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Disclaimer

Neither the BCCA nor Committee will accept any liability for personal injury arising out of participating in any event, rally or race organized by or through the BCCA whether sustained by members, guests, or visitors, or caused by the said members, guests or visitors whether or not such damage or injury could have been attributed to or was occasioned by the neglect, default or negligence of any of the officers, committees or servants of the BCCA.

Boat Owners Third Party Insurance

It is the responsibility of all boat owners to have adequate third party insurance in respect of him/herself, vessel, his/her crew for the time being & his/her visitors.

Hello fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors everywhere

July - August 2007

September's.....Boat Show "Meet & Eat" will be held at "The Duke Of Wellington"

Bugle Street, Southampton, SO 14 2AH at 7.30pm. on the first Saturday of the Southampton Boat Show. All members and guests are welcome. It will be good to meet up with old and new members, but please let us know the number in your party so we can ensure seats for all. Remember it is the first Saturday of the Southampton Boat Show and space will be of a premium.

Contact J.Bretherton by e.mail or text to his mobile 07989 110837
to inform us of the number in your party.

Enquiries:

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PRESS RELEASE 26 MARCH 2007.....

VOLLER ENERGY GROUP PLC

VOLLER ENERGY ANNOUNCES SEA TRIALS OF GREEN GENERATOR ON BENETEAU 411

Voller Energy Group PLC, the leading developer of fuel cells systems, is pleased to announce that the first installation of their 1kW environmentally friendly generator is to be on a Beneteau Oceanis Clipper 411.

Voller will be sea trialing its innovative environmentally friendly fuel cell generator on-board the company's Solent based Beneteau Oceanis 411, 'Emerald'.

Using this popular design of family sailing yacht allows Voller Energy to demonstrate the benefits and practicalities of the fuel cell generator under typical usage, as well as showing its retro-fit market potential.

Quick and easy to install, the fuel cell system can be fitted to the existing wiring in the boat. The system operates from the Calor Gas, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or propane that is already on board for cooking. The system will fit comfortably in an aft locker, normally used for a conventional generator.

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Voller's fuel cell generator is safe and economical. It works by automatically monitoring battery voltage; when the battery voltage falls, it automatically switches itself on and recharges the batteries. Once the batteries are fully charged the fuel cell switches itself off to conserve fuel. Voller's generator also provides hot water as well as heating to the cabin.

Stephen Voller, Chief Executive comments:

"Our fuel cell generator will completely change the way that people sail. Most skippers are used to turning everything off to conserve power; with Voller, that will no longer be necessary.

From now on people won't have to turn their fridges off, they won't have to worry about using a TV, a games console or a hair dryer on board. They can use an electric kettle, enjoy an ice cold beer on board, and no longer have to worry about switching lights on. In short, with the power burden removed, sailing will become even more pleasurable."

- ENDS -

Fuel cells work by converting the chemical energy in hydrogen to electrical energy. Hydrogen is combined with oxygen from the air across a special membrane. The outputs from the reaction are electricity, heat and water. No toxic emissions are produced.

WOW.

Aren't we lucky no toxic emissions, that really is remarkable with all that excess of power, sod the hair dryer I want a dishwasher.

What about the butane or propane gas that power the fuel cells!!!! That's toxic it can kill you.

The recommendations of the marine industry and marine surveyors over the last five years have deemed gas water heaters, gas fridges, and many gas cookers on boats as being taboo.

Indeed many owners requiring an insurance survey have been forced to spent considerable sums of money replacing their gas water heaters, gas fridges etc. that have given many years trouble free service. Have no fear members it not only the marine industry that's cookoo, I heard on the grapevine that next year anyone who owns and uses a BBQ will need to obtain a licence for doing so. Mumblings of eco friendly - greenhouse gas etc. Enjoy your sailing, ED.

We rejoin **Magic Carpet** on their adventure in the warmer climbs of the Cook Islands off New Zealand after they leave Samoa heading for Australia.

Vanuatu via Fiji.

After Samoa, we were really tracking to get to Port Vila and prepare for the last 1000 miles to Australia. Mind you Vanuatu from Samoa is 1000 miles itself, but with a break of Fiji in between.

As usual we left early after sunrise. As the wind was predicted from the SE, we had the expected "no wind" as we motored along the north coast of the main island of Samoa, Upolu. It was still calm as we continued on through the strait separating Upolu from Savaii and only started to fill in about 3pm when we were clear of all hazards and on a straight course for Savusavu, in Fiji. For the next night and day, the weather was pretty standard for the Pacific this year, 20+kts from the SE, overcast and squally. The day after that the wind dropped out completely and we were soon motoring. It was lunchtime and we discussed settling down to writing our backlog of travel stories, during the afternoon, whilst we were motoring.

As we finished lunch, we noticed that the wind had returned a little, but it had changed 180 degrees and was now coming from in front of us - just gently, at the moment. However soon it was

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noticeably increasing and before long it had swung a bit more and was over 30 kts and still increasing - no travel writing today!

The wind settled in at around 39 kts forward of the beam and we could still lay our course, but the seas were building and the rain was increasing. It was time to batten down the hatches and put on the wet weather gear. Karyn got on to preparing the evening meal, before the seas got really big and working in the galley became hazardous and we radioed our friends, 50 miles behind us, to prepare them for what is ahead.

We had to go through a narrow strait bordered by reefs, which meant that if the weather deteriorated further, we could not run off and put the wind and waves behind us, we had to hold our course. Even if we set our parachute sea anchor, which we have not yet needed to do on this circumnavigation, we would have to watch our downwind drift, because those reefs are pretty close and it is getting dark-very dark!

We can turn around and run back the way we came, or grit our teeth and continue on and get through the pass, as quickly as possible. The boat is handling it very well, so we decide to continue on even though the waves are increasing and the rain bucketing down.

The wind is steady at 39 kts - gale force, as we claw our way towards the lighthouse, at the entry to the strait, sailing as high into the wind as possible. We want to stay as far to windward, as we can. We are watching the progress on our chart plotter, which is updating our position every second. However, we cannot trust the accuracy of the charts, absolutely, so we are cautious, trying to stay a good distance from the reefs to leeward, which means as close as we dare to the unseen reefs to windward, whilst battling gale force winds and driving rain. The pulsing light, from the lighthouse, piercing the darkness, makes it seem much closer than it is in reality. This just adds to the tension, aboard MAGIC CARPET, as we constantly reassess our approach to the reefs close in to the lighthouse. Apart from the motion, as the boat is buffeted and bounced around, it is the noise that creates the most tension. It is difficult to concentrate on anything other than the functioning of the boat, the navigation and the continuing assessment of the development of the storm and our options - if something should go wrong, with the boat, or the weather get out of hand. Hemmed in by these reefs, we would need to act quickly, so we always have contingency plans in mind, in situations like this.

Meanwhile near Tonga, a couple of hundred miles away, an undersea volcano has been spewing lava into the ocean. This has resulted in big rafts of pumice floating on the ocean. Pumice is actually stone, but is less dense than water, so it floats on the surface, sometimes many inches thick. Now as waves crash against MAGIC CARPET and the wind whips the spray across the boat, pumice is showered over everything. It sounds like hail stones hitting the cabin and deck, and adds to the noise of the storm.

We must have done good deeds in a previous life, because as we get into the pass, the reefs are lessening the waves and the wind is shifting around a bit behind us. MAGIC CARPET is making a crunching sound as she plunges through the pumice, in this pitch black, night. This must be what it sounds like on an icebreaker!

I am back out on deck checking the wind speed and direction. The wind is definitely shifting aft and is down to 25kts. Another 15 minutes and it is down to 20-22kts. Another 15 minutes, 17-20kts. I talk on the radio to our friends behind, who still have 39kts. I give them good news (with caution) "We seem to have come out the other side, of the front." After 9 hours, of this gale, we are through! What a difference the protection of the reefs and an hour makes.

A few lines of type, does not really convey how long 9 hours can be, when you have gale force winds, driving rain and flying pumice. It is certainly a lot longer than a day in the office!

The wind is steady at 17-20kts. Everything has calmed down. We are still crunching through the pumice and pumice is everywhere on deck, but the gale is behind us now. As usual, MAGIC CARPET, handled it really well and never gave us a moments concern about it's strength and ability in these conditions, the proximity of the reefs was our only concern.

Now we can get some relaxed sleep. Karyn sleeps first, it is enough for me just to breathe a deep sigh of relief and enjoy the comparative tranquillity, aah.

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Next morning sees us motoring in a flat calm, threading our way between rafts of pumice and reefs, as we approach our destination- Savusavu, Fiji.

The Copra Shed Marina directs us to a mooring in Savusvu Harbour and we await the officials for clearance into Fiji. The first to arrive is a lady from Agriculture and Quarantine. She was a delight. She arrives in a neat formal uniform, but with bare feet and painted toenails. The bare feet is a consideration to coming on board, a yacht, without shoes to mark the deck, but this lady was so natural in bare feet and a big friendly smile, we thought she was gorgeous.

Once Quarantine had cleared us, we could take down our yellow flag, which was the signal for the officials from Customs and Immigration to come out. These were men and whilst they did not have painted toenails, they still came aboard with bare feet and a big friendly smile. This was a great welcome to friendly Fiji.

Fiji is a place that you need a year to cruise, not a week, so whilst we caught buses to inland towns and liked Savusavu, we barely scratched the surface. However we did achieve something unexpected, whilst we were in Savusavu.

We met Sue a NZ lady who crews on cruising boats when she can and spends the NZ winters in Savusavu when she cannot find a boat to sail on. Sue does scrimshaw, which is an old art form of engraving on whalebone, or whale teeth. It used to be done by the old whalers whilst they were sitting around, waiting for whales. The subjects are usually old sailing ships and/or whales or dolphins. Sue does not like to use whale bone, as she is against killing whales, so in fact she does not use any animal bone, she uses fossilized bones of hairy mammoth (approx 2 million years old) and fossilized walrus teeth (approx 2000 years old).

Where on earth does she get these, I hear you say, incredulously? The answer is Alaska. The Eskimos are allowed to excavate these fossils, from the ice and sell them. Sue is tapped into this source of supply.

Now for the last few weeks, whilst sailing through wind and rain, I have been thinking, "What could we get as a lasting memento of our 12 year circumnavigation of the world?" Here it was- I commissioned Sue to inscribe a miniature drawing of MAGIC CARPET, with the name of the boat and 94-06, the years encapsulating our departure and return to Australia, on a fossilized walrus tooth. We have one of these each, to wear as a pendant, once we reach Australia. Pretty neat eh?

We cut our stay in Fiji short by a few days, because we had a good weather forecast, for the trip to Vanuatu. Very light variable winds settling down to 10-15kts from the south. We are heading 580 miles due west to Port Vila, Vanuatu. South winds puts it right on the beam, which we usually don't like, but with 10 or 15kts, there won't be any seas and this wind strength is nice for MAGIC CARPET and we are longing for a gentle, pleasant passage. There have been few of them, since we left the Bahamas last January. We used to do most of our writing on passages, because we tend to be rushing around looking at things when we visit places, however this season in the Pacific, has not been a good one for gentle passages.

We are motoring away from Fiji in a calm and are quite happy to motor for a while to charge our batteries and run the computer. Tomorrow we will get stuck into our writing. We are looking forward to it.

Dawn finds us still motoring on a glassy sea and at 7am, we tune in to our radio sched, with a Fiji based station, calling themselves "Rag of the Air". They record the positions and conditions being experienced by all us boats, on passage and give us weather forecasts. The forecast is for 10-15kts from the south as we expected.

The wind is just starting to fill in, as we have breakfast. By 10am it is 15kts, by midday 25kts and through the afternoon 25-30kts! We obviously didn't do enough good deeds in our previous life! 25-30kts on the beam is not comfortable on MAGIC CARPET and certainly not a time to take the computer out. It is not the wind, but the seas that build up with this strength of wind, which make it uncomfortable. We are sailing along happily averaging 7 kts with just a reefed headsail. At least it will be a quick passage.

The wind stayed up to 22-25kts, on the beam for the following day. The wind and seas have a reputation for increasing as you approach Vanuatu and we were expecting this, however as the wind

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increased to a steady 30 kts, it shifted around to the ESE, which is the normal Trade Wind direction. As soon as the wind went aft of the beam, the motion became more comfortable again. We slowed down, as usual to make our final harbour entry into Port Vila in the daylight and here we are in a calm anchorage finally writing about our travels. I wonder what our last passage to Australia will be like?

We have been up to the Met Office, here in Port Vila. The "Highs" coming off the Australian coast are very high, so I guess the winds will stay strong and if they go lighter, we will see that as a bonus.

1064 miles, to Bundaberg, for the final passage of this circumnavigation and we will have travelled 10,000 miles, through 8 countries since leaving Miami last December- 10 1/2 months. Whilst always interesting and enjoyable, it has been a long, hard, year and we are really looking forward to reaching Australia and the end of passage making for a while.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu means 'land eternal' its people mainly Melanesian have lived in the islands for centuries. It has more than 115 distinctly different cultures and languages which still thrive. It is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Dances, ceremonies, status and systems of authority, artistic styles, animal and crop husbandry can vary from island to island and often from district to district. The 83 islands that make up the Vanuatu chain has a diverse range of scenery from erupting volcanoes on the island of Tanna, in the south, to high mountains and lush forests as on Pentacost Is in the north which is the origin of ritual 'bungy jumping' using vines. There are also many coral atolls.

In the early days of our Pacific crossing, we had planned to spend a month visiting the outer islands. However by the time we got there our time had evaporated and the bad weather that we had been having was an indication of the arrival of an early cyclone season. We had entered the Port2Port Rally, which is just a fun way to sail in company from Port Vila to Bundaberg (The trade wind route) and finish with a week of social events. This put a bracket around our time. We had nearly 2 weeks in which to catch up on the ever present, boat maintenance, our travel letter writing and have a look around.

First thing was to visit the fabulous market with the women in their Mother Hubbard dresses (shapeless below knees introduced by the missionaries to cover up but now made of the most wonderful colourful cottons). This sprawling market was so full of produce you almost had to walk over people selling bunches of bananas, woven bags of sweet potato and yams, groups of 10 small lettuce strung together, mountains of cabbages, bags of ruby red tomatoes and beans, bunches of carrots, spring onions, basil and parsley, papaw, mangoes, grapefruit, coconuts, melons, gourds and would you believe punnets of wild raspberries. The market operated 24 hours and you could buy lap lap there wrapped in a banana leaves to take a way or sit down at any of the many little kitchens and have steak, chicken or fish with rice and salad for \$4. it's everyone's social outlet and has a wonderful dynamic. How they keep it all fresh without refrigeration is amazing.

As time was short we researched options for commercial tours that were not too simplistic and touristy. We struck gold. Alec was from the island of Tanna and had come to Port Vila to set up a business. He had not been in the "Big City" long and was still very oriented towards his traditional culture.

We have all heard of the Ugly American Tourist, the British & German Yobbs in Europe and the Med, well guess what, the Ugly Australia Tourists, come by plane and Cruise Ship to Port Vila! It was a real (and embarrassing) culture shock for us! So we arranged with Alec that we would round up enough yachties to fill his 10-seater mini bus, if he would design a special tour around our agenda for a tour of the island. We were interested in the village culture of Vanuatu and its' various peoples and what makes them so different from their neighbours. We were not interested in pretty swimming beaches, swimming at waterfalls, or a nice lunch at a tourist restaurant - after all, we live on boats.

Alec was helping some people from his island, of Tanna, who had set up a village on the outskirts of Port Vila, set up a dance and feast night that they could perform for the hotels. They were happy to invite us yachties (about 20 of us) to their village, perform their special "Tanna" dances and prepare lap lap - underground oven food. The evening began at five o'clock when we were summoned with the sound of a Triton being blown by one of the villagers who led us down, a track, through the bush, to the "village square". There we were formerly greeted by beautiful women, dressed in grass skirts and decorative leaves, who planted a kiss French style on each cheek. Then we were all offered a cup of kava, which has been described as tasting like dish water but Karyn thinks it, tasted like raw celery juice. (She has never drunk dishwater) The affect was a slight numbing feeling in the mouth and a general relaxation but you needed to have more to compare it to a couple of beers. Vanuatu kava is reputed to be very strong and is exported to other islands. It is generally taboo for women to partake but in Port Vila, the big city, it has become a common social past time. They provided our evening meal, which consisted of taro, sweet potato, banana and coconut milk, tapioca, spinach and chicken all cooked with volcanic stones underground. We paid a very cheap rate as we were there, not only to learn and enjoy, but also to give them constructive feedback on the performance and meal. This was a great night because they were so natural, enthusiastic and friendly. The dances were some basic rhythmic movements with accompanying chanting using spears as props. These dances are usually only performed once a year, in Tanna, when different villages get together for a festival. Traditional costumes are made out of wild hibiscus twine, which is thinly stripped and soaked in seawater and dried. It is then made into grass skirts or woven to make capes and other apparel to cover bits of the body. Body and face paint is used and banana leaf decoration. It makes the dance look quite primitive but all the young men were wearing Hawaiian shorts underneath. Some spoke a basic school English while others only spoke Bislama and their own dialect. We know that in the Northern islands the men wear penis sheaths, made from the same material. Penis sheaths are worn by males, after the age of circumcism - four years. It fits over the penis and leaves the testicles free. The rest is then tied to a string around the neck. You can figure yourself what the effect is. In 1986, a friend of ours saw a man, on the island of Espiritu Santo wearing one, whilst wheeling a trolley in a supermarket!!

Our first stop on our "Round the Island" tour, was a cultural centre, set up to re-acquaint Vanuatuans (particularly the young people) with their cultural roots, customs and values. As we walked down this track from where the van was parked, we could here an alert signal in the form of blowing a Triton shell. Alec was showing us some different ferns. One type, which when placed across the path into the village signalled that you were welcome, whilst the other signalled that if proceeded you would be killed. There was still cannibalism in Vanuatu just 50-60 years ago! I was walking along chatting to one of the men, when our women up ahead, let out these piercing screams, cutting through the early morning stillness. A muscley guy wearing face paint and a few banana leaves and brandishing a menacing looking spear, had leapt out of the trees beside them and blocked their way shouting in an unknown dialect. Further on there were more warriors and for a split second we all really did believe that we were in the wrong place!

We came to a clearing and saw an opening in the volcanic rock wall, which had the welcoming cycad leaves. Then a friendly warrior dressed in a lovely woven mat with long tassles welcomed us into the village circle and showed us a typical thatched hut. 80% of people in Vanuatu live in villages of less than 50 people, headed by a chief. Our host then showed us some various natural medicines used on babies and methods of fishing.

Another warrior explained to us a little about cannibalism, his examples being two skulls kept in a woven basket. Holding the female skull in the right hand and the male in the left he explained his spiritual link with these skulls in a Shakespearean (Hamlet) sort of way- he was quite genuine, in his belief.

We continued around the coast road passing many copra plantations with coconut trees in very straight lines. There are also many herds of beef cattle, forming an important export - as is the local kava. There was much evidence of the presence of Anglo -French condominium from early 1900. We saw an old manganese mine now in disrepair with accompanying harbour. The US forces arrived in 1942 to counter the Japanese advance. We visited one of the bases, which still have the runway and associated buildings. Up on the hill is a machine gun emplacement and binoculars and somewhere there is a crashed plane. One of the ladies on our tour had an avid interest in all WW11 relics as her father had stopped here, for military training, when it was known as the New Hebrides.

We visited a few villages which consisted of about 20 houses made of thatch or, tin, a school with very few facilities or equipment, pigs rooting around the gardens and plenty of breadfruit, mango and banana trees. Many of these villages had beach- front sites, so although quite poor materially, they had a very pleasant environment.

We had lunch next to a lovely sandy beach while a local trio band played.

Alec, who was an ex teacher, loved to talk about his culture so we were able to discuss with him many aspects of cultural life, knowing that he would be more specifically familiar with his own culture from Tanna. This personal contact made the day very enjoyable. Although Karyn corrected the English on his feedback sheet, Alec was given plenty of new ideas for tours. Our interest is definitely piqued to return to this enchanting place full of myth, magic, large stone and wooden statues, people living a subsistence existence with wonderful smiles and friendly dispositions. We know that Port Vila-the big smoke is not the real Vanuatu.

We attended the farewell BBQ and briefing for the Port2Port Rally on Sunday and whilst ready to leave, the forecast indicated pretty windy weather, until Wednesday, so we decided to wait a couple of days. Routinely listening to the marine weather forecast, early Monday morning, we were astonished to hear that a cyclone had formed and been named, since our visit to the Vanuatu Weather Bureau offices, on Sunday morning. Cyclone Xavier was situated near the Banks Islands just to the NE of Vanuatu. In the Southern Hemisphere, all things being equal, cyclones track SW, which could bring it right across our track to Australia. Happily we had not planned on leaving for a couple of days, so we watched and waited for Xavier to track SW and to the north of us, as predicted by all the weather sources. Fiji carries the prime responsibility for cyclone monitoring and prediction in this part of the world, but we were also monitoring Hawaii and walking up the hill to the local weather bureau office, where we could look on their computer screens at real time images of the cyclone, whilst we chatted to the duty meteorologist.

Upper atmosphere conditions were making Xavier track SSE, instead of the continually predicted SW. This was bringing it down the east coast of Vanuatu, ever closer to us, particularly once it started to track SW.

Fortuitously, I had got chatting to a local Australian expat, who was selling his big waterfront home complete with empty moorings. Moorings designed for a really big boat. There were 4 of them, designed to moor two large vessels fore and aft, side-by-side, right in front of the house. Before all this drama, I had arranged to rent a mooring off him, just for the week before we planned to depart and whilst we were away from the boat touring around the island. Now with a cyclone in the vicinity, I felt very comfortable, attached to this big mooring, tucked in close to his house, which provided shelter from the prevailing wind direction.

As soon as I heard about the cyclone, I went up to the house and asked if I could stay on the mooring until the coast was clear. It was fortunate that I did, because within a couple of days, all shipping had been moved out of the main harbour. Smallish coastal freighters had run their bows up on a beach on the island, that formed part of this inner harbour and there was a scramble for every available mooring. This scramble for life and death protection did not bring out the best in human nature, with fights over moorings and locals doing deals with other local owners of moorings and evicting the current occupier (boats visiting Port Vila). I kept waving good morning to my "landlord" as he sat on his balcony drinking his early morning coffee and reading his paper. I was also, a best mate with his dog!

The atmosphere gradually transitioned from circumspect - knowledgeable locals, in the supermarket telling us "no worries" Port Vila has never had a cyclone whilst the yachts were still there, (the winter season), to hushed. One of the reasons that the harbour was closed was to give the workers time to go home and secure their houses.

The VHF radio on our boats is the regular telephone when in a port, like this. Usually people call on channel 16, to make contact and then you change to another channel to chat and make social arrangements. There is a contact and calling protocol, where you call the name of the boat you wish to contact first, then your own boat name. It goes like this, "SANDPIPER, SANDPIPER, MAGIC CARPET". Then they will answer and you switch channels. This chat goes on all day, but you tune out except for hearing your own boat name. But as the cyclone tracked SSE towards us, the radio went eerily quite. Not much chat, not many social arrangements. People were removing their sails and stowing all

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loose gear below decks. We were all diving on our moorings, to check their condition and add extra lines. In our case I added chain to the chain below the humongous, mooring buoy, (size of a 44 gallon drum) and ran it back to a bridle secured to my front beam, rather than take the full brunt of a cyclone on the anchor winch, or deck cleats. Everyone was sorting out their "grab bag" of essential items, if you had to abandon the boat in emergency circumstances. Everything was quiet save the sound of the bull dozers burying loose rubbish near the resort on the island and around the foreshore. Flying debris is lethal in cyclones and hurricanes. A couple of times each day a group of us yachties would walk up the hill to the weather bureau, to look at their computers and chat with the meteorologists. Why hadn't this cyclone tracked SW, like it is supposed to? Maybe it will tonight - bringing it right across Port Vila?!

Wednesday was very tense. Some local game fishing boats came on to the moorings right in front and beside me. The closest, when it swung in front of me would clear me by less than 2 metres. The Aussie skipper, assured me that these are cyclone moorings, he has used them before, in a cyclone and they never move. An aluminium shed, called "GLASS BOTTTOM BOAT" took up the remaining mooring right in front of me, and so as not to hit me, took a line ashore to a post on the sea wall of the house. This was not great, because this butter box of a thing could be held side on to the wind, a few metres from me and I did not believe that that post would hold, assuming that his deck fittings did- not very comfortable time for us on MAGIC CARPET, but what could we do? They were not our moorings and we were very lucky to be on one of the few, purpose designed cyclone moorings and you could tell that everyone was tense and serious - there were not a lot of options.

Wind pressure increases by the square of the wind speed, so whether you are dealing in lbs per sq ft, or kilos per sq metre, the principle is the same. 20 knots of wind (40 kilometres per hour) exerts $20 \times 20 = 400$ units of pressure. 30 knots of wind exerts $30 \times 30 = 900$ units of pressure. A full gale is 38 knots, which exerts 1444 units of pressure. The outer area of this cyclone had winds of 40-60 knots (3600 units of pressure) and a direct hit with the inner circle 90-120 knots (240 kilometres per hour) and 14400 units of pressure. (Yes that is 14 thousand units of pressure compared with a normal full gale of 14 hundred!) So we had decided that we would stay with the boat in the 60 knots peripheral area of the cyclone, but if we looked like getting a direct hit, we would go ashore to a hotel, or other suitable refuge and if they were all booked out, shelter in the hollow of a Banyan tree, as have the local villagers, forever.

Then we waited.

Thursday morning dawned and Cyclone Xavier was still tracking SSE, had matured and was starting to dissipate. Wednesday morning it was 930 Hectopascals, Thursday morning 950, Thursday afternoon 970 Friday morning 1002 and no longer a cyclone, just a depression - it was over. - That sounds quick doesn't it? It seemed longer at the time!

Friday, we restocked our provisions for the 1000-mile sail to Australia and watched to see that Xavier did not reform. Saturday morning we waited until after the early morning weather forecast, waved goodbye to my best mate, drinking his early morning coffee on his balcony, dropped the mooring and sailed away from Port Vila. Next stop Bundaberg, Australia and the end of our 12year Odyssey around the world.

Karyn is the provisioner and fisherman on MAGIC CARPET. We did not want to cash any more money in Port Vila and had to decide whether we buy more fuel, or some chickens for the 7day trip. Fuel won because we have had continual cloudy weather and need to run the motor to charge the batteries each day. So Karyn made up a big pot of lentil soup with vegetables for our first few days. We always do this in case it is a bit rough and she does not feel like spending too much time down in the galley. However this time instead of our usual chicken stew it was to be lentil soup.

We cleared Port Vila Harbour by 8am and noon we had cleared the Island and cloudy skies. For the first time in weeks we had blue sky, from horizon to horizon. Then zing went Karyn's fishing line. I started to pull whilst Karyn put on her gloves and then she held the pressure whilst I put on mine - so that I don't cut my hands on the wire trace. We could tell it was big, but would it be edible? We finally wrestled a 1.2 metre (4 ft) Wahoo to the boat. Frightened that it may get off the hook, Karyn slid our

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fishing net underneath him as I heaved him up. Oh no! Karyn had the net under the top lifeline and I had the line over the that same wire and the fish's tail was thrashing about and caught up in the net. A bit of the wire trace had punctured my thumb and blood was liberally running down my hand. With a few words like "bother" we untangled ourselves and got this big fish into the dinghy, where we could pour alcohol into its gills and send it off to Nirvana. Phew.....

This was to change our meal plan for the trip and here is Karyn's description,

WHAT TO DO WITH A 1.2M WAHOO (CATCH OF THE DAY)

This brilliant blue and silver fish landed on our deck at midday, the first day out from Vanuatu. We discarded the pot of lentil soup that was to be our dinner and planned a fish 2 meal / day menu for the next 5 days; a creative challenge, necessary when away from the shops, no freezer and running down food stocks to accommodate Australia Quarantine requirements.

To combat squeamishness on our first day, steamed fish with ginger, garlic, spring onion and soy sauce with salad was perfect. Next day's lunch utilized leftovers as a Marinara Salad with garlic bread and for dinner we grilled the fish with a ginger/ garlic and horseradish sauce.

We found ourselves nibbling leftovers even for breakfast and next day's lunch was grilled fish served with tomato pickle and alfalfa sprouts on a toasted baguette. A baked fish with cheese, onion and asparagus sauce and sweet potato provided a delicious taste change for the next dinner followed by lunch with Poisson Cru, (raw fish marinated in coconut milk and fresh lime with crisp lettuce and tomato).

However, the best gourmet delight was using a forgotten present- a smoker bag! Within 30 minutes we had Scandinavian style smoked fish and vegetables straight from the oven, served with dill and sour cream and accompanied by a Lindemans Crisp Dry White.

We managed a BBQ for the Finale on a sunny day five- with a light breeze.

We did not manage Fish Cakes -need two free hands, which is not easy on a beam reach with 2 metre seas.

Wahoo Italian Style is our favourite, but our Basil Plant died and we no longer had Taglitalle, or Parmesan Cheese. What would my Italian friends think!
Bon Appetit and thank you to the fish.

In contrast to most of our sailing through the Pacific this past 7 months, this was a delightful sail- 20 knots on the quarter, blue skies and following seas. Calm enough for me to be writing this last travel epistle of our circumnavigation, at 3am as we close the Australian coast.

It will take a while to realise that we are back home and not just in another country, but what great memories we have - and Karyn has her "job for life project" sorting out her thousands of digital photos and I have the rare privilege of having lived my life's dream.

Thank you MAGIC CARPET, you have looked after us well.

Love to you all and please keep in touch,

C&K