

St Aubin's Boat - "Venture Forth" – July 2014

"Venture Forth" is an Aquastar 27 Pacesetter owned by Graham & Catherine Baudains. They bought "Venture Forth" in 1990 and have never ceased enjoying the many adventures they have had as a family in her. Despite the name suggesting only twenty-seven feet in length she is in fact nearly twenty-nine feet overall. With a generous beam of ten feet and four full-length berths she had been ideal for the cruising area Graham, Catherine and the family have so enjoyed. Graham said, "With a draft of only three feet and with the stainless steel keel band and extended drying bilge keels we had purpose fabricated for her, she had crept into nearly all the small drying harbours along the French coast between Morlay and Tréguier". The family has also enjoyed many a trip to Sark drying out in Creux Harbour. "One of the great advantages of having a smallish boat, yet large enough to accommodate a family of four, whilst also being able to safely undertake short coastal passages provides the skipper with the ability to slip into places that larger vessels can not access." Graham's conversation was starting to reveal that he was a "Small Harbour Man", which is not surprising as he was brought up messing about in little boats out from Bonne Nuit Harbour. When you are used to having only a few inches below the keel and rocks that poke up at you from just a boat or two lengths away, it's part of the attraction of Graham's sort of boating to just nudge into small interesting anchorages or harbours.

"Venture Forth" is normally over wintered in St Aubin's Harbour where Graham does most of the annual maintenance himself. The boat is exceptionally well maintained for a vessel of nearly twenty-five years old and is a reflection of the care Graham has taken of her over the whole of the period of his ownership. For many vessels of this age the engines are often in need of some serious rebuilding but as with everything else about the boat; Graham has kept the engine well maintained and Bill Keating rebuild the engine long before it started to belch out the familiar black smoke often seen of vessels from this period.

No boat report would be complete without some insight as to the sea keeping qualities of the vessel. Graham recounted an account of when leaving Alderney bound for Bonne Nuit they experienced the Swinge when there was a strong run of tide and the wind was pushing us against it. He told me, "I now understand the notoriety of "The Swinge". We kept close to the coast, by following an outgoing local fisherman, but it was very unpleasant to see the sea "boiling" just yards away from us. Needless to say, it was very scary but "Venture Forth" got us home safely."