



NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2009



A very merry Christmas and happy New Year to you all



UPCOMING COURSES

Courses for December are:

- 07 – 11 December 09: Day Skipper Practical.
- 14 – 18 December 09: Competent Crew.
- 19 – 24 December 09: Day Skipper Theory.
- 27 – 31 December 09: Day Skipper Practical.

Please see the website at <http://www.yachtmaster.co.za> to book a place.



Photo: Jachym Rudolf

SAILING TIP OF THE MONTH In lieu of a sailing tip this month, we offer the following story:

CLIPPER YACHT *HULL & HUMBER* IN DRAMATIC RESCUE *Hull & Humber* has been involved in a dramatic rescue of one of their crew members following a man overboard incident in the South Atlantic, 1,400 miles from the team's destination of Cape Town, South Africa.

Arthur Bowers, 51, was climbing towards the main companionway at the end of his watch when the boat was hit by a big wave, knocking him sideways, down the deck and through the guard wires into the water. He was wearing his lifejacket which automatically inflated when he entered the water and had just unclipped his safety line to allow him to descend the steps into the saloon.



The crew, who carry out endless man overboard drills during their pre-race Clipper Training, immediately put theory into practice and, in an excellent display of seamanship, recovered Arthur and had him safely back on board within 17 minutes.

The incident happened at 1345 GMT during daylight hours in the South Atlantic where the waves were six to eight metres high. In winds of 25 to 30 knots *Hull & Humber* was sailing with the Yankee 3 headsail, staysail and three reefs in the mainsail. The crew reacted quickly, according to *Hull & Humber's* skipper, Piers Dudin, 31. The Salisbury-based skipper was at the chart table at the time and immediately pressed the man overboard button on the GPS

system to mark on the chart the position at which Arthur entered the water.

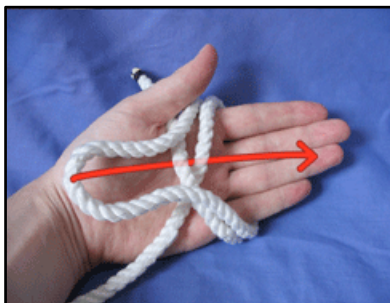
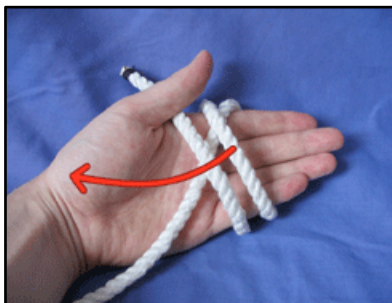
Piers said, "Bex (Rebecca Mayman, 19) was pointing at Arthur's position. After heaving to, we released the preventer line and centred the main and dropped the Yankee 3 and staysail. We started the engine and motored back upwind to him – at this time we were about 150 metres away. Jeremy (Reed, 54) put on the harness while the rest of the watch prepared the halyard to allow him to be lowered over the side to reach Arthur. During this time we circled Arthur twice and on the third lap came up close to him on the starboard side. We didn't reach him on the first attempt. I stationed *Hull & Humber* with Jeremy low in the water next to Arthur. On the fourth lap we lowered Jeremy to him and he attached a staysail halyard to Arthur's lifejacket and both were hauled up. Arthur held onto the helistrop and supported himself as he was hoisted. He walked himself back to the cockpit and walked below to get out of his wet gear. Charlie (Charlotte Mulliner, 21) had prepared a sleeping bag for him in the saloon."

Points to Note:

- Work out a MOB procedure for your yacht.
- Practicing MOB drills frequently is vital.
- You may not pick up the MOB at the first attempt, so make sure you know what went wrong and correct the problem on your next attempt.
- Do not lose sight of the MOB!
- Have a plan for getting the MOB back on board.
- Once on board, treat the MOB as a casualty, until you are sure that no further action is required.
- Know how to treat hypothermia.

As soon as he was back on board he was checked for signs of hypothermia and for shock and had no other injuries. From www.clipper-training.com.

KNOT OF THE MONTH The **Butterfly Knot**, also known as the **Butterfly Loop**, or **Lineman's Loop**, is a "non-jamming loop on the bight": a loop which may be tied in a rope with two fixed ends, and can take loads on both ends of the original rope, and on the loop. The alpine butterfly loop is symmetrical and provides for multi-directional loading. The Butterfly knot has a high breaking strength and is regarded by mountaineers as one of the strongest knots to attach climbers to the middle of a rope, such that they have room to move around even when the main rope goes tight, and they can be supported in either direction from the main rope. The loop is typically attached to a climbing harness by a carabiner.



The knot can also be used to isolate a worn section of rope, where the knot is tied such that the worn section is isolated in the loop (which of course does not receive a carabiner nor bear any loads in this case). In fact, the knot can be tied as a bend with the ends emerging where the loop would be. The loop portion is isolated when the other two legs are loaded.

RYA NEWS The following article is taken from the RYA website at www.rya.org.uk:

Internet Weather Forecasts Go back a century or so and you soon realise that the most that old salts could use when planning a passage was their trusty barometer and a bit of sea lore such as *Mackerel skies and mare's tails make tall ships carry low sails*. Things are a bit different these days and, if anything, we almost have too much information at our fingertips. The latest source is the internet; carry out a search on weather forecasts online and you will find hundreds of sites confidently telling you what the weather is going to do next. So how useful are these sites? Can they be trusted?

Choice of Sites The range of weather information now available on the internet is simply staggering and it can become a bit confusing. One of the most important things to remember is that many of these forecasts are using the same data, known as Gridded Information in Binary or GRIB, so they are all

presenting the same information in different styles. Basically it's about which format works best for you. GRIB is a system used by the World Meteorological Organisation to compress and store information such as patterns of wind, pressure, sea state and temperatures for exchange between national weather services. The beauty of the GRIB system is that file sizes can be small enough to be downloaded via FTP using a mobile phone, preferably using GPRS or G3. Alternatively, they can be sent straight to you as e-mail attachments, thereby giving you the latest weather models to your fingertips. However, as with any forecasting system, there are limitations. One of the big problems with all GRIB files is that they work on such a scale that they are not able to take into account local factors such as the lie of the land and local sea breezes.

Localised Conditions Most GRIB models are only able to deal with areas of about 100 nautical miles, meaning that they cannot recognise the influence landmasses such as the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight or the Shetlands in the UK have on the local weather conditions. The thought that a forecasting system does not recognise the Isle of Wight is mildly alarming, however the fact is that any of the free online weather models you look at will not be able to do this. Some subscription services, such as Windguru or Theyr.net, offer more detailed, smaller scale analysis at a small cost but even these more detailed forecasts cannot recognise significant local factors such as headlands. Typically, they can only represent average conditions over areas around 30 miles in size. This can be a big problem, as you only have to sail around Cape Point or Cape Agulhas to realise that there can be a significant increase in wind as it accelerates around a headland. A general rule of thumb with any of these GRIB forecasts is to add on an extra force on the Beaufort Scale to winds over F 5 over the open sea, as they do underestimate strong winds.



Also bear in mind that these data have been churned out by a computer, so it is advisable to use them in conjunction with other forecasts, such as inshore waters forecast broadcast on VHF or NAVTEX 490 kHz. These have the benefit of human intelligence.

Ultimately, as with all forms of forecasting, the GRIB system is not a completely exact science. Forecasts are always best endeavours and these sites are no different. Be wary of any forecast claiming to be 100% accurate, giving high definition or precision.

Sea Lore However the internet forecasts are a very useful tool to be used in with other forms of forecasting, and at this point we return to what the sailors of a century ago relied heavily upon: sea lore and experience. There is no substitute for a bit of nous: anticipating when you are going to pick up a sea breeze or spotting a squall from a distance are the kind of skills which no amount of technology can or will replace in the foreseeable future. As Slocum once said: To know the laws that govern the wind, and know that you know them will give you an easy voyage: otherwise you may tremble at every cloud. The best way to pick up a bit of sea lore is by spending as much time out on the water as possible. Not before checking the weather forecast of course!

Fair winds and full sails.

Peter and the YMOS Team