

Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau

Newsletter

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Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Tuvalu, 18-19 September 2012

The Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Tuvalu was undoubtedly one of the highlights of 2012 in Tuvalu. The young royal couple captivated the people, young and old alike, with their down to earth personalities and their big smiles.



Photo courtesy of Tataua Pese

At the Welcome Ceremony, Vaiaku Falekaupule



Photo courtesy of Tataua Pese

Young dancers from Funafuti perform a *fatele* to welcome the royal couple



Photo courtesy of Tataua Pese

Arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in Funafuti, Tuvalu.

In this post colonial era where most would assume Great Britain's influence on our islands has waned, the recent royal visit only affirmed the bond both Tuvalu and Great Britain still share.

In true island style, a welcome befitting chiefs and royalty, the young royal couple were carried shoulder high by young men on a dais with a small *fale* (traditional hut), from the plane to the Vaiaku *falekaupule* (traditional meeting hall). A traditional welcome ceremony performed by the Funafuti community awaited them.

Following the Welcome Ceremony, the royal couple visited Nauti Primary School. They were entertained by the

students with an array of items ranging from traditional dances to traditional sports.

The mixed freely with students, much to the delight of the children who were so eager to show their skills to the Duke and Duchess, whether in dancing, playing, or in other traditional skills.

The Duke and Duchess also visited the University of the South Pacific Extension Centre.

They then went to the Vaiaku Lagi Hotel where they had coconut milk from the coconut tree planted by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Tuvalu in 1982.

They also watched a canoe race

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Royal Visit ...



At Nauti Primary School, the royal couple watch a young boy husk a coconut.

(Continued from page 1) from the Vaiaku Lagi Hotel, presented prizes to the winners and then took a short walk to the Tuvalu Village, just outside the Vaiaku Falekaupule.

The makeshift Tuvalu village showcased the various traditions and uniqueness of each of the eight

islands of Tuvalu.

Following the tour of the Tuvalu Village, the royal couple were entertained by a local game of *Te Ano*. Prince William delighted both the players and spectators alike when he joined in and actually played very well!

A local feast was held in the evening for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at the Tausoa Lima, the Funafuti community's falekaupule.

After the local feast, the Duke and Duchess left for the Vaiaku Falekaupule where they were entertained by the eight island communities with *fatele* (traditional dances).

The Vaiaku Falekaupule was lit up with



Photo courtesy of Tataua Pese

Prince William taking a walk from Vaiaku Lagi Hotel to the Tuvalu Village



Photo courtesy of Tataua Pese

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge take a ride on the royal float from Nauti Primary School to the Vaiaku Lagi Hotel



Photo courtesy of Tataua Pese

Duchess of Cambridge at the Nui fale at the Tuvalu Village



Nauti Primary School students present their alofa (gift presentation) to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

Royal Visit ...



The Duke and Duchess leave the Vaiaku Falekaupule after the *alofa* (gift presentation).



The royal couple carried on their royal dais and escorted by dancers and local dignitaries to their aircraft.



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on their departure from Tuvalu

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the a variety of colourful traditional costumes and vibrant *fatele*.

The Duchess of Cambridge joined in the dancing and was later joined by Prince William. That moment was one truly special moment cherished by all Tuvaluans.

An *alofa* (gift presentation) was performed for them by the Niutao community the following morning at the Vaiaku Falekaupule.

All too soon, it was time to say goodbye to the royal

couple.

Students from the University of the South Pacific sang and danced as they escorted the royal couple, carried on their royal dais, to their aircraft. Local dignitaries followed the procession.

As the aircraft carrying the royal couple took off, it seemed the fairytale ended all too quickly for us. The royal couple spent less than 24 hours in Tuvalu, but it was indeed a memorable visit. ■



The Union Jack being waved by an onlooker as the royal couple pass by.



Students lined along the runway as the royal couple were escorted to their aircraft.

News ...

The nation was shocked with the untimely demise of the Minister for Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Lotoala Metia, on the 21st December 2012.

He passed away at the Suva Private Hospital, Suva Fiji.

Hon. Lotoala Metia was also the Minister responsible for the Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau.

He served as Minister for Finance and Economic Development under the former Prime Minister, Hon. Apisai Ielemia's administration from 2006 to 2010, and again under the current Prime Minister, Willy Telavi's administration since 2010.

He is survived by his wife, Penieli, their five children and nine grandchildren.

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Around the capital, strong winds have affected the lives of all living here on Funafuti.

The Government primary school, Nauti Primary School has been closed for

over a week now.

Motufoua Secondary School students have yet to return to Vaitupu where MSS is based. The only means of travelling to Vaitupu is by ship.

In the meantime, all local shipping voyages have been cancelled due to the strong wind warning.

Not only is the local shipping schedule affected but also cargo vessels and oil tankers that Tuvaluans rely on are being delayed due to the strong winds.

Goods are slowly running low and gasoline has run out. Fewer and fewer vehicles are being seen on the roads.

Hopefully the weather will improve soon so that students can return to school and life can return to normal.

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Following Karl Tili's retirement from his position as General Manager of the Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau at the end of 2011, he was requested to stay on working under a contract for another year.

The Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau was in the process of some changes by the time of Karl's retirement. He was instrumental in the initial process, discussions and in the planning process of the proposed merging of Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau with the Tuvalu Post Office.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, delays and obstacles, this process is still ongoing and it is not clear at the moment how soon this proposed merger will actually take place.

Karl Tili has officially left Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau for the last time at the end of 2012.

Karl is looking forward to his retirement to spend more time with his family and friends, start up a little business probably and do more gardening.

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Acknowledgement:

We wish to thank Tataua Pesese for kindly allowing us to reprint some of his photographs of the Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Funafuti, Tuvalu. Fakafetai lasilasi! ■

