

SCARY SOLENT JUNE 2011

June is normally warm and windless on the Solent. We usually spend the whole time towing boats. What a surprise this trip was.

It seems that this year April and June have swapped over. I am always wary of April Solent trips. Bert will explain why if you are interested.

We had a good journey down with a few heavy showers

These continued once we had arrived at Warsash so we kept diving in and out of the cars to set the boats up.

The wind was ok but was increasing. We heard from Dave Waller and he was stuck in traffic and would be late but would catch us up.

We loaded up everything and Bert decided not to try to move his cruiser around to the other pontoons as the sea was a bit choppy. Gu and I are pleased not to have the long walk

Just as we were setting out the wind increased again. The 2000 got off the beach and tacked out of Warsash. We moved off the pontoon to stick with them

The other boats decided to move along to the end of the pontoon to launch.

We headed off to keep an eye on the 2000.

Calvin called us back as they were having trouble getting off the pontoon.

Eventually the 505 made it off after several attempts.

Again we set off to keep an eye on the 2 boats now on the water.

We see Steve Pooley launch and head off past us. So we now have 3 boats afloat.

Calvin then catches us up and tells us the Vision is afloat but Richard has a big problem with his cat. His rudder complex has caught under the pontoon and broken it in half. Not only that but it has then crashed into one of the big wooden pillars. Richard will not be sailing. Calvin will go back for him but first has to retrieve the Vision who are in amongst the boats by the lifeboat station.

We head off at speed to try to catch up with our boats.

We find the 505 upside down about a third of the way across and Adam and Luke trying to right it.

They have several goes with no success.

Then we hear from Claire that she and Bernie are upside down in the shipping lane. We cannot leave the 505.

A rib from the racing fleet stands off. The lads finally right the boat but the mast is broken so no more sailing. We ask the other boat to tow them to Warsash and they kindly oblige.

We hurtle off and in the distance we can see a boat upside down with two people on top and the Police boat in attendance.

We are nearly there when Calvin Steve and Richard arrive in the rib and they rush off to assist.

We arrive and stand off while Richard swops with Claire and they try to right the 2000.

After a discussion it is agreed we will take Claire and Steve on board and go and check on the Vision.

We have had them in our sights and they only have their jib up but are making good progress, we are nearly with them when we see Dave Waller coming up behind, he takes over our duty and we go back to see what is happening to the 2000.

The lifeboat has by this time taken them in tow and into calmer waters by Calshot. To right the boat. Calvin then tows the 2000 back to Warsash and we head on to Wootton.

At this point the coastguard become involved and Bert spends a long time on the radio. We have not heard anything from Steve Pooley but have seen no red flares and we know he has them. In amongst all the traffic on the radio we have a report that Steve is safe and well but not where he is. I receive a text from Brian O'Leary to say that its a force 8 in Stokes bay, we had noticed !!!

Needless to say the trip is very wet and bumpy.

Just as we are heading into the creek we hear from Dave Waller that they and the Vision are safely at PGL but no sign of Steve !!!

At this point Steve D spots Steve P on the beach by the ferry so we go to pick him up.

We then get into PGL and get Claire off to get a hot shower. We are still missing the Adam Luke Calvin Bernie and Richard we know they were safe in Warsash but do not know how they are getting to us.

A bit later Luke and Adam turn up in the rib and tell us the others are in a taxi going to Portsmouth to get the ferry to Fishbourne.

We all settle into our chalets and tell each other the tales of the trip We head off to dinner and just as we are starting the rest of our party turn up to a rousing cheer.

We have a good evening playing Uno, pool and darts and generally eating and drinking. Off to bed around midnight

The next morning only a few make it to breakfast and I am looking and feeling as bad as the lads when I have only had 3 drinks its not fair ! However some headache tablets and some more sleep and I am feeling human again

We check the forecast which is for 4-5 over the Brambles we would normally think that was quite blowy but after the Saturday we are all quite happy with that.

We organise our group and Bernie goes with Steve on the Cat. Richard goes with John and Rob Phillips in the Vision and the rest of the team are with us on the cruiser.

The wind is in a good direction which means the Vision can set here sails and head for home.

Dave Waller takes off to return home as we only have two boats and Steve P has shot off into the distance.

The weather is still blowy but not as bad as before but it is still quite rough over the Brambles.

We have an uneventful return barring Maybee 2's engine playing silly B's.

We arrive in Warsash in brilliant sunshine and then have to sort the boats out including retrieving the 2000 and 505 from the sailing club where they were stationed.

So we all arrived back in one piece apart from the boats.

Thanks to the Police Lifeboats and the Coastguard for keeping us all safe.

Just a reminder that the sea is not necessarily a friendly place.

I reckon we all slept really well that night !

Now about that September trip !!!!!!!!!!!