

Postcard from Chichester

24th to 26th August 2019



1-Kingfisher

Saturday morning marked the start of a record-breaking scorcher of an August bank holiday weekend. *Aphelion*, *Tarim*, *Gina* and a guest yacht *Alexa*, from the Island Sailing Club made the trip to Chichester Marina for East Cowes Sailing Club's late summer cruise in company.

Depending on the state of the tide, when you arrive at Chichester Marina, you may have the bonus of free-flow through the lock. Unfortunately, there being neap tides pushed down further by high atmospheric pressure, all the rally boats had to lock-in whenever they arrived. Free-flows were in short supply for those few days. Indeed, all the rally boats also had to lock-out on their departures.

Chichester Marina is much changed since your correspondent's last visit many years ago. Then, I was moved to write to the editor of PBO after I'd used 10 pence worth of electricity and was charged a whopping connection fee.

Now, we were pleasantly surprised to experience the high standard of service and facilities that we have come to expect from Premier Marinas.

All the old marina complex buildings have been replaced. I was much taken by the air

conditioning in the harbour office :-). The old multi-purpose shop/café/chandlery is no more. The café/restaurant is a worthy replacement but there is a scant supply of chandlery. Specifically, the boatyard reception stocks the 'hundred most popular items' from the Force 4 Chandlery a few miles away. If you'd like to see a comprehensive selection of groceries (or alcohol) you'll need to walk a mile or so to a convenience store in Birdham.

Coincidentally, Saturday the 24th August was open day at Chichester Yacht Club. Being Saturday night and an open day to boot, the CYC galley was catering on an industrial scale. The operation was highly efficient and the service exemplary.

Before dinner, the Commodore asked the Vice Commodore what he was drinking "*Autumn Gold*" came the erroneous reply. The Commodore duly waited his turn at the crowded bar and was met by a blank stare when he asked for the ale. Oops, the Vice Commodore should have ordered "*Indian Summer*". The VC had to return to the bar to ask a stalwart CYC member which real ale he had recommended earlier :-)



2-Dinner at Chichester Yacht Club

On Sunday, Bunny from *Alexa* and Elaine from *Aphelion* took a stroll to the picturesque Dell Quay with their dogs Henry and Rupert; the male members of their crews having repaired to the yacht club for

refreshments. Ivan and Denise from *Tarim* popped over to Birdham for tea and *Gina's* skipper walked the length of the Chichester Canal tow path from the marina to the city centre.

The canal is navigable for around half its length from the Chichester basin but becomes shallow and overgrown before being completely blocked by two road bridges on its journey to the sea at Birdham.

Rather like the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, volunteers from the Chichester Ship Canal Trust run trips on the canal from February to October and a Santa Special. The first picture is one of a CSCT trip boat making leisurely progress through the water. *Kingfisher* was motoring just short of a brisk walking pace and served as an ideal pace-setter for the journey.

It being an extremely hot day, your correspondent made the return trip by bus. On the plus side the bus stops right outside the marina. On the other hand, the marina estate is extensive and it's around half a mile from the main road to the pontoons.

The bus route runs from Chichester to the beach at West Wittering; an extremely popular destination on a sweltering bank holiday weekend. There was such nose-to-tail traffic on the route and the published schedule was in such disarray that it took twice as long to ride back to the marina than it did to walk to Chichester in the first place.

On Sunday evening *Aphelion* hosted dinner. Elaine and Conal laid out a superb spread; thoroughly enjoyed by all present and complemented by a magnificent sunset.

Conversations ranged from *Alexa's* participation in the 2019 Rolex Fastnet Race to the long-standing re-enactments of the

Battle of the River Plate in Scarborough's Peasholm Park.



3- Sunset from *Aphelion*

On bank holiday Monday rally participants went their separate ways. *Aphelion* and *Alexa* returned to the Medina. *Tarim* left the marina taking the opportunity to drop the hook wherever the mood took them. The rest of the week was their own. *Gina* stayed an extra couple of nights and returned to her berth in East Cowes on Wednesday afternoon.



4-Last Pimms of the Summer

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