



# Home comforts

**After 20 years of owning yachts Steve Walker and his partner Marion have dropped sail and are living a retirement dream in their custom-built Seaward**

## This series

Owner's Report follows the fortunes of boatowners, not just through the initial purchasing process but as they use their craft through the ensuing seasons.

If you've owned your boat for more than a full season and you'd like to share your experiences, email [mark\\_turley@ipcmedia.com](mailto:mark_turley@ipcmedia.com)

## This month

### The boat

■ Seaward 35 Gullfoss  
■ August 2011

### The owner

Steve Walker

**A**pproaching retirement we were looking for a boat that we could readily live on for several weeks at a time.

As we eventually want to cruise the west coast of Scotland it was important that the boat would be comfortable in poor weather. By way of inspiration, we met Colin and Janet Ingram and their Nordhavn *Suilven* (MBM April 2013) four years ago when their boat was new and have followed their progress with interest. Colin and I have exchanged insights and experiences into the

design of boats and their systems, many of which have been factored into the design and specification of *Gullfoss*. I have owned both sail and power boats. My first 'sleepover' boat was a Hardy 20 which was used for up to two weeks at a time and was based at Craobh Haven near Oban, when I lived in Warwickshire.

Subsequently I had a succession of yachts, the last being a Rustler 36, the interior of which was customised by Rustler to my design. This gave me the experience of working with a custom builder producing superb quality woodwork and a solid, no compromise build specification. I had the Rustler for nine years and cruised extensively from its base at Dartmouth, ranging from the Isles of Scilly to south-west Brittany, with passages running to 100 to 120 miles which could take 20 hours or more, particularly if the wind died and I had to motor at 5 knots. In all

I clocked up 8000 miles under sail but decided a motorboat was the best for what we had planned for our retirement.

## What boats did you consider?

We looked at a lot of different craft. The accommodation offered by the Broom range was very attractive, the Dale Nelson boats are superb and like most people I was taken by the lavish finish offered by Sunseeker and Princess. I was also drawn to Grand Banks, Nordhavn

and Fleming, which are all great boats but you need to consider purchase and running costs and exactly what type of use you will make of the boat.

My benchmarks were: what will it be like making a passage into a Force 6 in heavy rain? Can you sit in comfort with the heating on in the winter and get a good view from the saloon? Is there a decent yet sheltered outside seating area for when the sun does

“We want to feel comfortable in rough weather”



Steve and Marion chose a Seaward 35 for its complete boating capabilities



The 'masterchefs' in their spacious 'proper kitchen' galley

serve meals. We cook on board most of the time and so really appreciate having a 'proper kitchen' with lots of secure storage space.

The cockpit provides seating for four in comfort. I designed the table, which is completely removable for major maintenance and folds away to allow access to the lazarette. I arrived with drawings and a plastic pipe and hardboard mock up at the yard, to return a month later to see a beautifully made stainless steel and oak table.

The combination of twin shaft drive engines and a powerful bow thruster have made handling very easy. In combination with inboard pilot style handrails and an extended pulpit, the bow rope can be handled from a safe

position. I have a golden rule that nobody should jump off to moor and a request to move the boat a foot further towards the pontoon is and never should be a problem.

In the winter I regularly take *Gullfoss* out for a run mid-week by myself and it is easy and safe to cope with single handed.

We have very much appreciated our 'proper' forward facing helm seats, with good arm rests, and we feel very secure and comfortable if *Gullfoss* has to bash us through some big seas. We generally leave the autohelm in charge and focus on spotting fishing marker buoys and enjoying the view.

To say we're delighted with our Seaward is something of an understatement; it is a dream come true.



## Seaward 35

### Value

**Purchase price:** £370,000 (including extras such as the generator and the custom fit-out)

### Annual costs

**Berthing:** around £5000 at Port Solent

**Insurance:** £1800 for coverage

throughout Europe

**Servicing:** around £1000. I assist with the servicing to help and learn

**Anode change/antifouling:** £800 per year

**Fuel**

**Annual usage:** 100-120hr, 12-15 knots

3lt per mile, 18-20 knots 4.5lt per mile

**Spares:** £1000

# MBM's Owner's Squadron

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and click on "Find MBM articles"

## Uttern D68



Will the Uttern D68 live up to former MBM editor Hugo Andrae's requirements for a family motorboat?

**December 2005**

## Chaparral Signature 280



The Matthews upgraded from their Signature 260 to a 280 as they needed a bigger and more powerful boat for more adventurous cruising.

**June 2007**

## Aqua-Star Explorer



The Aqua-Star Explorer was the perfect option for the Thomas' who wanted it totally customised.

**August 2008**

## Jeanneau Prestige 32



Space and on-board accommodation was needed by the Lobbs with a growing family; and they just love their Jeanneau Prestige 32.

**March 2009**

at their other marinas has been great allowing us to spend extra time in Chichester and Falmouth at little expense. Their Cruising Credit scheme, which gives discount of your next year's fees if you have over 30 days away, has also made quite a difference to our total cruising costs.

It is important for us to make the best of the weather; our twin 370hp Yanmar engines can power the boat up to 28 knots, however they will let us cruise with reasonable fuel economy at 20 knots. But most of the time we cruise at 12 to 15 knots, which, when combined with careful tide planning, is a really economical way to cover plenty of ground.

We ran from Port Solent to Dartmouth in moderate seas this year covering the 110 miles in six hours at about 3 litres per mile, taking full advantage of the tide from Hurst Castle to half way across Lyme Bay.

The seakeeping of the Seaward is great, punching out over Chichester Bar with wind against tide makes overtime for the windscreen wipers but no stress for the crew. We have built up our experience and in June last year left Portsmouth to go to a Seaward Squadron event in a Force 7. There were gusts of 54 knots recorded at Hurst Castle as we were underway, the Lymington to Yarmouth ferries had stopped running. We bounced about a bit, but it was manageable; there were only about three yachts and no other motor boats visible on the whole of the Solent.

We draw interest more from yacht owners than other motor boat owners; they find it incredible that we weigh about 10 tonnes loaded, which is more than a 35ft heavy



A low freeboard and wide decks make getting about onboard safe and easy. A ladder aids those who fancy a swim

displacement yacht with its 3 tonnes of keel ballast. The boat's fuel tanks are set below the engines, helping to keep a good portion of weight down low, which is a significant factor in seakeeping.

### Has anything gone wrong?

The combination of having plenty of power on hand, the hull's inherent comfortable ride and not least the ability to customise the boat has worked very well for us. The whole

team at Seaward were very helpful throughout the design and build process and have been supportive since we took delivery.

When *Gullfoss* was commissioned, it became apparent that the generator supplier had changed its specification and so it was unable to charge its own battery.

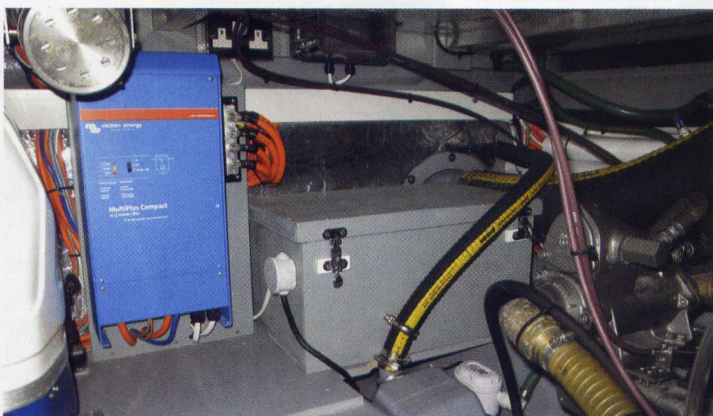
In double quick time a suitable trickle charger was installed by Seaward at no charge. Minor niggles have been very few and always fixed without question. It is

great to be able to ring Seaward and speak to the individual who fitted an item to the boat and talk things through with them.

We have had a few extra small items added since we bought the boat – custom stowage for mugs, almanac and binoculars – and they match the rest of the finish perfectly.

### Has the boat lived up to your expectations?

The galley/dinette area gives us a cosy place to prepare and



A generator and inverter provides power for the oven, heating and lights



The angled console is simple and easy to view



Steve and Marion have catered for 15 guests onboard but usually cruise as a couple or with a few lucky friends

We have an extra-large domestic battery bank combined with a Victron inverter to power the kettle and microwave. There is also a 3kVA generator tucked neatly in the engine room which allows us to cook, use our immersion heater and charge the batteries simultaneously. All in all we can cook, heat the hot water tank and recharge, which

includes running our larger than standard fridge, by firing up the generator for about an hour a day.

The general build quality of the Seaward is very high, hull laminating is to commercial standards and the bulk of the fittings and equipment are one size up from what might be considered 'adequate'. The boat as standard was supplied with 60m of anchor chain but we wanted to upgrade to a larger anchor, which meant modifying the bow roller arrangement, a job done at no extra cost. The engine air intakes are the same ones developed for their pilot boats, with baffles and drains rather than simple vents in the side of the boat.

### Where do you keep *Gullfoss*?

At the moment Marion and I are both still working part time and we like to have easy access to *Gullfoss* for long weekends. We have

based her at Premier Marina's Port Solent harbour complex near Portsmouth, where the staff and facilities are great.

### What do you use the boat for?

My work is flexible and so I can deliver *Gullfoss* to where Marion and I wish to go for our main cruise beforehand. We spend about 80 nights a year on the boat, with regular long weekends at Chichester or Lymington, or on swinging moorings in the Beaulieu River. Poole Harbour is another favourite destination.

We have an Eberspacher heating system and additional small electric heaters for when we have mains hook up so we can make the boat very cosy in the winter. Adverse conditions don't stop us using her because the wheelhouse is comfortable and gives great views both from the helm seats and the wheelhouse's settee. The canopy

over the cockpit allows us to hang towels and wet coats and gives protection to sit out in bad weather.

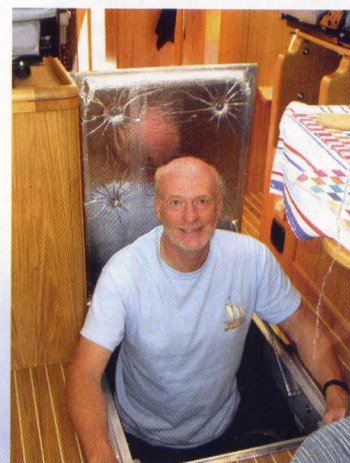
We are members of the 'Seaward Squadron' and have had a maximum of 15 people squeezed on the boat for pre-dinner drinks.

Our first full season in 2012 was not a great match between our main holiday and weather but nevertheless we managed a cruise around the Channel Islands. Earlier this year I took *Gullfoss* to Falmouth with a friend in readiness for our main cruise and when Marion came down we then took it in leisurely stages over several weeks back to Port Solent.

The Premier Marinas 42 free night policy where you can berth for free



The galley sports a full-sized oven



Engine access is in the saloon



Plenty of storage under the seats



out rough water but wanted to know we would still be comfortable if caught out in such conditions.

An important consideration in choosing to buy from Seaward was that their design and manufacturing process enables a high degree of customisation at reasonable cost. This enabled us to have an extra-long berth in the fore cabin (I hate short berths), and that the temporary berths converted from the dinette and the wheelhouse seating are both well over 6ft long.

Perhaps uniquely on a motorboat they built us a separate wet hanging locker for waterproofs and lifejackets just inside the cockpit door. We also wanted comprehensive cooking arrangements, so along with the usual three-burner gas oven and microwave Seaward worked in a Remoska portable 240V electric cooker which tucks neatly away.

Seaward always builds in plenty of lockers but we had extra ones wherever there was space such as the steps down to the galley dinette, which give great storage for tins, extra galley equipment as well as tools.



The 11-strong Seaward team who all helped to build the 35



Gullfoss takes shape as the superstructure is lowered on to the hull

decide to show itself? When we reach the age of 70 can we moor and handle the boat by ourselves? And finally, can you reach all the engine service points, change fuel filters and unblock water filters by only opening one hatch? The poor access on some boats put me off them straight away.

We also decided that rather than an aft cabin boat with a raised deck that we wanted an enclosed cockpit that ran straight through to the wheelhouse and so we began to home in on manufacturers of semi-displacement craft that offered this.

### Why did you choose a Seaward 35?

It was important for us to have a boat which two people could live on comfortably with occasional visits from friends and family. The ability to make open sea passages of 100 or so miles as well as a range of at least 300 miles, so we could be independent in Scotland, was also essential.

The ability to customise, both for the greater sense of 'ownership' I had experienced with my Rustler, and to ensure the boat would meet our needs was also a major factor.

The Seaward yard seemed to meet these requirements and given that they build pilot boats based on the same hulls, it was a convincing argument as to its seaworthiness. It is all very well being able to scoot about on a calm sunny day in the Solent but the real test is in a Force 6 with wind over tide or in some awkward overfalls. We don't seek

