

SCUTTLEBUTT

SUSSEX POLICE OFFSHORE SAILING CLUB

NEWSLETTER



Memorable Cruising

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Frostbite

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FROSTBITE SPECIAL EDITION

Hardy crews brave the elements and cope with the faults one encounters on boats of a certain age, as they head out into Solent waters for this traditional SPOSC venture!

Welcome to this edition of Scuttlebutt, I hope you enjoy the tales and pictures of the recent Frostbite trip. Moving the trip from March to April certainly resulted in fairer winds even if it was still chilly, but I think everyone had a great time. We certainly had a few laughs such as an exploding noo noo and a few concerns when the mains electrics melted the adaptor!

Unfortunately the Solent charter fleets are getting tired and are not being maintained to the standard you would expect. Chris and I were playing defect poker, which I on the Sunsail boat won. Due to the defects and the boat not being properly prepared we didn't get away from Port Solent until 13:00hrs on the Monday, not satisfactory at all.

Needless to say the Sunsail's onboard Webasto heater didn't work. We eventually found an electric fan heater in one of the lockers, not a lot of use as the boat had continental sockets and the heater had an English plug. Pretty hopeless considering they are a large international yacht charter business.

The next event is the United Kingdom Fire Service Challenge Regatta in May which is a great event, there are still places available so if you fancy racing with great social evening events give Alwyn a shout.

I shall leave you to enjoy the stories and the photo's. I hope to see you on the water soon.

Remember to send Terry Clothier tales of your own sailing trips for us all to enjoy.

Owen Poplett

Commodore.



Editorial Note

Please remember that this is your magazine and should reflect your views and experiences for the benefit of other members. If you have any comment, articles or photographs you feel are appropriate for inclusion then please forward them to me, terryclothier@hotmail.com for publication.

The opinions expressed in articles within Scuttlebutt are those of the individual only and not necessarily those of the Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club. No responsibility can be accepted for any inaccuracies or omissions.



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Memorable Cruising, the story according to Annie Darling

The key to any successful event is the level of fun and the number of memories accumulated. The first half of Frostbite certainly ticked both boxes in this respect.



And then there were Four

With sickness and family issues prevalent, our race training boat depleted from a compliment of seven down to four. Arrival at Port Solent on the Sunday afternoon was met with somewhat of a surprise by marine staff who didn't appear to be expecting us. So from being told we had no pre booked boat, we ended up watching Owen place a £500 deposit from his personal bank account to enable access to Sunsail 4013. Three hours later Peter Ewen, Owen Poppett and I were still waiting for another yacht given there was no water, fuel or gas on board, a filthy fridge and rusty cutlery, a damaged toilet,

broken hatches, no hose and missing equipment.

Our spirits increased as a complimentary litre of gin and a better boat 4024 was made available. Frustratingly however by 19:45, despite a cleaner boat, we were still with no water, fuel or heating, so the three of us set off to Witherspoon's for beers and an evening meal.

On Monday 9th April, our fourth crew member, Cathryn Pedersen joined us and with hose in hand, we hoped to set sail early. Sadly our water hose was inadvertently 'borrowed' and with no water or fuel, we didn't depart until 13:00.

A safety briefing and on shore breakfast had been agreed due to the lack of kitchen pans and no cooker.

We motored to Yarmouth against tide, amidst heavy mist, torrential rain, freezing cold, but nevertheless high spirits. We each took it in turn to helm and learn about the passing navigation marks and buoys. I was also able to refresh my knowledge of charts and GPS.

We moored at Yarmouth, learning the benefits of securing with a breast line first, before applying the bow and stern spring lines.

Our own master chef Owen Poppett delegated culinary tasks to us all, to produce mouth watering incredible fish chowder for supper. A very memorable experience indeed! Worthy of top marks from Gregg Wallace and John Torode, we awarded him our own Michelin Star and a tasty gin and tonic!

An evening on board Adelaide Star

with our fellow Crew members topped the evening well, with yacht malfunction poker between the Skippers and intriguing magic tricks from Dave Cherry.



Tuesday 10th April

A wet overcast morning was spent exploring Yarmouth, with breakfast at Gossips cafe and a fascinating walk round the local church revealing important burials and memorials including that of Lord Nelsons daughter.

Then a surprising improvement in the weather beckoned us to grab the moment as we set the sails and enjoyed the rest of the day tacking and practising our skills in preparation for the May UKFSC. It was wonderful. A warming sun, a boat speed up to 8 knots, with favourable tides, and good winds, we enjoyed great boat work and superb company.



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We threw ourselves into the task, each taking turns on the helm and honing our skills with the essentials of sailing; sail setting, boat trimming, boat balance, and course made good. With beam reach then closer hauled sail setting, we zigzagged our way towards Cowes. We trimmed the sails trying to sail faster at 70 to 80 degrees of the apparent wind, and so create a lift and propel the boat smoothly and effectively. Owen was mindful about weather helm for the less experienced, it was dealt with by pulling the wheel to leeward to counteract the effect. A thoroughly enjoyable time on white sails only, took us through the afternoon, mooring at Cowes.

A SPOSC committee meeting was followed by good wine, home-made food, drinks in the Anchor pub, and delicious port and cheese back on the



boat, to complete a great day.

Wednesday 11th April

A final morning for me, as we awoke to glorious unbroken sunshine, and then a motor back to Port Solent. I sadly had to leave my very special comrades, as I caught the train and waved goodbye to newly formed friends and the newcomers boarding in my place.

I only began this fabulous sport later in life. And I'm totally hooked. So to anyone thinking of the same, spare this thought, a poem by John Masefield.

*"Oh I'll be going, leaving the noise of the street,
To where a lifting foresail-foot is yanking at the sheet;
To a windy, tossing anchorage where yawls and ketches ride, Oh I'll be going, going, until I meet the tide.
And first I'll hear the sea wind, the mewing of the gulls, The clucking sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls,
The songs at the capstan at the hooker warping out,
And then the heart of me'll know I'm there or thereabout.
Oh I am sick of brick and stone, the heart of me is sick, For windy green unquiet sea, the realm of Moby Dick, And I'll be going going, form the roaring of the wheels, For a winds in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels.*

✱

Annie Darling

Frostbite, by Cathryn Pedersen

Well what an enjoyable week I had on Frostbite. I know the clue is in the name but it was a tad chilly! We had one day with sunshine, the rest were all a bit grey & cold. I think the most amount of layers I had on at one time was 7! 😊

Anyway, the temperature aside, I had a very enjoyable week, everyone was very friendly and welcoming.

Skipper/Chef Poplett spoiled us rotten at the start of the week by providing a vast assortment of ingredients for his delicious seafood chowder. We all helped prepare it and we were very happy to hear that there was going to be enough for us to be able to have it

again the next night.

In all my 45 years I have never eaten prawns as I'm not a lover of shellfish. But the king prawns being cooked in chilli and garlic smelt so amazing that I gave them a go and boy were they good! So I have also learned that I like prawns 🍷

There were only 4 of us on the Beneteau First 40 for the start of the week. After a few teething problems we got on our way. Annie & I took it in



turns to sleep in the saloon so we all had our own space when it came to sleeping.

Annie got off on Wednesday and then Phil and Caroline joined for the second half of the week.

We were able to get the sails up twice in the week and I learned how to use the winches for the Genoa and did some tacking. Owen also showed me what was involved with the spinnaker. How everyone manages to hang on and not fall overboard when racing I don't know!

Everyone was very kind when it came to helping me and giving me guidance as I am very much a beginner sailor with lots to learn.

The other crew on the Bavaria 44 were all just as friendly and welcoming and getting both crews together in the evenings was great fun. We got through a fair bit of cheese and wine &/or port! All in all, a very enjoyable week and I hope I'm able to do it again.

Cathryn Pedersen.

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First Experience, by Caroline Lambert

Whilst sailing in the Solent, the laughter turned in an instant to an eerie silence as we came round to the realisation that the red object floating in the distance could be a person...

I have been serving as a Police Officer in Sussex Police for eighteen years, and it was only recently that I had heard that Sussex Police had a sailing club. I thought I would look into this and joined the Sussex Police Sport and Social group with the intention of trying the sailing club. I have never experienced sailing before. I thought this would be a great opportunity to try a new experience, meet new people and learn some new skills. I know nothing about sailing and I haven't a clue about knots and didn't know my port from my starboard!

The sailing trip known as 'Frostbite' gave me the opportunity to give sailing a try. There was the opportunity of sailing for 3 or 5 days from Port Solent. It was also a very reasonable cost, only £65 for 3 days, plus a bit extra for food. I could also hire sailing gear if required, but I

managed to buy what I needed for a bargain on eBay. I was set to go!

Owen Poppett my skipper, was excellent. He provided an inventory and information I needed (which included a reminder to bring our favourite tippie), as well as accommodating for my Vegetarian needs! I arrived at Port Solent and was greeted by the team who all made me feel very welcome. There were five of us in total in our boat, me, Owen Poppett, Catherine Pedersen, Peter Ewen and Phil Russell. I was apprehensive that my lack of knowledge and experience may hinder the others and I would be out of my depth, but the crew didn't mind at all, and if anything, they were pleased to have a new crew member. I met Catherine who showed me around the boat and Owen gave a helpful and informative induction, including what to do in an emergency and also how to use the most complicated and temperamental toilet I have ever come across! Everyone was given a role or responsibility when setting sail and it was all planned and professional, but in a really relaxed and helpful environment. Owen had a novel way of gauging the wind and checking the tides, using his cigarette! We set sail for the Isle of Wight and time flew fast. During laughter and good conversation, I was able to observe and learn about 'Lines', 'Fenders' and a 'Genoa'. I even took the helm and had a go at steering the boat. Once moored in Cowes, we met the other boat/team, who were also sailing. Once again, I met another bunch of lovely people. Unfortunately, my sea sickness kicked in and for a while, I was a little delicate! I was able to use the well equipped marina showers and toilets and we all ventured to a local pub for an evening

meal. This was then followed by us all gathering on one of the boats for cheese, biscuits and port.

The following morning we went out for a lovely cooked breakfast and I bought some travel sickness wrist bands and tried a different sickness tablet that Catherine had - thanks Catherine! This time, it did the trick and we had a good day of sailing, practising 'Tacking' in the Solent. We returned back to Cowes and had a great meal at a local pub. Owen, assured me that he usually does cook some of the meals, but I think the chef wanted a night off! We were entertained by Dave and his magic tricks as well as Peter's interpretation of 'Old McDonald had a Farm' - I did not see that coming! I laughed so much that my cheeks hurt.

In the morning we made our way back to Port Solent and it was at this point that we saw a red object bobbing in the water. We truly believed that this could be a person, especially after Owen checked it out with his binoculars. On closer inspection, thankfully, it was remains of a red foil balloon, that from a distance looked like a hooded head.

Thank you to everyone for making my first Sailing experience such a memorable one. There was such a vast amount of experience in the groups - not only in sailing ability, but also within the Policing family. I would recommend this experience and I know that the club are keen for new members. I am looking forward to more sailing adventures and seeing the crew again soon.

Caroline Lambert



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**Frostbite is warmer in April.
isn't it? A hint of
optimism from Kevin Claxton**



Safe in the knowledge that April is obviously warmer than March, the Frostbite crews stoically prepared for a warm sail in the spring sunshine. The plan for Sunday 8th April was for a Sunsail boat crew (skippered by Owen Poplett) to gather at their base at Port Solent, and for a Commodore Sailing Boat crew skippered by Chris Gillings to muster at their Gosport base. Whilst en-route telephone calls confirmed that both boats had unfortunately been impacted by people retiring due to sickness and other matters.

Thus whilst Owen met Peter Ewen, Cathryn Pedersen and Annie Darling at Port Solent, Chris met Graham Castell, Dave Cherry, Julie & Kevin Claxton at Gosport at around 4pm. Unfortunately home for the week –the 44 foot Bavaria 'Adelaide Star'– had just returned from a cross-channel trip, and was in dire need of some care and attention. The crew adjourned to Weatherspoon's whilst a clean was undertaken. At 6.30 pm they were able to provision the boat from the small mountain of supplies that Dave, Julie and Kevin had picked up in Chichester.

With the unpacking complete, the crew gave the vessel the once-over. It became clear that the fuel gauge did not work. Neither did the water gauge. Or the rev-counter. Or the heater. On top of this, the

'donkey' needed about 4 very long leans on the button to persuade it to murmur into life. With the boat stocked and provisioned, a discussion as to where to have dinner was resolved with a decision in favour of 'The Castle' pub. After dinner, it was clear that 'the peas were a bit hard', so the crew returned to the boat for cheese and biccies!

The crew awoke on Monday 9th April to find that it was raining. It was unanimously agreed that 'There's no rush', so after a leisurely cooked breakfast prepared by Kevin, Adelaide Star set off for



Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight. However on reaching the stepping off point just inside Portsmouth harbour, Kevin had to steer the boat in several circles, whilst 2 reefs were shaken out. On leaving Portsmouth, the weather improved and the wind picked up to around 15 knots, so the sails took the strain. Seas were slight and the tide was fairly kind to us. It was a pleasant and uneventful sail to Yarmouth, interrupted only by Chris engaging in banter with Owen. The 2 skippers played a new game: phone poker, with the bets being the various and several faults that both boats seemed to have! We edged into port at about 4pm, with around 22 nm sailed. The evening meal was a fine Lasagne and garlic bread, prepared by Graham. After a glass or two of wine, a sojourn aboard the Sunsail boat followed, and then all came back to Adelaide Star for something of a party! However Kevin had given up by then, and had retired to bed before 8.30 pm, which



the next morning was regarded as possibly a sensible move, on hearing some of the stories!

Tuesday 10th April met the crews with easing rain once more. Graham prepared a wonderful cooked breakfast, and at a very gentlemanly 11am Adelaide star set sail out of Yarmouth, with the Skipper at the helm. Later Kevin took over and made a bid for the Needles, but this was countermanded. In NE winds at 15-18 knots, a series of tacks gave the chance to develop skills with Graham and Julie taking turns at the helm. Dave also had a go at the helm. Nearing Cowes, Kevin was attacked by a marauding low-flying banana, which took a low pass over the stern before dipping beneath the waves! After Julie had finished remembering what she had originally learnt on 'incompetent crew' in 2006, Kevin brought the boat into Cowes, having completed a 13 nm day sail.



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Owen's boat had already arrived, and had prepared us a berth to reverse into. This was successfully achieved and the crew celebrated with G&T's, and the SPOSC committee members from both boats held a brief meeting on the Sunsail boat. After meeting, all adjourned to 'The Anchor' for drinks and dinner. Dave entertained us with some of his excellent magic, and tales from long ago, and the burgers at 2 for £16.00 went down very well! After the Sunsail crew ate on their boat they joined us in 'The Anchor', and a fine evening was had by all.



The day broke on Wednesday with bright sunshine, and everyone was of course very pleased! The crew were ready to move our boat to allow the Sunsail boat out of its berth behind us at the agreed time of 9am, but they were no-where to be seen! It was crew-change day for them back at port Solent, but the 'early start' was apparently not going to happen. Eventually they appeared and we said 'goodbye' to Annie, as they left at 9.30. We then had breakfast and poked our nose out of port. We found that initially there wasn't a lot of wind (though still from the NE), but it was a lovely day

and by far the best day we had. It actually felt warm when the sun came out from behind the clouds. The wind was a little stronger mid-channel, and again we got some decent sailing in up to 15 knots.



We skirted the Bramble bank, then sailed, and then motored up Southampton water. We avoided the various tankers, freighters, ferries and other craft along the way. The plan was to go to the top of the water to see the cruise liners, but unfortunately when we got there, the cupboard was bare. There was just a row of large cranes and little else to look at, so we turned around for the open sea – err the Solent! As we came about, Graham crossed from one wheel to the other. Also there was a beep, and then our temperamental motor coughed and died. Oh no, what to do? No amount of cajoling would persuade the engine to re-start in response to multiple presses of the dormant starter button. We were just beginning to consider our options when realised that the engine cut-off handle (which was vertically mounted) was raised slightly. Lowering it 1/16 of an inch then allowed the engine to burst into life. We assumed it may have got caught on something as Graham had crossed the helm. We then heard 5 loud blasts on a horn. Of course, this was not directed at us, but rather at a yacht precariously positioned beneath the bows of a freighter a mile to the south – now that

was close! We had our usual lunch of soup and rolls 'on the run', and although we were able to sail out of Southampton water, once we reached the Brambles, the wind died. We motored the brief distance to Cowes, and up the Medina, where Julie did some very expert pontoon-bashing. After that it was back to the yacht haven for 'tea and medals' at 3.30, after another 22 miles sail.

An expedition onto Cowes ascertained that every cash machine in town was faulty, and the only cash available was cash-back at Sainsbury's – limited to £40.00! The Sunsail boat also arrived back at Cowes with new crew members Phil Russell and Caroline Lambert. On board Adelaide Star, Kevin and Julie cooked spaghetti Bolognese, which seemed to go down well enough with a glass or two of Shiraz. Then it was time for another trip to 'The Anchor'. This prompted a discussion which resulted in an agreement amongst our crew that we would like to go somewhere else for a change, for our final meal the following evening. Various options were discussed, but none received a unanimous vote: deadlock prevailed, as Captain Chris was vigorously against the 'Harbour View', where Kevin had pointed out that mains were from £4.99 all day. This option was clearly unfavourable to some!



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So the discussion was left till the morrow, but this did lead to a collective view that we needed to go on to somewhere else at that point in the evening. Kevin was not in favour of the Union, due to a previous bad experience, but that view was in the minority, so off we went. As prophesied, the few heads present tuned to gawk at us when we entered. The quiz that was in motion halted as we looked for a table. Things were not going well! Then the quizmaster said "What do you call chopped ham and pork?" and Graham shouted out "Spam". "They are playing for money in here" was the reply! Oh – dear – we finished our drinks and left. Not for the first time, it was back to the boat for cheese and biccies.

The following morning it was dull and bitterly cold, although dry. The Sunsail boat was in no hurry, so after everyone was ready, we navigated Adelaide Star out of a tight corner between our compatriots and another yacht which had been left berthed halfway along the opposite pontoon. With our colleagues assisting with roving fenders, we slipped through the gap and out of the marina. The Solent was even colder and greyer than it had looked from ashore. It was dank and misty and although the winds were light, they seemed to cut right through us. The very swift tide carried us west under sail and in no time at all we had covered nearly 5 nm. After some tacking practice we made a determined effort to tack back up the Solent against the diminishing tide. The wind was at 9 knots and in a NE direction, we initially struggled to make headway, and keep the course changes to a minimum. "You'll never make it past Egypt Point" said Chris, "You'll need to tack again". Dave said "What?" However on a slightly strengthening breeze and with a bit of pinching, the

impossible became possible as Kevin nudged the boat against the tide. Two knots became 4.5 and in time we cleared Egypt Point without any change of course. We passed the North Cardinal well to the north, and feeling quite pleased, Kevin carried on past Cowes to Osborne Bay, where we dropped anchor for lunch.



However by 2.45pm the cold had taken its toll and we motored back to Cowes in order to berth. This threw up the 'fault of the day', when the retaining clutch for the topping lift decided that it didn't want to do its job anymore! Once safely berthed after the 12 mile sail, we struggled to get warm. This brought us back to the issue of where to have dinner on our final night. The table at the Anchor had been cancelled by the Skipper, so we needed a decision. We settled on the Duke of York, and booked a table for ten. This seemed to go down well, became a popular choice

after everyone agreed that the meal we had was excellent. It was also assisted by the top-class entertainment provided by Dave, who thrills us with his brilliant feats of magic, and a visit from a rubber snake. Later on board Adelaide Star he also got out the mouth organ. Not to be beaten in the entertainment stakes, the Sunsail boat presented Pete Ewen, whose version of 'Old MacDonald's Farm, will, I am sure, live in the minds of those who were present, for many many days to come!

So, our Frostbite trip ended on Friday 13th April. Rising early, a rubber snake was found in Julie's sleeping bag, and this was the cause of some discussion over a large breakfast. Still grey, but strangely much milder than the previous day, we got a good start out of Cowes. After leaving port, we had a brief race against the very large container vessel 'MOL Glyde', but the big ship won, and after it passed, Adelaide Star nipped nimbly over its quite large wake. Then it time to knuckle down and motor back the 10 miles to Gosport. We arrived back at the home berth very late in the morning and the £25 spent on diesel was a good reflection on how much sailing we had managed to achieve in the week. Then it was back to Commodore where the list of faults with our faithful old girl seemed not to faze the owner. Never mind, we had all had great fun, and a good weeks sail, so it was time to say 'goodbye' until our next SPOSC adventure!



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STOP PRESS

Hello all SPOSC Members

This years SPOSC Passage Charter is planned for August (12th to 17th) when hopefully the weather will be the same we're currently having and will be favourable to us for enjoying some great sailing outside of the Solent.

Crew will need to join the yacht on the Sunday evening by 1700 as we may depart later that evening. Subject to weather, the options would be to France, Channel Islands 🌴, or West Country. Some night sailing will be involved.

This will not be a RYA course, but plenty of practical instruction or refresher training can be available for inexperienced or experienced members. Also a good opportunity to build up your sea miles!

We will return to the Solent probably Thursday evening at the latest by Friday midday.

Any members interested should email me, alwynevensuk@yahoo.com by 8th May 2018 to secure your berth.

Best regards

Alwyn
Vice Commodore & Treasurer

