

Postcard from Gosport

23rd and 24th September 2017



1 -Tideline; Rear Commodore's burgee flying

Two rallies ended up on the *Hardway Sailing Club* pontoon; both with two boats apiece. The *Seawych Owners' Association* and *East Cowes Sailing Club*.

Tideline, with Mike and Gordon aboard, and *Gina* with Lorraine and David aboard slipped their lines at 1000 on Saturday in the best weather you can expect this time of year (mostly sunshine with a little cloud).

The Solent was chock-a-block with weekend warriors of all sizes enjoying the competition made possible by the gentle to moderate south-westerly breeze.

Gina, with just her foresail and mizzen set and her engine a tad above tickover, settled to 8 degrees of heel (where she's comfortable) and made six and a half knots over the ground towards Gillkicker Point. *Tideline*, under full sail also made healthy progress with the fair tide.

Turning into the Portsmouth Harbour small boat channel from the inner swatchway, we were met by confused swell from a merchantman exiting the harbour and also two small QHM boats bustling about the small boat channel. What with monitoring the VHF, cowboys with a questionable grasp of the rules of the road and

QHM regulations, the tides and swell. It's not a good idea to let your concentration slip when entering Portsmouth harbour. On the other hand, but for different reasons, no doubt Portsmouth sailors say the same about entering Cowes harbour.

Surprisingly, there was no room at the *Royal Clarence Marina* so we decided to head up to the *Hardway Sailing Club* pontoon.

Gina stood off while *Tideline* made her approach. Mike moved quickly, turned the boat to come in port-side to the south of the pontoon and with a deft burst astern dropped straight into a gap between two boats little longer than *Tideline* itself.

David made his approach starboard-side to; also to the south of the pontoon; oblivious to the urgently waving Gordon. Lorraine tried to repeat Gordon's warning but it fell on deaf ears. Mike even made a last-second phone call to David to which David responded without listening, "*Mike, I'm a little busy right now*".

What was all the fuss about?

The flood tide and (what seemed like) the freshening wind were both pushing onto the south side of the pontoon. Now, we all know, you come in to moor against the strongest opposing force; be it wind or tide. This time both the wind and tide were pushing against the south side of the pontoon; so the text-book would say go to the north side of the pontoon.

Both Mike and David had made the decision to go to the south side of the pontoon as they reckoned that they might be blown and pushed off the north side before they could get a line ashore.

Mike had made a hard landing against the south side of the pontoon and so he and Gordon had determined to warn David to go around to the north side.

David, however, had made his decision and was not for turning. *Gina* came in fairly hard but in control, if a little higher up the pontoon than

was sociable. Gordon took a line and he and David set about warping Gina down the pontoon to narrow the gap between boats. Unfortunately, one or two of Gina's fenders rode up and she sustained some scratching on the starboard side. Never mind, it's all part of the game and to be expected.

That *Hardway* pontoon can be challenging in certain conditions.

On Sunday, Gordon was to give the Commodore of the *Seawych Owners' Association* a master class in springing-off astern.

We were paying attention to the *Seawych Owners' Association* because a number of their members were intending to travel by car to dine at the *Hardway Sailing Club* on Saturday evening. We thought the menu choices might become restricted as a result.

A salient feature of their association is that many members no longer own a *Seawych*. Indeed, the Commodore of the association had owned a *Westerly Longbow* for 22 years. There was but one *Seawych* present.

Your correspondent digresses. All tied up early on Saturday afternoon, the crew of *Gina* decided to stretch their legs and venture out for a spot of lunch.



2 - "We don't do small"

Just up the road, we popped into the *Old House at Home* for a bite to eat. The couple of

sandwiches we ordered came served between doorsteps of bread with salad and chips. The barmaid explained as she served us "we don't do small".

All four of us met in the early evening in the *Hardway Sailing Club* bar. We waited until 1830, in line with the rally instructions, in case anyone else from *ECSC* would join. Pretty soon afterwards, mindful of the other rally, we placed our food orders.



3 - Gordon and Mike waiting for food

After a nightcap on *Gina*, everyone spent a quiet night against the pontoon.

Hardway serves breakfast from 0900. As if he hadn't eaten his fill the night before, David ordered a large breakfast without appreciating what the description meant.



4 - Full English

After breakfast, we set about readying our boats for our intended departure time of 1400. That meant transferring from the south to the north side of the pontoon. Boats on the south side were again being pinned onto the pontoon by wind and tide.

The pontoon was busy with boat movements that morning with everyone lending a hand.

Tideline was away first with Gordon supervising the springing-off operation. Once *Tideline* was away, she took up position on the hammerhead. Mike was given a dispensation to extend the normal time limit of 30 minutes on that berth.

Gordon and Mike got *Gina* away and waited on the north side of the pontoon for her to nose in. The tide and wind were pushing hard and *Gina* didn't come alongside easy. A thank you to the lady from an adjacent boat who lent a hand.

We left at the appointed time. Once out of the harbour we were presented with dull grey skies and moderate winds. By 1600, *Tideline* and *Gina* had tied up on their pontoon at East Cowes with another rally successfully concluded.

A big thank you to the members of *Hardway Sailing Club* for their hospitality and unstinting help over the weekend.

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