

Southampton Town Quay - Rally Report

This first rally of the season, 7th April, was also a first visit by GCCC to a relatively 'unvisited' venue on the Solent rally circuit. Rumoured comments had previously dismissed the venue as 'too commercial', a 'working port', a 'rather bumpy mooring' or that 'there's not much there'!

In fact the venue offered a pleasant surprise for those who hadn't visited it previously. This recently modernised marina with its broad concrete floating wave-break provided good protection from the wash of the Red Jet Ferries' as well as plenty of room to set up for the usual pontoon 'drinks & nibbles'.

Saturday's weather was overcast but dry and with sufficient WSW wind to give a pleasant sail at least as far as Hamble Point. From the Point's South Cardinal Buoy there was a timed passage to 'Gymp' PHM just short of the marina. A total of six boats showed up (Vikla, Sarinah, Shibumi, Quickstep, Cadh 'Ruadh & Lacewing) but only Sarinha took up the timed passage challenge, making a 'clean sweep' to take the prize! So how does a motorboat out-sail the 'stick & canvass'?!

After getting familiar with the local facilities and paying our dues we all enjoyed a pre-prandial 'meet' on the wave-break. A quick change of togs and we set off for the short 5 minutes walk to Kuti's Royal Thai Pier Restaurant in what was originally a Gate House to the Victoria Pier of 1833 (later the 'Royal Pier'). The old pier is now redundant but the restaurant proved very stylish in its Grade II listed building with wonderfully attentive staff who provided us with an excellent, if somewhat slowly progressed, three course Thai dinner.

We returned quite late to our boats, feeling pleasantly sated, and settled down for a calm night's sleep before waking in the morning to a still, dank, misty and mostly wet day that hung over us all the way home - Vikla to the River Hamble, not far, but for the rest of us all the way back to Portsmouth and Northney.

Thank you to the skippers and their stowaways - Denny, Jan & David.
And despite the misty Sunday - a good start to the season!