

JRA Summer Rally Report 2009

JRA Rallies are usually very enjoyable social events with sailing on members boats. They are not usually known for excitement or drama. However, this year's first rally seems to have been an exception.

Our summer rally was held over the weekend of 27th and 28th June at the Warsash Sailing Club at the entrance to the Hamble river on Southampton water.

On the Saturday morning before members arrived Robin, his wife Mandy and I had just finished assembling the junk rig display models when a lady enter the clubhouse and show some interest in the models. It was Sarah Norbury the Editor of Practical Boat Owner and a member of the Warsash Sailing Club. I went over and spoke to her. She seemed quite interested in the rig and commented that quite a lot of PBO readers are also interested in the junk rig. After telling her about our rallies and trying to explain how the rig works she suggested that the association may like to submit a short article and photographs for inclusion in the rallies section of a future issue of PBO. I have done this and hopefully we shall see the result in due course.

Thirty six members and friends joined us over the two days and seven boats came to the rally. Bertrand Fercot brought his Warram catamaran 'Pha' probably for the last time in his ownership as he hopes to launch his new and much larger Warram catamaran in the near future. We had two Freedom 30's. Steven and Sally peake brought '*Hearty*' now renamed '*Alanouwoly*' and Chris Edwards brought '*Dragonfly*'. John Stone came in '*Rose*' a Sunbird 28 formally owned by his brother in law Chris Edwards. John says Rose is to be renamed '*Kittiwake*'. John Schofield came in '*Kraka*' a 26' Newbridge Pioneer and Tony Connellan brought his Skipper 17 '*Hound of the Seas*'. Sleive McGalliard brought his Westerly Longbow '*Poppy*' complete with her rather unusual junk sail which has been featured in previous issues of the magazine. Dennis Shepherd came in his Atlanta Viking '*Hui Mar*' complete with red sail.

Steve and Sally Peake chose the new name for their boat '*Alanouwoly*' in memory of a friend from Guinea in West Africa who was sadly killed in a car crash a year ago. '*Alanouwoly*' means 'Thanks be to God' in Soussou, Salif's West African language. A charity with the same name, based in the UK, has been started in his memory to further the understanding of Guinean musical traditions in the UK and help Guinea based musicians.

After lunch in the clubhouse, members joined the boats in the afternoon for sailing on Southampton water in near perfect conditions. The wind was F 3-4 and the sun shone brightly. The skippers had been asked to spend part of the time sailing close to each other to allow group photos to be taken for our own magazine and also to send to PBO.

All was going well with the boats sailing well and passing each other so photographs could be taken. Robin, another member Martin Lloyd and myself were sailing on board

'*Alanouwoly*' with Steve and Sally Peake when, without warning, there was a loud crack, the foremast which was made of carbon fibre broke about half way up and slowly lowered itself, complete with sail, over the sidedeck and into the water. The whole episode was initially rather undramatic. However, once we realized what had happened all hands got to work carefully recovering and securing the mast and sail. Needless to say the other boats came to see if any help was required. Fortunately no-one was hurt and hopefully the sail was recovered undamaged. Thankfully, the boat also appeared to be undamaged. When the accident happened '*Alanouwoly*' was sailing to windward but not hard on the wind.

With the broken mast and sail secured on deck '*Alanouwoly*' and crew made their way back to Warsash under engine. The rest of the boats remained on the water enjoying the near perfect sailing conditions.

Steve and Sally are to replace their broken mast with another one originally built by Carbospars for Bunny Smith's Dragonfly.

It was nice to see Tony Connellan in '*Hound of the Seas*' going well with his home build and very square junk sail. It just goes to show that you don't necessarily need a high tech professionally built sail. I am sure Tony would admit that it does not have the performance of other sails but nevertheless it must be most satisfying to have made your own sail.

After all the boats had returned to the clubhouse we sat down to enjoy a buffet provided by the club during which pictures taken by members during the afternoon sailing were shown on a large screen.

After dinner we received a very entertaining talk by member Trevor Wilson who had managed to survive three attempts to cross the Atlantic although his yachts were not so lucky. His first, a junk rigged yacht lost its rudder, the second was lost in a hurricane and his third which did actually reach Brazil was wrecked on the rocks. Undeterred, he is now planning a fourth attempt on board a Bermudian rigged Warsash one design. His inspiration came from a voyage of 16 exiled men, women and children aboard a 70 year old double ended sailing boat *Erma* from Stockholme in the Baltic to Norfolk, Virginia in America. Trevor has written a book on his experiences.

Sunday dawned and the weather had changed. Gone was the F3-4 wind and also the sunshine. Instead the sky was overcast and the winds very light. At least it was dry which was a change from the Sunday on the last Warsash rally two years ago. Undeterred, the crews and skippers arrived on the pontoons and after being allocated to the boats set sail up Southampton water towards Shamrock Quay where we all enjoyed a barbecue lunch and drinks at the waterside pub.

You never know who you are going to meet at these rallies. I was therefore very surprised when a voice said, don't I know you?. It was Rob a friend I had made at Douglas boatyard in Lancashire where I had been building my boat. He had built a steel

Wylo at the same place before moving, through work, to the Isle of Wight. He had come to see some friends at the rally. It was good to see him again and catch up.

After lunch we all had a gentle sail, actually a gentle motor back to Warsash to bid farewell to our friends and bring another successful and I hope enjoyable summer rally to its inevitable close.