

January 2026



CIVIL SERVICE SAILING

The magazine for members of the Civil Service Sailing Association

www.cs-sailing.org.uk



Happy New Year!
Save the Date
IDOR 2026: 8 - 12 June
CSCSC AGM 28 February



CSSA AGM 2026

The 2026 Civil Service Sailing Association AGM is planned for a Saturday in early May.

Details will be in the next issue and at

<https://cs-sailing.org.uk/cssa-business/>

Nominations and Motions should reach the Secretary by 14th February 2026 at:

csgensec@yahoo.co.uk

using the heading 'Nomination' or 'Motion'

Please make sure your email address is up-to-date

The print version of the CS Sailing magazine will cease following the 2026 CSSA AGM in May.

Please take a minute to check what email address you provided when you joined CSSA.

We still have email addresses on CSSA records for departments and agencies that no longer exist.

A personal email is probably best, as it ensures you can stay in touch with CSSA even if you change or leave your job.

If you need to update your email address please email:

membership@cs-sailing.org.uk

Get Involved - Help Shape the Future of the CSSA

The CSSA Management and General Committees are in need of fresh energy and new faces

We're on the lookout for volunteers to step into several key roles: vacancies exist for General Secretary, all dinghy roles and several other posts.

If you want to help make a difference, keen to bring new ideas, and want to help shape the future of the CSSA, then we'd love to hear from you.

Whether you're an experienced member or new to the CSSA, your ideas and energy can make a real impact.

Interested?

Want to know more?

Drop us a line at: **editor@cs-sailing.org.uk**

Inter Departmental Offshore Regatta

8th - 12th June 2026

Island Sailing Club, IoW

Details to be posted on CSSC website

Find out what happened at IDOR 2025 in
the July 2025 issue and
the January 2025 issue has information about
the various trophies awarded at IDOR

See: <https://cs-sailing.org.uk>

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Hello and a very Happy New Year to you all!

In this issue, please take time to read our Commodore's update, which outlines some important changes taking place within CSSC which may impact on the CSSA.

We also feature sailing stories from ECYC's Freyja trips, recounting her voyages from her home mooring all the way to Gibraltar via many and various ports and harbours - inspiring reads.

The CSSA AGM will be held in May, with full details to be shared in the next issue.

Finally, please note that printed copies of this magazine will cease after the 2026 AGM.

Be sure to read the notices regarding email addresses to ensure you continue receiving future editions digitally.

Eileen

What's in the offing?

Your Association (CSSA) General Committee (GC) invited me to serve as your Commodore for a further 3 years. I accepted. We can all continue with our sailing as we have for many years but this will be a term for me where we see marked changes in our methods of funding and delivering sailing.

The Council (CSSC) established sports bodies such as our Association to facilitate communication and management using 1950s technology. The Association has grown into one of the largest and broadest ranging sports bodies within the Council – dinghies, yachts, cruising, racing, training, facilities management – and communication is now quick and easy.

The Council's rules around sports bodies are changing. Some of the changes will be dictated by the Council. Some consequent changes will be for the Association, you, to decide. I encourage all members to consider and comment on the future direction of the Association.

Your GC has found that sailing could be delivered equally well with or without an Association affiliated to the Council. If you know differently, please get in touch. GC recommendations for the future of the Association should be published in the next magazine and at <https://cs-sailing.org.uk/cssa-business/> ahead of the Association AGM.

The Council's proposal to communicate directly with Clubs appears practicable whereas its proposal to further broaden the Association to become a national sports body for all sailing groups across the Council (including those currently outside of the Association) appears impractical and potentially conflicting with guiding bodies such as the RYA, MCA and HSE.

Clubs providing facilities to vessel owners have potential for large financial benefit from membership of the Council through preferential rates for leasing of Council property but see little benefit from membership of the Association.

Club yacht operators see operational benefits from cooperation between Association Clubs but returns from Council membership have diminished to zero following the Council's withdrawal of grant funding of Associations

like ours.

The Association will not compete with the excellent dinghy events provided by nationwide dinghy clubs and class associations. The Association will continue to support its affiliated dinghy Clubs.

The National Yacht Regatta (including IDOR) is no longer sponsored by the Council. The Association GC will no longer organise events because more protections



for competitors and organisers are available through other bodies. A National Yacht Regatta may be delivered through the Council in 2026. We look forward to hearing from the incoming organisers.

Direct mailing of printed magazines will cease after the AGM. Members will receive an email link to CS Sailing at <https://cs-sailing.org.uk/news/> upon publication. Eileen, our Membership Secretary, has unreliable email addresses for many of our 2,500 Association members. Please email Eileen at membership@cs-sailing.org.uk with your current email address and CSSC number.

The Association AGM is planned for a Saturday in early May. Details will be in the next issue and at <https://cs-sailing.org.uk/cssa-business/> Nominations and Motions

should reach the Secretary by 14th February 2026 at csgensec@yahoo.co.uk using the heading 'Nomination' or 'Motion'.

It is great to see that the sailing grounds covered by Association Clubs continue to expand. We are in closer contact with Inchyra Boat Club based on the Tay about 5 miles downstream from Perth, Scotland. Our Club yachts are visiting cruising grounds between the Balearics and the Hebrides, Morocco and Orkney. Racing off the south coast of England is once again being delivered aboard a Club yacht.

Fair winds

Paul

**Direct mailing of printed magazines will
cease after the AGM**

**Once each issue is published, members
will receive an email containing a link to
CS Sailing, available at:**

<https://cs-sailing.org.uk/news/>

**Our Membership Secretary currently
does not have reliable email addresses for
many of our 2,500 Association members.**

**If you currently receive a printed copy of
CS Sailing and would like to receive the
digital version once the printed edition
ends, please email:**

membership@cs-sailing.org.uk

**with your current email address and your
CSSC number**

There are exciting opportunities for sailing on Freyja in 2026 and we look forward to welcoming you aboard!

In Spring she will be based in Gibraltar and available for CHARTER, SEATIMES, as well as IN-PORT STAYS. In March and April she will become a training ship with various courses available. In May /June / July she will undertake a Mediterranean journey along the Spanish coast to the Balearics with plenty of sailing options on offer. In August she will sail back to Northern waters via an Ocean Passage from

Lisbon to Brest. And finally, in the Autumn she will sail in Brittany and the Channel Islands before returning to English waters.

You can register for most trips and training via the booking system on our website.: <https://ecyd.org.uk/>

If you would like to charter or cannot find what you want please contact the crew Bureau directly at ecydcrewbureau@gmail.com

Trip Type	Start Date	Number Days	Cost PP GBP	Itinerary From/To
TRAINING				
Yacht Master training + exam	21-Mar	9	585	Gibraltar/Gibraltar
RYA CC, DS, CS *	13-Apr	5	400	Gibraltar/Gibraltar
RYA CC, DS, CS *	19-Apr	5	400	Gibraltar/Gibraltar
Yacht Master training + exam	25-Apr	9	585	Gibraltar/Gibraltar
SEATIME				
Mixed	13-Mar	7	420	Gibraltar/Gibraltar
EASTER	01-Apr	10	420	Gib/Cadiz/Seville/Gib
Women on the Water	16-May	7	420	Almeria / Cartagena
Mixed	02-Jun	7	420	Denia to Balearics
Mixed	09-Jun	7	420	Balearics
Mixed	17-Jun	10	600	Balearics
Women on the Water	18-Jul	7	420	Balearics
Mixed	07-Sep	7	420	Britanny
Mixed	14-Sep	7	420	Channel Islands
OCEAN PASSAGE				
Over 600 Nautical Miles	15-Aug	21	840	Lisbon / Brest
CHARTER AVAILABLE SLOTS				
Gibraltar to Almeria	09-May	7	1400	Gibraltar to Almeria
Brittany/Channel Islands	21-Sep	7	1680	Brittany/Channel Islands
Brittany/Channel Islands	28-Sep	7	1680	Brittany/Channel Islands
Brittany/Channel Islands/SC	05-Oct	5	1000	Brittany/Channel Islands

Following our AGM on Saturday 1st November, the first fully virtual AGM was held, this allowed members to participate from regions around the UK, Spain and including from on-board Freyja.

Discussion was based on feedback provided from two membership surveys of member's views on the 2026 Cruising Destinations and on getting more Women on the Water.

The 2026 Sailing Programme has been developed which includes opportunities for: In port stay in Gibraltar Bay; RYA Training at Competent Crew, Day Skipper and Coastal Skipper levels in addition to YM training and examination; Sea Time, Club Cruise and Charter Opportunities from: Gibraltar Bay, Western Med. to the Balearics, returning Gibraltar Bay before Cruising to Lisbon. From here a qualifying Yachtmaster Ocean Passage to Brest and after some Brittany cruising a potential opportunity to cruise the Channel Islands and finally back to the UK for a rest over Winter 26/27.

We have a Sailing Programme linked from the web site which is now available to view and to book on. This is not just run with Skippers from last year as this year we have been able to increase our number by six new Skippers with more planned following our in house YM training courses in March and April.

Berths are going fast and so if you would like to take part in our European Cruise taking advantage of warm weather cruising then look at the Web Site and the link to the Online Sailing Programme. If you want to discuss any of the exciting sailing then please contact our Crew Bureau. Amanda already in Spain can help provide a detailed insight into where and when Freyja will be available to cruise.

We have modest Maintenance plans this season compared to previous years, but in addition to routine maintenance and repair; to improve the AIS aerial and Engine Fuel Filter. Since leaving the East Coast, this season we have already replaced the Engine air extraction fan, Lewmar portlight, Gas thermocouple and Main halyard.

Club finances difficult last year have with member support and enthusiasm for our beautiful yacht continues to improve. Increased growth forecast continues. A hiccup with the accounts at the AGM was satisfactorily resolved.

RYA Skipper and Yachtmaster Training and Yachtmaster Coastal Examination in Gibraltar Bay are planned in March and April building on our successful training in late November. Freyja is truly a remarkable yacht for training and whilst having a long fin shoal keel for shallow draft. Her marina manoeuvring ability is enhanced by bow thruster and all three reefs operable from within the cockpit and with her mid ships cleats on her teak decks makes securing to the pontoon easy. Equipped with Doplar Radar and integrated Chartplotters for navigation and new AIS Freyja is well equipped.

Our member feedback included: *"As you know at the beginning of the week I was hesitant but by the end you had inspired me and gave me confidence to go for it which I am grateful for."* Danny Khan, CSSA Member & Yachtmaster Candidate

So whether you want to Crew, Skipper or develop your Sailing have a look at our 2026 Western Mediterranean Programme accessible from East Coast Yacht Club web site. www.ecyd.org.uk

Safe sailing and fair winds

John Hulme
Club Captain ECYC



My Yachtmaster Journey: Training & Exam

Where do I start with sailing in Gibraltar Bay. I guess the first thing I should mention is the easy and economic cost of travel - BA from Heathrow or EasyJet from a number of regional airports.

And then there is no expensive transfer as Gibraltar Airport to Alcaidesa Marina is walkable after landing in less than 20 minutes. Other members of the crew arrived at Malaga Airport and reported a direct and easy coach transfer with the coach station only ten minutes from the boat.

I was acting as crew for 3 Yacht Master Coastal candidates but still had the opportunity to be able to practice most of the same exercises.

Training by John Hulme was comprehensive in prepping the candidates, although good previous experience is essential too. Training included:

- Mooring at the berth,
- Anchoring under sail and motor,
- "Blind" navigation,
- Night navigation,
- Experience in a busy commercial port.

The sailing season in Gibraltar Bay runs on somewhat longer than in the UK with the temperature range in November and December generally between 13° and 19° C.

Provisioning is easy and cheaper on the Spanish side, but the better stocked supermarkets are around 15 minutes' walk. A bigger supermarket is available close to the airport (15 minutes' walk) and stocks many Waitrose branded items. The large freshly baked croissants from here were a very popular breakfast item on board.

A number of local restaurants offer a good choice of food. During our trip we used 2 local Spanish places, and a Chinese restaurant about a 12-minute walk away. At the same distance there are well known UK chains



Jerzy Wiczorek and Paul Denton working the Emergency tiller

Hoisting the Storm Jib Jerzy, Paul, Tony Schofield and Danny Khan



serving pizza and the usual burger offerings. A longer trek onto the Rock offers many other well-known restaurants chains and a few rather classy looking places.

Gibraltar has a long and varied history and an opportunity to explore the rock is a good break from the intensity of sailing training and assessments.

So take the opportunity while Freyja is berthed here for a sailing trip to another continent (visiting The North African coast) or a Western Mediterranean cruise or just around Gibraltar and the Spanish coast. It's a great experience without a big hit on your wallet.

After 5 days of full-on training for the YM Coastal Skipper candidates, there followed 2 days of personal activity revising and preparing for the examiner to arrive. And then 2 days of fair but firm assessment.

The examiner was a British citizen living locally in Spain and with a huge breadth of sailing experience mainly gained running his own sailing school until Brexit and COVID difficulties took their toll. He now offers yacht delivery and sailing services and is a RYA approved instructor and examiner.

A very amenable guy with a great attitude to understanding his need to assess competence and sailing and handling ability, but not to have to focus on and penalise small errors in choice of approach.

The weather was reasonable on the first day, but on the second day the wind gusted up to Force 6, presenting some challenging conditions.

The 3 candidates showed their capabilities at berthing in the differing conditions over the two days. Then moving on to MOB drills, night navigation, and sailing skills on day 2 when as mentioned, the winds had picked up considerably.

For me it was great to observe the drills which were presented and the examiner's approach. My advice if you are hesitant is to go for it: the training John Hulme (and by inference



the other ECYC RYA Instructors) provided was more than adequate for the examiner to assess, the examination approach was commendable and undertaken in a relaxed atmosphere.

It was a long two days of assessment – over 12 hours on the first day and around 6 hours on the second for the three Yachtmaster Coastal examinations. But this enabled candidates to provide evidence of capability and yacht control skills to meet the requirements. My personal view is that this is absolutely the right approach to moving capable slippers on the next rung on the ladder.

There are two further Yachtmaster training and assessment opportunities planned in the ECYC 2026 Cruising Programme in March and April. Gibraltar Bay offers a great location to be able to prove your ability to move onto the next level in sailing and become a Yachtmaster and CSSA - Approved Skipper.



Channel Sailing Division & Civil Service Channel Sailing Club

General Meetings

Following resolutions passed at a Channel Sailing Division Special General Meeting (SGM) on the 13 October and at the 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday 8 November at the Gaff Rigger, Mercury Yacht Harbour, CSD has been wound up and all operations, assets and liabilities taken on by the Civil Service Channel Sailing Club Ltd.

Highlights of the CSD AGM, Captain's (Andy Smith) report:

- 2025 saw a full sailing programme, with the usual range of activities charter, day sails, sea time and training but somewhat marred by several incidents and failures which led to cancellations, lost revenue and repair costs. Whilst the club remains viable it has not been as strong a year financially as we expected.
- The Dufour 390 at the end of its fourth season has been well used and liked but is not proving robust enough for our extensive sailing programmes so we are now actively pursuing a replacement for 2026. A business case has been produced with a number of options the most likely being the purchase of secondhand boat given the level of funds that will be available.
- After 50 years of providing opportunities for offshore sailing to CSSC members it is sad to see the demise of CSD as it is subsumed into the new company CSCSC Ltd (the Club) but the intention is to continue and improve the offering to members.
- This is also an apt time for me to stand down after 13 years as Captain with my proposed replacement being Jeff Llewellyn.
- Andy voiced his thanks to all the current and past members of CSD for all the support and hard work over the years. This club operates and succeeds due to the goodwill and efforts of the committee and supporting teams, and you the members who use the yacht.

At the following Club EGM

New Captain, Jeff Llewellyn, presented a report on the Club activities since incorporation on 27 February 2025: The Club has established a Management Committee to oversee the day-to-day business of the Club and its sailing activities (see list below). The Committee has met four times since establishment the main business being:

- *The Club Rules* – adopted by Ordinary resolution and published on the CS Channel Sailing Club website (seaassaysailing.org)
- *The purchase of Sea Essay from CSSC* – occurred on the 31st July 2025 for a nominal £1
- The transfer of assets from CSD to CSCSC – resolutions passed at CSD SGM and AGM followed by Special Resolution passed at this EGM
- *The relationships with CSSC and CSSA* – both organisations are in transition so at this time it is not possible to fully understand what if any interface there will be with them.
- *The replacement of the Dufour 390* – agreed by Ordinary resolution at this EGM. Sub-committee formed to arrange the sale, establish the key requirements of a replacement (online questionnaire sent to 350 members in November – 80 responses), identify, assess candidate vessels
- *Finance* - acknowledge the lower income achieved in 2025, set the charter and berth fees to maintain the Club's liquidity (increased by 10%, see website) and establish the affordability of a replacement boat. Independent Examiner Paddy Greenwood appointed
- *The need to attract a new wider and younger membership* – a Marketing and Publicity group of six members has been formed, chaired by Jim Houlihan, to establish the means of presenting the totality of the club's offering to a wider range of potential customers. It is to include the "Women-on-the-Water" and the Mentoring schemes (seaassay.mentoring@gmail.com).

Jeff finished by recording his and the Club's thanks to Andy Smith for his stewardship of CSD over many years and to Colin Smith who is standing down after serving as Club Secretary, Taster Day Organiser and



member of the Yacht Husband team for as long as most can remember.

Questions from the Floor:

Q1. Why it was necessary to be a member of CSSC before being a Member of the Club?

A As a company limited by guarantee the Club requires a degree of limitation, especially for tax purposes. Depending on the future support from CSSC/CSSA it may become necessary to change the prerequisite through a special resolution requiring a 75% majority of guarantee members in favour.

Q2. Through this long period of uncertainty in the future support the Club may receive from CSSC was that organisation being lobbied at the right level to properly inform it of the value provided by offshore sailing?

A The Captain noted these points and said they would be discussed by the Committee with the aim of providing more definitive information at the AGM.

Q3. Does the Club inherit CSD's debts?

A Yes.

Approval of Officers and Committee Members:

The following members were voted onto the Club Committee to serve until the first General Meeting of the new company (see calling notice elsewhere in this issue):

Position	Name	Contact
Captain	Jeff Lewellyn	captain@seaessaysailing.org
Treasurer	Clare Glasspool	treasurer@seaessaysailing.org
Secretary	Jim Houlihan	secretary@seaessaysailing.org
Yacht Secretary	Adrian Barnes	yachtsec@seaessaysailing.org
Yacht Husband	Steve Strange	yachtusband@seaessaysailing.org
Sea Time, Day Sail and Crew Bureau Secretary	Susie Welch	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
Committee Member (Training Organiser)	Guy Bennett	training@seaessaysailing.org
Committee Member (Charter Organiser)	Brian Skelley	charters@@seaessaysailing.org

Also co-opted are David Price and Andy Smith.

We are always seeking members to refresh the committee and bring new ideas and drive to the operation and management of Sea Essay. Please consider stepping up at any time to shadow a sitting Committee Member before standing for a position.

Club Membership

A reminder that the Cub has three classes of membership:

- Members (guarantors and votes on company issues) – open for all but required for Sea Essay Approved Skippers, Charterers
- *Sailing Members (non-guarantors) – open for all who sail on Sea Essay or volunteer
- Day Members – temporary membership at additional daily cost with 14 day limit

*All existing CSD members (sailed on Sea Essay in the last three years) who haven't already applied to be Members are considered to be Sailing Members. However to ensure correct contact details are maintained we request that Sailing Member applications (<https://seaessaysailing.org/membership/>) are completed.

Sea Essay Sailing Opportunities in 2026

The proposed 2026 Programme has been distributed with the AGM papers and updates are published on the new Club website (seaessaysailing.org)

Crew Bureau

The Crew Bureau exists to bring prospective crew and skippers together for Charters as well as Sea Times. We encourage members looking for sailing opportunities and skippers looking for crew to make themselves known to Susie Welch (seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org).

Sea Times

Sea Times are cruising events of varying lengths aimed at providing further experience for beginners, competent crew and aspiring skippers. Whilst the cruises are led by nominated CSSA Approved Skippers it is emphasised that they are meant to be for the benefit of the members and within the bounds of safety and seamanship their wishes, hopefully elicited well before the event commences, should be accommodated. For Sea Time opportunities so far programmed refer to the table below and contact Susie Welch or CSSC Events as indicated.

2026 Sea Times (2, 3 & 4-Day events run from 18:00 Day 1 to 18:00 final day)

Date	Area	Berths	Contact
6th - 8th March	Solent	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
25th – 29th March	Solent and beyond	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
23rd -26th April	Solent		
8th - 10th May (CSSC)	Solent	4+	events@cssc.co.uk
10th – 19th June	Channel Islands	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
27th June – 4th July	Channel Islands	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
11th – 18th July	Channel Islands to Plymouth	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
25th July – 1st August	Plymouth	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
22nd – 29th August	Plymouth	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
29th Aug – 5th Sept	Plymouth to Hamble	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
9th – 13th Sept	Solent and beyond	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
25th–27th Sept (CSSC)	Solent	4+	events@cssc.co.uk
2nd – 4th October	Solent	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
22nd- 25th October	Solent and beyond	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org
13th -15th November	Solent	4+	seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org

Day Sails and Group Day Sails

Day Sails are intended as a fun day out from 09.00 hours to 18.00 hours to provide an introduction to sailing on a cruising yacht in the sheltered waters of the Solent and may include a stop for lunch at a suitable hostelry (often on the Isle of Wight). CSSC include Day Sails in their Taster Day programme and application for berths on one of the TDs programmed should be made to CSSC (events@cssc.co.uk) in the first instance. We can also organise similar days out for groups, say from the same organisation, or a party of friends or individual members. We provide a qualified and experienced skipper and mate. At this stage we have programmed 9 Group Day Sails. For more information and to apply please contact Susie Welch (seatimebureau@seaessaysailing.org).

Training

We are programming 4 of our popular 3-day Boat Handling courses that are designed for anyone with some sailing experience who would like to update and develop their skills with an experienced skipper. The course covers a range of activities especially close-quarter manoeuvres under engine plus sail setting and trimming resulting in a better understanding of the characteristics of boats (particularly our 12m sloop) and the effects

of prop, tide and wind. Whilst a course's content will be governed by tide, weather, sea conditions, crew experience and time limitations the variable but protected waters of the Solent offer the best opportunities to find the right environment for demonstration and practice.

Whilst the Club is not a RYA Recognised Training Centre (RTC) and cannot issue certificates we do have RYA instructors as members and corporate membership of the Army Sailing Association (ASA) which is a RTC. Hence the experience accumulating DS/CC Skills/boat handling long weekend with a Cruising Instructor in April. For RYA certificated courses please apply to the ASA. We are programming a Yachtmaster Preparation and Exam in November.

For all training (and pre-requisite) opportunities please consult the table below and contact Guy Bennett (training@channelsailing.org)

2026 Training Courses (From 18:00 Day 1 to 18:00 final day)

Date	Course	Berths	Contact
26th Feb – 1st March	Boat Handling (Sail & Power) 1	4	training@seaessaysailing.org
12th – 15th March	Boat Handling (S&P) 2	4	training@seaessaysailing.org
31st March – 2nd April	Boat Handling (S&P) 3	4	training@seaessaysailing.org
9th - 12th April	Basic Day Skipper/Competent Crew Skills	4	training@seaessaysailing.org
4th - 7th Oct	Boat Handling (S&P) 4	4	training@seaessaysailing.org
1st – 8th Nov	RYA YM Prep + Exam	4	training@seaessaysailing.org

Inshore Skipper Scheme 2026

The Club ISS is intended to facilitate a limited number of RYA Coastal Skippers to gain experience enroute to Yachtmaster qualifications. Contact Guy Bennett (training@seaessaysailing.org) for all details.

Charter

Between all these programmed opportunities there are ample periods where any member can charter Sea Essay the only proviso being a CSSA Approved Skipper familiarised on the boat must be in charge. To book contact Brian Skelley (charters@seaessaysailing.org).

2026 Summer Cruise

We carried out a survey of our Approved Skippers to determine interest in and the course of the 2026 Summer Cruise and from those results it is proposed to be 13 weeks long and encompassing the Channel Island/North French coast and the UK South West coast. At the time of writing most weeks have bids against them but there may still be room for one or two more. Contact Adrian (yachtsec@seaessaysailing.org) for more information.

Mentoring

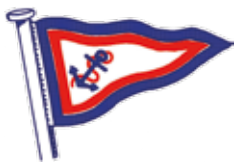
For a few years now we have operated a successful, light-touch mentoring scheme (CSD1-2-1), which seeks to pair members who would like advice, guidance and practical help to develop their sailing experience, with a CSSA Approved Skipper who is keen to share the benefit of their established skills, knowledge and experience. If you think you would like to take part as a Mentor or Mentee then Jason Williams (seaessay.mentoring@gmail.com) is the person to contact.

New Website

With a new Club comes a new website which you can find at seaessaysailing.org. Whilst you should be able to find all the information you may require about the Club and its offerings the site is still a work in progress and you may note some changes as time goes on. If you have any experience in the administration and maintenance of a WordPress blog we would be very pleased to hear from you

Facebook Page

The Facebook page continues to be quite active with over 330 people signed up. At the moment this is the only medium we can use for rapid promulgation of CSD news so do please check in regularly.



Civil Service Channel Sailing Club Ltd

(a Company limited by Guarantee)

CIVIL SERVICE CHANNEL SAILING CLUB LTD

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: 28 February 2026 Time: 12pm-3pm

Wheatlands Farm

White Horse Lane, Finchampstead, Berkshire RG40 4LZ

Provisional Agenda 12-1.15pm

1. Minutes of the EGM 8 November 2025 and matters arising
2. Election of Directors and Officers - see table 1 below.
3. Captain's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Approval of 2025 Accounts
 - b. Appointment of Independent Examiner
5. Yacht Husband's report
6. Programme Subcommittee and Yacht Secretary's report
7. 2026 Sailing Programme
8. Boat replacement
9. Marketing and Publicity Working Group's report
10. AOB

Lunch 1.15-2pm

Open Forum 2-2.30pm

External Speaker 2.30-3pm (to be confirmed)

To register for the AGM, either in person or online, please email Jim Houlihan at secretary@seaessaysailing.org by Wednesday 11th February.

Please indicate whether you intend to attend in person or online.

Papers and Zoom details will be sent out to members on Friday 13th February.

If you wish to propose a motion or the election of an officer or committee member you must send that by email to the secretary by Friday 6th Feb 2026:
secretary@seaessaysailing.org.

You must include the names of the proposer and seconder with their respective CSSA/CSSC membership number. Only signed up members of CSCSC will be eligible to submit such motions or proposals for officers or committee members.

If you were previously a member of CSD, by default you are entitled to be a member of CSCSC. It is important you register with CSCSC either as a guarantor member or sailing member.

Information about this can be found on the CSCSC website:

<https://seaessaysailing.org/membership/>

We would like to thank Paddy Greenwood in advance for offering to host our AGM at the premises on his farm.



Table I - Proposed Officers and Committee Members

Position	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Directors			
Captain and Chief Executive Officer	Jeffery Llewellyn	Adrian Barnes	Jim Houlihan
Secretary	Jim Houlihan	Jeffry Lewellyn	Adrian Barnes
Yacht Secretary	Adrian Barnes	Jim Houlihan	Clare Glasspool
Treasurer	Clare Glasspool	Steve Strange	Jim Houlihan
Yacht Husband	Steve Strange	Clare Glasspool	Jeffery Llewellyn
Committee Members			
Crew Bureau and Day Sail Secretary	Susie Welch	Steve Strange	Clare Glasspool
Charter Secretary	Brian Skelley	Susie Welch	Guy Bennett
Training Secretary	Guy Bennett	Brian Skelley	Jim Houlihan
Co-opted Skipper Representative	David Price	Guy Bennett	Jeffery Llewellyn
Co-opted member	Andy Smith	Adrian Barnes	Jim Houlihan



The 5KSC AGM and what we talked about afterwards

People attending the 5KSC AGM in Liverpool heard that one of the most memorable training days in recent years was a Man Overboard (MOB, or should it be SOB - Sailor Overboard??!) event, when club stalwart Martin Findlow donned a drysuit, 'fell' into the murky marina waters and allowed himself to be rescued multiple times.

It turned out to be excellent practice on deploying Ynot's custom-made lift-out device, known as Cobra, and the Handy Billy. Plus, some recommended ways of retrieving the casualty, such as furling the poor wet individual into a piece of sailcloth, turned out to be pretty difficult in a real-life situation. It was also clear that fenders aren't much of a substitute for practising on actual people in the water.

A focus on more training, both formal and informal, was definitely on the wish-list for members who took part in discussions after November's formal AGM business concluded with the re-election of existing committee members. Club captain Alison Hutton and Vice-Captain Karl Lloyd are in the middle of their two-year terms, while Mr Findlow was welcomed back, dried off and ready for action.



Ynot on a misty Clyde



As an RYA-recognised training centre (RTC), the club organises theory and practical courses every year, together with volunteer-led days on other aspects of sailing that help encourage members to develop their skills. More are being added to the programme for the end of 2025 and throughout 2026, both in Liverpool and up in Ynot's favourite summer haunts on the Clyde. VHF radio refreshers, First Aid, Sea Survival and manoeuvring were among those proposed, along with further taster days. The search for a new boat also featured in the informal post-AGM discussion, a topic that has exercised club members' minds for several years. Ynot, an Oceanis 37 built in 2009, has served faithfully since arriving in 2015, but a 2023 decision to look for an upgrade has yielded nothing so far. Some

members at the meeting favoured a light-displacement Mediterranean-type boat, while others tended towards a heavier-displacement model. Eventually, the matter was put to the vote, with a majority preferring the heavier but probably expensive models that were likely to be sufficiently robust in the difficult sailing conditions that often arise off the west coast of Scotland. Watch this space

The day finished with a look at Women on the Water, an RYA-led initiative to encourage the development of more female sailors. A short presentation by 5KSC Secretary Deborah Ward on the results of a CSSA members' survey about women's experiences, sparked some lively chat and agreement that 5KSC was doing reasonably well in supporting women but more was always possible.

Ynot near Bradda head, Isle of Man



Portsmouth Offshore Group News

Weevil Lake Pontoon and Dredging Project

POG activity has been dominated for the past few months, by this mammoth project. From the planning stages, through to clearing all the boats from the marina in time for the pontoon contractors to come in and dismantle, there was a great deal to do. Apart from finding temporary homes for more than 160 boats and making sure they all left the marina on time, this also involved accomplishing the largest lift-out the Club has ever achieved with 65 boats lifted on shore over 8 consecutive days.



Our teams are all totally unpaid volunteers and they kept going through the most diabolical weather and the yard is now just about as packed full as it can be. A magnificent achievement by the lift/launch teams.

With the pontoons dismantled and mostly removed from site, it was the turn of the dredging company to move in and get digging.

Challenging weather has been hampering the progress of the dredging, as the heavily laden barges full of mud and silt have to make their way out of the Solent to the 'Nab Spoil Ground' for dumping and with the recent windy weather, they can only go out in so much wind, or they could be swamped and sink!



Nonetheless, as of the second week of December, the first of the pontoons are back in position, so work parties of volunteers will start to re-install the electrical cables and water pipe work as of Monday 15th December. We will then follow along behind the dredger and pontoon construction contractors, reinstalling services as we go. Many of the boats which have been temporarily relocated, are in commercial marinas, so the longer the project takes, the more expensive it gets, so there is real urgency to get things back into service asap. Updates are regularly posted on the Club website to keep members informed.



Winter Social

This event, which has been variously called the Commodore's Dinner and the Laying Up Supper, has had to be postponed this winter, as many participants, particularly those who live a distance from Gosport, normally overnight on their boats after a hearty meal and a few drinks. With Weevil Lake completely clear of boats, that option is not possible which would have restricted numbers attending. It's not been cancelled though and as soon as we can see a clear date for boats returning to the newly laid pontoons, our organiser Nick Judd, will be setting a date.

Obituaries

Sadly, two members who made significantly positive impacts to POG over many years have left us recently.

David Judge sadly died on Sunday 16th November – David was a member of POG for many years owning both Sail and Power boats though most of his boating was in France where he kept his boats for many years.

Unknown to most POG members, he had a major role in the Portsmouth & Langstone Sailing Association (PLSA) who manage the interface between Portsmouth and Langston sailing clubs and Crown Estates. The PLSA was set up a long time ago to promote interclub activities but more recently has become focused on the mooring charges made by Crown estates.

The mooring charges for all non-walk ashore moorings in Portsmouth Harbour are agreed every 5 years between the Crown Estate agents and the PLSA on behalf of all PLSA member clubs. For more than ten years David collected data annually from the PLSA clubs on mooring utilisation to support the quinquennial review. During this time, he led negotiations very successfully, managing to keep the rise in charges to a minimum. In fact, at the last talks David was involved

in, he managed to include agreement for no charges to the 12 clubs for drying moorings that remain vacant during the season. In the past clubs have had to pay for all moorings even when vacant and this saved clubs a considerable amount of money. David has been quietly working in the background for many years and for this he was recognised with a Commodores Award. In 2023.

Derek Gant passed away on morning of Monday 8th December following a severe chest infection. Most will know Derek through his many years of service to POG, at work parties, social events and of course as Moorings Officer. Derek led the moorings team from the time he took over the role from John Anderson in 2010 after he had been supporting John for several years. He then transferred the process of moorings management from a paper-based system to a computer-based system.

He introduced the first "make my berth available" system which allowed those members without a Weevil pontoon mooring to have use of these facilities when Weevil mooring holders were away from their berth. This significantly improved the utilisation of our moorings and was very popular with those members able to take advantage of the scheme.

He supported the development of our Wicor facility from the limited number of pile moorings we originally had, into the mid-stream pontoons we now have. Derek was awarded Honorary Life Membership in April 2020 in recognition of his contribution to the Club.

He and his wife Linda enjoyed many years sailing and later, entertaining on their motorboat Sundowner.

Our thoughts and condolences go to both families.

Chris Blackman
VC General Purposes
POG



Littleton Sailing Club actively promotes dinghy sailing in a safe environment. Adults and families are all welcomed. The club is situated on an attractive lake, near Shepperton in Surrey and easily accessible from the M25, M3 and M4. We offer year round dinghy racing and cruising, windsurfing and stand up paddleboarding. Adults can learn to sail on one of our RYA training courses, while junior members start learning in a relaxed fun environment and can go on to take RYA certificated courses if they wish.

Full house at the RNLI Quiz Night!

We held our annual RNLI quiz on 1st November, raising about £600 for the RNLI.

The winners were Soraya's team, followed by Chris's team, then Mel's team; three points covering them!

The picture taken by Tim Hore, shows everyone thinking about the answer – always a challenge at quiz nights!



Brass Monkey Series – Sunday 1st February 2026

Sail the best 2 from 3 General Handicap races, competing for the Brass Monkey on Sunday 1st February 2026. This little fella always raises a smile. Even if you don't win him, you can still learn the true meaning of the expression. Prizes for the top boats, after the event.

Racing starts at 10:35 with the 2nd race following back to back, with the final race after lunch at 14:00 - 2 out of 3 races to count.

Come and join the wonderful Tuesday Maintenance Club!

We are looking for volunteers to offer their services at the Tuesday Maintenance Club. Our club relies on the goodwill of club members & the Maintenance Group are no exception.

We currently have a small group of volunteers giving up a few hours of their time on a Tuesday to help maintain all aspects of the club, but we could always do with more. If you have the time & feel you can help, please get in touch, you'd be warmly welcomed!

Rob Lockyer,
Commodore (Facilities)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO

Be appreciated ... Learn new skills ... Add value to your CV ... Make new friends ... Gain confidence ... Have fun ... Make a difference ... Gain a sense of purpose ... Feel proud of yourself ... Be happier ... Develop your social skills ... Make your mark !!?

VOLUNTEER NOW and help keep our award winning club running for another 60 years!

Financial Skills People Skills Management Skills
Administrative Skills Marketing Skills Organisational Skills
Leadership Skills IT Skills Creative Skills Event-planning Skills
Coaching Skills Practical Skills



There's something for everyone so what are you waiting for?

Speak to a committee member or email committee@littletonsc.co.uk

Fairy lights galore, fun and food!

The event poster said to come and experience Littleton in a different light and this certainly was the case.

The earlier forecast on the day wasn't very good, with predicted strong winds. As the OD for the event, everyone's safety afloat was my priority but we

went ahead and got everything ready incase the forecast was wrong which is so often is at Littleton and what a good job we did.

At the time for the start the wind had dropped significantly and the moon came through the clouds lighting the lake beautifully. This made the event possible and spectacular to see.

Multiple boats with different fairy lights on the rigging and sails made it all look strangely Christmasy, and with the club house lit up with fairy lights the club had a unique and different atmosphere to it.

The BBQ was lit and we also arranged for a new members social evening. The combined activities saw 30 or more spectators on the shore and 15 boats on the water all blinged up with lights. Most boats managed 6 laps of the small triangular course laid out right in front of the clubhouse. The boats silently crept around, making OD efforts to record the numbers a little tricky especially as a few had no numbers.

We also ran a paddleboard race before the sailing race, seeing four paddlers fight it out to complete two laps of a course.

Overall, this event seems popular with members with several people who only chose this one race to take part in. Well done to all who took part and we look forwards to the next one in a year's time.

We gave out 4 prizes:

- Winner of the event was Julian Rickards in his Solo
- Winner of Paddleboard race was Sarah Black
- Best lit boat was Neil Martell and his young crew in RS Feva
- Most impressive sailing was shown by David Hucklin and his young crew in RS Feva

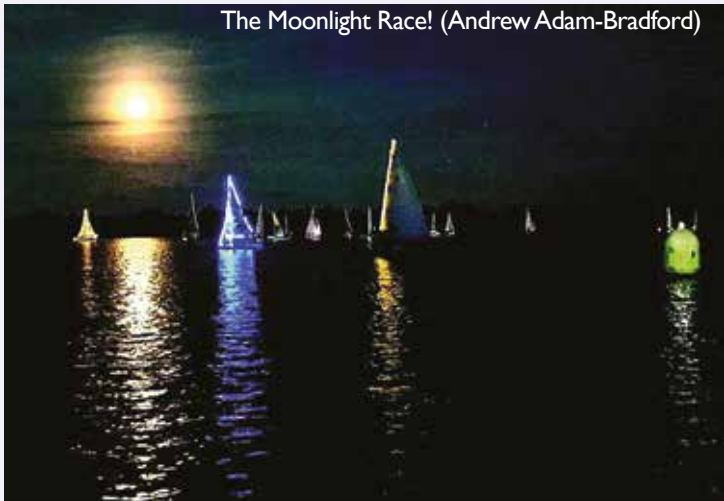
Tim Hore

Officer of the Day, Moonlight Event

The Moonlight Race is almost ready to begin!



The Moonlight Race! (Andrew Adam-Bradford)



Freyja's First Voyage to North Africa...

... well to Ceuta, a city of Spain on the North African coast. Bordered by Morocco, it lies on the boundary between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, directly south of Gibraltar.

“The crossing is not for the faint hearted ...”

9 October 2025 – To Ceuta

Sandra recalls, I've sailed Freyja of the Orwell several times, in Scotland, the East Coast, The Baltic and up the river Thames, so it was a great thrill to Skipper her over the Strait of Gibraltar to North African Spanish Ceuta. This was on a Seetime with Susan Iskander taking an oversight/safety role.

Susan, Helen, Sandra, Caroline, Angela



The 17.5nm passage is due to take us three and a half to four and a half hours.

Angela, with guidance from Caroline planned our passage using the Chart Plotter, Navionics and Charts.

The crossing is not for the faint hearted with currents and winds that change during the crossing.

Leaving after lunch at 1300 we set sail out of La Linea's Alcaidesa marina and into the busy Bay of Gibraltar – if you think the Solent is busy, give this a try.

Keeping clear of the prohibition zone for the airport runway, we're on our way out of the bay. Getting our sails up with one reef thanks to the great crew we're off.

Passing Europa Point and Punta del Carnero the winds between the Mediterranean and Atlantic really hit us. A steady hand on the helm from all the crew brought us over the Straits – negotiating the Traffic Separation Zone for ships passing through the Straits. At one point Caroline made 9.1 kts under beam reach sail.

We kept a close watch on AIS to identify vessels paths and tacking when we needed to ensure they had a clear passage.

On our approach to Ceuta the winds really picked up; the determination of Susan and Caroline on deck, with me on the helm, we got our sails down before heading through the gap in the harbour wall into relatively less choppy waters.

On entering the harbour the helpful marina staff guided us to our berth. We moored up stern to and grabbed the 'slime line' used in the Mediterranean.



Ceuta by night

“ The busy Bay of Gibraltar, if you think the Solent is busy, give this a try. ”

Freyja's First Voyage to North Africa... (cont'd)

The Harbour Master and Police arrived promptly to check the ships papers and our passports.

After a restful evening with great Moroccan food at The Oasis Restaurant on the hill overlooking the Strait, we reflected on our achievement and Freyja's first passage to Africa.

I'm thrilled to be the first person to Skipper Freyja over the Gibraltar Strait putting my RYA Coastal Skipper skills to good use on this unique trip.

My thanks to the fantastic crew of Susan, Caroline, Angela and Helen that supported me.

Sandra Young

10 October 2025 - the return passage!

Caroline explains, after spending a chilled morning exploring Ceuta, it was time to drop the 'slime' lines and head back to La Linea Alcaidesa marina.

Now Skipper for the day, the navigation was easily sorted, simply reversing my route plotted on Navionics the day before!

Roles for the day: Helen - Navigator (being coached by Susan), Angela - Engineer, Sandra - Purser and with Susan keeping a very watchful eye over everything.

The forecast was looking favourable, an easterly with max gusts later on of 23kts.

Big ships!



My sail plan was 2 reefs, to avoid any need to add a further reef part way over the TSS prep zone.

Delivering the crew briefing and a quick check on Marine Traffic for approaching vessels, we slipped just after midday.

Like yesterday, listening on dual between Ch16 and Ch12 (Gibraltar VTS) and all eyes on lookout for vessels. It felt a bit like playing 'Space Invaders', particularly approaching Gibraltar Bay, dodging vessels coming out of the bay, from the Med and the Atlantic!

The sailing was all great, the crew worked well together having learnt from the day before. We were even blessed with dolphins calling by to see us (and thankfully no sightings of orcas which I had been tracking sightings in the lead up!).

In the bay we witnessed the katabatic wind coming down off the rock, one to be wary of in the area, along with the tidal streams plus surface current in the Strait.

Mooring back in Alcaidesa marina we celebrated our achievements of the last two days. The return trip covered 24nm, taking about 6 hours and all my planning ahead of paid off!

Very grateful to Susan in agreeing to undertake the passage. A fab passage for all of our log books!

Caroline Tadd

Sandra and Caroline with La Linea Alcaidesa marina in view



I boarded the little turboprop at tiny Exeter airport heading for Jersey to meet Freyja, a Najad 380, and her new crew for the start of her coastal voyage to Gibraltar. My seat on the flight was 11A, for the second flight running! If it happens again, I'll start worrying.

I'd just completed three weeks and 444NM sailing in in the west of Scotland on a Go Sailing Association boat, Hebridean Flame II, and 5KSC's Ynot. Getting my eye in after a year off sailing. Enduring memories were a scintillating beam reach south along the east coast of the Outer Hebrides, sheltered from the swell, but not the rain and spray, or the stiff westerly F5/6. This boisterous passage contrasted with tranquil nights anchored in dramatic Loch Scavaig on Skye beneath the grey cliffs of the Cullins, or nestled in the star-reflecting, mirror-like serenity of Loch Moidart. I was wondering what unexpected adventures lay in store on the passage to Gibraltar.

On arrival in Jersey my crew, Bob and Paul, met me on Freyja as planned and we completed boat check and briefings. Ownership of Freyja was being transferred to new company on 1/8/25, so our original plan of sailing south from Jersey now included a passage back to the UK to complete the transfer in UK territory as required by law. This added around 170NM to our planned passage and a degree of time pressure to complete the planned voyage to La Rochelle for our next crew change on 8th August.

We took Freyja out of Jersey marina, over the tidal sill onto the waiting pontoon for an early start the next day, 29th July. The destination was Braye harbour on Alderney about 40 NM north. Three French boats had rafted up behind us coupled with an adjacent motorboat with huge outboard props about 10 cm from our beam posed a problem. This was the first time I'd been on Freyja, and I'd been cautioned that she doesn't handle like the boats with deep centre keels that I'm used to. Fortunately, Bob had sailed on her before and was up for delegation: He took her out flawlessly with a bit of shepherding from marina staff.

Next day we juggled with the powerful Channel Island tides. Very favourable winds are needed to make the passage to Braye without some foul tide at the start or end of the passage. In the end we sneaked through the Alderney race just as the tide turned, lucky that a favourable breeze sprang up just when it was needed. I was feeling envious of the local boats sailing inshore of rocks to dodge tide; maybe next time I'll be brave enough!

We moored up in Braye for a day, waiting for fair winds to cross the channel, enjoying the quaint, old worldly charms of Alderney



Crossing the Channel to Brest

and a bit of swimming and jogging. We slipped our mooring before dawn on 31st July and the expected F4/5 westerlies or southwesterlies got us into Poole harbour by 1515. The transfer of ownership went to plan, and we picked up Nick as the fourth crew member. The only issues were an eyewatering £72 per night marina fee in Poole and a horrendous fuel dock berthing complete with overhanging crane.

The day in Poole was used to plan the next passages. Time was very tight, and we couldn't afford to get held up by channel island tidal gates. So, we opted to make a 200NM passage direct to Brest. This was timed over two days and two nights to arrive in daylight. Bob and Nick would share passage planning, acting as skippers under supervision, to get the passages they needed for their yacht master qualifications. We left on the afternoon of 1st August with lively F4/5 northerly and westerly winds powering us through the first afternoon and night until they dropped off on the next afternoon and left us motoring. We skirted south of the channel island TSS in the dark, early hours of 2nd August, plagued by a small fleet of fishing boats that constantly turned onto collision courses, only to turn away just as we were preparing to take evasive action. Realising we would arrive at Brest earlier than planned, in the dark with foul tide, we opted not go through Chanel du Four, but to use up time skirting westward round the Island of Ouessant (Ushant). The timing was perfect, and we arrived in the Marina de Chateau in Brest at 1030. It was Sunday, so we kept the Q-flag flying and used our free time to visit the naval museum and town while we waited for the police station to open the next morning for check-in to Schengen.

We were still behind schedule for the crew handover, so I agreed with the current and next crew to complete the following crew transfer in Pornichet, instead of the more



Spinnaker in Brittany

distant La Rochelle. We set off right after check-in to catch the tide through the Raz de Seine and to reach a peaceful anchorage in St. Evett where a local boat delivered fresh croissants on board the next day. We decided to hone our skills by sailing off anchor and spent the next night in Concarneau before making the short sail in the company of several racing fleets to anchor in the beautiful Glénan Islands. These islands are a French version of the Scilly Isles, low-lying islands surrounding a navigationally challenging central lagoon. We took the dingy to a beach of golden sand and swam in the clear water; then ate supper on deck bathed in the light of a beautiful ochre sunset. One of our very few opportunities to relax!

I was still feeling a pressure to reach Pornichet in time for the next crew change, although I felt for the crew who were hoping for some relaxed sailing. Fortunately, they understood, and didn't want to let the next crew down, so we pressed on, taking an offshore line, along the chain of islands west of Brittany, motoring frequently in very light winds, envious of the boats far

Mission Gibraltar (cont'd)

inshore benefiting from a sea breeze. Our asymmetric spinnaker came into play during this phase, and we were lucky to have Bob on board with his expertise in spinnaker management. The spinnaker was a huge sail, ideal for very light winds, but not for running dead downwind. It also lacked a snuffer that would have come in very handy when the wind picked up suddenly. Finally, took a mooring buoy in a crowded mooring in the harbour at the beautiful Belle-Île, after declining an offer to raft up seven deep on a pontoon! Sadly, we didn't have time to go ashore to visit that historic island that once belonged to Britain. (We swapped it with France for Menorca, without asking the Spanish it seems). Our next stop was Pornichet to meet the new crew and for Paul to leave us to return to the UK. This time the new crew was John Hulme, instructor and club captain, so I could step aside from skippering duties at least until we reached the end of the next leg in Bilbao.

The next day, 9th August, we set off for a secluded anchorage in Ours de Vieilles on Île D'Yeu, tacking in powered by a brisk F4/5 and sailing onto anchor. Our breakfast next day lacked croissants, but a beautiful pink sunrise was some recompense and saw us hauling anchor and sailing for the marina at Bourgenay. The next day took us through the narrow Île de Ré passage to the huge Port des Minimes marina at La Rochelle. Here we took a rest day to re-victual, do washing and some sightseeing in the ancient part of town. I even managed a couple of jogs exploring the old port and docks.

Our next target was Port Medoc, a passage of over 60NM that Nick planned as one of his yacht master qualifying passages. The pilot guide described the passage east of the Île d'Oléron and how its author had scraped his VHF aerial

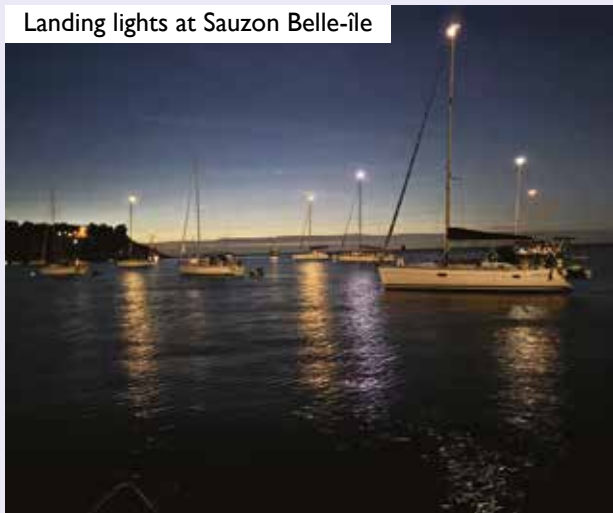


Sunset Îles Glénan

passing under the Pont de Ile d'Oléron. As if wasn't sufficient discouragement, it also offered the advice to follow fishing boats through the shifting sand banks at its exit. Nick wisely chose not to take the short cut passage east of the Île d'Oléron and we rounded it in the open sea to the west. As we reached our destination a strong swell broke menacingly on either side of the long channel into the Gironde to reach Port Medoc. I was thankful that we were entering in settled weather.

We refuelled on arrival and when we came to berth John was at the helm. As he put the motor into reverse to slow down for the final turn there was a tremendous vibration and the whole boat began to shudder. Reverse was virtually non-existent, and it took all of John's skill to get us onto the pontoon. We decided to investigate at the next opportunity and spent a restful night preparing for the long overnight passage along a blank section of coast to Cap Breton, through the narrow inshore corridor of the huge 100NM plus Landes firing ranges that fringed this part of the coast. We were lucky to find onshore sea breezes as the next day warmed up and we made good progress, skipping past the only port on this coast, Arcachon. After a night dodging fishing boats (some without any lights!), we found ourselves off our intended destination, Cap Breton, at dawn just as the crew emerged on deck after resting between watches. There was a good breeze and after some wordless glances

Landing lights at Sauzon Belle-île



we understood that we would press on to Spain, arriving in the afternoon at pretty palm tree-fringed Hondarribia, just across the river Bidasoa from France. This town is just downstream from the unpopulated Isla de Faisanes, notable for changing ownership between France and Spain every six months. We had arrived in sweltering 30 degrees plus of mid-afternoon heat; welcome to Spain! But we were close to our next destination and were all looking forward to a rest day after a long passage.

When I put Freyja onto our pontoon in Hondarribia there had been a repeat of the vibration we experienced in Port Medoc. Bob, whose other hobby is diving, borrowed a mask from the skipper in the next berth to investigate and released a tangled mass of hemp rope from our prop shaft. The vibration was explained! We settled down for a relaxing night only to be woken up by our wind alarm going off in sudden 30-40 knot squall. Freyja was healing alarmingly, compressing the fenders into the pontoon, almost pushing them under water. Our neighbours, who were still partying on deck, shouted to us over the howling of the wind that this was normal after very hot bays. Fierce catabatic winds suddenly descend to the coast from the nearby Pyrenees but only last for 30 minutes or so. They were right

and we were all soon asleep again.

We were all looking forward to a more relaxed cruise, with four days to cover less than 60 miles and loads of attractive ports to visit. Luxury! But unfortunately, this wasn't to be.

The next day we sailed west, stopping at the lovely harbour of San Sebastian to anchor off the beach for lunch before sailing onwards to our intended destination of Zumaia. We passed the fishing port and marina of Getaria, shelter behind a small cape, and I noted that it had an anchorage off a sandy beach, well sheltered from the north and west. Off Getaria we sailed past several sunfish, flapping their fins above the surface of the sea. Just off the cape the wind suddenly picked up to a fresh F5 from the northwest and we prepared to reef. But as we started the motor to point into

Bob frees first prop wrap in Hondarribia



wind it suddenly stopped and could not be restarted. We accomplished the reef without it but quickly became aware that we had a serious problem, probably another prop wrap. We elected not to proceed to Zumaia but to return to the anchorage at Getaria. We sailed up the anchorage at the beach, into an increasing light wind as we received

Mission Gibraltar (cont'd)

shelter from the cape, and dropped anchor between two other yachts, fingers crossed that it would hold. It did. The next day two of us went to Getaria by dingy to look for a diving mask and discover what the marina had to offer in terms of assistance. My Spanish language was now in demand. We found a mask at a professional dive outfit (cash only!) but also discovered that the marina had little to offer in terms of repair facilities or even towing. Bob's next dive revealed the severity of our problem. A serious wrap had broken the p-bracket and damaged the prop shaft. We needed a proper boatyard, and the next one was 45 miles away in Bilbao. With two yacht masters, one a yacht master instructor, and a dingy sailing instructor on board we felt confident we could sail Freyja to Bilbao and made a start by sailing off anchor that afternoon.

The winds were lighter now but still from the west of northwest, so we tacked 20NM offshore to get a line into Bilboa. Overnight the wind dropped and we drifted becalmed, thankful for our huge margin of sea room in the event of adverse winds or onshore currents. As morning came the winds filled back in and we made good progress towards Getxo Marina in Bilboa harbour which we had chosen for its ample repair facilities. At this point I was alarmed to notice that where our main halyard went through the clutch it has lost its sheathing and consisted of barely 4 mm of dyneema core. This was not the moment to lose our mainsail! But dyneema is super strong and we sailed into the busy harbour with a following wind, helmed by Bob, our resident dinghy instructor. We had advised the port authority that we had no motor and had restricted ability to manoeuvre. They helpfully offered to send a boat to assist but this was not necessary since

Freyja hauled out after second prop wrap



we could see would be possible to turn into wind and anchor just outside of the marina. We radioed the marina to let them know our intention and the staff helpfully notified us of a pontoon, right on the edge of the marine, oriented upwind, that we could sail straight onto. Bob helmed us expertly onto the pontoon as three marina staff ran up to take lines. I was pleasantly surprised that the one that took my midline knew exactly what to do to stop the boat with it. I got to know him later. He was called Gon, the manager of the marina, a Basque who holds RYA yacht master ocean, among other sailing qualifications. We explained that we couldn't lower the main with our damaged halyard and let it flap until we could tape up the broken ends of the sheathing so it wouldn't jam when going up the mast.

The next two weeks were supposed to be two weeks off for me, while another crew arrived to take Freyja to A Coruña. The new crew did arrive but sadly were limited to living on Freyja on the hard while visiting Bilboa and surroundings.

Meanwhile, we organised an insurance claim and repairs. I was alarmed to learn that the boat next but one to us, which had no rudder, had been attacked by orcas off Bilbao. It had been the lucky boat; another one had been sunk by them. Gon showed us some photos of the chewed rudder after it was removed to act as the template for a new one. In 2025 orcas had been active further north than in previous years, especially off the coasts of northern Portugal, where we were headed. I discussed the orca risk with the club captain, and we agreed that I'd write a policy for skippers. In essence, this recommended following the Spanish Ministry of Transport guidelines (also now adopted by Reeds Almanac in their latest set of amendments). This is to make for shallow water as quickly as possible and NOT to stop the boat until the orcas cease their attack, as recommended by the RYA, based on the advice of an orca conservation group. Orcas are important, but the safety of my crew is even more important. The new club policy also stipulated that skippers should consult information about recent orca activity in

passage planning, if necessary, delaying or modifying their plans.

Getxo Marina and Gon were super-efficient, and the parts were sourced and repairs completed in two weeks, perfect timing for the arrival my next crew of Amanda, Calin and Aidan. We were lowered into the water on 8th September with two engineers and Gon on board to verify the repairs. All was well, and we dropped the marina crew on a pontoon and set off..... to be continued in the next issue.

Crew List:

Jersey, Poole, Pornichet: Reg Morris (Skipper), Bob Fletcher (Mate), Paul Denton, Nick Jackson (from Poole).

Pornichet, Bilboa: John Hulme (Skipper), Reg Morris, Bob Fletcher, Nick Jackson.

Bilbao, A Coruña; A Coruña, Porto (two legs combined): Reg Morris (Skipper), Amanda Topson (Mate), Calin Gilgorea, Aidan Hobbs. Mark Davies (to Gijón)

Porto, Gibraltar: Reg Morris (Skipper), Amanda Topson (Co-Mate), Bob Fletcher (Co-Mate), Steve Topson.

Photos credits: Photos taken by various crew members.





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