

# Spread Eagle Sailing Club



## Winter Newsletter 2014

Welcome to the 2014 Winter Newsletter at the end of another good season. What an amazing summer we had before this wet weather!

Personally, I had a wonderful summer on Eagle. Along with sailing with friends I also took the children on the club family weekend with Ian Hyde and they had the best time sailing the boat while the adults looked on. I then passed my C ticket under the watchful, expert eye of Richard Foulkes and look forward to further boat handling tuition this season.

Please do send pictures and stories of your sailing exploits – they brighten up the newsletter and everyone enjoys reading them! Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.

As ever when one Newsletter is put to bed the next is already under-way but I do need copy from those of you who are active sailors.

Many thanks

Jane Mancini (Editor)  
jane@wag-design.com



## And it's Goodbye from me and Hello from him!



It's now approaching the three year mark that I have had the honour of being your club commodore and at the last club committee meeting

I made known my intent to step down. While I have thoroughly enjoyed the role I am currently faced with a number of external factors all competing for my attention. It is for this reason that I am stepping away.

My three year tenure has gone very quickly and I think the highlight was the procurement and commissioning of Eagle. I look back and smile when I remember the evening conference calls with the replacement boat committee and the 'debate' had over choice of keel. As we all know those advocating the shallower keel won the day, and any fears that there might have been over adverse performance have not materialised.

On a sad note I reflect that the club has seen the passing away of a number of key club members and most notably enthusiastic committee members. In no particular order I think of David French, Dawn Aloof, Geoff Nichols, Geoff Brown, and most recently Bill Munnery. Each managed to indelibly leave a positive mark on the club and pave the way for the future.

So, as stated at the outset my tenure is now coming to a close and I am very pleased to say that Andy Morrill has agreed to take on the Commodore role. He is effectively taking over with immediate effect in a 'commodore designate' capacity pending formal ratification at the next AGM in May. A large number of you will know Andy from the brilliantly organised and run training weekends. Andy has the full backing of his fellow committee members and I know that the club could not be in safer hands. I would ask you all to join me in welcoming Andy into his new role.

**Paul**

*(soon to be Immediate Past Commodore).*

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## A Hello from the new man

As I take the helm, my thanks must go to the commodore's, flag officers and committee members who brought us to where we are today – sadly, some of whom are no longer with us and will be greatly missed.

### Over to me:-

A number of you [our club membership] already know and have sailed with me on club events either as crew, a mate or skipper, but for those who don't know me, here is a quick "potted history" of who I am...

A product of the sixties, brought up in Bursledon, I spent most of youth on or around the Hamble river, sailing and play on boats whenever possible. My whole family, father, brothers and I have all owned boats at some time or another and have sailed and explored the waters around the Solent.

I joined Barclays Bank Sailing Club (as it was at that time) back in the mid 90's, sailed whenever I could and was fortunate to have met a great circle of sailing friends, married Claire who has similar sailing passions, who can victual for a hearty bunch of blokes, helm, crew, cook a 3 course meal on board, drink me under the table, then drag me back to the boat, and is my sailing conscience that keeps me righted most of the time.

The sailing club gave me many opportunities to sail on larger yachts, where I progressed from a novice crew member through to club skipper and RYA Yachtmaster.

I've sat on the committee for a number of years, helped maintain Eagle and a few of her fore runners and supported and organised a number of club family and sailing events. I've always been impressed and passionate about the ethos of the club and have been committed to give back some of the opportunities afforded me through my sailing career.

### Why do I go sailing?

For me, it's such a brilliant [team] pleasure activity and sport, I feel privileged to be able to get out on the water with friends and mates enjoying the moment and the company, pitching up in a different port or anchorage, never the same day twice and every day an adventure.

### What type of sailing do I do?

I've tried the "racing" bit, it's all too stressful and expensive should things go wrong - not for me. I prefer the cruising mentality; it's about the journey, the company, freedom to explore and doing it for fun. Long or short passages, new or familiar stops it's all good. It's about the sailing and life on board, a bonus if you reach your intended destination or simply a change in plan if you can't.

### Any preferred sailing areas?

I never get bored with sailing in the Solent, there are times when it can be as challenging as anywhere I've sailed before, I still enjoy the fun of creek crawling or revisiting old watering holes, and when the weather builds, you can be assured of some great sailing up Southampton Water, and still only a short sail from a cosy berth. Or in warmer, deeper waters of the Mediterranean or hot sultry nights of the tropics, Andaman or South China Seas – they're all a very different sailing experience and areas I'd highly recommended for anyone looking for a different challenge.



### How about places on the "to sail list"?

I'm not a fair weather sailor but sunny sailing in tee shirt and shorts or anywhere that doesn't require "oilies" sounds good to me. Caribbean, BVI's, The Bahamas. Perhaps one day, I'd love to do more Thailand sailing, maybe sailing further south to Malaysia or Singapore or try out the emerging sailing grounds of South Vietnam.

### Scariest moments?

I've many memories that bring on the night terrors - remembering the sleepless nights, fretting in my bunk over passage plans for the day to come, following weather conditions or simply, the boat and its crew – I'm sure there are many skippers who can relate

to this too! But by far, the moment to raise the hairs on the back on my neck every time, is just thinking about the possible outcomes - whilst we were sailing a catamaran in Koh Samui last July and were snagged by a trailing line from behind a Thai fishing trawler and, potentially being towed backwards or worse, that moment had all the elements of something that could have ended so badly. Recovered by quick reactions, not panicking and a silent prayer and ending with only ones pride being hurt. A valuable life lesson and sailing experience, I never want to repeat.

### How do I sum up sailing?

Being skipper has its own rewards and challenges, being "Mate" is the most fun, but ultimately it's just about being out on the water and never stop learning, exploring, feeling alive.

Or alternatively, to plagiarise the words of the wise: It's about 95% of boredom interrupted by moments of sheer terror. And albeit a cliché: a bad days sailing is still better than a good day in the office.



As I take up my new post I'm keen to make this a club, run by its members, for the benefit of all its members, so please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or

suggestions you may have.

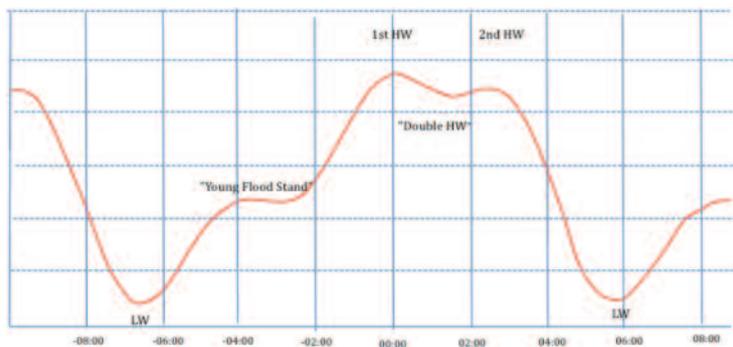
Happy sailing and here's to a safe and successful new season.

**Andy Morrill – Commodore Elect**

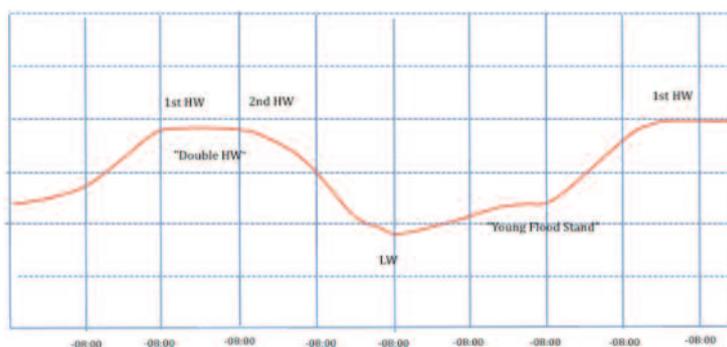
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## 'Springs' Tidal Curve



## 'Neaps' Tidal curve



## Universal Marina Tides

The tides at the upper reaches of the Hamble, and around Universal marine, can at times be ferocious and often can catch out the unwary yachtsman. This can make leaving and returning to our berth, on G6, at Universal marina, particularly challenging at certain states of the tide.

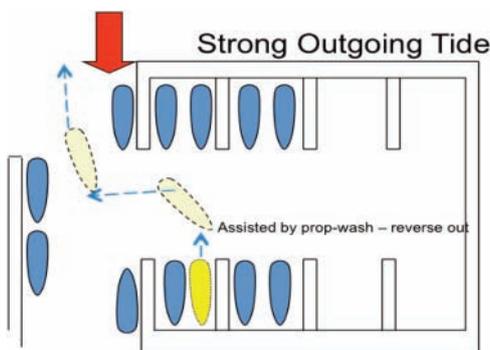
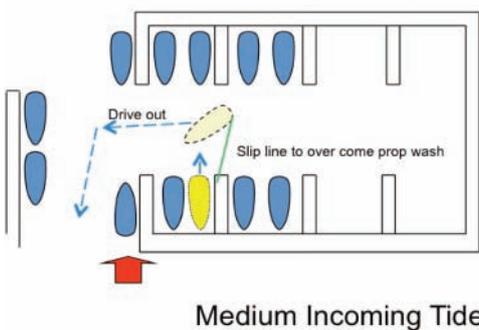
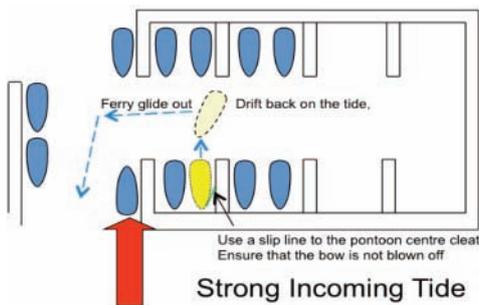
The tides within the Hamble are unique and a closer inspection of the tidal curves shows several interesting features:-

- The strong asymmetry in tidal movement in and out of the estuary is reflected in differences in the flood and ebb duration (lasting on average seven and five hours, respectively) resulting in stronger currents on the ebb tide than on the flood.
- During the flood tide there is a pause or period of little change in water level, followed by a second rise (a 'double high water'), with the whole lasting for up to about 3 hours. This feature is particularly evident on spring tides.
- Also, within the flood tide, there is a period when the rate of tidal rise slows or completely stops for a period of around 2 hours (a 'Young Flood Stand'). This period of slowing in tidal rise is followed by an accelerated rise to the first high water, being particularly noticeable on spring tides.

Putting this technical information to practical use...

### Leaving G6

Due to the starboard prop kick, the obvious way to leave our berth is to reverse out to starboard in to the main river. A flowing ebb tide assists this manoeuvre. However during the flood tide, there is a risk of being swept down on the tide, onto the boats moored in the berths/hammer head behind - (on 1 pontoon). A possible exit would be to reverse out to port, using a slip line to overcome the prop kick and then drive out forwards. With a strong ebb, it might be possible to drop back on the tide (using a slip line to the pontoon centre cleat to stop the bow from blowing off, onto our neighbour) and then 'ferry glide' out into the main river.

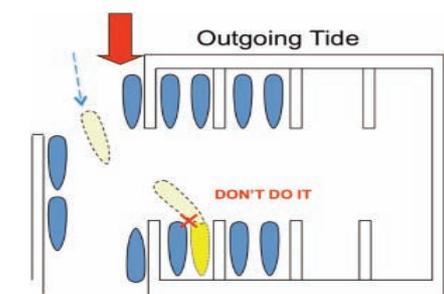
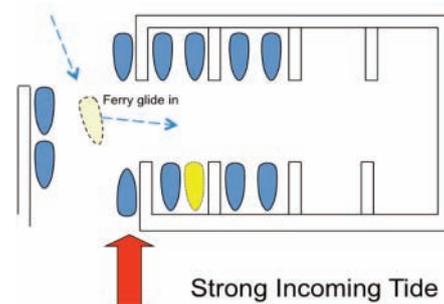
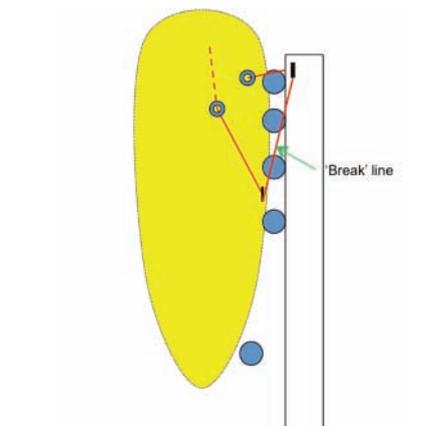


### Returning to G6

With a strong incoming tide, it is possible to 'ferry glide' across and then drive forward into our berth. With a medium incoming tide, it is possible to simply 'drive' into our berth. Even during slack water our berth is not a straight forward as it may first appear. When simply 'driving' on to our berth, approach at a slow speed as any reverse throttle will move the stern away from the pontoon (due to the starboard prop kick), -try to resist any big bursts of astern - tick over in reverse can be used to slow the boat down. When approaching at a slow speed, the prevailing SW winds can blow the bow off. A line from the yacht's centre cleat to the first cleat on the pontoon can be used as a 'break' if having to approach at more than a tick-over due to strong SW winds (but make sure you have a big fender on the bow).

Looking at the tidal curves, slack water not only occurs at HW for 2 hours, but also at LW+ 2, therefore at LW+2, a flood tide cannot be relied upon to slow the boat down.

During the strong currents on the ebb tide (the 3 hours before LW), mooring on our home berth is dangerous and should not be attempted. Skippers should bear this in mind when preparing their passage plans and arrange not to return within this 3 hour period.

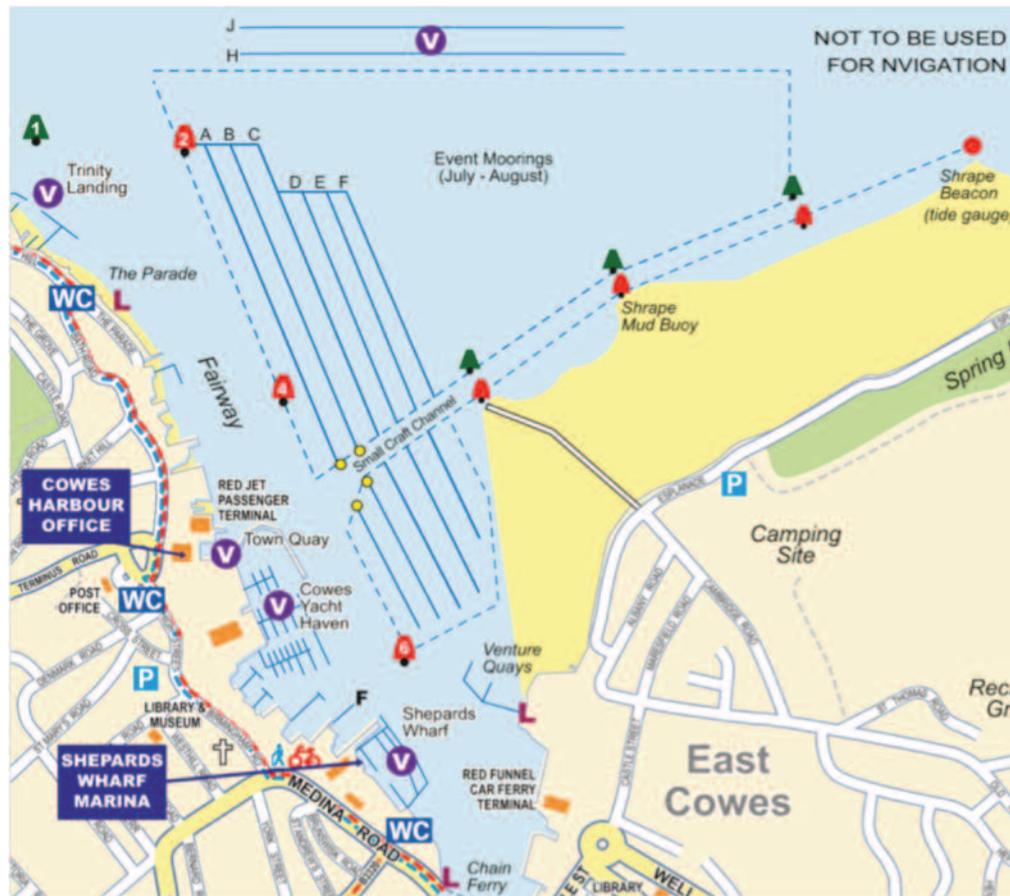


All of the above is based on my observations and experience. However, each skipper must make their own decisions on how and when to leave and return to our home berth

**Richard Foulkes** (a man with local knowledge)

## Small Craft Channel – Cowes

The small craft channel connects the eastern approaches to Cowes with the main fairway opposite Town Quay, enabling small vessels to avoid the main harbour entrance when approaching/departing Cowes from/to the north and east. The depth in the small craft channel may be as little as chart datum (0.0m). As a rule of thumb, if your draught is more than the current tide height you should avoid using the channel.



Map courtesy of PC Graphics (UK) & Solent.co

The current tide height can be found on the COWES.co.uk homepage or on the tide boards located at Town Quay and the Shrape beacon. Vessels using the channel should stay below 6 knots and pass to seaward of the Shrape beacon and between the three pairs of red and green buoys. The small craft channel is a minimum of 35m wide and is marked by three pairs of lit red and green lateral marks at the eastern end and two pairs of lit yellow lateral special marks at the western end. Vessels in the small craft channel and main fairway must ensure that Rule 9 of the Collision Regulations is followed.

Vessels joining or leaving the small craft channel at the western end should navigate with extreme caution and are advised to give way to all vessels navigating in the main harbour fairway. Care should be taken in particular not to impede commercial vessels including passenger

ferries (Red Jets) turning off Cowes Town Quay and large car ferries approaching and departing from East Cowes Red Funnel terminal.

Cross currents of up to 2 knots may be encountered in the small craft channel during spring ebb tides. Care should be taken to adhere to the buoyed channel and not to

enter the small craft mooring areas either side (prohibited areas).

More information is contained in: Cowes Local Notice to Mariners No. 12 of 2013: Small Craft Channel, at [www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk/pages/notices](http://www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk/pages/notices).

### Tidal Movements

Tides around Cowes Harbour can run up to 3 knots. Such tidal streams will have a significant effect on the manoeuvrability of commercial vessels. In keeping with the Collision Regulations vessels under 20m, sailing vessels and fishing vessels, must give way to large vessels that can only safely navigate within the fairway; this includes all the ferries arriving or departing Cowes.

**Mean spring range 3.6m (12 feet)**

**Mean neaps range 1.8m (6 feet)**

South of No. 4 buoy the tide stands for 2 hours after High Water. Exercise particular caution during periods of spring ebb tides in the vicinity of the Chain Ferry where the tide can reach speeds of up to 4 knots.

During spring tides, a west going ebb of up to 3 knots runs between High Water - 2.5hrs and High Water +3hrs at No. 1 and No. 2 buoys. The west going set is experienced as far south as No. 4 (red) buoy.

A tide gauge and five day weather forecast is available on the homepage at [www.COWES.co.uk](http://www.COWES.co.uk).



## The Depth Sounder that Lies!

Before anyone accuses me of get on my high horse, again, let me caution you that the older I get, the larger the herd of high horses grows. This one is just the current favourite.

Let us assume that you go elsewhere and charter a boat. The specs will tell you the draft of the boat before you get there, and if you ask, they will almost certainly tell you that the depth sounder reads depth below the keel.

So, the boat draws 1.8m, you are following the slight channel through the bar, into the river, for a pleasant evening in idyllic surroundings, when the helmsman announces, with more than a touch of concern, that the depth sounder reads 0.0m! You have done the sums, and there should be water to spare.

You try a turn to port – still 0.0m. Starboard – still 0.0m – can't find deeper water. What now? Perhaps you cross your fingers, turn round and give up your plans, and head for the fish dock for the night.

What has happened? Almost certainly the charter operator has "added a bit" to the keel offset, because his experience tells him that charterers are, in the main, too dumb to be able to work out depths. He has added perhaps 0.5m "to keep the numpties off the putty". He will have passed this instruction to the lad or lass who is on a gap year, looking after yachts, who will have added 0.5m to the draft of 1.8m, and set an offset of -2.3m.

Does this means that the depth sounder will read 0.0m when the depth is 2.3m? In my experience, almost certainly not! Unless he/she is very good, he/she will have ignored the fact that the depth sounder

reads from the transponder, and seldom is the transponder anywhere near the waterline. At a guess, it will often be something like 0.5m below waterline, so his keel offset of -2.3m means that the depth sounder will read 0.0m when the actual depth of water is 2.8m.

In your chartered yacht drawing 1.8m, this means that you might still have a healthy 1.0m of water under your keel, but the crucial point is that you will have no idea how much from that point onwards. If you have a satisfactory 0.9m of clearance, it will still show 0.0m, and it will show 0.0m all the way until your keel hits the bottom. At that point you will have an accurate indication of depth, but that might prove to be of little comfort.

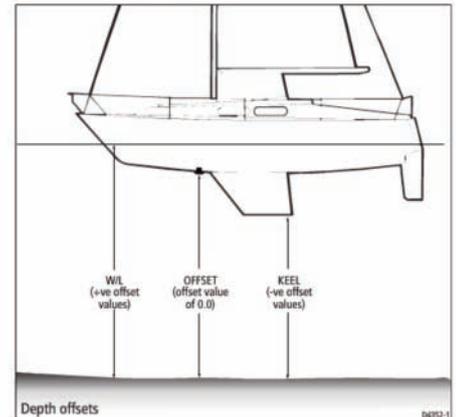
You know what your yacht draws – it was in the specs. If you know what the actual depth of water is, (and you can set up the instrument with a + offset just as easily as a - one), it is not a hard task to stay deep enough. Set the depth alarm if you want a "heads up".

Don't think this idyllic scenario is far away. The Beaulieu River is a good example (although The Master Builder is another one of my high horses!).

### Depth offset

Depths are measured from the transducer to the sea bed. However, you can use the depth offset screen to apply offsets to this distance, so that the displayed depth reading represents either the depth from the keel or the depth from the water line (W/L). In order to do this, you need to know the vertical separation between the transducer position and:

- The bottom of the keel. This requires a negative offset.
- The water line. This requires a positive offset.



The legend at the top of the Depth offset screen reflects the value you set up, i.e. W/L for positive offsets, KEEL for negative offsets and OFFSET for zero offset.

So check what you are chartering, and ask the right questions. Better still, dip the lead line around the boat before you leave the berth, and establish your own comparison. You may still be stuck with this dead band of no information, but at least you will know it is there.

**Jim Crick**  
(aka Dismal Jimmy)



## Geoff Brown 1953 - 2013 late editor of this (his words) esteemed publication

It was not Geoff's practice to include obituaries in this publication and in line with that tradition this is not but simply an acknowledgment of a relatively short but oh so active sailing career.



At the age of 50 Geoff came as a complete novice on a 5 day cruise in August 2003 cruise which his sister Marilyn (Maz) had put together. We had little wind but some fog and we managed to get to Cherbourg and St Vaast during the 5 days. He just loved it and as with many other things took to sailing with great enthusiasm and gusto. This was evidenced by the fact that during the winter of 2003/2004 he did an RYA Yachtmaster shore based course which is no mean feat with virtually no sailing experience.

Geoff did a couple of weekends during 2004 but during that year Stan Davis announced that he intended to get a crew together for the 2005 Fastnet and our man promptly signed up for it against advice from various quarters. As most of you know you do not just turn up for the start of the Fastnet but have to complete a number of gruelling RORC qualifying races prior to the start of the main event. By the end of the first series of qualifying races he had proved himself to be an able navigator and competed in, and finished, the 2005 and 2007 races. He never got over the fact that for the third in 2009 they were forced to retire at Plymouth in appalling weather a damaged boat and injured crew. He vowed he would never do another but if pushed it is likely he would have taken part again.

Whenever the chance to go sailing was on offer Geoff would be up for it. One November he volunteered to help move a boat from Andraxt on Majorca the 110 miles to Marseilles. What should have been an easy trip was far from it as on two attempts to get away from Majorca we blew the main out and finally had to admit defeat; it would have to wait until the spring of the following year. The same crew turned up in Mid-April again expecting a doddle of a trip but again not to be as we blew the main out again but this time finally made Barcelona where we effected repairs and worked our way up the coast taking night stops. A very memorable one was close to the snow covered Pyrenees where the wind screamed off the mountains and out into the Gulf of Lyon. We were very lucky that night to have got into a small marina only a couple of hours before the wind arrived. We continued to port hop up the French coast and while the weather had improved it was bitterly cold but we finally got to a very wet and cold Marseilles and the boat could be trucked to the UK.

Another significant delivery Geoff went on was to help take a boat from The Solent to La Corunna in Spain which is no mean feat. The trip was relatively uneventful but what made it different was that his mother had died just before the trip started and

he had to be back in time for the funeral which he was but it takes a different sort of man to take that sort of risk.

Those who sailed with Geoff will remember him as a passionate and outstandingly eloquent individual, some may say loquacious, but he could talk for hours on his favourite subjects which, in no particular order, were politics, fox hunting (anti), religion (very pro) and any other matters usually relating to the down trodden working man.

As ambassadors of the club there were none better as the evident enthusiasm for all things meant that he persuaded many of his friends and acquaintances to try sailing even though most lived in Coventry which is about as far as you can get from the sea on this small island of ours.

He will be missed by many. His sailing career spanned almost exactly 10 years as he died on July 13 only a couple of days after being aboard Eagle for a weekend. For those who knew him RIP is singularly appropriate. He was also a staunch member of the Baptist church and amongst many other enthusiasms was studying for a Divinity qualification.



The picture was taken off the coast of the Camargue on what was a bitterly cold still morning in April. The smile says it all.

## The Benefits Cruise

When we gathered on the first day of September for the club event on Eagle it was apparent that only one crew member was in full-time gainful employment and our average age was 68. Fortunately someone had the foresight to allow only people answering to names of John or David, to sail, which was a great help to those with failing memory from the onset of senility!

On the Monday morning we were greeted with sunshine, very mild weather but precious little wind and set off on a passage to Weymouth. Our skipper, Jeff quickly introduced a ban on 'old man noises', i.e. gasps and groans, as we moved about the vessel!

drowns out the snoring, and akin to being moored in a marina.

The next day it was warm enough to wear shorts and tee-shirts at sea, but no wind and we continued with our passage to Weymouth under power and by early

two yachts. We passed St Albans Head and were concerned about going into Poole in the fog but as we reached the channel the fog was lifting sufficiently for us to go in safely.



The following morning was foggy as we came out of Poole Harbour marina and inched our way into clear water. The murk then cleared with a breeze and enabled us to raise the sails to have a fine passage in force 4 back to the Solent. During our journey we heard that at dawn that morning there had been a 100 car pile up at Sheppey, fortunately, without loss of life. We were grateful that our trip had proved to be trouble free!

We progressed under power in order to pass through the Needles channel with favourable tide and before reaching the fairway buoy set course on a WSW direction. It seemed an appropriate time to try sailing across Poole Bay but after some time little progress had been made and we were facing adverse tide by continuing past St Albans Head. Being early afternoon we decided to go into Swanage Bay, pick up a buoy and take lunch. The conditions were benign and the bay was populated with wind-surfers skimming across the glassy sea. One of them came by and asked how long we intended to stay as apparently he owned the buoy. A rapid decision was reached to shortly move off to visit Studland Bay but return later to spend the night in these pleasant surroundings and money changed hands to reserve the buoy for the night. Our night's rest on the buoy was undisturbed by any adverse conditions, deafness

afternoon toured Portland Harbour, picked up a buoy and had lunch. We then progressed into Weymouth and rafted up for the night in the river. Whilst the shower block in the Harbour Master's Office has been completely renovated a walk round the town revealed that not a lot else had been achieved on the back of the town's heavy involvement in the Olympics.

In the morning it was misty as we slipped our mooring and became enveloped in fog on leaving the river. Our view of the scenic Dorset coast was non-existent but on putting into Lulworth Cove the fog cleared and the sun shone. We then headed southwards to clear the Lulworth Firing ranges and the fog thickened with visibility at times down to 50 metres. Everyone had their eyes peeled keeping watch with one person below on the radar. Fortunately the only vessel detected was the Range patrol boat which kept its distance and one or

## David Smithson

