



## Bringing a cruise to book

*How do you go about sharing your memories of a once-in-a-lifetime cruise in a lasting and valuable way? Why not publish a book?*

*Leon Schulz describes how he did just that and offers some tips*

I was the archetypal armchair sailor. Late in the day, when the work was done, I would cast off with Hiscock, Moitessier, Schenk, the Bjelkes or any of the dozens of others on my study shelves.

When finally I had the good fortune to join my heroes for a year of real bluewater sailing, I knew that I wanted to catch, save and share our experiences. I would have an online blog to let family and friends follow our adventures, but I also wanted something that could find a place up there on the shelves. I wanted a book.

Writing a book for friends and family is one thing, writing one for people who don't know you is something else. From well before we set sail, I was looking for angles and approaches that hadn't been covered and wondering if I could do something sufficiently original to be worth another sailor's hard-earned cash.

Our trip would not, I very much hoped, be packed with drama. I was

not planning to go far off the beaten track. And I would not, thankfully, be overcoming any physical disability. But we would be taking our school-age children in a modern, relatively small yacht and we would have to pluck up a lot of courage and determination even to start. It was in that need we felt for help with making the break that I found my angle.

So, I didn't start writing when we cast off. I started long before that – when we first dreamt of making a break. I wrote about the worries we had, the pros and cons we anguished over and the practical stuff that needs doing. As we sailed, I focused more on the effect the trip had on us as a family than on the details of passage times and ports visited.

Every author, of course, must find his or her own story. Whatever you do, collect as much material as you can as you go. You'll need a notebook for your thoughts and impressions, and a camera.

Be aware that when the going gets tough, it will be both the most important and most difficult time to open the notebook. I didn't put a lot of effort into trying to write stylishly. The most important things, I think, are to come up with some good, original insights and to express these clearly.

### Self-publication

The process is simpler if you don't plan to offer your book for general sale. Self-publishing, in which you do all the preparation, design and layout yourself and then pay to print a number of copies has become much easier and cheaper in recent years. And I've seen some really good-quality books produced on a laptop.

This is a particularly good route, I think, if you have more confidence

**In his book, Leon Schulz concentrated on the effect of the trip on his family**





in your photography than your writing. Nicola Cornwell is halfway through a two-year cruise of the Caribbean. She produced a lovely hardback record of the first year via the online operation Blurb.

"There's something really special," she says, "about having a record you can hold. The software was fairly straightforward and we were very pleased with the final result." Cornwell's book has worked out at more than £30 a copy, but is produced to a very high standard.

Black and white pictures and paperback covers will cut costs significantly. Blurb also offer the option of allowing other people to buy copies via their website.

Another operation worth looking at is Lulu. They offer an online Book Cost Calculator. Printing 100 copies of a 200-page black and white A5-sized book should cost around £6 per copy.

## Self-publication

A step on from self-publishing is subsidised publishing. Juliet Dearlove, another sailing friend, has written more than 150,000 words about her North Atlantic circuit with husband and two children. She plans to pay for professional layout, design and printing and then sell copies herself. "I want the memories to live on for us and our children," she told me. "and a proper book seems the best way to do that. I've signed up with AuthorHouse, who have given me a good service so far."

AuthorHouse offer a range of

Nicola Cornwell with her photo book



services, including copy editing, rights management, cover illustration and design as well as promotion and marketing. You can set a price that will give you, as author, a reasonable return per copy sold. Remember, though, that the publishers have limited motivation to sell copies since all their costs have already been covered. But if you want a record of your adventure and a few spare copies to sell at sailing club talks, this is a perfectly good way to go.

eBooks are much talked about at the moment and I believe electronic readers will be quite common in a few years' time. But they don't fulfil the need for something solid and lasting. And photographs are still not well served by most devices. To my mind, if you've already written a blog or Facebook page, there doesn't seem much to be gained by producing another electronic version of your adventures.

An exception to that could be something fairly serious, specialist and text-heavy like the technical guides. Digital publication of these can cost less than £1 a copy and, of course, there's no shipping cost. Profit per unit should be better than in print, but the total number of sales is unlikely to be big.

## Mainstream

Finally, there are the mainstream publishers. If you can hook one of these, they will not only support and advise during the process of writing, but also manage the design and layout, printing, marketing, sales and distribution. The publisher takes the financial risk and the author receives a royalty. Five to seven per cent of the cover price is not untypical.

I spent the best part of a year trying to get my book published by one of the big names. None rejected me outright, but all wanted months to read the book and asked for changes and additions without any guarantee that they would take me on.

Eventually, I found a friend to

## How to publish your book

### Examples of mainstream publishers specialising in nautical literature

Adlard Coles/AC Black Nautical [www.acblack.com/nautical](http://www.acblack.com/nautical)  
 Seafarer Books [www.seafarerbooks.com](http://www.seafarerbooks.com)  
 Sheridan House [www.sheridanhouse.com](http://www.sheridanhouse.com)  
 Outworn Creed [www.outworncreed.com](http://www.outworncreed.com)  
 Wiley Nautical <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-291398.htm>  
 McGraw-Hill Professional - International Marine [www.mhprofessional.com](http://www.mhprofessional.com)  
 The Crowood Press [www.crowood.com](http://www.crowood.com)  
 Paradise Cay [www.paracay.com](http://www.paracay.com)  
 Seaworthy Publications [www.seaworthy.com](http://www.seaworthy.com)  
 Atlatl Publishing [www.atlatlpublishing.com](http://www.atlatlpublishing.com)  
 Wescott Cove Publishing Co [www.wescottcovepublishing.com](http://www.wescottcovepublishing.com)  
 Devereux Books (only about old classic boating) [www.devereuxbooks.com](http://www.devereuxbooks.com)  
 Tiller Books [www.tillerbooks.com](http://www.tillerbooks.com)

### Examples of subsidy publishing

Dorrance Publishing  
[www.dorrancepublishing.com](http://www.dorrancepublishing.com)  
 The Author House  
[www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)  
 iUniverse  
[www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com)  
 Bookwarren  
[www.bookwarren.com](http://www.bookwarren.com)

### Examples of self-publishing

LuLu  
[www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)  
 Xlibris  
[www.xlibrispublishing.co.uk](http://www.xlibrispublishing.co.uk)  
 Be Published  
[www.be-published.co.uk](http://www.be-published.co.uk)  
 Selfpublishing  
[www.selfpublishing.com](http://www.selfpublishing.com)  
 Blurb  
[www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com)



**I want the memories to live on for us and our children, and a proper book seems the best way to do that**

take me on through his new publishing company. He had never worked on the book like I had never worked before, but I am pleased with the finished article. Sales are growing steadily, but they are going to pay the mortgage.

The choice of publishing really comes down ultimately to the identity of your target readers. Self-published and subsidised publishing work fine if your main aim is a lasting record to share with friends and family. Whichever you go, holding a book of your sailing adventures is a very pleasant feeling and, I've found, well worth all the hard work.

Leon Schulz now works as managing editor of an international shipping publication. He took a year off work to sail from Europe to the Caribbean and back in the family Hallberg-Rassy 40 *Regina*. *The Missing Centimetre, One Family's Atlantic Sailing Adventure* is published by Outworn Creed, price £25

