

Orchids of Papua New Guinea
August 4-22, 2025

Tour Leader: Mary Gerritsen

Tour Participants: Beth Huning (Angwin, CA), Anne Tuft-Miller (Long Beach, CA), Joy Orlich (Reno, NV), Claire Garrett (Hollywood, FL), Zoe Bejar (Fort Lauderdale, FL)

Local tour guide: Luke Raima

Drivers: Andrew Pala, John Pund

Cooks: Peter Dinbi and Naiko (Traveller's Hut), Elijah Rospa (Magic Mountain), Betty Higgins (Betty's Lodge)

Travels:

The tour started with the incredibly long journey to Papua New Guinea. Four of us (Beth, Anne, Joy and Mary) met up at LAX and flew on the same long flight to Brisbane, Australia. There we met up with the other two participants, Claire and Zoe, and all of us took the same flight to Port Moresby. Everything went smoothly, all baggage arriving intact, and our transfer to the Holiday Inn Hotel in Port Moresby was quick and efficient. The group enjoyed drinks and dinner next to the pool, and Claire struck up a conversation with one of the waiters who was from the Mt. Hagen area. The waiter told us about his brother who had an orchid garden and gave us contact information.

Day 0 Touring Port Moresby

We had arrived with an extra day before the tour started, so Mary arranged for a bus, driver and guide. Our first stop was a local shopping mall where we purchased a SIM card for Mary's mobile hotspot, a way for the group to access data throughout the trip. Our next stop was the fish market, a well-known Port Moresby favorite, with an amazing selection of shellfish, octopus, and dozens of different fish species. We had a quick lunch at a cafeteria style restaurant near the fish market and then made our way to the Nature Park, a combination botanic garden/zoo where we spent the rest of the afternoon. Zoe was particularly entranced with the many flying foxes perched in trees above the garden. Other highlights were the extensive aviaries with several different birds of paradise (one of which, the Raggiana, even put on a mating display for us), parrots, Victoria pigeons, and other colorful birds. We got some great views of the large cassowaries. There was a fairly large display of antelope-type dendrobiums lining the paths, and several decorative native carvings, masks and sculptures. It was a very warm day, and we were all pretty tired from our long trip the day before, so we retired early to pack up before heading to the airport the following day.

Day 1 A whole day at the airport!

What was supposed to be a short flight to Mt. Hagen turned into an all-day wait at the airport, with delay after delay announced for our flight. Instead of leaving at 10, we finally left at about 4, arriving in Mt. Hagen with the day basically shot. We were met at the airport by Luke and Andrew, and we quickly transferred to the Travellers Hut in Mt. Hagen. The only adventure for this day was a quick visit to the supermarket, where the group purchased various snacks and some souvenirs (e.g. local coffee beans).



Intricate native art
Port Moresby Nature Park



Antelope type Dendrobium
Port Moresby Nature Park



Blue winged Kookaburra
Port Moresby Nature Park



One of the many beautiful fence paintings at Traveler's Hut, Mt. Hagen

Day 2 Rondon Ridge

After breakfast we spent a few hours at the local market checking out the various vegetables, fruits and handicrafts. Several of us bought bilums (a local hand-knit universal purse/shopping bag), local highly colorful dresses, as well as avocados, pumpkins and other vegetables. From the market we drove to the lodge at Rondon Ridge. We enjoyed a coffee in their large meeting area, waiting for our orchid guide, Joseph Tano, to arrive. In contrast to many of the local guides (who were quite knowledgeable about birds but knew very little about the orchids), Joseph knew his orchids. We toured the extensive outdoor orchid collection at the lodge, finding lots of interesting orchids in bloom, including *Mediocalcar* sp., various *Bulbophyllum* sp. *Coelogyne fragrans*, *Phaius tankervilleae*, *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, *Dendrobium subclausum*, and *Spathoglottis* sp.

After our orchid tour, we enjoyed lunch at the lodge, sharing several pizzas with the group, our guides, and driver. We then travelled farther up the ridge, visiting the village of Paul Yafisi, a guide Mary knew from previous tours. We made a short hike up the hill towards the ridge, followed by half of the children in the village. In the forest we found quite a few orchid plants but nothing really in bloom other than a few *Cadetia* growing on the bank next to the road. The trek was quite difficult for some of the group, so we turned around, heading for an orchid garden established by Paul's brother and some other members of the village. This garden had lots of interesting plants, including *Dendrobium vexillarius*, *Dendrobium masarangense*, *Dendrobium alaticaulinum*, *Dendrobium sulphureum*, and a number of *Bulbophyllum* sp. One of the most curious was *Bulbophyllum tricanaliferum*. All too soon the light began to fade, and we had a bit of a hike back to the bus, so we had to finish our visit without seeing all the possibilities in the garden.

Back at Travellers Hut we enjoyed a delicious soup made from the pumpkins we had purchased at the market.

Day 3 Garden of Steven Mur and Avi Vincent

Another day in the Mt. Hagen area, our first stop was to visit a new garden, that of Steven Mur (brother of the waiter at the Holiday Inn in Port Moresby). His garden was beautifully laid out, with lots of stunning *Coelogyne fragrans*, several of them specimen size. Most of the orchids were mounted on the tops of tree fern trunks. A favorite was one that had been augmented with eyes (shells) and a moss Afro with an orchid on top-affectionately known as the "Boss-Man"!

Our second stop that day was the tropical garden of Avi Vincent. We had visited this garden on previous tours (site of the skeleton men), and the garden was as beautiful as Mary remembered. Although many of the orchids that had been in the garden originally were no longer there, he had planted lots of *Spathoglottis* as border plants, with abundant *Heliconia* and other decorative tropical plants. There were still a few interesting orchids, including a large *Dendrobium finisterrae*.



Trying on PNG dresses at the Mt. Hagen Market



Shopping for handmade Billums (bags)



Dendrobium subclausum
Rondon Ridge



Spathoglottis spicata
Rondon Ridge



Bulbophyllum cf. callipes
Rondon Ridge



Dendrobium hellwigianum
Rondon Ridge



Dendrobium engae
Rondon Ridge



Oberonia sp.
Rondon Ridge



Dendrobium alaticaulinum peeking through
immense specimen of *Mediocalcar* sp.



Another color form of *Dendrobium vexillarius*



Dendrobium tricanaliferum
Rondon Ridge, Yafisi Garden



Bulbophyllum sp.
Rondon Ridge



Dendrochilum longifolium.
Rondon Ridge



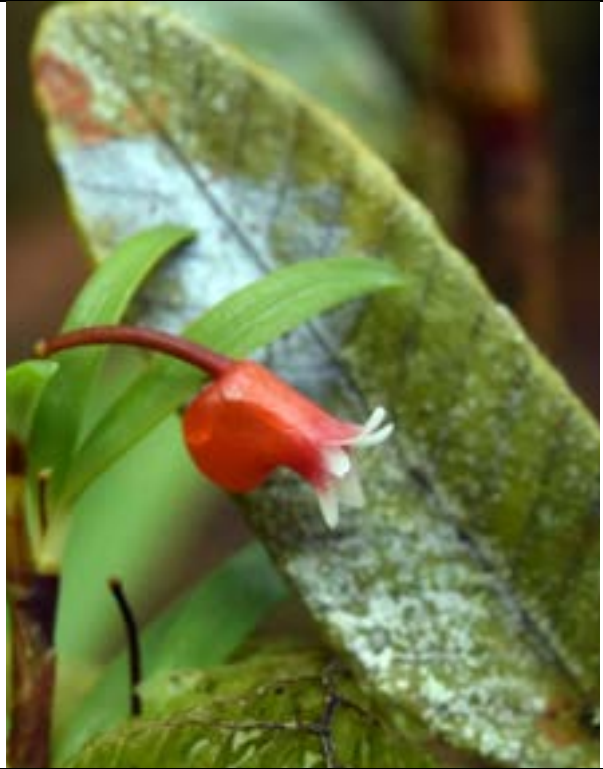
Diplocaulobium (Dendrobium) sp.
Rondon Ridge



The children (and our guide for the day, Joseph Tano (blue hat)) who accompanied us our visit to Paul Yafisi's orchid garden.



Another color form of *Dendrobium vexillarius*, Rondon Ridge



Mediocalcar bifolium
Rondon Ridge



Liparis (or *Stichorchis*?) sp.
Rondon Ridge



Dendrobium hellwigianum
Rondon Ridge



Phreatia sp.
Rondon Ridge



Cadetia sp.
Rondon Ridge



Liparis altigena?
Rondon Ridge



Bulbophyllum sp.
Rondon Ridge



Bulbophyllum antenniferum Rondon Ridge



Bulbophyllum sp. nov. (?)
Rondon Ridge (Yafisi garden)



Agrostophyllum uniflorum
Rondon Ridge



Phreatia sp.
Stephen Mur's Garden



Dendrochilum (Coelogyne) longifolium with
Coelogyne fragrans



"Bossman" a tree fern with pig tusks, a moss hairdo and orchids growing out the top! Stephen Mur's Garden, Mt. Hagen



Stephen Mur in his garden
Mt. Hagen



Dendrobium finisterrae
Avi Vincent Garden



Huge spider
Avi Vincent Garden



Dendrobium crispilinguum
Avi Vincent Garden

We transferred from Travellers Hut (while nice enough, it was in the ugly town of Mt. Hagen), to the lovely Magic Mountain Lodge located at the base of Mt. Hagen itself (and Magic Mountain), well out of the city. It was wonderful to be back here, enjoying the sounds of birds, frogs, and other wildlife.

There was a large Blyth's hornbill hanging out at the bird feeding station (this species is not native to the highlands, but had been introduced by Pym when he found it for sale in a small cage at a local market). Also visiting were Belford's Melidictes, Brown Sicklebills, Princess Stephanie's Bird of Paradise, and Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (another bird of paradise). There were also numerous honey-eaters. It was wonderful to sit on the covered balcony and watch the birds come and go. (for photos, see the end of this newsletter where the birds are discussed in further detail).

Day 4 Kamul Lodge and Max Mal's

Kamul Lodge is a well-known birding lodge, just over the provincial line from the Western Highlands Province (where Mt. Hagen and Magic Mountain are located), into Enga province. The lodge featured a large bird feeding station, enabling great photographs of the visiting birds. We were able to photograph Ribbon-tailed Astrapias, Sicklebills, Papua Lorikeets, Tiger Parrots, honey eaters and Belford's Melidictes.

Max met us at the lodge and took us for an extended trek down a new trail (to Mary) to his property at the base of the hill where the lodge was located. The group had the opportunity to see a large number of orchids *in situ*, including various *Cadetia*, *Dendrobium*, *Mediocalcar*, *Stichorkis*, *Listera*, *Calanthe*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Glossorhyncha*, and *Epiblastus* species. It was amazing how many different species we were able to spot on that trek! In addition to the orchids, we spotted quite a few tree ferns, as well as other large ferns including the King Fern (*Todea papuana*).

We came out of the forest into the grasslands surrounding Max's home and farm. After a nice picnic lunch we enjoyed a prolonged tour of Max's extensive and beautifully grown orchid collection. The garden basically consisted of tree ferns that had been planted in a maze-like pattern, all nestled under some large natural trees. The forest extended farther from his garden and had dozens of *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii* growing high above us in the trees. The diversity of orchids in Max's collection was awe inspiring, with nearly every single one grown beautifully and in excellent condition. Although not many were in bloom compared to previous visits (which were in late October and November, not August), the group still were able to get great photos. Max also gave everyone some of his unusual Banana passion fruit (*Passiflora mollissima*).

After visiting his garden, Max suggested we all take our bus further farther into Enga province, where he knew of a hillside next to the highway that had many orchids. We returned to the bus and drove for about an hour. Gradually the scenery began to change from the expansive rich farmland of the Western Highlands province to steeper valleys and fewer farms growing vegetables. We came to a steep hill opposite a local college and stopped to look for orchids on the hillside. We spotted numerous *Coelogyne beccarii*, *Dendrochilum longifolium*, and



Crepidium sp.
Forest Walk, Kamul Lodge



Pterostylis papuana
Forest Walk, Kamul Lodge



Dendrobium vexillarius
Max Mal Garden



Dendrobium alaticaulinum
Max Mal Garden



Dendrobium habbimense
Max Mal Garden



Agrostophyllum sp.
Max Mal Garden



Bulbophyllum caviventer
Max Mal Garden



Bulbophyllum sp.
Max Mal Garden



Bulbophyllum intersitum
Max Mal Garden



Bulbophyllum masonii
Max Mal Garden



Dendrobium sp. (possibly *geotropum*)
Max Mal Garden



Bulbophyllum sp. section *Polymeres*
Max Mal Garden



Dendrobium nardoides
Max Mal Garden



Paradisaea raggiana
Nature Park, Port Moresby



Mediocalcar sp..
Max Mal Garden



Dendrobium cuthbertsonii
Max Mal Garden



L-R. Our driver, Beth Huning, Anne Tuft-Miller, Zoe Bejar, Claire Garrett, Betty Higgins, Joy Orlich



Crepidium megalanthum
Max Mal Garden

Arundina graminifolia. This was a very rich site for orchids, and there were quite likely more species as well.

Day 5 Trek up part of Magic Mountain

Today was to be an adventure. A steep downhill path from the road up to Magic Mountain Lodge led to multiple trails up Magic Mountain, as well as to Mt. Hagen. However, the first 100 yards was a challenge. Our guide, Luke, had brought a long rope that we secured to some trees at the top of the path, and then Luke and Mary rappelled down the trail to the bottom where they could steady the rope and help the rest of the group down the trail. Heavy rains had eroded the path considerably, and the toe holds, roots and other usual places to put one's feet had washed away. Nonetheless, with the help of the rope (and Luke's encouragement), everyone made it down safely. We crossed over some large boulders in the nearly dry creek bed, then started a climb up to the trail on the other side of the creek. Again, several people needed the rope and a helping hand to get up the slope. After this, the trail was much easier, and the group explored the trail for a few hours, finding quite a few orchids, including many *Dendrobium vexillarius*, *Dendrobium alaticaulinum*, various *Mediocalcar* sp., *Glomera* sp., *Ceratostylis* sp. *Epiblastus montihageni*, *Phreatia* sp. and several large root masses of the leafless orchid, *Taeniophyllum robustum*.

After returning to the lodge, some of the group enjoyed an afternoon rest, while others took a trail uphill from the lodge where there was another bird blind. Here they spotted Princess Stephanie *Astrapia*, as well as a hybrid with the Ribbontail *Astrapia* (some have called this a separate species, called Barne's *Astrapia*) and far off in a tree, the magnificent King of Saxony Bird of Paradise.

Day 6 More birdwatching and a trek to Israel Joseph's village and mountain trail

This morning, after hearing about the new birds the others had seen the day before, many of the group hiked up to the bird blind above Magic Mountain Lodge. We were lucky to see all the birds mentioned above in the first 15 minutes!

In the late morning, the group spent some time working on the orchid garden next to the lodge, reattaching orchids to the trees, opening up the forest a bit to let in more light, and doing general maintenance. The orchids in the garden had been picked up by our group on the Mt. Hagen trail two years ago (from broken branches, tree falls, etc.) and rehomed. It was great to see that the orchids we had placed there two years ago had adapted to their new homes and were doing very well. We also rehomed a few from the previous day's hike that had been found on fallen branches/trees near the trail.

After lunch we climbed back in our bus and traveled a few miles up the road to a different settlement (Melpa Wakti village). Here we met Israel Joseph, a local orchid enthusiast who had created his own orchid garden in the thick forest above the village. As usual, when we pulled up in the bus, the entire village came out to greet us, and probably half of the village followed us up the trail. We first hiked up a rough road then traversed to a narrow path winding along the edge of a steep cliff. Nestled under the cliff was a "spirit cave" that at one time had held human skulls (former chiefs) and pig jaws, but apparently the skulls had been stolen, so only the pig jaws were left. There were many orchids growing in the trees along the trail, including several terrestrials (*Liparis*, *Dendrobium*). Walking farther through the forest we found a few



Luke Raima, our guide
Showing off his new binoculars!



Rope descent to get to Magic Mountain
Trail



Climbing back up from the canyon
Magic Mountain Trail



Buying billums
Melpa Wakti Village



Group photo of the children (and a few older folks) from Melpa Wakti village who accompanied us on our hike



One of the traditional huts in the Melpa Wakti Village

more unusual *Bulbophyllum*, and taking a trail off to the right, we came into the little orchid garden-basically plants from the surrounding forest mounted on tree fern logs and stumps. There was quite a bit to see, and Joseph and his youngest son were very eager to point out new additions to his garden. We also found a few plants of *Balanophora* (possibly *oosterzeeana*), a rare mycoheterotroph.

Returning to the village, the villagers who did not hike up the trail with us had gathered near our bus, setting out a collection of different handicrafts in case we wanted to buy some souvenirs. There were many choices of bilums, and most of the group bought at least one. There were also a few masks, hats, carvings etc. We also took some group photos of the villagers to help us remember our visit.

Day 7 An easy day, visit to town and some shopping

We traveled into Mt. Hagen to get some supplies, have a nice coffee and lunch at a cafe in town, and do some shopping at Jack's, a local clothing store featuring the wild PNG inspired shirts and other clothing. Other tribes had started to arrive in town in preparation for the culture festival in a few days, and the bank tellers, security guards and other employees were ready for the festival with painted faces, wild outfits, and amazing head dresses. It had rained a bit, and the bus had some issues getting up the hill to Magic Mountain but finally made it. We had a quiet afternoon, sitting on the cabin porches (out of the rain) enjoying the birds and raindrops. It rained most of that night, with lots of wonderful sounds, including birds, frogs, insects and even the infamous croaking worms. We kept hearing something rustling through the thatch on the cabin roof, possibly a cuscus (an opossum-like animal).

Day 8 Paiya Cultural Show

After the heavy rain of the previous evening, it was a delight to wake up to bright blue skies and incredible views from the breakfast area looking over the valley below. We left early for Paiya Village, enabling a close study of how the different tribes put on their face paint, costumes, head dresses etc. for the cultural show that afternoon. Many of the groups were from Paiya Village itself but depicted different parts of their culture, including the Mt. Hagen Wigmen, the women's dancing and singing group, the widows, the mourners, and the spirit boys. Several other tribes had been invited as well, including the Huli Wigmen, the skeleton Men from Chimbu province, the Asaro Mudmen, the Silimuli Besta Singing group, the Tambul tribesmen from near Mt. Giluwe, the Kungkuil from Waghi. Every tribe had different headwear, face painting, and head dresses, and some painted their entire bodies black, bronze or grey. The display of feathers, pig tusks, dried grass skirts, hornbills, cassowary tails and cuscus pelts was overwhelming.

While we were waiting for everyone to get their costumes and make up on, we went souvenir shopping. There was an incredible display of wares from the different villages, including masks, shell jewelry, baskets, necklaces with pig tusks, stone implements, billums and other woven handicrafts, figurines, mudmen masks (miniature), baskets, Kina shells, and much more.

Finally, all the groups were ready and the show began. One by one, each group entered the display groups, singing, chanting and dancing, coming to the front and posing for group photos where the audience was seated. They were introduced with a description of where they were from, although it was hard to understand the moderator. Once all the groups had come

out, the audience had the opportunity to meet and talk with different groups, get photos taken with them, and just experience the event. Zoe Bejar exclaimed “I feel like I am in the National Geographic Magazine”.

Day 9 Mt. Hagen Cultural Show

The Paiya show the day before was just a prelude to the much larger cultural show in Mt. Hagen. There were over 80 different groups represented, each with their own unique costumes, songs, dances, music and customs. The different groups had come from villages all over the highlands as well as from various villages on the coast. The entire town of Mt. Hagen was full of tribes congregating on various corners, putting on costumes, face paint, head dresses etc. The show ground was a large fenced-in area that was an absolute mad house! There was a large grandstand where the audience could sit and watch, or the audience could circulate amongst the different tribes, taking photos and talking to the various representatives of the tribes. There were also more souvenirs for sale, with an abundance of carvings, baskets, bilums, paintings, spears, masks, jewelry, shells, etc. Among the most interesting group types were the numerous “Musicians”. The drums were a series of either bamboo poles or pvc pipes of different diameters and lengths, and the drumsticks were made of old flip flops and shoe soles. Various guitars, singers, and dancers completed the ensembles, and the music they were able to make with these very simple instruments was amazing.

There were multiple versions of the “widows”, the “burial, the Tambul tribesmen, the Waghi tribesmen, as well as the women singing groups with the shells jewelry and brightly painted red and white faces, several groups acting out the colonial “slavery”, and a few different different groups of mudmen, skeleton men etc. It was fantastic, overpowering, and incredible, all at the same time.

After the show we returned to the cafe from a few days ago and enjoyed a tasty lunch (including delicious chocolate truffle cake). We returned to Paiya village in the afternoon to learn more about the early history of the tribe, the use of different farm implements, visit their spirit house with grinding stones and pig jaws, and finally visit an enclosure where the skulls of past chiefs were kept.

Day 10 Drive from Magic Mountain to Betty’s Lodge (Mt. Wilhelm).

We left early, stopping at Traveler’s Hut where we changed from the bus to two 4WD vehicles, necessary for the rough road to Betty’s (named for its owner, Betty Higgins). We also left much of our luggage at Traveler’s Hut, reducing the amount and weight of what we would take with us on the next part of our adventure. The first two hours of the trip were a straight shot down the Highlands highway, finally reaching the town of Kundiawa where we stopped for gas, lunch and a restroom stop at the Mt. Wilhelm Hotel. We had a delicious lunch, although it took well over an hour before our food was served.

After lunch we made our way to Betty’s. The road was even worse than the last time we visited (over 5 years ago), especially the last 4.5 miles. There had been a landslide near the school (about 3 years ago) that had killed several people (including some teachers) and resulted in the closure of the road for over 6 months. Despite multiple complaints and requests to repair the road, nothing had happened, so Betty actually organized a tractor, raised money for diesel fuel and a driver, and cleared the landslide and opened up the road herself.

We finally reached Betty's Lodge, where we were warmly welcomed by Betty and her husband Peter. We stayed in the old Betty's Lodge (not sure how much longer that old building will be standing) but enjoyed sitting around the wood stove and hearing Betty's many amazing stories. Meals at Betty's are an absolute taste treat, with fresh fish from her trout farms, delicious vegetables and salads from her extensive gardens, as well as local eggs and other foodstuffs.

Day 11 Tour of the Lodge, gardens, and trout farm. Some local orchids.

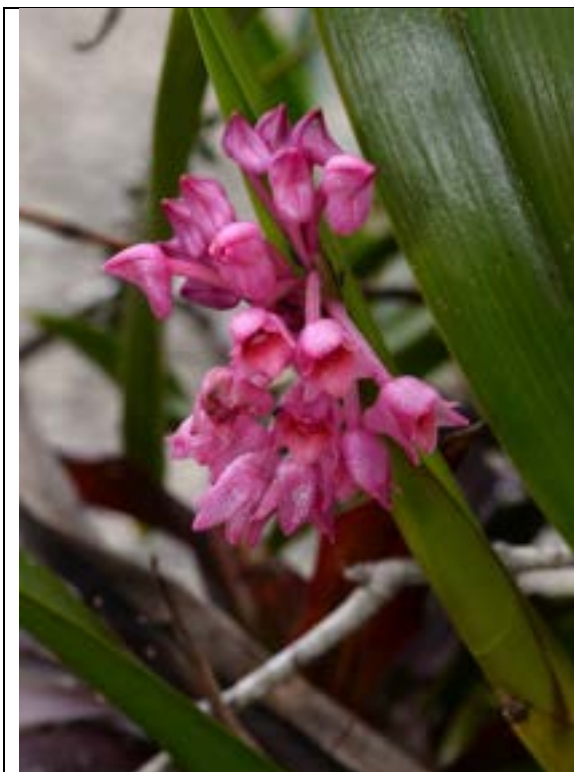
After a yummy breakfast on the outdoor porch, we spent the day touring the extensive gardens, trout farm, nearby woods (searching for orchids) as well as the new lodge, called "Betty's Place". In contrast to the very simple, hostel style of the old lodge, the new building was downright luxurious. Each room was tastefully decorated with native styling and included en suite bathrooms. A well-appointed dining room, large common room with wood stove, comfortable couches (and even a large screen tv) completed the interior guest areas. The kitchen was large, fully equipped, and included a large pantry. Outdoors there was a covered walkway leading to an outdoor bar area, complete with a round fire pit. The wood used to build the new lodge was harvested from pine trees that Betty had planted over 30 years ago. We met Betty's daughter Ruth and husband Kevin, who had taken on the management of the new lodge. Ruth served the group coffee and tea on the veranda, along with a cake she had made herself.

After coffee, the group explored Betty's trout farm, learning some of the history of its establishment and its trials and tribulations. In the forest around the trout farm, Betty and Peter pointed out various orchids, including *Calanthe* sp., *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, *D. alaticaulinum*, *D. habbemense*, and *D. dichaeoides*, *Mediocalcar* sp. and two different species of *Corybas*. We also found a few *Bulbophyllum* species.

We walked back to Betty's old lodge and lounged around for the remainder of the afternoon watching birds, reading and just relaxing. We had a delicious curried chicken dinner served with a soup made with vegetables from the garden, and after dinner Peter brought over his computer and gave us a few mini-seminars he had prepared on the orchids of PNG, including terrestrials.

Day 12. Trek up the Mt. Wilhelm Summit Trail

After a delicious omelet breakfast, everyone made a small lunch for the day's trek up the summit trail. The objective (at least for some of us) was to make it to a least the 2nd rest station at ~10,000 ft, but also to see many orchids and other interesting plants along the way. Peter and Betty came with us, and everyone in the group (including Magic Mountain guide Luke Raima who had come along for the adventure) searched for orchids. We found more than we had anticipated, quite a few of them in bloom. Highlights included *Dendrobium sulphureum* and *Dendrobium aurantiroseum*, but we also found numerous *Epiblastus*, *Calanthe*, *Habenaria*, *Liparis* and other *Dendrobium* species. Betty was scouring the ground looking for her favorite, *Corybas*. She found numerous colonies, some with as many as 50 plants. At least 3 different species could be identified by the differences in plant form, although none were in bloom. Some of the group tired and turned back with Peter, while Betty and several others continued up to the 2nd rest area. Five years ago there had been picnic tables there, but now all that was left was a large, flat cleared area. We quickly ate our lunch as it was beginning to rain, and



Epiblastus montihageni
Trail to Mt. Wilhelm summite



Betty Higgins with Zoe Bejar
Betty's Lodge



Looking back at Mt. Hagen (left) and Magic Mountain (right)



Path through the garden at Betty's
Lodge, Mt Wilhelm



Dendrobium aurantiroseum
Summit Trail, Mt. Wilhelm



Hiking the Mt. Wilhelm
Summit Trail

made our way back down the trail, which got quite muddy and slippery. One of the most haunting features of the trip down the trail were the strange calls of the Brown Sicklebill, which sounded more like a chain saw than a bird song! Fortunately it takes much less time to go down than up, and soon everyone was back at the lodge, sitting around the wood stove enjoying a cup of tea.

We enjoyed another delicious dinner of rainbow trout, chicken, fresh garden salad, and sweet potatoes, then retired early

Day 13. Drive back to Mt Hagen

It rained quite a bit the previous evening, unfortunately, making that terrible road even worse. However, our drivers arrived fairly early (about 9), and the group said their goodbyes and headed back to Mt Hagen. Four and half hours later we arrived back at Travellers Hut, truly a marathon drive! We enjoyed the modern plumbing and hot showers and spent much of the evening sorting out our luggage and packing for the airplane trip the next day. Beth and several others in the group set off for Rondon Ridge in an attempt to buy a mask at the gift shop there but found that all the masks had been sold the previous week (due to the cultural show and all the visitors).

Day 14. Another wasted day at the airport.

Despite making reservations for the first available flight in the morning (and anticipating an afternoon in Port Moresby where we could visit the cultural museum), we were at the mercy of Air Niugini, which treated us to a 6 hr wait for the plane (it finally arrived). Even though the flight to Port Moresby was short and uneventful, we arrived too late to do anything other than go to our hotel.

Our last meal in PNG was pizza, which was quite tasty, and was enjoyed at the poolside bar at the Holiday Inn Express.

Day 15. Return home.

This was to be a very long day(s), with flights first to Brisbane, then to Los Angeles, then to San Francisco (Mary), Reno (Joy), or Fort Lauderdale (Claire and Zoe). Beth and Anne had a shorter journey from LAX to Anne's home in Long Beach. In total, anywhere from 23 to 40 hrs of travel! All arrived safely and are awaiting this trip report with plant IDs!

List of bird species seen or heard on our trip (provided by Beth Huning)

Common Name	Scientific Name	seen	heard	Male	Female
<u>Hawks, Kites, and. Eagles</u>					
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	√		?	?
Long-tailed Buzzard	<i>Henicopernis longicauda</i>	√		?	?
<u>Parrots</u>					
Stella's Lorikeet	<i>Charmosyna stellae</i>	√	√	√	
Papuan Lorikeet	<i>Vharmosyna papou</i>	√	√	√	
Josephine's Lorikeet	<i>Charmosyna josefinae</i>	√		√	
Brehm's Tiger-Parrot	<i>Pittacella brehmii</i>	√		√	
Painted Tiger-Parrot	<i>Pittacella picta</i>	√	√	√	
<u>Cuckoos and Hornbills</u>					
* Blyth's Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros plicatus</i>	√		√	
<u>Swifts and Treeswifts</u>					
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>	√	√	√	√
Mountain Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus</i>	√	√	√	√
	<i>hirundinaceus</i>				
Fairy Martin	<i>Petrochelodin ariel</i>	√	√	√	√
<u>Fairy-Wrens</u>					
White-shouldered Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyanocephalus</i>	√	√	√	√
<u>Honeyeaters</u>					
Red-collared Myzomela	<i>Myzomela rosenbergii</i>	√		√	√
Marbled Honeyeater	<i>Pycnopygius cinereus</i>	√		√	
Rufous-backed Honeyeater	<i>Ptilopronra erythropleura</i>	√		√	
Common Smokey Honeyeater	<i>Melipotes ater</i>	√		√	√
Ornate Mellidectes	<i>Melidectes torquatus</i>	√		√	√
Belford's Melidectes	<i>Melidectes belfordi</i>	√	√	√	√
<u>Berrypeckers and Painted Berrypeckers</u>					
Mid-mountain Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis longicauda</i>	√		√	√
Fan-tailed Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis versteri</i>	√		√	

Fantails

Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura albolimbata</i>	√		√	√
Dimorphic Gantail	<i>Rhipidura brachyrhyncha</i>	√		√	√
Black Fantail	<i>Rhipidura atra</i>	√		√	√

Birds of Paradise

Riboon-tailed Astrapia	<i>Astrapia mayeri</i>	√	√	√	√
Stephanie's Astrapia	<i>Astrapia stephaniae</i>	√		√	√
Black Sickiebill	<i>Epimachus fastosus</i>	√		√	√
Brown Sickiebill	<i>Epimachus meyeri</i>	√	√		√
King of Saxony Bird of Paradise	<i>Pteridophora alberti</i>	√		√	
Short-tailed Paradigalia	<i>Paradigalia brevicauda</i>	√		√	√
** Barnes's Astrapia	<i>Astrapia sp.</i>	√			

*. Blyth's Hornbill lowland species introduced into wild at Magic Mountain Lodge

** Barnes's Astrapia is hybrid between Ribbon-tailed and Stephanie's Astrapias, possible new species



Blythe's Hornbill
Rhyticeros plicatus



Ribbon-tailed Astrapia
Astrapia mayeri



Brown Sicklebill (male)
Epimachus meyeri
Photo by Beth Huning



Belford's Melidectes
Melidectes belfordii
Photo by Beth Huning



Barnes's Astrapia
Photo by Beth Huning



Common Smokey Honeyeater
Melipotes ater
Photo by Beth Huning

Tribal Photos from Paiya Village Festival and Mt. Hagen Culture Festival



Asaro Mudman



Asaro Mudmen



Silimuli Besta Singing Group
Women (Enga)



Silimuli Besta Singing Group
Men (Enga)



Asaro Village Tribesmen
Eastern Highlands Province



Asaro Village Tribesmen
Eastern Highlands Province



Huli Wigmen
Hela



Huli Wigmen
Hela



The Widows
(Paiya Village)



The widows wear a head and body covering of mud, clay or moss for an extended period of time as a traditional sign of deep mourning. It signifies the deep sense of loss and state of sorrow.



Tambul Tribesmen



Tambul Tribesmen



Waghi Tribesman
(Jiwaki province)



Long feathers dance (Kungkuil)
(Jiwaki province)



Kewakali Village Tribe
Morobe



Kewakali Village Tribe
Morobe



Skeleton Men
Chibu



Skeleton Men
Chibu



Silimuli woman
Enga



Silimuli men
Enga



Paiya Village
Western Highlands Province



Paiya Village women and children's singing group
Western Highlands Province



Paiya Village Spirit Boys
Western Highlands Province



Paiya Village Spirit Boys
Western Highlands Province



Mt. Hagen Wigmen
Western Highlands Province



Mt. Hagen Wigmen
Western Highlands Province



Funeral re-enactment
Paiya Village



Funeral Procession
Paiya Village



Bride Price Ceremony
Paiya Village



Bride Price Ceremony
Paiya Village



Beautiful Gardens
Cottages and Magic Mountain
(Magic Mountain Lodge)



View from the Breakfast Balcony
Magic Mountain Lodge



Grieving women with pig
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many musical groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



Tambul Tribesman
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many musical groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



Young girl in one of the many
sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing
groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



One of the many sing sing groups
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



Palgum Sing Sing Group
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



Kuwar Sing Sing Group
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



Sing Sing Group
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival



Looking out at the amazing, overwhelming spectacle!
Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival

**Hope you will join us our next trip to Papua New
Guinea**

**Planned for late summer/early fall
2027!**

**Email Mary Gerritsen if you are interested:
mary@orchidconservationalliance.org**