

It wasn't particularly the easiest plan, but we all wanted a chance at a reasonable overnight sail. From Anguilla to Antigua — no, we're not simply working our way through the alphabet, you'll see no mention of Antarctica in our travel plans — took from 4pm Sunday until about two pm on Monday. The last bit was an uncomfortable upwind slog with the engine through choppy seas — no one would find that trip comfortable — but the first two-thirds or so, with the boat gliding along at seven knots in wind of eleven (Force 4), with the full moon behind, even upwind sailing was gentle and pleasant. (Though we all found it difficult to sleep in our bunks, the boat heels at a significant angle upwind.).

Neil and Donnie and I took two-hour watches, with the understanding that any sail change or change in direction would require all three on deck. At first, the clumsiness of donning life jackets and clipping a harness with every step we took — anywhere in the cockpit, at night, it seemed entirely sensible — overshadowed everything; but it soon settled down to a pleasant evening in the moonlight. Thank goodness for autopilots; ours was set to a 45o apparent wind angle, and it was ever so comfortable.

When the wind freshened near daybreak, the sailing turned a little more challenging — reefs in the dark, after little sleep, and a lot more bouncing — uncomfortable, perhaps, but hardly dangerous. We did decide that the perception of time always makes the last two hours the longest, especially if you're motoring into choppy seas on your nose.

English Harbour, Antigua, is — they say — the original headquarters of Nelson's fleet, deep enough for ships of the line, and full of old brick buildings converted to hotels and pubs and museums. Somehow two days isn't long enough.