

2013 the season that delivered at last !or did it?

With last year's 2012 cruising season yet again effected by the weather and our season changed of its normal itinerary because of the Olympics, the committee hoped like everyone else we would get a season that we deserved and had been waiting for far too long.

The season was to kick off with a cruise to Brighton Marina for the Easter break a new venue for the Association. With Easter at the end of March it could prove to be unsettled but Brighton could offer plenty to do if the weather was wet provided the seas were kind. However with high winds and seas that would have been a challenge for even the hardest of boaters we decided that after last years experiences we would have to take a rain check on Brighton literally. So one cruise down and the next one a month away the weather very poor, windy and at times wet our season even for local journeys coughed and spluttered its way in to life for this year. Were we cursed again! Only time would tell.

Second up was our first ever visit to Northney Marina one of our own MDL marinas, up in the far left corner of Chichester Harbour. There are many marinas in Chichester and we have often been approached by other marina chains to visit, but with one of our own in the same harbour it seemed pointless to pay when ours are always free. The argument has always been "There is nothing over



there you are too far away from the towns". Well it is! a long way up and it is on its own, but that is it, being out of the hustle and bustle just adds to its charms and everyone who went said they would return if we were to go there again. The proof will be if we return so fingers crossed they can accommodate us again next year. It has a relaxing feel to it and with the weather delivering warm evenings most people had their first barbeque of the season, the local pub was only a short walk away so pretty much

what we all wanted, a pontoon get together as well this was what boating was about and made for. With a plan to go south of the Isle of Wight on our return if the seas were good it was all falling in to place. Queue the fog Monday not just anywhere but the Solent and South of the Isle of Wight was thick down to 50 metres. Other Cobbs quay vessels were in the Solent and had called to say it was pea soup out there, of course we were bathed in sunshine but you could see the fog and here the horns downstream. Our departure tied to the tide to get over the bar we left hearing the radio traffic on the visibility which sounded bad. Once at the entrance to Chichester harbour we were unable to see the Isle of Wight, but could see the fog bank extending way south while we bathed in sunshine. Our call made to return up the Solent we set off radars on for those that had them listing to other CQ vessels way ahead describing the poor visibility. We trotted off the fog lifting as we went we were in a perfect envelope which is good as my radar failed terminally. Around the corner by Cowes the way ahead clear until Hurst we plodded on the information ahead said it was bad some down to 10 – 12 knots. We arrived at Hurst our lead boat sorted out ready to plan ahead on our route for the foray in to the grey, but as we pushed on the fog went back and back. For the record we never hit fog and saw it disappear into the bay at



Swanage, on no occasion was there a need to reduce speed and came back in a fantastic sea after a great weekend. The season had started fingers crossed for it to develop further.

Yes you guessed it our next to cruises fell foul of the weather Guernsey Whitsun week was blown out literally, and the Reflections cruise returned for the 2013 season Cherbourg was blown away as well. I know the dates are booked nearly seven months in advance but we are having a bad run another start of the season and middle bit to forget quickly.

June passed and was really blown away then as if the light bulb turned on we had good settled



weather and no wind hooray!! With our first ever day boat return to Lymington planned that would need good weather as it was aimed at the smaller day boat form the marina and dry stack I waited for it to change. It didn't we had the perfect day flat sea, probably the best ever for a run to the Solent good weather Top hat the safety boat from Powerboat training UK with Paul Gladzel on board the only down side was a very small fleet disappointing for

us as so many of you missed the opportunity to go that bit further on the best day for boating we have had in years.

Our trip up was via the needles channel and once moored in Berthon Lymington, the rugby enthusiasts rushed off to watch the test which the Lions won (Wales really but who cares!!) followed by a lazy lunch before returning to Poole in ideal conditions. MDL Cobbs quay kindly arranged a meal in the Boathouse for all the participants on our return which finished the day with a few tails if I remember as well!!



It was a shame that we failed to attract more boats, but next year we will try again and will move the day to Sunday giving a chance for a few more to participate, two dates one booking fee. After all we want everyone to go that bit further and if everyone enjoys there boating the small boats become big boats and so the cycle begins all over again.

Summer here yes we did have one and I did water ski for the first time in 24 years and yes I did half ache the next day, no sympathy of course but we were having a summer one that we need as boaters just like it used to be. Would it break will it stay, It broke! The week we planned our



summer cruise to Guernsey and St Cast another new venue the weather became unsettled again. Our trip to Guernsey direct was in a grey murky sea and cloud, we got all the way to Alderney before the heavens opened ask Roger from Clearwater I think he is still mopping up the water after taking the gamble to take his top cover down. The rain was so hard in a flat sea that you struggled to see more than a boats length in front, but we carried on and

popped out the other side ran all the way to Guernsey and waited as usual for the tide to rise. Our arrival was greeted by Mr Grumpy in a rib a strange phenomenon in Guernsey as staffs here are normally fantastic. I told him we were expected but he was not up to speed he had been on holiday (First day back I suspect and wet)and when I told him Boatworks were going to stay open to refuel us all, his reaction was disbelieving and laughed at the mad man me, we did of course refuel. Our relationship with Boatworks over many years has allowed us a few extended times of opening which we appreciate and helped us again this year. Once in and tied up with two French powerboaters helping us, the harbour master there to greet us as well, aware of our initial problems with who we nick named Mr Grumpy it proved a very unusual day.

The wind blew for the next three days leaving after looking at the weather with a problem do we move or not further south for what was only a day. The response was due to the fuel load to get there and back we needed to be there for at least three days with the weather unsettled and closing in, we plumed for possession of berths here and travelled back on the



Friday to Cherbourg before crossing the Channel on Sunday morning early to get ahead of the weather. Our trip up to Cherbourg was pretty much as planned a good sea and not much rain, some of us did get wet as we pushed off in Guernsey, but other than that the weather remained behind us up the Alderney race. Once at the top we turned to Starboard making our way to Cherbourg which is undergoing massive improvements to their facilities. The bar was not affected! The hypermarket has been refurbished as well, many more shops a bit like a complete shopping mall which we did visit just to get some of those wonderful patisseries !! As was the French market that always takes place on the Saturday morning. The week had flown by with a pontoon party where everyone was in blue. The PAA invitational golf day the second event in the history books. This being marked with a record number of entrants. A star in the making as a new young winner, remember we take 5% of all his pro winnings, we spotted him first !! (Nathan Whale) his ability is going to be immense and will I think rival that of Georgia Hall another young golfer.

Returning home early Sunday saw our safety boat Girl Fisher develop a problem and have to run on one engine for a considerable part of the return leg, the extra time that this incurred meant that she was unable to get back ahead of the conditions and had a less than comfortable last leg of the journey. A blown heat exchanger was the fault a freak thing but that is boating. I wonder now looking back what if anything any of us could of done if they had lost both engines. Other than perhaps taking off the ladies if possible I think we would of struggled to pull her on any tow due to being so big and heavy, but we didn't have to, so onward to Poole we went all getting home not on time but back one and all.

The weather picked up and up the Summer came back, we all I am sure played boats heavily when the weather allowed. Even the Air show saw a first, both bridges up a double lift of the 10-30 bridge for safety, an association goal before the opening of the Twin Sails and a precedence that has now been set!

With the season coming to a close for the Association we only had Weymouth left, returning after a year's sabbatical due to the Olympics. The marina has changed slightly and with a full fleet of 24 vessels it was like the old times. The difference this year, not as many boats rafted but we were

spread around a little like confetti. Our thanks must go to Clipper Marine who having taken on the brokerage office at Cobbs Quay kindly sponsored our pontoon party supplying many a glass of Pimms for our crews prepared by Peter Keats or Freddie as many know him by. On the Monday some of the boats took advantage of being in the West and stopped off at various locations from Lulworth to Swange before returning of course to Poole . A few remained until the Tuesday which saw us have flat seas like the others, making the journey in record time. Three boats remained for



the week to bask in the Weymouth sunshine a great end to a good end of season with weather we would all like to see next year.

Thank you for all those who have supported the association again this season both new and old, without your support it would be pointless. We hope that we can entice a few more both old and new to join our cruises next year. Talk to others or committee members who have been, get your experience with us in a group, there is always safety in numbers and somebody is always there to grab those lines when you arrive somewhere new. Our Cruise calendar will be declared in November 2013 and all are booked on a **“First come first serve basis”** once the booking form has gone live in the New Year.