

Vava'u 2

There are quite a lot of boats here..of course about 50 from the ICA...another 20 or so from the Round the world ARC rally, and a lot of Americans on boats...and Americans that live here and seem to run all the cafes....

A very strange couple I met on the island of Tapana that have an art gallery called the ARK which they built 11 yrs ago..its like a workman's shed on a barge...there were a number of rather deserted looking boats moored in the bay...I went to the ARK and met Sheri and her man Larry...they put down the moorings and rent them to absentee Americans that got to Tonga and don't want to go anywhere else...it was a bit eery ...all these boats with their biminis off and plastic bags over winches etc....Larry looks after them...charges batteries and so on, and Sheri tries to sell her rather primitive paintings of local scenes, and other crafty sort of stuff (crap really !)

Sheri said she wasn't a gallery anymore, but a hospital and introduced me to (I can't remember his name) a 70 yr old solo sailor that had had an altercation with a car..the car won of course and he has 3rd degree gravel rashes on his right leg, can't walk, spent a week in Neiafu hospital (bet that was an experience!)...his boat a 39ft Robert Perry design is tied up to the ARK for the duration and Sheri is playing nursemaid....left 'em to it !!



Diva anchored off Tapana Is



The Ark art Gallery run by Sheri and Larry with the injured solo sailor's boat tied up to it

Monday June 7

The tall ship Soren Larsen is here cruising around..saw it in Nukualofa as I left, now its here in Vava'u



In Nukulafo, Pangiamotu



In Vava'u, Port Maurelle



DIVA Anchored in Port Maurelle...



Leaving Port Maurelle

Yesterday discovered the 240V charger of the camera isn't working...luckily its output is 11VDC so I've made up a 12V cable to charge it directly from the switch panel.

Tried to clean up the earth connections in the bilge for the SSB radio but couldn't get the copper strip from the radio off the earth stud....did put another earth from the ground plate to the rudder-keel

grounding system which should make it better...the reception seems better but Russell Radio still can't hear me...I'll have to have a go at that copper plate connection.....

Otherwise, yesterday Graeme Brown from Adamite came over and asked if I'd like to come with them to Mariners Cave (he's asking everyone in the anchorage)...Mariners Cave is an underwater cave which you have to dive down about 3 m and then swim about 10 m through a tunnel and then up 3m to the cave inside...supposed to be spectacular.... I didn't go Not keen on the idea of swimming through an underwater tunnel in the dark !

Peter Greacen rowed over this morning to say he'd got an email from PRG to say that Clark Gable (Terry and Amanda) are leaving for Fiji tomorrow...the terrible weather in NZ has delayed them by about 3 weeks. But the weather still doesn't look that good...NW of 30 odd....

The water here is so clear you can see the bottom which is about 15m down from the boat deck...and you can see fish swimming around....snorkelling around here is easy and vivid...the colours of the fish(iridescent blues and yellows) and the coral quite astounding... no pictures as I don't have an underwater camera, sorry.

I've discovered that you can't freeze yoghurt or sour cream.. they separate and look like they're off..but they're not...just separated...makes things look a bit funny esp the sour cream. The shops here don't have such things a sour cream or youghurt..the restaurants must have them...I'll ask at the Aquarium later this week, see if they know where it can be bought.

When we clear out from Neiafu, we can buy duty free diesel...have to order it for the day and time that we clear customs, and the tanker turns up (hopefully). Need to calculate how much we will take on then find out the duty free price, then make sure we have the right money to pay for it.....all can be organised 3 days before we leave.

Today I'll probably pick up the anchor and motor around the corner to Nua Papu Island which has a small lagoon .. and a restaurant apparently !

Went to Nua Papu.. didn't find the restaurant...mind you I didn't look that hard.....dropped the pick in a bay in the north side of the lagoon for lunch, then tootled off to a little island, Lape, with a tiny beach, went for a swim here ..it has been really hot today.



Locals come past every now and then in these really rough little boats, sometimes with so many people on them there's almost no freeboard !

Back to Port Maurelle for the night...didn't fancy the anchorages at Nua Papu as overnights.

Tuesday June 8

PG rows over to say..."wanna come with us to Mala Is ?" ..Sure why not....after a little while we get our stuff together and motor out of Port Maurelle round the corner where Swallows Cave is and down to Mala Is. We're motoring at a leisurely 4 knots; I'm following Viveka about 50m behind when I see PG suddenly bolt below, then topsides, below again, topsides again...hard turn to port and he's off steaming at 7 knots towards Neiafu Harbour !...What's going on ?..call on vhf16..no answer...oh well.... mooch around Mala Is for bit and with the weather looking a bit foreboding, head back to Port Maurelle.

Later, Viveka comes alongside and I find out PG and his crewman have had a major falling out so PG took him back to Neiafu and they went their separate ways.

But...its not all bad...PG has crew (relatives) arriving in a week or so anyway, so everything will be fine.

Wednesday June 9

Had a go at that copper strip for the radio earth...managed to get it off the bolt and soaked then end in a small bowl of vinegar to get the verdigris off.....hammered it flat and filed it so it was all coppery...attached it to the same bolt as the tuner earth...looks much better...we'll see.

Tried contacting Russell Radio at 6.16pm on 6615 kHz..they could barely hear me...unreadable was the word he used..Adamite relayed...he could hear me clear as a bell, as I could him.

Tried Taupo Maritime..the NZ govt base station on 6215 at 6.45 and they heard me !...go to 6224 he said...going up...call again...he can't make me out....back to 6215 and he said I was easily readable, signal strength about 2/5so looks like its fixed !!

Only issue I have now is that the inverter which I now need to run the computer (as the battery is dead) and the computer power supply are so electrically (radio) noisy, I haven't been able to pick up weather faxes !

Thursday June 10

In Neiafu.....using the free internet to send you this.....

All the best

Alan

SV DIVA

Vava'u, Tonga