



The weather chart shows areas of high and low pressure, weather fronts and isobars. Winds will circulate in a clockwise direction around a high pressure and anti clockwise around a low pressure. The difference in pressure between a high and low produces a pressure gradient. The steeper the gradient, the closer the isobars, or lines of equal pressure and the greater the wind speed between the isobars. Areas of low pressure or depressions tend to move rapidly while areas of high pressure tend to drift more sedately, or sometimes just sit there. When a high meets a low, there is a compression of isobars, which give rise to strong winds.

The decision to proceed or not rests with you the skipper. There is no disgrace if you are uncertain, in going to have a look and turning back if you do not like what you see. Local conditions play a big part in determining the sea state. In my area, the Thames Estuary, there are many shallows and strong tides, which can cause a short, steep sea. Some boats are intrinsically better sea boats than others and it is important to know your limitations as well as those of the boat. It is often said that you will give up before the boat, particularly if you are prone to sea sickness. With a little basic knowledge to begin with, supplemented by common sense and experience, you should enjoy many years of

pleasurable boating. There will be many times when you ask yourself the question "Why am I out here?", but at the end of the day I am sure that you will find it all worthwhile.

I hope this little book has been of use and interest to you.

Good luck and Happy Cruising