

MOA Solent Area Rally - Easter 2015

The season got off to a fine start with the first rally of the year taking place over Easter.

Three boats (Moonshine Blues, Night Sky and Rebel III) joined Asante at Hamble Point Marine after a breezy sail on Saturday. We were joined in the evening by Peter & Sarah Sands (Blue Lightning), Peter & Sue Stonestreet (Blue Rider) and Tim & Sarah Phillips (Caribou) who all arrived by car. Given that the weather was somewhat less than balmy, a quick decision was made to move the pre-dinner get together from the pontoon to on-board Asante where we managed to squeeze 14 people on for drinks and a few snacks - thank goodness for the cockpit tent! A few drinks later (and the marina donated a bottle of wine and box of beer to the rally) it was time to move up to The Ketch Rigger for dinner where conversation continued until the staff finally decided they wanted to close up and go home!



Moonshine Blues & Rebel III at Hamble Point

The marina kicked off Easter Day with daffodils, hot cross buns, croissants and Sunday newspapers for the visiting boats. A slow start the following morning saw Night Sky depart first for Bucklers Hard, followed by Rebel III and Asante (with Peter and Sarah Sands as crew). Moonshine Blues stayed on for a while at Hamble to make the most of being alongside and carry out a few jobs before departing. Asante met up with AmyLou just outside the Hamble where we enjoyed a good sail, albeit in light winds down to the Beaulieu. Rebel III were anchored just inside the river and kindly allowed Asante and AmyLou to tie up alongside and come on board for a quick drink before heading up to Bucklers Hard. The drinks session was unfortunately foreshortened when we realised that perhaps three boats on one anchor was not the best idea and we ended up dragging towards an Elan that had anchored up behind us. A swift departure ensued, unfortunately leaving Dave and Dolores on Rebel III to wash up on their own! Berths were allocated on the fuel berth at Bucklers Hard and we were joined again later by Moonshine Blues and Ariam.



The Fleet at Bucklers Hard

The evening drama commenced when Rebel III realised they were likely to dry out in their allocated berth and so they decamped to raft alongside Night Sky. Sara and I went for a quick walk but when we go back we realised the Asante was well and truly aground with the tide still retreating further. As the pontoon dropped Asante's bow emerged further and further from the water and we were concerned that she would drop back on her rudder. Moonshine Blues who were tied up outside of us also went aground, although not to such an alarming extent. We went to speak to the harbour office about the problem who seemed rather surprised but then told us they had previously lost a few marina trollies and had found them dumped in the river just where we were berthed. Perhaps they had missed one! So the planned safari supper was put on hold until Asante refloated (as the food for 11 people was still on board!) so we all moved onto Ariam to warm up and for drinks while we waited for the tide to return. Again a cockpit tent came into its own - fifteen people on a Maxi 34 may be a record!



After an hour or so the boats refloated and we were able to move them along the pontoon to deeper water. At last the safari supper could begin, albeit slightly later than planned. Folks gathered on the various boats for starters and main courses and it was decided everybody would squeeze onto Asante for desserts so we could all get together in one big group. After some excellent puddings prepared by Sally (Moonshine Blues) and Carole (AmyLou) and yet more glasses of wine, people gradually headed off to their boats for a good nights sleep.



Sunday morning dawned cold and misty, with a slight frost making the decks a little slippery for Moonshine Blues early departure (they had to get back to London for the Brentford v Notts Forest match). The low tide was also an issue and rumour has it they may have gone aground at least once on the way down to the river! The mist cleared and the sun came up to reveal a delightful morning on the Beaulieu River. I made a quick visit up to see the Harbourmaster to discuss any possible damage to Asante following the grounding. A few phone calls later and the harbourmaster managed to persuade the crane driver to disturb his Easter break and come down and lift Asante for a look. Within half an hour, we had been lifted, checked out and relaunched with no problems found. A great relief all round and many thanks to the Harbourmaster and his team who, given the circumstances, couldn't have done more

Boats and crews gradually departed and we were the last to leave on Asante following a late cockpit breakfast in the sunshine. Light winds meant a leisurely sail/motor sail in the sunshine back to Hamble.

Cont.

Boats/Crews attending:

AmyLou - Gary & Carole Heward

Ariam - Andy, Pam & Peter Verdon

Asante - Andy & Sara Horwood joined by Peter & Sarah Sands (Blue Lightning)

Moonshine Blues - Robert & Sally Ledger

Night Sky - Allen & Linda Dobie

Rebel III - Dave & Dolores Cleary

By car - Peter & Sue Stonestreet (Blue Rider), Tim & Sarah Phillips (Caribou)

All in all, a very enjoyable weekend. It was particularly good to be joined by some new faces - Allen & Linda on Night Sky and Dave & Dolores on Night Sky. Hopefully we didn't put them off too much and they will join us again at sometime☺.

Andy Horwood

Asante