

Dinghy Cruising Association

Report of South Coast Winter Meeting - 16 January 2010

This was held, as usual, at The Crown Hotel in Emsworth. Due to persistent heavy snow I was concerned, right up until three days beforehand, that I might have to cancel, but then the snow melted and all was well. However, I had other problems. When checking car the day before I found the battery dead, so time allocated to checking my digital projector was instead spent walking into town to buy a battery, trundling it home on my shopping trolley and installing in car. Then I couldn't get projector to pick-up my laptop, so Saturday morning, when I should have been on my way, found me rushing projector and laptop to local photography shop and pleading for help. They solved the problem, bless them! I now know it was due to a faulty plug on the cable. Then on the way down I had a puncture. By this time I was beginning to think I wasn't meant to be there. I just about arrived in time and we had a splendid meeting.

Twenty people braved the cold weather to attend, and in spite of only expecting 15 the hotel did us proud and there was plenty of food for everyone. We enjoyed some videos recorded by Ian Hylton of out-of-date flares fired on Bonfire Night in Len Wingfield's garden. Samples were passed around, and the advantages and disadvantages of the various types were discussed. Ian's opinion was that the best option would be a pack of mini-flares and a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) in a lifejacket pocket. He then demonstrated various pieces of equipment which he carries or wears while sailing.

Discussion followed about future methods of running the "Hayling Challenge". Cliff Martin, the organizer, wanted to make it more of a race, but he was advised of legal requirements for insurance and safety vessels if we did this. The result of a vote was to continue with the status quo. Congratulations to David Sumner who was voted the winner of both the Hayling Challenge cup for the "best" circumnavigation of Hayling Island, and the Alan Earl trophy for the best circumnavigation by a boat with conventional rig, having previously converted his Mirror dinghy from gunter to gaff.

We were all so pleased to meet-up again after the long spell of cold weather that some of us were still chatting at 11.30pm, even though I'd only booked the room till 10.30pm. A brilliant evening and thank you all for coming!

Liz Baker

