

TALES OF THREE SHIPS – text by Fiona Jones, illustrated by Hannah Edge. Published in soft covers and available from the author [www.talesofthreeships.co.uk] at £6.50 plus postage. 36 296mm x 208mm pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-9999-0310-7

This picture book by OCC member Fiona Jones, aimed at children aged about three to seven, describes the first part of her 14-year circumnavigation with her husband Chris in their Gitana 43 *Three Ships* and was written to explain their way of life to their grandchildren.

Each large-format page carries a colourful illustration by Hannah Edge. These are well-observed and full of detail, providing lots of opportunity for a young reader to spot things, or for an adult to point things out. The large-print text is written in rhyming couplets, which can be very effective if done well and can assist a child who is learning to read. Unfortunately, however, some of the lines don't scan properly, which could make reading this book aloud to a child quite frustrating – you get into a rhythm with poetry, and when extra words upset the scan, the flow is spoilt.

This is an entertaining story which is successful in describing many aspects of the cruising lifestyle – preparations, saying goodbye, bad weather, the joys of arrival, and even exploring a new and different country. The (simplified) sailing details are accurate, but there's a curious error near the end where the page describing Cape St Vincent – which has links to Prince Henry the Navigator – depicts Lisbon's famous Rose Compass accompanied by the words 'They saw a monument to Captain Cook in a giant compass shape'. But then it was never intended to be a geography text book!

Tales of Three Ships is quite long, and might be best read a few pages at a time to a younger child, but those captivated by the adventure can look forward to enjoying further books in this series as Fiona and Chris continue their circumnavigation.

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