

CLASSIC CRUISES

there, we utilized the time to extensively refurbish *SKYLARK* and to outfit and resupply for another year of cruising.

We moored our boat at the Westhaven Marina, under the famous Auckland Bridge, and felt the security of having her moored instead of anchored for the first time since leaving the United States.

"We can't have too many mooring lines," I told Robby as we tied up that first morning of arrival.

The photograph (Photo 9), with the famous Auckland Bridge in the background, was taken near our berth in Westhaven Marina, *SKYLARK'S* home for five months. Kristi is returning from a shopping trip astride a bicycle loaned to us by a Kiwi friend . . .



PHOTO 9

Although we worked hard while visiting New Zealand, the tension and worry of the previous year's 9500 miles of cruising eased away and we were able to relax and enjoy the wonderful "Kiwi" hospitality and their beautiful, unspoiled country. We look back upon the time spent here as possibly the most enjoyable part of our trip around the world.

From New Zealand, enroute to the New Hebrides we struggled through two gales, and the Southeast Tradewinds were very strong. Here (Photo 10) Kristi is taking her trick at the wheel as *SKYLARK* is reaching in heavy seas. We had to wear our foul weather gear since, even though it was hot, we were constantly getting drenched by errant and capricious waves.

In New Hebrides, Bob and Kristi rendezvoused with Kirk and Ines Nyby whom they had met in Fiji. The two couples arranged to tour the Hebrides island group together.

Here, we made anchorages at Efate, Malekula, Ambrim, Pentecost and Espiritu Santo Islands. The most interesting anchorage of them all, however,



PHOTO 10

was an open roadstead called Rannon Anchorage in front of a copra plantation on Ambrim Island. A Frenchman we had met on mysterious Malekula Island told us that there was a native village of the Small Namba tribe not too far up the mountain behind the plantation. "You can find a guide at the plantation," he told us.

There are two tribes of Nambas in the New Hebrides: Large and Small Nambas. A "namba" is an item of wearing apparel worn by the men; it's sort of a figleaf. The early Europeans, noting that one tribe wore large nambas made of pandanus leaves while the other wore more petit nambas made of banana leaves, named the tribes Large and Small Nambas. If we could arrange it, the tribe we were going to visit was the Small Namba.

The plantation manager told us that the name of the village we had heard about was Fanla Village.

"It will only take you a couple of hours to walk up the mountain to the village," he explained. "My chief's son will be your guide."

Early the next morning the crews of both boats assembled on the black sandy beach of the volcanic island. The early morning sun danced across the anchorage, the volcano brooded above us, and the lush green jungle seemed to form an impenetrable wall about us.

"Where was the trail?" we wondered. Soon the chief's son, John, arrived and led us down the beach to a narrow path which disappeared into the thick jungle.

Single file, we trudged up the narrow path as it wound its way up the steep mountain. The foliage was green and lush, and the trail seemed to lose

itself at times in the grass and ferns. Coconut palms and other verdant growth closed over our heads to form a natural canopy to protect us from the oppressive heat. We emerged from the jungle, after a couple of long hours, into a clearing. We had arrived at Fanla Village.

The few people standing about greeted us and, as the word of visitors spread, those few people swelled into a receiving line comprised of nearly everyone in the village. We shook hands and greeted everyone as we moved through the line and worked our way through the compound, which turned out to be the first of three tiers. When we arrived at the top of the village's third tier, we were introduced to Chief Tofor, Headman of Fanla Village and Chief of all Northern Ambrim Island.

After visiting for an hour or so with Kirk and me, the Chief invited us to lunch. Although everyone was invited, the Chief (or Tofor, as we called him when we became more familiar) made it clear that Kirk and I were the only ones he would like to communicate with since we were "captains," not mere crew. In fact, as a sign of our status, he had us wear hibiscus behind our ears like the rest of the respected village elders (Photo 11).



PHOTO 11