

Nautical Terminology – Alba Sailing Style

PS – This is NOT what we teach our RYA Students!!!!

If the words associated with sailing are a complete mystery to you read on to find no help whatsoever:

Ahoy

The first in a series of four letter words commonly exchanged by skippers as their boats approach one another

Bar

Long. Low lying navigational hazard, usually awash, found at river mouths and harbour entrances, where it is composed of sand or mud, and ashore, where it is made of mahogany or some other dark wood. Sailors can be found in large numbers around both.

Boom

A Laterally mounted spar to which a sail is fastened, used during jibing to shift crew members to a fixed, horizontal position.

Bulkhead

Discomfort suffered by sailors who drink too much

Cabin

A cramped, closet like compartment below decks where crew members may be stored – on their sides if large or on end if small – until needed.

Calm

Sea condition characterised by the simultaneous disappearance of the wind and the last cold beer

Channel

Narrow stretch of deep or dredged waterway bordered by buoys or markers that separates two or more grounded boats

Current

Tidal flow that carries a boat away from it desired destination or toward a hazard.

Fitting Out

Series of maintenance tasks performed on boats ashore during good weather weekends in spring and summer months to make them ready for winter storage.

Flipper

Rubber swimming aid worn on the feet. Usually available in two sizes, 3 and 17

Flotsam

Anything floating in the water from which there is no response when an offer of a cocktail is made.

Fluke

The portion of an anchor that digs securely into the bottom: also, any occasion when this happens on the first try.

Galley

Ancient: Aspect of seafaring associated with slavery.

Modern: Aspect of seafaring associated with slavery

Gear

Generic term for any pieces of boating equipment that can be forgotten in the back-seat or boot of a car, left behind on a pontoon, soaked in the bottom of a dinghy or lost over the side of the boat.

Gimbals

Movable mountings often found on shipboards lamps, compasses etc which provide dieting passengers an opportunity to observe the true motions of the ship in relation to them, and thus prevent any recently ingested food from remaining in their digestive systems long enough to be converted into unwanted calories.

Grounding

Embarrassing situation in which a sailor returns to shore without leaving his boat.

Hatch

An opening in a deck leading to the cabin below with a cover designed to let water in while keeping fresh air out.

Hull speed

The maximum theoretical velocity of a given boat through the water, which is 1.5 times the square root of its waterline length in feet, divided by the distance to port in miles, minus the time in hours to sunset cubed.

Jibe

Course change which causes the boom to sweep rapidly across the cockpit; also, frequent type of comment made by observers of this manoeuvre.

Lanyard

A light line attached to a small article so that it can be secured somewhere well out of reach.

Leeward

The direction in which objects, liquids and other matter may be thrown without risk of re encountering them in the immediate future.

Life jacket

Any personal floatation device that will keep an individual who has fallen off a vessel, above water long enough to be run over by it or another rescue craft.

Mizzen

The shorter aft mast on a yawl or ketch. Any mast that is no longer there.

Moon

Earth's natural satellite. During periods when it displays a vivid blue colour, sailing conditions are generally favourable.

Motor Sailor

A hybrid boat that combines the simplicity and reliability of sail power with the calm and serenity of a throbbing engine.

Ocean racing

Demanding form of sailing practised by sportsman whose idea of a good time is standing under an ice cold shower, fully clothed while re examining their last meal. Most hardy Ocean Racers are distinguishable by the scars left from their lobotomy.

Passage

Basically a voyage from point A to point B, interrupted by unexpected landfalls or stopovers at point K, point Q, and point Z.

Pontoon

Harbour landing place that goes crack, crunch when hit

Pilotage

The art of getting lost in sight of land, as opposed to the distinct and far more complex science of navigation used to get lost in offshore waters.

Port

1. Left on a boat.
2. A place you wish you never left on a boat.

Propeller

Underwater winch designed to wind up at high speeds any lines left hanging over the stern.

Radar

Extremely realistic kind of electronic game often found on larger sailboats. Players try to avoid colliding with "blips" which represent other sailboats, large container ships and oil tankers.

Regatta

Disorganised sailing competition that pits your luck against your opponents' luck.

Sailing

The fine art of getting wet and becoming ill while slowly going nowhere at vast expense.

Satellite Navigation

Sophisticated electronic location method that enables sailors to instantly determine the exact latitude and longitude, within just a few feet, anywhere on the surface of the surface of the earth, of whatever it was they just ran aground on.

Single handed sailing

The only situation in which the skipper does not immediately blame the crew for every single thing that goes wrong.

Spinnaker

Large beautiful balloon shaped sail used in powerful downwind sailing, collapses at the sides to make control difficult and when lowered stores neatly into the galley and main cabin and heads all at the same time.

Tides

The rise and fall of ocean waters. There are two tides of interest to mariners: the ebb tide sailors encounter as they attempt to enter port and the flood tide they experience as they try to leave.

Yardarm

Horizontal spar mounted in such a way that when viewed from the cockpit, the sun is always over it.

Yacht Owner

A person who *used* to have some disposable income.