

BOOK REVIEWS

ATLANTIC ISLANDS – Anne Hammick and Hilary Keatinge, 6th edition. Published in hardback by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] and the RCC Pilotage Foundation [www.rccpf.org.uk] at £45.00. 456 A4 pages, with hundreds of colour photographs and four-colour plans. ISBN 978-1-8462-3649-5

This is the 6th edition of *Atlantic Islands*, in my opinion the definitive cruising guide to these islands and indispensable to anyone wishing to cross the Atlantic in either direction. New to this edition is the inclusion of Bermuda, which has long been a stopover, albeit an expensive one, for those crossing from either the Caribbean or the eastern seaboard of the United States or Canada.

The introduction covers passage-planning, weather forecasting and internet-based meteorology (which has increased considerably in both quality and quantity since the last edition). There is also a very useful list of websites from which weather data can be extracted, along with methods by which the data can be obtained. What is noted, however, is that weather patterns are changing and that a well-prepared yacht should be ready for every eventuality – 2016 saw the first January hurricane in the North Atlantic since 1954, and 2015 the first hurricane to hit the Cape Verde islands in more than a century.

The chapters devoted to the individual islands and archipelagos are a delight to read, giving reliable information on navigation, administration, local customs and things to do ashore, so I found myself reliving the times I had spent in places like St George's, Bermuda; Velas, São Jorge, Azores; and La Restinga, El Hierro, Canaries, and making mental notes of what to do in other places with which I was less familiar. It is particularly beneficial to read of the changes which have taken place since one's last visit, such as the requirement for a permit to anchor off Playa Francesa on the island of Graciosa, just north of Lanzarote, and that the maximum permitted stay is now ten days. It is nuggets of information such as this which makes *Atlantic Islands* such an invaluable publication to both newcomers to the Atlantic circuit and those who have cruised the islands before. The excellent chartlets, often accompanied by photographs, add an extra dimension to the other navigation aids one should have on board.

Above all, this cruising guide demonstrates that the archipelagos of the Azores, Canaries and Cape Verdes can be regarded as cruising destinations in their own right, and that those who regard them simply as quick stopovers on the way to the Caribbean or to Europe – just stations on the way – are denying themselves some very real pleasures. It gives an insight into the facilities and ambience of a wide variety of locations, from deserted anchorages to busy cities, harbours and marinas, giving a flavour of somewhere everyone can enjoy.

Atlantic Islands builds on the experience and expertise not only of its authors – Anne Hammick FRIN and Hilary Keatinge – but has input from both itinerant cruisers and locally-based individuals, all adding their ha'porth to the information to round it out and bring it up-to-date. Since we live in a dynamic world it is inevitable that changes will occur during the lifetime of this book*, but although I may not *need* another copy of *Atlantic Islands*, I certainly want one – it's an informative, practical, lively and invaluable resource, and one which will end up being well-thumbed and slightly grubby after a single season.

LMLT

* Visit the RCC Pilotage Foundation website at www.rccpf.org.uk to download free Supplements to all their titles, including *Atlantic Islands*, designed to combat this very problem. See also page 202 of this issue.