



sailingholidays.com[®]

2020 NEWSLETTER

LEAD CREW NEWS

Our lead crew news,
past and present...

.....

SUMMER 2019

Our update of the past
12 months...where did the
summer go?

.....

YOUR STORIES

Photos and stories from
our flotilla sailors!

The 43rd year of our flotillas sailing in the Greek Islands was another wonderful year of memories.

Our lead crew teams did a fantastic job (again) and, just as our holidaymakers do, they have formed friendships that will be for life.

The shorebased team were brilliant as they beavered away, usually behind the scenes, but always on hand when needed!

We continue to run our many flotillas across the Greek Islands generally and the welcome in the towns and villages we visit is as warm and friendly as ever.

Early Summer is special with the millions of flowers, fireflies in the evenings and a feeling of the "joy of Spring and the coming Summer" in the air. We have some great Spring offers for 2020!

See you around the islands!

*Barrie + Heidi Neilson
+ the Sailing Holidays Team.*



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OUR 2019 TEAM

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CELEBRATING OUR RAFFLE WIN!



THE SUN WAS SHINING!



PETE, BARRIE AND EX-FLOTILLA SKIPPER JAMIE



FAYE WITH FLOTILLA SAILORS ROBIN AND DOT

A LOOK BACK ON 2019 BOAT SHOWS

2019 was the first year without the London Boat Show. We know many of you like to beat the winter blues by visiting us at a show in the colder months.

We popped up at our usual shows this year, we also visited some new ones too...

In January we spent a weekend at London Olympia at the Destinations Travel Show! We saw plenty of familiar faces and lots of new sailors as well.

It may have been snowing outside but the Greek sunshine was shining on our stand!



OUR STAND AT THE RYA DINGHY SHOW

RYA DINGHY SHOW

ALEXANDRA PALACE, LONDON
29TH FEBRUARY - 1ST MARCH 2020
www.rya.org.uk/dinghy-show

Our stand at the **RYA Dinghy Show** was a success once again! We are always pleased to show dinghy sailors how easy it is to make the step into yacht sailing on our "set up for the job, easy to use, flotilla yachts".

There was plenty to see and do with some interesting talks on the stage and the ever popular children's treasure hunt!

One of our favourites was the interactive sailing course game, things did get a little competitive amongst the team!

We will be at Alexandra Palace again in 2020 and if you fancy being very organised, tickets are on sale now!



ELLEN AND CHARLIE AT THE DESTINATIONS TRAVEL SHOW

A new one for 2019 was the **Northern Boat Show** which took place at the Albert Docks in Liverpool.

Bex, Faye and Charlie made the trip up north to see what Liverpool had in store.

Many of our regular flotilla sailors came to say hello. Despite the slightly drizzly weather we managed to enjoy a couple of G&T's on the waterfront.

We were definitely the most vibrant stand on the docks that weekend.

What was not anticipated was that Liverpool would make it to the Champions League final and that the match would fall on this very weekend! So our Saturday afternoon/night was a little rowdy and our Sunday was cut short by the victory parade!

However, we really enjoyed the **Northern Boat Show**, it was lovely to be able to see those of you who can't make it down south. Keep your eyes peeled because we may well be back in 2020.

SOUTHAMPTON INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW

MAYFLOWER PARK/TOWN QUAY, SOUTHAMPTON

11TH - 20TH SEPTEMBER 2020

www.southamptonboatshow.com

2019's Southampton Boat Show was busy as always!

We were blessed with glorious weather (let's forget about the final day) which only made it more enjoyable.

On the Saturday afternoon the G&T's flowed (as usual). Many of you joined us having just returned from Greece and several were preparing to set sail that very weekend!

During the week Barrie was asked if he would like to talk about the history of flotilla sailing on the Foredeck Stage. He was on the bill alongside illustrious names like Stokey Woodall and Rod Heikell.

Barrie took a look back on where it all started and how flotilla sailing has allowed millions of British people to discover sailing in the Mediterranean.

Faye, Bex and Heidi were invited to attend the Women in the Marine industry drinks where they listened to talks from some incredible women doing incredible things!

The Sailing Holidays team headed to the Exhibitors drinks on Thursday evening, where there was a raffle to raise money for the charity "WetWheels".

Between us we managed to take home several prizes, although we did buy a large number of tickets! The fancy boat hook we won is hanging pride of place in the office (it's too nice to use).

Thank you to everyone who popped by to say hello, we always enjoy hearing your flotilla stories (whether old or new). We look forward to seeing you all again in the new year!



BARRIE DOING HIS THING ON STAGE



PILOT ALEX AND ROD & LOU HEIKELL POP IN FOR A CHAT



ENJOYING THE SUNSHINE

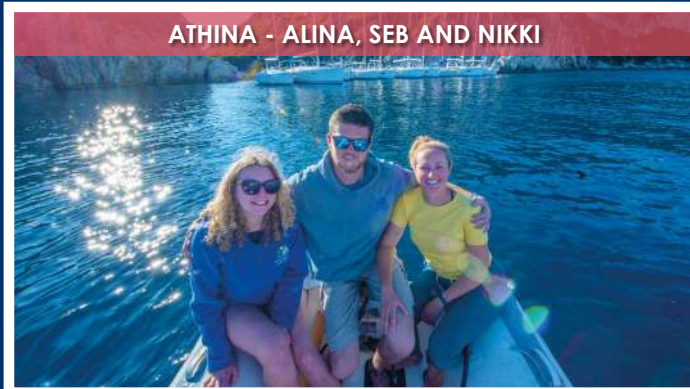
The Sailing Holidays Greek Island Team

• 2019 •



Our Lead Crews

ATHINA - ALINA, SEB AND NIKKI



KALAMAS - JAMES, LOUISA AND BEN



ZEPHY - CHARLIE, MEG AND SCOTT



KAMARA - JORDAN, YORKIE AND BENJO



HELEN - LOTTIE, CALLUM AND NIAMH



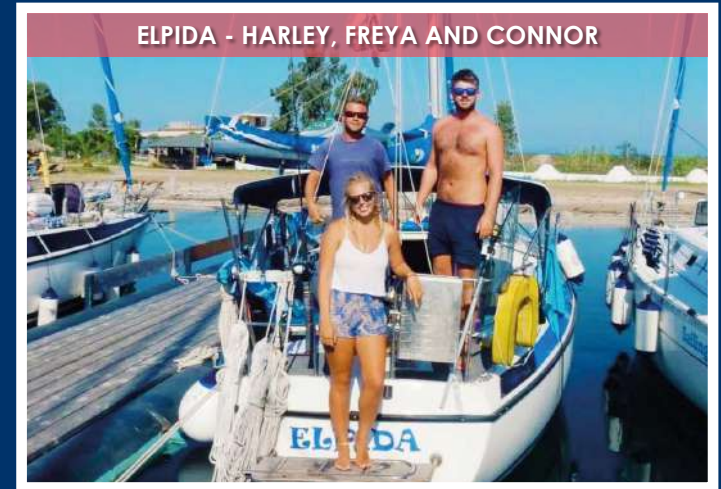
KALYPSO - SANDY, CIAN AND JOE



VASSIA - CALVIN, EMILY AND ROSS



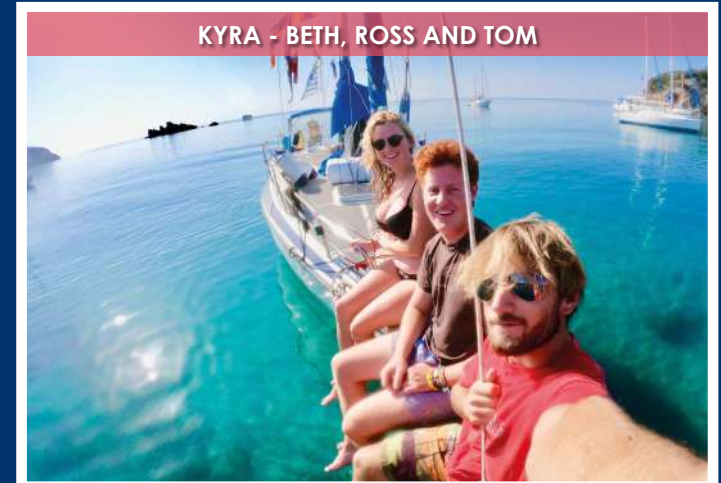
ELPIDA - HARLEY, FREYA AND CONNOR



DESSA - SEAN, MEG AND EMMA



KYRA - BETH, ROSS AND TOM



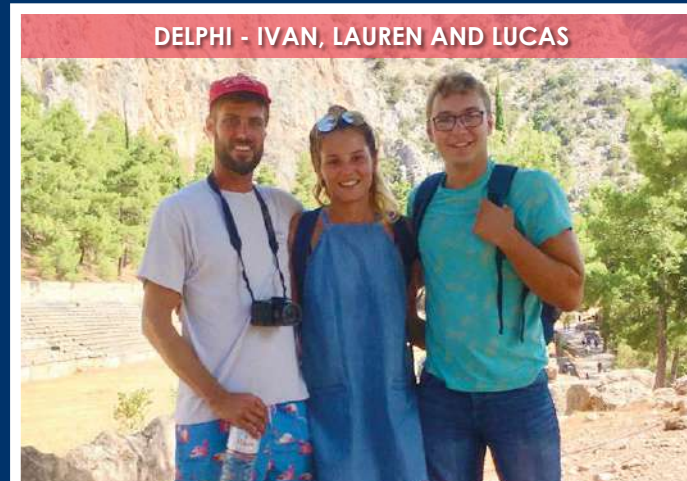
LOUTRAKI - DANNY, ELEANOR AND JOE



KIRKI - PAUL, PHOEBE AND JULIA



DELPHI - IVAN, LAUREN AND LUCAS



SIROCCO - TOM, BILLIE AND DOM



PAST LEAD CREWS AND THEIR NEWS...

FIONA & GLENN TIE THE KNOT!

"Dear Barrie and Heidi,
I met an old acquaintance of yours last week, Pete Jamieson.

Anytime a Kiwi tells me they have sailed the world/Greece/The Med/ been on a boat once - I mention I lived and worked on boats in Greece because I figure there is a 99% chance they know you.

Sure enough, Pete who lives on a boat currently, has sailed in Greece, stayed with you in London and I think his wife was your primary school girlfriend Barrie!

Was lovely to reminisce, although we do often anyway - wish Paxos wasn't quite so far away from New Zealand.

We are very overdue a Greece trip, Glenn hasn't been back since 2009 so we will be sure to make a visit soon.

We went out for a Greek meal with Jim & Anna recently, great food - they forgot one dish and ran out of something else so all in all an authentic experience.

You may not recognise the surname change from Campbell.



Glenn and I got married in July - better late than never!

Just us and 2 witnesses followed by some Skype calls around the world, then a cheese board with Dolmades, Olives and lots of homemade wedding cake - perfect day despite the rain."

CATCHING UP ON OLD TIMES AFTER 27 YEARS

New Zealand fisherman, Martin Holmes, and Jane Maree took over the Jaguar flotilla in 1992 with fellow Kiwi engineer, Brett. Back then we only had twelve Jaguars, 15 Beneteaus, Muscadet, and three Maxi 95s .

Martin and Jane Maree now run their own charter business in Nelson, New Zealand, cruising the incredible Abel Tasman National Park.

They popped into the London office to catch up with Barrie, Heidi and the rest of the gang!

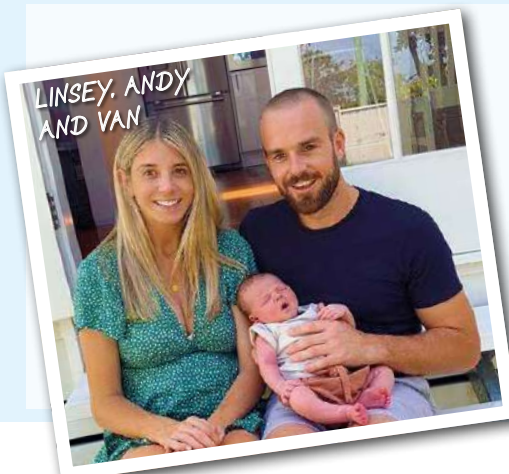
If you ever travel to New Zealand and fancy some sailing in the stunning Marlborough Sounds or Golden Bay their website is -

www.sailingadventures.co.nz

They specialise in catamaran sailing of different sizes.



ANOTHER FUTURE LEAD CREW MEMBER IS BORN



Many of you will recognise Linsey and Andy from the summers of 2010 and 2011.

Both of them spent time as lead crew in the Saronics and the Ionian.

They then headed for dry land and moved to Brisbane, Australia where they now live.

Fast forward 8 years and there is now a new member of the family.

Van Arthur Cottle was born on 30th January and we have to say, he is rather cute!

Make sure he gets in touch in 20 years time, there will be a job waiting!

TIM AND NIKKI GET HITCHED

Tim and Nikki were part of our Greek team in the Ionian Islands back in 2011.

Since then they have ventured a little further afield and are now living and working in the Caribbean (still sailing).

They took some time away from island life to travel back to the UK to get married.

There were several Sailing Holidays faces amongst the guests including ex-Hosties Hannah and Ruth.



THE YEAR OF WEDDINGS CONTINUES...



Jumping aboard the Sailing Holidays love boat this time is Kate and Andy (Geezer)! They both worked in Greece during the summers of 2011, 2012 and 2013.

They tied the knot on 21st September 2019. The Sailing Holidays family was represented by Paul and Marileen who travelled to the UK from the Netherlands to celebrate.

RUTH AND 'FESTER' GET IN TOUCH

Our long-standing flotilla sailors may recognise 'Fester' and Ruth from back in 2005.

They dropped us an email to let us know what they had been up to over the past 14 years!

They now live in Auckland, New Zealand with daughter Freya.

Fester works for a company called 'Sealegs' who develop and build amphibious boats.

Ruth owns her own business - The Alternative Bread Co. When Freya was diagnosed with coeliacs at the age of 3 Ruth decided to start creating delicious allergy friendly bread!

They keep in touch with lots of the old Sailing Holidays crowd. "Vicki (first female skipper) and Chris (who owned the chandlery in Fries) are very much part of our boats, water and sundowners life. They are property developers in Whangarei and have a son, Connor.

We catch up with Mhairi and Marcus and their two girls, Layla and Halle regularly too.

We spent a lot of time with Springer and Leanne before she lost her incredibly strong battle against pancreatic cancer."



HOSTIE KAT AND ENGO MATT ADD ONE MORE TO THE SAILING HOLIDAYS FAMILY



Matt & Kat were Engineer and Hostie on Lead Boat Kalamas in 2013.

Now, 6 years on, they are back in Australia living in Sydney.

We are delighted to see that they now have a gorgeous baby boy. Oscar Leonard Mackay was born on 18th June! Congratulations you two!

WE WIN BRITISH MARINE'S CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD!

Bex from our London office went down to Southampton on 26th March to attend the inaugural British Marine Expo.

The award category that we were in the running for was the British Marine Leisure Boating Customer Service Award 2019. The award is designed to highlight outstanding customer service within the marine industry.

This accolade is presented every year to a British Marine member who has excelled in customer service.



On this occasion we pipped the competition to the post and were crowned winners of the award!

Rob Clark, Chair of British Marine Leisure Boating, commented: "As an industry we boast many examples of outstanding service at every stage of the customer's experience."

A huge thank you to British Marine for recognising how much we do for our customers and of course to our teams in both London and Greece for the endless hard work!

As we'd say in Greece whilst raising a glass, "Yamas!" (Cheers!).

NEW ARRIVALS IN THE LONDON OFFICE

We have a couple of new faces in the Sailing Holidays London Office. You may have spoken to one or both of them on the phone over the past couple of months.

Ottillie joined our Flotilla and Yacht Charter sales team at the end of July. She has sailed out in Australia and loves a bit of windsurfing!

She was followed shortly after by James, who is working with both our Launch Crew and "Sails" Crew. He grew up sailing off the west coast of Ireland.

Neither had experienced a Sailing Holidays flotilla before so, in October, salty sea dog Charlie took them out to see the Ionian Islands for the first time.

Setting sail from Gouvia on a Beneteau 361, the crew sailed to the harbours of Sayaidha, Gaiois and Lakka.

With only 3 days on the water Charlie wanted to show them some of his favourite spots in the North Ionian.

They also joined a few flotilla group meals and punch party in order to get the full flotilla experience!

In November 2019 Joe joined the London office as our new Office Manager.

He is a newbie to sailing so we are keen to get him out on the water so he can see what Flotilla Sailing Holidays are all about. It won't be long before he's skippering like a pro!

We love introducing people to the joys of sailing in the Med and watching young people grow into fully fledged members of the team is always a pleasure.

Make sure you say hello if you see any of them on the water!



MORE BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS SUCCESS!

THE ONLY TRAVEL AWARDS VOTED FOR BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC!

At the end of November, we were once again summoned to the British Travel Awards because we had apparently won one of the categories!

The event is held annually at the Evolution Centre in Battersea Park, London and more than 1000 people from the travel industry attend each year.

Barrie dug out his "best bib-and-tucker", where it had lain since last years event and off they went (many moths lost their homes)!

We were over the moon to repeat our success of previous years to win gold in the "Best Small Holiday Company to Hellenic Europe" category. This award is particularly close to our hearts, as supporting tourism in the Greek Islands is one of the most important things we do (along with getting people out on the water)!

We also came runner up in the Best Small Family Holiday Company and Best Small Activity/Sports Holiday Company against huge competition!

It was a fabulous evening all round and it is thanks to the wonderful people who have enjoyed our holidays and voted for us! Don't forget to vote after your holiday in 2020 when voting opens in July (you could win a holiday)!

It's nice to know, in this world of corporate and internet travel, that the importance of independent specialist holiday providers is recognised by the industry.

Thanks again everybody!



Heidi's mission to rid the world of single use plastics continues and she brought her refillable water bottles to the event. There was plenty of wine and bubbly but no tap water! Her war on waste goes on!



LUNCH ON THE PATIO



ONE OF THE HUGE BEDROOMS



EN-SUITE WETROOMS

VILLA MEANDROS - THE SAILING HOLIDAYS EXCLUSIVE VILLA

Villa Meandros is now up and running for those seeking a little luxurious time ashore. It sits above Sivota Bay looking down on the comings and goings of the harbour.

Several families had the pleasure of spending a week or two there during summer 2019 and we are now taking bookings for 2020.

Why not combine one of our Ionian flotillas with a week on shore in Villa Meandros?

The villa can sleep up to six people so you could even book one of our larger boats with friends or family for your first or second week.

The villa is located within olive groves and is completely secluded.

The infinity pool has undisturbed views out to the Dragonera, Atoko and Oxia Islands. It is a perfect vantage point over Sivota Bay.



The outdoor barbecue area is ideal for preparing those all important Mediterranean dinners and lunches and the kitchen is well equipped.

All the bedrooms are en-suite with sprawling wetrooms!

You will be in the ideal location for exploring Lefkas Island. There are lots of beaches and some hidden gems in the form of inland villages scattered across the island.

This is a very special escape from the outside world.



Sailing Holidays' Annual Photo Competition

Congratulations to all of our 2018 competition winners! We had some fantastic entries and we love seeing all your holiday memories from the year gone by!

Our 2019 Photo Competition is open! There is still time to enter your holiday snaps, email them to: photos@sailingholidays.com or fill out the form on our website.

Entries will be closing on New Year's Day (1st January 2020).

The finalists will be uploaded to our Facebook page in January and then the voting will commence!

WINNERS RECEIVE:

- 1st: £500 towards their 2020 holiday
- 2nd: £300 towards their 2020 holiday
- 3rd: £200 towards their 2020 holiday

Sea



Trevor Brownley

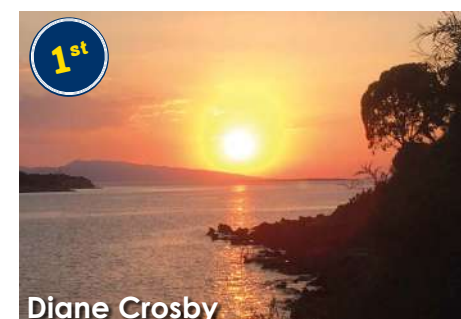


Louise Lambert



Tom James

Sundowners



Diane Crosby



Trevor Brownley



Christine Davis

Sails



Louise Lambert



Christine Davis



Craig Mallinson



THE NEW YACHTS ARRIVE ON THE BACK OF A LORRY



THE BOATS ARE LIFTED INTO THE WATER



THE ELECTRICS ARE RUN THROUGH

OUR NEW BENETEAU 38.1'S ARE DELIVERED FROM FRANCE

Four of our flotilla crews brave the January weather...

Our new boats start their life in Port Napoleon, a small marina and boatyard west of Marseille.

They arrive wrapped in plastic, without rigging, anti-foul or guard rails. Our commissioning crews build the rigs, fit the distinctive frames over the cockpits and check all the engineering systems.

All the work is carried out by our own staff, allowing us to train new skippers in maintenance and rigging from the ground up.

Once the yachts are complete, we prepare them for their maiden voyage. With the spacious design of the new 38.1 it was easy to store food, water and fuel for the long passages.

Our new boats need their engines "run in" so, for the first couple of days, the crews run the engines at steady revs.

This gives them the best performance for their lives on flotilla.

The delivery crews are a mix of seasoned skippers and newer staff. This year three of our boats were skippered by our RYA instructor team, headed by Pete Newman our chief instructor so they were in safe hands!

The journey started on Tuesday 29th January. Our first leg was a 200nm passage from Port Napoleon to Port-De Macinaggio on the northern tip of Corsica.



ALL READY TO GO!

With strong following winds and some large seas, it was a great chance to test our boats and our crews.

The new 38.1 has a fantastic touch screen chart plotter in the cockpit along with a strong and accurate auto helm system.

In January the Mediterranean Sea can be fierce. Cold northerly winds and deep areas of low pressure combine to whip up some challenging sailing conditions. We saw this first hand on our next leg.



BEFORE THE MAST FITTING

Aiming to use a gap in the weather, we headed over to the Italian coast near Rome.

We pushed through building southerly weather and strong winds all day until a small hitch forced us to change our plan just a little.

In the dark and swell one of the boats had run over a thick floating line. The prop wrap stalled the engine and forced us to seek shelter closer than we had aimed.

We made for Porto Stefano on the Argentario peninsula. With no engine the only safe option was to sail into the marina and then onto the quay.

As a Yachtmaster instructor, Pete teaches this technique and demonstrated an excellent piece of sailing skill to his crew (show off).

The third leg of our journey followed the coast of Italy south towards the Straights of Messina. This is a narrow stretch of water between western Italy and eastern Sicily.

The beautiful town of Tropea lay 320nm to the south and it would take us at least 50 hours to reach.

The first day saw very changeable conditions but constant improvement.

However, the first night of the passage proved to be a wild ride. In rain and gale force winds we moved closer to the shore to try and get more shelter.

After a few hours things calmed down and by dawn the storm had broken. We rested in Tropea and waited out the last of the big southerly weather.

The last leg of our journey always feels the best, soon we would be home in Corfu.

The final part of the trip saw us through the straights with the backdrop of snow covered Mount Etna puffing away in the distance.

While most of the Med has little to no tide, the narrow straights can cause very strong tidal flow, with spring rates being up to 5 knots in either direction.

We calculated our arrival time and had a gentle 3 knots of flow behind us.

Dodging ferries and shipping we skirted the whirlpools to finally enter the Ionian Sea.

We were then blessed by 24 hours of flat seas and a fabulous sunset, finally arriving "home" to Gouvia Marina on Saturday 9th February, tired but in high spirits due to the "job well done".



IMPRESSIVE SUNSET!



THE MASTS GO ON

THREE OF OUR TEAM QUALIFY IN THE GREEK ISLAND SUN!



In association with Corfu Sea School



THREE HOSTIES

ONE INSTRUCTOR

MISSION: QUALIFY AS RYA DAY SKIPPERS

With over 7 years of flotilla lead crew experience between them, ex-Hosties Jen, Ellen and Bex decided it was about time they got Day Skipper qualified!

We got underway with our online theory course, this was the bit that was least familiar to all of us.

The online course involves plotting positions, planning passages and using tide timetables.

We all managed to pass this bit, then it was just the practical course to worry about!

ARRIVING IN GOUVIA

On 6th October we boarded a plane from Gatwick bound for Corfu.

On arrival in Gouvia Marina we were shown to our home for the week, the Dufour 36 Knight Odyssey.

We were delighted to discover that Pete (or Uncle Pete to some) would be the lucky one guiding us through our course.

Having spent plenty of time on board yachts there wasn't too much to go through with regards to housekeeping.

The first job on the list was to provision the yacht for the first day or so out on the water.

As Hosties, this is second nature to us and we made sure that we would be well fed whilst on board! A well fed crew is a happy crew...

After making beds and a bit of unpacking, we spent the rest of the afternoon relaxing in the sunshine and enjoying a few liquid refreshments.

It was then time for an early night before the learning commenced the following morning.

DAY 1 - SAILING TO SAYAIDHA

We were up and with a cup of tea in hand ready for our first day! Pete went through several safety elements including the location of the life jackets and the fire extinguishers.

We talked through the importance of knowing the location of all the sea-cocks and how to prepare the yacht for a day on the water.

This was a great refresher for us all and we managed to ask plenty of questions...which, according to Pete, were not silly questions!

Each day Pete would designate a skipper for the day and a navigator, today it was Ellen's turn to take charge on the passage to Sayaidha and Jen's job to get us there!

We motored out of Gouvia and before too long Pete had us doing doughnuts in the bay!

There was a point to this exercise and this soon became apparent. We played around with the prop wash and the prop walk and learnt how we could use these to our advantage when manoeuvring.

We had a spot of lunch and then raised the sails before heading in the general direction of Sayaidha.

The wind was not playing ball so after a while we popped the motor on and powered on.

Those that have visited Sayaidha before will know how daunting the entrance to the harbour can look at first sight. It is incredibly narrow and does not look like a yacht should fit through it!

Ellen took the helm and expertly got us into the harbour and parked us up stern-to. First day done!



DAY 2 - ON TO CORFU TOWN

Today it was Ellen's turn to navigate and Bex's turn to take charge. Passage plans were drawn up and we were off!

Before setting sail for Corfu Pete got all three of us to travel in and out of the narrow harbour entrance and also turn the yacht within the harbour itself.

This was to get to grips with manoeuvring in tight spaces. He assured us that he would definitely not let us crash into anything! Thanks Pete...

We set course for Vido Island, north of Corfu Town. Here we anchored, had some lunch and enjoyed our first swim.

We then tried our hand at sailing off anchor, this was a new skill for all of us and we think we did pretty well!

The afternoon was spent tacking and gybing in the bay before heading into Corfu Yacht Club.

In the evening we spruced ourselves up and set off in search of some sustenance in historic Corfu Old Town.

DAY 3 - 30 MILES TO LAKKA

Today we had a navigational challenge on our hands. We needed to use clearing bearings in order to get around the Lefkimmi Point (a sand bar on the south east of Corfu) often known as the Venus Fly Trap of the Ionian.

We managed to arrive in Lakka in one piece and avoided the sand bar! Once Jen had safely moored us up stern-to, we enjoyed a celebratory beer.

DAY 4 - THE NIGHT SAIL AWAITS

We left Lakka in glorious sunshine and made the most of the wind. Some cloud started forming over Paxos island so we decided to sail to Mongonissi for lunch.

Whilst anchored Pete talked us through basic engine checks and maintenance.



We then waited until the sun was just setting and headed out into the night! Part of the Day Skipper course is to sail at night and to consider all the things that come with this.

We spent time navigating using the lighthouse outside Gaïos and making sure we steered well clear of the reef! After a few hours we made our way into the south entrance at Gaïos and moored up.

DAY 5 - OVER TO THE MAINLAND

The sea was flat calm and there was very little wind to be found! We decided to motor over towards the mainland in the hope that the wind might increase in the afternoon.

Outside Sivota Mourtos we spent some time sailing up to a buoy in preparation for our Man Overboard drill. This involves de-powering the mainsail in order to allow one of the crew to pick up the buoy.

DAY 6 - HOMEWARD BOUND

The next morning we ran through side-to mooring. Unfortunately this involved disturbing some of the local fishermen!

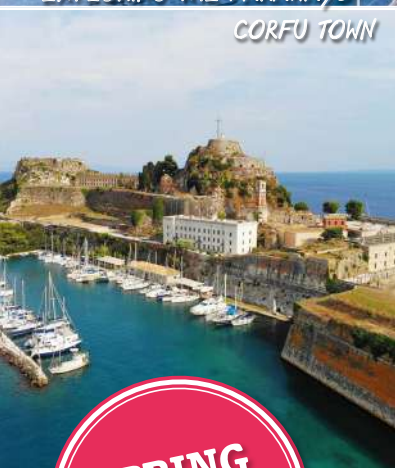
We managed one last lunch stop and a swim before tying up in the marina.

On return to the marina we were informed by Pete that we had all managed to pass the RYA Day Skipper course! G&T's all round!



EXPLORING THE FARAWAYS

CORFU TOWN



THE NEW HARBOUR AT ERICOUSA



MOORED IN KASSIOPE, CORFU ISLAND



EARLY SUMMER FLOTILLA OFFERINGS

A couple of extended sailing escapes for April...

This year we have a few special flotillas sailing at the end of April. These include two "extended flotillas".

Our first Faraway Islands flotilla of the summer will now begin on Friday 24th April (as opposed to the 26th), giving you two extra days of sailing - 16 days for the same price as a two week holiday.

The reason for this is that our Sunday flights out to Greece on the 26th are almost full, so it makes sense for one or two flotillas to go out a couple of days earlier!

Enjoy three weekends on a two week holiday or two weekends on a one weeker - can't be bad in terms of time off work!

The one week holiday will follow the route of our Corfu Sheltered Waters flotilla and will be doing 9 days for the price of 7! Two days sailing for nothing.

The Ionian Islands can be a joy at this time of year.

We are usually the first flotilla sailing company up and running, so we often have the harbours and bays to ourselves!

Sailing up to the Faraway Islands is a treat at any time of year, but there is something particularly special about the lack of other watercraft around!

The water isn't quite up to summer temperature yet but some hardy souls can be seen taking refreshing dips.

The new harbour at Ericousa makes this island a great stop for our flotillas. There is now more than enough space for everyone to moor on the quay. You also have the option to free swing in the bay. This is a very special experience.

All three of the Faraway Islands (Ericousa, Othoni and Mathraki) are blessed with crystal clear emerald waters.



ANCHORED IN OTHONI

Both of these flotillas are likely to visit the north most coastal villages of Corfu, St. Stephanos and Kassiope.

They have long been popular stops for the flotillas. The joys of visiting these old favourite spots remains undimmed!

The channel between Corfu and the mainland often offers some of the best sailing in the area, it is a good spot for some tacking practice!

You could sail for 16 days from just £555 per person (including flights). These "extended flotillas" are only available at the beginning of the summer.



BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE SAILING HOLIDAYS PRE-SEASON BUILD UP



THE BOATS GO IN



PREPARATIONS BEGIN



CHECKING FIXTURES AND FITTINGS



ALL THE YACHTS ON THE HARD



GETTING THE STICKERS ON

Our team in Corfu work endlessly throughout the winter to ensure that the boats are ready for you all to enjoy once the summer comes.

Believe it or not, it gets quite cold in Greece in the winter, so working outside can be a challenge.

There are many jobs to be ticked off before the boats are launched. Flotilla lead crews work with the shorebased team to get their fleets ready.

Here are just a few jobs that are on the Skippers' checklist:

- Splice warp to anchor chains and attach anchors
- Check the steering systems and put on the steering wheels
- Check cutlass bearings
- Check and maintain the skin fittings and seals of seacocks
- Check deck fittings
- Prepare each boat for anti-fouling

- Attach propellers/rudders
- Polish hulls
- Maintain teak decks
- Replace stickers

Our Engineers don't have an easy task during build-up. Not only do they team up with their Skippers and spread the load, they have a huge responsibility themselves before the big launch day.

Here's an idea of what they need to sort before lift in day:

- Plumbing for heads (toilets)
- Run all the engines
- Test all the electrics
- Check the seacocks and make sure they're SHUT!
- Check the drive train (gearbox, shaft, propeller and bearings)

Any hiccups are resolved quickly. The odd beer fine is handed out so the crews can pay for their mistakes and to make sure they're not repeated!

One of the bigger jobs we took on over the winter was updating the last five of our Beneteau 311's. They were our only remaining tiller steer yachts - they now have shiny new wheels instead!

We also changed them from slab reef sails to in-mast furling, to finally standardise our entire fleet on furling sail systems.

Once the on-land work has been done, the yachts are all lifted back into the water. The running rigging and sails are put back on the boats.

Then the "Hosties" arrive to get the interiors sparkling clean. They fit the cushions back on, load the all-important inventory, and do all the final touches.

All this work takes place between February and the end of April. The crews work to a fairly tight schedule, but somehow they manage to pull it off every year!

Fancy working for us? Go to our website to find out how sailingholidays.com/about-us/join-the-team

LITTLE THINGS TO HELP THE PLANET

Every little helps...



RECYCLING GREEK STYLE....

We know that the Greek Islands are not renowned for their recycling facilities (this is improving year on year).

It actually wasn't until Western tourism arrived on the Greek Islands that waste management became something the locals needed to think about more.

The Greek way of life was always very much reuse, reuse, reuse and this can still be seen in many of the small villages we visit.

However, we have spotted some ingenious and creative means of reusing modern used items that would ordinarily have ended up in the bin!

Heidi spotted these whilst on her travels in Lefkas. Engineer Vicki recycled fenders at our Sivota store and used them as plant pots which we think is a pretty creative way to recycle.



AITO PROJECT PROTECT

In 2019 we decided to join AITO's Project Protect programme, an initiative for travel companies to become more sustainable and eco-friendly.

Each company devises a pledge that summarises their commitment to sustainability, how they wish to improve their own efforts and what results they hope to see.

In Greece we are aware of the plastic pollution caused by the purchasing of multiple plastic bottles of water by our staff members and clients.

We have teamed up with Water-to-Go, a company that produces filtered water bottles which remove 99.9% of bacteria making the tap water safe and pleasant to drink.



WATER-TO-GO BOTTLE

We calculated that an average flotilla sailor goes through around 3 large plastic bottles of water a day, which costs roughly €10 a week.

In addition to this project, we have started to work on lots of other things we can do to reduce our impact on the environment, both in Greece and our London office.

We're trying to find compostable/degradable single-use items like our punch party cups and bin bags – things we get through a lot of.

In an ideal world we'd switch to electric engines and install solar panels in an instant! But things like that take time and a lot of money, so for now we are starting small.

With your help we can only improve and we'll continue to work hard to protect the beautiful Greek Islands we love to sail around!

Stokey Woodall Talks at Southampton Boat Show

Stokey explains how common sense is vital in ocean navigation. Things like finding your way in fog and out in the landless ocean.

Stokey has crossed the Atlantic many times and is an old fashioned navigator.

Very handy when the modern electrics fail!

It was a great reminder that the practical side of navigation is equally as important as the electronic side (which has made us lazy)! Satellites can be switched off!



Kostas from Steni Vala on Alonissos is recognised by the Greek Academy

In 2018 our good friend in Steni Vala, Kostas Mavrikis wrote an amazing book.

It focuses on how British, Australian and New Zealand soldiers tried to defend the east side of Greece and the nearby islands from the invading Germans in June 1941.

He is determined not to let people forget the horrors inflicted on Greece by the Germans (and later by the Greeks on each other as a result).

In December 2019 he is being given the Award of Greek Academies.

He sent us this email at the end of the summer:



"Dear friends

Barrie and Heidi

This summer was a fantastic season. We have a very good co-operation with the leaders crew. They were very excellent and kind to the locals also to your clients.

I surprise that you put me in your information book.

It was very helpful from you and a lot sailing holidays sailors buy The Escape.

At 19 of December I am going to have the award of Greek academy's. It is the biggest honour for a Greek citizen. This award is belong also to my good friends.

Like you that always help me to continue my try.

Thank you for your all the friendly helpful.

Kostas and Aggela

Steni Vala, Alonissos Island, Sporades"

It is a fascinating read and if you would like a copy you will have to set sail to the Sporades and purchase one in his shop in Steni Vala!

AITO Charity Auction pledge donated to the Disabled Sailing Association

This year we again contributed a prize (including Barrie's rarely seen tie) to the charity auction which takes place at the Association of Independent Tour Operators Annual Conference.

Our prize offering raised a fantastic £1,100 which will be contributed to the Disabled Sailing Association.



The DSA are a Torquay based sailing charity, run for the disabled, by the disabled.

The charity's aim is, wherever possible, to give everybody, no matter what their disability, the opportunity to enjoy the experience of seagoing sailing in a safe and pleasurable environment.

We continue to support them in the amazing work they do to get people out on the water!

We became aware of this organisation from Len Skinner, who regularly joins our flotillas and whose daughter Sophia worked as flotilla hostess a few years ago with skipper Mike.



BARRIE ASSISTING THE AUCTIONEER



THE RACE KICKS OFF

NORTH IONIAN REGATTA OCTOBER 2019

2020 DATE: TO BE ANNOUNCED! (KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED)

As usual, the annual end of season North Ionian Regatta took place on an almost flat calm day.

It was a beautifully sunny day but we were not blessed with very much wind!

The great forecast encouraged plenty of people to enter the regatta.

However, not all who entered actually persevered and crossed either the start or the finish line.

There were around 100 entrants and this year only 23 yachts completed the whole race course.

The completion times range from around 1 hour and 40 minutes to 3 hours 45 minutes so, it wasn't what you would call nail biting stuff but everyone definitely enjoyed themselves!

Plenty of our flotilla sailors and lead crews took part. It is always a great way to wave goodbye to the summer season!

"Paxos" (one of our old Bavaria 46's) was crewed by a collection of Sailing Holidays staff members. Calypso, Anna and Jo all from our Corfu Office. Along with Angelos, Dionisis and Nektarios from our Corfu workshop. They were also joined by three smaller sailors Tereza (Dionisis daughter), Alexis (Jo's son) and Alkinoos (Angelos' son).

They managed to come 6th overall and 1st in their class, many hands make light work!



THE CREW OF PAXOS ENJOYING THE SAILING...



...AND THE SUNSHINE



THE CREW OF KASSANDRA



GIVING THE SAILS A HAND!

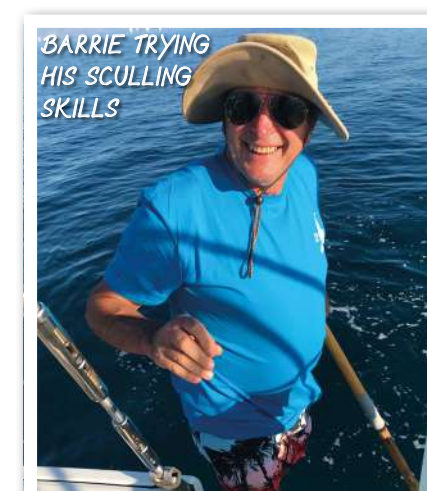


CALLISTO CREW

Ex-Flotilla Skipper and RYA Cruising Instructor Sam and his crew were the only "liveaboard" entry so they didn't have much competition. They managed to finish the race so took home first place in their class.

Moving up a size, in the up to 38ft flotilla yacht category, Chris, Marielle, Freddy, Leo and Max worked together as the perfect crew to take home the prize on Callisto, one of our popular Beneteau 361's!

In the over 38 foot category Kalokeri took first position crewed by Dave, Sarah, Luke, Zoe, Sophia and Amelia.



BARRIE TRYING HIS SCULLING SKILLS



THE CREW OF KALOKERI

Crossing the line first was Ciriad Bach, skippered by Will Davies. We think it might be time that someone gave him a run for his money as he has taken home line honours for too many years!



WILL COLLECTS HIS PRIZE

For the up to 35ft flotilla class honeymoon couple Will and Lucy sailed the love boat, Kalloni to victory in just over 3 hours (well done for sticking with it folks)!

With the class winners announced it was time to present prizes to the overall winners.

Ex flotilla Skipper Joe Charlton and his crew took 3rd place on Daisy Sea.

Coming in 2nd place on Captain Camfon was Andreas, who some of you may recognise as the Harbour Master at Corfu Yacht Club (a regular flotilla stop).

You may notice there is no mention of the "1st Staff Yacht" winner...that is because none of them managed to finish the race!

A delicious Greek buffet was put on by our friends at Argos Restaurant.

Once the prize giving was over the band Blues Wire and Nick Dounousis, with Maria from the Corfu office as guest singer, got the crowd going!

The evening was spent celebrating a lovely sunny day on the water, albeit a little lacking in the wind department!

We hope to see you out there racing (or midday drifting) next year...



WILL & LUCY - KALLONI



ANDREAS & CREW



THE PARTY IN FULL SWING

LOCAL NEWS

From our friends around Greece...

ISIDORA AND THEODORA CELEBRATE

Effie and Christos are the ever welcoming owners of the Iris Hotel in Nidri.

Many of our flotilla sailors will have enjoyed their famous barbecues whilst on holiday.

Over the years we have seen their family grow and the hotel is very much a team effort!

Their two daughters Isidora and Theodora took part in celebrating in traditional dress.

Isidora wore the Lefkadian dress and Theodora donned a dress from Florina. These outfits are made up of many layers and are very difficult to put on.



Each dress takes around half an hour to get all the different garments in place! The event was to celebrate the end of the dancing season, this year the theme was the four seasons.

CULINARY SUCCESS FOR 12 GODS - SIVOTA

This year Twelve Gods Taverna in Sivota took home a Gold award for Best Seafood and Mediterranean Cuisine.

This is not the first time they have won this accolade. 2019 is the second year in a row they have been recognised for their outstanding seafood.

The "Gold Awards" ceremony takes place in Athens and gathers restaurateurs from all over Greece.

We definitely agree with the judges decision, we love popping into Twelve Gods for dinner whenever we are in Sivota. Congratulations!



DIMITRI - ELENAS TAVERNA - VLIHO BAY



We thought we would give everyone a quick hello from dynamic Dimitri at Elenas Taverna on the other side of Vliho Bay. Elenas is one of our favourite tavernas and features fresh fish that he catches himself. The arrival of his two children, Maria and Amarilis, has curtailed his fishing a bit.

The food served there is absolutely fantastic! The evening environment as the sun sets over the mountains of Lefkas is just magical.

He has no quay, so yachts anchor in the bay and go to the taverna by dinghy, tying up to the wooden decking.

ROD HEIKELL'S NEW LITERARY OFFERING

Barrie's good mate Rod Heikell (fellow Kiwi) has just produced a brilliant reflection on pretty much everything historic and up to date about Mediterranean sailing/boating.

As with all Rod's writing in all his amazing harbour guides and other publications, it is a reasonably easy read although quite a long one!

You may see some photographs from the Sailing Holidays History Book appearing here and there, as we are very much part of the last 40 or 50 years of sailing the Med.

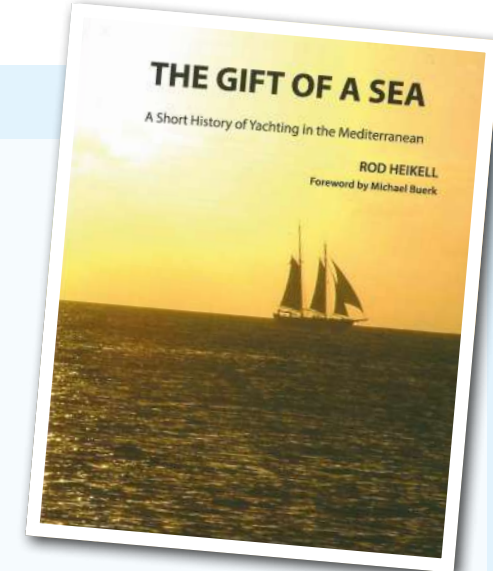
It goes all the way back to the Pharaohs of Egypt and their luxurious vessels.

He talks about the incredible seafaring of the Phoenicians, the Minoans, the Mycenaeans, the Carthaginians and the Romans.

Several sea battles fought in the Mediterranean changed the entire course of world history, so it is quite an intriguing tale.

One of the fascinating aspects Rod points out is that, in the nice warm climate of the Med, one thing that hasn't changed in 5000 years is that the boats most constant adornments are nubile young ladies.

The Pharaohs of Egypt apparently had them on their boats as slaves and rowers!



As I write I have only read a couple of chapters so far and it is engrossing!

If you'd like a copy it can be bought from Rod's Facebook page. He is in the process of getting it on various other online platforms and even in book shops (if there are any high street shops left)!

NIDRI - LOCAL WOODEN BOAT BUILD

As we drive backwards and forwards from Nidri to Sivota Bay on Lefkas Island, we notice all sorts of things going on.

In this day and age, of almost everything being fibreglass, we were amazed to see the frames of an enormous local caique being erected in a boatyard beside the road.

Slowly but surely and using many traditional tools and methods she began to take shape.

It felt like we were witnessing history before our very eyes. Suddenly she was planked and before we knew it launched into Vliho bay.

Not so many years ago, she would have been used for fishing as a "mother boat" for half a dozen smaller caiques which spent the nights fishing for calamari.

However, tourism has changed all that and she will spend her life entertaining lucky tourists as they cruise around the islands.

There are not many traditional fishing families left around the Ionian Islands and we savour our friends in the village of Petriti who battle on with traditional fishing methods.



YANNIS, THE FERRYMAN FROM PARGA, TAKES A YEAR OFF

For the first time in 44 years Yannis' little blue ferry boat "Betty" was not taking us to and from Parga Town and Valtos Harbour.

Yannis was unfortunately taken ill (the lifetime of smoking caught up with him) and he had a major operation in Germany.

His wife Claudia was able to help nurse him back to some degree of health although not enough yet to cope with the work required to commission "Betty".

We certainly miss the sight of the blue hull with its eye on the bow, appearing on the back of our boats and him shouting "lady, no fingers, no fingers" and "careful, careful" as we scrambled onto the bow.

Fortunately, Alex and the team at Costellos restaurant (and the Salvator Hotel) arranged alternative ferries, so the 30 minute walk along the beach and over the hill was a choice rather than a necessity.

Yannis' family history features on pages 24 - 27 of the Sailing Holidays History Book.



A YOUNGER YANNIS PREPARES "BETTY" FOR HIS EVENING RUNS TO PARGA TOWN AND BACK

THE OLD GIRL IS STILL GOING...THE HISTORY OF POCKET ROCKET

In the late 70's, six UFO 27 hulls were purchased by Tom Keen on the advice of his son Thomas. Only a couple were ever completed properly and used as lead boats in the 1980s.

They were eventually abandoned in a boatyard but Barrie couldn't resist getting his old lead boat back in the late 90s as a project for taking part in the Ionian regattas in September and October. She then remained very much part of the Sailing Holidays history.

Pocket Rocket was largely rebuilt inside and was fitted with a spare Jaguar mast and a couple of larger sails.

Sailing Holidays now had its own budget regatta yacht in order to compete with the ever growing number of local boats appearing on the scene.

Over the years she has taken first place twice at both of the Ionian regattas.

She is a 'light airs' yacht, so in windy years, she tends to finish down the field.

However, she was a distraction from the mainstream yachts and of course an extra cost.

We decided to donate her to the NAOK Yacht Club in Corfu for the teenagers of the island to experience sailing in their own local waters.

Many people around the islands assumed that people who went sailing were rich, but in fact the opposite is largely true, as yachts cost so much to keep!

We watched the children's "Oppi" (Optimist) fleet go from half a dozen to over 30 yachts now, so the future looks bright.

Now the youngsters have a stepping stone into larger yachts and by all accounts they are doing well in club events.

The young people are also learning about keeping a boat "ship shape" so she is well maintained and regularly raced.



THE YACHT CLUB TEAM REALLY GETTING GOING



SNAPS & STORIES

YOUR TALES FROM A SUMMER OF SUN, SEA AND SAILING

Gold
Trusted
Service
Award
★★★★★
feefo

"I would like to think I speak for everyone when I say THANK YOU. Thank you for giving us memories that we will not only cherish always, but one's that we will share with our children, maybe even our grandchildren, of the days we sailed the Ionian Sea, with a fantastic team of people." **Chris Marr**

"From our first contact with Sailing Holidays we felt we were in safe hands and that feeling continued throughout our holiday. As complete beginners we were given the confidence to book our own yacht. The pre-holiday information we received was comprehensive and helped us prepare for our adventure. On the first day we had a really helpful member of the Sailing Holidays team on board to show us the ropes then from the second day we were sailing on our own with a friendly and helpful lead crew on hand when needed. Thank you Sailing Holidays for making sailing accessible to complete beginners. Can't wait for our next sailing holiday!"

"Would recommend the Sporades if you want something different as we normally sail the Ionian. Inspired when came home and booked Faraway Islands two weeks ready for next year. (This is the fourth flotilla holiday with you). Anyone wanting a sailing holiday with a company that they can rely on - Sailing Holidays are in my opinion, the best. From the Office based staff, shore staff and the best Lead Crew. Would recommend every time. Well done guys!" **Angela Dunbar**

"My first time properly sailing - thankfully the boyfriend knew what we were meant to be doing - and it definitely won't be my last after an amazing week full of sailing, sunshine, far too much laughter and a lot of gin! The crew have a great balance of personalities and made everyone feel included despite an age difference but on these trips age doesn't really matter" **Holly White**



YOUR NEWS FROM SUMMER 2019

HONEYMOONING IN THE FARAWAYS

Sharon and Simond celebrated their honeymoon whilst on flotilla in May this year.

They joined Lead Boat Athina for a fortnight of exploring the Faraway Islands.

They sailed on Galini, one of our Beneteau 35's and whilst on holiday they enjoyed a meal in Taverna Galini...good choice!

Their first holiday together was a flotilla several years ago and they decided to come back to where it all began for their honeymoon.



They managed to squeeze in another celebration as Sharon had hit a birthday milestone the week before they set sail.

When Emily ventured out to Greece for her second summer as a flotilla hostie, she probably wasn't expecting to run into a long lost friend!

HOSTIE EMILY AND FLOTILLA FRIEND OLIVIA - 12 YEARS ON...

"You never know who you're going to meet this season..."

When I was 11, I (Emily), went on my first Sailing Holiday's family flotilla and made friends with Olivia.

Fast forward 12 years, I end up being her Hostie! Such a small world!"

Emily and Olivia...reunited at last! Here are some photos from then and now...



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Andy and Myrtle set sail on our Whole Ionian flotilla in May.

Whilst on flotilla with Lead Boat Vassia they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

This isn't their first foray into flotilla sailing, they know the ropes! It looks like they had a great time celebrating in style.

Here's to another 50 years!



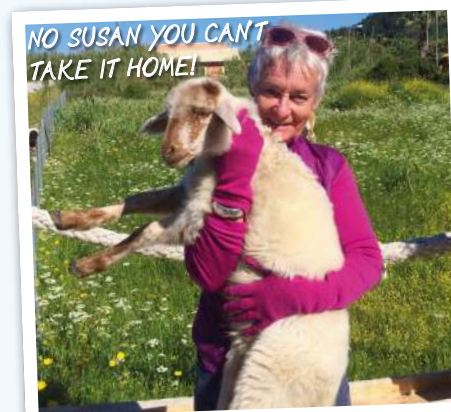
MAKING FLUFFY FRIENDS IN THE FARAWAYS

Susan and Tom sailed up to the Faraway Islands in May to explore the delights that the more secluded parts of the North Ionian hold.

Whilst exploring the island of Ericousa they came across the local bakery which was the only place open for dinner.

After showing them around, the owner introduced them to his pet lamb.

Being from New Zealand Susan was in her element and immediately made friends. We're not sure who is having more fun...



ROOM FOR A LITTLE ONE?



A NEW USE FOR OUR JUTE BAGS...

Many of you will have enjoyed 'Happy Hour' or breakfasts at the Harbour Lights in Lakka. We have been visiting Lakka for many years and have seen the children in the town grow up. Melody and the team from Harbour Lights found a new use for our Sailing Holidays jute bags.



Susan, Tom and Heather using their bag in Menton, France!

OUR MERCHANDISE TAKES A HIKE TO NEPAL



We love to see where our Sailing Holidays "merch" gets to. So many of you travel to and from all four corners of the earth and often take us with you when you go.

Flotilla sailor Hilary went hiking in Nepal this year and one of our tops and hats made the perfect apparel for her trip!



Another photo we received recently came all the way from Copenhagen. One of our very eye catching towels has travelled with Clive on his sailing adventure!



During the school summer holidays there is always an occasion to celebrate when sailing on flotilla.

This year lead boat Sirocco had their fair share of parties!

CELEBRATING WITH SIROCCO IN THE SARONICS

In June one of their flotilla sailors Lucy found out that she would be receiving her degree in Pharmacy. Not only did she pass...she got a First!

The flotilla gathered for a beach party in Dhokos to mark the occasion!

Then in August Sirocco raised a glass (or several) for a double birthday party.

Lorcan and Seb were treated to a group meal and a cake EACH!





A few more snippets from the summer...

These holidays can be seriously addictive...

Which Phill & Jamie recently found out...

We have said it before and we'll say it again, we can't think of a better way to spend precious holiday time than sailing around the fantastic Greek Islands.

The number of you who return to sail with us year on year just goes to prove that we are not alone in our thinking!

This year Phill and Jamie sailed on their first flotilla with us. Little did they know, it would spark a new addiction!

"We have been sailing on the Norfolk Broads for years and have always wanted to do a sailing holiday abroad on a flotilla. One day we were talking to our sailing friends and after much discussion we all decided to book a holiday on a flotilla to the South Ionian.

We have been to Poros and Sami in Kefalonia for a few holidays previously, and we always thought seeing it from the sea would be an amazing sight - we were not disappointed!

After meeting our crew (Dom, Lottie and Will - later to be called Princess) we started our week sailing around Kefalonia and Ithaka.

We had an amazing week of lunchtime stops in secluded bays, healing over in the afternoon wind, being on dolphin watch, and drinking Mythos of an evening whilst catching up with the flotilla.

We were enjoying our week so much, that as we were sailing to Poros we decided to email the office and book another flotilla later in the year.

We ended our holiday on such a high as we'd had an amazing week sailing and we couldn't wait to return in September.

On the day before departing for our second flotilla holiday, we went to the Southampton Boat Show.

After reminiscing about the holiday in July, we ended up booking another one for the following year - a two week South Ionian holiday for 2020. We were so excited!

Landing in Greece in September for our second week we met our lead crew Niamh, Lottie and Princess.

We were over the moon that Princess and Lottie were our lead crew again.

It was like meeting old friends, and we couldn't wait to get on our boat and get sailing again.

Due to Greek laws changing in the South Ionian with regards sailing qualifications we would have to go through the Lefkas Canal to the North Ionian for our week afloat.

The lead crew were keen to inform us that the tradition is that you dress up when going through the canal.

Now we are not ones to let down this "tradition" and scoured the boat for dressing up stuff, namely bedsheets, in order to dress up as a Titanic tribute act, with Jack and Rose flying off the bow in the wind.

Many pictures were taken, and much fun was had whilst motoring through the swing bridge!

We had another amazing week and made some great new friends as we travelled from port to port, either stopping off for a lunchtime swim or maximising our time with the sails up during the afternoon.

We finished our week on another high and now can't wait to return in June next year."

*Phill & Jamie
(flotilla addicts)*

Not a story of 2019 but a story of 16 years!

"In 2003 we visited the Birmingham NEC Outdoor and Boat Show looking around camping and walking equipment.

At the time, we were approaching our 25th Anniversary and wondering what different holiday we could do to celebrate.

Amongst the stalls was Sailing Holidays and we chatted to them mentioning that we had twice tried sailing on Windermere but couldn't consider the sea.

These lovely people assured us that we would be able to sail one of their boats in Greece.

This planted the seed for us, we booked a week in the South Ionian the following year as our special one off, never again holiday to mark our 25 years together.

We came back from that holiday completely amazed at having been given the opportunity to experience something so wonderful and so different.

We got different things out of that first trip but both loved it more than anything we had done before.

Two years later, we were back in Greece again for our second one-off, never again sailing holiday.



Next year, 2020, is already booked, returning to the Faraways for our 13th flotilla holiday.

Since that early trip we have enjoyed the North and South Ionian, Saronics, Sporades and the Faraway Islands and still sit at anchor in beautiful remote bays for our lunch marvelling at the fact that we, us, Lynne & Ged, are actually allowed to do this. We feel so privileged!"

Ged & Lynne Donovan

They said we couldn't do it, they said we would sink!



"Hello Sailing Holidays,

Thank you for another outstanding two week flotilla holiday!

After a great day on the beach in Parga doing watersports, we realised that we would have to make it back to the boat "six up" in the dinghy.

We received two rounds of applause from the flotilla and managed to make it back without a drop of water entering the dinghy.

What a memorable day!"

*Phil and Crew
Pindos*

ADVENTURES IN THE ATLANTIC

Tales from our 2019 Canary Islands Mile Builder

12TH - 26TH
JANUARY 2019



CAMINO'S CREW



TINTO'S CREW



January 12th

The two crews arrived on Tenerife and we were greeted by Will, Pete and Charlie.

Our yachts Tinto and Camino, both Dufour 412s, were ready for us to board.

The first evening was low key, a group meal was in order at a local restaurant.

We left the marina on a bright morning with a moderate wind blowing at force 4-5.

January 13th to 14th - Distance: 140NM

Instructors Will and Pete had prepared our first passage plan and we set a course for the island of El Hierro.

We each practiced man overboard under motor and sail, crash tacking and gybing.

A fender and a length of warp made a makeshift man overboard who became affectionately known as 'Bob'.

With the crews working in pairs for night watches, it was generally three hours on and six hours off.

In order to practice entering a marina at night we planned to arrive at Puerto de la Estaca, enter the marina, turn around and then head for La Palma.

We had some challenging and exhilarating sailing with winds up to force 7, gusting 8. Despite being heavily reefed we reached a speed of 10.6 knots.

The crews had an enjoyable meal at a restaurant fronting onto a black sand beach.



January 15th to 16th - Distance: 63NM

We departed Marina Tazacorte and sailed around the north of La Palma beating into a force 6.

January 16th to 18th - Distance: 222NM

Our sail to Lanzarote was to be our longest passage which would take us over 37 hours.

Will threw in an impromptu man overboard at one point to test out our skipper Pete and his crew, so Bob was called into action once again!

We spent the day and the following night at Marina Rubicon for some well-earned R&R, a few beers and a pleasant group meal.

January 19th - Distance: 46NM

With the wind on our nose at force 3-4, we tacked up the east coast of Lanzarote for what by now seemed like a short hop of 46NM to Marina Lanzarote.



January 20th - Distance: 38NM

We left Marina Lanzarote and once again beat up the east coast. The scenery as we sailed through the Estrecho del Rio, the channel between Lanzarote and Isla Graciosa, was stunning.

That evening Camino spent the night in the marina at Caleta del Sebo. Tinto's crew opted to free swing at Playa Francesa about 2NM further on.

The crew took turns on anchor watch during the night. I spent a peaceful hour reading in the cockpit waiting for the blood moon to appear.

January 21st - Distance: 122NM

Both yachts set a course of 240°M heading for Gran Canaria and the marina at Puerto de Las Palmas.

The wind blew force 2-4 and behind us all the way, we surfed to Gran Canaria on big rollers.

As we approached Las Palmas we were hailed on the VHF by a solo rower who was attempting to cross the Atlantic.

He had diverted to Gran Canaria due to illness and problems with his navigation systems. He was concerned that we were a large tanker as he was not able to identify us on his AIS system. We allayed his fears and the crews eventually met up with him later that day.

January 22nd

After a 30 minute stroll turned into a one hour hike we had some delicious tapas and the odd cold beer.

January 23rd - Distance: 103NM

We headed north to round the top of Gran Canaria bound for La Gomera.

For the first time we really felt the effects of the wind acceleration zones between Tenerife and Gran Canaria. We also had to be aware of our position in relation to the Traffic Separation Scheme that runs between the islands.

As we passed Tenerife, the wind died on us for the first time on our trip and so we motor-sailed the last few miles until we arrived at Marina La Gomera at San Sebastián.

January 24th

On our final rest day the crews each did their own thing. Tinto's mob took a taxi trip to sample the tapas and beer at Mirador de Abrante. Camino's crew explored San Sebastián with the more energetic walking up the hill that overlooked the town.

January 25th - Distance: 32NM

The wind once again deserted us for our last short passage back to Las Galletas. We motored to Tenerife and whale watched along the way.



The crews celebrated the end of the trip in their own ways, Camino cracked open the champagne and Tinto the cans of lager. We emptied the fridge for our last meal on board which was a melange of culinary delights.

Living on board...

For seven relative strangers to be thrown together aboard a 41ft yacht, albeit with a shared love of the sea and sailing, could have been a recipe for, if not disaster then potential niggles. Having shared meals and stories with both crews and Will and Pete it is evident that both crews gelled as teams and although dealing with things in different ways just got on with it and thoroughly embraced and enjoyed the experience.



Cooking on board could be challenging particularly in a rolling sea but we all took turns and ate really well, a meal tastes great after a days' sailing. Some crew members were more adventurous, Bill decided to serve up a roast dinner!

Will and Pete are extremely professional and good at what they do. The success of the trip was due in no small part to how they led us, imparted their knowledge, fashioned us into teams and above all had our safety as their paramount concern.

Steve - Tinto Crew



Sailing Holidays Ltd

YACHT CHARTER DIVISION

"Just a quick note to thank you for a great charter in Greece. Charter company were excellent: very helpful and both hand-overs were detailed and smooth. The boat was very well equipped and far too easy to sail, meaning the trip was stress free.

The team are thinking about next year already."

Grant - Greece - Kos - Hanse 505

"We have returned from our bareboat holiday sailing on a catamaran.

I would like to thank all the staff in Sailing holidays for great communication and organisation. You were very helpful providing us all the information.

Thank you once again ."

Bojan - Greece - Corfu - Lagoon 380

"Sailing north out of Kos on Audenis was great fun. She sailed really well in both light and not so light winds, was well prepared by the charter company.

A good range of charts and port information awaited us in the chart table and instrumentation was all fully functioning.

The charter company provided good service and had great recommendations for our two week itinerary.

So yes, everything went really well on this charter and we return with great memories of an excellent sailing experience."

Steve - Dodecanese Islands - Sun Odyssey 409

THE SAILING HOLIDAYS LTD YACHT CHARTER DIVISION GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH!

When you have tried all our flotilla sailing holidays areas, you may wish to consider branching out to a new area or larger yacht, so check out a few possibilities below:

YACHT CHARTER (Bareboat)

For those with sailing qualifications (minimum ICC or RYA Day Skipper Practical).

This sector of our programme is where we "package" sailing holidays on charter companies' yachts in Greece and other countries across the Med.

This covers clientele who require larger yachts than we have ourselves, operate in areas other than where we operate, or even as overflow when our flotillas are booked.

Mediterranean sailing is continually evolving and we develop with it. The key is our knowledge of the core aspects of travel and sailing. We specialise in merging these two ingredients through our infrastructure in the UK.

All three holiday options can be provided as flight and transfer inclusive holidays or simply the sailing bit by itself. In recent years, the luxury side has been slowly moving to catamarans and the super luxury of crewed large motor yachts.

SKIPPERED YACHT CHARTER

For those new to sailing or simply wishing to relax and begin to learn the ropes.

This is a popular option for those wishing to experience sailing and take their first foray out onto the water with a skipper who will know their way around the area.

Certainly, couples, groups and families all enjoy the aspect of going out to local eateries in the evening once tucked into a Mediterranean harbour.

Med sailing in the morning is usually quite sedate and late afternoon sailing can be a bit more exciting - the choice is yours.

Skippered charter caters for complete beginners at an extra cost for the skipper - not full luxury, but still enjoyable and a chance to have a go at sailing with onboard supervision.

Your skipper will "give you a go" whenever it is appropriate and explain all sorts of aspects of sailing generally.

LUXURY CREWED CHARTER

(skipper and hostess on board) this is a bit more expensive but a "real getaway" in comfort.

Luxury yacht charter costs a bit more because the yacht is normally larger and fully crewed with breakfast and lunch provided. It especially allows for unique nights at anchor under the brightest stars you will have ever seen.

Greece generally remains our most popular cruising area although Croatia is gaining in popularity and Turkey seems to have recovered from its recent political upheavals.

Broadly, you will find incredible history in all these areas and, above all, fantastic fresh and healthy food.

One of the nicest aspects of sailing in the Med is not knowing or caring about what is happening in the outside world.

It is quite noticeable that, after a couple of weeks on the water, the television news appears to be the same as when you left.



One key to our success is the protection of your money through our Civil Aviation Authority ATOL for flight inclusive packages and our ABTOT (through our ABTA membership) for 'yacht only holidays'. In addition we are long standing members of AITO (a group of 150 specialist holiday companies).



GREECE

CROATIA

TURKEY

SPAIN

ITALY

Call us on: **020 8438 1133** or visit our website: **sailingholidays.com/yacht-charter**



FACT BOX

Yacht Name: Free Me

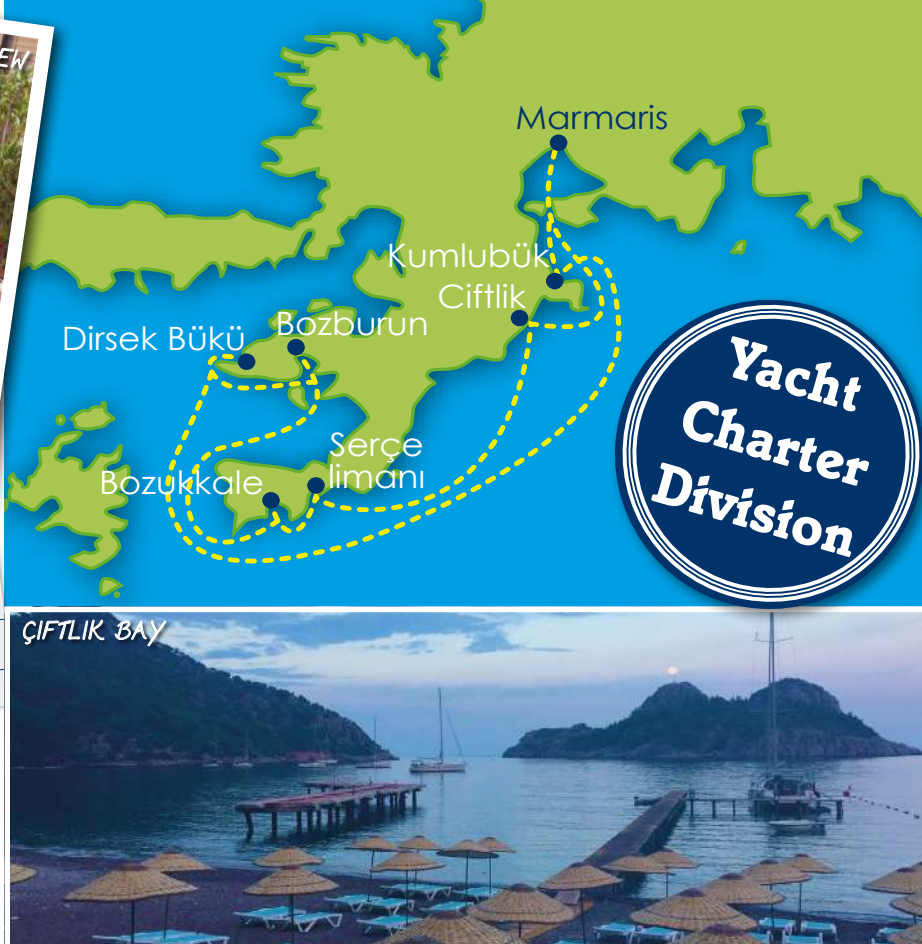
Yacht Type: Sun Odyssey 410

Location: Turkey - Marmaris

Travel Dates: 15th - 22nd June

Crew: 2 - Day Skipper
3 - Crew

Bareboat Yacht Charter



At this point in the week, everyone knew their roles on the yacht and we were starting to function like a well-oiled machine.

Driven by the thought of our week coming to an end, the crew were keen to gorge themselves on as much food, drink and sun as possible.

With the chain up, we motored for another hour before reaching Kumlubük.

This is a huge moon shaped bay with several restaurants scattered along the shore.

Another delicious cockpit dinner capped off what had been yet another seamless day on the boat.

DAY 6: KUMLUBÜK TO MARMARIS

Compelled by the knowledge this was to be our last day aboard, making the most of our time left was a must.

In order to stay ahead of the other charters returning to base, our first play of the day was to refuel our tanks back at the marina.

Tank full, we found a little bay 30 minutes from the marina where we spent our final hours reflecting on the week we'd had.

Nestled in between two fishing boats and with a warm sun beating down, we all agreed it is easy to see why Turkey has long been one of the greatest sailing destinations in the Mediterranean.

We will definitely return here and I highly recommend this sailing area to anyone who has a mind for a Turkish holiday.

Finlay and crew

FINLAY FROM OUR OFFICE ESCAPES TO SUNNY TURKEY!

Having left the UK on a rainy summer day, we received a warm welcome as we landed in Turkey! Our home for the week was a Sun Odyssey 410 with all the bells and whistles you could ask for. The next morning, following a thorough briefing and a substantial supply shop, we were ready to get going!

DAY 1: MARMARIS TO ÇİFTLİK BAY

We set off with the sun blazing and not a cloud in sight. A casual 2 hour motor down the coast took us to our first anchorage of the week, Çiftlik Bay.

Anchor dug in, it was time for dinner. With a choice of 3 restaurants, we eventually decided on Azmak where we dined on fresh dorado and quenched our thirst with the local brew, Efes.

DAY 2: ÇİFTLİK BAY TO BOZUKKALE

Our first full day was all about re-familiarising ourselves with boat life as we headed down the coast in search of bays.

The prevailing North Westerly created a great opportunity to go through the motions as we beat into the wind for the better part of the morning.

Our bay stop for lunch was called Serçe Limanı.



Once longlined, we were able to admire this beautiful inlet which cuts back into the land and boasts some of the clearest water I have ever seen.

A quick hop over to Bozukkale was next. The remains of an ancient fortress lines the hillside as you make your approach, which we later discovered made for a cracking viewpoint.

We dropped our anchor before taking a few lines ashore with the help of some enterprising restaurateurs.

DAY 3: BOZUKKALE TO BOZBURUN

An early start and an important day ahead as we set sail for Bozburun. Having not seen a town since Marmaris the crew were keen to set foot on land.

More pressing was our need to restock the boat with food (and maybe some beer).

A quick lunch on the go before a couple of cooling swims and it was time to make port.

An excellent dinner quayside followed by some refreshments at Osman's restaurant was more than enough before lights out. The town had been a much needed and enjoyable stop, but we couldn't wait to get back into bays.

DAY 4: BOZBURUN TO DIRSEK BÜKÜ

A lazy start to the day with breakfast ashore and a supplies shop, finally saw us leaving harbour at midday.

Once out in the open, we were spurred on by a strong breeze to put the sails up. With not far to travel today, it was lovely to be sailing.

This evenings stop was one we had been looking forward to, a stunning bay called Dirsek Bükü.

Not only did this represent our furthest reach from Marmaris, it had also been praised by the base team as one of Turkey's best bays.

Without a doubt, they were not lying! With gin-clear water and shelter from most angles, it definitely lived up to expectations. A small restaurant ashore provided us with some much needed sustenance (and local olive oil).

DAY 5: DIRSEK BÜKÜ TO KUMLUBÜK

Our earliest start of the week promised our best and longest day of sailing yet, an uninterrupted 5 hour leg back in the direction of Marmaris.

With a strong North Westerly blowing we flew down the coast topping 10 knots and leaving several other yachts in our wake.



FACT BOX

Yacht Name: *Minnie*
Yacht Type: *Hanse 385*
Start Base: *Split Kastela*
Travel Dates: *28th September - 5th October*

**Bareboat
Yacht
Charter**



LIZ POTTER CRUISES THE DALMATIAN ISLANDS FOR A WEEK

This is the story of the Croatian travels of Liz and Andrew Potter, from West Kirby Sailing Club on the Wirral, who put aside their four racing dinghies for a week in favour of an alternative salty adventure in a 38ft yacht.

ARRIVAL IN SPLIT

We arrived at Kastela marina at around 10pm, we had been given the pontoon number where Minnie, our Hanse 385, was berthed.

DAY ONE - BRAC ISLAND

After a familiarisation of the boat by the charter company we left the marina in light winds. Arriving at the port of Milna on Brac island by early evening, where we chose to anchor on the far side of the harbour.

Next came the drama of getting the tender off the deck. The little rubber boat was very small.

This was not going to stop us from getting a meal and a beer!

In our haste to get ashore, we had failed to put on the yacht's masthead lights. Fuelled on beer and slight apprehension, we crossed the dark waterway towards our unlit vessel, with our way lit by the phosphorescence of thousands of microscopic plankton under a blanket of stars.

DAY TWO - VIS ISLAND

After a leisurely breakfast in the warm sunshine on deck, we made a late start. A little wind put us close-hauled to Vis, which became our destination.

We approached the far side of the island and decided to stop over in the port of Komiza, which was the closest point to the small Island of Bisevo; location of the blue cave.

Once inside the harbour, we were met by a RIB, who directed us to the buoyed area, to pick up a mooring.

We had a delightful meal in a small restaurant off a shady backstreet in town.

We feasted on a Dalmation dish of beef and gnocci in a rich aromatic sauce, accompanied by local island wine.

DAY THREE - BISEVO ISLAND

By 8am, there was already a line of boats heading for Bisevo. We joined the exodus.

Access to the cave was only possible with a guided tour launch, which passed by the moorings, where many yacht crews awaited a turn.

We were lucky to pick up a mooring just as one yacht was leaving and were collected.

The blue cave was in the next bay and was but a tiny gap at the bottom of the cliff face. We all had to duck and the dark stone corridor swallowed us.

After a short echoing passage, where the boatman turned off his engine, the boat emerged into a bolt of the brightest blue, as the sun lit the water from the cave's underwater entrance.

Back on our boat, we returned to Komiza for some supplies, before setting off in a direction dictated by the current wind, the forecast and a few whims.

We ended up heading for the main town port of Vis. We picked up a mooring on the quieter side of Vis harbour, called Kut, and enjoyed the end of day sunshine. The weather looked set to change, forecasts showed wind and thunderstorms for the next day.

DAY FOUR - SOLTA ISLAND

A quick on-deck inspection at 06:00 showed that some strong gusts were blowing across our sheltered bay.

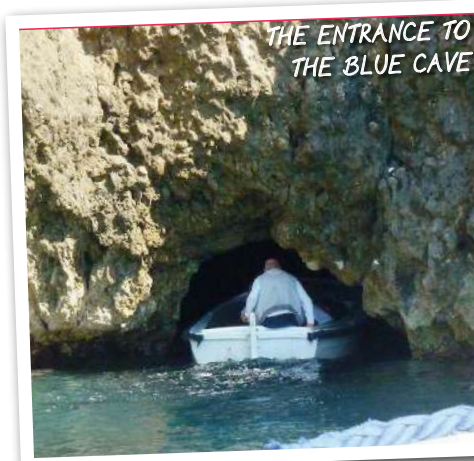
I reacted in a very British way and put on the kettle and make a very large cup of tea.

In the end we slipped the mooring at 07:30, put up the sails and headed out of our cove.

By 10:30 we were at the coast of the Island of Solta, looking for the lee of the island to anchor and have some breakfast.

Before arriving at the port in Maslinica, we stumbled across a lengthy inlet called Sesula. We decided to pick up a mooring due to the stormy weather.

As it turned out, this was an excellent decision, as the mooring was owned by the little bistro ashore and the overnight stay was free for customers.



Owner Sasha came to fetch us in his small boat, so we avoided the tiresome paddling experience. We had a very pleasant lunch at the bistro and took a walk over the hill to examine Maslinica marina.

Sasha came back to collect us for dinner. During the meal, the sky started to flash with distant lightning as the storm rolled in over the hills.

After a while, deluges of water were pouring down outside and thunder rumbled overhead. We made a dash for the boat once the rain had eased.

DAY FIVE - ROGOZNICA

The skies were dark grey and there appeared to be some wind out of the harbour. Soon after leaving harbour the wind started to increase, so, at 18 knots of wind, we made a decision to reef early.

Almost as soon as the reef was in, the wind gusted 25 knots. The radio piped up on channel 16 in Croatian, which was later repeated in English for the sole mad English people still out on the water "Gale warning, gale warning, gale warning". It was too late to turn back, as we were mid passage to our bolt hole of Rogoznica on the mainland.

Ahead was looking dark and menacing, but with the wind astern and the dark and menacing skies behind us looking some way off, we pressed on.

It was with relief that we finally dropped sails to head into Marina Frapa, cold and wet.

DAY SIX - KASTELA

It was sails up and away for a long challenging sail to return to the starting point.

The wind shifted during the morning, so we chose to sail inside the mass of small islands, rather than around.

We finally turned into Split bay for the last 6 miles in 15 knots of wind on the nose. A glorious last beat to end a wonderful week of adventures.

Where to next?

Liz Potter

2019 ★★★★★ feefo
Gold Trusted Service Award



THE 2020 SAILING HOLIDAYS BROCHURE!

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