



Buying Ocean Gypsy

A very wet day! Neptune's Staircase, Caledonian Canal



'Ocean Gypsy' came into the family just a short while after we sold our last yacht, 'Alannah'. After eighteen years, it was time for a complete change. We had been impressed by Jennifer's brother's *Benctacau Oceanis 473* Clipper but wanted something slightly more compact although, in some people's minds, compact and just over 43' overall don't go together. We reckoned that the Oceanis 423 "owner's version" with two cabins would ideally fit the bill, and be manageable by two pensioners. A short trawl of the internet revealed two examples for sale, within ten miles of each other, on the Clyde. A deal was done in time for my birthday on the 21st December.

After a shopping spree at the London Boat Show in the New Year, we spent a total of three weeks getting to know the boat and tackling a long list of tasks that customised it to our liking. Amongst these were: safety equipment upgrades, domestic equipment additions and sail maintenance, as well as the addition of a new spray hood/cockpit cover. There were a number of electrical jobs, mainly around the battery management area, e.g. the addition of an ADVERC smart controller to the alternator and the provision of a switchable battery cross link and wiring upgrades. We also installed a keel cooled fridge/freezer unit into a capacious ice box so that we now have a domestic style front opening fridge and the top loading freezer.

Our previous yacht, 'Alannah', had the benefit of a solid wheel shelter combined with a PVC cockpit tent. This all-weather facility was a top priority on our list of add-ons to 'Ocean

Gypsy'. We discovered an excellent sail maker in Saturn Sails of Largs (01475 689 933). The ensuing "marine conservatory" was a masterpiece of practical marine canvas work created by Colin McKenzie. It was produced through an iterative design process, which entailed a combination of my verbal specification (must have excellent visibility, full standing headroom at the helm and be able to remain up while sailing the boat) with sample photographs from other yachts and detailed discussion with Colin. Before commencement, he supplied an excellent set of photos showing 'Ocean Gypsy' with drawings of the spray hood/cockpit cover superimposed on tracing paper. We now have a superbly adaptable arrangement - everything can zip on and off in modular form and shirtsleeve conditions can almost always be guaranteed in the cockpit.

'Ocean Gypsy' was based at Kip Marina - surely one of the best anywhere. We enjoyed excellent service from the staff led by Duncan Chalmers and his team. We could even monitor the boat and any attending tradesmen through the marina web cameras! There was good dining at the Inverkip Hotel (01475 521 478). This restaurant is somewhat of an institution in this part of the world; featuring a menu which caters to a distinctly Scottish palate, this place has been a favourite of yachties for years now. The service in here is excellent and, as is the case with many small villages, it is staffed by young girls and boys learning the catering trade. The Chartroom Restaurant (01475 520919) is right on the marina with good views and an appetising menu. Prices are very reasonable in both eateries. Indeed, every possible marine service is available in or near to the marina and competition keeps prices at premium but sensible levels.

We have since sailed around 1,800 miles from Kip up through the Caledonian Canal, then to Orkney, Fair Isle, Shetland, the Outer Hebrides, Dun Laoghaire, Fishguard, and The Isles of Scilly and via various ports in Brittany to La Roche-Bernard on the Vilaine River in South Brittany.

John Crebbin



BRIGHT IDEAS

What future events and speakers would you like to see in your Club?



The **Social and Catering Committee** would love to hear your ideas for speakers, entertainment and events in your Club. So, if you have an interesting hobby or talent, know an excellent speaker who would draw a crowd or if you simply have an idea for future events, please do let us know.



You can share your ideas by contacting Sonja, Marketing Coordinator, on **01 280 1811 Ext 7** or by email to **members@rsgyc.ie**. All contacts and ideas will be passed onto the Social and Catering Committee. Thank You.