

Summer 2020 on Sky Song of Dart

Paul and I had planned to retire at the end of the financial year and spend the Summer exploring the South West on our 336, Sky Song of Dart, which we had taken ownership of last year. As it was clear that our planned activities were to be rather curtailed, I returned to support my colleagues in healthcare and Paul to a full-time consultancy.

We spent the summer weekends getting to know our new boat; we spent many happy evening hours simply sitting on her with a glass of chilled something or other on the mooring on 'our' river watching the sun go down. Occasionally we'd sail up the river and drop anchor for the night. In the mornings we were often accompanied by paddle boarders or kayakers enjoying the morning stillness.

Another time we had a fantastic beat out to the Eddystone and back. Lunch stops at Cawsand became a regular event, as was 'just going out beyond the breakwater for a blast'.

We got as far as Salcombe twice. The first time we arrived in blissful ignorance expecting the peaceful Salcombe we knew 40 years ago. Horrified by the numbers on the shore, motorboats at anchor and in the water and the prospect of rafting up on a buoy with several others (social distancing?) we turned tail and headed for home. On the way we had a spot of engine bother, and no wind, so decided that navigating the Yealm for the first time in a very dark night, with a potential engine failure wasn't the wisest choice. So we unexpectedly but successfully navigated the Sound and were safely tied up by the small hours. The trouble? Weed in the strainer. It's a learning curve!

The next time was perfect; by then I'd heard of anchorages at the Salt Stone, so we headed straight through the busy harbour and joined one other yacht there at anchor. (Note to self – read the pilot book thoroughly!). We were rewarded by a beautiful sunrise the next morning and a race flotilla of prettily painted Salcombe Yawls. On our return journey we were delighted to be accompanied by a pod of dolphins dancing in our bow wave, gannets diving for fish and shoals of Pilchards. In fact it was all so delightful that our guests, who had only ever sailed in Mediterranean flotillas before, went out and bought a boat the following Wednesday. Sad to say, not a Moody.