



# *The Coastal Passage*

TCP 88  
Oct., 2018



# Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Yacht Race 2018 News



# DON'T START THE MOTOR!

By SV Natsumi, with help from Sheryl Waller

On Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> August this year I began yet another Adventure with my owners Gil and Sheryl Waller. With our Crew consisting of my owner's Sons Matt and Simon, Matt's two sons Cambell (15) and Angus (12), Lew Clarke and Justin Congdon we headed over the start line twice. There was just a little confusion as to what Division we were in however, we crossed the line 2 ½ minutes earlier than we should have which fortunately, meant that we were not disqualified before we started so to speak. Nevertheless, the spinnaker had to come down as we went about and started the Spice Island Darwin to Ambon Race for the second time.

With little to no wind we headed off with Capt. Gil saying, "It's not if we have to start the motor it is only a matter of when". The crew set forth and put up every sail they could to help me gain some sort of momentum. This is no mean feat for someone my size, weight and age (I am now the ripe old age of 37). For nearly two days no matter how hard I tried I just couldn't go faster than between 1 ½ to 3knots except when we had a little tide assistance as we rounded Cape Fourcroy. Every

time Capt. Gil suggested starting the motor Sheryl would say in a very loud voice "DON'T START THE MOTOR". In fact, this became her catch cry for the whole race!

Sheryl did keep pointing out that all my competitors were 'in the same boat' all doing much the same speed and it would be a little embarrassing to start the motor and then pass our opponents and be disqualified to boot. I must say I had to agree plus I felt I would like to just do one race just under sail alone. By the afternoon of day 2 things began to improve and with my spinnakers up on both masts for three days and two nights we had a great sail arriving at the finishing line with the tide with us just until

we finished. Our crossing of the finish line (at 5.15 and 30 sec am Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August) was about as slow as our crossing of the start line however as the fireworks heralded the fact that we had finished under sail the champagne cork popped and the cry went up "Start The Motor"!

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# DON'T START THE MOTOR!

Sailing is just part of this Adventure of which I was obviously an integral part. Whilst I happily sat on my mooring the Crew went off to enjoy the most amazing Ambonese hospitality. According to what I heard from the Owners and Crew they all felt overwhelmed by the welcome they received by everyone from the Mayor of Ambon down to the school children and people generally.

As everyone stepped ashore on the Thursday morning they began their amazing experience with a hearty welcome from the Organizers of the yacht race.

Later in the day there was the Becak ride with everyone in their own trishaw paired with delightful student's intent on improving their English skills heading off with a police escort and a band on the back of a truck as they were taken on a tour of Ambon City. Apparently Cambell and Angus were a great hit and spent quite some time posing for 'selfies' with the female students. I am sure they really hated that!!

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# DON'T START THE MOTOR!

The Mayor of Ambon and his Wife hosted a wonderful evening at their home with an abundance of food drinks and entertainment and of course a warm welcome expressing his heartfelt gratitude to the 'Fleet' explaining the importance in relation to not only the friendship between the City of Darwin and the City of Ambon but also that such events demonstrate to others that Ambon is now a safe haven for visitors.

The visit to the school was another highlight with entertainment from the children. This was a highlight for Cambell and Angus who along with other young crew joined the children doing traditional dancing and attempting to 'jump the bamboo sticks' without damaging their ankles. Simon was quite a hit with his drone taking footage of the proceedings which he gave to the school.

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# DON'T START THE MOTOR!

An unexpected pleasure was the Crew's attendance to the evening put on by the local Boating Club. According to the conversation when the Crew returned to join me on the mooring things started a little quietly until the large group of older citizens got up and gave a demonstration of ballroom dancing. Before long the whole room was up tripping the light fantastic with this very agile dance group.

Although I knew it was impossible for me to attend I was a little disappointed no to be amongst my Crew for the Presentation of Prizes. There had of course been many stories from other Yachts about the pros and cons of their race experiences and by all accounts all the yachts had succeeded in bringing all their crews safely from Darwin to Ambon.

Personally, I never believed that it would be possible for Gil, Sheryl and our Crew to be up their receiving first place on handicap in our division. I am not new to this yacht race as I have done it in 1991 and 1992 with my original owner however, it is the first time I have managed it under sail alone and thanks to an amazing and enthusiastic crew and Sheryl who kept repeating "don't start the motor". Who would have thought!! I would just like to add that the Grandsons who were perhaps not as enthusiastic as they could have been at the start both said to Sheryl, "Nonna this is the best thing I have ever done in my life" and then asked Papa if they could to it again next year. Well, I think that will be a discussion for another day.

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# DON'T START THE MOTOR!

After leaving Ambon with Gil, Sheryl, Lew Clarke and his wife Julia things were much more relaxed as we headed around the north coast of Ambon stopping at a couple of villages along the way where we donated bits and pieces for the schools. Due to the weather conditions we were in no hurry to head towards Banda Neira. I had some great encounters with some of the local fishermen who came to visit, children heading out after they finished school in their canoes to get one or two of Lew's balloons and then there was the boarding of the local water police who also wanted a photo with Me. We



were lucky enough to have a pod of about fifty dolphins keeping us company when we spent four days off Nusa Laut Island waiting for a break in the weather.

When we arrived in Banda Neira at dusk on the 22nd August the only boat left was *Ozzie Mozzie*. Capt. Peter came and helped the Crew tie me safely to a large tree on the shore. We were the last yacht to arrive in this beautiful place which lived up to everyone's expectations. We had no sooner arrived than out of the darkness came the familiar voice of Ayu calling "*Natsumi, Natsumi* I knew you would come"! I was rather chuffed that I was expected and spent the next four days gently tugging at my anchorage watching life pass me by while everyone else enjoyed the delights of Banda Neira with their wonderful Tourist Guide Ayu.

From discussions on board it was obvious that Ayu was an amazing Ambassador for her Island. A walking tour of the historic Town, the Spice Island tour which highlighted the importance of Nutmeg and Mace in the History of this tiny dot on the Globe, (once the most expensive real estate in the world), forays through the market and fish market, sitting sipping coffee with fried bananas, and savouring the most amazing and interesting Indonesian food ever.

The visit to the school of 13 children on one of the adjacent islands to deliver a box of supplies donated by two of the other yachts was a favourite excursion. Who would have thought a box of stationary, hats and drink bottles could bring such joy? My crew added some balls, pool noodles and old spinnaker which were also accepted with enthusiasm especially the pool noodles which prompted the children to head into the water fully clothed in their school uniforms. The crew topped off this visit with a snorkel over the lovely coral just off the beach.

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# DON'T START THE MOTOR!

Abba of Cilu Bintang Resort was also very welcoming, and we had a couple of lovely meals there. In return we treated Ayu and Abba to an Aussie BBQ aboard which was fun. I think they both enjoyed the lamb chops and sausages as much as the Crew enjoyed the dishes served up onshore.

Gil and Lew also did two tank dives which they said was one of the best they had done. By this time Gil had discovered that Google Maps in satellite mode was very useful in being able to find the edges of coral etc. and therefore improved our ability to find some lovely snorkeling spots.

Our four-day visit seemed to be over in a flash. The only disappointment was the fact that Ayu missed out on the Scholarship she had applied for to come to Australia to study. Ayu told us this news as we were sailing away and we were all feeling sad for this enthusiastic young woman who is so ardent in her 'Dream' to help children who are struggling to be educated due to family circumstance and to promote Tourism in Banda Neira. We all hope that she fulfills her Dreams for herself and her beautiful Island.

"Don't Start the Motor" was not mentioned on the way back to Darwin. Thank goodness as otherwise we could still be out there waiting for some wind. The weather was kind to us and we spent many an hour reading on the back deck. Unfortunately, my automatic pilot decided to give up the

ghost and consequently Capt. Gil and Lew had to keep me on track for the last 3½ days and nights which was a pain for all concerned.

As I sit tied up at Tipperary Waters Marina waiting for Gil and Sheryl to turn up again I would like to say thanks to all the Organizers and Participants in the 2018 Spice Islands Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race for your part in giving me yet another amazing sailing experience. In the meantime, I will spend some time swapping stories with the 'stink' boat moored next to me.

I wish you all many more safe sailing adventures.  
*Natsumi.. with a help from Sheryl Waller*



Ayu



SV *Dreamer*, Mick, Heather and Emma

**Catamaran *Dreamer*,  
Rally category Ambon, 2018**

Last Saturday in Ambon, Joy asked me if I could write a few words on the sail we had on *Dreamer*. Joy, I am sorry, I just can't. I can't find any word to describe how good it was or what was good about it. It was so good...

The sail, the amazing time ashore with the community, the organisation, etc...

I can just join a photo of our crew, going ashore for the first time after having spent 7 days on the ocean together

**WE HAD A GREAT TIME!!!** (and we'll be back!)  
Thank you Mick and Emma.

And thank you Dinah Beach for organising such a beautiful event.

**See you soon Ambon,  
David, SV *Daymirri2***



## **A note from Clair Hall, D2A race organizer**

My kids attend JINGILI PRIMARY SCHOOL near Darwin and are working to become sister schools with SD IMPRES 42 AMAHUSU (a local primary school in Amahusu where the race finishes). The community & school were very excited to have the kids visit in their school uniforms and spend a few hours with a class each.



*more fun photos next page*



This may not be very tidy production but we felt it was important to get photos like this in this edition, however it worked out. I remember my experiences in Amahusu in Ambon clearly. The kids were great and we were treated like movie stars. The race is just part of the deal.

# 2018 Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Race

The 2018 Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Race has drawn to a close for another year.

As usual it was a light start in Darwin Harbour although many were hopeful as there was plenty of breeze early morning but unfortunately that disappeared by the time boats made it to the starting area. The light breezes continued for the first few days seeing most of the fleet stay within close range of each other.

The breeze finally kicked in for *Antipodes* the lead boat on Monday and they flew into Ambon Harbour receiving a hero's welcome at lunch time Tuesday. Most of Amahusu came to watch the first yacht cross the line as well as the numerous dugouts and the official welcome boat that escorted them up the harbour complete with gamelon, drums and dancers!

In Cruising Monohull, *Colie* and *Wallop* had a close race throughout the trip swapping positions constantly finally finishing on Wednesday afternoon. Not too far behind and surprising everyone (even themselves) was *Natsumi*, a Roberts 53 that maximised their kite flying capacity and ability to run square,

they finished on Wednesday night and took out first place. Special mention to the crew aboard *Anastasia* that stuck it out and finished on Thursday afternoon 2hrs before the welcome ceremony. A little dishevelled and quite relieved they managed to make it to the party - a great effort!

Cruising Multihull was also swapping leaders throughout the race but it was the trek up Ambon Harbour that eventually set the placings. On Wednesday night, *Ozzie Mozzie* had a good lead but a frustrating sail up the harbour took a little longer than they would have liked and made crossing the finish line a challenge in its self. Hot on their heels, *Vitamin B* had a dream run up the harbour and crossed the line doing 12 knots!

All yachts received the usual fireworks upon finishing & welcome drinks on the jetty. There were also plenty of activities on offer throughout the week including a welcome dinner at the Mayor of Ambon home, Becak tours through the city, School visits, games with locals and of course the Presentation event in Amahusu.

As always the hospitality of the people of Amahusu and Ambon was overwhelming and is the main reason that most boats will be back again in 2019 for a bigger and better race.

# FINAL RESULTS

## IRC

1<sup>st</sup> Antipodes Santa Cruz 72 Geoff Hill

## Cruising Monohull

1<sup>st</sup> Natsumi Roberts 53 Gil Waller

2<sup>nd</sup> Colie Hanse 575 Doug Sallis

3<sup>rd</sup> Wallop Jeanneau 509 Marcus Itlon

## Cruising Multihull

1<sup>st</sup> Vitamin B Tennant Dakota Steve Winspear

2<sup>nd</sup> Blue Frog Seawind 960 Bruce Cartwright

3<sup>rd</sup> Ozzie Mozzie Bob Burgess Tri Peter Anstey



Proudly organised by:



and sponsored by:



**The 2019 race will start at 10am on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019. For more information and to submit an Expression of Interest please contact:**

**[info@darwinambonrace.com.au](mailto:info@darwinambonrace.com.au)**

# Five reasons every sailor should try a Darwin Ambon Race

By Simon Waller, SY Natsumi

I'm writing this as I fly home from my first Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Yacht Race. From before we left Darwin to well after we arrived in Ambon the race has been an incredible experience, one that I think every sailor worth their salt should attempt at least once.

I must confess that before doing the race I knew very little about it. The boat I crewed on had done a couple of Darwin Ambon's back in the early 1990s but none of our crew and no one else I know had ever competed in one before. If perhaps I'd known what I'm about to tell you, it would not have taken our crew quite so long to do the first one.

Maybe a Darwin Ambon is already on your radar or perhaps your just hearing about it for the first time, either way, I thought I'd share my top five reasons why every sailor should have a go ... at least once.

## 1. The weather

OK, so I'm flying back to Melbourne where the weather forecast this morning was four degrees and I'm in thongs, shorts and a t-shirt. Doing a Darwin Ambon is a great excuse to escape the southern Australian winter and although you can still get some crazy weather during the race it still far more enjoyable than what most Sydney Hobart participants experience in the middle of the Australian summer (I'm speaking from experience here having competed in the 2004 Sydney Hobart when only half the fleet manage to reach the finish line).

## 2. The wind

The general wind direction for a Darwin Ambon is from the south or south east. We launched our spinnaker on the morning of day two and didn't take it down for over 48 hours, and even then it was only so we could put up a different spinnaker. All in all we flew a kite for nearly four days, all the way from Melville



Island just north of Darwin to within 10 miles of the finish line in Ambon harbour. All in all it was very conducive to games of cards in the cockpit during the day, drinking rum cocktails at sunset and getting a good night's sleep each night.

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# Five Reasons...

## 3. The welcome

Words cannot describe the warmth and sincerity of the welcome you will receive on arrival in Ambon. From the fireworks as you cross the finish line, to the reception at the Mayor's house and the countless lunches and dinners in honour of the participants, you are treated like royalty.

But even more compelling than the official functions and organised social events are the interactions with the locals of Amahusu Beach who cannot do enough to help you out while you're there.

## 4. The history

The first Darwin Ambon was run back in 1977 and it has been run nearly every year since. Over this time there have been incredible long term friendships that have developed between participants, organisers and the Ambonese people.

At times being in Ambon felt like you'd been dropped into middle of a family

reunion ... except most family reunions involve far less Bintang and are nowhere near as much fun.

Along the way these relationships have been instrumental in the development of the sister city relationship between Darwin and Ambon, the formation of the Ambon Sailing Community and a recently announced student exchange program between the two cities. Outside there is also a historical relationship between the two cities, formed when Australian air servicemen fought, died and were buried on Ambon during World War II.

## 5. The impact

My reason for sailing in the Darwin Ambon was somewhat selfish. It was an opportunity to bring our old crew back together, have a bit of fun and



experience a bit of healthy competition. I didn't really think that my participating in the race would have such an impact on so many people.

Whether it be through the visit to the local primary school, the games organised between the locals and the crews, the secondary school students hanging around the hotel just so they can practice their English on you or the injection of money into the local economy, you leave Ambon feeling like your presence there and the race itself makes a real difference to people's lives.

When our crew got together last year and convinced our skipper to enter his boat *Natusmi* in one last race I thought that doing a Darwin Ambon would be a once off. But having experienced it first-hand I can fully appreciate why so many crews end up going back and back again.

So although I stand by what I wrote earlier in that every sailor should have a go at a Darwin to Ambon at least once, you might just find that **doing it just once is not nearly enough.**

# Dinah Beach Yacht Club - your one-stop pit-stop in tropical Australia

If you're thinking of travelling to tropical Australia, there's a unique yacht club you should visit for repairs, re-stocking and connection with like-minded sorts. Nestled in the inner harbour in tropical Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Association specialises in providing a range of DIY opportunities for the cruising yachtsman.

This down to earth quirky club, 35 years old, offers hard stand sites (with option to reside), careening poles, pontoon access, showers, laundry and a basic workshop. There are two marine chandlery shops and other specialist marine equipment stores within walking distance. It also has a relaxed open air licensed premises open seven days and a kitchen, affectionately named the Galley, which has just undergone a big refurbishment with new caterers and a new menu. Live music three times a week provides a great backdrop for social engagement.

Another strong point of this Club is its strong community focus its members are marine folk with years of experience that provide local advice, professional services, look after their mates and welcome visitors with the promise of stories to share. Visiting membership for 28 days is available at the bar free if you are a member of another yacht club outside Darwin or only \$20 if you are not.

**The Club also runs the wet season race series from November to March and the international Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race each year in August.**

Visit [www.dbcya.com.au](http://www.dbcya.com.au) for more information and ask for a DBCYA burgee when you depart!





# LETTERS

## Dunk Island shipwreck mystery

My wife and I are local yachties from Townsville who recently came upon an old, well decayed shipwreck at Stingaree Reef on Dunk Island, North Qld.

The remaining steel frame from this once sizeable vessel is slowly being consumed by the muddy elements and mangroves are growing through the structure. Having enquired with some locals and then with The Museum of Tropical Qld in Townsville, I discovered the shipwreck was only recently listed in June, 2018 (after discovery by a staff Archaeologist) on the Australian National Shipwreck data base and listed as 'Unknown'- for vessel name, details and any history.

Curiosity now has the better of me and I would like to find out more details before the vessel disappears altogether. Does anyone have any information about this vessel, when and why it came to grief on Stingaree Reef opposite Kumboola Islet? Many thanks

Bruce Piggott  
E: bkpiggy@optusnet.com.au  
M: 0413 739605

*ED: This seemed interesting so we asked Bruce if he had more information and it turned out he did. this could be good fun so we hope a reader can shed light on this. Please see next page for more on this.*

**see next page!**

**Notice to contributors:** All contributions that purport facts in a matter of possible contention, should be ready to provide support for their assertions or the contribution may be refused at the discretion of the editor. Anyone disputing a matter of fact in any part of TCP is **invited** to respond as long as the discussion remains one of fact and the responding writer must also provide support for their assertions. Personal attacks will not be published and rude or offensive mail will not get a response.



Do you know something about this wreck?  
email, [mail@thecoastalpassage.com](mailto:mail@thecoastalpassage.com)  
and we will put you in touch with Bruce

## More on the Dunk Island shipwreck mystery

**Greetings Bruce and Karen,**

*Sorry to be so tardy in getting back to you. I have been on the move having recently entered Australia via Cairns from the Solomons. Now steady for a while to make repairs. I tend to be hard on sails and other gear.*

*Kay and I are preparing an edition and so makes sense to publish your letter and photos. seems odd in a location like that to not know the total history of the wreck, down to cabin boy... how long would you estimate the vessel? and any other details you may have observed. Construction materials etc. the photos are good but you may have seen stuff they don't show.*

**Standing by,  
Bob Norson**



**Hi Bob,**

Hope you had a great trip out to the Solomons.

Yes it is odd nobody seems to know much about the wreck. The guys from our local Museum of Tropical Qld and GRMBPA did searches but came up with nought. Pete Illidge, the Maritime Cultural Heritage officer, a local guru we know, suggests that it may have been a scuttled vessel as there are no fittings about, just the iron frame left and it is up high and dry close to the mangroves. He estimated that it may have been there since the beginning of the 20th century.

The local Harbour masters have not even acknowledged my enquiry.

LOA is difficult to work out but I reckon 20-30 metres and 10-12+ metres beam. There was a round drum sitting on the

frame there but it seemed in better nick than the rest of the vessel. Hope this helps and many thanks for your assistance

**Bruce**

**Hey Bruce,**

*That should be helpful information and I think Pete may be right but that doesn't diminish my curiosity. Your estimate of size is important, hard to tell from the photo. I assume it was rivetted construction?*

*And it doesn't surprise me at all that you didn't rate a response from the local harbour masters. They may have little connection with local shipping history. The people that may have known have been pensioned off by now. I bet they would have replied to you in any case.*

*My Solomons voyage is covered this edition.*

**Bob**



**Dear Bob & Kay,**

I had previously asked Sandy at Airlie Beach 'Grotty Yachty' for printing something special for all you lovely Friends of Percy and Yacht Club Members to prove it! So, after many years a Club Member has taken the initiative to design a shirt using our logo. They look smart and great and practical.

I have forwarded this info. direct to you, so that you can choose colour and style and own boat name if you would like to follow through and support a local shop and advertise your community Queensland Island all at one go!

Please make contact with Sandy online: [www.grottyyachty.com.au](http://www.grottyyachty.com.au) or myself: [percyisland@gmail.com](mailto:percyisland@gmail.com)

**Happy cruising to you all!**  
**Cate and the Percy Island Crew**

## **Painting on Rusted Steel**

see [www.thecoastalpassage.com/rust-paint.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/rust-paint.html)

**Hi Bob,**

I have read your article over and over and am wondering what the longer term results have been of the two products you used after you cleaned the rusted steel.

the POR 15 has now changed names but I would be very interested in how they both held up.

**Cheers,  
David**

*Hi David,*

*You are referring to our web page as named at the head of this column.*

*They have both changed names. It was Altex pre prime 167 and now I understand from a conversation with John of Percy Island that International Paints appears to have taken it up but still uses the number 167 in the title.*

*The 167 was better. Both required careful preparation but with that done, the 167 was permanent. the POR 15 was good for about a year or so.*

*continued next page*

## **Funny you should mention that David...**

continued from previous page

*But it took a long time to find these things out! Our old boat, WhiteBird is currently in Darwin and as I moored nearby in current vessel BareBones, was able to have a look to verify.*

*The benefit to POR 15 was that you could, actually had to, do a whole paint system the same day where as, the 167 was several days to do a system.*

*So Por 15 was handy for spot repairs on deck. But if you are doing a big job and want the best result you take the time with at least two coats of the 167 and then proceed with the best primers and undercoats and topcoats you can get.*

**Cheers,  
Bob**

**Hi Bob,**

Thanks very much for your reply.

I got onto a very good tool system as well for rust removal which is a formidable combination with a rattle gun.

<https://tercoo.com/en/>

It is available in Australia through McIntyre Equipment in Brisbane.

They work very well except really do not like being run over edges

**Safe Travels,  
David**

**Funny you should mention that David,**

*I have been thinking about our old mate Tony Becks, Aka the Ragin Cajun that contributed an article in TCP #56 about that tool. He used it to strip the paint off his steel boat without blasting while refitting in South Africa on a circumnavigation.*

*Tony sent us several really clever tech articles over the years. His uncommon, common sense and sense of humour are missed. He passed away from cancer.*

*He also noted the problem of running the tool into edges or protruding hardware.*

*So McIntyre Equipment gets another free ad from TCP. No worries.*

**Cheers,  
Bob**



**Tony**



# Anchorage surveillance?

*Greetings,*

A couple years ago I saw one. I don't remember what anchorage but I looked up and saw a pole on a hillside, with a wire going to it but none going further? What? So got out binoculars and it appeared to be a camera... shook my head.

The camera will not just be taking a photo once a day, it will be capable of live video 7/24 saved to memory and retrievable at any time. a permanent record. Park's use to keep people from over staying anchorage as a justification for the cams would be a ruse.

The cams are there to track yachts movements as our paranoid government seems distrustful of the free and un-surveilled movement of people period. you live in a police state. get over it!

You guys may live aboard and travel infrequently by car any distance. If you did you might notice the cams over the A1 *claimed* to have been put there originally to prevent truckies from driving over long shifts. To keep us safe from those truckies! Blaming it on terrorists might have been going too far.

Those cameras are capable of reading every rego plate that passes AND identify every driver and front seat passenger with facial recognition software. It is

almost, if not entirely impossible, to travel the state, end to end, without the government tracking you. Course if you use a credit or debit card to pay for fuel, you are double screwed. And even if you pay cash if you go into a BP servo, they have you on video. And I would bet they 'cooperate' with government.

Everything they do is legal, both parties have approved it. And for an agency like ASIO, the Australian equivalent of the American FBI, even if a thing is illegal they can not be prosecuted. Look up ASIO on Wikipedia. The only things they can't do is rape, torture or kill you or burn your house down. Course they will have to be caught at it. And get witnesses... with a death wish.

To sum it up for this page; no, they do nothing illegal. Anytime you see a camera or other form of state or cooperative private sector surveillance, assume it is being used to it's fullest capability and shared to every department that wishes it, from the council dog catcher to ASIO.

**Aren't you glad you asked?!  
Have a Brilliant Day!**

**Hi Kay and Bob,**

I'm writing to tickle your journalistic interest in the recent goings on with the National Parks in the Whitsunday's!

They have begun a programme of installing hidden cameras in the most popular anchorages in the area!! The cameras take a photo once a day monitoring the amount of vessels and duration of their stay. If a vessel remains more than seven days in one anchorage they are liable for an on the spot fine!

This is happening right now, a good friend who lives aboard has been constantly hassled and told to move every seven days. He claims they even use Google Earth Live to check anchorages. What the???

Just wondering if you'd heard of this and or the legality of the hidden cameras? Think the money would be better spent putting the cameras further north where illegal asylum seekers can land undetected!

**Cheers,  
Name with held by request**

# Bitcoin?

*TCP got a letter from Rob Judd shopping for a boat as he had done some good with Bitcoin! So I had to ask... how do you do it?*

**Hi Bob,**

<https://www.independentreserve.com/>  
<https://www.coinjar.com.au/>

Set up an account on one of these sites. Pay via direct deposit (max\$5000 at a time).

Send the coins to one of these:

<https://www.ledger.com/products/ledger-nano-s>

The Ledger Nano S requires a computer to attach to of course, a laptop running Windows 7 or above is fine.

You can then set up a software wallet on your smartphone to pay for stuff, or send back to another exchange anywhere in the world for cash. Depending on the country you may need to send to a local bank account due to KYC/AML

requirements. But it's also possible to sell direct to someone via:

<https://localbitcoins.com/>

They match up buyers and sellers for a fee. Better explanation? There's a lot more but that's the basics.

**Rob**

***TCP Bob replied:***

*OK, that's clearer BUT... what if you do not have a smart phone? or even a dumb phone? See this edition of TCP for details of why...*

**Rob Replied:**

Cryptocurrency can be sent from your laptop or tablet too, obviously. A smartphone is just more convenient when physically shopping since it fits in your pocket.

KYC = Know Your Customer

AML = Anti Money Laundering

These requirements have become part and parcel of banking and any institution dealing in cash transfers in western countries since

9/11/02 has implemented rules to comply with government's need to spy on our every day transactions in the vague hope of tracking down fund sourcing for terrorism.

Now you know why they blew up those two big buildings. In point of fact, the major benefit to governments is not anti-terrorism but tax compliance.

Amounts larger than AU\$10k or "suspicious" transfers of multiple smaller amounts, and any international transfer at all, are diligently monitored.

All cryptocurrency gains are subject to CGT with the minor exception of small amounts spent almost immediately, such as buying a concert ticket where a discount is given for crypto payment.

In this respect Australia is slavishly following the American IRS on taxation issues, as it does on most everything else, to our detriment.

**Rob**

# Adventures of *BareBones* in Palu, Indonesia

*Below is a suburban area of Mamuju. the city center extends into a valley created by a river that the local fishing boats moor in.*



## **Story & photos by Bob Norson, SC *BareBones***

I was sailing back to Sulawesi after cruising around Lombok, Kalimantan and some smaller islands. Mamuju was my first stop.

Crossing the Makassar Strait was easy enough, only 180 miles or so but plenty of shipping and FADs (fish aggregating devices) to keep a skipper alert. It was an attractive city on the shore and rising into the hills of a wide bay facing north with an island in the center of the bay's entrance providing some shelter. There was a large sign on the hill above the city, done up like the famous "Hollywood" sign announcing "MAMUJU CITY." A proud city. A prosperous city. The Mosques were plentiful and impressive. Like most places in the area, the water was deep and the shore, steep to. I stopped in to get my Indo visa extended.

I found a place to anchor right next to a new, actually unfinished wharf and found my luck was good as the new Immigration offices were within an easy

walk. People were very helpful. I knew how to say immigration in Bahasa but couldn't understand directions so a lady running a shop got her son to give me a ride on his motorbike; he refused payment. I had walked further to get the ride than Immigration was from where I went ashore.

The people running Immigration were very helpful but I was short one document. They would do it same day if I could get it which was a big ask normally and as I wasn't in love with where I anchored, especially appreciated. I finally got through to the immigration agent I had and explained the urgency which must have lost something in translation... I gave up waiting. All I wanted was a sponsor letter which takes a couple minutes to write and needed to be sent email with her ID. She would have had a file in her phone, insert name and send.

*continues next page*



# Adventures of BareBones in Palu Indonesia



But they didn't have petrol there so he rang up a mate with a car. A big flash SUV. His mate was prosperous. We loaded it up with all my jerry cans and took off for the Perta Mina servo, by way of a store to pick up a few more bottles of Bintang beer. The harbour master went along for the ride and entertainment I think. All the way the big guy driving would take a tissue out of a box, wipe his brow and throw it out the window... this is Indonesia. The servo was not close, we were most of the way to Palu to get there. The coast of that bay was densely populated from the shore to the high hills. The opposite shore was steeper so I assume less populated on this side but those hills were a peninsula and the city of Donggala was on the coast side. A lot of people concentrated in the area.

I got back and loaded the fuel on the boat and tried to talk the harbour master into letting me stay the night... no way.. he smiled, I shrugged, I tried. I anchored again by the beacon.

The next morning I motored out of the bay heading north to Teluk Labeia, Labeia Bay according to my chart. It was only forty miles and I hoped to find ground less than a hundred feet! I wanted to replace some antifoul on my curb feelers, AKA dagger boards, before I went to sea again and it looked sheltered. I had a couple days to kill I reckoned, between there and Bitung.

The place was a paradise! I spent that afternoon on deck just looking around me. I remember thinking that I could *live* here! The hazy, cloudy sky had gone, the wind was gentle and warm. The palms swayed gently. I wanted to go to sleep. We were only seven and a half miles from the equator. It was all good.

*continues next page*

## Adventures of *BareBones* in Palu Indonesia

I got the work done and with regrets, left the bay behind and motored and sailed non-stop to Bitung, 440 nm. I cleared there on the last day of my visa, loaded all the fuel available in the village I anchored by across the channel from Bitung and set off. Next stop. Davao, Mindanao.

Readers surely know by now, the devastation that occurred at Palu Bay and Donggala. But Mamuju was also hit by the tsunami from what I have been able to discover. A wave of even a metre or two there would have been very destructive. I am still checking.

But one place that I am sure has been destroyed and goes unreported is the villages of Linde and Labeia Bay. According to a chart published by the USGS (United States Geological Survey) the epicenter of that quake was directly under that little area. Palu city was over 80 kilometers away on a fault that ran almost directly south from the epicenter to Palu.

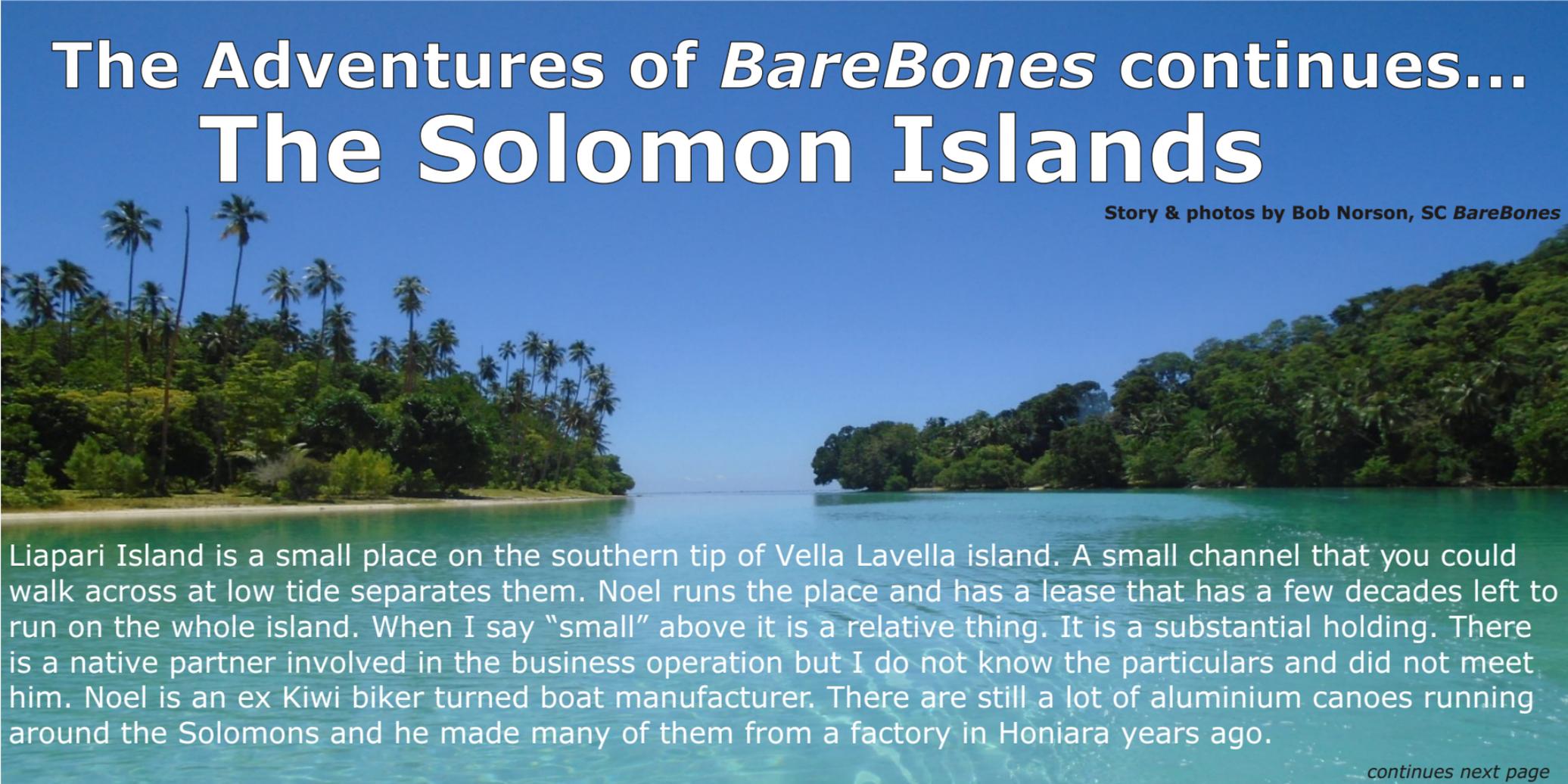
I fear that the deaths from this horror will go well beyond mere thousands. Many of the lost will never be recovered, perhaps most. I am glad I got to see it before but I can put real faces to the disaster. I hope the harbour master and his family survived.



***The red star indicates where we were anchored. There are many more towns along this coast than the chart indicates.***

# The Adventures of *BareBones* continues... The Solomon Islands

Story & photos by Bob Norson, *SC BareBones*



Liapari Island is a small place on the southern tip of Vella Lavella island. A small channel that you could walk across at low tide separates them. Noel runs the place and has a lease that has a few decades left to run on the whole island. When I say "small" above it is a relative thing. It is a substantial holding. There is a native partner involved in the business operation but I do not know the particulars and did not meet him. Noel is an ex Kiwi biker turned boat manufacturer. There are still a lot of aluminium canoes running around the Solomons and he made many of them from a factory in Honiara years ago.

*continues next page*

## **Adventures of *BareBones* continues...**

Rose is Noels wife, a native of the Solomons and a very sweet lady. She is an ex nurse; an operating room nurse. If you start talking down to her she is kind enough not to correct your false perceptions, but she could. Lately she is in charge of egg production and house hold chores. A marvelous cook and generous to a fault. I really like her. If you visit bring some ibuprofen for her arthritis.

The island used to do much more in ship maintenance but not so much now. The sheds and heavy equipment remain however. Noel built a jetty along the west facing shore where the shelter was best. Yachts tie up Med style. There are a couple of sunken wrecks just off shore and they are used as mooring points for the yachts. I had a spot to the south end and had to use an anchor for my southern, aft line. Ran out of wrecks!

Like most places in the islands, the shore is steep to. The wrecks were in around 60+ feet. (20 meters) and the jetty was on shore one side and a meter of water the other. If lines are well set, it's pretty good. Unfortunately my lines were altered while I was gone and damage resulted on my port side as a result.

I was the only yachty there that spent any time aboard. Most were gone for long periods. I only met one other crew the whole time there. They came back to set up and leave. I was there a couple months aboard and a couple months back in Australia to visit my wife and daughter. I kept busy when there as I had repairs to make.

*continues next page*



*Noel and Rose invited me for Christmas dinner and other occasions at the round house, a shaded BBQ and beer thirty gathering place. Very generous and I was always sorry I couldn't contribute more. my provisions were adequate for survival rather than celebration! BYO is at 1700 every working day.*

## **Adventures of *BareBones* continues...**

The timber waste generated by the timber industry and normal storms, flush a lot of wood into the seas north of PNG. My rudders had some damage and the leading edges of both dagger boards were beat flat! My bows are built amazingly tough. We ploughed into a large semi floating log in the Philippines at about 10 kts. It spun us around rather than shove the log aside and I figure in our bloated, bring everything you might need for anything and provisions for a year mode, we were at 6 ton easy... the log hardly moved. The damage to the bow was chipped antifoul paint.

Anyway, the bring everything you might need for anything part of those tons came in handy. Besides the boards and rudders I found another little problem. A long time ago I had to move the anchor winch chain stripper a little and the hole through the deck had to be enlarged as a result. The deck was composed of 20mm foam and 20mm of ply reinforcement. The ply was completely protected by epoxy... except for one small spot where I enlarged that hole for the stripper. Bigger! The whole thing had to be excavated from below as water soaked the ply. Then dried out and replaced... with the ply I brought along just in case... [As an aside, poor *BareBones* was carrying all this stuff in the 2016 Darwin to Ambon race. We should have been handicapped into first place, but life isn't fair.] Then I had to glue in the ply and laminate the bottom from inside the chain locker... a midget would have complained but I love *BareBones*... I love *BareBones*...I love *BareBones*.... And repeated that mantra the whole time.



***Everything is happening here at once, the boards are on the bows, the rudders on the nets, the windlass on the catwalk and all under repair as I found some serious corrosion on the windlass body.***

*continues next page*

# Adventures of *BareBones* continues...

The island sends a supply boat to Gizo every Thursday. You can ride along for a fee. The boat is made to Solomon Island style, long and skinny, like the traditional dugout, but made of GRP and powered by a big outboard. The 14 mile trip is rather pleasant as long as it doesn't rain and we only lost one overboard while I was there but we found him and loaded him in again.

Gizo City is stretched out along the sheltered north shore of Ghizo Island. The one long street has some pot holed bitumen remaining but everything else is dirt except when it rains and it does that a lot there. The Gizo Hotel is owned by Australians and priced like it was in Sydney and another one on a mud street further down is locally owned and not too bad considering and priced like it was in Brisbane.

Taxis clog the street, crawling over the pot holes and rubbish. Petrol is expensive in the Solomons. You wonder how they make a living but per kilometre they charge a lot but then nothing is more than a kilometre away but trust me, with baggage to carry and considering the mud paths that have the audacity to call themselves roads, pay and take the taxi. You should pay no more than \$10-20 SD to go anywhere in town. Exchange rate is about 5 or 6 to 1 for the AUD\$ or 7 to 1 for \$USD

The PT 109 indicated on the sat shot is a restaurant and bar that I liked but the owner died just before I left, hope it hasn't changed.



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## Adventures of *BareBones* continues...

To get to the Solomons I sailed hard from Ninigo Atoll. No rest along the way and some rough weather. About 1000 miles. Liapari was first stop. I got a couple days rest there over a weekend and the low down on clearing in at Noro. Gizo had been a clearance port but an official had died so that port was written off though I heard just before I left the government was getting that organized again. Noro on the Island of New Georgia is about 40 miles away from Liapari to the south. The word I got around the place was that enforcement was lax. Apparently people had sailed around the Solomons for years and never checked in. You just have to stay out of trouble. A sailor I met at Liapari had some bad luck. He sailed in to Gizo in time for a big party and wound up drunk with a lady in his bed and no wallet... or passport... ah oh... So he was in trouble with immigration. Billy runs the office in Noro and he gave the sailor a real hard time, however after finally getting his replacement passport which he had to travel to Honiara and wait weeks to get, he was eventually cleared in. You wouldn't want to try that stunt in Australia!

To Noro. You sail into a small lagoon. The entrance over the reef is marked by a stick on the north side of the entrance when I was there. Get well past it before turning to port and anchor in front of the market. Monohulls will need a tide. Immigration is in the tallest building behind the market on the top floor. Go to the left hand side of the building and through a steel gate and up a wonky looking stairway to find the office. But first you need to go to customs!

*continues next page*



## Adventures of *BareBones* continues...

Walk up the street away from the market and find a bitumen road that runs along the waterfront and turn left. Soon you come to a red building on the hill, the offices of TeleKom, handy to know when you want a local sim. Turn left on the road just before TeleKom and when you get to some houses look to the right for a sign. Customs charges \$18 USD a metre for your yacht! BUT, they don't want it in USD, they want it in \$SD and the only official place to change your money is at the bank that you passed as you were walking away from the market on your left... and they are thieving bastards! Go to the store that occupies the bottom floor of the building that immigration is in and ask the Chinese person at the counter by the door if they buy your currency. If they don't there is another big Chinese operation up on the big bitumen street but to the right of where you turned left before, or you can cut through the bush behind the big building like everyone else does. One of the places are usually buying AUD or USD. Either will be better than the bank.

***Do not be afraid to barter on the exchange rate!*** A Chinese guy and I went at it for about 15 minutes over 20 cents AUD to SD and in total it did make a difference but mostly we were just having fun. I should have gotten him for another 10 cents.

Then do immigration and you are all set. Billy may take a few dollars off you. If he took any off me it wasn't enough for me to remember. Especially after Customs! They hurt. From recollection, coming in by boat gives you several months but coming in by plane gives you a month before you need to extend, which you can... for a fee.

I hope that gives you a flavour of how things are done in the Solomons.



*This was a big rain. It washed some of the market in the foreground into the lagoon.*

*continues next page*

## Adventures of *BareBones* continues...



*WELKAM to GIZO, the sign proclaims. This is a glimpse of the waterfront by the Gizo Hotel which is across from the ship landing and market. Notice the traditional dugout canoe powered by the outboard motor. That is carved from one tree trunk and beautifully done.*

Now where was I? oh yeah, Gizo. It's a good idea to shop at the places that Liapari use for provisions. Just ask whoever is running the boat. Besides the fact they are probably going to look after you better than some places, you can have your stuff boxed up and waiting so the boat can pick it up when they pick up theirs...

But wait a minute, I got back to front again.

When the boat comes into Gizo. It ties up at the jetty that belongs to the Gizo Hotel. The boat leaves Liapari about 0830 so you get into town just after 0900. The boat leaves the jetty about 1400 and heads for the wharfs behind the two stores that the island usually does business with. Most of the stores there are set up so their back door is the bay and their front door is the main street. If you shop at other stores you can leave your purchases at one of the others and they will store it for you until the boat comes around with you in it as you should meet at the Gizo Hotel jetty at about 1400 or as advised.

For frozen goods there is a place next to the concrete supplier, no sign. Everyone just knows.

You can get an amazing array of goods but you can never tell what. All the merchants are Chinese and they stock anything they can make money on. You might find paint brushes next to the rice. And watch them like a hawk! I saw a place that had pocket calculators. The local native girl showed me a package with a new calculator in it and showed me the price marked on it. I gave her the money which she took with the calculator to the Chinese woman running the store. Only they make the actual transaction. Later when I opened the box I found a well used calculator had been exchanged for the new one I had seen...

All part of the adventure, right ?

*continues next page*

# Adventures of *BareBones* continues...



*All kinds of ships land here. Some have regular passenger service as well as cargo. You can travel very cheap if you don't mind sleeping on deck on any place you can find. There are also cabins if you don't want quite as much adventure.*

At the market in Gizo there is a reasonable variety of local fruits and vegetables. Some may not be familiar and what you may regard as staples, like potatoes are not there at all, but there is something called Kumara that kinda, sorta resembles potatoes. Buy them cleaned and washed as dirty ones can hide sins that make them useless. Don't look for scales. Usually things will be sold by "bunches" or some other general description. Goods will often be displayed in groups and price quoted for the group. Bartering is expected.

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# Adventures of *BareBones* continues...



Pauline made shopping a pleasure. She is the sweet lady that will paddle all the way across the lagoon to offer her fruits and vegetables, and sometimes mushrooms to you on your boat at Liapari. She will leave the price to you as she knows you will give her more than she would ask. I got to know what the stuff goes for in the markets and the service is brilliant so I was happy to pay a premium. I didn't know this variety of mushroom but can (obviously) vouch for their safety. Pauline will also offer cooking tips which lead to the dish I cooked below. She also does laundry.

*continues next page*



## **Adventures of *BareBones* continues...**

I will take a moment to try to attack the smiling native bullshit. I find that yachties want to believe an image of the friendly native. The honest native. The humble native. My ass, they are often craven cons. Much of the time they approach your boat to sell food, it is the shit they won't have or have in excess and is soon to rot. And the carvings... from prices I have seen asked they have had some crazy white people around.

*There may be a few really talented artists out there that have sold some items for good money, that were worth it, but now there are thousands of imitators, looking for easy money. That universal ambition. I was shown a small piece and the carver asked \$500 SD. I laughed and declined, the offer was quickly reduced to \$400, \$250 and he gave up at \$100.*

I think that a lot of people in Solomons, PNG, Philippines etc... believe you are rich and they are poor because your country/culture/grandfather exploited them. Otherwise they would be the rich ones because they are smarter than you and they will prove it by ripping you off with petty shit. So watch out for the ones approaching by canoe. Exploiting your dreams of the noble native. Maybe a man at back paddling and a woman with small child offering you some pretty ordinary fruit. If you do buy something you may be additionally asked for gifts.. for the child or the ailing brother, anyone or anything that might invoke sympathy.. Sorry but.... *They* are the exploiters.

I talked to a couple on a cat anchored by Gizo, they had just come from an anchorage by a village where they went ashore and asked what they

could do to help out. The man repaired some things and the woman helped a lady with a sewing machine. The village woman had no experience with machines and when it no longer worked she was helpless. They worked together to get it running again and in the end the village woman learned a lot. The sewing machine was a valuable thing. They would have continued but the village chief paddled out to their boat one day demanding money to anchor there. They refused as anyone should and thus began a big row as the sewing machine lady was the chief's sister and began shouting from the beach, she was livid that her idiot brother was chasing away people that had been so helpful. A perfect example of the conflict you can encounter. One little shining light of industry shot down by the exploitative chief. Ms Industry lost, the cruisers lost, the Chief didn't get the money but maintained his authority. Perhaps more valuable. Hmmm.. maybe I should take a closer look at our own politics before I criticize theirs. Morrison, Trump, May... does Murdock control the Solomons too? I'm getting depressed...

I just read something: *change occurs when the pain of remaining the same is greater than the pain of changing.*

People like what they are familiar with. Things that western people think are indispensable may not be received that well in primitive cultures. I remember offering a young lad a glass of cold water at the Ninigo Atoll. He didn't like it. He had never had anything cold in his life. Refrigerators didn't exist there.

Is this why countries that have been liberated from dictators elect another dictator when given elections? Are we being conditioned to accept dictators and idiots for leaders? Sure seems like it. *Cui bono(latin)* Who benefits? Time to move on, I got a head ache. *continues next page*

# Adventures of *BareBones* continues...



**Rendova Island**



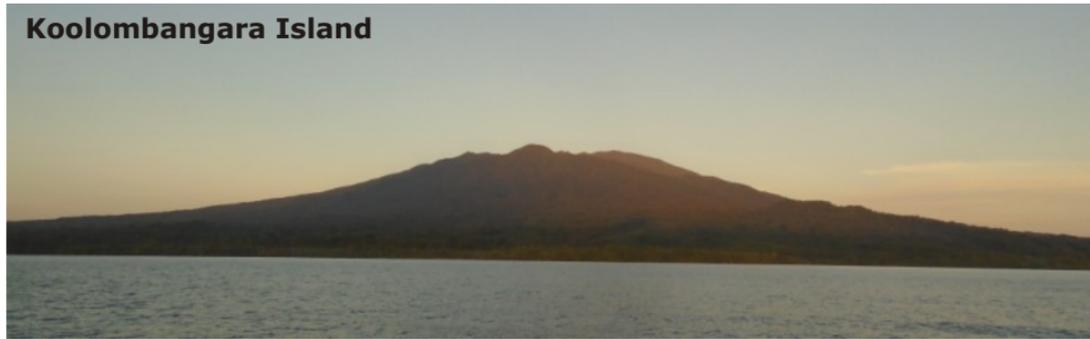
**Rendova Harbour**

The Solomons have an interesting history, not much of it though. Don't look for Roman coins or Spanish treasure. Popular history really begins and ends with WWII. The battles between Japan and America were legend. JFK, John Kennedy, the US president was rammed by a Japanese warship there in his PT 109 boat that I heard was stationed at Rendova Harbour on the north west corner of Rendova Island just south of New Georgia. I anchored there, no incoming fire but canoes full of natives selling carvings and rotten fruit. The island is a magnificent volcano.

Another grand volcano is Koolombangara Island just north west of New Georgia. I found some really fine anchorages there. Narrow passages making deep into the growth. But the canoes found me. They sell marijuana there. They sell it by the branch.

Otherwise the main source of employment is working for the plantation timber operation there.... run by Australians. I met the General Manager and his family at Lola Island. Timber export is what keeps the port at Noro busy, not yachts.

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**Koolombangara Island**

# Adventures of *BareBones* continues...



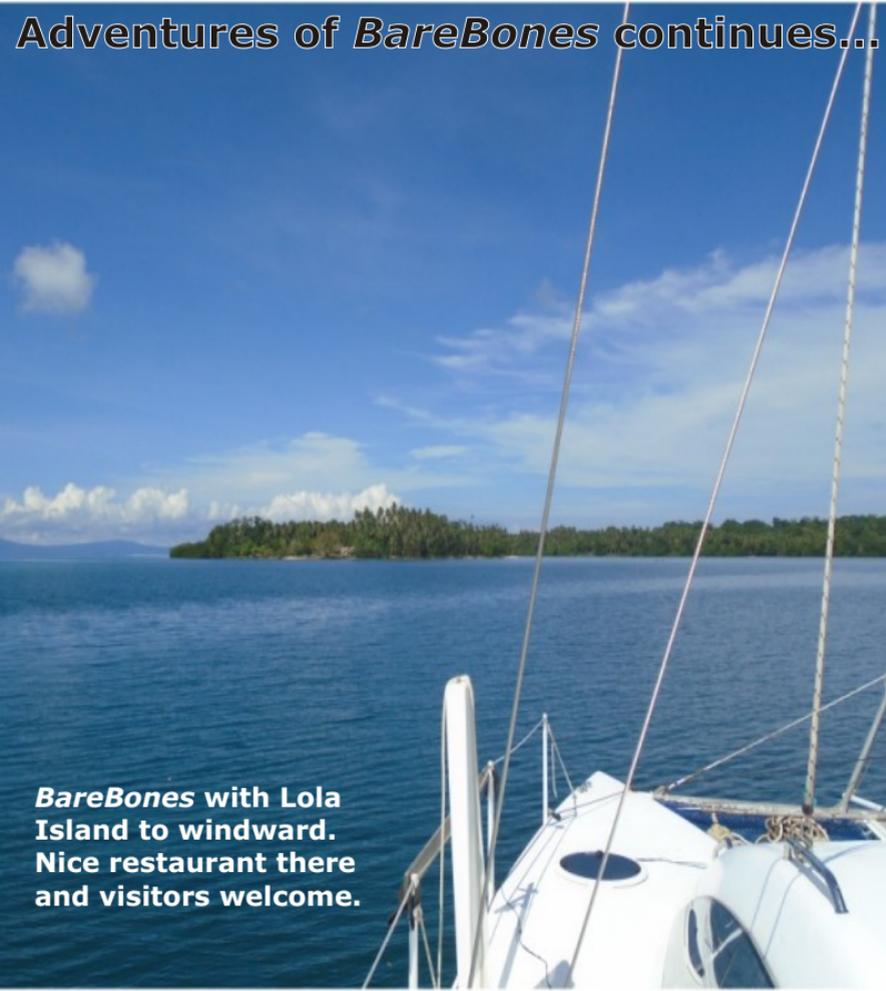
Munda is interesting and a good anchorage with a well marked entry. The airstrip there was built by the Japanese. The Americans held Honiara with Henderson Field air base and the Japanese wanted to force their way south but needed an airstrip south of their base in Rabaul. They built the Munda strip under cover of wired up palm tree tops while they worked underneath. They fooled American observation planes long enough to finish it and then pulled the cover down and launched attacks that surprised the Americans. Amazing stuff. It is still there, I landed on it in an Otter. A small and old aircraft with bald tires and other shortcomings...

*continues next page*

*At left: Flying in the little plane from Honiara to Munda. Just a glimpse of what the Islands are about. Right: a big plane for the Solomons, landing at Munda on the old Japanese air strip.*



# Adventures of *BareBones* continues...



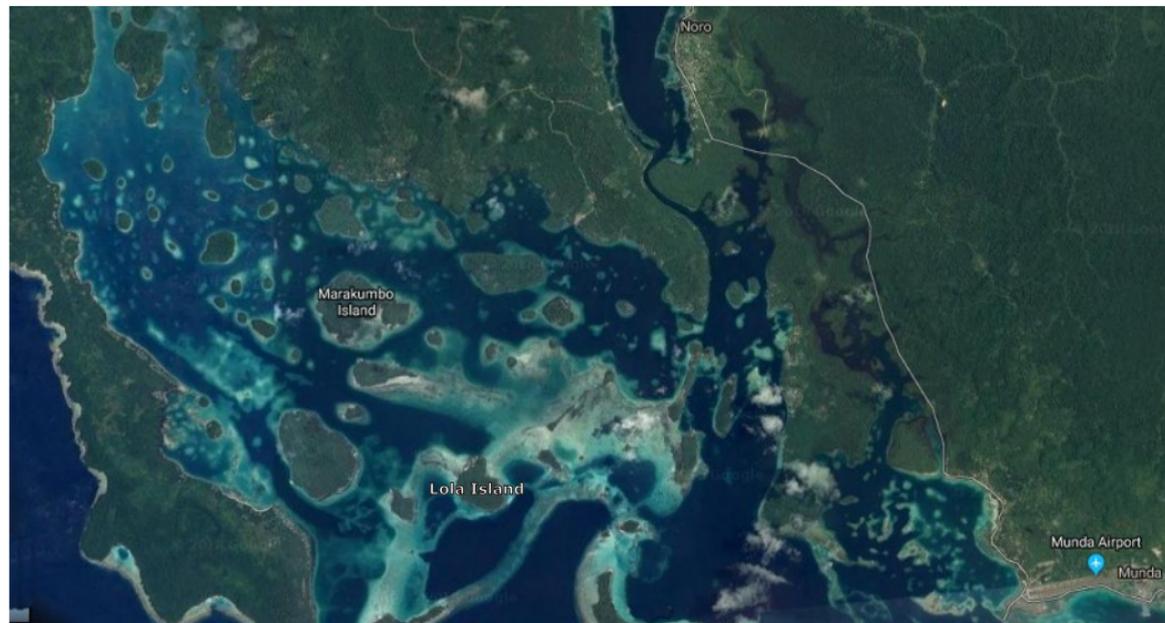
***BareBones* with Lola Island to windward. Nice restaurant there and visitors welcome.**

The great lagoons were the best. Vonavona (below) has some well known channels and a resort island that was a treat.

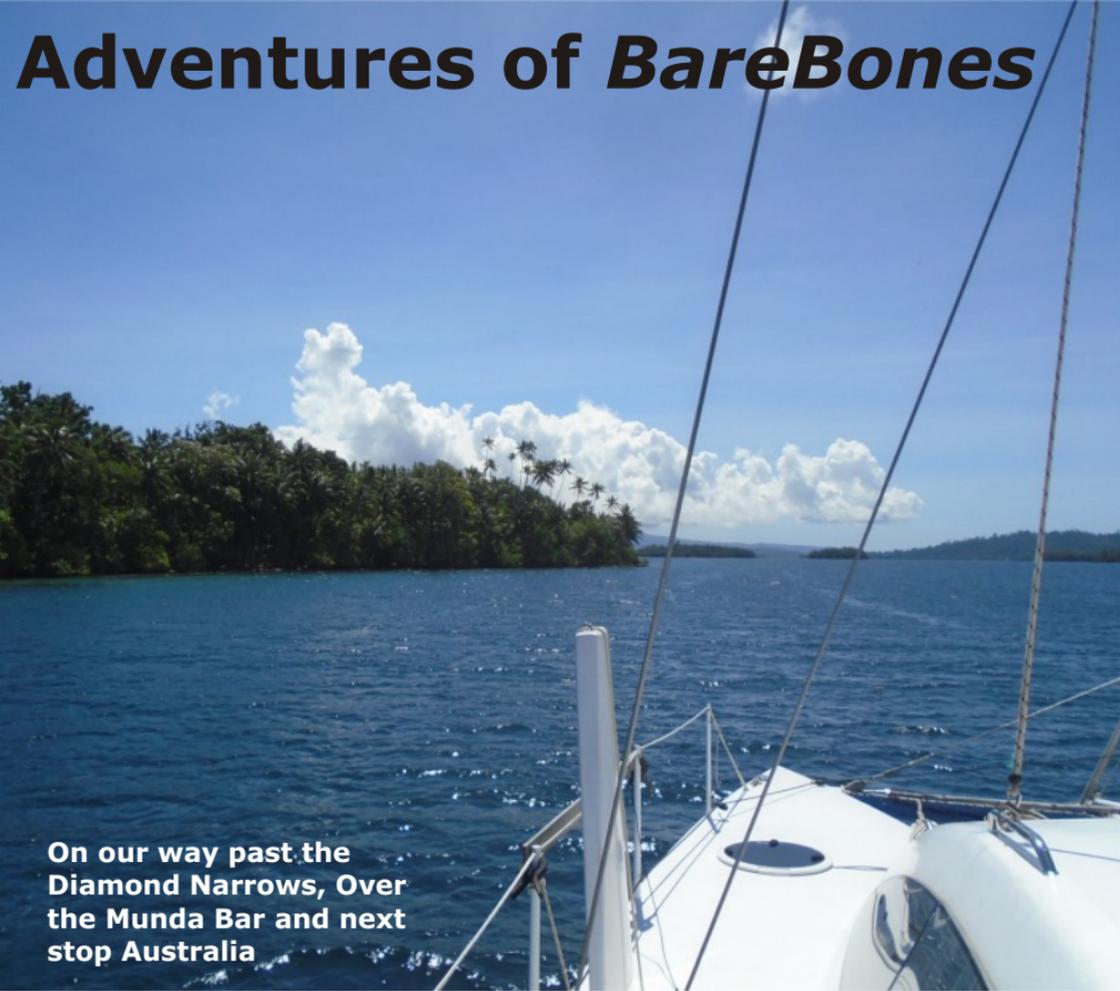
**Marova lagoon is meant to be the largest in the world. It does seem so when you are navigating through either of them the first time. The tension is like shooting pool for serious money. You need to keep your eye on the ball. Focus!**

But they are so worth it. Nothing like this anywhere else that I have seen. They make it all worthwhile.

*continues next page*



# Adventures of *BareBones*



On our way past the  
Diamond Narrows, Over  
the Munda Bar and next  
stop Australia

But the call of Australia and family was strong. It was time for *BareBones* and I to head home for a while. I looked at weather forecasts and spotted what looked like a break in the pattern. I checked out at Noro and headed south through the Diamond narrows and Munda bar and sailed into the night past Rendova and making for the light at Adele island off the Louisiades. That worked for a while pointing close. Then the wind came up to about 25-30 kts and more from the south than east and I had to tack away, tried again later and had to tack away. Did that several times and gave up. The seas had gotten big. I had given notice to Australian customs that I intended for Mackay but if not then Cairns. I threaded my way through the Louisiades, past Misima and through the Jomard entrance and tried one more time for Mackay as conditions improved. Reality set in and corrected course for Cairns and stayed on it.

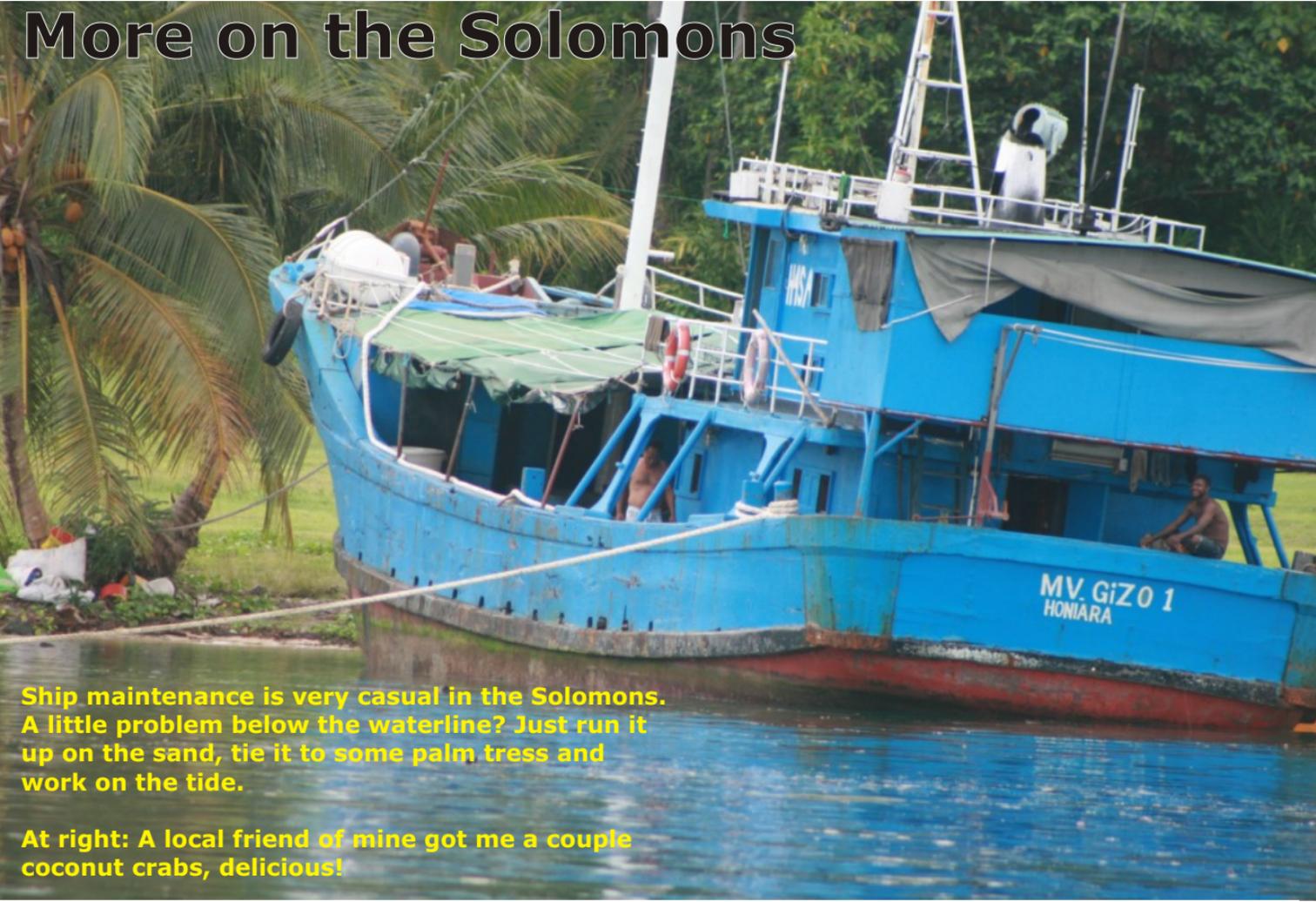
When I got close to Cairns it would have been very helpful if Customs responded to radio. I know they monitored. That was shitty. However. When I got organized in spite of that the two people that came aboard were very nice. I had no trouble and I was unsure of what to expect. With my record concerning Customs I figured it would be all one or the other. I got the good treatment. Helen and Amanda couldn't have been nicer or more professional. I had my end covered and they weren't picking a fight so it was all over quick and easy. The Quarantine lady was a little late getting to me, next day, but had it all together, knew her job and I didn't have to face the ignorance and bad attitude that, from reports, was so common a few years ago. It had been over two years but we were back.

# More on the Solomons

Some good friends of mine have a huge 60 foot catamaran and can arrange special visits aboard their boat. You can see the lagoons that the skipper Gavin knows very well and have meals prepared by Luciana, a legendary cook. She does cooking classes aboard as well. See their website and get in touch for details. [www.svchemistry.com](http://www.svchemistry.com)  
It will be the holiday of a lifetime for just the cost of accommodation.



# More on the Solomons



Ship maintenance is very casual in the Solomons. A little problem below the waterline? Just run it up on the sand, tie it to some palm tree and work on the tide.

At right: A local friend of mine got me a couple coconut crabs, delicious!



# Living the Dream

**SY Mi Querida**

Photo by Nick, SY Creightons

originally published in TCP # 50

**Words by Stuart Buchanan, SY Pluto**  
**Photos courtesy of Leigh Von Bertouch,**  
**SY Mi Querida**

It was a typical North Queensland winter's afternoon pleasantly cool and calm. The fronds of the coconut palms hung motionless over the white sandy beach bordering Dunk Island's Brammo Bay, as I sat in the cockpit of my ketch *Pluto* enjoying a few rums in the company of Leigh Von Bertouch. Leigh owned the beautiful Cherubini designed 14 metre ketch *Mi Querida* that was anchored just across from me. She stood out from the other yachts anchored in the bay, not only because of her sparkling varnish and beautiful lines, but because of the exaggerated rake of her masts.

I had first met Leigh for a brief time in Mackay Harbour a few weeks earlier. I discovered then that he owned a wheat farm in Kingston in South Australia, where he had built *Mi Querida* which, translated into English, means 'my beautiful one' or 'my mistress'. He was in Mackay, to drop off two Spanish backpackers who had sailed with him for a few weeks. I had met the backpackers and found they could speak very little English.

*continued next page*





# Living the Dream

"That would make it quite difficult for you, wouldn't it?" I said to Leigh "Your only crew not knowing much English."

"Oh, no," he replied. "Even though they had no sailing experience, everything worked out well. But I suppose if a storm had developed suddenly, it could have been a bit complicated explaining to them how to put a reef in the main."

Leigh was now sailing single-handed. I glanced across the shimmering waters of the bay towards *Mi Querida*.

"That's one hell of an achievement to build a yacht like that," I said. "How long did it take you?"

"When I started building her in 1983," Leigh replied, "I thought it would take me about two to three years and cost somewhere between seventy and ninety thousand dollars. It ended up taking me twelve years working seven days a week, and I'm not telling *anyone* how much it cost."

The hull is built of five skins of western red cedar, the deck is teak and almost everything, from the 5.7 tonne lead keel to the anchor winch, was fabricated by Leigh.

Leigh told me that he was sailing a little further north before returning home to South Australia, where he'd do a few minor alterations to the interior of *Mi Querida* before setting off on a circumnavigation of the world.



*continues next page*

# Living the Dream

Well, he certainly did that. Once a year, for the next twelve years, I received a lengthy letter from Leigh describing exotic sounding places that he had visited around the world such as Borneo, Yemen, Tunisia, and along the rivers and canals of Europe to Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Onto the Shetlands, Scotland, England, Ireland and Spain. Across the Atlantic to Martinique, Venezuela and through the Panama Canal to the Pacific.



During 2008 I received a letter from Leigh saying that he was in Tahiti and soon going to leave for Rarotonga, Suwarow, American Samo . . . Hey! What was that again? Suwarrow! SUWARROW!

Forty-five years ago I bought a copy of *An Island to Oneself*, an autobiography written by Tom Neale. Tom wrote how he spent six years living alone on Suwarow, a small uninhabited coral atoll 515 miles from Rarotonga and 200 miles from the nearest inhabited island. He arrived there on 7 October 1952 and remained there alone until 24 June 1954. A few weeks before that departure date he injured his back and was almost paralysed. Miraculously, he was found a few days later by some visiting yachties who arranged for Tom to be taken off the island. And it was a miracle, because during that initial two year stay on the island only two yachts had called in to the atoll. He returned to Suwarow on 23 April 1960 and remained there alone until 27 December 1963.

I think I took the wrong direction in life when I was about six years old; by that age I had read and become addicted to author Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' books, whose young characters were involved in an amazing series of adventures. There was

Julian, Dick, tomboy Georgina (called George by the others), Anne and Timmy the dog, whose exploits occurred on places like Kirrin Island.

If I had read *Advanced Economics* instead of the 'Famous Five', I might have been Prime Minister of Australia by now. Well . . . I *might* have been. However, after reading Tom Neale's book in my early twenties, I wanted to live on a deserted island too. But in retrospect, if someone had plonked me on a deserted island at that period of my life, I wouldn't have liked it at all. Tom Neale lived a self-sufficient life on fish, coconuts, chooks and eggs. With *my* knowledge of self-sufficiency I would have starved to death within a month and gone insane from the lack of company.

*continues next page*



# Living the Dream

However, some years later I did discover my deserted island; and it was much better than Tom Neale's atoll. You see, my wife Shirley and I became lighthouse keepers on Queensland's Barrier Reef coast; not only were we paid a salary, but a stores boat delivered food to us once a fortnight. I suppose I could be called a Clayton's hermit; Shirley refers to me as an 'Enid Blyton Tragic'.

Leigh wrote to me in 2008, describing his visit to Suwarrow. The atoll is now a national park, with a ranger, his wife and four boys stationed there from May to the end of October. As Tom Neale did, the family live on the island of Anchorage, the largest island in the 9 mile diameter atoll. Anchorage Island is only about 800 metres long and 300 metres wide; its highest point is 5 metres above sea-level. During the great hurricane of 1942, sixteen of the twenty-two islets in the lagoon were washed away. At the time, Robert Dean Frisbie was living on Anchorage with his four children and some coast-watchers. He saved his children's lives by tying them to tamanu trees, which were flexible enough to bend with the violent wind.

Tom Neale lived in the old coast-watchers' hut, which still had two functioning rainwater tanks.

Although there is now a \$55 entrance fee to the lagoon, the ranger John waived this for Leigh because he brought in a supply of tomatoes, potatoes, taros, limes, cabbages and a stalk of bananas for the family. Yachties aren't permitted to visit other islands in the lagoon without the ranger, because only recently some yachties were discovered spearing fish in large quantities; now it's prohibited to dive in the lagoon away from the sight of the ranger.

It's also prohibited to take away coconuts from the islands because of a serious infestation of termites. One yachtie who ignored this ruling later found termites gnawing away at his timber mast.

A stone monument to Tom Neale now stands on Anchorage Island that states:

**TOM NEALE LIVED HIS DREAM  
ON THIS ISLAND**

*continues next page*



# Living the Dream



In late 2008 while I was living at Bustard Head lightstation, Leigh arrived unannounced. He had hardly changed one iota since the last time we met in 1996; he looked tanned and extremely fit.

Leigh was sailing single-handed. Over the past twelve years, Leigh had kept me up to date with the

various crew he had on board. For some reason he didn't seem to keep crew for too long. I don't know why, because he had a great personality and was an experienced skipper.

I think it would be the opportunity of a lifetime to travel the world like that. So, for a few days while

Leigh was anchored in his ketch in Pancake Creek, I asked the twenty or so tourists who arrived at the lighthouse on the LARC (amphibian vehicle) each day if there was a woman who would consider accepting this wonderful offer to crew for Leigh.

*continues next page*

# Living the Dream

Over three days only one woman responded:

“Can he cook?” she asked.

On the fourth day, an attractive looking woman gestured with her thumb at the man standing next to her, who I assumed was her husband or partner, and said:

“He'd go.”

“I think Leigh would prefer a woman,” I replied.

“That's not a problem,” she said, “he'd dress in drag to go on a trip like that.”

Leigh sailed out of Pancake Creek single-handed.

Two months ago, Leigh phoned; he was off again, heading up the Queensland coast towards Darwin and then to who knows where. He was sailing single-handed after having disembarked a female crew member in Yeppoon.

So, ladies, if you have a dream of cruising the Great Barrier Reef and beyond in a beautiful yacht, keep your eyes open for *Mi Querida* and your dreams could come true.



# Do not bring your "smart phone" on my boat!

Think having a "Smart Phone" is, er... *smart*?

Have you ever read the agreements you sign onto from Android or Microsoft or any of the "apps" they come with?

Your phone or pad or Windows 10 notebook can take photos or video and record audio of you and your surrounds anytime, without your knowledge or specific permission, and much more. I have told that to people explaining why I don't want it around me. They offer to turn it off and I can't believe how many people don't know that that makes no difference!

TCP has been reporting on this for about 10 years!! I reported an incident in Europe that got attention because it went to court and the perp went to jail. He planted malware into a girls computer she kept in her bedroom that allowed him to remotely activate the camera and microphone. He got all hot and bothered and in a fit of fantasy he contacted her in hopes she would be pleased that he thought so much of

her! No really, he did! That is the only way they caught him. I was quick to recognize the possibilities of the software he used to do this. Anyone could buy it. And that was ten years ago folks! Before "smart phones" happened.

Your phone or Windows 10 device can be remotely operated even with the power off. The only way you might be certain it is safe is to remove the battery, I think. On some new win 10 laptops, the battery is not detachable. I would avoid them.

Masking tape or blue tack over your notebook's cam and mic is a start. I saw a photo of Mark Zuckerberg with his laptop behind him, HE had his cam covered. He should know.

But don't take my word for it. The "real" journalists are catching up to me. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/06/phone-camera-microphone-spying>

Also the movie, "Snowden" is highly recommended. Never heard of it? In Australia? Not surprised.

So you say you don't care if they spy on you... Fine, be a fool if being otherwise is too hard but what about the people around you. Your family, your friends. Your friend's children? The collected data is never erased. You are taking away their choice not to be a victim.

Can't live without it? First of all, a few years ago you could. Why not now?

OK, the info bothers you but you really can't give it up so what do you do?

Iphones are probably less worse. I find Android phones scary, windows same. I would not trust the settings in them to be secure but do what you can to make it a little harder for them. .

Do not download apps! Their job is to collect data and they often include access to your cams, mics and location as well.

Keep a metal box by your door. a place your friends can deposit their phones when they visit. You may find the visits are more congenial anyway.

## Who really Runs Australia?

Seven years ago, (TCP 49 Aug 2011), I filled printed pages full of warnings of the danger to our democracy from Rupert Murdoch and his empire. I explained how it worked, the evolution of the power base.

Few listened and now I bet the same people that looked at the article and thought to themselves, there's Bob rabbiting off on some conspiracy theory again and turned to a more entertaining page are shocked at the news.

Now it is widely known that Murdoch personally picks our government to suit his own interests. That's NEWS!? Is anybody awake out there?

The ABC is a tamed puppy compared to what the country needs.

## Lotta new boats out there

While going south to windward on the QLD coast I saw a lot of new French Plastic going north. Anchorages were crowded but the culture was different. More conformist, joiners, less pirates. Leopard yachts from South Africa is strong as well but a notable lack of new yachts made in Australia.

I put the blame at least partially on regulatory agencies. Marine Safety Queensland (MSQ) has apparently been muzzled somewhat by recent budget issues but too little and way to late. Even Seawind, since moved to Vietnam, seems to have vanished from the Whitsundays charter fleet.

As Peter Kerr of Lizard Yachts has pointed out, foreign boats for charter do not meet requirements that apply to local builders. We peaked 12 years ago. Death of a thousand daggers really.

## That Kavanagh guy

What a hot topic. This morning (6 Oct)I checked news and the woman senator, Sue Collins, said she was going to vote yes. She was the crucial vote. Within minutes a cloud funding site set up to sponsor an opposition candidate had crashed from activity after taking in nearly two million dollars.

I think an isolated incident of over 30 years ago might be forgiven.. maybe... but his performance, and that is what it was, before the senators was obviously deceptive and confrontational.

I totally believe the women, they are very credible. But the question that has been nagging me; why were McConnel, the senate leader and his cronies so confident? And what were some senators backing Kavanagh for when from all appearances they have their doubts about him *and* their chances of re-election? There appears to me to be a 'behind the scenes' power strong enough for people like Collins to commit political suicide.

I think that there should be more women in power, then an image of Anna Blythe comes to mind and I gag....



# The Coastal Passage

[www.thecoastalpassage.com](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com)

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# The Coastal Passage

## The Back Page



**This Edition has been brought to you by Kay and Bob Norson, who are doing this for the love of it and offer it to you free. We may continue to do this on occasion as material and opportunity allow.**

**As with our website, there is no trickery, tracking or other violations of your privacy in this publication and never has been. We hope to lead by example. We know that *privacy and freedom of information* are under attack and hope you do your part to preserve them as well. Try to be diligent in resisting.**

**The website continues to achieve an average of 500,000 hits per month. This in spite of the fact the site needs some tidy up which we hope to get around to soon. That kind of activity tells us that the concept of The Coastal Passage is still needed out there. We'll do our best and appreciate your support.**

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