



EXPLORE, DREAM, DISCOVER

There's no doubt that having a 60ft Sunseeker can be wonderful ... **Words: Paul Glatzel**

You get to experience that James Bond moment; passing boats always give you a glance; and mooring stern to in a Mediterranean port with drinks brought to you by your favourite waiter is, of course, rather nice. But sometimes having a big boat can be hard work: there's lots to look after, some places you just can't get to, and of course, 'bigger' comes at a price. Sometimes simple (and smaller) is best.

It's at this time of year that the owners of smaller boats come into their own. The

trailer is serviced, the engine is dewinterised and you get to do all those little jobs that you've been meaning to do for a while. Spring has turned to summer (well, sort of!) and you're ready to head off and explore some new part of our wonderful coastline that you haven't been to before. And that's the joy of keeping a boat on a trailer (or if it's a small RIB/SIB on the roof rack or in the boot) – a bit of planning and you can hook up and you're off.

So this summer, whether it's for a weekend, a week or a month, take the boat and (to quote Mark Twain) 'explore,

dream, discover'. But where could you go and what planning do you need to do?

The first key question you have to ask is whether to stay in the UK or are you thinking about further afield. Trailing a boat to northern France or southern Spain can be huge fun but does, of course, present challenges, and the need to ensure you are 'fully legal' is a key part of this. The detailed rules on trailing overseas go beyond the scope of this article, but two good websites are: www.rya.org.uk (search: 'Boating Abroad') and www.ntta.co.uk. If you do your

planning early, be careful to ensure that the rules haven't changed before you travel. The RYA website also has a really useful section on what documentation you will need to have (e.g. an original VAT invoice for the boat may be necessary), and you will certainly need your International Certificate of Competence (ICC) in most countries.

From personal experience, the most stressful aspect of long-distance towing is the state of the trailer. Having had a trailer wheel fall off at 55mph in the middle lane of the M25, it's a subject I get a bit paranoid



NORWEGIAN FJORDS

INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE (ICC) i

An ICC is considered by many as their 'boat driving licence', but that isn't actually quite so. An ICC is simply a document evidencing that you have reached a certain standard of boating capability, and it is up to the country you are travelling to to decide both whether they actually need you to have one and whether they accept it. The ICC is enshrined in European Law, so it is widely used throughout Europe, but beyond Europe its applicability will vary. Check with the boating organisation in the country you are travelling to (or a local marina) what they expect you to have.

The easiest way to get your ICC is to use your RYA Powerboat Level 2 certificate to apply for it. It is simply a form-filling exercise and for RYA members it is free. www.rya.org.uk (search: 'ICC')

about! It is really key to make sure your trailer/towing set-up is up to the job and you maintain it on a regular basis when en route.

But let's get back to where to go ... Overseas, three locations that are trailable from the UK always beckon to me. The coastline of southern France around Nice, Villefranche and Beaulieu-sur-Mer is lovely and well suited to a small boat. There is the added advantage that there are so many superyacht tenders about that you can pretend you belong to one of them! There are also plenty of boating facilities, so finding slipways and trailer storage facilities is not too hard. Southern Brittany, around Concarneau/La Forêt Fouesnant, is special too. Beautiful beaches and a rugged coastline make for a trip you will not forget in a hurry. The French just love their boats and the marina facilities are first class, and it is a fairly simple trip from the UK. Finally, before we head back to UK shores, a fabulous location has to be Majorca – my personal

favourite – largely because so much of it can't be reached easily by car or on foot, so the little coves and hidden beaches are a haven for small boats. OK, the trip is not an easy one (drive to Barcelona, ferry trip to Majorca), but you will remember it forever.

If you do your planning early, be careful to ensure that the rules haven't changed before you travel.

In the UK, Poole Harbour has to be on every trail boater's destination list at least once – but of course, I am biased! Basing yourself in Poole gives you the benefits of access to stunning beaches (apparently Studland Beach has just been voted the best beach in the UK) and coastline, and a harbour that balances being home to the Royal Marines, the RNLI and Sunseeker and literally thousands of boats while still offering up parts where you can anchor up and only occasionally see another boat.

From Poole, let's head north to an area that I want to spend more time exploring, as when

passing through it during the Round Britain RIB Challenge in 2010 it took my breath away – the west coast of Scotland. Its ruggedness and utter beauty have inspired generations of boaters to explore its challenging coastline, but the effort you put in will be rewarded many times over. The particular part of the trip that sticks in my memory was up the Sound of Jura, through the Gulf of Correyvreckan, up through the Kerrera Sound, to Oban – it was all stunning. The trick is not to do too much. A week spent pottering around the coast rather than blasting from port to port will ensure



MED DELIGHTS



IRISH SEA

THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND IS FULL OF SUCH DRAMATIC CLIFF LINES



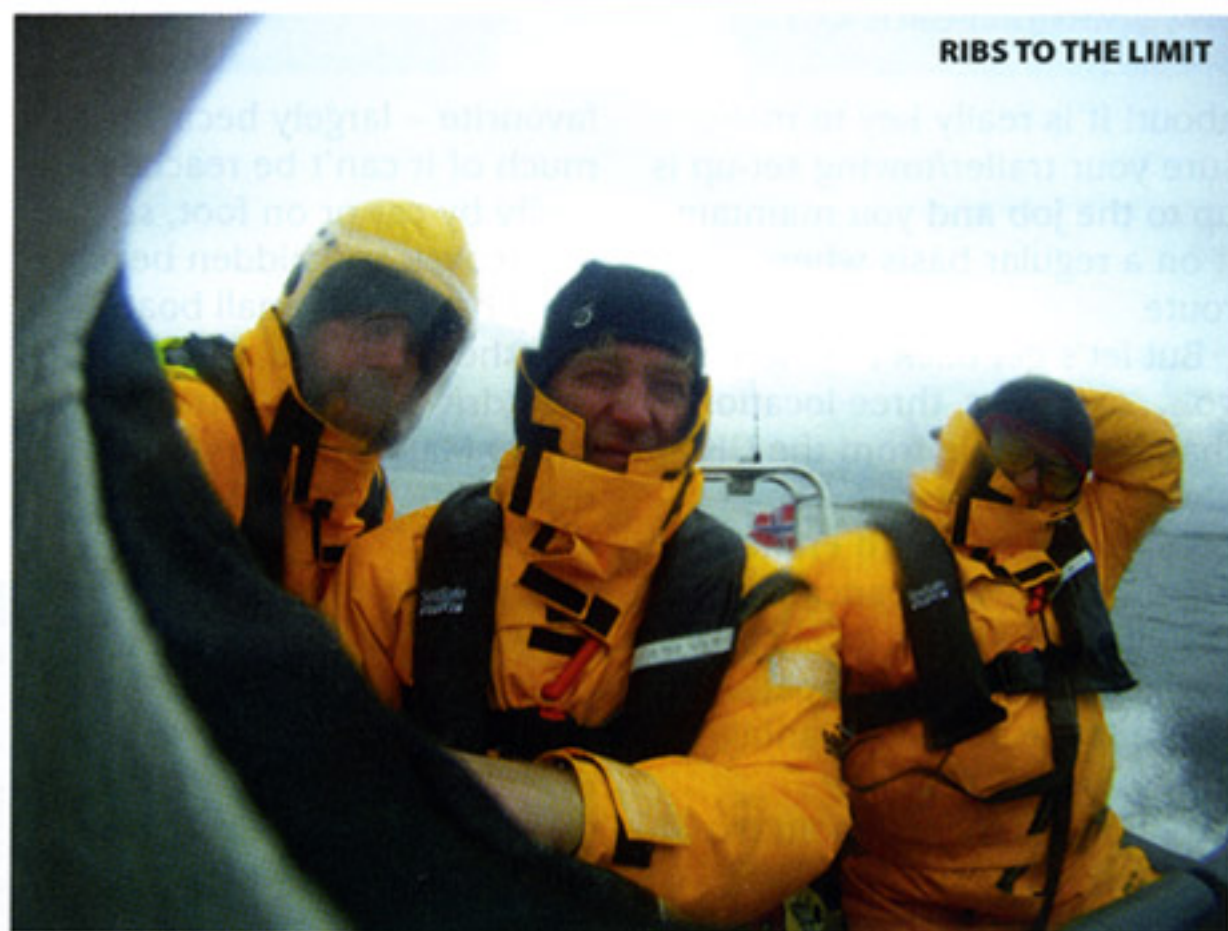
you see so much more.

So what of Wales? For me, Swansea Bay and along into the stunning Gower Peninsula offers another truly stunning location to explore. Long, sandy beaches coupled to the attractions of a busy city with good boating facilities in Swansea make this a great place to explore with the family.

My final destination is the Lake District, or more specifically Lake Windermere. Before the speed limit was imposed it was a haven for waterskiers, but since then boat use has dropped dramatically. If you can stand not going fast, then Windermere offers an amazing alternative to the coast. Roughly 10 miles long,

with locations to visit at the northern end (Ambleside), southern end (Lakeside Hotel/ Newby Bridge) and Bowness in the middle, just pottering around and anchoring, with perhaps a spot of fishing, never felt so good. If you search hard enough on the Web you will find houses with their own jetties that you can hire for a few days or a week, and the marinas offer the usual range of facilities.

The problem with this article is that it is simply too short (give me more space, Mr Editor!), as around the UK we have such an amazing mix of scenery and coastlines that we never need stop exploring. I have the chance to boat in



RIBS TO THE LIMIT

many locations around the world and every time I return to the UK I remember how blessed we are. OK, it isn't always 28°, but it is always beautiful.

Of course, there are always reasons not to take on such a trip – time, money, the kids, the challenges – but as you contemplate things, remember what Mark Twain said: "Twenty years from now you will not regret the things you did but will regret those you didn't

do. So cast off the bowlines, sail free of the safe harbour. Explore, dream, discover." How apt.

Paul Glatzel

INFO



For more information on the areas mentioned, the Web is, of course, our usual first port of call. I always then speak to two types of organisation – marinas and RYA training centres. In my experience, marina managers and staff love their area and know all those secret little places to moor up and have lunch or watch the seals catching the sun. Of course, they can arrange launching and store your trailer too. RYA centres are invariably run by people who started out just like any boater – loving being afloat – and so love sharing their knowledge of an area and again will know those gems of little bays that you will never really notice on a chart.

INFO



Paul Glatzel is author of the RYA Powerboat Handbook, an RYA Powerboat trainer and examiner and runs Powerboat Training UK in Poole. www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk