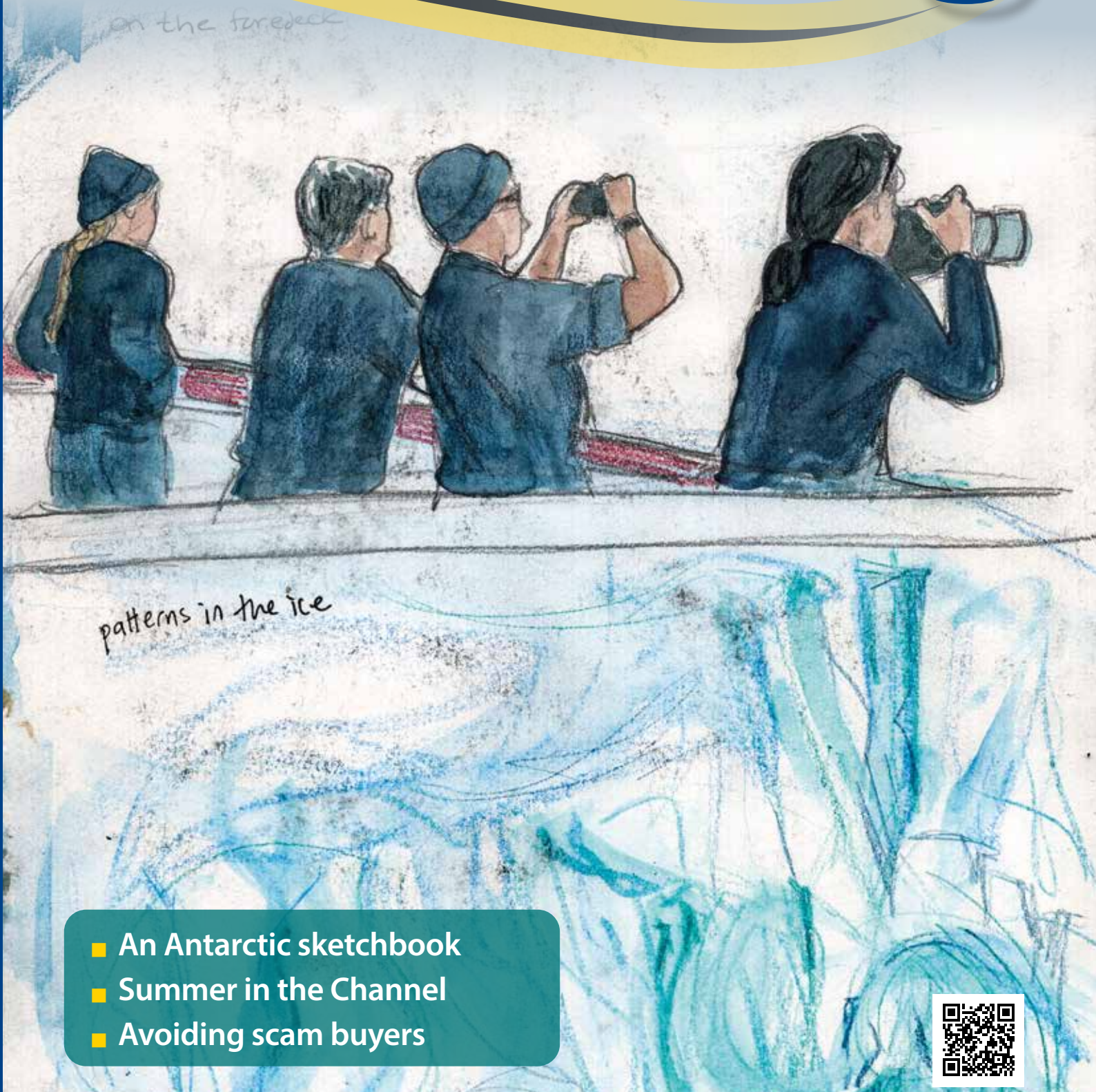




# Cruising

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



- An Antarctic sketchbook
- Summer in the Channel
- Avoiding scam buyers



## 'An Association supporting cruising yachtsmen'

The CA's President, **Derek Lumb**, looks back to the foundation of the CA and realises how little things have changed since 1908



In October, the CA put on a New Members' Seminar for those who had joined within the last 12 months or so. We invited approximately 600 new members, and around 40 came along to CA House to find out more about the CA. The range of our activities is so large that even old lags like myself discovered something new.

I kicked off with a short session on the origins of the CA; how Mr Hownam-Meek wrote to *Yachting Weekly* (YW) in August 1908 about the "iniquitous overcharging" by some unscrupulous local boatmen for taking visiting yachtsmen ashore (and perhaps more for taking them back aboard!) The solution proposed was to form a "Union" to "compile a register of honest boatmen at the various ports..."

This led to a meeting in November of those interested in forming an Association. Some 30 yachtsmen turned up at No. 5 Arundel Street in the Strand and agreed that: "It is desirable to have an Association; not formed along the lines of an ordinary club, to give increased facilities to cruising yachtsmen".

And so the CA was born. An Association to support Cruising yachtsmen, not a Club to provide a fixed base adjacent to a cruising area.. The objectives very quickly expanded to the provision and exchange of information about cruising destinations and by the first AGM the proposal was "to have a central office in London, with an 'Information Bureau', where members can obtain full particulars of any and all cruising grounds around the British Isles and adjacent waters".

What struck me as I put this presentation together was just how little the CA's objectives have changed. One of the main purposes of the CA still remains to provide the means for members to exchange information about cruising destinations. The members of 1908 would be stunned at the technological advancement that has taken place over the last two decades.

Until about 20 years ago Cruising Reports were written on paper and sent to the CA Library, where they were placed in red filing boxes. Today the information is mostly entered on mobile devices and, once submitted, is available to all other members within minutes, pretty well wherever they are in the world.

Information available is now about much more than destinations, and our website contains a wealth of information about all manner of topics of interest to the cruising yachtsman or yachtswoman. There is the wide range of information from RATS on the formalities of cruising, and bringing to our attention new technical developments and concerns. There are pages covering weather forecasting and sources, navigation, and communications. The forums provide a means of accessing the experience of other members. Whatever your problem, someone else will have had it or something very similar before. One of the greatest strengths of the CA is the experience and knowledge of its members and their willingness to share it.

### Don't forget our discounts

Of course, our activities to support each other have expanded with our increasing membership. During the New Members' Day Nick Clayton (Hon Treasurer) told us about the CA discount scheme, and in discussions afterwards we both confessed to having made sizable purchases without checking for CA discounts, only to find out later that we could have saved a considerable sum. In my case it was for new sails, where the 10% discount from the sailmaker I used would have paid for several years of membership. If you are in the market to buy a big-ticket item for your boat, or simply looking for a visitors' berth, have a look at the discount section first (or see page 80 of this issue of *Cruising*).

On that note I wish you all a productive winter season.



**CREW:** "I like to think I'm a respectful guy and a good team player, I don't have any specialist skills... but I'm happy to roll up my sleeves and I'm pretty practical. I really enjoy the social side of things too, getting to know people that you might not otherwise cross paths with, and having a coffee and the obligatory penguin bar on deck. In my day-to-day life, I'm a solicitor working in London... I can only do weekend trips which I can get to on public transport."

### Crewing Service meetings

The CA's Crewing Service puts skippers in touch with crew and crew in touch with skippers. We are holding Crewing Service meetings on **Sunday 14 January, Thursday 8 February, Sunday 3 March** and **Thursday 4 April 2024** all at CA House. Skippers and crew have the chance to meet and get to know each other a little before committing to time together on the water, enjoy a meal and a few drinks and just generally chat. We will also be organising Zoom meetings for those who can't get to CA House. Look at our crew and skipper listings; the quotes here give a taste of what's on offer. 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:** "My 2024 plan is for a voyage around the UK, in memory of my late husband. Weather and everything else permitting, I would set off in mid-May, travelling anticlockwise from Suffolk, through the Caledonian Canal, with the intention of spending June and the first part of July in Western Scotland... Preferably you are competent crew, or have some sailing experience, but enthusiasm is more essential!"



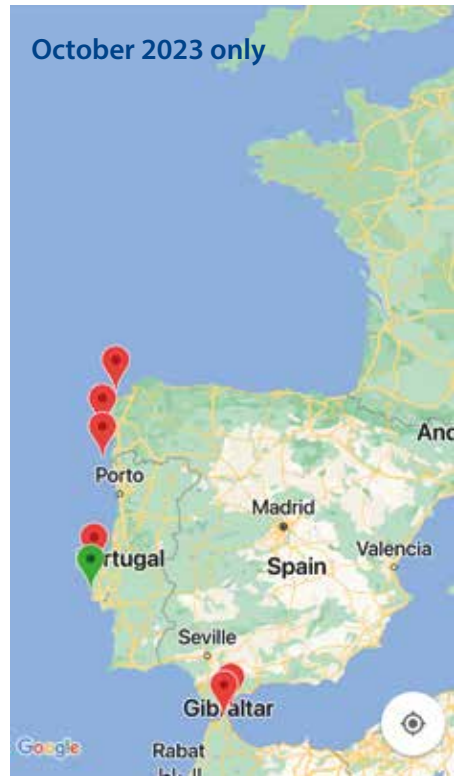
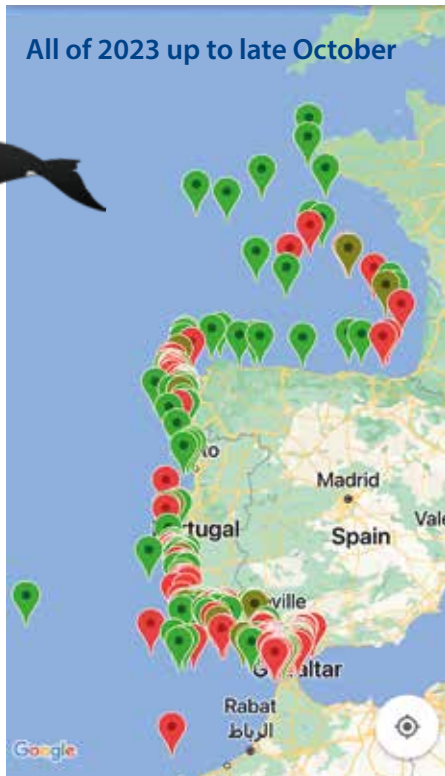
# Latest news on orca interactions

The interactions between orcas and yachts off the Iberian coasts during the 2023 season have brought some more surprises and still leave the experts uncertain why a group of 15 orcas, out of a population of around 35, have continued to damage yacht rudders.

The year started with a significant increase in the number of reported interactions and damage. One yacht sank in May while it was under tow, having been seriously damaged. In July the orcas moved into the Mediterranean and 10 yachts were damaged between Gibraltar and Malaga. This was a new and very worrying development for yacht crews on the southeast coast of Spain. Luckily this behaviour was short-lived.

In August the number of reports of interactions reduced significantly: 28, as opposed to 40 in 2022. The behaviour of the orca had changed, and the number of interactions continued to reduce. At the time of writing this article in late October there has been one interaction off west Portugal and a sinking off Tangier, Morocco, after a period of several weeks without any such activity.

One of the beneficial developments this season has been the creation of two dedicated applications on which crews can report sightings of orca as well as interactions. **GT Orcas** was developed



by our partner agency GTOA; the other, **Orcinus**, was developed by the Bottlenose Dolphin Research Institute and the Nautilus Project funded by the Ports of Galicia. Yacht crews can use these apps to see where the orcas have been.

Lately there have been a few sightings off Galicia in northwest Spain, but none off the Portuguese coast. This has caused a problem for the Portuguese Navy and the Portuguese Government Institute of Conservation of Nature and Forests (ICNF) who are keen to trial acoustic deterrents. Both want to identify effective and safe solutions (because orca are a protected species) to keeping them away from yachts. The Portuguese Navy want to trial Oikomi pipes which have been used to keep orca away from oil spills in north west USA, and ICNF want to trial an electronic orca startle device, but both need the orca to be in Portuguese waters. It is now likely that these trials will not take place until the orcas return next year.

Orca interactions with yachts continue to vary between violent attack and much calmer behaviour. "Predatory not playful" and "Calm and curious" are the words used by two different skippers in early May to describe how the orca were

acting. So scientists are still not absolutely certain why they are behaving this way; enjoyment is still the most likely reason.

The CA continues its successful partnership with the marine biologists in GTOA and is also engaged with ICNF and Portuguese National Sailing Associations. The CA is very active on social media and with the press to ensure we give the best possible information to sailors to help them stay safe in the affected waters. Some potential causes of interactions, such as weather, time of day, echo sounders, and the colour of anti-fouling, have been eliminated.

The website at [www.theca.org.uk/orcas](http://www.theca.org.uk/orcas) has been developed this year and now includes comparative data and a library of reports on popular topics of concern, such as the use of sand or reversing, to save having to research all 153 interaction reports. The safety advice has been firmed up and is available online for all to access. The interaction and uneventful passage reports published by the CA are well used by researchers and sailors.

What 2024 will bring we do not know, as it is likely the behaviour of the orca will change again. Hopefully approved acoustic devices will be available to buy or hire. Could it be that the recent decline in interaction activity means the orca are becoming bored of their behaviour - you never know!

## An evening with RATS 2024

Following recent successful RATS seminars, we have booked CA House to hold another in-person and on-line seminar in the evening of **Thursday 21 March 2024**. The agenda will probably include an update on the continuing impacts of the UK leaving the EU, orca interactions and some technical topics. We will announce more details on the website and in monthly Newsletters.



John Burbeck



# Adventures in *Ruby*

**Viv & Linda Fox** have moved from sail to power, with a Marex 375, *Ruby*. These photos of their 2022 cruising season, from the River Blackwater to both sides of the English Channel and the Thames, won the CA's Dolphin Cup



We started the season in one of the most beautiful spots in the UK, **Heybridge Basin**. In Essex! What! Yes, don't tell anyone, but we have some wonderful cruising waters here in the most mocked part of Britain. Heybridge is nestled behind lock gates that let you out at high tide with a couple of pubs on the quayside. It's a short walk from the small town of Maldon which is in the top ten places in the UK for best quality of life.



The north coast of France has pretty big tidal ranges and little harbours where the approaches can completely dry out at low tide. Careful planning is essential! Here in **Boulogne**, the ebbing tide reveals the damp and slimy underbelly of the harbour structures. Not a time to linger so there are many lovely eateries to visit, especially in the old town, just a short walk away



The 130-kilometre-long **Alabaster Coast** in Seine-Maritime is a series of white chalk cliffs between Le Havre and Le Tréport. Dotted with famous seaside resorts, pebble beaches, dry-hanging valleys and fishing villages, it was a place of inspiration for many Impressionist painters. We took this picture while leaving **Saint-Valery-en-Caux**



I love to go running and this was a challenge: up the winding streets out of **Fécamp** to a viewing point. What a view it was too. As I recovered my breath, I watched boats enter and depart between the long piers at the harbour entrance. The sea was the bright blue that this part of the coast is known for. If you don't want to run up here, I did see people walk too



The harbour at **Barfleur** almost completely dries out at low tide. There are moorings here, but for us, not a place to visit by boat. It is definitely worth a visit though. It was one of the nicest and prettiest places of our travels this year and easily accessible by bike from nearby Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue, which itself is worthy of a couple of days' exploration



Motor boaters used to appal us when we were sailors. They were oblivious of the tranquillity much valued by yachtsmen and had poor manners when they cut you up and swamped you with their wash. We never enjoyed long passages but a day's sail can easily be covered in a couple of hours in the **planing-hulled Marex**, cosseted from the elements in a heated cockpit. Mind you, with the escalating cost of diesel...

**St Peter Port** was the prize at the end of a crossing from Cherbourg, where we had to have our passports stamped by the French authorities. They were, to be fair, very sympathetic to the predicament of we Brits and our new-found sovereignty following Brexit



Our son works for Spirit Yachts, so it was a piece of good fortune that we found ourselves arriving in Guernsey at the start of an inaugural **Spirit Yacht Regatta**. They are traditional-looking yachts but brim-full of the latest technology from their design to equipment and fittings. En-masse and racing one another they were a spectacle!

It took 11 days to find a suitable weather window to cross the Channel back to **Falmouth** via Plymouth. This was the next phase of our journey that coincided with a fantastic spell of weather. This is not an area that we have properly discovered before but it is a splendid cruising area with many stunning places to see. Falmouth is at the head of the Fal, itself a nice town, but the Fal too is delightful



There are a number of anchorages in the **River Fal** but this one, just below **Trelissick House**, is one of the best. It is an easy dinghy ashore and the National Trust property has a garden full of many varieties of hydrangeas which are well suited to the local climate

**Mayflower Marina in Plymouth** may be a little way from the city centre, but its position just across from the Royal William Yard is unparalleled and makes the marginal inconvenience of being away from the city centre action well worth it. This former naval building has been tastefully converted to an entertainment and shopping venue





Heading out of Plymouth harbour, if you turn left, you enter the **River Yealm**. Tucked away and meandering towards Moss Mayo and Newton Ferrers there are buoys to pick up for around £10 a night. The steep banks on either side of the river ensure excellent shelter and both these villages have a selection of pubs to visit. They seem to support a local clientele as well as boaters giving the area a very authentic feel.



Further east from Plymouth is **Dartmouth**, in our view a far more inviting place than Salcombe, which we felt was rather brash and full of very entitled, brash rich kids whose expensive education had done little to develop any sense of belonging to a society where consideration has to be given to anyone outside their own little world. Not so Dartmouth where even the fuel barge attendant had little good to say about his native Salcombe and clearly also loved the more genteel Dartmouth!



We have learnt that headlands need to be treated with caution. These are places where different currents merge and frequently cause steep and uncomfortable, if not outright dangerous, seas. **Portland Bill** is one of the most notorious of these. Timing is critical and for a comfortable passage, you should either pass very close to land, or keep a few miles clear. On an otherwise calm day, a three-mile margin was just about sufficient



We were blessed with good conditions for our passage between Weymouth and Poole Harbour enabling us to pass close to number of potential anchorages, including **Durdle Door**. However, the forecast of a rising southerly wind suggested that these anchorages could become uncomfortable overnight, so we continued along to Poole Harbour.



It is a real treat to see the next generation finding the joy of being afloat. **Poole Harbour** offers calm waters, nice beaches and the opportunity of learning some basic skills such as Millie being taught how to weigh the anchor!



After years of sailing other people's boats, in 2012 Viv & Linda Fox bought *Tempus*, a Nauticat 331, and sailed her to the Baltic, winning a number of CA log awards for reports of their adventures. In 2021 they decided to move on, to a 40ft Marex 375, *Ruby*. You can read more about her travels and see more lovely photos at [newadventuresinruby.wordpress.com](https://newadventuresinruby.wordpress.com)



# CA London lectures, spring 2024

From naval testing of quantum inertial navigation to cruising with old gaffers, and from Dartmouth to the Black Sea, this season has something for everyone

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.

## **Wednesday 7 February** **Swinging, Spinning and Wobbling: pendulums, gyroscopes and Inertial Navigation, Jeremy Batch**

"I can dive off the eastern coast of the United States and surface again in the Mediterranean within five hundred yards of where I expect to be," says Rock Hudson to Patrick McGoohan in the film *Ice Station Zebra*. We would take that for granted today, but how was it even imaginable in 1963 when Alistair MacLean wrote the book, and was the captain (or the author) exaggerating?

Our world is round (sort of) and takes 24 hours (almost) to revolve. The roundness was obvious to sailors for centuries, but the size of the sphere (if, indeed, it was a sphere) was a matter of guesswork and its rotation was once a dangerous heresy. The tilt, wobble and lumpy shape were all puzzling, but eventually undeniable.

We shall meet: Léon Foucault, demonstrating the Earth's rotation with pendulums and gyroscopes which stay fixed relative to the universe; Hermann Anschütz-Kaempfe, using the rotation to align his gyrocompass, and Elmer Sperry (allegedly) copying his ideas; leading to Charles Stark Draper and his rivals

developing inertial navigation for ships, submarines, missiles, aircraft, spacecraft and cars, allowing us to travel confidently to the Moon and across its surface and (more daringly) beneath the North Polar icecap and through the Limehouse Link tunnel.

And as the Royal Navy tests Birmingham University's quantum inertial navigation system on *XV Patrick Blackett*, ready for when GPS says "0 satellites available", should we be saving our pennies or polishing our sextants?



*Old Gaffers in Oban*

## **Wednesday 14 February** **Sort of a Flotilla Holiday: The ins and outs of organising a cruise in company round the UK, Alison and Julian Cable**

In 2023, the OGA, the association for gaff rigged sailing, reached its 60th anniversary. The celebrations included a Round Britain Cruise, and participating boats ranged from a 19ft Cornish Shrimper, to several centenarian yachts, and a 100-year-old motor lifeboat. A similar event 10 years earlier had shown the importance of a common understanding of the timetable.

The OGA is an area-based organisation,

and each Area was expected to host one (or more) social and/or racing events for the fleet and local boats. For the Areas, knowing who would be coming was vital. Making sure the port and canal authorities were aware was also important and knowing what the Association and the Areas were responsible for and what was just the normal responsibility of a yachting skipper needed communicating to all parties.

Alison and Julian share the experience from the perspectives of the overall co-ordinator (Alison), and the president of the largest Area, with two party ports and two canals (Julian). They also joined the cruise for a week on *Robinetta* so saw a little of what the crews saw too. They will talk about the tools they used, some of the problems and the pleasures and even have a few nice pictures of boats and scenery.



*Rally boats in Caylioglu*

## **Wednesday 21 February** **Black Sea Rally, Colin & Maggie Walsh**

After sailing in Turkey for three years, Colin and Maggie Walsh fulfilled a long-held ambition and ventured into

Left, XV Patrick Blackett is an experimental vessel used by the Royal Navy to test systems including quantum inertial navigation. Unusually, she was built in the Netherlands, is not painted grey, and now flies a blue ensign. Right, Missy Bear anchored in Bozukkale in Turkey

the Black Sea as part of a Turkish friendship rally: a two-month long cruise along the north coast to Georgia and back following the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts. The hectic schedule included ziplining, white water rafting and learning a traditional dance, as well as the more expected local attractions of mosques, museums and wildlife sanctuaries. It took them to faraway places they would never otherwise have ventured where they made friends with some lovely people and had a lot of fun.



Good Dog arrives in Carlingford marina

### Wednesday 28 February Completing the Harbourmaster Challenge, Mark Ashley Miller

Mark left Dartmouth in March 2019 to sail round the UK and Ireland, attempting to meet every Harbour Master. Five years later, on 28 September 2023, he completed the challenge having sailed 9,000 NM, visited 310 harbours, met a total of 256 Harbour Masters, been helped by 90 different crew and having raised over £25,000 for The Seafarers' Charity.



Moorings in Ghent

### Wednesday 6 March The challenges and pleasures of inland waterways cruising, Julian and Vanessa Dussek

Floods, droughts, large barges, weed, locks (hundreds of them, big and small) and canal closures all at times present challenges. Cruisers need to be on the

qui vive constantly. These challenges fade when compared with the pleasures of exploring the vast wealth of inland Europe, the culture, the history, magnificent buildings and of course the culinary delights.

Julian and Vanessa started cruising inland Europe in 2006 in a Southerly sailing boat *Pluto* and 16 years later are still exploring the delights of the inland waterways of Europe in her.



The Fastnet light

### Wednesday 13 March A cruise around Ireland, Ann and Steve Crome

Spectacular scenery, clear waters, friendly people, castles, great live music, dolphins and superb sailing – what's not to love?! Come and hear about Ann and Steve's circumnavigation of Ireland in *China Girl*. They will talk about rounding the various well known headlands, dealing with the Atlantic swell, the notorious Irish weather and learning about Irish history and culture.

### Wednesday 20 March The Adventures of Missy Bear, Season 2 – Preveza to Goccek, Richard Crooks and Alix Tittley

Richard and Alix return to give us the sequel to their talk last spring. *Missy Bear's* trip took her from Preveza through the Ionian Islands and around the



Peloponnese into the Argolic and Saronic Gulfs. She then crossed the Cyclades, turned down through the Dodecanese, entered Turkey at Bozburun and sailed eastwards along the Lycian coast to Göcek, before returning to Leros island to overwinter.

Richard and Alix went searching for signs of the old Ottoman and Venetian empires, but also stumbled across the footprints of the ancient Greeks, Lycians, Romans, Maniots, Russians, British, Italians and Germans. More mundanely, they also solved ongoing problems with the house batteries and solar panels...

### Wednesday 27 March The Hanson Lecture

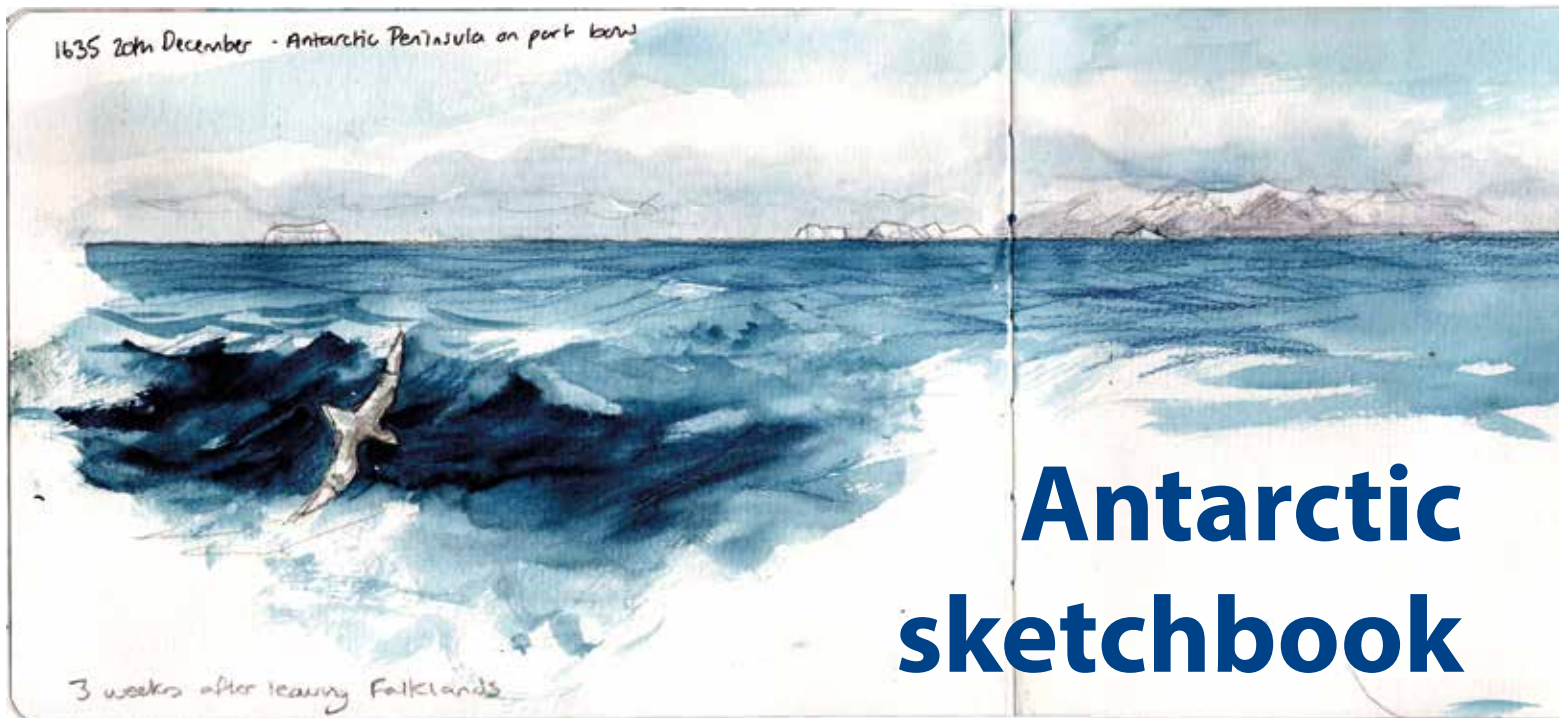
We round off the season with the Hanson Lecture and the award of the CA's log competition prizes. Tickets at £19 include supper and must be paid in advance. As we go to press, the speaker is yet to be confirmed.

## Bookings

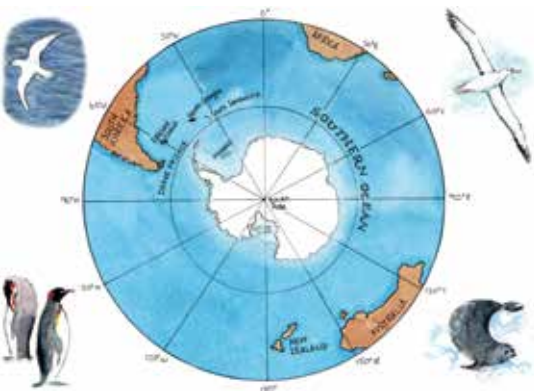
Events start promptly at 7pm unless otherwise stated. To book to attend any lecture at CA House, and to indicate whether you'll be ordering food, go to **News & Events > Events > BOOK VENUE** on the CA website. Please pay in advance on the website, or by contactless on the door. Individual lecture tickets Members £4, Non-Members £7. Season tickets available to Members at £32.

Webinar links will be published before each event. Any problems with the booking system, call or email Samantha on 020 7537 2828 / [office@theca.org](mailto:office@theca.org). [www.theca.org](http://www.theca.org). There is no charge for viewing online.





# Antarctic sketchbook



Artist and illustrator **Claudia Myatt** spent six weeks as Artist in Residence aboard the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship *HMS Protector*, as it cruised Antarctic waters. Now her sketches have been published in book form, and we are lucky enough to be able to reproduce some of them in *Cruising*

"I hope you don't mind me asking," said the young marine commando, "but what are you doing here?"

The three marines from *HMS Protector* were sharing their tot of whisky with me at the Shackleton memorial in South Georgia. At the foot of the stone cross a fur seal dozed gently and the cold wind whipped the pages of my sketchbook making the wet colours blend into a puddle.

It was a good question – what on earth was a woman old enough to be their grandmother doing on a working Navy ship with her sketchbook and paints? I told them the easy answer first, that I was this year's Artist in Residence appointed by Friends of Scott Polar Research Institute. Their question, though, deserved more of an answer. What they were really asking is, why have an artist at all? What's the point?

"It's about communication," I said. Using art to appeal to people who may never have the chance to come here, why places like South Georgia, the Southern

Ocean and Antarctica are important as well as beautiful. Sketches, paintings, songs and stories bring faraway places closer. They nourish the imagination, reflect the past as well as the present and make the world a bigger and more interesting place.

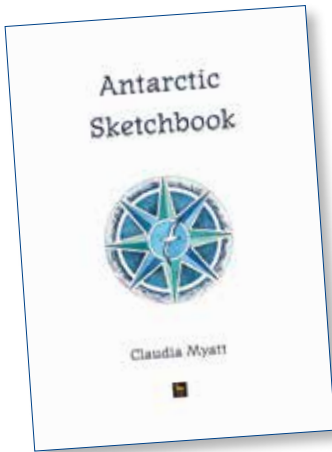
Maybe my sketchbooks and what I do with them will inspire a few others to start drawing too, enriching their own lives. After an extraordinary trip I came home with three full sketchbooks, each page a swirl of lines and colours evoking memories of ice, glaciers, mountains, wildlife, people, history, life on board ship, sea, sky and birds. I tried to draw not just what I was seeing but what I was feeling, and what it is about the Antarctic air and landscape that makes you feel more intensely alive.

The continent at the bottom of the world is almost out of sight on a conventional globe. On a Mercator projection schoolroom map it becomes stretched

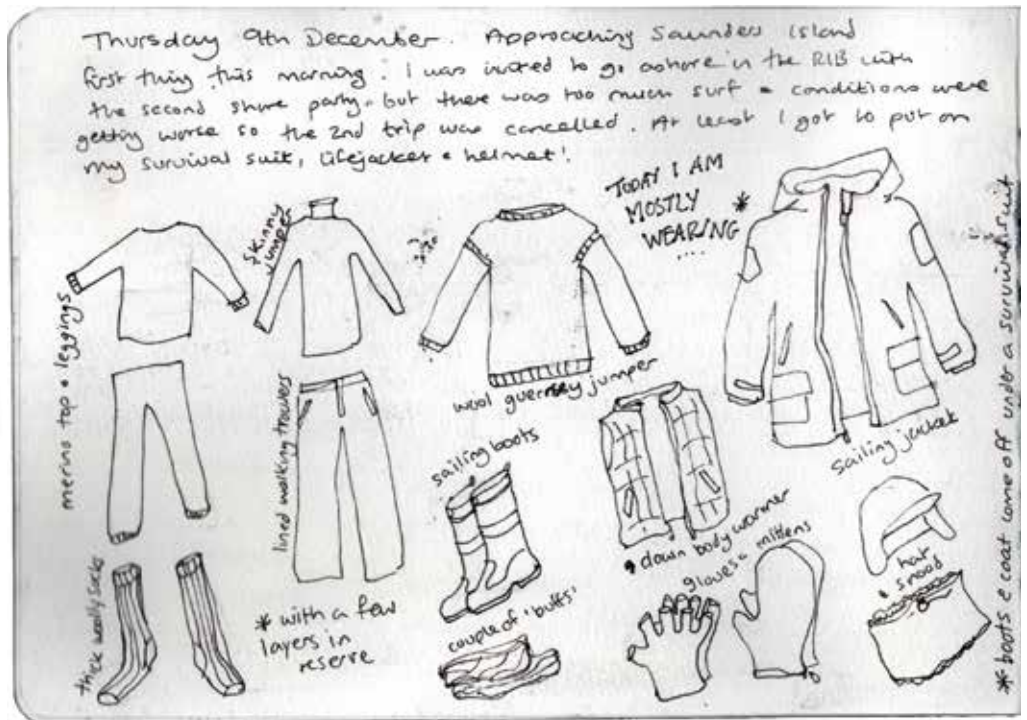
beyond all reason, a meaningless ribbon of white at the bottom of a page in which all the important stuff, the bits we need to learn about, are everywhere else. When I found out in November 2020 that I was going to Antarctica, I bought an old National Geographic map of the continent on eBay and pinned it on my wall. Everything depends on your point of view; now I was looking at the world from underneath, from the axis of its spin – if you stand at the south pole, is there a still small place where the earth isn't spinning at all?

I often wondered, as a child, why the world map was drawn with north pole at the top and south pole at the bottom.





Claudia's book is £15.99 at [claudiamyatt.co.uk](http://claudiamyatt.co.uk) or from the publisher [golden-duck.co.uk/shop/antarctic-sketchbook](http://golden-duck.co.uk/shop/antarctic-sketchbook), as well as the usual booksellers and Amazon.

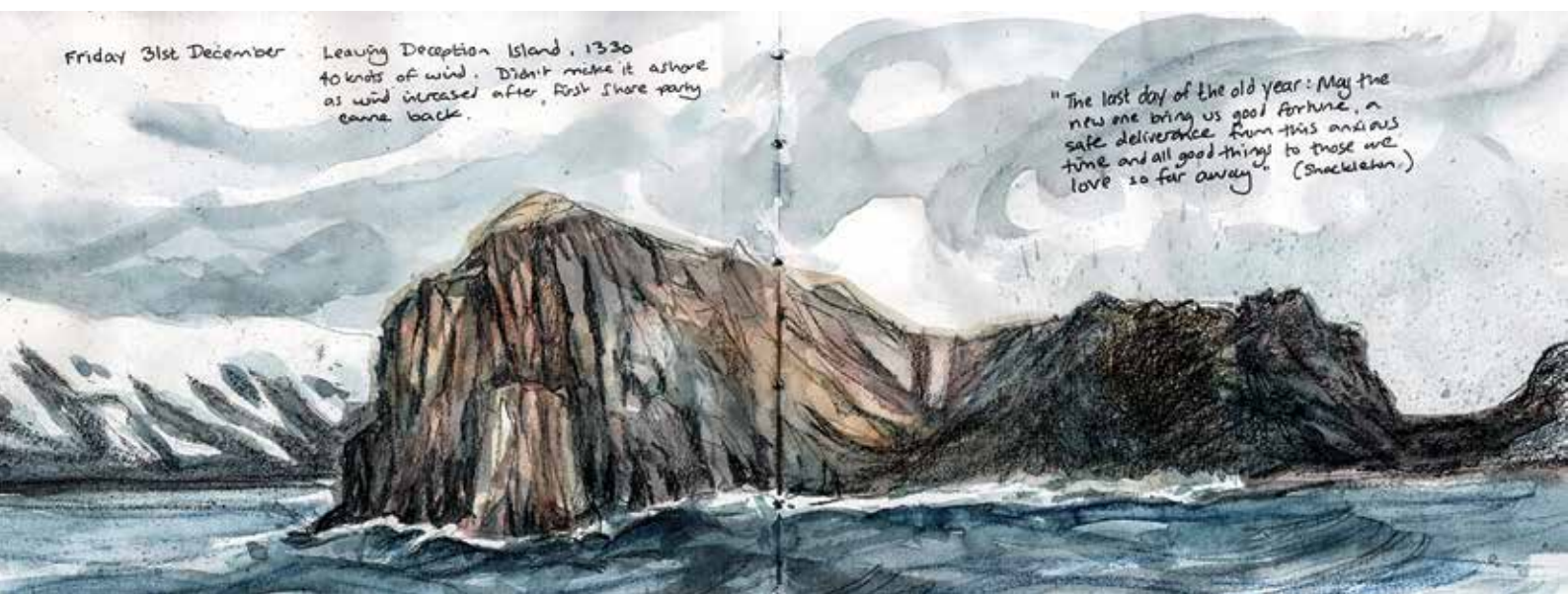


Was there a big sign in space, pointing at the earth, saying 'This way up?' Maps are drawn by the explorers who lived to tell the tale, and nearly all of them were from the Northern Hemisphere. I wonder how different world history and politics would have been if the globe was turned upside down. Try it when you get the chance – it makes the familiar suddenly very unfamiliar indeed.

The sea is so much more than the wet bit between the dry bits. Each ocean has a presence and a character of its own. This was my second visit to the Southern Ocean and I love its fierce beauty, the shift in colours from steel grey to liquid sapphire, the bright snow petrels and prions dancing in the bow wave. "But isn't it really rough down there?" my friends ask. Well, yes it can be, but if you're in those waters you're going to be in a ship built to take it. I've been sicker on the brown, lumpy waters of the North Sea than I have down in the far south. At least in the south there is always an albatross soaring astern, swooping to clip the wave crests and lifting the spirits by the perfection of those knife-like wings.

The Southern Ocean circles Antarctica and was only recently officially recognised by National Geographic cartographers as an ocean in its own right. It's far from our lives and far from our thoughts but we depend upon it for our existence. Oceans absorb 93% of the heat produced by global warming. The Southern Ocean is one of the smallest but it takes 75% of that total. The reasons for this lie in its depth, ➤





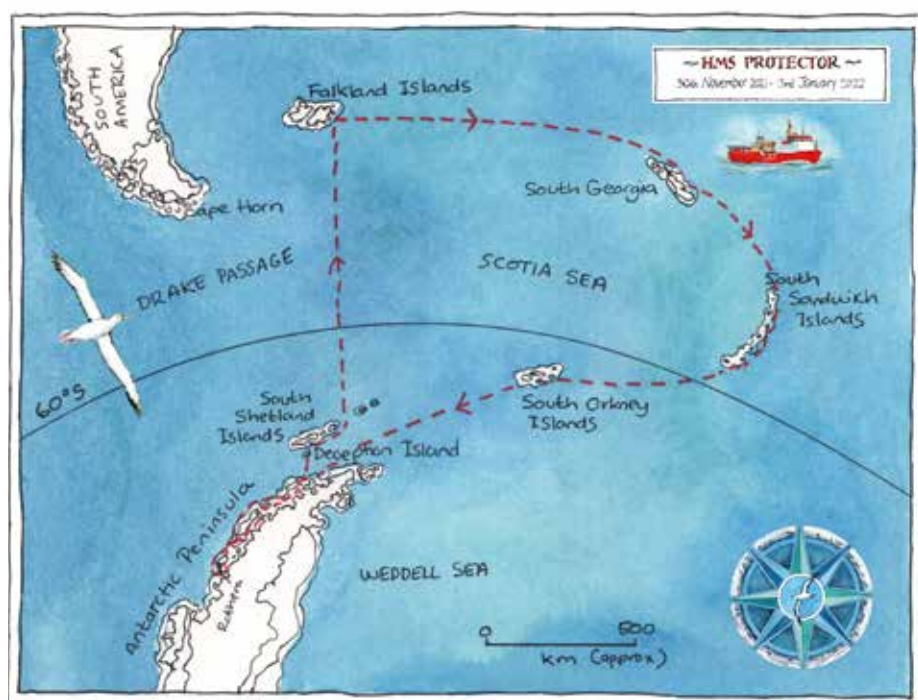
temperature and unique circulation which can enable heat and CO<sub>2</sub> to be exchanged at a deep level. It forms a girdle around Antarctica, a boundary between the icy water south and warmer water north. It also supports a wide range of life – over 9,000 known species.

I am grateful to the scientists who are studying this globally significant area. There is a wealth of information online, especially with the British Antarctic Survey's website at [www.bas.ac.uk](http://www.bas.ac.uk).

- Claudia was Artist in Residence for the **Friends of Scott Polar Research Institute**, part of the University of Cambridge. For the Antarctic summer season in 2023/24 a musician will join HMS Protector as a composer.



Claudia was brought up in the UK and overseas, and started drawing as a child. She has a passion for sketchbook voyaging and has owned a number of boats including a 24ft cutter, and *Else*, a retired tugboat. She now lives on another boat in Suffolk and spends most of her life drawing, painting, writing, or teaching. Her work has been used in many boating publications, including *Cruising*. Find out more at [claudiamyatt.co.uk](http://claudiamyatt.co.uk)



# Dodgy dealing?

**Beryl Chalmers** discovers how selling a boat privately can lead you into deep water



To sell your boat in the good old days, you contacted a yacht broker, he/she visited your boat, took photographs, wrote the spec and then advertised her and sent it to their database of those looking to buy. Not any more.

There are numerous ways to sell your boat:

- Contact the company you bought her new from, and liaise with them to sell her.
- Select a few independent brokers, choose your selling price, and wait.
- Or sell your boat yourself, advertising her privately or through an online portal.

But sellers beware! It's not that straightforward.

We had successfully sold a couple

## CA warning

Our guidelines for classified ads in *Cruising* include this warning:

### Beware of frauds/scams

CA members who have advertised online have in the past been approached by fraudsters. As a result, ads on the CA website are now visible only to CA members. You should still be careful, as non-members may see *Cruising*. Typically, fraudsters try to overpay you and ask you to reimburse them, but their cheque bounces. Never make a payment to a buyer you do not know, or their agent. Scammers may be improbably enthusiastic and not ask anything about the item for sale. Their grammar or spelling may be poor and they may become aggressive.

of boats privately without any real issues. The buyer looked over the boat, organised a survey, or not as the case may be, made an offer and we agreed to sell. We then downloaded a Bill of Sale from the internet, discussed payment terms and the boat sailed off.

Our latest sale proved you have to be wary of the scams and dodgy dealings worldwide.

We knew the boat was very sound, with no issues at all. Paperwork was in order and her pedigree was A1.

We advertised her online in November, stating her history, full specification and including about 30 photographs. The boat was in Croatia so we offered a Facetime viewing as well as a real-time viewing.

We were surprised to have a couple of replies within days, not expecting any sort of sale before the spring. Our potential buyer spoke only French so we asked a French-speaking friend, to interpret for us on the phone.

A couple of phone calls later, we agreed to meet the potential buyer in Paris and to take all videos and photographs with us, plus copies of the original Bill of Sale, CE certificate, VAT certificate etc. He said he would bring an English-speaking colleague with him. The prospect of a couple of days in Paris in December appealed to us.

After a quick hop across the Channel on Eurostar, we checked into a hotel near Notre Dame and enjoyed dinner out in Saint-Michel, revisiting old haunts from earlier days.

We met him (I am deliberately not mentioning any names), in a café the following morning. He was nearly an

hour late – traffic blamed – but on his own. Despite his broken English, we could easily understand him – especially when he mentioned he was from the Middle East...

He then proceeded to offer us the full asking price, plus £100,000! We said nothing.

He went on to explain that he did not need to see the boat at all but could send someone to have a look around her.

His terms were:

- Pay the full asking price plus £100,000, eventually via a bank transfer into our bank account.
- We would then meet him in a London hotel room, taking £100,000 in cash with us.
- After us checking the selling price was in our account online, and him checking we had brought £100,000 in cash, the sale would be completed.

We said we would think about it, left the café and disappeared before he could gain any information from us such as names, account details or any other information he could follow us by.

We were shocked and felt we had had a lucky escape.

In January, we went to the Düsseldorf boat show. While there, we had two more phone calls from potential buyers. Ever wary now, we gave no information as to where the boat was, or our address details. We did say, however, that we were at the show.

The caller then asked if we could meet him in a café in Germany on our way back to the Hook of Holland. He said he would bring a client with him who would be willing to pay the full asking

price. That almost sent us straight home, without stopping in Germany.

We did meet, and at first it seemed a straightforward meeting about someone wanting to buy a boat. But he then said he wanted to pay in €200 bills, could pay straight away and didn't need to see the boat. We left the café and headed home.

Another phone call offered to pay €50,000 on top of the asking price if we could repay him the €50,000 after the sale completed, in commission. In other words, his customer would be paying the commission without knowing it.

We were shocked there were so many

dodgy characters around trying to launder money, but then realised as a private seller, it was the only way they could handle such a purchase and move money along. Another tried to persuade us to accept payment via crypto-currency – not our bag at all.

When we did eventually meet a completely straightforward buyer, we were very wary and almost didn't follow through. Their saving grace was that they wanted to buy through a broker for their peace of mind, and we knew a broker from whom we hoped to buy our next boat.

We travelled to the Netherlands in

February to look at our possible purchase and to meet our potential buyers. It could not have been more straightforward. They paid the broker and we paid the difference for our new boat.

We didn't feel we were naive, but after this boat sale, if we ever decide to sell again, we will be very wary.

Beryl Chalmers is a former General Manager of the CA. With her husband Simon she has owned and sailed boats all over Europe and the inland waterways.



## Rechargeable batteries can be a fire risk

Our Kent Section Secretaries, **Sue & David Long**, were on board a Greek charter vessel and recharging the AA batteries for their own handheld GPS...

Hardly a day goes by without a news report of another fire caused by battery failure of one sort or another, usually with Lithium Ion batteries. Are other batteries more safe?



For many years we have used rechargeable Ni-MH batteries for our portable devices while away sailing. We have a hand held Garmin GPS plotter with two AA cells which last about a day. In the UK this is kept in the cupboard, but while chartering in the Mediterranean it is often powered up if the kit on the charter yacht is unfamiliar. Our routine has been to charge the batteries at the end of the day, ready for the next day's passage. We have a charger which was supplied with two leads, one with a 13-amp plug and transformer, the other a 12-volt sausage plug, which is used on board. This has been successful for several years.

However, while sailing in Greece this year the happy situation changed. We had placed the two AA batteries in the charger on the chart table and sat up in the cockpit to enjoy the cool evening air after dinner. David went below to fetch a chart to plan for the next day's passage and reached over the charger, felt an intense pain in the back of his hand as he momentarily touched the batteries – ouch! In less than 15 minutes' charging the batteries had overheated to the extent that the plastic outer covers had parted. We quickly unplugged the charging unit and placed the lot in the metal sink. Meanwhile, the skin on the back of David's fingers began to blister and he spent the rest of the evening with his hand in a bowl with repeated changes of cold



*The overheated batteries in the charger, and David's burned fingers*

water from the fridge.

After a while we inspected the damaged batteries and took the attached photos. Needless to say, we have disposed of the unit and batteries and will not be using rechargeable batteries on board again. Had David not gone down below to collect a chart we might well have had a boat fire, something we would rather not think about.

Some years ago we witnessed a fire break out on a flotilla lead yacht and within two or three minutes it was clearly a write off; what was left of the yacht eventually sank despite desperate efforts to extinguish the flames. The cause of the fire was thought to be electrical.

An important lesson for us: never leave batteries of any kind on charge out of view.