



**In Search of Spirits & Crocodile Warriors**  
*Artefact Collecting Expedition up the Sepik River*  
**Gone With The Wynd Expedition # 6**

The Last Tuesday Society

&

The Viktor Wynd Museum of Curiosities, Fine Art & Natural History

**Invite You...**

**On a Collecting Expedition Up The Sepik River in Papua New Guinea  
To Visit Remote Villages, Meet Crocodile Warriors  
& Sight Birds of Paradise!**



# In Search of Spirits & Crocodile Warriors

## *Artefact Collecting Expedition up the Sepik River*

### Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is indisputably the most culturally diverse country in the world, with over 860 languages, and well over 1,000 distinct cultures. It is a land of stunning mountains, spectacular wildlife and one of the world's last intact systems of tribes, clans and rituals. In many remote villages across the country, first contact with the outside world is well within living memory.

This expedition takes you to one of the most remote and little visited parts of Papua New Guinea... the Sepik River. At 1,126 kilometres, the Sepik River is Papua New Guinea's answer to the Amazon. It is the country's longest river and is often referred to as Papua New Guinea's 'cultural heart' because it is so rich and varied in its tribal cultures.

Following on from Mr Viktor Wynd's extremely successful 2018 expedition up the Sepik River, The Last Tuesday Society has developed this itinerary to focus on the most interesting villages that the Sepik River has to offer, and to venture even higher along the Upper Sepik to visit villages that are very seldom visited by outsiders. We will witness two large "sing sings" (gatherings of tribes for traditional dance and singing), as well as a mumu feast (involving cooking food on hot stones in an earth oven in traditional Polynesian style).

Life on the Sepik River, despite the best efforts of missionaries, is still dominated by Spirits, they are everywhere from The Haus Tambarans to the dark of night. People can change their forms and be possessed, ancestors are still present, not dead like ours; never far below the surface lies a society still very much involved with magic and ritual. In this expedition we aim to spend as many evenings as possible with friends we made on our last





expedition in their Spirit Houses, sitting quietly in the dark as they play on garamut drums and Sepik flutes, watching and listening to the initiated, hearing them tell of their clans origin myths, of the spirits that surround them and of the time before first contact – still just within living memory.

During this 12 day trip, we travel by canoe to the Upper Sepik and Middle Sepik to visit villages with ancient beliefs and rituals. We will meet the famed crocodile men, known for their intricate crocodile-skin scarification marks. We will visit many varied and ancient Spirit Houses, and discover the Iatmul tribe's mythologies of wayward spirits and animal gods that still hold sway over traditional village lifestyles.

Along our journey on the Sepik River, we will have many bird-watching opportunities (with good chances to see several birds of paradise), and we have the chance to spot diverse waterfowl as well as crocodiles on the Sepik River itself.

We will visit numerous villages for artefact buying opportunities, and may be allowed to go out with the crocodile warriors to observe their traditional livelihood of hunting crocodiles at night. Artefacts along the many (varied) villages along the Sepik River include exquisite wooden carvings (such as figures and masks), shields, spears, dancing sticks, stone tools, pottery, axes and traditional knives.

**COST:** US \$3,950 per person.

**START POINT:** Wewak, Papua New Guinea.

**END POINT:** Wewak, Papua New Guinea.

**DATES:** Monday November 16th to Friday November 27th, 2020 (note this expedition is deliberately planned to start on a Monday and finish on a Friday, allowing you to travel to/from PNG over weekends. Only 10 work days are required to take part on this trip!)

**GROUP SIZE:** 6–10.

Email [expeditions@thelasttuesdaysociety.org](mailto:expeditions@thelasttuesdaysociety.org) for more information and to make bookings.

**Optional pre- expedition extensions:** Before or after your Sepik Adventure, you can extend your stay by visiting the breathtakingly-beautiful Yuo Island (and other islands nearby) off the coast of Wewak. These volcanic and coralline islands offer spectacular treks, many WW2 war relics, birdwing butterflies, traditional way of life, excellent local food (including fresh lobster), world-class coral reefs snorkelling and even regular dolphins sightings. If you wish to spend time on these islands, we will introduce you to all required contacts, so you can organise your add on trip directly and at cost price. Accommodation on the islands costs approximately US \$50 per person per night.



## ITINERARY

**Note:** all transport on the Sepik River will be undertaken on motorised dugout canoes. Our team of local guides have extensive experience navigating the river channels. The canoes offer excellent photographic opportunities for wildlife and river life scenes!

**Day 1 (November 16th):** We meet in the town of Wewak (pick up from airport) and are transferred to the Wewak Boutique Hotel where we overnight and have dinner. At 7 pm we have a detailed briefing meeting to discuss the itinerary of our expedition.

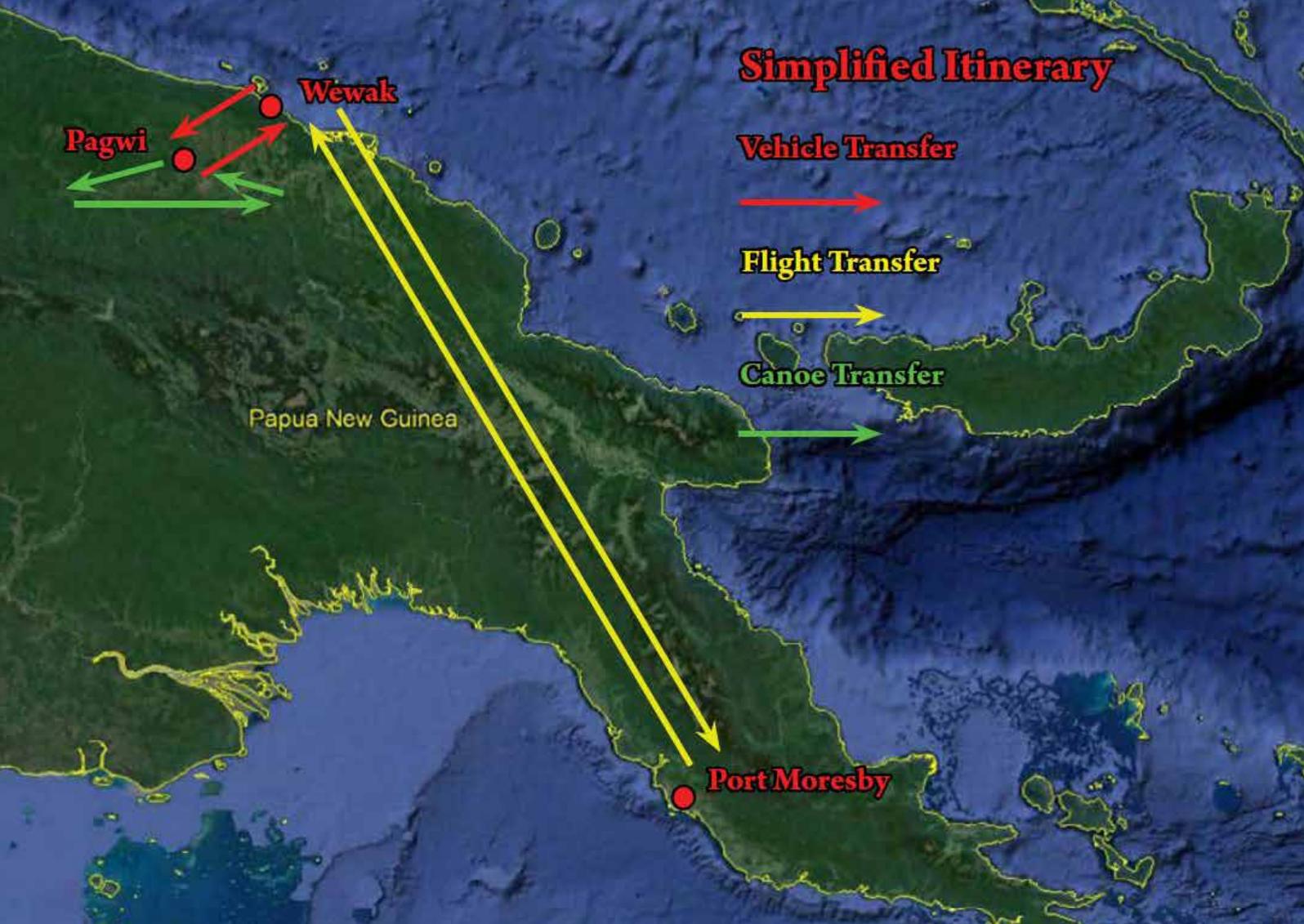
**Day 2 (November 17th):** After breakfast, at 8:30 am, we drive to the small town of Pagwi on the Sepik River (about 5 hours driving time). At Pagwi, we are met our canoes and canoe men who will transport you up river to Wagu Village in Wagu Lagoon and check into the guest house there. Overnight and dinner in the guesthouse.

**Day 3 (November 18th):** We awake early and visit birds of paradise sites to see them performing their dawn chorus. We have a chance to see the lesser bird of paradise, the twelve-wired bird of paradise, the magnificent riflebird (a true beauty!) and the king bird of paradise. Sightings cannot be guaranteed, but we have a good chance!

After birding, we return to the guesthouse for breakfast. We then motor in canoes upstream to Amaki Village on the Upper Sepik. Overnight and dinner at Amaki.

**Day 4 (November 19th):** Amaki Village is absolutely stunning. It is extremely remote and little visited, and home to a vast Haus Tambaran (Spirit House). We explore the village, and witness an impressive sing sing showcasing traditional clothing, dancing and singing. The villagers in Amaki are exceptional carvers, and we have the opportunity to visit dozens of artefact sellers in the village (often with very interesting pieces). Very, very few outsiders have the chance to visit Amaki and witness the villagers' ancient customs and way of life. Depending upon the time we are finished, we may travel even further up the Upper Sepik to villages beyond Amaki. In the afternoon, we then travel downstream to the village of Korogu. Overnight and dinner at Korogu.





## ITINERARY

**Day 5 (November 20th):** We canoe from Korogu to the stunning Chambri Lakes, filled with fish and waterfowl. We visit Aibon, a village famous for unique pottery that is traded across the Sepik River, and several nearby villages for artefacts. We dine and overnight in a local guest house at Chambri.

**Day 6 (November 21st):** Today, we visit a series of villages of the Chambri Lakes to meet artefact carvers, visit spectacular Spirit Houses, and glimpse local life. We may have an opportunity to observe the villagers crocodile hunting (their traditional livelihood) and may join them for a traditional crocodile meal. We dine and overnight in a local guest house at Chambri.

**Day 7 (November 22nd):** We journey from the Chambri Lakes to Kanganaman Village, spotting birdlife and crocodiles along the way. On arriving in Kanganaman, we witness a traditional cassowary dance (the dancers are dressed in amazing leafy costumes) and a spirit dance sing sing. Afterwards, we see ancient "blood stones" (where enemies were tied up and executed), and visit a very distinctive two-level Spirit House (completely different from all that we will visit on this trip). This is the largest Spirit House on the entire river. We dine and sleep in Kanganamun village guest house. After sunset, we return to the Spirit House to hear traditional music on bamboo flutes and giant garamut drums! We may hear stories from the tribesmen.

**Day 8 (November 23rd):** We undertake a day trip from Kanganamun to visit the beautiful villages of Palembangi and Yentchen, both of which are known for their handicrafts and artefacts. Palembangi has two really spectacular Spirit Houses, which we visit. We meet initiated Crocodile Warriors of the Yatmul Tribe (and see their unique scarification patterns on their backs). The Yatmul are famous for their 'Crocodile Clan Culture' and we meet the village chief to understand their complex relationship with crocodiles. We will likely meet many artefact sellers. We return to Kanganamun for the evening and visit the initiated men in the Spirit House. Some expedition members may opt to go crocodile hunting in the evening with young men from the village, and it is possible we may join a traditional Yatmul crocodile feast (crocodile meat is the locals' main source of protein). We sleep and dine at Kanganamun village guesthouse.

**Day 9 (November 24th):** We undertake a day trip from Kanganamun for Kamindibit village to watch a mumu feast ceremony and to witness the cooking process (heating stones in a fire,



## ITINERARY

building an earth oven, and cooking food in banana leaves). While dinner is cooking, we visit artefact traders and can undertake a nature walk. We sleep and dine at Kanganamun village guesthouse.

**Day 10 (November 25th):** We undertake a day trip from Kanganaman to Kamanimbit Village, home to the Havalan clan of the Yatmal clan, and the epi-centre of carving and artefacts on the Sepik River. We visit a master carver and trader called Ronnie, and witness traditional weavers and sago makers. We listen to stories from village elders, concerning the origin myths of the local clans, and may be able to witness traditional techniques of building dugout canoes.

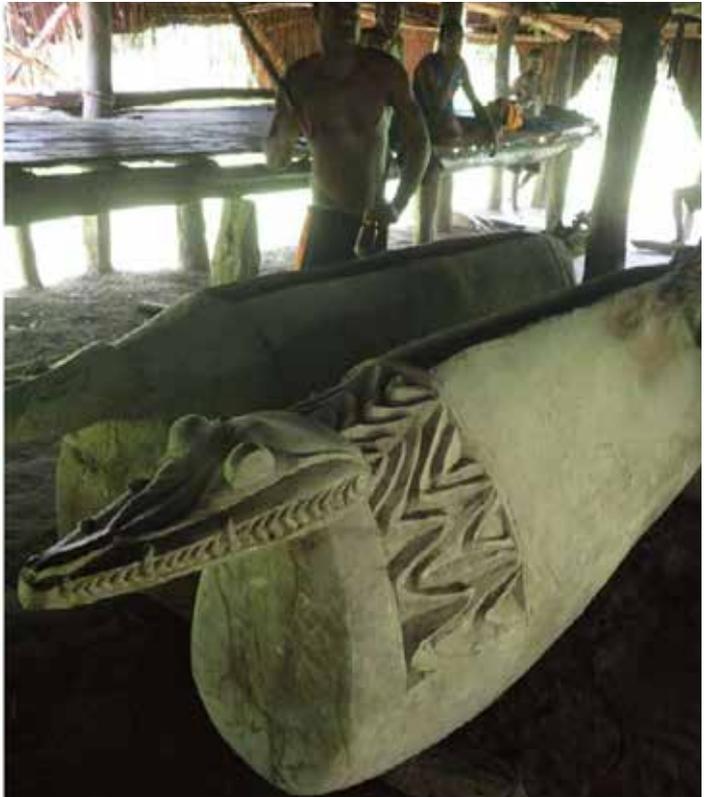
**Day 11 (November 26th):** After breakfast in Kanganaman, we motor upriver, stopping off at Korogo village before we return back to Pagwi. We say goodbye to the boatmen, transfer into a private charter bus, and are driven back to the “Wewak Boutique Hotel” where we dine and overnight. We will aim to arrive in Wewak during the early afternoon to allow time to visit artefact traders and to pack any artefacts we have purchased, ready to fly home tomorrow.

**Day 12 (November 27th):** After breakfast, we transfer from the hotel to Wewak airport for departing flights to Port Moresby.

**Note:** it is extremely likely that whilst we are journeying up the Sepik River, we may become aware of additional activities, such as visiting initiation ceremonies or bride price ceremonies. If such opportunities do arise, we will discuss options as a group and can modify the itinerary accordingly!



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## **Artefact Collecting**

On our last visit in 2018 we were amazed by the enormous variety of beautiful, wonderful and strange artefacts that were available to buy for extremely reasonable prices. The Sepik River has one of the worlds richest artistic traditions, and unlike in other parts of the world there is no artisanal class – everyone in the village makes things, all the men carve, the women make beautiful bilums, baskets, fish traps and pots. In many ways the Sepik is a cashless subsistence economy however the locals do need cash for, amongst other things, medicine & education and by buying as many artefacts as possible not only do we help keep ancient traditions alive but we support a desperately poor economy.

## **Accommodation**

Accommodation will mainly be in village houses allowing us to immerse ourselves in the Sepik way of life, however the accommodation will be very simple. There is unlikely to be any electricity, let alone mobile phone reception, during our trip.

## **Security Surcharge**

The Sepik River is a remote region and the security situation is subject to change – on our last trip, at the last minute we were advised to take two additional armed guards. If this happens we will consult with the group and the cost will be split amongst us (likely US \$100 to US \$200 per person). If we take guards, please do not be alarmed. The guards are merely a precaution to guarantee our safety. The villagers and tribesmen encountered during our 2018 trip were extremely friendly, and we received warm welcomes in all the villages we visited.





**The Last Tuesday Society is Delighted to Offer a Small Group The Unique Opportunity to Accompany Viktor Wynd On a Expedition To Find New Wonders For His Museum.**

Following three successful Gone With The Wynd expeditions to Papua New Guinea over 2018 and 2019, we have built an excellent team of expert local guides to organise bespoke trips to the most interesting parts of PNG that few outsiders get the chance to visit.

What Mr.Wynd will find for his museum during this trip he does not know. But since his childhood visits to the old Museum of Mankind on Burlington Gardens he has been fascinated, not to say obsessed by the Malagan Death Rite and longs to bring back a mask, or two.

Participants of this expedition should understand that Papua New Guinea is the land of the unexpected and it is challenging to plan events one day in advance let alone one year in advance so the itinerary may be subject to changes. Things that are promised may not appear – however historically this has worked in our favour when things that were never mentioned or even dreamed of appear as if by, or indeed very probably by magic. As with all our previous expeditions to Papua New Guinea, we will have an incredible adventure!

**Email [expeditions@thelasttuesdaysociety.org](mailto:expeditions@thelasttuesdaysociety.org) for more information and to make bookings.**

This expedition will be organised and run by Redfern Natural History Productions

