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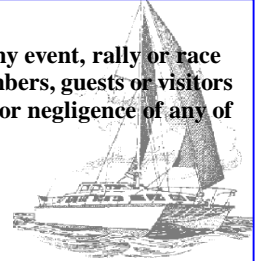
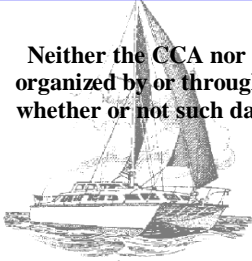
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Disclaimer

Neither the CCA nor Committee will accept any liability for personal injury arising out of participating in any event, rally or race organized by or through the CCA whether sustained by members, guests, or visitors, or caused by the said members, guests or visitors whether or not such damage or injury could have been attributed to or was occasioned by the neglect, default or negligence of any of the officers, committees or servants of the CCA.

Boat Owners Third Party Insurance

It is the responsibility of all boat owners to have adequate third party insurance in respect of him/herself, vessel, his/her crew for the time being & his/her visitors.



OCTOBER 2009

Hi to all you Catamaran Sailors.

DON'T FORGET NOVEMBER'S C.C.A "MEET & EAT"

To be held on the 7th. November
at The Alverbank Hotel Stokes Bay Gosport.
Meet at Midday in the bar.

We need to know the numbers, who wish to attend the lunch.
This year it has been decided to eat in the bar,
rather than one of the function rooms.
The food is the same and it is easier for members to circulate.

Text to 07971 808777, or e.mail to peter.Gimson@sky.com ASAP to avoid disappointment.

With the nights drawing in, as the days get shorter, October is the month, where in the past we in Europe have suffered hurricane force winds. We are fortunate that with modern equipment; we can easily get a current forecast that will be in the most part accurate.

While cruising during the summer months in UK waters there is little or no excuse for not being fully aware of the forthcoming weather we are likely to experience during our cruise. A favorable, up to date weather forecast will help to ensure that your trip is both comfortable and completed in safety. The luxury of this forecasting only becomes apparent when one leaves the VHF range of UK coastguard stations to cruise further from home waters, in other European countries.

(1) Hon. Sec. Office 196 Harewood Ave. Queens Pk. Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7BQ

The Englishman's belief in general, that the English language is understood and can be spoken by most Europeans may seem at first hand to be a blessing while one is shopping or enjoying a bottle of the local wine with your plat du jour.

This blessing tends to make us lazy and unwilling to learn another language and does not alter the fact that the European coastguard needless to say, issue the weather forecast in the local language ie; French in France, Spanish in Spain etc.

I must confess, the first time I listened to a forecast in French was after a trip from the Bay de Morlaix to L'Aberwrac'h. The trip began with a light wind on the beam. We sailed between Roscoff and Ile de Batz with the tide in clear sunshine but having past Roscoff a sea fog descended. Fog at sea is one thing that I really dislike and this fog continued to thicken, the last ten miles of our trip being completed with eyes straining, the visibility at times less than a boat length. The fog is bad enough to travel through but our trip was made worse by the mournful wailing of a nearby fog horn to warn of the nearby dangers for the last hour and did nothing to cheer one up.

There are two entrance channels into L'Aberwrac'h. The larger called The Grand Chenal is well lit and best for strangers. The first we approach is the smaller Chenal de la Malouine, a narrow short cut from NE, the almanac states: use only by day and in good weather, it is very shallow and rocky at low tide. Having carried the tide on our trip, we arrive just after low tide. Wishing to get out of the fog and into port asap. this is the channel we decide to enter. As we past through this rocky passage to L'Aberwrac'h we met two other boats. One grounded just past a rock painted red, (the rock being a port hand mark.) We stopped and asked if they needed assistance and were relieved to hear that they were not holed and could manage. The other, a yacht leaving port, was traveling straight towards us, to our mind much too quickly for the conditions. He loomed out of the fog passing us close on the starboard side; he hailed us for information as to the visibility from where we had come. Our reply and suggestion was that it would be prudent to stay in port rather than continue his trip fell on stony ground, as he quickly disappeared in the swirling mist.

We continued on into the river where needlessly to say the fog soon cleared as quickly as it had appeared. On reflection, had we realized the foggy conditions, we would have waited for clearer conditions, both us and the other two boats were equipped with radar. The radar was very useful for showing the other boat heading towards us but it did not help the other boat who grounded on a the submerged rock. Once again the plotter for us proved to be the best piece of safety equipment but having now seen the smaller Chenal de la Malouine at low tide I would not care to use it at springs.

Our next intended passage plan, subject to us getting a favourable weather forecast with no adverse winds or fog, was to leave L'Aberwrac'h the following day and head down the Channel du Four to Camaret near Brest or further into the Rade.

We listened to the forecast on radio 4 but required more detail of the inshore forecast rather than Biscay, which is a very large area and inshore quite often very different from the forecast offshore.

To get a more detailed forecast we needed to listen to the local French forecast they sensibly split the area we were intending to sail in to *Manche Ouest & Nord Gascogne*.

We listened to the local forecast on the VHF in French. I am ashamed to say that my understanding of it was pathetic; I could not tell if it would be foggy or clear.

To be fair with practice one can improve. The forecast itself is given in a similar manner to the one from the English coastguard ie: by first giving the general synopsis then the area forecasts. Having again listened carefully to the French forecast, Sue and I then spent an hour with the English/French dictionary trying to find what the words *buffer sank* meant. Having given up none the wiser, all was explained the following day by another yachtie, an English lady, who taught French in her local school, explaining to us that what sounded like *buffer sank* was in fact the wind strength ie. Beaufort being the wind scale, the strength force five.

We have had reasonable success while sailing in other European countries obtaining the weather forecast by using an AM, FM, radio, the AM being the old medium wave having a much greater listening range than the later stereo FM band. The times of the broadcasts from these local stations are printed in your Macmillan nautical almanac.

The easy option for receiving up to date weather forecasts while cruising is by installing a stand-alone receiver. The two main types of receiver pass the information to you by using either Navtex stations, or the other popular receiver "the weatherman" uses German forecasts sent from Germany. The big advantages of these stand alone receivers being that they leave you free to do other things. You do not have to remember to turn either the VHF or your radio on at the specific times that the forecast is being transmitted or stay on board waiting for the transmission. ie: once you have programmed in your sailing area, the stand alone receiver will keep you updated several times a day. Each system has their advantages, they both give you the shipping forecast and warn of any impending gale warnings. The weatherman also gives a 5 day forecast that can be very useful when passage planning and give you adequate time to run for comfortable shelter. One thing it doesn't do in Biscay is to give an inshore forecast ie: *Manch Ouest* or *Nord Gascogne*. This is a pity as it manages to give the inshore forecast in Great Britain and France along the English Channel. To get *Manch Ouest & Nord Gascogne* you need Navtex. Both these units consume negligible electricity, indeed far less than the modern VHF or radio.

The latest modern way of getting the latest weather information on your boat is by using the Internet and many owners now take a laptop computer on their boats. The laptop can also be used for communicating with friends and family, watching the latest television programs or for plotting when loaded with suitable software. The disadvantage for most of us being the amount of battery power it will consume with extended use. If it is to be used for plotting an extra 12volt battery will be required and suitable means of charging it while on the boat.

To connect to the Internet from your boat by using wifi usually incurs a cost, as most wifi hotspots at marinas are secure. The UK, however, has many unsecured hotspots and with prior knowledge you may be able to surf the Internet for free. Once across the Channel unsecured wifi is by comparison very rare. However, most French marinas with wifi have it

set up so that you can get on their web page. Their web page then allows you to access information with regard to the marina and more importantly access Meteo France for all the weather and safety information. This works well for safety issues but it will not let you check your e-mails or visit your home page. To do this you will have to pay a fee to the marina. If you intend to marina hop in France you will find that many but not all marinas will allow you wifi access once you have paid for a week or month ie. the fee is transferable.

There is another way of connecting to the Internet from your boat see article below.

What is a Dongle.

My son Andy brought me a Dongle for my birthday (there were one or two rude comments) but he said Dad its to help you connect to the Internet when you are on the boat.

I have a wireless router set up at home which connects me to the Internet using Broadband technology and I have tried this on the boat using what they call Wocfi, which is just some thing like a kitchen woc to help locate a near by station that is unsecured and allows you to work through it.

There are also what they call hotspots, sites where you can log on to the internet using there services, a lot of yacht clubs marina's will allow you to connect through them but you need to get a code or password before you can do it.

I have found that the range of these sites and your own local equipment is very limited and if you are some distance from these sights or even on a mooring, it is very difficult to get a good strong signal or even a signal at all.

The Dongle works on mobile phone technology, you buy your dongle through one of the phone networks and then you can buy data access you may be on a contract and have to pay a regular monthly payment or you can get pay as you go and pay for 24 hours 7 days or a month but you need to read the small print as you will probably have a data allowance, and you may use it all up before your time is up. I think with most networks the data access ends at the end of the time period even though you might not have used it up but I do believe this is not the same with Vodaphone network pay as you go which allows you to continue until your data allowance is used up..but you need to check this out before you buy.

You are now able to get better mobile access to the internet via your dongle and the mobile phone network, so like the mobile phone the signal strength will depend on your location and you can always check how good the networks are in your area before you buy, and you can also call up all the hotspots in your area which may or may not be any help to you.

Your laptop may have a wireless card, which will help you to connect through these hotspots but not all of them are free so try to keep an eye on what it is costing you.

My main use is to get extra weather information while on a cruise and to keep in contact with family by email.

With emails you may be able to work off line and transfer the file when connected, but with looking at weather data or similar try to know what you want to look at so that you can get it downloaded to your computer and then you can sign off, you can then take your time looking at your weather data etc!

Bob Freeman.

CL.8.80 THINK AGAIN.

(4) Hon. Sec. Office 196 Harewood Ave. Queens Pk. Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7BQ

Let us now join "TARA DOS" whose cruise last year of 2900 Nm. continues in the Mediterranean from Malta.

SUMMER CRUISE IN THE MEDITERANIAN

We didn't see very much of the town – but what we did, did not impress us unduly so we decided to carry on to VENTOTENE. We left Forio at 1345 hours and reached Ventotene at 1900 hours with a mixture of gentle sailing and motoring. Ventotene is fascinating. There are two harbours – one, modern with long quays and good anchorage off a sandy beach. The other is the ancient Roman Galley harbour – carved out of living rock. We chose the old one – and it was crowded, with other yachts, all with the same ideas as ours. We tied up to a Roman bollard to which, no doubt, many galleys had made fast 2000 years ago. We walked through a tunnel carved by the Romans to a lovely beach on the other side of the headland – and we revelled in the place!

However, the "name of the game" was to get to Sardinia so, after two nights there, we set forth once again, heading for PONSA. This was to be our setting-off point for the crossing to SARDINIA.

Log entries for the trip: 1100 hours: cast off. Course for Ponsa 290. Wind 290!!
 1500 hours: wind more southerly. Sailing very close-hauled
 1900 hours: at anchor in Ponsa Bay

Ponsa was a delight – in every way. We made no attempt to get alongside any jetty. They were crowded with every conceivable type of craft moored 3 astern of one another!! Why – I cannot imagine. There is a wide, safe bay and one can anchor anywhere in perfect safety. The only thing is – you have to dinghy ashore, but what chore is that?

The town is very pleasant and interesting and the coastline, both to the north and south is spectacular offering delightful bays in which to anchor. This island too is full of Roman works. There are numerous caves carved out of the rocks to provide berthing for galleys and storage for their cargoes. They really were an industrious nation – or, at least, they made their slaves do a lot of good work!

We arrived at PONSA, SARDINIA, on 2nd. July and the weather deteriorated almost immediately. Twice we went round the island to have a look – once north about and once south about – and found big seas and contrary winds – so each time, we ran back to the comparative safety and comfort of Ponsa harbour. We felt that if there was any place where we had to wait for the weather, Ponsa was about the best. Each day we sailed up or down the coast to some little bay to swim and laze, while the wind blew its heart out on the other side of the island.

Eventually, however, things settled down again and on 29 July we set sail for our long leg to the northern end of Sardinia – nearly 200 miles. For the first 3 hours there was no wind at all, that is from 0530 – 0830, but thereafter we scarcely used the engines and by 1745 hours, 30 July, Sardinia was in sight ahead.

Quite incredible, in fact, because we didn't take a sun sight nor did we get a bearing, yet we altered course just 10 degrees and ran straight into PORT CERVO harbour to tie up alongside at 1945 hours – dead on schedule.

Thus far it had been a quite remarkable trip to us. On the odd occasions when there had been contrary winds we had had time to stay in harbour and wait for a change – one thing we have never had time to do before. And we lapped it up! This kind of sailing we like. On top of that those little Dolphins had given no trouble at all – and they had been used for many hours on end.

To us that seemed an end of our “jollying”, yet it was not so. We spent a month in port Cervo looking, without any envy, at the magnificent cruisers and expensive racing yachts sailing out each day and coming back each night. Some of them are beautiful – not all. Porto Cervo is very much a rich man’s marina. We, of course, anchored in the bay for nothing and nobody queried us when we went alongside to water ship. The supermarkets there are expensive – as one would expect – but the quality of the goods is also good. The sailing area around the north coast of Sardinia and in the Straits of Bonifacio is absolutely superb. There are little islands and bays where one can anchor in idyllic surroundings to be found wherever one sails. The prevailing wind is through the Straits from the west or north west and it blows strongly nearly all the time – but all the easterly facing coast is available to the cruising man and there are dozens of places to visit.

Eventually, our friend joined us. She had volunteered to sail back to MALLORCA where she kept her catamaran. Also, another friend opted to come with us – so we had a crew of 4 for the last leg. So we had a superb crew, no worries and no contentions. In fact, for the first (and only) time in the trip these qualities were to be tried, if only gently!

We bade goodbye to our other crew and left Porto Cervo on 4 September, to find a nice easterly blowing – what a change for these parts! Our course was through the islands and on the Bonifacio on the south coast of CORSICA. We had a splendid sail with the wind up to force 5-6, crashing along. Bonifacio is not the easiest harbour to identify but we had visited it (by ferry) during our prolonged stay in port Cervo so I felt fairly certain of our landfall. That was OK, but, just off the entrance to the long, narrow cala we dropped our sails and started the engines – or tried to!.

The starboard one gave a hiccup or two and seemed to settle down, but the port one, no way would it go. One glance in the engine compartment was enough. Water was dripping from the tube linking the exhaust manifold to the silencer!!

Never – but never – before have I had that trouble and I have had our boat out in some pretty rough seas. Somehow a wave had hit the exhaust outlet strongly enough to force itself round the “0” bend into the pipe and the engine. Anyway – the starboard engine was working and I thought that that would get us into the harbour OK, so we carried on, rather slowly! The entrance to Bonifacio is long and narrow and goes from SW to NE. The wind was from the NE, by now very nearly force 8. It was howling down the cala. We crawled along, bit by bit, working our way into the harbour. Then for the first time in 3 months, one of the cylinders oiled up. No way would one cylinder push us against that wind – and, at the moment I looked astern and saw one of the huge inter-island ferries lining up to enter harbour. Then the lord for roller reefing!. We rounded up, set the jib and had control, running out to sea again. In fact the ferry altered course to starboard along the coast and I thought, how very courteous of him. Of course, it wasn’t for us that he waited to enter. Some 10 mins later another ferry came steaming out of Bonifacio at a rate of knots. By that time, however, we had got to grips with the problem, or, at least, our crew had. He disconnected the exhaust pipe and poured a pint of water into the bilge. Then we ran the engine with the bplugs out and sprayed water over everything. Eventually he put the plugs back and tried again. After 6 more changes of plugs the motor ran again quite sweetly, apparently none the worse for a dose of salt water. The starboard motor was no trouble – a plug change and all was OK – so in due course we ran happily into Bonifacio harbour ...but it had been a moment of tension.

The marina at Bonifacio is crowded and, I believe, expensive, but there is a pleasant little cove on the port side as you enter, with good holding. We put in there and, being a Catalac, were able to go right up towards the sandy beach before dropping anchor in peaceful, sheltered surroundings. Never, but never would I want a deep-keel boat. I cannot account the number of occasions on which I have gone close inshore than any other boat and have anchored in complete safety when the others have been swinging about and threatening to drag their anchors set in 3 or 4 metres.

We only spent one night in Bonifacio and then set off westwards. The northwest corner of Sardinia comes up in a great horn to Caprara Point. We could have cleared that and headed straight to menorca or we could have gone a little to the south, found an anchorage or harbour for the night, and have gone through a narrow passage in the horn and thus away to sea. We headed for Punta Caprara, keeping our options open, when we set off at 0500 hours on the 5 September, the wind was right behind us. We boomed out the genoa and creamed along with some fair seas coming up behind us. Just before 1200 hours we sighted the Punta ahead... and had a committee meeting!

We had, in fact, been strongly recommended to call into a small town some 30 miles down the west coast, called Alghero, and this rather influenced our decision, coupled with the fact that we had no time schedule other than that we wanted to be back in Mallorca by mid-September. The almanac mentions a small harbour facing NE just south of the base of the horn and we had been told that this had recently been developed to cater for yachts – so we turned left. That beautiful easterly wind, now on our beam, began to die away and within an hour we were facing into a full southerly force 7. However, quick to come, quick to go! It didn't last long and not much more than an hour later we were motoring with no wind at all. You get used to that sort of thing in the Med.

The harbour at Stintino was excellent. There is a long cove which had recently been dredged and had new concrete holes on either side and there was an unbelievable number of empty spaces. We tied up alongside in perfect security and comfort at 1730 hours to be welcomed ashore by a good friend who had been with us for much of the time in Porto Cervo. There is little one can say in favour of the village of Stintino. It is raw, new and not at all well planned, but it is such a happy place. Everybody was smiling and friendly and it was the time of the village fiesta. We stayed until, on the 8th, we made an attempt to get away.

We set off at 0900 hours and motored the few miles north to the narrow passage which separates the mainland from the horn and turned westward, to pick up the transit points to guide us through. There was not much wind but the long blow of the past few days had set up a large sea and waves were breaking either side of the channel. Indeed, it was impossible to identify the channel at all. To have followed the transits we would have had to sail within 50 yards of a rocky island which was almost completely covered in spray – so I chickened out and turned tail back to Stintino. Once that decision was made there was a palpable sigh of relief from all 3 crew members, and I called for a quick whisky! We didn't regret turning back in any way. The previous evenings there had been a superb concert in the village square – brass bands, a remarkable display of country dancing and a good disco. This evening was the last night of the fiesta and they gave one of the finest firework displays we have ever seen. The whole village and many visitors were out having fun – and we joined in.

One thing I ought to mention, in case any readers go that way, the almanac shows a good anchorage just near the south end of Asinara Island. On his way, our friend put in there and was about to drop anchor when he was greeted by furious shouting from a group of military personnel ashore. They were all armed and one put a shot over his masthead. Apparently the place is a penal colony of some importance!!

There are actually 2 passages out to sea westwards. The southerly one, which no book says is navigable, is! Next morning 4 of us (yachts, that is) followed a Frenchman through. He knew it well and was our willing guide – but I am not sure that I would like to attempt it without him. Once through we waved goodbye and headed south along the coast. That afternoon, 9th September, we put into a large bay facing south – Porto Conti – and found a nice little cove. Next day we sailed on 8 miles to Alghero town, still with our friends in company. We liked the bay of Alghero very much and, had we more time, we could well have spent some days exploring. The town too is very pleasant and the shops are good – though we were badly caught for a round of beers at a tourist café in the square. However, time was marching – as it ever does – and at 12.45 hours on 11 September, we set off for the long leg to menorca, some 200 miles due west.

This, I think, was the most trouble-free voyage we have ever done. The wind was a little north of NW and it stayed there all day and all night, only varying between force 2 and force 5.

Only once did we use the engines – and then for little over an hour. The sun shone by day and the stars glittered by night. What more could anyone want!!!

At 1600 we got a bearing on Mahon 260 – dead ahead. At 0500 next morning we could see Cabo Favaritx light and at 0715 hours, 13 September, we were entering harbour. All the way across we had kept in touch with our friends on VHF and we found it very cheering to exchange current experiences. They have an Islander 32 a very light, fast boat. Nevertheless, they only arrived 4 hours before us!! We had anchored in a little cove and next day collected a large pail of mussels, which we cooked in wine for supper. Delicious.



On 16 September, we cleared Mahon harbour at 0645 hours, had a lovely sail, caught 3 large Bonito and entered Porto Petro harbour at 2300 hours. End of a long, long voyage!

Last year 2900 miles and this year 1300 miles.

This, I think, will satisfy us – for a while. One thing is certain – our boat satisfies us. She is just the right size and we have complete confidence in her ability to look after us and she is so comfortable to live in.