

Waiting for the tide

with the editor



Quote of the year:
“We shouldn’t have parked here, we’ve been keel-clamped”

What a picture! It’s been all over the world’s press and the internet. We print it here in PBO for posterity.

How on earth did *Knight Star* manage to balance at a crazy angle on a rocky outcrop without falling over? Well if you look very closely you can see that she doesn’t have an ordinary keel...

With brilliant timing this Starlight 35 rocked up into photographic history just as we are publishing an article on the Starlight’s designer Stephen Jones and his wing keels. You can see a photo of what *Knight Star*’s keel is like on page 37.

Intrigued as to what Yachtmaster Arthur Manning and Coastal Skipper Peter Williams were doing so close to the giant La Longue south cardinal tower in the first place, I gave them a call. It seems that adrenaline and a will to win were the culprits.

We were stuck

They had just started out on a two-handed race from Binic in North Brittany to their home port in Jersey. Peter told me: ‘Other boats were going close in to the tower, which marks a small rocky patch about three miles offshore. Both our chart and the chart plotter showed the rocks drying 1.8m, but we were above half-tide, probably in over 8m of water.’

Skipper Arthur continued: ‘It was around 8.00am. We all had our spinnakers up. Someone was pinching our wind so we went just a bit closer to the tower to gain

speed. Then we landed! The pull on the spinnaker heeled us over, which with the wing keel deepened our draught. We realised we were stuck!

This risk-taking must seem ludicrous to cruising folk, but to racers it is quite normal. In this year’s Round the Island race more than a dozen boats went aground on Ryde Sands. I’ve seen one of the world’s top navigators aground on the Solent’s Bramble Bank, and I’m sure every racing sailor has

“Someone was pinching our wind so we went just a bit closer to the tower...”

been aground at some time. However, *Knight Star*’s mishap takes some beating!

‘We were about 300 metres north-west of the tower, and with over a knot of tide under us we crashed to a halt at 7.5 knots,’ Arthur told me. ‘We were heeling and bouncing, and truly stuck. I said to Peter: “We shouldn’t have parked here, we’ve been keel-clamped.” The water was clear and we could see that about two thirds of the keel was resting on the rock and one third was overhanging a 15ft drop. If the boat toppled over we’d be in a lot of danger. We got the spinnaker and mainsail down and sent a Mayday.’

‘We were rescued by a French fishing boat crew. Then the lifeboat arrived, and once we could see that *Knight Star* wasn’t going to fall over, we went ashore and had a nice French lunch. At 5.30pm we

went back in the lifeboat and towed her off. The lifeboat crew saw us safely back until we were lifted out at St Quai Pontrieux. They were great people, very helpful. They charged us €1,745 which was for five hours, but they spent much longer than that helping us.

‘The boat has just a bit of keel damage, and the surveyor said she was structurally sound, so we sailed her back to Jersey the next day. Pantaenius insurance have been great throughout the experience.’

Peter added: ‘It’s a fantastic advert for the Starlight, she hit the rocks at speed and bounced up and down and yet she’s fine.’

When he got home, Peter found a more detailed chart showing La Longue drying 7.2m. I looked at PBO’s copy of the *North Brittany and Channel Islands Cruising Companion* and found it doesn’t give any heights for La Longue rocks, probably because, with a great big South Cardinal on top, they assume sailors will keep well clear.

As it happens, I’m about to sail a wing-keeled Starlight off the Brittany coast in a few days’ time. I’ll certainly give those cardinals a wide berth!

Call to join the elite

Arthur and Peter knew they’d joined the yachting elite when a phone call came from the South West Shingles YC, an invitation-only club that celebrates noteworthy nautical mishaps. Members are said to include Mike Golding, Ben Ainslie and various Navy captains. So the *Knight Star* crew are in good company.

No problem?

By another coincidence, in this issue we have an article called ‘Aground, no problem’ in which you’ll find top tips on how to get off the bottom. To which I’d like to add, ‘some groundings can be a bit more problematic than others...’

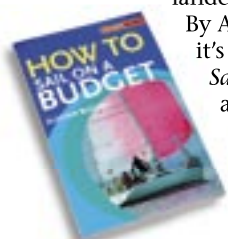
Cheeky duck house

The other day I spied a new addition to Fareham Creek in Hampshire. The MP Sir Peter Viggers, famous for claiming £1,645 on expenses for an ornamental duck house, lives just down the road in Gosport, and in a nice piece of tongue-in-cheekery David Hardy decided he’d like a duck

house, too. David, who owns the Westerly brokerage and spare-parts shop, Trafalgar Yacht Services, told me he’s fond of ducks and decided to build a house for the mallards that swim outside Trafalgar’s office. And he won’t be claiming it on expenses.

Boating on a budget

Here’s a timely book that’s just landed on my desk. By Alastair Buchan it’s called *How to Sail on a Budget*, and it’s full of money-saving advice from Alastair’s experience. It covers everything from finding a boat, buying it, deciding where to keep it, looking after it and, most important of all, going sailing in it – all for as little money as possible. Even very experienced boat owners will



find something of use in here, and for anyone just about to take the plunge into the nautical world, it’s a little bible. It’s published by Adlard Coles and costs £11.99.



Ben Meakins

PBO’s new writer

Welcome to PBO’s new staff writer Ben Meakins. If you think you’ve seen his name

before you’d be right, he’s been with us as a trainee since January and has already written articles on engine servicing, the OSTAR-winning ‘wreck to racer’, liferafts, and fishing from your boat. Ben’s first sail was at six weeks old on a Sigma 33. He helmed dinghies in his teens and now crews on his family’s Sigma 38 in which they are national champions for the fifth time. Ben gained a degree in

PBO Mystery photo competition

Win a handheld VHF

This month’s prize is a Standard Horizon HX280E handheld VHF worth £99.95. For more information, visit www.standardhorizon.co.uk

QUESTION: How many crew were on *Knight Star*?

Write your answer, on a postcard, stick on the PBO token (right) and send to: September Mystery Photo Competition, PBO, IPC Media Ltd, Westover House, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1JG. Please be sure to write your name, address, phone number and email. **Closing date:** Monday 31 August 2009

July’s Mystery photo was St Aubin’s in Jersey. Winners of Sundog Sunglasses are Scott Johnson, Alan Plummer, Mr M D Rose, Tony MacDonald, Dave Horsford and Mrs Francis.



Maritime History from Exeter University, despite spending his study leave building a cedar-strip Canadian canoe, and a replica 74-gun warship with a group of family and friends. (This is an amazing craft; he has promised me he’ll write an article about it.)

He’s just become a boat owner with a half share in a 30-year-old Impala. Look out

for his articles next month on building a cruiser from a kit and how to dry out your boat safely (hint – try not to park it on a pile of rocks).

Enjoy this issue of PBO!
Sarah Norbury



LOWER QUAY DUCK PAVILLION
 (PRIVATELY FUNDED)

PAVILLION RULES:-

1. NO HEAVY PETTING
2. NO BOMBING
3. NO DODGY EXPENSE CLAIMS
4. NOT SAFE FOR HUMANS
5. ANY DUCK USING THIS FACILITY WHO IS NOT WEARING AN EU APPROVED LIFEJACKET DOES SO AT HIS/HER OWN RISK

Ducks have a new home on Fareham Creek

■ To receive my monthly email newsletter, sign up on our website: www.pbo.co.uk



SNSM/AFP/Getty Images

