

A Busted Rudder – Cliff Champion

As ever, we had had varying winds but on that day we had good weather, sunshine and a south-westerly to take us very comfortably from Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight to Beaulieu. Mike and I were enjoying a wonderful sail when, without any cause or reason, the rudder moved upwards and sidewise. Looking over the transom we could see that the rudder was only connected to the boat by the top pintles. Thus, some half mile from the entrance to the Beaulieu River, I had no steerage.

Fortunately, Terry and Kathy Colgate were nearby in Newtown. We made contact and they were with us in half an hour. *Saucy Ann* was tied barge-like to the side of *Jubilate* and we made for Buckler's Hard boatyard.



Saucy Ann being rescued in the Beaulieu River

This sounds simple, but with a 20ft boat tied to a 40ft one it could have been tricky. However, all was carried out by Terry as if it were a daily occurrence. The boatyard was most co-operative and took her in straight away.

I phoned Roger Cox at Cornish Crabbers for a new set of pintles, which again, with good co-operation, were received the next morning.

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Ever optimistic, we thought the problem was solved, but when she was pulled out we found the rudder had also damaged the propeller, which much delayed the whole operation. For now we needed to check the shaft, fit a new propeller and, for safety's sake, a new cutlass bearing. With all this done *Saucy Ann* is as good as ever but the question “why did it happen?” remains unsolved.

I have spoken with Roger Cox of Crabbers and he feels that primarily it can only be put down to age (*Saucy Ann* is 12 years old). He does feel that the fixings for the rudder ought to be checked at the end of every season. Another possible cause is cavitation, which has been described to me as the creation of excessive bubbles by a propeller which is set too close to the underside of the boat. However, Dalgrow Engineering, who supplied the original three-blade feathering propeller known as the F1 and who have provided the new three-blade ‘Featherstream’, completely discount this theory.

So now *Saucy Ann* is back and as perky as ever, giving Mike and me some good sailing on the Solent Mid-Week Cruise. At last we went to the top of the Hamble River, where we got three Shrimpers right up to the Horse & Jockey pub. All part of an excellent week organised by Robin Wearn (*La Mouette* – 379). My thanks as well for the wonderful photograph taken by Tim Reid (*Fairmaid* – 845), which shows so well the rescue operation.

Clifford Champion - *Saucy Ann II* (705)

Ode to Saucy Ann II by Mike King

Twelve years and more she's borne her crinkly crew,
Abroad and home her reputation grew.
A yellow hull means Clifford, Mike and Terry -
To sounds of popping corks they cry "Make Merry".
But now she rests in Agamemnon's yard
Where Nelson's wooden walls were built and tarred.
She lost her rudder and she lost her prop
But such a mishap will not make her stop.
Our Champion's call has gone out far and wide:
Poor *Saucy Ann* must be restored – with pride.
Our little boat will soon be back intact,
Cry “windward boat keep clear” to Cowes and back.