

Easter Escapade

*by Pam Goddard
Scurvy crew of Dizzy Lizzy*



Image courtesy of Pam Goddard

Chris Hinson and family on board *Blue Marlin*

The weather forecast for Easter was not good: rain on Good Friday and Saturday, brighter on Sunday and rain on Monday. However, we had committed to a B&B in Yarmouth for two nights, so we set off early on Friday morning to launch *Dizzy Lizzy*, our 6.5m Ballistic, on the River Hamble. The sky was overcast and grey but dry as we launched. By the time we got into Southampton water, the rain started and although it was a fairly short run to Yarmouth with slight sea conditions, we were all cold and wet from the rain as we arrived.

Katie (11) and I decided to take the sensible option and catch the bus into Newport to watch a film at the cinema. Trevor and Richard (12) decided to rendezvous with *Storm Breaker* and go out for a drier run (due to the canopy) with Paul and Bryn Beaurain. We did try to meet up with *MOR DEN 2*, an 8m Ocean, and *Blue Marlin*, a 6.9m Solent, who were supposed to meet up with us to start the cruise at 10.30am from Yarmouth, but we couldn't raise them. We later found out that they had also taken the bus and spent the day visiting Osborne House!

The afternoon brightened up somewhat, with sunshine and clear skies. So, after *Storm Breaker* had dropped Trevor and Richard off at Yarmouth to head back to Southampton and home, they decided to take *Dizzy Lizzy* out again for a ride to the Needles.

The rain set in again in the evening, but we weathered it well inside *The Wheatsheaf*. We managed to speak to Barry from *MOR DEN 2* and agreed to meet at 10am on Saturday.

Saturday morning was cold and grey again, but started out dry. *Dizzy Lizzy*, *MOR DEN 2* and *Blue Marlin* all headed out from Yarmouth for Lymington which was just a short run. We visited the market there and had coffee, lunch and got to know each other a bit better. *MOR DEN 2* and *Blue Marlin* tend to launch on the East coast, so we had not met them on the water before.

Mike Deacon joined us as he is based in Lymington, along with Mark Eade (brand new member) and Rebecca with their 6.8m Ribcraft (cunningly called *Ribcraft*). *Hot Lemon* was having some mechanical work done so Mike joined us as a passenger on *Dizzy Lizzy*. We all agreed to head into Christchurch as we would be able to do this on a rising tide and we hadn't been there before by water. As we headed out the rain started again but, with slight seas, the journey was fairly comfortable (if a bit wet).

The channel buoys were difficult to see, but Mike guided us in close enough to pick them up. We followed the very winding and shallow channel into Christchurch. There were hot chocolates, coffees and cups of tea all round at the harbour café to warm us up before setting off again to make sure we didn't lose too much water on the falling tide. There was some surf breaking as we left the mouth of the Christchurch channel which caught Mark Eade out and tipped the boat up backwards to an almost vertical angle. Even more surprising, we somehow managed to capture this on camera! The rain was steady now and I was beginning to feel like a drowned rat. When Trevor suggested that I go straight back to Yarmouth rather than drop Mike back at Lymington and then come back to Yarmouth, I jumped at the idea. We radioed *MOR DEN 2* and I caught a lift with them straight back to the warm and dry B&B!

Having had a hot bath and a cup of tea, I began to wonder where the rest of the *Dizzy Lizzy* crew were. When they finally turned up, it was with a new flotation suit (or two) courtesy of Mike! No wonder nobody else had volunteered to go straight back to Yarmouth – they'd had other plans.

The crews from *MOR DEN 2* (Barry, Penny and cousin Jane), and *Blue Marlin* (Chris, Fiona, Sam and Ben) decided to join us for dinner at Jireh House (which, by the way, is to be recommended as a B&B – but watch out for the low beamed ceilings!). We enjoyed a convivial meal swapping boating stories and exchanging boat trivia - well the men did that whilst the women chatted and got to know each other. The children disappeared to *The Wheatsheaf* to pick up the free wireless internet connection on their iPods. They were later caught bouncing around on our beds upstairs! After agreeing to meet at 10am again the next morning, we went to bed. The crew of *MOR DEN 2* hiked across the road to their B&B, Harvey's (which did not get such a positive review), and *Blue Marlin's* crew stumbled back to their caravan in a nearby campsite.

Trevor, Pam, Katie & Richard Goddard



Blue Marlin



MOR DEN 2



Ribcraft



Sea Hawk



Blue Marlin & MOR DEN 2



Sunday morning dawned bright and mostly sunny and the plan was to go around the Isle of Wight past The Needles and on to Ventnor for a coffee break. We knew that we would be passing through a couple of rough patches like St Catherine's Point, but the conditions were in general slight and the sun was shining. *Blue Marlin* had picked up some more crew (sister Tracey and her two children, Joe and Rosie), so were carrying seven in total.

We went through a rough patch of sea around The Needles but otherwise the journey was OK. As we approached St Catherine's Point, we could see that it was quite choppy with a big swell coming across and breaking waves in all directions. Our passage became slower and rougher and Trevor finally decided to head straight out to sea to face the waves straight on. After ploughing through them for a few minutes, we turned back towards the shoreline having reached slightly calmer waters. Breathing a sigh of relief, we looked back to see how *MOR DEN 2* and *Blue Marlin* were coping. They seemed to have decided to take the same route as us when suddenly they stopped making any headway and we could only see them when the swell and waves allowed.

Shortly after, over the airwaves came a radio call from Chris sounding remarkably calm, "*MOR DEN 2, MOR DEN 2* this is *Blue Marlin*. We have lost all steering. The hydraulics have gone. We have no steering, over." "We will come around. Get a rope ready," came Barry's reply. We sat out in the slightly calmer waters watching with bated breath, waiting to see if we would be needed in the rescue. *MOR DEN 2* came around, Chris threw a rope and Jane on *MOR DEN 2* skilfully caught it and tied it on. Both RIBs were being washed about, "like being in a washing machine", as described by Jane later on. However, it wasn't long before *MOR DEN 2* began to tow *Blue Marlin* out of trouble. We learned that the steering on *Blue Marlin* had lost all its oil, so not only were they being washed about in the rough seas, but were also stuck going around in circles! At times, the boat had been tipped over sideways, giving the whole crew quite a scare!

We radioed to say that we were happy to take passengers as soon as they were in calmer waters and did so as soon as we could. Understandably, they were a bit shaken but there were no injuries and everyone was OK. *MOR DEN 2* towed *Blue Marlin*

at 24 knots into Ventnor where we all gratefully moored up. A quick inspection revealed that the nut had fallen off the steering fluid pipe, letting all the oil pour out and hence the loss of steering. Chris managed to put it all back together but only had a small bottle of steering fluid to replace the fluid lost. It wasn't enough. Being Easter Sunday, no suitable shops were open, so Chris' sister, being a local, called her husband and asked him to bring across some cooking oil as an emergency measure. She checked whether vegetable oil was OK!

As we all recovered over a cup of tea, Trevor got a call from Richard (another fairly new member of BIBOA) and Jane with *Seahawk*, a 5.85m Ribcraft, who had come from Chichester to Bembridge and then to Ventnor to meet us. Trevor went down to the quay to meet them and found that they had a big bottle of steering fluid that saved the day!

Having filled ourselves with refreshments and the steering column with fluid, we all set off to Bembridge for lunch. The sea conditions got a bit choppy, but were still slight. *Blue Marlin* was fine, with no reoccurrence of the steering problem. We had lunch at the sailing club, who coped admirably with our table of 17! Sadly, we had to get back home on Sunday night. So after lunch we said our farewells and although we all left together, we had to peel off back to the Hamble, whilst *MOR DEN 2* and *Blue Marlin* headed back to Yarmouth and *Seahawk* went back to Chichester.

Their plans for Monday were to go to *The Folly* in Cowes for lunch and then back to Southampton/Hayling Island to get their boats back on their trailers and start their journeys home.

In summary, the Easter Cruise was most enjoyable even though the weather was wet for much of the time. We met some lovely people whom we had never met before and had a great time. It was good to see some of the new members come along and join this cruise, and as it happened one of them saved the day by carrying essential supplies enabling the repair. It also reminded us that it really is a good idea to "buddy up" with at least one other boat and to keep together on these cruises. If *MOR DEN 2* had not been so close to *Blue Marlin* when they lost their steering, we could have had a much more serious incident. With Barry being the Club Safety Officer, *Blue Marlin* was in the most capable of hands!

Ribcraft prepares for take off!



Ribcraft & MOR DEN 2 entering Christchurch



MOR DEN 2 towing Blue Marlin

