

WILD, WACKY AND WONDERFUL WEYMOUTH CONTD/



Brian, Norman & John entertain everybody

aged by the dry humour of John ('Gadabout') - three of the four male spouses forming the highly entertaining and wacky 'Wiltshire Wombles' - all from Somerset (need I say more?!) The humour, camaraderie, and sheer high spirits of everyone that evening really made our weekend and we still ached from laughing the next day!

Having discussed the possibility of prolonging our weekend and mooring up en-route back to Poole with Peter, Anne, Mark and Helen, Monday did indeed dawn with beautiful sunshine. We'd decided to get going earlier than a lot of the others, who stayed until midday, and set off for the 9.30am Bridge, the old Weymouth Harbour looking at its picturesque best under the blue skies. Our destination was Mupe Bay, a natural, sheltered cove, making the perfect

place to anchor the three boats, relax and enjoy the peaceful and beautiful setting. Together we sat in the sun and chatted, swam, had a relaxed lunch, explored rock pools from the dinghies and walked along the cliff path. It was also thrilling to watch the convoy of returning CQBHA boats pass by in the distance, their white water spray highlighted by the sunshine as they moved across the bay.

A little reluctant to end such a lovely day, we headed together back to Poole, making good progress at a steady 20 knots - and this time, with conditions fair and calm, we were able to admire the stunning Dorset coastline in the afternoon sunshine, finally arriving back at Cobb's at around 5pm.



Anchored in Mupe Bay

A truly memorable weekend. We wanted experience - and we certainly got it! We have met some wonderful people whom we are honoured to call friends. We wouldn't have known the capabilities of 'Kool Water' - or ourselves - if we hadn't gone through tough times. We're 'living the dream' - except I have a sneaky feeling that it may change shape slightly in the not too distant future - possibly to around 28 feet, with twin engines, a proper cabin and perhaps even real beds....!

Diane Meeson, 'Mr Sea', C Pontoon (Ha!)

Explore, Dream, Discover!

So said Mark Twain, the American Author and Philosopher referring no doubt to all of those things we should do but always find a reason not to, he could have been referring to taking a boat far and wide to explore new places. In Poole we are blessed with an area of such beauty and boating variety that a good number of us never get far beyond the harbour entrance. There's nothing wrong with staying close to home but for

many there is a hesitation to go further afield due to the uncertainty about navigating between 'A & B' and the safe entry in the destination port/harbour.

With fully featured chart-plotters getting cheaper and better the temptation is to place total reliance on them to navigate coastlines and enter harbours. Without doubt nowadays the

primary means of navigation is electronic and it is usually extremely reliable and accurate. More fool the person and Skipper who 'places all his/her eggs in one basket' though and relies exclusively on electronic kit.

Last year navigating into Bagnor in Northern Ireland on a trip round Britain as I was passing through a rocky channel, the

Explore, Dream, Discover! (contd/)

chartplotter placed me about one mile from where I was 100% certain I was. At the time it did not matter too much but it was a stark reminder that to rely on electronic systems without suitable backups could end up being a very very painful experience.

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Opinions seem to vary but a commonly reported statistic is that GPS is accurate to 15m 95% of the time. That's great but what about the 5%? It could be inaccurate to 16m or even as per the above example quite a few hundred metres. So why does this matter? Imagine entering Poole Harbour for the first time at the end of a coastal passage. Yes you could use the chartplotter and 'follow the channels' but if error does occur then as you well know you could easily go aground. In Poole it will be sticky and embarrassing, elsewhere it could be far more dangerous.

Pilotage is the bit of a trip that occurs generally at the start and end of the passage and refers to the navigation in and out of ports and harbours using features and navigation marks that you can see (or measure easily like depth)

So enough of GPS and chartplot-

ter, what are we suggesting? Yes use chart plotters but our recommendation would be that when entering a port/harbour use a pre-prepared 'pilotage plan' that you have created from a review of a chart of the area that you are navigating.

Why not just use the chart and read directly from that? A chart is great and contains a vast wealth of data. When navigating into an unfamiliar port you don't need access to all the data the chart presents though and the danger is that if an aspect of your entry isn't going quite right, your brain struggles to filter what you need and don't need confusing you at a time when you need total clarity.

So enough of problems, what of solutions?

Creating a useful pilotage plan is all about lifting key information and presenting it in a format that is easily readable whilst you are bouncing around and are tired and possibly wet and cold.

Some examples of key points to note on a pilotage plan are:

- Buoyage – type, colour, numbers/names
- Courses and distances between points. Assuming a speed (e.g. 10 knots) allows you to turn these distances into time
- Things that you will see and pass that can help you confirm where you are – spires, castles, fuel pontoons, ferry terminals, marinas and so on
- Depths – depth in the channel you are using but also in adjacent areas to act as an alarm if you see the depth gauge dropping below a certain 'trigger' level
- Navigational methods like clearing lines, transits etc that help

you stay where you want to be – or avoid where you don't want to be

- Dangers – detail any dangers in the area you are navigating through

One way of presenting a pilotage plan

There are different schools of thought as to how to present a pilotage plan. My strong preference is to do so in a visual way drawing on sheets of paper a representation of the port you are entering with the key data detailed.

Another method – could be used alongside the first method

In summary, like anything in life, preparation and planning prevents particularly poor performance. With your pilotage plan, a plan to navigate from A to B and Mark Twain ringing in your ears you will discover many great new places – although probably not quite as amazing as Poole!

By Paul Glatzel

Paul Glatzel runs Powerboat Training UK and is author of the RYA Powerboat Handbook