampshire and recalled that when he worked for Unilever he had spent some time in the nearby Solomon Islands and was familiar with the island culture and dancing traditions.

Councillor Bill Dow and Mrs Dow enjoyed the full programme of dancing and expressed on behalf on the New Forest District Council his delight that the KTA had chosen to come to Brockenhurst for this their 15th annual celebration.

The programme continued into the evening with more dancing, and sports for the younger people.



*A message from KTA Chairman, Agnes Henson-Derby*

Thanks to all the members and families for their support and especially our hosts Kabure and Ivor Blake, Aorita Andrewartha and their families. Our thanks too goes to Paul who kindly used his van for ferrying things for the whole weekend. And again we owe a huge thanks to the Committee Members and their families for their continuing hard work year after year.

The dancers were wonderful and the dances are just fantastic. Keep it up. Good words have spread out and now the KTA Dancers are being invited by the Commonwealth Secretariat to perform at their show next March 08.

We were honoured to have our local representative and our fellow islanders joining us on the day.

Once again thank you all and see you again at Great Dunmow 25th - 27th July next year 2008.