



Cruising

www.theca.org.uk

- Mayday & helicopter rescue
- Ultraviolet damage
- Going West with the CA
- Talks online this autumn



Hot & bothered

Association President **Robin Baron** reports on the hot summer in parts of Europe, and an interesting adventure for one of our older members

This past summer quarter is the quiet one, at least in terms of Association activities, if not for our members. The unprecedented and unrelenting hot weather has hopefully meant that most of us have managed good cruising adventures. Not that heatwaves are particularly welcomed by cruisers. I remember being moored at Dittisham in August 2003 on a day so hot and sunny that we had to shelter below with the curtains drawn to try to keep cool. In the end we put to sea for some respite.

Anecdotal evidence from talking to members is that it has not been hot and sunny everywhere. Wind and rain greeted participants in the ARC Baltic, which made a thousand miles in a month something of a challenge. Members cruising to Lofoten have had indifferent weather but probably shouldn't be surprised – the archipelago is within the Arctic Circle.

On page 11 you can read an account by longstanding member Frank Singleton of



his rescue from sea following a medical emergency. Until recently Frank was the Association's weather expert and author of the Weather section in *The Cruising Almanac*. The story as told by Frank is noteworthy for its down-to-earth tone, and acceptance that it is normal to cruise at his advanced age and that these things happen. May we all live and cruise as long and be as active late in life as Frank and his wife, Jennifer.

One of the issues Council is considering is how to improve opportunities to recruit new members as the closure of the London Boat Show in 2018 has been followed by a steady decline in attendance at Southampton. We are launching some exciting new membership initiatives over the next few months and as a start have introduced two new ways of joining:

- **Young Cruiser** We are extending eligibility for our younger members until the end of the year in which a **member turns 35**, recognising that many people are discovering cruising later in life or balancing careers, young families and the costs of getting afloat. Young Cruiser members can enjoy **full membership from just £50 a year**.
- **Recurring card payment** New and existing members can now pay annually by credit or debit card at the lower Direct Debit rate (currently £172 rather than £185). Direct Debit remains the best option for most members with a UK bank account; recurring card payments offer a welcome alternative for those without one, particularly for members living outside the UK.

If you are thinking of becoming a member, do look at page 6 for number four of our series highlighting the benefits to be enjoyed.



A Young Cruiser recruited at Southampton

Fair winds
Robin 

Now out: 2027 Cruising Almanac

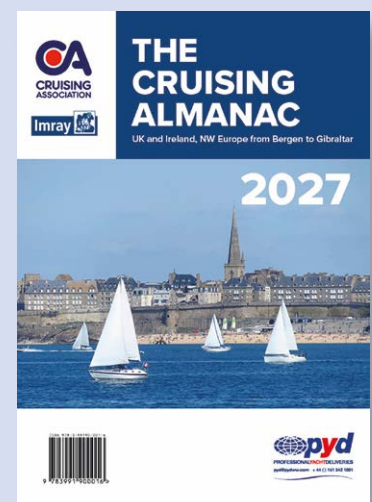
Trusted as the go-to on board reference for sail and motor cruisers, the *Cruising Almanac* covers the coasts and islands of the British Isles, together with NW Europe from Bergen, through the approaches to the Baltic and down to Gibraltar.

Order your copy today: **members pay £30**, non-members £40 (plus P&P)

What's new in this edition?

The 2027 edition has been comprehensively reviewed and updated, with highlights including a reorganised western Scotland section, revised coverage of the Swale, Medway and Menai Strait, updated harbour plans, new entries for Wisbech and Rhu, and improved tide tables to make passage planning even easier.

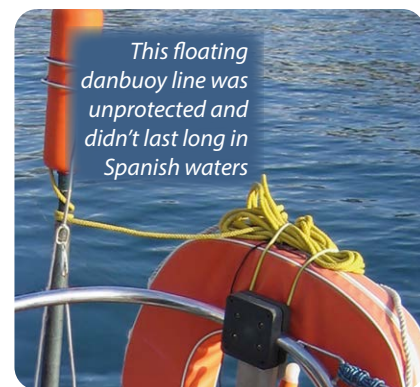
The Almanac serves as a comprehensive guide for planning safe passage in and out of harbours, rivers and anchorages, as well as discovering new waters. With detailed information on almost every harbour and a multitude of anchorages, whether you are planning weekend cruises or extended voyages, the 2027 CA Cruising Almanac remains your essential companion. Order at <https://shop.theca.org.uk>.



Ultraviolet

how it affects your boat

It can destroy your ropes, damage your skin and fade your canvas and gelcoat. **Richard Ritchie** considers how this invisible radiation can affect every sailor



You are putting the boat to bed for the winter. You plan to put the life-sling away, but as you undo the knot securing the line to the pushpit, the rope crumbles to powder in your fingers... Why? What is going on? When this happened to me some years ago I was astonished. My life-sling had been new that spring. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays had destroyed the exposed part of the yellow floating rope in a single season. I had no idea that floating ropes could degrade so fast. Was this normal? And how do I stop it happening again? Have you checked yours?

Our boats are always outside and our sport takes place in the open air. Boats and sailors are particularly affected by the impact of UV in sunlight, and by degradation caused by it.

UV damage is not limited to hotter climates. It has most impact when the sun gets 40° or more above the horizon. UK summer sun has an elevation up to 60° and day length can be up to 16 hours. This extended exposure of equipment to sun means UV damage is as important in northern Europe as anywhere. But boats that are closer to the equator will suffer more.

The impact of this damage ranges from cosmetic to downright dangerous. Awareness, protection and inspection is key to managing it. In this article we aim to promote awareness rather than to provide guidance. You should seek solutions which suit your particular circumstances.

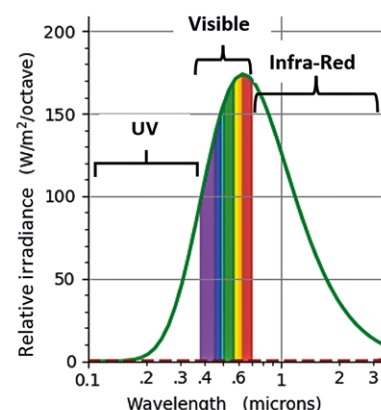
Why does UV do damage?

The sun's rays deliver a great deal of energy to the earth. This is carried by photons of light spread across the energy spectrum from Infra-red (perceived by us as heat) through visible light to ultra-violet and above.

The spectrum (spread of frequencies) peaks with visible light, but there is considerable energy at higher (UV) frequencies. There are fewer UV photons than visible photons, but each one carries

more energy and can do more damage.

When a photon hits an object, energy is transferred at a molecular level. Particularly at high energies, this can cause structural damage to the material. Damage starts at the surface, breaking chemical bonds and fragmenting the material, weakening the fibres. Chemical "free radicals" released by the chemical breakdown can then migrate inside the material and do further damage. Thus UV damage may not only be at the surface.



UV effect on materials

Modern materials such as plastics are particularly susceptible to UV damage. Unlike natural materials which have evolved protection, their long chain molecules can easily fragment. Their material purity and high performance, which make them useful, also leave them more vulnerable to UV than bulkier traditional natural materials. Early Dacron sailcloth fragmented completely after just one season. Materials have improved through the development of better processes: modern Dacron is much better, but still vulnerable.

Ropes are made of multiple fibres and "inside" fibres may only be partially protected since they weave both inside and out. Polyester rope is reasonably UV resistant. Low-stretch options such as Dyneema and Kevlar degrade extremely quickly and must be coated.

Colour also has an effect. The dyes are affected separately from the material. Red dyes look red because they absorb

the damaging, higher-energy blue and UV end of the spectrum, so are therefore more susceptible to UV molecular damage. Blue dyes reflect more blue light and damaging UV, so they fade less. Black fabric fades too, but in clothing may give the best skin protection. However, black plastics tend to be UV-robust because the carbon black used is not damaged by the UV it absorbs, and prevents penetration of UV deeper into the material.

Damage is often indicated by surface fading, stiffening, flaking and/or powderiness: compare exposed and shaded parts. Where these effects are seen it pays to inspect carefully to check that mechanical properties have not been lost.

UV damage tends to be progressive. If one part of an item has failed (say a few stitches in a sail or a crack in a lifebuoy cover) it is likely that other places have become vulnerable. Don't wait until winds are strong and the sea rough; catch problems early through vigilance, inspection, awareness and replacement when appropriate.



Full boat cover. Photo: Crusader Sails

How to protect against UV

Take appropriate steps to protect your **skin** and that of your crew. Build appropriate guidance into crew briefings, especially regarding skin damage, hats and eyewear, such as "Please put on sunscreen while we talk through our plans for the day." See panel on page 26 for more details.

Use **hatch and cockpit covers** where possible when leaving the boat and consider a **full boat cover** if decommissioned in hot climates.

Select **appropriate ropes** and lanyard materials for your needs. Be aware of vulnerabilities and inspect as appropriate. Only use UV-sensitive

fibres where necessary, and be prepared to inspect and replace them. **Thicker ropes** will retain core strength better. Sheathed ropes perform broadly according to the sheath material rather than the core.

Ensure all (polypropylene) floating ropes for safety equipment are always **protected from the sun** by a bag, and most importantly that the attachment thong is sheathed or of a UV-stable material such as polyester webbing. Where possible (eg danbuoy tethers) use non-floating nylon line instead of polypropylene.

Consider **removing webbing jackstays** when not in commission. Always specify UV-resistant stitching on loops. Inspect regularly: the shock forces involved on jackstays can be very high.

Remove lifebuoys and portable equipment to below decks when the boat is out of commission. The fabric tends to embrittle and tear and the stitching fail.

Make sure all **wiring and connectors** are **protected** from the sun with an appropriate sheath or wrapping: black heat shrink or self-amalgamating tape work well. This includes at the top of the mast: my tricolour wires were

wrongly installed without protection, and they failed.

Regularly **inspect** all plastic fittings for potential embrittlement prior to failure. Be alert! Stow vulnerable equipment below decks when your boat is not in commission.

Use **black cable ties**, not clear ones, to mouse shackles (or better still Monel wire).

Keep **varnish** in good condition and use good quality marine versions.

Inspect and maintain carbon fibre masts and poles. These **must** be protected by appropriate paint or varnish. Repair any chips, polish varnished items with UV polish and recoat the surfaces according to manufacturer's advice.

Choose **appropriate colours for fabrics** and other materials that fade less: blue fabrics reflect more UV and keep their colour better.

Don't forget to protect yourself and your crew with **high-factor sunscreen**, labelled with the date of opening.

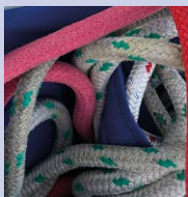


Where might I see UV induced damage?

- Most importantly, on your skin. Sun damage is cumulative and causes serious long term skin damage including skin cancers! It also causes eye cataracts, more common in sailors. "Sunburn" is not just a passing inconvenience.
- Weakening, powdering and stiffening of ropes. A damaged rope may harden or show "furry-ness" or roughness due to short fibres.
- Weakening of the stitching on jackstays. This should be inspected regularly.
- Severe damage and powdering of floating (polypropylene) ropes in safety equipment, typically yellow rope
- Loss of stretch in shock cord. Inspect and replace regularly.
- Stiffening and cracking of sail materials and degradation of stitching. Sail covers should be used whenever possible. UV strips and their stitching should be inspected regularly. A loose UV strip or trailing threads can catch or jam a furler and lead to difficulties.
- Embrittling and colour loss of electrical insulation on wires and of connectors, leading to failure, water entry and shorting. Cable ties fracturing.
- Lenses clouding on navigation lights. This seriously reduces range.
- Surface damage to plastics: surfaces become powdery as the material degrades
- Degradation of paints and varnishes. Fading, chipping and milkiness.
- Embrittling of plastic fittings and of PVC dinghy fabrics. Consider sacrificial dinghy covers.
- Fading of the colour of fabrics and of hull colours. Redder colours are worst affected.
- Damage to gelcoat. This provides protection to GRP hull structures but is itself susceptible to fading and powdering. A quality polish can provide good protection for a period.
- Degradation of resins: this is why a UV protective varnish is needed on resin impregnated wood.
- Crazing of hatch covers (This is only mechanically damaging if extreme). Covers help.



Susceptibility of common plastics and rope materials to UV damage

Photos: Wikimedia, Jimmy Green Marine						
Material	Polyamide (Nylon)	Polyester (Dacron)	Polypropylene	Polyethylene (Dyneema, Spectra, UHMWPE (Ultra High Molecular Weight Polyethylene))	Aramids (Technora, Twaron, Kevlar)	Shock cord
Stretch %	15-20%	To 15%	10-15%	<2%	4%	High!
Best applications	Anchor lines, dock lines, mooring	Sheets, halyards, control lines, webbing	Safety lines, rescue equipment	Halyards, high-load applications, lashings, soft shackles, fixed rigging	Reinforcement	
Key benefits	Shock absorption, durability, abrasion resistance	Robust, low stretch, UV resistant, maintains shape, cheap	Floats, lightweight, chemical resistant	Maximum strength to weight, minimal stretch after initial creep, lightweight	Robust strong light fibres	Convenience
Constraints	Creep and loss of strength when wet		Massive creep in addition to stretch, very UV sensitive	Slippery. Very hard to knot. Splices must be long. Beware snatch loads. Expensive	Poor handling, cost	Short life
UV stability	Medium	Very good	Very poor	Medium. Needs protection or frequent replacement	Very poor	Poor
Lifetime (typical)	10 years+ May get stiff	10 years +	Good but very poor in UV/sun	4 years typically if unsheathed, less if under dynamic loads	2-4 years if coated, only months if uncoated	Typically 2 years
Cruising comments	Shock absorbing. Cheap. Robust.	Sheets, halyards. Low stretch. Robust.	Protect from UV. Not for fixed lines.	Best for halyard cores, lashings and static lines. Ideally use it sheathed	Not relevant to cruising sailors	

How to check a rope

Start at one end and work along the whole length. Look and feel for any areas of concern. Symptoms of damage include furry-ness and increased thickness; hardness; stiffness and resistance to bending; and any flat spots or visible cracking. Narrowing is a sure pointer to failure in the load-bearing core, but also beware of any kinks, tufts or flat spots. Pay particular attention to splices and fittings and to wear at the locations of fixed blocks and jammers. UV damage is harder to see but can show up as furry-ness, dust, faded colour and stiffness. If you notice that a rope starts to run less easily it may be time to replace it: the resulting improvement can be surprising.



Environmental considerations

The generic environmental approach applies: Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle. Select materials which will last. Our discarded materials can be a significant waste burden. Old ropes and sails can for instance be repurposed to other uses where mechanical properties are less critical.

Dispose of waste thoughtfully. Damaged plastics and ropes shed harmful microplastics to the environment. Longer lived materials do less damage. Sanding and re-coating with varnishes also sheds microplastics. Wood oils such as Semco can be more natural, easier to maintain without sanding and are an option for some woods.

Make the most of CA membership

There are many advantages to CA membership. We are highlighting some of the best in a short series in *Cruising*. This is Part 4

Social

Our cruising and social network is second to none. Many of our cruising area and local area groups hold rallies during the summer, ranging from a night or two in an attractive destination to a cruise in company over a week or more. They are an ideal way to explore a new cruising area and share the planning and the socialising with a like-minded group of cruising sailors, and enjoy activities from barbecues and *boules* to walks and bike rides.

In any harbour or anchorage, look out for other boats flying the CA burgee (see below). Or on CAptain's Mate try out the Friends feature. Start by just saying hello and see where it goes from there. Lasting friendships have been formed that way in stormbound harbours.

Over the winter season we hold a whole range of talks, pub meets, club meets and more. All of them include a chance to have a meal or a drink with other CA members. If you can't get to any of our meetings in person we also hold an increasingly popular range of online events via Zoom. Chat and share evenings allow you to socialise with others from your own home while learning more about an interesting destination.

You can be as sociable or as private as you like – the choice is yours.



Flags and burgees

If you want to liven up a quiet evening in a sailing club, start discussing flag etiquette. It's always a controversial issue! Many cruisers on UK-registered vessels enjoy flying a blue "defaced" ensign, and members of the Cruising Association may fly the Association's defaced Blue Ensign on their own boats instead of the normal Red Ensign. In order to do so, a permit is required; it's valid for a maximum of five years but must run in line with the boat registration document. Find out more and apply at www.theca.org.uk/defaced-ensign.

The CA's burgee is more widely seen, though, and is a great way to recognise other members. Fly it from your port crosstrees (unless you have a masthead location), and as the CA was founded in 1908 you may consider that it is "senior" to some of the other burgees that you own and therefore flies at the top. That's another topic for discussion.



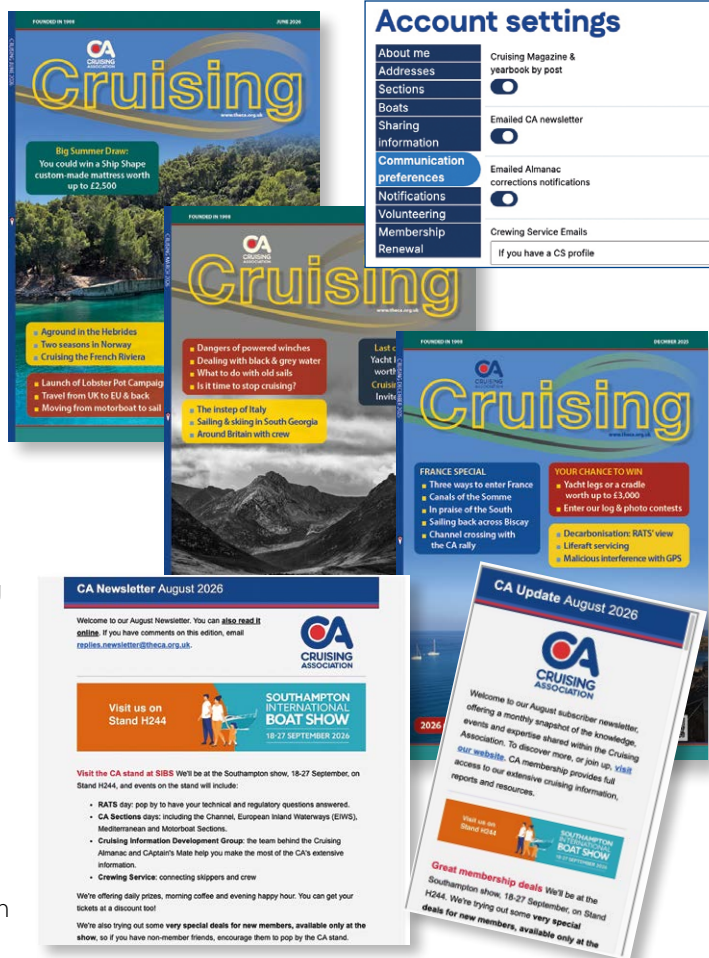
Cruising and the Newsletter

Four times a year CA members receive a copy of this magazine, *Cruising*. It's written almost entirely by members and put together by a professional editor, who continues to be astonished that many members rate it as their favourite benefit. It also carries a modest amount of display advertising which helps pay the costs of production.

If you prefer not to receive a printed copy, you can opt out under **My Account > Communication preferences**, and read *Cruising* online at www.theca.org.uk/cruising (or browse to it under **Community**). That page also links to previous editions, as far back as 2009.

At the beginning of each month we also send out an email Newsletter with brief updates on what's happening in the CA and the world of cruising, plus links to more information on the CA website and elsewhere. You can catch up with previous newsletters online in our **News** pages. **Non-members can sign up to a shorter version called "Update" together with this shorter version of *Cruising*.**

Most of our Sections (community groups) also send out newsletters, with information not just about what's happening within the Section but also topical information about cruising areas, from regulations to closures.



12 13 benefits to be aware of

- 1. Social** Meet other cruisers via the CA's sections, at winter talks or summer rallies.
- 2. Cruising info and Captain's Mate** At the heart of the CA is its cruising information. Its mobile app, *Captain's Mate*, gives you access to the latest pilotage and cruising information in your hand, all provided and edited by members. And the yearly *Cruising Almanac* is class-leading.
- 3. Honorary Local Representatives** The CA has many locally-based HLRs to help you in your travels.
- 4. RATS** The CA is good at technical and regulatory stuff, with pages of invaluable advice on topics from insurance to UV degradation.
- 5. Find answers online** The CA's website includes forums where experienced CA cruisers offer well-informed advice.
- 6. Crewing Service** If you need crew – or would like to crew for someone else – contact the Crewing Service at www.theca.org.uk/crewing/welcome.
- 7. CA House** Our base in London, with restaurant, bar and cabins.
- 8. The CA library** within CA House has a huge selection of books, charts and more to help you with planning.
- 9. Lectures & seminars** The CA puts on loads of interesting lectures and seminars, which you can attend in person or remotely.
- 10. Cruising & Newsletter** Yes, the full-length version this magazine, plus our monthly email newsletter.
- 11. A blue ensign** with CA insignia for members.
- 12. Discounts** Many members make up their annual fee and more from the discounts they get as CA members from marinas, chandlers, insurers and marine businesses..
- 13. The CA represents not just sailors but also motorboaters and users of the inland waterways.** Find out more at www.theca.org.uk/p/community/motorboat



Tom Cunliffe loves the CA

We've put together a reel highlighting some of the benefits of belonging to the CA. It stars Tom Cunliffe and you can view it from the CA homepage at www.theca.org.uk. And if you use social media you can also see **short clips** from the videos.

Red Arrows pass over the CA fleet in Torquay



Going West with the CA

Channel Section Secretary **Bob Garrett** describes the Go West relay rally – and three participants report on their experiences

An interestingly different form of rally was initiated for 2026. It started with the title of a "Relay Rally" but as planning progressed that became more of a description than the title. Four CA Sections (Solent, Wessex, South West and Channel) arranged the event like a series of meet-ups. Participants would get together in a series of ports for a few days with berths, dinners and other "diversions" prebooked; then there would be a few days before the next meet-up in another port. That few days we hoped would allow participants to savour the delights of each area and also ensure their passage to the next port would be in suitable weather.

It was agreed early on that the rally should progress westwards, with the

Section Secretaries making the local arrangements while the Channel Section managed the overall admin and member booking processes. Participants could take part in as many or as few ports/locations as they wished, and we also were open to CA members just joining for dinners and other events even without their boats.

While Section Secretaries were doing the planning and booking for the rally, their own personal cruising plans meant they often could not be at the rally locations themselves, so we also had "Local Hosts" who finalised details, welcomed participants and, well, acted as hosts. A splendid example of collaboration – and I am sure we are all grateful to the Section Secretaries and the Local Hosts

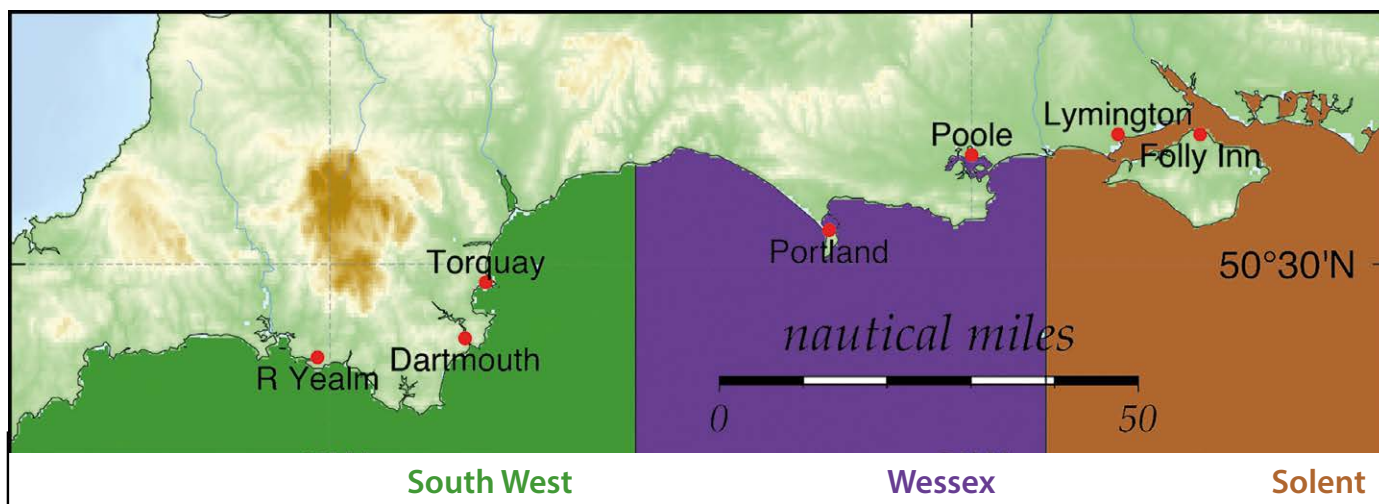
Participants braved rain on a walk to Dartmouth



for all their hard work. In total over 20 members played a part in the planning, organisation and execution, helping to get more ideas and spread the workload.

Rally route

The rally started in the Solent with visits organised by the CA Solent Section to the Folly Inn up the Medina river from Cowes, then on to Lymington. From there the CA Wessex Section took over with visits to Poole Harbour (mooring at Poole Quay Boat Haven) and then Portland Marina. Then the CA South West Section took over for visits to Torquay, Dartmouth and The Yealm. Regrettably the final leg of the "relay" had to be cancelled due to strong westerly winds so the rally actually ended in Dartmouth.



Some 15 boats (yachts and a motor-boats) took part with most doing two or three locations. One boat booked for the entire rally – and then booked to join the Channel Rally too! But enough from us, let's hear from three participants.

To the Folly Inn & beyond!

Malcolm Hyde reports

As CA Newbies the crew of *Kingfisher* set off from our home marina at Chichester with some trepidation. We were blessed with a great crew: Admiral Sally, Chief Engineer Paul, Skipper Malc and lead Stew Viv. Late changes to our Chief Engineer's agenda meant that we were able to leave Chichester with a plan to arrive at the Folly Inn when the tide was rising and happy to cope with our 2-metre draught. The weather was not exactly set fair and if we are honest had it been a little worse we may have made a very regretful decision to abandon the voyage. How glad we were not to be forced to make that decision, because as Newbies we were welcomed into the fold of the CA with warm open arms.

Our voyage will be well understood by Solent sailors but this rally was to the edge of the known world (well, the South West of England). Non-Solent sailors may not be familiar with the interesting tests set by the Solent. During our route we negotiated the Chichester Bar, the Submarine Barrier and of course the busy deep channels leading to Portsmouth and Southampton. Our sails were up for most of the voyage, that is until we were around five miles east of the entrance to the Medina River, when the wind turned against us and it was time for our reliable Penta Donkey.

Now, we use our AIS and keep a close look out. We saw AIS warning us of a cargo ship approaching from astern. We were outside the deep channel, as

recommended by the Almanac, as we were passing Osborne Bay (always a treat). Suddenly we heard five warning beeps from the cargo ship. We were somewhat surprised as we assumed that the cargo ship would want to be in the deep channel. So we turned 30 degrees to starboard making it very clear that we were taking avoiding action. The cargo ship's crew were clearly enjoying the Osborne Bay view, as they headed further into the bay. Our Skipper reported that the closest point was 600m.

Entering the Medina River past Cowes is always entertaining. Of course there was a race to avoid, an Isle of Wight ferry and youngsters being pulled along in their dinghies looking like cygnets following their mummy swan. Next our skipper had his eyes peeled for the Cowes chain ferry. However, Neptune was kind to us as the ferry was broken down. Our skipper was still a little cautious. With a 2m draught we kept a keen eye on our depth gauge as we passed East Cowes and continued towards a far more tranquil Medina River.

Our crew are not great fans of rafting.. The thought of close contact with another yacht (which inevitably will be far more valuable than our vessel) fills our skipper with concern on approach. However, on arrival we were greeted by three people on board the lovely yacht we were to be rafted against. That was helpful, but it was six eyes monitoring the skipper's every move. The decision was made, after consultation with the Admiral, to reverse into our berthing spot. The skipper turned the boat, raising adrenalin levels and increasing the number of casual viewers. We reversed – our skipper facing backward and steering with his arms behind his back. It was a near-perfect arrival and those on board the other yacht took our lines, and all was good.

Naturally we thanked the crew of our

raft-to yacht, to be told it was not their yacht: they were CA members looking to help. What a lovely introduction to fellow CA seafarers!

Drinks on the pontoon were abandoned due to inclement weather, but the Folly Inn served a delicious meal.

The following morning was taken up with a walk, a trip to Newport or Osborne House as desired by individuals. But we had more excitement, as the wind got up and the rain fell. A small dinghy was blown under a pontoon and got firmly stuck, leaving its engine under water. Fortunately our chief engineer was on hand to help the owner and rescue the dinghy and its engine.

That evening we ate at the Cackle restaurant. Many of our group were continuing to Lymington; unfortunately we were unable to do so. But the fantastic organisation by CA volunteers, and the shared experience of other CA members meant that we are committed to join another rally in the future. Anyone with any doubts about joining a rally is strongly encouraged to take up the opportunity; be prepared to make new like-minded friends. Our sincere thanks to all the organisers and fellow members for such a warm reception.

Welcome to Torbay

Andy Addison

The MDL Torquay visitor pontoon was looking remarkably presentable for the weekend's arrivals thanks to a heroic Thursday morning power-washing session by MDL Marina's Dockside Paul. Following his determined efforts, the pontoon was, for perhaps the first time this season, almost entirely free of seagull deposits and positively sparkling for the Go West Rally visiting boats.

Enterprise, Kite Runner, and Lullula



Very clean pontoon in Torquay



made steady progress across an exceptionally windless yet beautifully sunny Lyme Bay and Torbay passage from Portland, with some crews choosing the more scenic route via the River Dart. The attraction of all-weather marina berths and the newly improved MDL Torquay Marina visitor pontoon proved difficult to resist.

On Friday afternoon, *Minalto* and *Hōne Rua* arrived from Brixham and Noss on Dart respectively, timing their passages perfectly to coincide with two RAF Eurofighters conducting practice displays ahead of the Torbay Air Show. Upon arrival, crews were expertly introduced to the essential local geography: the Co-op, the Royal Torbay Yacht Club, the best fish restaurants, and, naturally, the nearest sources of refreshment.

Friday evening on the pontoon developed into a highly civilised gathering, beginning with champagne and nibbles kindly provided by Gordon Bentley, Torbay HLR, and his wife Carol, followed by CA members Andy and Helen's excellent Pimms – complete with fresh garden mint.

The weekend's entertainment continued with the opening displays of the Torbay Air Show, led by the ever-impressive Red Arrows, followed by live music from the Below Decks bar on the harbourside and a spectacular evening fireworks display.

Various cultural and recreational activities were suggested over the course of the weekend, including cycle rides, coastal walks to Brixham, visits to Torre Abbey, and an informal "Spot the Agatha Christie Connection" competition. However, many participants appeared more committed to monitoring the levels in their glasses than pursuing historical investigations.

Saturday brought classic English Riviera weather, with glorious sunshine accompanying an excellent BBQ hosted at the Royal Torbay Yacht Club, offering front-row views of the continuing air displays overhead. The gathering expanded further with the arrival of Go West Rally administrators Bob and Sue Garrett, who had made the journey down from Oxfordshire.

By Sunday, most crews were eager to locate some genuine wind, with departures split between passages to Dartmouth and journeys home by train, bus, and scenic walks via Babbacombe. *Hōne Rua* and *Lullula* were the final boats to depart the marina on Monday for Dartmouth, encountering rather less appealing conditions than those enjoyed earlier in the weekend.

Special thanks go to all who hosted and engaged with the "Go West" Rally boats to give their skippers and crew a big welcome and enjoyable time in Torbay.

Finally to Dartmouth!

Trevor & Alison Pritchard

We set off in hot pursuit of the rally a full week after it had passed through our home port of Lymington. Prior commitments prevented us from joining directly but now we were on course for Torquay, along with a random fleet of yachts steaming for Portland Bill at 7am. The Bill rounded and lobster pots dodged, the fleet disbursed and we had a pleasant motor sail into Torbay, arriving by mid-afternoon. The weather turned hot, very hot as the CA rally assembled in the picturesque port.

By Sunday, several of the CA rally were checking the weather and heading for Dartmouth a day early. We stayed on in

Torquay and made the trip to Dartmouth in blustery conditions on Monday.

Having switched on the navigation lights an hour into our rather bouncy passage, the unwelcome smell of overheated electrics permeated our nostrils! Yikes! The engine was still running and the smell did not come from the cabin... meanwhile the nav lights had tripped out. With the weather window closing, the tide running west, we ploughed on to Dartmouth.

On arrival at the Dartmouth walk-ashore pontoon we switched on the nav lights again, quickly switching them off when we saw smoke emanating from the starboard light. Many thanks go to Colin White of Pulse Marine who identified the fault and replaced the unit.

The next days we were weather-bound in Dartmouth, but with a great bunch of new-found friends. There was the walk to Greenway ferry and lunch in The Ferry Boat Inn, the visit to the Royal Naval College, the coast walk back from Stoke Fleming and of course dinner in The Royal Dart Yacht Club.

With a storm forecast, consensus rapidly developed that our planned trip to The Yealm would not be wise. Then another weather window opened up and we headed off direct to Plymouth to leave *Lullula* for a few weeks in the Yacht Haven before yet more West Country adventures. The trip took us to new places as well as some familiar territory. It was a shame to miss The Yealm but we can get there some other time. We must say a big thank you to CA hosts James Caslake in Dartmouth and Andy and Helen Addison in Torquay, who were outstanding in terms of their hospitality and local knowledge.



A sailing life and a Mayday

The CA's weather expert, **Frank Singleton**, reflects on a recent incident where he was the person being rescued

For many cruising sailors the inevitable question will arise – how long can you cruise independently with minimal help from family and friends? Jennifer and I had our last unaided cruise in 2022, when I was 89. After a later start, due to a granddaughter's Covid-delayed wedding and my hernia operation, we cruised from Dartmouth, mainly by ourselves, as far south as Le Palais.

Earlier in our sailing life, we had been away from Dartmouth for 14 years cruising the Mediterranean, Adriatic and the Iberian peninsula. That was after having previously cruised Biscay generally, with crossings ranging from coast-hopping to direct to A Coruña. In recent years we restricted our cruising to France as far south as Rochefort and Île d'Oléron. There is much to see in this area and we could usually visit at least one new place each year. Vauban's military architecture is well known throughout France and this area is well endowed. The Citadel at Le Palais is an outstanding example.

Obviously, there are favourites, with Audierne being in the forefront after we were storm-bound there for two weeks in 2000 on our way down to the Med. Entry is far more simple now, as the channel is well buoyed. Then, it was necessary to use leading lines with both forward and stern transits.

In January 2023, it all changed when Jennifer had a stroke. Luckily it was not severe, and she has recovered remarkably well, although she had to stop driving.

Due to macular degeneration, I have not driven for many years. This was a mixed blessing as we were no longer tempted to cruise by ourselves. Luckily, we have a family of sailors far more competent than we ever were. Our elder son Ralph is a well-known RS800 (double trapeze wire) sailor with considerable experience in round the cans yacht racing, and has recently become world champion in B14 dinghies. Our second son has yacht racing experience from a period spent in Brazil, and was a winner of the Cowes Week two-handed round the Island Race, in a Sigma 33. He now sails a 28-foot yacht up and down the US east coast.

I vaguely remember standing on the cabin steps talking to Jayne, but nothing else...

Our daughter, Jayne, is a former world-class dinghy sailor with experience in Europes, then an Olympic class and in Laser Radials in which she was third and fifth in successive world women's championships.

Jennifer had got me into sailing initially, having spent family holidays on the Norfolk Broads. By the age of 18 she was capable of taking charge of a 28-foot yacht, with only a quant pole for propulsion through bridges when there was little wind. That was my first experience of sailing. The family as a whole had learned much about sailing on the Thames at the now-defunct

Laleham SC, just below Staines. A Met Office posting took us to Aden (South Yemen now) where Jennifer and I learned how to sail dinghies with trapeze wires. We would coach young servicemen from the wire.

In 2026, the plan was for Jayne to skipper us to St Peter Port, Guernsey, where our younger son, John, would meet us after flying in from the USA via Paris. Due to complications of having a small dog, Timmy, our daughter-in-law, Penni, would go by land to Roscoff and meet us there. All very much complicated by having a family spread apart by an ocean.

Before leaving Darthaven, I had a fall on the boat and needed treatment at Torbay hospital. A small but deep dent in my head was glued together. I thought that I had slipped on early morning dew on the boat deck. There was no reason for the hospital to query that.

Then, on passage to Guernsey on 29 May, came another, more serious fall. I had been down below using the AIS to watch ships entering and leaving the Casquets TSS. We were just about clear and I remember thinking that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz had resulted in fewer ships than normal. I vaguely remember standing on the cabin steps talking to Jayne, but nothing else. Apparently, I fell backwards into the cabin, badly damaging an ear.

Jayne, not sure if I was dead or alive, tried mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, patched up the ear and put out a Mayday call on VHF. A small pleasure fishing boat heard

Frank and Jennifer's
Hallberg-Rassy 34, Anhinga

the call and, being a faster boat, offered to take me to St Peter Port. By a stroke of luck, all three on board were part-time paramedics. I remember being helped to their boat. Subsequently, after a transfer to a lifeboat, a French helicopter, again responding to the Mayday, lifted me and took me to St Peter Port. I had never realised how wet you get when lifted by a helicopter over water. Despite wearing the bottom half of a two-piece waterproof suit I was verging on hypothermia when I arrived at the St Peter Port hospital.

After various checks, the doctors decided the two falls were due to my heart being a bit irregular and not always getting enough blood to the brain. I needed a pacemaker. They contacted our local hospital, Frimley Park (Camberley) and arranged for an air ambulance to get me there via Farnborough.

All went smoothly, although I was gazed three times by more urgent cases. After one night of observation at Frimley Park, my pacemaker was installed

and I was back home the following day. Both the Guernsey hospital and the NHS acted promptly and effectively.

As well as contributing to the RNLI, I also support the air ambulance charity, never thinking that I would need either.

Being at the centre of an incident gave me a jolt and a totally different perspective

Most of us sailors will have heard many Pan Pans and an occasional Mayday but usually as third parties. Being at the centre of an incident gave me a jolt and a totally different perspective even though I was not really aware of what was happening for much of the time.

I hope that a real-person account of how services work together might be reassuring to some. I can only encourage contributions to the Air Ambulance charity as well as the RNLI. You never know when you might need either or both.



After a career as a professional forecaster Frank set up his respected weather site, weather.mailasail.com/Franks-Weather. His books include the *Skipper's Cockpit Weather Guide*.



HLRS & THEIR COASTS

North-east Brittany: A water clerk to the CA?

Keith Martin is our Honorary Local Representative in north-east Brittany. He started his career in France as a water clerk, and explains how similar the roles can be

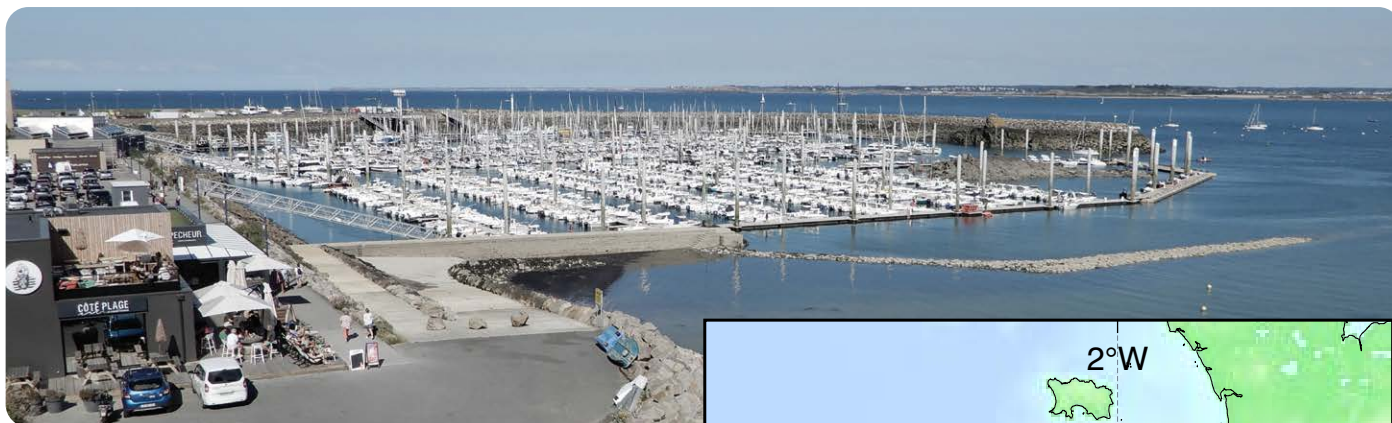
In 2013 I was asked to become the HLR for the Cruising Association, with responsibility for the Brittany northeast coastal area that stretches from Saint-Malo westwards to Le Légué/Saint-Brieuc on the Gouët estuary. I was more than happy to accept, because during my 20 years with the Côtes d'Armor Chamber of Commerce I was very much involved in the reconstruction of the commercial port of Saint-Brieuc/Le Légué, the promotion of the new ship repair facility in Le Légué, and, more to the point, the extensive development undergone at that time in the Saint-Cast marina. Although I am now retired from the CCI, the advent of Brexit and the EES, with all their ramifications for UK boats sailing to and from France, has meant that I am still very much involved with Saint-Cast, and continue to work very closely with the marina team.

I suppose you could say that it's my home port.



When I arrived in France many years ago, my first job was as a water clerk for a shipping company in Le Havre. This was a 24/7 job. I was responsible for organising a ship's call in the port, including informing the harbour authorities of the ship's ETA and ensuring that a pilot, tugs, mooring gangs, customs, and border police were on hand when she arrived on roads. When docking had been completed, I would arrange for a gangway provided by the port to be put in place. The ship's gangway was a definite no-no. As this was in the days before emails and smart phones, a landline had to be connected to the ship, and supplies of fresh water and provisions organised, if necessary,

My most important job, at least as far as the ship's crew



were concerned, was to be on board with the crew's mail immediately the ship had docked, even if this meant that I could be on the quayside at three o'clock on a cold, winter's morning, which was sometimes the case.

After discussions with the captain and the first mate, I would organise outgoing crew changes, including providing train and plane schedules and transport to airports and railway stations, and ensure that incoming crew replacements were met and brought to the ship.

Prior to the ship's arrival, I would have briefed the stevedoring company to ensure that there were sufficient gangs of dockers available for the quantities of cargo to be loaded and discharged, and ensured that the port authorities would provide the necessary cranes and crane drivers for the work.

Of course, with sometimes as many as 20 crew members on board, other services were often required while the ship was in port, including doctors, dentists, and other, more varied, services, so my little black book was often consulted,

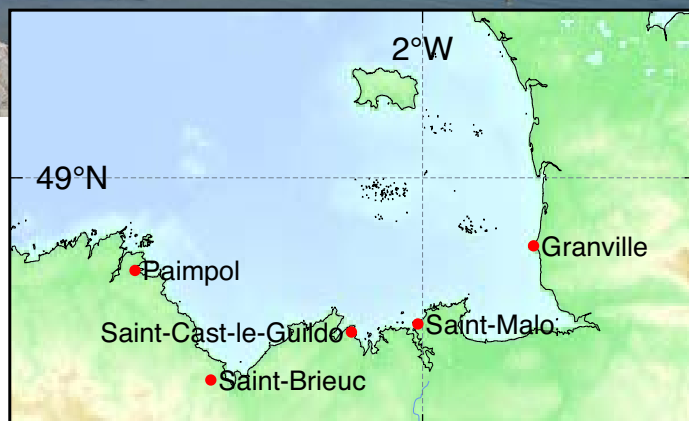
HLRs all have our own version of the little black book, so that we can assist our visitors

I've taken the time to explain what a water clerk's job entailed, because I feel that the rôle of an HLR is not so different. Although, thankfully, we are not required to be on pontoons at three o'clock in the morning, and generally pilots, tugs and mooring gangs are not requested by our visitors, we all have our own version of the little black book so that we can assist our visitors in any way we can.

Saint-Cast can provide all the services that visiting boats may require, including a ship's chandler, electronic and mechanical expertise, cleaning, careening, rigging, over-wintering, refitting and polluted water disposal. A 24-hour fuel service is available. Should visitors have need of any of these services elsewhere along the coast, the HLR for the area will consult his or her little black book to provide the necessary information, and any other help that may be required.

The Saint-Cast marina has 50 pontoon places for visitors, although more places usually become available when permanent marina residents leave their berths for a period of time during the season. A well-appointed sanitary block adjoins the marina office. It is open 24/7, and accessible by codepad. The facility includes showers, toilets, a washing machine/dryer and a dishwasher.

The town has restaurants and bars catering for all tastes, and there are many tourist attractions in the area, including Saint-



Cast point, the cliffs of Cap Frehel, the fort of La Latte, and the delightful group of islands that comprise the Ebihens Archipelago, among others. Details of these and other tourist attractions, including a golf course, are available in the marina office, where the team or I, as your HLR, will be happy to answer any questions visitors may have.

For those not straying far from the marina, the Grande Plage, a long, sandy beach, within easy walking distance of the marina, is easily reached via a beachfront promenade constructed by the marina authorities in 2014.

A word of caution, however, to visiting boats. Brexit and the incoming EES regulations have meant that interaction with the customs authorities and the border police is still very much *de rigueur*. However, early in 2024, we, the marinas situated along the north Brittany coast, and generally the first ports of call for visiting boats from the UK and Channel Islands, proposed a regional Protocol to simplify arrival and departure procedures for our visitors. This Protocol was accepted and ratified by the maritime authorities in 2024 and has since become a National Protocol for boats visiting from outside the Schengen Area.

If a boat wishes to visit a French marina as its first port of call in the Schengen Area, the designated marina will have a website which includes an Entry Declaration. This should be completed and returned to the marina in question if possible a minimum of 24 hours prior to the visitor's scheduled ETA.

One final item of interest. On 11 September, 1758, during the Seven Years' War, a combined British naval and army force of some 42,000 men attacked a French land force of around 9000 men in what became known as the Battle of Saint-Cast. The action was a disaster for the British, who were roundly defeated and lost or had captured around 3,000 men. The French lost just 300. Today, our UK visitors can still be assured of a very warm welcome when they visit Saint-Cast, but one of a totally different nature to that which our ancestors encountered in 1758.

Kenavo, bon vent et à bientôt!

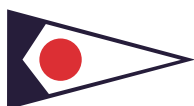


CA London lectures autumn 2026

From the Caribbean to north Norway, from the River Vilaine to a small canal in Hampshire, and from British slaves to 23,000 miles on a home-built 19-footer, it's another brilliant season of inspiring lectures. Put the dates in your diary now



Sunset at La Roche-Bernard: part of Richard Tucker's Biscay adventure



LONDON

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 October

The Ugly, the Bad and the Good: Five Years and 31 Countries Sailing the Caribbean, Jerry Norton

When Jerry Norton and Sophie Newman cast off from Plymouth in July 2021 aboard *Khamsin*, a brand-new 51ft Beneteau Oceanis, the plan was simple: one season in the Caribbean and then home. Five years later, they still haven't returned.



Khamsin under way

After dropping the hook in 31 countries, sheltering in five hurricane holes and completing two circumnavigations of the Caribbean, they look back on the outright ugly, the not-so-bad, the lessons they wish they had known from the outset, and, above all, the extraordinary experiences that have made the adventure far richer than they could ever have imagined.

Wednesday 14 October

My mother bought a canal, Liz Dodwell

Liz and her husband Tim are well known by many as long-serving, now retired, Solent Section Secretaries. What is less known is Liz's involvement in saving and preserving the glorious Basingstoke Canal for the nation.

This extraordinary story began on 1st March 1949 when Joan Marshall, Liz's mother, bought the Canal in an auction, and it changed the course of her family's

life. The challenges faced in restoring the waterway included outright dereliction, bombed locks, breached banks, landslips and hundreds of tons of rubbish. The initial fight culminated in the Grand Reopening to navigation by the Duke of Kent in 1991. However, the struggle to save the Canal still goes on. Never let it close!

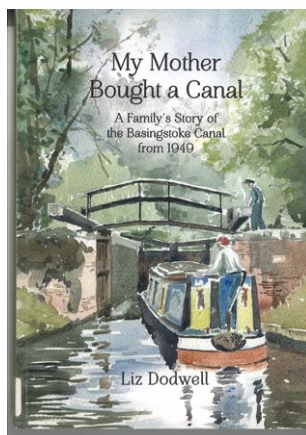
Wednesday 21 October

The inaugural Mini Globe: an extraordinary journey of resilience, courage, and adventure, Adam Waugh

In February 2025 15 identical 19ft Class Globe 5.80 sail boats set out to circumnavigate the world, the smallest boats ever to have attempted such a feat. This was the inaugural Mini Globe, a solo, unassisted race covering 23,000 nautical miles.

Adam set out on this epic journey in a boat he built by hand in his garden shed—without prior boatbuilding experience. *Little Wren*, named after the tiny bird that nested in the shed during construction, was launched in March 2024. To qualify for the race, he had to sail across the Atlantic from Lanzarote to Antigua, a passage he completed in three weeks. Fifteen boats started the race and eleven completed the course with Adam coming into Antigua on 8 March 2026, finishing in fifth place.

Adam's mission was not just to conquer the world's toughest oceans but to raise funds for the Ella Dawson Foundation elladawsonfoundation.org.uk,





Little Wren under way



The bombardment of Algiers in 1682

supporting young adults living with cancer. He became an ambassador for the charity and after the race joined the board of trustees. He has so far raised £75,000 out of his target of £100,000.

Wednesday 28 October Speaker to be confirmed

Wednesday 4 November The Fight Against the Barbary Pirates. Rob Smith

The song *Rule Britannia* says, "Britons Never Shall Be Slaves" but they were once. From 1600, pirates preyed on the British coast and merchant ships, capturing people for sale in North African slave markets. In this talk Rob Smith will tell the story of how British sailors fought to rescue the slaves and make the sea safe from the Barbary Pirates of North Africa over the following 200 years.

Wednesday 11 November Cruising Association AGM See page 10 for details

Wednesday 18 November Three summers in Norway, Mark Sweetnam

Mark and his wife Dawn spent the last three summers cruising the coast of Norway. Having left Kilrush on the south-west coast of Ireland on *Don Carlos*, their Najad 420, in May 2024, they worked their way up the Norwegian coast to Tromsø.

Going north in May 2025 they rounded Nordkapp – the most northerly point on mainland Europe – before working their way south to the Hardangerfjord near Bergen. This summer they cruised around to the Oslofjord before returning to the Hardangerfjord.

Mark will give a taste of their cruise and many of the magnificent anchorages and harbours they visited. He will also cover practical information that may be of assistance to future visitors. As a cruising area they found Norway to be no more demanding than the west coasts of Ireland or Scotland.

Wednesday 25 November Biscay Adventures for the Unadventurous, Richard Tucker

It's a well-worn track that leads from the Solent to South Brittany, yet for Sarah and Richard Tucker aboard their Oceanis 38.1 *Rosalita* it still felt like embarking on an adventure, leaving family and friends, not to mention an empty house, for three to four months. For this is not a tale of derring-do, rather the exploits of ordinary folk who in prior years would have not given a thought to such folly. They roundly blame the CA members for instilling these dreams and the confidence to follow them and will be forever grateful that they did, as they discovered a wonderful cruising ground

in a lovely region full of interest and curiosities both on and off the water.

Richard won the New Horizons trophy in the CA log competition for his record of this trip and you can read part of his log in this edition of *Cruising*, starting on page 46.

Wednesday 2 December Annual joint event with the Royal Institute of Navigation. Speaker Bill Aylward

Bill is the brains behind the AngelNav plotter, a new app for iPad or iPhone to assist with marine navigation. It includes the unique ability to carry out traditional navigation directly on the screen.

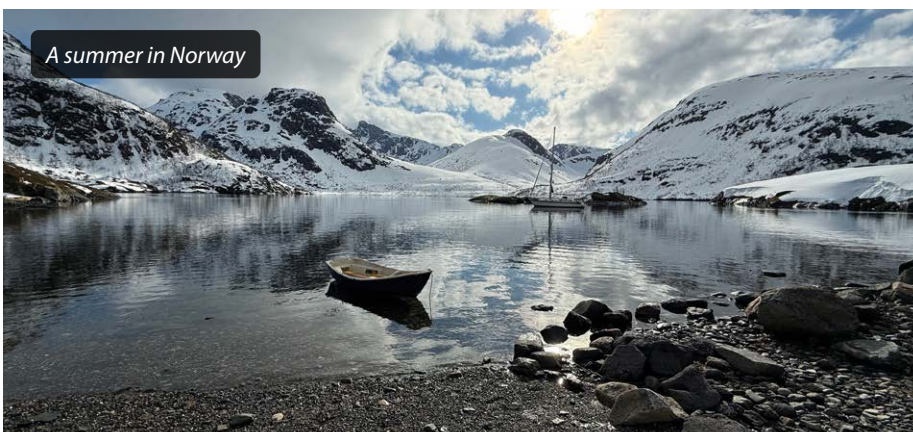
Wednesday 9 December CA carol service and supper

Traditional carol service at St Anne's Limehouse, followed by an informal Christmas supper at CA House. Details and times will be published later along with a booking link.



Bookings

Events start promptly at 7pm unless otherwise stated. Book on the website for any **CA London lecture**, and indicate whether you'll be ordering food. Find the lecture under **News & Events > Events**, filter by CA London to find the event, and click to take you to the registration page. Then choose **Register > Get tickets** and select In Person or Zoom. Please pay in advance on the website, or by contactless on the door. Individual lecture tickets for members are £4, non-members £7. Any problems with the booking system, call 020 7537 2828 or email events@theca.org.uk. There is no charge for viewing online.



A summer in Norway



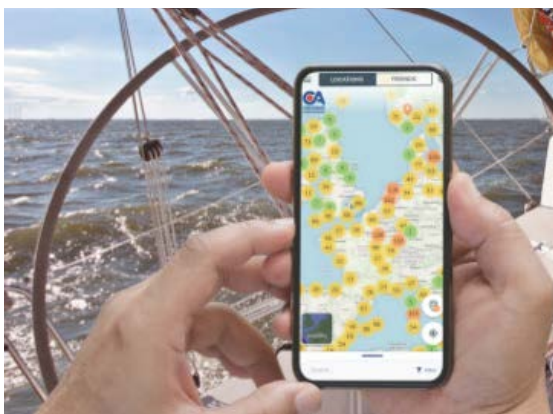
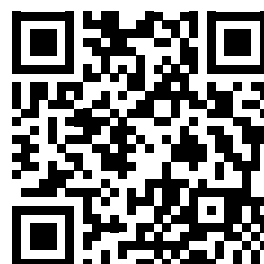
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