

Wildlife, Wind and a Warm Welcome

It was a warm, sunny April day when we brought Squander from her then home in Lymington to her current residence in Portland Harbour. Having sailed for many years in the Solent and Poole area we were expecting the usual choppy seas, accompanied by a cheek-burning wind. However, in the days that followed Easter 2019, the weather was calm and the day of our trip was a glorious but uneventful 8 hours of motoring!

When we eventually got to Warbarrow Bay we were debating whether to spend the night in Weymouth or whether to anchor in the moonlit waters off Mupe Rocks. The benign sea developed a low yet uncomfortable swell, which was quite different from what we had experienced earlier on in our journey, so we made the decision to head for Weymouth Bay. It was dark when we dropped the hook, but a comfortable night was spent by all.

The next morning saw the comings and goings of lots of watercraft enjoying the Spring sunshine. We were overjoyed when one anchoring yacht seemed to bring with it an accompanying dolphin - a sight we'd never seen in the busy Solent. However, the surprise of seeing the dolphin didn't stop there. He took an enormous interest in us, coming over to our boat and allowing us to film him up close. He was with us for about an hour before he went on his way. Some local jet skiers said he was from Portland Harbour and ever since he has been affectionately known on Squander as "Portland Bill" (of course, SHE could be "Portland Billie"! I guess we'll never know!)



One thing that we have noticed about Squander's new home is the wind! If you are going to check the Met Office wind speed, add another 5 knots at least to the predicted forecast! However, the wind direction is also a factor, as we learned the hard way! Being newcomers to Portland Harbour, we naïvely set about getting to our mooring in an



easterly one May Friday evening. The chop was pretty intense and the short trip in our dinghy left us feeling quite traumatised!

It was only when we were safely in the cockpit that we realised we were the only sailors around that evening! Since that dreary day, we have treated any wind with an east in it with extreme caution!



All in all, we are

delighted with Squander's new home. The Dorset coast is amazing and there are loads of places for a quick weekend sail. The RNSA members have been very helpful and welcoming and we were delighted to meet some of them at the Cocktail Evening. The food was excellent, especially the pudding! Our lift-out this September was smooth and efficient, thanks to the team at the Sailing Academy who gave us fantastic assistance, despite another weekend of severe wind and chop!

Roll on next season!

Joel Burton - age 12

"Squander"