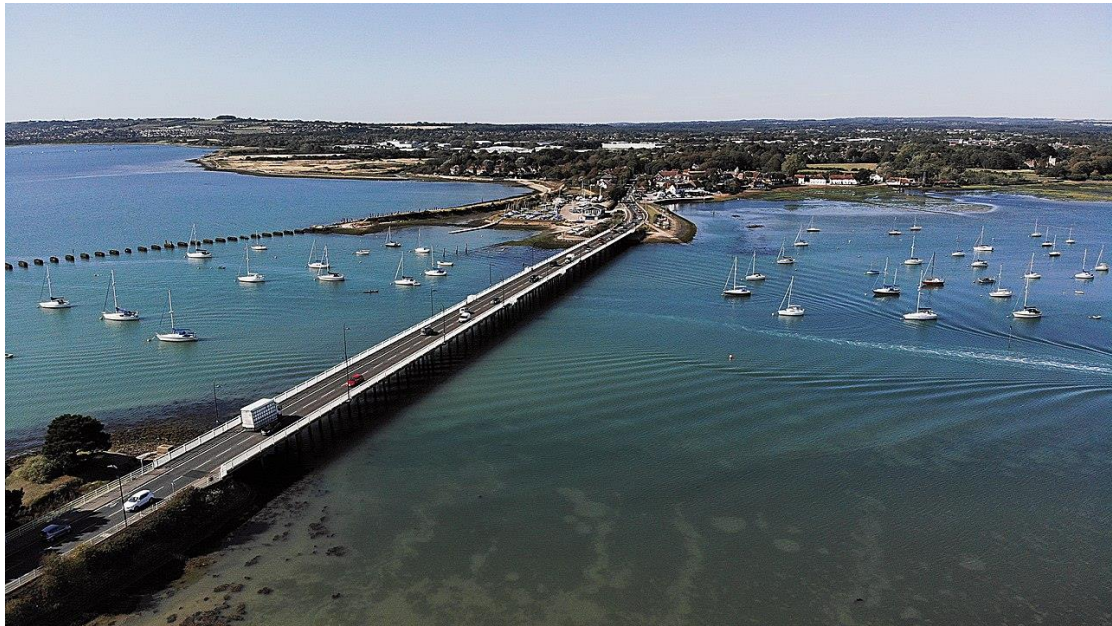


MY FIRST REAL TRIDENT ESCAPADE

Pete Munday takes *Red Kite* out for her first proper trial sail and dips her gunwhale under water with exhilarating results in this 2016 Marcon Trophy winning account.

I got aboard *Red Kite* at 08.30. This was only my second trip with her. She is moored on the Chichester Harbour side of the Hayling Island Road Bridge and it was from there I departed.



The moorings on the east side of Hayling Island Bridge (right) are in Chichester Harbour.

There was a light South Westerly 2-3 and it was a beautiful sunny morning, I put on the tiller pilot and with the VHF already on, that was all the electrical equipment in use (there has been more added since).

I put the kettle on, the little Nanni inboard purred away and, with the binos in one hand and a cuppa in the other, had a



“Three seals enjoying this beautiful morning...”

pleasant trip down the harbour looking at the little egrets and 3 seals enjoying this beautiful morning. How different things would be in an hour or so.

As my first trip had been a slow affair the week before with a combination of light airs and inexperience in sailing I decided with a bit more wind on this day to find the best course to get the most out of her and not worry too much about destination.

After clearing the bar beacon I again used the services of the tiller pilot raised the main and unfurled the genoa and set a Southerly course, I was probably making about 4 knots and having a very pleasant sail, time for another cuppa.

As I was finishing I noticed some way off the sea surface looking quite black and from my time in the commercial fishing



Chichester Bar Beacon after it was redesigned in 2020

industry knew this meant wind. Not being experienced in Tridents or sailing I did not reef.

As the wind freshened, she heeled more and really got going.

How fast I had no way of telling but significantly quicker than the 4 knots earlier on in the day.

This was fantastic; she was occasionally dipping her toe rail under the water and I could feel the air and sea slapping against the bilge keel and with land disappearing quickly astern I settled in for a good sail, legs braced and really starting to get a feel for this great little boat with a motion so different to anything I had been used to. It was so pleasant not to be rolling gunnel to gunnel for a change.

I was by now directly looking at the East end of the Isle of Wight when the wind picked up a little more. This was exhilarating. The toe rail was now under more than ever and *Red Kite* was flying (to me anyway).

I was by now finding the helm a bit heavy but was having so much fun and did not want it to stop. The view through the companionway through the port windows just showed the side deck as being green for the most part, after another hour or so I came across a couple of gravel dredgers and knew I must be on the spoil grounds, approximately 11/12 miles off and could now just make out the white bits of Ventnor far to the NW. I made the decision to go on for another half hour then change course and head NNW for the Nab Tower, discretion being the better part of valour and not wanting to push my luck but on the other hand not wanting this experience to stop either.





So with the course change made came a new motion and a lot more spray, it was blowing off the port bow as she dipped, hitting the genoa and running off the bottom like a waterfall and she was still going well (along with my pulse rate). The adrenaline rush was fantastic especially after being a little disappointed the week before, not in the boat but at my ability to get her going. This was a very different trip indeed.

With the Nab Tower now hoving into view, and the wind dropping as I was getting in the lee of the island, I decided as I could not get to my mooring for another three hours or so to have a potter down the Solent.

As things calmed further, I made a welcome cuppa and some bacon sarnies (why does bacon always smell and taste so good on a boat?). As I neared the forts one of the clipper fleet came out of Portsmouth, had he been near me a couple of hours ago I may have given him a run for his money!

All jokes aside, it would have been impressive to see that in those conditions.

By now there was very little wind but *Red Kite* was still making 3/4 knots at a guess and so it was I turned for home, sailing most of the way up Chichester Harbour, only doing the last mile under power.

I moored up at 16.30, had a look at the chart and worked out I had covered approximately 28/30 miles. I had a tidy up and made sure everything was shipshape before getting into the dinghy to go ashore with probably the biggest grin I have ever got off a boat with.

Now I know I didn't cover huge distances over many days or visit far of climes but just wanted to send in someone's early experience of these brilliant little boats. At no time did she feel unsafe or flimsy; quite the reverse. I should I have reefed, yes of course but it was huge fun and the first of many little escapades with this grand, tough and safe little ship.



Pete Munday