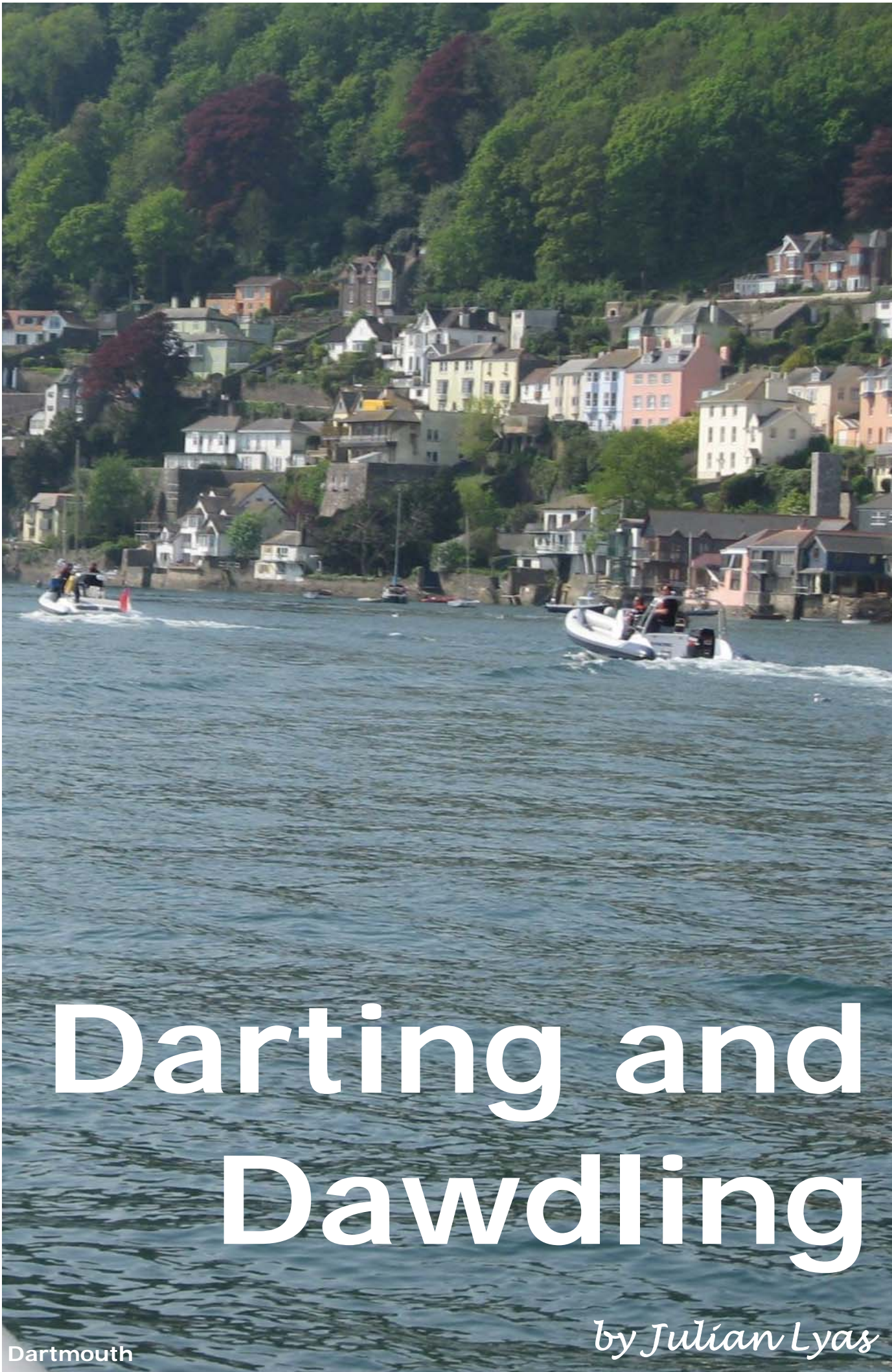


Title page photo courtesy of Ann Oddie, other photos courtesy of Julian Lyas



Darting and Dawdling

by Julian Lyas

Dartmouth

Well where to start with this trip? One of the best weekends we have had for a long time, would sum up the Dartmouth trip.

Heading down to the boat on Thursday night, after a week of praying for sunshine, we got our rewards: the sun was out and all was looking good for the weekend. There was a rumour of fresh winds but nothing too serious.

Saturday morning and we woke to clear blue sky and bright sunshine. Jon Adlard called to say we should cancel as we weren't used to this kind of weather, following our Weymouth trip a few weeks ago! A quick trip to the fuel barge for diesel and it was off to Yarmouth to meet with *Loujescha*, *Ocean Devil*, *Dizzy Lizzy*, *Per Mar* and *My Pleasure II*. The only question we all had was: do we wear shorts for the trip?

Once we had all mustered, it was time for the off. We all headed down the Solent and out past the Needles, but something was very wrong: there was not a wave in sight and the sea was like a sheet of glass. This we were really not used to. Shooting across Poole Bay, it was the flattest I have seen it in years. It was so flat that we decided to head around the bays to get a good look at the scenery en route. Then *Scorpion* headed straight across to Portland so we could all muster together before we entered Lyme Bay. Mike Deacon in *Hot Lemon* was setting off sometime after us as he had just returned from Scotland and needed to refuel in Yarmouth. Soon we were all together, basking in the baking sun off Portland, tucking into a Cornish pasty; not a bad place for lunch. As I turned round, I could see a fast moving boat on the horizon and knew it was Mike en route.

Once into Lyme Bay we all decided to head to Lyme Regis as we thought it may be possible to have a quick stop and a pint there. Everyone raced off for a few miles, trying to outdo each other, until we realised we were using a lot of diesel and we should behave ourselves! Our planned trip to Lyme Regis did not quite work out as time was ticking by so we decided to change direction and head straight to Dartmouth. As we made our way, during the last few miles the sea state changed slightly to give a nice following sea which gave us a little excitement for the last part of the trip. On entering Dartmouth you realise just how lovely it is; it has to be one of the nicest places on the South Devon coast. With my impressive organisational skills I had already booked us all into the Dart Marina. It's a great place to moor the boat but it does leave a large dent in your wallet when you have to pay for it!

Once we were all moored it seemed rude to walk past the Floating Bridge pub without stopping so we made our way to the bar for some well deserved refreshments. Sitting outside with a clear sky and baking sunshine was fantastic. After a couple of drinks it was time to check into the Bed and Breakfasts. Unfortunately, I had forgotten the map so we had no idea where ours was. A quick trip to a local newsagent for directions soon solved our problem.





That evening we all enjoyed a great meal in Kendricks restaurant, a must if you are in Dartmouth. The meal was excellent. I ordered sea bass and ended up with Mike Deacon's cod instead. I have to say it was lovely, sorry Mike. We can swap again next time. Once we had all filled our bellies with food, we decided to head for a beer in the pub round the corner to finish the evening off. Jon Adlard was trying to get me to go to a cocktail bar but I managed to get out of that one and kept my sensible head on. (Sorry Jon, hahaha. I know it was the other way round.)

The next morning it was still baking hot but the wind had got up and was blowing a force 5. Andy, Petra and Jason Micklewright came round from Torquay and said it was not great out at sea so we came up with plan B. As an organiser you should always have a plan B. Whoever came up with plan B, well done! Plan B was to head down the River Dart to a pub I had read about. Unfortunately, I couldn't remember the name of the pub or where it was so we missed that one but we did manage to find a superb place at Totnes and we moored right on the pub wall - what more do you need? Everyone enjoyed a plate of sandwiches and a couple of beers; it was a great spot to sit in the sunshine and a place that I would highly recommend. The trip down to the pub takes a good hour but it's a lovely trip to take with some great scenery on the way.

After lunch we headed back to Dartmouth where Mike Deacon and Martin Mundy decided to take their boats out for some fun. The skippers of *Scorpion*, *Ocean Devil*

and *Per Mar* decided the best place to go was the pub, and that's exactly what we did. We sat on the sun terrace and enjoyed a couple of cold drinks. Unfortunately, we did forget that it was rather hot so we, well I say we but mean me, ended up with sun burn AGAIN.

That evening I had booked a meal at the Floating Bridge pub. Luckily for a few of us that was where we were still sitting from the afternoon so we didn't even have to move, well we couldn't anyway so that solved the problem! (*More evidence of your excellent planning Julian - Ed.*) The meal at the Floating Bridge was very good and we all enjoyed some good banter.

The next morning and again it was clear sky and sunshine but a little windy. We refuelled and headed out of the river. The first hour of the trip was a bit bumpy but nothing too bad. Unfortunately, on our boat I had a bad leg and dad had a bad neck so we took it a little easy. On *Ocean Devil*, Jon Adlard also had a bad leg so we ran together. All these sporting injuries and they say it's good for you! The sea soon flattened out and we had a great run to Weymouth where we stopped for some fish and chips. After that, it was a flat run back to Lymington.

A huge thanks to everyone who came along and made it a fantastic weekend. We had great weather, great company and great food. What more could we ask for? This one may take some beating so I need to put my thinking cap on. See you on the next one.



Someone please buy Julian some Factor 50!!!

