

SLIPPER SAILINGS Summer 2009

Commodore's Corner



I don't normally associate Federation Week with "peace and quiet" but on the last day of this year's event, Series 3 (for which I am the Race Officer) was held at low water before Series 1 and 2, so I was able to spend the afternoon sitting in the shade watching the boats come and go and writing this introduction. After a dreadful July,



August is actually turning out quite well. Certainly the Fed Week sailors have enjoyed some warm weather and good breezes, much better than in recent years. See the separate article on Fed Week.

Thanks to the efforts of Mike Lillywhite, the Environment Agency has managed to keep more water in the millpond this year. Mike also made a tough call to hold the Junior Regatta on a windy day, but it resulted in some great racing and a superb event was held with many youngsters rising to the challenge of racing in a Force 6. There was also a lovely atmosphere afterwards with all the amusements including Scalextrics, Wii and BBQ. Many thanks to Matthew Thorsby for organising such a good event. Oppie Camp was another very good weekend superbly organised by Dave Valentine and Sean Curtis.

Talking of youngsters, there have been many successes so far this year. I am aware of Alex Mothersele, Peter and Phil McCoy and Tom Durham who have done our club proud on the international circuit, and I am sure there are others who can be very proud of their results.

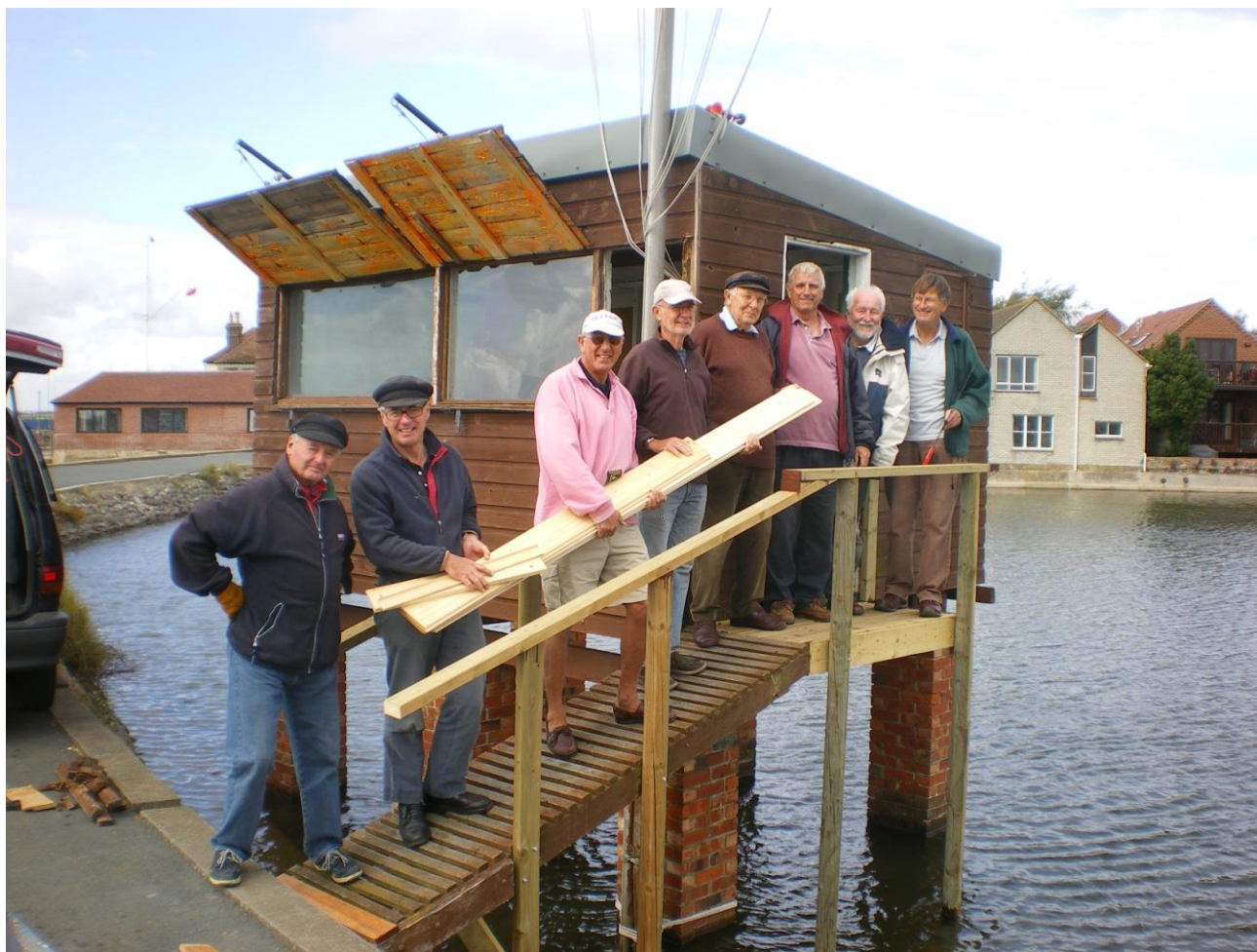
Cruiser and dinghy racing have been well supported. I enjoyed some exciting spinnaker runs in "Buster" in the Phillips Cup to Lymington and also in "Fixation" in the return leg of the Folly Trophy from Yarmouth. Buster (Martin Perry, Alastair Pratt, Mark Mansfield and Gillian McCoy) did exceptionally well at Cowes Week to gain a 3rd place in the Sonata class. Mary Alston and I enjoyed contributing to a mid fleet place in a Bavaria Match 42 in Class 3. On a more serious note, it was both inspiring and humbling to see the charity "Toe in the Water" in action. They were providing places on J80's for injured servicemen (mostly in their early 20's with missing limbs) and not only racing on level terms but at the top of their fleet. We came across them at the UKSA, RNSA Cocktail Party and Cowes Corinthian. They were having a great time!

Rex Riddington's Bosun Team and Mike Clarke's Painting Team continue to keep our boats and club facilities respectively in good order. The availability of the safety boats has been excellent and the Mezzanine area, fences, gates and the Wood Barn are now all looking much smarter. Thanks also to Julian Murch for helping out so much with Premises work. Repairs to the start hut are the next challenge for the Bosun Team!

Sarah Thorsby and her energetic social committee masterminded another excellent Summer Ball with the food provided by Karen and Trevor and dancing to the Nick Pomfret disco. Many members also enjoyed a Salsa dancing evening thanks to Sarah Turner (where my lack of coordination was clearly evident!).

Finally, the lease to our tenants in the top floor of the Malthouse has recently been renewed. This income helps considerably in keeping our subs down. We now look forward to our Dinghy and Cruiser Regatta, the Emsworth Yoke cruiser race against ESC and the Hare and Hounds dinghy racing series against ESC and Thorney in the Autumn.

James Mant



Round The Island 2009

Report from Fixation

The race started for all of us in a light and shifty NW breeze, which from our perspective favoured the tide on the left hand side (but this perception only came about after starting in the middle!). There were holes everywhere to start with and the mucky air was unavoidable. Approaching Yarmouth the wind filled in from the west and picked up to a more useful F3-4. The Needles was thankfully not the parking lot expected. After getting the spinnaker up we settled into an enjoyable downwind “sleigh ride”, successfully seeking out clear air most of the way to Bembridge Ledge. Again, from our perspective, it seemed to pay to hug the IOW coast all the way round until Dunrose Point – It did not do us any harm anyway!

Approaching Bembridge Ledge the wind died, lots of boats converged and the parking lot expected at the Needles appeared here instead. There was nowhere to go but out into the tide until the log jam cleared. When we eventually (about 20 minutes later) got back into shallower water up the IOW shore the log jam had indeed cleared and the boats arriving later at the Ledge cruised unhampered straight into shallower water. This was definitely our low point.

Tacking close past Bembridge, Seaview and Ryde Sands was fraught! Lots of boats, lots of tacking, lots of calling starboard, lots of ducking sterns, lots of calling water and lots of boats stuck

on the mud! It was a case of keeping your nerve and mine, thankfully with Tim our tactician on the helm, were severely frayed! After Ryde we found a good line across Osborne Bay in shallow water, nicely clear of the tacking duals further inshore, before heading for the finish line positioned in strong tide. This was not a record breaking race for anyone but it was great fun. It was certainly a memorable experience and Fixation is still in one piece!

Hugh Kennedy

Report from Nessa V

From an initial crew list of 7 and 2 reserves, Nessa V set off on the RTI with a select crew of 4. Alastair Pratt and Gillian McCoy joined Nigel Higgs and Caroline Wilkins for the second year in a row, obviously believing that things could only get better. After a generous 2 minute head start to the rest of the fleet, the beat down to the Needles (initially against the tide due to the earlier start time than other ESSC entrants) saw the 2 minute deficit cancelled out as a succession of ISC group 4 boats were passed. At the Needles the spinnaker was eventually hoisted and launched from a snuffer to aid the later gybes. This was followed by a comfortable run inshore all the way to Bembridge ledge buoy where 200-300 other boats were kindly waiting for us with little or no wind and foul tide.

After 30 minutes or so of friendly banter with our new friends we put the fenders away and set off for a challenging inshore beat with all the others. Avoiding the tide also involved avoiding the sand banks but this inshore line seemed to pay off. Inevitably with all those boats in so little space there were several close encounters, one of which involved Fixation. A loud “starboard” call sent another boat across Fixations bow only for a call for water from Hugh Kennedy to send us all off on port tack. Obviously Fixation has a much deeper draught than we thought!

Nessa V stayed close inshore all the way to the finish, managing to pass the other Westerly Typhoon in her division along the way and picking up a very pleasing (and surprising) 5th in division 4C, a big improvement on last years 15th. Look out Melody – here we come!

Nigel Higgs

Report from Melody (Third time lucky!)



My core crew for the Round the Island race in previous years has been Judith, James Mant, and Mike Lillywhite. This year with James away in the US visiting his brother, we were joined by Chris Lunn and Pete “Bomber” Wells. It was clearly going to be quite a boisterous affair with this team on board Melody and we would certainly have plenty of weight on the windward rail if required! Compared with other Elan 333s taking part, we were still moderately manned as many had up to eight in their crews.

On Friday afternoon the day before the race, we sailed from Northney Marina down the Solent to Hamble Point. There was quite a fresh breeze blowing from the west, so despite making

good speed through the water, it took us quite a while to get to the Hamble battling against a strong flood tide. Fortunately we arrived in time for an excellent meal at the Ketch Rigger restaurant having passed Alex Janicki in Gelig Knight by No Mans Land fort on the way down.

Often Judith and I race Melody on our own so are used to having masses of space down below. Five up that night with Chris and Mike sleeping in the saloon and Bomber in the forward cabin, the boat suddenly seemed awfully small!

This year our start was at the much more reasonable time of 0840. In 2007 it had been at 0620 which made for a very early departure. This time we left Hamble Point just before 0730 and made our way out to a holding area just to the west of the Bramble Bank. Seeing all the boats lining up for their respective starts is a magnificent sight. Of the 1700 or so boats competing I suspect there were about a thousand around us waiting for the off. This is definitely not for the faint hearted!



With the wind from the south west, the favoured end of the line for the bold is usually at the Royal Yacht Squadron end as the tide tends to turn there first and the line bias also favours the Island shore. However, this means making a port tack flyer with the likelihood that the rest of the fleet will be bearing down on you on starboard if you get it wrong. My tactics have always been to try to sail in clear wind whenever possible, stay on the starboard side to the course, keep to the deep water when the tide is in our favour and to the shallows when it is not and generally try to keep out of trouble. Hence this year we started at the northern end of the line in pole position close to the West Bramble cardinal mark on starboard. We crossed the line in clear air a few seconds after the starting gun. A large Bavaria barged in at the last moment but he was quickly luffed to a standstill never to be seen again!

The wind at the start had been light, about force 2, and by the time we were off the entrance to Bealieu River it had died completely. Fortunately, when the wind came back in from the south west, we were still very much at the front of our 300 boat start, on the favoured side of the course and soon we were tacking up through those that had started well before us. By the time we got to Hurst Castle we were charging along making 10 kts over the ground in a force 4, gusting 5.



Once round the Needles it was a case of avoiding the wreck of the Varvassi (our track subsequently showed we had been rather close!) and hoisting our spinnaker. We had hoped to practice a hoist on the previous day; however, the conditions had been against us so this was our first launch. Bomber took the helm, whilst Mike and Judith worked the halyards, sheets and guys and Chris and I sorted out the pole. It was not the fastest of evolutions but it was achieved

without a wrap and we were soon making excellent progress close inshore under Highdown Cliffs. When we had rounded the Needles it had been very reassuring to see a very large RNLi lifeboat accompanied by two ribs standing by at anchor. In 2008 they had been very busy as quite a number of boats had been dismasted. Then the conditions had been really challenging and we had surfed at up to 14 kts down the waves and broached four times with the spinnaker up before we went round St

Catherine's Point. There we had witnessed the SAR helicopter making a high line rescue from a stricken vessel. This time it was still quite challenging as the wind funnelled round the point through the over falls.

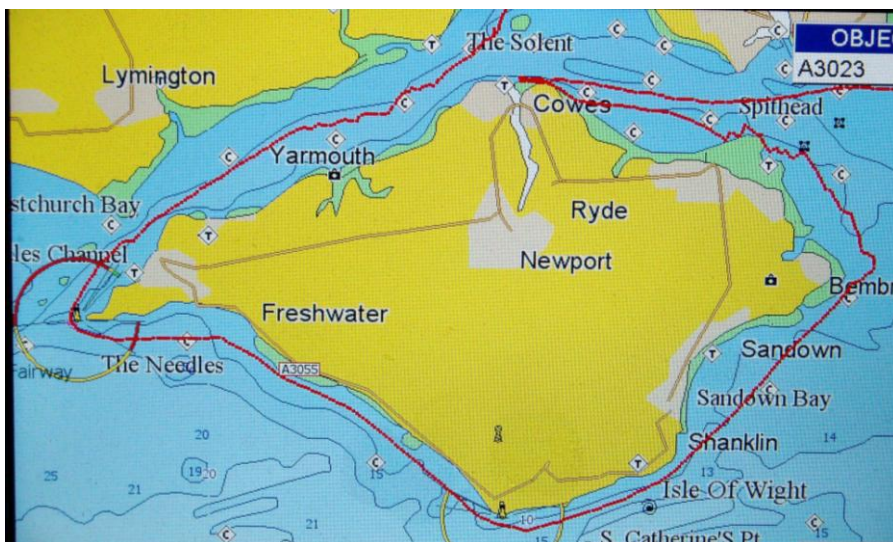
Pete was still on the helm at this point and as we turned north east we needed to gybe the spinnaker, Chris gamely went forward to transfer the pole to the other side. It was at this point that we fell off a very steep wave and Chris lost his grip and went crashing across the foredeck into a stanchion on the starboard side bending it quite considerably. Two months after the race, Chris is still suffering from a torn ligament which he sustained in that fall. Despite his injury we completed the gybe and we hurtled on across Sandown Bay towards our turning mark at the Bembridge Ledge cardinal. By this point I was back on the helm once more, and becoming increasingly concerned about the timing of our spinnaker drop. We were approaching the mark at 8-10 knots yet none of the two



or three hundred boats directly ahead seemed to be moving at all. Just as we arrived the wind died completely and we were faced with a wall of boats going nowhere. What to do?

Looking up the Solent it was flat calm as far as we could see and the wind shadow created by the boats

ahead was killing any there was close by. There was no point in joining the raft so we gently glided through gaps in the right side of the wall (the picture only shows a small portion of it) heading north towards Chichester entrance. Hardly my preferred course! However, when the wind eventually filled in from the SW, we had relatively clear air and despite being well out in the tide made considerable progress over those inshore of us. By the time we were ready to turn in towards Ryde Pier, smugly chuckling at those who had gone aground on the sands, we were making about 5 knots through the water overtaking most of those around us. The boat was very flat... can't imagine why! Then disaster struck. During one of our many tacks, the luff of the genoa either caught on a spreader or the deck light, not sure which, and about two metres of the luff rope was ripped off producing an enormous lasso, which meant we could not tack without fouling the genoa on the rig. Bomber recommended that we should roll it up until it would not catch, but that meant only about 1/3 of the sail was available... not quite what I wanted at this stage. I needed full power but as we were unable to tack, I decided to attempt a long port tack from off Ryde to the finish; lee bowing the tide if possible and accepting the fact that we would have to either luff up or go round the stern of starboard tackers, which is exactly what we did. Fortune favoured us and by the time we passed Norris Castle we were back in the shallows out of the tide.



Rounding Old Castle Point on port with lots of boats trying to get in out of the tide on starboard was always going to be a challenge but again we were very lucky as we ducked under the sterns of the yachts with rights of way. Round the corner and the finishing barges were in sight. We kept as close to the left as we could so that others would

not be tempted to put us about as we charged for the line in the strong breeze that was funnelling out of the Medina. Just under ten hours after we started, we crossed the finishing line off Cowes.

When the results were published that evening, to our delight we found we had won our class once more, this time by a 20 minute margin over the second placed boat, another Elan 333. We were also 3rd out of 127 boats in Group 5, only two minutes behind the group winner and 63rd in the ISC fleet of about 750 starters. Subsequently I was informed that we had also been awarded the St George's cup by the RNSA for their highest placed boat in the ISC fleet.

As ever it was very much a team effort that brings about these successes and I am indebted to Mike for calling the tacks when I was unsighted and controlling the main, Chris for his enthusiasm and remarkable strength, Bomber for his off-wind work and continuous humour and Judith for working the traveller and keeping us fully fuelled all the way round.

Julian Murch

For the Record:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Baby Blue | Brian Almond was 32 nd in Division 3A and 262 nd in the IRC fleet. |
| Fixation | Hugh Kennedy was 20 th in Division 3B and 146 th in the IRC fleet. |
| Gelig Knight | Alex Janicki was 37 th in Division 3D and 228 th in the IRC fleet. |
| Melody | Julian Murch was 1 st in Division 5A and 63 rd in the ISC fleet. |
| Nessa V | Nigel Higgs was 5 th in Division 4C and 357 th in the ISC fleet. |

Club Charity Cycle Ride

On Sunday, 19th July, thirty eight intrepid cyclists set out (and returned) on this year's WOW Charity Cycle. Lesley Spenser and Helen Hodges excelled themselves, designing 2 routes to cater for all ages and fitness levels. The shorter Family friendly route for those who wanted to take part in a quiz, and get back to the club quickly for the cream tea! While the other route was designed for those with more energy...and an ability to decipher bridle paths from foot paths on a map! No one got seriously lost and only one person ended up in a bed of stinging nettles having had brake failure at the top of a hill!

Prize Giving took place after Lynn Cowell and her team had restored participant's energy levels with home made cream teas. There were prizes for various categories of achievement: Julian Mandiwall and Jennie Vaughan won the most nautical dressed award, Andy Gould & Duncan Pickup won the first "serious" cyclists back award (it wasn't supposed to be a race was it?). The Dove family answered the most questions; while the Fuller family received the award for the family who turned out in most force. Sarah & John Thorsby won the prize for the most unusual item transported on the ride.....A Flan Dish!!! - WHY? - Puncture repair kit yes, but a flan dish???? Even the Commodore was awarded a prize for being the most unprepared cyclist – ask him if you want further details.

Can I express my thanks to all who took part and all who helped make the day a complete success. We have raised over £600 which will make a real difference to our friend Katie - who is bringing up a group of children in Mozambique. She is showing the children that there are people in this world that care what happens to them.

Well done, Slipper! We have made a very small but very real difference.

Mary Alston

Mixing Business with Pleasure

Paul and Caroline Fisk set off on a 16 month cruise at the end of May, day sailing along the coast with their two children, Jack aged 8 and Grace aged 6. Paul has transferred his office to the nav station on board and is continuing his work as a graphic designer via email and the internet. Jack and

Grace have a year off school and plan to return to Emsworth Primary in September 2010. Having bought their Beneteau First 305 in Scotland at the end of last year, they departed from Ardfern in Scotland on May 22nd and spent a couple of weeks visiting Oban and Tobermory before heading south through the Crinan Canal and into the Firth of Clyde. Highlights on the Clyde included Brodick on The Isle of Arran, Troon, Largs and a brief stop at Ardrossan for the Highland Games. They crossed the Irish Sea from Stranraer to Belfast so Paul could join in the RS Elite Nationals, which were hosted admirably by the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club in Bangor.

At the beginning of July they headed south again towards Dun Laoghaire in Dublin Bay and then on to Kilmore Quay on the south east corner of Ireland, ready to cross the Celtic Sea to the Scilly Isles. Weather had not been brilliant with strong winds, rain and big seas. Having enjoyed the Seafood Festival in Kilmore Quay, they waited a week for a suitable weather window to make the 150 mile passage to Tresco. After a very uncomfortable and wet trip through the night, on arrival in New Grimsby Sound the sun came out so they could spend the next day yomping around Tresco visiting castles and caves.

Unfortunately their plans suffered a setback at the end of July when Paul's mum sadly passed away (not unexpectedly). They all travelled back to Burnham-on-Crouch by rail, leaving the boat on a swinging mooring in the Scilly Isles, to sort out her affairs and arrange the funeral. Happily they are now back on the boat and continuing their adventure. After a few days on the Isles of Scilly they have now crossed to the west coast of France and are enjoying fair weather on their way south again. They are hoping to make it to the Med either via Spain and Portugal or maybe on the back of a truck from La Rochelle! You can follow their log online at www.fiskdesign.co.uk/xaloha.html

Paul Fisk

Cowes Week Diary

Christmas: Shall we, shan't we? Who to crew? What's the cost?

May: Martin's friend 'tall Martin' agrees to join us. Three is just enough for a Sonata. Let's do it! Pay £520 berthing fees for Amaryllis as a floating caravan for the week in East Cowes Marina. £300 entry fee for Buster and £120 mooring fee for Buster in Cowes Roads. Still looking for forth/fifth crew as Gilly hasn't enough leave to commit to crewing.

July: Mark Mansfield suddenly becomes available (thank Darwin! – Editor). We've now got our team sorted, for the first four days at least when 'tall Martin' has to go back to work. Researching tides, sailing instructions and newest racing rules begin in earnest. Practical preparations also take shape. Mark constructs a shore power cable and distribution board, we can take a 240v kettle and lights, chargers for phones, cameras and handheld VHF's. I get many unneeded items off Amaryllis to try and make space for five to sleep aboard. Mark volunteers to sleep under the cockpit tent, so I fit the dodgers and take the tent aboard, construct a cockpit table (come bed base) from a bit of plywood scrap out of the skip at work. I also topped up the crockery, cutlery, glasses and tea towels to be sufficient to cope with five aboard for a week.

Friday. D-Day-1: I'm all packed and I've got Mark and Gilly's bags. There's too much kit to fit in the tender so I persuade Dad to run me out in Slipper Maid. Martin has already left aboard Buster. I've got his 'light weight racing outboard'. When I get to Cowes Roads Amaryllis will go alongside Buster and swap it with his heavier 'cruising outboard'. I've brought extra fenders for this operation and to keep Amaryllis safe left unattended in what I fear will be an ever changing raft of boats in East Cowes Marina. Single handed, en route to Cowes, the tiller pilot fails so I rediscover the delights of setting a course by adjusting the sail trim. Fortunately it's a close reach towards the forts and Amaryllis behaves well. When I ease the main a little she soon establishes a straight course and I can pop below to make my lunch. The outboard transfer in Cowes Roads goes safely and Martin, Amaryllis and I soon arrive at East Cowes. We're lucky to claim an inside corner berth in a bay where we won't get many people stomping along the pontoon or over our deck. Mark and Gilly arrive on a slow ferry from Cowes and we had the first of many "briefing sessions" in, on this

occasion, The Lifeboat. Dave Valentine was also to be seen partaking in a “briefing”. (During the week we seemed to bump into Mary in most of the watering holes, and occasionally even the Commodore.) ‘Tall Martin’ later joined us off a late ferry.

Saturday. Race 1: Walking along via the chain ferry to the Island Sailing Club takes us through bustling Cowes, with (at this time of day) crowds full of carnival spirit. Ducking down the alley into the ISC we have a last chance for food or loos before being marshalled into one of their many launches for the short ride out to Buster. The mooring is just a few lengths east from the red can at Cowes entrance. With all the ferrys, yachts, ribs and launches running around this is a very lumpy spot. I’m soon down below trying to get the hang of the race instructions for the fleets in front of us being broadcast over the VHF. Just after the ten minute gun the course for each class is read out as a string of numbers. You have to copy these down, translate them into names and then programme them as a route into the GPS. I practice with a couple of the fleets in front of us. Turns out that despite Martin typing in the coordinates for sixty-odd buoys the day before the courses are using some of the other thirty he didn’t get around to. By now (to my stomach’s great relief) we’ve left the mooring and are manoeuvring to take our turn at the start line. Our ten-minute gun (and at the Royal Yacht Squadron ‘gun’ really means ‘cannon’) comes all too soon. The course is different to the one in front. I have to type-in yet more buoy coordinates. ‘Tall Martin’ is on the helm, Mark coping with all the sheets when I’m below, and Martin is looking after the foredeck. I pop up to help with a few quick manoeuvres just before the start and managed to tell the guys on deck the course to the first mark, but mostly I’m below frantically prodding the strange GPS. I didn’t actually see the start as I’m still battling the GPS.

After what seems an age I’m up on deck. We’re doing well. Much better than I had hoped for from an un-tuned boat and crew that had never all sailed together before, let alone on Buster. Boat speed isn’t too far off the leader’s pace, and navigation and tactical discussion seems to be working well too. It takes a while to get the hang of ‘cross-winchng’ – taking the jib sheets to the windward winch so that we can keep the crew weight on the uphill side. We finished a close 4th out of 7 finishers, which seemed a good result for my first race on a Sonata, and my first Cowes Week race. Back to the mooring, pack away the boat and polish off the sandwiches Gilly had sent us off with. Then we hail a launch to get us ashore to the ISC where we join the happy throng of small boat sailors indulging in post race wind down on the terrace, watching the results appear on the screens showing CowesTV, and testing the recuperative powers of the local brews.

Sunday. Race2: We’re more confident now we know what to expect. I still miss the start as I’m down below coping without the handheld VHF (flat battery). Luckily they also send the course by SMS to Martin’s phone and I listen to CowesFM which also lists the course and gives a running commentary on how the starts go for the fleets in front of us. We’re going even better today as we settle into our roles. This time we’re close on the heels of second place and finish third by 16 seconds after three hours. This is so much better than I had expected. A week ago I wouldn’t have been surprised if we had been at the other end of the fleet.

Monday. Race 3: Again I’m below and miss the start. Not a VHF problem this time (we’ve taken two) but we did manage to forget the GPS (it was the skipper, actually and yes I am a plonker – Editor) so I’m back to navigating the old fashioned way, hand bearing compass, pen and paper. Mark’s iPhone came to the rescue. He has loaded chart plotter software onto it and it has built in GPS. This works well enough for the legs to navigation marks, but isn’t much help en-route to special race marks which aren’t on its charts. Fortunately we’re not in front and we’re able to follow the lead boat and finish second, 55 seconds behind the leaders and 17 seconds in front of the third boat. This is after three and a half hours racing. This is going really well. We’ve had three days of good winds not much rain and we’ve got 4th, 3rd and 2nd places! Could there be a trend developing?

Tuesday. Race 4: Wind. Lots of it! We persuade Gilly to ignore her office laptop and come sailing. This time I see my first Cowes Week start. Everything goes well on the first leg. We’ve not had to reef and we’ve got good boat speed and are well placed. At the next mark we’re in second and looking strong. Then we prepare to tack around the windward mark... Most of us are not used to sailing Sonatas in strong winds. We didn’t anticipate and failed to ease the sheets quickly enough to

prevent a broach as we started to move crew weight off the rail, which resulted in us hitting the wrong side of the (inflatable) mark. Sorting this out left us in last place. But with full sail we had the advantage and soon climbed back up two places. We now saw this race as our discard for the week and as it was 'tall Martin's' last day he passed the helm to me to get my first practice.

As we tacked about a mile from the furthest mark the shout went up "man overboard"! Mark dumped the main and dived to leeward, meanwhile I'm looking around for someone in the water and starting to wonder what to do with the waggie stick as I can't see anyone. Then all becomes clear as Mark has reached over the side and grabbed Gilly from under the hull and has her by the scruff of her neck. She hadn't been able to get all the way across the cabin roof from the old windward rail before the boat had heeled and she slid back across the smooth deck and clear under the single guard wire. Within seconds Mark had her around towards the transom where I could also get a grip of her life jacket strap. After releasing the stern guard wire (thanks to a very effective pelican hook) we found it easy to drag Gilly back on board over the transom. A little shaken, very wet, and apparently OK to do the last mile to windward. So we put her into a dry jacket and kept her in the cockpit out of the worst of the wind and carried on. We had already agreed not to fly the spinnaker again that day as we feared it might burst and we would be needing it in the light winds forecast for the rest of the week. Even without the spinnaker the reach back to Cowes and the finish was exhilarating. If we didn't get Buster planing we certainly had some very prolonged surfing, which seemed exciting enough to keep Gilly warm. We didn't gain anymore places and finished 6th.

Wednesday. Race 5: Gilly is bashing her laptop again, 'tall Martin' has gone back to work and Paul (no sailing apart from a week's cruise on Buster) from Belfast has flown over to join the crew. Light winds, but the mooring is as bumpy as ever and within yards of casting off Paul nearly repeats Gilly's slip over the side. He never stood up on deck again! We struggled at first explaining to Paul what was happening whilst trying to get a good start. It wasn't going too well and we were probably about 4th or 5th north off Newtown Creek going west with the full ebb when the wind started to falter. We discussed kedging for about five minutes before the wind finally failed altogether. Then it was obviously the right thing to do. We had the anchor up out of the cabin and over the side in seconds. As soon as the line was made fast to the bow the boat snapped around and pointed east into the tide. Then we saw one other Sonata had already anchored before us, but most seemed to carry on trying to sail. After about 20 minutes we had enough wind to stem the tide and we were off again lee-bowing the tide on a nice reach south across the tide to the mark. The Sonata that had anchored close to us chose not to trust the wind and sailed a little lower than us and hoisted their kite passing a cable behind us about half a mile from the mark. The new wind held and we maintained a perfect track to the mark and rounded it in the lead with most of the fleet swept west of the mark trying to run back east.

With the tide under us we were pulling out a huge lead over all bar one boat. Next, to a mark off Lymington then a long run back along one or other shore (which?!) to the finish at Cowes. But then we saw it. A motor boat anchored 100m north of the turning mark. Was it? Mad scramble for the binoculars. Flags! "Can you see an 'S' flag? What about our class flag?" "Can't be sure... Then get ready to hoist the kite as we gybe around the mark". TOoot!!!! We had done it. Hooray! First. First at Cowes Week. Our first Cowes Week. Elation. We needed lots of recuperation that evening. Despite our success it was clear to all that Paul would have to bow out and we started a scramble to phone around to find a replacement.

Thursday. Race 6: We wake up to discover that one of the two lead boats didn't see the shortened course yesterday and sailed the full course before submitting her declaration (by SMS), but outside the two hour time limit from her actual earlier finish. This seemed a little tough on them but we are now laying second overall with two days to go. We started studying the maths of the permutations and combinations possible from the last two races. There were lots of possible solutions! We're fairly confident that from the last two races we could do better than our worst result (sixth) and thus use that as a discard, so third place seemed reasonable secure, and we had a chance of 2nd. Meanwhile Sarah, my ex-crew from National 12 days, came to the rescue and jumped on the ferry. We met her off the fast ferry as we walked to the ISC for the customary taxi out to Buster. This time the race was off to the east towards Gilkicker and back across to the island shore a few

times. This was a compact course mixed up with lots of other fleets on very similar courses. We had some very tight mark roundings with lots of (good natured) shouting exchanged with the boats either side of us. The last leg to the finish line was a very close fetch and we stayed north whenever the wind freed keeping some “wind in the bag”. This tactic may have worked but, with another Sonata level with us, at a crucial moment we had to luff around a cruising French man on port. We are now too high and had slowed slightly allowing the Sonata inside to establish an overlap. As we closed the northern outer end of the finish line it was clear they were going to sail us past the mark. The crew on the rail of the Sonata to leeward held their legs out straight denying us an extra foot of space. (Protest-able? “Crew and equipment in its normal position”?) - We let the sails fly and slowed and then (just) ducked their transom, we would be able to finish but it was far too late to try and sail under them. Our fate was sealed. Forth, by seven seconds. Oh well. Satisfactory, but we hoped for more.

Friday. Race 7: The front of the Sonata class at Cowes Week was dominated by one boat which took a clear lead from the start of the week and went into the final day with an unassailable lead. However, at the start of the seventh and last day, the next three places were totally open, with just seven points separating three boats including 'Buster' in third place. Second overall seems unlikely, but mathematically possible. We have a four point cushion for third place overall. This was a light wind race, with some difficult course decisions, not helped by the desire to sail a conservative race to keep the forth boat behind us (which would open our lead over them by at least one more point). In retrospect we would likely have done better by continuing to attack the two leaders. Twice the fleet split; to opposite sides of a moored tanker at one point, and later between the mainland and the island shore for the very slow run to the finish.



The run back to the Squadron, into an ever strengthening tide, proved increasingly frustrating as the wind in the western Solent died. We could just see that 'The Apprentice' had won yet again but most of the fleet (and 'Buster') was more than an hour behind. Within yards of the finish line (and the beach!), but probably all going backwards over the ground, we gained a few places (enough for second place overall), but our breath of wind didn't last and after over five hours of racing most boats finished within less than two minutes of each other. We ghosted over the line 24 seconds behind

the boat in front of us. Sixth again so not our best day, but with a first place in the fifth race the tie for third overall was broken in our favour. We had made it. A podium finish at our first Cowes Week, and yes there really was a podium at the prize giving!

The photo shows THE APPRENTICE (winner, left), BUSTER (third, Martin Perry, centre) and is the copyright of Rick Tomlinson.

Alastair Pratt

Chichester Harbour Federation Week 10th – 14th August

As many involved remarked, this year was a “classic” Fed Week with breeze every day, warm temperatures and plenty of sunshine. The afternoon tides had caused some discussion in the planning stage about whether to delay a week, but it was decided to stick with the traditional “week after Cowes” and on the final day run each series sequentially before high water with Series 3

(Toppers, Slow Handicap and Oppies) racing in the channel at low water. This was very popular and helped in ensuring a reasonably early prizегiving.

As always, it was great to see so many Slipper members taking part, with entries in most classes. The racing is competitive but it also very much a “family friendly regatta” where safety and encouragement to newcomers is given high priority. HISC nearly always wins the team event as some of the classes are sailed entirely by HISC members (although ESSC did win it in 2005). I am very pleased to say that we again won the coveted 2nd place team trophy, beating Mengeham Rythe by only one point!

I am the Race Officer for Series 3 where we hold Oppie, Topper and Slow Handicap races in the sheltered water off Mengeham Rythe. It is only a few hundred yards from the beach at Sandy Point. We have 4 safety boats on our course including one from Slipper and also a dedicated Beach Master. As well as all our top sailors, it would be great to see some more young competitors next year.

James Mant

This year’s Slipper Results

Fast Asymmetric

7th RS800 Theo GALYER & Simon LEWIS*

10th RS800 Alex THORSBY & Phil McCOY / Mike THOMSON

Medium Asymmetric

1st 29er Alex MOTHERSELE & Hamish ELLIS*

2nd ISO Andrew GOULD & Vicky GOULD*

4th ISO Mike LILLYWHITE & Mandy GUNNER / Mark RIDDINGTON

17th BUZZ Ben HODGES & Lucy HODGES

RS 400

2nd Matt JOHNSTON & Gael PAWSON*

8th Mark MANSFIELD & Toby PRICE

10th Martin PRICE & Tom PRICE

13th Bob STEVENSON & Ian STEVENSON

Fast Handicap

13th RS300 Richard KENNEDY

16th RS300 Tom KENNEDY

29th Merlin Rocket Jack SPENCER & Ryan VICK

Finn

20th John GALYER

RS 200

40th Beverley LEWIS & Mary ALSTON

Laser

15th Glen GRANT

Laser Radial and 4.7's

22nd Laser Radial Kieran WOOD

RS Feva

13th Oliver CREASY

Topper

3rd Brendon WOOD

6th Luke AUSTEN*

7th Jo AUSTEN

* Denotes Slipper Team which consists of 5 entries chosen after the first day's results.

And Finally.....

A BIG thank you to John Anderson. Back in late June, Buster suffered an attempted break in, during which the mindless thugs damaged some of her woodwork. I was upset by this vandalism but, thankfully, John volunteered to assist with the repairs. So, after a week of rushing around preparing, John and I rendezvoused at Northney Marina so he could help me.

Help me? Well, while I wrung my hands and paced up and down the pontoon like an expectant father, John proceeded to drill new holes in my yacht(!) and work wonders with wood. Two and a half hours later, Buster was as good as new and John disappeared as mysteriously as he had arrived (in his white van!). All that was left for me to do was sweep up wood shavings, apply teak oil and replace headlinings.

Thanks again, John. I would still be wondering how to start the repair without you!

Martin Perry

Editor