

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

WINTER SUNSHINE ...

of Vila, perfectly sheltered with its high hills from the prevailing S.E. trades. We sailed on the red leading lights leaving the P.V.Y.C. to port, and if we forget to drop the pick in time, straight into the bar on the terrace of the Hotel Rossi!

However, we did drop an anchor in time and were boarded from "rubber ducks" powered by large outboards, with friendly voices from the Rossi and cartons of cold beer, which were very quickly broken open by a parched crew. I was also welcomed back by a more cheerful Dominique! It was now 3.30 a.m.

We finished 5th on corrected time but felt we would have done better had we not inadvertently partly circum-navigated one of the several small islets between Lifou and Maré, adding a couple of miles on our log. The first two boats were Antagonist and Brere Fox (more about her later) both from Tasmania and the fourth boat Huon Chief was also Tasmanian.

Hospitality was out of this world and we were wonderfully looked after by yachtie sponsors the A.N.Z., Hong Kong and Shanghai Banks. There was a BBQ for everyone at the British Commissioner's residence and drinks for a select few at the French Minister's exotic house.

The "funny races" after the main events, where strict compliance to the racing rules was rewarded by instant disqualification, were an amusing feature, and Lou (an Italian Olympic Dinghy competitor in the '56 Games) in his beautifully appointed Carbinier 46 sloop Sabala stole the shown on both occasions. In Noumea he hired the entire local native band and Sabala looked like a floating banana grove. In Vila he shipped the largest

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number of New Hebrideans ever seen on a boat of that size. Obviously the right note.

(To be continued)

KEITH ADAMS 2/8/79

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THE FIRE ON MORNING HUSTLER

Towards the end of two weeks cruising after the Port Lincoln race, Morning Hustler was in West Bay, Kangaroo Island. With me on board were my wife Anthea and son Sam. It was Thursday, 22nd February and we had decided to return to American River via the south coast of K.I. Whilst it is not relevant to the fire, some account of why we went that way and what the south coast is like may be of interest.

I had wanted to sail around the island for many years but had never done so mainly because from a yachtsman's point of view, there is no south easterly sheltered anchorage anywhere on the south coast. On this Thursday morning, however, the wind was north to north-west and looked like staying that way for 24 hours or so. That would allow us to spend a comfortable night in Vivonne Bay and sail on to American River the next day. And that was how it turned out, weather wise at least.

We had the company of a number of cray boats in West Bay, including Frank Miller's "White Pointer". Frank had given us some local knowledge of the south coast. We sailed from West Bay at 0900 and spoke to Frank as he was pulling pots a couple of miles south of West Bay and agreed to speak on the radio at 1200 and 1500.

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Good time was made down the coast in a fresh nor'westerly with full main and No. 3 genoa and we were off Cape du Couedic at midday. Cape du Couedic with its two off-lying Casuarina Islets, its Admiral's Arch and Weir Cove to the eastwards is spectacular. There was very little swell and we passed as close as possible inshore, but still outside the inner Casuarina. These islets abound with fur seals and there is a colony on the mainland immediately west of the lighthouse.

While between the Casuarinas, we spoke to Nigel Buick on "Lady Buick", who offered us the use of his mooring in Vivonne Bay.

Once around the corner the wind dropped considerably and left us undercanvassed on a smooth sea with almost no swell - good for viewing a very attractive coastline, but difficult to see Douglas Rock, a pinnacle just awash off Hanson Bay.

When we were off the mouth of Stuns'l Boom River, some ten miles west of Vivonne Bay, Anthea decided to cook some crayfish that we had been given earlier. It was calm and sunny; Sam and I were in the cockpit - me on the helm. Unknown to us, Anthea started cooking then found the metho stove needed refilling. She thought she had turned it off and proceeded to fill it from a one gallon container with a tube pourer we had for the purpose.

The first thing I knew of all this was an explosion in the galley. I saw that Anthea was alight and she threw the burning container into the cockpit, where there was a second explosion and the top blew off the container. Sam was sprayed with burning metho. We both jumped out of the cockpit and Sam, feeling himself alight, jumped over-

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board. I could feel and see that my legs were burnt, and I saw Anthea wrapping herself in a waterproof to put the fire out.

I dashed forward, releasing both Halliards as I went down the fore'ard hatch, only to find the luo door latched across the main bulkhead barring my way. It wasn't hard to kick open! I grabbed a new fire extinguisher, pulled the safety pin out and pressed the lever. It wouldn't work, so I hit the firing pin hard against a bulkhead and sprayed powder over the galley stove and then into the cockpit which was still full of fire. Metho flames are difficult to see in bright sunlight.

It is hard to remember exactly what happened and the sequence of events. Even careful analysis between the three of us leaves gaps. I do remember checking that the stove was turned off, but I don't remember whether it was already off or not. So we will never know for certain how the fire started. By this time Anthea was in the cockpit; she had thrown the container overboard and the burnt waterproof and had removed her own burning jumper. We threw the life-ring and danbuoy for Sam, who was now a hundred yards or so astern and I proceeded to get the boat under way while Anthea started to attend to her burns. My first thought was to ensure that the sails and all lines were inboard, then I motored round and picked up Sam. He said later he was in the water less than five minutes.

It was only then that I realised how badly Anthea was burned. Her forearm was badly burned and she had lesser burns to her feet (from walking in the burning cockpit?) and face. Sam was more shocked than burned. He had had instant and very effective treatment by jumping overboard, but he did have painful burns to his face. Both were treated with large quantities of ice and made as comfortable as possible.

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Then I called "White Pointer" on the radio. It happened to be 1500 hours and his radio was switched on. Frank took over the radio work for me. He called the fishermen's Coast Station at Kingscote, VH50T, and arranged for the ambulance and doctor to meet us at Vivonne Bay. He also asked Lance Tyley of "Ivy II" who was in Vivonne to come out and meet me. (I learned later that a number of other fishermen were involved. Nigel Buick in fact called VH50T because Frank couldn't get out from West Bay. Also I learned that a tuna boat started towards us from further south, but Ivy II was closer. There was a general alert amongst the fishermen until Anthea and Sam were safely in the ambulance at Vivonne Bay.)

Ivy II met us at about 1600 - an hour after the accident - and Anthea and Sam transferred to her with blankets and pillows, but I forgot the ice. The worst mistake in my first aid treatment was that I did not give Anthea an effective pain killer. Without ice on Ivy II she was in considerable pain and shock by the time she reached the ambulance at about 1630.

I arrived in Vivonne Bay at 1700 just as the ambulance was leaving for Kingscote. Lance Tyley helped me moor Morning Hustler before I went ashore to telephone. Among other things, I had to make a decision about getting Morning Hustler back to American River. The wind was still in the north west but the weather forecast was for south to south east winds of 20-30 knots and Vivonne Bay is no place for that weather, being open to the south east.

I returned to Morning Hustler at 1930, having tentatively organised Ian Roberts to join the boat later that night if he could and help sail her home. He arrived at 11.00 p.m. and when he was aboard we had some food, I dressed my

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burns which by now were large blisters and we fell into bed.

Next morning the wind was round to SSE. The mooring was just sheltered but the sea was building up. After returning Lance Tyley's dinghy that we had borrowed and putting aboard ice that he brought out from Kingscote for us, we put a deep reef in the mainstall, set what I call our No. 4 jib and sailed for American River. It was 0910.

Once outside the bay I realised how sheltered we were inside. It was blowing then at 30-35 knots SSE and at times 35-40. We had plenty of sail, visibility was very poor with rain squalls, and close hauled we could lay a course to take us between SE Snare and Quin Rock. SE Snare is a rock with 3 fathoms over it about five miles SE of Vivonne Bay, it breaks at times. Quin Rock is a pinnacle of rock with about 6 feet of water over it lying 2 miles west of Cape Gantheaume. It rarely breaks. We passed between the two (presumably!) but saw neither of them.

It blew equally hard all day (and the next night as well). The sea was very rough and confused, with heads continually falling on deck and into the cockpit. It was not a pleasant sail. My burns were troublesome and Ian who had not sailed for a while, was seasick. But he did not give in to that and was in fact a tower of strength. By 1918 i.e. Adelaide radio schedule time, we were abeam Penneshaw. The duty radio operator John McGregor very kindly telephoned a message reporting our progress to Anthea who was now in the Royal Adelaide Hospital. I cannot over emphasize my gratitude to those people who helped during this period, some of whom I will not know. The Adelaide radio operators went well beyond their duty in handling messages for us. The fishermen and Mrs. Smith

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of VH50T, Kingscote, kept constant watch on our progress, even after the initial help at the time of the fire.

We entered American River at 2020 hours having sailed 81.3 miles in 2 hours 10 minutes and tied up at the jetty at 2100.

Anthea and Sam were taken to the Kingscote Hospital and Sam was admitted overnight for treatment but Anthea was sent immediately to R.A.H. by air ambulance. Over the next five weeks she had most of her right forearm skin grafted.

Sam's burns to his face and legs, which received prompt first aid when he jumped overboard, healed in about two weeks. Mine which were similar but didn't receive first aid, took about a month.

We do not know why the explosion occurred except that in the second before it happened, Anthea noticed she had spilled some metho and it was alight. She had no time to deal with it. Maybe she had spilt more than she realised. Nor do we know why she was so badly burned. The sleeve of her jumper was probably soaked with burning methylated spirit, but unless it was blown out of the reservoir, it is hard to understand where it came from as the tube pourer was still on the container when she threw it into the cockpit.

J.H. COWELL

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SARINA'S CRUISE

Al Piolet Hotel
Ceruinia
Italy

13th December, 1978

Dear Yacht Squadron Members,

As I write, the snow is falling in large flakes outside our small hotel window, almost obliterating our car parked in front. The visibility is too poor to bother to ski today. Until the last few days, however, there has been little snow anywhere in Europe and we therefore chose Ceruinia, on the Italian side of the beautiful Matterhorn. If it continues thus we should have interesting skiing for the few days left to us before we go to Zurich and, finally London for Christmas. When I last wrote we had arrived from Turkey to Rhodes, the first of the Greek islands we visited. As this was three months ago, I shall cast my mind back to September and give you an idea of where we went from then on.

Leaving the beautiful land-locked harbor of Fethiye at 0600, we motored for eight hours, the breeze freshening as we came in sight of Rhodes. Our Australian friends Max and Leonie from "Quatro Vientos", whom we had met in Israel and who knew our Sydney crew members well (Max had installed Sarina's automatic pilot), moved over to allow us to squeeze in alongside them at the very crowded dock. Gratefully we accepted Leonie's offer of a hot freshwater shower aboard their huge vessel.

There were many wealthy-looking yachts, including a magnificent affair with gilded windows and gleaming bright-work constantly polished by hired crew, flying a Spanish flag bearing a crown and owned by rich Germans. In our part of the dock were less resplendent craft, but interesting to us as they came from all parts of the world. We replenished the ship's supplies at the local market; the vegetables were reasonable but