

# HAINES

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## Owners Club

### Our 2010 Holiday Afloat

We bought a new Haines 34 Coastal Sedan in 2009 fully fitted out for coastal cruising, and achieved a long held ambition this year, living aboard for two months based in the Solent. The trip was not intended as a test for the boat (or crew), to see how far we could go in so many weeks, but was to be a floating holiday home for a relaxing lifestyle to allow us to visit by sea or by car if more appropriate, a few of the places on the south coast we had not been to for more than 20 years. The water-based lifestyle would come to an end in the middle of July when we were due to return to Norfolk, but the experience was everything we had hoped for and is to be recommended if you are fortunate enough to have the time.



Partnership on her mooring in the Solent

The boat is more than capable of making the trip from Norfolk to the Solent by sea, but for many reasons we decided to have her transhipped overland. The semi-planing hull and efficient 200hp engine (which is just as happy at high and low revs) gave us a very economical cruising speed of 7.5 knots through the water (with an SOG of up to 10 knots when the tide is running in the same direction)! However when a higher (albeit more costly) turn of speed is desired she will happily plane at over 12 knots giving 14-15 knots SOG with appropriate tidal planning!

So what have we done and where have we been? After delivery to Lymington, our first sortie was out into the Solent to see how the boat handled “real waves” (as opposed to hire boat wash!) as well sharing the channel between Lymington and the Solent with the frequent IOW ferries. The boat (and crew) felt very comfortable in the Solent chop and the ferrys' wash was no problem.

The first weekend weather was a little mixed and we decided to visit Exbury gardens to see the azaleas before they were over and on the Sunday visited Christchurch and after discovering there was choral evensong in Christchurch Priory, stayed on - what a treat.

Our first coastal passage the next week was to Poole. It is many years since we were last there. What a transformation. New floating pontoons and excellent on-shore facilities. Poole is the home to Sunseeker and their large luxury boats were very much in evidence. We found a very good Italian restaurant with a spectacular view over Poole harbour – made all the more special by a lovely sunset. The next day we visited historic Brownsea Island in the centre of Poole harbour, now owned by the National Trust.



Cruising at 14 knots SOG

We returned to Lymington via the Isle of Wight and fetched up in Yarmouth for the night. This is a fascinating little town with a picture-postcard high street and harbour and some good

restaurants. On the Friday we walked to Freshwater and back before returning to Lymington.

We had discovered my VHF radio licence which I have held since the 1980's did not authorise the holder to use a modern VHF DSC radio such as installed on Partnership. We found an RYA training centre with a course the following weekend and the radio can now be used legally!

Our next trip was to Weymouth and Portland. The sea was flat calm and we decided to put Partnership through her paces and make the most of the west-going tidal stream. Weymouth was over 40 miles away as we passed the Shingles buoy at 10.45 am but cruising at a very pleasant 10-12 knots we arrived at 2.25pm. well before the tide changed. In Weymouth we were allocated



Old Weymouth quay

an alongside berth in the main harbour opposite the picturesque old town and unload huge quantities of fish crab and lobster daily. We used the local bus service to the Portland peninsular and walked to Portland Bill at the southern most tip. We had only previously seen this famous headland from the sea in the 1980's. On a sunny day in late May it looked positively charming - very different from how it looks from a small boat trying to avoid the dangerous overfalls 5 miles offshore.

We visited Portland harbour and the very impressive new marina set next to the National Sailing Academy and which are to be home to the sailing events in the 2012 Olympic Games. A fabulous setting with views over the whole of Weymouth bay.



The new Portland Marina

For the May bank holiday weekend we sailed to Bucklers Hard on the Beaulieu River from where we visited the Beaulieu Estate and motor museum. Sadly we had to leave the Beaulieu on the Tuesday since we had arranged to return for the Three Rivers Race. However we returned the following Thursday and decided that if the weather held we would stay on board until the boat returned to Norfolk.

On the Friday we welcomed aboard friends from Horning who were holidaying in the area and the four of us set off for Isle of Wight for lunch on the island and a return trip via the Needles and Alum Bay. We all agreed we could easily get used to this life!

Our next trip the following week was to Portsmouth and with wind gusting above Force 6 we experienced a really nasty sea state for a mile or so either side of Southampton Water with significant wave heights. The boat handled it very well but we were glad to gain the protection of Portsmouth harbour and a berth in the Royal Clarence Marina in Gosport. The next day we used the ferry to reach the greatly improved waterfront development of old Portsmouth. A trip up the Spinnaker Tower, which now dominates the Portsmouth skyline, was a great success and we spent almost 2 hours looking out over the sights and watching the passing shipping. A meal in old Portsmouth in the evening meant a return ferry trip in the dark giving us the opportunity photograph the floodlit Spinnaker tower.



Spinnaker tower by night

We were now getting the hang of catching the tides and the return trip to Lymington on the Thursday was completed in just over 2 hours. The log speed was 7 knots, yet for much of the journey the GPS showed that our SOG was between 9 and 10 knots.

The engine needed servicing and Haines sent an engineer all the way from Horning on the Friday to do this for us, and to attend to a couple of other warranty matters at the same time. We should not have been surprised - the firm gained the coveted MBM Award for Service 2 years ago!



We returned to the Isle of Wight for a couple of nights so we could explore the western end of the island. We wanted to repeat the walk to Freshwater and then walk along the coast. This we did on the Monday and the next day we used the open top bus to go to Alum Bay and then on to the Needles Fort.

Other friends were due to join us on the Wednesday so we booked a short term lunchtime mooring for the next day before leaving for Lymington and returned to the Isle of Wight the next day for lunch with our friends on board, and a sightseeing trip to Hurst Point before returning once again to our home berth in Lymington.

The Needles from the Fort

With the promise of continuing warm and sunny weather, we set off for Cowes on the Thursday morning and managed to secure a berth in Cowes Yacht Haven for the next four nights. On the Friday we again used the island bus service and after first visiting the beautiful village of Godshill travelled on to Shanklin and walked down the lovely Shanklin Chine and then along the seafront to Sandown from where we returned to Cowes by bus. Saturday was spent exploring East Cowes seafront and trying to envisage the exciting new Venture Quays development planned for that area. A lovely meal in Murrays restaurant in Cowes finished the day nicely.

The next day was spent watching the coming and going of fleets of racing yachts, the arrival of a historic tall ship The Royalist now serving as a youth training ship, which moored up next to us, as did a very large ocean racing yacht after the Royalist had left. In the afternoon we took a trip using the chain ferry and walked to the greatly improved East Cowes marina a little further up the Medina river.



Al fresco dinner in Cowes

After a pleasant cruise back to Lymington we got ready to welcome other friends from Horning on the Wednesday. The day dawned warm and sunny and another pleasant time was spent catching up on the news from home and cruising over to the Isle of Wight for lunch. Dinner in the Blue Bird restaurant behind the quay in Lymington was a fitting end to another memorable day.

A few days were then spent away from the Solent as we assumed our Grandparents role looking after our three grandsons in North London. Then back to the boat for the final phase of our holiday afloat beginning with a spectacular organ recital by the international concert organist Margaret Philips on the magnificent organ in Christchurch Priory.

We had noted a headland to the east of Lymington called “Nash Point” and felt we just had to visit it. This provided a lovely walk along the edge of the northern shore of the Solent, with the late afternoon sun illuminating the Isle of Wight, and later the fleets of little sailing dinghies manned by children learning to sail, all with their differently coloured sails. A real spectacle. While walking along the shoreline we saw the QM2 leaving Southampton – a real ship rather than a floating apartment block which so many of the modern liners resemble! Droppings along waters-edge revealed that New Forest ponies regularly found their way onto this beach.

Later that week we set off once again this time to the Hamble River and Hamble Point marina, which is a ten-minute walk from the pretty village of Hamble. While there we took a trip up river to what used to be the home of Moody boats at Swanwick but which is now a large marina. In fact the Hamble river and associated marinas is one huge parking lot for 10,000 boats of every description. On the Saturday we left the Hamble for Southampton and found a berth for the next two nights at Ocean Village marina close to the centre of Southampton and a stroll away from the docks where the Cunard and P&O cruise liners berth. It was fascinating to see the Oriana at relatively close quarters and to watch as she left with hundreds of passengers lining the decks.

We had hoped to visit Chichester harbour from Southampton but the weather deteriorated and with consistently strong winds only the hardiest of sailors were venturing out, so reluctantly we returned to Lymington from where we used the car to meet up with friends who live in the vicinity and started to negotiate the return trip for the boat on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

Was it a success? Without a doubt - Yes.

Has the boat proved adequate for living aboard and taking us on our travels? Again a resounding Yes.

Would we do it again? Definitely - although it will take a bit to restore the bank balance!

Would we recommend anyone else to try it. Yes - provided you have experience of the sea and a working knowledge of basic navigation and a suitably equipped boat.

Keith and Maureen Nash