

# Medical Sailing Ministries (MSM) Vanuatu Mission 2017

## SHIPS LOG – Return Voyage (Port Vila to Westernport, Melb.)

**Date/Duration:** Wednesday 18 October – Wednesday 8 November 2017 (21 Days, including 3 day rest in Sydney)

**Details:** **Stage 1** - Port Vila to Sydney (2,123 nautical miles, 12 days, including 1 ½ day stop-over at Chesterfield Reef), Cam Heathwood (Skipper), Rob Lott, Ray Clark, Jonno de Puit & Gwilym Seibel

**Stage 2** – Sydney to Melbourne (553 nautical miles, 6 days) Rob Latimer (Skipper), Ray Clark, Bruce & Edith West



### BACKGROUND

Medical Sailing Ministries (MSM) began in 2009 to provide remote-access transport and logistical support amongst the islands of Vanuatu. It is a partnership program of the North Ringwood Uniting Church (Melb), The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Ministry of Health, using the Westernport-based 53 foot cutter rigged steel yacht Chimere.

This year's sailing mission follows in the tradition of previous missions in 2009, 2010 and 2013 and once again we are seeking a range of volunteers - both sailing and medical - to fill each of the 8 stages that span from May to November (2017) - specifically dentists, dental assistants, doctors, optometrists and nurses, oh, and sailors.

### NATIONAL ORAL HEALTH SURVEY 2017

Along with transporting medical volunteers, this year Medical Sailing Ministries will also be coordinating a National Oral Health Survey of Vanuatu using strict World health Organisation (WHO) methodologies; the first such survey ever to be conducted in Vanuatu.

The survey will encompass 1% (approx. 3,000 people) of the population across 5 different age groups in both urban and rural locations on more than 30 of the country's 63 inhabited islands. It's a big undertaking and with the recent withdrawal of Australian Federal Government funding to this vital, long-standing Vanuatu health program, it's something we are seeking to do solely through volunteer-contributions, private donations and fundraising.

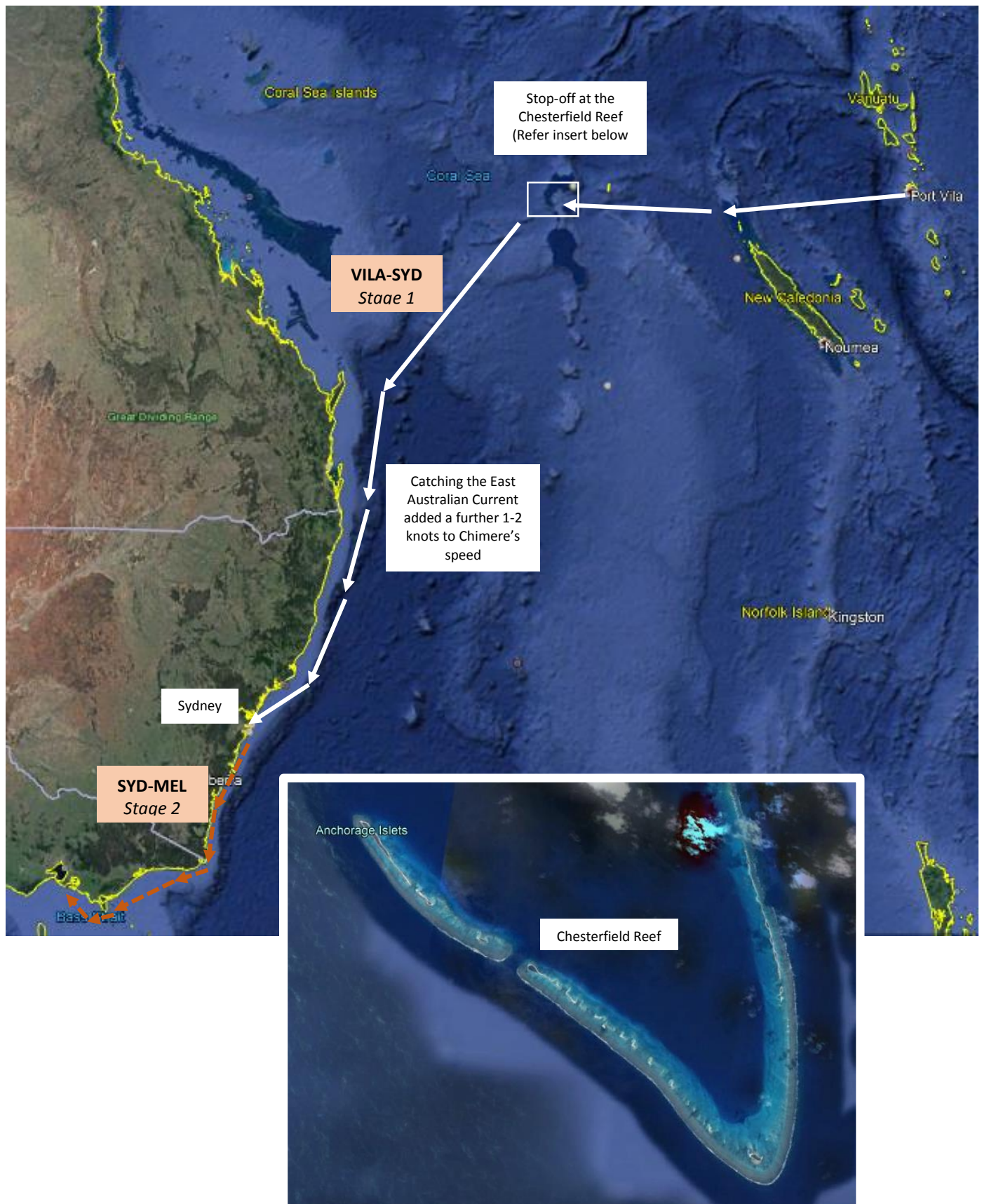


Vanuatu  
Dental Care  
Services



## 2017 Ships Log – Return Voyage

The following is a compilation of the daily Ships Logs, written & transmitted each day from the field by the MSM team and then published on the MSM website and Facebook site.



# Contents

Bringing her home – 2017 .....	4
Bringing her home.....	5
Bringing her home #2.....	6
Bringing her home #3.....	7
Bringing her home #4.....	9
Bringing Her Home #5.....	11
Bringing Her Home #6.....	13
Bringing her home #7.....	14
Young doctor finds his feet – at sea and on land.....	15
Bringing Her Home #8.....	17
Bringing Her Home #9.....	19
Bringing Her Home – final Blog.....	19
Alby !!!.....	21
Cruising home.....	22
Heading away from coast for next 18-24 hours.....	25
One more sleep and Chimere is home .....	25
Back at last.....	29
Introducing ... two new Ni-vanuatu friends .....	30



## Bringing her home – 2017

Wednesday 18 October 2017

Port Vila

This blog begins the voyage home for Chimere after more than 4 months of [hyper] active service throughout the lovely islands of Vanuatu.

The last 3 days have been a conglomerate of meeting new blokes, travelling together, arriving in Port Vila and being greeted by Rob Lat and Martin Burgess, before finally meeting Chimere herself at Yachting World, Port Vila. Our activities since arriving have included unpacking and repacking pretty much everything (food, supplies, tools, equipment, dinghies) and provisioning for the return voyage including fresh food, water, fuel. Chimere has been thoroughly checked from bow to stern, masthead to keel, engine serviced, halyards run, steering adjusted, dinghy repaired and cleaned out. Out course and best timing for sailing have been negotiated, explained and plotted, along with weather apps consulted to prepare us for what lies ahead.

Of great significance in our journey has been meeting and getting to know our crew, who are:

- Skipper: Cameron Heathwood, seasoned pilot, ocean racer and cruiser who would rather be on a boat somewhere (oh, he is!).
- First Mate: Rob Lott, crusty sailor, constant friendly evangelist and teacher of us all in almost everything.
- Second Mate: Ray Clark, chief fixer of complicated stuff, adviser, boat owner and....Dad really.
- Bosun: Jonno de Puit, ships builder, cyclist and Laser sailor, about to learn heaps.
- Chief Cook and Baker: Gwilym Seibel, passionate food purveyor and connoisseur, always up for a laugh.

Some highlights from the last few days include:

- Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu – letter of support received for exemption from port dues – currently being negotiated.
- Rob Latimer having a 20 minute private audience with the Vanuatu President – Pastor Moses.
- Experiencing the drop in centre that Chimere is and meeting many interesting and interested folk.
- Sending Cam up the mast for some cool photos (and some odd jobs),
- Going to the friendliest fresh fruit and veggie markets for supplies and a great feed.
- Seeing brown faced smiles wherever we go and meeting yachties from the world over.

Planning to be up early tomorrow and away heading west across the top of New Caledonia through the Grand Passage.

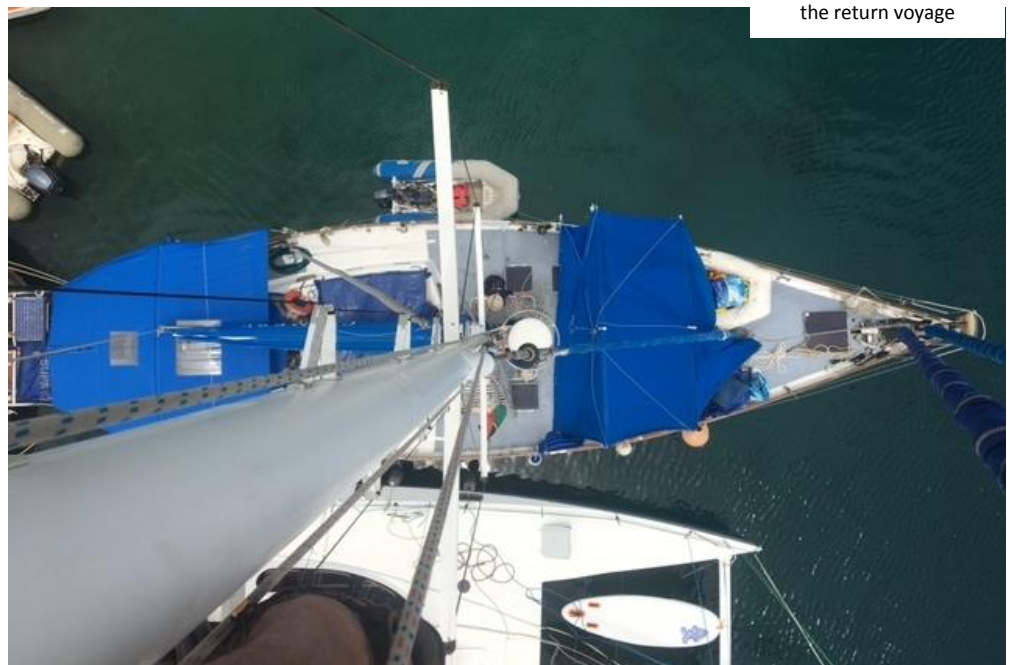
Catch you tomorrow.

Jonno de Puit

[Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Lorraine Rose](#), [Nicola Young](#), [Elke Hofmann](#), [Martyn Vincent](#), [Barry Stewart](#), [Cathy West](#), [Carmel Noble](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#) liked this post



Preparing Chimere for the return voyage



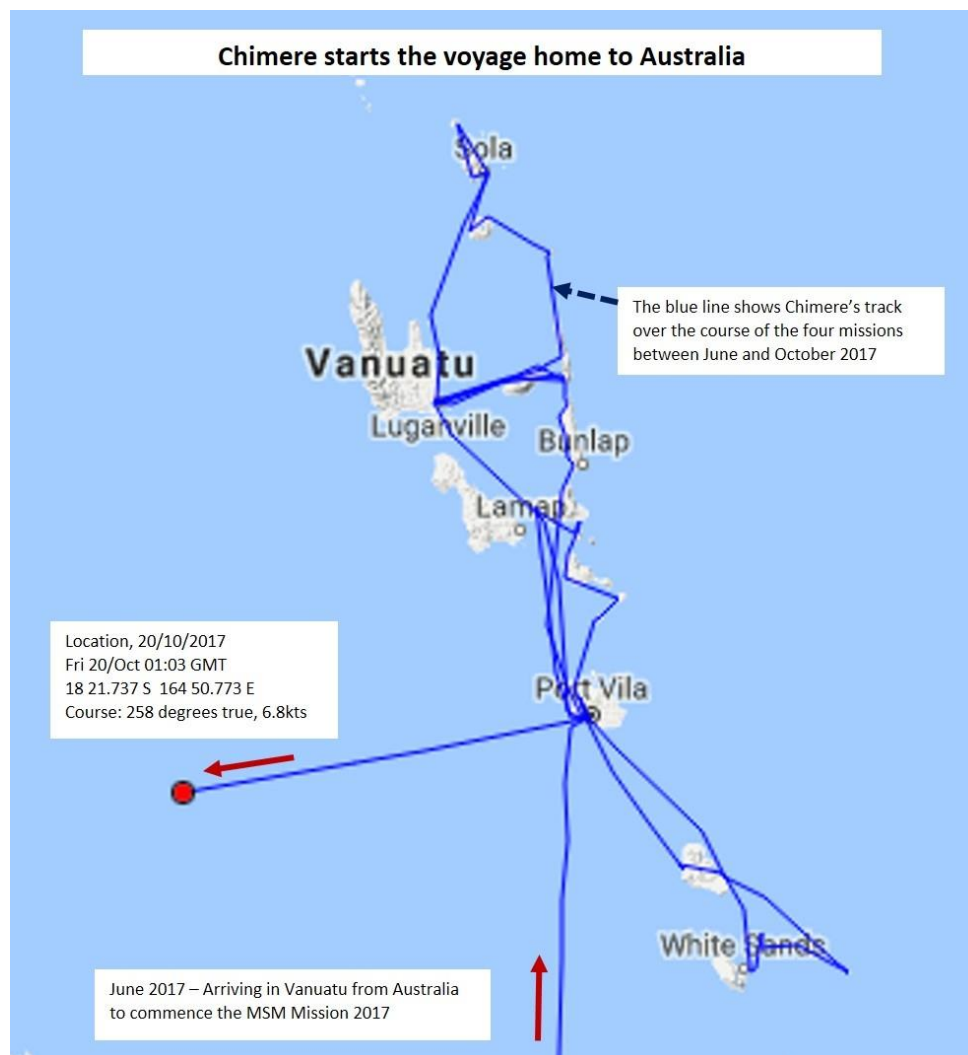
## Bringing her home

Friday 20 October 2017

At sea, west of Port Vila

Apologies for no blog on Thursday. We had a couple of busy days preparing Chimere for the voyage and set sail on Thursday morning tired but keen to get going.

We dropped our mooring lines at 7:37 in the morning yesterday and spent some time familiarising the crew with the boat. Outside of Mele Bay we sailed into a choppy and confused sea with a 25 knot wind from the southeast. It was fast sailing but not so kind on the tummies of most of the crew. As a result no one had the desire to sit at a bouncy table typing on the laptop. It was in bed or on watch thank you.



Even so we set a brisk pace and bye and bye everyone got their sea legs and eventually their sea tummies too.

By Friday midday the weather moderated, the seas smoothed out and Chimere became a pleasant place to be. The direct course to the Grand Passage at the top of New Caledonia would have taken us about 4 miles south of Petrie Reef but since we were passing in daylight we diverted to pass close by it's northern coast to try and catch our dinner.

Rob and Jonno quickly caught 2 very good looking mackerel and then engaged in a fight with several much bigger fish all of which chomped through the trace wire and got away with our lures. Fishing lesson 101 get strong steel trace wires! It is a grand thing to catch a fish at 4 in the afternoon and be eating it by 6pm. Jonno and Rob did the filleting, Gwilym made a great salad and sweet potato mash, we

all did some cooking and had a superb meal.

We are now about 30 miles away from the Grand Passage still make good comfortable progress with full sail under a clear star filled night. Yes a sailor's delight!

Cheers,  
Cam.

[Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Nicola Young](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#), [Martyn Vincent](#) liked this post



## Bringing her home #2

Saturday 21st Oct 2017

Hi Folks,

It's been a few days since our departure blog and about time we brought you up to date on the journey thus far.

We are now through the Grand Passage via Petrie Reef having managed through the first day of solid 25 knots of wind with decent seas. With the wind abeam on day 1 it made for good reaching and some adjustments of stomachs for a few of us. Since that brisk initiation into open sea sailing things are settling into a routine and the weather has all the while calmed down to only about 10 knots and is almost astern – allowing us to pole out the staysail and enjoy less apparent wind.

Some highlights and revelations over the last few days are:

- Continuing to get to know each other. A yacht is very close proximity at best and our personal traits and habits are all exposed, with Jonno's (proud) family heritage in flatulence evident even outside in 25 knots.
  - Singing spontaneous 'Scripture in Song' verses with full gusto together.
  - Realising that this isn't just a Men's Camp but also a Men's Shed – we regularly consult the workshop for tools and Ray for advice on fixing and tweaking things aboard, we almost know where all the tools reside now! Jobs have included steering sheave lubrication, engine brake enhancements, stay adjustments, traveller car pin repairs, etc. Often jobs are done with 3 or 4 heads down a hole or out on deck together.
  - Stopping at Petrie Reef was a welcome change where we snuck in the lee and out of the swell and did ourselves a spot of fishing.
- Rob pulled in two nice Mackerel which we cleaned up immediately and ate for dinner. Jonno has bragging rights for the big one that got away.



Making good time on flat seas with "The Big One" up, otherwise known as the Genoa, Reacher ... or the Ray-cher



The night-watch is always a time for extra vigilance



- We are getting hints of Gwilym's cooking prowess as the seas have settled, which keeps us all cheery indeed.
- Just a while ago Cam and I were watching a large seabird swing past and then dive for a sizeable flying fish, and then immediately after a large tuna jumped well clear of the water, apparently after the same fish but looking like it wanted the bird!
- The night sky is brilliant out here – I thought our bush sky was bright with stars because it is out of town but when you are miles from anywhere at sea with no moon it is fantastic!! The phosphorescence in the wash makes it all the more special.
- I have a video of Rob and Gwilym laughing that I'm pretty sure will go viral – will post it upon return.
- The third hour of a night watch is harder than the previous two combined.
- Cam is teaching us the Navchart Plotter and Auto Helm which is great for building confidence for us during watches. Rob says there is no better crew member than the AutoHelm – yep, never complains, always works, doesn't need food!

Righto – sea you later!

Jonno

[Andy Tiver](#), [David Goldsmith](#), [Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Lorraine Rose](#), [Nicola Young](#), [Barry Stewart](#), [Phil Wicks](#) liked this post

## Bringing her home #3

Monday 23rd Oct 2017

G'day readers,

This last period has seen us progress from the western end of Grand Passage through to 20nm east of the Chesterfield Reef. During that time the wind has continued to ease and vary in direction and we have had a number of sail changes in an effort to max out the power from the sails. The wind has come from the NW, W and SE so we have gone from poling out the staysail to reaching and close hauled with some motor helping us along. Right now it is 4.20am and Ray and I have been sharing a pretty special experience – the sea is glassy, there is no moon and some stars are showing up and are reflecting off the water. Add to that a large presence of



phosphorescence and you see the wash light up brightly – AMAZING!

Yesterday afternoon the wind dropped enough for us to cut the motor, drop the sail and stop for a swim. Ray has been commenting on how blue the water is out here, and to dive around in it only reinforced that. It is SO blue. We were swimming in about 1500m of water and to look down into what appears a never-ending blue with goggles is pretty special.

A couple of other things to note:

- On the night of the 21st Cam saw the lights of two ships, interestingly they were from different places but were both 351m long.
- Porridge with banana, sultanas and peach with honey tastes pretty good.
- Gwylim (the singing chef) continues to deliver with an onion gravy bangers and mash enjoyed by all last night.
- We had an ‘all hands’ knot tying session on deck yesterday, practicing bowlines, clove hitches, rolling hitch and a variety of other knots. Cam showed us how he can tie a bowline loop with a flick of the wrist and a crack of the rope – THAT’S WHY HE IS THE SKIPPER!
- We are learning more of the navigation system which is a fancy RAYMARINE chart plotter and it is interesting to note that currents can play an important part in your progress against a course. Last night we changed sails in the dark during a wind change and I must say I couldn’t pick the direction without the compass and chart plotter.
- The auto helm continues to steer us along without complaining.

When the sun rises soon we will be close to arriving at Chesterfield Reef – hanging out to see the place. We are seeing increasing numbers of birds as we approach.

All the best,

Jonno

[Andy Tiver](#), [Nicola Young](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#), [Phil Wicks](#) liked this post



**Above:** “Turquidescence” ... a made-up word by the return crew to describe the water of Chesterfield Reef. Given that nothing is truly new these days I thought I’d do the right thing and research the word Turquidescence ... just to check no one else had invented it before. After all ... “made up” is a big claim at the end of the day. Anyway, I “Googled” the word and low and behold I obtained just 3 results. That’s right THREE. All results related to the MSM

Return Voyage Ships Log, plus a heap of MSM photos. So well done guys, your new word is truly yours ... **Turquidescence**



## Bringing her home #4

Monday 23rd Oct 2017

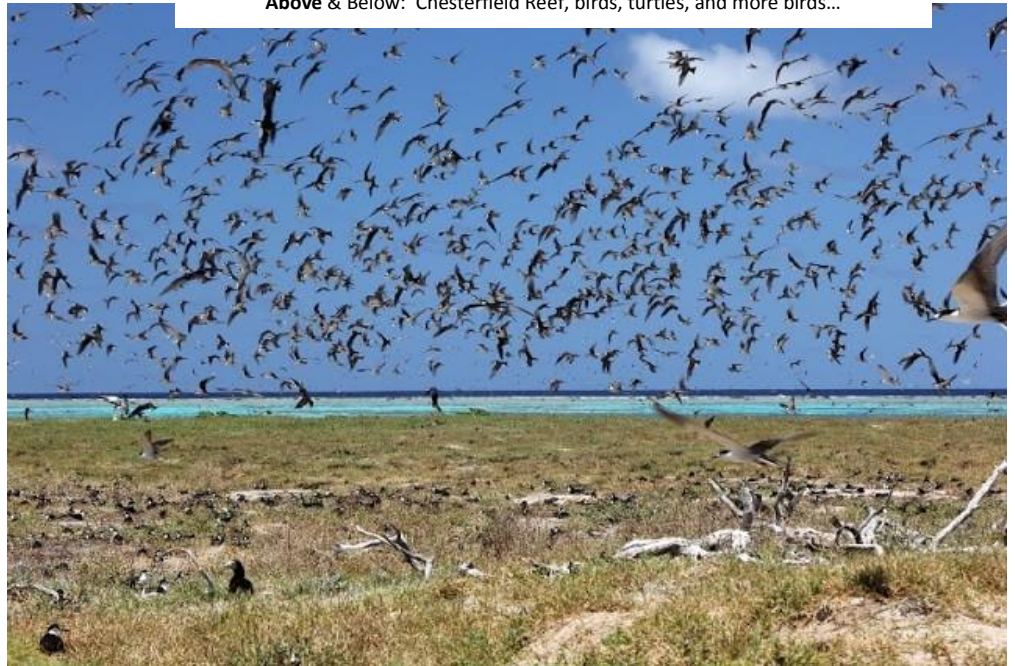
Hi there Family and Friends,  
Well if yesterday was special then today was magnificent to say the least. We arrived at Chesterfield Reef at about 0830 – look it up on GoogleEarth. It is a vast reef arrangement about 67nm long by 38nm wide containing a huge lagoon about 45m deep pretty much in the middle of absolutely nowhere. It has a variety of sand cays scattered around its perimeter and we are nestled in a group of them in the SE corner. Arriving in light wind we had men up the rat line scouring the horizon for land and surf – Cam gave us the 'Land Ho' signal first. What hit us first was the absolutely iridescent turquoise water over the white sand as we approached the fringes of the lagoon – so much that any birds flying by with white underneath actually glow turquoise – we even saw clouds with a turquoise underside. We have decided that the most appropriate term for the colour is "Turquidescence".

Once we approached the cays it became most evident that they are absolutely covered in about a gazillion birds including Boobys (red foot, yellow foot etc), Gannets,

Frigate Birds and Terns of all types. They are roosting on every low shrubby tree, on the ground, in the grass and on the beaches everywhere. It seems to be the time of year for the young to arrive so there are a multitude of fuzzy fluffballs and attempted first flights alongside parents shading eggs pretty all over the place. The sound of their calls is perpetual and persistent and the fact that they don't bump into each other without air traffic control or radar is phenomenal. Along with the birds we have enjoyed seeing a variety of fauna such as:



Above & Below: Chesterfield Reef, birds, turtles, and more birds...



– Loggerhead turtles (yes Loggerhead turtles!!) They are SO big and are laying eggs at the moment – we gave up



counting their tractor tracks up the beaches and are thinking about visiting at night to watch them lay.

- Sea snakes in the water.
- Black tip reef sharks, chased by our most wild hunters with spears and clubs.
- Bright red hermit crabs hiding in the shade of anything they can find, in large groups.
- While snorkelling we spotted fish of all colours including blue, yellow, striped yellow and black and bright coral trout.
- And we found gorgeous complete Nautilus shell.

**Below:** The BIG BLUE ... lucky there's no sharks out this far ...??!!

A couple of other things to note:

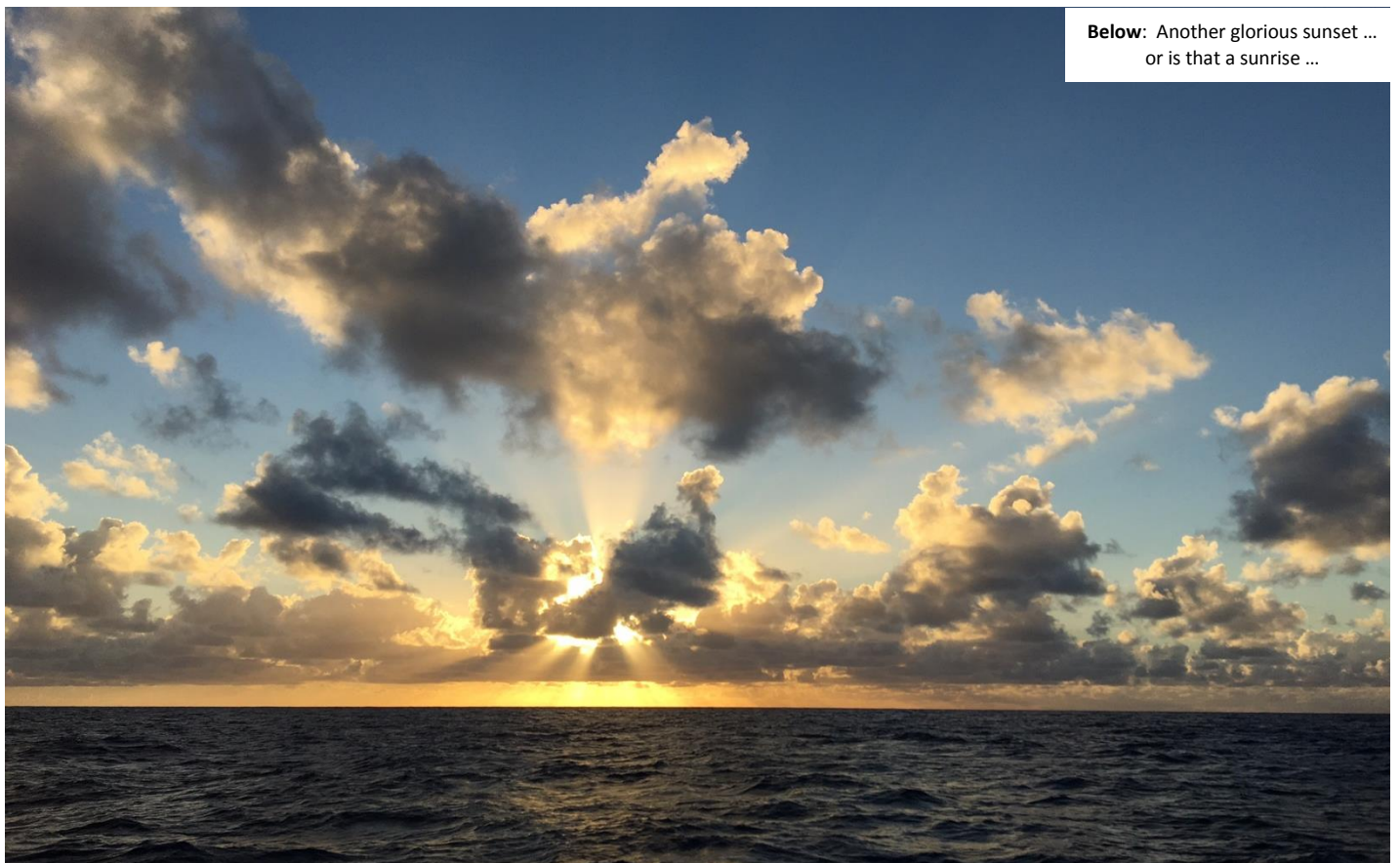
- Cam is wearing a custom built 'holiday shirt' which was lovingly crafted by Suzi from two sarongs from Kupang – West Timor.
  - Rob caught a decent Frigate Mackerel (a small Tuna) which has incredible red flesh – we enjoyed wasabi sashimi and curried fish, courtesy of our galley legend Gwilym, for dinner as a result.
  - At sunset, we enjoyed some spectacular crepuscular rays and enjoyed learning a new word and a new nickname for Ray.
  - We also enjoyed briefing Rob Latimer with a taste of the details of the day and our hopes for him to have a good day in the office, we received a one word reply.....
- We will be hanging here for some exploration and relaxation and some jobs tomorrow before heading SW for SYD the following day.

Wishing you were here  
Jonno



[Carl Suddaby](#), [Alice Kalontano Kailes](#), [Raymond Wicks](#), [Bruce Thurtell](#), [Bruce Jacobs](#), [Naina Kau](#), [Edith West](#), [Andy Tiver](#), [Liz Ogden](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#), [Petrea McCarthy](#) liked this post

**Below:** Another glorious sunset ...  
or is that a sunrise ...





## Bringing Her Home #5

Wednesday 25th Oct 2017

Everyone,  
Monday was a very big day for us at Chesterfield – after the last blog we were lounging around in the evening wondering if we should go and try to spot a turtle on the beach, whilst we were all tired we agreed it was a chance of a lifetime so we seized the day and trundled off to our sand cay armed with torches. We trudged through the soft coral sand for probably half an hour before spotting a fresh set of tractor tracks up the beach, followed it up and there she was – a giant grey turtle shovelling sand with all flippers, sending it behind her with impressive strength.

Before I go on we would appreciate some help please. We aren't completely sure that these are Loggerhead turtles because we think they have large longitudinal grooves down their backs, but these guys have smooth shells, but they are huge – at least 5 foot long and a very high and pronounced hump at the front, all dark grey in colour. Look them up and give us some options.

Anyway this female had laid her eggs and was filling up the hole which was probably 7

foot diameter with strokes of all flippers about 6 or 7 at a time. Then she would lay her head down and rest, often for a few minutes, before continuing. We left her for about 20 min before returning. She continued for a while and then turned around and headed for the water. These things are very fast and manoeuvrable in the water but definitely not on land, they must be 100s of kilos! We got to bed after midnight and slept in.

Next morning we were doing jobs like washing clothes all together on deck when Gwylim pointed an extra large turtle. After watching it rolling around on the surface for a while we noted there were three of them there – a large female and two smaller males – one on her back and the other waiting for a turn. We hadn't come here expecting to see some turtle copulation!



Glorious Chesterfield Reef

That afternoon we got Chimere all ship shape for cruising, because the wind had picked up, and left the reef as a few other boats arrived – so blessed to have it to ourselves.



Chimere at anchor, Chesterfield Reef – birds above, turtles below

I want to share a few numerical insights with you all, because they are vital bits of information:

1. Our average age is 59.4 (as of today, which is Ray's Birthday – "Hip Hip....Horaaay")
2. Yesterday 4 of us went to the sand island, we all went for a swim, 2 of us skinny dipped.
3. We have caught 3 fish so far – easily enough for a few meals.
4. We are 8 days in and over a third of the way home. (the rest from here is just sailing).
5. 3 of us have thrown up over the side.
6. At Chesterfield Reef we saw many islands. 1 of them had 1 Coconut tree sapling, and another had 3 coconut trees, that's all.
7. Cam has been up the mast 2 times, at Pt Vila and Chesterfield Reef – I think he likes it up there.
8. Right now our Course over Ground is 200 degrees and speed is 6.5knots, in about 15 – 20 knots of wind.
9. 1 of us has a real beard, there are a few on the way now, but the Skipper seems to be giving up the chase every day. He is the cleanest, organised and sweetest smelling member on board, by far.

Last night it was rough and dark and we were pitching pretty hard, then Cam said ".....right now I wish I could cuddle up to Suzi....." Bugger – that made me think the same about my Robyn. A few hours later Ray and I were on watch in the dark when a Red Footed Booby flew up behind us to say g'day, after a few attempts it managed to land on the back davits (rails to hold the dingy up on the stern) for a rest, however it kept sliding off in the wind and would come and land again. It was very happy with itself! A minute later another one came, landed up wind of it and then slipped back and bumped the first one off and they both fell into the gloom together. This happened a few times, until the first one wouldn't let the other on again – better than TV!

We are spending time sharing about our lives and our story with God – it is a blessing to be sharing a boat with such a quality bunch of God's blokes.

Happy days folks – heading your way.

Jonno

[Andrew McDonald](#), [Andy Tiver](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Denise Stephenson](#), [Robyn Clarke](#), [Rae-Ellen Graham](#), [Sue Duke](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#) liked this post



## Bringing Her Home #6

Thursday 26th Oct 2017

Friends and Family,

Today has been a day of great progress on the water – despite the winds being relatively light we have had good wind angles and good current and some assistance with good 'ole trusty Perkins (85 quality diesel horsepower). Right now we have the main and reacher filling with wind on the starboard aft quarter and are moving at 8 knots on a flat sea with virtually no rolling – gorgeous! It's our first Starboard tack since Vanuatu.

Earlier today we were enjoying a calm sea when Cam noticed a large piece of white flotsam ahead – we headed over for a look while Rob enthusiastically lunged for the fishing line and had a lure in before you could say “who farted?”.

On approach we could see that it was a large single use canvas bag and there were a few little fish hanging around under its shade. Suddenly we noticed some large flashes of colour below and Rob just went off – “Mahi Mahi ohhh look at that they are GORGEOUS ohhh”.

Mahi Mahi or Dorado or Dolphinfish are a deep sea fish known for their extreme beauty and great eating – their fins are iridescent blue, they are blue / purple on top with metallic gold sides with blue dots, these fish were about 1.2m long. They are known for living in groups up to 100 around even small pieces of flotsam – they are stunning really, look them up. They are a real prize for fisherman and Rob has been dreaming about them for ever. After a few laps around the bag Rob latched onto one and was reeling it in. It fought hard and jumped into the air several times. After a while he stopped winding and we had a go at wearing out the fish by driving the boat forward for 10 minutes or so. Eventually it was lying on its side so we got in to the boat, onto the gaff and on board. We tried the method of sedation using rum over the gills, and it worked a treat. After a photo shoot Rob spent about 2 hours preparing what is a lot of fresh fish, which we enjoyed tonight.

We stopped for another swim today – more amazing blue that seems to go for ever. This was after our more mature folk had a water fight with buckets on the deck.

Our Chief cook Gwilym has been treating us to a great variety of food so far including curried fish, chunky beef on pasta, vegetarian on pasta, coleslaw tuna salad, green salad, bangers and mash with onion gravy and Sri Lankan 'Hoppers' this morning – a combo of pancakes and fried egg. Today we baked some fresh bread and had hot bread and jam for lunch.

My sailing history is in dinghies, windsurfers and cats with a bit of yacht sailing with relatives in Sydney so this has been a real learning experience. It's been great to sail with blokes who have raced the oceans and cruised the world and they are wise and patient in their teaching. I've learned about different bits and pieces like running back stays, the boom preventer and the barber hauler (which is not someone who pulls your hair out).

We are aiming for an arrival in Sydney before a Southerly which is forecast for Tuesday morning – will keep you posted.

Cheers!

Jonno

*“Happy to catch a fish” ... doesn't quite sum it up ...*



This image showing the Chimere doing 9kts, which must be close to maximum. I think they are riding the EAC ... dudes!

Rob Latimer

[Nicola Young](#), [Edith West](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Liz Ogden](#), [Andy Tiver](#), [Barry Stewart](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#) liked this post

The wind and tide going our way  
... 9 knots is seriously fast for  
industrial-strength Chimere



## Bringing her home #7

Friday 27th October 2017

Hello Folks,

In the 24 hours to 9am this morning we achieved 196nm – quite a thing for Chimere as she would normally average 140nm. As mentioned yesterday this is courtesy of favourable winds and current and seas. Well the broad reach continued all night and into this afternoon. At 3am I got up for a shift and there is Rob, standing in front of the wheel. It's dark but I can see a twinkle in his eye and a bit of a wry smirk across his mouth (both of which are pretty normal for Rob). I climbed the companionway and looked at the chart plotter – flop, 9.4 knots! “Yep, and I got her up to 10.2” says Rob “even got a photo..... she’s like a horse heading for home”

The broad reach is the fastest point of sail and is around 135 degrees off the wind. Every windsurfer lives for broad reaches, that’s all you want. My Laser loves a broad reach, she gets excited and up onto the plane and hums a tune to me when we reach together. Yesterday we had a gentle broad reach all afternoon and evening, we were making good with 8 knots with the big reacher and main aloft, a current of about 1 knot which we measured when swimming, and good ‘ole ‘Perky’ assisting. It made for extremely pleasant sailing because the sea was pancake flat. Overnight that breeze picked up so Cam and Gwyl changed out the reacher for the jib and staysail.



After sunrise this morning the breeze picked up much more than forecast and the sea picked up a few notches too. We saw some fantastic little Storm Petrels today – dancing along the large moving waves with incredible skill – goodness knows where they live. Cam spotted a large shark in an adjacent wave, with fin out of the water – hmmm, half a day from our last swim. The waves were pretty big and rolling up behind us, sometimes breaking as Chimere slid slightly sideways down the face. At one point I turned to Rob to let him know I felt a bit scared – he said Chimere is big, heavy and well built, so we'd be alright. And then a minute later he said he'd be scared mountain biking downhill through trees and rocks which are hard when you land on them, that put it into perspective for me. Cam, Rob and Ray take it all in their stride and their confidence helps us newbies.

Today we turned on the water maker, which converts sea water to fresh water through reverse osmosis. It makes about 6 litres a minute. After an hour and a half Cam checked the water tank to find a fair bit of fresh water sloshing around the midship bilges because of a leak in the system. After a few ideas with all heads down holes we formed a chain and bucketed out what must have been close to 500 liters of water, at least the bilges got a rinse.

Fish for dinner again tonight, with sweet potato and onion mash – that Mahi Mahi will go a long way.

Heading your way,  
Jonno and the gang.

[David Goldsmith](#), [Edith West](#), [Andy Tiver](#), [Petrea McCarthy](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#), [Cathy West](#), [Martin Burgess](#), [Phil Wicks](#) liked this post

## Young doctor finds his feet – at sea and on land

Friday 27 October 2017

As Chimere continues her return voyage from Vanuatu to Australia we hear from Dr Jeremy Duke ... yes, son of the famed, 9-time Vanuatu volunteer, Dr Graeme Duke ... but carving his own path on Mission 4 of the recently completed MSM Vanuatu 2017 mission. In his own words, Jeremy looks back on his 2 weeks away with new insights ... Come sail with me... a brief reflection from the ship's junior doctor:

Feeling a bit seasick? Just down a glass of seawater, said my Vanuatu taxi driver.

Well, I can't say I came across medical evidence for that one when researching what tablets I was going to bring along. That might not be your preferred method of curing sea-sickness either, so come with me on a brief journey through the Penama and Banks group of islands in Vanuatu's north, a splattering of odd shaped islands covered in dense green foliage.

Apart from an occasional smoke plume rising into the blue sky, the Ni-Vanuatu (Ni-Van) people are mostly hidden amongst the banyan, coconut, banana and mango trees. That is, until you sail close enough to a village to attract the attention of local children, who upon seeing you anchor will jump in the water to greet their visitors with wide smiles and hand-shakes!



Dr Jeremy Duke and close friend Matt (the younger) as Chimere exits the Second Channel, Luganville, at the start of Mission 4



**Above:** Dr Jeremy and his father Dr Graeme, consult with all-comers on the island of Merelava  
**Below:** Jeremy does his best to keep his young patient focused ...



Dr Jeremy Duke and Dr Graeme Duke set up their medical practice for a day's work in the village ... next ...

Over the 16 days of MSM Mission Four, we ran 7 clinics across 6 islands. While the main aim of the mission was to complete a National Oral Health Survey of the Ni-Van people, we also provided dental, optometry and medical care.

Now young lady ... what can I help you with today ...?

The majority of our medical care revolved around key non-communicable diseases: hypertension, diabetes, obesity.

High blood pressure is common – partly due to eating large amounts of salt, and cooking with sea water. How about blood sugar? If it's higher than 30 in Australia, you'd be onto medications right away – and maybe even score a hospital admission. In Vanuatu, the access to medications by locals is difficult – impacted by cost, varying distance to your local dispensary, and health literacy.

Jeremy Duke and Matt Latimer strike a poignant pose as Chimere sets sail from Luganville on her final medical mission for 2017 with 15 people on board

So what difference can we actually make? Those times when you make a visible difference to someone are extremely valuable, and I'm grateful for our timing, such as ...

- ... treating bronchitis in a heavily pregnant woman so she can breathe without difficulty
- 
- ... bringing back an asthmatic from a coma
- 
- ... draining an abscess on a 3 year old's thigh.

Is that an insect in that 6-year old's ear? Only one way to find out...

But what about when we're not there? The nurses and midwives who station the hospitals and clinics throughout these islands do a formidable job. There are few, mostly no doctors in these regions, and they are both the front-line and the rear guard, when it comes to diagnosis, treatment and ongoing care..

Thankfully, developments of the most valuable kind are underway! I was amazed to see how the baton of dental and optometry work is being passed onto capable Ni-Vans. Five of our 15-strong team for our mission were Ni-Vans, local people. Although the numbers are small, Ni-Vans are being trained as doctors. The island nation only has enough to staff its central hospitals. We all look forward to the day when we can take Ni-Van doctors out to provide the healthcare themselves! Providing healthcare in remote parts of Vanuatu was rewarding and fun, but our eyes must look forward – over the white-topped waves, around the network of banyan tree roots, through the cloud peaking the deep green mountain, to a sustainable and truly Ni-Vanuatu health service!

Thanks for your prayers and support for our mission

Jeremy

[Edith West](#), [Alyce Graham](#), [Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Matt Bryant](#), [Cathy West](#), [Andy Tiver](#) liked this post



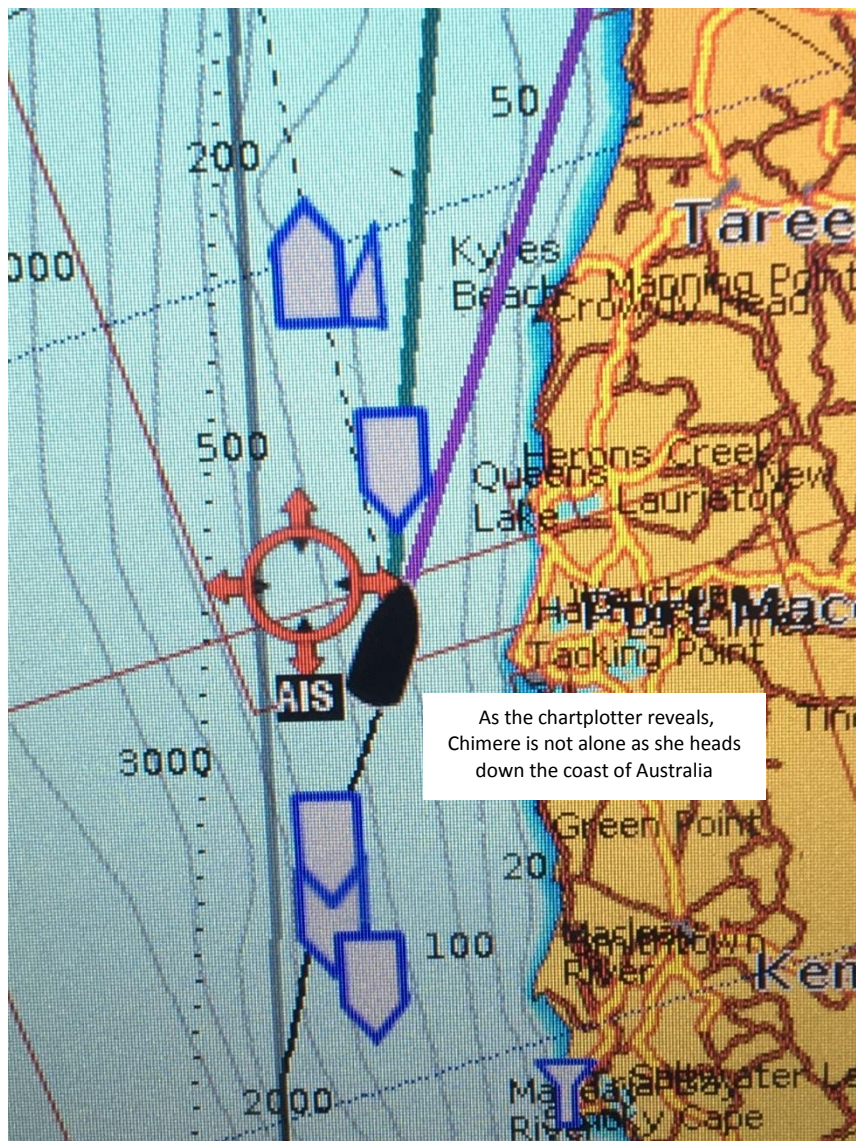
## Bringing Her Home #8

Sunday 29th October 2017

Hello All,

This morning we sighted the sweet shores of Australia for the first time on our trip. It's amazing how much it means to us, in many ways really, such as:

- A few bars of phone reception had us all diving for pinging phones and making calls and texts to loved ones, looking up the weather and trying to ignore work.
- Access to the good old EAC! East Australian Current which gives us a knot or two advantage and right now contributes to about 8.5 knots on a broad reach with reacher out.
- Sightings of numerous ships, mainly cargo but we have also seen a cruise ship and some smaller vessels. We spot them on the Chart Plotter which taps into the Automatic Identification System (AIS). This shows us actual paths of travel of vessels and at the click of a button gives us ship info, their speed and heading and it calculates true vectors to establish our crossing time and distance apart. If it's less than a mile we just need to alter



course by 2 degrees or so and you can see an immediate difference to our crossing distance pop up on the system. This will be particularly useful at night and as we head for busy ports like Newcastle in the dark.

- Thoughts of home, wives, family and how keen we are to see them.
- Reflections on the journey and what we have experienced together, both in adventure and in relationship.
- The beauty of the Aussie coast – with ever changing headlands and ranges of hills and mountains fading into the distance.
- Cooler air than the tropics we have got used to.
- Flatter seas (at least at the moment) which is a welcome respite and just makes everything easier.
- Planning how we will devour as much of the food supplies as possible before Sydney – particularly the fresh food bought in Vila. Thanks to Gwilym my ambition for losing a few kilos has not come to pass. The Mahi Mahi has now been consumed – it took the five of us six solid meals to do it. We have tried it in a curry tinged flour, light flour and nude in butter, which was our favourite in the end.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Rob Latimer and Barry Crouch for the opportunity to sail Chimere through some very special places.

And particularly I'd like to acknowledge our Skipper and Crew who have been experts in different things, complimenting each other just like a team (or body) should:

Skipper Cam – for being the boss like a boss, but being a humble and patient one, always trying to eek out an extra half knot on her speed and being the epitome of organisation and cleanliness. He takes the record for number of baths on deck, hands down. If you want aviation or sailing racing and cruising or rescue stories, buckle up for the journey. First Mate Rob – for being a constant character, mentor, story teller and teacher / evangelist. Rob is an ex hippie, global traveller and pastor with miles of sailing under the belt and his wealth of life experience and special testimonies are shared constantly, always coupled with a giggle or a smirk or a tilt of the head and a piercing eye. He knows Chimere and how to sail her well and passes that knowledge on in helpful detail.

Second Mate Ray – who cut his teeth working for BHP and is now a Management Consultant to small business. Ray learnt problem solving techniques before they wrote the textbooks and it is obvious he applies them every day. We have had many opportunities to solve technical problems and Ray works out the options and then says ‘you will find that piece of stainless steel in the bottom drawer on the right in the workshop’. He is methodical and practical, gentle and unflappable. He comes home having had a birthday at sea – congrats Ray.

Chief Cook Gwylim – who has the best and biggest laugh, the most jokes and the biggest heart available. The passion of this man in the kitchen was evident from the outset – he had plans for our food before he left Australia and has maximised the variety of our cuisine from fresh ingredients sourced from Vila and the sea, watching him in the kitchen right now I can say he knows his stuff. Not only this – Big G is our song leader and has by far the best voice in the Pacific Ocean.

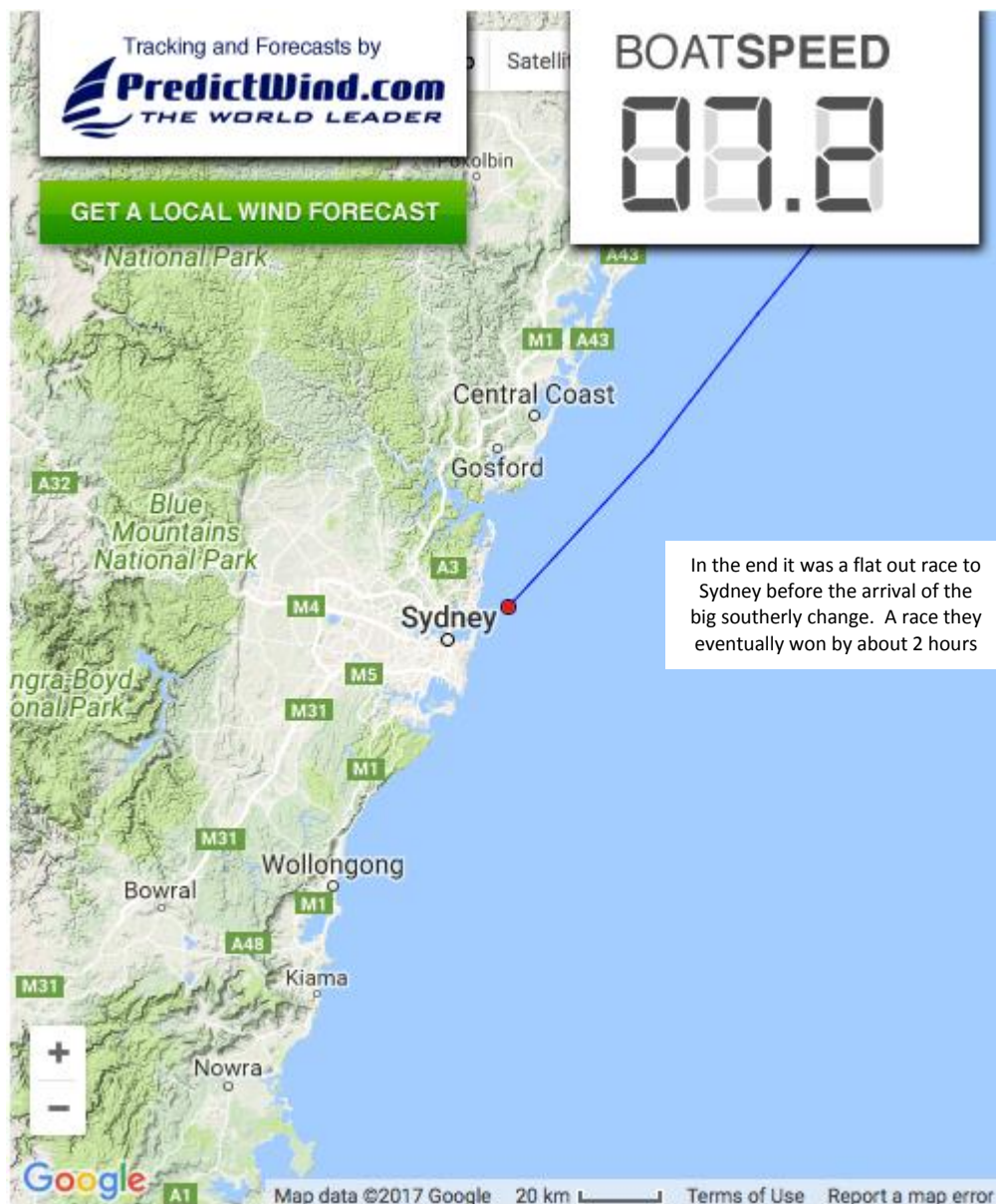
Being the spring chicken of this group and more of a mountain biker than a sailor it’s been like having 4 dads on board, each contributing something different to my experience through theirs. I’ll be going home much richer than before I knew these blokes. Thankfully it will be richer in skills, experiences, relationships and in God – what a great combo.

Will let you know how we go once we get there – please pray for fair winds and an entry into Port Jackson ahead of that ugly looking Southerly, ta.

Almost there,

Jonno and the lads.

[Raymond Wicks](#), [Barry Stewart](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Nicola Young](#), [Andy Tiver](#) liked this post



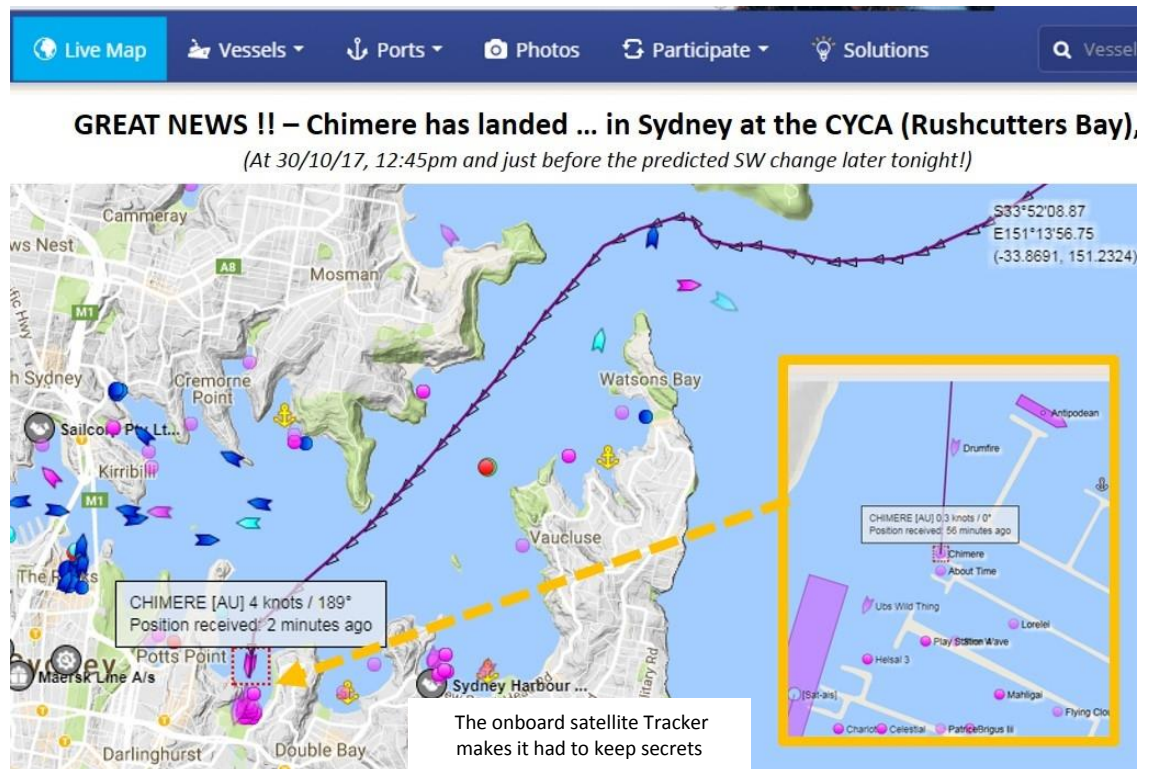


## Bringing Her Home #9

Great News !! Chimere and her loyal skipper and crew have arrived in Sydney, just before the predicted SW change later today

Congratulations !!

[Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Andy Tiver](#), [Jake Remyn](#), [Antonia Cavallotti Albertazzi](#), [Carmel Noble](#), [Jo Yeaman](#), [Alyce Graham](#), [Arianna Albertazzi](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Liz Ogden](#), [Robyn Clarke](#), [Martyn Vincent](#), [Jim Davies](#), [Sue Duke](#) liked this post



## Bringing Her Home – final Blog

Hello All,

Well Chimere isn't home quite yet, she's in Sydney and our crew are all on the way home or already there. Since the last blog it is fair to say that a number of prayers were answered and a few surprises were thrown in.

The most significant answer to prayer was that a sweet combo of winds on the beam and the EAC. When we were in the current we were doing a solid 7 – 8 knots, and when we weren't it was down around 5 – 6. So we did a bit of EAC hunting that brought us to about 15nm from land, and out to about 30nm. Our hope was to sneak into the Sydney heads before the Southerly hit on Monday afternoon, and through the good fortunes above we did and we were grateful.

A job well done !! Return crew – the “after shot” – kindly hosted by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia in Rushcutters Bay, Sydney. L-r Cam, Jonno, Rob, Gwylim and Ray



Coming into Port Jackson is always fun because of the action. We arrived at the same time as a large ship which had a few tugs involved and as we dropped the main we saw a good number of ferries and tourist boats along with numerous pleasure craft.

The surprises I mentioned above were both pretty special. At about 3am Rob charged through Chimere telling us all to hurry and get out of bed. I thought he was pretty keen rousing us because it was our shift, but when I made it to the deck Rob was swinging about on a swing he made up talking away about something. I got to him and he was clearly disappointed. He had just seen a dolphin in the phosphorescent water of the bow-wave, something super special that he had seen only once before, but it was gone by the time we arrived.



The last to say good-bye, back to Canberra – Jonno and Cam

So Uncle Ray and I settled into a shift spent staring at the ships on the Chart Plotter screen and out into the dark night. And then I saw it racing around our starboard side to the bow. A large single dolphin completely surrounded by light in the dark water. The green luminescence covered the whole sleek body of the dolphin and curled off its fins and tail like green sparklers. It was like a constantly moving and changing fluorescent tube in the shape of a dolphin. You could see every swift move in detail as the dolphin swapped sides and surfaced for air. It was with us for about 3 minutes and then disappeared. What a privilege to see. Rob was over the moon that he was able to share the experience.

Later, as we approached Sydney we spotted a few humpback whales and enjoyed their fun slaps and splashes a few times in a few miles- icing on the rich cake of our experiences in this trip.

We had secured a pleasant berth at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia at Rushcutters bay and were heartily welcomed by MSM stalwart Bob Brenac. The afternoon settled into a progression of visitors including Border Force in their black uniform with guns, and Quarantine with their sample jars and big yellow bags. After an enthusiastic search they took all of the Vanuatu sourced fresh food and our garbage, all for a hefty fee. And then it was friends and rellies dropping in for a look.

Through the afternoon we split up as a crew as various members left for home, before Rob Latimer arrived from Melbourne to catch up and start preparations for the trip to Melbourne. It felt surreal to be on land and sad to end a very focussed time with a special bunch of blokes. I'll take away some amazing experiences and some great friendships, all whilst feeling a part of a greater cause in Medical Sailing Ministries and in God's plan for the Pacific and for us.

In the end we travelled 2123nm, or just shy of 4000km, in 12 days, with a 1.5day stop at Chesterfield Reef. I couldn't count the number of birds and flying fish we saw. We have left 833 photos and videos with Rob Latimer for him to enjoy and share with you all.

Thanks for tuning in to our journey, and stay in touch with [msm.org.au](http://msm.org.au) for the next phase of the ministry.

All the best,

Jonno de Puit, Cam Heathwood, Rob Lott, Gwylim Siebel and Ray Clark.

[Robyn Clarke](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Sue Duke](#), [Liz Ogden](#), [Carmel Noble](#) liked this post



Alby !!!

NSW South Coast  
Friday 3 November 2017

Must be in home waters...

Albatrosses!!! Lots of them  
And we've even seen some mutton  
birds, not migrating south as we did in  
Vanuatu but now home and looking for  
a feed

It's the first morning out of Sydney and  
we are off Batemans Bay with a steady  
NW wind on the stern quarter. Another  
southerly wind due this way around  
lunchtime  
Currently heading for Eden 100 miles  
south. From there we'll check the  
forecast in order to plan the Bass Strait  
leg home



Back in Aussie waters – the  
good 'ol albatross.

Smooth seas, fair breeze and must be in home waters  
Smooth seas and almost back  
Rob Latimer

[Carmel Noble](#), [Glenys Janssen-Frank](#) liked this post



After a brief stop in Sydney it was  
time to start the final push south  
to Westernport and home



## Cruising home

Broulee Island, NSW South Coast

Friday 3 November 2017

The final leg home from Sydney to Melbourne officially began yesterday afternoon around 3:30pm as we eased our way out of our berth at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) in Rushcutters Bay, being careful not to take the corners off any other yachts parked nearby ... like Brindabella et al.

Bob Brenac, our long-time, Sydney-based supporter and volunteer – plus 50-year CYCA member it must be said (like his father before him) – had arranged a morning meeting with the CEO of the club, Ms Karen Grega, so that I could officially say thank you on behalf of Medical Sailing Ministries; plus present her with an official (limited edition) “MSM Mission 2017 Shirt”

As I mentioned in my letter to Ms Grega... *“Access to a marina berth, along with the club’s facilities, at the critical before-and-after stages really is invaluable, enabling us to address the many, many “last minute” tasks that inevitably pop up, in an efficient manner.*

*It’s also a glorious part of the world in which to live, even for just a few days, here on Sydney Harbour, surrounded as we are in Rushcutters Bay, by so much Australian sailing history and “royalty”.*

*This is the fourth MSM Vanuatu Mission since 2009 and so this is the eighth time CYCA has extended to us their welcome. Again, we appreciate this so much and Medical Sailing Ministries is greatly indebted to you.”*

It was then back to Chimere for a wonderful salad-kind of lunch, with nuts, celery, tuna ... prepared by Edith, along with some of the bread she’d baked yesterday. Great to have the actual author of the official Chimere Cook Book on board. And the one also responsible for compiling the very, very long shopping list, and then taking a leading role in the purchase and stowing aboard of same – was that just 6 months ago!? The weather forecast had been a bit hostile to sailing south, since Cam and his gang of four docked mid-day Monday, but it was now taking a turn for the better.

Rob, Bob, Bar & Beer - Ahhh ... lovely to catch up again at the CYCA



Rob finally gets to meet Cruising Helmsman magazine editor Phil Ross ... at the CYCA



Rob's brother Andrew (and original co-owner of Chimere) drops by during Chimere's brief stop-over in Sydney



Ray, who'd caught the train back to Melbourne on Monday night (for some home-comforts) was now back on board having caught the Wednesday night train back again.

Our plan was to get away around 2:00pm, after we'd caught up with Sydney resident Phil Ross, the editor of the sailing magazine Cruising Helmsman. Despite all our emails over several years, we'd never quite been able to arrange a face-to-face. As it turned out Phil just happened to be at the CYCA yesterday afternoon and it seemed an opportunity too good to pass up.

After waving good-bye to Phil, retrieving the lines, and mercifully NOT hitting anything, we took the opportunity to cruise up past the Opera House, under The Bridge and in-out, around, past and behind an amazing variety of craft – from an HMAS War Ship and an 18 foot skiff, to more ferries, yachts, and pleasure craft (some doing the same as us) than we could count. Even a three-masted tall ship doing their regular "Twilight Harbour Cruise".

Soon enough we'd made it back past the Fort, around towards Manly (watching out for the ferry – each way) then out through North and South Head into the rising swell. It was now around 5:00pm and pretty soon we were clear of the rocks and setting a course south with an easterly breeze of about 15-20 knots moving us along at around 6-7 knots. As is the custom, we took it in turns to keep watch through the night, with Bruce and Edith taking first shift, then Ray and I relieving them around 12 midnight. The moon was bright and with the glow of Sydney, plus the lights of planes, seemingly queued head to tail into the night-sky waiting to land and then taking off, we were rarely short of things to keep us engaged.

The wind changed throughout the night, first North-east, then to the north, then north-west, then west ... all the while ol'faithful Perkins chugged away in the background doing 1600 RPM, enabling us to maintain our speed in the lumpy sea left over from three days of strong southerly winds. Dawn was greeting with many pairs of albatrosses, gliding and swooping close-by in their effortless, majestic way.

Keeping tabs on the changing weather forecasts, we initially thought we could make it to Eden, way down near the Victorian border, where we could sit out the next southerly blow. In the end, the 35-30kts southerly change came through earlier than expected and so in anticipation of this we had already started to close the coast, with a view to finding a snug anchorage behind Broulee Island, just south of Batemans Bay; 135 miles south of Sydney, but still 70-odd miles short of Eden.

With MSM mission "provisioning officer" Edith aboard for the trip south to Melbourne there was always going to be some good food laid on.



"Aren't they married?" ... Bruce and Edith enjoy the Sydney sights before Chimere clears the Heads and sets a course south. To Melbourne



A quick glance at our “vessel tracker” will show the hard right turn we made earlier this afternoon. There’s no hiding out here anymore and I must say, there are times I’m tempted to turn the thing off!

Two hours from the coast the southerly wind-change hit us, and after putting two reefs in the mainsail and reducing the jib by around 50%, we were soon loping along at 8 knots in a south west direction; the coastal detail – the trees, the rocks, the hills and buildings – becoming more and more distinct the closer we got.

The temperature also dropped and Ray, having crewed with Cam from Vanuatu, was finally seen to put on long pants and I’m sure I could see steam from my breath.

Our depth sounder shows the water temperature at around 21 degrees, which is a bit lower than the 29 degrees in Vanuatu. Can’t wait to see what it says when we finally make it around into Bass Strait

Anchoring here at Broulee Island was something of a text-book landing. Edith on the helm, Ray and I dropping the sails in the lee of the headland, then Bruce and I finally setting the anchor, all the while making sure we got as close to the coast as we dared while still keeping plenty of water beneath the keel.

And this truly is a wonderful spot. Flat calm, as the occasional gusts of wind shake and shudder the rigging above. Soon after turning off the engine and everyone breathing a sigh of relief, the cheese and crackers appeared along with a hot drink of choice – coffee, hot chocolate, even English Breakfast if desired.

Out beyond the point white caps could be seen on the waves and as late afternoon moved into early evening Edith and Bruce set about preparing a tag-team culinary delight. I know it’s got potatoes, cheese, onions, bacon and many other things ... all baked in the oven. “And lemon-slice for dessert!” I just heard Edith yell. Yummy!!

So this must be what cruising sailors do. First, wait for the wind to blow their way. Second, set sail and go-with-the wind, then Third, seek shelter when the wind blows the wrong way – cool.

Our current plan, using the above “algorithm” is to stick it out here till Sunday when the wind is expected to blow from a northerly direction hopefully taking us right round the corner, past Gabo Island and into Bass Strait. Once there we will high-tail it to Refuge Cove on Wilson’s Prom before the next south-west change comes through Tuesday. Sounds like a plan !!

It’s funny, dropping anchor here on the south coast of NSW, memories of anchoring in a dozen or more Vanuatu villages come to mind. Will any canoes come out? If not, maybe we could buy or trade some paw paws, or pamplemousse in the village tomorrow morning? But no, a quick glance along the beach reveals signs of development, beach houses and street lights to name just two. Confirming once again that we are definitely home. Back to “normal” life once more.

Smooth seas, fair breeze and cruising home ...

Rob Latimer

[Nicola Young](#), [Andy Tiver](#), [Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Carmel Noble](#), [Phil Wicks](#) liked this post



Rob, Ray, Bruce and Edith enjoyed a brief stop-over at Broulee Island on the NSW South Coast



## Heading away from coast for next 18-24 hours

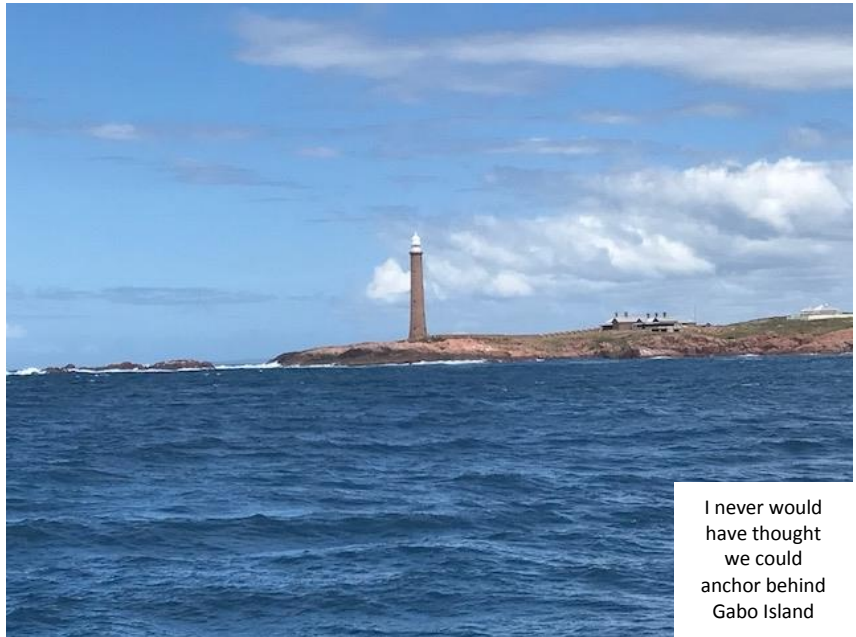
In an attempt to take advantage of a gap between weather systems we sheltered 3 hours behind Gabo Island  
Now we are setting sail for Wilsons Prom.

Draw a straight line between Point Hicks and Wilsons Prom, make a few allowances for oil rigs and that's where we'll be.

May not have the inter-web  
See you on the other side

Rob

[Naina Kau](#), [Liz Ogden](#) liked this post



I never would have thought we could anchor behind Gabo Island

## One more sleep and Chimere is home

Refuge Cove, Wilsons Prom. VIC

Tuesday 7 November 2017

The wind comes in sustained gusts, vibrating the rigging and rattling whatever it can find on deck to rattle; shackles, clips, hand rails and halyards. All comforting sounds as we soak in the blissful stillness of this most aptly-named piece of Victorian coastline – Refuge Cove. Not in an easterly wind to be sure, but today, and from mid-afternoon yesterday, it has been blowing from the south west, and at those time, this is most certainly the place to be.

Like most things, it could have been worse, but still, 25-35 knots, with building seas over a long fetch are things we try to avoid – particularly when they are coming from where we actually want to go.

Thanks to the wonderful weather forecasting from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) – and I mean that most sincerely – and the ability to receive their regular updates via my iPhone, (even miles offshore) we were able to track a more southerly course from Gabo Island, (at the southern tip of the NSW coast and the entrance to Bass Strait) in order to have just enough sea-room to aim north towards Wilson's Promontory as the worse of the change arrived. Certainly not what you'd call a "great-circle" route, but in the end a prudent move because with nowhere to hide the last thing we wanted to do was tack our way to the day's finishing line.

When I say finishing line, more correctly – and to continue with the racing theme, this being Melbourne Cup Day an' all – we are actually well down the home straight, just a few short furlongs (what's a furlong anyway?) from the

Rob finds the "internet friendly" rock overlooking Refuge Cove



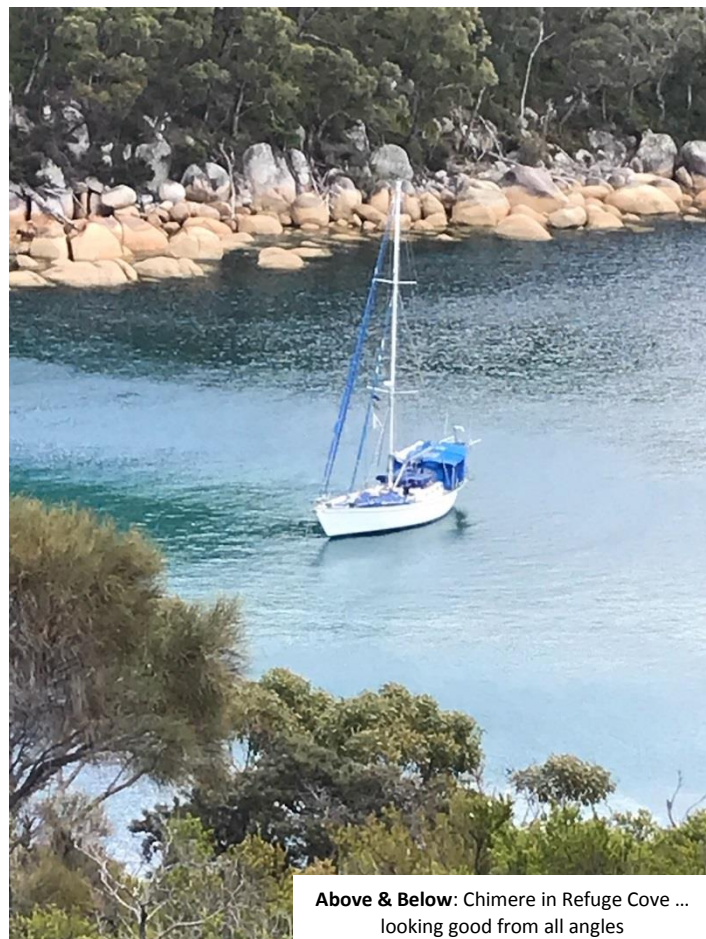
tape. If all goes to plan, mid-morning tomorrow we will reach the entrance to Westernport Bay, just as the tide turns so as to take the “flood” all the way up to Westernport Marina, Hastings; ETA around 1:00-2:00pm tomorrow afternoon.

So tonight will actually be Chimere’s last night at sea. Tomorrow her six month mission, which saw us depart Westernport on the night of Monday 15 May, will come to an end.

As comfortable as it is here in Refuge Cove, in a few hours’ time, when the wind outside the bay has hopefully abated somewhat, we plan to sail the short distance down the east coast of the Prom, around the bottom (that’ll be the lumpy part) then up the west side, gaining shelter from the rocky, off-lying islands to Great Glennie Island. Here we’ll drop the anchor till around 10:00 o’clock tonight, at which time we’ll set a final course for the Westernport entrance.

According to BOM, the south-westerly will remain dominant, but of lesser strength, making for a gentle romp to the finish. Maybe that’s a bit aspirational, but in the end most sailors are optimists?!

Chimere’s crew – the “gang of four”, comprising Edith & Bruce – parents of Cathy West (MSM’s “Miss Capability 2013”, who returned again this year as a volunteer nurse on Mission 4) Ray Clark and myself. Each of us with such different backgrounds, yet each working together with enthusiasm to do what has needed to be done.



**Above & Below:** Chimere in Refuge Cove ...  
looking good from all angles



At times maybe “enthusiasm” is slightly over-stating things, there have definitely been the quieter, more reflective moments – 3am watch-changes to name just one – but with Edith and Bruce mostly commanding the galley our stomachs and morale have been nurtured, to be sure!

When some of Chimere’s bits have broken, stopped working, or needed adjusting – Ray’s thoughtful analysis has been invaluable. Closely followed, it must be said, by Bruce’s musing about possible solutions, or feasible “work-arounds”. My familiarity with Chimere’s ways and moods, built up over the past 11 years, is obviously of assistance as I generally contribute to the deliberations with words like ... *“well the last time this happened we ...”*



Take yesterday for example. After 10 minutes of flawless operation, the generator suddenly stopped. Not even a splutter, just ground to a halt, leaving a red light glowing on the panel – strange. At almost exactly the same time we turned on the pump to lift fuel to the “day-tank” from the storage tanks below deck. At least we’ll top up the tank while we consider the generator problem. And after a couple of minutes the pump just stopped, nothing – even stranger.

Knowing that bad things generally come in threes, I was immediately wary of what was to come ... but maybe past experience has just been a stream of amazing coincidences.

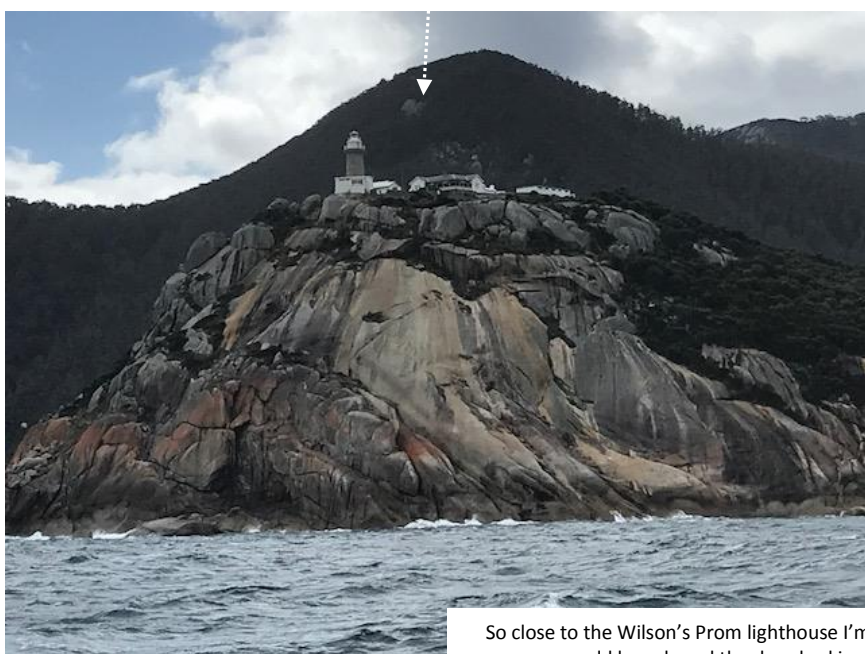
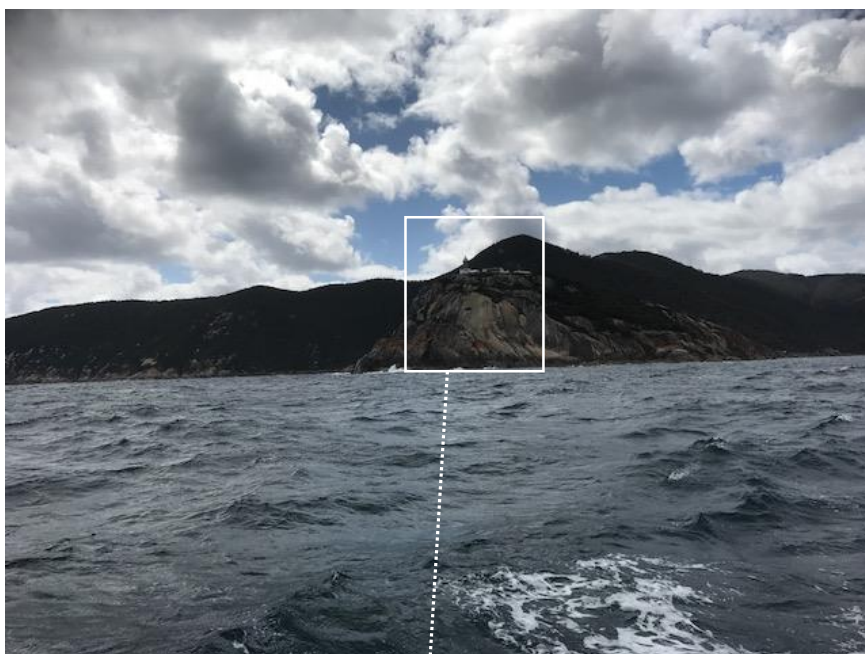
Then there was the bilge pump “incident” two days ago. (Oh, maybe that gives me my “three bad things”) I think everyone knows that bilge pumps are supposed to pump water OUT of a boat. Not that water should ever really flow into a boat in the first place, but given the number of holes (all with taps on them mind) through the hull it’s probably surprising the sea doesn’t find a way in more often. Anyway, we were sailing along, sunny sky, smiles all round, when the bilge alarm sounds. (gee I’m glad I had that installed all those years ago) Naturally, I lift the floor panel, revealing water a foot deep (about 30 cm for you young-folk) where it shouldn’t be, the bilge pump surrounded by bubbles doing its best to keep up.

Closer inspection revealed that instead of ONLY pumping water out, this particular bilge pump was allowing water to flow back IN – but only when we were on a starboard tack and the port outlet was under water; something amiss with the one-way valve, or outlet-hose presumably.

The problem was quickly fixed using our portable submersible pump (housed in a box on deck – oh that beautiful pump) *plus* a wooden plug (kept handy for such a situation as this) which was jammed into the hose once it was cut off the bilge pump itself.

Rather than simply share these “other joys” of life at sea and of owning a boat, my point in mentioning the generator, fuel and bilge pumps is to say that Ray and Bruce were good men to have around – reaching for the tool kit, lifting floor panels and probing with the multi-meter like their life depended on it; perhaps a bad analogy there. Whilst the bilge pump is just a temporary fix, the fuel pump and generator were quickly repaired, by adding more coolant (I’m ashamed to admit) in the case of the generator and re-attaching a loose wire and replacing a connector in the case of the fuel pump. All done with plenty of time to watch a late-night movie – Tanna – at the on-board MSM-DVD saloon-class cinema.

After arriving here yesterday around 4:00pm, having lunch (admittedly a late lunch), and launching the dinghy we were excited by the sight of a breaching whale, way out to sea beyond the entrance. This naturally drew us out of the bay in the dinghy rather than towards the beach as initially planned. Not too far out to sea, but far enough to



So close to the Wilson’s Prom lighthouse I’m sure we could have heard the dogs barking

see a repeated display of maybe three whales bashing their tails down onto the water lifting spray in all directions. Every now and then a whale would still breach, up into the air, its white belly glistening in the late afternoon sun, landing with an almighty splash. It was truly an awesome display, but eventually we needed to return to the beach.

Breakfast is now in full swing, the sun is out, it's still amazingly calm, and pretty soon we will go ashore for a climb up a nearby hill where internet and phone reception can be found. After all, it must be simply, positively, hours since I was able to check my texts, emails and look up the latest weather forecast.

Then it'll be time to up-anchor (after lifting the dinghy back on deck of course) and head around the other side of the Prom in readiness for our last-night-at-sea and the finishing line for Chimere's involvement in MSM Vanuatu Mission 2017



Refuge Cove again ...

Smooth seas, fair breeze and one more sleep and Chimere is home

Rob Latimer

PS Just checked the weather forecast ... still blowing 20-30kts at the Prom lighthouse, (Southeast Cape) and gusted up to 51 kts last night I see from the observations. It's still expected to calm down later today and in the day ahead.

[Elke Hofmann](#), [Judy Hooper](#), [Kerry Tait](#), [Rae-Ellen Graham](#), [Glenys Janssen-Frank](#), [Andrew McDonald](#), [Phil Wicks](#), [Sue Duke](#) liked this post



Entering the familiar Westernport, on an incoming tide (naturally)



## Back at last

"A Row", Westernport Marina, Hastings, VIC  
Wednesday 8 November 2017

The last "Official" Ships Log from Refuge Cove titled "One more sleep and Chimere is home" did kind of leave things up in the air a bit.

Well, as Cam's brief mission-by-numbers post confirms, YES we did make it back to Westernport Marina; our old berth once more.

Before officially tying up, however, there was a brief stop at the Marina Service Wharf to unload a trailer load of gear, including

lifejackets, wet weather gear, clothing, bedding and all that stuff that accumulates tropical salt and stickiness and which needed a good hose-down on the Hills Hoist at home, or wash in the machine.



A wonderful feeling of relief and satisfaction as Chimere is once more tied up in her pen at Westernport Marina after 6 months away

Here's a photo of the return crew. The "After" shot of the gang of four, me, Edith, Bruce and Ray.

It took six days to get back from Sydney. Not quite your Sydney-Hobart jaunt, but if Chimere was a car, she'd be more in the Holden Kingswood class, or maybe even a Ford F100, whereas yachts that enter ocean races are more along the lines of a Formula One, or a V8 Supercar. That said, I'd rather be transporting medical teams around the islands of Vanuatu aboard Chimere than Brindabella or Wild Thing; so each to their own I suppose.

For a brief summary of the MSM Vanuatu Mission 2017 mission you might like to click on the following [link](#) ... As life gets back to "normal" ... my bed has stopped rocking, the lawns at home get cut and the daily commute to the office resumes ... it's time to thank all the many, many people who contributed to the success of this year's mission. We set ourselves some very ambitious goals this year, and as I've said before, there were a lot of "moving parts" to the program, any one of which could have derailed us if it had not gone to plan.

The analysis of the data for the National Oral Health Survey will continue for a further 6 months or so, with this set to become a lasting legacy from this year's mission. A report, produced in conjunction with the Vanuatu Government's Ministry of Health that will inform the establishment of a National Oral Health Plan. Hopefully this will go some small way towards arresting the unfolding national health-disaster caused through the adoption of an increasingly sugar-based western diet.

As we enter this time of Advent, with the busy-ness ... not to mention the business of Christmas well upon us, may you find time to enjoy life's simple blessings, and have a safe and joyful time.

Smooth seas, fair breeze and back at last

Rob Latimer

[Andy Tiver](#), [Carmel Noble](#), [Liz Ogden](#) liked this post

## Introducing ... two new Ni-Vanuatu friends

September 2017,  
MSM Vanuatu Mission 4

Since its inception MSM has encouraged Ni-Van workers to be involved in mission, and is delighted this year to be working alongside Vanuatu MOH dental colleagues on the National Oral Health Survey 2017. MSM Mission 4 to the Banks Islands had five Ni-Vanuatu staff in the medical team, including two newcomers, 34 year-old Oral Health Therapist, Barkon Japheth, and 27 year-old dentist, Dr Wellin Jerethy, both currently employed at Vila Central Hospital dental clinic.

(Front l-r, Oral Therapist Barkon Japeth & dentist Dr Wellin Jerethy with Bob and Richard behind)

Japheth, who prefers to be called by his family name, was born on Aore, a small island off Santo, the largest island in the archipelago. His father was a farmer and a teacher, consequently Japheth and his four brothers and one sister attended several schools on Ambrym, Malekula, Efate, and Aore. Japheth remembers growing up adhering to traditional village ways with island food, singing, and dancing. Some of his favourite boyhood games seem remarkably familiar... shooting down a stack of empty cans, hopscotch, skipping, swimming, and snorkelling.

Later as a teenager he enjoyed hunting wild birds, goats and cattle. As an adult he currently plays rugby with a team in Port Vila.

(Japeth attends to an emergency case on Chimere's foredeck while Matt Latimer looks on)

Japheth undertook Science studies in Port Vila with aspirations to pursue a career in Medicine. After three unsuccessful attempts to gain entry into Medicine, however, his mother, Linda, prayerfully encouraged him to pursue a course of study in oral health therapy in Fiji. Following acceptance into the three-year course Japheth graduated in 2013 and joined the VCH dental clinic in 2014.

Having always enjoyed doing things with his hands, including drawing, Japheth has thrived in his work and particularly loves to help people and make them happy. He enjoys educating patients and gets great satisfaction out of seeing the fruits of his work. His occupation has also introduced him to many new friends.

Japheth attended the survey training course at VCH and had heard a lot about MSM before his boss, Dr Maine Rezel, encouraged him to join Mission 4. He has learnt a lot from the mission and is pleased to have made more new friends. The only downside was a dislike for the motion sickness during some of the rougher sailing legs, but fortunately this was controlled with medication and was not such a big problem as time went by. Japheth regularly attends the SDA church and the highlight each year is Christmas spent with all the family at his parent's home on Ambrym.

Barkon, Bob, Richard and Wellin,  
taking time out on Mission 4 to relax  
Bottom: It's Barkon's turn to do  
emergency dentistry on Chimere's  
foredeck





Japheth does not intend to continue working as a dental therapist. He has been awarded a scholarship to return to study to become a dentist, so that he can offer a greater range of skills to serve the people in Vanuatu.

Dr Wellin Jerethy has an interesting story, which motivated him to become a dentist. Born in Tenmaru village in the Big Nambas area in the NW of Malekula, he has two brothers and three sisters. Growing up he remembers handline and spear fishing, climbing trees, swimming and soccer. In the evenings he and other boys would hang out on the beach to listen to the men tell stories over a shell or two of kava. He attended primary and secondary school up to year 8 at Lakatoro, the provincial centre of Malekula.

He then moved on to years 9 and 10 at Epauto Secondary School in Port Vila and Malapoa College for years 11 and 12. After completing the Pacific Adventist University Science Foundation he successfully completed the 5-year BDS degree at the University of Papua New Guinea, and was the first dental graduate from Malampa Province in Vanuatu. Wellin was brought up in the SDA church and learned to appreciate the sacrifices his parents made to educate him and his siblings. Both parents were unemployed and had to work very hard doing odd jobs such as making copra and working in their gardens to pay for the school fees. Wellin said that his parent shaped the lives of all his family and he owes everything to them.

Returning to the reason he wanted to become a dentist, Wellin recalls as a child listening to his mother crying in pain from toothache during the night, and vowed that he would help her. As a second year student he came home already armed with the knowledge to extract his mum's rotten teeth that had caused her so much pain. He has since made her partial dentures to replace the missing teeth and plans to provide a more fixed solution for her missing teeth. Following his graduation from UPNG Wellin completed his two-year residency at Port Moresby General Hospital before returning home in 2017 to join VCH where he currently works. Even as a student he returned home every year to help people in his home villages and intends to continue this service to his people.

Wellin loves his job and has three major ambitions... to continue serving his people, to undertake a program at Otago University in NZ leading to a Master degree in Clinical Dentistry, and to set up a private dental clinic named after his mother, Alphine, to offer free dental treatment to people on weekends and public holidays. He feels passionate about improving oral health in Vanuatu and is willing to do anything and go anywhere to help make it happen.

Wellin also came to the VCH training and volunteered to join MSM Mission 4 because he wanted to visit islands where there are no regular dental services and to help people in need. He loves his job and feels happy whenever he has the opportunity to help others. He enjoyed the mission, made new friendships and felt part of the family on Chimere.

Thank you Japheth and Wellin for your expertise and contribution to the National Oral Health Survey, Vanuatu 2017, and all the best for the future.

Dr Barry Stewart



Wellin and Japheth relax in the village at the end of a long clinic – pulling teeth and conducting the National Oral Health Survey