

# Hayling Challenge 2023

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## Mark Tinkler in his Gull, *Vivant*

Skipper name: Mark Tinkler

Boat - 1967 MK1 GRP Gull

22nd August

HW Portsmouth 16.23

Wind SW 2/3 at the start increasing to top end 4 pushing 5 by the end.

My intention was to use a £40 Gunter Mirror rig and a homemade pivoting tabernacle. I first used this rig the day before and felt it needed some work to reach its potential and it lacked reefing. I therefore decided to use the faster and safer Bermudan Gull rig.

I launched at 8:51 with the last of the ebb to help me out of the harbour, progress was good until.... I passed the East Head buoy and sailed on, I couldn't see the Winner buoys but a lot of open water so I headed South. After a while there was a lot of sand ahead, the Winner bank - Error ONE.



Retracing my track I eventually saw the Winner buoys. As I passed the sailing club the wind was freshening and I assumed it would be more outside so reefed in preparation for the bar. As I left the harbour the breeze softened and I shook out the reef. There was a bit of turbulence at the bar but nothing to worry the Gull. I headed for Langstone shortly after Bar Beacon. Tacking through Hayling Bar I was in my element, singing at top of my voice only stopping as I approached a mark boat for the Laser Nationals, a mass of sails was

leaving the harbour.

I could see the East Winner bank and what was either the entrance or the snatch way described in the briefing. As I approached I could see the seabed and I rapidly headed down wind tracing the edge of the bank, Error TWO. Though I was going backwards, the sun was out, glorious pristine sand to starboard and crystal clear blue sea, I could have been in the Caribbean.

Eventually I passed the end of the bank and headed North and sailing free. I have an old sat nav and a sped in Langstone at five pushing six knots. After that it was a pleasant sail but I didn't relax, determined not to make another navigation error. As I approached Langstone Bridge the flood was still running and the old railway bridge turn table looked scary. Through with out any drama I put ashore on a little beach west of the sailing club slip. Twenty five minutes later after untangling a knitted mess of shrouds and halyards I was under the bridge and sailing again. The breeze was now freshening and speed down the Ellsworth Channel. At Marker Point I decided to risk going over Pilsley Sands, close reaching. With the finish in sight I went from conservative DCA sailor to full race mode. Toe straps and abbs got a good workout and the spray was flying. I joined the main channel at Stocker and as I went onto the run the Gull became rather unstable and I decided to be cautious and reefed. As I

recovered Cliff Martin passed in his rock steady Mirror under full sail looking very relaxed.

Soon I was at Cobnor Point and as I gybed round had a horrible few seconds as I dipped the gunwale.

I put my foot ashore seven hours and nine minutes after departure, not the best time by a long way but I was pleased to have completed the Hayling Challenge.