



The Crabber Chronicles

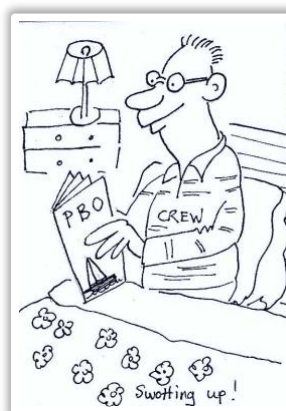
Highlights from the 2021 CCC Solent Rally



An Uncertain Buildup to the Rally

As the Covid 19 Global Pandemic escalated rapidly in early 2020, our rally organizer Julian Biggs made a timely decision to cancel the planned 2020 Rally. Broadly speaking, Julian proposed to carry over the plan as the basis for a full week's program in June 2021 and, with much appreciated consultation amongst the rally regulars, a new plan was devised.

There were so many changes to the Covid regulations and much uncertainty in the months leading up to the start of the Rally on 19th June, which caused a lot of hard work for Julian, so everyone was truly grateful as we finally converged on Haslar Marina for the opening dinner. Restrictions were easing and even the weather looked promising.



Rally preparations - so much to think about!



Mary helping Summer Breeze out of Chichester



Moore's Claws en route from Chichester to Portsmouth

Day 1- Haslar Marina 19th June

The rally begins with an air of anticipation and excitement on a calm and overcast day. The crews donned full oilies for the trip to Portsmouth. Crabbers from Chichester sailed in convoy (Summer Breeze, Moore's Claws, Maudie IV and Molly) through the submarine barrier to join the fleet coming in from the west. It was great to meet up again after so long. John Lowes and crew arrived after an epic journey from the West Country in time for an excellent dinner at the Lightship.



John and Ros on Westwind moored up in Haslar



Peter and Phil in Haslar



Running maintenance



Spinnaker Tower, as viewed from dinner on the Green Lightship

Day 2 — Bembridge 20th June

As the mist gradually lifted and the sun came out, a sociable morning was spent catching up with a few maintenance jobs. A contingent took the green ferry across to Gunwharf Quays for some much-needed retail therapy. Then full sail was hoisted for a very pleasant sail across to Bembridge.



Julian departing Portsmouth en route to Bembridge



Andrew and Caroline on Sea Wind dodged the Fishbourne ferry

John Lowes and crew on Lady Mary (all the way from Dartmouth), off Portsmouth



Lady Mary approaching Bembridge through the Forts

The Crabbers gilled around outside Bembridge Harbour entrance waiting for sufficient water to snake their way in. There was a scramble to catch the water taxi to Brading Haven Yacht Club, who made us very welcome. Drinks in the sunshine on the terrace were followed by another delicious meal. Most enjoyed a walk back across the causeway to their berths, just as darkness was falling.

Paul, Caroline and John at Brading Haven Yacht Club



Evening sunshine on the terrace at Brading Haven Yacht Club



Day 3 — Bembridge 21st June Summer Solstice

We woke to the sound of wind whistling through the rigging (some of us heard it in the night too!). It was really rough with the boats being jostled around on their moorings and full wet weather gear was needed for a trip to the facilities. Meanwhile John and Ros put in two reefs and ventured to Chichester, making it back for the barbeque.

This was held in the marquee which afforded some protection, and it was a sociable evening as usual.

An unwelcome change in the weather on our 2nd day in Bembridge



Summer Solstice Barbeque



In search of sausages, when the ferry breaks down



Day 4 — Bembridge & Cowes 22nd June

No let up with the storm. Whilst some were up and doing their exercises others took to their duvets. The boats with heating became quite popular! There was much discussion as to the best plan of action. The more intrepid of the fleet donned wet-weather gear and sailed to Cowes whilst the others followed on in minibuses. What a little gem the Max Aitken museum is, full of maritime treasures. We had a marvelous meal with the giant gaff of the Britannia hovering above our heads.

It was a bit bumpy out to the Forts



Pat and Graham on Sally Lightfoot in Cowes



Dinner under Britannia's gaff at the Max Aitken Museum



Mary and Julian braving the weather en route to Cowes



John Hunt on Westwind in Cowes



Robin Harper's splendid Pilot Cutter "Verano"



Day 5 - Beaulieu 23rd June

The sun appeared, bringing lots of early morning activity.

With light winds, the Crabbers sailed and motor sailed across to the entrance of the Beaulieu River, spotting seals on the way.

YoYo and Tressa off Ryde, en route to Beaulieu



Amigo in the Beaulieu River



YoYo off Ryde, en route to Beaulieu



Chris and Sue on Creekability 2 approaching Beaulieu



Approach to Beaulieu River Entrance



Andrew and Caroline on Sea Wind



Bar-B-Q at Bucklers Hard



Dressing the boats at Bucklers Hard



All dressed up

The old village at Bucklers Hard



Ah, so that's why we had strong tides



The boats made a wonderful sight, fully dressed and rafted up.

It was great to see ex Crabbers, Mike and Ann, who had made a special trip to catch up with all their old friends.

The very jovial cook-out was made easier by the use of Chris' ladder which held the disposable barbeques perfectly.

The Crabber fleet on the Bucklers Hard visitor pontoon



Days 6 & 7 – Yarmouth 24th & 25th June

Breakfast at Bucklers Hard was enjoyed in baking sunshine. The excellent shower facilities should be mentioned here as other marinas are not always so good! After lots of reversing and maneuvering the boats slowly made their way off towards Yarmouth.

Molly set off for Chichester to make use of favorable tides and weather to catch up later by ferry.

The rest of the fleet enjoyed their time chilling in Yarmouth taking in the lovely walks, restaurants and shops.

Gerry on his Shrimper 'Sniff', left at the crack of dawn to sail singlehanded round the southern side of the Island.

Yarmouth entrance



Tucked up in Yarmouth



Rafting up in Yarmouth



G T's on Nellie



Early morning in Yarmouth



Classic restoration — Kevin and Sue's Mark 1 Nellie



Preparation for homeward journeys



Nellie B homeward bound



The week rounded off with a splendid meal at The Royal Solent Yacht Club. Mary was blown away by being awarded the Steve Evatt trophy. Julian acknowledged she has put up with a lot over the years helping him in the back ground. All the Crabbers felt Mary deserved a “medal” and then she got one! Many thanks for all the hard work that they both put in to make the rally such a success in challenging times. It was very much enjoyed and appreciated by us all.

*Acknowledgements: Nigel and Sue would like to thank all those who contributed photos and anecdotes for these Chronicles.
Sue apologises for any perceived likenesses in the cartoons, which are purely accidental!*