



Cruising

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Sailing in the Swedish archipelago

Portugal's wild west coast

Why we need AIS

Boat taxes in Greece & Croatia





Great start to 2018

Judith Grimwade welcomes the many new members who joined at the London Boat Show... and invites us all to appreciate recent progress in a range of CA activities

This year began very well for the Cruising Association, with record recruitment on the Saturday of the London Boat Show of 19 new subscriptions or 38 new members. That day, the show was exceptionally busy, recalling the days of Earl's Court. We welcomed many members on to our stand, some to buy bunting or an Almanac, others just to say "Hello" and enter our competitions. That afternoon saw the launch of the first video commissioned by the CA, in support of our Lobster Pot campaign – see below. Although the show was only half the length this year, it was very successful for your Association.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the new members who have joined the CA, many of whom attended the welcome seminar at the beginning of February. We will be holding another welcome seminar for our new members in the autumn, so if you were unable to join us last month, perhaps we will see you in October.

Our latest competitions

We will continue to run the following competitions until the Southampton Boat Show in September. We are grateful to Certosa Marina in Venice, who have offered a berth (ashore or afloat) for the winter in Venice; I have spoken to more than one CA member who was calculating the cost of transporting their boat to Venice should they win this prize.

We also have a week's charter for up to six people in any of Dream Charter's 47 cruising destinations. Another very generous prize that is only open to CA members. To enter the competitions, either attend a CA event, send a photograph of your boat flying the CA burgee to office@theca.org.uk or introduce a new member to the Cruising Association. If the member joins with a direct debit, they will receive a 25%

discount on their first year's subscription and you will also get a voucher to spend at the CA shop. You can find the code for arrangement on the CA website at www.theca.org.uk/referafriend.

Looking forward to summer

By the time that you are reading this edition of *Cruising*, our spring lecture programme will be drawing to a close with the Hanson Lecture later this month; however, there are the summer rallies to look forward to. Please read the Section news for where you intend to cruise this summer, as there may well be a water-based event that you would like to attend. You do not have to belong to a section to attend their events, but if you do join a section, you will receive the newsletters with all the relevant information. These events provide excellent opportunities to make new friends and to renew friendships as well; they sometime encourage us to extend our cruising grounds. Thanks to the hard work and organisational skills of our Section Secretaries and event organisers, they are always very enjoyable occasions.

Lobster pots

In support of our Lobster Pot Campaign, we released our first official CA video at the LBS, featuring Tom Cunliffe (pictured). Depending on when you see this issue



of *Cruising*, there may still be still a few days left to sign the petition in support of the better marking of fishing gear – just go to petition.parliament.uk/petitions/200001.

The CA has already begun organising a consultation with stakeholders such as fishing organisations, harbour authorities and other relevant bodies. As Ian Wilson, who heads the Lobster Pot Group, says, "We know that it will not be easy to improve the situation, but that is no reason not to try." Given the willingness of fishing organisations to discuss the situation, in the long term, we should be able to make a difference.

Meanwhile, a big thank you to everyone who has already signed the fishing gear petition and persuaded their friends to do likewise, especially those who promoted the cause through their local clubs, section meetings and social media platforms. We have the cruising world talking!



The five-day London Boat Show was a CA success, with 38 new members on just one day

From the forums

Seasickness prevention... or cure?

In June we will be undertaking our first Biscay crossing with friends. None of us are particularly prone to seasickness but I am sure that if it gets bad enough no-one is immune I would much appreciate views on how best to anticipate and deal with this eventuality.

Keith Hedges

Scopiderm plasters that you put behind the ear are very effective. Your GP may prescribe them – they work for 72 hours. Can be removed and re-applied. Stugeron works for some. Minimise the time spent below decks until one has become fully adjusted to the motion. Get as much preparatory navigation done as possible before you leave; pre-cook or prepare meals. Avoid getting hungry or thirsty. Organise the boat, so that you do not need to sort through lockers to find items that may be needed on passage. Aim to sail a comfortable course, even if this means a greater distance, change of landfall or sailing more slowly.

Judith Grimwade

The BBC tested various "cures" some time ago and the old Chinese remedy of ginger seemed to work. Fortunately I don't suffer, but my wife has tried a slice of ginger root in her cheek and reports that it helps.

David Inwood

Having suffered for years whenever the going got rough, I discovered Boarding Ring glasses (*pictured below*) in 2012. Apparently used by the French Navy, they can fit over ordinary glasses and provide an effective horizon in two planes. Sea sickness is caused by conflicting signals from the inner ear and the stomach; providing a clear visual horizon seems to help the brain resolve the conflict. The glasses work to train individuals so you only need a single pair on board. They have helped me to dramatically reduce my symptoms.



Alan Dowie

One of my crew was seasick for about 24 hours. We had enormous Atlantic rollers in Biscay, with westerly F5-6. Then down the Portuguese coast it became NW 6-7. He recovered quite quickly but about 10 days later started

feeling very faint so in Gibraltar we went into a chemist to check his BP. This was very low. It transpired he had been taking medication for a mild high blood pressure condition. Normally the body recovers well from low blood pressure caused by dehydration, but if the person affected is taking these tablets (in this case Losartan 40mg) they should stop them for a few days. Our crew member was fine after a couple of days and resumed his medication 2-3 weeks later. Fortunately one of my crew was a doctor.

Andrew Geddes

We intended to do an Atlantic passage last year and I bought a pair of Boarding Ring glasses. For me they worked. They made me look like a complete idiot – but who cares if you're not seasick. I felt the beginning stages of nausea a few times during the first couple of days. When I put them on, within a few minutes it went away. Obviously that's not a scientific trial – it could easily have been due to the placebo effect. It could even be that the laughing and falling about of the other crew distracted me :-)

Dave Kitson

Having been involved a lot in youth sail training, Stugeron seems to be very effective. However rather than just taking it a couple of hours before setting off, it is better to start it 12 hours before to get it into the system. The second dose can be taken before setting off. I have only very, very rarely seen people needing it for more than the first couple of days.

Tony Boas

I can recommend the book *Heave Ho!* by Charles Maze, 100+ pages of knowledgeable and often humorous analysis of *mal de mer* through the ages including a critical analysis of all known cures. My wife uses Stugeron but has also found the "reliefband" (a wristwatch that delivers small shocks to the same nerve that the pressure bands are supposed to affect) a miracle cure. Unusually, it can help when she is already feeling sick. However it has failed her on at least one occasion, and it has never worked for me.

Richard Balarkas

I think it was Spike Milligan who suggested the best seasickness cure: sit under a tree.

Mac McDiarmid

Join the discussion at www.theca.org.uk/forum

REASONS TO BE A CA MEMBER

- Comprehensive, user-friendly website www.theca.org.uk with thousands of pages of information, advice and expertise, members' forums, boats and gear for sale and wanted, and much more
- World-class library of books, charts, pilots and logs in print and electronic form
- Discounts on key products and services
- Quarterly magazine
- Wide range of topical and authoritative publications
- RATS: the Regulations and Technical Services group fights to protect the interests of cruising sailors
- Convivial bar and excellent food at CA House
- Shared expertise: whatever your cruising plans, members will be able to help with experience and advice
- Area Sections covering key cruising grounds at home and abroad
- Honorary Local Representatives (HLRs) to help and advise visiting yachtsmen all over the world
- A crewing service matching skippers and crew
- Overnight accommodation available at very competitive rates at CA House only ten minutes from the City of London
- *The Cruising Almanac* published annually by Imray
- Winter season social, training and lecture programme

Yachts in Simi. Photo: Jacques Chalifour



Greek cruising tax confirmed for 2018

The law on the new Greek Cruising Tax has been officially published and the ministries of finance and shipping are finalising their implementation plans, so that it looks as though this tax will happen and affect anyone who keeps their boat in Greece in 2018.

Key points on the tax, subject to confirmation.

- The DEKPA is the recording document of your compliance with the new tax; you must be able to produce it and the tax receipt attached.
- The tax is paid monthly and run from the payment date. You can pay for several consecutive months' tax at one time and payment must be made in a bank, in cash.
- Annual payments are 10% cheaper but run only January to

December and cannot start in other months.

- Out of use waivers will apply to boats out of the water *and*, we understand, to those in the water in a marina but not leaving port.

The CA is working hard to confirm these details and to improve the conditions, such as increasing the annual discount to 30% and applying it from the date of payment. For updates, go to the Greek Regulations page on the CA website (Cruising Info > Mediterranean > Greece > Greek Regulations).

Croatian boat tax may be delayed after protests



The new tax would be potentially prohibitive, with craft such as these between 15m and 20m paying Kn9,600 (more than £1143) per year on top of mooring fees and the Croatian cruising permit.

The CA's protest over a proposed 400% increase in Croatian Sojourn Tax on boat owners has led to a proposed delay in implementation and a planned review of the best solutions.

However, as *Cruising* went to press in February, marinas in Croatia only seemed aware of the new rates and not of any delay. The best advice to members is not to be too hasty in offering to pay the tax, in the hope that the situation will become clearer.

Gari Cappelli, the Croatian Minister of Tourism, has written to the CA, via the Croatian embassy in the UK, saying: "The Croatian Ministry of Tourism is establishing [a] special working group in order to find out the best possible solution for the sojourn tax payment and make it easier for yachtsmen to pay it."

He confirmed that implementation of the new Act is planned for January 1, 2019, and added: "Croatian professionals and entrepreneurs from the nautical sector are involved in the process of adopting a new Sojourn Tax Law. We appreciate the Cruising Association's suggestions, which will be considered... during adoption of the new Sojourn Tax."

- For an update on international protests over the Sojourn Tax see *RATS*, page 27.

Volunteer with IT knowledge needed for finance committee

Do you have knowledge of the IT industry? If so, our Finance committee needs you!

We're looking to fill a voluntary post within our finance team and would like to speak to any members who have an IT background. Meetings take place eight times a year at CA House. If you're interested, contact Lucy Gray on generalmanager@theca.org.uk.

Welcome to Peta

The CA has announced the appointment of Peta Stuart-Hunt as its new Press & PR Manager. Peta has worked for more than 30 years in the leisure marine arena, and for sailing charities including Sail Aid UK (see page 20).

Peta's role for the CA includes day-to-day responsibility for all media enquiries, news and features and managing the CA's social media campaign. You can contact her at publicity@theca.org.uk.



Jeff & Janine Kempton



Jeff

Jeff was born in Loughton, Essex and started sailing while at school, in a 12ft lugsail dinghy on the Blackwater.

He went to sea as a Merchant Navy cadet, eventually becoming a captain, then spent several years as marine superintendent in Paris and Rotterdam. He spent his Navy leave time sailing dinghies and Dragons on the Blackwater/Medway.



Janine

Janine was born in Paris. After leaving school, she went to England and stayed with a family for seven months (the husband was a retired Merchant Navy captain, which must have been a sign of fate) to really learn the language. Then she returned to France to work for an airline and as bi-lingual secretary.

Janine used to feel sick just looking at a boat! She met Jeff when he rented her small flat. A year later Jeff told his family that he was getting married to his French landlady, creating a panic! But all finished well.

Our HLRs for La Ràpita in Mallorca are reluctantly selling their boat, but remain as keen to help members as they have been for the past 32 years



Together, from 1966 onwards

Our first boat was a 470-type dinghy, which we sailed around Rotterdam and in Alicante. In the early 1970s we fitted out and test sailed one of the first Turkish gulets built actually to sail. (We had to train the crew!) We chartered twice in the Windward Islands and three times in south Cornwall and the Scillies.

In 1983 we bought our first cruising boat, a 39ft Westerly Sealord. We put her in a Cornish charter fleet and used her ourselves when she was free, sailing to Cornwall/Devon and the Channel Islands. We joined the CA at this time.

In 1986 we set off to sail to Turkey, planning to set up a charter business, but for various reasons stopped and stayed in Mallorca, where we actually set the business up. Being settled in Mallorca, we were asked to be HLRs for La Rapita.

We closed the business in 1993 and changed to a 41ft Westerly Oceanlord, *Papajou II*, which we bought new from Westerly in the UK and took through the French canals to Mallorca. We cruised her extensively throughout the Mediterranean, including North Africa, every year until recently, covering 47,000 miles in all. Unfortunately she is now for sale due to our advancing age.

Papajou II is sail number 78 of the well built Oceanlords. The Kemptons have cared for her lovingly and part with her reluctantly. She is for sale at €65,000, lying Mallorca. To find out more, contact jeff.kempton@btinternet.com

We were founder members of the CA Mediterranean Section in 1996 and were recruited by Michael Manton to help update the *10 Language Dictionary*.

One notable HLR event was a call from a boat which had gone on to the beach in the north of Mallorca. She had been rolled while anchored, broke her mast on the bottom and been swamped in the process. Probably it was caused by a local tsunami effect. Anyway we went there right away and helped them sort things out, including a new mast. We have been firm friends ever since.

A remarkable HLR coincidence merits mention. In 1957 Jeff was second officer on a ship which towed a broken-down sister vessel off the coast of California. Not having VHF, the setting up of the tow had to be organized by signal lamp, with Jeff manning his ship's Aldis





lamp. Many years later, at a CA President's lunch in 2006, Jeff went to chat with the HLR from his own home country, the River Blackwater, to discover with great surprise that Michael Andrews had been the officer behind the Aldis on the other ship. Needless to say that the chat went on for a very long time!

We are based at La Ràpita, the best and safest harbour on the south-east coast of Mallorca, and it is equipped to the highest of marina standards. The adjacent Es Trenc beach is the best on Mallorca and a very nice anchorage in settled weather. Behind the dunes there are woods, then herds of cows!

We must say that as HLRs we have enjoyed meeting and assisting people from all walks of life and all nationalities, and we are grateful for having had the opportunity to do so.



New HLRs in Iceland, Italy & Kiel Canal

Two of our new HLR appointments, both following proposals from CA members, have been made for locations about as far apart worldwide as could be – one in Indonesia, the other in Iceland. At least both countries start with the same initial!

We currently have around 220 HLRs in more than 60 countries or groups of islands worldwide, ready to help CA members when they visit, or plan to visit their port, island, or stretch of coast. All our HLRs know their local area well and are always very pleased to meet, or give guidance and support in whatever way could help.

All contact details for HLRs have been checked with them, and updated as necessary for the 2018 Yearbook. Members wishing to contact an HLR are advised to check the HLR listings on the CA website under Member Services as these are kept updated as and when changes are received.

Tony Francis, our HLR for Brunsbüttel, was recommended by Janet Safarovic,



Claude Dischly, our new HLR for Venice

HLR for Kiel. Being located close to the entrance to the Kiel Canal, Tony is well positioned for contacts from members making their way to Baltic waters. Tony is looking forward to giving whatever help and information he can, particularly to those cruising to the Baltic for the first time.

Personal recommendations for new HLRs from members are always followed up and we look forward to receiving more of them during 2018.

HLR updates

New appointments:

Germany, Brunsbüttel – Anthony (Tony) Francis

Iceland – Ólafur Valsson

Indonesia, Raja Ampat, Papua and West Papua – Warwick Alliston

Italy, Venice – Claude Dischly

Retirements:

Australia, Sydney – Kimbyl Mann, standing down

Netherlands, Dordrecht – Louise Busby, relocation

Sweden, Göteborg – Per Hallgren, lost contact.



A good news story from the MedNet forum

Very late one evening Michael Solano posted on [MedNet](#), one of the CA's discussion forums, that he urgently needed a doctor in Skiathos town in the Greek Sporades, following a severe back problem.

Within a few hours members posted contact details for the medical centre and a private clinic, and a suggestion of treatment in Volos on the mainland.

Michael says: "In fact I had three almost immediate replies and so fast that using their advice I was in a clinic being treated within hours. It was a little miracle when I was stranded on a small and remote island in northern Greece not even able to walk. Without the support of the Med Forum I would have been very severely stuck."

It was actually Michael's wife who suggested they use the forum to seek help. As soon as the replies started coming in it took a huge burden from her.

Michael added: "One member even offered to bring his boat to come and collect me and take me (and my boat) to a safe haven... (and he most certainly would have done if I'd let him). At the time I was quite overwhelmed by the kindness of so many 'unknown' people, but all members of this lovely Cruising Association of fellow sailors."

The couple were eventually able to leave the boat safely, and a week later after the initial treatment flew home where Michael made a good recovery and will be sailing again this season.

"I would most certainly commend anybody to join the CA (and often do when I am on board)," said Michael. "Thank you so much for allowing me to express even in just a small way my gratitude to all concerned."



Isobel Porter
HLRs Group

Below, the lighthouse at Cabo de São Vicente and right, the western coast of the Algarve. Bottom, Aqua Blue after her jetwash in Portimão



The wild west coast of Portugal

David Bains explored the Portuguese coast south of Lisbon in his trimaran *Aqua Blue*, encountering katabatic winds and even rain, plus swifts, tuna and some attractive anchorages

I returned to *Aqua Blue*, which had wintered again in El Rompido, southwest Spain, by late May 2017.

And after a rapid fit-out, I single-handed her to Portimão over three days. The last day from Culatra to Portimão was 11 hours into a freshening headwind, touching F6 apparent by late afternoon. I was minimising tacks by heading offshore, tacking back in, when short 2m seas started to crest over the bows. But with a reef in the main, and some rolls in the genoa, the old bus crashed her way west, finally shooting past Portimão breakwater at 8pm on June 2, having seen not a single other yacht!

After a couple of days anchored off Ferragudo, *Aqua Blue* was hauled by the giant travel hoist and propped ashore, high enough to fully lower the centreboard. I spent a week (during an early heatwave), wearing old clothes

and protective gear, while carrying out epoxy repairs to the main hull skeg, plus centreboard and trim board, with the encouragement of Paul Wells, who is rebuilding a 60ft trimaran here. A thorough cleaning and greasing of the excellent Kiwi prop ensured three-point turns would still be possible. Finally, a good coat of antifouling completed the work, for this year anyway.

We were under way by 7am – Arrifana's 200ft cliffs don't exactly encourage hanging around

On Monday June 12 I walked up to Parchal station to meet Stella arriving by train from Faro airport. We dragged her case back to the yard admiring the profusion of large stork nests, most with one or two young, already as big as their attentive parents. I like Portimão, a working town with good restaurants, and a riverfront to stroll by and sit at in the evenings.

Relaunched 48 hours later, *Aqua Blue* was refuelled and watered at the marina, before anchoring off Praia Grande in the outer harbour for some R&R, although I can never stop pottering on board. It's a great beach with clean water and a couple of restaurants, although we alternate with Ferragudo for easier access to the shops.

It was now time to select a window for "going round the corner". I was

determined to tackle the first part of the west coast of Portugal which means waiting for a pause in the *Nortada*, the relentless summer north wind created by the Azores high pushing up against the thermal low over Spain. After a couple of days we moved the few miles further west to enjoy the great anchorage of Alvor. Quite windy but with less movement than Portimão, and still good shopping and eating out. The easterly Levanters seem more frequent than previous years to me, although I'm no climate historian.

When the wind clocked round we ran down to Sagres, but found the easterly seaway making the bay uncomfortable, if not untenable for overnighing. After returning for another night in Alvor we made a much earlier start and were rounding Cape St Vincent by mid-morning on Sunday June 18, with a favourable fresh wind, and were able to broad reach up the west coast for few hours till the wind died. I'd already identified Arrifana bay as a possible overnight stop and we motored in behind the headland at tea time. There was only a very slight Atlantic swell and we had a relatively quiet night in this rather open anchorage, despite some katabatic blasts finding their way over the peninsula. Under way again by 7am (the 200ft cliffs don't exactly encourage you to hang around!), we had to motor up the coast all day. We paused outside Milfontes, knowing it was low tide and an unmarked very shallow entrance, but keen to observe for a future visit. In fact I





had crossed the bar for one night exactly 30 years ago in *Freedom of Norwich*, another Kelsall trimaran.

By the evening we pulled into Sines and anchored initially on the east side of the inner harbour, just outside the marina. But the close presence of two other yachts, plus an annoying swell, made me move west to anchor outside the fishing boat moorings and just below the free lift which ascends the yellow concrete cliffs, towards Vasco da Gama's stern statue. There's a long staircase as well, if you fancy the exercise after dragging your dinghy up the beach!

We spent several days here. I think Sines old town is charming, seemingly only reluctantly tolerating a few bijou hotels and tourists. A few moderately priced restaurants and bars help while away the time. And there's a very healthy swift population occupying the drainage holes in the yellow cliffs. They continually screech and do low flybys, as one attempts to capture them on camera!

On the grey morning of the longest day we motored round the Sines sunken breakwater buoy and headed north, later managing to sail in "mizzle" up to the Setúbal entrance channel, although we just continued, to anchor outside the small craft moorings at Portinho de Arrábida for a catch up siesta. By 6pm the wind was howling off the mountains and we stayed on board to start watching a Coen Brothers box set, particularly enjoying *Burn After Reading*, before a rather disturbed night. Good ground tackle is needed here!

During a quite chilly pre-brekkie swim

I managed to unwrap a stray mooring rope from the prop. Then ashore to visit Fort Arrabida which surprisingly contains a small maritime museum. There are also rooms to let at one of the restaurants in this most pleasant anchorage.

We rode the tide up to Setúbal and anchored, as advised by the pilot, in the filthy water off the Yacht Club. Shortly a RIB skipper informed us we risked a hefty fine if we remained within 300m of the wall. We moved southeast to Castello San Phillipe, but it seems a rough area. We crossed to Troia, and the marina there informed us over the VHF they had no room for multihulls! So back north to anchor off Albarquel beach west of Setúbal. And this is a pleasant spot with no overnight katabatic blasts, although the beach bars close by 7pm. Still, we caught up on sleep!

In the morning we beached the dinghy and walked and hitched into Setúbal, which is really worth it for the huge *mercado* and especially the 15th century Igreja Jesus, with its spiral columns in local stone. I also walked down to the Club Nautico who confirmed that anchoring off is not now permitted, and indeed they recommended we continue to use the Albarquel beach. A taxi from outside the *mercado* sped us back to the Praia for a coldie. Back on board by 12.30 we plugged the tide down channel and re-anchored at Arrábida for a good fish meal in A Faro restaurant, before another windy night demonstrated the holding power of the Rocna. In fact with F7 forecast in the morning we spent another day at Arrábida, maintaining *Aqua Blue*.

Above, Vasco da Gama overlooking Sines, including swifts and below, Sines itself. Bottom, the lovely Igreja Jesus in Setúbal



We even changed the Yanmar water pump impeller, and finally connected the waterproof cockpit speakers to my new toy, an eBay 24-volt Brennan, basically a giant iPod! Stella, a Radio 3 aficionado, will tolerate some of the blues and fusion I prefer.

More violent blasts overnight, but I did sleep from 2am, you can get used to anything. Unbelievably on June 25, in southern Portugal, we awoke to rain! I found our oilies after breakfast



Left, Stella and the anchorage at Arrábida, in the approach to Setubal. Right, running under multipurpose genoa. Below, the mercado in Setubal



raised the Rocna between williwaws. We were motoring south in zero wind by late morning with two huge bumblebees in the cockpit, no doubt blown off the Sierra overnight. We eventually sailed the last few miles back to Sines and released the bees. It was very quiet in town on a Sunday evening.

We appreciated the quiet night at anchor, but apparently blasts off the cliffs are not unknown in Sines either. In the morning we moved *Aqua Blue* on to the *cais recepção* to fill with diesel and water, then transferred her on to the outside visitor quay, helped by a British yottie who's been here for 12 years. After signing up to good wifi Stella easily booked her return flight, and the marina office printed her boarding pass. I appreciated the very soft water, in the brilliant showers. The air temperature was only 21°C (70°F)!

The morning of June 27 brought the return of the Nortada. So a late morning investigation of the unmarked Milfontes entrance bar was abandoned for this year. Instead we left at 9am for Cape St Vincent. And a long day's run in increasing wind ensued, with several long displays by dolphins under the bows. I'm convinced they like multihulls! We rounded the Cape after exactly 10 hours as the sun set, great views brought the cameras out! We had the hook down in a calm Sagres bay, inside an alloy cat, by 8pm. M&S tinned curries are so good!

A very quiet night, although some slight swell does refract round Ponta de Sagres. We beached the dinghy and walked round Henry's Fortaleza on the headland. Again, it's exactly 30 years since the last time, although I had previously driven here in a TR2 in 1970! We then ran east to Cape Piedade in a rising nor'westerly, and rounded it just inside

the fish farm, accompanied by a couple of large Bottlenose dolphins. Later, we re-anchored in Alvor in the slight shelter of the villa with blue pontoons, for a good meal ashore. The place is a bit of a multihull graveyard, but of course to me they're interesting.

Alvor is a bit of a multihull graveyard, but of course to me they're interesting

After three windy nights in Alvor we transferred *Aqua Blue* east back to Portimão on July 1, which was surprisingly cool in the early morning, only 17°C (63°F) at 7am. As usual we alternated between Praia Grande for loafing and swimming, and Ferragudo for shopping and eating out. Then into the marina to ease Stella's journey home, which she managed in eight hours on the 5th. I booked my EZY flight too via the marina wifi. I also dinghied up to Rosa Cabral & Soares, a multihull-friendly boatyard in Portimão, where we would like to have spent the winter, but Paulo was still "doing his places" and couldn't tell me if there would be room for us.

So on Saturday July 8, I hauled the Rocna, and singlehanded back to Faro, anchoring at Culatra by 3.45pm. Ashore later for a good Corvino, I got a fish bone stuck in my throat which bothered me for 36 hours or so. Henry Honda was behaving much better after the simple expedient of applying some Contralube to the plug connection. I use it on every electrical terminal now, especially the windlass connections in the fo'c'sle.

There was only 2.6ft under *Aqua Blue's* hull on Sunday morning, I do exploit the shallow draft! By 11am I was sailing east

along the southern side of the huge fish farm when I noticed splashes from what I initially assumed were dolphins. But shortly afterwards, sickle fins made me realise I was looking at very large tuna.

Later I was slowly overhauled by a large green Spanish yacht under spinnaker. They came very close for pictures and interrogated me, "Are you alone?" I ran into Ayamonte with a fresh sea breeze on the last of the flood tide, and the heavy old bus twice touched 9.9kt. There were seven yachts anchored outside the marina and I joined them, not going ashore, it's not obvious where to leave a dinghy here. We bounced around with current against wind till 3am.

Finally I ran back to El Rompido's shallow winding entrance under multipurpose genoa, to reclaim *Aqua Blue's* very comfortable and convenient winter berth on the inside "cat quay". Francisco and the *marineros* are very welcoming.



David, a retired dentist, started building his 39ft Kelsall-designed trimaran *Aqua Blue* in 1972 and finished her in 1976. In 1989 he sailed her south to the Med. She gradually worked her way east to the Ionian and Adriatic, and now west back to the Atlantic over the past few years.

Pottering among the Swedish islands

Sandi Burch & Merv Hilton look back on one trip among four years of gently exploring numerous islands in their Twister, *Benita*

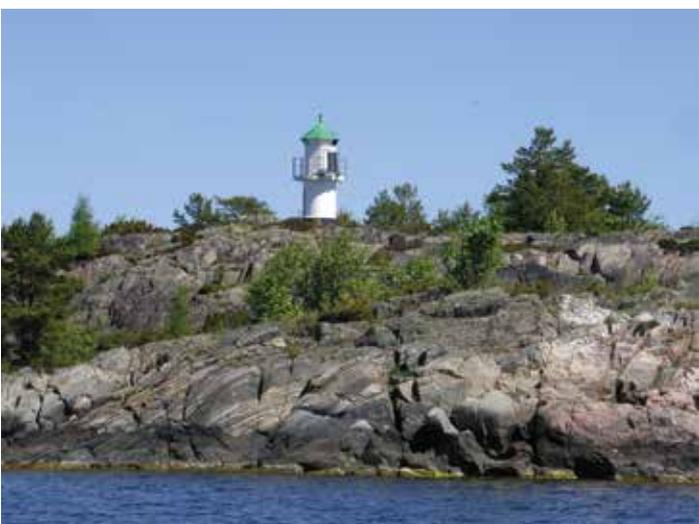
For four years (2013-2017) we kept our boat, Benita, on the east coast of Sweden. There are thousands of islands and skerries scattered along the coast, forming a wonderful cruising ground, albeit one with some very "interesting" navigation. The Stockholm archipelago is the best known and most popular area, but the islands extend more-or-less continuously along more than 200 miles of coast, loosely grouped into several local archipelagos. We prefer pottering to passage-making and this area is ideal for short passages in beautiful surroundings, with numerous well-sheltered anchorages available; we can certainly recommend it. The great majority of boats there are Swedish but quite a few foreigners have also discovered its delights, including a number of CA Baltic Section members.

Benita spent her winters at a small boatyard in the village of Figeholm, near the southern end of the main east coast archipelago area (latitude 57°22', similar to Aberdeen). This article describes parts of our cruise in 2014 from there, northward to the Stockholm archipelago. Many foreign sailors go quickly through or past this southern area of islands en route to Stockholm, but by doing so they miss some lovely and uncrowded places. During our time in Sweden we have enjoyed exploring this part of the coast in some detail.

In late May we set off from Figeholm. On most of the east coast, sailors can choose to take the sea route, outside all of the islands and most of the rocks, or the inner marked route through the islands. An advantage of the latter is flat water, without sea swell, since it is stopped by the outer islets. On this

occasion we took the inner buoyed channel, winding through the islets, rather tortuous in places, and popping out into a stretch of open sea near the Simpevarp nuclear power station! In light wind we motored most of this short trip, about 10 miles, to an anchorage we knew and liked from previous visits. Continuing the next day we covered a further 23 miles, with enough breeze for some pleasant gentle sailing. It gave us a feeling of satisfaction to navigate the buoyed channels under sail, though we generally only did so on a reach or run, unlike some intrepid Swedes who beat along them. This brought us close to the town of Västervik and we anchored in an enclosed bay a mile or two to the south. Some shopping was required here, and that meant a bike ride. We carry two folding bikes, which is a lot of bulk and weight on a Twister, but we find it's worthwhile for the mobility they give us. In this case it entailed squeezing the two folded bikes and the two of us into the dinghy to reach the shore and the adjacent road. We could have paid to moor at a marina, but where's the fun in that?





Left, at Åsnevik, moored Swedish-style and cooking on the camp-fire. Inset, a lovely day's sailing, above, a typical lighthouse, and below, one of many beautiful sunsets...

When the wind became more co-operative we made our way further north, and stopped in the Saint Anna archipelago, anchoring among the Missjö island group. This required some intricate navigation without buoyage, and the scale of the standard charts (paper and electronic) doesn't really give enough detail for anyone unfamiliar with the area. We had invested in a few small-area Swedish paper charts at 1:10000-scale and were glad to make use of one here, though the helm (Merv) had to proceed as slowly as possible for the navigator (Sandi) to keep up, plotting positions manually on the chart from the GPS. We successfully threaded our way into a beautiful little spot, taking the long way round to get there, as the shorter route included a very narrow gap marked minimum 2m depth. We checked this out in the dinghy, during a day spent exploring on and off the islands, and decided we could squeeze through it with care, which we did on the way out on the next day. Making use of the afternoon sea breeze (easterly) we enjoyed a lovely sail with the archipelago looking gorgeous in the sunshine.

The next few days included a visit to the town of Nyköping to replenish provisions, water etc and have proper showers(!) and to Stendorren nature reserve at the beautiful Aspöfladen, a shallow enclosed lagoon close to the fairway. We weren't sure whether to stop here, but as we sailed past the entrance we saw that the mooring buoy was vacant, so we did a "handbrake turn" in limited manoeuvring space, a quick dump of the sails and nipped in to pick it up. The Swedish Cruising Club has these mooring buoys in various places, and each year gives the Cruising Association Baltic Section a few permits for using them;



By now the weather forecast was promising NE5-6 wind for a few days, and we don't like to beat or motor against that, so having stocked up on provisions we sought a nice sheltered spot to sit it out. The spot we chose was at Åsnevik (58°01'N, 16°46'E) and a very pleasant place it was to be stuck for a while. It is tucked away from the open sea, like the two previous anchorages, and well sheltered from the north and east by forest to the water's edge. We usually swing to the bow anchor, but here we decided to make our first attempt at Swedish-style mooring, i.e. pick a suitable spot on the shoreline (usually a rounded rock) with adequate depth next to it, nose up to it, chucking a kedge anchor out astern, then hop ashore and tie bow lines to handy trees or rocks. In some places, where there are few trees, mooring rings are provided, otherwise it is necessary to hammer mooring wedges into cracks in the rocks.

Here, as at many popular mooring places, the archipelago (*skärgård*) authorities have provided basic facilities consisting of rubbish bins, dry toilets and in this case a camp-fire site plus firewood supply. A recce in the dinghy revealed a good mooring place close to these and we successfully moored there, feeling quite pleased with ourselves. What we call an anchorage is known in Swedish as a *naturhamn* (natural harbour); this name reflects both the Swedish preference for mooring to the shore and the good shelter and/or facilities to be found in many of them. It was still low season, so we had this lovely spot to ourselves for the next four days; we enjoyed camp-fire barbecues, walks on waymarked routes through the forest, and relaxing with our books, as well as doing little maintenance tasks on the boat.



Above, squeezing through the tiny Dragets canal was worth it to get to the secluded lagoon, left

we were lucky enough to have one of the permits that year. We were very glad we visited this place; it has a visitor centre and lovely walks in meadows, woods and on islands connected by little pedestrian suspension bridges; the weather was good and we thoroughly enjoyed strolling around, finishing the day with another barbecue on one of the provided camp-fire-places.

During this period we were contemplating our route onward to the Stockholm Archipelago, particularly the possible option of a section heading inland, reputed to be very pretty. We obtained useful information about this route from other CA members via Baltic Net. It passes through a lifting bridge at Tottnäs and a couple of narrow shallow passages including a man-made channel called the Dragets canal. Width is not often a problem for Twisters, at 2.5m beam, but the Dragets canal is only wide enough for one boat at a time even if it is a Twister, and just deep enough for *Benita* (she draws 1.6m), so we had to watch the water level reports carefully. There is no tide in this part of the Baltic Sea, but the water level does vary a bit, depending mostly on weather conditions, and the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrographic Institute provides reports and forecasts of sea level along with weather forecasts. In the end we took this route, squeezed through with a minimum of just 0.2m below the keel, and passed through some lovely scenery en route. We also spent the night in a wonderful, secluded little lagoon, with total all-round shelter and not a soul in sight.

By now it was well into June and at these latitudes daylight is nearly continuous. Midsummer is a major public holiday in Sweden, and many sailing clubs celebrate it with a weekend of activities on their club island. (Most sailing clubs, and some families, own a small island – there is no shortage of them!) We had a date to join in one such gathering, on the invitation of a Swedish sailing couple we met the previous year, and were eagerly anticipating this new cultural experience. So we continued north-east to Ornö, and on the evening of Thursday June 19 we duly arrived at the small wooded island where the boat club has two jetties (packed with boats for this occasion) and various simple facilities including a marquee, and the obligatory sauna. The celebrations during Friday and Saturday included dressing the midsummer pole and, for the children,

About the boat & crew

Merv and Sandi, with *Benita*, have been CA members since 2004, in first the Mediterranean section and then Baltic section.



Benita is an all wood Twister 28 and was home-built by Wilfred McDonald of South Shields in his garden; construction began in 1963 and took 20 years. Mr McDonald was an amateur boat builder, but with impressive knowledge and skills. He made his own drawings, basing them on the Twister design and tweaking it slightly, possibly also taking some inspiration from the Honeybee – so one could say she is a Twister with a twist! This, with the hull material of narrow teak strips, makes *Benita* a truly unique boat. Having completed his long and meticulous labour of love, Mr McDonald named the boat *Suda II*, launched her in May 1983 and sailed locally for several years. After his death we bought the boat from his son in October 2000 and renamed her *Benita*. Despite her tweaks she is so like a Twister that we have always considered her to be one, and were welcomed into the Twister Class Association. ("If it looks like a Twister and it sails like a Twister...")

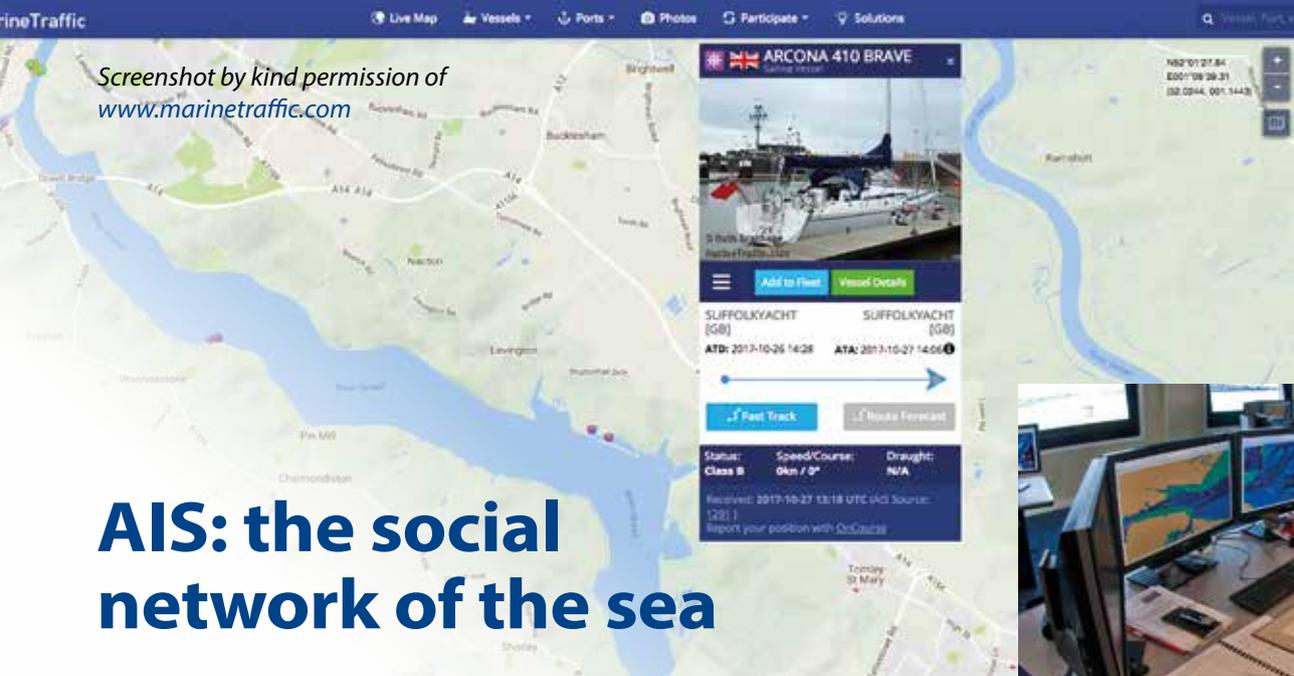
We have enjoyed 17 years and many miles of cruising, as well as lavishing upon her countless hours of TLC to keep her shipshape and looking beautiful. Now we are ready to move on to land-based travel and *Benita* is for sale, looking for a new crew to continue her adventures. See details in the CA classified ads at www.theca.org.uk/node/26712 or phone 07836 56185.



dancing around it; traditional meals all together of *sill* (herring, pickled in various sauces), or meatballs in sauce, with potatoes and salad, accompanied by the singing of drinking songs; a walking quiz, with questions nailed to trees around the island (and an English translation kindly provided specially for us); a game of Varpa, which involves each person throwing a stone as close as possible to a stick in the ground – the closest stone wins each round and it's keenly contested with precise measurements made when necessary. The atmosphere of the weekend was of families and friends enjoying the time together (not at all a drunken party, though some alcohol was consumed, of course), and it was a pleasure being welcomed to observe or participate in all the activities. This was one of many times we enjoyed Swedish friendliness and hospitality.

On the Sunday morning we bade farewell to our new friends and continued toward Stockholm. After spending a few days visiting the city we explored some of the Stockholm Archipelago at our usual leisurely pace, before returning south to Figeholm – but that's another story.





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AIS: the social network of the sea

Many skippers fear that if they broadcast AIS, Big Brother will be watching them. **Cathy Brown** finds that on the contrary, it's a great way to make contact with marine professionals... and friends

When AIS receivers first appeared on the scene, not that long ago, they generated only enthusiasm. They were affordable, did not represent half as much power drain as radar, and gave a much more immediate way of assessing collision risks and so on.

However, AIS transponders for yachts arouse much more mixed feelings. Many highly experienced cruisers have an "over my dead body" attitude to this "final frontier" of communications technology, and I have some sympathy with their position. It's easy to see the spectre of Big Brother in allowing everybody, including officialdom, to follow your every move.

A few years ago, World Sailing, the global governing body, decreed that AIS transponders would be compulsory for long offshore races, and since we wanted to race, we were forced to comply – albeit reluctantly.

But it did not take us long to become enthusiastic converts. It was a game changer, in racing terms, but not in the negative sense we had feared. And we soon found that it had all sorts of benefits when cruising, too. One was the ability of officialdom, whether harbourmasters, wind farm guard boats, or London VTS, to call you up by name.

Every time we have been called it has been not to interfere or criticise, as those who oppose AIS transponders fear, but to be constructively helpful. We were heading up the Thames, where you are

required to cling to the starboard side of the channel, and ahead we could see a ship leaving the quay.

"Now what do we do?" asked the skipper, wondering how to combine the obligation to keep right with the obligation to stay out of the way. Right on cue, London VTS called us and asked us to switch to the other side of the river – phew! The fact that they could call us by name took away all the uncertainty that comes from those "vessel in position so and so" hails, which cost precious time while you work out the answer the vital question "Do they mean us?" The hail from London VTS made our position and intentions clear to the ship, as well.

We've been called up by fishing boats, too, with polite requests about which way to alter course to avoid their nets, again banishing the uncertainty that can come with encounters with these often unpredictable vessels.

"But I don't want everybody seeing what I'm up to," transponder sceptics will argue. Our response is that we have nothing to hide. We try not to do anything that might get us into trouble – but we wouldn't go the wrong way up a shipping lane without AIS either.

We enjoy seeing what all the other boats around us are doing, and once or twice the AIS has alerted us to friends heading to the same port as we are, opening the way for unexpectedly social stopovers. If they weren't transmitting, we would have

missed out – and vice versa.

We also follow friends' progress, and we know other people follow ours, perhaps far from the sea via an app on the phone. When we reached London, a long-lost friend who had just flown there from Scotland on business, called to say: "I see you're in St Kats. Can we meet for a drink?" It was almost worth buying the transponder just for that.

With many countries tightening border controls in response to the terrorism threat, not to mention Brexit, it seems increasingly likely that all yachts going foreign may soon be required to have AIS transponders. In some quarters this will be fiercely resented. But in my experience, not only is there nothing to fear, but those sceptics are likely to find they actually come to enjoy it!

Cathy, a former editor of *Cruising*, sails with her husband Richard on their Arcona 410, *Brave*. In this and previous yachts they have raced and cruised extensively from Spain to Sweden and sailed around the UK and Ireland. In January Cathy won the CA's Fid award for her contributions to *Cruising*



Photo © Port of London Authority

Left, Brave's position on the MarineTraffic AIS system shows not just her name and position but even a photo. Below, Big Brother, also known as London VTS