



# Club Newsletter

Summer 2016

## CONTACT US

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## FROM THE COMMODORE

Welcome to our website <http://aquastarclub.co.uk/>

You will find that only Club members will be able to access the 4 'members only' pages. To set up your access rights to do this please go to <http://aquastarclub.co.uk/password/reset> and enter your email address (the one which is registered with the club) and press the 'Send Password Reset Link'.

You should then receive an email with a link to go to to enter a password of your choice. When this has been done and you have pressed 'Reset Password' you should be able to access the 4 members only sections.

Please peruse it, and as so many restaurants now say 'enjoy'.

The April issue of the free on-line Motorboat Owner magazine starts a mini-series of articles on the BSS (Boat Safety Scheme) and it is of course relevant if you intend to take your boat on one of the UK's network of rivers and canals. That issue also has a brilliant 12 page guide to Saint Valery-en-Caux.

Their May issue is even more pertinent to us. You can now replace your April 2006 Insiders Guide to Lymington from MBM with the Neale's latest, 12 page, review. This is in good time for those who, like us, have never been there by boat, to study in time for the Club's September mini-rally.

## 2016 PLANS - September, Lymington

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Friday 16th    | - informal supper near marina,   |
| Saturday 17th  | - 11 a.m. a tour over Berthon Boat Co.,<br>- later, possibly visit the Lymington Street Market,<br>- official annual club dinner at Lymington Town Sailing Club, |
| Sunday 18th    | - visit to local place of interest (possibly Beaulieu),  |
| Monday 19th    | - time off to visit the Southampton Boat Show ,  |
| Tuesday 20th   | - passage to Island Harbour Marina (Isle of Wight),<br>- supper at the marina 'Breeze' restaurant,   |
| Wednesday 21st | - time off - (perhaps visit Classic Boat Museum in East Cowes),<br>- walk to 'The Folly Inn' for supper,   |
| Thursday 22nd  | - trip up the River Medina to Newport - probably in dinghies,  |

Friday 23rd - passage to Yarmouth  
 Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> - visit Yarmouth Castle and/or Fort Victoria Model Railway  
 Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> - walk across island to Freshwater Bay for lunch  
 Monday 26<sup>th</sup> - passage to Bembridge

## 2016 Aquastar Rally - weekend of September 16th - 18th

Names	Boat name	LOA (M)	Draft (M)	No. on board	Date of arrival	Depart Lymington	Island Harbour	Final depart date	comments
Ray & Maureen Grimwood	Gallant Lady	12	1.1	4	Home berth	Sept 20	yes		definite
Anna & Ingvar Svenson	Star	12	1.1	2	Sept 15/16	Sept 20	yes	Sept 30	definite
Bob Medhurst	Vectis	10	1.1	3	Sept 16		yes		definite
Alan & Cecelia Devine	October Star	12	1.1	2	Sept 16	Sept 20 or 21	yes		definite
Jacqueline & Martin Files	El Finisterra	11.9	1.1	2 + 2?	Sept 16	Sept 20	yes		provisional
David & Karen Starkey	Kapana IV	13.1	1.3	2	Sept 15/16		Yes		definite
Tony Giblett	-	-	-	1	Sept 17	Sep-18	-	-	past commodore
Gavin & Caroline Crick	-	-	-	2	Sept 17	Sep-18	-	-	definite - past owner of Patience
Mike & Godwin	(Nibby)	-	-	2	Sept 17		-	-	provisional
Bob & Jackie Stevenson	Arabesque	12	1.1	2	Sept 17				definite
Bary & Carole Alford	Patience	-	-	2					probably

### Deposits:

For those interested in meeting up in September, as mentioned in my email of June 6<sup>th</sup>, I now need your final confirmation of intent.

Please peruse the details above to check I have entered them correctly, and please confirm the numbers for the actual dinner, and where possible also let me know proposed arrival and departure dates.

The cost of the Saturday dinner will be £ 22 for three courses plus coffee.

As you will remember Geoff Willson has most generously offered to cover the cost of wine consumed.

To secure you place please transfer this amount, for each person attending, to the club account at Barclays, The Aquastar Club, no. 4394 5057, sort code 20-68-10, by July 17<sup>th</sup>.

The menu is as follows, and I would also appreciate to know your choice for starters, main course and pudding at the same time:

Cream of Wild Mushroom Soup, or, Haddock Chowder;

Loin of Pork Roast with lemon & thyme stuffing, apple sauce, roast potatoes & panache

of vegetable, or, home made steak mushroom & ale pie, parsnip mash with broccoli; Rhubarb crumble, or, baked lemon tart pudding.

Mooring:

Berthon Marina is busy that weekend as not only is it their own Brokerage Boat Show, but also the Southampton Boat Show. If it is your intention to stay at the Berthon Marina I am advised that it will be necessary to book well in advance (by mid July) and that a deposit will be required.

Attached with this newsletter are two forms, a Client Registration Form and a Long Term Casual Application form, which require filling in and returning to Laurie Lysandrides at Berthon, email: [laurie.lysandrides@berthon.co.uk](mailto:laurie.lysandrides@berthon.co.uk)

Please write Aquastar Owners Club at the top of the second (the LTC) form.

Once the forms are received the Dockmasters will raise an invoice and you can then call in and pay over the phone, by internet banking or even the old fashioned way.

Please also let me know at the same time if you are intending to berth at Berthon as I need to liaise with them in order to try and get the boats moored as close to each other as possible.

**NEWS FROM 'THE YARD'**

The next 43' is well in build, fitted with Yanmars new direct injection engines, linked to joystick controls. The Southampton show stand is confirmed afloat in our normal position.

The 49' will be on show, she shares the base platform fit out of the 43'. The fwd cabin, galley and aft cabin very much a standard.

We have a big waiting list for used 43's, but due to the refined practical designing they are rare to come up.

Here is a picture of the launch of Azure Star at St Sampsons on April 7<sup>th</sup>, courtesy of David Norman, managing director of M&G Engineers Ltd.



## FROM OUR TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

Article in May Practical Boat Owner - to free seized up nuts & bolts - liberally apply mixture of 50% acetone and 50% automatic transmission fluid and leave for few hours/overnight. A second application may be required for really awkward ones.

Further to my article on fuel consumption curves for our old Aquastar 33, Stephen Westwood who has an aft cabin 33 calculates that at 8 knots his two TAMD 41A consume 15 litres per hour, rising to 44 at full speed of 19/20 knots. Also interestingly David Norman who owns an Aquastar 48, (and incidentally is the Managing Director of Marine & General Engineers Ltd of St Sampsons) emphasises the importance of having a clean hull.

He has kindly sent me a copy of a table printed back in a 2009 issue of MBM featuring the fuel used at various speeds by a Princess 430. The figures were taken after a year in the water with a dirty hull then pressure washed and antifouled and taken again.

The litres per mile at cruising speed of 22 knots is 29% more with a dirty hull!

### Fuel Comparison Clean & Dirty Hull

#### Pre Scrub Figures for Princess 430

<u>RPM</u>	<u>Knots</u>	<u>GPH</u>	<u>LPH</u>	<u>MPG</u>	<u>Pre LPM</u>	<u>Post LPM</u>	<u>Difference as Percent</u>
1400	9.3	5.9	27	1.58	2.90	2.80	0.96
1800	11.2	13.2	60	0.85	5.36	4.56	0.85
2000	13.8	16.7	76	0.83	5.51	4.89	0.89
2200	16.9	20.2	92	0.84	5.44	4.70	0.86
2400	19.0	24.4	111	0.79	5.84	4.53	0.78
2600	23.5	29.9	136	0.79	5.79	4.90	0.85
2725	24.7	33.9	154	0.73	6.23	5.51	0.88

#### Post Scrub figures for Princess 430

<u>RPM</u>	<u>Knots</u>	<u>GPH</u>	<u>LPH</u>	<u>MPG</u>	<u>Post LPM</u>	<u>Pre LPM</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1400	9.3	5.9	26	1.58	2.80	2.90	1.04
1800	12.5	12.5	57	1.00	4.56	5.36	1.18
2000	14.1	15.2	69	0.99	4.89	5.51	1.13
2200	18.3	18.9	86	0.97	4.70	5.44	1.16
2400	22.3	22.2	101	1.04	4.53	5.84	1.29
2600	24.9	26.8	122	0.93	4.90	5.79	1.18
2800	27.2	33.0	150	0.83	5.51	6.23	1.13

Source Motor Boats Monthly June 2009 Page 32  
Boat Princess 430, 10 years old 2 X 63p

## COMMODORE'S COMPLAINTS

### 1. Our boat had a leak.

In fact it was on the starboard engine start battery even though when we leave the boat in our marina we always turn the battery isolation switches off.

As I had purchased a brand new set of two engine start batteries just a couple of months ago I do not want to leave them continuously being trickle charged, even though we do have a modern multi stage charger.

So what I am doing over the winter months when I am not using the boat is to give the batteries a proper charge every week/couple of weeks when I go and visit her for a few hours. What I found was that when I turned on the battery charger the Xantrex Link 20 twin battery monitor showed 3 amps initial charge for one battery but over 33 amps for the other. As this happened every time I went down to the boat I realised something was not quite right.

So using my current clamp meter I started testing the wires from all the batteries in the battery compartment (in case there was a back feed). This showed that one of the wires to the Xantrex battery monitor from the starboard engine start battery was permanently drawing around 45 - 55 milliamps, even when the monitor display had turned itself off and all the battery isolation switches were also turned off.

A phone call to a most helpful man at Adverc Battery Management Systems confirmed that this was indeed normal and that no harm would be done in putting a switch on this circuit so I could turn off the monitor circuit when we were not using the boat. My nice new batteries are now safe and both behaving well.

## 2. Mains failure text messaging - the SAGA continues.

As our electricity supply at Brighton Marina is not very reliable (we have frost-stat heaters and a dehumidifier) we need to be notified by text message when it fails. As I do not wish to leave my mobile on at home 24 hours a day, and of more relevance is the fact that there is no proper network signal where we live in the first place, we need the text message also to be sent to our landline for when I am at home.

You may remember reading my 'Grumble no.3' from my previous newsletter. In a nutshell Boat Warden were replacing their tried and tested alarm system which we had been happily using for many years with a new system which unfortunately does not send text messages. After purchasing the old system there were no ongoing subscription costs. However they are now encouraging everyone to change over to the new system which not only does not send text alerts but also costs 18.45 euros every month (please note not the publicised 14 euros as the 23% VAT has to be added!).

Since then I have looked at the Yacht Sentinel system, but even though they were most helpful as yet it does not work totally seamlessly on the Apple IOS system (pasting and copying is still required), and the small print also said it needs IOS version 9.2 or later. Unfortunately I have an iPhone 4 (which stops at version 7.1.2)!

I then discovered that the Boat Warden system, even though you have to have the new app running 24 hours a day on a smart phone for it to work (?battery depletion?) was now able in addition to send an email. So at least I could receive an email during the day at home, or if the mains had failed at the marina at night I would know first thing in the morning when I turned my computer on.

Now more recently Boat Warden have cleverly disconnected their old server, and that means that every day we had been getting a text message to each phone saying 'sys err 03'. This was of course also using up my credit on the PAYG SIM card so something had to be done. So I thought I would give it a go nevertheless and went on-line and signed up,

However due to 'communications problems' and a lack of instructions I frustratingly cancelled after a week, and have accordingly re-read my Christmas newsletter to you, and bought for £89.99 the alternative mains failure alarm from ultrasecuredirect.com which I mentioned in my article. Details of this unit on it may be found on:

<https://www.ultrasecuredirect.com/mains-power-failure-alarms/kp-mini-adjustable-gsm-power-failure-008-1690-p439.html>



This I installed without any difficulty and not only does it send a text message to my mobile and home phone but their technical people are also most happy to talk to you. For the record rather than annoying my wife and permanently monopolising a socket on the boat I have wired it into the 12 volt output of a wired in mains adapter, and as you can see from the photo it can additionally have alarms circuits wired into it

The only bit of the programming worth mentioning, which could catch one out, is that though the instructions (yes instructions!) suggests changing the '0' in front of your number with +44, on my mobile this did not work. I had to replace it with 0044 instead for it to work. To their credit I did find this out without having to ring them because it does mention that this may be necessary in the instructions!

I did then discover that as a default it also sends you a daily text alert to show it is functioning correctly, but as I am using a PAYG SIM card they told me how I could turn those off.

### SPECIAL OFFERS

David Norman, managing director of Marine & General Engineers Ltd of St Sampsons, has informed me of his special 'in season' price for a lift, pressure wash, inspection and relaunch within an hour, for Aquastar owners as follows:

27 ft	£ 127	33 ft	£ 171
38 ft	£ 205	48 ft	£ 291

Please contact 01481-243048 or Boatyard@MGE.gg

### REGALIA



We have some very good quality club ties and these are available by post. The design is shown here and the logo is woven into a dark blue tie and is very smart. Price is £15.

Burgees are still available at £17 for the small ones (13") and £22 for the larger ones (19"). These are also well made, sewn and come with the toggle and braid for attachment to your boat.

Payments made electronically are most convenient, and help keep our costs down. Please add a note to any payment confirming what it relates to (e.g. burgee, tie, subscription etc.).

Name of Account: The Aquastar Club;  
Sort Code: 20-68-10;  
Account Number: 43945057.

### **MEMBER'S NEWS**

**We are pleased to welcome the following new member to the club:**

Simon Gotch - Aquastar 57, Inconnue, moored at Salcombe.

Keith Gammon - Aquastar 47, ONAR, moored at Itchen Marine & Towage, Southampton.

**Roger and Lynne Snelling are looking to purchase an Aquastar 33.**

All models would be considered, but looking primarily at the aft cabin version.

Please contact

[rogersnelling@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rogersnelling@hotmail.co.uk)

**Rob Platts writes:**

Keeping safe, powered up and cooled down in the Med.



**Tristan, showing the solar panels and biminis, in Rhodes new marina**

My wife, Ros, once protested, "You love that boat more than you love me". "No", I said, "I love you both the same".

Fortunately Ros has a sense of humour, and, actually, as the years have gone by, I suspect she has grown to be every bit of fond of our 45ft Aquastar, "Tristan of Guernsey", as I am.

We had sailed for many years, but realised that if we wanted to travel often and quickly between Guernsey (where we live) and France and the UK, then it was time to consider power rather than sail.

When specifying the fit out, I asked Ros whether she thought we might venture further afield and whether we should therefore consider air-conditioning, etc. Ros was adamant that this was a boat mostly for Guernsey and surrounding coasts and that we would have no need for such luxuries. However, come the day in 1998 when Tristan was launched, in fact, at the precise moment sea water first touched her keel, Ros turned to me and said, "So, when are we off to the Med then?". A month later Tristan was back in Aquastar's factory having air-conditioning, a water maker, passerelle and fly bridge bimini fitted.

So, in our first summer with Tristan, we did a dash to the Med - more specifically to Mallorca, where we planned to meet up with some old sailing pals we had first met on a flotilla holiday in Turkey. Malc & Lindy Robertson had bought their own yacht, "Mr Bean" and had recently started out on a round the world cruise.

For our trip to the Med, the plan was for me, with three pals acting as delivery crew, to take Tristan from Guernsey to Lagos in Portugal. My pals would then leave me in Lagos and Ros and my two daughters (then aged 9 and 11), would fly out to join Tristan. We would then continue on through the Straights of Gibraltar, and on to Mallorca.

We planned to journey home at the end of the summer in a similar fashion.

Partly because we wanted to get down to the Med quickly, and partly for the adventure, I wanted to go straight across the Bay of Biscay.

We spent a month doing fuel trials in order to work out what speed we'd need to limit ourselves so that we could be absolutely sure we had enough fuel for the 345 miles from Camaret, on the Brest peninsular, to La Coruna.

I needn't have worried about fuel - Biscay turned out to be too rough for a fuel hungry fast crossing - it was like being in a car wash for 34 hours.

For most of those 34 hours we saw nothing other than the green water washing over the front screen. Even with the radar set at 48 miles we didn't pick up any other vessels until we were almost within sight of La Coruna..

We stopped for one night's rest in La Coruna and, apart from refuelling, carried on without stopping. By the time we arrived in Lagos we had covered 950 miles in 79 hours.

One of the highlights for me, and possibly one of the best days we have ever experienced on board Tristan, was going through the Straits of Gibraltar. I'd never been to Gibraltar and was looking forward to seeing "The Rock".

Now that the family was on board, the pace slowed a little. We still planned to cover about 150 to 200 miles a day, but we would be stopping every night.

Our first night stop after Lagos had been Cadiz and we set off from there, on a lovely calm morning and, within a couple of hours, were approaching the Straits. However, thick fog developed and, in order to weave safely between the many fishing boats and enormous container vessels, we had to reduce our cruising speed from 20 knots to 10,. It looked as if I was going to be disappointed and wouldn't be getting to see the famous Rock after all.

Luckily, the powerful Med sun started to burn the fog away. Then I spied land - but it wasn't where I expected to see it. I could clearly see land on our starboard side. It was Africa of course! We were within what seemed like spitting distance of another continent.

Minutes later the fog cleared enough for Gibraltar to come into view. We nipped into Gibraltar to refuel and then carried on our way.

In the hour or so we spent in Gibraltar the wind had strengthened considerably. Fortunately, the wind was behind us. It reached force seven and stayed with us all day. We hurtled along at twenty knots, sometimes managing 24 knots, surfing down the big waves. Tristan is superb with a following wind and correctly trimmed, she doesn't wander and very rarely buries her nose.

The wind was so strong that even at top speed our Guernsey ensign pointed resolutely towards our bow. Ros spent the entire day sun bathing on the flybridge while I watched scores of less fortunate vessels heading into this near gale, trying to make their way out of the Med.

Our frenetic Med trip was, however, slightly marred by health issues. I have Multiple Sclerosis and, whilst I have been generally lucky with the progress of the disease, at the time of the trip the disease was very active and, during the previous four years, I had been experiencing daily "episodes".

These episodes are quite a rare symptom of MS and are hard to explain. I can only describe them as halfway between a fit and a panic attack. I would have a few minutes warning each time and had learnt just to retreat to a quiet place for 40 minutes and ride them out. These episodes were uncomfortable but manageable.

I had gained confidence through being faced with bringing Tristan into our home marina, Beaucette. Those of you who know the marina know that the entrance is tricky. It is very narrow and rock strewn and can be quite a challenge with much north or east in the wind. It was a bit more of a challenge attempting the entrance whilst I was having an episode, but I proved to myself I could do it if I had to.

It didn't help that while at anchor in Fornells bay in Minorca, twenty kilometres from the nearest hospital, I burst an artery in my nose. This was nothing to do with MS - much more likely to do with the various solvents I had been using to remove the remnants of glue from the tape I'd employed to stop a leak in one of the saloon windows!.

Anyway, I had to spend a night in hospital and then a week flat on my back with a couple of tampons up my nose.

Overall, our Med trip was a great adventure. and we covered 4,000 miles in 8 weeks. However, despite the changes we had made, Tristan was not yet a comfortable warm water vessel.

Over the next ten years we confined our cruising mostly to the Channel islands and nearby coast of France, interspersed with a few more adventurous destinations such as Paris, Bordeaux, Amsterdam, London, the Scillies and North Wales.

When our girls left home to go to University we planned to venture a bit further afield. Ros and I love sailing in Turkey so we started to develop plans to slowly cruise from Guernsey to the Med, taking in the north African Coast, before eventually, perhaps over a number of seasons, arriving in Turkey.

Then three things happened which changed everything.

Firstly the Arab Spring began. Our immediate reaction was to revise our route so that we would go to Turkey via the north of the Mediterranean.

Then a bombshell - our good friend, Malcolm Robertson, who had almost completed his round the world trip with his wife Lindy, was killed, in the most horrible and gruesome manner, by pirates in Thailand.

Then, the night before we buried Malc, we discovered that my eldest daughter, Katie, who was in her second year at medical school, also had Multiple Sclerosis.

Our boating plans ground to a halt.

For a few weeks Ros and I weren't very inclined to think of boating, and definitely couldn't contemplate leaving when our daughter had just been diagnosed with MS. With Malc's death on her mind, Ros was wondering if she'd actually ever want to set foot in a boat again..

In the end, it was Katie and indeed Malc's wife, Lindy, who put things in perspective and urged us to carry on with our plans.

We decided we should head straight for Turkey and, rather than going under her own power, we planned to put Tristan on a ship and send her from Portsmouth to Izmir.

Turkey generally offers very safe cruising and when we sailed there we have seldom locked doors or hatches at night. But, before finally agreeing to go, this time, Ros made me sign up to some changes in on-board policies and procedures.

Ros asked me now to agree that we would always lock larger windows, hatches and doors at night. I also agreed that we would choose our anchoring spots carefully and try not to end up in totally isolated bays at night that didn't at least have a phone signal.

Malc was killed by opportunist thugs using Malcolm's own tools which he had left in the cockpit. We now make sure that we never leave anything out that could be used as a weapon. Having agreed the ground rules, and the plans for getting Tristan to Turkey, we turned our minds again to making her a more comfortable, power efficient, warm water cruiser.

We don't like being in marinas much, but being at anchor meant that in order to keep cool we either had to run the generator and air-conditioning or open the portlights. Often, opening portlights was just not enough.

Our generator, which is located in the well between the fuel tanks, was noisy and troublesome and, because we hadn't previously thought to fit mosquito screens (doh!), opening the portlights invited the even more annoying sound and discomfort of mosquitoes.

In addition to keeping cool, other changes were needed to make us more confident when at anchor. During our previous trip we had discovered, through a couple of fraught nights spent coping with dragging anchors in Pollenca bay, that our Bruce anchor was pretty hopeless in anything other than soft sand or mud.

Before Tristan left Guernsey we made a number of changes including:

- replacing the anchor chain with heavier stainless steel chain and doubling its length to 80 metres. This would be vital to cope with the deep and steep line-ashore anchorages in Turkey.
- Changing the Bruce anchor for a Delta anchor
- Purchasing two, long (60 metre), floating lines, with one kept on a hose reel for ease of use. These would be used for anchoring with line ashore.
- Fitting a large bimini to the aft deck with folding stainless frame and roll down meshed side panels which block most of the sun but allow the breeze through.
- Fitting the saloon and cabins with large, 240 volt, desk fans, powered by an inverter.
- Fitting all portlights with mosquito screens. Geoff Wilson, owner of Aquastar, found the ones we were meant to have received when the boat was new!
- Coating the saloon windows with additional reflective material
- Changing the front screen cover from dark blue to white.

The big desk fans were an immediate hit. We find these are usually quite sufficient to sleep comfortably.

The new aft deck bimini, with roll down side panels, transformed the way we used the boat. Previously, in Mallorca, the aft deck was so hot it had become a no go area.

An added bonus of the new bimini was that by keeping direct sunlight from hitting the teak deck, it helped to keep the aft cabin cooler. In addition, leaving the decks to go silver helps reflect the sunlight too.

In the five years we have been cruising in Turkey and the Greek islands, we have made further changes:

The delta anchor was an improvement, but not significantly so. Having experienced a traumatically stormy night (65knot winds) in 2014 when the Delta anchor tripped and failed miserably to re-set, we have, yet again, changed our anchor. This time we fitted a 35 kilo "new generation" Rocna anchor. Although it came with a fierce price, the difference in setting and re-setting ability is simply astonishing. We sleep much more soundly with our Rocna keeping us safe.

As well as changing the anchor, we upgraded our windlass to a mighty Lofrans 1700 watt model, capable of lifting 800kg. This meant fitting an additional battery to supply the extra power demanded by the new windlass. We also fitted a charge relay so that we weren't completely reliant on the main engines charging these batteries. As soon as the house batteries reach a certain level, charge is redirected by the relay to the windlass batteries.

Running all the electrical items on the boat calls for a lot of power. Our two fridges have to work hard in the heat. Especially the one on the flybridge which cools my beer to near freezing point. If we add in the fans, the various pumps, and all the lighting - we can easily consume 3 KW in 24 hours.

We often go weeks without attaching to shore power and, if we don't use the engines much, we need to run the generator a lot. In these circumstances, we found that in order to charge the batteries with our 70 amp battery charger, we needed to run the generator for as much as 6 to 8 hours a day.

We had a bit of scare when, through a combination of factors such as failed alternator diodes and dodgy lead acid batteries, we managed to cook one of the house batteries, nearly gassing ourselves in the process. We also found that with the heat in Turkey and constant recharging we were forever having to top up the battery fluid.

We carried out a re-assessment of what we were powering and how we produced and stored electricity and then set about trying to save power and increase efficiency.

We started by changing every single light bulb on the boat to LED bulbs.

In the saloon and galley alone, we have 11 x ten watt bulbs which could consume 550 Watts in an average evening. The LED replacements reduced this consumption to just 48 Watts, with the added bonus of not producing any heat.

There were other simple things we could do, such as turning the drinks fridge off at night.

We then replaced all the lead acid batteries (house, generator and windlass) with Advanced Glass Mat (AGM) batteries.

Tristan had 4 x 100 amp hour house batteries, but we found that, occasionally, the voltage drop between charges meant the compressor on the galley fridge struggled to start. We added one more 100 amp hour house battery which reduced the voltage drop.

AGM batteries, although expensive, will last more than twice as long as lead acid batteries. They are spill proof, require no maintenance, can be installed in almost any orientation, are able to withstand very deep discharge and are faster to charge.

We also decided to retire our old, high revving, noisy and unreliable generator. It was a bit of a struggle to find a low revving generator which would survive in the small space available and which had good soundproofing. It was also vital that whatever we chose came with a good record of reliability. Finally we settled on a Westerbeke 5 KW model.

This is slightly less powerful than our old model but often people choose generators which are over specified and, because they are not working hard enough, they can end up not burning fuel efficiently which can reduce the life of the generator.

The new generator is very quiet - It's almost undetectable from the forward or aft cabins. So far, the new generator has clocked up 1,000 hours and has been very reliable.

Energy savings have been modest and we still had to use the generator for maybe 5 or 6 hours a day. This in turn meant having to complete frequent services and oil changes. If we could find a way of reducing the amount we had to run the generator, it would mean we could expect our generator to last correspondingly longer.

The answer was solar panels.

We now have 4 x 100 watt panels mounted on a stainless steel frame extending out from the back of the radar arch. We had a yard fabricate and mount the frame, but the wiring of the panels and fitting of the controller was a fairly simple task which we completed ourselves. The entire job cost about £800 and the panels should last for decades..

The solar panels have halved the hours we run the generator. If our generator now lasts ten years instead of say, six, I calculate the panels will have paid for themselves in a little over a year. An added bonus is that when we leave the boat for any length of time we no longer have to be plugged in to shore power to keep the batteries topped up.

Because we are not usually in a hurry to reach destinations we tend to cruise at below 10 knots. Six knots is a great speed for fishing but Ros tells me off when we are being passed by sailing boats.

The cost of diesel has reached up to 1.65 Euro a litre in Turkey, so the considerable fuel savings from slower speeds are very welcome.

The joy of warm water cruising is that we seldom need to helm from below. Tristan can be a wet boat, but an added advantage of cruising slowly is that spray seldom finds its way to the flybridge.

One recent improvement which was to link the water supply of both deep sea seals and change the Manecraft seals to Tides Marine seals (picture below). This means we can safely run on one engine at a time (vital if one engine fails) without damaging the seals. It also means it is possible to change the seal with the boat in the water and without pulling the shaft from the coupling. The engineering was challenging but rewarding.



Picture shows one of Tristan's new "Tide" seals with tube (blue) connecting to the other seal. The spare seal carrier can be seen on the shaft just forward of the main seal.

Running on one engine, alternating hourly to ensure gearboxes remain lubricated, has reduced fuel consumption even further. I haven't calculated it exactly but at a slow cruising speed of say, 6 knots, our range is probably over 800 miles.

It's taken a few years, but Tristan is now a much more power efficient and comfortable warm water cruiser. She has covered over 27,000 miles - a distance equal to more than the circumference of the earth.

I can't finish these ramblings without updating the reader on the situation with Katie and Lindy. Lindy says people are a lot scarier than the oceans. After Malc was killed, she sold their yacht, Mr Bean, but has since found the courage to go to sea again and joins us frequently on board Tristan. Our daughter Katie is doing well and, with the latest therapies, her MS has been kept reasonably well in control. Katie finished her studies and her junior doctor years and is now a GP. Unfortunately however, health issues continue to challenge us. Three years ago Ros was diagnosed with breast cancer. Having undergone surgery, radiotherapy and several rounds of chemotherapy, Ros is now doing well.

We are learning to live in blocks of three months, between check-ups. We hardly need to be reminded that life is not a rehearsal, but our experiences, and our new reality, certainly allow us to see the futility of making long-term plans at the expense of living for the day.

Ros feels happiest on the boat. She says it's easier to move the thoughts of cancer further back in her mind when she is voyaging on board Tristan or when we are simply sitting at anchor, watching the world go by.

Ros had one further energy saving tip, which I consider a step too far - she reckons if I simply gave up ice cold beer we probably wouldn't need a generator at all.



A typical early morning view of a Turkish bay from Tristan's flybridge.

**Sea Sayings** - 'Taken down a peg'

This expression comes from the practice of admirals and officers having their own flags aboard ships. Superior officers would have their flags positioned higher on the mast than subordinates and these flags would be attached to the mast by a peg. If a senior officer handed over his command to a junior then the flag would have to be flown in a subordinate position or 'taken down a peg'.

