

## Thoughts from abroad

Written by David Brunnen  
Sunday, 08 April 2012 17:01

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(Groupe Intellex is on vacation)



There are many reasons for sailing offshore. Some may enjoy pitting their wits against the forces of nature. Others may take a more functional view, the convenience of getting from A to B. In my mind the principal reason is to leave land and much else besides, to live, if only for a short time, in another world.

This other world is detached, separate and distinct from the everyday. Being offshore and away from home and work may not be trouble-free but is not bound by the limitations that beset landed life. Leastways it was so until the temptations of mobile phones, Internet and Wi-Fi access allowed business callers to intrude even offshore, even when far away in the Med, even on Good Friday.

In any rational world I should have left that phone/pad/laptop at home and respected the intention to be apart. Out of touch, offline, switched off, gone away. The value of a retreat is often found in the advancement it brings – thinking things through, getting ideas and feelings into some sort of perspective.

I may be relaxed but I didn't immediately switch off and, until this latter half of the voyage, I am yet to discover that sense of advancement. Excusing my snatched moments of connectedness as reassurance for those at home, or the modern equivalent of a picture postcard '*wishing you were here*' , is no good reason for clinging to the essence of on-shoreness, of missing the news, of pretending to be in two or three places at once. It is no doubt convenient that every shore-side taverna provides Wi-Fi, that every bay on every island now has a mobile signal but, until these threads are broken, that inner urge to be 'Captain of my fate/Master of my soul' is still qualified by an all-too-easy reference to digital weather forecasts, GPS position indicators and the auto-helm.

There is, I will admit, a line to be drawn between desire and safety. On-shore the former may too easily displace the latter and at sea the latter should always trump the former. It is not that I do not care. The fundamental reason I am here is in that desire to be in another world and, in this next week, there will be minimal reassuring calls, and no texts, or pictures, or emails, or

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tweets.

And for those still on-shore it will most probably be a blessed relief that I have, at last, 'gone away'.

Vathi (Ithaca) 8<sup>th</sup> April 2012

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Groupe Intellex returns on April 16th.