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The Sextant Handbook



Synopsis

Loran and GPS notwithstanding, there will always be a place for the sextant aboard any blue-water boat, if for no other reason than the thrill and mystery of finding one's position on earth by gazing at the heavens. Here is the indispensable reference that should accompany the instrument aboard. Cmdr. Bruce Bauer, a professional navigator and master mariner with the U.S. Merchant Marine, has distilled years of hands-on experience into an eminently readable guide to buying, adjusting, using, and repairing sextants. The Sextant Handbook is dedicated to the premise that electronic navigation devices, while too convenient to disregard, are too vulnerable to rely on exclusively. The book is designed to make beginner and expert alike conversant with this most beautiful and functional of the navigator's tools. Topics include: Assembly and Disassembly Vital Adjustments Avoiding Problems Rough Weather Sightings Oiling and Cleaning Immersion Baths Emergency Silvering Finding and Buying Used Sextants And Much More You'll also find a list of distributors, manufacturers, and dealers worldwide, a discussion of future trends, and numerous helpful hints, including sighting with eyeglasses and using a Rude starfinder. All in a thoroughly revised edition of a book acclaimed by navigation professionals.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sextants are beautiful instruments that let us determine our position by observing stars and planets. They are very precise optical instruments, and today, the least expensive new metal sextant costing around \$... Such a precious and expensive instrument needs to be cared for properly. This book contains very helpful information on how to adjust (or how not to adjust, to avoid damage) your

sextant to ensure accurate sightings. The book also covers what can be done to continue to use a sextant after damage, including what repairs can be done by its user. It covers the use and storage of the sextant at sea, gives good tips on how to get good sights and times, and describes a number of sextant types, apparels, and accessories, along with their pros and cons. It also contains interesting information about the history of celestial navigation. I bought my sextant new, but there is a really good section on buying a used sextant. Cmd. Bauer also gives numerous contact information for sextant manufacturers, importers, and retailers, though I haven't checked if they are still up to date. At the very least they will be a good guide for the prospective buyer of a new or used sextant. The pricing information on the book is outdated, and so are some of the things that are described, like Davis' prism to ensure verticality of the sextant, which is not manufactured or distributed anymore. But it is really well written, full of good information, and a very nice companion to your sextant, or a good guide before you buy one, used or new. Obviously, Cmd. Bauer knows what he writes about, and how to present his knowledge in a compelling manner.

Please do not be misled by negative reviews that criticize this book for not being able to teach you CelNav. The reason it doesn't do a good job of teaching you CelNav is simple.....it's not about teaching you CelNav. It is; however, about the sextant, as an instrument. In that capacity, this book is a must have for those that study the subject of CelNav. A well written and thorough owners manual for an automobile will educate you on features, functions, and care, it will NOT teach you how to drive. Anyone who owns a sextant must own this as well.

Bauer -- no, not Jack Bauer, and Bruce isn't his brother -- is an ex-Navy man and often it comes through his writing, which sets the books mood and tone. If you've battled with self-learning celestial navigation (as I am) you'll appreciate the beginnings of the book, and it IS more readable and understandable than much of what I've been through before. The second edition is dated 1992; the pricing he gets into on used sextants is worthless; his seemingly complete disdain for plastic sextants (I have a Davis Mk. 25) is pretty clear as well. Nonetheless, this is pretty clearly written, and in many cases explained theory/math that I was unable to grasp in other instructional books. I've still yet to make a correct sight, but I'm getting closer all the time!

Excellent reference and maintenance manual. Has a permanent place in my navigation kit. Wish I had read this before buying my sextant, although, I most likely would not have understood it all without a sextant in my hand. Everything from alignments, checks, adjustments, cleaning,

maintenance... even tips and tricks on taking sights- priceless! This, with Buckley's video, and you'll be plotting your position in no time.

I have GPS that I call "Gabby" but until you find your place on Earth with A Sextant, you haven't had the fun you want with a simple technical item like my Davis Mark 25 Master Sextant for about 100 bucks. This Handbook takes you to the front of the class. I've gone a couple of hundred miles from home and plotted within 70 yards from my actual location on Earth. I enjoyed the results from this particular Handbook. It doesn't go over my head with confusing information; Just to the point of what you need.

I bought a WW II vintage U.S. Navy Mark II Sextant made by David White Company on eBay. I got The Sextant Handbook from to learn how to maintain, adjust and use the sextant. I learned a lot from the book that applied to my sextant. I have made a number of repairs outside the scope of the book as well cleaning and lubricating as described in the book. I have done all of the checks and adjustments suggested in the book. It is now functioning quite well, thanks to Bruce Bauer's suggestions. I'm still learning and I'm having lots of fun. I'd have been lost without The Sextant Handbook. However, I do have questions about the sextant that aren't answered in the book.

For some reason I've always wanted to learn how to use a sextant. Which may prove difficult because I don't live near the sea! I have found this book to be very informative in this quest for learning and am hoping for a basic sextant as a Christmas present or will purchase one in the near future.

I am a land-locked Midwesterner who has hardly ever seen the ocean. Even so, I am interested in celestial navigation. (Although generally associated with the sea, celestial navigation has also been used for land based navigation and surveying.) This book was very helpful in helping someone with no nautical knowledge acquire a working vocabulary of terms that any mariner probably already knows, but can seem very obfuscated to us land lovers. The book has been a key to my understanding of other books focused on nautical celestial navigation. It also does an excellent job explaining the sextant to the complete novice. It includes sections on maintenance, purchasing, etc. If you want to learn to use a sextant, you would greatly benefit from having this book.

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