

Earning enough to keep on going... with JOHN CAMPBELL

WHENEVER I MEET people who are not themselves cruising full time, sooner or later they all ask, "What do you do for money?"

Living on a boat can be much cheaper than living ashore, but money is unfortunately still required. How much? Nobody can answer this. A lot depends on the boat and the lifestyle of the owners. Lana and I try to live simply and relatively cheaply, preferring to spend as much time as possible doing the things we enjoy, rather than in a never-ending quest for money. It really comes down to a question of personal values.

Eat less!

Living in the tropics is generally cheaper than living in colder climates. We find in hot weather that we eat less, spend nothing on heating and need little in the way of clothes. Provided one avoids the temptation of eating out too often or renting cars, the living can be very cheap, perhaps even now under £10 per week. At this level of cost, expensive foods must be resisted, marinas or harbours charging dues must be avoided, and for transport ashore we rely on our folding bicycles.

On top of this weekly expense there must be some reserve for such things as postage, film for cameras, and the occasional cold drink ashore. Then the boat must be cared for. Paint and varnish break down quickly in the tropics, and a wooden boat must be slipped for painting every six or eight months in tropical waters otherwise pretty soon there will be no boat to worry about. A resinglass boat can go much longer without slipping, especially if the energetic owners are prepared to dive down regularly and scrub the bottom.

So if you are considering taking off on an extended cruise, then choose a boat that is small enough and simple enough to maintain cheaply. Then, provided you adapt your lifestyle to suit your level of income, it is perfectly possible to earn enough money along the way to keep going forever!

Charters for starters?

The first way that everyone assumes that we make money is by chartering. Alas, the days when a cruising boat could pull into some small harbour and get charters at once, for exorbitant prices, have



Raising the wind...

long gone. Chartering has become a very specialised professional business. In many cases, large yachts are run at a substantial loss for tax reasons. Economically a private owner-skipper cannot compete against these boats and make a profit.

Almost all the good charter areas are already over-exploited and a newcomer cannot expect to be welcomed with open arms by a

Preferring to spend time doing the things we enjoy rather than in a never ending quest for money



charter agent who is already having a job supplying enough clients to satisfy his established yachts. How about exploiting a new area? New areas are hard to find. Every year more and more countries are making it illegal for foreign yachts to pick up charters in their waters. For somebody trying to make money to complete a cruise, there would not really be enough time nor facilities to set up a business. To do that would require setting up a new company, and getting back into the rat race we try to escape by going cruising. To complete the picture of gloom, the bareboat charter business and the sailing convoy schemes have almost killed the charter business for the smaller private boats.

If chartering is still your aim, there is one glimmer of hope — day chartering. This involves taking groups of people out just for the day, returning them to their hotel in time for supper. The only way to make a go of this is to have

contacts in a hotel, and have your services well advertised in the hotel. The hotel may expect a commission, but sometimes they can be persuaded to regard you as an additional service offered by them to attract custom.

An ideal hotel would be an expensive one overlooking a sheltered bay where the boat can be anchored safely overnight. An evening in the bar with the boat in sight will ensure an unlimited supply of customers. Again, the best hotels will be already taken. Be patient and look around. Often the boats there before you will be in the same position as yourself — making sufficient money to move on. By befriending the skipper or the manager of the hotel, you may be able to take over for the next season. Don't be shy of asking.

I was fortunate a few years ago in Antigua to pick up several day charters from an exclusive hotel whose own boat was ashore for repairs. Our guests arrived at about 11am each day and we took them out to a reef for a swim. This particular hotel provided a very lavish luncheon hamper for its guests, which we unpacked while they were swimming. So, our own home-made potent rum punch was prepared and offered in copious quantity as the swimmers returned. As soon as the second helping of punch was on its way down, the anchor came up and we sailed out into the brisk trade winds. As soon as we were well clear of the shelter of the land, the guests were invited below for lunch. None but the most determined ever managed more than a small sandwich or a cracker or two. Our guests, without exception, enjoyed their sail and the punch; we got enough food for a week and twenty five dollars a head. The hotel's own boat was back in commission all too soon.

Words worth?

The next great fallacy is writing. Do not expect to get rich by writing for sailing magazines. It is possible for anybody to sell articles to magazines — the very fact that you are reading this shows that it is possible — but the rates are none too high. The difference between breaking even and showing a profit on an article can be in the use of photographs or drawings. Magazines pay on the space an article uses, yet no sailing magazine likes articles much over two and a half thousand words. Half a dozen photographs sold with the article can often double the size of the cheque when it comes.

We are presently building our own darkroom on board so we can supply photographs more easily and much more cheaply. A cheaper



The author busily 'raising the wind' aboard Papilio Ruga

alternative still would be to do sketches or drawings; all that is needed is artistic ability!

Black and white photographs must be supplied on glossy paper and should be at least half-plate size. The manuscript of the article itself must be typed, on one side of the paper only, double spaced, with a large margin on each side. It is a good idea to enclose return postage if you want the material back if it is not accepted, though this can be a problem if overseas. (But not all editors are so mean! — DMD)

It is worth finding someone in the same country where the magazine is published to act as an agent. If the material is rejected, then ask the magazine to return it to your agent, and ask him to re-submit it to another magazine. Just because the material is rejected, don't give up, but try to sell it elsewhere.

Finally, don't expect to get paid too soon. Many magazines pay on publication rather than on acceptance. It can sometimes be as much as two years before the cheque finally arrives.

A lot of cruising people determine to write a book. Once again, it has all been done before. Unless one has a very unusual experience or narrow escape from death, it is unlikely that just another account of a cruise will be published. Even if it is, there is not much of a market, so not much money is to be made. Perhaps it would be better to divert one's literary talent in other directions. A novel or a thriller, perhaps, has a better chance of being published, and if by any wild chance the film rights could be sold, well, then one's financial worries would vanish overnight.

Filming the voyage itself can be considered. It is again unlikely to

be very lucrative though unless a disaster occurs and is filmed. Television is plagued with union problems, and the unions do not like to allow freelance material to be used unless it is very special. The film must be colour and it should be 16mm. Few stations will even look at 8mm film unless it is unique. It would be out of the question for an individual to buy, process and edit the film, then sell it to a TV station and expect to make a profit. This is even disregarding the not inconsiderable cost of the camera itself. The only possible way would be for a station to sponsor the filming of a particular voyage. Even then, don't expect to get rich. We have had film shown on four TV programmes, and, although all the film was supplied, processed, and edited by a TV station, we barely broke even.

What then are the other ways to make money? Unless one is a doctor, dentist, or even an accountant or teacher, it is unlikely that you will be allowed to work ashore. The only exception would perhaps be for casual manual labour jobs, or seasonal jobs such as fruit picking, where payment is in cash on a day-to-day basis.

What can you do?

Despite this legal limitation, there are two areas where legal restrictions are almost impossible to enforce, so the secret is to think of goods or services to sell to tourists or other yachts.

For the tourists, we have covered day chartering, but they can also be an excellent market for hand-crafts. Every tourist is compelled to take back a certain number of gifts or souvenirs. Any reasonably competent artist brave enough to set up an easel in a busy place will have customers almost fighting for the chance to buy a painting or drawing before it is finished. The only criterion seems to be that the picture must in some way be typical of the area concerned. Your typical palm trees leaning over a white sand beach can be sold on any island in the tropics, and could even be painted or drawn while on passage between the islands.

Other sure-fire sellers are macrame belts, bags, or watch-straps, and shell necklaces. However, be careful about competing directly with the locals — they will not take kindly to it. It is much easier to sell straight off your yacht. If the yacht can be moored stern to a busy waterfront, frequented by tourists, so much the better. A crew member sitting on the stern finishing off a belt or necklace will attract attention in

no time. The article will probably sell itself.

We have a large treadle sewing machine on board. On it Lana can make bikinis, and it seems that the less material you put into a bikini,



Lana Campbell, modelling half of a home-made bikini

the higher the price it commands, especially if boy friend is buying it! We can also use the machine for mending sails, not only our own, but others, and for money!

Almost any skill can be sold to other yachts. The list is just about endless. Starting with the sail-mending. It is fairly easy to equip oneself to repair quite large sails, and it can be quite lucrative. A charter boat with a torn mainsail and a schedule to keep will pay almost anything to have it quickly mended.

A mechanic, engineer, carpenter, or electrician will find all the work he wants, wherever yachts gather. A good tool kit and a few basic spares can earn a good living for anyone prepared to learn how to use them. A few years ago I made a lot of money in Tahiti repairing fridges and freezers on board yachts. There was nobody ashore willing to do the work in a hurry. I borrowed tools and freon gas off one yacht as payment for changing a filter on their deep freezer. The word got round the waterfront, and I soon had more work than I could handle.

Other skills to develop could be as a rigger. A few coils of wire, end fittings, and spares could perhaps prove a worthwhile investment. A sound knowledge of radios, radar, echo sounders, and the like would be a passport to the world. With our darkroom, we hope to be able to repeat an experience in French Polynesia. I was staying there on a boat with a darkroom and sold many sets of passport photographs to yachtsmen applying for visas.

The scope is unlimited. Pick one or two things that suit you individually, that have a wide appeal for sale, then a small investment will ensure a small but steady income. If it all fails, you can always write about it! ●

TRAILER LAW IN TURMOIL

DAVE GREENWELL investigates



LAST YEAR, the Department of Transport put forward proposals which would make sweeping changes to the law governing the trailing of boats. In essence, they proposed replacing the existing limits on trailer weight with new laws which would limit most family cars to towing loads of not more than 400 kilos (8cwt) unbraked. Above this limit, trailers would have to be fitted with brakes.

Practical Boat Owner first brought this situation to the notice of readers last September (PBO 153) by publishing a letter from Mr. L. Wilson who is the Chief Executive of the Association of Trailer Manufacturers.

It pointed out that, if adopted, the proposals would put a great number of trailer sailors on the wrong side of the law and they could be put to considerable expense to update their trailers. Mr. Wilson then went on to suggest that the sensible course of action would be to write to one's MP stressing dissatisfaction.

In our opinion . . .

Many people, in fact, wrote and phoned the Department of Transport to register their views. Trailer manufacturers, the RYA and a significant number of private individuals brought to the attention of the Authorities, the special problems that the proposed new legislation would create for those who trail boats. All of which has resulted in the Department of

Transport demonstrating that we do indeed live in a democracy by coming up with a new set of proposals. Proposals which, it is hoped, will not be weighted so heavily against boat trailing. These have now to do the rounds of interested parties so the whole process is starting once more.

Current regulations . . .

At present, the law centres its attention on the unloaded weight of the trailer and the relationship between the all up weight of the loaded trailer and the kerb weight of the towing vehicle. *The Motor Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations* say that provided the unladen trailer weighs less than 2cwt, it need not be fitted with brakes. Many people have, for some time now, considered this to be a dangerous loophole because it makes no mention of the maximum load that can be placed on a trailer without brakes.

Current regulations also say that if the total laden weight of the trailer — that is trailer, boat, engine etc — exceeds 60 per cent of the towing vehicle's kerb side weight, and the trailer is not fitted with brakes operated through the coupling, your maximum speed is limited to 40mph. Likewise, if the laden weight of the trailer fitted with brakes exceeds the kerb side weight of the towing vehicle, you are again restricted to 40mph. Vehicle/trailer combinations within the above limits can travel at the 50mph limit which is, other