

New money for old rope

One boater's excess junk can be another sailor's money-saving treasure according to **Jess Lloyd-Mostyn**, who loves a good bargain

Swap meets – I love them. The traditional car boot sale or antiques market in land-lubber life has always had a certain appeal but they are always plagued with the business of having to root through all the junk to uncover something useful. By contrast, a boaters' swap meet is a thing of beauty as everything, just EVERYTHING, has a use and a function that makes it perfect for someone's yacht, somewhere.

Yachties like a good bargain, probably because we all invest so much time and money into maintaining our boats. In fact, add the word "marine" onto anything in a shop and you're generally looking at a hefty pricetag with more zeros than you would like to see.

So we all share a thinly veiled hope that any compilation of unwanted or second-hand sailing goods will provide exactly the items we've been hoping to find but at a fraction of the price.

And, the opposite is also true – who doesn't like to add a few more pennies into the cruising kitty by shedding some of your own ballast and offloading some of the gear that you would rather not be lurking at the back of every locker on board? It's always the case that one boat's trash can very easily be another boat's treasure, thus our old damaged headsail scraps became a handy sun awning for another sailor. By far the best sailing swap meets we've come across were the ones on the west coast of Central America, where many yacht owners are looking to streamline and rationalise or upgrade kit before stepping out into the Pacific.

Some of the nicest deals we've picked up have been on fishing gear, cruising guides and charts. I'm almost embarrassed to admit that we're appalling fishermen, with no real art or technique and very limited skills, losing far more lures to cunning catches than we've ever landed decent meals for our table. But, we keep at it and always like picking up an extra rod here and there in the vague hope that at least some of the fish will be stupid enough to bite. Paper charts and hard copy guides are invaluable on board and, with new editions coming thick and fast, it's easy to find one that's only from the



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JESS LLOYD-MOSTYN

Jess and James left the UK in 2011 in their Crossbow 42 and have sailed halfway round the world, growing their crew en route. Follow their journey at water-log.com

previous season or edition and to couple it with digital updates.

There's also a veritable smorgasbord of electrical and electronic peripherals that might as well be magnetised as they draw in my husband, James, in an instant; he gets all excited and chatty about solar panel isolators, voltmeters and rotary switches. Now, I'm a good sport, but there's only so much excitement even a sailing lass can show about a used rotary switch.

Anchors, however, are another story. We have an ongoing joke that I'm easily impressed by ground tackle and I hold a firm belief that there is no such thing as too many anchors on a boat. So much so that a stint contributing to the local cruisers' VHF radio net in Bocas del Toro, Panama sends me flying across the cabin for the microphone as soon as I hear someone advertising a hefty Bruce anchor

in the "treasures from the bilge" section. But, to my credit, we upgraded our main anchor to this weighty secondhand prize, and have never slept better as a result.

Sometimes we've even just gifted particular items to fellow cruisers, when we realise that we're not using them enough to warrant their space in a lazarette. This was the case with our barbecue that secured to the rail of our aft deck. Though a very shiny and nifty bit of kit, the sheer faff of cooking anything up at the stern when all the rest of our galley equipment and food was down below was enough for us to reason that it would've been much more useful to a catamaran.

And, of course, sailors are often getting rid of rope. Running rigging, halyards, lanyards, floating line, towing line and everything in between is up for grabs when boaters are about. We all like to carry some extra long lengths of it for those "just in case" scenarios so I felt particularly smug when I managed to score an extra 100-metre line to keep up my sleeve for our remote Western Pacific stretch. "What if we need to stern tie to some far off palm trees?" I plaintively said in response to my darling skipper's raised eyebrows. Well, who doesn't love a bargain? Plus, there's something nice about knowing that anything you buy is helping someone else journey on just that teensy bit further.