

# Sailing a Warrior 40 from Southampton

PHOTOS: BOB AYLOTT



Mikaela helms while her skipper tends the sheets during fresh winter winds in the Solent



Around 130 Warrior 40s were built and Chiscos was the penultimate to launch

**Rally organiser  
John Simpson takes  
Dick Durham through  
a Solent blizzard –  
the first in a series  
of shakedown for  
an Atlantic crossing**



Mikaela Meik, 28, as she wiped snowflakes from her face with a gloved hand and peered at the chartplotter.

'Yes,' I said, screwing up my eyelids against the couscous-sized ice pellets sprayed by the south-easterly wind. 'But it's OK, she's anchored. We passed her yesterday.'

The orange hull of a small coaster, sheltering under the lee of an invisible Isle of Wight, loomed out of the swirling vortex of snow. John squinted over the sprayhood to confirm what his plotter was saying. 'That snow stings your face,' he said.

'Jimmy Cornell can keep his rally through the North West Passage. I'm going back to Antigua.'

John's esoteric reference to the cruising guru's plan to run a rally through the bergy bits of Baffin Bay had simply pointed up his own determination to find customers for a warmer destination. He and Mikaela have set up a new Atlantic cruise-in-company, the Christmas Caribbean Rally, which sets off from Lanzarote in the Canaries next December (see *Yachting Monthly News*, February issue).

The 50-year-old son of a Lincolnshire vicar who built up a chain of newsagents, John first sailed aboard a Mirror dinghy on a reservoir.

After beating up the Solent in a blizzard with 30-knot gusts over the deck, I was quite prepared to believe John Simpson's claim that in 20,000 miles of ocean sailing, *Chiscos*, his Warrior 40 Mark II has taken only three waves over the bow which didn't 'lose their oomph before reaching the sprayhood'.

The evidence? As we thrashed myopically through the whiteout, it wasn't spindrift rattling against the hood's plastic windows, but ice.

'Is that a ship over there?' asked John's crew

He later took his wife Susan on a windsurfing holiday in Greece and their first boat was a Roberts 26 which he kept at Fareham. Then came a Gib'Sea 28 and a Moody 35, before he bought *Chiscos* in 2004.

Under full mainsail and staysail, but with the genoa rolled away, we were close-hauled at 60° to the true wind and making 4.5 knots of apparent wind. As the wind increased to 24 knots, our boat speed went up to 5.8.

On a beam reach with 21 knots of apparent wind, we made 5.9 and got her up to 6 knots on a broad reach. One gust of 35 knots made a difference to the boat speed.

'She's may not be wildly quick but she's certainly very comfortable,' said John.

The day before had been very different. We'd left *Chiscos's* berth at Ocean Village in Southampton under grey, pregnant skies with a light southerly wind quickly cooling the hot pasties John handed up from

*'She's not wildly quick, but she's certainly very comfortable'*



*The Warrior 40 is one of the best boats we've seen for deck space*





Winter in the Solent, but John has some tropical isles to look forward to

*'It's a cliché, but almost everything about her is bulletproof'*

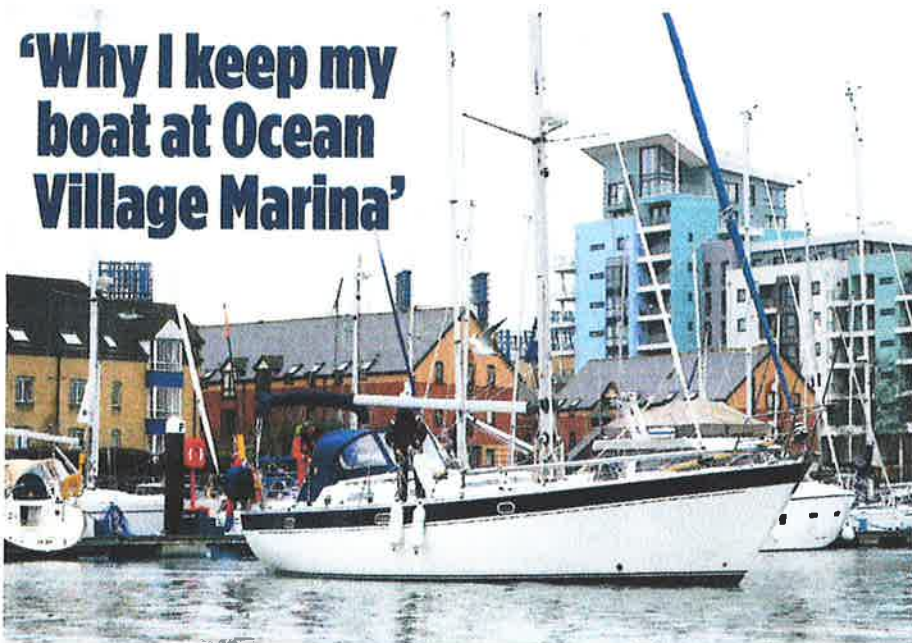


The saloon table can be doubled in size from the area shown above, which is adequate for 'sea snacks'



John and his crew signed up Dick to play spoons for a rendition of a Stéphane Grappelli number

## 'Why I keep my boat at Ocean Village Marina'



the companionway as we motored down Southampton Water.

Her saildrive engine, John feels, is too far forward for effective prop-wash. 'Also, in any kind of sea the prop cavitates,' he said. The Warrior 40 does have a line drawn in the plans for a conventional prop-shaft style engine, which could prove more handy.

On the plus side, John has fitted a folding prop: 'It's made a knot and a half of difference, along with the new mainsail.' He had the mainsail made with a 'squarer' leech, carrying the drive area further aloft thanks to the vertical battens. This was because the boat had 'no power' in anything below a Force 3 with her original, narrower cut mainsail. But given all that, John is still no fan of the in-mast furling system, 'I would prefer luff slides,' he said.

Cliché it may be, but almost everything about the Warrior 40 is bulletproof. She started life when designers Angus Primrose and Bill Dixon shared T-squares and drew the Voyager 38 in the early Thatcher years. Dixon then adjusted the keel, designed a new interior and switched the deck saloon's rig from sloop to cutter, creating the Warrior 38, 29 of which were built between 1984 and 1988, when the hull was stretched into the Warrior 40. Around 130 of these were built and John believes *Chiscos* to be the penultimate hull, launched in 2000.

The hulls were built to Lloyd's specification of solid laminates, hand-laid chopped strand mat and woven rovings beneath a double gelcoat. A reinforced grid takes the keel loads and stringers – it's a seriously strong hull.

A low coachroof and flush, wide decks give her a serious work-boat look, not spoilt too much by the beetling topsides, which are camouflaged with a thick blue stripe just below the toerail. Her voluptuous ends are fuller than the aesthete's ideal, but do give her ample volume down below. This allows the seamanlike addition of a workshop, located where the anchor locker would be on most boats – in the Warrior's case, the anchor locker is forward of the workshop. It sports a bench vice and there's standing headroom for the ship's carpenter.

While it is never a good thing trimwise to stack stores forward, John uses the space for

Ocean Village is where Southampton City Centre should be. The Luftwaffe gave the city fathers the opportunity to rebuild on the waterfront, but with true Anglo-Saxon myopia it was left to the private sector, in this case MDL Marinas. Once you've dodged the traffic on Canute Road there are shops, restaurants, and bars nearby. The Royal Southampton Yacht Club, overlooking the marina, is open to berth holders and visiting yachtsmen. The basin, formerly used for commercial ships, has hosted the start and finish of various round-the-world yacht races.

### What does it cost to berth a yacht here?

A 40-footer like *Chiscos* costs an eye-watering £7,133 annually – the market rate, alas, for deep-water berths on electronically gated

*LEFT: A mooring in the heart of Southampton but there are few marine facilities on site*

# ME & MY BOAT

## Key cruising features

Her vertically battened mainsail has been replaced to give a deeper leech. John is no fan of the in-mast furling, however

The coachroof is low, giving a clean aesthetic to her overall appearance

The foredeck is like that of a pilot cutter. Great work space for the crew

A bathing platform is very useful for getting aboard from the tender – especially as the topsides are challenging

The topsides are high but the blue band craftily breaks up the 'slabyness'

The staysail is self-tacking, a boon when sailing short-handed

The wind was blowing straight into the river as we motored out of Lymington



John used his own DIY skills to make this foot stand which gives the helm a view forward

To starboard aft, there's a heads compartment with a shower and a sink in front of a second aft cabin with generously sized single berths set out bunk-bed style, one atop the other. Both these cabins have access panels to the engine, which can also be got at the traditional way – by removing the companionway stairs.

We jogged gently down the Solent, the ebb doing more work than the fickle breeze, and motored into Lymington where John was keen to get hooked up to shore power before nightfall because the boat's own diesel heater was 'knocked out' when a following sea forced its way up the exhaust pipe on his way home from last year's Atlantic circuit, following the 2011 Atlantic Rally for Cruisers.

'We had two storms of 50 knots plus,' he said, 'and that's when it happened.' The Hydrovane

did most of the steering on that passage and remained untouched for a stretch of 500 miles as they ran along under a poled out pocket of genoa and a rag of mainsail. 'We were knocking off between 160 and 180 miles a day,' John said.

Going west on the outward leg from the Canaries, the Parasailor spinnaker carried them for 14 days non-stop. 'It was much better than using the double headsails, which I set luff-to-luff on twin tracks on the headfoil. They seemed to require a slot to work,' John added.

Her broad decks are a boon for working or sunbathing, yet there's a deep, narrow cockpit with teak-laid finish to enjoy when there's a serious sea running. She lacks cockpit lockers (because of the aft cabins) and the lazarette takes a fair bit of kit, although it became cramped once warps, shorepower lead, kedgie

anchor and jerrycans were added. The fenders are stored forward in a bow locker.

John has made a teak-covered, whaleback-shaped step to fit across the cockpit seats abaft the wheel so the helmsman can stand and look over the sprayhood. Her transom is a bathing ladder and a liferaft pod hangs from the pushpit.

He has also glued extra non-slip patches each side of the cockpit coaming and at the aft end of the coachroof forward of the sprayhood because crew were losing their footing at those points.

*Chiscos* will be joining the inaugural Christmas Caribbean Rally, which leaves Lanzarote on 16 December, bound for Antigua 2,850 miles away. Seventeen crews had already signed up as we went to press and John is expecting up to 125 boats at Marina Rubicon before the off. For more information, go to: [www.sailingrallies.com](http://www.sailingrallies.com)

# Warrior 40

ARTWORK: MAXINE HEATH



## FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Price guide** £70,000 - £110,000
- **LOA** 39ft 4in (12m)
- **LWL** 31ft 3in
- **Beam** 13ft (3.96m)
- **Draught** 5ft (1.5m)
- **Mainsail** 305sq ft (28.33sq m)
- **Yankee** 397sq ft (36.9sq m)
- **Staysail** 122sq ft (11.33sq m)
- **Engine** 56hp Yanmar
- **Displacement** 10 tons
- **Ballast** 4.25 tons
- **Fuel** 191 litres
- **Water** 600 litres
- **Designer** Bill Dixon
- **Builder** Trident Marine, Porchester, Fareham



A great boon for the practical sailor: bosun's store with vice and tool room



At sea, the island seating provides bracing for cooking in the linear galley

## OUR VERDICT ON THE BOAT

### What's she like to sail?

The Warrior 40 will give you no thrills on the wind but she is clearly a weatherly boat, carrying a lot more sail than, say, an equivalent-sized Hallberg-Rassy in such conditions. That's because she's heavy – 14.83 registered tons, which goes up to 16 tons when she's in cruising mode. She sets a 135% genoa, an in-mast furling mainsail and a self-tacking staysail without a boom. Her deck-stepped mast has two sets of cross-trees and a pair of forward-facing jumper struts, tensioned via an adjustable backstay. There are Lewmar 44 winches for the sheets and 40s for the halyards. It all amounts to an arrangement that pleases her skipper greatly – and with two Atlantic crossings beneath his lifebelt, who could argue?

In an ideal world, John would replace the in-mast furling system with a conventional luff-in-track ensemble. He does not like the extra top hamper the boat suffers, as well as the fuss and bother which can occur when the sail jams halfway in or out of the mast. However, in a concession to progress, he prefers the fact that the staysail is fitted to a furler rather than on a boom, as it makes for easier reefing – especially when you're sailing short-handed.

### What's she like, in port and at anchor?

A double bow roller takes a 45lb CQR anchor, 40m (130ft) of chain and the same of warp. She's a heavy boat which will always need this kind of hefty ground tackle. There is also a 1,000W electrically operated windlass to haul it all back in. In fact, it proved to be so powerful that John noticed that the foredeck was 'flexing', so he refitted the windlass with substantial stainless steel bearers above and below deck, which has eliminated the problem.

For long passages and remote anchorages, Chiscos is fitted with a watermaker, capable of producing 70 litres a day.

Despite her theoretically high form stability – and perhaps due in part to a shallowish keel (5ft) for her size, John found that she rolled uncomfortably at anchor occasionally. In Tyrrel Bay, on the Caribbean island of Carriacou, he came up with a novel idea for dealing with the problem. He tied his drogue to the boom-end, then, using a preventer, hauled the boom outboard and dipped the drogue in the sea. It dampened the boat's motion down a treat, but was only suitable in wide-open roadsteads with plenty of swinging room to spare.

### Would she suit you and your crew?

For comfort both at sea and in port, you'll have to go a long way to find a better boat. Her six-berth accommodation is sensible and roomy, yet practical. She has the form stability and easy motion for running down the Trades but is stiff enough to bash upwind.

If you sail year round and want a boat for all seasons, she fits the bill. A portable 4kW generator, stowed neatly in a glassfibre pod beneath the skipper's bunk, produces 440 amp hours through the inverter and gave us enough power in mid-winter to run fan heaters off three-pin plugs while under sail. In complete contrast, the lack of a fixed sprayhood – which is how many Warriors were delivered – enables the crew to create a through-draught under the bimini when she's in the tropics.

Her accommodation is very comfortable and well thought out, without being over-the-top in luxury. A family of four could make a three-year circumnavigation in this boat and still be able to talk to each other at the end of it.

Does she suit your style of sailing?

CREEK CRAWLING



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TRADE WIND VOYAGING



HIGH-LATITUDE ADVENTURE

