

Ken Granger

Some volcanoes I have met

I have been fascinated by volcanoes from a young age and through my career as a geographer. I have had many opportunities to visit and study these powerhouses of nature. In this lecture I will introduce some of the science and terminology of volcanoes before talking about five active volcanoes in PNG. They are:

- Rabaul (where I lived in 1963-4 and visited many times subsequently);
- Ulawun (first visited in 1965);
- Long Island (where an ancient eruption spread ash over 600 km to its west),
- Karkar (where I visited in 1979 following a fatal eruption), and
- Lamington (the scene of Australia's worst natural disaster in 1951 and a location I visited in 1967).

These fascinating features dominate the landscapes in which they lie and have become tourist attractions in their own right. I have selected a few of the more interesting destinations I have visited over the past 20 years or so, at least in part to see their volcanic landscapes.

Many of these sites have great historic interest, such as Vesuvius which buried the Italian towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 AD, or the even more devastating eruption of the Greek island of Santorini around 1620 BC. These have attracted tourists for hundreds of years. More active centres such as Yasur on the Vanuatu island of Tanna attract the more adventurist tourists to witness its spectacular night-time displays (photo). For me, however, the must-visit location for anyone with an interest in the forces of nature is Iceland, the Land of Fire and Ice, where ice sheets cap, and massive glaciers spill off, active volcanoes.