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developments and works closely with other organisations around the world to improve aids to navigation and to optimise global navigation satellite systems and e-navigation. The ongoing safety of navigation and education of mariners are common goals of Trinity House and of the Pilotage Foundation.

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FOREWORD

The Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation's new *South China Sea* is the direct successor to the *Cruising Guide to Southeast Asia, Volume I* that was first published by Imray in 1998 and which remains the basis for this new title. Authors of the original book, Stephen Davies and Elaine Morgan, have generously gifted the associated copyright to the Pilotage Foundation, who were delighted to take on this title and to build on this valuable cruising guide.

Jo Winter brings with her a depth of experience of extended cruising and of the detailed research needed for a guide such as this. When Jo agreed to take on the project, she was sailing with her husband Giles in Malaysian waters and had already developed a love of the region, which came through in her writing. Over the following seasons she has further explored and researched the very extensive area covered by the book and has brought it all together in this updated, expanded and authoritative cruising guide.

Piracy and other security risks to which some parts of this region may be subject, and also political situations and extreme weather, all have an impact on cruising in this area. While these are serious, they are thoroughly discussed and well reported and with the help of this book and the links it gives to further information, the cruising sailor will be well informed and up to date.

Enormous thanks to Jo for her steadfast application to the book over many years and to her husband Giles for his invaluable support in the process. Thanks also to the various other cruising sailors who have provided contributions and updates, to Jane Russell and Jenny Taylor-Jones at the Pilotage Foundation for their support on the editing and to the team at Imray for bringing this new title to publication.

The quality of Pilotage Foundation publications is enhanced by the contributions received from sailors visiting the area. We welcome any reports and updates to navigational and other detail provided in *South China Sea*. Contact us via the Cruising Notes page on the Foundation's website or at info@rccpf.org.uk. Reports are posted on the website and consolidated into an annual supplement which can be downloaded from www.imray.com or www.rccpf.org.uk.

Antony Wells

Director, Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation
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PREFACE

I first visited southeast Asia in 1976 as an impoverished backpacker and took £50 spending money for three months. It was only two years after the end of the Vietnam War, Thailand was little visited and in Phuket foreign backpackers were locked up inside a high wire fenced in hostel for their own safety. Malaysia was hospitable and friendly, Indonesia was virtually untouched by tourism, while Singapore and Hong Kong buzzed with energy, geared mostly on money making, while exuding a sense of the exotic east, not so easily found today. I had travelled extensively in Europe and Morocco, where I stood out like a sore thumb, being tall, blond and blue eyed, so the contrast of travelling in southeast Asia, where I remember on one occasion being asked by a young man if he could follow me, was a delightful experience. I found then as now, the people friendly, helpful but undemanding, often reserved or shy, but always responding to smiles. In all our travels in the region, I have never felt threatened. My love and fascination for southeast Asia its culture and its people has remained with me ever since.

In 2005, when the youngest of our four children was safely at university, my husband Giles and I decided to cast off on what was planned as a fast circumnavigation in our 45ft Island Packet, *Brother Wind*. A heavy displacement, long keeled, cutter rigged sloop, she is well suited to short-handed sailing as well as having space for the many family and friends who have joined us in countless far flung places across the world. After crossing the Pacific and a year in New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia we arrived in Singapore late in 2007, my fascination for this area thoroughly rekindled. The prospect of the Indian Ocean had become less certain with the problems off the Horn of Africa, and we began to think that perhaps the best was already behind us. So we headed east again, back to the South China Sea. Ever since then, our circumnavigation has been put on hold while we have spent longer and longer exploring the fabulous cruising grounds of SE Asia, and enjoying the company of the resourceful, friendly people who live here.

I hope that this Cruising Guide will encourage many more boats to head east and experience, as we have, one of the most diverse, beautiful, unspoilt and undiscovered sailing areas in the world.