

During the stay in Nukualofa we had the services of "John the Taxi", a man spotted by John Lamb on the side of the road in the most rundown taxi I have ever seen in my life !



John the Taxi with me and Murphy outside the customs shed on Queen Salote wharf

The car had dents and dings in every panel. The windscreen was cracked all over, it's a wonder it stayed in place. There was no suspension to speak of and he started and stopped the car by using a pair of tweezers pushed into the remains of the ignition switch hanging out of the dashboard !

But he was a lovely man and he knew where everything was and helped me a lot in finding electrical cable and trying to get the computer sorted etc....

So if you are ever in Nukualofa and need a taxi...ph John on 7716404 for an experience you will never forget.

Wednesday May 26th

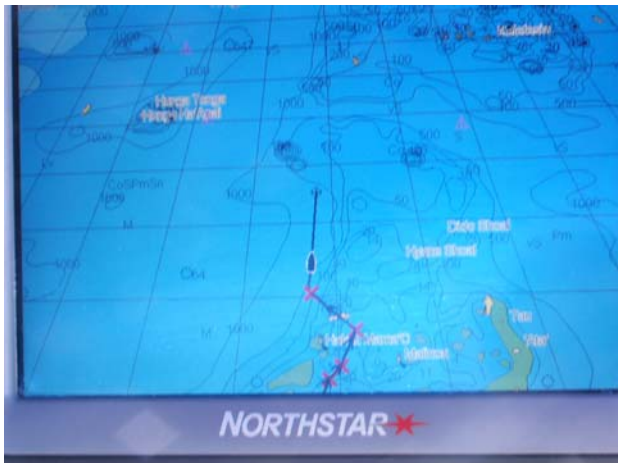
Cleared out of Nukualofa on Wednesday..Customs man asked "when will you leave?"..well, I thought I'd go and anchor at Pangiamotu for the night and leave the next morning..."what time ?"..about 9 ?.."well you come back here at 9"...Oh, well there's not much point in that I said...I can leave now.."OK what time"...2.30 ?.."OK here is your clearance, go...and have a good trip"....right...so I gathered up my stuff and motored over to Pangiamotu for the night and left the next morning...at 9 !

Thursday May 27th



Pangiamotu

It started off as a beautiful sail once clearing all the coral crap in Nukualofa harbour...10-15 from ENE...just lovely, the boat was humming...



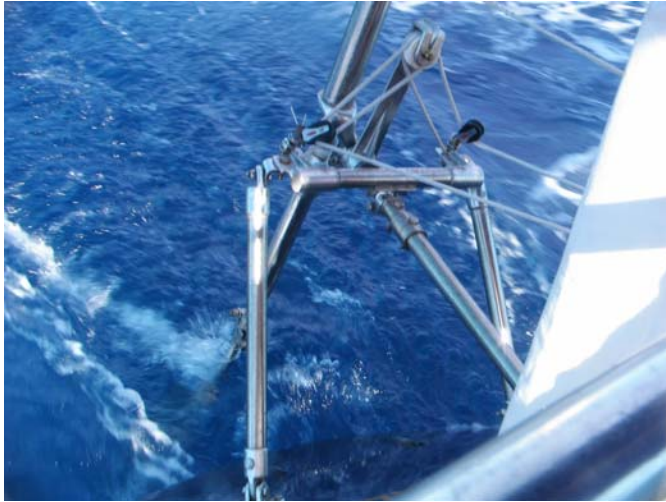
by evening it had got up a bit so took in a reef for the night and set about trying to work out how to manage this solo sailor deal...got talking on the radio...Pete Greacen is at Foa Is...says he's leaving for Vava'u at midnight...quick look at the chart, its 1830 and I'm about 35 miles south of him, I could just get there before him !

Look at the weather...its lightened off...reef out and we're reaching at 7 knots...ha that's the way...its now 10pm...haven't had anything to eat since breakfast...omelet..that's the go...cook up a 3 egg omelet, beautiful...then it starts..the rest of the night I really don't feel well...nervous too...even though the AIS is doing its thing and the radar is scanning every 5 minutes...

Friday May 28th

The AIS (Automatic Identification System) picked up a ship at 3am on my reciprocal course doing 12knots ...bugger, have to change course to avoid him – he ain't moving !

Must have got some sleep 'cos the next thing I remember after the 3am ship was being up at 5am for a pee and thinking...where am I...totally confused for a few seconds...then back on track...boat is still going well..Mr Fleming doing his job while i slumbered.



Stars are still out, sit in the cockpit waiting for the sunrise...but there's a lot of cloud and its a bit of a flop...

0800 try calling PG on VHF16...he said he'd have it on...nothing...tried again at 0900, 1000, nothing

Got to Point refuge at 1230...surely I must be here before him ?.....no sign of him..call on VHF...Yes we're here anchored in the harbour....how the hell did he do that?....motor into the harbour and bail him up...he comes over for a cool drink...how did you get here so fast ? I asked...Oh we left at 9.30 pm that night...you bugger, cheated !!!

Anyway...all's well....my head and stomach have recovered and tomorrow's another day...

Saturday May 29th



Neiafu Harbour, Vavau

Well they have free wireless internet here, so this comes to you courtesy of The Aquarium Café.

Managed finally to download Skype to this computer and was able to phone Judith – relief for both of us to actually be able to talk to each other without it costing anything.

Peter Greacen comes by to say he's going out exploring...I'll catch up with him later.



Peter Greacen's Bavaria "Vivieka"

So that's it from Vava'u for now