

Jan. 7, 2008

Dear Ian,

Thanks so much for your Christmas wishes, and please accept the same, a bit retroactively, in return. Your card reminded me, too, that your birthday is upon us; congratulations!

We continue with our analysis of the data from last July/August's work on Nikumaroro. To our considerable surprise, among the oddities we found near the campfire sites at the SE end of the island are three little tabular pieces of what is most likely - according to chemical analyses - cosmetic rouge. Not far away were shards of a piece of thin, beveled glass that is likely to be from a small mirror, as would be found in a woman's compact. Since such a compact hardly seems a likely possession for an I Kiribati or Tuvaluan colonist, a U.S. Coastguardsman, or Gerald Gallagher, we're quite interested in these discoveries. Meanwhile, we've established that the odd streaks on the reef that appear in a 1942 aerial photograph are natural, so we're no longer puzzling about the possibility that *Nimanoa* winched logs over the reef flat. We just may develop a pretty good understanding of that little island before it disappears beneath the rising sea.

Again, best wishes for a very happy birthday, and many more to come.