



Shakedown Cruise

29th April to 1 May 2017.

It was extremely satisfying sitting at the end of a long table watching a group of people who some few hours before, had been acquaintances, members of the same club--but little more. The food had passed, the wine had flowed and suddenly this group of people became as one – it was the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club at its very best, cementing relationships built up during the day cruising in company.

The event had started the night before in the Clubhouse with a meeting to discuss tactics and final passage planning. As ever on these early-in-the-year occasions, the weather was not being particularly obliging. The object of this cruise was to take our boats briefly to sea to make sure that they were ready for the coming season. The next morning, five boats eventually left the Club Marina for the delights of the Norfolk Broads via a short sea passage to Great Yarmouth, passage of the Haven and Breydon Bridges and then a long passage up the River Yare to Bramerton.

The first to leave was DELIGHT (Roger & Dottie Matthews); the rest of us had to wait while UK D ORCA manoeuvred outside the marina entrance. Eventually, SEA SWALLOW (John Franklin), THE DREAM (Dexter & Wendy Bowers) and FOXLEY LADY (Paula & David Evans) left the marina and headed out into a slight sea. MERIDIAN STAR (Ian Brockie and John Finbow) decided to follow a little later as they wished to open up their powerful engines to the full – they eventually caught up with us about halfway to Great Yarmouth.

The sea conditions were almost ideal for a Shakedown Cruise with a slight sea and a gentle breeze. The problems soon became apparent – SEA SWALLOW – was soon reporting high engine exhaust temperatures – you could hear the engine alarms over the RT! By 1300, the cruise flotilla was together for the passage of the Haven and Breydon Bridges and by 1345 we were all making passage across Breydon water. It was here that THE DREAM reported that she had fuel in her bilges but she was otherwise performing well.

As the afternoon progressed, the weather improved and by the time we arrived at our destination, WATER'S EDGE at Woods End, Bramerton, the sun was shining. There was a little confusion over mooring at Bramerton but this was soon sorted out and crews repaired to FOXLEY LADY for preprandial refreshments where we were joined by Kingsley and Janet Farrington, David Jobson and Don Cleaver. We then all trooped off to the restaurant where the function room had been reserved for us with a single long table to accommodate all 18 members of the club who sat down to dinner together.

The food was excellent, the wine and beer matched the food and it was a pleasure just sit back and soak up the atmosphere of general bonhomie. After dinner, the diners disgorged into a clear moonlit scene for a pleasant walk back to their boats.

Next morning, Sunday, 30 April, in spite of the weather forecast of high winds etc. the morning dawned fine and clear with sunshine and little wind although the barometer had fallen by 5 millibars during the night. At the skippers meeting, it became apparent that different boats on

the cruise had different agendas. THE DREAM decided to press on and get to a boatyard that could help her with her fuel problem as soon as possible. SEA SWALLOW had her own tame engineer on board who was attending to the various issues and she decided that she was going to explore further up the river towards Norwich. MERIDIAN STAR, DELIGHT & FOXLEY LADY pressed onto the next destination which was The Ferry Inn at Reedham.

We arrived at lunchtime with a stiff breeze blowing the boats onto the mooring; DELIGHT decided to press on towards Waveney while MERIDIAN STAR & FOXLEY LADY remained at the Ferry Inn for a slightly alcoholic afternoon and an early supper. The two crews decided to go their different ways the next morning, MERIDIAN STAR putting to sea for a fast sea trial back to Lowestoft, while FOXLEY LADY lowered her radar arch and windscreens preparatory for passage under Vauxhall Bridge back to her home base on the Northern Broads.

Thus, came to an end the first of the Club's cruises-in-company; it had been an enjoyable affair and promised well for the later cruises in the season. The next is the River Thames Holiday

Cruise commencing on 12 June for a two-week visit to the non-tidal Thames. For those interested, please contact Catherine at the Club on **01502 566726** or admin@msyc.org.uk.

DCE
3/5/2017