



Cruising

www.theca.org.uk

- Navigating the orca challenge
- Baltic & back in three months
- Taking a dog to the EU



Save the cost of your membership this year

The CA's President, **Derek Lumb**, says that just attending one seminar makes CA membership a worthwhile investment

Most of us join the CA for the information provided by the Sections, RATS and, more recently via CApitain's Mate; many of us also appreciate the social interaction, whether at CA events or meeting up with other members up in distant harbours. Such meetings are generally initiated by the recognition of the Association's burgee, and I urge you to fly yours.

There is however a cornucopia of other benefits for members to access.

Over the winter most of the Cruising Sections run full day seminars at CA House which typically cost around £30-£35 for members, including lunch. In the case of my own Celtic Section you got a day with seven knowledgeable speakers, tea and coffee and a two-course hot lunch. A similar course away from the CA, not run by volunteers, would cost £150 upward – almost the cost of your CA membership. Add to that possible discounts, particularly for insurance, marine parts (eg from ASAP), sails, bedding or marinas and the list goes on... it is possible to save your membership again!

The cabins at CA House provide



*Antares chartmaker Bob Bradfield presents at the Celtic seminar.
Inset, don't forget to fly your burgee*

accommodation at a very much lower cost than London hotels, with the added benefit of free parking and convenient moderately priced drinks and food in the relaxed, normally uncrowded Galley.

The work of our volunteers is a theme I have often returned to, but I make no apology – they are vital to the existence of the CA. Volunteers do so out of the goodness of their heart, giving their time freely and without even travel expenses in almost all cases.

I make no apology for coming back to the work of our volunteers – they are vital to the existence of the CA

In November the Sections' Group had their annual conference at CA House and I was delighted to see a great turnout of enthusiastic people. There was a buzz about the session which bodes well for the future. January is the time of the Flag Officers' Lunch. This is an opportunity for the Flag Officers, on the CA's behalf, to say thank you to the volunteers and other members who contribute to the running of the Association and deliver, with assistance from our excellent staff, almost all the services provided.

Last year we recruited a new Hon



Treasurer and Hon.

Solicitor but these are not the only professional skills which would be of considerable assistance to us. CA House is now 30 years old and, not surprisingly, some things are approaching end of life. At present we are dealing with these issues as they arise but it would be much easier if we could plan replacement/refurbishment over the coming years so that we can deal with them when convenient, not when they fail. So, if you are a building surveyor, building services engineer or have other experience of looking after this sort of building and would be prepared to examine the building and help us prepare a plan, it would be of great assistance.

I must stress that CA House generates more revenue than it costs to run, even with repairs and maintenance, and so subsidises the cost of membership.

Many of you will have seen Judy Evans' webinar on applying for a VLS-T visa for France. You may be aware that an amendment was made to a bill before the French Senate to simplify the process of getting a visa for second homeowners from the UK. The CA, with considerable help from Judy and Jules Dussek, wrote to the senator responsible for the amendment to request that those who keep their boats in France be considered in the same way. Sadly we heard in late January that the constitutional committee had thrown out the amendment, because it was not related closely enough to the original bill. This is a setback, but does appear to show a desire to make things easier for Brits who want to spend time in France. We will be on the look out for other possible areas where we can make our case. This would be easier if the UK government was sympathetic; sadly, it is not.

In any case I wish fair winds to you all for the coming season. I plan to be sailing around the UK this year and so if you see *Nightsong* give us a call or drop by.





Staying at CA House

If you have never stayed in the cabins at CA House, why not make this the year you try them for the first time? The five cabins are available exclusively to CA members. They include double beds and en-suite wet rooms as well as the usual tea/coffee making facilities. CA House is a few minutes' walk from Limehouse DLR station, or if you're not in a hurry and enjoy the views, you can take the No 15 bus to Charing Cross. In the morning you can enjoy a self-service breakfast..

There are 10 free parking spaces at CA House on a first come, first served, basis. The congestion charge does not apply but it is in the ULEZ zone.

From 1 March 2024, cabin prices are **£60 for single occupancy and £70 for double** – still much less than you would pay for a hotel. And don't forget that if you successfully refer a friend to join the CA (see page 10), you can now **use your £20 voucher towards accommodation.**

If you stay Friday and Saturday nights, Sunday is included free of charge. The restaurant and bar (The Galley) is open 1200-2300 on Saturday and Sunday (and 1730 to 2300 on weekdays) for drinks, snacks and excellent meals.

Does your boat need a length of copper pipe?

Why is a foot-long length of copper pipe the most useful tool on **Jeanne Socrates'** boat? Find out this and the answers to many other questions in the CA and *Practical Boat Owner* (PBO)'s **video interview** with the 81-year-old sailor and world record-breaker. The short version of the recording was first shown at Southampton Boat Show 2023, and the full 45-minute version is on the CA's video page and our YouTube channel.



End of the voyage for JST and Tenacious

The CA was saddened by the closure of Jubilee Sailing Trust (Tenacious) Ltd in December. JST was our chosen charity for many years, with a regular free advert in *Cruising* magazine. A number of members, including *Cruising*'s editor, have taken advantage of the discounts offered to CA members for voyages on the charity's tall ships *Tenacious* and *Lord Nelson*. The future of the charity is being decided by the Charity Commission.

HLR news: all change in Lagos, Portugal

Fiona Dransfield (*below*) is stepping down from her HLR role after more than 20 years. She and her husband John arrived in Lagos in 1994 with their yacht *Zoe* when the marina was first opened. They enjoyed sailing from there, and always felt relaxed and happy to return to Lagos at the end of the season. While sailing they were introduced to another HLR who recommended they become one for Lagos. Over the years she has met and emailed many CA members. She and John frequently organised marina

Christmas festive dinners for between 20 and 200, a different restaurant each year. So a huge thank you for all your valuable contributions to the CA.

Ingrid Fortunato (*right*) is our latest recruit. She is the manager of the Lagos Marina and knows the area well. She is greatly looking forward to meeting CA members.



Key dates & rallies

There are still some section seminars to look forward to, followed by rallies and cruises in company. Find out more via the CA site, where you can also make bookings, at www.theca.org.uk/events/all.

Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 March

Mediterranean Seminar Two-day seminar aimed at those cruising the Med for the first time & those planning new cruising grounds. Speakers are all Med CA members keen to share their knowledge and exchange ideas with the audience too. Also offers the opportunity to meet fellow Med sailors, chat about experiences, future plans and all things cruising in a convivial environment.

Sunday 28 April, Blue Water Spring Seminar.

The annual Blue Water Seminar includes two informative talks and the opportunity to meet fellow blue water sailors, share ideas, plans and tales of adventures. There will be time for a Q&A session at the end of each presentation.

Saturday 4 to Monday 6 May East Coast Bank Holiday Rally

An event-packed Bank Holiday weekend – all are welcome. Join us for all the events or just some, you choose. Come by boat, car, motor home or bicycle. Royal Harwich YC.

Saturday 18 May Fitting out evening

Following the success of the Biscay Section 2023 supper, this year's will again take place in Arzal.

Saturday 25 to Monday 27 May Brightlingsea Rally

Another busy Bank Holiday weekend event, hosted by the Essex Section.

Sunday 9 to Monday 17 June

Baltic Rally – Rügen in sheltered waters, starting in Stralsund and ending in Swinoujscie in Poland.

Wednesday 12 to Friday 14 June

Île d'Yeu Rally Biscay members gather in Port Joinville on one of France's loveliest islands. Spaces are limited to 12 boats.

Saturday 15 to Thursday 27 June

Channel Rally & Cruise-in-Company W Country & Solent starts, visiting Alderney & France.

Fully booked within 24 hours of opening but you can join the wait list.

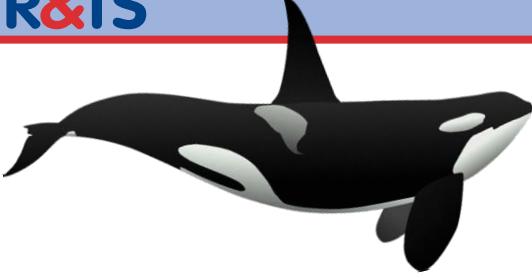


Photo: gillfoto/Wikimedia



Navigating the orca challenge

As we look forward to the new sailing season, crews who are planning to sail in the Bay of Biscay, off the Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal, through the Gibraltar Straits or even as far as Malaga should prepare for the possibility of an orca attack.

The majority of interactions result in slight or no damage, but there continue to be those where violent attacks by orca cause serious damage, including the sinking of two yachts last year.

What can crews do?

We encourage all to prepare properly for the risk, as you would do for the many other risks you may face such as storms, breakages etc. The first and probably the most important thing to decide is **when and where to travel** through the affected areas, by finding out where the orca are likely to be. From historic reports, it seems that early in the season their activity is concentrated in the Strait of Gibraltar while they wait for the tuna, on which they feed, to leave the Mediterranean. Later in the season they move west and north following the tuna and can then disperse into smaller groups and appear simultaneously in different parts of the affected waters.

To help with working out where they might be, there are at least two mobile apps where sightings and interactions are reported in real time. **GT Orcas** and **Orcinus** were launched early in 2023 and provide this information. In addition, there are a number of social media sites such as **Orca Attack Reports** on Facebook [pictured right] which can all help with understanding the locations of the orca.

The apps and Facebook groups are being used to record orca locations as close as possible to real time. This approach is supported by the CA orca website, which publishes detailed information about the location and nature of interactions. Please check www.theca.org.uk/orcas along

with the monthly interaction maps and traffic light risk maps produced by our collaborator Grupo Trabajo Orca Atlantica (GTOA) at www.orcaiberica.org. If crews know where the orca are, or are likely to be, they can plan their route to reduce or even remove the risk of an interaction.

If you must passage through the area where you suspect the orca are, and if conditions permit, staying in less than 20m and close to the shore seems to significantly reduce the risk of an interaction compared to travelling in deeper water which is where the tuna swim. So the best advice is:

- Do everything you can to avoid them.
- If you have to be where they are, try to stay in less than 20m of water.

Keeping orca away from your yacht

We had hoped to be able to give some good news about the approval of at least one safe and effective device that could be used to deter these protected animals. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no progress had been made on approving any audio deterrent. Since the Portuguese Government has been ready to trial at least two devices, the orcas largely avoided Portuguese waters, so the trials could not take place. It is hoped to hold these trials as soon as the orcas return.

So we are not aware of any legal safe audio deterrent devices that crews could use. The "pinger" devices that are available appear to use frequencies, volumes and cause noise pollution in a way that the marine biologists believe will harm the orca, particularly their ability to hunt using their hearing.

Dealing with an interaction

What should you do if your plans to avoid them fail and you are unlucky enough to have an interaction? Remember that most interactions lead to no damage or

only slight damage. As fish eaters, orcas will not be interested in people as prey. However there is a real risk of injury from the violence of some attacks, so be careful moving about.

To date there does not appear to be any one guaranteed course of initial action to end the interaction and minimise the damage. There are two main option:

- **Stop the yacht** as this can calm the orcas and reduce their adrenaline. This is based on advice from marine biologists who have studied this species for decades and it has worked for some yachts. Once stopped, the best options appear to be making a loud noise, reversing, or pouring sand around the rudder. Skippers have tried all these with mixed success and their comments and experiences can be found in the Library of Comments on each topic on the CA orca website at www.theca.org.uk/orcas/reports.
- **Or motor at full speed directly to shallow water.** This was proposed last year, and has also worked for some yachts. It is based on the understanding that when hunting, the orcas tend to stay together, and so the few orcas involved with the interaction will be reluctant to follow the yacht, and leave the rest of the group.

One of these options may work, we hope so. But at present, we do not yet have enough understanding of which would be better and when.

CA orca resources

For this season we have updated the CA orca website and reporting pages. They are still in four languages: French, Portuguese and Spanish as well as English. Since last summer, fewer skippers have been reporting interactions on our site. We suspect skippers are now choosing to use the easier option of reporting the nominal orca location

RATS and Disclaimer

The Regulatory & Technical Services group (RATS) is an executive committee of the Cruising Association (CA) made up of CA volunteers. RATS gives advice and assistance to CA members and others on a voluntary basis but this is subject to the following Disclaimer and should not be regarded as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Any advice has been prepared voluntarily by the Cruising Association, its members and others and they have tried to ensure that the contents are accurate. However, the Cruising Association, its employees, contributors and relevant members shall not be liable for any loss, damage or inconvenience of any kind howsoever arising in connection with the use of and/or reliance on such advice, save to the extent required by applicable law.

Prepare for orca attacks this season, continued



data on the mobile apps. Unfortunately, that approach means the reports do not contain all the key information and are quickly lost over time, unlike the CA report data which is comprehensive and retained.

In order to help keep crews as safe as possible, the CA makes the data collected available to everyone worldwide, not just our members. Apart from yacht crews, we know it is being used by researchers and commercial companies who are trying to assist with the problem. So for all these reasons, it is important that we encourage more reports to be submitted.

In order to address the problem, we are, with the help of the marine press and others, running a campaign to encourage more reports this season. For example, Noonsite, which many of you use, will be putting articles in their next four monthly

newsletters, and magazines such as *PBO* and *Yachting Monthly* are covering the issue.

The Spanish and Portuguese Governments have just announced a three-day international conference in Madrid in early February on the orca problem. This is most welcome as it means the problem has now also been escalated to Government level in Spain. It will have input from commercial companies as well as scientists and policy makers. At the time of writing this article there are no more details, but the CA Orca Project Team is being kept informed of developments and will make sure CA members are made aware of any findings as soon as they are known.

John Burbeck

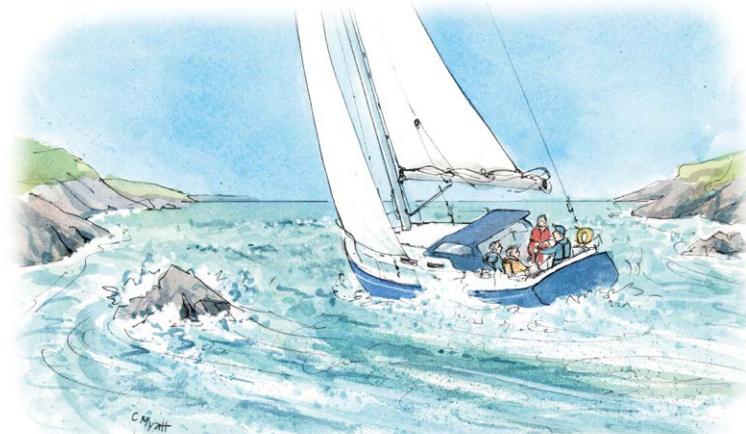


BOATING BLUNDERS

Watch out... for correct timing

Although we raced our J120 regularly, we usually went for an annual cruise. In 2021 we left our berth on the Hamble and went up the Welsh coast. During the cruise our cabin clock stopped and despite many efforts we failed to get the hands moving. After a fortnight we returned to Milford Haven to take two sets of friends for brief sails in the area.

The second group comprised Caroline, an old family friend who like my wife and I was in her late 70s, and her teenage grandson, Max. We had three days. On the first day we sailed from the Neyland marina to Dale where we anchored and crew members had a swim. After checking the weather forecast in the morning we decided to head for Skomer. Given the wind direction we headed for the North Haven, sailing around the west of Skomer to avoid Jack Sound. We had a brisk sail with two reefs down. We spent the rest of the day on a mooring watching the wildlife,



"Stop saying it ought to be slack water.....!"

including a number of seals basking on the rocks.

On the following day we needed to return to Dale so I carefully checked the tides through Jack Sound. I told the crew that we needed to leave at 1100. At about 1030 by my watch we started to prepare to get under way. Wind was SW and the tides nearer springs than neaps. With two reefs again and the jib we headed through the Sound where I was surprised to find strong adverse tide. We made over the ground slowly and when we were through Caroline suggested a coffee as it was 11 o'clock.

Turned out that I had unwittingly pressed a button on my watch and changed it to French time! As we raced to France several times a year I kept my "dual time" set one hour ahead of BST so that it was easy to switch to local time in France – too easy.

Tim Lester



Martin off Sicily, with Etna behind



Topping up the CA cup

Martin Sutcliffe came across the CA as recently as 2019.

Having appreciated what the CA has to offer he felt he should give something back – and is now a Council member and Chair of the marketing committee

"We seem to be heading in the same direction, why don't we meet up?" I suspected a junk email, but it turned out a fellow CA member had spotted me on CApitain's Mate crossing to the east coast of Sicily. Alan caught my lines on Syracuse harbour quay and we remain firm friends to this day. That's one of the best things about the CA, you never have to be alone.

Somehow, I just fell upon the CA. It was 2019, I was about to retire, and as I was living in Zurich a local club wouldn't be much help with my boat in Athens! The CA seemed a good option with little to lose, although little did I know where this was to lead.

Sailing came as a means to have fun holidays with my family, Sarah and our three young children. We were blissfully ignorant signing up for a Sunsail "learn to sail" course in Greece followed by a first flotilla with the children, who were then nine, seven and five. The yacht was a Gibsea 33 and every time we tacked the boom caught in the backstays! We were too scared to reef and hung on for dear life one afternoon. Crazy!

Over the years our sailing skills grew. We took an online Day Skipper theory course and when the time came for our

Day Skipper practical in the Solent, we saw winds so light we barely moved. We passed, but felt poorly equipped. Nevertheless, we greatly enjoyed Mediterranean flotillas that followed, with as much time spent in the water as on the boat, and the children entertained in the evening with beach fires and games. Not being one to sit on a beach for a week, this was as close to an ideal holiday as I could imagine.

Throwing out all the chain doesn't work when the anchor is missing a bolt and the flukes collapse on the seabed

After a while it seemed natural that we would take the plunge into bareboat charters, starting on what seemed a monstrous 41 foot Oceanis. This was perfect, although the boats weren't! One yacht, we were told, had no holding tank; it did and it was permanently full. With another we learned that throwing out all the chain doesn't work when the anchor is missing a bolt and the flukes collapse as soon as it hits the seabed!

Then in 2015 we bought the perfect boat (of course she's not!), a Malö 39 built in

1999. The combination of the boat being in Turkey, me a Brit in Switzerland and Walter, who was selling the boat, being Austrian, led to a complex and scary sales process including a trip to Rhodes to complete the sale.

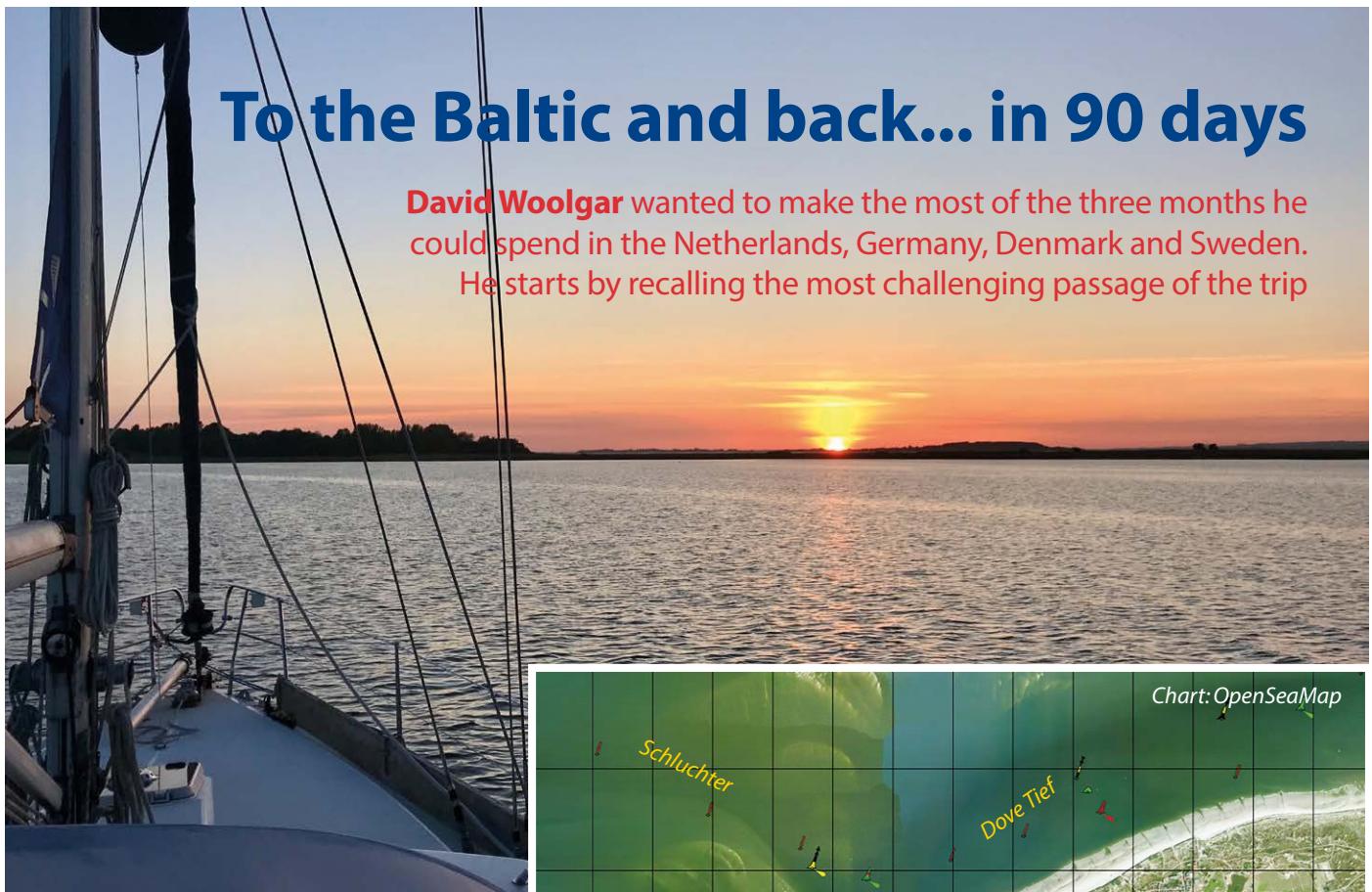
In our first year as members we couldn't get enough of the valuable information available. Sarah and I sailed from Athens to Istanbul, and while Heikell's guides were well thumbed, it was CM (CApitan's Mate) that saved us from a convincing scam in Ayvalik and provided up-to-date tips about anchorages and harbours. We found our CA burgee broke the ice in meeting several friendly fellow cruisers, and that triggered some pleasant evenings and coffees swapping stories and sharing favourite locations. Those same things, the community, the information... oh, and the discounts, mean we keep signing up!

Today, *Dragon II* is overwintering in Valencia and I find myself fully immersed in the CA as a CM editor, a Council member and the Chair of the Marketing committee. Having quenched my thirst from the "CA cup", it seems only right that I help keep it topped up.



Martin's family appreciating the ice-cream boat on flotilla in Turkey, and right, Dragon II at anchor. Photos: Martin Sutcliffe





To the Baltic and back... in 90 days

David Woolgar wanted to make the most of the three months he could spend in the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden. He starts by recalling the most challenging passage of the trip

We had been enjoying what I call a "cracking sail" along the outside of the Frisian islands, having left the island of Borkum early that morning to give us a favourable tide. Bright and sunny weather and a beam reach in a lively sea and a force 4 had seen *Jemma*, our Moody Eclipse 38, in her element, frequently exceeding 8kt as she surfed down the side of the large swells, which had built over the fetch of the whole North Sea before crashing onto these low, sandy islands.

Now however, the sky suddenly darkened as heavy clouds piled in from the north increasing the wind to a force 5 and bringing a whole change of mood, from an enjoyable sail to something more sinister and threatening. We had just passed the safe water mark for the *Schluchter*, the westerly channel or *seegat* that runs between the islands and into the small harbour on the German island of Norderney. My new paper charts simply showed a "buoyed channel" and the recently updated Navionics electronic charts in the plotters on board had a notice stating that as the buoys were so frequently moved they were not showing any of them, so it was down to us to find the buoys that marked this narrow and twisting channel.

From the safe water mark the crew scanned the choppy waters ahead with



binoculars but could see no marks, so I decided to stand on in for a while to see if any appeared. A Dutch yacht that had been ahead of us coming along the coast was also heading in, which was comforting, as we were not completely alone. I could feel the swells increasing as the sea "felt the bottom", and had to concentrate on keeping our course as we rushed on towards the land.

I was horrified to see the Dutch yacht plunging into the surf... rolling over almost to 90° as white water broke over her hull

After what seemed like an age my brother Chris shouted that he could see a red mark away some distance on our port bow. I asked both Chris and Mark, a friend who made up the crew, to scan right around to the beam on both sides for any other marks as I did not want to miss one of them, which could lead to disaster. But

when nothing else could be seen I changed course and headed for the red. Shortly afterwards the Dutch yacht must have also seen the buoy for he suddenly veered round and also made towards it.

Only when we reached this first small red pillar mark could we see another one some distance away and more or less on the bow. The Dutch yacht, now maybe two cables ahead, was already making towards it and we followed. The depth had been shoaling constantly and was now about 4m as we neared this second mark. All I could see ahead was a continuous line of white breaking water, the dull roar of which I could start to hear above the sound of the wind and waves. The Dutch yacht continued onward, but it did not look like there was any depth of water where these waves were obviously breaking onto the sand. Chris shouted again over the din that he could see a "strange-looking" mark of some sort broad on our port beam, and as this was all we had I turned hard to port and towards the unidentified buoy some distance away.



Jemma in Leeuwarden

I glanced astern and was horrified to see the Dutch yacht plunging into the surf. I do not know if the yacht hit the bottom or the skipper just realised his error, but at that moment the yacht swung wildly to port and rolled over almost to 90° as white water broke foaming over her hull. Amazingly she picked herself up, and shaking off the savage waves completed her turn. With her engine no doubt at full throttle, she dragged herself out of the surf and back the way she had come, much to my relief and I am sure to all those on board. I thought she might then follow us to this new mark, but the skipper just kept heading north, back into deeper water, after which we never saw her again. So now we were completely on our own.

Jemma was on a broad reach and sailing quite fast, perhaps too much so, but now was not the time to put a reef in the sails. The depth of water was still decreasing and I was beginning to really believe that there was no channel here at all and that we would soon end up like the Dutch

yacht on our beam ends in the raging surf. As we sailed on, a line of breaking waves developed only a few metres to port between us and the open sea; on our starboard side was the surf that the other yacht had encountered, seemingly only a dozen metres away. Was this a blind alley with no way out? Had the marks not yet been repositioned after the winter storms? These were questions I kept asking myself.

Through binoculars I could see now that the mark ahead was a bifurcated starboard buoy, perhaps from the Dove Tief channel coming from the east, and it gave me hope that it marked where the channel I was following hopefully joined the deeper water. The depth alarm, which was set to one metre below the keel, was now sounding continuously adding to the fearful din. Glancing down while keeping us between the two sets of breakers I saw it was indicating 0.7m but was steady, and another minute saw it rise to 1m and then 1.2m. Suddenly, to my great relief, the surf to our starboard



Ship in the Kiel canal

calmed and we were almost to the buoy. There was an amazing silence as the depth alarm stopped, the noise of the surf died away and even the wind appeared to drop as we gybed and I swung Jemma around the buoy and into the calm 6m depth of the Dove Tief channel. Even the clouds parted and the sun once more shone, holidaymakers could be seen playing on Norderney's sandy beaches half a mile away and the last hour of fear and worry already just seemed like a distant memory.

There was an amazing silence: the depth alarm stopped, the surf and wind noise faded as we swung into the calm 6m depth

This was the start of my three-month Baltic cruise, hopefully making full use of the 90 days that UK citizens can now spend in the Schengen zone. I was going to be changing crew every two or three weeks and spending some time single handed.

We had sailed directly from our home berth on the river Crouch in Essex to Den Helder in the Netherlands, where the immigration and customs officials who checked us into the EU could not have been more helpful and polite, coming to our boat and even recommending that we complete a temporary importation form for Jemma to avoid any tax problems when we later departed the EU.

The persistent strong northerly winds were increasing again for the next few days so I decided to head through the Wadden Sea, protected by the islands of Texel and Vlieland, to the charming Dutch town of Harlingen, and from there proceed along the canals through the ancient towns of Leeuwarden and Dokkum to Lauwersoog on the





A typical Danish street



Jemma in
Agersø Havn

north coast, by which time the winds should have moderated and we could safely re-enter the North Sea. This plan worked very well, although when we did leave the shelter of the canals the wind and sea state were still more than ideal, but with deep water channels both out of Lauwersoog and into our next port, Borkum, we were able to keep moving east.

After the exciting sail into Norderney, where Mark left us to attend a family christening, the following day was hot and sunny with a light and variable wind which meant motor-sailing for much of the time, but by 2100 we were in the Kiel canal at Brunsbüttel. After ten days of pushing on hard in less than ideal conditions at last I felt I could begin to relax.

Two days later it was a German bank holiday. Exiting the canal at Holtenau we were finally in the calm blue waters of the Baltic Sea, with hundreds of other pleasure craft of all sizes and types enjoying perfect weather and champagne sailing in the Kieler Förde, described as the Cowes of Germany!

For the next three weeks the weather remained hot and sunny with light winds, as we explored the fjords and islands of southern Denmark, with each small harbour and old town seemingly more charming and the people more welcoming and friendly than the one before. It really was a sailing paradise. Jemma spent more nights at anchor than in harbour and I lost count of the number of beautiful, sheltered spots to drop the hook and enjoy sundowners in the cockpit as a burning orange sun set into a mirror-smooth sea.

Eventually we made our way to

Kastrup marina, 20 minutes' walk from Copenhagen airport, where my brother was flying home and my wife Linda and our friend Kay were joining *Jemma* as my next crew. We sailed north up the Øresund, stopping at the beautiful Swedish Island of Wen for a night before arriving on the Swedish mainland at Helsingborg to celebrate both my wife's birthday and the Swedish midsummer. In a park a short walk from the harbour there was much music, dancing, folk singing and of course drinking as the locals dressed in colourful costumes and with garlands of wild flowers in their hair celebrated the summer solstice.

***It really was a sailing paradise.
I lost count of the number of
beautiful spots to drop the hook
and enjoy cockpit sundowners***

Leaving Sweden we sailed along the north coast of the main Danish island of Sjælland (Zealand), where we discovered more wonderful small towns and good sailing including a few days exploring the large and sheltered Isefjord.

A few more days found us in a small harbour on the island of Sejerø, said to be the sunniest island in Denmark, and most of the time it was indeed sunny and warm, but it was also very windy! We ended up stormbound and staying for seven nights. Not too much of a hardship with a first class restaurant about 30m from our berth and a lively bar and cafe just across the harbour. There were also fine walks around the island and a small supermarket in the charming little village to keep us provisioned, while winds of up to 50kt blew through.

Once the winds had abated we sailed to the port of Kalundberg on Sjælland where a good train service ran to Copenhagen, as it was time for Linda and Kay to fly home and Mark to join me again for another week. The public transport in Denmark appears to be excellent with train and bus travel being quick, reliable and inexpensive making all the crew changes very easy.

With Mark I sailed back across the Great Belt and around the north side of the island of Fyn, anchoring for a couple of nights before we entered the Little Belt at its narrowest point, where it twists and turns under two bridges between the towns of Fredericia and Middelfart. It was another sunny and hot weekend and the waters were again full of hundreds of pleasure craft all enjoying the weather and the beautiful scenery.

A couple more crew changes finally saw myself, Rosie, Louise and another Mark returning along the Kiel canal. I had 14 days left of my Schengen 90 and the weather in the German Bight and the southern North Sea was looking very unsettled, with weather windows opening and then closing tightly as the forecasts changed daily.

We sailed as far as Cuxhaven, at the mouth of the river Elbe, and had to wait five days for north westerly sixes and sevens to abate for long enough to make the next passage safely. This was a long, 16-hour sail directly to Borkum, followed by an early start to make Lauwersoog the next morning before more days of winds this time up to force nine, blew through. Re-tracing our outward route through the Dutch canals was made more "interesting" by three days of 35kt winds testing our boat handling skills through the locks and bridges!



Left, crew in the Holtenau lock on the Kiel canal and below, the skipper enjoying Baltic sunshine



Safely berthed back in Harlingen another window had appeared in the weather that might allow us to get back to England if we sailed directly from Harlingen early the next morning. So while the crew provisioned the boat, I took our passports to the local *Koninklijke Marechaussee* (immigration) office where again an incredibly pleasant and helpful young officer stamped us out of Schengen. I now had five of my 90 days left! I also submitted our voyage details on the new UK Border Force sPCR website which, as with our outward journey, was easy to do and worked very smoothly.

This voyage had certainly proved that, at the moment anyway, the UK's

relationship with the EU does not present any difficulties in travelling to or from the EU, except for the 90-day limit for a visa-free stay.

Locking out from Harlingen the next morning the journey across the Waddenzea was smooth and easy, but once we entered the North Sea the residual swell from days of storm force winds made the first half of the crossing a challenge for the crew, especially as it was a very dark night with a lot of commercial shipping movements. However by the next morning, with both the swell and the wind decreasing and the sun shining brightly we had a final cracking sail right up to our mooring at North Fambridge, 36 hours and 212 miles

after leaving the Netherlands. I was away for a total of 86 days and covered 1,812 miles on my Baltic cruise, but without doubt the star of the show was our Moody Eclipse, which once again was faultless and looked after all her crew so well.

David was born and grew up in Folkestone on the Kent coast. He first started sailing aged seven and in his teens raced Lasers. He started cruising in his 20s and has never stopped. With his wife Linda they purchased Jemma in 2011 and have cruised extensively from Brittany to Sweden. After retiring in 2021 David made a five month circumnavigation of the UK.



CREW: "I'm 67 and fully retired. I keep fit by playing tennis, cycling and swimming. I have sailed with various CA skippers on some fairly long trips, including the south coast of England, across to France and Ostend, in the Med and across the Bay of Biscay, as crew.... I'm happy to sleep in the saloon, but I'm afraid I'm not prepared to share a cabin (even with another female)."

Crewing Service: getting ready for the season

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 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. Keep an eye on the newsletters and website for any further meetings.

Also 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 and if you have any queries please contact Malcolm Davidson at crewing@theca.org.uk



SKIPPER: "Crew needed for Bahamas to UK in April, May, June and possibly July on an Oyster 53 which completed the ARC in November/December 2023, and is currently cruising the Windward and Leeward Islands, the BVI's and then the Bahamas... We are looking for up to three extra crew for the return transatlantic leg, leaving Nassau in early April and the Azores in mid-May, doing either Nassau/Azores and Azores/Falmouth or both. They need physical fitness and competent night watch keeping on offshore passages."



Since Britain left the EU, there have been new regulations concerning taking pets to Europe.

We have taken our dog, Marley, across the Channel on numerous occasions – initially on our sailing boat, then since Brexit, on the Harwich to Hook of the Netherlands ferry. He is a rescue dog from Spain and has an EU passport so could go backwards and forwards without his passport even being checked.

In 2023, however, everything changed. We went to the Netherlands in March to see a boat we hoped to buy. For a change, and possibly because it was less than half the price of the ferry, we went via Eurotunnel from Folkestone.

Arriving at the terminal at 0450 for the early train, we were told Marley's documentation was not valid. His rabies vaccination – which had been checked by an EU laboratory blood test, at a cost of £150, to make sure it was valid – was not recorded in his passport.

The record of the vaccination was on a vaccination card supplied by our local vet. The validation by the EU laboratory, however, was on a separate letter.

Advice from RATS

You can read more information about taking your pet to the EU on the CA website at www.theca.org.uk/rats/brexit_advice/pets

It's a dog's life

Beryl Chalmers' rescue dog Marley is from Spain, with an EU passport. His vaccinations, done in the UK, are up to date and checked, but because a British vet can't write in an EU passport they don't really count....

The customs officer told us we needed to get an additional Certificate of Health from an English vet, but there were no vet surgeries open in Folkestone until 0830, and there was no vet able to sort the problem until after 1000.

We had to ask our local vet to email Marley's health history for the Folkestone vet to check. They sent it to us immediately. We were then told the email had to go direct to the vet. We were lucky our local vet was so accommodating.

The vet didn't even check the dog. He just completed a form, stamped it, charged us £200 and sent us on our way

At no time did the vet check Marley. He just completed a form, stamped it, charged us £200 and sent us on our way.

Back at the Eurotunnel terminal, we then had to wait another three hours before we could board as our booking was for 0600! We arrived in France seven hours late.

On our return via the Hook of Holland

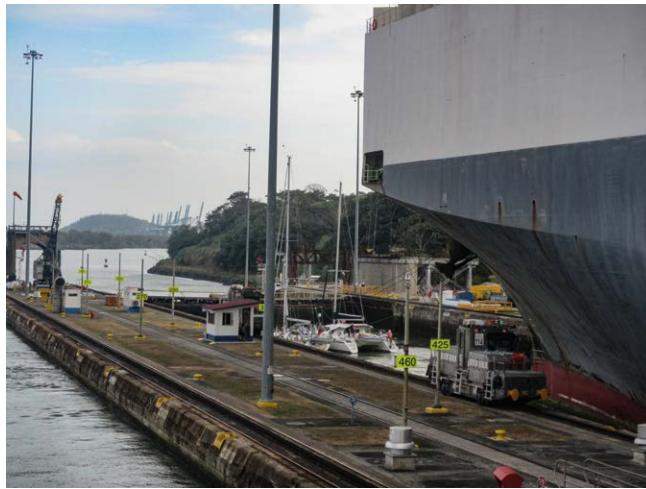
– as we had lost a day getting there, we didn't have time to do the same return trip – we were told again that no UK vet was "allowed" to write in an EU pet passport, and the rabies vaccination needed to be recorded in the passport.

We are now forced to either pay for a certificate of health each year – valid for four months – or get his vaccinations done in the Netherlands. On previous trips we always had to have Marley checked, given a worming pill and his passport written up before we returned to the UK. That cost us €6 or €7. Last year it cost €67.

Although Marley was not due his rabies vaccination until October 2024, we took him to a vet in the Netherlands so that everything was in order according to EU rules. Another £100+. It's lucky that Marley is a well-loved dog!

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.





Views on the Panama Canal. Left, sailing vessels are dwarfed by a bulk carrier. Above, crocodiles snooze on the banks

Voyages of discovery

Cathy Brown is following the adventures of friends as they sail through the Panama Canal and into the Pacific... and suggests that all of us should record and share our voyages

As I write this, some dear friends are transiting the Panama Canal in their yacht, taking part in the World ARC. I am filled with both envy and awe. Envy: I would love to be in their place, seeing all the sights, experiencing all the adventure of a circumnavigation. Awe: I am not sure I would have the courage to take such a bold step into the unknown.

It is too late now. As the years fly by, declining strength, or increasing obligations, force us to seek adventure closer to home. There are still pleasures to be enjoyed in returning to familiar cruising grounds, rather than endlessly seeking new horizons.

All kinds of things have changed, over the years we have been sailing, but possibly the most significant is ease of communication in the digital age. Early leisure circumnavigators were virtually incomunicado. Then there was the technical difficulty of short-wave radio. Early satellite phones appeared revolutionary by comparison, but it was still a challenge to use them for simple text-only transmissions.

It is only relatively recently that we have truly been able to follow one another's cruising adventures from day to day, through AIS tracking as well as news updates on all types of social media – complete with pictures and video.

It is particularly enjoyable when the postings cover familiar places. We were lucky enough to enjoy a trip through the Panama Canal ourselves – in a small ship, not our own yacht, I confess.

So I am delighted to be reminded of the

whole wonderful experience – the awe-inspiring vision of the canal's creation, the technical wizardry of its operation, the incredible landscape of the huge lakes that provide water for the locks, the wonderful wildlife – especially the crocodiles basking on the bankside.

So far, our friends' adventures in the ARC and now the world ARC have taken them to places we have been ourselves (though again, I confess, our Atlantic crossings have been by air).

Everyone who sails knows there will be challenging days as well as delightful ones, and often these are the most interesting

But once they leave the canal and set out across the Pacific, they will be exploring places we have not been – and at our time of life probably never will – and in many ways that means their online accounts will become even more fascinating.

We are looking forward to vicariously sharing their triumphs and traumas (for everyone who sails knows there will be challenging days as well as delightful ones, and often these make for the most interesting reading (if not the most enjoyable cruising).

Not everybody keeps a log, in these days of electronic navigation, but that is their loss – it is good to be able to look back. An online blog is even better – a record not only of the voyage itself, but also the anchorages enjoyed, the restaurants

visited, the people encountered. Again, it is a lovely thing to have to look back on, whether or not it garners many viewings, likes or shares – but it almost certainly will, and friends and relations will enjoy it too.

So I am appealing to all who are out there sailing, near or far, in waters exotic or familiar, it really does not matter, to share their adventures, by Facebook, Instagram, Blogger, or whatever method they choose.

Other active cruisers will learn by and benefit from your experiences, and those who have "swallowed the anchor" will appreciate armchair adventures. The importance and value of logs and blogs is reflected in the CA's annual competition, with its numerous trophies for voyages of all types and durations.

Whatever your sailing path this season – epic or local – please record it, and enter the CA log competition – so that we can all share it.

■ *Entries for the 2024 CA log competition open in October.*

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.

