

Hayling Challenge 2024

Note: This entry is eligible for the Hayling Challenge Trophy and also the Gunter Grail

Skipper name: Tom Edom
Boat name: Scarab
Crew name(s):
Type of boat and description: Mirror, plywood, standard gunter sloop rig, no spi.
Date of challenge: Thursday 29th Aug 24
Time of HW Chi BST: 08:19 (Chi Entrance)
LW Chi BST: 14:13 (")
Wind strengths and directions: Met Office Weather forecast: W to WSW 9 kt gusting 21 kt (F3 gusting F5). [Enough wind for a timely rounding but not enough for a fast one.]

Waypoint	Planned Time, p-p duration	Actual Time, p-p duration
Start Cobnor	10:30 latest <i>1 hr</i>	10:58 <i>1:17 hrs</i>
Marker point	11:30 <i>1hr</i>	12:15 <i>1:05 hrs</i>
Langstone Bridge	12:30 <i>1hr</i>	13:20 <i>1:40 hrs</i>
Langstone Entrance	13:30 <i>1hr</i>	15:00 <i>40 mins</i>
Chi Entrance	14:30 <i>1hr</i>	15:40 <i>20 mins</i>
[Unplanned stop at E Head]		16:00-16:13 13 mins <i>27 mins</i>
Return Cobnor	15:30	16:42
Total time	5 hrs	5 hrs 44 min

“Time and Tide wait for no man, not even the tide guy!”

Strategy: Avoid going to windward unless with the tide and never into waves. Therefore, cross Hayling bay downwind. Therefore anticlockwise rounding (with a westerly). Hayling bridge under oars, mast up, planning to catch the ebb in Langstone harbour to assist in the windward leg to Langstone entrance.

In the event, I made it difficult for myself by starting late, which meant that when I got under the bridge into Langstone harbour the tide was already slack, so instead of being shot out of Langstone on the ebb as planned, it called for patient windward work against a lightish shifty wind and a building flood. This, at 1 hr 40 mins, turned out to be the longest duration leg of the trip.

Downwind across Hayling bay was the right choice; in the Solent the breeze was a little stronger and the Mirror (singlehanded) was semi-planing some of the time and surfing occasionally. Only 40 minutes.

The Chichester entrance was flat except there was a small break on the Hayling spit. I initially headed for the inshore gap in this but could not see it clearly so reverted to rounding nearer the West Pole. As I looked back at this from the entrance I reckoned if I'd held my nerve and gone in close to the beach it would have been fine.

A quick stop to socialise with fellow sailors at East Head and back to Cobnor. The total time was not bad but,but,..... “if only” I had not started late and so missed the tide!