



Civil Service Sailing Association - Channel Sailing Division

SKIPPERS NOTES - Yacht Sea Essay of Hamble

Newsletter No 01/15

Introduction

This is an occasional document issued by the Yacht Secretary, which will be placed on the CSD website and/or sent to all CSSA approved Skippers in CSD when there is new and/or important operational information to promulgate. There is no intention to produce newsletters on a regular basis. Each one is numbered in sequence every year so recipients can identify if any are missing.

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River Hamble Tidal Streams.

A recent incident has highlighted yet again, the need to take account of the direction and rate (speed) of the tidal steams in the Hamble River when going out and coming alongside our berth in the Mercury Yacht Haven.

Sources of Information

The amount of detailed information of the tidal steams is surprisingly limited. The most comprehensive information comes from the Raymarine MFD (Plotter) by placing the cursor over the "T" at Warsash, pressing "OK" (centre of rotary control) then using the soft keys for data etc. Other sources include easytide.ukho.gov.uk where predictions for 7 days are free. The notes in Reeds under "River Hamble" are also of interest.



Interpretation of Data

From these sources the Warsash tidal curve can be obtained and the times of high and low water. From the curve the prediction for a 1st and 2nd HW at or near Spring tides and any "Stand" which can be as long as 2 hours can be seen. The steepness of the line can be an indication of the expected rate. It should be noted that with a 1st and 2nd high water and a stand of up to 2 hours the ebb tide has to complete its ebb cycle in 3-4 hours instead of the usual 5 + hours. This means that the rate of the ebb will be significantly greater than the preceding flood tide. This rate will also increase with the amount of heavy rain (land) water flowing in the river.

Recommended Action

Preparation for leaving or berthing with the knowledge from the predictions from the data sources and the resulting formulation of a clear plan, which has been briefed to the crew, cannot be over emphasised. The passage across the tide between C and B pontoons may have to counteract the tidal stream where the course steered may have to be as much as 45 degrees off the rhumbline. The tidal stream rate and direction can vary considerably during this passage from and to the fairway and adjustments of course and speed may have to be made. A suitable boat speed may be as high as 4kts to counteract the tidal effects and too slow can lead to loss of control. It is recommended that boat is positioned in the centre between the two lines of pontoons and a crew member available with roving fender ready for action if required. In spite of the predictions obtained there is no substitute for personal observation of the tidal stream before leaving and during your passage up the river. Situational awareness is the key and use of transits, back bearings etc. can be used but the position can change rapidly which prevents the use of anything too complicated. The actions stated above apply, in the main, to spring tides about half tide. The same manoeuvre at Neaps and at or near High or Low water or during a Stand can be more straightforward though the effect of wind must also be born in mind.

Berthing bow or stern in

The decision to berth bow or stern in is one that only the skipper can make, bearing in mind that directional control is generally better going bow in. It is also true that boarding and leaving the boat over the stern with the bathing platform down is easier for the less mobile. Mooring stern to in conditions other than slack water and benign wind conditions is not recommended. The use of a berthing spring rigged with both ends on the boat's amidships cleat and the bight over the pontoon cleat provides a degree of additional control.

The use of a flexible plan, briefed to the crew before leaving and arrival and the possibility to wait until the tidal stream slackens should be taken into consideration. It is better to arrive late than damage our and others boats due to loss of control.

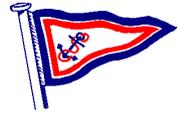
Conclusion

A proper plan, which can be modified in short order as conditions dictate and a definitive course at an appropriate speed should be adopted. There is no shame in abandoning the manoeuvre when there is still sea room to do so and to try again.

Crew Lists

It is paramount that the Yacht Secretary (YS) has a list of your crew and their next-of-kin contact details before you depart.

We are trying to move the Crew list process forward to take advantage of the plethora of electronic transfer available these days. At the same time we need to meet the requirements of the CSSC Charter Agreement and provide an audit trail of all who sail having accepted the terms and conditions. Whilst we don't expect all crewmembers to have read the T&Cs etc.



we do expect the skipper to ensure that they are aware of them as they apply to the voyage they are undertaking together. We also assume that no skipper would depart with an unwilling crewmember!

This all leads to the need for a copy of the signed crew list being available ashore before the boat sails. If you can get an electronic copy to the YS before you leave (scan, smartphone photograph and picture text or email) then that would cover it. If unable to do that leaving a copy with the marina office is a good backup, then when you return it could be scanned/posted to the YS. Remember you must also have a signed list with you on the boat to present to any authorities that may ask for it.

YS contact details are in the Operating Manual.

The following are items from previous Skippers Newsletters that remain applicable to the continuing operation and management of the new Sea Essay of Hamble (Jeanneau SO409).

Domestic Electrical System:

Whilst there are four 110Amp hour batteries supplying all the domestic circuits on the SO409 it is vital that their charge state is managed to prevent permanent damage to them. Skippers should limit the electrical circuits selected when under sail to those essential to the boat's operations. The high power consumption circuits of engaged-Autopilot, Radar and Refrigerator should be dis-engaged or turned off unless essential. Skippers should monitor the battery voltage on the Main Control Panel Contents Gauge particularly when sailing at night. If the voltage drops below 12.25 volts or the low voltage alarm sounds then start the engine immediately and run it at about 750rpm.

Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) Reports

<http://www.maib.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm>

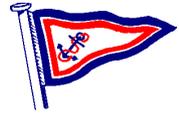
Skippers are recommended to make the effort to regularly read the MAIB reports on various incidents even though they appear to relate to commercial ships. It is far better to learn from others misfortune to avoid the potential situations than repeat them. The recent report on the grounding of the tanker "Ovit" (24/2014) illustrates the dangers of changing the Plotter settings. For ECDIS read Plotter.

Closedown Checklist:

Skippers are reminded to ensure the boat is left in the state specified in the checklist. With the number of skippers using the boat it is essential it be left in a clean and ready state for the next skipper.

Reefing Lines (Pennants)

SNL 01/11 contained a warning about stiff reefing lines (pennants). It is necessary to slacken off and pull all reefing lines through the boom both at the forward (reefs 1 & 2) and aft ends so that the slack can be stowed in the folded mainsail. This practice is necessary to avoid stretching the sail leach when it is re-hoisted particularly as we now have an unforgiving electric winch. Any attempt to hoist the main without first ensuring the reefing lines are slack will cause damage. If you have reefed the sail shake them out by fully hoisting the sail before stowage.



Boom Vang (Kicking Strap)

The boom vang arrangement is very powerful and should be used with care. Its main purpose is to hold the boom down when off the wind and thereby flatten the sail. It contains a gas strut, which will hold the boom **up** when the sail is lowered. Due to the standing rigging configuration the vang is unlikely to induce mast bend and all the other adjustments that can be made in a dinghy or with a slender mast. The power available through the purchase and winching has in the past resulted in the hole in the gooseneck fitting becoming worn and elongated to such an extent that it required replacing. Similarly it has caused the topping lift shackle to pull through its locating hole. To prevent this damage ensure that the topping lift is slack before tensioning the vang. Please do not over tension the vang and release the tension when the sail is lowered.

Warps

The number of warps carried on board has been rationalised and skippers should have sufficient lines for every eventuality even if that means joining lines together. (A double sheet bend is useful in these conditions). Spare lines are available in the shed if skippers think they may need them but please return them to the shed on return to Mercury YH. Please do not leave them on board.

Fenders

The number and size of the fenders has been rationalised, we now have 8 fenders of the same size and all of these should be stowed in the cockpit lockers. Tying them to the pushpit should be avoided as the cabin heater exhaust can burn them and it looks untidy! The very large fenders are now in the shed, should a skipper consider that they are required for a particular purpose please put them back in the shed when finished with them.

Adrian Barnes
Yacht Secretary