



# Solent Soundings



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Don't forget to look at <http://groups.msn.com/MICROCRUISERSUK> for rally photos and general discussion.



## Editorial

DINGHY CRUISING IS ABOUT SAILING RESPONSIBLY AND SAFELY. 2005 so far hasn't been a good year for rallies, with strong winds forecast for most of them. F6 is gale force as far as dinghy cruising is concerned, and in wind-against-tide conditions the Solent can become very rough. Do you think you can handle your boat in these conditions? What if something goes wrong - supposing your rudder breaks? It's far harder to repair damage to boat or crew when big waves are coming on-board and the sails are flapping furiously. Try launching nearer the venue, where you can set-off later if the weather moderates and still reach your destination. Last-minute changes of plan often have to be made in view of a bad forecast, when it's difficult to relay this information to others. Regular DCA members won't sail if the forecast is bad, so even if YOU reach the venue, you're unlikely to meet others . . .

I rushed out the last issue in order to draw your attention to a Traditional Boat Building Open Day at Dolphin Boatyard in Emsworth, which happened to be on the same week-end as our Copperas Point rally. I'd have liked to have gone myself, but couldn't escape from home in time to do this and get my boat to the rally as well. However, it was gratifying to learn that several of you did go, and Len has kindly sent me a write-up on this, reproduced below. All is not lost if you missed this one as there will be more, but I don't know the dates. I get this local information on Chichester Harbour as I subscribe to their e-mailing service. Some of you might have recourse to similar snippets about other parts of the Solent area, and if you'd like to pass them on to me I can include them in future issues for general interest.

Liz

*Trevor Chanter asks:*

**Hi Liz, does anyone sail in the Chichester area mid-week?**

(Please see membership list for contact details.)

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Thanks to those of you who have responded to my request for volunteers. Hugh has now booked a caterer from Hayling Island who will run the bar-b-q on the Friday evening and the dinner on Sat. Not sure whether he has sorted-out the liaison side of things yet.



## **Dell Quay Festival of Sail**

This takes place at Dell Quay on the week-end immediately preceding the Cobnor event and welcomes anyone with a boat carrying a traditional workboat rig. There will be a full

on-shore programme to include entertainments, exhibition of marine art, and fireworks. Further details from Philip and Barbara Ruewell on 01403 782 027



## **THE DOLPHIN BOATYARD OPEN DAY**

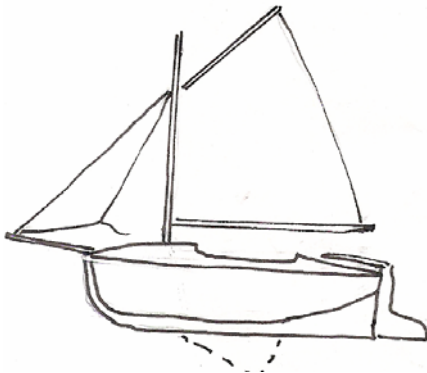
The Dolphin Boatyard at Emsworth specialises in restoring vintage craft, and their April Open Day conveniently coincided with our Copperas Point rally. The main item of interest was the large, open sailing boat, *Terror*, formerly in Portsmouth Museum but now being restored into sailing condition with the aid of a Lottery

mainsail and a jib on a short bowsprit (it was presumably only sailed with the tide, down on the ebb, back on the flood). The heavily cambered decks are unusual, but the *Terror* design was taken from another Emsworth oyster boat, the *Grampus*.

It might be argued that *Terror* will be more of a replica than a restored boat, but it is claimed that 40% of the original timbers will be re-used, together with some of the original iron work. Great care is being taken to retain the original shape with only alternate planks being replaced. We look forward to seeing her sailing in due course.

Incidentally, some of the Emsworth sailing oyster dredgers were huge, designed to dredge far afield in foreign waters. They had wells in which to keep their catch fresh, and steam engines were used to haul in the dredges and raise sail. Older members might recall seeing the hulk of one of these alongside *The Ark* at Emsworth.

*Len Wingfield*



grant. *Terror* was built in Emsworth and used to collect oysters from the dredgers working the Hayling banks. It is a strange boat, with a massive iron centreboard, but only a small gaff





## Rally Reports

### Copperas Point - 16-17 April 2005

Len Wingfield	14 footer	<i>Bluey</i>
Cliff Martin	Mirror	
Alan Glanville	Ness Yawl	<i>Lowly Worm III</i>
Steve Bradwell	Enterprise	
Liz Baker	Cormorant	<i>Tessa</i>

Also in the vicinity were Chris Jenkins, who set-out from Northney but then heard a F7 in the forecast and decided not to risk it, and the Evans family, who were down for the day and sailed from Itchenor to East Head, but somehow failed to see any of us, except me in the distance.

In fact the weather was perfect, although a bit chilly in the northerly wind, and it did Rain as forecast late on Sunday afternoon, but we were all on our way home by then.

I didn't escape from home until mid-day on Sat, and so it was 4pm before I was setting sail from Cobnor. An hour later, with the Spring sunshine beginning to lose its warmth, I was passing Copperas Point, where a lone fisherman had established himself exactly where I had planned to moor. Never mind, there was plenty more foreshore. I was more concerned at the lack of DCA boats at a time of day when I would have expected to meet some. I continued and found them all converging on Dell Quay, having decided to use the quay to provide shelter from the chilly northerly wind. They were willing to accompany me back to my original rendezvous, but had already obtained permission to tie-up to the Sailing Club jetty, Alan had booked a table for us in the pub, and with the tide now ebbing, we'd soon be



aground anyway.

I watched Cliff (attending his second rally) wading round his Mirror in the chilly April water erecting his new tent. "You'll have to find a way of rigging your tent from within your boat", I said, but Rome wasn't built in a day - he'll soon learn.

We had to be up by 6am on Sunday to move away from the quay before the tide left us, but on such a beautiful morning this was no hardship. Steve, Cliff and I moored in deeper water to prepare breakfast, but Len and Alan set off straight away for East Head. There was no wind at first, but I was happy to let *Tessa* drift with the tide while I scanned the bird life with my new binoculars. I identified Knots on the beach at Old Park Wood, showing off in their russet breeding plumage. At East Head the DCA boats were so far apart that it was hard to decide who to aim for. I chose Steve and Alan who were fairly close together. Len had disappeared and didn't return until all but myself had left, having fallen asleep in the dunes. Steve and I walked as far as the *Hinge*, which has indeed been breached and there is now a gap 200 yds wide, with the rock berm placed there in an attempt to prevent this happening now being all that remains.



### Tom writes . . .

We had a great time at Chichester. Sitting on the Dunes at East Head for lunch was magical surrounded by water with the sun glistening off the Solent. As you say though, it was cold which affected Julie more than James or me and we spent the 1 3/4 hour drive home with the car heater on V. HOT

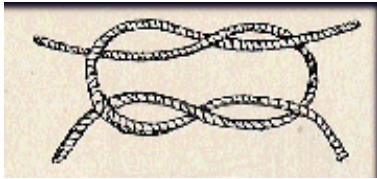
and the fan on setting "4". We had our usual mishaps though: Our launch trolley tyre had perished and split, so with the tide out, we had needed to blow the tyre up every 10 yards or so, which was quite a few times since the tide was out when we launched. Once we got the trolley and boat



in the water, the air was fizzing and bubbling out of the water in a most embarrassing way!! My glasses fell into the water as I prepared to get in the boat. Luckily it was only 10 inches deep and I

found them again. I didn't realise how little depth of water there was in the channel, so with the centreboard up I think I pushed the boat at least to Chichester Marina.

### *How Well do you Know your Knots?*



Reef Knot



(Feathered) Knot

#### **Portchester Castle - 30 April - 2 May**

The forecast of thick sea fog no doubt put some members off. New member Mark Tinker had planned an ambitious catamaran sail from Poole, but with the easterly wind, that was clearly impracticable; however, five boats did make it. David Jones in his 16' 6" Beaufort had sailed from Northney Chichester), Alastair Law in his 14' Paradox, Chris Jenkins in his 15' Potter AX and Tom Evans and family in their GP14 all launched within Portsmouth Harbour. I made the tactical error of launching my mystery\* 14 footer at Warsash. I soon ran into thick fog, and tacking against light winds, it was a considerable time before I realised I was making no progress. The shore was only faintly visible on the inward tack, so I could not identify my position. At times in the shallows I could see the bottom, but not the shore! Eventually the fog cleared and a breeze came up, but fell again before I reached Gilkicker Point where I struggled for ages, sailing, then rowing, then walking the boat against the fierce ebbing tide, but eventually accepted a tow from a Portsmouth yacht, *Sirocco*. Once in the harbour I could have sailed as the breeze had filled-in, but *Sirocco* very kindly towed me all the way to

Portchester so I arrived just on time (*I have only taken about five tows in 50 years or more*). On Sunday the question was where to go for the next venue, bearing in mind that the tide situation ruled out Fareham as the only other attractive venue within the harbour. David decided to sail back to Chichester, and the rest of us headed for Wootton Creek on the Isle of Wight. Unfortunately on the way the mist returned and Chris sensibly elected to return. My powerful, if battered and overweight 14-footer had out-run the others into the fog and, when it dispersed, no one else was in sight. Ashore at Wootton I was glad to eventually see Alastair sail up. To look at his Paradox (said to be the only one in Britain) one might dismiss it as an ignorant amateur's design. In fact it sails well and rows well (sculled by a single oar), and all this with cabin comforts and an easily managed rig! It could be described as a 14' water-ballasted keel-less yacht, and it looks right once one has overcome prejudice over how a boat should look. On May Bank Holiday morning, after drifting down the creek, the breeze filled-in and we each sailed back to our respective mainland launching points. The Portchester cruise had been 100% sail and oar!

\* *Now known to have been moulded by Woodnutts of St Helens c.1958, presumably on the lines of some pre-war class boat.*



### Folly Inn - 14-15 May

Due to forecast bad weather, Jay decided to cancel this rally and it will take place later in the year. Please see front page, and rally programmes below.

In fact the weather had moderated by mid-day Sat and Graham and I launched the Cormorant into Chichester. Steve Bradwell, meanwhile, was launching his Enterprise into Langstone. We planned to meet-up at The Kench but in fact neither of us got there. Due to lack of wind Graham and I turned-back and spent the night in Snowhill Creek, and Steve got swept

by the ebbing tide onto a sandbank while trying to cross Langstone Harbour from Eastney. Next day we managed a more successful rendezvous at Langstone Bridge, with Steve sailing up from the Langstone side, and *Tessa* from the Chichester side. As those without computers and those who don't look at the South Coast website won't have received Jay's cancellation message, there is a possibility that some members might well have made it to the venue, although I haven't so far heard of anyone who did.

### ... and Mark Tinker's experiences:

*Hi Liz*

I know you weren't going to this rally but I don't have an e-mail address for Len Wingfield & I wanted someone to know that I really did try to get there! I left home in Glastonbury at the crack of dawn on Saturday & managed to be afloat by 08.15. It was all a big rush because I really needed to be through Poole Harbour entrance not many minutes past low water at 09.00. Sadly the wind was very light & when I finally reached the entrance at 10.15, the tide was running strongly against me. In any case, the dense fog which the old salts on the shore had assured me would lift in an hour was, if anything, worse; visibility around 50 yards.

I had an interesting day learning to navigate Poole Harbour in this dense mist and then camped on the tramp of the Hobie, moored in shallow water off a beach by the Harbour entrance ready for my second assault on the Solent in the morning.

Sunday morning dawned bright, quite clear and with a promising Force 2 / 3 from SW. I reached Old Harry's Rock within 30 minutes and then set a compass course for Hurst Castle. Visibility was fine for an hour but I then ran into dense fog. I kept going

*Mark Tinker*

for about another 30 minutes because, although the fog was thick at sea level, I could still see blue sky & the sun above me. It felt as though it should clear. It was a bit of a shock when a yacht suddenly appeared out of the mist about 50 yards away as I had not realised how little I could see. I sailed over to them and they confirmed that the fog was dense all the way to the Solent so I reluctantly turned back to Poole.

The wind turned much lighter on the way back. It took nearly 3 hours to make the entrance but visibility was fine, once I had got back through the fog bank. One last drama awaited me when the heavy chop in the entrance rocked the boat and the sails so violently that I stopped dead about 30 feet away from the (thankfully stationary) chain ferry. I had to paddle frantically for about 50 yards, across the bow of the ferry, to get through to the next patch of wind.

I was sorry not to have managed the long journey to Portsmouth to join the others but I still enjoyed my own little rally. As they say in all the best films... 'I'll be back!'



### ***Yarmouth - 4/5 June***

Jay Melbourne	Star Trekka	<i>Ka Lae</i>
Len Wingfield	14 footer	<i>Bluey</i>
Graham Deans & Liz Baker	Wayfarer	
Steve Bradwell	Enterprise	

Nearly sabotaged by bad weather again with forecasts of westerly force 5, 6 or even 7. 3 boats launched on Saturday at Keyhaven. Len and Steve set out for a sail around Hurst harbour and found it was indeed breezy. Jay was found moored behind a shingle spit having previously sailed from Christchurch. Looking across towards Yarmouth it did not look inviting with white capped waves and heeling yachts.

Waiting for the change of tide so that tide and wind were in the same direction did improve conditions and it was agreed to set out with an escape route to Oxey Lake or Lymington if needed. As it turned out the most difficult part of the crossing was getting out over the mud of an almost dried out Keyhaven. The three, reefed down dinghies made a fast crossing and found Jay already tied up to a pontoon having set out earlier. He reported a very choppy crossing, on jib alone, with at least one wave

breaking into the cockpit of his small cabin boat.

Yarmouth was in the middle of a colourful 'old gaffers' festival but this did not affect the sleep of the tired dinghy sailors after a walk into town.

On Sunday the wind was less but it was decided to skip the planned sail up the River Yar in case conditions worsened. In fact the return crossing was made in almost ideal conditions for a fast and enjoyable sail. Even the rain, when it eventually came did not stop the three open boats from a few laps of Hurst harbour in friendly competition, but not racing of course!

In all a successful rally for the four boats that reached Yarmouth, despite the unhelpful weather.

*Steve Bradwell*

*. . . and more news from Mark Tinker . . .*

*Dear Liz*

If there was a competition for the best story about why one didn't make it for a rally, this could be a strong contender for the title. After the disappointment of failing to complete the journey from Poole to join the Portchester Castle Rally because of fog, I was determined to make it to Yarmouth & set off in plenty of time.

***Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June:***

Forecast SW F4 occ F5. In the event, the strongest wind was in Poole Harbour & I sailed from Rockley Point to Newtown Creek in mainly a F3 or less. Leaving Rockley at 11.15 hrs, I passed through the Harbour entrance at 12.00hrs and followed a course roughly parallel to the shore, about a mile

off. At Hengistbury Head (13.00 hrs) I looked long & hard but without success for the breaking waves described in one of my pilot books as 'awesome' and came through Hurst Narrows at 14.15 hrs.

I pitched the tent on the Hobie 15, tied to the quay at Shalfleet, & enjoyed a quiet night after a celebratory meal at the New Inn.

***Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June:***

I decided to sail east to Bembridge . . . partly because I had never been there, partly because the tide would turn in my favour after Cowes but also because I had the thought that Bembridge would provide an overnight stop protected by the land



from the strengthening SW wind. Forecast F2-3, then F3-4, then F5 & then F6! Well, the forecast was right but thankfully the F5-6 only arrived in the evening. The protected overnight berth proved to be wildly over-optimistic.

I left Shalfleet at 09.15 hrs & spent the first hour finding the elusive tap at Newtown Quay & exploring Clamerkin Lake at HW. Leaving Newtown, I made good progress against the tide & stopped for a quick break at Wootton Creek before covering the last few miles to Bembridge, arriving at 14.15 hrs. With the tortuous entrance and an off-shore wind, I had no chance of entering at LW, so I ran up on a sandbank and spent the afternoon walking to Seaview and reading. I finally entered the harbour at 17.00 hrs & pulled up on the steep beach next to the sailing club.

#### *Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June:*

There is nothing more intimidating than sleeping in a thrashing tent as the wind tries to blow it away all night, knowing that you've got to sail to Yarmouth in the morning!

The forecast was F5-6 so I double reefed the mainsail and left at 09.15 hrs. The F4 at Bembridge quickly built up to F5 as I neared Ryde Sands & No Mans Fort and I was beating into very big waves. The Hobie coped brilliantly but I was having trouble tacking as the pocket-sized main (my modification!) did not provide the power to drive through the tacks in one movement and my normal remedy of sailing backwards & reversing the rudders, left the boat vulnerable to being turned over by the waves.

Both wind & waves stepped up a gear after Cowes and finally the inevitable occurred. I missed a tack and capsized. When you take on these longer journeys, there is a pressure to keep moving for all the best reasons when you would rather wait another day. If I had made it Yarmouth unscathed in such conditions, it might have been seen as something of an achievement. If, on the

other hand, you capsize and particularly if you need assistance, then the judgement might well be that your decision was foolhardy. It's quite a fine line.

Anyway, I righted the Hobie without difficulty, furling the jib in the process, and sailed off under the main alone. I had initially intended to release the jib when under way but the boat handled so well without it that I wore round at the end of the next few tacks. I was, however, very tired and decided to run the boat up on the next suitable beach which turned out to be Thorness Bay at about 13.00 hrs.

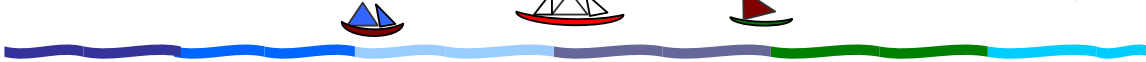
I still had thoughts of sailing onto Yarmouth for the rally but the tide was falling so quickly that by the time that I had drunk a coffee, recovered my strength and sorted out the boat, the water's edge was 20 yards away.

#### *Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June:*

After another tent rattling night on the exposed beach, I left at 09.15 hrs with a daunting journey ahead of me. The forecast was WSW F4-5 occ F6. I just hate weather forecasts that are designed to cover the forecaster's back. What are you actually meant to do about that 'occasional F6'? I am sure it is only there so that they can say, 'Well, I did warn them!'

This time I just single reefed the main and had no trouble tacking all day. It was a long steady beat in the F4 wind up to Hurst Castle which I passed at 11.30 hrs. You would have seen the whites of my eyes for the first mile along the North Channel as the wind built immediately and the Hobie was tossed every which way by the confused seas but after a while it settled down. I passed Hengistbury Head at 13.00 hrs and this time the stronger wind rewarded me with 15 minutes of spectacular breaking waves over Christchurch Ledge.

The ebb tide was still running quite strongly at Poole Harbour entrance only 30 minutes before LW, but the wind was still plenty strong enough to keep the boat moving and I finally landed at Rockley at 16.30 hrs;



exhausted, thirsty, hungry and in urgent need of a 'comfort break', but well pleased to have completed my first longer voyage in such testing conditions without incident.

I hope some of the others managed to make the rally! All the best.

*Mark Tinker*

***Sad news from Chris Hunt:***

Unfortunately I am not renewing my DCA membership this year, for various reasons including I have sold my Sunspot and do not have a sailing dinghy at present, and the events and articles are very tempting but with no boat and very little free time I was feeling guilty (and envious) at not being able to join in, and my spare pennies seem to be fully committed at the moment.

hope they will now join. I really enjoyed meeting everyone, socially and at the annual meeting a while back and sailing with Liz and the southern group last summer was brilliant fun, and the many Sunspot and boat-mad friends across the country I have made through DCA.

I have passed the latest magazine and a membership form to friends locally and I

Wishing you all a very good sailing season and I hope to get back on the water sooner or later. Fair winds and favourable tides from  
*Chris Hunt*

***Next Three Rallies***

**Oxey Lake** - OS 196-330 936 (just west of Lymington)

18/19 June      Sat HW Portsmouth 21.06  
Chris Jenkins    Home: 02392 601 779

**Folley Inn, Medina** - 1/2 July 2005 - OS 196-507 930

**Re-scheduled** from 14/115 May. Meeting point just south of Folly Inn pontoons. Camping ashore possible behind pub by arrangement with the landlord.  
Jay Milbourne    Mobile: 07890 198 089

**Dell Quay Festival of Sail**

8 - 10 July      (**not** a DCA event - please see above).

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations** - at Cobnor, Chichester Harbour

Fri 15 July to Fri 22 July      Sat HW Portsmouth 19.11  
Bookings to Hugh Clay

To be followed by cruising in company for remainder of week. Bookings in advance essential. South Coast regulars, please don't turn-up unannounced hoping to sleep afloat as there won't be room!

