



The Coastal Passage

Mini Edition
May, 2018

"Where is *BareBones*?"
an update from Bob
Percy Island news
and a bit more...

Bob Norson photo

Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Yacht Race 2018 News

Cruising north this year? Its time to make that decision to enter the Darwin Ambon Yacht Rally/Race now!

Race Starts August 4

Ambon to Banda Rally

At the request of the Maluku Province we would like to help showcase what this amazing region has to offer. Starts after celebrations in Ambon. Please advise race admin if you are interested info@darwinambonrace.com.au

Once again we will be working with Ambon Sailing Community, Darwin Languages Centre and a few local schools to source school donations in Ambon. If you or your crew have some spare supplies that would be suitable please contact info@darwinambonrace.com.au to arrange collection.

SPICE ISLANDS
DARWIN AMBON
yacht race

Proudly organised by:



and sponsored by:



www.darwinambonrace.com.au

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, 34 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 for more information and ask for a DBCYA burgee when you depart!



Percy Island News

www.percyisland.com.au

The Cruising Season has begun at **Middle Percy Island** with a number of cruisers making the walk up to the Homestead and joining the PIYC to 303 members!

West Bay was made 'ship shape' thanks to the massive efforts of our wonderful volunteers. Percy Island Yacht Club (PIYC) Secretary Steve K. also was able to stay in the 'Tree House' as Lindsey Kate and Bigdog 'Rythm' moved to mainland for jobs that paid! They all helped to upgrade the 'Tree House' whilst living there to eventually make available for rentals (short or long term). Thanks to all to those above and other **Friends of Percy Island** who spend some time to 'pitch in' with the Islands extensive management needs...a 'bus mans holiday' I call that! The regular residents enjoy these times immensely.

As always all walkers to the Homestead are welcome to stop off for a refreshing drink of lime juice. This season it's been impressed on me to offer tea/coffee and cakes for donations, while folks relax with a chat as they enjoy the historic photos and ambiance on the veranda overlooking West Bay and Pine Islet.

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Percy Island News

Goat pies have been suggested as a money raiser and use of an existing resource (especially appropriate, as goats were put here in 1874 to feed sailors). Annie introduced me to the tasty pie and now mine have been tested and tried out with approval by visitors. I am hoping to have some available in the freezer at the Homestead upon request (booking by phone in advance will help if you plan to try this seasons specialty). The 'Pizza Parlour' at the 'Tree House' will be happening next cruising season as Lindsay and Kate hope to return.

Looking forward to you and friends all enjoying Percy Island!

**Regards,
Cate and the Percy Crew**

A "New" Yacht Clubhouse

The newest Yacht Clubhouse in Australia is also it's most unique; there are no doormen, no dress rules, it's totally byo food, drinks, and musical instruments and as there are no closing times, members and visitors can sing and party as much as they like.

The interior decorations are also quite one off. A thousand signs of boat names from 20 different nations, and yes, it is our very own Percy Island Yacht Clubhouse.

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The cruise ship, L'Austral stops in for a visit

Percy Island News

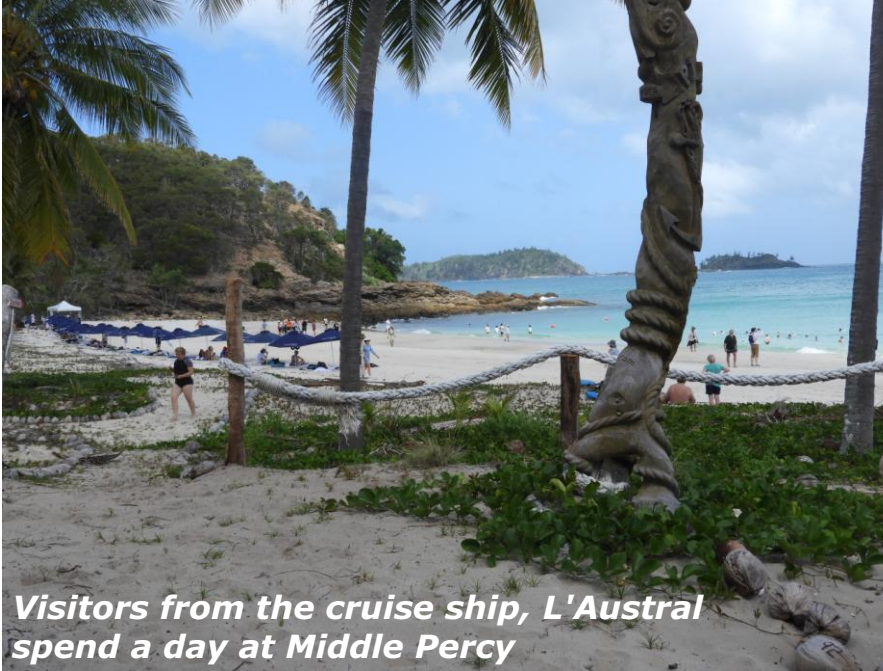
Originally known as the "A Frame", it was later dubbed "Percy Hilton", (as displayed in Jenni Kirkwood's beautiful painting). However time moves ever on. "Hilton" has connotations of a place to sleep in, and in this new day and age of public liability, it did require re-naming .. and our PIYC needed a Clubhouse, so, bingo!

Cate, Annie Cooke and Debby Pen have done a marvellous job of cleaning out accumulated junk, whilst still preserving and re-painting all the boat signs. Even t-shirts have been washed and hung in racks.

So our Clubhouse is all spruced up for the cruising season.

As an aside, the opening was rather quirky. In previous winters I've twice counted 23 vessels anchored in West Bay, with 6 or 8 inside the lagoon, yet at this time of the summer season there had not been a single one, not even a speedboat for over 3 weeks.

Then the first Clubhouse visitors arrived when a cruise ship, "*L'Austral*", (whose Pilot is a PIYC Member). They dropped anchor to put 200 tourists ashore. The sun came out, everyone had a great day swimming or walking



Visitors from the cruise ship, L'Austral spend a day at Middle Percy

the trails, and were enthralled by our Clubhouse, with its Aussie vibes and boat signs.

All 200 left and guess who the next visitor was? One single man, Damien in his tiny sea-kayak paddling alone from Gladstone to Cairns. How ironic is that ?

Oh well that's the PIYC news for now. It's been an extremely dry wet so far, yet there is good rain at the moment, with cyclone Iris hovering around.

The Percy Island Historical Video is selling quite well, (for \$35 inc. postage), with all good feedback so far:

It's terrific" (Member # 96).

"Fantastic" (# 186). *"Wow fantastic history - paradise is returned"* (Capt Mark). Great work" (# 273). So if you too would like a USB with the 40 min. video and 5 min. trailer, just

email me on kilroykenyon@hotmail.com . I have added a 5 min "Trailer", as you may like to show your friends a short history of this isolated Island, where you are lifetime members in its unique Yacht Club.

**Have a great Cruising Season.
Best wishes,
Steve Kenyon (PIYC Secretary)**

Big digital - Dangerous monopolies? continues...

Editorial comment by Bob Norson

Last TCP issue #86 I had a lot to say about the activities of FaceBook and Google. And that wasn't the first time. Since then my charges about FaceBook have been revealed to have substance and there are supposedly changes under way but I see coverup and distraction while the operator of the shell game moves to keep the machine churning out money.

At the same time Zukerburg was before the US congress, sincerely apologizing, FaceBook was shuffling it's operation in Ireland, with it's obvious tax advantages, back to the US in what appears to be motivated by new European laws coming into affect that would guard users privacy against exploitation.

But Google still operates with impunity and it is a greater danger to world democracy and personal privacy. I read a report recently

where an IT expert went to look at exactly what FaceBook and Google had on him. And it takes an expert to find out! He found that FaceBook had 400 megabyte on him. That is a large amount of data. But Google had 5.5 gigabyte on him! A hint, when you delete data from your email account or anything like that, Google still has it.

But the worst thing about Google is that it is a monopoly. It controls information in an age where the world is dependent on the web for information. When you search on Google or any other search engine, the results you get are dictated by Google. Google results do not reflect what you wanted to know but what the highest bidder wants you to know. FAKE information. The Australian Government has a long history of spending money and resources to control information. WHY? Something to hide?

If you only knew.....



Bob Norson: publisher, editor, journalist, advertising, photographer, etc...
Kay Norson: senior volunteer, TCP format organizer and semi - retired postie.

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The characters you meet “out there”

A beach at a popular anchorage, a table at a marina club house, a sleazy bar in a dark corner of an Asian harbour town... anyplace out there that sailors gather where they are just happy to hear English spoken, regardless of quality.

Words & photos by Bob Norson, SC BareBones

At every gathering place of yachts in Asia you will find a rich, if not downright weird collection of characters. I mean... what brings people out here anyway? People who wouldn't 'fit in'?... or couldn't. People who are looking about for something un-named and unknown to satisfy something unidentified. I think the reason people cruise Asia are as varied as the number of boats but I suspect the reason a lot stay is because they can be someone else here. They can reinvent and improve themselves by just claiming to be something without paying the price of actually accomplishing anything extraordinary.

They mostly fall into five basic categories... the most common type just have a complex and need to fabricate their past to bolster their self image and out here they can get away with it... most of the time. They need to be perceived as important and wise. Next is the competitor, they need to show that they know more about everything than you do. Insufferable know it alls. And then the gossip... they will wheedle into your confidence so they can exploit your privacy to amaze their mates. And the pirate.....

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Terry & Bob, the odd couple!

The characters you meet “out there”

They love to exact currency from those that will trust them, which is a side benefit to convincing themselves that they are better-smarter than the “client”. And finally, the criminal on the run.... Or to simplify my speculation, most are insecure and their weakness manifests itself in different ways. One boasts of fictional accomplishments, one puts down others, one pretends friendship so they can betray you, another is, well, a pirate. All those toward the same goal - making them feel better than they may think they really are. The genuine criminal is merely acting in self preservation.

But there are some really interesting good people scattered around as well. Them first:

Ah, there are a few honest ones, refreshing if you can take it because you will probably have to be accepting of other points of view.

Take Tom for example. I was always the odd man out as I didn't take a Filipino girl friend (Over thirty years married for a reason ya know). Philippine woman tend to good looks, great bodies and very, very available. But the sexiest, prettiest and barely legalist.... was Tom's. But he was never going to have his heart broken in case the deck got shuffled. His saying was: “Bob, you never lose your Filipino girlfriend, you just lose your turn...” and if his turn was up... for a while... he knew there were more out there, “Bob, no matter how beautiful a woman is, there is always someone out there that is tired of f.. [er. having sex with] her. OK, a bit cynical but we had a great time. We could talk as we wished with no bullshit ever... no need. We had both done what we had done. Perhaps the most honest and funny person I have met in years.

And I need to mention that not *all* Philippine woman are vultures. There are a lot of them that have made a deal and will stick to it. They may marry an older white guy and take care of him to his dying day, and faithful and hard working all the while. They value the secure future and besides, Philippine men are all too often, useless assholes who will desert their women and children in a heart beat and the women are stuck because the country is run by the Catholic church so divorce is not possible unless you are Muslim (or make a convenient conversion) and apply to a Muslim judge. Not possible for a woman who can barely afford rice. In most cases a woman can not get a passport without permission from the deadbeat husband who is long gone and maybe married again. To sum it up, many are just plain victims trying to survive. And before I ever went to the Philippines, I met Filipino women who are absolutely wonderful. True Blue.

Dianne Poole lives on her classic double ender in the Philippines. We crossed paths years ago, introduced by the Lucas's. We directed payment for articles to a charity that her and her now deceased husband were running for the locals. Published authors in The Coastal Passage were given the choice of donation to a worthy cause or receiving a cheque. Most donated, which I think says something about the quality of our writers as well as their writing. But some just plain needed the money. The nearby schools benefited and they advised and assisted locals that developed businesses that provide services for yachts. All good. It was nice to stumble upon someone like that. I did remember the face eventually and she recognised me. We kept that out little secret. But it was nice.

continued next page...

The characters you meet “out there”

And then there was the “colonel”. I get along with military types that are the real deal. Too many are just there to cause havoc and get a medal for it but a few are really there to accomplish something.

The colonel lives on a jewel like little ketch. He is over 80 but fit enough it would take a brave or foolish man to push him around. Quick tempered but absolutely no bullshit, which explains why he didn't make general.

We had an interesting chat one arvo aboard his boat. The conversation came around to his days in Germany in the late sixties. He was attempting to deal with the problem of troops leaving post and getting in trouble in town as there were some tough parts in cities like Frankfurt or Mannheim in those days. Germans do not have the puritanical hangups that Americans still cling to. And it was still post war and people struggled to make their way however they could... survival of the fittest.

Anyway, he described a solution he proposed to local commanders and lamented that he never heard anything after his proposal, assuming it was dismissed. But I was stationed at that base just a year or two later and I had the pleasure of informing him that his idea had been instituted exactly as he proposed and it was successful! There were snack bars in every company that sold beer and sandwiches and equipped with foosball tables or other entertainment. Men could stagger back to their bunks without knife injury from a local tough guy or their wallet lifted by a bar girl in town.... or worse.

His look of satisfaction was priceless. 40 years late but some things age like wine.

These days the colonel, Terry, is one of the worlds authorities on electronic marine navigation. He works tirelessly to develop and distribute innovations and does enormous groundwork to provide satellite image chart overlays that make navigation tools that leap ahead of what was science fiction a few years ago. And he gives it away. Dedicated to service. See Terry's website: www.yachtvalhalla.net

Dave, or as I thought of him, “Dude!” 100% old California beach bum. He migrated out into the pacific for the waves I think... and liked it. He lives aboard an aging sport boat that he keeps in top nick. Surfing and flat track motorcycles are his historical passions and great fun to have a chat with. We had lots of smiles and some serious gut busting laughs.

Eric and his young bride liveaboard a motorboat he built, except last I heard it still didn't have a motor! A self confessed nut case and proud of it. Mercurial and honest about his past failings and wins. Nothing halfway in either department. He is a mountain of a man and looks fantastic on the miniature motorbike he got for Chrissy. He is active in helping ex-pat veterans fight their way through the notorious American VA.

Now for the other kind..... names have been changed to protect the guilty. Any similarity to a real person is coincidental, blah blah blah...

Clyde... hysterical really, it was hard to contain myself all the time. At a gathering spot on Cebu he would have to dominate the discussion at all times. His eyes swiftly roving from side to side checking reaction, a cigarette in constant motion against an ash tray.

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The characters you meet "out there"



My mate in Coron, what a great host.



I don't usually allow strangers on my boat but this group from SE Davao Gulf seemed safe enough and friendly that I made an exception.

continued next page...

The characters you meet “out there”

He rarely paused long enough to smoke it. He was practised in his lies, skilful. He said he had been a radio announcer back in the UK... but who knew for sure. His knowledge base was wide but he had no depth in anything, but he counted on his audience not having any either.

I let him get away with his bullshit about having raced motorbikes. That is one of the most common invented subjects at a gathering. And dangerous when I'm there. I actually did race, though not very well on the track. I was a street brawler. The hot road in southern California was/is Palomar mountain in San Diego county. They had to build some very interesting roads to construct the famous observatory at the peak. For several years no one could go faster than me on the east side... and that was with Kay on the back! And I had a lot of motorcycles. When I entered a race on public roads in Mexico, I won my class hands down and did well overall in spite of riding the smallest bike in the field. Anyway you get the idea, so anyone talking about racing bikes when they didn't was in trouble. But I just smiled.....

It was the phoney Rolex story that was the last straw however. He recited a story about a gathering in Hong Kong where a phoney Rolex of fine quality was discovered only by the fact that instead of “jewels” in the movement, they were glass. He told how at the gathering the experts had the back “popped off” in 5 minutes..... pretty unlikely unless they happened to be carrying around a clumsy boxed tool set made for Rolex. You do not “pop” off a Rolex back! I busted him on that one. The cigarette twitched in frustration as he hurried into another tail. Eyes spinning to check reaction from the others at the table. What a dull life he must have had. I mean the real one!

There is your critical know-it-all. Their favourite way to introduce

themselves is saying, “Ah mate, yer doin it all wrong!” Best thing you can do is just nod for a while as they go through their litany of better ways to do whatever you are doing now or might think of doing in the future. Never argue with a drongo! There is no future in it. If you have a sense of humour and want to get a smile, just ask advice in passing on any subject, or say, “What do you think”? Get comfortable! Just give a nod at the sage 'advise' and let it go. And avoiding asking his advice again won't protect you, he will volunteer anytime he sees you, 'stuffing up again'. It's fun seeing two of these together going at it... but only if you are on your third beer and a shot of rum and at safe distance.

The Gossip... I learned to call him Dickhead D.... and at another port ran into a couple that knew the same asshole and referred to him by that name! It was a laugh around the table that when I recognised who they were talking about right away.

Ole “DD” had gone out of his way to give a hand when I first came into the port, offering a ride into town. But his piece of shit car dropped dead on the way back and he was lucky I was there... I later found the car had just been “rebuilt” by the local mob that had bid the lowest price... this in a country where the value of a used car was determined by whether a local had ever touched it!

Anyway as time and rum went under the bridge... a subject came up and I let out a secret provided he would keep it between us. He said he would. The next day the whole harbour knew. He must have gone through 20 liters of outboard fuel running around like that. He taught me a lesson.... I became ever more cautious about spilling private info. A good habit in all regards in this modern age.

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The characters you meet "out there"

The dedicated follower of fashion is an odd one.... The one that comes to mind is the younger guy with the dreadlocks and a Drascomb Luggar. That would make you a marked man anywhere but in the Philippines? Ya gotta be kidding.

What kind of nutter devotes his life to constructing a hairstyle that takes so much time and work to look "natural"... on an Africans head. And the boat is probably a good one in it's own environment... a hundred years ago.. The capacity for self delusion in this model is amazing. Nothing this guy does is without consideration of how it will look and everything he does or has is superior to whatever anyone else has or does. I am certain he has a big mirror on the boat. He has to be on top of his imagined fashion heap.

The big shot... specialising in supervising work done by locals and deliveries. He told me he was in the antiques business back in the UK, the family business, but it had been ruined with those TV shows telling people what the stuff was really worth.

There are a lot of yachties out there that know little about the maintenance of their boat and don't want to learn more. Good Business! Throw up a website, tack a flyer onto the bulletin board. My advice is if you can't fix it.... sell it. Funny thing about delivery businesses, seems twice I have heard of busts of delivery skippers that used a client's boat for the job.... that's what I heard... one from him personally. My advise is that if you can't sail it yourself... sell it.

And finally, the Big Shot's best mate and drinking buddy, the Criminal. Now I don't know if he didn't know about his buddies past, or he did and he is the one who dobbed him for a reward.... it's a good question to ask though. I got along with the Criminal for a while myself but parted ways when I just smelled a rat, something wrong, not who he was making out to be but in truth I was surprised when I heard this:

The story goes that he was busted for a major drug importing operation in Australia. He and his partners were importing it mixed into barrels of hydraulic fluid and then separating the dope from the hydraulic fluid in country. Pretty sophisticated operation. But he got busted, charged, bailed and split! He got a yacht in Mackay I heard, and just sailed away. The yacht was sold while I was around in the Philippines.

While I was writing this.... I was thinking... I wonder if I could verify this story... I just popped over to a web computer.. no worries! The guy that was known as Filip Novak was actually one Markis Scott Turner, the instigator of a plot that saw over 70 KG of cocaine brought in. I checked for photos.. yup, no doubt about it. The last words he got from me were F___O___. One of those rare times when me and Australian authorities are on the same page.

Overall, like the bar scene in star wars...
And they all gather out there.....

The characters you meet “out there”



One of the cafes in Bonbonon with a boat careened for antifouling.

A ride on the wild side!

Or, how I found out my boat is built tougher than me.

Words & photos by Bob Norson, SC BareBones

I had been set free of Holiday Ocean View Marina - finally. We had been there too long, *BareBones* and I. I waved goodbye to the armed guards by the gate, punched the air and powered up the Hondas for an east side passage of Samal Island, opposite the Davao City side on Mindanao.

What a pretty name for a place so maligned by its reputation for violence. Just the year before I got there the place was attacked by Muslim gangsters, snatching people to ransom. The armed guards the marina had hired were curiously deaf to the screams and threats just a 100 metres from their shack. One couple fought their way off the gangster's boat and dove for it and made safety. 3 others were taken. A Norwegian man with family connections to the owners was eventually ransomed in poor condition. The others were beheaded by those monsters. Their two Canadian boats were still on the hard, ghost ships, waiting for something to happen to them when I left. Now the place is guarded by the army, 7/24.

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A walk on the wild side!

The day was fine and after rounding the north end of Samal, I was sailing for the eastern side of Davao gulf, heading south to make north. It's a big gulf. Finally rounding Cape St. Augustin we were facing the real Pacific, 5000 miles to the Americas but we were hugging the coast to beat the strong south setting current that runs just offshore. Besides thwarting the main current, if you get in close enough you can pick up a little counter current but there is a risk.

Fishing nets are thick in some places and not well marked. While we were still in the marina at Samal Island, A cat that had left to go north met nets on the way that caused substantial damage. They were towed into the marina. Our outboards and flick up rudders paid off when in spite of a careful watch, we were pulled to a stop twice. Minor damage to one of the dagger boards. Night sailing this coast would be unwise..... so we grabbed anchorage where we could.

At an especially nice little anchorage, I pulled up the dinged board to fill with epoxy and top up some fuel. I rowed the dingy into the village and pulled in where I saw some men hanging around. So many Filipinos speak English you can start to expect it, but not here. Fortunately bright red fuel jerry jugs are an international language. They waved over a couple of young boys and apparently assigned them to help me out. They grabbed as many as they could struggle to carry and I got the rest.

We walked a couple of blocks on nice clean concrete streets, unusual! Then a trike was spotted and a quick conversation between the driver and the boys and we were loading up the fuel jugs and ourselves. After dropping off a couple locals we worked our way to the edge of town and to what was probably the only servo for many miles. The boys were

having a ball doing this important task and they were good value. We were filled and loaded quickly and my wallet lightened accordingly...

Taking a ride on a trike/taxi in Asia is very risky without haggling over the cost BEFORE you go anywhere. But I was out of the loop from the beginning so ready to cop it so it was a nice surprise when I got a price at the end of the line that was way to LOW! I gave him double and he almost seemed insulted... almost, but the men at the shore told him to say thank you and take the money! I gave the boys a hand full of cash as well. They were delighted and the men were pleased and wanted me to stay for a drink but the tide was running out and I would soon be out of water to row in. I would like to have stayed though... for a few months! This was a nice town.

A that current moves from east to west though the Philippines between the upper Islands and Mindanao is a big obstruction. Just offshore the water goes very deep so there is a LOT of water moving at the tide. Between the two phenomena, Hinatuan Strait by Surigoa can be a hell of a passage. And one more complication, your tide tables may be wrong. Mine was 180 degrees out and I doubled checked on the web and found those sources also inaccurate.

On the various islands in or near the strait, there are nickel mines. The hills stripped bare exposing the red soil. The bulk carriers are anchored out and loaded by lighters, there are no big wharfs to tie up to. So they swing to tide. If they aren't pointing at you... don't go there! Find an anchorage. I didn't get it right but was fortunate to catch the place at neaps so wasn't ground to a halt by 8+ kt. tides.

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Well off the coast of Mindanao these fishermen came from the mother ship to try to sell me this tuna.



FAD deluxe! there were more of them near by. Far off shore and in very deep water.

A walk on the wild side!



***A few of the beauties
from SE Davao Gulf***

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!

Above the town of Surigao is Punta Bilar the tide is still a big factor and for many miles after it. A lot of people anchor by the town of Surigao to wait for the next fair tide and provision. We entered the Bohol Sea on a close reach and ran into wicked seas. Close and big... lost gear that had been "safe" on the bows before.

Before I go further I need to talk about the change in Australian sailor's habits. Anyone who says that Australia is getting the international traffic in cruising yachts that it once did is stupid or a liar. In fact there has been a change in local Australian marinas as well. Every year some Australian yachts leave.... and do not return soon... if ever. Due to governments that have raised seabed leases in Queensland and other government interferences elsewhere, marina fees are horrendous. Couple that with high fuel prices (double the cost of Indonesia) and the deserved foul reputation of Australian border authorities... yachts are avoiding Oz like the plague.

Australians that flat could not afford the cost of entry into and berthing in Australia are leaving their boats in Indonesia or the Philippines at a cost from low to free and flying back to Australia. Entering back at an Australian airport is generally hassle free. There is no way the airlines or their customers would put up with the abuse that many yachts have suffered at the hands of the customs thugs. Tourism would suffer.

These words from the Cruisers Wiki: *"Although boat ownership is widespread, most Australians don't travel much further than their local waterways, and marinas are often clogged with moored craft that haven't been moved in years. Added to this the tendency for local government to frown on living aboard and we have an environment that isn't really*

conducive to cruising. Considering the size and beauty of Australia's coastline this is tragic. On the other hand the Australian people are warm and friendly to travellers, and mostly disagree with the restrictions imposed, so you'll find assistance anywhere you go."

The author had apparently visited the Broadwater or Mooloolaba. I could say more about this and have over the years. Recently I got a big thank you from a Australian boat that makes regular trips between Australia and the Solomons. He credited TCP with a positive change in Customs, so those that can listen have listened. But I would still avoid entering in Queensland if possible, particularly Bundaberg. Mackay has the best record in Queensland, the one port in the state we have never had complaint about.

OK... back to the voyage. The harbour by the village of Bonbonon, usually just referred to as Bonbonon, is very well protected and below the usual Typhoon path. There are a couple of locals that provide cheap moorings and service including bottom jobs if you like. Or you can have them put in a mooring for you to own. There is no regulation. Harbour master doesn't care unless you interfere with the fishermen that generally prefer the outer harbour. Anchorage is free. Some boats sit there for years. A local boat builder provides transport to town once a week for a 'fuel donation'. The locals are a mixed bag, there are low-life there but mostly they are indifferent unless there is a profit motive. The net fishermen that work the harbour can be dickheads.

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



Surigao



continued next page...



**An interesting fishing boat
in Bonbonon Harbour**

Sundown in Bonbonon

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!

You can buy beer from two bayside cafe's. I would advise caution on the food. I did get pretty sick once. But I never heard of a boat getting robbed while I was there and there is a white guy there that would be as likely as a local for some petty crime. But hey! This is Asia. You want colour? You got it. Check your charts for the SW corner of Negros Island.

From there we sailed toward Coron on the northern tip of Palawan with one stop in between that I will not publish! Too nice and too small.

I had a very interesting experience on the way, well several, but one that I caught in daylight with a camera handy, wished I had cleaned the lens filter though. We had caught a quiet spell and were under motor, just chuffing along about 5-6 kts.

Ahead in the distance I caught sight of movement on the water and got out the binoculars. I was astounded. What I saw was three killer whales, one apparently dead being pushed along on the surface slowly by a second, and a third circling slowly around numbers one and two. The dead one was on it's back side and being pushed along perpendicularly by the nose of another.

What practical reason could they have for doing that? Answer is simple, none. This was a matter of emotion; this had to have been driven by grief. I sensed the circling whale was a male and that it would be unwise to intrude. Disrespectful. Where were they going? Any place in particular and what would they do when they got there? Or was the parting so unbearable that the dead whale was being pushed around until the others were exhausted?

I have had the opinion for many years that the intelligence of these animals is underrated. I believe it is possible for a creature to be as intelligent as humans, maybe more so, in spite of not being builders. Lack of an opposable digit doesn't necessarily mean one is stupid. Especially in the larger whales, I sense a superior sense of civility. They don't merely refrain from attack but seem actually careful to avoid accidentally causing injury to yachts.

We have had some very close encounters but I do not fear them, nor pursue them. I just don't panic upon their approach. Reports of senseless attacks are very rare, even for the more aggressive "killer" whales. You can't say that about our breed. However you define "soul," what I observed fits my definition. So... I kept my distance, not out of fear, but respect.

I am no greenie vegan but I firmly believe that killing these creatures is not hunting, it's murder.

Near Coron I was anchored and needing a place to park the dingy, I used a fishing wharf. There was plenty of room. One day a girl came out to meet me and said "the boss would like to see you", uh oh.... so I went as directed to the big house inside the compound... ready to take my medicine and get chewed out for using a private wharf...

I could not have been more wrong. The owner of the business was from Taiwan, he had several such installations in the Philippines, with fleets of a dozen boats or so in each place. He was there on a visit and helping one of his sons get the place organised, as far as I could tell.

continued next page...



You can see that the dead whale is being moved along here



And the other whale is circling slowly

A walk on the wild side!

English was thin on the ground and my Chinese is... NADA! He said, "Us foreigners must stand together." So I had lunch there for the rest of my time in the bay. He had a brilliant staff and the best of the best for seafood. I hadn't eaten that well for a long time. And the bar was open! This was a very rich family. I never heard a word about my dingy, but two of the sons asked for a tour of the boat which I was happy to provide.

Coron on Busuanga Island is across the channel to Coron Island which has some spectacular scenery. Eroded limestone cliffs and deep pools that are almost landlocked. Very nice but I asked about about the bare hills... was it timber harvesting/logging? "No, typhoon!" I had noticed a lot of heavy timber furniture in the big house and was told then that it came from typhoon.

At the time they were beginning to trim back the trees in the compound in preparation for the season when the typhoons would start to drop further south... toward Coron... I took the hint and left with a typhoon coming just north of us which created a strong southerly. Sunrise to dusk 110 miles of nice steady cruising for *BareBones*. Doesn't get better. Started with light winds filling in toward the afternoon.

The next morning was good wind from the start. I left the anchorage of a resort island under sail with 3 reefs in the main. By the time I had a course set up we were doing 13 kts and a macho idiot Filipino skipper of a tourist Bangka had to scramble to get out of my way. I wasn't going to change course unless dire as I would have had to steer to wind and picked up some more speed. 16 or 17 kts on third reef!?! Something to avoid. Being sheltered by the big island to my south, the water was moderate.

A couple of miles later... I noticed the hillside covered with wind generators... makes sense. Later I shook out reefs until full main and falling off to only 8-10 kts which actually seemed slow.

By mid day it was falling off more and getting a little too relaxed before I discovered something that I should have already known. When sailing in a large archipelago, never trust the wind with an island between you and the wind direction. I got a burst and *BareBones* took off like a hot rod Chevy. No time to reef, I fell off, trying to lose speed by running from it and went just a little too far or the wind direction was a little unstable, I don't know which but things were happening so fast the accidental gibe ripped the sliders right out of the track by the headboard, jamming the sail up.

I got down the heady to slow things and then man handled the main down. I got the motors running to stabilise a course and made repairs. I had spare sliders by a fluke on the original order but I had to take all the other sliders off to get to the ones at the top. Big job but the wind started to fall off as rapidly as it came on. By the time I had it fixed we were motoring as necessity, wind was all done for the day. I headed for the first anchorage I could find and thought little of it...

It's strange what a sailor comes to "feel" in a boat when you are as close as *BareBones* and I. I woke around 0300 on red alert. Something wasn't right. It was a black moon but I leave my nav computer on at all times under anchor and it reveal we were indeed, dragging. I was using a new anchor and it proved to be unreliable.

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



My mate in Coron, what a great host



A sweet little island anchorage I am not telling anyone about!

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!

Just a brief note on the anchor... I had a 35lb delta that had done very well for me but I wasn't cruising the Australian coast anymore and excessive depths and unknown conditions convinced me I should go heavier given a chance. The chance came about when a Canadian cruiser was selling a little used Delta 45 lb. anchor... so, better right?! I found that not the case. Delta screwed up somewhere, the balance just isn't right. It doesn't set right away like the smaller one but likes to drag on its side. I now use my 35 lb. Delta again and store the 45 that I might use it for an anchor buddy, dead weight.

Dragging... love my electronic nav screen. It saved the day that night.... (?) I just took off watching the computer screen, by dawn I was a round a headland and taking on the next leg but the wind had come up and rock hard. I passed an island where all the fishing boats had taken shelter. Keeping in mind that I have seen these guys anchor in 50 fathoms rather than abandon the fishing grounds just to get a little sleep. That worried me a little.. well.. more than a little. I was torn whether I should join them but dithered until it was too late so there you go. Not bravery, indecision.

Within a few miles of that island, the water was coming over the cabin in waves. About 35 kts true on starboard bow. We were close reaching and having a very rough but fast ride. 10-14 kts in those seas were attention getting. Stuff was shaking loose inside that had never moved before. I was soaked every few seconds, hanging on lest I be washed over. Water hitting me like an oversized bag of cement. Painful to take full on the chest. I turned sideways to lesson the body shock. The only good sides were, we were punching into it so the cabin was dry, no flooding through the door, and *BareBones* was taking it. Actually I think the bastard was having fun! The interval of the seas prevented the big slam in favour of constant action but not as steep an amplitude as I expected. So, what the hell. Hang on and go with it.

We passed another small island with fishing boats littering the lee. Wonder what they thought of us!? And in diminishing wind made the top of Cebu. Sandy beach, calm water, two fast beers and a rum. Exhausted.

I hung around Carmen for a while, a place to meet the best and worst and the just plain f-ing crazy. There are a few old dry dock bays lined up on the south end of the harbour. A yank name of Zeke, an ex San Diego fisherman, bought or leased out one many years ago and turned it into a boat yard and a few Med style berths. Then most of another one two doors up, with a still active ship repair dry dock in between them. He built more med style berths and a club house there and a shed for projects. There are a lot of guys working there and are all on contract. They work for you, not Zeke, but they pay Zeke a daily fee to access the place.

Part of the second bay is leased by Peppey, nice guy but stuck with the same labour pool. He has some med style berths as well and a spot gouged out of the rocky bank to dry out on with sand bags... well... actually gravel bags... er... small assorted rock bags. I gave it a try but the work men that set up the job were useless.

Everything was way off and the boat was not properly supported. They were also supposed to help me clean the bottom, ready for painting and I dared to criticize their work in the kindest tone possible. So their feelings were hurt and they vandalised the cleaned up hulls by covering with mud and punched a hole in my dinghy that I didn't spot until I moved the boat. Because of the way the labour hire worked, I had no leverage with the boss but at least I exposed them for the chicken shits they were and I did not see them there anymore. Give Peppey credit for that.

Both operators allow work to be done in close quarters. Spray painting, steel grinding, anything. Bad luck mate. I couldn't wait to get out of there.

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



BareBones on the hard in Carmen. This was OK except for the metal dust from sand blasting nearby. You take your chances



Real professional treatment alright...



In the pit at Peppey's, high tide

continued next page...



A view of Peppay's showing his version of Med style berths



At the marina, Med style, in Carmen

A walk on the wild side!

The guy Zeke is known to be mercurial. Nice one day and not so nice the next. In an argument between you and one of his boys he will side with the worker. Filipino men there stick together and they can be petty, macho, brats. I suspect he is cautious about taking sides with a yachty that will be gone soon while he is stuck with the locals for years. On the other hand I did see some nice work being done. There was a big motorcat built there that was impressive. There are skills there if you pick your men well.

Think I am being tough on the crowd there... nah... I'm leaving out a lot! Good luck if you go. You may need it. It might work out great for you. Then again... it might not. There is anchorage in the lagoon and for shallow draft vessels like *BareBones*, also anchorage in the main harbour in Carmen. The clubhouse at Zeke's is open to everyone and it is nice.

Back to the Surigoa Strait. It's late in the season and the best winds have gone but will try for Palau. I was doing OK for a while but then a system came in and it got rough and there was more east in the wind. We fought hard for it, not giving up easy. Punching into it.

At night it got rougher. I had been tacking already to make northing when I could. *BareBones* got swatted around hard and I lost my footing in the cockpit. I fell hard. My left foot and lower back hurt. I had to give up. I struggled forward to lower the main. It was all I could do. We ran with the heady. With the wind on our bum and being pulled by the nose the action was easier. With every mile of northing lost it got a wee bit easier.

By morning I was having my regrets. What a pussy! OK... up with the main and back to it. But by the end of the day I was really hurting from the constant bashing around and the increasing seas. The weather had not got better, I had just got into better latitude running and now was going right back in.

It became obvious I was not merely bruised. I was later to find out I had one grossly broken rib and a probable fracture of another. When I saw a doctor months later and asked about it he took one look and said, "Oh yeah", he didn't have to touch me. Also a broken bone in my foot. The wind was blowing me to Indonesia so that is where we went. Easy going. Just a few knots at night and around 5-6 during the day with a reefed heady. Love my Harkin furler! Besides comfort, there are many Fads (Fish Aggregating Device) out there and collision with one at any speed sucks and at high speed, will ruin your day. I was in no hurry.

Bitung, Sulawesi

I had checked out of Indonesia at this port so had some knowledge of it. But a mate advised me of a place he anchored in close so I tried that. A Coast Guard runabout showed up and told me to follow him to a better place as I was in the way of a pilot boat.. OK.

On taking the anchor up I found it blanketed in plastic shopping bags. Took a while to remove the wad. After motoring for a hundred meters or so one engine fouled and stopped. I tilted it up to find... yup. Plastic shopping bags wrapped around it tight. The guys in the Coast Guard boat thought that was really funny... I anchored up across the channel which is a great shipping anchorage. About 100 feet. I found a little bit that was only 50 feet in sand and coral. It sounds crazy but that harbour channel is a world famous dive spot. One of the best of it's kind they say.

I checked in with Customs. They had been good to me before and I had been straight with them. I saw the same faces. I had a problem this time though. They were now enforcing a rule that had been on the books for over a year. No MMSI number, no entry!

continued next page...



Playing cat and mouse with water spouts. I am sure we can survive one but not keen to practise.



In Bitung. these traditional style Pinisi do charter work now but the working boats are much alike except they use a motor.

continued next page...

My MMSI saga

Maritime Mobile Service Identity. My shiny new AIS, Automatic Identification System, transceiver was delivered to the Philippines by Kay. They have to be programmed with an MMSI number which identifies you to other craft via a radio signal from your machine so they can see you on their display screen.

A very handy gadget, AIS... just ask Jessica Watson! They put one on her boat just after she had a bingle with a tanker while she was taking a nap. After that rough start she sailed around the world just fine.

So how do you get the number?? Well, in every other country in the world as far as I know... you get one from the marine authority in your vessels registered country. You give details of ownership, dimensions and vessel name, and they issue you with a 9 digit number.

But I am from Australia and AMSA, (Australian Marine Safety Authority) won't make it that easy. The land of the hostile Bureaucrat trying desperately to justify their own existence and flex some control over YOU! Yeah baby! You must have a SROCP! (Short Range Operators Certificate of Proficiency). Every Australian agency loves it's acronyms, very military you know. WHY? Because they can. There is no valid justification.

You aren't required to have a VHF radio so why demand a license for one? The AIS that I want my MMSI number for, is an automatic devise. Many radios now have a DSC function.... (Digital Selective Calling)... but that just sends out an auto identity. Doesn't do you any good as you must get on the air to describe your circumstances and where you are.

In speaking to cruisers from a great variety of countries there is none other than Australia that holds a victim ransom for something like this. The Italians almost refused to believe that any country could beat theirs for bureaucratic nonsense.... Once again, WE'RE NUMBER ONE!! And you have to be in country to take the test. I called the Hervey Bay VMR... (Volunteer Marine Rescue)... that gives the test only after sitting around all day being lectured... first available day... a month away. Can't happen.

I finally call Tin Can Bay Coast Guard and talked to Mike who put me on to Jon Jones, their "invigilator" (??? no idea) that supervises the test. ACMA, (Australian Communications and Media Authority) is the agency in charge of the licenses. Finally an intelligent life form. Jon put me onto Lizibeth at AMC, (Australian Maritime College) at the U of T, (University of Tasmania) that administers the test. Instead of waiting for mail delivery, she emailed the docs right down to Jon and I was good to go as soon as I paid the \$89 fee... slammed that plastic.

Jon was very helpful, creating a relaxed environment for the exam, 25 multiple guess questions with many having little to do with normal VHF radio use. Then a little practical test with an actual radio and BYU, (Bob's Yer Uncle!) Jon doesn't grade the thing but puts it in an envelope and sends it off to AMC and then the ACMA can give me the license so I can get my MMSI from AMSA... simple....

Tin Can didn't charge for the service but will accept donations, which I was glad to provide. And thanks to Lizibeth for getting the paper pushed around quick smart, but as far as the rest...

A walk on the wild side!

Now... where was I, oh yeah, Bitung Indonesia. I was there but couldn't clear in. I was there because I was running from weather with an injury. The Customs fellow talked to his boss and they agreed there was no problem. A legitimate need for safety, I could not be refused. He asked about my plans to exit the country and I was honest. I had two options depending on conditions when I got out there and described my intentions, including a fuel stop or two and that was all good. Why are bureaucrats so fair there and we get stuck with the ... well.. you know. I hear our customs mob is far improved, I will find out one day... but not yet.

Still nursing my busted rib, I sailed on the heady east. Good sailing the first day but slowed right down that night. Next morning I saw many boats and FADs. They had everything except TV antennae. There would be a small float and a floating shack on a tether to the float. Fishing boats would also use the floats for a mooring to grab a little sleep. But we kept going.

The islands by Ternate offered an interesting passage. Would have made a nice stop but ... steep to shores and we were done to the business of making miles. We went through one passage in the middle of night where the tide was ripping through so fast it made a mess of my sounders, all three of them showed erratic and dangerous reports. So we took it on faith. Hate that! At dawn we were passing the last island before shaping an easterly course.

With the wind dropping out we motored gently toward Irianjaya. No FADS and very little traffic... restful and I needed it. The morning saw a channel ahead with a fierce tide line in front of us. A small island on the south side of the entrance had a little shelter and a postage stamp piece of sand at a depth I could use to anchor.

The controls on my starboard motor had seized. I did not want to manoeuvre around a strange harbour on one motor. A couple of hours later problem solved and on our way. We got into Sorong that night. The beacons were good though the cm93 charts were not. As long as you have one of the two you are ok. With a couple hours sleep the next morning I went looking for fuel and found I had anchored right in front of a servo selling to the fishing fleet. What luck! The fishermen there were very friendly, I was invited to share a meal but was on a mission...

I spent every Rupiah I had left to top up fuel and get a bag of tomatoes and a hand of bananas. There were no money changers and the banks were closed. Good thing I didn't need much but I hate to leave a port down even a small amount of fuel, you just never know. In Bitung there was a government money changer near the Customs office. There is no standard thing for Indo cities, like city states all run by local rulers. The only thing in common everywhere is the shoreline covered in plastic shit.

Besides the now required MMSI in Indonesia, they now want ID for a sim card for a phone. But not for Data!? I got a sim good for 30 gb for 900,000 Rupia or \$9 AUD. Pity I didn't get to use it very much.

On the Tuk Tuk to the market for fruit I met my first Papuan's. That is what they called themselves. Not Indonesian. My very brief encounter suggested an uneasy peace between them and the Indonesian.

Now to set a course over the top of Papua for Jayapura to check out. Good plan... but plans are never concrete until they are done.

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



Sorong - lots of rubbish - this awful sight is seen in many harbours.

Sorong - right in front of the fuel station.



Sailing into the night again. you can see the little Simrad pilot that handles the work for me at right.



A walk on the wild side!

A land breeze came up out of Sorong or so I thought it was but it came in solid as the day went on. Day went to night and then day again... As I sailed south of Biak Island the wind was nice and steady and I wanted to make some miles.

With the help of a mate in the Philippines we had figured out how to adapt my asymmetrical (MPS) and sock that were made oversized for my rig. The rib was still tender but I decided to give it a go. Beautiful! And I had an audience. Sailing vessels are still admired by Indonesians and two boats came out from the island to get a closer look. They had to move along to do it as we were doing over 10 kts on a mild sea. I was proud as and feeling good. That big sail made good speed out of a moderate wind. The wild, joyful cheers of the Indonesian guys was good for the soul.

Another night and another day but with darkening skies. I had a notion to sail into the Mambera River for a break but as I rounded the cape and into the shallow waters, I noticed the rafts of trees flowing out of the river. Looks like there had been heavy rains inland and the river was in flood. Give this a miss and back out to sea.

The weather was steadily deteriorating as we sailed on. Nothing to worry about yet but as we neared Jayapura it got quite strong. I wasn't up to bashing into a wind so decided to run. That worked out ok for a while but we were going too damn fast! On bare poles we were doing over 10kts all the time.

I had never used a drogue before but had gathered up a milk crate for the job. A tip from another cat cruiser. I set it up with a harness and

connected it to a 30 foot length of 8mm chain connected to about 50 to 60 feet of rope and on a bridle aft. That slowed us down to 8 or so kts most of the time but we gradually increased that. I was amazed the little simrad tiller pilot handled the load. The wind was so strong that the top of the water and bottom of the atmosphere were indistinct. Even a second of having the door open drenched the cabin.

A very hard day... and into the night. Eventually it did start to ease and by the next day we were sailing slowly on the heady, still no main, through an ocean filled with debris of a mountain storm. Big trees, some over 60 foot tall were stripped of most branches and floating just barely, mostly hidden. It was impossible to avoid it all. I just tried to miss the big stuff but then one got me. It bounced off the port bow and slammed back into the board and finally the rudder where it was wedged in tight. I didn't get to the pilot in time.

Still groggy from the last few days hard going. The pilot shit itself trying to keep a course. I cleared the rudder by raising the cassette, whacked on the spare pilot and started to look around for a place to go. *BareBones* and I needed some bloody rest and repair. There was an atoll not too far with islands spread around the place. There must be some shelter there.

I found a passage through the reef and anchored on the southeast side of Ninigo Island. A canoe was already headed toward me when I set the anchor down. The welcome committee! But that night I needed sleep.

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



Do you see the 15 mtr log with the smaller one in front of it?

**It was fun getting this thing out on a perfect day,
even funner not having to manhandle it down this
time with the sock installed.**

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



**This was the extent of my sail
a lot of the time over Papua.**

**This was before it got really bad
so the drogue was visible out the
window, see red arrow, later
visibility was nill.**

A walk on the wild side!



There is a small bouy with a black flag and a smaller float drifting off it. Very hard to see.



The floatsom from hell!

A walk on the wild side!



What can I say... Oceania, Ninigo



***BareBones* looks at home here**

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!

Next morning another canoe came around. This time asking for help. An old fellow... well, my age, had a rag wrapped around his foot and a young bloke had paddled them out. Could I provide medical assistance? One can not refuse to have a look.

It was an ugly wound. Ulcerated hole about 6-8mm deep and 15 mm round, the foot was swollen around it. Infection was going to kill this guy if I couldn't stop it. He was a brave old bugger, I had to debride as best I could and then wash out with antiseptic. The alcohol brought tears but not a sound. Finally patched him up with some antibiotic cream and bandaged. Then wrap his foot in a plastic bag and taped in place in hopes he would get home dry.

He had made a beautiful model of the sailing boats they have there to give to me. I was touched!

The next day I went ashore because I did not want him to come to me. I had ordered him to get home, put the foot up and let his family look after him. Orders were followed but the infection was still there.

I tried another cream I had found in my kit that had a multiple substance approach and it was newer. If this didn't work he would need to get to a hospital that would be a 200 mile ride across open ocean in a small runabout. A dangerous thing at best of times.

That day I was given a lunch of cray, and fruit that was splendid. There were several dishes made from Casava and Sago. This is the staple of the islands and they are very creative with it. A little weird though as they would not eat until I did...

I got a tour of the island which was as tidy as it could be. Everyone spoke very good English and I met the reason why. The school teacher was switched on. An intelligent and educated instructor. They were fortunate to have her.

Their boats were fascinating. I saw how the single ama/outrigger was shaped with an ax, and had their general construction explained. The small sticks that hold the ama to the struts of these Proas (?) are rock hard, do not rot and flex just enough to resist fracturing.

The hull is hand hewn from logs that drift to the island from Papua. Steering is primarily from sail handling though an oar over the side can assist. The sails are rectangle which I had not seen before. Because that is the shape the plastic is made in? Just use what shape they get? They have to come from Papua.

The island is only a metre or two above sea level. Each family tends it's own garden and everyone dives for fish and cray. The old boy I was tending to was known as the best diver in his day and still very good, a mentor.

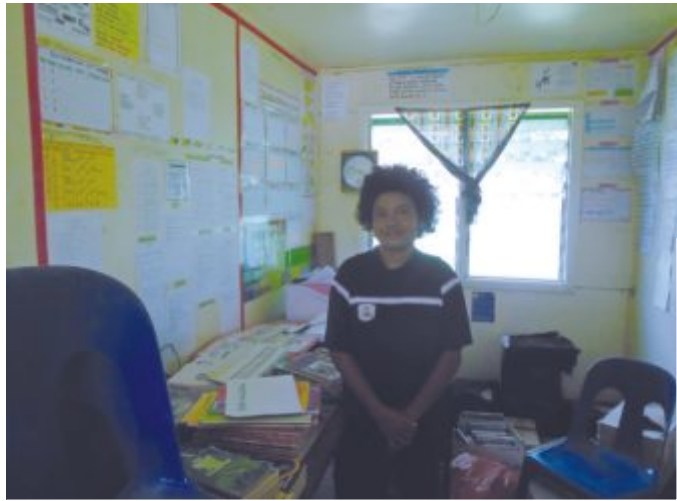
By the next day the wound had improved a great deal. We were all relieved. I re-did the dressing and bandage. I also fixed a problem on a chain saw. Some guys were building a conventional floor with raised planks and cutting palm with the saw to do it. Most people had sand floors and palm frond walls and roofs.

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



My visitors, my new friend



The teacher in her office

**The best house
on Ninigo Island
for the teacher**



The sailing boats of Ninigo Atoll



Some construction detail of the locals boats in Ninigo

continued next page...

A walk on the wild side!



**Passing by Rabaul,
but not stopping**



Sailing into the night...again

A walk on the wild side!

Another lunch was provided by a local woman recently widowed with a tribe of small children. She would be ok as the islanders would help her out and was happy to share with a stranger. At another place I was asked to look at a "solar system" that was made up of a very small panel, a motorcycle battery and a 12V low wattage light. I couldn't help her, the battery was knackered, and I didn't have anything to replace it with. It is amazing what they live without. A light at night. But how friendly, honourable and smart they are... except one. There has to be one rotten apple in the barrel. A rascal, a thief. But most are so nice.

The next day the old boy came out to visit which I chewed him out for but his foot was looking better again. He wanted one last treatment and to say thank you. As he was feeling better he was going to sail to another island where his extended family was assembling for the holidays. This was so important to him I had to give in and just did the best I could for him but I did admonish him to let the wound dry out in a clean place and make all his children and grandchildren do everything for him and he promised he would, but his mouth was a bleeding red of Betel nut so the party was already starting. But then, everyone chewed betel nut there, and everywhere else for a 1000 miles around.

So it was time for me to take off. I did over 900 nm the next leg in one go, all the way to the Solomons where I checked in at Noro. We dodged water spouts and squalls and endured more big storms and crazy Chinese fishermen to get there. We sailed 2300 nm since Bitung and I was a long time out of touch from the world but I had *BareBones* to look after me.



Ah, the Solomons, finally