

# Tops'l Cruise Planning Guidance

## Intention:

The following guidance is aimed to help members plan & manage an extended cruise for a Tops'l Yacht.

Port Solent offer a rebate of mooring fees, depending on the length of time our berth is vacant (month or more), organised through the Technical Director.

A normal cruise is merely an agreement between fellow members to cooperate over a period of time so that our yacht is always occupied & handed over to another Tops'l skipper. An example might be that one skipper would take the yacht to the West Country with an agreed handover down there & another skipper would return the yacht to base at Port Solent.

An extended cruise is one where there may be occasions when our yacht lays unattended during the cruise. It is more likely that the destinations will require more than a continuous 24 hour cruise to repatriate the yacht.

This brings with it some other responsibilities:

- The overall utilisation (berth days) should not be significantly less than if the yacht remained at Port Solent.
- Any additional costs must be covered by those enjoying the benefits of the cruise, not the general membership.
- There maybe annual or other maintenance issues to address.
- The security of the yacht must be assured at each layover.
- The skippers involved must be correctly authorised. (Some areas will require Unrestricted Authorisations even to be able to sail locally e.g. Channel Islands).
- The proposer will undertake the research, promote the cruise & deal with crewing issues. Wherever possible, this will form a back to back cruising plan.
- The proposer will have a contingency plan, including a workable exit strategy.
- The Directors must approve the plan & any significant changes thereafter.

*Extracts from Tops'l Rules:*

## Cruise booking

- Cruise booking differs from the system at Port Solent, in that you book the **nights** aboard: e.g. if your last day showing on the booking site is Friday you are liable for all the charges up to and including that day and night. It is your and the next skipper's responsibility to liaise the time you will leave the following **morning** ie Saturday.
- If you wish to leave in the evening, that day and night should be paid for and entered on the booking site.
- The yacht must only be handed over to full Tops'l members, competent as described on page 4[of the rules –ed] (Away from Base)
- Bookings which contain sectors deemed by the directors to be delivery sectors will invoke the normal daily sailing charge; however, if those delivery sectors transpire to involve a lot of motoring, the engine charge will normally be capped at 3 hrs per day. The correct engine hours still need to be recorded on the sailing return for our records. This amelioration and for any other unforeseen delays should be discussed by the skipper involved with Finance Director / Sailing Return Secretary before sending them a sailing return.
- Skippers booking time on Cruises may be asked to pay a non-returnable booking fee to cover cancellation, extra charts, equipment etc, and any excess to go to Tops'l funds.
- Members are reminded to take out holiday insurance to cover any losses, such as air fares, they may incur if club yachts become unavailable for their booking. Tops'l does not compensate for such costs.

### **Practicalities:**

The above may sound slightly daunting but should not present too many problems. Most of the research is no more than you would do if planning a cruise for yourself. It is your own enthusiasm that will carry it through.

It must be recognised that some members are more pro-active than others. You will get more response if a cruise is well planned & presented.

The board will assist with advice / guidance but will not be "running" the cruise.

### **Considerations:**

#### **Insurance:**

Need to check with the appropriate board member if the yacht is to be taken out of its Normal area of insurance. Usually there is no increase in premium but the excess may be increased for that period.

#### **Change Over Points:**

Obviously, these points need 2 important features:

1. The facilities for the yacht – security / fuel / water / guarantee of visitor berth availability.
2. Easy transport options. Our experience shows that members are unlikely to want to undertake convoluted journeys. Usually, the preferred method is to be able to fly or use public transport to a hub then taxi to the yacht. This does not rule out other options but the information must be gathered & well presented.

#### **Timing & Length of Cruise:**

Obviously a good weather window is ideal. The length of the cruise will probably be determined by the support you can engender.

#### **Stage Lengths & Hubs**

If the "destination" area is far more appealing than the transit to / from, you will need to get delivery crews. While it is perfectly possible to do 100+ miles / 24 hours, it is by no means guaranteed. Thought is needed in the timescales allowed & how arduous the journey might be. Be realistic in the amount of "roaming" that can be planned.

#### **Charts, Chips & Other Navigation Equipment:**

Please liaise with the appropriate board member before buying a stack of pilots / charts or chips. There may be a win / win way of minimising these costs.

#### **Managing Crew Issues:**

Be prepared for members to change their plans! If you can, identify those who are willing to be flexible, so that they can step in to form a complete crew complement if it looks like there will be a cancellation due to insufficient crew. Skippers will hopefully find their own crews but that will also need monitoring.

#### **Contingency Contact:**

Emergency / incident contact will be retained by the board but routine contact should be fielded by the proposer.

#### **Summary:**

Having well –planned cruises benefits everyone. It also means that you get to explore those sailing areas you desire. It's all good, give it a go!