



If you use computers for navigation, watch out for the Big Bang when you lose the lot. It doesn't just happen to other people.

NOT ME?

Office workers know only too well the ramifications of a computer meltdown and no backup. It's finally Don's turn to go through this modern-day affliction before getting into some "island" towing

Sure it will always happen to someone else, right... never you? That car accident, major illness or computer crash, or maybe you just mention something like, "Wow... the toilet has been running smoothly for ages, hey, and then the very next day... POW! A major plug-up!"

My best was back in 1997, heading into Hamilton Island after three weeks at sea with eight people onboard. I was so happy with our

toilet and told people so, then 20 minutes later... oops.

We traced it to a blocked outlet pipe, which I disconnected at the bowl and thought I would just "blow it through", so I put it to my mouth and blew hard. In that split second I knew it was a big mistake, pressure built instantly, I was out of breath and there was bound to be blowback, so yes, I wore it!

Persevering, I next selected a scuba tank for air-pressure backed-up by a swimmer in the water

armed with a long screwdriver at the skin fitting. Dive tanks create high pressure but this was no ordinary plug, holding till the last. When finally, you guessed it, there was an explosion, the swimmer wore it in a rush of wind, bubbles and poo. Which is just how I feel at this moment.

CYBER ATTACK

It just happened to me. After so long catching up to this new-age younger generation – continually on

iPhones and relying on technology etc. – I just lost my "cyber life" and it hurts so much, I cannot yet comprehend the ramifications. In other words my computer died, then my backup failed and five years of photos, contact lists, files and favorites are all probably lost. So often I had seen others with the same drama but never thought of me. For five months I had been saying my trusty old Toshiba must be ready to die and I guess it did. The real blow was losing my backup through bad luck, but I always tell people you make your own luck. Yes, I am kicking myself!

Most boats now use laptops and many are relying on them as their mainstream navigation hardware, rather than using proprietary-brand marine electronics. Great idea for sure, saves money – but just be prepared for the big bang! We all know they are great while they are working and that it only happens to others... right?

PAY ATTENTION!

In Fiji, Cloud Break is one of the top 10 surfing spots in the world and part of the competition tour for professional rankings in the sport. One very windy day, a guy came to ICE and asked if we could give him a hand to tow his "island" off the beach. A little surprised I asked about that island and sure enough, out the back of the marina during the cyclone season, he had indeed built himself a very stylish tropical floating island called *Cloud Nine*.

It will be anchored in the lagoon of the reef that delivers Cloud Break surf. A neat place to relax, drink and watch the dudes cutting the waves, and he is laying 20 yacht moorings out there too. His island was big and it was going to be the only day to launch. Forecast was 30kts onshore winds... hmm? Okay, I will help.

We left the marina before dawn and were onsite an hour ahead of the top of the tide. I checked the reef edge 200m out from the beach with my sonar to ground proof the chartplotter and confirm its position relative to a nearby pole. The wind was light, five to 10kts offshore, but there was stronger in the sky. With great excitement and cheers from the crowd they floated off and slowly drifted toward us hovering at the reef edge. My echosounder strangely decided not to work this day.

There were two dinghies in the water assisting with lines and it



Top: Ready to launch the "island" in the small hours, as the spring tide is rising. There were a few people worried if the tide would be high enough. Above: *Cloud Nine* "island" on the mooring at last, and our emergency rope reel and 120m floating line. I have another rope reel aft that holds our second nylon anchor warp and chain and another 100m nylon line. Reels are great!

was glass calm. I was just about to accept the 40m tow line when, oops, the slightest bump... we touched the top of the muddy reef flat while we drifted at 1kt. Engine in gear... but double oops, we were not moving anywhere and I didn't like thinking about being on the top of anything at the moment of a spring high tide.

I didn't try full power as I knew the reef edge must be just off our port beam, but when I saw my pole of reference I realised how dumb I had been not paying attention. I was in too far – obviously.

I instantly streamed out the 120m floating line from our deck reel through the vertical roller anchor chute, designed to take side loads, and gave it to *Newa*, the original tow yacht on standby. I could have powered hard and tried to "slide

turn" 90 degrees but the simplest was a side pull to straighten us up aiming for the reef edge I knew was just one boat length away. The muddy water did not show the bottom. (If *Newa* was not there I would have launched a dinghy and set an anchor at 90 degrees and warped across with the anchor winch drum).

A short, light 30-second pull straightened us up and then I powered up, slid off, recovered our line, picked up the "island" tow rope and took them to the mooring. The whole grounding incident and recovery was over so fast (about six minutes), that many spectators to the island's birth did not even realise it had happened. Being around boats all my life, I know "it happens", so I designed the response equipment into the boat



Left: My stainless steel 110lb anchor and port anchor chute with vertical rollers setup to take heavy side loads and not cut the rope – handy for groundings when you need to pull the boat sideways or if you set a second anchor at 60° to the original chain and anchor.

at build time. Next time, I will copy two backup hard drives... argh!

RED WHAT?

Adventurer and environmentalist Inigo Wijnen has just set sail solo from Sydney on a Pacific circuit in his 21m modern day proa outrigger *Gaiasdream* to promote a sustainable world and the advantages of these unique sailing craft. (Follow him on iniwijnen.com).

First stop is Tonga, where crew



Inigo is a passionate environmentalist and adventurer, building his proa out of renewable timber and obviously likes speed sailing.



Gaiasdream is not just a multihull it's a proa, where instead of tacking the boat you tack the mast and "shunt" upwind with great efficiency. The Tongans in the Pacific were masters of this art and now Inigo Wijnen is sailing his beautiful creation solo to Tonga, the Pacific and eventually the world.

INIGO BUILT THE BIG, RED, TIMBER PROA HIMSELF AND TONGA IS A FITTING FIRST STOP

will join him for the next leg to Noumea, then back to Sydney. It is all part of a shakedown for a proposed global circumnavigation in the future. Inigo built the big, red, timber proa himself and Tonga is a fitting first stop. They perfected these "shunting" sailing vessels and dominated the Pacific with them for generations.

YOUNG EXPLORERS

If you follow this column, you will know I am looking to sponsor two young explorers, 18 to 23yo, to join me and my crew at Blue Base in Tonga as part of our bluetreasure.me expedition.

I have had a few enquiries, sending out numerous info packages, but amazingly no one has been prepared to submit an official application to date. We are still in Fiji, just about to head across to Tonga where the adventure begins. It obviously is not for everyone and I would not just pick anybody but if you make the grade I am sure you will never regret the decision. If you are a diver we are looking for crew for the next few years.

WEAKEST LINK

People often ask if *ICE* is built of stainless steel. I have to admit



Above: Each year we lose 30cm of zinc galvanised chain due to corrosion by its connection to the stainless steel anchor and swivel.

there is plenty onboard, but no, she is a steel hull. I have an awesome Manson stainless steel plow anchor that does the job and looks good. Annually, I cut off about 30cm of chain that rusts/corrodes heavily at the large stainless steel swivel. When anchored, weak electrolytic corrosion sets in between the stainless steel and zinc galvanising. I accepted this would happen when I bought the anchor and plan/maintain this accordingly.

Some solve the problem with stainless steel chain, without thinking about the specification of the chain itself. A very impressive multihull just arrived at the marina on which they had done just that. The always-brittle stainless steel chain he had snapped and they went onto a reef. Punctured, one hull flooded but they were eventually salvaged to sail again another day. I just wish I could salvage my hard drive... argh! 🚫