

# Hayling Challenge 2024

Note: This entry is eligible for the Hayling Challenge Trophy and also the Allan Earl Trophy

<b>Skipper name:</b>	David Sumner
<b>Boat name:</b>	Curlew
Type of boat and description:	Modified Mirror, with gaff rig
Rig:	Gaff rig and topsail used throughout plus old style spinnaker
Date of challenge:	August 28, 2024
Time of HW Chi BST:	0700
LW Chi BST:	1230
Start time:	1033, HW+3 1/2
Finish time:	about 1730
Did you go Clockwise or ACW?	Clockwise
Wind strengths and directions:	F3 Easterly gradually veering South and fading.
How did you pass Hayling Bridge?	Sailed under bridge with topsail and peak dipped, with a few inches clearance.

## David's report:

I decided that I had spent too many hours tacking against foul tides getting down Chichester Harbour, so would depart from Cobnor to enjoy the maximum ebb, around HW+3 ½. With an Easterly F3 this was highly enjoyable, and within half an hour I was passing the East Head starboard hand marker and heading over the Winner sands towards the Bar Beacon.

It was very shallow, being near to LW, and my heart was in my mouth. The sea had something of a left-over swell after previous bad weather and the prospect of diverting over the swashway held little appeal, but once out to sea I did notice several dinghies taking the short cut. Once at the Bar Beacon, around 1130, I turned on to my heading of 270 degs and cut directly over the West Pole sands, now a little choppy but not troublesome.

So far I was pleased with my progress, but it is a long way across Hayling Bay and the wind came and went. At one point I saw a big fleet of international dinghy racers ahead, and having no idea what their intentions were I turned a little to seaward and passed close to their committee boat. Soon after this, another support RIB came alongside and we had a chat about Curlew and the Hayling Challenge.



David in Curlew at a 2023 rally (pic J Murphy)

The East Winner sands were slowly approaching, and care is needed not to run on to them, even with the depth sounder on. I plotted a clearing line from the hotel on Hayling sea front such that when it bore 030 when I was at the Winner. Sure enough, I was a little too far inshore to clear the sands and had to head out to sea. My next heading was towards the Roway Wreck beacon, which I soon picked up with my monocular. The seas built up quite suddenly and I soon realised why, because I had confused Langstone Fairway for the Roway, taking me into danger, so another quick course change. All the time the wind, which had been Easterly, was veering, and now was SE, so I gybed the vessel and was able to sail straight into Langstone entrance and head up to the Mulberry Harbour, which I passed at 1300, just 2 1/2 hours since departure.

Now I headed up the main channel and the wind followed me, but slowly decreasing. I was really pleased with the time so far, but by the time I was approaching the railway crossing I was beginning to notice the wind dropping. I am able to rig an old style spinnaker, which is tacked down near the foot of the mast and poled out from a shroud, and set this for a while, but soon would have my hands full negotiating the railway pillars and the bridge, so brought it in again. In theory I could sail under the bridge, and with some trepidation I just lowered the topsail together with the peak of the gaff and pressed on. The sail was baggy but still propelled the boat, and in seconds I had passed with inches to spare and was emerging from the bridge, to the surprise of boys fishing from the top.

Now the wind was getting very light and I row-sailed through the cut towards Northney Marina. As I gently ghosted/rowed past the Northney Beacon, and just when a launch was emerging from the marina, the wind stopped and then shifted. Curlew decided to dive at the post, and I

had no alternative but to do a sharp 180. I have to say the launch read the situation perfectly and stopped for me.

Now I had a close-hauled and gusty few minutes getting along towards Emsworth beacon, but having struggled to reach it, my hopes of a quick time evaporated, as the wind became light and headed me and the flooding tide slowed me. After a long series of tacks and periods of rowing, I reached Stocker at 1645, but at least could then start sailing again towards Cobnor, which I reached about 1730, though I forgot to write down the time. The voyage was about 7 hours, a disappointment considering I was half way round in 2 ½ hours.

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