

WHEN WE BOUGHT *Lottie* in Christchurch, Dorset, neither she nor I was in any fit state to make a winter sea voyage to Chichester.

So I arranged for her to be trailered there by someone I found through PBO small ads. Elkins yard at Christchurch and Dell Quay Yacht Yard helpfully craned her on and off (without charge).

The total cost in 2004 (I see from the receipt) for the 80-mile haul was £275. At the time I thought this quite reasonable. But Stuart Troop tells me he had *Little Drum* shifted from Christchurch to Brighton (30 miles further) for the all-in price of £188 by Dave Woolf of Pembridge Marine in Honiton. Stuart says: "He was very helpful and best of all, he was about half the price of everyone else we contacted! He also did a good job." David Rudling has also used Dave Woolf and found him "very reasonable and efficient". The modern way to arrange cheap boat haulage is apparently to offer up the job through the online auction service run by Shipley (<http://www.shiply.com/boat-transport/>). This website claims to tender the job to over 11,000 boat transport companies. The e-bay-like service is free to use with no obligation to accept any of the tenders. It claims to save up to 75% on costs by giving access to hauliers that perhaps are going there anyway and are in need of return loads. Obviously, the best deals are to be had if you are flexible about dates.

Just before Easter the job of shifting a Trident 24 from Plymouth to Rochester on a tight deadline was offered up on Shipley. Two bids were recorded: £545 and £550. The website does not allow the boatowner to be contacted directly so I was not able to contact this Trident owner to get any views on either the service or price.

As further examples, there were four recent bids posted on Shipley to shift a Westerly Centaur from Canvey Island to Walton on the Naze (about 60 miles). They ranged from £275 to £210. Transporting a Halcyon 23 someone bought on e-bay from Yeovil to Mersea (211 miles) attracted bids from £330 to £230. And

## TRIDENT TRANSPORT

*Moving your boat by road*



prices for taking a Hurley 24/70 from Torquay to Holyhead (310 miles) ranged from £1,200 to £590.

The lowest bid may have been less than half the highest but this did not necessarily mean poorer service. The lowest bidder on the Hurley had 17 enthusiastic recommendations from previous customers recorded on the Shipley site. That is one of the other benefits of this system: you don't do

this very often but you don't have to book completely untried and untested boat transporters since the site encourages previous users to record feedback on services rendered.

The firm putting in the cheapest bid for the Centaur had these comments on previous jobs: "Fantastic service at the best price - do not hesitate in using this company"; "Excellent, really helpful and saved the day! Thank you."; "I had a good rapport with the agent. The job was done very professionally"; "Great service, good communication, many thanks. Highly recommended."

Of course the other way is to do-it-yourself. Some of the prices quoted would go a long way towards purchasing a trailer which you could resell or use again, perhaps to take your Trident home for the winter or to new cruising grounds. However, you would need to own or hire a hefty vehicle to match the trailer weight with a Trident aboard. *Lottie* (as you see above) was delivered behind a Toyota Land Cruiser.

Towing heavy trailers requires skill. But there is another option. Chris Tabor has shifted two Tridents on a self-drive flatbed lorry hired for about £100 a day. One was a three-day round trip to Scotland. You don't need an HGV licence for a 7.5 ton lorry and Chris describes it as "a dream to drive, easier than driving a car".

A neighbour of mine used to trail his 27 foot Vega behind a small lorry to faraway cruising grounds. The boat travelled behind because in the lorry he loaded the family Mini. **BD**