

New Caledonia contd

Monday Sept 19

Off to La Poste – they haven't got the parcel...mais, attention!, its at the downtown La Poste !..Ok, go down there, bottom of town, take a number wait my turn....Ah yes, here it is and here's your invoice for CFP22,000 for customs charges...hey hold on, I'm on a boat just arrived from Vanuatu, these are parts for repairs, I shouldn't have to pay taxes !!....Oh, where are you customs papers..I don't have any, Customs never came to the boat, I dropped my papers at Port Moselle Capitainerie and never got anything back....

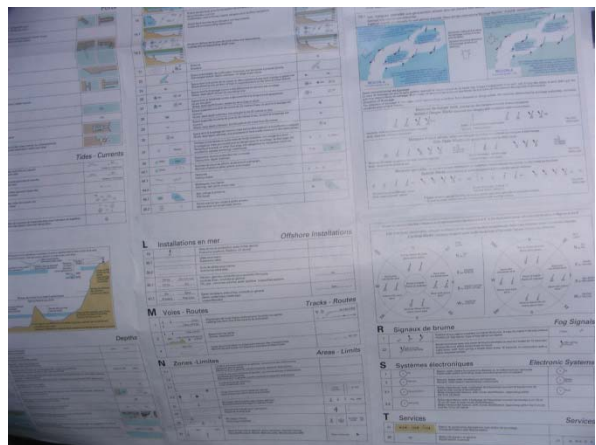
Anyway after two hours of ; discussion, waiting, phone calls to Port Moselle and La Douane, waiting some more, I finally got my parcel without paying tax...whew !

Back to the boat, strip off the old pump, fit the new one, run up the engine and NO LEAKS !...fitted a new alternator belt at the same time.

Tuesday Sept 20

Run the engine to cool the fridge etc..think I'll just check the bilge...guess what...there's water there !...not much ..about 2 tablespoons after 90minutes of running....arrgh..there must be a small leak after the pump somewhere.

1200 My friend Jean-Yves Morelli arrives and we go for lunch at Mr Boeuf – very nice...brings back memories from 20 years ago ! JYM takes me to Marine Courail, a boating shop / chandlery with everything where I buy a French chart of the west coast north of Noumea. These charts are fabulous, fold up plasticised paper that you can write on, but they don't go soggy when they get wet. The reverse side is full of explanations of all the symbols used on the chart....why aren't our charts comprehensive like this ?



There's an Amel Super Maramu 2000 on the visitors dock. I go to have a look and meet Mark and Laura. They invite me aboard and show me their beautiful boat – African Mahogany interior, 3 fridge/freezers, 2 double cabins, 2 ensuite heads, loads of storage, huge galley, 2 watermakers!, dishwasher, washer/dryer....wow...there's an older one of these for sale in Sydney for <\$300K ... We should go and have a look, if its still there when I get back.



1730 My friends Raymond and Christine arrive with nibbles and drinks...we sit on the boat and chat for an hour or so....I suggest diner, but Raymond says he has work at "une bonne heure" tomorrow, so they decline. Raymond has a long weekend this weekend so he will be at the beach shack on Thursday night. We agree to meet up either Thursday evening or Friday morning..he shows me on the chart exactly where to anchor.

Wednesday Sept 21

Off to town to the Casino supermarket...bought lots of yummy French stuff; cheese, butter with salt grains in it, baguette, wine...lug it all back to the boat on foot....its hot 33degC 80%RH !



This marina is beginning to get to me; it smells terrible. The street drains empty into the harbor about 50m north of the visitors dock –yuk....

My neighbours Sea Lance, an Ovin 45 (last seen in Vanuatu) are leaving today. He has a full size Roland electric piano on board and he is an excellent pianist. They're making beer for the first time; I lent them my hydrometer and told them of my beer making experiences...

Went back to town in search of cushions...the ones we have in the cockpit are well past their use-by



Thursday Sept 23

Up early to the market to buy tomatoes, garlic, bananas etc..quite expensive but very good quality – crazy thing : they sell little bags of Chinese garlic...same brand that I bought in Fiji and which was confiscated by the quarantine woman !

Up to the Capitainerie to pay the bill for the marina, then cast off and over to the fuel dock for diesel..took on only 61 litres...133 CFP / litre (A\$1-65?)

Motoring out into the lagoon; breeze is ESE/SE F4/5 – genoa out and run all the way– 14 miles in 2 hours 20min - to L'Ongue, the bay where Raymond has his beach shack (22°09.18S, 166°14.37E). On the way Raymond phoned to say he won't be there 'til late tonight so he'll pick me up in the morning and we'll go fishing.



On the way north



Evening at L'Onguet

Friday Sept 25

0730 Raymond arrives in his aluminium boat; takes me to the shack for petit dejeuner with Christine ...Lulu (shanty town neighbour) turns up with fishing rod and off we go fishing.....Raymond caught 8, Lulu 1, me 0 – dropped me back at the boat so I can do the fridge thing..comes back an hour or so later to collect me for lunch.....Raymond cooked up some of the fish on the barbecue, made salads, Lulu and



The catch



Chez Raymond



La cuisiniere sophistique



Lulu Raymond et moi

Danielle turned up with more stuff...and we had LUNCH.....they all crash for a siesta, I go for a walk along the beach.



Salads, oil....and rum ?



Raymond, Lulu Christine, Danielle

Later, people start turning up...more drinks, nibbles, then its DINNER...Danielle has made some brochette de cerf et poulet...there's more vegetables, salads, deserts...and wine of course....whew !!



Neighbour Gilles



Gilles' mum Christine Gilles' wife
Fernands wife Danielle Lulu

Sorry I don't remember all the names.....

I sleep at the shack.....

Saturday Sept 26

0730...too early !....off in Lulu's car to Fernand's house to go fishing with him....Fernand has a Bertram fiberglass cabin boat thing with a big outboard. We go fishing – useless – caught more coral than fish.

Fernand drops me off at Diva for the fridge thing...Raymond comes and picks me up at 11...for lunch ! whew....



Lunch...encore !!

We are invited chez Fernand for dinner....I meet Dennis, retired ore freighter skipper who has just bought a catamaran, we all pile into cars and go to Fernand's house. F's wife is Asian she has prepared a veritable feast of nem, special Cantonese rice, pork, chicken.....just beautiful.

Dennis has a little joke "Le riz Cantonais est le riz que tu connais"

Lulu has a joke : A French woman (F)in Sydney – doesn't speak English but has a phrase book – accidentally bumps into an Australian(A). Conversation goes like this :

F: I am sorry

A: I am sorry too

F: (confused-looks in phrase book) I am sorry three

A: What are you sorry for ?

F: I am sorry five !

Well it was funny at the time.....

Sunday Sept 26

Clean up chez Raymond, back to the boat loaded up with stuff from Christine, and slow motor sail to Baie de Ste Vincent – anchored Presquille d'Uitoe (22°04.73'S, 166°07.36'E). Raymond phoned at 1900 to see if all was Ok , and if I need anything at all, please call.

Had some of Raymond's already cooked fish with persillade and Christines lettuce, spring onions etc for dinner...good!



Steel boat Antipodean from Gisborne, NZ arrives from the North and anchors in the bay.

Monday Sept 27

Finally convinced myself that the last batch of beer I made is no good at all...will chuck it out and start again.

In the bay there are a few weekenders; Dolphins swim past the boats; Couple from one of the houses on the beach watching the dolphins; she swimming topless with the dogs (sorry uncle Tom..no pics), he talking very loudly about the dolphins.

Antipodean raises anchor, passes by "Going to Noumea", "I'm going North", "Good luck", "You too"

Put on brew and made some bread.

Message on the phone from Chrissy...her friend Ann was in a car accident and has been in a coma since. Chrissy went to sit with her and she died at 3am yesterday.

Tuesday Sept 28

Slept in ! Off to Baie des Moustiques on Ile Ducos....motored past it and anchored opposite a small beach on the north side of Ile Ducos (21°59.30'S, 166°02.23'E). Did some washing and some fishing...no result. Raymond gave me one of the fish he caught the other day which had been frozen solid in Lulu's congelateur...so I'll have that for dinner with onions, tomatoes, cream....



Tough, eh !



Trees grow at strange angles due to continual SE wind

Message on the phone from Judith saying that her friend (Jane)'s mum died...she was 100 !

Wednesday Sept 29

Motored off to Canal Lepredour (21°58.21'S, 165°59.99'E) – rowing ashore when a couple from a ketch "Blue Bird" approach in their dinghy....I say "Bonjour".."You speak French?" "Oui!" ... so then he proceeds to speak to me in very bad English !?! He tells me this is a private island and you can't go ashore without permission from the chef. Today and tomorrow there will be many hunters here hunting deer with rifles; it is very dangerous.

Ok, fine, back to the boat then; I hear gunshots on the way and then more once back on the boat and see three guys with a 4x4 farmbike loading dead deer on the front and driving off.



Blue Birdstrange erosion on hill



3 guys, 2 deer on 4x4

Thursday Sept 30

French RORO warship on the other side of the bay with a load of army trucks on board....



Set off back to Presqu'ille d'Uitoe and caught an 85cm wahoo on the way.



11 meal size fillets for the freezer

and

one for lunch !

Friday Oct 1

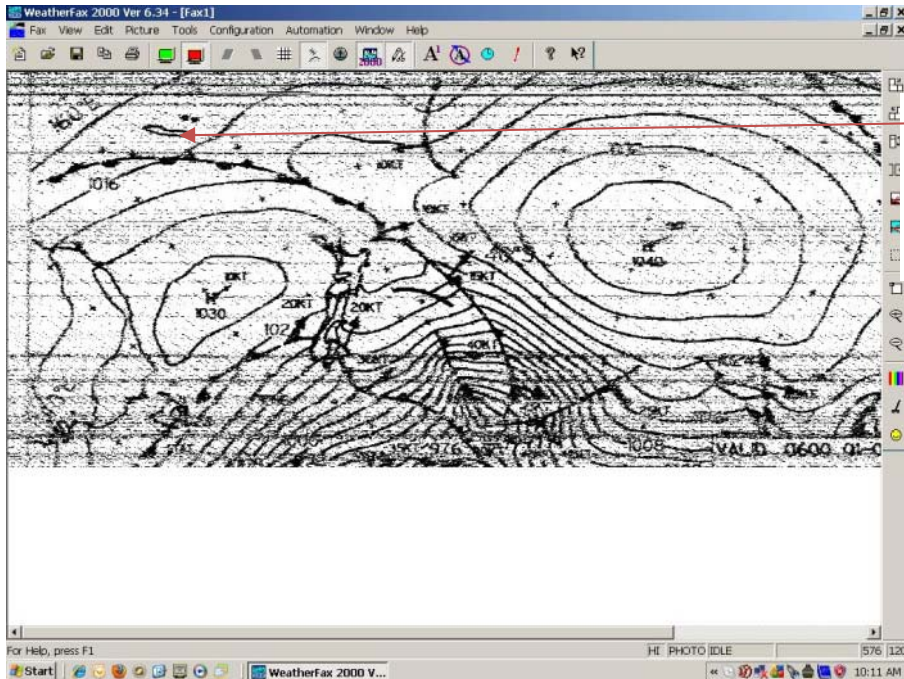
Calm morning, overcast. Spoke with Graeme on Adamite via the Namba Net. He's on Ilot Maitre just outside Noumea and will leave for NZ about the same time as us. He could hear me clearly as I could him. Namba Net woman in Port Vila was a little faint but readable.

1900 blowing F6 in here now !

2000 diner Waloo fillet with oil/ garlic/dill, kumala chips, cabbage..mmmmm .. wind has died down, but still In have 35 metres of chain out in depth of less than 3m !

Miles on the stereo....

Looks like it might get stronger tomorrow if the NZ Met fax is anything to go by, there's an occluded front coming by the looks of things...and the isobars are squeezing up...so more wind.....oh la la



Saturday Oct 2

Decide to set off anyway...motor out through the narrow pass between Ile Mathieu and Ile Nudukua into a strong SE breeze – F5 with a building sea. Small jib up and sailing SW tacking around islands and reefs...took 3 ½ hours to do 15.5 miles, which should have been 12. Breeze was up to F6 with 1.5 to 2m waves which is a lot for inside the lagoon.

Anchored at L'Ongue 22°09.28'S, 166°14.55'E – and there's no-one here ! Oh well, lazy afternoon, wahoo with tomatoes, cream and basil for dinner; will set off for a better anchorage tomorrow. This is quite exposed to the SE but by 1800 the breeze has gone more E and the sea has died down quite a lot.

Beautiful sunset Have you had enough sunsets yet ?



Sunday Oct 3

0700 up and off, this anchorage is no good; too exposed to SE wind and swell. Motor out, its 20 knots already !!

0800 anchored in the lee of Ile T'Ndu 22°10.27S, 166°16.99'E....much calmer, lets see what happens to this wind.



Looking East



North East

More sunsets....thought you'd never ask !





Well it blew all day ... and all night

Monday Oct 4

Woke at 0530 after a night of crazy dreams, muscle cramps, feeling shaky and tingling in my limbs....

Oops, sounds like ciguatera poisoning !. That wahoo caught inside the reef probably preyed on toxic reef fish – well out it goes !

It must be a mild case as I don't have vomiting or diarrhoea, but the other symptoms are consistent; deal is to drink lots of water and it should pass in about 24 hours.

Wind seems a bit less this morning, might set off for the next bay 3 miles away to get closer to Noumea.

Set off to Baie Maa a bit further down the coast...ah that's much better.

Tuesday Oct 5

Woke early again to check the weather...looks OK..we're off..motor sailing towards Noumea.

0830 anchored in the anchorage outside Port Moselle marina...into shore to send this and check to see when I can get a berth.

So, for now that's it from Noumea....Au revoir et a bientot !