

August 25-28 Cruise to Burnham and Fambridge

With a promising Bank Holiday forecast seven boats plus the cruise leader Sark, a Nauticat 33 motor sailor, signed up for the trip to the river Crouch. Three of us, Avocet (who started from Aldeburgh) Sark and Juniper of Ore decided to break the southbound passage with an overnight stop on Friday in Brightlingsea. The wind was challenging and the Walleet familiarly lumpy but the three arrived safely and were looked after well by the harbour master – a bonus when wind and tide make mooring tricky. A dinghy trip ashore to collect eight portions of excellent fish and chips eaten together on Sark kicked the cruise off well.

Meanwhile Guy Forkes kindly deputised at the Friday night briefing on the Lightship and then led the fleet of four boats, Pippin, Orca II, Halcyon X1V, and Mystic Tide leaving HPYC on the Saturday morning. Morning Song was delayed a while but set off later. To everyone's delight the fleets from Brightlingsea and SYH converged around the mouth of the Crouch and made our way under engine, weaving through the many boats racing as part of Burnham Week, to their berths in Burnham Yacht Harbour. Pippin generously awarded line honours to Halcyon, although we were not racing of course! Katriona had arrived earlier from a trip back from foreign parts and joined in with the evening festivities. Amazon was also in Burnham to watch the racing.



The customary gathering at 6.00pm was held on the grass near the Harbour master's office – more space than on the pontoon and luckily the afternoon showers had blown through. The Haven Ports Youth Choir gave a hearty rendition of 'What shall I wear?', the Sailor's version of rugby anthem Cwm Rhondda, then we all made our way to the Swallowtail restaurant. There was a lively fund raising Caribbean evening for a lady rowing the Atlantic to raise awareness of plastic pollution (Well that put our bumpy trip in perspective!) alongside our gathering. The food was well served and tasty and the 'props' on the tables led to some hilarity.



Sunday's plans involved a short trip upstream to Fambridge and a relaxed walk around the stalls, cars, boats etc. taking part in the River Festival. Mystic Tide had to leave at 6.20 to go straight back to SYH and made it before the weather gods delivered wind gusting 25knots plus and a real deluge. This meant that the festival packed up early with everyone very wet. The HPYC stalwarts dried themselves off, Sark had the wood burner going for the first time since April, and then we all reconvened for after dinner drinks and chat at the West Wick Sailing Club.

Fortunately the low pressure system moved through overnight. The return trip on Monday was led to the Outer Crouch buoy by Avocet who was then passed by Sark and Juniper. Halcyon, Orca II, Pippin and Morning Song left a little later and all arrived safely after a fast run up the Wallet. Thanks to all who took part in making this a memorable long weekend.

Mike & Jean Garnham
Sark