

Postcard from Gosport
3rd and 4th August 2019



1- Sundance and Blue Peter

Eight boats joined the ECSC rally to Gosport on Saturday 3rd August 2019: *Aphelion* (Conal and Elaine plus dog Rupert); *Brassed Off* (Paul and Karen plus dog Alfie); *CScape* (Bob and Mike); *Sundance* (Marcus); *Puffin* (Richard); *Monty-D* (Paul); *Dirty Girty* (Bob and Judy) and *Gina* (David and Lorraine) with the crew of PLC namely Rupert, Jo and Melissa joining us for dinner.

E.C.S.C rally participants shared the Solent with competitors waiting for the start of the 2019 Rolex Fastnet Race, a gentle breeze, slight sea and a rash of orange storm sails¹.

Aphelion and *Sundance* made their way to Gosport from Hamble and Ashlett Creek respectively. *Sundance* had sailed from her mooring in Newtown Creek to Ashlett for the Ashlett Sailing Club Regatta before setting off for Hardway.

Brassed Off with Paul and Karen aboard had berthed against the Hardway Sailing Club pontoon on Friday 2nd August. No mean feat as Friday was the culmination of HSC's Junior Week and there was a big knees-up scheduled in the clubhouse on Friday night. Reputedly, boats were rafted three deep on the pontoon. Paul W emailed *Gina* to suggest she raft up against *Brassed Off*

should the pontoon still be crowded on Saturday.

Gina made a start from her CHC pontoon just before 1100 followed a little later by *Mana* with Torsten and Linda aboard and a flotilla of three motor boats comprising *Dirty Girty*, *Puffin* and *Monty-D*.

Gina hoisted her sails well away from the Cowes harbour entrance and the melee of Fastnet competitors, spectators and commercial traffic. Even entering the small boat channel was a challenge with boats four abreast and *the Red Kestrel* freight ferry on manoeuvres.

For *Gina*, there followed a tranquil sail on one tack across the Solent to Stokes Bay where she furled the genoa and dropped the mainsail but retained the mizzen to damp the expected roll on the approach to Portsmouth Harbour entrance.

Later, the motor boats in the party reported an uncomfortably choppy sea from Gilkicker Point onwards.

Portsmouth Harbour entrance presented a confused weekend sea, as usual, and was chock-a-block with leisure traffic, commercial shipping and ferries. Some of which observed the rules of the road and QHM regulations.

Your correspondent uses the Swashway to approach the Small Boat Channel on the way into Portsmouth Harbour, preferring the well-known transit between the Gosport War Memorial and the right hand side of the isolated block of flats, to join the start of the Small Boat Channel at No 4 Bar Buoy (even on the top half of the tide).

On the other hand, if there's sufficient water, on the way out of the harbour, I turn

directly into the Inner Swashway, so as not to prolong the stress :-)

Paul W, reminded me of the well-worn advice that if you can't see the shingle bank at the foot of the Dolphin you'll have sufficient water in the Inner Swashway channel. The caveat being that the Inner Swashway is not a recommended route and requires local knowledgeⁱⁱ.

On entry to the harbour, a couple of E.C.S.C. boats were cautioned by the Harbour Patrol for leaving the Ballast Pile to starboard.

On his last visit, your correspondent was forced, by the Harbour Patrol, to the wrong side of the Ballast Pile and so I was unsure about which side to approach. The choice was made for me. A sailboat under engine coming from the Gosport side of the harbour overtook *Gina* then suddenly veered back. I decided to put the Ballast Pile between us, and so passed on the wrong side. On this occasion the Harbour Patrol was nowhere to be seen. Radio chatter indicated they'd been tasked to check on a drifting motor boat.



2-Excerpt from QHM Notice LNTM No 24/17

Gina approached the *Hardway Sailing Club* pontoon around 1400 and spied *Brassed Off* near the top of the south side of the pontoon.

Tide and wind would have pushed *Gina* gently onto *Brassed Off* should she have chosen to raft alongside. However, it pays to think ahead. *Gina* spotted a space lower down the north side of the pontoon. In return for a slightly tricky berthing today, *Gina* would be almost sure of an earlier getaway and a tide pushing her off the pontoon. As it happened the wind also played ball, rewarding *Gina* with a textbook departure (there's a first for everything!). It always happens that you have an audience for your embarrassing moments and no one pays attention to your successes :-)

Brassed Off and *Gina* discussed where they should direct the E.C.S.C. motor boats. A number of *Hardway Sailing Club* boats had vacated the pontoon after lunch and there was more than enough space available.

Dirty Girty arrived first and took a spot on the south side of the pontoon just below the HSC mast stepping derrick. Shortly afterwards, *Puffin* and *Monty-D* arrived together. *Puffin* occupied a space well down the north side of the pontoon and *Monty-D* rafted alongside.

The deep-draughted *Aphelion* berthed in the old Camper and Nicholson marina now owned by Premier Marinas, a pleasant stroll away. *CScape* and *Mana* berthed at Haslar being a short bus ride away from our pre-arranged meeting at *Hardway Sailing Club* bar at 1830.

Sundance was nowhere to be seen, a mystery that would have to wait six hours to be solved.

Paul, the E.C.S.C. Rear Commodore Social and a well-known member of Hardway Sailing Club organised our evening meal. There were 15 for dinner including (as Mike pointed out) the E.C.S.C. Commodore, Vice Commodore, a previous Commodore and two Rear Commodores.



3 - Fifteen for dinner

Overall, the HSC galley caterers acquitted themselves well with some notable successes (rump steak) and some mediocre fayre (the fish in the fish and chips). There again, the Knickerbocker glory was a sight to behold and made a hypocrite out of the Vice Commodore who professes disdain for those who take photographs of food.



4 - Knickerbocker Glory

Those with a bus to catch back to Haslar departed just before 2130 and *Gina's* crew retired around 2200.

Marcus in *Sundance* had arrived in the evening along with *Blue Peter*. They had sailed in company from the Ashlett Regatta but arrived at low tide and had been forced to pick up a buoy in the channel. By the time the Hardway pontoon had sufficient water half of the evening's participants had disappeared. Undeterred Marcus made his way up to the bar before last orders and was made welcome by the remaining E.C.S.C. members.



5- Puffin (from Paul Hippolite)

The following morning the HSC galley served an excellent English breakfast in three sizes (standard, large and mega)!

Thoughts turned to departure. *Brassed Off* would float last and so had time enough to enjoy Sunday lunch at the club before leaving.

Sundance and *Blue Peter*, being much lower down the pontoon, were the first to float. They had slipped their lines and were away before anyone noticed.

Bob and Judy in *Dirty Girty* were keen to get going as soon as there was sufficient water. They were the first of the motor boats to leave at around 1100. Soon afterwards, they were followed by Paul H in *Monty-D* and Richard in *Puffin*.

Gina left around noon and motored slowly to the harbour entrance, entering the Inner Swashway at 1230. The harbour entrance was crowded. *Gina* had a gin palace on the plane either side of her as she entered the Inner Swashway.

The wind was light and the sea calm for those who took the first of the tide back to Cowes. Around 1345 ripples on the water presaged an increase in the wind from the south west and an opportunity to deploy the foresail. By that time though, all the motor boats were safe in their E.C.S.C. berths.

Thank you to Hardway Sailing Club and its members for your usual friendly hospitality and good humour. We look forward to our next visit.

ⁱ The Rolex Fastnet Sailing Instructions can be found here: <http://www.rorc.org/downloads/2019-racing/rolex-fastnet-race-sailing-instructions-2019-final.pdf>

Excerpt: IDENTITY GATES 11.1 Before starting every boat shall pass through an identity gate and receive acknowledgement from the Race Committee. Each boat shall have her trysail and storm jib rigged (in accordance with World Sailing's Offshore Special Regulation 4.26), have her engine running and display her sail numbers and letters secured to her port lifelines (where the sail numbers and letters are not permanently displayed on the hull). IMOCA 60s, Class40s and other boats not required to carry a trysail by their class rules shall have their mainsail reefed to the maximum point as required by class rules.

ⁱⁱ See note on Admiralty Chart 2625 (2 March 2017)