

TIMOR LESTE AND WEST TIMOR 2014 by PAT RHYS-JONES

In the early to mid 1980s, I worked with a young chap and we became good mates. He was from New Zealand and he told me how his mother was taken to hospital when he was just 10 years old and never came home. Not having been able to say good bye to his mother had a profound effect on him. His father, later, moved him and his brother and sister to Australia. His brother's name was Gary Cunningham one of the 5 journalists killed at Balibo in East Timor. And so I became interested in the story and have followed TV reports, etc. I wanted to see Balibo and eventually dragged Les to this country.





Santa Cruz Cemetery where 200 peaceful demonstrators were massacred



Balibo massacre site
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The Balibo house where the five journalists were massacred

We wandered through this house where the 5 journos had lived and had ran from to try and save their lives. We saw the Aussie flag that Greg Shackleton painted and we stood and wondered and thought, so sad, so emotional. Before Garry left he had spent a night with a young lady and without knowing it he had fathered a child that he never knew about. Makes you stop and think.

SOME HELP WITH OUR BAGGAGE



Crossing the border between East and West Timor



The West Timor border

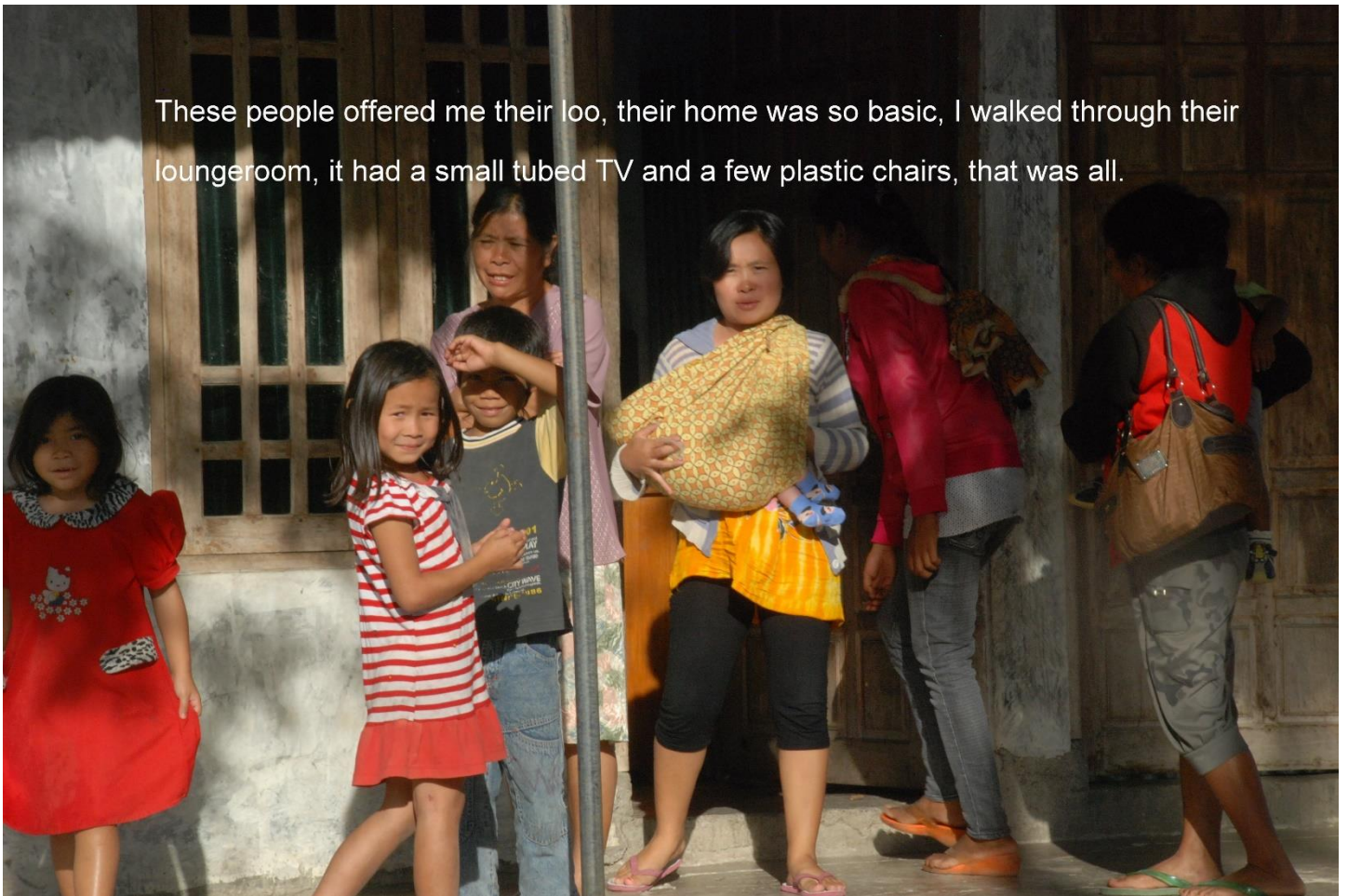


A remote village in West Timor, so remote that the Japanese didn't find them in WW2



MOTHER AND SON

Rote village, West Timor



These people offered me their loo, their home was so basic, I walked through their loungeroom, it had a small tubed TV and a few plastic chairs, that was all.

I struggle with Eastern loos so bring my own



And here is my loo!



We flew from Kupang in West Timor to Lubuang Bajo in Flores. From there, we organised a boat to take us to the Komodo dragons on Rinca Island.



Komodo dragon on Rinca Island (look hard for the dragon)



Cold tea for sale



Fish for sale



Petrol for sale





ARRIVING AT SAPE IN SUMBAWA

Wherever possible we travel overland in preference to flying as this enables us to see and explore more of the country. So now, we had to find our way home from Flores to Melbourne. This entailed a boat from Flores to Sambawa, another boat to Lombok, and another to Bali.



It was necessary to take a bus from Sape to the next boat. The bus was full and Les and I stood for 1½ hours. Unforgettable.



We were very happy to eventually arrive at our accommodation in Bali (with a pool).