

Solent Cruise 7th-13th August 2010

A large number of Shrimpers took part in the week long cruise around the Solent this summer. The Chichester harbour contingent sailed a variety of courses, some going off shore and others hugging the coast, but all arriving at Wootton Creek to meet up at The Royal Victoria Yacht Club for dinner.

Sunday dawned sunny and calm as we set off for Yarmouth. The wind died as we passed Cowes, still busy from the end of Cowes Week Regatta, so most of us motored the rest of the way. When we arrived off Yarmouth the wind suddenly got up so rather than waste the opportunity, some of us sailed a loop across to Lymington, up to Keyhaven and around past Hurst Castle, where wind against tide produced some interesting and choppy water! More boats joined the party and we were well entertained at the Royal Solent YC courtesy of Howard Crouch (Sea Urchin).

The next day most of the Shrimpers proceeded up through the Yarmouth swing bridge to the upper reaches of the River Yar River. This proved a delightful trip and reminiscent of sailing in a bygone era. After a lazy lunch, some of us rafted up, we headed back down the river and through the bridge again and sailed across to Lymington in an ever increasing wind and choppy sea. We had a very enjoyable evening at the Lymington Yacht Club as guests of Richard Shaw (Gamba).



The weather on Tuesday was foul so sight seeing and shopping was the order of the day. Olaf Petersen (Little Auk) and I navigated Lymington High Street while the girls, Julia Slatter, Lizzie Petersen and Sally Hawling dropped anchor in the nearest boutiques! Trevor Thomas (Sea Breeze) and others joined us for dinner in the The George that evening where I had to work out a bill for twenty odd jolly sailors! (Or should that be twenty jolly odd sailors? I am not sure!).

By Wednesday the storm had blown through and we had a pleasant sail up the Beaulieu River and another lazy lunch before heading back down to Bucklers Hard ably led by Finn, aged 10, and his crew Steve Mitchell (Spray). A very good barbecue was arranged by the Master Builder pub but the evening was subdued due to the sudden departure of Trevor following the news that his wife had been diagnosed with cancer. We all wish Marion a full and speedy recovery.



Next morning the full contingency of over twenty Shrimpers sailed out of the Beaulieu River into The Solent bound for Bembridge. The weather was sunny with light airs, and with little shipping around all was a pretty picture of red sails against an azure sky. Tim Reid (Fair Maid) obviously thought so too, as he decided to stand up on the deck to take a picture, lost his footing and fell overboard, miraculously his camera landed in the cockpit!. Towards the back of the fleet and sailing solo this situation suddenly became a drama as with sails set and autopilot on, Tim was in danger of being separated from his boat. Fortunately he managed to grab the main sheet and drag himself back to the ladder but couldn't climb back aboard for all the weight of his wet clothes. Julian Biggs (Bybyn Bubyne) was alert to the situation and came along side with assistance. That evening at Brading Haven Yacht Club Tim was the centre of attention, if a little bit sheepish, and by the end of the week he had attained celebrity status. When is the book being published Tim?

The final day saw us sailing to Chichester with a strengthening wind and by the time we arrived at Chichester Bar was brisk. The leading boats then had a storming race all the way up to Itchenor. We met up for a final dinner at Chichester Yacht Club after a successful, if eventful week.

A Special thanks to Trevor Thomas, Barry Mellor, Julian Biggs, et al for organising the event.

Mike Hunter & Julia Slatter (Redwing)