

Blue Legend



Adventures of the Legend - 2018 to 2022

M/Y Blue Legend

Nelson 80 by Richardson Marine

Built 1996 in Cowes to Lloyds 100A1

Dimensions 80ft x 21ft draft 5 ft - 64 MT

Powered by two Caterpillar 3212 each producing 1,000 HP

Accommodation for 6 guests and 2 crew

Range 2,200 NM @ 10 knots

817 NM @ 22 knots

British Register number 729327

Bought 24th April 2018 - Sold 28th June 2022

Distance Travelled approx 11,150 NM



Introduction to Blue Legend

This is the continuing story of the 80 foot Nelson called Blue Legend. The motor yacht was built in 1996 with a length of 69 foot. The Nelson is famous for its exceptional sea keeping characteristics, its Halmatic hull and a high quality finish.

She was built to the highest standards of construction - Lloyds 100A1. This is an equivalent level to most commercial vessels of over 300 feet, and requires a very vigorous set of construction and safety standards.

Blue Legend was built by Richardsons of Cowes, and designed by TT Design who are the authentic Nelson designers. The hull was moulded by Halmatic of Porchester, in Hampshire, who are world famous for their quality of construction.

The original layout was for the galley to be forward along with the master cabin and crew cabin, with two guest cabins aft port and starboard.

In 2006 the original owner decided he required more room for his crew, and additional space for a larger galley. The vessel was dry docked in Palma, Majorca and, under a TT Design and Lloyds 100A1 construction brief, was lengthened to 80 feet - making her the largest Nelson in the world. The design called for the hull to be extended astern of the rudders which ensured there was no need to move the engines, or lengthen the shafts.

The design was brilliant as it not only increased the waterline length and therefore stability in a sea but also gave extra buoyancy aft which allowed the vessel to hold additional fuel ,and to increase her top speed by 1 knot to 22.3 knots.

It is impossible to see where the extension starts, although quite a few people think they can spot it! However the transition from old to new is completely seamless.

After 2006, and until 2012, the original owner continued to cruise the vessel in the Mediterranean before he sold her to an Italian who kept her in Monaco for four years before laying her up in a closed warehouse in Porto Ercole which sits north of Rome.

My history with boats

My name is Paul Markland, and I have been a professional deep sea mariner for some 20 years. I have been involved in the sea all my life either as a profession or a hobby and hold a Master Mariners ticket. I have owned many boats between 1970 and 2018 but most of these have been what I would call day boats, i.e. under 30 foot and open without any cabin.

However in 2015 a friend of mine from Hong Kong talked me into jointly buying our first cabin cruiser - a Windy Khamsin of some 34 feet. That year we used the boat regularly either together or more often, as he lived in HK, solely with my family. It led to trips to the Isles of Scilly and the Channel Islands, as well as several coastal ports to the East and West of our home in Salcombe.

By the end of that year my wife had decided we needed something bigger so our whole family could travel in comfort. My partner was up for this, and we bought our second boat from Berthon - a Windy Chinook of some 42 feet.

This boat boasted three cabins and two heads, and was much more spacious, and more modern than the Khamsin. It was fitted with the latest IPS drives that allow the boat to be manoeuvred by a joystick which was a great help for my mate, who was just starting out in his boating life.

During 2017 Berthon sent me a booklet of their brokerage boats, mostly the larger ones, and that was the first time I saw Blue Legend. As a professional seafarer one glance and I realized that this was a very special boat designed for serious cruising in nearly all weathers. But having no interest in buying an 80 foot boat I just kept an eye on what Berthon were doing with her whilst enjoying another year cruising in the Chinook which included a month in the Irish Sea and Inner Hebrides. That was a cruise which can only be described as awesome.

As the year drew to an end I wondered what had happened to Blue Legend and whether she had been sold. When I enquired with Berthon, they informed me she was still for sale, lying in Porto Ercole in Italy and would I like to go to see her. At the time there seemed little point as I owned a half share in a 42 foot boat and still had no real aspiration to go much bigger.

The Inspection

However, in December I was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. I had an operation which was closely followed by catching Encephalitis on the underground during a day visit to London. When I had recovered, I asked my wife if we could go to Rome and see Blue Legend - if only as an opportunity to recuperate somewhere a bit different.

So, in late January 2018 we found ourselves staying in a gorgeous hotel in central Rome, and then being driven north to Porto Ercole to see Blue Legend housed in a warehouse at Nautica Cala Galera.

In 2014, when she had been laid up, they had obviously gone to a lot of trouble to ensure she was properly winterised for long term storage.

However, she had not been cleaned since that time and was covered in a thick layer of dust outside, but she was clean and tidy inside.

First impressions were a bit mixed; all the cushions and biminis had been removed from the outside and dumped in the wheelhouse which made things seem very pokey. The once beautiful carpets looked OK, but the furnishings in general had begun to look very dated and a bit threadbare.

Notwithstanding all this, it was clear that the accommodation was of the highest standard and looked magnificent. Under the layer of dust outside she was in excellent condition - except around the stern where a cover had been rubbing on the hull for 4 years and had rather dulled the finish.

The engine room was spotless. It was obvious the machinery had been left in a very good condition on layup, and the bilges were clear of oil and were dirt free.

She was a beautiful yacht that now just needed some TLC to bring her back up to her former glory.

I was told that the owner had recently passed away, and his heirs were keen to sell her. But the environment she was in did not lend itself to an easy sell, hence the reason I believe she was still on the market.

We returned to the UK unsure of what we were going to do. My partner was not keen on owning a half share partly because he would not be able to operate it on his own and partly because it is just so big. I however had the bit between the teeth, and felt more and more certain I would like to own this boat. My wife, ever supportive, agreed to go along with the plan to see if we could agree a price with the owners.

Needless to say, although the boat would be very difficult to sell in her storage environment, the heirs would not give up on their asking price. However, after much debate back and forth we finally came to an agreement, and we bought Blue Legend - subject to a sea trial and survey.

Coding Survey and Launch

This was going to be a very difficult and expensive exercise. The boat needed launching which would cost some Euro 2,000, a survey - some Euro 5,000, and, if I bought her, a further haul out and back in with the application of antifouling and anodes, which would cost another 6,000 Euros. I decided to take a punt and carry out the majority of the survey in the shed and also pay for the anodes and antifouling to be done before we launched for the sea trial. This was risky as, should I decide not to buy the boat, I would have spent close to Euro 10,000 by the time we got her back out of the water and into the warehouse again.

Having made this decision, I arranged for a MCA Coding Surveyor, Richard Linford, and my favourite mechanic, Chris George, to come out to Porto Ercole



for a week whilst we did all the work we felt necessary before the launch. We left the UK on the 17th April 2018.

We stayed in a great hotel in Porto Ercole at the end of the sea front, and each night after work ate at one of the many little restaurants along the quay. During the day Richard worked hard on his survey whilst Chris and I got to grips with the engine room, fuel system, navigation equipment and bilge layout.

On 22nd April we were ready for launch and the transporter arrived to take us to the lifting gantry in the marina harbour.

As the boat had been out of the water for four years, it's relaunch took quite some time and we left the boat in the water overnight - supported by the slings - in case of a catastrophic leak in the hull or its fittings.

The next day we went on a sea trial with the Italian skipper, Mauro. This turned out to be a total disaster. The guy had not driven the boat for four years and had forgotten most of the control systems- to such an extent that we managed to get outside the breakwater before losing the engine controls and being marooned at sea! Somehow or other we crawled back into the marina and tied up. Mauro then disappeared, never to be seen again!

However, Chris George, our engineer, and I sat down to figure out what had gone wrong and quickly realised the problem was Mauro, not the boat. The next day we had sorted out the problems. In the meantime I had taken the gamble and moved forward with the purchase. This was finally agreed late in the afternoon of April 24th.

The Voyage Home Part 1

Over a few days we then sorted out most of the obvious issues. We also purchased a new life raft, an electric bicycle, and a whole lot of food and equipment. In addition, our voyage crew had arrived in Porto Ercole ready for the trip. Two good friends, Andrew Thompson and Chris Simons, joined us - making us a crew of 4. In the meantime, our surveyor, Richard, had flown home having completed the survey and recommended us to be coded as a Commercial Yacht.

We decided we would depart Porto Ercole the morning after the formal handover, early in the morning so as to make the most of daylight while crossing the Sardinian Sea to the Bonifacio Straits before dark. Rather fortuitously the boat had some 6,500l of marine diesel (MGO) on board which should be enough for us to reach Palma without loading further fuel.

By this time we were happy with the engines and one generator, and we set off in the hope of an easy crossing to Palma in Majorca. How wrong can you be? Within five miles of leaving the marina we realised that the autopilot was shot and not working, that the fluxgate compass was just about working, and that the steering rams had considerable wear in them making the rudder sloppy.

So it was going to be hand steering to Palma at least. The engines however were running fine and the engine control system more or less working perfectly with just an occasional spurious alarm which we could not find the source of.

However on the far side of the Bonifacio Straits we hit a strong North Easterly, and had this behind us all the way to the Southeast corner of Majorca. This meant that steering was very hard work and that the boat was surfing every few minutes at up to 22 knots, which is quick, seeing as our engine settings were for 12 knots!

However, Chris and I rotated watches along with Chris Simons and Andrew Thompson as second hands. We soon got used to the motion and the boat handled as we had expected, brilliantly. Her sea keeping ability is like no other yacht I have owned and gave one a real feeling of security in what was a Force 7/8 all the way to Majorca.

We considered diverting to Mahon in Minorca but in the end just aimed for Cap de Ses Salines, and then things improved rapidly as we cruised along the south coast to Palma.



But we realised that we had to do something about the autopilot and the steering. Neither Chris nor I felt continuing to Gibraltar was an option and so we had to find a repair yard in Palma.

It was at this point that we were put onto Nick Clark by a friend of Chris. Thank heavens for that as Nick knew exactly what to do, and soon had us booked for a berth in STP, the superyacht repair yard in the centre of Palma. So we arrived in Palma, anchored overnight and then the next day, on the 24th April, we went into STP and moored stern to on their repair berth. And Nick was waiting on the jetty for us!

STP - Palma

It turns out that Nick owns both an electronic equipment business and a hydraulic repair service. How very convenient! We quickly ascertained that we would have to wait a week or so for any equipment we ordered, so Chris George and Andrew flew home, while Chris Simons and I got the work programme under way, sorting out a pile of minor, but important, jobs around the boat.

Horizon Electronics ordered a new Simrad autopilot for us and Marine Hydraulics dismantled the steering ram and took it away for a rebore and polish.

Being almost next to the crew café in STP, we spent quite a lot of time in there which was tremendous fun and gave us the opportunity to meet crews from other yachts who were all preparing for the season.

As the days passed I thought it would be good for Myra, my wife, to fly out and have a few days on board. It was just £50 return on EasyJet! So we had a great week of meals ashore in Palma and some sightseeing. I had bought an electric bike in Porto Ercole which I had not really used until now but this became a real boom in enabling us to go for food and equipment both in the dockyard and in the city

Voyage Home Part 2

By the 14th May things were almost ready for our departure and Chris George and Andrew Thompson flew back in, whilst Myra flew home. And finally on May 16th we departed STP and Palma and headed for Gibraltar to load a full tank of fuel before the trip North to Salcombe.

The steering and autopilot worked perfectly on departure from Palma and the weather had improved significantly so the voyage down to Gibraltar was largely uneventful. However, as we were some three weeks behind schedule, it was good to see Europa Point coming out of the haze ahead of us.

We proceeded straight into Marina Bay where there is a refuelling berth which does not require us to clear into Gibraltar. We previously had plans to go ashore in Gibraltar but as we were so far behind schedule we didn't bother. This, however, caused a near mutiny by the crew as we had only loaded fresh food sufficient to get to Gibraltar so from here North it was going to be my favourites: baked beans and wine gums!

Having loaded all the tanks full of fuel, we found the boat actually carries 13,000 litres, not the 11,700 we had been told. This is good, as the more we have the bigger her range. Heading North to Lisbon was again uneventful. However the mutinous crew insisted we stop in Cascais at the entrance to the Rio Tejo that leads into Lisbon in order to go shopping. We also planned to top up with some fuel to ensure we had plenty for the trip across the Bay of Biscay to Salcombe.

We got the fresh food, but not the fuel as the pumps were broken in the marina.

Cascais to Salcombe

We then left Cascais , without staying overnight, to press on to the UK.





On departure, whilst just rounding Cabo Raso, our autopilot suddenly failed, and we had to manually steer the boat. In a bit of a panic I phoned Nigel at Horizon Electronics in Palma. He was just leaving for a party but stopped to listen to our symptoms. Unbelievably he cottoned onto the problem straight away. Someone had leant against the steering control lock button in the wheelhouse, which, unbeknown to us, locks out the autopilot. One press and we were back in business. Needless to say after the trip, a guard has been fitted to the button. Phew! I was in despair for a few moments there.

Problem rectified, we steamed at 12 knots for Cabo Finisterre and Biscay beyond. The wind was moderate up to the Cape and immediately into the Bay but then tapered off and Biscay was dead calm in the middle. However as we approached Finisterre the breeze got up a bit and the visibility started to fall in a misty rainy sort of way.

We rounded Ushant and made a beeline for Salcombe some 90 miles away. Nothing was going to stop us now, and we steamed into Salcombe, flags flying, to be met by a reception committee of several boats including two of the harbour master's launches. Our 30 day journey, that should have taken 10 days, came to an end as we tied up on Normandy pontoon, and we welcomed Myra, and the many other well wishers, on board for a beer.

We had travelled 1,975 NM in 160.3 hrs over 29 days at an average speed of 12.32 knots - consuming 17,661 litres of MGO at a rate of 110 litres per hour. We arrived at 17.30 on 21st May 2018.

Summer in Salcombe

For the rest of May and most of June, I was busy working on the boat completing a long list of jobs that we had made on our way from Italy. I also managed to recruit a crew member, Nathan Dundas, who like me was on the Salcombe lifeboat crew. He was available until the end of the year when he hoped to join the Royal Navy as a medic.

One of the biggest jobs was cleaning and then polishing the hull and cabins. This took several weeks to complete before we were happy with the finish. At the same time Nathan also had the varnish work outside to tidy up and touch up.

By July she was beginning to look really good.

Having fitted a Simrad Autopilot, I made the decision that any new navigation equipment we bought would be the same make. So, during this period we fitted a new dual processor plotter, Broadband radar, and several other navigation control units and devices.

Later in the Summer we took the boat to the Isles of Scilly and the Channel Islands, both trips an easy jaunt from Salcombe. There were also day trips to Fowey, Falmouth, the Helford River, Dartmouth and Torquay. The boat behaved immaculately and we just could not have been happier.

St Katherines Dock, London

The list of jobs though was still growing and it would be well into 2019 before the list was finally completed. However, by the time we sailed from Salcombe for St Katherines Dock in London we were, in the main, all sorted.

The crew for this trip was to be Iain Dundas, Nathan Dundas, Chris George, and Tom Somerton. As Tom has a commercial officer of the watch certificate we could operate three watches going up - with Iain and Nathan serving as second hands.

The voyage to London was hideous. We were steaming into a short sea on an Easterly Force 6 to 7, and it was really uncomfortable all along the South coast until we got to Dover. It was a fairly uneventful trip although we were rather shocked when we came upon Littlehampton Wind Farm, which just lit up the horizon the like of which I had never before seen at sea. However we navigated around this and then nipped up the Inshore Traffic Lane off Dungeness and Dover.

Although the coastguard did speak to us on the VHF, they did not force me to cross the channel to the northeast bound main shipping lane. I think a combination of us only being a little too big for the Inshore Zone coupled with the fact we were heading for inside the Goodwin Sands let us get away with it. Thank heavens as it would have been a much longer passage if we had been forced into the main shipping lane. We were not so lucky on our return, and more on this later!

Nipping inside Goodwin Sands we then proceeded North around North Foreland in much better seas before turning to port to enter the Thames Estuary in the early morning.

Navigating up the Thames is tedious rather than difficult but one has to be very careful about other traffic, especially bigger vessels, until one is in the Sea Reach channel off what used to be called Shellhaven or as we seaman knew it Stanford-no-Hope!

On this particular day a whale had been trapped up the Thames off Gravesend and there were special rules about passing the area in which he was seen. But we never saw him.

We arrived at Tower Bridge too early to enter St Katherines - which has a tidal lock.

However we took the opportunity to go beyond Tower Bridge up to London Bridge. This we could not get under so we turned around, passed HMS Belfast and then Tom phoned his girlfriend who came out of her office and filmed us passing back under Tower Bridge just in time to turn to port and enter St Katherines Dock on the high tide.

We were taken into the East Basin and moored stern to in a great spot close to the main centre of the dock.

We were to be in London for six weeks whilst I had treatment in Harley Street. Myra was staying on board, and Nathan and the rest of the crew headed home to Salcombe.

Unfortunately - and unbelievably - Myra tripped over on the third day we were alongside and broke her ankle. After several hours in A&E we returned to the boat to realise that I was now going to have to look after Myra whilst her leg healed. What a disappointment, as we had so many plans.

We still had a good time in London and we were there for Remembrance Day and the sea of poppies that surrounded the Tower of London. This was definitely a highlight of our stay.

Voyage Home to Salcombe

We re-assembled our crew. And this time it was just Chris, Andrew, Nathan and myself to prepare for the voyage back to Salcombe.

On November 17th we departed St Katherines Dock. After an uneventful passage down the Thames and inside the Goodwin Sands we came around Dover to head west to Salcombe. The weather was behind us but it was a fairly lively and rough sea pushing us along.

I opted for staying just North of the Westbound traffic lane but the boat was picked up very quickly by the Dover Coastguard and this time I got a major bollocking for not being in the lane. Worse still I got another bollocking when I slotted into the lane ahead of a tanker and abeam two other vessels all going West. Dover felt I had impeded the tanker but luckily when the coastguard called him and asked, he said we had not caused him any concern. I think I could have faced a more difficult situation and possibly a fine if he had not spoken up.

So having got into the Westbound lane we then proceeded down to the end of the traffic scheme off Beachy Head before setting course direct to Salcombe passing well outside the Isle of Wight and the infamous Littlehampton Wind Farm.





Once again Blue Legend was on a run , and this time we broke our previous surfing record by hitting 22.3 knots on one particularly big wave. The wind followed us all the way to Salcombe and although it was Force 6 to 7 at least it was behind us, which made the ride much more comfortable.

We arrived back in Salcombe without incident and proceeded to Whitestrand Pontoon where the boat was to stay until March as the town's Christmas light ship. The Harbour Office very kindly charged me for this privilege but to be honest it was worth every penny as it meant I could work on the boat most days.

Winter 2018/19

The beauty of being alongside for the winter is that we can move forward and refit the boat with new carpets, curtains, blinds and a new Corian top in the galley without the need to transport people and materials out to the mooring in the Salcombe estuary. (Technically not an estuary but a ria!)

So being alongside made a huge difference to what could be achieved, as well as ensuring we had power all the time to keep the boat warm and dehumidified. The winter flew past with loads of small jobs being completed, as well as servicing the main engines and generators.

Just as important was the time we had to understand some of the many things we were unclear about. One of the few issues we had on purchase was that all the drawings for the vessel were missing and the previous owners had no idea what had happened to them. Although I had been in touch with the builder, Terry Richardson, and the designer, both had thrown out the documentation relating to Blue Legend when she was 20 years old.

What this meant was that many things had to be investigated and new drawings made in relation to each shipboard system. Over the winter nearly all this new documentation was assembled and recorded both on paper and electronically.

And by March the vessel was ready in all respects for going back to sea, and we loaded 5,000 litres of MGO ready for the voyage back to the Mediterranean.

Return to the Mediterranean

Crew – Chris George (Watchkeeper & Mechanic), Andrew Thompson (Watchkeeper), Henry Turner (Deck Hand), and Isabelle Vaughan (Deck Trainee)

On the 21st April we set sail for Puerto Andratx in Majorca. This was four days earlier than intended, and we left on the evening of Easter Monday. The weather was forecasted to worsen later in the week between Salcombe and Finisterre and I gambled on us getting there ahead of the incoming weather. A gamble that did not pay off as it turned out!

We left Salcombe in good weather with light winds and seas and headed for Ushant. We had two new and completely 'green' crew on board, and three old hands.

All went well to Ushant and across the northern part of the Bay of Biscay.

However, 110 NM out of Coruna we ran into a strong South westerly wind that just got worse and worse. This was combined with a shortening sea that made the boat pitch more and more as we pushed South. The necessity to slow the vessel down to maintain a safe pitching motion meant that by the time we were 90 NM from Coruna we had slowed to 7 knots and our ETA was just getting later and later.

By this time the forecasters had labelled the storm 'Hannah', and we seemed to be going into the teeth of it. Our two young crew handled the situation amazingly, as not only was it extremely uncomfortable but they must have been a bit scared as well because a Force 8 to 9 is scary for everyone.

Chris George and I discussed options and both felt we needed to turn and run back to the South Brittany coast for shelter as it was likely the storm would last several days and we were going to take a hammering. We knew that running was viable as we have had Blue Legend on a run a few times in the past. So, we turned without incident and settled on the best course we could find to maintain some semblance of comfort. This took us towards Belle Isle in Southern Brittany.

Twenty hours later we had crossed the Bay again and arrived in the shelter of Belle Isle and the port of Le Palais. Thank heavens we were finally out of the weather. Blue Legend had suffered no damage except for a piece of the upper teak strake being ripped off the bow.

We entered the port and were directed into the Inner Harbour right in the centre of town. We were tied up alongside the main drag, and could not have had a better spot.

Biscay and Coruna

We spent three days in Belle Isle and during that time went for a cycle around the island, visited the castle at the entrance to the town and had several excellent evenings ashore. At this time of year there were few tourists and so we had the place to ourselves. Henry and Isabelle were pleased to be on dry land again but had done incredibly well considering their baptism by fire in Storm Hannah.

Finally the weather started to die off in the Bay, and we set sail from Le Palais on the 27th April bound for Finisterre. The sea was still quite big but had lengthened considerably and we could cruise at 11.5 Knots across the bay.

We had had quite a bit of trouble with the fuel tank measuring system, which is controlled by very sophisticated, but not very accurate, ultrasonic sensors. Every few hours we topped up the Day Tank (the ready to use tank from where the engines draw their fuel) from one of the larger tanks to maintain a safe margin of fuel.

However, about twelve hours out of Coruna we miscalculated the fuel in the day tank and ran it down too far which led to a problem three hours out of Coruna.

We suddenly lost power on the port engine and had to shut it down. Initially we thought we had picked up a bit of netting or a pot and so decided to leave it alone until we got into Coruna. We were also concerned we might have an internal engine problem. I was a pretty worried skipper as we berthed in Coruna Marina.

However we had made it in without difficulty, and the next morning we lowered Izzy's Gopro down into the water on a broomstick and inspected the shaft and prop. As far as we could see there was no issue so I donned my scuba gear and dived under the boat to make sure this was not our problem.

At this point Chris was concerned it could be an injector or other engine issue so we called for a Cat engineer to attend. The guy was amazing. He arrived on board and immediately said he thought it was fuel starvation. Starting at the engine he worked his way back through all the filters and separator until he reached the tank suction. Guess what? There was the problem: a small piece of silicon had got sucked up and blocked a coupling.

It was hard to believe such a small thing could cause the problem but of course we then recalled the incident the day before with the Day Tank. Relief on board was palpable as he put the system back together and the engine started and ran perfectly. Phew !!

As we had used 1500 litres of fuel in deviating to Belle Isle we loaded a further 1,500 litres in Coruna before sailing to Gibraltar. We had a very pleasant run ashore during our one night in Coruna and decided it was a really good port to visit when transiting Biscay.

Coruna to Gibraltar

We left on the morning of the 30th and headed for Finisterre and then South along the west coast of Spain and then Portugal. The weather was astern of us on the starboard quarter so the voyage was comfortable.

Luckily when the starboard engine suffered the same fuel blockage we were two hours out of Cascais. We did not even consider options, but proceeded into

the anchorage off Cascais Marina. This time Chris followed the Cat engineers diagnostic and found the blockage very quickly. The engine was soon running again. However, I realised I needed to ‘polish’ all the fuel on board and clean out the day tank completely. We think the silicon had come from the self-same sensors we were having so much trouble in measuring the tanks with. They had Sikaflex gaskets and we figure some of this sealant had washed off and dropped to the tank bottom.

Chris and I rigged a suction hose and drained the day tank, and dumped the contents into the forward tank which we then left alone for sorting later. We vacuumed the day tank as best we could and removed any particles we could find. We wanted to treat the tank with Diesel Bug killer as well to be sure we had covered all our bases, but we could not find any in Coruna or Cascais. Clearly more work was to be done on the fuel system in Majorca when we got there. However this was the last problem we had with fuel.

We pulled up to the fuel berth in Cascais and loaded another 1,000 litres of MGO before departing for Gibraltar. The approach and departure from the Lisbon area is fraught with pots and nets, so it is best to get out over the 100 metre depth contour line as soon as possible. Once out and clear we headed South in improving seas to Cabo St Vincent and from there headed Southeast to Gibraltar.

As I am in the middle of taking my Ocean Yachtmasters, mainly to keep up to date, I had to take some star sights on the leg from St Vincent to Europa Point, and the weather was perfect for this. I took the opportunity of showing Henry and Izzy the various sights in the sky.

The weather got up as we approached Cape Trafalgar but it was from astern so was more of a nuisance than a problem. Some vessel had lost a man overboard earlier in the evening but, although we kept a sharp lookout, I did not think there was any chance of us seeing him. However, one still has to try as best one can to help. That’s the mariners code.

We arrived in Gibraltar bay at 1200 on the 3rd May, and it was back to the fuel berth we visited the year before. This time we wasted no time in loading 11,500 litres to fill all 5 tanks to the brim, including the forward tank with its questionable fuel. The latter on the basis we would ‘polish’ all the fuel in this tank once we settled in Majorca.

We managed to persuade the dock workers to let Chris George sneak shoreside into Gibraltar to visit the supermarket just across the road. This was a God send as we were really low on fresh food and other supplies, and still had a couple of days to go before we got into Majorca.

Gibraltar to Majorca

Once loaded to the gunnels with marine diesel, we left the berth for Palma de Majorca. Rounding Europa Point we finally had a flat calm with no winds, no sea and no swell for the first time since leaving Salcombe. Wow, thank heavens! I was beginning to think Henry and Izzy would never experience calm weather!

The voyage as far as Ibiza was entirely uneventful and indeed really pleasant. We could see that a blow was forming off Barcelona with winds from the northwest between Ibiza and Majorca. This was the Tramontana wind.

As we approached Ibiza we considered heaving to off Ibiza Town as we passed between Ibiza and Formentara. However I was keen to press on and get ahead of the weather if we could. It soon became apparent that anchoring off the town would not really get us out of the sea, so I insisted we continue northeast to Palma at best speed. Luckily this turned out to be a good decision as we never really hit the heavy weather we expected. It was not as bad as forecast.

We arrived in the Bay of Palma at the Saint Agusti anchorage at 0315 local time and dropped the pick. We had made it: it had been a long hard trip from the UK.

At 0830 we were all up and raring to get to our mooring in Puerto Andratx just 35NM away. The sea had moderated and we steamed around the island without issue and into Andratx. We had called ahead and our mooring buoy was waiting for us on arrival. It’s all ashore for a drink and supper with my friends Mark

