

15:00 Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2026 and 3 heavily laden motors and 11 folk are met at Gosport by the 12<sup>th</sup> disciple.

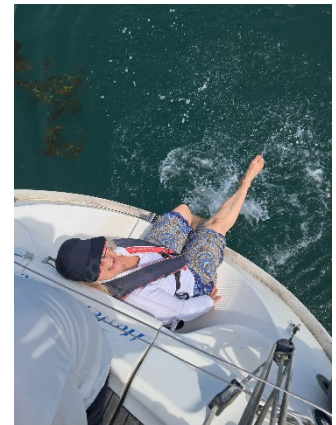
*No Optimist* and *Hayley Louise* were ready and waiting for us in the blazing sun.

It was a little intimidating on our crossing to Bembridge to have a massive – and in my opinion rather ugly- cruise ship bearing down on us: but he missed, the tide filled and we zigged and zagged our way into Bembridge marina.

So *Hayley Louise* (Kelvin, Iestyn, Adrian, Richard, Anja and your scribe) and *No Optimist* (John, Mac, Diane, Janet, Andrzej and Ian) moored up for the first night. BUT we had a problem- Mike was meeting us in the bar of the Brading Haven Yacht Club and warned us that they might be closing- so hot foot along the causeway, through the town and into the bar, even readier for the beer than when we moored! Mike, chaining yourself to the bar was a selfless act.

Saturday dawned bright and warm with a distinct lack of water in the marina which gave us an excellent excuse for a leisurely breakfast.

Had we been allowed to race the starting time would have been around 10:00, as it was we did set off around then in light winds – so light that a couple of crew members decided to cool off with a swim. Safety being paramount, lines were attached and cooling was effected. I bet the swim ladder at the back had not been used too often before in the Channel. All was well until the swimmers' line decided to wrap itself around the rudder for just long enough for *Oppy* to make up some ground.



I regret to report that *Oppy* then proceeded to out manoeuvre *HL*, disappeared round the bottom of the island and sailed cleanly through the Needles (*HL* didn't 😞 - good job



we weren't racing!)

Yarmouth Marina on a summer Saturday evening bore a striking resemblance to Picadilly Circus: boats rafted 3 deep and if the lifeboat had launched *HL* would have had to breathe in. You will be amazed to learn dear reader, that even after a full day's hard sailing we were gallantly able to struggle to the pub for refreshment and celebrate a super sporting achievement (just like the PSG fans).

Sunday morning, the boat we were moored onto wanted to leave at 07:00, as the tides were less considerate than the previous days. By 08:30 Andrzej had set a course down the Solent, which we followed in a brisk wind. Ain't it funny how those pesky tides confuse we poor inland sailors! Confused or not, we had fun and even eventually found the marks that Andrzej had set. (We're sure that knowledge of the course did not give Oppy an unfair advantage)(*Andrzej: It certainly didn't because, despite setting the course, my navigation failed to identify the first mark correctly*).

It's a hard life, so we all anchored up near Osbourne House for lunch.



To aid our digestion, there was a further couple of hours blasting around the Solent, rails to the water, spray over the bows, admiring the wealth of boats out on a Sunday afternoon.

We made it back to base with whole minutes to spare, and even the traffic home was far easier than we had feared.

In conclusion dear reader, good weather, good wind, good sailing, good company and curry puffs – what more could a sailor wish for???

For a video of some of the highlights of the trip, see [here](#).