

THE FOUR RIVERS CRUISE

Monday - Friday, September 8th-12th 2014

What an amazing week - a high stuck over the British Isles and summer was back again with winds from the N-NE every day!

Some people stayed on board on the Sunday night ready for an early start on

Monday which comprised of motor/sailing out to the beacon against the tide. Once there, it was cruising chutes - Proud Moment, chute only, Aurora and Sugar Glider plus main - the latter goose-winging and going in a direct line to the Medina, whereas Aurora carried on on a broad reach along past Portsmouth. She then gybed and arrived at the Small Boats channel into the Medina just behind SG, though both were overtaken by Stewpot motoring in a hurry out of Langstone. Seldom Seen left later and carried a full spinnaker to Osborne bay for lunch, motoring on to the offshore pontoon at the Folly and mooring up behind Eva Rose. They were shortly joined by the Williams in their new small cruiser, just for this day.

All the others were able to get into the Marina at Island Harbour on free flow and were joined by Steorra from Hamble, Gundog from Langstone and Silver Moon.

A lovely spot for a Pontoon Party hosted by Stewpot, and the restaurant, eventually, served the 27 of us with an excellent menu despite being a chef short.

A walk home to the Folly for those who came by tender turned into a wary paddle as the High tide had flooded the path!

Tuesday - most boats left on the free flow but Sugar Glider opted to go early and try the lock. Not much wind so it was playing with chutes again or doddling along in the 4 knots of tide with just the jenny to Yarmouth. Seldom Seen tried out a chute that they had discovered a while ago in the bowels of their boat but it was decided it was originally meant for a much smaller vessel! In Yarmouth we were joined by Karma and Sunmaid.



As it was a short sail, there was time for an afternoon walk or shopping before a Presentation Pontoon Party. Proud Moments provided some very nice bubbly and were then given a small gift by John Blake but from everyone, in honour of their 47th Wedding Anniversary.

Picture - Tony Aitken

more pics here <http://www.cyberarc.co.uk/socsailrivers2014/>

31 people went off for dinner at the Royal Solent YC which was as good as usual with stunning views of the Solent

Wednesday dawned with a bit more wind and from the East, so it was a frisky fetch with the odd hitch to the mouth of Beaulieu River and thence to Buckler's Hard where we were all to be moored up on the long walk ashore pontoon. After assorted instructions as to depth at low water we arranged ourselves depending on our requirements - or so we thought!

Plenty of time for a walk into Beaulieu for a cream tea or for an exploratory tender trip before the Pontoon Party, this evening hosted by Steorra.

The tide was dropping and the skipper of Steorra suddenly realised that his hull was way out of the water and the boat was leaning heavily onto the pontoon with Eva Rose on the outside in a similar pickle. The swan took advantage of leftovers from the party and the waterline of Steorra can be seen well above the water level.



Picture Alan Clarke

Seldom Seen, towards the shallow end, was leaning towards Karma with rather a lot of tension on the ropes. Behind them Sugar Glider and Gundog and then Stewpot and Proud Moment were all OK. After a word with the harbour master the deeper boats Steorra and Eva Rose and then Aurora and

Sunmaid all moved back one space to deeper water and so did not go aground early next morning and Seldom Seen rested happily on her bilge keels.



Picture of all our boats taken from near the sewer outfall!

Picture - Ray Stewart

Later drama, Margaret was feeding the swans again off Stewpot. Her glasses fell off, landed on the guard rails and then descended into the murky depths! A fishing line was produced and with this mini grappling hook Barry eventually fished the glasses out of the water!

A few folks went to the pub for supper but for most it was a quiet night in - a bit too quiet as when the wind dropped the aroma at low water from the adjacent sewer outfall was not pleasant!

Thursday and the wind got up nicely for a beat along the coast to the Hamble - but then dropped as we all played dodgems with container ships coming and going!

Sunmaid arrived a bit too early so tied up to the fuelling pontoon. Most folks managed to arrive at slack HW when it was much easier to get into the finger pontoons. Later we watched as a small motor boat failed to allow for the tide and ended up broadside on to a row of transoms!

The Pontoon Party tonight was hosted by Sugar Glider with help from others. The pontoons did not seem as buoyant as some and soon they were weighted down and Sugar Glider's fenders showed signs of popping out. Then it was off to the RAFYC for an excellent supper with good service, some provided by a young lad of 6'10" in stature with good long arms for reaching. We sat down 28 people as more had joined us by car

Friday dawned dull but breezy and people set off at slack LW. SG made a long tack out towards the Forts, stopping to reef when the wind hit 22 knots. Gundog motored out to the middle and sailed a bit till the wind became too strong, then motored home to Langstone. SS motored out to over the Bramble bank and then sailed to Priory bay for lunch. Aurora was going on so passed her crew over to Stewpot and PM set sail for one more night at the Folly. Eva Rose arrived back home just after SG and the others returned to their respective berths in Hamble.

Many thanks to all the organisers for these events - Margaret for Monday, Lyn for Tuesday and Wednesday and Anthony for Thursday, and to the various people who hosted the pontoon Parties - it was a great week!

BIRDS

Meanwhile, Anthony did a bit of bird spotting and has sent a list to which have been added a few more in italics

Beaulieu

Little Egrets
Buzzard
Swan
Mallard
Redshank (Migrants back for winter)
Pied Wagtail
Lapwing
Curlew (probably back from breeding on northern moors)
Black Headed Gull (winter plumage not much black)
Herring Gull (Green Grey legs)
Lesser Great Black Backed Gull (bigger with blacker back and yellow Legs)
Sparrows (in village)
Pigeons
Blue Tits (In woodland behind yard)
Swallows (catching flies close to water, about to go back to South Africa)
Crow
Red Breasted Merganser (I think, just above Ginns farm. Winter migrant diving duck.)
Cormorant (at entrance)
Small flock of feral Greylag geese - up at Beaulieu
Robin sitting on rock by sewer outfall!

In Solent

Common Tern
Gannet - last week

Hamble

Oystercatcher (at entrance)
Turnstone (on pontoons in river)
Jackdaws (On shore line)

I expect some people saw other birds as well. I was meant to be concentrating on sailing/steering the boat!

No Brent Geese yet, they will be back early October though I think I saw one off Pilsey Island when cruising in the Solo a week last Thursday. One or two stay in the harbour all summer.

Anthony