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Skipper's View

AFTER BEING TOSSED LIKE A CORK AT THE RNLI'S SURVIVAL CENTRE, I HAVE A NEW SENSE OF ADMIRATION FOR CREWS



WE ARE INDEBTED this month to the RNLI, which allowed us to use its impressive Sea Survival Centre in Poole to test the latest wet weather gear (see pp56-61).

And though it proved an excellent way to test the comfort and watertightness of the latest crop of oilies, the centre serves a much more serious purpose. Almost unbelievably, only one in 10 RNLI volunteers comes from a professional maritime background, so the pool is part of an invaluable training resource.

It allows volunteers to plan for abandoning ship, take the plunge from a 3m-high platform and learn techniques to stay warm, stay together and stay alive in the water. They also practice deploying and righting liferafts (all RNLI outboards are inversion-proofed – I wish

mine was) as well as how to survive in them. It means they get a glimpse of what it's like to be in a liferaft, helping them empathise with and treat anyone they rescue from a similar situation.

It may sound daft, but after just a few hours under the water jets in Poole, I discovered a new depth of admiration for the crews that risk their lives to save ours. When the blinds came down, plunging us into darkness, the steep 5ft waves (see p5) tossed our tethered lifeboat like a plaything. With rain and thunder thrown into the mix, it became clear that verbal communication was out of the question.

I asked our amiable trainers Adam and Barnie how crews dealt with it during a rescue and they said each coxswain and his crew have their own limited signals. But it all came down to training, to make sure no words needed to be exchanged for common manoeuvres. Imagine how much training that requires.

It is a myth that the RNLI is the UK's best-funded charity, although at £163m in 2010, it's not far off the top. In the same year it spent £155m, according to the Charities Aid Foundation. But the institution is obliged to keep vast cash reserves as a contingency so that it can continue pulling people out of the drink even if donations dry up.

I for one will be bumping up my contribution.

Sam

Sam Fortescue, editor



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CONTRIBUTORS



DAG PIKE is best known for motorboating, but has always sailed and now has a Falmouth Working Boat



JULIAN DUSSEK started sailing as a boy and recently took his boat through the French canals to the Med



KERRY PEARS and husband John launched their 40ft pilot house sloop in 1999 for a circumnavigation

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JOE MCCARTHY

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Fire in the sky

Photo by Adrian Kingsley-Hughes

Britain was treated to the very rare spectacle of the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights in late February. Here, Trwyn Du lighthouse near the northern entrance to the Menai Strait is outshone by the vivid yellows and reds, which are caused by charged particles from the sun hitting the Earth's atmosphere. Usually confined to the skies near the poles, the lights were seen as far south as the Home Counties.





Ebb and flow

EVENTS | GOSSIP | NEWS FROM THE SAILING COMMUNITY

FORESTAY FAILURE

PARTICIPANTS IN THE

Clipper race have been forced to make an unscheduled stop after it was discovered that forestay fittings were not up to the job.

This marks the second big issue with the boats after deck/hull laminates were found to be unsuitable just months away from the start.

The bottlescrew fitting actually failed in three of 12 Clipper 70s forcing organisers to instruct the entire fleet to stop racing and head to Hong Kong.

"There is clearly a fault with this part of the rigging and we are not prepared to take any risks with the remaining boats so far unaffected," explained Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, founder and chairman of Clipper



Ventures. "There are always adjustments needed with new boats and little things that need looking at. It's not the end of the world because the skippers were onto it very quickly. We suspect a lack of articulation at the base of the forestay is the main reason for this type of failure. The fitting is being replaced with Dyneema cordage."

No points were awarded for the abandoned race, with race nine, to Qingdao now officially starting out from Hong Kong.

Amateur Odyssey

FATHER OF THE modern rally and founder of the ARC, Jimmy Cornell, has announced an ambitious global race for amateur sailors.

"In recent years I have spoken to many owners of production boats who are keen to race around the world in a competitive event but see themselves excluded by the dominance of current offshore races by sponsored high-tech yachts sailed by professional crews," Cornell explained. "The World Odyssey will answer this demand by bringing back the Corinthian spirit of earlier round-the-world races."

Entry will be limited to 40ft-60ft (12m-18m) mono-hulled boats with no performance enhancing modifications to the standard design and racing

will be run under the IRC rule.

The ten-month-long Odyssey will start in summer 2016 from an as yet un-named port in France and follow the traditional sailing route around the three great capes of the Southern Ocean. The 28,300-mile route has been divided into 11 legs, with stopovers in ports with good yachting facilities that are

also attractive destinations. A longer stop has been planned in the New Zealand capital, Wellington for families and friends to join the crews for the Christmas holiday season.

Entrants will take part in oceanographic and meteorological projects to monitor climatic conditions from remote ocean areas.

The planned route for Cornell's World Odyssey, taking in three of the five great southern capes



Designer dies

David Sadler – best known as the designer of the renowned Contessa 26 and 32, and early Sader yachts has died at home in New Zealand.

Sadler grew up in Essex and built his first cruiser when he re-designed his Folkboat hull to be built in GRP, giving birth to the iconic Contessa 26. He went on to design a great many boats and ran the Sadler company with son Martin from 1977 to 1981.

David retired permanently in 1981 and later emigrated to New Zealand. His two children, five grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and second wife survive him.

THAI TAX TROUBLE

A new law to reduce the time a boat can stay in Thailand from six to two months is on hold, following complaints from the boating community



SAILING SCENES

GOING UP



SOLO RECORD The World Sailing Speed Record Council has announced the establishment of a new singlehanded 24 hour record of 677nm by Armel Le Cléac'h on the trimaran *Banque Populaire VII*.



NEXT CHALLENGE Hilary Lister, the quadriplegic sailor who shot to fame following a British circumnavigation is preparing to tackle the Indian Ocean from Mumbai to Muscat



BELGIAN BACKDOWN The Belgian Finance Minister, Koen Greens has advised that visiting British leisure craft can use red diesel in Belgian waters provided that they are able to present documents that prove excise duties have been paid in the UK



NEW MCZS At a meeting on 24 February Defra announced the 37 sites under consideration for the second tranche of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in England. See www.sailingtoday.co.uk for more details

GOING DOWN

Storm damage hits 1,000s

FOLLOWING SOME OF the worst storms and flooding the UK has seen in many years, more than 8,000 boats are feared lost or damaged.

The estimate comes from major insurer Haven Knox-Johnston on the basis of claims submitted between December and February.

Insurers were reluctant to try to put figures on the costs of the clean up, but with

insurance premiums making smaller claims uneconomical, it seems likely to reach well into the millions of pounds.

Claims hotspots include marinas and private moorings on the Medway and Thames and coastal areas of Cornwall, Dorset and Sussex. The most common claims relate to boats colliding, hull and external damage, internal and engine damage, damage done

by broken marina fingers and total write-offs.

Across all sectors, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) says storm claims have hit £426m, with the cost expected to grow. Councils have already said they need to spend in the region of £400m repairing roads, in addition to the bill for patching up council buildings and providing emergency help.

Oyster back on the up

OYSTER YACHTS IS to close its Ipswich HQ and move operations previously based there down to Southampton, *Sailing Today* has learnt. Only brokerage and commissioning will remain at the site.

The changes are the final stage of returning the British boatbuilder to financial health after ending a foray into

Turkish-built superyachts, according to Oyster MD David Tydeman.

The move comes as Oyster reports an order book of 33 yachts worth £70m – back to its 2007 peak. This represents a rise of 17 per cent on 2012, with most demand coming from the traditional markets in the UK, Germany and the US.

The firm's Wroxham yard in Norfolk is undergoing significant expansion to create a further five building bays in a new 1,000m² unit. It will mean that boats up to 75ft can be built in Norfolk and create up to 50 new skilled trade jobs by 2015, Tydeman said. Oyster will focus on its core 45ft-90ft (13.7m-27.4m) boats.



RYA Dinghy Show

THE ANNUAL RYA Dinghy Sailing Show took place at the Alexandra Palace in North London over 1-2 March, and has seen an impressive increase in attendance figures.

"We had some 10,000 people attend this year's show, making it the most highly-attended show since 2006, with a fantastic 7 per cent increase in advance and on the door tickets on last year's

figures; we are delighted," said show co-ordinator Charlotte Pearson of the RYA.

Though the show has never been the size of the London Boat Show (LBS) and only takes place over the course of a single weekend, it is interesting to note that this increase is in stark contrast to the LBS which saw yet another fall in attendance figures in 2014 – though sales

made at the show were up year-on-year.

Like the LBS, the Dinghy Show was also a great success for exhibitors, with many reporting increased sales. "The atmosphere is really friendly and we've had a lot of people coming to talk with us... Saturday was really busy, much busier than last year," commented David Kent of the Scottish Sailing Institute.

BISCAY BOXES

THE CONTAINER SHIP, *Svendborg Maersk* lost a staggering 520 containers during a serious storm in the Bay of Biscay last month.

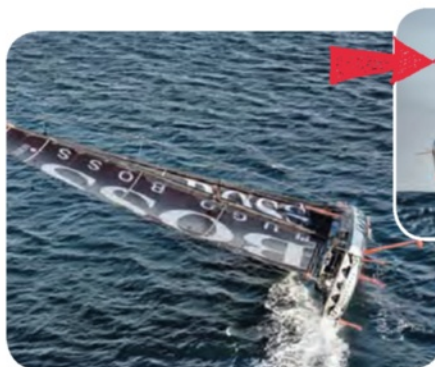
This is clearly a significant loss, though how it stacks up to the numbers of containers lost annually is hard to estimate due to there being no such record.

The Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) has said it believes most of the containers were empty and have sunk in French waters approximately 75 nautical miles southwest of Land's End.

However, at least one container has washed up on UK shores, at Axmouth, which forced the agency to remind potential salvage hunters of salvage laws surrounding containers. "We have been carrying out extensive searches over the last four days and spotted three containers, one of which has since come ashore, the other two are mid-Channel.

"The public is reminded that all wreck material found in the UK has to be reported to the MCA's Receiver of Wreck by completing a form on our website. Those who don't declare items are breaking the law and could find themselves facing hefty fines and paying the owner twice the value of the item recovered."

SAILING STUNT: BRITISH solo yachtsman, Alex Thompson has taken part in an impressive stunt, climbing the mast of his IMOCA 60, Hugo Boss



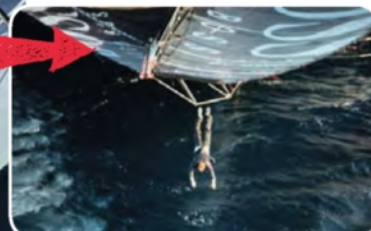
THOMPSON said afterwards it was something he would never repeat



THIS SHOT was released by Hugo Boss to universal acclaim and featured in sections of the national press



IT BARELY needs to be stated that huge numbers of safety and support crew were on hand



THIS FINAL DIVE and a video detailing the shoot can be found at www.sailingtoday.co.uk

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BRITISH-BUILT



Azzam launched for VOR 14/15

£n/a

Just launched in preparation for the 39,000nM Volvo Ocean Race, the 65ft (19.8m) Open class racer *Azzam* has been undergoing sea trials off the UK's south coast. With her carbon-infused, canting keel, she's a bit off piste for ST, but she's a fascinating British project for double Olympic silver medallist Ian Walker. She was built by Green Marine in Hythe, where she also underwent extensive testing, including a pull-down to 45°, to ensure her 4.7m (15ft 6in)-long, 3,500kg lead bulb keel would not adversely affect the yacht's integrity in the hazardous sea conditions experienced in the Southern Ocean.

Azzam is the fourth of seven identical yachts being built for the race, which starts in Alicante, Spain on 4 October 2014. To follow all the latest news of the Abu Dhabi Ocean Racing team check out www.volvoceanraceabudhabi.com, or www.facebook.com/AbuDhabiOceanRacing.

► **Builder:** Green Marine 023 8081 5420 www.greenmarine.co.uk



Faurby 460e

from £550,000

One of the most attractive yachts at the Dusseldorf Boat Show this year was the Faurby 335e, but just as interesting was the news that this traditional Danish boatyard is working on a new project – a bluewater 46-footer (14m) with an eye-popping 'standard' spec.

Built around a substantial steel subframe with bulkheads laminated onto the hull, she has rod standing rigging and a lead-ballasted keel. The choice of sail plan, sails, instrumentation and accommodation layout are left with the owner to decide.

► **Builder/UK dealer:** www.faurby.dk



Arcona 380

£255,000

Thanks to its vacuum-infused hull and deck, the new Stefan Qviberg-designed Arcona 380 should be lighter and stronger than ever. As with her predecessors, she is built around a steel sub-frame, keeping the rig loads off the hull.

She will fly a 107 per cent headsail and a large, fully-battened main, giving her plenty of power, offset by a deep bulb keel. She promises to be even better all-round than her predecessor, the indomitable, race-winning 370, so I can't wait to get my hands on her this June.

► **Builder:** www.arconayachts.se

► **UK dealer:** www.arconayachts.com

Saffier SC8M Cabin

£61,000

Right up there with the Eagles and Rustlers of this world is the to-die-for Saffier range of elegant weekend cruisers from Holland. The SC8M Cabin is an enclosed version of this beautiful series, but manages to give you the feeling of being in an open boat thanks to its spacious self-draining cockpit and lack of guard wires.

All lines come back to the cockpit, and she also boasts a bright interior with accommodation that will cater for up to four adults in relative luxury below, with a small galley, heads with sea toilet and comfortable berths.

► **Builder/UK dealer:** www.saffieriyachts.com



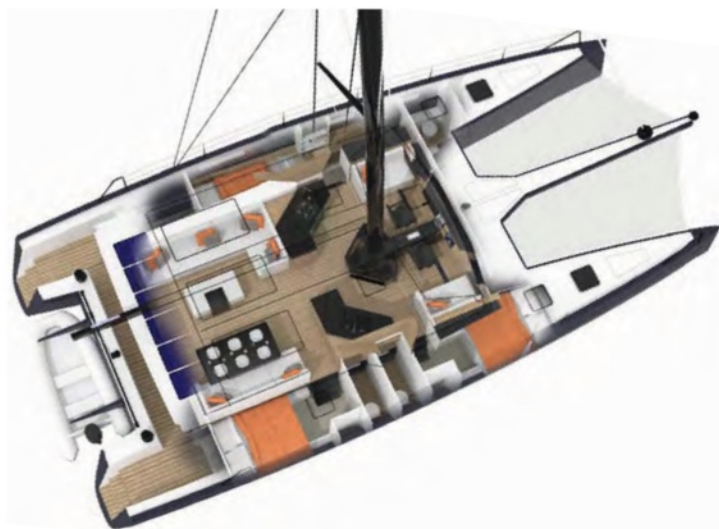
ACCF K10

c£46,000 (€55,000)

This beautiful new performance 21ft (6.5m) daysailer is built by French small-boat specialist ACCF in Loctudy. She's designed by Jeremy Guénolé as something of a concept boat – plywood replaces one layer of glassfibre for greener credentials (and a lovely woody finish); her lifting engine pod can be powered from a small hydrogen fuel cell in a carbon-fibre canister; and lightweight construction means she weighs only 850kg.

A flat, modern hull shape, fat-head main and lifting bulb keel promise a fast ride even in low winds. And her light weight makes her easily trailable.

► **Builder:** www.accfmarine.com



Broadblue Rapier 550

from £1.74m

Originally Broadblue cats were rather stodgy cruising boats that weren't quite well enough thought out. At Southampton 2013, however, I was introduced to designer, Darren Newton and his new Rapier 400 – now part of a new series of BB cats being built in Cornwall. Wow, what a difference! They are lighter, sexier and now look like serious ocean cruising yachts.

The open-plan 550 has acres of useable deck space, a luxurious interior and singlehanded capability, thanks to handling solutions such as a central, enclosed helm station, self-tacking jib, reversible electric sheet winches and more. She's also built to be fast (up to 350nm/day), light and strong due to the advanced carbon-infusion construction process.

► **Builder:** www.sapphireboats.com

Word of mouth

LETTERS | TWITTER | FACEBOOK | EMAIL

COMMENT OF THE MONTH

No good ice year

Could you pass my thanks to Bob Shepton for the great read in April's *ST* (*In Amundsen's Footsteps*). My wife and I were sailing *Traversay III*, our 45 footer (pic, below middle), as we passed *Dodo's Delight* just west of Cambridge Bay on 28 August. We left London on 31 March 2013 and arrived at Victoria on the west coast of Canada on 31 October.

Environment Canada records show 2013 to have been the worst ice year since 2006 – and there were no good years prior to that. It was interesting for us to read about the eastbound passage because the season in the east both opened and closed earlier than in the west. Thus, ice-wise we had an easier time entering and exiting than the eastbound boats. Prince Regent closed for good just a few days after *Dodo's Delight* left it.

We certainly had ice issues at Bellot Strait, Franklin Strait and Cape Bathurst but were not as pressed by the advance of the season as was *Dodo's Delight*. Our problems were more with mechanical things and abysmal weather in the Bering Sea and North Pacific. All in all, quite an adventure!

Larry Roberts, Victoria, BC, Canada

Caribbean coincidence

I was pleased to read your article about Iain and Fiona Lewis (ST203) and their yacht *Ruffian* as I met them last year in the BVIs; a meeting that threw in an amazing coincidence.

In our party was my chum Owen Davies with whom I share ownership of a Sadler 29. One day, I spotted a British-registered Sadler 34 sailing into the Sound. Sails were dropped and the boat moved on to Biras Creek, the stop

PRIZE COMMENT
Our star letter wins a bottle of Old Pulteney Navigator, the genuine maritime malt distilled in the fishing town of Wick.
www.inverhouse.com

for 'live-aboards' who don't want to cough up for a yacht club mooring.

As Sadlers are not exactly common in the Caribbean, I went across to chat with the owners. I introduced myself as a fellow Sadler owner and enjoyed listening to details of Iain and Fiona's adventures since leaving the UK. Iain also told me of his younger days sailing in Langstone and Chichester harbours. He mentioned his introduction to sailing at the Havant Youth Sail Training Scheme (HYSTS).

I replied that if he started off at HYSTS he ought to know my co-boatowner, who was involved with HYSTS for many years. "Owen taught me to sail," was



Iain and Fiona Lewis sailing *Ruffian*, their Sadler 34

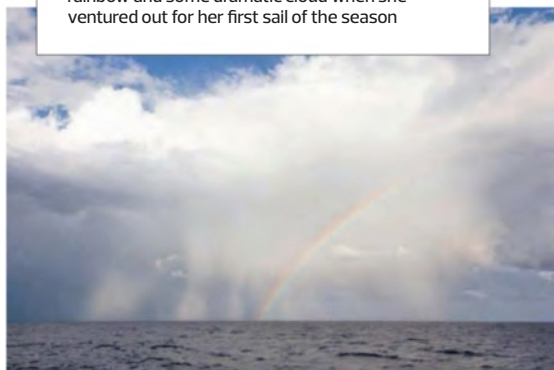
Iain's reply. How's that for a coincidence? We also established that Iain had been a junior at Langstone Sailing Club, where both Owen and I are members.

Later that evening, we got chatting to an elderly couple from Boston, USA, whose son works in the UK at a company located about half a mile from our home. After that we decided we had had enough coincidences for one day.

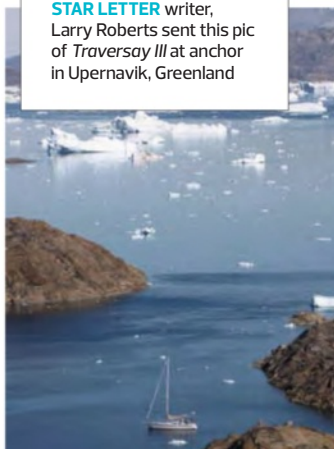
Gerry Woods, Havant

YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

LUCY FOWLER was rewarded with this view of a rainbow and some dramatic cloud when she ventured out for her first sail of the season



STAR LETTER writer, Larry Roberts sent this pic of *Traversay III* at anchor in Upernavik, Greenland



HARRY WATHEN happened across the driver of this Princess struggling on the Thames





Retweet

A video we posted of a yacht surfing through a harbour entrance in a storm elicited a number of responses this month:

Speechless!

Jason Williams – Facebook

That would of been interesting in any boat.

Stuart Newcombe – Facebook

Very clever, but I don't think I would have been out there in the first place!

Sue Ketteridge – Facebook

I don't care who or what skill level that skipper is but that was definitely done with clenched cheeks!! Amazing all the same.

Iain Fraser – Facebook

This is totally amazing and very scary!

Georgina Moon – Facebook

Relieved!

Russell Mogridge – Facebook

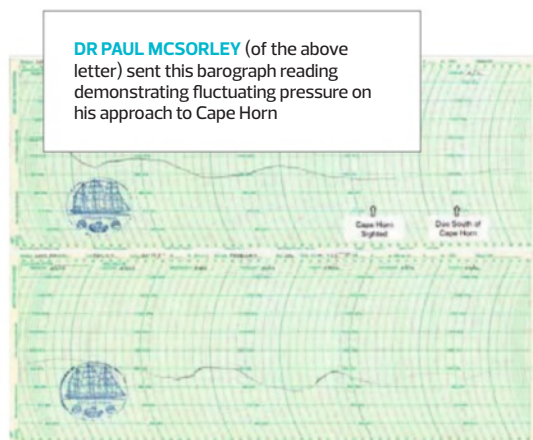
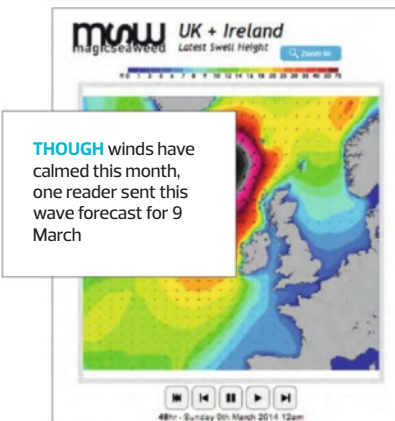
Elsewhere a number of people got in contact to express their delight (and sometimes distress) at the results of the ST 200th edition best boat vote.

Contessa 32 voted 'best boat' ever in @SailingTodayMag and by a huge margin. Quite right too!

David Barrie – Twitter

Gemini voted as second best boat in @SailingTodayMag vote. Should be first.

Jennifer Kimberly – Twitter



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Gas detector

I'd suggest a rethink on recommending that a domestic carbon monoxide detector be fitted on a boat. Is it designed to withstand motion, humidity and temperature changes on your readers' boats? At least warn them to take it in the winter if nothing else.

Carbon monoxide is a very hot topic at the moment following the deaths in the Lake District last year and the child who died recently from a generator in a basement. I'd suggest you get whatever techies you have at your disposal to consider your recommendation and then run a risk assessment on same for the insurers.

Susan Stockwell, Nereus Alarms by email

A line tells a 1,000 stories

I enjoyed Dr Simons Keeling's weather tips (ST203) and was particularly interested in his recommendation to keep a barograph on board. As well as being a powerful indicator of developing weather conditions, I would advocate the barograph tracing as a unique record of a passage.

The movement of the pen, in reaction to pressure changes, tells of stable or stormy weather. Depressions or gales are captured in date and time and can be related to journal or log entries – essential fodder for sailor's yarns.

I have just returned from the epic

voyage of the Jubilee Sailing Trust Sail Training Barque, *Lord Nelson*, across the South Pacific from Auckland to Ushuaia. The *Lord Nelson* carries a barograph and contributes weather observations to the Met Office.

The illustrated tracings (below, right) relate to our approach to and through the Drake Passage. We encountered Cape Horn in benign mood, with flat seas and very light winds and spent a day drifting around it. The barograph demonstrates fluctuating pressure on our approach, which gave way to a near flat line for the day of our rounding (1 February 2014) and is followed by more unsettled conditions as we proceeded northeast. There are many ways to tell a story but to my mind the barograph does it well.

I am keen to acquire one for my own boat, but my initial research hasn't produced any ideal options for a cruising yacht. The traditional pen and paper device is bulky, expensive and likely to be temperamental. It should be possible to produce a continuous record with an electronic device. This could be downloaded and printed when ashore. Are you or readers are aware of any devices on the market that are compact, robust and cheap?

Dr Paul McSorley, Londonderry

Editor replies: I have seen digital barographs on boats – NASA Marine produces a simple one, or have a look at the German-made Bohlken Westerland. They both use the NMEA protocol, which means you could hook them up to a PC or tablet to permanently record changing readings.

What's on

EVENTS | DIARY DATES | PLACES TO VISIT

AROUND LUNDY RACE / 31 MAY

45 miles with 50 or more boats around the 'Jewel of the Bristol Channel'



RICHARD ALLAWAY



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Broadside

READY MEALS AND BOTTLED WATER ARE OUT FOR **ROD HEIKELL**, WHO RELISHES THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF COOKING ABOARD

The days are long gone, if they ever really existed, when sailing folk opened a tin of something for dinner or, like Tilman, cooked up a pot of gumbo or burgoo which was added to for weeks until it got too mouldy to eat. Most cruising people eat very well and spend a lot of time thinking about and preparing food. On passage cooking can be difficult as you bucket down the tradewind route and needs a bit of tenacity and a bit of planning.

One solution often touted for passage-makers is that you trot along to the local supermarket and order a pallet of ready meals. It's an odd idea, when you have a lot of time on your hands on passage, to resort to a TV dinner of mashed goo and spud. In any case, you just can't buy them in many places in the world.

When thinking of what you are going to cook, there needs to be a bit of creativity used in the ingredients department. Any on-board recipes should be taken as a guide and not instructions set in stone. One of the things most cruising folk get used to is substituting ingredients which look like, taste like, or have the same texture as the missing ingredient.

For example, if you need roasted pine nuts, try substituting roasted almonds, walnuts; pumpkin seeds or even peanuts. And don't roast them: dry-fry (they have oil in them) and then tip onto a kitchen towel. If you can't get parmesan try some of the local hard cheeses. In Leros in Greece they make an excellent hard white cheese, leriko, that keeps well and tastes as good as Parmesan. In Greece and Turkey, try the local versions of peppery rocket grown there. Make your own sweet and sour sauce by chopping some chilli into marmalade and adding a little balsamic vinegar. As long as it tastes about right, it will do in the absence of the real thing and who knows, it may taste better.

Putting a stores list together is much dependant on individual tastes. On *Skylax* we carry little in the way of frozen meat or other frozen stuff. Usually just a frozen chicken and maybe some frozen beef, sausages, bacon – that sort of thing. While we have a freezer, we do not run it as such, it is more a very cold drinks fridge. To keep it frozen down in a Mediterranean summer or in the Tropics would entail running the engine (the fridge



PHIL STARLING

'It's an odd idea, when you have time on passage, to resort to a TV dinner of mashed goo and spud'

compressor runs off the engine to two big holding plates in the 'freezer') twice a day for around an hour. I'm not interested in burning the fuel, nor annoying the hell out of others sitting in an otherwise quiet anchorage, by running the engine just to pull a couple of frozen steaks out of the freezer.

I have a particular bee in my bonnet about bottled water. So often, you will see boats loading pack upon pack of bottled water on board until the gunwales are nearly awash with the stuff. Our seas and oceans are peppered with empty plastic water bottles bobbing around, washed up on beaches and casually disposed of ashore. Even if they are taken to a bin, they invariably end up being burnt on a rubbish dump and releasing all sorts of toxic compounds into the environment.

Apart from the very obvious matter of pollution in the sea and on the land, there are other reasons why it is pointless to carry all that bottled water on board. Most bottled water

is not required to comply with the standards that are rigorously applied to municipal water supplies. I well remember the MD of a water brand being put on the spot in a TV interview and asked if he would give his small child mineral water or London tap water to drink. He replied tap water, though rather sheepishly.

Drinking bottled water is not going to keep you away from any nasties in the local tap water. What do you clean your teeth with? Do you eat ashore? If you do then what do you think the ice in your drink is made of? What do you think the glass is washed up in? And what do you think the salad ingredients are washed in?

Water in another country will have some benign bacteria of a slightly different strain to that your gut is used to at home. The sooner you adapt to the 'foreign' bacteria, the better. And you get to eat ashore.

So, bottled water is an affectation you can do without. And you will be doing yourself and the environment a favour as well.

ROD HEIKELL has been sailing since his youth, and edits most of Imray's Mediterranean pilot guides

YOUR VIEW

What are your tips for cooking on passage?



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SMUGGLERS' COAST

Before you plan your summer cruise to the West Country, take a look at *Dag Pike's* guide to the secret harbours of Devon and Cornwall



Look beyond the usual famous West Country spots and a host of smaller harbours can prove just as charming

CHRISTOPHER NICHOLSON/ALAMY

SOUTH DEVON & CORNWALL



It is almost like a rite of passage for a cruising yacht, sailing down Channel to the West Country. This is the classic summer cruise for the Solent sailor and it can be a very rewarding week of sailing. With the prevailing southwesterly winds, you may face some head winds on the way west, but you have the comfort of knowing that if the weather follows its normal patterns, you will have following winds to speed you home.

It is a coastline blessed with some magnificent natural harbours such as Plymouth, Dartmouth, Falmouth and Fowey which are supplemented by a host of smaller harbours. It is a coastline full of history and its scenic beauty attracts many cruising yachtsmen who are spoilt for choice in places to visit.

Your plans will be dictated partly by your sense of adventure. You can play it safe and use the marinas in the major ports, but there are many smaller harbours where you will probably have to pick up a mooring rather than have marina convenience. Further down the line there are some tiny drying harbours that will demand settled conditions for a visit. You are unlikely to find an anchorage in any of the harbours

these days, because all the good spots have been used for moorings, but there are still sheltered bays and beaches that are possible for overnight anchoring such as off Cadgwith on the Lizard peninsula where the Cadgwith Cove Inn is only a short tender ride ashore.

Minerals have played a major part in port development and whilst Plymouth has long been known as the major naval port, upriver there

'ports along this coast were originally fishing harbours'

are the remains of several mineral ports such as Cotehele and Morewellham, which are now more museum ports than operational ones. However, it was the fishermen who knew the best places for harbours and so many of the small ports along this coast were originally fishing harbours. These tended to be built on the eastern, more protected side of the headlands.

Places like Mousehole, Mevagissey, Polperro and Gorran Haven all fall into this category and in the summer they are full of boats on the crowded moorings. You may be able to find an



ST. GERMANS

'don't forget the delights of the Scillies just 20 miles over the horizon'

overnight berth if you are prepared to dry out alongside, so this is an option mainly for bilge-keelers and long-keeled yachts. Other harbours more exposed to the southwest such as Portleven, Mullion, Portwrinkle and Hope Cove are less secure for a relaxed overnight stay – as was so clearly demonstrated by the recent UK storms.

If the weather does turn foul on your cruise then you have the sheltered estuaries which can provide a great day out when the weather makes passage making unpleasant or unsafe. Exmouth, Salcombe and Dartmouth in the east are great places to explore upriver when the tide is right, whilst further west you have the splendid options of Fowey,

Plymouth, Falmouth and the Helford offering sheltered day cruising by yacht or by tender.

Land's End may be the end of the road for many because here the next stop is Ireland or the Bristol Channel, with nowhere to hide for many miles, but don't forget the delights of the Scillies just 20 miles over the horizon. The marina at Newlyn is well located either as a turning round point on your cruise or as a waiting point for the right weather to head further west. Here, like most fishing ports, you have fresh fish shops on the quay and of course, pubs close by.

GET IN TOUCH Do you have a favourite spot off the beaten track in the southwest?

1 Seaton

Often overlooked on the way west is the delightful port of Seaton. Here the River Axe meets the sea and the narrow entrance with its strong tides could prove a challenge for low-powered yachts, so I would advise only attempting the narrow entrance in settled conditions. The channel has been well stabilised these days and advice is available from the helpful Axe Yacht Club. Once inside you find all the usual facilities of a small town.

Entrance: 50°42.18N, 003°03.15W
Depth in entrance: dries at LW springs.



ROBERT HARDING WORLD IMAGERY/LAMY

DAG PIKE

2 Tuckenhay

Located upriver from Dartmouth, Tuckenhay on Bow Creek is a peaceful, drying backwater where you can stay overnight alongside the Maltster's Arms by prior arrangement. The channel along the creek from the Dart runs roughly down the centre of the creek and is marked by pole beacons. Tuckenhay was a bustling port in the past but is now a quiet rural community with the quay at the pub virtually the only landing place along the creek.

Entrance: 50°25.65N, 003°39.32W

Whilst there is water in part of Bow Creek at low water, further up near the pub it virtually dries out.

3 Hope Cove

This west-facing fishing harbour is tucked in behind Bolt Tail, its seawall combining with the natural rocks to offer protection. The harbour itself is for small boats but there are moorings and a possible anchorage outside in good conditions. Watch out for Goody Rock as you come in. The Hope & Anchor is the local pub supplemented by hotels and cafes.

Entrance: 50°14.65N, 003°51.75W

The harbour dries out extensively but you can stay afloat at the anchorage/moorings.

4 Bantham

Another west-facing entrance with a challenging bar. Conspicuous Burgh

Opposite: St German's was a busy port in the 1800s, handling coal, timber and limestone

Left, from top to bottom: Seaton is one of only a few ports to break a passage across Lyme Bay; Hope Cove offers a fair weather anchorage; the River Dart has lots of quiet creeks for anchoring

Above right: The River Avon has a few deeper water anchorages

Island helps to identify the entrance. The winding river channel brings you into a sheltered area with a quay that dries. All the moorings are spoken for but there might be one available on contact with the harbourmaster. A harbour to perhaps explore by tender and the Sloop Inn provides a warm welcome.

Entrance: 50°16.62N, 003°53.75W

Virtually a drying harbour, best entered on the flood close to high water.

5 St. Germans

One of the many small harbours on the tributaries of the extensive estuary at Plymouth. Dominated by the railway viaduct upstream, it has a quay and moorings with the Quay Sailing Club being the point of contact. Access is via the St. Germans River where the channel is marked by pole beacons and is easy to follow as the tide rises. Apart from the club the village facilities are 1 mile inland.

Entrance: 50°23.46N, 004°18.15W

The quay dries at low water but there are pools in the channel where yachts can lie afloat.

6 Portwrinkle

Portwrinkle looks like an impossible sort of harbour: just a circle of rough stone walls built on an exposed coast. But closer inspection shows the logic of it. Further out is a reef of rocks that breaks up heavy seas, then a stone breakwater guards the entrance to reduce any swell inside. A gap in the reef allows access but



7



9



PORTWRINKLE



10

local knowledge is needed to find this, as both the reef and the breakwater are covered towards high water when access is best. So this is a harbour to visit by tender in settled conditions, but the reward is the Whitsand Bay Hotel a little way along the sea front.

Entrance: 50°21.58N, 004°18.85W
Dries at around half tide with access best around high water.

7 Lostwithiel

Lostwithiel is right at the head of navigation of the Fowey River and you follow a beautiful, long and winding channel to get there. The chart offers little help once you get above St Winnow, but the OS map shows where the channel lies. There is a drying concrete quay here close to the town but this once busy harbour is now silted and almost abandoned. It is a great trip up and best done a couple of hours before high water.

Entrance: 50°24.23N, 004°40.05W
The river channel above Golant virtually dries out at low water.

'The chart offers little help above St Winnow'

8 Port Navas

Port Navas lies on one of the creeks on the north side of the beautiful Helford River. A drying creek with old quays, it sports a yacht club (for sale for those with a spare million or two) which controls most of the moorings and there is some conflict here between the oyster fishermen and the yachties, but this mainly tranquil harbour is well worth a visit. Contact the Port Navas Yacht Club for a mooring.

Entrance: 50°06.38N, 005°08.62W
There is fair access to the moorings for most of the tide for a shallow draught yacht.

9 Gillan Harbour

Gillan Harbour is an alternative to the more popular Helford River next door. Don't come here if you want shore facilities, because there are none, but it is a great place for a quiet anchorage or to pick up a mooring.

GET IN TOUCH What are your 'must haves' for bluewater cruising?

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The moorings have taken over the good spots in the entrance to the creek where you can lie afloat over low water. There is a landing point at St Anthony at the yacht charter business or on the opposite side at Flushing

Entrance: 50°05.25N, 005°05.38W
Much of the creek dries at LW but there is deeper water in the entrance.

10 Lamorna

The last harbour before Land's End is a place to visit with the tender rather than the yacht. The tiny breakwater was built to ship out the granite from the quarry on the hill, and embraces a lovely beach. There is a café on the quay and it's only a half mile walk to The Wink, the local pub. Exposed to the southwest, Lamorna suffers from any bad weather in the windier months and the quay was damaged during this winter's storms. However, it is still serviceable and should make a lovely stop.

Entrance: 50°03.70N, 005°33.75W
The harbour dries out at low water

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dag Pike did his first ocean race in 1948 at the age of 14. After a career at sea where he became captain and later an inspector of lifeboats for the RNLI, he resumed sailing but his focus was in power boat racing where he became a top navigator. He now sails a Falmouth working boat for fun.



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BUYING BLUEWATER

In the second part of this series,
Toby Heppell looks beyond the hull and rig
to the other bluewater essentials

Last month we looked at the preferable hull and rig characteristics for a bluewater cruiser. These are the things most discussed when looking to set out on a circumnavigation, high latitude cruise or similar, and rightly so; a seaworthy boat is perhaps the most important guarantee of a sailor's safety. However, there is plenty you can do on deck and below to prepare any boat for ocean cruising.

Deck gear

Boats have become lighter and more easily driven by the wind, while sail



This Allures 39.9 (ST196) is the epitome of a bluewater cruiser, featuring an alloy hull, twin rudders, solar panels and more

ANTOINE SOUBIGOU

‘pilot berths with sturdy lee cloths are an absolute must’

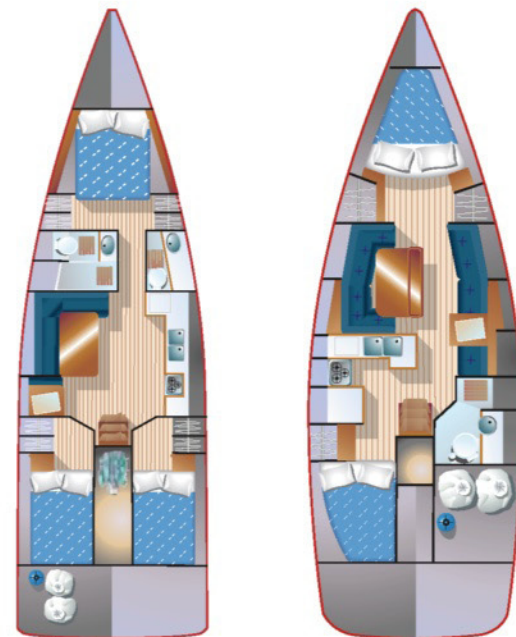
plans have become more efficient – both thanks to the modern building technologies. This means that the usual working loads on kit such as the primary sheet winches have reduced. So, a lighter, modern 40ft (12.2m) cruiser will often be fitted with kit designed for lower loads than an older or heavier yacht of the same length.

This is fine for everyday cruising, but ocean passage making will impose new strains on your boat.



CHAFE

These shrouds have been covered to avoid ropes snagging and/or chafing



During long voyages, every piece of deck gear will be under additional strain from the continuous use. That and the greater chances of encountering foul weather mean you should make sure your existing gear is in top condition, and that new gear is over-specified for its use. At the very least, it is worth considering upgrading the primaries.

Chafe is the chief enemy of bluewater cruising kit. It is well worth spending some time looking at the flow of all rope systems and checking whether they rub anywhere. Try to do this under sailing conditions if possible; often ropes move in ways we had not fully anticipated when under load and or attached to a flying sail.

Whether your new boat is just out of the mould, or second-hand, you may want to invest in new turning blocks, sheaves or deck organisers. Of course, if you are not dealing with a brand new boat, the beginnings of wear may already be visible in trouble spots. Look at covering shrouds and guard-wire terminals as a minimum

Ground tackle

If you're setting off on a long trip, you're bound to be relying more heavily than usual on the anchor. Make sure your ground tackle is big enough to take the load of, say, shearing to and fro in 40 knots of wind. A very rough rule of thumb is 1lb per ft or 1.5kg per metre of boat

length. However, it is worth taking an anchor one size larger than is recommended for your size of boat. Bear in mind that this can mean upgrading your windlass and chain/warp as well.

Below decks layout

Even after your bluewater cruiser has been commissioned, there are plenty of key tweaks you can make below.

Undisturbed sleep comes at a premium on long passages, so decent berths with sizable and sturdy lee cloths are an absolute must. If crewmembers are unable to sleep in the usual berths while the boat pitches and rolls, look at where you could establish pilot berths. Locating them as centrally as possible (on saloon seats) will reduce your exposure to the boat's movement.

Modern yacht design is often all about generating a feeling of space below. However, when heading into a seaway, handholds and features you can wedge yourself against become increasingly important. Make sure you can reach all key parts of the boat from the companionway without having to cross open cabin. In this vein, we would also avoid a linear galley, favouring something U-shaped to provide a safer berth at sea. Either way, install a crash bar in front of the stove and a strap to keep you comfortably in contact with the work surfaces.

Another key comfort factor is the temperature below. Make sure the

boat has suitable ventilation, even when under way. Opening hatches and portlights can help, although in some parts of the world, you'll need netting to keep the mosquitoes out. Low ampage fans are another useful way to maintain airflow below. You can also fashion a reasonable air scoop out of almost any spare fabric.

A true go-anywhere bluewater cruiser would be fitted with some sort of heater, usually an installed, diesel-powered heating system, like an Eberspacher or a Webasto. For cruising in very low temperatures, consider installing a separate diesel stove below, as did Bob Shepton for his journeys through the Northwest Passage (see ST204).

Finally, if you are truly planning on a long voyage and can afford the space, it is well worth considering turning the smallest cabin on the boat (or even a locker if you have a big one) into some sort of workshop, where you can make repairs away from the elements.

Other cruising staples

There are two competing philosophies when it comes to equipping a boat for cruising: simplicity and minimum comforts vs luxurious complexity. This is perhaps best characterised in the air-con and deep freeze debate.

But even simple boats will almost certainly have some items that drain power – a chartplotter, fridge or SSB radio. It's vital to draw up a power budget well in advance to make sure that the power you consume is balanced by what you produce. This can throw up some unexpected results, with lighting often the major consumer of battery power.

Usually, cruisers will fit at least a wind generator to keep them self-sufficient. These come in an array of shapes and sizes – see ST200 for a full test of the top models. It's also worth looking at where to position solar panels if you're heading south, and consider a towed water generator. For larger yachts and high inverter loads, you'll need a generator, which must be carefully located and used to avoid polluting quiet anchorages!

Self-steering is another near requirement for comfortable

EMILLY HARRIS

A good, compact U-shaped galley such as this one makes cooking at sea easier, with plenty to hold on to




passage-making. A windvane such as a Hydrovane or an Aries are the usual choices, but there are many options out there (see ST190). A good vane gear is simple, robust, easy to repair and does the job without using any power.

Water supplies are another fine example of the simple/complex equation. A watermaker can free up space otherwise devoted to extra tankage and make daily showers a reality. But there are few user-repairable parts to a watermaker, so if it does give up, you could be stuck with little water until you make landfall.

GET IN TOUCH What are your 'must haves' for bluewater?

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Insurance

In our view, it is lunacy these days to set off without at least third party insurance cover. Increasing numbers of marinas will not let you in if uninsured, and some countries take the same view when you try to clear in. Failing to insure your boat is simply not an option.

However, insurers don't make it easy, and there's really no such thing as a straight bluewater package. Even once you've chosen how comprehensive to make your cover, most companies aim to quote you in trip sections. For a transatlantic, for example, you will often receive a quote for the UK to the Canaries, a quote for one Atlantic crossing and a quote for your time in the Caribbean. Costs vary depending on where you are planning on going, but can be into the £1,000s per annum for even a 35-footer. As much as we consider insurance unavoidable, it is easy to see why people are tempted to forgo it.

You can have an 'all risks' wording, which is similar to comprehensive motor cover, or cover for specific perils only. These will depend on where you are going. Lightning cover, for example, will be more important to those cruising in places like Florida than those heading for Norway.

Insurance policies

A guide to cover and exclusions

Generally include:

- Fire/explosion • Theft and attempted theft • Vandalism or piracy • Storm damage • Latent defects in equipment • Your own negligence • Contact with third party objects • Frost damage

They don't usually include:

- Wear and tear or gradual breakdown • Corrosion or electrolysis • Deliberate acts of negligence or recklessness under the influence of alcohol or drugs • Cover for racing • Breaches of policy warranties and conditions are also likely to invalidate claims



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So what makes this crowded anchorage with excursion boats all around and swell rolling in so special? Well, you know you are truly in the Galapagos, surrounded by its amazing diversity of marine life. No wonder Darwin was astounded by the place.

From the cockpit, the birdlife is prolific: frigate birds perform aerial acrobatics stealing from other birds, pelicans perch on the boat to fish, red and blue-footed boobies pin their wings back and drop into the sea, wedge-tail petrels, storm petrels, gulls and a few of Darwin's fabled finches.

Marine iguanas are everywhere and the startling orange Sally Lightfoot crabs contrast with the bare, black basalt shores. A sea lion used *Skylax* as a backrest while it tenderised a 10in sea worm and then popped it down whole. Ashore, there are the giant tortoises roaming around the highlands and lots of other life.



GALAPAGOS

Puerto Ayora

Though the anchorage is rocky, cruising guru *Rod Heikell* says the bird life here is second to none

Getting there

We have just crossed the equator and it is surprisingly cool. The Humboldt Current cools the air, giving grey skies and a misty visibility more like winter in Britain than somewhere tropical. *Skylax* arrived in Puerto Ayora on the island of Santa Cruz at 1000hrs local time, surf crashing on the shores all around. It had taken 8½ days, not bad considering it was windward work all the way.

It is one of the conceits of sailing the oceans that it is almost all downwind in the trades. In fact there are substantial passages to be made with the wind forward of the beam and the passage from Panama to the Galapagos is one of them.

Although we were supposed to be well south of the Intertropical Convergence Zone, nonetheless we encountered entirely overcast days and rain. Lots of rain. For one period, 20 hours of torrential rain. And wind shifts all over the place.



If you wish to take your own boat to another island, a national park guide must accompany you at a charge of \$100 per day, except in cases of emergency

We tacked on the shifts and had a relatively good passage in the end. It felt like the ITCZ to me...

Anchorage

The main ports of entry are Bahia Ayora (Academia Bay) on Santa Cruz or Bahia Naufragio (Wreck Bay) on San Cristobal. Once you find a spot in Ayora's crowded anchorage you need to put a kedge off the starboard quarter to hold the boat bows-to into the swell. It seems a bit insecure until you appreciate just how good the holding is in sticky black volcanic sand. The windlass groans and protests with the chain straight up and down. ⚓

NEXT MONTH Rod visits Nuka Hiva in the Marquesas. See more of his photos online at www.sailingtoday.co.uk

PUERTO AYORA (ACADEMIA BAY): 00° 44' .87S, 090° 18' .44W



Getting ashore

Water taxis routinely tour the bay, picking up people from the boats at anchor and, for the princely sum of a dollar, running them into the dock. Water and fuel also arrives by water taxi. Most of the water here is from reverse osmosis water plants and is expensive, around \$US10 per 100 litres. Likewise, fuel is delivered by water taxi. Diesel is subsidised in the Galapagos and is very cheap (around \$US1 for four litres), but you cannot buy it yourself. An agent will usually charge around \$US2-2.50 for the same measure.

Victualling

Provisioning is only so-so and, given that you are provisioning for the 3,000-plus miles to the Marquesas, you need to stock up well. Nearly everything, except for some fruit and vegetables and a bit of beef or goat, is shipped here and brought ashore on small lighters. Consequently it is expensive. Often there will be shortages until the supply ship arrives.

On the outskirts of the town is a market where everything seems to cost a dollar a bag. When Lu was doing the final shop before we set off for Atuona in the Marquesas, she got a bit carried away buying passion fruit which meant we had yoghurt and passion fruit for breakfast most of the way across – a good mistake to make. There is also a small market on the waterfront where you can buy good fish. It is frequented by a couple of sea lions and a pelican begging for tid-bits.

Eating out

Ayora is so compact you can walk around the town in no time at all. It has a number of good restaurants for dinner with, not surprisingly, good fish. A few streets back from the front there is a row of restaurants where you can get the set lunchtime menu for \$US3-4. It usually includes excellent soup, a choice of a rice dish or something like fried chicken with rice and salad, a fruit juice, and sometimes a dessert. And a lot of good people-watching as the locals sit down for lunch.

Tell us about your own favourite port or anchorage



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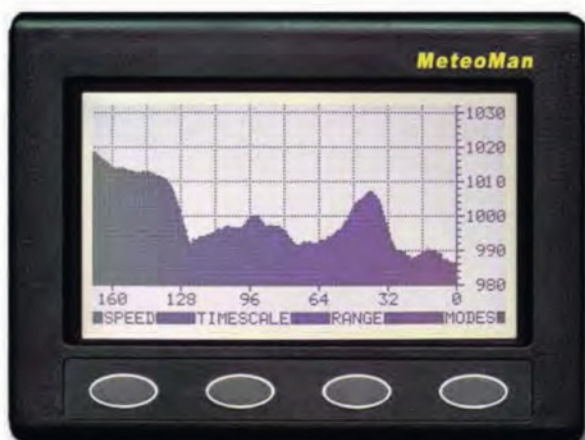


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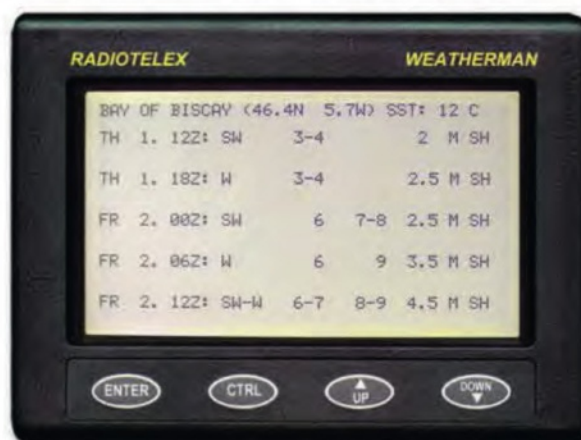
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GULL'S EYE DUNSTAFFNAGE

Toby Heppell finds a marina that provides great access to Scotland's west coast

Dunstaffnage Marina is located on the shores of Ardmucknish Bay overlooking the castle at the entrance to Loch Etive. Just three miles from the so-called gateway to the Western Isles, Oban, it is accessible by road, rail or ferry.

It is an undeniably pretty spot to berth, sitting at the entrance of Loch Etive, and benefits from protection by a significant headland and Eilean Mor (Big Isle). It is quiet and far from being one of the best served

marinas in terms of shops, but a 10-minute drive along the coast will see you in Oban, where you can pick up almost anything you might need to fill the lockers.

Many of the visitors are stopping for one or two nights during the course of a west coast of Scotland cruise, and those berthing permanently are made up of a surprising number of non-locals who fly in from Gatwick, drive to Dunstaffnage and go cruising for the weekend. This makes the marina appealingly quiet.

Main: The bay in which the marina sits offers ample protection from the wind



Local berth holder

David Leaver — 45ft Sarstream ketch



"The great thing about Dunstaffnage is the access it

provides to the west coast of Scotland. Leaving the marina we usually make our way across the Sea of the Hebrides to either Barra or via the Sound of Harris and on to St Kilda.

We often stop on the way, and visit the Priest Isles of Mingulay, Barra Head or

Vatersay. Or we may go to the Shiant Isles. Whichever route we take, we always find the cruising is enjoyable. The opportunities for seeing exceptional wildlife — birds, cetaceans and wild flowers — occur daily in wonderful surroundings."

RUN ASHORE

As should be fairly clear from photos of the marina, there isn't a great deal going on once you are ashore in Dunstaffnage. The on-site restaurant, bistro and bar is the Wide Mouthed Frog and is the meeting place for those wishing to have either a pre-cruise or end of cruise tittle. The Frog has a good reputation for innovative cuisine and also has rooms available for overnight stays for those not wishing to stay on board.

Aside from the food, many of those mooring in Dunstaffnage will take a walk around the partially-ruined Dunstaffnage Castle, which sits opposite the marina on a headland guarding the entrance to Loch Etive. The castle remains one of the oldest stone castles in Scotland and provides a diverting few hours.

There is also a pretty garden centre called Poppies just next to the marina; it is said to do excellent cafe food (teas, coffees and cakes) but is not open in the evenings. You do have to walk round to it by the main road with no pavement, or you can take the dinghy straight there.

Solent: 13.30 hrs 04/08/13

Wind: 15 knots gusting 26 knots, SSW

Weather: Clear, good visibility

Boat: Elan 410 - GBR 8410 "Flair V" with owner Jim Macgregor

Event: Cowes Week - Day 2, Western Solent

Keith Lovett: Haven Knox-Johnston's Business Production Manager on-board IRC Class 3 winner sailed and helmed by Olympians Katie and Lucy Macgregor

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Castle

Dunstaffnage castle offers perhaps the most prominent navigational aid, particularly to the naked eye on approach

Future

A harbour wall running from the shallows to the west (below right) and protecting the outer berths, but not the moorings, should be in place by the season's end

GULL'S EYE

DUNSTAFFNAGE MARINA

56° 27' .04N, 005° 25' .97W



SCAN HERE OR SEE OUR WEBSITE
FOR A DUNSTAFFNAGE VIDEO GUIDE

Eilean Mor

Is the island that adds protection to the bay. Shallows shoreside and to the west make the easterly gap the best entrance way

The Frog

The only restaurant on site and well liked. In addition to food they also offer overnight stays for those not inclined to stay aboard



FACTFILE DUNSTAFFNAGE MARINA

Contact: +44 (0)1631 566555
www.dunstaffnagemarina.co.uk

Berths: 80

Facilities: Fuel, 35-tonne hoist, toilet/shower block, chandlery, water/electric, boat servicing, restaurant

Tides: Dover -0405

VHF: Channel 12

Costs: From £1.25/m per day

Passage planning

DUNSTAFFNAGE MARINA: 56° 27' .04N, 005° 25' .97W

Broadly speaking, the distant approach to Dunstaffnage is relatively simple with the deep and wide Ardmucknish Bay easily leading the yachtsman towards the marina. So deep is the entrance and so clear is the Castle marking the route in, that it would be possible to get extremely close to the entrance using eyeball navigation alone, though obviously we advise carrying and checking charts.

Once close inshore, however, things do get a little trickier as navigation between the headland (Rubha Garbh) and the Island

(Eilean Mor) is required. This channel is really the only route into the marina. Although there looks to

‘Navigation lights are fixed on both castle and island foreshores’

be plenty of room from the west between the mainland and the island – and certainly this looks attractive if approaching from Loch Etive itself – there are significant shallows here, requiring local knowledge.

With the land side of the island out of the question, entrance to Dunstaffnage Bay from the Firth of Lorne is the passage leaving Dunstaffnage Castle on starboard

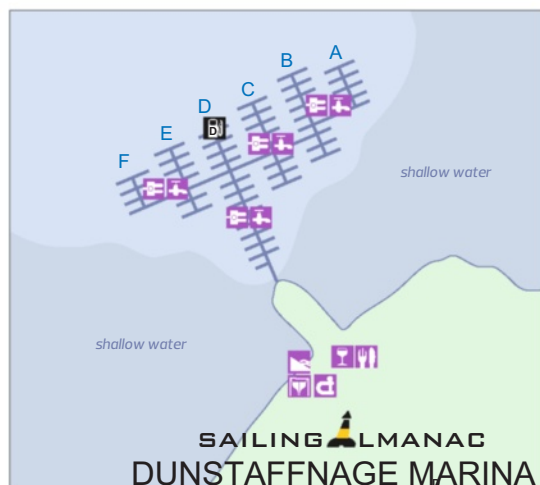
and the island Eilean Mor to port. Navigation lights are fixed on both castle and island foreshores.

It is usually suggested that you have your engine at least ticking over as you approach the gap between headland and island unless there is a lot of wind, because the breeze dies at the entrance and there is more often than not a strong tide against you.

Entrance to the marina is made by following the fairway in a direction of 150° leaving the green marker buoys to starboard. After the second of these buoys, the Marina Fairway mark should be apparent at 270°.

Strong currents exist in the bay due to the effect of tidal flow in Loch Etive. The prevailing current follows the shores of the Bay in an anti-clockwise direction, though the main

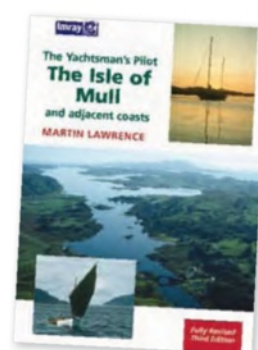
Above: The marina is surrounded by extensive drying ground

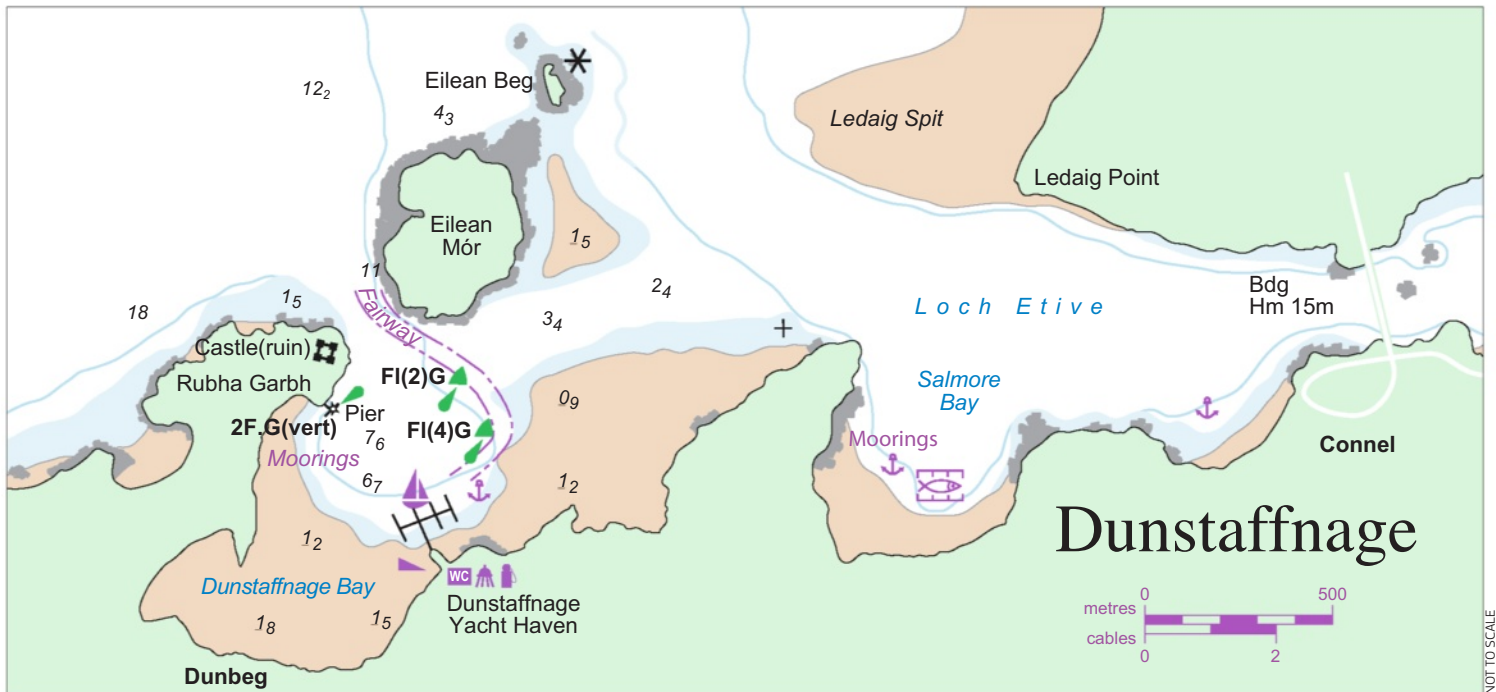


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CRUISING GROUNDS

The world (or at least the west coast of Scotland) is your oyster here, and the cruising yachtsman is truly spoilt for choice. Heading east out of the marina, through the overfalls under the Connell Bridge (c50ft/15m air draught) opens up miles of cruising through picturesque Loch Etive. Surrounded by forests and hills, this is classic west coast cruising. The further you travel up the loch, the quieter it gets. From a bend to the north at Inverawe onwards no roads run around or even near the waters. At the very northern end of the loch is an old ruined pier; a relic of the time the loch was an important artery to the coast.

Heading north out of Dunstaffnage marina opens up some stunning cruising in Loch Linnhe, all the way up to Fort William or off to Glencoe in the offshoot, Loch Leven.

To the west of the marina, out past Oban, lies the Isle of Mull, putting the cruising sailor within easy reach of the Sound Of Mull and Tobermory.

The options are much greater than we have space for here but those pointed out should serve to give some idea of how accessible much of the famous west coast cruising is from here.

4-knot limit within the anchorage and bay.

Future plans

It should be noted that following an application to Marine Scotland, the marina is due to receive some revisions and updates, probably falling in the middle of the summer 2014, though plans have yet to be fully firmed up. It is suggested that potential visitors keep an eye on the notices to mariners section of the Dunstaffnage Marina website.

"The new plans involve a breakwater type harbour wall being put in around the outside of the marina pontoons," explained marina manager Tuig Ollsen. "This will offer better protection and will add some more, larger pontoon berths for us and offer additional protection."

The new wall shouldn't alter the main run in to the bay.

Below: The marina is often used as a stop to change over crew or as a launching point for charter cruises



tide experienced in the bay is easterly. Do not attempt to cut through the moorings on your approach to the marina and obey the

Costs

VISITOR BERTHING CHARGES

Mooring	Summer	Winter
Daily	£2.45 /m	£1.25/m
Weekly	£16.90/m	£8.40/m
Monthly	£67.40/m	£33.70/m

had chartered in Corfu 30 years previously and remember looking across at the Albanian mountains, totally blacked out at night except for a lone searchlight, which relentlessly raked across the sea, a distant hostile and enigmatic country. More recently, my *Adriatic Pilot* (fifth edition) warned of minefields and a high crime rate. Even the Foreign Office had recently issued a warning about thefts there, especially in Vlorë.

But after a few enjoyable years sailing the Ionian, we wanted to head north from Corfu to Montenegro and Croatia, stopping in Albania. We had met people who had cruised there and another pilot book, *777 Harbours and Anchorages of the Eastern Adriatic*, was very positive. We had to find out for ourselves.

Our research had revealed that there were almost no facilities for visiting yachts, because domestic boating was banned until 2013. Apart from one small marina, all the harbours were purely commercial. This actually sounded like a plus. Similarly, the port authorities were not geared up for visiting yachts – they dealt with big ships and ferries. This means you have to employ an ‘agent’ – a formidable title in an ex-communist country. This actually turned out to be another plus.

Greek paperwork

Leaving Corfu was one of the biggest problems. Our mistake was to have said we were going to Albania, striking fear into the officials, (the Greeks seem to fear Albania even more than Turkey). It eventually took two days to get the papers stamped.

Finally we left Gouvia Marina for the 16nM crossing to Sarandë in Albania wondering what reception we would have. We had no reason to worry. When we called up anxiously on VHF for permission to enter, the harbourmaster laughed and in a heavy accent said: "Welcome *Pluto*, come on in!" We were probably the only vessel to come in to Sarandë that day.

Our agent turned out to be a smiling Captain Agim Zholi with whom we had been in contact by email and SMS. He greeted us warmly and took our lines, then came on board and took our papers away. The formalities were soon

JULIAN DUSSEK



How to do it

Albania

Your best bet is to charter a boat from Montenegro and cruise south to Albania. Fly to Dubrovnik or Podgorica and transfer to the huge new marina complex at Kotor:

- www.happycharter.com

Or try this new charter outfit in Orikum

- www.sail-albania.com

Albania is relatively undeveloped and peppered with classical ruins. For sailing info, see www.noonsite.com or contact the Cruising Association

LIONEL HAMM





BALKAN BYWAY

Now the mines have been
replaced with marinas, *Julian
Dussek* reckons Albania is opening
up to cruising sailors



THE ALBANIAN COAST



complete, whereupon he took us to a café where we met his son. How different to Greece!

As for security, we couldn't have been safer. We had to go in and out through the customs and immigration office, just showing our pass as we went through. Sarandë itself is a holiday resort, but is rather run down and poor. However, we were greeted cheerfully by all we met, the usual



PLUTO

Southerly 115 Mk.1 1990

LOA: 37ft (11.3m)

Beam: 11ft 10in (3.6m)

Draught (Lifting keel):
2ft 4in/6ft 6in (0.7m/2.0m)

Displacement:
14,600lb (6,621kg)

Sail area: 590sqft (55m²)

Builder: Northshore. Itchenor

greeting being, "Manchester United, good!" to which we merrily agreed. About 20 miles from Sarandë is Butrint, a large Roman site in good repair in a public park, which we visited by bus, made slightly tricky by the absence of a bus timetable.

We wanted good weather for the next passage, about 60nm north to Orikum. The Adriatic is at its narrowest between Albania and the heel of Italy, funnelling the wind to create rough, and, Agim says, treacherous seas. With prevailing northwesterlies, this is a long and inhospitable lee shore.

There are several internet cafes in Sarandë so we were able to get accurate weather forecasts and choose a good time to depart, having paid our dues and said goodbye to Captain Zholi. We aimed for a speed of six knots which really means motoring – there are no tides to help! The passage was uneventful except for a ferocious wind as we rounded Cape Gallovecit to enter the Gulf of

A typical back street in Durrës: run-down but colourful

Vlorë, which almost had our lee rail under, though no sails were up. Apparently this is common here as winds crash down off the mountain.

Communist style

Orikum Marina lies at the southern end of the Gulf of Vlorë and in theory you should first report to the port of Vlorë, six miles north. But, as evening was approaching, we decided

Pilot Books, charts and Guides

There are no readily available paper charts, just electronic ones such as Navionics or Open CPN

777 Harbours and anchorages – Karl-Heinz Beständig, Dario Silvestro. Edizioni Magnamare. 2012/13. Covers the whole Eastern Adriatic but is particularly informative about Albania. Good charts of all harbours.

Adriatic Pilot – Trevor and Dinah Thompson. Imray. The sixth edition is now available but the authors have not visited Albania themselves

Albania – Thomas Cook traveller guide. Thomas Cook. 2011. Essential if you are going inland



*'the town had a feeling of the Wild West
– you could have had a shoot-out'*

to go straight to the marina. In a country with no pleasure yachting, here was a smart marina with excellent facilities: electricity, water, showers and Wi-Fi. Since we were there, a 40t crane has been installed and a marine engineer has taken up in the marina.

We spent a week in Vlorë, in which time only one other boat came in. The nearest town was in the Communist style: large blocks of concrete flats and shops with sparse shelves. Consisting of a long, straight street with high-rise buildings around, the town had the feeling of the Wild West – you could have had a shoot-out in the street outside one of the bars, and there were chickens along the edge.

Elections – still a novelty here – were about to take place. Feelings ran high and the bar owner had to come and prise two old fools apart as they tried to make their point with



Above: Simple but excellent food in Durrës

Above right: After the Communist years, Albanians are keen to preserve anything of vintage!

fisticuffs. What fun. We liked it. Everyone was friendly and many spoke a smattering of English.

We took a minibus into Vlorë and enjoyed the sights, despite the Foreign Office warnings. An Israeli liveaboard working there had no reservations about safety – the marina itself has a permanent armed guard. We ate very well in a restaurant nearby. Traditional food, said to be gristle and dumpling, has given way to either Italian or 'fast food'. We discovered that it is normal to get two free dishes before reaching the meal you ordered, which is

followed by a free dessert. It took us by surprise the first time.

After five days, we had another weather window for the 60nM trip to Durrës, a large port whence we would check out of Albania. There was one problem though. Vlorë is a port and we should have checked in on the way to Orikum and needed to check out before going to Durrës. "It should only take 20 minutes," said the marina manager.

An hour-and-a-half later, having got an agent out of bed at 7am, we were scouring the town for a place to copy our documents. Finally the



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CHRIS GALVIN

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Westerly Oceanlord 41

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Location	Inverclyde
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Photo	October 2013 with owner
Verdict	The original treatment has now lasted 17 years and Maalesh is scheduled to be treated with Coppercoat™ anti-foul for a second time in Spring 2014.

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'Durrës had plenty of cafes patronised by young, well-dressed people'



Pluto alongside the grain terminal quay at Durrës, where we had to moor against a vast rubber fender

police, harbourmaster and customs were satisfied and we left, about €80 lighter. Vlorë harbour was unsuited to yachts. There was a wrecked ferry in the harbour and the quay was huge.

Tirana-on-sea

We motored to Durrës with little wind and a gentle swell. The harbour is huge and we felt a bit intimidated as we entered, especially as we couldn't raise anyone on VHF. But, as in Sarandë, we need not have worried, because there on the quay in the far corner was Ilir Gjergji our agent.

One or two regular ferries from Italy and the odd container ship or grain carrier made us feel very insignificant, but everyone was friendly. A man came round each day in a dinghy to fish out any floating detritus and there were women weeding between the railway tracks. It is, however, a port and there are no specific facilities for visiting yachts. We topped up with diesel from a filling station and had to show our passports to get in and out.

The more we got to know the town, the better we liked it. It was lively with

plenty of cafes and bars patronised by young, well-dressed people in tight jeans and smart shoes. We explored the Roman amphitheatre, said to have seated 20,000, ate in an exceptionally good restaurant 400m from the port and found a large, well-stocked supermarket. Every evening there was a great *passeggiata* or promenade along the sea front – very Italian.

The other attraction of Durrës is that it is only 40km (25 miles) from the capital Tirana, where we went in a *furgon* (minibus) one day. They queue like taxis and depart when they are really full, being cheap and frequent. We won't forget the journey at speed along a motorway with cows and goats on the verges and even the central reservation.

Most of Tirana is very modern, surrounded by ugly tower blocks. The centre was buzzing and the traffic heavy. But for one student, we were the only people in the National Museum, a magnificent modern building. The artisans' area near the river was, by contrast, small, attractive and lively, having been home to the

party elite of Enver Hoxha, out of bounds then to normal Albanians.

We had stayed in Durrës longer than we had anticipated waiting for another weather window for the long passage to Montenegro. We checked out with Ilir our agent the night before leaving, then joined him and his wife in a bar. Both spoke perfect English. Ilir, the son of a submarine captain, had trained as an English teacher and his wife worked for the department of tourism.

We were truly sorry to leave the country. We had found the people to be friendly, open and honest, very keen to establish contact with the outside world. Where else in Europe is as unspoilt by tourism as this? 🌊

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julian Dussek started sailing as a boy and on retirement he and his wife Vanessa took *Pluto* through the French inland waterways to the Mediterranean where they sailed for five years



On test





Yes Saare!

Built in Estonia, does this 41ft classically styled, long-legged ocean cruiser cut the proverbial mustard?

Duncan Kent thinks she does

For those sailors amongst us that still have the time to indulge in a serious ocean passage or two, there is a certain style of cruising yacht that will most definitely be near the top of the wish list when looking for a new boat. I have to admit, until she appeared at the 2013 Southampton Boat Show I'd never set eyes on a Saare. But the yard was in fact founded in 1991 on a small island in the Estonian side of the Baltic Sea and apparently now employs the rump of the workforce that used to produce the esteemed Finngulf yachts – including Finnish designer Karl-Johan Stråhlmann.

The yachts are intended for those demanding quality, safety and comfort as well as vice-free handling and a good turn of speed. With only

a small number of yachts in build at any one time, each is constructed by a team of highly-skilled craftsmen with a full range of traditional boatbuilding skills.

All composite materials used on the boats are tested by scientists from the Department of Materials Engineering at the Tallinn University of Technology, to ensure they meet quality requirements.

As is common with most small yards, customisation is the name of the game. The furniture is all hand-built, so the client can state his or her wishes right from the start, plus there is a wide range of flexible options available. For instance, our test boat *Saareena* has just one aft double cabin to port with a workshop-come-machinery room and wet locker where the second cabin would be. This option is popular amongst bluewater cruisers, who want to simplify maintenance and have the ability to dismantle and maintain equipment on a workbench.

There is also a centre-cockpit model that shares the same hull, but offers a more owner-orientated layout featuring a large ensuite cabin aft with a generous island double berth on the centreline.

Top gear

Everything on deck is solidly engineered and high spec, including Harken, so she should be a reliable performer

ALL PHOTOS: JOE MCCARTHY

What, no chines?

1

A cruising yacht of this ilk has little need for chines to improve her stability

Solidly built

You just know what she's going to sail like when you first set eyes on her from afar. We managed to find a one-day window between the seemingly endless February storms, so the sea state was debatable, but my confidence was boosted as soon as I stepped on board her wide side decks and spotted the quality of her deck gear and fittings.

Some might think her design a little dated, but actually there are signs of a gradual return to the more classic lines on many new ocean-going yachts. Not everyone wants the huge, wide stern and twin wheels found on most production boats today, and for good reason. While they might be ideal for chartering in the Med during the summer months, in open-ocean sailing, comfort and security are a higher priority than being able to run down the centre of the cockpit and jump off the full-beam, drop-down transom platform into the sea. Great fun when relaxing at anchor maybe, but not so good with a following sea in the top end of a Force 9 halfway across Biscay!

So, not unlike the Najad/Malo/Hallberg-Rassy marques, the Saare has a deeper entry, fuller bilge and higher displacement than the average – giving her a healthy angle of vanishing stability of 134° and an enviable 40 per cent ballast ratio. She's no slouch, by any means, but though she's unlikely to be particularly fleet around the cans, she'll make excellent passage times due to her ability to keep powering on through heavy sea conditions – and even let the off-watch crew get a decent night's sleep into the bargain.

Well mannered

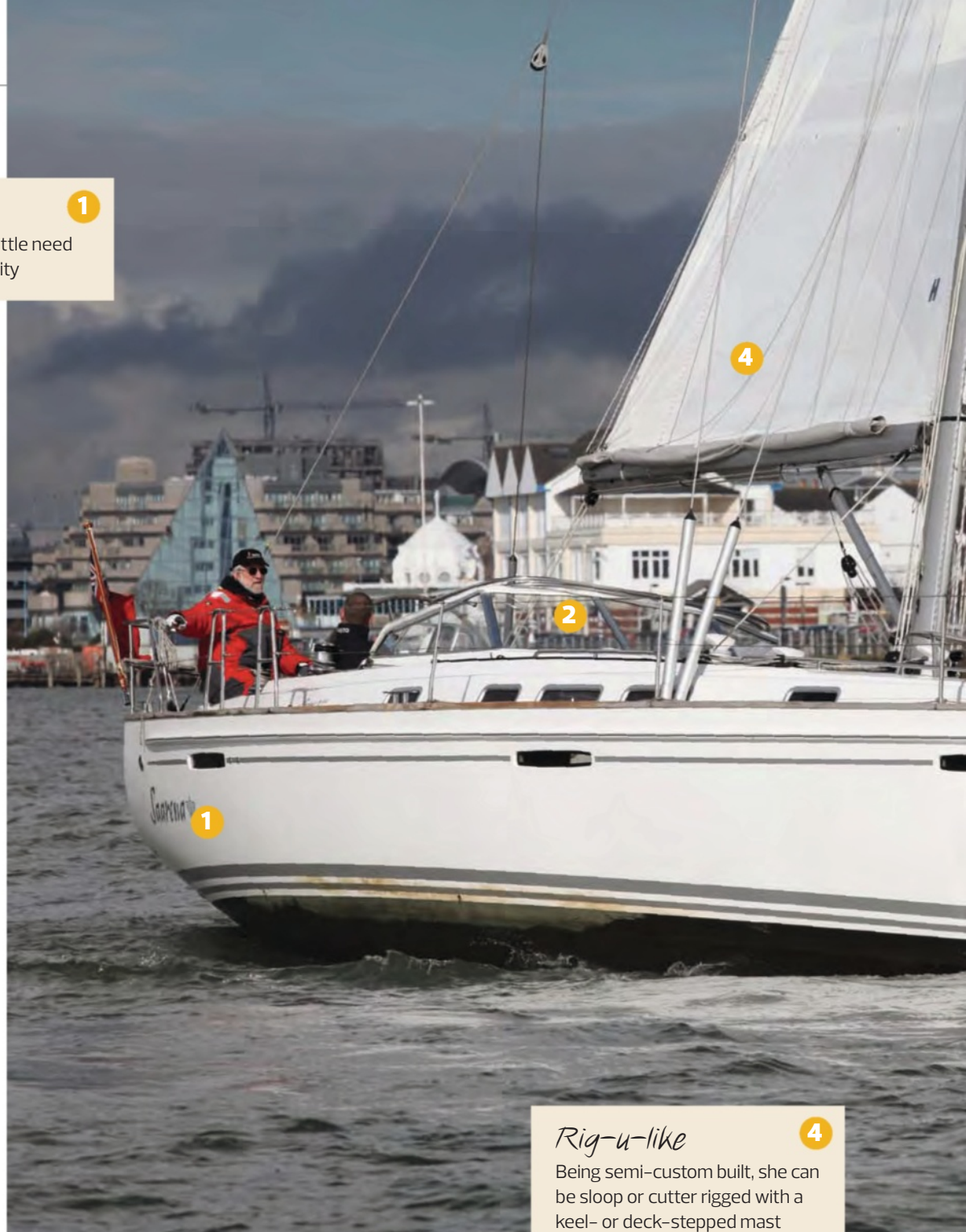
Our test boat was equipped with Saare's standard fully-battened mainsail and smallish jib, as she had already been out a few times during the stormy winter weather, when the

genoa was quietly left at home. She was a bit under-powered for our test.

We set off north up Southampton Water, for a change, as we chased a sunbeam through a tiny crack in the heavily leaden sky. As it narrows opposite Mayflower Park, where the boat show marina is rebuilt each year, it was good to see how she briskly flipped through short tacks and picked up speed again without losing too much momentum. Despite being relatively heavy (though lighter than her Swedish counterparts), she has a good turn of speed in lighter airs thanks to her moderately shallow underwater sections.

'The layout below can even include a good-sized workshop/machinery room for bluewater maintenance'

Soon we were chased out of the upper reaches by several brutish-looking tugs trying to berth a large container ship, so it was full sail off a Force 4 westerly down to the Solent. Like most modern offshore cruisers today, she is set up to be handled



Rig-u-like

4

Being semi-custom built, she can be sloop or cutter rigged with a keel- or deck-stepped mast

Fixed screen

2

Her fixed windscreen is just another sign that this boat is intended for open ocean cruising conditions

3

Ground tackle

3

Twin bow rollers are very desirable when spending long periods at anchor



easily by a couple, with maybe only one crewmember on watch at any time. For this reason, her headsail winches are within easy reach of the helmsman, as is her mainsheet, which is on a raised track just forward of the wheel.

Those who prefer a less cluttered cockpit can opt for the mainsheet track to be mounted across the coachroof, but I like it where it is – giving you full control of the main under way and keeping the working end of the cockpit free from non-sailing guests and the grandkids' wandering fingers! The mainsheet is on an adjustable traveller and is double-ended, with each end led to a coaming winch for easy adjustment on either tack.

Halyards are kept up on the coachroof, as are the gas-sprung vang and spinnaker pole controls.

She's a great boat to sail in open waters, giving plenty of positive feedback through her helm thanks to her deep spade rudder, and the sailplan is nicely balanced, although it would have been good to have had

the genoa on board to really stretch her legs in the moderate airs.

She pointed to within 42° of the true wind, which at 12 knots gave us 6.8 knots through the water. Bearing off a little to a close reach nudged the speed log up to 7.6 knots, which increased again with the wind square. Downwind, we were slowed by the lack of sail area, but she still managed a respectable 5.8 knots broad-reaching in relatively flat water. She's light on the helm, but you can just feel she would remain steady and under control whatever the weather, as Saare UK's Steve Bruce confirmed when he described sailing her back across the Baltic in a Force 8 with very unpleasant seas.

Baltic build

There an indubitable element of Baltic-built cosiness as soon as you descend below, although, despite all the lavish satin woodwork, she's still bright and cheery thanks to the numerous portlights, hatches and hull lights. What's more, unlike many penny-pinching production boats these days, every portlight opens, so that you get a proper free-flow of air during hot and humid tropical nights.

The seating is like sitting on your sofa at home and the lockers better than any cabinets in my house. Owning a Saare would make me want to stay on board – permanently!

The so-called 'standard' layout has two double cabins aft, a single cabin

Single wheel

Not having a massively wide stern means she can still have a single wheel of a reasonable size. Having the mainsheet by the helm is a real boon for single-handing





Galley

An L-shaped galley works well under way and this one has plenty of useful stowage and work surfacing

Drinkies

In addition to her galley fridge, *Saareena* has a drinks cooler built into the centre of the saloon table

forward with a V-berth and two heads. But few Saare owners have ever ordered a standard boat. A popular option is to open up the forecabin, bringing the berth further aft and giving access either side. This offers the additional bonus of a good-size sail locker behind the chain locker.

Some have even been built with pilot berths only up front, but Saare is pretty easygoing with interior construction, provided you don't ask for the impossible! It'll even make you a deck-stepped mast version if you particularly object to the mast running through the saloon, although personally I've always liked to know my mast is attached at the keel – especially if the hull has an integral steel frame, like the Saare.

In the two-cabin model there's enough space to add a good-size wet locker in the aft heads, which is a real bonus for long-term cruisers, and if you're happy with a smaller, outboard, or aft-facing chart table, you could even fit in a twin-bunk crew cabin as well.

In the standard option she has a proper navigation station with its

own seat and a full Admiralty-size chart table, with bags of room for essential bits and bobs, pilot books, almanacs and instruments all within easy reach.

Her L-shaped galley is especially well equipped, with our boat having an additional drinks fridge in the centre of the saloon table so as not to disturb the cook when a top-up is required. Another nice touch is putting the sink at the end of the

Owner's suite

The forecabin is designed as the owner's suite and the space forward of the main bulkhead can be configured to the owner's preferences. *Saareena* has a V-berth with extra lockage, but an island berth is optional. Both are ensuite



For video of the test, scan the QR code with a smartphone or see www.sailingtoday.co.uk

return so someone can be washing up or cleaning food while another prepares and cooks it.

The gimballed cooker is full size with a grill and oven and there's loads of stowage for food and cooking utensils in lockers below and above the worktop.

In the centre cockpit model, the galley is in the corridor running aft, with the sink inboard, above the engine compartment.

DUNCAN'S VERDICT

I felt at home as soon as I stepped on board *Saareena*. She's just my sort of cruising yacht and I know I would be happy to sail her anywhere in all weathers. Her high coamings, long sturdy handrails, chunky teak-capped bulwarks and beefy standing rigging are all great confidence boosters. Then there's her sumptuous interior with all that warm wood and cosy cabins, plus the sheer practicality of the layout with options for a proper workbench, generator space, machinery area – the lot.

In all, she has everything the Swedish equivalents offer – more in fact when you bear in mind how much the yard is happy to customise her for you – but at a considerably lower price.

SAILING ABILITY: ★★★★★

COMFORT: ★★★★★

BLUEWATER: ★★★★★

THE SPEC

PRICE FROM £341,000

SAILAWAY PRICE FROM £372,000

(see www.sailingtoday.co.uk for details)

LOA: 41ft (12.5m)

LWL: 36ft 9in (11.2m)

Beam: 12ft 9in (3.9m)

Draught: 6ft 6in (2m)

Displacement: 21,560lb (9,800kg)

Sail area (main/jib): 924.5sqft (86m²)

Fuel: 68gal (310lt)

Water: 68gal (310lt) +100lt option

Berths: 4/6

Engine: 55hp Volvo D2-55

Transmission: Saildrive with 3-blade folding prop

Designer: Karl-Johan Stråhlmann

Builder: Saare Paat, Estonia

UK supplier: Saare Yachts UK,
023 8045 8272, www.saareyachts.co.uk

PERFORMANCE

Displ/LWL ratio: 194

Sail area/Displ ratio: 19.2

AVS: 134°

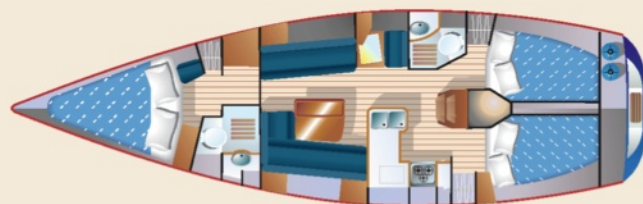


Weight



Speed

For a fuller explanation of stability and performance figures see www.sailingtoday.co.uk



IF THE SAARE 41AC ISN'T RIGHT FOR YOU...



HALLBERG RASSY 412

From £395,000

Probably the nearest equivalent to the Saare, HR's 412AC is one of the yard's quicker models, but still retains the excellent build quality and craftsmanship of this well-respected marque of bluewater cruisers.

www.transworldyachts.co.uk



MALO 40

From £377,000

Another traditional Swedish long-legged ocean cruiser, the centre-cockpit Malo 40 replaced the earlier 39 and has been brought completely up to date with a good number of upgrades.

www.maloyachts.co.uk



NAJAD 410

From £423,000

Despite a bumpy ride during the recession, Najad yachts are now being made again by the builders of Swedestar Yachts. The Najad 410 is another classic centre-cockpit ocean cruiser with luxurious accommodation.

www.sdmarine.co.uk

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RELAX AS HARD AS YOU LIKE



Main: The Oceanquest 35 Aft Cockpit

Opposite: Apart from headlinings, the interiors stand the test of time well

Nine lives

Westerly's 1984 Seahawk sired eight derivatives over the next 17 years. **Jake Frith** makes sense of these nine similar boats

Ever since GRP production technology gathered its unstoppable momentum in the 1960s, boat manufacturers have squeezed as much value as possible out of their moulds by adapting them, reusing them and getting multiple models out of them. One of the great success stories of perpetual rebirth was Westerly's series of 33ft 8in (and later with the addition of a bathing platform – 34ft 7in) centre and aft-cockpit cruisers.

The first and most successful of the lot was the Seahawk, of which 125 were built. As well as a fin keel, the boat was also offered with efficient twin keels, making her a worthwhile prospect for drying moorings.

For the Southampton Boat Show 1985 the Seahawk hull was offered

FALCON 35 SPEC

LOA: 34ft 7in (10.5m)

LWL: 27ft (8.2m)

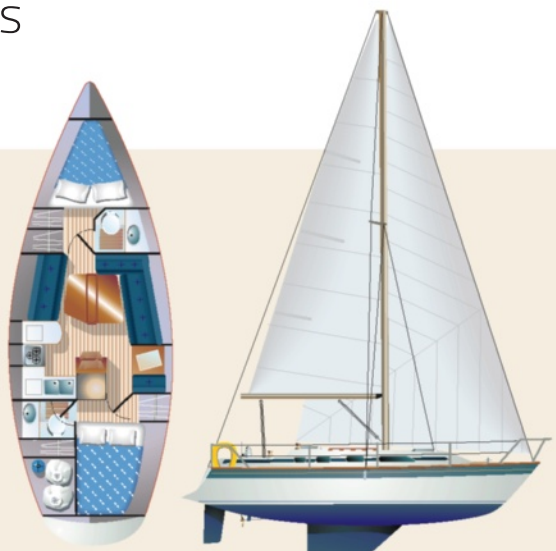
Beam: 12ft 3in (3.7m)

Draught: (fin keel) 4ft 11in (1.5m)
(twin keel) 3ft 11in (1.2m)

Displacement: 6,387kg (14,080lb)

Windward sail area 725sqft (67.4m²)

No Built: 19



with an aft cockpit deck moulding. The new baby, the Falcon, still offered an aft cabin, albeit a less spacious one than the Seahawk's.

1988 saw an extensive facelift of the design and the launch of yet more model names to the already extensive Westerly pantheon. The Seahawk 35 and Falcon 35 gained their extra hull length from a sugar scoop stern. The scoop, while it added about a foot to the length overall, was tucked up and hence did not make much difference to the speed; it was more for styling and ease of boarding. Other than their new sterns, the 1988 boats offered slight tweaks to layouts and interior joinery options.

The big news though in '88 was the Riviera: a rakish motorsailer well ahead of the modern deck saloon curve. She sold an impressive 72 boats over her four-year run so the gamble paid off.

By 1991, Westerly was in the thrall of the receivers for the second time, but still needed to appear to appeal to potential boat buyers. So, the Seahawk 35 had her interior joinery updated a little more and was 'relaunched' as the Oceandream. The Falcon got the same treatment the next year, relaunched, with a fin keel only, as the Kestrel.

As soon as 1993/4 though, the Oceandream and Kestrel were succeeded by the Oceanquest 35 and Oceanquest 35AC (denoting her aft cockpit). While the 35AC received little more than the name change, the centre cockpit 35 was extensively

reworked. Thanks to a new deck moulding and complete internal rearrangement, the 35 went from a seven-berther to a rather more luxurious four-berth model which stood the test of time, right up to Westerly's final demise in 2000.

Stepping aboard *Tranquility*, Chris Blackman's 1998 Oceanquest AC, we were struck by how much interior volume she has for a 35-footer. She's very much a boat of two halves thanks to her fore and aft ensuite heads compartments. When cruising with his wife, children, their partners and grandchildren it's possible for extended family to cruise in relative harmony. When regrouping at the end of the day the spacious saloon seats six with no trouble round its good-sized table.

The designer

Ed Dubois



SAM PEARCE

After an interesting early life writing for *Yachts & Yachting* amongst other things, Ed Dubois set up his own design house in Lymington. With the launch of the first two Dubois

Westerlys; the 26ft (7.9m) Griffon and 32ft (9.8m) Fulmar, the old knuckle-bowed Laurent Giles range, with the exception of the redoubtable Konsort, were soon pensioned off.

Dubois' brief for the Seahawk family was to replace the Conway, which was looking fairly dated under an onslaught of light, airy, voluminous French designs.

While some buyers mourned the loss of the older range, the 17 Westerlys (and their multiple sub-variants) penned by Dubois offered excellent compromises on performance, accommodation, looks and safety. Many have argued that these well-regarded boats were about the only glue that kept the company together through its well-publicised ups and downs.

THE SURVEYOR

Nick Vass, Omega Yacht Services

Like many Westerly yachts, they can suffer a bit from osmosis. However, the blistering tends to be mostly between the layers of the gelcoat rather than within the laminate itself and could be considered to be a minor problem. Values of yachts with blistering will be held down and they might be more problematic to sell through. Rudders blister too.

The gelcoat on the superstructure tends to degrade and craze if subjected to strong sunlight, as many have as they are often sailed to the Med or beyond.

These boats do not suffer from failure of transverse floor beams as many smaller fin-keel Westerlys do.

► Contact: www.omega-yachtservices.co.uk

THE BROKER

Ross Farncombe, Sunbird Yachts

A reasonable Seahawk can be found at present for between £35,000 and £50,000. A Riviera will cost slightly more – in the region of £40,000 to £60,000 and a well looked-after Oceanquest could set you back more like £70,000.

In a range made over a period of 17 years, age is going to be a big contributing factor in price, but so will the particular model variation.

Read the article and check on the Westerly Owners' Association website www.westerly-owners.co.uk to fully appraise for yourself all of the models.

► Contact: www.sunbirdyachts.eu



GUY FORD

On test



Main: To test the gear better, we dispensed with lifejackets, but only in the knowledge trained lifeguards were on hand

Inset: The RNLI pool can fit the Atlantic 85 RIB (and make it feel pretty lively)



WET WEATHER GEAR

WE TESTED THREE OF BRITAIN'S BIGGEST OILSKIN BRANDS AT THE RNLI'S SEA SURVIVAL CENTRE

If you're like me, then this is the time of you that you rootle in the back of the garage for your oilies and realise that they probably won't see you through another season – especially if the year continues in the same vein it has started!

Like most areas of the clothing market, wet weather gear is susceptible to fashion – this year, neon colours seem to the fore. And it is now a major investment, with prices edging up to nigh on £1,000 for decent offshore gear. Cut through the marketing fluff, though, and there have been some major advances over the past five years. And as ever, your intrepid *ST* team was on hand to put three of the biggest manufacturers to the test in heavy seas, strong winds and lashing rain – all courtesy of the RNLI's Sea Survival Centre in Poole, to avoid risking life or limb.

Fabrics

Gore-Tex membrane is the most recognisable benchmark for waterproofing and breathability, which Musto and Henri Lloyd duly use. Gill, however, have developed their own fabrics. Because Gore is selective about which manufacturers it licenses, its use is often a sign of quality. The best waterproofing comes from a three-layer sandwich of nylon or polyester on the outside, Gore-Tex (or similar) in the middle and a backing fabric for protection.

A cheaper alternative found in many lower-budget garments is to laminate a fabric with a microporous coating that provides reasonable waterproofing and breathability. It is

not as robust or efficient as a three-layer system, but can be perfectly adequate for coastal cruising with the odd longer offshore leg.

How it really works

Both systems come down to the fact that perspiration produces small clumps of water molecules, while rain and spray comes in large groups of water molecules. Tiny holes in the membrane therefore allow sweat out but block water coming in.

This process is enhanced by a layer of durable water repellent (DWR) on the outside of a garment. Likened to millions of tiny 'fingers' by Musto technicians, DWR encourages incoming water to bead and prevents it from soaking into the fabric.

Taped seams

Now standard on any serious wet weather gear, taped seams prevent water from entering through the holes left by stitching. The tape is heat sealed and should cover every seam for full waterproofing.

Breathability & resistance

Waterproof is an absolute term, but wet weather gear, of course, is not infinitely resistant. The industry measures how many millimetres of water a fabric can resist before it starts to leak – imagine the water weighing down in a column.

Breathability is usually measured in how many grams of water vapour a square metre of fabric will transmit in 24 hours. Top of the range gear stretches to 20,000mm (20m) and 20,000g; mid-range clothes only manage around 5,000mm.

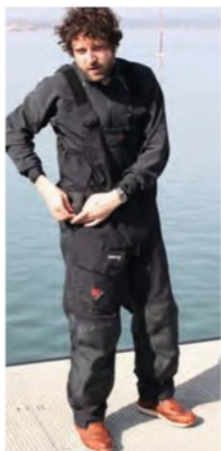
Comfort

It's no good being dry if your gear makes you feel like you're wearing a spacesuit. Different cuts will suit different builds of person, but some common features to look out for include: high, lined collar and bib; adjustable, peaked hood; hand-warming pockets; articulated knees and elbows; knee, bottom and elbow patches; and a longer-tailed jacket for comfortable sitting.

Warmth

Most of the more serious sailing suits focus on waterproofing and breathability. This keeps jackets and trousers lighter and more flexible, but it doesn't make them warm – we could feel the cold of the water jets through the gear we tested, though we stayed dry.

Instead, manufacturers recommend layering technical garments underneath your jacket and trousers, and many produce mid layer and base layer ranges.



MPX TROUSERS

Relatively simple in pocket terms, these high fits kept me dry and moving

TOP FOR PERFORMANCE

MUSTO MPX OFFSHORE RACE SMOCK £495 TROUSERS £350

Don't dismiss the idea of a race-style smock for cruising out of hand. Yes, it's harder to get in and out of; you can't unzip to let off steam; but it is super waterproof and warm. With no zip to get in the way, the

easier and more comfortable to wear.

One of the chief design features of the jacket is its exceptionally high collar – running from the corners of the eyes above the ears and up to an adjustable elastic cord at the crown of the head. Because of this, the hood has less work to do, and is quite heavily cut away at the side, providing you with a pillar-box view of the world through around 270°. Protection was excellent.

I found the Velcro fastening on the hand-warming pouch quickly allowed water in, so this is clearly aimed more at dry conditions or preventing wind chill to wet hands.

The MPX trousers are light and comfortable. With their high fit, they offer some protection without a jacket, and like the jacket they depend on a mid and base layer for heat. That said, I kept warm enough for the test with bare legs under the oilskins despite jets of cold water.

Shoulder straps are Velcro-adjustable and the trousers are elasticated under the arms. Each leg had a single Velcro fastening at the ankle, although this proved fine over seaboots – keeping the water out even in total immersion situations.

Colours: Surf, platinum

► **Survival:** ★★★★★

► **Comfort:** ★★★★★

► **Looks:** ★★★★★



fabric provides better protection, and the neck can offer a snug inner neoprene seal, as for ankles and wrists. Across all the jackets we tested, this one feature alone promised the driest ride.

With its more racy design, the jacket also had a neoprene skirt at the waist, forming a good seal with large adjustable Velcro straps. Musto also makes a standard offshore and a race offshore version if you decide the smock's not for you.

Musto's technical 3-layer fabric is based around Gore's most extreme 'Pro' membrane, which is tested with the company's toughest wet weather simulation. The backing layer is lighter than in the top-of-the-range HPX gear, making the jacket



MUSTO BR2 JACKET £250 TROUSERS £200

Below its MPX range, Musto now offers two grades of high-spec wet weather suit – BR1 for inshore sailing and BR2 for coastal and offshore use. Using a non-branded two-layer fabric, they both offer decent breathability and waterproofing, coming in at a lower weight and a lower price. Like the rest of the Musto range, they use non-metallic zips to avoid corrosion.

We tested the BR2 and, after its sturdier MPX cousin, the difference was immediately obvious in the collar area. It has a double storm flap, but fewer adjustments make it harder to achieve a tight seal, and coverage comes lower down the face. The hood tried valiantly, but couldn't keep out water from the RNLI hoses, simulating horizontal rain.

The jacket is mesh-lined, however, so you can keep

warmer without base layers. Its lighter construction makes it more flexible and comfortable for less demanding use. And it has plenty of useful pockets – six, including two handwarmers and two large cargo pockets.

The trousers come in dark grey only and are higher cut than the MPX version. It's a tighter squeeze to get in, but once fitted, they are comfortable and allow plenty of movement. Various adjustments allow the straps and waist to be fitted more snugly. Nonetheless, we found them a tad tight on the ankles, where they barely stretched around a boot.

Colours: Black, red, blue

► **Survival:** ★★★★★

► **Comfort:** ★★★★★

► **Looks:** ★★★★★



HENRI LLOYD OFFSHORE ELITE JACKET £475 HI FIT TROUSERS £350

Immediately noticeable was how light both garments were – Henri Lloyd claims it to be 30 per cent lighter than its predecessors. Add to this the ergonomic fit, and movement is entirely unrestricted making it a great option for offshore racers and cruisers. Trends have seen outer layers getting thinner, so base and mid-layer clothing are essential items for any serious sailor. Make sure these are budgeted in.

The high-fit trousers performed well under the intense conditions and with my boot completely submerged at times I was impressed to end the day with two dry socks. The Gore-Tex pro shell runs to the bottom on these so you need to really fold and wrap them snugly to get a waterproof seal. Good to see chest pockets, though, and with taped seams, always useful when a jacket is not required. However, I would have liked to see more fleece lining.

The jacket did benefit from an inner neoprene cuff, called a Dartex storm cuff, which is

secured with Velcro and worked a treat. HL's Optivision hood system with side windows is great for peripheral vision and



gets a big thumbs up. Multiple adjustments can be made using the elastic toggles and Velcro to get the fit just right.

The high collar is lined with Polartec fleece, and a storm flap can be secured to protect the face. But its downfall was a rather large gap around the neck which allowed the RNLI's driving rain to soak the chest area of my inner layer.

Colours: Red, morning cloud, carbon

► **Survival:** ★★★★★

► **Comfort:** ★★★★★

► **Looks:** ★★★★★



HI FIT TROUSERS

With buckle fastenings and an elastic back you can really get a great looking fit

GILL OS1 JACKET £375 TROUSERS £275

Gill's range uses a proprietary 'dot' fabric, developed to reduce reliance on Gore-Tex. The system runs from one to five dots – one denoting onshore/mid-layer fabric and five for offshore. The OS1 uses this highest '5-dot' material.

When you put the OS1 jacket on it has an obvious USP in the form of a very generous face cover. The third and final storm flap on the jacket, it protects from just under the eyes down and feels spectacularly cosy. During actual use, however, it turned up a few gripes.



If the jacket is done up with all the various flaps in the right order, it is very watertight. But as soon as I adjusted the neck to chat with a crewmember, I struggled to get it done back up correctly. In a hurry and away from a mirror, this eventually made me very wet indeed.

A feature I loved was the generous quotient of fleece-lined pockets (four in the jacket, two on the trousers and 11 pockets in total!). Another plus was the reflectors on the inside cuff, which make a waving MOB more visible. Unfortunately, with the Velcro cuffs done up, the reflector was largely hidden.

The trousers (graphite only) feature elastic shoulder straps for flexible fitting, but I prefer a wide fabric shoulder. Gill offers this option in the OC1 ocean racing range and my hope is this will filter down in coming years.

Colours: Graphite, red, yellow

► **Survival:** ★★★★★

► **Comfort:** ★★★★★

► **Looks:** ★★★★★



Aware that this total face covering makes communication hard, the OS1 has a Velcro spot to fasten back the rolled-away flap. Having a roll of bright yellow fabric in my peripheral vision was annoying and occasionally confusing in the dark.



OS2 TROUSERS

Slightly lower fit than the OS1s but retain reinforced seat and knees.



GILL OS2 JACKET £240 TROUSERS £185

The OS2 jacket comes with an inner liner that felt instantly warming when I put it on, so no need for a midlayer here. Like the more rugged OS1 version I had tried earlier, it comes with a generous four fleecy pockets. Though on both, two of these are slightly oddly placed sitting at (there is no other way to put it) breast height; I felt foolish with my hands in them.

At every turn, this jacket is clearly related to its offshore OS1 brethren though with some of the more ocean-specific elements calmed down a little. The full-face flap on the OS1 has been replaced with a smaller version that, in truth, I preferred. It also benefits the addition of a strip of fleece material here, to snuggle a cold nose into. Perhaps there is some technical reasoning I am not privy to, but it seems a shame this is not included on the ocean jacket.

The cuffs also have a neater Velcro fastener than the offshore jacket with an adjustable strip buried within the cuff, cinching it tight around the wrist as it is pulled. I had concerns that the inevitable rucking this

created would prevent the Velcro from adhering to itself but that was not the case. This different adjustment system also kept the reflecting panels on the cuff more visible.

It managed to keep the water out just as well as the OS1 and I felt less inclined to fiddle with the face flap. I got the impression that conditions would have to be pretty extreme before you were longing for the additional benefit provided by the flap on the OS1.

The OS2 trousers were very similar to the OS1s, featuring a slightly lower fit that left more of the chest exposed, but enabled superior movement. Trousers available in graphite and red.

Colours: Lime, graphite, red, yellow

► **Survival:** ★★★★★

► **Comfort:** ★★★★★

► **Looks:** ★★★★★

Four toasty fleece-lined pockets and two large dry pockets

Large face covering flap



OS1 TROUSERS

Very high fit with reinforced seat and knees and we liked the fleece pockets



FEATURES

BRAND	MODEL	DOUBLE CUFF	STORM FLAPS	HOOD TOGGLES	FLEECE-LINED HANDWARMERS	WATERPROOF (ZIP) POCKETS	SPECIAL FEATURES
MUSTO	MPX offshore race smock	Y	2	3	Jacket: pouch Trousers: 2	Jacket: 1 Trouser: 1	Photoluminescent patches Exceptionally high collar
MUSTO	BR2 offshore	Y	2	2	Jacket: 2	Jacket: 4 Trouser: 2	Photoluminescent patches
HENRI LLOYD	Offshore Elite	Y	2	2	N	Jacket: 3 Trouser: 2	Optivision Hood System with side windows
GILL	OS1	Y	3	2	Jacket: 4 Trouser: 2	Jacket: 1	Oversize face covering
GILL	OS2	Y	3	2	Jacket: 4 Trouser: 2	Jacket: 3	Large fleece face covering



RNLI Survival Centre

Poole, Dorset

To put the gear through its paces, with no risk to life and limb, we went to the RNLI's Sea Survival Centre in Poole. This purpose-built, 25m training pool is installed with wave machines, wind machines, water jets to simulate rain and spray; and even thunder, lightning and blackout blinds.

Lifeboat crews, 90 per cent of whom are not professional mariners are trained here in sea survival and inshore capsized recovery.

RESULTS AND SPECS

BRAND	MODEL	Results			Specs		
		WATER TIGHT	WARMTH	COLLAR	WATERPROOF MM	BREATHABILITY*	FABRIC SYSTEM
MUSTO	MPX offshore race smock	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	28,000	28,000g+	3-layer Gore Pro
MUSTO	BR2 offshore	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	15,000	4,000g	2-layer
HENRI LLOYD	Offshore Elite	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	n/a	n/a	3-layer Gore Pro
GILL	OS1	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	10,000+	75%	3-layer 'dot'
GILL	OS2	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	10,000+	75%	2-layer 'dot'

*Moisture Vapour Transmission Rate (MVTR) can be measured in several ways. Most popular is grammes per m2 as Gore-Tex use. Sadly the various methods are not directly comparable.



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Sailing style

SLAM Giubotto jacket

A soft, lightweight shore jacket, but incredibly warm thanks to 60gm Primaloft padding. Ripstop nylon

- Colours: Blue, royal blue, red, black, peacot
 - Price: £130
- www.slamuk.com



CASUAL CLOTHING



GILL polo

Classic 100 per cent cotton polo. No pill pique fabric with print detail beneath the collar. No frills, just classic comfort. Women's version available

- Colours: Navy, French blue
 - Price: £35
- www.gillmarine.com

HUDSON WIGHT Day jacket

New from a new British sailing brand (Test tank, ST202) is this waterproof and breathable day jacket. Using two-layer OceanVent fabric, it is also fleece-lined for extra warmth.

- Colour: Blue
 - Price: £100
- www.hudsonwight.com



GAASTRA Battle t-shirt

Simple seafaring stripes for this lightweight v-neck t-shirt. Understated style

- Colours: Dark blue/white
 - Price: c£55 (€65) including P&P
- www.gaastraproshop.com

BRING ON THE SPRING

ST HAS SIFTED THROUGH THE BEST NEW SALTY CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR ON OFFER THIS SEASON, TO SAVE YOU FROM POUNDING THE HIGH STREET



MUSTO Vesta jacket

Made in lightweight nylon, this stylish modern jacket is exceedingly warm, thanks to its 200gm down filling. Elastane cuffs and hem, fleece-lined collar and zip pockets keep it snug.

- Colours: Black, red, blue, yellow, navy
 - Price: £160
- www.musto.com

GAASTRA Fox Sea shirt

Dutch online sailwear brand Gaastra has hundreds of new products this year. We liked this bright, light, long-sleeved cotton Oxford shirt with decorative stitching on the cuff.

- Colours: Blue, green
 - Price: c£70 (€85) inc P&P
- www.gaastraproshop.com



HENRI LLOYD Cyclone jacket

A soft-shell jacket that is at home as a mid-layer for sailors or as shore wear. Water resistant and extremely breathable.

- Colour: Black, white
 - Price: £100
- www.henrilloyd.com



MUSTO chino shorts

Classic cotton twill shorts, with zigzag stitch detailing and Oxford shirting in the waistband.

- Colours: Red, blue, mustard, stone
 - Price: £55
- www.musto.com

QUBA Hemsby shorts

Casual cotton chino shorts in a bold check. Hip pockets and button-fastening back pockets with maritime flag detail.

- Colours: Navy
 - Price: £69
- www.quba.com



FOOTWEAR

GILL Newport 3-eye

With its strong side-stitched sole, this non-slip, non-marking shoe deals well with wet decks. The leather is water resistant and marine grade. Fabulously comfortable.

- Colours: Brown, grey
- Price: £95
- www.gillmarine.com



HENRI LLOYD Ocean Warrior boot

This is the British manufacturer's top-of-the-range ocean boot, featuring Nasa's Outlast waterproof lining. Fully taped and lined with a moulded Octogrip sole and waterproof leather. The aqua transport sole moves water away from the gripping surfaces just like a car tyre.

- Colour: Cognac
- Price: £210
- www.henrilloyd.com



CHATHAM Finn boot

Designed for men, this high-leg leather boot keeps the water out using Chatham's special bamboo membrane lining. In leather with non-slip rubber sole unit. A really comfortable, capable boot.

- Colours: Navy, tan
- Price: £145-149
- www.chatham.co.uk



SEBAGO docksides

Lots of colour here for the classic Dockside shoe. Hand sewn Blucher moccasin construction with a non-marking rubber sole.

- Colours: 35 options
- Price: £110
- www.sebago.com/uk



HENRI LLOYD Valencia deck shoe

A more sporty take on a classic deck shoe, with its wave-profile sole. Designed to get wet, with waterproof leather, rust-resistant eyelets and non-rotting laces.

- Colours: Brown, navy
- Price: £90
- www.henrilloyd.com



CHATHAM Kat G2

A technical, athletic boat shoe designed for women. Made in premium leather with mesh panels, padded insock and non-marking sole. Could be the gift to get her back aboard.

- Colours: Navy, grey
- Price: £99
- www.chatham.co.uk



CHATHAM Intrepid G2

Using the sailcloth construction Chatham won awards for last year, this new range is solely for women. Crusader is producing the brightly coloured sailcloth specially for Chatham.

- Colours: Pink, cyan
- Price: £89
- www.chatham.co.uk



DUBARRY Admirals

The Irish shoemaker's original two-eye boat shoe. Adjustable leather lace, award-winning non-slip sole and distinctive port and starboard flashings.

- Colour: Brown ► Price: £99
- www.dubarryboots.com



ORCA BAY Hamble deck shoe

New in shops this week from British brand Orca Bay, this lightweight shoe has a cushioned heel and soft calf-leather insole. Sipped rubber sole gives great grip.

- Colour: Brown
- Price: £69
- www.force4.co.uk



TEST TANK

DUNCAN KENT AND JAKE FRITH PUT THE LATEST GEAR THROUGH ITS PACES

Winboat F-RIB

£2,200



The articulated hull folds down to make it fit in a bag measuring only 1m by 1m



rowlocks and stow clipped down onto the tubes for motoring or towing.

The standard F-RIB is made from 1100g/sqm Mirasol PVC with high UV-resistance, although a more costly hypalon version is available. Seams are glued and taped and there are four inflatable compartments for safety. *DK*

VERDICT: ★★★★★

www.f-rib.co.uk



New from Russia, the Winboat range of folding RIBs has just been launched here in the UK. We took out the tender-sized 2.75m (275) model, but the range includes a 330, 360, 375, and 460 – all of which fold neatly up to stow away or fit into the back of an estate car.

The 275 weighs a mere 36kg and folds away into a 1m x 1m bag. It is in three pieces and locks into place by means of a lug and slot design. In the 275, just the force of the four separate inflatable tubes keep everything rigidly locked into place, although all the larger models can be securely fixed using bolts as well.

The F-RIB handles just like a standard RIB. It's more stable than a simple inflatable boat and can carry a greater payload (<300kg) and take a bigger outboard (<15hp) although it is recommended that you stick between 5hp and 10hp.

We first tried it out using a 2.5hp Suzuki 4-stroke outboard, which gave us 6 knots two-up and 8 knots with one. Then, with a 5hp motor we were making 8 knots with two and planing at 14 knots with one.

Rowing, even with the larger engine attached, was simple and directionally stable thanks to the rigid keel. The adjustable wooden thwart can slide

back and forth to suit leg length, which makes rowing very comfortable and enables you to brace your feet against the transom and really get some power on the oars. The latter have captive

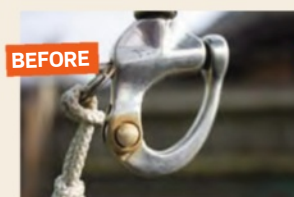
Super Stainless

This is a gel-type consistency stainless steel renovator, which in common with some others is painted on with an old brush, left for a minimum of half an hour and then rinsed off with fresh water. When we warned that we would be testing it in UK winter conditions, the suppliers informed us that it is a temperature dependent product, that works best above 10°C. With that in mind, we were expecting it to fail dismally in our tests at 6°C.

However, we were really impressed. We tried it on a never-cleaned bow-roller fitting and various stainless fittings with weeping oxidation marks. We found that an old toothbrush was better than a paintbrush at working into



Super Stainless recommends a coat of carnauba wax 24 hours after applying the cleaner



£25 per litre

these complex shapes. Being the impatient folks that we are at *Sailing Today*, we could only give it 20 minutes or so, but everything we tried it on still came up gleaming. I'm sure that the fittings would have polished up just as nicely, but it's a lot easier to apply this stuff, walk away and do something else for half an hour, then simply return and hose off. *JF*

VERDICT: ★★★★★

www.superstainless.net

Head-a-Lite head torch

£51

A head torch is a very useful piece of kit to have aboard for everything from hands-free buoy spotting to routine engine maintenance. This Head-a-Lite from Hampshire based Cluson Engineering is a solid feeling example, using the latest Ni-MH rechargeable battery pack and Cree XP-C LED bulb. It boasts a 100m (328ft) beam thanks to a very tightly focused reflector.



Below: The battery pack sits on the back of your head



It means that in closer work, such as looking into a dark locker, the torch can give you a more tightly bunched beam than you would like. It is, however, excellent for distance spotting duties, as the light intensity is, at 100 lumens, impressive for a head torch.

The Head-a-Lite lasts up to nine hours on a full charge at the dimmest of its light settings, and three hours on its brightest setting. Although it is not mentioned anywhere on the packaging, the manufacturers have confirmed to us that this product is water resistant to IP65 standards, which means it is protected against squirted water and rainfall, but not immersion-proof. JF

VERDICT: ★★★★★

www.clulite.cluson.co.uk

Magic Ezy 9-Second Chip Fix

c£13.70 (AUS\$25)

This is a clever new nanotechnology gel coat filler, that, unlike normal polyester gel coat fillers, does not require a catalyst to be mixed in. Nanotechnology fillers are used commonly in car touch-up paints and offer a degree of self leveling. Ours had separated a little in the post (this stuff comes from Australia), but a bit of a tube massage got the contents mixed again.

We think MagicEzy's marketing department got a little carried away on the '9 second' claim. While it can certainly be applied in nine seconds, we had to wait for a couple of minutes for it to become touch dry in our test at 18°C. As it must dry by solvent evaporation, perhaps it can achieve this impressive nine-second feat in Alice Springs on a hot breezy day?

Colour selection is a case of visually matching on the MagicEzy website,

and surprisingly my memory of the cream topsides on my boat returned a very close match; certainly good enough for small chips. It would be handy stuff to have aboard as it is so quick to apply. Making up batches of polyester filler can be a pain and cleaning up afterwards messy.

The company also sent us a sample of its hairline crack fix. Unlike the chip fix, it dries with a gloss

finish as it is more liquid in nature. It can either be used as a

Below: Eleven colour options for this product can be mixed to obtain the perfect match



Pegless clothesline

£10

Standard clothespins eventually leave rust staining on clothing and stainless-steel pegs are an expensive alternative. The fully plastic pegless line can solve the problem, but they don't always grip the clothing very tightly. This pegless line consists of a pair of twisted bungees with a hook at each end.



The bungees are simply separated to pop 'ears' of the clothing through. Even in the strong breezes we have had this spring, the line has been impressive, with clothing only blowing off with the most extreme of gusts. The section of the clothing that passes through the line can remain damp for a bit longer, but the effect is comparable to the bits of clothing under the pegs that take longer to dry on a conventional line. JF

VERDICT: ★★★★★

www.wackypracticals.co.uk

finish to a chip fix repair, or on its own to fill hairline cracks.

Unfortunately we can't comment more on it, as our sample was a thin green liquid with streaks of the correct cream colour running through it, and no mixing and tube massaging could rectify matters. Perhaps 23 hours in a rather chilly cargo hold does this stuff no favours? JF

VERDICT: ★★★★★

www.nanotechrepairs.com

Sony Xperia Z2

This is the latest version of Sony's phone and tablet range. As with its predecessors the updated range is waterproof straight out of the box making it the perfect sailing tablet for storing charts on. Runs the Android operating system.

► **Contact:** www.sonymobile.com

► **Price:** £499



Stainless steel tide clock

This attractive tide clock looks like it could be an excellent addition to either a bulkhead on board or perhaps hung on a wall at home.

► **Contact:** www.classicseagulls.co.uk

► **Price:** £30.73

NEW GEAR

TOBY HEPPELL BROWSES THE BOATING MARKET FOR THE LATEST GOODIES



Dry bag

This new bag from renowned sailing clothing manufacturer features innovative heat sealed straps and no zips so is impenetrable by water.

Though there are many such bags on the market, the 40l size means this pack can take a lot of stuff while the soft shoulder straps keep you comfy.

► **Contact:** www.musto.com

► **Price:** £45

Spirit Seafire watch

Speake-Marin's first ever chronograph, and seriously striking with it. Also features central hours and minutes; date; seconds wheel; and signature case in polished grade-five titanium with straight-grained sides. Waterproof to 30m.

► **Contact:** www.speake-marin.com

► **Price:** c£5,450 (CHF7,900)

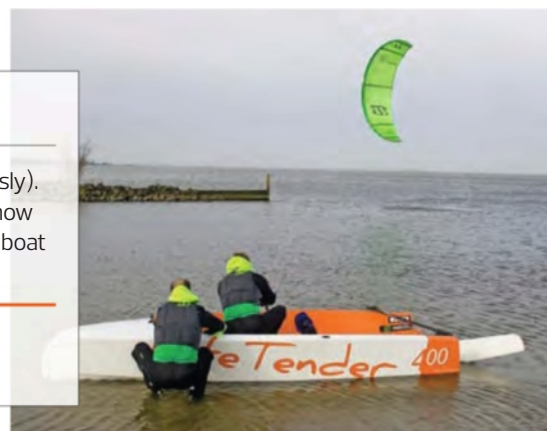


Kite Tender

We are all for using wind power (obviously). However, it's slightly unclear to us just how one is supposed to come alongside the boat with a kite whizzing around in the air.

► **Contact:** www.kitetender.nl

► **Price:** from c£4,437





Smaller DinghyGo

When we tested a range of inflatable tenders (ST198), the DinghyGo won the day by being a jack-of-all-trades. The new, smaller version looks a good plaything for the kids but can it be rowed ashore with four on board?

- **Contact:** www.dinghygo.com
- **Price:** c£1,988



Carbon boom furler

Designed for performance cruisers up to 40ft (12m), the new Gen 2 Coastal Furl boom has a carbon mandrel, lightweight carbon-fibre boom shell and an integrated canvas cover.

- **Contact:** www.southernspars.com
- **Price:** £999

RNLI bags and accessories

The RNLI has launched a limited-edition range of bags made from decommissioned RNLI lifejackets, replaced in 2012. The range is made up of six items, including a wash bag, a messenger bag and tablet case.

- **Contact:** www.rnlishop.org
- **Price:** from £35



Gaslevel measure

Only recently making its way to the UK market, the GasLevel classic is pressed against the side of a gas bottle with a light on the front turning red if there is no gas at that level and green if there is. Simple

- **Contact:** www.gaslock.de
- **Price:** c£21



Super strong tape

Make your own flexible loops out of high-strength adhesive tape that is as strong as a shackle – at least that is the claim made by Allspars of its new LoopX. We are keen to get our hands on some to test out these impressive statements.

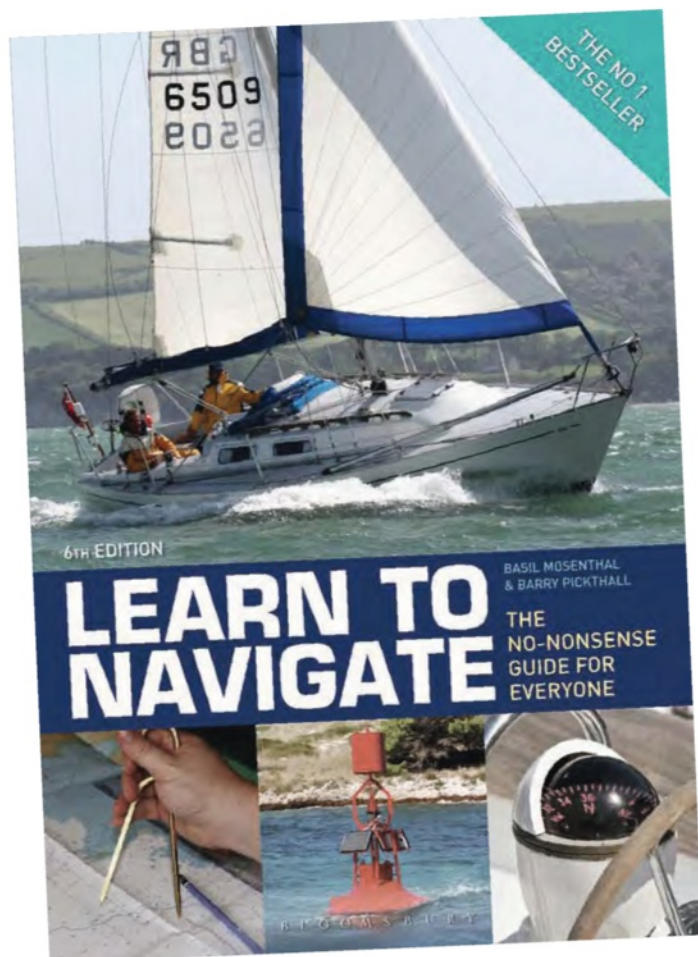
- **Contact:** www.allspars.co.uk
- **Price:** from £19.16

Secumar Survival Lifejacket

This lifejacket, packs a full 220N of buoyancy and a unique front 'click' buckle that can be easily opened under pressure with one hand. The company says the specially-designed shoulder area remains stable and doesn't 'load up' on the back of the neck.

- **Contact:** www.secumar.com
- **Price:** £257





Learn to Navigate

The best-selling guide has had a complete revision for its sixth edition, and includes a section on GPS and modern chartplotters. The book is divided into 14 sections dealing with the basics of tides, buoys and lights, plotting and planning a course. And it does a good job of explaining the concepts behind these key skills.

It is very visual, using plenty of pictures, diagrams and annotations – including shots of those whose navigation has gone awry. The authors have also pulled out tips in useful shaded boxes for quick reference. This has the advantage of making the subject feel very non-threatening for the beginner, with useful advice on getting into a strange harbour and even sailing at night.

However, it lacks the rigour of more advanced day skipper navigation and assumes that the reader will not be venturing far offshore. There is little discussion on how to make a longer passage – across the Channel for example. *SF*

Verdict: Designed to get beginners up and sailing by explaining the essentials. A useful introduction only.

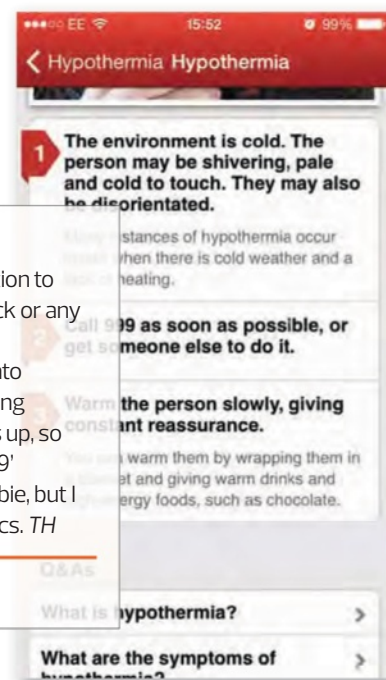
- **Publisher:** Adlard Coles Nautical
- **Author:** Basil Mosenthal and Barry Pickthall
- **Price:** £10.99

Red Cross first aid app

This app provides step-by-step information to treat hypothermia, choking, a heart attack or any number of other ailments – on board or otherwise. Unfortunately, it rarely goes into enough depth and is more guide to keeping someone going until an ambulance turns up, so the second step is almost always 'call 999'.

Probably worth downloading as a freebie, but I wouldn't rely on it for more than the basics. *TH*

► **£Free**



TIME OUT

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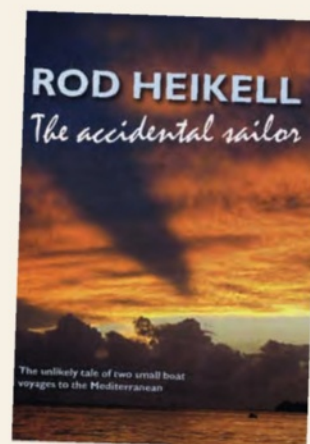
THE ACCIDENTAL SAILOR

As a cruising guru and pilot book author, Rod needs no introduction. As autobiographical writing, though, this is a little off Rod's well-beaten track. It covers two small boat voyages that he and his then-partner made in the 70s and 80s from the UK on down to the Mediterranean.

They are charming tales that heavily reinforce the young man's mantra that the right time to depart on a voyage is right now. Both the boats were of a sort that would be frowned upon for leaving the Solent nowadays, and Rod was clearly new to sailing too. While other more experienced sailors though, were saving for a bigger boat, or sitting sailing examinations, Rod was out there seeing the world (rather too close up, in the case of the Roches Douvres). *JF*

Verdict: Despite a slightly confusing mixture of the present and past tense to describe events, this book inspires the reader to set off tomorrow, and this can be no bad thing.

- **Publisher:** Taniwha Press
- **Author:** Rod Heikell
- **Price:** £9.50



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Seamanlike

A well executed splice can maximise strength and safety in crucial areas such as this anchor rope to chain joint

ESSENTIAL SPLICING

PART 2

JAKE FRITH GETS TO GRIPS WITH A COUPLE OF LOW PROFILE CHAIN-TO-ROPE SPLICES AND A CONTINUOUS LOOP SPLICE WITH MULTIPLE USES ABOARD

Many of us use a rope and chain combination anchor rode. The weight of chain is needed to keep the anchor stock parallel to the seabed, plus the catenary action of the chain's weight helps dissipate snubbing loads. Chain, though, is heavy, tough on the hands and very resistant to stretch, so three-strand or multiplait rope is also needed for the boat end of the setup. As well as aiding handling and reducing weight, the rope helps absorb shock loads, which is why using an old low stretch line

like a doublebraid halyard as an anchor rode can be a bad idea.

As we covered last month, knotting your rope rode to your anchor chain is a pretty inferior solution. Not only does the knot rob up to 40 per cent of the rope's break load, it can add real handling difficulties, especially when it comes to passing it through windlasses, bow rollers or hawse pipes. My own boat is the perfect example of this, with 10m of chain at the anchor end connected to three strand nylon for the rest of the rode. When I first bought the boat, the rope and chain were joined by a bowline through a large shackle. In

retrieving the anchor, the last 10m is the heaviest part of the operation.

The large knot and shackle often seemed to require fiddling through the bow roller just after the anchor had lifted from the seabed, so when the full weight of chain and anchor were being held suspended, resulting in bleeding fingers and much swearing. The replacement of the shackle and knot with the correct splice took me months to get round to, but was one of those five-minute jobs that vastly improved my enjoyment of the boat.

This month, as well as these 'must know' mooring cable splices, I'm also covering another use of D-12 naked dyneema. This versatile cordage is one of the easiest modern lines to splice and this hollow, non-cored line makes it the easiest way to achieve a continuous rope loop, invaluable for example, for rapidly cow-hitching a block to the toerail or, indeed any fixed loop.

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Three-strand nylon to chain splice

Three-strand synthetic rope is cheap to buy, durable, stretchy, and most importantly in this context, probably the easiest rope of all to splice. This splice allows the usual rope and chain combination of an anchor cable to be almost seamlessly joined for minimum loss of rope strength and minimum bulk for passing over a bow roller or through a hawse pipe.



Step 1 Cut off any melted end of the rope or remove any end whipping and begin to unlay the three strands



Step 2 Unlay about six twists or kinks' worth of the three strands. It's better to err on too much unlayed than too little



Step 3 Pass two of the strands through the first link of the chain. It doesn't matter which two strands go through first



Step 4 Pass the third strand through the same link in the opposite direction then pull all three strands up snug



Step 5 Thread the nearest strand back and under any of either two other strands of the standing line, but not under itself



Step 6 Rotating the whole splice, tuck each one of the two remaining strands under the two remaining standing line strands



Step 7 Continue round the splice, opening up the standing line tucking each strand under then over strands of the standing line



Step 8 Continue working round the splice threading the strands under and over in turn until each has seven of these 'tucks'



Step 9 Throughout the whole process, periodically pulling the line tight and rolling the splice on a hard surface can equalise tensions and neaten it up



Step 10 Once each strand has been tucked seven times, separate each of the strands roughly into two clumps of sub-strands in order to begin tapering the splice



Step 11 Continue further up the standing line making your alternate tucks, but now with just a single one of these separated half strands



Step 12 Finish the splice by cutting off and melting the six ends flush with the standing line, being careful not to melt and weaken the standing line

Multiplait to chain splice

Alternatively for mooring tackle, multiplait line can be used. It shares the stretchiness of three-strand for absorbing snubbing loads, but its high level of flexibility means it can be stowed in the chain locker more effectively, filling all the corners allowing rode length to be maximised.



Step 1 Mark a link of the chain about 10 links back from the end and roughly measure the rope alongside it equivalent to about 15 chain links' worth



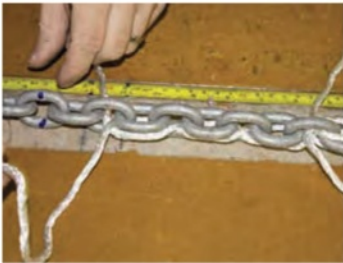
Step 2 After placing a whipping here to prevent the line unlaying beyond it, pull the strands apart keeping them in their twisted pairs for now



Step 3 Tape up the individual strand ends to prevent further fraying and separate the strands into the two pairs opposite each other in the rope



Step 4 Pass a strand through the first link one way, then the opposite strand the other way, leaving the opposite four strands interlaced through



Step 5 Pull up snug then continue to weave these four strands in order through alternate links up the chain until the marked link is reached



Step 6 Weave the opposite four strands alternately through the opposite links of the chain, again continuing as far as the marked link



Step 7 Keep some tension on the chain and the strands for a more even splice. Some dangle the chain under gravity or roll the splice on a bench to even it out



Step 8 To finish, whip the opposite pairs back together around the last link, cut the spare ends and melt as flush as possible to prevent ends snagging in use

LOOPING CLEVER

A D-12 loop splice (step-by-step opposite) can be a thing of great elegance and usefulness aboard. A few spare metres of 5mm or 6mm D-12, a pulling fid and the knowledge to make such splices can make useful additions to your inventory:



They are used commercially now such as in this Wichard MXL block we tested last month. Make a few loops of your own though and you can vary the distance from toerail to block



We have quickly set up this demountable asymmetric spinnaker pole. It is tensioned down into the bow fitting by a D-12 loop splice to a pelican hook led to the bow's trailer eye.



We have many different sized loop splices aboard. Here a longer loop cow-hitched to the toerail and a block allows a better sheet lead for reaching with the genoa

D-12 continuous loop splice

The hollow nature of 12-strand naked Dyneema lends this material to straightforward but professional looking splices. The slippery but strong cordage can be passed inside itself easily. We covered making soft shackles in ST195, but here's an equally useful trick to pull off with D-12. The downside is that its slipperiness also can allow it to readily unsplice itself off load, so D-12 splices are best secured with a whipping.

THANKS TO:

David Aldridge, rigging manager at Aladdin's Cave Rigging who provided the ropes and tools backed up, of course, by several decades of yacht rigging know-how
www.aladdinscave.co.uk



Step 1 This splice will need twice as much line than will show in the finished loop, so create a double loop to estimate length, then fold it into four sections



Step 2 Insert a wire pulling fid into one of the folded elbows close to the middle of the loop and exit the rope at the next fold towards the nearest end



Step 3 Halve the other rope end and slot either half of it into the pulling fid and pull this end back through so it exits at the elbow where the fid was inserted



Step 4 Reinsert the fid close to the point where you just pulled it out. Insert it pointing in the opposite direction, so heading the other way round the loop



Step 5 Push the fid round the loop to exit close to the point the line now enters itself. This can be quite a tight loop so for small loops, a flexible wire fid is best



Step 6 Halve the remaining line end with sharp scissors, insert half this line into the fid eye and pull the fid back through, like you just did in Step 3.



Step 7 This time though it will require a much heavier pull as the loop is bulking out. It will help with this stage if your wire fid has a comfortable pulling loop on the end



Step 8 Milk the loop round and round to even tension in the loop. Several hard pulls on the loop now will also settle its finished size once and for all



Step 9 Pull the excess loose ends out about a centimetre, cut them at an angle to taper the splice, then milk the outer back to hide both ends in the loop



Step 10 This loop can be used as is if it will remain under load at all times. Any likely flogging, though, and the loop will need whipping to secure

Step 11 You can either place a whipping at the join of the loop or a running stitch all the way round the loop. Either will prevent the inner and outer lines slipping.

On this occasion we have opted for a whipping over the join to complete the loop. Flat, waxed whipping twine, ensures a neat, low-profile finish



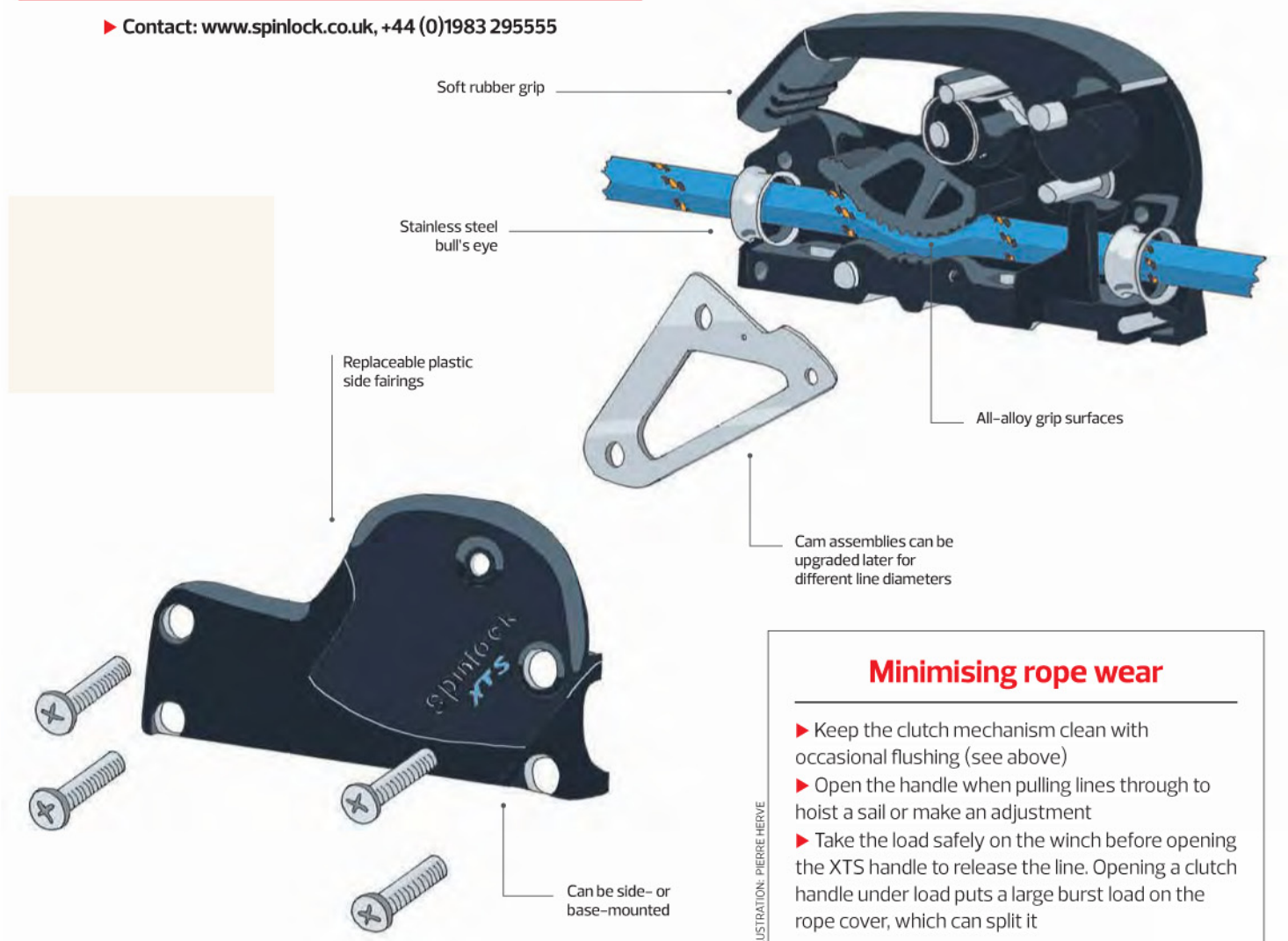
HALYARD CLUTCH

The first halyard clutch (as opposed to jammer) was only developed in 1981 – by Spinlock. Based in Cowes, the company has been manufacturing sailing gear since 1968.

The clutch was developed at the request of big boatbuilders, who wanted to save on the cost, weight and footprint of the deck winches otherwise used to grip lines.

Now, 85 per cent of Spinlock's orders come from overseas and there are over a million of these XTS clutches in use worldwide.

► Contact: www.spinlock.co.uk, +44 (0)1983 295555



Maintenance tips

Looking after your clutches

Step 1 Clutches should only be mounted with the recommended fasteners

Step 2 Only use pure silicone sealant around the fastener, applied sparingly. Do not use polysulphide or polyurethane (Sika) sealants, which can damage some plastics

Step 3 Regular flushing with fresh water removes dirt, rope debris and salt build-up

Step 4 The handle and cam axle can be lubricated with a smear of silicone grease to keep the handle operation smooth and easy

Minimising rope wear

- Keep the clutch mechanism clean with occasional flushing (see above)
- Open the handle when pulling lines through to hoist a sail or make an adjustment
- Take the load safely on the winch before opening the XTS handle to release the line. Opening a clutch handle under load puts a large burst load on the rope cover, which can split it

ILLUSTRATION: PIERRE HERVE

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Riding Light



WHAT HAPPENED TO BOOM GALLOWES FOR CRUISERS, WONDERS **COLIN JARMAN**; AND HOW STRICT SHOULD WE BE WITH OUR SAILING PLANS? DO WE NEED ANY AT ALL?

A fancy for gallows

I've long had a fancy for a set of gallows. No, nothing to do with hangings, but the (now) old-fashioned boom support arch that remains in place while you're sailing. They provide a really sound way of securing the boom when the mainsail is handed; they can be used for support; and to stop the boom swinging during reefing, particularly when tying in reef points.

So why did they die out? Even amongst serious cruising sailors they are a rarity nowadays. Junk-rigged boats have them, largely to relieve the unstayed masts when the sail is handed, but most of these are of a folding type that does not give the handhold benefit.

I suspect the answer is two-fold. The racing fraternity, whom I blame for most of cruising's ailments, would not have liked the windage and, secondly, the introduction of 'rigid kickers', those aluminium gas struts that support or hold down the boom. The former relied on topping lifts and the latter obviated the need for even those. Designers of mass production cruising boats, as ever following the latest racing trends, told us first that we didn't need boom gallows and then, later, sold us on hydraulic kickers, gas struts or whatever.

Did they have a point? Well, there is windage involved with boom gallows and a topping lift does an essential job, with or without the gallows, but may be of debatable value if you have a rigid kicker of some sort. After all, a rigid kicker's support for the boom is just that and it doesn't stop the boom swinging about as the boat rolls at anchor or on a mooring, which means constant wear and tear. Surely it is better to pop the boom onto a nice set of gallows, bouse it down and have all secure and longer lasting fittings?

What I would advise against is use of the 'scissors' style of boom crutch, which is quite likely to try to take your fingers off one day. A monopod metal boom crutch is OK, as is a wooden mitchboard, but I would much prefer the permanent set up of proper gallows.

To plan or not to plan?

Does making plans help us to enjoy our sailing more? My immediate feeling is no, because they won't work

out and I'll be disappointed, but that's my pessimistic nature coming out along the lines of 'don't have expectations and you won't be disappointed'. On the other hand, if you do make plans, whether for the day, a weekend or a longer holiday, you don't have to dither about before leaving your berth, arguing about where to go and what to do. You've got it all mapped out and

you'll have (or should have) at your fingertips all the information you need – tide times, weather forecast, pilots, charts and details of calling channels for your destination harbour or marina. Without a plan you'll have to sort these things out as you go, which is sometimes a bit unwise.

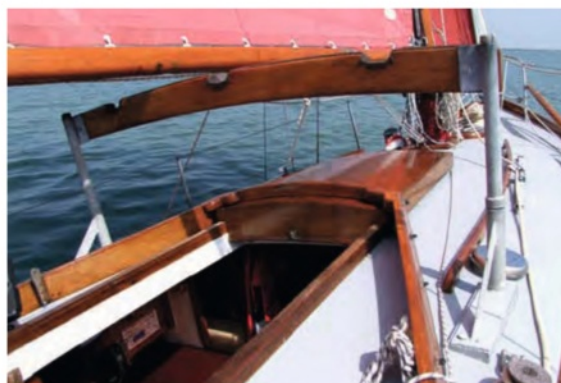
Plans, however, can make it harder to change your mind and go somewhere different. Such whims should always be explored and if they seem to offer a better chance of fun, should be followed. After all, what is cruising about if not sailing where and when you want?

I like an aim, as opposed to a plan, even for a day sail, whether it's to visit a newly established buoy or to see if I can reach a location upriver before the flood runs out and I have to turn for home, but I am more than happy to abandon that aim if the occasion for something

better arises. That might be simply sailing across to the other side of the river in order to join a friend spotted lying at anchor for lunch or the sudden thought that it would be useful to see if the entrance beacon to Port X has been repaired since a ship hit it.

However, having the original aim is good for me, because otherwise I am likely to get aboard and just sit there with a book, a cuppa and a pair of binoculars to watch the waders paddling along. The danger is that I'll feel guilty as I see all the other more active people coming and going with their diesels burbling away and their eyes on the horizon. It won't last long, though. I just like being afloat, even aimlessly, but without a plan that will lead to disappointment.

COLIN JARMAN helped launch *Sailing Today* in 1997 and lives and sails on the east coast. Read his *Riding Light* blog online at www.sailingtoday.co.uk



Proper boom gallowes support and secure the boom, and offer a great handhold

YOUR VIEW

Do you stick to plans for better or worse?



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Pint sized

Modern classic

Jake Frith sails a clever water-ballasted trailer-sailer with traditional lines but up-to-the-minute performance

Since I sailed the sweet little Swallow Boats Bay Raider Expedition in our December issue, I've been dying to get my hands on this slightly larger and quicker offering. She's clearly from the same lineage as the Raider, evidenced by her single central water ballast tank, largely unballasted centreboard and jaunty rising sheer looks. Again, her water ballast approach means she is very light to tow in view of her sailing weight. Indeed she was efficiently and legally towed down to the Solent from west Wales the morning of our test by a normal two-wheel-drive family car and rigged and launched in under half an hour.

This is the real benefit of boats like this. Very few people can morally or financially justify running a heavy 4x4 in 2014, especially if it is just for towing the boat. Trailer weight laws are tighter than ever before and keenly enforced, though. Gone are the days when the governing factor was the state of your clutch and you could get away with heading onto the motorway in a 1.6 Cortina with a 26ft SuperSeal weaving about precariously behind.

The BayCruiser, I would argue, is actually even easier to rig than her

little sister; thanks to her sloop rig there is one fewer mast and sail to hoist. Her jib is quite small, and the test boat had its sheets rigged through Spinlock's swivel PXR cleats. This made short tacking very easy, as a flick from any angle releases the sheet, but without wishing to incite the wrath of Spinlock, I think the swivel versions of this cleat have a lot of quite disconcerting play in them. I've never seen one fail but perhaps Swallow's selection of them for jib sheets on a 23-footer is 'towards the top of their performance envelope'.

It was a windy day, though, for a small boat, gusting to Force 4, but I opted not to reef the main. This is a real test for a boat like this, as it's all very well having a craft that tows and launches easily, but if she falls over when the wind pipes up you won't be going on many adventures. I was as impressed with her as I was the Bay Raider Expedition.

Upwind, her fully battened main remained stable and she was easy to feather into the larger gusts, her 500kg of ballast maintaining her momentum. As I was sailing on my own for much of the test, I could have done with a tiller extension (this one was missing), to get right out beyond the coamings. Regardless of how carefully I feathered the gusts

She was overpowered in our test but could be feathered up well even in the worst of the gusts



ALL PICTURES: JOE MCCARTHY



she needed the main dumping at times, and with the traveller down it was a long stretch aft to reach her mainsheet cleat to flick it off.

Her backstay-less rig allows a fairly big roached main which is a very modern sailplan. A clever touch is her use of cockpit-adjusted lazyjacks in lieu of a topping lift.

We soon got to test the efficiency of the keel and rudder raising equipment as I managed to find an unmarked mud bank. The keel is ballasted enough to sink on its own, but not a great deal more than that. It has a 4:1 tackle to raise it and it takes a good pull, but there's a winch handy too should it be needed. The rudder is another one of Swallow's clever touches. It is quite a long and heavy blade, so it uses the leverage of the tilting tiller and a couple of jam cleats to wrench it up.

Wood matters

This test boat has had a hard life as a demonstrator for the last year, and some of her woodwork was beginning to stain a little from water ingress. It turns out that this sweet chestnut fitout was something of an experiment by her builder, Matt Newland. Sweet chestnut is a temperate hardwood which probably makes it ecologically a better bet, but in my view tropical hardwoods are the proven material for boat fitout for very sound reasons. Standard fitout is now utile; a tropical hardwood, but a more sustainable one than some. The woodwork itself is well executed inside and out, and of pleasingly generous proportions; her hefty tiller, for instance, would do a pilot cutter or Thames barge proud.



Left: A clever Aero Luffspars roller for kink-free derigging
Above: Her jib sheets are led well inboard for close-winded performance

Down below, she offers the usual four-berth forepeak plus pilot berths aft arrangement, although the port-side berths both fore and aft are robbed of some length by the galley.

'Cleverly, the table is attached with wing nuts onto the top of the keel case.'



The saloon offers good sitting headroom and space-wise she looks like she'd make a great weekend cruiser for two adults and a couple of children. She even benefits from a very small folding cabin table. Cleverly, the table is attached with wing nuts onto the top of the keel case. If the keel jams up with a stone (not unheard of on centreboarders on drying moorings), it's a few minutes' work to pop the table off to gain access to the open top of the keel box. You can then use a metal rod, prod, pokey stick or similar to work the obstruction out.

You pay a lot over the Bay Raider for those extra 3ft (91cm) of hull, but that's always the way with boats. However, I came away with a similar conclusion; that this was a boat that would be both a joy to sail and a pleasure to own for many years. ✨

BAYCRUISER 23

LOA: 23ft (7.0m)

LWL: 21ft 4in (6.5m)

Beam: 7ft 9in (2.4m)

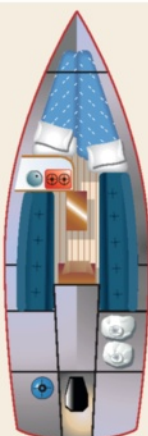
Draught up/down:
11in/4ft 9in (0.3m/1.5m)

Sail area: 260sqft (24.2m²)

Price: £39,900 inc VAT

Builder: Swallow Boats

Contact: www.swallowboats.com



VERDICT

She's pretty, quick, well-made and bristling with smart features. Her real selling point, though, is her ease of trailing and launching. Her greatest competition probably comes from her own makers in the shape of the Bay Raider we tested in the December issue.

PERFORMANCE: ★★★★★

ACCOMMODATION: ★★★★★

LOOKS: ★★★★★



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Talk to any rigging specialist, and they will probably have a rogue's gallery of wire, blocks and even mast sections that have spectacularly failed, sometimes in even the most benign of conditions. The cause of the failure usually comes back to one recurring theme – lack of preventative maintenance.

“Corrosion is a major killer,” explained one leading rigging specialist. “A metal mast will inevitably have a number of dissimilar metals in close proximity to each other, and when the barrier layer between them breaks down, then salt spray can set up galvanic corrosion. Over a period of time, this can slowly but surely weaken the structure at key load points. Saving money by using low quality fittings, or failing to spot any broken strands of rigging wire, can also lead to disaster.”

‘a pair of binoculars will allow you to check key components’

Masts and standing rigging can also be damaged during storage, with components becoming bent out of shape, or by having heavy equipment or other masts placed carelessly on top as they lie in their racks.

Before you relaunch this spring, make some straightforward checks to spot any potential problems in good time, and nip them in the bud. The easiest way to check your mast is when it is down for any major work, or if it is small enough for regular unstepping, but these checks can also be done from a bosun's chair or via mast steps. Some owners have even laid a long aluminium ladder against the mast. When climbing, common sense requires wearing a harness, and attaching it to a halyard with a crewman keeping tension on a winch as you ascend.

For visual inspections without going aloft, a pair of binoculars will allow you to check key components, and perhaps encourage a follow-up inspection of anything suspicious.

Bosun's chair

The best way to check your rig is to climb the mast, but make sure you are safely harnessed to a tensioned halyard via a knot, and someone you trust has the other end around a winch!

JOE MCCARTHY

ESSENTIAL RIGGING CHECKS

THE SPRING IS A GOOD TIME FOR A PRE-SEASON INSPECTION OF YOUR RIG, SO **JAKE KAVANAGH** SOUGHT SOME EXPERT TIPS.

Ongoing checks of your rig during the season will also help spot any previously solid connections that may be starting to work loose. These checks only take a few minutes, and could save a lot of time and expense – and even danger – when you are cruising.

Bottle screws

Cracks in the body of the metal, or a split-locking nut, can allow the screw to lose its traction and break out. These cracks are often caused by poor stowage of the rigging on a stored mast. Repairs aren't really feasible, so always replace with a brand new bottle screw and keep some spares aboard.





Left: Masts often fail at the cross trees due to compression loads on corroded metal



Top right: Split pins must be good quality and unkinked. Some say split rings are less safe

Right: A broken strand requires a whole new wire

Metal fatigue

One of the most common failures of a mast is around the crosstrees, where there are a number of rivets punched into the metal. Compressive forces from overstressed rigging can cause these to implode, leading to failure. Look for signs of corrosion, or depressions in the metal, and reinforce with extra plates if necessary.

Split pins

Low-grade steel split pins can break, allowing the clevis pin to work loose. A simple and inexpensive precaution, especially on a newly acquired boat, is to replace any of the split pins in high load areas with brand new stainless steel versions of known quality.

Breaking strands

Broken strands are sometimes hard to spot, especially when high in the rig, and are a clear sign that the whole wire needs replacing. The protrusions can also rip into sails. The strands usually part around terminals due to shearing forces, and corrosion from seawater sitting above the fitting. You can identify the first signs of a problem by running your fingers around just above the swage – any bulges or irregular strands can signal a break.

Spreader end caps

The stainless steel bolts that clamp the alloy end caps of the spreaders to the rigging can cause corrosion, and seize. This is a tricky area to check when aloft, which is why they often get overlooked. The cure is usually to remove the end cap, hammer out the

bolt, clean out the channel and replace with a new bolt after lubing with an anti-corrosive paste.

Worn sheaves

Sheaves made of nylon or hard plastic have a finite life, and it's usually ultraviolet that makes them brittle, and start to break up. As this happens on the thinnest part first, the rim becomes a saw blade that starts to fray the halyard it serves, a clear sign. Fortunately, sheaves are usually fairly easy to replace.

Roller bearings

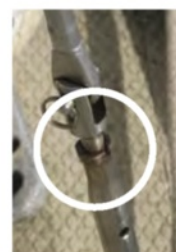
Modern roller reefing systems are very hardwearing, with bearings designed for rinsing with fresh water. If your reefing gear starts to become stiff, it may be that the metal bearings have corroded, and the whole thing could eventually seize up. Turning by hand will detect a 'rumble' of failing bearings.

Electrical wiring

Insulation is prone to UV damage, and corrosion can work its way along the wires out of sight, usually from the weather end. Keep some slack in bottom of your masthead wires, so you can pull fresher wiring up and cut the wiring back to clean metal if corrosion has begun. Tinning exposed ends, shrink-wrapping and adding a drip curve all help.



Metal bearings in older roller reefing systems can corrode, break up and seize



Look for broken nuts or split turnbuckle sleeves

TOP TIPS

► WASHING HALYARDS

Halyards and sheets are best placed inside a pillow case and machine washed on a warm wash cycle. The pillow case will prevent fraying against the drum, and help minimize tangling. A good tip is to soak the halyards in fresh water for a day or two beforehand.

► RENEWING RIGGING

Some yachtsmen feel that oversizing their standing rigging will aid safety. Whilst adding some strength, it also adds a lot more weight aloft. It's best practice to correctly size the wire to the rig, and completely renew the standing rigging every six to eight years. Many insurance companies will insist on proof of the age of the rigging before offering cover, so keep all documentation.

► UNSEIZING

Sea salt and dust can cause sheaves and blocks to jam. Even if a metal fitting has jammed through corrosion, such as this aluminium sheave on a genoa car, simply pouring boiling water over it can dissolve the oxides and free up the fitting. For more stubborn jams, heat from a mini blow torch aimed at a stainless steel screw corroded into an aluminium body creates different expansion rates, so when cooled again, the screw can be removed. This works well on woodscrews, too, but watch out for scorching.



► WOODEN MASTS

Metal fittings in wood can set up galvanic corrosion in salt water, creating a corrosive alkali. The alkali slowly dissolves the wood, turning it black in the process. Check for these black areas around metal fittings. The cure is to remove the fitting, chisel out any softened wood and stabilise with epoxy before filling.

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£75,000



Beneteau Oceanis 323

2006 Year Model, Owner's Two cabin Version, Deep Fin Keel, Wheel Steering, Yanmar 19hp Engine, Slab Reefed Mainsail, Raymarine GPS Chart Plotter, Tri Data, Autohelm, JRC Radar & Eberspacher Heating.

£59,950



Beneteau Oceanis 323

2004 Year Model, Owner's Two Cabin Version, Shallow Fin Keel, Wheel Steering, Volvo Penta 19hp Engine, Slab Reefed Mainsail, Raymarine GPS Chart Plotter, Tri Data, Wheel Pilot, Simrad VHF Radio, Electric Anchor Windlass & Wind Turbine.

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2005 model year Beneteau First Class 7.5 racing yacht. inventory includes outboard engine two mainsails, two roller genoas and an asymmetric spinnaker. Lying Eastbourne.

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Freedom 30

1990 Year Model, Long Shallow Keel, Wheel steering, Cat Ketch Rigged with Carbon Fibre Masts, Nanni N2 14hp diesel Engine (New 2012), 4 Berths, Stowe Tri Data Instruments, Garmin GPS, Icom VHF Radio, Auto Pilot, Saunders Main Sail & Mizzen. Lying Eastbourne.

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Contessa 35

1976 Year Model, Fin & Skeg Keel, Tiller Steering, Nanni (2006) 37hp Diesel Engine, Raymarine S2 Auto Pilot, Garmin 128 GPS, Icom DSC VHF, AIS Transponder & Hammer Head Tablet PC. Lying Eastbourne.

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Oyster 26

1980 model year, Bermuda Sloop Cruiser/Racer, 5 Berths, Fin keel, Tiller Steering, Volvo Penta Sail Drive, Autohelm Auto Pilot, Magellan GPS & VHF Radio. Lying Eastbourne.

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Oyster 56

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Island Packet 440

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£285,000



Bavaria 40 Cruiser

2008 Year Model, 3 Double Cabins, Deep Fin Keel, Twin wheel steering, In-Mast Mainsail, Volvo Penta Sail Drive 38hp Engine, Electric Anchor Windlass, Raymarine Chart Plotter, Tri Data Instruments, Auto Pilot, ICOM VHF & Webasto Heating. Lying Brighton

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Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 40

2002 Year Model, Long Fin Keel, Wheel Steering, Yanmar 4JH3E 50hp Diesel Engine, Slab Reefed Mainsail, Owner's Two Cabin Version, Garmin GPS, Raymarine Tri-Data Instruments and Electric Anchor Windlass. Lying Prevesa - Greece.

£57,500



Southerly 110

2010 Year Model, Lifting Keel, Wheel Steering & Twin Rudders, Yanmar 39hp Sail Drive Engine, In-Mast Mainsail Furling, Self-Tacking Furling Genoa, Bow Thruster, Electric Anchor Windlass, Raymarine Chart Plotters, Autopilot, Wind Generator & Coppercoat.

£180,000



Hunter Pilot 27

2002 Year Model, Bilge Keel, Hull Epoxy Treated When new, Nanni 250HE 14.5 hp Diesel Engine, Slab Reefing Mainsail, Furling Genoa, Garmin 750 GPS Chart Plotter, Raymarine ST2000 Tiller Pilot, Simrad VHF Radio, ST40 Wind, Speed & Echosounder Instruments & Navtex. Lying Eastbourne.

£36,950



Westerly Griffin

1979 Year Model, Fin Keel, Tiller Steering, Mitsubishi 17hp Engine (Replaced 2008), 6 Berths, Standard Horizon 300 Chart Plotter, Icom DSC VHF Radio, Navman Wind & Tri Data Instruments. Lying Eastbourne.

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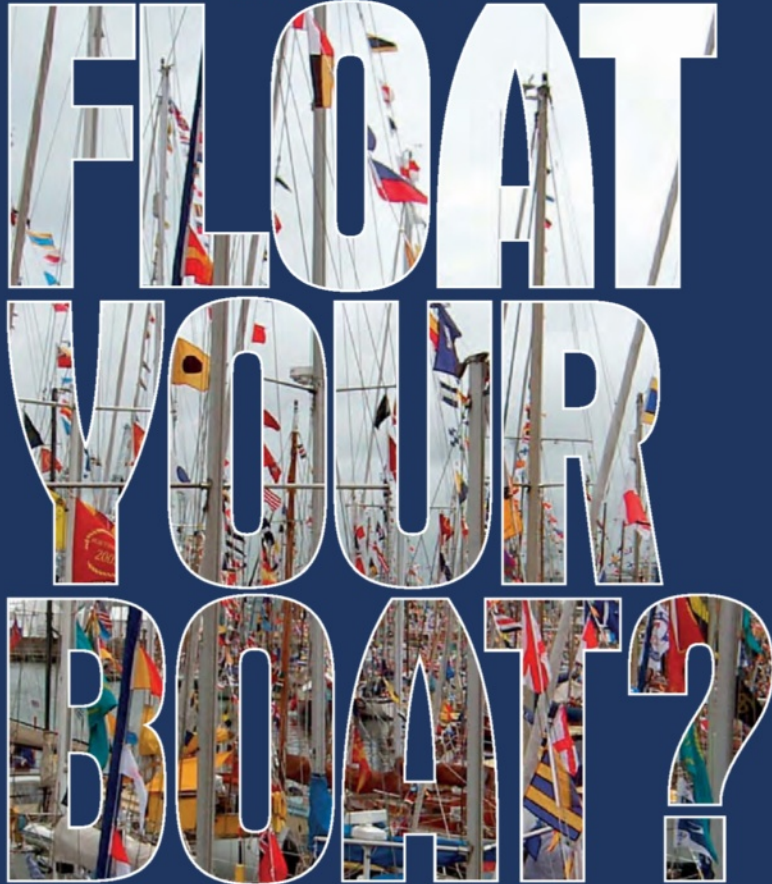
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Dispatches

THE BAHAMAS | FOLLY



We're on "island time" now. Balmy Bahamian breezes encourage our lassitude. "Why hurry, no worries, mon!" locals exclaim

Tomorrow is full of possibilities. Shall we snorkel? Shall we shell? Shall we BBQ on the beach with cruising friends, or take a walk to the ocean side of our island to look at the whitecaps and feel smug because *Folly* is safe in her snug anchorage?

In Biscayne Bay, Miami, we had waited, and provisioned, and waited, and re-provisioned, and pored over the weather and Gulf Stream forecasts, awaiting our opportunity to cross. We had shopped and hurried and tuned and – finally, sailed, for 36 glorious beam-reach hours under full sail, and a full moon.

Christmas and New Year were vivid as we skimmed over gem-bright patches of shallow sea in azure blue and aquamarine, jade and turquoise, until Georgetown ensnared us with its seasonal social life. As the sole Brit boat, we tried to uphold our country's honour in the social stakes, but it was an exhausting task. Soon enough we'll leave the 'buddy-boaters' behind and forge our independent way south, through isolated islands, with the wind shift from an expiring US cold front. 🌐

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FOLLY

40ft pilot house sloop

LOA: 39ft 4in (12m)

Beam: 12ft 10in (3.9m)

Draght: 5ft 5in (1.7m)

Year built: 1999

Engine: Nissan 55hp

Owners: Kerry & John Pears

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