



Cruising

www.theca.org.uk



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Hard work pays off

What do the CA log competition, Lobster Pot Campaign and Cruising Skills Week have in common? They all reflect hard work by members which results in a better cruising experience for us all, says **Robin Baron**

Since I wrote my piece for our March issue and after a dreary month or two, spring has arrived. In Cornwall strong easterlies have delayed many sailing plans, including, in my case, stepping the mast on *Misha*. This winter I had the rig removed and new standing rigging fitted. It is rewarding to see sunshine and long evenings, even if the days will start getting shorter soon.

In February, Council (the CA's governing body) held an **awayday** in the Royal Thames Yacht Club in Knightsbridge. For the afternoon session we were joined by the heads/chairs of the various committees and groups that make up the Cruising Association. Each group's head presented on their current activities in the context of CA strategy. By all accounts this was highly welcomed by all the participants, particularly as, in most cases, this was the first time each group head directly communicated their plans and concerns with the others. The overall effect was overwhelmingly positive and this bodes well for the future of our organisation. We will be repeating the format in October.

In March I attended the Hanson Lecture at CA House and presented the prizes in the **2025 Log Competition**. Author and journalist Dick Durham delivered the Hanson Lecture *Confessions of a Cruising Correspondent* in an entertaining and amusing style. He reflected on a lifetime of sailing, from his early years on the water to a distinguished career afloat.

Dick was also this year's judge of the Log Competition. He commented, "*Leafing through the logs of sailors I'd never met is a voyeuristic experience, and as I panned through the thoughts and fears of human beings at sea it occurred to me how much more revealing is a log compared with a diary. The sea is a great lie detector, as well as leveller, acting as a truth serum on the conscience of the sailor. It is no place for grand standing, buffoonery or boastfulness. It is a place for celestial measurement, or if you can't use a sextant, a place to at least thank your lucky stars.*"

'The sea is a great lie detector, acting as a truth serum on the conscience of the sailor'

As usual the range and depth of entries was high. I'd like to highlight a couple of winners here.

Boyd Holmes was awarded the Hanson Cup for his log *Aground on rocks in North Bay Barra*. Dick Durham as judge commented: "Boyd's candid account of *Blue Damsel's* grounding and lifeboat rescue in the Western Isles is a masterclass in honesty, preparation, and understanding the realities of what can go wrong at sea."

The Generations at Sea Trophy for a family cruising log was awarded to ten-year-old Beau Cooper for *Sailing around the UK with*



my family. Dick commented: "Beau's log impresses with meticulous navigation, insightful observations, and personal reflection, charting a remarkable round-Britain voyage with skill, curiosity, and engaging storytelling." Beau, his parents and sister are now setting off on a world cruise. I'm sure we'll hear more about them soon.

Looking ahead to the 2026 Log Competition, members are encouraged to record their notes of passages and to photograph frequently, thus capturing the moments that define their time afloat this season. Whether a short coastal cruise or an extended offshore adventure, every log has the potential to inform and inspire others. Entries for the 2026 CA Log Competition open on 1 October 2026. Now is the perfect time to start preparing your story.

While at sea every mariner must of necessity be aware of risk. Now that navigation is so easy, due to the use of plotters and GNSS, and the risk of bad weather is much reduced, due to significantly more reliable short- and medium-term forecasts, one of the most significant risks remaining is that of entanglement with unmarked or poorly marked fishing gear. The CA, ably led by Ian Wilson, has launched a fresh initiative, a Lobster Pot Campaign to improve safety at sea with the slogan **Marked Gear = Safe Gear**. We are joined in the campaign by The Royal Institute of Navigation, *Practical Boat Owner*, *Yachting Monthly* and the Westerly Owners' Association.

As I have said in support of the campaign: "Poorly marked fishing gear continues to present a real and avoidable danger. This campaign is about improving clarity, consistency, and ultimately safety at sea – for everyone. By working together and strengthening existing guidance, we can reduce risk and support safer navigation in our waters. The issue is



Beau and (right) Boyd receive trophies from Dick Durham & Robin after the Hanson lecture



LOBSTER POT CAMPAIGN

not fishing, but unsafe marking practices that put all water users at risk. Clear marking saves lives, protects livelihoods and keeps our waters safe for everyone."

This is a good example of our Association leading in advocating on behalf of other leisure sailors, and I am proud to have been able to assist with the campaign. You can read more about the campaign on page 7.

In March the Association held **Cruising Skills Week 2026**, consisting of six expert-led sessions designed to support sailors and motorboaters at every stage of their journey into cruising.

The programme brought together CA members and marine partners to deliver practical guidance across a wide range of topics. Free evening webinars covered topics spanning buying a first boat and securing appropriate insurance, to boat preparation, maintenance, safety, coastal cruising and navigating the European inland waterways. Each session focused on technical know-how, actionable guidance and proven approaches to help boaters. The week closed with the Go Affordable Boating Seminar on 28 March, hosted by

Left, the lobster pot campaign logo. Right, Malcolm Denham (aka Denny) starts his presentation on boat maintenance, one of the best-received talks during Cruising Skills Week



renowned sailor and author Tom Cunliffe. Drawing on decades of experience, he led a panel who shared realistic, experience-led approaches to getting afloat and managing the cost of boating.

As I commented: "Cruising has always been about more than just the miles we sail – it is about shared experience, practical knowledge, and the willingness to help each other do it better."

We brought together cruisers, experts and industry to make cruising safer & more rewarding

That spirit is exactly what Cruising Skills Week set out to capture, bringing together cruisers, experts and industry voices to share insights that make cruising safer, more rewarding and more accessible.

By opening these sessions to a wide audience, and working closely with our members and partners, the CA aims to support and strengthen the cruising community by passing on knowledge and experience not just for today's sailors, but for future generations as well. Attendees

tuned in from across the UK, Europe, Asia, Oceania and North America, reflecting the global reach of the CA community.

Following the link to www.theca.org.uk/news/csw-2026-videos will enable you to revisit the talks and explore topics in greater detail, with digital goody bags of resources and recordings of the talks.

Cruising Skills Week showed our Association taking a lead in encouraging newcomers to cruising and fits well with three of our core values of being Knowledgeable, Trusted and Supportive. Much hard work went into it from our staff and volunteers. I should thank particularly Sian Cantellow, James Parnell, Ann MacKellar and Luissa Smith for their considerable efforts. As I understand it, the plan is to promote a similar, improved event in 2027.

Finally, many of you know **Lucy Gray**, our Chief Operating Officer. Lucy was delighted to announce that she is expecting a baby, due in September. Our warm congratulations go to Lucy and her partner, Ali.

Fair winds
Robin 

Orca advice: play dead or motor away?

The CA has updated its Orca Interaction Comments Library at www.theca.org.uk/orcas, which collates first-hand reports from skippers describing the deterrent actions they took when encountering orca attacks and the outcomes that followed. It now includes further reports of conflicting success and failure stories when the same deterrent measures were used. These reports underline the continued complexity and unpredictability of orca interactions.

In early studies, Grupo Trabajo Orca Atlantica (GTOA) found marginally less damage among yachts that stopped compared with those that did not (51% vs 55%). A slightly more noticeable difference was observed in cases involving extensive damage where 24% of vessels that stopped sustained extensive damage compared with 31% that continued moving.

More recently, official guidance has diverged on what to do in an interaction. Portuguese authorities advise skippers to "play dead" or reverse if conditions permit, whereas the Spanish

authorities advise motoring away as fast as possible towards shallower water, based upon a tested theory that orca are unlikely to pursue a yacht for more than 2km, as they typically hunt within a defined area, and that the force of any impact on the rudder is likely to be lower when the yacht is moving.

Comments from a skipper whose boat sank: **When motoring away I got up to 8 knots for about 15 minutes and they continued to hit the rudder; I tried reverse for about 10 minutes both in a straight line and circle. They continued to attack [the] rudder for the duration of the attack even once steering was broken.** In hindsight, he says he would have stopped the boat immediately and turned everything off as soon as the orca encounter began.



Paul Lingard



Making the most of CA membership: Part 3

Even people who joined the CA 20 years ago can overlook some of the many benefits of membership. We are highlighting some of the best in a short series in *Cruising*. It's really easy to make a subscription worthwhile

CA forums & online discussion

In this world of social media and disappearing posts, the structure of a **forum** may seem a bit old fashioned. Typically, on a CA forum, someone else asks a question, a few people post answers, someone picks up a different part of the post and the discussion goes down a different path for a while, then returns to the main topic, and eventually the original poster (OP) comes back to thank everyone and explain how helpful the comments have been. Sometimes this process is complete in just a few hours, and the OP is able to fix a boat problem, or navigate difficult water, thanks to the united knowledge of CA members. It's not too different from Facebook or Reddit. The key advantage of the CA's forums is that this knowledge is retained and searchable, even when those who posted are no longer members of the CA.

One staunch advocate and avid reader of the forums is Julian Dussek, CA President from 2018 to 2021. In 2021 he donated the **Dussek Plate**, awarded annually for the most valuable collection of posts on the forums. Among the winners are Judy Evans, for her multiple posts to explore and explain the Long-Term Visitor visa application process for France. Judy has gone on to become a member of RATS and expert in all things Schengen, and you can read some of her distilled knowledge about travelling between the UK and EU starting on page 22.



You can look at all our forums right now, post yourself, or lurk and enjoy the discussion at www.theca.org.uk/forum

We love our forums but we know that many members prefer closed instant messaging apps, generally **WhatsApp**. We already have a number of WhatsApp groups for various sailing areas. Now we're dipping our toe in the water of more general topics, thanks to the support of some of our interested and knowledgeable members. Early topics include flying a drone from your boat and watching wildlife from your boat.



Library & Information Centre

Members of the CA have unrivalled access to a collection of **pilot books, charts, magazines and reference materials** in the CA Library and Information Centre, the largest of its

kind in the world. Situated on the first floor of CA House, it contains material covering every aspect of marine activity, with particular focus on sail and power cruising. There is a large collection of paper charts and also passage planning software on a dedicated PC available for members.

Whatever members need can be found either in person at CA House, at the end of the phone (020 7537 2828), a reply to an email (office@theca.org.uk) or a parcel by post. UK members can borrow many books by post; we ask that you cover the return postage costs. Members can browse and search the catalogue online. We are also able to scan certain portions of our material (within copyright regulations) to send electronically.

The library is open Monday to Friday, 9.30 to 5.30 and also opened by volunteers at other times when events are taking place in CA House. It is free to members and can be used by non-members for research for a daily fee. Find out more at www.theca.org.uk/join/ca-house

Honorary Local Representatives (HLRs)

Imagine the scenario. You've just completed a North Sea crossing and have safely arrived in Amsterdam. However en route you have realised that both your VHF and AIS receiver have an effective range of about three miles. After extensive searching you can't find the loose connection. What's next? How would it be if you could contact someone who would identify three boatyards in a 20-mile radius who could take a look, and one who has confirmed that they could start work the next day? That was the Editor's experience of dealing with one of the CA's Honorary Local Representatives, contacts in locations all over the world who are willing to go above and beyond to help members who need support or information.

From Aalborg to Ventspils, via Helsinki, Halifax (Nova Scotia) and Hamble, from Iceland to Durban and Karachi to Wellington (New Zealand), you'll find a local representative of the Cruising Association. There are over 150 HLRs worldwide, covering more than 60 countries, providing a network of support that is, literally, second-to-none.

The task of the HLRs is to assist CA members in whatever way they can. They help with things like sourcing emergency repairs, finding moorings, securing visas, translations, explaining local customs and bureaucracy, provisioning, land transport and excursions. And if they can't help themselves, they'll know someone who can. They also keep us up-to-date with matters arising in their areas that might concern CA members.

Thanks for your message and welcome to Holland on this rather rainy day.

I checked for you.

1) the best option is Shipshape jachtservice in Muiderzand website shipshape.nl tel . they informed me that have time next week and are able to help you and the best way is that you moor your yacht in Muiderzand . tel 036 536 60 90 . Muiderzand is not far from Amsterdam.

2) another option is Flevo Marina website flevomarina.com They are very busy and can only help you at the end of next week. I spoke to mr Veenstra .

3) There is a company WNL in Ijmuiden, website: <https://www.wnl.nl> spoke to mr [redacted] he informed me that [redacted] the address is not in the most [redacted]

There's no need to wait until it's an emergency to contact an HLR. Generally they are sociable people who are happy to share a glass of wine, or dinner, with a CA member. You don't even need to arrive by boat! A few of our HLRs, like Christopher Lloyd in the British Virgin Islands or Paul Hardcastle in New South Wales, Australia, arrange get-togethers for members. Read an update from our HLR in the Azores on [page 16](#).



Valerio Zoja, the CA's HLR for northwest Italy, Corsica and Elba, and his wife Wendy, with members Barry & Linda Edmonds. Read more on [page 15](#)

12 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** As you can see above, the CA has many locally-based HLRs to help you in your travels.
4. **RATS** The CA is good at technical and regulatory stuff. For invaluable advice on dealing with entanglements, turn to [page 9](#).
5. **Find answers online** The CA's website includes forums where experienced CA cruisers offer well-informed advice – see opposite.
6. **Crewing Service** To crew for a CA skipper, contact the Crewing Service at www.theca.org.uk/crewing/welcome. Full CA members can recruit crew.
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, see opposite page
9. **Lectures & seminars** The CA puts on loads of interesting lectures and seminars, which you can attend in person or remotely.
10. **Cruising & Newsletter** the 100-page version of this magazine, plus our monthly email newsletter.
11. **A blue ensign** with CA insignia for members. Go to shop.theca.org.uk
12. **Discounts** Members can make up their annual fee and more from the CA member discounts from marinas, chandlers, insurers and many others.

Tom Cunliffe loves the CA

We've put together a video 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'll be seeing **short clips** from the video – 12 altogether to match the 12 benefits.





Join the CA today

the leading organisation for cruising boaters

**We bring together a wide community
to share knowledge and inspire well-informed,
rewarding cruising, under sail or power**

- ▶ Hundreds of marine discounts
- ▶ CAptain's Mate app – Cruising reports
- ▶ Events, rallies, seminars and workshops
- ▶ Webinars and videos
- ▶ London clubhouse and accommodation
- ▶ Access to RATS (Regulatory & Technical Services group)

Scan the QR code
to join now...
or go to www.theca.org.uk/join



Knowledgeable | Trusted | Supportive | Inspiring

www.theca.org.uk



Alliance partners

The Campaign is supported by our Alliance partners: The Royal Institute of Navigation, *Practical Boat Owner*, *Yachting Monthly* and the Westerly Owners' Association.



Tom Cunliffe launches the campaign at the South Coast Boat Show.
Photo: Maritime Filming UK / MDL Marinas

CA Lobster Pot Campaign aims to improve safety at sea

At the South Coast Boat Show in May, the CA launched its Lobster Pot Campaign, a national initiative calling for safer, more visible marking of static fishing gear. The launch was led by renowned sailor and author Tom Cunliffe, alongside Campaign Chair Ian Wilson CBE.

Poorly marked lobster pots and creels remain a persistent and avoidable hazard. Often difficult to detect, particularly in busy coastal waters, low light, or adverse conditions, they can lead to fouled propellers, loss of propulsion, vessel damage, and in serious cases, danger to crews and vessels.

The issue is long-standing but remains

unresolved. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) voluntary guidance on *Static fishing gear: Design of ends* (reissued in 2024) is widely recognised and followed by many fishermen. However, compliance is not mandatory, so inconsistent marking continues to pose risks. Incidents involving entanglement, near-misses, and emergency rescues continue to be reported. About 25% of entanglements are suffered by fishing boats. Since 2020, legislation in Scotland has made it illegal to mark creels with anything other than a dedicated buoy.

Call for enforceable regulation

The Lobster Pot Campaign is calling for existing MCA guidance to be made mandatory and enforceable, establishing clear and consistent standards to improve visibility, reduce ambiguity, and reduce risk for all water users.

CA President Robin Baron said, "Poorly marked fishing gear continues to present a real and avoidable danger. This campaign is about improving clarity, consistency, and ultimately safety at sea - for everyone. By working together and strengthening existing guidance, we can reduce risk and support safer navigation in our waters. The issue is not fishing, but unsafe marking practices that put all water users at risk. Clear marking saves lives, protects livelihoods and keeps our waters safe." ➤

Supported by



At the launch event, MDL Marinas formally pledged its support and will help amplify the campaign through its marina network.

"MDL Marinas is proud to support the CA's Lobster Pot Campaign and help raise awareness of an issue that affects so many people using our coastal waters," commented Sophie Kirkpatrick, Head of Sales and Marketing. "Clear and consistent marking of static fishing gear is an important step towards improving safety for all water users, and we look forward to sharing the campaign's message across our marinas, berth holders and wider boating community."

The Cruising Association **invites organisations across the marine sector to partner with us** in strengthening this campaign. By sharing campaign materials and helping to share key messages, you can play a vital role in improving awareness and driving safer practices.



Photo: Guy Brown

Marked Gear = Safe Gear *The Cruising Association campaign for visible, safe static fishing gear*

Our campaign relates to the hazard created by poorly marked static fishing gear, such as lobster and creel pots.

Our Manifesto

We believe that:

- 1. Safety at sea is everyone's responsibility** All who use our waters must play their part.
- 2. Poorly marked static fishing gear is dangerous** Unmarked or inadequately marked lobster pots and other static fishing gear pose a serious risk to navigation, safety and even lives.
- 3. Good practice deserves support** Most fishermen already comply with the MCA voluntary guidance¹, but their efforts are undermined by the dangerous actions of the irresponsible minority who refuse to comply.
- 4. Voluntary measures have failed** Clearly the voluntary guidance is not enough and has not worked.
- 5. Regulation is essential** The MCA voluntary guidance must be made mandatory and enforced through legislation where necessary.

¹ Maritime and Coastguard Agency – Static fishing gear: Design of ends – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/static-fishing-gear-design-of-ends>

Our Mission

To reduce the risk and make our waters safer, we will:

- 1. Highlight hazards** Educate and raise awareness to water users about the hazards posed by unmarked static fishing gear and the potential consequences.
- 2. Document incidents** Collect and share data on, and examples of, dangerous entanglement and near-misses to demonstrate the need for reform.
- 3. Map and publish identified hazards** Provide accessible data on high-risk areas.
- 4. Build partnerships** Work alongside and build alliances with those in the fishing and boating communities who share our concerns and support reform.
- 5. Advocate for regulatory reform** Collaborate with regulators to transition from voluntary guidance into mandatory, enforceable legislation.
- 6. Campaign for policy change** Lobby policymakers to prioritise this critical safety issue and enact enforceable reforms.

A spokesperson for the MCA added, "We welcome this campaign to encourage reporting of specific navigational safety incidents linked to poorly marked static fishing gear, which will help quantify the scale and location of potential hazards."

The **Lobster Pot Campaign video**, presented by Tom Cunliffe, highlights

the dangers of entanglement with lobster pots, and how the boating community and industry can help.

Supporters already behind the campaign include the British Ports Association, Hallberg-Rassy Owners' Association, UK Harbour Masters Association and the Royal Ocean Racing Club.

- Go to www.theca.org.uk/lobster-pot-campaign for further information, to view Tom's video, support the campaign, or access resources.
- RATS advice on **dealing with entanglement**: see next page



Photo: Kirstin Jones/Yachting Monthly

How you can help: report sightings & entanglements

The CA, RYA and Irish Sailing are calling on boaters to report entanglements and sightings of poorly marked gear. Submit reports via the RYA Fishing Gear Reporting Form: www.rya.org.uk/water-safety/fishing-gear-incident-reporting-form, with details such as location, time, conditions, and photos.

Please report, every time:

- Entanglements that you were directly involved in or witnessed, **and**
- Sightings of unmarked, poorly marked, or lost static fishing gear.



NEWS FROM RATS



Propeller after an entanglement experience en route from Alderney to Guernsey on 18 October 2025. Photos: Ian Randall. Background image: lobster pots in Banff

Dealing with entanglement

As the CA launches its campaign for better marking of fishing gear, *Marked Gear = Safe Gear*, **Ian Robson** considers strategies for avoiding and coping with entanglement

An occasional hazard when skippering a boat is catching a line that is attached to an object on the sea or riverbed – either a mooring, or a buoy and line marking a lobster pot or fishing net. Normally, such hazards are only found in rivers or closer to the shore when at sea – most typically within three to five miles of the coast.

Additionally, loose abandoned lines not attached to the seabed, and other drifting flotsam, can also be a hazard. This article considers how to avoid entanglement and looks at strategies that can be adopted to free a boat which is caught, considering mainly lines attached to the seabed, and with a final section on drifting lines and flotsam.

Background

Moorings, particularly the old abandoned semi-sunken ones

to which it is easiest to become attached, are, by their nature, found in sheltered waters, so usually rivers and harbours. In most cases there will be other moorings in the same vicinity.

Lobster pot and other fishing markers are found more widely around the coastline. Because the fishing gear or pots attached to these markers represents a significant investment for the fisherman, they may be fairly well-marked – typically with a danbuoy and a flag or with a brightly painted plastic buoy or container. The fishermen must also be able to find their tackle, and while they will know roughly where it is they need to be able to see and find it in all types of weather conditions, so normally the surface marker will be visible. But some pot markers can still be harder to see in poor conditions, particularly when painted old milk containers or similar are used: the paint can fade, and some containers are left unpainted. Around

Avoidance

Once entangled there is no strategy or group of strategies that is guaranteed always to release an entangled boat. For this reason, avoidance is the best strategy for dealing with entanglement.

On rivers and in harbours, whenever possible, **navigate along the main channel** and not through groups of moorings, as that will avoid the worst risks of your boat becoming entangled in any unused mooring – some of which can become semi-sunken.

Similarly, when at sea, and especially in areas where there are small fishing boats and or lobster pot markers visible, always be sure to **keep a very close watch forward** and be prepared to disengage any autopilot, throttle back your engine and/or take avoiding action at short notice. If in a power boat, navigate through areas with pots at reduced speed and whenever possible, if proceeding at night, either



Keep well clear of mooring buoys

keep well offshore, or use only marked routes to harbours and marinas, which are normally kept free of fishing gear.

On a sailing yacht, it's always good practice to lock the engine in gear and **prevent the propeller turning when sailing** as this reduces wear, but when the yacht has a folding or feathering propeller, the risk of catching a line around the propeller is also much reduced once the shaft is locked from rotating.



Poorly marked lobster pots with floating line. Photo: Norman Keane

headlands tidal currents may also pull pot markers beneath the surface.

If your boat is entangled

If you become entangled when **under power**, there will usually be a sudden and unexpected change in the engine noise, caused by a drop in the engine revs. The first thing to do is to return the throttle to neutral to stop the propeller turning, and to allow time to assess the situation.

When **under sail** the entanglement will normally be indicated by a surging noise

around the stern and a change in the yacht's motion as the boat is slowed to a standstill. As when under engine, the first thing to do is to cut power: free the sheets, furl any sails that can be easily furled and possibly drop the mainsail.

The next thing to do is usually to **wait**. Frequently the impact of wind and tide on the boat can rotate it around, and this may be sufficient on its own to free the boat from whatever it has become entangled in.

While waiting, the skipper should also settle the crew and any passengers

Strategies for getting free

Once the point of attachment has been identified then various strategies to free the boat can be adopted:

- Firstly, allow enough time to see if, with forward power removed, the boat **floats free on its own** under any tide and wind.
- Next, with the boathook, it may be possible to **manipulate the line** sufficiently to clear the entanglement. Particularly if the pot marker is trapped around the rudder, then it may be possible to use the boathook to pull or push the pot marker float clear using the boathook, especially when wind and tide are not strong.
- When the entanglement is around a rudder it may also be feasible to engage the motor and by **reversing up-tide or up-wind** reduce the tension in the line enough for the buoy or marker to which the line is attached to either float free, or to be released with the boathook.
- Failing being able to release the trapped marker float and line, it may be possible to use the boathook to **pull the trapped line** to within reach and **then cut it** using a knife. This will free the boat from the pot, but will result in the pot being lost, and if the rope is caught around the propeller it may not free the rope sufficiently to allow the voyage to be restarted under power. A sailing yacht could hoist sails and proceed as described under free floating lines below, but a motorboat would still require outside assistance – so beware of cutting lines if entangled close to rocks or the shore.
- Where the entanglement is around the propeller and, if the boat is equipped with a **rope cutter**, then engaging or re-engaging the engine and revving it may cut the rope. But if it does not then the entanglement is likely to be made worse.
- In sheltered waters or very calm seas it may be possible to **launch the tender** and get closer to the surface of the water either to manually assist release or, in extremis, to cut the line.
- **Under no circumstances should crew enter the water** in the event of an entanglement.



RATS (the Regulatory & Technical Services Group) represents the CA in understanding and explaining how regulatory and technical issues affect cruising sailors. We represent their interests in dealings with government departments, offshore developers, statutory authorities and the marine industry. We also produce policy papers and technical questionnaires, write articles for *Cruising* and develop material for the CA website. RATS responds in detail to members' queries where it can. To contact RATS, email rats@theca.org.uk

The RATS team

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RATS 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 and it 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.



The RNLI assisting an entangled Dutch boat off East Sussex in June 2025 and (inset) an underwater photo of the prop. Photos: Gerard Versluis



and make sure that they remain calm and in the cockpit. With progress impeded, and depending on the sea state, the boat's motion while stationary will be very different from that before the entanglement. So, if not already being worn, consider donning lifejackets and life harnesses before anyone moves out of the cockpit.

When all on board are briefed and aware of the issues and if time has not yet freed the craft, the next thing to do is to assess **how and where the boat is entangled**. In a yacht under sail, especially a modern wide-beamed yacht with twin rudders, the line will most likely be caught on the rudder. In a powerboat or a yacht under power the entanglement is more likely to be around the propeller, but can also be the rudder. A yacht with a wing or bulb keel can occasionally wrap a line around the keel but this is unlikely, unless

the yacht is manoeuvring slowly – for example prior to anchoring.

Often simple observation will show where the line is attached, but, if not, catching the line with a boathook and moving it forward and aft will clarify whether it is the rudder or the propeller which is entangled. Particularly when the propeller is caught, be certain to **keep the engine in neutral or turned off** while the situation is assessed. If all attempts to free the boat fail, then outside assistance will be needed. Normally in calm waters becoming entangled is not a life-threatening emergency so a call to coastguard for advice is the most appropriate next action. While the RNLI may carry tools for cutting underwater lines and freeing a boat they do not normally assist unless lives are at risk, and so skippers should consider other alternatives before requesting help from them.

Depending on the situation a regular

call on Channel 67 to the nearest Coastguard radio station may suffice. Let them know your situation and discuss the best course of action. But if the situation is more pressing then a **Pan Pan call on Channel 16** will give an immediate response as the Coastguard will then give priority to you over other radio traffic.

In a river or sheltered harbour, where the boat's situation will often be stable, skippers should consider if there is a suitable **boatyard or yacht club** nearby with a tender that may be able to assist. Or, if at sea, whether there are any fishing boats visible in the vicinity, as normally they will understand that, even if the pot is not their own, it is someone's livelihood and therefore they may be prepared to assist to avoid the pot's loss if you can attract their attention.

If all other options are closed and/or if there is any danger to other boats or to your crew, then the Coastguard will contact the RNLI.



Free-floating lines and flotsam

Normally, entanglement with free-floating lines while on board a yacht sailing at sea will be annoying rather than problematic. The rudder may be a bit stiff, but it should be possible to continue the passage under sail until more sheltered waters are reached. The vessel can then be anchored or moored while the line is pulled free using a boathook handled either from the deck or from the tender or a pontoon.

Entanglement with free-floating lines is typically more problematic in a motorboat, or a yacht proceeding under engine. Again, avoidance is the best strategy, so keep a good look out and always alter course to avoid lines of heavy seaweed and flotsam, as lines typically become encumbered with weed and may not be easy to see.

If the propeller becomes trapped the engine revs will drop,

or in extremis, the engine may stop completely. It should immediately be put into neutral. After settling the crew and considering if lifejackets should be worn, then try using the boathook to work the line free. Again, a line cutter on the propeller shaft may assist. But if it's not possible to untangle the line, while a yacht may be able to hoist its sails and make its way into sheltered waters where the problem can then be addressed, a power boat will need external assistance.

One final hazard to be cautious of is trailing lines from one's own craft. Be especially careful if leaving a pontoon or similar with an unfamiliar crew, to ensure that all mooring lines have been brought on board before accelerating away from the berth. If entanglement does occur the boat will be in sheltered waters so, while embarrassing, the situation is unlikely to be life threatening. On a yacht underway, spinnaker and jib sheets can also make their way overboard, so again be cautious before engaging the engine when at sea in light winds.

Expert advice for cruisers: Watch the latest Evening with RATS

Cruisers looking to stay informed on the latest technical and regulatory challenges which impact the cruising community can now watch the recording of an **Evening with RATS 2026** at www.theca.org.uk/news/ewr-2026-video

March's seminar this year brought together expert insight on issues impacting the cruising community, including::

Lithium Batteries: Power or Peril?

Rick Ballard discussed the benefits and risks of lithium battery systems on cruising boats. He covered essential safety practices, common installation pitfalls, and what insurers now expect so cruisers can stay both protected and compliant.

Marine Communications: Should you install Starlink?

Robert Sansom presented an overview of modern communication options afloat, including the rise of Starlink. He covered systems, discuss reliability and safety implications, and



helped you choose the right setup for your cruising style.

Marked Gear = Safe Gear: lobster pot campaign renewed

Ian Wilson showed us that entanglement with poorly marked or deployed static fishing gear remains the same issue as when the CA made its video in 2018. Except for a small gain in Scotland nothing has changed. See page 8 for more details on the new campaign.

When abroad: making sure your kit is legal

Roger Bickerstaff discussed requirements when travelling abroad from the perspective of UK boats leaving UK territorial waters, and the requirements to maintain compliance with UK regulations, as well as the laws of the country you are visiting.



CREW: "I am now retired & love sailing, especially long distances. In May 2024 I sailed across the Pacific from the Caribbean arriving in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand in November. People who sail with me say I am a great sailing companion and I have a good sense of humour even when it gets rough! References available! Looking forward to my next adventure."

Join the Crewing Service to find crew... or cruises

The CA's Crewing Service puts skippers in touch with crew and crew in touch with skippers, with regular meetings over winter. You can find crew or a skipper by posting your details on our listings (the quotes here give a taste of what's on offer), or post on the Crewing Service Forum. Find out more on the **Crewing Service page** at www.theca.org.uk/crewing/welcome or contact Malcolm Davidson at crewing@theca.org.uk



SKIPPER: "Gentle cruise... mainly day-sailing down the Atlantic coasts of France, Spain and Portugal to end up in Gibraltar for the winter. Will include stops for a few days at a time along the way to make the best of the many lovely places we will visit. All food on board will be provided by me and I will keep the boat vegetarian to accommodate all options."



Walrus video goes viral

A young walrus undertook a tour of Scotland during April. "Magnus" was first spotted in Stronsay, Orkney, before moving on to Lossiemouth, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Findochty.

CA member Fiona Hampton-Matthews was in just the right spot to video Magnus as he attempted to climb on to a pontoon in Lossiemouth, and we shared her video on Facebook. As *Cruising* went to press it had clocked up more than half a million views. You can see the video on Facebook at www.facebook.com/share/v/1Bf86rre5V

Walrus are occasional visitors to UK shores, with sightings increasing in recent years.

Menton



From Cannes to Menton

In the December 2025 issue of *Cruising*, **Barry & Linda Edmonds** highlighted the joys of the south of France, from the Rhone to Cannes. Here they complete the trip along one of the most glamorous coasts in the world... with a side passage to Corsica and Elba

Cannes is (almost) the proper start to the French Riviera. To the west, we have been dallying along Languedoc Roussillon, Provence and the Cote d'Azur, enjoying the various ports and many, many anchorages too numerous to list. Most of these anchorages are pretty locations with good holding in sand. We happily dropped the hook in between 5m and 7m (no tide to worry about) and only felt uncomfortable when there was south in the wind (or had been) as then your night could be rolly.

Before leaving **Cannes** don't miss the opportunity to catch the bus (more scenic than the train) to the ancient town of **Grasse**, the world capital of perfumery, and discover the history of scent in a town that discovered the secret by chance.

There are almost too many choices as you head further east, with the first stop being **Golfe-Juan**, a pleasant marina but a little starved of interesting sites to visit, but only a few miles from Cannes and like most locations, very welcoming to cruising sailors. Its claim to fame (other than being between Cannes and Juan les Pins) is that it is where Napoleon first reentered France on escaping from the island of Elba.

Next stop is **Juan-les-Pins**, and be warned, it is probably best to anchor off (3-6 metres, sand) as the marina is somewhat expensive. Inflate the dinghy,

tie up alongside the fisherman's jetty and stroll into town. If you are there in September enjoy the world-famous Jazz festival.

Now we round the Cap d'Antibes, admiring the very famous Hotel Cap (much better view from your boat!) and turning north for a short trip to **Antibes** itself. There is usually, in season, a fleet of superyachts anchored in the approach to Antibes harbour, where they have deployed their jetskis, waterslides, banana boats and all manner of rich boys' toys to make your journey a little more interesting, but it is worthwhile.

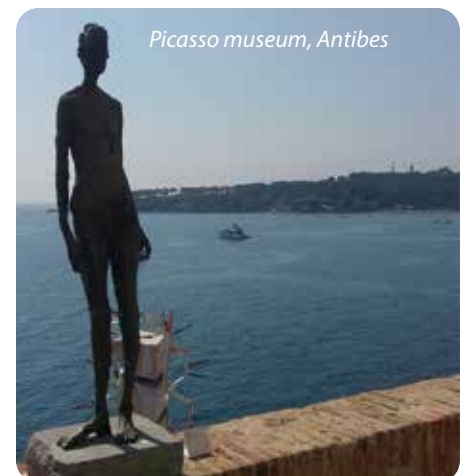
As you enter the harbour, turn to port and tie up in the Vieux Port. You are very close to the old town with its museums, bars, markets, street music, restaurants and interesting buildings waiting to be discovered. Fifteen minutes walk away are the train and bus stations. Catch a bus to the walled town of **Saint-Paul-de-Vence**, famous for its arts and crafts centres and well worth a stroll around the walls. Back in Antibes be sure to visit the Picasso museum (it seems everywhere in the south claims a part of Pablo) and on a day when it's not too hot, catch a bus out to the Hotel Cap. They won't let you in, but it's a great walk along the coast back to Antibes town, and take your swimming togs for a halfway dip. Don't forget to walk to Fort Carré on the east of the harbour, and take a guided tour; it's

inexpensive and has a fascinating history.

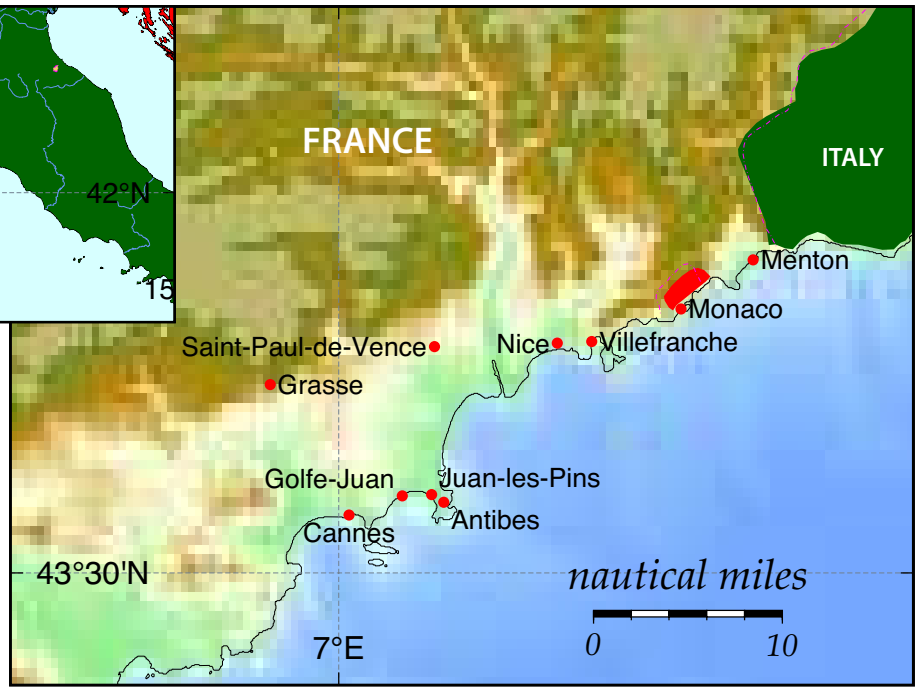
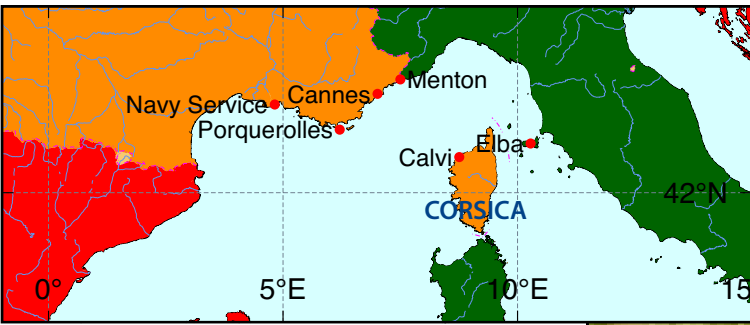
A word of caution regarding Antibes marina. It is vast, and unless you specify a berth in the Vieux Port you will probably be allocated a spot on "the other side" which is a 45-minute walk from the old town. They advertise a pick-up service in a buggy, but in our experience it is very often unavailable.

Once again setting sail, often very slowly, there are other harbours to enjoy, but for us they were often too shallow, or crowded and we felt best avoided. No doubt others would tell a different story.

Sailing across the bay of Nice, try counting the number of planes taking off and landing from the seafront airport. In high season it's a continuous procession and combined with the huge and



Picasso museum, Antibes



interesting apartment-block facade, it encourages the use of binoculars... while keeping a good lookout in this extremely busy area.

We enjoyed the marina in **Nice** (make sure to book well ahead) which is conveniently situated next to the tram/train connected directly to the airport. The facilities are located on the quayside and are heavily subscribed (perhaps over), but it is a short walk into Nice old town to the west of the marina, and to the famous triple diving boards to the east. The cathedral offers concerts throughout the summer months, all of which can be booked online or you can pay at the door (if there is room!). The one area that we didn't enjoy after the fine sandy coast to the east were the rocky, pebbly beaches.

Nice is the fifth largest city in France, and has been loved by the British for many years and its "busyness" declares this with pride, but it is an enjoyable stop (once again fantastic transport links) until the desire for somewhere more peaceful takes over, and you find it a few miles east in the huge and protected anchorage and marina of **Villefranche-sur-Mer**.

The Rade de Villefranche is bordered by the huge Cap Ferrat to the east and extensive rocky cliffs to the west and is an easy entrance. The port is €31.90 per night until June, and not much more after that, and it will always try to find you a berth if you call on mobile or VHF. If the port is full, it is a comfortable anchorage in 5-8m (close in) so long as cruise ships are not coming and going.

Villefranche is a very old town with

battlements and a citadel (worth a visit) and is a very steep walk into the new town, but the old town can be reached on a pathway around the edge of the fort from the marina. Walking into the old town you'll find a host of interesting shops plus the Chapel of St Peter (dedicated to the town's fishermen), beautifully decorated in 1957 by Jean Cocteau. It is very small and is open to visitors for a small fee; the interior is unique in our experience.

There are two outings that are really worthwhile from here, the first is the Rothschild's **Villa Ephresi**, and the second is the mountain village of **Èze**. Walk (steeply) up the hill and catch the regular bus that will drop you at the villa. The view over Cap Ferrat is wonderful, and the villa and its gardens, with fountains that "waltz" to Strauss every hour are interesting, beautiful and entertaining. The cafe/restaurant is a good place to rest halfway through your visit... but please remember this is a Rothschild villa.

The mountain village of Èze is reached via the train station in Villefranche (around the seafront and you'll see it on the left), get off at Èze-sur-Mer and catch the connecting bus up the mountain to the village. There is of course an off-road walking track, best used on the way down as there are plenty of hills to ascend once you are in the village itself. It is a tourist hotspot, but justifiably so with its gardens and statues. Please don't make the mistake that we did of buying "senior" tickets for the rail trip (saving a total of €10), and being stopped by transport police and being fined €90 for

not having a French senior's pass... in our defence there was no mention of this necessity when buying our tickets, and even our French friends were unaware.

On another day, stroll west around the cliff-bottom, well-signposted pathway all the way to Nice, and catch another of the ubiquitous buses back to Villefranche.

As in 99% of the ports we have used, the marina staff are really helpful and welcoming, often squeezing you in to a vacant berth for one night (when there has been no availability) until the next day when one becomes vacant for a longer period. There are a few brasserie/cafes on the port, plus the yacht club. All are much frequented by locals and good value; one has live music, often very listenable (even from another bar!)

Onwards east, past Cap Ferrat, you pass **Beaulieu-sur-Mer** (which makes the English Beaulieu seem inexpensive) and then **Monaco**, which we have sailed past on a number of occasions "wowing" about the Oceanarium building at the water's edge (more about that later) and to the old town (and port) of



View from Èze



Calvi, Corsica



Menton. If there is no space (book ahead) the alternatives are the new marina (which we have not tried) or the very calm, protected anchorage (in 6-7m) just outside the old port.

This is (almost) the border with Italy, and with its tiered rows of houses, the topmost church and (almost English) graveyard and hard-to-follow accents, it feels multinational. Menton was another favourite with the wealthy British in the 19th and early 20th centuries. We enjoyed every aspect of Menton: the museum, the narrow crowded streets, the Pilates classes conducted on the quayside, the gardens and even the interesting graveyard.

It was from here that we took the bus to Monaco: we wanted to visit the renowned Oceanographic Museum, and it did not disappoint. We happily spent some hours being absorbed in life below the sea and the history of exploration. Having satisfied our appetite for knowledge we decided our lunch appetite was waiting so we found a reasonable-looking diner and sat and waited, and waited. Eventually I asked a server (who had ignored us) for a menu, she scurried off and was replaced by the manager, who quizzed us... *do you live here?... no... do you work here?...no. In that case we cannot serve you, in case you have Covid.* This was in 2021. We tried another, and then a Starbucks. Same questions but met with the response...*we will serve you, but you cannot stay here, you must go to a designated area for tourists and*

eat your food there. We decided that the billionaires deserve each other, caught the bus back to Menton and had a lovely meal at probably a third of the cost.

Now, Menton (or close by) is a good place from which to cross to **Corsica**, it's the equivalent of a Chichester-to-Cherbourg Channel crossing (about 60nm-ish) but for us the island of **Porquerolles** is where our voyages to Corsica have begun. From Porquerolles to the north-west harbour of Calvi is about 150 nautical miles, and we would leave the island in mid-morning and plan to arrive in Corsica in late morning the following day, sometimes sooner and sometimes later, but always in daylight. In early season, as the sun comes up, seeing the snow caps looming really lifts your spirits.

Arriving in **Calvi** is terrific, there is an excellent anchorage to the north of the bay, there are plenty of visitors' buoys (payable) and in low season go into the marina. We paid €41 a night (until June). Try to avoid weekends, as the "music" from the shoreside bars and clubs is very, very loud – it's best to be on the buoys at these times. From Calvi walk around the fortified town, catch a train to L'Île-Rousse, take a tour on the inevitable *petit train*, or book a (incredibly reasonable) bus tour of the north of the island, stunning scenery and frightening roads.

Having been southabout previously we went north via Cap Corse. Eight hours later we tied up in the small harbour of

Macinaggio and left the next day for Napoleons birthplace, **Bastia**, which we found unappealing. After one night in the old port we took a six-hour, excellent sail to the exile island of **Elba**. We tied up in **Port Ferrario**, which is the main town. Very helpful mariners helped us with a challenging berth and we paid an interesting €40 euros a night, plus a one-off €6 for electric and water and €4 for rubbish collection, no matter how long we stayed.

Of course it's almost obligatory to do Napoleon: his town residence, Villa Mulini, and the Falcone fort, plus his summer residence Villa San Martino and museum, and there is more to see and do.

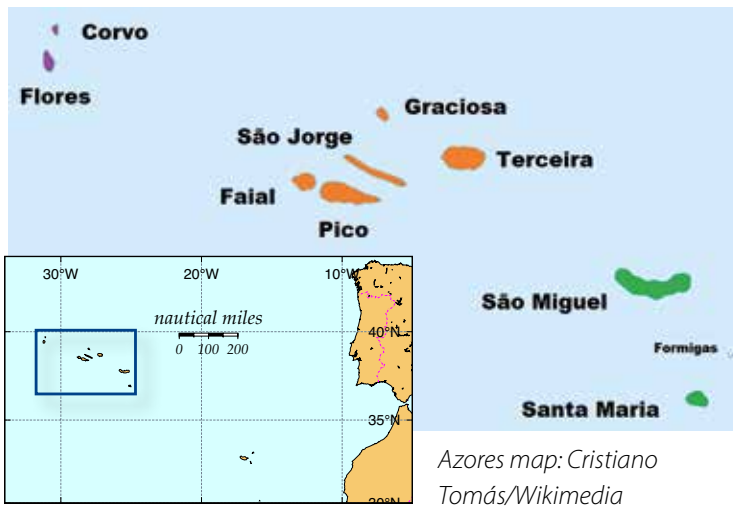
From Elba we sailed for seven hours to the Italian coast (where marinas are much more expensive than France) but we wanted to visit Florence, Pisa, La Spezia, the villages of Cinque Terre. We met the wonderful HLR, Valerio Zoja and his wife (and dog) for dinner and we received so much valuable help and advice, not to mention the home-grown fruit (in its various guises). Thank you Valerio, we are fortunate to have you.

And so, after our Italian adventure, we returned to Menton and began our journey westwards to our off-season berth in Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône.

Barry & Linda started sailing on a Skipper 17, moving to a Jaguar 22 after a few years, and then to a Westerly Konsort, sailing to France, the West Country and the Channel Islands. They bought their Corsair *Sovereign Flame* 25 years ago and in 2008 set off to Greece via the Canal du Midi. They spent three years in Greece, returning to the UK in 2012, and in 2018 made their way back to the Mediterranean via the Seine and canals. In 2025 they brought her back to the UK and plan on new horizons in the future.



Dinner with Valerio Zoja, the CA's HLR for northwest Italy, Corsica and Elba, and his wife Wendy



The Azores: Beyond the horizon, among friends

Pedro Parreira, our Honorary Local Representative on Terceira in the Azores, explains what makes the islands so special

In today's world, we are surrounded by an abundance of information. With a few clicks, we can access charts, weather GRIB files, and restaurant reviews. But as any seasoned sailor knows, while data can help us navigate, it is the human connection that truly defines a voyage. The Azores are no exception. You can pre-plan what to visit and what to eat, but the experience only becomes extraordinary through communion with the locals—the people who make these islands come alive.

It is a great honour to write to you again as an Honorary Local Representative (HLR) for the Azores. Some members may remember me from years past; unfortunately, health challenges forced me to step away from these duties for a while. However, like a boat returning to its home port after a long crossing, I am delighted to be back, ready to assist the CA community in navigating the unique realities of our archipelago.

Nine islands, nine personalities

We are islanders by definition, yet each of our nine islands has cultivated a singular community. Shaped by their dimensions, their proximity to neighbours, and their unique histories, no two islands are alike.

For centuries, the relationship between Azoreans and the sea was complex. Despite being surrounded by the Atlantic, our ancestors looked primarily to the fertile land. Agriculture was the backbone of our economy; the sea was often viewed as a formidable obstacle

rather than a playground. I grew up in a family rooted in that agricultural tradition, but I belong to a generation that saw the sea as a place of gathering—a bridge between people rather than a barrier. To visit the Azores is to fall in love with this authenticity, but it is an authenticity that requires a specific mindset.

As an HLR, my role is to help you find solutions for a safe and successful journey. It is vital to understand that the very isolation that makes the Azores beautiful also brings limitations.

I am based on the island of Terceira, where we have two active marinas. Both are relatively small and frequently face space limitations during the busy summer months. This is a common reality across the archipelago. Furthermore, because we are far from the mainland, services or spare parts you are accustomed to getting “on demand” in your home ports are often not readily available here. Dependencies on external logistics mean that patience and foresight are essential.

My advice: come with time

If you are planning a visit, my strongest recommendation is to prepare well and, above all, do not rush.

- **The two-year plan:** Consider exploring the Azores over two seasons. Many sailors find great success in leaving their boat here for the winter, allowing for a second year to truly discover the islands at a calm pace.

Above, aerial view of Angra de Heroísmo, Terceira, by Julia Schaefer. Below, special delivery: member Barry Owen-Smith hands over an HLR pack to Pedro Parreira, left



- **Embrace the pace:** Living far from the centres of immediate gratification means things may not happen “on the hour.” If you visit with a very tight schedule, the logistical challenges may cause frustration. However, if you come with time to participate in our festivals and feel the genuine hospitality of our people, those challenges become part of a rewarding story.

The Azores are a place where the clock slows down. I invite you to join us, to accept our rhythm, and to discover that the best parts of a voyage are often found in the moments when you stop rushing and start living.

- To contact Pedro, go to www.theca.org.uk/cruising_info/HLRlist or check individual locations in CAptain's Mate.

A breath of fresh air?

Cathy Brown asks whether every well-equipped galley deserves an air fryer... and concludes that it does

The first Motorboats Section day, at CA House in March, was a triumphant success. A range of attendees – lifelong motorboaters, converts from sailing yachts, and some still sailing and considering making the switch – enjoyed a programme which, thanks to multiple break-out sessions, got everybody talking.

It's the exchange of information that comes from situations like this that makes the CA so valuable. Lots of different views and experiences are expressed and everyone – no matter how "expert" they think they are – goes away with new ideas and fresh food for thought.

Food was the operative word in this case, for it seemed the topic that got everybody talking was not the nuts and bolts of motorboat maintenance, customs regulations for different destinations or any of the more "serious" subjects of the programme, but something which had come up in more informal discussion – the desirability of carrying an air fryer on board.

Apparently some two-thirds of British households now have an air fryer in their kitchen, attracted by shorter cooking times, lower energy consumption and healthier (lower fat) dishes. Up until then, I remained one of the "have nots" – rather prejudiced against the endless proliferation of "must have" kitchen gadgets – most of which prove of limited lasting usefulness.

However, I was so impressed with the



level of enthusiasm air fryers generated that day that I bought one, supposedly destined for the boat. I gave it a test run at home, and quickly found it so impressive and useful I wanted to keep it there. It is indeed a "game changer" as everyone said. So I bought another for the boat.

One of the advantages of motorboats over sailing yachts is that they tend to have more stowage space, so finding a safe home for it on passage was not a problem. But I have been intrigued to discover since that many of my sailing friends, too, have also made space aboard for this extremely helpful gadget.

The topic that got everybody talking was not motorboat maintenance, but the desirability of carrying an air fryer on board

I make no apology for writing about this. It might seem a bit "off topic" but provisioning and catering have always been an important part of cruising. This latest step into the future inevitably started me thinking about the past.

In the bad old days it was taken for granted that food on board was rather – er – basic. My husband remembers a long-ago early spring delivery trip on a friend's newly acquired (wooden) yacht when breakfast was cold beans on bread.

Our first yacht (25ft 1980s) had a two-ring gas burner and neither fridge nor cold box. We tended to live out of tins. There was a universal recipe for boat stew that involved tinned steak, tinned peas and carrots and tinned potatoes. It was welcome enough at the end of a cold passage, but I'm glad things have since moved on.

The next boat (33ft 1990s) had a gas oven with two-ring hob, and a cold box, and catering began to improve. It moved on another stage with the next yacht (40ft 2000s) which also had a fridge.

Now we have a motorboat with a fridge, a deep freeze, a four-ring induction hob and an electric oven which doubles as a microwave – everything we need to live just as well as we do at home.

But I want to enjoy being on the boat rather than spending all day in the galley. And that is where the versatile, compact and convenient air fryer will help – I hope. And every time I switch it on I will remember that lively, friendly and informative motorboats day at CA House, and how much else I learned there, too.

Cathy, a former editor of *Cruising*, is enjoying cruising with her husband Richard on their motor boat, *Attitude*. In her four sailing predecessors they raced and cruised from Spain to Sweden and sailed around the UK and Ireland.

