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|-----|-----------|----------|
| 4.5 | 2212 | 4.3 |
| 1.0 | 24 | 0333 1.3 |
| 4.7 | | 1040 4.5 |
| 1.0 | SA | 1554 1.3 |
| 4.7 | | 2246 4.4 |
| 0.7 | 25 | 0408 1.0 |
| 4.8 | | 1112 4.6 |



Skills and Thrills

Clive Loughlin suggests three different itineraries for sailing in the Solent on Saturday 24 September 2022

Days spent out on the water are precious and need to be nurtured with care if we are to make the most of them. In previous articles I have suggested itineraries for long weekends based on different states of tides between neaps and springs, but what if you only have a single day?

For this series I suggest options for a specific Saturday a few weeks after the date of publication. Whereas the 'weekends' concentrated on passages and destinations, for these specific Saturdays I will concentrate on building skills and fun activities for all the crew to enjoy.

The activities will be those that I would consider for a day of a sailing course and are pitched at Day Skipper candidates as well as aspiring Yachtmasters.

With just a single day at your disposal there is simply no time for relocating the boat before the start of the adventure, and so I will suggest different options for those berthed in Lyminster/Yarmouth, the River Hamble and Portsmouth.

To get the best out of this article (and life in general) I strongly recommend having a copy of the Admiralty Small Craft Chart Folio 'SC5600: The Solent and Approaches' on board, together with a handbearing compass.

I assume winds southwesterly Force 4-5 and I leave all the tidal height calculations, passage planning

ABOVE LEFT
Swanage Bay in Dorset makes a delightful stopover in the right conditions

BELOW
Yarmouth is a splendid port and a great stopping off point to wait for a fair tide through the Needles

and pilotage to you. Times are in BST unless otherwise stated.

For this first Saturday, the time of HW Portsmouth is 1040 UT and it is mid-way between neaps and springs.

Lyminster and Yarmouth

Aim to be passing Hurst Point at 0900 and head west down the Needles





Channel. Initially the tidal stream will be about 1kn against you, but with the southwesterly the seas should be fairly flat in these 'wind with tide' conditions.

Tacking practice

The Needles Channel is 0.3nm wide and has the menacing Shingles to the north and the rocky coastline of the Isle of Wight to the south. This makes it a perfect place to practice tacking. A crew that is putting in sloppy tacks at the start should be operating as a slick sailing machine by the time you leave the 4nm channel in your wake.

Swanage

The tide will have turned and be heading southwest by the time you leave the 'Bridge' west cardinal to port.

If you head roughly west on port tack, the tidal stream should take you pretty much directly to Swanage Bay (13nm).

Mooring under sail

Head to the north of the pier and pick up a mooring buoy under sail.

The trick is to control speed and bring the buoy to the shrouds on the upwind side of the boat.

I prefer to bring the buoy to the shrouds so the helmsman/woman has it in sight at all times. Have a bow line pre-rigged at the bow and taken back, outside everything, to just beyond the shrouds ready for passing through the thick loop in the mooring buoy line. The free end of the bow line can then be temporarily tied off to a mid-ships cleat while the sails are put

ABOVE (INSET)
Swanage pier reopened in 1998 following extensive restoration

BELOW
Try picking up a mooring buoy from the shrouds so it stays in view from the helm

away, and then secured at the bow.

For trips ashore it is best to call the Swanage Water Taxi (07802 480139) rather than risk a beach landing.

Be sure to visit the recently and magnificently restored Victorian pier, and to leave a donation for the Swanage Pier Trust.

A generous skipper may also like to consider investing in a 'Discover Scuba', three to four-hour introductory course based on the pier (Divers Down, Tel: 01929 423565). After which the crew should be well qualified for rescuing the situation next time they let a line get wrapped around the prop.

At 1700 the tide will begin to turn, ready for a cracking 20nm downwind, down stream passage back to Lymington or Yarmouth.

Leave the engine switched off and manually back the jib as the mooring line is released (see 'Expert's Forum: Backing the jib' in ST/Y&Y June 2022). Then set the sails for a run; and don't forget to rig a preventer.

Sail all the way back to your harbour entrance and leave the prop in neutral and free-to-rotate for maximum boat speed.





Hamble

Set off early at about 0700 with the aim of having breakfast at anchor up the Beaulieu River by 0900 (8nm). This first exercise of the day is probably best done under engine as the tidal flow is against you, and you will need to head upwind in a busy shipping area.

High water (3.6m) this morning is at 1106 (Beaulieu River website), so head upriver on the flooding tidal stream and anchor between the '20' and '22' port-hand marks.

Trip-lines

Although this is a designated anchoring zone, and the only area on the river where anchoring is permitted, it is a good idea to fit a trip-line and float to the crown of the anchor.

I once spent a very pleasant day with members of the Southampton University Diving Club recovering the anchor and chain from a previous visit when I had not taken the above precaution.

The tide should still be flooding when it is time to leave, but with wind from the southwest you can try to recover the anchor under sail using a reefed headsail. Unroll enough to make progress against the flow, but not so much as to encumber the crew on the foredeck.

Recover the trip-line float, and pull in the slack, before hauling in the anchor chain.

When entering or leaving a harbour I like to have some of the headsail rolled away for improved forward visibility.

Navigation under sail

Once outside the Beaulieu River, the next destination is Newtown River on the Isle of Wight (3.5nm)

The navigator is banished below and only allowed access to the charts and tidal information together with trip-log and depth readings.

Zero the trip-log at the Special Mark and make best course to windward on starboard tack. The navigator gets busy below and tells the helmsman/woman when to tack, based either on depth or when the trip-log reads a particular value. Zero the trip log when the tack is made and continue like this until the navigator declares that the boat should now be near the entrance to Newtown River – at which point they are allowed back on deck to judge the results of their efforts.

This is a brief passage, and with the favourable tidal stream it should all be over in less than an hour. This makes it an excellent task for improving navigational

ABOVE LEFT
Moorings on the Beaulieu River

BELOW
The Portsmouth War Memorial makes a convenient target for a back bearing

skills, and will underline the benefits of preparation while at the same time requiring decisions to be made while underway.

Enter Newtown River under engine, and pick up a buoy or anchor. Pump up the dinghy to make sure everyone knows how, and then if not too windy, go for a paddle ashore, heading upwind and up-tide so that the return paddle is easier.

Man Overboard!

If the crew is up for more challenges, head out as soon as you like into the western Solent and practice MOB recovery. This is a great area for such activities as commercial traffic is very low, apart from the very regular ferry service between Lymington and Yarmouth.

MOB exercises care not a jot for the strength or direction of the tidal stream, which as it happens will be heading west until about 1600.

For MOB recovery suggestions, please see 'Expert's Forum: MOB -





don't make things worse' in this issue.

Then after 1600 when the tidal stream has turned, start to sail back to the Hamble being sure to pass the 'Calshot Spit' port hand mark and work out why it shows a white light at night.

Portsmouth

I often go to Portsmouth to practice mooring buoy pickup under power and sail, and as the tide is rising until HW at 1140 it is convenient to take advantage and stay within the harbour.

There are lots of mooring buoys near the big ship buoys northeast of Burrow Island and many are unoccupied and with a bit of space around them for careful manoeuvring.

Time to head out

The main tidal stream starts to head west around 1000. I would aim to be heading out past Gunwharf Quays any time after that, although the tidal stream will still be heading

into the harbour until about 1200.

If you are based here you will be familiar with the regulations that the QHM (Queen's Harbour Master, VHF Ch 11) strictly enforces – if not, consult the Almanac and ignore at your peril.

Technology free day

Set your chartplotter to record your track and then cover up the display and go 'technology free' for the rest of the day.

Head out in the small boat channel under engine and when the War Memorial bares 049°T turn onto the reciprocal heading of 229°T. This is a great opportunity to practice steering using a back bearing on the War Memorial. The trick is to have a set of rules worked out in advance that tell the helmsman/woman which heading to go on if the boat wanders off course. It is not sufficient to simply steer to the reciprocal bearing, as the tidal stream and wind will quickly push

ABOVE LEFT
Newtown Creek, a haven of tranquility

ABOVE RIGHT
Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. Queen Victoria's preferred residence

BELOW
Calshot Spit port hand mark – shows white at night – why?



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the boat off-track and onto the shallows on either side. Only a back bearing will keep you on track.

Once beyond the shallows of Spit Sand head for the south side of the main channel and Osborne Bay (6nm).

The life of 'Y'

Your task, using only compass and depth sounder, is to drop your hook exactly on the centre of the 'Y' in the 'Osborne BaY' as shown on the chart (5600.9). At least one handbearing compass will be required. The trick is to approach the target 'Y' heading into the tidal stream and have at least two nearby visual targets to take cross bearings of. It is handy if one of these is directly ahead or behind so that you know the boat will pass over the 'Y', then the second will tell you when you get there. It is all about coming up with a clear and simple plan and making good use of your crew.

Have someone at the bow ready to press the 'Mark' button on a GPS when the crew announces the compass bearings are correct, and drop the hook. You can then work out just how close you got to the centre of the 'Y' as the kettle boils. My best crew managed to get to within 5m – but probably there was quite a bit of luck involved to be fair.

Osborne Bay is a favourite location for a swim and lunch at anchor with Osborne House providing a stately backdrop.

The tidal stream starts heading east around 1600, so you can head back to Portsmouth then, or alternatively head for Cowes a bit earlier if you fancy a trip ashore.





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