

Sailors in warmer climates often become more relaxed in their attitude to clothing, as liveaboard Jess Lloyd-Mostyn discovered

Sailors without clothes. Perhaps it comes from being away from home and its stigmas, or the feeling of perpetual holiday, or simply no longer caring what anyone thinks, but whichever way you look at it, the truth is that cruisers spend a lot of time naked.

This is not a lifestyle choice, I hasten to add. We haven't suddenly become naturists and no self-respecting sailor expects to carry out a conversation with another whilst in their birthday suit. But liveaboard cruisers, by and large, do enjoy a lot of time without clothes on.

An awful lot of it comes down to necessity. It's hot and humid where we are, and it's considered dressing up to be in anything other than shorts or a bikini. Year-round sailors in the Solent may not relate to this condition, nor would those spending the winter outside the Tropics. They probably shudder at the thought of it. But the daily act of diving into turquoise waters and showering off at the stern does give a new confidence and a more lackadaisical approach to privacy.

When your boat is at anchor and the anchorage not too crowded you almost feel as though there is a bubble surrounding each vessel. If you choose to go swimming



Relaxing in a hammock on deck – clothing is optional

The naked truth about cruisers

in the nude then the other boats are far enough away that your modesty remains intact. If the lie of the boat is in your favour, you can even rinse off afterwards without accidentally flashing your neighbours. Or you simply stop worrying about it and have your shower in the buff.

On board, in the seclusion of your own cabin, who needs extra layers when the temperatures are soaring? Far easier to save on the laundry and just walk around in your underwear. Among fellow cruisers it's an ongoing joke that an unscheduled

'My British sensibilities had me blushing right down to my toes'

knock on the hull and friendly call of 'Ahoy there' will often elicit the response, 'Hang on, I'm just putting pants on!'

I admit to becoming far more liberal about baring all since having a baby. Our daughter is regularly bathed or showered in full view of the anchorage and quite enjoys scrambling about on deck totally naked. In fact, one tell-tale sign of a 'boat kid' is one who frequently disrobes with no warning and a look of utter composure.

Before you write us off as a crazy, stark-naked bunch with no boundaries, I should point out that even we have our limits. My own cut-off point was crossed by friends who were cleaning their boat one day, as they did every day, the wife in her bikini while her husband adopted a more European-style pair of trunks. Our trips ashore in the dinghy would include us giving them a quick wave as we sped past. One such journey, however, revealed that not only had the

gentleman bade farewell to his teeny tiny trunks altogether but he then proceeded to call us over and chat, facing us!

My British sensibilities had me blushing right down to my toes as I averted my eyes but our friendly neighbour was clearly quite comfortable. Had he stopped caring? Maybe he'd just been cruising too long. Perhaps, inside everyone who dreams of casting off is a small part of them that craves the bare freedoms that go with it. ▲



Showering off, boat style



Just hope that your neighbours at anchor aren't watching

Jessica Lloyd-Mostyn

Jessica and James left England in 2011 aboard *Adamastor*, a Crossbow 42, on a circumnavigation. After crossing the Atlantic and cruising the Caribbean, their daughter Rocket was born in Mexico and logged her first sea miles crossing the Pacific in 2014. They got married in Fiji and are now in New Zealand where they added to their crew list with their son, Indigo. Follow their blog at www.water-log.com.

