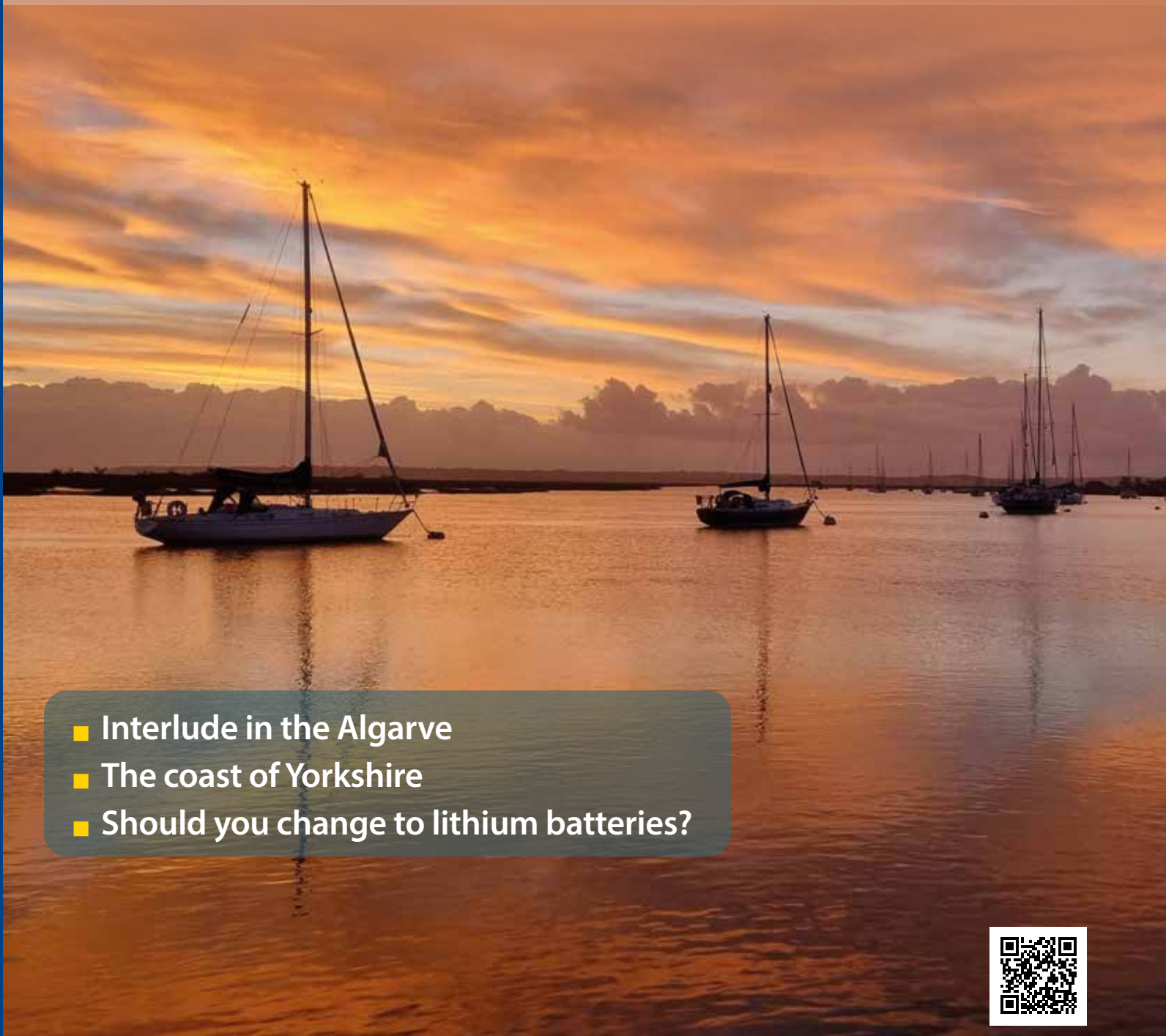


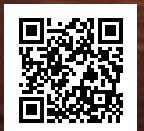


# Cruising

[www.theca.org.uk](http://www.theca.org.uk)



- Interlude in the Algarve
- The coast of Yorkshire
- Should you change to lithium batteries?



# New season, new savings

The CA's President, **Derek Lumb**, is just one of many CA members who finds that his discounts on products and services means he makes a surplus on his CA subscription cost



The Cruising Association has two seasons, a summer season where we go sailing and a winter season where we talk about going sailing! As I write this the winter season is over and things appear to be finally returning to normal after Covid. Most events went ahead at CA House with respectable attendance, albeit generally slightly lower than we had pre-Covid. In addition, there was a decent season of Zoom talks, led by CA London with their hybrid talks (with an audience and simultaneously on Zoom). Other sections have done separate events – a seminar at CA House plus one or more Zoom talks. RATS, for the first time, hosted a hugely informative evening at CA House on their current activities which was also available to members free online and to non-members at a charge. All this takes a huge amount of organising and my thanks go to the Section volunteers, the speakers and also to Ania and Jeremy for looking after us in CA House.

With all this behind us I am about to head off to my boat in France for some sailing at last. I do this at a time when, economically, things are challenging. We have high inflation, an increasing tax burden and for most of us an income which is not keeping up. In these circumstances, I think most of us look at our outgoings and see if there is anything we no longer get value from. That old gym membership might well fall into that category but I hope the CA does not.

There have been a number of years where I have made a surplus on my subscription cost as a result of the savings I have made from discounts and this year I find myself in the same position. I switched from an insurer that does not give a CA discount to one that does and the saving was considerably in excess of my CA subscription. Insurance is of course one of the big potential savings but there are plenty of other possibilities. There are several sailmakers and, given the price of new sails, the 10%-plus offered can save you several years' subs! If you add in the smaller savings like those

from equipment suppliers and marinas it is well worthwhile. Above all, check it out before you buy – there are few things more frustrating than finding out after the event that you could have got a discount.

*If you stay at CA House, try the N° 15 bus: it runs from Limehouse to the West End*

If you fancy a short break in our capital city, don't overlook our cabins at CA House which provide an economical and convenient place to stay in London. They are now all double (one has twin beds) with ensuite shower rooms. (If you are a regular, you may like to know that the plumbing has just been replaced and the decorations freshened up). If you haven't been to CA House it is a 10-minute walk to Limehouse DLR station, then five minutes on the train to Bank underground station. Less-known is the number 15 bus, which runs from Limehouse station to Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus, perfect for the West End and avoiding the need to change trains.

Finally, as volunteers, we often forget that perhaps the most enjoyable part

of being a CA members is the pleasure of meeting up with other CA members in out-of-the-way places. Among many vivid memories I particularly remember meeting up with Roger and Kristin Saunders, contributors to the Baltic Section's *Cruising Guide to Sweden*, in the Wasahammen. Over a drink or two they shared with us their favourite places in the Stockholm archipelago, which offers a bewildering choice. As a result, we found some fabulous places which greatly enriched our cruise. I also remember the strength of Edward's G&Ts on *Polar Bear* (and not much else of that evening!), and walking our dogs with Caroline and Adrian on the beautiful north end of Guernsey in 2022.

I have said it before and I will say it again – the CA *is* its members. This summer, make a point of watching for the CA burgee, the CA member's flag or the Polaris flag. If you see any of them, go and introduce yourselves. If you want to find out who you are meeting, then you can look up the boat in the Yearbook or on the website under Find a CA Member, which is on the Home menu.

I wish you fair winds and good company.



*Another membership benefit: walking dogs with other CA members in Guernsey in 2022*

## Lithium batteries: are they the right option for your boat?



Stylised LiFePO<sub>4</sub> batteries.  
Artwork from Openclipart/flo moto

Lithium batteries and more specifically Lithium-Ion (Li-ion) batteries are used extensively in consumer products and electric cars and they have a number of attractive features for use on recreational vessels compared with lead-acid batteries.

### Advantages

- They weigh less and are smaller for a given capacity (they have a higher energy density)
- They can be discharged to a low level without significant detriment to their life
- They can be charged quickly using higher currents
- They hold their full charge for long periods of storage
- They can be deep cycled many more times.

### Disadvantages

- They are considerably more expensive than lead-acid batteries
- They require a much more complex control system, plus different fuses and wiring
- You may also need a new alternator and drive belt
- If not installed correctly, there is a risk that they will ignite, creating a fire that is difficult to extinguish
- From an environmental point of view, they are much more difficult to recycle than lead-acid batteries
- In addition, lithium is a scarce resource.

If you have purchased a new boat which uses Li-ion batteries, provided it was from a reputable builder, they should have been installed safely. However, if you own a boat in which Li-ion batteries have been retrofitted or if you are planning an installation yourself there are some important points that need to be considered.

### Lithium battery chemistry & fire risk

Li-ion batteries contain a flammable

electrolyte, and if they do ignite, there can be a devastating explosion and fire. There are a number of causes of these fires, such as overheating, electrical short-circuit, overcharging and mechanical damage. Because of these risks the whole battery system has to be carefully designed and installed, but a properly designed and maintained system should pose no greater risk than a system with lead-acid batteries.

Remember that most of us already have Li-ion batteries on our boats in mobile phones, computers and other devices, and we use them with almost no thought to the fire safety issues.

We should also remember that most of us have other dangerous substances on board, namely petrol and gas. We understand the risks of these and we manage them accordingly. We can do the same with Li-ion batteries.

There are many different types of Li-ion batteries, each of which has pros and cons. Some chemistries are particularly susceptible to thermal ramp up and if not managed very carefully can be a serious fire risk. Hence, these are not used in applications for leisure purposes. For safety reasons most marine batteries use **LiFePO<sub>4</sub>** (lithium iron phosphate), normally referred to as **LFP** (lithium ferrophosphate) batteries. These are more resistant to thermal abuse than are batteries using other Li-ion chemistry and they are currently considered to be the safest Li-ion batteries on the market.

### Why choose lithium batteries?

As we have already noted Li-ion batteries offer advantages, but there are some downsides. So if you are thinking about changing your old lead-acid batteries there are some questions you might ask yourself.

- **Do I want to gain more battery capacity in the same space on board or reduce the space taken up by batteries?** LFP batteries will do this for you because their energy

density is up to four times that of a lead-acid battery.

- **Is weight an issue for me (particularly on smaller craft)?** LFP batteries weigh significantly less than lead-acid batteries of equivalent capacity – perhaps as little as one fifth.
- **Do I want my batteries to last longer before they need replacing?** LFP batteries can typically be charged and discharged two to three times more often than lead-acid batteries.
- **Do I think these benefits are worth the higher initial costs of the batteries and of the system?** The costs of the batteries alone could be double the cost of simply replacing your lead-acid batteries, and system changes will add to this. The benefits may be worth it, but for many cruisers it will be hard to justify on cost alone.
- **Can I install it myself, or pay an electrician?** In order to do the installation yourself, you need to fully understand the system and its design. Alternatively, consider whether the cost of employing a competent marine electrician is worth the benefits gained?

Normally you will **still need a lead-acid battery as the starter battery** for your diesel engine, with a DC-DC charger, as an LFP battery might not deliver the cold cranking amps to start a diesel engine.

### Safe installation & use

Start by planning the whole system carefully and sourcing the batteries from a reputable manufacturer who has complied with all the necessary safety requirements. Avoid bargain offers for

drop-in batteries, on the assumption that if it seems too good to be true it probably isn't true!

It is very important that **the LFP batteries are not simply installed in place of lead-acid batteries using the same circuitry and chargers**. This is dangerous and could lead to unexpected power failings at critical moments, self-destruction of alternators or even to explosion and fire. LFP batteries cannot be dealt with as stand-alone add-ons and they must only be installed as part of a well-designed system.

The heart of this is the Battery Management System (BMS), an electronic system which controls the charge rate, detects any problems and manages the connection and disconnection of batteries in a controlled manner. You can't simply fit LFP batteries without redesigning the whole charging system. You will almost certainly require different

fuses and wiring, and probably a much larger alternator and new drive belt system to realise value from the upgrade. The project typically grows and ends up more expensive than mere battery replacement.

The decision to change to a system using LFP batteries is not one to be taken lightly. It requires careful design, planning, and installation – something that an inexperienced amateur might not have the skills to deal with. If in doubt, don't take the risk, and employ a professional with the relevant knowledge. You should also discuss the proposal with your insurance company, as we have heard of cases where insurance has been refused for a retrofitted Li-ion battery installation.

### The future

Developments are taking place all the time and in the near future new types

of battery will become widely available. One example is Sodium-ion, which although having a slightly lower energy density than Li-ion, offers a safer and cheaper alternative- and it's much more environmentally friendly.

New forms of lead acid battery (such as those with carbon electrodes) are also emerging, which may in time provide similar benefits more simply.

Rick Ballard



### Useful links

- [www.yachtingmonthly.com/gear/how-to-install-lithium-boat-batteries-89782](http://www.yachtingmonthly.com/gear/how-to-install-lithium-boat-batteries-89782)
- [www.12voltplanet.co.uk/upgrading-to-lithium-batteries.html](http://www.12voltplanet.co.uk/upgrading-to-lithium-batteries.html)
- [www.powertechsystems.eu/home/tech-corner/lithium-ion-battery-advantages](http://www.powertechsystems.eu/home/tech-corner/lithium-ion-battery-advantages)

## Orca incidents already increasing in 2023

It is worrying that 2023 has started with many more interactions than last year. This year there have been 26 to the end of April, compared to 10 last year, with many damaged, one of which was so badly damaged it sank while under tow.

Scientists are no nearer understanding why this particular group of orcas are engaging in this behaviour, so currently most of the focus is on helping crews avoid interactions and on reducing the damage if one starts. A number of initiatives are helping to identify where the orca are, so crews can avoid those areas or take additional safe action such as travelling in shallower water close to the shore.

Grupo de Trabajo Orca Atlantica (GTOA), CA's partner in this work, has a Traffic Light System on its website which shows where the risks are higher. These warnings are updated regularly based on reports of interactions. GTOA have also launched an app, **GT Orcas**, on which crews can report live sightings. These reports are publicly available in real time. There is another app called Orcinus which serves the same purpose.

Since orcas do not move more than about 100 miles in 24 hours this can give an indication of which waters are likely to be safer. However there is a warning that on occasions last year the orca group split, and interacted with yachts several hundred miles apart.

### What should crews should do if an interaction starts?

The advice is to drop sails and stop, but there are two opposing thoughts on what to do next. One option, which the CA is



gathering more data on, is to **reverse if the conditions permit**. If the orcas are spotted, reversing before the first strike is beneficial. Otherwise, the CA is trying to establish whether reversing in a circle, or not, works better.

An option being recommended by a Spanish scientist is to **motor as fast as possible to the shore**. This is based on the thinking that the orca group as a whole is hunting, and the few orcas engaged in the interaction will be reluctant to leave their group to follow the yacht. He is trying this method with a motor boat to see what results can be achieved; however a yacht following this advice **sustained damage** while motoring towards shallows after sighting orcas.

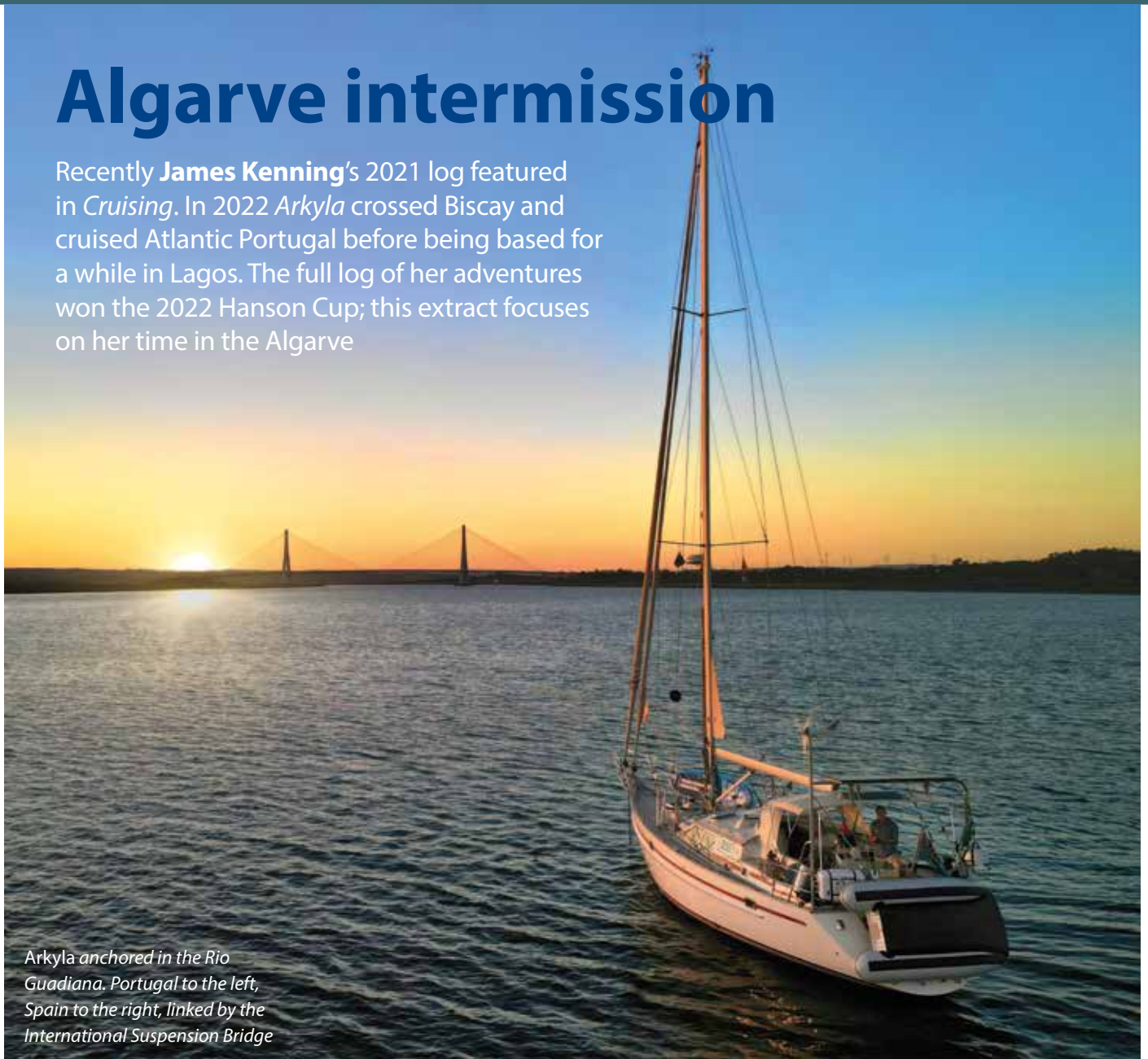
The CA project team has updated the website with the latest advice, and to capture the data needed by sailors and scientists. It has also been very active in publicising the problem, as it is apparent from the reports that some of the crews are unaware of the danger the orca present in these waters. To that end the team has posted regularly on social media, it has engaged with sailing organisations in Portugal and Spain and has approached those in France. There have also been webinars for audiences in Europe and the UK to try to help crews stay safe.

John Burbeck



# Algarve intermission

Recently **James Kenning's** 2021 log featured in *Cruising*. In 2022 *Arkyla* crossed Biscay and cruised Atlantic Portugal before being based for a while in Lagos. The full log of her adventures won the 2022 Hanson Cup; this extract focuses on her time in the Algarve



*Arkyla anchored in the Rio Guadiana. Portugal to the left, Spain to the right, linked by the International Suspension Bridge*

**Lagos** – our new cruising hub. Since our arrival in early July, we'd had plenty of opportunity to explore Lagos. It's a good seasonal base to explore the Algarve and further afield toward the Med. The marina is modern, well protected in terms of weather and physical security, and is efficiently run by a friendly set of staff. The nearby Sopromar boatyard has all the expertise required for any level of repairs or refits and has an excellent (if sometimes pricey) chandlery. The marina is fronted by a number of rather brash bars and restaurants that seem to cater mostly to the daytrip and excursion clientele, but it is only a short walk into the old town where there is any number of more traditional places to eat and drink. A nearby supermarket and superb off-licence makes provisioning a doddle. Rail and bus terminals are also just a short walk away for fast and easy public transport to Faro airport. Oh yes, and the

sun shines here. A lot. All year round.

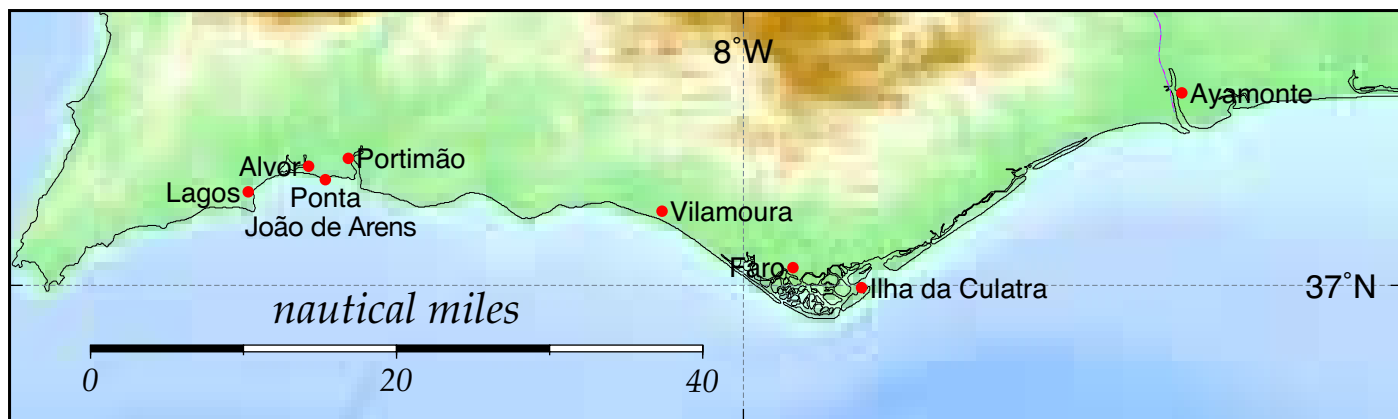
Our plan was to cruise the Algarve coast as far as the Rio Guadiana and the border with Spain, then retrace our wake back to Lagos, a round trip of about 180 miles. Having spent the previous month sailing with the ARC Portugal rally, it felt a little odd to slip lines and head out of our berth alone, despite years of previous solo cruising.

Despite good intentions, we were somewhat late in getting away, so we just went through the swing bridge, along the breakwater, and into the Baia de Lagos anchorage, a grand distance of 1.5M! However, having spent our entire passage down from the UK overnighting in marinas, we were longing to be back on the hook again where we both feel happiest.

Instead of the noise of bars and restaurants, we were now serenaded

by the gentle slapping of waves against hull as *Arkyla* lightly danced around her chain. Relaxing in the cockpit we watched arriving yachts drop anchors, tripper boats head out to the Ponte de Piedade grottos, and youngsters race their Optimist dinghies (using us as a windward mark). Maybe we could have done with a few less high-speed drive-





Adrenaline junkies off Lagos

bys from the jet boat and its cargo of adrenalin junkies but, all in all, life was good. Through the afternoon and into the evening, the wind freshened to 15-20 knots, but we felt safe in the firm holding and turned in for the night.

Come the morning, the anchorage was a perfect calm so we decided to head over to the caves. The grottos are only a short dinghy ride away and are a wonderful place to visit, especially if you can rise early and beat the crowds. With some careful rock dodging, here we found our own private little beach to relax and paddle around spotting the tiny crabs that scuttle around the rocky shoreline. As the place began to get busier, we headed back to *Arkyla*, and weighed anchor, to push on eastwards.

**Alvor.** Just a short (3M) hop along the bay is Alvor. Given the high spring tide, and our lack of local knowledge, we chose to anchor in the entrance behind the breakwaters rather than pushing all the way up to the town, where the pilot guide warns of limited space and depth for anchoring. Even where we were anchored, care is needed in selecting where to drop and how much scope to lay as the mud flats could easily catch you unawares on the turn of tide or wind.

Alvor is a mecca for kite surfers so, seeing scores of them speeding and leaping all around us, we should not have been surprised that the wind maintained a healthy 15-20+ knots from mid-afternoon until well into the night. The chop and spring tides deterred us from launching the paddleboards. Feeling a little isolated,

we decided next morning to up anchor and keep heading east along the coast. With our draft (1.8m), we might come back at neaps.

**Ponta João de Arens.** In the Algarve, if you become restless at one spot, it's never far to find another. Our original plan was to push to Portimão, anchoring for lunch along the way behind Ponta João de Arens another 3M east along the coast. Arriving mid-morning, the anchorage was relatively empty, so we dropped the hook and settled back to have a lazy time in the cockpit. This is a beautiful spot and, although the pilot guide says this is "probably only a day anchorage", we decided it was well protected from the forecast W-NW winds

### *We dropped the hook and settled back to have a lazy time in the cockpit*

and chose to stay overnight. From midday onwards, the calm of the morning was replaced with the coming and going of vessels of all sizes, kayakers exploring the caves, party boats, and the occasional jet ski or towed inflatable zooming close by. By 1700, almost at the flick of a switch, tranquillity was restored and just a few yachts were left at anchor for the night. Again, the wind had picked up through the afternoon to 15-20 knots, but the holding was good, and the cliffs gave us excellent shelter from both wind and swell; we slept silently and soundly!

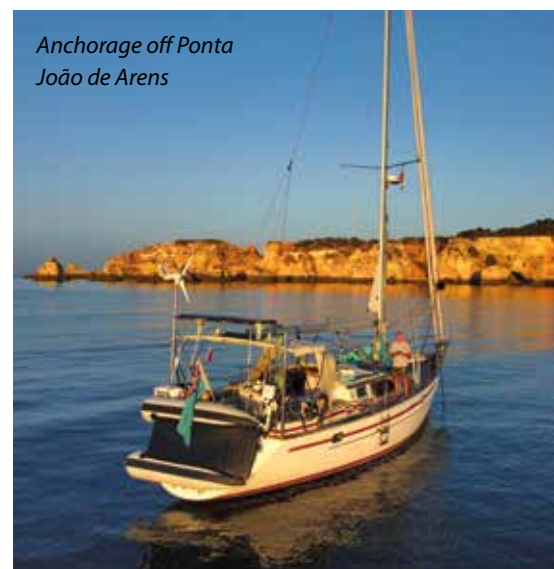
The morning saw four boats motionless at anchor, their chains dropping vertically to the seabed, and a dead calm with not a ripple on the water, plus the most beautiful light painting the orange cliffs that had protected us so well during the night; I rushed to launch the drone to capture *Arkyla* in the scene at its most perfect.

It was also the ideal time to paddleboard and swim among the grotto caves. This

is a magical place to explore with many small beaches accessible only from the water. We hauled our boards out on one such private strip of sand and took the plunge. Tropical these waters are not! Even wearing neoprene tops, the chill of the water was enough to take the breath away. My intent to regularly dive the boat, check the set of the anchor, and scrape slime off *Arkyla's* bottom went unrealised for the duration of the cruise. Still, we loved this spot and gazed in awe at the wonderful colours of a traditional boat, laden with tourists for a sunset cruise, as it was lit up against a glorious dusk sky.

**Portimão & Ferraguda.** Another bunny hop to the Rio Arade upon which Portimão and Ferragudo lie on the west and east banks respectively. Just inside the entrance, protected by a pair of breakwaters, is the main anchorage off Ferraguda's Praia Grande. It's a busy place, with some wash from speeding boats and noise from the Portimão beach, but there is no shortage of space, and we anchored near historic tall ship *Te Vega*.

A problem we found throughout the Algarve was where to safely leave the dinghy for excursions ashore. The "Lagos Navigators" Facebook group cautioned that leaving the boat tied



Anchorage off Ponta João de Arens



*Culatra offered incredible light shows at dawn, dusk, moonrise and sunset*



to the Ferraguda quay (as advised in the pilot guide) can lead to altercations with the local fishing fleet, so we instead hauled the tender up the small beach opposite. We later discovered that this is also ill-advised as boats and/or motors have been stolen from this spot; we were lucky, though I did securely padlock the engine with steel cable. If wanting to explore old town Portimão, dinghies can be left at Portimão marina by the fuel pontoon, at a cost... €20 for four hours! An Uber into town is €3-4 from here.

Alternatively, you can drive a dinghy ashore between the marked landing zones on Praia Grande and the guards are happy to keep an eye on it during their duty hours. From the south end of this beach there is a (well hidden) path that takes you toward the east mole and gives access to the lighthouse and cliffs overlooking the coast, a great walk with some fantastic views.

**Portimão to Vilamoura.** West of Albufeira, the coast is steep sided with many coves, stacks and caves. To the east the land becomes low-lying with few opportunities for any protected anchoring, so we took the easy approach into Vilamoura for some rest ashore. With a stiff westerly breeze blowing us off the reception pontoon, the presence of two *marineros* to take our lines was most welcomed. It is not cheap in Vilamoura, but service is first class; once checked in at reception, we followed the *marineros*' RIB to our berth where the guys again took our lines. Typically, the finger pontoons are short, slender and decidedly wobbly!

Vilamoura has won the "Portuguese marina of the year" award for the past 11 years; the staff are friendly, helpful

and omnipresent and the pontoons are kept meticulously clean. There is good security, which is important given that the basin is surrounded by an urban jungle of public bars and restaurants, including eight or nine Irish bars, all a bit too noisy for us. Once Jenny was feeling better, we continued our journey east, stopping briefly at reception again to take on diesel and check out.

*Dinghies can be left at Portimão marina... at a cost of €20 for four hours!*

**Approaches to Faro and Ilha de Culatra.** With a respectable breeze, we had a super sail along the coast toward Barra Nova and the western entrance to Faro and the Culatra lagoon. We routed inside the fishing zone offshore Ilha da Barreta, clearly designated with yellow special markers, then furled all sail before making our entrance between the breakwaters. It is important to read the pilot guide before entering, as there are local regulations and fierce currents. We entered close to high water but were still thrown around in the whirlpools just outside the entrance; beware also the ubiquitous fishing pots and small fishing boats that anchor on the recommended line of approach.

Once inside the breakwaters we chose to push westwards between mud flats to the large zone between Olhão and Culatra town. This is a popular anchorage with good holding, although we were warned that unattended charter yachts can crash through the anchorage on a change of wind or tide!

Culatra was the highlight of our cruise. Not least because of the incredible light shows at dawn, dusk, moonrise and sunset. With calm waters this place is nothing short of serene and any effort taken to rise early from the bunk is fully rewarded with the magical changing colours that spread over the lagoon.

A visit to explore the island, with its Caribbean feel, should not be missed. The outer pontoon of the fishing harbour is one of the few places in the Algarve where it is safe, and free, to leave your dinghy! The town is slow to wake up, but this is the ideal time to wander among the wooden fisherman huts, scour the beach for shells, and take a gander at some of the abandoned boats in the drying part of the lagoon.

By lunchtime the numerous restaurants and mini markets are abuzz. We took a wander through the centre, impeccably clean, heading toward the boardwalk that takes you over the wetland dunes and spits you out on a long stretch of beautiful coastal sand. You can also catch a passenger ferry to Olhão... if you can find the correct schedule.

**Culatra to the Guadiana river.** It is not recommended to attempt the eastern exit from the lagoon so most yachts double back to the Farol breakwaters before heading eastward. It's 30M to the Guadiana bar which you should cross above half flood, so for us it was another dawn start on another windless morning; the breeze failed to set in all morning, so it was a motor all the way along the shallow low-lying coast. Along the way we passed a trawler and a scene reminiscent of Hitchcock's *The Birds* as a mass of gulls circled the boat and its crew hauling its catch – an

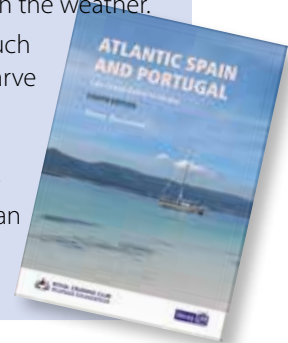


## Some lessons learned

- Algarve waters are not the warmest... a wetsuit top is a valuable accessory for swimming or paddle boarding.
- Finding places to safely leave a dinghy for runs ashore can be a challenge; make use of local communities, such as the Lagos Navigators, to gain local knowledge.
- The wind pattern is often

characterised by calm mornings and stiff breezes in the afternoon and evenings; plan your passages or at-anchor activities to match the weather.

- Fishing pots are as much a menace along the Algarve as they were down the Atlantic coast.
- Invest in a pilot guide; some lagoons or rivers can only be safely entered with this knowledge.



occupational hazard of the fishing life I guess!

Once across the bar and into the river, you first pass Vila Real de Santo Antonio on the Portuguese bank. I've been into the marina here some 20 years previously; the entrance is a mere 20m wide, space inside is very tight, and there is no protection from the current that runs fast through the berths. Call me a coward, but I wasn't prepared to risk the shiny gelcoat of my own boat! We continued upstream and settled in the wide anchorage opposite the northern end of Spanish Ayamonte; this is the last opportunity to anchor downstream of the International Suspension Bridge that spans the river. We dropped the hook and gently motored astern to set the Rocna. With a sudden jarring halt, we stopped dead in the water; my suspicion was that we had snagged something on the riverbed.

The wind, now a stiff breeze, kicked up quite a chop so we decided not to launch the dinghy to go exploring. The blow continued until sundown at which point we had a brief spell of calm and I was again able to launch the drone for some sunset shots of *Arkyla* against the striking backdrop of the Guadiana bridge. The respite in the wind was short lived however, and it soon piped up again to 25+ knots from the north. This was not so bad initially but once the tide had turned, and the boat began fighting wind against current, it became uncomfortable; an anchor watch was required overnight.

By morning, all was again calm. However, with more wind forecast for the following days, we decided to head into Ayamonte marina rather than press further upriver. Weighing anchor, the windlass laboured heavily and, as feared, our Rocna appeared from the murky depths snagged under a two-inch rusty steel cable. Fortunately, a length of line under

the offending wire and secured to the bow cleat allowed us to drop the Rocna, disentangle the metals and motor the short distance to the marina entrance.

**Ayamonte.** With the tide at low water springs, the marina team advised us to hold off a short while before entering, and to then keep close to the "fuel" pontoon (never commissioned) to avoid the worst of the shallow water. Ayamonte is another welcoming marina, with a pair of *marineros* to direct us to our berth and secure our lines; once again, the fingers are short, thin and wobbly! On checking in (just €38 a night) we found we had arrived just in time for the town's *fiesta* and decided to stay a couple of nights.

The marina is located in the heart of this small town and, on the short walk in for a drink and tapas, we dropped in to the Ayamar Chandlery. This British-run business is an Aladdin's cave which stocks, or can order, most things a boat could need, and deliver them to your boat in any Algarve marina as far as Lagos. It's a great service and items are mostly cheaper than in the Sopomar chandleries in Lagos or Portimão.

The Angustias festival is more a deep religious affair than a carnival-type celebration. It is a joint holiday with Portuguese worshippers from across the river and, even to the non-pious, provides quite a spectacle. On the eve of the main event, the ladies gather in their finest traditional dresses to offer floral tributes to the statue of the Virgin. The next night there is a grand procession of bands, dignitaries, and the devout who march ahead of the Virgin's statue – carried by teams of the town's burliest men from the church, through the streets, and along the quay-front esplanade. It's quite a sombre affair reflective of our own moods, as it was the day that we dipped *Arkyla's* RAFSA ensign to mourn the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

earlier that morning.

**Turn-around point.** And so it was, having had ringside seats on *Arkyla's* bow to watch a finale of fireworks, we travelled back to our winter berth in Lagos. We would stop in on some of our favourite places again, experience more wonderful sunrises and sunsets, and enjoy all that this coast has to offer. Now into mid-September, the route back was noticeably quieter than our push out.

We enjoyed our time sailing in this beautiful part of the world, but it has not captured our hearts as have other places. The Med beckons; after all, there is too much to see in this world to linger too long in one spot!



James Kenning is a retired RAF officer and has sailed since childhood,

racing the OK dinghy on Oxfordshire gravel pits. An RYA Yachtmaster, he has crossed Biscay and the Atlantic. He has owned *Arkyla*, a 2008 Regina 43 Deck Saloon, with wife Jenny since 2018; over the past 20 years, they have cruised throughout the UK, Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Australia. This season *Arkyla* will move into the Med with intent to cruise the Balearics before wintering in Valencia. In 2024, the Atlantic and Caribbean beckons. *Arkyla's* adventures can be followed on Instagram @sailingarkyla or through the website [www.sailingarkyla.com](http://www.sailingarkyla.com).



## Stern-to mooring – the difficult way



My husband Herbie and I have kept a sailing boat in the Mediterranean for many years and are now very familiar with the stern-to system of mooring to a pontoon or town quay. However we have a very embarrassing memory of the time when we were new to such a manoeuvre and were preparing to enter Fiscardo, on Cephalonia – a very confined and busy place at all times.

We had decided to moor up to the floating pontoon (now no longer there) positioned just in front of several cafés, ice cream parlours and shops. As we approached the harbour we made sure that we had everything prepared for the stern-to manoeuvre – fenders on, mooring warps attached and coiled

*“I bet they use the old ‘main got jammed’ excuse...”*

ready to take ashore, the anchor hanging from the bow, genoa furled.

We selected our spot between two yachts and began motoring in reverse towards the pontoon. I dropped the anchor on my husband's order and we continued into the space but wondered why our boat seemed so sluggish and inclined to veer slightly sideways. We threw our warps to helping hands on the quay, and then, on looking up, realised with horror we still had our main sail up! No wonder the boat had been tricky to handle!

Obviously we felt very stupid in front of so many people, so to mitigate the situation I shouted very loudly to my husband “That was awkward with a jammed main, and let's hope we can sort it out and get it furled back into the mast”. So together we did a bit of pushing and pulling (Oscars due for our acting skills I think), and finally the sail was stowed and we slunk down into the saloon with red faces!

Not sure if we got away with it – probably not – but we never made the same mistake again!

### We'd really appreciate your blunders

Has Pamela's story inspired you to recall your most embarrassing moment on board? Please do 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](mailto:editor@theca.org.uk) before 1 August for the September issue, with the subject line “Boating blunders”. They should be around 300 words.

Pamela Gaunt



**CREW:** “For the last 20 years I've sailed mainly on the East Coast, with trips to Holland and up to the Baltic; cruised west coast of Scotland and Ireland; Greece; Adriatic; Mallorca; last year crewed on Atlantic crossing. I recently moved to Dorset to be nearer grandchildren. Fairly recently retired, am looking for cruising opportunities in UK, Europe and further afield as opportunities arise.”

### Crewing Service in summer mode

The CA's Crewing Service puts skippers in touch with crew and crew in touch with skippers. Winter Crewing Service meetings have ended. One innovation this winter was a Sunday morning and lunchtime meeting at CA House instead of the normal Thursday evening, which was very successful.

If you're short of crew later this summer, why not contact potential crew members now? There's just a taste of what's on offer in our crew and skipper listings in the quotes here. Find out more at [www.theca.org.uk/crewing/welcome](http://www.theca.org.uk/crewing/welcome) and if you have any queries please contact Malcolm Davidson at [crewing@theca.org.uk](mailto:crewing@theca.org.uk)



**SKIPPER:** “I am planning a relaxed transatlantic circuit on my Contest 55CS. Orcas permitting I hope to get to Lisbon before the summer and then will be going to Madeira/Canaries for Christmas. I will cross the Atlantic early or late in 2024 before reaching the East coast of the USA in 2025. I am looking for one to two crew members who could join for the longer crossings and have some flexibility... I don't plan more than 3-4 months in advance. I'm happy to pay for all expenses except for dinners out...”

# Why not sail to Yorkshire?

**Alan Holmes, HLR for the Yorkshire coast, encourages us all to explore this 45-mile coast of cliffs and bays**

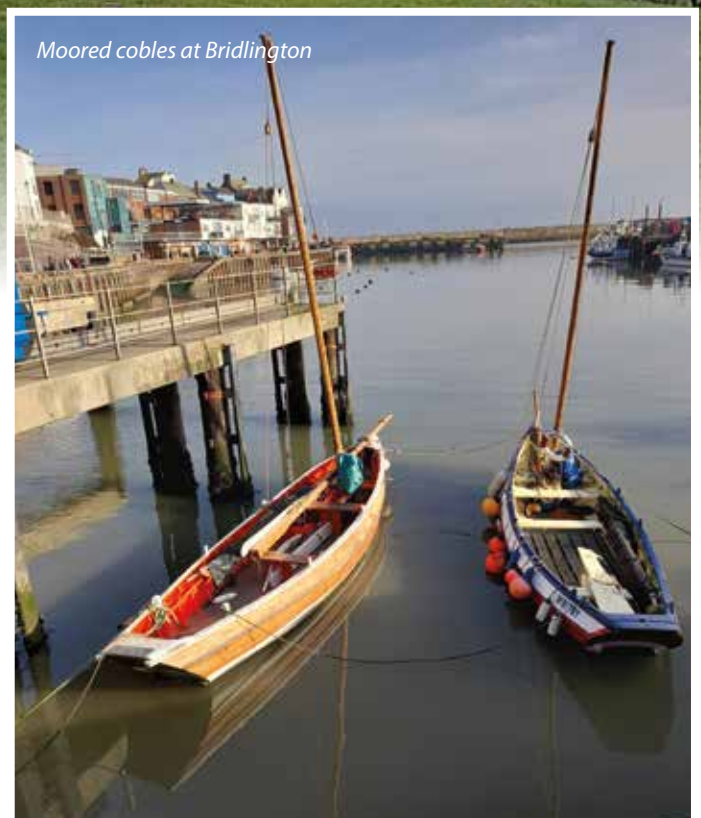
From Lowestoft it is a full day's sail (24 hours) to the Yorkshire coast. While there are no safe ports of refuge until the Humber is reached, there are few off-lying hazards north of the Wash, so the journey is well worth making. Pods of dolphins and porpoises are found all along the Yorkshire coast, and northwards, while seals are plentiful and minke whales are often seen in summer.

North of Spurn Head the coast is low-lying until Bridlington is reached, although there is a windfarm to negotiate off Hornsea. NCI has a manned station in Hornsea and recently opened another station in Filey, with plans to open in both Scarborough and Whitby in the pipeline.

Bridlington Bay, protected by the Smithic shoal, provides excellent sailing conditions except in fresh southeasterly breezes. Bridlington is the European lobster capital with catches being shipped to France and Spain. The harbour does dry, but there are pontoon moorings where fin-keeled yachts can sit upright in the soft mud. Alternatively they can dry out alongside the south pier. The pontoons give access at least two hours either side of high water for boats of around 6ft draft.

Bridlington is home to the Royal Yorkshire Yacht Club whose premises overlook the harbour, with stunning views across the bay. The harbour also has a fleet of restored sailing cobs which can be seen under sail most weekends while the annual coble festival (29-30 July) will see visiting traditional boats as well.

The RYYC is hosting the World Championships for the Dart 18 catamaran, from its dinghy section about a mile south of the harbour. That event runs from 29 July through to 4 August and already has more than 100 entries. The following week will be the annual RYYC regatta for dayboats/sportsboats and yachts.



Racing over high water plus a short coastal race over low water, this is a fun and very sociable event.

From Bridlington the cliffs rise considerably to Flamborough Head, where strong tides and lots of sea birds will be encountered. If you are passing close inshore, it may be possible to see North Landing at Flamborough, where a few fishermen still launch their boats down a very steep ramp.

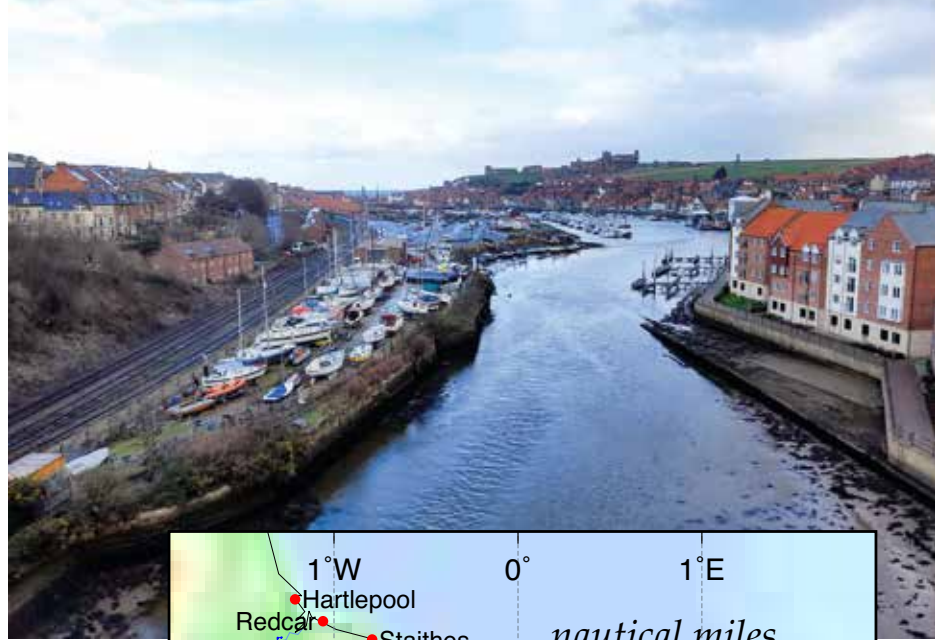
Beyond the white cliffs of Flamborough you will soon come to Filey Bay which can provide a pleasant anchorage in settled weather. A few miles further along is Scarborough where visiting yachts can lie afloat on a pontoon in the old harbour. From here, it is a steep climb up to the castle where you get spectacular views along the coast.

Approximately 15 miles northwest of Scarborough lies the historic town of Whitby, where the process of fixing the date for Easter was decided at the Synod in 684. While superficially

Coble on a ramp at North Landing, Flamborough



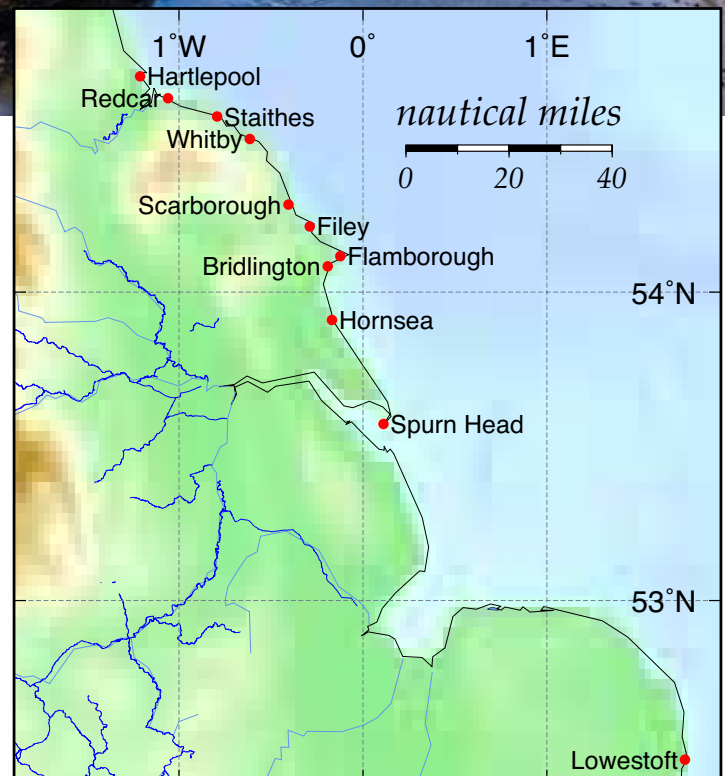
Whitby's harbour and boatyard, seen from the high-level bridge



pretty, Whitby has lost much of its charm, with 24% of houses now being second homes and most harbourside shops selling tat for tourists or overpriced fish and chips. Visiting yachts will find a small waiting pontoon on the west side of the lower harbour, close to Whitby Yacht Club. For longer stays, proceed through the swing bridge (opens HW +/-2hr) to reach the visitors' pontoon, from where it is just a short walk upstream to Coates Marine for chandlery and boat hoist, or into town for provisions. Whitby Railway Station is also the terminus for the North Yorkshire Moors Railway which runs both steam and heritage diesel locomotives on a 20-mile track through stunning scenery (Heartbeat Country).

While in Whitby it is well worth visiting the Captain Cook Memorial Museum, on the harbourside. This year the special exhibition in the attic is all about Captain Cook's voyages around Antarctica. Similarly, the Whitby Museum and Art Gallery, in Pannet Park is also worth visiting if time permits.

Just four miles northwest of Whitby is Runswick Bay, voted the prettiest seaside village in the UK, and another sheltered anchorage in settled weather. Go another few miles and you reach Staithes (historically and still locally known as Steers). This small drying harbour is the setting for Captain Jack's Boat and is worth a look in if you can dry out, or just pop in for a view at high tide.



Just north of Staithes are Boulby Cliffs, which at 206m, are reputedly the highest sea cliffs in England. The cliffs gradually reduce in height as you progress northwards until you pass the remains of Saltburn Pier and the long sandy beach stretching up to Redcar with its nearshore wind farm, and the river Tees.

Across Tees Bay is Hartlepool with its large marina and the northern museum of the Royal Navy. Hartlepool also offers direct trains south to London which can be handy for crew changes and is a stopover port for the Tall Ships Race from 6 to 9 July.



Alan racing at Bridlington Regatta

Alan is a past Commodore of Whitby Yacht Club and a VHF-SRC examiner. He keeps his SB3 sportsboat (*Chaotic*) up in Blyth and races there throughout the winter, and will be at Bridlington for the regatta in August. However, this summer he should be sailing with friends from Amble to Norway and back via Shetland for about six weeks.



## How green is your sailing? – continued

In March's *Cruising*, **Cathy Brown** asked how green sailing could be. It has led to some thought-provoking discussions

How green is your sailing? The question posed by Last Word in the March issue of *Cruising* has led to some very thought-provoking exchanges.

Andrew Gilmour, who races a classic Stella in the UK and cruises a larger boat in the Mediterranean, said his enthusiasm for biodegradable products started in the Med "born out of seeing frothy bubbles when motoring and the fact that you could taste soap in the water when swimming."

Both disappeared thanks to Covid, he said – inspiring efforts to keep things that way.

"We use biodegradable products as much as possible – washing up liquid, loo cleaner, shampoo as well as boat cleaners and polish."

They are bought in five-litre containers where possible and decanted, to reduce the number of plastic bottles bought. "A big win has been a 25-litre water filter so we can filter tap water and not buy water in plastic bottles – or carry it."

Andrew accepts that there is a "tricky balance," with much more to take into account than eco-friendly detergent. Having retired, he has more than halved his annual number of flights backwards and forwards to the boat and is investigating going by train.

And he points out that while away on the boat his carbon footprint at home is much reduced: "On the plus side we are not filling cars with fuel or using central heating. Although we use some fuel on the boat it is less than we put in cars."

Afloat, he uses solar panels to reduce engine and generator use, and a thermal



*In the UK the plan to clean up our sewage outflows might deliver.... in 12 years' time. In the meantime something like the Lifesaver jerrycan water purification system may be the best thing since sliced bread*

cooker reduces gas usage. Buying local produce – one of the great pleasures of cruising – also limits food miles.

Cruising yachtsmen and women in general are doing what we can to mitigate damage to the environment we love. And we are honest enough to accept that we are not perfect, and to avoid the green-washing "zero impact" claims made by so many commercial organisations.

### *A single boat's impact is literally a drop in the ocean compared with UK sewage discharge*

(How can anything be "zero impact" when ultimately it is delivered by something diesel-powered, or even if electric, driven by an extremely environmentally unfriendly battery?)

There might however be a temptation to fall into "why should I bother?" despair when considering the wider issue of water quality. A single boat's use of eco-friendly chemicals and responsible holding tank practice is literally a drop in the ocean compared with the scandalous level of sewage discharge in coastal waters which occurs routinely in the UK and many other countries.

In the UK, "overflows" are permitted, supposedly as an occasional emergency measure during heavy rainfall, to prevent flooding. But data shows that in 2022, raw sewage was pumped into British rivers and seas for 1.75 million hours – on average 825 times a day.

This was actually down 19 per cent on 2021 figures, but that was

because of drier weather rather than water companies' actions, according to the Environment Agency. It seems shocking that more and more house-building and other development is being permitted where systems are already manifestly not coping, without any requirement for new provision.

The Government recently announced potential unlimited fines for water companies dumping sewage, but its Storm Overflows Reduction Plan merely requires them "to improve all storm overflows discharging into or near every designated bathing water" and "75 per cent of overflows discharging to high priority nature sites" – by 2035!

Surely we need to be campaigning for more investment and accountability much sooner than that?

It is sad to relate, but the [lconlifesaver.com](https://www.lconlifesaver.com) jerry-can-sized water purification system recommended by my friend Andrew as essential cruising equipment really is, as he enthusiastically endorses it, "the best invention ever."

**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.**

