

# Books

The increasingly embittered Deputy Editor retires to his berth to review the latest nautical reading.

## FLOTILLA - WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA

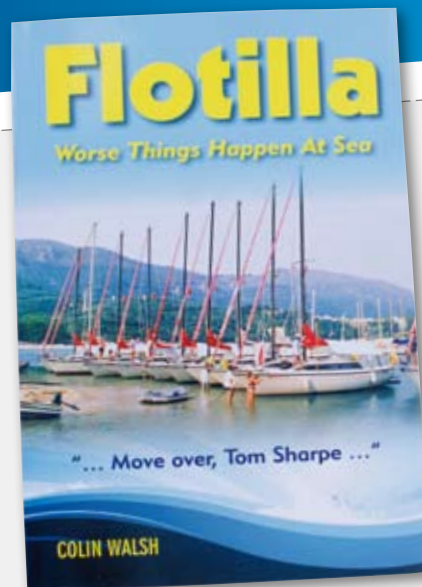
AUTHOR: COLIN WALSH  
PUBLISHER: GRANTA EDITIONS  
ISBN: 978-1-85757-105-9  
**PRICE: £6.95**

Before I even start this review, I'm going to point you towards the cover, which seems to date from the very first flotilla back in 1892. Very interesting. For me, however, it was all downhill from hereon, but hear me out, because a different person might have enjoyed this more than me.

*Flotilla* is a lighthearted book, narrating the adventures of a disparate group of holidaymakers brought together by the

joy that is a flotilla holiday. Predictably, this results in much hilarity. It's not a badly written book, but the more I read it, the more I fell into the depths of despair. This is probably because the concept of a flotilla holiday doesn't do a huge amount for me at all. The thought of sharing my holiday with a bunch of randomers and enduring enforced bouts of organised fun in the evenings is my idea of hell on earth.

Therefore, however witty this book may be – and it is fairly entertaining in parts – the overall effect on my spirit was akin to watching an episode of *Eastenders*; a kind of insight into a life infinitely more depressing than my own. The effect was utterly dispiriting. I put the book down with a feeling of relief.



**ST Verdict:** Suitably witty, but personally I simply found the subject matter just too unwholesome to enjoy it.

## THE WEST COUNTRY: LYME BAY TO THE ISLES OF SCILLY

AUTHOR: CARLOS ROJAS AND SUSAN KEMP-WHEELER  
PUBLISHER: IMRAY  
ISBN: 978-184623-202-2  
**PRICE: £29.50**

New additions to Imray's excellent and generally very authoritative cruising guides are always welcome, so when this guide to the West Country arrived on my desk with a pleasing 'ker-thunk' I was delighted.

Starting out in Lyme Bay, the guide works its way down the West Country all

the way to Penzance, before heading offshore to the Scilly Isles.

I haven't used this guide in anger as this wretched job rather prevents me from cruising the West Country, much to my chagrin.

This means that I can't point out if there are any glaring omissions, but certainly on early perusal it all looks



highly authoritative and well laid out, as all of these excellent guides generally are.

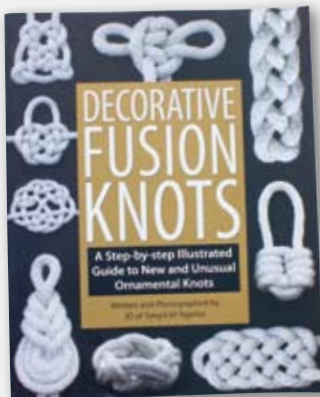
**ST Verdict:** A quick browse through the pages and I was seized with an almost uncontrollable desire to abandon my desk, hop aboard my boat and decamp for a lengthy period to some secluded West Country haven. I'm still toying with the idea in fairness.

## DECORATIVE FUSION KNOTS

AUTHOR: JD LENZEN  
PUBLISHER: GREEN CANDY PRESS  
ISBN: 978-1-931160-78-0  
**PRICE: £10.49**

Now here's the kind of book that no member of the WI should ever be without. JD Lenzen is clearly some kind of a genius when it comes to crazy knots that would grace any stall at your local bring and buy sale. JD is a Californian chap and brings a real sense of panache to the subject. Indeed, as the back cover bellows out at you '*The future of decorative knots has arrived!*'

Hot stuff, and I was expecting to see some pretty racy knots within. I'm sure if



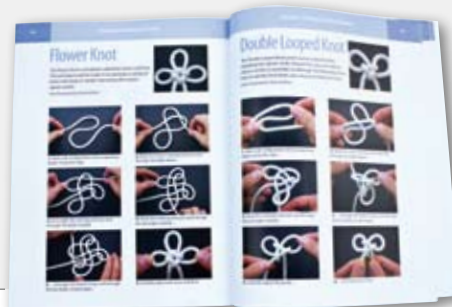
I had even the most modest interest in decorative fusion knots, I wouldn't have been disappointed. Unfortunately I have almost no interest in decorative fusion knots. They're the kind of thing that wizened old mariners in

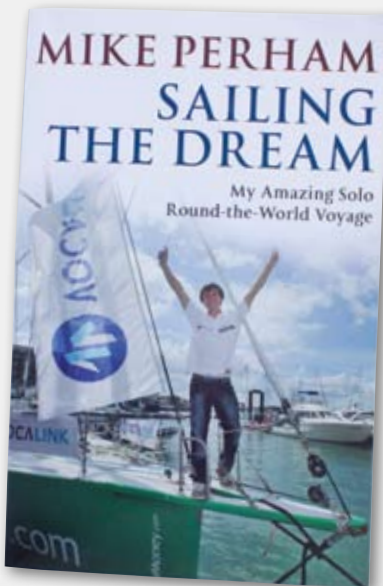
days gone by would have worked on in their off watches and then presented to their beloved on their return.

JD talks you through all manner of

different knots and his diagrams and illustrations are all top notch. As I say, the only drawback is that, for me, I can see little profit in weaving these intricate patterns when I struggle badly enough with a rolling hitch.

**ST Verdict:** Not for everyone, but a very handy guide if you fancy setting up a stall at your nearest WI bring and buy sale.





## SAILING THE DREAM - MY AMAZING SOLO ROUND-THE-WORLD VOYAGE

AUTHOR: MIKE PERHAM  
PUBLISHER: TRANSWORLD PUBLISHERS  
ISBN: 978-1-4081-3141-1

**PRICE: £19.99**

Mike Perham's adventures as an underage singlehanded sailor are well documented and I'm not about to go over them again. Suffice to say that his voyage around the world caused a fair amount of controversy and discussion about where lines should be drawn etc.

Personally, I didn't really care about any of the debate about his age. Sailing around the world solo is a magnificent feat whether contemplating puberty or senility, but I was more concerned about how crashingly dull

it would be to do it on your own with the minimum number of stops.

I feel a bit mean picking on this young shaver about his English, but I found his writing style a trifle disconcerting; I felt like he was in a tremendous hurry to get the damn thing done and often important events were hurried past in a single line of text.

Nevertheless, what does shine through is his enthusiasm for sailing and the sea. It is also clear that he found sailing around the world without seeing much of it enjoyable and rewarding, which made me feel a little happier for him. Once you get used to his rather staccato writing style, I actually found it helped as I found that I was also in a hurry for the whole ordeal to end.

**ST Verdict:** Doubtless many find this inspirational reading, but I struggled to keep up with the youngster.

## THE SALT STAINED BOOK

AUTHOR: JULIA JONES  
PUBLISHER: GOLDEN DUCK  
ISBN: 978-1-899262-04-5

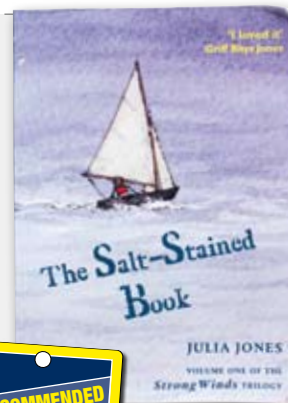
**PRICE: £7.99**

This book review would be far better in the hands of a youngster who could probably give you a better insight into whether it is suitable for its target audience. Sadly, since the tightening up of the grooming laws, I couldn't collar anyone in the 10-14 age bracket to do this, but I'll soldier on.

This is Jones' first novel and I have to say that although it is clearly aimed at a

younger audience, there was plenty in the book that appealed to the older reader too and I often think that this is a very good sign. The book narrates the travails of our hero, Donny, who has been separated from his hippie mother by social services. I won't give away the plot, but there are innumerable twists and a pleasing denouement.

The book leans heavily into the realm of Arthur Ransome and there are



frequent name checks throughout. This is in part inspired by the fact that Ms Jones owns *Peter Duck*, which was the last yacht that Ransome owned.

**ST Verdict:** A pleasant and entertaining adventure, particularly rewarding for the younger reader. It's also the first part of a trilogy, so there is plenty more to come.

## CLASSIC CHOICE

They don't write 'em like they used to. We browse the musty bookstores for an essential old nautical read.

## THE MAGIC OF THE SWATCHWAYS

AUTHOR: MAURICE GRIFFITHS  
PUBLISHER: VARIOUS

**PRICE: FROM 40P**

Ah, the magic of Maurice Griffiths! Erstwhile Editor of our rival *Yachting Monthly*, yacht designer of note and all round yachting commentator. *The Magic of the Swatchways* is a distillation of many of his favourite yachting memories and these wistful reminiscences have formed the template for many later yachting journalists' scribbles.

There's a good reason for this, in that it's a cracking good read; plenty of humour, a dash of adventure and a few practical navigational tips as well. It helps if you have a real love and knowledge of sailing the Thames Estuary and the East Coast, but



this is not vital. What I really love about this book is not only the wry humour that shines through, but also the very real danger of some of the situations that Griffiths ends up in on some of his cruises. One could never accuse Griffiths of being some kind of smug, self satisfied know-it-all as he describes his various life threatening and usually self induced marine cock-ups.

The thing that really sets this book apart, however, is Griffiths' hugely evocative descriptions of life aboard, settled at anchor with the primus stove going and the kettle singing. This dewy eyed depiction of cruising Nirvana is doubtless to blame for hundreds of ill advised purchases of leaky wooden yachts and ensuing drizzle laden cruises spent choking on paraffin fumes and extinguishing small kerosene stove induced blazes.

I must say that to my mind it fizzles out a bit towards the end. What seems patently obvious

to me from reading the book is that being Editor of a London based magazine and a dedicated cruiser didn't really add up. Some of that sense of frustration seems to seep through the later chapters. A salutary lesson to us all.

**ST verdict:** The original and best. Beware of pale imitators.