

## Eling SC Rally

Four boats turned up at Eling and with the rally planned to coincide with a late high tide, most planned to go for a sail beforehand. Now you'll have to forgive this report being a bit self centred but you will find out why if you read on. We were probably more ambitious (or just mad) on Liberté and decided to go to Lymington and then catch the favourable tide back up Southampton water. One and All also went West but not as far, with Brock and Kamelya chickening out when a few spots of rain fell; they went straight up to Eling. I don't know why, but we always underestimate how long it takes to get from Calshot spit to the top of Southampton water. So leaving Lymington and 15.30 was a bit tight (doing an Absolute) even with 20kts of wind up the chuff. We arrived at the mooring as Tony and crew were just about to get in the dinghy. The two Davids, Wendy and Billie had already left. A rapid change of clothes, outboard on and off up to the sailing club. One advantage of being a long way up Southampton water, is that the water is very flat which meant we could give it some wellie and try to make up a bit of time without getting soaked.

The BBQ was in full flow when we arrived with ten more GCCC members arriving by car it was a pretty good turn out. Eling laid on a great BBQ and they had some rather fine real ales on tap. It was good to see both Steve and Maurice there, as well as past members. We generally mixed and socialised with the Eling SC members, checking all the time when we needed to leave, otherwise we would be spending the night in the clubhouse with dinghies on the putty. Those on boats left just before 10pm for the trip back to the deep water moorings.

Back at Liberté we were unloading the dinghy and couldn't find the bag, which had Julie's wallet in it and at first we thought the boat keys. In the urgency to leave I had forgotten the bag. I found the keys, so Julie stayed and Tony volunteered to come back with me against the falling tide. Another thrash in the dark up to Eling, just hoping there was enough water to get in and out. We made it in, but we could see the rudders and propellers on rather a lot of boats that were afloat half an hour before! A run to the sailing club, with swift hand over of the bag and we were off out trying to find the deepest water, deep being about a foot. The outboard skeg made some scrunching sounds but we got nearly to the channel markers when splut, splut, oops outboard stopped. All this hammering around on flat water had consumed the 1 litre of fuel. Oars out and a rather long row, I was very thankful Tony had come with me because I had already rowed around Lymington that day. We took turns and fortunately we still had some tide with us, so it wasn't too bad.

One and All left first for a sail West, getting as far as Keyhaven before the tide turned. We had a more leisurely start and a beat to Thorness Bay where we anchored for lunch, not the best spot in a south westerly but certainly a lot less crowded than Osborne Bay.