

## OCEAN ADVENTURE – TRIP REPORTS

By Tim Peace

Since joining the MVS in 2016, I've been really keen to take on some longer passages (out of the harbour) and into some more 'challenging' waters. Challenging by the nature of them being new to many, with hugely varying features and conditions and, by seeing what Ocean Adventure is really capable of in so many ways. The last few days has definitely covered those bases...and she has so much more still to offer too.

The trips were designed to be open to all, particularly those with a keen interest in learning more about RIB helming and, more importantly, about themselves in relation to where their ability currently lies. For me personally, I've been helming Ribs for many years, in very harsh conditions practising and actually rescuing people but, I wanted to do more practise navigational work, continue to see if I could pick up some tips from others and them, maybe from me. 'Teamwork makes the dream work' as they say.

### **FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018/ POOLE TO BEMBRIDGE (83 Nms)**

**CREW:** Nigel Rodgers, Iain Rainford, Mark Kelly & Tim Peace

The 4 of us left Cobbs to a very chilly start with me at the Helm. A quick fuel stop to Saltern's then we were enroute to Bar Buoy for our bay crossing in the direction of the Needles. I'd selected this route purely for long open passage with very obvious, white cliffed landmark in the distance. We arrived slightly north of the Fairway buoy and took an uneventful sightseeing passage into the Solent. On arrival on Sconce North Cardinal, Mark took over the Helm and took us up to 30 kts for big push to Bembridge. By this point, Nigel had hibernated into his clothing, Iain was deaf in in left ear and Mark's feet didn't work – it's fair to say, it was quite chilly!

Rounding the No Man's Land Fort, we kept a good eye out for our next WP, the Tide Gauge at Bembridge...although it was no longer showing the tide depth! I'd calculated we should have enough water to cross the bar by 1230 hrs so we trickled over the bar having less than a metre under the boat but, were safely into the harbour. Bembridge was nice and empty so we tied off, had lunch and got warmed up.

Nigel took us back to Yarmouth for fuel and the weather held out for us. The Solent was very quiet with only a few Wightlink, Redjet and Red Funnel vessels around. We weren't too sure on the fuel capacity so we thought we won't trust the fuel gauge and get full for the final leg. Iain took us out toward Hurst Castle and into some slightly lumpier waters between the Shingles bank and Alum Bay but, it really gave us chance to shake off OA and let her do what she does best – blast through waves. The sunset was creeping up as we went to refuel and about £90 on fuel spent so a great value day out. At least we knew now that the fuel consumption was about 1.1 litres per mile.

### **SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018/ POOLE TO OCEAN VILLAGE (74 Nms)**

**CREW:** Alan Jones, Duncan Miller, Stefko Urumov & Tim Peace

Today was always going to be wet so I suggested to Duncan the day before that he should collect Vasco's helmets so we could use them with the visors – I'm pretty sure everyone was very grateful that Gecko made helmets by the time we got back! Stefko took us out of Cobbs, with Alan navigating, out into the bay. From this point it seemed that every single wave we hit shared itself with us in the boat; it was relentless. All the way there and all the way back. The only thing that changed was the volume of water; it ranged from a light spray to Alan's 'greenies' coming over the

bow like a tractor bucket being unloaded on us. Stefko took us across the bay to North Head Buoy and the sea was building quite nicely. Alan took over just west of Hurst Spit into a strong following sea entering the Solent. I think we had 3 serious soakings before we picked up West Bramble west cardinal at the start of Southampton Water. Duncan then navigated us up to Ocean Village using the pilotage plan and we arrived safe and sound at, F1 mooring for our lunch stop.

Duncan took us back out into Southampton water with a colossal container ship greeting us coming into the main channel followed by a large LPG vessel in some quite sheltered waters...then we got back out into the Solent. The 'Solent chop' is world famous I'm told as, if you're in the Solent, you can't escape it. The wind was F4-5 on the nose and we started what was to be quite a lumpy return trip. Duncan trimmed the boat to the right speed and OA 'floated' on her air cushion over most of the waves with the odd one reminding us it was there with a big bang on the hull. I'd asked to do the final leg, as I thought it would be quite lumpy on the other side of Hurst Castle...and it didn't disappoint. Duncan and I swapped over and the chop was then joined by more chop but, on top of a good size swell.

The swell was big enough that it was a long way down into the troughs and a long way up when looking at the peaks from the troughs. In these seas, my priority is to keep her in the water and as level as possible so we keep forward speed and, the crew in the boat! Power off, power on, power on, power off for the next hour long crossing with some awesome fish eye and bird's eye views of the waves; this where I feel so happy to be part of mother nature's forces. As we approached Hengistbury Head, the waves were peaking well over the rocks and visibility was becoming quite hard. Alan's goggles were full of water and Duncan's, Stefko's and my visor was battered continually so we could only see clearly for probably every 2 in 10 seconds – great fun!

As we entered the impact zone of the waves, I saw a big rogue wave jacking up 30 m off the port side so made a very quick turn into it as I think, if it had hit us beam on, it may have become a very different day out. Silence fell over the boat, I lined OA up perpendicular to the wave, the bow started to climb, I powered off as we went up the face as long as the boat. The wave just started to spill as we reached the peak and we took flight at 45 degrees. We seemed to be floating for 2-3 seconds, I was looking through the windscreen with the white bow locker in my eyeline as opposed to the horizon and my visor practically resting on the GPS – it was a pretty steep angle, put it that way.

OA hung in the air and came back down on her tube cones and gently resettled her few tonnes back into the sea as if falling onto a huge cushion. A quick look behind me to see if everyone was still there, 'yes' and away we go again with a great story to tell. With everyone buzzing from our flight and passage we pulled back into Saltern's to refuel and had a look around some boats with Nigel B (who was on shift) and back to Cobbs. Another great day out and one we'll all be referring too for a while I think. Roll on the next ones....

Tim