

Membership in the Travelers' Century Club (TCC), organized in Los Angeles in 1954 by a group of the world's most widely traveled people, is limited to those who have visited 100 or more of the 317 destinations on the club's list.

A TRAVELERS' CENTURY CLUB YACHT EXPEDITION TO REMOTE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY



One of the most remote of those destinations is British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). Formerly called the Oil Islands ('oil refers to copra, or coconut oil, rather than to petroleum), BIOT consists of the Chagos Archipelago. Lying south of the Republic of the Maldives, BIOT consists of a number of atolls, the most southerly and the best known of which is Diego Garcia, where some of the U. S. aircraft employed in Afghanistan were

based. In the northern reaches of BIOT are the Salomon Islands, which I visited by yacht 21-22 July 2002.

Our yacht charter was organized by club member Charles Veley who was attempting to visit the entire TCC list within a period of 15 months. Charles, in his mid-30's, also planned to be the youngest person to visit every destination on the TCC list. Charles had already found two others to share the steep yacht charter expenses, Jeff Shea and Ben Fogle. Jeff is another TCC member who is also an accomplished mountain climber. Ben Fogle, while not a TCC member, is a BBC travel show presenter who is writing a book on far-flung British overseas territories. (There may also eventually be a parallel BBC television program.)

On 17 July I flew Emirates from Cairo to the Maldives via Dubai. Upon arrival on the morning of 18 July I hopped a motorized ferry from the airport island across to Male, the capital, which is situated on a nearby island. Then early on the morning of 19 July we flew to Gan in a 15-passenger twin engine plane.

Upon arrival at Gan the four of us were met by two sedan cars which carried us a short distance to a spot where we could board a small motorboat to go out to our 84-foot sailing yacht, the Dream Voyager. Due to the

An expedition member relaxes while sitting on a horizontal palm branch over the crystal clear waters of the Salomon Islands lagoon. Near this spot a ray was spotted.

