



About the Author

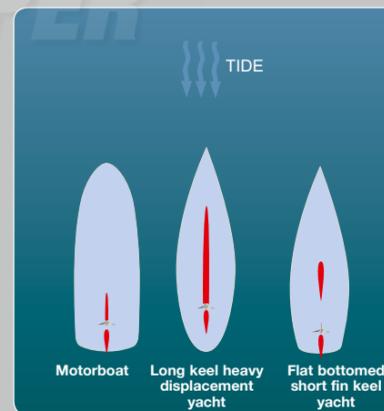
Duncan Wells is an RYA Instructor and Principal of Westview Sailing. When not on the water he's also a voiceover actor and an after dinner speaker.



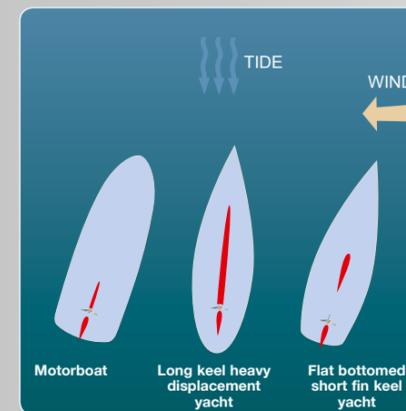
Leaving a mooring under sail

You can derive a great deal of satisfaction and save quite a bit of money to boot – simply by using your sails more than the engine. To that end, this month, **Duncan Wells** gets to grips with leaving a mooring buoy under sail and shows how easy it is to sail out the anchor.

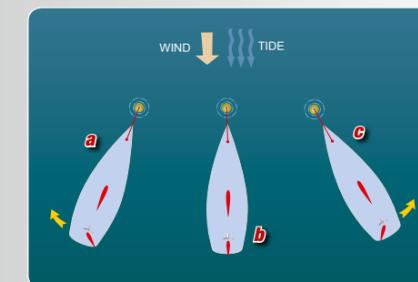
Diag. 1



Diag. 2



Diag. 3



a. Rudder to starboard kicks stern to port.
b. Rudder centred.
c. Rudder to port kicks stern to starboard.



All yachts with keels will lie head to tide on a mooring **Diag 1**. If the tide is slack then they will lie head to wind. If the wind is strong some yachts will sheer (move about) quite considerably **Diag 2**. The longer and deeper the keel, the more they will be affected by the tide and the less they will be affected by the wind. The shorter and shallower the keel, the more effect the wind will have. It's worth considering this when anchoring and looking at swinging room. Light, flat bottomed boats with short fin keels will be blown around by the wind. Heavy displacement boats less so. Boats may be swinging at different rates and times in relation to the tide.

Preparation

For our departure from the mooring buoy we need to single up the mooring rope (make it into a slip line) so it goes from the boat, through the ring on the buoy and straight back to the boat **Pic 1**. We don't need to do anything if we are attached to a pendant (a thick line from the buoy with an eye spliced into the end) we will just slip this off the cleat and let it go.

Assuming that there is tide running, we will be facing into it. If the wind is forward of the beam we will leave under mainsail and if the wind is on or abaft the beam we'll leave under headsail. If there is no tide running we will be head to wind.

Wind forward of the beam

We hoist the main while still attached to the buoy. Let the mainsheet out so we don't have any power in it and go sailing madly round the buoy **Pic 2**. If we are lucky the boat will simply sail away from the mooring the minute we let go of the buoy and sheet in. More often than not the boat will be more or less luffed up and we will need to get her to bear away. We can set this process in motion by using the tide and the rudder. We can't actually move

the bow, because this is attached to the mooring, so we have to move the stern. If we want to increase the wind angle on the port bow we will put the rudder over to starboard which will push the stern to port. If we want to increase the wind angle on the starboard bow we put the rudder over to port **Diag 3**. Depending on the strength of the tide one can increase the wind angle on the bow by as much as 35-40°, so even if the wind were directly in line with the tide and dead on the bow, moving the wind angle this far off the bow should be enough for you to power up the main, gather some way and have steerage. If this is marginal, then as soon as you've slipped the mooring you could set the headsail and back it in order to bring the bow round. So, assuming that we have enough power in the main to get way on, we simply slip the mooring **Pic 3**, harden in the mainsheet **Pic 4** and sail away.

Headsail only

With the wind on or abaft the beam life is very much easier. We will use the headsail only. What we want to avoid, is running over the mooring buoy. The strength of the tide, the strength of the wind and »



1. Singled up and ready to slip.
2. No power in the main.
3. Pendant released and ready to sail off.
4. And away we go.

Sailing out the Anchor – wind forward of the beam



We marked the chain with coloured silks at 5m intervals: Red 5m, Yellow 10m, Green 15m, Brown 20m, Blue 25m, Pink 30m, Black 35m, 2 x Red 40m, 2 x Yellow 45m (we have 50m of chain) **Pic 9.**



7. Anchor ball set.
8. Yellow ribbon indicating 10m of chain.
9. Chain marked at 5m intervals with coloured ribbon in the same order that you pot snooker balls.
10. Mainsail set and ready to be powered up.



11. Sailing her like a dinghy by 'handing' the mainsheet parts together as one.
12. Ready to start hauling in the slack chain.
13. Ready to break out the anchor.

Sailing the anchor out – wind abaft the beam



14. The weight of the boat is taken gently off the chain.
15. The hauler and a crew member tailing.
16. Over running the anchor slightly to help break it out.
17. Up she comes, covered in mud.

Headsail only



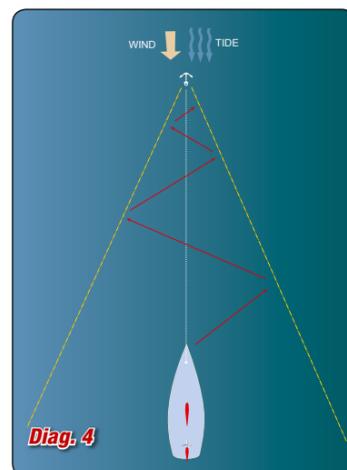
the amount of room we have will affect what we do. If there is very little wind then set the headsail, but keep the sheet loose and do not allow it to power up. Let go of the buoy **Pic 5**, allow the boat to drift back with the tide, then sheet in the headsail and build up way to proceed past the buoy **Pic 6** and away from the mooring. If there is a reasonably strong wind then it is worth letting go of the buoy first before setting the headsail – hauling on the halyard for hanked on sails or unfurling for the roller furlers – and then departing.

Sailing out the anchor – wind forward of the beam

We have spent the night at anchor **Pic 7** and now we want to sail the anchor out. Note that we are using the 'snooker ball' sequence for colour marking the anchor cable **Pic 8/9**.

The wind is forward of the beam, so we set the main and we can see that the wind is almost dead ahead **Pic 10**. We adjust the angle of the boat to the wind by moving her stern with the rudder and then power up. We had just

the right amount of wind to enable us to handle the falls of the mainsheet much as we would a dinghy **Pic 11**. This is the best and most immediate way of controlling the speed of the boat. Duncan Kent ran the cockpit and powered up the main while the crew and I worked the foredeck. With the boat moving ahead it was easy to haul in the slack chain **Pic 12**. We wanted to make sure that we did not over run the chain, so we let Duncan know when to power up and when to ease off. Then, once we were over the anchor we asked him to power up to help break it free **Pic 13**. If one has a lot of cable out and there is quite a strong tide running it may be necessary to tack up to the anchor **Diag 4**.



Here we would want to set the main and the headsail at the start and, if the wind is on the nose, we can use a combination of rudder against tide along with a backed headsail to bring the bow round and get the boat onto a point of sail. Then as the boat gets way on, we sail along the tack and haul in the slack chain.

As the chain starts to tension up at the end of the tack, lock it off under a cleat or round the samson post, if you have one. This will bring the boat up with a bit of a jolt and start the process of going onto the other tack for you.

Tack the boat and carry on hauling in the slack chain. The tacks will become shorter and shorter as you approach the anchor. Keep your fingers well away from any windlasses, cleats or cable jamming devices.

We didn't use the electric windlass – first because it uses so much power that it is best to have the engine running at the same time and we were carrying out this manoeuvre without the engine and,

secondly, because I did not want to risk the possibility of any undue strain on the windlass. I have just spent a fortune having the motor replaced, so I want to look after it. For this reason we were hauling up the chain by hand and leaving it on the foredeck.

One of us did the 'tailing' for the hauler. Later we simply hand fed the chain back into the locker before re-mounting it on the gypsy.

Sailing the anchor out with the wind abaft the beam

It is even more important here to prevent over running the anchor. Anchor chain wrapped round the keel or prop or rudder is not going to be easy to sort out. So it is key to power up the headsail just sufficiently to be able to progress slowly against the tide so that the weight of the boat is taken off the chain and the

foredeck crew can haul it in easily **Pic 14**. With someone in the cockpit on the sheet and someone on the furling line we can control the speed. Let out a little headsail to power up sufficiently to ease the tension on the anchor cable **Pic 15**, then simply power the sail up a little to help break out the anchor **Pic 16** and up she comes **Pic 17**. That's all there is to it.

Over to You

For future Boat Handling articles we will be looking at some of the issues faced by our readers. If you would like to be involved, please contact the Production Editor on elizabeth.paine@sailingtoday.co.uk. We're not saying we have all the answers, far from it, but we may be able to help.