



Cruising

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Cruising around Malta
Our man in St Petersburg
Can we get under that bridge?
Why you need pipe cleaners



Not the year that any of us expected

CA President **Julian Dussek** looks back over 2020 and finds that the CA has weathered the storms so far – provided we keep recruiting members



Writing this column a year ago I never envisaged the situation that we are all in now. We were celebrating a year in which Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal had visited us and we had been celebrating the 50th anniversary of our patron's solo circumnavigation of the globe. Instead, now we are marking the end of a sailing season that really didn't exist. Covid severely curtailed much of our activities. I am writing this as we go into November, the Brexit negotiations are still in the air, the VAT situation concerning boats both in the EU and the UK is still uncertain. We do not know how we can celebrate Christmas.

Boats selling like hot cakes

Surprisingly however I am not full of doom and gloom. We have held our virtual AGM and learnt that the finances of the Cruising Association have weathered the storms so far. Our staff have performed wonderfully in these uncertain circumstances. The CA has a full licence for serving food & drink and the uptake by local people, lockdown permitting, has more than made up for the fact fewer of our members have been coming to London. Ania Muchla has

done a terrific job keeping the bar and galley open.

I am told that new and secondhand boats are selling like hot cakes, as are the CA almanacs. Presumably people want to get away from it all, and don't want to be incarcerated in hotels or cruise liners. I hope that we will be able to recruit many of these new sailors.

Members may already know that I am an enthusiastic reader of the forums. The amount of information that appears is amazing. I'm thinking at the moment of the innocent title "Medicane", which has produced over a hundred contributions ranging from members who have ridden out the storm to very erudite discussions on various meteorological systems and predictions. On another issue I was also amused by one entry concerning VAT and how an imported car was made to look like a chicken run. Most of the entries don't concern me directly, but I learn a lot and am amused by some.

Zooming away

By far and away the biggest change that has occurred over the last six months is the wide use of the Internet and in particular Zoom. Many more people

have been able to access lectures which hitherto would have required them to come to London. Alison Hadley has started the weekly series of London lectures, and various other section activities are available to view. Do keep looking at News & Events on the CA website for more information. Mike Golding gave an awe-inspiring Hanson Lecture which we were all able to view as a webinar, but it was a shame that he could not present the awards to the winners of the log prizes. Nothing beats meeting other members, having a drink, a meal and a very good chat. I have learned so much from meeting fellow members and I long to get back to the situation where we can all get together.

Once we are over this crisis I feel confident that the CA will be stronger than ever. We just need to deal with Brexit, VAT, the 90-in-180 day restrictions and probably many more problems which will emerge over the next few months.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a much happier New Year.



Brexit webinar now available to all

Brexit issues affecting the sailing community were addressed in the recent webinar on *Brexit Issues for Cruisers*, from the CA's Regulations and Technical Services group (RATS).

Over 300 members of the CA from 13 countries watched the webinar. In response to demand, a recording is available to the public in shortened form (excluding the member Q&As), at www.theca.org.uk/news/rats/brexit_webinar_video.

Topics covered by the webinar include:

- **People issues** including immigration and Schengen 90 days: Trevor Page
- **Vessel issues** including VAT: Roger Bickerstaff
- **CA Brexit web pages**: Robin Baron

CA President, Julian Dussek, said "At a time when the Brexit arrangements are still unknown it was a delight to watch the RATS Brexit webinar. The complexities and implications of our leaving the EU were explained with great clarity. I am extremely grateful for the enormous amount of work



Top, Robin Baron, Alan Kohler.
Bottom, Trevor Page, Roger Bickerstaff

that RATS has been doing for the CA, both in compiling the Brexit pages on the website and for putting together the webinar. I am now much more knowledgeable about what I will have to do next year, and what not to do."

The recording of the webinar and PDF of presentation slides must be viewed and read in conjunction with the disclaimer on the page, and on the understanding that it is based on information available at the time of broadcast on 5 December 2020. As such, any of the detail provided may be superseded at any time and the video or PDF of the slide presentation will not be updated to reflect any changes.

Springs are in the air....

It was 2012. One decision had been taken. We had given up our jobs. Now for the other... keep our wee Moody 31 or buy a bigger boat for our liveboard adventure?

Two seasons permanently aboard sailing the west coast of Scotland without dying, divorcing or disaster produced the answer. Pension for me was ten years away, Louise further still, so we would stick with *Camira*.

We did renew some kit. We were going down the Atlantic after all. Pertinent to this story, it included a new furling system, new anchor windlass and a new rod kicker.

The problem first presented itself on the Irish Sea leg. At Milford Haven, I noticed a small coil spring rolling around the toe rail. Hmm? Put it in the "To be decided on" jar.

The second occasion was Roscoff, France. "In the jar it goes". This time accompanied by vigorous head scratching and a check of all the new equipment, just in case. This continued with regularity down France, Spain and into Portugal. I now believed in Spring Fairies, and the jar was rattling.

I emailed Boatcraft in Ardrossan a picture



of the springs and a ruler to give scale. "Can you help?"

"They're possibly from your self-tailing winches," came the reply.

I checked this out. The springs were similar but all present!

Lagos, Portugal, and the springs were still making regular appearances. At a BBQ I was explaining my spring conundrum to the accompaniment of the now expected head scratching when the lady from the boat next to me piped up:

"Yes, I saw that this morning. When Louise hangs out the washing her pegs are breaking... and the springs ping everywhere."

Gordon & Louise Montgomery 

Have you ever done something really dumb while sailing? We want you to tell us about the silliest mistake you have ever made on a boat... or maybe the silliest you're willing to admit to. The best will be published in each issue of *Cruising*, alongside a cartoon by wonderful marine illustrator Claudia Myatt. The original artwork will be the prize for the winner each quarter.

Send your entries to editor@theca.org.uk before February 1 for the March issue with the subject line "Boating blunders". They should be no more than 300 words.

CREW: "Looking for sailing in the Pacific if Covid permits. Have my own boat (Vancouver 34) which is currently ashore on the Atlantic coast of Spain. Crossing to Brazil planned in early 2023 (skipper), have previously crossed La Gomera to Antigua as crew. Generally fit and healthy."

Join the Crewing Service

The CA's Crewing Service puts skippers in touch with crew and crew in touch with skippers. Even if you can't go sailing at the moment, why not take time to contact potential crew members? We plan crewing meetings via Zoom during the winter .

There's just a taste of what's on offer in our crew and skipper listings in the quotes here. To read more, go to www.theca.org.uk/crewing/welcome – or check the Crewing Service forum.



SKIPPER: "I have been based in the Baltic since taking delivery of our boat in 2009. After the death of my partner in 2018 I have resumed sailing and want to continue to explore the Baltic... in 2021 the starting point would be Kalmar. I love to entertain fellow sailors on board: in 2019, 22 people signed my Visitors Book and accepted some hospitality."

My flexible friends

CA president **Julian Dussek** explains that one of the most useful items on his boat is... the humble pipe cleaner

A pipe cleaner is the most cost effective gadget you can have on a boat. They cost a few pence and I would not sail without some. We always have a packet on board.



As a flexible ruler. They can be marked with a felt tip pen and either used as a flexible ruler, invaluable for tortuous rivers or round headlands but can also be used instead of dividers, incredibly quick and easy to use. They just need to be marked for whichever chart you are using.



For oiling parts that are difficult to reach. They can be angled to reach round the back of awkward things and a drop of oil on the tip can be touched on to the part needing lubricating.



As a mini paint brush. Occasionally there is a need to put a drop of paint on to a tiny area such as the bare head of screw. Using a pipe cleaner saves getting out a paint brush and it can be thrown away afterwards. Similarly, they can be used for putting a smear of grease on for example a bolt thread.

As a key ring. So simple, particularly useful for example when a marina gives you an electronic key fob, or when you have to separate a key from a bunch of others.



As a cable tie. You may need to hold a cable or pipe temporarily out of the way. It is easy to fix and undo.



Cleaning pipes and holes. They are invaluable for cleaning out narrow bore pipes and poking out crud in filters.



What do you think?

What's your favourite use for a pipe cleaner? Or do you have something else on board which is equally useful and cost-effective? Send your suggestions to editor@theca.org.uk and we'll publish the best.



As a taper. The ends of pipe cleaners burn slowly, better if dipped in methylated spirits. I use one to light my Taylors oil fired stove.



A drip stopper. Very useful, especially as we approach the festive season; no more red stains on the tablecloth.

Mending a broken bicycle chain. I thought I had heard of every possible use until I met a villager who said he used a pipe cleaner to join the ends of a broken bicycle chain when he was out cycling. It got him home but he's given up smoking and I had to rescue him with my car the last time it happened. (Sorry, no picture)



And you can use them to **clean a real pipe.** No sailor should be without one.

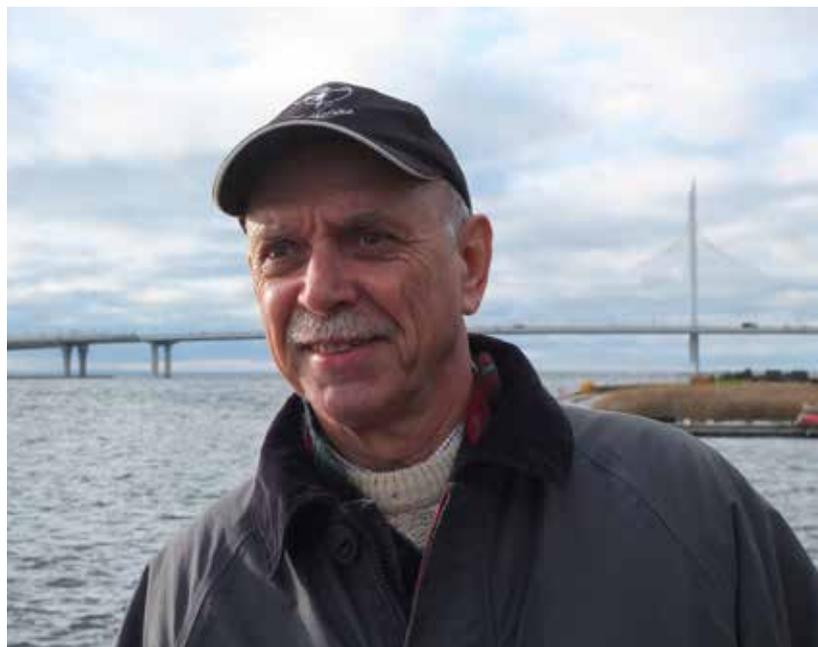
All pictures are for illustration only and not to be taken as good practice.



Vladimir Ivankiv near Krestovski Yacht Club with the bridge of the "speedy diameter" ring road in the background. Pic taken by Alla Lashkova (Vladimir's wife)

Our man in St Petersburg

Vladimir Ivankiv has been an HLR since soon after the Iron Curtain fell. He is still an indispensable contact for any CA member visiting Russia



I was born in Western Ukraine, beside the Carpathian Mountains, rather far from the sea but since early childhood I dreamt of becoming a sailor. As a teenager I moved to Leningrad (now St Petersburg) to join relatives and continue my education, later graduating from the Leningrad technological institute as an Engineer.

After serving two years compulsory service in the Soviet Army I took a job as an engineer in the St Petersburg Central Yacht Club belonging to Trade Unions. (In the early 90s the club reverted to its original name – River YC). In Soviet days most sailing pleasure boats were state owned. The certified skippers would be appointed by the state while the crew members were recruited by the skippers. I started sailing at the age of 28 being recruited as crew for an international 5.5m R class boat called *Eos*, then continued as crew on the Russian national class L60 called *Volkhov*.

While serving my compulsory service I kept studying English so by the time the "Iron Curtain" collapsed and the first foreign boats started visiting St Petersburg I was able to offer them help – being about the only one in the club who could make himself understood. The first British boat I met at the River YC was Tom Cunliffe's *Hirta*. The boat *Marsh Mist* (Liz & Ken Steele and John Dawkins), was the first British boat I dealt with and who later became my true friends.

In 1992 I joined Barry Sheffield on *s/y Moorhen*, in his cruise



Members on the 2013 St Petersburg Rally. Photo: Harry Standley

through the Russian Inland Waterways from St Petersburg to the Black Sea. It was Barry who then kindly recommended me to the CA as an HLR for Russia. In 1993 my name was for the first time published in the CA Yearbook as an HLR.

Nowadays I also represent about ten western cruising organisations including SXX, RCC, OCC, Clyde CC (of which I am an honorary member) and WCC.

I have very good memories of working with Donald and Jenifer Green, the CA's original Baltic Section Secretaries, who came to St Petersburg in 1994 with their daughters Fiona and Margo in *Bonnie Anne*.

Inland waterways

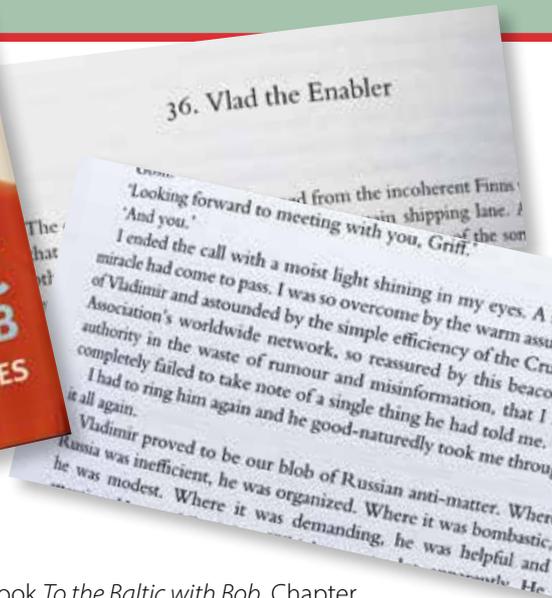
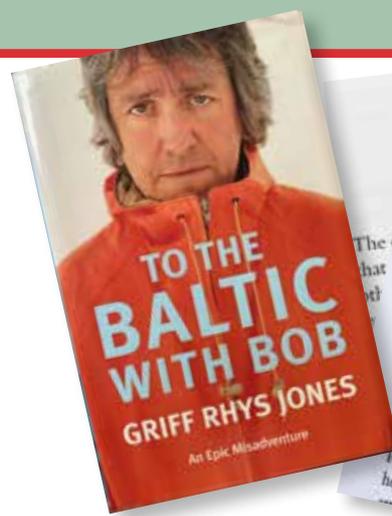
In 1997 I assisted CA member Ray Glaister, *s/y Babaji*, in organizing his cruise through the Russian Inland Waterways to Moscow and back. That year Mr Yeltsin signed the document allowing foreign-flagged vessels into these waterways. The trouble was that, although signed, the paper was not yet implemented by the time Ray changed his ensign from Russian to the Red Ensign. (He had sailed under the Russian flag using the re-flagging juridical scheme). It took me a couple of days running around, visiting relevant authorities in order to open the locks and bridges for poor *Babaji* which was detained for violating Russian law.

The CA Millennium Rally (see page 62) brought 37 boats to St Petersburg, nine of which proceeded through the inland waterways to Petrozavodsk, Lake Onega and then four of the nine, led by Ray Glaister, sailed up to the White Sea.

In 2012 Russia finally implemented the new law allowing foreign-flagged pleasure boats to sail within the Russian Inland Waterways. Since then several CA members have sailed through Russia and I was pleased to be part of their projects.

My UK contacts

For the past 20 years or so I have been in very close contact with Graham and Fay Cattell, Joint Secretaries of the CA's Baltic Section, a couple with outstanding enthusiasm totally devoted to the association. I worked with them organizing the CA Winter visits to St Petersburg in 2008 and 2010, of which I have very warm memories, for the Baltic Sea Cruising Network and writing the *CA Cruising Guide to Baltic Russia*.



Vladimir with daughter Marina, wife Alla, and Jack Russell terrier Bertie



In Griff Rhys Jones's book *To the Baltic with Bob*, Chapter 36 is titled "Vlad the Enabler". Griff first came to St Petersburg in 2012 in his s/y *Undina*. I did not know Griff was a celebrity as he was not well promoted in Russia. Later, watching TV in the UK, I noticed a familiar face – it was Griff in one of the British talk shows. There are two copies of Griff's book *To the Baltic With Bob* in my home library, one signed by the author – we met again when he, his wife and friends came to St Petersburg for the Opera First Night performed in the Mariinski Theatre.

I have met many other people while acting as the CA's HLR but sadly do not have space to mention them all. I often receive messages from remote parts of the world with photos of two different boats that meet at sea and realize they have a mutual friend in St Petersburg. It helps me realize how small the sailing world is.

People often ask if I have my own boat. The answer is "No, I do not" as the sailing season in St Petersburg is rather short and most of the time I am busy helping visiting boats feel at home while in Russia, which is known to be quite a bureaucratic country.

The last CA group visit I coordinated was the 2013 CA Rally. Regretfully this past season the Russian border was closed for foreign tourism because of Covid-19, but I hope this annoying virus will fade away by the next sailing season so I can see more CA boats visiting Russia, individually or as part of a sailing rally.

On a personal note, I live in a city apartment with my wife Alla, daughter Marina and our Jack Russell terrier Bertie. Marina is my deputy HLR and a great support.



HLRs prove indispensable in current crisis

With 2020 being such a difficult and different year for CA members to be afloat and enjoy their cruising, the help and support provided by our HLRs has been appreciated and valued by those who have contacted them concerning local arrangements, providers of goods and services, and practical matters relevant to those keeping and sailing their boats overseas.

Two examples of reassuring help are:

- CA member Derek Jones got in touch to send warm thanks for the time and commitment taken by **Keith Martin**, our HLR for St-Cast in North France, for finding supplies.
- CA Members Adriaan and Karien Roosen were looking to ship their boat from Greece to the Netherlands by land transport. As a first step they contacted **Georgia Papanikolaou**, HLR for Lavrion, to seek help in finding companies to approach regarding the transfer of their boat by land. Georgia was pleased to help and passed on a range of contact details for Adriaan and Karien to follow up. They then contacted a suitable

company for their needs, which resulted in a swift, safe and efficient transfer of their boat to the Netherlands. Thanks to Georgia for her initial help.

While sailing in Albania some years ago, our President Julian Dussek met **Agim Zholi**, HLR for Sarande. Julian later wrote an article for *Yachting Monthly* on the opportunities for sailing in Albania and Agim reported that this brought a big increased interest in visiting yachts. Albania, as many other countries, is having a difficult time. Julian has kept in touch with Agim and his family; Agim's niece is currently a student in the UK, and Julian will contact her while she is here. As Julian says, it's good that the CA can help an HLR.

Updates

Start Bay and River Dart: Longstanding CA member **Chris Cooper**, is standing down as HLR as he is relocating to Sussex.

Brunsbüttel, Germany: **Tony Francis** is moving away. He is happy to provide relevant local information of help and interest to CA members to our nearby

HLR for Cuxhaven.

Aalborg, Denmark: Niels Mathiesen has stood down and the new HLR for Aalborg is Jacob Mikkelsen. His contact details are in the HLR listings on the CA website.

Ayvalık, Turkey: Hasan Kaçmaz has let us know that our HLR for Ayvalık remains in post, but is no longer associated with the marina. HLR Ayvalık **Umut Tepedelenlioğlu** can be contacted on email: umuttepedelenlioglu@gmail.com

India, Surat Coast: **Dr Azim Patrawala** – deceased. See page 14 for an obituary.

Antigua, Caribbean: **Dave Ross** is soon to be appointed HLR for Antigua.

All HLR contact details are kept up to date on the CA website. Other potential HLR leads are also being followed up.

Isobel Porter,
HLRs Group





Crewing to far horizons



Jon Boon has chartered and crewed in yachts of many shapes and sizes all round the world, thanks to the support of the CA's library and its Crewing Service

To me, the meaning of the Cruising Association is the companionship that comes from experiences, challenging or pleasant, that are shared with others to support their endeavours and voyages.

So how did I wash up on the hospitable shore which is the CA? My first sailing experiences were bashing about in Wayfarer dinghies at school on Broxbourne Lakes in the Lea Valley. It was cold and wet, but an undeniable foundation laid. In 1975 I was on deployment in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, and as enterprising soldiers we managed to get use of a heavy wooden sailing cruiser on Lough Neagh.

I had no further boating activities until in my 45th year, inspiration. In a travel agents, a brochure on the wall showed a white yacht anchored in gin-clear water by a white sandy beach, wave-smoothed boulders and palm trees. "I bet I can do that," I thought. The result was a Competent Crew course, a shared yacht trip from Göcek, Turkey, and then, can you believe it, a Sunsail flotilla as skipper in the BVI. Looking back it almost makes me go grey; providence and good luck enabled me to dodge the bullets of my own lack of knowledge. I've now sailed in the BVI many times and would recommend it as an area, especially as they need tourists after Irene.

After a Coastal Skipper evening class and practical exam, I was ready for charters further afield – Vancouver and the Strait of Georgia surrounded by huge scenery, and afternoon tea in the Empress Hotel,

Victoria. If you go boating there watch out for the floating logs that have escaped from log booms, they float like passive torpedoes.

On a visit to Kew Gardens I saw a painting by Marianne North of a waterfall in the Coco De Mer forest in the Seychelles. A charter to that group of islands followed. The waterfall was visited along with giant tortoises and the fantastic bird sanctuary island. I recall returning to the boat in our tender (slightly deflated) when the classic fin of a shark broke surface in front of us. I reassured my companion: "Seychelles carp, they are big here".

I visited St Vincent and the Grenadines on charter and in 2005 I crewed on a 44ft catamaran, *Mjali*, on the ARC, Gran Canarias to St Lucia, to build understanding of longer duration voyages. A very well run event.

Following charters in Greece and Turkey membership of the Cruising Association hove into view. I knew of the crown jewels of the CA from the boating press: its chart collection, pilot books and all the other literary gems. Books like Admiral Anson's *A Voyage Around the World*, the account of a robbing mission to take a Spanish Manila galleon loaded with treasure. Or Nansen's *Farthest North*, his epic journey seeking the North Pole and spending a winter marooned on the ice.

I planned a charter in French Polynesia to sail on the waters so liked by Bernard Moitessier. The CA chart library offered a large area chart which had a small chartlet showing the islands of Raiatea,

Tahaa, Huahine and Bora Bora. With an enlarged photocopy of the islands, I drew up my own scale map to route-plan. It worked!



Bora Bora worked its romantic magic with a proposal of marriage for a couple on the crew, followed by dinner at Bloody Mary's in the Bay de Povai. I even met a gentlemen who had been friends with Bernard Moitessier and he told me that Bernard helped him lay out his garden. It was my privilege to deliver a lecture on this trip at the Limehouse HQ.

I supported the CA's crewing service now run by Caroline Milmo. There was a huge range of experience pooled within the members from all their watery adventures; they were extremely capable and understated.

I was now able to contribute to the CA. My working life in pre-hospital emergency care allowed me to deliver "First Aid at Sea and Medical Emergencies" talks to the Biscay, Blue Water and Thames Sections.

I supported Tony Wildig on his 44ft Malo



Far left, three wise men (Jon, Iain and Terry) aboard *Chantana* in Gibraltar. Left, logs of some of Jon's voyages. Above, Jon has crewed on *Njord* from Ipswich to Croatia in stages since 2014

as he skippered us through the western isles out from Ardfern. His boat held a cornucopia of the Waters of Life.

I crewed for Lorri Whiting, at the time about 88 years old. "Oh Jon, do you think you could take me on a cruise?" she asked. Said I "Of course." Lori owned a 1974 Sparkman and Stevens Impala. I joined Lori and *Servyn* at Orbetello, Italy. *Servyn* had been ashore for some time. Rid of the mildew, leaves the bird's nest in the main, and the ants in the lazarette locker, we had a successful voyage along the east coast of Corsica and across the Bay of Genoa to Imperia. Highlights of the voyage included Macinaggio which has links with Napoleon and from where three Corsican ships left to join the Christian fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. We also encountered a sperm whale basking on the surface, you could hear it breathing. Subsequently I took Lorri to Bonifacio for Bastille Day and across to Stintino on Sardinia.

I crewed for Paul Eedle on his 1907 Looe Lugger *Guiding Star*, carefully looked after by Paul, who was a great teacher on the workings of a gaff rig lugger. I have abiding memories of the Primus stove on the run to Brixham from Plymouth for a classic boat rally.

In 2019 I crewed for Terry Sandling on *Chantana*, his 56 ft Oyster, which had enough spares and tools for a boat yard. Joining *Chantana* in Grenada, we completed maintenance and initial provisioning, then through the next two and half months we moved up through the islands, joining the ARC Europe fleet in the BVI and continuing to Bermuda, Azores and Gibraltar. Highlights included

Dominica and the Indian River; St Barts, with more strappy shoes and posh frocks than you can count; St Pierre, Martinique where in 1902 Mt Pelée erupted and a pyroclastic flow destroyed the town, ships in the harbour and killed 29,000 people; and Deshaies, Guadeloupe where the TV programme *Death in Paradise* is filmed. It has a stony beach, so for fans the detective house is a pop-up on a more picturesque sandy one. Our most remote anchorage was Dog Island, 17 nautical miles west of Barbuda with only the birds for company.



Horta, Azores

In Horta, Azores, we painted a picture on the harbour office wall and made a crossing entry in the log books of the Scrimshaw Museum above the famous Peter's Bar Sports. Joined by crew Iain, Kat, Dean and Paul on various legs all made significant contributions to life on board. All credit goes to Dean, who had never been to sea before, who with the rest of the company weathered a serious storm peaking at force 10.

All my crewing has entailed good journeys, but one stands out as greatly significant, a first amongst equals: the voyages of *Njord*, a Malo 39 Classic, with Vic Farhi and Clare Harrison. Between Ipswich and Plymouth we had

encounters with a Dunkirk Little Ship and Arthur Ransome's *Nancy Blackett*. We crossed Biscay for A Coruña in May 2014. We continued over the years through the Mediterranean via all the bits in between to Thessaloniki. Crossing the Adriatic to Croatia gave a most challenging moment when we were caught in a dry lightning storm, bolts crashing down all around, and the smell of ozone was dominant. Vic was the brave volunteer helmsman at that moment. We learnt a lot about the CAPE index which measures probability of lightning.

It's the company and shared experiences that makes a voyage. On *Njord* when weather or circumstance became more challenging, we become calmer and talk quietly with careful consideration and purpose.

We gave the historic locations of the Mediterranean a good thrashing and visited the grave of war poet Rupert Brook on the island of Skiros, where I placed a post and poppy for Sgt Robert Maughan, a soldier in my section, killed on active service.

In closing I would commend to you a verse from a prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake.

*Disturb us, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask you to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And push into the future
In strength, courage, hope and love.*



A GUIDE TO MEDITERRANEAN SAILING



Malta

In the ninth part of our series on Mediterranean cruising destinations, Iain Muir writes about the Maltese islands



We set off into retirement on our Sweden 45 Alma from Lymington in May 2009 to explore the Mediterranean. By the end of September we'd reached southern Brittany! We'd learned our first cruising lesson – there are so many wonderful places to visit and sometimes it's hard to move on. However, the following year, after a summer enjoying (all too quickly in hindsight) the delights of Portugal, Spain and Sicily, we eventually reached Malta by early October 2010 and stopped there for the winter. After 10 years sailing throughout the Med we're still based in Malta. Here is why for us it has been a great place to visit and a great base for sailing in the Med.

Overview

Anyone cruising through the Med and having an interest in history, or wishing to enjoy some superb diving, rock climbing, or kayaking, or requiring boatyard services or chandleries, or simply for some relaxation or re-provisioning, should, after visiting Sicily, make a detour to visit Malta (including the islands of Gozo and Comino).

The Maltese islands have three UNESCO World Heritage sites – the city of **Valletta**, the Megalithic Temples (of which there are seven, dating from around 3600BC to 2500BC) and the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum. The two temples of Ġgantija on the island of Gozo are thought to be the oldest free-standing monuments in the world. Later the Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans left traces on the islands and most significantly the Normans, Aragonese, Knights of St John, the French and the British have all contributed to the colourful history of Malta.

For sailors, Malta offers several modern marinas, good flight connections within Europe throughout the year, full yacht services (good or very good quality if you find the best people), all the pleasures of

a major tourist destination and several pleasant anchorages (outside peak summer). Maltese and English are both official languages. Malta is a member of the EU and within the Schengen travel area. For non-EU arrivals, Mgarr in Gozo and Valletta in Malta are official Ports of Entry.

Location

Malta is situated at 35.9°N (further south than Tunis), only 53 miles almost due south from Marina di Ragusa in southern Sicily or 80 miles from Siracusa (also not to be missed as one of the great historical cities of the Mediterranean). If you wish to break the journey from Siracusa to Malta, in suitable weather a stop could be made in either Marzamemi marina (but beware the entrance channel, and it may not be advisable to enter in stronger winds with any east) or, again very weather-dependent, at anchor at Capo Passero or Portopalo.

Approaches

Cruiserswiki.org has a useful list of charts. Beware fish farms/tuna pens off the coast and numerous fish buoys (often poorly marked) and many cargo ships anchored or manoeuvring off the coast. Off the



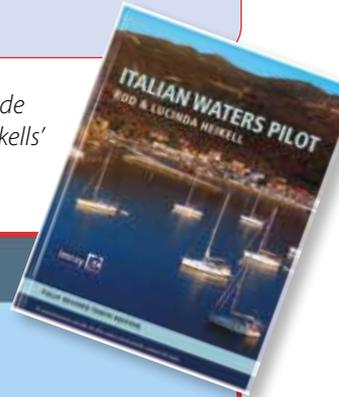
Pros

- Convenient location between E & W Med
- Modern marinas, good quality yacht services
- Good flight connections all year
- Numerous tourist attractions
- Pleasant anchorages (outside peak season)
- English is an official language
- Mild winters; typical Med sailing conditions

Cons

- Moorings crowded in high season
- Swell can be uncomfortable or dangerous

Useful sources of information include *Captain's Mate*, below, and the *Heikells' Italian Waters Pilot*, published by Imray, which covers Malta



Right, the historic city of Valletta and its extraordinary bastion walls, with Grand Harbour to the left (south) and Marsamxett harbour to the right (north). Below, St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, built in the 1570s and decorated in the 17th century in Baroque style. Images: www.viewingmalta.com



north coast is the Pembroke firing range – for firing times see Notices to Mariners issued by Malta Transport Authority. If approaching from the NW and heading through the channel between Malta and Gozo, keep a look-out for the very frequent ferries crossing and particularly if you are entering Mgarr harbour. Listen on VHF Ch12 (Valletta Port Control) as well as Ch16 for information on ship movements, especially vessels entering/leaving Grand Harbour (including the fast cat to/from Sicily), and it is advisable to call Valletta Port Control on approaching Malta.

Weather

The weather in Malta is typically south central Mediterranean, with mild winters and hot/very hot dry summers. Spring and summer sailing conditions can be

sublime and after sailing my first RMYC round-Malta race in mid December in T-shirt and shorts, I was hooked!

For marine weather forecasts, as well as the many popular weather apps available (Windfinder, Passage Weather, Windy etc), Malta Airport weather forecast includes a three-day marine forecast at www.maltaairport.com/weather/3-day-forecast-for-mariners.

Mostly, and generally throughout the summer, the weather offers very pleasant sailing conditions but, like much of the central Mediterranean, at times there's too little wind and at other times too much. A significant swell can arise in moderate to strong winds (only 60 miles east the depth of water is more than 3000m). The swell can make exposed anchorages and some marina berths at

best uncomfortable, often untenable and occasionally very dangerous. In a dreaded NE *Gregale* the swell can be extremely dangerous in several harbours, and if leaving a yacht afloat, ensure the berth will be safe if there is significant swell and that your boat is well fendered, well spaced from neighbouring boats and has springs/dampeners on mooring lines.

Marinas, boatyards & anchorages

The main marinas are Manoel Island, Roland Marina, Msida Creek, Valletta Marina, Grand Harbour and Kalkara in Malta and Mgarr Marina in Gozo. The Royal Malta Yacht Club also has berths for visiting yachts in settled weather in mid-summer.

For storage and work ashore many of the main yards are around Grand



Mediterranean cruising



Above, many anchorages have spectacular views. Above right, Comino's Blue Lagoon can be packed during the day, but peaceful at night. Right, the Megalithic temple of Ħaġar Qim is one of the most ancient religious sites in the world. All images: www.viewingmalta.com



Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour, including Manoel Island, Kalkara, plus Baldacchino further south-east. Most recently the Mediterranean Maritime Hub in Marsa, an extensive commercial ship facility, has developed dockside hard standing for yacht storage, and sailing yacht services are available from either MMH or outside sub-contractors some of whom are now moving on site, including Prolink rigging, deck hardware and hydraulics specialists.

Berths and also yard storage in Malta can be difficult to find at certain times and it is advisable to book ahead. All the marinas and yards (except Baldacchino which is in the south of the island) are close to Valletta. If you berth in Grand Harbour Marina or Kalkara, you will enjoy one of the most spectacular harbour entrances in the Mediterranean, and taking either the public ferry or one of the traditional *dhajsa* boats to cross Grand Harbour from Dockyard Creek to Valletta is not only a great experience but frequently quicker than car or bus. The traffic in Malta can be very congested and the driving culture may take a while to get used to. Car hire is reasonably priced by international standards. Buses can be slow but eCabs taxis are reasonably priced and have good coverage.

There are many anchorages around

the Maltese islands although several of these do get very crowded in peak periods – and I mean really crowded, so you feel you could walk across the boats! However, most anchorages are peaceful at night. In choosing an anchorage, the swell as well as the general weather conditions need to be carefully considered. Useful information on several anchorages is available in CAptain's Mate (the CA's own app), and in comments on Navionics charts, plus Imray's *Italian Waters Pilot* and the Malta Maritime Directory cruising guide at www.maritimedirectory.com.mt/cruising.asp.

Travelling onwards

From Malta, Sicily is only a day sail away, and the foot of Italy and onwards into the Adriatic and Croatia or south to the Ionian can all be achieved by day sailing, albeit with several longish days. Alternatively, for those happy to sail offshore, within three days most yachts will be able to reach Sardinia or the "heel" of Italy (Santa Maria de Leuca) or western Greece.

Malta's location, along with the many attractions mentioned above, make it a great base for exploring the central Mediterranean.



- In the June 2017 edition of *Cruising* we carried an article on 'Overwintering in Malta' by Sarah Gauci Carlton, our Honorary Local Representative in Malta. You can access a PDF or Flipbook version of this edition at www.theca.org.uk/cruising

Since sailing from Lymington in 2009, Helen & Iain have been exploring the northern shores of the Mediterranean on their Sweden 45 *Alma of Lymington*. In 2021 they plan to return to their favourite areas in Croatia and Greece.



CA London lectures: Spring 2021

This season's lectures will again be available to every member with an internet connection. Topics range from water power to travels with a dog



The spring lectures will be broadcast on webinar on Wednesday nights at 7pm. At present, we are hoping that we will be able to run some of the later talks as social events as well.

All events are open to any member, subject only to restrictions on numbers. Members of CA London section will receive weekly reminders as usual with the booking links. If you are not on the section mailing list, please check the events listings on the CA website.

Don't forget that some of our very successful lectures from the summer season are still available as videos on the CA site. Go to **General info > CA Videos**.

Wednesday February 3

Revolution at Limehouse: The Power of Water, Jeremy Batch

What connects Limehouse Marina, Tower Bridge, the USS *Enterprise* and a National Trust property in Northumberland? All made use of hydraulic machinery conceived by Blaise Pascal and later developed by Joseph Bramah, Sir William Armstrong and others, including the jigger (which is not a weevil), the hydraulic motor and the weight-loaded accumulator.

Bookings

To book any lecture, go to the **CA website > Events** and find the lecture you are interested in. Details of how to book a place are included in the text for each event. Normally you can book up to the last minute, but webinar numbers are limited by the technology, so it's always wise to book in advance. Webinars are free to members. If you encounter any problems with the booking system, call or email Jeremy on 0207 537 2828/reception@theca.org.uk

To see working examples of Armstrong's hydraulic lifts you should visit Craggside (NT), his house in Northumberland, which was also the first in the world to be lit by hydroelectricity. But look across the marina from CA House and you'll see one of his hydraulic accumulator towers (the best surviving example in Britain) which once drove the cranes, capstans, lock gates and bridges of the Regent's Canal Dock, now celebrating its 200th anniversary.

Plus: how the Romans made their shelves level and their aqueducts not quite so level, and how they made water run uphill.

Wednesday February 10

Around Britain and beyond with my dog, Martin Whitfield

A British circumnavigation is on many sailors' wish lists. Martin planned a four month voyage, which meant the dog had to come too. No problem, as Buzz, Martin's most travelled dog, has sailed nearly 15,000 miles in more than 15 countries, so definitely qualifies as being an experienced "sea dog". Martin will describe their fabulous trip around the UK in 200 dog walks as well as journeys much further afield, with some helpful tips on keeping the canines happy while at sea and on the boat.



Martin, Buzz and boat on Loch Lochy

Picture postcard perfect: the Gulf of Morbihan



Wednesday February 17

Cruising in the Gulf of Morbihan, Malcolm Denham

The Golfe du Morbihan is a magical place with something to please almost everyone. An area of 40 square kilometres with over 40 islands, quite a few rocks and some very strong currents make for some interesting pilotage. The Golfe has plenty of history with islands inhabited from megalithic times. There are anchorages amongst the islands, swinging or fore/aft buoys and the major towns of Auray and Vannes. The talk will take a tour around the Golfe showing some favourite places.

Primetime at anchor



Wednesday February 24

A Circuit of Sweden, David Rivett

David won the 2020 Dolphin Cup for his pictorial log of a voyage in *Primetime*, a Contest 40S, from Denmark to Gothenburg and across Sweden via the Gota Canal. In this talk, David will describe the cruise, show striking images from his log, and offer some general thoughts and observations on sailing, laying up and so forth around Scandinavia..

Wednesday March 3

North with Narnia, June Berridge

June recounts her experience of cruising the west coast of Scotland on board *Narnia*, a Najad 441 which she was invited to join via the CA Crewing Service by owner and skipper Derek Jones. The cruise began in Strangford Lough, Ireland and after a brief stop in Bangor they crossed the Irish Sea to begin threading their way through the beautiful Scottish islands and mainland. For June, the voyage finished at Gair Loch because she was already booked to help another CA member, Terry Murphy, move his Moody Eclipse 38 from Sardinia to Sicily.

■ **Stop press: March 10, Cruising the European Ring**, Andy Mulholland. **March 31, The Thames Estuary**, Rob Smith. Lectures on March 17 and 24 are being booked as we go to press and will be confirmed in future newsletters.

Updated editions of CA cruising guides

New, updated 2021 print and digital editions of the CA's four main inland waterways cruising guides, have been published. All four editions reflect the updates posted by intrepid EIW members braving the Covid-19 restrictions during 2020. The digital editions of the A4 guides are free to members and contain hyperlinks to the CAptain's Mate app, so you can access up-to-date information on mooring locations.

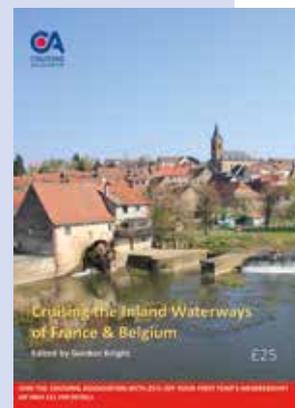
Cruising the Inland Waterways of France and Belgium, 216pp, edited by Gordon Knight and now in its 25th edition, covers cruising routes, cruising preparations, supplies, equipment, licences and documents, useful addresses, books and websites and a list of around 250 mooring places in France and Belgium with comments on facilities, depths, prices, closest shops and restaurants and nearby attractions.

Through the Netherlands via the Standing Mast Routes, 66pp, covers 14 different routes for yachts to transit the Netherlands. Written by Andy Mulholland and James Littlewood and edited by Gordon Knight, the guide covers nearly 1,000km of waterways from Vlissingen near the Belgian border to Delfzijl close to the border with Germany.

50 Great Cruising Routes in the Netherlands, 246pp, by Andy and Gwen Mulholland and edited by Gordon Knight, provides detailed information on routes in the 12 provinces of the Netherlands, with navigation details for each route; bridge and lock opening procedures and times; descriptions of facilities and a glossary of Dutch terms.

The German Rhine, 20pp, by Dr Roger Edgar and Rob Thomas and edited by Gordon Knight, covers about 700km of the river from the border close to the Swiss city of Basel downstream to Nijmegen just inside the Dutch border. The guide includes a list of mooring points, fuel stations, ports and harbours along the river and a list of useful websites.

For further information on all the CA's inland waterways publications, visit the EIW web page at www.theca.org.uk/public/sections/eiw where members can download digital editions of the guides for free.



Kingsferry Bridge on the Swale in Kent. With a mast, you have to request an opening, but without one you can just slip underneath. Behind it is the Sheppey Crossing – at 35m high, unlikely to bother most yachts

Not a bridge too far

'Can we get the mast under that bridge?' Cathy Brown reports on the new delights of cruising in a boat with no mast at all



Under sail there's an optical illusion which means, even when you know a bridge is many metres clear, if you look up the mast as you approach it seems certain you will hit.

We once raced under the mighty Queen Elizabeth II bridge over the Thames at some speed, and husband mischievously asked a novice crew person: "Warn me if you think we are going to hit." She was so panic-stricken that I had to tell her that the clearance was 61 metres – not quite three times the mast height of our Arcona 410. Richard has played the same trick taking non-sailors under our local Orwell Bridge, which has an air draught of 43 metres, twice the last *Brave's* mast height. It gets them every time.

The joke was on us though, when we picked *Brave* up new in Gustavsberg, in the Stockholm archipelago, and the first sail began with negotiating a motorway bridge with just 22 metres clearance – only centimetres to spare. It really did look as if the masthead instruments were going to come crashing down on the deck.

Thrilled as we were with the new boat, we realised with some sadness that we would no longer be able to enter the delightful inland waterways of the Netherlands by our favourite route through the Roompotsluis. When the Delta scheme was designed, in the wake of the catastrophic 1953 flood, the height of fixed bridges was set at 17 metres – more than enough for most leisure yachts at the time. We might just have scraped under the bridge at the entrance to the Westerschelde at low water springs – but then we'd have been worrying about our keel on the sill of the sea lock.

Switching to a motor boat, with only a fraction of either the air draught or keel depth of the sailing yacht, has made things simpler. Our aim is to take her to places we could not get to, even with our earlier, smaller yachts. If there had been no lockdown, this summer our plan was to return to the Dutch inland waterways and explore routes inaccessible with a mast. That means lots of low bridges.

Attitude was designed with canal cruising in mind. Her air draught, with aerials lowered, is about 3.1 metres: "depending on how much water, diesel – and wine – you have on board," as the salesman helpfully explained.

The crew was so panic-stricken I had to tell her that the bridge was almost three times the height of our mast

Those lower bridges give an entirely different perspective, compared with looking up a mast. On our recent "staycation" cruise we began with Rochester bridge, the head of navigation for sailing vessels on the River Medway, but at 5.4 metres HAT, well within the scope of most motor cruisers.

Even knowing that we would have rather more than two metres to spare, as it was neaps, and the tide starting to fall, it still looked awfully low as we approached. Fortunately a flying bridge cruiser, obviously much taller than *Attitude*, came through towards us, reassurance that we would be fine – with aerials up. It was great to have somewhere completely new to explore, so close to home.

Emboldened by that experience, we folded down the aerials and set off home via the Swale, intending to pass under the Kingsferry bridge (3.35m MHWS) rather than having to request or wait for its lifting.

We reached it at high water neaps. The helpful bridge keeper told us there was "just a tad under four metres." So we knew we would be fine, but it still really didn't look possible as we approached.

I was despatched outside to double check, as the skipper approached with extreme caution, ready to engage reverse big time if required. Of course, it wasn't. But it was still a relief to emerge on the other side of this wonderful piece of railway engineering – massive cast iron girders which would really hurt if you hit it.

We feel it was something of a rite of passage, as motor-boaters. We will now have the confidence to tackle low bridges if and when we do get to explore the European inland waterways, to believe in the tide gauges – and, just as with the yacht, to ignore the deception of our eyes!

Cathy, a former editor of *Cruising*, is exploring new options with her husband Richard on their motor boat, *Attitude*. In their Arcona 410 *Brave* and her sailing predecessors they raced and cruised from Spain to Sweden and sailed around the UK and Ireland.

