


WELCOME ABOARD!

- 
- **Joining Information** Page 2
 - **Returning Your Yacht** Page 3
 - **Management Afloat** Pages 4-15
 - **Safety at Sea** Page 17
 - **Meals Afloat** Page 20
 - **Getting to Alba Sailing** Page 20
 - **Charts and Publications** Page 21
 - **Clothing and Extras** Page 22

JOINING INFORMATION

1. Upon arrival at Dunstaffnage Marina, please check in to Alba Sailing Reception (white painted building by the water's edge). Official handover time is 1500 hours and check-in time is ideally between 1430 and 1500 hours. As we only have a short time to turn the yachts around (0900 to 1500 hours), we will not normally be able to hand over your yacht before 1500 hours. The only exception to this would be when your yacht has not been out on charter the previous day or if we are running ahead of schedule. If you think there is a possibility that you may arrive later than 1600 hours, then we ask you to please telephone us so that special handover arrangements can be made. These special arrangements may include you staying on board overnight and us handing yacht over the next morning.

The time prior to handover of your yacht is ideal for attending to waterproofs and bedding hire, crew lists or just relaxing at the on-site restaurant and bar - "The Wide Mouthed Frog" or 'Poppies Garden Centre café'.

2. The official handover includes the skipper and first mate checking and signing for the inventory of loose equipment onboard the yacht and completing a hull report detailing any obvious defects on the fibreglass gel-coat such as scratches or chips. Checking through the inventory will help with familiarising yourself with the yacht so that if you do have any queries these can be dealt with before you get under way. Once you have completed the inventory we will provide a pre-charter briefing on the workings of the yacht and equipment. This lasts for between 30 minutes to an hour depending on your level of familiarity with the yacht. We appreciate you may be tired after a long journey, but would recommend that you pay particular attention to the briefing as it will help to ensure that you have a trouble-free holiday. When the skipper and first mate are going over the yacht, the crew may have time to go into town for last minute shopping or perhaps browse around our chandlery and range of clothing. Once the pre-charter briefings have been carried out on all the yachts going out that day, we would be very pleased to go over the cruising area with you and recommend anchorages, restaurants etc.

3. Once the skipper and first mate have completed the pre-charter briefing you are then free to load your gear aboard the yacht. It is very difficult to check through the inventory and complete the pre-charter briefing if your crew are loading up the yacht with personal gear so we ask that you try and control the crew's eagerness to get underway and wait until all the formalities are completed before loading your personal gear aboard. In this way, you will be able to get underway all the quicker. Trolleys for loading are provided at the marina and these are located at the top of the access ramp. Please return them for others to use as soon as you have finished loading.

4. Once your personal gear is loaded onto your yacht, please move your car to the Marina car park which is located opposite our offices.

5. The fresh water and diesel tanks will be topped up prior to handover. We recommend that you double check the fresh water situation before setting off as you may not know when you can next fill up. The diesel carrier in the cockpit locker is left empty in order to avoid possible seepage through the plastic cap and is provided simply so that you can obtain diesel in an emergency when you cannot lie alongside a berth with diesel fuel facilities. Bunkering points are listed in the Welcome Anchorages and pilot books on board.

6. Gas Cylinders: Each yacht has two gas cylinders only and they should remain stored in the gas bottle stowage locker provided on the yacht. One bottle may have had some gas used from it – the other will be full.

7. A small grocer's shop (incorporating village post office) is conveniently sited in Dunbeg village, less than half a mile from the Marina, and sells groceries, toiletries, confectionery, newspapers, beers, wine and spirits. If you do not have transport they will generally deliver groceries back to the Marina for you. A BP Filling Station is located about three quarters of a mile away, on the main road going into Oban, which has a shop selling basic groceries, confectionary, newspapers etc. There is also a very good butchers in Oban and Marks and Spencer Food Hall, Tesco, Aldi and Lidl.

8. Bedding is not part of the standard inventory and if required, you need to make arrangements to bring your own or you may, if you wish, hire from us pillows with freshly laundered pillow slips as well as sleeping bags.

9. All Alba yachts are strictly designated as **"no-smoking below"** so if any of your party wish to smoke, would you please ensure that they do so on deck or in the cockpit and not down below.

RETURNING THE YACHT AT THE END OF YOUR HOLIDAY

1. Upon your return to base, please tie-up alongside the pontoon berth where your cruise commenced, or one nearby. The Alba Sailing berths are those on leg 'F'.

2. Each charter commences with two gas bottles. At the end of each charter, the connected bottle will be checked and if it is more than half full it will be left on board. There is a fixed charge for gas which is equal to one cylinder of gas per week. Please bear in mind that gas bottle replenishment may not be a straightforward exercise in the more remote regions of the Western Isles. We hope you will realise that this is not an exact science but is better than the previous system of charging for a full replacement bottle even if a tiny amount had been used and then sending back a virtually full bottle of gas to be vented to the atmosphere and refilled again. Overall this is MUCH better for the environment and kinder to your wallet!!

3. Diesel is available on the pontoons - full instructions of how to get diesel will be given at handover – then the Marina invoice us and we charge you – there is no mark-up on diesel sales – we charge you whatever the Marina charges us. If you arrive back outside the Marina operating hours or choose not to refill the diesel tanks then we will do it for you - there is a charge of £75 for this service.

4. Fresh water is available on the pontoons.

5. The yacht should be handed back to Alba Sailing no later than 09.00 hours on the last day of your charter, clean, tidy and with all personal gear removed. Unless prior arrangements have been made.

We ask each skipper to complete a defects list (if any) on the form provided and once all personal items have been removed please bring this document and the electronic gate fobs up to the office to talk through the defect sheet with our engineers and to sign off the final paperwork.

We ask for your co-operation in this important matter as a prompt hand back allows sufficient time to give the next customer a fully checked and well serviced yacht. If you need to get away particularly early, let us know as soon as you return and we will endeavour to make special arrangements for you.

6. Shower and toilet facilities are available in the building adjacent to our premises. Laundry facilities are also available in this building. You will require the key fob or code number provided onboard the yacht to access these facilities

7. Other on site amenities includes "The Wide Mouthed Frog" which provides bed and breakfast as well as a popular restaurant and bar. Many charterers find it convenient to eat at the Wide Mouthed Frog on the last night of their holiday. It is advisable to book this as soon as you arrive back at the marina or earlier if possible - particularly at weekends. We are happy to recommend other excellent restaurants in the area.

If you find that you have a few hours to spare before setting off, places of interest include a visit to Dunstaffnage Castle on the other side of the bay to the Marina, which is said to be the oldest stone castle to be built in Scotland and dates back to the 13th century, or perhaps the local whisky exhibition centre in Stafford Street, Oban, or have a chat with our friendly staff who will gladly share their favourite places with you and tell you about any new attractions that may be worth a visit.

ON BOARD MANAGEMENT/MAINTENANCE NOTES

PLEASE READ BEFORE HANDOVER

However basic, some of the following may appear to more experienced sailors, some charterers do get into difficulties, which with a little extra knowledge of what to expect could easily have been prevented. Experience does not necessarily equate with safety or good seamanship so we do ask for your patience in reading these notes.

Crews relax when they know there are clear rules on board with regard to when to wear lifejackets and/or harnesses, i.e. at all times on deck during the night or at all times on deck when reefed, or in a dinghy going to and from the shore etc. There should also be a clear distribution of duties in case of emergency.

Situations requiring outside assistance can usually be avoided by listening to the weather forecasts (sea area Malin), by not being over ambitious in passage planning, choosing an anchorage suitable for the expected weather conditions and by anchoring securely, using the kedge if necessary.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS - In the event of any problems at all, however minor, please telephone us. Usually, we will be able to diagnose the problem over the telephone. If you require our urgent help when we are not in the office, please try our **emergency contact numbers** which are shown in the Skippers Handbook. Sometimes the office telephone is diverted to our mobile but please do leave a message at the answering machine if there is no reply. Mobile phone coverage has improved considerably over the last few years but there are still many areas where there is no service at all on some or all of the networks. Marine VHF remains the primary means of communications during emergency situations but mobile phone communication in this sea area has become a very important additional safety feature.. During the handover you will be issued a phone number that you can contact Alba Sailing on out of hours.

WHAT TO BRING - If you would please refer to the Basic Inventory (you can download it from the 'download' page on our website – www.alba-sailing.co.uk it will serve as a reminder of what is provided. Stowage on a yacht is limited and efficient stowage makes life on board more comfortable for everyone. Suitcases are definitely not recommended - holdalls or rucksacks are better. There is no need to bring your own tools as those on board each yacht are adequate for any minor repair which may be necessary. Alba Sailing supply consumables such as toilet cleaner, fresh air spray, washing up liquid, spray cleaners for galleys and heads, cream cleanser, furniture polish, fly killer, paper kitchen towel, matches, bin liners, pegs as well as clean tea towels, dish cloths, floor cloth and duster. We will happily email you a suggested 'packing list'. We do NOT provide toilet paper.

GALLEY - There are chopping boards provided so there is no need for cutting on any of the teak or Formica surfaces. Please be careful not to put hot pans or hot cups on varnished surfaces as not all surfaces are heat resistant and unsightly staining could result. It is good practice to wipe the cooker over with a warm soapy cloth after each use. If your cooker burners get clogged up with pieces of food please do not be tempted to use wire to clean them out as a piece of wire may be left inside which will rust. Instead blow any blockage out using the dinghy pump (with the gas turned off!).

No matter what the type of yacht, most galley sink drain pipes are on the narrow side so blockages can occur rather easily. To avoid the need to unblock a galley sink pipe, we suggest that all dirty plates and particularly pans be rinsed first with a bucket of sea water (in the cockpit area) then finished off using hot fresh water at the galley? This also saves a little fresh water but please remember to retrieve all cutlery before throwing the dirty water in the bucket overboard!

CLEANLINESS - If left neglected all week, a dirty yacht can easily take 3 hours or more to thoroughly clean and even with the sincerest of intentions, a yacht soon becomes dirty and untidy when passage making. On reaching harbour, the first job should be to tidy and clean the yacht, not just the decks but also the hull if you have been through an oil slick, and any lockers which are used for storing food. We would ask that, even if you have asked us to clean the yacht upon your return, that you still wipe the cooker bay as well as the cooker burners with a damp cloth after each use. This helps prevent the cooker burners from clogging up and helps prevent spillages from solidifying. Should the need arise to dry out a wet locker, you may find the portable bilge pump or sponge useful. May we remind you that upon return from charter, all yachts are checked thoroughly for cleanliness, both inside and out. If more than two man hours has to be spent on the yacht after your departure, then you will be charged at the rate of £35 per hour for each man hour over the initial two hours, and the amount deducted from your security deposit.

For those who have opted to hand the yacht back in the same clean and tidy condition as they received it:

1. Everything should be stowed tidily in the locker as shown on the inventory a copy of which is on board in the yacht's manual.
2. The bilge should be kept clean and dry at all times.
3. Numerous hairs, sweet papers, dirty socks (or worse) can mysteriously collect underneath the cushions and adhere to the underside of the actual cushions. Care needs to be taken in cleaning underneath, remembering to dry thoroughly, and to clean the lockers underneath the cushions.
4. The area surrounding the cooker, plus the grill pan, oven and hob, often gets splattered with food and grease.
5. The floor in the heads gets covered in hairs which should be removed, and if there is a teak grating, water often lies underneath which can be removed by means of the shower drain pump or sponge. (The shower drain filter requires cleaning on a regular basis) See note on shower drain filters on page 14.
6. The cockpit locker should be emptied, cleaned out and everything put back neatly with all ropes coiled. The lightweight man-overboard rope should be left secured to the stern rail.
7. Charts should have all pencil marks removed and should be placed in numerical order in the chart table.

As the above needs to be done **BEFORE 0900** hours on the day of your departure, it is sensible to plan to return to base the evening before. This helps make for a smooth and orderly departure next day, gives you and your crew the opportunity to have a relaxing evening ashore. A little forward planning can go a long way!

FIRST AID - If you use anything from the first aid kit, we would appreciate it if you either replace the item or let us know upon your return so that we can replace it before the next customer arrives. In compliance with the DoT regulations, there is a drugs box aboard. **This box should only be opened by the Skipper or the First Mate.** The drugs include paracetamol and anti seasick tablets, as well as drugs for which radio medical advice should be sought first - for angina, for non-clotting bleeding, and for severe pain. If you use the paracetamol or anti seasickness tablets, kindly replace before the end of your charter. **THE CAT 'C' BOX CONTAINS HEAVY DUTY DRUGS WHICH CAN RESULT IN DEATH IF MISUSED.**

PASSAGE PLANNING - Tides and weather ultimately determine your route but as a rule of thumb, it is wise to try and cover the furthest distance during the first few days of your holiday and plan to be on the homeward leg by, at the latest, the half-way stage. If you fail to inform us of any possible delay or are delayed without reasonable cause, then you will be charged at twice the daily rate for every day or part day by which re-delivery is delayed. Try to interpret the weather and avoid getting caught out as you are really the custodian of the next customer's holiday. Please note that in the event of your being late returning to base and you have just cause, you will be charged on a pro-rata basis per charter fee paid for any additional time aboard, provided you have notified us of your intended late return two days before the due redelivery time, and you are asked to please advise us as soon as possible if such a delay is expected. In the event of a delay occasioned by being storm bound, please remain with the yacht and bring her back as soon as conditions improve. If you have any doubt and decide to speak to the Coastguard - their advice will always be to remain where you are.

EFFICIENT CREW MEMBERS try on their lifejacket and safety harness before leaving base and remember where they are stowed in case of emergency. No doubt the skipper will have a set procedure covering personal safety and boat safety. A good crew anticipates danger and the skipper's wishes and make it their job to observe anything amiss such as a split pin pulled out of a bottle screw, loose anchor retaining pin, chafed warp etc and report it at once to the skipper. If ends of mooring warps become frayed then crew should note to do a whipping or back splice at the earliest opportunity and not wait to be told by the skipper. If unsure how to do this, ask the Skipper to show you as a training/learning exercise, or just tape it as a temporary measure. If the crew is young or untrained we suggest that the skipper makes a rota and allocates tasks to each member - checking lifejackets, safety harnesses, rigging screws etc. It makes them feel part of a working crew and if they are busy they won't dwell on the idea of sickness too much and good on-board management makes for a happy ship.

DEFECTS LOG - If you think that any piece of equipment may give trouble, please make a note of it on the form provided and pass it to us for actioning upon your return.

SEASICKNESS - If you are prone to seasickness may we suggest you try a supply of Stugeron or other anti-seasickness tablets, which are available over the counter at any chemist. These may induce sleepiness however and, if you prefer, you could try Sea Bands. Sea Bands are worn on your wrists, like a watch, seem to work well on most sufferers, and are available in our shop. The main advantage of Sea Bands is that they work almost immediately whereas tablets can take up to 2 hours to take effect.

FATIGUE - If you have travelled a long distance to join us, we suggest that you do not immediately start off on a long passage until you are rested. In all the excitement of joining the yacht your tiredness may temporarily disappear, but later on at night when on watch you will become less efficient and may be more prone to suffer from cold and seasickness unless properly rested and fed.

HARBOURS - Some harbours are used by fishing vessels which come and go at all hours and visitors should always treat local traffic with respect. Visitor moorings are usually free but harbour dues should be paid where applicable as these usually go towards maintenance and non payment gives yachtsmen a bad name. Litter should not be dumped in harbours or at sea, but disposed of in bins ashore. Remember you are now liable to a fine of up to £2,000 for dumping rubbish at sea within 25 miles of land.

PIERS - Please do not tie up to piers overnight or whilst leaving the yacht unattended to go ashore for the evening. Very few piers are designed for yachts and if left at a pier, the yacht will almost certainly be damaged either by rubbing against the uprights of the pier which are not suitable for yachts or by other boats coming alongside.

BERTHING - It is always best to rehearse the procedure well in advance. When going alongside a berth, please do so slowly and under control. Have fenders positioned at pontoon height and neatly spaced at the widest part of the side which will lie alongside. Bow and stern warps should be already attached with two crew members standing at the widest part of the yacht, one holding the coiled bow line and the other holding the coiled stern line in readiness to either throw to someone on the pontoon, or to step ashore with to secure round a cleat. Try to avoid a downwind or cross wind situation where extra crew may need to be deployed around the deck to fend off. Smooth berthing can be difficult particularly on a strange yacht, but please never feel afraid to ask for assistance. The skipper who does everything right first time hasn't been born yet!

MOORING BUOYS - The H.I.E. (Highlands & Islands Enterprise) has laid visitors' moorings in several west coast anchorages over the past few years and handed these over to the local communities to maintain. The presence of a visitors' mooring does not necessarily imply that it is suitable for use in all conditions. Some are in very exposed positions and are only safe and comfortable in quiet conditions or specific wind directions. It may be that you will be more comfortable anchored in another part of the bay or harbour, or some other anchorage nearby. If you need to anchor in the same location as a mooring, please keep clear of its ground tackle, and attach a tripping line to your own anchor. You should never rely on being able to secure to a mooring, pontoon or pier. Most visitors' moorings consist of a large blue GRP flotation buoy with a ring or shackle on top, to which you attach the yacht's own 3-metre mooring strop. Others may already have a Pick-Up which could be of dubious quality. It is best to use the on-board mooring strop provided. Most visitors' moorings will be marked as such, and will usually give the safe displacement (gross weight) or length. Information about last maintenance date may also be shown.

You may have difficulty reaching the ring (on top of the buoy) from the bow. The solution is to lead a warp from the bow to the lowest point amidships and bring the yacht alongside the buoy. You will then be able to slip the warp through the ring and take the end to the bow. On larger yachts with high freeboard it may be necessary to work off the stern steps or send a crew member out in the dinghy with a handy size warp. If the visitor buoys are not maintained in a good condition you may find a rusted shackle or ring on top of the buoy which could cut through rope in minutes so please use the yacht's own mooring strop (which you will find in the cockpit locker) for shackling to the ring and looping the other end around a bow cleat. We suggest you tighten the shackle with a shackle key, pliers or adjustable spanner and if the sea is lumpy or there is a strong wind, please use seizing wire to ensure the shackle cannot unscrew. A hand-tightened shackle can easily work free and you will find seizing wire in the yacht's toolbox if required. A secondary line to the buoy is also recommended as a safety precaution.

The practice of securing two or more yachts to one mooring is generally regarded as un-seaman like, even when their combined weight is within that indicated on the buoy, for if weather conditions deteriorate damage to hulls and rigs will almost certainly occur as the yachts pitch and roll. Nevertheless a practice has arisen for yachts (within the weight marked on the buoy) to raft up on moorings for short periods in settled weather but yachts moored in this manner should not be left unattended nor overnight. You may be approached to share a mooring with another yacht and will require to exercise judgement in light of the conditions before you agree. Even in light airs, where two yachts are lying alongside, damage has arisen from 'fender rub' where the thin blue gelcoat line under the gunwale has been rubbed off completely. There is no obligation to share moorings and you should not presume that you may tie up alongside another yacht without first asking and receiving permission but generally the practice is not encouraged. Almost without exception, damage occurs to yachts when tied up alongside piers which are generally fendered to take ships not yachts and this practice is not encouraged.

ADMIRALTY CHARTS – Less experienced crew members may not be aware of the value of the comprehensive and up to date charts kept onboard each of our yachts. The chart packs on each of our boats are extremely expensive. These charts obviously have a busy life and are very expensive to replace so we ask that particular care is taken when removing and replacing charts from the chart table or when folding or plotting courses. For general planning and crew use, please use the uncorrected Imray fold up charts which are more convenient for this purpose and please use the notebook provided for notes rather than marking the charts in order to minimise the wear and tear. Soft pencils only should be used on charts and any pencil marks made should be carefully erased after use. Soft pencils are provided and we ask you not to use pens or your own pencils unless of course they are soft ones. A plastic chart case is provided to protect charts in wet weather. Please replace the charts in numerical order with the lowest number to the top. It would be appreciated if you could ensure that the charts are back in their correct order when you return to base. If you find a damaged or torn chart please note down our chart number on the defects report. Finally for obvious reasons please make it a golden rule that no tea, coffee or other drinks are to be placed on the chart table at any time.

ENGINE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

1. Only one person must control the engine
2. Do not smoke when you put diesel fuel in the tank
3. Do not clean, add oil or adjust the engine while it is running
4. Do not make adjustments that you do not understand
5. Avoid excessive running of the engine where it could cause a concentration of toxic emissions (e.g. near fish farm cages)
6. All persons must be kept at a safe distance from the engine whilst the engine is running.
7. Do not permit anyone with loose clothing or long hair near moving parts of the engine
8. Do not remove the filler cap of the cooling system while the engine is hot
9. Do not allow sparks or a naked flame near the batteries because the gases from the electrolyte are highly flammable
10. Before starting the engine, ensure there is no smell of gas in the bilge or elsewhere
11. Check the oil level before starting the engine and make sure that it is within the marked field on the dipstick, ensuring the dipstick is fully seated. Oil levels are regularly checked by us and, during a charter, no extra oil should be needed. If extra oil is needed however, please recheck the level very carefully and bear in mind that the sump is a lot shallower than that of a car and therefore doesn't require so much oil to top up. The difference between the high and low marks on the dipstick can be less than half a litre! You will find a small quantity of spare engine oil in a plastic container located in the cockpit locker but please be careful not to overfill as this can lead to total sudden engine failure. If you start the engine then suddenly remember you should have first checked the oil dipstick level, please stop the engine and wait 20 minutes or so to allow the oil to settle down again in the sump before checking the dipstick level.
12. Before starting the engine, check the fresh water header tank (where fitted) is filled to correct level. All the yachts in our fleet have a fresh water header tank.

STARTING AND STOPPING THE ENGINE – You will be given a full briefing on the engine procedures when we hand over the yacht. Some of the yachts have split charging systems but the following techniques apply to the rest of the yachts.

Switch the main battery switch to position '1'. Ensure seawater intake valve is open (we never close it except to clean the strainer). If the yacht has a T bar stop switch, make sure it is pushed fully home. Set the engine control lever in the cockpit to neutral (red button depressed) and push the control lever about 1/3 of the way forward. Switch the preheat on (where applicable) for about 20-25 seconds and press start or turn the key.

After the engine starts, please determine if you have sea water cooling by looking over the stern rail (and underneath the recluse where applicable) and you should see water flowing out. Once you have established you have sea water cooling, please then check your oil and temperature gauges (where fitted) and ensure the ignition light goes out (in the cockpit control panel) which tells you the alternator is charging your batteries. Once the engine is running, please turn the battery isolator switch to "BOTH" in order to charge both batteries.

In the case of yachts with a T bar, to stop the engine pull the handle out until the engine stops and then switch the ignition off. It is important to ensure that the T bar is pushed fully in once the engine has stopped otherwise you will not be able to start the engine again when you need it.

If your yacht has an ignition key switch, to stop the engine, turn the key fully anticlockwise until the engine stops then immediately return the key to the off position.

The engine should be stopped from as low revs as possible. Ideally the engine should be allowed to run at idle or tick-over for a few minutes prior to cutting out the engine. This method of stopping also helps the engine to start more easily next time. The battery isolator switch must never be turned off until the engine has stopped or you will destroy the alternator which will spoil your holiday.

ENGINE (general) - Only one person should be in charge of the engine and gear controls as damage can easily result if someone takes over who is not familiar with the procedure. The engine starting and stopping procedure and maintenance checks will be demonstrated to the Skipper and First Mate on handover and ideally no one else should control the engine during your holiday. You will be shown the position of the sea water intake, strainer, fresh water header-tank, oil dipstick, oil filler cap, battery isolator switch, control lever, ignition key (or start button), forward, neutral and reverse gear positions. All our yachts have sea water cooled auxiliary diesel engines therefore water must be seen to be coming from the exhaust at all times when the engine is running. Constant vigilance and keeping the engine bilge clean and dry are usually the key factors in spotting trouble in advance.

The cooling system functions normally when the temperature gauge (if fitted) is between 80-90 degrees Centigrade. If the temperature is too high or if the engine starts to change decibel level, lose power, overheat or you smell burning then please stop the engine immediately and investigate for the following possible reasons with suggested remedies:

- a) Insufficient coolant in fresh water header tank - top up with fresh water as required. Only add hot water to a hot engine – adding cold water to an overheated engine will crack the engine block.
- b) Restriction in raw seawater strainer - switch off seacock, clear strainer, open seacock.
- c) Check tension of fresh water pump drive belt.
- d) Damaged water impellor at sea water pump (see Engine Cooling on next page).
- e) Air in fresh water system - only caused in the unlikely event of you removing a fresh water hose from the intake side, or if the fresh water header-tank filler cap is loose or not seated properly.
- f) Faulty thermostat or temperature sender unit.
- g) Examine prop for fouling (e.g. rope, fishing net or lobster pot). You may need to engage a local diver to clear the obstruction

We do everything we can to reduce the likelihood of problems but, given the sometimes hostile environment the yachts are regularly sailed in, occasionally a problem arises which hopefully the above will enable you to overcome any difficulty experienced.

If you feel excessive vibration through the soles of your feet or through the steering wheel, it could indicate you need to check the engine mountings and stern gland. There are many floating objects around these waters and, depending upon how hard they are in relation to the speed you are doing if you hit one, the prop shaft could be pushed out of alignment causing an engine mounting to break. If only one breaks, this could put sufficient strain on the others to cause another to break unless you are careful to reduce the engine revs and motor slowly. In serious cases of collision with unknown floating objects, you sometimes find excessive water leaking into the engine bilge from the stern gland, which would indicate a bent prop shaft.

The stern glands on most of the yachts do not require any particular attention as they are self water-lubricated. Yachts with a sail drive obviously do not have a stern gland.

The diesel engines installed on our yachts have all been fully serviced and maintained to start with ease. The engine mountings, oil levels, drive belts, stern glands and all filters are routinely checked by our engineer between charters.

ENGINE COOLING - When checking the coolant level in the fresh water header tank, please be careful not to remove the cap when the engine is still hot as scalding could result. The diesel engines in the Alba Sailing fleet have both fresh water and sea water systems.

Always look over the stern to check for water spitting out from the exhaust every time you start the engine. Water should be seen coming from the stern at all times when the engine is running.

If water is NOT seen coming from the stern when the engine is running, you should immediately stop the engine, and check the seawater strainer. To do this you close the seawater intake valve and examine the seawater intake strainer, then clear away any debris that may have entered. As some water strainers have washers or large "O" rings fitted, please be careful not to lose them otherwise the system will draw in air and cause a malfunction in the cooling system. If after clearing the strainer, you start the engine and water is still not coming out at the stern, please switch off the engine immediately. Check the raw seawater impellor which is usually located at the front of the engine behind a little round brass plate with three short grub screws holding it

on. After removing the brass plate with a small screwdriver - being careful not to tear the paper thin gasket - simply examine the impellor for damage and replace if necessary. There is a spare on board. To replace, you pull out the old impellor and you hold the new impellor against the casing where it is to go in, then slowly turn the impellor clockwise until all the blades enter the housing. Fit the rubber disc at the front of the impellor and remember to refit the gasket and refit brass cover plate. Open the seawater valve, start the engine and check again for water coming out at the stern. It should be emphasised that the impellor seldom fails unless it is run absolutely dry. Very occasionally thick green slimy seaweed sticks like glue to the outside of the main seawater intake valve which may need a diver to remove. Normal sailing activity may, however, clear any outside obstruction.

GEARBOX - The single control lever operates both the speed and the drive shaft. The important rule for gearboxes is to "Engage Gear SLOWLY". Always wait until the engine has dropped to idling speed before changing the travel direction of the control lever. Damage to the gearbox will be caused if you shift gear when engine is above 800 rpm. **When under sail, the control lever should always be kept in the neutral position and the propeller be allowed to turn freely.**

Fisherman's floats and stray lines may be encountered virtually anywhere therefore a good look out is required at all times. If you are unfortunate enough to pick up some debris or you motor into a weed strewn anchorage, weed and miscellaneous debris can foul the prop and prevent you from engaging forward or reverse gear. If you try a hurried gear change from forward to reverse this could result in damage to the gearbox and in any case usually tightens whatever is round the prop. A dive down to cut the obstruction free is usually necessary. If the prop becomes fouled and you try to motor forward or to reverse, you could also bend the prop shaft and therefore cause a leak into the engine bilge

The gearbox oil level will be checked by our engineer before handover and should not need to be topped up during your holiday but if you have reason to suspect there may be a problem, or you notice a pool of oil lying underneath the gearbox simply check the dipstick level mark. The gearboxes all use engine oil (except Raphy G, Miss Victoria and Explorer of Sleat). As the gearboxes should be capable of running from one season to the next without topping up, any loss of oil would normally be as a result of damage or a worn seal. You will find spare oil in a plastic container located in the cockpit locker but please be careful not to overfill otherwise serious damage could result. **DO NOT TOP UP THE GEARBOX OIL ON MISS VICTORIA, RAPHY G OR EXPLORER OF SLEAT.**

STEERING - **Please be very careful when going astern.** The steering can be under extreme pressure when reversing and caution is required. The rule here while reversing is **keep a firm grip on the tiller or wheel at all times**, go slowly and in a straight line". Never let go of the helm while reversing, the consequent pressure on the rudder, could cause severe damage to the rudder or steering components. Use slow deliberate movements at all times when reversing, trying to avoid severe turns and never let the wheel spin out of your hands. All yachts have emergency tillers and you will be shown how they are fitted as part of your pre-charter briefing. The most likely way that you can have a problem is, for example, if the yacht suddenly hits a rock or goes aground and the skipper, in the heat of the moment, gives the wheel to the first available crew member while the skipper goes down below to look for any water ingress and the crew member reverses off the rock and lets go of the wheel because he has not been briefed The resultant shattering of the pintles or steering quadrant spoils the rest of your holiday and creates unnecessary work for the Coastguard.

UNDERWATER DAMAGE - To help us identify the extent of any damage, we routinely inspect the keel bolts and engine mountings in between charters but it would be helpful if you would please notify us if you suspect there may be problems in this area. **It is your duty to advise us at the earliest possible opportunity if you suspect you have hit a rock or gone aground during your holiday (we normally hear from other sources anyway) and even if there is no internal signs of damage we may still require to take the yacht out of the water to examine the hull and keel below the waterline.**

IGNITION KEYS - These are easily bent by exerting too much pressure when turning to start or stop and rather vulnerable to people standing on them if left in the ignition. If the key should break flush with the lock you could try using tweezers from the first aid kit to extract the remains. Some yachts just simply have push button ignition switches and no key.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM – All the yachts all have 12 volt systems, 60/70 Ah alternators with 2 or 3 batteries. If the alternator and the regulator are to function correctly, it is important that the following instructions are observed:

- a) The battery isolator switch must not be switched off until the engine has stopped.
- b) The battery isolator switch must not be switched through the 'off' position while the engine is running.

c) Never switch off the engine by means of the ignition key when there is a 'T' pull stop lever provided in the cockpit.

MAIN BATTERIES – Many of our yachts have a battery isolator switch showing four positions Battery 1, Battery 2, Both and Off. Position "1" is used for starting the engine, position "2" is used for domestics, position "both" is used when you are running the engine and position "off" is used when you leave the yacht to go ashore. By keeping to this system, you will be able to keep Battery No.1 in a well charged state for starting the engine. Battery No.2 is for domestic use. Please be careful not to turn the battery isolator switch through the "off" position when the engine is running or you risk damaging the alternator and thus having no means of charging.

The remaining yachts have a split charging system and it is not normally possible to use the "engine" battery for the domestic systems or the "domestic" battery for the engine starting. However, in the unlikely event of the "engine" battery being completely flat, then there is an emergency switch which will allow the "domestic" battery to be used for engine starting. The position of this switch will be demonstrated during the handover.

On arrival, you will normally find your yacht connected to the shore power and we would ask that you take the shore power cable with you when you depart and reconnect it upon your return. This means that the next charterer will be sure to start their holiday with fully charged batteries. Away from the marina, charging a battery that is even partially flat can take considerably longer than you may think. Lack of battery power is seldom due to faulty batteries - more often it is simply the result of over use of the electrical services and inadequate battery charging. To allow a diesel engine to idle in neutral while at anchor or tied to a pontoon berth is inadequate as far as charging the battery is concerned and can lead to gearbox damage. It also increases the chances of sucking in jellyfish, seaweed or debris through the seawater intake, so this practice is definitely not recommended. The alternators fitted to the engines do not achieve their full charging capacity until rotating at 4000 rpm which is normally equivalent to an engine rate of about 1500 rpm. The charging system is therefore at its most effective when you are moving along in gear at normal cruising speed. If you wish all batteries to be charged at the same time while the engine is running, then turn the isolator switch to 'both'. If you wish only battery '1' to be charged up then turn the isolator switch to position '1'.

Time taken to fully recharge the batteries obviously depends on how much use you have made of the electrical services but under normal conditions, perhaps one or two hours motoring underway each day will be sufficient to recharge the batteries. If you use the fridge and heating a lot then a little more motoring underway may be necessary. If you use an electric anchor windlass, the engine requires running at cruising speed for at least 30 minutes to replenish the batteries. As stated above, running the engine to charge the batteries should only be done when underway at cruising speed.

REFRIGERATION - All the yachts have refrigerated cold boxes. Some yachts have a "Supercool" refrigerator which uses less power than a conventional fridge and can be run in "economy" mode when the engine is not running. The remaining yachts have a more conventional system but we recommend that all refrigerators are only switched on when the engine is running. Full details will be given during the handover.

HEATING - The main point to remember is that the heating system requires well charged batteries before it will start. The first 2-3 minutes of operation is when the heater draws a high current so we always recommend that you have the engine running at fast idle (12rpm) when starting up the heater. The system works on a cycle. 5 seconds after switching to the "HEAT" or "ON" position the blower motor will start (fan noise), then 30 seconds later the fuel metering pump will automatically switch on. Some smoke may emit from the exhaust skin fitting at first, this is quite normal as the heater is diesel fired. Usually the exhaust outlet is located on the side of the cockpit coming on centre cockpit yachts or on the transom on aft cockpit yachts. 1.5 – 2 minutes later the heater will fire up. The desired comfort level in the cabin can be selected by adjusting the thermostat control dial. When you turn the heater switch to the "OFF" position, the system will run through its cycle for another 2 or 3 minutes before automatically switching itself off. The main cause of failure is low battery voltage or needless disruption of the above mentioned cycle. As the heating unit can get rather hot, please be careful to keep the emergency box of flares, fenders, warps etc well clear of the unit and its exhaust pipe. If the heating is run over a long period of time the battery level will eventually drop. The heating system relay will shut off the heating if the voltage drops below 11.5 volts.

NAVIGATION AIDS - It is good seamanship never to wholly rely upon any electronic navigation aid or completely upon any particular pilot book. Even a fully corrected Admiralty chart may not have every rock charted that your yacht could possibly hit. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information on Admiralty charts and pilot books, it should be appreciated that it may not always be complete and up to date. Admiralty Notices to Mariners (where applicable) should be read in conjunction with the Admiralty Charts. The skipper must be the final judge of the reliance he can place on any information given.

PILOTAGE – There is no substitute for careful pilotage. Within our cruising area most obstacles are unmarked by buoys or perches. However except in very confined waters very few of these rocks or obstructions are not clearly marked on the charts and/or noted in the Pilot books. There is a very comprehensive chart folio on board as well as all the local pilot books available. Plan well in advance and carefully check the largest scale chart available when passage planning or before entering any anchorage. Always proceed with great caution when in confined waters. Even a low speed impact with a rock can cause severe injury to crew members and many thousands of pounds worth of damage to the boat.

SPEED LOG - These do not normally give much trouble but if your log suddenly stops working then it is normally due to marine growth or weed which has collected on the paddlewheel. If you have to withdraw the unit for inspection please be ready to cover the hole, or fit the blanking plug, otherwise you can expect to see a fountain of water entering the yacht! To clean, you simply clear the debris and replace the paddlewheel with the markings on it facing forward and aft. Remember to sponge up any water that may have entered the bilge. A word of warning - the faint hearted among your crew are best not to attempt withdrawal of the unit as the sight of a fountain of sea water gushing towards you can be a bit alarming if you have not done it before.

ECHO SOUNDERS - The echo sounders on our yachts are set to read from the bottom of the keel. Manufacturers of echo sounders cannot guarantee accurate readings in all depths or in all types of sea-bed and often, over-reliance on the echo sounder has been known to induce a touch of paranoia among the less-experienced, particularly when the readings look suspect. If you are using your echo sounder with the engine running, turbulence can cause spurious or inaccurate readings. When choosing a suitable depth for anchoring, you do have a lead line on board which is easy and fun to use and will confirm any readings. Normally you should allow at least 4 metres for the tidal range.

GPS – Now that selective availability has been removed, GPS is more accurate than ever but you should still treat the readings with caution and always use them in conjunction with conventional pilotage and position fixing. Signals may be subject to error and waypoints can of course be entered incorrectly. It is simply good seamanship to have more than one source of navigational information to fix or confirm your position.

VHF RADIO COMMUNICATION –

You should be aware that because of the local terrain, there are several areas where reception is patchy or non-existent. The VHF should always be on channel 16. The details of how to obtain the weather forecast from the Coast Guard will be given at handover and are written down in the Skippers Handbook (on-board document).

The portable VHF is for **emergency use only** and should remain on board the yacht at all times. There is a charging socket fitted to each yacht to enable the portable VHF to be charged on the yacht. The portable VHF works more efficiently when standing outside in the cockpit.

MOBILE TELEPHONES - See the note on page 4. If you bring your mobile phone, then you may also charge it on board the yacht. Please be sure to keep all mobile phones away from the GPS, Log, Echo Sounder etc. As there are several anchorages on the West Coast where VHF transmissions are impossible, there is a chance your mobile phone could be useful in such a situation.

INSTRUMENTS - If any instrument becomes faulty please do not attempt to repair it as more damage may result which could nullify any guarantee.

GAS DETECTORS - there is one installed on each yacht and these will sound not only if there is a gas leak but may sound if the yacht's batteries are low or if someone sprays deodorant or any other aerosol near them.

ELECTRICAL SPARES - There are spare batteries and bulbs on board each yacht and if you find it necessary to use any of these, please dispose of the old ones (don't put them back in the spares box!) and either replace or let us know upon your return so that we can replace them.

HEADS - Please do not put kitchen roll, cotton wool or anything other than toilet tissue down the toilet as these will almost certainly cause a blockage. Apart from toilet tissue, nothing should go down the toilet unless you have eaten it first! Before use, please ensure there is enough water in the bowl to prevent toilet tissue becoming compacted at the bottom of the bowl. Inlet and outlet toilet seacocks will be open on handover. **Wet Wipes will block the heads instantly.** If you choose to put used toilet paper in a bag rather than down the toilet you **MUST ENSURE** that you remove the bag from the yacht and dispose of it yourself.

All the yachts in our fleet have the ITT Jabsco type of pump. To operate these, if the bowl is empty, firstly move the flush lever to the open position, and pump the handle up and down until the flushing pump is primed and water enters the bowl. Operate the pump with long, smooth strokes for efficient and easy operation. During

use, pump as necessary to keep the contents of the bowl low enough for comfort. After use, keep the flush control shut and pump the handle until the bowl is empty. When the bowl is empty, open the flush control again and continue to pump until all waste has left the boat. Most of our yachts have discharge pipe lengths of 4 to 5 metres and the manufacturers recommendation is for 7 complete up/down strokes per metre length of discharge pipe. 35 up/down strokes therefore may be required. It is best to leave the bowl empty when finished flushing to minimise odour and spillage. After use please shut the flush control. The usual cause of blockage other than putting something down the toilet which you should not have, is air loss caused through too vigorous pumping of the handle leading to cracking of the plastic. Unblocking these toilets calls for basic engineering or plumbing skills and it is necessary to ensure that all the valves are put back in the correct way.

Unblocking a toilet which someone else has blocked calls for dedication beyond the normal call of duty. If the yacht is returned to base with a blocked head **the minimum charge for unblocking is £100 plus VAT**. In the past, we have found that some crews, eager to leave the yacht immaculate, clean the toilet area with paper kitchen towel and then attempt to pump it away - this of course does not work as the paper is too heavy for the pump. To sum up therefore, please remember the pumps can only accommodate natural waste and soft toilet tissue. Anything else leads to problems. **'Wet Wipes' will always block the heads instantly.**

PRESSURISED WATER SYSTEMS - All the yachts have pressurised fresh water systems and to avoid air locks developing when filling up the tanks may we suggest that you simply turn on a tap slightly. Within 2 or 3 days use a tank can easily run dry. If this should happen to you, please remember to turn off the electric pump switch until the tank is refilled otherwise the electric pump will almost certainly burn out.

SHOWER DRAIN PUMPS - The shower drain filters need to be removed and cleaned after each shower and are located through the heads cupboard doors near the seacocks. The filters are easily accessible and the plastic cover simply turns to remove and gain access to the gauze strainer.

OUTBOARD ENGINES - If you choose to hire an outboard engine from us, we will demonstrate the starting, running and stopping procedures during your pre-charter briefing. Please do not leave it attached to the inflatable tender and tow behind the yacht otherwise you risk wrecking the engine. It is considered bad seamanship to tow an inflatable dinghy but is even worse to see a dinghy being towed complete with an outboard engine attached! When not needed, please clamp the outboard engine to the yacht's stern rail bracket, and use the lanyard as a backup to the clamp nuts.

If the outboard is accidentally immersed in seawater you must immediately do one of the following:

- a) If the engine will start, run it for a minimum of 30 minutes.
- b) If it won't start – leave it attached to the pushpit – we will strip it down when you return.

The new Honda Outboards are supremely reliable but if immersed in seawater they always require a new clutch – the cost of the clutch and fitting is £175 plus VAT – this will be deducted from the security deposit.

STOWAGE OF PETROL OR OTHER FLAMMABLE LIQUID BELOW DECKS IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN.
Plastic petrol cans must be lashed to the stern rail.

RIG - The yachts are all Bermudan sloops with a conventional and simple to use rig – this will be explained to you at handover along with how to put in and shake out a reef. All our yachts have roller reefing. None of our yachts have Spinnakers.

SAILS - These have all been carefully overhauled during the winter months but if you see any stitches or batten pockets coming undone or if any damage occurs please notify us at the earliest possible opportunity so that we can arrange for repairs before the next charter. We only charge for sail repairs if the sail has been abused and should there be any doubt, this decision is made by the sail loft. There is a sail repair kit on board, including sail repair tape, for minor repairs. Even a new sail can be permanently damaged very easily if it is left flogging or incorrectly trimmed so if you are unsure about any aspects of sail handling or trimming please do not hesitate to ask.

GENOA REEFING – You must remember to keep the genoa halyard tight and cleated at all times. A common mistake is for crew members to mistakenly slacken off the genoa halyard which results in the genoa sagging, making furling difficult or impossible due to halyard wrap which can lead to eventual breakage at the halyard or foil. The headsail furling drum and the stainless steel retaining toggle bottle screw should be inspected on a daily basis in case of possible damage caused either by the motion of the yacht or by the anchor/chain catching. The genoa furling system will be explained during the pre-charter briefing but if you are in any doubt as to the correct operation don't be afraid to ask. It is very easy to severely damage an expensive genoa with incorrect sheeting angles and excessive or insufficient tension.

MAINSAIL REEFING – The system for reefing the mainsail is again part of the handover but skippers should ensure that the crew are familiar with the reefing procedures before setting off.

The procedure for slab reefing is as follows:

Bring yacht head to wind, ease kicking strap (or boom downhaul) and take up slack on topping lift, ease main halyard and slowly lower mainsail to the required reef cringle. The reef cringle on the luff is hooked on to fixed hooks by the gooseneck. The leech is reefed down with a line running to a winch at the mast or fed aft to the cockpit. Harden up main halyard, make fast, ease topping lift then harden kicking strap or boom downhaul. Stoppers at the gooseneck allow the same winch to be used with any line on the boom. Lines not in use are kept clear of the winch by the special fairleads. Either leave the sail to flap or tidy it up by tying lines loosely around sail and boom. Reefing eyes can easily pull out if the tidying up lines are tied too tightly.

Procedure for single line reefing is the same as above except you reef by hauling in on one line only. A system of blocks inside the boom draws both luff and leech down to the boom together. Where there is a zip on the sail cover, please take special care when using the zip on the sail cover.

Some other yachts have a system of Lazy Jacks which require special care to avoid chafing. The correct procedure for reefing will be fully explained when we hand over the yacht.

Above all remember that conditions can change very quickly in these waters. The golden rule is: **If in doubt reef early.**

RUDDER LOCK - When tied up alongside or at anchor please centralise the rudder by lashing the tiller or locking the wheel, using the brake knob on the steering wheel, to prevent damage to the rudder bearings.

SPRAYHOODS - These are only lightly constructed and crew should be reminded that they are not to be leaned on heavily or trodden on.

INFLATABLE DINGHY - When not in use these should always be stowed on deck and never towed behind the yacht as not only is it considered bad seamanship but **it is not covered by insurance if lost**. To operate the valves on the dinghies, simply press one finger down the middle of the valve and turn the little white plastic star to the left or to the right - please do not attempt to use a spanner or a damaged valve may result. Please carry the dinghy over any rough terrain.

COCKPIT LOCKERS - As our yachts are basically standard production yachts, the cockpit lockers are not really designed to take the enormous quantity of gear which we must carry and therefore some sympathetic understanding of the problem is required. A tidy ship is an efficient ship! – and a safe one so try and keep the warps neatly coiled and stowed in the cockpit locker in such a way that they are ready for immediate use at all times. It is also wise to do a daily inspection to ensure that nothing is snarled around the gear controls or diesel fuel on/off tap and that nothing is left so close to the warm-air heating ducting that it might burn. In particular you should make a point of ensuring that the emergency flares container is kept well back from any source of heat! The kedge anchor, with warp and chain which is already attached, should be readily accessible in case of emergency and the 20 metres of buoyant warp (for man overboard) should be left attached to the aft rail in order to avoid confusion with the mooring warps which are stowed in the cockpit locker. From a safety point of view, think of what might happen if you cannot throw a rope quickly enough to someone who has just fallen in the water, or if you cannot gain access to the kedge anchor quickly enough to prevent the yacht from dragging onto rocks or if you have to start the engine to clear a hazard but fail to manoeuvre clear because an obstruction is wrapped around the gear controls.

ANCHORING - Please use the anchor cable generously and in a moderate to fresh breeze of between 15 and 20 knots or more it is strongly recommended you use the kedge anchor provided in addition to the main anchor and **set an Anchor watch**. After dropping the bow anchor, the yacht should be allowed to come slowly astern, paying out the chain. If allowed to fall away quickly, particularly in conditions of weed, kelp or hard sand, the anchor may slide without penetrating. The anchor will usually take up a little way back from where you dropped it. Once you think the anchor is holding please make sure it has properly 'dug in' by going slowly astern under engine taking shore transits to ensure you are not dragging. You cannot tell what lies beneath the surface when you drop anchor, but some care in anchoring, and the longest scope possible, will help you to sleep soundly if the wind blows heavily suddenly in the night. We recommend that you do not leave your yacht at anchor without a competent watch on board.

The main anchor chain is usually 50 metres and is marked every 10 metres. The kedge anchor has about 50 metres of warp and a minimum of 10 metres of chain attached.

For anchoring where there is a probability of fouling such as Tobermory, there is a buoyed tripping line aboard. There is a body of opinion against using tripping lines in view of the additional risk of the line fouling a propeller so the final decision whether to use or not rests with the skipper. As Tobermory is a very popular anchorage, you may well find that the best holding is already taken up with permanent moorings. To alleviate congestion, there are now pontoon visitor berths and over 20 visitors moorings available in Tobermory Bay. Payment for the use of a berth or mooring should be made at Seafare, the chandlery on the seafront. It is considered bad seamanship to pick up unknown mooring buoys, as you do not know what ground tackle has been used or if the owner himself wishes to use the mooring. There is a booklet on board each yacht (Welcome Aboard) listing the location of the visitors' moorings, which you are entitled to use if available.

One final word about Tobermory. If you have to anchor well out in the bay, please ensure that your anchor is well dug in as the bay shelves rather steeply in places and we know that some of the local divers make a lot of 'beer money' by untangling anchors after a night of dragging anchors and drifting across the bay!

ANCHOR WINDLASS - Adopt the habit of removing the handle, when not in use, from the drum or gypsy cap to avoid personal injury and the possibility of inadvertently releasing the clutch. Please also ensure that fingers and loose clothing are kept clear of the chain and gypsy whilst they are in motion to avoid personal injury.

The yachts have electric/manual windlasses which will be demonstrated on handover but the rules for the operation of these windlasses are as follows:

Electric Anchor Windlasses - Safety

1. Ensure that limbs, fingers, hair and clothing are kept clear of the windlass and anchor during operation.
2. Ensure that there are no swimmers or divers nearby when dropping the anchor.
3. Regularly check clutch nut for tightness. During normal use, it is possible for it to work loose. Always remove the special windlass spanner after tightening the clutch nut.
4. When the windlass is not in use, isolate its power supply by switching off at the circuit breaker/isolator.
5. While at anchor, the load on the chain must be transferred to a cleat. Most yachts have dedicated strop with chain hook and line for this purpose.
6. DO NOT use a windlass as a mooring cleat, for towing, to haul someone up the mast, or as a solo means of securing an anchor in a bow fitting - this is especially important while underway. DO NOT use the windlass for ANY purpose other than deployment and recovering of anchor.

Electric Anchor Windlass - Electric Operation:

1. Check for swimmers. Keep clear of moving anchor chain.
2. Release bow anchor pins. Switch on power switch located by chart table.
3. Press switches UP or DOWN to operate the windlass.
4. After sufficient chain is out and you have reversed the engine SLOWLY to dig the anchor in, transfer the chain from the windlass to the cleat using a round turn, figure of 8 then a half-hitch or the chain hook and bridle where supplied.

Electric Anchor Windlass - Manual Free Fall Operation:

1. Locate clutch lever over gypsy nut.
2. Rotate lever 90 degrees anti-clockwise to release chain.
3. Control descent of anchor by pulling clockwise gently on the clutch lever.
4. Rotate lever fully clockwise to lock chain.

Finally, when using an electric anchor windlass, run the engine for at least half an hour to replenish batteries after each use.

SALVAGE - Please do not accept a tow without agreeing a price first. Please be wary of someone offering over-friendly assistance if you are in trouble and require a tow. Unfortunately yachtsmen can be viewed as fair game for a fat salvage fee by a minority of fishermen who of course, derive their income from the sea and all who sail in it! The kedged anchor warp doubles as a towrope.

GAS SAFETY

Gas is one of the greatest hazards onboard a yacht and therefore care should be taken to use the gas cooker with caution. The rule to remember here is "Leave hatches open (for ventilation) when using cooker and switch off the gas bottle after use". The gas cooker and ancillary fittings are inspected by us between charters but if you do suspect any problems at handover please report immediately.

1. Turn off cooker taps and gas supply at cylinder in gas locker after using cooker. Be sure the cooker taps are closed before opening cylinder valve.
2. Be sure to apply ignition source to burner before opening cooker tap.
3. The cooker needs fresh air to work properly, therefore please open a window and leave washboards out when using the cooker.
4. Do not spray aerosols in the vicinity of the cooker while it is in operation.
5. Spillage should be wiped off as soon as possible. If you leave the cleaning until the spilt food solidifies on the burners, they become blocked. To clear any blockage, after turning off the gas, blow out the blockage using pressure. (For example using the dinghy pump). Stubborn blockages may need to be slightly dampened first. To avoid the burners becoming blocked, wash with a warm soapy cloth after each use and finish off with a dry cloth, while the cooker is still warm and before any food has a chance to harden.
6. If aluminium cooking foil is used in the oven, it should be used to cover food and dishes. It must NOT be allowed to block the oven flue outlet or smother the burner.
7. Do not try to use the oven as a space heater as it is not designed to be left on for extended periods.
8. If sailing in rough weather, make absolutely certain that the gas cylinder is turned off and make sure that the cylinders themselves are lashed down firmly.
9. Carbon-monoxide (which is invisible, tasteless and deadly poisonous) is produced by any gas burning appliance when there is inadequate ventilation, ie if all the hatches are closed and the cooker oven is lit to heat the cabin, then it is likely that before long carbon-monoxide will build up as the ventilation becomes inadequate. The first effect of carbon monoxide is to remove the will of the crew to take action. They fall asleep and die - possibly in a matter of hours - before the gas appliance is fully starved of oxygen and goes out.
10. Turn off cooker taps and gas supply at cylinder in gas locker after using cooker.
11. Be sure the cooker taps are closed before opening cylinder valve.
12. Remember that it only takes a small leak of gas of up to 10% volume of air to cause an explosion. Therefore if you suspect a gas leak, warn others by shouting 'GAS – GAS - GAS', and follow this ABC:

Avoid Explosion - Put out cigarettes, pipes, match flames and anything else hot enough to ignite the gas. Do not touch any interior light switches or any electrical fittings of any kind as a spark could trigger off an explosion. You should turn off the engine to prevent a possible explosion should gas be drawn into the warm engine compartment.

Block Further Gas Escape - Check to see whether the gas is escaping from an unlit burner - are the knobs at off? If they are, the leak is elsewhere. Shut off the gas supply at the taps and cylinder (or other valve at the inlet to the installation), and call Alba Sailing who will arrange a qualified gas fitter to rectify the fault.

Clear Away Escaped Gas - Open hatches and windows to disperse the gas. Pump the bilges using the bilge pump handle which is located in the cockpit, lifting the floorboards for safety. If an electric bilge pump is fitted, DO NOT USE IT, in case a spark ignites the gas.

It should be stressed that gas appliances are safe provided they are correctly installed and used. We have left your cooker correctly adjusted and ready to use, but if you suspect the appliance to be unsafe, do not use it or let anyone else use it. ALL the cookers are fitted with flame failure shut off devices on the burners which means that in the event of the flame being accidentally extinguished, the gas supply will be cut off to the burner. A certain technique has to be used to light a cooker which is fitted with the flame failure device which is as follows: To light a burner, push in the appropriate knob, rotate anti-clockwise to the full 'ON' position, and apply a spark or match to the burner. Provided you have remembered to switch on the gas bottle located outside on deck, the cooker should light immediately. After the cooker is lit, you then hold the knob in for a further 15 seconds otherwise the flame will extinguish. If the burner goes out when the knob is released, you simply repeat the procedure but hold the knob in for longer before releasing. The tap can then be rotated to the desired setting. To turn off the gas, rotate the knob clockwise until you reach the off position.

Nearly every piece of equipment on a yacht has an idiosyncrasy, and a gas cooker is no different! As the control knobs are only lightly constructed, please use them gently. In the unlikely event of a burner not lighting, 99% of the time it is due to the burner being clogged with a piece of food or fat. The cure is to simply switch off the gas at the bottle outside first of all, then blow through the burner using a dinghy pump or try cleaning the

burner using a hot soapy cloth ensuring you refit the top of the burner correctly if you remove it. The flame should be blue although it may have some yellow tipping. The flame height should be level and stable.

WARNING

- 1 DO NOT LIGHT GAS APPLIANCES IF LEAKAGE IS SUSPECTED
- 2 BEWARE OF ANY UNUSUAL SMELL AS THIS MAY INDICATE LEAKAGE FROM THE APPLIANCE
- 3 DO NOT CHECK FOR LEAKS WITH A NAKED FLAME
- 4 MAINTAIN GOOD VENTILATION AT ALL TIMES

Please be suspicious of gas cooker failure if you have only just connected a full gas bottle. Very occasionally new bottles do not work because they have been over pressurised by the gas refilling dealer. If you should be unfortunate enough to get a faulty cylinder and are not within easy reach of a gas dealer, you simply disconnect the bottle from the regulator and, keeping the bottle outside in the open air, (making sure no one is present with a lit cigarette or anything else which could trigger off an explosion), open the valve to release a little gas, then reconnect the bottle and try the cooker again.

When changing a gas bottle, please ensure that the valves on both the full and empty cylinders are turned off before changing. Also please take care to avoid stripping the brass threads which are present on some connections in the gas bottle stowage locker. One gas bottle usually lasts a 6 berth yacht for one week. However this obviously depends on how much cooking you do.

SAFETY AT SEA

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT - Keeping warm and dry helps you stay alert and safe. If you wish you may hire waterproof clothing from Alba Sailing.

WEATHER - Careful attention to the weather forecast can make all the difference between an enjoyable cruise and disaster! You may obtain up-to-date weather information via the Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 (then to 67) or from any of the radio stations listed in the Yacht's Book (which remains on board).

ACCIDENTS - Every Yachtsman has made errors of judgement. What matters is that you spot the error early and remain in control while you try to solve the problem.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS - There is one fire extinguisher located in each cabin, one in the cockpit locker within easy reach, one fire blanket by the cooker and one automatic extinguisher is located in the engine room.

HATCHES - All hatches must be kept closed when underway at sea.

BOW ANCHOR - This should be lashed or pinned before getting underway.

LIFEJACKETS - Each crewmember should be allocated a numbered lifejacket and know where it is stowed and how to use it. Details of how to don a lifejacket are in the Skippers Handbook as it is a slightly different procedure for each make of jacket. Make sure all crew members have read and understood the document about wearing and using a lifejacket.

For the safety of others, please notify us if any jacket is accidentally inflated during your charter. Many of the automatic type rely on a salt capsule dissolving to trigger inflation. Leaving your lifejacket on a wet dinghy floor WILL result in an inflated jacket. Inflated lifejackets result in a charge for re-arming. Over the last 12 months we have found a number of lifejackets that have been inflated then 'hidden' – or even worse deflated and repacked and hung up again to resemble a regular lifejacket to avoid paying the re-arming charge. This is risking someone's life – **PLEASE DO NOT DO IT** – if a jacket is inflated **TELL US!**

Remember there are two spare lifejackets per yacht.

LIFEJACKET LIGHTS - These are for emergency purposes only

SAFETY HARNESSSES - Each crewmember should be allocated a harness and know where it is stowed and how to use it. Correct adjustment of the harness is essential to ensure it performs properly. The shoulder straps and waist belt should be adjusted to suit the individual as soon as possible after boarding. This will save time when it is required, particularly in an emergency. The safety line should be located at the centre of the chest and if you wear one in conjunction with a lifejacket, please ensure that one does not interfere with the function of the other and, in particular, that in use, the safety line is not likely to foul the lifejacket. Any damage or chafe should be reported to us. Useful tips are to sit down when working on deck if you can and hook on short so you can't go over the side.

RIGGING - After sailing in strong winds or choppy seas, the motion of the yacht could easily have slackened or disturbed something and therefore you are advised to visually inspect the standing rigging bottle screws and all shackle pins on running rigging in case anything is amiss. The stainless steel wire standing rigging is immensely strong and stable. The fittings by which they are attached are extremely reliable but even so, rigging failure doesn't reveal its intention to break in the same unambiguous manner as its rust-prone galvanised predecessor. A stainless steel shroud might look perfect, and it could have lasted for many years, but one day the cumulative forces exerted on it, may cause failure without warning. For this reason many skippers adopt the practice of having a daily walk around the deck for a visual inspection of standing and running rigging. The first sign of failure will probably be the parting of a single strand or the loosening of a shackle pin. The rigging on all our yachts is changed every 10 years regardless of condition or sooner if required.

Suggested daily checks:

1. Forestay deck fitting for tightness and the presence of the split pin or circlip on the bottlescrews. This area is vulnerable to damage from the anchor or its associated cable.
2. Port & starboard shrouds including a check on split pins or circlips having torn through the tape creating a potential hazard

3. Mainsheet track ends and gooseneck fitting, particularly if you have accidentally gybed or if you intend sailing in heavy weather
4. Backstay deck fittings and twin back-stay coupling if any
5. Deck lifelines (jackstays) including the end fittings for fatigue and tightness
6. Guardrails for stranding and tightness
7. Tightness of main halyard and topping lift shackles
8. Tightness of mainsheet shackles and pins

Warning: A mast may survive following the loss of a shroud, but when a forestay or a backstay fails, the mast is in immediate and catastrophic danger. There is just a chance that the combined effect of the lower shrouds and the leech of the mainsail will hold the mast up long enough for the crew to act. If the backstay goes, the yacht should be brought immediately to windward and should the forestay go, the yacht should immediately sail downwind. The spare halyards which each of our yachts have been fitted can then be used as an emergency forestay/backstay.

SEACOCKS - The seacocks have all been serviced and lubricated to work with ease but if any become stiff or if a weep develops, please report to us for rectification. We only use top quality DZB seacocks when replacement is required.

SKIN FITTINGS - These have all been checked for tightness and soundness but if you suspect a leak or anything amiss, please report to us. Each hose leading from a skin fitting should have two hose clips and it is a wise precaution, particularly after sailing through a lumpy sea, to check that the clips have not slackened off. If you keep the bilges clean and dry on a daily basis, it is easier to trace a leaking seacock or skin fitting.

LIFERAFT - It is important to get the use of liferafts into perspective. You should remain with the yacht and only use the liferaft as the very last resort. The final decision rests with the skipper naturally and we can only advise that unless the yacht is sinking fast, or on fire, please don't use the liferaft. You will stand more chance of being rescued, and suffer less from exposure in a flooded yacht, than in a tiny liferaft. Stability and protection from the elements are largely a matter of size, so a yacht provides a greater potential for safety than a liferaft and it is also much easier to see. Remember a great deal of water can be pumped out of a yacht by using the bilge pumps. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that successful boarding of a liferaft is not, in itself, sufficient in all cases to ensure survival, particularly in rough seas and cold weather. Experience has shown that certain vital actions must be taken as soon as possible to maximise your chances of survival.

The Key Points Of Survival:

1. Only abandon to the liferaft when you are absolutely certain that the yacht is going to sink or go up in flames.
2. Cold kills quickly. Stay dry and gain a place of safety and warmth at the earliest opportunity.
3. Know your drills - rehearse and remember them and make sure every member of your crew knows them too.
4. Keep your lifejackets readily available at all times ensuring that everyone knows how to use them.
5. **Don't lose the will to survive.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE LIFERAFT:

Before launching the liferaft, all crew should put on warm clothing, waterproofs and lifejackets (if not already worn) and have ready such extra emergency equipment as you think may be necessary such as flares, water, food, grab bag, VHF etc then in the case of a real emergency:

- (a) secure the painter line of the raft to a strong point on the yacht
- (b) throw the liferaft overboard
- (c) after approximately 25 feet of the line has been paid out, a sharp tug on the painter will inflate the raft
- (d) the strongest crew member should climb into the liferaft first in order to help the others
- (e) the rest of the crew should transfer to the raft in an orderly fashion and sit round the perimeter to avoid the raft capsizing
- (f) transfer extra gear to the liferaft **ESPECIALLY THE HANDHELD VHF** and cut the painter line free from the yacht
- (g) examine the survival equipment in order that all occupants understand the use of the flares and other equipment
- (h) once clear of the yacht, stream the drogue (always located by the entrance) which will prevent the raft from drifting rapidly away from any survivors who may still be in the water. The drogue will also prevent the raft from moving an excessive distance from the distress position
- (i) close raft entrance - body heat from the survivors will help heat up the raft
- (j) bail or sponge out water, pump up the buoyancy chambers (and inflatable floor) with the pump and plug any leaks with the leak stoppers you will find in the raft

(k) either in the grab bag or in the raft itself, you will find a pole which you fit to the inverted top hat on the floor of the raft. Connect the inflatable radar reflector to the top of the pole and hang it out of the observation port to aid the rescue authorities in locating your position.

All Alba Sailing yachts have liferafts with RORC packs or SOLAS B packs. The DoT regulations require additional equipment to the RORC packs and those yachts whose rafts are so fitted, have a 'grab bag' of useful equipment to be taken into the raft with you. There are also 'grab bags' for the rafts fitted with Solas B packs but these only contain thermal protective aids (or TPAs). The TPA's should be worn as soon as practicable once inside the raft as a protection against hypothermia. Some yachts have some TPAs in the liferaft and some have TPAs in the 'grab bag' but EVERY yacht has the same number of TPAs as there are berths on the yacht so provided you take the 'grab bag' with you into the liferaft every crew member will have a TPA.

If the liferaft is accidentally inflated, a cost of about £650 is incurred to have the cylinder recharged and the raft repacked, together with a charge for hiring another one whilst the first one is being attended to. If the liferaft is damaged in any way it will be replaced and the full cost charged to the charterer – the cost of a liferaft is an average of £2500.

NAVIGATION - Please remember that the buoyage system runs in line with the direction of the flood tide. In the case of the Isle of Skye, the flood tide passes around the outside and north, east, then south down the inner passage between Skye and the mainland (known as the Kyles of Lochalsh). At about the halfway point in the Kyles of Lochalsh, the buoyage system may appear to 'change direction' from what you would normally expect. It is therefore wise to double check your position on the Admiralty chart at this point. At spring tide in the Kyles of Lochalsh, a passage through here can flush a 10-metre yacht through at 15 knots which is quite exhilarating!

Unlike the Isle of Skye, the flood tide at the inner passage between the Isle of Kerrera by Oban and the mainland (known as Kerrera Sound) runs northwards through the inner sound. Extra caution is also required before attempting a passage through the Cuan Sound (about 10 miles south of Oban) or Dorus Mhor (about 20 miles south of Oban). The Gulf of Corryvreckan, the roars of which can sometimes be heard 20 miles away, is located between Scarba and Jura about 25 miles south of Oban, and as it is notorious for being the second biggest whirlpool in the world, you are strongly advised to keep well clear. Local yachts do go through the Gulf of Corryvreckan at certain states of the tide but it takes some courage and excellent timing! Before passage planning, the pilot books should be read in conjunction with reference to the Imray charts or Admiralty charts provided. There are 4 pilots on board which have very clear sketches and aerial photographs of most of the West Coast and Hebridean Islands. **You MUST read and understand the pilot books everywhere you go.**

Provided you read the pilots, keep a continuous check on your position on the Admiralty chart in addition to keeping your eye on the weather pattern, the average yachtsman exercising due caution and not being over ambitious, should have no difficulty in navigating these waters. Please remember that the prevailing winds are south-westerly and the Coastguard are contactable on VHF anytime (except on the hour and half hour for 3 minutes) on CH 16.

NIGHT TIME NAVIGATION - Although we have rarely personally encountered any submarines, the Navy do carry out submarine exercises from time to time anywhere in the cruising area. As submarines at periscope depth and without lights are a possible hazard at night, it is now recommended that yachts on night passage run their engine and use pulpit navigation lights, as masthead lights may not be seen at close range through a periscope. Naval vessels can be contacted, if necessary on VHF Ch 16 or 6.

We try to do everything humanly possible to ensure the success of your holiday. We also take a lot of pride in our yachts and many of our customers come back for return visits which we consider a great compliment. We genuinely do like to hear from you if you have any suggestions for improvements in either our management or to the yachts themselves.

We very much look forward to welcoming you aboard and hope that you will enjoy a memorable holiday and finally may I thank you for your great patience in reading these notes!

We hope you will find the formal handover interesting and informative. You will save considerable time and vastly increase your knowledge of the boat by having read these notes. If there is anything you would like to know in advance please feel free to either phone or email me and I will do my best to help you.

David Banks

© Alba Sailing 2020 All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced without the written permission of the copyright owner.

Meals Afloat

Some people only ever eat ashore, others never leave the boat. Whatever your preference for catering we aim to help you. Some people arrive with car loads of food others arrive with nothing and go shopping. Here are some suggestions.

In Oban there is a fair selection of supermarkets. In 2018 a new Marks and Spencer Food Hall opened and in combination with Tesco, Lidl and Aldi you can find most things that you might need.

The local taxi drivers are used to taking people shopping and coping with the array of boxes and carrier bags on the way back.

There is a very good traditional butchers in Oban and we would be happy to direct you. (Jacksons of Oban)

Getting Here

We have an arrangement with a local airport transfer company who will collect you from your airport or train station etc. Their contact details are on the download page of our website. The advantage is that they are cheaper than you would be able to arrange yourself and the drivers effectively give you a running commentary as you travel through the amazing countryside to get here – a lovely start to your holiday. The fare also includes a 1 hour provisioning stop at a supermarket on the outskirts of Glasgow if you wish.

If you are travelling by car we have free car parking on site.

Information Download

Visit our website at www.alba-sailing.co.uk and go to the download page. Here you can download all sorts of information – yachts inventories, charter agreements, tide times, charts of the area, packing lists, price lists of food suppliers, and airport transfers etc. Please only print them out if you really have to. If there is anything you might find useful that isn't there then please let us know and we will happily add it to the list.

Alba Sailing and our employees have no direct connection with any of the above companies. We recommend them on the basis that we have personally selected them for the quality of their goods/services and fair price. **We encourage you to support local businesses by shopping in the area.** If you have had great service etc from a company that might be of interest to other sailors please do let us know and we will add them to this list.

Alba Sailing Chandlery

Our waterfront premises at Dunstaffnage Marina not only house our offices and engineering workshops, but also our small but well stocked chandlery. You will find a range of Gill and Helly Hansen wet weather gear including the latest breathable clothing. We also have sea boots, thermals, gloves, hats, deck shoes and other Gill clothing - all at competitive prices.

Local Charts and Books

Our yachts have all the major pilot books and a comprehensive chart folio aboard, but if you may wish to plan your holiday in advance we are pleased to offer you the following Imray Charts. These are ideal for passage planning and cover the whole of our cruising area. **Chart C65** is the most popular as it takes in the majority of likely destinations for a one week charter.

C67 WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND - North Minch & Isle of Lewis

C66 WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND - Mallaig to Rudha Reidh & Sound of Harris

C65 WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND - Crinan to Mallaig & Barra

C64 BELFAST LOUGH CRINAN AND ISLAY - Tayvallich, Port Ellen, West Loch Tarbert

Also available are the recently updated series of Imray/Clyde Cruising Club pilot books.

Let us know your requirements and we will ensure that we have what you need ready for you when you arrive or delivered to your home. We can accept UK cheque, Mastercard or Visa payments for mail order and postage is charged at cost.

Alba Sailing

EXTRAS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

We would be grateful if you would give us as much notice as possible of your requirements so that we can have your items ready for when you arrive and to make sure we have sufficient stock.

Please send your payment with your order.

ADULT WATERPROOFS - £40.00 per week

Gill or Helly Hansen - hi-fit trousers and jacket, fully lined, waterproof and breathable

Sizes Available:

Extra Small (36" Chest)

Small (38" Chest)

Medium (40" Chest)

Large (42" Chest)

Extra Large (44" Chest)

CHILDREN'S WATERPROOFS - £20.00 per charter

Jacket and Trousers Sizes Available: Age 4, Age 6, Age 8, Age 10, Age 12

SLEEPING BAG - £20.00 per charter

Freshly laundered and with cotton lining. Please advise us if you require two sleeping bags that zip together to form a double.

SLEEPING BAG LINER - £3.00 per charter

Freshly laundered.

TOWELS - £5.00 per charter

Freshly Laundered - bath size

PILLOW WITH FRESHLY LAUNDERED PILLOWSLIP - £3.00 per charter

BLANKETS - £5.00 per charter

PLEASE NOTE THAT, FOR HYGIENE REASONS, WE DO NOT HIRE SEA BOOTS BUT THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR SALE IN OUR SHOP.