



The Magazine

Autumn 2010

Sails *before sale*

Rally reports

**'SUNK WITHOUT
TRACE'**

- bunktime reading

PIPIT

Living aboard a Bavaria

A live-aboard lifestyle reaches Brittany

In our Summer issue, Ann and Andy described their plan to become live-aboards and what was involved in bringing it to fruition. Here, during the first six months from the West Country to Brittany, we read of the upgrades, and the triumphs, trials and tribulations of living aboard a Bavaria 36.

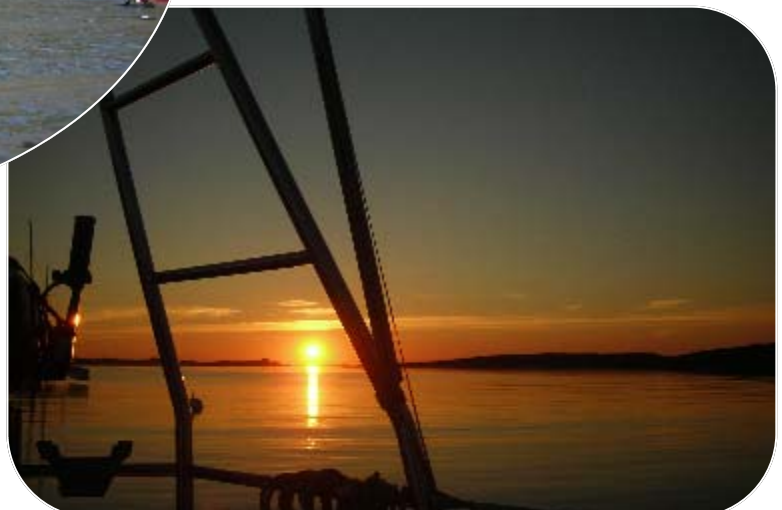


Braye harbour

Champagne at Sainte-Marine



Tricky pilotage at Paimpol



Sunset at l'Aber Wrac'h

After enjoying a few weeks in the familiar waters of the West Country to ease ourselves into the new lifestyle and ensure all our equipment was working, we finally crossed the Channel from Poole to Cherbourg on 23 June. The conditions were benign, the sun warm and there was very little traffic but unfortunately, the forecast F4 never reached even F2. In spite of having to motor all the way, our first Channel crossing on *Pipit* could have been far less pleasant!

A new bimini for warmer climes

After the elation of crossing the Channel, we stayed in Cherbourg for several days enjoying the fine weather, fabulous markets and meeting some new friends. We deployed the bimini for the first time and were pleased to find it works simply and exactly as intended.

'We deployed the bimini for the first time and were pleased to find it works simply'

The bimini and stern arch were designed in discussion with both the canvas maker and stainless fabricator.

We chose to remove the existing pushpit rails completely and have new ones integrated into the arch as the existing pushpit rail on the B36 is relatively short across the transom and is angled outward, not ideal for mounting equipment. We also thought it would look better than having something just 'added on' to the existing pushpit. Due to the boom extending well into the cockpit, the bimini is fairly short, so we've also had a separate section made for use when not sailing which zips onto the forward edge of the bimini and

the sprayhood grab rail, giving more shelter from the sun. We had these made in contrasting beige canvas which, in theory, should be cooler than navy blue when we reach the warmer climes of the eastern Med.

Unknown waters bring enjoyable challenges

From Cherbourg, we headed east to Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue before returning westward towards the Channel Islands and the Cotentin Peninsula. Most of our passages were between 20 and 60 miles, easy day hops but, nevertheless, requiring careful navigation and pilotage due to the plethora of rocks, strong tidal streams and high tidal ranges. We do every passage plan together on paper charts, making copious notes before entering waypoints into the new plotter (Raymarine C70) on the helm. Whilst obviously not essential, having a plotter on the helm has proven to be an enormous asset in the challenging waters of the Breton coastline, particularly when we've chosen navigable but tricky shortcuts. It gives us the comfort of corroborating our planning and verifying our position. We've found the transition from weekend sailing in home waters to every passage being unfamiliar an enjoyable challenge, particularly as we have the luxury of time to relax and linger in new places.

Our passage from St Helier to St Malo provided the opportunity to use the radar, new AIS and ActiveX in earnest for the first time, as we left St Helier in thick fog. The C70 plotter allows simultaneous overlay of radar and AIS onto the chart. Again, having this on the helm (we still have our original Raymarine RL70C plotter at the nav station), with both of us on deck, has proven to be ideal for us.

Whilst there are numerous anchorages along the Breton coast, we have spent more time in marinas than perhaps we originally intended, for two reasons:

- * Firstly, the tides are so strong and the ranges so great that we weren't inclined to leave *Pipit* at anchor during the turn of a tide, thus precluding exploring ashore, which of course is part of the reason for our adventure.
- * Secondly, being in a marina with WiFi access allows Andy to work remotely for a day or two a week (not in the original plan, but an unexpected opportunity that was too good to turn down) as well as providing easier access for Ann to do the washing and shopping. This division of duties may sound stereotypical but, although new to us, works well and we have readily adjusted to this pattern.

'What about living in such close proximity for 24 hours a day?'

What about living in such close proximity for 24 hours a day? On the whole, we thoroughly enjoy it and the short periods of being apart when doing our respective 'work' gives us all the time on our own we seem to need.

Self sufficient in power – and cool beer

When we have spent several consecutive days on a buoy or at anchor, we have been self-sufficient in power. We researched wind generators and solar panels extensively before choosing a D400 wind generator and a Solara 85w solid solar panel. For us, the D400, although more expensive than others, produces twice the output for any given wind speed and has a low start up speed. It is also extremely quiet and, interestingly, seems to be the generator of choice on many boats we've seen here in Brittany. As our ultimate destination is the eastern

Mediterranean, more solar panels may become necessary, but in the meantime, the combination we have of wind and solar power seems to work well.

LEDs consume much less power

In order to conserve the power we're generating, we have replaced all the cabin lights with LEDs. This is a cost effective and dramatic power saving upgrade – the warm white LEDs consume about one tenth of the power of the halogen bulbs and you simply can't tell the difference in the characteristics of their light. We also changed the anchor light to LED, but not the nav lights as there is still some debate over the suitability of LEDs for these. Luckily, the fridge already had a cooling plate fitted to the hull which reduces its power consumption by about 30%, and of course the only reason we keep it well stocked with white wine and beer is to further improve its efficiency...

Fresh local produce on the barbecue

When we are in marinas and on mains power, we stop the wind generator to prevent dumping excess power (i.e. heat) into the dump resistors. We also take advantage of the 'free' electricity and save gas by using a two-cup electric kettle and a small slow cooker. We also purchased, again after some research, a Cobb barbecue with several of the different accessories and cooking surfaces. The addition of the slow cooker and a Cobb barbecue to our armoury of culinary tools has resulted in some truly delicious meals. As we both love cooking, doing this at leisure using fresh local produce and experimenting with sometimes unfamiliar ingredients is one of the joys of our cruising lifestyle. We try to ensure we 'work off' these

gastronomic creations through our mutual enjoyment of walks ashore and rowing our Nestaway dinghy.

By the time you read this, we should be tucked up in our winter berth on the Vilaine River. We hope to be asked to share this next phase of our adventure with you in another article, where we could report on what life is like living aboard in a marina throughout the winter months.

Andy & Ann

Pipit, B36

Aboard Pipit on the River Auray

