

# Offshore Safety

From idea to plan to circumnavigation

*Below, Jess, James and newborn baby Rocket in Mexico. Above right, the couple's Crossbow 42, Adamastor, headed downwind off Cuba.*

**W**ould you start a trip around the world prompted by a single sentence? Jessica Barber, James Lloyd-Mostyn and their baby daughter Rocket Lloyd-Mostyn did just that. Their circumnavigation aboard their Angelo Lavranos-designed Crossbow 42, Adamastor, was prompted during a walk along the cliffs of a Cornish seaside town. Jess gazed at a boat out to sea and said, "We could just buy a boat and sail around the world." According to Jess, that sentence "changed everything."

After months of training and preparation, Jess' crazy idea became an actual plan. They rented their house, quit their jobs as architects and bought Adamastor. They had "only a little sailing experience and

very limited understanding of boat maintenance, but a healthy amount of optimism."

In October 2011, Jess and James threw off the dock lines in Falmouth, England, and set out. They intended to sail around the world in two and a half years and then return to their lives in London.

Together they managed to sail the boat from the U.K. to Morocco, the Canary Islands, the Caribbean, Cuba, eastern Mexico, the Panama Canal, then the Pacific coast of Central America to Banderas Bay in Mexico. It was in Banderas Bay they had their daughter Rocket. They plan to depart for the Marquesas in the spring of 2014.

**OV:** How do you approach the subject of safety? Has your experience sailing offshore affected your thinking on safety?

**JB:** When we bought our boat I had little sailing experience and James' sailing experience mostly came from crewing on someone else's boat in the Caribbean for a season. So, starting from a position of knowing very little, we took it upon ourselves to get a safety education so that we could look after each other and our boat. The short courses that we attended in first aid and ISAF offshore sea survival certainly helped our confidence when it came to scary subjects such as storms, lightning,

fire and abandoning to the life raft. There is also a strong safety aspect to the formal RYA (Royal Yachting Association) sail training we had (up to Coastal Skipper practical and Yachtmaster theory level).

However, I think that our subsequent experiences of sailing offshore, gradually taking bigger and bigger steps (the English channel, the Bay of Biscay, Morocco to the Canaries and our Atlantic crossing) have given us great opportunities to make safe sailing practices part of our cruising routine. We didn't know our boat that well when we set off so we asked a sailing instructor friend of ours and one of his fellow teachers to come aboard as crew to give us extra training to begin with. We also crossed the Atlantic with another sailing instructor friend and his partner as it was a great opportunity to learn from one another. Things like always being harnessed onto the cockpit and wearing a life jacket when on solo night watch are just second nature to us now.



Jess Barber



Jess Barber

## In This Section

- Tropical storm and hurricane info
- Non-pyrotechnic signaling lights
- The hazard landscape



But there are also elements of fine tuning that we learned after many passages together: we reef down early and before sunset, we sail cautiously and comfortably as we're not trying to win any races.

**OV:** What planning have you done for possible medical emergencies? Did you receive any medical training before you began voyaging?

**JB:** We have both attended first aid courses that give basic knowledge. We have various first aid kits and medications on board. We participate in VHF and SSB radio nets so that there is a community of people who are aware of our movements when we're going offshore or ocean sailing.

Now that we have our little baby girl we're taking a few extra precautions: we have a friend joining us as crew for the Mexico to Marquesas leg of our Pacific crossing who is a former neo-natal nurse. Also, it sounds small, but one of the most important things that we do while sailing is simply keeping fit and eating well, as being in good health in the first place stands you in pretty good stead if you should get ill.

**OV:** What type of life raft do you have? How often do you have it serviced?

**JB:** We have a six-man Plastimo TransOcean life raft with a 24-hour kit. It was second hand

when we bought it so we had it serviced and fully inspected. The next service is due at the end of 2014. We have never sailed the boat with six people on board, but we were keen that the boat should have a life raft that was comparable to her size and she is a 42-foot boat with three cabins and it is no bad thing having extra rations to go around.

**OV:** What do you have in your abandon ship bag?

**JB:** It varies slightly according to how long a passage we're planning and whether it's coastal or ocean sailing. Our full-on version includes:

Handheld VHF with GPS; flares; PLB and EPIRB; back up GPS/plotters as we use an iPhone and iPad; a Leatherman and a knife; a mini-fishing kit; thermo-protective suits (survival suits); extra water and food; torches that are powered by movement rather than batteries; money, credit cards, passports and boat documentation; sunscreen and hats; first aid kit.

Depending on the nature of the event causing us to abandon to the life raft, we would potentially have time to grab all manner of other useful items and, of course, our life jackets.

**OV:** Do you have survival suits?

**JB:** We carry six survival suits.

**OV:** Do you have an EPIRB, PLB or a tracking device like a Spot or inReach SE?

**JB:** Yes, we have both an EPIRB and a PLB registered with Falmouth Coastguard in the United Kingdom who are aware that we are global cruising. We don't have a Spot or other tracking device though, but we alert our families whenever we're doing a long passage and tell them when we expect to arrive.

**OV:** Do you have an AIS unit on board?

**JB:** Yes, we have an AIS unit on one of our chartplotters. We tend to only use it when we

are in busy harbors or shipping lanes. The time that we were most grateful for it was when we encountered fog on our channel crossing. However we don't use it as standard on passages as knowledge of lights and day shapes is sufficient. Although it's quite good fun to play with on a long night watch or when we transited the Panama Canal!



Jess Barber

**OV:** What types of weather data do you use when making an offshore passage? How do you gather weather information?

**JB:** We've found that we vary our approach to our sources for gathering weather information according to where we are in the world, the length of passage and how far offshore we're going. We always collate weather data from a number of online (free) weather sites and local radio nets before any passage. If we are going far offshore, we normally combine

Adamastor anchored in Panama.

# Offshore Safety

this information with SSB weather services and online sites like Passage-Weather. On some of our European passages we found NavTex to be particularly useful.

We make a point of being in the right place at the right time of year so that our crossings that negotiated the notorious gap winds of the Pacific coast of Central America (Papagayo and Tehuantepec) were timed for the most favorable conditions which means longer weather win-

dows. Likewise, we only attempt ocean crossings when the trade winds are well-established and the storm seasons have come to an end.

**OV:** Do you use a weather routing service?

**JB:** We haven't ever used a paid-for weather routing service, although we've tuned into various SSB nets and weather services and listened for relevant information for people going on the same or similar passages to the one



Jess Barber

*The British-flagged Adamastor underway in the Caribbean at sunset.*

## OCEAN ALMANAC MEDICAL INFORMATION

### Medical resources

There are numerous services and insurance plans available to sailors. Resources range from companies that assemble specialized medical kits or are ready to fax medical records in an emergency, to organizations that provide worldwide consultation and insurance, including emergency evacuation (medevac).

#### Marine and Wilderness Medical Training

**www.medofficer.net** Medical Officer, Ltd; custom training and the Offshore Emergency Medicine course for long distance voyagers.

**www.medicineforamariners.com** Medicine for Mariners; offers the Annual Medicine for Mariners and Safety at Sea Conference.

**www.wildmed.com** Wilderness Medical Associates International; one of the two major worldwide providers of wilderness and rescue medical training.

**www.nols.edu/wmi/** Wilderness Medical Institute of NOLS; one of the two major worldwide providers of wilderness and rescue medical training.

#### Advisory and Evacuation

**www.worldclinic.com** World Clinic; concierge physician service for travelers, comprehensive and expensive.

**www.medaire.com** Medaire; medical advisory, training, and inventory service. Medaire is an International SOS company.

**www.globalrescue.com** Comprehensive medical, rescue and repatriation service.

**http://www.cirm.it** An Italian site with free remote medical advice.

**www.airmed.com** Company specializing in medical evacuation and insurance.

**www.findmespot.com** SPOT; messenger beacon (like an EPIRB only more versatile).

**www.diversalertnetwork.org** Divers Alert Network; travel and accident insurance. Worth doing even if you don't SCUBA dive.

**http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/RCC\_numbers.asp** U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Centers phone list.

**www.iamat.org** International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers

**www.gwemed.edu** George Washington University Maritime Access program.

#### Medical Suppliers

**www.oceanmedix.com** Retail and wholesale medical products.

**www.mooremedical.com** Retail and wholesale medical products.

**www.boundtree.com** Retail and wholesale medical products.

**www.buyemp.com** Retail and wholesale emergency medical services products.

**www.conterra-inc.com** Various medical packs and bags, rescue equipment.

**www.drmmotoscope.com** Site to purchase otoscope (stainless model with LED is best)

**www.marinemedical.com** Commercial supplier of medications and equipment for ships. An example of a number of similar services.

**www.dentalkitfortravelers.com** Dental emergency kit for travelers.

**www.firstaidpak.com** FieldTex Products; medical kits day sailors and cruisers.

**www.chinookmed.com** A supplier to civilian search and rescue and military medicine.

#### Reference

**www.cruisingclub.org/pdfs/surgeon\_memo.pdf** Medical recommendations for offshore yachts from the CCA fleet surgeon.

**www.medscape.com** Mobile drug, disease and other medical reference.

**http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga-seafarer\_information/mcga-dqs\_st\_shs\_seafarer\_information-medical/mcga-dqs\_st\_shs\_ships\_capt\_medical\_guide.htm** Free download of Ship Captain's Medical Guide in pdf.

**www.cdc.gov** Centers for Disease Control links to travel medicine and alerts.

**www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/table-of-contents.aspx** CDC Yellow Book for traveler's health.

**www.med.umich.edu/libr/sma/sma\_index.htm** Sports Medicine Advisor. Information on injuries.

**www.noonsite.com** Jimmy Cornell. Lots of info including medical links.

**www.fda.gov/CECI/ComplianceManuals/CompliancePolicyGuidanceManual/ucm074403.htm** FDA position statement about drugs onboard ship.

**http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr\_2005/apr/qtr/pdf/21cfr1301.25.pdf** DEA regulations concerning controlled substances aboard commercial aircraft and vessels.

**www.cs.amedd.army.mil/borden/Portlet.aspx?ID=cb88853d-5b33-4b3f-968c-2cd95f7b7809** Download site for the book Emergency War Surgery - A U.S. Army publication.

**istm.org** International Society for Travel Medicine.

we're on or are planning.

**OV:** What safety gear do you plan to purchase and why?

**JB:** We've been living and sailing aboard since October 2011, so we have quite a lot of safety gear already. Our most recent purchases have all been connected with having a baby girl. She has a life vest PFD, a harness and tether. We also have a playpen, a highchair with a harness, a baby hammock and a carrier for her which allow us numerous options for somewhere safe to leave her when we're both on deck. We're also installing netting on our guardrails before our Pacific crossing.

We've recently purchased a Hydrovane, which, although not a dedicated item of safety gear, will enable the boat to self-steer without using any power on long trade wind passages. This will be a big change for us as so far we've hand-steered all 11,000 miles that we've traveled.

Now that we've been cruising for a few years we realize the importance of having a back-up for every system on board so, in preparation for our Pacific crossing, we've loaded up the boat with engine spares and a few bits of extra electronic kits like a second-hand iPad which can act as a back up chartplotter. ■