

When we decided last November to sail to Papua New Guinea, I pushed thinking about it to the back of my mind, deciding that I would think about it later and get myself organised. All of a sudden it was April and I had to put my thinking cap on regarding provisions. Have you ever tried to think of how much food 2 people would need for 4-5 months? Let me tell you it isn't easy. I think we tend to forget that people in other countries do eat and that we will be able to buy food along the way. Still not knowing of the availability and prices, we decided to stock up with as much food as possible. We eventually took on enough frozen meat to provide 4 meat meals per week, hoping to supplement this with fish and local produce, and there went \$350. I think that we were the best customers Woolworths had seen for months when we stocked up with groceries. I refused the offer of all those giveaway stamps for dinner sets as even if I had wanted a new set, I would never have found sufficient room to stow it. While I was busy worrying about food, Howard was rubbing his hands with glee at the thought of buying his grog duty free. Would you believe \$9 a carton for beer and need I say he brought 10 cartons on board. I haven't the heart to tell him that I intend to use some of his liquid amber for breadmaking!! We bought a plentiful supply of Whiskey at \$6.75 a litre, Bundy Rum for \$6.50, Gin at the same price and a bottle of Drambuie. Finally, I shouted myself a large bottle of Opium perfume.

We decided to enter in the cruising section of the Nissan Coral Sea Classic. This was a race over 4 legs:- Townsville/Cairns, Cairns/Port Moresby, Port Moresby/Samarai and then back to Townsville. We planned to sail 2 legs, Cairns/Port Moresby and then on to Samarai. Our intention being to then stay in that "neck of the woods" when the race returned to Townsville. We were lucky to have on board Elaine and Bryan Griffiths, friends from

Sydney who joined us in Cairns for the race. We first met Elaine and Bryan in Bundaberg with their boat JASTA in 1987. The Squadron was well and truly represented with Don Morton and Beryl and Gil Morcom also competing. John and Jenny Ellison elected to leave Cairns about a week after us and sail direct to Samarai, where we would all meet. I am pleased that we left our first big offshore cruise until 1988 as when we left Adelaide in 1985 I was far from ready for offshore cruising. Now after sailing into every little port from Adelaide to Cooktown and logging 12000 miles I felt more confident.

Race day dawned fine and for once the sun was shining and I hoped that this was a good omen of things to come. Unfortunately, during the previous few weeks we had experienced a lot of rain. We sailed out of Cairns on the start of the first leg on a strong 15-25 south easterly with John and Jenny in their dinghy along with Peter and Heidi Kruger from Port Lincoln to see us off, waving flags and John blowing his insides out on a bugle. We were still in the channel when one of the yachts, RED BOOMER II broke her mast and had to return to Cairns. They eventually made repairs and managed to reach Port Moresby in time for the presentation dinner. We arrived in Port Moresby on Saturday, 7th May, at 4 am after a very brisk sail. The swell was big and the seas a little confused and at times I felt a little "off". Although I was not sick, I was just not 100%. We were about 1½ miles from the Finishing Line when the wind dropped out and we then just sat. It was quite nice as far as Elaine and I were concerned although Howard was "chomping at the bit". We drifted by a settlement as the locals were rising to go to work and they started singing. I just can't explain just how beautiful it was and the harmony was incredible. It gave us goose bumps and we all agreed it was a lovely way to enter PNG. We finally crossed the line at 6.26

am in 3rd place in the cruising section, however seeing that we had the largest handicap, we were placed last. We didn't mind as we had not entered to win, but to have the security of other yachts and a radio relay boat, which was very comforting. As we went over the line, a Royal Papua Yacht Club tender came alongside and gave us a carton of the local brew, S P Lager, which apparently was not too bad as Howard and Bryan have managed to drink it all. We were then shown where to tie alongside and were made to feel very welcome.

After a lovely long shower, the first in 3 days as the seas were too lumpy during the trip to manage standing in one spot for too long, we were off for a look at Port Moresby. We were a little disappointed. I'm afraid that KESAB has not been introduced to Port Moresby and there was litter every where. The Nationals were all chewing betel nut and spitting this revolting red juice all over the "footpaths".

Being the weekend, most of the shops were closed but we did find a supermarket that was airconditioned and we spent some time browsing. Besides being nice and cool, it was interesting to see the kind of goods displayed. Honestly, it was no different from "Woolies" and John Martins. The prices seemed to be very good until we changed our Oz dollar for Kina. We bought K1 for \$1.50 which just shows you what our dollar is worth.

I thought that being in Townsville and Cairns for a while would have prepared us for the PNG climate, but it seems to be more humid here and I find it very trying. Howard seems to be coping very well, probably from all that beer on board.

We went on a bus tour around the surrounding district of Port Moresby and found it very interesting. We visited a very good museum, and the PNG Parliament House

was just lovely with lots of carving around the entrance. Unfortunately there was a meeting on so we couldn't have a look inside. I believe the building cost K22.4 million. We had lunch at a motel at the Kakoda Trail, visited a market for local handcrafts and bought a lovely woven tray. We also visited a local food market where the locals bring their "fresh" veg into the market and squat on the ground with all their goods around them. We bought a bunch of bananas, about 10 to the bunch for 20 toea (30c).

Up to now we have not felt threatened by the Nationals, they seem to be friendly and always say "hello" or give a wave. However, we have been warned by other yachties not to anchor in a bay on our own as sometimes things can get a bit nasty; forewarned is forearmed.

The next stage of the race to Samarai started on 11th May, but unfortunately, we only made 10 miles before we turned back. We were travelling SE straight into the wind and we did not fancy 255 miles of purgatory as the winds were gusting 30-35 knots. Bryan had unfortunately picked up some "bug" in Port Moresby and his ankle had swollen; he was on an antibiotic and was not feeling well. We therefore radioed in our intention and then turned back. We saw ALONA with a ripped headsail and not long after heard on the radio of another yacht having lost steerage. All in all 6 yachts returned to Port Moresby. Howard talked to Gil Morcom and they had ripped another headsail and were returning. ALONA had been at sea 29 hours and they were still in Port Moresby. Oh! the joys of sailing. We anchored at Manabuda Island, just inside Port Moresby Harbour, as we did not want to return to the RPYC Marina because there seemed to be little breeze in there.

We finally arrived at Samarai after 2 stops along the way; Hood Point and Baxter Harbour. Both were

ALLIANCE - REPORT FROM SAMARAI, PNG

delightful anchorages and we met the Nationals who made us most welcome. A native canoe came alongside at Baxter with 5 children in it and they gave us 4 eggs and 2 paw paw for 20 toea. We thought that they were lovely and presented them with 5 T shirts and they went away delighted. When we arrived we heard the good news that TOOLKA T had gained first place in the cruising section. Don and his crew certainly deserved the win considering the terrible conditions they encountered. At Hood Point we were given a tour of the village by a beautiful girl called Yelga, where we were shown the school and the children who were all giggling and hiding their heads. The houses looked a little like Shanty Town as they have used pieces of timber and iron and we often had to dodge chooks and pigs. When we got back to ALLIANCE it was almost sundown so Howard played the Last Post on his trumpet and Bryan lowered the flag. We looked around and noticed that some of the older people had stood to attention and a couple saluted. The children had come almost out to ALLIANCE on a barge and they clapped and shouted for more. Howard gave them a few more tunes until it was dinner time and the end of another lovely day.

Samarai is lovely, and we have been made very welcome. We walk at night through the town and the Nationals all bid us good evening. We plan to stay here another day and leave tomorrow for a cruise to Rabaul. Up to now I can honestly say that in our opinion, these cruising waters are more inviting than the Whitsundays and we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves. By the way we have also found 2 young men from the Squadron, Ben Wright and Jonathon Morris who crewed on SANGAREE. I am not going to give away secrets but put it this way, they don't seem to be homesick.

MYRA WRIGHT

PANACHE - REPORT FROM RABAU

We last heard from John and Jenny Ellison (PANACHE) in late September 87 as reported in the December 87 edition of the magazine. Since that time they have been home (having left PANACHE in Qld), returned to Qld and resumed their cruising, finally arrived in PNG in May 88. The following is the text of their latest letter to Alan and the Staff received late in June 88.

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We have been in PNG now for 5 weeks and sometimes I have to pinch myself for reassurance as it is hard to believe that we really are in this beautiful country.

After collecting the boat in Bundaberg in January following our Christmas holiday (?) at home, we sailed south to Southport and because of persistent SE winds we decided to go no further south. We then enjoyed 4 days at Sanctuary Cove and were made very welcome. We will call in there again for sure.

We then sailed through the Broadwater, Moreton Bay and eventually on to Gladstone where we also enjoyed their marina facilities. We subsequently negotiated the Narrows and called into Great Keppel Is and then on to Rosslyn Bay. Here we obtained a ride into Rockhampton and were taken on a tour of the OTC Station where we met Graham and John. They are both very friendly guys and anyone who has listened to Rocky Radio while cruising in this area will know what we mean.

Island Head Creek was reached after an animated trip and we stayed there for 10 days in company with 2 other yachts, ESA-ALA and DAWN TREADER. When the weather improved we continued on to the Whitsundays where we spent 2 weeks. We still haven't seen all the anchorages in this area after 4 visits.

We subsequently met up with ALLIANCE and TOOLKA-T in Townsville and an enjoyable BBQ was held at the Breakwater Marina with them and 2 other SA yachts,

Squadron Quarterly