



Stori Bilong Rambutso

Issue 7, February, 2011

Beating the Garamut

By Lynne Shori

Here we are in February and the village garamuts (*Rambutso drums carved from a single tree trunk*) have been sounding off: so much to report!

Our Run2Rambutso run challenge kicked off in January, with 21 runners volunteering to help run the 7028kms from Sydney to Rambutso and back, and raise funds for the two Haus Meri (womens cooking houses) buildings FOR is helping to fund. We're still on the look out for more runners to help raise funds. Our formal training sessions kick off next week, so, even if you haven't run before, check out our cover story "**Confessions of a Novice turned 1/2 Marathon Runner**" by Lucy Mcquillan. You can also get all the details on how to participate in Manon's follow up story on "**Running 2 Rambutso and back**".

We're putting the final touches on our Earth Hour event on 26 March, so keep the date for us, and make your hour in darkness really count this year! FOR has chosen the **Adopt a Mangrove project** as the centrepiece of our Earth Hour celebrations. To learn how your support for **our Earth Hour event** will make a real difference, read Ruud's report on a very special initiative, in **Adopt A Mangrove**.

Fresh back from a personal trip to Rambutso in December, there's also plenty of news about several of FOR's priority projects and important developments in the province and Rambutso which will positively impact FOR going forward.

A highlight of my trip was to learn that many of the villages in Rambutso have decided to establish Village Trusts structures. FOR believes these structures will help individuals become more engaged in discussions and debate on issues impacting their own communities, instead of relying on external parties to make decisions for them. FOR looks forward to engaging with individual Village Trusts and identifying opportunities to work closely on projects of common interest (health, education, conservation, sustainable development).

I was also excited to learn of the arrival in Manus of internationally renowned and respected conservation group, The Nature Conservancy, in August this year. Find out how FOR is helping Rambutso capitalise on this opportunity, in Ruud's article, **Telling Stories Tour, 2011**.

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On Rambutso, it was fabulous to see that the Panuselu villagers had built a dedicated library for their Primary School. (See below).



**New Library awaiting books
Panuselu, Dec 2010**



**1000 gallon tanks arrive
Popeu, Dec 2010**

When FOR was first established in 2007, not one of the 3 primary schools on Rambutso had a dedicated library building and each had fewer than 50 books on display. FOR has been keen to fund shipments of much needed books on condition that dedicated libraries existed to protect the books.

The construction of school libraries, first in Loamat in 2009 and now in Panuselu in 2010, demonstrates the importance Rambutso communities place on education. FOR is delighted to earmark its third shipment of books for Panuselu. This has been made possible with the help of **Rotary's Ranfurly Library** in Sydney, with the books arriving in Lae on 28th Feb. The books will be freighted from Lae to Rambutso, at no cost to the Rambutso villages as a result of a generous donation from Tom Bell, whose PNG wife comes from Rambutso. At FOR we are excited and grateful to have Tom's assistance: you are a God-send Tom!

We hope that Tom's act of generosity inspires other **man na meri bilong Rambutso** (*men and women from Rambutso*) working on the PNG mainland, and especially those amongst our **300 PNG Facebook friends**. FOR wants to hear from any of our PNG Facebook friends interested in doing something more than simply receive updates on what the FOR team in Sydney is doing. If that sounds like you, please post us a message on the wall – we'd love to get to know you better... **FOR** Life, **FOR** Hope, **FOR** Yumi Olgeta! (*you and me, altogether!*)

During my December trip, I joined Popeu's Village Committee in inspecting the 1000 gallon water tank FOR delivered last November (see photo above). While it was encouraging to see the tank in place, I noticed that while some weeks had passed, the iron roof sheeting and guttering FOR purchased had not yet been erected above the tank. At a time when Rambutso had experienced minimal rainfall for 3 months, this was disappointing. Following FOR's visit to Rambutso in April 2011, we hope to be able to report back that all tanks provided by FOR are in place and fully operational, including the 3 1000 gallon tanks provided to Kasma, Pukal and Pusu in November 2010.

My trip to Rambutso also allowed time to progress design ideas with the Committee for the **Panuselu Haus Meri** project. Since then, the Project timeline has been extended to ensure the women's input is accurately reflected in the building design.

To ensure the continued progress, the Haus Meri project will receive special focus during the Telling Stories Tour in April.



**Panuselu Haus Meri Committee
Shares design ideas, Dec 2010**

**Site of proposed Haus Meri
Panuselu, Dec 2010**

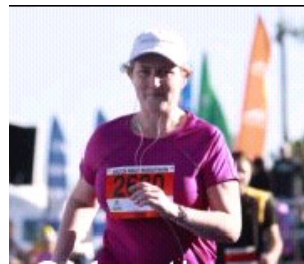
So, 2011 has started with flurry of activity both here in Sydney as well as on Rambutso. And that is likely to continue over the next couple of months, as we prepare for Telling Stories Tour in April, which is pleasingly once again, a sell out event for FOR!

At FOR, we wish all our readers, Friends, Members and 'wantoks', all the very best for the year ahead. We trust you will enjoy this issue of Stori Bilong Rambutso and we hope to see you soon.

Lynne

Confessions of a Novice Turned ½ Marathon Runner

By Lucy McQuillan



Lucy's Money Shot

So here I am....I'm in my 30's and have never done any sort of regular exercise when a friend suggests I join the FOR runners to train for the 14 kilometre City2Surf run. In a moment of complete madness, and for reasons I still don't understand, I agree. In doing so, I kick start an amazing turn of events. 6 months down the track, I've dropped 13 kilos and 2 dress sizes and am actually ENJOYING running! This is my story, all of it true and until a year ago, all way beyond my imagination...

There is a saying that goes 'why run when you can walk'.

Up until a year or so ago, this statement pretty much summed up my view of the world. I have never enjoyed running and so no-one was more surprised when, cornered by a well meaning friend, I agreed to sign up to FOR's regular running sessions. Our goal was the 14 kilometre City2Surf run, which gave us about 3 months. Turning up on a Monday and Wednesday night for training sessions with FOR Runners trainer, Andy Kirwan, always filled me with dread: which horror would it be tonight? Speedy death by hills?...or slow death by long laps...?

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, my body would stage its own little mutiny and so to say it was very, very hard at the beginning was the understatement of the century. But while the transition was slow, incredibly it wasn't long before I actually started to look forward to that post-run high. Feeling like I'd let the team and trainer down on those nights I couldn't make it – or squelched because it was a downpour while everyone else somehow made it out – probably also had something to do with it...

My body really came to crave the endorphin kick that came with whatever we did. Soon, I was joining the group for a casual Saturday morning run and was on my way. On the day of the City 2 Surf, I ran almost all the way, crossing the finish line in 112 minutes. Sure it was hard and the hill really is a heartbreaker. But I did it! And the achievement was far beyond anything I could have imagined I could do.

I was officially on a roll. This plus the encouragement of the other FOR Runners further inspired me. So with a further 2 months of training and dedication, I went on to complete the 9km Sydney Bridge Run in 60 minutes. Could I ever do more than this? I never thought so.... but I was wrong.....

In a second display of utter lunacy - or so it seemed at the time - I heard myself agreeing to sign up for a 21 kilometre half marathon run. (It was about this time I began to seriously wonder what goes into those lurid coloured sports drinks. Not just colouring, I conclude.....)

This really was getting serious: I had from February to July to turn myself into a marathon runner, well half marathon anyway, and this was no easy task. They say that being able to run is at least half a mental exercise. I'm sure I could not have run as far or as long without support of the other FOR Runners, or the encouragement and individual attention that trainer Andy gave to each runner.

The day of reckoning finally arrived after some 5 months of training and some great long Saturday morning runs with my fellow novice half marathon runners. The half marathon we had chosen was the Gold Coast running festival, with the group all travelling up for the weekend. On the Sunday morning it was up at 4.30am for a 6am race start. Yes, that's right: not only do you have to run 21 kilometers you have to do it in the early hours of the morning! So after some warming up, plenty of nervous laughter and an all important toilet stop, we gathered at the start line in complete darkness. At the sound of the gunshot, I was off on my long 21 kilometre journey.

What a surreal experience!

There I was, watching the sun rise over the water and amazed to be part of a group of 7000 other runners of all shapes and sizes, many of whom – like me – did not look like life time runners but were there and setting off at their own pace.

There were a few times I thought I would not make it but then I remembered Andy's training and I ran within myself. 2 hours and 45 minutes later I made the finish line to be met with Lynne's smiling face, a big hug and an orange and it was all worth it.

Below is a picture of the gang with our medals... see: sore muscles, a few blisters and total exhaustion could not wipe the smiles off our faces ...!



Grins all around: Lynne, Alecia, Martijn, Nicole, Lucy

Never would I ever have imagined I could achieve the half marathon, but it turns out all you need to do is take the first few steps and then turn those steps into a short run and before you know it you are running 21 kilometres. ...and (girls: take note....) having to get a whole new wardrobe because you've lost 13 kilos and dropped 2 dress sizes....!

Where to from here...?

Well, I plan to start training in February with the FOR Runners to run my second half marathon at the Sydney Running Festival in May, and hopefully improve on my time.

So, if you are on the look out for a new challenge, a way to maybe lose a few kilos, or just make some wonderful new friends, then consider joining the **Run 2 Rambutso challenge** or simply start training with the FOR Runners. Manon's article below has all the details.

You don't have to have run before. And I promise, you won't regret it. You've got nothing to lose...except perhaps those few unwanted kilos!

Lucy

Join Us in the 7028km Run 2 Rambutso and Back – Feb 2011

By Manon Van Zundert

And we have lift-off...! We are 4 weeks into our challenge of running the distance equivalent to Sydney to Rambutso and back: a total of 7,028 kilometres. Twenty-one volunteer runners have started off 2011 in a healthy fashion and have collectively run 1226 kilometres, which is excellent progress in our first month .

The aim is to raise \$1 for every kilometre run, with all donations greatly appreciated and going towards building women's community houses (*Haus Meri*) for Panuselu and Lenkau villages.

To follow our progress and sponsor our efforts, check out the FOR Go Fundraise event page:

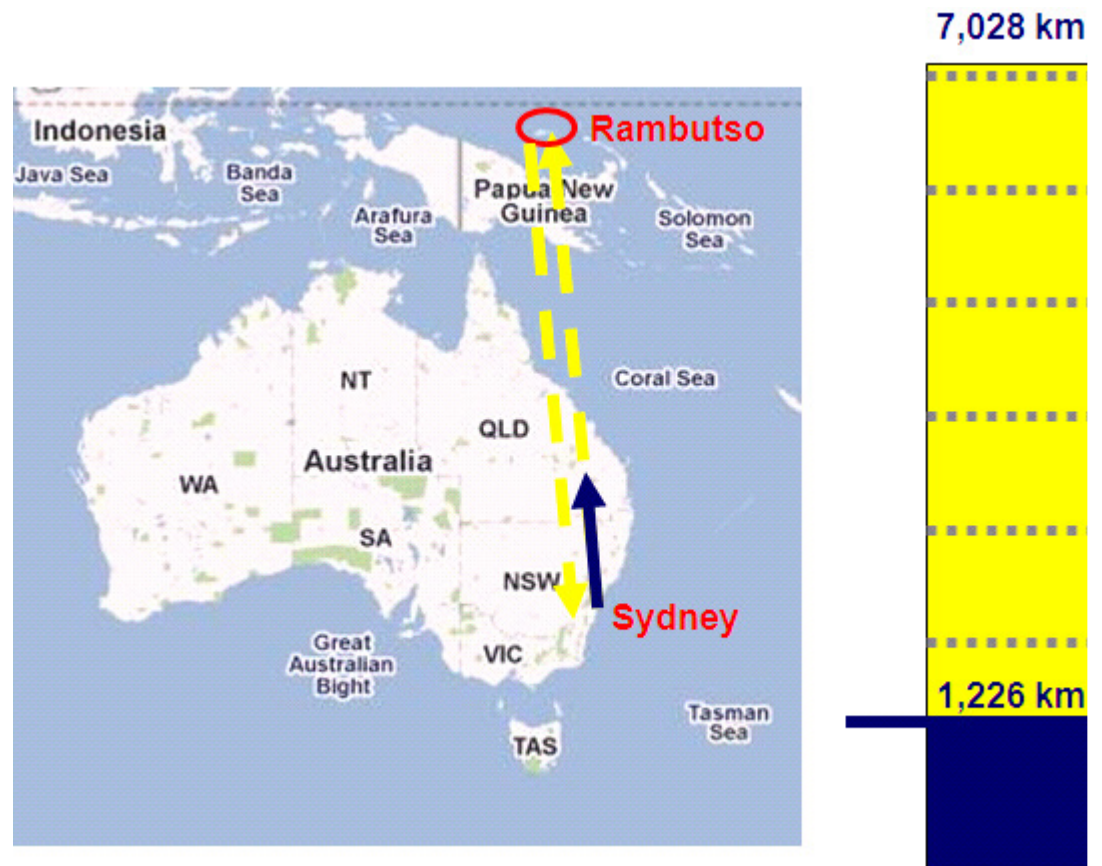
<http://sydneytorambutsoevent.gofundraise.com.au/>

FOR has enlisted the help of the wonderful Andy Kirwan, an experienced runner and excellent running coach, to get us in shape and keep us injury free.

Starting on 14 February, Andy will hold 2 sessions per week for our Sydney FOR runners for only \$10 per person per session. The training will be structured to support runners aiming for the Sydney May half and full marathons, as well as those just looking to lift their overall level of fitness.

And the really great news...

....is that it's not too late to join either as a FOR runner, or just to get fit and meet some new friends.



So, if you want to participate in the training and/or help raise funds by becoming a FOR Runner and joining the Run 2 Rambutso and back, email run2rambutso@FriendsOfRambutso.org.

If you are completely new to running and first want the inside scoop on what to expect, be sure to read Lucy's warts-and-all cover story in this edition.

Thanks to all the FOR volunteer runners who have pledged their fundraising support so far: keep up the fitness and let's raise some money for Rambutso!

Manon

Adopt A Mangrove – Villagers Take Action to Protect Their Island

By Ruud Dautzenberg

Bundrou Island in Rambutso is home to around 300 people and is less than 50cm above sea level.



Bundrou's low lying shoreline, Dec 2010

The low lying nature of these islands exposes these villages to the dangers of storm and tidal surges. In the 2008 king tides, for example, high seas swept from one side of the island to the other, destroying everything in its path and eroding what little soil there is. In fact, over the years, villagers report that soil erosion and a rising salt water table has become so severe that the soil hardly supports any crops being grown on this small island.

In 1994, then Ward Councillor, Apiu saw that the shoreline of Bundrou which was once covered with tall trees and grass was becoming a desolated area, better described by dead trees and a retreating shoreline. He realized something had to be done to protect the island, limit soil erosion and prevent the land from disappearing in the ocean.

Apiu's solution, which was later accepted by the villagers, was to promote the planting of mangroves along key parts of Bundrou's shoreline. Mangrove cuttings were collected from around the island and planted in the most affected spots. The result was the birth of a new bushland creating a natural, protective barrier and helping prevent further soil erosion in that area.



Apiu shows mangrove plantings, Bundrou Island, Rambutso, Nov 2008

However, there is much more to be done and Apiu has asked for FOR's help to re-ignite and extend this project to other parts of Bundrou Island's shoreline.

FOR is working with Apiu and the Loamat School Board to refine the scope and terms of this project, which would involve primary school children collecting and planting mangrove cuttings to protect other areas of Bundrou Islands low lying shores. FOR is investigating ways to support this important conservation initiative combined with ways FOR can support the villagers, the Village Trusts, and the Provincial Government to work together to deliver improvements in the quality of education and teaching on the island.

Further discussions between FOR, Apiu, the Loamat School Board and the communities of Bundrou Island will take place during the April 2011 Telling Stories Tour to Rambutso. Friends Of Rambutso strongly supports initiatives such as this in which the villagers themselves are actively involved in helping themselves. We are also highly encouraged by the community mindedness of individuals like Apiu, who are not waiting for the government or others to come up with solutions.

We look forward to bringing you an update on this initiative in the next edition of ***Stori Bilong Rambutso***. In the meantime, FOR will kick off fundraising for this initiative with a planned Earth Hour event on 26 March. Keep reading for more details on what's being planned....

Ruud

Earth Hour – 26 March – Make Your Hour In Darkness Count!

By Lynne Shori

On Saturday 26 March, the world will once again be asked to turn off all lights for an hour. **This year, make a decision to support the Friends Of Rambutso Earth Hour event and when you turn off your lights your actions will help make a real difference to villagers of Bundrou Island, Rambutso.....**



The theme of sustainability is central to the idea behind the annual earth hour celebrations. (see www.earthhour.org)

Similarly, the concept of sustainability is at the heart of all of Friends Of Rambutso projects. This is because Rambutso's remoteness and isolation means that projects that require the ongoing assistance of external parties are unlikely to ever be truly successful: only projects that are eventually fully implemented and maintained by the villagers themselves will be truly sustainable.

For this reason, **FOR has chosen our Adopt a Mangrove Project as the centrepiece of our Earth Hour celebrations** (check out the previous story, by Ruud). This initiative is all about supporting the Bundrou Island villages implement a sustainable solution to the rising seas that threaten it's continued existence.

We're adding the finishing touches on the event. In the meantime, circle 26 March in your diary and plan on celebrating Earth Hour with Friends Of Rambutso.

And stay tuned for all the details coming your way shortly!

Lynne

Telling Stories Tour 2011 – SOLD OUT!!

By Ruud Dautzenberg

This year will see the biggest group of white people ever to go to Rambutso with a total of 9 travelling on April 16 from Sydney via Brisbane, Port Moresby and Manus Island to Rambutso.



Telling Stories Tour 2008- Relief follows a wet & bumpy 3 hr trip from Rambutso (L to R: Ruud, Luc, Lynne, Brad, Drew, Claudette, Clare)

Pending approval from PNG's National Research Institute, Dr Helen McGregor and Dr Javier Leon, will again join the Telling Stories Tour with their involvement being a key part of the work to be undertaken on our 2011 visit.

During their initial trip in 2009, also funded by the University of Wollongong, their field research involved beach profiling and coral sampling from Rambutso's low lying areas. Their participation in 2011 will enable them to collect more data to understand how sea levels around Rambutso have

changed over the years, and importantly, identify those villages most at risk so that Adaptation plans can be devised.

Javier and Helen are excited about sharing their research findings with Rambutso communities and outlining the benefits provided by this additional research. This is as an exceptional opportunity for the people of Rambutso to obtain access to world class information unique to their environment and FOR is excited about our role as facilitator and organizer of their involvement. We are actively engaging with village leaders in Rambutso through the local government President and others, to obtain local support for this initiative.



Dr Helen McGregor & Dr Javier Leon, University of Wollongong, explain their field research to Loamat village, Rambutso - April 2009

A related area of focus for the Telling Stories Tour in 2011 is the opportunity presented by the arrival of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Manus Province (of which Rambutso is part). The TNC is an internationally renowned and respected conservation group that works at a grassroots level to ensure conservation initiatives are embraced within communities, and therefore genuinely sustainable. The TNC achieves this by first educating communities about their environment and then sourcing specialist partner NGOs to work in affected villages to jointly develop plans of action that empower local communities to respond to environmental concerns.

The arrival of the TNC in Manus Province is an exciting development for FOR and also for the people of Rambutso, for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, the TNC's interest in the environment, sustainability and self determination makes it a highly desirable and compatible partner for Friends Of Rambutso. Secondly, the research conducted by Dr Javier Leon and Dr Helen McGregor during their 2009 trip with Friends Of Rambutso, identifies all the environmental challenges confronting the communities of Rambutso. This means that should Rambutso communities decide they want TNC help, the TNC will be able to hit the ground running on Rambutso, which means faster relief and training for the people of Rambutso.

Because Rambutso is so remote and communication to Rambutso from the Provincial capital so poor, at this stage few people on Rambutso know that the TNC, with Provincial Government support, is about to roll-out a programme of work across the Province. Therefore, an important focus of the Telling Stories Tour in 2011 is to conduct initial awareness sessions with Rambutso communities so they can decide if they want to engage formally with the TNC. FOR will do this with the assistance of Ruth Francis of Lorengau, who has worked successfully with FOR on other initiatives for the people of Rambutso, and who is already helping the TNC engage with other Manus communities.



Ruth Francis facilitating FOR's sessions with the Loamat Women's Group – Apr 2009

Friends Of Rambutso is helping to bring lasting and significant benefit to the people of Rambutso by funding awareness sessions for Rambutso villages which may not otherwise occur. Most importantly though, once the awareness sessions are held, it is up to the villages themselves to determine if they wish to formally engage the TNC.

This year's trip will also involve participants in inspecting the watertanks and books sent during the year, finalising the Haus Meri Proposal for Panuselu and reviewing the Coral Monitoring / How to Free Dive Safely programs.

For the first time we'll also be staying in different villages and be around to celebrate Easter Rambutso style! We're very much looking forward to sharing more stories and pictures in future editions of ***Stori Bilong Rambutso***.

Ruud

Amazing Racers Take Line Honours in FORs Amazing Race Day

By Bel and Ryan Miller

Sunday 28th November may have been overcast but participants in the Friends Of Rambutso **Race Around Sydney** lit up the day with their enthusiasm. After strapping on walking shoes and backpacks, collecting water bottles and a short briefing at Cadman's Cottage in The Rocks, they were off and running.



Race Start, Cadmans Cottage



Bel hands out the starting kits

Race Around Sydney took the participants on a winding journey through the city past many well-known places as well as some less well known ones. Everyone had a great time navigating around the city and enjoyed answering the questions at various locations and trying to find the picture clues. A degree of creativity was required to source the items needed for bonus points, with some teams being more successful than others!

The Race end point was Bar 333 at Wynyard where participants enjoyed a well deserved drink (many of the alcoholic variety!) and a delicious bite to eat. After a brief presentation, Ruud announced the winners. Congratulations to the **Amazing Racers** who took line honours and walked away with a dive package from **ProDive Manly** and **ProDive City**.



Kiribilli Runners pass the 1st Secret checkpoint

The Amazing Racers celebrate their win

It was a fantastic day and great to see everyone having fun and many discovering new places in the city that they call home. \$1095 was raised for FOR which represents roughly half the funds needed to buy a 1000 gallon water tank for a village on Rambutso.

A special thanks to our generous friends who donated prizes: **ProDive Manly, ProDive City, Surf Hardware International, Lynne Shori**. Your support is greatly appreciated.

And a big thank you to **Bar 333** who kindly donated the space for our post race get together and made a big difference to the total funds raised.

Bel & Ryan

Join the FOR Community and Get Involved!

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FOR Life FOR Hope FOR Yumi Olgeta

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Account Number 488 20700
Account Name - Friends Of Rambutso Inc

Friends Of Rambutso (FOR) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping the remote island communities of Rambutso (Rambutyo) in Papua New Guinea through community based health, education and conservation programmes. We are connected to these communities by humanity, history and the Pacific Ocean with its dazzling diversity. We reach out to these communities through story-telling.

Do you like to organise fundraisers, write proposals for grants, or help manage our website, let us know! Please email info@FriendsOfRambutso.org, or visit our website



Friends Of Rambutso

