

East Cowes Sailing Club Newsletter August 2018

Mackerel competition and BBQ Sunday 22nd July

What a fantastic day and turn out of the fishing and sailing sections!

Five boats left at 10 am; Puffin, helmed by Richard with Marcus and the crew of Little Spirit, who normally sail. Dirty Girty helmed by Bob with Judy and Matt; Kaikoura helmed by Mike with Jack and also Nick and his 12 year old son Cole; Steve on his boat and Tom and Julia also took their boat out. So a massive 13 people fishing.

Fishing was slow to start, with horse mackerel caught off the Prince Consort buoy. Richard, however, had better ideas and anchored to the North of the West Ryde Middle buoy, with success!

With fishing over by about 3 pm; a total of about 60 fish were caught. Bob's boat caught about 35 Horse mackerel and Puffin caught about 25 proper mackerel and also a 10lb undulate Ray and an 8lb smoothound. Steve also managed to catch a couple of mullet too; and Tom and Julia landed a beautiful Shad (Herring Family).

Four prizes collected by Dave were presented by Torsten (see opposite) for the youngest fisherman (Cole) who caught his first ever fish on this day; the normally non-fisherman (Tom); Richard for the longest mackerel and Steve with his prize catch.

An enormous thanks to Dave Bonham for also setting up the BBQ and encouraging guests to cook their own food.

I heard the sailors enjoyed the event and that Mike Tennuci even ate three mackerel.

Many thanks to all who came and made the day one to remember.



1. Cole receives his prize from the Commodore



2. Tom and Steve with their prizes awarded by Dave

House and Stores

Tractor

The big news from the yard is the acquisition of the new (to us) tractor.



3. Dave Casson with the new tractor (from Mike)

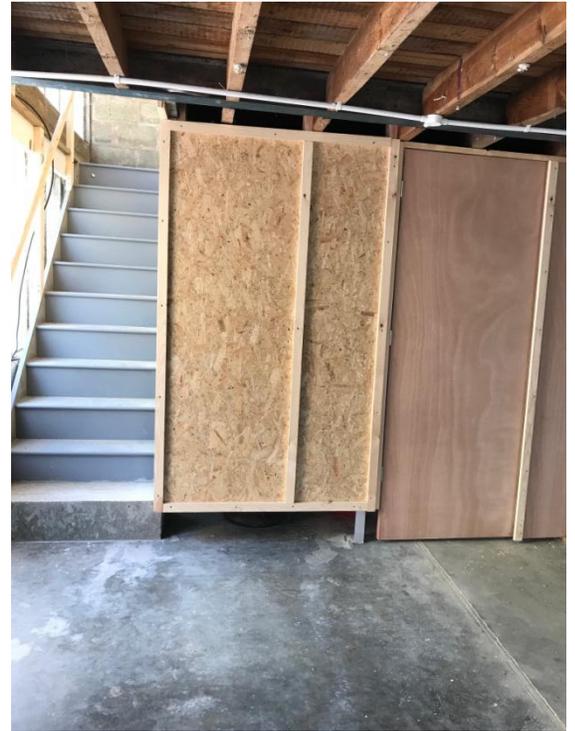
There's a little work to be done to fabricate a detachable "A" frame for our trailers and to fit towing gear to the front and rear of the tractor.

Thanks are due to Dave Casson and John Barnes for sourcing the tractor and working out how best to use it for moving trailers around the yard.

Centre Store

Work continues on the Centre Store. The Wednesday Club has expended an incredible amount of effort and applied a great deal of skill to the refurbishment so far.

The view opposite is of the newly fitted staircase on the ground floor alongside the newly fitted out Bosun's store and the repaired door frame of the existing Bosun's store.



4. New staircase and Bosun's Store



5. Repaired door frame

Quick Quiz

What is a scran bag?

What is a Handy billy?

In old naval mechanical calculations, how much weight can a man handle?

Passage Plan

I thought an article about my return across the Channel and how something this simple can go wrong might be of interest.

Dan and I had a good fast trip to Cherbourg via the Needles on the Friday and enjoyed a lazy day in Town on the Saturday. The weather for the return from the marina office and via the internet was suitable although the visibility would be Poor over some of the journey. This is not unusual and poor visibility is normal. Little Spirit is equipped with an AIS transceiver, radar and radar transponder.

For me this trip is a milk run. Sunday morning up early to rig the boat, get the latest weather, run through the navigation prepared the night before, use the loo and off.

Unfortunately the loo blocked and took 2 hours to clear. Clean myself up and check the navigation for a late departure.

Two hours late arriving at the Needle still gave 3 hours of flood and still daylight. Off we went and had a fast sail in a slightly rough beam sea but nothing exceptional. To stop the genoa flapping and get best speed we didn't run straight downwind but about 10 degrees west of the direct course. This made an arrival in the middle of Christchurch Bay and a gybe as the tide turned to flood and take us home. Perfect. Kept amused drinking tea, eating and looking for ships visually and on AIS. We estimated about one and a half miles visibility.

About 3 hours before the gybe I changed the chart plotter from Course Up to North UP. This was done so that the projected track was steady and not swinging from Portland to Newtown. After the gybe and making good progress and mist started to close in. Nothing visible on the AIS. The sea was now much calmer and we soon made The Bridge Buoy.

By now we were in a quarter of a mile visibility and the Needle Lighthouse was not visible nor was it horn audible. I did a course change to get out of the rough water on the reef. The chart plotter changed and when I looked at it didn't make sense. It did not agree with the steering or electronic compass. So I circled the Bridge buoy and made a positive identification.

To continue on a compass bearing was not sensible and to try and make Poole via safe water would be difficult. So I asked for help and the Lymington Lifeboat very kindly came and took me in

to off Yarmouth where the sea was flat, the wind calm and the visibility was 3 miles.

So what went wrong? Habit! I have used my chart plotter in Course Up mode for 17 years. It is like driving home you need to go to the supermarket in town but turn into your street out of habit. I just didn't remember that I had changed the orientation of the chart plotter. So when I looked at the plotter it was displaying about 90 degrees from what habit told me it should. So a press of a button to an unusual screen caused a lot of embarrassment.

Brian
Little Spirit

Differences in Cross-Channel Passage Making

It struck me recently that there are marked differences between tackling a Channel passage from the Solent and striking out across the Straights of Dover.

Navigating the English Channel from the Solent has the same external considerations as crossing the Dover Straits or, I suppose, any sailing passage to anywhere; including wind; sea-state; visibility; tides and shipping.

In practice, you treat some of these factors differently according to distance, your experience and your attitude to risk.

For example, a forecast strong wind and deteriorating sea-state later (that is 12 or more hours later in Met Office lingo) wouldn't necessarily put you off a passage across the Dover Straights.

With a well-found boat, a deadline to meet and a strong and experienced skipper and crew, this forecast might not deter you from a passage to Cherbourg but it could give you pause for thought and extra preparation.

On the other hand, my own idea of an ideal 48 hour forecast for any cross-Channel passage would be a smooth or slight sea-state; force 3-4 winds and perfect visibility :-)

Solent to Cherbourg

Tides and shipping need to be traded-off in planning a passage across the Dover Straights but there is no such conflict on a passage from the Solent to Cherbourg; the odd jig through the shipping routes aside.

For Cherbourg, passage planning techniques vary from the simple: "*keep your chart plotter pointing at the destination and follow that course regardless of tide*". That's grossly inefficient for the distance involved but widely practiced I'd warrant.

The efficient approach sums up the effects of the tide hour-by-hour to arrive at a course to steer which, all being well, would describe a gentle tidal "S" shape course over the ground to drop you close to your chosen entrance to the Grande Rade with a favourable tide across the harbour entrance.

There's a neat computer program that works it all out for you from any start point on the English side of the Channel to a finish point on the French side namely *TidePlan2* from <http://www.compasscard.co.uk>. The program used to have a nominal annual licence fee. I've not used it for years but when I did it appeared accurate.

Dover to Calais

My view is that you have to pay extra attention to the following considerations for a Dover Straights passage:

Communications

In this section, I use the term VHF rather than DSC deliberately, but that's a subject for another day.

It's not wise to attempt entry to the port of Dover or cross the Channel without a receiving and transmitting VHF radio, preferably two sets; a ship's set and a portable set.

A bit of an aside, my last time into Calais was a little choppy. The portable VHF slipped off the cockpit locker, bounced around the cockpit sole and spilled its rechargeable batteries. I retrieved them a few days later when I was in Sovereign Harbour. After I replaced the batteries, I reasoned that I should attach the portable VHF to my harness using the radio's wrist strap, so that I didn't drop it in future. Bad move; as I climbed off the boat to prepare to cast off, the radio caught on a guard wire, the wrist strap snapped and the radio dropped into the marina. I replaced it at my next port of call (Newhaven - excellent chandlery) with a super-sturdy VHF that floats!

It's convenient to set your ship's VHF to SCAN if it's available. There are a 4 essential channels (including Channel 16) and it's a bit of a fiddle to constantly switch channels when you have enough else to keep you occupied.

For the same reason, it's handy to use a portable set for communicating with port control (Dover and Calais).

Don't forget to switch off your ship's VHF radio when transmitting on your portable set to avoid feedback :-)

Keeping an ear on the following VHF channels can relieve a lot of potential stress.

- Channel 11 - Channel Navigation Information Service (CNIS)
 - Useful/interesting/essential safely broadcasts.
 - Reputedly, the channel on which you will be first contacted if you breach TSS regulations.
- Channel 74 - Dover Port Control
 - Contact for permission to enter
 - Contact for permission to leave
 - All ships passing down the English side of the TSS report into (or are contacted by) Dover Port Control. It's useful to know what's about to appear from the east.
 - Inbound and outbound ferry traffic reports into Dover port control.
- Channel 17 - Calais Port Control
 - Contact for permission to enter (they speak English and are very polite).
 - Contact for permission to leave; but there is generally a scrummage of local boats when the bridge opens and you can leave it to the locals to request permission to leave the port.
 - Useful to pick up VHF traffic from inbound and outbound ferries.

I shouldn't leave this section on communication without a mention of AIS. I don't intend to cover the subject in any detail; again that's a topic for another day.

It could be my imagination but I seem to have had a much easier time of it with Dover and Calais port operations since I fitted an AIS transponder.

Everything passing through the Dover Straights is tracked on multiple screens on both sides of the Channel. It may be that if the authorities can put a name to a dot on screen, it helps you just a little.

Tides (timing) and Ports

Tides run quickly up and down the Dover Straights, particularly around headlands, of which there are a few. Cap Griz Nez springs to mind on the French side.

Possibly, because of the regulatory restrictions imposed on your route across the TSS, you may have no choice but to put up with a period of adverse tide through one or other of the inshore traffic zones. With that in mind, neaps may be preferable to springs.

Dover has a reputation locally for confused seas outside the harbour walls, even in light winds. A few years ago, a friend told me of a yacht from his club (the Royal Temple) that foundered on the harbour walls and was lost. Recently, I was talking to one chap who preferred to add the extra few hours it took to reach his home port of Ramsgate rather than stop-off at Dover. He was annoyed that a recent visit to Dover had shaken off his TV antenna :-)

On the plus side, most of the commercial/ferry traffic uses the Eastern entrance and you'll be more than likely to be approaching the Western entrance. That being the case, you won't have to stand off the harbour's menacing walls for too long, if at all.

You may need to factor in, on the outward passage, the opening times of Dover's Granville Dock (where most visiting boats seem to be directed). This is not too great a restriction, as the gate opens for 60% of the tidal cycle. Current dock opening times are displayed on a screen in the marina office.

Calais marina is also part tidal. The marina basin lock closes around two hours after high water and opens around two hours before high water. There is the added barrier of a road bridge which bars access. Bridge opening times for the month are available from the marina office.

There is no need to be unduly anxious about your time of arrival. On entry, there are waiting buoys outside the marina basin. Timing is more important on the way back from Calais, when it can be a good idea to leave the marina on the first opening of the road bridge before high water.

The Dover Straights TSS

The Dover Straights TSS (Traffic Separation Scheme) comprises:

- An inshore traffic zone
- A south west shipping lane (Dover side)

- A traffic separation zone
- A north east shipping lane (French side)
- An inshore traffic zone

You are required to cross the shipping lanes "*on a heading as nearly as practicable at right angles to the general direction of traffic flow*".

Voluntary shipping route

There is an additional voluntary cross-Channel shipping route mostly used by ferries crossing between Dover and Calais or Dunkirk.

For reference, there's an insert on the latest Imray C12 chart which details the voluntary cross-Channel route.

This voluntary arrangement comprises:

- An inbound traffic route
- A traffic separation zone
- An outbound traffic route

The ferries, in keeping with the regulations, will travel at right angles to the TSS

If you are parallel with the ferries, it's a handy confirmation that all is well with your course through the TSS.

Dover to Calais Passage Plan

Again, this is a personal view; you have 3 options in your passage from Dover to Calais:

- Above the voluntary cross-Channel shipping route.
- Through the middle of the voluntary cross-Channel shipping route.
- Below the voluntary cross-Channel shipping route

I've used all three routes. The one I find least stressful is the third option.

I'm not going to specify any waypoints, just a broad directional indication.

Aim to enter the south west shipping lane midway between the outbound ferry route to port and the (pretend) Varne lightship to starboard.

Once through to the inshore traffic zone on the French side, head for the main buoyed approach channel into Calais. Keep a little to the shore side of the channel, but not too close in-shore, on your approach.

The only hazard of note off the coast, for the shallow draughted, is a drying patch on the Ridens de

Calais, but anyway you should be approaching from lower down the coast.

In conclusion, passages to Calais or to Cherbourg have significant differences and challenges.

All the usual caveats apply. These notes are incomplete, subject to error and for entertainment purposes only.

David

Gina of Parkstone

Cruising Update 14th July

There was a combined Yarmouth Passage Race and Newtown Creek picnic on 14th July. 4 boats entered the passage race and 4 different boats came to Newtown Creek.

We have a couple of pictures of the racing and one from the picnic at Newtown Creek.

I've included an extra picture. When everyone had returned home, the view of the sunset from Newtown Creek was a sight to behold.



6. Tom, Julia and Guinan (from Mike)

Quick Quiz Answers

What is a scran bag? A locker for misplaced items.

What is a Handy billy? A small tackle

How much weight can a man handle? 120 lbs



7. Mike, Gordon and Tideline (from Julia)



8. Lorraine, Mike and Marcus



9. Newtown Creek Sunset