

News Letter January 2010

Hi everyone.

Happy New year. I hope everyone had a good new year and is ready for 2010. We have had at least one boat berthed all winter and have had a few good days on the water. 2010 is shaping up to be just as good as 2009. European clients are returning to the best cruising waters in the world.

Training

Boat Handling Courses. Once again these two day berthing courses will run at the beginning of the season. Only 2 courses are planned. 31st March -1st April and 4th-5th May. These are ideal for those wanting to brush up on berthing. Once again maximum four people per course. First come first served. I'm sorry that some of you who wanted a place on these last year had to be disappointed, but we only intend to run a couple of them in 2010. They are quite demanding on the instructor and to be honest, although it may not show, they do put the instructors under a lot of stress.



Dolphin puts on a show in Tobermory Harbour

5 Day RYA Courses

We again intend to run mixed ability courses as this can be more fun and instructive for everyone involved. Dates are published. Just click this link. http://www.clydewestcoastcruising.com/RYA_courses.htm

Prices in 2010 will remain at £440 per person for 5 day RYA courses. If you have any preferred dates just let us know and we will try to work with them

Skipped Cruises and Mile builders. Proving very popular again. The official classic malts cruise has been cancelled this year so we are having our very own tour of Islay, Jura, Mull and Skye. The objective is to visit the distilleries by sea.



The Beautiful St Kilda

St. Kilda 2010. Yes we're off again. This beautiful island is the most western point of the United Kingdom. Out in the Atlantic, St. Kilda is 41 Nm from The Sound of Harris and 56 Nm from the Sound of Barra. There is little shelter so a settled weather system is required before we can depart. Those who have made this passage before will agree that it is truly a unique Island with a fascinating history. Best thing is that it's all there to see and is maintained as a world heritage centre by the National Trust for Scotland. You can get an in-depth account of the Islands including fascinating History and stunning photographs by visiting <http://www.kilda.org.uk>

The 2010 Skipped cruises. Schedule with spaces, as follows:

Boat		Depart	Arrive	Availability	Days
Lady Q	Ardrossan – Oban Via Crinan Canal	28 th June	2nd July	Spaces	5
Bacchus	Ardrossan–Bangor-Strangford Loch–Dublin–Douglas-Ardrossan	13 th June	21st June	Spaces	9
Lady Q	Ardrossan–Bangor-Strangford Loch–Dublin–Douglas-Ardrossan	13 th June	21st June	Spaces	9
Jura Star	St Kilda Adventure - Dunstaffnage Departure	13 th June	21st June	Spaces	9
Bacchus	Special Islands Whiskey Tour (Islay Jura Mull Skye)	2 nd July	10 th July	Spaces	9
Lady Q	Oban-St Kilda and back (Hopefully)	9 th Aug	14 th Aug	Spaces	5
Bacchus	Ardrossan-Ballycastle-Islay-Gigha-Cambeltown-Ardrossan	23 rd Aug	28 th Aug	Spaces	5

The price for these trips is £440 p/p for the 5 day trips and £850 p/p for the 9 Day trips. They include all Breakfasts & Lunches and two evening meals on board. They do not include any canal fees or mooring fees.

Any of you wanting a berth or berths on any of these trips should call me soon, as the cruises are popular and I don't like disappointing anyone.

If you have a specific destination and would like us to do arrange a skippered charter then let us know and we will see if anyone else is keen on the destination

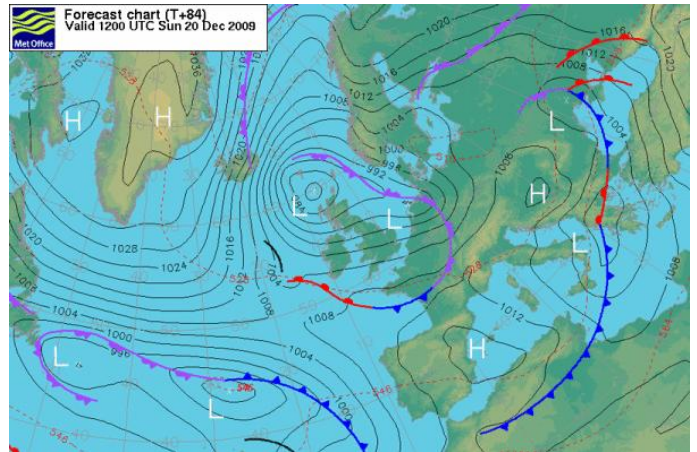
Weather forecast. Predictable, Unpredictable, infuriating, frustrating and down right annoying. Especially when the Met office latest seems to bear no resemblance whatsoever to what your mark one eyeball is seeing and your wind instruments are displaying.

As skipper you find yourself either disappointing a crew who have travelled some distance to go sailing at considerable cost. Or going to sea when you know you probably shouldn't.

Six hours alongside and the force 9 prediction fails to materialise. You look like a *pratt* who doesn't have a clue about weather.

Inversely, you go off to sea in a beautiful morning's force three and fail to notice the barometer descending 6 millibars per hour and all hell breaks loose, you look, once again, like a *pratt*. Either way you loose the confidence of your crew who may decide not to share your passion for sailing or the cost of your week's charter.

As you gain more experience in assessing local conditions you will become increasingly aware of your own ability to predict what will happen next. Trying to work out why the wind direction and speed are not what you expected, can sometimes be evident when you look at the latest synoptic chart which shows a change from previous predictions. Some of the most powerful computers in the world are constantly working on the predictions of our weather trying to anticipate the next shift in the weather, which even they sometimes don't get right. So don't be overly self critical when your own assessment fails to turn up the correct result.



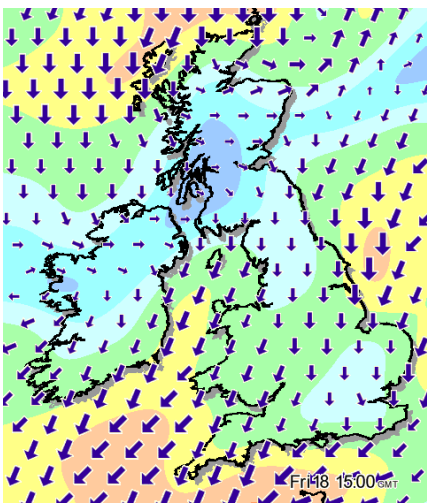
Just err on the safe option.

As yachtsmen we must protect ourselves, our crew and the yacht from the extremes of which will quickly take us from a brisk and exhilarating sail to being outside of our personal comfort zones putting both the yacht and our lives in danger.

So, where best to get the latest up to date forecast? I hate to admit it, but increasingly I am using the internet to arm myself with good information on which to base my decisions.

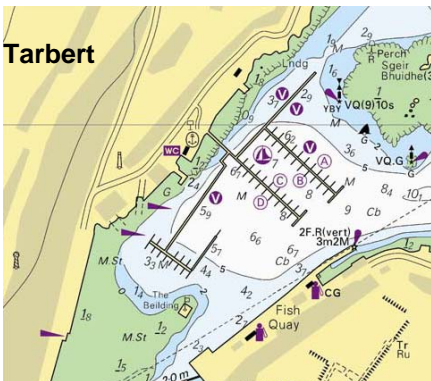
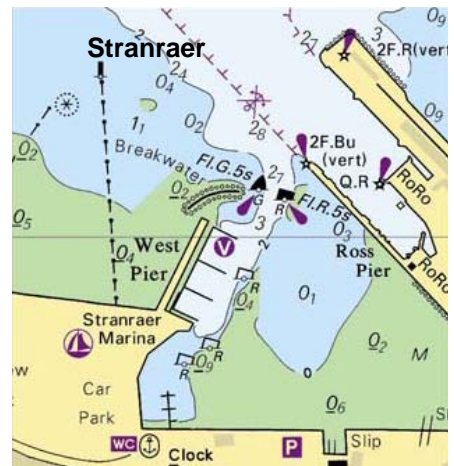
Which sites give the best weather? Well it's not the website which gives us the weather. They nearly all get the information from the same sources. Each site has a different target market and therefore the information is set out to assist the target market to make weather based decisions for that market. As sailors, the time intervals on the predictions are important as we may be trying to complete a short passage in between periods of unsuitable weather, or complete a passage before bad weather arrives, or even predict best time to depart.

Here are a few sites to try: <http://www.windguru.com/int/> or <http://www.xcweather.co.uk/> or <https://www.theyr.com/index.asp> or <http://www.weatheronline.co.uk/> or <http://www.wetterzentrale.de/>.



Cruising News

Stranraer. At the foot of loch Ryan lies the town of Stranraer. Not exactly a metropolis but a fine bolt hole in the event of big south or south-westerly winds. It now boasts a small 'Marina' (really only pontoons). Suitable for small to medium sizes yachts, it is tight as there is shallow ground to the south east of the pontoons. So if you do decide to go in be careful that a north wind doesn't carry you onto the shallows. At £10 per night it's not a bad deal. Supermarket, pubs, and a restaurant. What more do we really need. If you're on your way to, or returning from the Isle of Man or Ireland then it's not a bad place to escape to for a night, to wait for the wind or tide to turn. If you really get stormbound there then you can hire a car from Hertz. They are based at the ferry terminal.



Tarbert Loch Fyne. The old favourite. Yes the new pontoons have been in for a year now and finally I have managed to get my hands on a plan of the harbour. Not the cheapest place to stop and next year's prices will be up by about 4%. This does include some free electricity and free showers. As most of you who have visited Scotland and the Clyde, Tarbert is a great place to stop for the night. The Hotels and restaurants have a great welcome and the Anchor Hotel always looks after us handsomely. The Victoria Hotel is now under new management so there may be some positive changes there.

That's all for now.
Best Wishes to you all Colin Hamilton