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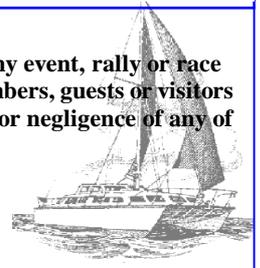
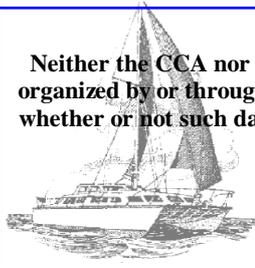
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Boat Owners Third Party Insurance

It is the responsibility of all boat owners to have adequate third party insurance in respect of him/herself, vessel, his/her crew for the time being & his/her visitors.



October - November 2012

Hi Members,

I have been asked to advise a member who wishing to keep his 'crew' happy, is considering buying an electric windlass to make struggling with anchor recovery a thing of the past.

We have had similar enquiries some six years ago, so I will reprint from 2006 and ask members who have more recently fitted an electric windlass to comment and update the previous findings. Also what maintenance is required to keep the windlass performing efficiently.

MEMBER'S WINDLASS ENQUIRY.

Hello Peter,

Many thanks for the newsletter. We have an electric windlass fitted to Sea Spirits, our 8m Catalac. We bought it at the Southampton Boat Show in 2005, but I have only just fitted it. It is made by South Pacific Industries, an Australian company, and marketed in the UK by Darglow Engineering, a well known South Coast marine engineering company who sell various folding props, etc.

We spent some considerable time and effort researching the different makes and models of windlass and decided on the Darglow vertical model because; Unlike others it uses uncalibrated chain, so a cost saving there. It is fitted with a combined chain/rope gypsy, so we can use both/either. It comes complete with a fitting kit. It is an easy diy fit. It seems to be as well engineered as more expensive makes.

I have fitted it just aft of the anchor cleat. I thought there would be enough room around the motor housing in the anchor locker below for the chain/rope not to bunch up when hoisting the anchor, but this is not the case. Having tested this theory with Sea Spirits on the hard standing at Ridge Wharf where we keep her for the winter, I find that after 10 meters or so of chain have been fed into the locker the chain forms a pyramid and jams the gypsy. It will mean we will have to keep an eye on things and level the heap of chain out if necessary, no big deal.

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Also, to keep the run of large diameter power cable to a minimum, I have fitted a separate dedicated battery in the anchor locker and fed this with suitable cable from the domestic battery through a double pole isolator, which will be switched off during anchoring. As the windlass motor pulls 45 amps for perhaps a minute or two during anchor hoisting, this will equate to less than 2 amp hours each hoisting. Flicking the isolator on occasionally should see the windlass battery is kept charged.

Obviously we will know how well these ideas work in practice during the coming and subsequent seasons. We will keep you informed.

Regards, Nigel Jones

I also have an electric windlass mounted in a similar position to yours. I agree with you the Catalac anchor locker does not have enough drop to prevent a pyramid of chain forming and blocking the gypsy. I have seen a windlass fitted in front of the port fender locker. This has a much deeper drop and solves the chain build up problem. The Catalac also had a bow roller fitted on the port side. When anchoring, he either fed the extra rope back through the original centre roller and onto the centre cleat as usual, or attached a pull from the starboard cleat to centralize the anchor chain. With costs as they are these days, the fitting of an extra battery may well be cheaper than buying the thickness of cable required to carry the load to the windlass. I presume you fitted the double pole switch between the windlass battery and the engine start battery, to prevent the small cable connecting the two batteries taking the load, should the starter battery become discharged. In the past I have done a similar thing but found that during the sailing season when the sun is shining and without a care in the world I would forget to throw the switch and end up with a flat auxiliary battery. You, like me, have an outboard engine for charging and these do not produce half the charge as the alternator fitted with the diesel engines.

Five years ago I fitted 5amp cable through a 4 pin relay, the power supply I took from the ignition switch. The cable is protected by a blade fuse that fits in the relay, making a very neat job. When the ignition is on and the engine is running, the charge from the engine will charge the engine battery first through the heavy cable and later the auxiliary battery through the smaller cable. (ie. the current will travel the easy route heavy cable and short run first.) To date, I have never replaced relay or fuse. When ignition is off the battery is not connected to the engine start battery. The cost of the relay £5.00 to £10.00 depending on supplier, for me worth every penny for piece of mind.

Many thanks for your replies. ED.

Dooley Learning to Live with "Twisted Sheets"

You might wonder why the self-proclaimed big mean animal in this photo is nervously dogging my feet. It's because he doesn't know what's happening next and he positively *hates* not knowing what's going to happen next.

He also turns into 100% Grade A Chicken if there's any hint of atmospheric electrical activity around. Or fireworks. Lately I've rediscovered how much he worries about bubble wrap, but that's a different story. So for all you Dooley the Disgruntled fans, don't worry. He's just nervous.

This was his first trip on the sailboat.

He's been on this boat dozens of times while it was tied to the dock. Where things don't move around very much. But we're not sure that he fully understood that it's a boat.



It never moved away from land the whole time he was on board. It must have seemed like a real small waterfront condo to him. Stable. Quietly plugged into shore power. And now that's all been changed. We started up these two diesels, moved the condo out of the marina, and put up the biggest sails he had ever seen close up. Sails apparently look pretty big to small dogs standing under them. To the point where they immediately stop standing under them. Then we left the island behind. This was all new to him. He wants to know exactly what is going to happen next. He'll be better once he's got this whole new experience catalogued. Next time, he'll be volunteering to cast the lines off.

We've been wishing for a nice weather window for weeks. We wanted to wend our way West where we would wander whilst we would while away a wonderful weekend. We were wistfully waiting... for the chance to make an overnight trip with the dog. I ran out of 'W's. You're welcome.... oops.

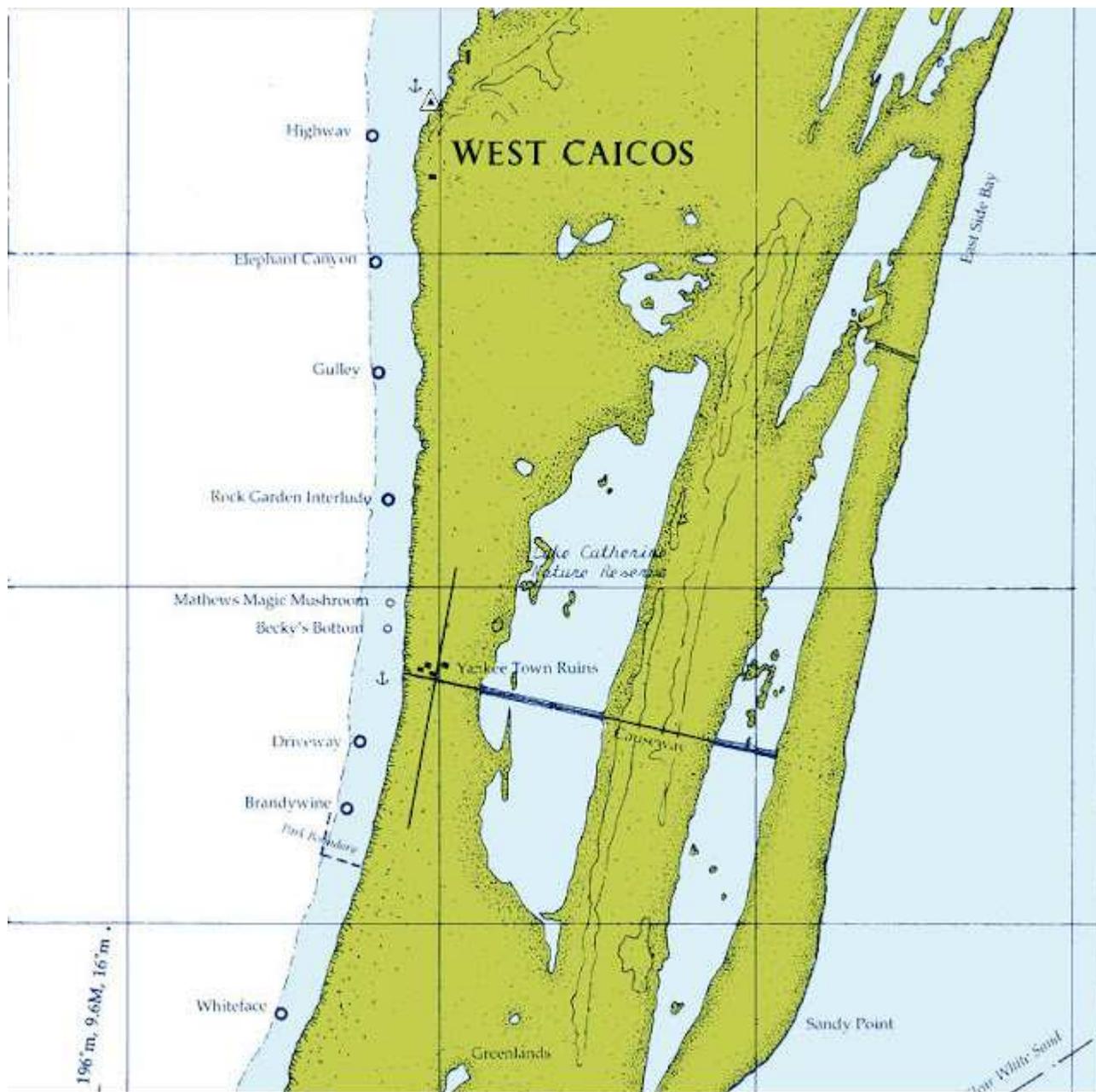
We weren't sure how The Dog would handle it.. We finally had a good forecast after a long stretch of those bruised looking weekends. You know the ones you get in the summer. Surrounded by serious cirrus. Dark, moisture laden clouds just looking for an opportunity to fling some lightning. Rumble some thunder. Once upon a time I would have told you that the silly dog was a nervous wreck if there was even the possibility of lightning. Now, I would tell you that all three of us are nervous wrecks about it. Getting hit changes some of your parameters about these things. I still twitch and walk funny. Yeah, yeah, I know. I can't blame that on the lightning. But this past weekend was forecast to be a nice one. We looked at how far we could get in a day, and looked at the forecast for strong southeast wind on Saturday and then strong east wind on Sunday, and decided to go anchor for a night on the far side of West Caicos. This is one of the places in the Turks and Caicos that we've wanted to visit again. All our trips to the outside of that island have been brief. We always had to stop what we were doing and start thinking about getting home before dark. But that was before the *S/V Twisted Sheets* came into our lives. Now we've got our magic carpet. Which looks amazingly like an old fiberglass boat with dingy sails.

Dooley the Deceived hopped onto the boat just as nimble as ever. He didn't know what we were up to. It's not like we were being sneaky, either. We carried coolers with drinks and food and clothing, and he's an old veteran of overnight trips. And he loves to ride on a boat. But he'd never before spent the night at anchor on a boat. That's a different sort of thing entirely than being home before dark.

After the boat got struck while La Gringa and I were sitting at the salon table, we remarked what a good thing it was that Dooley had not been on board with us for that experience. I am sure he would have been seriously traumatized. It was his worst fears confirmed. And it's an intense experience. It does make an impression. In HIS case, he's already terrified of even distant thunder. I think he gets nervous just thinking about thunders he's heard in the past. The dog never forgets anything. A thunderclap in the same boat with you is

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another level entirely. Polly's left ear rang for 24 hours. Mine always ring so I missed that special effect. We showed the dog around the cabin before leaving the dock. Sometimes I think I know what he's thinking, but most often I'm sure that I do not. We've managed to visit most of the outside edge of West Caicos over the years. We'd been about a third of the way down the western shore from the north. We'd been down around the southern tip and a few hundred yards beyond. We've gone beachcombing on the eastern side many times. But there was still that big unexplored stretch of the western shore that had been just out of our comfortable reach. We always had to cut the trip short to make it home before dark. This is not the kind of place to boat around in the dark if you don't know the water very well.



Except for a security presence up at the unfinished Molasses Reef resort, West Caicos is uninhabited. There are ruins at an old long abandoned site called Yankee Town. There is an old causeway that crosses the island. This was used in the 1890's when a sisal plantation was located here. I have also read that the causeway is part of the remnants of an early sea salt operation. Bermudian sea salt businesses were here hundreds of years ago. We've long been curious and wanted the time to investigate this place. Of course knowing about the [Maravedi coin](#) and the island's drug smuggling and dictator hideout history just whets our appetite even further.

Notice the dive boat moorings shown on the chart. This should give you an idea how fast

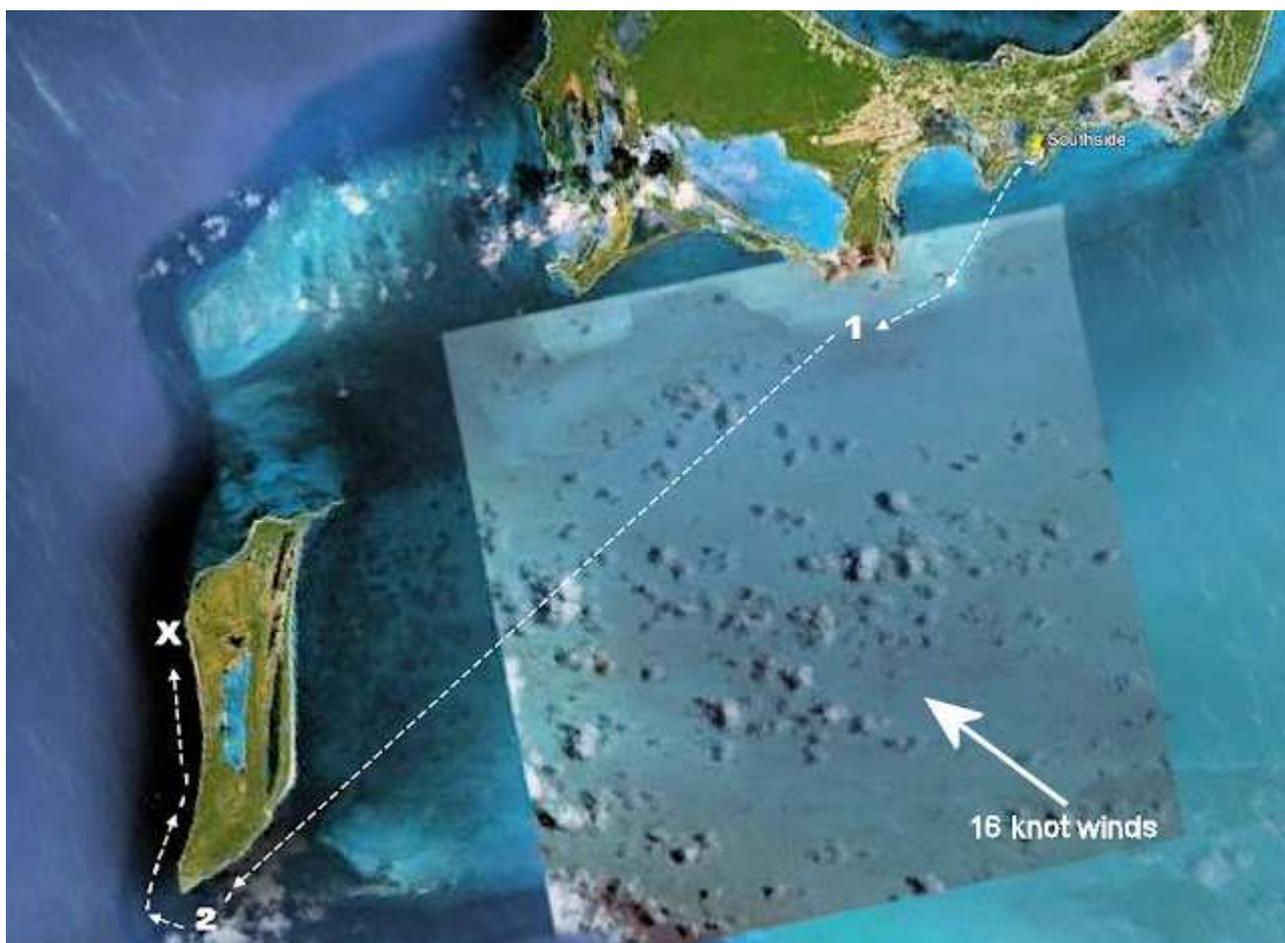
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the bottom drops away once you leave the island on that side.

We loaded up the boat for a long picnic and away we went. We used the engines to just get clear of the obstructions and over the shoals and around the coral heads. Once we were out into deeper water we put up the sails and shut the diesels down. What a peaceful way to travel. Unless one is a nervous little dog, apparently.

If you look just to the left of the center of this next photo you should be able to make out the new radar installation here on the south side of Providenciales. This is finally starting to sound like it's operational. We hear the *Coastal Marine Radar Station* talking to people on the VHF radio. This little country has a huge issue with illegal immigrants arriving by the boatload from Haiti. This radar is modern and covers the entire nation. It should definitely lead to more Haitian sloops being intercepted long before they can make landfall.

Of course catching more of the illegal immigrants means that the country will have to foot the larger bill to feed them and buy them all airline tickets back to Haiti. I wonder if anyone has thought about that.



We had a great wind for a beam reach over to the island and then for a turn to the north. We didn't have to use the engines again until I was lining the boat up on a mooring loop floating on the ocean where the "X" is marked.

Sailing along with the wind on the beam.

Back in the long ago days when we took our [ASA sailing catamaran courses](#) in the Virgin Islands we never really relaxed for very long. We spent the entire week as the only two students of a sailing instructor accustomed to keeping a half dozen of them busy. We tacked, and came about, and jibed, and sailed back and forth for a week without just setting a course and keeping it for hours.

This is different. We set the sails just south of the radar tower and pretty much held the

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same heading for the next few hours. Very nice.

We told Dooley the Distracted that there were NO thunderstorms on the horizon, and that none were in the forecast until at least the following evening. And we planned to be home before then. He was still nervous. So we don't have a lot of photos of the dog on the boat. He wasn't much fun, come to think of it. Constantly underfoot or hiding in a corner.

We planned to take the time to test the old Mercury outboard that came aboard *Twisted Sheets*. I cleaned it up and got it running fairly smoothly while it was clamped to the Land Rover. It's pretty elderly and could use a lot of parts replaced. This trip should tell us whether it's worth keeping or not.

This photo was taken just as we passed the southern tip of West Caicos. This is marked as location "2" in that Google Earth satellite image up above.



The angle of the wind up the other side of the island was even better, and we were cruising along at 6-8 knots without bothering to fine tune the sails. This is not a fast catamaran. It's a solid, heavy catamaran. Stable. Slow. We could have probably played with the sails and gotten a little more speed out of her, but we were enjoying the sail so much we just didn't bother. We knew we would be at our destination by mid afternoon. There will be plenty of time to play with sail trim on some of our long trips in the future. We've got 8 other sails we haven't even tried yet.

We had planned to anchor near the shore at West Caicos, but we've learned that private boats are allowed to spend the night on one of those several dive site moorings located along the west side of the island. The moorings are reserved for the dive boats from Provo during the day, but that means that they are unoccupied and available from early afternoon until the next morning. Polly grabbed the mooring with a boat hook, and we were secured for the night. We like moorings better than anchoring. When we anchor, we're constantly on alert in case the anchor drags. When we are attached to a solid mooring made for boats several times our size, we really can relax and not worry about an anchor. This location is also good for us geographically. IF we were to break loose from a mooring or anchor and slept through it, we'd just drift to the west all night with nothing to run into. Probably wake up half way to Great Inagua. Would have to decide which way to go at that point. Return to the Turks and Caicos Islands or go check back into the

Bahamas. And Great Inagua is definitely on our list of places to go visit in *Twisted Sheets*. It's about a hundred miles from Provo to Matthew Town.

Everyone was ready for a swim and a look around, so we unlimbered the dinghy and got the outboard running. After four or five hours on the boat without a tree or rock in sight, Dooley the Desperate was very interested in going on shore leave. The inflatable dinghy is more his idea of what a boat should be, anyway. Zipping around warm tropical islands in inflatable boats with tiller outboards is just one of the finer things in life to many of us. I'd say the feeling of the wind in our hair was part of the charm, but obviously, that doesn't apply in our case. Wind in our beards? Nah. Wind flopping our ears back? No, that doesn't quite work either. But we do know that these two old dogs like boats.



We set a new record for how far we've gotten from the boat while it was not tied up in a marina. I'm okay with that as long as I can see it and have a way to get back to it. We hadn't planned to do extensive land exploring on this one-afternoon visit. We wanted to take a closer look at the shoreline, and just enjoy spending a night on the boat, out of sight of Providenciales. We know it's not that far away, but just being the only man made light in sight gives the darkness a special character.

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Almost as soon as we got near shore we spotted an interesting looking opening in the rock. From a distance it's sometimes hard to tell a cave from a deep shadow. This was looking like it had some depth to it.



As we got close we could tell that it was quite a respectable little sea cave. This entire section of the coast line is honeycombed with fissures and crevices and caves. Fascinating places for history buffs with fertile imaginations.

One of the nice things about the inflatable boats is that you can easily get really close to things like rocks and walls without worrying too much about the boat. We got this close and could see that there was a ledge at the back of the cave. This photo came out a little blurry, but it's the closest one we have without getting out of the boat and swimming inside. The cave seems to bend to the left, and there is a ledge that could be walked on. You'd be in a bent over position, but there's room.

Every time I start thinking like that, I remind myself to look around at all the broken rock that has fallen off this rock face over the years. A couple tons of limestone pinning you underwater could potentially ruin the entire day.

As much as I liked the idea of poking around in caves, this one had a major drawback as far as Dooley the Determined was concerned. There was no place to, uh, stand. Some things just don't work right while treading water. We headed further up the coast knowing that the charts looked like there might be some beach further north. *Twisted Sheets* was still in sight. The dinghy planes just fine with the 2.1 of us and no other load. It wasn't long before we spotted the same two coves we had seen on the previous trip in the Hobie Tandem Island. We decided to see if we could find a place for the dog to go ashore for his nature walk. Which was starting to look like it might be a nature jog, if I was reading his expression right. And just around the next corner we spotted what looked like a small beach in a protected spot. Perfect.



I didn't notice the spot of water on the camera lens at the time, so this kind of got blurred in the middle, but you can still see what a nice spot this is. Clear warm water, a fine soft sand bottom, and a beach with a built in doggie fence.

The next time we come over here I'll try to remember to hook up the "Dooley Cam" and we'll send that little booger into every cave we can find. I know he'd get into it, and I bet he'd do it for the fun of it. This cave also appears to go further back into the shore than is immediately apparent. And there is a sand ledge above the high tide line.

We didn't have all afternoon to explore, but we did zoom back to the south to investigate a small cut we had seen in the shoreline as we sailed by on the way up to the mooring. The cut was square and symmetrical, and that's pretty rare in nature. When we got close we could see that this was an old loading wharf for boats.

Polly had spotted the rows of dressed limestone blocks that had been used to make a vertical wharf here. These have to be at least a hundred and twenty years old, and maybe older. There is just no decent history written about most of these islands. So much is left to the imagination.

There is no doubt that someone spent long hours in the tropical sun using hand tools to cut, transport, and place these blocks, though. There's got to be some stories there. Is it lost forever? We hoped for a spectacular sunset to polish our first night on the boat in six weeks, but it was not to be. The sun slipped away without a splash of any kind. We were left alone, just the three of us in a floating home in the dark. It felt comforting and familiar to two of us, but not so much to one little nervous dog who must have wondered if the big guy forgot to get him home before sundown. NOW he was nervous.

While Dooley did his canine spelunker thing, Polly and I enjoyed a nice swim in the clear, warm water. The bottom slants away very quickly on this side of the island. A lot of the dive charters here bring their customers to one of the spots marked on that chart up above. It's a good place to get anchored out of the prevailing wind and seas.

We made the decision to head back to South Side Marina in the morning. We had toyed with the idea of doing some more exploring and maybe some snorkeling, and delaying our departure until midday. But we reminded ourselves of something we learned on the trip down from Florida. We think it's best to get the earliest start you are comfortable with on a day you plan to travel. It's a lot better to have extra daylight left to allow for delays. And so far, in our limited experience, there *are/ways* delays. We didn't really know how long it would take us to sail back to Provo, and we decided to play it safe. In retrospect we should plan two overnights with a full day for exploring in the middle. We're still learning.

Since our earlier issues with navigation equipment failures we have replaced both our GPS receiver and the laptop we use to navigate. We just found a bug in the software, by the way. I was changing the icon to be a catamaran when we found it. Bugs seem to be attracted to me for some reason. All kinds of bugs. Two legged, six legged, eight legged, and software.

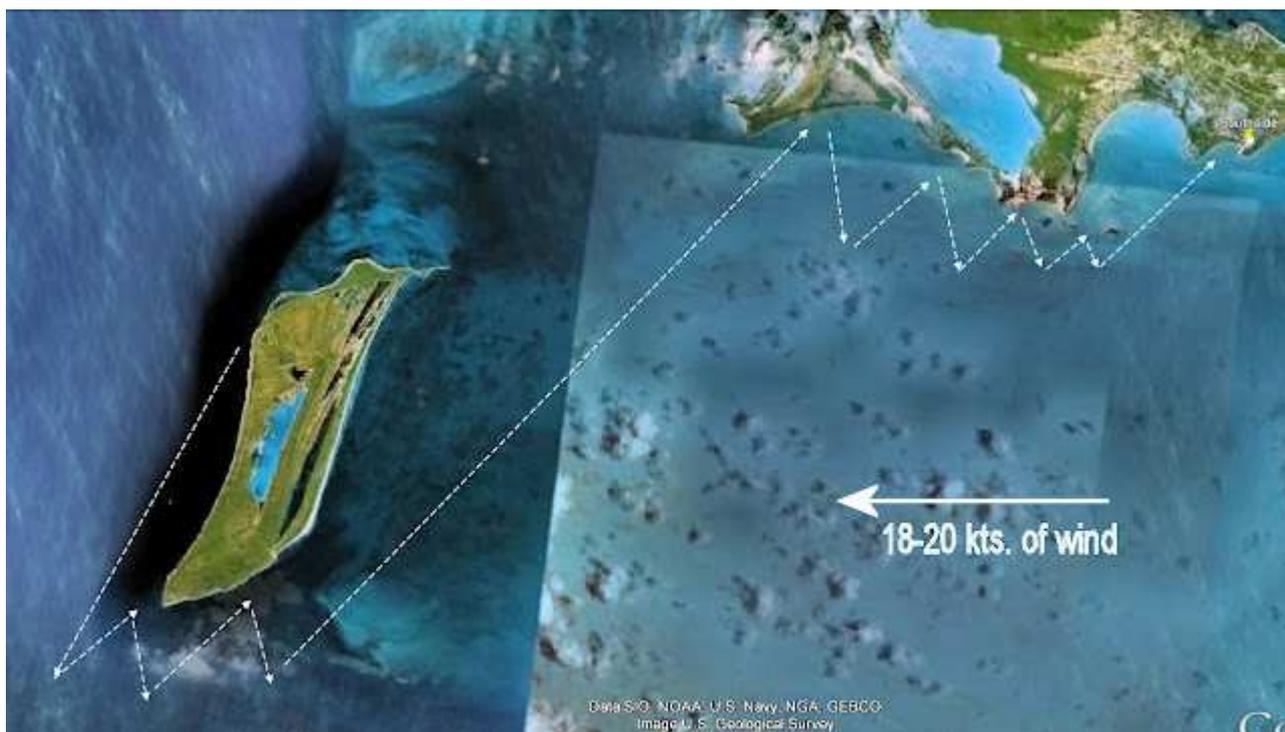
We spotted 8 flamingos flying across our bows headed for Lake Catharine on the island. They look bizarre in flight, but they are absolutely great at playing 'Follow the Leader'.

The trip back was what we are coming to realize is normal. We wanted to make good time into the wind, so I started up both engines as we cleared the tip of West Caicos. Within a few minutes the engine temperature alarm on the starboard engine started squealing. I opened the hatch, shut down the engine, and could smell that hot oily smell engines get when they are hotter than they should be. Have you ever noticed that an engine is like a little petroleum cracking tower in that regard? All the chemicals that will evaporate up to the normal operating temperature have long ago evaporated. But heat the engine up to a new temperature, and previously unvaporized hydrocarbons start making themselves

known. Just an observation. Sometimes you can tell an engine is getting hotter than usual just by the smell. That's a whole lot better than finding out it's overheating by the noise. Trust me.

I looked down under the engine and could see that the bilge was full of black oil. Oh Boy, I thought. Just what I was hoping. Not. I knew it was going to be a mess to work in, so we elected to use a combination of sails and the remaining engine to motor-sail back to Provo and I would address the oil issue at a nice safe marina.

We can motor into 20 knot winds with one engine, but it's very slow. Maybe 3 knots. By using the combination of the port engine and the genoa and main, we were able to move at 5 to 6 knots. This is known as 'motor-sailing'. The problem, of course, is that we had to tack to make headway into the wind. It was fun, and that's our story and we're sticking to it. It did give us another opportunity to practice tacking the boat under these conditions. This is our approximate path back keeping in mind that none of these lines was anywhere near that straight in actuality.



We made it home with plenty of daylight to spare, and ahead of the thunderstorms that were forecast in the afternoon and evening. I think Dooley the Distracted was glad to be back in familiar surroundings. Hopefully, the next time we take off for an overnight trip he'll know what to expect and be a little more relaxed. From his perspective, he got through the entire weekend without a single thunderstorm.

Oh, before I forget. The problem with the engine was minor. The cleanup wasn't minor, took me two days. But the problem was that the new alternator got loose and rattled a hole into the oil filter next to it. I cleaned up the mess, replaced the filter and oil, and it seems to be okay. We haven't run it again yet. Other than idling at the dock. Now, back to the DIY du jour:

PS. Dooley seems calm now. He was back on the boat yesterday while tied to the dock and he was enthusiastic and had a proprietary spring in his step. I think he now knows what this boat is all about.

Now, if we could just get him to realize how pretty thunderstorms can be from the right perspective.



POSTED BY GRINGO AT [5:28 PM](#)

TOPICS: [SAILING](#), [TWISTED SHEETS](#), [WEST CAICOS](#)