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## Happy Christmas 2015 & a Prosperous New Year

Sea Bunny finally left SE Asia this year, passing through the Sunda Strait between Sumatra and Java on 25 June and is now in South Africa.

After spending Christmas in Phuket again we headed north to Koh Phayam for the New Year, meeting up on the way with John and Judy (Kalypso). The visit was necessarily short as we needed to get down to the Singapore area for our trip to Europe which this year included a 2-week skiing holiday in Austria (our fix of cool weather) as well as the usual visits to family and friends.



Anak Krakatoa

A couple of weeks in the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club marina enabled final shopping for the Indian Ocean. We were remembered from our 2008 visit and made very welcome, despite the roly berths. At the end of May it was time to move on again to transit Indonesia and enter the southern hemisphere again. To enter and anchor near the edge of the crater formed by the explosion of Krakatoa (1883) in darkness required the use of a triple split screen showing chart, depth and radar was very eerie as anchoring depths are within 50 m of the shore. This was upwind of the active forming peak of Anak Krakatoa (Son of Krakatoa) that emerged from the sea in 1927 and is now 189 m high.

From Indonesia it was a 4-day passage to Australia or, to be more precise, the Australian island group of Cocos Keeling.

We expected to find replacement working for our fridge waiting for us. However, as Australia Post don't seem to acknowledge the existence of that part of Western Australia, it was not to be and even now it has not got back to the supplier.

Here it is the custom to fashion a record of the visit out of flotsam so Sea Bunny did her bit.

A 14-day passage, fairly rough with up to 35 knot winds and 4 m seas, took us to the laid back island of Rodrigues, where we enjoyed several walking trips with the crews of other yachts as well as the hospitality of island residents.



Sea Bunny's visiting card - Cocos



Susan's winner - Maxrapax - is led in

The main island of Mauritius was next, a 2-day passage away. Here we attempted to get our radar, which had failed on the passage to Cocos, fixed. Unfortunately the local Raymarine agent had neither the skills nor the equipment to achieve this but nevertheless charged us significant amounts in respect of the parts that failed to fix the problem. The unit was shipped to the UK and returned to us, fixed, at our next stop. A day at the races was very enjoyable, being treated as honoured foreign guests by the Turf Club. While we did some car touring in Mauritius we much preferred the charm of Rodrigues.

From Mauritius it is a 19-hour voyage to France (Ile de la Réunion). Réunion was the highlight of the crossing. The small island has spectacular mountain scenery, remote areas with no roads and an active volcano. We could happily have stayed longer than 4 weeks but we needed to get to South Africa before the cyclone season, which technically starts in November.



**Piton de la Fournaise , Reunion**

The ocean charts show a current (the South Equatorial current) with a speed of 1-1.5 knots heading westward from the area of Réunion and south of Madagascar before it turns

southwards as the Agulhas Current on hitting the African continental shelf. This is a gross simplification – there are numerous eddies and countercurrents, many of which we found. As a result of these we only just made it to Richard’s Bay ahead of a “monster” cold front bringing 70-knot southerly winds. We had to motor hard for the best part of 3 days to maintain speed to achieve this.



**Collapsed marina**

When we arrived in Tuzi Gazi Marina a gang of crews from other yachts were on the dock to welcome us and we were tied up and in bed by 0200. At 0500 the marina pontoon to which Sea Bunny was attached collapsed, trapping her between two finger pontoons, both of which had rotated to gouge the hull until she could be released and moved two days later when the wind had moderated. We crawled up the partly submerged finger pontoon to the safety of an hotel.

side – causing more damage. In pitch darkness and pouring rain other yachtsmen made all vessels safe. Thankfully no-one was injured when the yachts were pushed up over the pontoon.

A few days later, when we had left on a trip to a game reserve the local, large, pilot boat lost control, ramming the boat next to us and forcing Sea Bunny into a motor cruiser on her other



**Zebra and suckling foal - Spioenkop nature reserve**

Despite these setbacks, we have been enjoying some touring – game reserves (4 of the “big five” sighted, but no leopards), battlefield sites (Zulu and Boer wars), bushman cave paintings and even a trip across the mountains into the



**Elephant - Hluhluwi nature reserve**

kingdom of Lesotho, with stops at the highest pub in Africa (2873 m) at the top of the Sani Pass while touring the Drakensberg mountain range.

We are now waiting for a suitable break in the southerlies to enable us to get to Cape Town to join friends for Christmas.

On the family side – Susan in delighted to have become a great aunt with the birth of Emily to Simon and Susie.

In 2016 we hope to visit Namibia, cross the South Atlantic and be in the Caribbean by May or June.

*Richard & Susan*

Zululand Yacht Club Marina, Richards Bay, South Africa