

THE ONE AND ONLY



sailingholidays.com®

2025 NEWSLETTER



OUR LATEST NEWS AND STORIES
FROM THE GREEK ISLANDS

Hi again everyone,

Welcome to our annual newsletter!

It's hard to believe we've reached 49 years of writing them. In the middle of the UK winter, it certainly reminds us how much of a privilege it has been to be able to spend so much time sailing about in the sunny Greek Islands.

We've clearly been having far too much fun over the years. Catching up with friends, enjoying meals outside, and lunchtime dips in the sea, is living the dream.

After the challenges of recent years, the gods shone down on us in 2024! The weather was glorious pretty much from start to finish.

We seem to be the only company specialising in Flotilla Sailing on our own yachts these days, which may be why many of you have booked so early for 2025.

There is still something very special about sailing slowly around the Greek islands. It is fascinating how all the issues that preoccupy our minds at home seem to vanish when we are there.

We hope you enjoy our retrospective on another great year, with news from Greece, London and beyond. Many children of our early flotilla sailors and crews are now lead crews in Greece.

Thanks to everyone who has given us their support during the year. Hopefully this will bring back some happy memories - we look forward to catching up with you during 2025.

Cheers,

*Barrie + Heidi Neilson
+ the Sailing Holidays Team.*

Congratulations to everyone who achieved their Day Skipper or ICC (International Certificate of Competence) during 2024. In sailing, we never stop learning, and all experience is good.

This year's newsletter cover was captured in August 2024 in one of our 'secret places' of the Ionian.



OUR GREEK TEAM 6



BOAT SHOWS 4



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BRITISH PASSPORT HOLDERS, DON'T FORGET:

Due to Brexit, travel to Europe has become a bit of a pain.

Your passport is now only valid for 5 or 10 years from the DATE OF ISSUE (check your Date of Issue) and must be less than 5 or 10 years old on the day you enter Europe. Don't forget children's passports are only valid for 5 years.

It must also be valid for at least 3 months from the date of your return.

Winter is a good time to check and, if necessary, renew your passport.

You can check the most up-to-date passport detail requirements on the government website.

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/greece/entry-requirements

This is your own responsibility and brought upon you by Boris and Nigel.

A LOOK FORWARD TO OUR 2025 BOAT SHOWS!

DESTINATIONS - THE HOLIDAY & TRAVEL SHOW

OLYMPIA, LONDON

30TH JAN - 2ND FEB 2025

<https://www.destinationsshow.com/london>

In 2025, we will be exhibiting at The Destinations Show (in association with The Sunday Times) at Olympia in London. You'll find us on the AITO Pavilion, Stand E142, in the heart of the Europe section. We will be sharing the stand with other Independent Tour Operators. The show is open from 10am - 5.30pm each day. Visit the website for more details.

RYA DINGHY SHOW

FARNBOROUGH

22ND - 23RD FEBRUARY 2025

www.rya.org.uk/dinghy-show

The RYA Dinghy Show in Farnborough seems to be expanding every year and there was a great turnout again in 2024. Several families chose to book their holidays right there and then.

This is our first sailing exhibition outing of the year and it is in quite a unique environment with private jets coming and going outside.

The Dinghy Show is a fun day out for keen or novice sailors - one of our favourite activities was the radio-controlled sailing yacht racing. Things got a little competitive amongst the team!

We look forward to seeing you for more fun and games next

SOUTH COAST & GREEN TECH BOAT SHOW 2025

SOUTHAMPTON

9TH - 11TH MAY 2025

www.mdlmarinas.co.uk/events/south-coast-boat-show/



At the South Coast Boat Show Callum, Ivan, Charlie and Mark, caught up with our ex-flotilla skipper, Heather Thomas, who had just won the Ocean Globe Race as Skipper of 'Maiden'

SOUTHAMPTON INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW

MAYFLOWER PARK/TOWN QUAY, SOUTHAMPTON

19TH - 28TH SEPTEMBER 2025

www.southamptonboatshow.com

Last year's Southampton Boat Show was even more busy than usual, as every day lots of you came to say 'G'day'. Many also come to sort out their 2025 holidays and a few popular dates are full already.

We have introduced a more substantial childrens discount for 2025 as well, as we try to make life a bit easier for families.

The confidence that children develop in relation to the sea and sailing in a given fortnight is incredible. It certainly opens their eyes to other life options.

Captain Glenn, from the hit TV franchise 'Below Deck', popped along to our stand to say hello and pose for a photo.

Niamh even made him look tall! (He made that joke himself, so we felt authorised to use it!)

Glenn remembers the Sailing Holidays teams fondly from the 90s - he was drinking buddies with many of us in the local watering hole in Gouvia!

Who knew we'd be watching him on our TV screens 30 years later! It was great to chat to him!



CAPTAIN GLENN OF 'BELOW DECK' FAME COMES TO SAY G'DAY TO THE TEAM

THE 2024 SOUTHAMPTON BOATSHOW CONTINUED...



SOME OF OUR 2024 BOAT SHOW TEAM

We weren't just on our stand, but also answering questions on the Foredeck Stage in relation to the RYA 'How to Get Afloat' programme.

'Captain Glenn' gave a fantastic talk on the Foredeck Stage, about how he 'made it' in the superyacht industry, and how he's gained so much respect from his peers over the years.

Our Boat Show team seemed to almost dominate the Foredeck Stage at the show. We were involved in the panels for the RYA "How to Get Afloat" programme and "Women in the Marine Industry". One of our RYA instructors, Meg, was interviewed in relation to both.

Barrie was banned from the stage on the basis that he was likely to be politically incorrect!



HEATHER DISCUSSING HER HISTORY WITH SAILING HOLIDAYS



BARRIE AND MEG CHAT WITH A REGULAR FLOTILLA SAILOR



MEG AND MARK ALWAYS HAPPY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS



MODERATOR BEN CHATS TO ALICE AND RORY ABOUT THE RYA 'GETTING AFLOAT' PROGRAMME



2004/5 FLOTILLA TEAMSTER, BEN, COMES TO SAY 'G-DAY' WITH HIS FAMILY.

Our Greek Island Flotilla Teams

• 2024 •



Our Lead Crews

ATHINA - TOBY, NICK AND IMOGEN



KALAMAS - LIV, JAMIE AND ALEKS



KAMARA - CHARLOTTE, JOSH AND IZZY



SIROCCO - ADAM, SOPHIE AND CAMERON



Teamwork makes the dream work!

VASSIA - AOIFE, PETE AND SEAN



ELPIDA - ELLIE, FREDDIE AND CHARLIE



DELPHI - CHARLIE, ELLIE AND BENJ



ZEPHY- TOM, DAISY AND JOHN



DESSA - FLO, EM AND TOM



DESSA - TOM, EM AND KIAN



OUR 2024 RYA TEAM



JOE, PETE, TIM, MEG, WILL AND LAURA

A FOND FAREWELL



LAURA IS SETTING SAIL TO SEE THE WORLD IN HER MAXI

HERE IS THE SILVER TONGUE DEVIL, ERIC MARTIN,
WHO IS TO BLAME FOR OUR ENTIRE FLEET BEING BENETEAUS



THE SUNBIRD TEAM WITH BARRIE AT THE SOUTHAMPTON BOAT SHOW

A FORTY YEAR PARTNERSHIP

In 1985 we purchased our first sixteen Beneteaus and over the following 40 years we have continued our relationship.

We did everything through their Scottish representative Eric Martin (pictured in the white shirt) and his Sunbird Yacht Sales team. We always looked forward to catching up with Eric and his team every year at the Southampton Boat Show.

Before Covid, as you know, we were running 10 flotillas of Beneteaus on our flotillas throughout Greece. We have a few less these days, but retain our amazing flotilla sailing holiday programme in our various areas with a great range of still Beneteau yachts from 32 to 50ft. We certainly enjoy sailing their yachts!

Sunbird
International Yacht Sales



ERIC KNOWS WHO THE REAL SAILING HOLIDAYS BOSS IS!

OUR LONDON OFFICE TEAM MEET A FEW OF YOU THEY HAVE SPOKEN TO OVER THE PHONE

OUR FLIGHTS GURU MEL GOES SAILING WITH HER CHILDREN AND SKIPPER, LAURA

Mel finally takes her children sailing! Their skipper for the week was Laura. Many of you will have chatted to Mel to book a holiday, or about flight arrangements, over the last 25 years.

This year, she escaped to Greece with her children for the October half term. Not yet being a sailor (we are working on it), she had the guidance of our highly experienced skipper, Laura

Whilst out in Greece, Mel ran into Penny, who she has been chatting to for some years on the phone but never previously met in person. It is always nice to put a face to a voice!



MEL, LAURA AND PENNY



ELYJAH AND LEONY FIND OUT WHAT MUM DOES FOR A LIVING



WHAT A COINCIDENCE! NANCY, HEIDI AND RACHEL TURN UP IN THE SAME COMPANY T-SHIRT!



CALLUM, JO AND IVAN

JO MEETS CALLUM AND IVAN FROM OUR OFFICE

In May, serial Share-a-Yacht flotilla sailor, Jo, met Callum and Ivan from our London Office. This was Callum's first trip to the Ionian, as he only joined us in February 2024.

Jo tends to come out twice a year and really enjoys meeting all the new people on the flotilla. In 2024 she joined a boat for the delivery from the Saronic to the Ionian with fellow sailors she had met earlier on her first flotilla of the year.

Ivan manages the Yacht Charter Agency side of our business. He also helps out with our main flotilla programme, not to mention his expertise with the phone system and the computers. Callum multi-tasks across all aspects of our sailing programme.

A QUICK TRIP TO THE DEEP SOUTH OF NEW ZEALAND, WHERE BARRIE GREW UP...

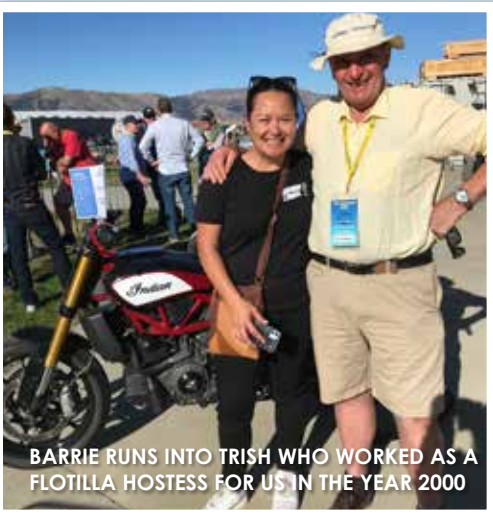
“Early in 2024 Heidi and I escaped to New Zealand to attend a couple of unique events and also, of course, to catch up with old mates and flotilla teamsters of the past.

The main event was our reunion of old motorcycle racing mates being held in a hanger at a huge and impressive air display called ‘Warbirds over Wanaka.’



The highlight was a fly past of a World War II Mosquito fighter aircraft that had been recently restored. It was apparently one of the only aircraft of its type in the world in flying order. Restoring old aircraft, cars and motorbikes is a big thing in New Zealand because we couldn't afford anything new!

The American Air force sent two F16 jets that literally blasted across the clear blue sky in all sorts of gyrations. Absolutely spectacular. There were many biplanes and helicopters that took to the skies, trailing smoke. On the ground we wondered how they managed to get them flying at all!



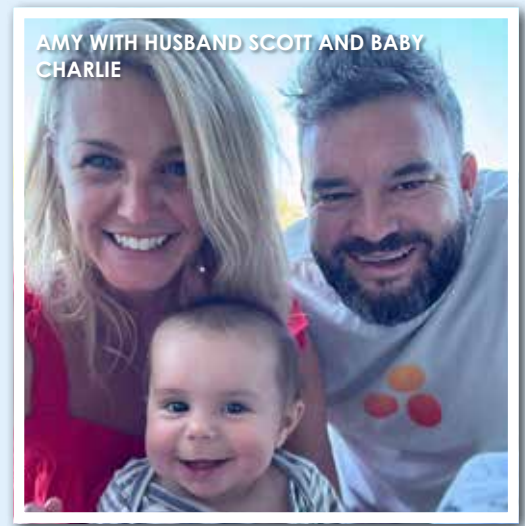
It was a wonderful day spent with good friends from the 1960's and 1970's. We all looked old, but our minds were taken back to those mad old days of hurling our racing motorbikes around some improbable places (like closed off city centres). How so many of us survived I'll never know!

It was extremely useful that our daughter, Amy, lived only 30 miles away in a town called Cromwell, on the shores of Lake Dunstan. Cromwell is a crossroads of central Otago and only 30 miles or so in the other direction to more well-known Queenstown.

We drove to my home town of Dunedin for a school reunion and also down to Invercargill (next stop Antarctica) to see old friends and visit the incredible motor museums there.

Invercargill is home to motor racing of all sorts, on its circuit called Teretonga, speedway track, and incredible beach. These were all made famous by the film 'The World's Fastest Indian' where Antony Hopkins played a local character

called Burt Munro, who was obsessed with speed. It is still hard to believe that it was exactly 50 years ago that I set off from nearby Bluff on a 'concrete yacht' (ferro cement) with mates Mike and Rangi to sail 'somewhere warm, where the beer is cheap and the girls



don't wear very much'. I could never have imagined that this voyage would lead to a million or so British people being able to enjoy that same freedom in the Greek Islands!

We made the time to catch up with some old lead crews now living with their families in the 'deep south'.



EX-FLOTILLA SKIPPER, BEN, FROM 2009/10 AND HIS FAMILY IN CHRISTCHURCH

Whilst in Christchurch, we caught up with 'Boulder', one of our more colourful characters of 2002 and 2003 and his wife Mel. They now have three children, twin boys and a younger daughter. The boys are certainly growing up in the outdoors, like most Kiwi boys, much to Mel's consternation.



EX-FLOTILLA SKIPPER, BOULDER, FROM 2002/3 AND HIS FAMILY IN SUNNY CHRISTCHURCH

We also caught up with his family, who live quite close to Boulder, so we introduced them.

skipper Ben from 2010 and



RICHARD AND KATIE'S DAUGHTERS DIDN'T WANT TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED SO THEY CLIMBED UP A TREE!

This led to us catching up with Ben's flotilla engineer and hostess, Richard and Katie (and again their family) down in Wanaka. With them and Ben's



WE CATCHUP WITH BEN'S ENGINEER AND HOSTESS, RICHARD AND KATIE IN GLENDHU BAY

wife and new baby in Glendhu Bay, was Danika and Tony. (Danika was also a skipper in 2010.) We had come to the other side of the world to be mostly in the company of our past flotilla crews! (And we didn't even go North of Christchurch!)

Finally, returning to our 2002 gang, when we went down to Invercargill to see some old pals, we also caught up with 'Gazza' and 'Minnie', who with South African engineer 'Bokka', ran one of our Whole Ionian flotillas in that year. They have three teenage boys now and have become very successful in the fields of boat building, boat management, and 3D printing!



'GAZZA' AND 'MINNIE' WITH OUR TALLEST ENGINEER 'BOKKA' IN 2002

What a trip! Amy and her husband Scott made grandparents of us with the arrival of young Charlie on the scene in May. They are coming to the UK and Greece for a holiday in early June next year. Granny and Grandad are looking forward to meeting young Charlie in the flesh!"



'GAZZA' AND 'MINNIE' WITH TWO OF THEIR THREE SONS AT HOME IN INVERCARGILL

A ROUNDUP OF PAST AND PRESENT STAFF MEMBERS



Our Greek end Manager "Big Mick" poses with his sons Ben (on the left) and Joe (on the right). As you can see they make him look like a garden gnome. However, Mick is confident they will soon have a call up for the Irish rugby team!



Yet another old flotilla engineer, Gordon Sanders (in the striped shirt), came out to sail on his own Beneteau 345, and to see his daughter, Laura (middle right), who is one of our skippers.



Eddie O'Keefe flotilla skipper from 1985 (now 88 years young) always turns up at the beginning of May to see everyone and just relax.



A recent pic of Jim Pain with son Xavier and daughter Vivian. Jim worked as a flotilla skipper and then in our London Office in 2005/6



Barrie reminisces with fellow old engineer, Mike, from the 1980's who is settled in Corfu.



Heidi and I visited Poole for a couple of days and decided to take a wander along Poole Quay. We had only gone a few yards when we heard our names shouted out from a balcony. It was Dom and Pia. They in turn got on the phone to Liv and George. All four had been lead crew in Greece. Small world!

SOME OF OUR WONDERFUL IONIAN ISLAND FRIENDS



Relaxing at the Harbour Lights in Lakka with our old mate Theo from Mongonissi. Everyone will know him from his 44 years of Greek dancing for all our flotilla sailors.



Evanthia (Effie) with her mum and dad at the newly christened Athesis Apartments (formerly the Iris) near Nidri.



Vicki (ex Chief Engineer turned Skipper) touches base with Steve from the Port Spiglia Taverna.



Theo of 12 Gods Taverna in Sivota with grandson "Tito".



After 45 years Steve and Georgia in the Lighthouse taverna, Lefkas town, hand over to son Vasilis



Barrie and old friend from Kasioppi, Vasilli with their respective daughters Alice and chef, Nicol.



Left to right: Callum, Mel, Ivan, Heidi, Francis, Raj, James, Joe, Tony, and Barrie enjoying a mince pie

FAREWELL FRANCIS!

After 30 years at Sailing Holidays, Francis sails off into retirement

In November, we said farewell to Francis, our Director who has worked within all aspects of the company for thirty years. He began as a flotilla engineer in 1980, alongside Barrie and Derek Akam (pictured below right this year).

In 1982, he left Greece to operate a programme for the company (then called Flotilla Sailing Club) in Sardinia. This eventually morphed into running a motor boat flotilla there for an embryonic travel

outfit called 'Peter Styvesant Travel' for another couple of years, before it closed. He then spent time in Canada with a family business, before returning to the company in the early nineties, this time in the London Office.

His role eventually became General Office Manager majoring on the flights and liaison with Greece. He became a steady hand on the wheel who dealt with all the bureaucratic bump that



TOMO, WINSTON AND FRANCIS

we have to cope with every year. He plans on sorting out his house, before setting off around the world to visit his friends and relations. We wish him well in his future endeavours.



FRANCIS, SANDRA, PAT AND MEL IN 2000



OLD FLOTILLA ENGINEERS DEREK, FRANCIS AND BARRIE

In November, we popped in to see Lucas, our now retired Greek agent of 30 years, and his wife Helen in Corfu.



LEAD BOATS LOUTRAKI, KYRA, HELEN, MARIA AND KIRKI RETIRE

A few of our amazing and historic lead boats are being put out to graze!

After many years of dedication, we retire our Lead boats Loutraki, Kirki, Kyra, Helen, and Maria. We use the Maxi's as lead yachts because they are built in Scandinavia for a more challenging environment than the Med.

In other words, they are built like tanks with lots of storage. We added to their robustness with larger engines and reinforced rigs, and they have served us well.

However, the days of carrying lots of spare lead yachts are over and we retain three spares, one for each of our sailing areas.

These are not simply boats, but the receptacles of hundreds of memories of young crew members first venture into the responsibilities of running flotillas.

They have been the first rung on the ladder of life on the water that has led to all sorts of amazing futures, not to mention the element of 'courting'!!! Lifelong friendships have evolved from these great yachts.

They all bring back memories for the company too.

Several were originally brought to the Mediterranean in the early 1980's for a company called "Seven Seas Sailing" in the old Yugoslavia.



LEAD BOAT LOUTRAKI IN HER HEYDAY

That operation didn't quite work out, so the boats were sold off. The only one that was not connected was Kyra, which had always been in private hands.

If anybody is interested in any of these boats please let us know. Loutraki, Kirki and Kyra are 'projects' and Helen and Maria are up and running



LEAD BOAT KIRKI COMES ASHORE

A NEW WORLD OPENS UP FOR PAUL AND CAROL

“Visiting Preveza on the Greek mainland in 2007, my wife Carol and I were sitting in a Taverna close to the waters edge when we observed a yacht sailing by to berth up. We thought how wonderful that would be to do, but (mistakenly) thinking this was just the privilege of the rich, thought it would never happen. Over the course of the meal we observed similar type yachts all with the same company name come alongside and berth up too.

On finishing our meal we struck up a conversation with two young lads who had come off one of the yachts. They explained to us they had never sailed before but the company were great in getting people with no previous sailing experience to ‘have a go’ all under the safety of a Lead Crew. I took a photo of the logo and getting home, did some research and then contacted Sailing Holidays and had a chat that was to change the course of our life in many ways over the coming years.

Our 1st Sailing Holiday in 2008, was to Fiskardo – a week on the yacht followed by a week ashore. We did do some homework prior to going out to sail for the first time. Watched countless YouTube video’s and booked an introductory Dinghy Sailing experience at a local water sports company. The anticipation, excitement and trepidation, in equal measures, was overwhelming as the holiday got closer. We also took advantage of the offer of paying an additional 40 Euro’s to have an engineer on board with us for the first day to show us the ropes and general points on sailing the yacht and we have never looked back.



We were very fortunate as our first yacht was a newly commissioned Beneteau 323 (Pyrgos) which is an ideal yacht for the first timer! The joy and exhilaration of sailing the yacht from marina to marina was again overwhelming and the help provided by the Lead Crew in mooring up and taking care of us each day was just awesome. Without doubt, and still to this day, our best holiday ever. We had a fantastic time and our sailing adventure had begun in style and boy did we want to repeat this as often as finances would allow.

Since then, we have sailed in the North Ionian in 2014 & 2022, The South Ionian in 2015, The Saronics (2019), and last year we sailed in The Sporades (2023).

Coming from a non-sailing background, we were very nervous as we started our sailing journey. We do come from a walking background so for me the navigation was fairly easy to adapt to, charts instead of maps! Of course the help now from Apps such as Navionics, and the use of GPS on the yacht all added to the adventure. Each year we set ourselves personal targets to achieve to increase our seamanship.

Things like sailing into a bay, dropping anchor and taking the dinghy ashore...taking the helm while stern-to mooring, trying to understand the different points of sail and how to trim the sails etc etc. Each holiday we felt we had improved on the previous experience.



NOTHING HAPPENS WITHOUT QUITE A BIT OF EFFORT!

Then in 2022 with the change in Greek Laws which now required each yacht to have at least 1 qualified Day Skipper we were faced with our biggest sailing challenge yet.

We signed up for the Day Skipper course in Corfu with Sailing Holidays and in preparation for this also signed up for a Competent Crew Course on a yacht named Black Diamond sailing out of Hartlepool, my home town. The North Sea is obviously a world away from the generally calm hot waters of the Med and to say we were a tad shell-shocked after our first all day sail would be a gross understatement!



We found the course quite challenging and were very glad to have had this experience a few months prior to going to Corfu for our Day Skipper Course. We had spent the good part of the previous 6 months studying and taking the Essential Navigation and Seamanship Theory course and were now ready for the practical. We had also booked a weeks sail immediately following the practical so the pressure was on for at least one of us to pass!

We were blessed to have Pete as our Instructor and sharing the yacht with two people the course was very informative, challenging but thrilling as well. It was great to see the hard work we had put in to our theory work and the countless hours of YouTube tutorials on all aspects of sailing, were now able to be put into practise as we tackled the various aspects of the course. We were obviously thrilled when we both were handed our Day Skipper Licences and we recall Pete saying to us, 'This allows you to take charge of a 300 ton vessel – but you are not thinking of that are you?'

Well Pete....not quite...but life has taken us on a course we never expected. Through a friend we were invited to become volunteer crew on an ex-naval tender vessel called M.V. Messina. It is a 24 metre supply vessel that has been bought by the Royal Naval Museum in Hartlepool. We have now been volunteering for over a year and I have been appointed to the position of 2nd Mate with Officer of the watch duties including navigation.

They have put me through various RYA Training Courses: VHF Short Range Licence: Powerboat Level 2: Radar: Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster Offshore and I have just completed the RYA First Aid Course. We are great believers that as one door of opportunity is closing then another door will open in the not too distant future.

Who would have thought, sat in a Taverna in Preveza, just how much our lives have been influenced by Sailing Holidays. In 2006, visiting Greece we hired a car and on a day out stopped by the Corinth Canal. As we stood on the viewing platform, looking down as yachts were sailing through the canal, I am sure we dreamed about the possibility of doing that. Our next holiday will be in June 2025 where a 'bucket List' item will hopefully be realised as we have booked on the Corinth Flotilla.

As for this year, we will just wait to see what transpires. Thank you Sailing Holidays for all you do in enabling holidays of a lifetime to be within the grasp of us 'ordinary folk'."



In conjunction with Corfu Sea School

3 GENERATIONS OF FAMILIES COME SAILING

STEVE AND PENNY CONTINUE TO ENJOY HOLIDAYS WITH FAMILY

Steve, Penny and family came sailing on the May half term holiday week with daughter Liz, her husband Rob and grandson Benedict (age 9). They are a regular 3 generations family who have done various flotillas and villa flotilla over the years.

Steve and Penny have even twice spent a week in villa Meandros, so they are certainly enthused about Sailing Holidays and what we offer!



DAVID RETURNS TO ENTHUSE THE FAMILY

David introduces his daughter Jennifer and grandson Hamish to the joys of sailing in the Greek Islands.

David has spent most of his life involved with boats in one way or another, from canal boats to ocean going ships.

In between all of that, he has been on many of our lotilla sailing holidays.

Hamish, aged 6, was very pleased that the tooth fairy made it to Greece!



RICHARD AND FAMILY RETURN HAVING "CAUGHT THE BUG"

"Esther, Simon, Louie, Archie and myself, all had another memorable holiday. So much so that we have booked in October next year. 3rd year running!!

My son in law, Simon, will be doing the day skipper course in the week preceeding the flotilla, he's definitely caught the bug!!"

It is amazing how many three generation groups are coming on the flotillas these days, and it is clear that grandparents wish to have a trip down memory lane and, at the same time, introduce the family to their great passion.



LOUIE AT THE HELM



"ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY"!

OCTOGENARIANS ENJOY GLORIOUS OCTOBER SUNSHINE!

Age is no barrier to enjoying our flotilla sailing holidays. John and Anne both look in their 60's but yet are in their 80's. They are regular flotilla sailors, so clearly our flotillas are good for fending off the aging process!

Barrie with regular flotilla sailor, George, also an octogenarian, on the final night of his flotilla. Barrie will be joining the 'club' in only three years time!



ROS AND ROGER'S FAVOURITE PLACE IS THE SPORADES

Roger, Yvonne, Grace and Ella in Steni Vala on the Sporades flotilla in July. Roger and Ros come at least twice a year on flotilla, bringing different members of the family or friends each time. You might recognise their Granddaughter Grace, as she welcomes everyone at Preveza airport. She certainly knows the ropes! They are another of our '3 generations of flotilla sailing families'.



MOVE OVER KATE WINSLET - TITANIC HAS A NEW BOWSPRIT!

Mike took his partner Yvonne and his brother Nigel on a delivery flotilla from the Saronic to the Ionian. He decided that this would be the perfect way to get them enthused about sailing, although a more than normally challenging introduction.

They had perfect weather and Yvonne decided that she would model her own version of Titanic (without the sinking). As you can see from the photographs, she certainly achieved her aim and we have no doubt that we will see them all again in the near future.



Postcards from Our Sailors...



From: Tony

"It was lovely to see you both looking well in Sivota, and thanks for the cakes!

We had a great week, the first week for ages where we've had decent wind for most of the week which saved on the fuel bill for you! I confess to broaching the 323 in a big gust but those boats sail so well she coped with it

admirably, just scooping a little water over the toerail into the cockpit. That'll teach us to reef a bit sooner!

Although I usually take Paul as crew, my wife Christine is keen to do another flotilla which I think will be her 5th or 6th. Maybe we can get over in Autumn...looking forward to our next trip! I'm still delighted that one of my pictures is in the Sailing Holidays history book. It's the one of Ange up the mast in a bosun's chair in 2006."



From: Tony and Diane

Tony and Diane had a surprise when they turned up for our RYA Day Skipper training out of Corfu. Their trainer was none other than Heather Thomas, who was doing a few weeks training for Sailing Holidays as a wind down from her amazing win on Maiden in The Ocean Globe Race. (Heather was awarded Sailor of the Year in the British Yachting Awards 2024).



From: Judith and David

Regular flotilla sailors, Judith and David, enjoying the excellent October weather in the South Ionian.

From: Sue and Phil

One balmy final night in Greece Sue decided that, in the early hours of the morning, she would feed the hungry looking cats on the quay. As she was slightly impaired, she ended up in the water, which instantly solved the impairment problem!

It wasn't until she arrived home, that she realised she had lost a bracelet which was a family heirloom. As we knew where her boat was moored, shorebased crewmember Patrick decided to see if he could find it, and sure enough he did indeed find it.

Needless to say, Sue and Phil were over the moon, so Heidi and Barrie brought it back to the UK and we re-acquainted Sue with her precious bracelet over an evening in a local watering hole. They were extremely grateful although we do ask people not to bring valuables on the holidays.



From: Drew and Traci

Aussie Drew and British Traci (now Australian) revisit the Ionian under sail after nearly twenty years away!



Drew first discovered the world of flotilla sailing in the Greek Islands in 2005. Initially shorebased, he was soon grabbed by Skipper Nancy and engineer Vicki as their flotilla 'host'.

In 2006, he graduated to skipper with Traci as his Hostess and it doesn't take Einstein to work out the rest!

Not only did they bring daughters Jessica and Isabelle, but also two other boats of family friends from Australia, for their trip down memory lane.



HALLOWEEN IN THE REAL GHOST TOWN OF SAGIADA



GHOSTS APPEARED IN SAGIADA..



...SO ALL THE FLOTILLA TEENAGERS CAME TO JOIN IN THE FUN AND GAMES

One of the popular flotilla stops in the North Ionian area is Sagiada. Up on the mountain behind the harbour is "Old Sagiada" which is a real ghost town. It was on the front line of the Greek Civil War and originally built centuries ago in a hidden hollow out of sight of the sea. This was so that pirates could not see it and it became a very important town in the district of Thesprotia.

One of the challenges of visiting Sagiada Harbour, is to get up early in the morning to hike up the mountain to see the ruins of Old Sagiada. When we were younger it used to take three quarters of an hour to get up there, but now an hour and a half! Once there however, for those who can read between the lines, of how the houses and buildings must have been, it is absolutely fascinating.

Heidi and I made the effort this year, and spent some time wandering around and through the ruins. The one building that is largely preserved is the local church and its tower. In the past, it must have been impressive and the area around it a general meeting place.

After our epic morning, we decided that some refreshment was required, so we had an early lunch at Alekos Taverna. The previous evening, we had been treated to a fabulous prawn, calamari and fish feast.

Alekos's son now runs the taverna and when we were chatting, we realised that Alekos and Barrie had been born within one week of each other at the opposite ends of the world.



EXPLORING 'OLD' SAGIADA



BARRIE AND ALEKOS DISCOVER THEY WERE BORN A WEEK APART ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE WORLD



OUR FAMOUS JAGUAR 27'S HAVE NOT GONE VERY FAR



HEIDI WITH JEAN AND JOHN IN NIDRI

In 2016, we were in the process of selling off the last few Jaguars as we replaced them with our Beneteau 323's. Thira was one of the last boats to be sold and also the last Jaguar which Barrie and Heidi sailed on.

New owners Jean and John said "We are finding it difficult to put into words just how much we would like to thank you for sailors like us. Just be assured that we will cherish our Jag Thira as much as you would wish... perhaps more! Living the dream!"



JEAN AND JOHN HAND OVER THEIR LITTLE 'HOME AWAY FROM HOME' TO MARTIN AND SONIA

"We thought you'd like to meet the new owners of our lovely Jag..... Martin and Sonia. They'll still be sailing in the same area so you may come across them. As you know, we have loved our time sailing Thira, but it's now time to pass her on to new owners. We will be out for a short trip on our friend's boat (Nemesis) and hope we will see you about. All the best to you both and have a good summer." Jean



MARTIN AND SONIA POTTERING AROUND AT ANCHOR IN A QUIET CORNER OF SIVOTA BAY

Heidi and Barrie did indeed come across Martin and Sonia in a quiet corner of Sivota Bay. They seemed very happy indeed and had been drifting around the Ionian since mid-May for six weeks and were planning to return in September for another six weeks.

Wouldn't it be nice to have that much time to escape the world!

Emerald Girl was the first Jaguar 27 into the fleet and the last to be sold. This year we spotted her happily ensconced in Port Spiglia. She certainly looked well.



HEIDI AND BARRIE HAVING A GREAT SAIL ON 'THIRA' IN 2015

THIS COULD BE YOU

Join our seasonal team for 2025

MANY OF OUR YOUNG FLOTILLA LEAD CREWS HAVE BEGUN THEIR SAILING CAREERS WITH US AFTER SEVERAL HOLIDAYS WITH THEIR PARENTS



a day in the life

We are recruiting for flotilla engineers, skippers, and hosties as well as shore-based staff for summer 2025.

If you would like to apply for a position, simply go to our website or email us at

work@sailingholidays.com

FIND OUT MORE ON OUR
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Different flotilla routes for 2025

- ONE WEEK ARGOLIC GULF FLOTILLA - 22nd and 29th June

See a selection of the highlights of the Argolic Gulf on a circular route from Astrous to include several spots including Plaka, Tiros, Dhokos island and Ermioni.

- TWO WEEK KEFALONIA AND ZAKYNTHOS FLOTILLA - 6th July

From Lefkas this flotilla heads South via Euphemia to Ayios Nikolaos, Keri Bay and Zakynthos Town, then heading North via Poros, Big Vathi, Kioni, Kalamos and Sivota.

- TWO WEEK SOUTH IONIAN FLOTILLA - 20th July, 3rd & 10th August and 28th September

Not a new route, but one that offers a relaxing meander around the South Ionian islands and its atmospheric villages.

- TWO WEEK FARAWAY ISLANDS FLOTILLA - 22nd June, 27th July and 24th August

A getaway to Islands seldom visited by flotillas with time to explore the North of Corfu, Ericousa, Othoni, and Mathraki.

- TWO WEEK CORINTH CANAL FLOTILLA - 15th and 29th June

A great opportunity to experience passing under the incredible Anti Rion bridge, visiting Trezonia, Galazidi, Antikyra, and passing through the Corinth canal.

- THREE WEEK HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IONIAN FLOTILLA - 18th May

Due to the demand for flight seats on the UK half term, we run this 'bridging flotilla' which provides time to visit the Faraway Islands, the Gulf of Amvrakia and many other less busy village harbours.

We still produce our printed brochure and calendar!

We no longer do an annual mass mailout as it's not environmentally friendly.

If you would like the printed version of our latest brochure, newsletter and calendar, please email us at brochure@sailingholidays.com

So all is not lost for us dinosaurs. We still like to see what day it is without turning on a computer.



ENJOY A WEEK OR TWO IN AIR CONDITIONED SPLENDOUR AT VILLA MEANDROS, SIVOTA, LEFKAS

For those of you who fancy a week or two ashore in luxury, we offer something special that is not available anywhere else.

This is a fabulous place to relax and is only a ten minute walk to Sivota Village. There you can take your choice of all its wonderful tavernas. From the balcony, you can simply watch yachts coming and going in the bay, over some cold refreshments.

"Everything about the villa was fabulous; what a glorious location, accommodation is great, provisions were very welcome. It was clean tidy and plenty of towels. Eddie cleaned the pool twice while we were there and the cleaner replaced sheets, towels etc during our stay. Too many good things to say"

Steve and Penny (This was their second stay at Villa Meandros)

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A TYPICAL SUNRISE AT VILLA MEANDROS LOOKING OUT OVER THE POOL AND SIVOTA BAY



HUGE INTERIOR LIVING SPACE



ENJOYING THE MEANDROS POOL LATER IN THE DAY WITH A VIEW OUT OVER SIVOTA BAY AND OVER TO ATOKO ISLAND



LUXURIOUS WASHROOMS



VAST OUTDOOR SPACE

BAREBOAT SAILING HOLIDAYS

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Make the most of the great
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- if you fancy a bareboat or
skipped charter for 2025, have
a chat with the team on:

020 8438 1133



BAREBOAT SAILING AND SKIPPED CHARTER
GREECE CROATIA TURKEY SPAIN ITALY

Ivan and Callum try a bareboat charter in Croatia

Our relaxed Sailing Adventure in the Dalmatian Islands.

"In February, we welcomed Callum to the team, and by the end of June 2024, he and I embarked on an unforgettable 1-week charter through the stunning Dalmatian Islands. Starting in Dubrovnik, nine of us shared a Sun Odyssey 440, which offered the perfect blend of adventure, relaxation, and breathtaking scenery that Croatia is so famous for.

From charming marinas to tranquil bays, every stop left us inspired. Here are a few highlights from our journey:

Day 1: Šipanska Luka

Our first day brought us to the serene bay of Šipanska Luka, where we picked up a buoy surrounded by crystal-clear blue waters. The arrangement was simple: spend a little at the bar that owned the buoy, and you're set for the night—a skipper's dream for peace of mind. With incredible local restaurants and stunning views, it was such a perfect start that we decided to return on our penultimate night.

Day 2: Korčula

Next, we sailed to Korčula, securing a spot at the ACI Marina using the ever-handly MySea app. Korčula's old town is a treasure trove of history and beauty, famously serving as a filming location for Game of Thrones. With its labyrinth of stone streets, vast array of exceptional restaurants, and unmatched charm, Korčula is a must-visit for any sailor exploring the Dalmatian Islands.

Days 3–5: Mljet Marine Park & Lastovo

The midweek was spent embracing the quiet magic of Mljet Marine Park and Lastovo,



where nature took centre stage. Pristine bays, incredible wildlife—including dolphins!—and tranquil days made these stops unforgettable.

Reflections on Croatia

Croatia strikes an extraordinary balance: a well-organised cruising destination with a laid-back atmosphere.

The marinas and apps make logistics seamless, while the islands themselves offer pure serenity and beauty. It's no wonder this trip deepened our love for sailing. Callum and I are already planning our next adventure back.

Croatia is truly a sailor's paradise—don't just take our word for it; experience it for yourself!"

Ivan



Our Yacht Charter Agency Division

Our Yacht Charter Division is where we act as agents for the best charter companies in the most popular sailing locations around the Mediterranean.

This gives you the freedom to choose the yacht which suits you. We are happy to discuss all aspects of charters and regions to help you find that perfect sailing experience.

Our Yacht Charter programme consists of three categories:

BAREBOAT CHARTER

For those wishing to truly get away from it all.

This allows qualified sailors the freedom to charter larger yachts, catamarans, and sail in different areas of the Mediterranean

For those who have the skills to sail independently, bareboat charters can expand your horizons.

Sailing is continually evolving, and we develop with it.

The key is our knowledge of the core aspects of travel and sailing.

We specialise in merging these two ingredients through our infrastructure in the UK.

SKIPPERED YACHT CHARTER

For those new to sailing or simply wishing for a more relaxing holiday.

This is a great option for those wishing to put their feet up a little more and have someone to 'drive' and moor the yacht for them.

This option is popular for those wishing to gain some valuable experience with a qualified skipper to show you the ropes.

Skippered charter provides the extra comfort of having someone to make sure you get the most out of an area you may not know well.

This tends to be on larger yachts with a separate cabin for the skipper.

LUXURY CREWED CHARTER

(Skipper and hostess on board)
For those looking to be catered for.

Luxury crewed yacht charter is the ultimate sailing holiday.

With a crew to look after you, and breakfast and lunch provided, you can make the most of every minute.

The skipper will ensure to get you to the best places (including hidden gems).

The host/hostess will make sure that your holiday needs are provided for including provisioning the yacht, restaurant and day-trip recommendations, to serving meals on board. They make sure your holiday is experience to remember.

We include this service for those who wish to branch out on their own, sail larger yachts or catamarans, or wish to sail in other regions.

All our Bareboat Sailing Holidays have financial protection through ABTOT.



Call us on: **020 8438 1133** or visit our website: **sailingholidays.com**

or email us on: **yachtcharter@sailingholidays.com**



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Once again, a huge thanks to all who took the time to vote for us.



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