



Tender Drivers Chris Johnston, Glen Emery, Patrick Moody (Junior Captain), and Sandra Camilleri on Opening Day.



Past Commodore and Life Member Keith Flint presented the TM Hardy Trophy to Leigh Causby (Breathless).

LEFT: Colin Dondy, Chairman of the Sailing Committee, John Phillips, President Trailer Boat Association, Kevin Loader of MD Zuellig Insurance Brokers and Vice Commodore Ric Mollison.



Sam Rocatti's Top Gun of the Game Fishing Association of SA saluting at Opening Day.

Pied Piper II cruising Vanuatu

Di and Ian Moncrieff



Cruising the Vanuatu islands for a second year has had its up and downs. We had an easy and pleasant passage from Brisbane to Port Vila, crewing for Marlene and Phil Tassicker on *Crusader*. We found that *Pied Piper II* had survived a bone rattling earthquake but had succumbed to tropical mould whilst stored on the hard for 7 months in Vila over summer. It took three days and multiple bottles of 'Exitmould' to clean her. Phil and Marl fed our weary bodies each night and we bedded down on *Crusader* until *The Piper* was back in the water. It took just five days to get her from boat yard to water.

We cruised the middle islands of the archipelago, sheltering through many a wet day, waiting for rough weather to pass and motor sailing in calms. It clearly was not to be a typical Vanuatu winter. Plans to cruise in company with *Crusader* were stymied by her severe gear box failure that meant several weeks on a mooring in Vila and great frustrations for the PBO's.

We kept going north, spending some time in new places and renewing acquaintances made last year. We visited St Patrick's Secondary College on Ambae again and relieved 'The Shed' (read aft port cabin) of the eight cartons of books flown FOC by Air Vanuatu from Australia but carried by *The Piper* from Vila.

For us, the beautiful Asanvari anchorage, just a brisk 15 mile sail away on Maewo island, did not live up to its reputation. Ian contracted

malaria, which occupied us both for about a week, then strong reinforced trade winds sent twirls of wind into the bay. *The Piper* danced the Asanvari Waltz with several big coral bommies as partners and for several days the creaking, jaggling and groaning of the anchor chain was only matched by our groans at the loss of galvanising. Also at this time, the house batteries seriously began to fail.

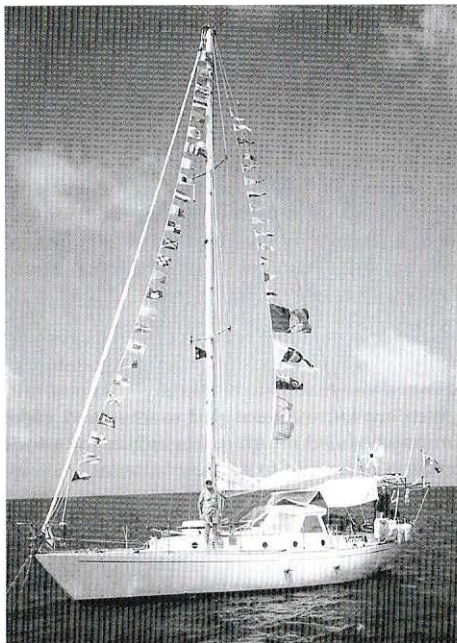
Asanvari is no doubt beautiful, with its gushing waterfall thundering into the bay, rainforest-covered mountains and friendly villagers. But given our lot, we were glad to leave and make an unscheduled return to Luganville to restock malaria drugs and to get new batteries.

After five days, we were on our way again, but unsuitable weather was to dog our attempts to reach the Banks Islands to the north of the country. We waited for five days in Port Olry, our jumping off point from Santo to the most southern of the Banks, Gaua island, just 53 miles away. However, it was a pleasant five days and we were to make friends with Michel and Bea, on their French registered boat *Chiriod*, whose company we then enjoyed for several more weeks. Having been continuously cruising for 22 years, Michel and Bea had much to teach us.

Finding the recommended anchorages on Gaua untenable, and with night approaching, we weremore than glad to watch and follow *Chiriod* as it looked for a suitable spot along this mountainous, reef-fringed coast. They aimed for calm water tucked in between two reefs, in a bay that we couldn't even see. It was the perfect Bushman's Bay, protected from the swell that ranged along the coast.

There we befriended the delightful Gray family, two brothers and their families with small children, living off the land. There we learnt about nalot, the taro and coconut cake made for special occasions (us!) and made only in The Banks; about special weaving techniques, and women's water music, both unique to Gaua.

We shared resources and knowledge. They supplied us with food, education and entertainment. We supplied fishing gear, clothes and medical help. We did our laundry together



Crusader dressed overall to welcome Pied Piper II to Huon Reef.

seated in the river bed of a shaded spring which was their only reliable water source. There was plenty of 'tok tok' as we scrubbed. Life at Bushman's Bay is always busy, and it was great fun and a privilege to share so much together.

It was here that I wrote the short story, *The Bishop, the Rope and the Shark* as a memory for the

children, but it was the adults who really enjoyed it! I did not know then that we were to meet the Bishop several times and share his table.

We left the bay to take the children and their fathers to Losalava, for school and kindergarten holidays were over. It saved them a full day's walk over rough terrain, and it gave us the opportunity to see the new traditional house made from hardwood poles and pandanus, that one of the fathers had built for the children to live in during the week while they attended school. They only came home at weekends. Relatives nearby kept 'an eye' on things. One child, a 10-year old, did not go to school. It was his job to cook and look after the rest. Losalava was also full of action Melanesian style, and we were welcomed into village activities as we waited for the weather to moderate to go to Vanua Lava, a day's sail north.

After sad goodbyes to the Grays, *Chir'od* and *The Piper* had a brisk sail on a breeze and sea that would discourage one 'on' the wind, but which exhilarates one 'off' it. Our destination was Sola, the 'big smoke' and government administration centre of The Banks Islands. It houses some 200 souls. But our arrival was not to be. Weather again forced us to wait, this time about six miles away. On the third day, Sola was safe to enter and anchor.

It was the Anglican Church Mothers' Union day, and people from all over the island had come for a big picnic. By chance we had wandered ashore into the centre of the celebrations and were soon

seated on a beautiful pandanus mat woven and offered by an older tattooed woman, lent some plates (it was a bring your own plate affair) and invited to be served from the Bishop's table. How embarrassing! But in ever generous Melanesian style, we were served beautiful food and welcomed into the throng. Two beef had been killed for the occasion. Cut and leaf wrapped in meal sized portions, the beef pieces were piled on to hot stones and covered thickly with banana leaves. This was done the previous day, in a pandanus and bamboo oven hut. We peered in as the oven was opened and the aroma was delicious indeed. We also visited another hut, this one round and without walls, where a great heap of taro had been cooking similarly. There were 200 people to feed and there was plenty to go around.

Our western sensibilities were sorely tried during the seven long speeches, each in bislama or the local language. Performances by each branch of the Mothers' Union followed. We longed for our cockpit and a cold beer. Later in the afternoon, there was a respite, for almost everyone walked to the soccer ground for custom dancing. The bishop did not go. The Church has disapproved of local customs for

many a long year and was not about to change for the Mothers' Union. However, I noted that the bishop, a Solomon Islander, had the telltale, red, eroded teeth of the devoted betel nut chewer! It seems that 'custom' for some is not seen as 'custom' for another.

The custom dancing was similar to what we had seen further south, for The Banks sends its celebrated dancers to southern parts of Vanuatu as paid entertainment. The head-dresses were outstanding and like nothing we had seen before. Painted red white and black with long spikes standing high, we heard that they are made for the one dance and then destroyed. Certainly they did look new and not as if they had been stored in the rafters of a grass house since the last dance.

The weather continued to moderate, so after reporting with our cruising permit to the Sola Customs officer, we took a day sail, in company, to the Reef Islands. Much like Australia's Barrier Reef, these tiny atolls sit surrounded by huge areas of reef reaching far out into the ocean. We anchored behind a reef in about 12 metres of coral rubble. *The Piper* pitched a bit, but held OK.

We dinghied to the atoll. All isolation and aloneness. To our surprise we found footprints and wondered if Man Friday was in residence. No! Kamuel and Roman from Vanua Lava, six miles away, had seen the boats come. Eager to trade, they had paddled out to us and were now offering fruit and the promise of lobster. Yes, please! The Banks are noted for their lobster. We supplied a torch and they delivered several beautiful live crustaceans at dawn.

The wind was lifting, the sea was up and we were keen to make the beautiful Waterfall Bay on Vanua Lava that day, so we left our friendly French companions, whom Ureparapara further north called The Lobster Catchers. They faced a paddle of six miles into the waves and swell of the open ocean. Their biceps indicated that they had done it or its equivalent before. Would we give them a tow? Well, who could refuse? Towing an outrigger canoe requires one paddler to stay on board to steer, and this Roman did. Motoring at 3 knots, *The Piper* wallowed about a bit, but not the canoe. It rode the seas well and we wondered at its calculated hull speed.



Willie Gray and his family.

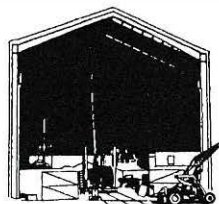
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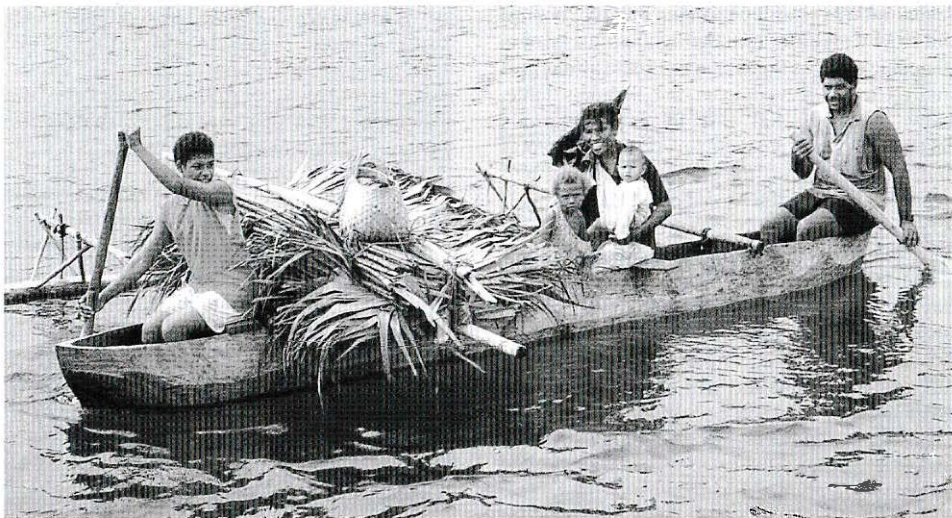
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Transporting the family and the roof of their house by dugout canoe.

Kamuel, standing on our bow like some ancient star path navigator, guided us through reefs into the little known, but ever so secure anchorage of Tivitwod Bay near his father's village on Vanua Lava. In the following five days, when we were obliged to wait out a blow caused by an occluded tropical convergence zone, we were very glad to have met him. Tivitwod Bay is home to John and Benning and their children. These dignified and hard-working people welcomed us warmly and we attended the custom celebration to mark the conception of their first grandchild. In a variation of the *nalot* (cake) on Gaua, crushed wild nuts were mixed through the taro and spread thickly on top. Children gathered flowers and scattered them on mats laid in the floor of the *nakamal* (a type of community meeting house). Two *nalots* on huge old hardwood platters were placed on the mats, one from each family. Then the families walked, circling four times round the *nalots* and back. The aunts were served first, after an uncle's speech. Then everyone had their pieces. When we arrived, during the last of the preparations, the *nakamal* was a busy place. The smoky fire in the corner didn't seem to worry any but us. The two *nalots* were being stirred, mixed and pummeled. Mothers fed babies and children gathered flowers. A pile of fish caught that morning sizzled in a great pot on the coals.

We were fortunate to be quiet supernumeraries in the corner observing the colour around us. It was lovely, but as Benning said as she pummeled a great wad of taro, 'custom is hard work'. She works hard every day to grow food for her own and her dead sister's children.

We tried to leave Tivitwod Bay when fooled by a brief calm. The whoosh of the south-easter, which came with the suddenness of a southerly change in our home gulfs, soon had us motoring back to Tivitwod into a choppy sea and winds in the mid thirties gusting to 40 knots. At times *The Piper* had no speed and steering was lost, but ever so slowly we made our way back. When entering the bay between the reefs, nearly to our haven, a 40-knot squall on the beam sent *The Piper* sliding out of control towards the leeward reef. Ian revved the motor and we gained steerage — just — and slid into the calms inside. Whew! Not as close as some stories we have heard, but character-building nevertheless!

So we continued to wait in the rain, the most frequent of our activities in Vanuatu this year. In the mornings and again in the evenings, we meet fellow South Australians on *Crusader*, *Pandemonium* and *Riot III*, on the S Aussie Net on the HF radio. Former Squadron boat *Midnight Sun* also tunes in. We share stories, weather info, and football scores, anticipating with some

excitement the possibility of a Crows/Port Power Final. Sadly, that was not to be this season, but next year...?

We had seven days left to do the 100 nm south to Luganville to meet crew and leave for home. You might say that it would be a piece of cake! Well we would say that you haven't been in these developed trades with a tropical convergence zone hovering. We waited and watched the weather charts and cursed the high pressure systems down under that throw such winds this way. When the weather did change, it was a blissful sail to Luganville. A moonlit night with 12 knots on the beam and long slow swells made us very happy. The 0400 drop-out meant motoring for the last 40 miles but who cared? For the first time in three and a half months, we finally rendezvoused with RSAYS boat, *Crusader* and fellow South-Aussies, Bruce and Bonnie Marriot on *Pandemonium*. It was a great reunion, with many a tale to tell.

Later: *Pied Piper* and *Crusader* are on the way back to Australia. After a 280-mile leg, we sailed into isolated Huon Reef. There was *Crusader*, fully dressed, with pizzas ready for our lunch. Marvellous indeed! Ashore, we spent time with

the huge sea turtles that nest at Huon and the thousands of sea birds that do likewise. They were very curious, circling the boats and peering at us and coming in close as we dinghied ashore. Huon was a magic place. We are now en route to Chesterfield Reef, another 280-mile leg, before the final three-day passage to Australia and home.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE POLICY

REFUNDS OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS AND FEES

Annual Membership Subscriptions are not refundable upon resignation. Mooring Fees may only be reimbursed to Licensees for the balance of the financial period where the outgoing Licensee transfers their Berth Licence to a new boat owner/Member.

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The Bishop, the Roper and the Shark

Once upon a time a man received a letter, sealed in a plastic bag, from a person who came from along the coast and over a hill. The letter came with instructions. Pass it on by tomorrow morning to the final recipient, several miles further along the coast. A yacht was visiting the man's bay. He asked the skipper and his wife if they would take him and the letter by sea to save him from a long journey on foot.

So the man boarded the yacht and helped retrieve the anchor and the three sailed the boat along the coast. It was a steep coastline, covered in thick bush and fringed with dangerous reefs waiting to snag the yacht. The woman wanted to catch a fish, a big fish with sweet white meat. She trailed a rope line with hook and lure from the back of the boat. The woman also wanted to use the boat radio to get a doctor for the man, for he had a bad eye. The skipper stopped the motor so that the woman could use the radio and the boat flopped about loosely on the wallowing sea.

The rope snagged round the boat's propeller. The three tried to free the rope but, being held fast, they prepared to cut it. But first, pull in the rest of the line. It went deep. It was heavy. It was jagging, and pulling and hard to retrieve. The hook and lure had caught a shark! The shark was pulled alongside the boat and the man hit it hard several times on the nose with a winch handle. The woman poured spirits into its

curved slit of a mouth. The shark became still. It was hauled on deck and its tail tied securely.

The rope was cut and freed the propeller. The journey along the coast was resumed and the boat rounded a steep cape with jagged rocks at its feet.

Soon after that, a small beach appeared. The water was swelly and there were reefs far out. The skipper stopped the yacht and the dinghy was launched. The man and the woman went in the dinghy, up and down, up and down the waves in the small boat, to the shore. The man delivered the letter on time.

It gave news of the intended visit of an Anglican Church bishop on the next day. The Skipper, the man, and the woman sailed the boat back to bay of the man's village. The shark was towed ashore in the dinghy and fed all the village.

The bay was Bushman's Bay on Gaua Island. The man was Willie Gray, the woman, Di, the Skipper was Ian and the yacht, *Pied Piper II*.

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Emma, a Fun-filled Performer

Di Moncrieff, *Pied Piper II*

RSAYS yacht *Emma*, a 36ft Mander 11 of Van de Stadt design, is widely known for the fun and camaraderie enjoyed by those lucky enough to sail on her. And now she is for sale.

You see, owners Jack and Sally Metzger specialise in laughter. Sally's self-deprecating Irish humour is no less than wicked — really wicked — and Jack? Well Skipper Jack, the butt of many a joke himself, gives as well as he gets — and some!

Having sailed against *Emma* in many a Twilight and Lincoln Race I am also well aware of her sharp competitive edge. So it was with some eagerness that I boarded *Emma* in March 2000 to join the no less than nine others for the return trip from the Adelaide-Port Lincoln Race. It seems all those that needed to turn up for work by Tuesday and had missed out on flights to Adelaide, gave Jack or Sally a 'hoy'.

But *Emma* can handle an extra few. She is commodious below, easily accommodating a

crowd and her cockpit, roomy and comfortable enough in rough seas, has been host to many lively sundowners.

We left Lincoln on Sunday afternoon, in time thought Jack, to round Cape Spencer before dawn. Why bother I thought, but in retrospect *Doctel Rager's* infamous encounter with Reef Head just a week later gave good enough reason to prefer the west to east rounding in daylight.

Beating into SEs and sloppy seas across Spencer Gulf, *Emma* handled the crossing well. She pointed high and kept up a good speed as we tacked back and forth.

We had a close look at Emmes Reef, breakers gleaming white in the dawn, rounded the Cape, and set along the foot of Yorke Peninsula.

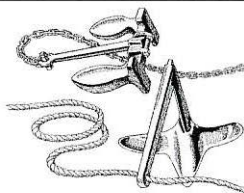
Sally by this time was as sick as the proverbial dog. She had survived the first few hours on her usual bright chatter and laughter, but when she



Emma.

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