

### West Solent Five Rivers Rally, 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> July 2014

#### Magic Moments

Bowsprit: “a spar projecting from the bow of a vessel, especially a sailing vessel, used to carry the head-stay as far forward as possible.” (Collins English Dictionary)

Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> July

Lymington converge on Starting Platform at 0900. Sight Poole flotilla coming from Yarmouth. No reef, one reef, two reefs - somehow all arrive at mouth of Beaulieu River at much the same time, ready to gybe and run fast up river. Sudden gust of wind on a corner! Little Egret has prodded a moored boat with her bowsprit! Bucklers Hard harbourmaster zooms in, blue light flashing. He's seen it all before and is right on station, therefore, when Magic collides with Lisette, loses her bowsprit too and then, a split second later, her mast, rather elegantly, descends in slow motion. Mercifully no-one hurt. No news yet from the Hydrographic Office, but Shrimpers already call it 'Willard Corner'.

Slightly smaller and suitably chastened, the fleet enjoys lunch in the pool by Beaulieu Abbey. Lured by ice-cream and renowned local chocolate bark, three big men row ashore in small inflatable. Jessie May's skipper gives demonstration of Olympic-standard Synchronised Rafting, a trio of boats manoeuvring on one anchor.

Down to Gins Farm and moor for the night. Guillemette sails in from Chichester. In true style, within minutes, her skipper is stowed away with feet up in time for afternoon tea. Little Egret must return to Warsash and work. No problems for Lisette. The indefatigable, never-to-be-beaten, skipper of Magic, however, hatches plans for her repair. Magic needs a sail repair and a replacement bowsprit. Joan's skipper says

he has a bowsprit in his garage - surprising since he doesn't have a garage. Magic's first mate dashes to Sanders Sails in Lymington at 1800. Good dinner at Gins provided by Royal Southampton YC.

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July



Morning briefing (or was it prayers?), at Gins Farm

Fleet have peaceful night and wake to beautiful morning. Mummy oyster-catcher, guarding her three eggs on the sea wall, escorts crews going back and forth to the club house along the boardwalk, clearly her territory.

Meanwhile - speed dating indeed - Magic's mainsail is repaired by 0900. Complicated travel arrangements bring crew, mended sail and replacement bowsprit back to Gins. With the trusty Shrimper Manual in hand, pontoon-side, her crew get to work.

First mate supervising  
bowsprit and mast repairs



Pollen count very high. Hay-fever sufferers depart early and head to Cowes. Others straight to Newtown and anchor off. Good sail for all. Disembark in various inelegant ways to reach the beach for barbecue. Black Swan's skipper disappointed in the culinary standard, thinking that the girls had gourmet food in mind! It's sausages, sausages and more sausages. Delight when Magic sails in at sunset all complete and up-together. Magic moment indeed, as the smoke signals go up around the camp fire. Several Shrimpers aground at low tide. Skipper of Triplet forgets his canoe is punctured, gets out on the wrong side and falls in, so rather wet even in shallow water. Anchor up Newtown River for a very peaceful night and lazy morning. Triplet dries out!

Camp fire on Newtown  
beach



Magic rejoins the fleet



Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July

Down to Yarmouth, reefed. Wind, hearing aids and out-board render Kune Kune's skipper effectively deaf while berthing. Much gesticulation and many charades. The shouted instruction is "bow to the road", ambivalent at the best of times, but makes no sense to Kune Kune, who is about to ram Eric and Mary Hiscock, *aka* the Yarmouth Lifeboat. Assembled holiday-makers enjoy their panoramic front-seat view. Fierce reverse revs avoid the calamity of another broken bowsprit.

Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> July

Weekend weather not promising so, rather than to Keyhaven, fleet sails to Lymington, where skippers and their crews enthuse about the refurbished Yacht Haven facilities. So good are they that skipper of Black Swan spends the afternoon in the monsoon, all-singing, all-dancing showers. By car in the evening to sample the celebrated Keyhaven YC Friday-night curry.

Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> July

Sailing is now definitely out, so time for more showers and to explore Lymington. Evening drive to Christchurch Sailing Club for more large portions of good food. There say our farewells, the Poole boats to return early the next morning, but all vowing to make it by boat to Christchurch in the near future.

Not just good sailing, but much camaraderie and hilarity, and huge thanks to Carolyn and David Howden for their hard work and thoughtful, patient organisation of what became the Three Rivers and Two Roads Rally.

Shrimpers are something else!



Dying moments – Triplet's canoe

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