

Let's Go Cruising

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If you are one of those boaters that hankers after getting afloat, exploring new places and anchoring up in a secluded bay a little off the beaten track, then Paul Glatzel's insight into the world of cruising herein is just for you ...

The Round Ireland Challenge 2013 and the cruises the team at PBR has planned for 2014 and beyond are great examples of the ability of well-prepared craft to execute a well-thought-through plan. Going round Ireland in a powerboat, though, is no small undertaking – perhaps we should term it 'extreme cruising'! – and the vast majority of us are happy to stay much closer to home and travel far smaller distances. Whether ultimately you want to try a big trip or a short cruise up the coast, it really is all about what you enjoy doing, what you and

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your boat are capable of and what your budget is in terms of things like kit, fuel, time etc.

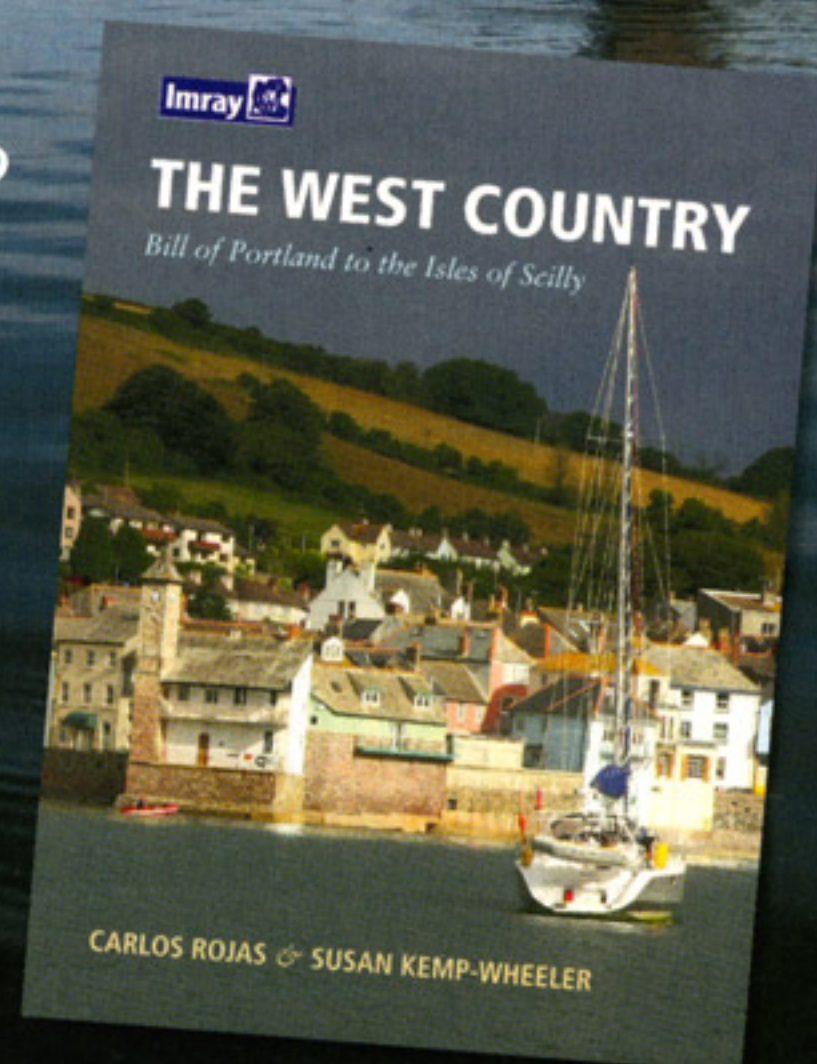
But how do you start out? Where do you learn about cruising? How can you get some experience under your belt? How can you find out whether you will enjoy it or not? In this article we'll come up with some hints, tips and tricks for getting going and hopefully help you to start cruising.

Before we start, though, what is cruising and what sort of boat do you need? One of the misconceptions about boating is that you always need a bigger, better and more expensive boat. Nothing could be further from the truth, and as we will go on to see, you can sometimes have much more fun per pound in a small 3.5m tiller-controlled RIB than in a far larger and more expensive craft.

Start thinking about where to go – the regular

cruising articles in PBR and on the Internet are a great source of inspiration and will introduce you to beautiful areas that are great to boat in. If you have an area in mind, buy charts for the area so that you can research the location better. Also, think about buying a cruising guide. These books cost typically about £25, and while they may appear to be aimed at yachtsmen, they are equally valid for us in smaller powerboats. These guides give essential information about all aspects of an area, telling you about great bays to anchor in, detailing local hazards and navigational issues and listing pubs, boatyards, slipways and other useful contacts. (See above: Imray Cruising Guide to the West Country)

Many boating websites have dedicated sections on cruising, and you will not only find articles on previous cruises but also people looking for others to go afloat with (check out



Book: Imray Cruising Guide to the West Country



Pic: Active Marina – Cobb's Quay

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www.ybw.com/forums and www.rib.net/forum).

If you are based in a marina or at a yacht club, it's possible that your marina/club has already signed up to the RYA Active Marina Programme. This scheme is all about getting people afloat more often, having fun on their boats and learning about new places. Typically the marina operator, along with the Berth Holders' Association and a local training school, will organise a range of events, including cruises focused on smaller craft (search RYA Active Marina for information). The benefit of these cruises is the presence of so many others that can assist you, and the knowledge that everyone there was new to this at some point.

Clubs offer a great opportunity to meet others interested in cruising. The two main clubs in the UK are the Pathfinder Powerboat Club (www.ppc.org.uk), which welcomes all types of craft, and BIBOA (www.biboa.com), which is focused on RIBs.

Marinas may have an active cruising club (for example, www.cqbha.co.uk), while some yacht clubs welcome powerboaters as much as they do dinghy sailors/yachties (for example, www.ltsc.co.uk).

A great way to start to get comfortable with cruising is to try to hook up with another boater and go along as crew. You will need to make the effort through web forums, clubs and perhaps training courses to get to know some other boaters, but it can be a great way to start.

Whether you are a skipper intending to cruise or are keen to crew, there is no doubt that

you will need to ensure that your boating and navigation skills are up to the level you will need for the cruising you will be doing. Many will have RYA Powerboat Level 2, but this is really aimed at short trips to the local beach. The RYA Intermediate Powerboat Course is designed for those intending to undertake coastal passages and aims to give the skills to be able to navigate safely. The course is practically focused, so if you can marry it to either the Essential Navigation and Seamanship Course or the Day Skipper Theory Course these will give you a great level of background knowledge. Make sure, too, that you do the VHF Course, get a first-aid qualification (as you may need to be a bit more self-sufficient) and perhaps do the Sea Survival Course.

Some training schools run mileage builders as a great way to put these skills into practice afloat over longer distances.

Don't forget, though, that you don't need to go far to explore a great new area. Take Poole Harbour, for example. Most boaters depart from one of the slipways or marinas and travel the main channels out to the beaches. A little planning, a close check on the tides and knowing your draught may allow you to explore many miles of little channels and secluded beaches away from the hubbub of the main harbour – you can anchor up without another boat in sight and chill. Cheap, simple and it won't take hours to plan or execute. Just wonderful.

Have fun and get cruising! **PBR**

INFORMATION



PAUL GLATZEL is an RYA powerboat trainer and wrote the RYA Powerboat Handbook. In 2013, he circumnavigated Ireland as part of the Round Ireland Challenge, and in 2010 went round the UK and Scotland as part of the Great British RIB Rally. He runs Powerboat Training UK in Poole. www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk

MUST HAVE



The RYA Powerboat Handbook contains many more useful insights into how to make handling your boat a whole lot easier. It is available for £15.50 from the RYA website or on Amazon. It will also soon be available as an e-book using the RYA app.

