

Solent Odyssey

by Barry Holme



All photos courtesy of Barry Holme

Church nestling in the trees—time stood still

Easter Cruise (or was it East Coast cruises The Solent?)

BIBOA Members and RIBS involved for some or all of the weekend:

<i>Blue Marlin</i>	Solent	Chris & Fiona Hinson, Sam & Ben, Mark, Chris's sister & her family.
<i>MOR DEN 2</i>	Ocean	Barry & Penny Holme, Jayne Middleton
<i>My Pleasure</i>	Osprey	Gordon Compton
<i>The Bandit</i>	Hunton	Barry Deakin & Family
<i>Hot Lemon</i>	Scorpion	Mike & Maggie Deacon, David & Wendy
<i>Cutting Edge</i>	Ribeye	David & Karen Norman, Sam & Olivia
sans RIB		Bob & AJ Barbour, Robert & Katie
sans RIB		Jim & Hazel Cox

Thursday

Left home at 0530hrs, however, stopping for fuel put us 20 minutes behind schedule and led to a rather protracted and laboured progression around the M25. Arrived *Drivers Wharf*, to find Jim Fry ready to reassemble the "leg" – this is not to be confused with the variety of body parts that have been turning up in Hertfordshire!!!!

Eventually launched and an uneventful run to Cowes. Just missed lunch at the ISC, which closed at 1500hrs, However, onward to that well known watering hole *The Fountain*. Suitably refreshed, and a limited time allowed for retail therapy, we set off for Yarmouth. Dull, mild and overcast but flat seas – what a change from last year (freezing cold, gales).

Yarmouth on a Thursday night is usually quiet and this Easter was no different. Harbour charges are lower mid week (£9.00/night; weekends £14.00/night). *Forrester's Hall Bistro* was offering two main meals for the price of

one, and very good it was.

Friday

Started damp and wet, but no wind. A quick trip to see the Needles, just to make sure they were still there. No overfalls to play with, but the cloud base was rapidly making its way down the cliff face.

Telephone calls from Chris Hinson and Gordon Compton suggested a meeting was formulating at *The Folly* – so next stop the Medina. Gordon let slip that it was his birthday and that he was 21 again!!!!!!! Four RIBs made this venue – *Blue Marlin*, *My Pleasure*, *The Bandit* and *MOR DEN 2*.

After lunch, *Blue Marlin* and *MOR DEN 2* returned to Yarmouth. *The Wheatsheaf* was honoured with our presence and we were joined by Jim and Hazel Cox who came over on the ferry.

It was rumoured that *The Kings Arms* was host to Gordon's birthday party, where he was joined by the



Ventnor harbour



My Pleasure



Blue Marlin

crew of *The Bandit* and Jan and Bethan Falkowski. Gordon tells me he overtrained.

Saturday

It was warm and sunny all day with temperatures rising to over 30 degrees Centigrade in the "greenhouse"!

The usual trip to Lymington Market by *Blue Marlin* and *MOR DEN 2* – East Coast moves to the Solent!

Bob Barbour and family (sans *Stravaiger*) appeared just as we were off to Poole for lunch. There followed a slight delay opposite the yacht haven as *MOR DEN 2* decided to have an overheating moment – an age thing! Something to do with back pressures and cooling water. Phone call to Jim Fry and remedy administered and we were off to Poole.

Once again we arrived at closing time – apparently in Poole on a Bank Holiday Saturday, lunch still finishes at 1400 hrs in some pubs! However, *The Antelope* next door was still serving and we quickly transferred our allegiance.

Mark, who was crewing on *Blue Marlin*, kindly loaned his "Blackberry" so that bookings could be made for the evening in *The Kings Arms* and for lunch the following day at *Brading Sailing Club* in Bembridge. Magic this technology if you know how to use it. And so ended another perfect cruising day.

Sunday

Summer has departed again, drizzle and a little breeze, visibility was limited at times. We set off around 1000 hrs, *My Pleasure* and crew of Jim and Hazel rejoined the East Coast Group for a circumnavigation of the island.

Seas were calm with only a little chop found off St. Catherine's. Next stop, Ventnor Harbour for coffee and a "potty" stop. Gordon was left in charge of RIBs - just after we left the harbourmaster appeared and requested that we use a mooring as we were in his place on the pontoon – no problem and *Blue Marlin* acted as taxi.

Leaving Ventnor, the dulcet tones of Mike Deacon shattered the airwaves: "Where are you? I am off Shanklin." We soon formed a convoy and made for Bembridge and the *Brading Sailing Club* for lunch. As usual the yacht club made us most welcome.

Now we were four RIBs and we proceeded for a period of quiet contemplation to Wootton Creek. This peaceful backwater is worth a look-see – away from the "madding crowd". The tide had turned and, not wishing to find ourselves aground, we reluctantly retraced our route to the ferry terminal.

Next stop Newtown Creek for a similar look-see. And so the return to Yarmouth. *Hot Lemon* returned to Lymington and *My Pleasure* to Southampton (something about a football game the next day!).

Dinner that evening was in *The Bugle* – relatively quiet - John the landlord, asked where AJ was!!!!!!!

Monday

Dawned fine and sunny – why is it that the last day is always the best weather? It happens time and again! Before the journey to *The Folly* for the final lunch, we decided to voyage to the upper reaches of the Yar – *Swallows and Amazons* type country! *Blue Marlin* acted as taxi for all of us. A peaceful river not known for fast RIBs, in fact an empty creek, in complete solitude only broken by the rising of fish and the clip, clop of horses hooves over the pack bridge. Ben and Sam enjoyed the use of the dinghy to explore further than *Blue Marlin* could reach.

On returning to Yarmouth, *MOR DEN 2* headed off for *The Folly* and *Blue Marlin* for Portsmouth and Hayling Island. *The Folly* saw two other RIB-owning families join us – The Normans on *Cutting Edge* and the Barbour family (sans *Stravaiger*) – it was good to see everybody again.

And so back to *Drivers Wharf* and, on Gordon's advice, a quick getaway before the football finished at 1700 hrs.

