

8 April 2010



Member Update

Greetings fellow MSM members and supporters...

... first the big news ... **YES** we are going again. In fact at this very moment Chimere is being fussed over like a bride on the big day as final preparations are made to enable us to set sail from Sydney on Thursday 15th April.

After such a successful inaugural mission last year, and a few months of much needed relaxation and reflection, the decision to once more assist the **Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness Project** wasn't such a big one. The close relationship we have established enabled with them meant that their plans for accessing different regions in 2010 continued to be discussed and in January the MSM team came to the point of asking the rhetorical question ... "so it's agreed then ... we go again?!"

Thank You

A very big thank you to those who have provided MSM with much needed financial support and encouragement over the past 9 months. It's amazing how every little bit counts and adds up.



Chimere on the dry having her bottom checked

At this point I need to mention Judy Hooper who's fundraising vision and hard work led to the musical Soiree being held at the Melba Conservatory of Music (in Melbourne) back on 21 March.

It was a brilliant afternoon and we were truly enchanted by the variety and excellence of the program assembled by MC and accompanist Dermot Tutty.

Thank you to everyone for making it such a success, with nearly \$2,500 raised; enough to hire the 12 person liferaft and install a safety ID-overboard system for the crew, particularly for their periods on watch at night.

Contact: Robert Latimer, 29 Wonga Rd, Ringwood North, 3134.
Ph: 0428 370579 & 03 9870 3918

1

Medical Sailing Ministries - taking medical services to where they are needed most...

Summary of Last Year

You might be very familiar with last years activities by following us on the website, but our initial objective was of course to arrive safely at the island of Tanna, (in the southern region of Vanuatu) by 15 May in order to meet the first medical team who were flying in from Australia. It was with much relief that this was achieved, with two days to spare.

Then over the next three months we met and transported two further medical teams on their two-week tours of duty. By the end of July we'd made it to 18 islands in all, assisting the medical teams conduct 48 clinics and see 4,220 patients. Over 2,500 pairs of glasses were dispensed with nearly 300 surgical procedures being arranged. A great result!



Eye clinic on Tanna, 2009

What's New For 2010

A big addition this year will be the provision of **surgical procedures** out in the field – in the regional, but still very remote, clinics. The surgical equipment for conducting eye operations, which also includes a portable generator and air conditioner, will be transported aboard Chimere and will be used by suitably qualified surgeons (not the ship's crew you understand) who will fly in at the conclusion of the medical missions in June and July.

On Mission 1, in May, we will also have a **dentist aboard**, Tony Burke from Ringwood. Tony will be providing a dental service at each clinic, training the local nurses in basic dental care and conducting a pilot study of tooth infection. This will assist with future planning and the introduction of a national dental training scheme for all health workers in Vanuatu. It's an ambitious plan and a much needed service. To find out more on the type of dentistry being employed look up Atraumatic Restorative Therapy, or ART on the web. <http://www.whocollab.od.mah.se/expl/artintrod.html>



Warm welcome at Mere lava, 2009

Plus, we are planning to introduce the idea of building low-smoke, mud brick **cooking stoves** in the villages where open fires are mostly used. The idea here is to help reduce the incidence of respiratory problems through the reduction of smoke inhalation. The building of very simple stoves has partly been inspired by viewing video clips on Youtube, where they are sometimes referred to as "Rocket Stoves".

MSM 2009 DVDs Available

If you'd like to get a firsthand glimpse of last year's work in the field, while at the same time donating to a good cause, download a DVD order form at the following link.

<http://msm.org.au/get-involved/order-dvd/>

The DVD contains six short films covering each of the missions in May, June and July, plus the delivery voyage to Vanuatu, plus much more ... as they say on TV.

Volunteer Crew

Once again we have been very fortunate in obtaining the services of many enthusiastic and capable volunteer crew to help maintain a ships complement of around 6 at all times over the course of the 3-4 months.

Chief amongst these is Bob Brenac, (a veteran of last years mission) who will skipper the voyage over to Vanuatu as well as the first mission in May.

The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) has been a tremendous support and many of the volunteers are either members or connected to the club in some way.

To give you an idea of what's involved in being a volunteer crew, apart from being available for 4-5 weeks and suitably qualified, I have included below a checklist of the many things they have been attending to in recent times:

MSM Volunteer Crew Checklist *(Extract from recent Volunteer Crew emails...)*

- Medical** Have you been to the doctor, got any required shots and investigated malaria anti-treatments yet?
- Personal** Start getting your personal gear together. Whilst it may not be necessary, don't forget the mozzie net (ideally the impregnated model) And also a blue pair of sailing shorts if possible. With the MSM T-shirt it acts as quite a good team uniform
- Flights** Check your flight itinerary when it arrives and if you could get your payment away for this ASAP it would be greatly appreciated.
- MSM \$\$** Your MSM crew contribution of \$750 is now required so if you can get that through soon that would be great.
- Fitness** Whilst I've been a bit on the slack side this last 2 weeks, it's a good idea, if you don't already, to do some exercises each day before going aboard; mainly to strengthen joints and improve muscle tone.
- Help** If you are able to lend a hand over this next couple of weeks in getting Chimere ready, Andrew would love to hear from you.

Info ... Make sure you get your doctor's "Fitness Letter", through to me ASAP and for those who haven't sent through their Bio, Photo and Passport scan through, please push this to the top of your list.



July 2009 Volunteer Crew
(Graeme, Terrence, Jo, Mike, Chris & Rob)

Vatu Don't worry too much about getting local currency (the Vatu). When we arrive you can get a small loan from the Vatu kept aboard Chimere and in any case you get a better exchange rate in Vanuatu.

Website Don't forget to tell friends and family to check the website from time to time. We hope to again put up a message in the Ships Log each day and everyone is encouraged to post comments. It's also a good way for those back home to get in contact with you. They send an email through to info@msm.org.au and from there our webmaster collates them, deletes any attachments and sends them via an email to Chimere (using Sail Mail, which operates through the HF radio)

Emails Please keep checking your emails regularly!

Test Sail The sail from Pittwater to CYCA at Rushcutters Bay will now take place now on MONDAY 12 APRIL. All welcome.

Holiday Package (5-12 August)

Otherwise referred to as Supporters and Friends Tour, this was a lot of fun last year and well worth considering.

It's a great way to get a first hand feel for the work of MSM and experience something of the Vanuatu culture.

Don't Forget the Website www.msm.org.au

The website is being re-worked to accommodate this year's mission, while at the same time archiving the photos, stories and content from last year.

We encourage you to keep tabs on Mission 2010 via the website and to look out for the regular news items and messages posted in the Ships Log.

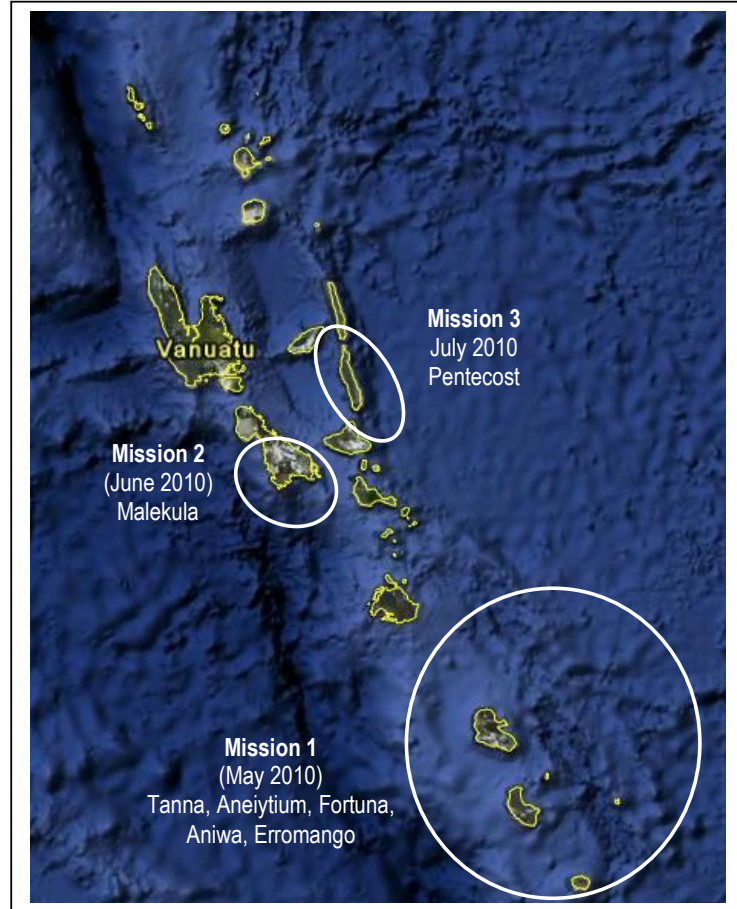
Your comments are always invited.

Exactly Where Are We Going?

After sailing Chimere to Vanuatu in the last two weeks of April, the first medical mission will then concentrate on the southern islands of Vanuatu throughout the month of May, specifically, Tanna, Aneityum, Fortuna, Aniwa and Erromango.

After a brief re-fuel and crew-changeover in Pt Vila the second medical mission will centre on southern and western Malekula throughout June.

Then in July the third medical mission will focus on the island of Pentecost, plus other smaller islands if time permits.



Thank You Once Again

Thank you again for your interest and support. We look forward to keeping in contact via the Ships Log throughout this year and encourage you to submit comments from time to time.

Smooth sea, fair breeze and not many sleeps now ...

Robert Latimer & Mike Clarke
MSM Co-ordinators

www.msm.org.au

**Contact: Robert Latimer, 29 Wonga Rd, Ringwood North, 3134.
Ph: 0428 370579 & 03 9870 3918**

5

Medical Sailing Ministries - taking medical services to where they are needed most...