

MEDITERRANEAN - WORK OR PLAY

Holiday time is here and people think of white sands, azure sea, soft breezes and relaxation. Here at Paphos International Sailing Club some of us get more adventurous; go beyond the white sands far out into the wide sea to explore distant shores.

Previous articles from PISC have concentrated on the dinghy racing and Regatta events. So now, let us look at boats of more than 5 metres in length. First the dozen or so "Working Boats" at Agios Georgios Harbour which belong to our Fishermen Partners. Our two Fishermen Partners with whom we work most are both called Savvas.

Most evenings they motor out to their "favourite" fishing ground (depends on season and sea conditions apparently), anchor up, cast in their nets and wait. Savvas says that he will often go to sleep, although the spectacle and beauty of the stars above in a cloudless sky with no "light pollution" is something that always amazes him and of which he never tires.

Just before the sun rises the nets are pulled in and the sea's bounty is placed into boxes full of ice. "I do not need an alarm clock, grins Savvas, I always wake up at the right time. I have done it all my life." Back at AG the fish are sorted and hopefully sold to local restaurants and hotels. "Some days are good, we might even catch a lobster or two - some not so good" explains Savvas.

What training did Savvas have? Only the best kind that money cannot buy. "I went out with my father when I was a very young boy so now 50 years later I can read the sea and all her moods, just like a book.

If you respect the sea, look and listen to her she will always give you plenty of warning. The sea is my life, boasts Savvas, and later, please God, my son Andreas who works with me now, will take over".

If our Fishermen Partners, all of whom are professional sailors respect the sea, then surely all recreational sailors must do likewise. "Absolutely, agrees Tony Crow our Vice Commodore who sails Circes, a beautiful 8m yacht with his wife Angela. I would not dream of venturing out to sea if myself or my crew were not fully

competent and my boat was not serviced, sound and fit for the purpose intended. 100 kilometres out to sea with a damaged rudder and a storm brewing is definitely not the best place to be."

There are few more rewarding and exciting experiences than offered by larger sailing vessels. Creaming along silently (no engine) in a beautiful blue sea with the wind whistling through your hair and not a soul in sight. The land disappeared an hour ago! Paradoxically there is nothing more frustrating/exciting when things suddenly change. Perhaps this is why people do these activities. Going that extra step; pushing the envelope; testing ones self; and many more. Life is for living!

So unlike Savvas who learned his trade from his Dad, our recreational sailors need to look elsewhere. Recently three of our Club members went to Greece - the birthplace of many a true seafarer - to hone their big boat sailing skills.

The high level comprehensive course officiated by an examiner from the RYA was for "The International Certificate of Competence" and included advanced sailing skills; communication skills (radio/gps); navigational skills and safety at sea. Over three days the examiner put each candidate through a series of demanding practical exercises at sea followed by a thorough oral and written examination.

"All three of us already had many hours of sailing experience in big boats, so we all felt confident (*sic* hoped!) that we would gain the qualification. In fact the examiner was quite complementary, beamed Dave Richards.

This qualification means that we will now be able to hire a bare boat (no need for crew from hiring company to be aboard) from anywhere in the world." Amazingly all three have already arranged their holidays for next year. No prizes for guessing what they will be doing!

Finally from PISC - "Safe sailing to sailors everywhere and good luck to our Fishermen Partners at Agios Georgios".

To find out more about our activities or impressive list of qualifications available go to: www.pisc.com.cy