

Te Buu 2009



A very Warm Greetings!

As the new chairperson of the KTA I am delighted to write a few words to introduce myself to those of you whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting yet. But first I must thank those of you who put me at the helm of the KTA for your trust in me and I hope I will be able to justify that trust. However, being a new comer to the UK, still adjusting and adapting, life for me is still full of surprises and uncertainties let alone leading the KTA.

It is more than a year since I left Kiribati in March 2008 to come and live in Bristol with my husband, Richard Turpin. Actually we got married in Kiribati in 2005 when I was still a member of parliament for Onotoa constituency and we lived in Kiribati for more than two years. I lost my seat during the last election held in 2007 which made it possible for me to come to the UK to join Richard after a few months of separation. What a blessing to come and live in the UK after having gone through such a hectic and busy life in Kiribati.

I am originally from the island of Maiana but I have adopted Onotoa as my home island after living and working for the people of Onotoa for many years beginning when my late husband Tewareka Tentoa was their MP from 1982 to 2000 the year he rested in peace and later when I carried on his good work when I won the bye-election at the beginning of 2001 until I lost my seat in 2007. But before all these I spent a good part of my working life with the University Centre in Kiribati and as a primary school teacher in Bairiki.

Life in the UK is easy and I love it but I miss the Kiribati kind of life that I am so used to. Especially I miss the fun of going fishing sometimes or collecting shellfish or visiting friends or even having the whole of Sunday lazying in the maneaba with the family, sleeping or gossiping and enjoying the cool breeze. Listening to the



lapping of the waves against our sea wall and seeing the water pouring over it and spreading around our house often gave me a mix of joy and worry, while the kids from around our place will be jumping in and out of the water naked to cool themselves from the heat of the sun.

I suppose I have to explain why I said living in the UK is easy for me now. First and foremost I am no longer working full time or even to conform to community expectations and obligations either from the church or the community. I now can be who I am and get on with what needs to be done as time goes by at home and for our family here. With my kind husband to take care of things for us I have nothing to complain but to be grateful. I spend most of my time at home which may sound a bit dull but in actual fact I quite enjoy it as there is endless things to keep me busy. We have also an al-

lotment to keep me busy but harvesting time is what I enjoy most, especially the picking of the variety of fruits and berries. For me living in Bristol, one of the big cities and to be able to do all this is just unbelievable.

For the last 15 years or so KTA has been an important vehicle not only for social and good fellowship but also in harnessing and promoting our Kiribati culture particularly in the singing and dancing done on numerous events. To me KTA is also like a family club where each family unit can play a vital role to make the club strong. It is also a family club where members will take care of each other with respect. It is a club where one will find refuge in time of difficulty. As a new chairperson I hope to further strengthen our communication network and information sharing among our members and to instil a strong sense of belonging in the KTA. With your willingness, no doubt, the Committee will be able to make the KTA vibrant to everyone's satisfaction.

I hope this edition reaches you in good time to wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year

*Nei Beta Richard Turpin
Chairperson*

NEW COMMITTEE ELECTED

Reported by Mike & Rote

In accordance with the KTA Constitution, elections were due for the Committee at the 2009 AGM – the previous Committee having held office for three years.

The following were elected, in accordance with the Constitution that only members present at the AGM are entitled to vote:

Chairman Nei Beta Turpin
Treasurer Patrick Lawrence
Secretary Paul Chilton
Dance Organiser Nei Rotee Walsh
Dance Co-ordinator Nei Moyra Orme
Co-Trustee Clive Smith

THE KTA CELEBRATES THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

The KTA celebrated the 30th Anniversary in our usual style, at St Peters Hall in Carmarthen. Many members braved wet and windy weather to camp near Kidweli, outside Carmarthen; not all lasted the foul conditions of the second night!

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, election of the new General Committee, the Reports of the Chairman, Treasurer and Dance Organiser and the formation of a sub-Committee to review our Constitution are all shown elsewhere on the Website. Unfortunately our Secretary Paul Chilton could not attend; we are very grateful to Judith Waters for keeping the Minutes of the AGM in his absence.

After the formal proceedings were over, the guests assembled for the usual sumptuous lunch. Our Guests of Honour were the Mayor and Mayoress of Carmarthen, and the Secretary and her family, who joined in the proceedings with gusto, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves as illustrated.

The toast for the 30th Anniversary was proposed by the Honorary Consul, Michael Walsh, and two cakes cut: one for the Gilbert Islands 1979, and another for Kiribati 2009. The cakes were cut by Roddy Cordon and Sheila Rose. Then we

had our usual accomplished dancing display. An innovation for this year was stories and crafts for the children at tea-time, led by our retiring Chairman Agnes. After tea, members left in stages, but the dancers were so fired up that



they remained for another session...

These events require immense effort and special thanks are due, firstly, to Teka Wainwright for organising the venue and campsite; to all the cooks; to the dancers; and to everyone else who made the Celebration so successful.

KIRIBATI GOVERNMENT HONOURS JOHN SMITH, CMG

The following Press Release was made by the Kiribati Honorary Consulate on July 12th:

‘I am delighted to release the following message from the Secretary to the Cabinet, Government of Kiribati:

“I am pleased to inform that the Be-retitenti, acting in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet, has agreed to confer the Kiribati Grand Order/Ana Tokabeti Kiribati on Mr. John Smith CMG.

“The ceremony to bestow medals on awardees this year will be held on Monday 13 July at Bairiki, Tarawa and coincides with National Day celebrations. I would appreciate advice if Mr. John Smith were able to attend so we can confirm arrangements for the ceremony. Al-

ternatively, we could arrange for you to do the honours in the UK on behalf of Government at a time and place convenient to Mr. John Smith.

“Please convey my thanks to the UK Kiribati community for the nomination”.



The nomination was as follows:

'On behalf of the I Kiribati community in the UK, I have the honour to recommend Mr John Smith CMG, former Governor of the Gilbert Islands before Independence in 1979, for the award of ANA TOKABETI KIRIBATI.

'On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of Independence in 2009, it seems highly appropriate to honour the contribution that he made to the people of Kiribati, supporting the negotiation of Independence and in particular, facilitating the design of the unique political system that has served the nation since 1979. He made this contribution despite intense pressure from the UK for him to influence the I Kiribati decision makers to follow the 'conventional' route to Independence, and at personal cost.

'The political stability of Kiribati since independence, when compared to the less happy history of many of the former British dependencies that became independent with 'Westminster' constitutions at about the same time as Kiribati (in the Pacific and elsewhere), confirm John

Smith's foresight, wisdom and commitment to the nation of which he was then Governor. He has recently celebrated his 80th Birthday, and has now retired to live near his children. In our view, it is most right at this time to recognise his role in helping to build the independent Kiribati nation'.

The medal was formally presented to John Smith on October 17th at the Kiribati Consulate. A number of KTA Members attended, as well as John's friends and family

VISIT TO UK BY H. E. TE BERETITENTI

H.E. Te Beretitenti and party spent 24 hours in the UK in June en route to Geneva, where they attended conferences on reducing disaster risks (Global Disaster Risk Reduction Conference) and humanitarian issues (Global Humanitarian Forum), which are of course both vitally important to the Pacific. The Beretitenti was a keynote speaker at the latter meeting, talking about the impact of global warming.

President Tong was accompanied by the First Lady, Meme Tong, and officials. The President (who is also Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a Patron of PISUKI) stayed over at Heathrow for 24 hours for consultations with Michael Walsh, former PISUKI chairman, in Michael's capacity as the Kiribati Honorary Consul in the UK.

He also met members of the I Kiribati community in Britain, including the Committee of the KTA who he joined for lunch at the end of their meeting.

MAIANA DISASTER

We are very sorry to report the worst ever maritime disaster in the history of Kiribati, which took place the week after the 30th Independence between Tarawa and Maiana.

According to the Commander of the Police Maritime service 55 persons were believed to have been on board the 17-meter double-hulled canoe when it capsized on a journey between Tarawa and Maiana, bound for Independence

Day celebrations there. A total of 22 persons survived the incident, but 15 persons were confirmed dead and 18 are missing. Five people were able to swim ashore to raise the alarm.

Tessie Lambourne, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, emailed that:

'It was the most tragic maritime incident ever experienced. Everyone is still grappling with what happened and particularly those who lost loved ones. I still cannot believe that it actually happened. I was not here when bodies were found but I understand from descriptions that it was horrible finding decomposed bodies floating in the sea, some of which have lost limbs probably from sharks. I do hope that they died before the sharks attacked them. One of these bodies was of a pregnant woman and one of a baby, about one or two years old. It was horrible.

'The Beretitenti had all the survivors and bodies taken to his home in Teoraereke and families came to take their surviving or dead relatives home. On Tuesday this week, all flags were flown at half mast. The President is very distressed by all this.

'I am sure the Beretitenti would appreciate a message from you and the community during this difficult time'.

There was a special Memorial service in Tarawa on Friday 17th July. The following message from the UK I Kiribati Community was read out during the service:

'The I Kiribati Community in Britain and Ireland were deeply shocked to learn of the disaster between Tarawa and Maiana. We wish to express our great sorrow for the relatives of those who died or are still missing, and our best wishes for the speedy recovery of those who have survived. Our prayers are with you all today.

'Tia bon raoni ngkami naba mai ikai n ami rawawata. Baai aika aki kariaki ma tia karaua naba nanora iai n tatabemanira nako. Ai bon te katetekeraoi nakoia te koraki ake a taonnako waaia ao nakoia naba to koraki ake atiku imwia ma aia utu nako.'

The Beretitenti sent a personal message of gratitude to the UK community for their expression of solidarity during this difficult time.

WADDINGTON AIRSHOW 4TH & 5TH JULY 2009

Royal Air Force Station Waddington in Lincolnshire, the county that is considered by many to be the traditional heartland and spiritual home of the Royal Air Force, has been host since 1995 to the RAF's biggest air show.



It has a well-earned reputation for appealing to enthusiasts and families alike, and is considered to be one of the UK's top military air shows. At the suggestion of Alan Houseago from the Christmas Islands Veterans Association, who we had met at Weston Super

Mare, the KTA performed there this year in front of 90,000 people (the equivalent of nearly the whole population of Kiribati!).

A general report on the Show is available at: www.demotix.com/news/waddington-air-show-2009



Our trip was organised by Tony Staunnage and Derek Chappell of the Christmas Islands Veterans Association. We stayed in a Village Hall opposite Tony's house, and bussed to the venue on both Saturday and Sunday. Sadly Alan Houseago was not well enough to attend the display himself, and in fact he died of leukaemia at the end of July. His funeral took place on Friday 31st July; the KTA Dancers sent condolences and flowers to it.

KTA ACCOUNTS 2008

		Opening balance 01/06/08	\$6,745.22
INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Subscriptions	\$940.00	Committee Meetings	\$176.84
Donations	\$85.00	New sletter & Admin	\$366.23
Interest on Savings	\$53.65	KTA Website	\$165.01
2008 Get-Together		2008 Get-Together	
Ticket Sales	\$2,035.00	Food, wine + bar stock	\$1,055.70
Camping Fees	\$190.00	Venue Hire, Insurance, etc	\$735.87
Auction, Bar + Raffle	\$773.90	Ind.Cake + disposables	\$137.34
Sale of T-shirts, flags, books	\$370.60	Banner, Name Tags, Printing	\$206.60
		T-shirts + flags for resale	\$266.11
2009 Get-Together		2009 Get-Together	
Ticket Sales	\$105.00	Carmarthen TC - venue dep.	\$100.00
		Tanylan Farm - campsite dep.	\$45.00
Total Income:	\$4,553.15	Total Expenditure:	\$3,254.70
		Excess of Income over Expenditure:	\$1,298.45
		Closing Balance 31/05/09	\$8,043.67
		Bank Reconciliation	
		plus an unrepresented cheque	\$47.90
		less monies yet to be deposited	(\$65.00)
		Balance at Bank 01/06/2009:	\$8,043.67
Patrick Lawrence,		Lloyds TSB Interest Earning Act	\$5,098.97
KTA Treasurer 1st June, 2009		Lloyds TSB Current Act	\$2,928.50

I have examined these accounts and supporting documents and am satisfied that they provide a fair and true summary of the transactions on the Kiribati Tungaru Association General Funds No2 Account for the year 1 June 2008 to 31 May 2009.

Peter Illsley,

Honorary Auditor, 7 July 2009

In other words:

At the start of the financial year (1st June 2008) KTA funds stood at almost £ 6,750 which had been saved from past year's surpluses and membership fees paid in advance for future years.

Between 1 June 2008 and 31 May 2009 the association received £940 in subscriptions and almost £140 from donations and interest earned on savings.

The KTA Committee held a small number of meetings, maintained the website and distributed the annual new sletter Te Buu.

As usual the main event of the year was the annual Get-Together which took place in Great Dunmow .

It cost £2400 to stage and £2225 revenue was collected in ticket sales and camping fees. An Auction, Bar sales, raffle and the sale of T-shirts, flags and books raised a further £1144.

Additionally the accounts include £105 worth of ticket sales for the 2009 Get-Together and approximately £150 of expenditure in the form of deposits on the venue and campsite for the same event.

On 31 May 2009 the KTA had a little over £8000 in the General Fund that includes membership fees paid in advance.

**THE KIRIBATI TUNGARU ASSOCIATION DANCE ACCOUNT
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE - YEAR ENDING 31ST MAY, 2009**

		Opening Balance 01/06/08:	\$2,483.81
INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Dance Display CXI Veterans	\$613.92	Venue Hire Dance Practices Chesham	\$430.00
Donation - Mr R Miller CXI Vets	\$102.00	CXI Veterans Reunion:	
Sale - Hawaiian Shirts CXI Vets	\$98.03	Purchases for resale	\$110.83
		Rooms & garlands	\$86.00
		Farewell Gift-Ionna+Tentau	\$506.79
		Westminster Abbey Display:	
		Coach hire + garlands	\$387.94
		Marlborough Hse Display-Travel Claim	\$50.00
Total Income:	\$813.95	Total Expenditure:	\$1,571.56
		Excess of Expenditure over Income:	(\$757.61)
Patrick Lawrence KTA Treasurer 1st June 2009		Closing Balance 31/05/2009:	\$1,726.20
		Bank Balance Dance Fund Act 31/05/2009:	\$1,726.20

I have examined these accounts and supporting documents and am satisfied that they provide a fair and true summary of the transactions on the Kiribati Tungaru Association Dance Fund Account for the year 1 June 2008 to 31 May 2009.

Peter Illsley,
Honorary Auditor, 7 July, 2009

In other words:

On 1st June 2008 the Dance Fund had approximately £2500 arising from surpluses from previous years.

During the period of these accounts (1 June 2008 to 31 May 2009) the dancers raised just over £800 from Dance Displays, donations and fund raising.

More than £950 was spent on the hire of venues for Dance Practices, accommodation, coach hire, travel claims and garlands.

Just over £500 was spent on a farewell gift of AUS\$1,120 for the Dance Instructors Ionna & Tentau who came from Kiribati for six months to teach the children of KTA members and greatly advance the skills of our Dancers.

On 31 May 2009 the Dance Fund stood at £1726.20.

KIRIBATI ENTERS MISS SOUTH PACIFIC CONTEST!

A Kiribati cultural group helped Professor Tony



Whincup launch his latest book amid a whirl of singing and dancing at Massey's College of Creative Arts in Wellington last week. Associate Professor Tony Whincup, who heads the School has always been interested in photographing and writing about Kiribati.

This is a fact acknowledged by the President of Kiribati, Anote Tong, in the foreword to the new book *Bwai ni Kiribati: Artefacts of Experience*, which celebrates the traditional skills and sustainable practices of Kiribati as the small Pacific island nation approaches 30 years of independence. "Each chapter draws attention to an aspect of our culture of which we as I-Kiribati, are rightly proud." Last year Professor Whincup was awarded the Kiribati Order of Merit for his services to the South Pacific island country

Kiribati will be making history this weekend when 18 year-old, Taumiri Tetuai joins young women from all over the region at the Miss South Pacific Pageant at Fiji's Albert Park. Miss Taumiri Tetuai will be the first to stamp Kiribati's mark in the 22- year history of the Miss South Pacific Pageant. Born in Kiribati but residing in New Zealand, Miss Taumiri will be representing Kiribati at the Miss South Pacific Pageant.

"Although I am currently living in New Zealand, I stand proud to be an I-Kiribati and this is why I am passionate about our culture which is all embraced in our language, dances, arts and many other ways that speak of our uniqueness as Ikiribati."

Miss Taumiri commented in an interview with the organizers of the Miss South Pacific Pageant in Fiji. The youngest from a family of five, Miss Taumiri has just completed her Form 7 at the Pukekohe High School in Auckland, New Zealand. She was crowned Miss Kiribati in Aotearoa in 2007 and she was awarded the Senior School Cultural Award by the Pukekohe High School for leadership and for tutoring in performing arts. Speaking from Suva, RMAI's Foreign Correspondent – Ms. Peniita Kabubuke said that the Kiribati community in Fiji are giving their hand in support for Miss Taumiri. "We are in the rushhour of getting final preparations done before our contestant arrives this afternoon from Auckland and we are grateful to Air Pacific for sponsoring return airfares for her."

Ms. Kabubuke said. While the Kiribati- Suva community are supporting Miss Taumiri in preparing costumes and traditional dresses, Ms. Kabubuke added that Fiji's Biggest Name in Hardware – Vinod Patel will be sponsoring Miss Taumiri's float and other expenses during the week-long event which kicks off this Saturday, 21 November 2009.



Themed "Preserving our Environment – The Pacific Way", Kiribati's inclusion for the first time ever at this year's Miss South Pacific Pageant is significantly prominent with Kiribati's concerns with the adverse effects of global warming affecting the low-lying islands of Kiribati.

Environment – The Pacific Way", Kiribati's inclusion for the first time ever at this year's Miss South Pacific Pageant is significantly prominent with Kiribati's concerns with the adverse effects of global warming affecting the low-lying islands of Kiribati.

A NEW MANAGER APPOINTED



Nick Harding (well known KTA member) will steer the first ever Aggregate Company in Kiribati in the years to come, is a construction engineer by profession and he is not new to Kiribati having worked in the

Pacific back in the early 1980s. Speaking from his temporary office within the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development, the Manager of the new Aggregate Company wants to be called simply as Nick. "I took up the challenge because I've had experience of 6 years working in tropical countries like Kiribati... first in Funafuti, Tuvalu and later on in the Solomon Island between 1982 and 1986," Mr. Harding said. When asked what he sees with the new Aggregate Company this is what he said; "I believe the new company will provide solutions to the social and environmental problems caused by drastic inland and coastal mining of aggregates... providing sustainable supply of aggregate to the public on South Tarawa will ease pressure on beach and inland mining." At present my work is focused on putting up the tender for our dredging barge and other machineries that will be needed for the company to be fully operational. "Knowing that such machineries will be available early 2011, from now until most of 2010 I will be dedicating my work on public awareness and consultations with the public and stakeholders," he added. Above all, Mr. Harding is no visitor to Kiribati because he's married to an I-Kiribati lady by the name of Nei Avira Harding. "I met my wife in the Solomon Islands in 1987, she's the daughter of Karotu Atoaia from Nonouti and Tabiteuea sadly he passed away in 1992, her mother is Nei Mare from Tamana and Arorae and she still lives in Gizo, Western Province of the Solomon Islands," he said. Nick says according to her passport, his wife was born in Manra Island, Phoenix Islands in Kiribati. The

couple had a son who is in school in Australia.

CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

BY RICHARD TURPIN

I did not know that the United Nations had made a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples until Beta was invited to speak at The Peirian Centre in Bristol at a Conference to mark the second anniversary of the Declaration in October.

It started off with some planning meetings bringing together various different speakers from different groups, from the Mapuche of South America, a Tibetan, a Lani from West Papua, a Jumma from the Chittagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh, and Beta from Kiribati, with a few others, academics, an explorer, Survival International, and the people from the Pierian Centre. The first part was a Cultural evening in September where each of the participating peoples shared some aspect of their culture, with Beta doing a dance in full costume to represent Kiribati. There were also displays of artefacts and books with a rolling slide show of images from each of the cultures.

The evening was well attended and was both very interesting and emotional as each culture shared some aspect of its essence.



The conference itself, a month later, was based on workshops with different themes, Modern versus Traditional Authority, Maintaining Cultural Identity, In the Face of Force, Patterns of Indigenous Genocide, and the Roots of Meaning.

Beta spoke in the workshop on Traditional versus Modern Authority, using the recent conflict between the Council and Unimane on Maiana as a current illustration of a problem that is widespread. In this case the Unimane dismissed the Council for a breach of custom, the leader of the Council's appeal to the Court was upheld, so the Unimane obliged all the Councillors to resign and had the leaders house burnt down. The situation neatly illustrates the conflict in allegiance that is widespread in Kiribati between traditional loyalties to traditional island leaders as represented by the Unimane, and a modern Constitutional authority, represented by the Council, the Law, and the Government. The Government has wisely convened a conference to discuss the issue which needs addressing, particularly as it is in the President's constituency. Similar conflicts have happened elsewhere in Kiribati but almost more significantly regularly undermine the influence of elected councils on many of the islands, particularly if they try and act against the wishes of the Unimane.

Listening to the other speakers it was obvious how comparatively lucky Kiribati is in that both Traditional and Modern authority are now in Kiribati hands. The plight of the Lani people in West Papua, downtrodden and dominated within Indonesia, denied many human freedoms, including raising their own flag for which Benny Wenda was imprisoned for 15 years, before escaping abroad to continue the struggle for some degree of autonomy if not independence.

Benny spoke movingly and without rancour about the position of his people as a minority within an artificial post colonial state, betrayed by the United Nations who seemed to allow the Indonesians to rig a vote for Independence back in the 1960s. The mineral wealth of the land is now being exploited causing further dislocation for the Lani whilst the wealth generated is used to finance the occupying army and benefit others. Perhaps because Benny and his family were fellow Pacific islanders, but also because of the contrast between their troubles as compared to the difficulties in Kiribati, our hearts were particularly called to support their struggle. There was much more of interest at the conference and we came away much better informed on the plight of other peoples as well as gaining insights into other cultures, many of whom share

much in common with Kiribati, the extended families, relationships with their land and ancestors, respect for elders and their environments. *Many thanks to those at the Pierian Centre for inviting us and instigating the event.*



CONCERNS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IN KIRIBATI

BY RICHARD TURPIN

Climate change is a major topic of concern in the world as a whole but particularly so in Kiribati where the threat of sea level rise in particular is a potential threat to its existence. It was over 10 years ago that I first remember seeing a double page spread in the Observer reporting on the first two islands to be submerged by rising seas as concrete proof of sea level rise. Bikeman, in the middle of Tarawa lagoon, was one of the islands. How many times had I picnicked there, gone past on my way to and from Abaokoro where I was born, sailed around it, viewed it from our different houses in Betio and Bairiki, as I grew up through the 50s, 60s, 70s? I was alarmed. But not so much by its disappearance as the fact that this was a case of fitting facts to an agenda without regard for truth and reality. My perception was that Bikeman had disappeared as a result of building the long causeway between Betio and Bairiki and the changes that this had made to currents and tidal flows in the lagoon. Man made changes yes, but not climate change. I am used to media distortion but it still annoys me. How can we make sensible decisions if we don't have good information? I believe climate change is a real threat but feel that it may evidence itself in many ways such as changing weather or current patterns

bringing droughts or cyclones, increased acidity in the sea harming coral growth, or indeed sea level rise making islands uninhabitable either through increased salinity of the water table, the most likely first effects, or actual submergence. I wonder if coral growth can keep pace with projected sea level rise and thus preserve the islands in some form. It is all very worrying but it feels that our priority should be to monitor closely what is happening to inform our defence against the actual threat rather than hypothetical threats.

Four years ago I returned to Kiribati for the first time since 1976, almost 30 years previously. I had heard about the increasing development of South Tarawa, the associated problems of rubbish and pollution of the lagoon, and other changes. The thing that struck me most however was how much MORE land there was than when I had been growing up. The accretion of land along the causeways was considerable so that Bairiki, for instance was now much longer. In the 50s it had ended just past the cemetery on the Nanikai end but now there were houses, embassies, offices, and a Nurse school all built on 'new' land. At the other end, stretching towards Betio, there was concern about squatter settlements on the new land which seemed to be being used as a popular picnic and party spot, not just for I-Matangs as Bikeman had mainly been, but for anyone. On Betio the war relics which had marked the end of the island had also been long passed by the extending sands and is now called Taiwan Park, again a popular pleasure spot, meeting the needs of increasingly urban Tarawa for public space as a facility for all. On either side of the harbour new land had been created by landfill, creating space for a container port and a Recycling centre. At Temaiku the causeway across to Bonriki had created new land and been used for a fish farm. The new Maneaba ni Maungatabu, the parliament, at Ambo was also built on reclaimed land. True there was erosion in some places, but not much compared to the growth of new land which had also been developed by the building of sea-walls by people wanting to extend their landholdings on Tarawa as land became increasingly valuable as the population increased almost tenfold. When I commented on my impression to an Australian researching sea level rise he didn't want to know, and I am not sure he really be-

lieved me, though I suggested he might like to verify it by comparing a 1950s map with the current position.

"So what?" you might say, new land a few feet above sea level is just as likely to be submerged as old land. True, but it gives the lie to those who are trying to say that there is already land being lost to sea level rise, and my concern is simply that we look at the issue with an open mind so that we understand properly what is happening and can make decisions accordingly.

A second issue with which I feel uncomfortable is the policy response to climate change. It seems that the main thrust of Kiribati, and Tuvalu's, response to climate change is to seek homes and work for their people elsewhere. Quite sensible one might say if your homes are soon to be submerged and anyway, they certainly need work so let's use climate change as leverage on polluters such as Australia. But what is the time scale for submersion 20 years, 50 years, 100 years, more? What if it never happens? Are there things we can do to bolster our defences? It is here that my concerns lie. I am worried that soon people will be saying it is not worth investing in Kiribati because it's about to be abandoned and submerged. I am worried that the outer islands, many of which are already being depopulated, will be further depopulated. How long would the I-Kiribati survive as a people and a culture once spread through Australia, New Zealand and America?

"All this concern" you say "but what are you proposing as an alternative?"

"Not much" I say, but I do have a few suggestions. Firstly, let's keep an open mind and start maintaining accurate records with which we can develop a clear picture of what is happening.

Secondly, let us defend our islands, our homes, our people and our culture to the end in the hope that it never happens.

That our priority in doing this should be to develop infra-structure to counteract sea level rise. In the forefront of these should be desalination for all the islands so that the first effects, increased salinity of the water lens, does not make life impossible. Indeed if sea level rise fails to submerge the islands then at least we have something to show for it in improved health and greater fertility of the land. If we are to be submerged we will at least be able to stay until the end to defend our place in the world.

I wrote this to share some concerns. I completely share the collective view of the small island states that it is up to the developed world to stop polluting. "We want **Action**, not **Sympathy**", said the Kiribati Youth delegates at Copenhagen.

THE KIRIBATI YOUTH PARTICIPANTS TO COPENHAGEN CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT



Name: Josephine Baaro
Age: 16
School: Moroni High School
Interests: Singing, dancing, reading and meeting people from different cultures

“Just today I was watching the tide coming in with great concern. The waves came right up to our mwaneaba (meeting

house). This is new. The sea never came this close before. Our well, our major source of water for every day needs has turned brackish and salty. What do we do as a nation, as people who are in the front line and experiencing right now the adverse effects of climate change?”



Name: Teako Otia Nebati
Age: 15
School: Moroni High School

“I have heard that Kiribati will sink under the sea in 50-70 years from now. What worries me a lot is my entire family and my ancestors land of claim in those years. My geography teachers tells us that by cutting

trees and burning rubbish we will increase the climate's heat, but we have now choice but to follow and accept these concepts. I notice the big countries are the key players in this climate issue. I am looking forward to learning a lot from this forum and sharing with the world's

citizens that global warming is true and precaution measures should be taken now!”



Name: Iaoniman Kambati
Age: 17
School: William Goward Memorial College
Interests: Science, rugby and athletics

“I am interested in the topic of climate change due to the reason that my home country is totally affected by it. I am very interested in meeting with the NZ youth delegates before leaving to Copenhagen!”

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NOTICES

CONTRIBUTE TO THE REVIEW OF OUR CONSTITUTION!

The 2001 KTA Constitution is out of date (for example, it still refers to the Kiribati and Tuvalu Association).

The AGM at Carmarthen thus approved the following motion, proposed by Rotee Walsh, and seconded by Patrick Lawrence:

‘That the AGM appoint a small sub-committee of members to bring the Constitution up to date, with a view to adoption of a new Constitution at the 2010 Annual General Meeting. The terms of reference of the sub-committee shall be:

1. To invite all members to make comments on the existing Constitution (including the Objects of the Association) and to propose ways in which it could be brought up to date.

2. To clarify the relationship between the General Committee and General Fund, and Dance Group and the Dance Fund (which have been created since the 2001 Constitution was drawn up and which the current document does not mention).

3. To clarify roles and levels of authority of both the General Committee members, and the Dance Group.

4. To make any other proposals for the improvement of the Constitution, taking into account the canvass of members' views at 1 above.

5. To discuss a draft of the new Constitution formally with the General Committee and at a duly constituted meeting of the Dancers.

6. To circulate a draft 2010 Constitution to all KTA Members not less than two months prior to the 2010 Annual General Meeting.'

The members of the sub-Committee are Philomena Lawrence, Teka Wainwright, Patrick Somerville and Sophia Walsh.

They will be meeting soon and will be in touch with all members to seek their suggestions as to how our Constitution could be brought up to date and improved. The sub-Committee hope that you will come forward with your ideas!



Keeping in Touch...

The Committee would like to keep members well informed. One way to do this is to contact everyone by email. If you have an email address contact Paul Chilton, the secretary.

Email: paulchilton@hotmail.co.uk
Phone: 01783 326625

KTA
Get Together
2010

Date: 31/07/2010
Where: Ashburton,
Devon
Venue: Lavender
House Hotel
(exclusive use for
members and
friends)
Campsite 5 mins
walk from hotel

*For more
information see
www.ktaweb.org.uk*

Donations! Donations!

for Get Together 2010 Raffle Prizes
Donations will be appreciated.

Bring them along to the
Get Together