

Addendum on Weather

Jamie Cowell

We, the Cowell family, have long had a facetious saying that 'listening to the weather forecast makes no difference to the weather.' This year's Cruise-in-Company was a good example of what that means, namely, by all means listen to the forecast, but act on your best judgment of all the circumstances.

On the Sunday morning, while we were preparing to leave Edithburgh for Knob Point, the forecast for Monday was, 'NE-N 15-20 knots.' At least two boats were concerned about going to the north coast of KI. I pointed out that the forecast was also for a hot day, in which case it would probably be calm on the north coast. So off we all went.

In the event, it started raining early on Monday morning, and continued non-stop all day, with a strong NE wind! We rolled a bit, but we were

reasonably comfortable at Knob Point, tucked in behind the reef.

The morning forecast had said that the wind would become NW to W 'later' and then SW. I advised all the boats that if that eventuated, we would have to run back to Emu Bay — but not to move until we were forced to and when we would have a fair wind for the passage. The wind stayed firmly in the NE all day, with steady rain. By mid-afternoon I was convinced that the weather would pass to the N of us and that the wind would go SE. That is exactly what happened. By late evening the wind was E, the anchorage was smooth, and by morning we had a fresh SE breeze.

For most of the rest of the week the wind was strong from S, ideal for the north coast of Kangaroo Island. 

MOORE STEPHENS PRIESTLEY & MORRIS

Business Advisers & Chartered Accountants

GST... Have you registered?... Act Now, Don't Delay!

With less than 5 months before the introduction of the GST it is vital that you are registered NOW! If you are an enterprise carrying on business with turnover above \$50,000 you must register for an Australian Business Number (ABN) and the GST by 31 May 2000. All entities carrying on a business should register for an ABN.

You must consider the following issues before 1 July 2000:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| • Accounting Systems | • Staff Training | • Purchasing |
| • Pricing | • Invoicing | • Stock Control |
| • Cashflow Implications | • Reporting | • Contracts |

For advice on your business requirements please contact us:

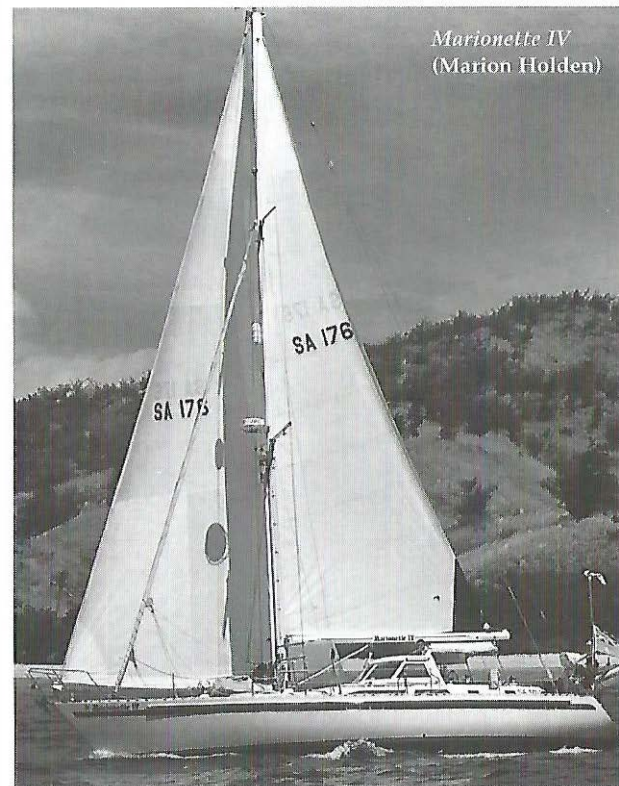
Chris Waples or Steve McEwen • www.mspm.com.au
47 Greenhill Road • Wayville • South Australia 5034
Telephone (08) 8271 1044 STD Freecall 1800 240 004
Facsimile (08) 8373 0389 E-mail: gst@mspm.com.au

Cruising in the Marionettes

Marion Holden

Marionette III left the RSAYS in March 1994, and Roger and I sailed up the East Coast of Australia as far as Lizard Island that year, enjoying many of the well-known anchorages that Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef have to offer. The next few years saw us participating in the Over The Top (Gove to Darwin) Rally, followed by the Darwin to Ambon race in 1995 and the Brisbane to Gizo (Solomon Islands) Race in 1997. Later that year we said goodbye to *M III* and bought our pride and joy, *Marionette IV*, a Taswell 49 built by Ta-Shing of Taiwan in 1991.

In November 1998 we headed off with two crewing friends across the Tasman for New Zealand via Lord Howe Island. This is surely one of the jewels of NSW. (Yes, it comes under NSW jurisdiction.)



The island has a population of about 200 and allows a maximum of 400 visitors at any one time. It was the original source of the *Kentia* palm, which was very popular in the drawing rooms of Europe from the late 18th century onwards. The island enjoys a balmy sub-tropical climate and has beautiful beaches, wonderful bird life and fantastic fishing. We intended staying 3 to 4 days but this stretched out to 9 days as we watched the weather maps anxiously, waiting for the storm that was obviously about to strike. One is not allowed to anchor at Lord Howe, but the harbourmaster, Clive Wilson, leads yachts to the most suitable mooring buoy (with respect to weight and draught of vessel), and for three days we were unable to leave *M IV*. We happened to notice 55 knots on the wind gauge, but the airport some

250 metres away recorded 75 knots. We were anxious about the strength of the mooring and had been instructed by Clive, just prior to the 'big blow', to tie three lines to the mooring below the shackle. We learned later that we were on the old seaplane moorings that had recently been checked and strengthened. Tragically this Tasman storm was responsible for the loss of four lives aboard two yachts and the dismasting of another only 100 miles away.

We left Lord Howe Island for New Zealand, passing the spectacular rock formation known as Ball's Pyramid under full sail, with sparkling seas and blue skies. One hundred miles off the NZ coast we were becalmed, but knew that another storm was heading our way, this time centred NW of Auckland. We had a chance to reach shelter before it hit us and so we raced under full throttle to Spirits Bay on the NW

corner of New Zealand. We stayed there for three days in company with a freighter and a fishing boat. When the fishing boat sailed out they gave us a huge rock lobster (crayfish) as a welcome to New Zealand.

We entered the country at Opuia, Bay of Islands, before flying home to spend Xmas 1998 with the family, returning in February 1999. Our cruising time in NZ was frustrated by the strong winds and wet weather we experienced due to the La Nina effect. Trips of a few days to beautiful fiord-like areas such as Whangaroa stretched out to more than a week as we were hemmed in by the awful weather. Having seen a little of the North Island by sea (Bay of Islands, Hauraki Gulf, Auckland environs) we decided to travel around the South Island by bus and train and enjoyed the hospitality that we encountered in the backpacker hostels. This is a great way to see that beautiful country and we had, by contrast, glorious weather in the South Island.

On 2 May 1999 we joined the Island Cruising Association in their rally to Atata Island off Nuku'alofa in Tonga. About 800 miles out from New Zealand we anchored within South

Minerva Reef and were quite surprised to have eight other boats for company. At high water nothing is visible to show the existence of the reef until it's almost too late except daunting breakers. Before the advent of GPS it would have been an area to keep well away from. A friend has since lent us Olaf Ruhen's book on Minerva Reef (about the Tongans who were yacht-wrecked there and survived by living aboard the remains of a freighter in the 1960s). [Ruhen Olaf. *Minerva Reef*. Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1963. Strongly recommended! — Ed.]

There is a paragraph on page 8: 'There are few reasons or occasion to take men there; and only men, who of their nature, probe and penetrate the unknown places — the adventurers, the investigators — come within the orbit of that menace. They are of the breed of men who become the racial heroes; they stand out among the crowd for one distinguishing characteristic, and that is physical courage.' Here, here, we say! What better way to describe the two of us — undaunted, fearless Minerva adventurers, risking all and going where few sailors dare to travel. Then again, I suppose, some killjoys might suggest that having a well-found yacht,

modern electronic charts and links with satellite navigation and GPS systems might have made our task a little easier! Shame!

We stayed there for two nights, fishing and snorkelling before leaving for Atata Island. We enjoyed the usual parties and festivities with the other rally crews for a week before we left to explore the chain of islands that is Tonga. The population is Polynesian and more reserved than the Melanesians we had previously encountered in the Solomon Islands. Today the country is proud of its status as an independent kingdom and the Royal Family of Tonga is held in high regard. The death of the king's brother, just prior to our arrival, plunged the whole country into 100 days of deep mourning and the local dance troupe had to obtain special permission to perform for the foreign visitors. The country is also very deeply religious, with many different Christian denominations and a visit to any church is an experience not to be missed. The congregation of 30 (men, women and children) in the little church on Atata Island (one of two for a population of 200) lifted the roof with their harmonious singing, and initially I looked for the loudspeakers creating that enormous volume of sound. Television, only available in Nuku'alofa, is highly censored and mostly consists of religious programs. Copra is still grown and increasingly the growing of kava is becoming lucrative, as it is now imported into the USA as an ingredient in the health food industry for its calming and relaxing effects. It is drunk mostly by the men at the end of the day's work and certainly appears to be a better social drug than alcohol, as it causes none of the aggression that alcohol triggers. [Interestingly, this is not so in the Aboriginal communities who have adopted the kava habit. They take such large quantities as to have revealed toxic consequences not known in the islands where it is part of the culture. — Ed.]

Every family in Tonga seems to have at least one son or daughter overseas in countries such as Canada, USA, NZ, Australia and even European countries. They send back money or goods that are sold in the markets (and that includes the kitchen sink and a spa bath we saw in one market). In this way families are able to lift their lifestyle above that of mere self-sufficiency in food and shelter.

We visited all four regions of Tonga, including the isolated island of Nuatoputapu in the far north and only 150 miles from Western Samoa. The southern group near the capital is more populated than the isolated central Ha'apai region, which has beautiful beaches. The northern Vava'u group is well known to yachtsmen. Moorings and Sunsail are based here for bareboating charters and most tourists go to this region.

A Tongan family we got to know invited us for lunch after church. In the traditional way only the head of the household, John, sat and talked with us while we ate, but he did not eat with us. We discovered later that the leftovers would then be eaten by the rest of the family after we'd gone. This family came and shared a meal on our boat the next day, and horrified us by saying that they'd occasionally invited yachting people to a custom meal, but we were the first boat to reciprocate the hospitality. Another day John took us to his 'garden' or plantation and gave us fruit and vegetables, showed us his cash crop of vanilla beans, and demonstrated basket-making. This sort of interaction is surely why we sail offshore to foreign countries!

After a couple of months in Tonga, we sailed westward to clear into Savu-Savu, a new port of entry for Fiji. This is on the eastern side of Vanua Levu and consequently we experienced a lot of rain, though interestingly only three miles away at the Costeau Resort we could look back towards the rain in Savu-Savu from beaches with blue skies above. On going ashore in Tonga, one normally asks the first villager one meets if one may walk through the village and permission is readily granted. In Fiji one must first present a bunch of kava root (obtainable in the market for about A\$10) to the village or regional chief in a little ceremony, during which the chief offers his protection to you and the boat in return. If we wanted to leave the next day we found it sometimes irksome to go through this *sevu-sevu* ceremony and so we often would not go ashore if the anchorage was inhabited. This meant that we might not have met as many Fijian people as Tongans. However, if we liked a place enough to stay a few days we always performed *sevu-sevu*, although we understand many boat people went ashore



Musket Cove Regatta, Fiji, 1999: Jan Elliott (Toolka T), Caryllin Coates (Jasmin Lee), Marion Holden (Marionette IV), Don Morton (Toolka T), Roger Holden (Marionette IV), Chris Coates (Jasmin Lee) — Marion Holden.

regularly without doing so. [For Jo Capel's account of *sevu-sevu*, see *Squadron Quarterly* September 1998: 24–30 Just Jane in the Fijis. There is information on kava on page 28.]

Some 48% of the Fijian population is of Indian descent, their ancestors having been brought to Fiji to work in the sugar plantations about 100 years ago. After their indenture period was over, many Indian families decided to stay in Fiji, which accounts for the large population of Indo-Fijians today. Many own small businesses.

We soon left the wet eastern side of the country and enjoyed the Yasawa Islands, where all the cruise ships go, and the Mamanucas, where every island has a resort or two. We sailed to Lautoka and travelled by bus across the big island Viti Levu to visit yachting friends anchored at the Suva Yacht Club, where it seemed to rain continuously.

The Musket Cove Regatta was next on our agenda, where all visiting yachts are invited to participate in the fun and games. These included catamaran races, beach bowls, pirate pranks after a race to Beachcomber Island, and many drinks and yarns around the bar with cruising yachties from all nations. In Vunda Point Marina we had earlier caught up with Don Morton on *Toolka T* and both our boats took part in the Vila to Musket Cove rally, so South Australia was truly represented.

In Vila we also caught up with John Taylor on *Midnight Sun*, and with many other yachting folk we celebrated Don's birthday at the Rossi Hotel, Vila. [For Don Morton's account of taking

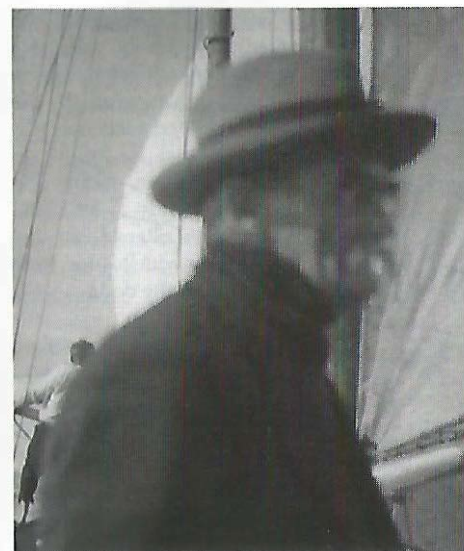
Toolka T to the Pacific in 1992, see *Squadron Quarterly* June 1993: 29–33.]

Vila seemed like a cultural oasis to us, with French patisseries hard to ignore and boutiques with the latest European styles, but after a week during which we had a small crack in the boom welded, it was time to move north. We were short of time, as I was flying to London for my father's 80th birthday, and so we really did not see a lot of Vanuatu. The culture here seems to be more intact than in the other Pacific countries we'd visited. Chieftainship is not conferred automatically and men are continually raising their status in their communities by grade-taking ceremonies. This culture seems to lie alongside Christianity without too much conflict, or perhaps the missionaries were more tolerant here than in neighbouring countries.

We were in Vanuatu for too short a time to see much of this culture in evidence, as we soon sailed north to clear the country in Luganville on the island of Espiritu Santo. We enjoyed a fabulous sail with 15 knots on the quarter to Chesterfield Reef, some 500 miles away, where the French have placed a board proclaiming the area for France (and disputed by Australia). The vegetated reef consists of many small islets, which have become the breeding ground for large turtles, who come ashore to lay their eggs in the warm sand, and home to millions of birds, including terns, boobies and gannets, all relatively unafraid of humans. A further dream sail of 500 miles brought *Marionette IV* to Scarborough Marina in Brisbane. Here she lies waiting for her next adventure in the year 2000. SQ

Harcourt Doherty and Warrigal: A Man and His Boat

Peter Last and Keith Flint



W.H. Birnie, who commissioned a succession of Wylos in New Zealand and Australia. (Colin Angus).

Peter: For as far as living memory can reach, and beyond that, the Squadron has attracted men and women of strong personality, forceful individuals, who excite anecdotes in the same way as notable teachers and similar characters. First though, comes the vessel. Information on her was supplied through John Powell from a previous owner, Tony Miers, supplemented by the detailed history compiled by Jim Bullock.

Warrigal is a Bermudan cutter, approximately 32 ft long, with a draught of 5 ft 4 in and a 'slipping width' of 9 ft 2 in. She was built in Clausen's yard at Birkenhead in 1931 for William Birnie. He was a bachelor bank manager, posted to Port Adelaide, then to New Zealand and finally back to Adelaide. Consequently he owned yachts in other states and in New Zealand. He joined the Squadron on 14 January 1897, but resigned on 19 March 1899. I have not yet confirmed when he rejoined. Each of his vessels was called *Wylo*, which can confuse tracing their provenance, as he

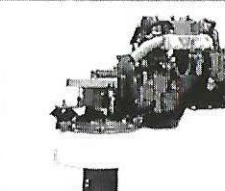
insisted that the name did not go with the boat. The first South Australian *Wylo* was renamed *Ilex*; the second *Argo*; the third *Nautilus* and then *Warrigal*; the fourth *Nautilus* (again!); the fifth *Wongga*; and the last is the current *Wylo*. [*Squadron Quarterly* December 1995: 34. *Wylo Resurgam*.]

To add to potential confusion, this vessel was bought in the 1930s by the Verco family, who gave her their family name of *Nautilus* after their earlier boat of that name was acquired by the Livingston brothers, who called her *Kurrewa IV* and participated in several Sydney–Hobart Races. There is a half model of her hull in the Club House. Subsequently Doug Verco bought another *Wylo* and also called her *Nautilus*. This is the boat bought by Dr Bob Downing. We hope you can follow that.

Initially *Wylo–Nautilus–Warrigal* was very much a racing yacht. Running backstays supported a large mainsail on a long boom, balanced with a flying jib to the masthead over a staysail. With the help of the Burnley brothers, she won two consecutive races to Kangaroo Island. The Burnley brothers had small boats of their own and often raced with others. In the early 30s they won an Easter race to Black Point in *Ardale*, one of the Restricted 21-footers which came from Melbourne for a Forster Cup series and remained behind. In the same undated cutting there is a reference to *Nautilus*, but I had no idea this was the boat I have always known as *Warrigal*. [*Squadron Quarterly* March 1995: 15–25. *The Twenty-ones and the South Australian Forster Cup Carnivals*.]

In the early stages of the Second World War (1939–45) she was bought by Dr AK Gault, who renamed her *Warrigal*, as the Vercos retained *Nautilus* for their new vessel. Dr Gault reduced the boom and installed a fixed backstay to a bumpkin. He used her only for cruising. She had an engine similar to a single-cylinder Blaxland. There are stories of her crew on their knees in a fierce storm, 'praying' to the sound of it.

Arthur Kyle Gault was a well-known general practitioner at Belair, who graduated in



9hp - 51 hp

SailDrive



BLUE SKY MARINE

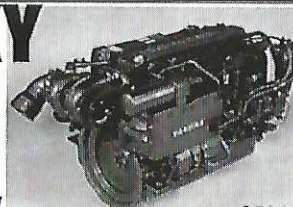
North Haven Marina

Ph: 8341 8505

"Dependable Diesel Power"

Marine Diesel, SailDrive & GenSets

Sales & Service



350 hp

6LY-STE