

An Easy Way to Update your Charts



By Ted Osborn

We all know we should keep our charts up to date – but we hardly know anyone who actually does so. Some people say they do not update 'because the rocks don't move' (which they soon find is not true if they use GPS with an old chart, especially in Scotland or abroad) but most people do not update because of the time and effort involved. Suddenly, however, it has all become much easier, quicker and totally free.

If you have not tried the new Admiralty Hydrographic Office chart updating service then give it a go – it's easily and simply available by contacting the website at <http://www.admiraltyleisure.co.uk> and navigating from there or you can dodge the unwanted guff to go straight to the updating site by copying <http://www.admiraltyleisure.co.uk/prodservs/nms/home.asp> into your browser. If you then copy this into your 'favourites', or whatever your browser calls it, you get to the site at a single click.

You will find that all the boring work of updating – the collection and organising of the various Notices to Mariners, new insert blocks, etc is done for you. You just get the interesting bits to do such as deciding whether the chart update in front of you is relevant to you and if so putting the correction on the chart itself. No longer do you have to organise your charts in some particular order, search through piles of unwanted stuff looking for the gold dust or even do it all at once. You don't have to update the whole chart (although it is best if you do) since you could just do the route you intend to follow plus a bit either side just in case.

I tried it for a common route from the Hamble to Poole using the charts in the Admiralty Chart Folio SC5600 (12 charts at £37.50). My computer is bog standard, three years old and running at 2.7 MHz speed through a dial-up connection. The printer is a rather poor combined printer/ copier/ fax but quite adequate for the job of printing the chartlets if I load it with good quality paper.

Getting the data from the Hydrographic Office website took me less than 3 minutes, spread as follows:

Dialling up my ISP - 32 seconds

This would be zero if you have broadband

Calling up the website - 5 seconds
I had already typed the address into 'favourites'

Selecting whether to update Folio or Chart - 2 seconds
Just click Folio or Chart

Selecting which Folio - 4 seconds
Click one out of a list of 9
Corrections came on screen in - 2 seconds

50 corrections, 3 new blocks, covering 13 pages

This is remarkable and took ages previously
Print corrections and blocks - 110 seconds
You can't select which to print: it's all or nothing

I was rather appalled to discover that the Hydrographic Office had found it necessary to publish as many as 50 corrections in only 9 months since the Folio was issued but it is easy to select which correction is relevant to you and each is laid out very clearly and made easy for you to apply to your chart.

For those who gave up correcting charts during the time of the old printed Notices to Mariners: you would not recognise you are doing the same job. For those of you, like me, who found the previous online systems totally obscure and bewildering, the new system is a revelation. I think the Hydrographer must have listened to our complaints.



<http://www.admiraltyleisure.co.uk>



<http://www.admiraltyleisure.co.uk/prodservs/nms/home.asp>



Select which Folio or Chart