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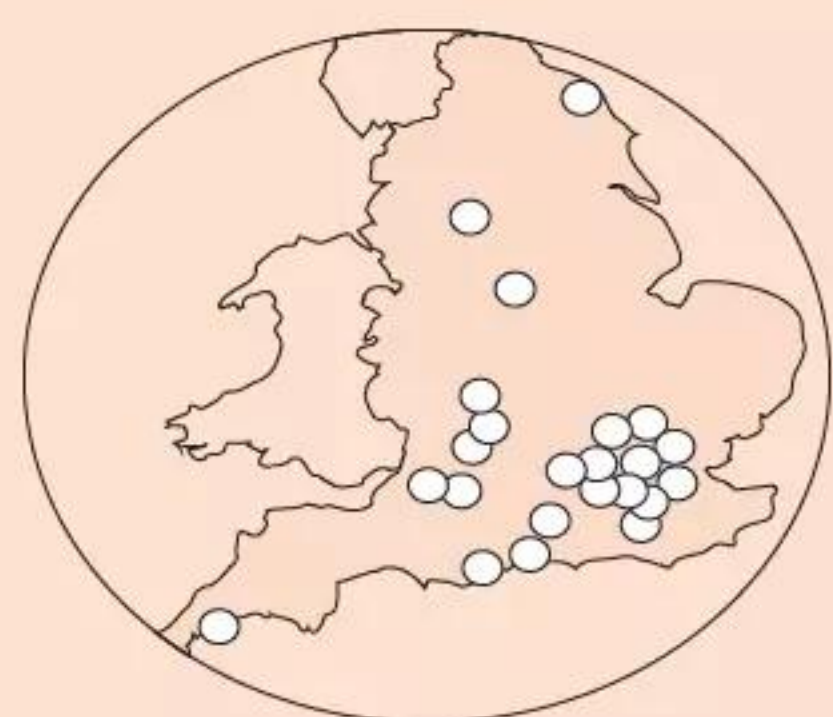
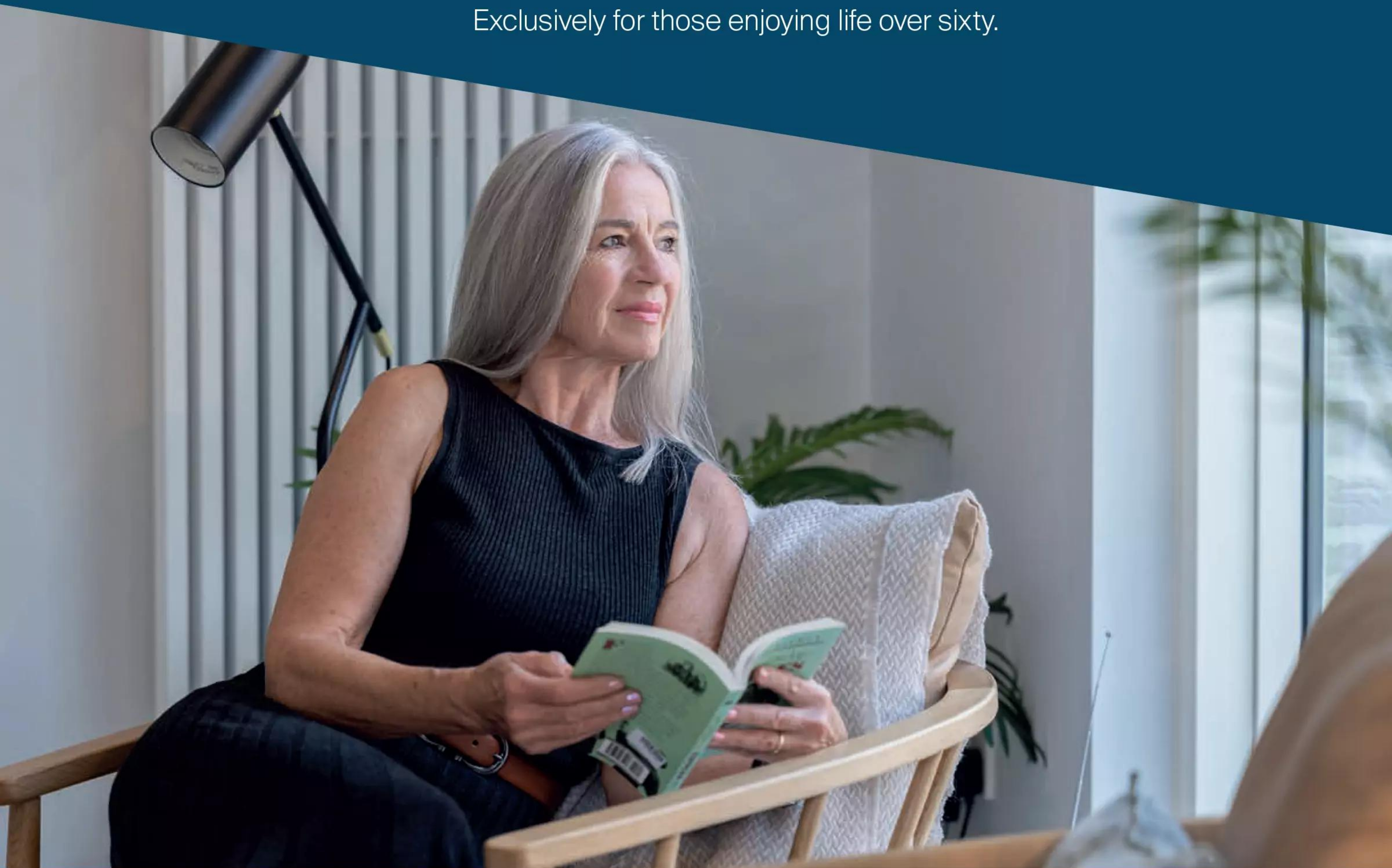
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Skipper's View

IS EVEN THE SLEEKEST YACHT LITTLE MORE THAN A GLORIFIED
MOTORSAILER? THERE IS COMPELLING EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST SO



FLIP TO PAGE 30 of this issue and you'll find a very thought provoking
piece by Tom Cunliffe on the joys of motorsailing. Basically he argues that
engines are so good and so powerful these days that even the sleekest of
yachts is, to all intents and purposes, a motorsailer, in that it is most likely
capable of plugging to windward into the teeth of a gale. He's not railing
against this, he's just making a statement of fact and saying that we
should accept and embrace this fact. Tom, as we all know, is a consummate
sailor and something of a purist, so his views on the matter are garnered
from personal experience and pragmatism.

He is, of course correct and I know this from my own bitter experience;
rolling around in a near calm with the sun westering and a cold beer
beckoning should you ever arrive in port, I have inevitably reached for the
starter button and fired up the motor. Yet, despite this, I can't help but rail against this cruel reality. The idealist in
me desperately wants to reject the motor; to do everything under sail. Part of this comes from a happy period of
my life when I was teaching sailing in engineless Folkboats in the Caribbean. I have clearly forgotten all the faff of
sailing on and off the mooring and the inevitable flat spots where the wind died and only remember the
satisfaction of teaching people in this fashion. Since then I have often striven to return to this pure form of sailing;
three summers ago, I decided that I would eschew the motor on my heavy displacement gaff rigged cutter
unless I was coming out of port. It was the Med summer and I have to confess that I barely got anywhere. I'd go
15nm in one direction then the wind would switch and I'd drift back again. I sold the boat in disgust and bought a
super lightweight racer/cruiser with the highest sail area/displacement ratio I could find. Alas! on a long trip back
from Greece to France I reckon I still motored or motorsailed 40% of the time. Sure, I was in a hurry, but the boat
was lightning quick. No matter, I still kept reaching for the ignition button. I'm not quite beaten yet; I'm planning to
give it another go this summer with a boat with an outboard on a bracket that will make motoring so unpleasant I
have little choice but to sail. Wish me luck!

Sam



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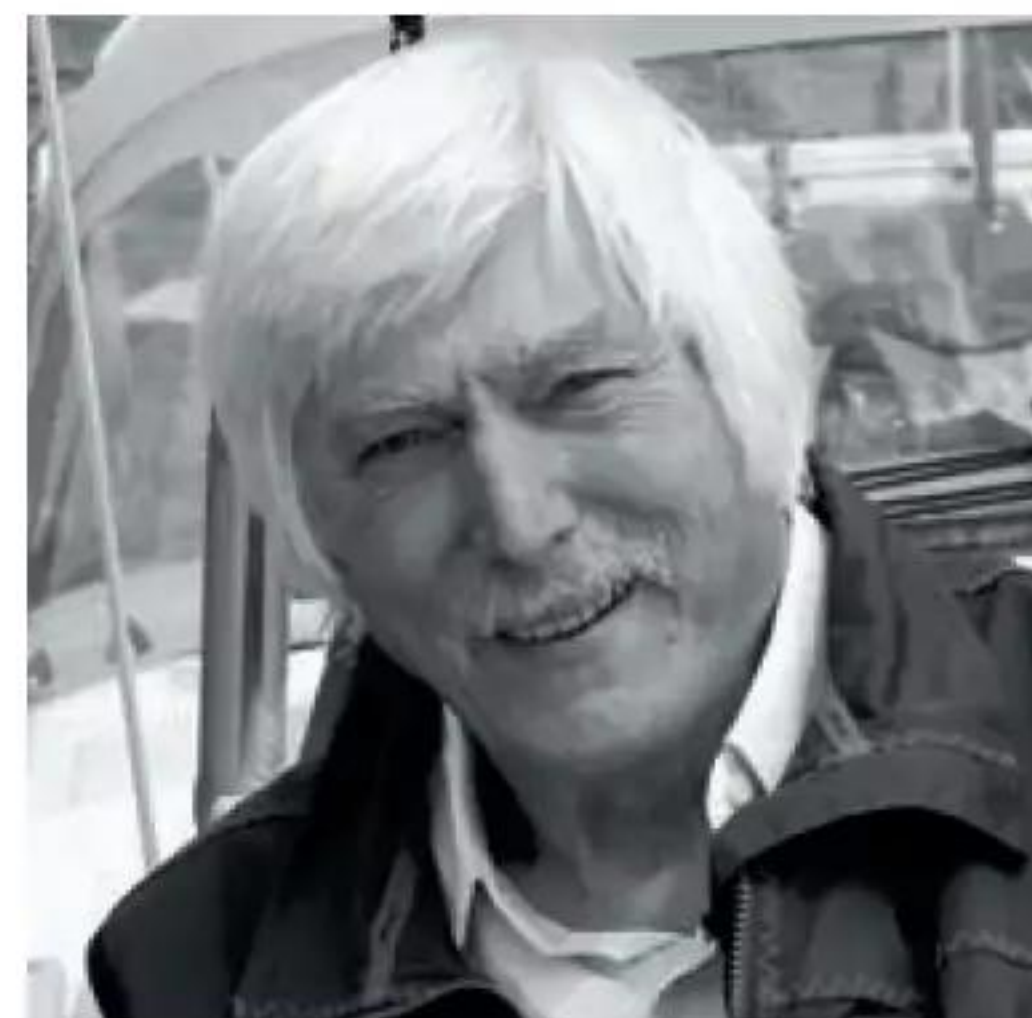


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Green Flash

Daguet 3, a Ker 46, owned and skippered by Frenchman Frederic Puzin dips her lee rail into the balmy waters of the Caribbean as she competes in the IRC Zero class of the RORC Caribbean 600

Photo: Tim Wright/RORC







Canal knowledge

A yacht negotiates the alarmingly narrow Corinth Canal which connects the Gulf of Corinth with the Saronic Gulf. Completed in 1893 this four mile long canal is often dogged by problems with erosion but saves many miles on a journey. Turn to p38 for Rod Heikell's insider guide to the Gulf of Corinth

Photo: Alamy



Ebb and flow

EVENTS | NEWS | TALES FROM THE SAILING COMMUNITY



PHOTO: RICARDO PINTO/AMERICA'S CUP

INEOS Out of America's Cup

The struggle for power at the heart of Britain's America's Cup challenge took another twist as INEOS, the powerful financial backers of Britain's 37th America's Cup challenge, announced their withdrawal from the 38th edition of the event.

Earlier this year the news broke that Ben Ainslie, the hugely experienced skipper of *INEOS Britannia* in the last edition of the America's Cup, would be parting ways with Sir Jim Ratcliffe, whose INEOS group had provided the financial muscle to mount a the challenge that saw the Brits fall just short in the finals after making history by winning the Louis Vuitton Challenger series. Left 'astounded' by the split, Ainslie threatened to launch a 'significant; legal fight, whilst INEOS appointed experienced sailor Dave Endean as their new CEO.

After prolonged negotiations with Athena Racing Ltd, INEOS Britannia has announced that it will be withdrawing their challenge for the next America's Cup. The agreement that had been reached between them had allowed for both parties to race; however, without rapid resolution from Athena, this is no longer on the table. The six-month delay of this agreement has, in INEOS

Britannia's opinion, prevented them from adequate preparation for the next Cup.

Sir Jim Ratcliffe, Chairman of INEOS commented: "This was a very difficult decision to have taken following our challenge at the last two America's Cups. We were the most successful British challenger in modern times with an exceptionally quick boat and we felt with the very effective input from the Mercedes F1 engineers, that we had a real chance at the next Cup. Unfortunately, the opportunity has slipped away."



PHOTO: CAMERON GREGORY/INEOS



Elan search for new plan

In something of an unprecedented step, Slovenian boatbuilder Elan has announced that it is taking a 'year out' to plot a new way forward for the business.

The boatbuilder has established a strong reputation for building both stylish cruiser/racers and also comfortable cruisers. The company has been an ever present part of the sailing scene for many years. However, it has taken the most unusual step of taking what appears to be a year out in order to work out where it wants to go next.

A statement released by the company said: "Elan Yachts has always been driven by a passion for innovation and performance. To ensure that Elan Yachts continues delivering the very best to our loyal customers, we have decided to undergo a complete strategic realignment.

"The primary focus of this process is a complete rethink and repositioning of our product offering. Our aim is to relaunch as soon as possible an exciting, redefined Elan portfolio of yachts that stay true to our core values of innovation, quality, and performance."

Imray charts' new path forward

The demise of paper charts seems to have been greatly exaggerated after nautical cartographers Imray announced a new deal with Austrian company Freytag & Berndt (FB) securing the future of its paper charts and pilot guides.

For more than two centuries, Imray has been a trusted name among mariners and sailing enthusiasts, its charts being an invaluable part of any sailors chart table. However, all this seemed to be at risk when, in February this year, the company announced that chart production and support, including Imray Notices to Mariners, would continue through the 2025 season. Beyond that, no new editions would be published. This side of the business has come under increased pressure from the rise of digital charts.

Imray also stated at the time that it was looking for willing collaborators to help sustain this side of the business and happily, this seems to have come to pass, with Austrian cartographic specialist Freytag & Berndt (FB) signing a letter of intent to form a joint venture. This collaboration

will ensure the continued availability and development of Imray's renowned nautical charts and books, maintaining its trusted legacy for sailors worldwide.

The new joint venture, FB Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson GmbH (FB Imray), will be based in Vienna. Bookharbour (Stanfords) Ltd will continue as the main UK-based distributor of Imray charts and books. The focus will remain on producing high-quality nautical charts and publications under the established Imray brand, while also developing

new products tailored to the needs of sailors and advancing digital navigation solutions.

Lucy Wilson, Managing Director of Imray, commented: "By combining our deep-rooted maritime knowledge with Freytag & Berndt's cartographic abilities, we are securing the future of Imray's nautical charts and publications while opening the door to new opportunities for development and growth. Our commitment to providing sailors with trusted, high-quality navigation resources remains at the heart of everything we do."

Further updates on the development of this venture will be shared in coming months.



PHOTO: NEIL RABINOWITZ



PHOTO: ALEXIS COURCOUX

Young guns go for it in Transat Paprec race

Britain's next generation of sailing talent is aiming to cut a dash this month as the Transat Paprec race fleet made its departure from Concarneau on 20 April.

Generally seen as the training ground for young, up and coming offshore solo racers, this double handed transatlantic race, sailed in Figaro Beneteau Figaro 3s, is frequently a key milestone in the career of many aspiring Vendée Globe skippers. It's the only transatlantic race sailed exclusively in mixed-gender pairs, and this year, it features a

strong British presence, with five UK skippers taking part.

The young guns include: Ellie Driver and Oliver Hill aboard *Women's Engineering Society*, Maggie Adamson and Calanach Finlayson of *Solan Ocean Racing*, and Catherine Hunt, racing alongside French co-skipper Maël Garnier on *Selencia Cerfrance*. These five skippers already have a wealth of experience, and the Transat Paprec could well be a proving ground for them to take the next step. You can follow all the action by going to transatpaprec.com



PHOTO: PKC_MEDIA



Sunsail offers free flights

Charter company Sunsail has unveiled a programme aimed at boosting bookings over the summer by offering a £500 flight credit for customers booking bareboat or flotilla charters in Croatia and Greece.

This limited-time offer is available for bookings confirmed by 30 April 2025, for departures up until 31 October 2025. This flight credit is combinable with Sunsail's Summer Sailing Special, allowing travellers to enjoy up to 20% off their

Croatian and Greek sailing adventures. By taking advantage of both of these offers, customers can experience substantial savings on their Mediterranean sailing holidays.

There are understandably certain criteria that must be met to qualify for this booking and these include that bookings must meet a minimum yacht charter cost of £3,000 before any discounts, and require a charter duration of at least seven days.

Humphreys' new historical venture

Sailor and adventurer Conrad Humphreys has unveiled a new project that aims to rediscover the epic story behind the charting of the Beagle Channel in Tierra del Fuego in his latest venture.

Humphreys has gained fame both as a racing sailor in events such as the BT Global Challenge and Vendée Globe Race and latterly has achieved celebrity status following his role as skipper in *Mutiny*, the Channel 4 documentary recreating Bligh's epic voyage to Batavia following the mutiny on his ship, *HMS Bounty*.

Humphreys' new project will focus on *HMS Beagle's* voyage to the southern tip of South America



and the surveying work carried out in seven survey boats including a small cutter called *Hope* which was used for much of the detailed surveying work.

In preparation for this new project, Humphreys has been working with Hyde Sails to convert his lug-rigged *Bounty* to cutter rig like the *Hope* in preparation for this new venture.

Conrad said: "I'm delighted that Hyde sails have joined our team as we prepare to re-discover another remarkable historical voyage. We have been out testing the new rig in Plymouth Sound and the new sails are brilliant. We've learnt a huge amount working with the design team to modify *Bounty* from a lugger to a cutter rig."

Next month in Sailing Today

The July edition of Sailing Today with Yachts & Yachting takes you on a voyage to the azure blue waters of the Caribbean all the way to the South China Sea. This is our blue water special exploring all the delights of sailing off the beaten track. We'll be casting our eye over all the latest blue water kit, looking at chartering in exotic locations, and even exploring how to land the finest fish. We'll also put the all-new Saare 47 blue water cruiser to the test. Closer to home, we preview the Round the Island Race, and also plan a cruise from the south coast to Brittany.



Position: Cooking up a storm

The Mini Globe Race is helping redefine discomfort at sea

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E F Knight was one of the pioneers of yacht cruising and he liked to do it in uncomfortable yachts, once stating 'if I want to stand up, I go out on deck'. Quite right and it's good to see that where Knight went, others now follow. here we have exhibit one, Renaud Stitelmann, Swiss competitor in the Mini Globe Race a round the world race in 19' plywood yachts. Here he demonstrates how to bake while at sea in an absurdly restricted space. Who needs yoga?



PHOTO:RENAUD STITELMANN / MGR 2025

“ ...if I want to stand up,
I go out on deck ”

DIFFICULTY RATING: **3/5**

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New boats

Sam Jefferson looks at the latest designs and launches



Pegasus 67

Pegasus Yachts is a Slovenian company that specialises in carbon construction who, up until now, had built only one model, the Pegasus 51. This is a very innovative yacht that combines blistering speed and light displacement with blue water comfort. The boat is full of innovation and the extraordinary gimballed settee and low, sleek deck saloon are particularly striking features. The Pegasus 67 looks to take many of those innovative features and transpose them onto a broader canvas. The result is a huge blue water cruiser /racer which is both light and incredibly spacious. Pegasus maintain that this is a boat that remains easy to handle for a couple.

pegasus-yachts.com



Saare 47

Saare Yachts is Estonia's best kept secret. The boatbuilder has been quietly turning out high quality blue water cruisers and weekenders for many years now. Their yachts have gained a reputation for quality, seaworthiness and comfort over the years and there is no reason why their new flagship, the 47 will be any different. This is in part because this boat is an evolution of the Saare 46, launched back in 2016. The new boat has been tweaked and features a slightly different deck configuration and interior fit out but the basic principles remain the same and that is a good thing because the maxim if it ain't broke, don't fix it definitely applies in the case of Saare Yachts.

saare-yachts.com

Allures 51.9

The concept of a rugged 'go anywhere' yacht was pioneered by French manufacturers such as Allures, Ovni and Garcia some while back now. Since then a number of French manufacturers have been refining the concept. The key factors seem to be a rugged aluminium hull married to a swing keel which allows the boat to dry out in shallow bays. The result is a boat that can flourish whether it be in high latitudes or in the tropics. The Allures 51.9 is the Cherbourg manufacturer's latest addition to their range and features the obligatory aluminium hull married to a fibreglass deck. As you'd expect, this is a boat that is easy to handle short handed and also offers a high level of comfort much in excess of what you used to see on the early boats of this genre.

allures.com





Persico 72

Persico Marine is an Italian company well known for its involvement in foiling technology specifically relating to the America's Cup which has now decided to turn its hand to developing a foiling performance cruiser on a massive scale. The result is a 72' catamaran designed by Morelli and Melvin, built out of carbon and equipped with foils that are an intimidating 7m in length that should enable the yacht to start foiling in as little as 9kn of breeze and theoretically hit a maximum speed of around 40kn. The boat is currently undergoing sea trials and Persico has enrolled the expertise of the American Magic America's Cup team to ensure that they can reach a higher plane smoothly. persicomarine.com



Heyman 42

It wasn't so long ago that Sweden was one of the great powerhouses of boatbuilding. Those days are by and large gone, with Hallberg Rassy the last one left standing. Yet Heyman Yachts seem determined to buck the trend. This Swedish based company for many years specialised in refit jobs and design projects for other boatbuilders but has now taken the plunge and produced this rather impressive 42 foot decks saloon cruiser. This is an impressive entrance into the market and the boat looks custom made for blue water cruising in comfort. The hull looks pleasingly slippery but what makes the boat fascinating is their interpretation of the deck saloon concept and how they have married it to a broad, spacious open cockpit. heymanyachts.com

Paul Heiney

Engines that 'play up' can be the bane of your life but, as Paul discovered, sometimes it pays to persevere with them rather than forking out for that engine of your dreams!

Rust! Don't you hate it? It's a nasty, ruddy disease which never lets go till it has smothered its victim and squeezed the life out of it. There's certainly no cure. It rampages, unstoppable. Nothing is spared; everything from locker hinges, jubilee clips, seacocks, padlocks, galley knives and every decent tool you own, even down to the zips on your jacket. Nothing seems immune.

I once owned a substantial piece of rust. We bought a 1973 classic boat which needed work. The previous owners were a couple of lads who had taken her all the way to Antarctica and claimed the record, at the time, for the glassfibre boat that had sailed furthest south in the world. Impressive. I asked the skipper why he had chosen his cousin as crew and he replied, darkly, "if things got tricky down there I always thought I could eat him."

Arriving back in the UK, the boat was put up for sale and stood for a good three years in a boatyard until we scrambled on board. The trouble is that those dangerous rose-tinted spectacles come quickly into play. "Oh, we can get that fixed. Just give the boatyard some more money. Lots of it." We looked in lockers, under bunks, but there was one place we failed to inspect.

Then we lifted the lid on the engine bay. Staring up at us, sickly and neglected, was a block of flaking, depressing brown metal. Gormley might have made rusty sculptures out of it but when it came to propelling a boat through waves it looked as though its days were done. Between 1958 and 1992, no less than half a million of these engines were made; Sir Francis Chichester famously took one round the world with him on his epic voyages. But this one was dead, never having taken a breath for three long, stagnant years. There's an old saying, 'give a diesel engine fuel, air and cooling water and it will run.' They are the most stridently bullish words ever spoken. We've all had diesel engines which you could plug into an oil well, shroud it in fresh mountain air and feed it water from an Evian bottle, and it still wouldn't start. Is there a more depressing noise from an engine bay than the churning of an engine that never fires, while the battery looses



'...It's a nasty, ruddy disease which never lets go till it has smothered its victim and squeezed the life out of it'

the will to live as the volts evaporate and you detect less enthusiasm in every turn of the crankshaft?

Glum faced engineers, or perhaps funeral directors, came round to inspect. "Shall we put it straight into a skip?" I offered, nervously, giving them the opportunity shrug off my pessimism. No such comforting words come. "Might be an idea," said the gloomy one.

The most difficult point in operations like this is knowing when to cut and run. Wasn't now the time to accept the worst, stem the rapid outflow of money, and start measuring up to see which shiny, brand-new, rust free engine is going to fit in the hole? In my mind I was already ordering up catalogues. The Perkins 4108, I learned, does have a reputation for sounding like a poorly maintained machine gun, the clatter of the ever forceful pistons making sleep impossible within a hundred yards. I always envied those boats which seemed to purr through the water as if propelled by a cat, and didn't want a jackhammer as a sailing companion. I soon argued

myself to the point where I hoped this whole exercise was going to be a complete failure and the brand-new engine of my dreams would be mine.

The securing bolts were, of course, completely rusted, as were the pulleys, which added to the air of desolation. The lads pumped the oil from the sump, emerging the colour of molten Christmas pudding, and gave her a few litres of fresh stuff. Then they connected a can of fresh fuel via a new filter and cautiously plugged in a fully charged battery. "You best stand back," someone suggested, approaching the starter button. This now felt like a bomb disposal event. He pressed. The engine turned! Then, on the next press it turned a little faster, and faster, and faster until it let out a giant roar like that a lion waking from a deep sleep. And there it was, alive and kicking, a great lump of lousy rust ready to get back into the water and do the job it was designed for.

A little grit blasting and a coat or two of engine paint and it was back from the brink. Never judge a book by its cover, they say, to which I might add: "nor an engine that rust has tried to strangle." It might sometimes be worth confronting rust head on and calling its bluff. ✦



HAVE YOUR SAY

What blessings can you count these days?

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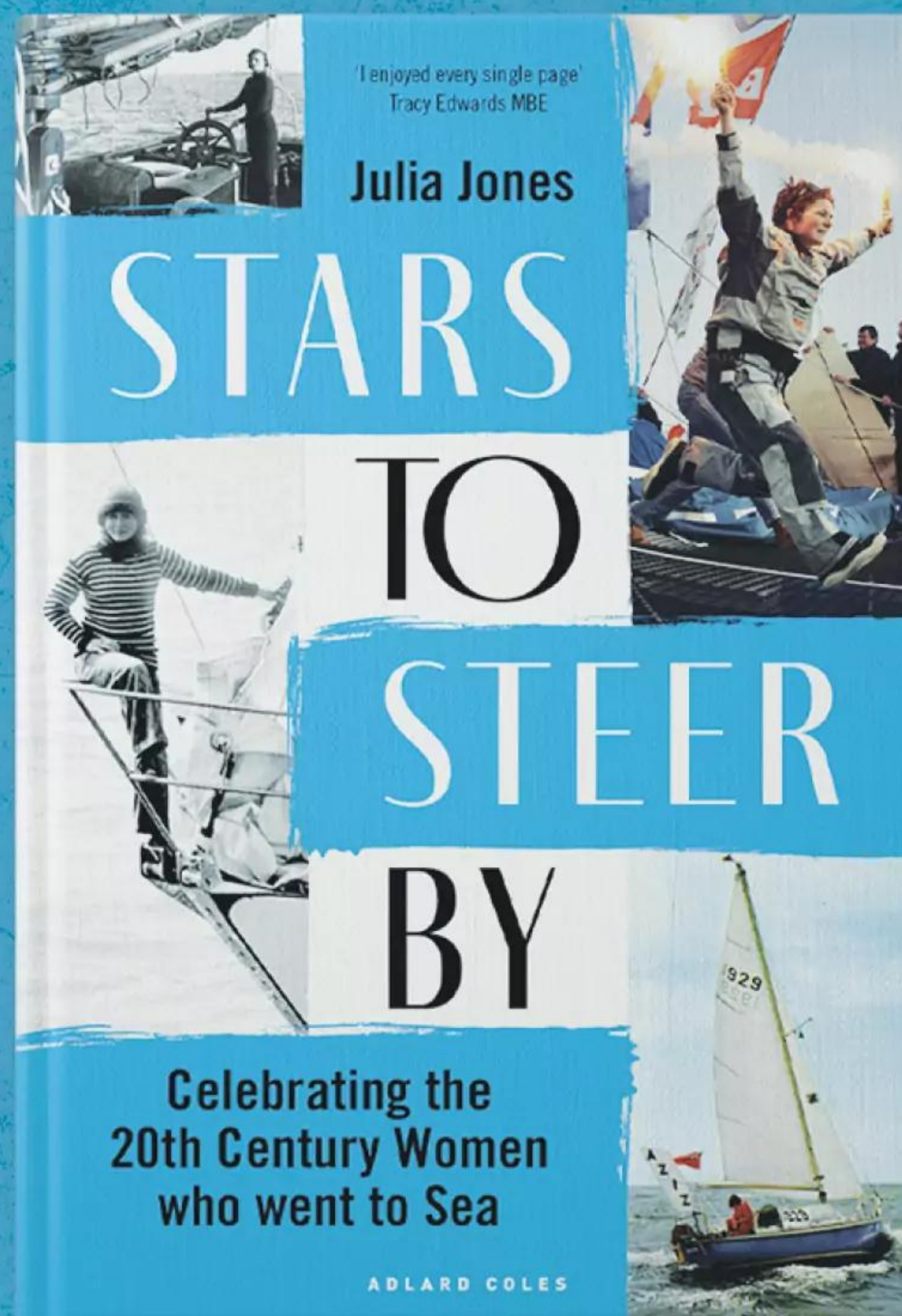
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ILLUSTRATION CLAIRE WOOD

*'A long overdue celebration
of the spirit of women's
independence through sailing'*

KATY STICKLAND
PBO Magazine

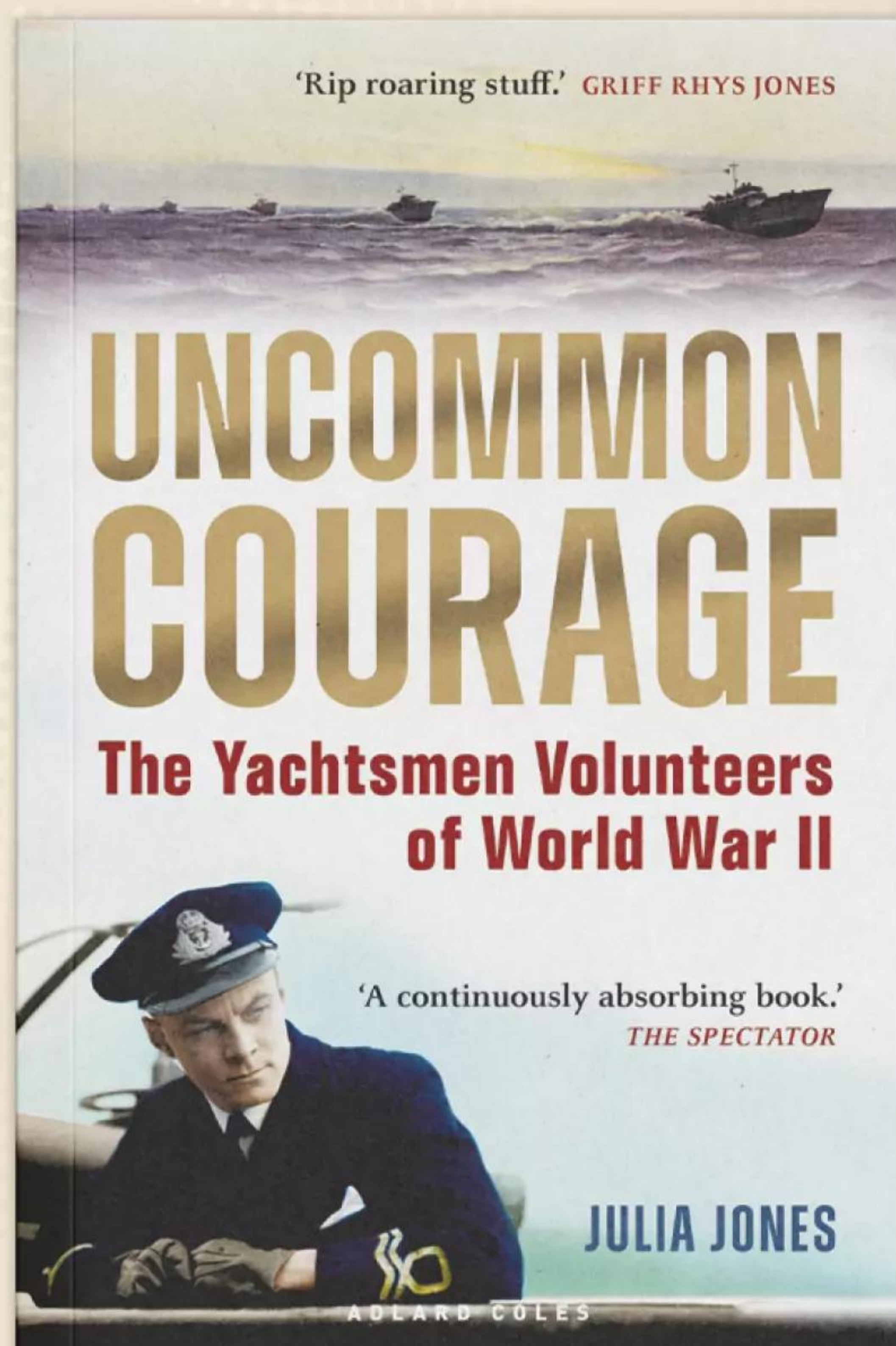
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missions of sabotage.

Andy Rice

A British medal jamboree at Princesa Sofía Regatta in Palma, and the ups and downs of racing on the professional circuit

“I won’t make a secret of it. I was in a bit of a hole after the Olympics. It was pretty shortly after that when I told myself, ‘well I’m going to have to go and win Palma next year!’” That’s what Micky Beckett told me soon after he stepped ashore from yet another victory at the Princess Sofia Regatta which took place in early April. It was good to be back on the Olympic scene after eight months since that extraordinary Olympic Regatta in Marseille last July. Extraordinary for all the wrong reasons, as far as Beckett was concerned. The battle for Olympic gold in the ILCA 7 had been as hotly anticipated as Robert Scheidt versus Ben Ainslie back in the day. This time it would be the defending Olympic Champion from Australia, Matt Wearn, up against the rising start, Beckett from Britain.

While Wearn sailed a masterful regatta in impossibly light airs, taking gold with the Medal Race to spare, Beckett struggled. In the scrap for the minor medals Beckett had moments where bronze and even silver looked within his grasp, but he fell the wrong side of a Rule 42 penalty frenzy from the on-the-water umpires and slumped to sixth.

If Beckett ever had a right to feel hard done by, it was then. But the practical Welshman never seems one to dwell on defeat or victory for too long. He just asks himself, ‘what’s next?’. To come back and win the biggest event of the annual calendar in Palma for a fourth successive time, this time against a fleet of 174 entries, is just phenomenal. The Welsh Wizard is back. And so too is Elliot Hanson. After taking 18 months out of the boat to earn some money and learn new skills on the professional keelboat racing circuit, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic representative is back doing the hard yards in the brutal singlehanded dinghy.

Hansen finished runner-up to Beckett, beating all those world-class sailors who have been at it full-time over the past year and a half. So of course he was more than satisfied with such a strong come-back performance. Actually, not. Speaking after winning the Medal Race, Hanson told me: “It’s a funny feeling finishing second. I’m 31 years old and I came second here back in 2017. That’s eight years ago and I wasn’t here to come second. I came here to win, so I won’t be celebrating tonight. That’s no disrespect to Micky, though. Congratulations to him, amazing performance.”

I like that. You don’t often hear that searing level of honesty, a lack of humility and ridiculous expectation



“Five gold medals from 10 events was beyond wildest dreams!”

of coming back to Laser racing and expecting to win straight away. That’s the kind of self-belief Hanson will need to get past Beckett for that Olympic berth at Los Angeles 2028.

Palma, by the way, was a barnstorming performance for the British across the board. Five gold medals from 10 events was beyond wildest dreams. Of course we have to remember this is post-Olympic year so there were some notable absentees from the entry list, but not all that many.

Following that disappointing medal

tally at Paris 2024, Palma was redemption day not just for Beckett but for Emma Wilson who took iQFOiL windsurfing gold, and for recently-wedded Nacra 17 team John Gimson and Anna Burnet who also took gold in the foiling catamaran. There were some encouraging golds too in the 49erFX for Freya Black and Saskia Tidey, and for Martin Wrigley and Bettine Harris in the 470 Mixed. Five golds and a total medal haul of nine. Stunning.

I was updating Ben Ainslie with the team’s exploits during a recent interview with him about America’s Cup and SailGP matters. I think that sometimes he wishes he was still moving in that simpler world of Olympic competition, where you have a large level of control over your destiny. And you actually get to go sailing rather than sitting in meetings. Although, as he pointed out to me, Ainslie is 48 years old, and he has had a good run of it over the past three decades.

Right now he finds himself embroiled in all the politics and machinations of relaunching an America’s Cup campaign. With Sir Jim Ratcliffe pulling Ineos Britannia out of another campaign, blaming Sir Ben on his way out of the door, at least he can start to put that unpleasant episode behind him. But there’s still plenty of negotiating to do be done with Grant Dalton and Emirates Team New Zealand and it’s not proving straightforward.

Pete Burling’s departure from the team suggests it’s not all roses inside the Kiwi camp. Burling had the opportunity to become the first skipper to win the Cup for a fourth successive time – to do a Micky Beckett! Instead Burling is choosing to spend his precious time on his Black Foils campaign in SailGP, and with his young family. Perhaps Cup campaigns aren’t as glamorous as they might sometimes seem to the rest of us.



ANDY RICE
As a sailing journalist and TV commentator Andy has unparalleled knowledge of the performance racing scene, from grassroots to elite level

PHOTO: FELIX DIEMER/SAILGP

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The continuing story of Barry Pickthall's sometimes dramatic two year cruise from Chichester to the Outer Hebrides and back

MAKE OR

Regular readers will recall that we last left Barry in ST/YY July 2025 after a calamitous dismasting off Portmaddy in the Outer Hebrides, led to repairs and over-wintering in Ullapool and an unexpected second season in the Western Isles. He now picks up the tale of his trip.

Every cloud has a silver lining. The silver in our case was to finish up in Ullapool after a 75-mile motor across the Minches and leave *Sea Jay* over winter for wooden boat experts Johnson & Lofatus to fashion a new mast. The break gave us an unexpected second season exploring these wonderful islands and anchorages,

starting with the season opening Lugger Fest – Ullapool's biennial classic boat festival in early May.

May to mid-June is high season. This was my fourth cruise in these parts and I've never been disappointed, waking up to one wonderful day after another. After that, historically you get four seasons in one day from mid-June through to August or early September when weaponised midges – Scotland's natural defence to keep us Sassenachs south of Hadrian's Wall – are at their height. September often provides an Indian Summer, but by then the temperatures have started to fall.

The extended daylight hours during the Spring and Summer months transform the Hebrides

into a paradise for artists and photographers, with ever-changing light providing a kaleidoscope of colours. This combined with the crystal-clear waters, wild landscapes, friendly locals and abundant wildlife thriving without disturbance, poaching or pollution, what's not to like about the Western Isles? The only downside as far as Southerners might have is the lack of WIFI and mobile signals. Vodafone is one provider yet to conquer the outer islands. We learned that the Coastguard and Emergency services all use the EE network, so swapped out my contract sim for a pay-as-you-go card which improved connections marginally.



BREAK

Barry's recommendations:

Port Ellen on Islay

With its nine distilleries on the Island is a good starting point for any cruise around the Western Isles, especially if you have sailed up the Irish east coast. It has a good, sheltered marina with some great seafood restaurants all within walking distance. If tasting single Malts is an attraction, there are two distilleries in Port Ellen, and others at Lagavulen and Ardbeg offer free overnight anchorages to visitors. If there is a need to clear heads after, there are plenty of anchorage points within the remote Ardmores Islands before crossing the Sound of Jura to the isle of Gigha

to view the remarkable variety of rhododendrons cultivated by Sir James Horlick (of slumber drink fame) back in the 1940s which come into glorious bloom during May and June. Remarkably, for such a small island with just 160 residents, it has a Michelin recommended restaurant and one of the finest fish and chip take-aways in the Scottish Isles overlooking a white sandy beach and moorings with spectacular views of the Kintyre Sound.

ABOVE

The anchorage within Tinkers Hole on the south west corner of Mull provides peace and tranquility

BELOW

Port Ellen featured a superb distillery



Oban

This travel hub for the inner Western Isles, is blessed with three marinas and makes a good base to cruise around Mull, Skye and mainland delights like Fort William, Mallaig, and Inverie on the Knoydart peninsula, the more remote hamlet in the UK. Other favourites included the multi-coloured port of Tobermory; the hurricane hole anchorage within Loch Scavaig on Skye; the beautiful island of Canna, the Treshnish islands with its azure blue waters and colonies of guillemots, kittiwakes, performing puffins, razorbills, shags and Atlantic Grey seals, and the weather proofed anchorage in Tinker's Hole on the southwest corner of Mull.





Oban, like Ullapool north of Skye, are ideal springboards to cruise around the Outer Hebrides. Castlebay at the southern end of Barra, and Portmaddy on the eastern side of North Uist both make excellent entry points to the Outer Hebrides when sailing from Oban, and Stornoway on Lewis is an easy day sail from Ullapool.

Castlebay

Once a favourite stopover for the Round Britain & Ireland Race, now has a small marina which is ideal for an overnight stay. Once a thriving herring port, the centrepiece is Kisimul Castle surrounded by water in the bay. Built by the MacNeil clan in the 1400s, it became famed for piracy

during the latter part of the 1500s. The Clan leaders were summoned by King James VI of Scotland to answer for repeated attacks against English ships, but their Chief, Roderick MacNeil, better known as Rory the Turbulent, managed to calm royal nerves by arguing that he thought the King would be pleased since Queen Elizabeth I had ordered the beheading of his mother Mary, Queen of Scots. He got off Scot-free and his clan continued to reign supreme until the Island was sold in 1838. The castle was repurchased a century later by Robert Lister MacNeil, who made efforts to restore it, but in 2001 it was leased to Historic Scotland for 1,000 years for an annual sum of £1 and a bottle of whisky. The castle



ABOVE LEFT
Kisimul Castle in Castlebay has a history of piracy

ABOVE RIGHT
The iconic brightly painted houses in Tobermory

BELOW
Ullapool is an ideal springboard to cruise around the Outer Hebride

is well worth a visit, along with the village, now famed for its local king scallops and langoustines. The island's other claim to fame is the film Whisky Galore telling the tale of the SS Politician which ran aground with 50,000 cases of whisky on board in 1941, much of which was salvaged by locals from under the noses of the Customs Men.





The Outer Hebrides are also famed for their white sandy beaches, so much so that were palm trees here, you might think you are in the Caribbean. Remarkably, the white sands emanate not from water-crushed coral or stone, but to beds of maerl – a purple-pink hard seaweed that form into spiky underwater carpets on the sea floor – and a favourite for Herring to spawn on. A type of coralline algae, maerl deposits lime within its cell walls creating a hard, brittle skeleton which, after being crushed by waves

and bleached by the sun, provide the make-up for the white beaches. It also makes a great natural fertiliser, and before conservationists got their way, crofters would spread the sand across their fields.

Lochmaddy, North Uist

Here, the local community has built a small well sheltered marina to attract visiting yachts. It has a car hire service which we took full advantage of to explore the wonderful shorelines that North & South Uist, Benbecula



ABOVE RIGHT

Lunga, one of the Treshnish Islands, is home to a large colony of Puffins

BELOW

Traditional gaff rigged sailing fishing boats celebrate a revival in lugger rigged boats at the first Ullapool Lugger Festival in May 2024

and Eriskay have to offer.

The marina, which opened after the Covid pandemic and was gaining popularity, suffered major damage in 2023 when a dredger destroyed its pontoon system after catching an anchor point. The facility was re-opened last year and offers full amenities including laundry facilities. There is also an excellent restaurant in the hotel, a short walk away.

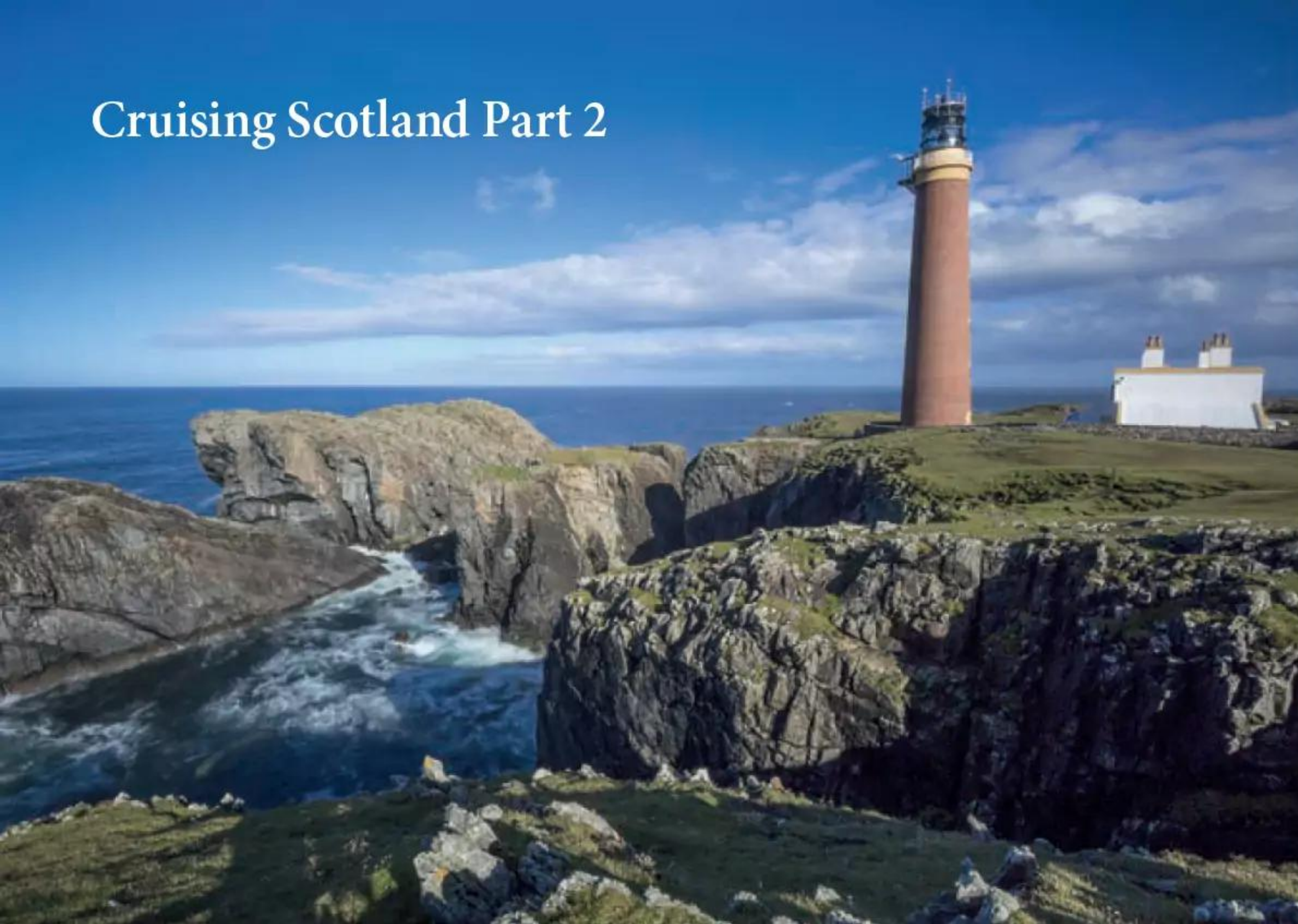
North and South Harris

These islands have wonderful beaches on their western sides accessed via a narrow buoyed channel through the Sound of Harris. We made a beeline for Tarbert, the main settlement on the island with a marina that can cater for vessels up to 20m in length on the outer hammerhead pontoon. This is the home of Harris Tweed and the Isle of Harris distillery which are both a short walk from the marina and well worth a visit. →



Annual events

- May 16: Start of the Scottish Peaks Race from Oban
- May 23–26: Jura Scottish Series, Tarbert, Loch Fyne
- May 30–June 1: FyneFest food festival
- July 5–6: Tarbert Seafood festival, Tarbert, Loch Fyne
- July 19–31: Cruising Club of America Scottish Cruise, starting from Oban
- August 2–8: West Highland Yachting Week, Craobh
- August 30–September 7: Largs Regatta Festival, Largs
- September 19–21: Tarbert Music Festival Tarbert, Loch Fyne



Like Portmaddy, the town is the main transport hub around the island, and also the centre for boat trips to the bird sanctuaries on the outlying Shiant Islands and St Kilda

The Shiants

This privately owned group of islands enroute to Stornoway is well worth an overnight stop, not just for its large population of seabirds but also for its fantastic variety of marine wildlife. The islands are owned by Tom Nicholson who allows visitors to step ashore providing they leave it as they find it. A simple bothy on Eilean an Taighe is the only habitable structure, and the only inhabitants – apart from the birds – is a flock of sheep that traditionally have grazed here untended

since the mid-19th century.

You know you are getting close when Atlantic puffins start popping up out of the water some five miles out. The islands play host to one of the largest UK colonies of these inquisitive orange-beaked birds and a delight to watch. There are also significant numbers of northern fulmars common guillemots, gulls, black legged kittiwakes, razorbills, great skuas and common shags. There is a sheltered deep water lagoon to anchor in and a stoney beach to get ashore by dinghy. Well worth a visit.

Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

This was our last port of call in the Outer Hebrides, is also worth a visit, not so much for what this commercial port has to offer, more

ABOVE LEFT
Butt of Lewis lighthouse

ABOVE RIGHT
Stornoway proved to be a very pleasant stopover

OPPOSITE PAGE
The immaculate sands of Luskentyre on the Isle of Harris (top) and the author's route through the islands (below)

for the Island which has been inhabited since neolithic times. The port is another former herring town with reminders of its past on almost every corner. Harris has a lot of history. The stark granite landscape with its many lakes and inlets were scoured out during the ice age. Calanais Standing Stones, one of Scotland's most magnificent monuments in the middle of the Island, are thought to have been erected some 5,000 years ago, predating England's Stonehenge. The stone circle was uncovered by peat cutters in 1857 under 9ft of soil and 11 more smaller circles have been found, some dating from much later era, which suggests that the Calanais stones was a ritual site for several centuries.

There is a bus service direct from Stornoway straight to the Stones, and another to the Butt →

How to get there – and could you keep your boat here long term?

When the weather changes in these parts, it invariably does so for a week or more, so rather than ride out wind and rain, we always had a plan B to leave the boat and scoot home until conditions changed for the better. The Highlands and Islands may be remote but public transport is good. We never had a problem leaving the boat at short notice in one of the many small marinas or anchorages, and with daily flight and ferry services linking the main mainland travel hubs, we could always count on getting back south within 24 hours from even the remotest parts.

The Outer Hebrides are serviced by the much-maligned Caledonian MacBrayne (Calmac) car ferries, but with four new ships entering service this season, breakdowns should once again become a rarity. The ferries run from Stornoway to Ullapool, Tobermory (Harris) and Port Maddy (North Uist) to Uig, (Skye), Loch Boisdale (South Uist) to Mallaig and from Castlebay (Barra) to both Mallaig and Oban. There are also daily flights from Stornoway,

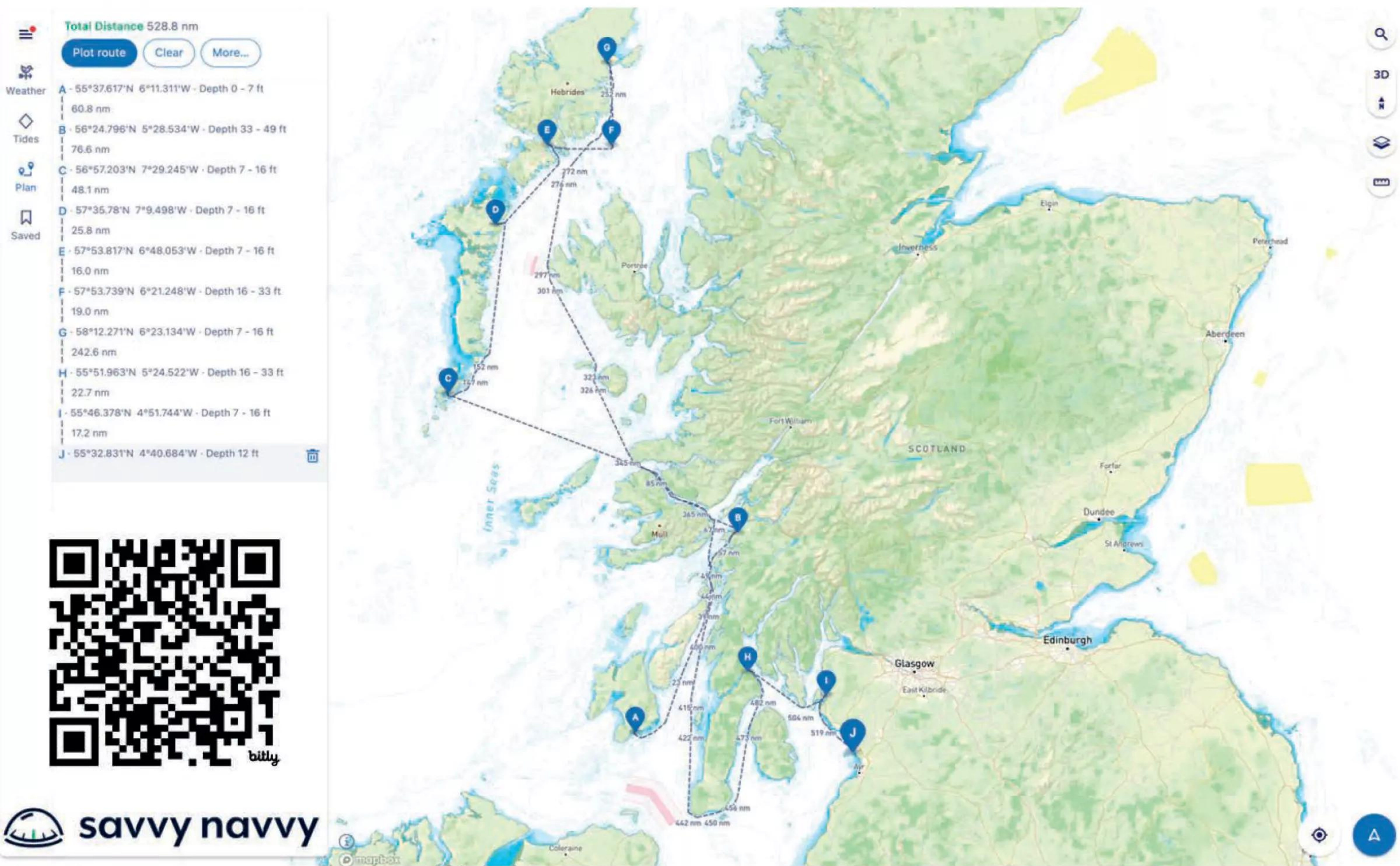
Benbecula, and – the most spectacular – from Barra, where the planes land on the beach.

From Scottish mainland harbours, it is even quicker, with train services from Oban, Largs and Troon direct to Glasgow and onward to London. Ullapool has a coach service to Inverness railway



station. Oban to the Home Counties takes 11 hours by train, and with a rail card costs between £60 and £90 when booked in advance. From Ullapool, we took advantage of coach service to Inverness where you can catch an overnight sleeper or sit the 13 hours out for £75.00.

Those prices prompt the question: Could we base our yacht in the Western Isles for a year or more? With swinging moorings costing as little as £50 a year (you sink your own ground tackle) many more people are basing their yachts in easy access harbours and marinas like Dunstaffnage and Ardoran Marine in Loch Feochan, both short taxi rides from Oban railway station with a direct link to Glasgow. Ullapool, which has a new marina and plenty of mooring space within the shelter of Loch Broom, is serviced by a coach service from Inverness station. Further south, we took advantage of two Yacht Haven marinas, one at Largs, the other at Troon, both offering comprehensive services and excellent restaurants. They also have direct train lines to Glasgow, and Prestwick airport is situated between the two. Marina costs are on average, 50% below those on the South Coast, and a visitor's berth cost £15 – £25 per night for our 27-footer.





of Lewis lighthouse marking the northern most point in the Outer Hebrides if you don't fancy the long sail round the Island.

Our return south took us back down the Sea of Hebrides and eastward through Gunna Sound dividing Coll and Tiree to Crinan and the canal linking the Sound of Jura with Loch Fyne and the Clyde estuary. Opened in 1801, the canal remains a testament to Scottish engineering even before the Victorian era, built to carry livestock though to the outer islands and provide a short-cut for fishing vessels heading out to the herring grounds and back.

The nine-mile waterway now has a second lease of life as a route for pleasure craft carrying 3,000 boats a year through 15 locks and beautiful scenery. It takes a day to transit and was great fun.

Tarbert, Loch Fyne

This is one of Scotland's answer to Cowes holding a number of regattas each year. It is also a temple to fine seafood, much of it caught in the loch, so a must stop for crews heading to or from the Clyde.

Largs and Troon

Our final Scottish stopovers were at Largs and Troon, two excellent marinas run by the Yacht Haven Group, providing full service facilities. Largs, the larger of the two, has a 75 ton travel hoist and plenty winter hard standing. Both marinas are great places to leave a yacht for extended periods, and have a number of offers to encourage longer stays including seven nights for the price of five. Troon of course has the added attraction of a golf course on its doorstep.

ABOVE LEFT
The author's boat negotiates the Crinan Canal

ABOVE RIGHT
Tarbert Harbour is the main settlement on the island of Lewis with a marina that can cater for vessels up to 20m in length

BELOW
Oban is the ideal springboard to cruise around the Outer Hebrides

Two seasons for the price of one in the South

Have I sold you on the idea? We met so many South Coasters who have already decided to keep their yachts in the Western Isles for a second season or more, for the simple reason that there is much to explore even after four months sailing in these waters.

The key attractions are the remoteness – you are lucky to see more than one or two boats all day – the abundance of wildlife, the dramatic coastlines, and brilliant sunsets, not to mention the whisky! It is so easy to fall in love with it all. Dolphins riding your bow wave is an almost daily delight, fulmars, guillemots, kittiwakes, puffins, razorbills, shags and great skuas are all in abundance during the summer breeding season. And there is always the chance of spotting a white-tailed eagle, Britain's largest bird of prey. Better known in these parts as the sea eagle, the breed were once persecuted to extinction until reintroduced from Norway during the 1970s. Now, there are around 40 pairs nesting within the Western Isles. 🌊



Yacht charter

If you don't have the time to sail up from the south, there is a choice of yacht charter companies offering bareboat and skippered vessels based at Ardfert, Craobh, Largs and Oban.

Alba Sailing: alba-sailing.co.uk

Argyll Yacht Charters: argyll-yachtcharters.co.uk

Burgess Yachts: burgessyachts.com

Cloud Nine Charters: cloudninecharters.co.uk

Plain Sailing: plainsailing.com

Sail Away Scotland: sailawayScotland.co.uk

SeaSpray Scotland: seasprayscotland.com

Tubber: tubber.com

Yacht Charter Scotland: clickandboat.com

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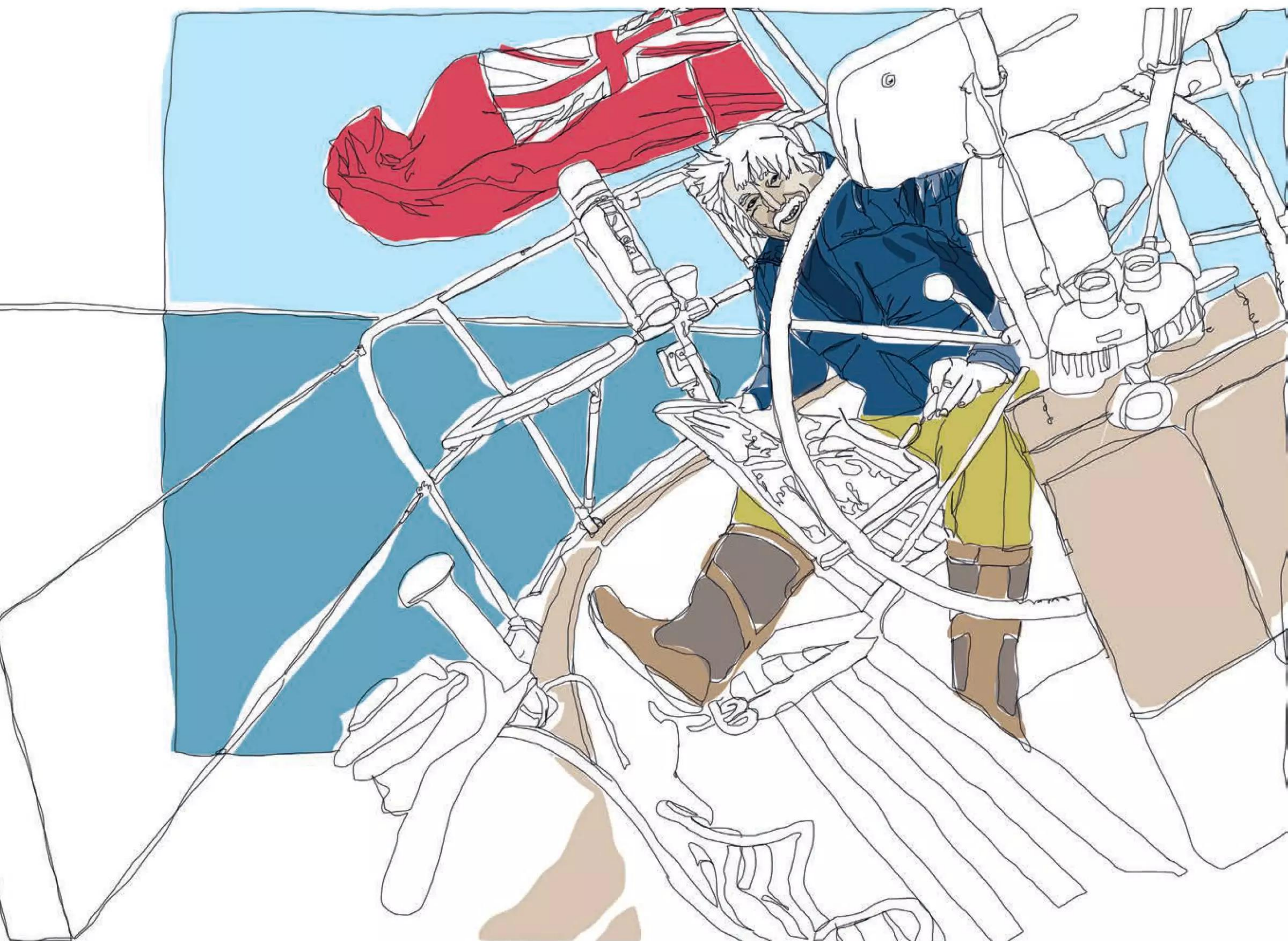


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Tom Cunliffe

Tom has learnt to rise above the embarrassment of firing up the engine on passage, and instead uses it to his advantage...

However we may feel about the potholes in our street or the ever-rising price of a pint, some things are definitely improving. It's impossible, for example, to ignore the uplift in reliability of the internal combustion engine. I often hear people lamenting the fact that youngsters today have little idea what makes an engine work and less clue about how to fix it when

it doesn't. The reasons for this have nothing to do with the quality of the next generation. When I was a student learning the hard way how to make my motorcycle run, I'd wake up regularly to the bitter music of my neighbour's side-valve Ford Anglia flattening its battery in stubborn refusal to start.

Fortunately, engines in those days were as simple as they were unreliable. No computers delivered instant diagnosis, and when you

lifted the bonnet, the beast was in plain view. It had a carburettor whose jets could be blown clear, ignition points which were cleaned up with the girlfriend's emery board, and a fuel pump an educated fixer could hit with a hammer to encourage it to deliver the lifeblood of the machine. Starter motors presented another area of frequent disappointment, yet these too could often be cajoled into life with a new set of brushes and a broken hacksaw



PODCAST

Catch up with Tom's columns now and in the future at sailingtoday.co.uk



“If it hit me on the head, it would be ‘lights out’ permanently. If it flew into the accommodation it would begin its rampage by smashing the teapot”

blade to freshen the commutator. We all carried a reasonable toolkit and a set of jump leads, so most people who were not congenitally incompetent were forced to manage.

All the above held good for marine engines too, many of which were powered by petrol. Coaxing a single-cylinder Stuart Turner into life was not complicated according to the rudely explicit booklet supplied by the manufacturer. All you had to do was turn on the fuel and wind the handle. So they said. Unlike my motorcycle or my friend’s old Ford, however, these inexplicably popular engines were well known for nasty habits. On a memorable occasion, the problem was not the usual failure to fire up. As the boat sailed herself into the mouth of the Hamble river one Sunday afternoon I left her to it for half a minute, engaged the heavy cranking handle in the shaft provided, spat on my hands and started winding.

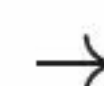
The plan was to give the engine my best shot. If it refused as was its habit, I’d simply sail up the river. The boat was only 22 feet long and was from the board of the great Alfred Westmacott who also designed the lovely Solent Sunbeam and the X One Designs which you can see racing to this day. She handled beautifully.

ABOVE
Learning to sail on the Norfolk Broads without an engine

BELOW
Stuart Turner engine complete with handle!



The harbourmaster didn’t like us sailing in the river so I was doing my best for him by trying the engine. To my amazement it burst into life on the fourth circuit of the crank handle. For a split second I rejoiced, but my pleasure was short lived because instead of disengaging, the handle stayed right where it was, whipping round at an improbable speed. It must have weighed at least a kilo. Travelling at somewhere near the speed of light, I didn’t care to think about its kinetic energy. It was safe enough so long as it stayed attached, but it was designed to come away. Should it let go now it would fly off with unstoppable force. If it hit me on the head, it would be ‘lights out’ permanently. If it flew into the accommodation it would begin its rampage by smashing the teapot. The unthinkable scenario was that it might make its dash for freedom on the downhill stroke. It would then



crash into the bottom of the boat and punch a hole shaped like a starting handle in the garboard strake. Sinking in the mouth of the Hamble was as unattractive a proposition then as it would be today.

The obvious answer of shorting out the magneto (the equivalent of turning off the ignition) was not available because any attempt to approach it would mean broken limbs, courtesy of the flailing handle. Not seeing any immediate answer, I left it whizzing round and nipped up on deck to make sure we weren't hitting anything. We weren't. The little thoroughbred was sailing up the channel as straight as a gun barrel. Back in the chamber of horrors, the handle was still doing its stuff. There was only one solution. It wasn't going to be instant relief, but I turned off the fuel anyway and went back on deck to pray that the juice ran out before we were sunk.

It was my lucky day. A few minutes later everything went quiet, and I sailed the boat peacefully to her mooring just below the A27 road bridge. The harbourmaster rewarded me with a black look as I passed his office window, so I gave him a gallic shrug and pointed vigorously down the hatch. He didn't like it, but he waved me on.

How things have changed! We're all diesel now, thank goodness, and it's literally decades since I had a starter motor fail, either in my car or on the water. Having been raised in the School of Hard Knocks, I am touching wood as I write this, but we really do live in a different world. Back in the day, my own relationship with engines was not unusual. Nobody really trusted their auxiliary except the owners of those luxury craft that used to be called 'motor-sailers'. So ingrained are my early experiences that an inherent lack of faith in the starter button seems inevitable, yet season after season my current Yanmar has delivered all I ask of it. I am overcome with humility and gratitude.

Something else has happened to auxiliary engines in the last half century. Not only are they now reliable, many are a great deal more powerful than their historic equivalents. The 50 horsepower in



ABOVE
Cracking on under power



TOM CUNLIFFE
Tom has been mate on a merchant ship, run yachts for gentlemen, operated charter boats, delivered, raced and taught. He writes the pilot for the English Channel, a complete set of cruising text books and runs his own internet club for sailors worldwide at tomcunliffe.com

my 45ft sailing yacht is more than enough to propel her straight into the eye of a gale of wind. In happier conditions, she will make an easy 6kts all the livelong day, burning well under three litres of diesel per hour. What this means in practice is that, however I care to spin it, I really have a motor-sailer by another name. If the wind isn't blowing my way and I'm pressed to get somewhere, there's no problem. I roll up the headsail, strap in the main, fire up the engine and off I go. My favourite cruising ground is a good 600nm from my home berth. I make the passage most years, then do it again homeward bound at the end of the season. I enjoy being at sea well enough, but if the wind doesn't serve up what I need, the trip's going to take me a long time. A few years back I used to feel uncomfortable about starting the engine to make the distance, but I've done some work on my head since then and I now have a different point of view.

I learned to sail in a cabin yacht on the Norfolk Broads with no engine at all. The motor in my first cruising boat was so chronically unreliable that I made most of

my passages under canvas alone. My second wasn't much better, yet my wife and I went to South America and back, in her, often with no power for months on end, so when it comes to sailing rather than using the engine I don't feel I have anything to prove. Secure in this knowledge, I'm relaxed about motoring. It's as though what I really have is a motorboat with sails. The default position on my annual delivery passage is motoring at 6kts. If the wind suits us, the boat and I are delighted to set the Code 0 and carry on under sail, but either way we get to our cruising ground in good time.

Once in our chosen paradise, we have a perfect sailing yacht which we use to the full. There's no pressure on us to do 60nm a day; we just go with the wind and have fun, cranking up the donkey occasionally for an awkward berth, or to put some charge back in the batteries.

We're all dragging the weight of our engines around even when we're sailing, so let's rejoice in modern machinery and not be embarrassed about using them on passage!

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SACRED COWES

Georgie Corlett-Pitt talks to top sailors about Cowes Week's unique appeal, and gets their insider tips on taking part...

Cowes Week takes place this year from 2-8 August and is, incredibly, just one year away from celebrating its bicentenary. The allure of one of the world's biggest regattas is, it seems, timeless. As ever, this year's seven-day Solent extravaganza is set to draw a diverse fleet – from classic cruisers to out-and-out racers – bringing thousands of sailors from far and wide to tackle challenges on the race-course and lap up the convivial post-race social scene.

I asked four well-known sailors, who are set to race in some very different classes, what it is they most love about the regatta...

Giovanni Belgrano – IRC (Whooper)

Racing his much-loved one-off 1939 Laurent Giles design is top racing yachtsman and America's Cup designer, Giovanni Belgrano. A Cowes Week competitor since, in his words, "forever", Giovanni switched from the Etchells class into IRC when he bought *Whooper* some 25 years ago. Since then, he

ABOVE
One of the many exciting starts from the Royal Yacht Squadron line

BELOW
Concentration is key

and his team have enjoyed plenty of high-profile Solent success, including IRC Nationals and the Gold Roman Bowl (Round the Island Race) wins – not to mention numerous class and Black Group overall victories at Cowes Week...

"As soon as entries opened, I signed up. This is a key event for us; we typically race 60 days in total per year, and I love Cowes Week because it's a great challenge.

"You have a very three-dimensional type of sailing where there is always a new situation, and that's unique. Thanks to the Solent – and the tides, the fleets, the long courses – you get pushed into situations you have never experienced before, so it's a continuous learning curve.

PHOTO: PAUL WYETH





PHOTO: MARTIN ALLEN

“Every year you get one or two races that are particularly unusual, often with very strong tides or a wind shut-down, and you have to think completely out of the box. You can spend an hour trying to go forwards 30 or 40 metres with another 100 boats around you; that involves a lot of skill, but also a good sense of humour. And that’s what Cowes Week is all about.

“We’re a very tight crew on *Whooper* and we love our boat. For us, the fun comes from sailing well; we like to earn respect from our competitors – and equally, show respect – by competing well, so that’s our priority.

“Racing at Cowes Week is very dynamic, and you can’t not make mistakes – it’s about making fewer mistakes than the boats around you, drawing on lessons from the past, and always looking out for opportunities; for example, the tide makes a huge difference to us so we try to position ourselves to use that as a strength and make up for any weaknesses, such as not being able to point high. At Cowes Week, the picture is always evolving. You never stop learning and enjoying the experience.”



PHOTO: PAUL WYETH

Top tip

“Navigation is key - you’ve got to know where you are and where you’re heading to avoid silly mistakes like rounding the mark the wrong way – we’ve learned that the hard way, and now have a very good system (using GPS, and charts as a back-up). Cowes Week is unique in that you get pushed into situations which you don’t normally encounter in windward/leeward racing; therefore, having good sail handling ability and confidence in sail choices for different angles is paramount. This way you can keep your eyes out of the boat, make good decisions, and be ready to respond to changing situations, without struggling to handle the boat. That comes with practise and requires thorough pre-event boat prep. Also, enjoy the regatta’s social side and make time to celebrate as a crew.”

ABOVE

Keeping the pressure on downwind requires good teamwork

Gerd-Jan Poortman, IRC (Ker 46)

Three-time veteran of The Ocean Race, multiple world champion and past Admiral’s Cup winner, Gerd-Jan is currently coach of the Rotterdam Offshore Sailing Team youth programme and skipper of the team’s Ker 46 *Van Uden*. The team will also sail in this year’s newly-revived Admiral’s Cup, representing the Royal Mass YC, and so Cowes Week will form a much-anticipated finale to their Solent based season. As a pro sailor, Gerd-Jan is no stranger to Cowes Week, having sailed most years since 1997...

“Cowes Week is a super event; so many boats, beautiful sailing waters – and the social side is also very important. It’s one of the best events in northern Europe.

“I love that the racing is so challenging! It takes a great deal of studying if you’re sailing there for the first time. Even now, after 26 years, I still get the books out – Solent Weather, Winning Tides – to get my head around where we can and can’t go, and where to get the best help or relief from the current. There are so many dimensions that make the Solent a very interesting place to sail, including the winds around the headlands and the Island.

“For first timers, I’m sure they find it difficult, but with experience and good preparation then you can close the gap on the local knowledge →

Thinking of taking part? Did you know...

- You can enter for any race up until 17:00 the day before; check out the Notice of Race and enter at cowesweek.co.uk
- Entries received before 4 May receive an Early Bird discount!
- Cowes Week has its own app, used for results, tracking and competitor updates
- A sophisticated VAR camera is used by race officials to catch anyone over the line, ensuring racing is fair for all
- As well as daily prizes, class trophies and group trophies, there are also a number of special trophies to encourage newcomers, youth and female sailors, as well as those awarded for team results and seamanship
- Boats in the Club Cruiser and Performance Cruiser class need an ISCRS rating, issued free by the Island Sailing Club



PHOTO: PAUL WYETH

advantage. Our boat is currently in the Netherlands, but is due to move to the UK soon and will do four or five weekends in the Solent (including the Admiral's Cup) to help build up the knowledge among the young sailors in our team.

"For Cowes Week – coming after the Admiral's Cup – we are using it as an opportunity to showcase what we do, to our sponsors, who are crucial in enabling our team to operate. So we will sail it with half crew, half guests – though most of them are sailors too, so we will still be competitive while also relaxing a little and showing our supporters the best of sailing. Cowes Week is perfect for us to do that."

Top tip

"Be prepared! Organise all your knowledge beforehand; make a shortlist of what's important to your team for sailing well. Plan to have a good balance between partying and sailing well. Our crew is young so we do have some rules in place, but I still encourage them go out there, enjoy the socials – as well as take in the scenery, the boats and all the many dimensions

that sailing in the Solent brings."

Giles Peckham – (Daring)

Giles Peckham is a longstanding Cowes Week competitor in the Daring fleet, having won the class, White Group and the regatta overall a record-breaking number of times. Each year, Giles and his wife Jane, look forward to the event as a break within their usual busy race schedule (this year they have cruising plans to factor in too!) choosing to sail with the boat's co-owners Milo Carver, and Richard Romer-Lee. Despite only sailing *Dauntless* together during Cowes Week, the team gels well and they have enjoyed numerous successful Cowes Weeks...

"Cowes Week is such a great buzz! There's so much going on – so many different yachts, a huge variety of different people – from professionals to those sailing with friends and family, like us.

"I like the long orienteering courses and the variety of the weather we get as that gives everyone an opportunity to have their moment – to catch the right shift or get the tide just right – and that's part of the excitement. It's very difficult to be top dog every day with any guarantee.



PHOTO: PAUL WYETH

ABOVE LEFT
Giles Peckham at the helm of the serial winning team's Daring – *Dauntless*

ABOVE RIGHT
Enjoying a spot of boat preparation

"Our boat tends to favour the lighter conditions when the tide really comes into play. It can be frustrating, but with the right team on board, the right tuning, finding the perfect line really concentrates the mind – and to me, that's a classic Cowes Week challenge. Having a really good crew is invaluable in helping the skipper focus on sailing the boat fast.

"Over the course of the week a lot can happen; even over the course of one race a lot can happen! Often, on the startlines, I have to remind myself that it's a week-long regatta and you don't have to win every start to win the week.

"I've done Cowes Week over 35 times, and we are already looking forward to the special anniversary event next year. Even after so many years, one of the best things about Cowes Week is that it never loses the buzz. At the same time, the variety of the racing means every year is different, so every year is memorable."

Top tip

"Keep your head outside the boat – and I don't just mean the skipper! Having a good crew is really important to feed information on wind, tide, competitors, and



2025 Cowes Week official charity

Autism on the Water (AOTW) is a registered charity with locations in Scotland and the South Coast of England that provide sailing and motorboating opportunities to all ages on the autistic spectrum plus their families free of charge. Murray MacDonald, Director of Autism on the Water spoke of his delight at being appointed as Official Charity for this year's Cowes Week, saying: "Alongside competing at the regatta this year, we will also be running many free sailing and motorboating trips and we're planning some surprises too! AOTW are avid fans of Cowes Week, both on and off the water, and we're looking forward to a week of exciting racing and shoreside fundraising activities."



to help work out what's going on around you. It's a great opportunity for good crews to shine through. Communication is therefore crucial; the conversation on our boat is only ever about the racing – there's no chat, but it's all friendly; everybody is contributing, talking things through and making decisions together. It's something we're lucky to have and have worked hard at, particularly as we don't sail together very often."

Kai Hockley – (Flying 15)

A hugely talented sailor who took his first steps in sailing at the age of 11 thanks to The Greig City Academy's Scaramouche project. Most recently Kai has been training with Ben Ainslie's Athena Sports Group, which includes the Emirates Great Britain SailGP team, the INEOS Britannia America's Cup team and Athena Pathway Youth team. A regular at Cowes Week, Kai has previously won both the Young Skipper award and Under 25 trophy. In 2025, for the second consecutive year, Kai will be sailing a Flying 15, kindly gifted to him, with teammate Jesse Opoku-Ware...

"For me, Cowes Week is definitely one of the stand-out events of the season. We really

look forward to doing it because it's an all-round great event that guarantees a good time and high level competition.

"My favourite Cowes Week (so far!) was two years ago, competing in the Etchells class; it was the first time we had done a whole season on one singular boat instead of chopping and changing between classes, so, as a team, we felt pretty ready for Cowes Week. It turned out to be a great event, and we were competing against some great competitors, the likes of Andy Beadsworth and Ted Blowers, which was really cool; they won overall and we were pretty happy to finish third that year.

"This year we are hoping to be top of the fleet in the Flying 15 class, and planning to use this as a warm-up for the Worlds the week after, in Weymouth.

"Since last year's Cowes Week, I've had some incredible opportunities through the America's Cup and SailGP. Being with the sailors I've been working with, you obviously pick up a lot of knowledge, particularly in terms of boat preparation. So that is something I'm taking on board for this year; Jesse and I are used to doing just a bit of boat work then turning up for racing, but we're definitely going to get this boat in tip top

ABOVE LEFT
And they're off! Close start for the TP52 class

ABOVE RIGHT
Kai Hockley at the helm of the Flying 15

BELOW LEFT
Young team enjoying the fun side of Cowes Week

BELOW RIGHT
Racing along the shoreline means it is a great place for spectators to get a close up view

condition over the next few months.

"Overall, though, I'll still be going into this regatta with the same sort of perspective. That's the great thing about Cowes Week – it is always a fun event to go into, no matter your skill level; Olympians, club sailors – everyone just wants to go there, sail well and have fun. If you ask me where the balance lies on our boat, it's probably tipped a bit more towards winning, but Jesse and I are still there to enjoy it and have a great time. We're looking forward to it!"

Top tip

"In the grand scheme of things, we are pretty new to the sport compared to many who have been doing it for 20, 30 years; but they all want to give their advice, so my number one tip for others who want to get ahead in their racing is simply to go and ask! That's a great thing about Cowes Week – everyone wants to win, but equally, everyone is happy to share and talk about their experiences. There are loads of social events which make great networking opportunities. Just get stuck in. At the beginning it may seem daunting, but once you've asked once, it's amazing how quickly you can build connections. Even if you are new to the fleet, people will always be welcoming."

ALL PHOTOS: PAUL WYETH



CORINTHIAN

Greece is a country of many gifts for the cruising sailor. The Gulf of Corinth is one of its hidden treasures as Rod Heikell narrates



SPIRIT





When sailing from the Ionian in Greece to the Aegean we often

prefer to take the slightly longer route around the Peloponnese. But early season it all depends on the weather and, not for the first time, this year we did a handbrake turn at the Gulf of Patras to head down through the gulfs and into the Aegean via the Corinth Canal.

Our yacht, *Skylax*, had been hauled in Aktio and launched in early April. A few days in Lefkas town to provision and pick up an old friend who wanted to sail with us to the Aegean and we were off on a gentle shakedown cruise to Vathi on Ithaca which turned out to be a bit of a thrash and an uncomfortable night at anchor. We didn't even go ashore. Then onto the anchorage behind Petala Island which always seems a long way away from the more crowded inland sea: just a couple of yachts, no tavernas, in fact nothing ashore except the

occasional fisherman and the gaping cave on the slopes of the island that sometimes has a resident vulture. Back in the day I found a pinion feather here which was identified in the UK as belonging to a griffon vulture with an estimated wingspan of around seven foot. If you see one here they are really big birds.

In Petala we consulted the various weather forecasts again. Same story. It was blowing red, 25-30kts from the south from Cape Malea up past Pylos for the next three days. Bashing to windward to get down the western side of the Peloponnese was not inviting hence the handbrake turn left into the Gulf of Patras with *Skylax* pointing her bows towards Mesolongion (Missolonghi). If there is one thing you can count on along here it is hurricane hole Mesolongion with sticky mud for good holding – and a messy foredeck when you haul the anchor up. For us sticky mud was a good option as a thunderstorm moved through in the evening.

Once you have located the buoys to seaward of the canal entrance

ABOVE LEFT
Rig check before leaving Levkas

ABOVE RIGHT
Messolonghi Marina

BELOW LEFT
Anchorage in Messolonghi basin

BELOW RIGHT
Rion-Antirion bridge between the Gulf of Patras and Gulf of Corinth

you potter up a canal to the basin in Mesolongion itself. The banks are lined with fishing huts (pellades) that have mostly been upgraded to holiday shacks in a vista that has always seemed like something out of Asia to me. At the end is the cargo ship basin which is rarely used by ships anymore, and yachts anchor in the basin or can go stern-to in the northeast corner though it can get a bit bumpy here with the prevailing northwesterly wind. Alternatively, there is Jo's Mesolongion Marina in the southwest corner which is up and running again after some ups and downs.

Byron's resting place

Mesolongion was where Byron died of fever during the Greek War of Independence though there is little left to remind you of that. What used to be a garrison town for the army has slowly morphed into a likeable university town, though the centre of town is some distance from the port.

From Mesolongion it was a taxing beat in a short choppy sea through the Rion-Antirion bridge into →

PHOTO: MESSOLONGHI MARINA





Other places in the Gulfs of Patras and Corinth

Winds in the Gulf of Patras and Corinth tend to be funnelled.

Gulf of Patras

Kato Achaia – A small fishing harbour ESE of Ak Pappas. It silts in the entrance and you can't rely on more than 1.4–1.5m depth to get to the basin.

Patras – The big commercial harbour at Patras has a few places for yachts (Pier 9 usually). Patras Marina at the north end of the commercial harbour is pretty run down and doesn't always have visitors' berths. For years there have been reports it will be revamped but nothing as yet.

Gulf of Corinth

Kallithea and Eratini – Between Navpaktos and Galaxidhi there are a number of bays along the northern side of the gulf affording good shelter from anything from the north quadrant and the usual westerlies or easterlies. They are all open south except for Anemokambi. Of these my favourites are Kallithea and Eratini which both have villages with some facilities and a taverna or two.

Anemokambi – A long indented bay just up from where you round Cape Andromakhi. It used to be a wonderful deserted bay but now has fish farms all around it. You can still get down into it and anchor off. There is a beach hotel at the very end.

Itea (pictured right) – North of Galaxidhi is Itea with a comparatively new marina that seems little used. It affords good protection and a few yachts have wintered here. In some ways Itea is

the poor cousin of Galaxidhi though that really means a proper working agricultural town. It is also handy for visiting Delphi.

Andikiron (pictured above) – In the Gulf of Andikiron under the steep slopes of the mountains on the north side. There is a pier off the village yachts can go alongside. Reasonable shelter from the prevailing winds but open south.

Saranda – A small fishing village in the large bay of Saranda. OK with westerlies but easterlies send in a swell.



Kolpos Alkionidhon – The gulf above the large bay where you head for the Corinth Canal. There can be strong northeasterly winds into the gulf so bear this in mind when anchoring. There are a number of bays around the coast including Vathi, Aliki and Livadhi with shelter from northerlies but mostly open south. There is also a harbour at Germeno that is OK in calm weather and an enclosed lagoon/harbour on the south side of the gulf at Mavrolimnias that affords good shelter but silts in the entrance. One to explore gently in calm weather.

Nisoi Alkionidhes – In the middle of the gulf are three islands where you can find good shelter from east-northeast under Nisos Zoodhokos. Anchor off the abandoned monastery on Zoodhokos on a good sand and mud bottom. There is still a wonderful sense of calm and something else about the islands.

Cruising – Greece



the Gulf of Corinth. As Australian friends have caustically mentioned, the Mediterranean is the only place you get square waves. The bridge is spectacular and you need to call up on VHF Ch 12 when five miles out and then again at one mile where you will be told which arch to cross under.

It's always tempting to stop at Navpaktos, a miniature Medieval harbour, which is pretty much in its original state except for the fairly noisy bars around the harbourside. If there is any swell it can be uncomfortable and we decided to plug on to the island of Trizonia. Sitting close to the coast, the island can be difficult to make out from the mainland slopes behind, but as you get nearer you can make it out and circle round into the enclosed bay on the east side.

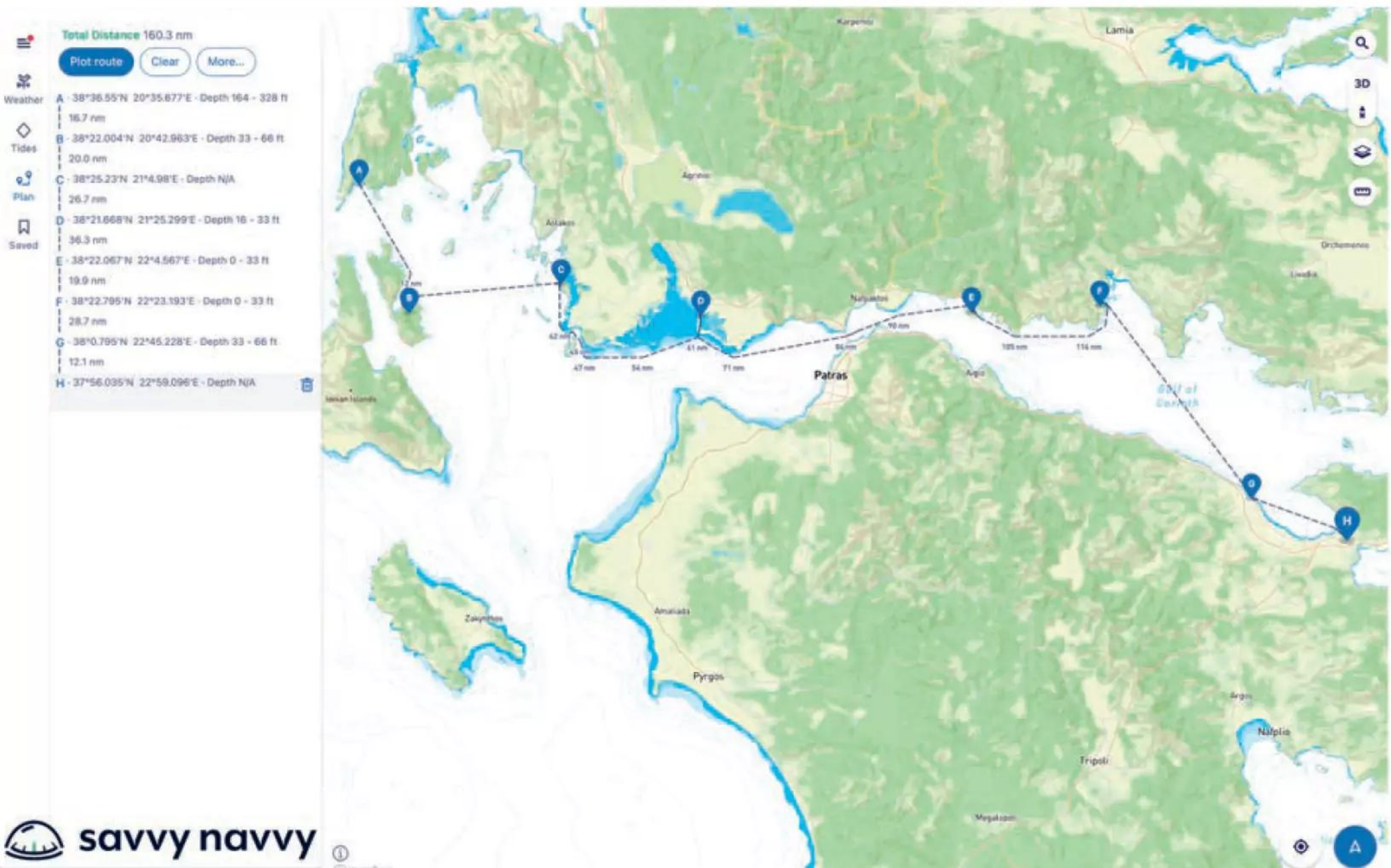
Trizonia is one of those places you end up staying longer than you thought you would. The 'marina' on

the north side was spurned by the villagers who decided they didn't really want a marina in the bay. The government built it anyway and it has been sitting there forlorn for decades. You can usually find a spot on the outer mole or inside. Alternatively, you can anchor in the bay. This is a laid back sort of place with several tavernas in the hamlet just across from the marina. Here you can relax over a glass or two with dreamy views out over the water. There is a very basic grocery shop and for anything more you need to take the water taxi the short distance over to the village on the mainland.

From Trizonia it is a hop, step and a jump around to one of my all-time favourite places: Galaxidhi. The approach may look a little difficult through islets and a reef or two but in practice is straightforward. Once into the inlet off the town

go stern-to wherever there is room on the quay. It gets shallow further in so stick to the outer part of the quay. Alternatively, you can anchor off in the bay around the corner to the northwest.

Shelter in the inlet is excellent and a few yachts have wintered here. Ashore, Galaxidhi is a likeable place with lots of unexpected pleasures tucked away in the streets. It was once a prosperous trading port with cargo schooners anchored all over the roadstead. In the town is the new Maritime Museum in a modernist (in a pleasing way) building a short walk from the harbour. It is much recommended. The town also has a number of excellent restaurants including Bebelis on the street running uphill at the inner end of the harbour. It used to only open in the winter for the ski season but is now year round.







Oracular spectacular

From Galaxidhi you can take a hire car or the coach up to Delphi. This extraordinary site perched on the side of a mountain defies description as it almost seems to hover in the air. It was famed for its oracle by the ancient Greeks who must have seen some veracity in it to climb all this way up the side of a mountain. If you take a car do get there early or later to avoid the coach cluster around lunchtime.

From Galaxidhi we idled, well motored most of the way, to Kiato. It's not one of my favourite spots but it is a useful pitstop before the Corinth Canal. The harbour has a bit of a surge at times so go alongside, well clear of the corner of the L-shaped breakwater. Sometimes you can find a berth in

the inner fishing harbour although it is riddled with fixed moorings and whatever is attached to them on the bottom. Shelter in the inner harbour is good. One of the reasons for using Kiato, just 11 miles from the canal, is that the yacht harbour in Corinth is invariably full. You may find a berth there but don't bet on it.

The approach to the Corinth Canal is straightforward. Call them up on VHF Ch12 when a few miles out and you will be instructed to call again when a mile or so out. You then wait until you are called up to go through the canal on the west to east transit. You can pay for the transit, (a healthy 279 Euros for 14m *Skylax*), at the Aegean end where the canal office is on the south bank or online by going to corinthcanal.com.

ABOVE LEFT
Delphi

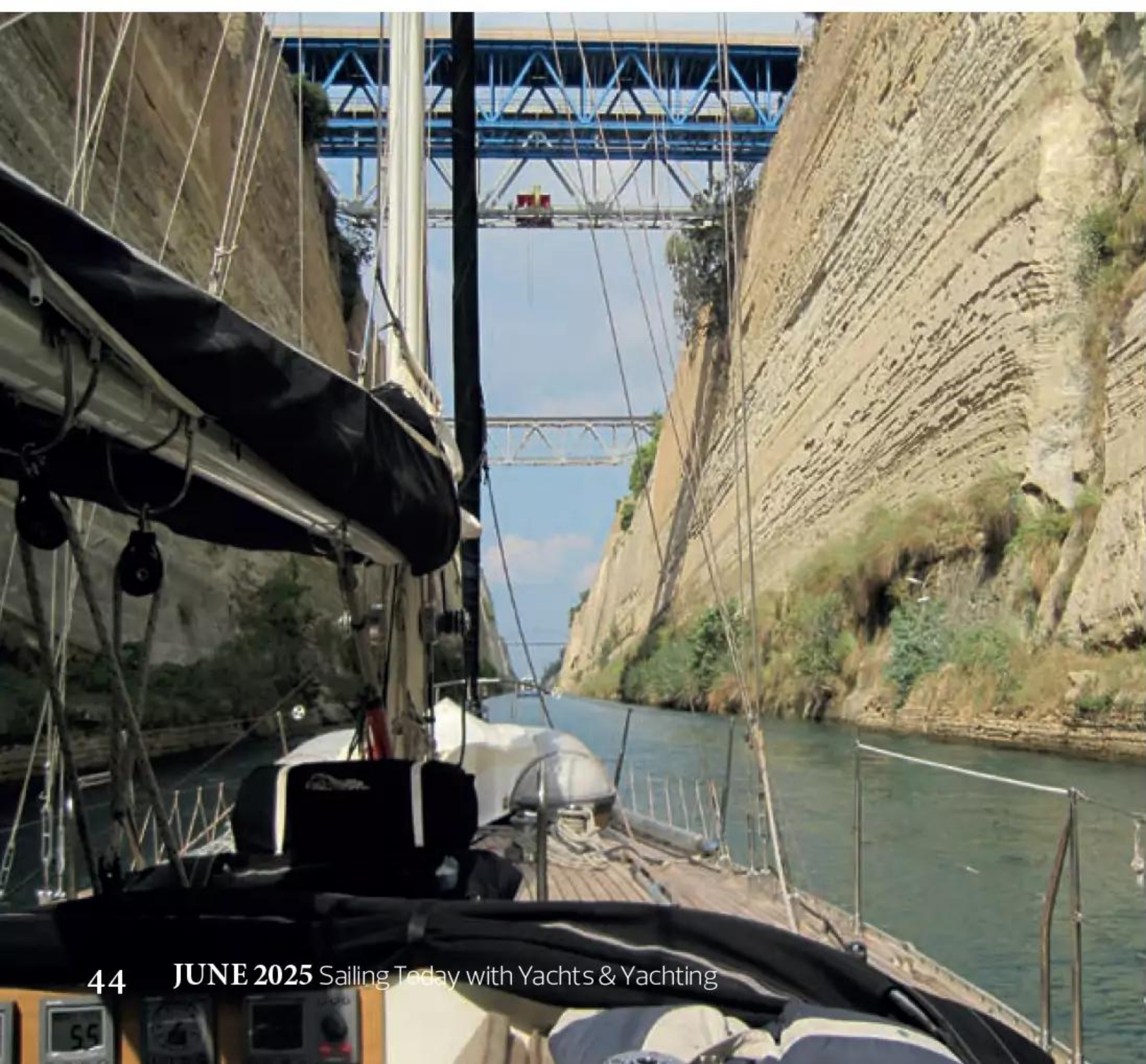
ABOVE RIGHT
Alongside in Kiato

BELOW LEFT
Corinth Canal

BELOW RIGHT
Skylax safely into the Aegean

The Corinth Canal is often said to be the most expensive canal per mile (it is just four miles long) in the world. That said it has recently had a lot of repair work done to it and is now usually closed through the winter from around November to March – see the canal web site for specific dates each year. Since it was constructed in the late 19th century, the soft limestone walls have needed constant reinforcing and when you potter through you will see the impressive engineering going on to keep it open.

Once through the canal we usually go down to Korfos or Epidavros and then onto Poros. If crossing to the Cyclades you can go across to Aegina and then onto somewhere like Kea or Kithnos.



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THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

Jimmy Cornell won our Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's British Yachting Awards. *Sam Jefferson* caught up with him to discuss a life of adventure on the water

Few in the world of sailing have not heard of Jimmy Cornell; a larger than life character who by force of personality combined with drive and vision has inserted himself into the annals of the sailing world.

Born in Romania in 1940, he grew up behind the Iron Curtain before emigrating to the UK in 1969 where he took up sailing while working as a reporter for the BBC World Service. In 1975 he took the leap into

the unknown that would change everything, embarking on a round the world odyssey with his wife and two children.

Since then Jimmy's restless ambition and drive has seen him set up the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers plus innumerable other sailing rallies which introduced thousands of sailors to the joys of blue water voyaging he then went on to write countless sailing manuals plus an atlas of global weather conditions to help sailors plan a safe voyage to

ABOVE
Jimmy at the helm

anywhere in the world. Not satisfied with that, he worked with French manufacturer Garcia to develop his idea of the ultimate cruising yacht, the Garcia Exploration 45 which he then used to traverse the Northwest Passage. I caught up with Jimmy in his London home where he reflected on a life at sea.

Tell us a bit about your life

Well, that's a very difficult question to answer briefly. I've been extremely fortunate to have been

born in 1940 – I'm 85 years and my generation, just born doing or after the Second World War, what will be looked at in in the future as possibly the most enjoyable and peaceful period in human history - which is coming apart at this very moment. I've been so fortunate and privileged to be able to do everything that I wanted.

I grew up under a dictatorship in Romania. My father was a political prisoner and he died in prison. I was 19 when he died. Then when I was 23, I met some English tourists and one of them happened to be a girl of my age, Gwenda. We are still together 60 years later.

I was very fortunate that with her help I managed to get out of Romania and settle in England. Well, the rest is history because I got a job at the BBC. I decided I didn't want to stay there forever because having a successful career was not my aim in life. I wanted to be free. I wanted to be a sailor and see the world.

The BBC had a yacht club and I went out sailing a couple of times and I realised It was doable - I mean it wasn't a crazy dream. So I said, right, as we don't have enough money I'll just buy a hull. I managed to buy a bare 36 foot hull and within



ABOVE
Aventura IV in the Northwest Passage

BELOW
A map of the routes taken by Jimmy on his private voyages between 1975 to the present day

one year I had that boat equipped. I did that in my spare time with some help from my friends. We set off in 1975. We were 35 and we had two children aged six and eight. Initially it was planned as a three year long voyage, but it turned out to be more than six covered over six something like 60,000 miles.

What advice would you give to sailors now who have a similar dream?

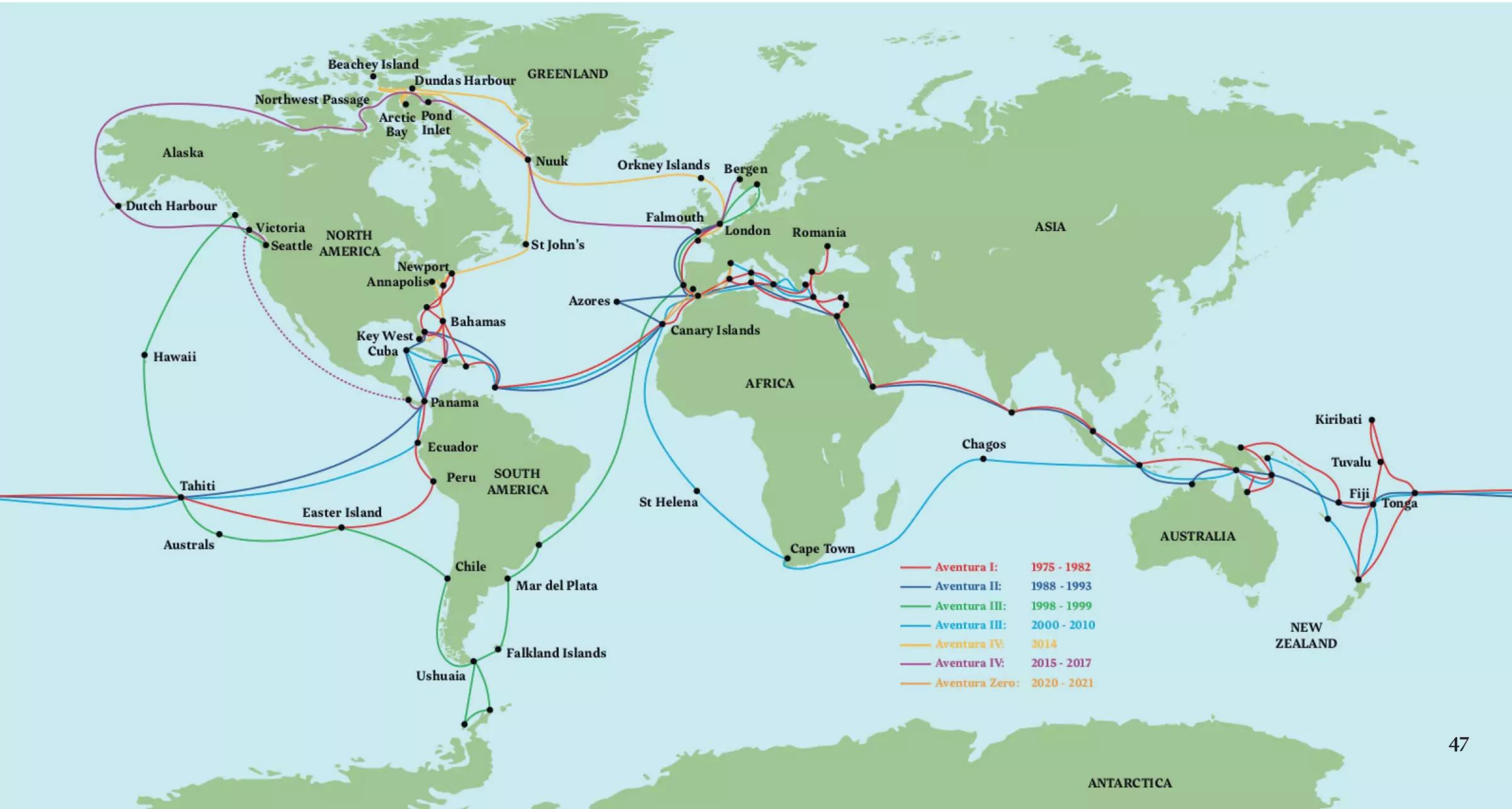
Even in these difficult times, if you really want to do something, and it will involve a sacrifice in some way or another, do it. Because if I at 85 can look back on my life and say I have no regrets, that's priceless. Why can I say that? Because I've done everything that I wanted to do.

So my attitude is that you really want to do something, do it. A

good example is my latest idea. I just thought up a couple of months ago which is to launch an event that would link the Antarctic with the Arctic. This is how the high latitude challenge was born; I thought of the route, I launched the idea. It's extremely successful and I already have 20 participants signed up.

And here I come to my attitude to life. Whenever I have a new idea, and believe it is good, I am never deterred by the possible problems that may come up. Because like in marriage, if you knew all the things that it could go wrong during your marriage, you may not have married in the first place. So don't think ahead in that manner. Absolutely, be prepared, but don't think ahead like that.

That's rule number one as a sailor - don't look at hypothetical →





problems that might occur in the future. Otherwise you're not going to go anywhere. I gave my latest example. I mean, you must be absolutely crazy to launch a sailing event when you're 85. But I've been twice to both Antarctica and the Arctic and I'd like to help sailors to do something that is quite difficult to do on your own. So with my experience, I can sit down and draw up a plan, a safe timetable, a feasible route, all of which is well thought out, and there you have it.

It will start in 2026. And it will be an annual event, but we will have to set a maximum number of perhaps 25 boats. So again, the advice I would give is that if you have an idea that you believe has some merit in it, and you believe that you are prepared to carry it out, do it. It would be better to fail than not to have done it.

And of all the things you've done in sailing, what are you most proud of as a of project?

I wouldn't want to say I'm proud of anything, but I'm very, very happy about my family life. I think that is the most important thing. I'm still very good friends with my wife Gwenda, with Ivan, who is now 53, Doina, who is 55, and my grandchildren Dan and Nera, who are 23 and 25. I regard them as friends and they regard me as a friend. So I am very happy to say that this is my greatest achievement.

I'm also pleased with my books, the atlas of pilot charts aimed at cruising sailors, which had never been done before. All the rallies I organised are often highlighted when people talk about me and my life. I've organized, 38

transatlantic and transpacific rallies, and seven around the world rallies. All these have made it possible for people to achieve something that would have been more difficult to do on their own. I suppose if I have a small regret it's that I was unable to complete my ELCANIO challenge. The aim was to sail around the world in an boat powered only by wind and electricity. Unfortunately Covid happened and it made the whole thing impossible. It was a shame, and it is one regret that I do have.

What about your work with Garcia Yachts?

Yes, I'm very happy with that. The Garcia Exploration 45 is one of the very few cruising boats that have been conceived by an experienced sailor. A cruising not the racing sailor. And it continues

ABOVE LEFT
Adventura in the
Trobriand Islands,
Papua New Guinea

ABOVE RIGHT
Adventura II sets off
from Las Palmas
on the ARC rally
which Jimmy set up

BELOW
Jimmy at a South
Pacific festival



to be extremely successful with over 60 Exploration 45 sold so far, plus several Exploration 52 and 60. So that is something that maybe I should now use your term to be proud of by the fact that so many people are happy that this boat exists. I just saw a report, that three Exploration 45 went through the Northwest Passages last year, and also one to Antarctica. Pretty extraordinary.

What fuelled your obsession with sailing?

I was inspired primarily by the sense of freedom that sailing on the seas gives you.

The greatest satisfaction I had is being in control of my life and my destiny wne I am on board my boat in the middle of the ocean with a beautiful sky at night and a glowing wake. Just being there. And this is something that I want to inspire people with. That is the one thing you can do in life to be entirely in control, to have the satisfaction of being dependent on yourself and to be able to decide what you want and to do with your life.

The feeling of not only that you are in charge of your life, but also that you take decisions and apply them to get you out of a difficult situation. That feeling of satisfaction can never be taken away. And, for me, it is fantastic.

Do you think it's more difficult now in some ways to sell up and sail?

From a sailing point of view, it's easier. Imagine sailing through the Tuamotus with just a sextant. I have done it and it was terrible. Of course the world has changed but just because the world has changed



– that shouldn't be an impediment in your decision to go. Just be bold, go to out of the way places, maybe to soe that are more difficult to reach, but do it anyway. It's not good finding an excuse not to do it.

So I think that cruising as such has become easier. The boats are more comfortable and safer, handling is easier, navigation and communications are far better, and repair facilities are better. The only thing that has got more difficult is the financial side. The prices have gone up. I recently did some calculations to see what it cost me in 1974 when I built my first boat and what it would cost me now with a compatible boat and salary. It was an easy calculation because my salary at the BBC was £2000 a year.

In those days I could have got a complete boat for probably about £10,000 or maybe £12,000. So the proportion was like one to six compared to my salary, sometimes less. I did the same calculations for buying a new boat on an average salary now – say £35,000. I think a new boat equipped for cruising of a similar size came out at £350,000 – that's one to ten, which is almost double. So this is one thing that has changed for the worse. So if you want to sell up and sail now you have to have some rich parents – perhaps also rich grandparents - because otherwise, if you are just on an ordinary salary, I doubt that you can really afford a serious ocean going yacht.

What have been the biggest problems you've had when sailing? What advice would you give to people planning a world cruise?

After sailing with Gwenda and the kids for many years I got to the

point where the kids were grown up and Gwenda didn't want to do it anymore. She's done too much. And she said, Jimmy, if you want to do it, do it without me. So I was forced to take on crew and for the first time, I experienced first-hand the kind of problems that other people have had to sail with neither friends nor family. I must say that I'm a bit of a perfectionist. I'm very disciplined and I expect everyone to be as disciplined as I am. If you are really good friends, you should be able to sort things out but it's not the same with people that you don't know well. So be very careful when you choose your crew because this could be one aspect that could ruin your voyage and your plans. Other than that, I'd say it's very important to have a level of self-sufficiency, you should know how to fix basic things on your

ABOVE LEFT
A fresh challenge;
Aventura III in
Port Circumcision,
Antartica

ABOVE RIGHT
Aboard *Aventura Zero*, in which
Jimmy attempted
to sail aroymjnd the
world carbon free

BELOW
Aventura Zero
under sail

boat – it's important that you can do at least some of the basic jobs.

Another thing, pollution, don't throw anything into the sea. It's just basic respect for the environment and that also of course goes hand in hand with respect for the local population. Be tolerant because you're an uninvited guest. 99% of the sailors behave in a responsible fashion, one percent don't and the locals remember the one percent.

I think that it is very important to be able to decide on your own route, what kind of weather to avoid and so on. Don't be depending on a some weather routeing company because they only know about as much as you do, but they know how to interpret better than you do. So you must learn the basics of meterology. After all, if you can see that bad weather coming, you don't need somebody sitting at a desk five thousand miles away tell you what to do.

Is there anywhere you wish you had sailed that you haven't sailed to yet?

Yes, Japan, because I was I was planning to see it. I've been there several times, and I was planning to sail there but I was in the midst of organizing a round the world rally and things didn't work out. My boat was in in the Pacific and I was planning to continue to Japan and then from Japan eastwards to British Columbia and Alaska and do the Northwest Passage, but I couldn't do it, so I just did the Northwest Passage from west to east. Maybe I'll sail there in my next life.

To find out more about Jimmys High Latitude Challenge or get hold of one of his many books, go to cornellsailing.com





CLASS ACTS

There are plenty of factors relating to why class open meeting championship attendance in some classes are suffering more than others. *Sue Pelling* considers some of the reasons, and highlights a selection of classes attracting big numbers

There is no denying the fact that open meeting and championship attendance over the last 10-15 years (and even further back) has declined significantly with some of the most well established dinghy racing classes of that time such as the one-design Enterprise, Firefly, Solo, Lark, and development classes like the National 12, International 14, International Moth taking a hit in terms of entry numbers. Some of those classes which regularly attracted over 100 boats, could barely scrape together 40 boats at their national championship, which

is a sad state of affairs. Thankfully, the tide appears to be turning with some classes now seeing year on year growth at major events and championships in general.

It is difficult to pinpoint the reason for the decline of open meeting/championship attendance in other classes because there are many factors that should be considered, not least the detrimental impact of the Covid lockdown period. The perceived lack of time in the fast-moving, crazy world we live in is also a huge factor, as is the need for instant gratification (including speed, thrills, and results),

ABOVE & RIGHT
The highly active and popular WASZP class is swarming to Weymouth this year

particularly within the millennial generation. The cost of living that has forced the rise in entry fees, accommodation, and car fuel prices have contributed too. And on the subject of logistics, spending every weekend stuck in inevitable motorway traffic jams is not everyone's idea of fun either.

The introduction of mass produced one-designs that started to appear in earnest in the 1980s such as the RS400 and RS200, and Topper and Laser range of boats (Iso, Buzz, Laser 5/4000) certainly affected some of the original, big number, class turnouts too. Many of these 'new' classes were not



only seen as a more 'affordable', lower maintenance option for class racing dinghies but also offered good, equal, close racing and a lively, fun social scene. This was a real incentive for many to switch classes but what it did do was further dilute the already saturated class/fleet racing scene.

One-design racing however, is not everyone's preference because it essentially restricts the introduction of new ideas/design tweaks into a class and therefore restricts class development. Many of the one-designs we see today afterall, including the RS200 and 400, and indeed the WASZP foiling singlehander were arguably based on some of the original successful



development classes such as the National 12, Merlin Rocket and International Moth respectively.

By nature of their very purpose, development classes and rule makers within these classes, face the inherent issue that is to ensure it maintains careful, steady progress/development within class rules without allowing it to become an arms race-style class, forcing popular, already established designs within the fleet to be 'grandfathered'. When, or if, this sort of dilution within the class takes hold, the outcome is not always positive.

While there is no instant answer to regain the sort of attendance once seen within some traditional classes of the 80s and 90s at both open meetings and championships, it is by no means all doom and gloom. These classes are still around; the development classes are still developing, and the other good news is, there are plenty of bargains to be had on the second-hand market, which gives newcomers to sailing in particular, an opportunity to get afloat without it costing a 'fortune'. Sailing/yacht clubs have also had the opportunity to promote competitive, club racing in recent times – for those who prefer to stay local – as well as run special membership-drive events such as

BELOW

The WASZP Games in July is expected to attract nearly 300 boats, and maybe more

club open/try sailing days. All in all, this sort of evolution process within classes is an essential component that contributes to the 'life-cycle' for all new dinghy classes in the future.

In the meantime it's time to celebrate some of the inspiring classes and events of the 'moment' – those attracting huge numbers of entries. Take the Andrew McDougall-designed foiling WASZP which launched in 2016. This is now one of the world's most popular, accessible, one-design foiling singlehanders, and the event of the year has to be the International WASZP Games, which is taking place at Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy (WPNSA) from 19-25 July. Over 190 entries were recorded within the first 24 hours of registration earlier this year, and with no cap on entries, organisers are expecting numbers to surge past 250 and head towards 300, making this the biggest foiling dinghy event in history.

Martin Evans – WASZP Class Manager – says the class works really hard to build a community that welcomes everybody. "While racing at the top is extremely competitive, we make sure the events are open and accessible. There is genuinely no minimum skill level required to turn up –

ALL PHOTOS: JAMES TOMLINSON/WASZP CLASS ASSOCIATION



Dinghy racing

we make formats and access to coaching work for beginners. Organising good racing for the top sailors is easy – just put some marks in and they’re happy. The challenge is to create an experience that ticks the box for all sailors and we’ll often find ourselves putting 80% of effort into the bottom 20% of the fleet, ensuring all sailors want to come back again.”

At the same world class venue (WPNSA) and following on immediately (26-31 July) is the Optimist national championship, which last year attracted 227 entries and a similar number is expected again this year. It is also home to the Flying 15 national and world championships (10-21 August) with, again, big numbers expected albeit an 86-boat limit at the worlds. The ever-polular one-design singlehander – Supernova – has also bagged WPNSA as its national championship venue this year (June 27-29) with over 90 boats expected on the start line.

For many years now the Merlin Rocket class has enjoyed a bumper entry at Salcombe Merlin Rocket Week, which is often better supported than its national championship. At this year’s event (29 June-4 July) around 120 boats are once again expected to turn up for a week of intense yet fun, close, action-packed racing in the beautiful setting of Devon’s Salcombe Harbour. With celebrations already in place for next year’s 80th anniversary, the class is preparing for even bigger turnouts in 2026. Lou Johnson (Merlin Rocket class PR) said



the class is looking forward to exciting times: “The celebrations will start at the RYA Dinghy and Watersports Show showcasing our heritage and an evolution of the boats, plus what the future holds.”

The Scorpion is another class that is showing its championship attendance on the increase with nearly 80 boats in 2024. Given the fact this year’s event is taking place at the popular venue of Mount’s Bay, hosted by Penzance SC (2-8 August) the entry is likely to increase further.

The RS200 class never fails to attract a huge following so it’s not surprising to learn that this year’s national championship 90-boat limit on entry was reached as early as March. The championship (3-8 August) is at South Caernarvonshire YC, Pwllheli, northwest Wales.

A big line up is on the horizon too for the popular RS Feva class, which last year attracted 159 boats. The 2025 event is likely to be big too particularly as it’s taking place for the first time in Scotland, in Dalgety Bay (May 24-27).

Despite many new classes over the years threatening to topple Topper’s popularity, it’s good to see this 48-year-old Ian Proctor design

ABOVE
No room for error on the highly competitive Optimist start line

BELOW
The OK class continues to attract a huge following

RIGHT
The Merlin Rocket class has – not surprisingly – adopted Salcombe as its key regatta venue

continuing to attract healthy, extremely competitive turnouts at all its events. Last year’s nationals for example attracted over 160 boats (varying rigs 5.3, 4.2 to suit all weight ranges). This year’s event (2-8 August) at Largs, Scotland, hopes to see a similar number of entries.

Finally, a couple of big international events to mention include the Finn World Masters in Medemblik (6-20 June) where over 300 entries are expected, and the OK world championship (12-19 September), at Circolo Vela Arco, Lake Garda, Italy where an impressive 259 sailors from 18 countries have already signed up. Robert Deaves – OK Dinghy International Association Secretary – says the OK, which is known for its close, competitive racing, and great socials at some fantastic venues continues to attract big numbers. “Combined with a range of high-quality boat builders, easy to access fast equipment, and extensive promotion and media exposure worldwide, the class has attracted many sailors looking for a fun but competitive challenge.”

PHOTO: MARK YULL / SHUTTERSTOCK





HANSE DOWN



A WINNER?

Peter Poland puts
Hanse's new 360
through her paces
and discovers that
this entry level
cruiser has much
to offer



Boat test – Hanse 360



ABOVE LEFT
Hanse's signature
sharp chines

ABOVE RIGHT
The helm felt light and
pleasantly balanced

BELOW
All the sheets
and control lines
ready to hand

To such successful production boat designs we now need to add the award-winning Hanse 460 (2022), Hanse 510 (2023), Hanse 410 (2023) and the latest Hanse 360 (2024). This brand-new Hanse is the most compact model in Hanse's revolutionary new range. What's more, it won the prestigious European Yacht of the Year 2025 Award in the Family Cruiser category, and was nominated in the 2024 British Yachting Awards. These nominations reinforce the Hanse 360's status as a leading light in the 36ft size. It combines innovative design, superior performance, a spacious interior and many luxury features.

The larger Hanse 460 had already been honoured as European Yacht of the Year 2022. With more than 200 boats already sold, she is a definite all-round winner. This great design

When Michael Schmidt took a rest from successful racing on German Admiral's Cup yachts, the Berlin Wall was beginning to crumble in late 1989. So he decided to investigate East German boat yards that had skilled workforces in order to get in ahead of the inevitable rush and get a really good deal.

Schmidt's first glassfibre production yacht was launched on its successful way in 1993. Rather than start from scratch, he bought the mould tools of an already successful Scandinavian cruiser-racer called the Aphrodite 29. Then he launched the boat under the new name of the Hanse 291. In 1995 he re-vamped the 291 and re-named it the Hanse 292 and this sporty little yacht, with its transverse two-berth aft cabin and aft heads, duly collected a much coveted European Yacht of the Year Award in 1998. Schmidt then bought the Finn Gulf 33 mould tools and the re-branded Hanse 331 became a logical follow-on to the 291/292 models.

He then selected the German designers Judel/Vrolijk and in 1999 he launched the all new Hanse 371. With its spacious accommodation and excellent performance, the 371 was built and sold in large numbers between 1999 and 2005.

UK agents Inspiration Marine handle both new Hanses and a wide selection of brokerage boats. Andy Cunningham, who spent many successful years working with

Hunter Boats, has since joined up with Michael Schmidt and Partner Yacht Brokers UK. He told me the 312s and 315s sell well, as do mid-range models such as the Hanse 370s up to and over the Hanse 400.

Then after Michael Schmidt had moved on to establish YYachts in 2016 – specialising in 20-30m carbonfibre yachts and custom superyachts up to 35m – things changed dramatically after 2022. This was the time when Hanse teamed up with another hugely successful design office ... one that was well-established in France.

Berret-Racoupeau Yacht Design has specialised in performance sailing yachts for more than 30 years. Based in La Rochelle, it now works with a team of nine naval architects, yacht designers and marine engineers. The company's know-how is extensive and as diverse as its designs. These range from one-off racing yachts to trans-Atlantic open racers to large 145ft performance cruisers.

To these we need to add all the production boats for yards such as Bénéteau which has built over 50 models up to the recent Oceanis 60; all designed by Berret-Racoupeau. Amel has also built three new bluewater cruising models including the 50, 55 and new 60; and the three recent 45, 52 and 60 Garcia Exploration aluminium hulled cruisers also come from Berret-Racoupeau as do several Fountaine-Pajot catamarans (up to the 2024 Thira 80) and six different sized Wauquiez 'pilot saloon' models from 40-58ft.





by Berret Racoupeau – as well as incorporating ‘Easy Sailing’ and ‘Fast Cruising’ concepts – is winning over yacht buyers worldwide. Hanse commented: “We are delighted with the success of this 46ft yacht and look forward to delivering many more Berret-Racoupeau sailing yachts in the future.”

In the past, yacht builder Hanse – based in Greifswald, Germany – has worked closely with the office of Judel/Vrolijk & Co on the development of the Hanse brand. All previous designs and most of the current models originate from these designers based in Bremerhaven. So why the switch to the French? Hanse press officer Morten Strauch explains the background to the new cooperation: “We organised a design competition for the new ship for the first time, and Berret/Racoupeau delivered the best and most suitable

vision for us.” In the press release that has now been published, Hanse also writes of a “starting signal for a new model series”. This implies that Hanse could well be planning a major generational change. And if the first four new models are anything to go by, these will all be excellent performers and top sellers.

The concept

Built in collaboration with the yacht designers at Berret-Racoupeau, the 360 features Hanse’s signature sharp chines that contribute towards excellent stability and high performance. The yacht stands out with its impressive interior volume, offering unprecedented space and comfort for its size. Reinforcing the 360’s wide appeal, it has also been shortlisted for SAIL magazine’s Top 10 Boats for 2025 and fellow US sailing magazine Cruising World’s best cruiser.

These nominations enhance the Hanse 360’s status as a leader in the 36ft class, combining innovative design, superior performance, easy handling and real comfort when sailing.

My first impression on visiting the Hanse 360 at Hamble Point marina was one of delight. From her plumb bow to the splendidly spacious cockpit, her sleek lines were appealing. What’s more – unlike some of its competitors claiming the same length – the Hanse 360 is a genuine 36 footer with an LOA of 11.32m (37’6”), Hull length of 10.6m (34’9”), LWL of 10.29m (33’9”) and Beam of 3.99m (13’1”). The 360 is

ABOVE

The spacious cockpit with lots of leg room, and enough room for a folding table

already the fourth design to come from the collaboration with the French designers Berret-Racoupeau who have managed to give the lines a fresh and, above all, distinctive look.

There is a mix of hard and soft chines (to combine a narrow waterline with a generous interior beam thus enhancing living space below). The wide, partially open stern, large hull windows emphasised by subtle beading, a striking window line in the low superstructure with opening windows protected from rain by the coachroof’s overhanging mouldings that cover the control lines. Also, not forgetting the now obligatory fixed bowsprit that lends the 360 great character and modernity.

On deck

The cockpit table and folding helm seats (part of the cruising pack) are robust and include instrument mounts on the table end and liferaft stowage in the locker under one of the helm seats. The larger 12in plotter screen option needs extra space on a revised table-end. The folding bathing platform (also part of the cruising pack) has a full width step that lowers automatically to give easy and safe access to the platform. There’s even an option for a wet bar with BBQ in the cockpit.

The deck has two large and six smaller opening hatches plus four large opening windows on the coachroof side and two opening portholes in the galley and heads areas. These give ample ventilation throughout the yacht.





Down below

The 360's interior layouts are variable and buyers can select their choice from several options. The standard forecabin comes with a large island double berth (2m by 1.82m max width), a spacious locker beneath the hinging berth and two large lockers port and starboard. As an option, the island berth can also be offset and a separate heads added on the port-side. To be able to go to sleep on pillows right in the bow is a splendid novelty on a 36 footer.

The standard saloon has a full length settee (1.85m) to starboard. This is adaptable to fit an optional chart table, thereby reducing its length to 1.28m. The dining area is to port with an L-shaped settee (1.96m) that can be adapted (as an option) to make a double berth. Stowage is available in under-side deck lockers, beneath settee lockers and a sliding locker under the saloon table.

The standard L-shaped galley has ample storage and also has a clever 'slide-away' chopping board above the cooker. Access to the extensive 'under cockpit' locker to port, a two-burner gas cooker with oven (a grill is an extra option), a waste bin, a 12 volt fridge with 135L capacity and a double stainless steel sink with a mixing tap are all also included. On the standard two-cabin version of the 360 there is also loads of extra storage including space for an additional fridge/freezer aft to port, and a cavernous locker under the cockpit sole and cockpit locker space.

The starboard stern cabin has a 2m by 1.62m berth with 1.9m standing headroom forward of the berth. As an option, a second aft double cabin can be added to port. This berth is 2m by 1.52m max. Both stern cabins have ample lockers. The spacious heads compartment

is slightly ahead and to starboard. It has ample space for a wc, a wash basin and a separate shower cubicle. This has a hinged Perspex door and approximately 1.92m headroom.

The woodwork finish down below is to a high quality. The standard wooden trim is in mahogany but the test boat came with interior joinery in the French oak option which I find to be very light and attractive. Other options include Canadian chestnut and teak. Floorboards come as standard in acacia but the test boat had the 'Noce Nero' style option which also looked good. Classic striped synthetic teak floors are also a popular option.

The diesel engine lives under the companionway steps and is either a standard 29hp with a SD25 sail-drive and a two blade fixed prop or an optional upgrade to 39hp with a two blade folding prop. The test boat was fitted with the larger Yanmar 40hp engine option with a SD60 sail-drive and cruised out of the Hamble at an easy 6kts running at a surprisingly quiet 2020 RPM. In the future, the 360 is also planned with 25kW Electric propulsion (that is a more expensive option) with either 18,4kWh or a 36,7kWh battery power.

ABOVE LEFT

The light and spacious saloon with the L-shaped galley, and settee

ABOVE RIGHT

The large double berth in the forecabin

BELOW

The Hanse 360 sailed effortlessly upwind

Under sail

There are four rigs offered with the Hanse 360: (1) In-mast furling Dacron mainsail and self-tacking jib [59sqm]; (2) Standard Elvstrom Dacron sails with a fully-battened mainsail and a battened self-tacking jib [60sqm]; (3) Elvstrom SPS tri-radial cut laminated performance mainsail (with full-length battens) and self-tacking jib (with three vertical battens) plus UV protection [60sqm]; and (4) Elvstrom SPS tri-radial cut laminated performance sails with a fully-battened 'square top' mainsail and a larger 105% jib with adjustable tracks [67sqm].

The test boat was equipped with the optional SPS tri-radial cut performance mainsail and self-tacking jib. It did not carry the extra Elvstrom CZ Crossover/gennaker with an endless furler and storage bag. Nor would we probably have elected to fly this sail in the 20kt+ breeze we encountered.

At 33 degrees to the Apparent Wind of 18kts+, the Hanse 360 sailed upwind at an effortless 7kts under full sail. When we later put the yacht on the Raymarine Auto-Tack system through 80 degrees AW [blowing 17-22kts] it sailed upwind at between 6.4kts and 7kts with consummate ease. On a broad reach the 360 achieved an exciting 9.1kts; also with no signs of broaching or heading up into the wind uninvited.

At all times the helm felt light and pleasantly balanced when going upwind. The central semi-balanced rudder blade allied to the standard bulbed keel with 2.0m draught (or there's a 1.55m shallow keel option) does a great job. There was never a hint of the yacht wanting to broach or round up into the wind. And with the mainsail and self-tacking jib sheets readily to hand, tacking and adjusting the trim or sail shape on the two standard Lewmar 40 self-tailing winches was as simple as it gets.





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PETER’S VERDICT

The magic of the Hanse 360 is that it’s so very easy to control and sail. Once the sails are raised, the self-tacking jib and the mainsail tack in unison and the yacht settles into an easy groove. What’s more the well-positioned self-tailing winches are within easy reach of the helmsman (or crew) and when the yacht feels in the mood to change onto a broad reach or a deep run it’s easy. Although you don’t want to ease the mainsail

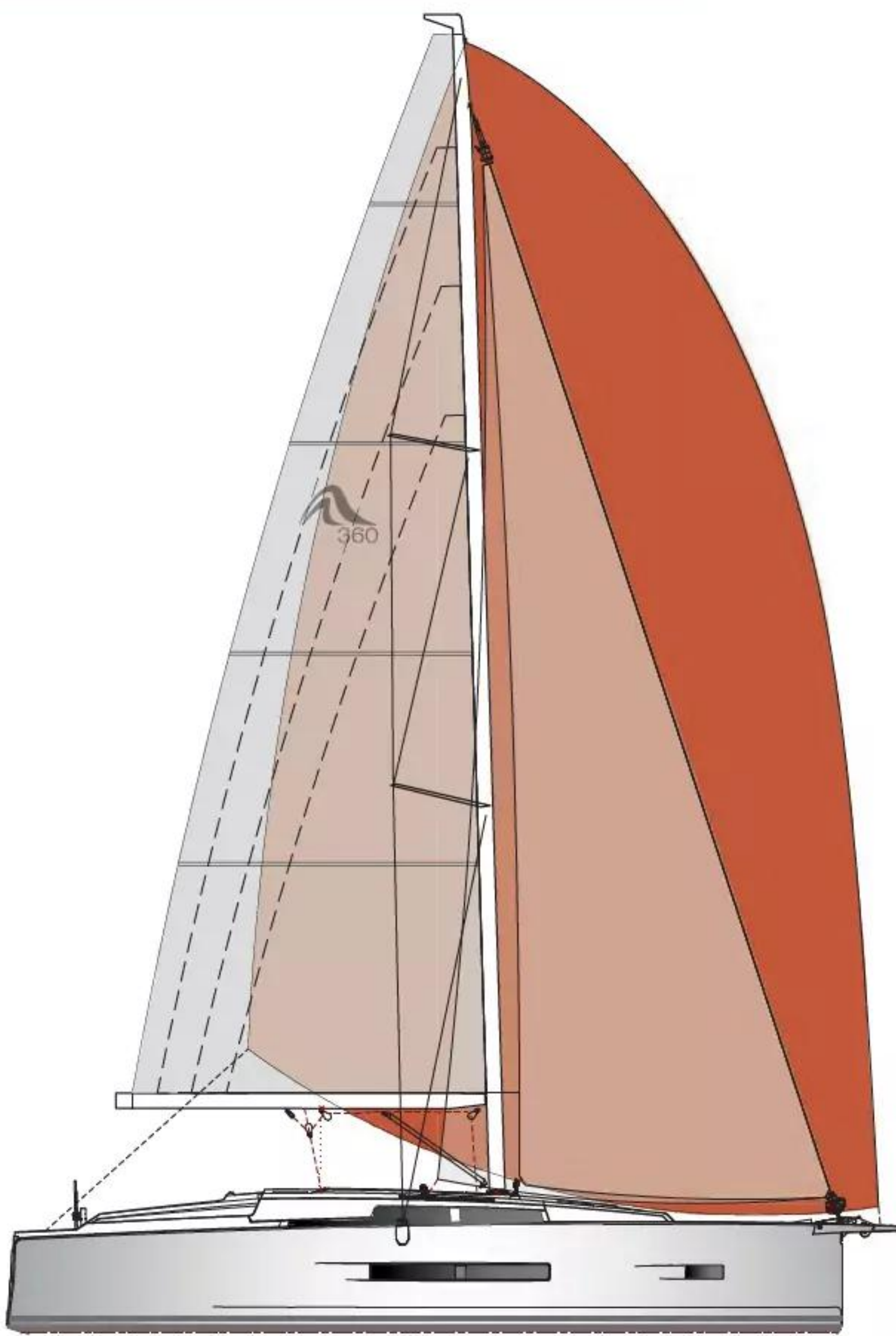
sheet too much because the long spreaders are also very swept back. Indeed Phil Dollin of Inspiration Marine took delight in showing what he called the ‘granny gybe’ whereby he swung the 360’s stern through the wind, executed a smooth skid turn and settled into the change of direction on what amounted to a new tack.

BLUE WATER ABILITY ★★★★★
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
LOOKS: ★★★★★

THE SPEC

- LOA: 11.32m 37'2"
- Hull length: 10.60m (34'9")
- LWL: 10.20m (33'9")
- Beam: 3.99m (13'1")
- Draught (standard): 2.05m (6'9") 17,196 lbs disp
- Draught (shoal): 1.65m (5'5") 17,659 lbs disp
- Mast above WL: 16.75m (54'11")
- Sail area: 61 sqm (656.6 sqft)
- Mainsail (std): 5 sqm (365.97 sqft)
- Jib: 26 sq.m 279.86 sqft)
- 105% genoa: 32 sqm (344.44 sq.ft
- Crossover: 68 sqm (731.94 sqft)
- Gennaker: 103 sqm (1108.68 sqft)
- Standard engine: 29hp
- Option: 39hp
- UK Broker: Inspirationmarine.co.uk

Total price with various selected options:
£296,774 including VAT, delivery to Hamble, antifouling, launching, rigging and handover sea trials.



ALTERNATIVE BOATS



DUFOUR 37,
The 37 has a length just 9.99m/32ft 9in. Yet thanks to the modern hull shape and distinct hull chines, she offers all the space and comfort of a larger yacht without sacrificing any of the performance.
dufour-yachts.com



JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 380.
The spacious saloon makes the boat feel larger than its actual 37 feet. The standard saloon table is small and fixed so most people upgrade to the drop-leaf table that connects the settees The twin rudders give good control.
jeanneau.com



BAVARIA CRUISER 34
For those looking for a slightly smaller and less expensive cruiser, the 2000 to 2009 Bavaria Cruiser 34 offers space galore. A bulbed fin keel keeps the ballast low and a DLR of 204.8 linked to a S.A./Displ ratio suggests good performance
bavariayachts.com





PUSHING THE LIMITS

Craig Wood has set out on a voyage to become the first ever triple-amputee to sail solo across the Pacific, non-stop and unassisted. Milly Karsten caught up with him prior to his departure on this epic voyage

While touring in Afghanistan in 2009, Craig Wood, then aged 18, was caught in an IED blast where he sustained enormous injury, losing both legs and his left hand.

After waking from a 14 day induced coma, and becoming aware of the scale of his injuries, Craig began an eight month battle of learning to walk again, and four-and-a-half years of rehabilitation to improve his quality of life. It was during this time that he discovered the world of Paralympic sailing.

Now, almost 16 years after Afghanistan, he is setting off on a record-breaking voyage, 6,000 miles across the Pacific, raising money for the charities that helped him get here.

Originally from Doncaster, Craig had enjoyed family sailing trips in Bridlington during his childhood, but after the IED blast sailing took on a whole new meaning, bringing new light to his life. With his voyage across the Pacific, from La Paz in Mexico to Yokohama in Japan, he is now on a mission to inspire others who have suffered trauma, and to create more opportunities to get people onto the water to experience the joy of sailing.

When did your sailing journey begin?

When I decided it was going to be my life was basically when I got into Paralympic sailing. So I was in my hospital bed, feeling really victimised and hopeless, and then my dad gave me the email address of the Paralympic

FACING PAGE
Learning ther ropes in preparation for his epic voyage

BELOW LEFT
Craig (left) in uniform prior to his accident

BELOW RIGHT
At the helm

development sailing coach for GBR. We had a meeting and he sort of sat me in a rib in December in Weymouth, I was totally under dressed and freezing but I thought, I reckon I can get into a 2.4 Metre and give that a go. I quickly realised I was up against the world's best, like Helena Lucas... and I was just like, there's no way I'm beating them yet!

So I waited until a couple other injured guys came in and then we went into the Sonar class, because we had a better chance. It basically made more sense. So yeah, we became professionals, got eighth in the world at one point. Our aim was Japan 2020, so again Japan is there in the back of the head again, and then in 2015 they cut Paralympic sailing from the Paralympic Games. I thought - well now what? →





Fortunately a guy found out in the marina in Melbourne, and he said, “oh come for sail with me this afternoon?”

He had a 50ft ferro cement boat, and basically as soon as I stepped foot on board there I thought yes, this. I’m going to buy one, I’m going to go around the world, and that is going to be me! So yeah that was November 2015, by April 2016 I had a boat, and then I left in 2017.

What led you to doing this Pacific voyage?

Quite a long process really. I started sailing around the world in 2017. I sailed to the Mediterranean, I got a new boat, I sailed across the Atlantic, and I met my partner. We then sailed Patagonia all the

way up to Panama, and then we had a baby! But in the meantime, so the three years prior to having the baby we sort of talked about where we wanted to go.

What adjustments have you made to your boats? Have you had to make any changes?

The ones in the past, no. I had a Colvic Victor ketch, and I didn’t touch it. Beneteau Oceanis 46, didn’t touch it. On the catamaran all I’ve done is put all the running lines aft to the cockpit so I don’t have to go forward in a big sea, which makes sense on any boat.

And then an electric winch. It’s got hand holds everywhere so you can hold on wherever you want. That’s the nice thing about boats,



ABOVE LEFT
Craig on tour in Sangin, Afghanistan. He was only 18 when the accident occurred

BELOW
Onboard his yacht, *Sirius*

the demographic of sailing is... it tends to be the older generation, so they need to hang on as well – that completely fits in with my needs, so it’s quite an easy transition.

How are you feeling about having up to 80 days alone?

I kind of feel like I’ve set myself a target to beat that. That’s like 80 days





"If the boat's not sinking, if it's a problem that's not going to need dire attention right now, I like the Moitessier method of – I'm going to think about this "

milestones of getting level to Hawaii, then I suppose the next big one is sailing into tomorrow... so I'll sail into an international date line, which is pretty cool. Yeah I think I'll do a video or something for that.

And then arriving!

Tell us about your fundraising

The first one is BLESMA, and essentially I'd never heard about this charity before I was injured, but when I was injured, as soon as I got taken out of intensive care there was a guy standing at the end of my bed and he said – "we're BLESMA, if there's anything you need you call us". I never grew up with any charity influence, I'd never taken from charity before or anything like that so I didn't know. BLESMA are quite an amazing charity that help a lot of injured veterans, and sick, and they were there without any questions.

The other is Turn To Starboard – they try to change people's lives through the healing of sailing. So they'll take veterans, families, a whole array of services, out sailing, and if you want to gain a qualification, say your Competent Crew to start, all the way up to Yachtmasters, they can facilitate that all for free. It's amazing, they are some of the most knowledgeable sailors in the world. They helped me last year get my Yachtmasters – I am the first triple-amputee Yachtmaster. They're just a wonderful charity and I'm very grateful to them.

if I'm going 4kts, and I hope I go a lot quicker than 4 kts, I'm hoping it's like a 7kt average, or at least a 5.5kt average. So yeah, I really hope to be covering more than 100 miles a day, which is quite reasonable in an ocean passage. There's definitely a range... but I'm thinking the median range is like 60-70 days. I'm looking forward to it but yeah it is daunting as well.

Is there any way you are preparing for that?

Just spend more and more time alone I suppose! There's definitely stuff to do, and because I'm not quite so skilled in celestial nav that takes up quite a lot of my time. Getting sights and doing all the maths, it just keeps the brain active, and after that I get to celebrate – call my wife and kids and say "oh yeah I know where I am!"

What parts of your Infantry training have helped prepare you for this?

I think the ideology of action breeds action. You can sit down and theorise and plan forever,

but until you go out there... as the famous Captain Ron said "if it's going to happen, it's going to happen out there". I think that's the big thing – as a problem arises – adapting to that situation and quickly switching from sailing great to "oh no we're not, how do I fix that?". Having read quite a lot of stuff, the Moitessier stuff, I always try to not do too much action too quickly... If the boat's not sinking, if it's a problem that's not going to need dire attention right now, I like the Moitessier method of – I'm going to think about this, I'm going to sleep on it – and then I'll have the full thought out answer the next day, which I quite like.

What are you most looking forward to?

My perfect sailing scenario is a full moon, between 10 and 15kts, just aft of the beam, and everything is just flick of a switch, black and white. You know it's like going back into the old movies. That is my perfect scenario.

I'm looking forward to the

ABOVE RIGHT
Craig is the only triple amputee RYA Yachtmaster



A BOATBUILDER'S VOYAGE

Peter Poland helped set up Hunter Boats, one of the most successful British boatbuilders of recent years. He looks back on the ups and downs of building the business

My early sailing experiences came about because my paternal grandfather Kenneth Poland owned successful syndicates in Lloyds of London. He had done very well there and owned a 63ft Yawl called *Lara*. She was designed for him by Robert Clark in time for the last Fastnet Race before World War 2. I was born in 1945 and 16 years later I was learning to pull on *Lara's* strings. I had also commandeered a Firefly dinghy on a Yorkshire lake and put it through its paces. I didn't capsize... so all was well.

After graduating from the Queen's College, Oxford I realised I needed to get a job. My family had its roots in insurance and I thought I should follow that path and got despatched to a firm called Glanvill Enthoven to 'study insurance'. I wasn't very good at it! Meanwhile an old friend of mine from school and university, Anthony Brunner, had gone to work

for ICI. After a year, both of us had itchy feet so we teamed up to buy a 25 footer and set off across the Atlantic in 1968. Why not? We pooled our savings, cashed in pension schemes and spent a total of around £1,400 on a Buchanan-designed Wind Elf Mk2 built in 1954 by William King in Burnham-on-Crouch. She was effectively a reverse sheer transom-sterned Folkboat derivation. She looked after us very well and we made it to Barbados and sold our trusty yacht. After briefly returning to the insurance business, I once again resigned and took up boatbuilding and sailing.

The first Hunters

In the early days, Hunter Boats was called the Essex Boat Company and run by John Chardin and his son Derek. Together they succeeded in building quality craft designed by Oliver Lee. They moulded the hull and deck of what became the RYA

ABOVE LEFT
Class Treasurer Peter Jeanneret's Pilot 27

ABOVE RIGHT
The Hunter Crusader 30 was a development of the Hunter Impala 28 fin-keeler. A counter was added and the topsides were heightened to give extra space in the saloon and aft cabin. The far more numerous twin-keel sisters – called the Hunter Horizon 30 – also enhanced its growing reputation as a 'twin-keel superstar'

National Squib. Derek was a skilled glassfibre laminator and structural designer and his father was an able accountant. The 1967 RYA National Squib was first moulded by the Essex Boat Company (predecessor to Hunter Boats Ltd) and the shallow draft (triple fin keelboat) version – the Sandhopper in 1970. Oliver Lee marketed the Squibs ordered in the UK while Hunter Boats were given the Export market.

The first Hunter – the Hunter 19 – was also originally moulded by the Essex Boat Company and was based on this same Squib hull and keel with a new look deck and coach roof plonked on top. My uncle – Michael Poland – was a keen JOG racer (Junior Offshore Group). While wandering around the London Boat Show, he spotted the Squib and asked Oliver Lee whether this open keelboat would convert into a Cruiser-Racer design. When Oliver asked what he would call such a boat, Michael



said his second favourite hobby was hunting, so how about the Hunter class? And so the Hunter 19 was born.

The most famous Hunter 19 was undoubtedly David Blagden's *Willing Griffin*. David decided he would like to sail the smallest ever yacht in the OSTAR transatlantic Single-Handed Race. Oliver Lee built David a slightly modified 19 and then David engaged the famous Blondie Hasler in discussions (and arguments) as to why a 19 footer couldn't be allowed to compete in the 1972 OSTAR. Despite successive storms, David got there in one piece and produced a very dramatic and readable book called *Very Willing Griffin*.

At around the same time Oliver had also designed the Ajax 23 racing keelboat, fleets of which still race out of St Mawes, and Royal Harwich YC. The Ajax inspired its builder to add a lid and Hey Presto; an Achilles 24 took shape in 1968 and eventually gained much popularity.

Then came the Oliver Lee-designed lifting keel 16ft Hunter 490 and 23ft Hunter 701 which had a

fin or lifting keel. My uncle Michael bought a Hunter 701 as a successor to Havoc, his original Hunter 19.

At this point I set up a company called Channel Yacht Services Ltd and employed a small team at Hambrook Marine to finish these three Hunter models on a sub-contract basis. Then I took a stand at an early Southampton Boat Show and was ably assisted by an early Hunter owner called Dave Deadman. It worked a treat and we actually sold some boats.

Shortly after this, I got a phone call from Hunter Boats. They offered me the chance to join the company and take on the sales and marketing side of the business. Why not I thought? It should be more fun than Lloyds of London. Derek and I subsequently bought out his father, who had emigrated to New Zealand.

Birth of the Hunter Sonata

The Hunter Sonata was one of the designs that really put us on the map. The boat was built between 1976 and 1990 and we made over 400 models during that time. To cut a long story

ABOVE LEFT
Havoc, the first Hunter 19 tested by Oliver Lee

ABOVE RIGHT
The Hunter Channel 31 is yet another example of designer David Thomas' skill at extracting maximum performance from his shapely twin keelers. The Channel 31 shows off its efficient bulbed keels

BELOW LEFT
David Blagden shows his Hunter 19 *Willing Griffin* to the OSTAR spectators at the start.

BELOW CENTRE
Tony Brunner (right) and Peter Poland (left) two days before leaving Emsworth marina in early June and aiming for Barbados

BELOW RIGHT
Peter Poland is presented with a hand-painted tray (and some fizz) to celebrate 20 years of boat sales at the Earl's Court show

short, at a later Southampton Boat Show I fell for two quarter-tonners. Both had ample accommodation and great boat speed. One was designed by a Kiwi called Ron Holland and the other was a multi chine design by David Thomas and called Quarto

Luckily I had a friend who knew David Thomas well. He arranged a meeting at the Southampton Boat Show and I asked David about a round-hull version of Quarto. The RYA National Sonata One Design was the result. Not only did she sail very fast; we jacked up David's coachroof design a bit to give her more space down below. David said it made her look prettier!

In 1975 we went to our first ever Earl's Court Boat Show that winter with a Hunter 19 Europa (also with an elegant raised roof line to give more space below) and sold several Sonatas off the drawings. It was take-off time for Hunter Boats.

The business expands

Next winter David approached us with a bigger Sonata sister (the Impala 28 OOD) and the smaller →





lifting keel Hunter Medina 20. The RORC then encouraged three sizes of Offshore One Designs and the Impala 28 was awarded the small-size slot of these three OODs. It duly took off. The OOD 34 built by Jeremy Rogers was the 'big' OOD and an Elvstrom design took the middle slot.

The RYA National Sonata, Impala 28 OOD and Medina 20 classes all took off and sold like hot-cakes. At that time, we introduced 'home completion versions' that helped boost speed of manufacturing. We were up to around three full sets of mouldings per week. Working flat-out, our laminators could mould three hull/deck units a week depending on the size. Hunter Boats was also amongst the first to incorporate Kevlar fibres into production racers.

Next on the Hunter agenda, we asked David to design fast twin-keel variants of his Hunters. He drew in a breath and said "I'll think about it", adding "You do realise that quick twin-keelers are few and far between and designing two quick keels to go on one hull will take time."

David came up trumps - designing angled-in twin keels with a splay equivalent to typical heeling angles of each model to ensure stiff sailing and to cut down on leeway. It did not take him long to also add 'bulbed bases' to these keels.

They sailed extraordinarily well for twin keelers. On one stormy Round the Island Race, the twin keel Hunter Horizon 32 'motor-sailer' with an enclosed wheelhouse won its division in the race. Z Spars mast maker and successful East Coast sailor David White could not believe the carnage going on around us. Then he asked how many rescue helicopters normally took part in the day's fun as he steered the boat around several yachts in trouble.

From here it was a case of expanding the range over time and improving and refining the existing yachts. We continued our close relationship with David Thomas who came up with some splendidly innovative designs. The Hunter Channel 27 perpetuated David Thomas's aft chines seen in Quarto. These added extra space in the stern cabin and – David added mysteriously – "Water likes chines. They tell it which way to go."

A whale of a time

At around the same time, David Thomas asked me if I would like to build a modern take on the Whalers he used to sail in New Zealand. When he was young, David worked for the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand who had owned more than 350 ships and had been the subject of a number of books. They also owned a fleet of Whalers for training and racing.

David's new offering had twin unstayed masts, one of which was a hinging mast in the bow. It had a

ABOVE LEFT
Peter Jeanneret's Hunter Pilot 27 was one of many elegant 'home completed' examples. She now lives in Scotland and shows the space and performance she inherited from the Hunter Ranger 265's hull and keel form

ABOVE RIGHT
The Hunter Liberty was an innovative David Thomas design inspired by the whalers he used to race in New Zealand

BELOW
David Thomas added the Hunter Sonata, Impala 28 OOD and Medina 20 to the Hunter equation in the early 1970s. All won races and also appealed as quick cruisers. Timothy Long sailed an Impala 28 solo round Britain at the age of 15

lengthy cockpit, a centreboard with stub twin keels either side and a surprisingly spacious interior with an enclosed aft heads. And it had a canoe stern. The twin-masted version was called the Hunter Liberty 22 and the single gaff-rigged version the Hunter Minstrel 23. Both proved very popular with their Thomas performance, versatility and adaptability. They were also easy to trail and sail. Ultimately, David Thomas had a knack of getting things right – you could also see that in his larger Sigma designs.

Winding down

My business partner died suddenly aged 58 at the turn of the century. I had two choices. Buy his widow's 50% which she inherited from her husband. Or we could sell the company and share the proceeds. We chose the latter. Running the show without my erstwhile business partner would never be the same after around 30 years working together. So we sold the concern to Cornish Crabbers who changed its name to Select Yachts in the process. It also took over production of our Stephen Jones-designed Mystery 35. Sadly Select Yachts went out of business around four years later, but Cornish Crabbers are now back in business.

There are very few other UK builders of sub-30ft cruising yachts. And some modern hull shapes have a tendency to broach upwind. It's amazing how many designers have re-discovered 'chines'. These add volume to aft cabins and reduce the tendency to broach going to windward. In short, they help to restore directional stability that was lost to extra space in wide sterns.



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Other facilities in the harbour include free parking, toilets and showers, a crew room, fueling facilities, on site laundry facilities and boat builders' yard.

The town of Arbroath also offers a variety of social and sporting amenities to visiting crews and a number of quality pubs, restaurants, the famous twelfth century Abbey and Signal Tower Museum are located close to the harbour. The railway and bus stations are only 1km from the harbour with direct north and south connections.”

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SHORTLIST

SIX BEST FLASKS FOR SAILORS

Whether you're cruising the coast, or taking part in races and regattas, you'll be looking for a handy flask for your days out on the water. Here's six brilliant containers that will keep your cosy tea, coffee or soup hot, and your refreshing drinks cold – so you can enjoy a day's sailing, or beach trip whatever the weather. When looking for the best flasks for sailors, there are a few important aspects we kept an eye out for that make them fit for the adventure, for instance, how long it can keep your chosen drink hot or cold for. It may seem obvious, but there really is no

better feeling than reaching for your tea after five or six hours of windy and wet weather to find it still steaming in your hands. Or better yet, on a scorching day at the beach, feeling confident that your ice cold water (or perhaps something a little stronger) has stayed perfectly chilled. Some flasks we've found even boast up to eight hours of heat retention and an incredible 24 hours of staying cold. We've also been on the look out for dishwasher safe flasks, so even if your day on the water doesn't go quite to plan, you can keep the flask side of things hassle free!

Best 24 hour flask: Thermos Stainless King 1.2L
Best flask for volume: Classic Stanley Bottle 2.3L
Best flask for soup: Chilly Food Pot 500ml

Brew Flask Ocean Bottle (350ml)

The Brew Flask Ocean bottle is available in a wide range of bright and neutral colours. You can keep it cold for 18 hours and hot for six hours, it's dishwasher safe, and every bottle funds the collection of 1,000 ocean-bound plastic bottles.
● £35
● oceanbottle.co



Classic Stanley Bottle (2.3L)

This large bottle keeps hot and cold for a whopping 48 hours. Although the Classic has a huge volume it's also available in a range of sizes down to 470ml. It's dishwasher safe and comes in black or green.
● £78
● eustanley1913.com



Life Venture TiV Vacuum Flask (1L)

The Life Venture vacuum flask has a stainless steel lid that doubles as a cup and a screw in stopper which means less risk of it coming loose out on the water. Keeps cold for up to 24 hours and hot for up to 8 hours.
● £27
● millets.co.uk



Thermos Stainless King 1.2L

The Thermos Stainless King boasts a remarkable 24 hours of hot or cold. It comes in a wide range of colours and is easy to carry and pour with a handy cup top. The design is also super sturdy and durable.
● £30
● amazon.co.uk



Camelbak Chute Mag Vacuum Bottle (1L)

This mid sized flask has a number of distinctive features, most notably an angled spout to prevent spilling. It can keep liquids cold for 24 hours and hot for 6 hours and it's dishwasher safe.
● £42
● millets.co.uk



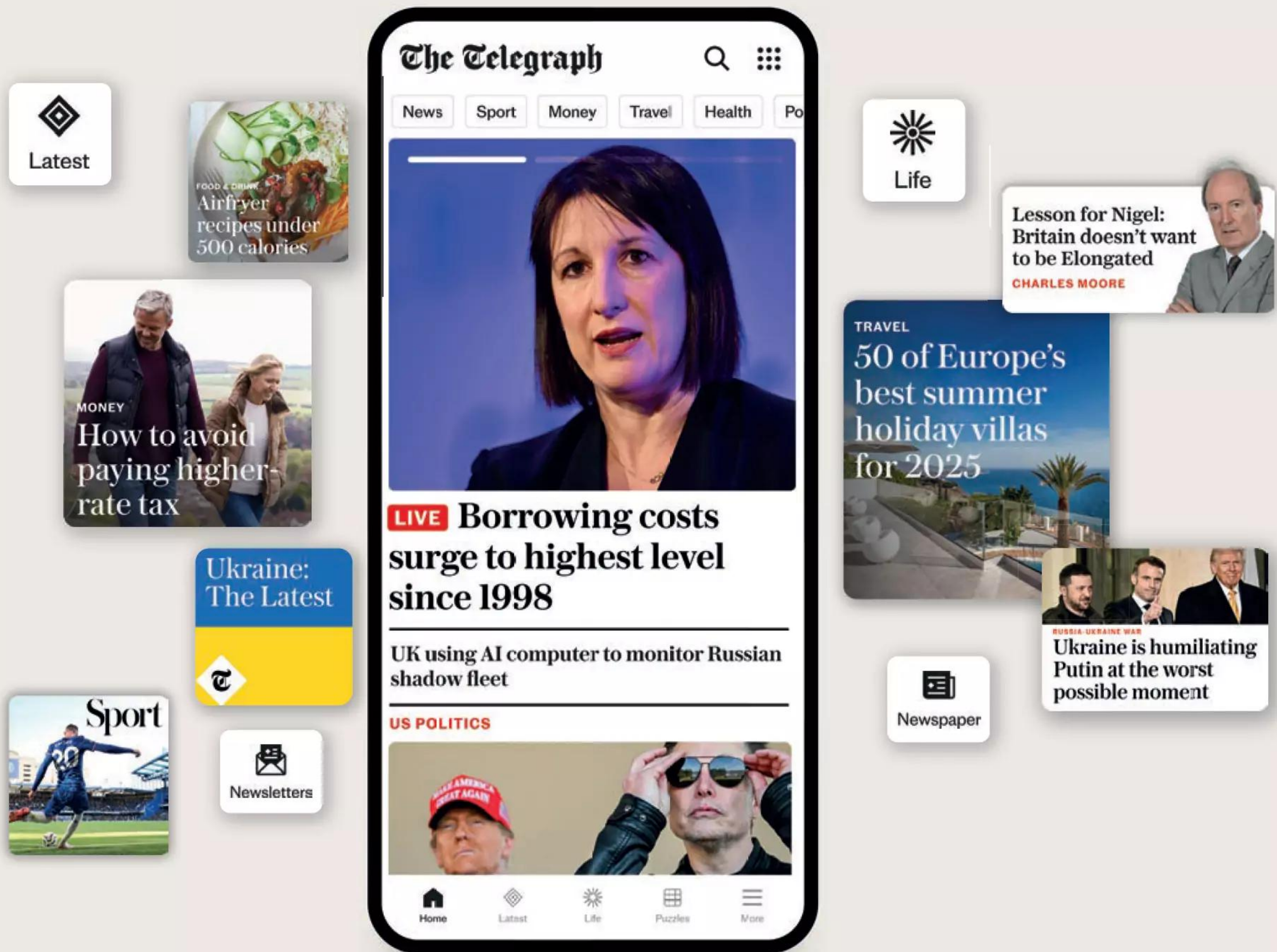
Chilly Food Pot (500ml)

This is a great flask for hot soup as its wide rim is ideal for warming soups and food. It keeps hot up to six hours and is available in pink, blue, black and turquoise. You can even get it engraved if you wish to personalise things.
● £28
● amazon.co.uk



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On older phones, you may need to download a QR code reader first.

SHORTLIST

HEAD TORCHES

Looking for a top quality, weather-proof head torch designed for sailing? Look no further...

Things to Consider for Sailing Head Torches

Lumens

Is your search for the best sailing head torches dependent on how strong the beam is? Looking at the lumens for each product will help tell you how bright your head torch will be before you click buy. We recommend the Fenix Rugged Head Torch with an impressive 1200 lumens.

Red Light Mode

No need to ruin your night vision while sailing at night... all the head torches we've chosen have a red light mode!

Waterproof Sailing Head Torches

There seems little point taking a non-waterproof head torch on a

boat. Our top picks of head torches for sailors are all designed to get a little (or very) wet. The safest head torch we recommend for waterproofing is the Fenix Rugged Head Torch, this torch can also withstand extreme range of temperatures making it the perfect choice for winter voyagers and tropical sailors.

What Does the IP Rating Mean?

The IP rating tells us the product's resistance to dust and water exposure – for details on each level take a look at this simple IP rating guide.

Note: waterproofing ratings are usually based on freshwater, saltwater speeds up the erosion process. It's best to take waterproof ratings with a pinch of salt and store your head torch in a dry area when not using it.

Our Six Favourites...

Ledlenser Head Torch

300 lumens (with short boost mode of 500 lumens for when you need it most)
IP68 waterproof
Wide operating temperature (-20 to +40 celsius)
Magnetic charging system



● £50
● Goooutdoors.co.uk

OSAT Exposure RAW Pro Head Torch

265 lumens
IP68 waterproof
Case magnetic charging for speed and simplicity
Fast 1.5 hour charge time
Turns on red light mode by default – no chance of ruining your night vision!



● £169
● Amazon.co.uk

Fenix Rugged Head Torch

1600 lumens
IP68 waterproof
Wide operating temperature (-35 to +45 celsius)
Inner waterproof charging socket
Memory mode – remembers last mode used (so you can keep it on red mode and retain your night vision!)



● £114.95

Fenix-store.com

Petzl Aria 2 RGB Head Torch
450 lumens
IP67 waterproof
Compact & lightweight
Hybrid power – batteries/rechargeable battery (not included)
Colours: black/green



● £53
● Petzl.com

Fenix Lightweight Head Torch

1200 lumens & 8m beam
IP68 waterproof
Lightweight
Rechargeable



● £84.95
● Fenix-store.com

Forclaz Headlamp

300 lumens & 65m range
Shock-proof and splash-resistant (IPX5)
Colours: Red/Black/Aqua
Rechargeable

● £24.99
● Decathlon.co.uk



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QUIZ TIME

What are the top five most commonly asked questions at the start of a charter? Charter veteran Tom Fletcher has the answers

One of the most popular extras we offer at Sail Ionian is the Assisted Sailing programme. The programme offers the support of a skipper on board for a day or two at the start of a bareboat charter. Many of our guests only sail once every few years and are rusty, others have family or friends on board who have never been on a boat or have never Med moored and want some practice. Whatever the reason, it's a popular option to have an instructor on board with no set syllabus. Guests get to focus on whatever they would like to practice, whether it's some sail trim pointers, family MOB practice or a long-lining masterclass.

It's great fun to teach too, as every day is different. However, there are some questions that come up again and again. Regardless of the different crews, boats or situations, I will usually be asked for my tips on these regular concerns.

Mooring is the premier topic that most people want to focus on. Whether it is a lack of experience when reversing the boat, or a crew who are beginners, we normally spend at least the first half of a day practicing in a harbour. It's all very hands on, with the instructor moving around the boat explaining different roles and elements, involving the whole family or group. We practice the manoeuvre again and again in a harbour like little Vathi on Meganisi, or Sivota on the south of

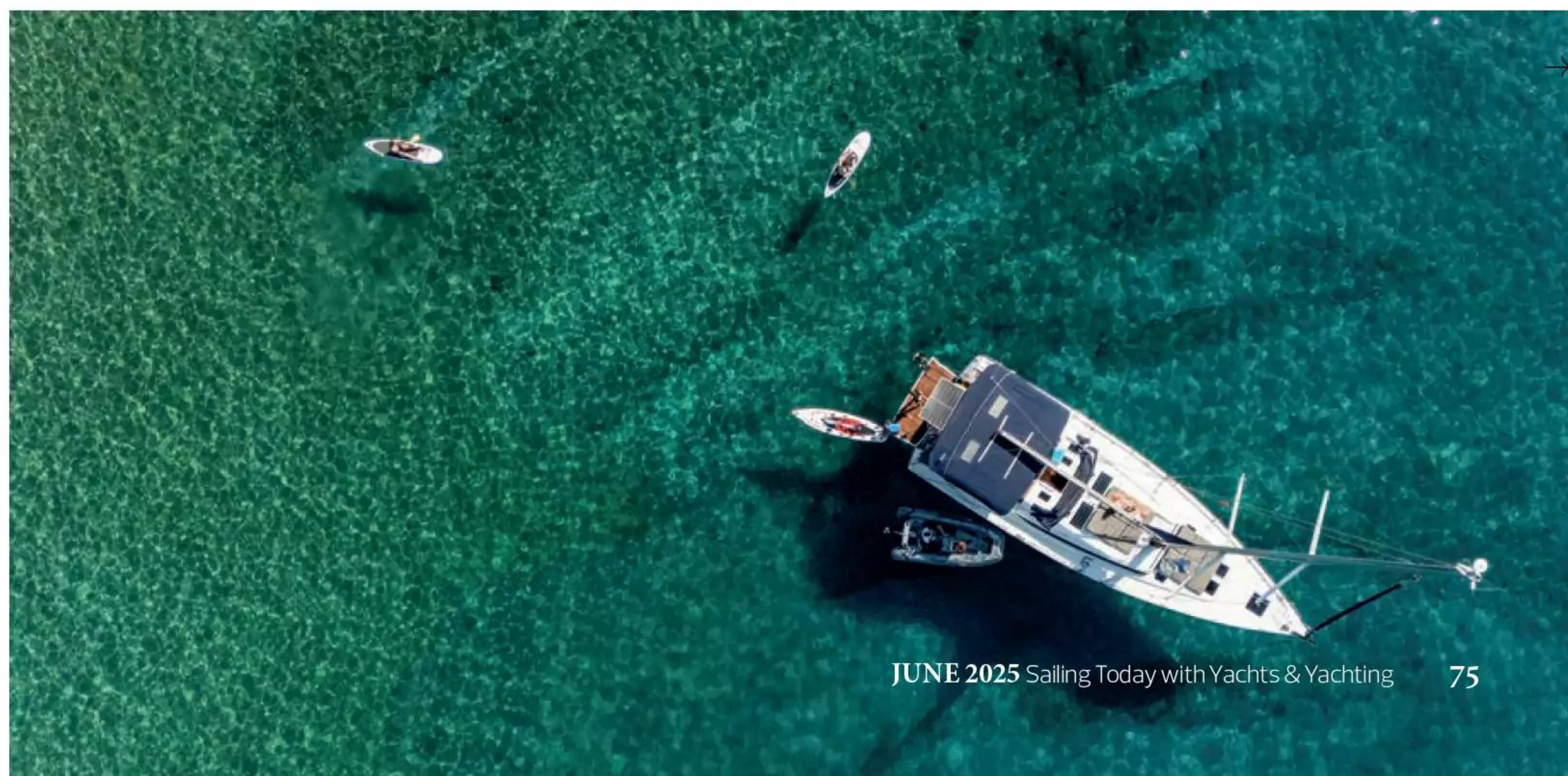
Lefkada. At the end of the session though, someone will often ask how to pick the best berth in a new harbour. There are several things to consider when entering a port for the first time that will make life easier. Firstly, I always advise being ready to moor before entering the harbour – lines and fenders set up, crew in place, ready to go. We see so many yachts getting in everyone's way while they circle and tie fenders on and dig ropes out of lockers! Secondly, think about the wind direction within the harbour. Most harbours will have a few different berthing options – some will be cross wind, and some will be up or down wind. Cross wind is hardest when Med mooring, so if you can pick a spot with the wind coming off the quayside, then you can reverse directly into it, and it won't push the boat off course. Finally, think about what you can't see – the depth and the seabed. In a shallow muddy area, your anchor will hold much better – study the pilot book and understand the harbour before you get there.

FACING PAGE
A perfect cove for
Med mooring

BELOW
One of Sail Ionian's
Bavaria C57s settled
nicely at anchor

2 Sail Ionian's guests always have many questions about anchoring, in a similar fashion to mooring. The Ionian presents a lot of anchoring challenges. We practice the manoeuvre with guests several times and ensure that novices on the bow windlass controls begin to understand how the anchor works. Hand signals are always taught to avoid shouting. But how to choose a good anchorage is another theoretical question that I get asked many times. Shelter and wind direction are normally the top criteria on everyone's list. However, in calm conditions on a charter holiday I actually think the seabed is more important. When on holiday with family or friends in unfamiliar waters, one should not really be trying to ride out strong winds or storms on the hook. When winds are light, anchoring on a lee shore may not be so grave. The seabed morphology and bathymetry are more critical. In an area like the Ionian where depths are considerable, and the seabed →

ALL PHOTOS: SAIL IONIAN



can be rocky or weedy, it's vital to spend some time looking over the bow to find a pale coloured sandy spot to drop your anchor on. Not only to ensure good holding, but also to preserve the Posidonia sea grass meadows. The meadows are key marine habitats and are easily damaged by charter yacht anchors dragging through the roots. I always advise spending some time circling an anchorage to get a feel for where the best place to drop is. It's not just about the depth though. Anchoring on a sloping seabed can result in reversing into deeper water as the anchor chain is paid out, with little chance of secure holding! There is a lot to be gained by exploring an anchorage with one eye on the depth gauge and another on the colour of the water.

3 Short-handed techniques. I teach a lot of newly qualified couples who are looking forward to their first bareboat charter and are justifiably nervous about coping on their own without a crew, or the safety net of having an instructor on board. There are a lot of small things that you can do, that you will learn over the years – such as techniques for reefing when short-handed – but really the key advice I give is simply about patience and preparation. When you first sail solo, you learn that most of your time is spent preparing for each manoeuvre far in advance, to make life easier on yourself. You must have a lot of patience and appreciate that you will be a lot slower doing everything, but that it can be done in a seamanlike way if you just take it one step at a time and think ahead. I encourage new couples to talk everything through before they do anything, running through it all step by step helps to ensure nothing is forgotten.

4 I often get asked to do some MOB practice during a day on the Assisted Programme. What I actually see, though, is a lack of knowledge and skill in controlling the boat in an

emergency situation. I find that most people do not truly understand how to heave-to. The manoeuvre is taught as part of a long-winded MOB procedure with so many steps to remember when you first learn it, that little time is given over to playing around and perfecting the emergency stop. There is a lack of understanding that heaving-to is as old as time itself and can be used just as easily to make the tea, as it can to rescue a casualty. Ships used to heave-to for so many reasons; from waiting for the correct tide to enter a harbour to riding out a storm. When in confined spaces I like to teach guests to heave-to, to allow stand on vessels to pass easily. Practice makes perfect and it builds so much confidence in novices. Having an instructor on board for a day enables people to relax and feel like they can experiment and learn, whereas normally they would just play it safe and stick with what they know.

5 A lot of the Sail Ionian charter fleet, particularly as you get onto the larger yachts, have in-mast furling mainsails. Many guests have never used them or have had problems with them before. Once you understand how to use them correctly, you will never have a problem again. Imagine the mainsail as you would a roller furling genoa, except in a small space inside the mast. When you furl your genoa by pulling on the furling line, you

ABOVE
Having an instructor onboard for the first couple of days will give you the confidence to go it alone

must keep some tension on your genoa sheet, to ensure the sail does not flog, and furl up messily. This is the exact same situation with your mainsail – you must keep tension on the outhaul as you furl to maintain a neat tidy roll. A couple of loose turns around the outhaul winch usually generates enough friction to furl the sail tightly. If a mainsail is furled away messily, without tension on the outhaul to keep it taught, the folds in the sail will jam inside the mast next time you try to use it. Always make sure your boom is level too, or you alter the shape of the sail as it furls away causing issues. Many instructors recommend tightening the kicker before releasing the main sheet to flatten the sail and keep a good shape.

As an instructor and professional skipper, it is a sad fact that I rarely sail with anyone with more experience than myself. It is not often I pick up tips or learn new techniques anymore and often feel stagnated. If offered the opportunity, I would always choose to have a skipper for the first day of a charter regardless of how proficient my crew was. I find it interesting and inspiring to watch a good sailor handle a yacht and love to pick up new skills and techniques. Every yacht, and every cruising area, are different and present their own challenges. Having the opportunity to be introduced to either by a professional is always an advantage!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Tom Fletcher is a hugely experienced skipper and instructor at Sail Ionian. For more information, go to sailionian.com






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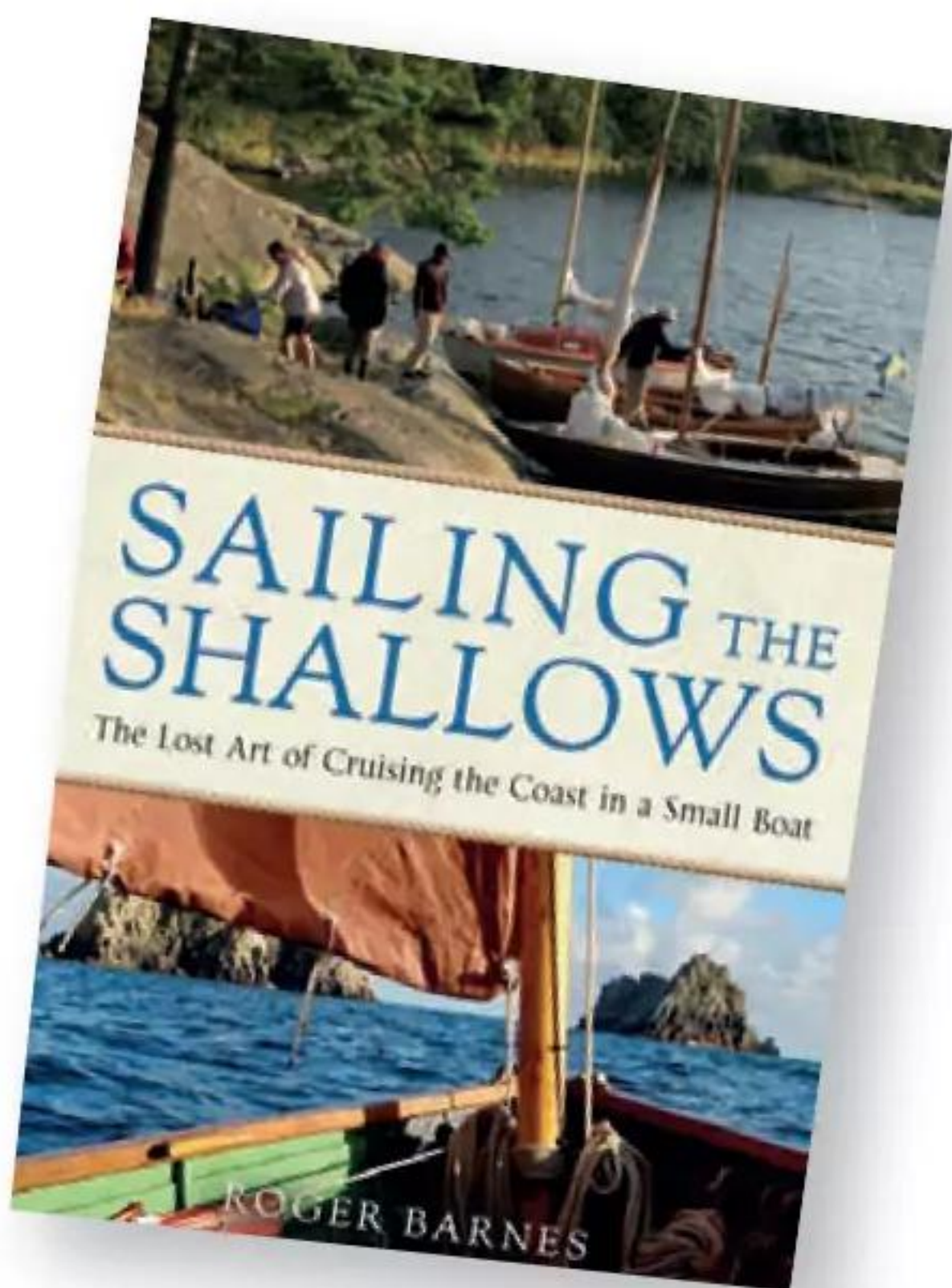
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TIME OUT

SAM JEFFERSON REVIEWS THE LATEST BUNKSIDE READS, CLASSIC BOOKS AND MORE

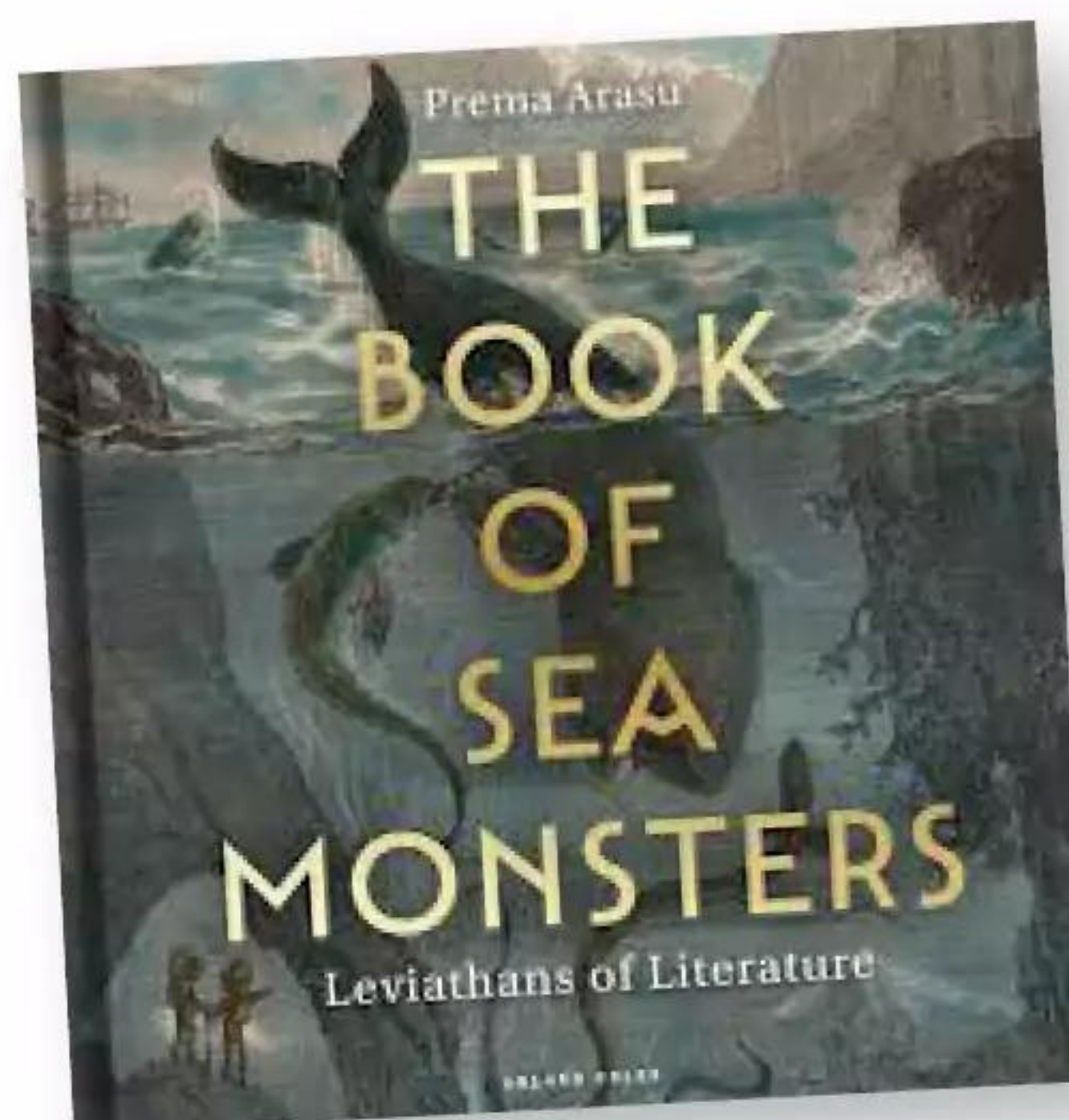


Sailing the Shallows – the lost art of cruising the coast in a small boat Roger Barnes

This book will be available in September but you can pre order a copy ahead of that should you wish and it sounds like it might be worth it. Barnes is an avid dinghy sailor who has always had a nice line in whimsy. It also sounds like he is not afraid to suffer for his art, and Sailing the Shallows takes a look at his many adventures sailing around the coast of Britain and further afield in an assortment of small craft. Throughout the book, Barnes seeks to demonstrate that sailing in an open boat on long passages is a sane and sensible thing to do. That may well be so but there will be many – and I include myself – who are happy to live vicariously through Barnes' own adventures. The book is a nice blend of entertaining tales interwoven with actual useful seamanship tips combined with illustrations making for a charming read. **Adlard Coles £16.99**

The book of sea monsters – Leviathans of Literature Prema Arasu

Now here is something we all need; a compendium of sea monsters. Ideal for if you're assailed while at sea by an unknown monster of the deep. Simply crack out this guide and you can immediately identify what monster is about to consign you to Davy Jones' locker. Oh alright, I jest but the concept is an interesting one, with author Prema Arasu taking a look at sea monsters over time and exploring their nature through excerpts from contemporary yarn spinners. Highlights include the ensemble of horrors presented in Homer's the Odyssey, Beowulf and also more modern menaces such as the Great White Whale in Herman Melville's Moby Dick and also more obscure monsters dreamt up by luminaries such as Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The result is an enjoyable read further enhanced by a selection of suitably fearsome illustrations. **Adlard Coles £25**



Ocean: A history of the Atlantic before Columbus John Haywood

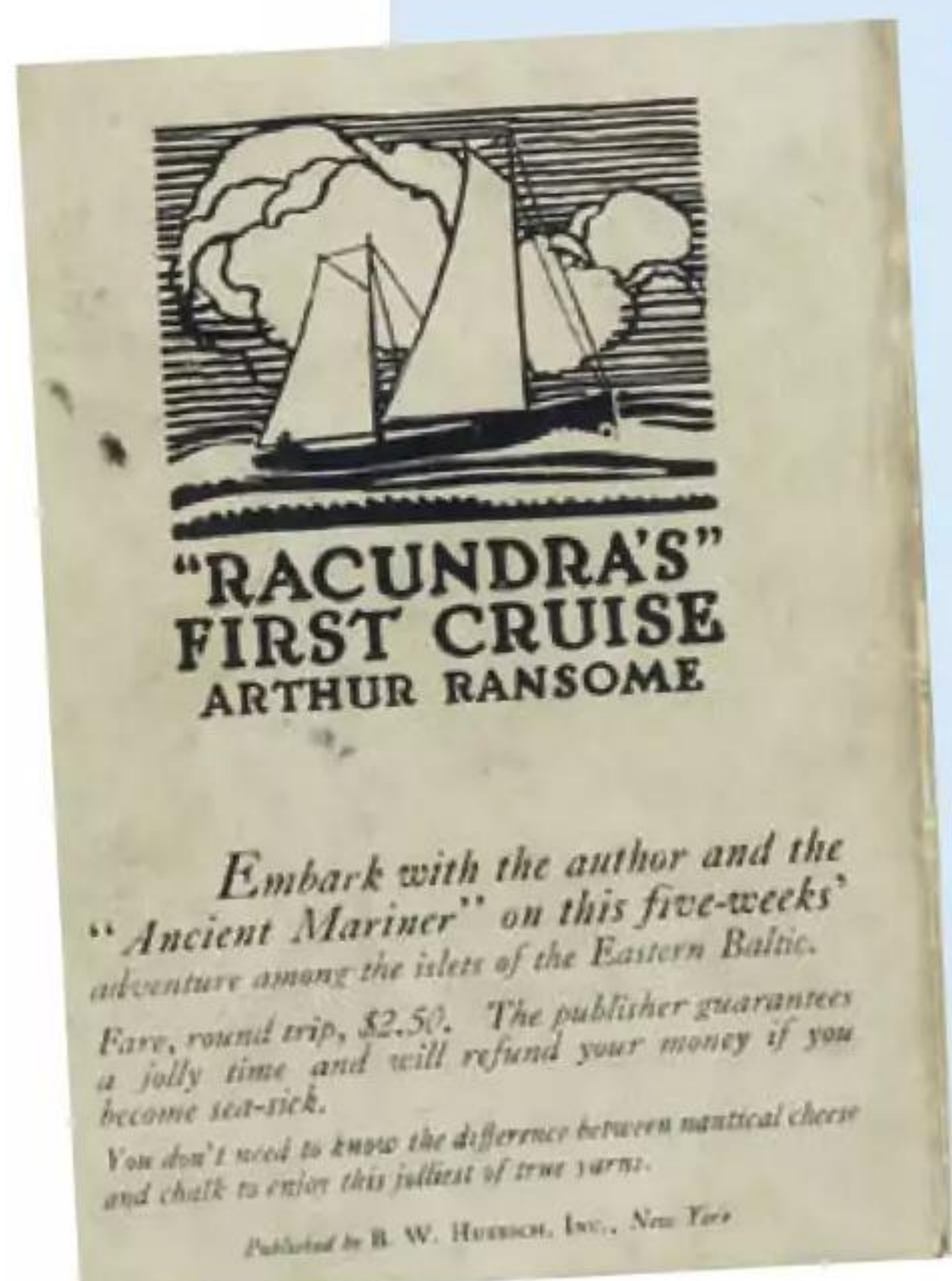
There is a good deal of anti American sentiment around at the moment and I'm going to use this book review to trowel on some more. I've always found the American's veneration of Columbus as absurd. He gets his own bank holiday over there even though he never set foot on the continent of North America and landed in the Caribbean pretty convinced he was in SE Asia. I'm not saying he wasn't bold but he was definitely confused. If he had spray painted himself orange he could've been their first president. Anyway, this is a book that looks at an Atlantic before Columbus and it's an interesting read. Haywood clearly knows his onions and looks at a diverse range of pre Columbus adventures ranging from the Castilian discovery of the Canary Isles to the adventures of the Vikings up in the northern stretches of the Atlantic. Given that it was likely the Vikings who were the first Europeans to set foot on the continent of North America and – wait for it – Greenland, I can't help but feel the American's might be better advised devoting a bank holiday to them instead of hitting them with a 120% tariff on... *that's enough anti American ranting, Ed* **Adlard Coles £14.99**

Classic Choice

Racundra's first Cruise Arthur Ransome

Racundra's First Cruise in many ways captures the moment when Arthur Ransome made the transition from rather inept foreign correspondent to one of the best loved and most accomplished nautical authors around. The background to the cruise is almost as fascinating as the trip itself: Ransome had been working for many years as Russian correspondent for the Manchester Evening News. In this position he had documented first hand the heady days of the Russian revolution and during this period began an affair with Trotsky's secretary, despite the fact he was a married man.

Back in England, there were concerns that Ransome was a spy, but a couple of interviews with MI5 seemed to confirm to the authorities that he was more of a blundering idiot than any real threat. Anyway, against this background, Ransome sought some peace and quiet with his new beau and the result was Racundra's first cruise from Latvia up to Finland and back. Racundra was designed and built especially for Ransome, who was not a terribly experienced sailor at the time and probably wasn't prepared for the unrelenting misery that is having a new boat built and fitted out. This is my favourite part of the book; it's covered very rapidly, yet he manages to convey perfectly his fury and hatred for the boatyard and its bone idle shipwrights. The cruise itself is enchanting and all the better because it covers a relatively obscure cruising ground. It revealed an author stretching out after freeing himself from the shackles of newspaper journalism. **Publisher: Various, From 40p**





BOATYARD

CAR PARK

CRANE

WELLINGTON DOCK

SHOWERS, TOILETS
& LAUNDRY

MARINA OFFICE

SHOWERS, TOILETS
& LAUNDRY

ENTRANCE TO
WELLINGTON DOCK

THE CURVE



GULL'S EYE

DOVER MARINA

Looking for a safe, secure, good value marina that encourages loyal customers? This is one to consider *says Sue Pelling*

51.1209° N, 1.3134° E



A TOTAL OF 385 BERTHS
AT THE GATEWAY
TO CONTINENT

NEW MARINA PIER

OUTER MARINA

Gull's Eye – Dover Marina



When the going gets rough with a high sea running in heavy weather in the Dover Strait, it's important to have a plan of action in place in case you need to take cover. Thankfully there can be few marinas that offer such warm and kind hospitality as Dover Marina which is located 2nm southwest of South Foreland.

Yes indeed, it is bang-slap in the middle of the UK's busiest shipping port but, stick to the rules of the 'road' with communication from Dover Port Control when entering and leaving, and it is one of the most user-friendly marinas to consider. Also, with the continent on the 'doorstep' (just 20nm across to France) it is a convenient location in which to base your yacht, particularly with such good transport links to and from the country, as well as major city transport links, close by.

This safe and secure 385-berth marina, shadowed by the imposing White Cliffs and overlooked by

ABOVE
The marina is located at the foot of the White Cliffs of Dover

BELOW
Plenty of space for winter lay up or maintenance



51.1209° N,
1.3134° E



Dover's magnificent castle, comprises two mooring options; the Outer Marina offers 250 berths which are accessible at all states of the tide, and the 135-berth inner Wellington Dock which has its water levels maintained at a minimum of 3m, and access is via a lock, which operates 24/7.

The marina is renowned for its good customer service and value for money berthing, with excellent facilities and services including a fully equipped boatyard, and four weeks of free quay storage (pro-rata) anytime throughout the year in its brand-new boatyard.

There is also a good range of shops and restaurants close by, with the Marina Curve, for example, an ideal location to relax with its beachfront atmosphere and excellent variety of locally-sourced food, and drink stalls/outlets – set up for the summer season – on Clock Tower Square and along the pier. There are plenty of other dining options nearby too including the recently expanded Dover Marina Hotel, which overlooks the marina and is open year round for breakfast, lunch, dinner and afternoon tea.

During a stay at Dover Marina it's worth taking the opportunity to visit places like Dover Castle, Canterbury Cathedral, or the nearby coastal towns of Deal and Sandwich plus, if you are in need of a bit of retail therapy, there's a host of shopping opportunities in Canterbury as well as Ashford Designer Outlet (23 miles away by car).

Other berthing benefits include the marina's own loyalty scheme, which is a nice touch, simple, and an excellent way of rewarding good customers. The scheme means annual berth holders are entitled to a loyalty discount on their berthing fees once they have been at the marina for two consecutive years.

It is also a TransEurope Marina, which means that if you are a berthholder with a minimum six-month contract in one of the TransEurope member marinas, you can enjoy reciprocal berthing benefits when visiting one of the 84 TransEurope Marinas, located across 11 countries.





Passage planning

Port control is essential when entering Dover Marina, so you'll need to call Dover VTS on VHF Ch74 when 2nm away and inform them of your destination and any other vital information that could help them identify you on your approach. If you are unable to use VHF for some reason, call +44 (0)1304 206063 because you cannot proceed into the harbour without specific permission from Dover VTS.

As you approach Dover during daylight hours you'll see the castle and the huge breakwaters, while at night the marina is well lit with breakwater lights. Once you have permission to proceed into the Outer marina, and are clear of the entrance, call 'Dover Marina' on VHF Ch80 for berthing instructions.

The same communication applies when you are leaving the marina by calling Dover VTS on VHF CH74 to confirm which exit you wish to use and await instruction.

ABOVE
Well sheltered and secure marina

BELOW
Rye, on the River Rother, is a pleasant place to tie up

Cruising ground

This marina's 'jewel in the crown' in terms of location at the south-eastern tip of the UK is its proximity to the continent, which means it's possible to head to places like France, Belgium or even The Netherlands for a long weekend.

There is also plenty of scope for cruising locally to places like Sandwich and Ramsgate, or further afield to the north such as the River Thames and the River Medway. To the south, approximately 5.5nm away is Folkestone although tide restricted, or about 26nm from Dover is the pretty, ancient town of Rye where you can moor up in the harbour. For a longer passage, Chichester Harbour is approximately 85nm away and well worth adding to your summer cruise itinerary. Chichester is located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, at high water, there are 29 square miles of local cruising opportunities within the harbour, so it's a great place to explore.

FACTFILE

Postcode: CT17 9FS

Tel: +44 (0)1304 241663

Email: marina@portofdover.com

VHF (Marina): Ch80

VHF (Dover VTS): Ch74

Marine traffic update: Twitter via @Port_of_Dover

Lock Ops: VHF80 or Tel: +44 (0)1304 241663

Prices:

Annual berth

Outer Marina: £380 per m

Wellington Dock (inner): £345 per m

(Loyal discount applies after 2 years)

Monthly berth

Summer – Wellington £47.00

Summer – Outer Marina £54.00

Winter – Wellington £41.00

Winter – Outer Marina £48.50

Visitors

Winter: £3.20 per m/per 24hrs

Summer: £3.75 per m/per 24hrs

Wifi: Free

Water: Free

Electricity:

Berth holders – pay as you go, top up on live app

Visitors – included in berthing fee

Fuel: red diesel, white diesel, unleaded petrol & gas, available from George Hammond Marine fuel berth in tidal harbour

Chandlery: Sharp & Enright chandlery (Snargate Street) Tel: +44 (0) 1304 206295

Gas: Sharp & Enright chandlery, or fuel berth

Services:

Boatyard: Tel: +44 (0)1304 240400

Lift out/lift out wash: available

Hoist (lifting capacity 50 tonnes): available

Repair: M&P Marine Services Tel: +44 (0)7854 904380

Sailmaker: Wilkinson Sails Tel +44 (0)1795 521503

Broker: Network Yacht Brokers Tel: +44 (0)1304 784137

Car parking: One parking permit allocated to each annual berth holder

Provisioning: Local BP garage, M&S Food, Food Warehouse (within new St James development)

Local Yacht Club: Royal Cinque Ports YC: Tel: +44(0)1304 206262

Places to eat and drink:

Bella Vita – Tel: +44 (0)1304 207740

Cullins Yard – Tel: +44 (0)1304 211666

Planet Earth Kitchen – Tel: +44 (0)7729 134394

Wheeler's Fish & Chips – Tel: +44 (0)1304 203633

Rebels Dover – Sauna & Cafe

Dover Marina Hotel – Tel: +44 (0)1304 203633

Stalls/outlets on The Curve

Big Pan Foods, The Breakwater Brewery, Stone-baked pizza stall, PEK on the go, Pedaler on the Port, The Coffee Wagon, Café on the Curve, Sue's Seafood Dover

Nearest railway station: Dover Priory (20 minutes walk from marina) with high speed trains to London St Pancras

Taxi: Dover Heritage Taxis Tel +44 (0)1304 201915



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK



Sam Fortescue takes a look at the latest developments when it comes to chartplotters

THE PLOT THICKENS

News late last year that Imray will cease publishing paper charts after the coming sailing season has caused concern

among sailors and navigators. It may be one of the reasons that the UK Hydrographic Office has given its paper charts a stay of execution until at least 2030. But however you feel about the move, it throws the spotlight more firmly than ever on digital navigation.

Just three brands continue to dominate the market for sailing chartplotters, namely Raymarine, B&G manufacturer Navico and Garmin. Furuno is sometimes seen as a fourth option, and offers

a full suite of instruments, but its heartland is commercial and motor boating. They each have their own chart offer, although Navionics (Garmin) and C-Map (B&G) are the best established.

There are also a small stable of independent brands which are highly tuned to specific types of sailing. France's NKE is perhaps the best established with the widest range of sensors. Its reputation is strongest in offshore racing, where accuracy and clear read-outs are paramount, and it has just launched its first chartplotter.

Sailmon is another brand popular among racers, where its displays are often stacked up at the bottom of the mast for quick and easy speed and heading read-outs. It has just

ABOVE
Raymarine's
Axiom+ in action

been acquired by US newcomer Vakaros, which produces the Atlas wireless satellite speed/position tracker for raceboats large and small.

And then there is Norway's Orca, supplying the hardware and digital charts needed to replace, expand or repeat your existing chartplotter. The young company is somewhere between a software outfit and a product designer, but the end result can be radically cheaper than the fixed chartplotter alternative.

Below, we talk to a confirmed Raymarine user who values the consistent look and feel of the Axiom plotter and compare that experience to the more disruptive Orca. Read on for a run-down of all the key chartplotter systems.

Raymarine

One of the leading suppliers of all-round marine electronics, Raymarine's chartplotter range is called Axiom. Raymarine prefers the term 'multifunction display' or MFD, since they now do a lot more than just plotting your position on a chart. You can use them for digital switching, remote monitoring, radar and AIS, monitoring third-party systems via downloadable apps – even watching Netflix, if you wanted!

Axiom comes in three main flavours. The Axiom+ is the entry-level choice with touchscreen-only controls, available in 7in, 9in or 12in sizes. Axiom 2 Pro has dual controls and includes a host of fishfinding sonar options in 9in, 12in or 16in sizes, while Axiom XL has more power and screens up to 24in for motorboat-style glass-bridge setups.

All the units now feature upgraded IPS displays, which deliver deeper tones and much wider viewing angles even in bright sunlight. Sailors may prefer the Axiom 2, whose dual touch and button controls mean you can still use it in a downpour or with wet fingers. They all run the award-winning LightHouse operating system, whose latest version gives you a host of sailing tools, including dynamic laylines, startline visualiser and tactical advantage display to improve your VMG.

Behind this is the industry's broadest range of instruments, including the well reputed Evolution Pilot, solid-state radar, AIS, digital switching, IP cameras and remote monitoring. Raymarine has also just launched its most advanced wind instrument yet – the SmartWind. This compensates for pitch and roll, as well as upwash from the sails, mast bend and twist. And it does this all at the masthead, so the signal going down the cable needs no black box computer to analyse.

Last but not least is the newish Alpha display, designed to be mounted at the bottom of the mast or in the cockpit. This serves as a race repeater targeting speed and wind angle, but also has a really handy SailPoint graphic which visualises your optimum VMG heading as a large dot which you must keep in the cross hairs.

raymarine.com



B&G

Long known as the racing sailor's answer to marine instruments, B&G's range now covers the whole gamut from cruising to grand prix, via bluewater sailing. Its entry-level chartplotter is the 7in or 9in Vulcan, designed for coastal sailing or club racing with prices starting at £630. But the Zeus range really showcases what the brand is capable of.

There are perhaps fewer third-party bells and whistles than with other manufacturers, but Zeus excels on the core navigational brief. And its SailSteer, LayLines and RacePanel functions still lead the industry. They help you to reduce the time spent on each beat and identify wind shifts – just as useful when you're hurrying to get through a tidal gate as rounding a race mark. For even greater accuracy, you can install an additional black-box processor (from c£1,500 to £8,000).

The new Zeus SR comes in 10in, 12in and 16in variants with prices starting at £2,740. It offers a redesigned interface for quickly switching from cruising to racing mode, like the Zeus S (7in - £844 to 12in - £2,532), but with the added oomph of a souped-up processor. Also new this year is the Zeus S

ABOVE
B&G's Zeus S

BELOW
Garmin's
GPSMap 7 x 3



Ultrawide, which comes in 12in (£3,050) and 16in versions. With 50 per cent more horizontal resolution than the smaller screens, it is now easier than ever to split the display between two functions without losing too much detail in either.

The Zeus 3S is B&G's top-end cruising product, available in 9in, 12in and 16in versions starting at £2,500. It combines touch and button controls with a very bright IPS SolarMax display. And its powerful processor can handle high resolution charts, plus autopilot, radar and forward-scanning sonar.

B&G parent company Navico also owns CZone digital switching, which is native to Zeus plotters, allowing you to turn lights on and off or monitor power consumption from the same single display. Instruments include B&G's well reputed range of wind instruments (designed to cater for everyone from cruisers up to foiling Ultim catamarans) and its unique forward scanning sonar.

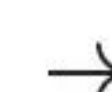
bandg.com

Garmin

Garmin has poured investment into its marine products over the last decade, with a focus on electronics for cruising and fishing. The GPSMap range is best suited to sailors with screen sizes running from 7in (£900) up to a whopping 27in (£15,520).

There are a bewildering array of different model numbers and suffixes but it essentially boils down to the resolution you want on your chosen screen size, and the sonar features. Most of the units are touchscreen-only, with high quality IPS displays; only the GPS 1022 (£1,400) and 1222 (£2,350) have dual button and touch control, and they feature older screen technology.

The flagship chartplotter is the GPSMap 90XX (where 'XX' is the screen size). It is a glass helm with premium design and mind-blowing 4K resolution (3840 x 2160 pixels). This means the display looks fantastic, with incredible viewing angles. But for sailors, it may be overkill, particularly in view of the 4.6A current draw of the smallest 19in unit.



Garmin has developed a SailAssist feature to help sailors visualise and optimise performance. You'll need to plug in accurate polars for the boat, then the display will plot laylines, race start guidance, and set/drift. It lacks the detailed analysis of wind trends that B&G offers, but its gWind horizontal transducer is said to increase accuracy in light winds. Garmin also does a wireless version to make small-boat upgrades easier.

Besides the aesthetics of the instruments and sheer power of the big plotters, Garmin's other strong suit is its integration with Fusion's high-end marine audio products. It also owns the Navionics chart brand, which offer additional features for Garmin plotters, and Empirbus digital switching. garmin.com

Orca

Orca is on a mission to shake up the 'big three' and provide navigation that is slicker and more intuitive – like the smartphones and tablets on which it runs. It can be just an app with its own proprietary charts, or an instrument repeater, or a screen – or indeed a combination of these. It is extraordinarily flexible and perhaps that has made it harder to communicate the benefits of the system to sailors who have grown up with big, fixed pieces of hardware at the helm and chart table.



The app can be downloaded and used free of charge on a phone or tablet with satellite position plotting and AIS overlays. But to get anything like the most out of Orca's capabilities, you will want to invest in the Core (£499) – a processor that takes the data off your instrument network and fires it wirelessly to the Orca app. With the Core, you can also access radar overlays, autopilot control and sophisticated auto routing under power.

For the best experience, you'll also need an annual subscription to unlock functionality such as offline chart downloads, automatic corrections and advanced route planning / weather tools. This is free for a year with the

ABOVE
Orca in use

purchase of a Core and thereafter costs €49 for the Plus plan or €149 for the Smart Navigation plan. This also enables automatic sail routing which carefully weighs the boat's performance on different points of sail and calculates the quickest safe way to your destination. Unlike most other products out there, it takes account of your course as you tack or gybe.

The final piece of the jigsaw here is the Orca Display 2 – a 10in Android tablet on steroids. It has a bigger battery (9.5Ah), better water / shock protection and a bright daylight readable screen than the high-street standard. You can run Orca on it for eight hours or more between charges, as well as any other Android app you care to download, and it can be paired with a robust charging mount. At £899 it is about half the price of a dedicated chart plotter, even including the cost of the Core.

Orca has been coded to connect to and control most of the common radar and autopilot units out there, and it does it well. In the near future, it will also be able to configure these units to get them set up – previously, you still needed the manufacturer's chartplotter to do that the first time. Advanced radar features like Doppler and MARPA should be supported later this year. getorca.com

Case study: Adding a chartplotter to a Moody 36

James Myatt is the fourth and latest boat in the Rona Sailing Project fleet, used mainly for training the volunteer navigators on whom the charity depends. In order to provide thousands of hours of safe sailing experience and teamwork to young trainees from across the country, these volunteers attain first Day Skipper and then Yachtmaster qualifications.

The Moody had to have the same electronics capabilities as the larger boats in the fleet (62–75ft), so that the volunteers could use their skills across a standard platform – regardless of the boat. To this end, Raymarine's Axiom 9 plotter has just been installed at the chart table by Hudson Marine.

"We are embracing digital first," says RSP director Sarah Woodman. "So, all the navigation is done using the chartplotters. Skippers do it their own way, but all the waypoints will be inputted and then we have paper charts on board as back-up."

All the boats are equipped with Raymarine's Quantum radar, which, being specially designed ketches, they

carry on the mizzen mast. The volunteer 'afterguard' is also trained to use this as a navigation tool, learning about clearing ranges, ETLs and so on.

"We spread the planning load and learning opportunities between different members of the afterguard," says Rona volunteer Jonny Ho. "The skipper will often ask the watchmate to put in the next day's passage. And because it's a training environment, that might take someone two hours while dinner's being made, and they don't want to be sitting up on deck alone.

"We have preset profiles – the skipper's profile is meant to be left untouched. And we enable a separate chart table view so you can play with it while not upsetting the navigation display on deck. As a training organisation, having consistency with what we use is really key, and the robustness and built-in nature of it is important."

The Rona Sailing Project relies on its volunteers and fundraisers. Find out more at ronasailingproject.org.uk



ORCA

The perfect companion to your chartplotter



Get a chartplotter-level experience on your phone and tablet with the **Orca Core 2**. The Core connects your boat's sensors, radar, and autopilot to the Orca app—so you're always in control, on any device. With a precision GPS and compass built in, it delivers everything you need for modern navigation experience.

Learn more at getorca.com



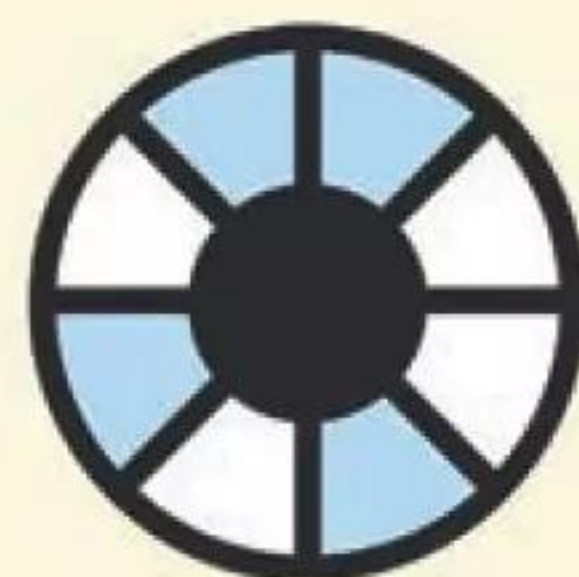
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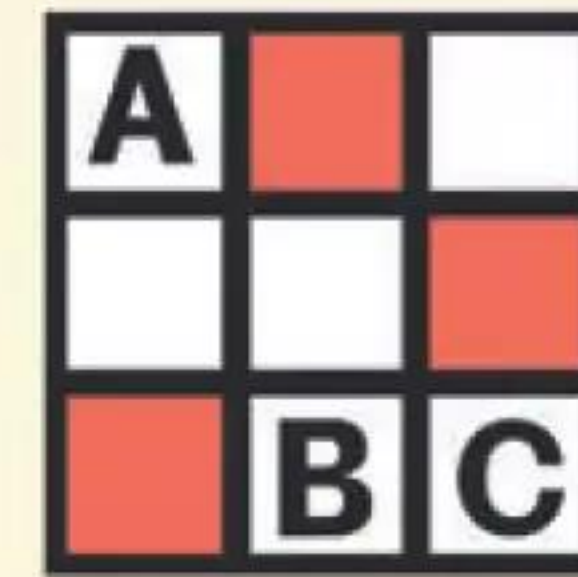
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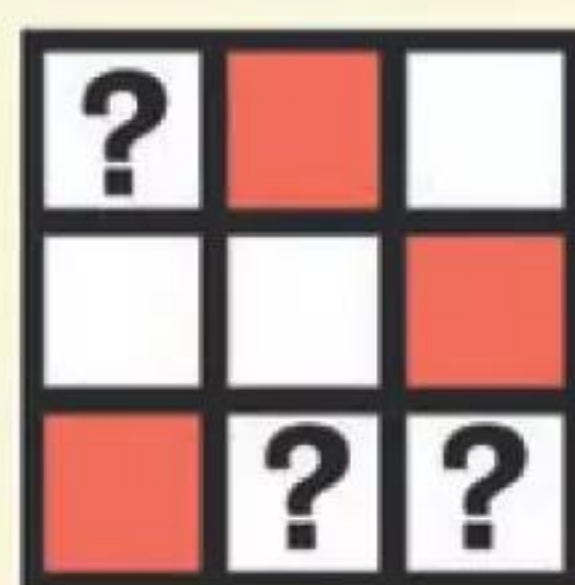
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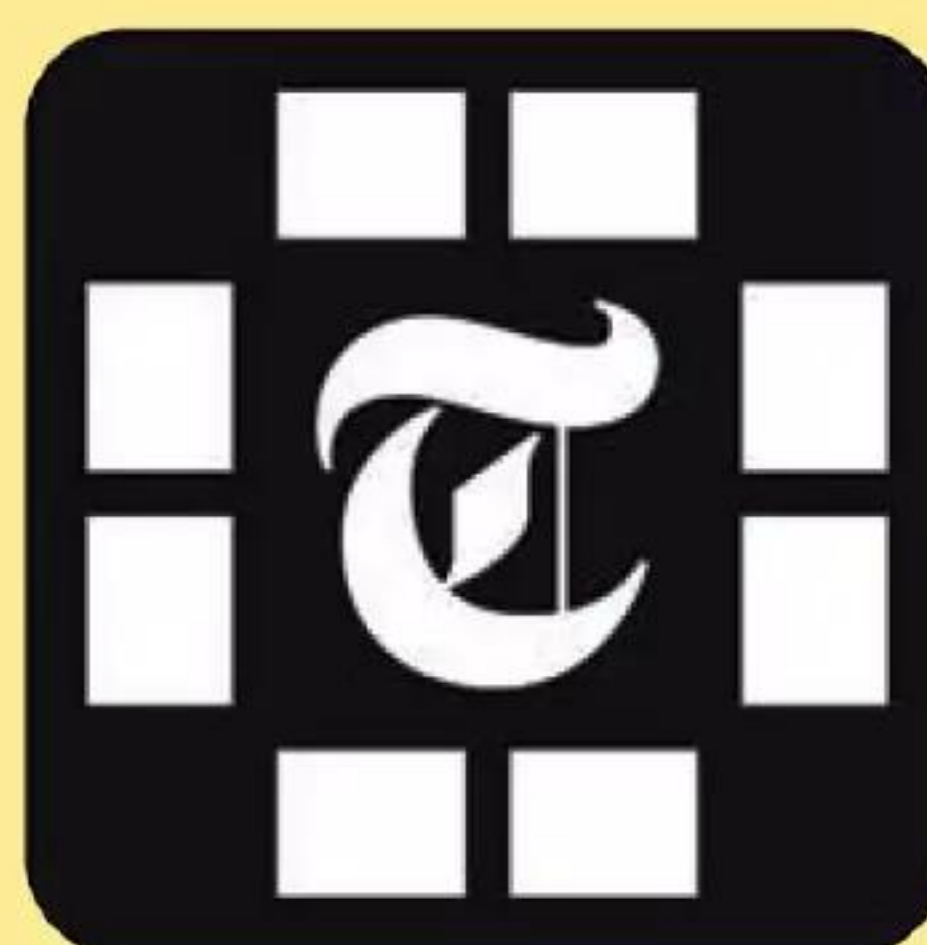
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Crossword**



**Cryptic
Crossword**



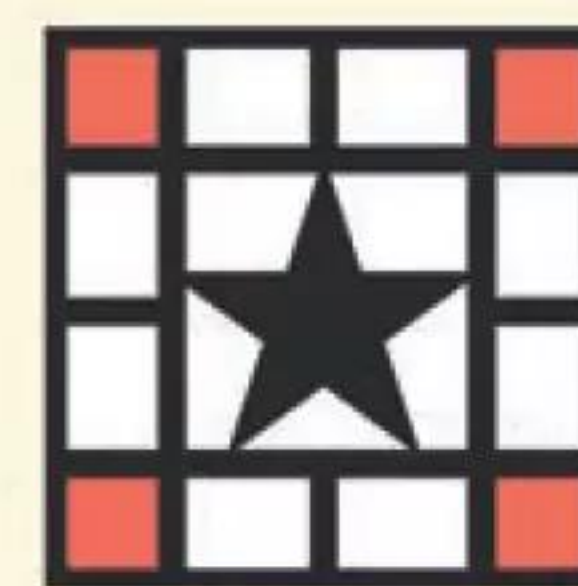
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Sudoku



Kakuro



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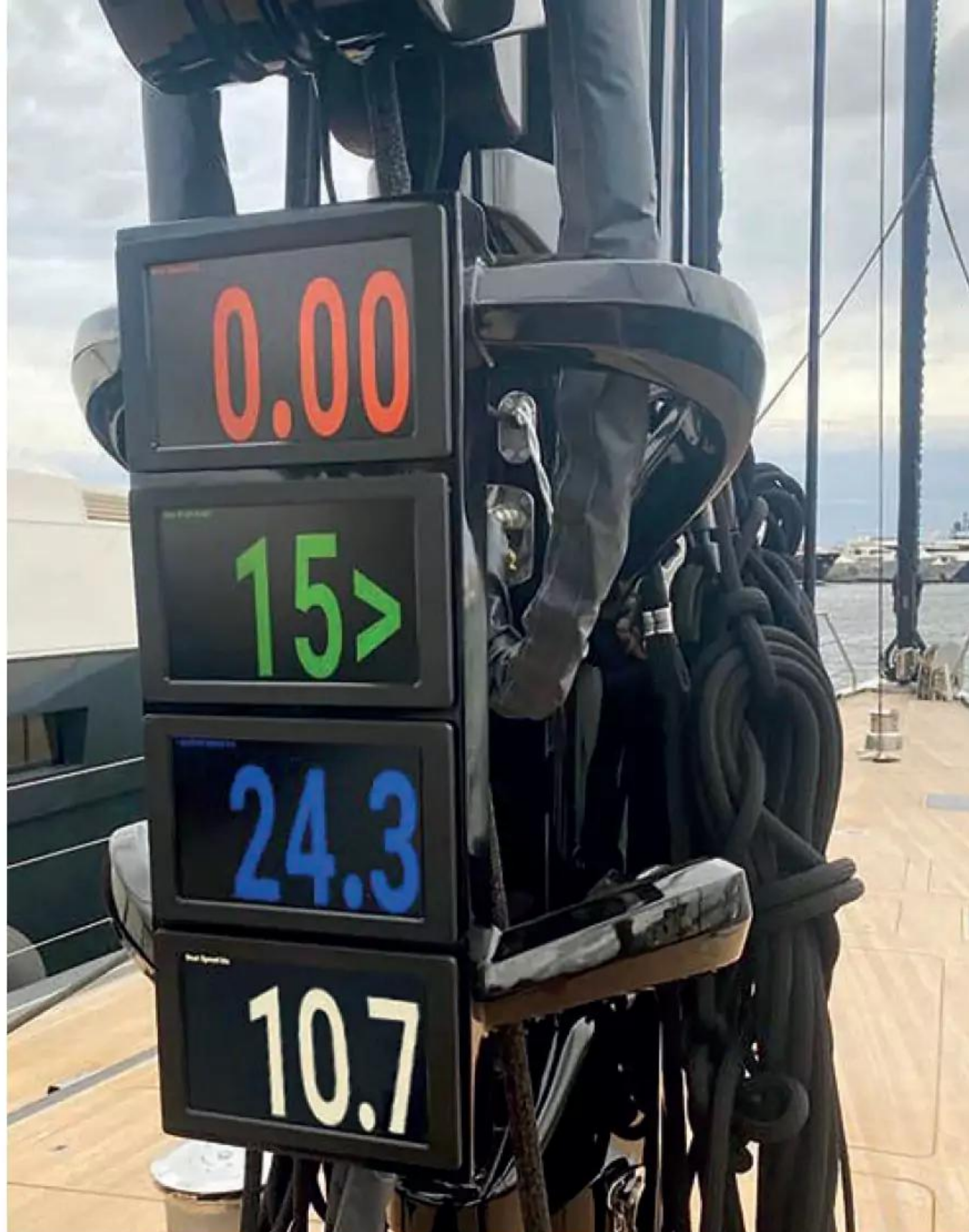
To scan the QR code, open your phone camera, point it at the code and tap the banner that appears on screen.
On older phones, you may need to download a QR code reader first.

BEST OF THE REST *Furuno*

New for this year is a widescreen version of Furuno Time-Zero Touch (TZT) displays. These are available in touch-only versions as a 16in, 22in and 24in display, or with hybrid controls in 10in and 13in sizes. It has recently updated its software and added bathymetric bottom mapping to its proprietary TZ Maps, which can be purchased directly through the display. Furuno has also developed a new AI-driven autorouting function, although this assumes you are under power. furuno.co.uk

NKE

Honed on ocean racers, NKE equipment caters for performance cruisers. Its host of high-performance sensors function on its own network, which can include processors for even more accurate read-outs. Rig tension, atmospheric pressure and complex wind readings are all possible. And now, the brand has finally launched its own chartplotter running on Navionics charts. The



display comes as a 10in (c£2,500) to 24in (c£10,000) variant and supports both radar and multibeam sonar. nke-marine-electronics.com

A&T

From Charlie Dalin's Vendée Globe-winning IMOCA to *Leopard 3*, A&T's wind instruments appear on many grand-prix boats. Its standard

ABOVE
BFD Mirasol
Mast Bracket

product is designed as a drop-in upgrade to the B&G 213 wind sensor, but it also produces signal processors, race displays and a nice line in retro-style analogue instrument displays. aandtstruments.com

Sailmon / Vakaros

Sailmon's MAX tracker allowing you to display, record and analyse performance on small boats using GPS signals has been discontinued following the takeover by Vakros. The new flagship is Vakaros' Atlas 2 (£949) and Atlas Edge (£591) unit. Sailmon's Element display is still available, priced around €3,600 for the 7in unit and €7,050 for the 10in. vakaros.com

NASA Marine

Robust, efficient and good value – NASA's instruments are designed for 'the average yachtie'. Covering speed, depth, compass, GPS, wind and battery state, they work well with no frills. There's also an AIS and NavTex receiver, plus SSB, nav lights and other bits and bobs. nasamarine.com



Case study: Switching to Orca on a Jeanneau 55

When Alastair Lord bought a 17m Jeanneau in 2020, it was already a well-travelled yacht. Its electronics dated from launch in 2008, so he decided to update the system. It was a big job, running to Quantum 2 radar, Evolution pilot, Starlink satellite comms and various sensors, as well as a 9in Axiom Pro chartplotter.

"I thought it would be interesting to look at Orca, too," says Alastair. "I saw they were trying to disrupt the market, but felt they were too new to rely on. So, I bought the Orca Core and thought it would be fun to see what it could do for me. I literally shoved it on the boat on some sticky-backed tape and plugged it into my NMEA system."

At first, he used the Axiom to plan weekend and summer passages around the Channel from his Solent base. "I started using the Orca just for fun and because I wanted a backup – a completely independent source of GPS, boat speed etc, because I'm a great believer in removing single points of failure."

He ran the Orca app on his iPhone and iPad, showing the boat data piped in via the Core. "Whilst I was still using the Raymarine for running passages, I was looking at instruments on Orca, because it's a really nice display. Then there came a time – during a night passage where we left Poole at about 6pm, heading for Gosport. As we were coming up towards the Needles, it occurred to me that I wasn't using the Raymarine at all – not at all! We'd switched over to Orca as the primary."

Part of the attraction is the user interface, he says, which feels much more like that of a high-quality tablet – detailed and quick to refresh. He dedicates his phone to controlling the Raymarine autopilot, with a tablet mounted in the cockpit. "For me it's the freedom of using the right device for the time and the place," says Alastair. "On passage, it's always there in the cockpit, but also the chart table and in my armchair. I do all my passage planning on a big iPad on the comfy sofa – doesn't matter where you are – at home, or on the boat."

He also likes the sense that Orca is a responsive digital start-up that takes heed of user comments. "Orca uses Facebook group for gathering input. You're talking to the actual people that are coding it! You stand up and say something to them and they'll call you back about it. I make all sorts of suggestions."

One such suggestion related to the way Orca displayed the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. The chart omits the suggested small craft channel, which is a common feature in busy UK harbours. Orca admit they haven't included this information, saying it reduces the "cognitive load" in stressful situations. But they are reviewing the data hierarchy this year, and have promised to weigh this feedback.

"It sounds like those areas would benefit from a more congested chart design due to safety concerns, and we'll definitely take that into consideration," says head of growth Vetle Slagsvold Øien.



GLORIOUS GREECE

With 15,000 kilometres of coastline and around 6,000 Islands to explore, the cruising area of Greece is vast, *writes Sue Pelling*. In this Greece pt 2 charter feature, we look at the popular areas of the Aegean, Sporades, and Dodecanese



Greece offers over 250 days of sunshine, some of the best cruising grounds in the world, and relatively low cost berthing fees, so it's not difficult to understand why this part of the Mediterranean remains a popular sailing holiday destination.

There is also a huge number of reputable sailing holiday companies operating in Greece, and a vast choice of areas to choose from depending on your level of ability.

Wind conditions vary considerably in Greece, which is why you need to pick your destination to suit your ability. In general terms the wind gets stronger as you head eastwards, with the Meltemi occurring in the summer months (May to early October) in areas like the corridor between the Cycladic Islands and the Dodecanese (central). In the areas of Aegean, the Sporades (central north), and the Dodecanese Islands (south-east) therefore, it pays to have a bit of previous experience or choose a holiday with skipper who can help you learn about the art of sailing in stronger winds, as well as guide you to the most desirable destinations.

Plain Sailing, which has bases in Athens, Lavrio, Paros, Volos, Skiathos and Skopelos, Kos and Rhodes, finds this part of Greece hugely popular with holidaymakers because it caters for all. Adi Tognarelli (co-founder, Plain Sailing) says "Winds in the Cyclades and Dodecanese are typically a little stronger than the Sporades and Saronic Gulf, which means Greece can cater for all comers, from pure sailing enthusiasts out for an adrenalin rush, all the way through to people who just want to bumble, and only stray as far as the next taverna down the coast! →

PHOTO: SVEN HANSCHIE/SHUTTERSTOCK



PHOTO: SAILING HOLIDAYS

“The other reason parts of this area remains popular,” adds Adi, “is the fact that down in the Dodecanese, the season can run on until the end of November which is ideal for those eager to grab a last piece of sunshine.”

Seafarer is another fan of the Aegean area due to the great sailing conditions and huge choice of sailing areas and islands to visit. In the Dodecanese its main base is Kos, home of Seafarer’s Dodecanese flotilla fleet which offers 7 and 14 night itineraries. In the Sporades, its main charter and flotilla base is Loutraki on Skopelos.

Throughout the entire area of Greece there are plenty of opportunities to embrace the rich and diverse local Greek traditions and, because most charter companies are based in prime positions, you don’t need to sail for days to find tranquil anchorages off the beaten track, or quaint harbour towns with waterside cafes and restaurants.

Chris Lorenzo (Seafarer managing director) says “The Dodecanese is my favourite sailing area in Greece, great sailing winds and a quite striking contrast between each island you visit. From iconic Symi, volcanic Nysiros, Historic Kalymnos and Leros, or complete escape in Arke to mention but a few, the area truly has something for everyone.”

And Lorenzo’s favourite anchorage? “Planitis Bay on Kyra Panagia island (Sporades) – far from the madding crowd – no mobile signal – total escape... bliss! The island is inhabited by goats and one monk.”

In the more challenging Cyclades, Seafarer operates a cabin charter programme on a fleet of skippered

Ocean Star 51 yachts with en-suite cabins and air conditioning. On the Aegean side, Seafarer has a charter and flotilla base in Korfos, serving the islands of the Saronic and Argolic Gulfs plus the Corinth Canal.

Longstanding Greek sailing holiday specialists – Sailing Holidays – is once again offering its popular Two Week Sporades Islands Flotilla from its base in the village of Orei on Evia Island. Heidi Neilson (director, Sailing Holidays), says this is an ideal holiday for the keener sailor owing to the consistent Meltemi winds, gin-clear water, and beautiful beaches. Like Seafarer’s Lorenzo, Neilson says “One of my favourite anchorages is Kyra Panagia, in the National Marine Park of Alonissos, which is home to the endangered Mediterranean Monk Seal.”

Neilson also tells us that due to popular demand, Sailing Holidays has an increased young sailors discount for those under 18. “September is fully booked but we do still have limited availability in May, June, July and August.”

PHOTO: PLAIN SAILING



PHOTO: SUNSAIL

PREVIOUS PAGE
The picturesque old harbour in Skiathos

ABOVE LEFT
One of Sailing Holidays’ favourite and recommended anchorages is Kyra Panagia

ABOVE RIGHT
Sunsail has plenty of options to choose from

BELOW
Plain Sailing ensures your itinerary includes some of the best taverna hot spots

OPPOSITE PAGE
Iconic Symi in the Dodecanese

Nautilus Yachting offers bareboat holidays from various bases in the Aegean, Sporades and Dodecanese, as well as flotilla holidays in the Sporades and Dodecanese. Leanne Kifford (Nautilus business development manager) says the Dodecanese and Aegean continue to be very popular destinations for more experienced sailors who are looking to explore a new area and take advantage of longer sails between islands. “Our clients love the Sporades for its picturesque islands and down-to-earth atmosphere.”

Finally Sunsail’s base at Zea Marina in Athens is a popular one because not only is it just minutes from the centre of Athens, it’s also only a short sail away to reach the peace and tranquillity of the Greek islands.

Within her itinerary recommendations, Caroline Barbour (Sunsail’s Marketing Manager UK/ZA/AU) says Aegina’s charming fishing village, Perdika is a good first stop before experiencing Poros’ vibrant nightlife. “It’s only a short trip to visit Hydra’s car-free streets and cultural scene, then sail to Methana’s volcanic landscapes. Epidauros offers ancient wonders before a scenic return to Athens.”



Useful contacts

sailingholidays.com
nautilusyachting.com
plainsailing.com
seafarersailing.co.uk
sunsail.co.uk
dreamyachtcharter.com
theglobesailor.com
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SOUTHERLY 420 | BLUE DOLPHIN

Blue Dolphin is one of just a few Southerly 420 cruising yachts built by Northshore. This fine example, for sale with Red Ensign Yacht Brokerage in Falmouth, offers outstanding sailing performance with easy handling by just two people from the centre cockpit. The spacious interior is fitted out to a very high standard and comes with many extras, to facilitate extended voyaging. The manufacturer's description highlights a modern well-balanced hull form, long heeled waterline and broad transom, which provide thoroughbred performance and a sea-kindly motion. The broker says the Southerly 420 certainly offers outstanding versatility, with a variable draft keel giving the freedom to sail in a variety of waters. With her flexible sail plan, secure cockpit, autopilot, generator, watermaker, wind generator and solar power, *Blue Dolphin* offers serious bluewater potential. Her superb living accommodation and a lifting keel also make her ideal for coastal cruising.

Year: 2013
LOA: 12.86m (42.19ft)
Beam: 4.03m (13.22ft)
Draft: 0.84m (2.76ft) – 2.72m (13.22ft)
Displacement: 11,800kg
Hull Construction: Glassfibre
Keel: Swing/lift
Engine: Yanmar 4JH5E diesel
Designer: Rob Humphreys
Accommodation: 4 berths in 2 cabins
Location: Plymouth, Devon
Contact: red-ensign.com



HANSE 460 | BLINK

Michael Schmidt & Partner is pleased to present this 2022 model Hanse 460 for sale in the UK ex tax. *Blink* is one of the first Hanse 460s to come up for sale on the second-hand market and the broker says it is a "seriously nice example". She boasts a huge specification including two electric winches, both bow and stern thruster, generator, air conditioning, and an extensive sail wardrobe. Down below *Blink* is configured in a three-cabin layout with owner's suite forwards and a handy utility room. She has upgraded oak interior joinery with dark noce nero flooring and grey upholstery, which sets a contemporary tone plus, with the upgraded Flagship package, she has leather covers to the internal handrails and textured bulkhead coverings.

Year: 2022
LOA: 14.61m (47.93ft)
Beam: 4.79m (15.72ft)
Draft: 2.25m (7.38ft)
Displacement: 12,678kg
Hull Construction: Glassfibre
Keel: L-shaped fin
Engine: Yanmar 4JH57 diesel
Designer: Berret-Racoupeau
Accommodation: 6 berths in 3 cabins
Location: Hamble, Hampshire
Contact: michaelsschmidt.co.uk



CONTEST 45 CS | FLY

Contest Yachts is a well respected Dutch builder with an impressive history dating back to the late 1950s. The 45CS ably demonstrates the quality and performance of the brand. The centre cockpit design with wheel steering creates a very safe and secure position for sailing and allows the generous aft master cabin to fill the stern section. As an early adopter of hull resin infusion, Contest Yachts marries technological innovation with classic craftsmanship creating a refined modernity. The 45CS is well laid out with ample room for four, but set up with in-mast furling it allows a couple to easily handle the sails if short handed cruising is preferred. All round, this is a yacht that embodies comfortable, enjoyable sailing whether it be coastal, offshore, or bluewater adventures. This is a fantastic example of these well-founded and very capable ocean-going yachts. In her second ownership since new, *Fly* has been well maintained and offers exceptional features for those looking to cruise in comfort. Laid out with two cabins, the aft master is generously proportioned with a large bed and en-suite heads, and the forward cabin is also well-sized. These are separated by the spacious saloon with a large dining area, dedicated navigation station and access to the well-equipped galley. Rigged with in-mast furling, there is a good sail wardrobe. Other inventory highlights include Yanmar engine, generator, Raymarine electronics, heating, water maker and coppercoat to the hull. This is an excellent all-around package for bluewater cruising or stately local sailing.

Year: 2007

LOA: 14m (45')

Beam: 4.10m (13'3")

Draft: 1.95m (6'4")

Displacement: 13,500kg (29750lbs)

Hull Construction: Glassfibre

Keel: Fin

Engine: Yanmar 75HP

Designer: Georg Nissen

Accommodation: 4 berths in 2 cabins

Location: Dartmouth, Devon

Contact: ancasta.com



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MUSTO SKIFF 619. Excellent boat, well set up and cared for. Used circa 6-10 days each year. Garage stored the rest of the time. May be able to help with delivery/collection. £9500 Tel 07970 106620 / (MORPETH)

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Jess Lloyd-Mostyn

Sometimes it pays to be a bit brave and use a bit of gumption when it comes to piloting into a shallow anchorage

There is nothing quite so nail-biting as navigating through shallow waters. Our boat draws about 1.8m but we always try to have more than that under the keel. However, when conditions are benign and the scenery is spectacular there are exceptions to be made. But it doesn't make it any less tense.

We first encountered tiny depths in the Caribbean. The clear, turquoise water with sandy sea floors made for great visibility. Combined with minimal tides it allowed us some of our most extreme shallow anchorages to date. We would approach a bay very slowly, creeping in as close as we dared to the shore, and then settle ourselves happily in a spot for the night, bobbing in only 2.5m. There is something oddly thrilling about being able to clearly see the dark shadow of your boat traced on the white sand below and it seemed a world away from the anchorages we'd experienced in Europe mere months before, where the tides would never allow us to be so bold.

We grew in confidence and decided to tackle the Rivière Salée in Guadeloupe, the small, narrow and shallow saltwater channel that divides the island into two butterfly-like halves. This can only be traversed shortly before dawn as two bridges, opening once a day, do so at this time to minimise the disruption to traffic. In the eerie pale light we motored slowly, picking our way along the channel with only scant detail on charts, using the buoyage to guide us. Several times we glanced at the depth sounder seeing far less below us than we would like. Plus, being a mangrove channel and pre-dawn, the visibility was poor. However, we had been assured that the bottom is very silty, soft mud and that we should still be able to get through, despite the figures flashing on our screens.

Imprecise charting is particularly prevalent in shoal depths and we've had various occurrences, in cruising grounds all over the world, where we thought there would be a navigable route through but then had to hastily backtrack or adjust. In Bora Bora we decided to explore the southern tip of the island. Using a combination of early satellite imagery and inching our way in slowly we held our breath onboard as we entered an extremely tight and shallow pass and felt the keel bump the sand bottom,



ILLUSTRATION HOLLY ASTLE

"Friends who had purchased a small island in Panama encouraged us to anchor off it"

ever so gently. We exchanged looks and I remember saying "well, we're in but I have no clue how we get out of here!" as we found a place all to ourselves, perhaps understandably, in the sandy basin that the channel had led us to. However, the payoff was an idyllic setting, a palm-fringed white sand beach, calm water for our baby to paddle in, and the water was almost luminous aqua blue. And suffice to say, we were able to leave unscathed a few days later.

When conditions allow, another great security in such slight depths is using someone up at the bow or on the first set of spreaders to help read the changes in water colour as you tiptoe through. This was our strategy in the Vanuatu island of Espiritu Santo. A clear yell coupled with arm gestures from

crew with a better viewpoint than the helmsman can be a real lifesaver when weaving through coral bommies. Again, the chart information was negligible, but the eyeball navigation worked a treat.

Friends who had purchased a small island in Panama encouraged us to anchor off it and explore. Lovely idea but the journey to their little cay involved piloting our boat through a huge area of the archipelago where charting was simply a blank blue, and we again used satellite, some gumption and a snail's pace to weave our way through many 3m depth areas in order to safely drop the hook.

On the west coast of Thailand we were making our way north when the winds switched on us, making several lovely anchorages untenable. With a fierce headwind, we sought shelter between the islands of Khao Yai and Ao Toa Ba, another with meagre depth data. But we spotted fishermen using a small stick marker, way over to our portside and realised that this, though unconvincing, marked the safe deepwater passage into the shallow anchorage. With white knuckles and a very low speed we edged our way in and were able to endure the blow in flat calm water for the next few days.

So these low depths may come at a high price but I would reason that sometimes, if approached with caution, the outcome is one of astonishing beauty, sheltered water, and sometimes simply a good story.



JESS LLOYD-MOSTYN

Jess and James left the UK in 2011 in their Crossbow 42 and have sailed halfway round the world, growing their crew en route.

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